



# Floating through Paradise!

*a culinary cruise in the South of France*

October 2 – 11, 2008

*Option: A Taste of Paris*

October 11 – 16

## TRAVEL TIPS - FRANCE

### **PASSPORT:**

US citizens need a valid passport to travel to France. <http://travel.state.gov/>. Your passport needs to be valid through six months from return date.

### **CURRENCY:**

You can get Euro delivered to your door before you leave the USA. <http://www.oanda.com/products/fxdelivery/>. Or you can purchase Euro at your bank. The easiest and best way to get cash while away from home is from an ATM machine. Credit cards are a safe way to carry money. They generally offer relatively good exchange rates. You can also purchase travellers checks before you leave home. You will have to show identification when cashing the checks.

### **TELEPHONES:**

Phoning from a hotel room can be costly as you will usually be charged for local calls as well as for long distance, even though you use a credit card or call collect. To avoid extra charges, we suggest using a pay phone, phone card or mobile phone. If you have phone charges or any other personal charges on your room, please pay them the night before or early on the morning of departure. The tour can not be checked out until all incidentals are paid.

### **CUSTOMS:**

US citizens can bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. For more information: [www.customs.gov](http://www.customs.gov)

### **TIME ZONE:**

France is nine hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time in the United States. When it is 6 a.m. in California it is 3 PM in France on the same day. Once you land in France don't forget to set your watch to the local time.

### **CALLING CODES:**

The country code for France is 33. Paris city code is 1; French country code from abroad is 33. For calls to Parisian numbers from within Paris, dial 01. To place a call within France, dial the complete area and city code and then the phone

number. To call internationally from France, dial 00, and then the country code, followed by the area/city code and then the number. The country code to dial the USA is 001.

### **GRATUITIES:**

Tour Guides, Tour Directors and drivers are customary. If you wish to show your appreciation, the gratuity should be on an individual basis and not in the form of a group collection. The recognized industry guidelines are \$4.00 - \$5.00 per day per person for the Tour Director and for the driver \$2.50 to \$4.00 per day. We recommend that this be done at the conclusion of the tour and not on a daily basis. Suggested tipping for local guides is one Euro per tour.

### **TIPPING GUIDELINES:**

Bills in bars and restaurants are required by law to include service, but it is customary to round out your bill with some small change unless you're dissatisfied. The amount varies — from €0.15 for a beer to €1.50 - €2.30 after a meal. In expensive restaurants, it's common to leave an additional 5% of the bill on the table.

Tip taxi drivers and hairdressers about 10% of the bill. Give theater and cinema ushers €0.25 to €0.50. In some theaters and hotels, cloakroom attendants may expect nothing (watch for signs that say "Pourboire Interdit" — tipping forbidden); otherwise, give them €0.75. Washroom attendants usually get €0.30, though the sum is often posted.

If you stay more than two or three days in a hotel, it is customary to leave something for the chambermaid — about €1.50 per day. Expect to pay about €1.50 (€0.75 in a moderately priced hotel) to the person who carries your bags or who hails you a taxi. In hotels providing room service, give €0.75 to the waiter (this does not apply if breakfast is routinely served in your room). If the chambermaid does some pressing or laundering for you, give her €0.75 - €1.50 on top of the bill. If the concierge has been very helpful, it is customary to leave a tip of €8 - €16, depending on the type of hotel and the level of service.

Service station attendants get nothing for pumping gas or checking oil but €0.75 or €1.50 for checking tires. Train and airport porters get a fixed sum (€0.90 - €1.50) per bag. Museum guides should get €1.50 - €3 after a guided tour. It is standard practice to tip bus drivers about €1.50 after an excursion.

### **WEATHER UPDATES:**

Before you go you can check a local web site such as [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) or [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com).

### **WHAT TO PACK:**

Dress codes are fast disappearing all over the country but very few French people will wear white sneakers, baseball caps and flip-flops (except at the beach). Nobody will tell you anything, you will just be labeled as a tourist. Generally speaking, business casual dress code is sufficient in cities and in all but the most formal occasions.

