

Henri Matisse, *Nature morte à la statuette africaine*, 1907, Musée Matisse Nice

MUSÉEMATISSE

MUSEUM GUIDE

FEBRUARY – MAY 2026

MUSÉES DE NICE

HÔTEL BEAU RIVAGE ★★★★

BEAU RIVAGE NICE

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THE COLLECTION
DISPLAY PRESENTED FROM 7 FEBRUARY TO 25 MAY 2026

"The presentation is simple and carefully considered, with no pursuit of 'effects' [...]. In short, it is nothing like a clinical museum, but a succession of tranquil rooms [...]. Visitors should not expect to see the grand interiors of the early days, the Fauvist landscapes or the dazzling still lifes, but rather imagine that they have the chance to visit Matisse's studio."

Rosamond Bernier in the review *L'Œil*, September 1963

These words, taken from an article on the opening of the museum, aptly capture the singularity of this unique place.

The museum's collection is the result of a remarkable history and was formed thanks to the generosity of Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and his family. In 1953, a year before his death, the artist gave the City of Nice a group of works that formed the basis of the museum that is now dedicated to him, including *Océanie, la mer* [*Oceania, the Sea*] *and Océanie, le ciel* [*Oceania, the Sky*, 1946]. Amélie Matisse, his wife, added to the collection in 1960 with a bequest of paintings, including *Nu au fauteuil, plante verte* [*Nude in an Armchair, green plant,* 1936-1937], and almost 100 drawings. The artist's children – Marguerite, Jean and Pierre – and their heirs further enriched the collection by donating sculptures, engravings, illustrated books, ceramics and cut-outs, including all the preparatory works for the chasubles in the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence. The collection also includes many of the artist's personal objects, true models and protagonists in his work.

A chrono-thematic display, spread over four levels, illustrates the diversity of the works and highlights recent acquisitions, including *Nature morte à la statuette africaine [Still Life with African Statuette*] (1907), and the deposit by the Centre national des arts plastiques of four aquatints from the late 1940s.

LEVEL - 2

This first level of the visit provides a thoughtful insight into the world of Henri Matisse, through some of the monumental works from the end of his life: *Océanie, le ciel*; *Océanie, la mer*; *La Piscine;* and *Fleurs et fruits [Oceania, the Sky*; *Oceania, the Sea*; *The Swimming Pool; Flowers and Fruit*].

The tour then takes the visitor from the artist's beginnings and shows how, through his artistic experimentation and creative process, he developed a visual language that profoundly marked modern art.

LEVEL - 1

MEZZANINE

The beginnings

Born in 1869 in Le Cateau-Cambrésis, in the north of France, Matisse only discovered his vocation as an artist at the age of 20. In 1891, he moved to Paris, where he began his academic training, essentially based on drawing from live models and ancient classical works, as well as copying the great masters. His first paintings featured a dark palette and a classical approach, but he quickly began to experiment with new ways of painting.



Henri Matisse, *Nude in an Armchair, Green Plant*, 1936-1937, Musée Matisse Nice

LONG GALLERY

Towards a liberation of colour

While still a student, Matisse spent three summers in Brittany, where he learned about outdoor landscape painting. The study of the effects of light led to a gradual transformation of his palette, which became lighter, and to a liberation of his brushwork under the influence of the Impressionists, whose work he discovered in Paris at the same time. His palette began to move away from greys in favour of warmer tones, anticipating the bright colours of Fauvism.

Fauvism

The artist pursued his exploration of colour in the south of France: in 1904 with Paul Signac, who taught him the principles of pointillism, and in 1905, in Collioure, with his friend André Derain, with whom he embarked on an even more radical path. The term "Fauves" emerged at the time of the scandal of the 1905 Salon d'Automne to describe the artists who had exhibited there vibrant paintings, characterised by broad brushstrokes or flat areas of colour. Matisse was very quickly regarded as the leader of the movement.

LEVEL 0

ROOM 1

Dialogues

In the years following Fauvism, Matisse undertook numerous journeys, which opened him up to new influences. The aesthetics of Eastern arts led him to develop a style of painting conceived as a decorative art. Matisse was also one of the first European artists to take an interest in African art. Little by little, he surrounded himself with a vast collection of heterogeneous objects that contributed to his mental landscape as much as to his living environment.

ROOM 2

First Nice period

In the years 1918-1929, the artist, then based in Nice, devoted himself to small-format, intimate painting, for which he often had Henriette Darricarrère pose. Through series of interiors or odalisques, he sought to rethink the relationships between the volumes of the human body and flat decorative surfaces. In Place Charles-Félix, he set up his studio like a stage set , using Orientalist bric-a-brac to stage his scenes.

