



# A Cook's Guide to Nice



By Rosa Jackson

Illustrations by Sarah Gleason

# Introduction

Compared to other parts of France, Nice has a less formal approach to eating. But it would be a mistake to think that food is not taken seriously here. Whether they are lining up for a portion of socca — the local chickpea flour pancake — or savoring a three-course meal in a family-run bistro, the Niçois expect their food to meet the high standards set by their mothers and grandmothers. Though in their minds these family recipes can rarely be surpassed or even equalled, happy memories of childhood meals prompt them to seek out food that is prepared with the freshest local ingredients and plenty of heart. Niçoise cuisine might be rustic at times, but with hearty dishes that make clever use of what is available it nourishes in the most meaningful way.

This list is a selection of tried-and-true favorites where you will always find locals, even if some are also known to tourists. The opening hours are accurate to the best of my knowledge, but please keep in mind that restaurants may close for holidays or change their hours unexpectedly and it is always a good idea to call ahead or drop by in person. Some of these restaurants are extremely popular and require booking days or weeks in advance; when this is the case it will be stated in the description.

Price scale (full meal not including drinks):

€ - Less than €15

€€ - €15-€30

€€€ - €30-€45

€€€ - More than €45

# Bistros & Brasseries



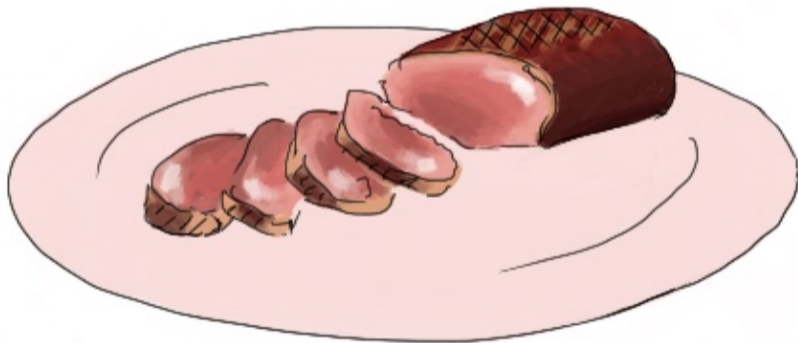
## **Acchiardo**

Old Town

38 rue Droite. Tel: 04 93 85 51 16. Closed weekends.

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Recently expanded and redecorated, this restaurant has happily lost none of its authentic charm. The parents watch benignly behind the bar while the second generation manages the dining room with unfailing charm. Here you will have an opportunity to try unpretentious versions of local dishes such as petits farcis (little stuffed vegetables) and Niçois ravioli stuffed with beef and Swiss chard, as well as some of the best French fries in town alongside steak or lamb. Arrive early or book in the morning.



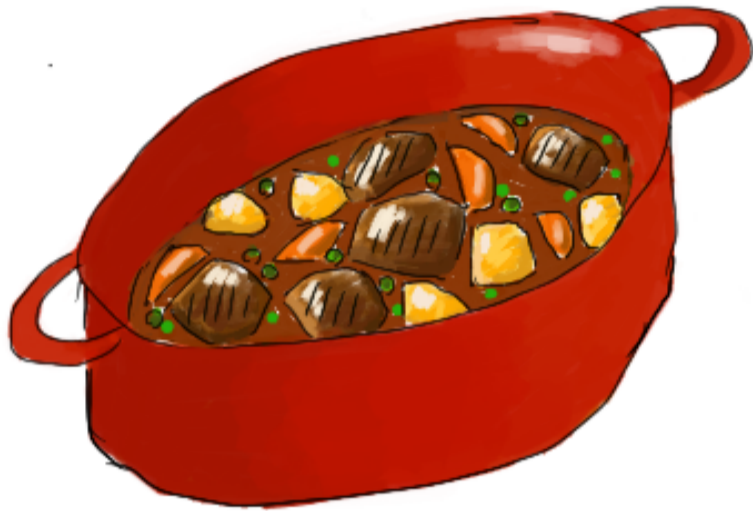
## **Le Bistrot d'Antoine**

Old Town

27 rue de la Préfecture. Tel: 04 93 85 29 57. Closed Sun and Mon.

