

EXPERIENCE

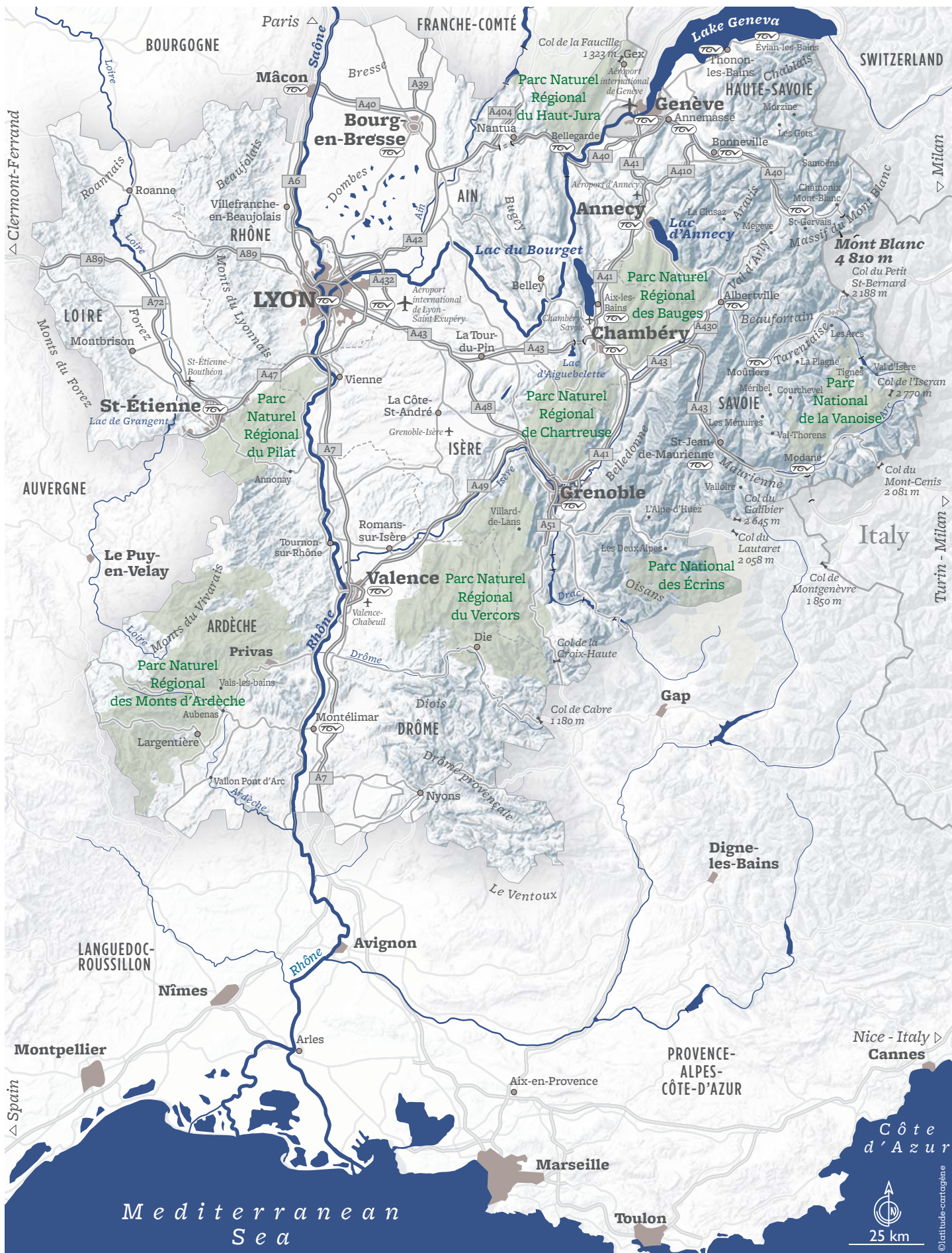
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**RHÔNE-ALPES**

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FRANCE

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EXPERIENCE

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# RHÔNE-ALPES

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FROM THE ALPS  
TO PROVENCE

P. 4 TO 9

—

THE HEIGHT  
OF INNOVATION

P. 10 TO 15

—

FROM THE EARTH  
TO THE STARS

P. 16 TO 21

—

ART  
AND CULTURE

P. 22 TO 27

—

WINTER SPORTS  
AND SUMMER TOO

P. 28 TO 33





# FROM THE ALPS TO PROVENCE

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From Mont Blanc rising majestically above the Chamonix Valley to the serene countryside bordering Provence in the south, Rhône-Alpes is a region of many faces. It boasts a palette of myriad hues, from the bright white Alpine peaks to the verdant lowlands of the Forez province west of Lyon, the stunning turquoise of vast Alpine lakes to the pinkish purple of Drôme Provençale lavender fields, the ochre façades of Vieux Lyon to the flaming reds of autumn in the Rhône Valley orchards.

Connecting one to the other is the stately River Rhône, hugged by ViaRhôna, a long ribbon of greenways and cycle paths that will soon lead from Lake Geneva all the way to the beaches of the Mediterranean. A hymn to nature ripe for exploring, like the vineyards of the Beaujolais, a favourite with wine buffs and foodies, the Ardèche Gorge, wending its way down to the Rhône from Vallon Pont d'Arc, and the shores of the Alpine lakes.



## CARING FOR NATURE

*Protecting the natural environment and rich biodiversity that thrives in our mountain areas is part of Rhône-Alpes' proactive environmental policy. In addition to the region's two national parks (the Vanoise and Écrins) and six regional nature parks (Haut Jura, Bauges, Chartreuse, Vercors, Pilat and Monts d'Ardèche), the countryside is protected by twenty-six national and twelve regional nature reserves.*



# THE LEGENDARY ALPS

From the Alpine giants to the eastern fringes of the Massif Central and lower foothills of the Jura, the region offers an incomparable diversity of mountain landscapes. Dominated by Mont Blanc, this 'world above', as it was known in ancient times, stretches in an endless series of peaks, cols, valleys and mountain pastures from the Chablais to the Beaufortain, the Tarentaise to Belledonne and the Maurienne to the Oisans. Like sentinels fashioned by time and the elements, these giants of stone and ice, from the Aiguille du Midi to La Meije, are the realm of sunshine and eternal snowfields, there to be conquered by those who dare.

## DIZZYING HEIGHTS

The lower-lying, gentler uplands of Haut Jura, the Vercors, the Pilat and the Monts d'Ardèche offer more restful surroundings. Lulled by the soft rush of distant waterfalls, tree-lined paths lead to villages proud to boast their age-old traditions. A source of inspiration and fresh air, the sunny hills of the Lyonnais, Forez, Vivarais, Bugey and Beaujolais are crammed full of natural treasures.

# URBAN ATTRACTION

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A European crossroads at the confluence of the rivers Rhône and Saône, Lyon is a major destination thanks to its architectural finery and gastronomic reputation. Once capital of the Gauls, the city is home to a wealth of interest designated World Heritage Sites by Unesco: Fourvière Hill with its basilica and Gallo-Roman remains; the medieval Vieux Lyon quarter; Bellecour, Europe's largest pedestrianised square, and more. Places of historical importance that contrast with the forward-looking character of a major city undergoing a metamorphosis, boasting new developments such as the Confluence district, which has inspired top architects.

