



Welcome
to



France

Bienvenue en France



Dear visitors,

Welcome to France, a country with a rich heritage, but one that is in harmony with the modern world it inhabits. Whatever the purpose of your visit, take the opportunity to enjoy the extraordinary sites and outstanding natural beauty on offer. Stay in a small guesthouse, have a bite to eat in a café or a top class restaurant, visit a castle, château or museum. Wander through the aisles of a Parisian shop or enjoy shopping at one of the many craft markets across the country. It's your choice.

The longest and most diverse coastline on the European continent, the most beautiful mountains in Europe, 31 Unesco world heritage sites, a capital city famed for its art, luxury and extravagance... Whatever the reason for your visit, we wish you an enjoyable stay in a country bursting with flavours and traditions, and hope that you enjoy the art of living "à la française".

FRANCE IN BRIEF

LA FRANCE EN BREF

Sea, mountains and unspoilt nature: a diversity of landscapes that make France a unique destination in the world. Twenty-six regions, each with their own character, with a variety of architecture, a range of traditional dishes and thousands of sites to visit. An entire way of life just waiting to be discovered.

SURFACE AREA

SUPERFICIE

France covers an area of 551,695 km², with a population of 62.9 million (2005).

FRENCH REPUBLIC

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

France has been governed by the Fifth Republic since 4th October 1958. The Head of State is elected by universal suffrage for a term of 5 years. Nicolas Sarkozy is the sixth President.

RELIGION

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France is a secular state. The majority religion is Catholicism. Since 1905, the Church and State have been officially separated. Places of worship for a variety of religions can be found in large towns and cities.





DÉCOUVERTES

FRANCE'S CITIES

VILLES DE FRANCE

Discover the gastronomic, cultural and festive delights of France's great cities: Paris, Lyon, Cannes, Aix-en-Provence, Reims, Bordeaux, Strasbourg, etc. Every French city has its own, unique character, architecture and atmosphere. Discover the personality of each one. www.franceguide.com

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

CULTURE ET PATRIMOINE

France boasts 40,000 monuments, including 10,000 châteaux, abbeys and mansions; 6,000 museums including the Louvre, the Musée d'Orsay, the Carré d'Art in Nîmes, the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence and 1,000 festivals. The diversity of heritage on display tells the story of France's history. The châteaux of the Loire (Chambord, Blois, Cheverny, etc.), Notre Dame and the Mont Saint Michel are the jewels in France's crown. www.franceguide.com

COASTLINE

LITTORAL

With more than 5,500 km of coastline, France's landscapes and atmospheres are as varied as they are stunning. The English Channel, the North Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea have all played a role in crafting France's coastline. From the pink granite coast of Brittany and the silver coast of Aquitaine to the dramatic limestone valleys of the Côte d'Azur, variety is the key.

PLACES OF INTEREST

MOUNTAINS

MONTAGNE

With more than 8,000 km of pistes, France boasts the largest skiing terrain in the world. From alpine skiing, Nordic skiing and snowboarding to snowshoes and sleighs, enjoy the winter paradise on France's slopes. From the Alps, dominated by Mont Blanc, to the mountain ranges of the Vosges and the Pyrenees, you're bound to find a ski station to suit you. With Courchevel, Tignes and Val d'Isère in the Trois Vallées, or family-oriented ski stations such as Font-Romeu and Cauterets in the Pyrenees, there's a mountain for everyone. www.france-montagnes.com

SPORT & NATURE TOURISM

TOURISME SPORT & NATURE

Rural areas account for 80% of France's surface area. In both summer and winter, the diverse landscapes offer a range of activities: walking, horse riding, cycling, canoeing, kayaking, canyoning, rafting, hydrospeed, paragliding, via ferrata, etc. All these activities provide new ways of appreciating France's natural beauty at your own pace. The whole family will enjoy the range of activities available, young and old alike.

WAY OF LIFE, CUISINE, WINE

ART DE VIVRE. GASTRONOMIE. VINS

Visit France's vineyards and discover the perfect wine for you. Activities on offer include vineyard

tours, oenology and cookery lessons and local tasting. Immerse yourself in French tradition. Enter the world of towns and villages with names such as Beaune, Saint-Émilion, Riquewihr and Nuits-Saint-Georges – names that will be familiar to the wine connoisseur. France's cafés, pubs and restaurants offer a palette of culinary and gastronomic delights from every region.

REST AND RELAXATION

REMISE EN FORME

Escape the stress and strain of daily life. Discover rest and well being in our relaxation and thalassotherapy centres. As the premier thalassotherapy destination in the world, France's secret is its natural environment, from the spray of the Atlantic to the caress of the Mediterranean. Come and discover the benefits of the country's numerous natural springs through balneotherapy. Come and take the waters and recharge your batteries in France.

