

Destination Guide for France



Overview

Destination Guide Content

Destination Risk Levels

+ Low Medical Risk for France

🛡️ Low Travel Risk for France

Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to France can continue with standard security precautions.
- Large-scale protests that impact both urban centres and rural areas are common. Precedent suggests they can deteriorate into unrest and most should be avoided as a precaution.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist militants. Be vigilant and follow instructions from police and security authorities. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Security alerts or hoaxes can trigger the short-notice evacuation of transport hubs or public locations, which can cause disruption. Follow all directives issued by the authorities during any security operation and do not act on the basis of unverified information.
- Take basic security precautions against petty and street crime.
- Strikes in the transport sector can disrupt travel. Keep abreast of planned industrial action and plan your itineraries accordingly.

Paris Olympics / Paralympics Advice (26 July-8 September)

Inbound travel

- Inbound travel to France can proceed with standard security precautions.
- Managers should determine the need for non-essential travel to France from 1 July and throughout the duration of the Games due to an increased demand for accommodation and an upwards pressure on transport options. Workforce that do travel should anticipate increased logistical and movement challenges during this period.

In-country workforce

- Workforce based in-country should discuss options for remote work with their managers in the lead-up to and during the Games.
- Anticipate increased travel time within urban centres due to road restrictions, related congestion and an increased use of public transportation.

Advice for managers

- Managers with workforce in cities impacted by the Games should consider remote working arrangements where possible, taking into consideration:
 - Office and employee location
 - Security perimeters and potential for access restrictions to worksites
 - Public transport/metro station closures/road restrictions
- Managers should ensure emergency plans are up to date and tested, including the ability to account for personnel in the event of a crisis.
- Run personal training security awareness sessions with workforce planning to visit the Olympics, ensuring they are cognisant of common scam and theft tactics.
- Ensure workforce have access to credible sources of timely, verified information to pre-emptively plan for possible rallies.
- Managers should monitor local news for information on industrial action, including negotiations between unions and the government.
- Discuss an emergency response plan with your team, including what to do if communications are cut off following a terror attack.
- When creating or reviewing emergency plans, account for the likely presence of workforce on leisure travel and clarify the extent of your duty of care responsibilities internally.

Active Alerts (2)

Notice

28 October 2024 at 03:32

Urban centres: Expect disruption in coming days during demonstrations linked to Middle East conflict

Location: Europe & CIS

Category: Road disruption, Protest/Rally

Situation:

Expect disruption **in the coming days** during demonstrations linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East (*see separate alerts*). Although such gatherings should mostly pass off peacefully, there is potential for localised scuffles between participants and the police. Bystanders would face incidental risks in the event of any unrest.

Advice:

- Liaise with local contacts for details on any planned or spontaneous demonstrations in your area. Expect associated disruption and plan journeys

accordingly.

- If travelling in the vicinity of a gathering, reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and allow additional time for journeys.
- Expect heightened security near demonstrations and follow all official directives. Leave an area at the first sign of unrest.
- Monitor our alerts for updates.

More Detail:

Details of known demonstrations are listed below (all times are local). This list is not exhaustive:

30 October

- **The capital Berlin** (Germany): From **16.00** outside [Potsdamer Platz Station](#)

2 November

- **The capital London** (UK): From **12.00** from the [Foreign Office](#) to the [US embassy](#)
- **Leipzig** (Germany): From **13.00** at [corner of Konradstrasse and Elisabethstrasse](#), towards the [US consulate](#)
- **Freiburg** (Germany): From **15.00** at [Freiburg Theatre](#)
- **Marseille** (France): From **14.00** at [L'Ombrière du Vieux Port](#)

Advisory

27 October 2024 at 04:23

South-east regions: Exercise caution, expect weather-related disruption until 28 October

Location: France

Category: Flood, Transport disruption

Situation:

Plan journeys in south-eastern regions accounting for weather-related disruption **over the coming hours**. Meteo France has issued an orange warning (second-highest on a four-tier scale, meaning 'be very vigilant') for flooding in Var department (Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region) **until at least 28 October**. Evacuations and flooding have been reported in Var in recent days. Further adverse weather in the region may cause short-notice disruption to transport and essential services in affected areas. Reconfirm the status of routes and transport services before setting out and exercise enhanced caution.

Advice:

- Consult the Meteo France [website](#) (in French) for up-to-date weather forecasts and related warnings. Plan journeys accordingly and follow all official directives.
- Heavy rain may trigger flash flooding and landslides, particularly in low-lying areas. Be alert to debris on the road such as fallen trees, branches or other items. Do not attempt to cross flooded roads. If you come across one, turn around and seek an alternative route.
- **We do not hold information on specific modes of transport.** In the event of cancellations or delays, your travel agent will be able to assist with alternative arrangements.
- Disruption to essential services, such as electricity, is possible. Ensure that all communications devices are charged and, if possible, prepare spare batteries for backup.
- Monitor our France alerts for updates.

More Detail:

On 25 October, a train travelling between Gard and Lozere departments (both Occitania) derailed in Lozere after hitting a fallen tree amid adverse weather. At least two passengers were injured. The train line is expected to be closed **until 18.00** (local time) **on 31 October**.

