

France



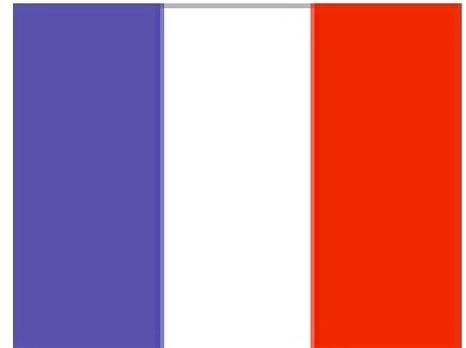
Day 1: Country Facts

Today my family and I left for France. While I was on the plane I looked through my mom's vacation guide and found out that France is located in Western Europe, bordered the Bay of Biscay and English Channel, between Belgium and Spain, southeast of the UK; bordering the

Mediterranean Sea, between Italy and Spain.

Our plane was going to land in the capital of France, Paris which has a population of 9,854,000 (metro. area) and 2,110,400 (city proper). The population in France is 60,656,178 according to the July 2005 records.

When our plane landed, my watch said it was noon back home in Concord, New Hampshire. I noticed the sun was going down when we arrived. According to my dad it was 6:00 pm in France because local time in Paris is 6 hours ahead of Concord.



Day 2: People, Places, & Things to do



Today I had a chance to meet children in France. They spoke French. The children told me that almost 100% spoke French but there are other dialects that can be heard in other regions (Provençal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, and Flemish).

I learned how to say, "Good morning. How are you doing today?". "Bonjour. Comment faites-vous aujourd'hui?"

The French celebrate three holidays during the summer, just like us, but on different days. June 5 is Whit Monday, July 14 is Bastille Day, and, August 15 is Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The only one that has fireworks is Bastille Day which is similar to our 4th of July. Sunday is a day of rest and worship. The main religions in France are Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant 2%, Islam 5%-10%, Jewish 1%, and unaffiliated 4%.

After church we went over to see Cathedrale de Notre Dame, a Medieval Marvel. Notre Dame de Paris is not only a masterpiece of French Gothic architecture, but has also been Catholic Paris' ceremonial focus for seven centuries. The cathedral's immense interior, a marvel of medieval engineering, holds over 6000 people and has spectacular rose windows. It's was well worth the effort of climbing the 387 steps of the north tower. It brought us to the top of the west facade and face to face with many of the cathedral's most frightening gargoyles, which enjoy a spectacular view of Paris.

For the afternoon we visited one of Paris' cultural heritages, the Palace and Park of Versailles. The Palace of Versailles was the principal residence of the French kings from the time of Louis XIV to Louis XVI. Embellished by several generations of architects, sculptors, decorators and landscape architects, it provided Europe with a model of the ideal royal residence for over a century.

Later that night we went out and had Peach Flambé. My mother loved it so much, I got her the recipe.

Ingredients:

8 Peach halves (peach or canned)
2 Tbs. Sweet butter
2 oz. Brandy
2 oz. White wine

4 Tbs. Sugar
Juice of one orange
Juice of one lemon
Peel of one orange shredded

Preparation:

Cook the sugar until it turns light brown in color. Add the butter, orange peel, lemon and orange juice, and simmer until the mixture has a honey like consistency. Add the peaches, brandy, wine, and flambé. Stir for a short while. Serve hot as a sauce over ice cream.

Day 3: Land & Climate



Today is a day for exploration in the country.

According to our guide, the average temperature in July is 67 F. I packed a pair of jeans and sweatshirt.

As we drove around the country, we visited France's most distinguished topographical areas: (1.) The Ardennes in the western tip; (2.) The Vosges to the south; (3.) The Armorican, which protects the Paris Basin to the west; and (4.) the Central Massif which separates the north and south of France. France is

bordered by Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany to the north and northeast, Switzerland, Italy and Monaco to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the southeast, Spain and Andorra to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. By the end of the day, we drove the total land area of France, 549,183 Sq Km (212,041 Sq Mi).

Day 4: Economy

The roadways are busy this morning with the Monday morning traffic. Dad told me that everyone is heading off to work. The main industries in France are machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics; textiles, food processing, and tourism. They export machinery and transportation equipment, aircraft, plastics, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, iron and steel, and beverages. France's import commodities are machinery and equipment, vehicles, crude oil, aircraft, plastics, chemicals.

Today I wanted to go shopping. I took my allowance money down to the bank to exchange it into French dollars. France's currency used to be the French franc (FRF) but was of 1 January 2002, the euro became the sole currency for everyday transactions within the member countries. On July 18, 2006, the \$1 U.S. was equal to 0.7977 Euro. When I gave the bank \$10, I got 7.97 in euro dollars back.

Day 5: Government

On the way to the airport, we passed the capital building in Paris. The official name for France is the La Republique Franaaise (The French Republic). The head of state is President Jacques Chirac (RPR), who was re-elected 5 May 2002. The ruling party is the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) (Union for a People's Movement), a coalition government comprised of the Rassemblement pour la Republique (RPR) (Rally for the Republic), the Democratie Liberale (DL) (Liberal Democracy), the Union pour la Democratie Franaaise (UDF) (Union for French Democracy), and allies. It has been fun visiting France. I have learned so much about this country and can't wait to share it my friends back home.



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Adventures in France

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