

# Bienvenue en France!

France is ranked the 4th most popular destination worldwide for international association meetings according to the ICCA country statistics for 2006. It is no surprise that a country with such a diverse appeal attracts so many visitors.

## Paris – City of Lights

The French capital city is ideally equipped as a meetings and incentives destination. The City of Lights never fails to surprise visitors with new and exciting aspects, which add to its world-renowned beauty and charm. For the last 26 years, Paris has led the world as a meeting place for international associations according to the UIA statistics and is ranked second in ICCA's 2006 city statistics.

It is easy to reach by air, rail and road. More than 170 airlines from around 130 countries fly to the city regularly. Every year, the two main airports Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle and Orly handle more than 70 million passengers. The famous high-speed TGV trains travel at an impressive rate of 300km an hour between Paris and other French

recently been refurbished. The four Parisian exhibition centres have recently joined forces to market Paris as the ultimate exhibition city. "The Leading Venues of Paris" (Palais des Congrès de Paris, Palais des Congrès de Versailles, Paris Le Bourget and Paris-Nord Villepinte) now offer the infrastructure for conferences and large events accommodating up to 30,000 participants. Historical venues include the magnificent Pavillon Dauphine built on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne at the beginning of the last century.

(<http://convention.parisinfo.com>)

## Your meeting in Alsace

Alsace, in the eastern part of France, is an attractive meeting destination thanks to its accessibility, being easy to reach from

This report looks at the French capital and two border regions: Alsace and the French Riviera, presenting their wide-ranging and contrasting meeting facilities and incentive programmes.



Strasbourg Convention and Conference Centre, Erasmus Auditorium

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can expect multilingual suppliers and a well-functioning infrastructure. The Strasbourg Convention and Conference Centre is ideally situated right in the heart of the European district and is one of the top-ranking convention centres in the world. It has a total surface area of 50,000m<sup>2</sup> spread over 2 levels, allowing several events to be organized at the same time. The region has its own exceptional gastronomy and fine home-grown wines.

([www.business.tourisme-alsace.com](http://www.business.tourisme-alsace.com))

## French Riviera

The French Riviera including Monaco is an ideal destination 365 days a year for those wishing to experience "passion", "emotion", "celebration" and "tradition" in an ideal blend of contrasts: the luxuriant vegetation of the hill country and the beautiful coastline, dotted with islands, sprinkled with fine beaches and resorts and served by an exceptional climate. Ideally positioned and easily accessible, this

metropolis of 1 million inhabitants, attracts more than 9 million visitors per year. Thanks to the Nice Côte d'Azur international airport, France's busiest airport after Paris, the French Riviera can be reached directly from 97 destinations, even the United States, and is conveniently served by more than 57 airlines. Altogether the Riviera offers a total of 8 convention and exhibition centres, among which are Monaco, Nice and Cannes, whose centres all have auditoriums with a maximum seating capacity of 6,500 people. The Acropolis Convention and Exhibition Centre in Nice, is classed as the top convention and exhibition centre in France after Paris and is ranked amongst the top ten in the world. The Grimaldi Forum in Monaco, futuristically-designed with glass walls and metal tubes, is a state-of-the-art convention centre for the 3rd millennium. The Palais des Festivals in Cannes, with its easy access, its 28 conference rooms (including an auditorium of 2,300 seats and the largest exhibition area under one roof) and its professional expertise was designed to welcome important international events such as the International Film Festival. The French Riviera Convention Bureau is launching a brand new initiative for the benefit of meetings and incentive organizers, "the meeting club", which brings together the best professionals on the French Riviera. ([www.frenchriviera-cb.com](http://www.frenchriviera-cb.com))

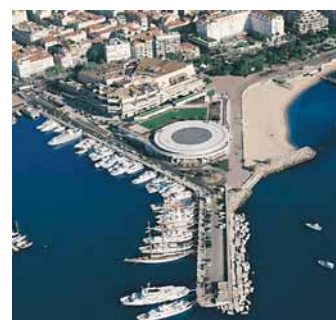


Palais des Congrès de Paris

©Fabian Charaffi, Paris Tourist Office

and European cities. A journey from London to Paris with the TGV, for example, takes only 2.25 hours. The city offers a wide range of over 1,500 hotels and 75,000 guestrooms. The InterContinental Paris Le Grand, for example, overlooking the Place de L'Opera, is a magnificent and historic hotel which has recently reopened following a multi-million euro restoration programme. There is also a choice of large convention centres, smaller unusual venues and unique event locations. The Palais des Congrès de Paris, Paris's main convention and exhibition centre near the Champs-Élysées, has

bordering European countries by air (Strasbourg and Mulhouse Airports), road and rail. In June 2007, the new TGV line Est came into operation and links the region to cities both in France and bordering countries. Strasbourg station has been modernized and expanded to cope with the increase in passenger traffic. A journey from Strasbourg to Paris now takes only 2.20hrs, and Frankfurt to Paris only 3.45hrs instead of the previous 6.15hrs. As the home of the European Parliament and other institutions, Strasbourg is one of France's main congress destinations and visitors



