

France

Key Facts

Location

Western Europe.

Time

GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

Area

545,630 sq km (339,054 sq miles) (not including overseas territories).

Population

60.9 million (2006 estimate).

Electricity

220 volts AC, 50Hz. Two-pin plugs are widely used

Currency

Euro (EUR; symbol €) = 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.

Climate

A temperate climate in the north; north-eastern areas have a more continental climate with warm summers and colder winters. Rainfall is distributed throughout the year with some snow likely in winter. The Jura Mountains have an alpine climate. Lorraine, sheltered by bordering hills, has a relatively mild climate. Mediterranean climate in the south; mountains are cooler with heavy snow in winter.

The Atlantic influences the climate of the western coastal areas from the Loire to the Basque region where the weather is temperate and relatively mild with rainfall throughout the year. Summers can be very hot and sunny. Inland areas are mild and the French slopes of the Pyrenees are renowned for their sunshine record. A Mediterranean climate exists on the Riviera, and in Provence and Roussillon. Weather in the French Alps is variable. Continental weather is present in Auvergne, Burgundy and the Rhône Valley. Very strong winds (such as the *Mistral*) can occur throughout the entire region

Public Holidays

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2008-December 2009 period.

2008

1 Jan: New Year's Day.

24 Mar: Easter Monday.

1 May: Labour Day.

1 May: Ascension.

8 May: 1945 Victory Day.

12 May: Whit Monday.

14 Jul: Bastille Day.

15 Aug: Assumption.

1 Nov: All Saints' Day.

11 Nov: Remembrance Day.

25 Dec: Christmas Day.

2009

1 Jan: New Year's Day.

13 Apr: Easter Monday.

1 May: Labour Day.

8 May: 1945 Victory Day.

1 Jun: Whit Monday.

21 May: Ascension.

14 Jul: Bastille Day.

15 Aug: Assumption.

1 Nov: All Saints' Day.

11 Nov: Remembrance Day.

25 Dec: Christmas Day.