



ARLES

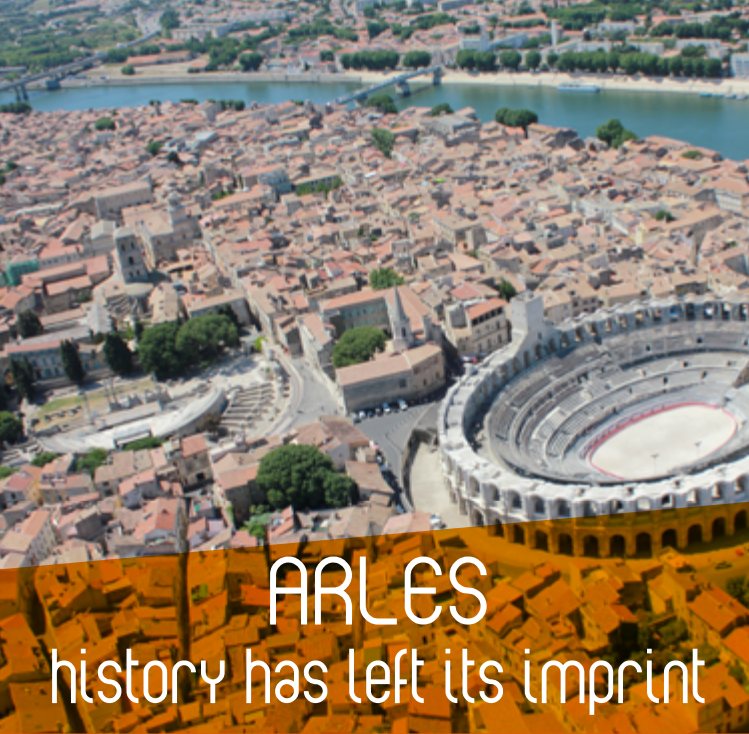
POCKET CITY GUIDE



ARLES 365°
Office de Tourisme
Arles Camargue



www.arlestourisme.com



ARLES

history has left its imprint

Close your eyes and imagine that you are walking along beside a long historical freize; open them and you are in the streets of Arles.

Centuries go by under your feet. Even though there remain few traces of the Greek trading post, the remains of the former Roman colony Arelate are everywhere.

The Amphitheater can be compared to the Coliseum, the Cryptoportico is a rare example of Roman construction engineering. Capital of Gaul in the 4th century, Arles reached its apogee in the 12th - it was the second largest city in the county of Provence, after Marseilles.

At that time Saint Trophime's Primatial church was built, as well as Montmajour Abbey. The Renaissance was also a glorious period for Arles when the aristocracy built sumptuous town houses in the heart of the city.

It is thus no mistake if Arles is labelled « City of Art and History » and listed on the [UNESCO World Heritage List](#) for its Roman and Romanesque monuments since 1981.



THE AMPHITHEATER the symbol of Arles



Built around 90 AD, the Roman amphitheater could contain 21,000 people at the time ! It is the most important monument of the old Roman colony that we can still admire today in Arles. Thanks to an ingenious system of round passageways and alternating staircases, the spectators who came to see gladiator fights for example, could take their places on the 34 rows of seats according to their social rank. During the Middle Ages, the amphitheater was transformed into a fortified city. At that time the 4 towers that give it its special appearance were built. Inside could be found houses, two chapels and even a public square. Today the arena has a different public, especially for ferias (bullfighting). It is the most visited monument in the city !

THE ROMAN THEATER still festive



It was built one century before its illustrious neighbor, the amphitheater. Unlike other Roman theaters which were built on a hillside, ours was built at the top of the Hauteure hill.

The stage wall had wonderful decoration. This included three levels of columns with numerous statues, including the colossal statue of the Emperor Augustus, presently on exhibit at the Musée Départemental Arles Antique (Arles archaeological museum).

Taken apart starting in the 5th century to be used as a stone quarry, the theater was only rediscovered and cleared out in the middle of the 19th century. Today it is a wonderful festive and cultural venue, particularly during the summer for the stars of the "Suds" and the "Escales du Cargo" festivals.





THE ALYSCAMPS *champs élysées*



This cemetery started as a Roman necropolis along the Via Aurelia, then became extremely important for the early Christians when Saint Genesisius, the Arlesian martyr, was buried here. Prestigious bishops were also entombed here and the site became a necessary stop along the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. The Alyscamps walkway lined with sarcophagi that remains today was created by the Friars Minor in the 18th century. In 1888 Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin came to paint in this romantic « Champs Elysées » of Arles.



