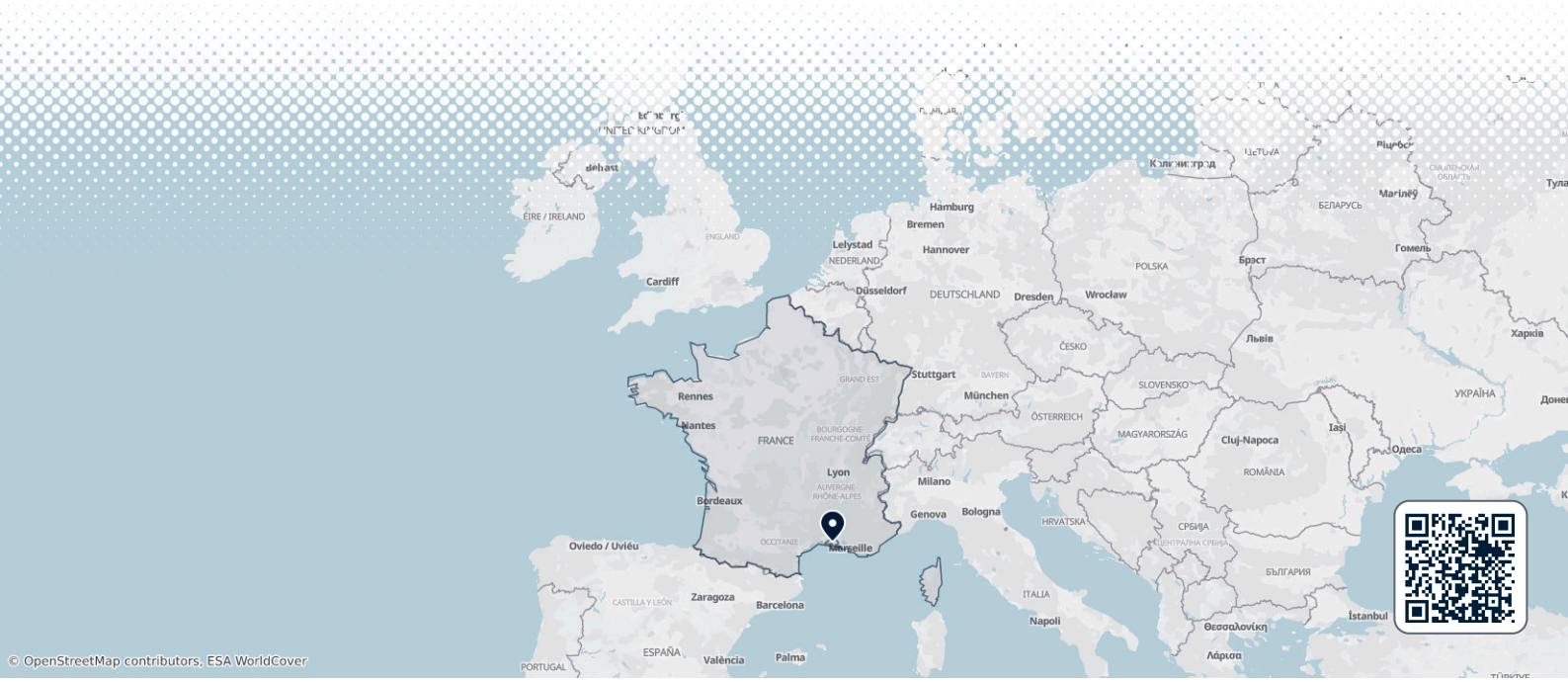


Camargue

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

The Camargue is the delta where the Rhône meets the Mediterranean. It is a flat land of lagoons, reed beds, salt pans, rice fields and long empty beaches. It is one of the largest river deltas in Western Europe and a protected regional park.

It suits travelers who want wildlife, big skies and slow days. You can see pink flamingos, white horses and black bulls in a single afternoon. Most visits are based in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer or Arles. Allow one or two days. Bring sun cream and insect repellent.

