

# France and Monaco

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Read our [general advice for motoring in Europe](#) too.

## Driving licence

You must be at least 18 years old to drive a temporarily imported car or motorcycle (over 80cc) and at least 16 years old to ride a motorcycle up to 80cc.

## Motor Insurance

You must have a minimum of third-party insurance cover.

## Fuel

- Unleaded petrol (95 & 98 octane), diesel (Gazole) and LPG are available.
- Leaded petrol isn't available but you may see lead replacement petrol 'Super carburant' or can buy lead substitute additive
- You may carry spare petrol in a can once in France but it's forbidden by ferry operators.
- **SP95-E10** (Sans Plomb (unleaded) 95 Octane + 10% Ethanol) is widely available but is not suitable for use in all cars so you should check with your vehicle manufacturer before using it. If you're not sure, use the standard SP95 or SP98 unleaded fuel which continues to be widely available.
- **B8 biodiesel** - you might come across diesel fuel containing 8% biodiesel. This 'B8' isn't suitable for use in all cars and you should check with your vehicle manufacturer before using it.

Most filling stations accept credit cards but check with your card issuer for usage in France & Monaco before you travel. Cards issued in the UK aren't always accepted at automatic pumps operated by credit/debit card.

If your card is accepted, automatic or unmanned petrol stations operate by authorising a transaction of between 100 and 150 Euros. If the amount authorised is higher than the cost of the fuel, the difference is usually refunded straight away, but in some cases this 'overpayment' stays on hold and the funds remain unavailable for up to a week.

## Electric vehicles

Most electric vehicle charging stations in France work with swipe cards (*badges de recharge*).

In Leclerc, Auchan and other major service stations and supermarkets you can borrow a 'badges de recharge' from their shop during opening hours. They may ask to see the registration certificate for the vehicle and may also ask for a small deposit for the card.

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Outside of that, the most popular and extensive networks are KiwHi and Sodetrel.

KiwHi: <http://www.kiwhipass.fr/la-carte.html>

Sodetrel: <http://www.sodetrel-mobilite.fr/cb/portal/#/>

## Speed limits

Speed limits in France are determined by place, vehicle and by the weather.

(Standard legal limits which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers)

- Built-up areas 31 mph (50 km/h)
- Outside built-up areas 55 mph (90 km/h) [50mph (80km/h) from 1 July 2018]
- Urban motorways and dual carriageways separated by a central reservation 68 mph (110 km/h)
- Motorways 80 mph (130 km/h) (lower in built-up areas. Minimum 49mph (80km/h))

In wet weather or if you've held a driving licence for less than three years, lower limits apply:

- Outside built-up areas 49 mph (80 km/h) [43 mph (70km/h) from 1 July 2018]
- Dual carriageways 62 mph (100 km/h)
- Motorways 68 mph (110 km/h).

## Seat belts

Front and rear seat occupants must wear seat belts, if fitted.

## Passengers/children in cars

- Children up to the age of 10 must travel in an approved child seat or restraint suitable for their age and size.
- Children under the age of 10 aren't allowed to travel in the front seat unless there's no rear seat, or the rear seat is already occupied by children under 10, or there are no seat belts in the rear.
- The French Highway Code doesn't specify a minimum height for children to use an adult seat belt so we recommend that you apply the minimum height of 150cm set by the appropriate European Directive.
- Children don't have to wear restraints in a taxi, but you could be fined if a child isn't correctly restrained in other vehicles.
- It's the driver's responsibility to make sure that all passengers under 18 are appropriately restrained.

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## Lights

- You must use dipped headlights in poor daytime visibility.
- The French Government recommends that all vehicles use dipped headlights day and night.

## Motorcycles

- You must use your dipped headlight during the day.
- Riders on any two-wheeled vehicle must wear a crash helmet.
- All helmets must display reflective stickers on the front, rear and sides in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 22 - a sticker of minimum surface area 18cm<sup>2</sup> must be visible from the front, rear, left and right and within each sticker it must be possible to mark either a circle of 40mm diameter or, a rectangle at least 12.5cm<sup>2</sup> in surface area and at least 20mm in width.
- Helmets worn in the UK have to comply either with BS6658 or with [UNECE Regulation 22](#). If you've got a 'Regulation 22' helmet it may be supplied with suitable stickers for you to apply.
- From 20 November 2016, the driver and passengers of mopeds, motorcycles, motor tricycles and motor quadricycles must wear a pair of CE-certified gloves while riding. This applies all year round, whatever the weather and you could be fined for not doing so. [This doesn't apply to vehicles fitted with seatbelts and doors i.e. city cars classed as heavy quadricycles].