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Run by Armand Crespo, who also owns Le Comptoir du Marché, Le Bar des Oiseaux (specializing in pasta) and Peixes (specializing in fish, see below) in the Old Town, this bistro has great atmosphere and delicious food at surprisingly reasonable prices, with an emphasis on Niçois specialties, fish and grilled meats (the duck magret and steak are fabulous). I often see Armand doing his shopping at the small farmers' stands at the Cours Saleya market. Be sure to reserve several days in advance for dinner, and a day or two ahead for lunch.



### **Chez Palmyre**

Old Town

5 rue Droite. Tel: 04 93 85 72 32. Closed weekends.

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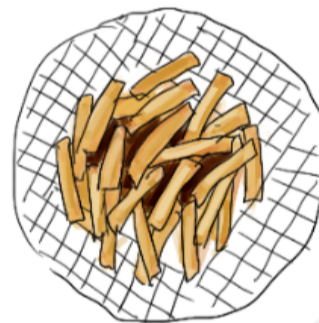
This little bistro was taken over a few years ago by young owners who have preserved its vintage charm while offering probably the best-value menu in town. You can expect to taste French classics made with fresh ingredients, such as crayfish salad to start, hearty beef stew and perhaps a chocolat pot de crème or pears in red wine to finish. It's extremely popular, so reserve weeks ahead for dinner, or try for lunch.

### **Le Félix Faure**

New Town

12 avenue Félix Faure. Tel: 04 93 62 25 53. Open daily.

Open non-stop from 11.30am-1.30am, this brasserie hits the spot when you are looking for a meal outside the standard French dining times. The moules-frites (mussels and French fries) are generous with good quality French fries, the thin-crust pizzas are equally satisfying, or you could go for the generous salade niçoise heaped with raw vegetables, tuna, hard-boiled egg and anchovy. The dessert menu sticks to French classics such as chocolate mousse, crème caramel, profiteroles and coupes of ice cream.



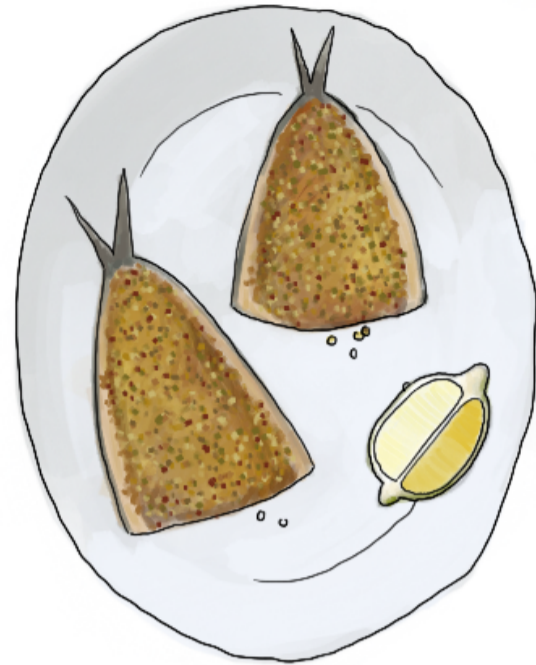
## La Merenda

Old Town

4 rue Raoul Bosio. No phone. Closed weekends.

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It's worth trying to get into this tiny, cramped dining room for its unrivalled Niçois cooking, prepared by former Negresco chef Dominic Le Stanc. The recipes have barely changed in more than 30 years and neither have many of the regulars. Drop by in person to reserve or take your chances by arriving early (noon or 7pm), and choose from the brief blackboard menu that changes with the seasons. No credit cards.



