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Where to buy property in Avignon, France

Live near lavender fields and the TGV without the Provençal prices. Buy in from €150,000



Pont Saint-Bénézet, the famous bridge of Avignon
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Liz Rowlinson

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A vibrant medieval city of narrow streets winding between honey-coloured Renaissance mansions, the small city of Avignon is the gateway to Provence. In summer it hums with opera, jazz and theatre festivals, and during next week's music festival its squares and parks will resound with string quartets, tribute bands and DJs inside the city's ancient ramparts.

surrounded by vineyards, with the sleepy villages and lavender fields of the Luberon and the Alpilles close to hand.

Avignon is ideally situated near two motorways, and its great transport links and affordability persuaded Harry Cowper-Coles to buy a 650-year-old former monastery there, after having a smaller family holiday home in nearby Meynes for ten years. “It’s a deeply historic city, full of beautiful architecture but with so much going on,” says Cowper-Coles, 39, who works in commodities in Singapore. “The TGV train there is excellent and it’s easy to reach for all my friends in London, Geneva and Asia — flights into Marseilles or Nîmes are easiest.”



This three-bedroom stone house in the centre of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue is on the market for €1.59 million with Knight Frank
SYLVAIN HUMBERT

He says it offers much better value than the fashionable Alpilles town of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence and its neighbouring village of Eygalières. “It’s so relaxed: I love the street markets, the shopping and the nightlife is superb, with parties going on around the running of the bulls, a Provençal tradition.” Many an all-night party ends up with Cowper-Coles and friends having a snack at the covered market of Les Halles — once a haunt of Peter Mayle, the bestselling author of *A Year in Provence*.

That it’s not a well-trodden path for international buyers — like the Luberon — has helped to keep a lid on prices, yet the estate agency Knight Frank predicts that values will increase by 5-10 per cent over the next five years. A new tramway is making

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“You can buy a beautiful townhouse with a shady courtyard and everything on your doorstep, or outside the city you can find excellent properties for about €600,000 [about £520,000], around half the price you would pay for a similar property on the Côte d’Azur,” says Nicola Christinger of Knight Frank’s south of France team. The agency is selling a four-bedroom triplex within a mansion close to the Papal Palace for €1.19 million or you can get a five-bedroom townhouse within the city walls for

walking distance is the neighbourhood of Saint-Ruf, where you can buy a little house for €250,000 to €300,000. In the bohemian Teinturiers quarter — the cobblestoned streets lining the Rhône, lined with shaded wine bars and restaurants — it's possible to find a one/two-bedroom apartment for about €150,000.



This five-bedroom property with a rooftop swimming pool near the Popes Palace is on the market for €1.59 million with Home Hunts

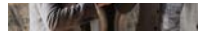
There's a popular Saturday flea market in the bourgeois quarter of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon across the Rhône, where you can find good schools and museums. In addition a famous Sunday antiques fair and farmers' market takes place along the canals of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, 15 miles east of the city, where you can find local tapenade and lavender honey alongside knick-knacks and textiles.

“[L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue is] a beautiful town full of old waterwheels and waterside cafés, the gateway to the Luberon and has long been popular with British and American buyers,” Smith says. “Properties cost €3,000-4,500 per sq m.” Recommended villages within easy commuting distance are Barbentane and Rognonas, while Lirac and Tavel are pretty villages renowned for their rosé. Avignon is also the centre of the Côtes du Rhône wine region.

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Another popular village is Bédoin, close to the mythical Tour de France climb of Mont Ventoux. The keen cyclist Tony Westcott, opting to escape city life and embrace remote working, bought a three-bedroom house there last year. He and his wife love the active lifestyle of the mountainous Vaucluse department. “This area is buzzing with international cyclists in the summer and the village has enough life all year round,” says Westcott, 56, who works in software. “We are close enough to the city to dip into it when we need it.”



A three-bedroom villa in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon with a pool and garage is on the market for €655,000 with Leggett Immobilier

Need to know

- Eurostar services from London St Pancras to Avignon take just under six hours, but you need to change at Lille or Paris and pick up the TGV. The average train journey time from Paris to Avignon is 3hr 25min, the fastest is about 2hr 40min.
- To stay more than 90 days in any 180, you can apply for a long-stay visa (france-visas.gouv.fr)
- When buying a property, budget for about 7-8 per cent of the purchase price for taxes



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