Welcome to Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole!

In your hands you hold the essential destination magazine that will lead you to key attractions, hidden treasures and - of course - amazing inhabitants!

Learn about the history of Montpellier Méditerranée as you peruse the chapters. This is a land of builders who did not rest until they had built the future stone by stone. Step inside the delectable saga of private manor courtyards and pleasure palaces. Visit Rabelais at the Faculty of Medicine. Enjoy a breath of fresh art in the Antigone and Port Marianne districts. Savour the immensity of the “Cathedral of Sand” in Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone.

Do more than just look, experience it! Participate! And get swept up in the creative energy driving our cultural venues and major events: the modern art MOCO and Halle Tropisme built around its creative industries, illuminated Coeur de Ville, Montpellier Danse, Cinemed and so much more!

Montpellier Méditerranée also boasts all the charm of a Mediterranean destination, with sky, sun and sea. All this is surrounded by an outstanding natural environment with vines, garrigue scrubland and mountains.

Lastly, Montpellier Méditerranée is its people: the men and women who are passionate about this region; the high level athletes who have built the reputation of Montpellier sport; the artisans who perpetuate traditional skills; and the shopkeepers around every street corner and behind every stall who have their hearts set on sharing their love of this destination with you.

This is a region packed with experiences!

PHILIPPE SAUREL
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MONTPELLIER
PRESIDENT OF MONTPELLIER MÉDITERRANÉE MÉTROPOLE
**Wander around the centre of Montpellier, from Place Royale du Peyrou to Place de la Comédie.**

Built by the Montpellier nobility on agricultural lands on the city’s edge, these pleasure palaces bear testament to Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole’s flourishing vic culture past.

**Wander through pine trees and garrigue scrubland along the aqueduct built to supply Chateau de Castries, an architectural treasure only 15 minutes from Montpellier.**

**With the Mediterranean Sea only 10 kilometres from the city centre, the coast is an integral part of the Montpellier region.**

**La Panacée, Ecole des Beaux Arts and Hôtel Montcalm: this MOCO trio is dedicated to modern art. Montpellier is at the cutting edge of creative innovation.**

**Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole’s Musée Fabre is the jewel in the region’s artistic crown due to its collection of artworks from all eras.**

**Montpellier Méditerranée is only a 10-kilometre cycle from the sea, passing by vineyards, beaches, lagoons and scrubland. Of course, you need to experience the region’s atmosphere, people and history—you can be a sunny terrace, chatting and setting the world to rights. Embrace this state of mind: enjoying others!**

Now it’s your turn to explore Montpellier Méditerranée. Choose your favourites from our key attractions and make your stay memorable. Enjoy! Jean-Luc Cousquer

President of the Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole
EXPERIENCE MONTPELLIER MÉDITERRANÉE!

THERE IS SO MUCH TO SEE AND DO IN MONTPELLIER MÉDITERRANÉE. EVERY DAY IS A HOLIDAY!

THE VISITOR CENTRE IS AN EXPERT ON THE REGION AND WILL SHARE THE BEST DEALS...

CHOOSE WHAT APPEALS TO YOU AND ADD MORE!

AN AFTERNOON AT THE ZOO
Stop a while at Lunaret Zoo with your family! We’re sure you’ll melt at the sight of the baby animals. Take a snack break and let your kids play on the playground. Get to know 140 little-known species. Last but not least, it’s completely free!

AN AFTERNOON AT THE BEACH
Take a short break and let the hustle and bustle of the city centre? Head to Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone with your picnic, swimsuit and bathing suits. Before hitting the beach, you’ll have to stop off at Maguelone Cathedral! Nestled between vines and lagoons, it will take on a journey back in time.

A SHORT BREAK IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS
What would you say to a break of fresh air far from the hustle and bustle of the city centre? Head to Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone with your picnic, swimsuit and bathing suits. Before hitting the beach, you’ll have to stop off at Maguelone Cathedral! Nestled between vines and lagoons, it will take on a journey back in time.

RELAX IN THE SHADE OF MEDIEVAL LAKES
Come lose yourself in the mediaeval streets of the Ecusson zone. Here, you can stroll between unique shops and many works of street art tucked away all over the city. Keep your eyes peeled for the many secrets and marvels. The star of the show is the Arc de Triomphe. Climb to the top to enjoy 360° panoramic views. Photo op!

100% CULTURAL WEEKEND
Stroll from exhibit to exhibit at the Pavillon Populaire (photography) and Espace Ragolet for a free cultural event. Then head to the Musée Fabre to explore one of the most prestigious fine arts museums in Europe. Lastly, enjoy a breath of fresh air at Panacée and the brand new MOCO Hôtel des Collections while enjoying a modern art exhibition.

A TASTE FOR THE GOOD STUFF
People love to follow their taste buds and go to the new Halles Laissac to savour olives, tielles (seafood quiches) and tapenades. Take your purchases off for a picnic in the sun, at Promenade du Peyrou.

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CONQUERING MONTPELLIER
Only a few hours to explore Montpellier? The Essential Montpellier guided tour is just the ticket. Book your spot through the Visitor Centre and set off for two hours of exploring the city and its history, secrets and marvels. The size of the show is the Axe de Trinité. Climb to the top to enjoy 360° panoramic views. Photo op!

GET YOUR FILL OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES!
Odysseum doesn’t do things by halves. This open-air shopping centre has plenty of options for a great day out. Planet Ocean, skating rink, climbing wall, themed restaurants and more. In short, it’s more than just a place to shop!

2-hour essential tour

2-hour architecture walk

CYCLING ALONG THE LEZ
Sport enthusiasts (and novices), hop on your bicycles and start pedalling towards Port Marianne and its island Odysseum doesn’t do things by halves. This open-air shopping centre has plenty of options for a great day out. Planet Ocean, skating rink, climbing wall, themed restaurants and more. In short, it’s more than just a place to shop!

Another great idea: Mission Exit escape game.

Another great idea: Immersive game by Night guided tour.

Another great idea: The Panacée by Night guided tour.

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WANT TO EXPLORE MONTPELLIER IN A NEW WAY?
Try the immersive game (combining a treasure hunt and escape game on your smartphone) developed by Atlantide in collaboration with the Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole Visitor Centre. Using geolocation, you must walk the streets to complete your treasure mission and fight evil dragons on historical facts and incorporating digitally archived documents. Atlantide offers a unique way to learn more about Montpellier and its history, while having fun!

Free to download from Apple Store and Play Store. Another great idea: Mission Exit escape game.

Want more great deals? And personalised advice?

Meet local experts:
- The Tourist Office, Place du Capitole
- The Information centres at Lattes, Castries, and Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone
- montpellier-france.com

Another great idea: the panoramic view out to sea and across the Pic Saint-Loup summit.

Another great idea: Strolling for an evening at Opéra Comédie or Berlioz. Climb to the top to enjoy 360° panoramic views. Photo op!

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MOCO IS A MULTI-SITE ART CENTRE FOR MODERN ART THE NEW HOTEL DES COLLECTIONS MONTCALM JOINS THE ECOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS AND LA PANACÉE TO FORM A UNIQUE TRIO IN FRANCE.

This is the only art centre in the world, apart from the MoMA in New York, to have several sites where you can view modern art. MOCO (Montpellier Contemporain) operates as an artistic ecosystem and combines the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts school of fine arts, La Panacée with its focus on emerging creativity and, since June 2019, the former Hôtel de Montcalm which has been renamed Hôtel des Collections MOCO. The new Hôtel des Collections MOCO has become the cornerstone of the original set-up and boasts eight exhibition rooms, a restaurant and cafe, a book store and a vast park which itself has been transformed into an artwork. In total, 3,100 m² of land in the heart of Montpellier is now dedicated to housing collections. What makes MOCO special is its preference for movement and creativity over having a fixed permanent collection. “This space can host public and private collections from around the world three times a year,” explains Nicolas Bourriaud, international modern art expert, co-founder of Palais de Tokyo in Paris and general manager of MOCO, whose president is fashion designer Vanessa Bruno. The inaugural exhibition features masterpieces from the Ishikawa collection owned by a Japanese industrialist who has amassed a modern art collection unlike any other in the world, with artworks by Felix Gonzalez Torres, Pierre Huyghe and Danh Vo which have never been exhibited in Europe before.

What convinced you to accept the presidency of MOCO?
Nicolas Bourriaud knew that I love modern art and this region, as I regularly visit for holidays. And of course I found it really interesting that MOCO features a fine arts school with Ecole des Beaux-Arts, a production site with La Panacée and an exhibition venue with Hôtel Montcalm.

What is your role?
This is the first time I’ve found myself in this type of system. My role is more to provide support, as I am involved in both the creative and entrepreneurial worlds, so I have a unique point of view. There is a continuous dialogue, and in the background is a dynamic of me wanting to make things happen as the company leader. I think I bring a fresher perspective that helps us bounce back differently. And of course I help create national and international “amplifiers” for these sites.

Can you have a museum without a permanent collection?
Having no permanent collection means you avoid being compartmentalised. You can offer a different view which is constantly changing. And call on major public and private collections. You can also work on themes. This gives Montpellier a newfound legitimacy to prove itself a pioneer in modern art.

How is MOCO innovative?
This project is unique in France because it combines the various sites, from production to exhibition. I’ve seen museums, I’ve seen schools, I’ve seen art centres. But I’ve never seen all three working together. I think it’s a generous project that brings the winds of freedom to a time when culture is often the poor relation.

Who is MOCO for?
What is interesting is that this project is for a wide range of people. The collections will be very interesting in their presentation, with dialogues between, for instance, major artworks and works by less well-known artists. This will create interesting combinations. So there is something for all interests!

Does it resonate with your profession?
Take our inspiration from what’s trending, including from modern art. We have the same understanding as artists. Actually, we feed off each other.

Vanessa Bruno: “MOCO brings the winds of freedom”
THE FASHION DESIGNER EXPLAINS WHY SHE AGREED TO LEAD MOCO

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Take our inspiration from what’s trending, including from modern art. We have the same understanding as artists. Actually, we feed off each other.
La Panacée is an integral part of the MOCO multi-site artistic facility and features a wide range of spaces – exhibition rooms, educational areas, a café/restaurant, a patio and an auditorium – giving this site a constant buzz.

This emerging creativity lab is both a university hall of residence for fine arts students, an exhibition venue and a bar/restaurant, whose internal courtyard is extremely popular with the locals. La Panacée enables a dialogue between the various artistic disciplines of visual arts, writing and digital, and stirs the melting pot of creativity with each exhibition offering an opportunity to introduce artists who have never before exhibited in Montpellier or who have produced brand new, surprising artworks for the occasion. La Panacée works hard to be inclusive by organising focus tours with a mediator to look at a selection of artworks, and hosting numerous school groups throughout the year. As for families, both young and old can explore the exhibitions and then enjoy a creative workshop together. The centre regularly organises lecture series and events on fine arts and current artistic practices.

Musée Fabre features ultra-modern museography and outstanding permanent collections while also having a constant buzz. This museum is always surprising with its daring temporary exhibition approach. The museum is home to both major historical artworks and the best works by artists with special ties to Montpellier and its region. Bourdon, Fabre, Cabanel, Bazille, Claude Viollat and Vincent Bouissou artworks sit alongside those by Brueghel, Rubens, Poussin, Ingres, Corot, Monet and Staël. Wandering around the museum is home to both major historical artworks and outstanding permanent collections while also having a constant buzz. This museum is always surprising with its daring temporary exhibition approach. The museum is home to both major historical artworks and the best works by artists with special ties to Montpellier and its region. Bourdon, Fabre, Cabanel, Bazille, Claude Viollat and Vincent Bouissou artworks sit alongside those by Brueghel, Rubens, Poussin, Ingres, Corot, Monet and Staël. Wandering around the museum and moving to see the freshness of ‘Young woman sitting at a window’ by Berthe Morisot. There is a unique dialogue with the paintings that Gaugin and Van Gogh came to admire, ending with the modern section designed around artworks by Pierre Soulages.

MUSÉE FABRE MAJESTIC ART

Pierre Soulages is the most famous modern French painter. Originally from Aveyron, he often visited Musée Fabre when he was young and even met his wife there. The museum holds 34 paintings by the creator of Outrenoir, including around 36 gifted by the artist, which offer an overview of his career in 600m2 of specially designed rooms. Start here before continuing on to explore the Musée Soulages in Rodez and the stained glass windows at the abbey church in Conques, two hours from Montpellier.

FAMILY MUSEUM VISITS

An audio guide for kids helps them explore Musée Fabre’s permanent collections. Boxes, overflowing with artwork-related challenges and game ideas, offer a fun approach to the museum and games booklets are available at reception or can be downloaded from museefabre.montpellier3m.fr.

CAFÉ DE LA PANACÉE

Need lunch on the run or want to enjoy a relaxed family brunch? Café de La Panacée has become the place to eat, with a menu that changes every week and a wide range of tapas to enjoy in the evenings. In summer, the kitchen and bar migrate to the courtyard, creating a grilled food and paella ambiance.

lecafedeflapanacee.com

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**CHAPELLE DE LA MISÉRICORDE**

Chapelle de la Miséricorde is home to Montpellier’s last working pharmacy, with its collection of pots illustrating the art of pharmacy. In the display cabinets you can see items from the Neolithic to the Gallo-Roman era: sculptures, inscriptions and burial items. Guided tours of the archaeological dig run regularly.

**AFRICAN AND MODERN ART**

In Montpellier, Frac (Regional Modern Art Collection) has amassed a collection of artworks and organises exhibitions that interrogate avant-garde creations. For years archaeologists have been uncovering the ruins of an ancient archaeological site. For the visitor, this site is supplemented by exhibitions at Crac (Regional Modern Art Centre) in Sète. In the nearby Miam (International Museum of Modest Arts) created by artist Jean-Raymond Boix-Vives, Yvon Taillandier and Jaber, along with works by local artists including Sylvain Corentin and Philippe Aïni. Over 750 artworks by a total of 250 artists are on show.

**MUSÉE ATGER**

In Lavérune, the chateau that houses Musée Hofer-Bury was the former residence of Montpellier’s bishops. Hofer-Bury was the name of a collector who donated over a thousand modern paintings and sculptures to the city. The museum showcases regional artists, and leads to Africa, Americas and Asia.

**ATTRACTION MAGAZINE**

**CHAPELLE DE LA MISÉRICORDE**

Chapelle de la Miséricorde is home to Montpellier’s last working pharmacy. In these spacious, bright premises they are able to bestow the twenty or so artists they support, such as Philippe Pasqua, De Rosa and Boisron, and show them to the Parisian and foreign collectors who happily make the trip. astgalerie.com

**POLYCHROME SCULPTURES**

In the display cabinets you can see items from the Neolithic to the Gallo-Roman era: sculptures, inscriptions and burial items. Guided tours of the archaeological dig run regularly.

**REGIONAL PAINTINGS OF YESTERDAY**

This surprising museum was founded in 1989 within the Montpellier 3 University of Arts and Social Sciences. It brings together plaster moulds of the most beautiful sculptures from ancient times to the Middle Ages, as well as unique ancient items and a photographic collection.

**ATTARA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE**

For years archaeologists have been uncovering the ruins of an ancient archaeological site. For the visitor, this site is supplemented by exhibitions at Crac (Regional Modern Art Centre) in Sète. In the nearby Miam (International Museum of Modest Arts) created by artist Jean-Raymond Boix-Vives, Yvon Taillandier and Jaber, along with works by local artists including Sylvain Corentin and Philippe Aïni. Over 750 artworks by a total of 250 artists are on show.

**ARTEFACTS AND SCULPTURES**

In Montpellier, Frac (Regional Modern Art Collection) has amassed a collection of artworks and organises exhibitions that interrogate avant-garde creations. In the display cabinets you can see items from the Neolithic to the Gallo-Roman era: sculptures, inscriptions and burial items. Guided tours of the archaeological dig run regularly.

**MUSEUM AND ART HISTORIAN**

In Lavérune, the chateau that houses Musée Hofer-Bury was the former residence of Montpellier’s bishops. Hofer-Bury was the name of a collector who donated over a thousand modern paintings and sculptures to the city. The museum showcases regional artists, and leads to Africa, Americas and Asia.

**MODERN COLLECTION MUSEE HOFER-BURY**

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**GREAT DRAWING AND PRINT MASTERS**

Over 1,000 drawings and 5,000 prints, including some by Fridz, Dubuc Robert, Rubens, Van Dyck, Donatello and Tiepolo, have been gathered within the Montpellier Faculty of Medicine Museum. Following a donation made by Montpellier-born collector and art enthusiast Xavier Alper to the faculty in the 19th century.

**MAKING ART AND WORKING ARTISTS**

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**ART IS ON THE STREET, TOO!**

**RIVER VERDANSON IS THE BOMB!**

**STREET ART**

A red croquettte, blue moust, a nymphet with olive skin, gigolitic lettering... This area is teeming with colours and shapes along hundreds of metres! No, we aren't in New York. We are on the Verdanson river bed at the foot of the Ecusson zone. A strange, concrete no man's land, four metres below street level. For 20 years, the vast open air gallery for artistic expression. Montpellier has long been at the forefront of the artistic scene and you can explore in the city and at graff-parks.

