

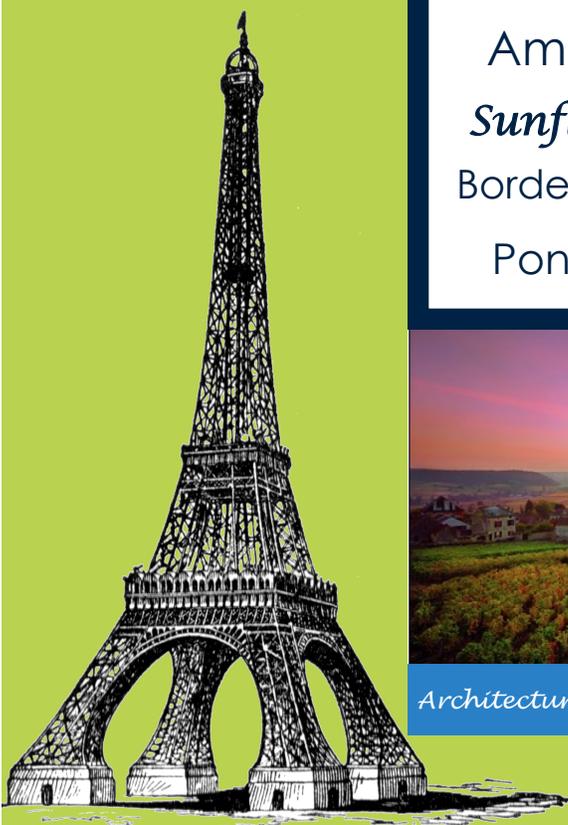


All you need to know before embarking on your France adventure!

France

GUIDE

Amboise Rocamadour WWII Beaches
Sunflowers Wine Routes **Chateaux** Dijon
Bordeaux **Avignon** Musee du Vin Hiking
Pont du Gard **Biking** Canal du Midi



Architecture Art Countryside Chateaux Food Medieval Villages

Enjoy your tour!

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Table of Contents



Table of Contents	Page No.
Using Train Tickets and Vouchers	3
Travel Tips	4
Luggage, Flying, Jet Lag, etc.	
Travel Documents & Post Office Information	5
Phone Info & Emergency Numbers	6
Public Holidays, Banks, Internet & Money	7-8
Trains, Planes & Automobiles	9-11
About your train passes, Driving in France, Gas, Car rental, Airports	
Paris	12-15
Paris Airports	12
Tourist Offices, Museum Passes, and Metro Info	13
Train Stations, Sights & Museums	14
Dining in Paris	15
Paris Indulgences—Shopping, Nightlife & Delicious Treats	16
Miscellaneous	17
France & Food	18
The French	19
A Calendar of Major Events	20-21

Did you know?

- France touches three major bodies of water: the Atlantic Ocean (Bay of Biscane), Mediterranean Sea and the English Channel.
- France features nearly 3,000 miles (4,668 kilometers) of shoreline.
- There are seven mountain ranges in France: Pyrenees, Alps, Auvergne, Vosges, Jura, Morvan and Corsica.
- France borders eight countries: Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg, Italy, Germany, Monaco, Andorra and Switzerland.
- France has two principalities within its borders: Andorra and Monaco.
- France is divided into 22 regions, and its overseas territories feature four other regions.
- One of the most famous symbols of France, the Eiffel Tower stands at a staggering height of 984 feet, almost the height of a 70 story building. Today, the tower has 2 restaurants, an observation deck and a post office. It also has elevators that take people up to the first three platforms.
- French cuisine and cooking is considered to be the best in the world. Dishes such as quiche, soufflés, mousse, pâté, croissants, crêpes, and French bread are deliciously and delicately prepared—we love the food and are convinced you will too!
- France is said to have been the birthplace of Gothic art as well as the Baroque architectural style. Before being called “Gothic art”, this style was known as “French art.”

Train Tickets



Websites to purchase train tickets:

- www.raileurope.com
For USA residents—In English & US Dollars
- www.tgv-europe.com
For European residents in their language or for worldwide clients in English—Currency depends on country of residence
- www.voyages-sncf.com
The French rail site—In French & Euros, you do not have to be French to purchase your tickets on this site

Sometimes promotions on the SNCF site are better than prices from Rail Europe, so if you know a bit of French, the French rail site is a good resource.

Be careful of the cancellation/refund policies! Most of the time, less expensive tickets will be non-refundable and non-exchangeable. So if you're sure you want to take a specific train, go ahead and book your tickets; but if you're not too sure, you should either wait or get exchangeable/refundable tickets! You can read more about trains in our "About Your Train Passes" document.

Vouchers

Vouchers for a biking or hiking tour will be given to you upon arrival at the first hotel on your tour. If you have booked an additional service through us, the voucher should be emailed with your final

The hotel or car agent may choose not to keep the voucher; do not worry if that is the case. The vouchers are a formality that is provided for ease of check-in. If you have any trouble with service shown as prepaid on your voucher, or if you are going to miss the check-in date, contact the supplier phone number shown, or contact us at Pure Adventures.

Vouchers included with your final documents may be for hotel reservations, car reservations, and/or Paris excursions. The voucher should show:

- If the reservation has been completely prepaid – this is usually the case for hotel reservations.
- The date(s) of the requested service or booking.
- The amount of people the reservation has been made for.
- For hotel reservations, what meals are included.

When you receive your voucher(s), make sure it corresponds with what you have requested: date, service, number of people, meals included, etc., before giving it to the provider.

Luggage/Airlines

Typically, airlines will either not allow you any free checked baggage or they will allow one checked suitcase for international flights (check with your airline for their specific allowances). We advise using strong suitcases that will not explode if strongly manipulated by baggage handlers at airports. Waterproof suitcases are also recommended, since luggage is sometimes left on carts on the airport tarmac before being loaded in the airplane!

Have your important documents easily reachable as they will be requested several times at the airport. Before leaving home, double check for your **Passport & Credit Card**. You almost could forget the rest!!!

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes for flying – nothing too tight.

With the increased security be ready to remove any large jewelry, belts, baggy sweatshirts and, of course, your shoes.