Yellow alerts (second-lowest) for flooding are in place for parts of Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, Occitania and Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur regions **until at least 28 October**.

Destination Guide for France



Before You Travel

Destination Guide Content

Visa Requirements

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

British

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Australian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Canadian

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

USA

- Passport Required Yes
- Visa Required No
- Return Ticket Required Yes

Visas

Citizens of countries mentioned in the chart above and nationals of Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong (SAR), Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Macao (SAR), Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela do not require visas for stays of up to three months. Nationals of most other countries must apply for visas before travelling. The visa-issuing policy is generally straightforward. Foreign nationals intending to stay for more than 90 days must apply for a long-term visa prior to arrival in the country. EU nationals and citizens of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland and Vatican City do not require a long-stay visa. Visa applications are generally processed within seven working days. Foreign nationals can refer to the official [website](#) for further information. As per EU, starting in mid-2025, nationals of [visa-exempt countries](#) will need to obtain an ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) travel authorisation to visit any of the European countries mentioned [here](#) for up to 90 days within any 180-day period.

The exact date of its implementation is yet to be announced. For updates on the ETIAS launch date and new requirements, check the [ETIAS news corner](#). ETIAS applications can be made via the official ETIAS website or the official ETIAS mobile app once it is operational. For information on travel documents required to apply for ETIAS and payment exemptions, visit [here](#). ETIAS travel authorisation is valid for three years or until the travel document you used in your application expires - whichever comes first. It is for short-term stays and allows business travellers and foreign nationals to stay up to 90 days within any 180-day period. Most applications will be processed within minutes, however, in some cases it may take longer ranging from four to 30 days. If your application is rejected, the email will provide the reasons for this decision. It will also include information about how to appeal, details of the competent authority, as well as the relevant time limit to appeal. Rejected applicants can also apply for ETIAS travel authorisation with limited validity. More information about this is available [here](#).

Procedures

Airport procedures are generally straightforward. Business travellers should not encounter long delays, particularly when arriving from other EU member states.

Entry/Exit Requirements

Entry/exit requirements

Foreign nationals should contact the nearest French embassy/consulate to ascertain the validity of their passport to travel to France. Nationals from outside the EU must be able to justify their reason for entering the country and, if required, show sufficient funds for a return journey. There are no restrictions on the import or export of any amount of local or foreign currency for foreign nationals coming to or from another EU member state; however, business travellers to or from a country outside the EU should declare amounts exceeding 10,000 euros or its equivalent in any other currency.

Schengen Area

France is a signatory to the Schengen Agreement, under which rules pertaining to visas, passports and other border controls remain the same for all the constituent 27 countries. A Schengen visa allows foreign nationals to travel within the territory of member countries without any entry/exit formalities for stays of up to 90 days within a six-month period. The period of stay is counted from the first point of entry in any of the Schengen member states. Foreign nationals must get their passport stamped while entering the Schengen area; an absence of the stamp can lead to a fine or further difficulties with the police or other authorities throughout the Schengen area.

Cultural Tips

CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

- It is illegal to conceal your face in public, including with balaclavas or full veils. Exceptions to the ban are permitted for health reasons.
- There are no legal restrictions for LGBTQ individuals. Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ community are generally tolerant.

Getting There

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport ([CDG](#)), located 19 miles (31km) north-east of the capital Paris, is the main international airport. Some international flights operate from Paris Orly Airport ([ORY](#)). Some other international airports are Bordeaux Airport ([BOD](#), Gironde department), Lille Airport ([LIL](#), Nord department), Lyon Airport ([LYS](#), Rhone department), Marseille Airport ([MRS](#), Bouches-du-Rhone department), Montpellier Airport ([MPL](#), Herault department), Nantes Airport ([NTE](#), Loire-Atlantique department), Nice Cote d'Azur Airport ([NCE](#), Alpes-Maritimes department), Strasbourg Airport ([SXB](#), Bas-Rhin department) and Toulouse-Blagnac Airport ([TLS](#), Haute-Garonne department).

Security is strict and there are large armed police contingents at major international airports. At times of heightened terrorist threats, the implementation of extra security measures can include the deployment of armed troops to supplement police personnel. Unattended suitcases and packages are liable to be investigated by the police and disposed of if left unclaimed.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's [website](#) for a list of airlines banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Major road and rail networks link France with all neighbouring countries. [Eurostar](#) rail services link Paris and Lille (Nord-Pas-de-Calais) with London (UK), via the Channel Tunnel, and Paris with Amsterdam (Netherlands), Brussels (Belgium) and Cologne (Germany). The Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer Francais ([SNCF](#)) – the national railways – and Rail Europe in the UK also connect Paris to several destinations across Europe. France is a Schengen area country, which makes crossing its borders with other EU member states generally straightforward. However, citing terrorism threats and pressure on the asylum reception system, France has reintroduced checks on its borders with Schengen countries **until 31 October 2024**.

By sea

Cruise ships, car ferries and other forms of sea transport connect France to Algeria, Ireland, Italy, Morocco, Spain, the UK and Tunisia.

