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Metropolitan France, often called Mainland France, lies in Western Europe and covers a total area of approximately 543,940 km2 (210,020 mi2). To the northeast, while to the southeast, Monaco and the Mediterranean Sea frame its contours. Spain rests to the
southwest, and Andorra tucks between them. The Bay of Biscay flanks its western edge, and the English Channel and the bay are extensions of the Atlantic Ocean. Due to its large area, the geographic regions of Metropolitan France vary in number
depending on the source, and descriptions tend to overlap with cultural and administrative regions. These are the 15 most apparent and distinguishable regions in Metropolitan France, followed by an overview of the geography of primary Overseas France territories. Note: The French Republic in total is 663,336 km2 (256,115 mi2), if excluding the
disputed status of Adélie Land. The North European Plain: The North European Plain: The North European Plain stretches across the northernmost region of France before extending northeastwards through Belgium, the Netherlands, northern Germany, and into Russia. In France, this area is characterized by its lowland topography and fertile soils. These soils have made the
region one of the most agriculturally productive areas in Europe. The Seine River flows through this plain, playing a vital role in the transportation and drainage of the region. The Paris Basin, geologically an oval-shaped synclinal depression, is largely situated in the northern-central part of France, and it is similar to the North
European Plain in both topography and location. This sedimentary basin consists of a series of layered rock formations laid down over millions of years. The region's topography is mostly flat with gentle rolling hills. Limestone and chalk deposits are prominent, which have influenced both the physical landscape and the economic activities, notably
agriculture, with grain crops being predominant. Massif Central: The Massif Central covers approximately one-sixth of the land area of France. It is a highland region composed mainly of granitic and metamorphic rocks, though volcanic landforms are also present, particularly in the western part. The landscape is shaped by a combination of erosion
volcanic activity, and glaciation. It features plateaus, deep valleys, and rugged terrain. Several rivers, including the Loire River, is one of the major river valleys in France. This region is predominantly flat, in spite of its position within the Massif Central,
with fertile soils due to sediment deposition from the river over time. It's known for its significant agricultural activity, especially viticulture. The region's geological evolution has resulted in a series of terraces alongside the river, which have influenced settlement and land-use patterns. The French Alps: Located in the southeastern part of the
country, the French Alps are a segment of the larger Alpine mountain range that stretches across Central Europe at 4,807 m (15,770 ft) (marked on the map above). Glaciation has been significant in shaping the landscape, resulting in U-
shaped valleys, moraines, and large lakes, such as Lake Geneva. The region also comprises important river systems, notably the Rhône. The Jura Mountains: Positioned to the north of the Alps and extending along the France-Switzerland border, the Jura Mountains: Positioned to the north of the Alps and extending along the France-Switzerland border, the Jura Mountains: Positioned to the north of the Alps and extending along the France-Switzerland border, the Jura Mountains are a series of sub-parallel ridges made predominantly of limestone. Karst topography
with features such as sinkholes and underground caves, is prevalent due to the soluble nature of limestone. The region is characterized by its dense forests and relatively high annual rainfall. The Vosges Mountains: Situated in northeastern France, the Vosges Mountains are primarily made up of granitic and sandstone rock. The range showcases
rounded summits and a westward decline, which contrasts with the sharp ridges facing east, formed out of distinctive pink granite sandstone. These mountains are relatively low in altitude compared to the Alps, with the Grand Ballon being the highest peak. Alsace Plain: In northeastern France, the Alsace Plain lies between the Vosges Mountains to
the west and the Rhine River to the east. The region is characterized by its flat landscape, with a series of alluvial terraces and floodplains. Its geological history is linked closely to the Rhine Rift, a rift valley formed by tectonic activity. The region benefits from a semi-continental climate and is recognized for its agricultural activities, particularly in
viticulture. The Pyrenees: Forming a natural border between France and Spain, the Pyrenees mountain range extends from the Bay of Biscay in the west to the Mediterranean Sea in the east. Its composition includes a mix of granite and limestone, with significant glaciated areas. The range is divided into three sections: the Atlantic (or Western),
