

<h1>What is in a Name? France</h1>	
<p>France. Republic in west Europe. Named after Franks, Germanic people who settled in what was Gaul in 5th century AD, with their own name = 'freemen'. Adrian Room, <i>Place-Names Of the World: A Dictionary of their Origins and Backgrounds</i> (Angus & Robertson Publishers: London, England, 1987) 97.</p>	
<p>Paris. Capital of France. Full Roman name was Lutetia Parisiorum = “Lutetia of the Parisii.” Lutetia probably derives from Latin luturr = “clay, sludge.” Parisii were Gaulish tribe with name perhaps deriving from Celtic par = “ship” (ie “shipmen, sailors,” dwelling on banks of River Seine), or from word = “border town.” Adrian Room, 183.</p>	
<p>Seine, River. In north France, flowing north-west through Paris and Rouen into English Channel. Roman name was Sequana, based on Celtic name which was itself formed from some pre-Celtic word probably = “calm, quiet” (compare Saone). Name gradually changed (Siguna, Signe, Seine) to present form Seine. Adrian Room, 214.</p>	
<p>Marseilles. 2nd largest city in France, seaport on south coast. Earliest known form of name is Massalia (Latin Massilia). City was perhaps founded by Phoenicians about 1000 BC and named after tribe Massili, whose own name is of uncertain origin, or more likely by Greeks about 600 BC. It is possible, though, that mas- element may mean simply “spring.” Adrian Room, 155.</p>	
<p>Brittany. Historic province in north-west France. Name arose in 5th century A.D. when Britons fled here from Britain to escape Germanic invaders (Angles, Saxons and Jutes). Roman name was Britannia minor = “little Britain,” in contrast to Britannia major = “great Britain.” Breton name of Brittany is Breiz, of same origin, as is “Breton” itself. Adrian Room, 54.</p>	
<p>Brest. City and seaport in west Brittany, north-west France. Probably based on Breton bre = “hill,” as for Irish town Bray. Romans had military post and fort here. Adrian Room, 54.</p>	

Berry. Historic province in central France, south of Paris. From Roman Biturica, after Gaulish tribe Bituriges, with their own name derived from Celtic bith, bed = “marshland.” Adrian Room, 46.	
Gascony. Historic province in south-west France. Latin name was Vasconia, from inhabitants Vascs (Basques), who in 6 th century were driven out of their territory in south Pyrenees by Western Goths and settled here. Adrian Room, 101.	
Lille. City in extreme north-east of France. From Old French l’isle = “the island”; city was built as a fortress surrounded by marshes. Adrian Room, 140.	
Loire River. Longest river in France, flowing north-west from central France into Bay of Biscay. Roman name was Liger, from Indo-European kg = “to flow, to run.” Adrian Room, 142.	
Lyons. 3 rd largest city in France, in central south-east, on River Rhone. Roman name was Lugdunum, possibly from Gaulish dun = “fortress,” with 1 st element luaus = “little,” or perhaps from name of pagan Celtic god Lug or from Celtic lucodunos = bright mountain.” Town was founded in 43 B.C. Adrian Room, 146.	
Mont Blanc. Highest mountain in Alps, in south-east France. French = “white mountain,” with reference to permanently snow-covered peaks. Adrian Room, 162.	
Montpellier. Marseilles. Chief city of Languedoc, south of France, north-west of Marsaille. In 975 had Latin naame Mons pestellarius = “woad mountain,” probably because was place where this dye was produced. Name eventually contracted to Montpellier. Adrian Room, 163.	
River Marne. In north-east France, joining River Seine just north of Paris. Said to be from Latin matrona = “mother,” in sense of “mother of the gods”; more likely to be from either Ligurian ma = “to roar” or possibly Indo-European mad = to flow down. Adrian Room, 154.	
Antibes. Port and resort in south France, south-west of Nice. Arose in 5 th century BC as Greek colony with name of Antipolis = “opposite the town;” town is on opposite (west) side of bay to Nice. Adrian Room, 27.	

