Drive France

DRIVING GUIDE

...driving since 1988

www.driveaway.com.au
Welcome!

Thank you for downloading our France Self-Drive Guide. As you’re likely to be in the planning stage for your next holiday, we’ve put together a selection of driving itineraries, along with suggested key attractions to visit along the way. Our driving tips will have you driving around France like a local.

Here at DriveAway Holidays, we believe that there’s no better way to experience freedom than by taking a self-drive holiday. As the leading specialist in Australia offering worldwide car hire, motorhome rentals, motorcycles and European Peugeot Leasing, find the best deals from world-leading suppliers with the expertise and knowledge of our team; and take the road to freedom on your next self-drive holiday!

Drive Safely,

The DriveAway Holidays Team
Take a self-drive holiday in France
Renting a car in France  
Rental vehicle insurance  
Driving in France  

Paris  
Self-Drive Tours: Courts and Cars / Back to Nature  

Central France  
Self-Drive Tours: Volcanoes and Vol-au-vents / Châteaux and Vineyards  

Northern France  
Self-Drive Tours: Champagne of Kings / Route of Battlefield to Belfries  

Eastern France  
Self-Drive Tours: Cultural Fusion / Reflection and Art  

Southern France  
Self-Drive Tours: The French Riviera / Wines, Castles & Caves  

Western France  
Self-Drive Tours: Cathedrals to Conquerors / Celtic History by the Sea  

Stay Healthy / Stay Safe / Money Matters  
Peugeot Open Europe  
How to book with DriveAway Holidays
At the beginning of 2016, the French government instituted a new administrative region reducing the number of French regions from 22 to 13. Many regions have merged and formed larger combined regional administrations. Some have yet to agree on a name so over time these region names may change.

Exploring France

1. Paris (Ile de France)

Central France:
2. Centre Val de Loire

Northern France:
3. Picardy Nord Pas-de Calais
4. Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine

Eastern France:
5. Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (Bourgandy)
6. Auvergne Rhône-Alpes

Southern France:
7. Aquitaine-Limousin Poitou-Charentes
8. Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées
9. Provence Alpes-Côte d’Azur

Western France
10. Normandie (Normandy)
11. Bretagne (Britany)
12. Pays de la Loire
Automatic and manual transmissions
Both automatic and manual vehicles are available in France. Automatic vehicles are generally more expensive than manual cars and may be scarcer at smaller depots and do tend to book out.

Do I need a credit card?
Yes. A credit card will be needed when collecting, which will be used for a security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car which depends on the category of vehicle you have booked.

Collecting at an Airport in France
At most French airports you will find your rental company has a desk in the arrivals hall, with the rental cars being located within walking distance or a quick shuttle to a car rental centre. DriveAway Holidays offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location / airport fees and charges that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

Can I collect my rental car in one French city and return in another?
Yes, this is certainly possible. In some cases there may be a one-way fee charged by our suppliers when you collect your rental. DriveAway Holidays will advise you of any additional fees before you travel.

ACRISS Car Rental Identification Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Fuel Capacity</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Transmission</th>
<th>Fuel / Air Cond.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M = Mini</td>
<td>0.8 - 1.0</td>
<td>B = 2 Door</td>
<td>M = Manual</td>
<td>R = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E = Economy</td>
<td>1.0 - 1.4</td>
<td>D = 4 Door</td>
<td>A = Automatic</td>
<td>N = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = Compact</td>
<td>1.2 - 1.6</td>
<td>C = 2/4 Door</td>
<td>N = Manual 4WD</td>
<td>D = Diesel Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>F = Full Size</td>
<td>2.0 - 3.2</td>
<td>L = Limousine</td>
<td>C = Manual 4WD</td>
<td>Q = Diesel No Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>P = Premium</td>
<td>2.0 - 4.2</td>
<td>S = Sports Car</td>
<td>B = Auto 4WD</td>
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<td>L = Luxury</td>
<td>2.0 - 4.2</td>
<td>T = Convertible</td>
<td>D = Auto AWD</td>
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<td>X = Special</td>
<td>1.2 - 3.0</td>
<td>J = All Terrain</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon
FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon

