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Travel Information for France

A. Transportation Information

Due to the frequency of social and labor strikes in France it is advised to verify the availability of your intended public transportation while within France and check the media for announcements of scheduled strikes. Most often this impacts rail travel, but at times does include taxi service. Especially check if you plan to use train travel to catch a flight.

Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris: Name and airport code: Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) Website: www.aeroportsdeparis.fr. There are several transportation options to reach downtown Paris. Refer to the "Train Transportation Information" section of this document for details on traveling directly from the CDG train station to other parts of France.

To and From the Airport

By Bus: Air France buses will take you to several train stations in Paris: www.airfrance.com

By Shuttle: The Blue Airport Shuttle provides service to downtown Paris. Rates are reasonable for two or more people if you reserve online in advance: <http://www.bluvan.fr/>

By Taxi: Taxis to downtown Paris cost between € 50 and € 80 (status 2017).

By Shuttle from Charles De Gaulle to the Orly Airport:

- Take the airport shuttle at Exit 22 on the departures level to the RER B station "Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 1".
- Take the RER B direction Saint-Rémy les Chevreuse.
- Get off at the "Antony" stop and take the "Orlyval" shuttle to the Orly airport.
- The trip takes about an hour.

Orly Airport in Paris: Name and airport code: Paris Orly Airport (ORY) Website: www.aeroportsdeparis.fr. There are several transportation options to reach downtown Paris. Follow signs to the Orlyval shuttle which will take you to the Antony station. From there you can catch the RER B train to downtown Paris.

To and From the Airport

By Taxi: To downtown Paris cost between € 50 and € 80 (status 2017).

Train Transportation: The following website describes French train travel in detail: Seat61. It's worth reading to save you money and frustration.

Schedules and Booking: High-speed (TGV) trains require a reservation. For other trains you don't need to purchase tickets in advance, but you can if you wish. You may purchase TGV, first, and second class tickets online or from your travel agent or before you leave the U.S. In France, train schedules are available at train stations or travel agencies. Trains access most destinations in France, but note that there are differences in their services. Different types of trains offer different services. For instance:

- The TGV requires a reservation and it is not possible to just “hop” on to the next train heading your direction. If you miss your train, you will need to exchange your reservation.
- Regional and local trains, (including the RER), do not require a reservation. If you miss this type of train, simply catch the next departure. These trains are mainly second class.
- Getting around in Paris: The RATP (Paris public transportation system) has a [useful website](#) for navigating the metro system within Paris, and even from the airport. For smart phones, [Apple](#) and [Android](#) have similar apps as well.

First Class or Second Class: Many customers prefer a first class ticket and seat reservation for train travel. First class is roomier, has fewer people, and helps you deal with jet lag. Second class is comfortable too, but can be more crowded. Either way, you can reserve your space in advance if you’d like.

Purchasing in Advance: We suggest buying TGV tickets online before leaving the US, but usually no more than 3 months in advance. For other trains, or for post-tour TGV, you can wait until you arrive if you wish. Once on tour, your tour leaders can assist you in making post tour train plans. Also, you may pay extra for tickets purchased in advance through the Internet.

If you do decide to make your arrangements ahead of time, we suggest using the following companies:

- SNCF. French National Trains (Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer): www.sncf.com
- Trainline: (www.trainline.com)
- Rail Europe (throughout Europe): www.raileurope.com (1-800-848- 7245).

Check schedule information and buy tickets on either site. Only Rail Europe will charge a booking fee. Certain types of SNCF pre-purchased tickets can be retrieved from ticket counters at your departure train station. You’ll need the credit card you reserved with and the 6-letter code you received when purchasing your ticket online. You can print some tickets from home, but these are generally non-refundable and non-exchangeable.

Train Travel Reminders

Traveling with your own bike: Bikes are allowed on all TER regional trains and some TGV trains that require special ticketing. If you see a bicycle symbol listed on the schedule next to your train that means it has a special car designed for storing bicycles. If your bicycle is packed into a special case (not a cardboard box) you can store it in the designated luggage areas on board provided that it does not restrict access to other passengers. You can also call the English-speaking service in France at 011-33-08-92-35-35-39, open from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm (be aware of the time difference). Please contact our office if you have questions about bringing your own bike on tour.

Other Types of Transportation

Paris Metro System:

The Paris metro system is the best method to travel around Paris. It’s made up of:

- **Metro trains:** On these internal Paris trains each line is a different color and number. The directions are identified by the last stop on the line, so board the train whose final destination is the same direction as your stop.
- **RER trains:** These trains go to the airports and farther out of the city. The different lines have letter names (A through E).
- **Buses:** Local buses in Paris are also a good way to see the city.

