Items of interest include Santons, colorful painted clay figures traditionally placed around the Christmas tree. Aix-en-Provence is known for fragrant soaps with natural floral scents, and calissons, a high quality marzipan made of almonds and eggs. Other items include painting, clothing made of Provençal fabrics, and pottery.

Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES The main post office (Poste) is Colbert, located at 1 pl de l’Hotel-des-Postes. There is also a post office at 50, rue de Rome and 46, rue Montgrand. A telephone office is incorporated into the Post Office. Many telephones in France accept “Telecartes” which can be purchased in Post Offices and Tobacconists. You can also place a call with your personal calling card using the following access codes:


TOURIST INFORMATION The main tourist information office is located in the Old Port on La Canebiere.

TRANSPORTATION A number of taxis are usually available at the Pier and most will accept U.S. Dollars. There is a bus and subway system within the city that is fairly easy and modern.

USEFUL WORDS Yes – Oui No – Non Good Day – Bonjour Good-bye – Au Revoir Thank You – Merci You’re Welcome – De Rien

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Marseille is located in the region of Provence, one of the most scenic areas in all of France. Geographically it ranges from the high mountains of the southern Alps to the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Its rugged, rocky countryside interspersed with vineyards, fields of lavender, and olive groves have inspired the paintings of Paul Cezanne and Vincent Van Gogh.

Marseille is the capital of this beautiful region and is the second largest city in France. With a trading history of more than 2500 years, Marseille owes its prosperity to the sea and still remains the largest port city in the Mediterranean. Although the cities image has been tainted by its strong emphasis on industry, Marseille has much to offer.

For visitors from the sea, Marseille is the gateway to the spectacular scenery of Provence and the Rhone Valley. Once the north-south route of ancient armies and medieval traders, the area has a strong Greco-Roman/heritage. With a number of well preserved towns and villages, an exploration into this region will reveal its fascinating history and marvelous landscapes.

HISTORY Marseille (Massalia) was founded in 600 B.C. by the Phoenicians but soon became a mixed population with the arrival of a large number of Celts in the 5th and 4th century B.C. The Greek culture slowly infiltrated the area and by the 2nd century B.C., Massalia became a powerful commercial city with a number of trading posts.

Threatened by an attack from the Gauls, Massalia obtained the protection of Rome in 154 B.C. The region enjoyed independence until 49 B.C. when it fell to the Roman empire as a result of having supported Pompeii against Caesar.

Christianity appeared in the region at the end of the 2nd century A.D. and brought considerable religious and political transformations for the next three centuries. Provence was ceded to the Franks in 536 A.D. and confusion and tragedy continued as the Arabs and Franks transformed the region into a battleground in the 8th century. Seeking protection, Provence became a part of the Holy Roman Empire in 1032.

The marriage of Charles of Anjou to Beatrice of Provence in 1246 linked Provence to the House of Anjou. The key city was Avignon where Bishop Jacques Duese was elected Pope in 1316. The second half of the 14th century brought famine and plague which devastated the area. The reformation spread to the south of France as early as 1530, however the Huguenots brought violent religious wars and Catholicism prevailed in Provence.
**HISTORY (continued)**

The region enjoyed a golden age of agriculture and commerce in the 18th century while industrialization and modernization dominated the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Places of Interest**

1. **Vieux Port** is the old harbor and heart of Marseille. Lined with yachts, fishing boats and restaurants, most streets lead to this historic center. Vieux is also the location of Marseille’s famous fish market held on Monday through Saturday mornings.

2. **Notre-Dame de la Garde**, a beautiful cathedral set atop a hill, bears resemblance to the Sacre-Coeur in Paris and the Fourviere in Lyon. From this area you will have splendid panoramic views of the city, harbor and surrounding mountains. The interior of the cathedral is faced with multicolored marble, mosaics, and mural paintings by the Dusseldorf School.