ROOM 3

Henriette, a model at the heart of Matisse's research

Henriette Darricarrère (1901-1991) is the embodiment of Matisse's odalisques. She is more than just a subject, becoming a partner in artistic research. Through her, the painter breaks away from conventions to focus on the essential: the structure of the body, the tension between volumes and the circulation of light.

ROOM 4

Matisse and plants

Branches, foliage, flowers, and fruit are omnipresent in Matisse's work. Synonymous with luxuriance, abundance and profusion, the plant world constitutes an inexhaustible source of inspiration and energy for the artist. While it provides him with a varied vocabulary of forms across drawing, sculpture and painting, its presence is most strongly expressed in the graphic arts.



View of Matisse's studio-apartment at the Regina, Nice, 1942. Photograph by Gaston Diehl

LEVEL 1

ROOM 6

An exceptional series of etchings

In 1929, at a time when his painting was in crisis, Matisse almost stopped painting to devote himself to sculpture and printmaking. He then produced a series of 107 etchings or drypoints. Using the line as his only means of expression, his engravings combine female models in almost infinite variations, represented only by their outlines.

ROOM 7

The feeling of space

In 1930, Matisse met Dr Albert Barnes, an American collector of modern art, who commissioned him to create a large decoration covering three panels and a total area of about 13 m by 3.5 m for his foundation in Merion, near Philadelphia. Free to choose the subject, Matisse immediately envisioned a dance. He created numerous scaled-down studies for the work. At the end of 1931, he invented a new process that allowed him to work to scale: he had pieces of paper painted in four different colours cut, which he placed and moved until he achieved the right balance of shapes and colours.

ROOM 8

"Architectural painting"

Matisse paid constant attention to the decorative quality of his art, that is to say, its ability to act upon the viewer's space and create an environment. Thanks to the experience of *La Danse [The Dance]*, he rethought how to paint to "create the idea of immensity in a very limited space". He pursues this desire in his tapestry projects in particular, including *Nymphe dans la forêt (La Verdure)* [*Nymph in the Forest (La Verdure)*].

ROOM 9

A second life

Matisse overcomes the turmoils of the Second World War, the distance from his loved ones and illness through reverie. His studio at Le Régina is filled with plants, objects and exotic birds.
He draws incessantly, and from this profusion comes the album *Dessins. Thèmes et Variations [Drawings: Themes and Variations].* The sleeping figure, a theme that would become central in his paintings of the 1940s, is inspired by Lydia Delectorskaya, model and indispensable collaborator in the studio.
Fleeing the bombing of Nice, Matisse withdrew to Vence in the summer of 1943. There, he produced a series of interior paintings, including *Lectrice à la table jaune* [*Reader at the Yellow Table*].

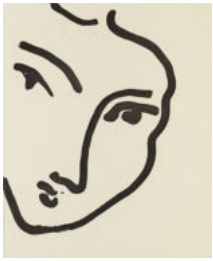


Henri Matisse, *Reader at the Yellow Table,* Vence, 1944, Musée Matisse Nice

ROOM 10

The aquatints

Matisse does not see printmaking as a substitute to painting or drawing, nor as a mere reproduction process, but as a genuine means of creation. At various points, he explores many printing techniques: drypoint, etching, aquatint, lithography, woodcut, linocut and monotype. Aquatint allows the artist to translate the effects of the brush into engraving. He focuses on the essential: the face, simultaneously capturing its universality and singularity.



Henri Matisse, *Nadia with a pointy chin*, 1948,
Centre national des arts plastiques, deposit, 2025

ROOM 11

The chapel of Vence

Between 1948 and 1951, Matisse devoted himself to creating a chapel for the Dominican Sisters of the Rosary in Vence. He considered it the culmination of his artistic life and his spiritual achievement. It was also the synthesis of various techniques: architecture, stained glass, ceramic drawing and more. Its guiding principle is "the balance of opposites". Inside, the stained-glass windows contrast with the white ceramic panels; outside, the linear black design of the bell tower contrasts with the blue-and white-glazed tiles of the roof.

PROGRAMMING

Every Wednesday and Friday at 11am in the museum lecture theatre
Screening of the film *Henri Matisse* by François Campaux (1946) – In French

Produced in the immediate post-war period, the film by director François Campaux was conceived as a tool for the dissemination of modern French art – of which Matisse was then an uncontested figure. Structured as a series of sequences, the film unfolds a visit to the artist: he is seen in conversation with a friend in his Paris studio, strolling through the garden of the Villa Le Rêve in Vence, attending the Salon d'Automne of 1945, drawing his grandson Gérard, and working with one of his models. A landmark in the art film genre, it would inspire Georges Clouzot to create *Le Mystère Picasso* a few years later.

