

Angelina Jolie's hands are tiny.

You might wonder how I have access to such intimate information. The answer is, her left handprint is preserved in cement outside Cannes' *Palais des Festivals et des Congrès*.

That's where the Cannes Film Festival takes place each May. And that's where you'll find France's answer to the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Handprints preserved there range from Martin Scorsese (also small hands) to Jean Claude Van Damme (impressively big paws).

But there's a lot more to see in Cannes than movie stars (and their handprints). And there's more to Cannes than just the Film Festival.



*Evidence of Cannes' cinematic connections abound.*

Anyone coming to Cannes for the Film Festival would think the town is incredibly expensive. And it is—for those two weeks.

On Airbnb, you'd be looking at \$200 to \$300 a night, just for a small studio.

But come a month later, and prices drop to around \$60 a night.

Come in the winter—when temperatures are around 65 F and the sun shines most days—and it's even cheaper.

Live here year-round, and you can skip town during the Film Festival, rent your place out, and use the money to pay your mortgage for a couple of months.

In many ways, Cannes is like a lot of port towns on France's Côte d'Azur.

There's the picturesque Old Town, the beach, the promenade, the yacht-filled harbor. There are excellent restaurants specializing in Mediterranean cuisine. And, of course, there's the year-round

sunshine.

All the things you'd find in a dozen other French Riviera towns.

Except Cannes is just that bit bigger and that bit grander.



*The old port and Old Town of Cannes.*

So there isn't just a promenade, there's *La Croisette*—Cannes' world-famous, mile-and-a-quarter promenade that links Cannes' two harbors.

On one side of *La Croisette* are the beaches. On the other side of the road are the boutiques. Gucci, Rolex, Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior—all the luxury brands catering to the town's high-end visitors.

As I mentioned, there isn't one harbor, there are two, both packed with yachts, even in winter.



*Glittering yachts fill the town's marinas.*

I don't know much about yachts, but I'd say the more impressive collection is at the old port, next to the *Palais des Festivals*.

And, of course, there are the fancy, expensive restaurants.

But what about those of us who are on a more measured budget?

Well that's the thing about Cannes: It's not just a resort town for the rich to turn up, spend some money, and leave again, it's a town that's home to 74,000 people, most of whom earn a normal wage.

So, walk a few minutes from the boutiques and you'll find the usual supermarkets and department stores you find anywhere in France.

You'll find family restaurants serving wonderful food at reasonable prices.

Walk 20 minutes from the beach to the Prado République neighborhood and you'll find two-bedroom apartments for under \$200,000.

So, if the Riviera lifestyle appeals, don't dismiss Cannes—for all the glitz, it's surprisingly affordable.

By the way, the smallest hands in the Cannes *Allée des Étoiles* belong to French actress Miou-Miou, who looks like she'd struggle to grasp a pencil. When you next visit Cannes, be sure to take a look.

**Editor's note:** As Steve discovered, the good life in Europe doesn't have to cost the earth. Discover all the potential it has to offer you a serious retirement upgrade with the [Best of Europe Private Screening](#).

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