

MONACO REINVENTED

The second-smallest (but also among the wealthiest) country in the world, Monaco and exclusivity go hand in hand. But this petite principality's focus on the environment and safety shows that style and sustainability can – and in fact, *must* – coexist. Read on for nine reasons to visit Monaco in 2021.

Small and mighty

At a time when crowds are discouraged and safety is a priority, the travel industry's greatest luxury is exclusivity. And that's exactly what you get when you visit the world's second-smallest country. A petite principality on the Mediterranean, Monaco is a social distancer's dream, home to just 38,000 people who enjoy a ravishing stretch of coastline alongside some 270,000 square metres of green space – you will never feel cramped or overwhelmed by crowds here.

Long live Monaco

Did you know that on average the Monégasque live until 89.5 years old? That's the longest life expectancy in the world. Blissful setting on the Med aside, there are a number of factors contributing to this longevity: an emphasis on organic urban farming and healthy eating (the principality is home to the world's only Michelin-starred organic restaurant); plenty of leafy and watery spaces to exercise and connect with nature; cutting-edge wellness centres offering therapeutic treatments; and one of the planet's best healthcare systems, which locals and visitors alike benefit from.

It's hip to be square

Monaco's landmark Casino Square (Place du Casino) is a fairytale union of Belle Époque architecture, its sides lined

with the grand Opera Garnier and glam Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo, among other architectural icons. A recent 2.5-million-euro renovation has seen the principality's heart transformed into a pedestrian-friendly haven, with soaring palms lining the streets, a new water fountain and a dramatic artwork by Anish Kapoor. It not only gives visitors more space to stroll but also preserves the principality's famed F1 racecourse.

Triple the speed

Three Grand Prix in the space of 30 days? It's a reality come April and May 2021. First racer off the rank is the Monaco Historic Grand Prix (23 – 25 April), showcasing charming old cars that take you back in time. Next is the fourth edition of the Monaco E-Prix (8 May), and then finally the hotly anticipated Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix (20 – 23 May): this glamorous affair sees competitors race on the slowest, and most difficult, track on the F1 calendar.

Reef reflections

Founded by Prince Albert II's great-great-grandfather Prince Albert I more than a century ago, the Oceanographic Museum today offers mind-boggling insights into the world's waterways. There are more than 6,000 sea creatures and countless artefacts on display, not to mention roving exhibitions like *Immersion*. This new interactive show spotlights Australia's Great Barrier Reef, revealing

the majesty of the World Heritage Site through multimedia installations that allow visitors to 'dive' below the surface of the sea and meet some of the marine species that inhabit the planet's largest coral ecosystem.

A coast with the most

Monaco makes the most of its coastline, which dazzles with sandy palm-lined bays beside protected pockets of ocean. The principality's presence along the Med is about to get even more impressive, thanks to a two-billion-euro project to extend the country's natural contour by a further six hectares. Portier Cove, as it's known, is set to welcome 1,000 residents in flashy villas and apartments come 2025; travellers, meanwhile, will be able to make the most of landscaped parkland, a seafront promenade and marina. Because this is Monaco, and the environment is top priority, extra steps have been taken to ensure the health of the floral and faunal species potentially impacted by development.

