





Le Cœur de la Provence

LE CŒUR DE LA PROVENCE
Tarascon-Crau-Montagnette







Between the Alpilles and the Camargue

At the gates of Arles, bordered by the lands of La Crau, the marshes of the Camargue, and the massifs of the Montagnette and the Alpilles, a unique part of Provence reveals itself. Lulled by a gentle way of life and bathed in sunshine, the towns and villages of Tarascon, Saint-Martin-de-Crau, Boulbon, and Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues are an invitation to discovery and relaxation. Complementary to one another, they form Le Cœur de la Provence (The Heart of Provence), an eclectic, vibrant destination with a rich heritage, as well as strong traditional and cultural roots. As you read on, discover some of the key features of this region.

Le Cœur de la Provence
Awaken your senses, live the experience !







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Tarascon

Located between Avignon, Arles, and Nîmes, the town of Tarascon was built along the banks of the Rhône. Once the residence of King René, today it is a town that reflects its royal past, promotes the preservation of its traditions, and keeps its artisanal and heritage legacy alive. With more than forty classified monuments, it has nothing to envy the surrounding major cities. A land of history and legends with its legendary monster the Tarasque and its famous Tartarin of Tarascon, it hosts a magnificent Italian-style theater with a highly appreciated program.

King René's Castle



Built between 1400 and 1435 by Louis II and Louis III, the « Château du roi René » is one of the finest fortresses. Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean, it played a fundamental role for the monarchy. All the improvements were carried out by René I of Anjou, son of Louis II, who turned it into a prestigious reception venue. However, upon his death, the castle became a place of incarceration, as evidenced by the graffiti still visible today. This imposing monument has been classified as a historic monument since 1840. Today, it is open to visitors and hosts numerous events throughout the year.



Boulevard du roi René
+33 (0)4 90 91 01 93



Saint-Martha's Church

The current church features various architectural styles as it has been remodeled over the centuries, from the creation of the first basilica in the fourth century to its reconstruction by the King of Aragon, Count of Provence, following the barbarian invasions. With the discovery of saint Martha's relics in 1187, the church became one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Provence. This is attested to by gifts offered such as a bust-shaped reliquary and several master paintings illustrating the saint's life. Since 1840, the church and its organ have been classified as historic monuments.

Place de la Concorde









Les Cordeliers Art and History Museum

Tarascon is a town that has been home to around fifteen religious communities. The Cordeliers established their monastery here, and today only the cloister and the former parlor remain. This building is also known as the town's Museum of Art and History, which hosts temporary exhibitions and houses the legendary Tarasque, the history of the Tarasque Race, and Tartarin's cabinet of curiosities.

Place Frédéric Mistral
+33 (0)4 90 91 38 71

Municipal theater

The current Italian-style theater in Tarascon was inaugurated in 1888, and historical personalities such as Joséphine Baker, Tino Rossi, and Edith Piaf have performed here. A true masterpiece of refinement and elegance, it is the work of Marseille architect Joseph Marius Letz. As for Jean-Barnabé Amy, he is responsible for the magnificent pediment featuring a lyre supported by two angels. Today, this architectural gem features a very eclectic program.

2, rue Eugène Pelletan
+33 (0)4 90 91 51 02





Souleiado Museum

The 15th-century Hôtel d'Aiminy houses true treasures accumulated since the creation in 1939 of the Provençal luxury brand Souleiado by Charles Déméry. The kitchen and printing workshop have been preserved, revealing hundreds of engraved wooden blocks that, through layering, give birth to the famous patterns that contribute to the brand's renown. Visitors will find textile collections, traditional costumes, santibelli, and fine woodwork furniture. This museum immerses visitors in the colorful history of Provençal fabric.

39, rue Charles Deméry
+33 (0)4 90 91 51 02

Saint-Jacques Church

Built on the site of a former medieval church between 1740 and 1750, Saint-Jacques Church features a classical façade and a baroque interior architecture. It is open during various services and the European Heritage Days, and each year it also hosts a grand pastoral play during the Santon Fair.

Place Saint-Jacques



Notre-Dame du Château Chapel

Located in the heart of the Alpilles, this chapel has been particularly cherished by the people of Tarascon since the Middle Ages. Since 1420, every year before Ascension, a pilgrimage takes place during which the inhabitants of Tarascon and the surrounding area take the statue of the Virgin, carved from a tree stump, to St-Martha's Church and return it to the sanctuary forty days later.

34, avenue Notre-Dame du Château
Saint-Étienne du Grès





Notre-Dame de Lansac Chapel

On the road of Arles, the Romanesque style Lansac Chapel serves as a reminder that it was a place of refuge for inhabitants fleeing the destruction of the ancient city of Ernaginum.

Lansac

Saint-Gabriel Chapel

Located on a hill in the Alpilles Regional Nature Park, the Saint-Gabriel Chapel surrounded by orchards, olive groves, and the remains of Ernaginum, is a true masterpiece of southern Romanesque art, notably with its richly decorated portal.

RD 33, route de Fontvieille



IT IS SAID THAT...

It is said that Anne of Austria, who came to pray for a child at the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Bon-Remède, offered the magnificent Baroque gilt-wood decoration and twelve paintings by students of the Mignard School of Avignon in gratitude after the birth of her son, Louis XIV.

Saint-Michel de Frigolet Abbey

Located in the heart of the Montagnette, the Abbey of Saint-Michel de Frigolet, a high place of spirituality for over a millennium, still welcomes a community of religious men, the Premonstratensians, present since 1133. The cloister dates from the early twelfth century, while the Saint-Michel church and the Chapel of Notre-Dame du Bon-Remède dates from the twelfth century.

Montée de Frigolet
+33 (0)4 90 95 70 07

Saint-Victor Chapel

North of Tarascon, the Saint-Victor Chapel, built on the site of a former Gallo-Roman villa, recalls the route of the ancient path from Tarascon to Avignon, not far from the road to Boulbon.