CONSERVATOIRE DE NICE
MUSIQUE - DANSE - THÉÂTRE

Spotlight on the Nice Conservatoire Students

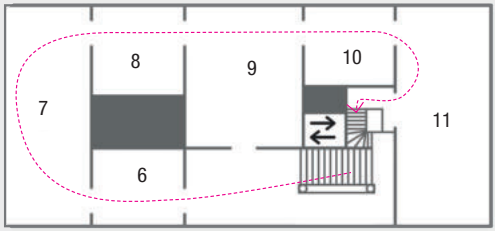
- Wednesday 11 February
- Wednesday 18 March
- Wednesday 24 June

Free admission, subject to availability.
Visit our website for more information.

Activities (guided tours, workshops) and other events
What's on? Visit the museum's website for the programme of guided tours and activities for adults, children and families.

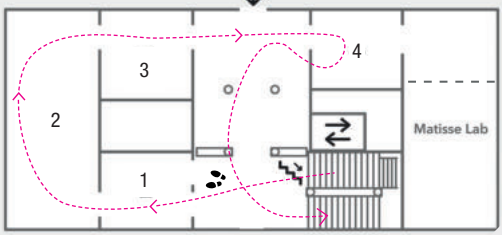
FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE MUSEUM

LEVEL 1

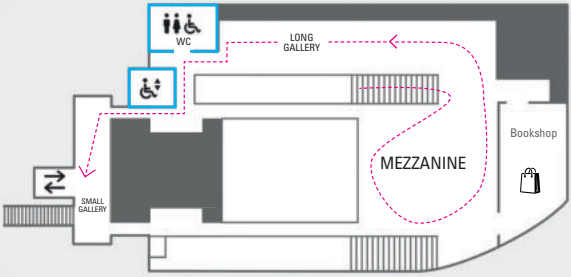


ENTRANCE

LEVEL 0



LEVEL -1



YOUR VISIT STARTS HERE

LEVEL -2





IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MATISSE

Places of residence and work

1 - Hôtel Beau Rivage
From December 1917 to April 1918
107, quai des États-Unis

2 - Promenade des Anglais
April 1918
105, quai des États-Unis

3 - Villa des Alliés
From May to June 1918
138, boulevard du Mont-Boron

4 - Hôtel de la Méditerranée
Autumn 1918-1921
25, promenade des Anglais (destroyed)

5 - Palais Caïs de Pierlas
1921-1938
1, place Charles-Félix

6 - Studio for *The Dance*
(Barnes Commission) 1931-1932
8, rue Désiré-Niel (destroyed)

7 - Le Régina
From 1921 to 1938 and from 1949 to 1954
73, boulevard de Cimiez

8 - Villa Le Rêve, Vence
July 1943 – end of 1948
261, avenue Henri-Matisse

Leisure places

9 - Flower Market
Cours Saleya

10 - Nice Nautical Club
50, boulevard Franck-Pilatte

11 - Nice National School of Decorative Arts
6, rue Tonduti-de-l'Escarène

12 - Cimiez Arenas Garden
184, avenue des Arènes-de-Cimiez

Worth seing

13 - Musée Matisse Nice
164, avenue des Arènes-de-Cimiez

14 – Cemetery of the Cimiez Monastery
Place Jean-Paul II:
Henri Matisse's grave

MUSÉE MATISSE NICE

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Open every day except Tuesdays
• from 10am to 6pm from 1 April to 31 October
• from 10am to 5pm from 1 November to 31 March

MUSEUM SHOP

Level -1 of the museum and online at arteum.com

FREE MUSEUM GUIDE

Available on Bloomberg Connects via the app or by scanning the QR code.

Enjoy detailed digital content on the artworks in more than 50 languages, also accessible outside the museum to prepare—or extend—your visit.

Bloomberg Connects

EATING AND DRINKING

Kiosque des Arènes in the Arenas garden (a garden planted with centuries-old olive trees next to the Roman arenas)

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Cimiez's monastery, cemetery and garden
Matisse's grave (in the monastery's cemetery)
Nice-Cimiez Archaeology Museum

TO VISIT THE CHAPEL OF THE ROSARY IN VENCE

466, avenue Henri Matisse – Vence
chapellematisse.com
Open Tuesday to Saturday, from 10am to 11:30am and from 2pm to 5:30pm (4:30pm from 1 November to the end of February).
Discover the Musée Matisse Nice's off-site exhibition at the Chapel of the Rosary: "Saint Dominic,'a pillar'" (from 5 September 2025 to 4 July 2026).



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