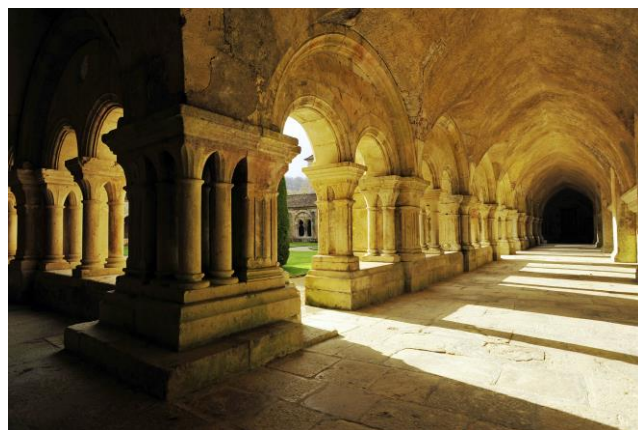


Tour
Information



Christmas in Burgundy by Rail





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

You will be issued with return train tickets.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Paris, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggagecompany**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Dijon, transfer by coach to the Hotel Mercure Centre in Beaune (approx. 45 minutes).

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hotel Mercure Beaune Centre

The modern 4-star Mercure Beaune Centre enjoys a convenient location within 10 minutes' easy walk of the centre of Beaune and the hospice. Recently renovated, facilities at the hotel include an airy restaurant, bar, terrace and bright, comfortable air-conditioned bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, and wi-fi.

For more information visit the hotel's website:

<http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-1217-mercure-beaune-centre-hotel/index.shtml>



Food

Burgundians are passionate and proud about both their food and their wine; the excellence of the cuisine goes back through history and remains at the forefront of life today. With varied and first-class ingredients – Charolais beef, Bourg-en-Bresse chickens, wild mushrooms, snails, pigeons, quails, boar, venison, freshwater fish, pâté, cheese, sausages and of course superb red wine – Bourgogne is a delight for gourmets. Famous regional dishes include *Boeuf Bourguignon* (beef cooked in red wine with mushrooms, onions and lardons), *Coq au vin*, *Escargots à la Bourgogne* (snails prepared with butter, parsley and garlic), *Gougères* (choux pastry with cheese, often served as an *aperitif* or at a wine tasting), and *Poulet de Gaston Gérard* (chicken in mustard sauce, named after a former mayor of Dijon).

Traditional sweets include *Poire Belle Dijonnaise* (pears poached in wine with *crème de cassis* and gingerbread), *Tarte de Semoule au cassis* (blackcurrant tart), *Tartouillat* (similar to a *clafoutis*, pear or blackcurrant flan-like tart), and *Anis de Flavigny* (aniseed bonbon).

Coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *à la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price). The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a

discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. Burgundy has been an established viniculture region since the Middle Ages, when monks produced wine for the aristocratic Dukes of Burgundy in the Middle Ages and today is home to some of the world's most expensive and famed wines. Thanks to rich soil, exceptional weather conditions and local expertise, the wine regions of *Chablis*, *Côte de Beaune*, *Côte de Nuits*, *Côte Chalonnaise* and *Mâconnais* produce wonderful wines, mainly using Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape varieties.

Enjoy the wine tastings included in your tour – discovering the fascinating history and particularities of the wines, in atmospheric cellars, whilst being a delight for the palette.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

Crème de Cassis, a sweet liqueur made from blackcurrants, is a local speciality.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – one dinner at the hotel, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day dinner at Le Cheval Noir

<http://www.restaurant-lechevalnoir.fr/>



Destination

At the heart of the country, Burgundy represents everything that is famously French. Renowned for sumptuous food and superb wine, it is also a region that basks in the former wealth of the medieval Duchy with historic cities, glorious Renaissance architecture, beautiful Romanesque churches and peaceful abbeys – the perfect place to eat, drink and explore.

Dijon

Dijon, Burgundy's capital, is an affluent, elegant and vibrant city with a rich cultural life and is a must for lovers of art, architecture and food. Pre-1477, when Burgundy was incorporated into France, Dijon was the centre of a hugely wealthy and powerful Duchy and was one of Europe's great centres of the arts, academics and sciences.

Dijon is noted for its architectural splendour, particularly the magnificent 17th century *Palais des Ducs*, now home of the *Musée des Beaux Arts*. The centre is a warren of little streets that reward exploration, the cobbled *Rue Verrerie* being a particular delight. Dijon is famous for its mustard and pain d'épices (gingerbread), a reminder of the town's old position on the spice route. Eating out here is a pleasure with a superb range of restaurants from brasseries to Michelin-starred gastronomic restaurants - try the Bistrot des Halles opposite the covered market for delicious Burgundian cuisine.

For more information about Dijon:
<http://www.visitdijon.com/en/>

Beaune & the Côte D'Or

Delightful Beaune is the main town of the Côte d'Or wine region, an atmospheric place of narrow cobbled streets and bustling squares. The highlight of any visit here is the *Hôtel-Dieu*, a hospice founded in 1443 to remedy the famine suffered by the locals after the Hundred Years' War. Today the hospice is a medieval jewel with its superb roofs and turrets decorated in multi-coloured Burgundian tiles and filled with religious masterpieces. Other sights include the *Hotel des Ducs de Bourgogne*, built between the 14th and 16th centuries and now home of the *Musée du Vin de Bourgogne*, and the splendid 15th century woollen and silk tapestries to be found in the Romanesque *Collégiale Notre-Dame*.

