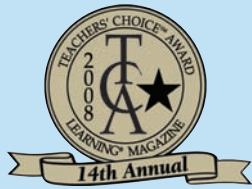


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BRITANNICA STUDENT ENCYCLOPEDIA



France

A large country in Western Europe, France has a temperate climate with moderate rainfall. On the Mediterranean

BRITANNICA STUDENT ENCYCLOPEDIA

France | 25



The River Rance runs through the town of Dinan in northwestern France.

Though agriculture is a small part of the economy, France is a top producer of wheat, cattle, pigs, and chickens. It is also well known for its cheeses and wines.

History

People lived in what is now France more than 100,000 years ago. The Gauls, a Celtic people, migrated to the area in about 1200 BC. By about 50 BC the ancient Romans had conquered the region, which they called Gaul.

As the Roman Empire weakened, German tribes invaded Gaul. The Franks were the strongest of those tribes, and they gave France its name. The greatest Frankish ruler was Charlemagne, who came to power in 768. By the early 800s Charlemagne's empire covered most of Western Europe. When Charlemagne died, however, his empire was divided into three parts.

After 843 the western section became known as the kingdom of France.

Wars over Land and Religion

In 1066 the French duke of Normandy conquered England. Because of that connection to France, English kings later claimed parts of France for themselves. This led to many battles between the two countries.

One particularly difficult period was the Hundred Years' War, which began in 1337. France was close to defeat when a peasant girl named Joan of Arc led the French army to victory. By the end of the war in 1453, the English had lost nearly all of their land in France.

During the 1500s Protestantism spread across Roman Catholic France. Wars broke out between Protestants (known as Huguenots) and Roman Catholics.

Facts About France



Population
(2005 estimate)
60,733,000

Capital
Paris

Area
210,026 sq mi
(543,965 sq km)

Form of government
Republic

Major urban areas
Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Toulouse, Nice

CONTENT SECTIONS

Content is clearly divided into sections to help students locate information easily.

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BRITANNICA STUDENT ENCYCLOPEDIA



Where Falcons Live

Falcons are found nearly all over the world. They live in many habitats, including forests, deserts, grasslands, and even cities. Falcons commonly nest in holes in trees or on natural ledges on cliffs. In cities they may nest on the ledges of buildings.

Physical Features

Usually the female falcon is larger and bolder than the male. Falcons range in size from about 6 to 24 inches (15 to 61 centimeters). The falconets are the smallest of the falcons. The gyrfalcon is the largest. Falcons have sharp claws and a short hooked beak. The beak usually has a small notch called a tooth. These features help it catch and kill prey animals.

Behavior

A falcon's shape helps it fly quickly. Its body is shaped like a bullet, while its wings are long and pointed. Unlike hawks and eagles, falcons rarely soar and glide. They dive down fast to catch prey. Some falcons capture other birds in midair. Other falcons kill hares, mice, lizards, and insects on the ground.

More to explore
Bird of Prey; Eagle; Hawk



A kestrel falcon sits on a fence post with a grasshopper in its beak.

Farming
see Agriculture

CHARTS AND TABLES

Charts and tables organize information and recap important details.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Cross-references encourage children to learn more.