2860 chemin de la chapelle
Saint-Victor



Tartarin of Tarascon

In 1872, Alphonse Daudet published *The Extraordinary Adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon*. But who is Tartarin? Passionate about hunting, somewhat boastful, and dreaming of expeditions, he invents adventures for himself, even though he is merely a cap hunter. Without ever having left Tarascon, he considers himself an excellent hunter and decides to set off to hunt lions in Africa. The perfect caricature of the Provençal temperament, a bronze sculpture of him is located at Square Louis Gonthier, and a space is dedicated to him at the Cordeliers -museum of Art and History.





The Tarasque

Another symbol of the town is the famous Tarasque. It was first mentioned around 1255 by Jacobus de Voragine in *The Golden Legend*, which describes it as a half-animal, half-fish dragon with sharp teeth and frightening eyes. The monster made its home near the rock where the Château du roi René would later be built, terrorizing the inhabitants of Tarascon. The town only managed to get rid of it in the year 48 thanks to the intervention of a young girl, Martha, who came to evangelize lower Provence. Later recognized as the saint patron of the town, saint Martha tamed the beast and handed it over to the townspeople, who killed it. The Tarasque is depicted in various locations throughout the town, with the most significant representation found at the Cordeliers - museum of Art and History.





Les fêtes calendales

Les fêtes calendales are an integral part of the traditions held dear by every Provençal. They begin on 1 December with the Advent calendar, continue with Saint Barbara's Day on 4 December, and then 24 December with Christmas Eve dinner and its midnight mass, «le gros souper» (the big supper), and the thirteen desserts, finally ending on 2 February, Candlemas.





Santon Fair

Christmas is celebrated in a big way in Provence, and Tarascon has hosted the traditional Santon Fair for several years. Several santon makers take over the town to showcase their new creations as well as their essential santons, such as Lou ravi (the delighted one), who brings good luck, or the *tambourinaïre* (tambourine player), who leads the farandole. The Chapel of Perseverance houses one of the finest nativity scenes in Provence, featuring more than 500 santons staged by passionate local residents, the Barzizza family.





The Tarasque Festivities

Every year on the last weekend of June, the Tarasque festivities take place. Originally created by King René in 1474 to reduce social differences among the inhabitants, today it is a must-attend event on the local festive calendar. Rooted in religious and Provençal tradition, for four days the town celebrates not only saint Martha and the Tarasque, but also Alphonse Daudet and his famous character Tartarin of Tarascon. The occasion also offers tens of thousands of visitors medieval entertainment within the Château du roi René and, for fans of Camargue traditions, several bullfighting events. The Tarasque, propelled by the *tarascaïres*, parades through the streets and surprises spectators. Folkloric groups also animate the event, bringing the town's rich past back to life. Since 2005, the Tarasque Festivities have been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Informations : +33 (0)4 90 91 03 52
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr



Tarascon Theatre



The municipal theater of Tarascon is a true cultural gem located in the heart of the town. With its elegant architecture and warm atmosphere, this Italian-style theater offers a variety of shows of all kinds.
Program available at :
www.tarascon.fr/saison-theatrale

2, rue Eugène Pelletan
+33 (0)4 90 91 51 02



Connected Walk

« Tartarin et Complices »

As an exceptional guide, Tarascon's most famous resident, Tartarin, leads visitors, starting from the Cordeliers- museum of Art and History, on a discovery of Tarascon's architectural, historical, intangible, and literary heritage.
A fun adventure in which each correct answer earns participants a badge and a reward.

Flyer available
at the Tourist Office
62 rue des Halles
+33 (0)4 90 91 03 52

Tennis

Four clay-style porous courts, two indoor clay courts, two padel courts, and a practice wall are available. The clubhouse, with its bar and relaxation area, is a welcoming spot. Equipment rental is available.

Chemin des Prés Verts
+33 (04) 90 91 18 04



Intercommunal swimming pool

Want to swim a few laps?
The Beaucaire-Tarascon intercommunal swimming pool is accessible year-round and features medium and large pools. In summer, the doors open to give access to a lawn, part of which is shaded. Picnics are allowed.

7, quai de l'Écluse
Opening hours and prices :
+33 (0)4 66 59 24 06





Tarascon City Stadium

Located on the banks of the Rhône, the city stadium is surrounded by an athletics track and a skatepark suitable for all levels, allowing visitors to enjoy the river breeze. Right next door, the playground gives children a place to have fun together. Shaded picnic tables are available on-site.

Open every day
Informations : +33 (0)4 90 91 03 52

Fishing at the Rambaille Pond

This pond, located in the Saint-Gabriel district, is accessible year-round free of charge and features several shaded picnic tables for enjoying time with family or friends. The fishing association « La Montagnette » organizes fish stocking, fishing competitions, and fishing introductory days for children there.

Informations :
+33 (0)6 10 09 83 42
aappma.tarascon@gmail.com

Where can I buy a fishing licence ?
- Intégral pêche :
+33 (0)4 88 09 02 99







Hikes and Walks

Tarascon is renowned for its heritage, but also offers great hiking opportunities for all levels :

- Tarascon – Saint-Michel de Frigolet Abbey (15 km route)

- La Routo : Around Saint-Gabriel (5.1 km route)

- La Routo : Chapels Trail (14.4 km route)

Find our full range of hiking options at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr
www.cheminsdesparcs.fr

