

### Welcome to France!

We want to support our foreign clients who are settling in France. In this brochure you will find valuable information, tips to know, essential procedures...

#### Welcome to CCF!

Our team is available to assist you:

- By phone, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 5.30pm<sup>(1)</sup>
- By appointment, by video conference or face-to-face
- English-speaking advisors specialising in international clients
- They are there to help you before, during and after opening your account
- They can also assist any family members interested in becoming clients

More than **165,000**<sup>(2)</sup> international customers have already placed their trust in us.

# CONTENTS

1 - KEY INFORMATION ON FRANCE	4
Top 5 biggest French cities	5
Get around France	8
Get around Paris	9
The French language	10
2 - ARRIVING IN FRANCE	11
To do before leaving	11
To do on arrival	11
Renting a flat	12
Buying a property	13
3 - LIVING IN FRANCE IS AN ART FORM	15
Work	15
Healthcare	17
Your children	18
Retirement System	22
The art of living "à la française"	24
4 - MANAGING YOUR MONEY	26
Money Culture	26
Everyday banking	27
Investments	29
Taxes	30

### 1. A FEW FACTS ABOUT FRANCE



A population of **68.6 million** as of January 1, 2025<sup>(1)</sup>



A surface area of 633 186 km<sup>2</sup>





A currency, the euro



A Republic whose capital is Paris



French

One of the **founding**members of the European
Union



A permanent member of the UN Security Council



A member country of the OECD, G8 and G20



The age of majority at **18 years** 



A temperate climate and varied landscapes



A passion **for gastronomy**expressed in a true art
of living

## Top 5 biggest French cities



### Paris



- **Population:** 2 million<sup>(1)</sup>
- Landscapes: Stone buildings and Haussmann-style structures...The most beautiful city in the world is organised around the Seine, with a trendy and popular right bank and a left bank that is sometimes more upscale, but also populated by students in the Latin Quarter.
- To do: Cinemas, theatres, museums, galleries, clubs, nature and theme parks.... You are spoilt for choice. And to adjust to the local rhythm, keep in mind that Parisians tend to go out starting on Thursday nights
- A must-try: Paris is the city of bistros and brasseries par excellence. On menus, you will find a nice selection of French regional specialities.

## Marseille



- **Population:** 877 000<sup>(1)</sup>
- Landscapes: Haussmannian buildings in the city centre and beaches right next door to go swimming in the Mediterranean.
- > **To do:** The city abounds with cultural activities. Add to that all the seaside activities and rocky inlets to explore
- A must to try: Olive oil, sun-drenched vegetables, freshly caught fish, shellfish... And the famous local bouillabaisse to be tasted on the port.

## Lyon



- **Population:** 520 000<sup>(1)</sup>
- **Landscapes:** A few kilometres from the mountains and the sea, the city of Lyon is recognisable by its yellow, orange and pink facades.
- To do: After a picnic on the banks of the Rhône, you can visit the mysterious traboules, or why not go to an exhibition in the popular Croix Rousse district.
- A must to try: Lyonnais sausage, pike quenelles... You are in the city of the "Bouchons", the famous no-fuss and authentically Lyonnais restaurants, where people often eat more than they should.

## Toulouse



- **Population:** 511 000<sup>(1)</sup>
- Landscapes: The "pink city" enjoys a lot of sunshine all year round and is not far from the Pyrénées for skiing.
- > **To do:** Toulouse is a student city par excellence, with its cinemas, small bars and squares that invite you to stroll.
- A must to try: The Toulouse sausage is famous, as is the cassoulet with goose or duck confit that can be eaten in summer or winter.

### Nice



- **Population:** 353 000<sup>(1)</sup>
- Landscapes: What to think of a city called "Nice"? It is certainly pleasant and beautiful to behold. Located on the seafront, the capital of the French Riviera is the ideal place to explore the region and discover Provence.
- **To do:** The Matisse Museum, the Chagall Museum, the palace bars...And nearby Cannes with its fabulous Festival.
- A must to try: Olives, Niçoise salad, pissaladière, daube and pan bagnat that makes for a great snack on the beach.

### Get around France



If you have a driving licence issued by a member country of the European Economic Area it is valid in France for an unlimited period.

**Driving licences issued by non-EU countries** are valid in France for a maximum of one year from the date of validity of the first French residence permit.

Finally, **holders of a student residence permit** benefit from recognition of their foreign driving licence for the duration of their residence permit.

You should also know that most motorways in France are not free of charge. And the maximum speed limit is 130 km/h.



**The French railway network** allows you to travel within the country and to reach practically all medium-sized cities. Rail transport is provided by the SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer).

For long distances the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) now connects most major cities:

- Paris Marseille in 3h
- Paris Lyon in 2h
- Paris Toulouse in 4 to 5h
- Paris Nantes in 2h
- Paris Bordeaux in 2h
- Paris Lille in 1h

#### **DID YOU KNOW**

The flagship of French industry, the TGV can travel at up to 574.8 km/ $h^{(1)}$ , or 150 metres per second!

All the more reason to move to the provinces, even if you work in Paris, which is what many French people are doing today.

