

GGG's "Route du Mimosa" Itinerary

Green Section (A) - Mile 1 - Bormes-les-Mimosas (Var)

An excellent and appropriately named beginning to the scenic "Route du Mimosa". Bormes-les-Mimosa is a small port town and quaint medieval village. Counted as the most beautiful floral village in France (Le plus beau village fleuri de France) and the headquarters for the Mimosa plant, the residents added "les Mimosas" to their town name in 1968 in honor of the golden tree. Wander the streets and you will see no less than 90 Mimosa plant species. Make sure to walk along the ancient ramparts and the old village center with its Chateau des Seigneurs de Fos. Pay a visit to the "[Pépinieres Cavatore](#)" as you leave town and pick up your own Mimosa plant from among the over 150 varieties available (closed lunch time and Sundays).

Don't Miss...

- The medieval village dating back to the 12th century
- Fort Bregancon where President Charles de Gaulle once lived
- Gonzalez Botanic Park with 700 rare species
- [Pépinieres Cavatore](#) nursery specializing in Mimosa
- [Château de Léoube Winery](#) where you can pick up a bottle of the fabulous "Sécrets de Léoube" rosé for €14.50
- Nearby are the white sand beaches of Cabasson, Brégançon, l'Estagnol and Pellegrin.

Events...

- 1/28-29/2017 - [Mimosalia](#) – always the last weekend in January, event showcasing rares and unique plant varieties. Located in the old town center.
- 2/26/2017 - [Corso Fleuri](#) – Flower parade in the old town center.

Green Section (B) - Mile 15km - Rayol-Canadel-sur-Mer (Var)

Imagine the Massif des Maures plunging into the crystal clear waters of the Mediterranean... The beautiful commune of Rayol Canadel is actually comprised of the joining of two villages (Le Rayol and Canadel) in 1945 and situated along the coastal D559. The highlights are not only the plentiful Mimosa blooming in and around the large villas, the gardens of the private estate Domaine du Rayol (considered one of about 30 official "Grand Sites of France"), but also its seaside location and beautiful beachfront with views of L'Ile du Levant and L'Ile de Port-Cros (les îles d'or). A popular seaside destination for families since the 1970's.

Don't Miss...

- Family oriented Canabel Beach with its long, wide sandy beach.
- Rustic wild and intimate Rayol Beach at the foot of a protected preservation area.
- "Jardin des Méditerranées" of the Royol Domaine 7 hectares (17 acres) of magnificent gardens that were a once part of a private estate. Redesigned by the landscapist Gilles Clément, France's newer version of "LeNôtre", with free-flowing forms instead of strict geometry.

- The “Escaliers Monumentaux” stone steps uniting the village to the otherwise inaccessible beach – sounds like a picnic to me!
- Pateck Round Pergola with its amazing panorama The Coastal path of the Domaine Rayol for an easy scenic promenade.
- Hike the “Col du Canadel” that begins at the « Escaliers Monumentaux » and offers superbe views of the ocean and the Îles d'Hyères.
- Stop by Saint-Tropez to set the jet setters and huge yachts on your way to the next stop, just because you can! (Just a 3.5km detour, but parking can be challenging).

Events...

- 1/20/2017 and 1/27/2017 (other dates TBD) - L'odyssée des Mimosas - Located at the Jardin des Méditerranées a world tour of meditaranean plants.
- Weekends in January and February - Guided walk “Le Rayol through Mimosa” at 3pm or Sunday at 10am. Sign-up and departure at the Tourist Office - 5€/person
- 3/22/2017 - Spring Festival at the Domaine du Rayol
- 8/15/2017 - Fireworks display to celebrate when Allied troops landed on these beaches during World War II to liberate France.

Orange Section (C) - Mile 42km - Sainte Maxime (Var)

Named after a saint (Sainte Maxime of course!), the small village with its many beaches is popular with tourist and families in the summer months. Located on the gulf of Saint-Tropez, it boasts 11km of beautiful beachfront with restaurants, brasseries, and plenty of commerce to temp you. Wander around town and you will notice remnants of Art Deco architecture, old tiled roofed homes, and lovely shaded streets. In February Sainte Maxime has its own “Corso du Mimosa” parade with Mimosa floral floats.

Don't Miss...