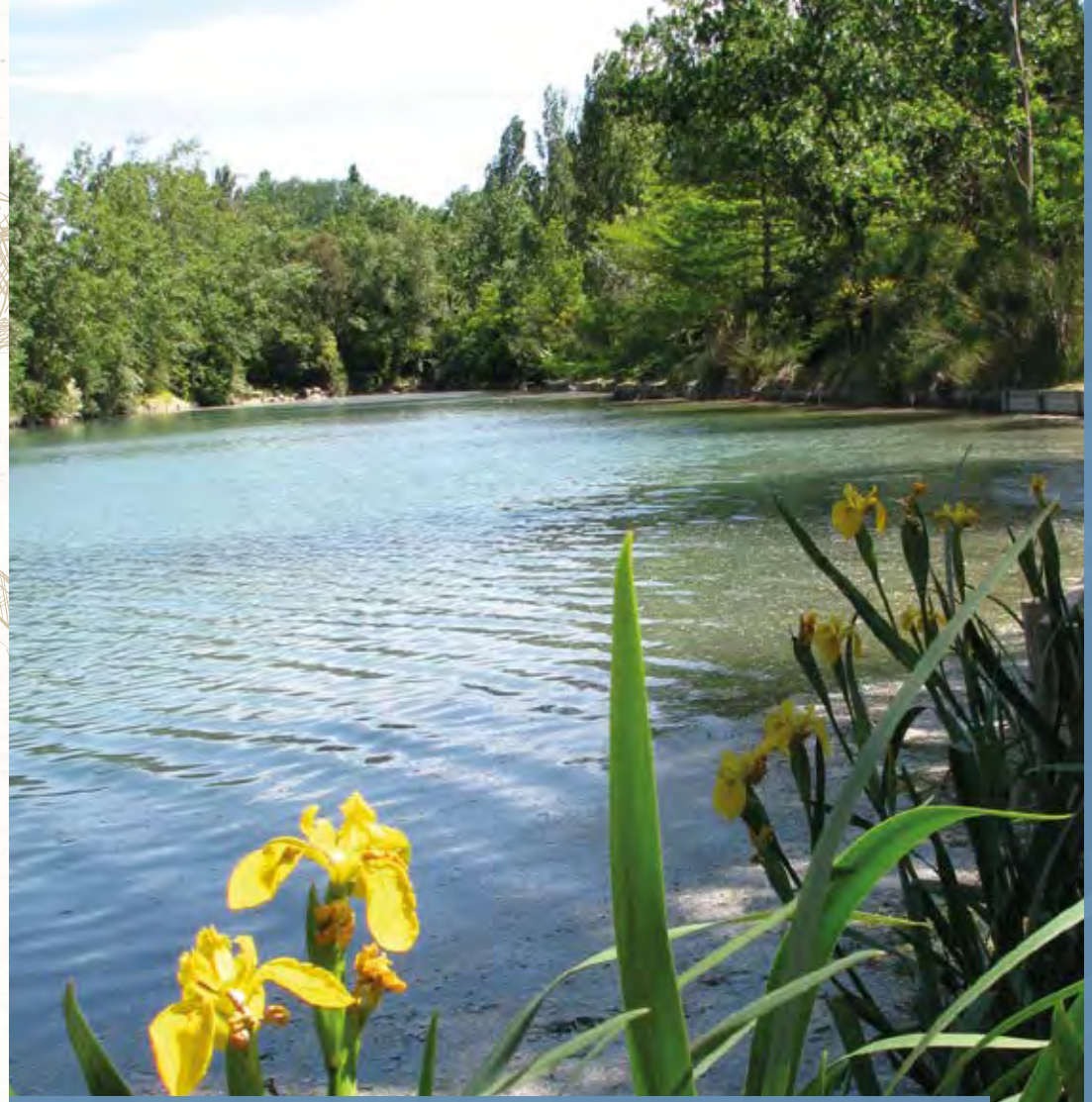


Cycling Routes

Tarascon is an ideal destination for cycling enthusiasts, offering picturesque routes that showcase the beauty of the area. The most notable ones, EuroVelo 8 known as «La Méditerranée à vélo» and EuroVelo 17 «La ViaRhôna,» stand out for their varied landscapes.

There are other routes to discover at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr
et www.cheminsdesparcs.fr





Saint-Martin-de-Crau

A stone's throw from the Camargue, at the gateway to Arles between the Alpilles and the Mediterranean, Saint-Martin-de-Crau is the 14th largest town in France by area. A town of character, it charms visitors of all ages with its incomparable natural heritage, gentle way of life, and ancestral traditions. Various cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, and shows enliven the town, which is also recognized for its wide range of sports and leisure activities. Saint-Martin-de-Crau also knows how to preserve its traditional skills, which form an integral part of its history, closely linked to pastoralism.



Saint-Martin's Church and its bell tower

Built in 1876, the actual church is built on foundations from the Xth Century. It hosts numerous concerts throughout the year as well as the Pastrage ceremony at the end of January. Its bell tower is open to the public during the European Heritage Days. Once you have climbed the steps, an orientation table allows you to visually locate emblematic sites of the region, such as the Alpilles.

11, place Léon Michaud
Informations at the Tourist Office :
+33 (0)4 90 47 98 40

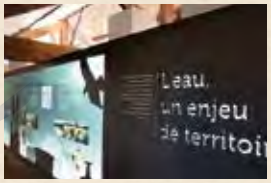


Retro museum

Created in 1987 by the Avis family, the Retro museum « Rétromusée » is a journey back in time. On site, a collection of everyday objects, toys, and vintage clothing is carefully displayed. Thirty-five mannequins in period attire, staged settings, and more than two thousand pieces from the late 18th to the mid-20th century bring this place to life. This museum highlights popular heritage and maintains collective memory.

2, place Léon Michaud
+33 (0)4 90 47 02 01









La Crau Ecomuseum

This museum is the gateway to discovering the Natural Reserve “des Coussouls de Crau”. Since 1987, the Ecomuseum explains the Crau through engaging explanations illustrated by magnificent photos and videos of the contrasting landscapes : between arid steppe and lush bocage, agropastoral activities and extraordinary nature.
Located in an old hay garage, between permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions, awareness-raising work to the protection of nature is permanent : activities, visits, conferences and workshops are organised and are accessible to everyone. It also features interactive and modern museography.

2, place Léon Michaud
+33 (0)4 90 47 02 01



National Nature Reserve of the Coussouls de Crau

This unique Mediterranean steppe has no equivalent in Europe. Its exceptional ecosystem attracts ornithologists and wildlife lovers who appreciate its unusual, rich, and unique flora and fauna. Covered by pebbles over seventy per cent of its surface, the vegetation changes locally depending on grazing. Today, it is home to France's only populations of pin-tailed sandgrouse, as well as other endangered species like the little bustard.