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French law requires all vehicles to have compulsory third party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car Rental Companies in France will normally include:
- **Third Party Insurance**: Compulsory insurance and will be included in your car hire price. This covers you for other people’s injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW)**: This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire prices. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car or by taking out DriveAway Hire Car Excess Refund Protection.
- **Theft and Loss Cover**: This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental price.
- **Fire and Liability**: Limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death and is generally included in the prepaid car hire price.
- **Personal Accident Insurance**: This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rate. It is considered an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

**DriveAway Hire Car Excess Refund Protection**

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance however, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for DriveAway Hire Car Excess refund Protection which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier’s damage and theft excess to a maximum for AUD$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in the long run! To find out more, simply call DriveAway Holidays on 1300 363 500 or visit the DriveAway website.
Driving in France

• Drive on the RIGHT hand side of the road. The driver sits on the left hand side of the car.
• If you park illegally you will receive a ticket. You can pay by buying a ‘timbre fiscal’ (tax stamp) from a tobacconist, stick it on the ticket and mail it to the authorities. If you see the officer or warden you can pay them direct and keep the receipt. Car rental companies will bill you and apply a surcharge otherwise.
• On almost all motorways you will pay a toll, depending on the distance. Pick-up a machine-dispensed ticket upon entering the motorway, then pay on exit; don’t lose the ticket or you will pay the maximum fee. Choose your lane to pay by person or machine with a credit card.
• At roundabouts, signs will indicate that traffic on the roundabout has priority. If there is no sign then the traffic entering the roundabout has priority. Look for signs ‘La priorité à droite’ (right has priority) or ‘La priorité à gauche’ (left has priority).
• Don’t drive in Paris. Make use of one of the world’s best metro systems, or even walk to get the true Parisian feel and see the famous sites on foot. When it comes time to see to the countryside, then driving is definitely the best option, and you will see the true France.

Driving Laws in France

• Drink Driving is a very serious offence. The limit is 0.05%. Exceeding this will incur severe penalties including imprisonment or confiscation of your licence. So be smart - don’t drink and drive!
• Talking on a hand held mobile device is forbidden.
• Pedestrians and cyclists have right of way.
• In case of a breakdown all vehicles must be equipped with a warning triangle and a reflective jacket that must be worn when outside the vehicle and the triangle placed 100 meters behind.
• Unless otherwise specified the speed limits are 80 mph (130kph) on motorways, 68 mph (110 kph) on urban motorways, 55 mph (90 kph) outside built-up areas and 31mph (50 kph) in cities.
• The driver is responsible for all persons under the age of 14 years. Children under 12 years of age must be in the back seat. The Law requires all children less than 135cm to use a child restraint appropriate to their weight and size:
  • Rearward-facing Baby Seat - Birth to 15mth/13kg
  • Forward-facing Child Seat - Under 4 yrs/18 kg
  • Booster Seat - Under 11/36 kg

Should I hire a GPS for driving in France?
You can request a GPS rental to be collected with your car, if the supplier permits. This does incur a additional charge which is paid locally upon collection. Alternatively GPS hire is available from DriveAway Holidays. The GPS is delivered direct to your home or travel agent before you depart.

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?
Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance excess is the maximum amount you are liable for. See page 5 for more details.
Parking

Alternate side parking or 'stationnement alterne semi-mensuel' means you can only park on one side of the road depending on the date. Signs marked 1-15 or 16-31 mean you can’t park on that side between those dates. Parking on the left is only allowed on one way streets. Pay-and-display machines are common throughout France. Parking is generally free from 7.00pm - 9.00am, on weekends and public holidays, unless indicated otherwise.

Licence Requirements

A full driving licence is required to drive in France. All drivers must have held a full valid driving licence for a minimum of one year. Australian residents are required by law to have an international drivers licence. Contact your local motoring association for further information. Carry your driver’s licence with you when you travel, as some authorities may not recognise the international driver’s licence, and could ask for additional confirmation of your license.

