

Mamac artworks

Martial Hayssé's *High Tension*, Mamac

GALLERY DISTRICT

Walk back towards Mamac along avenue Gallieni and turn right into rue Defly. This part of the New Town, largely undiscovered by tourists, is home to a burgeoning gallery district, where contemporary art galleries mix with antiquarian booksellers, unusual design shops and laid-back bars and bistros. On the corner, **RDF Galerie** (2 rue Defly; www.rdfgalerie.com; Tue–Sat 3–7.30pm, July and Aug by appointment) features young artists in a variety of media, from painting to video installations to collaborations with DJs.

Turn left into rue Gioffredo and then right into rue Delille, perhaps stopping for a meal at **Le Gloss**, see ❶. At the end of the street turn left into boulevard Dubouchage, passing the **Villa Rambourg** (at no. 21bis), now a library of antiquarian books, posters and postcards with a lovely public garden at the rear.

Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image

At no. 27, behind a streamlined Moderne façade, the **Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image** ❶ (www.tpi-nice.org; Tue–Sun 10am–6pm; free) puts on excellent photography exhibitions in the former premises of the ornately decorated Cercle Artistique, a gentleman's club founded to promote Niçois writers and artists. There are a couple of good places to eat nearby: try **Aphrodite**, see ❷, for exciting modern cuisine, or **L'Instant T**, see ❸, for light meals.

If you want to extend the tour, continue along boulevard Dubouchage and turn right into avenue Jean Médecin for the Nice-Étoile tram stop to discover Nice's ambitious tramway art project: works by 15 international artists along 9km (6 miles) of tramway.

Food and Drink

❶ LE GLOSS

16 rue Delille; tel: 04 93 81 71 87; www.le-gloss.fr; Mon–Fri L and D; €
This sleek designer eatery is popular with laidback young Niçois for lunch or an aperitif. The easy-going menu takes in gnocchi, farcis, fajitas and steaks.

❷ APHRODITE

10 boulevard Dubouchage; tel: 04 93 85 63 53; www.restaurant-aphrodite.com; Tue–Sat L and D; €€€
In this dressy restaurant with a lush garden terrace, chef David Faure's beautiful, modern Mediterranean cooking is a blend of tradition and inventive touches. In the evening there is also a more revolutionary 'cuisine techno-émotionnelle' menu using modern molecular techniques.

❸ L'INSTANT T

35 boulevard Dubouchage; tel: 04 93 85 13 50; Mon–Sat 8am–7pm; €
Salads, omelettes, hamburgers and quiches are served all day at this little tea room, which has a prettily planted front garden.



Looking down from the Colline du Château

COLLINE DU CHÂTEAU AND VIEUX PORT

Now a pleasant park, the Colline du Château (Castle Hill) bears the traces of medieval Nice. It sits above the site where the Niçois' prehistoric ancestors first settled and the city's picturesque port and antiques district.

DISTANCE: 6km (3.75 miles)

TIME: A half day

START/END: Place Garibaldi

POINTS TO NOTE: The Colline du Château can also be reached by lift from the eastern end of quai des États-Unis (daily summer 8am–8pm, winter 8am–6pm; free) up to Tour Bellanda.

stands in the middle. On the southwestern side, the **Grand Café de Turin**, see ❶, is known for its seafood. Next to it, quiet rue Neuve leads into Vieux Nice. Continue along rue de la Providence to place Ste-Claire, where the **Chapelle de la Visitation** ❷ has a remarkable trompe l'oeil façade.

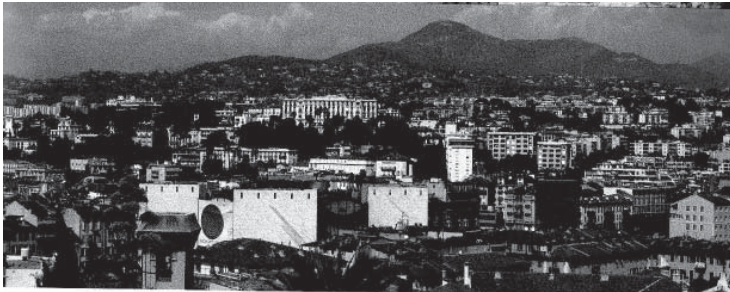
COLLINE DU CHÂTEAU

For centuries, the Colline du Château was the heart of medieval Nice, which grew up around the castle, before the population moved down to the coastal plain. Today, nothing remains of the citadelle, but the park laid out in its place is an oasis in summer with gorgeous views over the bay and the Old Town.

