

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Budget options in this guide cost €40 to €60 a night for a double room in a hotel with private shower and toilet; midrange covers the €60 to €90 price range; and the top end is €90 to €150. With the exception of *chambre d'hôte* and *maison d'hôte* accommodation, rates in this guide don't include breakfast unless stated otherwise. Budget/midrange/top-end hotels charge about €5/8/12 for it.

Tourist offices can tell you which hotels have vacancies, but can't reserve rooms. Many midrange hotels only accept reservations accompanied by a credit-card number, and many budget joints demand payment upon arrival.

Local authorities impose a *taxe de séjour* (tourist tax) on each visitor in their jurisdiction, usually only enforced in the high season (Easter to September). At this time prices

charged are €0.20 to €1.50 per person higher than posted rates.

Camping & Caravan Parks

The region has camp sites galore, most open April to October. Larger sites on the coast tag visitors (with a rubber wristband, permanent for the duration of your stay) to ensure only camp-site guests use the pool and other facilities.

Stars reflect facilities and amenities. Separate tariffs exist for people, tents or caravans, and vehicles, though most places tout *forfaits* (fixed-price deals) for two people with tent and car.

Camping à la ferme (camping on the farm) is coordinated by Gîtes de France (p254). Many farmers and winemakers belong to **France Passion** (www.france-passion.com), a network of farms and wineries happy to host caravans, camping cars and mobile homes on their land for free; to take advantage of their hospitality, all you need is an annual card (€28), sold online.

Wild camping (*camping sauvage*) is illegal.

Chambres & Maisons d'Hôtes

The best way to sleep, eat, dream Languedoc-Roussillon! A *chambre d'hôte* is a B&B, the most stylish of which are marketed as *maison d'hôte*. A feast of a breakfast is included in the price, and many serve a delicious dinner of several courses around a shared table (*table d'hôte*) for €20 to €30, including aperitif and wine. Many are in historic chateaux, elegant *hôtels particuliers* (mansions), old stone *mas* (farmhouses) or – in the case of along the Canal du Midi – aboard canal barges.

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- Use the metric system for weights and measures.
- Buy or watch videos on the PAL system.
- Plugs have two round pins, so bring an international adaptor; the electric current is 220V, 50Hz.
- Gen up on national news with leading French dailies *Le Monde* (www.lemonde.fr), *Le Figaro* (www.lefigaro.fr) and *Libération* (www.liberation.fr), which posts the Toulouse-specific online edition *LibéToulouse* (www.libetoulouse.fr). Regional and local news, views and cultural events fill the pages of broadsheets *Midi Libre* (www.midilibre.com) and *L'Indépendant* (www.lindependant.com).
- English-language glossy travel and lifestyle magazine *Sud de France*, published quarterly by the Languedoc-Roussillon tourism board, is a good read, as is the intelligently written, amusingly named *Blablblah* (www.blablblah.org). News, views, culture and classifieds fill *Languedoc Sun* (www.languedocsun.com), a free pocket-sized monthly easy to find. In Roussillon look out for *P-O Life* (www.anglophone-direct.com), with info-packed website.
- On the road, tune in to French-language Radio France Info (105.5MHz) and multilanguage RFI (738kHz) for news; and NRJ (pronounced 'energy'; www.nrj.fr in French), Skyrock (www.skyrock.fm in French) and Nostalgie (www.nostalgie.fr in French) for music.
- See p35 for blogs.

For ecological B&Bs in protected green areas (p57), go direct to the national parks and nature reserves. The Parc Naturel Régional de la Narbonnaise en Méditerranée has its own 'Nature & Heritage' accommodation label, which it gives to properties committed to water and energy conservation and environmental protection, encouraging guests to discover the surrounding natural heritage in an eco-friendly fashion.

Dozens of B&Bs are listed in this guide, and tourist offices keep lists of them. Alternatively, you can contact self-catering specialists Gîtes de France or CléVacances (p254), or try:

Au Château (www.au-chateau.com) Upmarket B&Bs in chateaux.

Bienvenue à la Ferme (www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com) Affordable B&B and self-catering accommodation on local farms, including fruit, wine, dairy and so on.

Chambres d'Hôtes Hérault (www.chambres-d-hotes-herault.com) B&Bs in the Montpellier area.

Chez l'Habitant (www.chez-l-habitant.com) Solid site for budget and midrange B&Bs.

Fleurs de Soleil (www.fleursdesoleil.fr) Quality label awarded to predominantly family-run *chambres d'hôtes*; national guide online.

Guides de Charme (www.guidesdecharme.com) Print and online guidebook covering *maisons d'hôtes de charme* – and we mean *bags* of charm – by French publisher Editions Payot et Rivages.

Likhom (www.likhom.com) Another inspired resource for creative B&Bs and self-catering accommodation.

Maisons d'Hôtes de Charme Sud-Ouest (www.maisons-hotes-charme.com) Incredible B&B properties with bags of charm.

Samedi Midi (www.samedimidi.com) Another French publisher that puts out thematic B&B guides to France's most charming B&Bs and reviews many online.

Hostels

There are hostels in Carcassonne, Quillan, Toulouse, Montpellier, Sète, Nîmes and Perpignan. Expect to pay €13.80 to €16.50 for a dormitory bed, breakfast and sheets (bug-susceptible sleeping bags are banned), or €10.30 to €12.10 excluding breakfast. Breakfast/dinner costs €3.60/9.80. Not all hostels have kitchen facilities, and some only open seasonally (March to November). Few accept telephone reservations.

Affiliates of the **Fédération Unie des Auberges de Jeunesse** (FUJ; www.fuaj.org) and the **Ligue Française pour les Auberges de Jeunesse** (LFAJ; www.auberges-de-jeunesse.com) require an HI card (p256).

Hotels

Hotels have one to four stars. Rooms with bathtubs cost more than rooms with showers, and beds often tout neck-cricking, hot dog-shaped bolsters; regular pillows (*oreillers*) are often hidden in a cupboard.

Single rooms often don't exist as such; rather, doubles are flogged as singles. Most hotels close for two weeks in January or February for their

congé annuel (annual closure). Ski-resort hotels in Roussillon open for the winter ski season and in July and August for walkers.

Budget hotels charge the same rates year-round, but midrange and top-end places have low-season (October to May) and high-season (June to September) rates. Reliable midrange hotels are those affiliated with **Logis de France** (www.logisdefrance.com). For top-end, consider **Châteaux & Hôtels de France** (www.chateauxhotels.com) and **Relais & Châteaux** (www.relaischateaux.fr).

Refuges & Gîtes d'Étapes

Rife in mountainous areas and national parks, *gîtes d'étapes* with basic dorms tend to be in villages popular with walkers; *refuges* (mountain shelters) are in isolated wilderness, usually only accessible on foot. Both are basic and equipped with bunks, mattresses and blankets, but no sheets. Some can accommodate walkers with donkeys or those on horseback. Nightly rates for a dorm bed start at €10 per person. Cooked meals are occasionally available.

National-park offices have lists of *refuges* and *gîtes d'étapes* in their areas, and the **Comité Régional de la Fédération Française Randonnée Pédestre** (Map p101; ☎ 04 67 82 16 73; www.ffrp-lr.com; 1025 av Henri Becquerel, F-34000 Montpellier) can point you in the right direction.

Rental Accommodation

Be it hanging in a hammock between clifftops, dropping off beneath snowcapped Pyrenean peaks or rising with the sun at the foot of Catalonia's most sacred mountain, there is no better way to revel in the extraordinary peace and tranquillity of this predominantly rural region than by renting a villa, *mas* or medieval *maison de village* in a hilltop village.

Tourist offices have lists of self-catering studios, apartments and villas to rent on a short- (one week) or long-term (several months) basis. Many superb *gîtes ruraux* (self-catering properties) – think century-old *mas* in an olive grove, or converted farm stables surrounded by a menagerie of farmyard animals – are represented by two umbrella organisations: **CléVacances** (www.clevacances.com) and **Gîtes de France** (<http://pagesperso-orange.fr/gites-de-france-languedoc>).

Amenities range from basic bathroom facilities and a simple kitchenette (with oven, hotplates and fridge) to a bathroom, fully equipped kitchen, washing machine, TV, telephone, garden and pool. Linen can be

rented. Bookings for both can be made online or through a regional office; addresses are listed on the websites. **Gîtes de France** runs a last-minute telephone hotline, **Allo Chambres d'Hôtes** (☎ 08 91 16 22 22), which tracks vacancies for the coming night.

BUSINESS HOURS

The *boulangerie* (bakery) is about all that is open on Sunday in this essentially rural region where tradition remains firmly intact. Other days of the week, most shops (including bakeries) close for a long lunch between 2pm and 4pm.

Some hotels, museums and accommodation options only open *Pâques à la Toussaint* – Easter to All Saints' Day (1 November), meaning from March or April to sometime in October or November.

Standard hours for commercial banks, post offices, shops and restaurants are listed on the Quick Reference page on the inside front cover; hours that differ are spelt out in listings.

CHILDREN

Most car-rental firms hire children's car seats for around €30 per rental; the concept of organising a car seat in a taxi remains an alien one.

Many hotels provide cots (free) or an extra bed (€15 to €40), but families travelling with younger children will find *chambre d'hôte* accommodation much more suitable. Pick one that serves dinner too, allowing you to dine in peace while the kids sleep upstairs with a baby monitor (bring your own).

TOP PICKS: ONLINE RENTAL RESOURCES

Handy links for tracking down that dream holiday property, most with a strong go-slow, think-green philosophy:

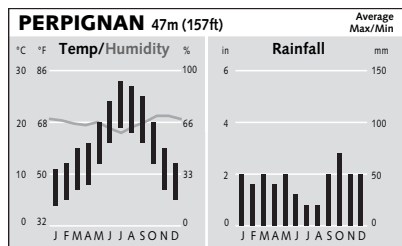
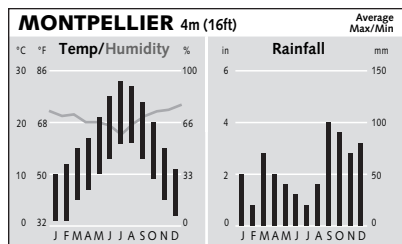
- www.aweekor2inlanguedoc.com
- www.creme-de-languedoc.com
- www.i-escape.com
- www.languedoc-holiday-rentals.com
- www.purefrance.com
- www.responsibletravel.com
- www.slowtrav.com
- www.southfrancevillas.com

Cobbled streets, ultranarrow pavements in old towns and bumper-to-bumper parked cars make strolling with a pushchair something of an obstacle course. Supermarkets and pharmacies sell disposable nappies and high-factor sun-protection creams. Tourist offices maintain lists of babysitters and crèches (nurseries).

Be it visiting a talcum-powder quarry (p205), tracking dinosaur footprints (p146), watching canal boats navigate locks over lunch at the Moulin de Trèbes (p184) or simply mucking around on the sand with a bucket and spade (p59), Languedoc-Roussillon has a riot of things to see, do and experience with kids. See p22 for specific ideas.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Tramontana aside (p58), the region enjoys a temperate climate with mild winters. For climatic considerations, see p17.



CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Goods brought in and exported within the EU incur no additional taxes, provided duty has been paid somewhere within the EU and the goods are for personal consumption. Duty-free shopping no longer exists within the EU; you have to be leaving Europe.

Coming from non-EU countries, duty-free adult allowances are 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 1L of spirits, 2L of wine, 50mL of perfume, 250mL eau de toilette and other goods up to

the value of €175 (€90 for those under 15). Anything over the limit must be declared and paid for; see www.douane.gouv.fr.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Beaches

Larger beaches have a *poste de secours* (safety post) in summer, staffed by lifeguards. Note the colour of the flag flying before diving in: green means safe to swim; yellow means bathing is risky; red means that swimming is forbidden; and purple means the water is polluted.

Extreme Weather

During the balmy days of June and the steamy days of July and August, it is hard to believe that the region can be freezing cold when the Tramontana tears through town.

Thunderstorms in the mountains can be sudden and violent. Check the weather report before embarking on a long walk; even then, be prepared for a sudden change in the weather. Storms are common in August and September.

Forest Fires

Forest fires are common in July and August when the sun is hot and the land is dry. Such fires spread incredibly quickly – between 20m and 30m per minute. Between 1 July and the second Sunday in September, forest authorities close high-risk areas. Never walk in a closed zone. Tourist offices can tell you if a walking path is closed. If you come across a fire, call the **fire brigade** (☎ 18).

Forests are criss-crossed with road tracks enabling fire crews to penetrate quickly. These roads, signposted DFCI (*défense forestière contre l'incendie*), are closed to private vehicles, but you can follow them on foot.

Lighting a campfire is forbidden. Barbecues, even in private gardens, are forbidden in many areas in July and August.

Poisonous Mushrooms

Wild-mushroom picking is a national pastime. Pick but don't eat until it has been positively identified as safe by a pharmacist. Most pharmacies in the region offer a mushroom-identification service.

Smoking

Smoking is illegal in all public spaces, including restaurants, cafés and bars.

CENT SAVERS

- **Pass inter-sites: Réseau Culturel/Terre Catalan** (www.reseauculturel.fr) Free annual pass (a little yellow book in fact), valid for one or two adults, which entitles its holder/s to reduced admission to 44 cultural sites from the second visit on.
- **Passeport des Sites du Pays Cathare** (€3; www.payscathare.org) Get your own admission fee for €1 less and one child aged 6 to 15 in for free at 19 Cathar castles, abbeys and museums in Languedoc-Roussillon with this Cathar country passport.
- **Tourist Pass – Pays Catalan by Bus** Prove you're a tourist and pick up a free public-transport pass valid for eight days in the Pyrénées Orientales *département*; available at any Roussillon tourist office.
- **Ville Pass'ion** (www.villepassion.fr in French) Two nights' hotel accommodation for the price for Friday- or Saturday-night arrivals in selected hotels in Carcassonne.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Billets Jumelés

Many museums sell *billets jumelés* (combination tickets) covering admission to more than one sight and offering a considerable saving. Some cities have museum passes that cut sightseeing costs further.

Camping Card International

This **card** (www.campingcardinternational.com) is a form of ID used instead of a passport when checking into a camping ground and includes third-party liability insurance. As a result, many grounds offer a 5% to 20% discount if you sign in with one. CCIs are issued by automobile associations, camping federations and occasionally on the spot at camping grounds.

Hostel Card

You need an annual **Hostelling International** (HI) card to stay at official youth hostels, although some let you in with a one-night stamp (€3.10). HI cards costing €11/16 for those under/over 26 are sold at HI-affiliated hostels and national **Youth Hostelling Associations** (YHA; www.yhf.org).

Seniors Card

People over 60 or 65 are entitled to discounts on public transport, museum admission fees and so on. For details on train travel, see p265.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

French Embassies & Consulates

France's diplomatic and consular representatives abroad are listed on the website www.diplomatique.gouv.fr/en.

Australia Canberra (☎ 02-6216 0100; www.ambafrance-au.org; 6 Perth Ave, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Sydney

Consulate (☎ 02-9268 2400; Level 26, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Belgium Brussels (☎ 02-548 8711; www.ambafrance-be.org; 65 rue Ducale, Brussels 1000); Brussels Consulate (☎ 02-548 88 11; www.consulfrance-bruxelles.org; 42 Blvd du Régent, Brussels 1000)

Canada Ottawa (☎ 613-789 1795; www.ambafrance-ca.org; 42 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 2C9); Toronto Consulate (☎ 416-847 1900; www.consulfrance-toronto.org; 2 Bloor St E, Suite 2200, Toronto M4W 1A8)

Germany Berlin (☎ 030-590 03 90 00; www.botschaft-frankreich.de; Pariser Platz 5, Berlin 10117, public entry at Wilhelmstrasse 69); Munich Consulate (☎ 089-419 4110; Heimeranstrasse 31, 3rd fl, Munich 80339)

Ireland (☎ 01-277 5000; www.ambafrance-ie.org; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Italy (☎ 06-686 0111; www.ambafrance-it.org; Piazza Farnese 67, 00186 Rome)

Netherlands The Hague (☎ 070-312 5800; www.ambafrance-nl.org; Smidsplein 1, 2514 BT Den Haag); Amsterdam Consulate (☎ 020-530 6969; www.consulfrance-amsterdam.org; Vijzelgracht 2, 1017 HR Amsterdam)

New Zealand (☎ 04-384 2555; www.ambafrance-nz.org; 13th fl, Rural Bank Bldg, 34-42 Manners St, PO Box 11-343, Wellington)

South Africa (☎ 012-425 1600; www.ambafrance-rsa.org; 250 Melk St, New Muckleneuk, 0181 Pretoria)

Spain Madrid (☎ 91-423 8900; www.ambafrance-es.org; Calle de Salustiano Olozaga 9, 28001 Madrid); Barcelona Consulate (☎ 93-270 3000; www.consulfrance-barcelona.org; Ronda Universitat 22, 08007 Barcelona)

Switzerland (☎ 031-359 2111; www.ambafrance-ch.org; Schosshaldenstrasse 46, 3006 Bern)

UK London Embassy (☎ 020-7073 1000; www.ambafrance-uk.org; 58 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7JT); London Consulate (☎ 020-7073 1200; www.consulfrance-londres.org; 21 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2EN); London Visa Section (☎ 020-7073 1250; 6A Cromwell Pl, London SW7 2EW)

USA Washington (☎ 202-944 6000; www.ambafrance-us.org; 4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007); New York Consulate (☎ 212-606 3600; www.consulfrance-newyork.org; 934 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10021)

FOOD

For regional gastronomy, see p42.

In our Eating listings, we indicate the price of a *menu* (two- or three-course meal at a set price); ordering *à la carte* is more expensive.

Budget restaurants serve simple, unadventurous meals for €10 or so. Midrange places cook up seasonal specialities accompanied by bags of atmosphere, with *menus* costing €15 to €30 (cheaper at lunchtime). More formal service, creative cuisine, an unusual and stylish decor, and *menus* costing anything upwards of €30 are distinguishing features of top-end eating spots.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Being the relatively rural area Languedoc-Roussillon is, the gay and lesbian scene is low-key. Most clubs and events of note are in Montpellier, where leading gay organisation **Lesbian & Gay Pride** (Map p101; ☎ 04 67 57 36 83; www.montpelliergay.com; 9 rue de la Friperie; ☎ 2-6pm Mon-Fri) hosts a bevy of cultural events year-round, climaxing with the Gay & Lesbian Pride street march each year in June. Inland, gay Lozériens meet and mingle with the **Association Lozérienne Gays & lesbiennes** (☎ 06 75 24 14 40; www.algl.net; 15 place Charles de Gaulle), inside the bar Le K'fé in Mende.

HOLIDAYS

French Public Holidays

Museums and shops (but not cinemas, restaurants or bakeries) and most businesses shut on the following *jours fériés* (public holidays). When one falls on a Thursday, many make a *pont* (bridge, ie with the weekend), meaning they take Friday off too.

New Year's Day (Jour de l'An) 1 January

Easter Sunday & Monday (Pâques & lundi de Pâques) Late March or April

May Day (Fête du Travail) 1 May

Victoire 1945 8 May – celebrates the Allied victory in Europe that ended WWII

Ascension Thursday (L'Ascension) May – celebrated on the 40th day after Easter

Pentecost/Whit Sunday & Whit Monday (Pentecôte & lundi de Pentecôte) Mid-May to mid-June – celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter

Bastille Day/National Day (Fête Nationale) 14 July

WHAT THE COMPUTER ICON MEANS

Only accommodation that provides an actual computer for guests to use to access the internet is flagged with a computer icon (☎) in this guide; those that offer wi-fi, but no computer, are not.

Assumption Day (L'Assomption) 15 August

All Saints' Day (La Toussaint) 1 November

Remembrance Day (L'onze Novembre) 11 November – celebrates the WWI armistice

Christmas (Noël) 25 December

INSURANCE

See p269 for health insurance and p267 for car insurance.

Getting travel insurance to cover theft, loss and medical problems is recommended. Some policies specifically exclude dangerous activities such as motorcycling, skiing and even trekking, so read the fine print. Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

INTERNET ACCESS

Airports and some train stations in the region have wireless access, as do many hotels and cafés in larger towns. But head into the hills or remote valleys of Roussillon and it is practically impossible to hook up. The same goes for internet cafés (listed under Information in regional chapters), where surfing costs about €4 per hour: easy to find in towns and cities, nonexistent in rural areas.

To access dial-up ISPs with your laptop, you'll need a telephone plug adaptor, available at large supermarkets. For useful websites, see p19.

LEGAL MATTERS

Drugs & Alcohol

French law does not distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' drugs. The penalty for any personal use of *stupéfiants* (including cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, heroin etc) can be a one-year jail sentence and a €3750 fine, but depending on the circumstances it might be anything from a stern word to a compulsory rehab program.

Importing, possessing, selling or buying drugs can get you up to 10 years' prison and

LEGAL AGE

- Driving: 18
- Buying alcohol: 16
- Majority: 18
- Sexual consent (for everyone): 15
- Considered a minor under anti-child pornography and anti-child prostitution laws: 18 and under
- Voting: 18

a fine of up to €500,000. Police have been known to search chartered coaches, cars and train passengers for drugs just because they're coming from Amsterdam.

Being drunk (*ivresse*) in public is punishable by a €150 fine.

Police

French police have wide powers of search and seizure and can ask you to prove your identity at any time. Foreigners must be able to prove their legal status in France (ie produce a passport, visa, residency permit) without delay.

Verbally (and of course physically) abusing a police officer can lead to a hefty fine, and even imprisonment. You may refuse to sign a police statement, and you have the right to ask for a copy. People who are arrested are considered innocent until proven guilty, but can be held in custody until trial.

The threat of terrorism makes French police very strict about security. Do not leave baggage unattended, especially at airports or train stations: suspicious objects may be summarily blown up.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Languedoc-Roussillon is one of 22 French *régions* (administrative regions). It has an elected *conseil régional* (regional council) based in Montpellier.

The administrative region is split into five *départements* (departments): Aude (11), Gard (30), Hérault (34), Lozère (48) and Pyrénées Orientales (66). This guide also includes gateway to the region Toulouse, sandwiched between the departments of Ariège (09) and Tarn (81), in the neighbouring Midi-Pyrénées *région*.

