

Rediscover the area just outside the towns

- **Drôme des Collines : Romans-sur-Isère**
- **Plaine de Valence : Valence-sur-Rhône**
- **Royans-Vercors : La-Chapelle-en-Vercors**
- **Vallée de la Drôme - Diois : Crest, Die**

**- Drôme Provençale : Montélimar,
Nyons**

The Drôme : Lands and towns

Some places, just like some people, do not reveal themselves in their true colours immediately but require closer acquaintance to be appreciated.

The Drôme lies at the crossroads of the main roads of Europe, it also forms the Southern limit of the Rhône-Alpes area and displays considerable contrasts, in light and shade, history and interests. The Drôme unfolds between the Rhone and the Vercors, at the gates of Provence ; the latter is reached at the level of Valence, where you will notice a slight change in accent, sunshine and fragrance. The earth here is rich, overflowing with sunshine.

The 5 lands in the Drôme

DRÔME DES COLLINES

North of the Drôme valley, there exists another Drôme, greener and more secretive. Its gentle folds extend from the slopes of the Bas-Dauphiné and the Vercors to the river valleys of the Rhone and the Isère, where its frontiers lie. The Drôme des Collines is a land mantled with forests, orchards and vineyards, ensuring a gentle transition between mountain and plain, the Alps and Provence. You can visit the Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval, pass through the Tain-l'Hermitage vineyards and discover the shoe-making centre of Romans.

ROYANS - VERCORS

The Vercors is an unforgettable setting which never fails to entrance the visitor: cliff-hanging roads, grandiose panoramas, underground rivers and caves systems. The Vercors Regional Park offers vast expanses for summer outdoor activities and, in the winter, all snow sports. Proud of its heritage, the Vercors maintains the memory of its heroic past during World War II and invites the visitor to follow the paths of freedom.

VALENCE SUR RHÔNE

Situated on the principal European North-South route, Valence is both a place to break a journey and enjoy a longer stay.

The old town with its pedestrianised shopping streets, its shady squares fringed with tempting terraces and its attractive facades in pastel colours, has maintained the charm of the past in the centre of a town resolutely facing the future.

Within easy reach of the Vercors via Chabeuil, Peyrus and the col des Limouches, Valence is also a point of departure for excursions.

DRÔME VALLEY - DIOIS

Set between Vercors and Provence, the Drôme valley forms a deep and green trench. Its nourishing soil brings forth treasures which will satisfy all gourmets : picodon, croquants, the renowned Clairette, aromatic plants. Lavender is grown on the mountain sides in the heart of the Diois. Steeped in artistic and cultural inspiration, a number of creative spirits have established themselves here : potters, glass blowers, artists, writers and sculptors.

DRÔME PROVENCALE

Marked by the seal of the olive tree and the wine, Drôme Provençale opens its "guarrigues" to the tinkling of the bells of flocks of sheep and goats. From Montélimar to Dieulefit, from the Tricastin to the Baronnies, the area presents an aromatic bouquet of thyme and lavender, cypresses and holm oak ; the extraordinary mosaic of fields testifies to its southern influence. With its secretive mountains under a sky that is always blue, Drôme Provençale will surely entice you. !

The Main Towns

VALENCE And its plain

The town is situated on the main North-South route, ideal for breaking a journey. It is also the **Prefecture**, the country town. The old town with its pedestrianised shopping streets opens on to shady terraces. Here there is a festive spirit abroad in the evenings. Don't miss the **Maison des Têtes** and the **Maison Dupré Latour** dating to the 16th century. **St Apollinaire's cathedral** with its polychrome decoration can be visited, as can the **Musée de Valence** in its charming 18th century setting. A superb collection of red chalk drawings by Hubert Robert is on permanent display. Idle in the **Parc Jouvet** or cruise on the Rhône from the Epervière.



Le Kiosque Peynet - J. Cerezo



Crest - A. Méjia

MONTELMAR Drôme Provençale

With its **Allées Provençales** where you can pass the time of day on a terrace, the nougat capital draws in the tourist. Walk the pedestrianised area of the old town : **Maison Diane de Poitiers, Hôtel du Puy Montbrun, Hôtel de Chabrilan, Collégiale Ste Croix, Porte St Martin. The Château des Adhémar**, nucleus of the old town, provides the setting each year for exhibitions of renown. **The Musée de la Miniature** provides all the interest to be found in the prodigiously small. The charming gates to the South of France, Montélimar, deserve a detour.



Les Allées provençales – A. Mejia

CREST Vallée de la Drôme - Diois

The town of Crest is mainly famous for its **Tower**, the highest keep in France (52 metres). The tower began life as a castle in the late 13th century and subsequently became a fortress and a prison between the 15th and 19th centuries. However, in summer, guided tours are also organised to explore the old town and its past, including the **Cordeliers chapel and Stairs, the Montségur Gate, the picturesque streets of the Cuiretteries**. Crest also hosts the nationally recognised **Vocal Jazz Festival** each summer.