PLACE GARIBALDI

Start at **place Garibaldi** ❶, the beautiful arcaded square, built in 1782–92 by King Victor-Amédée III of Sardinia. Originally called piazza Victoria, it was later renamed after the Nice-born hero of Italian reunification, whose statue

Through the gate to the left, Escalier Ménica Rondelly zigzags up the hillside to the **Cimetière Catholique** ❸, full of winged angels, tragic maidens and other funerary monuments. Next to it, towards the sea is the **Cimetière Israélite** (Jewish Cemetery). From here, the road climbs up to **Parc du Château** ❹, with superb views along the way. Follow the sound of water up to the **Cascade**, built in the 19th century on the site of the medieval keep, using water diverted from the River Vésubie. Steps around the rear lead to an outdoor amphitheatre, used in summer for *La Castillada*, a promenade-spectacle recounting the history of Nice.



View across town to Mamac

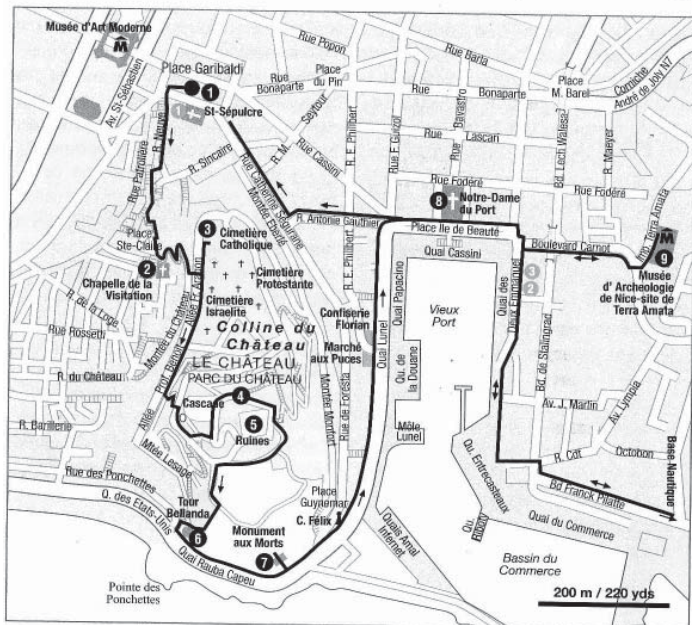
Medieval ruins

Below, a fenced-off **archaeological site** ⑤ protects the fragmentary ruins of the Romanesque cathedral and bits of houses which, though poorly labelled, give some idea of the medieval residential district destroyed in the siege of 1691. Follow the path to the southwestern corner overlooking the sea to the solid round **Tour Bellanda** ⑥, a mock fortification reconstructed in the 19th century; Hector Berlioz stayed here in 1844.

You can descend by a **lift**, which occupies the well shaft dug in the 16th century to supply water to the citadelle, or by the footpath down to quai des États-Unis.

MONUMENT AUX MORTS

At the bottom turn left on quai Rauba Capeu – Nissart for ‘flying hat’ because of the breeze – to the powerful **Monument aux Morts** ⑦, which commemorates the 4,000 Niçois killed in World War



Martial Raysse's Nissa Bella, Mamac

Return to the promenade du Paillon, taking steps up onto the esplanade of the **promenade des Arts**, created in the 1980s by mayor Jacques Médecin as part of his ambitious cultural programme.

Architects Yves Bayard and Henri Vidal's carrara marble complex comprises the octagonal **Théâtre National de Nice** (see page 121), which is renowned for premiering new drama, the Mamac and the **sculpture terrace** between the two, where a *Stabile* by Calder, Borovsky's *Man with a Suitcase* and Niki de Saint Phalle's *Loch Ness Monster* fountain prepare the way for the art to come.

