



- HIGHLIGHTS
- ITINERARIES
- LOCAL EXPERTS
- + PULL-OUT MAP

Discover France

Experience the best of France



Discover France

Contents 

Throughout this book, we use these icons to highlight special recommendations:



The Best...

Lists for everything from bars to wildlife – to make sure you don't miss out



Don't Miss

A must-see – don't go home until you've been there

Local Knowledge

Local experts reveal their top picks and secret highlights



Detour

Special places a little off the beaten track



If you like...

Lesser-known alternatives to world-famous attractions

These icons help you quickly identify reviews in the text and on the map:



Sights



Eating



Drinking



Sleeping

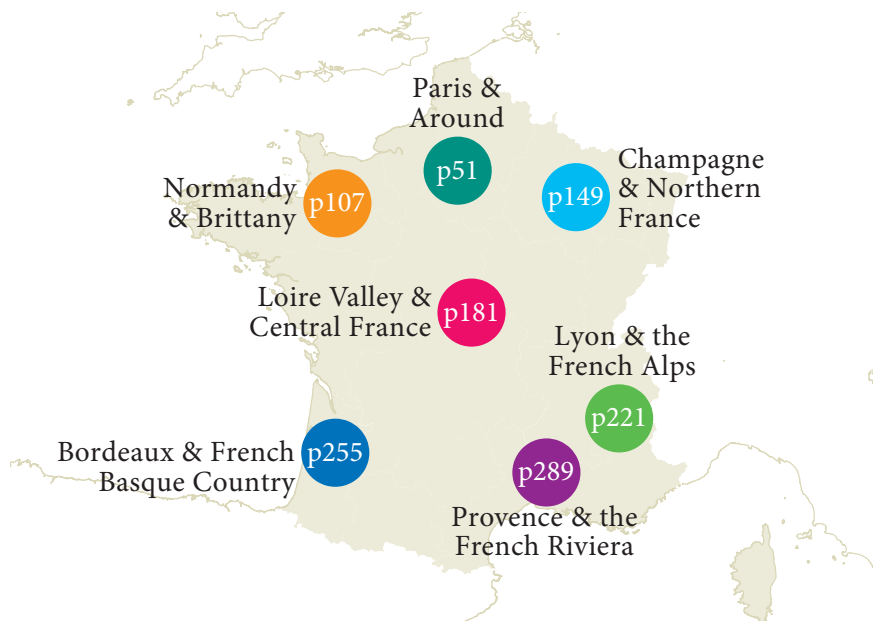


Information

This edition written and researched by

Oliver Berry

**Alexis Averbuck, Stuart Butler, Kerry Christiani,
Steve Fallon, Emilie Filou, Catherine Le Nevez,
Tom Masters, Daniel Robinson, Miles Roddis,
John A Vlahides, Nicola Williams**



Paris & Around

Highlights 54

- The Louvre
- Versailles
- Cathédrale de Notre Dame de Paris
- Eiffel Tower
- Cimetière du Père Lachaise
- Musée d'Orsay
- The Seine

Normandy & Brittany

Highlights 110

- Mont St-Michel
- Giverny
- Bayeux Tapestry
- Carnac Megaliths
- D-Day Sites
- St-Malo

Champagne & Northern France

Highlights 152

- Wine Tasting in Champagne
- Centre Pompidou-Metz
- Reims and Amiens' Cathédrales Notre Dame
- Alsace
- Fort du Hackenberg
- WWI Sites

Lyon & the French Alps

Highlights 224

- Croix Rousse
- Action Chamonix!
- Aiguille du Midi
- Gorges de l'Ardèche
- Annecy
- Basilique Notre Dame de Fourvière
- Cheese Feast

Bordeaux & French Basque Country

Highlights 258

- Bordelaise Cuisine
- Bordeaux
- Cognac
- St-Émilion
- Basque Culture
- Dune du Pilat

Provence & the French Riviera

Highlights 292

- Provençal Markets
- Riviera High Life
- Three Corniches
- Les Arènes de Nîmes
- The Camargue
- Pont du Gard
- Carcassonne

Contents

Plan Your Trip

This Is France	6
France Map	8
France's Top 25 Experiences	10
France's Top Itineraries	32
France Month by Month	42
What's New	46
Get Inspired	47
Need to Know	48

Loire Valley & Central France

Highlights184

- Chambord
 - Castle Country
 - Grotte de Lascaux
 - Le Clos Lucé
 - Sarlat-la-Canéda
 - Burgundy Wine Road
-

On the Road



Paris & Around 51

Highlights	54
Best... ..	60
Walking Tour	62
Around Paris	104
Disneyland	
Resort Paris	104
Versailles	104
Chartres Cathedral	105



Normandy & Brittany 107

Highlights	110
Best... ..	114
Itineraries	116
Normandy	118
Rouen	118
Giverny	120
Bayeux	122
D-Day Beaches	124
Honfleur	126
Camembert	128
Mont St-Michel	129
Brittany	132
St-Malo	133
Dinard	136
Cancale	137
Roscoff	138
Presqu'île de Crozon	140