When to visit

Spring and early autumn are the best times for walking, cycling and bird watching. Summer is hot, bright and busy on the beaches, and mosquitoes are a problem near the water. Winter is quiet, mild and often windy.

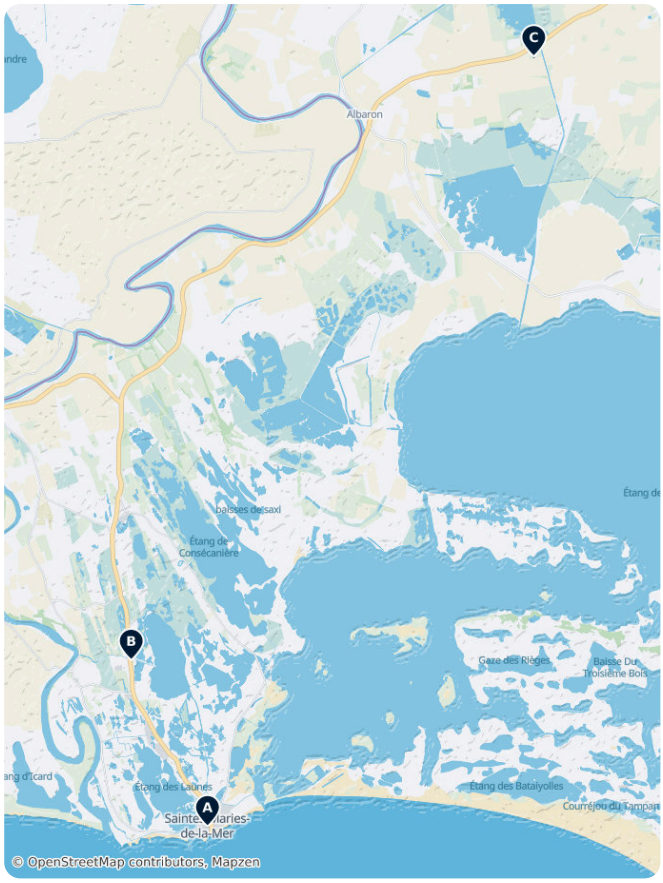
The biggest event is the Roma pilgrimage in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. It takes place on 24 and 25 May. Statues of the saints are carried to the sea. The town is very full then, so book rooms early. A smaller pilgrimage takes place in October.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	11° / 15° Feels like 6°	6° / 1°	Dry air
February	Good Good for hiking	12° / 16° Feels like 7°	6° / 1°	Dry air
March	Great Great for hiking	15° / 19° Feels like 10°	8° / 4°	Dry air
April	Great Great for hiking	18° / 22° Feels like 14°	11° / 7°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 26° Feels like 19°	14° / 10°	Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 31°	19° / 15°	☀ 22 sunny days
July	Great Great for the beach	28° / 32°	21° / 17°	☀ 25 sunny days
August	Great Great for the beach	28° / 32°	21° / 18°	☀ 23 sunny days · Humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 28°	17° / 13°	
October	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 24°	14° / 9°	Dry air
November	Good Good for cycling	15° / 19° Feels like 10°	10° / 4°	Dry air
December	Good Good for wildlife watching	12° / 16° Feels like 7°	7° / 1°	Dry air

Best months: May, June, July, August, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer is the main landmark of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. The fortified church dates from the 9th to 12th centuries and can be seen from far away. Inside, the crypt holds a statue of Sara, the patron saint of the Roma. A roof terrace gives views over the town, the sea and the delta.
- B Parc Ornithologique de Pont de Gau is the easiest place to see flamingos up close. Paths cross about 60 hectares of ponds and marshes. It lies on the D570 road, just north of Saintes-Maries.
- C Musée de la Camargue is a museum in an old farm between Arles and Saintes-Maries. Entry is paid; it is free on the first Sunday of each month. It explains the work of the cowboys, the bull herds and the delta's wetlands, and has a nature trail.
- **Salin-de-Giraud** is the center of salt production on the east side. Pink salt pans and a viewpoint over the works are the main draw. The Domaine de la Palissade, near the Rhône mouth, has marked trails through marsh and dunes.
- The **Étang de Vaccarès** is the large lagoon at the heart of the park. Roads and paths around its shore offer the best views of birds.
- The **lighthouses** of Faraman, Gacholle and Beauduc stand on the quiet coast. Reach them by car or bike for beach walks away from the crowds.

