



ESSENTIAL UTILITIES: ELECTRICITY, INTERNET, AND HOUSING COSTS EXPLAINED

Everything you need to know to manage your energy bills, internet setup, and what's actually included in your rent.



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RECAP: **WHAT TO REMEMBER**

RECAP

No time to read everything? Here's what you need to know about utilities in France.

➤ What's included in the rent?

If your lease says "charges included" (loyer charges comprises), it usually covers cold water, garbage collection, and maintenance of shared areas. Electricity, gas and internet, and housing tax are almost always separate—ask your landlord to be sure.

1.

➤ How to set up electricity and gas?

It's your responsibility as a tenant. Choose from providers like [EDF](#), [Engie](#), [Octopus Energy](#) ou [TotalEnergies](#), and open your contract before moving in.

2.

➤ What about Internet?

If you're staying short-term, get a mobile plan with lots of data. For longer stays, go for a Wi-Fi box from providers like [Free](#), [Red by SFR](#) or [Bouygues Telecom](#).

3.

➤ Useful tips

Compare offers, use a French IBAN to avoid issues, and don't forget to cancel your contracts before you leave!

4.



2

**ESSENTIAL UTILITIES:
ALL YOU NEED
TO KNOW**



INTRODUCTION

When moving into a new place in France, there are a few things you'll need to take care of to make your home comfortable and functional. Depending on your type of accommodation, some charges might be included in your rent, while others will be your responsibility—and require you to open contracts yourself.

Before settling in, it's important to understand what's covered by your rent and what you'll need to manage on your own: **electricity, gas, internet, housing tax...** Each service comes with its own providers and specific process.

In this article, we walk you through how to set up your energy and internet contracts, which providers are worth checking out, and **how to avoid common pitfalls**.

Ready? Let's go!

Included Charges vs. Personal Subscriptions: What's the Difference?

When you rent a place, your lease might say “charges comprises” (charges included). That means some regular costs are already bundled into your monthly rent.

Generally, included charges cover:

- **Cold water** (and hot water if the building has collective heating).
- **Maintenance of shared areas** (elevator, cleaning, hallway lighting, gardens...).
- **Waste collection tax** (for garbage removal).

But keep in mind, some expenses are usually **not included** and must be handled separately.

- **Electricity and/or gas:** you'll need to open your own contract.
- **Internet:** rarely included, unless you're in student housing.
- **Housing tax (taxe d'habitation):** this is being phased out for most students, but can still apply in some cases.

Before signing your lease, always ask the landlord exactly what's included. If possible, try to speak with the previous tenant too—it can save you a lot of surprises later on.



Electricity and Gas: How to Open a Contract

Historically, **EDF** has been the main electricity supplier, and **GDF** (now called Engie) used to handle gas. But the market has opened up, and today there are **plenty of alternative providers** offering competitive and flexible plans.

Here are some of the most common energy providers:

- **EDF** (and its sub-brand **SoWee**)
- **Engie** (formerly GDF Suez)
- **Octopus Energy** (one of the few with English-speaking support)
- **TotalEnergies**
- **Vattenfall**
- **Ohm Énergie**
- **Ilek** (local green energy)
- **Mint Énergie**

Good to know: No matter which provider you choose, the **same national network** is used (Enedis for electricity, GRDF for gas), so the **quality of service is identical**. The real differences lie in pricing, options, and customer support.

➤ How much does it cost?

For a small apartment or studio, expect to pay around **€40–60/month**. Your costs depend on:

- **How much energy you use** (especially if you have electric heating)
- **The type of plan you choose** (fixed rate, off-peak hours, green energy, etc.)

➤ Our recommendations

- **If you're more comfortable in English:** Octopus Energy is a solid option with English-language support.
- **If you speak French (or feel confident using a translator):** most other providers have great offers available online.

Internet: What's the Best Option Based on Your Stay?

A good internet connection is essential—whether you need it for studying, staying in touch with family, or binge-watching *Arcane*. But how much does it cost? And what plan should you get?

It all depends on how long you're staying in France.

► Short stays (under 3 months)

Skip the home Wi-Fi box—it's not worth it. Between the installation delays (1 to 3 weeks) and cancellation fees (about €50), it's too much hassle.

Instead, go for a mobile data plan with plenty of gigabytes. You can use your phone as a hotspot and stay connected easily.

Our recommendations:

- **Lebara**: 200+ GB for around €15/month
- **Red by SFR**: 100 GB for around €10/month

It's simple, affordable, and easy to set up—especially if you need internet right away.



➤ Longer stays (3+ months)

If you're here for a longer period, getting a home Wi-Fi box is a better deal. You'll enjoy a faster, more stable connection—plus access to 200+ TV channels, which can help you improve your French!

Here are the main providers to consider:

- **Sosh** (subsidiary of Orange): no long-term contract, reliable network.
- **Red by SFR** (subsidiary of SFR): low prices, no commitment.
- **Free**: good value for money.
- **Bouygues Telecom**: also offers 4G/5G boxes if fiber isn't available.
- **Orange**: more expensive, but very reliable.

Note: Most of these websites (like energy providers too) are only available in French. If needed, **use Google Translate** or the built-in translation in Chrome to navigate.

Check your address for fiber eligibility before signing up. Also, keep in mind that installation may take 3 to 21 days, so plan ahead!

Helpful Tips to Avoid Issues

- **Ask what's included in your rent:** Get a detailed list of included charges from your landlord or the previous tenant.
- **Compare offers:** Prices and promotions change often—shop around before committing.
- **Start early:** Set up your contracts as soon as you move in to avoid delays.
- **Cancel before you leave:** Don't forget to terminate your contracts to avoid surprise bills.

