

# PRESS KIT

## Palace of the Popes 2015



**AVIGNON**  
**TOURISME**



Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Centre historique d'Avignon :  
Palais des papes,  
ensemble épiscopal et Pont d'Avignon  
inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en 1995



**Palais des Papes**



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# A Palace for Avignon

## **Avignon, a magnificent urban landscape**

The Rocher des Doms, overlooking the City of Avignon and the Rhône River, is a superb architectural ensemble which includes the Avignon Bridge, the Ramparts, the Petit Palais, the Doms Cathedral and the impressive walls and towers of the Palace of the Popes.



UNESCO has ranked the architectural ensemble in Avignon as World Heritage for all humanity. Once a flourishing Roman city, Avignon became the capital of the Christian world in the 1300's. Referred to as the «Other Rome» Avignon was home to seven popes and two anti-popes, before the papacy definitively returned to Rome.

## **The Palace of the Popes is the symbol of the Church's position in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Christian Western world.**

In the early 1300's, the papacy experienced troubled political times. In Italy, a raging civil war and climate of danger created complex circumstances which led the pope to flee Roma and settle in Avignon as a temporary measure.

In 1305 Pope Clement V was elected pope and made Avignon the new seat of the papacy.

Construction of the Palace of the Popes was started in 1335 and took less than twenty years to accomplish. The Palace was primarily built by two strong "builder" popes, Pope Benedict XII and his successor, Pope Clement VI.

The Palace of the Popes is the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. With 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, it has the volume of 4 Gothic cathedrals. Inside the Palace, visitors can tour over twenty rooms which echo with the important world events which took place. Visitors see the popes' private apartments and magnificent frescoes left by the Italian artist Matteo GIOVANNETTI.



# The Avignon Popes



## SEVEN POPES and TWO ANTI-POPES

### **Pope Clement V: (1305 - 1314)**

The bitter rivalry which pitted the King of France – Philip IV – called Philip the Fair, against Pope Boniface VIII led to the election of a French priest, Bertrand de Got, to the papacy in 1305. Bertrand de Got, who had been Archbishop of Bordeaux, took the name of Pope Clement V. Many different events, including the Knights Templar affair, led the pope to settle in Avignon in 1309. Avignon was a vassal to the Holy See, and bordered the Comtat Venaissin, church property since 1274. Pope Clement V stayed off and on in Avignon, and took up quarters in the Dominican convent.

### **Pope John XXII: (1316 - 1334)**

French Cardinals then dominated the Sacred College, ensuring the election of a former bishop from Avignon, Jacques Duèse, who reigned as pope under the name of Pope John XXII, from 1316 to 1334.

Continued political strife in Italy and civil war between the classes led the new pope to remain in Avignon. He lived in the Episcopal Palace, near the cathedral, where he undertook significant extensions and embellishments.

### **Pope Benedict XII: (1334 - 1342)**

The Episcopal Palace was not to the taste of Pope Benedict XII (Jacques Fournier). He acquired the palace, demolished it, and had his architect, Pierre Poisson, build a powerful fortress instead. This palace, now known as the “Old Palace” was vast and austere, a reflection of the background of the pope, a former Cistercian monk.

### **Pope Clement VI: (1342 - 1352)**

Pope Benedict XII's successor, Pope Clement VI was an aristocrat with demanding taste. He deemed the Palace unworthy of pontifical majesty, and had his architect, Jean de Louvres, build a second Palace, called the “New Palace”, in a more

ornate style. Pope Clement VI brought in a team of painters from Italy to embellish his new palace. The artists worked under the direction of Matteo Giovanetti, from Viterbo. In 1348, the pope bought the City of Avignon from Queen Jeanne of Naples, Countess of Provence.

### **Pope Innocent VI : (1352 - 1362)**

Innocent VI (Etienne Aubert) focused on pacifying the Italian territories of the Holy See. He continued the construction work started by Pope Clement VI.

### **Pope Urbain V : (1362 - 1370)**

Urbain V (Guillaume Grimoard) extended the papal gardens and planted an orchard below the palace. He added a gallery known as La Roma, which has disappeared since.

