

# The good, the bad, and the ugly...



**An insider's guide to living in France, with the French:**



**Grenoble Edition**

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**Dear Student,**

**Get ready to have an experience that will change your life forever! Living in France or any foreign country allows you to experience a new perspective on living life as well as seeing lots of the world that many only see in history books or on TV.**

**Living in a foreign country is exciting and scary at the same time. Take each day as a new learning experience and go with it. Whether you live in Grenoble for 3½ months or for 6 months you will be amazed how much you can do in that short of time.**

**You will experience new people, customs, ways of life, foods, music, and just about everything else. At times you will feel that your French is horrible and it will never improve. Other times you will be amazed at how substantial of conversations you hold with your host family. Then other days you will find yourself doing something and realizing that what you are doing is so French.**

**The contents of this guide are just advice that can help make your life easier in transitioning into life in Grenoble. These suggestions are taken from experiences about what works and doesn't and how to act just a little more French than you will feel.**

**So I encourage you to read this guide and then go live and create your own memories and experiences because above everything you will read in later pages the most important advice I can give you is this: Take advantage of everything you can and want to do, go see as much as you can, don't waste one minute because the next thing you know you will be back in Seattle going to school and working and realize you have been back longer than you were in France.**

**~Kendra Borja  
Grenoble Fall 2005**

## YOUR ARRIVAL

### Packing

Some packing tips to help make your life so much easier...

- **PACK LIGHT!!!** No joke, I know it sounds impossible, but remember packing two full suitcases doesn't allow you to bring back much stuff at the end of your stay and trust me, you will want to bring back tons of stuff (i.e. bottles of wine, chocolate, souvenirs, a bakery if it were possible)
- Know your baggage requirements. You can find this information on the website of the airline you are flying. Many times the international luggage requirements are different and can be stricter than flying domestically.
- A good idea is to pack a collapsible duffle bag in your bag so that when you leave France you can have a third piece of luggage. For me, it was worth the extra expense to pay to check a third bag instead of going over baggage weight limits.
- Pack a small pocket English dictionary. I know it sounds weird but even though you are in France to practice as much French as possible there will be times you need a dictionary to help you figure out a word.
- Bring an assortment of clothes to prepare you for weather. When you arrive in Grenoble it will still be summer and warm, but as it moves towards November and into the winter months it can get really cold and you are going to want long sleeve shirts and a nice warm coat.
- Don't forget to pack a collapsible laundry basket or bag to put your dirty laundry in at home.



### Arriving in France

Even though the airport in Lyon is closer to Grenoble, flying into Paris is usually just as easy and cheaper. If you arrive in Paris, you can take an Air France shuttle to the Gare de Lyon which is cheap and easy and leaves directly from the airport.

I would highly recommend knowing if any group members are going to be on the same flights as you especially when arriving into France. It makes you feel a little less alone in the world knowing you can conquer Paris in your first initial hours with someone(s) who is experiencing the same thing as you are.

*I know this is a section on how to get to Grenoble but this is very important. Our whole group sort of came prepared to wear our fleeces and long sleeve shirts and pants when we arrived in France. DON'T MAKE THIS MISTAKE!!! If you arrive at the beginning of September you'll want to be wearing cool clothes because it is still summer there and the weather stays decent until the end of September. You will arrive in France and think that it is way hot, TRUST US!!!*

## Taking the Air France Shuttle:



The suggested way to get from Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) to the Gare de Lyon is by taking an Air France Shuttle. The shuttles run every thirty minutes from 7:00AM to 9:00PM. A one way ticket costs €12. You can buy your ticket and catch the bus from these places:

Aérogare/Terminal 1: exit door #34 on the arrivals level  
Aérogare/Terminal 2F: exit doors #B2, C2, 0.07 on the arrivals level

(CDG's terminal 1 is a huge circle made up of multiple levels. To find the door you need, just keep walking in a circle on level one until you see a door marked #34. The doors are nicely marked so it isn't too hard. There are also plenty of airport employees near major exits ready to assist you with where to go. Most know enough English to point you in the right direction of the shuttles)

\*As a person who this happened to, the shuttle does not stop curbside at the Gare de Lyon. It drops you in front of the station, but you must cross a street and go up a few stairs to get into the station. Pay attention to when you get to the stop because they did not blatantly announce that we were at the Gare de Lyon. Paying attention and getting off when you are supposed to will prevent you from going across Paris to another train station that isn't where you want to be. This just creates more stress and the challenge of figuring out the transportation system of Paris in order to get back to the Gare de Lyon.

Once you get to the Gare de Lyon, you can go to a guichet (ticket booth) and buy your Carte 12-25 (see section on Train Tickets) and then buy your ticket to Grenoble. Trust me on this, for travel ease because most likely you will have to suitcases and a carry-on, pay the few Euros extra to take a direct TGV to Grenoble instead of having to transfer in Lyon. This benefits you in multiple ways (1) you will have just arrived in France and are probably not familiar with their travel systems so having to take only one train makes things immensely easier (2) your French probably isn't spectacular and it being your first day in France for 3 ½ months just pick the least stressful route to Grenoble (3) having to lug your bags on and off one train instead of two is so much easier.

\*See the section on trains to see how the system works in France.

## Arriving by train in Grenoble:



You should have already notified Professor Milan and Madame Sécher about when you would be arriving in Grenoble. This is so both of them or Madame Sécher can meet you at the train station with your host family. When you

arrive there, you will receive a packet with your housing agreement, temporary tram pass, map of Grenoble, and map of the tram and bus system as well as the schedules.