**A SPOT ALL GRAFFITI ARTISTS KNOW**

**URBAN CULTURE**

Zest, Simolo, Gum, Mammies, JonnyStyle, Al Sickly, Noon, Sidka, Mist and SMB are among those who have used this previously clandestine but now famous canvas for their art. Its fame has grown to such a point that themed tours are organised by the Visitor Centre to view and understand the work of this movement's biggest international artists. This urban culture has a firm grip on 21st century reality. "We always try to be ahead of the game, by painting society's future subjects," admits de Paume. These artists used the same technique for a vast fresco opposite Saint-Roch, as well as nearby areas, in the Ecusson zone of Montpellier, as well as in the coast and Cévennes. Local expertise and excellence is showcased during summer (Estivales) and winter (Hivernales) festivals where artists and craftspeople can introduce themselves to the general public.

**GENUINE ARTWORKS AND SUBTURFUGE**

**TROMPE-L'Oeil**

A nondescript building with people on their balconies. A charming scene of Montpellier life, except that the flying bird seems not to be moving and the woman beside it is... Juliette Greco, the famous singer? No, you have been fooled by a trompe l'oeil mural created by Foch, Frédéric Chaudière devotes the necessary time to shaping, sanding, polishing and tuning his instruments. Established in Montpellier since 1986, this stringed instrument maker produces creations in its 300m² space. During a stroll around Saint-Roch, you will encounter studios of the collective of the same name. And the surrounding villages have just as many, with over 1,500 artistic craftspeople between the coast and Cévennes. Local expertise and excellence is showcased during summer (Estivales) and winter (Hivernales) festivals where artists and craftspeople can introduce themselves to the general public.

**LA NEF: A STUNNING SETTING**

Since 2015, artistic professions have had a new home in Montpellier: Ateliers d’Art de France has restored the Visitation Chapel, now simply renamed La Nef (The Nave), at the end of Rue de l’Université. Under its vaulted ceiling, The Nave reveals creations reflecting the imaginations of artistic craftspeople. In addition to the three permanent areas (jewellery, fashion and decorative item store, gallery of unique pieces and meeting/projection room), temporary exhibitions are regularly held.

ateliersdart.com

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**STRINGED INSTRUMENT MAKERS**

In a stately building on the discreet Rue du Bayle behind Avenue Foch, Frédéric Chaudière devotes the necessary time to shaping, sanding, polishing and tuning his instruments. Established in Montpellier since 1986, this stringed instrument maker produces around one violin, viola or cello per month. For each instrument ordered, he finds the best wood grain and quality (maple or spruce) and constantly contemplates how to perfect his craft. But he is not the only one. The city has proven appealing to this profession due to the available premises, good humidity and light characteristics, and concentrated cultural life with many festivals providing great opportunities to meet the musicians. As a result, in only 20 years the numbers have grown from 5 to 15 stringed instrument makers who love to share their passion.

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**THE TRADE TRAIL**

From the Ateliers des Métiers d’Art to the Saint-Anne stringed instrument makers, the centre of Montpellier is home to numerous artistic craftspeople. Head to the Visitor Centre to get a Fine Crafts discovery trail brochure showing where you can meet these craftspeople in their own stores.
HALLE TROPISME, THE NEW INNOVATION AND CULTURE HUB, IS BOTH A WORKPLACE AND RELAXATION SPACE WITH AN ABUNDANT PROGRAMME OF CREATIVITY IN ALL ITS FORMS.

What do a start-upper, an oyster, a sociologist, a DJ and a giant barbecue have in common? Easy, it’s Halle Tropisme! Officially opened in early 2019 in a former army warehouse in the Montcalm district, this forward-looking 4,000m² of space forms the biggest Third Place in Montpellier. A Third Place reinvents how we share spaces intended for doing things and working, as it also hosts spheres that open it up to the general public through fun and innovative artistic and cultural programmes. Beside the entrepreneurial village of 220 cultural industry start-ups, there is a main stage, a performance and exhibition gallery, a dining space - Café Tropisme - which is the hub of the Halle, and a vast outdoor area which hosts event after event. These include outdoor cinemas, yoga classes, kids’ coding sessions, Latin music festivals, Tango workshops, electro concerts, lectures by philosophers and sociologists, Sunday brunches, oyster apéritifs and huge Brassacade barbecued mussel events. This comprehensive programme of events amuses itself by titillating the boundaries and light-heartedly cultivating an intermingling of genres!

CAFÉ TROPISME: THE MEETING PLACE

With kids’ cooking classes, evenings with guest chefs, Brassacade barbecued mussel nights and more, Café Tropisme chef Benji Vicenc does his utmost to create the effect of surprise. Café Tropisme serves a clever, inventive produce-based cuisine for lunch and dinner, along with Sunday brunches that are already popular with parents as they can let their kids frolic without worrying. On sunny days, the Café spreads onto the terrace and offers even more social times with themed barbecue nights, oyster apéritifs, culinary performances and even mini gastronomy festivals. So exhilarating!

Flying the eclecticism flag

VINCENT CAVAROC IS THE DIRECTOR OF ILLUSION MACADAM, THE COOPERATIVE THAT MANAGES HALLE TROPISME.

Is this place a unique ecosystem in Montpellier? We believe that as part of the cultural environment’s transformation we need to invent new models with activities that enable us to create a lasting, original financial model. We are not a business centre but a dual-purpose venue with permanent links.

How is the programme designed? It is deliberately cross-discipline and can range from a lecture by the eminent sociologist Edgar Morin on Monday to a relaxed barbecue on Tuesday night! We seek a sense of what can hone a new type of citizen and new instincts. You could say we are a place that awakens your conscience.

Is the Halle for everyone? We want to avoid creating a certain clique-ness. At the official opening we had 15,000 guests ranging from 3 to 80 years old! We want people who live in the centre of town and neighbouring suburbs to come with their kids. The Halle is a venue open to everyone and offers infinite connections.

HALLE TROPISME
121 Rue de Fontcouverte 34000 Montpellier Tel. +33 (0)4 67 84 58 10 tropmoe.coop
**INTERNATIONALES DE LA GUITARE SEPTEMBER**

This festival showcases music and arts from other Mediterranean shores along with theatre, music and storytelling, delivering an exceptional cultural blend. [Internationalesdelaguiteres.fr](http://Internationalesdelaguiteres.fr)

**TROPISME OCTOBER**

Digital culture, modern music, lectures, performances, kids’ entertainment, exhibitions and more; this autumn festival fully immerse you in technology and digital creation. [Supermedial.fr](http://Supermedial.fr)

**FESTIVAL DES ARCHITECTURES VIVES JUNE**

Every year for the past 14 years, young architects have taken over private manor courtyards and other historic sites in the city centre to offer you an introduction to modern architectural heritage through surprising, often interactive installations that play on the city’s wealth of heritage. [festivaldesarchitecturesvives.com](http://festivaldesarchitecturesvives.com)

**FESTIVAL RADIO FRANCE OCCITANIE MONTPELLIER JULY**

This festival has become an international benchmark. Every year for the past 15 years it has offered symphonic concerts, operatic performances, chamber music, performances by young soloists and jazz, world music and electronic music concerts. There are over 160 concerts to enjoy! [infestival.com](http://infestival.com)

**FAMILY PIKNIK AUGUST / I LOVE TECHNO DECEMBER**

Montpellier is a well-known spot for electronic music and hosts two flagship events: the family Piknik in early August at Parc de Granier and a day dedicated to pumping Techno music and in winter the Parc des Expositions becomes a haven for the Biggest DJs on the techno planet. [fairmontpellier.com](http://fairmontpellier.com)

**ARABESQUES SEPTEMBER**

This festival showcases music and arts from other Mediterranean shores along with theatre, music and storytelling, delivering an exceptional cultural blend. [arabesques.fr](http://arabesques.fr)

**CINÉMÉ OCTOBER**

Montpellier’s week-long Mediterranean film festival, commonly called Cinémé, brings together the year’s best films from Mediterranean countries. [cineme.fr](http://cineme.fr)

**CULTURE PLUS**

**MONTPELLIER DANSE JUNE**

This is the annual gathering of the biggest international names in choreography, with over 300 dance companies travelling from around the world to Montpellier and the metropolitan area’s towns. [montpellierdans.com](http://montpellierdans.com)

**WHAT A TRIP SEPTEMBER**

Sharing adventures: that’s the recurring theme of this international travel and adventure film festival. On the programme: film projections as well as a travel village, travel library, entertainment and workshops. [www.montpellierdans.com](http://www.montpellierdans.com)

**TOU TOU**

Tourists have never had a friend like Tou Tou. He’s an easy-going, lovable character who’s been designed to promote Montpellier, the capital of Languedoc-Roussillon. [www.toutou.fr](http://www.toutou.fr)

**THE EPICENTRE OF DANCE**

The story of Montpellier’s love affair with dance goes back to the 1960s. Today, the surprising circular construction - a former convent - on Rue de l’Université, is the headquarters of Agora, Cité Internationale de la Danse. This 17th century building is also home to the Centre Chorégraphique National, directed by Christian Rizzo, and Montpellier Danse, an organisation led by Jean-Paul Montanari who also orchestrates the festival of the same name in July and the winter choreography programme. Montpellier has demonstrated that major arts can flourish in regional cities and for the past 40 years has invited companies as prestigious as those of William Forsythe, Sasha Waltz, Nederland Dans Theater and more. Montpellier regularly hosts major international names and many now-famous productions have been performed on Montpellier’s stages. This exceptional energy has enabled Montpellier to develop an artistic hub sustained by numerous companies who participate in this extraordinary creativity. Enjoy one of the many shows to see them for yourself. [montpellierdanse.com](http://montpellierdanse.com)

**MONTPELLIER ILLUMINATIONS DECEMBER**

A plethora of sites and occasions will be lit up to celebrate the arrival of the season. The story of Montpellier’s love affair with lights is well-documented and has become a major tourist asset, with the main sites lighting up each December to create an extraordinary atmosphere. [www.montpellier-france.com](http://www.montpellier-france.com)

**CINEMA OCTOBER**

Montpellier boasts two opera houses where the Opéra Orchestré National Montpellier Occitanie performs. Opéra Comédie is one of the biggest Italian-style theatres in France. The Corum was built in the 1980s and serves as an opera house and convention centre. Inside the building, the Berlioz performance hall has 2,000 seats and hosts mostly symphonic music concerts. It is also a venue for part of the Radio France Occitanie Montpellier and Montpellier Danse festival programmes. [opera-orchestre-montpellier.fr](http://opera-orchestre-montpellier.fr)

**LA VISTA, THÉÂTRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

La Vista, Théâtre de la Méditerranée, has been established in the working-class district of Figurelles for the past two decades and boasts a significant programme for youth. This performing arts venue hosts and disseminates works by local companies, and has recently moved to Rue Joachim du Bellay in the former Gély Chapel, a new 300-seat performance hall that has been created thanks to the city council. [theatrelaviastra.fr](http://theatrelaviastra.fr)

**LA CHOCOLATERIE**

Specialising in comedy, this little theatre was created in Montpellier moved to Saint-Jean-de-Védas in 2019. It hosts non-stop comedy improv and kids’ shows for all to enjoy. [lachocolaterie.org](http://lachocolaterie.org)

**LE SPLÉNDID**

Located in Saint-Jean-de-Védas, Le Splendid reinvents the atmosphere of the greatest cabarets with a mind-blowing dinner and show accompanied by music from the 1970s to the 2000s. [le-splendid.fr](http://le-splendid.fr)
Guided tour with actor Julien Masdoua, who is excited to showcase his city.

"This really stirs my memories and is one of the city’s legendary locations which I know well. I showed my TV co-stars somet places like the tree where you write romantic messages. What’s great is that we have filmed in less well known yet identifiable spots such as the bamboo grove and under bridges."

"I haven’t filmed any scenes there but thanks to the show this place has regained its status as a zoo. It’s not just a place for a walk but somewhere you come to admire and discover amazing animals. I love it!"

"I must admit, before filming here I had never set foot in this major and it was the place’s Parisian actors who So Park often during their days off who introduced me to it! This is an amazing place and, what’s more, it looks exactly like a film set!"

"We filmed in this pretty square but there hasn’t yet been a panoramic view of this charming site. What’s interesting is that on the screen you’re not necessarily aware that this is a cosy, quite restricted spot."

"LES ARCEAUX

"I haven’t filmed here but I know the area well as it is where I managed the Prime Theatre. It’s only the start of the season so there aren’t stills of rooms to show in this area. I think that the directors spotted its cinematic potential but are saving the settings and ambiances."

"Les Arceaux are saving the settings and ambiances!"

"This is different as it’s a newer place that I don’t really know well, but for the Parisian actors it’s just another place in the city. It’s interesting to see how it is handled, like with these new parts of the city, and I’m happy because it will become part of the collective unconscious as a key site, like others in Montpellier."

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"We filmed in this pretty square but there hasn’t yet been a panoramic view of this charming site. What’s interesting is that on the screen you’re not necessarily aware that this is a cosy, quite restricted spot."
One of Montpellier’s treasures can be found by walking up the shopping street of Rue Foch and through the Arc de Triomphe to reach Place Royale du Peyrou. A French-style garden has been designed either side of this promenade. Flowers, beds and benches provide the ideal setting for a peaceful stroll. Place Royale du Peyrou forms the backdrop for the statue of Louis XIV astride a horse. This site was developed in 1689 to demonstrate the royal power to the rebel Protestants. Over time, this 4-hectare site has become a popular location with an outstanding view over the city’s roofs and beyond. At the other end of the square is the water tower built in the 18th century, which served as the city’s water reservoir. It features a style reminiscent of Greek temples. From there, steps lead you down to the Arceaux district and the Aqueduct.

UNOBSERVED VIEW FROM ARC DE TRIOMPHE

Sitting at the crossroads of Avenue Henri IV and Avenue Foch, leading to Jardin des Plantes, the Arc de Triomphe glows with its ochre stone. Built in the 17th century to honour Louis XIV, it sits on the site of one of the eight gateways in the city’s ancient ramparts. The Peyrou bas-relief side depicts various stages in the Sun King’s reign, from completing the Canal du Midi to revoking the Edict of Nantes and the taking of Namur. The Visitor Centre runs an exclusive trip up to the top of the Arc de Triomphe. Climb just under a hundred steps to find yourself 15 metres above street level and enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the Peyrou gardens with the Pic Saint-Loup summit on one side and Montpellier and the roofs of the Ecusson zone on the other, and even a glimpse of the sea.

CITY AQUEDUCT

Built in the 18th century, the Saint-Clément aqueduct carries water 14 kilometres from a spring near Montpellier to the water tower built on the Peyrou promenade. The final 800 metres of this aqueduct, as it arrives in Montpellier, comprise a double row of arches inspired by Roman architecture. Nicknamed “Les Arceaux” (The Arches), it has given its name to the nearby area where young and old play boules in its shade.

LES DIMANCHES DU PEYROU

The bric-a-brac and antiques market is held along the Peyrou garden’s paths every Sunday from 7.30am to 2.30pm.

FROM SCRUBLAND TO CHATEAU

The 6.8 kilometre long Castries aqueduct is the biggest private hydraulic structure ever built in France. It offers a pleasant walk through the garrigue scrubland on marked trails alongside the arches of this 17th century structure built to supply water to the chateau’s gardens.
WHETHER LIVELY, SECRET, SHADY OR SUNNY, THE SQUARES SPINKLED AROUND MONTPELLIER LET YOU ENJOY A RAMEL WHILE DISCOVERING THE CITY’S HERITAGE.

PLACE ALBERT I
Only a stone's throw from Jardin des Plantes, Place Albert I is a former mediaeval gateway to the city and connects the buzzing Boulonnet district, Venissieux docks and Peyrou. Place Albert I dates back to the 17th century. The former public hospital chapel - now a university centre - sits on its edge and the cathedral is only a few hundred metres away.

PLACE LA CANOURGUE
When you head up Boulevard Henri IV, you will come across the square and follow it to the end. It is a majestic gateway to Rue Foch and its chic boutiques. After passing the Palais de Justice, you arrive at Place de la Canourgue, tucked away down a side street. Its narrow trees and few help you understand the Fontaine des Licornes, which is surrounded by tall windows and numerous cafes and restaurants as well as the new Jardin des Tons hotel and restaurant expected to open in 2020.

PLACE SAINTE-ANNE
Place Sainte-Anne is lined with mediaeval buildings and is the oldest square in Montpellier. It is home to the former church of the same name which has since been converted into a hotel. It is wonderful to lose yourself in this little village with its bohemian-spirit while exploring the many shaded lanes of this timeless area.

PLACE SAINT-RAVY
From Halles Castellane, take the underpass Rue de la Vieille to reach the little Place Saint-Ravy. Here, you will find the remains of the old royal palace of the short-lived Kingdom of Majorca. Visit the Saint-Ravy municipal gallery to admire the beautiful vaulted ceilings adorned with keystones.

PLACE SAINT-ROCH
After a stroll through the charming pedestrian streets, you will emerge to find Saint-Roch church. Built in the 19th century, it is dedicated to the patron saint protecting the city and sits opposite a huge tramway (bus) mural. A fountain with a children's playground and numerous cafes and small restaurants complete the surrounding area. The peaceful atmosphere during the day gives way to a more festive ambiance in the evening in the wine bars and restaurants.

PLACE CANDOLLE
Tucked away off Rue de l'Université, Place Candolle seems untouched by time with its discreet restaurant and bar terrace where students set the world to rights and enjoy a romantic rendezvous. On sunny days, musicians often get their guitars out for an impromptu concert in this square with its distinctive acoustics.

PLACE SALENZRO
Place Salengro presides over the centre of the lively Jauréou district. Children's laughter can be heard at the playground, which was recently created under the shade of the plane trees when this area popular with the locals was revamped.

