



So, You Want to Stay in France!

NOT OFFICIAL LEGAL ADVICE – JUST MY EXPERIENCE

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Would Your Plans Require a VISA?

- Without a visa, Americans can stay in France (or any Schengen country) 90 out of 180 days, rolling – not based on the calendar year.
- The 90-day limit applies to all Schengen countries cumulatively, not separately.
 - Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, **France**, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland

Yes, You Want to Stay MORE than 90/180 days!

- Apply within 3 months of your intended trip / move to France.
- Consider what type of VISA would fit your situation: www.France-visas.gouv.fr – has a form to fill out to help you determine if you need a visa – and if so, what type.
 - **Long-stay visa (Type D)** For stays longer than 90 days, allowing you to settle in France.
 - **Validity:** Usually valid for between three months and one year and must be validated within three months of arrival.
 - **Types:** **Salaried employee visa:** For those who have an employment contract; **Student visa:** For those pursuing studies or training; **Professional and independent worker visa:** For self-employed or liberal professions; **Temporary worker visa:** A provisional residency permit for temporary work. **Visitor visa:** For retirees or others not intending to work.
- My VISA is a **LTS-TS – Long Stay Visitor Visa**: One Year, Renewable annually for up to 5 Years, after which I can apply for Permanent Residency (not citizenship). Since I will be older than 65 by that time – I will NOT need to meet a French language threshold – but if you are younger than 65, you will need B2 level for either permanent residency or for citizenship.
 - If you check the box for just the LTS – it will allow you to stay in France for ONE year, but you will have to go back to your home country to renew it every year. I highly recommend checking the box for “more than one year” – so that if you decide to stay longer than one year, you can renew in France.
- VISA does NOT allow living in any of the EU/Schengen countries – only France.
- There is some debate among advisors about whether remote work for non-French companies is allowed. But to be clear – there is NO “nomad” or “digital” visa available in France (currently).

Steps to the Visa Application Process

- **Fill out online “application.”** Fee is \$99 US. (See website above).
- Application process provides a list of documentation you will need:
 - Application Form – printed out and signed.
 - Receipt that you paid the \$99 application fee.



- Identity photograph (specific to FRENCH VISA – not just PASSPORT photo.)
- A “travel” document – in this case, your PASSPORT. Be sure the expiration date is at least 3 months BEYOND the end date of your requested Visa.
- Purpose of the Trip/Stay. (A simple letter as to why you want to move to / stay in France longer than the 90 days – in English and in French.)
- Commitment letter NOT to carry out any professional activity in France (for a Visitor Visa).
- Proof of sufficient income / financial means such that you will not become a burden on the French system. In 2025, that means at least 1400-1700 Euros monthly per person – which is France’s current net minimum wage and cost of living. Funds may come from pension, savings, rental income, or other reliable sources and must be documented through recent account statements and official financial records (such as tax returns).
- Proof of at least the first 90 days of housing upon arrival in France. (AirBnb rental receipt or hotel or Friend’s address with letter from them. Be sure your AirBnB contract is cancellable in case you don’t get the VISA – or if you find your apartment quickly after arriving in France.)
- Health insurance for the first year. NOT US health insurance, but rather a French policy for the first year. **MUST** include repatriation coverage.

After Application Submission

- Website will lead you to the next site to “set an appointment” for document submission. This is just an outsourced service to review your application and documents for COMPLETENESS. This is NOT the decision-making body.
- I made my appointment in Chicago. Took less than 30 minutes once I was called from the waiting room.
- Biometrics – photo and fingerprints.
- They FedEx to Washington DC Embassy / Consulate for review and approval or denial.
- Select (and pay for) the Fed Ex service to get your Passport / Visa back. Mine was returned to me in less than one week.

After Arriving in France

- You will need to go online (address provided right on a sticker in your passport next to your VISA) to validate your Visa and pay \$200 fee within the first 3 months. Best to do so AFTER you have your permanent address – so that the French System will have your correct address.

Helpful Facebook Groups to Join (but always do your own research on official sites).

- Applying for a French CdS (Carte de Sejour)
- Applying for French Nationality, Titre de Sejour and Carte de Resident
- Americans Retiring in France
- Expats Moving to France