THE BATHS OF CONSTANTINE *sport & relaxation*

Built during the 4th century AD, the baths were used of course for daily hygiene, but they were also a very popular meeting point. Every afternoon the whole population, women first, then men, undertook an ordered ritual; first a dry sweat, then a series of baths (hot, lukewarm, then cold pool), before finishing with a vigorous massage. Some also came for physical exercise. Today only a small part of these baths remains – they were originally much larger. Thus the houses built next to the site on the South side have massively reused the walls of the frigidarium, the cold bath.



THE CRYPTOPORTICO *a horseshoe*



These underground corridors were built to create a level surface on sloping land and to be used as a basement for the future Roman Forum. These 3 corridors, in the form of a "U" or horseshoe, create a building 89m long by 59m wide. Air and light entered through high basement windows. The only access was by two service entrances, proving that they were not open to the public in Roman times. At the end of the southern corridor, which is under the City hall, you can spot former cells through the windows. At the beginning of the 5th Century, since the site was looted, cryptoportico were closed and became private basements.

SAINT TROPHIME'S CHURCH AND CLOISTER *gems of Provençal Romanesque art*



During the 12th century, when the city of Arles was undergoing an unprecedented expansion (the city had from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants) a new episcopal quarter was built, including Saint Trophime's primatial church, the Archbishopric and buildings for the canons organized around a cloister.

The portal of Saint Trophime's church is admirable with its statues associating a representation of Saint John's Vision with that of Judgment Day. It is of course a church with relics on the Compostela pilgrimage route. A Gothic choir replaced the Romanesque apses in the 15th century.

The adjoining cloister was built during two major campaigns -- 12th century for the North and East corridors, and 14th century for those on the West and South sides -- which explains the diversity of the iconographic decoration, inviting us to meditate about the Resurrection of Christ or the Mystery of Easter, and thus introducing subtle relationships between the Old and New Testaments.





MONTMAJOUR ABBEY a grand mountain

This is the meaning of « Mont Majour ». It was on a rocky island dominating the Crau plain that a community of Benedictine monks established themselves in the 10th century. During eight centuries the site grew (Saint Peter's Hermitage, abbey church, Saint Maur's monastery ...) corresponding to successive occupations and dangers.

The abbey, majestic and imposing, has inspired numerous artists. Vincent van Gogh made several drawings there during his stay in Arles. In 1967 it was the main site for the filming of A Lion in Winter which revealed for the first time on a movie screen Anthony Hopkins and Timothy Dalton. Every summer Montmajour Abbey hosts exhibitions in partnership with the Rencontres de la Photographie (photo festival).

Useful information and open hours : www.abbaye-montmajour.fr

THE ARLES ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM Musée Départemental Arles Antique the blue museum



Arles is an open-air museum and a paradise for archaeologists. When the Arles Archaeological museum opened in 1995 the public was able to admire the treasures discovered dating from the Neolithic Period through Late Antiquity. Among the 1,800 objects on display, some exceptional pieces including the bust presumed to represent Julius Caesar and the 31m-long Roman barge, removed from the waters of the Rhone River in 2011. In the wings the team of archaeologists and the conservation and restoration workshops work to give a new life to mosaics, statues, and wall paintings of inestimable value. Outside the building, the Hortus garden, in the form of a Roman circus (race track), makes a green intermediary between the museum and the city center.

Useful information and schedules : www.arlesantique.fr



ARLES in love with traditions

Traditions, tied to the past, still ringing true in the present, are sacred in Arles and have nothing to do with folklore. Here, little girls learn the secrets of the Arlesian dress costume from the cradle and are happy to parade with their parents during Arlesian traditional celebrations ! Some of them even dream of becoming one day « Reine d'Arles ». Much more than a Beauty Queen, she is being elected during the « Fête des Gardians ».

*“ We are the offspring of immortal Greece,
We are your children, Orpheus, divine soul!
For we are your sons, O county of Provence. »*

Frédéric Mistral, les Iles d'Or, 1875



MUSEON ARLATEN Provence in your heart

This ethnographical museum is a reference when speaking about Provençal culture. It was created at the end of the 19th century by Frédéric Mistral, the Provençal poet who won the Nobel Prize in Literature. He was conscious that the social upheavals of the industrial Revolution could endanger what he cherished above all else : the Provençal traditions and language. After a spectacular renovation, the Museon Arlaten is once again exhibiting its collection of 38,000 objects, allowing us to better apprehend the ways of living, thinking and working in the region since the 18th century.