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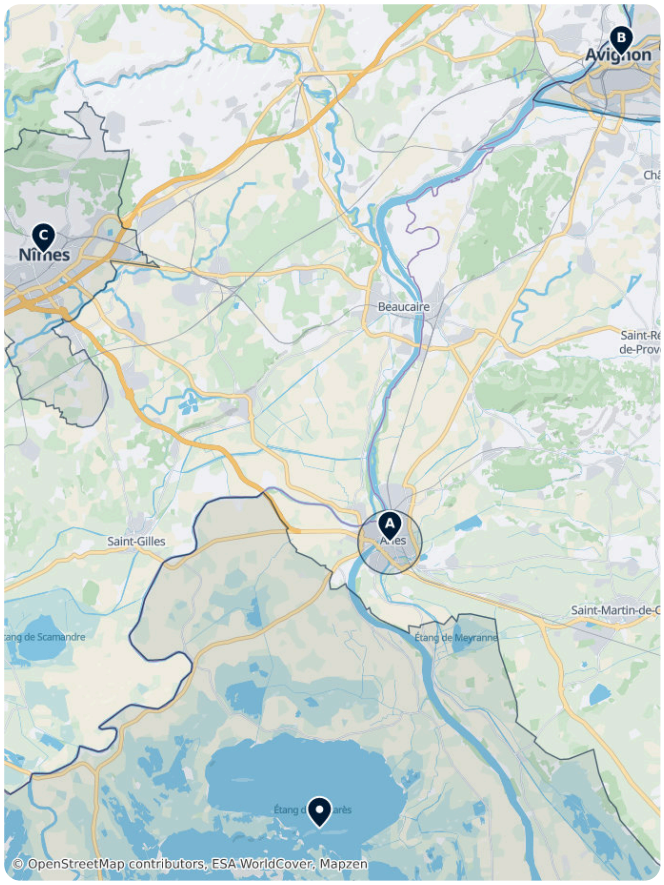
What to experience

- **Ride a white horse**: Local stables near Saintes-Maries offer rides along tracks and on the beach.
- **Boat trip on the Petit Rhône**: Short river cruises leave from Saintes-Maries. They are a calm way to see birds and herds from the water.
- **Watch a bull game**: In the Camargue style, bulls are not killed. Teams of young men try to take a ribbon from the bull's horns. Events take place in village arenas, mostly in summer.
- **Flamingo watching at dusk**: The lagoons are quietest in the early morning and the evening. Bring binoculars.
- **Join the May pilgrimage**: See the procession to the sea in Saintes-Maries on 24 and 25 May.
- **Quiet coast at sunset**: Walk or cycle near the Beauduc or Faraman lighthouses for wide, empty views.

Day trips

All times are from Arles, the usual base on the north side of the delta.

- Ⓐ Arles is the base. Allow a half day for its Roman monuments and Van Gogh trail.
- Aigues-Mortes is about 45 minutes by car to the west. This walled medieval town sits among salt marshes at the edge of the Petite Camargue.
- Ⓑ Avignon is about 20 minutes by train. The Palais des Papes and the old town make a full day.
- Ⓒ Nimes is about 40 minutes by car. It has a Roman arena and a well-kept Roman temple.
- Marseille is under one hour by train and works as a city day out.



