



# WELCOME TO FRANCE



# BIENVENUE EN FRANCE !



## Welcome to Science Accueil

Our team is dedicated to ensuring that you have the best possible experience and that your stay in France becomes a cherished memory of your life. From administrative procedures and housing search to learning French, cultural exploration, eating with locals and festive events, we strive to make your life easier, ensure that your stay goes smoothly and you enjoy it.

We are doing our best to  
help you find your bearings  
and decode France!



## THE FLAG BLUE, WHITE AND RED

The 3 colours appeared for the first time on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July of 1789. They mix white (a royal symbol) with the colours of Paris: blue and red.



# INTRODUCING SCIENCE ACCUEIL

For over 25 years, Science Accueil has been facilitating the arrival and settlement of scientists coming to study or work in major schools, universities, research centres, companies, and startups in the Île-de-France region. Are you from one of Science Accueil's institutions partners? Whether you are a master's student or an experienced researcher, Science Accueil assists you in preparing for your arrival, settling in, and integrating into your new environment.

## ✓ For our members

Register on our website:  
[www.science-accueil.org](http://www.science-accueil.org)

Administrative  
procedures

Housing  
research

Psychological help  
and reassurance  
program

## ✓ For all

French Classes

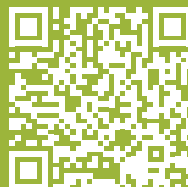
Cultural  
Visits

### Alister:

It is the name of our mascot, inspired by a small parrot that symbolises exotism and journey. This little bird has a hiding meaning : it represents the personalised welcome we have in store for you, taking you under our wing!

It is also the name we have given to the digital platform through which you can communicate with us and submit your support requests (**registrations on the page Prepare Your Stay**).

[www.science-accueil.org](http://www.science-accueil.org)



# SETTLING IN FRANCE

**Thanks to Science Accueil, finding accommodation before your arrival is no longer a hassle!**

Once your request is **registered** in your personal account, our team will contact you 6 weeks before your arrival to propose to you housing options. Science Accueil offers a selection of furnished accommodations that match your preferences and constraints: homestays, shared rooms, studios, apartments, or houses.

**To avoid unpleasant surprises, our accommodations are labelled, allowing you to prioritise your preferences among different criteria such as proximity to transportation and shops, modernity and renovation, and rent.**

## LABELS

Transportation  
Equipment  
Shops  
Modernity/renovation  
Rent



# INSURING YOUR ACCOMMODATION

It is mandatory. If you are a PhD student or researcher, you can benefit from a special offer from an insurance partner of the Euraxess network, or compare offers on:

[lecomparateurassurance.com](http://lecomparateurassurance.com)

## OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

A particularity in France is that banks require proof of address to open a bank account. You don't have an address in France yet? Science Accueil can guide you through this administrative hurdle through a partnership established with banks, including Société Générale.



## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There are several financial aids available to international students, particularly for housing (APL: housing assistance). You can apply for it through the CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) in your department. Science Accueil assists you in making your application.

Visit [www.caf.fr](http://www.caf.fr) for more information.

## GOOD TENANT MEMO

We offer quality housing, rented by landlords committed to international hosting. The landlords who trust us must also be able to trust you! Mutual respect and maintenance of the accommodation are the foundation of this trusted relationship. A security deposit will be required upon entering the accommodation.

To fully recover it at the end of your stay, remember to regularly maintain your accommodation. Science Accueil provides you with the "Perfect tenant guide" which gives you tips to enjoy your stay peacefully.



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

## HOW TO GET A VISA

You are arriving in France with a visa. **Please note that this visa is not a residence permit!** It is essential that you apply for a residence permit to regularise your status and to be able to proceed with other administrative procedures, such as registering for social security and applying for

family allowances. The process of obtaining a residence permit may vary depending on your status. Science Accueil is here to assist you!

Please contact us through your secure personal space.

## THE GATE (GUICHET D'ACCUEIL DES TALENTS ÉTRANGERS)

The International Welcome Office (Guichet d'Accueil des Talents Étrangers: GATE) allows you to complete all your procedures in one place. It welcomes all international students and scientists from the end of August until the Christmas holidays. The GATE team and the Science Accueil Information Point (PISA) will guide you through all your procedures. Representatives from various public organisations (CPAM, CAF, CROUS, RATP, Pôle Emploi, Campus France...) are present on-site to assist with your inquiries.

The GATE is likely to change its location from one year to another.