Arrive early for flights International flights require you to be at the airport 2 or more hours before take-off time. Also, for return flight, the airlines prefer that you confirm 72 hours in advance of your flight.

Time France is 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1). This makes it 6 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time (and +9 PST). The time is the same all over the country, but 1 hour ahead of the UK.



Earplugs: These can be very useful, both on the plane and in a hotel at night. They are light and easy to carry. Every traveler should have some whether they need them or not.

Jet Lag

When traveling to France from North America you will arrive the day after your departure, generally in the morning. You will be somewhere between 6-9 hours ahead of North America. There are several ways to overcome the change.

We suggest sleeping on the plane. Plenty of rest prior to departure will also help. Upon arrival it may be difficult to continue without sleep, but you should try to stay awake. If you cannot go on, take a short nap, with an emphasis on *short!*

Then, go to bed early. When you return back home, you will probably feel the jet lag for a few days. You will arrive home (if you travel to North America) in the evening on the same day you left France. Just rest if you can. **A small, easy trick that helps the Discover France staff: drink lots of water.** You can get dehydrated quickly in the airplane and dehydration causes fatigue.

France is divided in 95 departments

Each has its own name and number. The number is set alphabetically and is found at the beginning of the zip code for the department, as well as the last 2 digits of car license plates. For example: *Bayeux*, a town close to the Normandy Landing Beaches and famous for the Queen Mathilde Tapestry, is in Normandy. *Normandy* is the name of the region. *Calvados* is the name of the department. Calvados, alphabetically, is department 14. Everywhere in Calvados the towns and villages have a zip code starting with 14, and every car owner in Calvados has 14 at the end of the license plate.

Hotels In most hotels, except 4 & 5 star, we suggest twin beds for people used to King or Queen sized beds. "Double" rooms in France often only have full size beds. Twins can be pushed together to form a "lit a l'italienne." Most hotels will offer a bath and shower. **Note:** If you exceed the service that is pre-paid, you will be required to pay for the balance of any fees due at the end of your stay or rental period. Cancellation penalties apply, and unused services may not be fully reimbursed, if reimbursed at all, so do not neglect to contact us or the supplier if a change in plan has occurred. There is no refund for no-show.



Documentation

European Union, U.S., Canadian, New Zealand, Australian and Mexican citizens only need a valid passport to travel to France as long as their stay does not exceed 3 months. You are required to carry identification with you at all times when traveling in France. If you lose your passport, contact the appropriate office in blue below.

- **American Consulate**
2, rue Saint Florentin - 75001 Paris
Tel: 01.42.96.12.02 or 01.42.61.80.75
- **Consular Section for Canadians**
35, Avenue de Montaigne - 75008 Paris
Tel: 01.44.43.32.00
- **Australian Embassy**
4, Rue Jean Rey -75015 Paris
Tel: 01.40.59.33.00

For other country residents, ask your government for information before departure.

Passports

Valid passports are required for everyone. Passports must be valid 3 months beyond length of stay. **Note:** It is advised that passengers hold return or onward tickets and proof of financial means, although this is not an absolute requirement.

Our suggestion: Keep your passport in a safe place as much as possible; keep a photocopy with you and email yourself a copy before departure.

Visas

Required by all except signatory parties to the Schengen Agreement: includes USA, Canada, Australia, all EU countries, among many others, check with your country regulations.

Insurance



Although not mandatory, **insurance is strongly recommended when traveling.** We recommend TRAVEL GUARD (available to US and Canadian residents). This insurance is useful to cover car rental, lost luggage, travel delay, cancellation, trip interruption, and more at variable prices depending on how much you would like to insure.



Post Office - Mail / Shipping

The Post Office is called **LA POSTE** or PTT. Generally open M-F from 9:00am to 6:00pm and Saturday from 9:00am to 12:00pm. They can handle money orders and other financial transactions, as well as faxes. Mail boxes are yellow and can easily be found in public places and on the walls of the Post Offices. Collection times are indicated on the box. Packages can of course be sent from the post office, but some merchants will also ship items for you for a charge. Be aware that shipping anything “economique” will take at least one month! **If you purchase goods at one merchant worth more than 175 Euros, be sure to ask for a VAT refund form, which can be submitted to the customs official at the airport when you leave.** A credit will be issued for VAT -Value Added Tax – (TVA in French) for a range of 13-20 percent. Any “ChronoPost” reaches its destination within 48 hours. **Stamps can also be purchased in “Tabacs” (tobacco shops) along with newspapers, telephone cards, and much more.** Some “Tabacs” are located within cafes; this is where the French also bet on sports: horse races, soccer games, etc. (Café-PMU). The post office at the Paris metro station Louvre is open 24 hrs - 7 days/week.



Emergency phone numbers in France:

Ambulance: 15
Police: 17
Fire: 18

Other telephone numbers in Paris:

24-hour doctor:
01.47.07.77.77
24-hour dentist:
01.43.37.51.00
English language crisis line:
01.47.23.80.80

American Hospital

63 boulevard
Victor Hugo
92202 Neuilly
01.46.41.25.25

American Pharmacy

1 rue Auber
75009 Paris
01.42.60.72.96



Telephones

France is divided into five zones for phones. The first two digits of a phone number tells you the area: 01 is Paris / 02 is Northwest / 03 is Northeast / 04 is Southeast / 05 is Southwest. From outside of France, you don't need to dial the 0; within France, you have to dial the 0. Phone numbers must have 10 digits (including the first 0) – the only exceptions are of course the emergency numbers. Public phones in France require a telephone card (“telecarte”) or a magnetic chip credit card. Phone cards can be purchased at Post Office or Tabacs. A call to America is dialed 001 then the area code and the number. To reach an English-speaking operator in the U.S. dial 19, wait for the tone, then 0011 for AT&T, or 0019 for MCI, or 0087 for Sprint.



Cell Phones

Your cell phone should be able to be activated so that you can use it in France – ask your cell phone company. Otherwise, cell phones can be rented prior to your departure and mailed to your home. There are a number of companies that provide this service and it is changing constantly.

