

# AIX-EN-PROVENCE

SITE-  
SPECIFIC  
GUIDE



ACADEMIC  
STUDIES  
ABROAD

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# Pre-Departure

Please see our Pre-Departure Guide for All Programs for additional important pre-departure information!

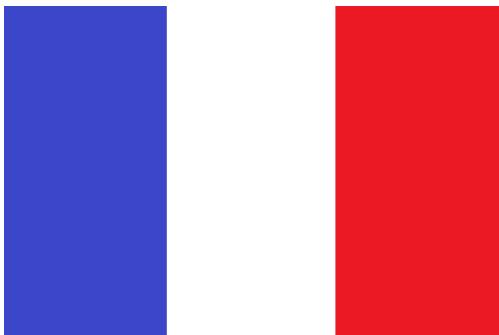
Please add the important numbers to your phone

<p>ASA Office in Boston, MA Academic Studies Abroad 72 River Park Street, Suite 104 Needham, MA 02494 Tel: 617-327-9388 24-hour Emergency Cell: 857-366-6821 Email: <a href="mailto:hello@academicstudies.com">hello@academicstudies.com</a> Web: <a href="http://www.academicstudies.com">www.academicstudies.com</a></p> <p>Emergency Local in France: 112</p>	<p>27, Place de l'Universite BP 30970 13604 Aix-en-Provence CEDEX 1</p> <p>The School of Humanities and Social Sciences; The School of Art; French Honors Program</p> <p>TEL: 04 42 23 02 82 Office Hours: 8:30am-6pm, M-F. Emergency Lines: <a href="https://iau.edu/contact/emergency">https://iau.edu/contact/emergency</a> Email: <a href="mailto:enroll@iau.edu">enroll@iau.edu</a> Web: <a href="http://www.iau.edu">www.iau.edu</a></p>
<p><u>U.S Consulate in Paris, France</u> 2 avenue Gabriel 75008 Paris France WEB: <a href="https://fr.usembassy.gov/">https://fr.usembassy.gov/</a> PHONE: 33 1 43 12 2222 ALT PHONE: 33 1 42 66 97 83</p> <p><u>U.S. Consulate in Marseille, France</u> Place Varian Fry 13006 Marseille</p>	<p>Karen Tahmazian, ASA Site Director +33 7 83 63 07 86 <a href="mailto:ktahmazianasa@gmail.com">ktahmazianasa@gmail.com</a></p>

In an emergency, please contact your ASA Site Director immediately. It is of utmost importance that you notify your Site Director of any problems, issues, or concerns that you encounter while you're abroad.

011 = International Dialing Code

34 = France Country Code



# International Dialing Instructions

- Within France: Dial the local number as is, without the country code, and include the leading zero. Example: 0 42 23 39 35 (dial the number in full, including the zero)
- How to Call France from the U.S.: Dial 011 plus 34 plus the local number but drop the first zero of the local number. For example, if the number you're trying to call is 0 42 23 39 35, you would dial 011 34 42 23 39 35.
- How to Call the U.S. from France: 011 + area code and number



# Passport & Visa

All U.S. citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond the day you plan to return to the U.S.

What should I do if I lose my passport?

Contact the local police, the U.S. Embassy, and your Site Director immediately. Having a photocopy of your passport on hand will make it MUCH easier to have it replaced.

**IF YOU DON'T HAVE A U.S. PASSPORT, PLEASE NOTIFY ASA IMMEDIATELY!**

Non-U.S. citizens may have a different visa process than described below, that requires steps to be taken in the U.S. or your home country before you arrive in France.

## STEP: Safe Traveler Enrollment Program

STEP registration is MANDATORY to complete before departure. This free service, offered by the US Department of State, enables the DOS to quickly contact US citizens abroad during emergencies, such as natural disaster, civil unrest, or a family emergency. By registering, you also get real time updates about safety, security, health, and weather in country. Click this link to complete your STEP registration before departure: <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>

**MANDATORY:**

**IF A US CITIZEN, YOU  
MUST ENROLL IN STEP**

## Obtaining Your Visa

Students are responsible for obtaining a visa (if required for their term length), yet ASA will provide detailed, helpful information upon acceptance about which visa students will need and how to go about applying for one.

