

Marseille (traditionally Marseilles in English), the second largest city in France and the third metropolitan area, is France's largest commercial port. Marseille is the capital of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur région, as well as the capital of the Bouches-du-Rhône département. Population: 800,000 with large North African immigrant population. One of Europe's busiest ports and a major industrial center on shore of Mediterranean not far from Rhone river delta, the port gained importance with completion of Suez Canal in 1869.

Consistoire de Marseille, 117-119, rue de Breteuil - 13006 MARSEILLE, Tél 04-91-37-49-64, Fax 04-91-37-83-90, [e-mail](#) has a [list](#) of all synagogues with addresses and telephone numbers.

[Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives](#)

[de France](#)

A partir de Février: 4, impasse

Dragon, tel. 04.91.57.03.35, . Today, France's second largest Jewish community lives in France's second largest city, Marseille. In 1896, this seaport of southern France had about 5,000 Jews in a population of 420,300, but it had a Jewish colony as early as the fifth century. In 567, exiles from Clermont-Ferrand and Auvergne sought refuge there from Bishop Avitus' forced conversions. Pope Gregory intervened in their behalf in 591, reproaching Theodore, Bishop of Marseilles, for having attempted to convert them by force and not by suasion. Jews of Marseille were scholars, merchants, laborers, coral craftsmen, and brokers. Benjamin of Tudela, the 12th-century traveler who chronicled the Jewish world of the time, provides a description of scholars, philosophers, and psalmists who lived among the Marseille Jews about 1165. He noted that the Jewish community numbered 300 members, who worshiped in two synagogues. In the thirteenth century the Jews carried on extensive commerce and had considerable relations with the East. While they are called "citizens of Marseilles" (cives Massiliæ), from the compact made in 1219 between the city and the bishop regarding municipal franchises and from the agreement between the inhabitants of Marseilles and the Duke of Avignon in 1257, this does not seem to denote that they had equal rights with their fellow Christian citizens. Still, although theoretically the Jews were citizens, certain laws make it clear that they were not treated as such. After the age of seven, they were obliged to have a disk of some colored material as large as the hand on their breasts, while married Jewesses were required to wear special veils called "orales" under penalty of a fine of five sous. As in other cities of the Provence, the Jews of Marseilles were forbidden to testify against Christians if their testimony was challenged or to work on Sundays and Christian holy days. They were likewise prohibited from going to the baths more than once a week, from journeying to Alexandria, or from embarking in groups of more than four on the same ship. Jewish passengers on a vessel, moreover, were forced to refrain from meat on days when the Christian passengers abstained. Their condition, which seems to have been favorable during the earlier parts of the Middle Ages, underwent a change in 1262, when the city was obliged to capitulate in consequence of an insurrection against the Duke of Anjou, Count of Provence, to whom the Jews were surrendered as property which he might tax at pleasure. The count, on the other hand, was well disposed toward the Jews, and in March, 1276, issued a severe edict against the inquisitors who had compelled them to wear a badge of greater size than the one worn by them since the Lateran Council of 1215, and extorted large sums from them under the pretext of fines. Toward the end of the thirteenth century a Jew living near the episcopal palace arranged some Purim games, which the Christians regarded as a mockery of their religion; and the bishop, making the whole community responsible, imposed a heavy fine upon it (Ibn Adret, Responsa, iii. 389). The

