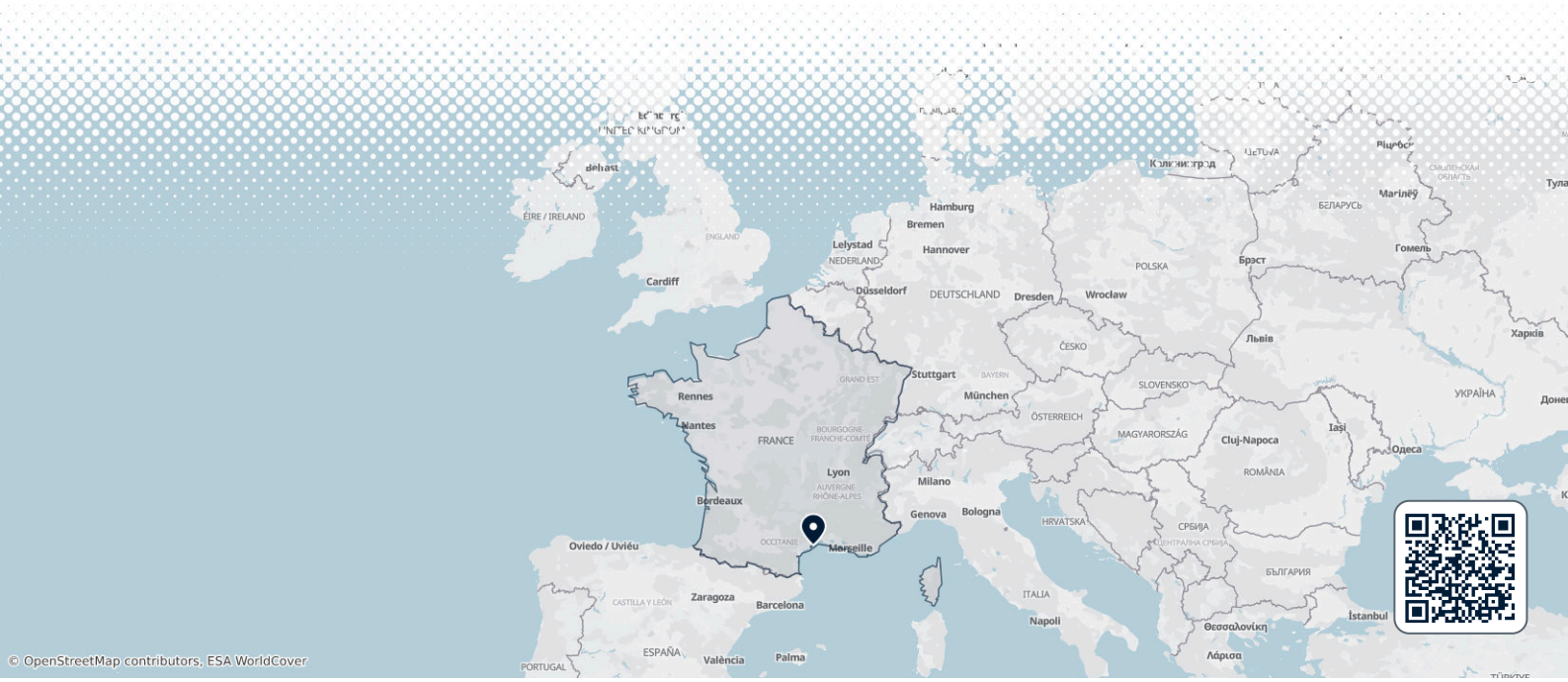


Sète

Occitania · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Sète is a working port and seaside town on a small hill between the Mediterranean and the Étang de Thau lagoon. Canals run through the centre, fishing boats tie up along the quays, and the town has a strong local identity. It feels more like a real fishing town than a resort.

It suits a relaxed stay of two to three nights. Come for seafood, canal-side walks, local museums, city beaches and views from Mont Saint-Clair. The poet *Paul Valéry* and the singer *Georges Brassens* were both born here, and their legacy is part of the town.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best times: warm days, calm crowds and a sea warm enough for a swim by early summer. July and August are hot, busy and full of events. Winter is mild but wet, and some seasonal services close.