Départements are known by their two-digit code (listed above), included in postcodes.

Each has a *préfet* (prefect), based in a *préfecture* (prefecture), who represents the national government, and an elected *conseil général* (general council). There is a *préfecture* in Carcassonne (11), Nîmes (30), Montpellier (34), Mende (48) and Perpignan (66).

MAPS

Quality regional maps are widely available outside France. **Michelin** (www.viamichelin.com) and **IGN** (www.ign.fr in French) have online boutiques where you can purchase maps. Michelin's orange-jacketed regional map *Languedoc-Roussillon* No 526 covers the area included in this guide at a scale of 1:300,000.

Within the region you can find city maps at *maisons de la presse* (newsagencies), *papeteries* (stationery shops), tourist offices, travel bookshops and many mainstream bookshops. Kümmerly + Frey, with its orange-jacketed *Blay-Foldex Plans-Guides* series, and Éditions Grafocarte, with its blue-jacketed *Plan Guide Bleu & Orange*, are the main city-map publishers. A city map typically costs around €4. The free street *plans* (maps) distributed by tourist offices range from the superb to the useless.

For cycling maps see p63.

MONEY

The euro (€) is the only legal tender in France. One euro is divided into 100 cents, also called *centimes* in France. Coins come in one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents and €1 and €2; the latter has a brass centre and silvery edges and the €1 has the reverse (silvery centre, brass edges). Euro banknotes, adorned with fictitious bridges (which bear a striking resemblance to the Pont du Gard) are issued in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and the often-unwelcome €500.

Exchange rates are given on the inside front cover of this book. For information on costs see p17.

ATMs

ATMs (*points d'argent*) provide the easiest means of getting cash. Most spit out euro banknotes at a superior exchange rate through Visa or MasterCard, and there are plenty in the region linked to the international Cirrus and Maestro networks. If you remember your PIN code as a string of letters, translate it into numbers; French keypads don't show letters.

SHOPPING LIST

When in the region I must, I must, I must buy...

- A hand-thrown *cassole* to cook up a cassoulet in back home, from Poterie NOT Frères near Castelnaudary (p186)
- A photograph of Cathar country from Gérard Sioen's Carcassonne gallery (p183)
- Baby-soft gloves fresh from Millau's Causse Gantier (p165) and L'Atelier du Gantier (p168)
- Secondhand and antique books from Le Someil's old-world Librairie Ancienne (p122)
- Gallery art (and anchovies) from Collioure (p221)
- Cork sculptures and almond oil from the Maison de l'Amande, Massif des Albères (p226)
- A ceramic pot fired in a solar-powered oven in Mont Louis (p233) or your choice of a zillion pots in St-Quentin-la-Poterie (p90)
- Goose or duck foie gras, *confit de canard* and cassoulet in a glass jar from Castelnaudary's Maison Escourrou (p186)
- Truffles (p90)
- Sweet Cévennes chestnuts in every guise (p148)
- Pézenas *berlingots* (suck 'em on the plane home; p132)

Credit Cards

This is the cheapest way to pay for things and to get cash advances. Visa (Carte Bleue in France) is the most widely accepted, followed by MasterCard (Access or Eurocard). Amex cards are not very useful except at upmarket establishments, but they do allow you to get cash at certain ATMs and at Amex offices.

Call the relevant number below to report a lost or stolen credit card.

AmEx (☎ 01 47 77 72 00)

Diners Club (☎ 0810 314 159)

MasterCard (☎ 0800 901 387)

Visa (Carte Bleue; ☎ 0800 901 179)

Tipping

French law requires that restaurant, café and hotel bills include a service charge (usually 10% to 15%), so a tip is neither necessary nor expected, although most diners leave something for the server.

POST

Postal services are fast (next-day delivery for most domestic letters), reliable and expensive. Post offices are signposted **La Poste** (www.laposte.fr in French). For a pretty postage stamp (*un timbre*) rather than the uninspiring blue sticker (*une vignette*) that comes out of post office coin-operated machines, go to a window marked *toutes opérations* (all services). Tobacconists and shops selling postcards sell stamps too.

In France, domestic letters up to 20g cost €0.55. For international post, a postcard or letter/package under 20g/2kg costs €0.65/12.30 to zone 1 (EU, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway) and €0.85/14 to zone 2 (the rest of the world). Worldwide express-mail delivery, called **Chronopost** (☎ 0810 821 821; www.fr.chronopost.com), costs a fortune and may not be as rapid as advertised.

SHOPPING

In this raw natural land it is predictably edibles that seem to dominate most must-buy shopping lists.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Male or female, travelling solo in the region poses few problems bar the fact that a sizeable chunk of hotels don't have single rooms, or charge the same price for a so-called 'single' as a double. Dining alone in restaurants or sipping coffee in cafés is quite common, although lone women might well attract unwanted attention in busier spots on the coast.

TELEPHONE

French telephone numbers have 10 digits and need no area code; those starting with the digits 06 are mobile-phone numbers. To call anywhere in Languedoc-Roussillon from abroad, dial your country's international access code, followed by 33 (France's country code) and the 10-digit number,

dropping the initial 0. To call abroad from the region, dial 00 (France's international access code), followed by the country code, area code (dropping the initial 0 if necessary) and local number.

For France Telecom's directory inquiries (*service des renseignements*), dial ☎ 118 008 (€1.18 per call from a fixed-line phone). For directory inquiries for numbers outside France, dial ☎ 118 700 (€2 or €3). To make a reverse-charges (collect) call (*en PCV*) or a person-to-person call (*avec préavis*) from France, dial ☎ 3123. For the USA and Canada you can dial ☎ 0 800 990 011, and for Australia (Telstra) ☎ 0 800 990 061.

For help in English with all France Telecom's services, see www.francetelecom.com or call ☎ 0800 364 775.

Mobile Phones

French mobile-phone numbers have 10 digits and begin with 06.

France uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with the North American GSM 1900 or the totally different system in Japan (though some North Americans have tri-band phones that work here).

It may be cheaper to buy your own French SIM card – and locals you meet are much more likely to ring you if your number is French. If you already have a compatible phone, you can slip in a SIM card (€20 to €30) and rev it up with prepaid credit, though this is likely to run out fast as domestic prepaid calls cost about €0.50 a minute. Recharge cards are sold at most *tabacs* and newsagents.

SIMs are available at outlets run by France's three mobile-phone companies, **Bouygues** (☎ 0810 630 100; www.bouyguestelecom.fr), France Telecom's **Orange** (www.orange.fr in French) and **SFR** (☎ 0811 70 70 73; www.sfr.com).

TIME

Local time is GMT/UTC plus one hour, except during daylight-saving time (from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October), when it is GMT/UTC plus two hours. The UK and France are always one hour apart – when it's 6pm in London, it's 7pm in Nice. New York is six hours behind Carcassonne.

France uses the 24-hour clock and writes time like this: 15h30 (ie 3.30pm).

TOURIST INFORMATION

Every city and town and many villages have an *office du tourisme* which provides maps and information on accommodation, sights, activities, transport and so on in the local area.

Regional tourist information is handled by the **Comité Régionale du Tourisme Languedoc Roussillon** (☎ 04 67 22 80 00; www.sunfrance.com; 201 av de la Pompignane) in Montpellier and its **Maisons de la Région** (Carcassonne ☎ 04 68 11 17 35; 26 rue Antoine Marty; Nîmes ☎ 04 66 36 36 64; 3 place des Arènes; Mendes ☎ 04 66 42 85 09; 98 blvd Théophile Rousset; Perpignan ☎ 04 68 34 32 34; 34 av du Général de Gaulle).

Each *département* has its own *comité départemental du tourisme* (departmental tourist office):

Aude (☎ 04 68 11 66 00; www.cg11.fr, www.audetourisme.com; F-11855 Carcassonne) Cathar country.

Gard (☎ 04 66 36 96 30; www.tourismegard.com; 3 rue Cité Foulc, BP 122, F-30010 Nîmes)

Hérault (☎ 04 67 67 71 77; www.herault-tourisme.com; av des Moulins, F-34184 Montpellier)

Lozère (☎ 04 66 65 60 00; www.lozere-tourisme.com; 14 blvd Henri Bourrielle, F-48000 Mende)

Pyrénées-Orientales (☎ 04 68 34 90 07; www.tourismedeterroir.fr; 19 av de Grande-Bretagne, BP 649, F-66006 Perpignan)

Outside France, there are four *Maisons de la Région Languedoc-Roussillon*, including one in **London** (☎ 020 7079 33 44; www.maisonde.laregionlanguedocroussillon.com; 6 Cavendish Sq, London W1G 0PD).

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

The region is not that user-friendly for *handicapés* (people with disabilities): kerb ramps remain rare, older public facilities and budget hotels lack lifts, and the cobblestone streets typical to hilltop villages are a nightmare to navigate in a *fauteuil roulant* (wheelchair).

But all is not lost. Almost every hotel and *chambre d'hôte* that has opened in the last year has at least one room equipped for guests in wheelchairs, and on the coast most beaches provide access to the sea in special sand buggies for wheelchair users.

Michelin's *Guide Rouge* indicates hotels with lifts and facilities for people with disabilities; Gîtes de France (see p254) provides a list of accommodation with disabled access.

International airports offer assistance to travellers with disabilities. TGV and regular trains are also accessible for passengers in

wheelchairs; call the **SNCF Accessibilité Service** (☎ 0 800 154753) for information.

VISAS

For up-to-date visa requirements see www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en.

EU nationals and citizens of Iceland, Norway and Switzerland need only a passport or national identity card in order to enter France and stay and/or work in the country. However, nationals of the 12 countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 are subject to various limitations on living and working in France.

Citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, the USA and many Latin American countries do not need visas to visit France as tourists for up to 90 days.

Other people wishing to come to France as tourists have to apply for a Schengen visa, named after the agreements that abolished passport controls between 22 EU member states (excluding the UK and Ireland), plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. It allows unlimited travel throughout the entire zone for a 90-day period. Application should be made to the consulate of the country you are entering first, or that will be your main destination. Among other things, you will need travel and repatriation insurance and be able to show that you have sufficient funds to support yourself.

Tourist visas *cannot* be extended except in emergencies (such as medical problems). When your visa expires you'll need to leave and reapply from outside France.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

French men have clearly given little thought to the concept of *harcèlement sexuel* (sexual harassment). Most still believe that staring suavely at a passing woman is paying her a compliment. Women need not walk around the region in fear, however. Suave stares are about as adventurous as most French men get, with women rarely being physically assaulted on the street or touched up in bars at night.

Unfortunately, it's not French men that women travellers have to concern themselves with. While women attract little unwanted attention in rural areas, on the coast it's a different ball game. In the dizzying heat of high season, the coast is rampant with men and women of *all* nationalities out on the pull. Apply the usual 'woman traveller' rules and the chances are you'll emerge from the circus unscathed. Remain conscious of your surroundings, avoid going to bars and clubs alone at night, be aware of potentially dangerous situations – deserted streets, lonely beaches, dark corners of large train stations – and take care on night buses.