Palais des Festivals, Cannes

©CRT Riviera



Dinner cruise, Bateau Parisien ©Amélie Dupont, PTO



Notre Dame, Paris ©Amélie Dupont, PTO



Alsace, Vosges ©Couchouron, CRTA/PNRBV



Nice ©CRT Riviera

**Incentive ideas in France**

**Paris – Bateaux Parisiens**

A cruise along the Seine is an essential part of any visit to Paris and definitely not to be missed! As you glide along the water, you find yourself face to face with Paris's splendid museums and monuments. One-hour cruises are usually held in French and



Tour Eiffel, Paris ©David Lefranc, PTO

English; and head-sets translating the commentary into many different languages are at your disposal, ensuring that you don't miss a word about the history of the city that is unfolding before you. All kinds of boats, barges, sightseeing river boats, the smaller "pataches", paddle boats or small yachts – go back and forth along the Seine and the canals of northeastern Paris. And what could be more romantic than to have lunch or dinner while cruising along the river? ([www.bateauxparisiens.com](http://www.bateauxparisiens.com))

**Experience French "art de vivre"**

La Belle Ecole was established in 2002 and it developed into the

first and unique French art-de-vivre school. The tutors are passionate professionals who share their knowledge of perfumes, jewellery, beauty or French gastronomy in a warm and refined atmosphere. You'll be able to learn everything about visual and culinary arts, as well as French elegance. All the classes take place at prestigious Parisian addresses. ([www.labelleecole.fr](http://www.labelleecole.fr))

**Wine-tasting in Alsace**

Visits can be arranged to wine farms to enjoy wine-tasting combined with typical Alsatian culinary specialities and demonstrations



Alsace Winstub © Hampé, CRTA

of wine and jam manufacture. The 170km Alsatian wine route covers a picturesque region of attractive old towns with half-timbered houses, flower-filled streets and welcoming "winstubs" (wine restaurants). In Colmar, groups can take part in a town rally to discover its cultural highlights, for example the Musée Unterlinden with the famous Isenheim Altar by Matthias Grünewald or the delightful old quarter "Petite Venise" with its smart half-timbered houses and numerous bridges over the River Lauch.

**Sporting activities in Alsace**

The company Trace Verte organizes sporting and team challenges for groups in the region. Go horse-riding or mountain-biking through the Vosges Forest or try your hand at orienteering with GPS equipment to track down the location of a certain village or wine farm. The company also organizes theme rallies, archery, Nordic walking through the countryside, rock climbing and acrobatic activities. ([www.traceverte.com](http://www.traceverte.com))

**Create your own perfume**

The town of Grasse has always been the perfume capital. Visit the international museum of Grasse and look back over 4,000 years of perfume making, discovering the techniques used from ancient Egypt to today. Some perfumeries



Scented produce of Grasse ©CRT Riviera

are willing to divulge their secrets to the curious and offer a free tour where you are given the opportunity of creating your very own eau de toilette. The town of Grasse loves flowers and celebrates with two festivals: the Rose Festival in May and the Jasmine Festival in August.

**Head for the Med**

Aquatic sports, mountain climbing, art and gourmet food - there are so many different ways to get away from it all on the French Riviera. Try your hand at cooking à la provençale - with its combination of vegetables, olive oil, herbs and spices. Provençale cuisine offers a tasty combination of fresh pro-



"Head for the Med" ©CRT Riviera

ducts from the land and sea. Learn all about this cuisine alongside the region's Michelin-star rated chefs. Or enjoy the region's health treatments and therapies to promote well-being such as thalassotherapy in Cannes, Antibes and Villeneuve-Loubet.

For more information, see <http://convention.parisinfo.com>, [www.business.tourisme-alsace.com](http://www.business.tourisme-alsace.com) and [www.frenchriviera-cb.com](http://www.frenchriviera-cb.com)

For further information on France as a MICE destination, see [www.franceguide.com/conventionbureau](http://www.franceguide.com/conventionbureau).



[franceguide.com](http://franceguide.com)



Sacré coeur, Paris ©David Lefranc, PTO



Quai de la Poissonnerie, Colmar ©Harang, CRTA



Villefranche sur Mer ©CRT Riviera



Fireworks over the Riviera ©CRT Riviera

INCENTIVES