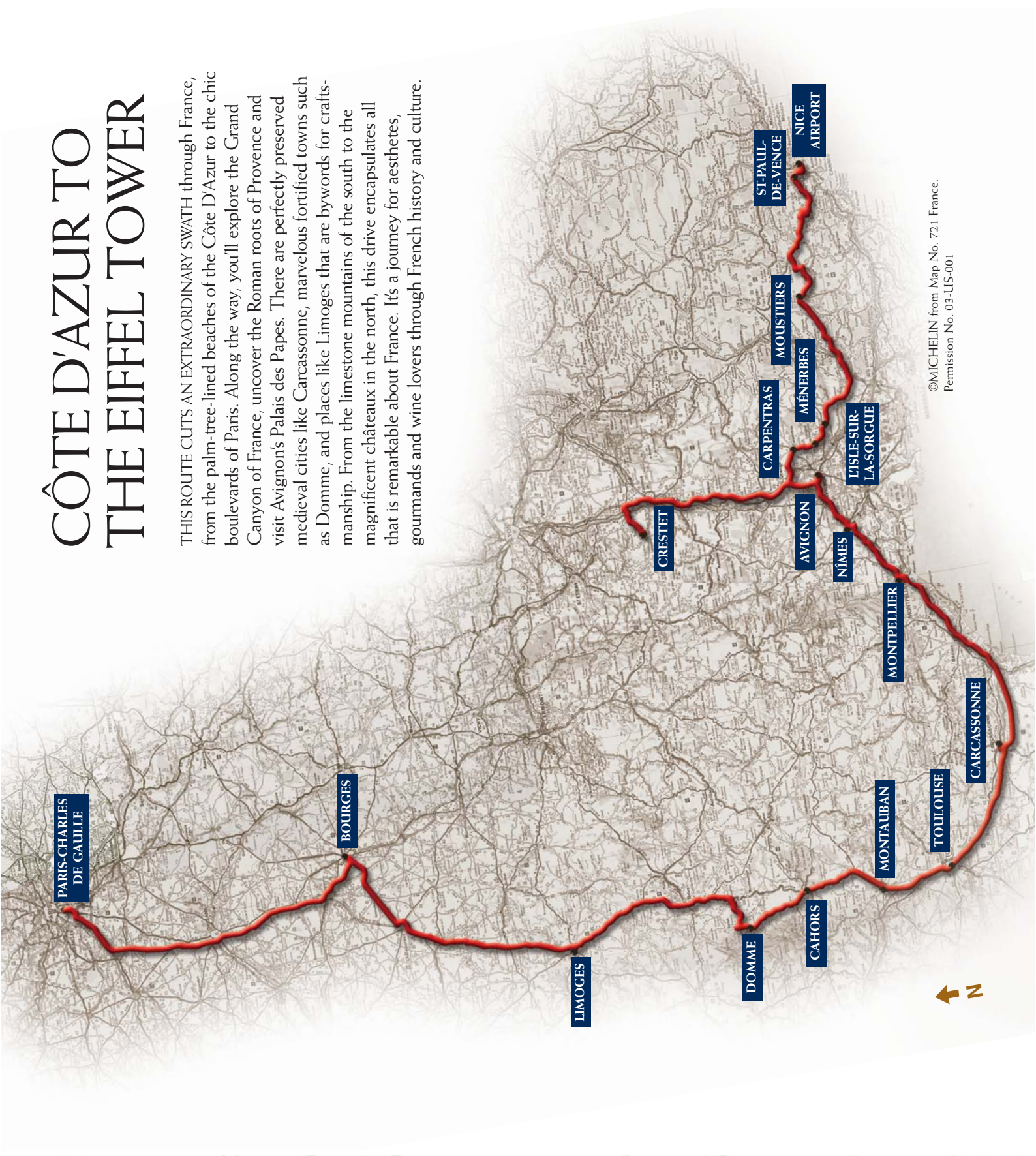


CÔTE D'AZUR TO THE EIFFEL TOWER

THIS ROUTE CUTS AN EXTRAORDINARY SWATH through France, from the palm-tree-lined beaches of the Côte D'Azur to the chic boulevards of Paris. Along the way, you'll explore the Grand Canyon of France, uncover the Roman roots of Provence and visit Avignon's Palais des Papes. There are perfectly preserved medieval cities like Carcassonne, marvelous fortified towns such as Domme, and places like Limoges that are bywords for craftsmanship. From the limestone mountains of the south to the magnificent châteaux in the north, this drive encapsulates all that is remarkable about France. It's a journey for aesthetes, gourmands and wine lovers through French history and culture.



