ISN International School of Nice

Your Complete Guide to Moving to the French Riviera with Children

ISNNICE
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Schools · Visas · Neighbourhoods · Costs · Family Life | isn-nice.com

The French Riviera offers international families a rare combination: Mediterranean sunshine, world-class IB education, a safe and welcoming environment, and seamless access to Europe. This guide brings together everything you need to plan your move — from visa paperwork to the best neighbourhoods, school choices, costs, and daily family life. Click any section link to read the full article on our website.

300+	60+	3–18	1990
Sunny days per year	Nationalities at ISN	Students Ages	IB World School since

1 WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE THE FRENCH RIVIERA

Climate · Safety · Connectivity · International Community

> Read full article



The Côte d'Azur blends coastal beauty with genuine international infrastructure. Families are drawn by the mild Mediterranean climate, easy access to beaches and mountains, vibrant expat communities, and a quality of life rarely matched elsewhere in Europe.

Advantage	What it means for your family
Climate	300+ sunny days, mild winters, beach & Alpine ski access within 1 hour
Education	Multiple IB & international schools; ISN is an IB World School for children
Safety	Lower crime rates in suburban/inland towns; family-friendly municipal services
Connectivity	Nice Côte d'Azur Airport — direct flights across Europe, North America, Middle East
Economy	Tech hub Sophia Antipolis, global firms, finance, luxury sectors & remote work community
Community	Large English-speaking expat networks in Nice, Antibes, Valbonne and Monaco

→ Read the full overview guide → isn-nice.com/blog

2 WHERE TO LIVE: BEST AREAS FOR INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES

Nice · Antibes · Sophia Antipolis · Cannes · Inland villages

> Read full article

Your neighbourhood shapes daily life — from commute times and school proximity to community life and housing options. ISN's bus network connects many of the French Riviera's most popular family-friendly areas directly to campus.

Area	Best for	ISN Bus	Est. Rent (3-bed/mo)
Nice West & Cagnes-sur-Mer (Corniche Fleurie, Saint-Isidore)	Families near ISN campus; green spaces; quieter place	✔	€1,200–€2,800
Nice Centre (Carré d'Or, Musiciens, Libération)	Urban lifestyle, walkability, cafés, cultural scene	✔	€1,400–€3,500
Antibes / Juan-les-Pins	Beach life, large international community, good space	✔	€1,300–€3,200
Valbonne & Mougins	Tech workers, quiet residential, gardens & outdoor life	✔	€1,400–€4,500
Villefranche / Beaulieu	Scenic coastal living close to Monaco	✔	€1,500–€4,000
Cannes	Vibrant city life; luxury or family-friendly suburbs	✔	€1,400–€5,000+
Monaco (Fontvieille & Grimaldi Forum)	International community, finance professionals, premium lifestyle	✔	€4,000–€10,000+

ISN operates an extensive bus network connecting Nice, Cagnes-sur-Mer, Antibes, Cannes, Monaco, Villefranche-sur-Mer, Beaulieu-sur-Mer, Valbonne and Mougins—making the school easily accessible from the French Riviera's most popular family-friendly residential areas.

→ Read the full neighbourhoods guide → isn-nice.com/blog

3 VISAS & ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

EU Nationals · Non-EU Long-Stay Visa · Key Documents Checklist

> Read full article

Relocating to France requires early preparation of paperwork. Requirements vary by nationality. Start the visa process at least 3–4 months before your planned arrival date.

Nationality	Visa needed?	Visa type	First step
EU / EEA / Swiss	No	—	Register at local mairie after arrival
United Kingdom (post-Brexit)	Yes	VLS-TS	Apply at French consulate in UK before departure
USA / Canada / Australia	Yes	VLS-TS	Submit application via france-visas.gouv.fr
Other non-EU	Yes	Long-stay (D)	Contact nearest French embassy / consulate

Documents to prepare for your family application:

- Valid passports for all family members (6+ months beyond planned stay)
- Signed lease or property deed as proof of accommodation
- Proof of financial means — bank statements, employment contract or company letter
- Health insurance valid in France for the whole family
- Birth certificates for children (apostille + certified French translation if required)
- School acceptance letter from an accredited institution (e.g. ISN)
- Marriage certificate if applicable

> After arriving, non-EU nationals must validate their visa within 3 months via the OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration). All family members are processed together.

