HANDBOOK FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN Bourges
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Welcome to Bourges. — This guide has been written by those responsible for international relations in the higher education establishments of Bourges and by the Cher County Council with the aim of giving you useful information to help you prepare your study period in Bourges. In no way, however, does it replace the assistance of the different services of these establishments, whose members will make every effort to welcome you and make your stay here in Bourges as easy as possible.

The Higher National Art School of Bourges
École nationale supérieure d’art de Bourges
http://www.ensa-bourges.fr/

The Higher National Engineering School of Bourges
École nationale supérieure des ingénieurs de Bourges
http://www.ensi-bourges.fr/

The University Institute of Technology of Bourges
IUT de Bourges
http://www.bourges.univ-orleans.fr/iut/

The Sainte Marie Saint Dominique Institute of Higher Education
Institut d’enseignement supérieur Sainte Marie Saint Dominique
http://www.esbc.fr/smsd/lycee.htm

Welcome to Bourges, located in the Centre region of France in the Cher county and less than two hours from Paris, has a population of more than 75000.

Once known as Avaricum, Bourges was the capital of the Gauls, strategically built on a rocky spur in marshlands where several rivers merge. The town is proud of its rich history and of its renowned monuments such as the Palace of Jacques Coeur and the Saint-Etienne Cathedral (a UNESCO classified world heritage monument), its medieval streets, its Renaissance buildings and its half-timbered houses. In the heart of Bourges lie 135 hectares of marshland divided into a patchwork of small plots by narrow canals and meandering rivers. The very marshes which protected the town in the Middle Ages are now private gardens enjoyed by local families. Bourges is also the scene for high quality cultural events throughout the year. It is proud to have been the first town in France to inaugurate a Maison de la Culture in 1963, and is famous for its Printemps de Bourges music festival which lasts for one week in April every year and brings together young musicians and well-known artistes.

Make the most of your stay to explore the riches that this town and the surrounding Berry region have to offer.
**BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

**DOCUMENTS - BUDGET**

**Documents.** — You must obtain a long-stay visa (a VLS-TS) for a study period in France from the French Consulate of your home country.

**Who should obtain this visa?** All students from non-European Union countries (except Algerian nationals) who wish to stay more than 3 months in France.

**How long is the visa valid?** 1 year

**Documents to accompany the visa:** A stamped application form for an OFII (Office Français de l’Immigration) attestation which must be given to the OFII on arrival in France with an explanatory note.

**Reminder.** — Nationals from EU (European Union) or EEA (European Economic Area) member states or Switzerland do not need a visa, however long their stay.

**Administrative documents you must bring with you:**
- Passport
- Birth Certificate (translated into French)
- European health insurance card (for nationals of a European Economic Area member state)
- Medical repatriation card
- Civil liability insurance attestation
- Social Security subscription is mandatory for students who are not nationals of European Economic Area member states

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**BUDGET**

**Budget.** — Average monthly budget:

- **Accommodation:** between 200 € and 400 € depending on the type of accommodation
- **Accommodation expenses:** Between 20 € and 40 € depending on: type of energy used, type of accommodation, season
- **Transport (Agglobus):** 17.50 € (+ an initial fee of 2 € the first month)
- **Telecommunication:** from 30 € for Internet, unlimited landline telephone, and mobile phone
- **Food:** 200 €

**Example prices:**
- a small loaf of bread (une baguette): 0,80 €
- a litre of milk: 0,70 to 0,80 €
- a cup of coffee: 1 € - 1,25 €
- a cinema ticket: 6,50 € (student rates)
- a postage stamp: 0,60 € (France rates), 0,75 € (European Union rates) and 0,87 € (rest of the world)

**Reminder.** — Allow for three times the monthly budget the first month of your stay as there will be one-off expenses linked to moving into your accommodation, school enrolment fees, Social Security, insurance, standing charges for electricity, telephone etc.
YOUR JOURNEY

from Orly to Austerlitz — From Orly airport to Gare d'Austerlitz
railway station : approximately 50 minutes

1. Take the bus to Pont de Rungis terminus
2. Take the RER C train, direction Massy Palaiseau
3. Get off RER C train at Austerlitz station
4. Follow signs indicating Grandes Lignes (SNCF)

from Roissy to Austerlitz — From Roissy-Charles de Gaulle
airport to Gare d'Austerlitz : one hour