3. **Abbey of Saint-Victor** was founded in the early 5th century by St. John Cassian, a monk from the Far East, in honor of St. Victor, a patron of sailors and millers who suffered martyrdom in the 3rd century. The sanctuary was destroyed in a Saracen raid and rebuilt in 1040 A.D. Highlights include the Crypt erected by St Cassian, the cave of St Victor, the catacombs, and a number of sarcophagi.

4. **Vieille Charité (Old Charity Cultural Center)** consists of four wings that open on a rectangular courtyard with galleries on three levels, and an Italian Baroque chapel within oval dome in the center. In the past it has served as a technical training center for the poor, a home for children and old people, and a low-cost housing area. Today is has become a science and arts center and houses the Museum of Mediterranean Archeology and the Museum of African, South Sea, and American Indian Arts, as well as various other exhibits.

**Beyond Marseille**

5. **Cassis**, an old Provencal fishing port, is a popular summer resort that has drawn many famous painters to its sunny bay including Vlaminck, Matisse, and Dufy. Cafes, restaurants and seafood shops cluster around its harbor and three beaches. Famous for its high white cliffs, Cassis lies at the foot of Europe's highest cliff, the 1,300-foot Cap Canaille.

6. **Les Baux**, one of the most charming villages in all of Provence, is perched high atop the Alpilles Mountain Range. Surrounded by landscapes of rice plantations, wheat fields, dark cypress trees, olive groves and sunflowers, it is hard to distinguish the village from the rocky plateau it was carved from. Half of Les Baux is composed of tiny climbing streets and ancient stone houses, inhabited for the most part by local craftsmen selling pottery, carvings, and assorted knock knock. The other half is medieval ruins. Although the population is less than 500 people, this beautiful little village sees over 1.5 million visitors each year.

7. **Aix en Provence** is the former capital of Provence from the 12th century to the French Revolution. Retaining a great deal of character imparted to it in the 17th and 18th centuries, it is a stunningly beautiful place, rich in culture and atmosphere. A university town famous for its music and literature, it is also the birthplace of the famous Impressionist, Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), many of whose paintings feature the nearby countryside.

8. **Arles**, known for its Roman ruins, was once a thriving port before the Mediterranean receded over what is now Camargue. Founded in the days of Ancient Rome, it was a commercial crossroad for trade with merchants arriving from as far away as Arabia, Assyria, and Africa. The city reached its zenith during the “Pax Romana”, at which time Arles provided wheat and grain to most of the Western Empire. Traces of its Roman past can be scene in the well preserved Roman arena built in the 1st century A.D for circuses and gladiator combat. Arles remains a central market for agricultural production as well as light diversified industry, administrative and cultural functions.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS**

To make the most of your visit to Marseille and the region of Provence we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS**

**Bargaining:** Not a way of life in France.

**Tipping:** Generally service will be included in the bill, however, it is customary to leave a few coins. For taxis, a 10% gratuity is normal.

**Local Cuisine:** Wining and dining is a major occupation for the French, and the region of Provence offers its own unique tastes. Olives, introduced by the ancient Greeks over 2500 years ago accompany many traditional dishes including tapenade, a paste of capers, anchovies, olive oil, and lemon juice. Aioli, a garlicy mayonnaise served with salt, cod and vegetables is also a famous dish as well as the traditional Bouillabaisse (fish stew). For dessert, try Les Marseillotes, a local sweet with chocolate, almonds and honey.

**Drink Specialties:** The traditional Provencal aperitif is pastis, a pale-green, anise-based drink usually accompanied by black olives. The region of Provence produces a number of good quality red, white, and rose wines.

**Shops are generally open from 9:00 am – Noon and 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday. U.S. Dollars are not accepted in France, however, most stores accept major credit cards.**

**SHOPPING FACILITIES**

The main shopping area is located around “Vieux Port” (Old Port). Centre Bourse is a small mall where you will find many local products (open 9:30 am – 7:00 pm). There is also plenty of shopping along “Canebiere” and the popular side streets of Rue St Ferreol, Rue de Rome, and Rue Paradis. Here you will find many luxurious shops such as Vuitton, Hermes and Dior.