On our biking and hiking tours you will be carrying a road book of maps and route instructions. **Our road books vary from region to region, and can have some funny translations.** Our local guides have developed most of our circuits, and with our help have chosen excellent roads in combination with interesting sites. However, despite our efforts to eliminate strangely translated words, misunderstandings persist. If you find you have made a mistake, simply back track. You will find that the first day is most difficult and by the second and following days you will understand much more clearly the methodology of the road book. So be patient on that first day, and have fun. It will become easier! Also, some people are more reliant on maps than written instructions, and vice versa.



Tips for using your roadbook!

The road book is designed to use both maps and detailed written instructions in combination to give you a complete picture of the route. You may be able to use one or the other uniquely, but always refer to the other if you have doubt.

You need to have some basic orientation skills to follow the routes on a self-guided trip. This means knowing how to find North and how to orient a map to your situation on the ground. If you need to, practice before your trip.

Public *Holidays*

- January 1st, New Year's Day
- Easter Monday
- May 1st, Labor Day
- May 8th, WWII Victory Day
- Ascension Thursday (last Thursday of May)
- Pentecost Monday
- July 14th, Bastille Day
- August 15th, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- November 1st, All Saint's Day
- November 11th, Armistice Day
- December 25th, Christmas Day



Banks

Banks are generally open weekdays from 9:00am - 4:30pm. In many cities outside Paris, the banks close for lunch, sometimes for up to 2 hours. Most banks are closed Saturday and Sunday and all holidays. The main banks are: BNP, Credit Agricole, Societe Generale, Caisse d'Epargne, and Credit du Nord.

Money



As of January 1, 2002, the Euro became the official currency in France and other countries participating in the European currency union. The old French Franc is now part of history and is no longer accepted as a payment form. Check before your departure to learn the current US Dollar equivalent. The Euro paper currency will be the same in all EU countries, in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros. The coins however, bear a different face according to country. There are 8 coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents, as well as 1 and 2 Euros.

Electric current

Electricity in France runs on 220 volt, 50-cycle AC current. If you bring electrical devices, you will need to have a transformer and plug adapter.



Internet Access

Wi-fi should be available at some hotels, however, the lower the star rating of the hotel and the more remote it is, the less likely it will be that it will have wi-fi, or internet at all. Even when a hotel claims to have wi-fi or internet, it is not always working. So, enjoy your vacation and don't expect to be connected everywhere you go!

On Sunday most stores are closed (some may be open in the morning) but restaurants will usually be open. Try to buy your food in the morning before leaving town because most stores close between 12:00pm and 2:00pm (and in some places until 4:00pm!)

Note: In France, **everybody has 5 weeks of paid vacation after the 1st year of work in any kind of job.** July and August are traditionally when the French take their holidays. During these months, tourist areas, seaside resorts and especially the south are very crowded. During the winter, the ski resorts are crowded during the school holidays: 2 weeks at Christmas, 2 weeks in February, and 2 weeks around Easter.

France is divided in different sections for school vacation with varying start times. There can be up to a 7 day difference – so that all French people with children do not hit the roads, heading in the same direction on the same day. This system was started about 15 years ago to avoid traffic jams and reduce accident frequency. It also allows some seasonal businesses to work a little longer and more productively.

Tips, Tipping and Safety Tips!

Tip: Put your important papers and your paper money inside ziplock bags to protect them from rain and sweat!



Tipping Almost all restaurants include tax and a 15% service charge with the bill. It is noted as “service compris”. If you really liked the service and/or the meal, an additional tip is customary. About 5 Euros or small change left from your bill. If service is not included, a 15% tip is customary.

In hotels, 2 or 3 Euros for each piece of luggage is the norm for bellmen and the same for housekeeping. Taxi drivers should receive about 10% to 15%, hairdressers 10%. Other times a 1 Euro tip is appropriate for washroom attendants, coatroom, ushers and museum tour guides. Bus drivers and tour guides get tipped after an excursion—15% standard.

Safety tips

Because we are ‘talking’ about money, passports, etc., we should remind you that your vacation will feel much more successful if these items stay with you! You needn’t worry about crime or theft anymore than at your home, however, take no chances. Petty thievery is somewhat common to imprudent travelers. Violent crime is very uncommon and not a big worry. Here are some tips:

- Use a secure method to carry your money and documents. A money belt works great, but if the belt does not appeal to you, try to use bags that can’t be pulled easily from your shoulder, like a backpack. Small ones should be carried in the front, especially in places like crowded metro trains.
- Use the safe at your hotel or a locked suitcase to store your passport, train tickets, extra money, etc. Only take with you what you need for the day and consider keeping only one photocopy of your passport, one credit card, and some cash on your person.
- Try to get accustomed to the currency in a safe and private place like your hotel room and try not to show a lot of cash while in public.
- Be prudent when you withdraw cash at ATM machines and don’t let a stranger distract you.



Credit Cards

Visa and Master Cards are accepted almost everywhere, and Amex is accepted at many places. Using your credit card can be the best way to get Euros when you arrive in France because of the good exchange rate but, because of new fees, **you should check with your credit card company before departure to know what rates and fees might be applicable.** Check with Capital One; they seem to be one of the few companies who do not have foreign transaction fees.

Travelers Checks

Credit cards and cash will be more widely accepting than travelers checks. Traveler’s Checks need to be exchanged at banks for better rates than change bureaus on the street, but exchange bureaus are open much longer. Traveler Checks cost you money when you order them, but they are safe: if they are stolen or lost, you don’t “lose” the money they represent.

Currency exchange

In any Currency Exchange Bureau and some first-class hotels you can exchange foreign currency. The “rate of the day” is written on the doors of exchange currency bureaus and banks. **Note:** Shops and most hotels are prohibited from accepting foreign currency by law, so the sooner you get foreign currency, the better.



About your train passes

You may have purchased rail tickets/passes to use while in Europe. Several different documents may make up your train tickets. You may have tickets only, rail passes and/or seat reservations. Your rail passes do not automatically come with seat reservations; these must be booked separately and most times for varying fees.

Seat reservations are required on the TGV and other express trains such as the Eurostar and Thalys. For regional trains, you are not required to have a seat reservation. Unless it is high travel season, or a long duration train, we do not recommend purchasing a seat reservation beforehand. They can always be purchased prior to departure at the station.