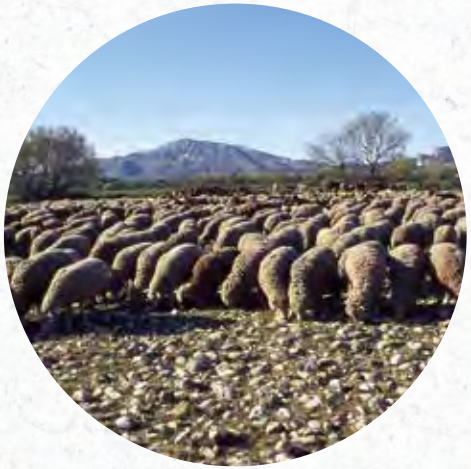
An interpretive trail allows visitors to discover this reserve and appreciate all its riches. An access ticket must be picked up in advance at the Maison de la Crau, where the Ecomuseum is located.



Écomusée de la Crau
2, place Léon Michaud
+33 (0)4 90 47 02 01

Pastoralism

Since antiquity, sheep have roamed the coussoul. Traces of ancient sheepfolds bear witness to a millennium-old pastoral practice. In the nineteenth century, the famous Mérinos d'Arles breed was born, renowned to this day for the incomparable quality of its wool. It accounts for 90 percent of the flocks in the South region, particularly in the Crau plain, where there are around 120 000 of the breed's 250 000 ewes. Sheep play a landscape-maintenance and ecological role, particularly in preserving wildlife and plant biodiversity.



DID YOU KNOW ?

Two women from Saint-Martin-de-Crau represent the Pays d'Arles as the 24th and 25th Queens of Arles : Camille Hoteman and Amélie Laugier.



Folklore

It still represents the authenticity of Saint-Martin-de-Crau, a land of traditions. Numerous sports, cultural, and bullfighting events are part of the festive soul of the commune. Several associations perpetuate the tradition, such as the Arlesian costume, which the local folk group Li Coudelet Dansaire has honored since its creation in 1984.



Crau Hay AOP

Crau Hay named « Le Foin de Crau » is the most renowned hay in the whole world. It is one of the specific products of the territory, created thanks to gravity irrigation initiated in the sixteenth century by Adam de Craponne. A network of canals brings mineral-rich water from the Durance River, giving the hay its distinctive quality composed of about twenty natural forage species. Three cuts of hay are made each year and meet the specific needs of each animal. Holder of a quality label in 1948 and an AOC in 1997 (which became a PDO/AOP), it is identifiable by its red and white twine.



Breeding

In Saint-Martin-de-Crau, you find not only the breeding of Mérinos d'Arles sheep, but also bulls. Several manades are present in the area, each with its own specific characteristics. Several actively participate in local bullfighting festivities. Some raise Camargue breed bulls and horses or Spanish bulls, others Morucha cattle and organic Gascon pigs. These breeders are passionate people who pamper their animals.





The Transhumance Festivities also called « the Spring Festivities »

Every year, in mid-May, the spring festivities promote the local territory, culture and ancestral traditions. Since 1986 it symbolises the shepherds' departure with their animals on migration to the mountain pastures. These festivities promote, for a weekend, pastoralism, Crau hay, provençal folklore and traditional trades. Two parades in the heart of the city animated by old tractors and folkloric groups, la Carreto Ramado, donkeys from Provence and thousands of sheep mark these two days. On Saturday night the Shepherds' Vigil is an unmissable gathering and is a gathering of hundreds of people sitting around long tables to spend an animated night and eat the traditional Lamb chops. A nod to the shepherds who, in the past, prepared to set off on foot for transhumance and cover hundreds of kilometers. Sunday's festival highlights the expertise of various producers and artisans who bring the main avenue's craft market to life. Many other activities are on the program. sont au programme.

Informations : +33 (0)4 90 47 98 40
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr





Cultural Development Center

«All-in-one» is how the CDC dedicated to culture and art could be defined. Throughout the year, shows, workshops, exhibitions, and activities are on the program. The building also houses the cinema and the media library.

Place François Mitterrand
+33 (0)4 90 47 06 80
www.cdc-smc.fr

Tennis

Five tennis courts, including three with synthetic surfaces and two with hard courts, are open to club members and non-members by reservation via the Ten'up app or through the Tennis Club.

43, avenue Nostradamus
+33 (0)4 90 47 33 78





Swimming Pool

Want to swim?
This is possible during the whole season !
In winter, access to the covered swimming pool. In summer, access to the outdoor pool : a lap pool, a children's pool and a paddling pool.

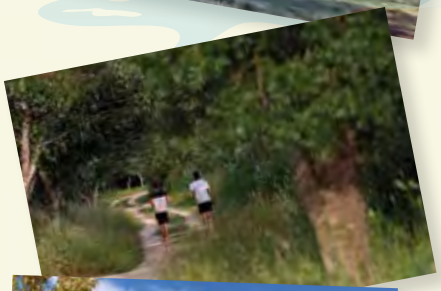
Avenue Nostradamus
Opening hours and prices :
+33 (0)4 90 47 01 42



Baisse de Raillon Nature area

Open Space and Landscaped Basin Relaxation, games, and walks are possible on this expansive site composed of a picnic and children's play area, a petanque court, wooded areas, outdoor fitness equipment, a skatepark. A walking trail also makes it easy to reach the lands-caped basin and the fitness trail. Accessible every day. Dogs allowed on a leash.

Baisse de Raillon
+33(0)4 90 47 98 40





Golf course

The Saint-Martin-de-Crau golf course is a municipal golf course close to the town centre. It offers the opportunity to start easily and progress in a very friendly atmosphere. The course, officially rated and enhanced by a river running through the golf course, is composed of 9 holes, par 32, over 2,037m.

Baisse de Raillon
+33(0)4 86 52 03 41
https://golfsaintmartindecrau.com



Fitness trail

This 24-hectare trail allows for multiple activities : jogging, walking, orienteering. A few facilities, positioned in various spots, are intended for gym exercises.

