



DIGITAL MUSIC TRENDS

How to do



on a budget

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Contents

Introduction	3
Conference Tickets	4-6
Getting there	7-11
Accommodation	12-13
Food	14-15
Drinks & Nightlife	16-17
Heading Home	18

Introduction

2013 was my 4th [Midem](#). While undeniably the event has changed over the past few years, adapting to the challenges faced by the industry and its inevitably shrinking budgets, the shift in focus on digital and the international reach still make it a fantastic place to be if you work in music.

There's also something about the small size of Cannes - with everything laid out in a straight line from the Palais to the Carlton hotel - that creates a very special bubble where it's easy to move around, run into people by chance and schedule meetings with a relative certainty of being able to make it on time...

The Midem experience can be tricky though, Cannes is practically made for people with generous expense accounts operating in industries that are far outpacing music (TV and advertising, for example) and a newcomer arriving without much preparation could very well end up penniless in a few hours. Given the rising number of self-releasing artists, one-man labels, small tech startups and freelance workers attending more than ever there's the need to look at the old balance sheet and see how much the trip could cost you.

So here's a guide to how to do Midem well, on a budget!

1 - Conference Tickets

Midem is always going to require an expense, so if you plan on attending it makes sense to decide doing so as early as possible. This is not just to maximize your time in Cannes and get the best possible meetings, but also to minimize expenses on all fronts.

The conference ticket is going to be one of the biggest expenses you'll have at Midem, but there are ways to make it cheaper.

If you're thinking of going to Cannes without buying a Midem pass I would say think again. I've been told that a few years back a lot could be accomplished without a pass but these days one is required not only to access the Palais but also the lobbies of all the big hotels in town so as much as you can probably still get some meetings arranged in Cafes or restaurants would seem like a bit of a waste of a trip.

Buy Early

First piece of advice here (although rather obvious) is to buy it early. The walk-up rate at Midem if you just show up in Cannes on the day it starts is €900, which is really quite steep. If you purchase the ticket before the 30th of September though, you'll have pay a much more manageable €525, which becomes €700 until the 30th of November and then €800 until the 24th of January. If you can plan 4 months ahead – which in fairness is not a lot

given that most people plan their SXSW outing 6-8 months ahead – then go for it.

Discounts

In order to get as many people attending as possible Midem has partnered with many music organizations to offer discounts to the conference or reduce the entry price if you have missed the early bird discount. AIM Members, PRS for Music and many other national music organizations offer discounts. UKTI (UK Trade and Investment) are also an interesting body to look at if you're a small company attending from the UK as they may be able to provide support and I would imagine many other territories will have similar national bodies to refer to.

Moral of the story is: if you're a member of a music-related organization check with them about potential discounts before you buy your ticket. If you're a company check for any government-supported scheme that may be able to help finance the trip.

Special Categories

This section deserves a very special mention as part of the Midem on a Budget guide. If you're reading this it's actually quite likely that you fall under one of the categories eligible for discounts.

First up is the **Young Company** discount. Midem offers a Young Company discount to any company that has been running for less than three years and that has less than 10

employees. The rate in this case is €495 until the 30th of November 2013 and €595 until the 30th of January 2014. This means that if you fall under this category you can buy your ticket a bit closer to the date of the conference without the fear of spending hundreds of Euros more.

The second discount tier applies to both **Performing Artists and Students**, and it reduces the fee to only €295. This is a really hefty discount on the usual rate. Of course the more artist and students attending the better, it makes for a more vibrant conference, better attendance to the numerous panels, better questions and a of course a better nightlife... Of course as I mentioned at the beginning this trip is going to cost you some money. If you're going to make it all the way to Cannes without a great deal of contacts as a student or as a young artist you won't get your money's worth by just sitting in the panels, you need to get out there, approach people, stay out late at night in the hotel bars and generally make sure that you don't walk away with just information but with a healthy pack of business cards and people that remember who you are. That's worth the trip.

2 - Getting there

OK you've got your conference ticket, now what? Travel is probably the second or third biggest expense of the trip (depending on where you're coming from) so let's look at the options.

If you're coming from France then you have a wealth of options from lengthy and cheap rides on regional trains, to super-fast trains to flights if you're coming in from Paris.

If you're coming from **Southern France, parts of Northern Italy and Southern Spain** driving may also cross your mind. If it does, check how much it would cost you to get there including petrol and toll charges, then bear in mind that it's incredibly difficult to find parking in Cannes so you may be restricted in your choice of accommodation, have to deal with extortionate hotel parking rates or may have to leave the car well outside the city center.