Procedures

Airport procedures are generally straightforward. Business travellers should not encounter long delays, particularly when arriving from other EU member states.

Getting Around

BY AIR

The country has an extensive internal air network connecting most major cities. Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) and Paris Orly Airport (ORY) in the capital Paris are the hubs for domestic flights. The other major airports in the country are Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Nantes, Nice, Strasbourg and Toulouse.

Various airlines, including flag carrier [Air France](#) and its subsidiary Air France HOP, as well as Easyjet, offer flights to all major cities. There are no specific immigration procedures on internal flights. Security at airports in the country is commendable.

BY ROAD

The police can fine motorists on the spot for driving offences, such as speeding, and issue random breathalyser tests to detect alcohol levels. It is compulsory to carry an emergency warning triangle and a high-visibility vest for use in a breakdown or accident. All motorists, including short-term business travellers, must carry a breathalyser test kit in their car. Moreover, radar warning devices, which detect the presence of speed traps or speed cameras, cannot be used in vehicles in France. Fines can be issued for non-compliance; the device and the vehicle may also be seized if the device is placed on the vehicle.

Foreign nationals may rent vehicles; there are several major international rental companies present nationwide, such as [Avis](#), [Europcar](#), [Hertz](#) and [Sixt](#). Their franchises are located primarily at airports and railway stations. To rent a car in France, motorists need to be at least 21 or 25 years old (depending on the rental company) and should possess a driving licence for at least a year (and sometimes longer, depending on the rental company).

Criminals may target rental cars, so business travellers should not leave valuables inside these vehicles. Hotels and limousine companies can arrange a car hire with a driver on a daily basis. A valid driver's licence and passport are enough to drive a vehicle in the country; however, it is advisable to carry an international driver's permit to avoid difficulties.

BY TAXI

Taxis are widely available. These can be hailed on the street, booked online or through phone. They can be easily recognised by the taxi sign on the roof. Taxis are metered and a surcharge is applicable for extra luggage. It is preferable to carry cash when using a taxi as drivers may refuse other means of payment or to reconfirm with the taxi driver before setting out. Drivers often refuse to carry more than two people on the back seat, and at night are permitted by law to refuse to take a passenger in the front seat, which reduces the maximum number of passengers to three or even two. Business travellers willing to travel with more passengers can request larger taxis when booking through their phone. Smartphone taxi application or ride-sharing services such as Uber are a reasonably safe and reliable form of transport for business travellers in major cities. However, taxi drivers have held demonstrations against app-based services. Ensure that there is no established taxi rank near your pickup location and keep a low profile when getting into the vehicle to avoid confrontations, particularly during times of higher tensions.

BY TRAIN

The railway network operated by the National Society of French Railways ([SNCF](#)) is extensive and the facilities offered are excellent, though strikes by SNCF employees can result in significant disruption. High-Speed Trains (TGV) have also made travel between major cities faster and easier. Exercise caution and avoid leaving valuables unattended as pickpockets, bag-snatchers and thieves are known to operate on trains. Luggage containing valuables should always be kept at hand.

BY OTHER MEANS

Regular ferries operate from Marseille (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region) and Nice (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region) to Ajaccio, Propriano, Porto Vecchio, Calvi, Ile Rousse and Bastia (all Corsica region). Cruise boats are also available. Ferries and boats are best avoided at night, during bad weather and if they appear to be overcrowded. Underground trains, trams and trolley buses also ply on the same routes in some major cities.

Business Women

BUSINESSWOMEN

Several major companies have taken measures to increase women's representation at executive level. However, the country's conservative business culture continues to ensure male dominance, particularly in large domestic companies.

Female travellers face no specific risks but should still maintain a level of attention when travelling alone. Lone women may encounter unwanted attention from men on the streets and on public transport, notably on public transports in major cities, where it is recommended to sit in populated carriages. Travelling on suburban trains and buses should be avoided late at night when the use of taxis is preferable for security reasons.

Working Week

WORKING WEEK

- Working Week: Monday to Friday
- Office hours: 09.00-12.00 and 14.00-18.00
- Banking hours: 09.00-12.00 and 14.00-17.00 from Monday to Friday; 09.00-12.00 on Saturday

Language & Money

LANGUAGE

French is the national language, though English is commonly spoken in major cities and in business circles.

MONEY

France is a member of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and uses the euro. ATMs are widely available. Smaller establishments may accept only cash. Business travellers from countries where 'black strip' magnetic credit cards remain in use may experience difficulty in having their cards accepted in France, where 'Chip and PIN' cards have long been in use. Major credit cards, including American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa, are accepted. Only some first-class hotels have the authority to exchange foreign currency. Shops and hotels will not accept any foreign currency. Traveller's cheques can easily be cashed nearly everywhere.

Tipping

TIPPING

Hotel staff expect tips. Tipping in restaurants and cafés is becoming less common because bills often include a 10-15% service charge, but it is always appreciated.

Geography & Weather

GEOGRAPHY

France is the largest country in Western Europe and shares borders with Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Spain and Andorra. It has a coastline on the Atlantic Ocean, the English Channel (La Manche) and the Mediterranean.