Near the golf course
Baisse de Raillon Parking





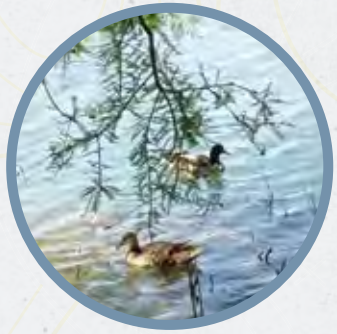
Fishing

Several locations are available to you for fishing : the Chapelette canal, le domaine du Lac, and the Étang des Aulnes.

Where can you buy a fishing licence ?

- Directly from the association : Association des pêcheurs d'Arles/ Saint-Martin-de-Crau (APASCM), 8 rue Henri Fabre, 13200 Arles +33 (0)6 80 93 82 78 / apasmc@gmail.com

- At Décathlon Arles Fourchon +33 (0)4 90 18 30 70



Domaine du Lac

Located near the town center and surrounded by housing, the lake is popular with families for Sunday walks and with fishermen. Several competitions are organized by the local fishing association and a pontoon is dedicated to people with reduced mobility. Dogs allowed on a leash. Accessible every day except in case of winds from 60 km/h or bad weather.

Rue du Lac de Constance



Treasure hunting

Two treasure hunts, two brand-new investigations! To be done on foot, solo, with family, or among friends, they reveal many secrets! Booklets available at the Crau Ecomuseum and the Tourist Office : *Mystery on the Crau and In Search of the Crau Cricket.*

Écomusée de la Crau
2, place Léon Michaud
+33 (0)4 90 47 02 01
www.cen-paca.org

Le Jardin de Gaston

Le Jardin de Gaston arboretum covers more than 4 hectares and features a botanical trail allowing visitors to discover plant species from around the world. This verdant bubble is ideal for relaxation and walks. Walkers also appreciate its lake where some forty ornithological species have made their home and its lawns for picnicking, napping, or reading.

Tourism and Disability certified.
Dogs allowed on a leash.
Accessible every day except in case of winds of 60 km/h or more, or bad weather.

Avenue de Plaisance
+33 (0)4 90 47 98 40





« Autour d'eau »
is a trail guide featuring 3 cycling loops across the towns of Salon-de-Provence, Saint-Martin-de-Crau, and Arles. Offering a commentary and photographic approach to the Crau landscape, its central theme is the Craponne canal.

Document available at the Tourist Office
Avenue de la République
+33 (0)4 90 47 98 40

Nature Outings

The Crau Ecomuseum and CEN PACA organize themed excursions in the Crau and other protected natural areas. Accompanied by a warden from the Coussouls de Crau National Nature Reserve, participants enjoy a guided and informative tour of the Crau. Several aspects of this unique European environment are explored, including the landscape, biodiversity, ornithology, and more. Depending on the season, free outings are also organized every first Friday of the month.

Informations and booking :
Écomusée de la Crau
2, place Léon Michaud
+33 (0)4 90 47 02 01
ecomusee.crau@cen-paca.org
www.cen-paca.org

Cycling Routes

More than a dozen routes are waiting to be explored. Whether in Saint-Martin-de-Crau or the surrounding area, circuits of varying lengths allow you to discover the Pays d'Arles and enjoy typically Provençal landscapes.

Tourist Office
Avenue de la République
+33 (0)4 90 47 98 40









Walks and Hikes

Great walks are waiting to be explored and are easily accessible :

- Arboretum Le Jardin de Gaston : Close to the town center (1.2 km route).

- Domaine de l'Étang des Aulnes : 5 km from the town center (1 km route).

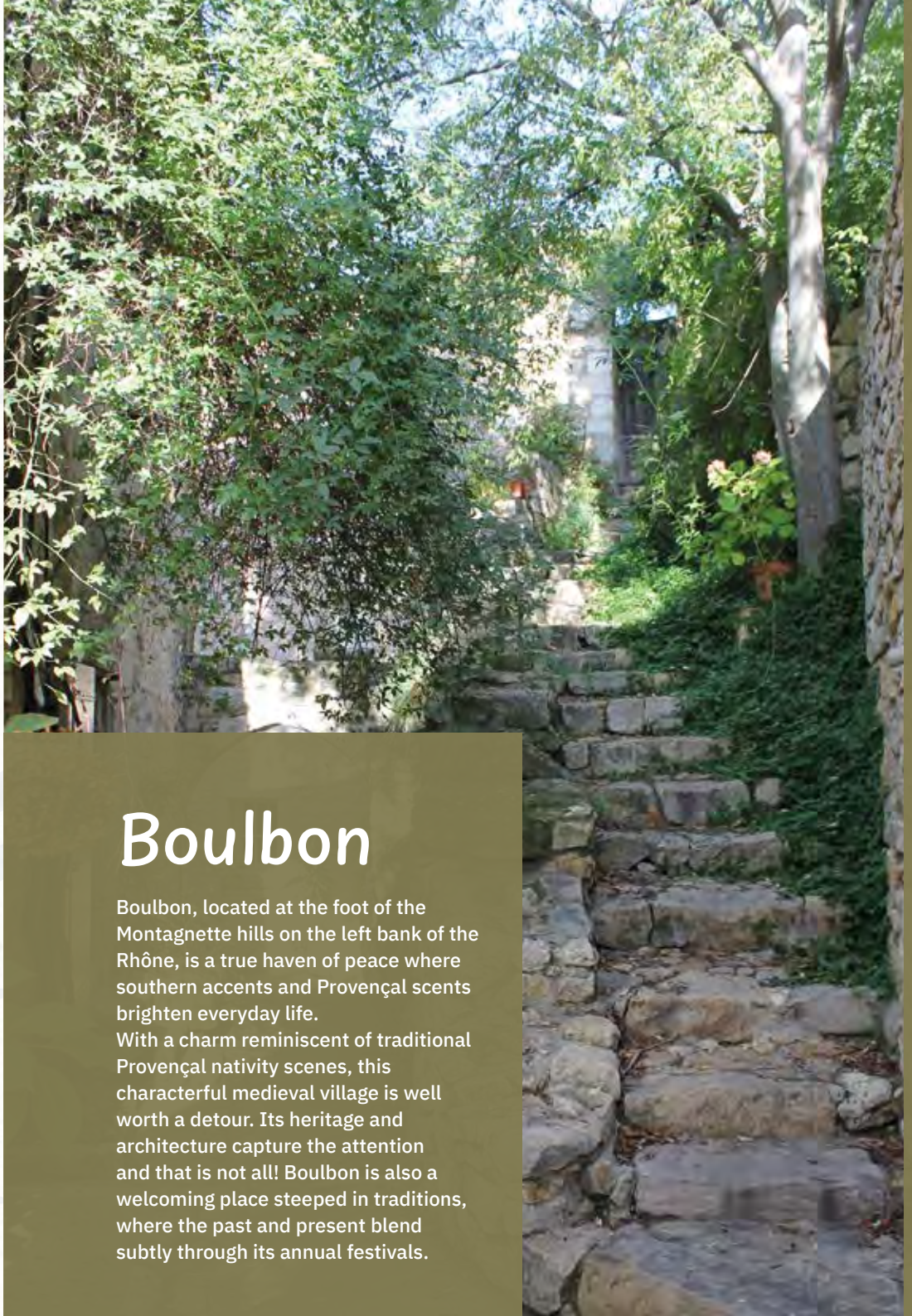
- Peau de Meau Interpretation Trail : 7 km from the town center (4.7 km route) access authorization must be picked up at the Écomusée de la Crau.