You catch RER, metro trains, and buses from the same stations - (buses also have extra stops above ground). Bus and metro trains cost the same and use the same tickets, while RER trains generally cost more. Buy tickets for all three at all metro stations. Pick up a free Petit Plan de Paris metro map and/or look at www.ratp.fr for information on the Paris mass transit system.

Taxis: Taxis wait outside airports and medium to large size train stations. In smaller towns, the café or bar will often call for you. It is good practice to ask for an approximate fare before the ride and the pay meter start. Keep in mind that the cost may vary depending on traffic in the city. Taxis from both Paris airports to the center of cost between €50 – €90 (status 2017) and take between 30-60 minutes depending on traffic.

Rental Car: You usually save money arranging your rental from the U.S. Be sure to get the exact address of the rental car agency, (preferably at your arrival airport). Most rental agencies in France are closed on Sundays. We suggest [Sixt](http://www.sixt.com) <http://www.sixt.com> or [Hertz](http://www.hertz.com/) <http://www.hertz.com/>

Bayeux Shuttle: Shuttle service in the Normandy region that also conducts airport transfers to Paris. Good for larger groups. <http://www.bayeuxshuttle.com/>.

B. Language Tips

Language Lesson: The consonants c, f, and l at the end of a word are pronounced; otherwise, don't pronounce final consonants. R is an exception: The r is swallowed or "gargled" in French; the final r is pronounced in words of one syllable (such as "la mer"-the sea) but not in words of more than one syllable (except, again (!) at the end of infinitive verbs such as: venir, partir.

Polite Phrases/Expressions: The French typically greet each other at work, in shops or on the streets. In addition, friends kiss each other on the cheeks or shake hands. The handshake is usually a brief grasping and releasing of the hand; a friendly kiss is more of a brush of the lips on either cheek, and NOT a full-fledged smack on the lips. How far you want to participate in this aspect of the culture is up to you. The French will appreciate any effort you put into speaking and practicing your French.

General Phrases

- Good day - Bonjour
- Goodbye - Au revoir
- Can you help me, please? - Pouvez vous m'aider s'il vous plaît?
- Mrs. - Madame
- Mr. - Monsieur
- A group of people with both - messieurs- dames
- Have a nice day -bonne journée
- Have a nice evening (after 5pm) – bonsoir
- Thank you - merci
- You're welcome - de rien or je vous en prie
- Please - s'il vous plait

In a Restaurant

- Call the waiter by saying Excusez-moi, whenever he/she walks by your table.
- To order say I would like - Je voudrais - NOT je veux - I want
- To say the food is delicious or very good - C'est délicieux or c'est très bon

In a Shop

- Handling the merchandise in any business establishment is considered bad manners; ask a salesperson for assistance.
- How much does it cost? - Combien cela coute-t-il?
- How much is it? - C'est combien?
- Excuse me (if you don't understand) - Comment?
- Could I see the menu, please? – Pourrais-jeavoir la carte, s'il vous plait?

Commonly Used Expressions

- Where is...? - Où est...?
- Where is the bathroom, please? - Où sont les toilettes, s'il vous plaît?
- Excuse me - Pardon

- How are you? (to someone you don't know) - Comment allez-vous?
- How are you? (to a friend) - Ça va?
- I'd like 1(2) beer(s), please - Je voudrais une (deux) biere(s), s'il vous plait.
- I would like a chocolate croissant, please - Je voudrais un pain au chocolat, s'il vous plait.
- Can I refill my water bottle, please? – Puis - je remplir ma bouteille d'eau s'il vous plait?
- I would like a baguette, please. - Je voudrais une baguette, s'il vous plait.
- I would like a glass of water, please - Je voudrais un verre d'eau, s'il vous plait.
- I would like Euros, please - Je voudrais des euros, s'il vous plait.
- Where is the train station, please? - Où se trouve la gare SNCF?
- I don't speak French. I'm sorry - Je ne parle pas francais. Je suis desolée.

Phrases for Using the Telephone

- A call - un coup de téléphone
- To dial - composer le numéro
- A collect call - en PCV (pay-say-vay)
- To pick up the phone - décrocher
- To hang up the phone - raccrocher

C. How to Dial Telephone Numbers

The International Access Code (IAC) for the US and Canada is 011 and for France it's 00
 The Country Code (CC) for France is 33 and for the US and Canada it's 1
 Area Codes in France can be various digits in length

To call France from the US or Canada, dial IAC + CC + LN.

Example: The local telephone number of the Louvre Museum in France is (0)1- 40205760. The number could also be listed as +33-(0)1- 40205760. In both cases, you would dial 011-33-1-40205760. Notice the Trunk code (0) is dropped.

To call the US or Canada from France, dial IAC + CC + LN.

