



Adapted Travel by Mike Cohen



NICE, FRANCE: Between our recent visits to Paris and London, my family and I came to the conclusion that we wanted to find a place that provided us with the opportunity to sit at a lovely beach by day and enjoy a lively and fun atmosphere in the evening. Nice (<http://en.nicetourisme.com>), located on the French Riviera, was the logical choice.

Old or Vieux Nice is downright dripping with atmosphere. Its narrow streets are a one-stop shop for take-home finds, such as Provençal wares, household items, wine, gourmet gifts, hip clothing and more. There are numerous restaurants in the area, as well as several fun bars and nightclubs. Be sure to stop off for a delicious ice cream in this neighborhood. We went there twice and really soaked up the atmosphere.

WHERE TO STAY: We spent considerable time researching where to stay and the Radisson Blu (<http://www.radissonblu.com/hotel-nice/location>) won out for its beautiful seaside location. There are 331 rooms and suites and amenities such free high-speed, wireless internet access and complimentary entrance to the on-site health and fitness club. You can dine at the Bleu Citron or La Terrasse, both well known for delicious international and regional cuisine, or relax on the rooftop terrace with a refreshing cocktail. This Nice hotel, located at 223 Promenade des Anglais, also offers premier services, such as a rooftop pool, sauna and sophisticated meeting facilities. It is only four kilometres from the airport and five kilometres from the train station. We truly appreciated the free seasonal double decker bus shuttle service to Old Town,



which operates in July and August. The hotel is fully wheelchair accessible and has a number of accessible rooms. Our rate included a generous breakfast buffet at the “Bleu Citron” Restaurant. In order to store some perishables we asked the hotel to empty the mini bar for us, which they did at no charge. The hotel has its own exclusive private beach, open from April to October. For a fee we secured sun lounges for the days we were there. Wheelchair access can be arranged to this beach as well.

DINING OUT: Where to dine in Nice? There are a lot of choices and we spent a significant amount of time researching the best options. Our search first stopped at Le Grand Balcon (www.legrandbalcon.net) located at 10 rue St. François de Paule near the opera house. The food is all fresh and homemade. Our meal was absolutely spectacular and I would recommend you place it first on your list of dining choices. It is located on the main drag in Vieux Nice and fully wheelchair accessible.

The menu is neatly set up like a stage presentation. Act I features appetizers and our server recommended the selection platter: the chef’s combination of four starters. This included: home-made foie gras; marinated Norway salmon with lime, fennel and dill; raw artichoke salad and shaved parmesan cheese and warm truffles sandwiches. We also shared a fabulous king prawn risotto. For our main course, or Act II, we chose three dishes to share: a grilled beef fillet with super home-made mashed potatoes; scallops in “tuber aestivum” truffles, with added black truffles puree; and sea bass fricassee with sautéed purple artichoke. Act III was dessert. We shared a chocolate delight with home-made caramel and passion fruits and a black truffle and salted butter caramel éclair. Once again, beautifully prepared. This was definitely the best restaurant we experienced in France, topping anything we tried in Paris.

We were excited to learn that there was a Hard Rock Café (<http://www.hardrock.com/cafes/nice>) in Nice. In fact it only opened up last November. The atmosphere was great from the moment we walked in. Located at 5 Promenades des Anglais, the

multi-level Hard Rock Café Nice is nestled near Vieux Nice, along the Mediterranean Sea on the Promenade des Anglais, and is a must-see for both visitors and locals. For the physically handicapped there are elevators which reach both the rock shop and the second level.

ACCESSIBLE NICE: Nice publishes a special guide on accessibility, which is online at <http://en.nicetourisme.com/accessible-nice>. This assists the physically challenged organize their stay and provides useful addresses for administrative and health services, information on wheelchair access for special transport and parking facilities. To help you make the most of your stay, you will also find addresses for accommodation, restaurants as well as cultural and leisure activities.

SNCF, the French railway system, caters to the hearing and sight disabled as well as physically disabled and wheelchair-bound passengers by providing designated spaces and facilities in the carriages. In some locations, adapted transport service to the station can be provided. A door-to-door bag transport service is available for a fee, and can be booked when the ticket is purchased. The baggage will be delivered within 24 hours.

MONACO: When we decided to spend a few days in Nice, friends told us to take the train one night and experience dazzling Monte Carlo in Monaco.

The principality of Monaco (<http://www.visitmonaco.com>) has a colorful and fascinating history filled with barbarians, kings and even a movie star. It is a story of castles, epic battles and untold riches. Monaco is a constitutional monarchy ruled by Prince Albert II. It has a population of just over 32,000. The Automobile Club of Monaco organizes a Grand Prix race each year.

SPECIAL NEEDS: The Principality of Monaco caters fairly well to physically disabled and wheelchair-bound people. There is even a handicapped accessible beach catering to wheelchair users and those with visual handicaps. It offers specially equipped wheelchairs for enjoying the surf and is open every day from June to September.

DINING OUT: The highlight of our evening in Monte Carlo was a remarkable dinner at the Salle Empire (<http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/gourmet/salle-empire>) at the gorgeous Hôtel de Paris



(hoteldeparismontecarlo.com). We took the train from Nice to Monte Carlo and enjoyed a pleasant 10 minute walk through town to this most breathtaking facility where we were seated on a gorgeous terrace overlooking the entrance to the grand casino. This was “people watching” at its best. A musical trio serenaded us with soft songs and a group of servers provided us with sensational service, starting things off with champagne, soft lemon rolls and their signature potato chips.

We experienced an extraordinary nine course meal which lasted nearly two and a half hours. Every item on the menu was explained in great detail and if something did not meet our dietary requirements a substitute was easily arranged. First was an interesting and nutritious drink, a concentrated healthy extract of bio vegetables. This was followed by raw and cooked vegetables from the hotel’s own garden, with tangy juice. We then enjoyed some amazing eggplant ravioli with fresh goat’s cheese and thyme lemon. Next was a cookpot of Brittany lobster, with coral juice. The main course was a roasted lack of lamb from prealps rubbed with summer savory and summer vegetable. It was beautifully prepared.

There were no less than three separate desserts. At the Salle Empire, there is access for guests with special needs via a lift.

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