Central, and Eastern Pyrenees. While the central section boasts the highest peaks, the eastern section is lower and less rugged. The Garonne River, which flows from the Pyrenees and eventually merges with the Dordogne River to form the Gironde estuary, leading into the Atlantic Ocean. The region is
characterized by alluvial plains and terraces, with fertile soils conducive to agriculture. Towards its southern parts, the landscape becomes hilly, transitioning into the French Riviera, or Côte d'Azur, is a part of the Mediterranean coastline
It is characterized by its mild climate, influenced by the Mediterranean Sea, and its steep, hilly terrain, which rises abruptly from the coastline. The presence of the Maritime Alps to the north provides a protective barrier, creating a microclimate conducive to
vegetation, such as the iconic maritime pines. Brittany Peninsula: The Brittany Peninsula protrudes westward into the Atlantic Ocean. It is characterized by a varying coastline, with numerous bays and inlets. The interior landscape comprises moorland, hills, and plateaus. Brittany is underlain by a large base of ancient rocks, which results in poor
soils. Notably, the region has a significant maritime influence, manifesting in its climate and the physical formation of its coastal features. Landes Forest: In southwestern France, the Landes Forest is one of the largest man-made forests in Europe. Originally, this area was a vast wetland, but it has been transformed through human intervention and
extensive pine plantation in an effort to stabilize the soils. The region's soils are sandy, having been shaped by the gradual accumulation of marine and wind-blown deposits. Rhone Valley: This valley stretches along the Rhône River from its source in the Alps to its delta at the Mediterranean Sea. The northern part of the valley, surrounded by
mountains and plateaus, is narrow, while the southern part expands into a broad floodplain. The region's geological foundation includes a mix of alluvial deposits, making some sections highly fertile and suitable for agriculture. As one moves south, the Mediterranean influence on the climate becomes increasingly apparent. Corsica is a Mediterranean
island situated southeast of the French mainland and west of the Italian Peninsula. It is characterized by a varied topography that includes mountains, plains, and a diverse coastline. The island's highest peak, Monte Cinto, rises 2,706 meters above sea level and is part of a mountain chain that runs north-south through the middle of Corsica. The
region experiences a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters, which contributes to its distinct flora and fauna. Rivers and Water Bodies: Beyond the Seine and Loire, France hosts other significant rivers including the Garonne, which drains
into the Atlantic Ocean, and the Rhône, which flows into the Mediterranean. The country also has several lakes, such as Lake Geneva (shared with Switzerland) in the east and Lake Annecy in the southeast. Geography of Overseas France In general, Overseas France In general I
sovereignty. These five territories maintain the same administrative status as the French mainland, which distinguishes them from more autonomous collectives such as French Polynesia or New Caledonia. Furthermore, these dependencies span across several oceans and regions, accounting for an area of approximately 120,396 km2 (about 46,485).
mi2). French Guiana: Located in the northeastern part of South America, French Guiana shares borders with Brazil to the south and east, and Suriname to the west. Covering an area of 83,534 km2, it is primarily covered by tropical rainforests, part of the Amazon rainforests. The Maroni River forms the natural border with Suriname, and the Oyapock
River forms the border with Brazil. French Guiana's topography is relatively flat but elevates towards the south with the Tumuc-Humac mountains. Coastal areas are characterized by marshy plains, while the inland region is dominated by the Guiana Shield, a plateau region of ancient rock. Guadeloupe: Located in the Caribbean, Guadeloupe is an
archipelago consisting of two main islands, Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre, and several smaller islands. Basse-Terre, the western island, has a rough volcanic landscape with La Grande Soufrière, an active stratovolcano, as its highest peak. In contrast, Grande-Terre, the eastern island, has flatter terrain with limestone plateaus and sugarcane fields.
The climate is tropical, influenced by northeast trade winds, and the region faces risks from both hurricanes and volcanic origin. It has a rugged mountainous landscape with Mount Pelée as its highest peak. The island has experienced volcanic origin. It has a rugged mountainous landscape with Mount Pelée as its highest peak. The island has experienced volcanic origin. It has a rugged mountainous landscape with Mount Pelée as its highest peak. The island has experienced volcanic origin.
