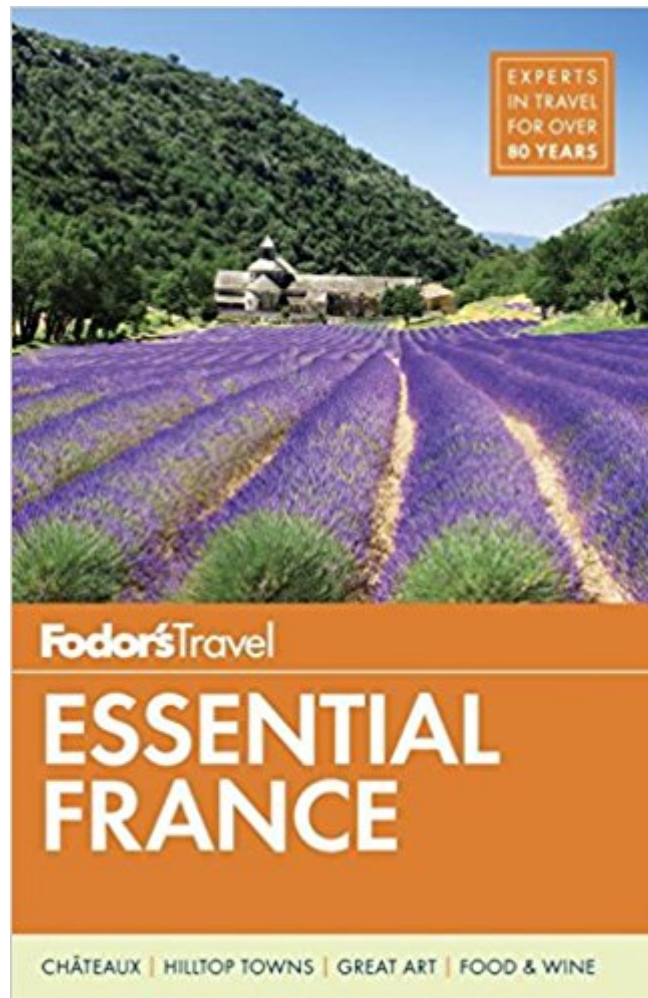




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Fodor's Essential France (Full-color Travel Guide)



Synopsis

Written by locals, Fodor's travel guides have been offering expert advice for all tastes and budgets for more than 80 years. Unforgettable artwork, heavenly villages, and dream cities--there are so many reasons to visit France that deciding where to go and what to do can be a bit overwhelming. Fodor's Essential France takes the guesswork out of choosing the perfect French experiences by compiling the top choices chosen by Fodor's army of France-based writers. This travel guide includes:

- Dozens of full-color maps plus a handy pullout map with essential Paris information
- Hundreds of hotel and restaurant recommendations, with Fodor's Choice designating our top picks
- Multiple itineraries to explore the top attractions and what's off the beaten path
- In-depth breakout features on Provence's fields of lavender, the wine cellars of Champagne, and Mont-St-Michel's medieval glory
- Side trips from Paris including Chartres, Versailles, and Monet's Garden
- Coverage of Paris Neighbourhoods, Western Ile-de-France, Eastern Ile-de-France, Loire Valley, and Grenoble

Planning to focus on just part of France? Check out Fodor's travel guides to Paris and Provence & the French Riviera.

Book Information

Series: Full-color Travel Guide (Book 1)

Paperback: 832 pages

Publisher: Fodor's Travel; Fol Pap/Ma edition (March 14, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1101880031

ISBN-13: 978-1101880036

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #40,811 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in Books > Travel > Caribbean > General #53 in Books > Travel > Europe > France > General #93 in Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Tourist Destinations & Museums

Customer Reviews

Fodor's is pitched a few notches higher, aimed at a fairly discerning traveler with an appetite for background and the occasional surprise.

- "New York Times" "The Fodor's guides are notable for their ratings of sights, restaurants, shops, accommodations and attractions."
- "Chicago Tribune" "In terms of comprehensiveness of coverage, the very accessible format,

and the enthusiastic tone, this series remains one of the best on the market. • “ Booklist
• Fodor’s super-informative guidebooks are known for accuracy and attention to detail. • “
Sacramento Bee • Fodor’s can help you plan the perfect adventure. • “ Arizona Republic

For over 80 years, Fodor’s Travel has been a trusted resource offering expert travel advice for every stage of a traveler’s trip. We hire local writers who know their destinations better than anyone else, allowing us to provide the best travel recommendations for all tastes and budget in over 7,500 worldwide destinations. Our books make it possible for every trip to be a trip of a lifetime.

I go back and forth between Fodor, Rick Steves, Frommer’s, Lonely Planet, and Rough Guides to find the right one for a specific purpose. Some of the guide books are better than others, some are more useful for planning and background, while others are perfect to take along with you in case you need to dig deeper to find nontouristy things to do. This book was helpful for both planning and while touring. Written and presented in clear, precise language, it told me what I needed to know about the sites. More comprehensive than most of the others, I relied upon it to find some out of the way places beyond the main tourist sites. I bought the Kindle edition and kept it on my iPad and iPhone so it would always be handy as a reference. I used it frequently. A good choice for planning and touring many parts of France.