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(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. We recommend the use of Michelin Map #724 France in conjunction with this guide.) To order Michelin maps, call 1-800-223-0987.

NICE AIRPORT— The easiest way to the chic beaches of the Riviera is to fly to Nice on a direct flight from the U.S.

NICE— When you think of Nice, think sunshine, art and gastronomy. Such are the hallmarks of the hub of the Côte D'Azur, a city bathed in the gorgeous light of the Mediterranean. Stroll along the waterfront on the splendid Promenade des Anglais, passing by such classic Belle Epoque hotels as Le Négresco. Then dip into the back streets of the old town, to Cours Saleya, with its lively flower and vegetable market. And by all means make time to visit both the Musée Marc-Chagall and the Musée Matisse.

10 miles

ST-PAUL-DE-VENCE— Art lovers know St-Paul-de-Vence because of the Fondation Maeght, José-Luis Sert's temple to modernism. It's a museum that contains masterworks by Braque, Calder, Chagall, Giacometti, Kandinsky, Leger and Matisse. The town itself is also one of the most charming in the south of France. Take in the antique shops and galleries, housed in 16th- and 17th-century buildings on the pedestrian-only Rue Grande. Then stretch your legs with a walk around the ramparts, which afford views of the Alps and the deep blue Mediterranean.

75 miles

MOUSTIERS-STE-MARIE— Getting to Moustiers-Ste-Marie is an adventure, since you'll drive along one of the most dramatic natural sites in Europe, the Gorges du Verdon. Reminiscent of the Grand

Canyon, it's the result of the jade-green Verdon River gradually eroding limestone. The deep canyon, with spires of twisted rocks, is nearly 3,000 feet deep in places. You may think of the American southwest when you pause at Point Sublime, nearly 600 feet above the gorge. This is where to begin a walking tour, but only if you bring suitable hiking boots. When you finally arrive at the vast natural amphitheater of Moustiers-Ste-Marie, you may be heartened by the sight of a star. It's suspended across the twin peaks above the town on an iron chain. Enjoy the town for its pottery, its red tile roofs, and Notre Dame-de-Beauvoir, a chapel that has been the site of pilgrimages since the Middle Ages.

72 miles

MÈNERBES— Ménerbes is in the heart of the limestone mountains known as the Luberon. Virtually the entire area has been designated a regional nature park. But it's no longer a secret that Ménerbes was once the home of adman-turned-author Peter Mayle. In *A Year in Provence*, Mayle immortalized the expat's lifestyle, depicting a world of truffles, long lunches and colorful locals. Visit the square called Place de l'Horloge and the 14th-century church. Then make time for the nearby village of Oppède-le-Vieux, with its restored upper village, a 13th-century church and fine views of the Coulon Valley and Vaucluse Plateau.

12 miles

LISLE-SUR-LA-SORGUE— For many, this watery town is the essence of Provence. Criss-crossed by canals and the channels of the Sorgue River, Lisle-sur-la-Sorgue's ancient wooden waterwheels and winding streets lined with plane trees only add to its lazy charm. On Sundays, chic Parisians arrive to hunt for treasures at the town's famous

antiques market near the train station. Wander into

Notre-Dame-des-Anges, a vast 13th-century structure that was

essentially rebuilt into a Baroque pastiche in the 17th century. Better yet

is the 18th-century Hôtel Dieu, with a fine chapel and a preserved pharmacy. On Thursdays

and Sundays, the food markets take over the streets and it's a feast of cheeses, tapenade and sausages.

11 miles

CARPENTRAS— Carpentras enjoyed a dual role in history, as an important center of the Catholic church and as a haven for a sizeable Jewish population. It has the oldest synagogue in France, dating from 1367, and the sanctuary, bakery and baths remain. When you tour the Cathédrale St-Siffren, enter it by the south door.

Known as the "Porte Juive" or the "Jewish Door," it was named after the Jewish converts who came through the door to be baptized. Carpentras' Law Courts are well worth visiting for their collection of 17th-century paintings. Adjacent is a Triumphant Arch that dates from Roman times. Ponder it as you develop a taste for "berlingots," the local mint-flavored caramel.