### **Pope Gregory XI: (1370 - 1378)**

Gregory XI worked to return the papacy to Rome, and achieved his ends in 1376. Upon his death in 1378, Rome exerted violent pressure to ensure the election of an Italian pope, Urbain VI. A second pope was also elected, creating the Great Western Schism. This divided the Christian world into two conflicting rivalries.

### **Pope Clément VII (1378 - 1394)**

### **Pope Benedict XIII (1394 - 1423)**

During the second Western Schism (1378 - 1417), two “anti-popes” lived in the Palace, Pope Clement VII (Robert of Geneva) and Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna), who fled Avignon in 1403, after a gruelling 5-year siege laid against him.

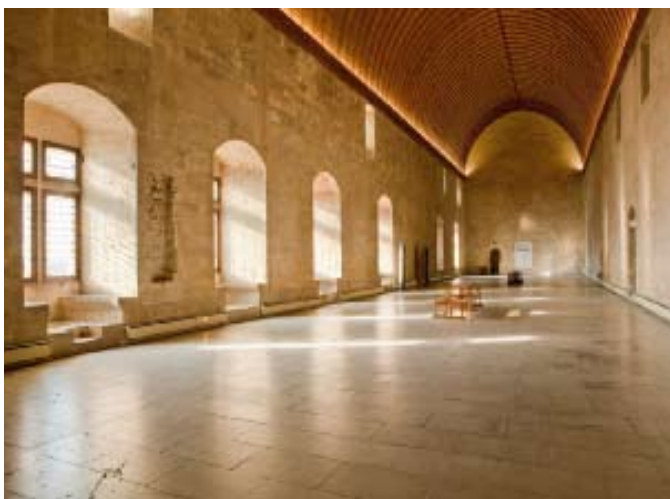
Portraits of the Avignon Popes  
as imagined by Henri Serrur  
in 1839-1840.

# Palace key dates and numbers

**The Palace of the Popes** is the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. There is 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space – equivalent to 4 Gothic cathedrals!

**Pope Benedict XII** had the old Palace built between 1335 and 1342. His successor, Pope Clement VI began the construction of the new Palace in 1343. The Palace of the Popes was built in less than 20 years!

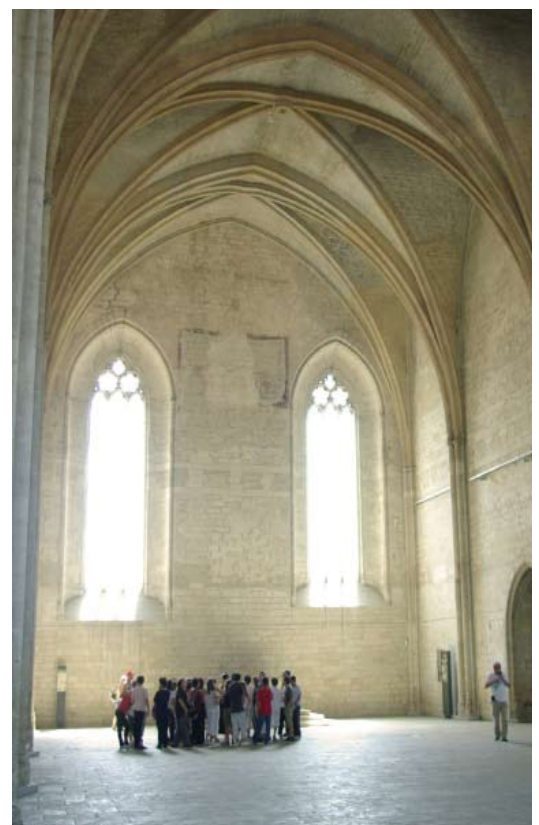
**The Honour Courtyard** has been a prestigious venue for the Avignon Festival since 1947, when Jean Vilar founded the “week for art”. In 2013, Avignon will be celebrating the 67<sup>th</sup> year of the festival.



**The Grand Tinel** was the setting for papal banquets, great feasts where 5 courses of 4 dishes per course were served.

The papal table stood on a raised dais. The pope dined alone seated on a throne under a canopy. Guests were seated on benches along the walls, and the food was served from the centre of the room.

