



VISIT GUIDE 2026

Les Carrières des Lumières

Les Baux-de-Provence · From 16.50€

<https://carrieres-lumieres.visit-tickets.com/en/> · Skip-the-line tickets & rates



History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Quarry to Cathedral of Light

GOOGLE **4.7** ★★★★★ 29 817 reviews

TIQETS **4.7** ★★★★★ 2 364 reviews

Long before it became a sanctuary for digital art, the site was a place of **hard labor and extraction**. Until 1880, quarrymen extracted massive blocks of white limestone from these walls to build the iconic Château des Baux. Using iron bars and crocodile saws, they carved out the natural pillars that now serve as screens, inadvertently creating a unique architectural space. The quarries closed in 1935 due to modern competition, leaving the Val d'Enfer silent and forgotten for nearly forty years.

The site's artistic rebirth began with a cinematic vision. In 1959, **Jean Cocteau** filmed sequences of 'The Testament of Orpheus' here, captivated by the mystical beauty of the rock formations. This early recognition of the quarry's potential paved the way for its transformation into a cultural venue, bridging the gap between industrial heritage and creative expression.

In 1975, Albert Plécy discovered the abandoned quarries and founded the **Cathedral of Images** festival two years later. He projected giant images onto the smooth rock walls, pioneering immersive projection mapping decades before it became a global trend. This initiative transformed the raw stone into a dynamic canvas, celebrating the fusion of light and landscape.

Since 2011, management has been entrusted to **Culturespaces**, who reopened the site in 2012 as Les Carrières des Lumières. The first exhibition featuring Gauguin and Van Gogh welcomed 250,000 visitors, proving the immense appeal of this format. Today, it stands as a leading destination for immersive art, continuously evolving while respecting its historic roots.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the Carrières des Lumières feels like entering a **living dream**. The cool air contrasts sharply with the Provencal heat outside, enveloping you in a serene atmosphere. As lights dim, the rough limestone walls dissolve into vibrant canvases, where colors dance across ancient rock faces. The sheer scale of the projections creates an overwhelming sense of immersion.

You are not just observing art; you are **surrounded by it**. Whether walking through a Van Gogh sunflower field or diving into an underwater world, the boundaries between viewer and artwork vanish. The soundscapes enhance the visual journey, making every step feel like a discovery. It is a poetic encounter with history and imagination, leaving you breathless and inspired.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Located at Val d'Enfer, Les Baux-de-Provence. Access only via departmental road D27. No direct public transport.

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary by season and school holidays. Check exact time slots on the official website before your visit.

PRICES

Children free depending on age (check variants). Online booking recommended.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 1h to 1h30 for a complete immersion. The visit is self-guided, with no mandatory audio guide, allowing you to enjoy each projection at your own pace.

PHOTOS

Photography is generally allowed without flash or tripod. Respect other visitors by avoiding obstructions. Check specific rules for the current exhibition.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for all ages. Note: uneven floor requiring appropriate footwear. Robust strollers advised for toddlers; otherwise, carry them.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

**Metro**

: Les Baux — 5 min à pied

Aix-en-Provence TGV (134 min) · Avignon Provence Airport (52 min)

**Bus**

: Les Baux — 5 min à pied

Aix-en-Provence TGV (221 min) · Avignon Provence Airport (85 min)

**Car**

Aix-en-Provence TGV (180 min) · Avignon Provence Airport (67 min)

**Bike**

Aix-en-Provence TGV (247 min) · Avignon Provence Airport (91 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve Les Carrières des Lumières ?



📍 Route de Maillane — 13520 Les Baux-de-Provence

🌐 43°44.913' N, 4°47.785' E



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Immersive Journey

Entrance & Picasso Room

Begin your journey at the monumental entrance dominated by a vast stage. Here, projections often feature dynamic works by Picasso, setting the tone for the artistic exploration. The space is partially covered, allowing natural light to blend with digital displays.

Dante Room (Main Hall)

The heart of the experience extends 60 meters deep into the mountain. Natural columns, 7 to 9 meters high, serve as screens for the main exhibition. This cavernous hall offers total immersion, with projections wrapping around every pillar and wall.

Van Gogh Room & Café

Conclude your visit in the Van Gogh room, which houses the Café des Carrières. This space offers a lighter, more intimate projection experience alongside refreshments. It serves as a perfect transition back to the bright daylight outside.

