

France Travel Tips 2018

In preparation for your trip to France, here are a few tips concerning what to bring.

1. **Passport:**

Be sure to photocopy the data page and place it and two extra photos in your carry-on. Also, leave a photocopy of your Passport at home.

Should your passport be lost or stolen, it will make replacing it much easier.

2. **Student ID (or Faculty ID): Required for students.**

If your student ID has a sticker with the date of validity, make sure it is up-to-date for 2018.

In any case, bring your student ID. Faculty ID: Very important because it may allow you to have reduced rates at museums, etc.

3. **Money:**

At the Notre Dame de l'Abbaye residence in Carcassonne, all meals are provided as well as entries to museums; therefore, you only need pocket money for gifts, etc. During the days in Paris, however, you will need more spending money. Breakfast is provided at our hotel and there will be a farewell dinner for the group. You will be responsible for the other meals. Paris is quite expensive (@\$5.00 for a cup of coffee or glass of coke in certain areas). Usually, you can stop and buy something to picnic on as you tour Paris. You will also be responsible for some metro or bus tickets, and some optional museum entries and other free day activities. I suggest at least \$300 for the entire stay in Paris. Currently 1 Euro = about \$1.25.

4. **Bring:**

A. A major credit card: Visa, MasterCard (not Discover, also people rarely accept American Express). A card with a chip is preferred by retailers. Sometimes there is a minimum amount (\$20) when using a charge card in a store. It is a good idea to call your credit card company before the trip to tell them you will be in France, and for how long, so that they will not block your account.

B. Your ATM card works in France and is the simplest and cheapest solution for getting money. YOU NEED A PIN NUMBER. With an ATM card you get the best exchange rates and pay the lowest fees (about 1%), depending on the issuer of your card. Please inform your bank that you will be traveling overseas and wish to use your card in France.

C. Changing dollars to euros in France= Highest fees and worst exchange rates. This is the most costly and difficult method of getting euros. Very few banks in large towns provide this service and none exist where we will be staying. If you do bring dollars, one of the only opportunities to change them to euros is at the airport in Paris, upon arrival.

D. Do not bring Travelers' checks because they have become difficult to cash even in banks.

E. Get 200 euros from an ATM machine upon arrival in the airport in Paris or Toulouse where there are ATM machines.

5. **Phoning Home:**

Remember, France is six hours ahead of New York time. Notre Dame de l'Abbaye residence has WiFi so you can use skype to call home. It is best to find out from your phone company whether your cell phone will work in France and how much it will cost.

6. **Medicine:**

A. Most important-- Prescription medicine: Don't forget to count the days you'll be away and bring all you need. If you suffer from asthma or other allergies, bring an extra inhaler, etc. the plants are in full bloom! Bring just the amount you need of prescription meds in original packaging and, if they are addictive, bring your doctor's prescription.

B. First aid. It's a good idea to bring your favorite remedies. Most likely you'll never need to use any of them, but if you do you'll be very happy to have them. Do not leave town without: Aspirin, Advil or Tylenol, Band-Aids and antibiotic cream for any blisters incurred while sightseeing.

Pepto-Bismol for queasy stomach and mild diarrhea. Although France is not Mexico, the food is

different and might bother you the first few days, especially if you eat too much cheese and salad. (There are 365 different kinds of cheese in France!) Imodium AD for dire cases of you-know-what.

C. Medicine for traveling

1. Bus trips: Our bus excursions are on winding roads, so some people may want to bring bonine or anti sea-sickness wrist bands.

2. Airplane travel: "EarPlanes", available in any drugstore, are also a good investment for your overseas flight. These tiny ear plugs prevent the severe pain that can occur during changes in cabin pressure. You put them in before take-off and remove them when cruising altitude is reached and then put them in again one hour before landing.

7. **Cosmetics:**

Cosmetics and other toilet articles are expensive in France so don't forget **small containers** of your hairspray, shampoo, conditioner, etc.

Electrical Appliances:

A. Hairdryers/curling irons: Check your travel dryer to see whether it has dual controls (120v/240v) to convert from the standard U.S. voltage of 120 to the higher voltage of 240 in France. A regular American hair dryer or curling iron will not work and may catch on fire.

You also need an adapter plug for French wall outlets.

B. Laptops/tablets/cell phones/cameras: All you need is an adapter plug for French outlets.

8. **Clothes:**

A. **TRAVEL LIGHT: *Only one carry-on and one suitcase.*** As we will have over 30 participants on this trip, you will have room for only **ONE SUITCASE**. You will carry your own luggage. Label all bags clearly inside and out. Do not lock your suitcase because of airport security regulations. Airline weight restrictions: Please do not bring large, heavy suitcases. The national rules regarding the luggage weight allowed on flights are very tight. Please check on-line sites for your transatlantic carrier's baggage regulations. For Air France flights between Paris and Toulouse you will be allowed only the following:

1. Allowed: 0-23 kilos (max. 50lbs) total checked luggage.

2. Excess weight: 23 -32 kilos (70lbs) anything over 50lbs will be charged a forfeitary amount of 50 euros (about \$63).

3. Over 32 kilos, not allowed, shipped by land, extra fees. Remember you must travel home with the same suitcase and space so be conscious of leaving room for what you may purchase while in France.

B. I cannot insist too much on the necessity for very comfortable walking shoes (hiking boots, sneakers). Even your sandals should be sturdy. We walk a great deal on rocky, uneven ground when visiting ruins and medieval towns. We climb two mountains with steep rocky paths and explore a one mile deep cave to see the prehistoric drawings. In Paris, we also cover many kilometers on foot.

C. Hat and sun screen: The sun is very strong in the south of France. You will need a hat for the mountain climb and the beach, at least.

D. Simple clothes to wear again and again and again. (French women put on an outfit they like and they wear it over and over, which makes perfect sense for travelers.) Dress is casual : jeans, tee shirts, etc. a warm jacket, one sweater, shorts and a bathing suit if you want to bathe in the Mediterranean when we visit Collioure. You can add something more dressy for Paris, if you like. Keep an eye on the weather channel just before we leave. You will need your warm jacket for the visit to the cave. Dress in layers.

E. Folding umbrella

F. Face cloth and soap. Towels are changed twice a week, but there are no face cloths and only small soaps.

G. Bring Flashlight and Alarm Clock.

9. **Carry-on bags:**

A. Liquids and gels are now restricted in size and packaging. Please visit these sites for information from your airline

[Carry-on information](#)

[Baggage information](#)

10. **ACCOMODATIONS: Notre Dame de l'Abbaye residence in Carcassonne**

We will be living in simple shared facilities. Rooms are double occupancy, some are triple and are located on the second and third floors. Most all rooms have a sink, shower and toilet.

There is no maid service. **There is WiFi.**

Meals are taken together on the ground floor and have become one of our most enjoyable ways of socializing and getting to know each other. People usually switch places at table at every meal so as to sit with new faces, and we all enjoy the French custom of delicious meals served in separate courses, with wine.

Before we leave for Paris, the faculty and staff contribute to tips for the bus driver (amount will be discussed later). Student costs are covered by the trip.

QUICK CHECK LIST

1. Passport
2. College ID card
3. Credit card, ATM card
4. Prescription medicine
5. Walking or hiking shoes
6. Hat
7. Adapter plugs
8. Flashlight
9. Alarm Clock