



Hannah and Molly in Moilets

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I'm a family travel expert - Moliets-et-Maa is the hidden French gem to add to your bucket list right now

Hannah Britt stayed in a Summer France chalet in Moliets-et-Maa with her family and fell in love with its laid back way of life. Here's why the peaceful surfing town on France's south east coast should be your next holiday destination.

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By **Hannah Britt**, Features Editor (Advanced Content)

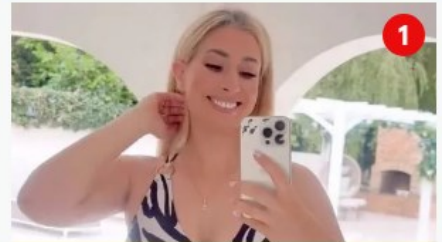


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We have to talk about Moliets-et-Maa... Walking through the pretty seaside town on France's south east coast is like taking a big breath out. The place has a boho, surfer vibe, and absolutely nobody is in a rush. As a result, Moliets-et-Maa almost forces you to relax. With a simple strip of surf bars, trinket shops and cutesy cafes leading down to a vast sandy beach, plus a pop-up produce market at the weekends, it has all you need for a fun-filled yet relaxing family holiday. We fell in love the moment we arrived - and I think you will too.



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Molly by the pool in a Summer France villa

Where to stay

When it comes to accommodation in Moliets-et-Maa it has to be **Summer France**. Their *Villas La Clairière aux Chevreuils* are a complex of beautiful airy chalets with varying numbers of rooms. We stayed in a three bed, which had more than enough room for my partner John and I, our then two-and-a-half year old daughter Molly, and her grandparents. The self catering home-from-homes come complete with a kitchen, spacious lounge area, comfy bedrooms and - the best bit - private, unheated, swimming pools to plunge into. Set amid a pine forest, with a pretty lake on site and plenty of grassy knells on which to picnic, the vibe on site is tranquil throughout.

But if you can tear yourself away, the town of Moliets-et-Maa and its gigantic beach is a short walk away. Bicycles, which can be organised by Summer France and rented from a shop down the road, provide a great way of getting around the complex too - as well as down to the beach and around the local area. Indeed, there's plenty to explore nearby. We spent a week with Summer France and all of us loved it, in particular the bakery delivery that arrived in the mornings for breakfast.



Summer France's Villas La Clairière aux Chevreuils

Things to do

Explore Moliets

Moliets has a traditional village centre based around its church, and is the ideal place for a wander. We grabbed an ice cream from one of the shops leading down to the beach and spent a gorgeous morning wandering the meandering streets, paved squares and the artisan markets. Flat, it's easy to explore on foot or by bicycle. For the intrepid, the local horse riding centre provide trips on horseback down the beach too.

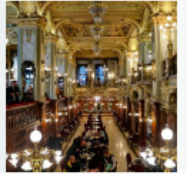
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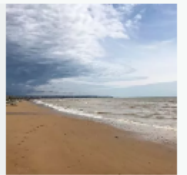
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Seaside town with miles of golden sands and little-known attraction perfect for families



'I visited the stunning lido in a world-class park and it was like being on holiday'



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'I visited UK's stunning 'Little Switzerland' village by the sea - it was idyllic'





Moliets Plage
Surf school

The long, sandy Atlantic beach at Moliets Plage is well-known amongst the surfing community as a great place to ride the waves. As a result, the shops that line the main stretch of street brim with surfboards and trendy swim kit. Well situated to provide a morning's entertainment, **Moliets Surf School** offers both private and group lessons to try out the high octane sport. Prices start from €39. My partner John and I loved our beginners lesson so much that we went back twice more during our stay. Molly did too. A total beach baby, she would have moved into the Surf School if we'd let her.



Tour guide

There's so much to see in Moliets-et-Maa and the surrounding area, and a tour with a professional guide is a great way to see it all - uncovering some hidden gems along the way. We set off en famille on an adventure with **Landes Tours** and our guide, the knowledgeable Stephan, took us out on a fascinating half a day expedition, taking in local churches, ruins, family run wineries and more.



Hannah, John and Molly at a local winery

Wine tour

Talking of wineries... Moliets-et-Maa is one of the places in south eastern France where 'Vin de sable' is produced. That's wine produced from vineyards grown in the sand to you and me.

As such, a visit to one of the local wineries is a must. Take cash, as many are pretty rustic. And prepare to stock up, as the locally produced wine is often delicious. We loved **La Cave des Vignerons de Tursan** in particular and stuffed a case of its finest into our suitcase to bring home.

Day trips

Moliets-et-Maa certainly has more than enough to occupy the whole family for the duration of your holiday. But it's also well placed to venture further afield. We stayed in **Bordeaux** both before and after our time in Moliets, and the mixture of sea and city was fantastic. We dined in **Casa Gaia**, a restaurant with a focus on local produce, as well as **Brasserie Bordelaise**, a carnivorous paradise, and **Gina**, a family-friendly upscale eatery with panoramic views of the city.

Elsewhere, San Sebastian, a resort town in the Bay of Biscay in Spain is a 90 minute drive away. It's cobblestoned old town, posh shops and seafront promenade is a must.