ACCESSIBILITY

**Disabled Access**

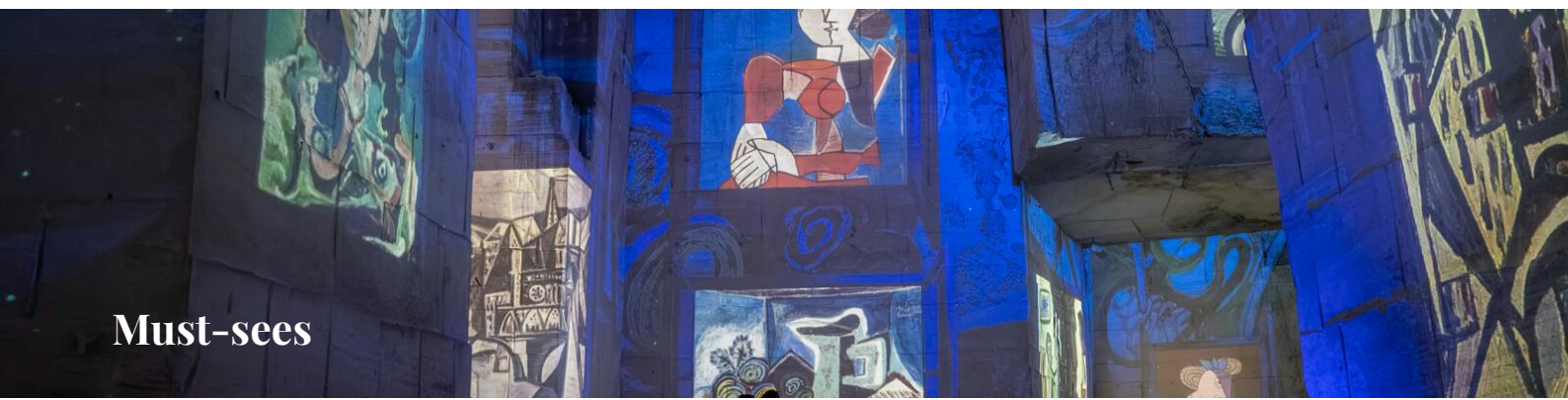
Accessible for PMR with precautions due to uneven natural ground.

**Families**

Suitable for families with robust strollers or carrying recommended.

**Audio guide**

French, English



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Moments in the Valley

01

Dante Room

The Dante Room Pillars

These **natural limestone columns** are the stars of the show. Left by quarrymen to support the roof, they now act as vertical canvases. Their irregular surfaces add texture and depth to the projections, creating a unique visual effect impossible in traditional galleries.

💡 Each pillar was carefully preserved during extraction in the 19th century, unknowingly preparing them for their future role as digital screens.

02

JEAN COCTEAU Cocteau Room

Jean Cocteau's Filming Site

Visit the room dedicated to **Le Testament d'Orphée**. See clips from the film shot here in 1959, along with interviews. The connection between Cocteau's surrealist vision and the quarry's mystique is palpable, offering a glimpse into the site's cinematic past.

💡 Cocteau was so amazed by the location that he considered it a **mythical gateway** between worlds, influencing the film's narrative structure.

03

PABLO PICASSO / FRIDA KAHLO Main Projection Area

Current Exhibition: Picasso & Frida Kahlo

Experience the dynamic interplay between **Picasso's cubism** and **Frida Kahlo's surrealism**. The projections bring their paintings to life, animating brushstrokes and symbols. This dual theme highlights contrasting yet complementary artistic visions.

💡 Though they never met, their shared interest in **identity and form** makes this pairing particularly resonant in such an immersive space.

04

Main Projection Area

Ocean Immersion

Dive into the **underwater world** with this seasonal program. Marine life swims around you, and the sounds of the ocean create a calming atmosphere. It is a refreshing change from classical art, showcasing the versatility of the venue.

💡 The projectors are calibrated to mimic the **refraction of water**, enhancing the illusion of being submerged.

05

Full Venue

Les Intégrales Evening Program

On Wednesday evenings, enjoy **three exhibitions in one**: Jimmy Nelson, Dreamed Japan, and Egyptian Pharaohs. This marathon session allows you to experience diverse cultures and histories in a single visit, maximizing your time.

💡 This format was introduced to cater to **local residents** who prefer evening visits, transforming the quarry into a nighttime cultural hub.

06

Entrance

The Entrance Stage

The monumental entrance features a **20-meter-high screen**. Before entering the main halls, you are greeted by large-scale projections that set the thematic tone. It is a dramatic introduction to the immersive experience ahead.