PLACE SAINT-CÔME
That site is currently occupied by the Hérault Petit Temple. This lively location with its bars and restaurants is one of the oldest squares in Montpellier. One end of the square was occupied by the Hôtel Saint-Côme anatomical theatre built in 1737, whose dome can still be seen today.

PLACE DE L’EUROPE AND PLACE DE THESSALIE
With its semi-circular architecture and vast lawns, Place de l’Europe is a great place for relaxing beside the River Lez. From here, you can head into the heart of the Antigone district. At Place de Thessalie, a stunning fountain with demigod busts emerging from the water is a hit with the kids.

TOUR DE LA BABOTE
Head down Rue Richelieu behind Opéra Comédie and through the gates of Square de la Babote which open onto a charming little square enclosed by a stone wall. These ancient fortifications, which frame the Escaliers area, were converted into an astronomy observatory in 1740. The site was home to the Académie des Sciences, then the Société Royale des Sciences. The tower can be visited with the Visitor Centre and opens onto the bottom of Boulevard du Jeu de Paume opposite Halles Laroque.

PLACE DE LA COMÉDIE
Nicknamed the ‘Egg’ because of its shape, this is the most famous of Montpellier’s squares thanks to its key symbols: the Fontaine des Licornes, the Hôtel de la Comédie, a statue of a composer, and the Three Graces statue atop the Petit Temple. This lively location with its bars, cafes and restaurants is a great place to meet up near Place de la Comédie and through the gates of Square de la Babote.

ESPLANADE CHARLES-DE-GAULLE
This plane tree-lined promenade with its fountains and lawns is a refreshing oasis near Place de la Comédie. Its rural feel in the morning gives way to a pleasant buzz around the restaurant terraces. The 20th-century kiosks serve snacks and drinks while children swarm over the playground. On a side path, the Art Deco kiosk is a favourite place for teens to meet up. Not far from there, older locals carry castles and bishops around the giant chess board. And others, busy themselves near the Pavilion Populaire, a photographic art space.

FROM SQUARES TO WIDE-OPEN SPACES

ARIVING IN TOWN
IMPRESSIVE FRESCO

With its scene, yellow and blue depicting the characters with accurate strokes, the fresco running along the walls of this room in a city-centre mediaeval building will not fail to impress you. Discovered by accident in 1999 and saved at the last minute, these pictorial works trace the life of Saint Eutrope in Hôtel de Gaydon, formerly the property of red drapers from Carcassonne. The drapers decorated the walls with frescoes and painted the ceilings with depictions of their patron saint throughout this building which housed their prosperous profession. This unique late 13th century testimony can be viewed by booking with the Visitor Centre.

UNDERSTATED CHARM OF PRIVATE MANORS

The centre of Montpellier features numerous private manors built from the 17th century onwards, after the city became the regional capital and nobles of the robe had residences built to reflect their elite standing.

Medieval is everywhere,” explains Elisabeth, a Visitor Centre guide, as she takes her group on a journey back in time from the Hôtel des Tresoriers de France, where Charles VII’s great financier Jacques Coeur lived, to Hôtel de Minnan on Place du Marché aux Fleurs, in the heart of a building whose foundations date back to the 13th century. Behind the discreet porches, the city brims with remarkable buildings. Don’t miss the understated Hotel Magnol, home to the botanist who gave his name to the ‘magnolia’ and which features an impressive external staircase (photo below), and Hôtel Hagueneuf near Jardins du Peyrou, which was built in the late 18th century and tucked away in the heart of an extraordinary terraced garden. These secret, mostly private, locations can only be visited with a Visitor Centre guide. But keep your eyes open anyway! Sometimes when you turn the corner of a street a door, perhaps of the Hotel des Tresoriers de la Bourse which is home to the German Cultural Centre, might be open for a few precious moments. A simple stroll around town can suddenly turn into a special moment!

Hotelmagnol.com
hotelhagueneuf.com

MIKVÉ: A 12TH CENTURY RITUAL BATH

One step, then another, and another... You are now in the basements of Montpellier, near Rue Foch. Suddenly you see a pool dug into the ground. Illuminated by a gentle diffuse light, this is a place where respectful silence reigns with the only movement coming from the pool water’s green-blue reflections dancing on the stone walls. This Jewish ritual bath from the late 12th century can only be visited on a Visitor Centre tour. It formed part of a synagogue that is no longer standing and is one of the oldest and best preserved specimens in Europe. The building bears testimony to the city’s past as a crossroads and meeting place. The mediaeval Jewish community was estimated at one thousand people before the expulsion declared by the King of France in 1306. Prior to that, they had participated strongly in establishing Montpellier’s philosophical and intellectual influence as it was a city with a reputation of tolerance.

80 private manors built during the classical era in Montpellier. Some can be viewed on exclusive Visitor Centre guided tours.
There is a commemorative plaque on a nondescript building on the edge of the Ecusson zone, at 3 Rue du Cheval Vert. “This is where Charles Bonaparte, father of Napoleon I, died on 24 February 1785.” The father of the famous French emperor came to Montpellier to consult the city’s renowned doctors. Originally from Corsica and born into an impoverished noble family, he died in the capital of Languedoc and was initially buried there too. The Visitor Centre runs themed “Montpellier and Napoleon” tours as there are many sites with ties to the emperor, from his father to Second Consul Cambacérès, who was born in Montpellier.

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Located within the former Faculty of Medicine, the anatomy conservatory holds an impressive collection of skulls, jars, skinned anatomical figures, skeletons and anatomical wax models. This teaching tool was created when the School of Health was opened in 1795. Now a museum, it holds several thousand items. A few years ago, the museum expanded its catalogue with collections from Musée de l’Université Paris Descartes and Musée Orfila. Today, over 13,000 pieces make up this unique collection preserved in the sublime 19th century decor. This is a fascinating tour organised by the Visitor Centre, but is not recommended for those with weak stomachs.

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Students have long entered the Faculty of Medicine through the large wooden door under the gaze of François de Lapeyronie, Louis XVI’s famous surgeon. This faculty has been famous for centuries for the quality of its teaching. Adjoining the Saint Pierre Cathedral, the university operated from a former 14th century monastery devoted to law and theology, which the Pope then gifted to the students. Lord Guilhem VII signed an edict authorising medicine to be taught in Montpellier but it was not until 1220 that the Faculty of Medicine was officially recognised. At the time, this large, prosperous city maintained a relationship with Hebraic medicine, which was represented by the Jewish community in the Midi region, and reached out to Arabic medicine through Muslim Spain. In the entrance hall, portraits of the building’s most famous occupants line the walls, from François Rabelais to Nostradamus and Jean-Antoine Chaptal. Two flights of stairs lead to the cloister, which has become a pleasant courtyard, and the late 18th century anatomical theatre. The amphitheatre’s wooden benches with their red cushions and the marble dissection table - from the Nîmes Arena - are still there. The faculty also houses a library of over 100,000 volumes published before 1800.

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From 1181 onwards, the Lord of Montpellier granted all communities in the city the right to perform and teach the cutting edge art of medicine. But it was not until 1220 that the papal legate created the institutional framework of the Montpellier Faculty of Medicine. To celebrate its 800th anniversary, a special stamp will be issued by La Poste. As for the current Faculty of Medicine, it is now located in the hospital district in the city’s northern area, in the centre of the Arnaud de Villeneuve campus. Designed by Montpellier architect François Fontès, the brand new 11,000m², 6-storey building can welcome 3,600 students and features cutting edge technology, symbolising the continuity of excellence practised since the Middle Ages.

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A BOTANIC GARDEN IN THE CITY CENTRE

Author André Gide wandered its paths, as did Paul Valéry. This is an extraordinary garden hidden away in the city centre near the former Faculty of Medicine, of which it is still a part. The Montpellier Jardin des Plantes was created in 1593 at the request of King Henry IV for the study of medicinal plants. The garden is a great botanic study tool and features a significant collection of plants and exotic varieties. For centuries, it was used to teach future doctors and apothecaries. In fact, this is the oldest botanic garden in France and a listed historic monument. Spread across four hectares, its rare species attract researchers from around the globe. You can take a guided tour or simply stroll around this peaceful oasis to enjoy the coolness of the shaded paths in the English-style garden, lotus pond and orange and bamboo groves.

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8 CENTURIES OF EXCELLENCE
FROM THE 17TH CENTURY, MONTPELLIER NOBLES OF THE ROBE AND BUSINESS BOURGEOISIE FAMILIES, WHO ALREADY OWNED AND LIVED IN PRIVATE MANORS IN THE CITY CENTRE, HAD ENTERTAINMENT HOUSES BUILT IN THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE WHICH DOUBLED AS LIVESTOCK FARMS. THE WEALTHY FAMILIES MOVED TO THESE ‘SUMMER HOMES’ WITH THEIR FURNITURE AND BELONGINGS TO OSTENTATIOUSLY DISPLAY THEIR STATUS, HENCE THEY WERE CALLED ‘PLEASURE PALACES’!

CHÂTEAU DE LA MOGÈRE
CENTRAL TO MONTPELLIER’S HISTORY

The children run around in the garden, the ladies serve tea in the sitting room and the man of the house sits at his desk to write letters. This pleasure palace, whose silhouette stands out amongst the pine trees, draws us deep into Montpellier’s historical heart. The residence’s elegance and numerous dedicated artistic areas in the form of the Zenith performance hall and national stage.

CHÂTEAU ET DOMAINE DE FLAUGERGUES
THE OLDEST FOLIE

Henri and Brigitte de Colbert are in love with their chateau, which has been in their family for over 300 years. Here you will find French-style gardens, an orange grove, an English-style park, a garden of the five senses and a bamboo grove. It’s hard to believe that the oldest Montpellier pleasure palace now sits near the Millennium district thanks to the city’s urbanisation. The interior’s elegance is a wonderful backdrop for the many collections, unique objects and superb Dutch tapestries. The sculptures and wrought iron balconies transport visitors back to the golden time of Montpellier nobility. But Flaugergues is also one of the last winemaking domains left in the city, which has combined wine and heritage since being built in the 17th century on its former priory garden.

CHÂTEAU ET DOMAINE DE GRAMMONT
WEDDINGS AND GREENERY

Domaine de Grammont is both a stunning 90 hectare park and a château that looks like it has been there since the dawn of time. However, little remains of the former priory established in the 12th century except the chapter house which has become Montpellier’s wedding hall. All around are vast meadows, with the Grammont equestrian centre nearby. Joggers and walkers enjoy the garden side of the estate while amateurs use the courtyard side with its dedicated artistic areas in the form of the Zenith performance hall and national stage.

DOMAINE DE DIAR
FORMER ROYAL FARM

Louis XV gave Baron de la Mosson this farm located on the edge of the River Lez in Lavelune. The estate is set in a tree-filled park of over 50 hectares and features English-style gardens and Manade horses. It has recently been restored by its owner to include luxury guest rooms and provide a seminar venue.

DOMAINE DE RESTINCLÈRES
STILL FULL OF LIFE

Despite having a pleasure palace, Domaine de Restinclières is first and foremost a working farm. This 215-hectare estate in Prades-le-Lez is owned by the Hérault region and is now dedicated to environmental education and awareness. In addition to its French-style garden, the estate also features farmland, woodlands and a park with wide paths. It offers an ideal place to enjoy a Sunday stroll or picnic.

DOMAINE DE RESTINCLÈRES
AN ABUNDANCE OF GARDENS

Located in the heart of Jacou, the Bocaud family’s former property dates back to 1469. The building was transformed into a château, which then grew over time. The interior is not open for visits, but you can stroll around the gardens and terraces between the romantic homestead, the English-style garden’s bountiful vegetation and the French-style garden’s imposed symmetry of tamed plants and alignment.

CHÂTEAU DE CASTRIES
GARDENS DESIGNED BY LE NÔTRE

Nestled between the garrique scrubland and Camargue, Château de Castries is a symbol of Montpellier’s administrative biography. The noble house of the Lieutenant General of Languedoc was built in the 14th century on several foundations but the current château, with its Renaissance style and understated architecture, only dates back to 1565. It boasts French-style gardens laid out by André Le Nôtre. The gardens’ irrigation system operates using a private aqueduct built by Pierre-Paul Riquet, who developed the Canal du Midi.

CHÂTEAU DE BOCAUD
AN ABUNDANCE OF GARDENS

This 18th century building is one of the most beautiful pleasure palaces in Montpellier. It belonged to a rich financial and aide advisor in Languedoc. This pleasure palace has combined wine and heritage since being built in the 17th century on the site of a former farm building. As soon as you step inside you’ll be enchanted by the residence’s elegance and numerous sculptures evoking viticulture. And don’t forget to take a look at the château’s wine museum displaying tools used at the vineyard since 1885. In the park you can explore the utterly poetic French style garden with two ponds interspersed with statues and a stepped cascade.
50 SHADES OF BLUE AT THE TOWN HALL
This vast blue cube with metallic flecks sparkling in the sunshine was designed by architects Jean Nouvel and Francois Fonté. It is flanked by an impressive stone-paved esplanade. This high performance building sits to the east of the city, where the old centre and new Port Marianne districts meet on the banks of the Lez.
Architects Jean Nouvel and François Fontés

STROLL AROUND JACQUES COEUR POND
The Jacques Coeur district is one of the most famous in Port Marianne. Launched in 1994 and built around a pond reminiscent of the Ecusson’s shape, the district comprises elegant penthouse buildings designed by famous architects. The soothing atmosphere gives the city a Californian vibe.

STAYING IN SHAPE AT THE CLOUD
Officially opened in 2014 on Avenue Raymond Dugrand, this surprising building has what appears to be a honeycomb film facade. The Nut bij (Cloud in English), designed by famous designer Philippe Starck, houses a restaurant, fitness centre and swimming pool. It sits opposite the RBC design centre designed by Jean Nouvel.
Design by Philippe Starck

COMPARING OLD AND NEW
Located between the train station and Ecusson zone, the new Saint-Roch district is an example of diversity within the city. This area will be completed in 2020 and combines smart homes with offices and green spaces. At 30 metres tall, the oblong-shaped Higher Roch tower being built opposite the train station is the tallest building constructed in the city centre for the past 40 years.
Brenac & Gonzalez firm

HEAD TO THE SEASIDE
The former Avenue de la Mer was renamed in 2009 to become Avenue Raymond Dugrand: an urban boulevard 64 metres wide and 1 kilometre long, lined with elegant office and apartment buildings. This is Montpellier’s take on the Champs-Elysées, with eco-districts being developed all around.
A+ Architecture firm

EUREKA MOMENT
Millenium is Montpellier’s business district and home to key start-ups who help grow the metropolitan area’s appeal. Symbolic of this energy are the elegant buildings from Rue Becquerel, with as the Phidias, all the way to the Benjamin Franklin roundabout, with the Cap Omega and Midi buildings.
Architects Emmanuel Nébat and Rudy Accoto

TOUCHING THE CLOUDS
Designed by Sou Fujimoto, Nicolas Lainé and Manal Rachdi, the 56-metre-high Arbre Blanc is the most surprising building in Montpellier. This 17-storey, 192-balcony building overlooking the River Lez and opposite the Antigone district is a technological marvel. It also offers a place to eat, as the building includes a chic brasserie and tapas bar, with views across Montpellier on the top floor!
Architects Sou Fujimoto, Nicolas Lainé, Kimmer Roussel and Manal Rachdi.

HAVING FUN AT THE ODYSSEUM
The Odysseum is a leisure and shopping hub in the east of Montpellier which was designed as a logical extension of the city centre. This complex boasts a multiplex cinema, leisure facilities (skiing rink, aquarium, planetarium, etc.), restaurants and numerous stores including major brands. The train stops at the Odysseum and will soon continue to the Sud de France TGV train station.
Architects Pierre-ol Deneux and Philippe Gorce

SLEEPING AT LYCEE GEORGES FRECHE
This educational institution in the Odysseum district trains students in hospitality and catering trades. The building, with its uniform metallic exterior, features a training restaurant along with a 4-star hotel - the Nelson Mandela - open weekdays and run by students. Twelve rooms are available at low cost, for a unique experience in the new district.
Architect Massimiliano Fuksas

ANTIGONE
Created by architect Ricardo Boffil in the 1980s, this district marked the regeneration of Montpellier that was driven by its mayor at that time, Georges Frêche. Antigone was inspired by ancient Greek architecture and enabled the city to grow towards the sea. This area features many dwellings organised around a monumental development interspersed with open squares, such as Nombre d’Or, and public facilities, such as the Olympic pool and Emile Zola multimedia library.
Architect Ricardo Boffil

REFERENCE YOURSELF IN PIERRESVIVES
PierresVives is the city of knowledge and sport for everyone in Montpellier. It was built at the start of the decade in a new district on the edge of Paillade, Malouici and Allo. This nearly 200-metre-long building was created by famous architect Zaha Hadid and is home to the region’s multimedia library and archives.
Architect Zaha Hadid

PROUD OF ITS VIBRANCY AND KEEN ON EMPOWER DARING, MONTPELLIER HAS BECOME A MECCA OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE OVER THE YEARS THANKS TO THE BIGGEST NAMES OF INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE.
IN MONTPELLIER, TRAMS ARE MORE THAN JUST A MUNDANE MODE OF TRANSPORT. FIRSTLY, THEY CRISS-CROSS MONTPELLIER AND PART OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA. SECONDLY, THE COLOURFUL CARRIAGES TRAVELLING ALONG THE FOUR LINES ARE DECORATED WITH DESIGNS BY GAROUSTE, BONETTI AND CHRISTIAN LACROIX, MAKING THIS THE MOST CHEERFUL AND STYLISH TRAM NETWORK IN FRANCE. ENJOY A FUN, PRACTICAL WAY OF EXPLORING THE CITY ABOARD ARTWORKS ON WHEELS!