Please click here and scroll down to "Student Visa Information" to find out if a visa is required for your program.

# Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA)

## For visiting & transiting through England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

### WHO:

For United States (US) passport holders, the ETA is required for anyone traveling through the UK for study, visit, or transit through (layover), via any method of transportation (e.g. plane, train, boat). If you are traveling on a non-US passport, first check to see if you can apply for an ETA [here](#). If your country is not yet approved for the ETA, notify your ASA Program Manager immediately (617-327-9388) for next steps.

### WHAT:

The Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) is a permission to travel for those who do not currently need to obtain a visa or do not have a United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) immigration status. **The ETA is valid for two (2) years from date of issue, or until passport expires, whichever is sooner.** It is valid for multiple journeys and must be valid for the entirety of your stay. It cannot be extended.

The ETA is digitally linked to your passport. There is no physical component. While you are not required to show a paper copy, we highly recommend saving a screenshot and/or printing your ETA approval email and adding it to your acceptance documents for your records. You are required to send a copy of your ETA approval email to your ASA Program Manager. To see how to apply, read on.

### HOW:

Students apply for the ETA electronically via the [UK ETA app](#).

#### Application Steps:

1. Watch the short "Getting Started: Applying for the UK ETA" video.
2. Gather information for the ETA application (contact information, physical valid U.S. passport in hand, recent photo or headshot, method of payment). Your flight itinerary is not required to apply.
3. Follow the instructions on the app or the UK GOV website. We recommend applying and getting approval at least 1 week prior to arrival in the UK.
4. Once received, SAVE your UK ETA approval email as a pdf or jpeg. Be sure that it is legible and email a copy to your ASA Program Manager. This is a critical step, as we must ensure you are complying with immigration requirements.

\*\* Students studying abroad for a semester in the UK must still meet the Standard Visitor Visa eligibility requirements. Carry your ASA and host institution documents with you, as you may be asked questions at the UK border about your eligibility and the activities you plan to do. \*\*

# EES: Europe's Biometric Entry/Exit System

On October 12, 2025, the European Union's borders went digital. A new system called EES (European Entry/Exit System) will log border crossings for some travelers by collecting a passport scan, a photo of your face, and your fingerprints. This system replaces passport stamps with biometrics (fingerprints).

Large airports like Paris, Frankfurt, and Amsterdam installed the new technology first; full rollout is expected by April 2026.

## Who WILL NOT have to use EES?

Travelers entering the European Union for the first time since 10/12/2025 or traveling during a long-stay visa obtained prior to departure, when the travel is during the visa's validity. A Student Visa is a type of long-stay visa. (NOTE: US passport holders traveling before your long-stay visa begins or after it expires, you WILL have to use EES - see below)

## Who WILL have to use EES?

- US passport holders traveling in the European Union before their long-stay visa starts, or after it expires
- Travelers from the US, Canada, and other NON-EU countries WHO DO NOT HAVE A LONG-STAY VISA. This includes US passport holders going on an under-90-day program. If you are one of these travelers, you MUST track your travel dates to ensure you don't exceed the 90-day limit. Overstaying can result in fines, deportation, or being banned from future travel.

*If you're not a US citizen and want to know if you can travel in the European Union outside your visa validity dates, please contact ASA.*

The first time you use EES will take the longest, as you'll need to complete your initial registration – you'll register your passport and get your photo and fingerprints taken. After that, it should go quicker because you're in the system, and can use the "EES READY" lanes. When using an EES READY lane, they'll verify your photo and passport using your data already stored in the system. Your EES registration lasts up to 3 years.

*NOTE: EES is different from the ETIAS visa waiver program that's due to start in 2026.*

Reference Links – Please read:

- <https://travel-europe.europa.eu/en/ees>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/10/travel/eu-entry-exit-system-explained>

# Budgeting for Study Abroad

The EURO (€) became the official currency of France in 1999. Bills come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200, and €500. Coins come in denominations of €2, €1, 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents, and 1 cent.