France is divided into 13 administrative regions and further subdivided into 95 departments, and five overseas departments – Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane (French Guiana), Reunion and Mayotte. It also includes four overseas territories: French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and the French Southern and Antarctic Territories; and three 'territorial collectivities' with a special status: St Pierre and Miquelon, St Barthélemy and St Martin.

CLIMATE

Climate overview

- There are three different climate zones.
- Western areas experience a temperate maritime climate with mild winters and pleasantly cool summers. The south has a Mediterranean climate characterised by mild winters, hot summers and frequent strong winds.
- Eastern and central France have a continental (transition) climate with warmer summers and harsh winters.
- Monitor the Meteo France [website](#) for weather updates and warnings.

Flooding and landslides

- Floods and landslides following heavy rain have become common.
- Violent storms and associated flooding occur occasionally along the Atlantic coast.
- Areas of southern France located closer to the Mediterranean Sea are prone to flash floods.
- Floods and landslides can cause significant damage and disruption, as well as fatalities. In March 2024, five people were killed by floods

following violent storms in southern France. Earlier, floods accompanied by storm Henk in January 2024 caused severe disruption in northern France.

Avalanches

- There is a risk of avalanches in the south-western Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region during winter.
- Avalanches occasionally block roads and can cause fatalities, such as in the Alps mountain range.

Wildfires

- Wildfires have become increasingly common during summer months (between June and September).
- Southern regions are worst affected, although some regions in the north-west and north-east have also experienced major fires.
- Wildfires often prompt evacuations of the affected areas, as well as road closures.

Droughts

- Severe droughts have affected France in recent years.
- Resultant water shortages have previously prompted the authorities to impose rationing measures, restricting the use of water for necessary purposes only.

International Dialing & Power

DIALLING CODES

Country Code 33

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) 00

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) 0

COMMUNICATIONS

The telephone system and postal service are efficient.

Communications are excellent and there is good mobile coverage, with 4G and 5G network technologies being widely available, except in very remote areas. Major mobile network providers include Bouygues Telecom, Free, Orange and SFR. All major hotels have internet access, including free Wi-Fi. The main postal service in France is La Poste, but other international courier services, such as DHL, are also widely available. The Chronopost service of La Poste is highly recommended for sending fast mail.

Information Security

France has a complex cybersecurity environment. Journalists and political activists in particular face the risk of being targeted by foreign actors, who have previously demonstrated their capabilities for disruptive actions and sophisticated data-breach attacks. In May 2017, assumed-Russian hackers reportedly stole confidential information from President Emmanuel Macron's En Marche party. Foreign hackers have also used advanced tools to steal data from isolated networks, highlighting their ability to combine physical and digital infiltration techniques.

Concurrently, business travellers are exposed to a relatively well-developed cybercriminal environment. Thieves have primarily targeted members of IT, telecommunications and financial companies with the objective of conducting financial fraud. Ransomware released through phishing and self-propagating vectors have caused major disruption to both companies and private individuals. In May 2018, pre-installed adware was discovered on multiple Android devices across the country, highlighting the risks deriving from supply chain compromise.

France has a sound legal framework to protect against cyberthreats. Multiple cybercrimes are included in the national Criminal Code, sanctioning those engaging in malicious online activities. Since 2014, the investigation of cybercriminal cases is assigned to the police's Sub-Directorate for the Fight against Cybercrime. According to the 2015 Intelligence Act, French intelligence agencies are permitted to use cybersurveillance techniques on grounds of national security, including outside their national jurisdiction.

Advice

- Ensure all devices you bring in-country are well-secured with strong passwords; ensure all storage devices have full disk encryption.
- Ensure all software, including anti-virus protection, is up-to-date prior to travel; avoid updating software while away.
- Avoid connecting to insecure Wi-Fi networks where possible. Public Wi-Fi connections are almost always unencrypted, allowing attackers to easily

instigate man-in-the-middle attacks, where they redirect your browsing request to a malicious website and then run malware on your device.

- If necessary, only connect to public networks using a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Always familiarise yourself with the legal status of any VPN or application in your destination country prior to travel. Be aware of other relevant legislation including compliance requests that allow authorities to inspect devices.
- Keep devices on your person as much as possible. If unattended, ensure devices are powered down and well-secured. If using hotel safes, secure them with a secondary personally-lockable device.
- Limit location tracking/turn off your phone's location function to deter surveillance, with the exception of our Assistance App and other essential applications. Turn off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when not in use.
- Run a thorough check of all devices upon your return and use the 'forget network' setting if you did connect to any public Wi-Fi networks.
- Comply with local legislation. This includes any official requests to inspect devices. If this occurs, inform your IT department as soon as possible and exercise caution when using the device after. Power off devices prior to approaching customs.
- Obtain profile-specific advice taking into account your industry and position in the company.

ELECTRICITY

These are the most common plug types used:

Calendar

Holidays & Security Dates

2024

01 Nov All Saints Day

11 Nov Armistice Day/Remembrance Day

25 Dec Christmas Day

In some countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

26 Dec Boxing Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is observed on the following Monday or Tuesday respectively.