- « Musée de la Tour Carré » specializing in local history
- “Pointe des Sardinaux” is THE perfect place for a picnic on the coast with amazing views. Please just be careful of the site as it is a fragile environment to be respected.
- “Jardin des Myrtes” is a peaceful and beautiful garden to enjoy as a quiet break with plantings typical of the area. During Jan-March emphasis is made on the Mimosa.
- Grimaud Flea Market / Brocante du Jas des Roberts – about 12km from Saint Maxime off RD14 but well worth the detour. Every Sunday between 7am and 1pm, Parking is available and entry is free of charge.
- Saint Tropez is just around the corner. Why not stop by and walk in Brigitte Bardots footsteps while admiring the humongous luxury yachts in the harbor. If the weather permits (doubtful), the famous "[Plage de Pampelone](#)" is THE beach.

Events...

- 2/4-5/2017 – « Fête du Mimosa » / « [Corso du Mimosa](#) » floral parade
- 3/4/2017 – Provençal Carnival
- 3/5/2017 – Flea Market in the center of town

Orange Section (D) - Mile 59km - Saint-Raphaël 59km (Var)

Near the Roman town of Fréjus with its vestiges and ancient church, the port town of Saint Raphaël is located right on the border of between the Var Department and the Alpes-Maritimes. The immense seaside church “Basilique de Notre Dame de Victoire” built in 1882 is a must see item in Saint Raphaël, as is the Musée d’Archeologie with its displays of rare objects discovered during underwater excursions. Blooming Mimosa can be found growing on the beautiful beaches nearby. A full 36 km with 29 separate beaches (of interest for diving and snorkeling), so if you struggle with decision making this might get quickly complicated. Choose wisely as some of these beaches are of difficult access...

Don’t Miss...

- Musée d’Archéologie
- Basilique Notre Dame de la Victoire
- The “Corniche d’Or” driving route that borders the coastline from Saint-Raphaël all the way to Cannes ([perfect for motorcycles](#)), a road established long ago by the Romans.
- Treat your sweet tooth at the « Le Palet d’Or » for a Mimosa flavored Macaroon, or stop by « Le Mimosa d’Agay » for chocolat flavored Mimosa.
- If you have the time, the ancient roman vestiges of Fréjus are worth the 10 minute detour.

Events...

- TBD

Purple Section (E) - Mile 108km - Mandelieu-la-Napoule (Alpes-Maritimes)

The section from here to Tanneron is probably the most scenic part of the “Route du Mimosa”. Considered the Mimosa Capital and entrance to the Massif Tanneron, its hills are covered with the largest Mimosa forest in all of Europe. The town is best known for the Château de la Napoule, a picturesque fortified castle that sits right on the water. Much of the castle was destroyed during the French Revolution (helas like so many other historical monuments). All that remain of the original structure is the 4th century Roman Tower and the 11th century Saracen Tower. Now a non-profit for the arts, much of what you see today is the renovation work of a rich American couple who purchased the property in the early 1900’s. You can walk along the castle walls and onto the neighboring city beach. In February there is a Fête du Mimosa, Corsos Fleuris (battle of the flowers), and a nighttime illuminated parade.

Don’t Miss...

- [Château de la Napoule](#) and its [promenade](#)
- The Massif Tanneron Mimosa Forest. There are tons of options, just stop by the local tourist office for itineraries, or try from Mandelieu-la-Napoule across town towards the Boulevard des Termes. After a few curves, several paths through the forest will appear on your left. Pick one! Particularly beautiful as you gain in elevation towards Tanneron (Crêtes du Tanneron).
- [Chemin des Douaniers](#) and Châteaux

- Mont San Peyre panoramic view
- Theoule Beach and cliff diving (10 min hike from town)
- Taste the « Tarte Mimosée » purchased from La Boutique de l'Oasis

Events...

- Fête du Mimosa en février
- 2/19/2017 - [Grand Corso Fleuri](#) on the beach boardwalk
- 2/15 + 2/22/2017- Saturday evening light parade
- 2/19/2017 – Pyro Symphonic Show (Fireworks set to music) at 19h
- 2/15 through 2/22/2017 - Daily guided walks "Au Pays du Mimosa" (see Tourist Office for more details).

Purple Section (F) - Mile 112km - Tanneron (Alpes-Maritimes)

Located right smack in the middle of the Mimosa Forest at the tiptop of the Massif du Tanneron. Expect amazing views dotted with burst of yellow everywhere. This is the ideal starting points for driving or hiking through the mimosa forests. There are shops and several “forceries” are open and you can find out how the budding branches are forced into bloom. If you cannot visit the entire route, this is great choice is you can only stop in one village.