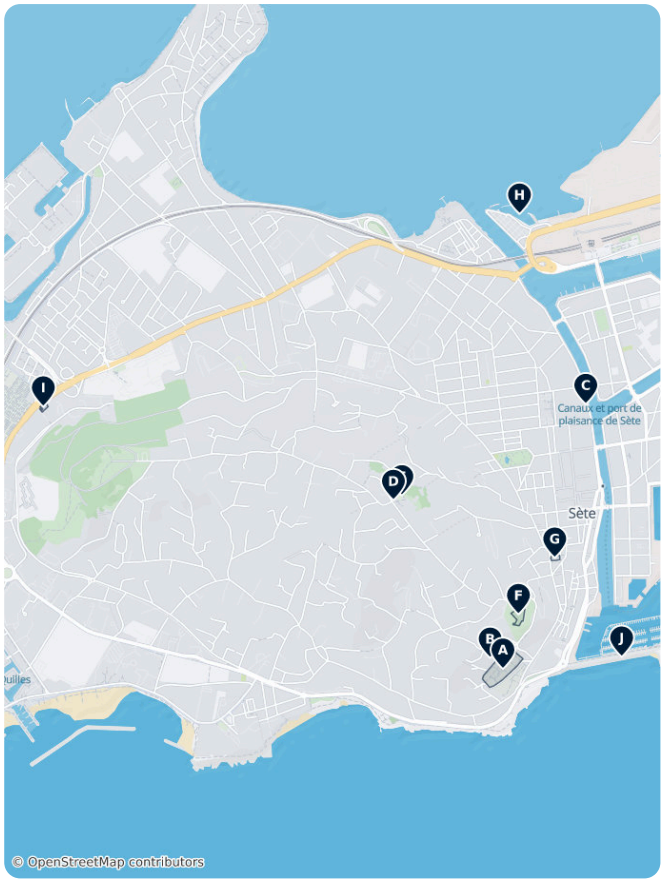
The biggest annual event is the Saint-Louis festival in August. It lasts about a week and centres on the water jousting tournaments on the canal, with concerts, street bodegas and fireworks. Book your stay well ahead if you want to be here for it.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 15° Feels like 7°	6° / 1°	Dry air
February	Fair Fair for sightseeing	12° / 16° Feels like 8°	6° / 1°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	15° / 19° Feels like 11°	8° / 3°	Dry air
April	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 22° Feels like 14°	10° / 6°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 26°	13° / 9°	Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 31°	17° / 14°	
July	Great Great for the beach	28° / 32°	20° / 16°	21 sunny days
August	Great Great for the beach	28° / 32°	20° / 16°	20 sunny days · Humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 28°	17° / 13°	
October	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 24°	14° / 9°	12 rainy days · Dry air
November	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 19° Feels like 11°	9° / 4°	12 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	12° / 15° Feels like 8°	7° / 1°	Dry air

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

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

Top sights



- A Cimetière marin is the hillside cemetery above the sea where *Paul Valéry* is buried. His famous poem is named after it. The view over the Gulf of Lion is the main reason to go.
- B Musée Paul Valéry stands next to the cemetery. It holds fine art, Valéry manuscripts and a collection about water jousting.
- C Musée international des Arts modestes is known as MIAM. It shows colourful, playful art made from everyday and low-cost materials. It is one of the most original museums in the south of France.
- D Mont Saint-Clair is the hill behind the town. Walk or drive up to the viewpoints for views over the sea, the lagoon and the rooftops. See also E Panoramique du Mont Saint-Clair.
- F Fort Richelieu is an 18th-century fort on the slope of the hill. It is open only on special days such as Heritage Days, but it is worth seeing from the outside.
- G Église décanale Saint-Louis is the church of the old upper town, called the Haut Quartier. Its narrow streets are quiet and good for a walk.
- H Port de la Pointe Courte is the old fishermen's quarter on the lagoon shore. The film director *Agnès Varda* made her first film here in 1955.
- I Espace Georges Brassens is a small museum about *Georges Brassens*, the singer-songwriter who was born in Sète.
- J Stèle Exodus 47 is a memorial near the port. It recalls the ship Exodus, which left Sète in July 1947 with Jewish refugees.