## SOAKING UP THE ATMOSPHERE

Another of the region's great cities, Saint Etienne is not just famous for its football team. This former mining city has successfully transformed itself, establishing a reputation as an international centre of design and joining Unesco's prestigious Creative Cities Network. It's a must-see. If you want to get up high, head for Grenoble, the Porte des Alpes and the Bastille Fortress. This bastion clinging to the mountainside is accessible in the city's amazing 'bubbles' cable car, and from this vantage point the visitor is treated to unrivalled views over the city with the Alps stretching beyond. A few kilometres from Chambéry, the proud, elegant capital of Savoie home to the famous Fontaine des Eléphants, Annecy is a town that never fails to charm. The Venice of the Alps is the perfect place to linger, exploring the cobblestone passages of the old town and the shore of Lake Annecy, shimmering like silver on a summer's day. Lastly, Valence, at the meeting point of the Rhône and Isère Valleys, forms the gateway to the Midi...



## A SHOPPERS' PARADISE

*Rhône-Alpes' main cities are a showcase of French creative flair and a favourite haunt of shopaholics. In Lyon, the creations of brilliant local fashion designers vie for attention with the goods in the Village des Créateurs alongside top luxury brand boutiques, while the city's Les Halles Paul Bocuse indoor gastro market is a haven for foodies.*

*The shoemaking capital Romans draws the eye with Marques Avenue, a shoppers' paradise, and the shopping centres at Part-Dieu and Confluence in Lyon and Bonne and Grand'Place in Grenoble pull in the crowds. And every Sunday morning bargain-hunters flock to Les Puces du Canal antiques market in Villeurbanne.*





## VIARHÔNGA, THE RIVERSIDE WAY

*The ambitious V2 cycle route project will ultimately connect the shore of Lake Geneva with the beaches of the Mediterranean. The banks of the Rhône are becoming a new-found haven of motor-free travel, gradually transformed into greenways and cycle lanes, with several sections already in use. This stunning riverside journey explores a wealth of natural and heritage interest along the way and will run for almost 700 kilometres, 450 of them in Rhône-Alpes.*

## OVERARCHING BEAUTY

*At the bottom of the Ardèche Gorge, in magnificent surroundings where the land meets the water, the Pont d'Arc is a natural attraction visited by thousands of kayakers every year. This rocky monument unrivalled anywhere in the world (54 m high and 59 m long) forms the gateway to the gorge.*



# WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Bossons, Tête Rousse, Grande Motte... From the glaciers of the Alps to the fish-stocked lakes of La Dombes, water in all its forms is present throughout the region's countryside. The Blue Gold is everywhere, forming France's largest natural reservoir.

Home to three of the country's five largest bodies of water, Lakes Annecy, Bourget and Geneva, Rhône-Alpes forms a watery landscape of remarkable diversity. Black or crystal clear, wild or tamed, Paladru, Monteynard, Nantua, Laffrey, Grangent and Saint André form a roll call of the region's finest lakes. Other limpid gems such as Lakes Roselend and Bessans are perched high in the mountains, their still waters reflecting the snowy summits.

## 7,000 KILOMETRES OF WATERCOURSES

The Loire, France's longest river, may begin its long journey across the country from the Monts du Vivarais, but the region's great artery is the Rhône. This vast watery backbone irrigates all eight of the region's départements, from Ain to Drôme and Isère to Ardèche, their names in turn a tribute to the smaller yet major rivers that course through their countryside. The majestic Saône lends its stately flow to river cruisers, while the Drac and Arve add rush and excitement to adrenaline-fuelled descents...





## GATEWAY TO PROVENCE

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The southernmost of the Rhône-Alpes départements form a patchwork of landscapes with a timeless charm that point the way to the Midi sunshine. The Drôme département, comprising the historical Diois, Tricastin and Baronnies regions, forms a gently sweeping succession of hills and lowlands that paint a picture-postcard view. The wilder Ardèche, made up of the Vivarais, high plateaux and Stevenson's Cévennes, boasts splendid scenery carved from limestone and basalt.

### A LAND OF COLOURS, FRAGRANCES AND FLAVOURS

On each side of the Rhône, flanking the vast lavender fields, you'll find the vineyards, olive groves, peach orchards and truffle trees that provide the produce piled high on the colourful market stalls that offer the best of the region's flavours and craft traditions...

To complete the picture there are the hilltop villages perched, the châteaux at Grignan, Suze-la-Rousse and Vogüé, caves and sinkholes such as the Aven d'Orgnac and a host of other attractions.

### LAVENDER'S BLUE

*In June and July, lavender fields cover the region's southern stretches with an elegant blue-mauve carpet.*

*Originally used by the Romans to keep linen fresh and perfume their baths, these days lavender finds a host of uses: perfumes, essential oils, soaps, scented draw-liners, infusions, honeys and even vinegar.*

*A visit to a distillery is yet another way to appreciate the wonders of this plant with countless properties.*



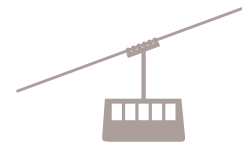
# THE HEIGHT OF INNOVATION

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France's second economic region, Rhône-Alpes benefits from both a strong industrial base and a thriving tertiary sector. Because it strikes the right balance between tradition and innovation, combined with a strategic geographical position in the heart of Europe, foreign investors are keen to come to this dynamic region. An industrial region with high added value, Rhône-Alpes has a highly diverse business portfolio and recognised expertise in intermediate and capital goods. Different parts of the region boast an international reputation, such as the Lyon area (Rhône département) for chemistry, the pharmaceuticals industry, transport, commercial vehicles and technical textiles, the Grenoble conurbation (Isère) for electronic components and nanotechnology, Saint Etienne (Loire) for engineering and arms manufacture, Plastics Valley near Oyonnax (Ain) for plastics technology, the Arve Valley in Haute Savoie for bar turning, and more... Recognised centres of excellence that have attracted major international groups such as Volvo, Bayer, Merck, STMicroelectronics, BASF and Schneider Electric to Rhône-Alpes.

Capable of extraordinary technological feats such as the construction of the Refuge du Goûter, the highest mountain hut on the ascent of Mont Blanc, Rhône-Alpes has also made its mark in Europe as an innovation driver thanks to its excellent training provision and the presence of twelve competitive clusters and thirteen centres of competitive excellence around the region. The region's main areas of expertise are healthcare, chemistry/materials science, information technology, energy, micro and nanotechnologies and logistics. By bringing together all the private and public players and laboratories and training establishments in these fields, France's second region in terms of exports remains a tremendous source of progress for the country.





