



Above View over Saint-Tropez town and its bay

VISITING SAINT-TROPEZ

Tourist Information

Quai Jean Jaures, 83990; 08 92 68 48 28; www.ot-saint-tropez.com

Parking

There are two large car parks to the west of the port, the aptly named Parking du Port and Parking du Nouveau Port. There is an additional car park in Place des Lices. All are within easy walking distance of the town centre. However, parking during the high season is very difficult.

WHERE TO STAY

SAINT-TROPEZ

Le Colombier *inexpensive-moderate*

Located on a private *cul-de-sac*, this tiny hotel is one of the town's best-kept secrets. Book well in advance to snag one of their pretty pastel rooms. In summer, breakfast in the flower-filled garden is a must.

Impasse des Conquettes, 83990; 04 94 97 05 31; closed mid-Nov-Feb

Pastis *expensive*

Owned by a British pair of former designers, Pastis' nine rooms meld antique furniture and avant-garde artworks. The result is a serene oasis five minutes from the harbourside glitz. It has its own private pool and there is free parking.

61 Avenue du Général Leclerc, 83990; 04 98 12 56 50; www.pastis-tropez.com

1 Saint-Tropez

Var, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur; 83990

Boasting a reputation that precedes it by a mile, Saint-Tropez could easily be shrugged off as the exclusive stomping ground of the über-rich and ultra-famous. At heart it is a picturesque fishing village which packs in surprises and activities for all its visitors. Spend a day roaming its enchanting alleys and it will be difficult not to succumb to Saint-Tropez's small-town charms.

A 90-minute walking tour

For those visiting this pretty seaside town mid-summer, it pays to start strolling before *le jet-set* deem it time to roll out of bed. Park at the eastern end of the charming **Place des Lices** ①, walk through the square, turning left onto Rue Gambetta and then right onto Rue Miséricorde. Immediately past the entrance to **Chapelle de la Miséricorde** ②, Rue Miséricorde twists uphill, passing under the church's three 17th-century archways. Follow the road's left fork onto Rue Aire du Chemin, lined with touristy restaurants, making a right at the ever-popular Restaurant de la Citadelle.

Across Place Forbin, scramble up the long, diagonal staircase to **La Citadelle** ③ (*open daily*). A massive defence system built during the early 17th century, it was last occupied by the Axis powers in World War II. The

ramparts afford spectacular views over Saint-Tropez's bay. After exploring the creepy dungeon cells, amble downhill along Montée de la Citadelle. At the road's first kink, step off onto the dirt trail that skirts the citadel's outer walls. Head around the corner for a breathtaking panorama east over the town's seaside cemetery, where film director Roger Vadim, of *And God Created Woman* fame, is buried. Down below is the delightful **Place des Graniers** ④.

Retrace your steps to Montée de la Citadelle. Just before Place Forbin, make a sharp right onto Avenue Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, named after the famed author of *The Little Prince*. A small plaque, dated 29 June 2000, honours the 100th anniversary of De Saint-Exupéry's birth.

A dirt path cuts left downhill, running alongside an old stone wall across the open field of Pré des



Pêcheurs. Swing right to check out Place de la Vue, a popular spot for artists who set up their easels and paint the seascape beyond. The energetic can continue east along Rue de Cavaillon's footpath, tracing the 12 km (7 miles) around Saint-Tropez's *cap* to trendy Plage de Pampelonne. The other option is to take Place de la Vue's small set of stairs down to **Plage de la Fontanette** ⑤. Visitors have the opportunity here to get into their swimsuits and cool off with a quick dip in the Mediterranean.

Rested and refreshed, follow the coastline westwards to Port des Pêcheurs, tucking back inland at the bustling Place du Revelen. Go through the arched walkway beneath Porte du Revelen, taking Rue Petit St Jean along to **Place de l'Ormeau** ⑥, a serene square surrounded by a collection of art galleries. Exit the square at its northwest corner, where quiet Rue du Clocher brings visitors down to the buzz of Rue des Commerçants, lined with bakeries, cafés and shops.

Rue du Marché, the first right turn, will lead to **Place aux Herbes** ⑦ which hosts a tiny but vibrant flower and produce market (*Tue–Sat mornings*), stocked with artisan cheeses, lavender honey and plump olives. Between the square and the town's Vieux Port (Old Port), the **Porte de la Poissonnerie** ⑧ is brimming with the day's catch. Each morning, fishermen ply mounds of red mullet, sea bream and octopus to local residents and top chefs alike.

Dive through the crowds, popping out among the style icons of Rue François Sibilli; boutiques include Louis Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana and others. Walk back to the car park at Place des Lices, just in time to grab a table at Le Café. Order a *pastis*, and try Provence's favourite pastime, *pétanque* – a set of *boules* can be borrowed from the café for free.

🚗 **Exit Saint-Tropez via Avenue du General de Gaulle, which becomes Avenue du 15 Aout 1944. Turn left onto Route des Plages, also known as the D93, and head south until reaching a left-turn indication onto Chemin des Moulins. Drive through the vineyards to reach the car parks that line the Plage de Pampelonne.**



2 Plage de Pampelonne

Var, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur; 83350
Turquoise waters gently lap the 5 km (3 miles) of white sandy beach here. Although it may appear a lazy paradise today, Plage de Pampelonne witnessed drama with the Allied landings in August 1944.

The first beach bar, the trendy **Tahiti Plage**, opened two years later and Pampelonne soon became a popular naturist spot. Strip down and dive in (Le Liberty and Neptune are naturist beaches), or follow the celebrities to the famous **Le Club 55**. Pampelonne's 27 beach clubs are the places to be seen in, attracting over 30,000 daily visitors in summer.

🚗 **Take Chemin des Moulins back to Route des Plages (D93). Turn left, head south along D93 until the first roundabout. Drive straight onto D61 following signs for Ramatuelle.**



Above The charming Plage de Pampelonne in the Saint-Tropez peninsula **Below** A passageway in the prison in Saint-Tropez

EAT AND DRINK

SAINT-TROPEZ

Le Café *inexpensive–moderate*

Offering classic southern French dishes, including the town's sweet-tooth speciality, *tarte tropézienne*, Le Café's passion is *pétanque*.

Place des Lices, 83990; 04 94 97 44 69; www.lecafe.fr

La Ponche *moderate–expensive*

Traditional Mediterranean recipes mingle with playful, high-end gastronomy at La Ponche, just steps away from the sandy stretch of Plage de la Ponche.

Place du Revelin, 83990; 04 94 97 09 29; www.laponche.com; closed Nov–mid-Feb