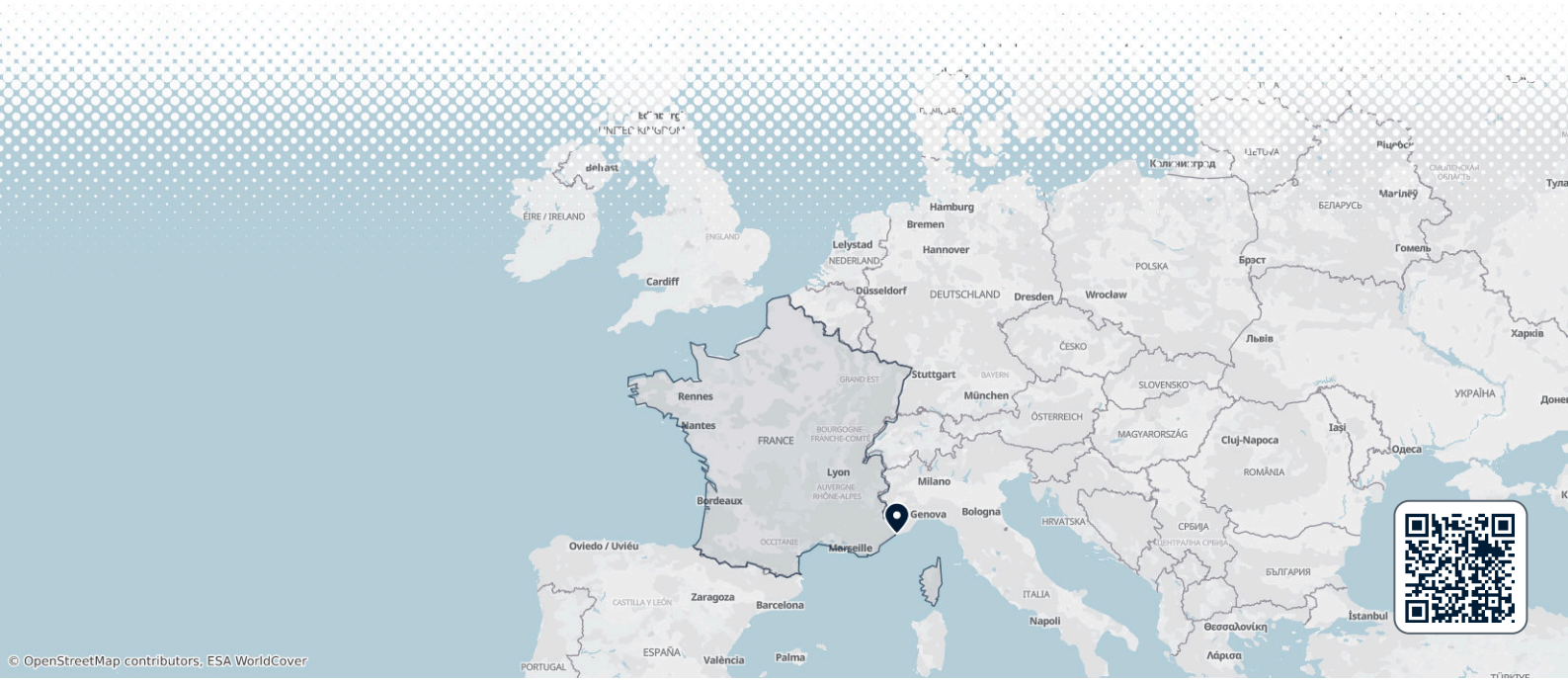


# Menton

French Riviera · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic

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## Overview

Menton is a small seaside town on the French Riviera, right at the Italian border. About 30,000 people live here. It is calmer and quieter than Nice or Cannes. Hills behind the town block cold winds, so winters are mild. That is why it became a winter resort for British and Russian visitors in the 19th century.

Lemons are the symbol of the town, and the local gardens are famous for rare plants. The old town climbs a hill above the harbour. Pastel houses and Belle Époque villas line the seafront. Menton suits a relaxed stay of two to four nights, with easy day trips to Monaco and Italy.

