

# Greg's Gaycations

## The Côte d'Azur

By: Gregory L Kiep



The South of France, or the Côte d'Azur which sounds so much more fabulous, has long been a vacation haven for Europeans who flock to the insanely beautiful beaches and exciting tourist towns. Nestled along the Mediterranean Sea, this part of the world is home to gorgeous homes, vistas, and people. Having spent numerous weeks in many of its towns, I would like to share some "insider favorites" on where to go and what to see in three of my favorite stops on the Côte d'Azur.

### Montpellier

You may not have heard of this destination, as it is a smaller stop about midway between Nice and Barcelona. I happened upon it a few summers ago as a place to stop along the train ride between these two cities (which I highly recommend, it is beautiful). Stepping off the train, you are greeted to a quintessential French town full of life and energy. The main square has delicious restaurants and bars as well as a Merry-Go-Round for the kids.

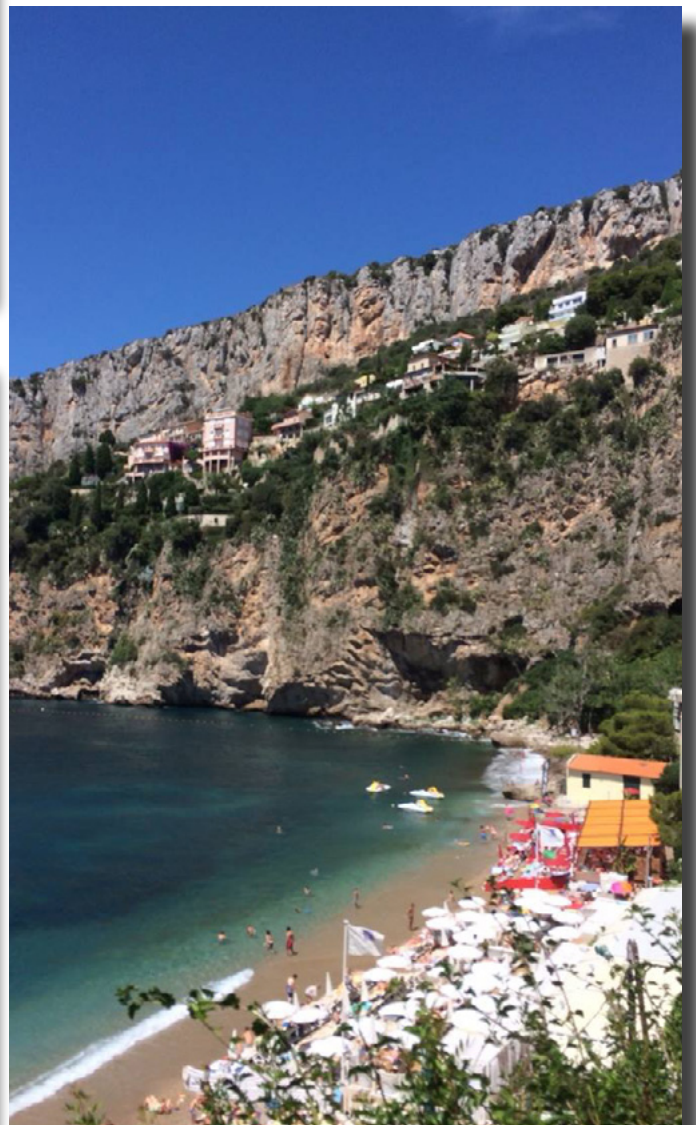
At night, it is bustling with lights and music and great fun. The city is a college town and extremely liberal, with many gay couples holding hands while walking around. There are a few nightlife options that cater to the gay community as well such as The Heaven and Café de la Mer.

An interesting aspect of Montpellier is the amount of pubs that are scattered around the town and the extensive amount of people that come from England and Ireland to grace these establishments. Many a night was spent by my friends and I dancing and laughing in pubs, which I highly recommend.

Do yourself a favor and add this to your list of places to see, especially if you are in the area. You can fly into Montpellier-Méditerranée Airport and take a quick train ride into the city. A long weekend would be perfect here, although I spent over two weeks and loved every minute. Each of my friends that took my recommendation to check out Montpellier have been pleased with their choice and thanked me upon their return.