Exchange rates fluctuate, so check <http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi> for today's exchange rate.

## How much money should I bring?

US\$250-300 per week of your stay

*Please note that these are general guidelines based on what past students have reported spending. Some students spend less and others more. The above figures do not allow for traveling every weekend, eating out a lot, or shopping every day. Included in this amount is local transportation, spending money, personal expenses, daily lunch and 1 dinner per week, meals on excursions, grocery shopping, some laundry, etc.*

## What expenses should I budget for?

*Please note: Housing, medical insurance, and all other ASA services are not included during the break between semesters or terms.*

1. **Books and materials for your classes** Budget US\$350 per semester
2. **Registration with French Office of Immigration** Approx €60 (Academic Year Students ONLY)
3. **Cell phone** Budget US\$400 per semester; US\$75 for Summer
4. **Transportation back to the airport at the end of the program** Budget US\$25
5. **Have at least \$1,000 in savings for emergencies**

# Arrival

What should I do when I get off the plane at Marseille airport?

## 01 Passport Control/Immigration

After you de-plane, you will go through Passport Control (also called Immigration), where your passport will be stamped. It may take up to an hour to pass through Immigration.

### HELPFUL TIPS

Address for delivery of delayed luggage:

Have lost luggage delivered directly to your French host's address.

ASA will email you the address approx 1 week before your program start date.

Write their address on your Last-Minute Checklist and pack it in your carry on or save on your phone's notes.

## 02 Baggage Claim

After Passport Control and Customs, follow signs to baggage claim. Delayed baggage must be reported to your airline's lost luggage counter before exiting the baggage claim area. After claiming your bags, exit into the airport lobby and look for a IAU sign/staff. Staff cannot meet you at Baggage Claim.

## 03 Meet ASA Staff

Once you locate the IAU staff, the IAU shuttle bus will take you to Aix, where you will either: 1) Be dropped off at your housing, OR 2) You will be dropped off at a central meeting point in Aix-en-Provence, and then your French host will come pick you up shortly at the meeting point and take you home. The IAU shuttle bus leaves the airport approximately every 2 hours between 8am and 7pm on arrival day.

If you have trouble finding an IAU staff member, inquire at the information booth on the ground floor of Hall 1.

### If my flight is delayed, will you still pick me up at the airport?

If you will not be arriving as scheduled, it is YOUR responsibility to notify the emergency contact person indicated on your ASA Last-Minute Checklist. They will let you know if you will still be picked up at the airport. We will make every effort to pick you up.

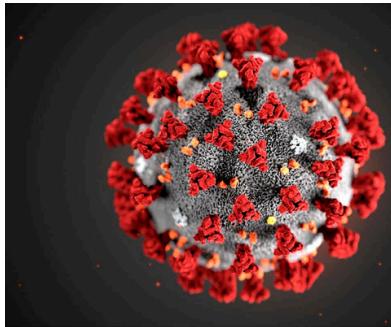
# Academics

Institute for American Universities (IAU)  
8 Rue de Littera, 13100  
Aix-en-Provence, France  
+33 4 42 23 02 82

## HELPFUL TIPS

Website:

IAU



### COVID-19

Your host university may have COVID-19 protocols you must follow, such as sanitizing your desk after class, not congregating indoors, wearing a mask, sanitizing hands, and others. Please follow accordingly.



### What are classes like?

Classes are usually small and have less than 25 students each. Classes are taught in English or French, depending on the subject.



### Attendance Policy

Since the Institute believes that a student has an obligation to participate in class, regular attendance is expected of all students. Class attendance is a factor in the final assessment of a student's academic performance and includes her/his presence on all excursions related to a course syllabus. IAU professors are empowered to impose academic sanctions (including a lowered grade or even failure) upon students for unexcused absences, frequent tardiness, work submitted late, etc.

