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Visiting Charming Avignon, France with Kids

A family vacation in Avignon, France

By Jan Ross

Family-Friendly Destinations



Avignon is a UNESCO World Heritage site located in south eastern France on the left bank of the Rhone River. This beautiful, medieval walled city with cobblestone streets and fascinating, historical buildings will interest everyone in the family. Kids will especially love touring the city on a small train, and investigating the Pont d'Avignon, a bridge which stretches half way across the river.

Here are Avignon's most kid

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Hotel De L'Horloge Avignon (Courtesy Hotel De L'Horloge)

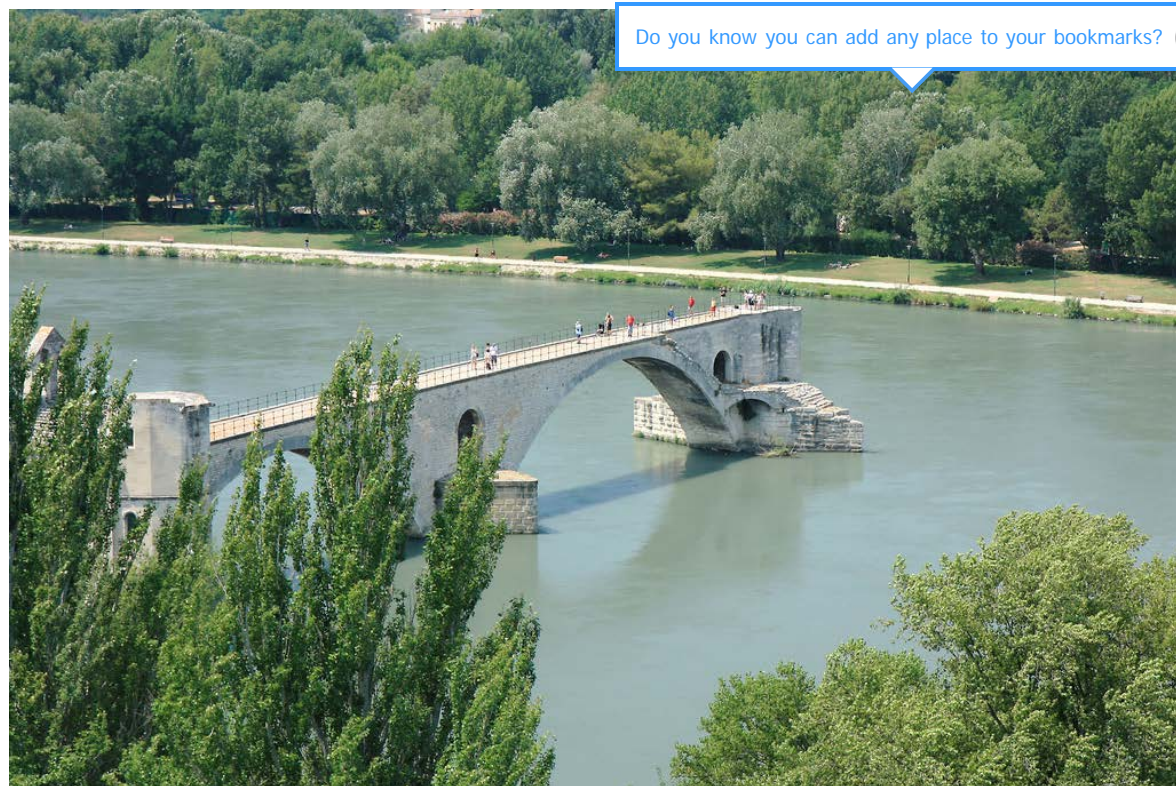
The family-friendly and quite lovely boutique [Hotel de L'Horloge](#) is conveniently located in the Place de L'Horloge in Avignon, with easy walking access to kid-friendly attractions. You can easily fly into Marseilles, then take a train to Avignon where the downtown train station is only a couple blocks from the hotel.