## When to visit

May, June, September and October are the best months. It is warm and sunny, and the sea is good for swimming from June to September. July and August are hot and busy. Rain falls mostly in October and November. Winters are mild, which is why many visitors come in the cooler months.

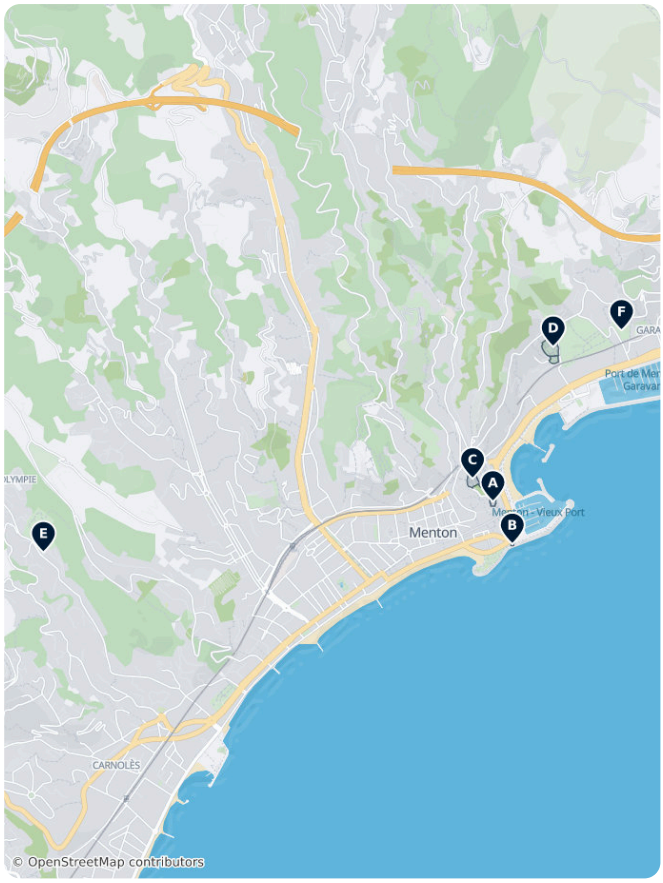
The biggest event is the Lemon Festival. It runs from mid-February into early March. Floats and large sculptures are covered in lemons and oranges. It is the main reason to visit in winter, so book rooms early.

| MONTH | CONDITIONS | DAY °C avg / max | NIGHT °C avg / min | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 11° / 15°<br>Feels like 8° | 5° / 2° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| February | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 12° / 15°<br>Feels like 9° | 5° / 0° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| March | Fair<br>Fair for sightseeing | 14° / 18° | 7° / 4° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| April | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 16° / 20° | 10° / 6° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| May | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 20° / 24° | 14° / 10° | Calm winds |
| June | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 24° / 28° | 18° / 14° | Humid air · Calm winds |
| July | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 26° / 30° | 21° / 17° | ☀ 25 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds |
| August | Good<br>Good for the beach | 27° / 30° | 21° / 18° | ☀ 23 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds |
| September | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 23° / 27° | 18° / 14° | Calm winds |
| October | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 19° / 23° | 14° / 10° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| November | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 15° / 19° | 10° / 5° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| December | Poor<br>Poor for sightseeing | 12° / 15° | 7° / 2° | Dry air · Calm winds |

