

Guide to France

The following advices for American travelers going to France was compiled from information provided by the U.S. State Department, the CIA, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and some really, really expensive spy satellites that the French don't know about. It is intended as a guide for American travelers only.

**** General Overview**

France is a medium-sized foreign country located in the continent of Europe. It is an important member of the world community, though not nearly as important as it thinks. It is bounded by Germany, Spain, Switzerland and some smaller nations of no particular importance and with no decent shops. France is a very old country with many treasures, such as the Louvre and Euro Disney. Among its contributions to western civilization are champagne, Camembert cheese and the guillotine. Although France likes to think of itself as a modern nation, air conditioning is little used and it is next to impossible for Americans to get decent Mexican food. One continuing exasperation for American visitors is that local people insist on speaking in English, though many WILL speak German, if shouted at.

**** People**

France has a population of 60 million people, 59 million of these drink and smoke (the last million is under six months old). All French people drive like lunatics, are dangerously oversexed and have no concept of standing patiently in a queue, or line. The French people are in general, gloomy, temperamental, proud, arrogant, aloof and undisciplined. Those are their good points. Most French citizens are Roman Catholic, though one would hardly guess it from their behavior. Many people are communists. Men sometimes have girls' names like Marie or Michel, and they kiss each other when they meet. American travelers are advised to travel in groups and wear baseball caps and colorful trousers for easier recognition.

**** Safety**

In general, France is a safe destination, although travelers must be aware it is to time invaded by Germany. Traditionally, the French surrender immediately and, apart from a temporary shortage of Scotch whisky and the increased difficulty in getting baseball scores and stock market prices, life for the American visitor generally goes on much as before. A tunnel connecting France to Britain beneath the English channel has been opened in recent years to make it easier for the French government to escape during future German invasions but Germans are now considering digging a tunnel to pass under France when going to Spain on summer holidays.

**** History**

France's historical figures are Louis XIV, the Huguenots, Joan of Arc, Jacques Cousteau and Charles de Gaulle, who was President for many years and is now an airport.

**** Government**

The French form of government is democratic but noisy. Elections are held more or less continuously and always result in a draw. The French love administration so for governmental purposes, the country is divided into regions, departments, districts, municipalities, towns, communes, villages, cafes, and telephone kiosks. Each of these has its own government and elections. One french citizen out of three is a president of something. Parliament consists of two chambers, the Upper and Lower (though confusingly they are both on the ground floor), and whose members are either Gaullists or Communists, neither of whom should be trusted by the traveler. Parliament's principal occupation is setting off atomic bombs in the South Pacific and acting indignant and surprised when other countries complain. According to the most current American State Department intelligence, the President is now one of the seven dwarves which escaped from Euro-Disney. Further information is not available at this time.

**** Culture**

The French pride themselves on their culture, though it is not easy to see why. All their music sounds the same and they have never made a movie that you would want to watch for anything but the nude scenes. Churchill said that a gentleman is someone who knows how to play accordion but doesn't.

**** Cuisine**

Let's face it, no matter how much garlic you put on it, a snail is just a slug with a shell on its back. Croissants on the other hand, are excellent, although it is impossible for most Americans to pronounce this.

**** Economy**

France has a large and diversified economy, second only to Germany's in Europe, which is surprising because the French hardly work at all. If they are not spending four hours dawdling over lunch, they are on strike and blocking the roads with their trucks and tractors. France's principal exports, in order of importance to the economy are : wine, nuclear weapons, perfume, guided missiles, champagne, guns, grenade launchers, land mines, tanks, attack aircraft, miscellaneous armaments and cheese.

**** Public Holidays**

France has more holidays than any other nation in the world. Among its 361 national holidays are : 197 Saints' days, 37 National Liberation Days, 16 Declaration of Republic Days, 54 Return of Charles de Gaulle in triumph as if he won the war single-handed Days, 18 Napoleon sent into Exile Days, 17 Napoleon Called Back from Exile Days, and 2 France is Great and the Rest of the World is Rubbish Days.

**** Conclusion**

France enjoys a rich history, a picturesque and varied landscape, and a temperate climate. In short, it would be a very nice country if French people did not inhabit it. The best thing that can be said for France is that it is not Germany.