For more information, visit

[www.gate.paris-saclay.fr](http://www.gate.paris-saclay.fr)

### DID YOU KNOW IT?

If you're going to a town hall, you will see the Republic's symbol: Marianne. Allegorical figure of France, she represents freedom and democracy and she was for a long time depicted on the stamps. Famous actresses such as Brigitte Bardot, Catherine Deneuve, Sophie Marceau have been taken as models when the statues were made.



# FILING TAXES

In France, the taxes are deducted directly from your salary. It is important to register for taxation upon your arrival, even if you are a student and not working. If you are an employee, taxes are deducted directly from your payslip, but citizens of certain countries are exempt from taxes. Filling out your tax return in May of the following year will allow you to claim a refund if applicable.

Follow our  
workshop  
« Filing taxes »



## WORK IN FRANCE

Do you need to work to finance your studies? It is possible, with limited working hours depending on your status. Please inquire with our services for more information.

Several platforms offer student jobs, such as:

[jobaviz.fr](https://jobaviz.fr)

[jobs-stages.letudiant.fr](https://jobs-stages.letudiant.fr)

[jobypepper.com](https://jobypepper.com)



## DRIVING IN FRANCE:

The conditions for driving in France with a foreign licence depend on the State of issue. The rules vary if you have a European licence or not, and if your country has an exchange agreement with France for driving licences. In certain situations, it can be quicker to retake the French driving test.





# HEALTH

## HEALTHCARE

The mandatory health insurance reimburses a portion of medical expenses (**between 35% and 80%**) based on rates set by the government, known as «conventional rates». For example, a conventioned general practitioner will charge you 26.5 euros. (**Rate valid in 2023, subject to change**).

**Upon your arrival, you must register with the CPAM** (Primary Health Insurance Fund) to obtain a social security number and choose a referring doctor, known as a «médecin traitant», who will be responsible for your medical care. It's important to have a referring doctor in order to be properly reimbursed for your healthcare expenses! Science Accueil can guide you to English-speaking practitioners and specialists near you.

## SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH INSURANCE (MUTUELLE)

To supplement the reimbursements provided by the national health insurance, it is strongly recommended to subscribe to supplementary health insurance, also known as «mutuelle», which provides additional coverage on top of the basic coverage provided by the national health insurance («sécu»). If you wish to enhance your healthcare reimbursements, you can join a supplementary health insurance plan of your choice or a specialised student mutuelle.



## PHARMACIES

There is a high density of pharmacies in France. You can purchase the medications prescribed by your doctor without paying upfront (most supplementary health insurance plans offer direct payment, known as «tiers-payant», where the insurance pays the pharmacy directly).

You will also find over-the-counter medications available at pharmacies.



## GOOD TO KNOW

### NOTES

### NOTES



Once registered with the CPAM, you will receive a "numéro de sécurité sociale" (social security number) and a «carte Vitale» (health insurance card), which you must present to the doctor or pharmacy. Always carry it with you!

If you are a European student, you can apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in your home country. With this card, you won't need to register for healthcare in France. Some non-EU countries have agreements with France, and Science Accueil can provide you with more information on this matter.

On Doctolib.fr, you can book an in-person or video medical consultation, manage your appointments, and find out the languages spoken by the healthcare professional. You can also request the list of healthcare professionals in your municipality from your town hall.

[www.doctolib.fr](http://www.doctolib.fr)

If your financial resources are insufficient, you can apply for the CSS (complémentaire santé solidaire = solidarity fund), which will cover your healthcare expenses. Science Accueil can assist you in making your application.

## CULTURE SHOCK

In France, pharmacies provide you with full boxes of medication, not the exact number of pills needed for your treatment!

Medications (even painkillers) are not found in supermarkets, but there are many pharmacies available.



# LES ENFANTS

In France, education is compulsory from the ages of 3 to 6: preschool or kindergarten from 3 to 5 years old, primary school from 6 to 10 years old, and middle school from 11 to 15 years old. Education is free and secular in public institutions. There are private schools or alternative educational approaches in certain cities. Access to high school (16 to 18 years old) is not automatic and depends on each child's orientation.



## HOW TO REGISTER YOUR CHILD

### Elementary school:

to enrol, you should contact the town hall of your place of residence, and they will guide you to the school with availability in your area. An interview with the school administration will complete the enrollment process.

### Middle school and high school:

It is necessary to contact the regional education authority (rectorat\*) of the academic district where you reside.

*\* Services direction of National education*

### Is your child not a French speaker?

A pedagogical team will assess their knowledge of French and other languages taught (such as English), their writing skills, and their academic abilities in their native language.

