

How to discover the heritage monuments of Arles



To facilitate your stay, the Tourism Office sells a combined ticket (one entrance per site) at a special rate :

The "Pass Liberté", valid one month, allows you to visit your choice of 4 monuments, one monument-museum (the Réattu) and one other museum. 11 €/9 € (reduced price) per person, free for those under 18 years-old coming with a relative

The « Pass Avantage », valid six months, permits you to discover all the monuments, the monument-museum, and all other Arles museums. 15 €/12 € (reduced price) per person, free for those under 18 years-old coming with a relative

Extra charge of 1 € on all tickets from July 1 to August 31.

Guided tours (information at the Tourism Office)

You can also buy brochures, practical guidebooks, and rent audio-guides in different languages :

- Walking tours : available in French and other languages.
- Roman Arles (Guides archéologiques de la France) : 18.00 € in French.
- Arles Guide (Editions du Patrimoine) : 12.00 € in French and English.
- Bike trekking tours : 8.50 € available in French, English and German.
- Miam miam dodo (Santiago de Compostella route accommodations) : 19.00 € in French.
- On the Santiago route (Sur le Chemin de Saint-Jacques) : 20.00 € in French.
- Audio-guides : 5.00 € available in French and English.

And of course we also recommend our mobile phone apps :



TOURIST OFFICE

Why stop at the **Arles Tourist Information Center** ?

Because 365/365 days a year our tourism counsellors are at your service to give you personal advice.

Our goal : that your stay with us be even better than what you dreamed, that you want to come back and that you become our ambassadors by recommending our city to your family and friends. In all our reception offices you can buy and reserve : your lodging (hotel, bed and breakfast, ...), your concert and theater tickets, your Camargue safari in a 4x4 vehicule, your guided tours, your ranch (manade) visits, your van excursions.

In all our reception offices you can buy : combined tickets for our monuments or discovery tours, the envelope containing the 14 Camargue trekking tour brochures, your guidebooks and pamphlets (from 1€ to 12€).

At our main office on the Boulevard des Lices you can rent : your audio-guide to discover the city; you want to take home a souvenir of Arles : the "Rencontres d'Arles" (photography festival) are finished, the "Suds" (music) festival is over... at the last minute you don't know where to find the famous Camargue red rice or salt flakes... at the Tourism Office shop you can find all year round the typical products that, as souvenirs, symbolize Arles, our destination.

French « chèques vacances » and credit cards are accepted.

From April thru September, the Tourism Office (main information center D4) is open every day from 9:00 to 6:45. From January through March and November and December, it is open from 9:00 to 4:45 from Monday thru Saturday and 10:00 to 1:00 on Sundays and holidays. In October, the Office is open from 9:00 to 5:45 from Monday thru Saturday and 10:00 to 1:00 on Sundays.

The Office in Salin-de-Giraud is open from April thru September from 10:00 to 1:00 and 3:00 to 7:00 from Tuesday thru Saturday.

What else do you need to **know about Arles** ?

*** Light for Vincent Van Gogh**
The artist came to live in Arles in February, 1888. He was fascinated by the light of Provence, and in spite of the short length of his stay, he painted here his most famous paintings (nearly 200). Since 2014, the Arles Vincent Van Gogh Foundation, housed in a former Renaissance town house, enhances his artistic heritage and relates his painting to works by contemporary artists. A walking tour through the city is illustrated with reproductions of some of his works, located on the spot where they were painted.

*** The Arlesian women's dress costume, the « gardians » (Camargue cowherds) and the bullfights.**
Arles is also a city of festivals and traditions. Two "ferias" (bullfight festivals), at Easter and at the beginning of September, take place in our "major league" arena. At the beginning of July, the arena is also the venue for the Cocarde d'Or bull games during traditional festivities where cowherds on horseback ("gardians") accompany lovely Arlesian ladies dressed in their traditional costumes and wearing silk velvet ribbons in their hair. A queen of Arles, elected every three years, officially represents our Provençal traditions with her ladies-in-waiting.

