



AT JUST TWO SQUARE KILOMETRES IN SIZE MONACO  
IS THE SECOND SMALLEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD  
IMAGE: COURTESY OF VISIT MONACO

# Magnificent MONACO

MONACO HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS ONE OF EUROPE'S SWANKIEST DESTINATIONS, HOME TO THE UBER GLAMOROUS AND WELL HEELED. AND TO BETTER ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH THIS BASTION OF LUXURY, TRAVEL WEEKLY BRINGS YOU 7 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT MONACO (OR MAYBE YOU DID).

WORDS: LAINE FULLERTON

Perhaps you only know Monaco as the second-smallest country in the world and bested only by The Vatican. Or you have heard of the Principality because it hosts the world-famous Grand Prix, and is a lavish citadel to the millionaires who call it home. But squeezed into its 500 hectares, between the flurries of people, there is much more than meets the eye.

## MONACO REFRESHED

Renovations, makeovers, and new openings. While Monaco has long been known as a bastion of luxury, the Principality is coming out with a refreshed, dynamic and even more glamorous look.

Monaco's most iconic five-star property, the Hotel de Paris Monte-Carlo, is nearing the conclusion of its four-year renovation and will be reborn in early 2019, with the addition of a courtyard garden, roof renovations and new rooftop villas, while the historic hotel façade remains intact.

The Principality's hidden gem, the Columbus Hotel Monte-Carlo, located in the lively Fontvieille area, was originally built for the racing drivers by former driver David Coulthard. The property has undergone a total facelift, and the now sleek boutique hotel radiates a contemporary feel.

## PARKS AND GARDENS GALORE

Since protecting biodiversity is vital to the Principality's sustainable development policy, Monaco has over 23,000 plants belonging to an array of species.

From the Princess Grace Rose Gardens, conceived by Prince Rainier III in memory of his wife Princess Grace, to the Exotic Garden of Monaco, an extraordinary botanic garden clinging to the steep

stone cliff-side of Moneghetti, possibilities to explore Monaco's greenery are endless.

And the lesser known gardens including Princess Antoinette Park, the Japanese Garden, the St. Martin Gardens, and the UNESCO Gardens on the Fontvieille Terraces, are also distinctive in their own way.

## A GOLDMINE OF UNEXPECTED INDULGENCES

From exciting sporting activities at the Monte-Carlo Beach Club, like jet-skiing and parasailing, playing boule with the locals, and eating fresh oysters on Fontvieille harbour, Monaco is a surprise at every turn.

Perles de Monte-Carlo, an oyster bar located at the very tip of the pier of Monaco's Port de Fontvieille, is a local hangout and unexpected gem that impresses visitors with a genuine ambiance.

To uncover Monaco's organic craft beer, head to Brasserie de Monaco, located on Monaco's harbour. The boutique brewery has an entirely automated brewing system that produces an authentic local beer.

And travellers can even check out one of the largest private city farms in the world, Terre de Monaco. This organic farming start-up was founded with the mission of instituting urban agriculture, in particular eco-friendly vegetable and fruit gardens, on Monaco's rooftops.

## A THRIVING HEALTH FOOD SCENE

Fun fact: Monaco boasts one of the highest life expectancies in the world. And that is no surprise since it is home to an inspiring organic food revolution and Michelin-starred restaurants, as well as local restaurants who are putting local and seasonal produce in the spotlight. »





THE OCEANOGRAPHIC  
INSTITUE INCLUDES A  
MUSEUM OF MARINE  
SCIENCES

“In a wealthy place like Monaco, it is comforting to know that the Principality is devoted to helping worthy causes.”



MONTE CARLO GRAND  
CASINO AND THE JARDIN  
EXOTIQUE AT DAWN

The world's only organic Michelin-starred restaurant, Elsa, is a trendy seaside dining option beautifully located in one of Monaco's most exclusive and intimate five-star hotels, the Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel.

And if you want to really immerse yourself like the locals, the friendly and colourful Condamine markets, are open every day, all year, with some of the best produce in its confines.

### ALL ABOUT THE 'E'

E-bikes, e-cars, e-boats, it seems everything has an 'e' before it in Monaco. And the Principality is one of the most sustainable places in the world with all public vehicles being either electric, hybrid, or bio-fuel.

The government further provides free charging stations for electric vehicles and offers financial incentives for the purchase of electric or hybrid cars. Plus, reusable sea water is also used for the cooling towers of major buildings.

One of Monaco's latest developments, an innovative electric car-sharing service 'Mobee' is available to travellers for all mobility needs. And what traveller wouldn't want to utilise the most economical and environmentally friendly alternative to taxis?

### MORE THAN THE GRAND PRIX

Obviously the world-famous F1 Grand Prix is one of the highlight's in Monaco's exciting events agenda, but there is a whole world of lesser-known, enticing racing events.

The Monaco Epxix and Historic Grand Prix each alternate, occurring every two years in May. This year saw an impressive line up of historical cars at the Historic Grand Prix, a retro motor racing experience that takes place on the same street circuit as the F1. And the Monaco Epxix, which will take place again next year, aims to promote clean mobility technologies with electric cars competing on the race track.

Every January, the historic and prestigious annual Monte-Carlo Rally occurs, with the entire Principality throwing itself into celebrating this exclusive ode to motorsports. And speaking of visiting Monaco in European winter, the Principality is conveniently just a short drive from the French Alps, making for the perfect stop on a ski holiday.

### MONACO LOVES TO GIVE BACK

In a wealthy place like Monaco, it is comforting to know that the Principality is devoted to helping worthy causes.

Monaco's commitment to the ocean shines through in the acclaimed Oceanographic Museum, which has been the temple of the sea for over a century. Built on the side of the mythical Rock of Monaco, the museum offers travellers a unique opportunity to learn about protecting our oceans.

The passion of Prince Albert I of Monaco, the brainchild behind the museum, shines through in the striking architecture from the marble walls to the jellyfish chandelier.

Visitors can witness this union between art and science all year round, from the museum's aquariums to its collections, which both offer a unique learning experience to know, love and protect the oceans. ●

### Enjoy the Magic of Monaco with this Value Offer

The Monaco Government Tourist Bureau is delighted to offer the exclusive 'Passport to Monte-Carlo' by French Travel Connection. By booking this excellent value offer, travellers will be able to benefit from a range of 'Passport' advantages, including free helicopter transfers between Monaco and Nice, a special attention (e.g. a welcome cocktail) in their hotel, as well as a book of free entrance tickets to the museums and attractions of the Principality. Put simply, the ultimate way to see Monaco at the very best value.

For more information visit: [www.frenchtravel.com.au/monaco/passport-to-monte-carlo](http://www.frenchtravel.com.au/monaco/passport-to-monte-carlo)