history, notably the devastating eruption of 1902 which destroyed the city of Saint-Pierre. Coastal areas feature a mix of cliffs, coves, and beaches, while the interior has dense forests. The tropical climate is moderated by trade winds, though the island is vulnerable to hurricane impacts. Réunion: Found in the Indian Ocean to the east of Madagascar,
Réunion is an island with diverse terrain. It is home to two prominent volcanic peaks: the extinct Piton de la Fournaise, one of the most active volcanoes in the world. The island also contains three calderas and a series of ravines and gorges. The eastern part receives significant rainfall due to the trade winds, leading to
lush vegetation, while the west is drier. This difference in rainfall has a significant impact on the island's geography, with the wetter east being more prone to landslides and erosion. Mayotte: Mayotte in the Comoros archipelago in the Indian Ocean between Madagascar and the coast of Mozambique, comprises two main islands: Grande-
Terre (while identically named, it is wholly separate from Grande-Terre of Guadaloupe) and Petite-Terre. The region is surrounded by coral reefs and lagoons. It has a hilly landscape with the highest peak, Mount Benara, reaching 660 meters. Volcanic activity has played a significant role in shaping the geography of Mayotte, though no eruptions have
been recorded in recent history. The region has experienced seismic activity in recent years, with a notable underwater volcano discovered off its coast in 2019. France (officially, the French Republic) is divided into 18 integral administrative regions, singular - region). In alphabetical order, the regions are: Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, Bretagne
(Brittany), Bourgogne-Franche-Comte (Burgundy-Free County), Corse (Corsica), Centre-Val de Loire (Center-Loire Valley), Grand Est (Grand East), Hauts-de-France (Upper France), Ile-de-France (Upper France), Ile-de-France (Upper France), Ile-de-France), Ile-de-France), Ile-de-France (Upper France), Ile-de-France), Ile-de-France), Ile-de-France (Upper France), Ile-de-France), 
These 13 regions are located in Metropolitan France in the European continent. The 5 overseas regions are: Mayotte and Reunion in Indian Ocean off the African coast; Guyane (French Guiana) is in South America; Guadeloupe and Martinique in Antilles in the Carribean Sea. Located in the north-central part of the country is Paris - the capital, the
largest and the most populous France. It is a major administrative, cultural and commercial center of the country located in North Western Europe. It is geographically positioned both in the Northern and Eastern hemispheres of the Earth. France is bordered by 7 countries: by Belgium and Luxembourg in the northeast; by
Germany, Switzerland and Italy in the east; and by Spain and Andorra in the south. It is also bounded by the Bay of Biscay (North Atlantic Ocean) in the west; by the English Channel in the northwest and by the Mediterranean Sea in the south. France also shares maritime borders with UK in the north. [Locations of 5 overseas regions: French Guiana
in Northern South America, between Brazil and Suriname, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, southeast of Puerto Rico. Martinique: Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean, north of Trinidad and Tobago. Mayotte: Southern
Indian Ocean, island in the Mozambique Channel, about halfway between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique. Reunion: Southern Africa, island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.] Regional Maps: Map of Europe This page was last updated on August 16, 2023 Paris: 2,254,262 inhabitants Marseille: 855,393 inhabitants Lyon:
500,715 inhabitants Toulouse: 458,295 inhabitants Nice: 342,295 inhabitants Nice: 342,295 inhabitants Nantes: 292,718 inhabitants President of the Republic (Head of State): Mr. Emmanuel MACRON Prime Minister (Head of Government): Mr. François BAYROU The climate in mainland
France is temperate, with quite significant regional differences in distance to the sea or mountainous areas. Temperature variations are less pronounced on the French coast than in the rest of the country, but rainfall is
higher. Source: CC BY-SA 3.0 Different climate Mediterranean climate with a continental influence Climate with a mountain influence High mountain climate Equatorial climate Equatorial climate The Channel Atlantic Ocean Mediterranean
Sea Guadeloupe Martinique Guyane française Reunion Mayotte © Michel FraissetIn 2025, Provence celebrates one of its most iconic ambassadors: painter Paul Cézanne immortalized his native Provence through his art. Follow in his
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the countryside, or by the coast, thermal resorts invite you to take care of yourself away from the crowds, thanks to wellness programs for everyone, based on the benefits of water for the body and mind! Between massages or yoga sessions, you can explore a unique and preserved environment at your own pace, with few visitors at this time of year. ©
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yourself be inspired by MarIAnne, our virtual travel advisor, powered by AI*. * Artificial IntelligenceVisitSee more events From 20 April to 3 November 2025From 7 June to 1 September 2025From 28 June to 12 October 2025From 5 July to 3 August 2025 French police detained 12 people on Sunday after 145 individuals reported being pricked with
syringes during a nationwide street music festival, according to France's interior ministry, it remains unclear whether the cases of "needle spiking" - in which attackers use syringes to inject victims typically in the arm
leg or buttocks - involved date-rape drugs such as Rohypnol or GHB, which can leave individuals disoriented, unconscious and vulnerable to assault. "The ministry told CNN on Monday. "Toxicology tests are being done and the investigation is ongoing." Millions of people took to
the streets over the weekend for the nationwide celebration Fête de la Musique, with officials describing the crowds in Paris as "unprecedented." Speaking to French broadcaster CNews, Laurent Nuñez, the Paris police chief, said there were three to four times as many people in Paris as normal. Ahead of the festival, feminist influencers like Abrège