→ Read the full visa & admin guide → isn-nice.com/blog

4 CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCHOOL ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

IB · Bilingual · French public & private · Key selection criteria

> Read full article

For internationally mobile families, curriculum continuity is the top priority — switching systems can disrupt academic progress and university pathways. The French Riviera offers several strong options.

School Type	Curriculum	Description	Typical Fees
IB Schools Nice (e.g. ISN)	PYP, MYP, DP, IGCSE, High School Diploma	Continuity. Global recognition. English-led with strong French	€12,000–€25,000/year
British-style Schools	IGCSE, A-Levels	Familiar for UK families	€10,000–€20,000/year
Bilingual Schools Nice	French + English	Strong French integration	€6,000–€20,000/year
French Public Schools	French National Curriculum	Full French immersion	Free
French Private Schools	French National Curriculum	Smaller classes; French immersion required	€1,000–€3,000/year

How to compare schools — key criteria for international families:

Criterion	Why it matters	ISN's answer
Curriculum continuity	Changing systems can disrupt academic progress and confidence	IB PYP → MYP → IGCSE → IB Diploma → High School Diploma
University recognition	IB Diploma opens doors to top universities worldwide	IB DP accepted by 90+ countries; strong university destinations
Language support (EAL)	New arrivals may not speak English or French fluently	Dedicated EAL programme supports all incoming students
Inclusion & SEND	Some children need learning support during transition	REACH Centre provides specialist 1:1 and group support
Community & diversity	Children settle faster in a multicultural environment	60+ nationalities; active PTA connects families quickly
Transport / location	Daily school run must be practical for your family	ISN bus network covers Nice, Antibes, Monaco, Valbonne, Vence

→ Read the full school selection guide → isn-nice.com/blog

5 COST OF LIVING FOR INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES

Housing · Schooling · Healthcare · Transport · Lifestyle budgets

> Read full article

The French Riviera ranges from affordable inland towns to premium coastal living. Understanding the main cost categories helps families budget realistically before relocating. The figures below are indicative monthly ranges for a family of four.

Expense	Est. Monthly Range	Practical notes
Housing (rent, 3-bed)	€1,500–€4,500	Higher along the coast and in central Nice; significantly better value inland (Valbonne, Vence)
International school fees	€800–€1,400/mo (€9k–€17k/yr)	Many employers offer education allowances; sibling discounts may apply at ISN
Groceries (family of 4)	€500–€900	Markets cheaper than supermarkets; organic & imported goods cost more
Transport	€100–€350	Nice tram/bus pass ~€35/mo; car recommended for suburbs & school runs
Childcare & activities	€200–€600	Clubs, sports, arts; ISN after-school activities included for enrolled students
Health insurance (mutuelle top-up)	€150–€500	French public health covers most costs; top-up mutuelle strongly recommended
Dining out & leisure	€300–€1,000+	From local bistros to Michelin-starred dining, with beaches and parks freely accessible year-round
Estimated total	€3,550–€9,250+	Highly variable; location and lifestyle choices are the biggest drivers

→ Read the full cost of living guide → isn-nice.com/blog

6 FAMILY LIFE: SAFETY, COMMUNITY & ACTIVITIES

Safety data · Expat networks · Sports · Culture · ISN extracurriculars

> Read full article

The French Riviera is consistently rated one of France's most family-friendly regions. Beyond school, the region offers an extraordinary quality of daily life: coastline, mountains, culture, sport, and a genuinely international community all on your doorstep.



Safety & Healthcare

The region has strong public safety records, with suburban and inland areas showing notably lower crime rates than major French cities. France's healthcare system provides high-quality care, and the Nice University Hospital (CHU) is one of the best in Southern France. European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) covers EU nationals initially.

