

it to its original purpose by programming shows again. The north corridor was extended. To achieve this, the rock was excavated on either side of the grandstand. Inside the building, the first two levels of tiered seating regained their initial oval shape. In the north a reinforced concrete structure was used to create these tiers. The southern seats are light concrete shells placed on the former stands of the 70's. One must bear in mind that there was a third level of tiers. The metal « baltei » provide a parapet between each level while respecting safety regulations and the spectators' view. The ramps meet the current standards of accessibility.

The project for the preservation and enhancement of the amphitheatre, while offering solutions to protect the ancient remains, does a lot to return as much of its coherence and readability as possible to the monument. Though it shows the contemporaneity of interventions (in the 21<sup>st</sup> century) with the use of materials such as reinforced concrete and metal, it also respects and highlights the volumes, the rythm and layout of the building. It also enables local residents and tourists to finally reappropriate this heritage monument and its performance setting, thus giving it a second youth.



### Fréjus belongs to the French National Association of Cities and Regions with Art and History Heritage.

The Ministry of Culture, Heritage department, awards the title « Cities and Regions with Art and history Heritage » to territorial communities maintaining, valuing and sustaining their heritage. This guarantees the skills of the Architecture and Heritage facilitators and of the tour guides, as well as the quality of their services. From the ancient remains to the XXI<sup>st</sup> century architecture, these territories put the diversity of Heritage on show. Nowadays, a network of 202 cities and regions provides its expertise throughout France.

### Learn about Fréjus, a city with Art and History Heritage...

The Archaeology and Heritage department coordinates the initiatives of Fréjus, a city with Art and History Heritage. Cultural programming is presented throughout the year in order to make the public discover and better understand the City heritage. They are available to teachers to build education activities. The Tourist Office guides/lecturers welcome you on many interesting visits. They know every aspect of Fréjus and invite you to « take a new look at the city » For information contact the Tourist Office.

### Opening hours

● October 1<sup>st</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>  
From Tuesday to Saturday  
9:30 am – 12:30 pm  
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Closed on Sundays, Mondays and bank holidays

● April 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>  
From Tuesday to Sunday, including bank holidays  
10:00 am – 13:00 pm  
2:30 pm – 6:00 pm  
Closed on Mondays and May 1<sup>st</sup>

### Rates

- Single ticket : 3 €  
- Fréjus Pass : 6 € (reduced : 4 €)  
Admission to the Amphitheatre, the Theatre, the Archaeological Museum, the local History museum and to the chapel « Notre Dame de Jérusalem »  
- Free for children under 12 accompanied by an adult.  
Detail of the conditions of free and reduced to the reception.

### Archaeology and Heritage department

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Tél. 04 94 53 82 47  
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www.ville-frejus.fr

### Tourist Office

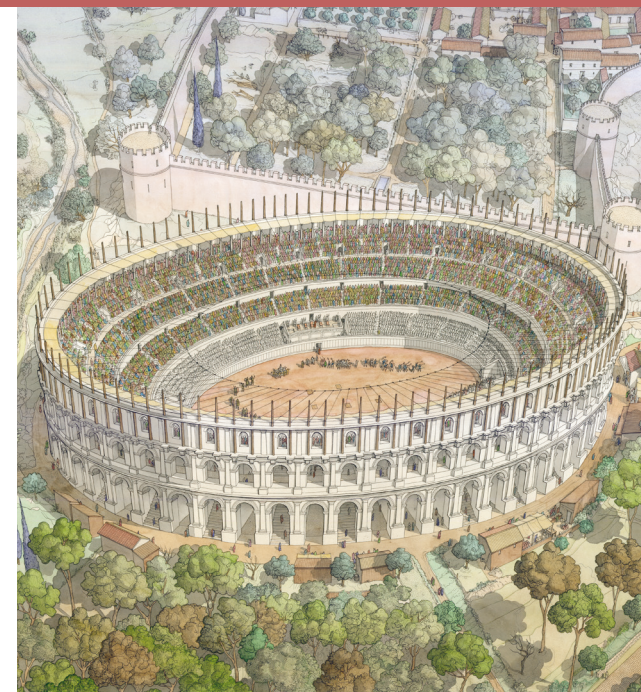
Office de Tourisme  
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# FOCUS AMPHITHEATRE OF FRÉJUS



Rue Henri Vadon

☎ 04 94 51 34 31



This emblematic building of the roman culture was built outside the surrounding walls of the city and near the “Gate of Gaul”. Its location is due to the period of its construction (at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century AD) while the intramuros city was already widely built. The reason was also economical: erecting the northern half of the building on the side of the hill avoided the construction of big radiating walls. Finally, the location was symbolic: it was an urban signal at the entrance of the city.

The Archeological research conducted between 2005 and 2007 led to a better knowledge of the building. The front wall consisted in three levels of arches up to a height of 21 metres (today the highest southern walls are 13 metres high) Pilasters punctuated the big radiating walls whereas the last level of cornice supported the wooden masts used to draw the *velum* canvas inside the building.

