



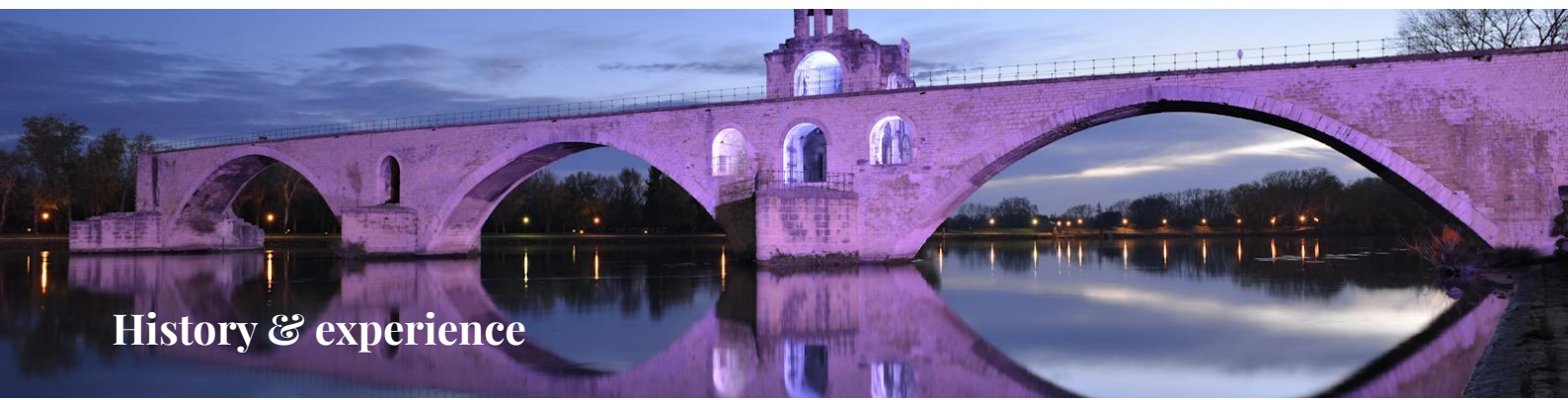
PALAIS
DES
PAPES

VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Palais des Papes & Pont d'Avignon

Avignon · From 19.50€

<https://palais-des-papes.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-line tickets & rates



History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

Fortress of Western Christendom

GOOGLE **4.5** ★★★★★ 53 356 reviews

TIQETS **4.4** ★★★★★ 2 019 reviews

Perched on the **Rocher des Doms**, this fortress-palace rose in the early 14th century to become the largest Gothic construction of the Middle Ages in Europe. Built by master architects Pierre Poisson and Jean de Louvres, it embodies the full expression of the International Gothic style, blending military strength with papal grandeur.

Between 1335 and 1394, six popes were elected here during historical conclaves, making the palace the official seat of Western Christendom for nearly sixty years. This era transformed the Church's administration, expanding the Curia from 200 to over 500 officials, and establishing a centralized bureaucracy that shaped medieval governance.

The interlocking of two distinct buildings defines the monument: the Old Palace of Benedict XII, a true fortress seated on the rock, and the New Palace of Clement VI, the most sumptuous of the Avignon pontiffs. Together, they created a spatial structure that facilitated a general transformation of the Church's organization and daily life.

Despite its scope, the palace became obsolete when the popes decided to return to Rome. Urban V left Avignon on April 30, 1362, followed by Gregory XI on September 13, 1376. This definitive return marked the end of the Avignon Papacy, leaving behind a legacy of architectural splendor and historical significance that remains unmatched today.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the Palais des Papes, you are immediately struck by the **scale and silence** of the stone corridors. The light filters through high windows, casting dramatic shadows on the irregular medieval floors, while the air carries the weight of centuries of history.

As you move through the 25 rooms, the atmosphere shifts from fortified austerity to opulent grandeur. The promise of the visit is fulfilled in every detail: from the acoustic perfection of the Grande Chapelle to the symbolic sculptures adorning the ramparts, each space invites you to immerse yourself in the heart of medieval power.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Historic center of Avignon · Bus: Station Palais (lines 1, 2, 3) 2 min walk away.

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary by season (2026-2027). Check the official website for the exact time slot for your visit date.

FARES

Free child entry depending on age (check variants). {promo}.