Topless sunbathing – less and less *la mode* (the fashion) on local beaches where it is very much tops on these days – is not interpreted as deliberately provocative.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

When planning your journey to France and onward to Languedoc-Roussillon consider booking flights, tours and rail tickets at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

ENTERING THE REGION

European integration means you'll usually cross fluidly between France and other EU countries without passing through customs or border checkpoints. Arrivals from non-EU countries must show a passport (or identity card for EU citizens) and clear customs. Those entering Roussillon by car from Portbou or the Col d'Ares (Vallée du Conflent) in neighbouring Spain will have shown their passport, if necessary, when entering Spain.

AIR Airports & Airlines

Several airports serve Languedoc-Roussillon, but Toulouse is the only one served by major airlines; others are used by budget airlines to/from the UK and continental Europe. For Roussillon, consider Girona Barcelona in neighbouring Spain, an hour's train ride or 85-minute coach ride to/from Perpignan with **Frogbus** (www.frogbus.com). For details on travelling between other airports and city centres, see the Getting Around sections in the relevant chapters.

Airports:

Béziers Agde (BZR): ☎ 04 67 80 99 09; www.beziers.aeroport.fr

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the transport provider or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works, and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Carcassonne (CCF; ☎ 04 68 71 96 46; www.carcassonne.aeroport.fr)

Girona Barcelona (GRO; ☎ 972 186 600; www.girona-airport.net)

Montpellier (MPL; ☎ 04 67 20 85 00; www.montpellier.aeroport.fr)

Nîmes (FNI; ☎ 04 66 70 49 49; www.nimes-aeroport.fr)

Perpignan Rivesaltes (PGF; ☎ 04 68 52 60 70)

Toulouse (TLS; ☎ 08 25 38 00 00; www.toulouse.aeroport.fr)

AIRLINES FLYING TO/FROM THE REGION

Budget airlines:

Atlas Blue (8A; ☎ 0820 887 887; www.atlas-blue.com)
Hub Marrakesh.

bmibaby (CWW; ☎ 08 90 71 00 81; www.bmibaby.com)
Hub East Midlands.

Corsairfly (SS; ☎ 0820 042 042; www.corsairfly.com)
Hub Paris.

easyJet (U2; ☎ 08 99 65 00 11; www.easyjet.com)
Hub London Luton.

Flybe (BE; ☎ within UK 0871 700 0535, from outside UK 4413 922 685 29; www.flybe.com)
Hub Southampton.

Germanwings (4U; ☎ 08 26 10 98 88; www.germanwings.com)
Hub Cologne.

Jet2.com (LS; ☎ 08 21 23 02 03; www.jet2.com)
Hub Leeds Bradford.

Jet4you (8J; ☎ 08 11 61 44 44; www.jet4you.com)
Hub Casablanca.

New Axis Airways (9X; ☎ 0820 82 52 06; www.axis-airways.com)
Hub Paris.

Ryanair (FR; ☎ 08 92 68 20 73; www.ryanair.com)
Hub Dublin.

Sterling (NB; ☎ 01 55 69 55 71; www.sterling.com)
Hub Copenhagen.

Tap Portugal (TP; ☎ 0820 319 320; www.flytap.com)
Hub Lisbon.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorized travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening; two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Transavia.com (HV; ☎ 08 92 05 88 88; www.transavia.com) Hub Amsterdam.

Twin Jet (T7; ☎ 08 92 70 77 37; www.twinjet.fr) Hub Marseille.

Others:

Aer Lingus (EI; ☎ 08 21 23 02 67; www.aerlingus.com) Hub Dublin.

Aigle Azur (ZL; ☎ 08 10 79 79 97; www.aigle-azur.fr) Hub Paris.

Air Algerie (AH; ☎ 01 42 60 30 62; www.airalgerie.dz) Hub Algiers.

Air France (AF; ☎ 0820 320 820; www.airfrance.com) Hub Paris.

Airlinair (A5; ☎ 08 10 47 84 78; www.airlinair.com) Hub Paris.

Alitalia (AZ; ☎ 0820 315 315; www.alitalia.com) Hub Rome.

British Airways (BA; ☎ 0825 825 400; www.britishairways.com) Hub London Heathrow.

CCM Airlines (XK; ☎ 04 95 29 05 09; www.ccm-airlines.com) Hub Ajaccio.

Iberia (IB; ☎ 08 25 80 09 65; www.iberia.com) Hub Madrid.

KLM (KL; ☎ 0890 710 710; www.klm.com) Hub Amsterdam.

Lufthansa (LH; ☎ 0826 10 33 34; www.lufthansa.com) Hub Frankfurt.

OLT (OL; ☎ within Germany 01805 658 659; www.olt.de) Hub Emden.

Royal Air Maroc (AT; ☎ 0820 821 821; www.royalairmaroc.com) Hub Casablanca.

Tunis Air (TU; ☎ 0820 044 044; www.tunisair.com) Hub Tunis.

Tickets

UK & IRELAND

Budget airlines usually offer the best deals. With the exception of Toulouse, Ryanair services all Languedoc-Roussillon's airports, plus Girona in Spain (see opposite), from London Luton, Stansted and several regional airports; easyJet flies to/from Toulouse and Montpellier from London Gatwick, and to/from Toulouse from Bristol; bmibaby does Perpignan–Manchester, Flybe Toulouse–Birmingham and Jet2.com Toulouse to/from Belfast, Edinburgh and Leeds Bradford.

Recommended travel agencies:

Bridge the World (☎ 0870 444 7474; www.b-t-w.co.uk)

Flight Centre (☎ 0870 890 8099; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

Flightbookers (☎ 0870 814 4001; www.ebookers.com)

North-South Travel (☎ 01245 608 291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk) Donates some profit to projects in the developing world.

Quest Travel (☎ 0870 442 3542; www.questtravel.com)

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk) For travellers under 26.

Traifinders (www.traifinders.co.uk)

Travel Bag (☎ 0870 890 1456; www.travelbag.co.uk)

WITHIN FRANCE

Much more responsible to take the train (right), but, should you have to, national carrier Air France operates flights from both Toulouse and Montpellier to/from Paris and several French regional airports, and from Perpignan to/from Paris. EasyJet covers the Paris–Toulouse routes and Airlinair flies from Béziers Agde to/from Paris Orly and Bastia in Corsica.

Recommended agencies:

- Anyway** (☎ 0892 893 892; www.anyway.fr)
Lastminute (☎ 0892 705 000; www.lastminute.fr)
Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 0825 000 747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr)
OTU Voyages (www.otu.fr) Student and youth travel.
Voyageurs du Monde (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; www.vdm.com)

AUSTRALIA

STA Travel (☎ 1300 733 035; www.startravel.com.au) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) have offices throughout Australia. Online, see www.travel.com.au.

CANADA

Travel Cuts (☎ 800-667-2887; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student-travel agency. Online, try www.expedia.ca and www.travelocity.ca.

USA

San Francisco is the ticket-consolidator capital of America, although good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities. Recommended agencies:

- American Express Travel** (www.aa.com)
Cheap Tickets (www.cheaptickets.com)
ebookers (www.ebookers.com)
Expedia (www.expedia.com)
Lowest Fare (www.lowestfare.com)
Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)
STA Travel (www.sta.com) For travellers under 26.
Travelocity (www.travelocity.com)

LAND**Bus**

Eurolines (☎ 0892 899 091; www.eurolines.com; Montpellier ☎ 04 67 58 57 59; Nîmes ☎ 04 66 29 49 02; Toulouse ☎ 05 61 26 40 04) links Toulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes and Perpignan with points all over Western and central Europe, Scandinavia and Morocco. A **Eurolines Pass** (www.eurolines-pass.eu; 15-/30-day pass high season €329/439) allows unlimited travel between 40 European cities.

National Express (☎ 08717 81 81 81; www.nationalexpress.com/eurolines) runs services from London's

Victoria coach station via the Dover–Calais channel crossing to Toulouse, Montpellier and other large cities, often with a change of coach in Lille or Lyon. Journey time is around 22 hours and return fares hover at £110.

Linebus (www.linebus.com; Nîmes ☎ 04 66 29 50 62; Barcelona ☎ 932 65 07 00) links Montpellier/Nîmes/Toulouse with Barcelona (one way €35/38/40) and other Spanish cities.

Car & Motorcycle

For driving in France, see p266.

High-speed shuttle trains operated by **Eurotunnel** (☎ in the UK 08705 35 35 35, in France 0810 63 03 04; www.eurotunnel.com) whisk motorists from Folkestone through the Channel Tunnel to Coquelles, 5km southwest of Calais. Journey time is 35 minutes, and 24-hour departures are up to three an hour. Promotional fares slash standard high-season fares (£49 to £145 or €69 to €217 one way) for a car and passengers considerably. Advance **reservations** (☎ in the UK 01303 28 22 01) are obligatory for cyclists.

Train

Rail services link France with virtually every country in Europe; Perpignan is on the south-bound line to/from Barcelona (four hours). For train travel within Languedoc-Roussillon, see p268. Outside France, book tickets/get information from **Rail Europe** (www.raileurope.com; ☎ in the UK 0870 5848 848) and **Railkey** (www.railkey.com). In France the **SNCF** (☎ 3635, from abroad 0892 35 35 35; www.sncf.com) takes telephone and internet bookings but doesn't post tickets outside France.

For pan-European journeys, consider a **Eurail Pass** (☎ in the US 1 888 667 9734; www.eurail.com) for non-European residents or a Euro Domino or **InterRail Pass** (www.interrailnet.com) for European residents. All are valid on France's national SNCF train network and allow unlimited travel for varying periods of time.

For discounted train tickets and passes within France, see opposite.

Digital train-travel planners:

- The Man in Seat 61** (www.seat61.com)
Rail Passenger (www.railpassenger.info)
Railteam (www.railteam.co.uk)
TGV Europe (www.tgv-europe.com)

EUROSTAR

Journey time aboard the **Eurostar** (☎ in the UK 08705 186 186, in France 0892 35 35 39; www.eurostar.com) from London St Pancras International to Paris Gare du Nord is 2¼ hours, from where

TRAIN PASSES & DISCOUNT FARES WITHIN FRANCE

Look out for great deals available on www.sncf.com, including last-minute offers and Prem's ('early-bird deals'), available for advance online bookings.

Discounted fares and passes are available at SNCF train stations and SNCF offices in Montpellier, Nîmes and Toulouse (listed under Getting There & Away in the respective town and city sections of this book). Children under four travel free of charge; those aged four to 11 travel half-price. Reductions of 25% are available – subject to trains and conditions of reservation – to travellers aged 12 to 25, seniors aged over 60, one to four adults travelling with a child aged four to 11, two people taking a return journey together or anyone taking a return journey of at least 200km and spending a Saturday night away.

Reductions of 25% to 50% are available with a **Carte 12-25** (www.12-25-sncf.com; €49), aimed at travellers aged 12 to 25; the **Carte Enfant Plus** (www.enfantplus-sncf.com; €70), for one to four adults travelling with a child aged four to 11; and a **Carte Sénior** (www.senior-sncf.com; €56), for those aged over 60. A **Carte Escapades** (www.escapades-sncf.com; €85), for those aged 26 to 59, guarantees a 25% saving on a return journey of at least 200km including a Saturday night away.