Getting there

- **By air**: Marseille Provence Airport (MRS) is the main gateway, about 1 hour by road from Arles. Nîmes airport has some low-cost flights. Montpellier airport is also within reach.
- **By train**: TGV trains stop at Nimes, Avignon and Marseille. From there, regional trains reach Arles, the main rail stop for the Camargue. Avignon to Arles takes about 20 minutes. Marseille to Arles takes under one hour.
- **By bus**: A regional bus runs from the Arles train station to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in about one hour. There are several departures a day. Another line links Arles with Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône, near Salin-de-Giraud.
- Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer is about 38 km southwest of Arles. There is no train line into the delta.

Getting around

- **Public transport**: Buses are few and mostly link Arles with the coast. Check times before you go and buy tickets from the driver or at the Arles station. Regional buses and trains are on the Zou! regional transport site.
- **Car**: A car is the easiest way to reach the lagoons, salt pans and lighthouses. See the driving section.
- **Cycling**: The land is flat and bicycles are easy to rent in Saintes-Maries and Arles. Distances are long and the wind can be strong. The sun is hot in summer.
- **On foot**: Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer is small and walkable. Elsewhere, sights are far apart and you walk only on marked trails.
- **Guided trips**: Jeep tours, boat trips and horse rides cover places that are hard to reach alone.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Yes, for a full visit. Sights are spread out and buses are limited.
- **Roads**: The D570 links Arles and Saintes-Maries. Roads around the lagoon are narrow and often straight. Watch for cyclists and animals.
- **Ferry**: A small river ferry crosses the Grand Rhône near Salin-de-Giraud on the way to Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône.
- **Parking**: In summer, Saintes-Maries has paid parking near the center and fills up fast. Park at the edge of town and walk.
- **Beach tracks**: Roads to Beauduc and other far beaches are rough tracks. Drive slowly and check the surface before you go.

Food & drink

Look for local Camargue rice and bull meat. The classic dish is *gardiane*, a slow stew of bull meat in red wine. Fish from the coast and clams are common near Saintes-Maries. Salt from the delta is sold as a souvenir.

The best choice is to eat in the center of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, near the church and the beach front, or in Arles. Many farms also serve lunch to visitors.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

The Camargue is a safe place for visitors. Petty theft from parked cars at beaches and nature sites does happen, so leave nothing in view.

- **Mosquitoes**: They are common in summer, so bring repellent and long sleeves in the evening.
- **Sun and wind**: There is little shade. Bring water, a hat and sun cream. The mistral wind can blow strongly.
- **Animals**: Bulls and horses live in open fields. Stay on the road side of fences and do not enter pastures.
- **Swimming**: Check flags on beaches. Some beaches have no lifeguards.

History

The delta is built from mud carried by the Rhône. People have mined salt on this coast since ancient times. Industrial salt works began in the 19th century, and Salin-de-Giraud grew around them.

Tradition says that Mary Jacobé and Mary Salomé landed on this coast by boat after the Crucifixion. The town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer takes its name from them. The fortified Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer was built to protect the shrine and the people. Sara, who is linked to the story, became a patron saint for the Roma, who come each year in May.

The regional park was created in 1970. The central area around the Vaccarès lagoon has been protected for longer. The park helps farming, salt making and wildlife share the land. The Musée de la Camargue tells this story and the life of the cowboys.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

