

COMPLETE GUIDE TO

Pets in France

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

- ✓ Pet passports, microchipping, and health certificates
- ✓ Quarantine rules, vaccinations, and travel requirements
- ✓ Airlines, ferries, and pet-friendly transport options



Buying Property in France made simple -
everything you need to know to start your life in France

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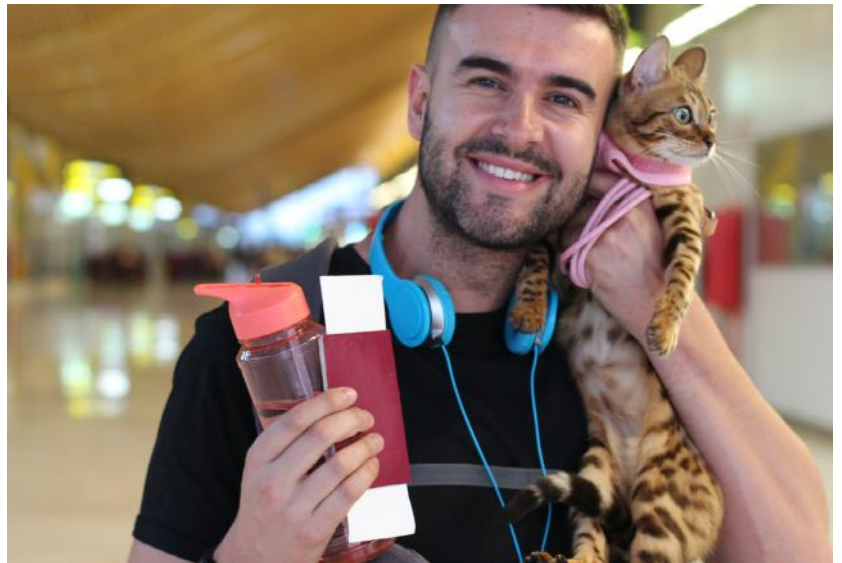
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DISCLAIMER: THIS GUIDE IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. WE HAVE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE IS CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRINT; HOWEVER, TRAVEL RULES AND CUSTOMS REGULATIONS ARE SET BY THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME. WE ALWAYS RECOMMEND VERIFYING THE RULES AND CONSULTING A LICENSED VET PRIOR TO TRAVEL.

Where to start with bringing your pets to France

Where to start with bringing your pets to France

Whether you want to bring your dog along while travelling or visiting your second home, or plan to move to France permanently, it's important to understand the rules and regulations around bringing your pets to France. Animals being imported from outside the EU are subject to strict entry requirements, and for UK travellers, Brexit has led to stringent new rules regarding travel to France with pets. This guide will talk you through everything that you need to know.



Can you bring your pets to France?

Let's start with the most important question for any pet owner considering a long stay in France: Are you able to bring your pet(s) with you?

The first thing to understand is that all pets brought into France will be subject to rules and regulations set out by French Customs (Douanes). It's essential that you follow these rules in order to bring your pet to France and to avoid your pet being refused entry or placed in quarantine. We cover all of these rules in the chapter Travelling to France with your pets.

Before we get into the details, however, there are some general rules that apply across the board.

Here are a few things to consider:

Which pets can be brought into France?

French customs considers the following animals “pets” and different vaccination and paperwork requirements apply to each group:

- » Dogs* (the rules also apply to service dogs), cats, and ferrets
- » Birds (not including chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges, and ratites)
- » Rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits), reptiles, amphibians, and ornamental fish, and invertebrates (except bees and crustaceans)

* Certain breeds of dog are banned from import into France or have special entry requirements: the Staffordshire terrier, American Staffordshire terrier (pitbull), Mastiff (boerbull), Tosa, and Rottweiler. See the section on Category 1 and 2 dog breeds in the Travelling to France with your pets chapter for more on this. French lifestyle and culture

How many pets can I bring with me to France?

There is a limit of five animals when travelling to France if you wish to fall

under the rules for “pet travel” as outlined in this guide. On April 22, 2026, the EU updated this rule to specify that this means ‘five pets per vehicle’, not five pets per person.

An exception to this is animals travelling to take part in a sporting event or competition (such as a dog show), provided the pets are over six months old. In this instance, documented proof of competition registration is required.

It is possible to bring more than five animals at a time into France, but this is generally classed as a “commercial import” and falls outside the scope of this guide. We recommend that pet owners with a larger number of pets find a way to travel with them to France under the pet travel rules (for example, by planning multiple trips); otherwise, it’s best to speak with your veterinarian and contact [French customs](#) for details on commercial imports.

How are the rules different between EU and non-EU countries?

Now that we have established whether you can bring your pets to France, the next important step is to understand the entry requirements. The most important factor here is which country you are travelling from.

Travel to France from another EU country

If you’re an EU resident, EU law makes it easy to travel with a dog, cat, or ferret, provided that they are microchipped and have a valid European Pet Passport with up-to-date rabies vaccinations. Make sure you carry your pet’s passport with you when crossing country borders, even where there are no border controls such as within the Schengen Area.



The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) also extends to Andorra, Switzerland, the Faroe Islands, Gibraltar, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, and Vatican City State. Pets with a Pet Passport issued in any of these countries can travel to France as well as to all 27 EU countries and Northern Ireland. However, note that EU-issued Pet Passports can no longer be used if the owner is not resident in the EU.

If you intend to become an EU resident, see the chapter. Moving with your pets to France for details of how to acquire an EU Pet Passport for your pet.

Note that EU Pet Passports only apply to dogs, cats, and ferrets. Special rules apply when bringing other pets to France, which we've detailed in our chapter Travelling to France with your pets.

Bringing pets to France from a non-EU country

If you are bringing dogs, cats, or ferrets to France from a non-EU country, which includes the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, the following rules apply. Remember,

you cannot travel with more than five animals unless you are travelling for a competition, show, or sporting event (in which case, specific entry requirements apply).

- » Be over 16 weeks/four months old (the first rabies vaccine cannot be given until a minimum of 12 weeks old, plus a minimum of 21 days for the vaccine to take effect).
- » Be microchipped, and have been vaccinated for rabies at least 21 days prior to travel*
- » Have a valid Animal Health Certificate presented alongside their vaccination record.

* Rabies tests: If you are travelling from an unlisted country, you will also need to carry out a rabies antibody titration test (a blood test carried out by an authorised lab) to confirm that your dog has been successfully vaccinated. This is not required if you are travelling from a listed country, which includes the UK, the US, and Australia.

We cover all the above requirements as well as those concerning other types of pet in detail in the chapter Travelling to France with your pets.

What's changed since Brexit

Unfortunately, a lot has changed since Brexit for UK pet owners, and it is no longer possible for UK residents to benefit from the simplified travel procedures of EU countries. As a non-EU country without a special deal in place, the UK now falls under the same rules as many other non-EU countries, adding extra hassle and expense for travellers. However, it is still absolutely possible to bring your pets to France, and many visitors and second-home owners have continued to travel with

UK-issued Pet Passports

Since Brexit, the UK is now classed as a non-EU country and the abovementioned rules for Bringing pets to France from a non-EU country apply. This means that each pet will need an Animal Health Certificate (AHC) issued by a UK vet no more than 10 days before travelling for each trip to France; rabies vaccinations must also be kept up to date.

With costs for the AHC varying between £99 and £300+ throughout the UK, it's worth shopping around a bit to find the best price, but remember, it must be issued by an official veterinarian in order to be valid.

IMPORTANT: UK-issued Pet Passports are no longer valid under the EU Pet Travel Scheme.

Will the rules change for UK-France pet travel in 2026/2027?

As of June 2026, there is no special deal in place between the UK and France or the EU regarding pet travel, meaning that pets from the UK must follow the same rules as those from non-EU countries. However, talks are underway to create a common "Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) area" between the UK and the EU, which would facilitate easier transport of foods, plants, and animals. This could also lay the groundwork for the UK to implement an EU-valid pet passport scheme in the future, thereby easing the rules for pet travel. However, it's important to understand that this is still in its very early stages: it's unlikely that any progress on the SPS will be made until 2027, and a pet passport scheme would require additional approval and implementation after that. In short, while there's hope that this will change at some point in the future, UK pet owners will almost certainly need to follow the current Animal Health Certificate requirements for at least the next couple of years.

What's new for UK-France pet travel in 2026?

Another update for UK pet owners came into action on 22nd April

2026, with the EU further clarifying the rules surrounding EU-issued Pet Passports. While UK-issued Pet Passports have no longer been valid post Brexit, some UK-based pet owners (especially second-home owners with a French address) were previously able to benefit from EU-issued Pet Passports, which had a lifetime validity. However, the rules have now been clarified to state that "GB residents should no longer use EU pet passports to travel into the EU". Further updates include an extension of the Animal Health Certificate, which is now valid for up to six months, rather than the previous four months - great news for pet owners travelling to France on a 6-month visa. There was a further clarification regarding the five pet limit. It was previously unclear whether this limit applied per person or per vehicle; it's now been officially confirmed that the limit applies per vehicle or per foot passenger. Consult the official announcement [here](#).



Travelling to France with your pets

Travel documents & customs requirements

- » Dogs, cats, and ferrets
- » Animal Health Certificates
- » Rabies vaccinations and antibody tests
- » Category 1 and 2 dog breeds
- » Birds
- » Rodents, rabbits, reptiles, amphibians, and fish

Travelling to France with your pet

- » Preparing your pet to travel
- » By car
- » By train
- » By ferry
- » By plane
- » Pet transporters

Travelling in the EU with your pet

- » EU travel rules
- » Travelling by train in Europe

From vaccinations and health certificates to organising pet-friendly transport, bringing your pets to France requires a fair amount of planning and preparation. In this chapter, we go over all of the legal and logistical requirements for travelling with your pets, including veterinary visits, customs regulations, and transport options.



Travel documents & customs requirements

Strict laws apply to bringing pets into the EU, regardless of whether you are coming for a short trip or moving permanently to France. Providing that you fall under the criteria for a non-commercial import (travelling with a maximum of five pets per vehicle or foot passenger), the following rules apply, depending upon the type of animal and the country you are travelling from.

Dogs, cats, and ferrets

The most common category applies to dogs, cats, and ferrets, and the rules depend upon the country you are travelling from.

