

Winter Festivals in Provence

Is there anything better than sitting around the fireplace with family and friends on a brisk, winter's evening? Yes, yes there is –sitting around the fireplace at a luxury vacation villa in Provence.

Consider visiting Provence in the off season. The weather may be a bit crisp, but it's the perfect opportunity to enjoy winter festivals and celebrations in a region so full of tradition and culture. Whether you opt to rent a villa in the [Luberon](#) or the [Alpilles](#), in [Gordes](#) or [St Rémy](#), you'll be near fun festivities and never too far from local specialty *vin chaud*, or hot mulled wine.

From mid-October through all of November, villages throughout Provence host the [Festival des Soupes](#), when locals prepare delicious soups from traditional recipes handed down from generation to generation. During the event, the soups are evaluated by a jury and then visitors are invited to taste.

Truffle fans won't want to miss the Carpentras Truffle Festival. On Friday mornings from November 15, 2014 to March 15, 2015, find beautiful, aromatic black truffles harvested from the slopes of Mont Ventoux.

Aficionados may also want to visit Pernes les Fontaines Truffle Market on January 25, 2015 for truffle tastings, truffle searching demonstrations, and an array of truffle products.

Provence kicks off holiday celebrations on December 4th, *Saint Barbe Day*, and continues through February 2nd, *Candlemas*. This period is called *Calendale*.

Santons, tiny clay figurines depicting the Nativity scene, are part of the Provençal holiday tradition. Santon fairs and

exhibitions begin as early as November and are held through the first part of January. Find great gifts, enjoy Provençal culture and musical performances.

The [Santons Fair in Marsielle](#) starts on the last Sunday of November and goes through December 31st.

The [Aix Santons Fair](#) begins November 20th and runs through December 31st.

Sorgues hosts a [Santons and Crafts](#) fair November 22 – 23, 2014.

[Saint-Rémy-de-Provence](#), a favored village among visitors to Provence, is the place to be if you're looking for festivities during the holidays.

Nocturne de Noël takes place in early December, when the town's holiday lights are all switched on. Shops stay open late and live music plays.

The [Christmas Market](#), *Le Petit Marché du Gros Souper*, offers crafts, santons, christmas caroling and all the ingredients for the *Gros Souper*, or big dinner, and the thirteen desserts traditionally eaten in Provence on Christmas Eve. The 2014 market will be held on December 21st – 23rd.

The [Mimosa Festival](#) is held for ten days each February celebrating the beautiful, yellow mimosa flower with decorated floats, music and street entertainment. You can explore a mimosa forest, learn about the plant's cultivation, or visit a perfumery to see how the mimosa fragrance is captured in a bottle. In 2015, the festival takes place from February 18 – 25 in Mandelieu.

The [Lemon Festival](#) in Menton, February 14 – March 4, 2015,

features giant designs made exclusively from citrus fruits as well spectacular floats decorated with oranges and lemons.

And while not exactly a festival, stores in France are only legally allowed to hold sales twice a year, in January and July, so if you're in Provence in January, enjoying the blooming mimosas, why not drop into a shop or two.

In sum, exploring Provence during the year end holidays is a fantastic alternative to the busier summer season, with the weekly price of luxury villas rentals at significant reductions.



Interested in renting your own private [luxury villa in Provence](#)? Contact [Only Provence](#) to get the inside scoop and plan your holiday!