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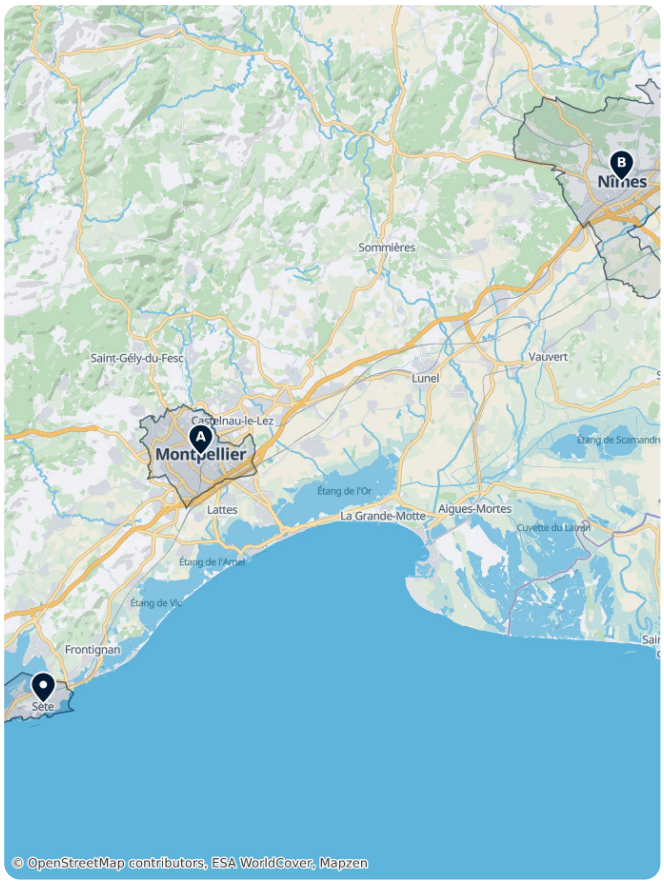
What to experience

- Watch the water jousting. Two jousters on raised platforms try to push each other off boats into the canal. The big tournaments are during the Saint-Louis festival in August.
- Take a boat trip on the lagoon or ride the summer shuttle to Mèze.
- Walk or drive up to Mont Saint-Clair at sunset for views over the sea and the lagoon.
- Swim and relax at the city beaches such as Plage du Lido or Plage de la Corniche.

Day trips

The Thau lagoon, wine villages and old towns are all close. The list goes from nearest to farthest.

- Ⓐ Montpellier: about 20 min by train. A large university city with a historic centre, museums and a lively food scene.
- Mèze and Bouzigues: about 25 min by car. Both are lagoon villages with oyster farms and seafood restaurants. In summer a boat shuttle runs between Sète and Mèze.
- Agde: about 25 min by car. An old town built of dark volcanic stone, on the Hérault river. Nearby Cap d'Agde has large beaches.
- Pézenas: about 40 min by car. A small town with fine old houses, craft shops and ties to the playwright *Molière*.
- Aigues-Mortes: about 1 hour by car. A walled medieval town beside salt marshes.
- Narbonne: about 45 min by train. Roman history, a large cathedral and a covered market.
- Ⓑ Nîmes: about 1 hour by train. Roman monuments, including a very well preserved arena.



Where to explore

For a bigger city, go to Montpellier or Nîmes. For beaches along the coast, try Cap d'Agde. Farther away are Carcassonne and the walled town of Uzès.

Getting there

- **By air**: The nearest main airport is Montpellier–Méditerranée (MPL), about 30 km away. Travel into Montpellier, then take a train to Sète. Béziers Cap d'Agde airport (BZR) is smaller and has fewer flights.
- **By train**: Sète station is on the main line along the coast. Montpellier is about 20 min away. Direct trains also serve Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Paris.
- **By ferry**: Car ferries run between Sète and Morocco. The crossing takes about 1.5 to 2 days.