From an EU country

Customs checks are generally not carried out when travelling between EU countries, but there are still some general rules that apply to all pets travelling within the EU. You may be asked to present documentation for your animal if you are stopped by the police or if seeking veterinary treatment. If you're

planning to arrive in France via another EU country, but your journey starts in a non-EU country (for example, you travel from the UK to Spain then cross the border into France), see the section "From a non-EU country" below. The same rules of entry apply across the EU, although you should also double-check that there are no additional local laws that you will need to adhere to (for example, dog breeds that aren't permitted in that country).

To visit France from another EU country, your pet must:

- » Be micro-chipped with an EU device-compatible transponder (your vet will be able to advise on this, or else you can find the exact requirements [here](#)) OR have a clearly readable tattoo issued before 3rd July 2011.
- » Have a valid European pet passport
- » Have been vaccinated against Rabies (see the section below on Rabies vaccinations and antibody tests)

Note that the same rules apply to dogs, cats, and ferrets travelling with their owner from the following European countries: Andorra, Croatia, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and Vatican City State.

From a non-EU country

Dogs, cats, and ferrets travelling from all other non-EU countries, including the United States, the UK, and Australia, must be presented to the customs authorities on arrival in France. Your pet's microchip will be scanned, and you will need to present the required paperwork as detailed below. Typically, transport operators will also verify that your pet's documents compliant before allowing you to board with your pet. You can read the official rules [here](#).

To visit France from a non-EU country, your pet must:

- » Be over 16 weeks/four months old (the first rabies vaccine cannot be given until a minimum of 12 weeks old, plus a minimum of 21 days for the vaccine to take effect).
- » Be micro-chipped with an EU device-compatible transponder (your vet will be able to advise on this, or else you can find the exact requirements [here](#)) OR have a clearly readable tattoo

issued before 3rd July 2011.

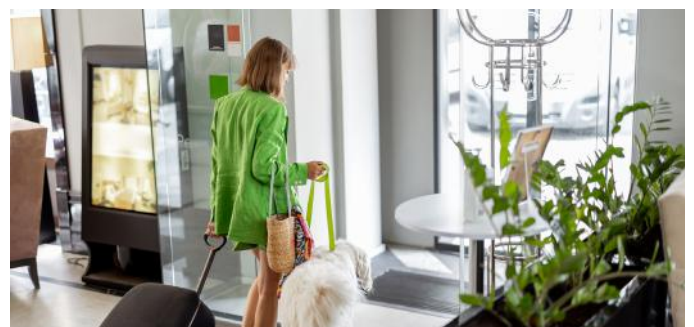
- » Have been vaccinated against Rabies in compliance with EU regulations and have undergone a rabies antibody titration test if required (see the section below on Rabies vaccinations and antibody tests).
- » Have a valid Animal Health Certificate presented alongside their vaccination record (see the section below on Animal Health Certificates).

Animal Health Certificates

Dogs, cats, and ferrets travelling from the US, UK, Australia, and all other non-EU countries that do not issue compliant European Pet Passports must present an Animal Health Certificate (AHC) on arrival in France.

An Animal Health Certificate (AHC) is a medical certificate issued by a registered veterinarian that contains details of your pet's identity, health, and rabies vaccination. In the US, the Animal Health Certificate is typically known as an EU Health Certificate; it may be known by other names in other countries - ask your vet for the relevant travel health certificate. You can read the official rules [here](#).

IMPORTANT: Pets are generally expected to travel with their owners; it is permitted for your pets to travel with a guardian, provided that you will be travelling to meet them within five days. A written, signed authorisation should be included with the Animal Health Certificate.



The Animal Health Certificate:

- » Must be issued by an official registered vet in your country of origin
- » May include up to five pets travelling with you to France; each pet will need to visit the vet, and the cost will increase accordingly
- » Must be issued within 10 days of your arrival date in the EU (not the date that you leave your country of origin)
- » Is valid for one single trip to the EU; if you leave and re-enter the EU, your pet will need another AHC
- » Is valid for up to six months (or until the rabies vaccination expires; whichever is first) and permits travel between all EU countries within the validity period
- » Can cost upwards of £100- £200 in the UK or \$250 in the US; for other countries, you should ask your vet for a quote
- » Should include a written declaration that your pet is being relocated for non-commercial reasons
- » Can only be issued to animals over 12 weeks old who are vaccinated against rabies (In practice, this means 16 weeks for dogs and cats as there is a minimum of 21 days post vaccine for it to take effect)

An AHC appointment usually takes between 45 minutes and an hour, but this can vary between vet surgeries - ask about the standard procedure and what you need to bring when you book the appointment. In some countries, it can be harder to find a vet certified to issue travel health certificates, so do your research well in advance to give yourself time to book the appointment and organise travel if required.

As you only have a 10-day window

in which to receive the certificate, we recommend booking your appointment at least a couple of weeks in advance to secure the date you would like. Waiting times will likely vary greatly between regions and countries, but some parts of the UK, for example, are experiencing high volumes of requests for an AHC, with waiting lists up to a month or longer. Your pet will not be able to travel without this, so don't leave it until the last minute.

Vaccinations

While it's highly recommended to have your pets fully vaccinated, especially when travelling to a foreign country, the only vaccination that is legally required for your pet to enter the EU is against rabies. While France officially managed to eradicate rabies in terrestrial animals in 2001, the disease is still present in some Eastern European countries, and there are still occasional isolated cases, usually due to imported animals. As such, strict protocols are in place to ensure all pets entering France and other EU countries are vaccinated and free from rabies. Proof of a vaccination against rabies is a mandatory requirement for all dogs, cats, and ferrets, and there are some important stipulations:

- » If you plan to travel with a puppy, kitten, or kit (a baby ferret), they must have been at least 12 weeks old when the vaccine was administered. The date of travel must be later than 21 days after the first vaccine. In practice, this will mean your puppy won't be able to travel until about 16 weeks old.
- » If your pet is currently vaccinated for rabies, then you must keep up to date with their booster vaccinations (usually administered one year after the primary dose, then every 1-3

years from then on). If you pass the validity period at any time in between boosters, then you must wait 21 days after the subsequent booster before travelling.

- » The date of administration of the rabies vaccination must not precede the date of the pet's microchip (i.e., your pet must be micro-chipped before receiving the rabies vaccination)
- » Pets travelling from an unlisted country must also carry out a rabies antibody titration test (a blood test carried out by an authorised lab) to confirm that your dog has been successfully vaccinated. This is not required if you are travelling from a listed country, which includes the UK, the US, and Australia. You can find the full list of countries that this applies to here and a list of official laboratories that carry out the titration tests here.

Category 1 and 2 dog breeds

In France, there are three different categories of dog breeds, and strict rules govern the ownership of certain breeds; others are banned altogether. These laws also apply to visitors wishing to travel with or move with their pets to France.

Category 1: Attack dogs

These dogs are unregistered breeds in France (i.e., they are not registered with the LOF, the French stud book). The following dogs are classed as category 1 breeds:

- » American Staffordshire Terrier/ Staffordshire Terrier, also known as pit bulls
- » Mastiffs, also known as boerboels
- » Tosa

Category 2: Attack dogs

These dogs are registered pure breeds in France (i.e.,

they are registered with the LOF). The following dogs are classed as category 2 breeds:

- » LOF American Staffordshire terrier dogs*, also called pit bulls
- » LOF Rottweiler dogs
- » LOF Tosa dogs
- » Dogs assimilated by their morphological characteristics to dogs of the Rottweiler breed, not registered by the LOF.

**Note that the smaller Staffordshire Bull Terriers are not considered dangerous and do not fall into Category 2.*

Category 3: All other breeds

- » All other known dog breeds fall into category 3, divided into 10 sub-groups:
 - » Group 1: Sheep and herding dogs
 - » Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer types, Molossoids, Mountain and Swiss Bouvier Dogs
 - » Group 3: Terriers
 - » Group 4: Dachshunds
 - » Group 5: Spitz and Primitive types
 - » Group 6: Hounds, bloodhounds, and similar breeds
 - » Group 7: Pointers
 - » Group 8: Retrievers and water dogs
 - » Group 9: Companion dogs
 - » Group 10: Greyhounds



What is the difference between Category 1 and Category 2 dogs?

The defining difference between Category 1 and Category 2 dogs is the presence of an official purebred certification - in France, this means being registered with the LOF (Livre des Origines Français), the official book of pedigrees in France. For a dog entering France from overseas, you must produce an equivalent certificate of birth or pedigree issued by the central canine society of your dog's country of origin. The pedigree must be recognised by the International Canine Federation. If no such proof is provided, the dog will be automatically classed as a Category 1 dog and prevented from entering France.

Can I bring a Category 1 or Category 2 dog to France

It is illegal to own, breed, sell, or give someone a category 1 dogs in France, and this equally applies to travellers and those moving to France. If you own a category 1 dog, you simply will not be allowed to bring the dog with you to France or import the dog to France.

To legally import or travel with a Category 2 dog to France, there are strict conditions to be met:

1. The French Douane (customs) website states: "If you wish to bring a Category

2 dog into France, you must produce a certificate of birth or pedigree issued by the central canine society of the dog's country of origin in order to prove a pedigree recognised by the International Canine Federation to the customs authorities.

2. You must meet the requirements for owning a category 2 dog in France *

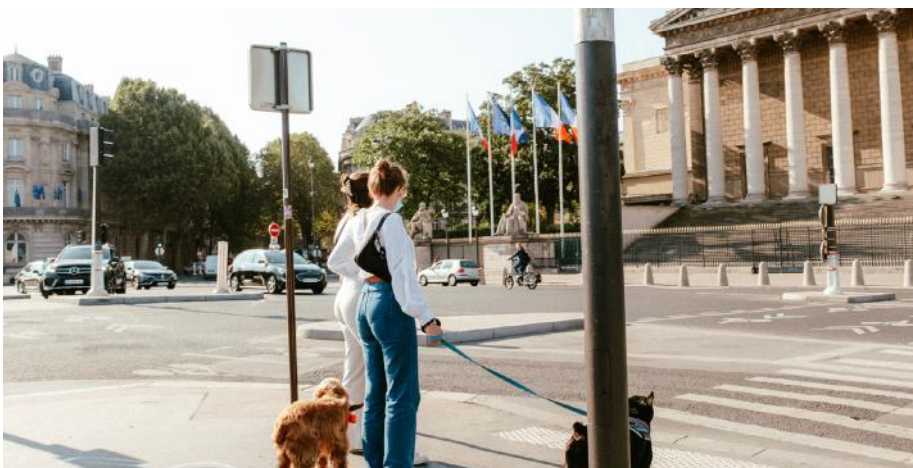
3. All the other requirements for pet travel must be met (vaccinations, Animal Health Certificate, etc.).