fourteenth century was a golden age for the Jews, for they were placed under the absolute protection of the municipality. The municipal council did not permit statutes to be construed in any way to their disadvantage, nor did it hesitate to oppose the guardian of the Jews appointed by the Count of Provence or the most hostile of the clergy to assure the security promised to the Jews by the laws of the city. They were permitted to engage in the same trades as Christians; most them were brokers, wine-, or cloth-merchants, or tailors. There was also one "magister lapidis" or stone-cutter. Another Jew, Crescas Davin (called Sabonerius) is said to have introduced the soap industry in 1371: and he was succeeded by his son Solomon Davin. Although the majority of the Jews were engaged in commerce, a number were physicians. The counts of Provence intervened in behalf of the Jews whenever occasion demanded. Thus, in 1320 King Robert enjoined his royal officers to afford special protection to the Jews, to assist them under all circumstances, and to receive them as needed either in his castles and fortresses or in theirs. In 1331 and 1332, Philippe de Sanguinet, seneschal of Provence, decreed that the Jewish communities in general and all Jews in particular should be protected against every vexation and that their property should be guarded by royal officers. No complaint seems ever to have been brought against the community as a whole. The Jewish quarter, with its principal street called "Carrerria Jusatarie" or "Carrerria Judæorum" and its lanes and byways, formed a kind of island designated "Insula Juzatarie" that occupied a considerable area. In 1350, the Jews planned to leave their ghetto, but the inquisitor objected and obliged them to remain. In 1357, Jews helped defend the city threatened by a siege. In 1385, they contributed fifty florins for a loan that the citizens of Marseilles found themselves obliged to contract. In return, Queen Marie and her son Louis II in 1389 confirmed the liberties, privileges, and immunities of the Jews. As long as Provence was independent, the counts refused to listen to the exaggerated complaints against the Jews, who continued to live under benevolent municipal statutes and franchises. In 1422, Queen Yolande of Naples, Countess of Provence, forbade her royal officers to accept certain personal property from the Jews, under penalty of forfeiture of office and of payment of 100 marks fine silver. When the city was taken by King Alphonso V of Aragon in 1423, the Jews suffered especially, and most of them fled from Marseilles, seeking refuge in various places of Provence. Some returned within a short time, under the protection of a safe-conduct, while those remaining were enjoined to return within fifteen days, under penalty of furnishing their coreligionists with a sufficient security to guarantee the payment of the communal debt incurred before the disasters of 1423. In 1463, King René, who ten years previously had entertained certain charges brought against the Jews without investigating them, declared that they had a right to his special protection, since they could count on it alone, not being able to rely on that of the Church. In 1481, on the complaint of two Jewish deputies, Solomon Botarelli and Baron de Castres, René closed the baptistery of Saint-Martin where a Christian woman had forcibly baptized a young Jewish girl. He obliged the parishioners to have their children baptized in the Church of St. Jacques de la Corrigerie. In 1484, lawless bands overran the cities of Provence, attacking and pillaging the Jews, assailed the community of Marseilles. The following year, the inhabitants of the city, accusing the Jews of usury and of various imaginary crimes, fell upon them and massacred a large number, demanding that King Charles VIII immediately expel the remainder from Provence. The king, not daring to comply at once with a demand so contrary to the tolerance hitherto characterizing the rule of the counts of Provence, decreed that all Jews desiring to depart should be permitted to leave the city unmolested, provided they had fulfilled all their engagements with the Christians. The municipal council, ignoring this royal command, forbade any Jew or Jewess to leave with property. The

Jews protested vigorously to the provost and the municipal council against this unjustifiable action and demanded the protection of the magistrates. These protests must have been in so far effective as to secure them a respite, for in 1492 the community was still numerous enough to ransom 118 Aragonian Jews captured by the pirate Bartholemei Janfredi, paying the sum of 1,500 écus, which it borrowed from a Christian. Eight years later, a royal decree of banishment from Marseilles was issued against the Jews, though it was not carried out completely until about 1501. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some Jews again settled at Marseilles. Among them were Villaréal, who was expelled in 1682 for having induced some Jewish families to come to the city and having opened a synagogue in his house; Lopez, originally from Bordeaux, who was driven out in 1711; and Rouget, who, by virtue of a residence of fifteen years at Marseilles, claimed in 1771 the right to engage in marine commerce. Since 1808, Marseilles has been the seat of a consistory, whose administrative authority extends over all the Jewish communities of southern France. The Jews had two synagogues in the Middle Ages, one "Scola Major," and the other "Scola Minor," but a Latin document mentions a third synagogue in an entirely different quarter. The present temple was built in 1865. The present community dates back to 1760. Grande Synagogue Breteuil, at 117, rue de Breteuil, tel. 04.91.37.49.64. Not far from Marseille's Old Port, was constructed in 1864 and contains the offices of the Consistoire de Marseille and other Jewish organizations. The interior is typical of French synagogues constructed in the early and mid-19th century following Jewish emancipation. Others possibly with information include Union Libérale Israélite de France 21, rue Martiny, tel. 04.91.71.97.46; Centre Communautaire Edmond Fleg 4, impasse Dragon, Tel. 04.91.37.42.01 ; and [Conseil](#)

[Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France](#)

A partir de Février: 4, impasse Dragon, tel. 04.91.57.03.35

and Bibliothèque Juive de Marseille Not open to the public. Call for information. 18, blvd Michelet, tel. 04.91.71.85.41 [January 2008]