A tramtastic city

1s 84 stations - soon to be 100 with the upcoming Line 5 - make Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole’s tram system one of the biggest in France*. And the prettiest. Want proof? A survey by the 20Minutes daily paper recently ranked it comfortably in first place for the prettiest tram networks in France**. Line 4 does a loop around the city centre and weaves in and out near most of the city’s historic buildings (Jardin des Plantes, Peyrou, Tour de la Babote, etc.), while Line 1 connects with the residential neighbourhoods and major university centres. And Line 3 lets you explore jewels of the city’s heritage, from the banks of the Mosson to l’Or lagoon and nearly all the way to Carnon’s beaches and Palavas-les-Flots.

*TaM operates the network and offers day passes as well as tram + bike packages.

**Results of a survey carried out in March 2019 and published in the 20Minutes daily newspaper
**SPIRIT OF THE STONES**

**THE IMPRESSIVE MONTPELLIER CATHEDRAL AND ITS ELDER SEASIDE SIBLING IN MAGUELONE ARE TWO MUST-VISIT VANTAGE POINTS FROM MONTPELLIER’S MEDIAEVAL PAST. THE FIRST IS A GOTHIC SYMBOL OF SOUTHERN FRANCE AND THE SECOND IS A SYMBOL OF MEDIAEVAL ROMANESQUE ART. OF COURSE THERE ARE ALSO OTHER, LATER BUILDINGS WITH THEIR OWN FASCINATING HISTORIES.**

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**GOthic TIME**

**SAINT-PIERRE CATHEDRAL**

Raised to the status of cathedral in 1536, Saint-Pierre sits at the foot of Place de la Canourgue and was originally an abbey founded in the 14th century. Its bell tower reaches up to Languedoc’s blue skies and of the original four towers only three are still visible. This building is the biggest Gothic-style monument in the region. A massive canopy porch protects the entrance. Inside, a central aisle ends in an apse. The 14th-century nave corresponds to the former Benedictine monastery’s chapel and, together with the 19th-century choir and transept, forms a Latin cross.

[www.cathedrale-montpellier.fr](http://www.cathedrale-montpellier.fr)

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**CATHEDRAL OF SAND**

**VILLENEUVE-LÉS-MAGUELONE CATHEDRAL**

Standing alone in the middle of the Meilguet lagoon between water and vines, the Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul de Maguelone cathedral was built from the 11th century onwards on what was the Island of Maguelone, which has been occupied since ancient times. Back then, you needed a boat to reach this little episcopal town which dates to beforeMontpellier’s time. Today, this fortified Romanesque structure is partly in ruins but has maintained its grandeur with a notable tympanum and bas-reliefs of the building’s patron saints sculpted from pure marble. When you step inside, the feeling of coolness and hall light quickly gives way to somnolence. The original cathedral whose history remains unknown, survives only in the Saint-Augustin Romanesque chapel on the southern side. The cathedral is occupied by the Compagnons de Maguelone association which runs a work-based support centre there. The site also has a store, local products (wine, honey, oysters, etc.) and a lovely restaurant with terrace.

[www.compagnons-de-maguelone.org](http://www.compagnons-de-maguelone.org)

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**CELEBRATED EVERY SUMMER**

Every year on 16 August a procession passes through the city in honour of Saint-Roch. The saint’s statue, along with his pilgrims’ staff, is proudly carried from the Esplanade. Hundreds of people follow in its wake, to the sound of flûte and the Saint-Roch church’s bells, all the way to the forecourt to celebrate Mass and venerate the relic.

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**LIVELY CENTRE**

**SAINT-ROCH**

At the very top of the church forecourt steps, in the heart of the Ecusson zone, a bride prepares to step inside the majestic Saint-Roch Church. The saint from which it takes its name is the patron saint of Montpellier. He is famous around the world as a healer of plague victims in the 14th century and a saint of pilgrims and animals, and was born in Montpellier. To honour the protection that Saint-Roch was said to have provided during a cholera epidemic in the early 19th century, Montpellier locals decided to build this Neo-Gothic-style church. The Saint-Roch church is a solid anchor in the midst of the joyful hustle and bustle of the surrounding shopping streets and sits opposite a pretty trompe l’oeil mural. Either side of the church are shaded squares with terraces, a playground and fountains. In the evening, the church steps become a gathering place for young Montpellier locals before they head to the many establishments that are the lifestyle of this neighbourhood.

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**THE OLDEST ROMANESQUE CHURCH**

**SAINTE-CROIX DE CELLENEUVE**

Tucked away in the narrow streets of the Cézallière district, Sainte-Croix church was built on a site given to the monks by Charlemagne. Over time the priory became a fortified church, with sculpted column heads, wide leaves and a 21-metre-high nave. Today, this is the only Romanesque-style church in Montpellier still open for worship.

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**FROM BAROQUE TO GOTHIC WITH THE PENITENTS**

Located behind Place de la Comédie, Sainte-Foy Chapel is run by the Confraternity of White Penitents. These heirs to over 700 years of tradition regularly meet to pray and perform acts of charity. They have occupied the chapel since 1518. The chapel itself is a wonderful example of Baroque art, with its painted ceiling and gilded wood decorations. While the Blue Penitents have existed since the 11th century, their royal chapel only dates back to the 19th century. The Neo-Gothic-style chapel has a crypt (closed to the public) where Napoleon’s last mistress Albine de Montbholon reposée.

Sainte-Foy Chapel, 14 Rue Jacques Cœur.
Chapel of the Blue Penitents 11 Rue des Etuves.
montpellier-france.com

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**300 NAILS ALONG THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES**

In Montpellier, 300 brass nails stud the ground to mark the Way of Saint James. The city is a stopover along one of the four pilgrim routes, the Arles Route, which passes through Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, so keep your eyes peeled when you go near the Corum or along Rue de la Loge which leads to Place de la Comédie and the Arc de Triomphe!

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**THE SECOND IS A SYMBOL OF MEDIAEVAL ROMANESQUE ART. OF COURSE THERE ARE ALSO OTHER, LATER BUILDINGS WITH THEIR OWN FASCINATING HISTORIES.**

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**From the cathedral’s forecourt, a huge medieval building on Rue Saint-Pierre conceals a strange oddity. Can you spot it?** Look for an elegant wrought iron balconies. Yes, it’s one of the buildings above the crêpe restaurant. Do you see the balconies on the first storey at number 16? That’s it! What is the box announced in the right-hand balcony for? According to legend, this little metal box could hold a cricket... Which made this a singing balcony! Actually, the home belonged to the master locksmith the Curix who just wanted to display his art.
1,000 YEARS OF HISTORY IN MONTLAUR

Built in the 11th century, Montlaur chateau occupied a strategic location between Nîmes and Montpellier which placed it at the heart of the French Wars of Religion. The stunning ruins are decorated with plasterwork depicting musical instruments, along with cherubs and hunting trophies. This noble residence is surrounded by a park planted with century-old cypress and plane trees. It also features ponds and a French-style garden. montpellier-france.com

LAVÉRUNE CHÂTEAU SITS ON THE SITE OF AN OLD FEUDAL CASTLE IN A PARK PLANTED WITH CYPRESS AND PLANE TREES, AND MAGNOLIAS. IT WAS BUILT AS A SUMMER RESIDENCE FOR THE BISHOPS OF MONTPELLIER. THIS ELEGANTLY DECORATED PLEASURE PALACE IS A LISTED HISTORICAL MONUMENT.

He Visitor Centre runs a guided tour of the former home of Montpellier’s bishops on the edge of the city. Located 10 kilometres from the centre of Montpellier, the Lavérune fiefs came into the hands of the prelates in 1692. The château was built in the 18th century by the nephew of Colbert and today is home to the Musée Hofer-Bury (see p.11). On the ground floor you can admire the Italian-style music room whose walls are decorated with plasterwork depicting musical instruments, along with cherubs and hunting trophies. This noble residence is surrounded by a park planted with century-old cypress and plane trees. It also features ponds and a French-style garden.

EVERY FACET OF ROMANESQUE ART

Around Montpellier, Romanesque art has a strong presence in the local heritage. In Lattes, the façade of Saint-Laurent church is impressive with its adornments. In Ballargues, Saint-Julien church is a great example of Romanesque architecture if you ignore the 19th century side chapels. A bit further away is the village of Saint-Génies-des-Mourgues on the Way of Saint James. It has a Romanesque abbey to which was added, some hundred years ago, a tall bell tower which doubles as a clocktower and is topped with an arrow-shaped belfry reaching 25 metres high. Saint-Géniès was founded around a Benedictine convent and the town celebrated its 1,000-year anniversary in 2019. Now let’s move to Vila-Gardiol, south of Montpellier. The Sainte-Léocadie church was fortified to protect the village against Saracen invasions and the dangers of being by the shore. The symmetrical building with its ribbed arches and wooden ceiling is dedicated to Sainte-Léocadie, the martyr, virgin and patron saint of Toledo who refused to renounce her faith.

WHEN MAUGUIO PROCLAIMED MONTPELLIER

Montpellier was born from this mediaeval chateau, which has recently been restored, built on a feudal motte in this town near the sea. Before becoming a stone building with foundations dating back to the 12th century, the Counts of Melgueil had built a feudal motte in Mauguio from which they established their control over the region and even minted their own coins, which became the official currency of Montpellier.

1,000 YEARS OF HISTORY IN MONTLAUR

Built in the 11th century, Montlaur chateau occupied a strategic location between Nîmes and Montpellier which placed it at the heart of the French Wars of Religion. The stunning ruins of this (private) feudal chateau offer a magnificent view of the seaside and inland region.

FORTIFIED CHURCH IN RESTINCLIÈRES

During the French Wars of Religion, the Saint-Césaire de Restinclières church located between Castelnau and Sommières was flanked by four towers topped with castellated walls and abutted to provide a refuge for the population. While those have almost completely disappeared, the church has preserved traces of its history in its stonework with the 12th century nave and 14th and 15th century bell tower. It also possesses the charm and restraint of Romanesque structures built with Castries stone.
Montpellier: Capital of Women’s Sport

With its many women’s sports clubs playing at the top level, Montpellier is the leading city in France in terms of women’s teams. Whether it’s rugby, basketball or football, Montpellier’s players dominate the podium, much like the 2018 French Champion under-19 football team. Women’s football has been played in Montpellier since 1990 and the team has formed part of MHSC since 2001. The club has played in the first division for almost two decades and supplies many players to the national team, such as Marion Torrent, Valerie Guvun and Salima Karchhau, who played in the FIFA Women’s World Cup. Montpellier was also chosen as one of the venues for the FIFA Women’s World Cup and hosted the South African, German, Brazilian and Cameroonian teams in June 2019 for four group matches and the Round of 16 match which was held at La Mosson.

Women’s Sport
Sport Capital of France
Cycling
Fise
Urban Culture
Parks
Animals
Pools
Adrenaline
Land of Traditions

Montpellier is a former FIFA Women’s World Cup host city and now works for the club as the professional teams’ merchandise manager. She was appointed as a city ambassador for the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup.

Montpellier players in the French team. Is that good?
That represents MHSC well. There were one or two other players on the cards but three is a good start.
Are you heavily involved in this World Cup?
FIFA asked the host cities for the 2019 World Cup to appoint ambassadors. The city council appointed me as an ambassador for the competition to represent Montpellier. It’s an honour to represent your city, especially as I work for MHSC
Is Montpellier a women’s soccer stronghold?
It was Louis Nicollin who wanted to have a women’s team and has provided the means for them to play at the elite level since 2001. His son Laurent has carried on from that and helped the team turn professional. The club has always done what’s required to help this team win titles and trophies.

BASKETBALL ON TOP
Four French Cups won since 2011, French Champions in 2014 and 2016, and now even European silver medallists: the Lattes-Montpellier Méditerranée women’s basketball team is filling its trophy cabinet. The ‘Gazelles’ (their official name) are accustomed to playing at the elite level and help promote this sport, which is played at many clubs in the metropolitan area.

SPORT WITH A CAPITAL ‘S’
In Montpellier, sports fans dance to the beat of the numerous matches and competitions as the city’s teams shine in a wide range of disciplines. Starting with football, a major sport for the city for the past 50 years.

Football, a major sport for the city for the past 50 years. Competitions as the city’s teams shine in a wide range of disciplines. Starting with football, a major sport for the city for the past 50 years.

Montpellier: Capital of Women’s Sport

In Montpellier, sports fans dance to the beat of the numerous matches and competitions as the city’s teams shine in a wide range of disciplines. Starting with football, a major sport for the city for the past 50 years.
Despite having neighbours with great rugby exploits to their names (Béziers and Narbonne), Montpellier only recently discovered top level rugby. Several neighbourhood clubs already played rugby but it is only since 1991 that Montpellier has had a top level team. Montpellier Hérault Rugby (MHR) has played at the top level since 2003 in the Top 14 competition. It has come second to the French champions several times and won the 2016 European Challenge. The Montpellier team has enjoyed a dedicated rugby stadium for the past 12 years and continues to draw from its training academy to help young talent emerge, such as Fulgence Ouedrago who is regularly selected for the national team. As for the women’s team, it also plays top level rugby with panache. The Women’s XV has already won the national title six times since the start of the decade, including the 2019 French Championship!

**TOU**

**ESPIE**

**STRIDING ACROSS MONTPLELLIER**

When he moved to Montpellier, he was already a passionate runner. “Because I didn’t have enough time, I started running in the city. I would start at Beaux-Arts and run to the banks of the Lez, then back up to Agualongue. That’s how I discovered some amazing places,” the IT manager explains. There are running trails everywhere: along the Lez, towards the zoo, in the Peyrou gardens, around the Jacques Coeur pond and along the Palavas-les-Flots shoreline. And a number of races are organised, including a marathon and a 20 kilometre run. Montpellier is also the first French city to host a nocturnal urban trail run during which runners can discover the city’s splendour by night. Lastly, in May there is the Montpellier Reine’, a 4.5-kilometre event that attracts over 8,000 competitors to enjoy a fun, zany run through the city’s streets to raise money for breast cancer.

**TEAM SPIRIT AROUND THE OVAL BALL**

Hérault has nearly 600 kilometres of cycle paths and 210 kilometres of cycle tourism trails. Cyclists can start in Montpellier and follow one of the many trails to explore the typical Southern France landscapes.

**FIND YOUR OWN PATH**

There are already over 160 kilometres of cycle paths in Montpellier. The city and metropolitan area are working to implement an ambitious cycle plan of an additional 256 kilometres. Cycling is both an economical and efficient way to travel short distances in the city. It is a mode of transport that combines enjoyment and environmental respect and you can cycle by yourself or with family. It is now easy to reach the seaside at Palavas on a dedicated cycle path or do a loop between Palavas and Maguelone Cathedral, or even cycle along the coast to Grande-Motte. And the metropolitan area’s more rural towns have not been forgotten, as special mention must be made of the Castries loop which takes you across the vineyard landscapes to explore Castries, Maudisson, Saussines and Beaulieu. The latter is a village famous for its stone quarries since the Middle Ages and features an open-air theatre, which provides a stunning backdrop for cultural events. The roads up to Pic Saint-Loup are also used by cycle-tourism enthusiasts wanting to combine exercising with discovering the wealth of heritage.

15

**HÉRAULT, EVERY WHICH WAY**

Drawing on the Réseau Vert initiative, Hérault’s Grande Traversée enables mountain bikers to cross the region in stages from east to west, from Castries to La Saliéset. The total distance is 300 kilometres. Montpellier is also a crossroads for European cycling routes including the EuroVelo 8 (The Mediterranean Route), along the Mediterranean coast from Greece to Spain, and the EuroVelo 17 (Rhône Cycle Route), which connects Geneva and Montpellier along the Rhône valley. More seasoned cyclists can tackle the Laccois- MidiMontpellier trail which now provides a route 188 kilometres across the region from La Casédel Aigle through stunning landscapes.

**TO EXPLORE THE TYPICAL SOUTHERN FRANCE LANDSCAPES.**

**TOURISM TRAILS. CYCLISTS CAN START IN MONTPLELLIER AND FOLLOW ONE OF THE MANY TRAILS**

**ALL-TERRAIN ENJOYMENT ON TWO WHEELS**

You can also enjoy cycling on a mountain bike, with great spots near the Garrido mountain range which are a popular playground with fans of inclines. The area around Pic Saint-Loup is another favourite destination. If you head further out, to the upper Hérault districts, there are also great trails leading to the Gradoise Traverse and the Passa Passa Voie Verte, a greenway that follows an old train line and crosses Haut-Languedoc through unique landscapes. And don’t forget the Pays de Lunel trails and the one around Lake Salagou. Hérault boasts over 2,400 kilometres of marked mountain biking trails. The recent emergence of electric mountain bikes offers new possibilities by enabling others to enjoy trails previously reserved for experienced cyclists. Several organisations offer half-day excursions through the vineyards or to the coast.

hérault-tourisme.com

**RECORD FOR HANDBALL TITLES**

Here, handball is synonymous with top level sport as the Montpellier team provides the majority of the national team’s players. MHB is by far the French handball club with the most titles thanks to its 14 French Championship wins, 13 French Cups, 10 Ligue 2 Cups in the Champions League and 3 Champions Trophies.