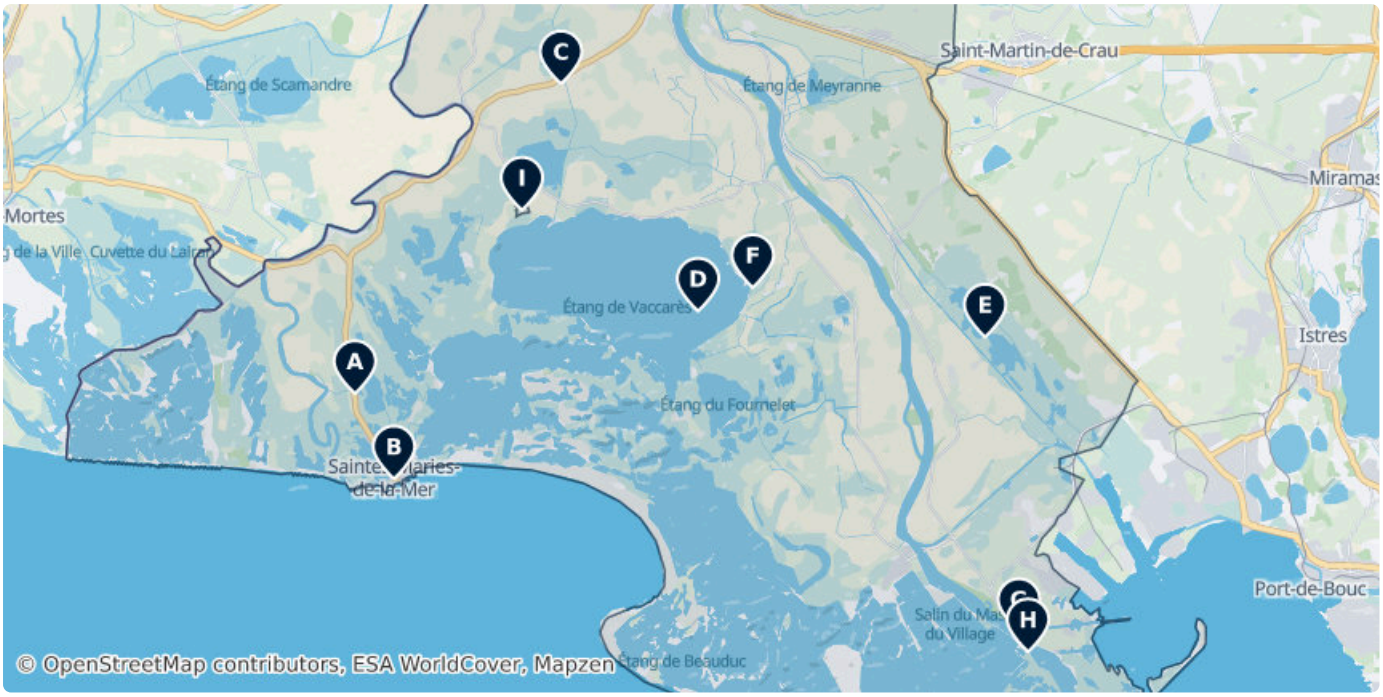
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Parc naturel régional de Camargue Essentials

The Parc naturel régional de Camargue encompasses the Rhône delta, a landscape defined by salt marshes, lagoons, and rice fields. This collection features the Romanesque fortified church of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and the Musée de la Camargue, which details local human history and traditional activities. Nature enthusiasts can observe flamingos at the Pont de Gau Ornithological Park or explore the Marais du Vigueirat and Domaine de la Palissade reserves. The area also highlights historical structures like the 18th-century Tour Saint-Louis and the unique biodiversity of the Vaccarès Lagoon.



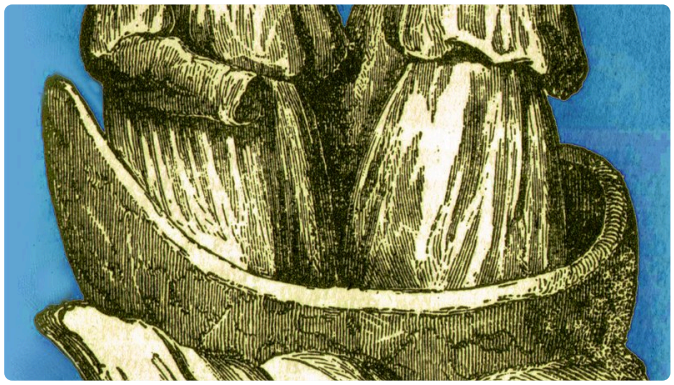


Ⓐ Ornithological Park

Come to this area to observe abundant wildlife. The reservation is a perfect birdwatching spot for its high number of bird species.