Finally, to get to the United Kingdom, Brussels in Belgium, Amsterdam in the Netherlands or Cologne in Germany, you can of course take the Eurostar from Paris Gare du Nord.



International airports allow you to travel throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

#### Main French airports

- Paris Charles de Gaulle (also called Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport)
- > Paris-Orly
- Nice Côte d'Azur
- Lyon-Saint Exupéry
- Marseille-Provence
- Toulouse-Blagnac
- Bordeaux
- Nantes-Atlantique



Paris-Roissy airport is also called "Charles de Gaulle", like the RER A station "Charles de Gaulle Etoile" located at the top of the Champs Elysées in Paris. Do not confuse the two RER stations which are dozens of kilometres apart.

### Get around Paris

To travel around Paris, the metro guarantees a maximum of 3 line changes and a 10 minute walk from point A to point B.

Numerous bus routes also take you almost everywhere in the capital and to the suburbs, several RER (Réseau Express Régional) lines cross lle de France from east to west and from north to south.

For timetables and recommended routes, visit www.ratp.fr or the RATP app.



#### TIP

To find out if a Parisian taxi is free or occupied, look at the small lights on its roof. Green means free and red means occupied.

## The French language

French has the reputation of being a particularly difficult language, and for every grammar rule there is always a multitude of exceptions. But it is also the language of the Romantics and the great philosophers of the Enlightenment.

#### A few ideas for starting, improving or perfecting your French:

- Download an app that offers language courses.
- > Find a teacher by going to your local city hall.
- Download **podcasts** in French.
- > Watch films in French.
- Listen to French radio programmes.
- Participate in **French courses and workshops** at the Alliance Française.

	<b>.</b>
	Ecrivez
Hello	Salut
Good morning	Bonjour
Good afternoon	Bon après-midi
Good evening	Bonne soirée
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais ?
Please	S'il-vous-plait
Thank you	Merci
I would like	J'aimerais
May I have the bill?	Puis-je avoir l'addition ?
I'm lost	Je suis perdu
Where is the subway?	Où est le métro ?
How much is this?	Combien cela fait ?
My name is	Je m'appelle
Where is the bathroom?	Où sont les toilettes ?



#### TIP

One of the favourite activities of the French is to chat for hours on end on the terrace of a café. So, for total immersion, sit back and listen.

### 2. YOUR ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

# To do before leaving

Your to-do list before moving:

☐ Get <b>your long-term visa</b> (if applicable)
☐ Get <b>your work permis</b> (if applicable)
$\square$ Organise <b>the transport of your personal belongings</b> (furniture, vehicles, valuables)
$\square$ <b>Declare them to customs</b> if you are from outside the European Union
$\square$ Pay customs duties and taxes to find out exactly what procedures to follow,
go to www.douane.gouv.fr
$\square$ Notify <b>the tax authorities</b> of your home country of territory
☐ Open a <b>bank account</b> in France To do so, go to:
www. ccf.fr/rubrique Services internationaux and let us guide you
$\square$ Request <b>a letter of recommendation from your doctor</b> in the case of a particular condition

## To do on arrival

Committi goor long-term visa with the French Office of Infiningration and integration within 3
months of your arrival
$\square$ Contact <b>the prefecture of your new department</b> of residence <b>or the prefecture of police</b> if
you are moving to Paris. To find out everything about your individual integration process,
go to accueil-etrangers.gouv.fr
☐ Search for <b>a home to rent or buy</b>
☐ Take out <b>a mobile phone subscription</b>
$\square$ Take out <b>a landline and internet subscription</b> (most operators also offer a package of TV
channels included in your subscription)
$\square$ Have <b>your degrees</b> certified if necessary with the <b>ENIC-NARIC centre</b> .
For more information, please visit www.ciep.fr/enic-naric-france
☐ Enrol <b>your children in nursery, primary, and secondary school or university</b> (for more
information on the French school system, see Chapter 3.3 - Raising your children)
☐ Register with <i>the Caisse d'Allocations familliales</i> (CAF) and find out about your entitlement
to social benefits, particulary if you have children. To find out more, go to www.caf.fr
☐ Declare yourself to <b>the french tax authorities</b> . You can find some preliminary information
at www.impots.gouv.fr
□ Insure <b>your car, your home and your schoolchildren</b>
$\square$ join the comlpulsory health insurance scheme and request your carte vitale at the $ extit{Caisse}$
Primaire d'Assurance Maladie of your department

to find your Caisse Primaire d'Assurances Maidale, go to www.dmeil.fr
$\square$ Take out <b>supplementary health insurance</b> if your employer has not done so for you.
(For information on the French healthcare system, see Chapter 3.2 - Healthcare)
☐ Open <b>a bank account in France</b> if you did not so before leaving your country of origin
(required if you receive a salary in France)
To open your account in France online, go to www. ccf.fr/rubrique Services internationaux
and let us guide you.
☐ <b>Register your vehicle</b> with the prefecture of your department

To protect your home, **CCF Habitation** is a multi-risk home insurance policy that your can tailor to suit your needs, including civil liability insurance for your children<sup>(2)</sup>

For more information, speak to your CCF Advisor

## Renting a flat

What you need to know before renting a property in France:

- Rents are calculated montly based on the square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) of the property, its general condition and, most importantly, its location
- Most property are rented unfurnished
- Leases are for 3 years for an unfurnished accommodations and one year for a furnished accommodation
- > Pay attention to the description of the accommodation as **many flats do not have a fully equiped kitchen, for example**
- You can find **the same property offered by several estate agencie**s at the same time
- A relocation agency can help you find accommodation in France; contact your employer for more information
- If you do not go through a relocation agency, you will have to provide **a complete application**, which must be approved by the landlord
- Most French landlords require a tenant to earn at least 3 times the monthly rent
- If you have your eye on a property, it is preferable to tell the owner you are interested in renting quickly and to have a complete application on hand, as **transactions take place rapidly** on the rental market
- When you sign the contract, you will have to pay **agency fees** if you have used a real estate agent, **the security deposit** which is generally equal to 2 months's rent, and **the first month**'s **rent**

#### Is your application complete?

To apply as a tenant you must provide a number of documents to the landlord: ☐ Proof of income for the last 3 months (salary, pension, investment income,etc.) ☐ A certificate of employment drawn up by your employer ☐ Your last tax assessment  $\square$  If the landlord requires it, the agreemnt of **a joint and several guarantor** that undertakes to pay the rent if you are no longer able to do so The obligations of the tenant: ☐ Take out a home insurance policy before you receive the keys to cover the contents of the property as well as your civil liability (bearing in mind that it is the owner who must insure the property itself) ☐ Pay **co-ownership fees** if you live in an apartment building, as well as the charges relating to your accommodation (water, gas, electricity, internet and cable subscription, etc.) ☐ Carry out **minor maintenance work** inside the property ☐ Do not use the accommodation **for commercial purposes** ☐ Do not sublet the property to a third party without the owner's consent ☐ Do not make **major alterations to the property** without the owner's consent ☐ Send your notice to your landlord, by registered mail with acknowledgement of receipt, 1 or 3 months before your departure, depending on the area and the type of accommodation (furnished or not)

## Buying a property

#### **Purchasing process**

A notary, a representative of the state, is required to manage the process of acquiring property in France. Neither the seller nor the buyer is entitled to carry out the administrative steps involved in a property purchase.

At the end of the negotiation between the seller and the buyer, an initial contract is signed. This is known as the *compromis de vente*. At the time of signing, the buyer is supposed to pay a deposit which can represent between 5% and 10%<sup>(1)</sup> of the selling price of the property.

The buyer then has a **10-day cooling-off period**, during which they can withdraw from the sale and get their initial deposit back.

After this period, about **10 to 12 weeks** pass, during which time the notary carries out checks on the property. It is also during this period that the buyer **applies for a mortgage**<sup>(2)</sup> from the banks, bearing in mind that the sale may remain conditional on their obtaining a mortgage.

At the end of this period, the seller and the buyer sign **the deed of sale** in the presence of the notary. This is the final contract transferring ownership of the property. On this date, the buyer must pay **the amount of the property to the seller and the acquisition costs to the notary** who will forward them to the tax authorities. The notary is also responsible for handing over **the title deed** to the buyer and for publishing the deed of sale with the appropriate *Service de Publicité Foncière*.

#### Summary of costs involved in signing a deed of sale

L	☐ <b>Intermediary fees</b> (search mandate, agency fees, negotiation fees) vary according to the price
	of the property with an average between 4% and 7% <sup>(1)</sup>
	$\square$ <b>Acquisition costs</b> (commonly known as notary fees), representing approximately 7% to 8% <sup>(1)</sup> of
	the purchase price for old buildings, and 2% to 3% <sup>(1)</sup> for new buildings
	$\square$ $Guarantee$ $fees$ such as real guarantees (special legal mortgage of lender of funds or mortgage)
	or the housing credit guarantee

#### ☐ Administrative fees for your mortgage<sup>(2)</sup>

#### Additional costs to be expected

From the moment you become a property owner in France, you are liable for **property tax** calculated on the surface area of your property and its location.



Your CCF advisor is at your disposal to arrange a meeting with one of our mortgage experts.

### LIVING IN FRANCE IS AN ART FORM

### Get to work!

#### Employed or self-employed?

There are two ways of working in France, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. You can:

Work as an employee, on a Permanent contract or a Fixed-term contract, which guarantees you a recurring salary. In both cases, the social security contributions to the collecting bodies are paid in part by your employer while the other part is deducted directly from your salary.

The starting salary is generally expressed in gross annual terms. To obtain the net salary, you have to subtract about 25% for a managerial position, which corresponds to the share of social costs. Furthermore, since 1 January 2019, the State has introduced a withholding tax, which means that your tax on your wages and salaries is deducted directly from your salary by your employer according to the rate of withholding tax established by the tax authorities or, where applicable, by default.

Please note that **salaries are always paid monthly** at the end of the month or, at the latest, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.