Mamac

While the **Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain** ⑤ (Modern and Contemporary Art Museum, www.mamac-nice.org; Tue–Sun 10am–6pm; free) focuses on art from 1960 to the present, the museum's strength lies in its holding of the *École de Nice*, which is pitted against an excellent representation of parallel movements in American Pop Art, including Warhol, Lichtenstein and Johns, and abstraction by artists such as Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly, along with varied temporary exhibitions.

An entire room is devoted to the pivotal figure of Yves Klein, one of the leading lights of the *École de Nice* art movement (similar to Pop Art) which was popular in the late 1950s and 60s, who reconciled conceptual ideas and performances with a visual sensibility. This is evident in his trademark IKB (International Klein Blue)

canvases and sculptures and *anthropométries*, where female models covered in paint were rolled like a living paintbrush over the canvas. Other rooms contain Arman's accumulations and cut-up musical instruments, Jacquet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and an exceptional donation by Niki de Saint Phalle.

Tête Carrée

Continue north, where you cannot miss the **Tête Carrée** ① (Square Head) a 30m- (98ft-) high grey head that morphs into a cube (in fact the offices of the Bibliothèque Louis Nucéra, which is itself hidden underground). Sculptor Sacha Sosno describes his work as an ‘inhabited sculpture’ and its giant chin looks rather menacing when seen from underneath.

Palais des Congrès Acropolis

Next cross rue Barla to the **Palais des Congrès Acropolis** ⑦ (1 esplanade J.F. Kennedy), a conference centre and concert hall. Although now due for a face-lift, the building by Nice architects Buzzi, Bernasconi and Baptiste was considered one of the most beautiful congress centres in Europe when it opened in 1984, and integrates artworks both inside and out. By the main entrance is Arman's *Music Power*, a monumental bronze pile of sliced-up cellos.

Continue walking around the building past the bowling alley and arts cinema **Cinémathèque de Nice** (see page 120) for Noël Dolla's steel cut-out *Les trois mondes*.



The view from the Modern Art Museum (Mama)



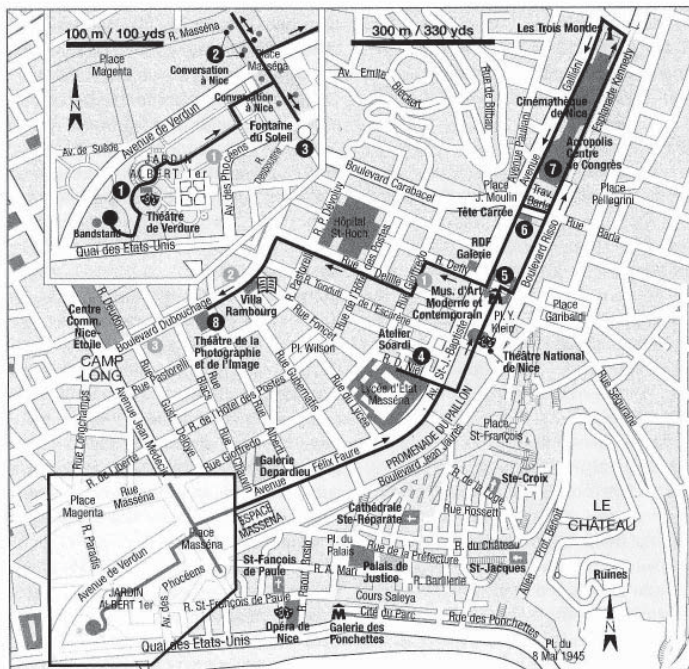
Boats moored in the Vieux Port

of the square after restoration, minus the nude statue of Apollo that crowned it when it first went up in 1956.

North of the new 'Miroir d'Eau' walk-through fountain is **Galerie Depardieu** (6 rue du Docteur Jacques Guidoni; www.galerie-depardieu.com; Mon–Sat 2.30–6.30pm), a dynamic young gallery, which mixes art shows with a programme of live jazz and readings.

