
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA COLLEGE OF LAW

2026 France Study Abroad Program: Paris

May 18 – 24, 2026



PARTICIPANT PREPARATION MANUAL

THIS MANUAL CONTAINS INFORMATION THAT WILL AID YOU IN YOUR
PREPARATION FOR THE FRANCE PROGRAM.
BE SURE TO CHECK MULTIPLE SOURCES AS INFO CAN CHANGE.

Updated October 06 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your acceptance into the University of Iowa College of Law May Intersession International and Comparative Law Program for 2026! Our program takes place in Paris, France, and we hope it will provide you with a variety of enriching academic and cultural experiences. This program includes an international and comparative law course, tours, and an introduction to French and European culture. It also provides a great opportunity to make lasting friendships.

If you have not traveled abroad before, you may not be familiar with the concept of “culture shock,” which is inherent in adjusting to a new country. This adjustment takes some time. While you will probably begin your trip with a great deal of enthusiasm, you may feel homesick for American culture. It is important to remain open minded about the different values and customs that you will learn about France. It is critical to remember that you are a guest in a foreign country and must obey local laws as well.

We hope this manual will help you before the trip as you make your plans and, also, during the trip as you make your adjustment to life in France. Please take the time to read this manual very carefully and to prepare as thoroughly as possible for this trip. Please consider purchasing a recent travel book from Lonely Planet or another source for detailed France information.

1. PAYMENTS

The cost of the program is \$2,000 for 1 credit, which includes tuition, 6 nights housing (program fee only covers double occupancy), legal tours, opening dinner, and closing meal. A \$200 nonrefundable deposit is due upon acceptance of your application (payment link will be provided). The remaining \$1800 will be charged to your university bill (U-bill).

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEPOSIT WILL BE REFUNDABLE IF THE PROGRAM IS CANCELLED. Students will be housed in a hotel while in Paris. The student budget provides the breakdown of other expenses besides the tuition. This budget is the amount students should approach their financial aid office about to determine their eligibility for financial aid. See our [website](#) for more information and links. Contact Andrea Flaherty at andrea-flaherty@uiowa.edu with any issues.

Book and course materials. There may be a small charge for the material which will be available on the ICON course site. ICON is the university’s course management system powered by Canvas. Books and course materials will be charged separately. Hard copy versions of these items may be printed upon request and will be available through the College of Law ISBA Bookstore with costs that will be determined by the bookstore. University of Iowa students may charge bookstore purchases to their student U-Bill accounts. Non-UI students will be billed for the cost of any faculty-prepared materials, plus shipping if you want a hard copy, as soon as these costs are known, and these materials will be shipped promptly, via FedEx, upon receipt of payment. **To ensure that materials are received prior to your departure for France, payment for these materials is due immediately upon receipt of your invoice.** If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Flaherty at andrea-flaherty@uiowa.edu.

If you requested **single housing** on your housing survey, you will be notified by email of the additional fee for this option. Single housing *is not included* in the program fee and is not covered by financial aid. You will be billed and responsible for paying this fee separately (payment link will be provided) and payment is required once rooms have been confirmed. Contact Andrea Flaherty at andrea-flaherty@uiowa.edu.

For those students who will be accompanied by one or more **guests**, a non-participant fee will be charged for each individual accompanying you who attends various events. This fee will allow your guest/s to attend program functions, including the opening and closing meals. This fee will be predetermined prior to the start of the program based upon the actual costs for events your guest/s attend and all relevant participants will be notified of the charge at that time. Such participants will receive an online payment link for these fees. Payment will be expected as soon as they receive the invoice detailing the charge.

No **damage deposit** is required for housing prior to the start of the program. The hotel will assess any such charges.

WARNING: The dollar may be weak against the Euro. This means that prices may seem very expensive to us, and students should be very careful about splurging on things until they are accustomed to the costs. We do not want anyone to run out of money.

2. PASSPORTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

2.1 Passports

You need a passport to travel to Europe. If you have a passport, make sure it is still valid and will be so for **six months** after your return. **If your Passport has expired, you will need to send it in and apply for a new one.** Non-U.S. citizens need to check with their country's embassy as to the procedures for replacing an expired passport.