Be self-employed, as a micro-entrepreneur up to a certain amount of revenue (€70,000 for the provision of services in the Industrial and Commercial Profits or Non-Commercial Profits category and €170,000 for the sale of goods, objects, supplies, foodstuffs to be taken away or consumed on the premises, or for the provision of accommodation, with the exception of the letting of furnished residential premises, for which the threshold is €70,000)

Beyond that, you will have to choose another legal status for your business, bearing in mind that **self-employed professions** (doctors, lawyers, etc.) are highly regulated in France. It is therefore preferable to use the services of **a chartered accountant** to calculate your professional revenue each year before declaring it to the tax authorities and the various bodies responsible for collecting social security contributions (health, pensions, etc.).

To help you set up your own business, visit www.afecreation.fr or www.bpifrance-creation.fr

The withholding tax has also applied to the self-employed since 1 January 2019 and takes the form of monthly or quarterly deductions from your business account, the amount of which depends on your income in the previous year.



**Your CCF advisor is available** to assist you in your professional and personal endeavours.

#### Working hours

They vary, of course, by sector, company and type of contract. To know what time to start work in the morning and when to finish in the evening, observe your colleagues.

In the middle of the day, there is a more or less sacred ritual observed in France, which is **the** *pause déjeuner* or lunch break. The French often eat a light breakfast and prefer to dine a little late. To get through the day, they don't hesitate to spend up to an hour at lunch, which should be eaten seated and, if possible, in good company. If you are lucky enough to work with colleagues who enjoy lunching, you will quickly get the hang of it.



#### Pause café or tea time?

The French are big consumers of coffee, which they often like to drink without milk or sugar. And it is around the famous *machine* à *café* that the most important discussions in the company often take place.

What about holidays? Most employees in the private sector have 5 weeks of paid holiday per year. However, depending on sector agreements, some employees may receive more. Depending on the size of your company and the agreement in your sector, you may also benefit from time off in lieu of overtime, known as RTT (Réduction du Temps de Travail), in addition to your paid holidays.

#### Looking for work

Are you an **expat's spouse** and do you wish to work in France during your stay? **Your interview with the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)** is a good opportunity to indicate that you are looking for a job in France. You will then participate in a training course **called "Living in and finding employment in France"**.

For more information, please visit www.ofii.fr

This is the time to obtain essential information and reach out to dedicated organisations, in particular the employment agency, called France Travail, and the executive employment agency, APEC.

You can find all the information you need at www.francetravail.fr, under "Candidate" and at www.apec.fr

#### Documents to be submitted

☐ Your CV listing your degrees, expertise, experience and languages spoken
$\square$ <b>A covering letter,</b> which you should rework depending on the target company
☐ <b>Your degrees</b> as well as any certificate attesting to a particular aptitude (languages, software, etc.)
☐ Work certificates from your previous jobs
□ Letters of recommendation from previous employers

### Healthcare

The French social security system is universal and consists of fully integrated network of public hospitals, private clinics, doctors and other health care providers. It is a service based on national solidarity which provides medical care to all citizens regardless of age, income level and social status. Contributions are made through social security payments deducted from income.



#### Hospitals versus clinics

In France, a distinction is made between "hospitals", which are public institutions, and "clinics", which are private. In Paris and the Paris region, the AP-HP (Assistance Publique des Hôpitaux Parisiens) provides most emergency medical care.

And more generally, in France, **hospitals provide care**, but also **teaching, research and emergency care**.

#### Some English-speaking hospitals in Paris:

- Institut Hospitalier Franco-Britannique (IHFB)
- > Foch Hospital
- Adolphe de Rothschild Foundation Hospital
- > American Hospital of Paris

#### YOUR EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- 18 (Fire brigade)
- 15 (Ambulance, i.e. SAMU)
- > 17 (Police emergency)

To find a doctor who speaks your language, contact your embassy.



#### **GOOD TO KNOW**

In France, it is compulsory to choose a *médecin traitant* who is the general practitioner responsible for coordinating your health care with other health professionals.

#### Carte vitale



The famous French "green card" allows you to benefit from **the French health insurance system.** 

Find all your rights and your updated situation on www.ameli.fr

Your *Carte Vitale* can be **supplemented by a private**, **optional mutual insurance card**, which will reimburse you for part of the costs not covered by the compulsory health insurance scheme. In the private sector, your company will usually offer you a company mutual insurance scheme.

#### Doctors' fees



They are requested at the **end of your consultation** and are usually **reimbursed by Social Security.** Your doctor then transmits the information directly to Social Security. If they are not equipped with the payment terminal, they will give you a health care form for reimbursement.

Many doctors charge **Social Security rates**, but it is always useful to find out before your consultation.



#### **GOOD TO KNOW**

Not all doctors are equipped with a credit card payment terminal. Remember to ask about the methods of payment accepted when you make your appointment.

#### **Employement leave**



If you are employed and a doctor recommends you stop working for medical reasons, you can continue to receive your salary in most cases. Social Security and your mutual insurance company will then take over from your employer.

In France, the State also guarantees maternity/paternity/adoption leave at 100% of your salary. The period is longer for women than for men and also varies according to sector agreements.

### Raising your children

#### Crèche (nursery)



France has many high-quality childcare facilities, which probably explains why **the rate of working parents is the highest in Europe**.