The France Railpass entitles non-residents of France to unlimited travel on SNCF trains for a choice of three to nine days over a one-month period, with the option to add on an additional six days. In 2nd class a three-/five-/nine-day pass costs US\$258/332/480. Equivalent France Youthpasses, available to those under 26, are US\$191/247/359.

a metro flit across the capital to Paris' Gare de Lyon proffers ample southbound rail connections to towns and cities in Languedoc-Roussillon (see below). A standard 2nd-class one-way/return ticket from London to Paris costs £154.50/309 (€232.50/435), but super-discount returns go for as little as £59.

WITHIN FRANCE

French trains are run by the state-owned **SNCF** (☎ 3635; www.sncf.com), whose pride is the world-renowned **TGV** (www.tgv.com), which speeds along at 320km/h (198mph). The TGV Midi-Méditerranée links Paris' Gare de Lyon with Montpellier, and in 2010 super-speedy track will reach Perpignan. Less fast but equally comfortable are **Téoz** (www.corailteoz.com) trains from Paris Gare d'Austerlitz to/from Toulouse, Montpellier and Perpignan. For fares and journey details, see Getting There & Away sections in the regional chapters.

Train stations have at least one *billeterie automatique* (automatic ticket machine) that accepts cash and computer-chip credit cards. With a credit card, you can also buy tickets by phone or online (www.voyages-sncf.com in French); have them sent to you by post (only within France) or collect them from any SNCF ticket office.

Before boarding trains time-stamp your ticket in a *composteur*, a yellow post at the entrance to the platform, or risk being fined.

SEA

Ferry links with the region are scant, and for UK motorists it's certainly a long old trek (read: an unenviable drive of 10 hours or so) from the Channel-linked ports in northern France to Languedoc.

From Sète, the **SNCM** (☎ 3260, 04 67 46 68 00; www.sncm.fr) runs year-round ferries to Tangiers, Morocco.

GETTING AROUND

BICYCLE

Despite what feels like an overdose of hills and *cols* (mountain passes), cycling is an inspired way to get around Languedoc-Roussillon – an area blessed with quiet back roads, relatively light traffic and dozens of urban and rural *pistes cyclables* (cycling paths); on the coast there are several, while pedalling along Canal du Midi towpaths is an unsurpassable Languedoc pleasure.

By law your bicycle must have two functioning brakes, a bell, a red reflector on the back and yellow reflectors on the pedals. After sunset and when visibility is poor, cyclists must turn on a white light in front and a red one in the rear.

Bicycles can be brought along for no charge on all intraregional TER trains in Languedoc-Roussillon. For more on cycling, see p63.

Bike Hire

Hiring a town bike (VTC; *vélos tout chemin*) or mountain bike (VTT; *vélos tout terrains*) is easy: every town has at least one rental outlet; see the Getting Around sections of the larger towns for details. Rental charges hover around €15/60 per day/week and outlets demand a deposit (a credit-card slip) – and sometimes ID as well – that you forfeit if the bike is damaged or stolen. Few rent safety helmets; bring your own if you want to be certain of wearing one.

In true Parisian style, Montpellier, Toulouse and Perpignan sport self-service bike-rental systems with computerised pick-up and drop-off sites all over town. In general, you have to sign up either short term or long term, providing credit-card details.

BOAT

For ferry services along the coast, see the individual town and city sections.

Canal Boat

Transportation and tranquillity are usually mutually exclusive categories – but not if you rent a houseboat and cruise along a section of the Canal du Midi (p30), stopping on a whim to pick up supplies, dine at a village restaurant, visit a wine-producing chateau by bicycle or navigate one of the many *écluses* (locks). The Canal de la Robine that flares off south from the Canal du Midi near Narbonne is also navigable, as are several canals in the Camargue.

Boats accommodate from two to 12 passengers and are outfitted with bedding and cooking facilities. Anyone over 18 can pilot a riverboat, but first-time skippers are given a short instruction session so they qualify for a *carte de plaisance* (a temporary cruising permit). The speed limit is 6km/h on canals and 8km/h on rivers.

Dozens of boat-rental opportunities are listed in the destination chapters of this guide; see p242, p136 and p188. Popular ports to get afloat on the Canal du Midi include Moissac west of Toulouse, Le Somail and Homps west of Narbonne, Le Capestang east of Narbonne, and Carnon near Montpellier. Count on a week for a Carcassonne–Agde return voyage and a fortnight for the classic Carcassonne–Castelnaudary return cruise – 3½ to five hours' sailing and navigating up to 10 locks a day.

Online rental agencies:

Camargue Plaisance (☎ 03 85 53 76 74; www.plaisance.camargue.fr)

Canal Boat Holidays (www.canalboatholidays.com)

Crown Blue Line (www.crownblueline.com; Castelnaudary ☎ 04 68 94 52 94; Port Cassafières ☎ 04 67 90 91 70; St-Gilles ☎ 04 66 87 22 66)

France Afloat (☎ 03 86 81 67 87, in the UK 0870 0110 538; www.franceafloat.com)

H2olidays Barging in France (www.barginginfrance.com)

Locaboat Holidays (☎ 03 86 91 72 72, in the UK 01279 505 097; www.locaboat.com)

Minervoys Cruisers (www.minervoiscruisers.com)

Rive de France (☎ 04 67 37 14 60; www.rive-de-france.tm.fr)

Worldwide River Cruise (www.worldwide-river-cruise.com)

BUS

Buses are widely used for short-distance travel within *départements*, but services are infrequent and slow. Route details are listed under Getting Around in regional chapters.

Updated bus schedules are online:

Montpellier area (www.herault.fr/herault-transport)

Bus services throughout the Hérault *département*.

Roussillon (www.cg66.com) Complete schedules under the Routes Transport link.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Having your own wheels is vital to properly discover the region, with many nooks and crannies impossible to uncover by public transport. That said, parking in larger towns and cities can be a headache, and during holiday periods – particularly in July and August and over long weekends – coastal roads can get backed up with *bouchons* (traffic jams).

There are four types of intercity roads:

Autoroutes Rapid-transit multilane motorways (highways) with tolls (*péages*). An example is the A8.

Routes Nationales (N, RN) National highways.

Routes Communales (C, V) Minor rural roads.

Routes Départementales (D) Local roads.

Autoroutes in Languedoc-Roussillon are managed by **Autoroutes du Sud de la France** (www.asf.fr), whose website allows you to plan your journey and check tolls, local weather, road conditions and so on. Surf www.autoroutes.fr for masses more traffic-related information.

Bringing Your Own Vehicle

Vehicles must display a sticker identifying their country of registration. A right-hand-drive

ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Carcassonne	---				
Montpellier	150	---			
Nîmes	200	55	---		
Perpignan	115	155	200	---	
Toulouse	95	240	290	205	---
	Carcassonne	Montpellier	Nîmes	Perpignan	Toulouse

vehicle brought from the UK or Ireland has to have deflectors fitted to the headlights to avoid dazzling oncoming traffic. A reflective warning triangle and fluorescent waistcoat, to be used in the event of breakdown, must be carried in your car. Fit your car with winter (all-season) tyres if you're driving here in winter.

In the UK, information on driving in France is available from the **RAC** (☎ 0870 0106 382; www.rac.co.uk) and the **AA** (☎ 0870 6000 371; www.theaa.com).

Driving Licence & Documents

All drivers must carry an ID card or passport, a driving licence, car-ownership papers (*carte grise*) and proof of third-party liability insurance.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol stations generally close Saturday afternoon and Sunday; 24-hour stations, generally at supermarkets on town fringes, require automated payment by credit card with an embedded PIN chip.

Essence (petrol or gasoline), also called *carburant* (fuel), is priciest at stations on *autoroutes*, cheapest at supermarkets. In late 2008 unleaded 95 – look for the green pump – hovered at €1.30 per litre.

Car Hire

Deals can be found on the internet with companies like **Auto Europe** (☎ in USA 1-888-223-5555; www.autoeurope.com) in the US, **DriveAway Holidays** (☎ in Australia 0311-723 972; www.driveaway.com.au) in

Australia and **Holiday Autos** (☎ in the UK 0871 472 5229; www.holidayautos.co.uk) in the UK. In this book, car-rental addresses are listed under large cities and towns. Major agencies:

ADA (☎ 0825 169 169; www.ada.fr in French)

Avis (☎ 0820 05 05 05; www.avis.com)

Budget (☎ 0825 00 35 64; www.budget.com, www.budget.fr in French)

Easycar (☎ in UK 0906-333 3333; www.easycar.com)

Europcar (☎ 0825 358 358; www.europcar.com)

Hertz (☎ 01 39 38 38 38 in French; www.hertz.com)

National-Citer (www.nationalcar.com, www.citer.fr in French)

Renault Rent (☎ 0810 40 50 60; www.renault-rent.com in French)

Sixt (☎ 0820 00 74 98; www.sixt.fr in French)

Insurance

Third-party liability insurance is compulsory for all vehicles in France, including cars from abroad. If you get into a minor accident with no injuries, the easiest way for drivers to sort things out with insurance companies is to fill out a *Constat Amiable d'Accident Automobile* (European Accident Statement), a standardised way of recording important details about what happened. In rental cars it's in the packet of documents in the glove compartment. If problems crop up, call the **police** (☎ 17).

Road Conditions

If you're planning to drive along the coast on Saturday in July or August, it can take hours to move a few kilometres. For traffic reports in English, tune in to 107.7MHz FM, which gives updates every 30 minutes in summer.

Road Rules

Passengers front and back must wear seat belts. Children under 10kg must travel in backward-facing child seats; children weighing up to

SPEED LIMITS

- **Built-up areas** (towns, villages etc) – 50km/h
- **Motorways** (*autoroutes*) – 130km/h (110km/h in the rain, 60km/h in icy conditions)
- **Dual carriageways** – 110km/h (100km/h if it's raining)
- **Two-way national and local roads** – 90km/h (80km/h if it's raining)

36kg must travel in child seats in the vehicle's rear seat. Children under 10 are not allowed to sit in the front seat, even with a car seat. North American drivers note: turning right on a red light is illegal.

Under the *priorité à droite* rule, any car entering an intersection (including a T-junction and a roundabout) from a road on your right has the right-of-way, unless the intersection is marked *vous n'avez pas la priorité* (you do not have right of way) or *cédez le passage* (give way). *Priorité à droite* is also suspended on priority roads, which are marked by a yellow diamond within a larger white diamond.

Mobile phones may only be used when accompanied by a hands-free kit or speakerphone. Radar detectors are very illegal.

Riders of any type of two-wheeled vehicle with a motor (except motor-assisted bicycles) must wear a helmet. No special licence is required to ride a motorbike whose engine is smaller than 50cc.

In forested areas unpaved tracks signposted DFCI (*défense forestière contre l'incendie*) are for fire crews to gain quick entry in the event of a fire: they are strictly off limits to private vehicles.

ALCOHOL

It is illegal to drive with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of over 0.05% (0.5g per litre of blood) – the equivalent of two glasses of wine.

