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| **Preparing for your trip**  **Passports and Visas**  A passport with validity six months beyond your trip is required. No visa is required for France.  **Vaccinations and Health**  No vaccinations required nor recommended. Please do secure adequate travel insurance for any mishap that may occur.  **Packing**  In addition to your everyday clothes and things, we suggest bringing:  - Medium sized day bag/backpack for easy access  - Light rain/windbreaker jacket  - Sunhat and sunglasses  - Personal medications  - Gel or “sport” sunscreen & lip balm  - French “round-prong” electrical outlet adapters  - Camera with spare battery & card  - Swimsuit  - Cycling shorts (baggy or tight), jerseys, gloves, and comfortable walking and cycling shoes.  -bandana or scarf (to cover neck)  - small Dr. Bronners travel soap  -purell hand wash  -small tissues pack for biking  - French/English menu guide  In May, early June, late Sept. and Oct. mornings can be cool and a light to medium wind breaker and sweater are useful.  Baggage Allowance  Standard weight limit for checked baggage on international carriers is typically 2 bags totaling 23kg (about 50 lbs.) in Economy plus. | **Practicalities**  **Local Time**  GMT +1 (5 hours ahead of NYC)  **Money Matters**  The national currency of France is the Euro (EUR), with exchange  rate of about 0.75 to the USD.  ATMs are common, but some banks limit withdrawals and malfunctions are common. Credit cards can be a problem for government and other purchases, such as gas stations.  Traveler’s checks are not recommended as they may be difficult to change. During your trip, allow for extra expenses such as laundry and drinks.  **Telecomm**  France Country Code:  33 (from US 011-33-*number*)  **Electrical**  France uses 220 volts (U.S. is 110V), but  Most phone, tablet, kindle, camera and other adapters adjust to 220V but not hairdryers (best to buy in France).  **Mobile Phones**  To avoid expensive roaming fees, you may try to have your phone unlocked and buy a sim card after arrival. You may also simply buy a local phone for about $50.  **Internet**  Internet access is available in all hotels, most of which offer wireless.  **Tipping**  Restaurants add a service charge of 15%. We suggest tipping drivers about US$10 and guides about US$20 per day, per person in your group. | **Books**  **My Life in France** by Julia Child  **The Great Domaines of Burgundy: A Guide to the Finest Wine Producers of the Cote d'Or** by Remington Norman  **Burgundy and Its Wines** by Nicholas Faith  **Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong** by Jean-Benoit Nadeau  **Off to the Side** by Jim Harrison  **Paris out of Hand** by Karen Elizabeth Gordon  **Paris, The Secret History** by Andrew Hussey  **A Year in the Merde** by Stephen Clarke  **The Table Comes First** by Adam Gopnik  **The Elegance of the Hedgehog** by Muriel Barbery  **French Revolutions: Cycling the Tour de France** by Tim Moore  **Slaying the Badger: Greg LeMond, Bernard Hinault, and the Greatest Tour de France** by Richard Moore  **French Illusions: My story as an American Au Pair in the Loire Valley**  Linda Kovic-Skow  **Joan of Arc: Her Story** by Régine Pernoud  **Queen of Fashion** By Caroline Weber  **Words in a French Life: Lessons in Love and Language** by Kristin Espinasse  **DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Loire Valley** by Jack Tressider  **The Discovery of France: A Historical Geography** by Graham Robb  **A Year in Provence** by Peter Mayle |