THEME PARKS FOR OLD AND YOUNG

PARCS D'ATTRACTION POUR PETITS ET GRANDS

Discover the magic of Disneyland® Resort Paris, (www.disneylandparis.com), or the famous Gauls of Parc Asterix (www.parcasterix.fr), go on a voyage to the centre of the Earth with Vulcania (www.vulcania.com), or explore the world at Futuroscope in Poitiers (www.futuroscope.com).

OVERSEAS

OUTRE-MER

Small corners of France are scattered across the Atlantic, Indian and South Pacific Oceans. Visit Tahiti, Martinique, the islands of Guadeloupe and Réunion for a unique tropical setting with a “French touch”. Discover the colourful contrasts of France spread across 3 oceans.

www.franceguide.com

DATES TO REMEMBER:

1st January: New Year's Day

May: Cannes Film Festival

May-June: French Open tennis championship at Roland Garros (Paris)

21st June: “Fête de la musique” music festival

July: Tour de France cycle race
Avignon Festival

Aix en Provence Festival

14th July: National Festival

September: Street markets in Lille

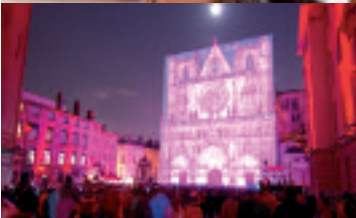
3rd weekend in September:
Heritage days

October: “Nuit blanche”
all-night festival
National tasting week

November: Arrival of new Beaujolais

December: Christmas markets

25th December: Christmas Day



YOUR STAY VOTRE SÉJOUR

ACCOMMODATION

HÉBERGEMENT

Hotel: classified into six standard categories, from “no stars” to “4* Luxury”, French hotels have to exhibit their prices, including taxes, on the outside of the building and in rooms. They offer double or twin rooms. Child cots are generally available on request.

Campsites: France boasts 9,000 equipped campsites, classified from 0 to 4*, and 2,300 non-equipped campsites. Camping is permitted anywhere with the landowner's permission, except on beaches, the edges of roads and certain sites. Further information is available from Tourist Offices and gendarme stations.

Tourist accommodation: fully furnished and equipped apartments and villas available for hire, with or without hospitality services.

Gîtes or guest rooms: hire a guest room or gîte (per night or per week, with breakfast, sometimes with evening meals) to share the real French way of life. www.gites-de-france.com

Holiday villages: bungalows or apartments available catering specifically for families. On-site facilities: entertainment, cultural activities, sports facilities and children's clubs.

Book your accommodations: on the web-site www.franceguide.com

MEALS

RESTAURATION

At home: 3 meals per day. Breakfast, 7am-9am, hot drink (coffee, tea, chocolate), croissants and/or bread, butter, jam. Lunch, 12noon-2pm, approx. 1 hour, with starter, main course and dessert. Often followed by an espresso coffee. Dinner, approx. 8pm, 1 hour. Starter, main course, dessert.

At a restaurant: a wide range of choice; jug of water, bread and service included in the price; it is normal to leave a tip. Advice: “menus” are generally better value than “à la carte” set meals with starter, main course and dessert.

GETTING AROUND

SE DÉPLACER

By car: no special requirements for holders of European Union driving licences. Otherwise, an international driving licence is necessary. 8000 km of toll motorways with rest areas and service stations. The latest traffic news can be found on www.bison-fute.gouv.fr. Parking in towns and cities normally incurs a charge (ticket machines located on pavements or in underground car parks).

By plane: Links between major cities provided by the national airline, Air France. All destinations within 1 hour from Paris. www.airfrance.com and www.adp.fr, www.aeroport.fr



By train: the national rail network (SNCF) is comprehensive and centralised. Paris is linked with London via the Eurostar and with Bruxelles and Amsterdam via the Thalys. In France for further information, call 3635 or visit www.voyages-sncf.com

By coach/ bus: The Eurolines network is comprehensive and serves all European capital cities from Paris. www.eurolines.fr

By public transport:

tram, underground and bus networks are available in all large cities. In Paris, further information is available by calling 3246 or visiting www.ratp.fr

Car hire: you must be 21 years old and have possessed a driving licence for more than two years. Agencies are located in train stations in major cities, in airports and in some city centres.

Taxis: Taxis Bleus: 0891 70 10 10 (€0.22/min), Taxis G7: 33(0)1 47 27 66 99, Alpha Taxis: 33(0)1 45 85 85 85.

You can also call taxi terminals anywhere in Paris using a single number: 33(0)1 45 30 30 30.

Taxi fares in France are regulated. You pay the price shown. The minimum price for a journey is €5.60. The driver has the right to refuse certain payment methods, such as cheques or bank cards.



Cycling/ rollerblading: If you want to get around major cities or simply visit the heart of one of France's regions, why not leave the car in the garage and take the bike? In Paris, Lyon and Marseille, discover a new way to get around... by bike! www.velib.paris.fr; www.velov.grandlyon.com; www.levelo-mpm.fr (in Marseille).