*** An atmosphere like no other**
Anyway, this is what visitors say. Arles is a Provençal city that stands out among the surrounding towns. You can wander and get lost in the typical little streets of the Roquette and Hauteure sections. Our restaurants with their shady terraces allow you to taste three local AOP (appellation d'origine protégée) products : olive oil from the Vallée des Baux, rice and bull meat from the Camargue. Twice a week the tradition of our prestigious Provençal markets is perpetuated. The Saturday market, one of the most spectacular in the region, unfolds along two long boulevards in the city center.

*** Famous festivals**
Arles is home to the Rencontres de la photographie (photography festival) when every year original photo exhibits are organized all summer long in the city, and a "music of the world" festival, Les Suds à Arles, which takes place during the first two weeks of July. Other festivals are planned all year round : the European Festival of Nude Photography, Jazz in Arles, the "Forum Lyrique" (bel canto), the Festival of Arles, the Cargo "Escalaes", Arelate and the "Peplum" Film Festival (Roman week), the Horse and Camargue food Festival, the "Prémices du Riz" (rice harvest festival), an Antique and Second-hand salon, "Octobre Numérique" (digital October), Provence Prestige, Drôles de Noël (Christmas fun), the International "Santoniers" (craftsmen who create "santons") salon.

*** An antique fair is organized on the Boulevard des Lices the first Wednesday each month. Open air markets on Wednesday and Saturday mornings**

Arles, gateway to the Camargue



*** The Camargue museum**
Housed in the former sheep barn of the Mas du Pont de Rousty, the museum reopened in November 2013. Its new exhibit "As water drifts ... so does time drift along in the Camargue » illustrates the relationships between man and nature as portrayed through activities specific to the delta of the Rhone River, from the 19th century until today.



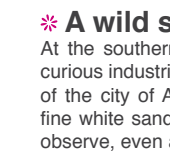
*** The Vigueirat swamps (Marais du Vigueirat)**
The Conservatoire du littoral, a government agency protecting the French coastline, has created a Visitors' Center in Mas-Thibert (23 km south of Arles). It maintains a "cabin" path for children, the "Palunette" trail for nature discovery, bird-watching, and offers guided carriage rides and nature hikes.



*** The "Domaine de la Palissade"**
This property is situated between Salin de Giraud and the coast, completely outside the Rhone River dikes. It was acquired in 1976 by the Conservatoire du Littoral, a public conservation agency. It can be visited by foot on specially created paths, but also on horseback.

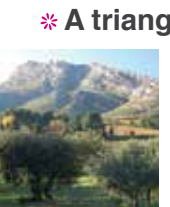


*** The « Capelière »**
The national nature park information center. The park covers 13,000 ha of ponds, lagoons and sansouires (flat plains of sand and salt where only saltwort grows). It is one of the largest wetland reserves in Europe. Discover these natural spaces and their wildlife with paths, observatories and exhibits.

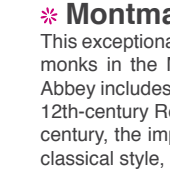


*** A wild sandy beach**
At the southern limit of the town of Arles, beyond the salt marshes of the curious industrial town of Salin-de-Giraud you arrive at Piémanson (the beach of the city of Arles). At this immense beach (40 km long, 500 m wide) of fine white sand, which can be reached by car or bicycle, you will be able to observe, even at the middle of the day, pink flamingos among the marshes.