A detailed Calendar of Events, including orientation and excursion dates & locations, will be emailed to you roughly 1-2 weeks before your program starts. ASA will run as many of our normal excursions and activities as possible, according to what is permitted in your host city and country during COVID-19. Calendar is subject to change. All orientation meetings are mandatory. To see the basic academic calendar for your upcoming program (which includes dates of any breaks), [CLICK HERE](#). Or go to: <https://www.academicstudies.com/program-calendars/aix-en-provence-france>

# Academics

## Course Load

In the fall and spring semesters, students are expected to carry a normal academic load of 15 credit hours (5 courses). The normal summer course load is six credits (two courses). A student wishing to carry a heavier or lighter load must first have written approval from his/her home university and consult with the Program Director. Students carrying a lighter load will still pay full tuition.

## Credit Transfer

Before departure from the United States, students must arrange credit transfer with their Dean, Study Abroad Advisor, or Department Head who must sign the ASA Release and Credits Form, signifying that work completed at IAU will receive credit toward your degree.

The Institution for American Universities issues an official, traditional American transcript with American letter grades. IAU courses have been accepted for academic credit by over 700 North American Institutions of higher learning since the Institute's founding in 1957.

## Drop/Add

If they have approval from their home institutions, students may change their course selection in consultation with the Director by the end of the sixth day of classes in the fall and spring semesters and by the end of the third day of classes in the summer. No new courses may be dropped or added after that period.

## Pass/Fail

Students who are taking fifteen semester hours on a graded basis may elect to take one course on a pass/fail basis. Such a choice must be declared no later than the drop/add period and may not be changed after that date. For purposes of pass/fail grading, "pass" is considered a grade of C or above. Students electing a pass/fail grade must have approval of the Director and their home institution.

## Withdrawal Pass/Fail

From the end of the drop/add period to the end of the eighth week of classes, (end of the third week in the summer session), a student may withdraw from a course with the consent of the Director. Students who withdraw will receive a notation of WP (withdraw Passing - if they were achieving a grade of at least C-) or WF on their transcript. The Director may require home institution approval for a withdrawal.

## Auditing Classes at the Institution

A student may audit a class, in addition to his/her normal class load, with the permission of the Director, and the instructor, and on condition that he/she attend the course on a regular basis throughout the semester. No grades may be awarded for audited courses. However, notation of the audit may be entered on the student's transcript. Such a choice must be declared no later than the drop/add period and may not be changed after that date.

# Academics

## Incompletes

The last day for a student to request an Incomplete ("I") grade for a course is no later than the last day of regularly scheduled classes. The instructor grants or denies this request and informs the Academic Director in writing of the decision. The Academic Director reviews this decision and determines the final result. Normally, an Incomplete may only be granted for reasons of documented illness, death in the immediate family, or other extraordinary extenuating circumstances. Simple failure to complete assigned work in a timely fashion does not justify the granting of an Incomplete. Unfinished work must be completed satisfactorily within the regular semester immediately following the semester in which the Incomplete was granted, or the course grade will become a permanent grade of "F".

## Grading Policies

Grades are assigned by the instructor of the course. No grade may normally be changed except for reason of material or clerical error. A student with a grade of "D" or "F" may retake a course once in order to improve the grade and obtain credit. The original grade "D" or "F" remains on the student's transcript.

## Grade Dispute Policy

IAU expects that most grievances regarding grades will be resolved informally between the professor and the student. If such informal discussions do not satisfy the student, the student wishing to dispute a final course grade must write and sign a petition addressed to the Director requesting a grade review. If the professor in question is the Director, the matter will automatically be referred to the President of IAU. The student shall have six weeks, calculated from the date of the submission of the final course grade, to initiate this formal procedure. The Director (or President) will ask the professor concerned to review the disputed grade and explain the rationale for his/her judgement. The Director (or President) may request to review the disputed grade and explain the rationale for his/her judgement. The Director (or President) may request to review the student's work, and. At his/her discretion, can invite other professors with appropriate expertise for advice. The President makes the final decision.