This is going to bite, but since there are multiple tracks at every station you may have to lug your luggage up and down a couple flights of stairs to get to the waiting area of the train station. I can only tell you to persevere because you will soon be at the place you will be staying and won't have to worry about all your luggage until you leave.

## **ADAPTING**

### **Your Host Family**

The kind of host family you will be placed in can vary a lot. One person was placed in a family with four kids all in their teens or above. I was placed in an apartment with a divorced lady who expected me to be independent all the time. Another person lived in an apartment with a family, while someone else lived in a house with a divorced lady and her son.

Just because you put preferences on your housing survey, does not mean you will get what you want.

You can think about your host family like a new roommate. It is a constant work to adjust to each other and respect that everyone lives differently.

For you, since your purpose of studying in France is to learn about the culture, you most of all will need to make the most adjustments regarding your living situation.

It is usually up to you mostly to decide how much you want to be involved with your family. My only advice is that the more effort you make in interacting with your family, the better your French will become.

### **Showering in France**

Most bathrooms in France have a bathtub with an unfixed, detachable shower head without a shower curtain; therefore, it is a tricky act to learn how to take a shower without making a huge wet mess on the floor.

Also, the French try and conserve water more than we do, so most people only keep the water on while rinsing and washing and turn it off when they shampoo and soap up. It takes a little getting used to, but it really isn't unbearable to not always have the water running.

### **Laundry**

As part of your housing contract, your host family will do your laundry once a week. This may seem awkward for those of you who have always done your laundry; however, get over it. It's a small thing compared to the other adjustments you will need to make in your new environment. Some host families, might allow you to do your own load of laundry once a week, while other host families do your laundry throughout the week with their own laundry.

If you absolutely have to do your own laundry or need clean clothes before the next time your clothes will be washed, there are a few lageries (laundry mats) around Grenoble.

These places cost 1€50 to wash a load and 1€ to dry. You can also buy laundry soap at the laundry mat or buy it beforehand at places like Monoprix, Géant, or Carrefour.

Unlike the US, it is the wash cycle that takes almost an hour to be finished (usually about 45 minutes). The washer also holds less than the dryer. The dryer costs 1€ for 10 minute increments. Your clothes can actually be dry in this short amount of time because the washer spins most of the water out of your clothes.

If you choose to do your laundry at a laverie and are unsure how to work the machines, just ask someone. It's a great place to practice your French.

The three most convenient locations can be found right across from the maison de tourisme, at the tram stop "Universités" on the "B" line, and near the tram stop "St. Bruno" which can be reached on both the "A" and "B" lines.

## SCHOOL and THE CUEF

### Placement Test

THE PLACEMENT TEST IS HARD!!! It is normal to feel afterwards that you might as well start packing your bags to go home, because there is no way you passed. However, do not fret all persons in our group passed the test and made it into his or her appropriate program and levels. You will be surprised most likely with the level you are placed in. If you are not immediately placed in the level you should be, the professors will see it within a few days and get you into the level they think best for you.

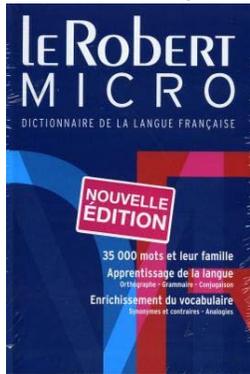


There is an oral section of the placement test where you talk to an instructor. It is not very hard and they ask you general questions such as how long you have studied French and where you are from. There is also an audio section, written comprehension, and grammar section on the test. The test is timed and do not worry if you did not finish, no one I know finished the test yet we all passed.

A practice test can be found online at the CUEF's website:  
[http://opus.grenet.fr/quizz\\_cuef/](http://opus.grenet.fr/quizz_cuef/)

### Language Class

You will be spending 10 hours a week with your language class. Each class is structured differently so it is hard to give a general overview about what will happen. The schedule is set up so that in the morning you have your language class for 3 two hour classes, and one four hour class which includes a one hour lab. This gives you one morning a week when you will not have your language class.



There are around 25 people in each class from all over the world. By the end of the semester some of your closest friends you meet will be from your class. The coolest thing about having a language class where French is not anyone's first language is that you are somewhat on equal playing field. Also, in addition to learning all

about French culture and traditions, you will learn about other countries cultures and traditions.

### Culture Classes

Culture classes take place during the afternoon and cover an array of topics such as the regions of France, history of contemporary France, art history, French culture and society, political and economic life of contemporary France, history of French cinema, and French and Francophone literature. Most classes challenge you to improve on your

French but aren't impossible to comprehend; however, some classes will challenge you a lot such as the course on French cinema because you are watching French films and are in a lecture with all levels of French speakers.

## **Translation**

Since there are so many English speakers, we have our own translation class once a week. This class is sort of weird since you are given articles in English to translate in French, and many times the articles are British English and not our standard American English. The class can be frustrating sometimes because you are in a room with around forty people all speaking out loud to try and translate the work best into a French phrase. Combine this with our lack of knowledge of the many ways the French can make things sound more eloquent and it provides a challenge. Bear through this class, though most likely it won't be your favorite class.

Note: Mme Eurin is a fun professor who teaches a lot of the culture classes. She is very informative and understands we aren't all fluent French speakers.

## **Books**

Unlike at SU where you spend half your life savings on books each quarter, in France you will at most spend 45€ on books and that is if you buy all books required and optional. At the bare minimum you will only need to buy one book for your language class. This book will probably cost around 15€ and can be found at a couple bookstores around town. An interesting thing is that professors in France write their own books and then teach from them.