Arriving/Departing

When you come into a station, take note of where you are, and be prepared to move quickly to get your bags off the train if it is only momentarily stopping. Trains run on schedule for the most part in Europe, so don't miss a departure or arrival time.



Don't Forget!

You are responsible for getting your luggage on and off the trains.

Finding your train / seat—When you arrive at the train station, match the train numbers as there may be multiple trains bound for the same city, so double check you have your correct train number. If you have a seat reservation, look for the Coach # on your tickets, and for what class your tickets are issued (1st or 2nd).

Once inside the car, locate your seat. If you don't have a seat reservation, find the class of car you are traveling in, and then locate a seat that is not reserved. In the bigger train stations, you must locate your train platform.

Point to Point tickets

Tickets will either be point to point (ex: Paris-Tours, Rome-Chiusi, etc.) or a rail pass (ex: Brit Rail Pass or a France Saver Pass). Rail passes are train tickets, but they do not entitle you to a seat. This is where seat reservations come in. Your seat reservation is an additional charge (charges can vary depending on the availability of seats, when you purchase your seat reservation, etc.). Seat reservations guarantee you a seat on a SPECIFIC train. They are not exchangeable or refundable. **If you miss your train, your ticket/pass will still be valid, but your seat reservation will no longer be valid and you will need to purchase another one.** Take note of the terms shown on your rail pass if you have purchased one to know when you may use it and the duration of its validity.

Renting & Driving

What to expect— Motorcycles, Parking & Traffic

Be prepared to have motorcycles pass in between cars when traffic is slow. If you plan to drive in Paris or in any other city, prepare to pay substantially to park. Look for a “Payant” sign painted on the roads, which indicates you must pay a machine (called “horodateur”) and place a ticket inside your car window. Also, prepare to deal with traffic, especially heavy during the rush hours.

Car rental

The legal age to rent a car is 21, but most companies require driver’s to be at least 25 years old. It pays to reserve your car from the U.S. or a supplier



in your country prior to arrival for substantial savings. If you have no insurance, the ones offered by the rental agencies are not the best deals, see travel insurance that provides that coverage. **We recommend www.autoeurope.com** **Toll roads:** Tolls can also substantially increase the cost of your ride. Tolls have to be paid on “autoroute” (interstate toll way), but these autoroutes are the best and fastest way to drive from one point to the other. Credit cards are accepted at tollgates, see the symbol for CB meaning “carte bancaire”. Expect long waits at toll booths in high travel season.

Be aware! From June 15 to September 15, it is high season and there will be a lot of traffic on every type of road, especially on weekends. **NEVER** leave objects of value in your car. *At the very least*, keep them out of sight and in the trunk.

Driving in France

An American driver’s license is valid for Americans driving in France but we strongly recommend getting an international driver’s license (at any AAA office). Have another ID document with you like your passport. Insurance is highly recommended. The legal age to drive in France is 18. Trucks – except with special authorization – are not allowed to drive on Sunday. Seat belts must be worn at all times – children under 12 must sit in the backseat. Park your car only where it is authorized, fines are easily given and cars are often towed away!

Gasoline

Taxes on gas are very high in France, which explains the price of the liter: more than 1.30 Euro (about \$7 a gallon!) At the gas pump, “Sans Plomb” means *unleaded gas*. *Gazoil or Gazole* is diesel. French usually get gas at large stores like *Carrefour, Leclerc, Casino*, etc... You can go at any time, help yourself and use your credit card. Stations along autoroutes are open 24 hrs, 7 days / week, but tend to be more expensive, and supermarkets can be hard to find. So when stopping on the autoroute, make sure that you use all the services needed like bathroom, snacks, etc. before exiting the autoroute.



Roads, Speed Limits & Airports

Airports Outside of Paris

- **Bordeaux Merignac** – BOD - 7 miles west of Bordeaux.
- **Lille Lesquin** – LIL - 7 miles southeast of Lille.
- **Lyon Satolas** – LYS - 16 miles east of Lyon.
- **Marseille Marignane** – MRS - 19 miles northwest of Marseille. (Airport shuttles to Marseille city and Aix-en-Provence – about 8 Euros).
- **Nice Côte d'Azur** – NCE - 4 miles west of Nice.
- **Toulouse Blagnac** – TLS - 5 miles northwest of Toulouse.
- **Avignon—Caumont** – AVN - 5 miles southeast of Avignon.



In each airport listed above you will find taxis, airport shuttles, restaurants, shops, ATM machines and also car rental agencies. The road network, as well as the rail network, is very efficient in France. French people use trains a lot, which leads to a very good standard in their rail company: service, schedule, speed (try the TGV train). The public transportation system in France is excellent. There are comprehensive bus systems in bigger cities. There are also tramways, trolleybuses and metros in larger cities like Marseille and Lyon - automated driverless trains or tramway in Lille.

Types of roads

- **Interstate toll way / Motorway**

A precedes the number of the road. Every 20 km you will have restaurants, a gas station, restrooms and sometimes a few shops.

- **National road**

N precedes the number of the road. If you are not traveling too far, or if you have plenty of time, then the more scenic and less expensive (free) way to go is the **National roads**. A famous road in France is the **National 7 (N7)**. There is even a song 🎵 about that road sung by Charles TRENET! 🎵

- **Department road**

D precedes the number of the road.



Speed Limits The speed limits in France are above the limits in most countries and the French tend to drive 10 to 20 km/h above these limits! 50km/h (31mph) in built-up areas, 90km/h (56mph) outside built-up areas, 110km/h (68mph) on highways separated by a central median and 130km/hr (81mph) on auto routes.

If you do not know what airport would be the most convenient to fly into for your tour, please contact us, we will be happy to give you a recommendation!