2025

01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

08 May Victory Day/Liberation Day

14 Jul Bastille Day

Destination Guide for France



Medical

Destination Guide Content

Medical Care

Excellent

Standard of Health Care

The standard of medical care in France is high and of an appropriate standard. The largest tertiary-care hospitals are in Paris and other large cities. There is a private medical system in France, but public hospitals are usually better equipped to handle emergencies and major cases. Most public facilities have emergency departments, while private hospitals sometimes do not.

The country is well serviced by a sophisticated nationwide ambulance service.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance 112

Fire service 112

Police 112

Contact International SOS for help with your medical situation. [Contact us](#)

Hospitals & Clinics

American Hospital of Paris

Category: Hospital

Address: 55 Boulevard du Chateau, Paris, Ile de France

Phone: [33 146412525](tel:33146412525)

Emails: intl.patient@ahparis.org,

pc@ahparis.org

Hopital Edouard Herriot

Category: Hospital

Address: 5 Place d'Arsonval, Lyon, Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes

Phones: [33 820082069](tel:33820082069),

[33 825082569](tel:33825082569)

Email: heh.sortie-administrative@chu-lyon.fr

Hopital Europeen

Category: Hospital

Address: 6 rue Desiree Clary, Marseille, PACA

Phone: [33 413427000](tel:33413427000)

Email: contact@hopital-europeen.fr

Hopital Europeen Georges Pompidou / AP-HP

Category: Hospital

Address: 20 rue Leblanc, Paris, Ile de France

Phone: [33 156092000](tel:33156092000)

Emails: contact.hegp@egp.aphp.fr,
cellule-internationale.hegp@egp.aphp.fr

Hopital Paris Saint Joseph

Category: Hospital

Address: 185, Rue Raymond Losserand, Paris

Phones: [33 144128477](tel:33144128477),

[33 144127881](tel:33144127881),

[33 144123789](tel:33144123789),

[33 144123333](tel:33144123333)

Emails: admsaunuit@ghpsj.fr,
internationalpatient@ghpsj.fr,
admsau@ghpsj.fr

Hopital Pasteur (CHU de Nice)

Category: Hospital

Address: 30, Voie Romaine, Nice, PACA

Phone: [33 492037777](tel:33492037777)

Email: direction-generale@chu-nice.fr

Vaccinations

COVID-19

Vaccination is recommended for all travellers.

Hepatitis A

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travellers regardless of destination, especially those who are at higher risk (see [US CDC](#)), such as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.

Hepatitis B

Recommended for health care workers and anyone who may have a new sexual partner, share needles or get a tattoo or body piercing.
Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers and international assignees, regardless of destination.

Tickborne encephalitis

Recommended for:

- people who will spend time in forested or grassy areas during tick season (particularly those who will hike, camp, perform fieldwork, etc.);
- people residing in this country for longer periods (i.e., six months or more).

Routine Vaccinations

Influenza

Influenza occurs in:

- Temperate southern hemisphere: April to September.
- Temperate northern hemisphere: November to March.
- Tropics: year-round.

Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease. People who are at higher risk for severe disease include:

- People over the age of 65.
- People with underlying health conditions.
- Pregnant women.

Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR". See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)
All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need to be vaccinated.

Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)
All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

Malaria

None

Yellow Fever

Routine only

Health Threats

Hantaviruses

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that belong to the *bunyaviridae* family. They can cause two different types of illness in humans: Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS) involves the kidneys while Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) involves the respiratory system. Regardless of which illness they cause, hantaviruses are carried by infected rodents. Virus is present in the animal's saliva, urine and faeces. Droplets of these excretions can contaminate the air in a process called aerosolisation. Humans become sick when they inhale the virus.

The incubation period of HPS is not positively known. Limited data suggests that people become sick within one to eight weeks after being exposed to the virus. The incubation period for HFRS is usually 1 to 2 weeks after exposure but could be as long as 8 weeks.

Initial symptoms of HPS include fatigue, fever, and muscle aches. About 50 percent of HPS patients also experience headache, dizziness, and abdominal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, pain). The "late stage" symptoms of HPS are cough/shortness of breath and a feeling of overall tightness in the chest. Heartbeat and breathing may both become rapid at this stage of illness. Symptoms of HFRS appear suddenly and include intense headaches, back and abdominal pain, fever, chills, nausea and blurred vision. As the disease progresses, patients may develop flushing of the face, inflammation, redness of the eyes or a rash. Later symptoms include bleeding from the skin, conjunctiva of the eye, and mouth. In the most severe cases renal failure develops.

There is no specific treatment or cure. Patients are treated supportively, meaning their symptoms are addressed even though the disease itself cannot be cured. Patients usually require hospitalisation in an intensive care unit. An antiviral medication, ribavirin, may be used to treat the HFRS although its effectiveness has not been proven in HPS.

There is no vaccine for HPS. Vaccines against HFRS are being used in many Asian countries. The best way to avoid infection is to eliminate rodents from your living space and worksite, and/or avoid contact with them. Keep food in tightly sealed containers, clean dishes immediately after use, do not leave pet food out all day, and seal holes to the outside – generally, make your environment inhospitable to rodents.