Soeur warned that calls had been made on social media for women to be targeted with syringes. "These are extremely serious incidents," Nuñez told CNews, calling the online calls to inject women "completely idiotic." In Paris, prosecutors said investigations were opened after three people, including a 15-year-old girl and an 18-year-old man,
reported being pricked in separate incidents across the city. All three said they felt unwell afterward, according to CNN affiliate BFMTV. In addition to the meedle attacks, police arrested 371 people across France on Saturday night for various incidents, nearly 90 of them in Paris, the ministry said. Visit the Definitions and Notes page to view a
description of each topic.comparison ranking: total 45comparison ranking: total 45comp
industry 153; agriculture 167comparison ranking: total 76comparison ranking: total 56comparison ranking: total 81 Introduction & Quick Facts References & Edit History Facts & Stats Geography & Travel Countries of the World France, country of northwestern
Europe. Historically and culturally among the most important nations in the Western world, France has also played a highly significant role in international affairs, with former colonies in every corner of the globe. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the Alps and the Pyrenees, France has long provided a geographic, economic
and linguistic bridge joining northern and southern Europe. It is Europe's most important agricultural producer and one of the world's leading industrial powers. France is among the globe's oldest nations, the product of an alliance of duchies and principalities under a single ruler in the Middle Ages. Today, as in that era, central authority is vested in
the state, even though a measure of autonomy has been granted to the country's régions in recent decades. The French people look to the state as the primary guardian of liberty, and the state in turn provides a generous program of amenities for its citizens, from free education to health care and pension plans. Even so, this centralist tendency is
often at odds with another long-standing theme of the French nation; the insistence on the supremacy of the individual. On this matter historian Jules Michelet remarked, "England is an empire, Germany is a nation, a race, France is a person." Statesman Charles de Gaulle, too, famously complained, "Only peril can bring the French together. One
can't impose unity out of the blue on a country that has 265 kinds of cheese." Audio File: Anthem of France (see article) Head Of Government: Prime minister: François Bayrou Capital: Paris Population: (2025 est.) 66,607,000 Currency Exchange Rate: 1 USD equals 0.886 euro Head Of State: President: Emmanuel Macron Form Of Government: Prime minister: François Bayrou Capital: Paris Population: (2025 est.) 66,607,000 Currency Exchange Rate: 1 USD equals 0.886 euro Head Of State: President: Emmanuel Macron Form Of Government: Prime minister: François Bayrou Capital: President: Emmanuel Macron Form Of Government: Prime minister: François Bayrou Capital: President: Presi
republic with two legislative houses (Parliament; Senate [348], National Assembly [577]) Official Language: French Official Religion: none Official Name: République Française (French Republic) Total Area (Sq Km): 543,941 Total Area (Sq Mi): 210,016 Monetary Unit: euro (€) Population Rank: (2025) 22 Population Projection 2030: 68,379,000
Density: Persons Per Sq Mi: (2025) 317.2 Density: Persons Per Sq Km: (2025) 317.2 Density: Persons Per Sq Km: (2020) 80.4% Rural: (2018) 19.6% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2020) 80.4% Rural: (2018) 19.6% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2020) 80.4% Rural: (2018) 19.6% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2020) 80.4% Rural: (2018) 19.6% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2020) 80.4% Rural: (2021) 80.4% Rural: (2020) 80.4% Rur
 '000,000): (2023) 3,085,397 Gni Per Capita (U.S.$): (2023) 45,180 Officially: French Republic French: France or République Française This tendency toward individualism joins with a pluralist outlook and a great interest in the larger world. Even though its imperialist stage was driven by the impulse to civilize that world according to French
standards (la mission civilisatrice), the French still note approvingly the words of writer Gustave Flaubert: I am no more modern than I am ancient, no more French than Chinese; and the idea of la patrie, the fatherland—that is, the obligation to live on a bit of earth coloured red or blue on a map, and to detest the other bits coloured green or black-
has always seemed to me narrow, restricted, and ferociously stupid. At once universal and particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science, particular, French culture has spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of art and science has a spread far and greatly influenced the development of a spread far and greatly influenced has a
ideals in the age of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and inspiring the growth of reformist and even revolutionary movements for generations. The present Fifth Republic has, however, enjoyed notable stability since its promulgation on September 28, 1958, marked by a tremendous growth in private initiative and the rise of centrist
politics. Although France has engaged in long-running disputes with other European powers (and, from time to time, with the United States, its longtime ally), it emerged as a leading member in the European Union (EU) and its predecessors. From 1966 to 1995 France did not participate in the integrated military structure of the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization (NATO), retaining full control over its own air, ground, and naval forces; beginning in 1995, however, France was represented on the NATO Military Committee, and in 2009 French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced that the country would rejoin the organization's military command. As one of the five permanent members of the