Here are the two stores where it is easiest to buy your books (these two stores also have an English book section, so if you ever need a little escape to English pick-up a book to read):

- Arthaud- near Place Grenette on Grand Rue (Arthaud offers a 5% discount to students, however you must show them your id and tell them you are student before they ring up your purchases)
- Decitre- near Place Grenette on Grand Rue after Arthaud

## **School Supplies**

Don't bother using space in your suitcase to bring school supplies, it is just as easy to buy them when you get to France. One reason for this tip is that the loose leaf paper in France is a different size than here in the United States. Most professors expect you to turn your assignments in on this paper which is A4 sized. This size is longer than the regular letter sized paper here. It also saves you space in your suitcase. You can buy your school supplies at almost any general store such as Monoprix or Géant.

## Lunch



Since this is France and they actually take time out of the day to get lunch, you will have at least an hour to two hours for lunch, depending on your schedule. An economic approach to lunch is to buy lunch tickets on campus that allow you to eat at multiple cafets around campus. These tickets cost about 27€ for 10 tickets. Each meal costs one ticket and follows a certain formula. The most convenient place to buy meal tickets is at Diderot. The building is on the other side of the library and can be found easily on a map or you can ask someone.

There is a cafet in the building most of your classes are in or else the nearest ones are Diderot (the best) or Condillac. Look at a campus map to find the exact locations of the cafets.

Pay attention to the signs of what one formula includes. There are long lines of students waiting to eat and the workers sometimes aren't the politest at telling you that you have made a mistake.

## TRANSPORTATION



### The Tram and the Bus

Grenoble's transportation system is really good. There are two tram lines that run every few minutes during the weekdays. The "A" tram originates in Fontaine La Poya and goes through Grenoble up to Echirolles. The "B" tram originates at the Cité International and goes to the Universities. The "B" tram is what you would catch to get to campus if you do not live in the suburbs where a bus might go directly to the university. Some students might also have to catch a bus from near their house to the nearest tram stop.

If you need to ride a bus, your host family are the best people to ask about which buses to take to get into town, the university, or the nearest tram stop. The buses stop running regularly around 8:30PM-9:00 Monday thru Saturday, therefore if you do ride a bus to get home you will need to keep this in mind if you don't want to take a taxi. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, there is a night bus that can get you home though it leave less frequently and from different stops. You can get a schedule of the night bus you need at the Tabac on campus or at the Maison de Tourisme.

The trams stop operating around 12:00AM every night. The later in the evening, the less frequently trams start coming.

The transportation system sells a monthly student pass for 23 Euros a month. You will not find a better deal in order to get you around town anywhere. The very first time you buy you pass, you will need to bring a passport picture that they scan onto an electronic card that becomes your pass. This will increase the price by 3-6 Euros your first time. Each consecutive month after you renew your pass, you just need to give them your pass and tell them you want to recharge the pass for the month. The two most convenient places to buy and renew your tram pass are the Tabac on campus (right when you get off the stop "Bibliothèques/Universités") or at the Maison de Tourisme. It is recommended that you renew your pass on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, or 29<sup>th</sup> for the next month, so that you don't get checked on the tram on the first of the month, and so you avoid the lines of everyone else renewing their pass on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Also renewing your pass before the month ends also helps if the 1<sup>st</sup> occurs on a Sunday when you might need to take the buss or tram, but the offices are open to renew your passes.

You will get a map of the transportation when you get to Grenoble, but if you want to get a snapshot of how the system works visit the Tag website at [www.semitag.com](http://www.semitag.com), where you can download maps and schedules.

## The Train



### *Train Tickets*

The easiest way to buy train tickets and cheapest way is to purchase them at the Gare or there is a SNCF boutique right across the street from the Maison du Tourisme. You can get significant discounts (25%-50%) if you buy a **CARTE 12-25**. This card costs 49€. You should buy this

card the day you arrive in France at the Gare before you buy your train ticket to Grenoble, because then you can automatically start saving money.

If you plan on traveling significantly in France, the Carte 12-25 is worth the cost. Here is a sample of price difference for the same train ride one-way from Grenoble to Paris (the prices are high because I choose days that are high traffic and the prices are raised). If you know you are going to be traveling on a certain date, you can get even cheaper fares by buying your train tickets (2 months before the trip departure)

With the Carte 12-25: 85.50€

Without Carte: 102.60€

If you are going to buy a carte, you will need a passport sized photo when you buy it because it is put on your card. You present your carte on the trains when the conductor asks for your ticket. **DON'T FORGET YOUR CARD!!!** Believe me, I saw at least one person on each trip I took not have their carte de reduction and get ticketed by the conductor.

### **Riding the Train**

The trains in France are very efficient so don't expect that your train will run late. Here are a few tips about riding the train.

- All your bags should have a blue identification tag on them. This tag can be picked up at any guichet or information booth.
- You need to validate your ticket before you board the train. It is really easy to do, just put your ticket into any yellow validation machine. The machines are set up all around the train stations especially near the trains.
- Have your Carte 12-25 ready along with your ticket for the conductor. You can get fined and other things can just make your life more complicated if you don't have this or even worse a ticket!
- It depends what kind of train you are riding, but on all TGVs you will have an assigned car and seat. It can be a little confusing at some train stations because there can be two trains butted up against each other departing at similar times, but

going in the opposite direction. To avoid boarding the wrong train, you can always look to the screens along your assigned platform that have a diagram of the train. This screen will tell you which direction your specific train is going along with where your car should be.