26 miles

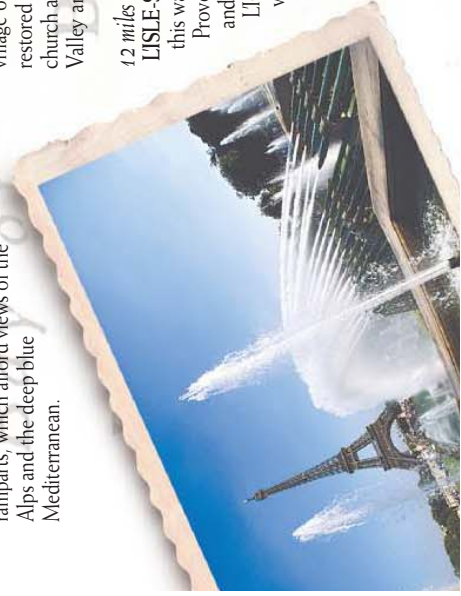
CRESTET— Crestet, an archetypal Provençal village, is worth visiting for its streets lined with Renaissance houses and the views from its 12th-century castle, Mont Ventoux. But Crestet is just one stop on a circuit of villages that lie around Les Dentelles de Montmirail. Literally called, "the lace of Montmirail," these mountains were given their name by the jagged shape of their peaks. Continue to Vaison-la-Romaine, where 32 acres of remarkable Roman ruins can be seen. Séguret is a charming stop, while the wine towns of Gigondas and Beaumes-de-Venise may entice you to stop at a vineyard.

31 miles

AVIGNON— Located at the crossroads of Provence and Languedoc, Avignon has been singled out as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. At its heart, on the Rhone River, lies the Palais des Papes, the Palace of the Popes. You could profitably spend a day wandering through this medieval gem, the residence of the Sovereign Pontiffs during the 14th century. But save time to stroll down Rue Joseph-Vernet and Rue du Roi-René, with their wonderful 17th- and 18th-century houses. At the center of Avignon is the Place de l'Horloge, where the Hôtel de Ville's Gothic clock overlooks sidewalk cafés and a century-old merry-go-round. Wander to the Musée Calvet, a hodgepodge of art that includes paintings by the likes of Soutine, Corot and Toulouse-Lautrec. The single-most picturesque street in town must be Rue des Teinturiers, named after the dyers and textile-makers who worked here.

28 miles

NÎMES— Nîmes can claim a bus stop designed by Philippe Starck and the best-preserved Roman amphitheater in the world. Nowadays, that amphitheater welcomes both bullfights and opera performances. The Old Town has the kind of narrow streets and small squares that define a graceful French city: Don't miss the Jardin de la Fontaine, built around the spring that drew the Romans here. It evolved into an 18th-century formal garden of pools and stone terraces. The Musée Archéologique, with its impressive collection of Roman statues, glass, mosaics and coins, is worth visiting. But the real gem is Maison Carée, a beautifully executed Roman temple that dates from the 1st century B.C.



36 miles

MONTPELLIER—Place de la Comédie, which has been nicknamed "l'Oeuf" because of its egg shape, is where you'll find the opera house, bustling cafés and Montpellier's youthful population. It's a city where

17th-century mansions such as the Hôtel de Manse and Hôtel de Mirman are open to visitors. And architecture buffs will note that Ricardo Bofill's postmodern housing complex, Antigone, is modeled on St. Peter's in Rome. Stop in the Musée Fabre, where you can see an impressive collection of paintings by Morisot, Courbet and Dufy. And remember that one of the nicest views in the city is from Promenade de Peyrou.

94 miles

CARCASSONNE—Carcassonne is the jewel of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, an extraordinary medieval town that has been perfectly restored. The once prosperous town fell into disrepair until the 19th-century architect Viollet-le-Duc championed its restoration. It's a storybook setting of turrets and ramparts above the Aude River, well worth visiting early in the day before the tour buses arrive. Go to the Château Comtal, which is essentially a fortress within a fortress, with a classic moat and towers. The Musée Lapidaire has Romanesque murals and remnants of medieval armaments. And don't let the jumble of souvenir shops distract your imagination from thoughts of jousting knights.