Rte d'Arles, 13460 Saintes Maries de la Mer, France
(43.48890, 4.40424)

parcornithologique.com, +33 4 90 97 82 62



Ⓑ Church of the Saintes Maries de la Mer

The Church of the Saintes Maries de la Mer is a Romanesque fortified church built in the 9th century in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in...

2 Place Jean XXIII, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer 13460, France
(43.45160, 4.42782)



C Camargue Museum

Housed in a former barn, this museum explains the history of the Camargue region with a focus on human activities.

Mas du pont de Rousty, 13200 Arles, France (43.62422, 4.52863)

Oct 01-Mar 31 Mo–Su	10:00–12:30, 13:00–17:00
Apr 01-Sep 30 Mo–Su	09:00–12:30, 13:00–18:00

museedelacamargue.com, +33 4 90 97 10 82



D Parc naturel régional de Camargue

The Parc naturel régional de Carmargue is a protected area which was designated in 1970 along the shoreline of the Camargue, France.

13460, France (43.52497, 4.61130)

parc-camargue.fr



E Marais du Vigueirat Nature Reserve

The delta of the Rhône has enabled the formation of a rare swamp ecosystem. There are many hiking trails for visitors around.

13104, France (43.51359, 4.78461)

marais-vigueirat.reserves-naturelles.or... , +33 4 90 98 70 91

F Interpretive Nature Center La Capelière

Discover the secrets of the Vaccarès Lagoon and the Camargue National Reserve in this visitor center. You can buy souvenirs here, too.

La Capelière, 13200 Arles, France (43.53530, 4.64435)

Mo–Su	09:00–13:00, 14:00–17:00

reserve-camargue.org/La-Capeliere,433, +33 4 90 97 00 97

G Tour Saint-Louis

Built in 1737, this historic tower in Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône houses a significant ornithological collection. Its terrace provides panoramic views of the Rhône delta, the salt marshes, and the surrounding nature reserve.

11 Quai Bonnardel, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône 13230, France (43.38469, 4.80498)

H Domaine de la Palissade

A 702-hectare protected natural site located at the mouth of the Grand Rhône. It features marked hiking trails through lagoons and salt marshes, preserving the delta's original landscape outside the modern dikes.

Domaine de la Palissade, 13129, France (43.37586, 4.81051)

palissade.fr, +33 4 42 86 81 28

I Domaine Paul Ricard de Méjanes

An agricultural estate on the shores of the Vaccarès lagoon featuring a 13th-century Templar building. The site hosts traditional Camargue bull and horse demonstrations and offers a small tourist train for exploring the landscape.

Domaine de Méjanes 13460, France (43.56907, 4.50504)

mejanes-camargue.fr, +33 4 90 97 10 10

Camargue Wetlands Birding Spots

The Camargue's unique ecosystem features a vast network of brackish lagoons, freshwater marshes, and reed beds. This selection highlights key birdwatching sites, including the specialized wooden observatories of the Marais du Vigueirat and the expansive ponds of the Domaine de la Palissade. These protected wetlands serve as essential habitats for greater flamingos, herons, and diverse migratory species within the Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue.



A La plate-forme de la bergerie

Elevated wooden viewing platform overlooking the Vigueirat Marshes.

(43.53755, 4.75590)

B Observatoire de la Panulette

Wooden bird hide located within the Marais du Vigueirat protected area.

(43.53779, 4.75007)

C observatoire des aulnes

Bird observation hut situated among alder trees in the Vigueirat Marshes.

(43.53511, 4.64631)

D Observatoire des tamaris

Sheltered bird hide named after the surrounding tamarisk shrubs.

(43.53224, 4.64408)

E Observatoire ornithologique

Traditional birdwatching hide located within the wetland zones of the regional park.

(43.45203, 4.64812)

F Observatoire des Ormes

Wheelchair-accessible bird hide in the Vigueirat Marshes, named for the local elm trees.

