



1

Eiffel Tower—Paris

- Built for the **1889 World's Fair** — Paris planned to tear it down after 20 years.
- At 984 feet, it became the tallest structure in the world for 40 years.
- Many artists and writers hated it. One critic ate lunch there daily because it was the only place he couldn't see it.
- The tower survived because it was useful for radio and military signals.
- In 1925, a **con artist** convinced scrap dealers the Eiffel Tower was being dismantled, sold it for scrap, and escaped before anyone realized it was a scam.
- Today, it draws **6–7 million visitors** a year, making it the most visited paid monument in the world.

See it for yourself



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2

The Louvre—Paris

- The Louvre began as a medieval fortress in the 1100s—original stone walls still lie underground.
- At 30 seconds per artwork, viewing every piece nonstop would take about 12 full days.
- In 1939, curators secretly evacuated the Mona Lisa in an ambulance to hide her from the war.
- The **Mona Lisa was stolen in 1911**, vanished for **two years**, and became **world-famous because of it**.
- The glass pyramid, added in the 1980s, was once hated—now it's iconic.

See it for yourself

Note: Parental guidance recommended for younger viewers. This video includes classical artwork that features nudity.



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3

The Notre Dame Cathedral—Paris

- Notre-Dame houses sacred relics believed to include the **Crown of Thorns**, one of Christianity's most important artifacts.
- The cathedral's largest bell weighs over 13 tons and can be heard for miles across Paris.
- In the square outside Notre-Dame sits the point from which distances to every corner of France are measured.
- Victor Hugo's **The Hunchback of Notre-Dame** revived public interest and saved the cathedral from demolition.
- Beekeepers maintain three hives on the sacristy roof; remarkably, all the bees survived the massive 2019 fire.

See it for yourself



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4

Catacombs of Paris

- Over 170 miles of tunnels run beneath Paris—most people have no idea there's a hidden world under their feet.
- The remains of around 6 million people rest in the Catacombs—**nearly three times the population of Paris today**.
- Bodies were moved here at night in the 1700s, quietly transported through the city after cemeteries overflowed.
- Only about 1% is open to the public—**the rest is a vast, off-limits maze beneath the city**.
- Some walls are carefully arranged using skulls—stacked to create organized, almost patterned designs.

See it for yourself



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5

Palace of Versailles—Paris

- The palace has over **2,300 rooms**, including the famous Hall of Mirrors with 357 mirrors reflecting the gardens.
- Daily life at Versailles was so public that nobles gathered to **watch the king** wake up, get dressed, and go to bed as part of official court ritual.
- Despite its grandeur, the palace had very **few bathrooms**, and court life was notoriously unhygienic.
- In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed here, officially ending World War I.
- Versailles housed an **exotic zoo** where King Louis XIV kept elephants and tigers to impress visiting foreign ambassadors.



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6

Colmar—Alsace Region

- **Alsace is a historic border region in eastern France**, shaped by centuries of French and German rule.
- Because of this history, Alsace developed a **distinct culture, architecture, and regional dialect**.
- **Colmar is one of Alsace's best-preserved towns** and sits near the center of the region.
- **Colmar is often marketed as France's "fairytale town"** because its historic center remains largely intact.
- Many of Colmar's **colorful half-timbered houses** date back to the 1300s–1500s and were never rebuilt.



See it for yourself

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LYON, FRANCE



7

Lyon

- Lyon is often called **France's culinary capital**, shaping French cuisine long before Paris claimed the spotlight.
- The city has **hundreds of hidden passageways** called traboules that run through buildings and courtyards.
- These secret passages were used to **smuggle silk, evade taxes, and later hide members of the French Resistance** during World War II.
- Lyon was once the center of **Europe's silk industry**, controlling fashion and trade for centuries.
- The modern **film industry traces its roots to Lyon**, where the Lumière brothers held the first public film screenings.

See it for yourself



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8

Provence

- Some Provençal towns still use **Roman roads**, aqueducts, and bridges built nearly 2,000 years ago.
- The region is shaped by the **Mistral**, a violent wind that can blow for days and historically influenced how towns were built.
- Many villages were **constructed on hilltops** so residents could spot enemies, pirates, or invaders long before they arrived.
- Provence has been continuously inhabited since **prehistoric times**, with cave art and settlements older than written history.
- The **Pont du Gard** is a 2,000-year-old Roman bridge built with perfectly fitted stones held together entirely by gravity.