**The Great Chapel** is a very impressive room 52 meters long, 16 meters wide and 20 meters high. Here, sumptuous ceremonies were held, including papal coronations and funerals.





# Prestigious Cultural Venue

The Palace of the Popes keeps pace with the Avignon cultural scene. Many special events take place in the palace throughout the year:

## Avignon Festival

**4<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July**

For 60 years now the Honour Courtyard has served as a true open-air stage every July. Since the very first Festival in 1947, the Honour Courtyard resounds with eclectic programming of classics and contemporary theatre.

## Les Luminessences

**Every night from August 12<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Sound and light show in the Palace of the Popes.

[www.lesluminessences-avignon.com](http://www.lesluminessences-avignon.com)



## . Over one century of exhibitions:

The City of Avignon took over the ownership of the Palace of the Popes in 1907. Major restoration work was started and the palace was immediately opened to the public, becoming a vital part of cultural and tourism activity, as it is today.

Among the major events at the Palace of the Popes:

- . **1947: The start of the Avignon Theatre Festival:** A Week of Art in Avignon. Exhibition of contemporary paintings and sculptures (Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Klee, Miro...)
- . **1970: Picasso exhibit** (works from 1969 to 1970), 165 canvasses and 50 drawings
- . **1973: Picasso** (works from 1970 to 1972), 200 works
- . **1993: Botero in Avignon**
- . **1994: Dubuffet - paysages** (1944 - 1984)
- . **1996: Deux Palais pour Rodin**
- . **2000: La Beauté in Fabula** – part of Avignon European City of Culture – contemporary art
- . **2010: Miquel Barceló**
- . **2011: Bridges**
- . **2013: les Papesses**
- . **2014: Stefan Szczesny**

# A Thousand and One Ways to Visit



## **Audioguide in 11 languages and accessible to hearing and sight impaired**

Visit the Palace on your own with the AUDIOGUIDE in 11 languages: French, English, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, and Polish).

Discover the Palace at your own pace and learn as you visit (2 €).

### **Tours:**

Reservations: + 33 (0)4 32 74 32 74 and on-line at

[www.avignon-tourisme.com](http://www.avignon-tourisme.com)

### **Palais secret: off-the-beaten track visit**

During this special visit, off you go along hidden corridors, up and down secret stairways, from the cellar to the rooftop terraces of the Palace. See the private chambers of the popes, the baths, the gardens... The visit ends with a lovely snack featuring Provençal products in winter or a drink in summer on the panoramic Grand Dignitaries' terrace. This tour may not be suitable for small children and persons with reduced mobility.

**In French every Saturday and Sunday at 2:30pm in January, February, March, November and December 2015. Every Saturday at 2:30pm and Sunday at 10:30 am in April, May, September, October 2015.**

**In English in April, May, September, and October every Saturday 10:30am**

### **Once upon a time at the Palace of the Popes**

Lecturer-guide tours of the Palace – the residence of the Sovereign Pontiffs in the 1300's, the biggest Gothic palace in Europe. See 25 rooms – ceremonial rooms, chapels, cloister, private papal apartments with priceless frescoes. UNESCO World Heritage.

Step into the universe of the Popes and discover

daily life and prestigious events in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.  
**Visit in french. At Easter, May, July, August, October's holiday.**

### **The Tale of the Palace of Popes for all ages**

A guided tour specially designed for families and children, full of details on the daily life at the time of the popes.

**At Easter, May, August and October's holiday.**

### **Strolling from the Bridge to the Palace**

Discover or rediscover: two exceptional monuments that are part of UNESCO World Heritage and French history. Leaves from the bridge.