## POMA, ON THE UP

*Established in 1947 by engineer Jean Pomagalski who originally hailed from Poland, the Poma group today equips winter sports resorts the world over. Ski tows, chairlifts, gondolas, funiculars and ski lifts of all kinds... In all, the company based in Voreppe (Isère département) has installed more than 7,800 lifts in 73 countries on the five continents. Initially focused on mountain infrastructure, the passenger ropeway systems specialist has more recently expanded to include low-level projects to accelerate growth. As a result, Poma is now developing modern environmentally friendly and innovative solutions in urban environments such as the Medellín Metrocable in Colombia, the Shenzhen funicular in China and the New York aerial tramway between Roosevelt Island and Manhattan.*

## LEADING THE WAY

France's premier mountain tourism destination, the Rhône-Alpes region is a natural proving ground for experimentation and innovation in the snowsports and mountain tourism industries. The proximity of the Alps has led some of the biggest players on the market to set up here, exporting their expertise worldwide. The region's big hitters include Béal, the leading manufacturer of mountaineering and climbing ropes, and Rossignol and Salomon skis, which continue to hog the competition podiums. Another key manufacturer, Lafuma, a pioneer in the outdoor sports equipment industry, has been supplying adventurers, hikers, campers and lovers of the great outdoors since 1930. Lafuma group subsidiaries Millet and Eider also have a reputation for excellence when it comes to mountain clothing and accessories, as does Petzl in the field of caving equipment.

## EXPERTS IN MOUNTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

All these brands are backed up by both the region's long-established expertise and its tremendous ability to innovate thanks to top research and development structures such as MND Group, an international player in mountain infrastructure engineering. This collective dynamism is backed by the presence of two clusters in the region: Sporaltec (sport, leisure and outdoor activities) and Cluster Montagne, dedicated to mountain infrastructure development.



# AT THE HEART OF LIFE SCIENCES

Rhône-Alpes is a veritable biotechnology laboratory with a worldwide reputation in the fields of healthcare and medical innovation.

In both Lyon, which boasts Lyon Biopôle, Sanofi Pasteur and the Institut Mérieux, and Grenoble, home to the European Molecular Biology Laboratory and the Institut de Neurosciences, international powerhouses are the driving force behind a flourishing sector. The region's 650 companies, 20,000 employees, 18,000 students, 400 establishments and 17 publicly and privately funded specialist research centres make it France's leading centre of healthcare technology. And the Canceropôle Lyon Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, a network of excellence that brings together manufacturers, scientists, doctors and hospitals, contributes to the region's exemplary record in cancer research.

With close to 15,000 jobs, Rhône-Alpes' pharmaceutical industry comes a strong second nationally after the Île-de-France region thanks not only to the worldwide giant Sanofi but also to the presence of Boiron, Merck Serono and Mylan.

## AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF RESEARCH

Excellence in research harks back to a tradition established here in the 19th century when Lyon was the centre of the nascent chemicals industry. France's leading region in this field, with 500 companies and nearly 20,000 employees, half of which are based in the Lyon conurbation, Rhône-Alpes derives its dynamic reputation from its research, its innovation and the synergy created by the region's workforce. Arkema, Rhodia, Air Liquide, Total, BASF and Bluestar Silicones are the flagship companies of this industry concentrated in the Lyon region's Chemical Valley, the Roussillon Platform, the Ain Lowlands and South Isère. A forward-looking industry well aware of the environmental issues at stake that continues to grow thanks to the Axelera competitive cluster.

## PURE ENERGY

*From Alpine dams to installations on the Rhône, the region produces more than 42% of the nation's hydroelectric output, the planet's leading source of renewable energy. In today's world where careful water management is paramount, Compagnie Nationale du Rhône, the hydroelectricity concessionaire of France's most powerful river, stands out through its exemplary environmental and sustainable development policies.*





## BIOVISION, INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

*Every two years since 1999, the Lyon conurbation is designated World Life Sciences Capital. Over three days, Biovision brings together the world's top experts, Nobel prize-winners, leading scientific figures, academics, politicians, manufacturers and personalities from civil society to kick start collaborations, facilitate the incorporation of innovative technology and foster the emergence of solutions that have a real impact on ordinary people. This event, which in 2013 attracted more than 3,000 participants from 65 countries, further strengthens the tremendous potential for innovation of one of the pharmaceutical industry's most advanced competitive clusters in the world, Lyonbiopôle, a pioneer in the life sciences.*

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

With 40 students per 1,000 inhabitants, 8 universities and 35 other top educational establishments, Rhône-Alpes is France's second centre of higher education after the Paris region.

The diversity of higher education on offer across all industries plays a huge part in ensuring the region continues to thrive economically. The curriculums developed in the region's seven university centres (Lyon, Grenoble, Chambéry, Annecy, Saint Etienne, Bourg en Bresse and Valence), ranging from plastics processing to the mountain professions, are clearly focused on areas in which the region excels. And Rhône-Alpes' attractiveness as a centre for higher education enables it to hold on to the young people who come here while attracting new talent from all over the planet.

## A CONCENTRATION OF GREY MATTER

The higher education establishments of the Lyon conurbation account for 134,000 of the region's 245,000 students. Great results it shares with Grenoble, home to the majority of Rhône-Alpes' 30,000 research scientists. Nicknamed the French Silicon Valley, Grenoble is the country's second centre of research and innovation after Paris. Benefiting from first-class facilities, from the Polygone Scientifique to Inovallées, as well as the international reputation of its laboratories and technology clusters, this concentration of grey matter ensures the region's excellence in a number of fields including digital technology, biotechnology and energy, creating a blueprint for excellence recognised the world over.

# WITH OPEN ARMS

With 30 congress and exhibition centres and 40 prestigious venues available for private hire, Rhône-Alpes is France's third business tourism destination. Lyon claims its place in the world's top 30 congress cities, with an exhibition centre (Eurexpo), the Halle Tony Garnier, the Espace Tête d'Or and the Cité Internationale, designed by Renzo Piano. The Cité Internationale's bold, modern architecture is home to high-end hotels, top restaurants, vast exhibition halls, a multiplex cinema and also the Museum of Modern Art, all built around Salle 3000, the monumental amphitheatre which seats 3,000 delegates. And the region's other major cities are not to be outdone, with Alpexpo in Grenoble, Valence's Congress Centre, the Zénith in Saint Etienne and the Scarabée in Roanne. Montélimar recently opened a brand new venue and Annecy is set to build a new exhibition centre on the shore of Lake Annecy by 2017.



## MORE THAN 2,000 HOTELS

With a hotel infrastructure estimated at 133,000 beds in more than 2,000 establishments, some forty of which are rated five stars, Rhône-Alpes also offers an extensive selection of business meeting venues in the picture-postcard countryside of the Alps, the Beaujolais and Provence. And the region is also perfectly positioned geographically and extremely easy to reach.

Lying at the crossroads of trade routes that have existed since ancient times, Rhône-Alpes thrives thanks to its first-class road, rail and air-travel networks. It is connected to neighbouring Italy and Switzerland by nearly 1,414 kilometres of autoroutes. The Paris-Marseille LGV high-speed rail route runs through the region, which has several intermodal stations including Lyon Part-Dieu, Lyon-Saint Exupéry and Valence TGV and boasts France's densest regional express rail network.

For those travelling by air, Lyon-Saint Exupéry, connected to Lyon city centre by the Rhône-express tram service, is the main airport hub. The airports at Geneva, Chambéry and Grenoble are convenient alternatives for those travelling to the Alpine resorts, while Saint Etienne airport offers yet more choice when it comes to scheduled and seasonal flight options.