💡 The stage was originally used for **quarry operations**, but its scale makes it ideal for grand visual spectacles.

07

Van Gogh Room

Café des Carrières

Take a break in the **Van Gogh-themed café**. Enjoy coffee or snacks while surrounded by gentle projections of sunflowers and starry nights. It offers a relaxed end to the intense sensory journey.

💡 The café's design ensures that even while eating, you remain **partially immersed** in the artistic environment.

08

Museum Section

Historical Quarry Tools

Look for exhibits on **iron bars and crocodile saws**. These tools highlight the manual labor that shaped the valley. Understanding the physical effort involved adds depth to your appreciation of the current digital art.

💡 The term 'crocodile saw' comes from the tool's **jaw-like mechanism**, which mimicked the animal's biting motion to cut stone.

TIPS

Essential Tips for Your Visit

TIMING

Arrive right at opening time to enjoy the Dante room without crowds. Early morning slots offer the best photo opportunities and total immersion.

BILLET

Book tickets online in advance, especially in summer. This guarantees entry and allows you to choose specific time slots, avoiding long queues.

PARCOURS

Start with the main exhibition in the Dante room, then move to the Cocteau room, and finish with the Café. This flow manages energy levels effectively.

PHOTO

Use night mode and increase ISO to capture projections without flash. Avoid tripods to respect other visitors and ensure safety on uneven floors.

PAUSE

Visit Le Café des Carrières at the end of your tour. It provides a pleasant transition back to the outside world with a sweet or salty treat.

ENFANTS

Carry toddlers or use a robust all-terrain stroller. The rocky path to the entrance and uneven quarry floor make lightweight strollers impractical.

AUDIOGUIDE

No mandatory audio guide is needed. The experience is self-guided, allowing you to linger on each projection at your own pace. Check the app for exhibition details if desired.

CONFORT

Wear closed-toe shoes and bring a sweater. The quarry floor is slippery and uneven, and the temperature remains cool year-round, unlike the hot surface.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Which exhibition is currently presented at Carrières des Lumières?

The program changes regularly, sometimes several times a year. It is essential to check the theme and exact dates via our booking widget or the official website before your visit. This variability allows for a renewed ex

Do I need to book tickets in advance?

Yes, booking is highly recommended, especially during peak season (summer) and weekends. This guarantees your access and allows you to choose a precise time slot. During busy periods, seats may be limited, so planning ah

Are there discounts for groups?

Specific rates often exist for groups or families. Check the available options when booking online. Accompanied children sometimes benefit from free or reduced entry depending on their age; check the exact conditions at

Can I cancel my reservation?

Cancellation terms vary depending on the type of ticket purchased. Generally, free cancellation is possible a few days before the visit. Check the specific terms indicated during your order confirmation to know the exact

How long does the visit last?

Allow about 1h to 1h30 for a complete visit. There is no mandatory audio guide; it is a free-form experience where you move at your own pace. Take your time to soak up the atmosphere in the Dante Room and other projectio

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Birth of Immersive Art

Albert Plécy's **Cathedral of Images** festival in 1977 predates modern digital projection technology. He used film projectors to create the first immersive experiences, laying the groundwork for today's digital art scene.

Quarrymen's Legacy

The **natural pillars** were left intentionally by quarrymen to support the ceiling. Without these structural supports, the quarry would have collapsed, preventing its current use as a cultural site.

Cocteau's Mystical Vision

Jean Cocteau chose this location for **The Testament of Orpheus** because he felt it connected the earthly and divine realms. The film's themes of resurrection mirror the quarry's own rebirth as an art center.

Record-Breaking Success

The 2012 reopening under Culturespaces attracted **250,000 visitors** in its first season. This unprecedented number proved the viability of immersive exhibitions as a major tourist attraction.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

After your visit, explore the nearby **Village des Baux-de-Provence**, one of France's Most Beautiful Villages. Wander its cobblestone streets and enjoy panoramic views from the **Château des Baux**. For a taste of local culture, visit the **Musée du Pays d'Enfer** to understand the geology that shaped this lunar landscape. Quench your thirst at Domaine de Trévans for AOP wines, or relax at Le Café des Carrières for a quick snack before heading back to the surface.



Leaving the Carrières des Lumières is like waking from a vivid dream, yet the memory lingers. This is more than a museum visit; it is an **emotional journey** through time and creativity. The fusion of raw stone and digital light creates a magic that words cannot fully capture. Come for the art, stay for the wonder, and let the valley transform your perspective on beauty and history.