From 0 to 3 years old, three types of childcare, partly financed by the State, are available:

- The collective *crèche* with several professionals who look after your children aged 3 months to 3 years. Reception hours are generally from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm. This type of childcare is particularly suitable for young children, as it provides an initial experience of life in society.
- The family *crèche* with a registered childminder who looks after the children at home. This system is generally more expensive than the collective *crèche* but offers more flexibility in terms of hours and conditions of care.
- The *halte-garderie* (drop-in centre) is a part-time, full-day facility that cares for children from 1 to 3 days a week.

To take advantage of one of these three approved childcare options, **contact your local town hall as soon as possible**, as the number of places available in *crèches* is limited.

You can also choose a **private childminder**. Many agencies offer the services of bilingual English childminders who can look after your children full-time.

And if you wish, you can take on **an** *au pair* to look after your children during the day. In exchange, they will be provided with accommodation, food and free time to pursue their studies.



#### School

In France, school attendance is compulsory from the ages of 3 to 16. It is the year of birth of the child that determines the date of entry into school, given that school starts at the beginning of September.

As soon as they arrive in France, **children from foreign countries are supported by the National Education system** to learn the language and to be integrated into the traditional school curriculum.



#### French vs. UK school system

	French school system		UK school system	
Age	Level	Class	Level	Class
3	Maternelle	Petite Section (PS)	N	Pre-nursery/Nursery
4		Moyenne Section (MS)	Nursery	Nursery/Reception
5		Grande Section (GS)	Preschool	Reception/Year1
6		Cours Préparatoire (CP)	Key Stage 1	Year1 / Year2
7	Elémentaire	Cours Elémentaire 1 (CE1)	Primary Key Stage 2	Year2 / Year3
8		Cours Elémentaire 2 (CE2)		Year3 / Year4
9		Cours Moyen 1 (CM1)		Year4 / Year5
10		Cours Moyen 2 (CM2)		Year5 / Year6
11	Collège Lycée	6 <sup>ème</sup>		Year6 / Year7
12		5 <sup>ème</sup>	Secondary Key Stage 3	Year7 / Year8
13		4 <sup>ème</sup>		Year8 / Year9
14		3 <sup>ème</sup>		Year9 / Year10
15		2 <sup>nde</sup>	Key Stage 4	Year10 / Year11
16		1ère	Sixth Form Key Stage 5	Year11 / Year12
17		Terminale		Year12 / Year13

The majority of schools in France are public and free of charge, and pupils are not required to wear a uniform. The Ministry of Education is in charge of education throughout the country and decides on the curriculum. In order to enrol your child(ren) in primary or secondary school, you must go to your local town hall, if you opt for public education.

For registration, you will need to bring an identity document, proof of residence and an up-to-date vaccination certificate.

Furthermore, the process of enrolment in private schools depends on the individual school.



#### **GOOD TO KNOW**

France has created international sections in private and public schools, in partnership with different countries, to provide bilingual and bicultural education. Students follow the French school curriculum, as well as specific learning programmes, under the aegis of the French Ministry of Education.

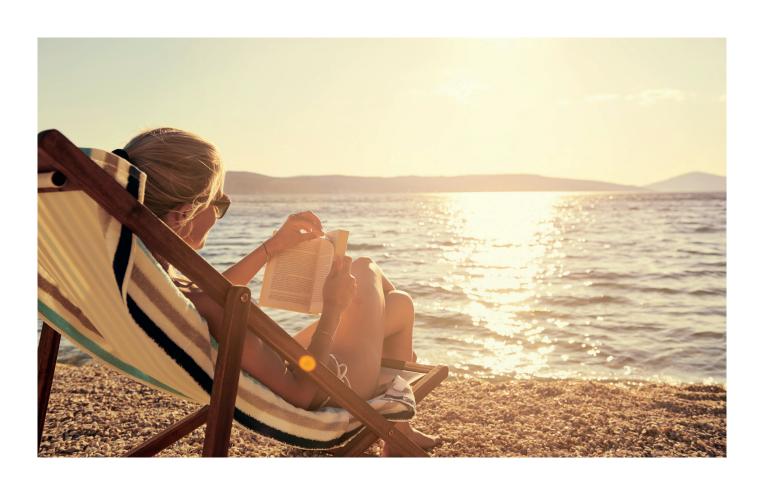
#### School holidays

On average, pupils in nursery, primary, and secondary school have **2 weeks' holiday every 6** weeks with a 2-month break in the summer.

In order to avoid congestion on the roads and at holiday destinations, there are **3 geographic zones** (A, B and C) with different holiday dates.

Over the course of the year, pupils will therefore benefit from:

- All Saints' holiday, 2 weeks between the end of October and the beginning of November
- Christmas holidays, 2 weeks between Christmas and New Year
- **February** (or winter) **holidays**, 2 weeks between late February and early March
- **Easter holidays,** 2 weeks between the end of April and the beginning of May
- > Summer holidays, 2 months from the beginning of July to the end of August



#### Ecole Maternelle (nursery school) (3-6 ans)



Public nursery school is **free and open to all children** residing in France.

Assignment to a public école maternelle is sector-based. However, if you want your child to go to a school other than the one in your area, you will need an exemption from the Mayor of your town. This rule does not apply to the private sector.