**Please note that for secondary education (middle school and high school), this level assessment may take several**

**weeks!** Your child will be assigned to an institution based on the evaluation results.

**Begin the process as soon as you arrive in France!**

### Your child is under 3 years old ?

There are solutions available! The town hall of your place of residence will provide information about nurseries, daycare centres, and childminders. To learn more, you can visit the website:

[monenfant.fr](http://monenfant.fr)

There are prestigious and sizable international middle and high schools in the region (Saint-Germain, Buc, Palaiseau), many high schools also have international sections, and there are bilingual schools as well. We can provide information based on your child's age and place of residence.



**Science Accueil can guide you in the schooling process of your child.**

# SOCIAL LIFE

## SPORTS OR HOBBIES



The 1901 law guarantees every citizen the right to be a member of an association. France has 1.3 million active associations!

Sports, music, dance, cultural exchanges, volunteering... you will surely find something for you among the associations near your place of study or research. Some clubs are accessible to students, researchers, and employees of a campus, while others organised at the municipal level are open to everyone.

Science Accueil, your town hall, your university... will guide you to find an activity that allows you to flourish, pursue your passion, and build social connections.

## LIVING TOGETHER

**France does not impose nor prohibit any religion.**

You are therefore free to have or not to have a religion, to change it or no longer have one, to practise it or not.

At the university, a teacher cannot express their religious belief or engage in proselytism. However, a student can display their religious belief without engaging in proselytism. The wearing of certain attire by students is not prohibited, unless it prevents identification or compromises the learning of certain subjects.

Source:

[www.gouvernement.fr](http://www.gouvernement.fr)

**LIBERTÉ  
ÉGALITÉ  
FRATERNITÉ**



It is the motto of the French Republic, created by the revolutionary Robespierre in 1790. It has been written on all public buildings (town hall, schools, administrative centre) since 1880.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Science Accueil is a non-profit organisation under the French law 1901. By seeking assistance from Science Accueil, you become a member of the association and are represented in the board of directors by a scientist.

# LEARNING FRENCH

Everything in our French courses  
is designed to promote oral expression

Small group  
classes  
(approximately  
8 participants)

60-hour  
sessions

Friendly  
and relaxed  
atmosphere

Free group  
activity (theatre,  
cinema,  
chatting)

Conversation-  
based learning

Flexible  
program tailored  
to learners'  
needs

Immersion  
courses

Homework  
assignments

## The French courses by Science Accueil

The semester package is offered at an attractive rate, primarily in-person at various locations

(Saclay plateau, RER B line between Bures-sur-Yvette and Massy, Evry, Versailles...).

Customised à la carte courses, known as Marco Polo, can be organised upon request by institutions or individuals. Please refer to the «Learn French» section on our website for more information.



## GOOD TO KNOW

**Follow us on Instagram**, where we announce free group activities and share a French idiomatic expression, a suggestion of a Francophone song, and a literary work by French authors every week.

Join our free conversation workshops to practise your French and expand your vocabulary.

The program is available on our website.

## PHRASES THAT

MIGHT

SAVE YOUR LIFE

IN FRANCE\*

Pouvez-vous répéter  
plus lentement ?

Qu'est-ce que c'est ?  
Qu'est-ce qui se passe ?

Je peux avoir  
un verre d'eau ?

Combien ça coûte ?

J'ai mal à la tête

Où est la sortie ?

Avez-vous l'heure ?

Où sont les toilettes  
s'il vous plaît ?

Où se trouve  
l'arrêt de bus ?

Avez-vous du feu ?

À demain !

Je voudrais un café /  
un demi s'il vous plaît !

À tout à l'heure !

\*you can find the translations on our instagram account: et un lien vers notre page instagram fle

TRUC

## THE WORD THAT WILL SAVE YOUR LIFE

Il se passe un truc ?

Je cherche le truc

Qu'est-ce que c'est que ce truc ?

### They speak French

Joseph Gordon Lewitt, Bradley Cooper, Christine Scott-Thomas, Tom Hiddleston, Shakira, Marlon Brando, Jodie Foster, Gwyneth Paltrow, Johnny Depp.

### FUN FACTS

According to linguist **Henriette Walter**, French-origin words make up more than two-thirds of the English vocabulary.

Some French words have three consecutive «e's» (agrée, créée...).

Even though **aminométhylpyrimidinylhydroxyéthylméthylthiazolium**, the scientific name for Vitamin B2, contains 49 letters, the longest French word is considered to be « **anticonstitutionnellement** » (unconstitutionally) with 25 letters!