United Nations Security Council—together with the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and China—France has the right to veto decisions put to the council. Paris skyline at dusk. The capital and by far the most important city of France is Paris, one of the world's preeminent cultural and commercial centres. A majestic city known
as the ville lumière, or "city of light," Paris has often been remade, most famously in the mid-19th century under the command of Georges-Eugène, Baron Haussman, who was committed to Napoleon III's vision of a modern city free of the choleric swamps and congested alleys of old, with broad avenues and a regular plan. Paris is now a sprawling
metropolis, one of Europe's largest conurbations, but its historic heart can still be traversed in an evening's walk. Confident that their city stood at the very centre of the world, Parisians were once given to referring to their country as having two parts, Paris and le désert, the wasteland beyond it. Metropolitan Paris has now extended far beyond its
ancient suburbs into the countryside, however, and nearly every French town and village now numbers a retiree or two driven from the city by the high cost of living, so that, in a sense, Paris has come to embrace the desert and the
North Sea and the Mediterranean; Marseille, a multiethnic port on the Mediterranean founded as an entrepôt for Greek and Carthaginian traders in the 6th century bce; Nantes, an industrial centre and deepwater harbour along the Atlantic coast; and Bordeaux, located in southwestern France along the Garonne River. What makes France a unique
country to travel to? Country Description France is a developed and stable democracy with a modern economy. Tourist facilities are widely available. Crime France is a relatively safe country. Most crimes are non-violent, but pick-pocketing is a significant problem. The majority of crimes directed against foreign visitors, including U.S. citizens, involve
attentive to their surroundings. Crimes against visitors are generally crimes of opportunity, though these crimes are more likely to involve violence on the street late at night or when out alone at night and/or consider traveling out at
night with companions. In general, Paris taxis are safe and professionally operated, but there has been an increase in reported harassment and assaults on women by taxi drivers. Caution is required throughout France when driving through economically depressed areas where there is a high incidence of "smash and grab" robberies. Thieves will
approach a vehicle that is stopped in traffic, smash a window, reach into the vehicle to grab a purse or other valuables out of sight. There is generally an increase in the number of residential break-ins in August when most French residents take a vacation, as well as in December. The majority are
attributed to residents not using security measures already in place, including double-locking doors and locking windows. Home invasions are often preceded by phone calls to see if anyone answers, offering the excuse
they are taking a survey or representing a utility company. PARIS: Crime in Paris is similar to that in most large cities. Violent crime is relatively uncommon in the city center, but women should exercise extra caution when out alone at night and should consider traveling out at night with trusted companions. There has been an increase in reported
sexual harassment, and sometimes assault, by taxi drivers. Pickpockets are by far the most significant problem. In addition to purses and wallets, smartphones and small electronic devices are particular targets. In Paris, pickpockets are commonly children under the age of 16 because they are difficult to prosecute. Pickpockets are very active on the
rail link (RER B) from Charles de Gaulle Airport to the city center. Travelers may want to consider using a shuttle service or one of the express buses to central Paris rather than the RER. In addition, passengers on metro Line 1, which traverses the city center from east to west and services many major tourist sites, are often targeted. A common
method is for one thief to distract the tourist with questions or disturbances, while an accomplice picks pockets, a backpack, or a purse. Schemes in Paris include asking if you would sign a petition or take a survey, or presenting a ring and asking if you dropped it. Thieves often time their pickpocket attempts to coincide with the closing of the
automatic doors on the metro, leaving the victim secured on the departing train. Many thefts also occur at major department stores (e.g., Galeries Lafayette, Printemps, and Le Bon Marché), where tourists may leave wallets, passports, and credit cards on cashier counters during transactions. Popular tourist sites are also popular with thieves, who
favor congested areas to mask their activities. The crowded elevators at the Eiffel Tower, escalators at museums such as the Louvre, and the area surrounding Sacré Coeur Basilica in Montmartre are all favored by pickpockets and snatch-and-grab thieves. There have been some instances of tourists being robbed and assaulted near less utilized metro
stations. The area around the Moulin Rouge, known as Pigalle, requires extra security precautions to avoid becoming a victim. Pigalle is an adult entertainment area known for prostitution, sex shows, and illegal drugs. Unsuspecting tourists have run up exorbitant bar bills and been forced to pay before being permitted to leave. Other areas in Paris
where extra security precautions are warranted after dark are Les Halles and the Bois de Boulogne. PROVENCE ALPES MARITIMES (PACA) / LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON (Marseille, Montpellier, Perpignan, Carcassonne Avignon, Aix en Provence, Arles, Cannes, Nice): The PACA/Languedoc-Roussillon region enjoys a fairly low rate of violent crime
directed at tourists. The most common problems in the region are thefts from cars (both stopped in traffic and parked) and from luggage trolleys at the major transportation hubs, including the Nice airport and railway stations in Marseille, Avignon, and Aix en Provence. Purse snatchings in transportation hubs, including the Nice airport and railway stations in Marseille, Avignon, and Aix en Provence. Purse snatchings in transportation hubs, including the Nice airport and railway stations in Marseille, Avignon, and Aix en Provence.