U.S. Passports are valid for adults for 10 years. The Passport agency will return your old passport when they mail your new one. Please check with your local passport agency for qualifications. Passports can be obtained either through the mail or from a U.S. Passport Agency. There is an agency on the UI campus. **Please check ASAP to determine how long it will take to get a new passport. Even expedited requests may take several weeks.**

Protect Your Passport At All Costs! Keep your passport with you at all times! Do not leave it in hotel rooms, etc. Wear it in a money belt inside your pants. However, you should be aware that some hotels may require the passport of one person staying in a room.

If your passport is lost or stolen, go to the nearest Embassy for your country or to local police authorities. If you can provide information that was contained on your passport, you may be able to obtain a new one. It is a good idea to make photocopies of your passport, birth certificate, and other important identification documents, and keep the copies separate from your passport. In fact, it is a good idea to leave a photocopy of the passport with a relative or friend in America.

2.2 Registration with the Study Abroad Office, International Health Insurance and Student Identity Card

IMPORTANT: In accordance with university policy, students travelling abroad through a University of Iowa sponsored program must be registered with the Office of Study Abroad. Students attending the France program will be registered as a group by a Program administrator. You do not need to register individually on the Study Abroad website. Once registered, you will receive an email from Safety Abroad with instructions to complete a mandatory pre-departure course titled, “Education Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation.” It is important you complete the course before you depart for France. The Study Abroad Office also recommends you register your travel plans with the U.S. Department of State through their [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP).

Your registration with the Study Abroad Office will also trigger enrollment in the University of Iowa’s mandatory health insurance for international travelers. The cost to students for this coverage is **approximately \$1.33 per day** and will be charged directly to your U-Bill. You can find more information about the insurance requirement, policy details, and claim forms at the Study Abroad website’s [Health Insurance Information](#) page. Again, registration and inclusion in the International Health Insurance program is mandatory and cannot be waived even if you have an existing insurance plan. You will receive an enrollment notification email with your digital insurance ID card from CISI at your uiowa.edu email address approximately 20 days prior to departure.

Students traveling abroad may also choose to apply for an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). These cards may provide you student discounts at some museums and other tourist attractions. A University of Iowa or other university student ID may get you many of the same discounts, but the International Student Identity Card offers some exclusive discounts that might make it worth getting. There is no age limit to get a card and all that is required is that you are a full-time student. For more information about the International Student ID, contact the Study Abroad Office or visit the [ISIC website](#). For those students who are **not** from the University of Iowa, ISIC cards may also be obtained from your respective universities. You are encouraged to check with your Registrar or university study abroad office. you can check the tourist activities you are interested in to determine if an ISIC card is worth investing in. Some students have found that most things they wanted to do in Paris were not on the ISIC card list, and thus did not choose to invest in a card.

If you decide to obtain a card, it sometimes takes as much as one month to process an order.

2.3 Student Visas

If you are a United States citizen, student visas are not required for participation in this program. However, if you choose to go to another country while you are in France, you may want to consider that particular country’s visa requirements. EU countries will not require you to have a visa. However, some pending EU countries, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Asian and African countries may require a visa. The UK requires a visa.

If you are NOT a U.S. citizen, you should contact the French Embassy and the embassy of any other country you wish to visit regarding their visa requirements. **YOU MAY NEED TO APPLY MONTHS IN ADVANCE.**

3. FINANCE AND BUDGETING

3.1 Banking and Charge Cards

ATM/Debit and Credit Cards

If possible, students should bring both an ATM/debit card and a credit card. Most ATM cards will work in French ATM machines, and there are many machines in Paris. **ATM/debit and credit cards with the VISA (Carte Bleu) logo are most widely accepted in France. MasterCard and American Express are accepted much less frequently.** If you do not have a Visa Card, you would be wise to call the bank that issues your card and ask if they issue a VISA version of your card. If not, you should seriously consider applying for one! Also, credit and debit cards often get de-magnetized, so you might want to have a contingency plan.