- For any of your trips, bring along water and some snacks to save you some money from buying things on the train. Some trains don't even have snack cars, so it is better to be prepared.
- Some of my best conversations came from people I met on the train. Don't expect to speak to everyone you sit by, but especially in the cabins will people strike up conversations especially when they realize you are foreign. It must be something about traveling that makes people more willing to talk to strangers.

## MONEY

Currently, the Euro is stronger than the dollar, so be careful to not think in terms that 1€=\$1. Each person handles their money differently so whether cash works or using your debit or credit card as often as possible is your method of choice stick with it. The only thing is that when you go out to dinner in groups at restaurants you should be prepared to pay cash.

Most credit cards charge a currency conversion charge; so they will charge you the exchange rate plus a 1%-2% conversion charge. Usually using a debit card will give you a better rate.

It depends upon whatever bank you use here, but no person seemed to have problems withdrawing money at any ATM in France. Each bank differs on how they assess the service charges to your account. The best way to keep track of your finances is to use the online banking feature most banks offer standard with checking accounts.

If you have Bank of America, you can use the bank BNP Paribas without any service charge. This is very convenient because BNP Paribas is found all over France. There was not one city I went to where I could not easily find a BNP Paribas ATM. Bank of America did start charging a 1% international fee on all ATM withdrawals and a 3% fee on uses of the card. These charges show up separately on your bank statement.

It is suggested you call your bank personally to ask about any fees they may charge you internationally. Also notifying your bank of your travel plans can help prevent them from freezing your card for fear of theft. This is also a good procedure for your credit cards as well because it is somewhat of a hassle trying to call your credit card company or bank from France.



## SHOPPING

For your daily needs such as personal hygiene products, small gifts, school supplies, or groceries, you can do your shopping at Monoprix, Carrefour, and Géant.



- Monoprix is located right in front of the tram stop “Hubert Dubedout” on the “A” and “B” lines.
- Carrefour can be found at Grand’ Place which you can get to by taking the “A” to the stop “Grand’ Place” and in Meylan by taking the “B” line to “Grand Sablon” and then taking the #9 bus to the stop ????.
- Géant can be found near campus and can be reached by taking the 26 bus from campus (there is a stop right near the tram stop “Universités” on the “B” line or by taking the “A” line all the way to the end (Fontaine La Poya).



You can also buy groceries at little markets such as Le Petit Casino or Coccimarket.

A few things you should know about shopping:

Most stores (Monoprix is an exception) expect you to weigh your produce before you checkout. You can do this in the produce section at a weighs station.

You are expected to bag your own groceries at the checkout and they go really fast, so be prepared! The plastic bags that are available to you aren’t very strong so it is suggested that you buy the extra strong bags that are for sale for under 1€ each. These bags are nice because you can reuse them whenever you go shopping and they are very sturdy!

Carrefour is an experience that every person should experience at least once. Going there on a Saturday morning or around 6PM at night is like going into a store the Friday after Thanksgiving. If crowds aren’t your thing, Géant is just as good as Carrefour and seems to usually be less crowded and a little cheaper.

### Markets

Just like all other towns in France, Grenoble has a few outdoor markets. Most of the markets generally just sell food (i.e. fruits, vegetables, poultry, meats, fish, etc.). The one market where you can find some fun things is the Marché St. Bruno. This market carries clothes, jewelry, books, fabrics, anything else you might want to find. You can find when the markets are open by looking in [Le Petit Bulletin](#) or in [Sortir](#). Your host families will most likely be knowledgeable in when the markets are open and where.

## **Sundays**

Unlike the American mentality of twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the French function a little differently. The time this effects you most is on Sundays when it seems like everything is closed. All places such as Monoprix, Carrefour, Géant, Grand' Place, and any other major shopping are closed. Only on select Sundays of the year such as during the annual sales, or the few Sundays before Christmas are the stores open. The buses are also on a different schedule that run less frequently and stop much earlier than any other time of the week.

Sundays are a great time to go see a movie, go to a museum, read, study, or spend time with your family.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### La Poste

The French postal system is very efficient and helpful. You can buy stamps and flat-rate boxes at the post office. Post offices are easy to locate due to their bright yellow and blue logo that is almost as common as pharmacies in France.

The post office staff is usually very helpful with your shipping needs. The post offices do get busy often, so sometimes you will need to wait a bit. If you have something to mail, the post office at the university seemed to be the easiest and most convenient place to mail things.



A postcard takes a 0,90€ stamp to send. If you do not care about the postmark on the postcard, you can send them cheaper by buying envelopes and sending the cards that way.

You can also buy stamps at most tabacs.

#### **Name of the Post Office**

GRENOBLE CHAMPIONNET

GRENOBLE GAMBETTA

GRENOBLE CHAVANT

GRENOBLE BERRIAT

GRENOBLE ILE VERTE

GRENOBLE REPUBLIQUE (Next to the Maison de Tourisme)

L'université (Right past the tram stop "Universités", next to BNP Paribas)

#### **Address**

1 RUE DE TURENNE

12 AVENUE ALSACE LORRAINE

7 BOULEVARD MARECHAL LYAUTEY

16 PLACE ST BRUNO

38 AVENUE MARECHAL RANDON

### Telecartes

#### **\*NOTE\***

#### **THE TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEATTLE AND GRENOBLE IS NINE HOURS!!!**

Therefore, prime calling time is: from 5:00 PM-Midnight Grenoble time. This equates to 8:00AM-3:00PM Seattle Time. (See time difference section for conversions)

France has moved on from the age of coins in pay phones, so the only way you are going to call out is if you have a phone card (telecarte). U.S. international phone cards work in France, but you have to make sure to get the correct access number for France. Your best rates for calling the U.S. will probably be by buying a telecarte from any Tabac in France. The cheapest cards cost €7.50 which give you a random range of time from 30-90 minutes.