- Chemin de l'Ilon : 2 km from the town center (7.8 km route).

- Baisse de Raillon : 1 km from the town center (6.5 km route).

- Domaine du Lac : 1 km from the town center (1.5 km walk).

All the walks can be found at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr
www.cheminsdesparcs.fr



Boulbon

Boulbon, located at the foot of the Montagnette hills on the left bank of the Rhône, is a true haven of peace where southern accents and Provençal scents brighten everyday life.
With a charm reminiscent of traditional Provençal nativity scenes, this characterful medieval village is well worth a detour. Its heritage and architecture capture the attention and that is not all! Boulbon is also a welcoming place steeped in traditions, where the past and present blend subtly through its annual festivals.



The Bonnet windmill

Located on the western slope of the Montagnette and visible from the village, this windmill dates back to 1776 and was restored in 2002 to match the original. A must-see site in the village, it has recovered its roof, sails, and machinery. When the wind permits, the millstones can still grind grain.
Additionally, near the orientation table, you can gain some height and enjoy a pleasant panoramic view. The windmill is open for visits from mid-September to mid-May, every second and fourth Saturday of the month from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM, or by appointment.

Boulbon Town Hall
+33 (0)4 90 43 95 47
accueil@mairie-boulbon.fr
Association les Amis du Vieux Boulbon
amisduvieuxboulbon@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW ?

Behind the high altar of the chapel stood an altarpiece, a photograph of which can be seen in the nave, as the original is now on display at the Louvre Museum under the name « Boulbon Altarpiece ».

Saint-Marcellin Chapel

Serving as the village parish church until 1628, the Romanesque-style Saint-Marcellin Chapel was altered during the 12th and 16th centuries. One initial chapel is dedicated to saint Anne and a second to saint George. Inside, you can find the tomb of Lord Archimbaud, whose effigy wears his armor, along with two shields bearing the coat of arms of the first lords of Boulbon.

Impasse du Prieuré





Sainte-Anne Church

Built in 1628 on the site of a Romanesque chapel, this became the village's second parish church over time. Deconsecrated in 1875 in favor of Saint Joseph's Church, it was brought back to life in 2009 after being restored and converted into a Cultural Center that notably hosts concerts and exhibitions.

Impasse Jollion



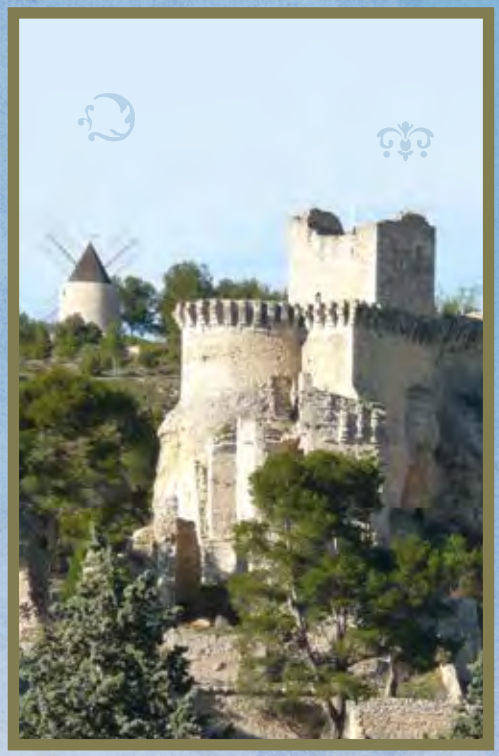
Saint-Christopher statue

Located on the Grand'Rue, the village's busiest street, the 14th-century statue of Saint Christopher depicts the saint standing in the water with Christ on his shoulders to help him cross the Rhône.



Loriol gate

Along with the Saint-Jaume Gate (which was destroyed in 1810), the Loriol Gate is one of the two fortified gates that formerly provided access to the village.



Feudal Castle

Originally a defensive structure, it was modified over the centuries. During the 14th and 15th centuries, the castle underwent remodeling to become more comfortable. Thanks to its strategic position, it long served as a sentinel for the County of Provence facing the Kingdom of France.
Today, on the right, you can distinguish the oldest part: the keep, clinging to the rock, and further west, the large terrace. To the south, the lord's residence and the former defense tower are now reduced to ruins. This in no way detracts from the charm of this monument perched on the Montagnette, which is visible as soon as you arrive in Boulbon.

Rue du château

Saint-Joseph's Church

St Joseph's Church, built in 1872 to plans by the architect Henri Revoil, was consecrated in 1875. Built in the Neo-Gothic style, it is dedicated to St Joseph, who was proclaimed patron saint of the universal Church by Pius IX in 1870. Today, it is the starting point for the traditional Procession of the Bottles, which ends at the Chapel of Saint Marcellin.