#### Ecole primaire (primary school) (6-10 years)

Children spend 5 years in école primaire: Cours Préparatoire (CP), then Cours Elémentaire 1ère année (CE1), Cours Elémentaire 2ème année (CE2), Cours Moyen 1ère année (CM1) and Cours Moyen 2ème année (CM2).

As with maternelle, the public école primaire is sectorised with the possibility to apply for an **exemption from the Mayor of your town**. This rule does not apply to the private sector.

#### Secondaire (secondary) (11-18 ans)

At the age of 11, pupils enter *collège* for 4 years: 6<sup>ème</sup>, 5<sup>ème</sup>, 4<sup>ème</sup> and 3<sup>ème</sup>. They prepare for their first national diploma which is the Brevet des Collèges, obtained at the end of 3ème.

At the age of 15, students start the second part of secondary education, which lasts 3 years and leads to the national Baccalaureate diploma. They then move on to Seconde, Première and Terminale.

Assignment to a public lycée is, in part, based on your sector, but also and above all on the pupil's academic record.

#### There are 3 types of *lycées* in France:

- The general *lycée*, which prepares students for higher education at university.
- The technological *lycée*, which prepares students for shorter studies.
- The *lycée professionnel* (vocational high school), which trains students for a particular trade in areas such as hotel and catering, mechanics, industrial design or sales. Students in the vocational stream can also extend their apprenticeship with a short higher education course, such as a Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS).

The general curriculum is the most traditional path to studying at university.

During these three years of *lycée*, students share **a common core of subjects** and they must choose options from Seconde onwards that will give a certain focus to their curriculum.

The French Baccalaureate diploma is recognised by most universities in the US and the UK (including Russell Group and Ivy League universities).

#### Higher education

There are many opportunities for international students in France and the *Grandes Ecoles* are frequently found on lists of the top 10 universities worldwide. To improve one's chances of being admitted, it is recommended to enrol in a *classe préparatoire* or preparatory course :

- > HEC classe préparatoire to take the competitive exams for business schools including HEC, ESCP, ESSEC and EDHEC.
- Math Sup and Math Spé to take the competitive exams for engineering schools such as Polytechnique or Les Mines.
- > Hypokhâgne and Khâgne which prepare students for the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris (Normale Sup).

The education provided at public university (Faculté) is also of high quality, and **the Pierre and Marie Curie** and **Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne Universities** are recognised worldwide.

Finally, there are more atypical courses that deserve to be mentioned for their excellence, such as Les Gobelins, the best animation school in the world, and Ecole 42, known for its innovative approach with branches in Paris and the USA.

To find all the courses by subject, level and geographic area, go to www.campusfrance.org

## Preparing for your retirement

The legal retirement age for **employees under the general scheme in France**, i.e. private-sector employees, is **64** for people born from 1968 onwards, between 62 to 64 for those born between 1961 and 1967, and **62** for those born before 1961.

This is the minimum age at which you can apply for a retirement pension.

The calculation of the number of quarters is a crucial element in the assessment of the pension you will receive after retirement. In principle, as soon as you start working and whatever your status, you automatically contribute to your future pension. This contribution takes the form of deductions from your salary, which can be seen on your pay slip under the heading "pension", or payments calculated on the basis of your professional income if you are self-employed.

For professional and managerial staff, there are 3 levels of pension:

- The basic pension paid by the general and compulsory social security scheme.
- The supplementary pension paid by AGIRC-ARRCO(1).
- The supplementary pension from voluntary schemes paid by your private insurance company.



For an employee who spends only a few years in France, **pension rights are locked in until the legal retirement age.** However, you can access these funds under certain conditions by contacting the dedicated bodies (Social Security, AGIRC-ARRCO and your insurance company).



To take a retirement assessment today, make an appointment with your CCF advisor



#### Basic pension

Its amount **depends on the amount of your salary** up to the social security ceiling and is capped above it (Social security ceiling in 2025: 47100€), **the length of contribution and the retirement age**.

The calculation is based on the 25 best paid years. And those born from 1955 onwards are guaranteed **a full pension after the age of 67**; this age varies between 65 and 67 for people born before 1955. The pension is paid **from the day you retire until your death**. In the event of your death, your spouse may, under certain conditions, be entitled to a reversionary pension, which may not exceed 54% of the amount of your basic retirement pension and 60% of the amount of your supplementary retirement pension.



#### AGIRC-ARRCO pension

For this scheme, **your contributions are converted into pension points each year**. It is the number and value of points that determine the amount of your pension (possible increase after the 3<sup>rd</sup> child).

In the event of your death, your spouse may be entitled to a reversionary pension, which may not exceed 60% of the amount of your pension.



#### **NOTA BENE**

Pension reform is underway and changes to the pension system may occur in the near future.



#### Supplementary pension savings

On 22 May 2019, the act on the growth and transformation of companies, known as the **PACTE Act**, came into force and led to the creation of the **Pension Savings Plan (PER)**, a product with specific taxation. As they are optional, supplementary pension savings products must be taken out by you or your company.

## Lifestyle

As you will quickly see, the French have a real **passion for gastronomy** and can boast **a very rich culinary culture. Specialities differ according to the region** and are best served with a French red, white or rosé wine, all of which have a strong reputation.

Alcohol abuse is dangerous for your health. Consume with moderation.