The word "eau" (water) is made of 3 vowels, but is pronounced "o"!



# DINING

## LA TRADITION

**Breakfast:** typically consumed quickly in the morning, it usually consists of a hot beverage (tea, coffee, hot chocolate) and toast with jam or honey, or cereal with milk, and a piece of fruit or fruit juice.

French meals consist of an appetiser, a main course, and cheese and/or dessert. The lunch, taken between noon and 2 pm, is called «déjeuner» and the evening meal is called «dîner». The French usually have dinner around 8 pm. If dinner is after the show, it's called supper.

The Crous university restaurants (regional centres for university and school services) offer meals for 1 euro for scholarship students, who need to activate their Isly account to benefit from this:

<https://mon-espace.isly.fr>

## GOOD DEALS

On [www.thefork.fr](http://www.thefork.fr), you can book a table at a restaurant and enjoy certain discounts.

To have your meal delivered to your home:

[www.deliveroo.fr](http://www.deliveroo.fr)

or

[www.ubereats.com](http://www.ubereats.com)

To find trendy restaurants:

[www.lebonbon.fr/paris/food-et-drink/](http://www.lebonbon.fr/paris/food-et-drink/)



## GOOD TO KNOW

Science Accueil has been organising the «Meet, greet & eat» program for a few years now. You can enjoy the pleasure of a nice meal and friendly exchanges while discovering French cuisine in the company of a local family. For more information and registration, please visit our website.





## LUNCH BREAK

**French people take lunch breaks of one hour, sometimes two!**

## INVITATIONS

In France, it is common to invite people for dinner at home. The guest usually brings a small gift, such as chocolates, a bottle of wine, or a bouquet of flowers (avoid chrysanthemums, as they are associated with mourning in French culture).

It is considered polite to arrive 15 minutes after the invitation time (not more) to allow the host to be ready. Never arrive early or exactly on time, as it is considered impolite!

**For family or friends' dinners, don't be surprised if you start with an apéritif at 7 p.m. and finish with dessert around 11 p.m.! French people love to talk (about everything, including food!) during meals. These are true social moments.**

## TIPS

**In bars and restaurants, the service charge is included in the price, but it is customary to leave a tip for the waiter or waitress (between 1 and 5 euros).**

## BREAD AND CHEESE

**French people are big cheese lovers:**

there are over 200 varieties (it depends on the milk, the making, the maturing, the local) that have in total more than 500 cheeses. French people consume more than 30 kg per person per year! Among the most popular there are the Comté, the Camembert and the Roquefort.

There is also a wide variety of bread, differentiated by their recipe and shape: baguette, boule, épi, fougasse...

For the French, «le pain» (bread) encompasses all types of bread, including the famous baguette. So when a French person goes to buy bread, they come back with a baguette! Even more surprising: in restaurants, they always bring you a baguette to accompany your meal, and it's free!

Bread and cheese are two essential elements of the French meal. As they say, «triste comme un repas sans fromage» (as sad as a meal without cheese) and «long comme un jour sans pain» (as long as a day without bread).





# SHOPPING FOR GROCERIES

If you want to reduce your environmental impact and consume locally:

[www.mangerlocal-paris-saclay.fr](http://www.mangerlocal-paris-saclay.fr)

Supermarkets and hypermarkets are located in commercial areas on the outskirts, but you can also do your grocery shopping at the local grocery store or convenience store in your neighbourhood, or at open-air markets (check with the town hall). Some well-known retailers include:

**Carrefour, Intermarché, Auchan, Franprix, SuperU, Casino, Leclerc, Monoprix...**

You will also find organic stores, called «bio» in France, such as BioCbon, Naturalia, Cbio...

**Picard** is a large chain of quality frozen food stores that can come in handy when you don't have time to cook.

For Asian products: L'échoppe des Currys in Saclay or O'marchéexotique in Massy.

For Japanese products:

[www.kioko.fr](http://www.kioko.fr)

In Paris, you can find numerous supermarkets, convenience stores, and Asian grocery stores in the 13th arrondissement's Chinatown, Belleville, or the 2nd arrondissement's Japanese district.

In Passage Brady, in the 10th arrondissement, you will find everything you need for authentic Indian cuisine.