4. When in France, a Category 2 dog must be muzzled and kept on a leash in all public areas.

**You can see the full requirements for owning a Category 2 dog [here](#) and [here](#) (in French). Most notably, the owner must have an "Attestation d'aptitude" showing that they have received training to own a guard/defence dog, proof that your dog has undergone a behavioural assessment, and take out third-party insurance for your dog. A 'permis de detention' is then issued by your local Mairie upon verification of these documents.*

The bottom line:

While travelling to France with a category 2 dog is not prohibited, it is not clear how a foreign owner can obtain an attestation d'aptitude or behavioural assessment. If you must travel with your dog, you should first contact your travel provider to find out whether your dog will be accepted for travel. You can then speak with your local Mairie in France (who may be able to issue a "permis de detention"



for your dog) or contact the Centrale Canine for advice on obtaining the relevant documentation.

Birds (not including chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quails, pigeons, pheasants, partridges, and ratites)

The second category of pets is birds, which covers most types of caged birds, except for the abovementioned farmyard animals and any bird species protected under the Washington Convention (CITES - Convention on International Trade in Endangered

Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Birds intended for sale fall under different entry requirements.

Due to outbreaks of bird flu around the world, strict import procedures apply to pet birds arriving from outside of the EU, and you face steep fines and even jail time for non-compliance, especially if your actions impact human or animal health. With this in mind, it's essential to follow the mandatory screening, vaccination, and quarantine protocols.

As with other pets, you may travel with a maximum of five birds.

From an EU country

Pet birds, such as parrots, can be transported within the EU as long as the regulations of the destination country are met.

Customs checks are generally not carried out when travelling between EU countries, but to enter France, your bird should be accompanied by a veterinary certificate issued within five days of departure that states that it is in good health with no signs of species-specific disease. You may be asked to present documentation for your animal if you are stopped by the police or if seeking veterinary treatment.

The same rules apply to pet birds travelling with their owner from the following European countries: Andorra, Croatia, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and Vatican City State.

From a non-EU country

All birds arriving in France must be presented to a border control post (BCP) that is authorised for pet controls when entering France (you can find a map of the possible entry points [here](#)).

Your bird(s) must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by an official veterinarian. In order to qualify, your bird must have:

- » Received a primary vaccination and at least one booster against the H5 and H7 avian influenza virus between six months and 60 days prior to the date of arrival in France.



Where to start with bringing your pets to France

or

» Undergone a supervised 30-day isolation period in an official program in the country of departure.

or

» Received a negative PCR screening for the H5 and H7 avian influenza virus taken from the 7th day of isolation under the supervision of an officially authorised veterinarian. This must be carried out a minimum of 14 days prior to travel.

In addition to the health certificate, you must:

- » Sign a declaration stating that you have understood the rules and regulations surrounding the import of your bird(s) into France.
- » Transfer the birds directly from the point of entry in France to your private residence.
- » Follow a 30-day official surveillance period after entry into France
- » Keep the imported pet bird(s) away from other birds and all places where birds may gather for a minimum of 30 days after entry into France.

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Rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits), reptiles, amphibians, and ornamental fish

The final category of pets includes rodents, rabbits, reptiles, amphibians, and ornamental fish, excluding species protected under the Washington Convention (CITES - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Animals intended for sale fall under different entry requirements.

As with other pets, you may travel with a maximum of five animals per vehicle or foot passenger.

From an EU country

Pets can be transported within the EU as long as the regulations of the destination country are met. Customs checks are generally not carried out when travelling between EU countries, but to enter France, your pet should be accompanied by a veterinary certificate issued within five days of departure that states that it is in good health with no signs of species-specific disease. You may be asked to present documentation for your animal if you are stopped by the police or if seeking veterinary treatment.

The same rules apply to pets travelling with their owner from the following European countries: Andorra, Croatia,

Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and Vatican City State.

From a non-EU country

The rules around importing rodents, lagomorphs (rabbits), reptiles, amphibians, and ornamental fish into France may vary depending on the species. All pets must have a certificate from an official veterinarian and follow any species-specific vaccination or other health protocols. The best advice is to discuss your plans with your vet at least a month prior to travel to ensure that you are able to comply with the travel requirements.

Travelling to France with your pet

Travelling to France with your pet

Once the paperwork and customs requirements are prepared, the next thing to consider is the journey itself. Depending on where in the world you are coming from, your pet may need to travel to France by plane, or you may have the option to drive or take a ferry or train. Let's take a look at the different travel options available and how to prepare your pet for their move overseas.

Preparing your pet to travel

Our pets are part of the family, and the prospect of moving them to France can be overwhelming. It's not just the logistics and travel costs that can be worrying, but also how your pet will cope with the journey.

Depending on where you are travelling from, your travel options will vary. While UK owners may have already travelled to France with their dog or cat, American or Australian travellers may never have taken their pet overseas. Some pets may never have even left their backyard before! As well as exploring which travel options are available to you and your pet, it is crucial to consider their temperament and put their wellbeing first. How well does your pet travel? How confident are they in new situations, with new people, or in loud, busy environments such as an airport or on board a ferry? Would they feel happier travelling with you, or would you prefer that their transport was handled by a professional with experience transporting pets like yours? You may not always have

a choice over the travel methods, but there are often things you can do to ensure that your pet is as comfortable as possible and help to prepare them for the journey in the months prior to travel.

For example, if you're travelling from an EU country or by ferry from the UK, it's a good idea to get your pet comfortable travelling in the car prior to undertaking a long journey. Dogs and cats will need to travel in the backseat or boot of the car and be suitably restrained (for example, with a net, cage, or travel harness) to ensure they cannot distract the driver while travelling. You should also get your pet used to being left alone in the car or in a kennel in preparation for travelling.



When to travel

It's important to consider the weather, departure time, and duration of travel when travelling with a pet. Will you have time to exercise your pet before departure? How long will your pet be left alone? Are there any adjustments to your travel plans that might make it easier for your pet?

Consider your pet's daily routine, including exercise, food, and sleep, and see if you can line up transport at the most convenient time. For example, an overnight flight or ferry might be a smart choice as your pet may be more likely to settle down and sleep for the duration of the journey. Keeping your pet's routine as close as possible to normal will help limit stress, while expecting your pet to travel quietly at a time when they usually enjoy a long walk or dinner might add unnecessary stress. If travelling in mid-summer, try to avoid travelling during the hottest part of the day if possible.

Talk to your travel provider in advance and read all information provided on pet travel prior to booking so that you are fully aware of the rules for travel, the check-in and arrival procedures, and how/where your pet will travel. Ask any questions that you have in advance, as it will be too late to make changes or consider other arrangements on the day of travel. Advance planning and preparation will not only ensure a smooth travel experience, but many pets will be sensitive to their owner's stress level, so if you feel relaxed and confident about the trip, there's a much better chance that they will also.

What to pack

Travelling with your pet means you will also need to pack your pet's essentials,

including everything that you will need for both travelling and the duration of your trip. Here are a few of the essentials:

- » Your pet's bed plus a suitable crate or harness for travel. Consider an extra blanket/bedding if travelling in winter or sun-guards if travelling in summer.
- » A non-spill water bowl suitable for travel and plenty of water.
- » An identity tag (updated with your travel phone number if different) attached to a collar or your pet's cage/carrier.
- » A towel (to clean off wet or muddy paws) or mop up accidents.
- » Enough food (and some extra just in case) for the duration of your holiday (see note below on bringing dog food to France).
- » Treats and toys for travelling, if you think it will help your pet settle and keep them occupied during the journey.
- » Food bowls, toys, brushes, poo bags, litter, or any other daily essentials you need for your pet.
- » Muzzle if required by your transport provider (dogs and cats)
- » Flea or tick medication, especially if travelling in the summer months.

Can you bring pet food into France?

It's not permitted to take any food (including pet food) that contains animal products - i.e., meat, dairy, or meat derivatives - from a non-EU country (including the UK post-Brexit!) into the EU. If you are travelling to France, be sure to check the packet and don't assume that you will 'get away with it' (customs can and will confiscate the items, leaving you without food for your pet's journey).

As a general rule, only dog foods marked 'vegan' are permitted, but there is an exception for special dog foods required for medical reasons (up to 2kg). You can read the full rules [here](#).

Most popular brands of dry and wet pet foods will be available in France, so the best option is to purchase your pet's food on arrival. For the journey, consider feeding your pet prior to arrival at the ferry port/airport or purchasing vegan alternatives to take on board.



Travelling with a pet: check-in procedure

Give yourself extra time when travelling with a pet and plan a stop before arriving at the airport or ferry port to exercise your pet and allow them to go to the toilet. Make sure you have all of your pet's paperwork ready to present to customs attendants; you will usually be asked to scan your pet's microchip (where relevant) and present your Animal Health Certificate and any other required documents. You will typically be given a tag or sticker to attach to your pet's crate or cage (for plane travel) or to the vehicle windscreen (for ferry or Eurotunnel travel), indicating that there is a pet on board. Procedures will vary depending on the airline or ferry company, and it's a good idea to confirm these when you check in - make sure you know where to take your pet for boarding and at what time, which areas they are allowed or not allowed to go, and any other questions you have.

Arriving in France

When it's time to disembark or rejoin your pet, remember that this can be just as stressful for your pet as boarding - airports and ferry ports are often loud, busy, and chaotic. If your pet has been separated from you for an extended period, remember that they will likely be excited to see you and also need to go to the toilet - try and keep them as calm as possible to avoid any accidents.

The arrival procedures may be similar to check-in - you will need to present your pet at customs, scan their microchip or confirm their identity, and present all of their paperwork for inspection. Customs officials may ask some questions about your pet, so be prepared and answer honestly - remember, they are just doing their job and they want to ensure the health and safety of your pet as well as others.

Travelling by ferry

There are a number of different ferry companies and cross-channel ferry routes between France and the UK. The most popular include Portsmouth to Caen, St Malo, or Cherbourg (operated by Brittany Ferries), and Dover to Calais (operated by P&O Ferries, DFDS, and Irish Ferries). Almost all routes and ships allow you to travel with a dog, with prices typically around £15 per dog. However, departure times, travel times, and rules for pet travel vary, so it's important to choose the right option to suit your dog.