## Olive et Artichaut

Old Town

6 Rue Saint Réparate. Tel: 04 89 14 97 51. Closed Mon and Tue.

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One of the few bistros to remain open on Sundays, this restaurant with an open kitchen and an haute cuisine-trained chef draws its inspiration from the freshest local ingredients. On the frequently changing menu you might find dishes such as spelt risotto with raw artichokes, ham and summer truffle, or pork filet mignon roasted with mustard and served with baby potatoes, carrots and wild mushrooms. The cozy dining room has a contemporary touch.



## Oliviera

Old Town

2 rue Benoît Bunico. Tel: 04 93 13 06 45. Closed Sun and Mon.

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This is the place in Nice to learn all about Provençal olive oil, from the personable Nadim Beyrouti, and taste delicious Mediterranean food inspired by his olive oils and the market. You might leave with a tin of olive oil from Nice or Provence to enhance your own cooking. Book in the morning for lunch or dinner.



### **La Table Alziari**

Old Town

4 rue François Zanin. Tel: 04 93 80 34 03.

Closed Sun and Mon.

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This restaurant on a side street near place Garibaldi is not as well known as La Merenda, but the food is prepared with just as much care. You might find stuffed sardines, les petits farcis (little stuffed vegetables) and daube (stew) made with lamb instead of the more traditional beef on the seasonal menu; save room for the homemade desserts such as tarte Tatin and lemon tart.



### **La Voglia**

Old Town

2 rue St-François-de-Paule. Tel: 04 93 80 99 16. Open daily.

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Come dinnertime, there is always a line-up outside this Italian restaurant, which is renowned for its gargantuan portions. The seafood spaghetтата comes in a sink-sized white dish loaded with mussels, octopus, crab, cockles, shrimp and fresh tomato sauce, and the chocolate pudding is unfinishably huge. If you can't get in, they also run La Favola at the end of Cours Saleya (just across the street from La Voglia).

# Wine Bar-Bistros

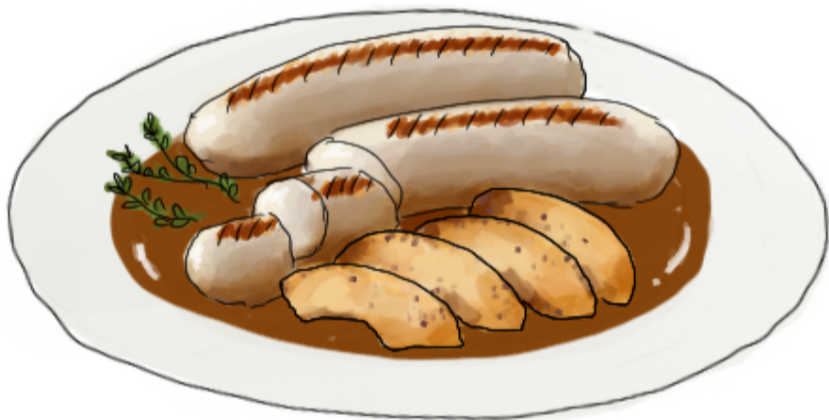
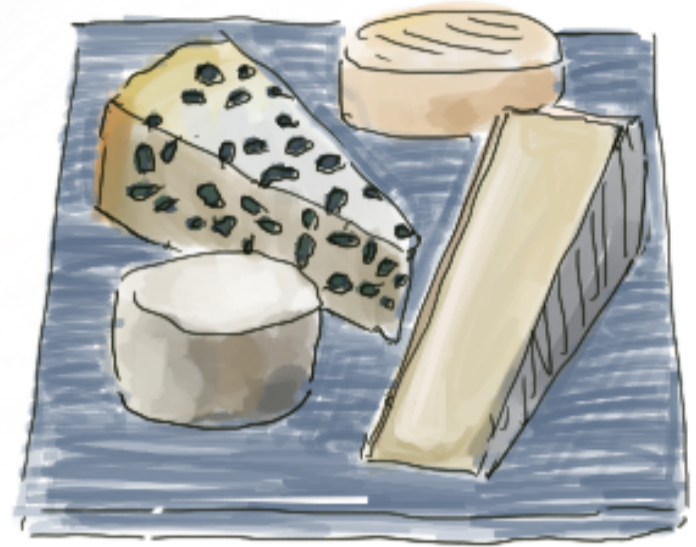
## La Cave du Fromager

Old Town

29 rue Benoît Bunico. Tel: 04 93 13 07 83. Closed Sun and Mon.

