

# Eze You Like it on the Riviera

By [Gustasp and Jeroo Irani](#). Published: 28 April 2020, 10:02



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From its hot pink bougainvillea, ivy and flowers that grow everywhere to its boutiques, art galleries and jewellery stores along the winding walkways, the perched village of Eze has retained all its natural charm over the years. Gustasp and Jeroo Irani re-visit their memories of Eze.

Our first glimpse of Eze, a medieval little village on the French Riviera, reminded us of an eagle's nest poised on the summit of a hill.

We had arrived by bus from [Nice](#), a half hour away from this charming hamlet. A short amble from the bus stop led us to an ancient stone archway at the entrance of the village which turned out to be the gateway to the most romantic little place imaginable - edged with flower-bedecked, narrow streets and alive with the clamour of unseen song birds. A narrow cobblestone path, ornate with archaic street lamps, invited us into a world that seemed moored in its medieval origins. We walked down an arcade of blushing buildings. Every archway, door, window, balcony and nook in the wall was dressed in flowering plants. We were hopelessly hooked on Eze.

This beautiful enchantress was just waking up when we arrived. The toll of church bells that reverberated through her empty streets beckoned. We entered a chapel through an arched gateway that supported a soaring steeple and crossed ourselves with holy water. The place was deserted but for the figurines that adorned the altar, murals and stained-glass windows of the baroque building.

Soothing strains of the flute swirled around us like an ocean of compassion. Even though we were in a strange place, seemingly tucked away in the folds of nowhere, we felt very much at home.

At that moment, we knew that just by being alive we were expressing His pleasure. It was one of the most moving moments that we had ever experienced.



We would have liked to linger but had other pressing matters to attend to, like exploring the rest of Eze which was priming itself up for another day. Souvenir shops, bars and restaurants that dotted the little streets had opened their doors to receive the first tourists who had started trickling in.

As we strolled down the cobble-stone streets, shopkeepers dusted and arranged their wares: homemade jams and wines; silk scarves; garments made of delicate lace; multi-hued glass vases and lamps; wood carvings... We could not help but smile at the sight of a row of toy ducks and chickens peering over a ledge into one of the display windows.



Occasionally, we had to step aside to allow people to cart their provisions around in trolleys. Yes, Eze is a vehicle-free village. A porter trundled the luggage of a guest staying in one of the luxury boutique hotels, and we decided to check out what the establishment had to offer. Pure magic and romance! The hilltop haven had cosy rooms that overlooked a picturesque little village at the base of the cliff and sweeping beaches punctuated by rocky outcrops and the deep-blue waters of the Mediterranean. We sat down at a table in the hotel's open-air restaurant that seemed to balance on the edge of the cliff and ordered coffee. The brew was expensive but the moment was priceless.

At the far end of the village, a narrow pathway opened out into a bristling cactus garden called [Jardin Exotique d'Eze](#) ([EXTERNAL LINK](#)). It was once crowned by a 12th century castle. In 1706, when Louis XIV of France captured Eze, he ordered that the fortress walls of the residing warlord of the village be razed. According to one shopkeeper, the order was given in a moment of jealous rage. "When Louis XIV realized that he could not enjoy the spoils of his victory and the stunning setting it came with, as he had to return to Paris, he decided to destroy it so that no one else could enjoy it," he explained.

Today, of course, steady streams of tourists flock to this hilltop retreat where the King of France may have destroyed the walls of a fortress but could do nothing to impair its stunning good looks.

By then, the narrow streets of the village had started to bustle with activity, with a growing number of visitors poking around its pretty little nooks. Among the popular attractions Eze has to offer are two [perfumeries](#), [Galimard](#) ([EXTERNAL LINK](#)) and [Fragonard](#) ([EXTERNAL LINK](#)), from [Grasse](#). Visitors can also drop in at the factory of Verrerie d'Art Eze and watch craftsmen blow glass into the most unique shapes and colours.



We, however, skipped these 'attractions' and preferred to continue flirting with Eze, all decked up in her medieval trimmings.

That charming siren still haunts our dreams even as we languish in a bleak lockdown.

## File Facts

Located between Nice and Monaco, Eze is best accessed from Nice, a half-hour drive away by local bus or car.

BY GUSTASP AND JEROO IRANI

Gustasp and Jeroo Irani are a husband and wife travel writer/photographer team who have an ongoing love affair with France.

<http://www.gustaspandjeroo.com/>



There were more atmospheric restaurants scattered around the village. Some comprised more than two chairs, a table and an umbrella snuggled in a corner of the street while others were perched at strategic points that offered swoon-worthy views.