**In August on Wednesday at 3pm and in September on Saturday at 3pm.**

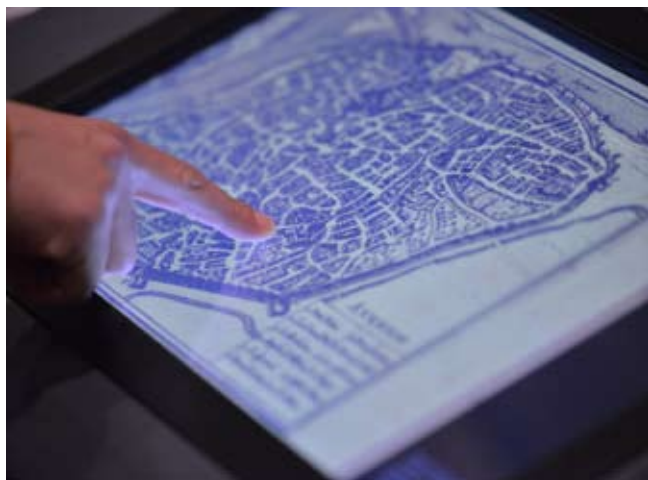


# 2015 Events and Projects

## The multi-media visit at the Palace of the Popes

Relive the splendour of the papal court and go back in time to the 14<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the new multimedia tools which animate and add to your palace tour. A new audio-guide in 11 languages is synchronised to 7 films in various rooms on the tour. This combination presents a very dynamic and fun view of the construction of the palace and shows the frescoes and furnishings that were once in the rooms. Audio guide commentary now has music, and a screen to show certain paintings and illuminations in 11 languages. (2 €).

[www.palais-des-papes.com](http://www.palais-des-papes.com)



The Saint Martial chapel at the Palace of the Popes is a true masterpiece of 14<sup>th</sup> century painting.

The painted decors in the chapel were commissioned by Pope Clement VI, and executed by the Italian painter Matteo Giovannetti.

The chapel has long been closed to the public for preservation reasons. Today, the current major restoration project is ongoing.

This restoration site has been assigned to an Italian firm, the "Consorzio ARKÉ". This restoration works with a leading edge scientific committee and is co-financed by the City and the national government, with philanthropic support from the Fondation BNP Paribas. Two steps are scheduled. In 2015, the work site enters a new phase devoted to studies of the preventive conservation required prior to re-opening the chapel.

[avignon-saintmartial.blogspot.com](http://avignon-saintmartial.blogspot.com)

## Guided tour of the Saint Martial chapel

Enter the universe of a masterpiece and learn the history of its restoration. Take part in a rare opportunity for a guided tour of the chapel prior to its opening in 2016. See the outstanding luminosity of the frescoes painted by Matteo Giovannetti, official painter under Pope Clément VI and a major artist of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Tickets on sale on [www.avignon-tourisme.com](http://www.avignon-tourisme.com), by phone and at the Popes Palace. Booking ahead.

Visit in French.

**June to December – see schedule on**

[www.avignon-tourisme.com](http://www.avignon-tourisme.com)



Photo ARKE



### Never-before seen images of the 1901/1944 restoration

June to end of December 2015

The Palace of the Popes invites you to a visual journey through the essential phases of the restoration of the Palais des Papes, conducted by Henri Nodet father and son, chief architects for the French Monuments historiques in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An impressive collection of black-and-white photographs has been displayed along the entire tour path showing views of the palace before, during and after the restoration. These large format photos also show the palace when it served as a barracks, occupied by soldiers until the early 1900's.

[www.palais-des-papes.com](http://www.palais-des-papes.com)



## Les Luminessences d'Avignon

### Monumental video show in the Palace of the Popes

Season 3 - every night from August 12<sup>th</sup> to October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015

English performances at 10.15pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Sound and light display designed by Bruno Seillier. A 35-minute staged show that restores the castle to its medieval glory, when Christianity reached its apex.

The Cour d'Honneur at the Palais des Papes is drenched in light, plunging spectators into the midst of over-sized high-resolution images.

A heady journey through time.

The Palais des Papes: a historical gem set in all its glory beauty right in the heart of Europe

Seeing it in all its majesty, standing proud in the historical heart of Avignon, people often wonder: but what were popes doing here in Provence? Why did they leave the Roman hillsides to come to the banks of the Rhône ? The monumental video projection, music and story-telling reveal the history of the building, the city and the region like never before.