## LYON - SAINT EXUPÉRY AIRPORT

*With 8,600,000 passengers in 2013, Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport is expanding fast. Determined to become France's second point of entry after Roissy-Charles de Gaulle, Lyon-Saint Exupéry now has a brand new terminal which is set to increase its capacity to 15 million travellers by 2020.*



*A new multimedia area now welcomes visitors arriving at Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport*







# FROM THE EARTH TO THE STARS

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Fields, orchards, vineyards... Rhône-Alpes is France's larder, a region of outstanding food diversity carefully managed by almost 40,000 farms. It produces an explosion of flavours sure to satisfy sophisticated gourmets and die-hard gastronomes alike. Abundant fruit orchards, flavoursome vegetables, chestnuts from Ardèche, walnuts from Grenoble: all contribute to the reputation of this land of plenty committed to responsible farming methods. Indeed, Rhône-Alpes has become a remarkable testing ground for organic farming.

The region's livestock industry is also thriving. From the high mountain pastures to the Forez lowlands, the cattle and goat herds of Rhône-Alpes provide high-quality meat and a generous supply of milk, the creamy raw material that goes into making the region's fifteen or so AOP cheeses. Other protected-designation-of-origin produce includes Bresse chickens, Nyons olives and most of the *crus* grown in the region's vineyards from grapes such as gamay, syrah and grenache. Indeed, the region's wines have an international reputation, spearheaded by Beaujolais and Côtes du Rhône. All this produce of excellence, grown just a stone's throw from the region's top restaurants, helps maintain Rhône-Alpes' reputation for superior gastronomy. Michel Troisgros, Emmanuel Renaut, Anne-Sophie Pic, Georges Blanc and of course Paul Bocuse are all Michelin-starred ambassadors of the region's culinary art that has been fêted by gourmets the world over for centuries.

# FRESH-AIR FARMING

With 71 AOCs (controlled-designation-of-origin products), of which 59 are AOP (protected designation of origin), plus more than 50 products awarded a Label Rouge for quality, the farms of Rhône-Alpes stand out from the crowd. Their recipe for success? Focusing on quality and highly diverse production, drawing on the expertise of more than 70,000 professionals.

## FROM THE ALPINE MEADOWS TO THE RHÔNE VALLEY

France's leading producer of a number of highly specialised products (apricots, chestnuts, aromatic plants, walnuts and cheeses), the region's countryside is an inexhaustible source of flavours and aromas, from the mountain pastures of Savoie to the Rhône Valley orchards. Tomme de Savoie cheese, Rosette de Lyon *saucisson*, Grenoble walnuts, Bresse chickens, Tricastin truffles and the famous black olives of Nyons are all flagship products that say much about the richness of the soils of Rhône-Alpes.

In terms of production, the region's dairy products, hailing mainly from the two Savoie départements, grab the lion's share. They are followed by wine (produced in the Beaujolais and Rhône Valley), beef (the main product coming out of Loire), and the cereal crops grown east of Lyon, in Ain and in northern Isère.

Farming in Rhône-Alpes may be a well-established tradition, but it has successfully adopted a beneficial pioneering approach. Resolutely forward-looking, the region is home to the greatest number of farms either selling produce directly or involved in local supply-chain sourcing. It is also in pole position nationally when it comes to organic farming.

The local agri-food industry is of great importance, with large groups such as Bonduelle, Martinet, Danone, Yoplait, Bledina and Lustucru the driving force behind a thriving industry of 4,759 businesses employing a workforce of 45,000.

## ORGANIC: THE WAY TO GO!

*The area of Rhône-Alpes given over to organic farming – a third of which is in Drôme – continues to grow. Determined to remain ahead of the game nationwide, in 2009 this département in the south of Rhône-Alpes opened Biovallée®, conceived as an open-air laboratory of good practice in organic farming. This initiative, a registered trademark, encompasses a collection of certified producers in Val de Drôme, the Crest region, the Diois and the Pays de Saillans who are champions of excellence in sustainable farming.*



# FOODIE HEAVEN



It was in Rhône-Alpes that Rabelais found inspiration for his gluttonous giant Gargantua. The 18th century gourmet Brillat-Savarin gave his name to a delicious cheese, and octogenarian Paul Bocuse is still delighting diners in his restaurant in Collonges-au-Mont d'Or. Since time immemorial, the region has enjoyed a passionate, almost carnal, relationship with the culinary art. In all, it boasts nearly 80 Michelin-starred restaurants. In addition to 'Monsieur Paul', four other chefs have achieved the ultimate accolade of three Michelin stars: Michel Troisgros in Roanne (Loire), Georges Blanc in Vonnas (Ain), Anne-Sophie Pic in Valence (Drôme) and Emmanuel Renaut in Megève (Haute Savoie). The latter two, talented chefs in their forties, are proof of the emergence of a new generation whose brilliance is rivalled only by their creativity. Because one of the great strengths of the region's cuisine lies in its ability to constantly renew itself while remaining true to its traditions.



## FLAVOURS AND COLOURS

Sitting cosily in picturesque villages, character auberges continue to regale their guests with *poulet à la crème* served with morel mushrooms, a tasty *fricassée de grenouilles*, creamy *gratin dauphinois*, a hearty *tartiflette* or succulent stuffed carp. Heading for higher altitudes, Courchevel, the winter sports resort with more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other on the planet, is a real draw for gourmets. Lastly, in the region's main cities highly skilled chefs continue to do justice to the gastronomy of Rhône-Alpes by raising the local produce to new heights. A sure-fire recipe for success.

## LYON, CAPITAL OF GASTRONOMY

Standing at the meeting point of the region's culinary traditions, Lyon enjoys an unrivalled reputation for gastronomic excellence. The famous 'mères lyonnaises' have since hung up their aprons, but the capital of the Gauls has remains the ultimate gourmet destination where prestigious Michelin-starred establishments rub shoulders with the traditional 'bouchon' bistros, the favourite haunts of foodies the world over, drawn by the aroma of andouillette, pike quenelle, the famous tripe dish *tablier de sapeur*, *gratin* of cardoons and other delicious 'Lyonnaiseries', all washed down with a traditional 'pot' of Beaujolais...

## SWEET TREATS TOO

With Montélimar nougat (Drôme), *marrons glacés* from Ardèche, the marzipan-praline 'cocons de Lyon' and the traditional macaroon, Rhône-Alpes has a reputation for fine confectionery and particularly gourmet chocolate: Weiss in Saint Etienne (Loire), Voisin, Bernachon and Sève in Lyon and Valrhona in Tain l'Hermitage (Drôme). The latter recently opened the Cité du Chocolat, featuring a gift shop, the École du Grand Chocolat training centre for top chocolatiers, and lastly a multi-sensory interactive visitor attraction with plenty of tasting opportunities along the way.

# ALONG THE WINE TRAIL

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Wine tourism is enjoying a boom in Rhône-Alpes! In response to the public's increasing interest in wine science, the region's wine tourism offering is growing apace. Around the region's vineyards, winemakers are only too happy to explain to visitors the ins and outs of their profession.

The cellars of the great wine estates like Guigal, packed with row upon row of barrels and bottles, make an atmospheric setting for the wine tasting sessions that are a feature of the many wine trails that criss-cross the region.