## AVERAGE PRICES\*

Baguette: 1€

Baguette tradition: 1,20 €

Croissant: 1,10 €

1kg of pasta: 1,50 €

1 litre of milk: 1,20 €

Coffee in a bar or restaurant: 2 €

6 eggs: 2,40 €

A meal in a fast-food restaurant: 8-12 €

A meal in a restaurant: 12-25 €

A sandwich menu: 5-10€

\* Observed in 2023



## CULTURE SHOCK

In France, most stores are closed on Sundays, except for garden centres and DIY stores. Markets and food shops are usually open on Sunday mornings until around 1 pm.

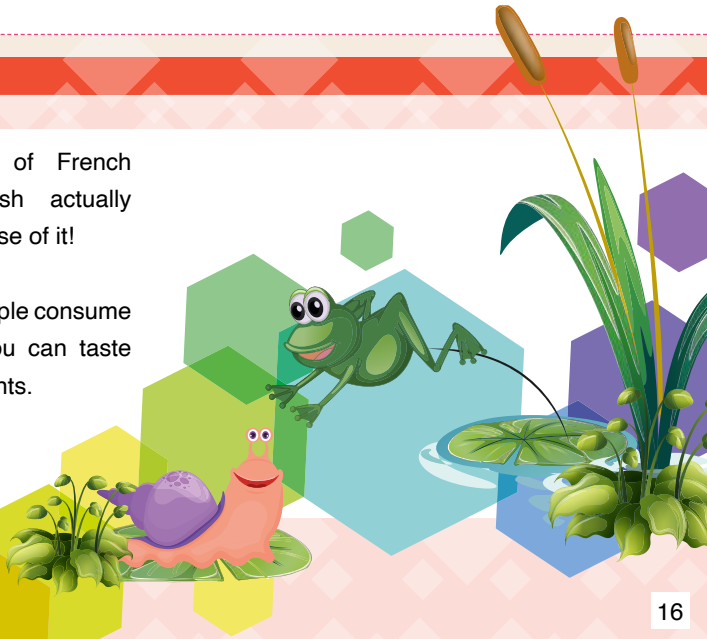


**There are official sales periods in France, during which you can find good deals. The exact dates and duration may vary, but the summer sales generally start at the end of June, and the winter sales begin in mid-January.**

French people still use checks as a payment method. They are paper notes that you fill out with the desired amount and sign. The money is then debited from your account.

Snails and frogs are part of French gastronomy, and the English actually nickname us «Froggies» because of it!

In practice, very few French people consume them on a daily basis, but you can taste them in breweries and restaurants.





# TRAVELLING IN ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

The Île-de-France region is divided into zones. Paris belongs to Zone 1. You can choose a subscription for all zones or only the zones you need.

**Operating hours:** Except for Noctilien, buses, metros, and RER do not operate during the night. Check the schedules if you plan to return late!

Single metro or bus ticket: valid for one journey. These tickets may be downloaded on your “Navigo easy” card or on your smartphone.

Navigo Pass or Imagine’R card: annual, monthly, or weekly subscriptions that allow you unlimited travel in the chosen zones. Your card allows you to travel across all zones on weekends and public holidays.

## Vocabulary of transport in Île-de-France:

**Métro** : Paris and the suburb around / **RER** : All Île-de-France

**Noctilien** : Night buses that substitute RER

**OnlyVal** : Shuttle RER B- OrlyAirport

**Filéo** : Shuttle upon request for the Airport Charles de Gaulle

**Réseau PAM** : reserved to people with reduced mobility



## Websites or applications:

[www.transilien.com/fr/page-tarifs-et-titres](http://www.transilien.com/fr/page-tarifs-et-titres)

To look at the different subscriptions offers and the prices:

[www.RATP.fr](http://www.RATP.fr) Official website of the Parisian bus and metro network.

[www.Vianavigo.fr](http://www.Vianavigo.fr) For transportation services usable with your Navigo and ImagineR cards.

[www.Citymapper.fr](http://www.Citymapper.fr) Website for planning your trips, including all modes of transportation, as well as travel times via Uber.

**Planning to travel within France?** Book a train on [www.sncf-connect.com](http://www.sncf-connect.com)

Websites like [www.thetrainline.com/fr](http://www.thetrainline.com/fr) ou [www.kelbillet.com](http://www.kelbillet.com) allow you to compare prices for train travel.

On [www.trocdestrains.com](http://www.trocdestrains.com) you can resell a non-refundable train ticket or purchase.

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

You can also rent a bike or an electric scooter.

**In Paris:** Vélib', Jump, Dott

**In Versailles:** Vélib'

**On the Paris-Saclay campus:** all the services of bike renting and the cards of sustainable transport are on [www.destination-paris-saclay.com](http://www.destination-paris-saclay.com), in the page My Stay / The transport.