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

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

## Top sights




- A Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange is the main landmark of the old town. It is a baroque church from the 17th century with a 53 m bell tower. The pebble-mosaic square in front of it is also worth a look.
- B Musée Jean Cocteau - Le Bastion is a small 17th-century fort on the harbour. The artist and film maker *Jean Cocteau* turned it into a museum. He also made the mosaics on its floors and walls. It is closed on Tuesdays.
- C Cimetière du Vieux Château lies in terraces on the old castle hill. It has wide views over the old port and the bay. It also has a Russian section with a small chapel, and old tombs of foreign winter visitors.
- D Jardin botanique du Val Rahmeh is an exotic botanical garden on the east side of town. It is run as a research garden for Mediterranean plants and is open to visitors. It is closed on Tuesdays.
- E Serre de la Madone is a terraced garden among old olive trees, west of the centre. The English gardener *Lawrence Johnston* made it between 1924 and 1939. It is closed on Mondays, and hours are shorter from January to March.
- F Fontana Rosa is a historic villa and garden near Garavan station. The Spanish writer *Vicente Blasco Ibáñez* began to build it in 1922. It has been a listed monument since 1990. Visits are only possible with the city heritage service.
- The Palais Carnolès was a summer palace of the princes of Monaco. It now holds the fine arts museum. Its large garden has one of the biggest citrus collections in Europe.

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## What to experience

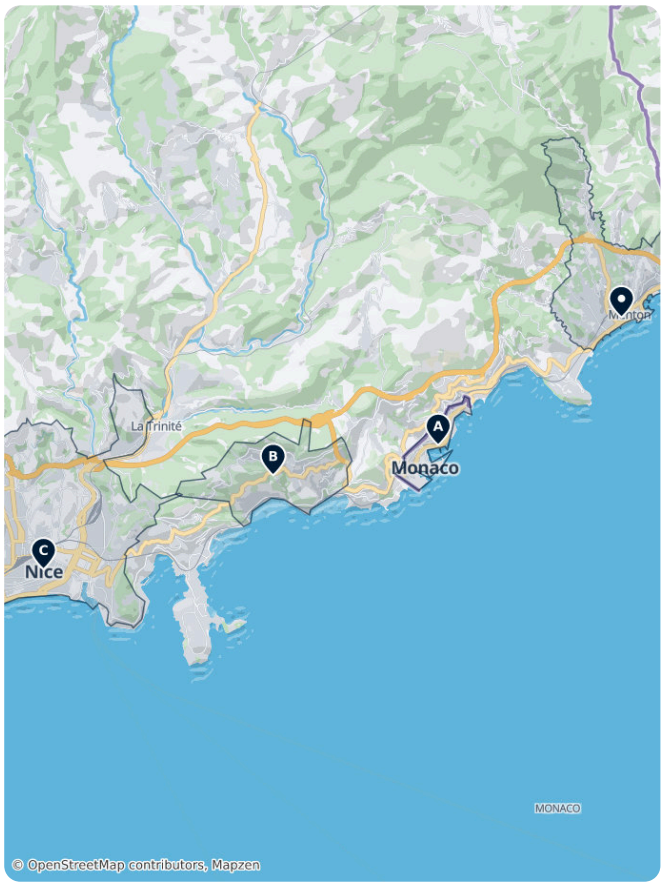
Menton's best moments follow the seasons and the festivals.

- **Lemon Festival**: In February and March, join the crowds for the parade of floats made of citrus fruit. Large fruit sculptures stand in the Biovès gardens.
- **Menton Music Festival**: Every August, concerts take place on the square in front of the basilica.
- **Swim in the sea**: From June to September, the beaches below the old town are popular.
- **Garden walks in winter**: The mild winters make the gardens pleasant to visit from late autumn to early spring.

## Day trips

Menton is close to Monaco and Italy, and trains run along the whole coast. These trips are listed from closest to farthest.

- Roquebrune-Cap-Martin: about 10 min by train. It has a medieval hill village and a coastal walk around Cap Martin, where *Le Corbusier* built a small seaside cabin.
- A Monaco: about 10 min by train. See the old town on the Rock, the Prince's Palace and the famous casino.
- Ventimiglia, Italy: a short train ride east. The big street market on Friday is popular. Nearby you can see the Balzi Rossi prehistoric caves and the Hanbury Gardens. Carry your ID.
- B Eze: about 30 min by train to the coast. The village sits on a hill above the sea, and you climb to it by a steep path or by bus.
- C Nice: about 40 min by train. It has the Old Town, the seafront and many museums.




## Where to explore

Menton is the last big town on the French side of the coast. Most of the Riviera lies to the west.