## Grades

You must check with your home institution to ensure you understand:

- The minimum grade you need to earn to receive transfer credit. Typically you need to earn a C or C+, but this can vary by institution. Check with your home institution to ensure you understand their requirements!
- Will your grades impact your GPA? Every institution handles this differently! Some institutions transfer in study abroad grades and it impacts your gpa. Some transfer in the grades and it doesn't impact your gpa. Others transfer in study abroad grades as pass/fail. Be sure you understand how your institution handles this.

You must check with your host institution or ASA Site Director upon arrival to ensure you understand:

- The deadline to change or drop classes. Classes dropped after your host institution's add/drop deadline will appear on your final transcript with a failing grade.
- What is your host institution's attendance policy? Absences from class will affect your grade and can result in a failing grade. Many institutions only allow a couple of absences a semester and only for valid reasons such as medical. Travel or family/friend visit is NOT ever an excused absence.

A: Excellent; B: Good; C: Fair; D: Barely Passed; F: Failure;

P: Pass; I: Incomplete; W: Withdrew; AU: Auditor; PE: Grade not yet available

These are suggested grade equivalencies provided by the host institution and are SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Your home institution may use a different set of equivalencies. Your HOME INSTITUTION will ultimately determine your final grade and credit equivalencies.

# Everyday Life

## COVID-19 In Country

You are responsible for complying with all COVID-19 protocols and recommendations throughout your journey. COVID-19 protocols will vary based on the city where you are studying. Once you arrive, our Site Director(s) will educate you on the COVID-19 protocols you need to follow on site. **PROTOCOLS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE!** Local officials make changes to protocols based on case data, which may become stricter or more relaxed at any time.

Your housing and host institution may have their own COVID-19 protocols you must follow as well. Once again, these are subject to change without notice.

## Things to keep in mind...

Electricity and water are very expensive. Be sure to take short showers (10-15 minutes maximum) and turn off all lights and appliances when leaving a room, even if you are leaving for only a short time. Also, most homes do not have air conditioning. Most of the buildings are older, which means they can be drafty in the winter, and European homes are usually heated at a lower temperature than those in the U.S. So, it is important to pack warm clothing, and to dress in layers during the winter.



# Everyday Life

## Housing

After being accepted to the program, students will be asked to complete a housing questionnaire. Every effort will be made to place each student in their top choice; however, it is important that students remain flexible and open-minded about their housing placement.

**Semester:** For the semester terms, the majority of students will live in a French homestay. Under certain conditions, and with prior approval, a limited number of Student Residence Apartments or Provence Family Apartment placements may be available for students with housing accommodation needs (e.g. mobility concerns, severe allergy, or other wellness concerns). If students would like to request living in a Student Residence Apartment for solely the independent-style living experience, they can request to be placed on a waitlist. Please note there is no guarantee that students will receive a Student Residence Apartment placement since it is based on availability and need.

**Summer:** For the summer terms, French homestays are a limited housing option. If there is limited availability of French homestays, students may be placed in a Student Residence Apartment.

### French Homestays:

Traditional Homestay with Meals - Students living in a shared homestay and receive daily breakfast, 6 dinners per week, and 1 load of laundry per week. Rooms are double or single occupancy. We cannot guarantee a single room. Bathrooms are shared. Homestays generally host 1-3 students a time. This option is supplemented with a small meal plan at Café Med, the IAU-ACM student café.

Traditional Homestay without Meals - Students are placed by themselves with a host family but prepare all of their own meals. This option is limited and typically reserved for students with severe allergies or food restrictions. Students have access to the kitchen/kitchenette, appliances, and food storage/supplies. Students are responsible for their own groceries and preparing their own meals.

### Student Residence Apartment

Rooms are double or triple occupancy. Bathrooms are shared between a maximum of three students. Meals are not included. Students will have access to a fully equipped shared kitchen to prepare meals. Bed linens and towels are included and students will have access to coin operated shared laundry facilities or be within walking distance to laundromat.

### Provence Family Apartment

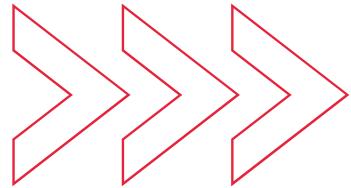
If you wish to live independently, you may choose to stay with one of our local Aix-en-Provence families. They offer apartment-style housing with kitchen access. Students will need to shop for and prepare all their own meals. You will meet your hosts and learn about their life in France while maintaining a very independent lifestyle.