## Other Options to Stay in Touch

If you do decide to bring your laptop and get lucky enough to have wireless or an always ready internet connection, another cheap way to keep in touch stateside is to use Skype. Skype is a program over the internet that lets you call land lines for either free or around \$0.03/minute. All you would want to get is a headset so you can talk to your friends and family without totally disturbing everyone around you.

Also, the internet café Neptune has instant messenger so you can use it there or wherever you have a good internet connection. Most instant messaging programs also have live talk features for free.

I utilized email and instant messenger to stay in touch with my family and friends and talked to my family at least once a week. It was nice because I could go to the internet café around 6:00 every night and catch many people online just as they were getting their days started.

## Time Differences

The following is a chart to help you keep track of what time it is here in Seattle. For ease of explanations, we will think in a three day span of Thursday/Friday/Saturday. Therefore, if it says it is 7:00AM Saturday in Grenoble, it is 10:00PM Friday in Seattle.



Grenoble		Seattle	
Day	Time	Day	Time
Friday	MIDNIGHT	Thursday	3:00PM
Friday	1:00 AM	Thursday	4:00 PM
Friday	2:00 AM	Thursday	5:00 PM
Friday	3:00AM	Thursday	6:00 PM
Friday	4:00 AM	Thursday	7:00 PM
Friday	5:00 AM	Thursday	8:00 PM
Friday	6:00AM	Thursday	9:00 PM
Friday	7:00AM	Thursday	10:00 PM
Friday	8:00AM	Thursday	11:00 PM
Friday	9:00AM	Friday	MIDNIGHT
Friday	10:00AM	Friday	1:00 AM
Friday	11:00AM	Friday	2:00 AM
Friday	NOON	Friday	3:00AM
Friday	1:00 PM	Friday	4:00 AM
Friday	2:00 PM	Friday	5:00 AM
Friday	3:00 PM	Friday	6:00AM
Friday	4:00 PM	Friday	7:00AM
Friday	5:00 PM	Friday	8:00AM
Friday	6:00 PM	Friday	9:00AM
Friday	7:00 PM	Friday	10:00AM
Friday	8:00 PM	Friday	11:00AM
Friday	9:00 PM	Friday	NOON
Friday	10:00 PM	Friday	1:00 PM
Friday	11:00 PM	Friday	2:00 PM
Saturday	MIDNIGHT	Friday	3:00 PM

## Cell Phones

Part of your program fee includes the use a cell phone during your stay in France. The cell phone will work throughout France and around parts of Europe though if it is used outside of France you can be charged for roaming.



The way cell phones work is that you buy credits in increments ranging from € 15 on up. The more Euros you buy, the longer your minutes are good for and the more bonus minutes you get when you recharge your cell phone.

Text messaging is the best way to communicate with your cell phone for the following reasons:

- 1) It is the cheapest
- 2) It is the most polite way to communicate without disturbing the people around you
- 3) Did I mention it's considerably cheaper than talking on the phone?

You can text the U.S. with your cell phone and place calls; however, it is very expensive and you will use your minutes faster than you can say "Bonjour."

The nice thing about cell phones in Europe is that all incoming texts and calls are free. This is a nice feature that allows your family to call you on your cell phone; however, note that on an international plan it costs about \$0.30 minutes to call a cell phone in France from the U.S.

Since your entire group will get a cell phone and most other people you meet will have cell phones as well, it is really easy to stay in touch and make plans. Don't get lazy and call people though because it eats us your minutes. I could probably have saved at € 35 (which is how much I recharged my phone each time) had I not called people as much.

There are numbers you can call to check how much money you have left on your phone as well as to check your voicemails. Calling these numbers from your cell phone are free, so don't hesitate to use them.

*Here is an example of how much you get for your money when recharging your cell phone (this is from Bouygues Telecom as of May 20, 2006)*

	10€	15€	25€	35€	50€	75€
Jusqu'à	20 min OU 83 SMS	30 min OU 125 SMS	55 min OU 229 SMS*	1h30 OU 375 SMS*	2h15 OU 562 SMS*	3h35 OU 895 SMS*
Durée de validité du crédit	15 jours	1 mois	2 mois	3 mois	4 mois	6 mois

Appels et SMS métropolitains valables vers tous les fixes et tous les mobiles. Hors N° courts, spéciaux et appels Data. 8 mois pour recevoir des appels (2 mois pour la recharge 10€).

\*Crédit offert inclus. Prix/min = 0,50€/min. Prix/SMS= 0,12€

## Computer/Internet Usage



Your studies at the CUEF will not require assignments to be typed; therefore, it is not essential that you bring your computer with you. A few students brought their laptops and liked it; however, if you feel you can live without it then I would leave your computer at home (it will be one less thing to worry about). It is not guaranteed that your host family will have the internet, or if they do, let you use it. There are a few options for internet usage around Grenoble that will ensure you stay connected to your family and friends back homes. The following are a few options for computers and internet use around town:

- **Computer lab at the university**

**Where:** Bâtiment K

**Cost:** Free

**How:** You must register with the computer lab and get a card that allows you to use the computer lab once a day for 30 minutes. In order to register you must bring a passport sized photo and your student id. After you initially register, you can go into the computer lab and request a station by showing your user card and your student ID.