Useful information and schedules : www.museonarlaten.fr





SANTON CONSERVATORY Conservatoire du Santon Christmas all year round

With its 2,000 santons and 160 m2 of exhibition space, the Provençal Santon Conservatory offers you an exceptional panorama of this Provençal folk art.

Useful information and schedules (closed every year in February) :
on the Facebook page of the "Conservatoire du Santon Provençal"

The nicest Christmas cribs are also exhibited each year at the Salon international des Santonniers between November and January. You will realize that in Arles Christmas festivities are no laughing matter ! Don't miss Christmas mass at St. Trophime's church on December 24, with the shepherds and the Arlesian women in their dress costumes !

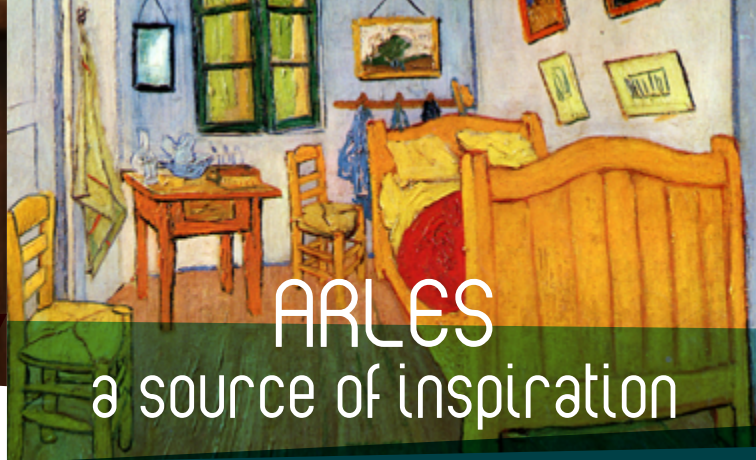
CAMARGUE RACE fast and agile

In Arles, first testimonies of this bullfighting game date back from the 15th Century. In the arena, the bull is the superstar ! His main qualities must be: passion, intelligence and velocity. The purpose of the raseteur (dressed in white) is to catch with bare hand the attributes hanging on the bull's head. Every year, first Monday of July, the Cocarde d'Or (Gold Roundel) takes place in the arenas of Arles. All raseteurs dream about winning this prestigious race.

BULLFIGHTING just like in Spain

The Easter feria kicks off the bullfighting season in Arles. The amphitheater becomes a Plaza de Toros for the satisfaction of the aficionados. Usually, festivities continue in the streets of the city to the beats of the penas (street bands)... and in the evening, bodegas are the places to be for dancers and tapas lovers. And don't forget the Rice Feria in Septembre with its main event : the Goya-style corrida, with its unique decorations and music !

www.arenes-arles.com



ARLES a source of inspiration

Touch, listen, look... All your senses are wide awake when you are in Arles, and even more so if you are an artist. Musicians, photographers, painters, authors... Many have found inspiration in Arles, either because of its brilliant light, its charming streets, or the savage beauty of the Camargue. Of course you remember Vincent van Gogh who spent 15 months in Arles, in 1888 and 1889. It was here that he painted some of his greatest masterpieces : the Starry Night over the Rhone River, the Café Terrace in the evening, his Bedroom... We can also mention the Arlesian couturier Christian Lacroix who discovered his artistic vocation while visiting the Réattu Museum as a child... But also photographers from around the world, professionals or amateurs, glorify the city every summer during the "Rencontres de la Photographie" photography festival. It is a tasty artistic whirlpool : all you need to do is to dive in !

MUSÉE RÉATTU a showcase museum



Our Fine Arts Museum is a must ! First, because of its building, the former Grand Priory of the Knights of Malta, built at the end of the 15th century. Next because of its situation, in a curve of the Grand Rhone, with an exceptional view of this powerful river. And of course because of its collections, created by the painter Jacques Réattu in the 18th century and continued by the successive curators. In 1965, the Arlesian photographer Lucien Clergue, back from a trip to the U.S., created a photography collection at the Réattu ; this was a first for any Fine Arts museum in France ! In 1971 Pablo Picasso showed his attachment to Arles and its museum by offering 57 carefully chosen drawings. An unusual destiny for this museum which also exhibits numerous works of contemporary art.

Useful information and schedules : www.museereattu.arles.fr





THE ARLES VINCENT VAN GOGH FOUNDATION **a bridge**

Inaugurated in April, 2014, the Arles Vincent van Gogh Foundation is a bridge between the Dutch painter and the artists that he inspired and continues to inspire. His works have unprecedented attraction for the public. All year long, the Foundation exhibits paintings on loan from the largest museums around the world, and invites contemporary artists to express their attachment to the artist with their own creations.