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Housed in a 17<sup>th</sup> century cellar, this bistro is dedicated to organic and natural wines from small producers and farmers' cheeses. Though the menu naturally focuses on cheese, they offer a meat dish every day and there are also lighter dishes in summer made with produce from local farmers. This restaurant is popular, so it's best to book at least a couple of days ahead.



## Le Canon

New Town

23 rue Meyerbeer. Tel: 04 93 79 09 24. Closed weekends.

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This bistro with Formica tables puts the emphasis on top quality products from the hills behind Nice, matched with natural and organic wines. Typical of their fare is a fillet of freshly caught local fish with white beans or capoun (pork-stuffed cabbage) with squid-ink orzo.

## La Cave du Cours

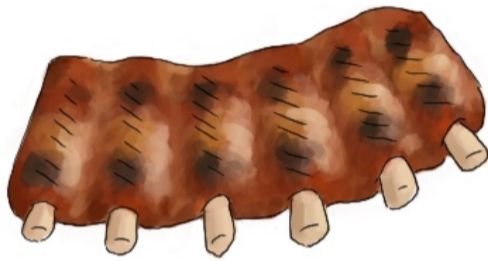
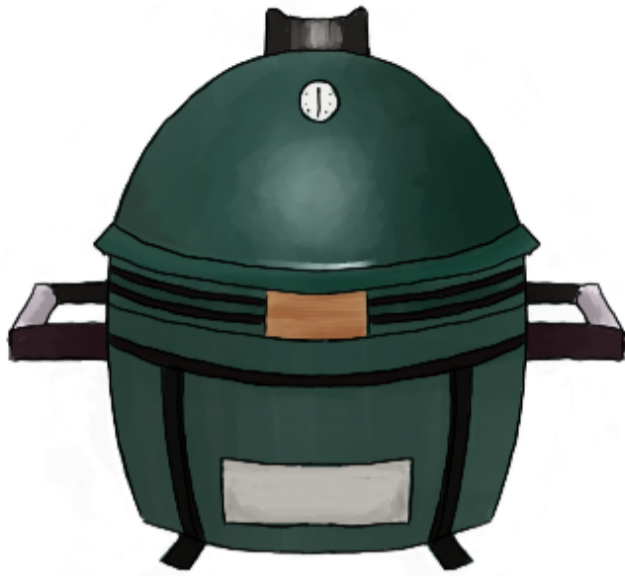
Old Town

24 rue Barillerie. Tel: 04 92 14 56 03.

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Run by Armand Crespo, who has a magic touch with bistros in the Old Town (see Bistro d'Antoine), this wine bar and shop caters mainly to locals who can figure out its mysterious opening hours. Drop in, if you're lucky, for a glass or two of natural wine and excellent small plates of ripe cheeses, artisanal charcuterie and smoked fish.





## **Lavomatique**

Old Town

11 rue du Pont Vieux. Tel: 04  
93 55 54 18. Dinner only.

Closed Sat and Sun.

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Run by the brothers Grégoire and Hugo, whose enthusiasm for natural wines knows no bounds, this wine bar/bistro with an open kitchen occupies a former laundromat. Many of the Mediterranean-inspired small plates feature ingredients that are smoked in the Green Egg barbecue. The open kitchen is high energy, so choose one of the tables rather than the stools for a more intimate meal.