- **Neptune Internet Café (Open Sundays)**

<http://www.neptune-internet-cafe.fr/index.html>

**Where:** Near Les Halles Ste. Claire and Place Notre Dame (Closest tram stop: Ste. Claire on the "B" line) On Rue de la Paix. From Place Notre Dame walk down Rue Bayard, then take a left on Rue A. Gaché, then take your first left (Rue de la Paix). The Café is on the right hand side.

**Cost:** It depends upon how much time you buy. Neptune tends to be a couple Euros more expensive than some other internet cafés in Grenoble, but they offer happy hours every days that give you 2 for 1 time. Many other CUEF students also use Neptune so you won't always feel weird. Also Neptune makes it really easy to change keyboards from the French keyboard to an English keyboard (You just click the flag on the menu bar until you get the US flag.

Neptune also serves drinks and has a nice welcoming atmosphere.

- The following are other internet cafés around Grenoble, though our group has no experience with them.

- **PI@net On Line (Open Sundays)**

1 Place Vaucanson

[www.planeton-line.wanadoo.fr](http://www.planeton-line.wanadoo.fr)

- **L'E-toile**

15 Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau

## EATING

### Eating in Restaurants

When you dine in a restaurant here are a few tips to get the most for your buck.



- Ask for a carafe of water (un carafe d'eau). As long as you specify that what you want is a carafe of water you want, it will be free and the water tastes good and is usually cold!
  - Check out or ask what the menu is. This is your best bet for the most food and the cheapest price.
  - The tip is included in your bill; therefore, there is no need to leave extra money when you leave. If you take the chance to look at your receipt the tip is included in the TVA tax.
- 
- If you get tired of eating out, buying a baguette (under 1€) and some meat and cheese will make an awesome meal. Just grab extra mustard and mayonnaise when you eat at the cafets in order to have a little supply.
  - Ask your host family if you can put a few things in the fridge, this way you can keep lunch meat in the fridge or buy milk and eat cereal.
  - **KEBABS!!!** Kebabs are a staple and are filling and cheap. These stands are also the places to be open the latest around town. We preferred **The Oasis** in Place Notre Dame. The guys who work there are super nice and if you become a regular you get even better service.
  - **Le Trio-** The trio just opened last fall and is also located in Place Notre Dame. They make good paninis and are fairly cheap. The guy who owns the place is from Montreal and really nice. The only thing about Le Trio is that it seems to be opened at weird times and on random days.
  - Good Indian food can be found either across the river on the Quai St. Laurent or on the Rue Boucherie between Place Notre Dame and Place Aux Herbes. It is called **Royal Tandoni**. The location near the Quai seems to be open irregularly, but it's faster and cheaper than the actual restaurant in town.
  - For the best vanilla ice cream **EVER** go to **Le Noix de Grenoble** in Place Grenette right next to Häagen-Dazs. It is a little chocolate shop that sells homemade ice cream. You will never have tasted any better ice cream than at this place here. Even on Grenoble's coldest day it is worth it to have some of this ice cream. This really is the best ice cream EVER!
  - There is a really good Italian restaurant on Rue Boucherie called **Tavola Calda**. This restaurant is packed most nights, so call ahead for reservations. They make their pasta fresh everyday and it is really good. Highly Recommended!!!

## Le Dahu



There is a guide that is published around the first of October each year called Le Dahu. This guide features descriptions of most restaurants in town. It is very handy because it separates the restaurants into categories by price and by type of food. Le Dahu only costs a few Euros and can be found in most tabacs and bookstores once published. It also comes with descriptions of bars, places to see, and some general information about things in Grenoble that can become handy.

### Bakeries

This is France so it is almost impossible to turn a circle and not find a bakery. The tip I have for you is find one you like or that is close to where you live and adopt it as one of your own. The French are big about becoming a regular and are so much more approachable if they know they can count on you frequently. My favorite bakery was in Place Notre Dame and was called Bourbon. Their Petit Fours were incredible!

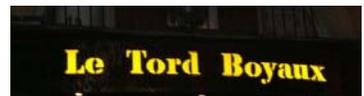
### Cafés

Cafés are another place where you should try a few out and find the one you like best. Because our group used Place Notre Dame as a central meeting point, most of our cafés are around here.

- The XIIIème café in Place Notre Dame is and has lots of outdoor seating for when it is nice. When the weather is cold, go inside and discover the spacious upper level where you can spend hours.
- Le Glacier next to the XIIIème is also a good café and offers 2€ glasses of wine.
- My personal favorite is Jules Verne behind Place Grenette near the Jardin de Ville. This place leans more towards a bar feeling but it works as both. They have a good selection drinks hot, cold, alcoholic, and nonalcoholic. Also on most Thursdays they have themed nights with live musicians. If space is limited upstairs ask the bartender if you can go down to the basement, most people don't know there is one.

### Bars and Drinking

The legal drinking age in France is 18 and it is also legal to drink in the streets. This being said, you can save some money by purchasing your alcohol in a store and meeting some friends before you hit the bars. The one big NO NO is to drink in front of the bar you are going into. Most bars will not let you in if they see you drinking in front of their establishment. Our group's favorite bar was one off near Les Halles St. Claire called Le Tord Boyaux. A few other good ones are Le Loco Mosquito, and La Boîte de Sardines. Another plug here for Jules Verne because it has a great atmosphere to just relax and chat with friends.





