

# The French Riviera



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**USS ESSEX VISITS  
3 - 7 DECEMBER**

## CANNES, FRANCE

On the wall of every travel agency around the world exotic posters extoll the beauties of the French Riviera. Essex is to visit Cannes, France, the center of the sun-bathed strip of French soil along the blue Mediterranean. While we are not going to be there during the height of the season we will still be able to see the beauty of this unique part of the world. It should have been named the "Gold Coast" because of its glittering color, its flawless beauty and also because of its fabulous high prices. But it has been named La Cote d'Azur, the Azure Coast. Along this strip, lying between the French Maritime Alps and the blue Mediterranean are little towns and large cities, each of which has beauty of its own. These include Cannes, Nice, Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, and the little fairy-land of Monaco, which now has its own American Princess.

Before 1834 the city of Cannes was just an ancient little hill-town, built on mount Chevalier, crowned by a church and chateau. Not much is known of its early history except that twice it was destroyed by the Saracens, in the eighth and in the tenth centuries. Each time it was recolonized from Genoa. In 1834 its unique charm was discovered by Lord Brougham, who in addition to this discovery is known by the coach which bears his name. He became a fervent visitor to the little village, and by his generosity helped build it in size and by his enthusiasm brought many other influential people to its charms. Before 1917 Cannes had its quota of Russian princes who were capable of dispensing fabulous sums in giving banquets and parties reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. Unfortunately the Russian Revolution deprived them of their fantastic resources so they were replaced later on, on a more modest scale, by the British and Americans. Today, because of the difficulties of international currency exchange, it is the Americans who have taken over, sometimes displaying a great deal of bad taste in their actions.

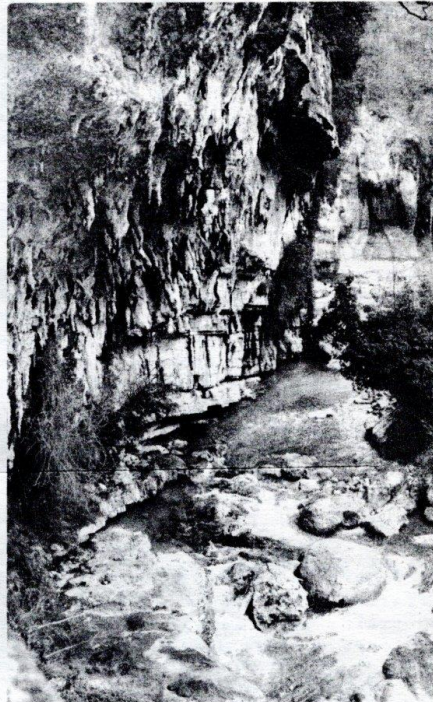
Just off the coast of Cannes two islands may be seen. They are the Isle Sainte-Marguerite and the Isle Saint Honorat, together being known as the Isles des Lerins. The fort in the Isle Saint Marguerite is famous, for legened has it that here the "Man in the Iron Mask" was imprisoned in 1687 and kept in secret confinement by order of the king. Today if you get over to that island you will be able to see the cell in which he was supposed to have been kept, and the table and chair he is reputed to have used. But even if you have reservations about the legend it's still an interesting place to see.



## WHAT TO SEE

This is not a locality for great bargains. Your money will not go as far here as it did in Barcelona. But there are a lot of things to see and a lot of things to do, even during the off-season. There are trips along the beautiful coasts; there are little villages which are untainted by the hustle and the commercialism of mass entertainment and recreation. Up in the Alps there are ski resorts, there are breathtaking roads which wind through the mountain passes such as the famous Gorges du Loup. It is recommended that you take public transportation, load your camera with film, and go out to some of the nearby towns to find the natural beauty and charm of the Riviera. It is sad to say that at this time of the year there is not too much of a chance to see any Bikinis.

Various tours will be offered. It will be advantageous to you to take a tour so that you will see many things which most likely you would miss if you went on your own. These tours will take you to the little country of Monaco, where in Monte Carlo you may see the fairy-land palace of Princess Grace and her family. There also you will be able to see the famous Monte Carlo gambling casino which cannot be seen ordinarily by servicemen in uniform. About three and a half miles from the center of Cannes is the point at which Napoleon landed on his return from his first exile on the island of Elba. The tours would also take you into the mountains, up interesting, thrilling roads to see ancient towns perched high on the tip, sitting in isolation surrounded by protecting walls. Various ski resorts, such as Valberg, may be seen where the skier is king, and where ski lifts and slopes of various gradients are offered to all would-be skiers, the beginner or the expert. Another place of interest is the city of Grasse where tons of flowers are used each year to make the perfumes and colognes which are sold throughout the world. You may not be a lover of museums, but in Antibes is the Musee Grimaldi in which is found the works of that controversial artist Picasso. This is considered a five-star attraction. Mention should also be made of yachts to be seen while walking along the harbors of the various ports along the Riviera.