**15 2019 Eurovolley matches hosted by Montpellier at the**

**Sud de France Arena from 12 to 18 September 2019.**

urbantrail.montpelliertriathlon.com

montpellier-reine.org

double-v.org

ebikepremium.com
Since 2014, FISE Montpellier has gone global. Montpellier hosts the French series. This global freestyle sports tour attracts several thousand professional and amateur athletes. FISE has five stages: Hiroshima (Japan), Montpellier (France), Edmonton (Canada), Budapest (Hungary) and Chengdu (China). The overall rankings for each discipline after the final stage determine that year’s champion.

These athletes defy the laws of gravity, performing acrobatics and catapulting their wheels high over the heads of the thousands of spectators packed into the crowd. Montpellier has been the undisputed capital for these riders for over 20 years. FISE World is a unique festival packed with excitement. It was created by a Montpellier student just launched a huge project to create new sites at Montcalm park. Work is scheduled to be completed by 2021. Montpellier will then have the biggest site in Europe.

A GLOBAL EVENT

Since 2014, FISE Montpellier has gone global. Montpellier now hosts the French stage of the FISE World Series. This global freestyle sports tour attracts several thousand professional and amateur athletes. FISE has five stages: Hiroshima (Japan), Montpellier (France), Edmonton (Canada), Budapest (Hungary) and Chengdu (China). The overall rankings for each discipline after the final stage determine that year’s champion.

The best spot has to be the Grammont skate park, which combines classic modules with a concrete bowl and central volcano. This skate park will be upgraded soon to become an Olympic training centre. It currently features five zones. And in the Métropole Montpellier Méditerranée area there are over 25 modular and concrete skate parks. There are few towns without one. The metropolitan area has just launched a huge project to create new sites at Montcalm park and near the Sud de France TGV train station. And let’s not forget the Montpellier Indoor Park now open in Arènes’ Prés district. For rollerbladers and roller-skaters, RIM – Roller in Montpellier – organises free rambles (no registration required) leaving from Place du Novembre d’Or at nightfall. These are supervised excursions along a 13 kilometre journey.

BMX, ROLLERBLADING, SKATEBOARDING, WAKEBOARDING, MOUNTAIN BIKING, BOULDERING AND MORE! IN LATE SPRING EVERY YEAR, THE FAMOUS FISE ACTION SPORTS FESTIVAL WORLD SERIES IS HELD ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER LEZ AND FEATURES AN ABUNDANCE OF TRICKS AND DEMOS.

The atmosphere is supercharged at the Zénith in Montpellier during The final of the Battle of the Year France (BOTY). This is the biggest French hip-hop event. Over 4,000 people come in May to watch the French final and the Battle Kids for the under 15s. The 20 best crews then qualify for the battles, where they perform question/answer moves to their adversaries. A Change of Direction is a fringe festival attracting the crème de la crème of French and international rappers. It also features DJ concerts, graffiti performances and more. And in October, Montpellier hosts the Snipes Battle of the Year which is the BOTY international final.

IN CREUS, A GREAT BMX TRACK SITS AROUND THE LAKE WITH FIVE STRAIGHTS AND FOUR BANKED TUMPS. THIS TRACK IS PERFECT FOR BEGINNER RIDERS AND IS ALSO FUN ON A MOUNTAIN BIKE. Vendargues has a BMX track in its municipal sporting complex designed for novice riders. It features a narrow starting gate, singles, doubles, table tops and banked turns. Adjoining the Grammont skate park, which is the biggest in Montpellier, is a dirt track reserved for professional riders at FISE 2019.

FISE GOES GLOBAL

FISE World is a unique festival packed with entertainment ranging from DJs, street artists, a village and exhibitors. As a bonus, this festival has kept its original spirit and is still free of charge, helping make Montpellier a land of riders.

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2000 professional riders at FISE 2019.

URBAN CULTURE IS HERE

MONTPELLIER MÉTROPOLÉE MÉTROPOLE BOASTS A REPUTATION AS AN EXTREME SPORT CAPITAL, AND HAS SEEN BMX BECOME A WIDESPREAD SPORT. AND THIS IS SET TO CONTINUE WITH MONTPELLIER BEING CHOSEN AS THE TRAINING BASE FOR THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS.

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OLYMPICS TASK FORCE!

With its extreme sport culture, Montpellier was chosen as the training venue for the French BMX Freestyle team as they prepare for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 and the Paris Olympics in 2024. In November 2019, temporary modules will be installed behind the Zénith while the Grammont site is being transformed into a giant 14,000 m² complex with a skate park, bowl, snake, street park, pump track and BMX park. Work is scheduled to be completed by 2021. Montpellier will then have the biggest site in Europe.

SKATERS AND SKATEBOARERS: HIT THE STREETS!

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NATURE IN THE CITY

WITH ITS MANY PARKS AND GARDENS, MONTPELLIER MÉDITERRANÉE HAS ACHIEVED AN URBAN BALANCE WITH A FOCUS ON QUALITY OF LIFE. MONTPELLIER CITY ALONE HAS OVER 1,000 HECTARES OF PUBLIC GREEN SPACES, INCLUDING 2 ECO-GARDEN PARKS. EXPLORE THEM BY BIKE OR ON FOOT: THEY ARE ALL EASY TO REACH WITH THE TRAM!

PARC MONTCLAIRM
This former military site has been converted into a 26-hectare park. It is ideal for jogging and going for a bike ride, and it has something for everyone. It features a stadium with an athletics track, a rugby stadium, a basketball court, a handball court, three volleyball courts, five tennis courts and even a tambourine court! The park is also ideal for family time, with spaces for the kids to rollerblade, skateboard, cycle and more. Vast tree-filled areas offer places to stroll along woodland paths and enjoy the shade of pine trees and Korean maples.

PARC CLÉMENCEAU
Located in the heart of Montpellier, this park features pine trees, Judas trees, nettle trees, espalier pear trees and a children’s playground. Signs provide information about the city’s birds and urban biodiversity. At the end of the park, locals tend a communal vegetable garden. The Méric estate is a genuine green lung in Montpellier. It was created beside the River Léz in the 17th century by the family of artist Frédéric Bazille (who often painted this area). At the entrance sits a magnificent spring flower meadow and an orchard. Spaces have been created where kids can play ball games. From the estate, head down to reach the Léz riverbank, then follow the river through the woodlands.

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PARC GEORGES HARPACK
A dozen hectares of the River Léz’s banks form the core of the new Port Marianne district. White willows, green oaks and parasol pines have been planted in this park, which also features a flower meadow either side of the Lironne stream. Only a few steps away are modern buildings: RBC Design Center and Huage both cast their reflections into the Mirèc d’Eau (reflecting pool) on the Stéphane Hessel forecourt.

PARC DU TERRAL
This is one of the oldest estates around Montpellier. It appeared on records dating back to the 9th century as the summer residence of the Maguelone bishops. Created in the 19th century, this English-style park with cypress, Japanese pagoda and Chinese willow trees is decorated with rock gardens, reflecting pools, an artificial swan lake and more. The park is owned by the town of Saint-Jean-de-Védas, which restored the bamboo groves and created a sensory garden and a stone and water garden.

LAC DU CRÈS
Located between Castellane-le-Léz and Le Crès, this small, 6-hectare artificial lake is snuggled within a former karstic quarry. The lakes tempt you to laze around and enjoy an apéritif beside the water. In summer there is a lifeguard at the developed beach. The site boasts a big playground, picnic tables and an orienteering courses for kids (8+ years). The lake is also popular with joggers. Crès has created some 10 kilometres of cycle paths nearby, with some following the River Salaison.

PARC DU MAS NOUGIER
The Mas Nougier anti-park is primarily an educational agricultural reserve with a focus on preserving urban fauna and flora biodiversity in the Grissets district. This former farm dates back to the 17th century and includes 10 hectares of organic vines managed by the Compagnons de Maguelone association. The estate is currently being restored. It features a drive lined with hundred-year-old pine trees and olive trees, and is bounded by meadows. Free to enter and fully pedestrianised, this is a genuine piece of the countryside in the city centre!

PARC DE LA MOSSON
The Bonnier de la Mosson estate has lost most of its buildings over the centuries but the 18th century former pleasure palace in Montpellier’s western district features stunning trees in a park and gardens open to the public. The nearby banks of the Mosson, marking the boundary with Lunelvès, provide 25 hectares of natural woodlands and refreshing, wonderful walks.

MONTPELLIER: THE GREENEST CITY IN FRANCE!
The study done by start-up Karmap found 43 m² of green space heritage per inhabitant, putting Montpellier at the top of the table for cities with over 200,000 inhabitants (June 2019).

LUNARET ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS
The Lunaret zoo is the city’s northern lung and the biggest green space in Montpellier, with 80 hectares for all to enjoy free of charge. There are a total of 1,300 animals which live in semi-freedom in a scrubland and woodland landscape. Along the maze of paths, kids will be fascinated to discover lion, zebra, wallaby, lemur, ostrich, common eland, mouffon, white rhinoceros, wolf, Syrian brown bear and giraffe enclosures. Picnic tables tempt you to enjoy a rest in the cool air under the green oaks and Aleppo pine trees. This is a great place for a family outing!

AMAZONIAN GREENHOUSE
The Amazonian greenhouse at the Lunaret zoo is the biggest in France. It offers a great journey of discovery through the Amazon in order to raise awareness about the beauty and special features of the Amazonian ecosystem and the need to preserve it. The greenhouse recreates the Amazonian forest’s characteristics and special features so visitors can discover over 500 animals, 3,500 plants and the different climate zones. Anandasis, spectacled caimans, iguanas, frogs, praying mantis, mygalomorphs, crickets and tropical fish live in this space where artificial storms are regularly triggered to recreate the climate conditions.

PLANET OCEAN MONTPELLIER
The Essex, an 8-deck cruise ship, is moored at the Esplanade, next to the Planet Ocean Montpellier building. It is a great place to head out to sea on a glass-bottom boat and see the flora and fauna of the ocean floor.

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LEISURE COMPLEX

Every year, Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole’s swimming pools welcome over a million people from different backgrounds: club athletes of all levels, families, seniors, school kids, general public and more. Montpellier wants to encourage everyone to get active, which is why it implements a number of activities that make time spent at the pool a relaxing, wellness experience throughout the year. There are swimming lessons for all levels, aquabiking, aquagym, lifesaving, freestyle swimming and more. Each pool has its own schedule. In summer, the pools offer a huge number of activities to entertain swimmers. At the Neptune watersports centre, there are supervised activities at the pool and neighbouring stadium for teens, while the Poseidon and Les Néréides have a stand full of books and board games. And in August, several pools turn into movie theatres with films projected on the big screen for the ‘La Métropole Fait Son Cinéma’ festival.

14 RELAXING POOLS

Montpellier Méditerranée has invested heavily in sporting facilities for competitive and leisure use. The Végapolis ice rink caters to all skaters with facilities for competitive and non-stop entertainment and ice skating. The ice rink also includes a skating school where you can learn artistic skating and ice hockey.

FOR A FUN, IMMERSIVE EXPLORATION, FROM THE SEA BED TO THE FARTHEST REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE, NOTHING BEATS A TRIP TO PLANET OCEAN MONTPELLIER WITHIN THE ODYSSEUM LEISURE COMPLEX.

Planet Ocean is a new site created by merging the Mare Nostrum aquarium with the Galilée planetarium. It offers a unique concept of visiting and discovering the two worlds: the ocean floor and outer space. The aquarium features breath-taking decor with over 24 pools housing nearly 400 different species of animal. You’ll be transported to another world to see sharks, all sorts of stingrays and dancing jellyfish, and feed the penguin colony! For excitement, hop aboard the storm simulator for a bumpy ride to the heart of the roaring forties, head off on a romantic trip or family adventure to explore the meanders of the River Lez and enjoy unspoilt nature in the heart of Montpellier. Canoes are also fun on Montpellier’s lagoons, exploring the FOI lagoon in Mauguio or the lagoons in Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone. Or you can enjoy more energetic excitement in the Hérault gorge only 30 minutes from Montpellier. You can find a list of canoe hire companies at montpellier-france.com, on the leisure/water sports page.

WANT EXPERIMENT AND FRESH AIR? TRY CANOEING NOT FAR FROM THE CITY CENTRE!

WANT A NEW EXPERIENCE?

Try out the TwistAir freefall simulator at Odysseum to enjoy the same sensation as doing a parachute jump. You can also try indoor rock climbing at Allisimo or Mad Monkey, and even augmented reality rock climbing!

PADDLING THROUGH TOWN AND DOWN RAPIDs

If you love speed, you can indulge in your passion at Grabels or Pérols which have karting tracks open year round and a range of vehicles for all drivers (minimum age of 7 years).

Golf Resort Montpellier Fontcaude and the Fontcaude Golf course in Saint-Gély-du-Fesc has an 18-hole course by putting on an 80-hectare estate. The Coulondres golf course near Juvignac also has an 18-hole course lined by pines and oak trees, along with a 9-hole pitch and putt course.

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If you love speed, you can indulge in your passion at Grable
Initially, the Languedoc villages celebrated the end of the harvest or their patron saint in summer. Now there are period costume parades, balls, petanque and fairground attractions and concerts. And of course, this is where a unique phenomenon appears: bullfighting, with bulls and young cows parading along a route where the village youths challenge themselves by approaching the animals who are surrounded by herdsmen. Next, the ‘Courses Camarguaises’ are held. In an arena, the participants (called ‘raseteurs’) try to move quickly to snatch a badge, rosette or string from the horns of the bull. And you can often visit a ‘manade’ estate where the bulls are raised and which continue the Camargue tradition. There you can watch the branding process and enjoy spit-roast beef (méchoui).

In early July, the Palavas-les-Flots Fête de la Mer launches the summer season at the seaside resort. The town’s canal is taken over by spectators wanting to watch the jousting. The jousting competition is both a sport and a tradition with deep roots in the region, making it one of Languedoc’s icons.

Formed with a pine lance and their crest (a shield decorated with their team’s colours), and clothed in white, the jousters face off at the end of their boat rowed by their comrades. The aim is to make your opponent fall in the canal. The tension is palpable for each run. The spectacle is a feast for the eyes and the ears. Balaruc, Frontignan and Mèze also continue the tradition of Languedoc boat jousting. In Sète, the jousting is held on the Grand Canal during the six days of Saint-Louis celebrations in late August. Custom dictates that a parade of the jousters be organised before every tournament. During the competition, the rowers are accompanied by two musicians sitting in the prow. One plays a traditional Languedoc oboe while the other provides rhythm with a tambourin drum. On the sound system, the announcer with a lilting accent provides a running commentary while the peñas, who are regular spectators at these local festivities, shout at the top of their voices to support their favourites. Everyone enjoys an authentic experience in keeping with true tradition, despite it also being a tourist attraction. In fact, the boat jousts have been listed by UNESCO as Intangible French Cultural Heritage.

Trophée Taurin

The Montpellier metropolitan area organises an annual Trophée Taurin competition in 11 towns (Mauguio, Castries, Béziers, Le Creusot, Lattes, Villeneuve-sous-Maguelone, Saint-Georges-des-Muguets, Larcueins and Luzel). Courses Camarguaises (a bloodless spectacle where the aim is to snatch a rosette from the head of a young bull) are held from March to October in order to find the best ‘raseteur’. This ‘raseteur’ (bullfighter in the provincial dialect) culture is part of the Camargue identity and is found in the many votive celebrations that liven up villages in summer such as Fabrègues, Saint-Briac, Saint-Étienne, Sauvage and Sussargues.

ANCESTOR OF TENNIS

A descendent of ‘jeu de paume’ (real tennis), tambourelli has been a popular ball sport in Montpellier and Hérault for 250 years. There are five players on each team. They each have a tambourelli which they use like a racquet to hit the white and red ball. This sport has a national championship, which is dominated by Hérault teams as the region has 85% of the sport’s members!
HEAD TO THE BEACH

FAMILY-FRIENDLY BEACHES

BEACHES FOR FOODIES AND FESTIVALS

HIDDEN BEACHES

WEST

EAST

GENTLY SLOPING TO THE SEA

There’s nothing like a good bike ride from Montpellier to the sea. Over 2,000 bikes are available at Vélomagg stations around the metropolitan area 24/7. Starting in Montpellier, the journey is straightforward and takes you across wonderful landscapes. Follow the cycle path past the town hall to the banks of the Lez, passing Marché du Lez which is a chic, trendy bohemian place. Further on, the path reaches the river port of Port Ariane in Lattes. The path then leaves the Lez to arrive at Maison de la Nature. You can choose between continuing on towards Pérols then Palavas-Les-Flots, or following the paths to Espace Méjean. And if 10 kilometres is a bit too long for you, take a five-minute train ride from Montpellier to Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone with your bike. From there, you only need to cycle three kilometres to reach Plou beach. These bike rides are ones that you’ll remember forever.

tam-voyages.com
lamediterraneeavelo.org

EASY BEACH TRAVEL

You can take a combination of public transport modes to reach the beaches from Montpellier in summer. To go to Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone, take the TaM Line 4 tram and alight at Garcia-Lorca, then take the J2 bus. If you are aged over 18 years, you can then use Vélomagg-Plage to hire a bike for free using your travel pass. To reach Palavas-lès-Flots and Carnon, take the tram to Pérols-Etang de l’Or then hop on your bike to complete the journey, if you brought one, or step aboard the Trans’Or shuttle. To reach the Petit and Grand Travers beaches further east, you can take the Hérault Transport’s Navette des Plages (beach shuttle) from Pérols-Etang de l’Or.