See it for yourself



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9

Grasse—French Riviera

- Professional perfumers (“noses”) in Grasse are trained for years to recognize and recall **hundreds to thousands of odor notes**.
- Grasse is known as the **world’s perfume capital**, producing fragrance ingredients used by major perfume houses worldwide.
- The city’s perfume industry began as a way to **mask the smell of leather**, back when Grasse was a major glove-making center.
- Local flowers like **jasmine, rose, and orange blossom** are still harvested early in the morning to preserve their scent.
- Grasse is home to **one of the oldest perfume factories in the world**, still operating today.



See it for yourself

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10

Pont du Gard

- Built around 50 A.D., the **Pont du Gard** has stood for nearly 2,000 years, making it one of the world's best-preserved Roman monuments.
- For five centuries, the Pont du Gard carried **millions of gallons of fresh water** daily to the Roman city of Nîmes.
- At nearly 160 feet tall, it remains **the highest surviving Roman aqueduct bridge** in the world.
- Massive limestone blocks were cut so precisely **they fit together without mortar**, held in place by their immense weight.
- Roman builders lifted stones **weighing up to six tons** using wooden cranes, ropes, and dirt ramps.



See it for yourself

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11

Carcassonne

- Its 52 towers and double walls provided the visual blueprint for the medieval fortifications seen in **Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty**.
- Legend says Dame Carcas ended a 5-year siege by tossing a grain-stuffed pig over the wall, **tricking the enemy** into thinking the city had infinite food.
- Its unique layout inspired the world-famous **Carcassonne board game**, which has sold millions of copies worldwide.
- Architects hid a "**secret**" cistern called the Fount Celado deep inside the walls to ensure a permanent water supply during long sieges.
- In 1849, the city was **ordered to be demolished** for its stone; a massive public protest saved it from destruction.

See it for yourself



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12

Lascaux Caves

- In 1940, **four teenagers and a dog** named Robot discovered the cave while searching for a legendary secret tunnel.
- It's often called the "**Sistine Chapel of Prehistory**" because it contains nearly 2,000 stunning, 17,000-year-old paintings of animals.
- The **original cave was closed in 1963** to protect the art from mold; tourists now visit a high-tech, millimetre-perfect replica.
- The cave was closed to the public because the **carbon dioxide** from visitors' breath was causing mold to destroy the art.
- By using flickering torchlight against the curved cave walls, the **artists created the illusion** that the animals were running.

See it for yourself



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13

Dordogne Valley

- The Dordogne Valley is known as the “**Land of 1,001 Castles**,” with hundreds of historic castles and fortresses packed into the region.
- The valley has some of the **oldest known human cave art**, dating back **17,000+ years**.
- Many villages were carved into **cliffs and rock faces**, creating permanent stone homes.
- The Dordogne was a **frontline region during the Hundred Years’ War**, driving the dense concentration of castles.
- Some of the region’s prehistoric caves were **sealed for thousands of years** and only rediscovered in the 20th century.



See it for yourself

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14

Loire Valley

- The Loire Valley contains over **300 châteaux**, built more as **palaces and pleasure retreats** than as military fortresses.
- French kings moved their court here during the **Renaissance**, turning the region into the center of royal power and culture.
- Many Loire châteaux were designed for **display and luxury**, with grand staircases, gardens, and art meant to impress rather than defend.
- Leonardo da Vinci spent the **last years of his life** in the Loire Valley, invited by the French king.
- The region is often called the “**Garden of France**” because of its fertile land and carefully designed landscapes.



See it for yourself

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15

Omaha Beach

- "Omaha" wasn't its real name; it was a **top-secret code name** used only for the D-Day invasion.
- To land supplies, the **Allies sank old ships** and massive concrete blocks to create a "Mulberry" artificial harbor right on the water.
- Because of its historic status, **the beach remains largely undeveloped**, looking much as it did on June 6, 1944.
- Soldiers faced a steep bank of **smooth stones (shingle)** that made running inland under fire nearly impossible.
- The **sand still contains tiny shrapnel** fragments from the battle, and the bluff above is home to over 9,000 American graves.



See it for yourself

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16

Mont Saint-Michel

- The island is famous for tides that rise **as fast as a person walks**, historically trapping unsuspecting travelers in the surrounding wet sand.
- Harry Potter fans often call it the "**real-life Hogwarts**" because its soaring spires and winding stone streets look exactly like the wizarding school.
- To lift tons of food up the cliffs when it was a prison, inmates had to walk inside a giant wooden wheel **like human hamsters**.
- During the Hundred Years' War, a small group of French knights **successfully defended** the island against the English for 30 years.
- The statue at the top depicts **Saint Michael slaying a dragon**, representing the triumph of good over evil.



See it for yourself

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