## Nice

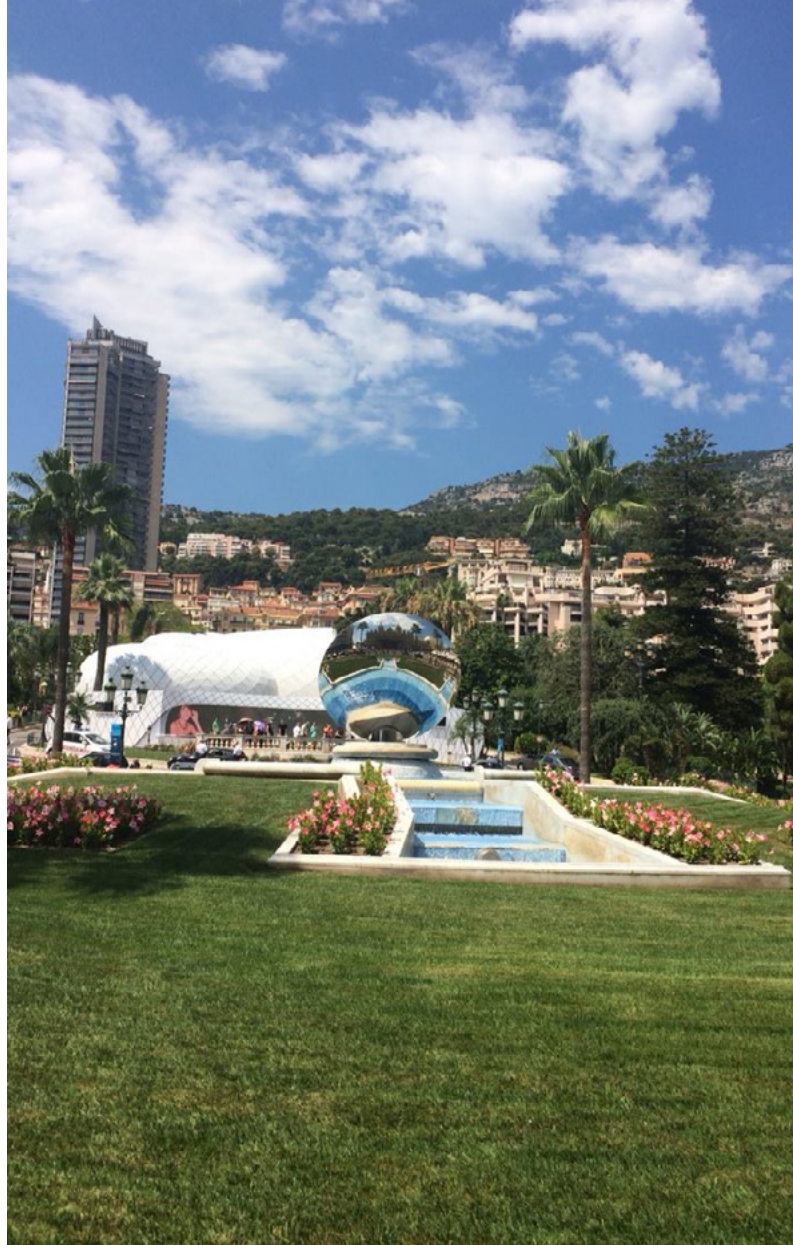
Everyone loves Nice. Well, what is there not to love? The beaches, albeit rocky, are spectacular and the nightlife is more than fun. The gay scene in Nice is vibrant and it's the perfect place to grab a bottle of rosé and toast the night away with friends. The only thing that rivals the beautiful sights are the stunning people – but who can complain about that?!

The gay beach in Nice is Castel Beach, all the way to the end with bars and shops only steps away. While you are there, make sure you check out some of the gay bars, especially Kult and Le Bar Bitch. (I don't make the names up!) Both have been around for years and are a ton of fun.

## Monaco

Oh, the rich kids' playground! Although the best way to check out this city is on a yacht, don't let what you have heard discourage you from going to see its splendor. There are few places in the world that are as blatantly expressive of wealth and the lifestyle that is associated with it. It is interesting to just walk around and take it all in with the Monte-Carlo Casino, Japanese Gardens, and some simply amazing restaurants.

There is nothing really exclusively gay in Monaco, but Nice is only a quick jaunt away for nightlife options. I recommend checking out the hotel bars that are great for people watching. Not a city I would spend weeks upon weeks unless you just want to throw money around, but a destination worth checking out at least once.



*Gregory grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio and lived in Hyde Park and Downtown during his 24 years there. Upon receiving his MBA from Xavier University, he launched a marketing firm specializing in LGBT lifestyle services and products. He has travelled all over the world to over 60 countries independently and in conjunction with Atlantis Events. When he is not on an adventure, he calls Boston home. Read more about his gaycations at [gregorykiep.com](http://gregorykiep.com)*