A PATH DESIGNED FOR ALL DISABILITIES

A 2.5-kilometre section of the Grains de Méjean path has been developed using wooden planks for people with disabilities. An audio box is located at the site’s entrance along with a guide strip along the ground. Discovery bags for visually-impaired visitors and wheelchairs for reduced mobility visitors are available at Maison de la Nature.

STUNNING NATURE AT MÉJEAN LAGOON

LATTES

Featuring 465 hectares of stunning landscapes with reed beds, marshes and lagoons, the Méjean nature site is only 8 kilometres from the centre of Montpellier. This is an ideal spot for a refreshing stroll through nature, marvelling at the wealth of plants and animals in this wetland. There are four trails for families and nature lovers to enjoy. Follow the marked walking trails to observe a wide range of fauna and flora, from pink flamingos to European pond turtles, white storks and more. Exhibitions and activities at Maison de la Nature help you understand this unique, inspiring world.
STYLISH TOWN
LA GRANDE-MOTTE

Listed as a 20th century heritage site, the town of La Grande Motte was built in the 1960s/1970s and features a unique architectural style. Its white pyramid-shaped buildings are hidden amongst the tree-filled parks that make this town special. You can enjoy a walk or bike ride on the many paths along the shore and around the lagoons. And the stores, cafés, restaurants, beaches and other businesses make this holiday destination particularly popular and lively!

ONLY 15 MINUTES TO THE BEACH

IT TAKES LESS THAN 15 MINUTES FROM PLACE DE LA COMÉDIE TO REACH THE COAST AT PALAVAS-LES-FLOTS. THIS SEASIDE TOWN SITS RIGHT ON THE BEACH AND EXUDES A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. FROM HERE, YOU CAN HEAD TOWARDS CARNON WITH ITS STUNNING SANDY PETIT AND GRAND TRAVERS BEACHES.

A Palavas-les-Flots, let the bustling, joyful, family-friendly atmosphere sweep you off your feet. Restaurants and cafés sit along the canal’s two banks where it crosses the town, and the street furniture lets you make the most of the summer season. On the doorstep of the holiday villages, the beaches are highly popular with families due to their gentle slope and the many activities on offer: fairgrounds, beach games, walks along the seafront, marina and even a casino. The neighbouring town of Carnon boasts 7 kilometres of sandy beaches. Seaside homes sit opposite a wide beach divided into small coves by riprap. Not far from the small Capitainerie marina is the beach, where you will find games for kids and volleyball nets to delight those who love to have fun on the sand. For those who love reading, the beach library is open every day in summer on Avenue Samuel Bassaget. Now let’s head to La Grande-Motte, where the Petit and Grand Travers beaches provide a more unsplotted setting. Cyclists will love the trail alongside the dunes, which leads to the public beaches and beach huts, while drivers will appreciate the car parks.

FUN FOR YOUNG AND OLD

TIME FOR SLIDES AND COMIC STRIPS!

It’s easy to keep the kids amused while you relax in the sun! The Club at Carnon-Plage offers a number of activities for kids and adults: swim school, games (trampolines, slide and bouncy castles), watersport courses, pedalio hire and more. The Petit Travers beach in Palavas-les-Flots also boasts ‘Lire à la Mer’, a temporary library set up each summer so you can enjoy a good book between dips in the sea at Roupilles beach. Over 2,000 books and comic books are provided free of charge for you to devour on a sun lounger or shaded terrace. In Palavas-les-Flots, the Koaland aquatic centre will make the kids happy, and they can also try mini golf and beach soccer on the Hôtel de Ville beach. Boredom is not an option!

GOURMET BEACHES

APRIL MARKS THE START OF THE SEASON OF SUN LOUNGERS, SEASIDE MEALS AND WILD NIGHTS. SOME 30 PRIVATE BEACHES HAVE BEEN SET UP BETWEEN GRAU-DU-ROI AND VILLENEUVE-LES-MAGUELONE. EACH BEACH HUT COMPETES AGAINST THE OTHERS TO OFFER EVER MORE SURPRISING SETTINGS - FROM DIRTWOOD AND GYPSY FOR BONAVENTURE, TO MINIMALIST AND WHITE FOR CARRÉ MER (VILLENEUVE-LES-MAGUELONE) AND EVEN EXOTIC WOOD FOR EFFET MER (GRAND TRAVERS) - ALONG WITH HIGH QUALITY MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE. THE RESTAURANTS PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS TO SERVE YOU VITAMIN-PACKED FRUIT JUICES DURING THE DAY, FRESH SALADS FOR LUNCH AND SEAFOOD PARRILLADA BY MOONLIGHT. FROM THE OLDEST - VOILE BLEUE - TO MINIMALIST EFFET MER, THESE BEACHES OFFER HOLIDAYMAKERS ELEGANT YET RELAXED SETTINGS EVERY SUMMER.

PARTIES ON THE SAND

GREAT SUMMER NIGHTS OFTEN START AT A BEACH HUT, AFTER LAZING AROUND ON THE BEACH. PRIVATE BEACHES WELCOME THOSE WHO LOVE SOCIAL NIGHTS AND DANCING FROM 7PM TO 1AM. COCKTAILS AND TAPAS PLATTERS ARE EVERYWHERE, BUT EACH BEACH HUT HAS ITS OWN THEMED NIGHTS WITH DJs AND PLAYLISTS. FROM BEACHES WITH BACKGROUND MUSIC TO THOSE WHERE EVERYONE IS ON THE DANCE FLOOR, AND EVEN KITKAT, ELECTRO, DISCO, FUNK AND SALSA NIGHTS, THERE’S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING AND YOU’RE SURE TO CREATE GREAT MEMORIES. THE PALAVAS-LES-FLOTS AND GRAND-MOTTE DISCOS THEN TAKE OVER, INCLUDING LA DUNE AT GRAND TRAVERS WITH ITS ELECTRO HOUSE PLAYLISTS.

A BEACH IN THE VINES AT VERCHANT

This surprising concept, La Plage by Verchant, sits within the luxury Domaine de Verchant complex and features a private beach surrounded by the vineyards, right on Montpellier’s doorstep. La Plage tempts you to come and relax beside a pool offering an unobstructed view across 12 hectares of the estate’s vines.

domaine de verchant.com

13 PRIVATE BEACHES BETWEEN VILLENEUVE-LES-MAGUELONE AND CARNON, WHERE YOU CAN ENJOY A RELAXING LUNCH OR LAZE AROUND THE BIG BLUE SEA!
UNTouched by urbanisation, the Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone beach offers a unique experience. 

A small peninsula with a unique atmosphere, the beach is surrounded by water on three sides. The road to reach it passes between a nature reserve and the village of Montpellier, and is an important example of the seaside landscape of the region.

round Frontignan, in the land of Muscat wine, the Aresquiers beach is popular with naturists as it is isolated and peaceful. The road to reach it passes between the village of Aresquiers, a former stopping point for the Mediterranean coast road, and the Aresquiers beach. Here, you can enjoy a refreshing drink and even taste some oysters.

A BEACH TO SUIT EVERYONE ARESQUIERS AND ESPIGUETTE

appled by the Mediterranean waters opposite the lagoons and lined with private, environmentally friendly beaches, this beach can be reached on the Petit Train that carries you across car-free areas to reach one of the coastline's gems: the Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul de Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone cathedral. Walk to the sea before walking to the beach along a narrow 9 kilometre pebble and sand path. Or you can try yoga SUP with a yoga, pilates or fitness session balancing on your board in the water. ymoc.fr / stand-up-rising.com / palavaskayakdemer.com

KITESURFING

There are many schools offering courses to learn how to kite surf or improve your skills, including KWM Kiteschool, Fluid Kite, AxéAir, Tiki Center, Lab Pro and Lac Magic. Kwm-kiteschool.com / fluidkiteboardingint.com / axeair.com / tiki-center.com / labkite.com

KAYAK

Echappée Verte runs kayak eco-excursions all the way down to the lagoon (near Montpellier and Grande-Motte), Maguelone lagoon (near Montpellier and Palavas-les-Flots) and Thau lagoon (near Balaruc and Mèze). Led by passionate guides, you can also discover the marine biodiversity of Languedoc coastlines while snorkelling. echappaeverte.com

PARACHUTE AND FLYBOARD

The Parachute Paradise centre in Grande-Motte can take you paragliding 70 metres above the water, leaving from Watairworld, as well as jet-skiing and even flyboarding, which enables you to fly above the water. watairworld.com

AQUA WALKING

Aqua walking combines walking in the shallows and exercising on the sand and in the water, all season! In Palavas-les-Flots, this relaxing, energising activity is run by Swimine in the mornings.

moveandswimmontpellier.fr

STAND UP PADDLEBOARD

SUP can be enjoyed at almost all the beaches. In Palavas-les-Flots, SUP excursions are organised on the lagoons and canals. You can also try yoga SUP with a yoga, pilates or fitness session balancing on your board in the water. ymoc.fr / stand-up-rising.com / palavaskayakdemer.com

Flowing from Toulouse, the Canal du Midi was the biggest construction of the 17th century and extends along 241 kilometres. Entering in Marseillan and connecting with the Sète port, it enabled the transportation of goods all the way to Toulouse and the Atlantic Ocean. It is one of the oldest canals in Europe and today is reserved for river tourism. The canal features major road crossing structures such as the Cesse canal bridge, Somail bridge and Fonsonnaux locks near Béziers, which led it to become a listed World Heritage structure.

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With its canals, beaches and cuisine, Sète has long inspired artists (painters, singers, writers and photographers) and is sure to leave a lasting impression on you. The entire town exudes a special atmosphere, with the Pointe Courte district, the fishing port with its trawlers and tuna boats, the docks and the picturesque streets leading up to the sailor's cemetery, which is why it is called a 'unique island'. From the summit of Mont Saint-Clair, you can look out over the town and admire its network of canals leading to the sea.

tourisme-sete.com

From Marseillan to Balaruc-les-Bains, the villages along the lagoon edge make their living from it and from farming mussels and oysters. In one of the charming little lagoon ports, there is a tradition of serving a piper-dimmer glass of Picpoul de Pinet white wine, whose grapes are grown on the lagoon edge, at the shellfish farmer's table while tending your taste buds to oysters, tellins and razor shell clams and enjoying the lagoon view.

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thau-mediterranea.com

Nicknamed the ‘Town of Molière’ because of the time the famous playwright spent there, Pézenas has a remarkable heritage. Street around exploring the historical town centre and along little paved lanes housing artistic craftspeople’s boutiques. You’ll be transported back to mediaeval times through the time-honoured skills of metalworkers, tailors and milliners. Walking around lets you explore the many squares with their cooling fountains, impressive Renaissance private mansions and the Jewish ghetto. Make the most of being here by sampling regional wines at one of the many vineyard estates around Pézenas.

pezenas-tourisme.fr
The stunning Lake Salagou, located 50 kilometres from Montpellier, boasts 750 hectares of sapphire blue surrounded by ochre hills. This artificial lake was created in the early 1970s. The spectacular red earth around it forms silicon- and iron oxide-based ‘ruffes’ which give the land its colour. With its canyons and hills, this is a perfect playground for mountain bikers but also attracts a pleasant water sports leisure centre where you can swim in summer, watched by a lifeguard. Enjoy great walks in the Salagou valley through wonderful landscapes and surprising little hamlets.

herault-tourisme.com
clermontais-tourisme.fr
prehistoire-cambous.org
auvillarot-sommieres.com

Located around 20 kilometres from Montpellier, Pic Saint-Loup has given its name to one of the most famous vineyards in Languedoc. Stretching across 6 kilometres from Cazevieille to Saint-Mathieu-de-Tréviers, this natural limestone beacon stands at 658 metres high and offers a breath-taking view across the sea, Cévennes, Montpellier plains and Camargue. A number of hiking trails lead to the Pic Saint-Loup summit from Cazevieille or Saint-Mathieu-de-Tréviers, passing by the impressive ruins of Montferrand chateau.

tourisme-picsaintloup.fr

To the north of the region, Navacelles Cirque is a geological feature carved out of the Causse limestone plateau by the ancient curves of the River Vis. From the Blandas or Basme Auriol lookout, the view is breath-taking. Walking down to the cirque's floor, 300 metres below, is a great experience. There, in a lush oasis beside the Vis waterfall, you will find the village of Navacelles. On the limestone plateau, dolmens, menhirs and henge bear witness to the rites and beliefs of the people who inhabited this area in Neolithic times.

cirquenavacelles.com

Here, in the heart of the Hérault gorge, the heritage, history, architecture and love of stone signs supreme. Stroll through the narrow lanes of this Grand Site de France listed village, step inside artisans' shops and stop to enjoy lunch at Place de la Liberté under the shade of the majestic plane tree. This hilltop village sits at 800 metres above sea level at its highest point and is located on the Way of Saint James - yet another reason to explore this hidden treasure and its abbey, prison tower, cloister and ‘Giant’s Castle’. And of course there is also the famous Pont du Diable (Devil’s Bridge) spanning the River Hérault.

saintguilhem-valleeherault.fr

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tourisme-picsaintloup.fr

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cirquenavacelles.com

Sommières, located between the River Vidourle and the hillside, has been inhabited since ancient times. Cross the 1st century Roman bridge to discover this hillside town with houses set in archways due to the risk of flooding. The chateau was built in the 11th century on a rocky outcrop by the Lords of Sauve and Anduze, then converted to a fortress. The promenade ends at the entrance to the 25-metre-high keep. From the top, there is a wonderful view of the town of Sommières and the region. On Saturday morning, the town is abuzz. It's market day! Browse the second-hand goods and local products.

dt-sommieres.com

Located on the final foothills of Massif Central, the Haut Languedoc Regional Nature Park encompasses the 200, Montagne Noir and Lacaune mountains. It enjoys Mediterranean climate from the south and east, Atlantic climate from the west and Continental climate from the north. This results in extremely diverse landscapes: garrigue scrubland, Mediterranean varieties, exceptional vineyards and olive groves along with dolmens and dry stone walls and cabinets. The park is an outstanding setting for enjoying outdoor activities. These include travelling along the Passa Puts Voie Verte greenway between Mazamet and Bédarieux.

parc-haut-languedoc.fr

Here, in the heart of the Hérault gorge, the heritage, history, architecture and love of stone signs supreme. Stroll through the narrow lanes of this Grand Site de France listed village, step inside artisans' shops and stop to enjoy lunch at Place de la Liberté under the shade of the majestic plane tree. This hilltop village sits at 800 metres above sea level at its highest point and is located on the Way of Saint James - yet another reason to explore this hidden treasure and its abbey, prison tower, cloister and ‘Giant’s Castle’. And of course there is also the famous Pont du Diable (Devil’s Bridge) spanning the River Hérault.

saintguilhem-valleeherault.fr

Travel back in time at the Cambous prehistoric site in Vidi-en-Laval. Here you will find the remains of dry stone and slate cabins of the Fontbouisse community and explore the mysteries of life 4,500 years ago.

prehistorie-cambous.org

Discover the extraordinary world of insects through the 15 themed, interactive rooms at Micropolis in Aveyron. You can also explore the Millau Viaduct Prehistoric area from the regional nature park to the stunning Millau viaduct.

micropolis-aveyron.com

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parc-haut-languedoc.fr

hereault-tourisme.com
clermontais-tourisme.fr
prehistoire-cambous.org
LUNEL
A LAND OF TRADITION

Lunel has become a mecca of wine tourism thanks to its Viavino centre in Saint-Christol. Come discover 2,000 years of winegrowing expertise through the surprising buildings and tasting workshops. Continue your visit at the Ambrussum archaeological site on the banks of the Vidourle in Villetelle, crossed by Via Domitia which is the oldest constructed road from Roman times. A tour of the centre of Lunel completes your journey of this authentic region, with a stop at the new San Juan arena: a multipurpose performance space and a bovine temple as the Courses Camarguaises are a well-rooted tradition here.

OT-PAYSDELUNEL.FR

GRAU-DU-ROI
DESTINATION: CAMARGUE

Grau-du-Roi, the ‘antechamber’ to Petite Camargue, features Camargue cabins and sandy beaches at Espiguette. This town has maintained its bullfighting traditions and village feel. A few kilometres away, Aigues-Mortes and its fortifications continue to stand over Camargue eight centuries after the town was founded by Saint-Louis. History-lovers will feel like they have travelled back in time with the history of the Crusades and French Wars of Religion. Whether on the terrace or up the Constance tower, you can enjoy stunning views of the surrounding landscapes and famous Aigues-Mortes salt marshes (open to the public).

LETSGRAU.COM
OT-AIGUESMORTES.COM

NÎMES
BASTION OF ROMANISM

Roman Nîmes, sitting between Languedoc and Nîmes, boasts an exceptional ancient heritage due to its status as the Roman Empire’s showcase under the reign of Augustus. The Maison Carrée is the only fully-preserved temple from ancient times, while the arenas are the best examples of amphitheatres that are still standing. They sit opposite the new Musée de la Romanité, which is housed in a wonderful modern building covering 10,000m².

OT-NIMES.FR

PONT DU GARD
EXPLOITS AND BEAUTY

The Gard bridge is a magnificent remnant of the aqueduct built along 50 kilometres from Uzès to supply Nîmes. This masterpiece of ancient architecture dates back 2,000 years. Take a tour of the site and museum a few kilometres from this lovely town of Uzès to understand the extent of engineering skill required to construct this world-famous stone giant.