ASA will email you your housing assignment approximately 1-2 weeks before your program start date.

## Internet

All ASA housing includes Internet access, is located in safe neighborhoods, and within a reasonable distance from school. You will have internet access in your French home, but it might be hard-wired (Ethernet) and not WIFI. IAU's buildings do have free WIFI for all students, so bring your laptop.

# Everyday Life



## What can I expect in a Host Family?

Living in a French home is considered the best form of housing because it provides an immediate introduction to life in this new place. This offers you the best possible way to learn about French culture and the French language. Living arrangements and the composition of families varies. The term "family" should not be interpreted too narrowly. Increasingly, about 50% of the host families are childless couples or divorced women with children who enjoy having a student living with them. Host families come from a cross-section of society; they belong to no particular professional or social milieu, but all are carefully chosen and many have hosted American students for several years.

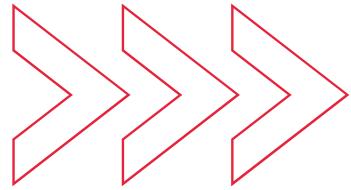
Students find that speaking French at home is the single greatest factor in increasing their facility with the language. Living in a French home is seen universally as an invaluable opportunity not found in many study abroad programs. Naturally, all students must accept the constraints and responsibilities that such arrangements entail.

Please keep in mind that French homes do not have the same amount of space that most Americans are accustomed to. You will not find large walk-in closets or large bedrooms. The French enjoy socializing with their friends, but usually do so outside their homes. For this reason, you will not find many big screen televisions, hi-tech stereos, or expensive home entertainment centers. You will be given your own key, but if it is lost or stolen you may have to pay to replace the locks. You will not have a curfew (unless mandated by French law), but please be considerate of your family and let them know of your whereabouts and expected time you will be home. You must always ask permission to bring over a visitor. **OVERNIGHT GUESTS OF ANY KIND ARE NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE!**

### Homestay only:

Be sure to use good manners, and say hello when you come home and goodbye when you leave. Always be quiet and courteous when returning home late at night. The occasional gift (such as flowers or bringing home dessert) will get you far with your French host! PLEASE DON'T FORGET THAT THIS IS A HOME, NOT A HOTEL!

# Everyday Life



## What can I expect in a Student Residence Apartment?

- Meals are not included. Students will have access to a fully equipped kitchen to cook and store meals.
- Laundry is not included.
- Cleaning supplies and household items are not included and will be the students responsibility.
- Apartments usually have a mix of double and triple rooms. Shared occupancy rooms are included with the ASA program fee.
- Apartments are fully furnished and equipped with basic kitchen equipment such as dishes, utensils, pots and pans, etc.
- Kitchen, bathroom(s), and common area will be shared with your roommates.
- You will share your apartment with other ASA students or, students from other study abroad programs.
- Apartments may be gender neutral (but bedrooms are single sex). We cannot guarantee a single sex living environment, but we will do our best to accommodate you if you prefer it.
- Apartments can house anywhere from 2-8 students.
- Most apartment buildings DO NOT have elevators.
- All apartments are STRICTLY NON-SMOKING.
- Overnight guests are not allowed.
- Access to coin operated laundry facilities OR within walking distance to a laundromat.

## When will I know where I will be living?

To allow us the flexibility to better serve your needs, housing assignments often have to be made shortly before the semester begins. Specific information regarding your housing will be provided to you via email within one to two weeks prior to your departure.

## What if I don't like my housing?

If you raise any concerns about your housing, our staff will investigate the problem, speak with the on-site staff, and hopefully resolve it. Many times a concern can be a cultural misunderstanding or a communication problem that is easily resolved. If, for any reason, we are unable to settle an issue, we will move the student to a new location. It is of utmost importance that you contact ASA or the IAU Housing Coordinator with any concerns you have with your housing.