TRAIN

Languedoc-Roussillon's regional SNCF train network, served by **TER Languedoc Roussillon** (☎ 0891 700 900; www.ter-sncf.com/languedoc), comprises several routes: one shadows the entire coast a little inland from Nîmes via Montpellier, Béziers and Narbonne to Perpignan and beyond into Spain; another snakes north through Haut-Languedoc to Millau and beyond; and a third dives west from

THE DIGITAL TRAIN STATION

Check train arrivals/departures in real time, locate the closest wi-fi hotspot, and find out about public-transport links, taxi telephone numbers, where the station loos are, services for disabled travellers and so on with **Gares en Mouvement** (www.gares-en-mouvement.com), an inspired digital resource that gives you the complete low-down on every train station in France.

Narbonne to Carcassonne, Castelnaudary and Toulouse. In Roussillon the train trundles the length of the Vallée du Conflent west from Perpignan.

Additionally, a narrow-gauge tourist train (p235) runs from Rivesaltes, north of Perpignan, for 60km along the Vallée de l'Agly to Axat in neighbouring Languedoc; while the mythical Canary (p232) chases the Vallée du Conflent. Both don open-top carriages in summer and chug through dazzling mountain scenery.

Reservations

Reservations are not mandatory on most regional trains, but it's advisable to buy your ticket for any straight-through trains well in advance in summer.

Before boarding time-stamp your ticket in a *composteur* (yellow post at platform entrances) or risk a fine.

Train Passes

For countrywide SNCF discounts and rail passes, see p265.

With the annual Carte Via Liberté (€25), cardholders get a 25% discount on all rail travel Monday to Friday in the Languedoc-Roussillon *région*. At weekends, on bank holidays and during school holidays, the cardholder and up to three travelling companions get a 50% discount.

Health

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Languedoc-Roussillon is a healthy place: your main risks are likely to be sunburn, foot blisters, the odd insect bite and mild stomach problems from eating and drinking too much.

BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names (French medicine names are often completely different than those in other countries), is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

Citizens of the EU, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein receive free or reduced-cost state-provided health-care cover with the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for medical treatment that becomes necessary while in France. Each family member will need a separate card. In the

UK, get application forms from post offices, or download them from the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk), which has comprehensive information about the card's coverage.

Citizens from other countries will need to check if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their home country and France. If you need health insurance, you should strongly consider a policy covering the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required to travel to France. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The main symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights, walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones), drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

IN FRANCE

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Visitors to France can get excellent health care from the emergency room/casualty ward (*salle des urgences*) of a hospital (*hôpital*) and at a doctor's office (*cabinet médical*), and for minor illnesses trained pharmacists (*pharmaciens*) in pharmacies – there is at least one in every town, flagged with a flashing green cross outside – provide valuable advice and sell medications. They can also tell you when more specialised help is needed and point you in the right direction. Dental care is usually good; however, it is sensible to have a dental check-up before a long trip.

DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution (eg Dioralyte). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours, or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, seek immediate medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Altitude Sickness

Lack of oxygen at high altitudes (over 2500m) affects most people to some extent. Symptoms of acute mountain sickness (AMS) usually develop in the first 24 hours at altitude but may be delayed up to three weeks. Mild symptoms are headache, lethargy, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. Severe symptoms are breathlessness, a dry, irritative cough (followed by the production of pink, frothy sputum), severe headache, lack of coordination and balance, confusion, vomiting, irrational behaviour, drowsiness, and unconsciousness. There's no rule as to what is too high: AMS can be fatal at 3000m, but 3500m to 4500m is the usual range.

Treat mild symptoms by resting at the same altitude until you recover, which usually takes a day or two. Paracetamol (acetaminophen) or aspirin can be taken for headaches. If symptoms persist or grow worse, however, *immediate descent is necessary*; even 500m can help. Drug treatments should never be used to avoid descent or to enable further ascent. Diamox (acetazolamide) reduces the headache of AMS and helps the body acclimatise to the lack of oxygen. It is only available on prescription.

To prevent AMS:

- Ascend slowly – have frequent rest days, spending two to three nights at each rise of 1000m. Acclimatisation takes place gradually.
- Sleep at a lower altitude than the greatest height reached during the day, if possible. Also, once above 3000m, care should be taken not to increase the sleeping altitude by more than 300m per day.
- Drink extra fluids. Monitor hydration by ensuring that urine is clear and plentiful.
- Eat light, high-carbohydrate meals for more energy.
- Avoid alcohol, sedatives and tobacco.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion follows excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink enough water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion, replace lost fluids by drinking water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

Hypothermia

Even on a hot day France's mountain weather can change rapidly, so always carry waterproof garments and warm layers, and inform others of your route. Acute hypothermia follows a sudden drop of body temperature over a short time, while chronic hypothermia is caused by a gradual loss of body temperature over hours. Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless rewarming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, and ensuring the sufferer has access to warm, dry clothing, hot, sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical advice. Be sure children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure, as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year.

If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, lost fluids and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take along rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling across time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern of some women. If you are using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, or stomach upsets such as diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead to the risk of pregnancy – remember to take condoms with you just in case. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible, but you should always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Emergency contraception is available with a doctor's prescription in France. Condoms (*préservatifs*) are readily available at pharmacies. Keep them in a cool, dry place or they may crack.

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Language

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Modern French developed from the *langue d'oïl*, a group of dialects spoken north of the River Loire and descended from the vernacular Latin used during the late Gallo-Roman period. The *langue d'oïl* – particularly the Francien dialect that was spoken in the Île de France – eventually displaced the *langue d'oc*, the dialect spoken in the south of the country, and from which the region of Languedoc gets its name.

The terms *langue d'oïl* and *langue d'oc* reflect language distinctions through the alternative ways these northern and southern dialects represent the word 'yes': *oïl* (or *oui* in modern French) and *òc* respectively.

Standard French is spoken throughout Languedoc-Roussillon, but Occitan (see the boxed text p273) and Catalan (see the boxed text p274) are also prevalent, and serve as important cultural markers.

For more information on food and dining in France, see p51. If you'd like a more comprehensive guide to the French language Lonely Planet's compact *French Phrasebook* will cover most of your travel needs.

PRONUNCIATION

The pronunciation guides included with the French phrases in this chapter should

help you in getting your message across. Here are a few of the letters of written French that may cause confusion:

- j** **zh** in the pronunciation guides; as the 's' in 'leisure', eg *jour*, *zhoor* (day)
- c** before **e** and **i**, as the 's' in 'sit'; before **a**, **o** and **u** it's pronounced as English 'k'. When underscored with a cedilla (ç) it's always pronounced as the 's' in 'sit'.
- r** pronounced from the back of the throat while constricting the muscles to restrict the flow of air
- n, m** where a syllable ends in a single **n** or **m**, these letters are not pronounced, but the preceding vowel is given a nasal pronunciation

BE POLITE!

While the French rightly or wrongly have a reputation for assuming that all humans should speak French – before WWI it was the international language of culture and diplomacy – you'll find any attempt to communicate in French will be much appreciated.

What is often perceived as arrogance is often just a subtle objection to the assumption by many travellers that they should be able to speak English anywhere, in any situation, and be understood. You can easily avoid the problem by approaching people and addressing them in French. Even if the only sentence you are able to muster is *Pardonnez-moi, madame/monsieur, parlez-vous anglais?* (Excuse me, madam/sir, do you speak English?), you're sure to be much more warmly received than if you stick to English.

You should also be aware that an important distinction is made in French between *tu* and *vous*, which both mean 'you'. *Tu* is only used when addressing people you know well or children. If you're addressing an adult who isn't a personal friend, *vous* should always be used unless the person invites you to use *tu*. In general, younger people insist less on this distinction between polite and informal, and you'll find that in many cases they use *tu* from the beginning of an acquaintance. Nevertheless, it's always best to err on the safe side.

OCCITAN

Occitan or *langue d'oc* refers to the dialects spoken over a large territory in the south of France. It is closely related to Catalan (see the boxed text p274), with influences from French. Recent estimates suggest there are around eight million speakers, of whom two million use the language every day. The dialects Provençal, Languedocien and Auvergnat are spoken in Languedoc-Roussillon.

As the language of the troubadours, Occitan enjoyed great literary prestige during the Middle Ages. However, economic and religious imperialism from the north resulted in the Parisian dialect being imposed in administrative spheres.

Good morning.	<i>Bonjorn.</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>Bon vèspres.</i>
Good evening.	<i>Bon ser.</i>
Hello./Goodbye.	<i>Adieu. (sg & inf)</i> <i>Adieussiatz. (pl/pol)</i>
How are you?	<i>Coma va?</i>
Well.	<i>Va plan.</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Perdon.</i>
Please.	<i>Te prègui. (sg & inf)</i> <i>Vos prègui. (pl/pol)</i>
Thank you.	<i>Mercés.</i>
Yes.	<i>Òc.</i>
No.	<i>Non.</i>

GENDER

All nouns in French are either masculine or feminine, and adjectives reflect the gender of the noun they modify. The feminine form of many nouns and adjectives is indicated by a silent **e** added to the masculine form, as in *ami* and *amie* (the masculine and feminine for 'friend').

In the following phrases, both masculine and feminine forms have been indicated where necessary. The gender of a noun is often indicated by the article that precedes it: 'the/a/some', *le/un/du* (m), *la/une/de la* (f); or one of the possessive adjectives, 'my/your/his, her', *mon/ton/son* (m), *ma/ta/sa* (f). In French, unlike English, the possessive adjective agrees in number and gender with its noun: 'his/her mother', *sa mère*.

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	zher shersh ...
camp site	<i>un camping</i>	un kom-peeng
guest house	<i>une pension (de famille)</i>	ewn pon-syon (der fa-mee-yer)

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

To ...	<i>À l'attention de ...</i>
From ...	<i>De la part de ...</i>
Date	<i>Date</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Je voudrais réserver ...</i>
in the name of ...	<i>au nom de ...</i>
from ... (date) to ...	<i>du ... au ...</i>
credit card	<i>carte de crédit</i>
number	<i>numéro</i>
expiry date	<i>date d'expiration</i>

Please confirm availability and price. *Veillez confirmer la disponibilité et le prix.*

hotel	<i>un hôtel</i>	un o-tel
youth hostel	<i>une auberge de jeunesse</i>	ewn o-berzh der zher-nes

Where can I find a cheap hotel?

Où est-ce qu'on peut trouver un hôtel pas cher?

oo es-kon per troo-vay un o-tel pa shair

What is the address?

Quelle est l'adresse?

kel e la-dres

Could you write the address, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez écrire l'adresse, s'il vous plaît?

es-ker voo poo-ryay ay-keer la-dres seel voo play

Do you have any rooms available?

Est-ce que vous avez des chambres libres?

es-ker voo-za-vay day shom-brer lee-brer

I'd like (a) ...	<i>Je voudrais ...</i>	zher voo-dray ...
single room	<i>une chambre à un lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a un lee
double-bed room	<i>une chambre avec un grand lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek un gron lee
twin room (with two beds)	<i>une chambre avec des lits jumeaux</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek day lee zhew-mo
room with a bathroom	<i>une chambre avec une salle de bains</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek ewn sal der bun
to share a dorm	<i>coucher dans un dortoir</i>	koo-sheer don zun dor-twa

How much is it ...? Quel est le prix ...? kel ay ler pree ...

per night	<i>par nuit</i>	par nwee
per person	<i>par personne</i>	par per-son

May I see the room?