Flying in is certainly the most common way of getting to Cannes. **The closest airport is Nice**. From the UK there's a wealth of choices with BA, Easyjet and Norwegian flying multiple routes every day from London. Flights can be inexpensive right-up to the beginning of January (I got a return trip in Jan 2013 for around £115), after that planes at the most convenient times start to fill up and you're left with the 6AM departures and 12AM returns which, let's be honest, are not very much fun at all. Aside from my personal experience though airplane fares are unpredictable so if you booked the cheapest conference

210
Express

Cannes → Nice Aéroport

Tous les jours / Every day

Cannes	7.00	8.00	8.30	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00
Le Cannet	7.10	8.10	8.40	9.10	9.40	10.10	10.40	11.10
Terminal 2	7.45	8.45	9.15	9.45	10.15	10.45	11.15	11.45
Aéroport Terminal 1	7.50	8.50	9.20	9.50	10.20	10.50	11.20	11.50

Cannes	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30	14.00	14.30	15.00
Le Cannet	11.40	12.10	12.40	13.10	13.40	14.10	14.40	15.10
Terminal 2	12.15	12.45	13.15	13.45	14.15	14.45	15.15	15.45
Aéroport Terminal 1	12.20	12.50	13.20	13.50	14.20	14.50	15.20	15.50

Cannes	15.30	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00	19.00
Le Cannet	15.40	16.10	16.40	17.10	17.40	18.10	19.10
Terminal 2	16.15	16.45	17.15	17.45	18.15	18.45	19.45
Aéroport Terminal 1	16.20	16.50	17.20	17.50	18.20	18.50	19.50

Tarification spéciale / Special ticket	
Ticket aller / One-way trip	20 €
TiTe DUCP / DUCP ticket	30 €
Moins de 26 ans / Under 26 years	15 €
6 voyages / 6 journeys	80 €
Tarif enfant <12 ans / Child rate < 12 years	5 €

- Cannes - Hôtel de Ville
- Rue des Saubies
- Place Vauban
- Place Berthomieu (arrêt au Terminal)
- Autobus
- Aéroport Terminal 2
- Aéroport Terminal 1

Observations

*Titre valable pour 1 aller-retour ou 2 personnes / Ticket valid for a return trip or 2 person employees to airport / le salarié de l'aéroport (se renseigner à l'agence) / Special ticket for the employees to airport (to contact the agency)
Il est recommandé d'adapter son départ en tenant compte des aléas de la circulation.
We advise customers to adapt their departure times according to possible irregularities in traffic flow

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ticket by the end of September go ahead and close on the cheapest flight you can find.

The easy reach of London and Paris as well as many other capital cities makes **Nice a great hub for long-haul as well**, and I've heard reports that it's not a bad trip from Australia with just one change required thanks to a direct flight from Cannes to Dubai. Of course if you're flying from overseas into France you may find that a direct trip to Paris is a lot cheaper than going all the way to Nice. If that's the case and you have some time on your hands look at <http://www.skyscanner.net/> for cheap fares from Paris to Nice by plane or <http://en.voyages-sncf.com> for high-speed trains.

Marseille airport is also an option although I would not recommend it unless you can find a Ryanair flight for £10 (which I did three years ago) including taxes. The trip from and then back to the airport if you take into account the train to Marseille and the bus to the airport will take the best part of four hours, so make sure you're prepared for that and you've checked the train/bus costs to ensure they don't cancel out the saving you made on the flight. The one time I did this I repeatedly cursed myself as on the last day of the conference all you really want is to go home and

would be prepared to pay your weight in gold to get there. And Marseille is not really sightseeing-central either...

Also, bear in mind that Ryanair charges for absolutely everything, so if you find a £100 return early on with BA (which has by far the best luggage allowance) or EasyJet to Nice that would be my recommendation.

From Nice Airport to Cannes

A special mention has to go to the ways of getting from Nice Airport to Cannes City center. As usual quicker = more expensive.

A taxi take around a half hour and will set you back anywhere between 70 and 90 euros depending on the time of day, traffic conditions and route picked by the driver. If there's 4 of you that's actually not that bad but for a party of one it's not a great option.