Useful information and schedules :
www.fondation-vincentvangogh-arles.org

VAN GOGH WALKING TOUR **in his footsteps**

This walking tour is available at the Tourist Office and will take you to a dozen sites immortalized by Vincent van Gogh. Imagine your emotion when you realize that the painter set up his easel on the spot, sometimes fighting off the mistral wind or the hot sun!

LEE UFAN ARLES **minimalist**

South-Korean artist Lee Ufan, worldwide master of Minimalist art, discovered Arles in 2012 when Actes Sud (Arlesian Book Editor) published his first monography in French. He decided then to establish his Foundation in Arles and acquired Hôtel Vernon, which was known as «Maison Dervieux», an antiques shop. Famous architect Tadao Ando participated to the refurbishment of this beautiful townhouse. He is Lee Ufan's personal friend and also created the artist's Museum in Naoshima, a Japanese island.



RENCONTRES DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE Photography Festival **focus on the Eighth Art**

Every summer, for more than 50 years, photography lovers have been meeting in Arles for 3 months of exhibitions, meetings, workshops, debates, etc... The vocation of this international event is to transmit our world photographic heritage. It is also an exceptional springboard for numerous artists.

Useful information and schedules :
www.rencontres-arles.com



LUMA ARLES **a campus for experimenting**

This multiple-discipline art center has been established on land which was formerly a railway (SNCF) repair depot. It encompasses 4 poles of activities : education, environment, art and archives. The Ressource building, decorated with stainless steel bricks, was imagined by the architect Frank Gehry. It houses exhibitions space up to international museum standards, conference rooms as well as an auditorium. The industrial buildings were renovated by the architect Annabelle Selldorf, and are a venue each year for numerous cultural events. The public park was designed by the landscape artist Bas Smets. More than 500 trees have been planted, umbrella pines, pistachio trees or even holm-oaks.

Useful information and schedules : www.luma.org





ARLES

a window opening onto the Camargue

Did you know that Arles is the largest township in France ? It includes part of the Camargue, those vast wetlands covering 100,000 hectares located in the delta of the Rhone River. Listed as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, the Camargue is a fragile sanctuary for wildlife; it is especially the only place in France where pink flamingoes nest. On foot, on a bicycle, on horseback (horses of the Camargue race, of course), there are a thousand ways of discovering its unique landscapes, sometimes wild, sometimes created by man. 14 discovery trails are available at the Tourist Office or can be downloaded free from our website.



www.parc-camargue.fr

MUSÉE DE LA CAMARGUE

Camargue Museum **water and time**



The Camargue Museum is a « sociology » museum. It will allow you to understand the special ties between man and nature in the Camargue. The permanent exhibition, entitled "Le fil de l'eau...Le fil du temps en Camargue" ("Along the river... As time goes by in the Camargue") explains the geological formation of the Rhone River Delta, then the arrival of man and its development. Man has had to adapt himself to this hostile nature and is still trying today to find an even balance between the development of human activities and environmental protection. Your museum visit can continue outside, on a 3.5 km-long walking path.

Useful information and schedules : www.museedelacamargue.com



SALIN DE GIRAUD, THE PIÉMANSON AND BEAUDUC BEACHES **at the end of the delta**



Houses built of red bricks along symmetrical streets at the end of the Camargue ? No, you are not dreaming, welcome to Salin de Giraud ! This village, within the township of Arles, was originally an industrial town, built by Solvay and Péchiney from 1856 on, to produce salt and transform it into soda. Numerous immigrant workers settled here during the 20th century. Salin de Giraud is an ideal departure point for observing the birds in the Etang du Fangassier or for discovering the wild beaches of Piémanson and Beauduc, a privileged spot for kitesurfers... You can also visit salt marshes, still in activity, by foot, bike or car. Guided visits during summer. Bright pink color in salt marshes offers stunning contrast with the blue sky !

MANADES ET GARDIANS

Ranches and cowherds **man and animal**

The « gardian » is the guardian of the ranch, where herds of bulls live in semi-liberty in the Camargue. Two different races of bulls are raised here : the original Camargue race or "raço di Biou", used for the Camargue bull games, and a second race from Spain, called "brava", used for bullfights. On the ranches are also raised horses of the Camargue race, a white horse which is a symbol of the Camargue and will be an excellent companion for your trekking. Many ranches ("manades") open their gates to the public and passionately share their work and their traditions.





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