Check your PIN numbers before leaving for France. Oftentimes, machines, such as ticket machines at train stations, will require you to put in a PIN. This is true sometimes even for credit cards because there is no way for you to sign a receipt to verify. You may be asked to give a signature more times than you're used to because cashiers will want to compare your signature on the receipt to the signature on the back of your card.

Chances are your banking institution has set a daily limit on both ATM withdrawals and purchases for your account. In addition to informing your bank that you are traveling and will be using your card while abroad, you may wish to speak with them regarding your withdrawal and purchase limits. You will need to know what these limits are, and you may wish to request that they be raised for the duration of your trip.

Of course, most banks and some credit card companies charge fees for overseas use of their cards, but past students have found that banks and credit card companies provide the best exchange rates. The issue with European microchip card readers may occasionally make use of debit/credit cards problematic, but savings can make the effort worthwhile, as ATM withdrawal fees can be significant. There may be fees from the bank sponsoring the machine as well as your home bank. Additionally, there may be currency conversion fees, and certain other flat transaction fees. Withdrawing cash in large amounts (e.g. 300 Euros) is often the best way to avoid fees. Your bank may also charge a fee per debit transaction, however, which could add up quickly, so you should check with your bank and/or credit card company to see which fees apply to ATM withdrawals, debit-card purchases, and credit card purchases. Fees can add up quickly, so it is worth doing some research so you can avoid them as much as possible. **Finally, some banks require notification that the card will be used abroad (i.e. what countries the card will be used in) PRIOR to departure, or they will not work overseas.** Most problems can be avoided by contacting your bank ahead of time. Due to the increased use of Apple Pay and Google Pay, you may find that these e-card options can be used in many French shops and restaurants.

3.2 Online Banking

We assume that nowadays everyone has online banking. French ATM machines cannot display your account balance or make transfers from savings accounts.

3.3 Using Cash

Depending on the value of the dollar to the euro, it may make sense to buy euros in the U.S. before leaving. Depending on the fees your bank charges, it may be less expensive to purchase euros, in your own city. Most banks do not hold foreign currency at the branch, so give yourself enough time to order the currency in advance.

You may purchase euros from exchange booths at the airport or in town when you arrive in Paris, but these booths often charge significant fees and have less favorable rates. US major airports may have booths as well, but the rate will not be favorable. Avoid bringing cash in dollars with you. Most banks only exchange currency for account holders, and even the post office places restrictions on which denominations it will exchange. Past students have found that the cheapest way to get cash while in France is by withdrawing it from an ATM.

3.4 Traveler's Checks

Traveler's Checks are generally not used in France anymore.

3.5 Budgeting

This seems like an obvious point, but some students neglect to plan their budgets in advance and can end up running out of money. For the entire program, make sure you account for the exchange rate, week, souvenirs, etc. Note that for train tickets, there may be a different price for people over a certain age. Please take this into account in your budgeting.

3.6 Wiring Money

Even when you carefully plan your budget, emergencies happen, and sometimes it is necessary to have money wired from home. Both Western Union (800-225-5227) and MoneyGram (800-926- 9400) have instant international wire transfer systems. If you visit one of their overseas offices or call them, you can pick up the money from their office shortly after the wire transfer is made. Another option is wiring money from a U.S. bank to a foreign bank. A more recent option is to set up a Venmo Cash App account. As a *last* resort, there is the option of contacting the U.S. State Department's Citizen Emergency Center (202-647-5225).

3.7 Safety Tips: ATM Fraud

A few students have been victims of ATM fraud. While this is not always preventable, there are a few important things to keep in mind:

- (1) If you have a money belt, it is probably cheaper to take out larger amounts of money in fewer ATM transactions (however, use common sense about this: you do not want to lose or have

500 euros stolen). This is also a good idea because **most banks charge fees for overseas ATM withdrawals**, so using an ATM on a daily or even bi-weekly basis can really add up. Also, for safety reasons, the more ATM withdrawals you make from different ATMs, the greater your chances are of being a victim of ATM fraud.

- (2) Be very careful booking hotels, flights, hostels, etc. with your credit card in internet cafes. Sometimes the computers are set to remember credit card information, and the connections may not be secure. If you do not know how to check the computer settings, it is probably better to call to make these arrangements (but be aware that French airlines usually charge a per-minute fee for telephone reservations).
- (3) Most importantly, check your bank account balance online from time to time so that you know if you are a victim of ATM fraud, and keep track of your spending!