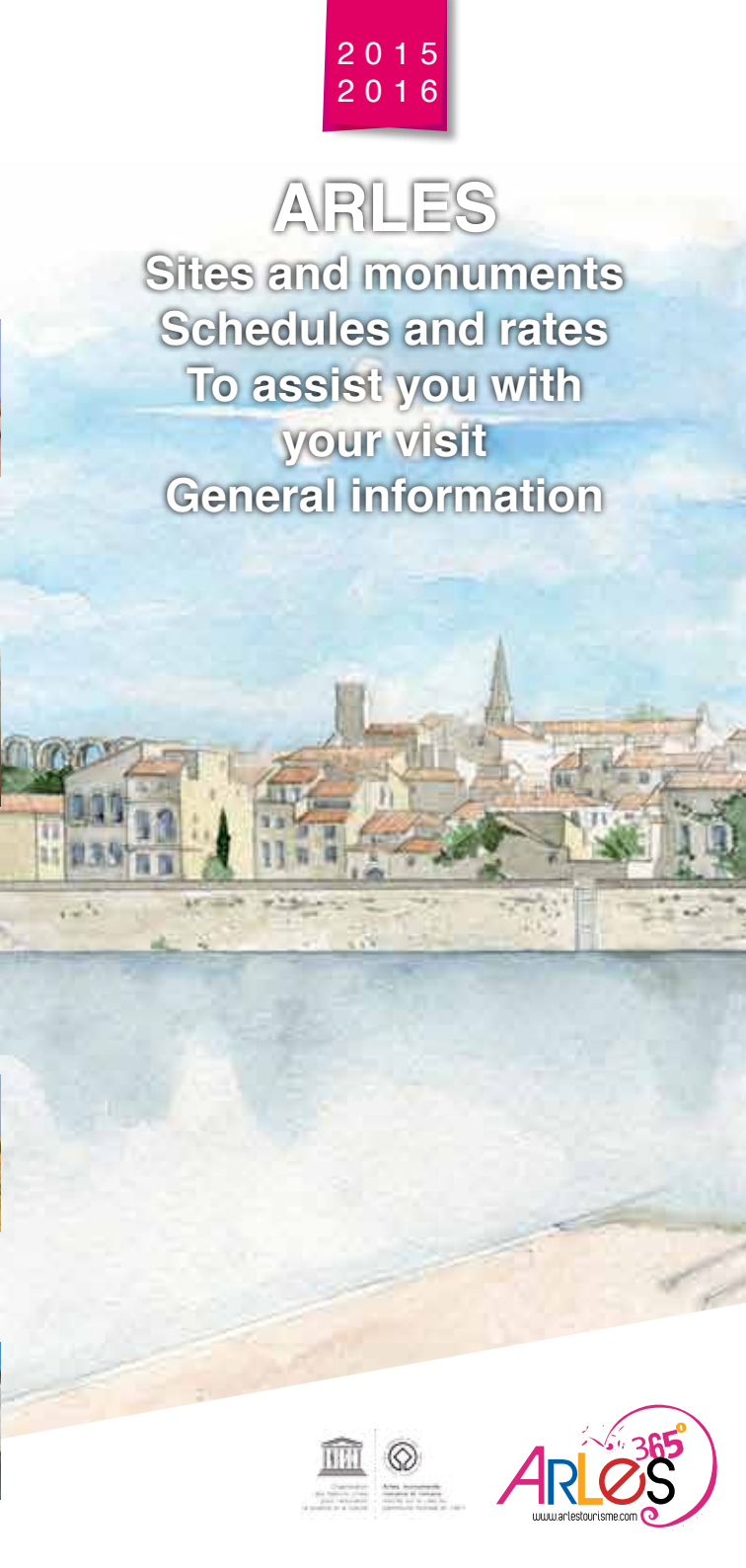
ARLES AND ITS SURROUNDINGS



*** A triangle of biodiversity and two nature parks within 10 km**
Arles is the largest township in continental France and it is surrounded by three different natural landscapes : the Alpilles hills to the north, the Camargue with its marshes to the south, and the Crau, an arid plain partially irrigated and farmed, to the east. The Camargue regional nature park has been joined by a second nature park in the Alpilles. Life in the city is marked by the Rhone River, which flows through the city center before creating the Camargue delta.



*** Montmajour Abbey**
This exceptional group of buildings was founded by Benedictine monks in the Middle Ages in the middle of marshland. The Abbey includes a 10th-century Pre-Romanesque building and a 12th-century Romanesque church and cloister. During the 18th century, the impressive Saint-Maur monastery buildings, in the classical style, were erected.



ARLES

Sites and monuments Schedules and rates To assist you with your visit General information

More than two thousand years of history

From Greek trading post to Roman colony, capital of an empire and important bastion of Christianity in the Middle Ages, then a rich agricultural center during the Renaissance, Arles is one of the capital cities of Provence.

Arles is a city proud of its traditions safeguarded by Frederic Mistral (Nobel Prize in Literature at the beginning of the 20th century), but also open to the world and contemporary architecture. One of the museums of Arles was designed by the architect Henri Ciriani, and an original project by the international architect Frank Gehry is now under construction for the Luma campus at the "Parc des ateliers" (former locomotive repair shops).