**Prefer to have your own bike?** Find a used bike on [www.leboncoin.fr](http://www.leboncoin.fr)

You can find new and used bikes at major sports stores like Decathlon, Sport 2000, or specialised shops.



## GOOD TO KNOW

The Île-de-France region subsidises the purchase of a new or used electric bike up to 500 euros (information subject to change) [www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/actualites/vae-aide-achat-500-euros](http://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/actualites/vae-aide-achat-500-euros)

Paris had been developing a project to limitate the traffic of vehicles with a motor, the scenery changed in just a few years. The bikes, electric scooters, skateboards are mixing with the bus lanes and cars. Be super careful, it is brand new for a lot of automobilists.

## GOOD DEALS

The «Carte Jeune» for ages 12-27 gives you a 30% discount on train travel: [www.sncf-connect.com](http://www.sncf-connect.com)

**To travel at a lower cost, opt for carpooling!**

You can also practise your French with the driver!

The platform also offers bus travel.

[www.blablacar.fr](http://www.blablacar.fr); [www.citygo.io](http://www.citygo.io)

English-speaking taxis:

TAXI

**GENTLEMEN DRIVER**

[www.gentlemendriver.com](http://www.gentlemendriver.com)  
(Tél : 06 06 51 96 84)

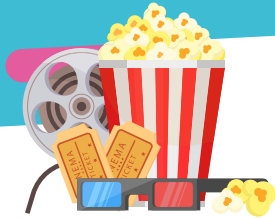


TAXI

**BEN YOUNES TAXI 91**

(Tél. : 06 50 63 08 79)  
[momobenyou@gmail.com](mailto:momobenyou@gmail.com)

# TIME OUT



## THEATRE

Looking for an affordable outing?

The Kiosque Théâtre sells first-category tickets at half price (between 15€ and 24€) for ongoing shows (theatres, concerts, cafe-theatres) on the same day of the performance.

<https://www.kiosqueculture.com/theatre/>

Don't speak French fluently yet?

[www.theatreinparis.com](http://www.theatreinparis.com) offers plays with English subtitles projected above the stage!

## ACTIVITIES, MEETUPS

[www.greeters.paris](http://www.greeters.paris) offers off-the-beaten-path walks with passionate volunteer guides (page available in English, German, and Spanish).

Make new friends in Paris: Join a group (some are English-speaking) of people who share the same interests as you on [www.meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com)

The Facebook group «Upside Down Sorties Paris» offers activities in a warm and festive atmosphere, including parties, sports activities, picnics, and more.

**Reassurance Program:** it is not always easy to live far away from your relatives, you can encounter some physiological or financial difficulties, Science Accueil can help you, do not hesitate to speak about it.



## CINEMA

A movie ticket costs between 9 and 12 euros, with reduced prices for students or those under 26. The movie lineup changes on Wednesdays.

Find all the showtimes near you at

<https://www.allocine.fr/>

## MUSEUMS

Attention, museums are often closed on Tuesdays (such as the Louvre) and sometimes on Mondays (such as the Musée d'Orsay). You can find all the information about current exhibitions and museum hours on the websites

[www.parismusees.paris.fr](http://www.parismusees.paris.fr) or on

[www.parisjetaime.com](http://www.parisjetaime.com) These sites are multilingual.





*L'art de vivre à la Française*

# CULTURAL PROGRAM

## « L'ART DE VIVRE À LA FRANÇAISE »

Science Accueil offers you a program of unique outings. Beyond the cultural discovery, you will be initiated into the French way of life, «l'art de vivre à la française». Each of these outings combines a guided tour in English with a friendly moment.

[www.science-accueil.org](http://www.science-accueil.org)

section visits and events.



LA VIE DE CHÂTEAU À TRAVERS LES ÂGES  
MONTMARTRE ET LA VIE DE BOHÈME  
JAZZ À SAINT GERMAIN  
LE PARIS DE LA BELLE ÉPOQUE  
LE PARIS DES ARTS ET DES LETTRES  
L'ART DU PARFUM  
L'ART DE VIVRE À LA COUR : VERSAILLES  
L'ART DU CHOCOLAT  
L'ART IMPRESSIONNISTE  
L'ART DE LA HAUTE-COUTURE  
LES GUINGUETTES AU BORD DE L'EAU

...



Some visits will allow you to experience these arts yourself! (Perfume making, chocolate making, watercolour and pastel workshop near Monet's house...).