Est-ce que je peux voir la chambre? es-ker zher per vwa la shom-brer

Where is the bathroom?*Où est la salle de bains?* oo ay la sal der bun**Where is the toilet?***Où sont les toilettes?* oo-son lay twa-let**I'm leaving today.***Je pars aujourd'hui.* zher par o-zhoor-dwee**We're leaving today.***Nous partons aujourd'hui.* noo par-ton o-zhoor-dwee**CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS**

Hello.	<i>Bonjour.</i>	bon-zhoor
Goodbye.	<i>Au revoir.</i>	o-rer-vwa
Yes.	<i>Oui.</i>	wee
No.	<i>Non.</i>	non
Please.	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i>	seel voo play
Thank you.	<i>Merci.</i>	mair-see
Excuse me.	<i>Excusez-moi.</i>	ek-skew-zay-mwa
Sorry.	<i>Pardon.</i>	par-don
My name is ...	<i>Je m'appelle ...</i>	zher ma-pel ...

You're welcome.*Je vous en prie.* (pol) zher voo-zon pree*De rien.* (inf) der ree-en**What's your name?***Comment vous appelez-vous?* (pol) ko-mon voo-za-play-voo*Comment tu t'appelles?* (inf) ko-mon tew ta-pel**Where are you from?***De quel pays* der kel pay-ee*êtes-vous?* (pol) et-voo*De quel pays es-tu?* (inf) der kel pay-ee ay-tew**I'm from ...** *Je viens de ...* zher vyen der ...**I like ...** *J'aime ...* zhem ...**I don't like ...** *Je n'aime pas ...* zher nem pa ...**Just a minute.** *Une minute.* ewn mee-newt**DIRECTIONS****Where is ...?***Où est ...?* oo ay ...**Go straight ahead.***Continuez tout droit.* kon-teen-way too drwa**Turn left.***Tournez à gauche.* toor-nay a gosh**Turn right.***Tournez à droite.* toor-nay a drwat**at the corner/at the traffic lights***au coin/aux feux* o kwun/o fer**behind** *derrière* dair-ryair**in front of** *devant* der-von**far (from)** *loin (de)* lwun (der)**near (to)** *près (de)* pray (der)**opposite** *en face de* on fas der**CATALAN**

Catalan is a Romance language closely related to Occitan (see the boxed text p273). It's spoken today in Roussillon, as well as the northeast tip of Spain.

Many famous creative types have been Catalan speakers: painters like Dalí, Miró and Picasso, architects like Gaudí and writers like Mercè Rodoreda.

Hello!	<i>Hola!</i>	o-la
Good morning.	<i>Bon dia.</i>	bon dee-a
Good afternoon.	<i>Bona tarda.</i>	bo-na tar-da
Good evening.	<i>Bon vespre.</i>	bon bes-pra
Goodbye.	<i>Adéu.</i>	a-the-oo
How are you? (Very) Well.	<i>Com estàs? (Molt) Bé.</i>	kom as-tas (mol) be
Excuse me.	<i>Perdoni.</i>	par-tho-nee
Sorry.	<i>Ho sento.</i>	oo sen-to
Please.	<i>Sisplau.</i>	sees-pla-oo
Thank you.	<i>Gràcies.</i>	gra-see-as
Yes/No.	<i>Sí/No.</i>	see/no

beach	<i>la plage</i>	la plazh
bridge	<i>le pont</i>	ler pon
castle	<i>le château</i>	ler sha-to
cathedral	<i>la cathédrale</i>	la ka-tay-dral
church	<i>l'église</i>	lay-gleez
main square	<i>la place centrale</i>	la plas son-tral
museum	<i>le musée</i>	ler mew-zay
old city (town)	<i>la vieille ville</i>	la vyay veel
quay	<i>le quai</i>	ler kay
ruins	<i>les ruines</i>	lay rween
square	<i>la place</i>	la plas
tourist office	<i>l'office de tourisme</i>	lo-fees der too-rees-mer

HEALTH

I'm ill. *Je suis malade.* zher swee ma-lad

It hurts here. *J'ai une douleur ici.* zhay ewn doo-ler ee-see

I'm ... *Je suis ...* zher swee(z) ...

asthmatic *asthmatique* as-ma-teek

diabetic *diabétique* dee-a-bay-teek

epileptic *épileptique* ay-pee-lep-teek

I'm allergic to ... *Je suis allergique ...* zher swee za-lair-zheek ...

antibiotics *aux antibiotiques* o zon-tee-byo-teek

bees *aux abeilles* o za-bay-yer

peanuts *aux cacahuètes* o ka-ka-wet

penicillin *à la pénicilline* a la pay-nee-see-leen

walnuts *aux noix* o nwa

EMERGENCIES**Help!***Au secours!* o skoor**There's been an accident!***Il y a eu un accident!* eel ya ew un ak-see-don**I'm lost.***Je me suis égaré/e.* (m/f) zhe me swee-zay-ga-ray**Leave me alone!***Fichez-moi la paix!* fee-shay-mwa la pay**Call ...!****a doctor
the police***Appelez ...!**un médecin
la police*

a-play ...

un mayd-sun
la po-lees

antiseptic	<i>l'antiseptique</i>	lon-tee-sep-teek
aspirin	<i>l'aspirine</i>	las-pee-reen
condoms	<i>des préservatifs</i>	day pray-zair-va-teef
contraceptive	<i>le contraceptif</i>	ler kon-tra-sep-teef
diarrhoea	<i>la diarrhée</i>	la dya-ray
medicine	<i>le médicament</i>	ler may-dee-ka-mon
nausea	<i>la nausée</i>	la no-zay
sunblock cream	<i>la crème solaire</i>	la krem so-lair
tampons	<i>des tampons hygiéniques</i>	day tom-pon ee-zhen-eek

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?***Parlez-vous anglais?* par-lay-voov ong-lay**Does anyone here speak English?***Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui
parle anglais?* ya-teel kel-kung kee
par long-lay**How do you say ... in French?***Comment est-ce qu'on
dit ... en français?* ko-mon es-kon
dee ... on fron-say**What does ... mean?***Que veut dire ...?* ker ver deer ...**I don't understand.***Je ne comprends pas.* zher ner kom-pron pa**Could you write it down, please?***Est-ce que vous pourriez
l'écrire, s'il vous plaît?* es-ker voo poo-ryay
lay-kreer seel voo play**Can you show me (on the map)?***Pouvez-vous m'indiquer
(sur la carte)?* poo-vay-voov mun-dee-kay
(sewr la kart)**NUMBERS**

0	<i>zéro</i>	zay-ro
1	<i>un</i>	un
2	<i>deux</i>	der
3	<i>trois</i>	trwa
4	<i>quatre</i>	ka-trer
5	<i>cinq</i>	sungk
6	<i>six</i>	sees

7	<i>sept</i>	set
8	<i>huit</i>	weet
9	<i>neuf</i>	nerf
10	<i>dix</i>	dees
11	<i>onze</i>	onz
12	<i>douze</i>	dooz
13	<i>treize</i>	trez
14	<i>quatorze</i>	ka-torz
15	<i>quinze</i>	kunz
16	<i>seize</i>	sez
17	<i>dix-sept</i>	dee-set
18	<i>dix-huit</i>	dee-zweet
19	<i>dix-neuf</i>	deez-nerf
20	<i>vingt</i>	vung
21	<i>vingt et un</i>	vung tay un
22	<i>vingt-deux</i>	vung-der
30	<i>trente</i>	tront
40	<i>quarante</i>	ka-ront
50	<i>cinquante</i>	sung-kont
60	<i>soixante</i>	swa-son
70	<i>soixante-dix</i>	swa-son-dees
80	<i>quatre-vingts</i>	ka-trer-vung
90	<i>quatre-vingt-dix</i>	ka-trer-vung-dees
100	<i>cent</i>	son
1000	<i>mille</i>	meel

PAPERWORK

name	<i>nom</i>	nom
nationality	<i>nationalité</i>	na-syo-na-lee-tay
date/place of birth	<i>date/place de naissance</i>	dat/plas der nay-sons
sex/gender	<i>sexe</i>	seks
passport	<i>passoport</i>	pas-por
visa	<i>visa</i>	vee-za

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>Qui?</i>	kee
What?	<i>Quoi?</i>	kwa
What is it?	<i>Qu'est-ce que c'est?</i>	kes-ker say
When?	<i>Quand?</i>	kon
Where?	<i>Où?</i>	oo
Which?	<i>Quel/Quelle? (m/f)</i>	kel
Why?	<i>Pourquoi?</i>	poor-kwa
How?	<i>Comment?</i>	ko-mon

SHOPPING & SERVICES**I'd like to buy ...***Je voudrais acheter ...* zher voo-dray ash-tay ...**How much is it?***C'est combien?* say kom-byun**I don't like it.***Cela ne me plaît pas.* ser-la ner mer play pa**May I look at it?***Est-ce que je peux le voir?* es-ker zher per ler vwar**I'm just looking.***Je regarde.* zher rer-gard

SIGNS

Entrée	Entrance
Sortie	Exit
Ouvert	Open
Fermé	Closed
Interdit	Prohibited
Chambres Libres	Rooms Available
Complet	Full/No Vacancies
Commissariat de Police	Police Station
Toilettes/WC	Toilets
Hommes	Men
Femmes	Women

It's cheap.

Ce n'est pas cher. ser nay pa shair

It's too expensive.

C'est trop cher. say tro shair

I'll take it.

Je le prends. zher ler pron

Can I pay by credit card?

Est-ce que je peux payer avec ma carte de crédit?
es-ker zher per pay-yay a-vek ma kart der kray-dee

more	<i>plus</i>	plew
less	<i>moins</i>	mwun
smaller	<i>plus petit</i>	plew per-tee
bigger	<i>plus grand</i>	plew gron

I'm looking for ...	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	zhe shersh ...
a bank	<i>une banque</i>	ewn bonk
the hospital	<i>l'hôpital</i>	lo-pee-tal
an internet café	<i>un cybercafé</i>	un see-bair-ka-fay
the market	<i>le marché</i>	ler mar-shay
the police	<i>la police</i>	la po-tees
the post office	<i>le bureau de poste</i>	ler bew-ro der post
a public phone	<i>une cabine téléphonique</i>	ewn ka-been tay-lay-fo-neek
a public toilet	<i>les toilettes</i>	lay twa-let

TIME & DATES

What time is it?	<i>Quelle heure est-il?</i>	kel er ay til
It's (8) o'clock.	<i>Il est (huit) heures.</i>	il ay (weet) er
It's half past ...	<i>Il est (...) heures et demie.</i>	il ay (...) er ay day-mee

in the morning	<i>du matin</i>	dew ma-tun
in the afternoon	<i>de l'après-midi</i>	der la-pray-mee-dee
in the evening	<i>du soir</i>	dew swar
today	<i>aujourd'hui</i>	o-zhoor-dwee
tomorrow	<i>demain</i>	der-mun
yesterday	<i>hier</i>	yair

Monday	<i>lundi</i>	lun-dee
Tuesday	<i>mardi</i>	mar-dee
Wednesday	<i>mercredi</i>	mair-krer-dee
Thursday	<i>jeudi</i>	zher-dee
Friday	<i>vendredi</i>	von-drer-dee
Saturday	<i>samedi</i>	sam-dee
Sunday	<i>dimanche</i>	dee-monsh

January	<i>janvier</i>	zhon-vyay
February	<i>février</i>	fayv-ryay
March	<i>mars</i>	mars
April	<i>avril</i>	a-vreel
May	<i>mai</i>	may
June	<i>juin</i>	zhwun
July	<i>juillet</i>	zhwee-yay
August	<i>août</i>	oot
September	<i>septembre</i>	sep-tom-brer
October	<i>octobre</i>	ok-to-brer
November	<i>novembre</i>	no-vom-brer
December	<i>décembre</i>	day-som-brer

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

What time does ... leave/arrive?	<i>À quelle heure part/arrive ...?</i>	a kel er par/a-reev ...
boat	<i>le bateau</i>	ler ba-to
bus	<i>le bus</i>	ler bews
plane	<i>l'avion</i>	la-vyon
train	<i>le train</i>	ler trun

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>Je voudrais un billet ...</i>	zher voo-dray un bee-yay ...
one-way return	<i>simple aller-retour</i>	sum-pler a-lay rer-toor
1st-class	<i>de première classe</i>	der prem-yair klas
2nd-class	<i>de deuxième classe</i>	der der-zyem klas

I want to go to ...