(43.53583, 4.64522)

G Étang de Meyranne

Large pond located in the northern Camargue region, near Arles.

13200, France (43.62141, 4.68314)

H Marais de Meyranne

Freshwater marshland system providing habitat for local waterfowl.

13200, France (43.62251, 4.69503)

I Marais de Carapasse

Coastal wetland area situated near Aigues-Mortes.

13460, France (43.53770, 4.31898)

J Baisse de Pilaron

Shallow seasonal wetland typical of the Camargue's salt-influenced landscape.

13460, France (43.46531, 4.50817)

K They de Béricles et de la Palissade

Alluvial lands located at the mouth of the Grand Rhône within the Domaine de la Palissade.

13129, France (43.35439, 4.81330)

L Étang Redon

Shallow lagoon located within the central Camargue nature reserve.

13200, France (43.47301, 4.65491)

M Marais de la Palunette

Extensive marshland area used for bird conservation and environmental monitoring.

13460, France (43.49854, 4.63723)

N Baisse Du Troisième Bois

Small pond and wetland area surrounded by riparian woodland.

(43.48699, 4.54678)

O Marais de Grenouillet

Protected marshland area known for its diverse dragonfly and bird populations.

13200, France (43.51958, 4.65647)

P Étang de Consécanière

Large brackish pond located in the heart of the Camargue delta.

13460, France (43.51203, 4.43139)

Q Étang de Tampan

Shallow water body situated near the Vaccarès lagoon.

13460, France (43.45054, 4.57445)

R La Gacholle

Site of a historic lighthouse on the dike between the sea and the Vaccarès lagoon.

13129, France (43.35873, 4.82601)

S Baisse Claire

Clear shallow wetland area within the Domaine de la Palissade.

13129, France (43.36340, 4.81456)

T Étang de la Grande Palun

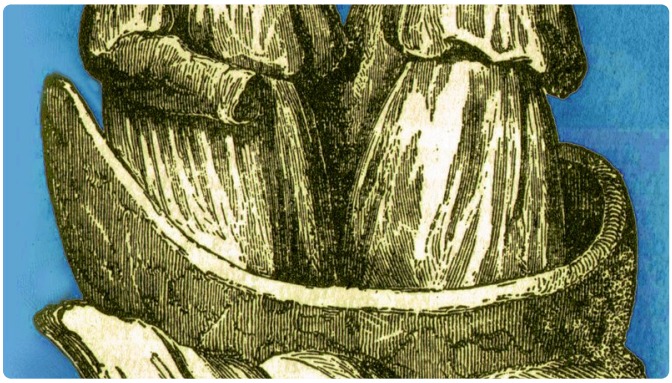
Large coastal pond located near the mouth of the Rhône river.

13129, France (43.35220, 4.81166)

Camargue Heritage Trail

Explore the cultural and historical landscape of the Camargue through its architectural landmarks and traditional industries. This trail highlights the region's unique identity, featuring the 9th-century fortified church of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, the 18th-century Château d'Avignon, and specialized museums dedicated to salt and rice production. Discover the heritage of the gardian culture at historic estates like Domaine de Méjanes and visit the bullrings that host traditional Camargue events. The list also includes diverse religious sites, from Greek Orthodox churches in Salin-de-Giraud to the iconic Romanesque Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer.





A Church of the Saintes Maries de la Mer

The Church of the Saintes Maries de la Mer is a Romanesque fortified church built in the 9th century in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in...

2 Place Jean XXIII, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer 13460, France
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B Camargue Museum

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Oct 01-Mar 31 Mo–Su	10:00–12:30, 13:00–17:00
Apr 01-Sep 30 Mo–Su	09:00–12:30, 13:00–18:00

museedelacamargue.com, +33 4 90 97 10 82

C Ecomuseum of Salt

Salt has been mined in this region for a long time and this museum explains the process of its extraction and processing.

