

Dining in the Provence Verte

By Alex Gardner at Maison Lambot B&B Provence

It has been over a year since I sat down and wrote the original version of this guide to eating out in the Provence Verte, my beautiful little green corner of Provence.

Over the past year it has been my privilege to share this valuable local knowledge with guests from all over the world who stayed at Maison Lambot B&B, some of them discovering Provence for the first time, others returning for their regular fix of sunshine, rosé and fine dining. If your new here, I now include a brief introduction to local specialities, ingredients and dishes at the end of this guide.

My guests' feedback and contributions have propelled this project forwards, and enriched the guide with new content and recommendations. I am grateful to all of them for helping me to pass on the insider tips and local gems which I will share with you today.

I wish you a great stay full of unforgettable moments and authentic Provençal Food with your friends and family. And don't be too surprised if you spot me at the next table toasting to the good life that we live in The Provence Verte. If you love food, you have come to exactly the right place. Just sit back and let the flavours do the talking!

If you have discovered somewhere close by which should be mentioned in the guide, please drop me a line at alex@maisonlambot.com.

Bon appétit mes amis!



Alex Gardner
Manager, Maison Lambot B&B Provence

© 2017 Maison Lambot B&B Provence. All Rights Reserved. This guide is the intellectual property of Maison Lambot B&B Provence. It is provided for information purposes for hotel guests. Endorsements in this guide based on merit and no free meals or other incentives have been accepted by Maison Lambot B&B writers in return for endorsements in this guide. Maison Lambot B&B Provence does not assess other accommodation so all opinions expressed relate solely to restaurant service even where accommodation is offered by the establishment reviewed.

My Local Favourites

The area surrounding Maison Lambot B&B is full of traditional family-run village restaurants offering superb value for money. Have you just arrived? Looking for a local gem to taste some seasonal Provençal food? Here is the list of recommended local restaurants, in order of distance from the B&B.

La Petite Marmite, Montfort-sur-Argens

04 94 59 55 06 Booking advised, Closed Mon/Tues

Consistently excellent little traditional French restaurant five minutes' walk from Maison Lambot. A small restaurant with a big atmosphere and an enviable reputation among local foodies.

Great value, particularly the 2-course lunch. Strong attention to detail and use of local produce are what make Marmite stand out to me.



The menu offers an ever changing variety of dishes from Chef Didier Oblette's extensive repertoire- many Maison Lambot B&B guests enjoy several meals here during their stay because it's so close and you will want to try more after your first visit!

As the saying goes 'Tu peux y aller les yeux fermés' (you can go there eyes closed). Upon advance request for 4 ppl+, La Petite Marmite provide dinner at Maison Lambot, Weds-Sun.

Le Mas Des Templiers, Montfort-sur-Argens 04 94 86 86 20

Booking Required

The house of Sir Raymond Of Montfort is steeped in history, which you will discover through the decoration, poems and stories of this Templar themed restaurant, specializing in local produce 10 minutes' walk from Maison Lambot. Service by a knight in armor and knighting of diners upon prior request.

Local wine from Caves Du Commandeur and a well-curated selection of other great Provence wines. The duck is a speciality of the house. This is one for a birthday treat or unforgettable group outing, don't forget the camera. Portion size is generous here and the atmosphere is relaxed.





Les Chutes Du Grand Baou, Montfort-sur-Argens 06 45 15 34 83
Summer Season Only

Outdoor family oriented restaurant with tasty salads, pizzas and grill dishes five minutes' drive from Maison Lambot. The spectacular triple waterfall, 'Les Chutes Du Grand Baou' is next to the restaurant and accessible from below their terrace. Pony rides operate next door to the restaurant and there is ample parking. Very popular with families in high summer.

La Crémaillère, Le Val 04 94 86 40 00

Limited covers - Small Restaurant

An understated treat. With many delicious local options it took me far too long to discover this absolute gem in Le Val. Traditional a la carte list and €29 menu with plenty of options. Spartan decor, friendly service and food that will surprise you given the simplicity of the setting. This restaurant is very small scale so book in advance to avoid disappointment.

