

# LYON - DISCOVER THE FRENCH PAST



Lyon, the second largest metropolitan area in France located between Marseille and Paris, is mostly known as the gastronomy capital of France. Yet, there are more attractions than the restaurants. Discover the Roman history and beautiful parks.

Thanks to its rich historical and cultural sites Lyon was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. When designating the Historical Site of Lyon UNESCO said the city showed exceptional testimony of urban settlement continuity for more than two millennia on a site of great strategic and commercial significance. Regions designated as part of the Historical Site include Fourviere, the Roman district, silk district (Croix-Rousses), the Presqu'île and Renaissance district (Vieux Lyon).

Some of the must-see tourist attractions include:

## **Theatre Romains de Fourviere**

This Roman Theatre is the oldest in the whole country dating back to the first century BC .It was constructed when Augustus was reigning in the land and is remarkably well preserved. There are three historic ruins of Roman structures that share the same compound with the theatre. The huge theatre has a steep gallery seating area that rise from its base. It has a decorated floor whose foundations were traditionally used as a large stage.

## **Basilica Notre Dame-de-Fourviere**

This imposing structure was constructed from 1872 to 1876 and is considered among the recent additions in the region. The gleaming basilica is clearly visible from miles around as it sits atop Fourviere hill. Most people who see it from a distance think it is a fortress as well as a church due to turrets arising from the four corners of the building and the crenellated walls. When you get closer more detailed designs such as the statue of the Virgin Mary emerge surmounted on the bell tower. The interior of the church is also magnificent with stained glass that looks stunning, beautiful marble work and colored mosaics.

## **Parc de la Tete d'Or**

This park located in central Lyon features a large lake where people enjoy boating during summer. It is a favorite destination for cyclists and joggers. The park which is approximately 117 hectares large also contains a Zoo - perfect destination for families with children.

## **Jardin botanique de Lyon**

This botanical garden is usually included in the Parc de la Tete d'Or otherwise known as Golden Head Park which is considered the largest park in the country. The garden was began in 1857 and contains more than 15,000 plants including 750 varieties of roses and 3500 plants of temperate regions among other diversified flora.

## **Fine Arts Museum**

If you travel to Lyon be sure to visit the main museum in the city as well as the largest in the

country. It is housed in a former 17th century convent and has major displays of paintings by renowned artists such as Rembradt, Francis Bacon, Picasso and Rubens. Here you will find a whole collection of drawings, decorative arts, Greek and Roman antiquities. The museum is also famous for its 50,000 coins and medals.

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