1. Take the RER B train, direction Robinson
   To Saint-Michel station
2. Take the RER C train, direction Massy Palaiseau
   To Austerlitz station
3. Follow signs indicating Grandes Lignes (SNCF)

from Beauvais to Austerlitz — From Beauvais airport to Gare
d'Austerlitz :

1. Take the bus, direction Porte Maillot
2. Get off at Porte Maillot,
   Take the Metro line 1, direction Château de Vincennes,
   Arrêt à la station Bastille
3. Off at Bastille station
   At Bastille station,
   Take Metro line 5, direction Place d’Italie,
   Get off at Austerlitz station
4. Follow signs indicating Grandes Lignes (SNCF)
from Austerlitz to Bourges. — From Gare d'Austerlitz railway station to Bourges:

To travel from Paris to Bourges by train, you must take the train at Austerlitz railway station.

A single ticket costs approximately 32€.

Before getting on the train, you must punch your ticket (see photo) in one of the machines provided in the station, usually situated at the beginning of the platform.

Residence permit (carte de séjour). — Once you have arrived in France, you must obtain your carte de séjour residence permit (unless you are a student from a European Union country) from the OFII.

The following documents must be sent to the OFII by registered mail (par lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception):

- The stamped application form for the OFII attestation given to you by the authority which delivered your visa.
- A photocopy of the passport pages giving identity details of the holder and of the stamp proving entry to France or to the Schengen Area.

Following procedure:

- On receiving these documents, the regional OFII office will send you an acknowledgement of receipt by post to the address you have indicated.
- The OFII will then request you to attend a medical visit.
- The OFII will ask you to pay a tax of 55 € by buying an “OMI” or “ANAEM” fiscal stamp. This stamp is on sale on-line at http://www.timbresofi.fr/, in certain tobacconists’ (bureaux de tabac) or at tax offices.

OFII : 43, avenue de Paris - 45000 Orléans
02 38 52 00 34 - orleans@ofii.fr
Accommodation. — The school or establishment you will be attending may offer you the possibility to stay in a university hall of residence. You can also rent an apartment in town, in which case you will have to find temporary accommodation on arriving in Bourges.

Temporary accommodation:
Youth hostel, from de 14,90€ per night
22, rue Henri Sellier - 18000 Bourges
+33 02 48 24 58 09
bourges@fuaj.org

Individual room in university hall of residence:
The Orléans-Tours CROUS runs two university halls of residence in Bourges. bourges-crous@ac-orleans-tours.fr

University hall of residence “Hôtel Dieu”:
11, rue du Pont Merlan - 18000 Bourges
Studio flat starting at 15 m²: 257,10 € TTC (inclusive of tax)
Studio flat for two: 231,20 € TTC
Multimedia room, Nightwatchman, Bed linen rental 20 €/year

University hall of residence “Les Gibjoncs”:
74, rue de Turly - 18021 Bourges
Room of 9,00 m²: 229,40 € TTC
Studio flat of 18,00 m²: 367,30 € TTC
Laundry + tumble dryer (3€), Multimedia room, Games room, TV room
Private study room, Nightwatchman, Bed linen rental 20 €/year

Renting an apartment in town: To find an apartment you can:
This website is intended to facilitate relations between landlords and students and make finding an apartment easier.

This free service offers:
• Useful information regarding student life: http://www.bourgesplus.fr/au-service-des-usagers.php?ID=actus&r1=habitat&r2=label_etudiant&page=annuaire
• A list of 40 privately-owned approved apartments proposed by estate agencies for a maximum monthly rent of 400 € (excluding service charges, electricity...): http://www.bourgesplus.fr/au-service-des-usagers.php?ID=actus&r1=habitat&r2=label_etudiant&page=recherche
• Visit specialized estate agencies or
• Check the small ads in free newspapers
• Check lists of apartments available for consultation in your school or establishment

Insuring your accommodation:
All tenants must take out an insurance called Mutirisques Habitation which covers damage caused by fire and water, theft, etc. and which includes civil liability insurance (see paragraph entitled “Civil Liability Insurance”). Your French bank and student Social Security organizations can propose this insurance.

Important. — You will not be able to rent accommodation without this insurance.
Accommodation. — **Le bail (or contrat de location)** is a mandatory document signed by the landlord and by the tenant. It defines the obligations of each party.

