

Press file

La Ciotat, gateway to the Calanques National Park



1 History of the town

La Ciotat and the sea have always been tightly linked together.

La Ciotat was certainly founded in the 4th Century B.C. by Greek sailors and trade people who founded Marseille in 2600 B.C. The Celts, who were settled in the "oppidums" in the hinterland, moved towards the coast. The remains of Roman sarcophagi from the 4th and 5th Century and of an urban cemetery are witnesses to the Roman occupancy until the 5th Century.

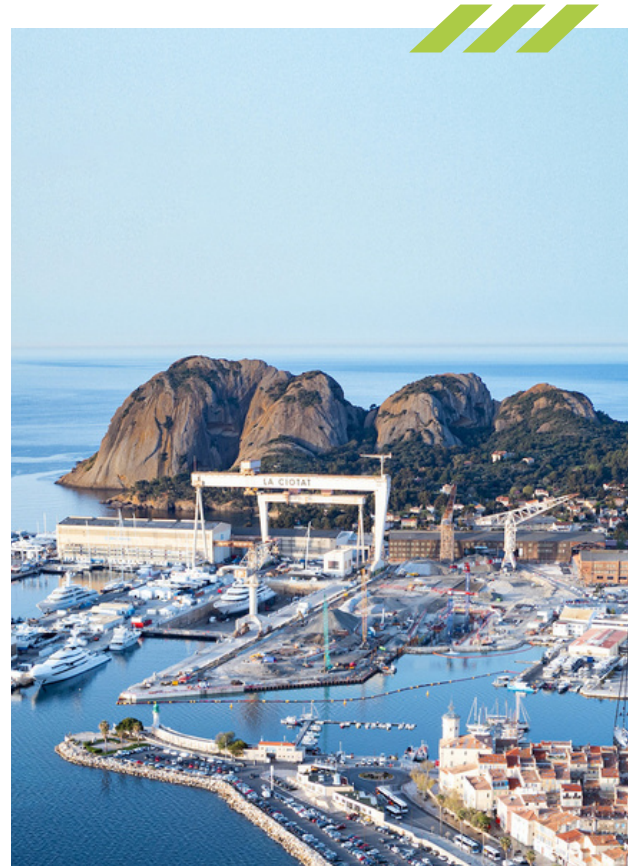
During the decline of the Roman Empire, Citharistas Portus (la Ciotat), a very active and prosperous harbor, was taken over by various invaders such as the Barbarians and the Saracens whose lootings and attacks forced the population on the coast to shelter in the oppidums of Césarista (Ceyreste) and to abandon the port in the 7th Century.

Public security was brought back in 1300 with the look-out institution enabling both the fishermen to move back and the city to prosper once more. In 1429, La Ciotat got permanently separated from Ceyreste.

One century later, the city was surrounded by fortifications and La Ciotat's harbor was as active as Marseille's, although in 1600, during the Middle East settlements era, La Ciotat's harbor became even more important than that of Marseille.

This was followed by a two-century long decline until the setting of Messageries Impériales (Imperial Messengers) which will become Messageries Maritimes (Maritime Messengers) in 1857. This initiated the construction of the shipyards that lasted until 1988.

Nowadays, the city lives upon a diverse economy: tourism, yachting and high-tech industry.



2 Our calling card

La Ciotat belongs to the Aix –Marseille-Provence Metropolis.

- Population : 36.211 (2022)
- Area : 12.7 mi²
- Latitude : 43.1740230 Longitude : 5.6042770 Location : 43°10, AN 05°36,7E
- Altitude from 0 to 1309 feet
- Coastline : 12 miles, 4 miles of which are beach area
- Climate : 340 sunny days a year
- Températures moyennes : Spring: 19°C / Summer: 26°C / Fall: 15°C / Winter: 12°C
- Twinning with 4 cities in Europe: Torre Annunziata (Italy), Bridgewater (United Kingdom), Singen (Germany) and Kranj (Slovenia).

Labels: Ville Fleurie (Flowered City): 3 flowers / France Station Nautique (French Watersport Resort) / Tourist office and Lumière Beach are certified for accessible tourism / Partnership with the Calanques National Park

3 How to get here

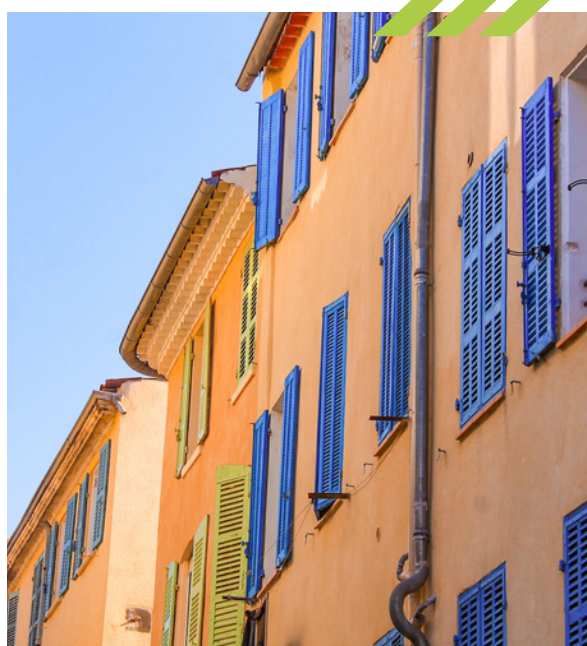
- Marseille-Provence International Airport: 31 miles
- Train station: regional and national lines (high speed trains from Marseille St Charles Station) and the A50 Highway to Marseille towards Spain and Northern Europe, as well as towards Italy via Toulon

4 In figures

With the development of industrial and commercial areas, along with the Shipyards and a growth in tourism, the city has been experiencing a renewal in its economy for several years now.