USEFUL PHRASES

Bonjour / Au revoir:

Hello/Goodbye

Parlez-vous anglais ?:

Do you speak English?

Désolé, je n'ai pas compris:

Sorry, I didn't understand.

Pouvez-vous m'aider ?:

Can you help me?

Où se trouve le métro/ le restaurant/ la poste/ les taxis ? :

Where is the metro/ restaurant/ post office/ taxi rank?

Quel est le prix ?:

How much does it cost?

Merci / non merci – Thank you /

No thank you



- ▣ 60 secs : acheter son billet
 - ▣ 20 secs : choisir son siège
 - ▣ 30 secs : imprimer sa carte d'embarquement
- Décollez plus vite avec airfrance.fr



PRACTICAL ADVICE

MONEY, BANKS, CURRENCY EXCHANGE

MONNAIE, BANQUES, CHANGE

The euro is the only legal tender in France. Currency exchange is available in some banks, as well as at bureaux de change, supermarkets, train stations and airports. The exchange rate is fixed, but commission remains discretionary.

BUDGET, COST OF LIVING

BUDGET, VIE QUOTIDIENNE

Metro ticket €1.50. Cinema €9. Coffee €2, soft drink €3.50, beer €4, sandwich (ham and butter) €3.70, steak and chips €12 (guide prices only).

CONSUMPTION

CONSUMMATION

Tobacco/alcohol: Smoking is forbidden in all public places from 1st January 2008, including restaurants, nightclubs, casinos and bars. It is illegal to travel when drunk, even on foot, and it is forbidden to consume alcohol on public highways. It is strictly forbidden to bring drugs into France or to use them in France.

SHOPPING

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Food: in large towns and cities, bakeries and other food shops open early in the mor-

ning and close at around 7pm-8pm. They close on Sunday afternoons.

Markets: traditional markets: selling a range of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, flowers and other goods.

Paris: well-known stores (Galeries Lafayette, Le Printemps, Le Bon Marché, BHV, etc.) and all major brands.

Trendy areas of Paris: Le Marais, Saint-Sulpice, avenue Montaigne, Saint-Honoré, Sèvres-Babylone, Place des Victoires, Les Halles. "Bouquinistes" area (rare and second-hand books): Saint-Michel.

Outside Paris: regional products, high streets.

Duty-free purchases: for all non-EU residents, duty-free prices (12% discount) available on certain items for all purchases equal to or greater than €175 (including taxes) on the same day in the same store. Shops normally closed on Sundays. Across France, sales take place in January and July.

PRESS, MEDIA

PRESSE, MÉDIA

Available in all newsagents and in kiosks.

Main daily newspapers: Le Monde, Libération, Le Figaro, France-Soir, Le Parisien, l'Humanité, Les Echos. Average price: €1.

7 terrestrial TV channels: TF1, France 2, France 3, Canal+, France 5, M6, Arte.

VIE PRATIQUE

TRIPS, EXCURSIONS

VISITES, SORTIES

Information available from Tourist Offices and at the ticket offices in Fnac, Virgin, Cultura and large supermarkets (Carrefour, Auchan, Leclerc, etc.).

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS

France to France: dial the 10-digit number, which always starts with 0.

France to abroad: dial 00+the country number + the telephone number you require.

Personal contact details can be found at www.pagesblanches.fr and company details at www.pagesjaunes.fr.

Letter boxes in France are yellow.

Internet is available in Internet cafes and WiFi zones in major cities.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

JOURS FÉRIÉS

1st January, 1st and 8th May, Easter Monday, Ascension Day (Thursday), 14th July, 15th August, 1st and 11th November and 25th December. All administrative offices, banks and businesses are closed on these days.

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CLIMATE

CLIMAT

Temperate climate. Regional weather forecasts are available by dialling 3250 (€0.34/min) from a landline or by visiting www.meteofrance.com.

IN THE CASE OF EMERGENCY, LOSS, CLAIM

OR IF YOU ARE ATTACKED

EN CAS D'URGENCE, PERTE, LITIGE OU AGRESSION

Emergency: from a landline, dial 15 (SAMU: emergency medical services), 17 (police) or 18 (fire service). From a mobile telephone, dial 112.

Attack, theft: go to the nearest gendarme or police station.

Claim (hotel, restaurant, business): contact the local "Direction Départementale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes" (Departmental Office for Competition, Consumers and Fraud Prevention).

Loss: give a statement at the nearest police station.

THE DEPARTMENT STORE CAPITAL OF FASHION

- INTERPRETERS
- WELCOME SERVICE
- DUTY FREE SHOPPING
- PRIVATE WEEKLY FASHION SHOWS
- CURRENCY EXCHANGE OFFICE
- LAFAYETTE GOURMET: DELUXE GROCERY
- RESTAURANTS



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