

Table of Contents

The Best of France	1
The Best Student Towns	1
The Best Scenes for Hip Youngsters	2
The Best Festivals	3
The Best Funky Arts Venues	3
The Best Tipple-Tasting	4
The Best Venues for Tracking the Rich & Famous	4
The Best Spots beside the Sea	5
The Best Moments	6
The Best Regional Produce	7
The Best of Freaky France	7
The Best Places to Eat Your Heart Out	8
The Best Places for a Good Night's Sleep	8
The Best Places to Get Down with History	9
The Best Châteaux	10
The Best Outlandish Architecture	11
The Best Religious Buildings	11
The Basics	13
The Lay of the Land	14
The Regions in Brief	14
Visitor Information	20
Getting In & Out	20
Money, Money, Money, Money! (Money!)	23
When to Go	24
Health & Insurance	30
Safety & Scams	31
Getting Wired	31
Getting There	32
Staying in France: Tips on Lodgings	35
Getting Around France	38
Tips for Travel on the Cheap	42
Tips for Backpackers/Creative Packing	42
Tips for Gay Travelers	43
Tips for Travelers with Disabilities	44
Tips for Solo Travelers	45
Tips for Minority Travelers	46
Specialized Tours & Resources	46
I Don't Want to Leave! Staying Beyond Vacation	49
Eating Your Way through France	51
Paris & Ile-de-France	57
The Best of Paris & Ile-de-France	58
Getting Around the Region	62
Paris	66
Ile-de-France	130
The Loire Valley	142
The Best of the Loire Valley	143
Getting Around the Region	144
Tours: The Ultimate Base for Château-Hopping	144
Top 20 Châteaux of the Loire	155
Nantes: A Bridge to Brittany	177
Playing Outside in the Loire	190

Normandy	192
The Best of Normandy	193
Getting Around the Region	194
Rouen: Joan of Arc's Resting Place	195
The Sea Stint: The Alabaster & Flower Coast	206
The History Trail	213
Brittany	219
The Best of Brittany	220
St-Malo: Surf, Sun & Stone Walls	222
Rennes: Student Town, Medieval Flair	237
Carnac: Brittany's Jekyll & Hyde	248
Quimper: Quaintness in the Country	258
Bordeaux & Charente-Maritime	269
The Best of Bordeaux & Charente-Maritime	270
Getting Around the Region	272
Bordeaux: Palatable & Happening	272
Angoulême: Cartoon Central	298
Cognac	305
St-Emilion: Thank Bacchus You Made It	308
The Bassin d'Arcachon & Dune de Pilat	312
La Rochelle: An Unmissable Port of Call	316
The Basque Country & the Pyrenees	328
The Best of the Basque Country	329
Biarritz: Surf's Up on the Atlantic Coast	330
Bayonne: It's All About Food & Culture	340
St-Jean-Pied-de-Port: A Day in the Basque Country	348
Foix	350
Languedoc-Roussillon	356
The Best of Languedoc-Roussillon	357
Getting Around the Region	358
Nîmes: French, Roman, or Spanish?	358
Farther Afield of Nîmes: Le Pont du Gard	369
Montpellier: Bumpin', Gritty College Town	371
Toulouse: Vibrant, Airy, Pink & Pastel	382
Perpignan: Straddling Catalonia	393
Le Viaduc de Millau	396
The Gorges du Tarn	397
The Dordogne & the Lot	399
The Best of the Dordogne & the Lot	400
Getting Around the Region	401
Sarlat: Art, Foie Gras & Truffles	402
Rocamadour & Cahors	415

Provence	420
The Best of Provence	421
Getting Around the Region	424
Marseille	424
Avignon	443
Arles	456
Aix-en-Provence	466
La Côte d'Azur (French Riviera)	475
The Best of La Côte d'Azur	476
Getting to the Region	478
St-Tropez: Clichéd but Still Beautiful	478
Cannes: More than Just a Film Festival	485
Nice: La Belle Dame de la Méditerranée	495
Grasse: Ain't Just Perfume	510
Monaco & Monte Carlo: Playground of the Rich & Those Who Want to Be Seen Near Them	517
Corsica	526
The Best of Corsica	526
Getting There	528
Corsica History	101 528
Ajaccio	530
Bastia: Fierce Face of the Tyrrhenian	536
Erbalunga	542
Corte: A Stony Face Staring into Space	544
Bonifacio: Your Yachting Dream Come True	551
The Rhône Valley & French Alps	557
The Best of the Rhône Valley & French Alps	558
Lyon	561
Drôme & the Ardèche	573
Evian-les-Bains	577
Chambéry	580
Annecy	587
Chamonix	593
Grenoble	599
Massif Central & Auvergne	606
The Best of Massif Central & Auvergne	607
Getting Around the Region	608
Clermont-Ferrand: Molten <i>Je Ne Sais Quoi</i>	608
Limoges: It Ain't Just Porcelain	618
Le-Puy-en-Velay	623
Elsewhere in the Massif Central & Auvergne	627
Burgundy & the Franche Comté	630
The Best of Burgundy & Franche Comté	631
Getting Around the Region	633
Dijon: As Mild As Its Mustard	634
Beaune: Quaint, Boozy & Multicolored	647
Abbaye de Fontenay: Key to Monastic Past	651
Besançon: Students, Citadels & Cheeses	652
Ronchamp: Le Corbusier's Masterpiece	661

The Champagne Region	662
The Best of the Champagne Region	664
Getting Around the Region	665
Reims: Bursting the Bubble	665
Epernay: It's Gotta Lotta Bottle	677
Troyes: Shaped Like a Champagne Cork	681
Alsace-Lorraine	691
The Best of Alsace-Lorraine	692
Getting There & Getting Around	693
Strasbourg	694
Colmar	708
Nancy	716
Verdun	724
Mulhouse	725
The Nerd's Guide to French Wine & Culture	731
French Wine 101	731
French Art 101	739
French Architecture 101	743
French History 101	750
What Remains: France Today	757
Recommended Books, Films & Music	759
Survival French	763
Index	771

List of Maps

France: Regions at a Glance	16
Paris Arrondissements	74
Sleeping & Eating in Paris	88
Partying & Sightseeing in Paris	102
Paris & the Ile-de-France	131
Versailles	133
The Loire Valley's Top 20 Châteaux	145
Tours	147
Nantes Sleeping, Eating & Partying	179
Nantes Sightseeing	187
Normandy	194
Rouen	197
Mont St-Michel	217
Brittany	221
St-Malo	223
Rennes	239
The Bordeaux Region & Atlantic Coast	271
Bordeaux	279
Bordeaux Sightseeing	291
La Rochelle	317
The Basque Country	331
Biarritz	335
Languedoc-Roussillon	359
The Dordogne & the Lot	401
Sarlat	405
Provence	423
Marseille	431
Avignon	447
Arles	459
Aix-en-Provence	469
La Côte d'Azur (French Riviera)	477
Cannes	486
Nice	497
Monaco	519
Corsica	527
The Rhône Valley	559
Lyon	563
The French Alps	579
Massif Central & Auvergne	609
Burgundy	633
Dijon	635
Champagne	663
Reims	667
Alsace-Lorraine	695