The dimensions of the building make it one of the biggest in Gaul with a major axis of 112,75 m, a minor axis of 82,65 and a track 69,37 m long and 39,17 m wide.

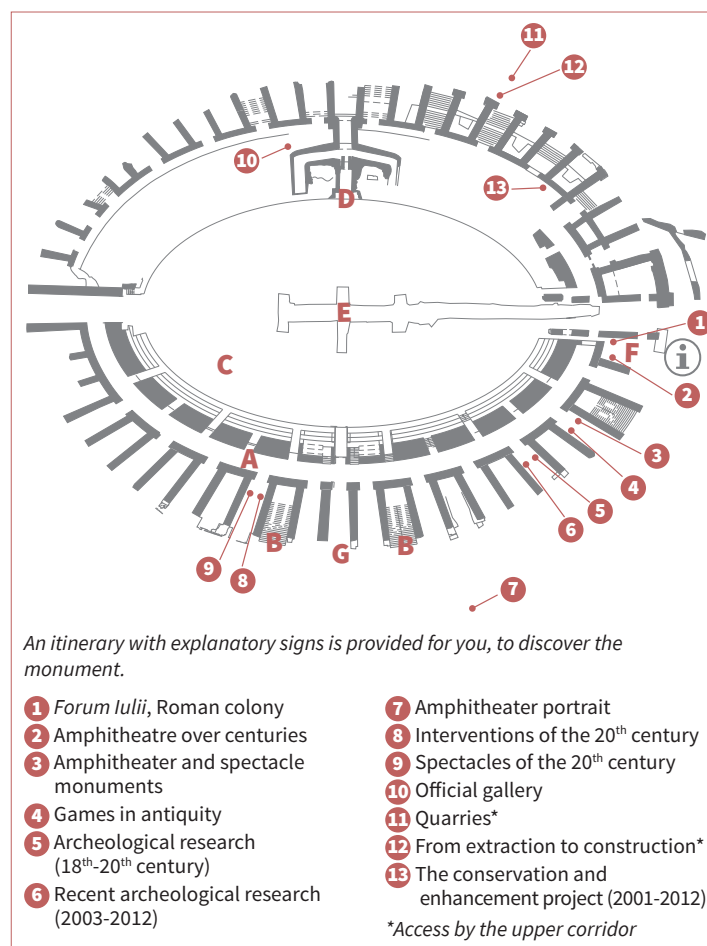
The building materials used in its construction come from a sandstone quarry located on the way to Bagnols en forêt, at a place called La Beaume. To move into the southern part of the building the public used an inner corridor [A]. Access to the specific tier level (*maenianum*)- which was assigned to them according to their social class – was done via a system of horizontal or vertical passageways (*praecinctio/vomitorium*) [B]: the colony’s officials close to the *arena* and the most humble people at the top of the *cavea*. An estimated 10,000 spectators could gather there.

The organizers of the events, accompanied by priests, walked around the arena then proceeded to the grandstand (pulvinar) located in the northern part [C]. By offering these festivities to the population, the elites demonstrated their generosity. It was not interest-free since it enabled them to earn the citizens’ gratitude and support in future elections. Gladiators and animals entered the arena [D] through corridors adjacent to the main entrance, or through a cross-shaped underground passage [E], dug as far as the centre of the *arena*; divided by wooden gates and covered with a floor, this was a spectacular device where gladiators and beasts would suddenly appear from.

## THE BUILDING OVER CENTURIES

From the 4th century and the ban on gladiatorial combat by Emperor Constantine, the amphitheatre went unused. It slowly became a quarry, like all the other monuments in the antique city, and the stones were used to build the episcopal group and the medieval town. In 1634 a convent of Dominicans settled down between the walls of the main entrance [F]. It was only with Prosper Mérimée’s journeys (1835) and Victor Hugo’s (1839), and the awareness of the value of this heritage, that the building regained its prestige.

The first studies were conducted in 1828 then followed by the classification “Monuments Historiques” in 1840. The first restoration works were undertaken in 1868 and resulted in



the addition of pink sandstone blocks to the radiating walls on the Southern part [G]. The buildings of the Dominican convent were demolished in 1887, thus allowing the unity of the antique monument to be restored. But in 1900 a part of the vault of the south corridor collapsed and it was necessary to wait until the 1960s to implement important interventions: re-creation of the corridor vault and of the south part of the tier seating, and realization of the main staircases. These restorations, carried out without any architectural study of the building, regrettably affected the appearance of the original structure of the building. One of the aims of the preservation and enhancement project (2009-2012) is to find the original proportions of the building.



Foundation stone of one of northeastern front pillar

## THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (2009-2012)

Within the framework of the « Plan Patrimoine Antique », archeologists and architects have come to a better understanding of the antique building construction methods and to the identification of its external height and architectural proportions. On the basis of this archeological and architectural analysis, Francesco Flavigny, chief architect of historic monuments proposed to the National Committee of historic monuments a project concerning the preservation and promotion which would meet three objectives: stop the chronic deterioration of the monument bound in particular to weather problems and infiltrations in the masonry; regain coherence by finding the original proportions of the building; finally, restore