- Close by: Monaco and Eze.
- Big city: Nice, with the main airport and many train links.
- Further west along the coast: Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Antibes and Cannes.
- Inland: Grasse, the old perfume town.

## Getting there

- **By air**: The nearest major airport is Nice Côte d'Azur (NCE). Direct bus 80 runs from both terminals to Menton via Monaco. Buy a ticket before boarding or tap a bank card on the validator. You can also take the tram to Nice and then the train. Nice airport: public transport
- **By train**: Regional TER trains run from Nice to Menton in about 40 minutes. About 60 trains run each day. The line continues to Ventimiglia in Italy. A direct high-speed TGV runs from Paris in season. SNCF Connect
- **By bus**: Line 600 runs between Nice, Monaco and Menton, every 10 to 15 minutes on weekdays. Tap your bank card or phone on board. A ticket costs about 2 €. It is cheaper than the train but slower.
- **From Italy**: Trains and buses link Menton with Ventimiglia, just across the border.

## Getting around

- **On foot**: The old town, the harbour, the seafront and the Biovès gardens are all close together. Old-town streets are steep stairs. Some gardens are uphill.
- **Train**: Menton has three stations, Carnolès, Menton and Menton-Garavan. They are useful for the west and east ends of town and for Monaco.
- **Bus**: Regional line 600 stops along the coast. You can tap a bank card or phone on board. The fare is about 2 €.
- **Cycling**: The seafront is flat, but the hills are steep. Cycling is only practical along the coast.

### Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

**High**

The old town, harbour and seafront are close together. Old-town streets and some gardens are steep.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Low**

The seafront is flat, but the hills behind the town are steep.

## Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for a stay in town. The old town, gardens and stations are easy to reach without a car. A car helps for hill villages inland.
- **Parking**: Underground car parks and paid street parking are in the centre. Old-town streets are narrow, so park outside and walk.
- **Traffic**: The coast road is busy in summer and during the Lemon Festival.

# Food & drink

The Menton lemon is the star of local food. Look for lemon tart, lemon jam and lemon liqueur. The food mixes Niçoise and Ligurian styles, so pasta, pizza and pissaladière are common.

For eating, go to the streets around the covered market. It was built in 1898. The old harbour quay has many restaurants with sea views. The alleys of the old town have smaller places.

## 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

Menton is calm and safe for visitors. Pickpockets are the main risk. They work in crowds, such as during the Lemon Festival, and on busy trains. Keep bags closed and valuables close.

The summer sun is strong, so use shade, sun cream and water. Old-town steps can be slippery when wet.

## History

The Grimaldi family of Monaco ruled Menton from 1346. The town joined France in 1860. The princes built the Musée Jean Cocteau - Le Bastion as a harbour defence in 1636. Prince Honoré II ordered the Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange in the 17th century.

On the castle hill, the Cimetière du Vieux Château stands where a ruined 13th-century castle once was. In the 19th century, doctors praised the mild winter climate. British and Russian visitors came and built hotels and villas. A Russian section in the cemetery dates from 1880. In the 20th century, *Jean Cocteau* left his mark on town hall and harbour. He decorated the town hall's wedding room in the 1950s.

## Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

**CURRENCY**
**EUR €**

**EMERGENCY**
**112**

**ELECTRICITY**



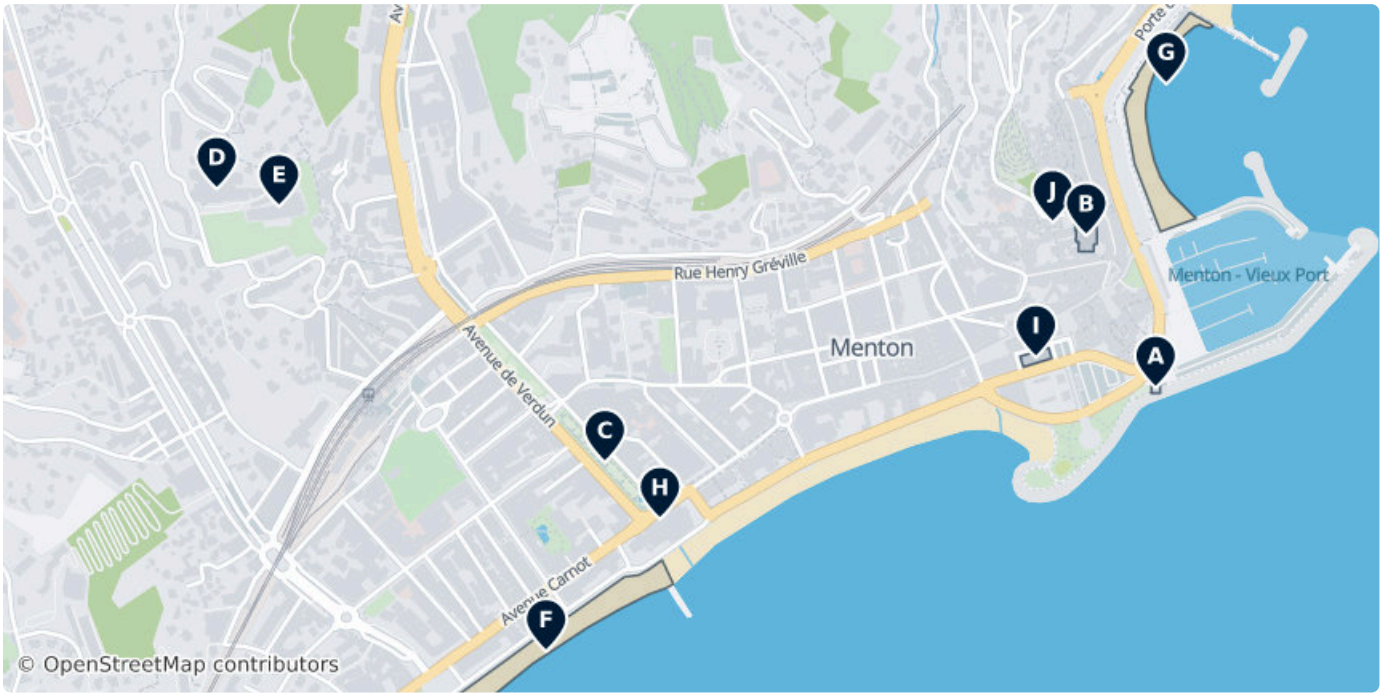
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

**LANGUAGES**
French

**TAP WATER**
**Safe to drink**

# Menton's Must-See Gems

Menton features a collection of Belle Époque architecture and Baroque religious sites concentrated in its historic center. The 17th-century Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange and the adjacent Chapelle de l'Immaculée Conception dominate the old town skyline. Cultural landmarks include the Musée Jean Cocteau, housed in a seaside bastion, and grand former hotels like the Riviera Palace. The town's horticultural identity is centered at Jardins Biovès, while the Marché Couvert, dating to 1898, remains the hub for regional produce and Menton lemons.



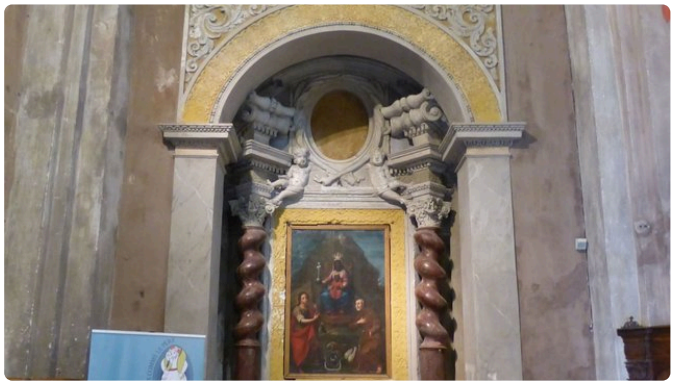



## A Musée Jean Cocteau - Le Bastion

A 17th-century fort restored by Jean Cocteau to house his mosaics, tapestries, and drawings overlooking the harbor.

