



THIS FRENCH LIFE

## Where the French go on holiday: three destinations popular for natives en vacances



Hip Marseille is known as 'the Berlin of France'

### The Inspirational Creative Escape: Marseille



Paris-based artist and illustrator [Kiki Ljung \(kikiljung.com\)](http://kikiljung.com) on finding inspiration in Marseille

Located between the Alps and the Mediterranean, you'd have to make a lot of effort not to find Marseille inspiring, as artists and writers have done for centuries. There are many reasons I love Marseille, not least the 2,858 hours of sunshine a year, which have earned the country's second-largest city the label 'sun capital of France'.

Some call it the Berlin of France, but Marseille is more than a hipster enclave: a wonderfully unpredictable, vibrant, colourful, versatile and exciting destination, it's the country's oldest city and is brimming with art galleries, historical buildings and beautiful public parks.

Cours Julien is the favourite neighbourhood of the 'bobos' (aka 'bourgeois-bohèmes', French for 'hipster'). This is where I've spent happy weekends discovering cafés and restaurants like La Cantinetta ([restaurantlacantinetta.fr](http://restaurantlacantinetta.fr)), with its beautiful outside terrace dotted with plants and flowers, plus design stores, galleries, bookshops and markets – the square is filled with an antique book market at the weekends. Studio Fotokino

([fotokino.org/Le-Studio](http://fotokino.org/Le-Studio)), a

short stroll away, is a lovely gallery that also sells prints and books from local illustrators and graphic artists.

Seafood lovers from all over the country come to Marseille for bouillabaisse (typical fish stew) at the Vieux Port. And nobody leaves the city without bringing home a little cube of traditional hard soap known as 'Savon de Marseille', so that the scent can bring you back to the city, even after you leave.

**Stay:** Pension Edelweiss (doubles from £65; [pension-edelweiss.fr](http://pension-edelweiss.fr)) is a stylish, quirky B&B designed and run by local Véronique, who'll give you great local tips the guidebooks won't tell you about. With vintage furniture and retro lighting, this oozes Mediterranean style.



Quirky B&B Pension Edelweiss has a French new-wave feel

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