

Lyon, France: Luxury & Culture at the Crossroads of Europe

Filled with beguiling cities, sleepy villages and long stretches of river and mountains, **Lyon** offers an extraordinary cultural journey through Europe's finest landscapes and famous districts — in style. This is the vacation to pamper you in the luxurious spas, boutique and historic hotels and fine arts theaters of the delectable French metropolis.



City of Lyon
Provided by Lyon CVB

Located in the very heart of Europe, this enchanting destination is the stepping stone to several destinations, including Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Milan, Brussels, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Munich, Prague and London. Lyon can be your starting point to sightseeing Europe's ancient landmarks, skiing in the Alps, savoring Southern France's distinct culinary and wine flavors or enjoying the natural surroundings of Western Europe by bike.

No matter how you decide to enrich your cultural experience, there's a variety of convenient transportation via air, train and car, providing you with more time to travel from Lyon to nearby destinations at your own pace. Especially for first-timers, Lyon presents the perfect place to begin any multi-country trips across Europe. The beautiful city full of vivacity and originality uniquely captures the essence of its vast history with the creative, modern spirit of Europe.

The Charms of Ancient Europe

Lyon lies nestled between the Rhône and Saône Rivers and the hills of Fourvière and la Croix-Rousse in the Rhône-Alps region, offering spectacular sceneries and remnants of its Gallo-Roman past. Encounter Lyon's greatest tradition of the "art of living" in its delectable cuisine. Commonly called the capital of gastronomy, the area boasts an elite selection of French restaurants serving mâchon and nouvelle specialties that will satisfy your appetite with hundreds of new savory and sweet tastes. Delight in the tender sausages or mouth-watering pastries found at a "bouchon," a bistro offering dishes unique to Lyon. At nightfall, watch the entire city transform into a living painting as the sparkling glow of lights illuminate more than 200 of its finest monuments.

In Old Lyon, you'll discover the district's undeniable charm found in its boutiques, bistros and courtyards, offering a similar ambiance to Italy. Its picturesque setting offers an array of characteristic red, blue, yellow and orange buildings lined along the banks of the Saône. It covers 46 city blocks and features much of Lyon's fascinating legacy — historical museums and medieval and Renaissance architecture — and a flourishing cultural scene of visual and performing arts.

Come across the region's best-kept historic remains in Europe's largest Renaissance quarter. Stroll down the narrow "traboules" (alleyways) found between the St. Paul and the Saint Jean Cathedral. Explore the interior courtyards and townhouses from the Middle Ages through these passageways, a unique and popular trademark of Lyon. See the hotel Cour des Loges, a popular tourist attraction that mixes Renaissance and ultra-modern architecture. Inside the building is a five-story-high, sand-colored atrium covered with a glass dome and filled with vivid, modern tapestries.



Old Lyon
Provided by Lyon CVB

Take the funicular (the world's oldest inclined railway that is still actively used) up the steep hill of Fourvière, home to the Basilica and Roman ruins, which jut out from its slopes. You'll spot La Tour Métallique, a widely recognized landmark that was built to rival the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The highest point in Lyon, the tower stands higher than the Eiffel Tower at 282 feet. On the south side are the ruins of the Gallo-Roman Amphitheater, which is now home to a museum and a series of concerts and operas throughout the summer, and the ruins of substantial Roman baths.

From the Esplanade, you'll see the town center and suburbs beyond the Tour de la Part Dieu as well as the slopes of the Croix-Rousse, Lyon's silk industry district. Catch sight of the Silk Workers Wall, the largest mural painting of its kind in Europe, along with 100 other "trompe-l'oeil" murals all over the city that unfold the stories of Lyon's celebrated heritage.

Where History and Modern Culture Meet

Downtown Lyon, also called the "Presqu'île," is the ideal departure point for easily exploring the historical center of the city. Place Bellecour, one of Europe's largest public squares, is a magnificent royal park with an eye-catching combination of modern design and Roman vestiges. It is the focal point of the city hosting the Lyon office of tourism and city post office and linking to the major shopping streets.

At present, Presqu'île is a bustling shopping and business district with one of Europe's longest pedestrian avenues, Rue de la République, which features several different art galleries and studios. The area also prides itself in important cultural establishments such as the Célestins Theater, Opera House and Palais Saint-Pierre Museum of Fine Arts. Take advantage of the area's chic shopping — wander down the row of designer fashion boutiques and silk shops by the nearby Rue Edouard Herriot Hotel.



Fourvière Hill
Provided by Lyon CVB



Place Bellecour
Provided by Lyon CVB

Stop by a few favorites from Lyon's culture, starting with the Saint Pierre Abbey, a haven of peace within the city streets that is now a public garden with a central fountain, flagstones and benches dating back to the 7th century. Be sure to visit the religious monuments of Saint Bonaventure, Saint Nizier and Saint Martin d'Ainay, one of the rare Roman churches preserved in Lyon. Housed in a former Benedictine abbey is the Fine Arts Museum, which contains the inspired Impressionist works of Picasso, Matisse, El Greco and Tintoretto in addition to collections of medieval sculptures and antiquities.

Just above the downtown district is the Terreaux quarter, a place with lively cafés that spill out onto the square in the summertime. Surrounded by some of the city's finest monuments, it was recently renovated to restore its original prestige and stand out as a symbol of the city. Terreaux quarter's most powerful display is the Bartholdi fountain, which combines with several mini fountains of black granite lined across the entire square for one impressive show.

Quartier Tête D'or is considered the peaceful residential area of Lyon, where aged buildings stand beside elegant boutiques. Nearby is Tête D'or Park, Lyon's only public garden housing botanical gardens and zoological park. Its panoramic views from the entryways and around the lake and diversity of the region's rose gardens, trees and other plants make this popular site worth seeing.

With such an endless selection of things to see and do in the Rhône-Alps region, you can be certain that you'll find the vacation fit for your unique interests.

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Place des Terreaux
Provided by Lyon CVB

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