Cases are reported annually, mostly in the northeast region.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Rabies is present in bats only and the risk of exposure for average travellers is low.

Crimean-Congo Fever (CCHF)

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is a viral disease that affects animals and humans. It is transmitted to humans by an infected tick bite or upon direct contact with an infected person or animal's blood and other fluids or tissues. Symptoms occur within one to twelve days of exposure to infection. The illness presents with fever, chills, headache, body ache and haemorrhage (bleeding). Continued bleeding leads to shock and death about ten days after symptoms begin. Around 40 per cent of all infected people die. If the patient survives, recovery is long and slow.

The risk to travellers is low. High-risk groups include agricultural workers, healthcare workers, military personnel, and people who camp in rural areas. Prevention is mainly by avoiding tick bites. Wear long sleeves and long pants and use insect repellents. There is no safe, effective, and widely available vaccine for CCHF.

Although there have not been any human cases detected in France, the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus (CCHFV) has been detected in ticks collected in the Pyrénées-Orientales department in southern France and on the island of Corsica. This indicates there is a risk of transmission in these areas. The ticks that transmit the disease are most active between March and July.

Dengue fever

Dengue, or "break-bone" fever, is a viral disease of the tropics and sub-tropics. It is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes that bite during the daytime and are found in and around human habitation. Transmission from mother to child is possible during pregnancy or birth. Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. A rash often follows. The acute illness can last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Occasionally, a potentially fatal form of dengue called severe dengue (previously known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or DHF) occurs. Severe dengue is more likely in infants and pregnant people, as well as for people who have been infected in the past and are infected again with a different strain of dengue. When a pregnant person is infected there is a risk of pre-term birth, low birth weight and foetal distress. About 2 to 3 out of 100 severe dengue cases are likely to be fatal.

Prevention is through avoiding mosquito bites. There are two commercially available dengue vaccines approved in a few countries. Dengvaxia is generally only used in people with previous dengue infection while Qdenga can be considered for people without a history of dengue infection.

Imported dengue cases are recorded annually, and since 2010, locally acquired infections have primarily been reported in southern France. In 2023, dengue infections occurred in Paris for the first time. The mosquito capable of transmitting dengue fever has been found in most departments, with infections most likely to occur between July and October.

Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by a parasite that can infect humans, dogs, rodents and other small animals. It is transmitted by sandflies that bite mainly between dusk and dawn and can occur in both rural and urban environments. Sandflies breed quickly in unsanitary conditions, and the spread of the disease is exacerbated by war, chronic food shortages and urbanisation activities like deforestation and building of dams and irrigation systems, changes in temperature, heavy rainfall and population movement. The disease can manifest in one of the three forms, cutaneous (is the most common form and causes skin ulcers), mucocutaneous (is a rare form which affects the inner parts of the nose and mouth) or visceral (which is the more severe form and can lead to death). There is no vaccine or drug to prevent leishmaniasis.

Prevention

The only way to avoid leishmaniasis is to prevent sandfly bites.

- Minimise outdoor activities from dusk to dawn- this is when sand flies are most active.
- Use protective clothing and insect repellent.
- Consider using an insecticide-treated bed net with *fine mesh* if there are sandflies in your living quarters. The standard bed nets used to prevent malaria are not effective, as sandflies are about one-third the size of mosquitoes and can fly through the malaria nets.
- Note that sandflies are small and do not make noise while flying. This makes it difficult to determine whether they are in your environment. Their bites cause mild symptoms and might not be noticed.

Lyme disease

Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:

- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

Tickborne encephalitis

Tickborne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral infection which is mostly transmitted to people through tick bites. Ticks live in or near forests and are usually active during warmer months. TBE infection can also be acquired by consuming unpasteurized dairy products from infected cows, goats or sheep.

Most people will not have any symptoms. For those who do, initial symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, nausea, and fatigue. These may resolve in a week or so, but if the infection spreads to the brain, the symptoms may become more severe (decreased mental state, severe headaches, convulsions, weakness and/or coma). TBE can be fatal.

Prevention is through avoiding tick bites and vaccination.

TBE risk is present in forested and grassy areas of the country. Most cases are reported in the eastern regions, including Auvergne-Rhone Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comte, and Grand Est. Transmission occurs when ticks are active, from early spring to late autumn.

West Nile Virus

Primarily a disease of birds, West Nile virus (WNV) can infect humans. The most common route for a human infection is via mosquitoes. The mosquito feeds on an infected bird or other animal, then bites a human and introduces the virus into their body.

Most people who get WNV develop no symptoms. Of the 20 percent who do get ill, most develop mild symptoms 3-14 days after being bitten: fever, head and body ache, nausea and vomiting. Sometimes the lymph nodes swell or a rash appears on the trunk.

In fewer than one percent of all human cases, the person develops a serious, possibly fatal, infection. Symptoms may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. The brain and membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord may get inflamed, which can cause coma and death. Patients who recover from a serious WNV infection may suffer permanent brain damage.

There is no specific treatment for the disease, or vaccine to protect against it. To avoid infection, prevent mosquito bites in areas where the virus circulates. Wear long sleeves and long pants, and use insect repellents.