4. MAKING YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Booking your Flight to Europe Rates

Booking your flight should be done as early as possible because rates tend to increase as you get closer to your departure date. Priceline, Expedia, Travelocity, etc. are not necessarily cheaper than buying your tickets directly through the airline! Try Skyscanner or Student Universe. Students may pay anywhere from \$700-\$1300 for round trip tickets from Chicago O'Hare to Paris, so shop around! If you have connections via Canada or Europe, be sure to allow enough time, as you may have to go through customs or a passport control.

Due to possibilities of flight changes or cancellations, you should definitely consider purchasing a refundable ticket or flight insurance. Check coverage carefully!!

Participants must arrange and pay for their own transportation. The cost of airfare will be part of the financial aid budget.

Destination

Participants should fly into one of the Paris airports and arrive no later than May 18. The quickest but most expensive way from the airport may be to take a taxi, and costs can be cut by sharing a taxi with a program participant. There is a metro from the airport as well, which is very inexpensive, but may have accessibility problems.

Frequent Flyer Programs

If you do not have a frequent-flyer account set up with a particular airline, it might be smart to set one up prior to buying your tickets. Students have received up to 6,000 frequent flyer miles for this trip, which can really help toward free tickets in the future. If you already have a frequent-flyer account, try to purchase tickets through the same airline to benefit from the additional miles this trip will give you.

4.2 Airport Check-In

Arrive early, at least two and a half to three hours before your plane is scheduled to depart. Security measures are even greater for international flights. Upon arrival at the airport, go to the check-in counter for your airline. Call your airline in advance to check international regulations on allowable luggage and weight limits.

You should also pack your carry-on bag so it can be easily opened by security. Make sure you have identification information both outside and inside the luggage. Your identification information should be the address of our Paris hotel.

Please cooperate with all security personnel.

Do NOT make any jokes with them about terrorists, bombs, etc.

4.3 The Flight

If you have never flown outside of the U.S., you should be prepared for a very long flight. For example, it takes approximately nine hours from Chicago, not counting layover time. If you are not able to sleep on the plane, you should bring books, magazines, etc. to entertain yourself.

If you get motion sick, do not forget your Dramamine. Chewing gum can prevent your ears from popping on the plane's descent. You will probably be served two meals on the flight, along with several drinks. If you have special dietary restrictions, you need to notify the airline in advance. You may want to bring snacks in case the airline food is not to your liking. It is advisable NOT to drink alcohol on the flight, as it tends to prolong jet lag. There is a 7-hour time difference between France and Chicago/Iowa (it is seven hours later in France). Therefore, if you have not slept on the plane, you will have missed the night. To adjust to the new time zone, you should plan on staying up all day and going to sleep at your normal bedtime in the evening. You also may want to avoid taking a nap the first day to make the adjustment easier. It can take several days to get over your jet lag so you can expect to be excited, but very tired.

4.4 What to Do When You Arrive

When you fly into Paris, you will go through immigration showing your passport (and visa if required for certain non-U.S. and non-EU citizens). You will pick up your checked luggage and then may be subject to customs inspection. If you have problems with receiving your luggage, you must put in a claim before leaving the baggage area. The various bus services to downtown Paris have been changing. Consult <https://transfer.airport-paris.com/bus.htm> to see your options, running about 12 euros and taking 80 minutes. Alternatively, you can take a taxi, which is very expensive but has the benefit of going quickly directly to your destination. It is around 55 euros. We do not recommend the cheapest alternative, the Metro. There can be high rates of pickpocketing, plus there may not be an escalator or elevator option, even though there are many flights of steps that may be difficult to climb with your heavy luggage and multiple bags.