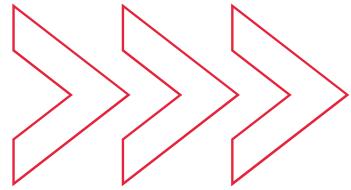
## How far will I live from school?

Most students can walk to and from class, as the majority of our housing is located within a 15-30 minute walk from the school. But, because of the way the city is laid out, some housing is further away from school than others and may require the use of public transportation. Aix has very good public transportation that you'll learn about during orientation. Please keep in mind that bus service ends at 10:30 PM in Aix during the week, but there are reasonably priced taxis in Aix.

## Move-Out Day

YOU MUST VACATE YOUR HOUSING BY 12 NOON ON THE OFFICIAL LAST DAY OF THE PROGRAM.  
You may not stay in your ASA housing after the official last day of the program.

# Everyday Life



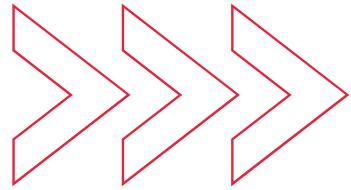
## Weather

Aix-en-Provence has a very pleasant and rather mild climate with an average of 300 sunny days a year. Provence has a Mediterranean climate characterized by a hot, dry summer with not much rain (average of 60 rainy days per year). Normally it is only rainy in the Spring. Summer lasts until October, followed by a short autumn that lasts until the end of December. Winters are also rather mild. Average winter temperature on a sunny afternoon is 10-11 degrees Celsius (50 F). The average temperature in July and August is around 28 degrees Celsius (85 F).

European homes aren't heated as well as American homes, so pack accordingly, including warm pajamas and socks, and things you can layer. Students have reported that although the winter weather was not very cold, it felt colder because the heating didn't work as well. Layering your clothes will help.

Months	Temperature
Jan - March	50-60° F
April - May	65-77° F
June - Sept	77-86° F
Oct - Dec	49-70° F

# Everyday Life



## Food and Customs

If you are staying in a Traditional Homestay with Meals, your host family will provide you with continental breakfast 7 days per week and dinner 6 days per week. Students are responsible for lunch, but this should not be a problem with the multitude of affordable cafes, brasseries, boulangeries, small sandwich and grocery shops that are located in town. There is also a daily open market in Aix that provides an abundance of fresh fruit, herbs, cheese, fish, flowers, and vegetables. (1 kilo = 2.2 pounds)

In France, breakfast is usually not as substantial as Americans are used to. With your host family, breakfast might include cereal, tea, toast or croissant & jam, cookies, etc. Lunch and dinner are much more substantial meals. The French tend to eat later, compared to American ideology, commonly not before 8 pm. A meal to the French is a time to enjoy and linger over a good meal. Although drinking alcohol is part of the social experience at some meals, excessive drinking is not acceptable.

## Alcoholic Beverages

The French do enjoy drinking socially as part of their culture, but they do it very responsibly, and it is normally not the focus of the social experience. They also enjoy alcohol on special occasions and holidays, but again, in moderation. The French generally do not drink to get drunk, and frown upon those who do. In French culture, it is considered in very poor taste to be drunk. Normally the only drunk people in a bar or discotheque are non-natives. Excessive drinking or drunken behavior is not acceptable, and both IAU and ASA consider it reason for expulsion.

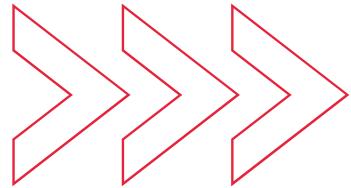
## Some Advice on French Culture

The success of your study abroad experience depends largely on you, but there are a few suggestions that we hope will further enhance your time in France. An open mind and a good sense of humor are prime requirements on your part.