PONTDUGARD.FR

THAU LAGOON

DESTINATION: CAMARGUE

Grau-du-Roi, the ‘antechamber’ to Petite Camargue, features Camargue cabins and sandy beaches at Espiguette. This town has maintained its bullfighting traditions and village feel. A few kilometres away, Aigues-Mortes and its fortifications continue to stand over Camargue eight centuries after the town was founded by Saint-Louis. History-lovers will feel like they have travelled back in time with the history of the Crusades and French Wars of Religion. Whether on the terrace or up the Constance tower, you can enjoy stunning views of the surrounding landscapes and famous Aigues-Mortes salt marshes (open to the public).

LETSGRAU.COM
OT-AIGUESMORTES.COM
A MINI REVOLUTION HAS TAKEN PLACE ON BOULEVARD DU JEU DE PAUME. THE HALLES LAISSAC COVERED MARKET USED TO BE PLONKED IN AN OUTDATED BUILDING OPPOSITE TOUR DE LA BABOTE, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN REPLACED BY A BALTAARD-INSPIRED BUILDING. THE COVERED MARKET HAS QUICKLY BREATHED FRESH LIFE INTO THE CITY CENTRE AND BECOME A LIVELY PLACE.

Watch out! From late Friday afternoon this is the place to be! After buying their groceries, many Montpellier locals enjoy the terraces and new spaces around the brand new Halles Laissac where they can sip a drink with friends and nibble on the food they bought there. This is a social location and ideal meeting place, where you can bump into your friends and neighbours. Officially opened in December 2018, this covered market with its 24 butcher’s stalls has been a victim of its own success. Rebuilt in a Baltaard style, Halles Laissac boasts food stores passionate about quality and which promote short supply chains. The central pier with food court enables you to have your meat cooked on site for immediate enjoyment. In short, this is a lively location unlike any other, located only a few hundred metres from Place de la Comédie. It joins three other covered markets in the city, along with the open air markets.

In the middle of Montpellier’s Ecusson zone, the Halles Castellane covered market is home to 26 food stores and is now effectively supported by the Halles Laissac to the west. In Antigone, the Halles Jacques Cœur also host around 30 stores while the Sunday farmers’ market is held in Avenue Champlain. In terms of outdoor markets, Montpellier has around twenty. The largest organic market is held in Arceaux on Tuesday and Saturday mornings every week. In Paillade, the Halles des Quatre Saisons are the area’s stomach. In the Figuerolles district, the Plan Cabanes market is held in an authentic, colourful, working-class atmosphere. In Grabels, the town holds a lead market on Saturdays with special signs for products according to their origin. This way of promoting local products can also be found in Clapiers (Sundays), Lattes (Sundays), Pérols (Saturdays) and Castelnau-le-Lez (Tuesdays and Saturdays).

LOCAVORE!

- 300 g black or green olives (stoned)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 80 g capers
- 6 anchovy fillets (in oil)
- 100 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or oregano
- 1 pinch pepper

1. Put the olives, capers, peeled and degermed garlic, anchovy fillets, thyme and pepper into a food processor bowl.
2. Pulse to combine.
3. Gradually add the olive oil, blending each time to bind the ingredients, then blend until you obtain the desired texture. Blending less will give you small bits; blending more will give you a smoother, creamier texture.
HALLES DU LEZ
SHORT SUPPLY CHAIN FOOD COURT

With a Belgian chip shop, creperie restaurant, Japanese dishes, tart shop, Italian delicatessen, local Sète products and more, the recently-opened Halles du Lez near Marché du Lez is such an innovative concept that nothing else comes close. Spread across two levels, this complex showcases the best street food in a space with 700 seats and 1,500 m² of terraces. “There are 25 different types of food outlets and three rooftop restaurants,” explains Alexandre Tessier, the brains behind this mind-blowing project. Inspired by the Mercado da Ribeira in Lisbon, as well as by Asian street markets, Halles du Lez favours innovative concepts where everyone can find something they like as the restaurants’ dishes range from €7 to €45. All this is complemented by a genuine creative synergy space and a forum unlike any other in France.

CREATED IN 2016, MARCHÉ DU LEZ IS A NEW LEISURE HUB ON THE EDGE OF MONTPELLIER WHERE YOU CAN FIND FOOD TRUCKS, THEMED RESTAURANTS, SECOND HAND SHOPS AND BIKE STORES. IT IS A LIVELY, CONNECTED CULTURAL AND CULINARY PLAYGROUND.

Located on Avenue de la Mer along from the Port Marianne district, Marché du Lez has rapidly become a key Montpellier venue. This creative hot spot combines stores, second-hand goods dealers, farmers’ markets, restaurants and events. Interestingly, it was designed within a former industrial and agricultural site. Shops and start-ups have gradually moved into this hybrid space around a central courtyard where decoration workshops and a cocktail bar create a buzz during summer. Savour a salad on the lovely sunny terrace overlooking the River Lez, stop by the florist next generation bikes and high tech equipment at Avenue du Vélô, and go vintage treasure hunting in the second-hand stores. This site has become a genuine creative synergy space and a forum unlike any other in France.

CREATIVE HOT SPOT MARCHÉ DU LEZ

A CITY OF EVERY FLAVOUR

Montpellier is a young, dynamic city packed with restaurants and popular food places that illustrate the food world’s current buzz. And there’s something for every budget!

In addition to the twenty or so markets that set the tempo for the Montpellier lifestyle, there are numerous craftspeople and storekeepers committed to promoting healthy local products. In fact, Montpellier and the Hérault region are among the French pioneers for promoting organically farmed products. There are around 20 organic grocery stores to be found in Montpellier and the metropolitan area, in addition to the same number of restaurants with a strong commitment to this approach. There is a significant range of healthy, delicious products to be found in stores ranging from the pioneering Folie Avoine in the Beaux-Arts district to the Bio & Sens chain stores, which can be found in several of the metropolitan area’s towns and feature a grocery section and a dining section. And the product range continues to expand. This is the benefit of having a sunny climate and having retained producers and market gardeners on the edge of Montpellier committed to promoting local products!

A GUIDE TO GOOD LOCAL PRODUCTS

Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole has joined forces with the communities of Grand Pic Saint-Loup and Pays de l’Or towns to publish RoCat, a guide that lists the producers and retailers of the region’s agricultural products. Over 250 companies in Montpellier and 74 nearby towns are listed. This is a must-have guide available free from Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole and the Visitor Centre. A website is also available.

bocal.montpellier.fr

PICKED THAT VERY MORNING

Every Thursday at 5pm, Justine heads to the La Ruche Qui Dit Oui stand at the Saint-Roch train station to collect her order of fruit and vegetables picked that very morning. This makes it easy to consume quality, organic and -of course- local products. In Lattes, La Ruche pops up on Wednesday evening. In Montpellier and the metropolitan area’s towns, a large number of producers’ stores have opened such as Comptoir Payzens’ O’Co and L’Ecosourer in Saint-Jean-de-Védas, along with Drive-Fermiers (click and collect) and producers who sell direct south of Montpellier.

THE FIRST COOPERATIVE SUPERMARKET IN OCCITANIE

In a former, normal 400m² supermarket on Boulevard Clémenceau, La Cagette opened its unique cooperative in September 2017. This is a supermarket without intermediaries and is directly managed by its customers. This is the first place of its kind created in Occitании. Managed by a few employees and cooperative volunteers who run the supermarket and operate the cash register, La Cagette has reduced the intermediaries and can provide complete transparency for the retail products which mostly come from short supply chains. This is virtuous consumption in action. The cooperative has 2,200 members and sells 3,000 products from 90 suppliers.

A GENEROUS LAND

In Clapiers in September, foodies gather at Port Léonard for the tomato festival. And in the Pignan chateau’s park, olive lovers congregate in early October for the olive festival. There is a honey festival in Comunel, in October, which promotes this delicious product in the metropolitan area. And as for the truffle festival, that is held in January in Saint-Génies-des-Mourgues along with a market and tastings.

More information is on the events calendar at montpellier-france.com
WINE GUIDE
The Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole wine guide is essential for finding the fifty or so vinegrowers in the metropolitan area. The guide is available in printed and digital versions as well as in a mobile app (Guide des Vins). Simply click or tap to locate vineyards and read reviews. And again to display the directions. It also shows nearby places of interest.

montpellier3m.fr

WINE FESTIVAL
The Fête des Vignes wine festival is another highlight of the calendar, where you can taste wines and meet Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole’s vinegrowers. Over a three-day weekend in late November, the esplanade transforms into a vinegrowers’ village with over 50 vineyards present. Your entry ticket gives you a wine glass, three tastings and a raffle ticket! This is a great festival with a lively atmosphere featuring workshops, games and fanfare. On Sunday, the vinegrowers do the honours at home and open the doors to their cellars and vineyard estates. Enjoy their wines, country-style buffets, local products, artistic exhibitions and musical performances. Take this special opportunity to awaken all your senses and experience wine tasting in situ.

Check out the list of vineyards and cellar doors at montpellier-france.com, on the wine tourism page.

LES ESTIVALES: COMING TOGETHER ON THE STREETS

IN JULY, VISITORS HURRY TO THE ESPLANADE IN MONTPELLIER TO TASTE THE BEST THE REGION HAS TO OFFER, INCLUDING CURED SAUSAGES, PÉLARDON CHEESE FRESH FROM CÉVENNES, TIÉLLES (SEAFOOD PIES) FROM SÈTE AND STANDS FULL OF LOCAL HAM, SEAFOOD, OLIVES AND MORE.

Every Friday night, the Estivales festival sets Montpellier’s pulse racing to the beat of the vines, confirming the metropolitan area’s support and attachment to its winegrowing history and honouring the region’s wealth of products. From 6.30pm, come join the vinegrowers, craftspeople and local producers. Buy a ticket (€15) to enjoy an engraved wine glass and two tastings at the open air wine bars run by some 40 vinegrowers. Over 200,000 visitors come every year to experience the local products and 160 vineyard estates, including those holding the famous ‘Grés de Montpellier’ designation which are a source of pride and boost the reputation of the Montpellier metropolitan area. This major, grassroots summer event resonates with the other grassroots summer event resonates with the other

MONTPELLIER’S LOVE AFFAIR WITH WINE GOES BACK CENTURIES. SURROUNDED BY FAMOUS VINEYARDS AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF AGRONOMY RESEARCH, THE METROPOLITAN AREA’S WINEGROWING PAST HAS SHAPED WHAT IT IS TODAY.

Pies have always been present in Languedoc and on the doorstep of Montpellier, but it was the Romans who created structured vineyards when the region was a Gallo-Roman province. Montpellier’s wine was already famous in the 16th century and made the city rich in the 19th century. From Square Planchon, with its surprising statue of Jules-Emile Planchon, who defeated phylloxera, to Rue de la Barralerie near the Peyrou gardens, which used to be packed with cooperers, the city bears numerous reminders of its prestigious past. The quality-focused revolution started in the 1980s resulted in the creation of the AOC Côtes du Languedoc designation, which became AOC Languedoc in 2007. Today, the Languedoc is ranked amongst “the best winegrowing regions in the world” by top oenologists. The vinegrowers are brimming with ideas, energy and passion to create iconic wines or simply ones to enjoy with friends. They open up their vineyard estates to welcome visitors and develop wine tourism, following the example of Château de Flaugergues in Montpellier, Domaine de l’Arbousier in Castries and Mas de l’Oncle in Claret. Vineyards, excursions and cellar doors: we have all the info at montpellier-france.com.

TOAST UNDER THE TREES

Domaine Saint-Jean de l’Arbousier is tucked away in the hills above Castries, which sits between vineyards, mountains and the sea. Everything here has been designed to give you an unforgettable experience with friends and family, and you can even sleep in their tree-top cabin.

domainearbousier.fr

WINE WALKS
Every year in May, the Grés de Montpellier vinegrowers organise a gourmet walk with wine and food pairings through the historical centre.

gres-de-montpellier.com

WINEGROWER WALKS
Lise, the winegrower at Château de Fourques in Juvignac, invites you to let your imagination soar with her winegrowing stories. Enjoy a stroll through the vines before stepping into the wine cellar to sample her wines direct from the barrel. Learn about sensory analysis while tasting aging as well as bottled wines.

chateaudefourques.com

DANCE IN THE VINES

If you want to taste Domaine de Terre Mégere wines in Coumeiron, you can visit the cellar door for a tasting or you can enjoy a glass and dance at the same time at one of the many concerts they organise for caliente, punk and reggae nights.

terremegere.fr

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domainearbousier.fr

ROOMS WITH A VIEW IN HAUT-LIROU

This vineyard organises tastings and themed walks or 4x4 excursions. You can also stay here in one of the several chic lodges on its estate. The three holiday cottages and one house on the estate offer accommodation to nature lovers and foodies.

famillieramibiier.com

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chateaudefourques.com

TIME FOR SOME WINE ENJOYMENT?

The Languedoc wine school runs a range of courses encompassing the theory and practical, ranging from 2-4-hour workshops to oenological weekends at Mas de Sauporta in Lattes.

ecoledesvinsdulanguedoc.com

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gres-de-montpellier.com

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chateaudefourques.com

FRUIT OF THE EARTH

CITY OF WINE
A LUNCH OF CULINARY EXCELLENCE

For the past seven years, the Chefs d’Oc association of the best head chefs in Montpellier and its surrounding region has organised Topôs in an event aimed at promoting their expertise and making it more accessible. Every year in late September, in the Papou gardens or another iconic Montpellier location, a dozen chefs put on an exceptional lunch prepared free. Some 2,000 people attend every year to discover the best dishes created by these regional chefs.

www.toposdoc.fr

IN VINO VERITAS

Cave des Arceaux, Courte Echelle, Tin Brocheuse... Montpellier has a large number of wine merchants who promote local wines. The Maison Régionale des Vins in the city centre is one of the pioneers promoting the wine from the world’s biggest wine growing region. Its owner is a great commissioner of local dishes who shares his passion at the regional wine centre, with no fewer than 1,800 wines on offer and regular tastings.

IN VINO VERITAS

Jardin des Sens

An extremely well-kept garden with a completely exotic setting. Prefer a gourmet, rural meal? It’s hard to choose between Fontès with a completely exotic setting. Enjoy exploring the little corner of Italy with a ‘tavola’ atmosphere, whereas at La Coquille brasserie popular with lawyers dining between two defence speeches at the neighbouring Court of Appeal. Near Place Candole, Les Canons serve a daring domestic cuisine inspired by the Burgundy roots of the young owner who shares his enjoyment of natural wines with diners. Le Bazar offers traditional Mediterranean cuisine in a lush oasis which is worth the effort to reach, as does Le Refletoir with its cozy terrace in a walled garden in the Arceau district.

THE CITY OF EVERY FLAVOUR

MONTPELLIER: GOURMET DESTINATION

In the shade of the plane trees, and its neighbour Canourgue.

A COMEBACK OVER THE CENTURIES, MONTPELLIER HAS EMBRACED THE CULINARY TRADITIONS OF GUESTS

Whoever said Montpellier has no specialty must-visit restaurants? We have several dining areas. We want to combine gastronomy with French culture. And of course there is also La Cuisine du 728.

ABSOLUTE MUSTS!

Are you resurrecting Jardin des Sens? Indeed in fact, it will be called Jardin des Sens and will incorporate a luxury hotel with several dining areas. We want to get going again with Michelin-star cuisine. This spirit also drives the chefs at Apicius, Centrat, Artichaut and newcomers Resto d’Obione and Ídeé Saveurs. Enjoy exploring the cuisines of other restaurants such as La Diligence, Terminus 15, Alter Ego around Jacques Coeur pond and L’Arbre near Lez. If you dream of elegant dishes, head to La Réserve Rimbaud, the Michelin-star restaurant of Charles Fontès with a completely exotic setting. Prefer a gourmet, rural meal? It’s hard to choose between Le Mazzerand in Lattes, with its terrace under the shade of the plane trees, and its neighbour Domicile de Soriche which boasts two hectares of parkland!

THE CITY OF EVERY FLAVOUR

SHALL WE PICNIC?

Whoever said Montpellier has no specialty dishes? While Montpellier butter flavoured with anchovies and herbs is not as prized at it was in the 17th century, other products have put the city on the map! Starting with Grissettes, honey and liqueur sweets that have been made for as long as the Faculty of Medicine has been in existence. Montpellier is also the stronghold of Azulier Chabemas, which has made liqueur pieces, marshmallows and timeless sugared almonds since 1923. Here, we love turning tradition on its head to reinvent it! Clapas was founded in 2003 by chocolatier/chocolate bar Amadeus and created a distinctive chocolate to reflect the city, while Maison Roux set up store ten years ago to produce organic macarons that immerse you in the roots of this traditional delight.

BRUNCH

At Au Bonobo you can enjoy delicious pancakes in a New York atmosphere. Enjoy a relaxed brunch at Napoléon Circus. Enjoy a relaxed brunch at Napoléon Circus. Pré Vert on Place Sainte-Anne exudes a peaceful ambience ideal for those with kids. And let’s not forget Café de la Panacée and Café Tropisme.

APERITIF

The Times in the city centre is the oldest wine bar. Glouglou offers a great selection of wines for self-service tasting, along with gourmet tapas. Atelier des Vins on Place de la Canourgue also serves tapas and rare wines. Other must-visit city centre spots: In Vino Veritas and Amuse Vin.

