In 2018, France was the fifth-largest trading nation in the world and the second largest in Europe, with the value of exports representing over a fifth of GDP.[177] Its membership in the eurozone and the broader European single market facilitates access to capital, goods, services, and skilled labour.[178] Despite protectionist policies over certain industries, particularly in agriculture, France has generally played a leading role in fostering free trade and commercial integration in Europe to enhance its economy.[179][180] In 2019, it ranked first in Europe and 13th in the world in foreign direct investment, with European countries and the United States being leading sources.[181] According to the Bank of France (founded in 1800),[182] the leading recipients of FDI were manufacturing, real estate, finance and insurance.[183] The Paris Region has the highest concentration of multinational firms in mainland Europe.[183]

Under the doctrine of Dirigisme, the government historically played a major role in the economy; policies such as indicative planning and nationalisation are credited for contributing to three decades of unprecedented postwar economic growth known as Trente Glorieuses. At its peak in 1982, the public sector accounted for one-fifth of industrial employment and over four-fifths of the credit market. Beginning in the late 20th century, France loosened regulations and state involvement in the economy, with most leading companies now being privately owned; state ownership now dominates only transportation, defence and broadcasting.[184] Policies aimed at promoting economic dynamism and privatisation have improved France's economic standing globally: it is among the world's 10 most innovative countries in the 2020 Bloomberg Innovation Index,[185] and the 15th most competitive, according to the 2019 Global Competitiveness Report (up two places from 2018).[186]

The Paris stock exchange (French: La Bourse de Paris) is one of the oldest in the world, created in 1724.[187] In 2000, it merged with counterparts in Amsterdam and Brussels to form Euronext,[188] which in 2007 merged with the New York stock exchange to form NYSE Euronext, the world's largest stock exchange.[188] Euronext Paris, the French branch of NYSE Euronext, is Europe's second-largest stock exchange market. Some examples of the most valuable French companies include LVMH, L'Oréal and Sociéte Générale.[189]

France has historically been one of the world's major agricultural centres and remains a "global agricultural powerhouse"; France is the world's sixth-biggest exporter of agricultural products, generating a trade surplus of over €7.4 billion.[190][191] Nicknamed "the granary of the old continent",[192] over half its total land area is farmland, of which 45 per cent is devoted to permanent field crops such as cereals. The country's diverse climate, extensive arable land, modern farming technology, and EU subsidies have made it Europe's leading agricultural producer and exporter.[193]

With 100 million international tourist arrivals in 2023,[194] France is the world's top tourist destination, ahead of Spain (85 million) and the United States (66 million). However, it ranks third in tourism-derived income due to the shorter duration of visits.[195] The most popular tourist sites include (annual visitors): Eiffel Tower (6.2 million), Château de Versailles (2.8 million), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (2 million), Pont du Gard (1.5 million), Arc de Triomphe (1.2 million), Mont Saint-Michel (1 million), Sainte-Chapelle (683,000), Château du Haut-Kœnigsbourg (549,000), Puy de Dôme (500,000), Musée Picasso (441,000), and Carcassonne (362,000).[196]

France, especially Paris, has some of the world's largest museums, including the Louvre, which is the most visited art museum in the world (7.7 million visitors in 2022), the Musée d'Orsay (3.3 million), mostly devoted to Impressionism, the Musée de l'Orangerie (1.02 million), which is home to eight large Water Lily murals by Claude Monet, as well as the Centre Georges Pompidou (3 million), dedicated to contemporary art. Disneyland Paris is Europe's most popular theme park, with 15 million combined visitors to the resort's Disneyland Park and Walt Disney Studios Park in 2009.[197] With more than 10 million tourists a year, the French Riviera (French: Côte d'Azur), in Southeast France, is the second leading tourist destination in the country, after the Paris Region.[198] With 6 million tourists a year, the castles of the Loire Valley (French: châteaux) and the Loire Valley itself are the third leading tourist destination in France.[199][200]

France has 52 sites inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List and features cities of high cultural interest, beaches and seaside resorts, ski resorts, as well as rural regions that many enjoy for their beauty and tranquillity (green tourism). Small and picturesque French villages are promoted through the association Les Plus Beaux Villages de France (literally "The Most Beautiful Villages of France"). The "Remarkable Gardens" label is a list of the over 200 gardens classified by the Ministry of Culture. This label is intended to protect and promote remarkable gardens and parks. France attracts many religious pilgrims on their way to St. James, or to Lourdes, a town in the Hautes-Pyrénées that hosts several million visitors a year.  
  
  
  
France is the world's tenth-largest producer of electricity.[201] Électricité de France (EDF), which is majority-owned by the French government, is the country's main producer and distributor of electricity, and one of the world's largest electric utility companies, ranking third in revenue globally.[202] In 2018, EDF produced roughly one-fifth of the European Union's electricity, primarily from nuclear power.[203] In 2021, France was the biggest energy exporter in Europe, mostly to the UK and Italy,[204] and the largest net exporter of electricity in the world.[204]

Since the 1973 oil crisis, France has pursued a strong policy of energy security,[204] namely through heavy investment in nuclear energy. It is one of 32 countries with nuclear power plants, ranking second in the world by the number of operational nuclear reactors, at 56.[205] Consequently, 70% of France's electricity is generated by nuclear power, the highest proportion in the world by a wide margin;[206] only Slovakia and Ukraine also derive a majority of electricity from nuclear power, at roughly 53% and 51%, respectively.[207] France is considered a world leader in nuclear technology, with reactors and fuel products being major exports.[204]