

A few suggestions about getting to Mer (Loir et Cher)!

Getting to France

There are various options open to you – Eurostar to Gare du Nord in Paris; fly to Charles de Gaulle (Paris) or Tours; or take a ferry to Calais, Boulogne, le Touquet, Dieppe or Le Havre.

Train travel ticket information

It's cheaper to buy tickets at the French station rather than from French Travel services in Britain (Eurorail, etc.). In particular, if you're over 60, you are entitled to a reduction of 25% on the cost of your ticket, without any rail pass. Just ask for *une réduction pour les plus de soixante ans* at the *guichet*. This does mean that you may have to queue a little at Austerlitz, though not at Tours.

Any French rail ticket is valid for three months. Your ticket will have a time and date printed on it but this is purely advisory. French Rail does not have the monolithic system of different tariffs that we have in Britain. You simply purchase a ticket then validate it (*composter*) before you board your train. If you forget to *composter*, then you must find the guard immediately –he's easy to spot as he blows the whistle on the platform before boarding the train!

1. Travel from Charles de Gaulle airport to Gare du Nord

Take the free shuttle (*navette*) from the terminal to the railway station. Buy a ticket for the *Gare du Nord* and take the *RER* fast train as indicated on the electronic notice board. Please note that you will need either Euro coins or a credit/debit card to purchase your ticket to the Gare du Nord from the automatic machines.

2. Travel from the Gare du Nord (Eurostar terminus) to Gare d'Austerlitz (for trains to Mer, Loir et Cher)

At Gare du Nord, take escalator signposted RER/Métro

Follow signs for Métro 5, Bobigny/ Place d'Italie

Take the métro 5, in the direction of Place d'Italie, for 8 stops (roughly 10 minutes) until you reach the Gare d'Austerlitz

Exit the métro (there is a flight of steps to walk down) and head for the Gare d'Austerlitz, looking for Arrivée grandes lignes

If you need to buy a ticket, go to the *billetterie*, remembering that reductions are available without formalities for under 26s and over 60s.

You need to *composter* (i.e. date stamp) your ticket at one of the orange machines before entering your train.

If you prefer to avoid steps, or would enjoy the scenic route take the 65 (we think!) bus south from Gare du Nord to Gare de Lyon. Then walk, following the signs to Gare d'Austerlitz which will take you over the river via the Pont Charles de Gaulle. Allow an hour, but it does depend on the traffic.

3. Travel from Gare d'Austerlitz (*Paris*) to Mer (*Loir-et-Cher*)

SNCF has reorganised all its timetables this year, with the result that you will need to change trains at Orleans (NOT Les Aubrais). Alternatively, you might like to spend a night or two in Orleans. The times below allow around ten minutes for this train and platform change. Train times from Paris to Mer are as follows:

Depart Paris:	13.27	14.27	15.27	16.27	17.57
Arrive Mer:	15.06	16.06	17.06	18.44	20.06

4. Travel from Tours airport (Ryanair, once daily) to Mer

At Tours airport, take the private coach (*le car*) that will take you to Tours station (cost: 5 euro), or a taxi (cost: 12 euro).

The journey takes roughly 15 minutes from the airport to central Tours.

SNCF has completely reorganized its timetables this year. The 2012 trains from Tours to Mer are as follows:

Depart Tours:	14.04 (Sat. only)	15.04(Fri only)	16.04 (Mon-Sat)
Arrive Mer:	14.52	15.52	16.52
Depart Tours:	17.04 (Mon-Fri)	18.04 (every day)	19.04 (every day)
Arrive Mer:	17.52	18.52	19.52

Sometimes, you need to change from the shuttle train out of Tours to the main train at *St Pierre des Corps*. If everyone else leaves the train at *St Pierre des Corps*, go with the crowd!

Hotels in Tours

We would go for a hotel near to the station or the Cathedral so that you don't have far to walk with your luggage - do travel light as you won't need an elaborate wardrobe in Suèvres. Tours is a delightful small city with a medieval street stretching from the two main points of interest, the Cathedral and the market place -you'll be able to enjoy the market on Saturday morning. There's a delightful Art gallery and lovely walks along the Loire and around the Roman walls-plus an unlikely stuffed elephant!

There are several hotels on or near the Station Square and the Tourist Office that may well suit you -remember that often breakfast is not included in the overnight price. You could try:

Quality Hotel Harmonie, 13, rue Joliot

Le Grand Hotel, 9, Place du Général Leclerc

Hotel Mirabeau, 89 bis, Boulevard heurteloup

Try booking through: www.booking.com/Hotels-in-France

5. Travel by car to Suèvres

Suèvres is about four hours drive from Caen, Le Havre and Dieppe and five and a half hours from Boulogne/Calais. The roads are good and most of the journey, until Châteaudun, is on motorway or dual carriageway.

We mostly use the Newhaven-Dieppe crossing with Transmanche Ferries: www.transmanche.com which is a longer crossing, but very comfortable, reasonably priced and gives a shorter journey on the other side.

From Calais, Boulogne and Le Touquet

Take the motorway **A16**, which you can join from all the above towns. Turn off on to the **A29 near junction 23, signposted to Abbeville, Rouen**. This junction is signaled 2000 meters in advance - do NOT continue on the A16 to Amiens and the very indirect journey around Paris. At Rouen, on the dual carriageway, follow the clear signs for **A13 to Paris**, but turn off this motorway **at junction 19, on to the N154 for Louviers, Evreux**. See below for continuation.

From Dieppe

Follow the clearly signposted road to **Rouen on the N27**. This becomes the **A151/150 into Rouen**. From here, follow the signs for **A13 to Paris** but turn off this motorway at **junction 19, on to the N154 for Louviers, Evreux**. See below for continuation.

From Le Havre

Follow the signs for **Rouen, Paris (A131)** taking the Tancarville Bridge over the Seine. After Rouen, look out for the turning on to the **N154 for Louviers and Evreux**. See below for continuation.

Continuation

From Louviers, Evreux, stay on the **N154 to Dreux** (9 roundabouts!) and Chartres (good stopping-off place). After this, take the **N10 to Bonneval and Châteaudun**.

At Châteaudun cut across country on the **D194 to Oucques and Pontijou**, where you turn left for **Maves and La Chapelle St Martin**. Here, you will find the sign posts for Suèvres, about 6 kilometres due South.

Disclaimer

Please note that this information is only advisory and we cannot guarantee that the timings and routes will be correct when you want to travel. It is essential that you check your own travel arrangements carefully, because this is only a guide. Please do not hesitate to call or email us if you need more information.

Enquiries to: **020 8764 8356** E-mail: imm.fr@btinternet.com