

# MY SAVVY TRAVELLER

## NICE: A CULTURAL CLASH OF THE FINEST KIND

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*Nice - the perfect blend of French perfection and Italian chill! Travel writer Shannon Melnyk shares her gems from this beautiful, seaside resort.*



by Shannon Melnyk

"Let's go to *Fratally!*", I say.

My companions know I speak of Nice, the jewel of the French Riviera. Where else can you devour the finest croissant France has to offer by day, and indulge in fresh, handmade pasta by noon? Nice, the perfect blend of French perfection and Italian chill. The vibe is carefree, but with the culture you'd expect from a city with a Chagall and Matisse Museum. The famous palm tree-lined *Promenade des Anglais* that stretches along the sea, acts as a divide between the vibrant beach scene and the galleries, markets and squares that delight on the other side. Steps away is Old Nice, with its charming narrow streets, brightly coloured façades and Sardinian and Baroque architecture of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Culture



On cultural explorations of Nice the 'MAMAC' is a must-stop.

Other than the obvious Chagall and Matisse fare, be sure to check out **The Floating World**, the Jaques Henri Larigue exhibit at the Theatre de la Photographie et de L'image, where you can peer in to the life of Larigue and his many women subjects. Not to miss is a visit to the **Musée D'art Moderne et D'art Contemporain** or MAMAC (Place Yves Klein), where a prolific exhibit is dedicated to the controversial works of political street artist **Ernest Pignon Ernest**, and runs now through January 8th of 2017.

### Dining

Nice is an all-out gastronomic extravaganza and an opportunity to try traditional Niçoise cuisine.

Best bet for a casual take-away or quick bite is **A Buteghinn'a** (11 Rue du Marché) in Vieux Nice, where you will likely be greeted by a smiling Sophie with a tasty homemade stuffed vegetable. Wherever you may wander, be sure to look for the *Cuisine Nissarde* certification proudly displayed at the establishment – the sign ensures authentic Niçoise cuisine. For a beautiful sit-down meal, **Acchiardo** (38, Rue Droite) is the pride of Old Town. This family-run restaurant has been in business for four generations since 1927, and can be counted on for a rich beef daube in wine and assiette Niçoise.



Roasted octopus and mashed potatoes and lemon at Sentimi. Credit: Sentimi

Another *must-manger* is at **Sentimi** (2, Place Garibaldi) - the hottest new slow food restaurant in town. Furniture maker turned slow-food afficianado Fabio Gnech has local tongues wagging and organic Italian bliss can definitely be found in the fromage fondant crescenza hiding in the crust of a Sentimi Dominica. Also try the Tonno di Sicilia - seared tuna with pistachio crust.

### Shopping

The **Cours Saleya** is a great way to take in the true nature of Nice and local producers of flowers, fruits and vegetables, fragrant spices and soaps – and don't forget the Socca, the large crepe of chickpea flour and olive oil, served piping hot and sprinkled with pepper – a Nice staple. Also pick up a Pissaladière, an onion tart with olives and anchovies – or the fougasse, Provençal bread stuffed with vegetables.

If you're a foodie, it's hard not to be stuck on gastronomic 1st gear, and it's all about the cheese at Les Chalets d'Alpage, where the vibrant red of a Tomme de vache (tomato olive) lait cru or truffle make for an amazing take-home treat.

And if it's good enough for Queen Victoria, it's good enough for you and pastries at **Maison Auer**, (7 rue Saint-François de Paule) open since 1820. Don't leave without a sesame truffle – it's been approved by royalty.

Nice is also littered with vintage couture, be it a pair of Valentino earrings or a Chanel suit. Stop by **Depot Vente Luxe Mademoiselle** on the Rue de France or **Achat Vente** for a unique treasure hunt.

Nothing says France like a good *parfum*, and **Molinard**, the family parfumeur created in 1849 - offers in its Nice location (20, rue St François de Paule) the opportunity to design your own personal fragrance, in four different classes to choose from. From as little as 25 Euros, create the perfect olfactory sympathy after learning about raw materials, extraction methods and the art of selecting notes for the perfect fragrance – your fragrance to take home and a little piece of Nice along with it.



Shannon at the Nice chocolate shop, Maison Auer

Travel expert and writer, Shannon Melnyk, is based in Vancouver. Click [here](#) to visit her site.



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