In the Beaujolais, the Route des Vins runs from Saint Amour to Les Pierres Dorées. In the Upper Rhône Valley, the steep hillsides running down to the river are lined with ranks of vines ripe for exploring. In Savoie, La Cave de Chautagne offers visitors a heady mix of intoxicating wine flavours and aromas designed to stimulate the senses.

## SEMINARS, INTIMATE WEEKENDS AND EPICUREAN CRUISES

In the land of Bacchus, the public's appetite to learn about the region's grape varieties, appellations and outstanding crus is satisfied by an endless variety of wine attractions. There are plenty of museums dedicated to the traditions and expertise of the wine industry in Rhône-Alpes: the Maison de la Vigne et du Vin in Apremont (Savoie), the Cave de Chautagne in Ruffieux (Savoie), Néovinum in Ruoms (Ardèche), dedicated to the wines of Ardèche, Vineum Paul Jaboulet Aîné in Drôme, and the Musée des Vignerons du Forez in Loire. And not forgetting the Hameau Duboeuf in Romanèche Thorins, a theme park all about wine growing and winemaking.

## WINE SCHOOL

*In vino veritas!  
Oenology classes,  
practical workshops,  
sensory experiences,  
wine tasting tuition...  
The region's sommeliers  
and winemakers are busy  
educating the many  
novices who come here  
with a thirst for knowledge  
about wine culture.  
Nowhere is this truer  
than in Tain l'Hermitage  
at the school for  
oenophiles opened  
by Michel Chapoutier  
and in the historical  
Drôme Provençale  
town of Suze-la-Rousse,  
whose château is home  
to the Université du Vin  
where students study  
for professional wine  
industry qualifications.*



# A VINTAGE TRADITION

Gamay, syrah, viognier, roussette, grenache... The roll call of grape varieties grown in Rhône-Alpes is first and foremost the product of the region's granite, limestone and clay subsoil. They produce wines with a golden or vermilion hue, refined by generations of know-how to adorn dining tables the world over. Clinging to steep slopes, from the foothills of the Alps to the hills of the Beaujolais and along the Rhône Valley, the grape bunches gorged with sun and packed with aromas give the wines of Rhône-Alpes their enduring character: one of a winemaking exception with an international reputation.

## A LAND OF VINEYARDS SINCE ANTIQUITY

Reds, whites, rosés, dry, sweet, sparkling, organic, the list goes on... 59,000 hectares of land are given over to the cultivation of this expression of excellence crafted by more than 9,000 producers. With 42 AOPs (protected-designation-of-origin wines) and 13 IGP (protected-geographical-indication wines), Rhône-Alpes boasts a wine production of the highest quality, with over 90% of its wines quality-certified.

The harvesting of all these vineyards is also of great economic significance to Rhône-Alpes, second only to dairy farming in its importance to the region's agriculture.

Emerging from the shadow of Beaujolais Nouveau, the region's commercial success story whose name is known the world over, are some of France's greatest *crus*: Morgon, Brouilly, Chiroubles, Moulin à Vent, Saint Amour, Juliéna... The wines of the northern Rhône Valley, Côte-Rôtie, Condrieu, Saint-Joseph and Crozes-Hermitage, are also part of the region's exceptional line-up, in which Clairette de Die and the wines of Savoie play an important part too.

A host of more modest wines are also scattered across the Rhône-Alpes countryside in the form of the IGPs of Isère, Ardèche, Bugey, Cerdon, Coteaux du Lyonnais, Grignan-les-Adhémar, Côte Roannaise and Forez, providing the full picture of France's fourth wine-producing region.



## THE BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU TRADITION

*The fame the Beaujolais region is forever assured by the popularity of its 'primeur' wine, Beaujolais Nouveau. The year's new batch of this fruity, festive wine is drunk for the first time all over the world on the third Thursday in November, because sale is permitted as soon as the vinification process is complete. This eagerly awaited opportunity to taste the new vintage gives rise to joyous festivities, formally initiated at the Sarmenelles de Beaujeu, held in the capital of the Beaujolais, where the first barrels are tapped on the twelve strokes of midnight, in keeping with tradition.*







# ART AND CULTURE

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The history of the Rhône-Alpes region stretches back to the dawn of time. Indeed, it was deep inside the Chauvet Cave in Ardèche that mankind's oldest known works of art were found. Rhinoceros, cave bears, mammoths... the collection of animal art there is utterly priceless and will soon be put on display in a life-size reproduction at the Caverne du Pont d'Arc-Ardèche, a world first due to open in 2015. This ambitious project designed to protect and show the world this unrivalled Palaeolithic heritage will be the latest new cultural attraction in a region that boasts a host of remarkable events and sites. From the Romans, who left lots of evidence of their time here, to the ground-breaking designs featured in Saint Etienne's Cité du Design and the future Musée des Confluences in Lyon, Rhône-Alpes has always been a key centre for creative culture in all its forms.

Cradle of the arts, land of birth or adoption of countless figures in the worlds of literature, music, painting and dance, the region is also the birthplace of cinematography, an invention now celebrated every autumn with the world's greatest actors and film makers at the Festival Lumière. This celebration of film is one of the many major international events held in the eight départements of Rhône-Alpes, some dedicated to music, others featuring giant-screen projections and others still played out live on stage or bringing a buzz to city centres around the region.



# DOWN THROUGH THE AGES



## THE MARK OF THE GALLO-ROMAN ERA

*Saint-Romain-en-Gal, Alba-la-Romaine: these two names alone symbolise the wealth of remains hiding just below the surface of Rhône-Alpes. Dig a little, particularly on the banks of the Rhône, and you'll soon uncover ancient history. Just outside Vienne, once the capital of the Allobroges, and in Lyon, capital of the Gauls, archaeologists have revealed countless remains, made accessible and presented imaginatively in museums and guided tours to create an unrivalled visitor experience.*

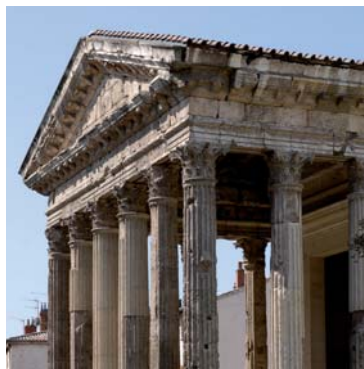
In Rhône-Alpes you don't need a machine to travel back in time. Ancient ruins, medieval fortresses and Renaissance monuments take the visitor on a fabulous journey to the beginnings of the region's history. Close your eyes and you'll glimpse the skilled hand of early man painting the story of his daily life on the walls of Chauvet Cave; you'll hear the ponderous thud of Hannibal's elephants as they take on the Alpine snows; you'll tremble at the fury of the Allobroge hordes as they rush headlong towards ranks of Roman legionaries...

The fascinating and potent history of Rhône-Alpes is revealed in countless listed sites, the oldest of which are the caves at Soyons and the Aven d'Orgnac sinkhole in Ardèche, which date back to prehistoric times. The region tells the story of 2,000 years of history through its Roman villas, lakeside settlements, thermal baths, aqueducts and Gallo-Roman museums, from Lyon to Saint-Romain-en-Gal.