France has a long history and a deep-rooted culture. As a people, the French are generally more formal than most Americans, a difference that can lead to misunderstanding and quick judgments. Politeness and basic rules of courtesy represent an important part of daily life in France. If you really wish to integrate French culture, certain "rules" are "de rigueur." For example:

1. Greet people as you enter a small store: "Bonjour." Or if you phone an American friend living with a French family: "Bonjour, Madame," or "Bonsoir, Monsieur. Puis-je parler à \_\_\_, s'il vous plaît?"
2. Compliment your host/hostess on her culinary talents.
3. Remember to let your host know your plans if you are not coming home for a meal or if you are going away for a weekend or on vacation. Let them know the dates and times they can expect you home.
4. When in doubt or when you don't understand, ask. Try to keep a good sense of humor rather than criticize immediately because it is not like America. Different points of view are a source of enrichment, not criticism. Appreciate changes and differences. Be curious. Dare to discover differences and appreciate them. You are, in your own way, an ambassador of the United States.
5. Try to blend into the local culture as much as you can. This includes speaking the local language, when possible; maintaining a low profile by avoiding wearing clothing printed with the names of U.S. colleges, universities, products, and locales; staying away from discos/restaurants known to be frequented by Americans; and using common sense in divulging information to strangers about yourself, your program, and fellow students.

# Everyday Life



## Is it safe to drink the water?

Yes. But you will find that in most European countries, it is more common for people to use bottled mineral or still water to drink rather than tap water.

## How to dress in France

The French of all ages tend to present themselves conservatively with a certain chic. You should expect to dress a bit more formally in France and you must be aware that you are not on a U.S. college campus. Also, the French tend to wear more dark/neutral colors (black, gray, beige, brown). If you bring clothes in these colors, you will not only blend in better, but you'll save space in your suitcase because you can mix and match using fewer pieces.

Although jeans are certainly fine to wear in France, you should plan to pair your jeans with more "nice" clothes than you might at home. For example, don't wear jeans and a sweatshirt/t-shirt in France. Black is always correct. You will find that people wear more dark-colored clothes and may stay away from very brightly colored clothes or clothes with loud prints/patterns. Ripped jeans or shorts are never acceptable in France.

Example: You may walk into a local bar wearing flip-flops and a college T-shirt and ask for a can of coca-cola at 10:00 a.m. Immediately, you will notice that you are the only one in the bar with open-toed shoes, a short sleeved shirt, no jacket and drinkinga Coke. The rest of the patronsof the bar will be "dressed up" wearing jackets, pants, closed-toe shoes or boots and ordering a coffee.

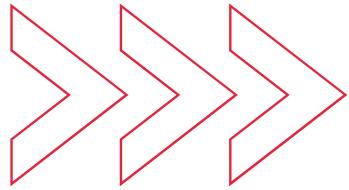
While people may, of course, dress as they prefer in France, keep in mind that it is easy to stick out as a foreigner because of your clothing. The French simply tend to have a more formal or "put together" way of dressing than is typical of American college students. The French do not go out in public in sweats, stretch pants, yoga pants, or flip flops, unless they are on their way to the gym. Flip flops are only worn at the beach. Pajamas are never to be worn outside the home.

Many churches and cathedrals do not allow people to enter unless their legs and shoulders are covered, even in summer months, so keep this in mind while travelling or while on a program field trip/excursion.

Many cities in Europe have cobblestone, which is notoriously uneven and hard to walk on. It is not advisable to attempt to walk on cobblestone in any sort of heel (even a low heel), especially if the streets are slippery from rain. Students HAVE sprained their ankles this way and spent the rest of the semester on crutches.

Finally, it is difficult to roll your suitcases on the cobblestone – you may have to carry them, so try not to pack too heavy. Watch out for broken suitcase wheels from the cobblestone. Happens all the time...some students have had to buy new luggage.

# Staying In Touch



## Cell Phones

For information about cell phones abroad, please see the  
ASA PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

## Time Difference

The following are the number of hours BEHIND France each region is:

Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
9 hours	8 hours	7 hours	6 hours

For date and time around the world, to help schedule meetings, sunrise and sunset,  
use the [Time and Date](#) website.

## Computers & Internet

*Should I bring a laptop?* YES.

### HELPFUL TIPS

For information about using a plug adapter with your laptop,  
see PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR ALL PROGRAMS