Consulate General in Marseille has noted an increase in holiday rental-home burglaries and in necklace snatching. Keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up at all times. Valuables should be hidden out of site to prevent snatch-and-grab attempts. Maintain visual contact with your car when visiting tourist sites, when using rest facilities at gas
stations, or stopping to enjoy panoramic views, even for a short period as thieves will break windows to access items left in cars. Victims have reported break-ins within minutes of leaving an unattended car. Keep your passport in a separate location from other valuables. Organized crime has increased in the south of France—especially in Marseille
and Corsica, where feuding groups have been responsible for several recent violent incidents—and although U.S. citizens are not targeted, you should maintain awareness and keep emergency contact information on hand should you find yourself in the wrong place at the wrong time. STRASBOURG: Strasbourg's historic center enjoys a fairly low rate
of violent crime. Pickpockets and snatch-and-grab thieves tend to concentrate their efforts in the Petite France historic district popular with visitors. BORDEAUX AND THE AQUITAINE, LIMOUSIN, AND POITOU-CHARENTES REGIONS: Bordeaux and other cities in southwest France are considered fairly safe. In cities and during popular festivals
that draw huge crowds, you should be wary of pickpockets and other tourist-aimed crimes, especially near public transportation. Stolen purses, ID cards, and passports left in cars - particularly around renowned landmarks are common. NOTE: Swimmers should be careful of strong riptides and swells in the Bordeaux area. LYON: Although levels of
violent crime are low, Lyon has a fair amount of petty crime and vandalism. Late-night weekend rowdiness is common in the center of town and in areas with nightclubs. The city's public transportation system is safe. To combat reckless and drunk drivers and prevent them from fleeing accident scenes, Lyon initiated 30-kilometer-per-hour zones in
day. Police response to sporadic armed robberies and violence is generally immediate and decisive. A recent wave of armed robberies in luxury goods stores and cash exchange businesses ended with the arrest of an organized gang of delinquents. Bicycle thefts are also a serious risk, as Lyon becomes increasingly bicycle-friendly and more people
cycle around town. NORMANDY: Break-ins and thefts from cars in the parking lots at the Normandy beaches and American cemeteries are common. Do not leave valuables unattended in a car. Locking valuables in the trunk is not an adequate safeguard as thieves often pry open car trunks to steal bags and other valuables. OVERSEAS (NON-
EUROPEAN) FRENCH DEPARTMENTS AND TERRITORIES: Please see the Country Specific Information for French Guiana, French Polynesia, and the French West Indies for crime rates throughout the consular district tend to be lower than in
larger cities elsewhere. There are occasional crimes in the center of Rennes related to drunkenness and rowdy behavior, with the largest and most boisterous crowds tending to gather on Thursday nights in the area around Rue Saint Michel (a.k.a. "Rue de la Soif" or "Thirst Street") and the adjacent Place Sainte Anne. The local authorities make
security a priority. Tourists occasionally encounter theft of valuables and passports. Valuables left unattended in rental cars overnight, or for extended amounts of time, are particularly susceptible to theft. In particular, tourist sites around Brittany warn travelers against leaving expensive items in plain view in parked cars due to frequent vehicle
break-ins. Do not leave luggage unattended on trains. TOULOUSE AND THE MIDI-PYRENEES: Toulouse and the Midi-Pyrenees region are considered generally safe. Car theft, vehicle break-ins, petty theft, and burglary are the most common crimes, and they are relatively more frequent in areas near railway stations. Car-jacking and home invasions
may occur, particularly in wealthier areas surrounding Toulouse. Home invasions usually target valuables and cars, but may include violence. Itinerant street people, often in groups accompanied by dogs, are increasingly prevalent in downtown Toulouse, particularly in warmer weather. While alcohol and drug abuse can make them unpredictable
 incidents of crime are relatively rare. Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim: Common-sense security precautions will help you enjoy a trouble-free stay. Most problems can be avoided by being aware of one's surroundings and avoiding high-risk areas. When going out, carry only essential items: ONE credit/ATM card, ONE piece of identification
and no more than \in 40-50. Avoid carrying high-value jewelry and large amounts of cash. Valuables should be kept out of sight and in places difficult for thieves to reach, such as internal coat pockets or in pouches hung around the neck or inside clothes. Shoulder bags and wallets in back pockets are an invitation to a thief. Keep photocopies of travel
documents and credit cards separate from the originals, along with key telephone numbers to contact banks for credit card replacement. Raise your awareness level while in crowded elevators, escalators, and metro cars. When possible, take a seat or stand against a wall to deter pickpockets and try to maintain a 360-degree awareness of the
surrounding area. Carry only a purse that zips closed and ensure that it is carried under the arm and slightly in front of your body. Swing backpack-type purses around so that they are slightly in front of your body.