Example: The local telephone number of the ExperiencePlus! headquarters in Colorado is 970-484-8489. You would dial 00-1-970-484-8489.

To call France from another European country, dial IAC + CC + LN.

Example: The local telephone number of the Louvre Museum in France is (0)1- 40205760. The number could also be listed as +33-(0)1- 40205760. You would dial 00-33-1-40205760.

To call France from within France, dial LN

Example: The local telephone number of the Louvre Museum in France is (0)1- 40205760. You would dial 01-40205760. Unlike the U.S. there is no need to differentiate between local and long distance by dialing a 1. Notice that the Trunk Code (0) is dialed.

Using Public Phones

Most telephones in France only accept télécartes, not coins. Télécartes operate like a debit card you insert into public telephones. The phones have a screen that shows you how many "units" are available on your card. Local calls cost one unit each. To call the U.S. from France, dial 001, the area code and your number. A call to the U.S. costs 120 units for 12 minutes. Calls to the U.S. between 10 pm and 8 am cost 50% less. You can purchase these cards at tobacco stores (tabacs), post offices and most metro stations for 8 euros (about 50 units) and 16 euros (about 120 units). Calls from a public phone cost 30% less than calls from a hotel or restaurant. We recommend buying a card as soon as you arrive.

D. Eating and Drinking

Everything you've heard about French cuisine is true, and the French are very proud of their culinary diversity. With over 400 kinds of cheese, unique regional wines, and specialties such as Dordogne's famous foie gras, you'll never run out of ideas or choices for your afternoon picnic.

A standard breakfast (le petit déjeuner) usually consists of bread and/or croissants, jam, butter, juice and coffee, tea or chocolate. ExperiencePlus! makes sure you also get more filling choices such as yogurt, cereals, fruits, cold cuts and cheese. If you'd like to shop for additional supplies, you may want to purchase these items the night before; most stores open at 9:00 a.m., (bakeries open as early at 6:30/7:00) It's also a very French experience to pick up a warm croissant or pain au chocolat at the local boulangerie (bakery) or pâtisserie (pastry shop) in the morning. Next door there's probably a café for your coffee. A café noir is the regular French coffee. An express is an espresso. Beware: no free refills in France. NOTE: Every café, bar and restaurant is required by law to post its prices by the entrance.

France comes to a halt roughly between noon and 2 p.m. for lunch (le déjeuner). Stop at a small village café, or put together a picnic. Restaurants and cafés run about € 10 for a plat garni (a one-dish meal of meat or fish and vegetables) or € 15 to € 30 for a three-course meal. For a quick lunch, pick up a sandwich at a bar for € 6 to € 8. You may want to get picnic supplies at the local épicerie or charcuterie (the French version of a delicatessen). Épiceries sell most of what you'll need: cold cuts, cheese, fruit, mineral water and chocolate! Charcuteries cost a little more, but they offer regional handmade specialties: pâtés, saucisson (sausage), salads, cheeses and olives. With a crusty baguette from the local boulangerie (bakery), you'll be set! Expect to spend € 8- € 12 per person for picnic supplies. Some people just snack all day instead of eating a traditional lunch. La glace (ice cream), water, sodas, coffee, fruit, and pastries are readily available along the way and cost from € 2 to € 5 (status 2017).

We'll provide dinner (le diner) suggestions the nights you're on your own. Most restaurants offer a menu à prix fixe which usually comes with an hors d'oeuvre (appetizer), such as a melon, pâté or crudités (raw vegetables); a main course such as poisson (fish), canard (duck), poulet (chicken) or agneau (lamb) and a side of vegetables; and a choice of regional cheeses or a dessert. These menus include gratuity and usually run € 15 - € 35. Some menus also include wine. Try a pizzeria or brasserie for a lighter meal. They'll offer pizzas (€ 8 – € 15) and fresh salads (€ 8 - € 12): a mixed salad of greens, vegetables, ham, and cheese...

E. Hotel Recommendations

Aix-en-Provence

[Hôtel des Augustins](http://www.hotel-augustins.com) (www.hotel-augustins.com)
3, rue de la Masse, 13100 Aix-en-Provence

[Hotel Aquabella](http://www.aquabella.fr) (www.aquabella.fr)
2, rue des étuves 13100 Aix-en-Provence

Ajaccio (Corsica)

[Hôtel San Carlu](http://www.hotel-sancarlu.com) (www.hotel-sancarlu.com)
8, Boulevard Danielle, Casanova 20000 Ajaccio

[Hôtel Fesch](http://www.hotel-fesch.com) (www.hotel-fesch.com)
7 rue du Cardinal Fesch, 20179 Ajaccio Cedex