Happy moving!



FAQ: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

Essential Utilities in France: key questions and answers.



What If I Move In and There's No Electricity or Gas?



If your apartment isn't already connected, you'll need to open a contract with a provider. Contact them as soon as possible—activation can take anywhere from **24 hours to 5 days**, depending on your situation.

Can I Get a No-Commitment Internet Plan?

Yes! Providers like **Sosh**, **Red by SFR**, or **Free** offer no-contract plans, which means you can cancel anytime without penalty—ideal if you're staying short-term.

How Do I Know If My Place Has Fiber Internet?

You can check fiber availability by entering your address on providers' websites (like Orange, Free, SFR, or Bouygues). If your building isn't connected, you can still use ADSL or a 4G/5G box.

Do I Need a French IBAN to Pay for Utilities?

Most energy and internet providers require a French IBAN for direct debit payments. We highly recommend opening a local account—it'll make things much easier.

N26 ou **Revolut** are great options for international students, easy to open and available in English.

Do I Need Home Insurance on Top of Utilities?

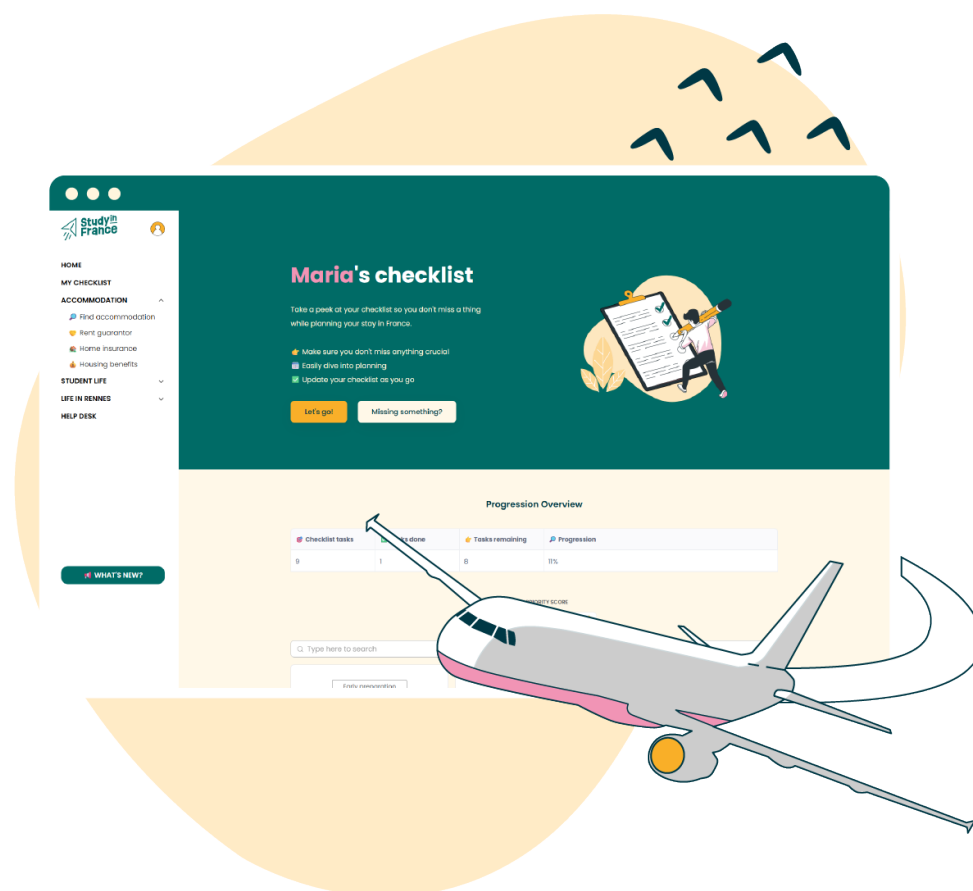
Yes, **home insurance** (assurance habitation) is mandatory in France. It protects you in case of damage (like fire or water leaks) and is often required by your landlord before move-in.





USEFUL RESOURCES

The International Student Hub: your all-in-one app for life in France



The International Student Hub is a **free web app** that brings together everything you need to prepare for your stay in France.



**Student
housing search**



**Scholarships &
financial aids**



**Administrative
procedures**



**Campus life &
integration**

Pick your city, create your account, and start planning!

Check out the app

Bonus: dozens of free downloadable guides on Study in France

Alongside the International Student Hub, we've got a bunch of guides to help you prep everything on your own — from banking and health insurance to getting a SIM card and more!



Register to health insurance

All you need to know about health insurance and top-ups in France.

Priority Score



Reading time

🕒 10 min



Find a guarantor in France

What to do if you don't have a guarantor in France.

Priority Score



Reading time

🕒 7 min



Choose the right home insurance

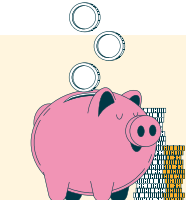
Why it's mandatory, how it works, and how to choose the right one.

Priority Score



Reading time

🕒 6 min



Open a bank account in France

How to choose and open a bank account in France, step by step.

Priority Score



Reading time

🕒 6 min

[Explore all the guides](#)

FINAL NOTE

We hope this guide helped you see things more clearly! Don't forget to join our community to stay updated and connect with other students.

Good luck with your preparations — and see you soon on **Study in France** !

