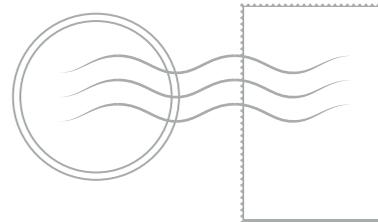


POSTCARD

Côte d'Azur



On her first solo holiday, **Lina Molloholli** discovers why the Côte d'Azur makes for an easy short break

At first, I feel a flicker of nerves. I'd always thought France was for couples sipping wine at sunset. However, starting my trip with a day in Marseille, the freedom to create my own schedule as I please is liberating. I climb to the hilltop Notre-Dame de la Garde basilica, wander through mural-splashed lanes in Le Panier before settling down to a bowl of bouillabaisse by the harbour.

The next morning, I board a train and in less than an hour, step off in the port town of Cassis. There's no need for a car here so, as a non-driver, I can wander worry-free.

I make my way to the old fishing harbour, taking a moment to soak in the pastel buildings, boats and cafes lining the quay. Cassis is small but packs in plenty, with each turn bringing boutique shops, cafes and boulangeries. It's a delightfully slow pace of life.

Plage de la Grande Mer, the main beach in Cassis, is sandy with a mix of pebbles, lined with sunloungers and bars. I stretch out my towel, let the water lap my feet and close my eyes, stirring only as evening rolls in, when it's time to order mussels and a glass of rosé over ice – the Provençal way – from a waterfront cafe.

On day two, I lace up my walking shoes for a hike to the nearby Calanques National Park, a coastal area stretching from Cassis to Marseille. Three *calanques* (rocky inlets) are accessible on foot from Cassis: Port Miou and Port Pin are within a 45-minute walk, while for more active clients, Calanque d'En Vau is a challenging 90-minute trek. The trail is framed by pines and pale limestone, with the turquoise sea flickering through the trees.

At Calanque de Port Pin, I slip into the clear, cool water. Floating between cliffs, I breathe in the sun-warmed air and listen to the gentle sound of the waves, feeling totally at peace with myself. I return to Cassis, weary but happy, and find a spot for one last rosé. Any anxiety I'd felt is long gone.

Travelling solo in France was deeply rewarding, boosting my confidence and giving me a thirst for more solo adventures – cheers to going it alone. **TW**



BOOK IT

Railbookers offers a four-day Marseille and Cassis City Break by rail from £986 for a solo traveller, departing on May 28, 2026, from London St Pancras. Includes all rail transport and accommodation with breakfast. railbookers.co.uk



TOP: Colourful boats and harbourside cafes in Cassis
ABOVE: Calanque de Port Pin, Marseille

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