Je voudrais aller à ... zher voo-dray a-lay a ...

The train has been delayed.

Le train est en retard. ler trun ay ton rer-tar

The train has been cancelled.

Le train a été annulé. ler trun a ay-tay a-new-lay

the first	<i>le premier (m)</i>	ler prer-myay
	<i>la première (f)</i>	la prer-myair
the last	<i>le dernier (m)</i>	ler dair-nyay
	<i>la dernière (f)</i>	la dair-nyair
platform number	<i>le numéro de quai</i>	ler new-may-ro der kay
ticket office	<i>le guichet</i>	ler gee-shay
timetable	<i>l'horaire</i>	lo-rair
train station	<i>la gare</i>	la gar

ROAD SIGNS

Cédez la Priorité	Give Way
Danger	Danger
Défense de Stationner	No Parking
Entrée	Entrance
Interdiction de Doubler	No Overtaking
Péage	Toll
Ralentissez	Slow Down
Sens Interdit	No Entry
Sens Unique	One Way
Sortie	Exit

Private Transport

I'd like to hire	<i>Je voudrais</i>	zher voo-dray
a/an...	<i>louer ...</i>	loo-way ...
car	<i>une voiture</i>	ewn vwa-tewr
4WD	<i>un quatre-quatre</i>	un kat-kat
motorbike	<i>une moto</i>	ewn mo-to
bicycle	<i>un vélo</i>	un vay-lo

Is this the road to ...?

C'est la route pour ...? say la root poor ...

Where's a service station?

Où est-ce qu'il y a une station-service? oo es-keel ya
ewn sta-syon-ser-vees

Please fill it up.

Le plein, s'il vous plaît. ler plun seel voo play

I'd like ... litres.

Je voudrais ... litres. zher voo-dray ... lee-trer

Where do I pay?

Où est-ce que je paie? oo es-ker zher pay?

I have a flat tyre.

Mon pneu est à plat. mom pner ay ta pla

I've had an accident.

J'ai eu un accident. zhay ew un ak-see-don

I need a mechanic.

J'ai besoin d'un mécanicien. zhay ber-zwun dun may-ka-nee-syun

petrol/gas	<i>essence</i>	ay-sons
diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dyay-zel

(How long) Can I park here?

(Combien de temps) Est-ce que je peux stationner ici?
(kom-byun der tom) es-ker zher per sta-syo-nay ee-see?

The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)

La voiture/moto est tombée en panne (à ...)
la vwa-tewr/mo-to ay tom-bay on pan (a ...)

The car/motorbike won't start.

La voiture/moto ne veut pas démarrer.
la vwa-tewr/mo-to ner ver pa day-ma-ray

I've run out of petrol.

Je suis en panne d'essence.
zher swee zon pan day-sons

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Is there a/an ...? *Y a-t-il ...?* ya teel ...

I need a/an ... *J'ai besoin ...* zhay ber-zwun ...

baby change room	<i>d'un endroit pour changer le bébé</i>	dun on-drwa poor shon-zhay ler bay-bay
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car baby seat	<i>d'un siège-enfant</i>	dun syezh-on-fon
----------------------	--------------------------	------------------

children's menu	<i>d'un menu enfant</i>	dun mer-new on-fon
------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------

disposable nappies/diapers	<i>des couches</i>	day koosh
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formula (milk)	<i>de lait maternisé</i>	de lay ma-ter-nee-zay
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(English-speaking) babysitter	<i>d'une baby-sitter (qui parle anglais)</i>	dewn ba-bee-see-ter (kee parl ong-glai)
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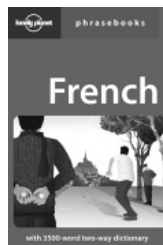
highchair	<i>d'une chaise haute</i>	dewn shay zot
potty	<i>d'un pot de bébé</i>	dun po der bay-bay

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?

Cela vous dérange si j'allaitte mon bébé ici? ser-la voo day-ron-zhe see
zha-layt mon bay-bay ee-see

Are children allowed?

Les enfants sont permis? lay zon-fon son pair-mee



Also available from Lonely Planet:
French Phrasebook

Glossary

For a glossary of food and drink terms, see p51. Below, (m) indicates masculine gender, (f) indicates feminine gender and (pl) indicates plural.

abbaye (f) – abbey
abrivado (f) – bull run into the arena
ancienne demeure (f) – historic old residence, mansion
anse (f) – cove
AOC – *appellation d'origine contrôlée*; wines and olive oils that have met stringent government regulations governing where, how and under what conditions the grapes or olives are grown and the wines and olive oils are fermented and bottled
arène (f) – amphitheatre
atelier (m) – artisan's workshop
auberge (f) – inn
auberge de jeunesse (f) – youth hostel
autoroute (f) – motorway, highway

baie (f) – bay
bandido (f) – return bull run from the arena to the bull farm
bastide (f) – fortified hilltop village; country house
billetterie (f) – box office
boulangerie (f) – bread shop, bakery

calanque (f) – rocky inlet
cap (m) – cape
carnet (m) – book of five or 10 bus, tram or metro tickets sold at a reduced rate
cascade (f) – waterfall
cassole (f) – traditional earthenware casserole dish in which to cook and serve cassoulet
causse (m) – high limestone plateau
cave (f) – wine or cheese cellar
chambre d'hôte (f) – privately run bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation
charcuterie (f) – pork butcher's shop and delicatessen; also cold meat
château (m) – castle or stately home
chèvre (m) – goat
cigale (f) – cicada
col (m) – mountain pass
comité départemental du tourisme (m) – departmental tourist office
commissariat de police (m) – police station
conseil général (m) – general council
corniche (f) – coastal road
corrida (f) – bullfight in which the bull dies
cour (f) – courtyard
cour d'honneur (f) – courtyard of honour

course Camarguaise (f) – bloodless Camargue-style bullfight (no dead bull)
cueillette des olives (f) – olive harvest

dégustation (f) – the fine art of tasting wine, cheese, olive oil or seafood
département (m) – administrative area (department)
DFCI – *défense forestière contre l'incendie*; fire road (public access forbidden)
domaine (m) – wine-producing estate

eau potable (f) – drinking water
écluse (f) – canal lock
église (f) – church
épicerie (f) – grocery shop
étang (m) – lagoon or lake

faïence (f) – earthenware
farandole (f) – folk dance dating to the Middle Ages
féria (f) – bullfighting festival
ferme auberge (f) – family-run inn attached to a farm or chateau; farmhouse restaurant
ferme conchylicole (f) – shellfish farm
fête (f) – party or festival
formule (f) – fixed main course plus starter or dessert
fromagerie (f) – cheese shop

gardian (m) – Camargue horseman
gare (f) – train station
gare maritime (m) – ferry terminal
gare routière (m) – bus station
garrigue (f) – ground cover of aromatic plants; see also *maquis*
gitan (m) – Roma; gypsy
gîte d'étape (m) – hikers accommodation, often found in the mountains or rural areas
gîte rural (m) – self-catering country cottage
golfe (m) – gulf
grand cru (m) – wine of recognised superior quality; literally, 'great growth'
grotte (f) – cave

halles (f, pl) – covered market; central food market
hôtel de ville (m) – town hall
hôtel particulier (m) – historic private mansion
Huguenot – member of the Protestant Reformed Church of France

jardin (botanique) (m) – (botanic) garden
joutes nautiques (f) – nautical jousting

lavoir (m) – communal wash house

mairie (f) – town hall

maison de la presse (f) – newsagent

maison de village (f) – old stone house, often terraced, in a village

maison d'hôte (f) – upmarket B&B

manade (f) – bull farm, bull herd

maquis (m) – aromatic scrub, see also *garrigue*; name given to the French Resistance movement and its *maquisards* (fighters)

marais (m) – marsh or swamp

marais salant (m) – salt pan

marché paysan (m) – farmers market

mas (m) – farmhouse

menu (m) – meal at a fixed price with two or more courses

môle (m) – jetty, mole, breakwater

monastère (m) – monastery

moulin à huile (m) – oil mill

musée (m) – museum

navette (f) – shuttle bus, train or boat

novillada (f) – fight between bulls less than four years old

office du tourisme, office de tourisme (m) – tourist office

ONF – Office National des Forêts; National Forests Office

papeterie (f) – stationery shop

parapente (f) – paragliding

parc national (m) – national park

parc naturel régional (m) – regional nature park

péniche (f) – canal barge

pétanque (f) – a game of bowls played on a rough gravel pitch

phare (m) – lighthouse

pic (m) – mountain peak

place (f) – square

plage (f) – beach

plan (m) – city map

plat du jour (m) – dish of the day

plongée (f) – dive

pont (m) – bridge

port de plaisance (m) – pleasure port

porte (f) – gate or door, old-town entrance

préfecture (f) – main town of a *département*

préfet (m) – préfet; regional representative of national government, based in a *préfecture*

presqu'île (f) – peninsula

prieuré (m) – priory

produits du terroir (m) – local food products

quai (m) – quay or railway platform

rade (f) – gulf or harbour

refuge (m) – hikers shelter (mountain hut)

région (m) – administrative region

réserve naturel (m) – nature reserve

rond-point (m) – roundabout

salin (m) – salt marsh

sardane (f) – Catalan folk dance

sentier (m) – trail, footpath

sentier de grande randonnée (m) – long-distance path with alphanumeric name beginning with 'GR'

sentier littoral (m) – coastal path

sentier sous-marin (m) – underwater trail

SNCF – Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer; state-owned railway company

SRV – *sur rendez-vous*; by appointment only

stade (m) – stadium

syndicat d'initiative (m) – tourist office

tabac (m) – tobacconist (also sells newspapers, bus tickets etc)

taureau (m) – bull

terroir (m) – land

TGV – *train à grande vitesse*; high-speed train or bullet train

trottinette (f) – microscooter

vendange (f) – grape harvest

vieille ville (f) – old town

vieux port (m) – old port

vigneron (m) – winegrower

vignobles (pl) – vineyards

vin de garde (m) – wine best drunk after several years in storage

vin de pays (m) – table wine

VTT (m) – *vélo tout terrain*; mountain bike

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