SEAFOOD

Le Panier du Pêcheur. Chef Toto and Ecailler des Nouveaux are safe bets in central Montpellier. Further afield, Poisson Bleu in Palavas and Chez Sauveur in Cépans are oyster sellers/ fishmongers where you can also dine in.

NEO-BISTRO

In Arceaux, Bistrot de Bacchus has made many lovers of good food happy. The same goes for Pimpin in Rex Arts. La Maison de la Lozère has become a hot spot for bistronomy. And of course there is also La Cuisine du 728.

PRE-DINNER DRINKS

Beer O’Clock was one of the first beer gardens equipped with self-service taps. But you can also drink wine there! As for Circus, this is a classic Montpellier evening destination with its New York pub-inspired décor.
Montpellier is extremely lucky to have cafés and bars that are 100% naturally heated with the sun! Here, life is lived outdoors on the terraces. Whether you prefer chairs, comfy armchairs or standing tables, there is something for everyone. From pre-dinner drinks to late at night, everyone mixes together, chats and calls out to friends. Café Riche on Place de la Comédie has been open since 1893. Nothing remains from that time except the wrought iron canopy, but the café has preserved its 1900s feel. Its terrace gets the morning sun and is a gathering spot for Montpellier locals to chat over a coffee. Place Jean-Jaurès boasts many terraces to choose from, including the not-to-be-missed Café Joseph, nicknamed Café Jo by its regulars. This is one of the most popular cafés at aperitif time. And at night the café regularly puts on free concerts and DJ nights to create a great electro atmosphere. At Place du Marché aux Fleurs, the vast Café de la Mer terrace is another Montpellier institution and is cosmopolitan, varied and gay-friendly. Its colourful tables are always lively!

ENJOY SOME FRESH AIR
To enjoy an authentic experience in the Figuerolles district, you have to head to Dôme La Cigale in Arceaux is an ideal place for enjoying a drink on the terrace opposite the aqueduct’s arches, particularly on Saturday when the market is held. In Beaux-Arts, Art Café’s terrace gently nudges the market stalls on sunny days. Opposite, the Super Vedettes bar entices people to pull up a seat and graze on delicious little dishes or listen to concerts on summer nights. At Place de la Comédie, the indoor terrace at La Closserie restaurant in Océania Métropole hotel is an intimate oasis of peace worth stopping at for a lunch or coffee, as in La Place restaurant by the fountain on Place Saint-Ravy and the lush, hidden Petit Jardin. And there’s no shortage of terraces in Port Marianne. These include Trinque Fougasse Sud, a famous wine bar, and of course the new Arbre Blanc rooftop bar where you can sip on a cocktail or glass of wine while admiring the view of the sea and Pic Saint-Loup!

MIXOLOGY PARADISE
Montpellier is famous with cocktail enthusiasts and boasts some world-famous bartenders. Papa Doble has a list of around 30 cocktails so you can explore the entire palette of drinks. Rhum Runner plays the rum connoisseur card in a cozy ambiance, while Willie Carter Shape cultivates a speakeasy-style bar. Cabinet de l’Apothicaire has daring original décor with medicinal properties (destressing and detoxifying). In Beaux-Arts, two great bars stand out: By Coss Bar with its house cocktails packed with originality and character, and the surprising Parfum where cocktails become genuine gastronomic creations! And you can now rely on Aperture by Julien Escot, 2012 World Champion. His specialty? Ultra minimalist mixes that deliver new experiences. Cheers!

THE BOUTIQUE
The AOC Languedoc winegrowers chose to present their best wines at Maison des Vins du Languedoc, a former winegrower’s house located at Mas de Saporta.

WINE TOURS
Estivales de Saporta every Tuesday and Thursday throughout summer, themed tastings in store and ‘Meet the winegrower’ events throughout the year. Details on the website.

RESTAURANT DE SAPORTA
Be introduced to and gain a deeper understanding of AOC Languedoc wines. Daytime and evening courses for the general public and professionals. Master Level Sud de France. Tel. +33 (0)4 67 06 88 66

Languedoc Wine School
www.ecoledesvinsdulanguedoc.com
THE CITY CENTRE’S STORES ARE ENJOYING GOOD MOMENTUM, DRIVEN BY SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION PROGRAMMES. THE COURREAU DISTRICT AND BOULEVARD DU JEU DE PAUME ARE GREAT EXAMPLES OF THIS.

Montpellier’s Ecusson zone is famous as one of the biggest pedestrian spaces in Europe. But you need to know why it’s worth the walk! Whether in Rue de l’Ancien Courrier, Rue de l’Aiguillerie or Rue de l’Argenterie, there is no lack of fashion or décor stores in the city centre and no shortage of fine food products such as Chocolats Papereux, the Gérard Cabiron macaron studio and Le Panier d’Aimé delicatessen. This generous range of products is now complemented by the many stores on the Ecusson’s southern belt, from Rue du Faubourg du Courreau to Tour de la Babotte and Place Laissac. With its concept stores and shops such as Nespresso, Majestic and Lluch, Boulevard du Jeu de Paume has become a key shopping street leading to the area’s new hub: Halle Laissac. The new covered market’s 24 butcher’s stalls form a link with the heart of the city’s historical centre and the urban districts. At the end of Place de la Comédie, the Polygone shopping centre is not to be outdone, boasting 130 stores with the biggest names in shopping. It remains open to the public while continuing its transformation to offer more space and comfort. This unique urban revival continues in Port Marianne and even extends from the Nouveau Saint-Roch district to Cité Créative.

Find all the best stores at montpellier-france.com

POSITIVE ENERGY IN ECUSSON

On the pedestrian Boulevard du Jeu de Paume, between Arc de Triomphe and the new Halle Laissac, concept stores are popping up everywhere. Check out new products, sip a cup of tea or do some work in a setting with a pop-soft electro blend of background music. Hybride has one room with couches and tables, where you can quench your thirst with soy milk or enjoy the daily menu. The second room has clothing, bags, jewellery, rugs and accessories. At Palma, wickerwork chairs, fruit juices and house chocolates sit alongside décor items and clothing. Allèego Store is an urban culture art gallery and concept store with artwork exhibitions and derived products. Further along in Rue du Faubourg du Courreau, you can have your next hit cut on a vinyl record at Discopathe before enjoying a drink on the terrace of this new multi-purpose location.

FLOURISHING CONCEPT STORES

The brand new non-slip granite and limestone paving stones were recently laid out along this road’s 350 metres linking Place de la Comédie and Rue de la Loge to the bottom of Boulevard du Jeu de Paume and Rue du Faubourg-du-Saunier, which itself is a buzzing food street. After several months of construction, Grand-Rue Jean Moulin has rediscovered its beauty and now meets the latest standards in terms of accessibility for persons with restricted mobility. This clothing street is a major city centre look, it dates back to the Middle Ages as merchants and pilgrims on the Way of Saint-Jacques used to walk along this street and Rue Jacques Couser to cross the city. The renovation work makes it much easier to walk around and makes shopping much more enjoyable!

WHERE EVERYTHING CONVERGES

Five years ago, a store called Majestic, which had been in Rue de la Loge for 25 years, took a chance and moved to Boulevard du Jeu de Paume because of the district’s overhaul. And their gamble paid off! Philippe Ballejos, store manager, vindicates its urban, innovative spirit. “Our shop is a place where everything converges: brands for the new generations and avant-garde, creative collections.” It is like an urban fashion lab in a reinvented district.

MONTPELLIER BOASTS A LARGE NUMBER OF BOUTIQUES. SHOPPING IN MONTPELLIER INVOLVES A STROLL ALONG CHARMING LITTLE LANES, MOVING BETWEEN BIG NAME STORES AND YOUNG JEWELLERY DESIGNERS, BEFORE HAVING A REST AT ONE OF THE MANY CAFÉ TERRACES.

If you are seeking nostalgia, Pomme de Reinette and Pomme d’Api, both on Rue de l’Aiguillerie, are must-visit stores that trigger memories. Here, you can find the charm of 1960s toys and the two stores feature purpose location!

SHOPPING IN ECUSSON: A PLACE OF ECLECTICISM

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On the pedestrian Boulevard du Jeu de Paume, between Arc de Triomphe and the new Halle Laissac, concept stores are popping up everywhere. Check out new products, sip a cup of tea or do some work in a setting with a pop-soft electro blend of background music. Hybride has one room with couches and tables, where you can quench your thirst with soy milk or enjoy the daily menu. The second room has clothing, bags, jewellery, rugs and accessories. At Palma, wickerwork chairs, fruit juices and house chocolates sit alongside décor items and clothing. Allèego Store is an urban culture art gallery and concept store with artwork exhibitions and derived products. Further along in Rue du Faubourg du Courreau, you can have your next hit cut on a vinyl record at Discopathe before enjoying a drink on the terrace of this new multi-purpose location.

FLOURISHING CONCEPT STORES

The brand new non-slip granite and limestone paving stones were recently laid out along this road’s 350 metres linking Place de la Comédie and Rue de la Loge to the bottom of Boulevard du Jeu de Paume and Rue du Faubourg-du-Saunier, which itself is a buzzing food street. After several months of construction, Grand-Rue Jean Moulin has rediscovered its beauty and now meets the latest standards in terms of accessibility for persons with restricted mobility. This clothing street is a major city centre look, it dates back to the Middle Ages as merchants and pilgrims on the Way of Saint-Jacques used to walk along this street and Rue Jacques Couser to cross the city. The renovation work makes it much easier to walk around and makes shopping much more enjoyable!

WHERE EVERYTHING CONVERGES

Five years ago, a store called Majestic, which had been in Rue de la Loge for 25 years, took a chance and moved to Boulevard du Jeu de Paume because of the district’s overhaul. And their gamble paid off! Philippe Ballejos, store manager, vindicates its urban, innovative spirit. “Our shop is a place where everything converges: brands for the new generations and avant-garde, creative collections.” It is like an urban fashion lab in a reinvented district.
**SPRING**

Admire works by new photographic talent at Boutographies (May / Montpellier)

See the best breakdance crews at the final of the Battle of the Year (May / Montpellier)

Enjoy a gastronomic walk to taste the best wines at Grés de Montpellier (11 May / Montpellier)

Take the kids to see a show at Saperlipopette (May / Montpellier)

Meet your favourite authors at Comédie du Livre (May / Montpellier)

Discover the latest theatrical creations at Printemps des Comédiens (May - June / Montpellier)

Cheer on the best riders competing at FISE (May/June / Montpellier)

Daydream while gazing at Pont du Gard and its light show during Daydream while gazing at Pont du Gard and its light show during

**SUMMER**

Meet the winemakers and taste their AOC Languedoc wines at the Estivales (July and August / Montpellier and metropolitan area)

Discover choreography by the best dance companies at Montpellier Danse (end June/beginning July)

Close your eyes and listen to new classical music virtuosos at Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier (July / Montpellier and metropolitan area)

Listen to Molière making fun of doctors from his era at outstanding theatrical performances in Tour d’Honneur at the Montpellier Faculty of Medicine! (23 & 30 July and 6 & 13 August / Montpellier)

Enjoy the festive atmosphere and sample local products at Estivales (12 July to 30 August / Montpellier & Lattes)

Watch the Course Camarguaise during the Trophée Taurin (31 March to 20 October)

Get fired up at the boat jousting during the Fêtes de la Saint-Louis in Sète (22-27 August / Sète)

Sample oysters from Thau lagoon at the Foire aux Huîtres in Bouzigues (10-11 August / Bouzigues)

Compete in the sandcastle contest during the Fête de la Mer in Villeneuve (August / Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone)

Watch the pilgrims’ procession during the Fête de Saint-Roch (15 & 16 August / Montpellier)

Enjoy an outdoor movie during Les nuits d’O (22-24 and 29-31 August / Montpellier)

Come try some of the 250 varieties of tomato at the Festival de la Tomate (September / Clapiers)

Take part in the Happy Days during the Festin de Pierres festival (14 & 15 September / Saint-Jean-de-Védas)

Support the world’s best beach volleyballers at the Montpellier Beach Masters (September / Montpellier)

Watch kiteboarding champions skim the waves at Festikite (19-22 September / Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone)

**AUTUMN**

Come discover the beauty of Oriental songs at Arabesques (10-22 September / Montpellier)

Sample the culinary creations of the Chefs d’Oc at Peyrou gardens during the Toqués d’Oc (21 September / Montpellier)

Enjoy concerts by singers at the Voix de Maguelone festival in the old cathedral (September / Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone)

Come get lots of ideas and make your purchases at the Foire Internationale de Montpellier (11-21 October / Montpellier)

Savour Picthéline and Lucques olives at the Fête de l’Olive (October / Pignan)

Listen to the best guitar riffs at the Internationales de la Guitare festival (14 September to 12 October / Montpellier)

Take part in a honey-based cooking workshop at Fête du Miel (October / Courmoneuse)

Enjoy a screening of the best Mediterranean films during Cinemed (19-30 October / Montpellier)

Enjoy a getaway to Lozère and stock up on the best preserves at the Toqués du Cèpe festival (October / Montpellier)

Try out the latest digital innovations at the Tropisme festival (October / Montpellier)

**WINTER**

Meet Montpellier Méditerranée’s winemakers and sample their wines at Fête des Vignes (November / Montpellier and at cellar doors in the metropolitan area’s towns)

Dance to the best electro music beats at the Arena during I Love Techno (14 December / Périos)

Enjoy an electro pop concert at the Rockstore (December / Montpellier)

Admire the magical effect of the lights projected on Montpellier’s monuments during Cœur de Ville en Lumières (December / Montpellier)

Discover regional products at the Hivernales (28 November to 28 December / Montpellier)

Experience the authentic atmosphere of the village Christmas markets (December / Le Crès, Banonvals, Vendargues, Cutias, Prades-les-Lèz, Pignan, Pérols, Grauves, Courmontaur et Cournons)

Learn how to hunt ‘black diamonds’ (truffles) with a pig at the Fête de la Truffe (January / Saint-Génies-des-Mourgues)

Head off for a day in the Cévennes and hurtle down the ski slopes of Mont-Aigoual (January / Puy-de-Peyrol)

Support your favourite player at the Open Sud de France tennis tournament (2-9 February / Pérols)

**BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE!**

Find all of the region’s big events at montpellier-france.com
TOU
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Useful information and great deals

Montpellier Méditerranée Tourisme & Congrès

Available at the Visitor Centre and at Montpellier-France.com

Guided Tours
The Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole Visitor Centre organizes a range of guided tours throughout the year.

Audio Guide
Explore Montpellier’s historical centre the way you want. Available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Suitable for people with visual or hearing impairments.

City Card
With your 24, 48 or 72 hour City Card, enjoy free and reduced entry to a selection of sites and activities in and around Montpellier.

Pocket WiFi
HipPocketWiFi gives you access to a 4G high-speed internet connection.
€8/day
€4/day with the City Card

MobilBoard
Tour the city on a Segway®.

Montpellier City Tour
1-hour tour with commentary in an open-top minibus. A 1-hour tour of Montpellier’s historical centre and contemporary architecture.

Concert & Show Box Office
The Visitor Centre on Place de la Comédie is a France Billet boîte box: a great way to collect your tickets any day of the week.

Visitor Centre Souvenir Corner
Stock up on gifts at the Visitor Centre souvenir corner on Place de la Comédie. Souvenirs, tapenade, olive oil, carafes, etc. - more than 150 items for you to check out!

City Card
With your 24, 48 or 72 hour City Card, enjoy free and reduced entry to a selection of sites and activities in and around Montpellier.

- 20% for children under 18

- 50% for children under 18

- 10% with the City Card

Pocket WiFi
HipPocketWiFi gives you access to a 4G high-speed internet connection.

- 8/day

- €4/day with the City Card

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Travel tips and information

General information

• Bureau d’Information Touristique de Castries
• Bureau d’Informations Touristiques de Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone

+33 (0)4 67 60 60 60

contact@ot-montpellier.fr

www.montpellier-tourisme.com

More great deals at www.montpellier-france.com
Visit the official Visitor Centre website to make the most of this region!

Open every day, the Visitor Centre and Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole conference centre are great resources for making the most of this region’s wealth of attractions. Come chat to our Visitor Centre staff to find out about all the best deals!

Year Round
Office de Tourisme de Montpellier
Place de la Comédie
Bureau d’Information Touristique de Lattes

High Season
Bureau d’Informations Touristiques de Castries
Bureau d’Informations Touristiques de Villeneuve-lès-Maguelone

GETTING TO MONTPELLIER

By Air
Montpellier has direct flights from Paris (1 hr 10 mins), London (1 hr 45 mins), Amsterdam (1 hr 45 mins) and over twenty other major cities. The Marignane airport operates only out of season. The Montpellier Méditerranée airport is located 8 kilometres from the city centre. A shuttle service operates.

By Train
Two TGV train stations: Montpellier Sud de France, 6 kilometres from the city centre, and Montpellier train station in the city centre.

By Car
Montpellier connects to the A9 motorway (Do Lys, Marseille, Toulouse, Spain and Italy) as well as the A75/A76 (to Paris). More info at tam.fr

By Bus
Hérault Transport regional bus network herault-transport.fr

GETTING TO MONTPELLIER METROPOLE

TNT: 1 ticket for the entire network!
TaM: 1 ticket for the entire network!
TaM VÉLOMAGG
Hire a bicycle for up to 24 hours straight, and more. There are more than 50 automated bike hire stations across the city. To pay, use a bank card or the voice server on +33 (0)9 69 39 00 99.

TaM Information tam-voyages.com +33 (0)9 67 32 87 87

Find all the best companies at www.montpellier-france.com.