

# ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

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# France Driving Guide

*With stunning landscapes, superb highways and one of the world's most scenic and comprehensive secondary road networks, France is a road-tripper's dream come true.*

## DRIVING LICENCE & DOCUMENTS

Drivers must carry the following at all times:

- ➔ passport or an EU national ID card
- ➔ valid driving licence (*permis de conduire*; most foreign licences can be used in France for up to a year)
- ➔ car-ownership papers, known as a *carte grise* (grey card)
- ➔ proof of third-party liability *assurance* (insurance)

An International Driving Permit (IDP) is not required when renting a car but can be useful in the event of an accident or police stop, as it translates and vouches for the authenticity of your home licence.

## INSURANCE

Third-party liability insurance (*assurance au tiers*) is compulsory for all vehicles in France, including cars brought from abroad. Normally, cars registered and insured in other European countries can circulate freely. Contact your insurance company before leaving home to make sure you're covered, and to verify whom to call in case of a breakdown or accident.

In a minor accident with no injuries, the easiest way for drivers to sort things out with their insurance companies is to fill out a *Constat Amiable d'Accident Automobile* (accident report), a standardised way of recording important details about what happened. In rental cars it's

## Driving Fast Facts

- ➔ **Right or left?** Drive on the right
- ➔ **Manual or automatic?** Manual
- ➔ **Legal driving age** 18
- ➔ **Top speed limit** 130km/h on *autoroutes* (highways, motorways)
- ➔ **Signature car** Citroën 2CV

usually in the packet of documents in the glove compartment. Make sure the report includes any proof that the accident was not your fault. If it was your fault you may be liable for a hefty insurance deductible/excess. Don't sign anything you don't fully understand. If necessary, contact the police (☎17).

French-registered cars have their insurance-company details printed on a little green square affixed to the windscreen (windshield).

## HIRING A CAR

To hire a car in France, you'll generally need to be over 21 years old, have had a driving licence for at least a year, and have an international credit card. Drivers under 25 usually have to pay a surcharge (*frais jeune conducteur*) of €25 to €35 per day.

Car-hire companies provide mandatory third-party liability insurance but things such as collision-damage waivers (CDW, or *assurance tous risques*) vary greatly from company to company. When comparing rates