Minimum and Maximum Age Requirements

Min Driving Age: Usually 18 depending on the supplier and vehicle type. Drivers aged 18-24 years may be charged a young drivers surcharge. The majority of locations in France do not have a maximum driving age, however there may be restrictions for drivers aged 70-75 in some regions. In some cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with DriveAway Holidays for further details.

What do I do if I want to extend my car rental whilst I’m in France?

Check with DriveAway if we can extend for you. If we are unable to extend once the car rental has commenced, you will have to call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle and if the car is available to be extended, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.

Can I collect my rental car in France and drop it off in Britain?

No suppliers will permit international one ways from France to Britain, however travel is generally permitted into Britain. This will depend on the car rental supplier. Check with DriveAway Holidays when you book your car hire.

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

Can I collect my rental car in France and drop it off in another European city?

International one ways are definitely possible however, as with any international one way, this will incur a one way fee. Prices vary depending on the supplier, the length of the rental, the vehicle type and the drop off destination.

Can I collect my car in France, visit another European city, then return it to France?

Most car rental companies based in France will permit travel to other European cities without an additional charge. However, luxury vehicles, such as Mercedes and BMWs are not permitted to enter Italy from France with certain suppliers and there may be restrictions to some Eastern Europe countries as well. Most car hire suppliers permit travel to the UK on the ferries from Calais to Dover at no charge, but you will have to pay for the cost of the ferry. Please check with DriveAway regarding insurance coverage on the ferry.
Paris is known as the ‘City of Lights’ and conjures many different images for many different people. It is a spectacular sightseeing city that contains a wealth of history and culture. The choices of things to see and do are limitless! Paris is a place where architectural and artistic heritage combine to make any visit an unforgettable experience. Savour its exceptional cuisine, indulge in its chic shopping and enjoy the nightlife. The river Seine weaves its way through the city and adds to Paris’ charm and romance. There is never a dull moment and there’s something for everyone in this beautiful, bustling city.

Events

**FEBRUARY**
Antiques Book Fair

**MAY**
French Open

**Nuit des Musées** - For one night nearly every Parisian museum will open their doors for free in order for visitors to gain exposure to art and culture.

**JUNE**
Fête de la Musique - Musicians perform on every corner, in doorways, gardens and squares throughout the city.

**JULY**
Bastille Day - Celebrate the French national holiday on the 14th of July. Watch a military parade, enjoy dancing shows and don’t miss the fireworks off the Eiffel Tower.

Fête des Tuileries - A Paris fun fair takes place in the beautiful gardens with side stalls, a traditional wooden merry-go-round and much more.

Quartier d’été Festival - A cocktail of concerts, shows and theatre played out across Paris.

Paris Jazz Festival - Held every weekend in July

Tour de France - This world’s most famous bike race.

**DECEMBER**
Self-Drive Tours in Paris

Courts and Cars
Head south-west on the A11/E50 to the small city of Chartres, which is an hour away from Paris. On the way you’ll pass through the beautiful Centre-Val de Loire region, which is famous for it’s vineyards and castles. Visit Chartre Cathedral, listen to the choir and organist or walk the labyrinth built around 1200 AD, which is known as ‘The Road to Jerusalem’. Out of town, the same road will take you on to Le Mans, which is a gloriously restored old city with cobbled streets and half timbered houses and is famous for the 24 Hours of Le Mans which is the world’s oldest endurance sports car race.

Then take the N157 to get to Vendôme. Sitting on the Loire river on the south side is the ruined castle of the counts of Vendôme that was founded in the 9th century, surviving still are numerous towers and extensive walls. The abbey is also worth a look with a fine florid gothic style and an interesting belfry from the 12th century. Heading back to on the N10 will take you to the Palace of Versailles.