All ferries have slightly different rules and regulations regarding travelling with a pet, so make sure to read them thoroughly - you can find the pet travel information for P&O Ferries [here](#) and Brittany Ferries [here](#).

Pet-friendly cabins, kennels, or travelling in the car

There are a few different options for travelling with your pet by ferry. On most UK-France ferries, your pet must stay in your vehicle for the duration of the ferry crossing; however, sometimes dogs are allowed on board. If you leave your dog in the car, it is usually not possible

to visit your pet during the journey (although exceptions will be made in an emergency), but some ferries do allow supervised visits at set times.

On some crossings, kennels are also available, which enable you to visit your dog during the journey. Some ferry companies also offer pet-friendly cabins, which means you can bring your dog on board with you. Note that most ferries require all dogs brought on board to wear a muzzle at all times (although this isn't always enforced).

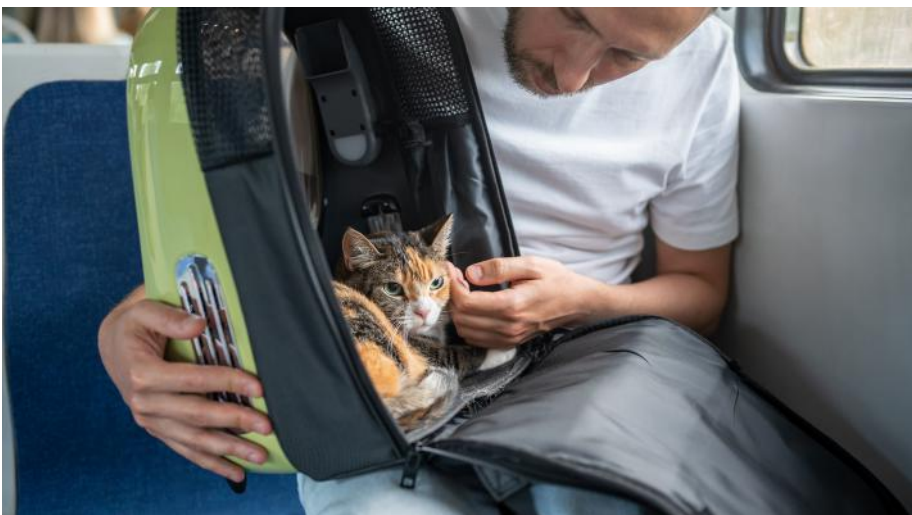
Make sure you check the available options before booking, and consider your pet's needs and preferences first. While it might feel difficult to leave your pet in the car overnight, they may feel safest and most comfortable in their own bed with familiar smells around them. On the other hand, if your dog suffers from separation anxiety and is happiest being with you, booking early to secure a pet-friendly cabin might be the best choice.

Travelling by ferry with your pet

On arrival at the port of departure, your pet should be safely secured for travel but visible to the customs attendants. You will not typically be asked to take your pet out of the vehicle, but you will

be asked to scan their microchip (for dogs, cats, and ferrets), which you can do yourself using the handheld device. You will typically be given a sticker to attach to your vehicle's windscreen indicating that there is a pet on board.

After passing through customs and passport controls, there may be time to take your pet out





of the vehicle to walk around or have a final toilet break while you are waiting to board the ferry. You will need to keep dogs and cats on a lead, and some ports also require dogs to be muzzled if you leave your vehicle at the port, so bear this in mind. Other pets should be kept in your car at the port.

Once onboard, take the time to prepare before you vacate your vehicle. If you are bringing your dog on board, be sure to bring everything you need for the journey with you, including bowls, toys, your dog's bed, and any food or water. Remember, you will not be able to return to your vehicle during the crossing.

If your pet is staying in the car, make sure to prepare them for the journey before you leave. You should always leave at least one or more windows ajar in your vehicle (even in winter), ensure your pet has enough fresh water and food for the journey, as well as bedding, toys, or other distractions to keep them comfortable.

You will be able to rejoin your vehicle and pet prior to the ferry arriving in port, typically around 30 minutes before. However, you will need to keep your pet in the vehicle until you disembark the ferry and pass through customs and passport controls. Plan a stop as soon as possible after you leave the

port in order to attend to your pet's needs before continuing on your journey - dogs and cats will want to stretch their legs, go to the toilet, and get some fresh air.

By train

Travellers from the UK also have the option to travel by train through the Channel Tunnel. It's not possible to take pets on Eurostar trains, but

you can bring all pets (they can even transport horses, donkeys, and zebras!) on Le Shuttle/Eurotunnel, which allows you to drive your car or motorhome onto the train. With a travel time of just 35 minutes between Folkestone in the UK and Calais in northern France, it's a short and convenient option for travelling with pets, and as you stay in your vehicle for the duration of the trip, it also means you can stay with your pets the whole time.

Check-in with pets starts from two hours before departure, and you must check in a minimum of 1 hour prior to departure. You'll follow a similar procedure to the ferry as detailed above, although you will need to leave your vehicle and take your pet to the Pet Reception, along with their Animal Health Certificate or other relevant documentation. After check-in, you can wait in your car or make use of the pet exercise area before boarding. On arrival, you will need to present your pet to French customs, so have your documents handy as you disembark.

You can find the pet travel information for Le Shuttle [here](#).

By plane

If you're coming to France from the United States, Australia, or other non-EU countries, you'll almost certainly need to fly your pet to France. Not all airlines allow pets to travel on board or in the hold, and they all have different rules and regulations to follow, so it's essential to do your research before you book.

While dogs, cats, and some other small pets are usually allowed to fly, travelling with other pets, including reptiles, amphibians, and most ornamental fish, may be more difficult. In some cases, they may be accepted as freight cargo, but the best choice is often to contact a professional pet transport service (see the section on Pet transporters below) for advice. There may also be restrictions on flying from certain countries, during certain seasons (very hot weather, for example), or certain routes (long-haul or connecting flights). Finally, make sure you follow your vet's advice on whether your pet is fit to fly. Flying can be taxing both physically and mentally, and it may not be a good idea for very young or elderly pets or those in poor health or with pre-existing conditions. Some breeds, such as brachycephalic (flat-faced) dogs (bulldogs, pugs, boxers, etc), are often at a higher risk of respiratory problems when flying, and some airlines even ban these breeds from travel. While it can be heartbreaking to leave a pet behind, in some situations, it may be kinder to find a temporary carer or rehome your pet than subject them to high-risk travel.

Choosing a flight route

Air France, Lufthansa, and American Airlines operate flights to France from destinations around

the world and allow dogs and cats both on board and in the cabin. Strict limits apply: for example, Air France allows pets under 8 kg (17.64 lb) in a carrier that fits under the seat to travel in the cabin with their owner, and pets up to 75kg (165.35 lb), including the carrier, may travel in the hold.

Many other airlines also allow pets, but the pet travel policies (and prices) will always vary, so make sure you check carefully in advance. It should go without saying, but don't leave bookings until the last minute when travelling with a pet - many airlines won't allow pet bookings less than 72 hours before the flight anyway.

When choosing a flight, remember it's not just about the airline requirements - consider the shortest route, the easiest-to-access airport for your pet, and whether or not you are flying direct or connecting. If you are flying long-haul or have multiple flight connections, consider whether it would be best for your pet to travel straight through or break up the journey with a stopover.

Preparing for plane travel

As well as preparing all the abovementioned documents and ensuring that you meet French customs requirements, you will also need to purchase an airline-approved carrier in



order to fly with your pet. Look for a carrier that meets International Air Transport Association size and ventilation standards, and is big enough for your pet to stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Make sure to also check any maximum size restrictions from the airline you are travelling with. You'll need to add a spill-proof water container and absorbent bedding. It's a good idea to get your pet used to the carrier at least a few weeks before travelling - perhaps let your pet eat or sleep in it, so this becomes a safe place with positive associations. If your dog is likely to get stressed when travelling, think about what might help them cope. Vets generally do not recommend giving your pet sedatives when travelling due to the increased respiratory risks, but a familiar toy or blanket could help. Dogs and cats in particular will appreciate being surrounded by familiar smells, so resist the urge to wash and clean everything prior to travel! While food can be a great distraction, it's also not usually recommended for air travel. Discuss your options with your vet in the weeks before travel, so that you have plenty of time to prepare.

Travelling by plane with your pet

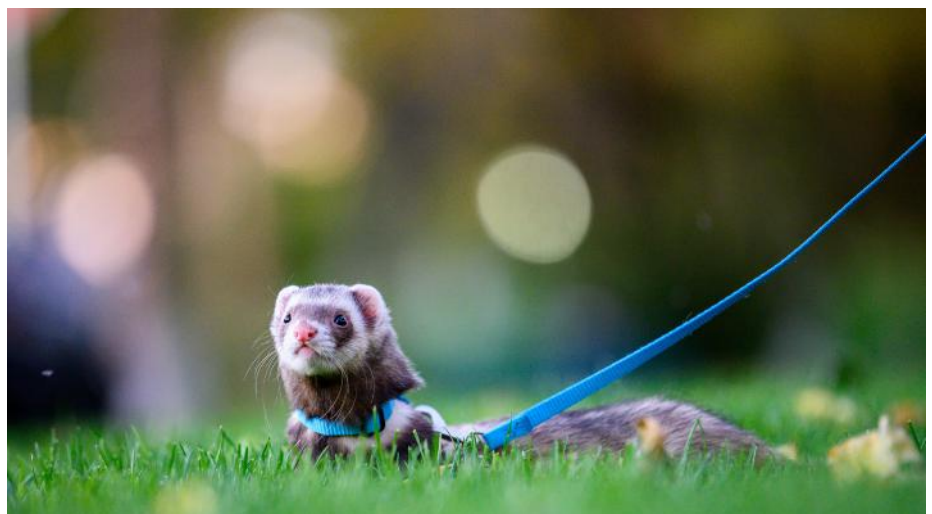
On the day of travel, ensure that your pet is well fed, hydrated, and exercised before you head to the airport. Your vet can advise on the best course of action for your pet, but it's often recommended to feed them four to six hours prior to boarding, allowing plenty of time for digestion. Calculate your schedule carefully, as you

want to leave plenty of time for a stress-free check-in, but you also don't want to add hours of unnecessary waiting around, especially if your pet is likely to find the airport environment stressful.

