

France



A key player on the world stage and a country at the political heart of Europe, France paid a high price in both economic and human terms during the two world wars. The years which followed saw protracted wars culminating in independence for Algeria and most other French colonies in Africa as well as the desalinization of Indochina.

FRANCE FACTS

Population: 60.1 million (UN, 2003)

Capital: Paris

Major language: French

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 75 years (men), 83 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Euro = 100 cents

Main exports: Machinery and transport equipment, agricultural products, including wine

Average annual income: US \$22,730 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .fr

International dialing code: +33

France has produced some of the continent's most influential writers and thinkers from Descartes and Pascal in the 17th century, through Rousseau and Voltaire in the 18th, Baudelaire and Flaubert in the 19th to Sartre and Camus in the 20th. In the last two centuries it has given the art world the works of Renoir, Monet, Cezanne, Gauguin, Matisse and Braque, to name but a few.



Flag Description: three equal vertical bands of blue (hoist side), white, and red; known as the French Tricolore (Tricolor); the design and/or colors are similar to a number of other flags, including those of Belgium, Chad, Ireland, Cote d'Ivoire, Luxembourg, and Netherlands; the official flag for all French dependent areas. For more information go to <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/fr.html>