PROMENADE DES ARTS

Continue along the promenade du Paillon. After Lycée Masséna on the left, make a short detour left to 8 rue Désire Niel, where the gallery **Atelier Soardi** ④ (www.soardi.fr; Tue–Sat 10am–12.30pm and 2–6.30pm) occupies a disused film studio rented by Matisse from 1930–33 to paint his vast composition *La Danse*.



1. Elongated Modernist allegorical sculptures by Alfred Janniot of War (symbolised by figures of Liberty, Strength, Sacred Fire and Victory) face Peace (symbolised by Labour, Love of Home and Fecundity) on either side of a colonnaded temple.

VIEUX PORT

Just beyond on place Guynemar, a statue of Sardinian king Charles Félix points his finger out to sea over the **Vieux Port**, which despite its name was actually excavated only in the late 18th century (previously, fishing boats were simply pulled up on the shore and Nice's main

port was at nearby Villefranche-sur-Mer). Today, big yachts and gin palaces moor along the western quay, **quai Lunel**, while tiny wooden *pointu* fishing boats can still be seen along the eastern side.

You might want to pause at the **Marché aux Puces** (Tue–Sat 10am–6pm) on quai Lunel, source of diverse bric-a-brac and collectables. Across the street at **Confiserie Florian** (14 quai Papacino; www.confiserieflorian.com; daily 9am–noon and 2–6.30pm), you can watch chocolates being made downstairs; violet- and rose-flavour chocolates are particular specialities.

Place Ile de Beauté was constructed following Genoese fashion – with arched ground floor, deep-red façades and ornate trompe l'oeil window frames – along the northern side of the port in the 1780s. Halfway along, the sailors' church, **Église Notre-Dame-du-Port** ① (Mon–Sat 9am–noon, 3–6pm), stands out for the purity of its neoclassical style, with ribbed columns and coffered ceiling.

Historic Hill

For such an inconspicuous bit of rock, the Colline du Château has seen a lot of history. Settled in the 10th century BC by Ligurian tribes, Greek Nikaia grew up on its flank and during the Dark Ages the population took refuge here from barbarian invasions. By the 11th century, a keep stood on the highest point and a walled town with churches, monasteries, a market and noble residences emerged. Following the siege of Nice in 1543, Duke Emmanuel Philibert I decided to construct a powerful citadel, forcing the townspeople down to the plain. The Upper Town's fate was sealed when Nice was besieged again in 1691, and in 1706 a victorious Louis XIV razed the citadel. It was transformed into a public park in the 1820s.

Musée d'Archéologie de Nice – Site de Terra Amata

Before continuing around the port, detour to 25 boulevard Carnot to the curious yet fascinating **Musée d'Archéologie de Nice – Site de Terra Amata** ② (entrance on Impasse Terra Amata; www.musee-terra-amata.org; Wed–Sun 10am–6pm; free). It is located at the bottom of an apartment block on the very spot, discovered in 1966, where a tribe of elephant hunters briefly camped



The Monument aux Morts

on the beach 400,000 years ago when the sea level was 26m (85ft) higher than today. The centrepiece is a large cast of the site, showing traces of tools, animal bones and even a footprint left behind, while the upstairs mezzanine explains the lifestyle of these prehistoric nomadic hunters with displays of axeheads, flint tools and a reconstructed hut.

Boulevard Franck Pilatte

Double back to the port, where the eastern quay, **quai des Deux Emmanuels**, is lined with fish restaurants and bars, such as **Ma Nolan's**, see ②, and **L'Âne Rouge**, see ③. Take the stairs at the end up to **boulevard Franck Pilatte**, popular with locals for a promenade or for a swim from the rocks, without the crowds

of the main beaches off the promenade des Anglais. Look out for attractive twin villas Castor and Pollux on the left, and the castle-like Château d'Anglais on Mont Boron in the distance, built by English military engineer Robert Smith in 1857; and watch kids divebombing into the sea from the high board just before chic restaurant La Réserve.