VISIT DURATION

Plan for 1h30 to 2h for the standard tour of the 25 rooms. Add 30 minutes if you include the secret gardens and the bridge. Thematic guided tours last about 1h3

PHOTOS

Photography is allowed without flash in all rooms. Avoid bulky tripods that obstruct traffic in the narrow corridors. The best exterior views are taken from the

AUDIENCE

Accessible from age 11 for thematic guided tours. The self-guided route suits families with independent children. The medieval architecture involves stairs, not

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

**Metro**

: Centre Station — 12 min à pied

Gare Centre (8 min) · Avignon TGV (15 min)

**Bus**

: Aubanel — 5 min à pied

Centre Station (12 min) · Avignon TGV (23 min)

**Car**

Centre Station (6 min) · Avignon TGV (15 min)

**Bike**

Centre Station (6 min) · Avignon TGV (19 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Palais des Papes & Pont d'Avignon ?



 Place du Palais — 84000 Avignon

 43°57.051' N, 4°48.462' E

ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Two Palaces

Niveau 0 (Rez-de-chaussée)

This level includes the medieval kitchens and service areas, offering a glimpse into the daily life of the papal household. You will pass through the lower chapels and storage rooms, which highlight the functional aspects of the fortress. The architecture here is more austere, reflecting the military origins of the Old Palace.

Niveau 2

At this intermediate level, you enter the private apartments of the popes and the Salle du Conclave. These rooms feature frescoes by Simone Martini and symbolic sculptures that convey the spiritual and political power of the papacy. The layout allows for a smooth transition between the fortified and residential zones.

Niveau 5 (Terrasse)

The upper levels include the Grande Chapelle and the ramparts, offering panoramic views of the Rhône and the surrounding landscape. From here, you can appreciate the scale of the Gothic construction and the strategic position of the palace on the Rocher des Doms. The acoustics of the chapel are exceptional, perfect for listening to the history of medieval music.

ACCESSIBILITY

**Disabled Access**

Partial accessibility due to medieval architecture; numerous stairs and uneven floors.

**Families**

Recommended from age 11 for guided tours; self-guided route suitable for independent children.

**Audio guide**

French, English



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Masterpieces and Spaces

01

Clementine Chapel

Grande Chapelle

The central place of medieval musical life, the Grande Chapelle features exceptional acoustics and frescoes that define the International Gothic style. It is where Guillaume de Machaut composed his famous Mass, attracting composers and chanters from across Europe. The space is both solemn and beautiful, embodying the spiritual core of the palace.

💡 Philippe de Vitry, guest of Clement VI, gave full measure to his **Ars Nova** music in this chapel, influencing the development of European musical theory.

02

Conclave Room

Salle du Conclave

This room hosted the elections of six popes between 1335 and 1394, giving it a uniquely solemn dimension. The walls bear witness to the critical moments of Western Christendom's history, where decisions shaped the course of the Church. Its simplicity contrasts with the opulence of other rooms, emphasizing its functional importance.

💡 Knowing that six popes were elected here adds a layer of **historical gravity** that moves even seasoned historians.

03

Palais Vieux

Old Palace Fortress

Perched on the rock, the Old Palace of Benedict XII is a true fortress that dominates the city. Its thick walls and strategic position reflect the military needs of the papacy in the 14th century. The architecture is robust and imposing, showcasing the defensive capabilities of the monument.

💡 The view from the Pont Saint-Bénézet at sunset highlights the **Gothic ramparts** and creates dramatic shadows on the facade.

04

Library Area

Papal Library

Holding 2,000 volumes, the papal library was the largest in Europe at the time, attracting clerks passionate about belles-lettres. It played a crucial role in the intellectual life of the palace, fostering the development of humanism. The collection included works that influenced Petrarch, the founder of humanism.



Petrarch, who studied here, is considered the **founder of humanism**, linking the library to the broader Renaissance movement.

05

Palais Neuf

New Palace Opulence

Built by Clement VI, the New Palace is the most sumptuous of the Avignon pontiffs, featuring lavish decorations and spacious halls. It represents the peak of papal power and wealth in the 14th century. The architecture blends Gothic elegance with administrative functionality.



The interlocking of the Old and New Palaces created a **spatial structure** that facilitated the centralization of Church services.

06

Kitchen Complex

Medieval Kitchens

These rooms offer a glimpse into the daily life of the papal household, with large hearths and storage areas for food preparation. The scale of the kitchens reflects the size of the Curia and the importance of hospitality in medieval court life. They provide a practical contrast to the ceremonial spaces.



The kitchens could feed hundreds of officials, highlighting the **logistical complexity** of running a papal court.

07

Upper Terraces

Ramparts and Views

Walking along the ramparts offers panoramic views of the Rhône and the surrounding landscape, showcasing the strategic position of the palace. The low light at sunrise or sunset enhances the Gothic details and creates a dramatic atmosphere. It is the best place to photograph the palace from above.