Don't Miss...

- Permanent exhibit of the tourist office – Tanneron, yesterday and today
- Visit the greenhouses of local Mimosa producers such as [Vial](#) and [Augier](#).
- [Medieval Chapel of Notre Dame de Peygros](#) in Tanneron with many ex-voto plaques. Unfortunately it is rarely open, but the exterior is also interesting.
- The Col de Peygros takes you to the Chapel at [Saint-Cassien-des-bois](#) (5km detour from Tanneron). Dating back to the 12th century, the chapel's square tower with no roof and no readily apparent entrance was used by monks during sieges and accessed by a rope ladder they would then pull down. There is also next to the chapel an abandoned ancient flour mill worth exploring, wild fig trees waiting to be picked, and the river Siagne awaiting you for a peek at its cascade or a refreshing swim in its waters. Great hiking and VTT area.
- Lac de Saint Sassen – Offering many water activities and an Aqua Park to keep folks young and old content. The lake is a picturesque large man-made reservoir.

Events...

- 2/5/2017 – Artisanal Market (Sunday only)

Purple Section (G) - Mile 115km - Pégomas (Alpes-Maritimes)

Quaint hilltop village overlooking a valley full of those lovely trees with yellow fluffy scented puffs that are the celebrity of the day. This is the home of the “Confrérie du Mimosa” created in 1998 to celebrate and educate others about the virtues of Mimosa. You can wander about town to admire the plentiful blooms and valley views while sampling a brioche with Mimosa cream...that's my plan anyways!

Don't Miss...

- The « Jardin des Mimosas » botanic gardens
- “Eglise Saint Pierre” dating from 1765 with typical Provençal wire cage bell tower
- [Leisure walk along the river Siagne](#) and the Béal canal (built in the 15th century to bring irrigation water to the fields and feed the starving people).
- Visit the [Mimosa greenhouses](#) to learn about the forcing techniques and to pick up a bouquet (or two) for yourself.
- Treat yourself the the “Mimosette”, a brioche filled with a mimosa flavored cream and only sold in Pégomas.

Events...

- 2/15 to 2/22/2017 – “Fête du mimosa” (Date to be confirmed as usually the last weekend in January) animated by the “Confrérie du Mimosa” as is the Mimosa Ball.
- 2/28/2017 – « [Bal du Mimosa](#) » dancing evening with local band, this is as authentic as it gets...

Purple Section (H) - Mile 130km - Grasse (Alpes-Maritimes)

Your last and most “fragrant” stop of the route. Grasse known as the fragrance capital of the world for good reason. Old Town in Grasse is a collection of large squares, narrow alleys, steep staircases, and 17th and 18th century architecture, and old perfume factories. The flowers necessary for perfume making are all grown in the surrounding mountains, including of course Mimosa. In fact, fragrant Mimosa oils are found in the perfumes “Paris” by Yves Saint-Laurent and “Champs Élysées” by Guerlain. There are three world-famous perfume factories worth visiting: Fragonard, Galimard and Molinard. You can even follow a mini course at one of the factories if you like and mix up your own perfume fragrance! In addition, Grasse is the home of the “Musée International de la Parfumerie” and its “Jardin du Musée” gardens which explore the history of perfume making that dates back to the end of the 18th

Don't Miss...

- The middle age architecture (cathedral et palis de l'evêque, hotel de ville, maison medivals, hotel particuliers, anciennes usines parfumerie),
- Musée international de la parfumerie - 3,000 years of perfume historyJardin du Musée International de la Parfumerie – heavenly when everything is in bloom.
- Fragonard, Galimard and Molinard Perfume Factories – Free tours (Fragonard the newest but most popular). You can sign up for a perfume class to make your own at any of the three factories (prices start at around 50€ per person with your perfume creation included). For a beaten off the track class option, try [Guy Bouchara Artisinal](#).
- Notre Dame du Puy's Cathedral – 13th century, houses 3 paintings by Rubens.
- Musée Fragonard – Paintings by Rubens and Fragonard in a very romantic style
- Musée Provençal du Costume et du Bijou – Provençal clothing and jewelry museum
- Museum of Art and History of Provence

Events...

- Fête du Jasmin – held every August (nothing special for the Mimosa, the Jasmine Festival is their thing as Jasmine is the main ingredient in many perfumes.