4.5 Arrival at the Hotel

You should arrive at the hotel on Monday, May 18, which is the first day your housing will be available. We will give out information in the States and at the hotel, including location for the opening dinner nearby. If you arrive after 7:00 p.m. (really try not to), we will be at the opening dinner. We will leave directions. **IF YOU WILL BE DELAYED AND WILL NOT ARRIVE ON MONDAY, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR ME EITHER BY EMAIL OR MY U.S. PHONE (+1-319-621-7674, when calling from France).**

5. PHONING

There are many methods for staying in touch for free or for very limited cost. These methods change constantly and might include WhatsApp, GroupMe, Facetime, Facebook Messenger, Zoom, and others. Please check which method is best before you go.

Cell Phones

The situation with phones changes each year, so this information may not be applicable. In 2025, many students used WhatsApp with their US Phone number and an internet connection to communicate. We will create a group for internal program communication, using whatever method is most useful near the time of departure.

Please leave the hotel phone number, **(will update when available)** with your family for emergencies, as well as my U.S. cell phone, 011-319-621-7674 (calling from the U.S.). Calling my U.S. phone in France will be a local call (i.e., U.S. call for your family).

Students may be able to purchase an international plan with their current mobile carrier. Prepaid SIM cards can be purchased once students arrive in France which will allow them to use French mobile networks. In the past, some students have rented a mobile hotspot. There are many companies that rent mobile hotspots, but a great French option that students have used in the past is [Hippocket WiFi](https://hippocketwifi.com): <https://hippocketwifi.com>.

6. FOOD

Students will need to primarily eat out during their time in Paris since there will not be kitchens in the hotel rooms. There are a variety of restaurant levels, ranging from fast food, sandwiches, to gourmet multi-course meals.

Please note that many more French people smoke than Americans, but the inside of restaurants are nonsmoking. The outside seating may permit smoking! Most restaurants also allow dogs.

7. GETTING AROUND

Bring comfortable shoes to walk around in. For the metro, you can get small individual tickets at the metro kiosks within the metro, however getting a Navigo pass is recommended as the tickets are easily lost and demagnetized. You can consult the different available options here: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/en/tickets-fares/media/navigo-travel-card>. The Navigo pass can be bought at most metro stations at the ticket counter there is a person and then can be topped off at the automated kiosks in the stations. [The weekly Navigo card](#) is a great option and can be refilled in the RATP App.

Bicycles, mopeds, motorcycles, and cars are available for rent. Cars can be rented at the airport. Using a car in Paris can be very difficult. Gasoline and parking are expensive. Please note, though, **that most cars available are manual transmission and may have an age limit for rental.**

8. HOUSING

You will be given your roommate and housing assignment prior to departure. The program will make every effort to assist students if any problems arise with their accommodations. The hotel may only clean the rooms or provide towels on an intermittent basis.

9. PACKING

9.1 REMEMBER THE PACK LIGHT ADMONITION!

Remember you may be hauling your luggage by yourself up and down stairs through airports and subways without elevators. I strongly recommend one checked piece, one carry-on that hooks or sits on the larger piece, and one small personal item such as a purse or small backpack. Put luggage tags outside each piece and put a sheet of paper with the address and phone of the hotel (*see supra* §4.2) inside each bag so that it can be sent to you if the outside tags fall off. Check with your airline about the weight limit per bag. Some airlines now charge extra for any bag over 50 lbs. and may even put limits on the weight of the carry-on! Your books, if printed out, must fit in along with your notebooks. A laptop will count as your carry-on or personal item, and you should not put it in your checked luggage! Also, do not check any valuables such as medicines, money, passport, jewelry etc. Carry them on. **Leave valuable items (jewelry, watches, rings etc.) at home totally.** Pickpocketing abroad can be a much bigger problem than in the U.S.

At the very minimum, you should carry a travel toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, comb/brush in your carry on, along with a change of underwear and maybe a fresh t-shirt, as you are flying overnight and will arrive in the early morning. If your luggage does not arrive, at least you have these basics with you. Remember to wear a flat fabric money belt underneath your pants (not an outside pouch) containing your credit cards, passport, and cash. Pick pockets can abound at the airport or train stations. Wear very comfortable clothes and shoes on the plane as your feet are likely to swell.