Paris Airport Information



Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport is where most international flights are now arriving at CDG—14 miles on the north end of the Paris suburbs. Listed below are your transportation options to arrive in the city center. From CDG airport, now available **TGV trains to main cities in France like Lyon, Avignon, Aix-en-Provence, Marseilles, etc.**

- **Taxi**—About 60-65 Euros and 50 minutes for the ride (depending on destination).
- **Bus shuttles**—Either *Air France Shuttle* or *Roissybus*. Depending on which terminal in which you arrive, you need to check with the information counter to know the pickup point for either bus. This is a very economical and scenic way to go into Paris. *Air France buses* are available to anyone, not just Air France passengers. Cost is about 18 € one-way; buses leave every 15-30 minutes. There are 2 routes for the *Air France Shuttle*: Porte Maillot/Arc de Triomphe or Gare de Lyon/Gare Montparnasse. There is also a route from CDG to Orly. *The Roissybus* is an excellent option with fares at about 12€ and service to Opera Garnier; buses leave every 15 minutes—ride is about 50 minutes.
- **R.E.R. (Line B)**—About €10 from Terminal 2. If you arrive at Terminal 1, take the “*navette*” shuttle to the SNCF station. RER stops at Gare du Nord, Chatelet, Saint Michel, Luxembourg, Port Royal, Denfert-Rochereau and Cite Universitaire. Further south, it goes to the other Airport: Orly.
- **Private Transfers**—Please make arrangements with us at least 5 days in advance.

Orly Airport—9 miles south of the city. Listed below are your transportation options to arrive in the city center. We recommend taking either the Orlybus or Air France buses.

- **Taxi**—About 50 euros for the ride.
- **Coaches and buses**—Every 12 minutes from Orly Ouest.
- **RER/SNCF Orlyval-Rail trains**—Every 15 minutes / travel time: 30min



Charles de Gaulle

Tip: It's a good idea to change some money at the airport to cover your transportation into Paris and any other minor needs before finding your preferred method of money exchange. We recommend using the ATM at the airport to get the best rates. It is a quick and convenient transaction, as the ATM's are available in English.

Car rentals

Car rentals are available in most of the terminals at either one of the airports. If you're having a hard time finding something in the airport, go to one of the information desks, they speak English!

Trains from CDG

You can take the train to some destinations in France directly from the airport without going into the center of Paris! The TGV station (“Gare TGV”) is located in Terminal 2. For train reservations, you can go to: www.raileurope.com. If you wish to train directly from the airport, type “Paris CDG Airport” as your departure city when searching for trains on Rail Europe.

Paris— the city of light

Paris is divided into “arrondissements” - precincts or districts – from the 1st arrondissement to the 20th arrondissement. The 1st district is the very heart of Paris (Louvre museum) and from there the other arrondissements are arranged like a snail shell, the 20th arrondissement being the furthest from the 1st. The zip code tells you which arrondissement you are in: it always start with 75 for Paris downtown, then you add the arrondissement: 75001, 75002, etc. Saint Germain des Pres is in the 6th arrondissement; the zip code is 75006. In Paris, and in France in general, street signs will usually be on a building.



Tourist Offices in Paris

There are many convenient locations within Paris to find a tourist office. Some are as follows:

- [Carrousel du Louvre](#): 99 Rue de Rivoli, 75001. Metro: Palais Royal / Louvre (1,7)
- [Montmartre](#): 21 Place du Tertre, 75018. Metro: Abbesses (12)
- [Gare du Nord](#): Metro / RER (B,D,4,5)
- [Tour Eiffel](#): Metro / RER: Champs de Mars / Tour Eiffel (C), Bir-Hakeim (6)
- [Gare de Lyon](#): Metro / RER (A,D,1,14)
- [Opera – Grands Magasins](#): 11 rue Scribe, 75009/ Metro: Opera (3,7,8) / RER: Auber (A)



Metro / Bus / RER / Trains

Paris Visit Pass This is a unique ticket good for unlimited travel on the Paris metro, bus, and RER trains for 1, 3, or 5 consecutive days. Metro stations are open from 5:00am to Midnight. Schedules for the first and last train of the day have to be checked at the station. Bus services run from 6:00am to 9:00pm, except on certain lines which run until 3am. Schedules are posted at bus stops.

Caution: Without creating alarm, it is necessary to mention that additional prudence be used when using the RER train from CDG airport. Incidents of baggage theft have been reported as weary tourists arrive in France as easy targets for theft. Pay no attention to anyone who approaches with simple questions while a train comes to a stop in the next station. Watch your luggage at all times from the moment you exit customs.

Museum passes Museum passes are good for unlimited access to 60 museums (permanent collections) and monuments in Paris and the surrounding areas, like Versailles. They come in increments of 2, 4 or 6 consecutive days. The pass allows you to avoid lines at the entrance of the museums or monuments, which can save you up to 2 hours in line during busy seasons like summer or Christmas. For more information about what sites are included with the museum pass, you can visit en.parismuseumpass.com. Ask us if you would like to purchase these tickets in advance as they can be shipped to your home / work address in the U.S before you leave. **Day tours, airport transfers and more can all be booked on our site** www.francetravelspot.com.



Train Stations, Sights & Museums

SNCF: The French railroad system is connected to all of Europe and is an excellent way to travel. If you wish to travel by train, it is advised you plan ahead as most rail passes and packages are only available from outside Europe/France. Of course, you can buy tickets once in France for anywhere you need to go. All train stations are reachable by the Metro and of course by taxi. Trains run on time, so plan on arriving early. Some trains require advance seat assignments, but many do not.

Train Stations in Paris

- **Gare du Nord:** North of France, Belgium, Eurostar to London, UK
- **Gare de L'Est:** Champagne, Alsace / Germany
- **Gare de Lyon:** Southeast, Provence – Cote d'Azur / Italy
- **Gare Austerlitz:** Loire Valley, Southwest France
- **Gare Montparnasse:** Brittany, TGV to Loire and Southwest
- **Gare Saint Lazare:** Normandy, Western



Museums

(Most can be visited with the museum pass)



The most visited museums in Paris include Le Louvre, Musee d'Orsay (impressionism), Rodin (sculpture), Picasso, Gustave Moreau, Eugene Delacroix, Musee de la mode (fashion + textile), Musee Carnavalet (history of Paris), Victor Hugo house, Balzac house, Arts Forains (carousels, merry-go-rounds, etc.), Musee de la Musique de la Villette (4500 musical instruments), Musee du Vin (taste and dine). Some unique and lesser known museums include: African Art and Oceanic Arts, National Museum of Ceramics, The Edith Piaf Museum, The Doll Museum, and The Museum of the Institute of the Arab World.