## WHERE TO EAT

Once again, because this is the off-season, we must face the fact that many of the famous places will be closed. The Carleton Hotel, long a landmark of the high society group, is closed from mid-October until Christmas. But there will still be many fine restaurants and cafes which will serve exquisite French cooking. But don't expect to get a feast while spending only a little bit of money. It's going to cost you more than you had to pay in other ports we've visited. In Cannes there is a restaurant we would like to mention. It is Da Bouttau, on 10 rue St. - Antoine, an atmosphere-y little cafe where they don't write down your order but instead sketch it on the corner of your paper tablecloth. They offer rotissened chicken as a speciality. Well worth visiting. Should cost you around five dollars. However, no matter where you go to eat don't hesitate in ordering French cooking. You can eat American food aboard ship, and at home. Broiled snails (escargot), real French onion soup, and crepe Suzettes will really tickle your palate. Get away from hamburger and French fries. Try something new. Live!

## WHAT TO BUY

There are many shops in which you can browse for hours and in which you will see much to entrance you. Luggage and leather accessories, cigarette holders, razors, pipes, cologne, novelty jewelry, steak knives and neckties; just to mention a few. And of course, there are always perfumes. But be careful. Actually, the best buys in perfume are aboard ship.

Once again we wish to indicate to you some things NOT to buy. Anything mechanical, like fountain pens, watches, cigarette lighters, and novelty gadgets should be ignored. Most likely they won't work. Shoes are a bad bet because they seldom fit American feet, for some reason or another. If you run out of lighter fluid, either wait until you return to the ship or get some matches. The French lighter fluid will only gum up your lighter so badly that a cleaning trip back to the factory will be the only answer.

If a clock or a watch catches your eye, let it be only your eye, not your pocketbook. French timepieces are often gorgeous to look at, and you may be tempted-but most of the time the works are beautiful, elaborate, intricate junk.

## TIPS

Like people all over the world, the average Frenchman is an honest man. But there are more than one unscrupulous Frenchman who concentrates his activity on the Riviera to fleece the unwary. Petty thievery is common. Don't leave any valuables around. And above all watch out for the man who comes up to you with an offer of a "good deal." It may be good, but only to him. If you take a goodly amount of money ashore, don't flash it around. If you have a large bill which you want change, watch out for French North

African bills. They are of no value in France itself. Count your change. A handful of small coins might add up to practically nothing. When presented with a bill, see that it's itemized and then carefully add it up. It's your money that will be spent. One final tip has to do once again with taxis. They are going to be expensive. Transportation from Cannes to Nice and back is easily found before 2000. There are buses and trains at reasonable rates. But after 2000 the schedule is quite curtailed and taxi fare will really run up. You'll think you bought a new tire. (Maybe you did.)



## MONEY

According to the best available information, the official exchange is 490.1735 francs to one U.S. dollar. In order to make it simple using the rate of 490 as a basis the following is an approximate guide that may be of help:

FRANCS	U. S.	FRANCS	U. S.
25-----	.05	980-----	2.00
122-----	.25	1224-----	2.50
244-----	.50	1470-----	3.00
366-----	.75	1960-----	4.00
490-----	1.00	2450-----	5.00
734-----	1.50	4900-----	10.00

It is to be hoped that some of the negative ideas expressed in this pamphlet relative to prices will not frighten you from enjoying yourself while on the Riviera. Or will cause you to think that the French are only desirous to get you. This is not true. You can have a very good time if you just use your head and think before you act. France has lived through some heart breaking experiences since 1939. She has had twenty-five governments since the end of the second World War. Now, under the leadership of General de Gaulle, France is beginning once more to become the France she once was. So do not be super-critical and condemn things which seem different to you. You are the foreigner, you are the guest in a strange land. Have a good time!

This pamphlet is not to be taken ashore while in the Mediterranean, but may be mailed home.