[Hôtel Imperial](http://www.hotelimperial-ajaccio.fr) (www.hotelimperial-ajaccio.fr)
6 boulevard Albert 1er, 20000 Ajaccio

Arles (Provence)

[Hotel Le Calendal](http://www.lecalendal.com/home.html) (www.lecalendal.com/home.html)
5 rue Porte de Laure, 13200 Arles

[Hotel Nord Pinus](http://www.nord-pinus.com) (www.nord-pinus.com)
Place du Forum, 13200 Arles

Avignon (Provence)

[Cloître Saint Louis](http://www.cloitre-saint-louis.com) (www.cloitre-saint-louis.com)
20, rue du Portail Boquier, 84000 Avignon

[Hotel Le Colbert](http://www.lecolbert-hotel.com/) (www.lecolbert-hotel.com/)
7 rue Agricole Perdiguier, 84000 Avignon
(2 star hotel located in the city center, no elevator)

[Hotel Bristol](http://www.bristol-hotel-avignon.com/) (www.bristol-hotel-avignon.com/)
44 cours Jean Jaurès, 84000 Avignon

[Hôtel de l'Horloge](http://www.hotels-ocre-azur.com/index.php?menu=303) (www.hotels-ocre-azur.com/index.php?menu=303)
1-3 rue F. David (place Horloge), 84000 Avignon

Azay-le-Rideau (Loire)
[Hôtel le Grand Monarque](http://www.legrandmonarque.com) (www.legrandmonarque.com)
3, place de la République, 37190 Azay-le-Rideau

Bastia (Corsica)
[Hotel L'Alivi](http://www.legrandmonarque.com) (www.legrandmonarque.com)
Route du Cap, 20200 Bastia
(Hotel north of city center with pool and balcony overlooking the water)

[Hotel Les Voyageurs](http://www.hotel-lesvoyageurs.com/hotel/bastia/centre/Hotel-1en.html) (www.hotel-lesvoyageurs.com/hotel/bastia/centre/Hotel-1en.html)
9, avenue Maréchal Sebastiani, 20200 Bastia
(Small hotel located in the city center, has parking, no elevator)

Beaugency (Loire)
[Hôtel de la Sologne](http://www.hoteldelasologne.com) (www.hoteldelasologne.com)
6, place saint-firmin, 45190 Beaugency

Beaune (Burgundy)
[Hotel Bretonnière](http://www.hotelbretonniere.com) (www.hotelbretonniere.com)
43, rue du Faubourg Bretonnière, 21200 Beaune

Bonifacio (Corsica)
[Solemare](http://www.hotel-solemare.com) (www.hotel-solemare.com)
Giovasole – Quai Nord, 20169 Bonifacio

Bordeaux
[Hotel Continental](http://www.hotel-le-continental.com/index-en.php) (www.hotel-le-continental.com/index-en.php)
(A good value 2 star hotel)
10 rue Montesquieu, 33000 Bordeaux

[Hotel Normandie](http://www.hotel-normandie-bordeaus.com/) (www.hotel-normandie-bordeaus.com/)
7&9, cours du 30 Julliet

Brive-la-Gaillarde (Dordogne)
[La Truffe Noire](http://www.la-truffe-noire.com) (www.la-truffe-noire.com)
22 Blvd Anatole France, 19100 Brive

Chinon (Loire)
[Hotel de France](http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do?propertyCode=93421) (http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do?propertyCode=93421)
Place du General de Gaulle, 37500 Chinon

Foix (Eastern Pyrenees)
[Hotel Lons](http://www.hotel-lons-foix.com/) (www.hotel-lons-foix.com/)
6 Place G. Dutilh, 09000 Foix

Gordes (Provence)

[Hotel Le Gordos](http://www.hotel-le-gordos.com/fr/) (www.hotel-le-gordos.com/fr/)

Route de Cavaillon, 84220 Gordes

Grenoble (Alps)

[Hotel Mercure](http://www.mercure.com) (www.mercure.com)

34, avenue de Verdun, Grenoble 38240

Isle-sur-la-Sorgue (Provence)

[Domaine de la Petite Isle](http://www.domainedelapetiteisle.com) (www.domainedelapetiteisle.com)

871 route d'Apt RN100, 84800 Isle sur la Sorgue

Pau (Pyrenees)

[Hotel Gramont](http://www.hotelgramont.com) (www.hotelgramont.com hotelgramont@wanadoo.fr)

3, place Gramont, 64000 Pau

Lourdes (Pyrenees)

[Mercure Lourdes Imperial](http://www.accorhotels.com) (www.accorhotels.com hotel.mercure.imperial@wanadoo.fr)

