France's significant reliance on nuclear power has resulted in comparatively slower adoption of renewable energy relative to other Western nations. Nevertheless, between 2008 and 2019, France's production capacity from renewable energies rose consistently and nearly doubled.[208] Hydropower is by far the leading source, accounting for over half the country's renewable energy sources[209] and contributing 13% of its electricity,[208] the highest proportion in Europe after Norway and Turkey.[209] As with nuclear power, most hydroelectric plants, such as Eguzon, Étang de Soulcem, and Lac de Vouglans, are managed by EDF.[209] France aims to further expand hydropower into 2040.[208]

France's railway network, which stretches 29,473 kilometres (18,314 mi) as of 2008,[211] is the second most extensive in Western Europe after Germany.[212] It is operated by the SNCF, and high-speed trains include the Thalys, the Eurostar and TGV, which travels at 320 km/h (199 mph).[213] The Eurostar, along with the Eurotunnel Shuttle, connects with the United Kingdom through the Channel Tunnel. Rail connections exist to all other neighbouring countries in Europe except Andorra. Intra-urban connections are also well developed, with most major cities having underground or tramway services complementing bus services.

There are approximately 1,027,183 kilometres (638,262 mi) of serviceable roadway in France, ranking it the most extensive network of the European continent.[214] The Paris Region is enveloped with the densest network of roads and highways, which connect it with virtually all parts of the country. French roads also handle substantial international traffic, connecting with cities in neighbouring Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Andorra and Monaco. There is no annual registration fee or road tax; however, usage of the mostly privately owned motorways is through tolls except in the vicinity of large communes. The new car market is dominated by domestic brands such as Renault, Peugeot and Citroën.[215] France possesses the Millau Viaduct, the world's tallest bridge,[216] and has built many important bridges such as the Pont de Normandie. Diesel and petrol-driven cars and lorries cause a large part of the country's air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.[217][218]

There are 464 airports in France.[81] Charles de Gaulle Airport, located in the vicinity of Paris, is the largest and busiest airport in the country, handling the vast majority of popular and commercial traffic and connecting Paris with virtually all major cities across the world. Air France is the national carrier airline, although numerous private airline companies provide domestic and international travel services. There are ten major ports in France, the largest of which is in Marseille,[219] which also is the largest bordering the Mediterranean Sea.[220] 12,261 kilometres (7,619 mi) of waterways traverse France including the Canal du Midi, which connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean through the Garonne river.[81]

With an estimated population of 68,605,616 people,[8][XI] France is the 20th most populous country in the world, the third-most populous in Europe (after Russia and Germany), and the second most populous in the European Union (after Germany).

For much of the 21st century, France has been an outlier among developed countries, particularly in Europe, for its relatively high rate of natural population growth; by birth rates alone, it was responsible for almost all natural population growth in the European Union in 2006.[221] Between 2006 and 2016, France saw the second-highest overall increase in population in the EU and was one of only four EU countries where natural births accounted for the most population growth.[222] This was the highest rate since the end of the baby boom in 1973 and coincides with the rise of the total fertility rate from a nadir of 1.7 in 1994 to 2.0 in 2010.

Since 2011, France's fertility rate has been steadily declining;[223] it stood at 1.79 per woman in 2023,[224] below the replacement rate of 2.1 and well below the high of 4.41 in 1800.[225][226][227] France's fertility rate and crude birth rate nonetheless remain the highest in the EU[228] and among the highest in Europe overall, where the average is 1.5.[229] The mean age of French women at the birth of their first child was 29.1, slightly younger than the EU average of 29.7.[228]  
  
  
  
Like many developed nations, the French population is aging: The average age is 41.7 years, while roughly one-fifth of French people are 65 or over.[230] It is projected that one in three French will be over 60 by 2024. Life expectancy at birth is 82.7 years, the 12th highest in the world; French Polynesia and the French region of Réunion ranked fourth and 11th in life expectancy, at 84.07 years and 83.55, respectively.

From 2006 to 2011, population growth averaged 0.6 percent per year;[231] since 2011, annual growth has been between 0.4 and 0.5 percent annually,[232] and France is projected to continue growing until 2044.[233] Immigrants are major contributors to this trend; in 2010, roughly one in four newborns (27 percent) in metropolitan France had at least one foreign-born parent and another 24 percent had at least one parent born outside Europe (excluding French overseas territories).[234] In 2021, the share of children of foreign-born mothers was 23 percent.[228]  
  
  
France is a highly urbanised country, with its largest cities (in terms of metropolitan area population in 2021[235]) being Paris (13,171,056 inh.), Lyon (2,308,818), Marseille (1,888,788), Lille (1,521,660), Toulouse (1,490,640), Bordeaux (1,393,764), Nantes (1,031,953), Strasbourg (864,993), Montpellier (823,120), and Rennes (771,320). (Note: since its 2020 revision of metropolitan area borders, INSEE considers that Nice is a metropolitan area separate from the Cannes-Antibes metropolitan area; these two combined would have a population of 1,019,905, as of the 2021 census). Rural flight was a perennial political issue throughout most of the 20th century.