ROMANS Drôme des Collines

This footwear centre attracts visitors with its Musée International de la Chaussure housed in the former couvent de la Visitation, a superb building now sensitively converted. You can admire the creations of the greatest shoe makers. This is a unique place where over 13,000 items are conserved in collections. At Romans, the factory shops of the luxury shoe trade cater for a larger and ever more knowledgeable clientele. Allow yourself to drift into the heart of the old town : **collégiale St-Barnard, Rue de l'Armillerie, l'escalier Josaphat, la place aux Herbes, le calvaire des Récollets**. Musical productions in the old town are all part of the charm of August. Musical thursdays, Place de l'Horloge, feature free concerts. On these occasions there is a warm and festive mood beneath **the Jacquemart**.



Romans - A. Meija

LA CHAPELLE EN VERCORS Royans - Vercors

Built on small eminence, some way from its encircling ring of mountains, this village presents some of the traits of a southern village with its precociously warm shades, its facades and roofs. Its geographical position, in the central part of the massif and the heartland of the Vercors has made it both an important historic and touristic cross-roads, as well as the local district centre (canton). Bombed and burned in July 1944, La Chapelle was comprehensively rebuilt from 1948 onwards. The main route of access in the spectacular **Route des Goulets** which follows the deep **Vernaison Valley**. **The Draye Blanche** cave, on the road leading to Vassieux unveils stalactites, curiously draped stones and 15 metre high petrified waterfalls to the visitor.

DIE Vallée de la Drôme - Diois

Historically, Die played an important role in the Roman period, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as the **Porte St-Marcel, Cathédrale Notre Dame, Chapelle St-Nicolas and Abbaye de Valcroissant** all bear witness. Renaissance, Protestantism and resistance have all left their mark on the town. For the visitor, Die provides a rendez-vous with local produce with its sparkling and fruity **Clairette**. The vineyards cover 1,200 hectares of AOC Clairette de Die vineyard, divided between 32 villages. Clairette de Die is a tradition waiting to be discovered.



Die - L. Pascale

NYONS Drôme Provençale

This old medieval town with its **Quartier des Halles**, forts and centre invites discovery. Visit the **Musée Archéologique, Musée de l'Olivier, Moulins à Huile and Jardin Botanique**. A **spa town**, Nyons is also famous for its olive trees and olive oil, and satisfies the most demanding palate. Honey, picodon and lavender are also local specialities. The **Rencontres Méditerranéennes** and the **Olivades** are joyous occasions in summer, without forgetting the **Alicoque**, welcoming in the new oil in February.



Pont roman à Nyons - F. Isler

The Drôme in a few figures

The department owes its name to the river Drôme (the Roman Druma), which rises in the department and traverses it from one side to the other, from East to West, thus creating a natural frontier between the northern and southern halves of the department.

Situated on the 45th parallel and containing some mountainous terrain, one can quickly pass from 2,400 m to 60 m (Pierrelatte). The Drôme enjoys a range of different climates, producing considerable diversity in fauna and flora.

Note that there is an island belonging to the Vaucluse in the South of the Drôme, commonly known as the Enclave des Papes or Valréas.

Tourism figures

7.4 million accommodation nights

36th place in the department league table for French visitors.

200 million Euros spent by French tourists.

4,500 permanent tourist jobs.

Characteristics :

Highest Point : Rocher Rond (2456 m).

Area : 6 561 sq. kms

Density : 67 inhabitants per sq. km

Communes : 370

Population : 437 778 inhabitants

Main towns :

Valence (66 568)

Romans (33 665)

Montélimar (32 896)

Nyons (6 948)

Die (4 668)

Gîtes de France :

585 rural gîtes

50 gîtes d'étape et de séjour

5 gîtes for children

138 rooms and tables d'hôtes

Visitors :

64 % are French (30,2 % Rhône-Alpes, 25,1 % Paris area, 11,4 % PACA, 4,9 % North-Pas de Calais).

36 % are foreigners (46 % Dutch, 16 % Belgian, 14 % Deutsche, 7 % English).

Accommodation :

211 listed hotels including 35 Logis de France

132 approved camp-sites

4 farm camp-sites

40 "natural" camp-sites

348 approved **Clévacances** seasonal rentals

8 approved **Clévacances** rooms and tables d'hôtes

62 holiday centres and holiday villages

Do you know ?

Ferrassières is the southern most commune in the Rhône-Alpes area.

The smallest village in the Drôme only has 1 inhabitant but is still a charming place for all that (**Rochefourchat**, in Drôme provençale).

Sources : SOFRES-SDT 2003- INSEE – Observatoire du Tourisme Drôme – Gîtes de France – Clévacances.

*Il s'agit du nombre de structures et non de chambres.