## MEDIEVAL CASTLES AND VILLAGES, WITNESSES OF HISTORY

The castles at Vogüé, Adhémar, Grignan and Longpré tell of the bygone splendour of the provinces that once ruled the land here, including the Dauphiné, which gave its name to the son of the king of France. Indeed, Rhône-Alpes did not exist as such until 1860, when Savoy became part of France, following Bugey and the Pays de Gex in 1601 and the Dombes principality in 1762.

The medieval village of Pérouges, the *villages perchés* of the south, Brou Monastery, Hautecombe Abbey, the Fourvière Basilica, the Fortresses of Savoy, baroque churches and chapels nestling in the heart of Alpine valleys... All bear witness to the region's past that has remained intact.







# ARCHITECTURE AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Jean-Antoine Morand, Le Corbusier, Tony Garnier, Renzo Piano, Jean Nouvel... A source of inspiration for the greats of architecture, Rhône-Alpes boasts evidence of a centuries-old architectural tradition. The Tour Perret in Grenoble, the Autoroute des Titans, the Le Corbusier collection in Firminy and the wings of Lyon-Saint Exupéry TGV station are all proof of the region's avant-garde tastes. This bold architectural approach takes on its full significance in the Part-Dieu district of Lyon, France's second business quarter, dominated by vast towers piercing the sky, and in the futuristic buildings of the Cité Internationale to the north. Another urban laboratory is the Confluence district south of the city centre which in recent years has seen the construction of bold and colourful cubes and glass monoliths that reflect the image of the Vaporetto river cruiser plying the Saône.

## EXEMPLARY REDEVELOPMENTS

In a challenge to the inexorable march of time, the region also excels in restoring the value and beauty to places whose grandeur has faded, particularly former industrial sites. In Lyon, some of the city's important historical buildings have been given a new lease of life, from the monumental dome of the Grand Hôtel-Dieu to the Opera House. In Saint Etienne, where the face of the Châteaueux district is changing little by little, this former mining town now has a bright future, by design.

Grenoble has transformed the Magasin, a former industrial site, into a National Centre for Contemporary Art, an attraction that – like Lyon's Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Modern Art in Saint Etienne – brings out the very essence of the region's perpetual creative energy.

## NOW BOARDING FOR THE FUTURE

*An imposing spaceship of steel and glass built at the meeting point of the Rhône and Saône, Lyon's Musée des Confluences is Rhône-Alpes' new figurehead of contemporary architecture. This futuristic building is set to become the home of amazing science and society collections.*

## DESIGN WITH A CAPITAL 'D'

*A symbol of the vitality of its new creative quarter, the Cité du Design was opened in 2009 on the site of Saint Etienne's former arms manufactory. This space of 16,000 m² dedicated to innovation and the future of design, which every two years forms the centrepiece of a world-famous Biennial event, is open to students, professionals, designers and the general public. It is a stunning showcase of the future for a major city that in 2010 was awarded the highly prized title of UNESCO Creative City, alongside the likes of Beijing, Berlin and Montreal.*

# THE ENTERTAINMENT NEVER ENDS

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26

Musician Jean-Michel Jarre, violinist Renaud Capuçon and, in dance, choreographers Dominique Hervieu, Mourad Merzouki and Jean-Claude Gallota... Rhône-Alpes' cultural scene is a thrilling ride, with live performances, ambitious artistic creations and beautifully preserved monuments. 150 companies, several symphony orchestras, a national ballet company, folk groups and hundreds of music ensembles and bands set the tone for a diverse cultural programme, with more than 1,000 festivals held over the year.

Every summer the waters of Lake Bourget in Savoie are set ablaze by the rock stars who throng to the Musilac festival. Les Nuits de Fourvière lights up Lyon's Roman theatre, and Jazz à Vienne brings the biggest names in jazz to the city's own ancient theatre. Hot on the heels of these international events, the region's musical repertoire always hits a high note: the Berlioz Festival, the Festival d'Ambronay, Les Nuits Romantiques du Lac du Bourget, Le Printemps de Pérouges and Lyon's Nuits Sonores all go down a treat with music lovers.

## ART IN ALL ITS FORMS

The sound and light show of Les Fêtes Nocturnes de Grignan takes the audience on a journey through time. For its part, Lyon brings a warm glow to early winter with the amazing illuminations of its incomparable Fête des Lumières, to which Annecy responds with an avalanche of pyrotechnic wizardry in its August Fête du Lac.

Lyon Opera House is not to be outdone, putting on stunning spectacles with ambitious simultaneous live broadcasts to other major cities around the region.

And lovers of avant-garde art in all its forms should head for the Biennale Internationale du Design in Saint Etienne and Lyon's Modern Art Biennial, alternating annually with the Dance Biennial, which attracts choreographers from all over the world to the streets and concert halls of the Lyon conurbation.



## WHAT'S ON IN RHÔNE-ALPES

### SPRING

**Printemps de Pérouges**

Mainstream music – Ain

**Biennale du Design**

Design festival

Saint Etienne – Loire

**Nuits Sonores**

Electro music – Lyon – Rhône

### JUNE

**Nuits de Fourvière**

Mainstream music

Lyon – Rhône

### JULY

**Festival Musilac**

Rock music

Aix-les-Bains – Savoie

**Jazz à Vienne**

Vienne – Isère

**Fêtes Nocturnes**

de Grignan

Sound and light shows

Drôme

### AUGUST

**Festival Berlioz**

La Côte-Saint-André – Isère

**Fête du Lac d'Annecy**

Annecy – Haute Savoie

**Au Bonheur des Mômes**

Children's festival,

Le Grand Bornand –

Haute Savoie

**Les Etats Généraux**

du film documentaire

Documentary film festival

Lussas – Ardèche

### AUTUMN

**Festival d'Ambronay**

Baroque music – Ain

**Nuits Romantiques**

du Lac du Bourget

Classical music

Aix-les-Bains – Savoie

**Festival Lumière**

Film festival – Lyon – Rhône

**Biennales de Lyon**

Dance and contemporary

art on alternate years

### DÉCEMBRE

**Fête des Lumières**

Lyon – Rhône

**Festival de Cinéma**

Européen

Film festival

Les Arcs – Savoie

# THE SILVER SCREEN

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In Rhône-Alpes one art that stands out from the others, the seventh art, was rescued from obscurity by Auguste and Louis Lumière, two enterprising engineers from Lyon who invented the cinematograph in 1895. Over a century later, every autumn the Institut Lumière invites leading film makers and actors to its world-famous festival. This prestigious event makes the city of Lyon the film industry's focal point, but around the region there are other events and gatherings celebrating the silver screen, such as the International Animated Film Festival in Annecy.



## MOVING PICTURES

1990 saw the establishment of Rhône-Alpes Cinéma, a fund designed to encourage the production and distribution of feature films shot in the region. Today, Rhône-Alpes' film-making expertise is supported by the creativity and innovation of studios and organisations such as Pôle Pixel in Villeurbanne, the Cité de l'Image en Mouvement (CITIA) in Annecy, Folimage and La Cartoucherie in Bourg-lès-Valence, and Ardèche Image with its centre for documentary cinema in Lussas. More broadly, the Imaginove cluster brings together 200 Rhône-Alpes businesses in promoting the digital image industry.

