



France



**France** is one of Europe's largest countries. It is bordered by six countries other nations: Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg to the northeast, Switzerland and Italy to the southeast and Spain to the southwest. The United Kingdom borders France via the English Channel. The country is considered to be the gateway to Europe as there are several large international airports (two of these can be found in Paris), ferry terminals and the French rail service.






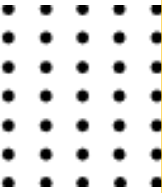
# Climate and weather in France

France's climate is temperate, but divided into four distinct climatic areas. The oceanic climate of western France brings average rainfall spread over many days, and modest annual temperature variations (Brittany, Normandy, Atlantic Loire, Loire Valley). Central and eastern France's continental climate harbours cold winters and hot summers (the Champagne region, Burgundy, Alsace). The Mediterranean climate of south-eastern France is responsible for hot, dry summers, with rainfall from October to April (when the weather is damp but mild) and ample sunshine all year round (Provence, Côte d'Azur and Corsica). Above 600-800m altitudes, France's mountain climate brings heavy rainfall, and snow three to six months per year.





# Geography



**France** is much larger than many people realise! Stretching 1,000km (600 miles) from north to south and the same from east to west, it's the **third largest country in Europe** after Russia and Ukraine, covering an area of 551,500km<sup>2</sup> (213,000 square miles).

Metropolitan France has **four coastlines** – the North Sea, the English Channel, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea – with a combined coastline length of 3,427km (2,129 miles). With the exception of its north-eastern border, the country is bounded either by **water** or by **mountains** – namely the Rhine and Jura, the Alps and the Pyrenees.

Outside metropolitan France, the national territory extends to the 'départements d'outre-mer' and 'territoires d'outre-mer', collectively referred to as '**DOM-TOMs**'. These are French Guiana in South America; the islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy and Saint-Martin in the Caribbean; the islands of Réunion and Mayotte off the coast of Africa; Saint-Pierre and Miquelon south-east of Canada; and French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna in the South Pacific. With the inclusion of these overseas territories, France's total land area rises to 675,417km<sup>2</sup> (254,000 square miles).