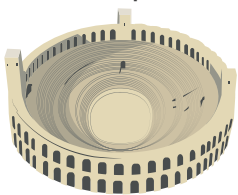
The Roman and Romanesque monuments of Arles are listed on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1981. Arles is a "city of art and history", with nearly one hundred buildings protected by the French government heritage program (Monuments Historiques). The pedestrian strolling through the old city center, all of which is a protected building zone, confronts all the different historical periods from the Roman period to the present, one after the other.

This small city, sub-prefecture of the Bouches-du-Rhône department, is also a city of culture and traditions with two major yearly events : the International Photography Festival when each summer original photo exhibitions blossom all over the city, and a world music festival during the first two weeks of July.

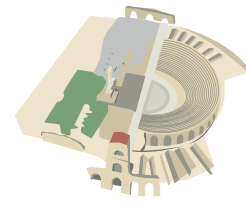
Roman and Romanesque monuments listed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, four museums

Arles is an interesting example of a Roman city which adapted itself to medieval Europe. The city has preserved impressive Roman monuments and an exceptional collection of Roman artifacts. Within the old city, Saint-Trophime's church and cloister are one of the major masterpieces of Provençal Romanesque art.

* The amphitheater (the arena) - E3



Built at the end of the 1st century AD, the amphitheater measures 136 x 107 meters and could hold 21,000 spectators (12,500 today), who came to see fights and games. During the Middle Ages, the monument was transformed into a fortress, and only turned back into an arena in the 19th century. Today bull fights and games are organized here regularly.



* The Roman theater – E4

Built a century before the amphitheater, its imposing neighbor, the Roman theater in Arles was located at the heart of the Roman city. It was looted for centuries by people looking for building materials and its original function was completely forgotten but then rediscovered at the end of the 17th century. Today it is again being used as a theater.



* The cryptoportico (cryptoportiques – foundations of the Roman forum) - D3

Like all Roman cities, Arles had a vast forum which has disappeared today. To build this forum on a flat surface, during the first century BC the Romans created a system of vaulted corridors underneath. Today we can go underground to visit these underpinnings.

* The baths of Constantine - D3



The baths were a popular public building, indispensable for the comfort of city inhabitants during the Roman Empire. There they could practice various physical exercises and bathe. The building also played a major social role as a place for meetings and discussions. The baths of Constantine, dating back to the beginning of the 4th century, are only partially restored.

* The Alyscamps (Roman and medieval graveyard) - F5



The Romans established their graveyards outside the city walls. In Arles the most famous Roman cemetery is the Alyscamps, which was transformed as Christianity developed and under the influence of the first Arlesian martyr, Saint Genesius, in the 3rd century. During the 12th century the Romanesque church dedicated to Saint Honorat was added. In the 18th century the Friars Minor created the impressive walkway lined with sarcophagi.

* Saint Trophime's cloisters - E4

Saint Trophime's cloisters are located next to the church. The first two corridors, decorated in the Romanesque style, date back to the 12th century. Two more corridors in the gothic style were added in the 14th century. The sculptures, of exceptional quality, are presently being restored. To end your visit, go up onto the roof where you can look out over the cloister courtyard and discover St. Trophime's church from an unusual viewpoint.



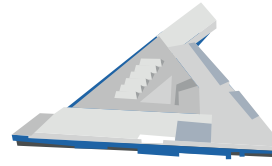
* Saint Trophime's church - E4

Carved at the end of the 12th century, Saint Trophime's portal is one of the major examples of the

Provençal Romanesque style, directly inspired by Roman architecture. During the 1990s the portal was restored using the most modern techniques, giving the façade columns and sculptures back their original splendor.

The MDAA (Arles archaeological museum) - A5

Inaugurated in 1995 near the remains of the Roman circus (racetrack) in Arles, on the banks of the Rhone River, this museum, designed by the architect Henri Ciriani, enchants its 160,000 yearly visitors with a remarkable collection of local and regional archaeological artifacts. In October 2013, the museum opened a new wing housing the Roman barge Arles-Rhône 3 (31 meters long). More than 450 objects telling us about Roman commerce and navigation, and discovered either recently or in years past, surround the barge, found in the Rhone River.