In 2022, more than 270 000 visitors came to La Ciotat.

Today, La Ciotat has 13 hotels, 1 of which is a four-star establishment, which makes up 442 rooms in total. There also are 3 camping sites in the town, providing 259 places and 352 mobile-Home bungalows. 3 tourist residences representing 180 flats and studio flats in total.



5 A unique scenery

From Mugel and Figuerolles coves to Saint Louis Point, La Ciotat exhibits a diverse scenery.

The two coves, in the western part of the city, belong to the chain of Calanques that stretch along the coast until Marseille. The two coves in La Ciotat are geologically very interesting due to their different shapes and colors. Mugel Park, is the region's botanical park that provides the most shade and is only a few yards away from the sea.

In the South, the old port, the ancient city and the beach area come together to create the typical small town character of a Provençal village.

In the East, the landscape turns softly into cornices and small inlets whilst the hills in the north offer walking trails in a wild environment.

6 A town with character

Wandering past the buildings' colorful facades or relaxing in the restaurants and bars of the old port makes people come back for more.

The old town has remained genuine with its narrow streets, remarkable chapels, typical squares and ancient doors that hold so much history.





7 A discovery

The urban development has not encroached upon the landscape, leaving natural sites intact such as Route des Crêtes, the panoramic route across hills and cliffs, or even Mugel and Figuerolles coves that have maintained their sought after natural side.

A boat trip from the old port takes our visitors along the Calanques up until Marseille and past some of Europe's highest maritime cliffs.

Ile Verte, a paradise for rabbits and birds, is only a short boat shuttle ride away from the Bay of La Ciotat. There, visitors find themselves in a perfectly wild and natural environment on this only wooded island in the area.

8 A land of inventions

The Lumière Family owned a holiday home in La Ciotat. The brightness of the local scenery made them choose to shoot the first movies in the History of cinema here, "The Arrival of a Train in La Ciotat Station" being the most famous one.

The Eden Theatre, the oldest still existing cinema in the world, was completely refurbished in 2013 during the Marseille Capital of European Culture event.

The Pétanque game was invented in La Ciotat in 1910 when Jules Lenoir, who suffered from rheumatism, play his favorite game, Boules, without moving around on the playing field... and La Pétanque was born.



9 Economic activity areas

Athelia is La Ciotat's hub for high-tech industry that host companies generating 4.000 jobs. The Shipyards on the marina welcome more and more luxury yachts creating 1.200 jobs.

Many commercial areas have developed, also hosting renowned French companies such as Darty, Gifi, Casa, Maisons du Monde and Sport 2000 amongst others.

10 A summer in La Ciotat

With 340 days of sunshine per year and an exceptional coastline, La Ciotat is waiting for you!

The beaches are not very steep, which make them very attractive for families and young children. They are supervised from June to September and equipped with showers.

The first "non-smoking" beach in Europe was inaugurated on the Lumière beach, making the town a leader in this approach.

Sportsmen and sportswomen are not forgotten since all water and land sports can be practiced.

Swimming in the creeks where the water takes on the colors of the Caribbean Sea is a very exciting prospect. During the day, the small markets offer a picturesque recreation while in the evening the terraces come alive.

As for events, the Musique en Vacances festival precedes the Creole festival for the pleasure of all music lovers. For our Corsican friends, the town organizes the Corsica Spirit Festival in July.

In August, we also look forward to the Votive Festival (traditional wooden fishing boats known as barquettes) and the magnificent fireworks (also in July)



II Other seasons

In Spring, boating is in the spotlight with the Nauticales boat show which takes place in March. On the cinema side, there is also the Festival du Premier Film Francophone.

After the summer, Fall is lively with the Heritage Days, the Lumexplore Festival and Cibo Di Strada, the Italian event par excellence.

In Winter occur Christmas traditions throughout the month with cribs, parades, markets and the Santons fair.

12 Markets

The markets of Provence are held three times a week, a fish market every morning on the Port-Vieux, a flower market in the spring, a nightly craft market in the summer, and the traditional Christmas market in December.



Tourist Office of La Ciotat

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SEASONS AND OPENING TIMES

Low season *November - December - January - February - March*

Monday to Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. / 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

Mid-season *April - May - June - September - October*

Monday to Saturday (9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. / 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

High season *July - August*

Monday to Saturday (9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.).

Sunday and public holidays (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)



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