The friendly hotel staff all speak fluent English and are always willing to give you directions and help in any way. The kid-friendly hotel can accommodate two adults and two children in their suites and provides a full, hot breakfast buffet every morning.

Kid-Friendly Things to Do in Avignon

The **Place de l'Horloge**, right outside the hotel, is a large stone plaza surrounded by dozens of restaurants all offering outdoor seating, a unique two-tiered merry-go-round, plenty of both locals

and tourists strolling around, and it provided the perfect introduction to Avignon with kids. There was often kid friendly entertainment in the plaza like musicians and people showing kids how to blow huge bubbles using tubs of soapy water and string.



Pont d'Avignon (Flickr: Andrea Schaffer)

Avignon is well known for two major tourist attractions – the **Pont d'Avignon**, a bridge built in the 12th century and made famous by the children's song "[Sur le Pont d'Avignon](#)" and the **Palais de Papes** or Pope's Palace which was home to several popes and is one of the most visited monuments in France.

These two sites are fascinating but one of the most interesting things about Avignon is the **ancient wall and medieval ramparts** which still surround the city so be sure to stroll around outside the city centre and talk to the kids about the history of the city. Avignon was originally a Roman city (the Place de l'Horloge actually houses the remains of the Roman forum), and the walls were built in the early 1300's by the popes who resided in the city and, surprisingly, made it the seat of the Papacy rather than Rome for over 70 years.

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A perfect introduction to the city and a great amenity for kids is [Le Petite Train d'Avignon](#), a miniature trolley like train which leaves from the Palais de Papes on a 40 minute tour of the city and includes medieval streets and neighborhoods along with the Pont d'Avignon. Tickets are very reasonable and the tour is available in a variety of languages via headphones.



Palais de Papes (Flickr: Artur Staszewski)

A tour of the **Palais de Papes** also gives you an appreciation of the time, effort, and man hours required to build this amazing edifice. The International Gothic style of the palace is impressive for any age, and with walls 17-18 feet thick and built on a natural spur of rock (many buildings in Avignon are built, rather astonishingly, right into the existing rock), it was nearly impregnable to attack. Captured during the French Revolution, it was used as a barracks and prison for many years, and the soldiers and prisoners caused still existing damage to the structure, prying off parts of statues and pieces of irreplaceable murals to sell. The castle is now a museum and tickets can be purchased at the entrance for tours.

The beautiful **Pont d'Avignon** is well worth an afternoon visit and is an easy stroll from the Place de l'Horloge. Under the bridge is a museum which shows a movie kids will enjoy about the history of the bridge. You can purchase a ticket for the bridge alone or one which also included the Palais des Papes.

Shopping in Avignon

The walk to the bridge is along streets lined with shops and you will want to purchase some traditional items from Provence, the French region where Avignon is located, and where lavender is the main export. Small stuffed animals scented with sachet are a fun gift for kids.

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Kid-Friendly Eats in Avignon

For lunch and dinner, you just need to stroll out into the Place de l'Horloge where dozens of restaurants offer plenty of choices for kids with everything from a traditional Croque Monsieur (hot, grilled ham and cheese sandwich) to pizza to a variety of pasta dishes and other hot meals.

Order a cold bottle of Orangina, a tart drink which tastes like a combination of orange juice and seltzer for the kids to try.

For a relaxing night in for tired kids, a [Carrefour](#) grocery is located just a block away from the hotel, and you can purchase delicious sandwiches, cookies, chips, and drinks to take back to the hotel.

France is the perfect place for a family vacation, with a variety of locations from big cities to

charming little villages, and as the French people truly love children, they are welcomed everywhere. But beautiful Avignon, with all it has to offer families, might very well be the very best choice of all!

Jan Ross contributed this to [MiniTime](#). She writes for a variety of venues, both print and online, and often travels with her photographer husband.

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