Contents

On the Road

Quimper	141
<i>Carnac</i>	143
Château de Josselin	145
Rennes	145



Champagne & Northern France 149

Highlights 152

Best... 156

Itineraries 158

Champagne 160

Reims 160

Épernay 164

Northern France 167

Strasbourg 167

Colmar 172

Metz 174

Amiens 176

Battle of the Somme

Memorials 177

Fort du Hackenberg ... 177



Loire Valley & Central France 181

Highlights 184

Best... 188

Itineraries 190

Loire Valley 192

Orléans 192

Blois 195

Château de

Cheverny 196

Château de

Chambord 197

Château de

Chaumont 198

Tours 198

Château de

Chenonceau 202

Amboise 202

Château d'Azay-le-

Rideau 204

Saumur 204

Burgundy 206

Dijon 206

Abbaye Royale de

Fontevraud 207

Côte d'Or Vineyards ... 210

Beaune 210

Abbaye de Fontenay .. 212

The Dordogne 213

Chantier Médiéval de

Guédelon 213

Sarlat-la-Canéda 213

Vézère Valley 216

La Roque Gageac &

Around 218

Gouffre de Padirac 219



Lyon & the French Alps 221

Highlights 224

Best... 230

Itineraries 232

Lyon 234

The French Alps 245

Chamonix 245

Gorges de l'Ardèche .. 245

Aiguille du Midi 246

Annecy 251

Route des Ducs de

Savoie 253



Bordeaux & French Basque Country 255

Highlights 258

Best... 262

Itineraries 264

Atlantic Coast 266

Bordeaux 266

Cognac 270

St-Émilion 271

Arcachon 274

Dune du Pilat 275

The Médoc 275

Cap Ferret 276

French Basque Country 276

Bayonne 276

Biarritz 279

St-Jean de Luz &

Ciboure 282

St-Jean Pied de Port .. 283

Lourdes 285

The Pyrenees 287

In Focus

Survival Guide



Provence & the French Riviera 289

Highlights 292

Best... 298

Itineraries 300

Provence 302

Marseille 302

Aix-en-Provence 310

Arles 313

The Camargue 314

Avignon 316

Les Baux de Provence 320

Fontaine de Vaucluse 321

Languedoc 321

Nîmes 321

Pont du Gard 323

The Luberon 323

Carcassonne 324

The French Riviera 325

Nice 325

Arènes d'Orange 326

Antibes-Juan-les-Pins 332

St-Paul de Vence 334

Cannes 335

St-Tropez 338

The Corniches 340

Monaco (Principauté De Monaco) 341

Îles d'Hyères 346

France Today 350

History 352

The French 360

French Cuisine 362

Literature & The Arts 369

Architecture 376

Outdoors 378

Family Travel 380

Directory 384

Accommodation 384

Business Hours 385

Customs

Regulations 385

Electricity 386

Gay & Lesbian

Travellers 386

Health 386

Insurance 387

Internet Access 387

Legal Matters 388

Money 388

Public Holidays 389

Safe Travel 390

Telephone 390

Time 392

Toilets 392

Tourist Information 392

Travellers with

Disabilities 393

Visas 393

Transport 393

Getting There &

Away 393

Getting Around 395

Language 403

Behind the Scenes 404

Index 406

How to Use This Book 414

Our Writers 416



This Is France

Snooty, sexy, superior, chic, infuriating, arrogant, officious, inspired, France never fails to stir up passionate opinion. Even if you've never set foot on French soil, it's a place that already seems immediately familiar: every time you've gazed at an Impressionist painting, watched a new-wave film or sipped on a glass of sparkling Champagne, you've been letting a little bit of Gallic flair seep into your soul.

From world-class wines to rich culture and even richer food, France is all about enjoying the finer things in life.

This is, after all, the country that invented the very idea of *joie de vivre*. Whether it's soaking up the atmosphere of a Breton street market, indulging in some après ski on the slopes around Chamonix, or savouring a long, lazy lunch under Provençal skies, one thing's for sure: the French certainly know how to live life to the full.

This is also a place with more history and heritage per square inch than practically anywhere else in Europe.

With a turbulent past spanning Roman rule to Revolution, France is awash with historical sights: prehistoric monuments, crumbling castles, grand châteaux, medieval churches and hilltop villages, each with its own fascinating tale to tell.

And though France is certainly a nation in touch with its history, it is far from stuck in the past.

For centuries, the French have been breaking rules and setting trends for the rest of the world to follow, and it's a habit that's hard to break. From cutting-edge fashion to ground-breaking architecture, France remains one of the world's great cultural icons. It's at the same time seductive and aloof, old fashioned and forward looking, enthralling and exasperating in equal measures, but always characterised by a certain *je ne sais quoi*.



the French
certainly
know how
to live life
to the full