A pioneer in audiovisual technology, the region has also established Rhône-Alpes Image, a platform that uses TV 2.0 to spread the word about a region which also hosts the 11 themed channels of the Rhône-Alpes TV network.

## BIRTHPLACE OF ARTISTS

*The region's inexhaustible breeding ground of talent has produced a host of artists, authors, poets and composers including the Lyonnais painter Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, the musicians Hector Berlioz (born in La Côte-Saint-André in Isère) and Jules Massenet (a native of Saint Etienne) and the Grenoble-born writer Stendhal, as well as the Renaissance poet Louise Labé, who hailed from Lyon, the city where François Rabelais published his comic novels Pantagruel and Gargantua while working as a physician at the Hôtel-Dieu. This was where the philosophers Voltaire and Rousseau found their inspiration, the former at Ferney in the Ain département and the latter spending time in Annecy, Chambéry and Lyon. The region and Lake Bourget in Savoie also charmed the 19th century writer, poet and politician Alphonse de Lamartine. The Château de Grignan in Drôme was home to the famous letter-writing Marquise de Sévigné, and the mountain peaks around Chamonix inspired the writings of an icon of mountaineering literature, Roger Frison-Roche.*







# WINTER SPORTS

## AND SUMMER TOO

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Rhône-Alpes is the largest skiing region in the world and its winter sports pedigree is unmatched. Indeed, the Olympic Winter Games have been held here on three occasions, at Chamonix (1924), Grenoble (1968) and Albertville (1992). The region's Alpine resorts offer something for every style, preference and discipline, making them the ideal destination for cruising Sunday skiers and adrenaline junkies alike. Chamonix, Courchevel, Méribel, Val d'Isère, La Plagne, Megève, Morzine... the list goes on.

In all, Rhône-Alpes boasts more than 180 resorts and 17 major ski areas, which with the onset of summer swap their white mantle for a green carpet, the perfect setting for a host of sporting and leisure activities. On the endless mountain trails, under the disbelieving gaze of marmots and chamois, mountain biking fanatics on a headlong descent pass walkers gazing in awe at the beauty of the countryside before soaking up the tranquillity of a mountain lake.

Present everywhere in Rhône-Alpes, water is a fantastic playground for visitors, from diving under the ice in Tignes to kayaking down the Ardèche Gorge, and from swimming in crystal clear Lake Annecy to rafting the white waters of the Giffre Valley. In Rhône-Alpes golfers are well catered for too with almost eighty courses, from the lakes of the Dombes region to the foot of Mont Blanc, with paragliders wheeling in the sky above the only witnesses of their exploits...

# WHITE GOLD

When it comes to snowsports, France is the world's leading ski destination, ahead of the USA and Austria. It owes this top spot mainly to the flagship resorts of Rhône-Alpes, the prestigious high points of the world's largest winter sports arena, with 180 resorts of an unrivalled variety of styles and sizes. Their snowy pistes come together to form 17 major ski areas that thrill-seekers can ply for hours on end without ever having to take off their skis. The Portes du Soleil, taking in part of Haute Savoie and neighbouring Switzerland, boasts 650 km of pistes accessed via 14 resorts, more than any other in the world, followed closely by the Three Valleys with its 600 kilometres spread over the mountainsides of Savoie.

## THE BIGGEST SKI AREA IN THE WORLD

Rhône-Alpes' gold-medal offering is chiefly a product of the hugely diverse skiing on offer from the region's resorts, which keep abreast of the latest snowsports developments and are continually investing in new facilities.

All this means that the 'white gold' is accessible to everyone, whatever their requirements and budget. Family-friendly resorts like Aussois, Le Grand Bornand, Le Praz-de-Lys and La Norma, often 100% car-free and always organised with children in mind, guarantee excellent value for money while respecting the local traditions. The village resorts of Megève, Arêches-Beaufort and Villard-de-Lans attract skiers looking for authenticity and unspoilt countryside. And there is no shortage of trendy, energetic resorts, from Courchevel to Val Thorens and including Tignes, La Plagne, Val d'Isère, Les Arcs, Alpe d'Huez and Les Deux Alpes, adept at combining adrenaline buzz, party atmosphere and wide open spaces.

## THE MAIN SPORTING EVENTS FROM DECEMBER TO APRIL

### DECEMBER

#### **Critérium de la Première Neige**

*Alpine skiing  
Val d'Isère - Savoie  
Alpine ski World Cup  
Ladies*

*Courchevel - Savoie  
Freeride World Tour  
Chamonix - Haute Savoie*

### JANUARY

#### **La Grande Odyssée**

*Dog sledding race  
Mont Blanc - Savoie  
Foulée Blanche  
Cross-country skiing race  
Autrans - Isère*

#### **International Snow Polo competition**

*Megève - Haute Savoie  
Montgolfiades  
Hot air ballooning  
Praz-sur-Arly -  
Haute Savoie*

### MARCH

#### **Pierra Menta**

*Ski mountaineering race  
Beaufortain - Savoie  
Snowzone  
Snowsports and music  
Les Deux Alpes - Isère*

### APRIL

#### **Vertical**

**TransVanoise**  
*Ski mountaineering race  
Savoie*





## THE GREAT WHITE CIRCUS

The winter resorts on the snowy mountainsides of the Alps now offer a selection box of activities. The time when skiing was all there was is long gone, and every season there are new and exciting disciplines to try. The resorts of Rhône-Alpes are constantly reinventing their winter offerings to keep fickle-minded visitors happy.

Water parks, gastronomy and fun events are today an integral part of the winter holidaymaker's experience. In Val d'Isère, Val Thorens, Méribel and Alpe d'Huez, the dance floor has come to the piste thanks to the madcap antics of the 'Folie Douce' outdoor dance bars. Megève titillates the taste buds with its Michelin-starred restaurants, Courchevel continues to attract the jet set, and luxury spas are springing up in most ski resorts.

### ADRENALINE JUNKIES

All-out skiing may still be the realm of places like Tignes and Val Thorens, but freeride – from off-piste to halfpipe – has won over new fans in Le Grand Bornand, Les Arcs and La Plagne. From airboarding to snowscooting and speed riding too, fun and adrenaline thrills are bringing a breath of fresh air to the region's ski areas. And as well as nordic skiing, adventure activities such as dog sledding and igloo expeditions are also enjoying a boom. Some resorts, such as La Clusaz, focus on an authentic holiday experience, and lastly extreme activities are on offer in Bessans, where you can go ice diving, and Avoriaz, where visitors can explore a frozen ice grotto.