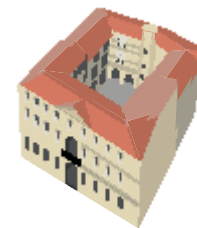


The Réattu museum (fine arts, modern and contemporary art) - E3

The museum is housed in a remarkable building, the former Grand Priory of the Knights of Malta. Its rich collections were gathered during the 19th century starting with a donation of works by the neo-classical painter Jacques Réattu. In 1965, the first photography department in a fine arts museum in France was inaugurated, underlining the innovative nature of the museum collections. Pablo Picasso was charmed by the spot and donated an important collection of 57 drawings to the museum in 1971. They compose one of the first public collections devoted to the artist. One of the nicest letters from Van Gogh to Gauguin is also preserved, representing the only original trace of Van Gogh's famous stay in Arles.

* The Museon Arlaten (ethnographical museum) - D4

This museum is currently closed for restoration : reopening in 2018. It was created by the poet Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914), and presents a panorama of daily life in Provence from the end of the 18th century up to today. It is a true "poem in action", one of the first ethnographical museums created in France to preserve the memory of a unique local way-of-life.



* Vincent Van Gogh Foundation in Arles - D3

Inaugurated in April, 2014, the Arles Vincent Van Gogh Foundation is a homage to the work of Van Gogh – a painter whose creative energy reached its zenith during his stay in the city, between 1888 and 1889 -- while also exploring his impact on contemporary art. Temporary exhibits are regularly organized, where original paintings and drawings by the Dutch master are exhibited beside contemporary artistic creations, thus creating a fruitful and constantly renewed dialogue.



How best to visit Arles?

* If you only have an hour and a half?

Don't miss at least one of the monuments listed on the UNESCO world heritage list or one of our three museums. The Roman theater and amphitheater are a "must" : buy the combined ticket.

* You plan to spend a half day?

In this case, along with visiting a monument, follow one of the five suggested theme walking tours (UNESCO heritage, Roman Arles, Van Gogh, classical and baroque Arles).

* You can stay for a day?

Buy the "Pass Advantage" with which you can visit all 10 monuments and museums, or follow one of the five theme walking tours (UNESCO heritage, Roman Arles, Van Gogh, classical and baroque Arles) in the old city center, or visit the Camargue, the Vigueirat swamps (Marais du Vigueirat) or the "Domaine de la Palissade"...

* You plan to spend two days?

In addition to the programs suggested for a one-day stay, visit the numerous exhibitions scheduled in the different museums or during festivals or international events like the Photography Festival (Rencontre de la photographie), the bullfights...

* You are staying three days or more?

Create a more complete menu by adding some of the sites surrounding Arles (Camargue, Alpilles, Crau, the Arles region and beyond). Go visit Montmajour Abbey. And don't forget to buy local products with an AOP label (olive oil, bull meat products, Camargue rice and salt flakes). Of course you may prefer guided tours (see opposite).

* Are you travelling with your children ?

- Hortus, the garden inspired by ancient Rome (near the Arles Archaeological Museum -- Musée départemental d'Arles Antique), has a kit of games available at the Museum reception desk.
- The « Circuit des Cabanes » path at the Vigueirat swamps in Mas Thibert (15 km from Arles), allows you to discover swamp wildlife.
- The « Domaine de la Palissade » in Salin de Giraud (located just before you arrive on the undeveloped Piémanson beach on the Mediterranean Sea) has discovery paths to be visited on foot or on horseback.
- The Camargue museum and its discovery paths at the Mas de Pont de Rousty.
- Shows take place in the city monuments during the summer months : bull games and gladiator fights in the arena.
- Take a fun discovery tour of the city by answering questions on a "treasure hunt" with the mobile application "Rallyvisit".
- Go horseback riding in the Camargue
- Take a 4x4 safari in the Camargue or the Alpilles hills
- Try canoeing on the « Petit Rhône » River at Paty de la Trinité.
- Take an excursion by van around Provence.
- Discover a ranch (« manade ») where bulls are raised.