



Students at Crea-Langues in Provence

The Pleasure Principle

When immersing yourself in all things French, *le plaisir* is essential—the pleasure of learning the language, the techniques of French cuisine or traditional arts and handcrafts is a fundamental part of the experience. The 2011 Travel Study Guide is all about these pleasures and where to find them. Every section is intended to help you get the most out of your educational travels, whether you wish to perfect your grammar, concoct a perfect *mousse au chocolat* or capture the Normandy coast in watercolors.

The following pages are meant to help you sort through the myriad options available. We have divided the guide into four sections: language schools, cooking schools, wine-tasting courses and handcraft classes. Each section profiles a few schools and programs as examples of the diversity of courses available, both in Paris and in various regions in France. You will also find listings of schools along with a key for selecting the right program. An expanded version of this guide is also on www.francetoday.com, along with vital practical information for planning your French adventure.

LANGUAGE CLASSES

Just brushing up on the fine points of French grammar or dipping into the language of Molière for the first time, improving your job skills or learning for the sheer fun of it, studying French in France is the best and fastest way to fluency, and a wonderful way to travel at the same time.



The Monastère de Ségriès in Provence

CREA-LANGUES – PROVENCE

If the idea of lavender fields, sunflowers and southern accents tickles your fancy, then pack your bags for Provence. Crea-Langues is located in the lovely village of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie in the Alpes de Haute-Provence, near the spectacular gorges of the Verdon River and the Lake of Sainte Croix. Founded in 1984, Crea-Langues has blossomed into a first-class language school. Students from all over the world come for a few weeks to mix the business of learning or perfecting their French with the pleasure of staying in one of the most beautiful regions of France.

The school is residential, installed in a beautiful 19th-century former Cistercian monastery and its 20-acre domain, with a cloister and courtyard, an organic vegetable garden, swimming pool, shaded terraces, and library. The single, double and twin-bed rooms are furnished in simple Provençal style; there's a grand piano in the living room; and the dining room serves traditional Provençal cuisine and regional wines. Living on the premises, with teachers on hand at meals and in the evenings too, offers students the opportunity for total immersion in the French language and lifestyle.

One-, two- and three-week courses are available, with separate locations for adults and teenagers. The Intensive program includes both morning and afternoon classes: the A La Carte option offers informal afternoon activities and excursions with teachers

or guest speakers along.

Rebecca Nybo had studied in France many years ago and found that her French had gotten rusty. She wanted to refresh it, and decided that the best way for her to do so was with an immersion program. "I wanted a mix of class and conversation so I chose the A La Carte program with classes in the morning and excursions in the afternoon," says the 47-year-old Nybo. Excursions available around Moustiers range from visits to a truffle cultivator to canoeing. Nybo particularly liked a presentation and tasting of olive oils made by a local producer. Crea-Langues founder Annemarie Desmet stresses that such enjoyable activities allow students to put their French to use in context as well as "integrate the local residents and the region into the courses".

Crea-Langues also offers several theme weekends, when students can go hiking, tour the landscapes that inspired Cézanne, or visit the Avignon theater festival, all while practicing their French. Nybo found that she was able to break through her inhibitions during her stay—the other students and professors, she says, "inspired me to be bold". Another student, 63-year-old Victoria Tschinkel, was thrilled when she realized that she was dreaming in French after her third night. "The quality of the professors was exceptional," says Tschinkel. "They are dedicated to their mission."

Le Monastère de Ségriès, Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, 04.92.77.74.58.

www.crealangues.com. The school is open from April to September.

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