3 avenue du Paradis, 65100 Lourdes

[Hôtel Notre Dame de la Sarthe](http://www.notredamedelasarte.com/) (www.notredamedelasarte.com/)

44-46 Avenue Peyramale, 65 100 Lourdes

Marseille

[Hotel La Residence du Vieux Port](http://www.hotel-residence-marseille.com/en/) (http://www.hotel-residence-marseille.com/en/)

18, Quai du Port, 13002 Marseille

Nice

[Nice Excelsior](http://www.excelsiornice.com/en/content/classic-rooms) (www.excelsiornice.com/en/content/classic-rooms)

19 Avenue Durante, 06000 Nice

(Located near the Promenade des Anglais)

[Hotel les Cigales](http://www.hotel-lescigales.com/en/accueil.html) (www.hotel-lescigales.com/en/accueil.html)

16 Rue Dalpozzo, 06000 Nice

(Located near the Promenade des Anglais)

[Hotel Gounod](http://www.gounod-nice.fr/en/) (www.gounod-nice.fr/en/)

3 Rue Gounod, 06000 Nice

(Located near the Promenade des Anglais)

[Villa Victoria](http://www.villa-victoria.com/en) (www.villa-victoria.com/en)

33, Boulevard Victor-Hugo

(Located near the Promenade des Anglais)

Orange (Provence)

[Hotel Terminus](http://www.hotel-louvre-orange.com) (www.hotel-louvre-orange.com)

89, Avenue Frederic Mistral, 84100 Orange

Paris

[Hôtel Cluny Sorbonne](http://www.hotel-cluny.fr) (www.hotel-cluny.fr)

8, rue Victor Cousin, 75005 Paris

Métro: St Michel-Odéon-Cluny Sorbonne RER: Luxembourg. Several customers have recommended this clean and basic 2* hotel. It is in the heart of Paris in the famous Latin Quarter (Sorbonne University)

[Hotel Cardinal Rive Gauche](http://www.hotelcardinal.com/) (www.hotelcardinal.com/)

20-22, rue Pascal, 75005 Paris

(Located on the left bank in the historical area, between two metro stops)

[Hôtel Britannique](http://www.hotel-britannique.fr) (www.hotel-britannique.fr)

20, avenue Victoria, 75001 Paris, France

(About two blocks from the Louvre and just a few steps from the Metro)

[Hotel Adriatic](http://www.adriatic-paris-hotel.com) (www.adriatic-paris-hotel.com)

6 bis rue de Lyon 75012 Paris, France

2 star hotel, 1½ blocks from the Gare de Lyon train station.

(Very handy for travel to and from Paris airports and the main train station)

[Hôtel de L'Empereur](http://www.hotelempereur.com) (www.hotelempereur.com)

2, Rue Chevert, 75007 Paris, France

(Near Eiffel Tower)

Paris (near Charles de Gaulle Airport)

[citizenM Paris Charles de Gaulle hotel](https://www.citizenm.com/destinations/paris/paris-charles-de-gaulle-hotel) (https://www.citizenm.com/destinations/paris/paris-charles-de-gaulle-hotel)

7 Rue de Rome, 93290

Tremblay-en-France Roissypole, terminal 3

[Hotel IBIS Paris CDG Hotel](http://www.ibishotel.com/gb/hotel-1404-ibis-paris-cdg-airport/index.shtml) (www.ibishotel.com/gb/hotel-1404-ibis-paris-cdg-airport/index.shtml)

Roissypole BP 11122, 95701 - Roissy Cedex

(Reasonably priced hotel located at CDG airport and 30 minutes from Paris)

Saint-Emilion (Dordogne)

[Logis des Remparts](http://www.logisdesremparts.com) (www.logisdesremparts.com)

18 rue Guadet, 33330 Saint-Emilion

Sète (Provence)

[Le Grand Hôtel](http://www.legrandhotelsete.com) (www.legrandhotelsete.com)

17, Quai de Tassigny, 34200 Sète

Strasbourg

[Hotel Maison Rouge](http://www.maison-rouge.com/en/) (www.maison-rouge.com/en/)

4 Rue des Francs Bourgeois, 67000 Strasbourg

[Hotel Rohan](http://www.hotel-rohan.com/uk/index.php) (www.hotel-rohan.com/uk/index.php)

17-19 Rue du Marquin, 67000 Strasbourg

(Located in the historic city center steps from the Notre Dame cathedral, cafes and waterway)

[Hotel Gutenberg](http://www.hotel-gutenberg.com/uk/index.php) (www.hotel-gutenberg.com/uk/index.php)

31 rue des Serruriers, 67000 Strasbourg

(Modern hotel located in the city center)

[Royal Lutetia](http://www.royal-lutetia.fr) (www.royal-lutetia.fr)

2bis, rue du Général Rapp, 67000 Strasbourg

(15 minute walk to city center)

F. Reading and Movie List

Literature on France

General France or multi-regions:

- *France Today* by John Ardagh. A popular introduction to present-day France. Ardagh addresses topics such as nouvelle cuisine, the role of education, and women in France.
- *Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French* by Richard Bernstein. Observations on modern France over the past two decades by the former Paris bureau chief of the New York Times.