Back To Nature
Drive south-east from the centre of Paris on the A6/E15 for 60kms to Fontainebleau, a historic town that is surrounded by a large scenic forest. This forest is home to 3,000 different species of mushrooms, 2,000 animal species and 5,000 insect species. Formerly a royal hunting park, it is now protected and well regarded by climbers for bouldering, a type of climbing without ropes. Within the forest are dozens of villages and you can drive along the river Seine to visit them. Here you will also find historic châteaux which were once owned by kings.

Take the D606 onto the N6 following the water to Sens where much activity awaits, head to the swimming pools, go carting or perhaps wander around the Serres Municipales (greenhouses). Best of all it’s free to visit. Head back to Paris on the A5/E54.

PARIS ATTRACTIONS
» Eiffel Tower
» Arc de Triomphe
» Musée du Louvre
» Notre Dame de Paris
» Montmatre
» Musée d’Orsay
The Central region is dominated by the Loire Valley, and is one of the loveliest drives in France that never ceases to amaze tourists and locals alike with its natural beauty. In Limousin, you can choose to drive through the Creuse, Corréze or Haute-Vienne department. Here you will find breathtaking lakes, rivers, chestnut forests, heather and vast expanses of countryside. The Massif Central has a rugged landscape of granite and hardened lava, violet-coloured volcanic rock and deep river gorges giving it an almost prehistoric feel.

**Regions/Cities:**

- **Centre-Val de Loire** - Chambord, Chartres, Orleans, Blois, Tours, Bourges, Chateauroux.
- **Limousin** - Guéret, Limoges, Tulle.
- **Auvergne** - Moulins, Clermont-Ferrand, Le Puy-en-Velay, Aurillac.

**Events**

**MARCH**

- **Le Printemps de Bourges, Bourges** - Large music festivals held around the city. Many pubs and bars also celebrate the event by hosting bands.

**MAY**

- **Joan of Arc week, Orleans, Centre** - Residents dress in traditional clothing, enjoy medieval food and local customs, all in honour of Joan of Arc.

**AUGUST**

- **Festival of Light, Amboise, Centre** - Listen to classical music and watch the fireworks.

**SEPTEMBER**

- **Bird King Festival, Le Puy-en-Velay** - A re-enactment of a medieval fair.
**Self-Drive Tours in Central France**

### Volcanoes & Vol-au-vents
Starting in Bourges, take the A71/E11 heading for Clermont-Ferrand in the Massif Central, famous for the Chaine des Puys (chain of volcanoes) surrounding it.

Be sure to stop off along the way at Riom to see its Renaissance architecture fashioned out of the local black volcanic stone, which is best viewed from the 16th century clock tower. Head east on the A72/E70 to France’s second largest city, Lyon. Known as the culinary capital of France, Lyon is full of the country’s finest chefs. It is also known for it’s professional football team, Olympique Lyonnais who participate in the European championships, so why not watch a match at the city’s huge stadium.

### Châteaux and Vineyards Tour
From Paris head south west on the E05 and join the A10 to Orléans, which in medieval times was the capital of France. Sitting on the banks of the Loire River, it is well worth a visit to stroll along the pretty streets and dine in the local restaurants. The Loire Valley is renowned for it’s beautiful chateaux, fine wine vineyards and wonderful cuisine.

Out of Orléans re-join the E05/A10 or the free national highway N152. Stop off at Blois and see the famous renaissance Chateau which was once occupied by King Louis XII, in the centre of town. Then travel on the same roads to Tours, which is a large city famous for its fine wines, Cathedral and Art Museum.

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**CENTRAL FRANCE ATTRACTIONS**
- Château de Chambord
- Bourges Cathedral
- Château d’Amboise
- Château de Blois
- Montmatre
- Tours Cathedral

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Château de Chenonseau, Loire Valley
Northern France

FORESTS, FLORA & FAUNA

Northern France is home to a diverse landscape of dunes, 200 metre white cliffs, crystal lake lands, deep forests and is renowned for it’s rich flora and fauna. This region is a bird lovers paradise and is a migratory route for many species. Northern France is a region of festivities and warmth, where people are ready to celebrate with parades, carnivals and fun fairs. Monuments and belfries stand with Norman buildings and fortified constructions and this wealth of architectural heritage is enhanced by the region’s natural surroundings.