ANTIQUES DISTRICT

Return to place Ile de Beauté, continuing straight on into rue Antoine Gauthier. Here, and on adjoining rue Catherine Ségurane, it is fun to browse the 100 or so **antiques dealers** clustered behind the port (www.nice-antic.com) before returning to place Garibaldi.

Food and Drink

① **GRAND CAFÉ DE TURIN**

5 place Garibaldi; tel: 04 93 62 29 52; daily 8am–10pm; €€

This seafood brasserie has been shucking oysters for over a century, drawing a faithful Niçois clientele despite a sometimes grouchy service. The lavish platters of *fruits de mer* include the usual suspects and some rarer treats, such as *violetts* (sea potatoes) and *oursins* (sea urchins) in winter.

② **MA NOLAN'S**

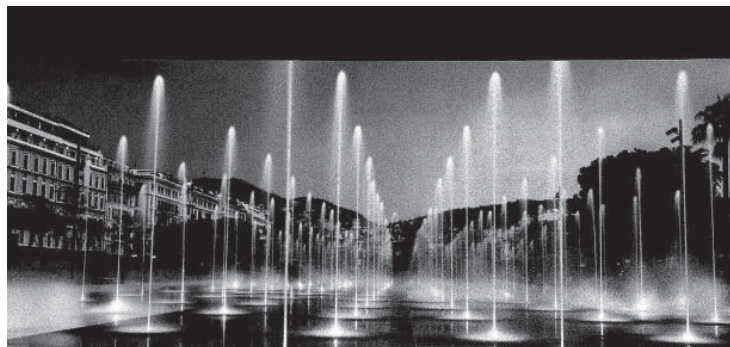
5 quai des Deux Emmanuels; tel: 04 92 27 07 88; www.ma-nolans.com; daily L and D; €

This sophisticated Irish bar draws a French and international clientele for drinks and pub grub, either outside on the terrace or inside the woody interior where live bands play most nights. Salads, sandwiches and burgers are served all day.

③ **L'ÂNE ROUGE**

7 quai des Deux Emmanuels; tel: 04 93 89 49 63; www.anerougenice.com; Fri–Tue L and D, Thur D; €€€

At the dressiest of the portside restaurants, chef Michel Devillers serves up inventive starters and more classic mains, with an emphasis on fish. Service is excellent though rather formal, and there is a good-value lunch menu.



Theatrical fountain along the promenade du Paillon

PROMENADE DU PAILLON

The landscaped promenade between Vieux Nice and the New Town is a focus for the arts and daring modern architecture, with plenty of public art to enjoy and the city's new gallery district to explore.

DISTANCE: 4km (2.5 miles)

TIME: A half day

START: Jardin Albert 1er

END: Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image

POINTS TO NOTE: The Mamac and Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image are closed Mondays; most private galleries open Tuesday to Saturday.

still have a blowsy, pleasure-garden feel. In the centre, the **Théâtre de Verdure amphitheatre** is used for outdoor concerts in summer. Towards place Masséna, admire Bernar Venet's massive 19m- (62ft-) high painted steel **Arc 115°5** – one of a series of arcs the French sculptor has made since the 1960s that are designed according to mathematical formulae – which seems almost to float over the lawn.

PLACE MASSÉNA

Running like a border between Vieux Nice and the New Town, the promenade du Paillon was created when the River Paillon was covered over for public health reasons in the 1800s. Today it has become a 'river of culture', recently redeveloped, where gardens and cultural buildings mix with outdoor sculptures.

JARDIN ALBERT 1ER

Enter the **Jardin Albert 1er** ① from avenue de Verdun. Despite busy traffic along the seafront the meandering paths, palms trees and iron bandstand

Place Masséna is Nice's elegant centrepiece and, since the arrival of the tramway in 2007, is also the setting for an art installation, **Conversation à Nice** ②, by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa. Seven resin figures squatting atop tall metal poles, symbolising a dialogue between continents, are eerily white by day and illuminated from within in a subtly evolving colourful glow at night. At the same time, the **Fontaine du Soleil** ③ (Sun Fountain), with bronze sculptures by Alfred Janniot representing the planets, was returned to the southern side