Congrats on choosing to study abroad in France! In addition to any cultural and social considerations you may have to make before and during your time abroad, you should consider how you want your actions to affect the ecosystems and communities that you will be a part of. This guide will walk you through ways to consciously and sustainably study abroad in France, including your options to shop locally, ride public transit, and give back to the communities you will be staying in.
PARIS

Public Transportation

Paris has excellent public transportation. The Metro is the main way to navigate around Paris, and is reliable, extensive, and quick. A map of Metro stations can be found here. Paris also is well connected to the rest of France and wider Europe through its regional and long haul trains. Gare Nord is the largest and main station, which is where the Eurostar Train departs from.

Food Options

Saxe-Breteuil market has fresh food and produce, and Rue de Grenelle Market is known for its locally sourced and locally made produce and products. Similarly, Place Monge Market has local produce and foods. All this being said, Paris has ample healthy and locally sourced food options all in close reach to your program.

Volunteering

Like any city, Paris has many volunteering needs and organizations are always looking for helpers that want to give back to the community. Check out senior centers, food banks, animal shelters and other options to give back to the community. Paris also has many sustainability, outdoor, and environmental clubs as well. Look on your university’s home page too.

Recycling and Thrifting

Paris has good recycling, and your residence hall will have recycling containers and sorting. Paris also has many second hand thrift stores and second hand furniture stores as well.
Aix En Provence is well connected with the rest of southern France. There is a bus called “Le Car”, which has daily service to Marseille. There is also a bus which can connect you to the Marseille Airport directly. Aix En Provence itself is a rather compact city, and is easy to bike and walk to get from A to B. However there is a bus system which connects the city, it is linked here.

Food Options

Aix has multiple farmers and local markets to buy fresh produce and local products. The farmers market in the center of town has fresh foods and produce for a reasonable price. Also in the center of Aix En Provence is a market called “Le Grande Marche”, which also has fresh produce and goods, as well as locally made pastries, clothing, jewelry etc.

Volunteering

Aix En Provence has multiple community clubs and organizations that will allow you to give back and connect with the local community. Check out local community led organizations, living homes, food banks, sustainability clubs etc. Also look at your university’s website for more options.

Recycling and Thrifting

Aix has public recycling points around the city, and recycling (as well as waste) is picked up every day, outside of Sunday. It is separated by clear and colored glass, plastic, paper, biodegradables, and cardboard. If your host family does not practice recycling, you can use the bins outside of your housing, or go to the actual recycling center if you choose. Aix has multiple second hand stores.
RENNES

Public Transportation

Rennes has excellent public transportation, especially given its size as a medium city. Rennes has its own metro line which has two lines that dissect the city in four. Both lines converge on the central station, which is also where the bus system is based, and the national and regional trains. The train will be the cheapest and easiest option to travel outside of Rennes, as it does not have a large airport. Trains can be taken direct to Paris.

Food Options

Rennes has multiple markets which sell local goods and produce. One of the largest is Marche de Lices market in the city center, where you can buy a wide range of products (Marche de Lices is considered to be the best in Western France). Rennes also has another market called Le Criee. Supermarkets in Rennes also have local produce and locally sourced products.

Volunteering

Rennes has multiple community clubs and organizations that will allow you to give back and connect with the local community. Check out local community led organizations, living homes, food banks, sustainability clubs etc. Also look at the Rennes Student Associations website for volunteering or club opportunities.

Recycling and Thrifting

Recycling in Rennes is easy and accessible. Your housing will provide recycling for you, however there are also public recycling centers around the city. Rennes has plenty of second hand and thrift stores, most of which are located in the city center, though some are in the Northeast of Rennes closer to the University.
Lyon has an excellent public transportation system, much of which is made up of its metro system. The metro is the best way to get around the city, though there are also bus lines which connect the city as well. The Rhoneexpress is a tram system which connects the city center to the airport in the east. Trains can be taken from the central station to the rest of France and Europe.

La Croix Rousse market has fresh food and produce, and Marche Saint Antoine Market is known for its locally sourced and locally made produce and products. Similarly, Marche Jean Mace Market has local produce and foods, as well as freshly made bread and local French eatery. Plenty of supermarkets in Lyon also have locally sourced products from the region, though you may have to seek them out more than at a local market.

Lyon has multiple community clubs and organizations that will allow you to give back and connect with the local community. Check out local community led organizations, living homes, food banks, sustainability clubs etc. Also look at your university’s website for more options.

If you choose to live in a resident hall, recycling will be provided through your housing accommodation. If you are staying in a homestay and your family does not practice recycling, there are multiple recycling centers across town, as well as at the university itself. Recycling can be put into bins on the street, and is separated by material and organized by color. There are multiple second hand stores, and thrift stores in Lyon, some of which specialize in bikes, furniture clothing etc.
Strasbourg has a tram system which consists of six lines, extending into the middle of the city to its outskirts. The tram network is extensive, but if you require to go somewhere specific, the bus allows access to smaller areas. Strasbourg train station allows easy access to other French cities, Germany, and the rest of Europe. You can find tickets from SNCF, France’s train provider, and you can also find trains from Deutschebahn (DB).

Food Options

Marché de l’Esplanade is a local market selling produce, meats, breads, and general products which are locally sourced and made. Marché des Producteurs is a market held every Saturday morning which sells fresh produce, cheese, honey, jams, etc. all of which are from local businesses and near by farms. The market is also noted for its relatively low cost and excellent goods.

Volunteering

Strasbourg has multiple community clubs and organizations that will allow you to give back and connect with the local community. Being that Strasbourg is an international city, some organizations may need native English speakers. Check out local community led organizations, living homes, food banks, sustainability clubs etc. Also look at university’s website for more options.

Recycling and Thrifting

Since students are responsible for their own housing, it may depend on if your housing offers recycling. If it does not, there are multiple recycling points around the city, and at the university. Look out for colored bins for recycling in the alley/street near your housing as well. There are plenty of thrift stores in Strasbourg, and multiple second hand bike shops which offer good bikes at cheap.