Regions/Cities:

Nord Pas-de Calais Picardy (Hauts-de-France): Lille, Arras, Boulogne-sur-mer, Calais, Amiens, Beauvais, Laon.


Events

APRIL
International Kite Festival

SEPTEMBER
La Braderie, Lille – Street fair with everything from paintings, antiques and ornaments.

OCTOBER
Jazz Festival Planètes, Tourcoing - A selection of concerts and international jazz

DECEMBER
Christmas markets, Arras – A wide selection of arts, crafts and local delicacies
Self-Drive Tours in Northern France

Champagne of Kings Tour

Start in Reims, where kings were crowned and the German’s High Command formally surrendered in WWII. Then head for the heart of Champagne in Épernay on the N51 and take the Route Touristique de Champagne.

Travel a short way on the D3 to Chalons-en-Champagne and pass through the Porte Sainte-Croix, as Marie-Antoinette did on her way to marry King Louis XVI, and visit the old town circus. Take the N77 to the city of Troyes which is shaped like the cork of a Champagne bottle with the body defined by tree-lined Boulevards and the rounded top circled by the river Seine.

Route of Battlefield to Belfries

Start in Amiens and follow the river Somme to the English channel down D3 to the medieval village of Saint-Valery-sur-Somme. Here you can take a stroll on the boardwalk and visit the beaches that are famous for the bloody battle in WWII. Travel along the coast and take in the spectacular cliffs of Cote d’Opale on the D940 to Calais. On a clear day here you can see the white cliffs of Dover. If you’re in the mood for some shopping, head to the huge Cite Europe and factory outlet centre.

Head along the coast to Dunkerque, where the largest sea evacuation in military history took place. Then travel along the Belgium border on the A25/E42 to Lille, which is the 4th largest city in France and has all the great features of Paris without the crowds and price tag.

NORTHERN FRANCE HIGHLIGHTS

» Lille Cathedral
» Notre Dame de Lorette
» La Coupole
» Boulogne-sur-Mer Old Town
» Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille
» La Coupole Museum
This region is one of France’s best kept secrets and is home to many beautiful buildings, prestigious honours and treasures to discover. Situated at the European crossroads, Eastern France has resulted in a blend of cultural influences. It is a nature lovers paradise and abundant in wildlife, which includes deer, wild boar, mountain goats and migratory birds. The Vosges Mountains is home to huge forests, hilltops and endless vistas. With plenty of navigable waterways, you’ll never be short of anything wonderful to see or do.

Regions/Cities

Grand Est: Metz, Bar-le-Duc, Nancy, Epinal, Strasbourg, Colmar, Mulhouse.

Events

MAY
Sundays in Meuse, Lorraine - Hundreds of volunteers revive over 19th century trades and crafts at an event like no other.

JUNE
Feast of St. John - Marks the lumberjack festival and bonfire nights at the summer solstice.

AUGUST
Mirabelle Festival, Metz - This festival celebrates the plum that forms the base for many desserts and liqueurs with concerts, fireworks and the election of a queen.

SEPTEMBER
Spectre Film Festival, Strasbourg - Devoted to science fiction, horror and fantasy.

DECEMBER
Christmas Markets, Strasbourg - The oldest in France, in its 446th year and one of the largest Christmas markets in the world.
Self-Drive Tours in Eastern France

Cultural Fusion Tour

Strasbourg is where France and Germany collide and culture fuses into one. The historic city centre, the ‘Grande Île’, was the first entire city to become a world heritage site. Head south on the E25 to Colmar, which is a stunningly beautiful and well preserved city.

Travel on the A35/E25 to Mulhouse and visit many of its distinct districts created from the culmination of different Centuries. From there why not take a scenic drive in the Vosges Mountains on the ‘Route des Cretes’ and take in its waterfalls, lakes and forested summits. Start in Cernay, then head back toward Colmar. You could also take the ‘Route des Vins’ though vineyards, castles, fortifications and convents. This route starts and ends near Strasbourg.