L'Oie Qui Boit, Carcès 04 94 04 39 42

A cozy, authentically decorated restaurant in Carcès where you will not go hungry! Traditional French cuisine, professional modern presentation and generous portion sizes make the Oie an absolute go-to for a relaxed dinner as a couple or with friends.



The best Marmite du Pêcheur (Fisherman's Pot) in the local area is to be had here and the €29 3-course evening menu is a winner. I also loved their pork fillet.

Les 3 Marches, Cotignac 04 94 04 65 99

Well above average food and service on the tourist hotspot Cours Gambetta, look no further for great pizzas and grill dishes. Conveniently located next-door to the Nestuby wine bar so that you have an excuse for an additional pre-meal aperitif and nibbles.



La Petite Maison De Bras, Bras 04 94 04 09 28

An excellent value very friendly family run restaurant in the village of Bras 20 minutes' drive from Maison Lambot. Expect service with a smile and daily specials. The € 24 menu has lots of choices and can be upgraded to local Auriac beef steak for € 4, or add a cheese course for € 4. The decor has recently been redone, wood fired heaters keep you toasty on chilly evenings. You can see into the kitchen and service is prompt.

Fine Dining in Provence

Headed upmarket? Spectacular settings and Michelin starred cuisine await! If you are here for gastronomy or a special occasion numerous renowned options are within easy driving distance. These are premium destinations with the stars and stories to match. Bonne Dégustation!

* * *

Chez Bruno, Lorgues (Michelin Star) 04 94 85 93 93

2350 route des arcs, Le Plan Campagne Mariette, 83510 Lorgues

www.restaurantbruno.com

An opulent setting, impeccable service, and an entirely truffle-based Menu make Chez Bruno in Lorgues, 30 minutes' drive away a unique dining destination. On my last visit I enjoyed a summer twist on the Tuber Aestivum menu. Dinner guests were arriving by helicopter and some impressive outfits were on show. A real treat and a sumptuous experience.

* * *

L'Hostellerie de L'Abbaye de la Celle, La Celle (Michelin Star) 04 98 05 14 14

10, Place du Général de Gaulle – 83170 La Celle

www.abbaye-celle.com

In the grounds of the Cistercian abbaye of La Celle is the world-renowned chef Alain Ducasse's outpost in the Provence Verte. Elaborate, splendid dishes to enjoy at special moments in a sensitively restored historic site. I recommend asking to sit on the outdoor terrace. Private dining rooms are available upon request.

* * *

Le Clos Des Roses, Fréjus 04 94 52 80 51

1609 Route De Malpasset, Lieu-dit Sainte Brigitte, 83600 Fréjus

www.closdesroses.com

First recommended to me by Mr Michel Lambot, (former French world champion sailor and great grandson of the inventor of Ferrocement Mr Joseph Lambot who was born at Maison Lambot in 1871), I get consistently glowing reports of the setting, service and food at this fine dining destination in Fréjus.

* * *



Market and Street Food in Provence Verte

Don't fancy a restaurant meal? Casual dining options mean that you can eat very well for less by getting takeaway dishes at markets and at delis, or picnicking with fresh bread from the bakery.

Pizza

It is always possible to pick up a pizza from one of the vans who park in Montfort (by Intermarché supermarket) and Le Val (at the Winery or roundabout) on various nights, or to order one from SOS Pizza in Cotignac (07 88 69 27 24) or Totolina (04 94 04 36 26) in Carcès.

Roast Chicken (Poulet Rôti)

All of the local markets have at least one roast chicken stall. At the roundabout on the way to Le Val on the way out of Brignoles there is a roadside roast chicken seller on the left. Local supermarket Intermarché in Montfort also sell roast chickens.

Paëlla

Watch out for the Paëlla stall at the local markets. Local street food at its best with chorizo, king prawns, rice and spices.

Bakeries

The local bakeries have lovely fresh bread and also sell cakes, pizza slices, sandwiches, 'Fougasses' (bread stuffed with Olive or Onion) and canned drinks, and can cater for a tasty picnic.