### ROSSIGNOL, A CENTURY AT THE TOP

*From Jean Vuarnet to Alberto Tomba, champions of legend have helped carve out the success of the famous winter sports equipment manufacturer. The international expansion of the Savoyard company, founded in 1907 by visionary joiner Abel Rossignol who made the first solid-wood skis, has little by little raised it to new heights. Using cutting-edge technology, the world's number one ski manufacturer, which also owns the Dynastar, Lange and Look brands, has produced more than 56 million pairs of skis in its lifetime. The group with the fondly remembered red, white and blue cockerel logo employs more than 1,120 people around the world, 700 of them in France.*



# THE PATH TO FREEDOM

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32

Rhône-Alpes is an endless playground of unforgettable experiences. The Tour of Mont Blanc, the trails of the Ecrins or hiking the Vercors Regional Nature Park, trekking through the heart of the Vanoise National Park... Following hundreds of footpaths and long-distance trails, walkers can soak up the unadulterated surroundings of the mountains. The forested mountainsides of the Chartreuse and Oisans are perfect for daredevil descents by mountain bike, while cycle paths follow lake shores and riversides for those who like to potter at a more sedate pace. The less energetic can explore the Doux Gorge by rail-bike or sit back on an electric bicycle and lose themselves among the vineyards. And lastly, visitors hankering after greenery can enjoy restful rural greenways: the Dolce Via in Ardèche, the ViaRhôna along the River Rhône, the shores of Lake Bourget and Lake Annecy, and a gentle circuit among the lakes of La Dombes or lavender fields of Drôme.

## ADRENALINE KICKS

But Rhône-Alpes offers the intrepid their fill of adventure too, with amazing underground excursions in the Fier and Loire gorges, and the chance to delve deep into the dark depths of the caves at Choranche and La Balme. And those with a head for heights will love the airy thrills of rock climbing and via ferrata. The boldest will defy the laws of gravity, suspended from a zip wire high above the Lac de Hauteville or bungee jumping in the Aravis. Venturing even further from terra firma, paragliders hang from their brightly coloured sails, wheeling high above Le Touvet and Chamonix in the vain hope, shared by the passengers in a hot-air balloon floating above the Arve Valley or Monts d'Ardèche, of reaching ever closer to the sun.



## ADVENTURES AT ALTITUDE

*There was no better place for the cradle of mountaineering than just below the roof of Western Europe. Dominated by Mont Blanc and its ring of rocky giants, Chamonix has become the world capital of a sport with broad appeal thanks to Rhône-Alpes, packed with crags, icefalls and mountain summits ripe for conquering. From the Aiguille du Midi to the Pic de la Meije, the high mountains here are home to the best climbs, following in the footsteps of legendary mountaineers such as Balmat, Herzog, Lachenal and Desmaison.*

# WHITE WATER

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In the heat of summer, Rhône-Alpes keeps children and grown-ups happy with a host of fun and refreshing sporting activities. As soon as the springtime sun appears, white water sports fans flock to the Alpine valleys. In magnificent surroundings, the turbulent, wild rush of the Rivers Giffre and Arve carry along lovers of rafting, hydrospeeding and canyoning, while canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts prefer the legendary descent of the Ardèche Gorge. The more tranquil blue waters of France's three biggest lakes, Lake Geneva, Lake Bourget and Lake Annecy, offer other aquatic pleasure such as swimming, sailing and wind surfing. The picture-postcard lakeside scenery is also popular with anglers, while others prefer to fly fish for trout in the mountain rivers and tarns.



## GREENS AMONG THE GREENERY

Golfers too are in their element in a region with a reputation for the number and diversity of its golf courses. Rhône-Alpes boasts nearly eighty 9- and 18-hole courses providing the very best golfing conditions. The region's top clubs include Evian Resort Golf Club, whose manicured fairways looking out on Lake Geneva play host to the new Evian Championship, the leading Major competition in continental Europe. But it is not alone: the roll call of France's finest golf courses also includes Lyon Golf Club, which held the French Open in 2001, La Bresse golf course among the lakes of La Dombes, and Chamonix golf course, nestling at the foot of Mont Blanc.



## THE MAIN SPORTING EVENTS FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER

### AVRIL

**Lyon Urban Trail**  
*Trail running – Rhône*

### JUNE

**Critérium  
du Dauphiné Libéré**  
*Cycling – road race*  
**L'Ardéchoise**  
*Cycle race – Ardèche*

### JULY

**Megavalanche**  
*Mountain biking*  
*Alpe d'Huez – Isère*  
**The region's stages  
of the Tour de France**

### AUGUST

**Ultra Trail  
du Mont Blanc**  
*Trail running*  
*Haute Savoie*

### SEPTEMBER

**Evian Championship**  
*Golf – Haute-Savoie*  
**Coupe Icare**  
*Free flight*  
*Saint-Hilaire  
du Touvet – Isère*

### NOVEMBER

**Marathon des Gorges  
de l'Ardèche**  
*Kayaking*

# CONTACTS

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Graphic Design: Avant Première | Written by: France Média | Translated by: communique-online.com – Charlie Gobbett | Cartography: Latitude Cartagène | Photo credits: Page 2, Lac Blanc – Lumieresdaltitude.com JF Hagenmuller | Page 4, Mont Blanc – JL Rigaux | Page 5, the Saône riverside in Lyon – T. Deschamp / OT Lyon | Page 6, ViaRhôna at Lac du Lit au Roi – Beegoo Images / G. Dardenne | Page 7, ViaRhôna – Beegoo Images / G. Dardenne, lavender in Drôme P. Blanc, Pont d'Arc in the Ardèche Gorge – M. Kirchgessner | Page 8, Refuge du Goûter – © Groupe-H&DecaLaage / G. Bergdahl Page 10, Equipements Lafuma / S. Cande, Les Trois Vallées, Savoie Mont Blanc Tourisme / Chabance Page 11, wind turbines – CNR / C. Moirenc, Getty Images, Roselend Dam – Olive White | Page 12, La Bastille cable car in Grenoble – P. Blanc Page 13, Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport – O. Chassignole | Page 14, the Beaujolais – C. Moirenc | Page 16, Les Halles de Lyon Paul Bocuse – CL Abreu, cows in the Alpine meadows – P Smit, Ardèche chestnuts – P. Fournier | Page 17, Anne Sophie Pic by Jeff Nalin, Paul Bocuse – M. Kirchgessner Page 18, Vinéum Paul Jaboulet Aîné – CL Abreu, bunch of grapes – ADT Ardèche LC; vines at Suze la Rousse, M. Rougy | Page 19, Tain l'Hermitage vineyards, C. Moirenc | Page 20, Grotte Chauvet Pont-d'Arc © DRAC Rhone- Alpes - Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication | Page 22, Gallo-Roman site at Saint Romain en Gal / Vienne – Région Urbaine de Lyon, the Temple of Augustus and Livia in Vienne – M. Rougy, the village of Balazuc – JL Rigaux | Page 23, La Confluence © Jakob + MacFarlane architects – Photo Brice Robert / OT Lyon, Cité du Design in Saint Etienne © Agence LIN architectes Finn Geipel – Giulia Andi | Page 24, Jazz Festival in Vienne – P. Blanc | Page 25, Auguste & Louis Lumière / OT Institut Lumière, Poster for Belle et Sébastien © Gaumont-Radar | Page 26, skier – P. Lebeau | Page 28, La Clusaz – P. Lebeau, chairlift in Méribel © Cluster Montagne | Page 29, Aurélien Ducroz © DanFerrer | Page 30, Getty Images | Page 31, waterfall at the Cirque de Saint Môme PNR Chartreuse – P. Smit, Lake Geneva – OT Thonon les Bains.