Reflection and Art Tour

Start this tour in the old town of Verdun, which is strategically positioned as it was the pivot of the French front line and was one of France’s strongest fortresses in WWI.

Take the D603 onto the N3 to Metz. Metz is known as the garden city and is home to over 20 miles of landscaped walks along rivers, canals and ramparts.

Head south along the N57, which winds by the Moselle river and pass by Pont-A-Mousson. Continue on to Nancy, an art and architecture centre which sits on the Meurthe and Rhine River as well as Marne Canal.
Sharing borders with the Atlantic, Spain, the Mediterranean, the French Riviera, Italy and Switzerland, this area is a favourite for driving holidays. The vast countryside includes Europe’s largest forest ‘Les Landes’ and highest peak Mont Blanc, not to mention numerous Unesco World Heritage sites. By the coast you will find rocky inlets, turquoise waters, luxury Riviera resorts, chic cities, fascinating harbours and colourful fishing villages. Discover the Alpes with the largest skiing area in the world and is home to famous resorts, set above discreet little villages nestled in the valleys.

**Regions/Cities:**
- **Aquitaine:** Périgueux, Saint-Émilion, Bergerac, Bordeaux, Arcachon, Agen.
- **Languedoc-Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées:** Cahors, Rodez, Montauban, Toulouse, Auch, Mende, Nîmes, Montpellier, Carcassonne, Perpignan.
- **Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur:** Nice, Gap, Digne, Avignon, Marseille, Toulon.
- **Auvergne Rhone-Alpes:** Lyon, St-Etienne, Valence, Grenoble, Chambery, Annecy.
- **Corsica:** Bastia, Ajaccio.

**Events**

**FEBRUARY**
- **Lemon Festival, Menton** - Citrus sculptures, moonlight parade and the gardens of light.

**MAY**
- **Cannes Film Festival, Cannes** - World famous film festival.

**JUNE**
- **Valrées Festival, Valrées** - Celebrated since 1504 with costumed actors and a torch-lit parade.

**JULY**
- **Grand Falconer Day, Cordes** - A major medieval festival.

**AUGUST**
- **Feria de Béziers, Béziers** - Bullfighting which attracts a million visitors to the 5 day event.

**DECEMBER**
- **Fête des Lumières, Lyon** - Houses place candles along all their windows and the Place des Terreaux hosts a light show.
Self-Drive Tours in Southern France

Wine, Castles & Caves Tour

Out of Bordeaux head north east to take the E70/N89 to the World Heritage site of Saint-Émilion and visit one of France’s principal red wine areas. From here, drive straight onto the D936, which follows the Dordogne river, to Bergerac which is the largest and most important town in the Region. Head west out of town following the river once again and join the D703 that will take you deep into the Perigord, an untouched area famous for its truffles.

At Campagne, take the D706 which flows along beside the Vézère River on your way to Montignac to see the prehistoric cave paintings. After your visit, head back down the D704, passing Domaniale Barde Forest, on your way to Sarlat. Take the D704a onto the D703 and join up with the main highway A20/E09 to Cahors which is situated within the Lot river on three sides. It has been famous for it’s black wine since the middle ages.

The French Riviera

Jump on the coastal road from Nice to Antibes, then on to Cannes along the coastal road. From here, take the main highway A8/E80 exit onto the A57 to Toulon then onto the A50 which will take you to one of France’s oldest cities, Marseille. Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, Marseille is the second largest port in Europe. From there, take the E712 to Aix-en-Provence.

Take the A8 onto the A7/E714 to Avignon. Cross the Rhone on the N100 then join the A9/E15 to Nîmes. The same road will take you to Montpellier. Out of town take the E15 and continue on the E80 to the city of Carcassonne and visit the fortress, which was fully restored in 1853 and it is now a World Heritage Site. To finish in Toulouse, take the A61/E80 out.
For many, Western France is the first port of call on a driving holiday. This region is rich in gastronomy as fresh fish, shellfish, duck and dairy produce are in abundance. It is the birth place of many of France’s famous cheeses and is home to a sophisticated landscape of manors, castles, neat orchards, stud farms, thatched cottages and tall hedgerows. The drink of choice is cider and Calvados, which is an apple brandy rarely seen outside of France. Take a journey through the western peninsula of Brittany and discover the Celtic history that is shown in the peoples language, customs and dress.