Getting around

- **Public transit**: The local bus network has 24 routes around the Thau area. Line 8 is free and links the station with the town centre. A single ticket costs €1.30 if you tap a bank card or phone on the validator, and €1.60 if you pay the driver. A day ticket costs €6 on board or €5 in the app. Sète Agglopôle Mobilité
- **On foot**: The centre, the canals and the port are compact and easy to walk. The Mont Saint-Clair hill is steep.
- **Cycling**: A greenway links Sète with Marseillan, and cycle paths run around the Thau lagoon.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The centre, canals and port are compact and flat. Mont Saint-Clair is steep.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

A greenway and lagoon cycle paths exist. Central streets are busy in summer.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for the town itself. A car helps for the lagoon villages, wineries and Pézenas.
- **Parking**: Central streets are narrow and parking is limited, especially in August. Leave the car at the edge of the centre and walk.

Food & drink

Sète is a seafood town. Look for *tielle*, a small spicy pie filled with octopus and tomato. Also try *bourride* fish stew, *macaronade* and oysters and mussels from the nearby Thau lagoon. Local white wine from the Picpoul de Pinet area goes well with shellfish.

The best places to eat cluster in two areas. The quays along the canals are lined with fish restaurants. The covered market, Les Halles, is the place for local produce, cheese and seafood snacks.

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

Sète is generally safe. Petty theft such as bag snatching and car break-ins can happen in summer crowds. Do not leave valuables in a parked car.

Wind and waves can be strong on the open beaches. Check the flag colours before you swim.

History

The port of Sète was founded in 1666 under King Louis XIV. It was built as the Mediterranean end of the Canal du Midi, and the canal link made it an important trading town. The port created the trade in wine and fish that still shapes the town.

The sea defences are still visible. Fort Richelieu was built in the 1740s to protect the coast, and Phare Saint-Louis stands at the end of the harbour mole.

In July 1947 the ship Exodus left from the port, which is now remembered by Stèle Exodus 47.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



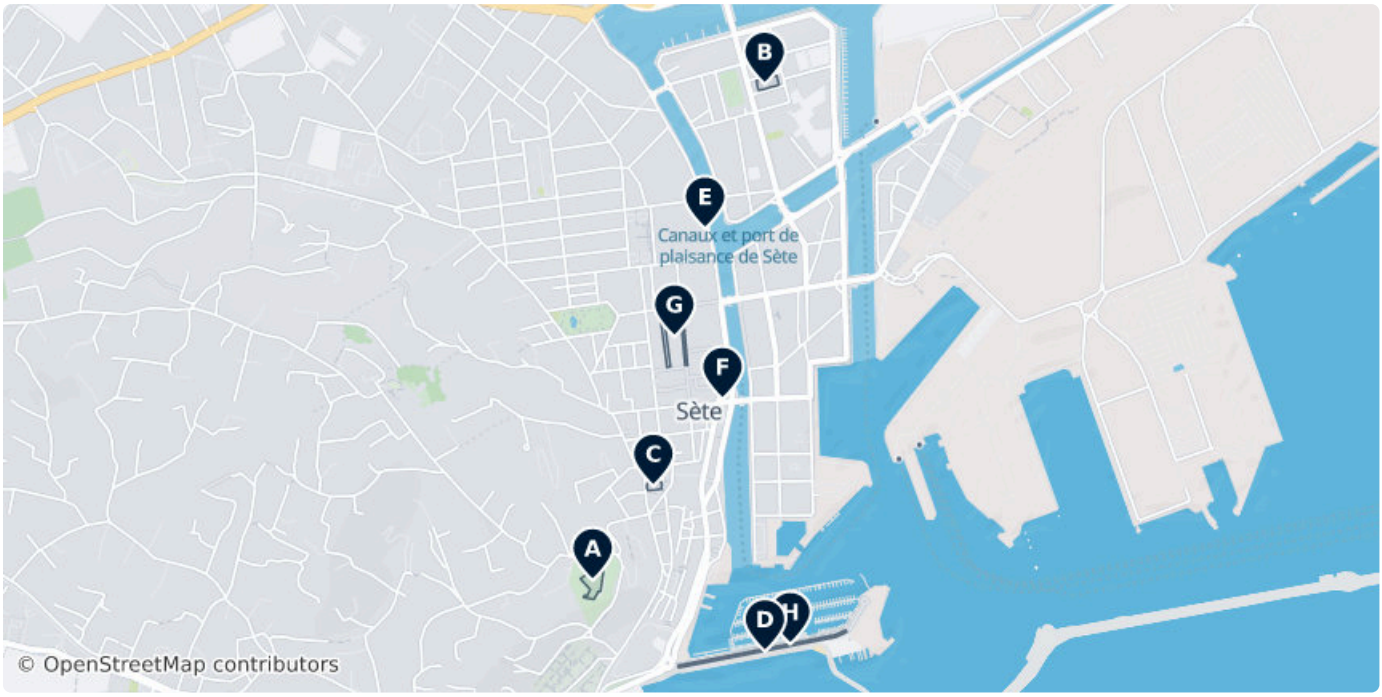
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Sète Essentials