Friday Morning Market In Montfort-Sur-Argens



If you are headed out for some adventuring on a Friday and wish to pick up premium quality picnic ingredients, a small market in the middle of the village offers a wide selection of cheeses, charcuterie, fruit and vegetables every Friday morning.

The meat and cheese stall is particularly well stocked with high grade products from all over the region, and the fruit and veg seller has a great selection from local to exotic.

Weekly local markets in surrounding villages

At all the local markets you can pick up roast chickens, paëlla, meat cheese and bread, appetizers, particularly olives, and various other street food.

Traditional Village Meals & Food Festivals in Provence

Feel like soaking up genuine friendly village atmosphere while sampling traditional peasant dishes like Aïoli and Soupe au Pistou? Events are organized throughout the year in Montfort-sur-Argens and surrounding villages. Here are some examples of yearly village celebrations. If you are visiting Maison Lambot during one of the celebrations please ask in advance for meal tickets to be purchased for you.



Fête de la Prune

Prune festival held in Brignoles in mid-September. Any prune based food that you can imagine can be sampled at this festival.

Foire à la Saucisse

Sausage fair in Le Val. Taste the best flavoursome artisanal sausages made with quality local meats, herbs and spices.

Soupe aux Pistou

Held in the Mayor's garden next door to Maison Lambot B&B in mid-July this is a convivial outdoor dinner usually accompanied by music and dancing. Thick, tasty, filling rustic bean soup is served with local wine in a traditional village setting.

Fête des Vendanges - Montfort-Sur-Argens

The high point of the year for this winemaking village, the harvest festival takes place in the last week of August. Visitors come from near and far for a day of traditional fun and games, a convivial lunch of Aïoli (fish, egg and vegetables with garlic dip), and of course the Rosé flows freely! Traditional Provençal costumes, dances, speeches and horse-drawn carts are all part of the show at the Fête des Vendanges.

Fête du Coing - Cotignac

Every October the Quince Festival (Fête du Coing) takes place in Cotignac 10 minutes' drive from Maison Lambot B&B. The locally grown quince is made into a range of products from jam to liqueur to pancakes. All the restaurants serve a 'Coing' menu only for this traditional festival.



Foire de Brignoles 14-22 April 2018

Large local fair with a vast array of food stalls, livestock competitions, as well as the chance to see and buy everything from a salad spinner to a new combine harvester. Tickets can be purchased at the Tourism Office in Brignoles, or ask at Maison Lambot B&B.

Booking

Maison Lambot B&B strongly recommends booking in advance at all of the restaurants mentioned in this guide to avoid disappointment. If it would be helpful for Maison Lambot to make bookings on your behalf please let us know. Restaurant flyers are arranged above the lounge fireplace.

Étiquette Notes

It is customary to say 'Bonjour' or 'Bonsoir' to the person who greets you and to seated diners you pass. If you have reserved say 'J'ai réservé au nom de (your name)', if not, say 'nous sommes (number of people)' even if it seems obvious how many are dining.

Tipping is expected; it is habitual to tip 5-15% of the bill. Waiting tables is poorly paid in France and some restaurants pool tips, therefore if you are pleased with your waiter or waitress you may discreetly hand them a note.

Speaking English

It helps to start with whatever French words you can, then ask 'Parlez-vous Anglais?' Before speaking English. (Your waiter or waitress may not speak English well and so may be stressed if you speak English without at least starting in French). Most restaurants in this area cater well to tourists, employ members of staff who speak fluent English and have translated menus.

Driving to Dinner

Many of our local roads are narrow, winding, and have short visibility due to being in the woods. Local drivers do not always respect speed limits and traffic laws. For these two reasons please exercise caution when driving in the evening. In France, the drink drive limits are strict, (0 for novice drivers and 0,2g for 3-year license holders). Enforcement (Ethylotest) is not uncommon on arterial roads leading out of towns on Friday and Saturday evenings. Licensed taxis are available to take you from Maison Lambot to the restaurants mentioned here (advance booking required).

