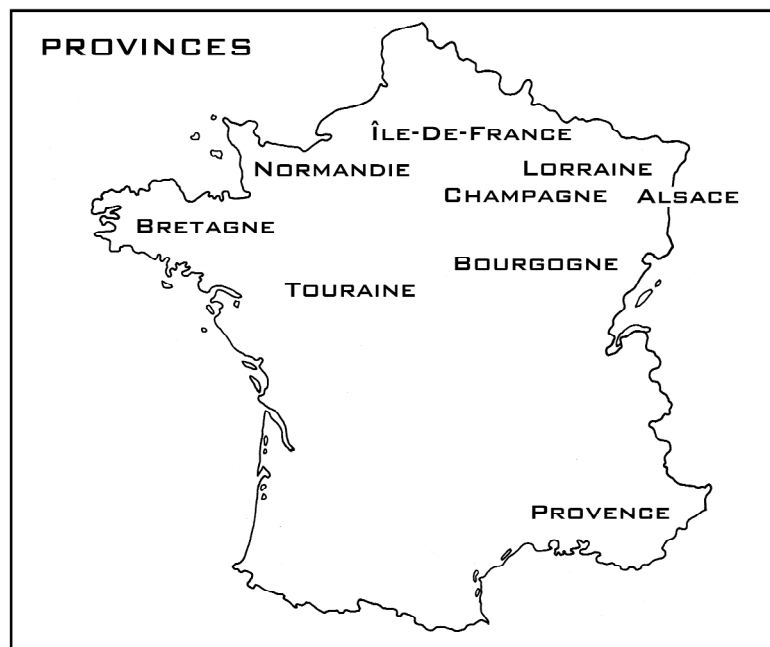


# Chapter 32

## Provinces

Until the French Revolution of 1789, France was divided into 32 **provinces**, each with its own customs and cultural traditions. Each province had a regional costume which is still worn today on festive occasions. The distinctive head-dress, the **coiffe**, and the wooden shoes, the **sabots**, are still seen in parts of France.

Today, although the old French provinces are no longer separate political divisions, their original names are still used to refer to one part of France or another. In 1982, France was divided into 22 new administrative units, the **régions**, which were given names and boundaries recalling the old provinces.



1. **La Bretagne** (*Brittany*), the peninsula jutting out into the Atlantic in northwestern France, is known for its sturdy stock of peasants, fishermen, and sailors. Numerous fishing villages dot the rugged coastline of Brittany. In addition to French, a Celtic dialect, **le breton**, is still spoken. The Bretons hold religious festivals known as “**pardons**”. Cider and **crêpes** are foods associated with Brittany.
2. **La Normandie** (*Normandy*), in northwestern France, bordering on the English Channel, is a region of fertile farms and rich pastureland. The Seine flows through Normandy. In addition to producing large quantities of milk, butter, and cheese, Normandy is also an industrial center. Along the coast there are several busy ports and fashionable beaches. In 1066, William the Conqueror (**Guillaume le Con-**  
**quérant**) set out from here to invade England. During the Second World War, the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy to liberate the Continent from the armed forces of Nazi Germany.
3. **L'Île-de-France**, with Paris as its capital, was the administrative heart of France. It was there that the kings lived and held their court. The dialect spoken in Île-de-France became the official language of France.
4. **L'Alsace** and **la Lorraine**, two provinces in northeastern France, were for many years the subject of a bitter territorial dispute between France and Germany. Alsace is chiefly an agricultural area, while Lorraine, an industrial region, is valuable especially for its iron-ore deposits.

5. **La Provence**, in southeastern France, borders on the Mediterranean. The best-preserved Roman monuments in France may be seen here. **Provençal**, the old dialect of Provence, is still spoken by some of the inhabitants. The stretch of coast running east of Marseille to the Italian frontier — the **Riviera**, or **Côte d’Azur** — is one of the most famous resort areas of Europe.
6. **La Touraine**, in the valley of the Loire River, is often called the “Garden of France” because it produces large quantities of fruits and vegetables. Several of the famous **châteaux de la Loire** are located here: **Blois, Chambord, Chenonceaux**.
7. **La Bourgogne** (*Burgundy*) and **la Champagne** are two important grape-producing regions of France. Their wines are world famous.

## EXERCICE

For each description in the first column, write the letter of the matching item in the second column:

- |  |       |                  |
|--|-------|------------------|
| 1. region of iron-ore mines                        | _____ | a. Bretagne      |
| 2. “garden of France”                              | _____ | b. Normandie     |
| 3. peninsula in northwestern France                | _____ | c. Lorraine      |
| 4. province known for its Burgundy wines           | _____ | d. Alsace        |
| 5. where the kings had their court                 | _____ | e. Touraine      |
| 6. landing place of Allies during Second World War | _____ | f. Champagne     |
| 7. province in southeastern France                 | _____ | g. Île de France |
| 8. province known for its bubbly wine              | _____ | h. Bourgogne     |
| 9. an agricultural region near Germany             | _____ | i. Provence      |

## EXERCICE CRÉATIF

*Choisissez une des activités suivantes.*

1. Make a map of France showing where all the provinces are located.
2. Find the names of 5 other French provinces and say why they are important.
3. Make a poster advertising one of the French provinces.