57 miles

TOULOUSE—Toulouse may be France's sixth-largest city, the home of Airbus and Concorde, but when you stroll around its old town, it feels like a provincial French city. In fact, walking is by far the best way to appreciate a town that mushroomed from its Roman and Renaissance roots. Place du Capitole and the massive Hôtel de Ville are at its heart. Shops, sidewalk cafés and bars proliferate here, as well as at Place St-Georges. It's the students from the University of Toulouse that keep this a young and vibrant town. Don't miss the ragtag flea market at Place St-Sernin every Sunday. It's in the shadow of the Basilique de St-Sernin, the largest Romanesque basilica in Europe.

32 miles

MONTAUBAN—The painter Ingres is the best reason to pause in Montauban. It was his birthplace, and the Musée Ingres is devoted to him. Later, you can shop and lunch in the Place Nationale, the main square, which is lined with 17th-century structures.

37 miles

CAHORS—The graceful Pont Valentré, the 14th-century Gothic arched bridge that crosses the River Lot in the center of Cahors, is more than a beautiful piece of architecture. With its tower and crenellated walls, it was a fortification as much as a bridge. This 2,000-year-old market town is most appreciated for a glass of its namesake wine and an amble through its lively Saturday morning market.

31 miles

DOMME—Domme is a "bastide," a fortified town dating from the 13th century, with a maze of streets that are made for a gentle meander. But hold your breath, because when you look down from the hilltown to the wide Dordogne River Valley, you'll enjoy one of the most magical views in Europe.

94 miles

LIMOGES—Famed for its namesake porcelain, Limoges has a delightful old city with half-timbered houses and narrow streets. The Musée National Adrien-Dubouché houses not only Limoges porcelain but thousands of other examples in one of the best ceramic museums in the world.

121 miles

BOURGES—You can tour the Palais Jacques Coeur and visit St-Etienne, an exemplary Gothic cathedral in this walled city. The medieval quarter of Bourges has been well preserved. If you have a lazy afternoon, hire a boat for a brief paddle through the "water meadows" outside the town.

152 miles

CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT, PARIS—France's major airport lies just outside of Paris. But if you have another day or two to spare, continue on into the City of Light as a spectacular conclusion to your trip.

HOTELS

Le Saint-Paul. In the heart of St-Paul-de-Vence, this is a 16th-century bourgeois home with 19 elegantly decorated rooms. You can dine alfresco on Provençal specialties here. 86, rue Grande, St-Paul-de-Vence. Tel: 33-04-93-32-65-2 Fax: 33-04-93-32-52-94

For reservations in the USA: 800-735-2478

La Bastide de Moustiers. Each of the 12 bedrooms in Chef Alain Ducassé's impossibly charming inn is different.

An impeccably decorated series of small dining rooms features the master's cuisine. Chemin de Quinson, Moustiers-St-Marre. Tel: 33-04-92-70-47-47 Fax: 33-04-92-70-47-48

Mas de Cure Bourse. A restored "mas," or farmhouse, with 13 bedrooms and two dining rooms. You'll find innovative Provençal cooking in this charming setting. 120 Chemin de la Serre, Lisle-sur-la-Sorgue. Tel: 33-04-90-38-16-58 Fax: 33-04-90-38-52-31

L'Évêché. This 16th-century "bishop's palace" in Vaison-la-Romaine's haute ville is the home of Aude and Jean-Loup Verdier. They have just four charming rooms. Rue de l'Évêché, Cite Medievale, Vaison-La-Romaine. Tel: 33-04-90-36-13-46 Fax: 33-04-90-36-32-43



Hôtel D'Europe. Close to the Palais des Papes, this elegant 47-room hotel is a beautiful 16th-century mansion. There are magnificent tapestries, formal dining in La Vieille Fontaine and a courtyard for balmy Provençal nights. 12 Place Grillon, Avignon. Tel: 33-04-90-14-76-76 Fax: 33-04-90-85-43-66

New Hôtel La Baume. There are 24 guestrooms in this 17th-century mansion, done up in warm Provençal tones. But it's the intact original staircase and court that give it grandeur. 21 rue Nationale, Nîmes. Tel: 33-04-66-76-28-42 Fax: 33-04-66-76-28-45

RESTAURANT

Les Jardin des Sens. The Pourcel brothers, Jacques and Laurent, have earned three Michelin stars at this temple to Mediterranean flavors and the regional cooking of Languedoc. The glass-fronted dining room that overlooks the garden is as enjoyable as the cuisine. 11 Avenue Saint-Lazare, Montpellier. Tel: 33-04-99-58-38-38 Fax: 33-04-99-58-38-39

For reservations in the USA: 800-735-2478

