



# France - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture

*Barry Tomalin*

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France has experienced considerable upheaval in recent years. The Eurozone crisis, a new socialist president, rioting by an alienated underclass, a ban on the *burqa* (full veil) in public places, and an attempt to democratize the elite system of education all point to significant changes in French society. At the same time leading French companies are major investors in European energy resources, services, and luxury products, and between three and four hundred thousand French people live in Britain, making London, as former President Sarkozy stated, France's fifth- or sixth-largest city. The implications of these changes have not yet fully permeated French society, but they reveal a slow process of adaptation to new realities.

Meanwhile, in international affairs, France makes a major and distinctive contribution and carefully guards its interests and prestige. The rivalry between Paris and the provinces continues the traditional split between North and South. France as a whole maintains its stately pace as a centre of culture, civilization, and, of course, the good life, which is one of the reasons it remains, with 75 million visitors a year, the most visited country in the world.

This new, updated edition of *Culture Smart! France* looks at the attitudes and values of the French today. It explains how French life and business work and shows you how to fit in as a foreigner. There is practical advice on how to avoid the pitfalls and do things the French way. It takes you through history, festivals, and traditions, the French at home, on the road, in the restaurant, and at work. Above all, it shows you how the French communicate, and how best to get along with this sometimes frustrating yet charming and brilliant people.

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