The second option is the **airport bus 210 Express**: this leaves from both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 and is not the cheapest at €20 for a single trip and €30 for a return (€15 one-way if you're under 26) , but it does do the trip without stops in a bout 45/50 minutes. So if you are in a hurry and arrive on a plane filled with Midem attendees you'd be better off making friends with people on the plane and sharing a taxi with them. Will not be a great deal more expensive but it will be definitely be faster... Here a [timetable](#) for the bus, but do check back on the [Nice airport website](#) in 2014 for up-to-date information.

The third option - **for the hardcore budget travelers only** – is the **200 bus**. This will get you into Cannes for **ONE and I mean ONE euro**. Which is awesome. Not so awesome, admittedly, is the fact that the bus will take about 1h 15m to get to Cannes, that it's a local bus meaning a lot of stops and that it may be very busy: you'll possibly have to stand the whole way. But it's 1 euro so I wouldn't complain. Bear in mind the driver will probably not have any change so it'd be a good idea to get a bottle of water at the airport's café and get a euro coin in change if you don't have one on you. Also, I've heard rumors that they may have started charging a few euros extra if you have a large suitcase but that wasn't the case as of January 2013.

Getting to it is quite easy but do keep this guide on your phone or print it and take it with you because no one working at the airport is willing to point you to it.

To reach the stop you need first of all to get to Terminal 1. If you landed at Terminal 2, just pop outside and find the free connecting bus to T1, which takes around 5 minutes.

If you arrive to T1 by bus you will want to go towards the corner of the terminal just on the right from where you alight. If you have landed at T1, just step outside.

In both cases you should see right in front of you a raised motorway that runs alongside the airport. You will also see a pedestrian crossing/path that from the terminal leads towards that road. Go straight towards it and then once you're at the road cross the under-passage and you'll see on your left some steps to get up to road level. Once there you'll see a bus stop and bingo! You're there.

Just wait for the bus and away you go... An hour and 15 minutes later - more or less - you'll find yourself at the Cannes Rail station which is just a few minutes walk from the sea-front and very convenient for most Midem accommodation options.

Whichever option you chose - voila', you've made it to Cannes!

Getting around Cannes is easy - everything's on the main strip by the seafront or close to it. No need to catch a cab unless you're pressed for time and need to get to the Carlton from the Palais in a matter of minutes. As the distances are small, taxis are not insanely expensive within Cannes, but will inevitably cost at least €10...

3 - Accommodation

One of the massive advantages of Cannes, in spite of the fact that some of the hotels are horrendously overpriced in both room rates and drink prices, is the variety of accommodation available. It'd be pretty hard to find a town that is so compact yet offers so many hotels & apartments for rental.

Choice of accommodation depends on your budget – of course – but also on how long you're planning to stay in Cannes.

First up, don't discount traditional hotel booking sites. Hotels.com, Bookings.com and company have a pretty healthy number of options and in that sense the reduced number of delegates over the past few years plays to your advantage - I would imagine rates for the packed Cannes Lions will still be astronomical.

These sites sometimes have apartments for rent too rather than just hotels, so look closely and you may find yourself a bargain.

If you speak French you can also turn to holiday home websites. I used Abritel.fr twice and very successfully to find cheap studio apartments in Cannes. Not all owners are aware that Midem is happening and for them this is the lowest season of all so if you find the right deal you could have a nice flat all to yourself for very little cash. Bear in mind that these homes-to-let are mainly for holiday makers

so there is often a contract involved (that you have to sign and send for the week's rental, don't be surprised if they ask you to Fax it). You will also have to give them a cheque as deposit when you arrive. It all sounds pretty convoluted but it's the norm for holiday apartments in France.

If you happen to be torn between a cheap hotel and a slightly more expensive apartment (when equidistant to the Palais), always pick the apartment. It may be a bit more hassle with contracts involved but you'll save a boatload of money on breakfasts and food in general if you can make yourself sandwiches etc to keep you going through the day.

Finally location-wise bear in mind that the Pointe Croisette area is on the other side of the Cannes bay from the Palais (2.2km), not a deal-breaker but a solid 20-minute walk.

4 - Food

Breakfast

Serious about saving some pennies? Then unless you have a breakfast meeting at one of the hotels or breakfast is included in your hotel deal, head outside to the nearest bakery! Just type “bulangerie” on Google maps and it will find the closest one to you. There you can buy pastries, bread, juice, milk and even a coffee for just a few Euros and you can be back to your room in no time.

If pastries or bread are not your style head to [Marche Gambetta](#), which is a local market with fruit, veg, meat and cheese open from 7 until 13 every day except Mondays. Not the cheapest place in the world but well worth checking out.