ISN Extracurricular Highlights

- Globeducate Events (Academic Olympics, Global Olympics, Robotics, Music Festival, Debates)
- Music, theatre, visual arts programmes
- Model United Nations (MUN)
- Swimming, football, athletics, basketball
- Community service & IB CAS projects
- International exchange trips



International Community

Nice, Antibes, Sophia Antipolis and Monaco host large English-speaking communities, expat associations, international clubs, and regular social events. The ISN PTA is an active hub connecting new families within days of arriving.

Language & Integration

French classes are widely available for adults, while children typically adapt quickly through their school environment. ISN's EAL programme supports students whose first language is not English, and daily French lessons help children develop genuine multilingual skills in a natural, engaging, and low-pressure way.

→ Read the full family life guide → isn-nice.com/blog

Outdoor & Family Activities

- 30km of coastline: beaches from Nice to Cannes
- Skiing in the Mercantour Alps — just 1 hour from Nice
- Hiking: Parc National du Mercantour, Massif de l'Esterel
- Sports Clubs: football, tennis, rugby, swimming, sailing
- Culture: Musée Matisse, MAMAC, Fondation Maeght
- Day trips: Monaco 20 min, Italy 45 min, Provence 90 min
- ISN English & sports holiday camps in summer

Full Blog Article Links

This PDF is a summary guide. Click the links below (or in each section) to access the full articles:

→ Complete Guide to Moving to the French Riviera with Children
→ Where to Live on the French Riviera — Best Neighbourhoods
→ Moving to France — Visa Requirements for Families
→ How to Choose the Right School on the French Riviera
→ Cost of Living on the French Riviera for International Families
→ Family Life on the French Riviera — Safety, Community & Activities

7 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Visas · Schools · Safety · Costs · Admissions

Q What visa do I need to move to France with my family?

Non-EU nationals need a long-stay visa (VLS-TS) for each family member, including children. EU nationals move freely but must complete local registration. Apply via france-visas.gouv.fr at least 3–4 months before moving.

→ Full article →

Q Can my child join ISN mid-year?

Yes. ISN accepts applications throughout the year, subject to availability. The admissions team will arrange a school visit and meet with you to place your in the correct Grade.

→ Full article →

Q What languages are taught at ISN?

English is the primary language of instruction. French language is taught from Early Years. Additional languages such as Spanish are offered at various levels. EAL support is available for non-English speakers.

→ Full article →

Q How much does it cost to live on the French Riviera as a family of four?

A realistic budget ranges from €3,500–€9,000+/month depending on location and lifestyle. Housing and school fees are the largest costs. Inland areas offer significantly better value than the coast.

→ Full article →

Q How does ISN help new families settle in?

ISN's admissions team, Student Life Team, PTA, EAL programme and REACH Centre all support incoming families. The school bus network, after-school activities, and multilingual community make transition much smoother for both children and parents.

→ Full article →

Q Which neighbourhoods are closest to ISN?

Nice West (Fabron, Sainte-Marguerite, Corniche Fleurie) is closest to ISN's campus. The ISN bus also connects Antibes, Monaco, Valbonne, Vence and surrounding areas daily.

→ Full article →

Q Do children need to speak French to enrol at ISN?

No. ISN is an English-medium school with a dedicated EAL programme for students arriving without English fluency. French is taught as a subject to all students from the earliest years.

→ Full article →

Ready to Make the Move?

The ISN admissions team is here to help from your very first question.
Book a school visit, download the brochure, or start your application today.

+33 (0)4 93 21 04 00	www.isn-nice.com	admissions@isn-nice.com
Book a Visit	Start Your Enquiry	Download Brochure

International School of Nice is a member of the Globeducate group of international schools. CIS accredited. Recognised as an IB World School since 1990. All cost estimates are indicative and subject to change. Visa information is general guidance only — consult france-visas.gouv.fr and your nearest French consulate for current requirements.