## Thanksgiving

If you are studying in Grenoble during the fall, you will be missing in Thanksgiving in the US. If that is something that bums you out, never fear there is a solution. There is a restaurant called *Pumpkins* right near the Marché St. Bruno on the Rue D'Alembert. This restaurant features some American food and happens to do a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Thanksgiving. Some of the other American groups with on site tour directors already make reservations for the actual day of Thanksgiving, so if this interests you, I would recommend calling at the beginning of November to try and make a reservation. The man and woman who own the restaurant are very nice and very helpful.

If you don't go for Thanksgiving, I recommend this place sometime if you are every craving some food from home.

## ENTERTAINMENT

The best tools for knowing what is happening in Grenoble for the week are the two free weekly papers Le Petit Bulletin and Sortir. Le Petit Bulletin comes out on Wednesdays and is the better of the two weeklies. It publishes all plays, concerts, exhibitions, and movies happening in the area for the following week. The Sortir covers the same thing and comes out on Thursdays.

### Movies

There are several movie theaters around Grenoble that aren't too expensive to go to (around 6€). You can find the movie times in either weekly mentioned above. I highly recommend you take in at least one or two French films during your stay to enhance your exposure to the language and the culture of French film.

If you need an English film fix, check the papers for the new films that have come out. If you find an film from here check beside its title for the letters "VO" which stands for Original Version or "VOST" for Original Version with sub titles. If it does not say this, chances are the film will be dubbed in French.

Movies are a great way to measure how your French has grown. By the end of the semester I had fairly good comprehension of movies and did not feel totally lost when I left the movie.

### Concerts

Keep on the look out for some popular artists to come to Grenoble or Lyon. While I was there Franz Ferdinand came to Grenoble, and The Fugees and Coldplay came to Lyon. Tickets were easy to acquire even a few days before the concert and only about 40€. It is sort of fun to say you went to a concert in France so easily, when people wait hours in line for ticket here in the US.

Also if you become interested in any French artists, you can go to a concert if they come to town.

A lot of times you can find free concerts in Le Petit Bulletin that are hosted in the museum or elsewhere. Be careful though to see if you must register for the concert ahead of time due to limited seating.

## Museums

Grenoble has some great museums a few of which are free. Here are a couple:

- Musée de l'Ancien Evêché: This museum is FREE and open everyday but Tuesday mornings. The Baptistery is awesome and you get a free audio guide. It is a good museum that gives the history of ancient Cularo and the region. The museum is in Place Notre Dame and you will probably pass by it everyday. It took us until November to go for a visit, but be sure not to miss out on this museum!
- Musée de la Résistance et de la déportation de l'Isère: This Museum is for anyone who has great interest in WWII and the German occupation of area and how the French tried to resist. The museum is Free.
- Musée de Grenoble: This is said to be one of the best art museums in all of France. It has some great pieces. There is a student discount; however, if you go on the first Sunday of every month it is Free. It will also be free during the Journées de Patrimoine which take place in September and is a weekend when almost all museums in France are free along with other sites that usually are not open. If you take the art history course, towards the end of the semester, the instructor offers a guided tour through the museum which is really cool because you have just spent the quarter learning all these traits in different works of art and you get to see them in person!



I'm not sure about all of France; however, in and around Grenoble, the museums are free on the first Sunday of each month, so it is something that should be taken advantage of.

During the middle of September, one weekend in France, is known as the Journées de Patrimoine. The special thing about this weekend is that *most* museums in France open their doors to the public for free. There are even some places that only open for this weekend. It is a cool weekend to take advantage of the heritage in France; however, expect more people because most French people take advantage of this weekend and are out in full force.

## Beaujolais

A celebration throughout France, Beaujolais is a celebration one night in the middle of November where people party in the street and drink the nouveau Beaujolais. Beaujolais is a type of wine that you drink within in one-two years from when it was harvested and it is actually not that good. The celebration is really just a gimmick so people will drink the stuff. It works. You can go with the CUEF to the actual town, or



else you can celebrate in Grenoble where our group had lots of fun and got more wine for cheap. There was a band and tons of people in the streets all for the same purpose...to drink wine! We had tons of people come to talk to our group and start talking to us. It was probably one of the few times French people willingly came up to us and talked to us in Either French or English. No lie, French comes easier after a couple glasses of wine, so utilize your French that night. We bought our wine at a tent over by Les Halles Ste. Claire, though it is not hard to find where to buy the wine.

## **DISCOUNTS**

You can receive a discount for most entrance fees and on certain purchases. These discounts range from museum or tourist sites, cinemas, events, concerts, or plays. This is why you should always carry your student card around because it can be very handy. The student card issued to you by the CUEF is a lot easier to get a discount instead of trying to use your SU idea or if you have an International Student Card.

## THE BATHROOM

Once you've been to France, you will never complain about the state of public bathrooms in the United States. Many bathrooms here are dark and dirty and its hit or miss if there will be toilet paper or better yet an actual toilet for you to use. Here is a lowdown on the state of public bathrooms in France as well as the best ones to use on campus.