Sporadic cases are reported each year. Risk is highest in the southern coastal regions of France from May to November.

Zika virus

Zika fever is a viral disease, mostly transmitted to people by mosquito bites, but also from one person to another through sexual contact. Symptoms can be mild and include fever, rash, muscle and joint pains, red eyes (conjunctivitis). However, infection during pregnancy can cause severe complications, including miscarriage and permanent birth defects (congenital Zika syndrome). No specific treatment or vaccine is available. Prevent infection through mosquito bite avoidance. Prevent sexual transmission through condom use or abstinence.

The first locally transmitted cases were identified in 2019. Peak transmission is generally from May through November. The mosquito that transmits the virus is present throughout much of the country, particularly in the southern regions.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is predominantly a respiratory illness, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Transmission is from person to person via contaminated respiratory droplets. People are infected when these droplets are inhaled or land directly on the mouth/nose/eyes, or indirectly when transferred by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth/nose/eyes.

Most people will develop a mild to moderate illness only which lasts up to two weeks, or have no symptoms. Symptoms vary greatly. Common symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Sometimes there is a loss of or change in the sense of smell or taste. The illness can progress to being severe and can be fatal. Older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of severe disease and death. Antiviral treatment is available and is particularly important for people at higher risk of severe illness.

Some people may continue to have symptoms that last for weeks or months after the initial infection has gone.

Prevention is through vaccination, hand hygiene, and physical distancing. Wearing a mask, and ensuring adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces can reduce the risk of infection.

The first cases of COVID-19 were detected in France on 24 January 2020. For severe symptoms call 15. See government information on [cases and data](#) and the Ministry of Public Health [COVID-19](#) website (in French).

Altitude

Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitudes, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

France has several mountain ranges including the Alps, Jura, Massif Central, Pyrenees and Vosges. The French Alps, bordering Italy and Switzerland, have 16 peaks above 2,500m. The highest of these is Mont Blanc at 4,808m (15,774ft). The French Pyrenees are lower than the Alps with the highest point, Vignemale, at 3,298m (10,820ft) above sea level. The other ranges are lower still with no peaks higher than 1,900m.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Schistosomiasis

Schistosomiasis, also known as bilharzia, is a disease caused by parasitic worms that live in freshwater lakes, rivers and rice paddies. It can penetrate the skin of persons who are wading, swimming, bathing or washing in contaminated water. There is no vaccine.

To prevent infection:

- Avoid swimming or wading in fresh water in countries where schistosomiasis occurs.
- Using soap during bathing *reduces* the risk of infection, as does a vigorous rubdown with a towel immediately after contact with contaminated water. Do *not* rely on these methods to prevent schistosomiasis.
- Heat bath water for five minutes at 50°C (122°F).
- Water held in a storage tank for at least 48 hours should be safe.

Cases of schistosomiasis have been reported among people who bathed in rivers in Corsica, particularly Cavu.

Food & Water

Generally safe

Food Risk

Food is safe.

Water and Beverages

Tap water is safe to drink.

Destination Guide for France



Security

Destination Guide Content

Personal Security

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to France can continue with standard security precautions.
- Large-scale protests that impact both urban centres and rural areas are common. Precedent suggests they can deteriorate into unrest and most should be avoided as a precaution.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist militants. Be vigilant and follow instructions from police and security authorities. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Security alerts or hoaxes can trigger the short-notice evacuation of transport hubs or public locations, which can cause disruption. Follow all directives issued by the authorities during any security operation and do not act on the basis of unverified information.
- Take basic security precautions against petty and street crime.
- Strikes in the transport sector can disrupt travel. Keep abreast of planned industrial action and plan your itineraries accordingly.

Paris Olympics / Paralympics Advice (26 July-8 September)

Inbound travel

- Inbound travel to France can proceed with standard security precautions.
- Managers should determine the need for non-essential travel to France from 1 July and throughout the duration of the Games due to an increased demand for accommodation and an upwards pressure on transport options. Workforce that do travel should anticipate increased logistical and movement challenges during this period.

In-country workforce

- Workforce based in-country should discuss options for remote work with their managers in the lead-up to and during the Games.

- Anticipate increased travel time within urban centres due to road restrictions, related congestion and an increased use of public transportation.

Advice for managers

- Managers with workforce in cities impacted by the Games should consider remote working arrangements where possible, taking into consideration:
 - Office and employee location
 - Security perimeters and potential for access restrictions to worksites
 - Public transport/metro station closures/road restrictions
- Managers should ensure emergency plans are up to date and tested, including the ability to account for personnel in the event of a crisis.
- Run personal training security awareness sessions with workforce planning to visit the Olympics, ensuring they are cognisant of common scam and theft tactics.
- Ensure workforce have access to credible sources of timely, verified information to pre-emptively plan for possible rallies.
- Managers should monitor local news for information on industrial action, including negotiations between unions and the government.
- Discuss an emergency response plan with your team, including what to do if communications are cut off following a terror attack.
- When creating or reviewing emergency plans, account for the likely presence of workforce on leisure travel and clarify the extent of your duty of care responsibilities internally.

