



ENGLISH

Discover Hyères
at your own pace
> Old Town itinerary
> 19th century itinerary

www.hyeres-tourisme.com



For those eager to know
more about Hyères' historic
and natural patrimony,
the Tourist Office
proposes guided visits.
For more information, please call:
(+33) 4 94 01 84 50.



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Hyères-les-Palmiers
TOURIST OFFICE

A brief history of Hyères

The territory occupied by the city of Hyères has been inhabited since pre-historical times. In the fourth century B.C., Greek sailors coming from Marseille established the commercial outpost of Olbia on its shores. Documents dating back to 963 A.D. first make mention of the name Eyras which, along the years, became Hyères. Eyras appears to come from the latin Arae and refers to the salt marshes, a significant source of wealth for the city in the Middle Ages. In the 11th century, the knights of Fos built a castle on the hill and a fortified small town, under its protection, grew in the plain below. The Roman houses in the old town, St Paul's Church and the Barruc city gate are all architectural examples of this period. In the 12th century, the Knights Templar built a commandery next to the city. One of its towers, the tower St Blaise still survives to this day. Knights Templar were monk-soldiers who exploited a large agricultural estate to feed their troops. In the 16th century, the town, which had grown significantly, sprawled all the way to the feet of the hill. New city walls were built.

The Massillon and Fenouillet gates from this period (cf. the Old Town itinerary). In the Renaissance, the city's warm weatherers started attracting important visitors. Catherine de Medici stayed in Hyères in 1564 and asked for orange and exotic trees to be planted in her garden. In the 19th century, the city's gardeners started to plant and grow various species, including palm trees that were sold all around the world. At that time, the city also became a popular holiday destination for the European aristocracy, especially in the winter months. New neighbourhoods were built along with luxurious hotels and opulent villas (cf. the 19th century Hyères itinerary). Many artists and writers came to spend some time in Hyères including Victor Hugo, R.L. Stevenson, Leo Tolstoy, etc. In the 1920s and 30s, the Villa Noailles attracted the artistic avant-garde of the time. It is now a creative space specialising in architecture, design, fashion and photography.

Old Town itinerary

Duration
≈ 1.5h

1 PORTE MASSILLON (Massillon Gate)

Dating back to the 14th century, Porte Massillon was the main city gate. One of its two watchtowers survives in its original form. Porte Massillon was also called the "Salt marshes" Gate.

2 JUNCTION RUE DES PORCHES AND RUE MASSILLON

The old town's fortified walls are visible to the left of this junction. In the 14th century, these walls sheltered many small shops.

3 TOUR DES TEMPLIERS (The Knights Templar Tower)

The Knights Templar built a chapel here in the 13th century. These monk-soldiers owned a large cultivation estate in the nearby Sauvebonne valley. The tower regularly hosts temporary exhibitions.

Apr. to Oct.:
from Mon. to Sat., 09.30-12.30 and 16.00-19.00
Nov. to Mar.:
from Mon. to Sat., 09.00-12.30 and 14.00-17.30
Closed on bank holidays.

4 PEÑISCOLA HOUSE

A porch topped by one or two levels is built in front of the St Paul city gate in the 16th century. The building underwent extensive modifications and enlargement in the 19th century.

5 SAINT PAUL COLLEGIATE CHURCH

A Romanesque-style building from the 12th century. The gothic nave dates back to the 14th century. The collegiate church displays one of the most important ex-voto collections in France (432 pieces) as well as beautiful stained-windows and altarpieces.

Closed for refurbishment.

6 PASSAGE JULES ROMAIN (Jules Romain Alley)

A picturesque small street located right under a beautiful Renaissance architectural block with mullioned windows.

7 PORTE DES PRINCES (The Princes' Gate)

A neo-gothic gate probably built at the beginning of the 20th century upon a local resident's initiative.

8 CASTEL SAINTE CLAIRE (St Claire Castle)

The house was built in 1849 by Olivier Voutier upon the ruins of a nunnery. Olivier Voutier was an erudite architect and an art passionate. During a trip to Greece, Voutier excavated the Venus de Milo (now shown in the Louvre Museum). The Castel Sainte Claire was the American writer Edith Wharton's winter residency from 1920 to 1937. The beautiful garden has been kept intact and has received the label Remarkable Garden.

The gardens are opened every day.
Winter: 08.00-17.30 | Summer: 08.00-19.00

9 CUPULE SLABS

Small cavities (called cupules) and grooves dating back to the end of the Neolithic. They are believed to be man-made and were associated with a water-related divinatory rite.

10 THE CASTLE

The Knights of Fos built the castle in the 11th century. Resting upon a rocky peak overlooking the town, its location was chosen for strategic reasons, the view allowing for better surveillance and defence. As the surviving ruins can attest, the castle has known many changes throughout the years. It was turned into a military fort in the 13th century before being partially destroyed in 1596 upon Henry IV's request and finally dismantled in 1620 under the reign of King Louis XIII.