2 Place Fontana, Menton 06500, France (43.77480, 7.50846)

menton.fr/Musee-Jean-Cocteau-le-B..., + 33 (0)4 93 18 82 61



## B Basilique Saint-Michel-Archange

17th-century Baroque masterpiece featuring a 53-meter bell tower and a parvis decorated with a traditional pebble mosaic.

7 Rue des Écoles Pies, Menton 06500, France (43.77694, 7.50711)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mo–Fr | 15:00–17:00 |
| Sa | 10:00–12:00, 15:00–17:00 |

menton.fr/la-basilique-saint-michel-archange.html



## C jardins Biovès

Public gardens that serve as the main venue for the annual Lemon Festival, featuring permanent floral displays and fountains.

6 Avenue Boyer, Menton 06500, France (43.77375, 7.49773)

## D Riviera Palace

A former luxury hotel completed in 1898, representing the height of Belle Époque architecture in the French Riviera.

(Unnamed Road), Menton 06500, France (43.77759, 7.49016)

menton.fr/Les-Palaces-de-Menton.html

## E Hôtel Winter Palace

Historic monument built in 1901, this grand former hotel is a key example of the town's early 20th-century resort architecture.

Chemin du Rosaire, 06500 Menton, France (43.77735, 7.49138)

menton.fr/Les-Palaces-de-Menton.html

## F Plage du Casino

A central pebblestone beach located along the Promenade du Soleil near the town's casino.

(43.77109, 7.49658)

## G Plage des Sablettes

A man-made sandy beach located at the foot of the old town, offering shallow waters and views of the Italian border.

(43.77907, 7.50866)

## H Casino Barrière

Art Deco entertainment complex on the seafront featuring gaming rooms, a theater, and a restaurant.

(43.77295, 7.49880)



## I Marché Couvert

Belle Époque market hall built in 1898 by architect Adrien Rey, specializing in local citrus, Socca, and regional produce.