[www.lesluminessences-avignon.com](http://www.lesluminessences-avignon.com)

Contact presse : Sylvie JOLY - + 33 (0)4 32 74 36 54 - [s.joly@avignon-tourisme.com](mailto:s.joly@avignon-tourisme.com)

# Meeting and Convention Centre

## The Meeting and Convention Centre of the Popes' Palace

The Popes' Palace Convention Centre: an excellent place for staging all major events

Located within the core of the Popes' Palace, historical monument that is a UNESCO World Heritage site, the convention centre offers character meeting rooms in the heart of Avignon, with 16 meeting spaces for 20 to 536 persons, reception space for up to 700 persons and 1800m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space. Many hotels within walking distance (3700 rooms, 1600 of which are in the centre city).

The Palais des Papes Meeting and Convention Centre has been ISO 9001-certified since 2002 and has been awarded QUALITE TOURISME since June 2011. These distinctions are true testimony to our clients of our commitment to quality service in order to constantly meet the needs of our clientele.

The Popes' Palace Convention Centre, the top Congress Centre in France, has been awarded the Qualité Tourisme label.

### Avignon Congrès

6, rue Pente rapide  
Charles Ansidei- BP 149  
84008 Avignon cedex 1  
[www.avignon-congres.com](http://www.avignon-congres.com)

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An original angle on the Popes' Palace

Discover the Popes' Palace when it's empty of visitors, experience the magic of the place:

- Visit the "must-sees": the Popes' Palace and the Avignon bridge, both fantastic monuments listed UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

- A private showing for an evening visit, as an appetizer to your gala dinner, in the ceremonial premises of the Popes' Palace: Grand Tinel or Grande Audience rooms.

- Architectural backdrop: Drape lighting over the walls of the Grand Tinel and endow your evening ceremonies with superb atmosphere... You'll find yourself mesmerised by the giant lighting (on themes such as nature, water and outer space), an astounding succession of images accompanied by creatively-designed music to harmonise with the unique decor and create that "wow" factor for your evening.

- Incentive-based Noct'en Bulle activity: experience an unusual and unforgettable adventure in the depths of the monument with the fun Noct'en Bulle game: at nightfall, wearing hard hats and cap lamps, you'll be part of a huge treasure hunt, exploring the monument in ways you'd never imagined.



# Handy information



## Boutique

At the Palace of the Popes, the visit ends in one of the most beautiful rooms in the Palace – the Theology room.

Here is where the Boutique is now located. Browse among the specialised books on the Middle Ages, the games and decorative objects which reflect the Palace and your visit.



## Café terrace

The Grands Dignitaires terrace now holds the Palace of the Popes café.

Chilled beverages, warm drinks, snacks, regional products, sandwiches, pastries and other goodies are served during the high season.





## OPENING HOURS

The Palace of the Popes is open every day of the year.

Last tickets are sold one hour before the Palace closes.

1 to 31 March	9- 6:30
1 April to 30 June	9 – 7
1 to 31 July	9 – 8
1 to 31 August	9 – 8:30
1 Sept to 1 Nov	9 – 7
2 Nov. to 28 February	9:30 -5:45

Discount prices apply to the following:

- Children between 8 and 17 years old
- Cézam card
- Student card
- Carte vermeil
- Handicapped - 80% card (free over 80%) – French “famille nombreuse” card
- “Show your card/ARC” card

## Entrance fee Palace of Popes and bridge

2015

### Palais des Papes

Full price:	11 €
Reduced price:	9 €
School price:	5,50 €

### Palais des Papes + Pont

Full price:	13,50 €
Reduced price:	10,50 €
School price:	7 €

### Pont St Bénézet

Full price:	5 €
Reduced price:	4 €
School price:	3,50 €

### Luminessences

light and sound show	10 €
	TR 8 €

. Audioguide multimedia

11 languages: FR, GB, DE, IT, ES, DE, NL, RU, JP, CH, PO

Supplément +2 €, groups & reduced prices : +1 €

On-line sales on

[www.avignon-tourisme.com](http://www.avignon-tourisme.com)