I looked at guidebooks at a local bookstore before ordering this—it’s a nice size (though a bit heavy) and had lots of useful information.

Perfect for our recent trip to Paris and Bordeaux.

Fodor’s guides are always helpful and relatively easy to use.

This is a really good guide for planning and dreaming at home. If you want to take along specific pages (restaurants, maps, tourist sites, etc.), I recommend you get an X-Acto knife & cut the book up & take those pages with you. You really do not need the hotel info if you’ve made reservations, etc. This is an 877-page book - too big IMO to take it all with you unless you are going to every part of France. If you are a return visitor or first-time, the "France Today" section gives a general overview of atmosphere & what’s hot in France. I also like the "Eating & Drinking Well in France" section for each part of France - the book highlights the food & drink the area is known for. The section on Paris

is very good. I like how it is organized & the "What's Where" pages that show the Paris arrondissements and all the top sights (& more) with advice for how to avoid the biggest crowds (there are always crowds no matter the season). There is information on side trips outside/near Paris & travelling with children. The dining section gives restaurant options in each arrondissement & there are also maps with restaurants marked with orange squares. The same goes for sleeping accommodations except they have a blue square. The "History You Can See" section is an interesting way to help you decide where you want to spend your time in France. For example, if you are interested in Ancient France you may want to visit Carnac in Brittany or Roman architecture in the south. The guide goes on to give advice on etiquette, what to pack (Parisians/French dress nicely & you should too), how restaurants work (it's quite different than in the USA), general information on France and overview of the country. The top sights for each section of the country is well done. There is a section on French vocabulary basics which should get you through. My advice is to at least learn basic words (& use them!) like: please, thank you, pardon, hello, goodbye - you will be amazed at how much more friendly people are if you are courteous & learn a few easy phrases/words. There are maps that are OK - good for planning. There is also a Metro & RER map. I always use the much more detailed & laminated "Streetwise Paris" map and buy Michelin maps (if I am driving) for the specific areas when I get to France. This is a lovely book & well-organized with good information. It's real value is whetting your appetite with the photos & helping you whittle down your itinerary - decide what you want to spend your precious time/money, doing/seeing.

For two years, I worked at the University of Grenoble in France. I have made several trips back to France since then. During my years in France, I had lots of time to explore. France essentially shuts down in August. It seems like everyone heads to the ocean or the Mediterranean. Each summer in August, when my university closed, I took off on bicycle. At an easy pace of 60 miles per day, I was able to do 1200 miles in three weeks. I have also traveled in France by train and auto. Every month or two, I would find my way to Paris by train. It really is the cultural center of Europe, if not the world. You cannot move without tripping over a museum or historical site. I hung out with friends, French and American, but I did a lot of exploring on my own. For Paris, I choose the Orangerie for the Monet Water Lilies. How did Woody Allen get permission to film a scene for Midnight in Paris in front of the Water Lilies? It may have helped that Carla Bruni, a cast member, was married to the President of France. The Fodor's Essential France provides good coverage of attractions, cultural institutions, and museums. It also describes shopping, restaurants, and hotels. My first impression was "OMG look at the size of the thing. It is over eight hundred pages! The guide is a lot to

take in at once, as is France. It does include many of my favorites: Avignon, the Mediterranean Coast from Nice to Monaco, Chartres, The Bayeux Tapestry, Mont St. Michel, and Carnac. I did not find a mention of the Tour de France. Watch it on TV in July to see how beautiful the country is. The guide is sketchy on alpine ski areas. It omits Alpe d'AzÃ©s and Chamrousse, Olympic areas, where I learned to ski. The Piste du Tunnel at Alpe d'Huez used to be my favorite. You pole through a tunnel cut through the mountain at 3,000 m (10,000 ft), then exit, and oh!!! See photos. My advice: see Paris, put up with the Parisians, and then get out of town. The further south you go in France, the nicer the people are. Bicycling through the Alps from Grenoble to Nice (two hundred miles, three days), we encountered a spring snow storm going up a mountain pass. A woman came out of her house to ask if we needed anything!! I recommend the Rhone Valley, the Alps, where I used to live, and the Mediterranean. Go to the Rhone Valley for the wine, to the Alps for the skiing in the winter, and further south to the Mediterranean, where the scenery is terrific and the weather is mild all year round. As for this guide, I find that it is heavy on descriptions in small text, but light on photographs. I prefer the Lonely Planet guides, which have more photos. You cannot do all of France in a week. You can skim through the Fodor's and then choose a region. Despite its eight hundred pages, it is not detailed enough. There are many regional guides available from Lonely Planet, Fodor's, Frommer's, Michelin, and others. Read the guide, but leave it at home. Use the regional guides for your travel.

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