**Register now, as places are limited!**

# CALENDAR AND AGENDA

## OF NATIONAL CULTURAL EVENTS

### January

The 1<sup>st</sup>, **New Year's Day**, is a public holiday!  
**Night of Reading** events celebrating the joy of reading.



### February

On the second day of February we eat crepes, it is called Chandeleur. The crepes, golden and in a circle shape, symbolise the sun and the end of winter, as well as offerings. According to an old custom, you must flip a crepe while holding a coin in the hand that holds the handle of the pan; if the crepe flips without falling, wealth is assured for the year.

### March

**Spring of Poets**: celebrating poetry in all its forms.

### April

**Easter Sunday** (sometimes in March), Christians celebrate the day Jesus Christ resurrected. **Easter Monday is a public holiday**.

There is also the **European Artistic Crafts Days**, where artisans open their workshops all over France.



### May

May is rich in public holidays!

**May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day** a day off work! It is respected by the biggest number of companies. For that matter it is the only day of the year when the binmen do not pick up the bin. The costume is to offer a sprig of lily of the valley.

**May 8<sup>th</sup>**: Commemoration of the end of World War II (1939-1945).

**Ascension Thursday** (a religious holiday, 40 days after Easter).

**Whit Monday** (a religious holiday: 7 weeks after Easter): Day of solidarity. All three are public holidays, so May is highly appreciated!



### June

**June 21<sup>st</sup>: World Music Day** : since 1982, music has been celebrated. Professionals or amateurs, everyone can play music in the streets!

**Rendez-vous in the gardens** (open doors of private parks and gardens for guided tours, exhibitions, workshops, and meetings).





## July

**July 14<sup>th</sup>: National Day** (commemorating the storming of the Bastille in 1789). It is a public holiday. Balls and fireworks are organised in the villages, often the night before.

## August

Traditionally, it's the month of summer holidays!

**August 15<sup>th</sup>** is a public holiday (Christian religious celebration).

## September

**European Heritage Day:** Free visits to all public historic monuments, unusual tours, exceptional opening of places normally off-limits to the public.

## October

3<sup>rd</sup> weekend: **National Architecture Days** visits, walks, educational workshops, conferences, and screenings that tell the past and contemporary history of architecture.

**Sleepless Night** (7pm-7am): artistic show in the streets, dedicated to modern art.

## November

**November 1<sup>st</sup>:** La Toussaint (All Saint's day), is a public holiday.

**November 11<sup>th</sup>:** (public holiday).

Commemoration of the end of World War I (1914-1918) and tribute to the «Fallen for France».

**Night of Museums** (between 6 pm and 1 am, the public is invited to discover the treasures of French museums in an unusual, festive, and playful way).

## December

**December 25<sup>th</sup>** is a public holiday: Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, it's Christmas Day!



# LA MARSEILLAISE

Written by Rouget de Lisle in 1792, she became the national anthem with the Convention.

# CULTURE SHOCK

**In France, Sunday is a day of rest for most people (although there are many exceptions).**

**The origin of this tradition is religious, but it has become a social issue.**

The legal working time is 35 hours per week for full-time work.

The legal duration of paid leave is 5 weeks. Most vacations traditionally take place in July-August: in France, it is known that «everything stops in August!», particularly the first 15 days of August.

**Between December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>, activity also significantly slowed down, known as the «trêve des confiseurs», (literally : truce of the confectioners).**

## THE FRENCH HABITS THAT MAY SEEM STRANGE TO YOU

### La bise (cheek kiss)

In many countries, people greet each other with a simple «hello» in the local language, a wave, or even a hug (the famous hug that is not practised at all in France!). In France, we have «la bise», a rather intimate form of contact that many foreigners find difficult. And to complicate matters, the number of cheek kisses and which cheek you start with, varies depending on your geographical location : right or left cheek? The general rule is to give 2 kisses, but it can go up to 4! Even if we do not kiss, the cheeks touch or brush each other, a contact rather intimate with which a lot of foreigners do not get used to. As a collateral victim of the pandemic, is the French cheek kiss on the verge of extinction or will it make a triumphant comeback?...

### Hello, good evening, goodbye

The French always say «bonjour» (good day) whether it's to their friends, coworkers, or when entering a store or waiting room. Generally, «bonjour» is used at any time of the day until around 6<sup>pm</sup> (the boundary is not always very clear, even for French people, so don't worry!), after which «bonsoir» (good evening) is used instead. Avoid using the word «adieu» unless you don't intend to see the person ever again!