Book: *Historique et relevé des cimetières juifs de Marseille* (1994)

Union Libérale Israelite de France (Progressive)

21 rue Martiny  
337 rue Paradis  
[Marseille](#)

Tel: 33 4 91 37 54 31 Fax: 33 4 91 37 54 31

**Cimetière des Trois Lucs:** 20, Tve du Commandeur - 13012 Marseille, Tél 04-91-89-94-15.

On 24th November 2003, seven graves were desecrated in the Jewish cemetery in the Trois-Lucs région in Marseilles. Anti-Semitic epithets, swastikas and racist slogans were painted on the gravestones. [January 2008]

**Cimetière la Timone:** 166, chemin de l'Armée d'Afrique - 13005 Marseille, Tél 04-96-12-45-81  
[January 2008]

**Cimetière Israélite des Camoins:** [January 2008]

**Cimetière des Vaudrans:** Chemin des Vaudrans [January 2008]

**Mont-Juif or Montjusieu Cemetery:** <http://www.bh.org.il/Communities/Archive/Marseilles.asp>  
: The modern Jewish community of Marseilles was founded in 1760; by 1768 they already had a small synagogue in a rented house on rue de Rome and a Jewish cemetery started to function in 1783 in the Rouet quarter after the land was purchased with the help of donations by 48 wealthy members of the community. A new synagogue was opened in 1790 at 1, rue du Pont. This new community was known for a long period as the Portuguese community as most of its founding families belonged to the Sephardi communities of Livorno, Italy - de Silva, Coen, de Segni, Attias, Foa, Gozlan, Cansino, Vital, and Tunis - Darmon (also spelled D'Armon), Boccara, Lumbroso, Daninos, Bembaron. They were joined by Jewish families from Avignon - Rigau, Duran, de Monteaux, Ravel, Ramut, Graveur, Caracasone, while others came from the Eastern Mediterranean countries - Constantini, Huziel, Brudo, Coen de Canea and from Tunisia - Semama, Lahmi, Bismot. Sabaton Constantini, a merchant of Candia (now Heraklion, in Crete, Greece) was instrumental in setting the basis of the new community. Constantini even met King Louis XVI of France in 1782 and received the royal approval for Jewish settlement in Marseilles and immediately 13 families received the right of settling in Marseilles. The Parliament of Aix-en-Provence recognized the Jewish community of Marseilles in 1788 and the privileges granted to it already in 1776. On the same occasion Daniel de Beaucarie, a Provençal Jew, is recognized as representative of the Jewish community of Marseilles. The "Jewish Nation" of Marseilles, numbering about 200 members, was granted full emancipation by the French Revolution already in January 1790, almost two years before the general emancipation of all Jews in France. New settlers came to Marseilles from other Jewish communities in Provence - Cremieu and Delpuget from Avignon, other branch of the Delpuget family came from Cavaillon as well as Jews from Aleppo (now in Syria): Marini, Sciama, Altaras. The community adopted the rite of the Jewish community of Livorno and Spanish was employed on a daily basis. In the wake of internal disputes, the community was reorganized in 1804, at the time its population was estimated at about 300 members. The establishment of a consistory in 1808 reinforced the leading role of the Jewish community of Marseilles over other Jewish communities in the south of France. Following the expulsion of 1501, the place was destroyed by a Christian landlord.  
Source: and others. [January 2008]

Source:

[Jewish Encyclopedia](#)

***Rouet Cemetery:*** After the expulsion of the Jews, King Charles VIII presented the site to a citizen of Marseilles. In 1783 Solomon de Silva and Mordecai Day Darmon bought a plot in the Quartier du Rouet. This served as a cemetery for the Jews until 1804, when it no longer sufficed; and a larger piece of land was bought in the vicinity ("R. E. J." xiv. 302). [January 2008]

***St. Pierre Cemetery:*** Towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jewish community of Marseilles endeavored to purchase land for a new cemetery that finally opened in 1855 in St. Pierre neighborhood. The old cemetery of Rouet was closed and in the 1970's disappeared beneath new urban developments, the remains and the headstones having been transferred to the new cemetery. In 1904, the community of Marseilles owned two cemeteries, one closed, near the Place Castellane and the other in the Quartier de St. Pierre. [January 2008]