Sète, the "Venice of Languedoc," is defined by its network of canals and its role as a major Mediterranean fishing port. This selection highlights the town's architectural landmarks, including the 18th-century Fort Richelieu and the Italian-style Théâtre Molière. Explore culinary traditions at the central market and artisanal tielle bakeries, or walk the Môle Saint-Louis, a breakwater dating to 1666. Cultural stops include the Musée international des Arts modestes, which celebrates everyday objects and peripheral art.





A Fort Richelieu

An 18th-century fortification on the slopes of Mont Saint-Clair. Originally built to defend the port against maritime attacks, it now serves as a naval signal station.

Chemin de Saint-Clair, 34200 Sète, France (43.39722, 3.69230)

B Théâtre Molière

An Italian-style theater inaugurated in 1904. A designated Scène Nationale, it features a restored horseshoe-shaped auditorium and ornate 19th-century interior decor.

Avenue Victor Hugo, 34200 Sète (43.40971, 3.69826)

theatredesete.com, +33 4 67 74 66 97



C Église décanale Saint-Louis

The city's oldest and largest church, completed in 1702. This Baroque-style building is topped by a golden statue of the Virgin Mary and is the focal point for traditional maritime festivals.

Rue des Trois Journées, 34200 Sète (43.39959, 3.69440)



D SS Exodus

Exodus 1947 was a packet steamship that was built in the United States in 1928 as President Warfield for the Baltimore Steam Packet Company.

Le Mole Saint-Louis, 34200, France (43.39543, 3.69827)



E Musée international des Arts modestes

Housed in a former wine warehouse, this museum explores "modest art." Its collections feature everyday objects, toys, and kitsch, challenging the boundaries between popular culture and fine art.

Quai du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny 27
(43.40607, 3.69619)

Tu–Su 09:30–12:00, 14:00–18:00

miam.org, +33 4 99 04 76 44

F Fabrique de tielles Sophie Cianni & Co.

Artisanal bakery specializing in the tielle sétoise, a local savory pie filled with spicy octopus and tomato sauce, prepared according to traditional family recipes.

19 Grand'Rue Mario Roustan, Sète 34200, France
(43.40178, 3.69680)

Mo–Su 08:30–19:30

+33467436062

G Marché du centre-ville (fruits et légumes)

Central indoor market hall hosting local vendors. It is the primary source for Mediterranean fish, Thau lagoon oysters, and regional produce.

16 Rue Alsace-Lorraine, Sète 34200, France
(43.40335, 3.69513)

We	06:00–12:00

H Môle Saint-Louis

A 650-meter breakwater constructed in 1666 to protect the harbor. The pier leads to the Saint-Louis lighthouse and offers panoramic views of the Mediterranean.

(43.39561, 3.69914)

DATA SOURCES

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- SS Exodus — "Sète (Hérault) - plaque posée sur le môle rappelant le départ de Sète en 1947..." by Fagairolles 34, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Musée international des Arts modestes — "La devanture du Musée International des Arts Modestes, lors des expositions..." by Jolaaan, CC BY-SA 4.0

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