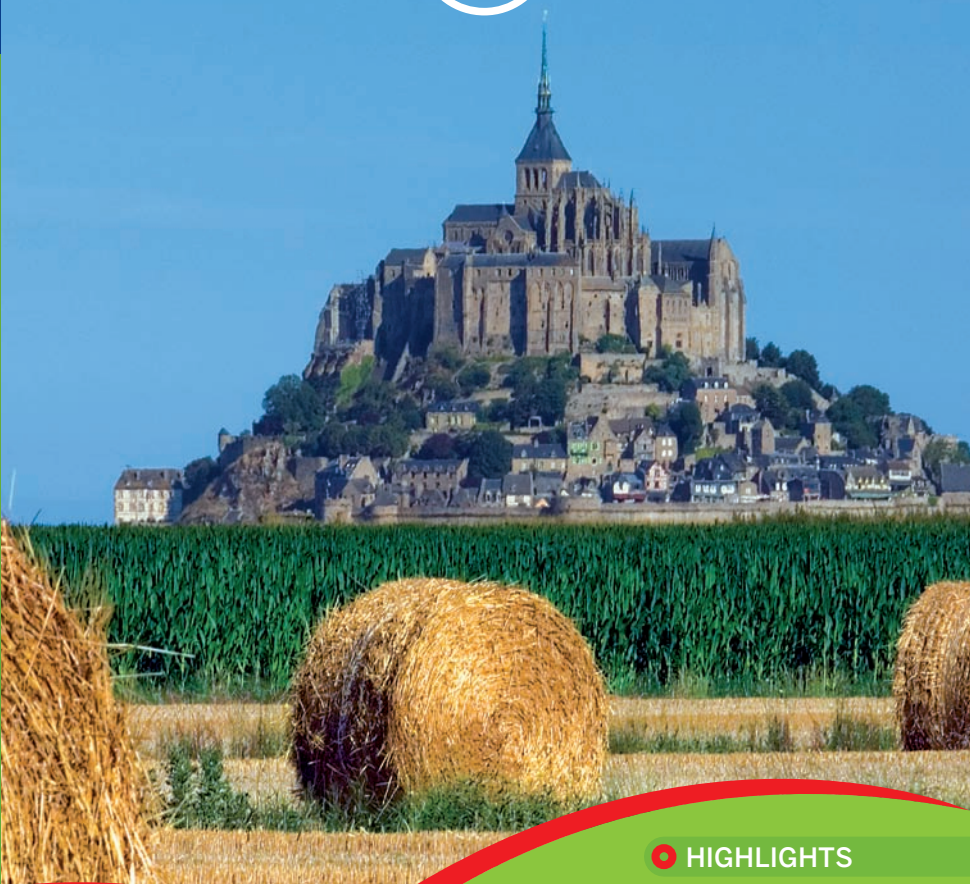




40 YEARS
OF AMAZING EXPERIENCES



- 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

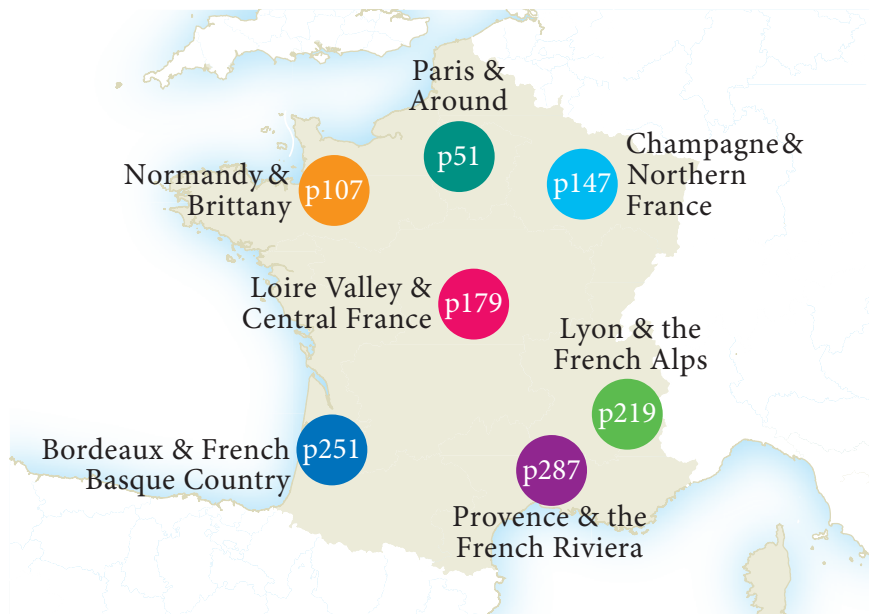
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This Is France

Snooty, sexy, superior, chic, infuriating, arrogant, officious and 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.

France is all about art and seduction, Roman to Renaissance and beyond.

Stroll the lily-clad gardens Monet painted and sip *un café* in a Parisian cafe where Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir met to philosophise. Imagine the glorious life of French kings at bourgeois Versailles or view tomorrow's art stars at new headline-grabbing museums up north. Ride magnificent mechanical elephants in an old Nantes shipyard. Listen to Marseille rap and Parisian jazz. Sense the subtle infusion of language, music and mythology in Brittany, brought by 5th-century Celtic invaders. Yes, French culture fills any stay in France with never-ending possibilities.

The country's feast of fine food and wine woos every traveller.

But gastronomic France goes far deeper than Parisian bistro dining, long lunches outside, shopping for fruit and veg at the market and wolfing down croissants hot from the *boulangerie* (bakery). Taste wine with world-class sommeliers in Bordeaux; visit an Atlantic Coast oyster farm; drink sparkling Champagne in ancient cellars in Reims; tour a Provençal melon farm; harvest olives, peaches and cherries in the hot south; and realise that food is as much an *art de vivre* (art of living) for the French as an essential to survive.

Then there is the *terroir* (land) and its wonderful variety.

Its rich and fabulous journey starts in northern France with chalky cliffs and sand dunes, continues south through to pea-green vineyards, and onwards to the bright blue sea of the French Riviera.

“
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”