Opening times

Lunch is usually served from mid day until around 1.30 PM. At dinner, service usually starts at 7:30 PM and finishes at 9 PM, Sometimes earlier. Many restaurants close on Monday, Tuesday, or both. If your visit falls during the low season it is wise to check for any annual closures particularly in early October.

Provençal Specialities, Ingredients and Dishes

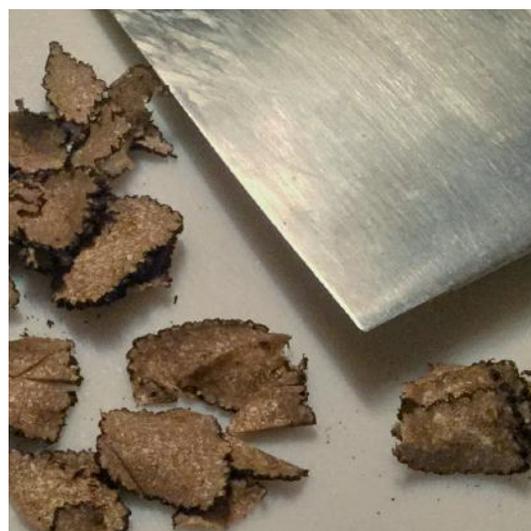
It would seem difficult to find a people more connected to land they live on through the work they do and the food that they eat than the Provençaux. Provençal recipes vary in their ingredients and preparation across the region and inventive chefs deliver updated versions of dishes allowing us to rediscover new configurations of our favorites. Here are some to look out for.

Sanglier

Plentiful wild boar roam the hills of the Provence Verte. A more flavoursome and robust version of pork, I think of it as being to swine what venison is to beef. 70 000 Hunters in the Var agree.

Truffles

The Provençaux train dogs and pigs to find truffles, the delicious mushrooms which grow among the roots of trees with a particular disease. The most common is Tuber Aestivum but there are several varieties available at local markets, delicatessens, and restaurants. The Michelin starred restaurant Chez Bruno in Lorgues specializes in Truffle based dishes and the whole menu is truffle-based. At my last visit I had the pleasure of meeting the son of the owner who is a partner in the business, and came over to our table holding an enormous basket of truffles for our inspection.



Soupe au Pistou

This is a tasty and filling soup made of beans and herbs. In August 2017 the soup evening in Montfort was accompanied by a concert and dancing.



Daube Provençale

This local speciality stew is made from Sanglier, (wild boar). A real treat flavored with wine, herbs and spices.

Marmite du Pêcheur

The fisherman's pot is best sampled at the restaurant L'Oie Qui Boit, one of our neighboring village Carces's gems. It is a pot of soup with a variety of fish, potatoes, vegetables and herbs.

Aïoli

Delicious garlic mayonnaise dip made the traditional style served with white fish, potatoes, boiled vegetables, this is hearty Provençal peasant food at its best. For the full Aïoli experience don't miss the Fête des Vendanges (wine harvest festival) in Montfort at the end of August.

Honey

Maison Lambot has chosen Les Ruchers De Norte Dame De Grace's Montfort-Sur-Argens store as our supplier. Lavender and Fleures De Provence honeys are served at breakfast. Our partners offer tours of small scale beekeeping operations (Ruches), please ask at Reception.



Jam and Chutney

Délices Maison produce over 106 varieties of jam and chutney using fruit grown between Montfort-sur-Argens and Brue Auriac. Their Maison Lambot selection is served at breakfast and is also available for sale in the kitchen.

C 2017 Maison Lambot B&B Provence. All Rights Reserved. This guide is the intellectual property of Maison Lambot B&B Provence. It is provided for information purposes for hotel guests. Endorsements in this guide based on merit and no free meals or other incentives have been accepted by Maison Lambot B&B writers in return for endorsements in this guide. Maison Lambot B&B Provence does not assess other accommodation so all opinions expressed relate solely to restaurant service even where accommodation is offered by the establishment reviewed.