# Contemporary



## Restaurant Jan

Port

12 rue Lascaris. Tel: 04 97 19 32 23.

Open Tue 7.30-10pm, Wed-Fri  
noon-3pm, 7.30-10pm, Sat  
7.30-10.30pm.

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South African-born Jan-Hendrik Van der Westhuizen worked as a chef on yachts and as a photographer and designer before opening his own stylish restaurant just behind the Port. Here, he brings a sophisticated and very esthetic touch to classics from Nice and other ports of call. It's the perfect choice for a romantic dinner, and the lunch menu is more affordable.

## Les Agitateurs

Port

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24 rue Bonaparte. Tel: 09 87 33 02 03.

Closed Mon and Tue. Dinner only Sat.

The Port area has become a hub for young chefs in Nice, and one that stands out is this small contemporary bistro, run by three graduates of the Institut Paul Bocuse. They serve a limited-choice lunch menu made with seasonal ingredients from small producers, as well as a more elaborate and experimental dinner menu.



# Cafés

## **Cafés Indien**

Old Town

2 Bis Rue Sainte-Reparate. Tel: 04 93 85 67 08. Closed Sun and Mon.

This coffee shop has roasted its own beans since 1925, and third-generation owner Jean-François Torres is committed to making quality available at affordable prices. He roasts his beans weekly and the coffee for the week changes accordingly. He personally sources his beans from around the world, and takes the time to bring out their optimum flavors. This branch with the roasting machine is open only in the mornings, but they have a second boutique/café at 35 rue Pairolière with more seating.



## **Marinette**

Old Town

13 rue Colonna d'Istria. Tel: 04 93 88 29 52. Closed Mon and Tue. No dinner.

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Housed in a former painter's studio, Marinette looks Pinterest-perfect with its painted tiles and display of homey French desserts. You can drop by in the morning for a good cappuccino and breakfast ranging from smoothie bowls to pancakes, at lunch for contemporary French dishes alongside fashionable additions (poke bowl, shakshouka), or in the afternoon for tea. The cakes are lavish and sweet, so this is not a place for the calorie-conscious.





### **Café Paulette**

Port

15 rue Bonaparte. Tel: 04 92 04 74 48.  
Closed Sun and Mon.

The black-and-white wicker chairs on the terrace make Café Paulette feel like a Paris bistro, while inside the dining room wood and stone dominate.

Notable for serving one of the best cappuccinos in town, with beans from Café Coutume in Paris, it also offers a contemporary menu at lunch and dinner combining French and international classics. It's a good place to stop by at any time of day and take in the rue Bonaparte scene.

### **Sapore di Pane**

New Town

10 avenue Félix Faure. Open daily. No dinner.

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Though its decor is unremarkable, this Italian-run café with a terrace facing the Coulée Verte park is worth knowing about for its convenient opening hours (6.30am-7.30pm) and reliably good espresso and cappuccino. The specialty here is foccaccia, flatbreads with a variety of toppings including banana and Nutella for those with a sweet tooth.



# Local Products



## Le Goût de Nice

Old Town

34 boulevard Jean Jaurès. Tel: 04 97 13 55 80. Closed Sun and Mon.

If for you the best souvenirs are food ones, you should be sure to visit this spacious shop run by the City of Nice. Showcasing the region's small producers, it stocks olive oil and paste, jams, honey and essential oils, to name of a few of the products. Prices are fair, taking into account the rarity of many of the products.

## Jean de la Tomate

New Town

3 rue Tondu de l'Escarène. Tel: 06 11 79 84 24. Closed Sun and Mon.

Billing itself as a "locavore épicerie", this neighborhood shop stocks only products from Nice and the south of France, including seasonal produce. You can buy breads made with heirloom wheat by a local baker, grains, olive oil, jams and spreads, locally roasted coffee and some dairy products.



## 21 Paysans

New Town

2 rue Valperga. Tel: 06 11 79 84 24. Closed Sun.