Things to See and Do in Paris Check the *Pariscope* at newsstands for its event listings, which includes *Time Out*, a section with reviews in English of the week's main events. Also *l'Officiel des Spectacles* is a good resource. There is truly an infinite list of possibilities. There are so many things to see and do, some famous and others not so famous, that it is impossible to list everything here. It is suggested you pick up a book on Paris and read more closely about what may interest you.

Sites & Monuments

(Some of these can be seen with the museum pass, check <http://en.parismuseumpass.com/> for more details.)

The Eiffel tower, George Pompidou Center (also called Beaubourg), Cite des Sciences et de L'industrie (interactive science museum including a massive mirrored geode cinema), la Defense and La Grande Arche, basilica of the Sacre Coeur in Montmartre, the historic district of Le Marais, cathedral of Notre Dame, the new and controversial Opera at Place de la Bastille, and of course the original Paris Opera (Palais Garnier), Pantheon, and place des Vosges ... just to name a few!

... the Gardens, the "walks", and the cemeteries!

Jardin des Tuileries, Jardin du Palais-Royal, Jardin du Luxembourg, Parc Andre Citroen, Jardin des plantes (botanical garden), Jardin de l'Atlantique, nice walks along the Seine river and also following the "green line" built on an old outdoor city train line. The Pere Lachaise cemetery will also allow you to walk an entire afternoon tracking the tombs of a wide variety of famous people from Frederic Chopin to Jim Morrison.

Eating Out

*“Everything is a pretext for a good dinner”
– playwright Jean ANOUILH.*

Some of the most known cafes are along boulevard Montparnasse, and though slightly more expensive, it's worth one visit to **La Coupole**, **La Rotonde**, or **Le Dome** to sit and sip where the greatest novelists of the 20th Century passed time. Also, the cafes around the cinemas in Saint Germain des Pres and Saint Michel are very lively and interesting.

“Menus”

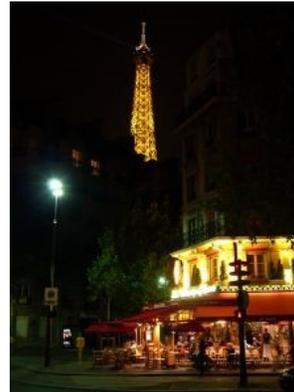
Most restaurants have fixed price menus that are considerably less expensive than ordering a la carte, and dining out for lunch is usually cheaper than for dinner. Most menus are translated into English. If not, just ask the server to explain what each item is. Typically, you can expect a choice of fish, meat, and poultry as the main course. If you don't want any of the choices, ask to change the item. A small supplement may be imposed depending on what you choose, so ask before ordering.

Always look for a reasonably priced house wine. The house carafe, or pichet, is often the best deal, but it can be more expensive than some bottles on the regular wine list. Also, you can choose a half bottle of wine if you don't want a full bottle. Mineral water, cafe, aperitifs, and digestifs can also add up. In cafes, soft drinks and bottled water can cost as much or more than a wine or whisky.

For thirst quenchers, hit the grocery store!

Michelin publishes a very comprehensive guide, which covers not only Paris, but also the countryside: “Guide Michelin Rouge France”. It includes more than 1500 restaurants offering a meal for less than 13 Euros and indicates about 350 nice restaurants at reasonable prices (15-20 Euros). The restaurants listed as 2 stars or as 3 stars in the Michelin guide are the best restaurants of the country.

www.viamichelin.com



Sidewalk Cafes

When visiting Paris, how better to get a glimpse of "real" local life than to leisurely enjoy some time spent at the sidewalk cafés, or terrasses?

Check out the following suggestions:

On the Left Bank

Forget about the [Café de Flore](#) and [Le Deux Magots](#). These famous cafés are today filled with tourists frowning into their over-priced drinks. **La Palette** is where the current generation of left-bank creatives are hanging out ([43 rue de Seine, 6th arrondissement](#)). Further west near the Eiffel Tower, **Le Café du Marché** offers some excellent people watching on one of the city's most posh market streets ([38 rue Cler, 7th arrondissement](#)). In the residential south, not far from the Catacombs, **Café Daguerre** has sunny tables on a pedestrian market street. This is a great place to observe the locals with hardly any other visitors around ([4 Avenue du Général Leclerc, 14th arrondissement](#)).

On the Right Bank

La Perle remains one of the best sidewalk scenes in town. Grab an outside table during the apéro hour—it's a prime perch for watching the nightly Marais fashion parade ([78 rue Vieille du Temple, 3rd arrondissement](#)). Near Grands Boulevards, the tables of the **Delaville Café** are packed in the late afternoon with local media and theater types ([34 boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, 10th arrondissement](#)). The interior is also worth checking out during your trip to the blinged-out bathroom. **Chez Prune** ([36 rue Beaurepaire, 10th arrondissement](#)) is a prime meeting spot along the Canal St-Martin, but I prefer its rival across the water. **Le Jemmapes** has only a handful of tables, but its takeaway cups let you sip your drinks along the sunny banks of the Canal ([82 quai de Jemmapes, 10th arrondissement](#)). Among the boutiques and galleries behind Bastille, **Le Pause Café** ([41 rue de Charonne, 11th arrondissement](#)) is an excellent spot for post-shopping recovery. Further east and not far from Père Lachaise, **Le Soleil** is an appropriately named institution, drawing hundreds of Paris hipsters in sunny weather ([136 boulevard de Ménilmontant](#)).

Why
not



indulge?



Our selection if you want to treat yourself!

- Bread** Daniel Dupuy, 13 rue Cadet – 75009
Au Petrin d'Antin, 174 rue Ordener – 75018
- Charcuterie** Charcuterie Lyonnaise, 58 rue des Martyrs - 75009
- Cheese** Androuet, 83 rue St. Dominique – 75007
6 rue Arsene-Houssaye, 75008
Fromagerie Boursault, 71 av. du General Leclerc - 75014
- Chocolate** La Fontaine au Chocolat, 101 rue St. Honore –75001
La Duree, 75 av Champs Elysees - 75008 (try a “chocolat chaud”)
- Escargots** L'escargots de la Butte, 48 rue Joseph de Maistre - 75018
- Foie Gras** Divay, 4 rue Bayen - 75017
- Honey** La Maison du Miel, 24 rue Vignon - 75009
- Ice cream** on Ile St. Louis, look for “Berthillon”.
- Pastries** Christian Constant, 37 rue d'Assas – 75006
Lenotre, various shops throughout Paris
- Seafood** Le Bar a Huitres, 112 Blvd Montparnasse - 75014
- Wine** Nicolas, various shops throughout Paris

Nightlife

Some nightclubs and discos in Paris have no entry fee, but drinks are usually more expensive. Alternatively, the entrance price sometimes includes a drink. As an alternative to a nightclub, there are many late-night bars. Tourist offices publish an annual and monthly diary of events available free of charge.

