

France

Population: 67.2 million people live in the country (2018)

Capital: Paris, with 2.2 million inhabitants

Name: République Française (French Republic)

Motto: '*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*' (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity)

Government: Democracy

Language: French

Religion: mainly Christians (Roman Catholics 64%)

Currency: 1 Euro=100cents, until 2002 French Franc

History: In 700-500BC the Celtic Gauls arrive in France. In 58-50BC Roman Emperor Julius Caesar defeats the Gauls and France becomes part of the Roman Empire until 476AD. French was ruled by kings for many centuries until the storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution in 1789. Then

Napoleon becomes Emperor of the French Republic until he is sent to exile.

Flag: blue, white and red. The French refer to the flag as 'Tricolore' (French for 'three colours')

Anthem: The French anthem is also called 'La Marseillaise'

France Map And Geography



France is situated in Western Europe, 1 hr flight from London/England, 5.5 hrs from New York/USA. On the

France outline you will see the little island of Corsica, which belongs to France, also in the French flag colors.

- The western-european country shares borders with Belgium to the North East, Germany and Luxemburg in the East as well as with Switzerland, Italy to the South East. The Pyrenées, a mountain range to the South of France, form a natural border between Spain and France. The highest mountain in France is the Mont Blanc, that is 4,810 m/15780 ft high and stands at the border between France and Italy.

Mainland France is divided into 27 regions and these into 101 departments. The Mediterranean island of Corsica belongs to France too as you can see in the outline above. Of the 101 departments there are also 5 ROM ('régions d'outre mer' or overseas regions) also belonging to France: French Guyana in South America, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean, La Reunion and Mayotte in Africa in the Indian Ocean.

Tourist Attractions In France

- Paris: Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Louvre (which you can see in the image to the right), Montmartre, Arc de Triomphe, the river Seine and many other great attractions
- Versailles: castle near Paris, once home of the French kings
- Lascaux Caves: for 17,000 years old rock paintings

- Côte d'Azur for turquoise blue sea and great beaches
- Corsica: island in the Mediterranean sea, known for being the birth place of Napoleon
- French Alps: great for hiking, skiing and snowboarding
- Mont St. Michel: island in northern France which can be reached on foot during low tide
- Provence: region with lavender fields and old historic towns like Avigno

French Food

The French main dishes contain: fresh vegetables, meat and cheeses. French cuisine is well known for its freshness and high quality dishes. The French people enjoy their main meal in the evening and this meal often consists of three courses starting with a 'hors d'oeuvre', a starter dish which often is soup or a salad and bread, then the main course and afterwards some cheese or fruit.

The bread you will buy in France in a typical French "boulangerie" (bakery) is mostly white wheat bread or bread sticks, called "baguette".

Make sure to read our separate article on 'Food in France', but let's quickly tell you some typical French food:

- **Baguette:** long bread stick
- **Croque Monsieur/Croque Madame:** ham and cheese grilled sandwich while Croque Madame is the more heavy version with ham, cheese and a fried egg on top
- **Escargots:** snails
- **Foie Gras:** goose liver pate
- **Ratatouille:** vegetable stew



- **Pain au chocolat:** similar to a croissant filled with chocolate
- **Crepes:** very thin pancakes with filling

Fun Facts

- France is a large European country, sometimes known at 'The Hexagon' because it has six geographical sides. Three sides bordered the sea and three inland sides.
- France shares her border with Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Pyrenees mountains make a natural border between France and Spain.

- There are twenty-seven different regions in France and the country includes the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean.
- The country has access to the sea from the Mediterranean to the English Channel and the North Sea as well as the Atlantic Ocean.
- France exports machinery, aircraft, chemicals, iron and steel, electronics, vehicles and pharmaceuticals. That is an impressive line-up of exports.
- France is a world leader in launching space satellites. They are a high-flying economy, but still produce products from ground level, like their beautiful cheeses.
- The French army was the first to use camouflage. The name camouflage comes from the French word 'camofleurs.'
- The special alphabet used for the blind was invented by a French man called Louis Braille who was blind as a child.
- The Montgolfier brothers were the first to launch a hot air balloon in France.
- The Louvre Museum in Paris is the most visited museum in the world. French culture and tourist attractions make it a popular holiday destination.