### April 1<sup>st</sup>

The traditional prank that children play on this day is to stick a small paper fish on people's backs. When the person realises it, the prankster shouts «poisson d'avril!» (April fish!). There is also the general knowledge of talking about false and surprising

information. But it is always done with a friendly spirit «esprit bon enfant» and to shout «Poisson d'Avril» when the surprise is a success.

### Ice cubes



The French don't automatically add ice to their drinks, which means you'll have to ask for ice at a restaurant or bar. But don't dilute your red wine with ice, as it will be considered sacrilegious!

### Complaining

While not far from us, Anglo-Saxons see the bright side of life and find everything «amazing,» the French LOVE to complain! «Oh no, it's raining!», «It's cold,» «It's too hot»...

Numerous reliable studies have proven that complaining is good for health and increases lifespan. (Didn't you know that the French are almost immortal?)

Going on strike: France is the OECD country with the highest number of strike days. Taking to the streets to make one's demands heard is a habit that may seem shocking to foreign workers but has sometimes led to significant social achievements!

### Smoking

A French person sitting on a terrace, enjoying a drink, often has ... a cigarette in hand.

Despite the constantly increasing price of cigarette packs, the French remain heavy consumers, and this (bad) habit may shock foreigners. However, the 2007 law prohibits smoking in enclosed public places, workplaces, and public transportation.

It has been a few years since vaping has replaced cigarettes.

This habit has also been prohibited in some places.

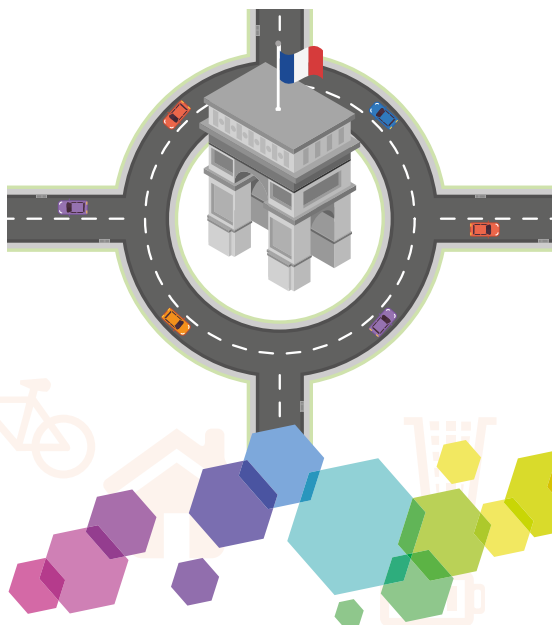
### Snack time



While foreigners have «snacks» throughout the day, the French wait until 4:30 pm for their «goûter», which is often a sweet snack, like a «pain au chocolat», for example.

### Roundabouts

A fear of beginner drivers, roundabouts are a French specialty. Our country alone has half of the world's roundabouts! This can surprise foreigners travelling on our roads.



Academic registration



Campus France



**Before your departure**

**Arrival in France**



French Phone number

Registration on our website Science Accueil (members)



Housing research / Housing insurance



VLS-TS

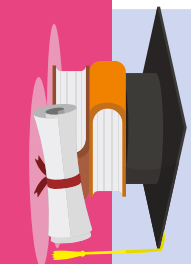
Validation of the VLS-TS

Bank account (via Science Accueil)



Back to School

Application for VISA



Preparation of administrative documents that are needed for the trip



Transport card



Social security number



**Departure for France**

**CALENDAR  
OF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROCESS**

**STUDENTS**

\*if you are eligible to Science Accueil's help

CAF if eligible



Job Interview



Job offer



Request the work contract



Arrival in France



French Phone number

Application for residence permit  
or validation of the VLS-TS

VLS-TS



Back to school for your kids



Assumption of Duties

Asking for the convention d'accueil



Registration on Science Accueil's website\*



Housing research / Housing insurance



Bank account (via Science Accueil\*)



Application for VISA



Preparation of administrative  
documents that are needed  
for the trip



Departure  
for France

CALENDAR  
OF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
PROCESS



Application for the tax number (adjusting rate if necessary)



Transport card

Social security number



CAF if eligible

RESEARCHERS

\*if you are eligible to Science Accueil's help

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### THE USEFUL NUMBER

<b>FIREMEN</b> <b>18</b>	<b>EMERGENCY SERVICES</b> <b>17</b>	<b>SAMU (ambulance)</b> <b>15</b>	<b>EUROPEAN EMERGENCY</b> <b>112</b>
<b>SOS HELP</b> <b>01 46 21 46 46</b>			

For more information or to register,  
please go to our website :

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