**Regions/Cities:**

**Normandy:** Caen, Rouen, Saint-Lô, Alençon, Évreux.

**Brittany:** Rennes, St-Brieuc, Quimper, Vannes.

**Pays-de-la-Loire:** Le Mans, Laval, Angers, Nantes, La-Roche-sur-Yon.

**Events**

**MAY**

**Jazz under the apple trees** - Festival at Coutances, Normandy.

**JUNE**

**Puy du Fou, Les Épesses** - A historic theme park set in period villages with 800 actors and 50 horseman reenacting scenes and battles of the past.

**JULY**

**Festival of Music** - Song and dance in Rennes.

**AUGUST**

**Sea Shanty Festival, Paimpol** - A music festival which attracts thousands of visitors over 3 days.

**SEPTEMBER**

**Musical September in the Orne** - Classical Music
Self-Drive Tours in Western France

Cathedrals to Conquerors Tour

Start this tour in Rouen, the capital of the Haute region. Take the N15 all the way to Le Havre, which is a port for cruise ships and is a World Heritage Site because of the post-war contemporary architecture. Just across the river is the beautiful port of Honfleur, which is characterized by its 7 story houses and continues to be painted by generations of impressionists who still set their easels on the quay.

Continue along the English channel on the D513 to Caen, which is the capital of the Basse region and is famous for its historical buildings which were built during the reign of William the Conqueror. Take the N13/E46 to Bayeux and see the famous Tapestry. Follow the N13 along the coastline to Cherbourg. Then take the D900 and at Périors, change onto the D971 and then onto the D7 to Mont-Saint-Michel, which is one of the most visited attractions in France.

Celtic History by the Sea

Start in the walled city of Saint-Malo, whose history extends to beyond Roman times and used to be an island in the middle ages. Cross the river and visit Dinard. Dinard was made famous by the aristocrats who, in the 1830’s, left behind 407 mansions in different architectural styles.

From Dinard, follow the indented coastline along on the 786 to Paimpol, which is popular for it’s port, beaches, markets and cobbled streets. Again follow the coast on the D786 to Morlaix, where you will find overhanging houses which are constructed out of stone and timber and bare religious and secular sculptures on their facades.

Head across the peninsula and take the N12 onto the D785 to Quimper. Quimper is the oldest Breton city and is a relaxed place and famous for its hand painted pottery. Take the E60 down the coast to Vannes and visit the prehistoric Carnac. Travel a little further down on the same road and spend some time at Guérande. Finally take the N171 onto the N165 to Nantes.
Stay Healthy

The French health care system is one of the best in the world and the level of care in hospitals is of a very high quality. All hospitals have an emergency room that is open 24 hours a day. You will need to pay for your health care and contact your private insurance for reimbursement. In the event of hospitalisation check with your insurer. Physicians and pharmacies are on call, but please be aware that home visits and consultations on Sundays and public holidays are always more expensive. If you need to see a doctor or go to a hospital, you will be given a signed ‘feuille de soins’ (a statement of the treatment carried out) and possibly an ‘ordonnance’ (a prescription) so keep them in order to claim. To find a doctor ask a local, enquire at a chemist or police station. There is a wide network of pharmacies and one is always open, if the one you are at is not it will display the address of the nearest one that is. If you need urgent medical attention dial 15 for the SAMU (Service d’Aide Médicale Urgente).

Plan for the continuing care of pre-existing conditions before you leave. Bring your medications in their original and clearly labelled containers with a declaration from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medicines needed. Pharmacies and chemists carry most prescriptions, however it can be expensive, so it’s best to have your scripts filled before you go, and carry these medicines along with a letter from your GP explaining your medical conditions.

