



INSPIRATION



Skip the big cities and visit these towns instead

BY

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From **Provence** to Bretagne, the Basque Country to Alsace and Normandy to Auvergne, **France** has a stunning variety of tranquil villages for escaping urban chaos and easing into a slower pace of local traditions. Whether meandering through ancient alleyways and sun-dappled squares or watching fishermen unload crates of lobster, observing everyday life in these hilltop hamlets and picturesque ports is the gateway to understanding the spirit of these places. We've rounded up 13 beautiful villages in France with dreamy views – a kaleidoscope of red-clay rooftops, pastel façades, centuries-old farmsteads, golden-hued castles, flower-dotted fields and vineyards, plus an array of fine regional wine and food.



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## Eygalières

Gorgeous market towns are a dime a dozen in Provence. But few are as lovely as Eygalières, where a buzzing – but never too busy – main thoroughfare is backed by craggy slopes and the peaks of the Alpilles. In town, you'll find all the usual suspects: a



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## Menerbes, Provence

Gone are the busloads of camera-toting Peter Mayle-crazed **Provence** lovers who once took this postcard-perfect village by storm. Beyond the rugged, austere beauty of Ménerbes, built into the rock with a sweeping view of the Lubéron valley and the blue-grey Alpilles foothills, there's a prehistoric dolmen, a Gothic-meets-Romanesque 16th-century abbey, Sainte-Hilaire, as well as a quirky corkscrew museum and rows of carefully restored aristocratic houses, including **Dora Maar's former home**, now a foundation and residence for American artists.