9.2 Electrical Appliances

The French electrical system is DC, 220 volts. We use AC in the U.S. If you plan to use an electrical appliance, you should purchase both a converter (to convert DC to AC) and an adapter (to adapt your plug to the shape of the outlet) before you leave for France. **IT MAY BE EXTREMELY HARD TO PURCHASE CONVERTERS OR ADAPTERS ONCE YOU GET TO EUROPE, SO IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU DO IT BEFORE YOU LEAVE!** Some places you may find converters include Walmart, Best Buy, or other major department or travel stores. You can also find them online at retailers such as Amazon. Students bringing laptop computers may only require an adapter, but are encouraged to check their computer's converter, manual, or contact the manufacturer for compatibility information. There are no computers available for classroom use, so you must bring your own. Several stores sell French hairdryers for around 25 euros. This may be a better option than bringing one from home, especially if you plan to return to Europe in the future. U.S. hair dryers tend to get fried, even with an adapter and a converter.

9.3 Clothing

Again, pack lightly. Temperatures may range such that you need to wear a raincoat or jacket.

You should bring at least one nice conservative outfit, since there will be visits to courts or other professional environments. **PLEASE BUY THESE ITEMS BEFORE ARRIVING IN EUROPE!** For men, this attire will be a sport coat, tie and dress shirt, or a suit, along with dress shoes. For women, this can be a dress, pantsuit, or suit with a skirt. Bring a pair of dress shoes that will be **comfortable**, since you may have to walk a great distance or wear the shoes for long periods. Some women bring a suit for court and a more festive outfit for dinners or going out.

***WARNING:** Due to anti-American sentiment or the possibility of terrorism, do not bring items that have American flags or American places printed on them such as University of Iowa, New York, sports teams, etc.! I will not permit you to participate in a group activity if you are wearing such an item.*

9.4 Other Items

Consider buying all toiletries, contacts, hair products, prescription and over-the-counter medicines, and personal items in the U.S and bringing enough for the entire trip. In Europe, the brand you want or the item itself may not exist or may exist under another name with slightly different ingredients. If you do forget or run out, the local pharmacies and grocery stores have many items.

9.5 Sample Packing List

(This is not all-inclusive, and I strongly suggest you make your own!)

Carry-On: [Check with your airlines re allowable items, size and weight of carry-ons, etc.]: Passport, cell phone, e-ticket, Student ID card, credit cards, money, contacts, contact solution, contact case(s), hairbrush, personal protective equipment such as face masks, glasses, sunglasses, prescription medicine, Advil, spare underwear, essential toiletries in a plastic baggy, (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.) (in case your luggage gets lost), Dramamine, Benadryl/Claritin/Epi-pen, umbrella, camera, computer/tablet, headphones, airpods, reading material (disposable magazines and paperbacks are great.) Consider buying a 22-inch roller bag with four wheels rather than two wheels for maximum flexibility.

Suitcase: deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, makeup, soap, shampoo, etc., notebook(s), schoolbooks, clothes (*see infra.* §9.3), swimwear, comfortable shoes, hair dryer, travel books, converter/adapters, travel iron.

10. OTHER THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

10.1 Respect for Foreign Customs

It is often easy to forget when traveling overseas that YOU are now the foreigner. While the French and other Europeans are normally very polite and helpful, you should not expect them to go out of their way to help you simply because you are American. While many French and other Europeans speak excellent English, **do not assume that everyone speaks English or is willing to speak English with you!** It is better to first ask the person whether he or she speaks English. Also, keep in mind the following:

- Always respect local habits and customs. For example, in France and elsewhere in Europe, they eat later than in Iowa. They also take two hours or more for dinner, viewing dinner as an opportunity for socializing, during which food will come out at various intervals. It can be next to impossible to turn around a meal in an hour or less. I have found if I am in a “hurry,” it is better to eat at a bakery or fast-food place. When ordering, most waiters do not approach the table to take orders until all menus are closed, signaling that everyone is ready.
- When visiting museums, churches, and other attractions, keep your voices down (Americans stand out because they are loud!), and refrain from touching anything. Also, be sure to look presentable (no shorts, tank tops, etc.).
- Usually there will be no warnings to this effect, but Europeans expect these customs be heeded.
- Be careful about getting into political discussions. You may encounter anti-American sentiment or anti-American-government sentiment.
- Be wary about the combination of alcohol, politics, and innocent discussions with local members of the opposite sex, etc. Bar fights can occur in France, as well as the U.S.
- Remember rude or unhelpful people can occur in any culture.