Designed for city dwellers who dream of easy access to the country, this épicerie and restaurant stocks fresh and dry products from the hills around Nice as well as nearby Italy, and served a menu based on seasonal produce that guarantees zero waste in the shop. You can also order your fresh produce basket in advance and pick it up in the shop or have it delivered.



# Best Bakeries



## **Maison Jean-Marc Bordonnat**

Port

19 rue Barla. Tel: 04 92 27 99 86. Closed Sun.

Jean-Marc Bordonnat has won a number of awards for his baguette, and with good reason — with a mahogany crust and tangy crumb, it's completely addictive. You can also treat yourself to buttery pains au chocolat, croissants and chaussons aux pommes (apple turnovers), as well as a whole-grain loaf sold by weight and well-executed pastries (even if it's hard to compete with Pâtisserie Lac across the street).

## **Boulangerie U Fornu**

New Town

19 boulevard Raimbaldi. Tel: 04 93 85 15 32. Closed Sun.

This bakery not far from the train station, run by Corsican Michel Fiori, has established a reputation as one of the best in town. They offer a variety of naturally leavened baguettes with different flour mixes, seeds and grains, as well as delicious breads made with walnuts or mixed dried fruits (dubbed the Brad Pitt after one of his films), and excellent viennoiseries (breakfast rolls) and sandwiches. There are a few tables outside where you can enjoy your purchases with a coffee.



## **Mama Baker**

New Town

13 rue de Léopante. Tel: 06 23 91 33 86. Closed Sun.

Bastien et Céline Epeirier are passionate about bread, and it shows in their selection of hearty loaves made with stone-ground flours such as buckwheat, spelt, kamut and chestnut. You'll find vegetable flatbreads as well as brioches and gluten-free cakes, with the selection changing daily. Though the bakery is tiny, there are a few seats where you can sip a quality coffee while nibbling on your purchases.

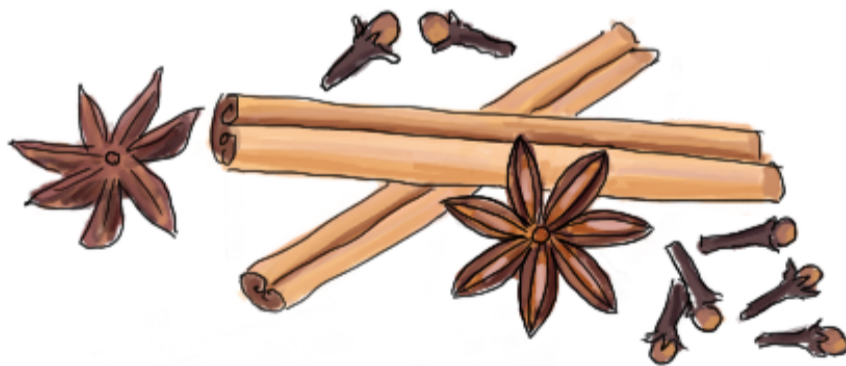
# Herbs & Spices

## **NO Nice Organic**

Old Town

24 rue Pairolière. Tel: 06 23 47 14 58. Open daily.

If you're suffering from any small ailment, Gregory Unrein, known to his customers as Dr NO, has the answer in the form of a herbal tea or a personalized essential oil mix that he'll make up for you on the spot. This is also the place to go for organic lavender to use in cooking or real herbes de Provence mix made with wild herbs. Try his pre-mixed herbal teas as well, made with local plants.



## **Girofle et Cannelle**

Old Town

4 rue Pairolière. Tel: 04 93 54 43 13. Open daily.

It's hard to walk by this Ali Baba's cavern of a shop without stopping to sniff the herbal and fruit teas (such as the Soleil de Nice, featuring tropical fruits, citrus and flowers) and spices on display outside. The staff are friendly, English-speaking and knowledgeable, with an enthusiasm for their products that is infectious.

