The French Flag

The French flag, called the “tricolor,” is made up of three vertical bands of color: blue, white, and red. The flag was first used in 1792 during the French Revolution, and in 1880 it became the national anthem of France.

Marianne

With her profile outlined on the official seal of France, “Marianne” symbolizes the Republic of France. During the French Revolution, the figure of a warrior woman, wearing a Phrygian cap represented the ideal of liberty. Her name stems from “Marie-Anne,” which was a popular name in the French countryside at the time.

La Marseillaise: the French National Anthem

La Marseillaise began as a battle song. After France declared war on Austria and Prussia in 1792, Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle, a French officer in Strasbourg, composed the “Battle Song of the Army of the Rhine.” Banned under the Revolution, the song was rearranged by Hector Berlioz in 1830. It was declared the national anthem under the Third Republic in 1879.

There are 1,662 steps to the top of the Eiffel Tower, and 211,209 square miles (the same size as Texas), and 22 regions. Roughly 85% of the population is Roman Catholic, 5% -10% Muslim, 2% Protestant, 1% Jewish and the remaining percent are unaffiliated.

Food

French people take food very seriously, which may be why French cooking is said to be the best in the world! Here are some well-known French foods:

- La Baguette: This is a long, thin bread that has a hard outer crust, and a soft, yummy middle.
- Cheese: France has over 400 cheeses. Cheese is usually served just before the dessert. Two very well-known cheeses are Camembert and Brie.

Sports and Leisure Activity

Attique is very important to the French. In fact, more than 10 million people belong to sports clubs in France! Here are some of France’s more popular sports:

- Soccer: With more than two million amateur players, France’s national soccer program gained world-wide recognition after its team, les Bleus (the Blues), won the Soccer World Cup for the first time in 1998.
- Tennis: Tennis, enjoyed and played by many in France, is celebrated every year with a Grand Slam event, played on the famous clay courts of Roland Garros, near Paris.

Politics

The President is elected directly by the people for a five-year term. The President lives in the Elysée Palace. Jacques Chirac became the fifth President of the Republic on May 7, 1995, and he was reelected on May 5, 2002. The President appoints the Prime Minister and the other members of government. He presides over the Council of Ministers, where many important decisions are made. He also certifies laws, and is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

有用网站

- French Government Information: www.franceguide.com - French Tourist Office in the U.S.
- French Recipes: www.recipesource.com/ethnic/europe/french/indexall.html
- French Books, Music, and Videos: www.frenchbooks.com
- Embassies of France: www.ambafrance-us.org - French Embassy in U.S.
- U.S. Embassy in France: www.ambn.usa.fr
- U.S. Tourist Information: us.franceguide.com - French Tourist Office in the U.S.
- French Culture in the U.S.: www.frenchculture.org

President of the Republic

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Prime Minister and Government

Prime Minister and Government

Under the direction of the Prime Minister, the government establishes and carries out national policies for which it is accountable before Parliament. The Prime Minister directs the government’s operations and ensures that legislation is carried out. Dominique de Villepin was appointed Prime Minister by President Jacques Chirac in June 2005.

Parliament

The Parliament includes two assemblies, the Senate and the National Assembly. Members of the Senate are elected for a six-year term by an elected college comprised of local political officials. Members of the National Assembly are elected directly by the French people for a five-year term. The most recent general election was held in June 2002.

In addition to providing a check on the government, the two assemblies draw up and pass legislation. In case of disagreement on a law, the National Assembly makes the final decision.

Work and Social Protection

Most French people work 35 hours a week, compared with 40 hours a week in the U.S., and they enjoy five weeks of paid vacation a year. In France, the right to health care for all is considered essential. The country’s social security system covers nearly the entire cost of medical treatment and medication for all workers and their families, during their entire lives.

Business

France is the world’s fifth leading economic power and the third largest destination for foreign investment. France is the world’s third largest exporter of automobiles, the second largest exporter of wines, cheeses, and aircraft, and the leading exporter of perfumes and luxury goods!

Do you still need more information about France? If so, we have a list of Web sites that may be able to help you with your research! The Web sites listed below are in English, but some of the links on their pages might lead you to sites that are only in French.

Embassy of France in the U.S.: www.ambafrance-us.org
Tourist Information: us.franceguide.com - French Tourist Office in the U.S.
Bonjour! My name is Pierre. Let’s have fun discovering France!