

Avignon

Avignon (/ˈævɪnjɔ̃/, also US: /ˌævɪnˈjoʊn/^[3] French: [aviɲɔ̃] (listen[ⓘ]); Provençal: *Avinhon* (Classical norm) or *Avignoun* (Mistralian norm), IPA: [aviˈɲun]; Latin: *Avenio*) is the prefecture of the Vaucluse department in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of Southeastern France. Located on the left bank of the river Rhône, the commune had a population of 93,671 as of the census results of 2017, with about 16,000 (estimate from Avignon's municipal services) living in the ancient town centre enclosed by its medieval walls.

Between 1309 and 1377, during the Avignon Papacy, seven successive popes resided in Avignon and in 1348 Pope Clement VI bought the town from Joanna I of Naples. Papal control persisted until 1791 when, during the French Revolution, it became part of France. The town is now the capital of the Vaucluse department and one of the few French cities to have preserved its city walls.

The historic centre—which includes the Palais des Papes, the cathedral, and the Pont d'Avignon—became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995 because of its architecture and importance during the 14th and 15th centuries.^[4] The medieval monuments and the annual Festival d'Avignon have helped to make the town a major centre for tourism.

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Avignon

Avinhon (Occitan)

Prefecture and commune

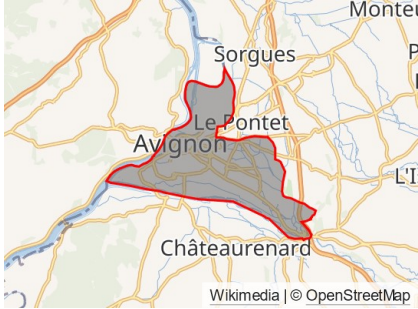


From top: skyline, Rocher des Doms, Palais des Papes, Pont Saint-Bénézet, Avignon Cathedral, Festival d'Avignon



Coat of arms

Location of Avignon



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Avignon Festival
International Congress Centre
"Sur le Pont d'Avignon"

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Coordinates: 43°57′00″N 04°48′27″E

Country	France
Region	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
Department	Vaucluse
Arrondissement	Avignon
Canton	Avignon-1, Avignon-2, Avignon-3
Intercommunality	CA Grand Avignon

Government	
 • Mayor (2020–2026)	Cécile Helle ^[1] (PS)
Area ¹	64.78 km ² (25.01 sq mi)
Population (Jan. 2018) ^[2]	91,729
 • Density	1,400/km ² (3,700/sq mi)
Time zone	UTC+01:00 (CET)
 • Summer (DST)	UTC+02:00 (CEST)
INSEE/Postal code	84007 (https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1405599?geo=COM-84007) /84000
Elevation	10–122 m (33–400 ft) (avg. 23 m or 75 ft)

UNESCO World Heritage Site	
Official name	Historic Centre of Avignon: Papal Palace, Episcopal Ensemble and Avignon Bridge
Criteria	Cultural: i, ii, iv
Reference	228 (https://whc.unesco.org/en/lis/t/228)
Inscription	1995 (19th Session)
Area	8.2 ha
¹ French Land Register data, which excludes lakes, ponds, glaciers > 1 km ² (0.386 sq mi or 247 acres) and river estuaries.	

Toponymy

The earliest forms of the name were reported by the Greeks:^[5] Ἀυενιῶν *Aueniōn* (Stephen of Byzantium, Strabo, IV, 1, 11) and Ἀουεννίων *Aouenniōn* (Ptolemy II, x).

The Roman name *Avenniō Cavārum* (Mela, II, 575, Pliny III, 36), i.e. "Avignon of Cavares", accurately shows that Avignon was one of the three cities of the Celtic-Ligurian tribe of *Cavares*, along with *Cavaillon* and *Orange*.

The current name dates to a pre-Indo-European^[5] or pre-Latin^[6] theme *ab-ên* with the suffix *-i-ōn(e)*.^{[5][6]} This theme would be a *hydronym* – i.e. a name linked to the river (Rhône), but perhaps also an oronym of terrain (the *Rocher des Doms*).

The *Auenion* of the 1st century BC was Latinized to *Avenniō* (or *Avēniō*), *-ōnis* in the 1st century and is written *Avinhon* in classic Occitan spelling^[7] or *Avignoun* in Mistralian spelling.^[8] The inhabitants of the commune are called *avinhonencs* or *avignounen* in both standard Occitan and Provençal dialect.

History

Geography

Avignon is on the left bank of the Rhône river, a few kilometres above its confluence with the Durance, about 580 km (360 mi) south-east of Paris, 229 km (142 mi) south of Lyon and 85 km (53 mi) north-north-west of Marseille. On the west it shares a border with the department of Gard and the communes of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon and Les Angles and to the south it borders the department of Bouches-du-Rhône and the communes of Barbentane, Rognonas, Châteaurenard, and Noves.

The city is in the vicinity of Orange (north), Nîmes, Montpellier (south-west), Arles (to the south), Salon-de-Provence, and Marseille (south-east). Directly contiguous to the east and north are the communes of Caumont-sur-Durance, Morières-lès-Avignon, Le Pontet, and Sorgues.

Geology and terrain

The region around Avignon is very rich in limestone which is used for building material. For example, the current city walls, measuring 4,330 metres long, were built with the soft limestone abundant in the region called *mollasse burdigalienne*.^[9]

Enclosed by the city walls, the *Rocher des Doms* is a limestone elevation of *Urgonian* type, 35 metres high^[10] (and therefore safe from flooding of the Rhone which it overlooks) and is the original core of the city. Several limestone massifs