



The Top 10 Most Beautiful Beaches and Coves of Pyrénées-Orientales

Welcome to the sun-drenched shores of the Pyrénées-Orientales, where the Mediterranean meets the mountains in a spectacular display of natural beauty. This enchanting region in the south of France boasts some of the most stunning beaches and hidden coves in all of Europe.

From vast stretches of golden sand to secluded rocky inlets, we've curated a countdown of the ten most breathtaking coastal spots in Catalan Country. Whether you're seeking lively beach bars, family-friendly shallows, or pristine natural environments, our guide will help you discover the perfect seaside retreat for your holiday in the South of France.

 par **Nuno Matox**



Crique du Forat: The Crown Jewel of Paulilles

1

Top Ranking

The undisputed champion of our coastal collection

3

Coves

Distinct coves within the stunning Paulilles bay

2

Activities

Perfect for paddleboarding and snorkelling

Crique du Forat (or Fourat) represents the pinnacle of coastal beauty in the region. This sheltered haven boasts crystal-clear turquoise waters embraced by dramatic rocky headlands. Located within the Paulilles bay area, it offers ideal conditions for paddleboarding and underwater exploration.

The surrounding landscape features Mediterranean vegetation clinging to rugged cliffs, creating a striking contrast against the azure sea. While some sections may be accessible only via steep paths, the effort is handsomely rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views and occasionally, a secluded cove all to yourself.

Anse Sainte-Catherine: Port-Vendres' Hidden Treasure



Sheltered Location

Protected from the Tramontane wind



Scenic Beauty

Nestled between Cap Béar and dramatic cliffs



Coastal Path

Accessible via picturesque walking trails



Pristine Waters

Crystal clear Mediterranean for swimming



Claiming the second spot in our countdown, Anse Sainte-Catherine is a true maritime gem nestled between Port-Vendres and Cap Béar. This protected inlet offers a peaceful retreat sheltered from the region's famous Tramontane wind, making it an ideal spot for swimming even on breezy days.

The rocky coastline creates a dramatic backdrop, with jagged cliffs plunging into crystalline waters. While less known to tourists than neighbouring beaches, locals treasure this secluded haven for its untouched beauty and natural tranquility. The coastal path offers stunning vistas for those willing to explore beyond the beach itself.

Bocal du Tech: A Wild Natural Paradise



Natural Reserve

Located within the protected Mas Larrieu natural area, this beach represents an ecological treasure. The estuary where the Tech River meets the Mediterranean creates a unique habitat for diverse flora and fauna.

The preserved dune system supports rare plant species that have disappeared from more developed coastlines. Birdwatchers will delight in spotting numerous species that make their home in this unspoiled environment.

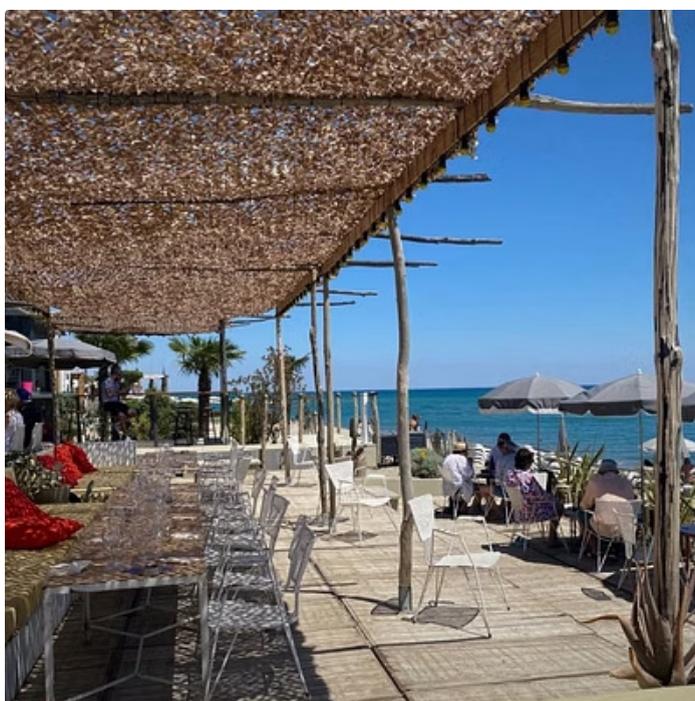
Taking third place in our ranking, Bocal du Tech epitomises the wild, unspoiled beauty that can still be found along the Pyrénées-Orientales coastline. Located on the commune of Elne, this pristine stretch of sand offers a refreshing alternative to the region's more developed beaches.