If your pet is travelling in the cabin, they will have to pass through security just like you. Airport procedures vary, but typically, you will take your pet out of their carrier and carry them through the metal detectors - the carrier will pass through the X-ray machine as with other luggage. Pets travelling in the cargo hold will typically need to be checked in at the oversized baggage counter; they will then be loaded onto the plane by airline staff.

Pet transporters

Transporting certain types of pets: The conditions and procedures for bringing certain animals, such as reptiles, fish, or birds, to France are more complicated than travelling with a dog or a cat. In addition, many commercial flights won't allow these animals to travel. Specialist companies have access to the full range of animal transport options and can help organise other solutions for importing your pets.



- » Reducing hassle and mistakes: Moving to another country is stressful at the best of times, and travelling with pets adds another level of stress. If you're not sure you can cope with the stress - and the paperwork - of importing your pet to France, getting a professional to handle this will ensure you (and your pet) avoid additional stress as well as potentially costly mistakes.
- » Long-haul travel: While many owners may feel confident travelling over a short distance, such as between the UK and France, travelling from the US/Canada, Australia/New Zealand, or other long-haul destinations is another matter altogether, and enlisting the help of a professional may be a smart idea.
- » Difficult or sensitive pets: If you've never travelled with your pet and you worry how they will cope, professional handlers will be able to offer the best advice. While transporters won't accept aggressive or untrained pets, their expertise and confidence will often put less-experienced pets at ease. It's money well spent to know that your pet is in expert hands.

Choosing a pet transporter

PetAir UK and Extrordinair both import pets from the UK to France, while Air Pets International operates worldwide, but there are many other companies that offer similar services.

It's essential to do your research and only use a reputable company to transport your pet. Most reputable pet transporters will be registered with the IPATA (International Pet and Animal Transportation Association), be authorised by the Defra/APHA authorisation or the equivalent association in your country, and have airline-approved agent status. Staff should also have training in handling a variety of animals.

Spend some time researching your chosen company before committing - read reviews, talk with them on the phone, and ask any questions you have up front. Be wary of companies offering very low prices or undercutting other reputable companies by a large margin - this could be a sign that their services are not up to the same standards or that they wouldn't have the experience to handle problems or emergency situations.

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Travelling in the EU with your pet

Many travellers and second-home owners don't only want to travel to France, but also to other EU countries with their pet, so it's worth mentioning the rules for travelling with pets within the EU.



EU travel rules

For dogs, cats, and ferrets, the general rules for entering France will also apply to other countries within the European Union. Border controls usually don't apply within Schengen area countries, but you should still remember to keep your pet's documentation (i.e., a valid Animal Health Certificate or EU passport) with you at all times when travelling with your pet.

If you're moving to France permanently, then you should apply for an EU pet passport as soon as possible - see our chapter Moving with your pets to France for details of how to do this. Providing that you keep vaccinations up-to-date, a valid EU Pet Passport allows you to move between EU countries without the need for an Animal Health Certificate.

If you are travelling outside of the Schengen Area, make sure to check with your vet prior to travel, as some countries do have other rules of entry, such as a requirement to treat your dog for the parasite *Echinococcus multilocularis* between 24 and 72 hours prior to travel.

If you travel to countries other than France with your dog, make sure that you understand and follow local laws. For example, some breeds may be restricted or must be muzzled in public, and fines may apply for having your dog off-leash in certain public areas or failing to pick up after your dog. You should also find out the rules regarding travelling on public transport with your dog or other pets. Don't assume that the same laws will apply as in France or back home.

Travelling by train in Europe

While most pet owners will opt to travel by car, you can also travel on certain Eurostar routes between EU countries, including Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Small pets weighing less than 6kg and secured in a carrier that fits under the seat in front may travel free of charge with their owner, while larger dogs can sit on the floor but must be muzzled and kept on a leash. A €30 dog fare applies to larger dogs. Birds and some other animals are not permitted on board. You can find the rules for travelling by Eurostar with pets [here](#).

Interrail and Eurail services often also allow pets, but you will need to check the regulations with the railway carrier that operates the route.



Travelling around France with your dog

Whether you're travelling with your dog or making the move to France permanently, it's important to understand the laws concerning dogs in public spaces. Here's what you need to know about going out and about with your dog, finding pet-friendly hotels and activities, and handling emergencies on the road.

Note that for the purpose of this section, we're only focusing on dogs, as we're assuming that most other pets will be kept at your home or temporary residence. For more on the laws on pet ownership in France, see the chapter Moving with your pets to France.

Laws regarding dogs in public spaces

Some of the main laws regarding dogs in France are as follows:

Third-party liability

It's important to understand that you, as the dog's owner, are liable for any damage or danger that your dog causes to other people, places, or other pets. If you choose to take your dog outside with you, it's your responsibility to ensure that they are supervised and under control at all times, whether on or off leash.

Failure to prevent your dog from biting or attacking another person or animal can have severe consequences and, in the worst case, could lead to the forced euthanasia of a "dangerous" dog.



Walking on a leash

Category 2 dogs (see the see the previous section on on Category 1 and 2 dog breeds) must be kept on a lead at all times when in public; a muzzle may also be required.

There is no national law that requires other dogs to be on a lead at all times, provided that they are under “effective supervision”. This is defined as your dog not being more than a hundred meters away from you or out of reach of your voice (whichever is closest). Cities and communes also often impose their own laws on dogs, so keep a lookout for signs stating that dogs must be kept on a lead (*chiens doivent être tenus en laisse* or *tenez votre chien en laisse*) in specific areas.

To be sure, ask around for dog-friendly areas when you arrive. Hotels and campsites, the local *mairie*, or other dog walkers will likely know where you can find a safe place to let your dog off leash.

As a general rule, it’s best to keep your dog on a lead at all times in cities, on public transport, and in any busy public area. Check carefully for signs before letting your dog off-leash and only do so if you are absolutely confident in their training.



Dog waste

Depending on your country of origin, you might be surprised to find that French dog owners are often not as diligent about picking up after their dogs. Don’t follow the lead of locals, though, as it is the law to pick up after your dog, and a €68 (in some communes, this has been increased to €135!) fine is applicable if you’re caught

not doing so. Thankfully, times are changing, and dog owners are becoming more responsible in France.



Car travel with your dog

While there’s no specific law that states that your animal must be tied up or restrained while travelling by car, the French Highway Code does state that all car passengers must “wear an approved seat belt” when driving in France, and that nothing inside the vehicle must interfere with or obstruct the driver or their field of vision. With this in mind - and for your dog’s own safety - it’s best to install a separation grid, secure your dog with a purpose-designed harness and seatbelt, or travel your dog in a suitable travel carrier.

According to the Rural Code, animals being transported in a car must have sufficient space and ventilation at all times, so never travel your pet in a closed boot and ensure they have enough room to stand up and move around freely.

There are also no rules that restrict leaving your dog in a parked car for a short period, provided they have sufficient ventilation, water, and the car is parked in a shaded area. However, you should always avoid leaving your dog in the car even for a few minutes during hot and sunny weather - the air inside a parked car can heat up rapidly, causing potentially fatal heat stroke in pets. Not only would you risk harming your beloved pet, but you also risk a €750 fine and potential confiscation of your dog for voluntary mistreatment of an animal.

There are also no rules that restrict leaving your dog in a parked car for a short period, provided they have sufficient ventilation, water, and the car is parked in a shaded area. However, you should always avoid leaving your dog in the car even for a few minutes during hot and sunny weather - the air inside a parked car can heat up rapidly, causing potentially fatal heat stroke in pets. Not only would you risk harming your beloved pet, but you also risk a €750 fine and potential confiscation of your dog for voluntary mistreatment of an animal.



Noise complaints

A final rule to be aware of is France's rules regarding noise nuisance and public disturbance. Noises likely to disturb the peace or health of neighbours due to their "duration, repetition, or intensity" are prohibited and subject to €450 fines. While a dog barking at a doorbell or at passersby wouldn't typically fall under this category, if your dog's barking is loud and persistent, you should think carefully about whether this will impact neighbours or other travellers.

Dog-friendly destinations

Dogs are permitted on most public transport in France, but restrictions apply, and it's worth checking local rules prior to travel.

SNCF, TGV INOUI, Intercité, and TER trains

Small dogs (under 6 kg) can travel in a bag or carrier with maximum dimensions of 45 cm x 30 cm x 25 cm; larger dogs must be kept on a leash. All dogs (except service dogs) require a ticket (€10 per journey or from €2 per journey on regional trains). You can read the official travel policy [here](#).

for service dogs).

Similar rules typically apply to buses and trams, but local rules may differ, so it's best to check prior to travel.

Dog-friendly destinations

France is largely a dog-friendly destination, and you'll find many parks,

Metro, Trams, and Buses

Small dogs are typically allowed on the metro in Paris and other cities, and small dogs in a closed bag or carrier usually travel for free. Larger dogs must be leashed and muzzled, and require a half-price ticket (except



Lakes, walking trails, and beaches where dogs are welcome and, in many cases, may run and play off-leash. However, both public and private establishments are free to set their own rules regarding whether dogs are permitted or not, so it's always important to check.

Hotels, airbnbs, and campsites

You'll find a surprising number of accommodation options around France that allow pets, but never assume your dog will be allowed. Most hotels and campsites clearly state their animal policies on their websites, and sites like Booking.com allow you to filter your search for pet-friendly options. Low-cost hotel chains, including Campanile, B&B, and IBIS, usually do allow dogs, but there may be exceptions.

Check the policy carefully, as most hotels have some restrictions on size or number of pets per room, and most add a surcharge for pets, which can range from €5 per night for a budget room up to €30 or more per night for a luxury hotel. Some hotels also have additional rules, such as no pets in the dining areas or no pets allowed in the rooms unsupervised, so consider whether this meets your requirements before booking.

A more flexible option for travellers with dogs is often to book a gite (holiday rental home) or Airbnb, which allows you to book an entire property, often with a garden. Both Airbnb.com and Gites-de-france.com allow you to search for pet-friendly accommodation.

Camping can also be a convenient option with a dog, and campgrounds are often located in rural areas with easy access to walking areas and nature. Look out for the QUALIDOG label, which means the campsite is certified as dog-friendly, or check directly with the campsite.

Restaurants, shops, and tourist attractions

Many restaurants and cafés in France, especially those with terraces, allow dogs provided that they are well-behaved. Many even put bowls of water outside for dogs, especially on hot days - if not, waiters will often offer one. Some restaurants also welcome dogs inside, but it's always best to ask before entering an indoor space with a dog.