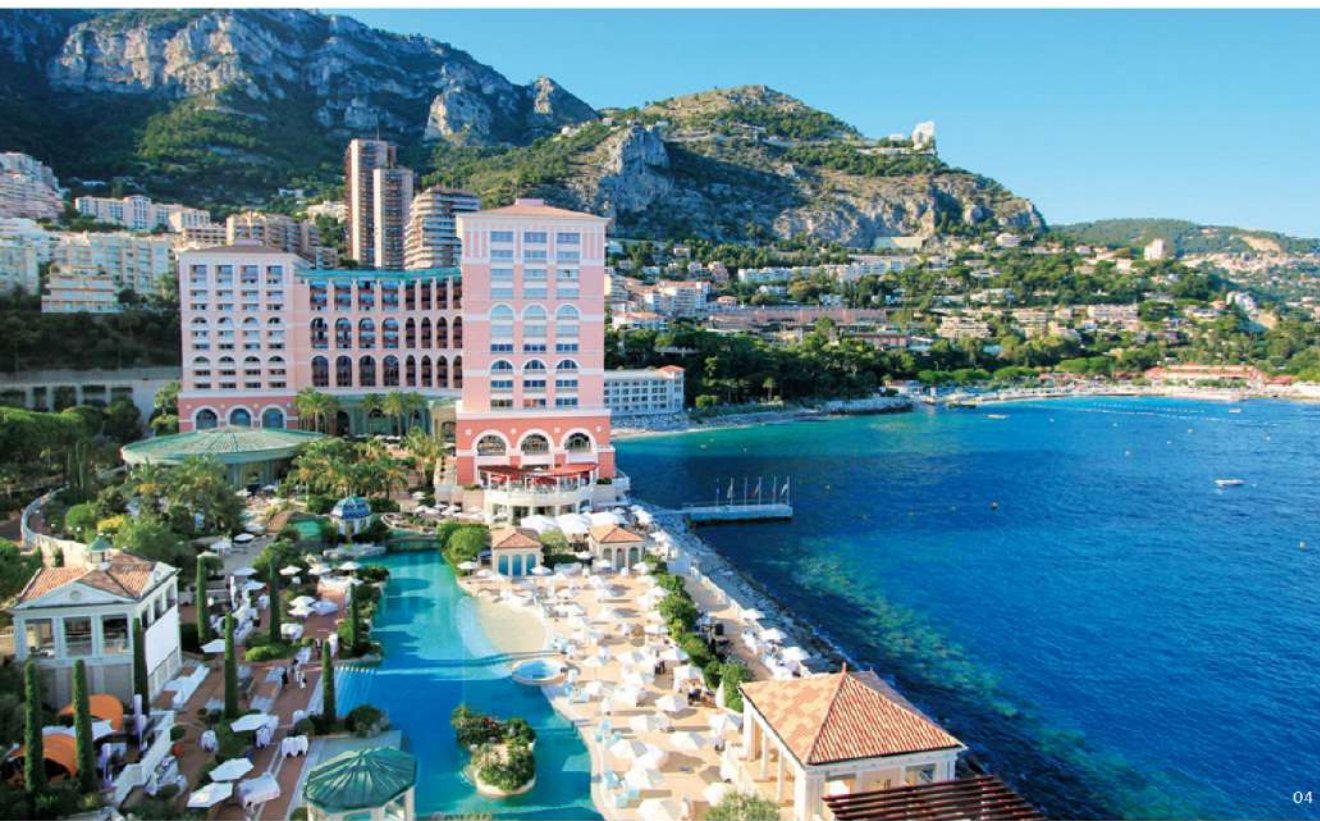
Communities of the future

Monaco has always been a leader in green transportation – travellers can currently zip around in an extensive fleet of Mobee electric cars and shared ebikes, while the testing of self-driving electric shuttles is also underway. But the principality is thinking even bigger for the future, creating a 'smart city' that takes environmentally sensitive urban



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planning seriously. Among the initiatives to ensure a smooth visitor experience is the expansion of connected bus shelters. Waiting for your ride? You can utilise Wi-Fi hotspots or play around on multimedia screens that offer real-time updates, tourist news and practical information. There's also an app so you can get from A to B easily, and using all available modes of transport.

A green shift

The country's pioneering leader established his namesake Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation more than 14 years ago. Since then, the charitable organisation has been responsible for everything from funding climate change studies in Antarctica to establishing renewable energy projects across Africa, in addition to a multitude of ventures on home soil – not in the least instituting strict guidelines that will likely see Monaco hit carbon neutrality by 2050. The Prince has been savvy in enlisting experts and personalities with global knowledge and influence, many of whom share their views on the link between the

environment and the current pandemic in *A Green Shift*: a series of short video interviews with the likes of Australia's own Tim Flannery and influential marine biologist Laurent Ballesta.

The suite life

From the hotel world's largest wine cellars to some of its glitziest suites, Monaco's accommodation offerings don't disappoint. But they do surprise – in the best possible way. Recently awarded prestigious *Forbes Travel Guide* 2020 'Five Star' status, the grande dame Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo (home to *those* cellars) is just one of the country's accommodations making an impact when it comes to sustainability. In fact, more than 80 per cent of the principality's luxury lodgings have achieved environmental certification of some kind, with most now employing 'Green Teams' to facilitate eco-friendly projects. Among trendsetters are the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort and Monte-Carlo Beach, both of which have Green Globe certification for initiatives to improve biodiversity and reduce CO2 emissions. ♦

Travel file

Accommodation
montecarlosbm.com

Information
visitmonaco.com fpaz.org

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