Wild Beauty

Unlike the manicured beaches of nearby resorts, Bocal du Tech offers a gloriously untamed coastal experience. The wide expanse of sand stretches between Saint Cyprien and Argelès-sur-Mer, providing ample space even in peak season.

The beach's natural character makes it popular with those seeking a more authentic connection with nature. Some sections are frequented by naturists, while others attract families looking to escape the more crowded tourist beaches.

Plage du Bourdigou: Torreilles' Natural Sanctuary



Securing fourth position in our countdown, Plage du Bourdigou presents a harmonious blend of natural beauty and subtle amenities. This expansive beach in Torreilles offers a more natural experience than many of the region's coastal destinations, with its unspoiled shoreline and preserved dune landscape.

While much of the beach retains its wild character, visitors can also enjoy the convenience of beach clubs like MAYA and ZAZA, where Mediterranean cuisine and refreshing drinks are served with panoramic sea views. The contrast between developed and untouched sections gives Bourdigou a unique appeal, satisfying both nature enthusiasts and those seeking a touch of comfort.

Crique de Tancade: Banyuls' Secret Paradise



Follow the coastal path

Begin your journey on the marked trail



Hike for 30 minutes

Enjoy spectacular views along the way



Discover hidden paradise

Arrive at the secluded cove

Ranking fifth in our collection, Crique de Tancade epitomises the adage that the most rewarding destinations often require extra effort. This wild, secluded cove near Banyuls-sur-Mer demands a 30-minute hike along the coastal path, but those who make the journey are rewarded with a pristine slice of Mediterranean paradise.

The small pebble beach is framed by rugged cliffs covered in aromatic Mediterranean scrubland, creating a natural amphitheatre that amplifies the soothing sound of waves. The crystal-clear waters offer excellent visibility for snorkelling, revealing a vibrant underwater ecosystem. The relative difficulty of access ensures that even in peak summer months, Tancade retains its tranquil atmosphere.

Sentier Sous-Marin: An Underwater Adventure at Peyrefitte



Sheltered Coves

The Cerbère coastline features numerous protected inlets that offer refuge from the powerful Tramontane wind, creating ideal swimming conditions even on breezy days.



Underwater Discovery

The Sentier Sous-Marin (underwater trail) provides a unique self-guided snorkelling experience through the marine reserve, with informational buoys explaining the diverse ecosystem.



Marine Life

The protected waters of the Banyuls-Cerbère Marine Reserve host an impressive variety of fish, sea urchins, starfish and colourful underwater vegetation.

Taking sixth place in our coastal countdown, the Peyrefitte cove offers much more than just a beautiful beach. This special location is home to the famous Sentier Sous-Marin, an underwater snorkelling trail that allows visitors to explore the rich biodiversity of the Banyuls-Cerbère Marine Reserve.

More Coastal Treasures: Completing Our Top 10

1 Plage de l'Ouille, Collioure

A picturesque cove nestled against rocky cliffs and featuring crystal-clear waters. This small beach offers a more intimate experience than Collioure's main beaches, with stunning views of the coastline and the historic Royal Castle.

2 Plage du Racou, Argelès-sur-Mer

A charming beach with a village-like atmosphere, where colourful beach houses meet golden sands. The sheltered bay creates gentle waters perfect for families, while the nearby Criques des Porteills offer more secluded spots accessible via the coastal path.

3 Plage du Lido, Between Canet and Saint-Cyprien

A wild stretch of coastline featuring traditional reed fishing huts near Lake Saint-Nazaire. This natural beach provides a stark contrast to the developed resorts nearby, offering a glimpse into the region's fishing heritage.

4 Plage de Torreilles/Le Barcarès

Located at the estuary of the Agly River, this beach marks the meeting point between river and sea, creating a unique ecosystem. The expansive sands offer plenty of space for relaxation away from the summer crowds.

Rounding out our top ten are four distinctive coastal destinations, each with its own unique character. From the charming village atmosphere of Le Racou to the wild estuaries where rivers meet the Mediterranean, these beaches showcase the remarkable diversity of the Pyrénées-Orientales coastline.

After a day of coastal exploration, visitors might consider stopping at **Le MOOT** in the picturesque village of Eus for refreshments with a spectacular view of Mount Canigó, the sacred mountain of Catalan Country, perfectly complementing the maritime experiences with a taste of the region's mountain splendour.



Le MOOT Vermoutherie Bar Tapas E. U. S.