Shops and tourist attractions, however, are often off limits to dogs - you'll typically see a no dogs sign such as "interdit aux chiens", "pas de chien, même tenus en laisse", or simply a picture of a dog accompanied by a red prohibition sign. Many tourist attractions detail whether they are dog-friendly on their websites. Always check ahead before travelling with your dog to avoid disappointment, and if you can't find any information, it's best to assume they won't be allowed.

Parks, beaches, and rural areas

Many beaches in France do allow dogs, but most restrict access during the summer months (June through September). During this period, dogs may be banned entirely or they may be allowed during specific hours (normally early morning before 8am or 9am, and late in the evening, after 8pm or 9pm). There are also some designated dog-friendly beaches, where your pooch is allowed year-round.

Most parks allow dogs, although they may only be allowed off-leash in designated areas, especially in cities, and they may be prohibited from certain areas, such as children's playgrounds and boating lakes. You'll find plenty of spots to exercise your dog in the countryside, but take extra care during the hunting season (la chasse) from September through to February.

During this period, it's a good idea to avoid walking your dog in hunting areas entirely; if you do, keep them on a leash or close by, and consider fitting them with a yellow or orange fluorescent jacket (it's a good idea to wear one yourself, too), so they can be easily identified in case they enter hunting areas. The local mairie will usually be able to advise you of hunting days and organised hunts during the season.

If you're walking your dog in woodland and forest areas, you should also be aware of the seasonal law (from 15th April through to 30th June) that orders dogs to be leashed at all times and to stick to pathways. In order to protect birds and other wildlife during the crucial spring breeding period, dogs are forbidden from rambling, even on a leash, in areas where wildlife may be present - this includes forests, woodlands, meadows, vineyards, orchards, woods, marshes, lakesides, and along waterways.

National parks and walking routes

Many hiking trails, including the Grandes Randonnées (GRs), Sentiers de Petites Randonnées (PR), and various chemins de randonnées and balades découvertes are open to dogs unless otherwise marked. Take care in alpine or forest areas, where specific rules or recommendations may exist to protect wildlife, and make sure to heed the abovementioned law regarding forest areas.

France's National Parks (Parc National) are an exception. Dogs are not permitted within any of the country's national parks; however, this does not apply to Natural Regional Parks (Parc Naturel Régional). Rules vary for regional parks, nature reserves, and other parks, so it's important to check ahead.

Fines of €350 apply for walking your dog in a prohibited area.

Handling emergencies

While we hope that your dog enjoys their travels to France as much as you do, accidents and emergencies do happen, so it's important to be prepared.

Prevention is always best, so ensure that your dog's collar has an updated ID tag with your French address and/or phone number; if you're worried that your dog might wander off or get overexcited, you might also consider adding a GPS tracker to their collar.

It's a good idea to look up the local vets before travelling and store their number in your phone, just in case. If your dog falls sick, don't hesitate to take them to the nearest veterinary clinic (vétérinaire or véto). Ideally, call ahead (or ask a French speaker to call for you) and request an emergency appointment.

In case of an emergency, there are also 24/7 vet services available in many parts of the country. Paris and several other cities around France have a dedicated Clinique vétérinaire de garde (emergency vet) for such cases, and you can also call 3115 (www.urgences-veterinaires.fr), an emergency vet line that's available 24/7 and will help put you in touch with your nearest vet. Smaller rural veterinary practices often list a 24/7 phone number on their website in case of emergencies.

Moving with your pets to France

In terms of the entry requirements and travel procedure, the process of bringing your pet to France for a short trip is the same as making a permanent move. Once you arrive at your new home, however, you'll want to start the steps to register your pet and settle them into life in France.



Registering your pet in France

When you arrive in France, you'll want to book a visit to your local vet as soon as possible. Your French vet is not only a good point of call for any pet-related queries you have, but they will also be able to legally register your pet in France.

In order for a dog, cat, or ferret of non-EU origins to enter the French system and receive a French EU Pet Passport, the pet must be registered in the Fichier national d'identification des carnivores domestiques (I-CAD), France's national pet register. This registration can be done by a vet, but only if the animal is staying in France longer than three consecutive months.

The official rules (which you can find (in French [here](#)) state that a dog or cat must be registered with I-CAD within eight days of arriving in France, so it's a good idea to book your vet appointment

as soon as possible if you are looking to stay.

You will need to present the same documentation required for travelling to France (see our chapter on Travelling to France with your pets) to your vet, so make sure you keep hold of all the relevant documents, including your Animal Health Certificate and rabies antibody titration test (if required). You should also bring with you proof of your residence in France or intention to stay in the country for longer than three months, for example, your long-stay visa or carte de séjour.

Your vet will fill in the provisional certificate of identification during import or intra-Community trade form, and you will need to pay the registration fee of €11 to I-CAD.

Acquiring an EU pet passport

If you move to France with your pet from a non-EU country such as the UK or the US, your pet will also be able to obtain an EU passport, provided they meet the requirements.

To qualify for an EU pet passport, your pet must be:

- » Microchipped with an ISO standard microchip, prior to rabies vaccination (tattoos carried out before 3rd July, 2011, are also accepted, providing that it remains clearly legible)
- » Vaccinated against rabies with an approved vaccine
- » Registered on the Fichier national d'identification des carnivores domestiques (I-CAD) - see the above section on Registering your pet in France.

Pet passports are issued by your French vet, who is responsible for checking the animal's registration with I-CAD and

vaccination record. Note that as of 22 April 2026, EU Pet Passports can only be used by pet owners that are resident in the EU and shouldn't be used by second home owners. In line with this, it's possible that your vet will ask to see proof of residency (such as your long-stay visa or carte de séjour) before issuing a new Pet Passport.

IMPORTANT: Your pet's previous vaccinations will not be listed on their new EU Pet Passport, so it is important that you hold on to their vaccine card or UK Pet Passport (if applicable). Remember that you **MUST** present proof of rabies vaccination for travel, so if your pet's current rabies vaccination is not listed in their new Pet Passport, you will need to present both documents at the border.

Veterinary care in France

France has a high standard of veterinary care and a wide network of veterinary practitioners throughout the country, so we're confident that you'll find a good fit for your pet. However, as with everything, you will likely find that there are some differences to your home country in terms of standard practices, available treatments, and costs. With this in mind, take the time to find a suitable vet, familiarise yourself with French veterinary care, and discuss your needs as soon as you arrive in France - don't leave it until you need help!

Finding a vet

Finding a vet should be one of your first tasks on arrival in France; in fact, it's a good idea to find one and make an appointment before you arrive. Most towns in France will have a veterinary practice, and if you have multiple options, it's a good idea

to ask other local pet owners, read online reviews, and plan a visit before choosing your favourite.

The Ordre National des Vétérinaires (National Order of Veterinarians) is the national veterinary association in France (www.veterinaire.fr), and all vets must be registered with them.

Veterinary care

Generally speaking, veterinary care for small animals is quite affordable in France, with a standard consultation costing between €30 and €50 depending on the practice. Your local vet will typically be able to take care of everything from vaccinations to accident and emergency treatment to sterilisation procedures, but you may have to visit a larger clinic for specialist treatments or procedures such as MRIs or CAT scans.

Vaccinations and routine care

Standard vaccinations for dogs in France include the DHPP combined vaccine for canine distemper, adenovirus (Hepatitis), parvovirus, and parainfluenza (distemper (maladie de carré), l'hépatite infectieuse canine, parvovirus, parainfluenza) and rabies (rage), but your vet may also recommend vaccinations against Leptospirosis (leptospirose), kennel cough (bordetella), and Lyme disease (maladie de Lyme).

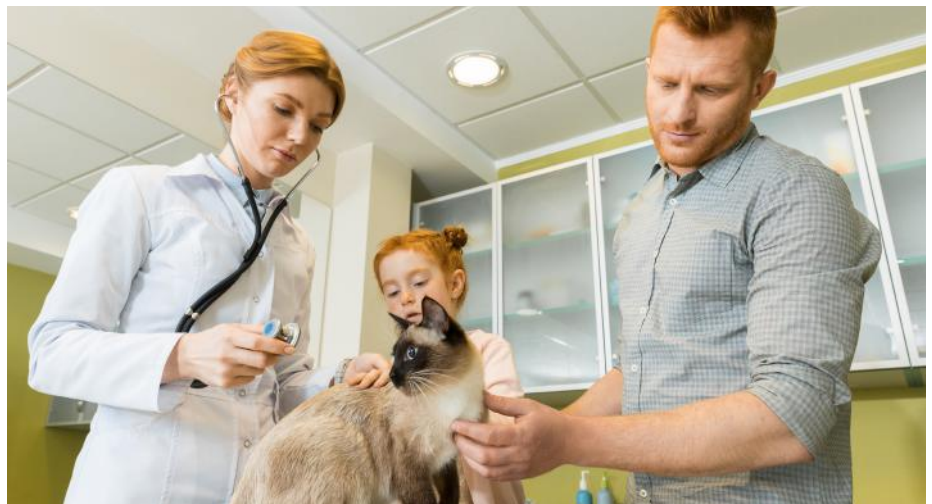
For cats, standard vaccinations include the PRC combined vaccination for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (R), Feline Panleukopenia (P), and Feline Calicivirus (C) (panleucopénie, rhinotrachéite, calicivirus), rabies, and feline leukaemia virus (leucémie). Boosters may be every year or every couple of years.

Your vet can advise on any other routine care recommended for your pet, depending on their age, breed, and health, as well as advise on feeding, worming, and tick treatment.

Worms, ticks, and flea treatment

Tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and heartworms are present in France, and most vets recommend a regular worming protocol for dogs, cats, and ferrets. Make sure to consult your vet regarding risks and treatment, as it's likely that the local recommendations will be different from those of your country of origin.

Ticks are also prevalent in France, especially in certain seasons, and different types may be present in different regions. It's a good idea to purchase a tick removal tool from your vet and check your pet daily after they've been outside - your vet can show you how if you're not already familiar with this. Recommendations for flea and tick treatments are likely to vary depending on where in France you live, so it's important to consult a local vet.



Pet insurance in France

Depending on your country of origin, you may find veterinary fees in France to be significantly lower compared to those in your home country. Prices will vary depending on the department you live in, as well as from practice to practice, but as a very rough guide, for a dog you might expect to pay between €60 and €80 for annual vaccinations, around €80 for a blood test, or €200 to €300 to have your pet spayed or castrated. For more serious conditions, it's rare for a bill to go into the thousands except for specialised cancer treatment (radiotherapy sessions could cost up to €1,500) or more complicated surgical operations (which average between €1,500 and €1,700 including the associated rehabilitation sessions).