Les charges locatives are service charges which include maintenance of communal areas, local taxes (e.g. for waste removal), cold water and, in some cases, heating.

Les abonnements are standing charges which the tenant must pay for electricity, gas, water, telephone and Internet.

Le dépôt de garantie or « caution » is a sum of money equivalent to one month's rent (excluding service charges) which you must pay when you sign the rental contract (le bail). This sum is reimbursed within 2 months after you leave the apartment, except if the apartment is deteriorated in any way, or the period of notice prior to termination of the contract is not respected.

La caution solidaire is a joint and several guarantee. In most cases, the landlord or owner of the property will require a guarantor, i.e. a person (relative or friend) or a legal entity (organisation or association) who commits himself or itself in writing to paying the rent should you be unable to do so. In the case of the CROUS halls of residence, the guarantor must live in France or in the European Union, and must be able to give proof of having a seizable income. If you do not have a guarantor, you must pay the annual rent in advance.

La taxe d’habitation is a local tax which must be paid by the tenant who is resident in the apartment on the 1st January of the current year. It is payable once a year to the tax office. This tax does not concern those who live in university halls of residence or in furnished accommodation belonging to someone who lets or sublets a part of his/her home.

**Accommodation expenses = Rent + Service charges + Standing charges + Insurance + Local tax**

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Accommodation. — Housing Benefits (C.A.F.) : 21, boulevard de la République à Bourges (près d'Avaricum et de la halle Saint-Bonnet)

If you would like to benefit from housing allowances paid by the C.A.F. you will find information on the website [http://www.caf.fr/](http://www.caf.fr/), under « étudiants », telling you which documents to provide, the conditions that must be met, the type of accommodation to which the allowance applies…

You can also find out the amount of the allowance you are entitled to and apply directly online. The first payment is made the month following the acceptance of your application, so don't lose time.
**Eating.** — The custom in France is to have breakfast between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., lunch between 12 a.m. and 2 p.m. and dinner as from 7 p.m.

France is a land of gastronomy where each region has its specialities. The Berry region around Bourges is well known for its wines, its cheeses and its potatoes … and Bourges for its fruit cordials.

**University Restaurant and Cafeteria at Turly:** 74 rue de Turly - 18000 Bourges
- **Cafeteria:** 50 seats
- **Restaurant:** 300 seats
- **Opening hours:** 11.45 a.m. - 1.15 p.m. Mondays to Fridays
- **Meal:** 3 €
- **Facilities:** bar, lounge, terrace, baby-foot

- **Fast food** — There are fast food restaurants near the schools

- **Supermarkets** — Staff in your schools will be able to give you the addresses of the supermarkets nearest your accommodation.

- **Markets** — All local products can be found in the Bourges markets. — [http://www.ville-bourges.fr/vie-pratique/marches.php](http://www.ville-bourges.fr/vie-pratique/marches.php)

**Health.** — **Health insurance:** Students are advised to subscribe to the French Social Security system which ensures very good health coverage.

If you are participating in a European exchange programme:
- Most formalities were carried out when you enrolled in your university or school in your home country.
- In this case, you subscribed to the Social Security system of your home country.
- As a holder of the European health insurance card (CEAM) your medical expenses can be paid during your stay in France.

If you are not participating in a European exchange programme and you do not hold a CEAM card (European Health Insurance Card):
- You must subscribe to the French Social Security system for students.
- If you are under 28 years of age you will have to choose a Social Security organization for students (LMDE or SMECO) when you enrol in your French school or university.
- If you are over 28 years of age you must subscribe to the CPAM Social Security scheme.
Health.

- **Doctors**: You can find doctors’ contact details in telephone directories and in pharmacies. It is usually necessary to make an appointment to see your doctor.

  The minimum cost of a consultation with a general practitioner is: 22€. At the end of the consultation a statement of the fees will be sent automatically to your Social Security organization which will reimburse you accordingly.

- **Supplementary health insurance**: If you want higher reimbursement rates than those paid by the Social Security, you can take out a supplementary insurance proposed by the student mutual insurance organizations.

- **Note**: The SMECO and LMDE student mutual insurance organizations provide both Social Security coverage and supplementary insurance.