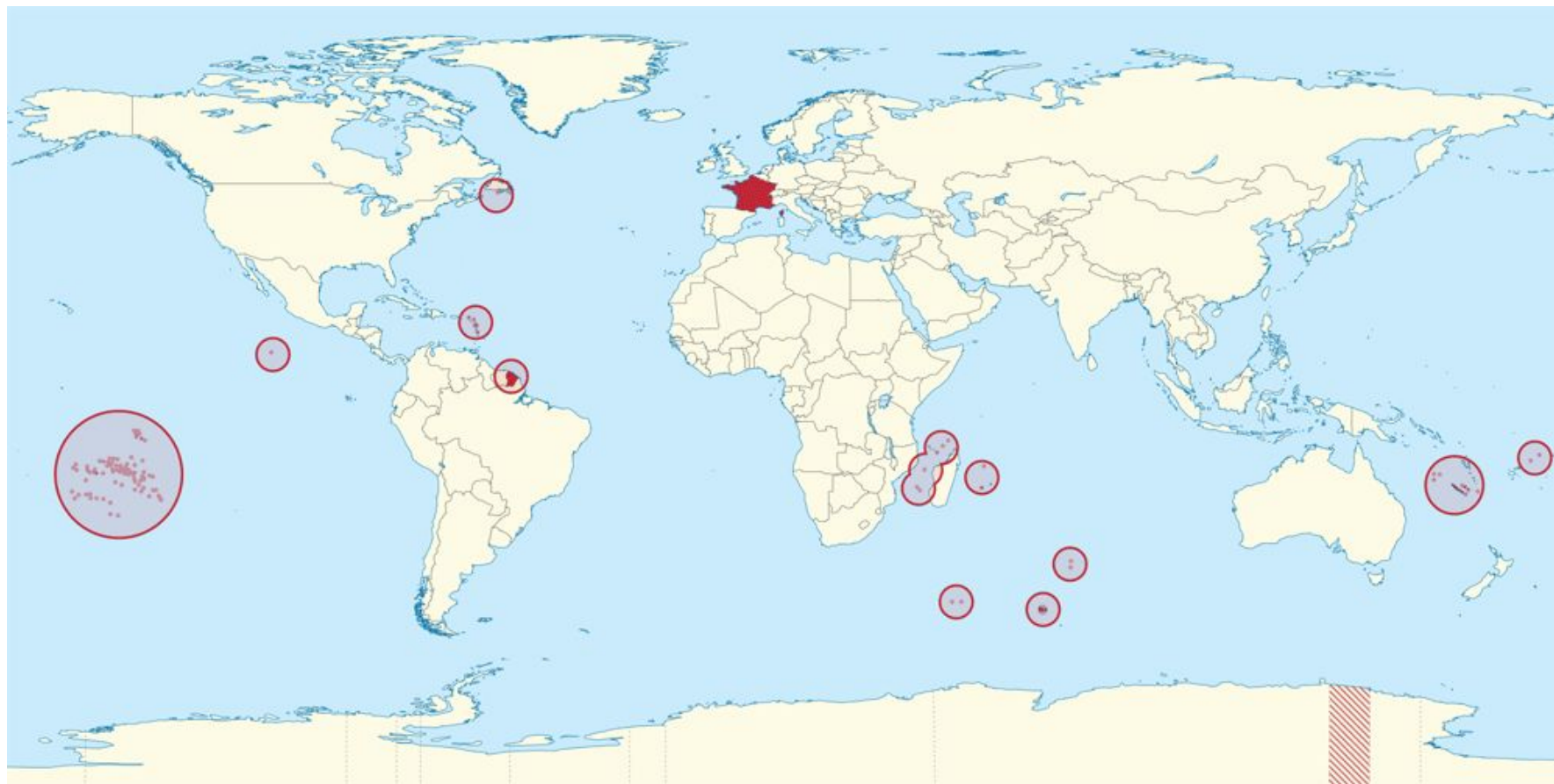






# Major cities

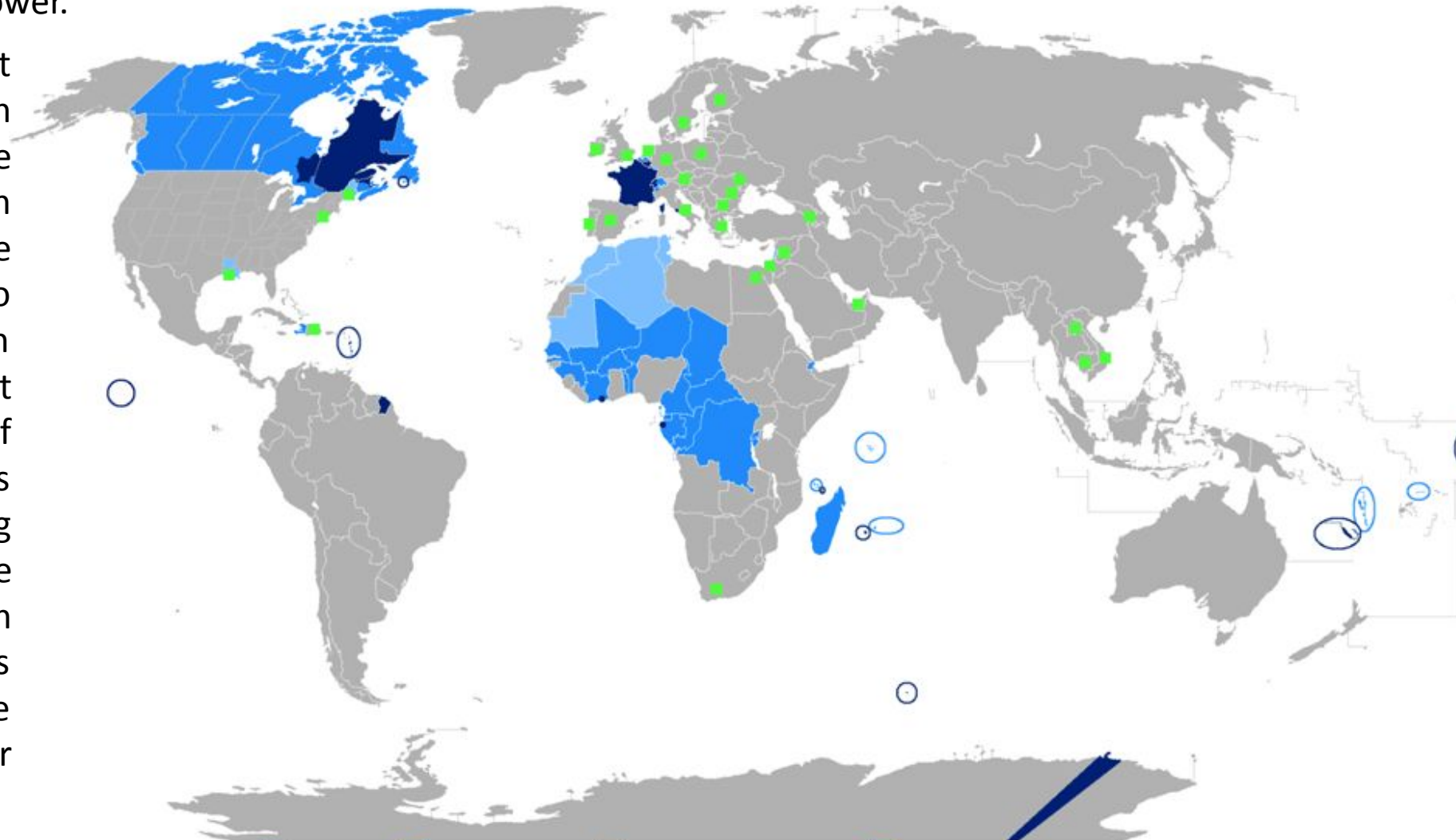
France is a highly urbanized country, with its largest cities (in terms of metropolitan area population in 2013[246]) being Paris (12,405,426 inh.), Lyon (2,237,676), Marseille (1,734,277), Toulouse (1,291,517), Bordeaux (1,178,335), Lille (1,175,828), Nice (1,004,826), Nantes(908,815), Strasbourg (773,447) and Rennes (700,675). (Note: There are significant differences between the metropolitan population figures just cited and those in the following table, which only include the core population). Rural flight was a perennial political issue throughout most of the 20th century.



# Language

According to Article 2 of the Constitution, the official language of France is French, a Romance language derived from Latin. Since 1635, the Académie française has been France's official authority on the French language, although its recommendations carry no legal power.

The French government does not regulate the choice of language in publications by individuals but the use of French is required by law in commercial and workplace communications. From the 17th to the mid-20th century, French served as the pre-eminent international language of diplomacy and international affairs as well as a lingua franca among the educated classes of Europe. The dominant position of French language in international affairs was overtaken by English, since the emergence of the US as a major power.



A map of the Francophone world ■ native language ■ administrative language ■ secondary or non-official language ■ francophone minorities



# THANK YOU!

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