# Best Pastry Shops

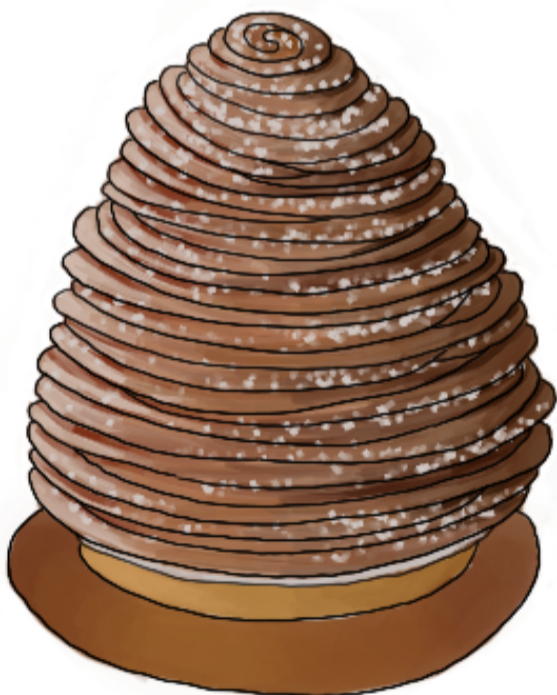
## **Pâtisserie Lac**

Old Town

12 rue de la Préfecture. Tel: 04 93 53 60 69.

Open daily.

This pastry shop near the Cours Saleya market is the most central of their three locations in Nice. With a sober decor and pastries displayed like jewels, it's reminiscent of top Paris pâtisseries such as Pierre Hermé and Ladurée. Pascal Lac is particularly skilled with chocolate, so you'll find some exceptional chocolate cakes as well as bars and ganaches. The macarons are also excellent, as are the reinvented classics on display.



## **Deli Bo**

Port

11 rue Fodéré. Tel: 04 93 56 33 04.  
Open daily (mornings only on Sundays).

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The creative cakes here are on par with the best pastry shops in Paris. Two specialties are the Paris-Nice, a wheel-shaped choux pastry filled with almond-and-hazelnut cream, and the Mont Blanc, a delicious meringue-and-chestnut concoction sold only in the winter.



# Casual Niçois

## Chez Pipo

Port

13 rue Bavastro. Tel: 04 93 55 88 82. Closed Sun and Mon.

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Open from 5.30pm onwards, this is the place to taste the Niçois specialty socca (a chickpea flour pancake baked in a wood-fired oven and eaten as a snack). Here it's particularly thin, crispy and irresistible, so play it safe and order the large plate. Arrive early to avoid a long wait.



## Socca d'Or

Port

45 rue Bonaparte. Tel: 04 93 56 52 93. Closed Wed year-round. Closed Sun from Oct-June, closed Tue from June-Sept.

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Not quite as popular as Pipo around the corner, Socca d'Or is preferred by some aficionados. Besides the good (if filling) socca, you can also taste other local specialties such as pan bagnat (salade niçoise on a bun), pissaladière (caramelized onion tart) or tourte de blettes (Swiss chard tart).

# Vegetarian



## **Badaboom**

Port

11 Rue François Guisol. Tel: 06 71 48 24 01.  
Closed Sun.

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This friendly juice bar/café is a popular meeting spot for the local anglo community, who come for the salads and vegan daily specials. Juices are cold-pressed and they also offer kombucha and jun (fermented teas).

## **Koko Green**

Old Town

1 Rue de la Loge. Tel: 07 81 63 14 88.

Closed Mon-Thur.

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This little Old Town restaurant with limited opening days is the place to find raw vegan dishes such as sushi made with root vegetable "rice" and crunchy vegetables. Chef Nicholas also offers cooked dishes such as the veggie burger on a gluten free bun with roasted sweet potato fries. The menu changes weekly and the raw cakes get snapped up so quickly that some regulars reserve them by phone.