1 Rue Gélis, Menton 06500, France (43.77523, 7.50612)



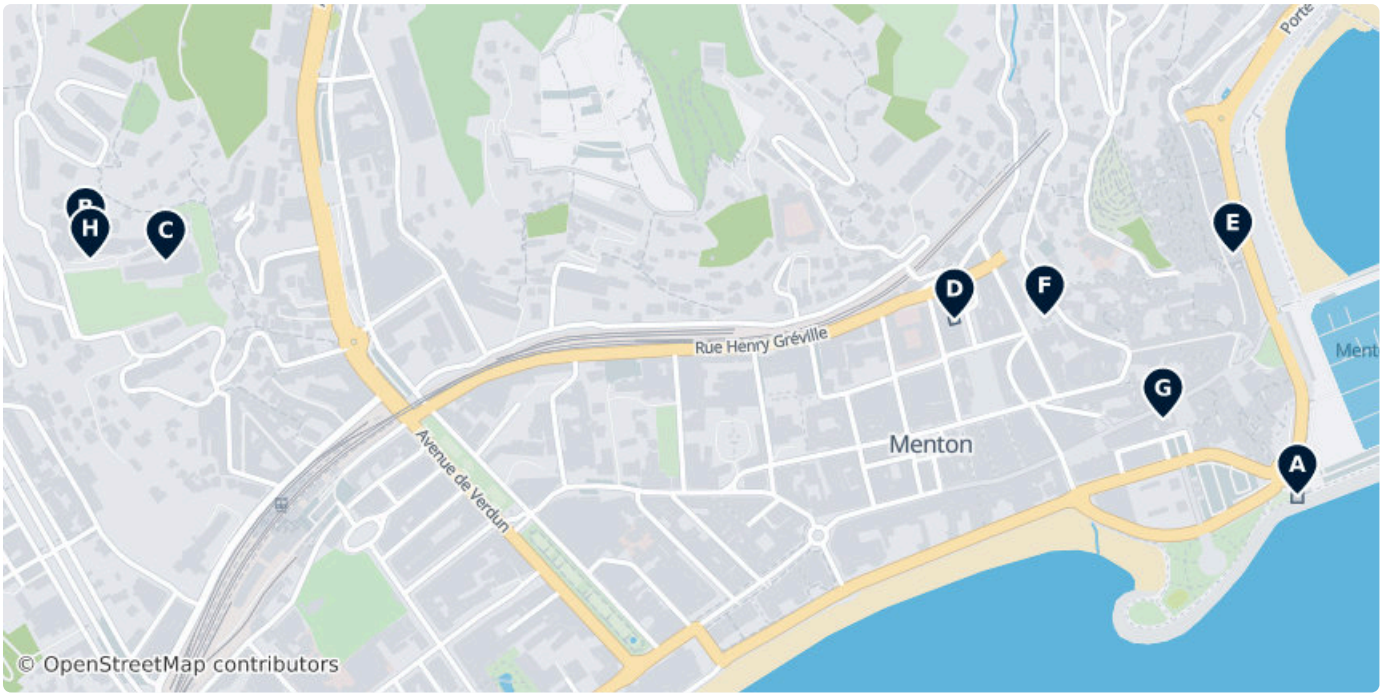
## J Chapelle de l'Immaculée Conception

A 17th-century Baroque chapel belonging to the White Penitents, situated on the square directly above the main basilica.

2 Montée du Souvenir, Menton 06500, France (43.77713, 7.50645)

# Regional Heritage Sites

Explore Menton's architectural history through this collection of 17th-century fortifications, 18th-century town mansions, and opulent Belle Époque hotels. The list features military sites like Le Bastion, restored by Jean Cocteau, alongside grand palaces such as the Winter Palace and Riviera Palace that defined the town's golden age of tourism. These sites showcase the transition from defensive structures to the decorative residential styles of the early 20th century.






## A Musée Jean Cocteau - Le Bastion

A 17th-century fort built by the Princes of Monaco. In the 1960s, artist Jean Cocteau restored the structure to house his works, including mosaics, tapestries, and ceramics.

2 Place Fontana, Menton 06500, France (43.77480, 7.50846)

menton.fr/Musee-Jean-Cocteau-le-B..., + 33 (0)4 93 18 82 61

## B Riviera Palace

Built in 1898 by architect Abel Glena, this former luxury hotel is a landmark of Belle Époque architecture, featuring eclectic stylistic elements and a commanding view of the coast.

(Unnamed Road), Menton 06500, France (43.77759, 7.49016)

menton.fr/Les-Palaces-de-Menton.html

## C Hôtel Winter Palace

Designed by architect Albert Tournaire and completed in 1901, this former grand hotel represents the height of Menton's Belle Époque era, noted for its monumental facade and historic gardens.

Chemin du Rosaire, 06500 Menton, France
(43.77735, 7.49138)

menton.fr/Les-Palaces-de-Menton.html

## D Maison de la rue Loredan-Larchey

A residential building constructed in 1910, showcasing the early 20th-century architectural style of the region.

15 Rue Lorédan Larchey, Menton 06500, France
(43.77671, 7.50328)

## E Hôtel Pretti

An 18th-century town mansion, also known as the Hôtel Pretti de Saint-Ambroise, located in the historic heart of the town.

Rampes Saint-Michel, 06500 Menton, France
(43.77743, 7.50749)

## F Villa les Mouettes

An early 20th-century villa located near the Léopold-Bernstamm staircase, typical of the residential architecture developed during Menton's expansion.

7 Promenade du Val de Menton, Menton 06500, France
(43.77675, 7.50464)

## G Hôtel Adhémar de Lantagnac

An 18th-century private mansion built in 1775 for the Adhémar de Lantagnac family, featuring period architectural details.

24 Rue Saint-Michel, Menton 06500, France
(43.77563, 7.50643)

## H Riviera Palace

A significant Belle Époque monument and former hotel designed by Abel Glena, dating back to 1898.

(43.77737, 7.49024)

## DATA SOURCES

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