Crime

Limited to hot spots

CRIME

Petty crime is common in major cities.

Thefts are most common in busy areas such as tourist spots (such as monuments and museums), restaurants, hotels, beaches and transport hubs. High-end mobile phones are particularly attractive for thieves, and foreign nationals should exercise caution when using them in public areas or in transport. Residential break-ins are a concern, particularly during the summer holidays (August) and festive season (December).

Violent incidents between gangs occasionally take place in destitute suburbs of the capital Paris, Lyon (Rhône-Alpes region) and Marseille (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region), with the latter having experienced the highest levels of related violence in the past few years. Nevertheless, most incidents, particularly shootings, occur in areas that business workforce are unlikely to need to visit and primarily affect individuals connected to criminal networks.

Terrorism

Limited indirect risk to foreign nationals

TERRORISM

There is a credible risk of attack by Islamist militants, particularly in urban centres, with France being the country that has been most impacted by terrorism in Europe in recent years. The country's participation in the fight against Islamist militant groups in Iraq and Syria and in the Sahel region makes it a continued target for militant groups.

The number of incidents attributed to extremism in recent years has decreased following high-profile attacks that occurred between 2015 and 2018. The most notable of these took place in November 2015, when IS mounted a co-ordinated attack on six different locations across the capital Paris, killing 130 people and injuring 350 others. Several smaller incidents ensued in the following years, though the capability of militants to carry out complex attacks has since diminished.

However, small-scale attacks involving the use of unsophisticated and readily available weapons remain a possibility. These are frequently aimed at members of the security forces, though civilians can also be targeted.

In December 2023, an assailant armed with a knife and a hammer killed one person and injured two others near Quai de Grenelle in Paris. Prior to this, in October 2023, an Islamist militant carried out a knife attack at a school in Arras (Hauts-de-France region), killing a teacher and injuring two others. The incident prompted the authorities to raise the country's terror threat level to 'emergency attack' (highest on a three-tier scale).

These incidents occurred following the outbreak of conflict between Israel and Hamas. The government has introduced several counter-terrorism measures, including allowing daytime military patrols in major cities, aimed at further enhancing the intelligence and monitoring capabilities of the security services. Additional measures to strengthen the police's counter-terrorism capabilities were proposed in 2020-21.

Soldiers and police officers remain visible at key locations (transport hubs, government buildings and tourist attractions) and patrol the streets in Paris and other urban centres. While their presence is a visible deterrent and enhances the security forces' capabilities to rapidly respond to an incident, this measure also makes them likely targets for terrorist attacks. Regular arrests of suspects underline the police's capabilities as well as the continued risk posed by militancy, particularly in public areas.

Concerns surround the upcoming Paris Olympics, a large-scale event that represents a valuable target for militants. Two terror plots related to the Games have already been disrupted. On 22 May, the authorities announced the arrest of an individual allegedly planning an attack on a Games football match at the Geoffroy-Guichard Stadium in Saint-Etienne (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region). In April, a teenager was arrested in Marignier (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes) for allegedly planning a suicide bomb attack on a Games venue. Security will be significantly heightened across the country throughout the duration of the events.

Although Islamist extremist terrorism remains the predominant threat, the risk posed by ultra-right and ultra-left militancy has grown over time. The French security services have foiled several attempted attacks in recent years.

Social Unrest

SOCIAL UNREST

Rallies and protests are very common. Such events can lead to significant localised travel disruption due to the presence of large crowds and road closures implemented by the authorities. Strikes by transport unions, particularly those in the rail and airport sectors, occur frequently.

A major protest movement emerged and was sustained in the first half of 2023 over controversial pension reforms. At its height, more than 1m people demonstrated on a weekly basis. Extensive travel disruption was also caused by industrial action. In 2024, anti-far-right demonstrations have occurred across the country following strong results in the European Parliament elections for far-right parties. In both cases, clashes between participants and security forces took place, with the latter deploying tear gas, a commonly used dispersal tactic by French police.

Protests by environmental and left-wing activists against major infrastructure projects can occasionally be unruly. Plans to construct a mega-basin at Sainte-Soline (Nouvelle-Aquitaine region) have sparked violent clashes between activists and the police, resulting in serious injuries on both sides. Nationwide strikes by labour unions over budget cuts occurred in March 2024.

Unrest sometimes erupts in the suburbs of major cities such as the capital Paris, Lyon (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region) or Marseille (Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region), particularly over perceived state discrimination or police brutality. These usually remain confined to peripheral neighbourhoods. The death of a teenager during a police check in Nanterre (Ile-de-France region) in June 2023 triggered numerous violent incidents across the country. Clashes with police officers, looting and infrastructural damage occurred. Later in the year, the fatal stabbing of a teenager in Crepol (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region) in November 2023 provoked protests by right-wing groups across the country. In March 2024, protesters attacked the La Courneuve police station in Paris after a teenager was killed in a collision with a police vehicle. Subsequent demonstrations were staged, passing off peacefully.

Conflict

CONFLICT

France does not face any serious external risks. Although France provides financial and military aid to Ukraine, the former's membership of NATO greatly reduces the likelihood of a military intervention taking place within its territory.