Place Pechiney, 13129 Arles, France (43.40462, 4.72425)

+33 4 42 86 70 20

D Camargue Museum of Rice

Rice has been grown in the Camargue region for a long time. This museum presents its cropping and further processing.

(Unnamed Road), 13200, France (43.49639, 4.71358)

maisonduriz.com, +33 6 38 16 56 90

E Musée de la Camargue

Located in a former sheepfold, this museum explores the evolution of the Rhone delta, focusing on the relationship between humans and the natural environment.

Route des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, 13200 Arles (43.62414, 4.52869)

Oct 01-Mar 31 Mo–Su	10:00–12:30, 13:00–17:00
Apr 01-Sep 30 Mo–Su	09:00–12:30, 13:00–18:00

museedelacamargue.com

F Maison du Riz

Dedicated to the history of rice farming in the Rhone delta, this museum displays traditional tools and explains the irrigation techniques used in the region's paddies.

(Unnamed Road), 13123, France (43.61361, 4.45480)

Mo–Su	09:30–12:30, 14:00–18:00

maisonduriz.com, +33 6 31 03 40 11

G Domaine Paul Ricard de Méjanes

A historic 600-hectare estate featuring a traditional bullring, a small tourist train, and agricultural displays focused on Camargue traditions and horse breeding.

Domaine de Méjanes 13460, France (43.56907, 4.50504)

mejanes-camargue.fr, +33 4 90 97 10 10

H Tour Saint-Louis

Built in 1737, this defensive tower served as a watchtower and lighthouse. It now houses a tourist office and a significant collection of ornithological specimens.

11 Quai Bonnardel, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône 13230, France (43.38469, 4.80498)

I Entrepôts Maritimes de la Compagnie Générale de Navigation

Industrial maritime warehouses reflecting the 19th-century commercial history of Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône and the development of navigation on the Rhone.

6 Rue Pasteur, Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône 13230, France (43.38493, 4.80538)

J Château d'Avignon

An 18th-century neo-Renaissance manor notable for its pioneering 19th-century modernizations, including early electricity and central heating, set within a vast wooded estate.

Route du Château d'Avignon, 13460 Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, France (43.55855, 4.41023)

K Arènes des Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer

Inaugurated in 1931, this seaside amphitheater hosts traditional course camarguaise bull games, where raseteurs attempt to retrieve ribbons from the bulls' horns.

Avenue Théodore Aubanel 6, 13460 Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (43.44990, 4.42699)

Oct 01-May 31 We–Su	10:00–17:00
Jun 01-Sep 30 Mo–Su	10:00–18:00

museedessaintesmariesdelamer.fr, +33 4 65 07 66 26

L Arènes Titi Boncoeur

A municipal bullring used for local festivals and traditional Camargue bullfighting events.

(43.39460, 4.80244)

M Église Orthodoxe de la Dormition de la Toute Sainte-Mère de Dieu

A Greek Orthodox church built in the 1950s to serve the community of Greek salt workers who settled in Salin-de-Giraud.

Rue du Jeu de Mail, Salin-de-Giraud 13129, France (43.40799, 4.73206)

N Église Saint-Honorat

A local parish church serving the village of Mas-Thibert in the heart of the Camargue.

2 Rue de la Forge, Mas-Thibert 13104, France (43.55729, 4.72552)

O Église de la Nativité de la Vierge

A small village church located in Le Sambuc, representing the rural religious architecture of the Rhone delta.

12 Chemin de l'Église, Le Sambuc 13200, France (43.52359, 4.71661)

P Église de Barcarin

A religious site located near the Barcarin ferry crossing, serving the local community in this industrial and agricultural sector.

415 Chemin de l'Église de Barcarin, Salin-de-Giraud 13129, France (43.42361, 4.73574)

Q Mosquée Arrahma

A local place of worship serving the Muslim community in Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône.

(43.39417, 4.80760)

R Église Orthodoxe

An Orthodox place of worship reflecting the diverse migrant history of the salt-producing regions in the southern Camargue.

(43.38781, 4.80407)

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