People won't be offended (although they may be surprised, especially in rural areas) if you wear clothing that is unusual in France, such as a sari, a Scottish kilt, or djelabas.

The most important items of clothing to bring are comfortable shoes. Men should go for cotton pants instead of jeans. Usual courtesy apply when entering churches, and although you may not be asked to leave, it is better to avoid short pants and halter tops.

Some restaurants will frown if you come in dressed for trekking but very few will insist upon a jacket and tie. At the same time you'll be surprised by the number of French twenty-something's who show up at a grungy bar in jacket and tie, even if obviously from a thrift-shop.

For city walking, wear leather shoes with good support. They are more socially and aesthetically acceptable than athletic shoes. Rainingear is essential and a little umbrella could be handy. Gore-Tex fabric, which is both waterproof and breathable, is an excellent choice. Pack a light sweater or jacket.

Everyone these days has a digital camera. If not, please bring your own film and then develop it at home (photo shops are expensive here). You might even consider bringing a disposable camera or two.

**YOUR TOUR DIRECTOR:**

Should you have any questions or problems about any phase of the tour please talk to your tour director immediately. Give him/her a chance to solve the problem—without knowing something is wrong, he/she can not help you. The Tour Director goal is to have happy travelers!

**INFORMATION & HINTS:**

- ✓ Be careful of your wallets. Pick pocketing can happen, especially in crowded places such as famous monuments, bus stops, and railways stations. We advise that you do not give money to beggars, as this is a common distraction for someone else to snatch your valuables.
- ✓ Do not carry all your money with you when leaving for sightseeing or strolls, deposit part of your money in the hotel safe or in the special belt around your waist.
- ✓ Bring your doctor's prescription for any prescription drugs you are bringing with you.
- ✓ Keep a separate photocopy in your hotel room of your Passport and Drivers Licence.
- ✓ Keep a photocopy of your Passport, Drivers License and Credit Cards at home.
- ✓ Have handy telephone numbers of your banks in the event of stolen or lost credit cards.
- ✓ Keep your Currency Exchange Form.

**OTHER USEFUL TIPS** (From **Kelby Carr**, your guide to France travel)

**How to Avoid the So-Called Rude French**

People say it time and time again: "The French are so rude!" Before I ever set foot in France, I heard the horror stories of rude French waiters who turn their nose up at you, snooty Parisians who refuse to give directions or just French people in general who hate Americans.

When I went there the first time, I was braced for it. After all, I can be nasty too, if pushed. But I was pleasantly surprised. Not only were most French people I encountered civil, they were outright friendly, helpful and kind. They even went out of their way to help me! How could this be? Where were the so-called rude French?

I didn't even have some deep secret. Really, I just followed a couple common-sense tips. Such as:

- Always at least attempt to speak French. Simply saying, "Bonjour! Parlez-vous anglais?" (pronounced bon-jouh, pah-lay vooz ahn-glay) can work wonders. It means, "Hello. Do you speak English?" Many French who would feign ignorance suddenly speak fluent English if you just try. Also, try to imagine what you would think of a stranger walked up to you speaking French and expecting you to reply!
- Be sure to greet strangers with, "Bonjour," before launching into other requests. In France, it is considered rude to just walk up and start talking like we do in America.
- Quiet down! The French are a very hushed people. I never realized how obnoxious it can be to be loud until I was in France. My husband and I were eating dinner in this lovely cafe in Carcassonne when a group of American tourists barged in, loudly shouting at one another, running around the restaurant snapping pictures of patrons and generally being rude. One man bellowed, "I wonder if they serve grits here?" across the room. Their behavior was made even more noticeable in France where the people are very low-key. I might note that the wait staff was still polite to these buffoons, despite their disrupting the dinner-time ambiance.
- Learn about the cultural differences. Many times, the French react rudely because we do something that is considered extremely rude by their standards. Know French culture and customs before you go to avoid misunderstandings.

I've had French who pored over maps to guide me to my destination, who wrote down the dollar amounts when I struggled with spoken French numerals and who went above and beyond to help me. I've gotten help in English from many French. Try getting information in a foreign language while visiting New York City!