It was because of the hospice that Beaune became the centre of the Côte d'Or – patients donated plots of vines out of appreciation. The *Côte d'Or* itself is a picturesque area of steep vine-covered slopes, sheer cliffs and small valleys. The signposts of the unbroken line of vines haunt the dreams of wine lovers the world over: Gevrey-Chambertin, Vougeot, Chambolle-Musigny, Vosne-Romanée, Nuits-St-Georges, Aloxe-Corton, Meursault and Chassagne Montrachet. We will stop to sample the local product as we explore.

For more information about Beaune:
<http://www.beaune-tourism.com/>

Chablis & Fontenay

Although it is one of the most famous wine villages on earth, the narrow stone streets of *Chablis* still have an air of sleepy prosperity, and there is no doubt that a glass of Chablis tastes best in Chablis! A wealthy and modern but pretty village, its red roofs are a stark contrast to the surrounding acres of vines.

One of the oldest Cistercian monasteries in Europe, the tranquil *abbey of Fontenay* offers a rare insight into the Cistercian way of life. Founded in 1118 by St Bernard and built in a Romanesque style, the abbey is remarkably well preserved, with the majority of the original complex, including the 12th century church, dormitory and cloister, intact. Located in a secluded position deep in the forest offering peace and tranquillity, this is a fascinating glimpse of the serenity and austerity enjoyed in years gone by.

For more information about Chablis and its wines:
<http://www.chablis-wines.com/>

For more information about Fontenay Abbey:
<http://www.abbayedefontenay.fr/en/>

Autun

Whilst it may appear a small provincial town, Autun was founded in 10BC by the emperor Augustus and became an important city of Roman Gaul. Today this Roman heritage is everywhere – two of originally four *Roman gates*, a section of wall thought to be part of a sanctuary, a 27m-tall stone *pyramid* and the remains of a 15,000 capacity *theatre*. Autun's 12th century *cathedral* and the *Musée Rolin* (with archaeological, medieval and fine arts collections) make for fascinating visits.

For more information about Autun:

<http://www.autun-tourisme.com/en/home>

Vézelay

At the height of its glory, in the 12th century, the *abbey of Ste-Madeleine* in Vézelay claimed to house the relics of Mary Magdalene and was one of the starting points for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Its importance during the Middle Ages is illustrated by the fact that Bernard of Clairvaux advocated the second crusade here, and Richard I of England and Phillip II of France met here before departing for the third crusade. Today the attraction of this UNESCO listed sanctuary lies in the Romanesque church with its magnificent Tympanum sculpture showing Christ on his throne.

For more information about Vézelay:

<http://en.vezelaytourisme.com/>

Semur-en-Auxois & Avallon

The medieval heart of *Semur-en-Auxois* is built on a bluff of pink granite overlooking the River Armançon which was once used to power the town's mills and tanneries. Although Semur's castle no longer stands, the towers and main walls remain, encircling the cobbled streets of the inner town. Note the 13th century *Église Notre-Dame*.

A town with Roman roots and possibly connections to Arthurian legend, Avallon is home to the 11th century Romanesque *Église St-Lazare* and the remains of ancient fortifications.

For more information about Semur-en-Auxois:

<http://en.tourisme-semur.fr/>

For more information about Avallon:

<http://www.avallon-morvan.com/>

Recommended reading

Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

Charles Richard Weld, *Notes on Burgundy, 1869* (edited and published by his wife after his death).

The historian Charles Richard Weld wrote a series of "Vacation Tours", of which the account of his travels to Burgundy.

James Bentley & Hugh Palmer, *The most beautiful villages of Burgundy*

Filled with lovely photographs, this book beautifully portrays the charm, delightful architecture and stunning landscapes of Burgundy.

Christmas

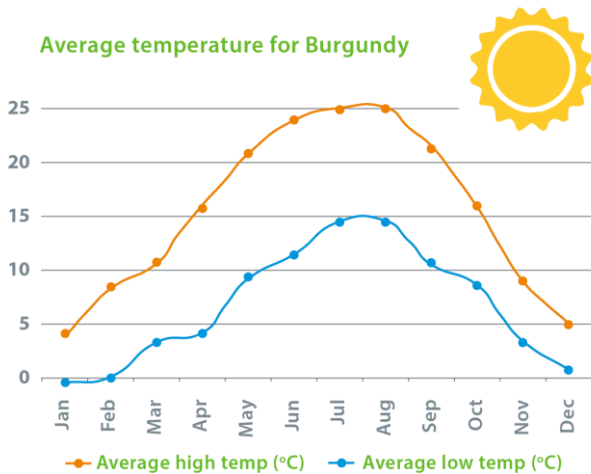
It is traditional in France for families to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve. Most shops will be closed on Christmas Day although there will be a limited selection of bars and restaurants open. Your tour manager will have details of opening times and Christmas services.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

The Basics

Climate – The weather in Burgundy at this time of year is likely to be cold, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior

to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. It is advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times, as restaurants and shops in small villages may not accept credit cards.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday. Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good flat/grip walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 20 7431 8201 or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

Consular services Paris

16 rue d'Anjou

75008 Paris

France

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00

Fax: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 27

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00.

Travel Editions

69-85 Tabernacle Street, London EC2A 4BD

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: info@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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