- *A Little Tour in France* by Henry James. A collection of magazine articles written in the 1880s. It's still available in one edition or another and describes many of the places we visit, especially in Provence and the Loire Valley.
- *The Sun King* by Nancy Mitford. A contemporary and popular introduction into the eccentricities of Louis XIV.
- *The Man Who Outshone the Sun King, A Life of Gleaming Opulence & Wretched Reversal in the Reign of Louis XIV* by Charles Drazin tells the story of the rise and fall of Nicolas Fouquet, builder of the Vaux-le-Vicomte chateaux south of Paris.
- *French or Foe?* by Polly Platt. An introduction to understanding the cultural quirks and daily life of the French.
- *Made in France* (2008). Author Laura Morelli's guide to finding the artisanal items that France is known for.
- Georges Simenon. If you are not familiar with this Belgian writer's famous mysteries featuring the classic Parisian detective "Maigret", now's the time to take him up. The Maigret mysteries are short, easy to read (good after a day on the bike or a walk the French countryside) and wonderfully descriptive. We can't think of any fiction writer who describes the French countryside and landscape better than Simenon!
- *Culture Shock – France* by Sally Adamson Taylor. This user's guide to French culture and society provides insights into understanding the French language, people and habits.
- *French Food: On the Table, On the Page, and in French Culture* edited by Lawrence R. Schehr and Allen S. Weiss. A fascinating introduction to the "first" nouvelle cuisine in 15th and 16th century France and its development through the 19th century.
- *The Road from the Past, Traveling through History in France* by Ina Caro. This unusual travelogue makes a great companion for traveling in Paris, southern France, the Dordogne and the Loire Valley. The book combines personal observation with large doses of well-presented history.
- *Wine and War: The French, the Nazis, and the Battle for France's Greatest Treasure* by Donald and Petie Kladstrup. The Kladstrups recount the dangerous and daring exploits of those who fought to keep France's greatest treasure out of the hands of the Nazis.
- *Eat Smart in France* by Ronnie Hess is a pocket size (handy for cyclists and travelers) culinary travel guide that includes the historical development of French cuisine, regional dishes, phrases and menu guide, recipes and more.
- Peter Mayle's master sleuth Sam Levitt caper series. *The Vintage Caper, The Marseille Caper, The Corsican Caper*.
- *Paris was Ours*: Penelope Rowlands. Thirty-two writers reflect on the City of Light.
- *The Marling Menu-Master for France*. (also available for Italy, Spain and Germany). A handy tiny paperback which lists common menu items by course. If you see something on a menu and aren't quite sure what it is, this is the solution!

Brittany and Normandy:

- *I'll Never be French (no matter what I do): Living in a Small Village in Brittany* by Mark Greenside. A humorous and gentle approach of the relocate to a foreign country genre told by an educator and political activist living in California until he visits the coast of Brittany and decides to stay. His friendship with his landlady not only assists him with the challenge of learning and blending into a new culture but also weaves into his personal development; although many of his cultural differences are due to lack of speaking the language of his new homeland.
- *Myths and Folk Tales of Celtic France: Legends and Romance of Brittany* by Lewis Spence. The author presents a collection of folklore and tradition of Brittany, one of the Celtic Nations.
- *The Oysters of Locmariaquer* by Eleanor Clark writes a story of the town of Locmariaquer located in Brittany known for its strong dedication to the production of Belon Oysters; les plates "the flat ones".
- *The Longest Day: The Classic Epic of D-Day* by Cornelius Ryan tells the history of the Allied Forces invasion of Normandy June 6, 1944 and is considered to be extremely well researched and a "must read".
- *Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies* by Ben Macintyre. A compelling spy story about Operation Fortitude and the deception of the exact location of the D-Day attack by the Allied Forces in their effort to halt Hitler.
- *Memoirs from Beyond the Tomb* is the memoir of François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848) the founding father of French Romanticism. The first part of the book includes pieces of his life in Brittany and St. Malo. Available as a Penguin Classics edition.

- *Ballads and Songs of Brittany (Barhaz Breizh)* is a collection of Breton folk songs collected by Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué first published in 1839. It was compiled from oral tradition and serves to preserve traditional folk tales, legends and music.
- *The Unlikely Spy* by Daniel Silva. Silva's successful debut novel weaves an intriguing espionage suspense story of the invasion of Normandy.
- *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. A highly recommended read that beautifully tells the story of a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths cross at Saint-Malo, on the Brittany coast, during WWII.