Shopping The most well known department stores are **GALLERIES LAFAYETTE** and **PRINTEMPS** on boulevard Haussmann. Other great shopping areas include Saint Germain des Pres and the Marais. Place Vendôme is nice for jewelry. There are old bookstores and antiques in the Latin Quarter, and don't miss rue Saint Jacques and rue de Rennes. Some interesting malls are at Forum des Halles at Les Halles in the center of the city and metro lines. Also, Montparnasse and St. Lazare stations have good shopping. Visit the **FNAC** for CD's, books, tickets and other items, even books in English. **TATI**, a department store of sorts, is known for its very low prices.

GO SPORT and **DECATHLON** are the large sporting goods stores with the best selection of gear and clothes. It's difficult to find specialty shops in sporting goods, so you will find the best gear and prices in these two, including all cycling gear.

Galleries Lafayette

www.gallerieslafayette.com

40, boulevard Haussmann
75009 Paris

Tel: +33 1 42 82 34 56 Open Monday through Saturday 9:30 am-8 pm Thursday until 9 pm Closed on Sundays

Metro stop : Chaussée d'Antin
La Fayette
RER : Auber

Printemps Haussman

www.printemps.com

64, boulevard Haussmann
75009 Paris

Tel: +33 1 42 82 50 00 Open Monday through Saturday 9:35am-7pm Thursday until 10 pm Closed on Sundays

Shoes are one of the best buys in France. Twice a year in January and July are “Les Soldes” - sales. During that time, it is like rush hour from dawn to dusk!

Miscellaneous



Etiquette

If you don't speak French, it is very important that you don't expect the French to speak your language. The polite thing to do is attempt a greeting in French or ask if they speak English, before asking your main question.

The French who speak English may have learned it in England and this can lead to communication misunderstandings. For example, in the U.S., a presentation that "bombs" has failed, but in England it has succeeded. Always ask if you are not sure what is being said. Words in French and English might have the same roots, but different meanings or connotations. If you don't speak French, don't be offended too easily. For example, a French person might "demand" something, because "demander" simply means "to ask". If you speak some French, don't assume an English word will have the same connotation in French. For example, if you ask for the bathroom and use the translation, "salle de bains," it will not be understood that you are asking for "les toilettes." Don't mistake a high-pitched voice and/or excited gestures for anger; they usually just mean great interest in the subject. Eye contact among the French is frequent and intense - so much so that some may be intimidated.

Remember, you are another country and English is not the primary language. Expect the theatres, TV, events, and everything else to be in a foreign language. Be flexible, and have fun! It is your opportunity to learn and respect a new culture!

Modesty French can be quite liberal by some standards regarding their own bodies and what other people may do with theirs in public. Beaches and swimming locations may be attended by topless women and girls. You are neither out of place nor need to be embarrassed if you do not do the same. You may see posters or ads in public places that would not be displayed as such in your country. Do not be surprised by this, or by the way some women maintain a high degree of femininity.



Customer Service

This is something that has made huge progress in France and is why the old image of French rudeness is outdated.

However, it is important to note that as service is a difficult quality to define and to receive anywhere, it can be stated that, in general, French customer service is more genuine, but less flexible than what you may have experienced in your country.

Remember, yelling and screaming out of frustration rarely gets people anywhere. Lower-level employees are not often capable of fixing problems that aren't specifically part of their job. Speaking to the right person is important.

Don't worry about being cheated in your business transactions (unless you are making them on the streets). Laws and regulations make it difficult to cheat a consumer, therefore patiently and persistently ask for what you need.



France & Food

France is the country of **gastronomy**, and this is one of the great pleasures of being there, so don't miss out! Meal times vary from north to south, but generally they are later than in North America and last considerably longer. For example, breakfast is generally from 7am to 9am, while lunch can be from noon to 2:00pm, and dinner from 8-10 pm. In the south, an *apéritif* is common before dinner. At the end of your meal, you have to ask for the check. Unlike the States, the waiter will bring your bill only if you ask for it; this way you let the waiter know that you are ready to go. It would be rude for him to bring it to you before!

Eating Well Fortunately this is easy to do in France, and certainly in Paris. We advise consulting the Michelin Guide, the Gault Millau, or asking your hotel for a recommendation.

When dining out in Paris, especially nicer restaurants, you should treat it as a dressy affair. Service may seem slow, but in fact, the servers rarely want to push you along. Tables may turn only 1 time per night. Expect to enjoy a long time dining. A meal in a 1, 2, or 3 star Michelin may last 4 hours!

Eating For Less

Finally, for those who don't want to spend a lot of money, or who don't want to spend too much time on lunch, there are alternatives. The best is to buy products such as bread, fruits, cheese, *pâté*, or other items at an open-air market. The markets are different everywhere and take place on a specific day (or two) during the week. Check local government offices for information on your *arrondissement* or village. If there is no market while you are in town, then hit the grocery store. If it's late, some little convenience style grocers are often open late in the big cities. Some excellent snacks can be found in the little stands in the streets as well. For example, "*crepes*" are an excellent way to eat cheap and have a nice snack. Sandwiches are commonly found as well.

Depending on your tour you may have opportunities to eat lunch in a different place each day. You may also have the desire to get a snack at any point during the day. In the countryside it's not always easy to find restaurants of "grande cuisine" but they do exist.



Did you know?

Café

Primarily, cafés are for hot and cold drinks, but they also serve a continental breakfast, snacks like *croque-monsieur*, *croque-madame*, pizzas, omelets, *quiche*, and sandwiches. They also sometimes have lunch specials.