I even ate in Paris, and the waiter was friendly. Imagine that!

## **Survivalist's French Language Course**

*Learn the Essentials on the Plane Ride to France*

Oh no! You are heading to France, and you don't know a word of French. No need to panic. With the aid of body language and a handy pad, you can get by if you memorize these ultra-basics during the plane ride over.

Perhaps you kept meaning to learn French, and never found the time. Or maybe you are only visiting for a day and it didn't seem worth the trouble. Either way, it is crucial to know at least the basic words and phrases. With this guide, you should be able to navigate many of the basic communications needs for your trip.

I have reduced everything down to the least number of words necessary to get your point across, while many phrasebooks tend to have the most grammatically acceptable versions. You won't be debating existential philosophy in a Parisian cafe, but you will get by.

Print this page and take it with you.

It is helpful to have a second person so you can quiz one another. Start by memorizing the terms at the top section, and work your way down because these are in order of importance.

Below are the words in French in italics, followed by pronunciation (even when you see an "R," don't say it very strongly. The French R is nasal and more like an "H.") The next is the English version. In parentheses you may also see some tips. *Bon chance!* (That means, "Good luck!" See! You're learning already...)

### **Absolutely crucial**

- *Au secours!* - pronounced OH suh-KOOHR - **Help!**
- *Je suis blessé!* - ZJUH swee BLESS-ay - **I am hurt**
- *Bonjour* - BOHN-joohr - **Hello** (Always start a conversation with the French by saying Bonjour!)
- *Parlez-vous anglais?* - PAHR-lay voo zon-GLAY - **Do you speak English?**
- *Je parle anglais* - ZJUH pahr LAHN-glay - **I speak English**
- *Attention!* - UH-tin-SHEE-ahn - **Watch out!**
- *Oui* - WEE - **Yes**
- *Non* - NOH - **No**
- *S'il vous plait* - SEE voo PLAY - **Please** (This may not sound like a crucial one, but if you expect the French to help you when you don't speak their language, I highly recommend being as polite as possible).
- *Pardon* - PAH-dohn - **Excuse me** (Not just for excusing yourself. Also great for when people are standing in your way. A firm "Pardon" will often clear a path.)
- *Merci* - Mayhr-SEE - **Thank you**
- *Desole* - DEH-so-LAY - **Sorry**
- *Combien?* - COM-bee-ENN - **How much?/How many?**
- *Ecrivez* - EK-ree-VAY - **Write it** (This is a great way to avoid memorizing the many numbers in French. In a store, hand the shopkeeper a pad so they can write the price for the item you want. I'd include a, "S'il vous plait," or please, at the end. It's also great for directions, because you can ask someone to draw a map.)
- *Montrez-moi* - MON-tray MWAH - **Show me**

**Pretty darn important**

- *Ou es...* - EWW ayy - **Where is/where are...**
  - *la gare?* - LA gayhr - **the train station?**
  - *l'aéroport?* - LAYHR-oh-pohr - **the airport?**
  - *l'hôpital?* - LOW-pee-TAH - **the hospital?**
  - *la police* - LAH pow-LEES - **the police?**
  - *le bus?* - LUH boos - **the bus?**
  - *les toilettes?* - lay TWAH-lett - **the bathroom?**
- *Avez-vous...* - AH-vay VEW - **Do you have...**
  - *un plan...* - uhn PLAHN - **...a map...**
  - *un guide touristique...* - uhn GEED tour-iss-teek - **...a guidebook...**
  - *en anglais?* - ahn AHN-glay - **...in English?**
- *driote* - dwaht - **right**
- *gauche* - goshe - **left**

**Handy**

- *Sortie* - SOHR-tee - **Exit**
- *Boulangerie* - beww-LAHM-juh-REE - **bakery**
- *Monsieur* - mohn-SYUH - **Sir/Mr.**
- *Madame* - MUH-dahm - **Ma'am/Madam/Mrs.**
- *Mademoiselle* - MAH- duh-mwuh-ZELL - **Miss**
- *Je ne comprends pas* - ZJUH nuh COHM-prahn PAS - **I don't understand.**