

## The Must- Sees of Monaco: 5 Things You Can't Miss On Your Visit To The Second Smallest Country In The World

My experience in Monaco was one that I just can't put into words. As one of the most ritzy, glamorous places in the world, you'll come away feeling like a movie star. Or having met one. Or seen one. Or bumped into one. Chances are, after a trip to Monaco, you will have had some contact with a celebrity in some way, as this is a popular vacation spot for the rich and famous. By far one of the most beautiful, lavish countries, Monaco is the place to be if you are looking for the epitome of luxury travel. If you decide to take the plunge (pun intended- you need to know what you are getting yourself into before you drive down the many winding, cliff-scraping, terrifying back roads to enter the country), here are the top attractions to seek out:

1. **The Changing Of The Guards, Prince's Palace:** A century old tradition, the changing of the guards outside the Prince's Palace happens every day at precisely 11:55 am, giving plenty of time to sleep in and still catch a glimpse. But be warned, get there early for the best view and to avoid the jostling elbow jabs of fellow travelers. Beginning with a parade, this formal event is the perfect chance to witness Monegasque culture, as one of only a handful of countries with ruling royalty left. Not to mention, it gives you the opportunity to watch the last bit of the morning fog roll away over the mountains as the afternoon haze starts to set in.
2. **La Mer Mediterranee:** Being a country quite literally perched up on a ledge overlooking the ocean, there's no chance you'll miss this beautiful view. A perfect photo opp every direction you turn, make sure you take the time to severely run down the battery life on your camera- this is a view you'll want to remember forever. That being said, I suggest bringing extra batteries along with you. If you get the chance to make it down to the water, I promise you a quick dip in this bright blue water will be the most refreshing thing you've felt all day, especially since average summer temperatures range anywhere from 70-80 degrees. Check out Larvotto Beach for an extra special treat. Where else in the world will you have an expanse of ocean ahead of you with a backdrop as incredible behind you? Beware: you may come across pebbles instead of sand, and there may be a couple hundred full size yachts blocking your view at times. Just accept it.
3. **La Condamine, The Historic District:** After you've filled up your camera with pictures of the breathtaking view, take the climb down nearly a million stairs (okay, I exaggerate, but it sure feels like there's a million when you have to drag yourself all the way back up) to Monaco's historic district. In this quaint little village you'll find the best boutiques to shop, outdoor cafes for a quick snack to nibble on, and overflowing markets full of fresh fruits and vegetables. Being the second oldest district in Monaco as well as the starting place of the Grand Prix, you'll find plenty of history all around you, as well as many shops dedicated to this beloved sport. Check out any of the Ferrari or Formula 1 shops for an experience unlike any other, and try not to drool. I kid you not when I say this store carries

everything and anything your heart could possibly desire with a Ferrari logo. Step outside and you'll witness your fair share of Ferraris as well. They're everywhere. It's amazing.

4. The Food: What trip would be complete without gorging yourself on local cuisine? I speak generally here, because there truly are so many options to choose from. Whether you're looking for a scoop of ice cream (la glace if you're ordering in French), or want to splurge on a 5-star, 4-course meal, Monaco has all there is to offer. On my trip, we didn't have much time for a long sit down meal, but with charcuterie, cheese and carbs, plus personal pizzas the size of your head, I can't say I was disappointed. However, if you're looking for something a bit more upscale (and let's admit, you're in Monaco, why not splurge) here are a few recommendations:

Elsa

<http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/gourmet/elsa/>

Le Louis XV- Alain Ducasse a l'Hotel de Paris

<http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/gourmet/louis-xv-2/>

Le Vistamar

<http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/gourmet/vistamar/>

La Salle Empire

<http://www.montecarlosbm.com/restaurants-in-monaco/gourmet/salle-empire/>

5. St. Nicholas Cathedral: With its architecture and interior design, this cathedral is one to add to the list of most beautiful. Built in Roman-Byzantine style during the 1800s, it is the location of not only exquisite design, but the burial of many members of the royal Grimaldi family. History lesson anyone? Fashion icon and Hollywood star Grace Kelly was also buried here as a tribute after her tragic death, beloved by the people of Monaco. If the royal family is of any interest to you, her memorial is worth a stop.

My stay in Monaco was short-lived, so I would love to hear from anyone who has stayed a bit longer about any of your experiences!