Corsica:

- *Granite Island: A Portrait of Corsica* by Dorothy Carrington. Carrington began her lifelong quest to understand the history, society, and anthropology from her first visit in 1948. This fascinating island of 300,000 souls has been a part of France since 1768 but has always been independent. It's more Italian than French, and, indeed, more 17th century Genoese than Italian.
- *Rose Café: Love and War in Corsica* by John Hanson Mitchell. More than four decades after he lived and worked in Corsica, John Hanson Mitchell writes of his time living on the Mediterranean island at the age of twenty.
- *Mazzeri. Love and Death in Light and Shadow* by Peter Crawley (2013). In this novel the main character travels to Corsica to uncover his family's roots only to find that he is drawn into the history and legend of the island of Corsica and the Mazzeri.
- *The English Girl* by Daniel Silva (2013). A Silva thriller starring Gabriel Albon an art restorer and Israeli spy that keeps one turning the page to discover the fate of a woman that is kidnapped while vacationing on Corsica.

Dordogne:

- *At Home in France* by Ann Barry. Written by a single woman who moved from New York to a house in Carennac. She spends some time travelling the Dordogne region. A nice glimpse at the French through an American's eye.
- *Timeline* by Michael Crichton. Time travel transports you to the 14th century Dordogne River valley in southwestern France. Crichton takes you, breathlessly, through Dordogne's hills and forests with all the Middle Ages' intrigue and violence.
- *Bruno, Chief of Police* by Martin Walker. An adorable series about the adventures about a police officer in the small town of St. Denis, France, who is the only policeman in his village.

Loire Valley:

- *Following the Sun: A Bicycle Pilgrimage From Andalusia to the Hebrides* by John Hanson Mitchell. As a self-proclaimed sun worshipper the author shares his travel journey tales from Spain to Scotland on his old Peugeot. His story is filled with history, archeology, lore, and the study of ancient sun worshipping cultures and his conversations with locals along the way. It includes his travels through the Loire Valley of France.

Paris:

- *Seven Ages of Paris* by historian Alistair Horne. Horne traces Paris through seven historical periods beginning with the 12th century, through the WWII occupation, and ending in 1969 in a style that demonstrates the excitement of the city.
- *Paris to the Moon* by Adam Gopnick. Those who wish to be travelers, not simply tourists, yearn for the kind of insights that author Adam Gopnik shares in his book of essays about Paris.
- *Almost French: Love and a New Life in Paris* by Sarah Turnbull. A refreshing twist of love-story and adjustment to cultural differences as the author, a native Australian, falls in love with a Parisian fellow and moves to Paris.
- *Paris the Novel* by Edward Rutherford. The author, well known for his historical novels tells the story of multiple generations of a few families in Paris.
- *The Food Lover's Guide to Paris: The Best Restaurants, Bistros, Cafés, Markets, Bakeries, and More* by Patricia Wells.

Provence and Southern France:

- *Travels With a Donkey* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Widely available, this is Stevenson's personal essay on walking with a donkey in the Cévennes Mountains of Southern France – an area we pass through on our Cycling Provence Plus tour.
- *A Year in Provence & Toujours Provence, and Hotel Pastis* by Peter Mayle (as well as the videos based on his books). These and other Mayle books and films recount his forays into adopting a Provençal lifestyle near the Luberon Mountains of France's Provence. We'll cycle by the author's former house on our Provence tours.
- *Provence* by Lawrence Durrell. A personal essay on the region where Durrell spent the last years of his life. It's fun, readable, and laden with history.
- *Running in Place: Scenes from the South of France* by Nicolas Delbanco. A lovely, well-written book on Provence by an Englishman who falls in love with the region as a child. This literary version of Peter Mayle recounts his return to Provence with his family.
- *French Dirt: The Story of a Garden in the South of France* by Richard Goodman. Like Mayle, Goodman spent a year living in Provence. This quick read recalls how his gardening brought him in touch with the region and its people.