#### **Heathly eating**

It's quite easy to eat a heathly and balanced diet in France, thanks in particular to the presence of **numerous markets** which are set up in cities several days a week. There are even **markets that sell only organic products**, as well as **mini-grocers dedicated to organic products**.



#### **PRACTICE**

To find out the days and locations of the markets in your town, contact your local town hall

It's quite new, but you can also easily find a wide range of gluten-free, lactose-free, vegetarian and vegan products.

And if you prefer to **shop in a supermarket** or even a hypermarket, you should know that these are generally located in **suburban areas**, where square metres of property are cheaper.

Many retailers also offer **online shopping** with delivery to your home or via a Click & collect service.





**Gastronomie in France is** *tout un fromage* (a big deal, that is)! Because France is above all the country with 1,200 varieties of cheese (according to the *Centre National interprofessionnel de l'Économie laitière*)





#### Normandy

- > Camembert from Normandy
- > Neuchâtel
- > Pont-l'Evêque
- > Livarot



#### Brie

- > Brie de Meaux
- > Brie de Melun



#### Burgundy / Champagne

- > Chaource
- > Epoisses
- > Langres
- > Mâconnais



#### Centre / Val-de-Loire

- > Sainte-Maure de Touraine
- > Valençay
- > Chavignol
- > Pouligny-Saint-Pierre
- > Selles-sur-Cher



#### Franche-Comté Alsace-Lorraine

- > Bleu de Gex Haut-Jura
- > Comté
- > Mont d'Or
- > Morbier
- > Munster



#### Limousin Poitou-Charrentes

- > Bougon
- > Chabis
- > Civray
- > Figou
- > Mothais sur feuille



#### Aquitaine Midi-Pyrénées

- > Rocamadour
- > Ossau-Iraty
- > Bleu des Causses
- > Laguiole
- > Roquefort



#### Auvergne

- > Bleu d'Auvergne
- > Salers
- > Saint-Nectaire
- > Cantal
- > Fourme d'Ambert



#### Rhône-Alpes

- > Fourme de Montbrison
- > Bleu du Vercors-Sassenage
- > Picodon



- > Reblochon
- > Abondance
- > Beaufort
- > Chevrotin
- > Tomme des Bauges



#### Mediterranean

- > Banon
- > Pélardon
- > Brocciu

### 4. MANAGING YOUR MONEY



#### **GOOD TO KNOW**

The French are rather modest when it comes to talking about money and it is not necessarily well received to reveal one's salary, for example.

In all bars, restaurants and hotels, **the service fee is already included in the price**. It is therefore not required to leave a tip, including for taxi drivers. However, you can leave one if you feel that the quality of the service is exceptional.

Thanks to the emergence and widespread use of contactless bank cards, the French are using less and less cash to pay for their purchases, which is a rather new phenomenon. You should know that the maximum amount you are allowed to pay for a product or service in cash at a retailer is €1,000.

And it is **not customary to negotiate the prices displayed** in most shops. The only exception is if you decide to go to flea markets or second-hand shops to buy vintage furniture.



## Every day banking



The bank card is the preferred means to make withdrawals and payments, including online, in France. Please note, however, that bank cards are usually subject to a charge. They can be taken out alone or as part of a package of products and services. You can choose between an immediate debit card and a deferred debit card, in which case your outstanding payments will be debited at the beginning of the following month, without interest. This will give you greater flexibility in managing your cash flow. Finally, French bank cards often include insurance and assistance services, especially when travelling abroad. Ask your CCF advisor for more information.

When you open your deposit account<sup>(1)</sup>, you may be given a cheque book as some payments are still made by bank cheque. Note that **many merchants no longer accept cheques** because of the risk of non-payment, while many institutions now accept payment by bank card. And if you receive a payment by cheque issued and payable in mainland France, you have **one year and eight days to cash it,** but it is best to do so as soon as possible.

You can also make payments in euros by **SEPA credit transfer** from your account in France to the countries in the SEPA area (the Member States of the European Union, the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, the Republic of San Marino, Monaco, the Vatican City State and the Principality of Andorra). You will need a **RIB** (*Relevé d'Identité Bancaire*) for the recipient account including **the BIC/IBAN numbers** and other information necessary for the execution of the transaction.

To get a RIB of one of your CCF accounts or make a SEPA payment, please access your CCF online banking site (ccf.fr or mobile app).

Please note that fees are reduced in case of online payments<sup>(2)</sup>.



You can use **CCF mobile app** and the website **www.ccf.fr** to carry out your day-to-day operations, such as

- Viewing your transactions and balance
- View your outstanding amounts and bank card limits
- > Free transfers between your different CCF accounts in France(1)
- Free SEPA credit transfers to third-party accounts in France and the SEPA area<sup>(1)</sup>
- Downloading of RIB, account statements, documents
- Stop payment on bank card
- Ordering a bank card following a stop payment
- > Viewing and customising your Online Payment Code

Most of these transactions can be carried out by phone by calling: 01 55 69 74 74 (from abroad, dial +33 1 55 69 74 74 - cost varies by operator)<sup>(2)</sup> be sure to have your CCF ID on hand.