Taking out a specific pet health insurance policy (assurance santé) is not as widespread in France as it seems to be in the UK and the US. With little chance of an astronomical veterinary bill wiping out your life savings, there is a fair argument for opting out of insuring your pet, especially if you do have sufficient savings to be able to cover an eventual emergency. That said, pet insurance policies can start from as little as €4 a month, so it could be money well spent if your pet does one day require life-saving surgery or ongoing treatment.

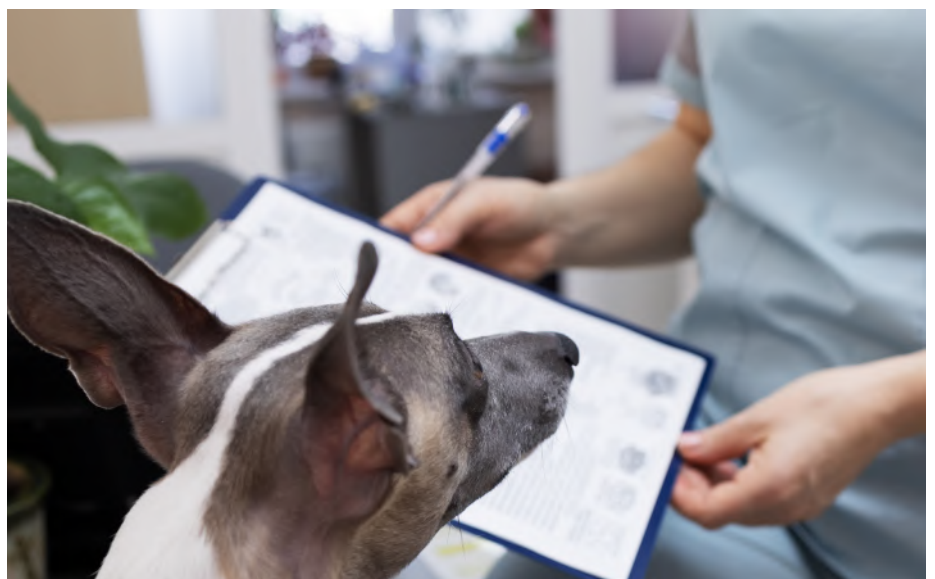
As with all insurance policies, make sure you understand exactly what your coverage entails, as well as any excess. The simplest policies will cover costs in case of accidents and surgery, while the most comprehensive policies also cover illnesses and contributions toward routine medical

costs and end-of-life care.

Dedicated pet health insurers in France include Santé Vet, Agria, and Animaux Santé, but many reputable all-round insurance companies such as Axa and Allianz also offer pet policies. It's best to speak to your home or car insurer first, as taking out multiple policies with one company often provides the most favourable rates.

Third-party insurance

While on the subject of insurance, it's worth mentioning that pets are also required to be covered by a third-party or civil liability insurance in France. For homeowners or renters, this is usually covered by all standard home insurance policies, and there is no legal requirement to declare your pets to your insurance company. An exception to this is category 1 or 2 dogs (see the section on category 1 and 2 dogs), which you must declare, or if you use your dog professionally (a herding or hunting dog, for example), as additional insurance may be required.



Your legal responsibilities as a pet owner

France takes animal welfare seriously, and there are strict laws regarding owning and caring for pets. Under French law, there are rules that determine who can breed and sell animals, the conditions for sale of an animal, and the responsibilities of a pet owner.

Some laws to be aware of, in no particular order, include:

- » Abusing a pet or committing an animal welfare offence in France is punishable by fines and potential imprisonment.
- » Since 1st January, 2024, the sale of cats and dogs in pet shops is prohibited (exceptions are sometimes made for rehoming charities). It's also illegal to offer a dog as a prize or as part of a promotion.
- » Only officially registered breeders and sellers can breed, sell, or advertise pets for sale in France.
- » Puppies and kittens must be at least eight weeks old before being separated from their mother.
- » Dogs and cats must be microchipped at the time of purchase, adoption, or giving away.
- » There is a legal limit of nine dogs per household (except for professionals and registered breeders); no legal limits are imposed for other pets, provided you are able to provide adequate care for them.
- » Individuals purchasing, adopting, or acquiring a pet in France must sign a Certificate of Commitment and Knowledge (see box below).
- » Animal welfare laws require that pets be provided clean food and water bowls, a supply of fresh and clean water available at all times, and adequate food to maintain good health.
- » Animal welfare laws require that pets be provided with a clean and adequate shelter, with suitable space,

shade, and weather protection.

- » While it is not illegal to temporarily tie up or enclose an adult dog, there are strict laws surrounding how this must be done to ensure their safety. It is illegal to tie up a puppy.
- » It is illegal to let your pet roam; for dogs, this means being more than 100 meters from the owner or guardian or out of hearing range while on a walk. For cats, this means being more than 1km from home when not under the supervision of the owner. Fines apply.

For more details on the above, see the official guidelines [here](#). For additional rules and regulations regarding owning a dog in France, see the section on Travelling around France with your dog.

IMPORTANT: October 2022, anyone acquiring a pet (including dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits, and horses) in France must read and sign a Contract of Commitment and Knowledge this doesn't apply to pet owners who acquired their pet outside of France. This contract is issued by a breeder, veterinarian, or shelter professional who holds a Certificate of Knowledge for Domestic Pets (ACACED), and it details the physiological, behavioural, and medical needs of the pet in question. The contract becomes valid seven days after signing, effectively providing a "cooling-off period" in case the new owner changes their mind. Read more about the contract (in French) [here](#).

Life in France with a pet

Life in France with a pet

We've already covered most of the essentials that you'll need to know for bringing your pet to France and ensuring their ongoing care on arrival, as well as going out and about with your dog. Now, let's take a look at the final needs you may have for settling into France with your pet.



Pet culture in France

One of the biggest differences that foreigners, especially those travelling from Anglophone countries like the US or UK, find in France is the general culture and attitude towards pets. France is absolutely a country of animal lovers, and a huge number of French households have a pet, but there is less of a tendency to anthropomorphise or coddle pets. For example, it's unusual in France to see dogs or cats dressed up in outfits, slurping a “puppuccino”, or sporting a bling-enrusted collar, and although dogs are often very welcome in public places, there

are fewer pet-centric services and activities on offer.

It's fair to say that while pet owners in France certainly place a high importance on their animal's welfare and wellbeing, there is less of a materialistic approach, and owners are unlikely to spend thousands on the latest pet accessories or services. Of course, there are exceptions to this, especially in Paris and other large cities, so you might see the odd dog café or special dog menu popping up now and again - other than that, dogs are mostly expected to behave like dogs!

Pet stores in France

One potential downside to the less-commercialised pet industry in France is that there are fewer options when it comes to pet food, treats, and supplies, especially if your pet has a specialised diet.

Certain big-brand pet foods and supplies can be found at supermarkets, but for higher quality foods or specific diets (supplemented puppy or senior foods, for example), you will need to go to a garden/outdoor store (*jardinerie*) such as Gamm vert or a dedicated pet store (*animalerie*) such as Maxi Zoo. It's worth searching for your local private pet store or *animalerie*, too, as these smaller stores often stock international brands and specialist items or can point you in the right direction for where to find them.

Purchasing online is often cheaper, but watch out for customs charges if you're ordering from outside the EU. Within France, reputable online stores include the abovementioned Maxi Zoo, Zooplus, Wanimmo, and Zoomalia.

Finally, vet practices often sell a range of higher-quality and supplemented foods, although they are usually on the more expensive side. However, if you're stuck, this can be a good place to ask for advice.

IMPORTANT: Raw food diets for dogs can be difficult to cater for in France, but some options are now becoming available at larger pet stores. A cheaper option may also be to chat with your local butcher to enquire about purchasing leftover meat and bones.

Grooming, dog-walking, and other services

Pet grooming services - known as *toiletage* - are quite widely available, with options available in most large towns. However, additional services such as dog walking, doggy daycare, or pet-sitting services are far less common. That's not to say you won't find them, especially in the larger cities, but if you are used to relying on such services, you might find your options limited in France.

In rural France, your best chance of finding someone to help out with your pet will be through announcement boards (in your local Mairie or supermarket, for example), via online communities such as Facebook groups, or through word of mouth.

Pet training, clubs, and support

Most large towns throughout France offer some kind of dog or puppy training (*éducation canine* or *éducation de chiot*) classes or groups, alongside various clubs (*associations*) or activities (*activités canines*) that you can join with your dog. Not only can these clubs be fun, but they can also be a great way to connect with other dog owners in your area. However, not all training methods are equal, and you may need to test out different classes or trainers before you find one that fits - most will allow you to try a class for free or without committing to the full season.

Here are a few useful resources to help you find suitable training classes, associations, and activities around France:

- » [Société Centrale Canine](#): Similar to the Kennel Club in the UK or the American Kennel Club in the US, the SCC is the place for pedigree (LOF) dogs to find clubs, competitions, and pedigree assessments. You can also search for official clubs canins in your department [here](#) or look for specific activities such as agility, canicross, dog-dancing, and treibball [here](#).
- » [MFEC](#): The Mouvement Francophone des Educateurs de Chiens de compagnie is an association of professional dog trainers and behaviourists dedicated to respectful and positive-reinforcement training methods.
- » [Vox Animae](#): A wide network of animal professionals around France, including everything from trainers and behaviourists to pet sitters or pet osteopaths.
- » [Cynopsy](#): A list of professional

cynologists.

- » [SPA](#): France's main animal protection society, La Société Protectrice des Animaux (SPA), is the go-to in France for animal welfare advice as well as rehoming services.
- » [Zoopsy](#) and [Wamiz](#): Two popular websites that offer general advice on pet care, as well as lists of trainers, groups, and personal recommendations.



Travelling back home with your pet

It's important to remember that once your pet has been registered in France, they will now be classed as a French (and therefore "foreign") pet for any subsequent return visits to your country of origin. If you choose to travel back to the UK, the US, or another country with your pet, you will be bound by the official customs laws of that country.