If you're craving a supermarket experience head to [Monoprix \(9 Rue du Maréchal Foch 06400 Cannes\)](#) which is good for shopping as well as for everything else you may need during your stay.

Cannes doesn't do cheap Espresso, expect to pay anywhere between €1.50 and €2.50 for an espresso in a bar and more for a cappuccino. Standard for the UK, steep for Europe.

Food during the day...

I can't offer a great deal of advice in this department as I have never been to Cannes for the food - though I've eaten exceptionally well a handful of times. My average day at Midem consists of a couple of energy bars to keep going and then a more substantial meal at night at a social dinner - wherever that may end up being.

After a couple of dicey years, the Palais in 2013 offered some decent lunch options for a few Euros, the addition a salad bar made all the difference and proved to be the best and cheapest health-oriented option around.

If you're planning a lunch meeting that takes you outside the walls of the Palais, make sure you look beyond the average and expensive options on the waterfront. Venturing a few meters into old Cannes will allow you to find some great, less touristy spots for a third of the price so look around, use Tripadvisor, take a morning jog to explore the side streets. If you manage to find a little gem in the old town your business meeting will be more memorable, more private and certainly cheaper than the waterfront fare.

5 - Drinks & Nightlife

A big part of the stigma of Cannes is linked to the absurd prices at the big hotels, like the Carlton, Martinez or the Majestic. There you can easily pay upwards of 6/7 euros for a coffee, between 12 and 20 Euros for a beer and much, much more if you feel like enjoying some spirits or bubbles. So can you avoid the big hotels?

The answer is Yes and No.

Pubs are a great alternative if you can choose the venue of a post-5PM meet-up. In fact if unless you have a vital meeting and the person you're meeting with for some unfathomable reason won't move from the Carlton I can't see any downside to this option especially if you're a young musician or startup. At least here you can pay for the bill if required without draining your finances...

The [Crillon](#) and [Morrison's](#) are my top 2 choices. The first is close to the Palais and the second in between the big hotels on the Croisette. Sure, you can still expect to pay around €7/8 for a pint but that's better than the 14/20 that you will spend at the big hotels.

Inevitably, as it gets later and pubs begin to shut, the big hotels become almost unavoidable. The Carlton lobby and the Majestic lobby in particular. At this stage if money is tight there's not much you can do but to join in the madness. The options?

1) ahem... an obvious one avoid drinking - blame it on a New Years resolution? #notfun

- 2) buy one bottle of beer and make it last for however long is required. That bottle will cost you anywhere between 10 and 15 euros, but it's a fun place to be.
- 3) Go out with someone with a generous expense account? Kidding but not really.

Parties are a good place to find great company and (some) drinks, you need to keep your ears peeled for events in the weeks leading up to Midem.

There are functions at the Palais in the early to mid-afternoon, then there are meetups in the bars in town from 6-ish. If you think a meetup will be well-attended head down early or avoid disappointment. Some get-togethers (like the annual music tech one) always end up with a long cue outside as none of the affordable venues are ever large enough...

Some parties and functions are invite-only so unless you are good at making friends on the first day those may not be an option. That said, late night private gatherings especially if in hotel suites become more relaxed about their door policy later at night, so if you were turned away at 9PM consider having a wonder back at midnight....

Strip Clubs: once even the Hotel lobbies start winding down at 2/3AM inevitably someone will be itching to drag the whole group to a strip club. I take that as my cue to head home so I can't really comment but I have heard that the entertainment is so-so and drink prices can top the the Carlton's... beware.

6 - Heading home

4 days at Midem can feel like well over a week by the end of it all. I try and get out on the evening of the last day and get back to London in time for bed. By 4/5PM the conference starts winding down for real so you're not going to miss out on a whole lot of action on the evening of the last day. Whatever you do I would avoid very early morning flights even if it means spending a little extra. The risks are a) missing the flight completely due to tiredness/intoxication/whatever else. b) having to take a Taxi to make it to the airport on time: remember that 60/90 Euros fare at the end of the ride...

I hope a few of the tips in these pages will come in handy when arranging your trip to Midem and help you stay on budget. If you do decide to make it down have a great time and I hope to meet you there!

[Digital Music Trends](#) produces two online shows every week covering the digital music industry. The DMT weekly roundtable tries to make sense of the latest news with a rotating panel of guests from all over the world whilst the DMT 1-2-1 show features interviews with startups, digital agencies and experts in the field on their particular projects.