11 VILLA NOAILLES

This house, a beautiful example of Modernist architecture, was built by the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens in the 1920s for the Parisian art patrons Marie-Laure and Charles de Noailles. Here, the Noailles used to welcome the artistic elite of the time and hosted memorable parties. The house has now been turned into a creative space. Its permanent collection and temporary design, architecture, fashion or photography exhibitions are open to public visits. Below the house, the terraced gardens of St Bernard Park have also received the label "Remarkable Garden".

Closed on Tuesdays and Bank Holidays (and on Mondays between October and June)
For more details on opening hours, call (+33) 4 98 08 01 98

St Bernard's terrace gardens have been labelled "Remarkable Garden"

Opened every day
Winter: 08.00-17.00 | Summer: 08.00-19.30

12 PORTE BARRUC (Barruc Gate)

The only surviving double gate from the town's fortified inner walls. It is in remarkable state of conservation and has kept its original apparatus and gothic arches. The original portcullis slots and the interior of the casements are also visible.

13 ROMANESQUE HOUSE

Typical house from the 13th century. The original geminate windows have been modified in time.

14 PLACE PORTALET (Portalet Square)

The square bears the name of a small gate pierced in the outer fortified city walls. A tower has survived and is now a private house.

19th century Hyères itinerary

Duration
≈ 1.5h

A PARK HOTEL

The current Park Hotel is located in the centre of an ancient orange-tree orchard where Charles X once planned to establish a residence. The orchard subsequently became the property of the bishop Raphael of Bologna who offered it as a gift to Louis XIV. The neoclassic-styled palace was built in the 19th century as the Grimm's Park Hotel. The Park Hotel's Rotunda hosts the offices of the Hyères Tourist Office.

B FAÇADE, PLACE CLEMENCEAU (Clémenceau Square)

Beautiful example of a 19th century building façade.

C LUTETIA PALACE

Once a luxury hotel, it was a popular destination among 19th century visitors who came to Hyères to seek warmth and sun in the winter months. The architecture is Neoclassic and the building offers beautiful examples of caryatides, ancient columns and fruit garlands.

D VILLA CHAPOULART AND THE TOUR JEANNE

The architect Pierre Chapoulart was commissioned the construction of these two villas by Alexis Godillot*, a wealthy entrepreneur who played an important role in the renewal of the Hyères' urban plan in the 19th century.

E GRAND HOTEL DES ILES D'OR

One of the most beautiful palaces in the city, it was an important tourist destination for winter tourism in the 19th century. Built by Alexis Godillot, the hotel comprised of 100 rooms all oriented South, magnificent salons and a lush garden.

F VILLA SAINT HUBERT or GODILLOT

This house was Alexis Godillot's main residence. It was built by Pierre Chapoulart at the end of the 19th century and displays an exuberant style quite characteristic of Chapoulart.

G SAINT-MARIE DES ANGES

A convalescent home for Franciscan nuns. The church was re-built at the end of the 19th century in limestone and dressed stone.

H GODILLOT RIDING STABLES & RING

Built by Pierre Chapoulart in 1882 at the request of Alexis Godillot*, they have been turned into private accommodations.

I MOORISH VILLA

Designed by Pierre Chapoulart and built by Alexis Godillot*. The house was made in the very fashionable Orientalist style of the time. Queen Victoria visited the gardens of the villa in 1892.

J GODILLOT FOUNTAIN AND ANGLICAN CHURCH

A generous patron, Alexis Godillot* offered this monumental fountain to the town. Nearby, the neo-gothic Anglican Church was consecrated in 1884 by the Bishop of Gibraltar and was a popular place of worship for the British community until 1953.

K VILLA LA CRIQUETTE

A 20th century villa made in Provençal Genovese style. Its architecture mixes bricks and ceramics.

L TUNISIAN VILLA

This was Alexis Chapoulart's main residence and office. Its architectural style is characteristic of the so-called Moorish art that mixes earthenware, Moorish arches and geometrical patterns.

M GRAND HOTEL DES PALMIERS (Palm Trees Grand Hotel)

A late 19th century luxurious hotel. It is oriented full South and used to shelter beautiful exotic gardens and fountains. It is now used as a secondary school.

N ANATOLE FRANCE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Built between 1888 and 1889, it is a prime example of "Jules Ferry" schools. Jules Ferry was a French Minister of Education who is best remembered for having introduced free primary schools and laic education to the country. The particularities of the school are its very large covered playground as well as an Ancient and Renaissance style façade.

O FAÇADES, AVENUE JOSEPH CLOTIS

This avenue was the equivalent of Nice's famous "Promenade des Anglais" in its time. Queen Victoria enjoyed strolling along the avenue, surrounded by her royal entourage.



ST PAUL'S BELL TOWER

PEÑISCOLA'S CORNER TURET

* Alexis Godillot was a Parisian saddler who earned his fortune from selling boots and equipment to the French army.

Old Town itinerary

Duration ≈ 1.5 h



19th century Hyères
itinerary

Duration
~15h

Duration
 ≈ 1.5 h