## Drinking and driving

- The French police can carry out random breath tests.
- The legal limit is 49 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, or 19 milligrams for bus/coach drivers and new drivers with less than three years' experience.
- Penalties include a fine, imprisonment and/or confiscation of your driving licence and/or your vehicle.
- Saliva drug tests are also used with penalties for drug-driving similar to drink driving.
- If you are involved in an accident or commit a traffic offence such as speeding, or not wearing a seatbelt or helmet you will have to take a drugs test.

## Fines

- On-the-spot fines or 'deposits' are severe and may be up to €750. An official receipt should be issued.
- If you don't comply with parking regulations your vehicle may be towed away and impounded.

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## It's compulsory to carry:

- **Warning triangle** (not required on motorcycles)
- **Snow chains** - you must fit snow chains when driving on snow-covered roads in accordance with local road signs. A maximum speed limit of 31 mph (50km/h) applies.
- **Reflective jackets (EN471)**
  - You must carry at least one reflective jacket within the passenger compartment of your vehicle and must put it on before you get out in an emergency or breakdown situation.
  - Since 1 January 2016 riders of motorcycles must also wear a reflective jacket in the event of an emergency or breakdown.
- **Breathalysers**
  - Drivers of all motor vehicles including motorcyclists but excluding mopeds, must carry one unused, certified (showing an 'NF' number) breathalyser in their vehicle.
  - Check that any single use breathalysers you're buying or that you used for a previous trip are still in date.
  - We recommend carrying two single-use breathalysers so if one is used or damaged you'll still have a replacement to produce.
  - The fine for not carrying a breathalyser has been postponed indefinitely (an on the spot fine of €11 was due to be implemented on 1 March 2013).
- **See other rules/requirements (below) for information on Low Emission Zones/Stickers**

## Other rules/requirements in France and Monaco

- You must not use headphones and headsets (any device that is attached to the ear) when driving.
  - This applies to all drivers and riders for phone calls and also listening to music/radio etc.
  - Bluetooth or integrated systems in a motorcycle helmet are still permitted.
- It's recommended that you carry a spare set of bulbs.
- It's recommended that snow tyres (marked M&S) are used on roads covered with ice or snow. These must have minimum tread depth of 3.5mm.
- The sign "priorité a droite" (often seen in built-up areas) means give way to traffic coming from the right.

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- At signed roundabouts bearing the words "Vous n'avez pas la priorité" or "Cédez le passage" traffic on the roundabout has priority; where no such sign exists, traffic entering the roundabout has priority.
- You must not overtake a stationary tram when passengers are boarding or getting off.
- You can obtain parking discs for 'blue zone' parking areas from police stations, tourist offices and some shops.
- When overtaking a bicycle, you must leave a distance of at least 1m in built-up areas and 1.50m outside built-up areas between your vehicle and the bicycle.
- You must not use your horn in built up areas except in cases of immediate danger.
- A device with a screen which can distract a driver (such as television, video or DVD equipment) must be positioned so that the driver is unable to see them. You must not touch or program any device unless parked in a safe place.
- It's forbidden carry, transport or use radar detectors. You could be fined up to 1500 Euros and have your vehicle and/or the device confiscated.
- Road signs indicating the location of fixed speed cameras are being removed and additional fixed speed cameras are being installed.
- If you've got a GPS-based navigation system (Sat Nav) with maps that can show the location of fixed speed cameras, you must have the 'fixed speed camera Pol (Points of Interest)' function deactivated and ideally removed.
- If you're towing a trailer, it must have two red lights, two triangular reflectors and a light illuminating the registration plate at the rear and orange reflectors on each side. If the trailer is more than 1.6m wide or is wider than your vehicle by more than 20cm there must be two white reflectors and two white side lights at the front of the trailer.

## Toll Payments

[Sanef France](#) has extended the Liber-t automated French tolls payment service to UK motorists through [Sanef Tolling](#). With a [Sanef Tollings telepage](#) tag you can use the automatic telepage/tag lanes, previously reserved for French residents only.

## Low Emission Zone (LEZ) Crit' Air Vignette

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Low emission zones – either full time or ‘emergency’ – are being introduced across France and so far affect Paris, Lyon, Lille, Grenoble, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Marseille, and Chambéry. Bordeaux is expected to implement a scheme in 2018.

The zones restrict access to all types of vehicles including passenger cars and motorcycles. If you drive in one of these restricted areas, you’ll have to display a ‘Vignette’ (sticker) in your windscreen.

Failure to purchase and display the vignette will mean a fine between €68 and €135

[Read more and obtain the sticker from the official source for the fee of €4.41 including postage.](#)

There are six different types of sticker, and the sticker required depends on the emissions of the vehicle. To obtain the sticker you’ll need to provide some of the information which appears on your registration document.

**Be careful though**, as we are aware that there are some websites who are offering the vignette at a vastly inflated price who are not related to the French government authorities.

Restrictions will be tightened progressively between 2017 and 2020.

[Read more about the Low Emission Zones in France](#)

This is a sample sign indicating the restricted zone



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