Salon de Thé

Tea rooms with pastries only. Open hours are limited. They are generally not found in small villages.

Bistrot

Smaller and often family-run restaurant with paper tablecloths and simple decor. Food is generally a traditional and home-style offering. Wine is often by *carafe*.

Brasserie

Literally translated it means brewery, and beer is often served. They are usually larger establishments, brightly lit, and open late. Typical dishes that are found in brasseries are the "*choucroute*", "*mussels and fries*" and sometimes nice seafood plates. Note: take advantage of going to a *café/brasserie* to use the restroom because finding public restroom is not often possible.





the French

“LA BISE”!

This is a subject worth a paragraph!

This is the name French give to the kiss or near kiss on each cheek they perform when they meet or when they leave. The eternal question, even for French, is how many times does one kiss? The simple answer is, whatever the other party wants! Some regions have a custom of 2; some have 3 or 4. While it may be an invasion of your personal space, it can be an insult to a French person to whom you do not give a “bise”.

If you meet people on the street on your own, you can generally get by with most people of either sex with a simple handshake. A “bise” may only be necessary if you make a new friend, or are introduced to people by a friend who *does* give a “bise” to the newly introduced. Simply follow the lead of others. Typically, women always kiss both men and women, while men kiss women and shake hands with other men. There are no hard and fast rules to this custom.

Jean COCTEAU—a French poet and playwright—used to say that “French are bad mood Italians and Italians are good mood French”

French “customs”

The French are proud people, but not worthy of the tired old stereotype of being unfriendly. The contrary couldn’t be truer. That said, it is still necessary to respect the culture you are going to visit. France is certainly not easily defined culturally in one or two paragraphs, but some simple graces will go a long way. Europeans and the French, in general, are accustomed to sharing their space with many people. The dense population requires that people have less privacy. That means that restaurant tables are close together, that crowds and lines are common, rules are numerous and patience sometimes short. One example that always seems to stand out is in restaurants. Though people are packed tightly together, they manage to have quiet and private conversations. Visitors sometimes don’t realize the value of quiet and private conversations to their French dining neighbors.

Speaking quietly in public is a grace to be respected in France.

Another example is the French language. Do not assume anyone speaks English by beginning a conversation in English without first asking in French “*Parlez-vous anglais?*” If they do speak English—great—if they do not, that’s fine too. You can then do your best to speak slowly and articulating your words to convey what it is you are seeking. Everyone will understand at that point you don’t speak French, but you made a polite effort in French to ask up-front. **Always say “*Merci*” and “*S’il vous plait*”.** When people enter an establishment they usually say “*Bonjour*”, and when leaving, even if no other word was spoken, people say “*Merci, au Revoir!*”

France & You! OK, you knew it had to end one day, right? Now that you are back at home, we at Discover France are eager to know what you thought about France—what was amazing, what was disappointing, what type of food you had for the 1st time, what was the best wine you tasted, etc. Also, we would love to hear what you thought this booklet lacked.

Calendar of the Major Events Throughout the Year



January

- Rally de Monte Carlo – one of the motoring world’s most venerable races.
- Tournament of St Vincent – a colorful Burgundy wine festival, takes place on the 3rd weekend in a different village each year.
- Salon de la Bande Dessinee – the town of Angouleme hosts the world’s biggest and most popular comic-book festival.

February

- Carnival of Nice – made of parades and revelry.
- Carnival of Dunkerque – the most rumbustious street carnival in northern France.
- Carnival of Granville – very lively and lasts for 4 days.

March

- Salon du Livre – France’s biggest book festival, takes place in Paris.

April

- The Monte Carlo Open tennis Championships.
- Foire de Paris – held at the Porte de Versailles in Paris, is a giant fair with food and agricultural products from all over France.

May

- Cannes film festival – very glamour! Lasts about 2 weeks.
- Roland-Garros—French Open tennis Championships.
- Fete of Joan of Arc – in Rouen.

June

- Fete de la musique – always on June 21 “the shortest night of the year”, music festivals in the street all over the country.
- Les 24 Heures du Mans – famous 24-hour car race in the town of Le Mans.
- Fete du Cinema – last weekend of June, allows you to take in as many movies as you can for the price of 1 single ticket.
- Horse races at the hippodrome de Vincennes, Auteuil and Longchamp.

July

- Festival of Avignon – theater.
- Festival of Aix-en-Provence – opera.
- Festival of La Roque d’Antheron – classic piano.
- Festival of Nice – jazz.
- Fete de Gayant – festival of the Giant in Douai, Northern France.



Calendar of the Major Events Throughout the Year



- Bastille Day on July 14th with its fire works – all over the country.
- And last but not least: THE TOUR DE FRANCE, world most famous bike race.

August

- August 15 – processions dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
- Festival of the Pardon – Ste Anne la Palud (near Quimper) in Brittany – religious.

September

- This is “vendanges” month: grape harvests – look for festivals in wine regions.
- La Grande Braderie de Lille – Giant Street fair on the 1st weekend.
- Fete des Remparts – medieval festival in Dinan in Brittany (even years).
- La Biennale de Paris – stylish antiques fair in Paris (even years).
- Les Journees du Patrimoine – weekend around the 21st – museums free and many official and private buildings exceptionally open their doors for visits.
- Festival du film de Biarritz – films from Latin America.

October

- Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe – horse racing’s most prestigious flat race in Longchamp
- The FIAC – giant contemporary art exhibition – Paris.
- Salon de l’Automobile – auto show – Paris (even years).
- Paris Indoor Tennis Open – Paris.
- Hunting Season in Provence—wear bright colors while cycling!

November

- Trois Glorieuses – Burgundy’s biggest wine festival.
- November 11th - ceremonies commemorating veterans of WWI & WWII
- Fete du Beaujolais Nouveau – 3rd Thursday, celebration of the arrival of the wine Beaujolais Nouveau – all over the country.
- Salon des Caves Particulieres – giant wine fair in Paris at the end of Nov.

December

- Christmas Market – Strasbourg, northeast of France.
- Giant Crèche – on the square of the Hotel de Ville, Paris.
- Shepherd’s Festival – on 24th, midnight mass and “living nativity” in Les Baux de Provence – southeast of France.