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**La Mutuelle des Étudiants (LMDE)**:
13 rue Michaël Faraday - 18000 Bourges

**Opening Hours**:  
Tuesday : 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.  
Wednesday : 2 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.  
Thursday : 2 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.

**SMECO**:
14 rue Calvin - Bourges - 02 48 02 15 00

**Opening hours**:
Mon. to Fri. : 1.30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

**BE CAREFUL!** — Your Social Security number is required to make you eligible for housing allowance.

**Civil liability insurance**: This is an insurance which covers damage caused to another. You may be considered responsible for damage caused by persons or objects in your care. Civil liability insurance may be included with housing insurance.

**BE CAREFUL!** — Your enrolment will not be finalized without the civil liability attestation.
Bank account. — Any foreigner staying in France more than 3 months may open a bank account enabling him/her to have a cheque book and/or a bank card. There are two types of bank cards:
- Cards enabling you to withdraw cash from your bank’s cash point 24h/24h.
- Cards enabling you both to withdraw cash from cash points in any bank and to make payments. The cost of these cards varies between 30 € and 40 €/year.

You will need the following documents to open a bank account:
- Passport (passport, visa, carte de séjour…)
- Proof of address (telephone or electricity bill, rent receipt…)
- A student card
- Proof of income, if appropriate
- A deposit of 20 €

Banks in France are open from Monday to Saturday; opening hours vary.

Note. — The official currency in France is the euro (€)

It is essential to have a bank account if you want to receive housing benefits or have medical expenses reimbursed.

Holidays. — The university year is divided up by several holiday periods:
- Christmas holiday: 2 weeks, end of December/beginning of January
- Winter holiday: 1 week in February
- Spring holiday: 1 or 2 weeks in April
- Bank holidays: 1st November (All Saints); 11th November (Armistice 1918); 25th December (Christmas); 1st January (New Year); Easter; 1st May (Labour Day); 8th May (Victory in Europe 1945); Ascension Day; 14th July (French National Day); 15th August (Assumption Day)

Practical information. — Communication means:
- Mobile phone (subscription or package)
- Internet: in the CROUS university halls of residence, you can have access to Internet via the provider of your choice, or via WIFIRST which proposes subscriptions starting at 9.90 € a month.

Telephoning abroad from France:
- Dial the international prefix 00 followed by the country code, then the area code without the 0.

Telephoning France from abroad:
- Dial the code 00 33 (00 is the international prefix, 33 the code for France), followed by the number of the person you are calling without the 0 at the beginning.

Practical information. — Electrical appliances:
Don't forget to buy an adaptor: the voltage in France is 220 volts and plugs have two pins.

Attention: Smoking is forbidden in public places in France. This law also applies within the premises of schools and teaching establishments.

Useful telephone numbers and websites:
- Firemen: 18
- SAMU ambulance: 15
- Police: 17
- Emergency n° within Europe: 112
- SOS médecin (a doctor will come to your home): 02 48 23 33 33
- Bourges hospital: 02 48 48 48 48
- Duty pharmacist, evenings and weekends as from 7 p.m.: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/vie-pratique/pharmacie-garde.php
Transport. — To travel within Bourges, take the “Agglobus”
• For occasional travellers: 1.25 € per ticket, valid one hour
• For regular travellers under 26 years old: monthly bus pass 17.50€ (+ initial fee of 2 €)

For timetables and bus routes, go to: http://www.agglobus.com/
Information and sales office:
Espace Nation - 1, Place de la Nation - 18000 Bourges - 02 48 27 99 99

To travel within the Cher county (outside Bourges) take the “Lignes 18” buses:
• For occasional travellers: 1 € per ticket
• For regular travellers: monthly bus pass 20 €

For timetables and bus routes, go to: http://www.lignes18.fr/
You can also travel throughout France by train: information about timetables and fares are available at the following SNCF (French railways) website: http://www.voyages-sncf.com

For regular travellers: 12-25 reduction card, Carte 12-25 ans

Bourges runs a scheme making bicycles available for free hire: to know more, go to: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/environnement/bourges-velo-location.php

Sponsorship and associations. — Each school or establishment has its student associations. You can find out about these in your school to have information regarding exchanges, student parties, sports events etc.