### *The Situation:*

- Many restrooms don't have actual toilets, but rather a hole in the ground that you straddle and squat. For a girl it takes talent. (Note: Some of these "special" bathrooms are found on the university's campus.
- If you are lucky enough to use a bathroom with an actual toilet, you will be even luckier if there is a seat on that toilet. Many restrooms are just the toilet bowl with no official seat attached.
- Don't expect soap in the bathrooms you use. The majority of the public bathrooms in France don't provide soap. Therefore if you are a germaphobe, bring a tiny bottle of hand sanitizer with you wherever you go!
- Most bathroom in France are unisex, so don't be surprised if you see a member of the opposite sex nonchalantly walk in. (The bathrooms at the university are unisex.)

### *The Best Bathrooms on campus:*

- The bathrooms located in the same building as the computer lab are decent. They are new and usually have toilet paper; however, no soap was provided.
- The bathrooms at the little Cafet at Diderot 'Ru had newer bathrooms that sometimes provide soap.
- The bathroom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the "F" building was the best found on campus with toilets, toilet seats, toilet paper, and soap.
- The bathrooms on the main floor of the Maison de Langues are decent to use as well.

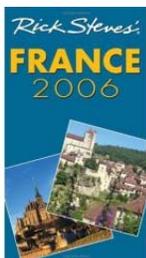
## TRAVELING

Take advantage of all that France and/or Europe has to offer. Here are some tips for traveling in general:



- The best places to find hostels are [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com) and [www.hihostel.com](http://www.hihostel.com). You can find both hostels and hotels on these sights for almost any city.
- When traveling to a city make sure to secure a map right away so you know where you are going.
- Ask questions of lots of people. It is a great way to practice your French speaking and comprehension.
- The cheapest way to get around is on the public transportation system. Once you have a map of the city you are in, you can probably get a good idea of where it is on the transportation map. There are many different kind of passes for the transportation, and usually a multi-ride pass or a day pass will be the best value for the amount of transportation you will need. Also most transportation systems always go right to the train station. I never once needed a taxi to get to anywhere I was going.

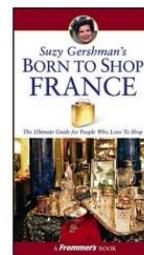
Depending on your travel plans, it is really unnecessary to buy an overall Europe guide. Buying a guidebook for France will give you much more detail on cities and places than a general guide to Europe. Here are two suggestions for books that gave great information for France:



- Rick Steves' France This book is pretty informative and gives you a few in-depth tours of sites around France. In his 2005 book, he writes a great guide to the Hospice de Beaune which along with the informational brochure they give you gives you a complete overview to the Hospice.

The one downside to this book is since it is for people with a wider budget than ours some of the food and lodging options are a bit expensive.

- Born to Shop France This book is for anyone, even non-shoppers. We found the neatest little districts and shops through this book. Our favorite finds were specialty food shops such as the greatest hot chocolate ever in Lyon or a great place to buy provençal goods such as olive oil and spices.



### Places to visit

Take advantage of what can be only a few hours train ride away. There are so many places to visit within France alone. The CUEF offers some overnight and day trips that are fun to go on such as Mt. Blanc or Avignon and Orange.

Here are a few suggested places to visit:



- Nice- Go before the weather goes gets colder because there is nothing like being able to dip your feet into the Mediterranean! If you go to Nice there is a cool hostel that is very clean and fun called “Villa St. Exupery.” It is full of Americans; however, the man who runs the place is very helpful and recommended a way to do Nice in a day that is unbelievable. Nice offers museums of Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse as well as Vieux Nice and the Mediterranean of course. Monaco is neat though the only things to do there are see the Casino, walk along the marina, or come for the changing of the guard. The trip worth making is taking a bus to Eze which is a tiny hilltop village that gives you views the best views of the Mediterranean that can be found. From Eze you can take another bus to Monaco and then just hop a train back into Nice.

- Avignon and Orange- These provençal towns are a must see. There is an ancient theater in Orange along with a famous arc de triomphe. Then you can go to Avignon and see the Palais des Papes and the famous bridge! While in the heart of Provence don't forget to take the time and have an incredible meal.



- Paris- How can you come to France and not come here. There is too much to recommend, but here are some must sees: the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs d'Élysées, the Eiffel Tower from the Trocadéro and the Palais de Chaillot, the St. Chapelle, Notre Dame, Sacré Coeur, the Louvre, and so much more!



- Dijon and Beaune- These cities are incredible especially just for the difference in architecture. They have amazing tiled roofs. If you go to Beaune be sure to visit the Hotel Dieu and old hospice. And don't leave Burgundy without having a kir.



- Lyon- Only an hour and a half away and it has lots to offer. Don't miss the Basilica of Notre Dame of Fourvière Hill or the Cathedral of St. Jean where the remains of St. Vincent De Paul are kept. Walk through Vieux Lyon and explore some of the ancient traboules, experience fun shopping across the street from the train station. If you want awesome hot chocolate or the best éclairs ever visit the very upscale chocolatier Bernachon. The 6€ hot chocolate is worth every centime! Just a note, this is a very upscale chocolatier where you will find people in the tea room where fur coats on any day of the week and outside the cars parked looks like they belong in Bill Gates garage.

- Any where else in France!

## MAPS OF GRENOBLE

You can find maps of Grenoble at the Grenoble Office of Tourism website. There is an overall map of Grenoble and a detailed map of downtown.

Go to <http://www.grenoble-isere.info/english/default.asp>

Click “Grenoble and the Tourist Office” → “Download Brochures” → Download “Plan detachable.”

To find maps of the campus you can go to the CUEF website.

Go to <http://w3.u-grenoble3.fr/cuef/en/sejour/plan.html>

Download the Campus map and the Stendhal university map.

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