It is not customary to pay interest on deposit accounts in France. However, if you have surplus cash, you can deposit it in a *Livret A*<sup>(3)</sup> or a *Livret de Développement Durable et Solidaire*<sup>(4)</sup> (LDDS). This means that your money earns interest at a rate regulated by the government and remains available for withdrawal at any time.

You can also take advantage of an **overdraft facility**<sup>(5)</sup> which gives you flexibility in managing your cash flow. The maximum use is **15 consecutive days each calendar month. And your account balance must return to positive** between each period of use.

### Investments

Life insurance is a type of investment that exists only in France and has many advantages:

- A specific tax system in the event of surrender<sup>(1)</sup> of your contract, but also in the event of transmission on your death
- > Your savings are **always available** thanks to "redemptions" that you can make to finance a project<sup>(2)</sup>
- A broad range of investment vehicles from the most secure to the most dynamic

Unit-linked investments, subject to market fluctuations, may go down as well as up and present a risk of capital loss borne entirely by the subscriber.

For more information, see our guide to life insurance: https://ccf.fr/particuliers/investir/investir-assurance-vie.html<sup>(3)</sup>



There are many other solutions, which you can explore with your CCF advisor to determine which is/are best for you.



## Paying Taxes



# Determining your tax residence

It is not a question of choice but **depends on the tax regulations** in force and the reciprocal agreements between France and your country of origin. French tax residents are taxable in France on their worldwide income, while non-residents are only taxable in France on their income generated in France.

Whatever your nationality, you will be considered a French tax resident, subject to the application of international tax treaties, if you meet one of the following criteria:

- If you have your home or main place of residence in France, as a general rule you are a resident of France if you spend more than 183 days per year in France;
- You carry out a professional activity in France, whether salaried or not, unless you can prove that this activity is carried out on an ancillary basis;
- Your main economic interests, major investments for example, are located in France.

In any case, the bank is prohibited from providing tax advice and, in this context, is prohibited from determining the place of your tax residence. If you have any questions on this subject, please contact an independent tax advisor or the tax office in your place of residence.

#### Impôt sur le Revenu (income tax) (IR)



Your reference tax income is the sum of the following incomes minus the deductions to which

- Salaries after deduction, where applicable, of the flat-rate deduction of 10% for professional expenses, capped at €14,426 for 2025
- Industrial and commercial profits
- Non-commercial profits
- Property income
- Agricultural income
- Income from movable capital

#### Income tax rates in 2025

Taxable income per individual	Tax rates
Up to €11,497	0%
From €11,498 to €29,315	11%
From €29,316 to €83,823	30%
From €83,824 to €180,294	41%
More than €180,294	45%

These rates do not take into account the **exceptional contribution on high incomes** at a rate of 3% or 4% that may apply<sup>(1)</sup>.

Your tax rate also depends on the number of units in your household. Each adult represents one unit and each child one half unit or one additional unit depending on your marital and family situation.

The French system is based on a **withholding tax** and your tax on your wages and salaries is deducted directly from your salary by your employer according to the deduction rate established by the tax authorities or, where applicable, by default. Adjustments may be made following the tax return for the year in question.

#### The Impôt sur la Fortune Immobilière (tax on real estate wealth)

Subject to international tax treaties, if you become a French tax resident, you may be subject to the real estate wealth tax (IFI) on the value of your real estate assets, held directly or indirectly, whether they are located in France or outside France, if their total value exceeds the tax threshold on 1 January (threshold of €1.3M for 2025). In addition, persons who transfer their tax residence to France after having been fiscally domiciled abroad for the previous five calendar years are temporarily taxable under the IFI only on their French real estate assets. This system is applicable for each year in which the taxpayer retains his or her tax residence in France, until 31 December of the fifth year following the year in which they moved to France. If you retain your tax residence abroad, you are likely to be liable to pay IFI on the value of your real estate assets located in France and held directly or indirectly, subject to international tax treaties.

Your main residence is part of your assets taxable under the IFI. However, a 30% discount<sup>(2)</sup> applies to the market value observed on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the tax year.

#### What is the threshold for the IFI?

You are subject to the IFI when **your net taxable property assets exceed €1.3 million,** but taxation is calculated from €800,000.

#### IFI rates in 2025

Amount subject to tax	Rate
Up to €800,000	0 %
Between €800,001 and €1,300,000	0,50 %
Between €1,300,001 and €2,570,000	0,70 %
Between €2,570,001 and €5,000,000	1%
Between €5,000,001 and €10,000,000	1,25 %
More than € 10,000,000	1,50 %

For IFI reporting requirements, please visit www.impots.gouv.fr



To find all the information concerning your taxation in France, go to your secure online account on: www.impots.gouv.fr and have your tax number ready.

This document is drawn up in accordance with the regulations in force on 1 January 2025.

Call our Contact Centre: 01 55 69 74 74

From abroad, dial +33 1 55 69 74 74 (cost varies by operator)

#### **Opening hours:**

Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm / Saturday from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm. On public holidays: 9:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Public holidays that fall on weekdays (Monday to Friday) are usually working days, except for: January 1st, Easter Monday, May 1st, May 8th and December 25th.

#### Log on ccf.fr







Non-binding information