Associations in Bourges. — At the end of September every year Bourges organizes a festival of all the associations in the town: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/fete-asso-liste.php

The Youth Information Office (Bureau Information Jeunesse)
— The BIJ is an essential resource centre for young people in Bourges. Its staff are always ready to lend an ear and advise you on practical aspects of life in Bourges: student jobs, training courses, sports, leisure activities... and more besides. http://www.ville-bourges.fr/vie-pratique/bureau-information-jeunesse.php

BIJ: Halle Saint Bonnet - 1st floor
8, bd de la République - 18000 Bourges
02 48 24 77 19 - bij@ville-bourges.fr

Free acces
Mon. 2 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.
Tue. to Fri. 9. a.m. - 12.30 a.m. - 2 p.m. - 5.30 p.m. (6 p.m. Wed.)

The Municipal Institute of Further Education (L’Institut Municipal d’Éducation Permanente) — The IMEP is a further education institute which includes a language training centre offering courses in 10 foreign languages. It also offers a refresher course for those learning French as a foreign language. http://www.imep.ville-bourges.fr
Culture and sport. — Leisure and sports activities; for information on sports facilities, go to: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/sports/equipements-sportifs.php

Where you will find out more about:

- **Bowling et billiards**: there are 2 bowling alleys in Bourges, one at “les quais du Prado” and the other in Saint Doulchard.
- **Skating rink**: at “les quais du Prado”; 3.50 € for students + 2 € skate hire.
- **Bourges Basket**: basketball team: Bourges hosts a women’s professional basketball team known as the “Tangos”. The team competes at European Championship level. Matches are played on Wednesday and Saturday evenings at the Prado sports centre, Palais des Sports.
- **Swimming pools**: Centre Nautique, avenue du 11 novembre (1.95 €), 2 open air swimming pools.

Cultural activities. —

- **La Maison de la Culture**: hosts productions promoting drama, music and dance: http://www.mcbourges.com/
- **Le théâtre Jacques Coeur**: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/theatre-jacques-coeur.php
- **Le Hublot**: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/le-hublot.php
- **L’auditorium**: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/auditorium.php
- **Cinémas**: Méga CGR (12 screens) 6,50€ student rates — Maison de la Culture (arthouse) 6 € student rates.
- **Le Transpalette**: this exhibition and experimentation area, managed by Emmetrop, is dedicated to contemporary art.
- **La Galerie La Box**: La Box is one of the key teaching tools of the Higher National Art School of Bourges. Every year it stages ten or so exhibitions of works by French or foreign artists. The gallery is open to the public. Admission Free: http://box.ensa-bourges.fr
- **For other exhibition venues go to**: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/art-contemporain.php
- **Museums**: http://www.ville-bourges.fr/culture-loisirs/musees-bourges.php
Cultural events.

- **Un été à Bourges** from 21st June to 21st September: concerts (mostly free) and activities in the historic centre of Bourges (jazz, organ, dance...)

- **Les nuits-lumière de Bourges** from Thursdays to Saturdays in May, June and September, every evening in July and August (for two hours after sunset): an amazing trail through the medieval district of the town bathed in “son et lumière”. Just follow the blue lights and the music... Admission free.

- **Journées européennes du patrimoine** (European heritage days): the third weekend in September every year. Visit public monuments, museums, châteaux etc. free of charge (or at reduced rates).

- **Biennale d’Art contemporain**: 10 days in mid-November every 2 years (even years). Some 20 sites present the works of artists of today and tomorrow.

- **Printemps de Bourges**: one week at the end of April. Music festival (chanson française, rock, world music) which reveals new talents each year. Also concerts in the town’s bars and restaurants.

- **Festival Bandits-Mages**: since its creation in 1992, this festival has contributed to the dynamism of young artists in the world of video art and experimental cinema. Every 2 years (odd years).

Walks.

- **Les marais de Bourges**: discover the marshlands of Bourges and their market gardens at just 15 minutes' walk from the cathedral.

- **Les jardins des Prés-Fichaux**: these pleasant gardens lie on the bank of the Yèvre river and have been classified as a Jardin Remarquable.

- **Les jardins de l’ancien archevêché**: these gardens lie at the foot of the cathedral in the grounds of the former archbishop’s palace.

For further tourist information, go to:
Office du tourisme: 21 rue Victor Hugo - 18000 Bourges
http://www.bourges-tourisme.com/

The Bourges area. — To find out more about organizing a weekend or a holiday in the area around Bourges, go to: http://www.berryprovince.com/