

The American's guide to France

INTRODUCTION AND GEOGRAPHY (§1)

France is a medium-sized foreign country situated in the continent of Europe. It is an important member of the world community, though not nearly as important as it thinks. It is bounded by Germany, Spain, Switzerland and some smaller nations of no particular importance and with not very good shopping. France is a very old country with many treasures, such as the Louvre and Euro Disney.

Among its contributions to western civilization are champagne, Camembert cheese and the guillotine. Although France likes to think of itself as a modern nation, air conditioning is little used and it is next to impossible for Americans to get decent Mexican food.

One continuing exasperation for American visitors is that local people insist on speaking in French, though many will speak English if shouted at. Watch your money at all times.

THE PEOPLE (§2)

France has a population of 57 million people. 52 million of these drink and smoke (the other 5 million are small children). All French people drive like lunatics, are dangerously over sexed, and have no concept of standing patiently on line. The French people are in general gloomy, temperamental, proud, arrogant, aloof and undisciplined; those are their good points. Most French citizens are Roman Catholic, even if you would hardly guess it from their behavior. Many people are communists.

Men sometimes have girls' names like Marie or Michel, and they kiss each other when they meet. [...]

SAFETY (§3)

In general, France is a safe destination, although travelers must be aware that from time to time it is invaded by Germany. Traditionally, the French surrender immediately. A tunnel connecting France to Britain beneath the English Channel has been opened in recent years to make it easier for the French government to flee to London during future German invasions, and for them to offload all their illegal immigrants.

[...]

GOVERNMENT (§4)

The French form of government is democratic but noisy.

Parliament's principal occupation is setting off atomic bombs in the South Pacific and acting indignant and surprised when other countries complain.

According to the most current American State department intelligence, the President is now someone named Jacques. Further information is not available at this time.

CULTURE (§5)

The French pride themselves on their culture, though it is not easy to see why. All their music sounds the same and they have never made a movie that you would want to watch for anything but the nude scenes.

CUISINE (§6)

Let's face it, no matter how much garlic you put on it, a snail is just a slug with a shell on its back. Croissants on the other hand, are excellent, although it is impossible for most Americans to pronounce this word. In general, travelers are advised to stick to cheeseburgers.

ECONOMY (§7)

France has a large and diversified economy, second only to Germany's in Europe, which is surprising because the French hardly work at all. If they are not spending four hours dawdling over lunch, they are on strike and blocking the roads with their trucks and tractors.

France's principal exports, in order of importance to the economy, are wine, nuclear weapons, perfume, guided missiles, champagne, guns, grenade launchers, land mines, tanks, attack aircraft, miscellaneous armaments and cheese.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS (§8)

France has more holidays than any other nation in the world. Among its 361 national holidays are: 197 Saints' days, 37 National Liberation Days, 16 Declaration of Republic Days, 54 Return of Charles de Gaulle-in-triumph-as-if-he-won-the-war-single-handed Days, 18 Napoleon-sent-into-Exile-Days, 17 Napoleon-Called-Back-from-Exile-Days, and 2 "France is Great and the Rest of the World Stinks" Days.

CONCLUSION (§9)

At least it's not Germany!

English Test - Stereotypes

1- What type of document is it? /2

- a- a funny historical text b- a funny traveler's guide c- a funny newspaper article

2- Among the following devices (*procédés*), select the ones which are actually used by the writer to produce humor and quote an example to justify (*indicate the line*): /2

- a- grotesque accumulations
b- word creation
c- broad generalizations
d- exaggerations
e- repetitions

3- True or False. Justify with a quotation from the text (*indicate the line*). /6

- a- French people are believed to drive very badly.
b- They can't speak English at all.
c- They are said to be thieves.
d- They are known for really working only 5 days a year.
e- They are said to take a long time to eat.
f- The writer is good at French History.

4- Translate this sentence into French: /3

"In general, travelers are advised to stick to cheeseburgers"

5- Find equivalents or give the translations for the following words or expressions: /2

- a- la climatisation (§1) b- in a queue (§2) c- moody (§2) d- to be proud of (§5)
e- naked, without any clothes on (§5) f- de l'ail (§6) g- limace (§6) h- en grève (§7)

6- According to the writer, which country is better? France or Germany? Quote to justify. /2

7- "Most French citizens are Roman Catholic, even if you would hardly guess it from their behavior."
Explain this sentence in your own words. (20-30 words) /3