8-10 rue de l'église



Shepherds' descent

For the past few years, the streets of the village have hosted the shepherds' descent *descente des bergers* on December 24th. The procession begins in the late afternoon and, depending on the year, starts either in front of the castle or from the mission cross above the cemetery. Paper lanterns are handed out to costumed participants and children. Several stops are made : in front of the Saint-Marcellin Chapel, at the Loriol Gate, in front of the Saint-Christopher statue, and finally on Saint Joseph Church Street, where a mass is celebrated at 6:00 PM. Shepherds and people in period costumes are represented by the local Boulbon association «*L'escolo Bourbounenco Dou Vesti*», accompanied by donkeys and sheep. As people leave the mass, delicious navettes (traditional Provençal biscuits) are handed out.





Saint-Éloi festivities

On the last Sunday of August, the decorated *carreto ramado* (a traditional wooden cart adorned with willow branches) is pulled by numerous draft horses harnessed in the Saracen style. It makes its way through the narrow Grand'Rue and bursts out under the Loriol Gate. A parade of folkloric groups brings this thrilling run to a close .



The bull events club festivities

Every year in late September, the bull events club celebrates local Camargue traditions. A parade of horse-drawn carriages, *abrivados, encierros,* and *attrapaïres* competitions, featuring local bull-ranch manades, animate the village. The highlight of the festival remains the traditional *abrivado à l'ancienne.*





Bottle Procession

On June 1st at 7:00 PM, the traditional Bottle Procession takes place at the Saint-Marcellin Chapel, a custom inherited from the monks of Montmajour who settled in Boulbon to drain the marshes. During this day, exclusively male participants head to the chapel carrying a bottle of wine. Led by the banner and the reliquary bust of the saint, the procession journeys from Saint Joseph Church to the Saint-Marcellin Chapel. Following a Provençal sermon, the bottles are blessed. At that moment, each participant can take a sip of wine while the garde champêtre hands out glasses to the clergy and local authorities.
According to local belief, wine blessed in the name of the saint possesses great healing powers, particularly against fevers and stomachaches. It is also said that Saint-Marcellin is invoked to bring rain, as reflected in the popular Provençal saying: *«Sant Marcellin bon per l'aigo, bon per lou vin»* («Saint Marcellin is good for the water, good for the wine»).





Walks and Hikes

Starting from Gilles Léontin Square, several circuits invite you to discover or rediscover the treasures of the medieval village's narrow streets. Trails also lead up to the Bonnet Windmill, the Saint-Michel de Frigolet Abbey, and the Montagnette hills, while various cycling routes are ready to be explored.

Brochures are available at the Tarascon Tourist Office.
The walks can also be found at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr
www.cheminsdesparcs.fr





Avignon Festival

Boulbon Quarry

Located about fifteen kilometers southwest of Avignon, the Boulbon Quarry is an open-air site that was first used for the Avignon Festival in 1985. This genuine, no-longer-active stone quarry requires several temporary installations to successfully host performances such as running water, electricity, stages, dressing rooms, and refreshment bars. This unique venue gives performances a whole new dimension and adds an extra touch of originality to the Avignon Festival.

Arena

Restored to better welcome the public and reopened in 2024, the Boulbon arena is the prime location for fans of courses camarguaises throughout the season, as well as a popular summer gathering spot for the unmissable *toro piscine*. Throughout the months, various other events take place in this venue known for its friendly atmosphere.





Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues

Located on the banks of the Rhône in the heart of a fertile plain between the river and the Montagnette hills, Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues is nestled amidst orchards of apricot, peach, and apple trees. An ideal spot for a peaceful country stroll, the village reveals its history through its heritage.



Although the village mainly consists of traditional farmhouses (mas) and agricultural buildings, its entire current heritage including the church is gathered at its center.

At the end of the 10th century, the Counts of Provence chose a cadet branch of the Viscounts of Avignon to control the territory of Boulbon, which included Mézoargues. Following the drainage of the marshes, a village developed around the manorial church dedicated to Saint Peter. It survived the turmoil of the 14th and 18th centuries.

In 1715, the church was rebuilt, enlarged in 1858, and its bell tower was erected in 1868. The parish itself was only officially created in 1665. Inside the chancel, you can find magnificent statues of the Virgin and Child and Saint Roch. The Chapel of the Blessed Virgin and the Chapel of Saint Peter are also adorned with statues. Additionally, the stained glass windows are well worth admiring—especially the one installed in the bell tower, donated by the municipality in 2012.

For special events, the church hosts various musical gatherings. Together, the church, the 18th-century town hall, and the presbytery form a high-quality architectural ensemble that marks the heart of the village, while the rest of the commune's dwellings remain scattered across the countryside.

Visits to the church can be arranged on request by contacting the town hall. Visits are only available in the afternoons from Monday to Friday.
+33 (0)4 90 43 93 42

Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues is a village where arboriculture, fruit growing, market gardening, vineyards, and olive groves are an integral part of its identity. During the annual Saint Peter's festival, a cherished heritage remains close to the hearts of the locals, highlighted by:

-Traditions surrounding bull events through traditional abrivados.

-The transmission of the Provençal language and traditional costumes.

Traditional craftsmanship is also celebrated through the expertise of the local liqueur maker at the L'Harmonieux shop. He takes pleasure in presenting and offering tastings of his handcrafted liqueurs, making this boutique a must-visit spot in the village.





Saint-Pierre Festivities



Every year on the first weekend of August, Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues honors its patron saint, Saint Peter. Historically, this celebrates Saint Peter in Chains, which falls on August 1st according to the Roman calendar. A mass is celebrated in the church, after which the reliquary bust of «*Sant Péire*» is carried by the faithful in a procession to Georges de Régis Square, accompanied by the folk group *Li Festejaire* and women in traditional Arlesian dress.
For two days, the village comes alive with excitement : *bandidos* (releasing and guiding bulls in the street), *ferrades* (branding calves, a Camargue tradition), and inter-village games during the day, followed by musical entertainment provided by a local DJ in the evening.