The view from the opposite bank, Fort Saint-André, provides another perspective on the **imposing silhouette** of the palace.

08

Jardins Secrets

Secret Gardens

An unexpected green oasis behind the ramparts, the Secret Gardens offer a peaceful retreat from the busy corridors. Families enjoy the augmented reality tablets included in the ticket, which bring the history of the gardens to life. The lush vegetation contrasts with the stone architecture, creating a serene environment.



The gardens are described as an **unexpected green oasis**, providing a refreshing break during the visit.

TIPS

Essential Tips for Your Visit

TIMING

Arrive at the start of your reserved time slot to avoid crowds in narrow rooms like the Grande Chapelle, as school groups usually arrive after 11:30 AM.

BILLET

Book online in advance, especially in high season (July-August) and on weekends, to guarantee entry without queues and secure your preferred time slot.

PARCOURS

Start with the Old Palace, the fortress of Benedict XII, before heading up to the more opulent New Palace, following the signage to understand the logical route.

PHOTO

Take your best photos of the Palace from the Pont Saint-Bénézet, especially at sunrise or sunset, when the low light highlights the Gothic ramparts.

PAUSE

Hydrate well before entering, as there are not always easy access water points in the closed rooms, and take a break at the Berges du Rhône after your visit.

ENFANTS

Children under 8 enter free all year round; use the augmented reality tablets in the Secret Gardens to engage younger visitors with interactive content.

AUDIOGUIDE

Download the 'Les Clefs du Palais' WebApp associated with your ticket to enhance your visit with interactive multimedia content in six languages.

CONFORT

Wear flexible sneakers because irregular medieval floors and narrow staircases make circling difficult; absolutely avoid high heels or open-toed shoes.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

What is the difference between the 'Palais + Pont + Jardins' ticket and the 'Palais des Papes' ticket alone?

The combined ticket includes physical access to the Pont d'Avignon and the Jardins Pontificaux in addition to the 25 rooms. The single ticket covers only the indoor route and the gardens. Choose the full package if you h

Do I need to book my time slot in advance to visit the Palais des Papes?

Online booking is strongly recommended, especially in high season (July-August) and on weekends. It guarantees entry without queues and allows you to choose a precise time. In low season on weekdays, it is still possible

Is there a tourist pass including the Palais des Papes?

Yes, the Avignon City Pass includes the Palace, the Bridge and the gardens, as well as nine other monuments with discounts. It is worth it if you plan to visit several sites over 2 to 3 days. For a single visit of the Pa

Can I cancel or modify my booking?

Conditions vary depending on the type of ticket and the booking period. Most online tickets allow free modification up to 24h before the visit. Always check the specific terms of your ticket before confirming, as some pr

How much time should I plan to visit the Palais des Papes and the Pont d'Avignon?

Allow 1h30 to 2h for the standard tour of the 25 rooms, taking into account queues and reading the plaques. Add 30 minutes for the bridge and gardens if you take the combined package. A thematic guided tour lasts about 1

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Largest Gothic Construction

The palace is recognized as the largest Gothic construction of the Middle Ages in Europe, resulting from the joint work of the best French architects of the time. It embodies the full expression of the International Gothic style, combining military strength with artistic grandeur.

Six Popes Elected

Between 1335 and 1394, six popes were elected in this palace during historical conclaves, making it the official seat of Western Christendom throughout the duration of the Avignon Papacy. This period saw significant changes in the Church's administration and organization.

Return to Rome

Despite its scope, the palace became obsolete when the popes decided to return to Rome. Urban V left Avignon on April 30, 1362, followed by Gregory XI on September 13, 1376, marking the definitive end of the Avignon Papacy.

Centralized Administration

The palace enabled a general transformation of the organization of the Church thanks to its spatial structure. The staff of the Curia went from 200 to 500 people by 1316, plus over a thousand lay officials, facilitating the centralization of services.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

After your visit, stroll along the **Berges du Rhône** for a relaxing break with a direct view of the Pont Saint-Bénézet. For lunch, head to the Marché aux Halles for authentic Provençal specialties like tarte tatin and local cheeses. Nearby, the Cathédrale Notre-Dame des Doms offers a stunning belvedere overlooking the city and the river. Don't miss the Musée Lapidaire for exceptional medieval sculptures, or catch a performance at the Théâtre antique during the Festival d'Avignon, adding a cultural depth to your day in the historic center.

Leaving the Palais des Papes, you carry with you the **solemnity and beauty** of a place where history was made. The experience is not just a tour; it is a journey through time, where every stone whispers tales of popes, artists, and musicians who shaped the medieval world. It is an emotion unique to Avignon, one that lingers long after you have crossed the bridge.