Stay Safe

Statistically one of the safest countries in Europe, France is not generally dangerous and has a low crime rate. Pick-pocketing is the most prevalent crime affecting tourists so be vigilant with your personal effects, especially in crowded places such as trains, metro stations and popular tourist areas. Never leave your bags unattended, not only do you risk theft but they may be considered a security threat. Late at night, especially when traveling alone, avoid areas around metro stations or when the streets appear less crowded. Keep a low profile by not wearing highly visible jewelry or clothing that identify you as a member of a religious or political movement. The Gendarmerie is a military institution in charge of public safety with police duties, they work with the police to enforce the law. If you are concerned about your safety, try to avoid large crowds and events which are easy targets for criminal activity.

Car break-ins, theft, smash and grab and vandalism on tourists vehicles can occur, but can be prevented by keeping valuables or bags out of sight, securely locking cars or using off-street supervised parking. In the unlikely event of theft or loss, be sure to inform all your credit card companies as soon as you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen. Most credit card companies have toll free numbers to call if your cards are lost or stolen, and they may be able to issue an emergency replacement card or wire you a cash advance.
CURRENCY
The Euro is the local currency of France. EURO (€) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE
The best places to change cash in France are either at banks or post offices, where they offer the best rates of exchange. You can also exchange cash at the airport or Bureau de Change however the exchange rates may be more expensive.

BANKING HOURS
Banks are open in France from Monday to Saturday, 9.00am-12.00pm and 2pm - 5.00pm.

ATM’s
ATM’s are readily available throughout France, and are available in cities and small towns across France. Look for the ATMs that show the Cirrus of Bankmate and the PLUS symbols as these will accept foreign debit cards.

TRAVELLER’S CHEQUES
Traveller’s cheques are still used in France, however they’re being out-dated by credit and debit cards. It’s a good idea to have cheques made in large denominations to reduce commission charges. You may need a form of photo identification to cash traveller’s cheques.

TAX
Sales tax is called VAT which stands for Taxe sur la Valeur Ajoutée (Tax on Value Added) which is set to 19.6% applicable to most goods and services or 5.5% applicable to some goods and services.

TIPPING
Restaurants in France generally include a 15 percent service charge in your bill, it is required by law as tips are assessed for taxation. Clearly itemized are the words ‘service compris’ (tip included) that will appear on your bill. The prices on the menu include tax and tip. However if you wish to show your appreciation to your particular waiter feel free to do so. Taxi drivers don’t get paid much and work hard so 5-10% of your fare is generous.
If you’re planning to travel through Europe for an extended period of time, consider leasing a brand new, tax free Peugeot. Ideal for travel periods of between 21 days – 175 days, Peugeot Leasing can often work out cheaper than renting a car for longer durations. Choose from a vast range of Peugeot Vehicles which come with a full factory warranty, unlimited kilometers, 24 Hour Peugeot Assistance, full vehicle insurance with no excess. Collection and delivery is free from locations within France and is available at select locations outside of France for a small fee.

The Benefits of Peugeot Leasing
The Peugeot is fully insured with no insurance excess payable in the event of an accident or theft.
• A brand new Peugeot car and model is guaranteed, unlike car hire where it is “or similar”.
• The fleet is predominately diesel models so you’ll save on fuel costs as diesel is cheaper than petrol.
• Travel is permitted in to most countries in Europe including Eastern Europe*.
• The paperwork is completed in Australia so time is spared when you arrive at the collection point.

Do I Qualify for a Peugeot Lease?
To qualify for a long term Peugeot Open Europe lease all drivers must:
• Stay in the European Union for no more than 185 days in any consecutive 12 month period.
• Not carry out any activity for gain during your stay (No working visas allowed).
• Must be an Australian Resident.
• Minimum age of 18 years with full Australian driver’s licence.

Locations:
• Marseille FREE
• Nantes FREE
• Nice FREE
• Paris Orly FREE
• Paris City FREE
• Pau FREE
• Toulouse FREE
• Lyon FREE
• Brest FREE
• Bordeaux FREE
• Basel-Mulhouse FREE
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