10.2 Cash

Cash can be preferred for small transactions, especially at the boulangeries, but most places will accept credit/debit cards. Many people may use cards to buy almost everything.

10.3 Tipping

The practice of tipping in France is different from the practice in the U.S. The French utilize the concept of the “pourboire,” or a small tip for very good service in French restaurants. This means rounding up to the next euro or two, instead of the 15-18% standard in the U.S. There is also usually no way to tip on your debit or credit cards, as you can in the U.S. Consult a guidebook for tipping rates for taxis, hotel luggage carriers, etc.

10.4 Medical Matters

International health insurance coverage is mandatory for all University of Iowa students traveling abroad for educational purposes. All students traveling abroad for such purposes must register with the Office of Study Abroad by completing the Study Abroad Registration Form. Upon registering, students are automatically enrolled in a University policy provided through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). This “blanket” policy will be U-billed at a cost of approximately \$1.33 per day for the duration of your trip. Cost of the insurance is calculated into the student financial aid budget. Information and necessary forms are available on the program website. There are many doctors in Paris, and the program will assist you in obtaining their services as well as have someone accompany you. They will request payment after treatment, and you will get reimbursed back home.

Non-UI students should check with your insurance company before you leave to make sure you are covered in Europe. Some companies charge additional premiums for overseas coverage. The International Student Identity Card also includes medical insurance while overseas.

11. CLASSES

There is a draft schedule available on the program website. Any revised schedules will be distributed just prior to departure, and there may be later updates distributed in France if necessary. The classroom may be at a law school or a hotel conference room.

12. INTERNET ACCESS

Free Wi-Fi (wee-fee in French) Internet access is available at the hotel. Various restaurants and cafes may have internet, as well.

13. TOURIST INFORMATION

Most students get their touristic advice from the internet. Some purchase hard copy travel guides as well. Many European cities have tourist offices that are often staffed with English speaking employees. In Paris, there is a tourism bureau at the Paris airport, as well as elsewhere in town. Consult the internet or current travel guides for the location of these offices, in addition to local hotel and restaurant information.

14. BRINGING LIQUID SOUVENIRS HOME

As students travel, they often buy souvenirs to bring home. Sometimes, these souvenirs are liquids (a bottle of Bordeaux wine or a bottle of olive oil from Italy to mention a few). Liquid items cannot be mailed through the post office system. They must be packed in your checked baggage. There is not a strict upper limit on the number of bottles of wines or oils that you can bring back but, you will have to go through the U.S customs as soon as you land and may have to prove to the customs officers that these items are for personal use and not for resale. Usually, the weight of the bottles and space limits the students in the number of bottles that they bring back.

Packing your wine or oil in your checked bag can be another challenge. Although many students wrap their bottles with their clothes, this is not advisable because if a bottle of red wine breaks in your suitcase, it can ruin all the contents in your bag. Therefore, as an alternative method, it is recommended that the students buy a disposable “wine diaper” to pack their wines and oils. You can buy the “wine diapers” online. You can also ask the the wine shop if they will pack and ship your wine for a fee.

15. VAT REFUND

Some retailers (especially high-end retailers) may choose to give you a VAT refund. Value-Added-Refund or VAT refund is a tax refund given to travelers who buy merchandise in Europe, and it can range from 15-25% per country, with France averaging 12%. Although you are not entitled to the refund on your hotels and meals, you can get most of the tax you paid on clothes and other souvenirs. One caveat is that you are not supposed to use the merchandise before you leave the country.

In France, your total purchases must exceed €100.01. When you shop, bring along your passport and present it to the retailer when you make a purchase. Then ask the merchant to fill out the “tax-free form.” At the airport or your other point of departure, bring your paperwork and purchases and have the customs officer stamp at the VAT station. Then you can receive the tax refund.

REMINDER: INFORMATION ON ALL SUBJECTS IN THIS MANUAL CAN CHANGE. BE SURE TO CHECK MULTIPLE SOURCES.