and away from the street. Many U.S. citizens have had purses or bags stolen from the back of a chair or from under the table while in cafes, restaurants, and nightclubs/bars, including higher-end establishments. Again, keep your valuables with you and never leave them unattended or out of your sight. Do not leave valuables in hotel rooms. If you
must leave valuables in the hotel, consider using the hotel safe. Thieves often operate in groups and often come to each other's aid if confronted. If a thief is caught in the act, a simple pick-pocketing could turn into an assault (or worse) if you attempt to capture the thief. You can shout out for police assistance to attract attention, but do not pursue
the thief. Do not use ATMs in isolated, poorly lighted areas or where loiterers are present. Be especially alert to persons standing close enough to see the Personal Identification Number (PIN) being entered and then stealing the card from the user in
some other location. If your card gets stuck in an ATM, immediately report the incident to both the local bank and your bank at home. Many theft and assault victims are targeted when making their way home from a late night, do so with a group of friends. There is safety in numbers. Use only
authorized taxis. Authorized taxis in Paris have the following equipment: An illuminated "Taxi Parisien" sign on the roof; A display meter showing the cost of the trip; A display at the rear of the vehicle and visible from the exterior that enables the monitoring of the daily duration of use of the vehicle; and A plate fixed to the front fender bearing the
license number. There has been an increase in sexual harassment and assault of women by taxi drivers in recent years. Women may want to consider having another individual walk them to a taxi and communicate the license number. Letting the
driver know that others are aware of your trip and the license number of the taxi may reduce the chances of becoming a victim. Avoid public parks after dark, as they are often frequented by drug dealers and prostitutes. Criminal Penalties While in France, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Individuals who hold U.S. and French
or Monegasque citizenship should be aware that local authorities may treat you as solely French or Monegasque. Criminal penalties vary from country, and there are some things that might be legal in France or Monaco, but still illegal in the United States. You can be prosecuted under U.S. law if you buy counterfeit or pirated goods in
another country. Engaging in sexual conduct with minors or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is also a crime prosecutable in the United States. If you commit a crime in another country, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are
going. Persons violating French or Monegasque laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in France or Monaco, refer to this list of
attorneys. If you use any of France's excellent public transportation services, take particular care to retain your used or "validated" ticket. Inspectors conduct intermittent, random checks, and passengers who fail to present the correct validated ticket for their journey are subject to stiff and immediate fines. Inspectors may show no interest in
explanations and no sympathy for an honest mistake. Failure to cooperate with inspectors can result in arrested: While some countries will automatically notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested in a foreign country, that might not always be the case. To ensure that the United States is aware of
your circumstances, request that the police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you are arrested or detained. Languages (Provencal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish, Occitan, Picard); note - overseas departments: French,
Creole patois, Mahorian (a Swahili dialect) Medical Facilities and Health Information Medical services. You can also dial the Europe-wide emergency response number 112 to reach an operator for all kinds of emergency services (similar to
the U.S. 911 system). Non-French speakers may experience a delay while an English speaker is located. For non-emergency medical assistance in France, you may refer to this list of medical professionals. Safety and Security Political violence in France, you may refer to this list of medical professionals.
large demonstrations simultaneously occurring in many French cities. Large demonstrations in Paris are generally managed by a strong police presence, but even demonstrations in possible, and exercise caution
if within the vicinity of any demonstrations. The congestion caused by large demonstrations can cause serious inconveniences for a visitor on a tight schedule. Some sporting events, such as soccer matches, have occasionally degenerated into violence that continued into the streets. Political unrest has developed in some Francophone countries with
historic ties to France (e.g., Algeria, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, and Tunisia). Some French citizens and residents with ties to such countries are infrequent and do not target U.S. citizens, visitors should avoid such demonstrations.
