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01 Vistas from Suite Carré d'Or at Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo © Jeremy Jakubowicz 02 The Wellness Sky Club at Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo © Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer 03 Arriving at the same hotel © Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer

SPOTLIGHT ON MONACO

Stylish and sustainable, Monaco knows how to impress even the most discerning of travellers, with experiences that range from high-end shopping to pampering in day spas like no other on the planet. Here are 9 reasons to visit now, writes Natasha Dragun.



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1 New look for Casino Square

Monaco's landmark Casino Square has always been one of the principality's most popular sites, the gateway to prime attractions including shopping malls and urban gardens. Following a major renovation, the new-look Place du Casino is now more visitor-friendly than ever while also preserving the legendary track of the city's Formula 1 Grand Prix. VIP Monte-Carlo Société de Bains de Mer customer? Make the most of valet parking in the middle of the square.

2 Dive into the Great Barrier Reef

It's a long way from home, but well worth the experience. *Immersion* at the Oceanographic Museum is a multimedia exhibition that offers visitors the chance to experience a dive below the surface of the sea on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Guests will meet the marine species that inhabit the planet's largest coral ecosystem and learn how humans can better protect the marine world in the future.



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3 Reinvented luxury hotels

French interior architect Jacques Garcia is behind the renovation of Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo. By April 2022, the famous five-star property will be transformed with a makeover of all guest rooms, the addition of suites and a redesigned restaurant and bar. Meanwhile, the legendary Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo is fresh out of its own transformation, with enhancements including new luxury suites, a garden courtyard and a rooftop wellness area. This remains a special place in Monaco's history, with Prince Rainier III and Princess Grace of Monaco choosing it as the destination for their 20-year wedding anniversary.

4 Wellness warriors

From extravagant day spas to wellness centres that utilise gold and caviar in treatments, Monaco knows a thing or two about pampering. Top of your indulgence list should be Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo's freshly minted Wellness Sky Club: the 500-square-metre rooftop space offers 360-degree views of the Prince's Palace and the Place du Casino. Nearby, Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo takes designer spa treatments to new heights with Spa Metropole by Givenchy, designed to perfection by architect Didier Gomez. The principality is also home to Europe's largest spa, Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo

5 Brand-new One Monte-Carlo

The One Monte-Carlo eco-precinct, Monaco's newest district of chic, combines vertical gardens, cutting-edge architecture and high-end luxury shopping. Alongside the Place du Casino, the quartier is focused around car-free Promenade Princess Charlene. Expect to find a who's who of luxe boutiques: Balenciaga, Fendi, Chanel et al among the precinct's 24 lavish stores. When retail therapy ends, linger over chef Marcel Ravin's culinary creations at Mada One restaurant.

6 Discover cultural treasures

The prestigious Opéra Garnier Monte-Carlo hosts world-class concerts and ballets in a space almost as scene-stealing as the shows themselves. This is the home of the Ballets de Monte-Carlo Company, created as a result of the commitment of H.R.H. the Princess of Hanover, who wanted to continue the long tradition of dance in Monaco. On tour for more than 200 days a year, the Ballets de Monte-Carlo has become a major cultural ambassador for the principality - catching a performance here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

7 Racing action

The Monaco Formula One Grand Prix has been the principality's most thrilling sporting event since 1929. But did you know there's also an all-electric ePrix (held every two years in May) to promote clean mobility tech using 100 per cent electric single-seater cars? And Monaco also hosts the Historic Grand Prix, showcasing an eye-popping array of expertly preserved cars on the same hair-raising street circuit as the F1 Grand Prix. Held every two years, the event takes you back to the golden days of motorsports racing.



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04 Dining on the Le Vistamar terrace at Hôtel Hermitage Monte-Carlo © Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer 05 On track for the Formula One Grand Prix © Visit Monaco 06 The Diamond Suite Princess Grace at Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo © Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer

Conservation

Monaco may be small, but it has big plans when it comes to the environment. The principality's green agenda includes goals to reduce carbon emissions by 55 per cent come 2030, and to be carbon neutral by 2050. The hotel industry also employs 'Green Teams' to implement solutions reducing the ecological imprint of tourism. Step out for a stroll to enjoy parks and gardens that make up more than 20 per cent of Monaco's surface; you can admire more than 23,000 floral species, which add to the region's biodiversity. Also adding to the biodiversity is the Oceanographic Museum, founded by reigning monarch Prince Albert II's great-great-grandfather Prince Albert I, who created the space to watch over the oceans more than a century ago. Today, its 6,000 artefacts provide an important message about the preservation of global marine environments.



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8 Wine and dine in style

Whether you're dining at the edge of the sparkling ocean or sipping Cristal at Monaco's bars and clubs, you'll quickly learn this principality lives by wining and dining. Three-Michelin-starred Louis XV by legendary Monegasque chef Alain Ducasse is an eternal favourite, as is Le Vistamar at Hôtel Hermitage Monte-Carlo. Meanwhile Elsa lures diners with impeccable farm-to-table food, and is the world's only Michelin-starred restaurant that is 100 per cent organic. Don't miss newcomers Gaia Monte-Carlo and Izakaya Cozza.

9 Dreamy luxury suites

The Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo recently revealed its freshly renovated Suite Carré d'Or. The 150-square-metre penthouse is as lavish as they come, with spacious living areas and a marble-and-gold bathroom. Meanwhile, the revamped Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo comes with two extravagant suites: the Diamond Suite Princess Grace and the Diamond Suite Prince Rainier III, with sweeping views and private pools. Finally, sleep at Suite Eleven at Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort for luxury living that spans the top floor of this resort. ♦

Travel file

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