Travel to the UK

If you're travelling to the UK from France with your pet, your pet can travel using your EU pet passport, providing that rabies vaccinations are up to date - in this instance, you won't need an Animal Health Certificate. Dogs must also be treated for tapeworm (*echinococcus multilocularis*) within 24 hours to 120 hours (five days) of travel. This treatment must be carried out by an official vet, who will issue a certificate (or stamp your pet passport). See the official rules [here](#).

Travel to the US

If your dog has been in France, which is a country considered low-risk for rabies, then the only additional documentation that they will need is a CDC Dog Import Form. Their vaccines should also be up-to-date,

and they should be in good health and fit enough to travel. Similar rules apply to cats, but note that cats arriving in the state of Hawaii and the territory of Guam are subject to local quarantine rules. See the official rules [here](#).

Other countries

An online search should be able to let you know the customs rules for taking your pet with you to another non-EU country. Your French vet will also be able to look up the rules for you and provide any required documentation. Certain protocols can take several weeks, so it's worth talking to your vet or looking up the rules well in advance of your date of travel.



Your bringing your pet to France checklist

Your bringing your pet to France checklist

There's a lot that goes into moving overseas with your pet, but this comprehensive checklist takes you from the planning phase through to your first months in France.

One month or more before moving

- Check the entry requirements for your pet and ensure that you understand all of the relevant steps
- Discuss your travel plans with your vet and book an appointment for any vaccination boosters, as well as your Animal Health Certificate
- Ensure that your pet's rabies vaccination is up-to-date, and a titration test is carried out if required
- Book your plane or ferry tickets to France, ensuring that you fully understand the rules and regulations for travelling with your pet
- Purchase a suitable travel carrier for your pet if travelling by plane
- Prepare your pet for travelling by getting them used to their carrier or being left in the car
- Discuss your travel plans with your vet and follow their advice regarding your pet's health and fitness to travel
- Consider taking out a pet travel insurance policy to cover your pet on the day of travel and your first week in France

One week prior to moving

- Visit your vet within 10 days of travel to get your Animal Health Certificate; carry out any advised worming, flea, or tick treatment before travel
- If you are moving permanently to France, locate your local French veterinary practice and book an appointment for your pet for the week that you arrive
- Pack up your pet's belongings and use up any additional food (you won't be able to take animal-based foods with you to France)
- Prepare your pet's documents for travel

-
- Write a packing list of items that your pet needs for travel, as well as additional items that can be packed in your luggage
 - Complete online check-in if possible to save time on the travel day

See the chapter Travelling to France with your pet for more details on each of these steps.

On the day of travel

- Make sure you have all of your pet's documents, including the Animal Health Certificate and vaccination card, in addition to your own passports and travel documents
- Pack up all your pet's belongings and ensure that you have enough food, water, toys, treats, and bedding for the duration of travel
- Be mindful of your pet's stress level and try to provide a calm and consistent routine for your pet, especially on the day of travel. Moving day can be stressful for everyone, but remember that your pet doesn't understand what is happening!
- Leave for the airport, ferry, or train with plenty of time to ensure a relaxed and stress-free check-in
- Feed your pet a few hours prior to travel or as advised by your vet
- Find a safe place for your pet to relieve themselves and stretch their legs (if required) prior to arrival at the airport, ferry, or train
- On arrival at the airport, ferry, or train, make your way to the check-in counter or follow the required check-in procedure
- Scan your pet's microchip and hand over any required documents
- Prepare your pet for travel and ensure they have enough water and bedding for the duration of the journey
- If you're leaving your pet in your car during a ferry ride, don't forget to open the windows, even in winter

See the chapter Travelling to France with your pet for more details on each of these steps.

On arrival in France

- Get all the documents ready for French customs and prepare for officials to inspect your pet (if required)

- Plan a stop soon after arrival for your pet to relieve themselves and stretch their legs (if required); you might also want to feed them

- Pick up any food or supplies needed for your first night on route to your destination

- Be patient with your pet and give them time to settle. After a long journey, it's normal that they may seem more tired or energetic than usual, but try to get back to their usual routine as soon as possible

See the chapters Moving to France with your pet and Travelling around France with your dog for more details on each of these steps.

In your first month of arriving in France

- Visit your French vet and start the process of registering your dog, cat, or ferret with I-CAD - this should be done within eight days of arriving in France

- Once I-CAD registration has been carried out, you can ask your vet to create an EU Pet Passport for your animal

- Carry out any locally recommended treatment for ticks, worms, or fleas as per your vet's advice. Remember that your pet may be more susceptible as they adapt to their new environment

- Consider taking out a pet health insurance policy in France

- Read up on the rules regarding taking your dog out in public in France

- Join a canine association, dog-walking club, or other dog-friendly activity in your area so that you can meet other dog owners

See the chapters Moving to France with your pet and Travelling around France with your dog for more details on each of these steps.

Pets and pet travel essential vocabulary

Whether you want to describe your pet, train your dog, or talk to the vet, here are the essential French words and phrases you need to know.

Essential pet vocabulary

Some general words for pets and pet-related items.

- » *aboyer* - to bark
- » *l'aile* - the wing
- » *les animaux de compagnie* - pets
- » *le bac à litière* - the litter box/
tray
- » *la cage* - the kennel/crate/cage
- » *un canari* - a canary
- » *un chat* - a cat
- » *un chaton* - a kitten
- » *un chien* - a dog
- » *un chien guide/un chien
d'assistance* - a guide dog
- » *un chiot* - a puppy
- » *un cochon d'Inde* - a guinea pig
- » *le collier* - the collar
- » *le coussinet* - the pad (of a paw)
- » *des croquettes* - kibble
- » *un furet* - a ferret
- » *les friandise(s)* - treats
- » *la gamelle* - the food/drink bowl
- » *la gamelle de voyage* - the
portable dog bowl
- » *les griffes* - claws
- » *grogner* - growl
- » *un hamster* - a hamster
- » *le harnais* - the harness
- » *son jouet favori* - her/his
favorite toy
- » *la laisse* - the leash
- » *un lapin* - a rabbit
- » *mordre* - to bite
- » *les jouets* - toys
- » *son jouet favori* - her/his
favorite toy
- » *a laisse* - the leash
- » *un lapin* - a rabbit
- » *mordre* - to bite
- » *le museau* - the snout
- » *la muselière* - the muzzle
- » *un oiseau* - a bird
- » *le panier* - dog/cat bed
- » *le passeport* - pet passport
- » *une patte* - a paw
- » *un perroquet* - a parrot
- » *le(s) poil(s)* - fur/hairs
- » *un poisson rouge* - a goldfish
- » *le/la propriétaire* or *le/la maitre/
maitresse d'un animal* -
» *the owner of an animal or the
master of an animal*
- » *la queue* - the tail
- » *un rat* - a rat
- » *ronronner* - purring
- » *le sac à crottes* - waste disposal
bag/ poo bags
- » *une souris* - a mouse
- » *une tortue* - a turtle/tortoise



Training and pet commands

A few French words that will come in handy for training your dog - éduquer un chien or dresser un chien.

- » *Allez !* - Go ahead
- » *Assis !* - Sit
- » *Attends !* - Wait
- » *Couché !* - Lie down
- » *Dehors !* - outside
- » *Donne !* - Let go/give
- » *Donne la patte !* - Give a paw
- » *Pas bouger !* - Stay/stand still
- » *Reste !* - stay
- » *Viens ici / Au pied !* - Come/heel

Visiting the vet: useful phrases

Some key phrases for describing your pet and their needs.

Describing your pet

J'ai un chien/chat - I have a dog/ cat (*note: it's best to use the neutral "male" or "femelle" when discussing gender, as "chatte" and "chienne" can also have other meanings!)

Il / Elle a ___ an(s) - he/she is ___ years old.

Un chat/chien de race - a purebred cat/dog

C'est un labrador (labrador), *dalmatien* (dalmatian), *berger allemand* (German shepherd), *carlin* (pug), *caniche* (poodle), *teckel* (dachshund), *bichon* (maltais), *bouledogue français* (French bulldog)

Il/Elle est castré/ stérilisée (non-castré/non- stérilisée) - he/she is neutered / spayed (or not neutered / spayed)

Booking an appointment

Je voudrais prendre un rendezvous pour mon chien avec un vétérinaire - I would like to book an appointment with a vet for my dog

Mon chien/chat est malade - My dog/cat is sick

Mon chien/chat a besoin de ses vaccinations - My dog/cat needs its vaccinations

Il a besoin de sa vaccination contre la rage - He is due for his vaccinations against rabies

Elle a mal à l'oreille - She has a sore ear

Elle s'est blessée - She got injured

Il saigne - He's bleeding

Il a vomit - He has been vomiting

Elle n'arrête pas de se gratter le visage - She keeps scratching her face

Il a de l'eczema - He has eczema

Elle a mal au ventre - She has a stomach ache

Il a la diarrhée - He has got diarrhoea

Elle a du mal à respirer - She is having difficulty breathing

Elle a des puces - She has fleas

Il a des tiques - He has ticks

Elle est allergique à... - She has an allergy to...

Couper les griffes - clipping claws

Soins dentaires du chat et du chien - Dental health of your dog or cat

Combien ça va coûter? - How much will it cost?

What the vet might say

Quel est le problème? - What is the matter?

Votre chat a la grippe - Your cat has the flu

Je dois faire une prise de sang et demander un bilan sanguin - I need to take a blood sample to run a blood test

Un bilan pre-anesthésique - A pre-anaesthetic blood test

Un bilan urologique - A urine analysis

Voici les résultats du bilan pre-anesthésique - Here are the pre-anesthésique blood results

Quel âge a votre chien? - How old is your dog

Garder votre animal en bonne santé - Keep your pet in good health

Administrez à votre chien ce médicament - Give your dog this medication

He must take one three times a day - Il doit prendre un cachet trois fois par jour.

Les puces - fleas

une piqûre - injection

Un test sanguin - a blood test

Les tiques - ticks

Le vermifuge - worming treatment

un animal pucé - a microchipped animal

Le carnet de santé - the health record/booklet

Le carnet de vaccination - the vaccination record

La puce électronique - the microchip

How can becoming a FrenchEntrée+ or VIP Member help?

As an Entrée+ Member, your dedicated Property & Relocation Advisor will put together a personalised RoadMap detailing all the steps that you need to take to make your dream of buying a French property or moving to France a reality.

Not only that, but they can recommend professional advisors and specialists to handle all of your additional needs, including banking, taxes, financial planning, or specialist pet transporters and insurers.