Walks and Rides

A few country walks and bike rides are available, such as the "*Autour de la Montagnette*" route. This easy 30 km loop starts from Gilles Léontin Square in Boulbon, passes through Saint-Pierre-de-Mézoargues, and reaches Tarascon. It offers a wonderful way to discover this region rich in varied landscapes and heritage sites, such as the Bonnet Windmill in Boulbon, King René's Castle in Tarascon, and the must-see Saint-Michel de Frigolet Abbey.

All the walks can be find at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence
www.cheminsdesparcs.fr





Concerts

At the church, the Pays d'Arles Music Conservatory occasionally organizes concerts, taking advantage of the venue's exceptional acoustics. Every year between September and October, the *Musiques en balade* festival makes a stop here.

Weekly markets

In the heart of Provence, the markets are a treasure trove of delicious local produce and authenticity. Whatever the season, the aromas from the many stalls mingle with the colourful aisles, and the southern accent adds a friendly touch.





Mondays from 4 pm to 7 pm Farmers' market

In Saint-Martin-de-Crau, under the Grande Halle, **a small farmers' market is held every Monday**. Fruit, vegetables, olive oil, quality meat, cheese, fougasses and more are just some of the local specialities on offer.

Tuesday morning

In Tarascon town centre, the weekly market takes place every Tuesday morning. **High-quality produce and a warm, friendly atmosphere** are the order of the day. Food lovers are delighted to find a range of food products at Place Verdun. Others appreciate the variety of items on offer, particularly local crafts, on Cours Aristide Briand, Avenue de la République and Rue des Halles.

Friday morning

In Saint-Martin-de-Crau, Avenue de la République, Place Georges Brassens, Place de Gaulle and the Grande Halle are particularly bustling. Filled with a variety of stalls, there is a wide and varied selection : **handcrafted items, Provençal specialities, fabrics and food stalls** all sit side by side for the duration of the morning. Visitors appreciate the variety on offer and the lively atmosphere that reigns there.

Events calendar

You'll never get bored in the Heart of Provence, which is buzzing all year round with a host of events. Some of these are listed in this calendar. Many other events are organised and can be found at **www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr**

JANUARY

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Pastrage – Traditionnal Provençal celebration
Last Sunday in January

> TARASCON
Wellness Fair
Late January–early February

FEBRUARY

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Foire Agricole de la Saint-Valentin (Agricultural Fair)
2nd Wednesday in February

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Namasté - Wellbeing Fair

MARCH

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Voix de Femmes Festival - Celebrating female artists



APRIL

> TARASCON
Pâques au Château – Easter activities
Easter Sunday (in March, depending on the year)

> TARASCON
Beer Festival and Spring Market Day
Early April

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Feria de la Crau – Bullfighting Festival

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Children's Book Fair

MAY

> SAINT-PIERRE-DEMÉZOARGUES
Flower Fair and car boot sale
1 May

> TARASCON
Camargue Traditions
1 May

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Transhumance Festival
2nd weekend in May

> TARASCON
Flower Market and Spring Shopping Festival

JUNE

> BOULBON
Bottle Procession
1 June

> TARASCON
Fête du Cordage - Folk festival
with a gypsy atmosphere

> TARASCON
Tarasque Festival
Last weekend in June

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
St John's Bonfires
23 June

JULY

> BOULBON
Avignon Festival at the quarry

> BOULBON
Les Estivales – concert & Food-trucks

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Night market

> SAINT-PIERRE-DE-MÉZOARGUES
14 July celebrations

> TARASCON
National Day
13 & 14 July

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Town Festival
End of July





AUGUST

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Night market

> SAINT-PIERRE-DE-MÉZOARGUES
St Peter's Day Festival
First weekend in August

> TARASCON
World Music Festival
Every Saturday in August

> BOULBON
Saint-Éloi Festival
Last Sunday in August

> BOULBON
Les Estivales – concert & Food-trucks

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Nature and Wellbeing Fair
Late August

Events calendar



SEPTEMBER

European Heritage Days

> BOULBON
Bull Club Festival
Late September

OCTOBER

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Video Games Fair

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Model-Making and Model-Building Fair

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Wine and Food Fair
Late October

> TARASCON
Provence Trade and Craft Fair
Mid-to-late October

NOVEMBER

> TARASCON
Santons Market
Last weekend in November

DECEMBER

> TARASCON
Wonderful World of Christmas
First weekend in December

> SAINT-MARTIN-DE-CRAU
Christmas Market
Mid-December



This is a non-exhaustive programme, subject to change

Practical information

The area is brimming with lovely walks. For lovers of birds, wildlife or flora, or for those who enjoy walking or cycling, there is a considerable number of circular routes to explore. The full range of options can be found at :
www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr
www.cheminsdesparcs.fr

Access to the mountain Ranges

Between 1 June and 30 September, access to the mountain ranges is regulated by prefectural or even municipal orders. As forest areas are more exposed to the risk of fire, it is important to protect not only the sites but also anyone who wishes to visit them.

Two colour codes indicate access conditions for woodland areas

GREEN Access to the woodland area permitted
RED Access to the woodland area prohibited

Before setting off on any walk, it is essential to check the access conditions daily at https://www.risque-prevention-incendie.fr/bouches-du-rhone



Useful telephone numbers

18 Fire brigade
17 Police
15 Ambulance service
112 European emergency number
114 Number for people with hearing or speech difficulties

For further information, please contact the Tourist Offices of the Coeur de la Provence : +33 (0)4 90 91 03 52 and +33 (0)4 90 47 98 40.

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Communauté d'agglomération

Arles Crau Camargue Montagnette

Le Cœur de la Provence is the tourism brand of the Arles Crau Camargue Montagnette Urban Community

LE CŒUR DE LA PROVENCE
Tarascon-Crau-Montagnette

TOURIST OFFICES

62, rue des Halles - 13150 Tarascon - +33 (0)4 90 91 03 52

Avenue de la République - 13310 Saint-Martin-de-Crau - +33 (0)4 90 47 98 40

lecoeurdelaprovence@agglo-accm.fr / www.lecoeurdelaprovence.fr

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