Movies About or Set in France That We Have Enjoyed

- *Jean de Florette* and sequel *Manon of the Spring*, directed by Claude Berri, 1986. A classic tale of an outsider (Gerard Depardieu) who encounters greed and jealousy when he moves to a small town in Provence. The story continues in *Manon des Sources* (*Manon of the Spring*) as Manon (Emmanuelle Béart) has grown into a beautiful young shepherdess living in the idyllic Provençal countryside. She's determined to take revenge upon the men responsible for her father's strife.
- *My Father's Glory* and *My Mother's Castle* (sequel), directed by Yves Robert, 1990 and 1991 tells the warm and tender story of a young boy growing up in Marseille and vacationing in Provence with his family. The films are often described as gems that honor and celebrate life's simple joys.
- *French Kiss*, directed by Lawrence Kasdan, 1995. Kate (Meg Ryan) flies to France to confront her straying fiancé (Timothy Hutton). She falls for a crook (Kevin Kline) she meets on the plane who has his own reasons to pretend friendship. A light comedy with wonderful views of Nice, Cannes, Provence and Paris.
- *Babette's Feast*, directed by Gabriel Axel, 1987. Though set in Denmark, this movie is about eating, French style. Editorial review by Leonard Maltin: "Exquisite, delicately told tale of two beautiful young minister's daughters who pass up love and fame to remain in their small Danish village. They grow old, using religion as a substitute for living life. Their lives change when they take in Parisian refugee Audran - a woman with a special secret. Subtle, funny, deeply felt, and full of surprises, this instant masterpiece deserves its Best Foreign Film Academy Award. "
- *Chocolat*, directed by Lasse Hallström, 2000. This movie deserves to be seen. The development of the story is mastered with grace and experience: the elements, the scenario, the characters are the perfect products of the writer's imagination. A woman (Juliet Binoche) coming from far and foreign lands, carrying with her a luggage of esoteric knowledge earned in exotic lands, blends chocolate for the villagers of a small town (Flavigny-sur-Ozerain – in the Burgundy region of France.
- *Joyeux Noël* (2005), a movie inspired by a real-life event that depicts an unauthorized truce of the front line soldiers of World War I on Christmas Eve 1914. Watch this inspirational film to see how the truce negotiated by the French, German and Scottish leaders unfolds.
- *Amélie*, directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and starring Audrey Tautou, 2002. The story of a shy young woman who finds a box full of childhood memories and returns it to its original owner. After seeing what happens to this person, she sets out on a journey to change the lives of others and in the process discovers who she really is. Now she has to decide if she has the courage to change her life too.
- *The Triplets of Belleville*, directed by Sylvain Chomet. An animated French treat for the eyes, ears, and mind. There's little dialogue, but ample whimsy and heart. It's the story of an orphaned boy who dreams of being a Tour de France champion. When his grandmother buys him his first bike, he's drawn into a whirlwind adventure on two wheels. Truly a unique film!
- *Paris, Je T'Aime* (*Paris, I Love You*), 2006. This film features 18 shorts, all set in Paris and by various directors.
- *La Vie en Rose*, directed by Olivier Dahan and Marion Cotillard stars in this biographical film of French star Edith Piaf.

- *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007), directed by Julian Schnabel and starring Mathieu Amalric. This film is not so much about France, but it's one of the best French films we've seen.
- *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis (Welcome to the Sticks)* (2008), directed by Dany Boon. A hilarious comedy about a post office administrator who is transferred from Provence to Bergues – France's version of Siberia. He quickly learns why the locals say, "You cry twice in Bergues: first when you have to come here, and again when you have to leave." Incidentally, this film has now become the highest grossing French film of all time.
- *A Good Year* (2006), directed by Ridley Scott, with an international cast including Russell Crowe and Marion Cotillard. It is based on the 2004 novel of the same name by British author Peter Mayle about a British investment broker inherits his uncle's chateau and vineyard in Provence, where he spent much of his childhood. He discovers a new laid-back lifestyle as he tries to renovate the estate to be sold.
- *Midnight in Paris* (2011), a Woody Allen movie with Owen Wilson and Marion Cotillard. A romantic comedy about a family traveling to the French capital for business. The party includes a young engaged couple forced to confront the illusion that a life different from their own is better.
- *Bottle Shock* (2008), an entertaining movie based upon the "Judgment of Paris" – a blind wine tasting held in France in 1976 that exposed Parisians to California vintages and ended up putting Napa Valley on the map of the world's best-known wine regions.
- *Cycling with Molière* (2013), a highly praised Philippe Le Guay film in which a very popular TV star travels to the Ile de Re in an attempt to convince his friend who is a retired actor and now very much a recluse to star with him in a Molière film.
- *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014) A talented chef and his family leave India after personal loss from the political unrest of their country and settle in France. Circumstances find them opening a restaurant across the street from the Michelin starred restaurant of Madame Mallory (Helen Mirren) and the competitiveness between the eateries begins.
- *Ventoux* (2015). A film from the Netherlands about four friends that reunite to cycle the iconic Mount Ventoux, 30 years after their first climb.

G. Other Travel Resources

If you'd like to explore more transportation options, we find that <https://www.rome2rio.com/> is a helpful resource.