The Government of France maintains a threat rating system, known locally as "Vigipirate," similar to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Advisory System. Under this plan, the government routinely augments police with armed forces and increases visibility at airports, train and metro stations, and other high-profile locations such as schools,
major tourist attractions, and government installations. Over the last few years, there have been arrests of suspected militant extremists allegedly involved in terrorist attacks in Europe. The United States and France routinely share
information in order to disrupt terrorist plotting, identify and take action against potential operatives, and strengthen defenses against potential threats. Although U.S. citizens have not been specifically targeted in terrorist attacks in France within the past few years, travelers should remain vigilant. Immediately report unattended packages observed
in public places or any other suspicious activities to French law enforcement authorities, who are proactive and will respond immediately. If there is a security in France are maintained by three different forces: Municipal Police; and the
military Gendarmerie. These services are professional, competent, and proactive in fighting crime and wiolence and maintaining overall state security. In an emergency, dialing 17 will connect the caller to the Police in both France and Monaco. You can also dial the Europe-wide emergency response number 112 to reach an operator for all kinds of
emergency services (similar to the U.S. 911 system) in France. Non-French speakers may experience a delay while an English speaker is located. Traffic Safety and Road Conditions While in France are generally comparable to
those in the United States, but traffic engineering and driving habits pose special dangers. Lane markings and sign placements may not be clear. Drivers should be prepared to make last-minute maneuvers. French drivers typically drive more aggressively and faster than U.S. drivers, and tend to exceed posted speed limits. Right-of-way rules in
France differ from those in the United States. Drivers entering intersections from the right have priority over those on the left (unless specifically indicated otherwise), even when entering relatively large boulevards from small side streets. While many newer traffic circles have yield signs, some intersections do not, and still require traffic in the circle
to cede the right-of-way to incoming traffic from the right. On major highways, there are service stations at least every 25 miles. Service stations are not as common on secondary roads in France as they are in the United States. Paris has an extensive and efficient public transportation system. The interconnecting system of buses, subways, and
commuter rails serves more than four million people a day with a safety record comparable to, or better than, the systems of major U.S. cities. Similar transportation systems are found in all major French cities. Between cities, France has an equally extensive rail service, which is safe and reliable. High-speed rail links connect the major cities in
France. Many cities are also served by frequent air service. Traveling by train is safer than driving. Pedestrians make up 13 percent of the deaths in motor vehicle accidents occur when a pedestrian steps out onto the street, often when a
car or motorcycle is making a turn through a pedestrian crosswalk. Pedestrians should be cautious even when they have a green walking signal since this is no guarantee against aggressive drivers. While Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and other French cities actively encourage bicycle rentals through widely available city-sponsored systems, you should be
cautious about this means of transportation, especially in a busy and unfamiliar urban environment. Helmets are neither required nor readily available near rental stations. If you plan to ride a bicycle in France, you should bring your own helmet.
boulevards, corner cafés, chic boutiques, avant-garde architecture, and top-notch art galleries, including bustling Rouen (Gothic architecture, Joan of Arc sites), the cozy port town of Honfleur, historic Bayeux (remarkable
tapestry on the Battle of Hastings), stirring D-Day sites and museums, and the almost surreal island abbey of Mont St-Michel. ALA Loire Picturesque towns (such as Amboise and Chinon) and hundreds of castles and palaces, including Chenonceaux (arcing across its river), the huge Château de Chambord, Villandry (wonderful gardens), lavishly
furnished Cheverny, and many more. AAA Dordogne Prehistoric caves, rock-sculpted villages, lazy canoe rides past medieval castles, market towns such as pedestrian-friendly Sarlat-la-Canéda, and nearby, for wine lovers, St-Emilion.
of the Popes), the ancient Roman aqueduct of Pont du Gard, Orange (Roman theater), the beautiful Côtes du Rhone wine road, and rock-top villages such as Les Baux, Roussillon, and Vaison-la-Romaine.
glitzy Monaco (casino), yacht-crazy Antibes (silky-sandy beaches), intriguing inland villages (Vence and St. Paul-de-Vence), and little hilltop Eze-le-Village, with marvelous Mediterranean views. At Giverny.
scenery featuring the drop-dead gorgeous town of Annecy, Mont Blanc (the Alps' highest peak), and the world-famous ski resort of Chamonix, with hikes galore and lifts to stunning alpine views. As Burgundy Aged blend of vineyards and spirituality, with the compact town of Beaune (world-famous vineyards), Fontenay (France's best-preserved
medieval abbey), Vézelay (magnificent Romanesque church), and the one-of-a-kind medieval castle under construction at Guédelon. A Alsace Franco-Germanic region dotted with wine-road villages, starring half-timbered Colmar and its world-class art, and high-powered Strasbourg and its sensational cathedral. Distribution at Guédelon.
with a forgotten interior, gorgeous coast, Celtic ties, two notable towns: Dinan (Brittany's best medieval carter) and the beach resort of St-Malo, and the sea-swept castle of Fort la Latte. A Languedoc-Roussillon Sunny region with a Spanish flair, featuring Albi (fortress-like cathedral and a beautiful Toulouse-Lautrec museum), medieval Carcassonne
(walled town with towers, turrets, and cobblestones), remote Cathar castles and village, vineyards that stretch forever, and the lovely Mediterranean village of Collioure. A Lyon Metropolitan city, located between Burgundy and Provence, with an Italianesque old town, two Roman theaters, a terrific Gallo-Roman museum, the stirring French
Resistance Center, an impressive fine arts museum, and delicious but affordable cuisine. A Reims and Verdun, site of horrific WWI battles, with a compelling, unforgettable memorial.
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