<p>Aquitaine. Historic province in south-west France. From Latin aqua = “water;” region is fertile plain bounded on west by Bay of Biscay and drained by River Garonne and its tributaries. Adrian Room, 28.</p>	
<p>Belfort. Town in central eastern France, between Jura Mountains and Vosges. From French bel = “fine” + fort = “fortress.” Feature of town is castle on high rock which was used for defence as recently as 20th century (it commands route between Vosges and Jura Mountains). Adrian Room, 42.</p>	
<p>River Meuse. Rises in north-east France and flows north through Ardennes into Belgium and Netherlands, then west to join River Waal. Name, as Dutch version Maas, derives from Celtic Mosa, ultimately connected with Indo-European root word mus = “damp, moisture.” Adrian Room, 158.</p>	
<p>Nice. Seaport and resort in south France, on Mediterranean. Was Greek colony of Nikaea (Latin Nicaea); city was dedicated to Nike, Greek goddess of victory, and so named to mark victory of Greek settlers from Massilia (modern Marseilles) over Ligurians in 3rd century B.C. Adrian Room, 171.</p>	
<p>Somme, River. In north France flowing west into English Channel. In Caesar’s time was Samara, possibly from Indo-European sai = “to flow” + ar = “water”; could also be connected with Celtic soghar = “quiet” (compare Seine, Saone). Adrian Room, 219.</p>	
<p>Tours. City in west central France, south-west of Paris. Former capital of Touraine; Roman name was Civitas Turonum = “town of the Turoni.” Official name-Caesaro-dunum = “Caesar’s city” (from Gaulish dun = “town”)-did not last and by 3rd century had fallen out of use. Adrian Room, 231.</p>	
<p>Bayonne. Town in south-west France, near Bay of Biscay. Name may be based on Low Latin baia = “bay.” Adrian Room, 41.</p>	
<p>Arras. Town in north-east France, south-west of Lille. Former capital of Atrebates, whose name derived from root word trebo = “people.” (See also Artois.) Adrian Room, 31.</p>	
<p>Arles. Town in south-west France. From Roman name Arelate, derived from Gaulish ar = “by” + fait = “marsh.” Town is</p>	

situated on low-lying land beside River Rhone. Adrian Room, 30.	
Auvergne. Historic province in central France. From Roman name Arvernium, after Gaulish tribe Arverni who inhabited region before Roman conquest of Gaul in 1 st century BC. Tribal name derives from Celtic ar = “good” + vern = “warrior.” Adrian Room, 34.	
Dijon. City in central east France. From Roman name Diviodunum = “hill of Divio”; 2 nd element of name is Celtic. Adrian Room, 84.	
Cannes. Seaport and resort on Mediterranean in south France. Probably from Latin canna = “reed” (French word is plural), or perhaps from pre-Indo-European can = “height”; old town of Cannes is at foot of low hills. Adrian Room, 62.	
Grenoble. City in south-east France. Latin name was Gratianopolis = “town of Gratian” (Roman emperor who founded it in 4 th century). Modern name derives from this. Adrian Room, 107.	
Le Mans. City in north-west central France, south-west of Paris. Roman name in 2 nd century BC was Vindinon, from Gaulish vindo = “white.” In 4 th century AD took name of tribe of Cenomanni (perhaps = “hill dwellers”), whose capital city it was. Name was shortened to Celmans, with 1 st element confused with French le = “the.” (See also Maine (2), Cremona.) Adrian Room, 138.	
Burgundy. Historic province in east central France. From Germanic tribe Burgundii who settled here in 5 th century, with their name derived from Gothic baurgjans = “dwellers in fortified places.” They had originally settled on Bornholm. Adrian Room, 57.	
Bordeaux. Chief port of south-west France. Latin name was Burdigala, probably from Gaulish tribe Bituriges Vivisci, but this is not likely to be taken, as sometimes stated, from bordigala, diminutive of bordo (borda) = “fish-pond.” Adrian Room, 51.	
Orleans. City on River Loire, south-west of Paris, France. Gaulish name was Cenabium, from Celtic cenna = “hill.”	

<p>Original city was destroyed by Caesar and rebuilt in 3rd century as Roman fortified town with name Aurelianum, in honour of Emperor Aurelius. From this comes modern name Orleans. Adrian Room, 179.</p>	
<p>Riviera. Name of south coastal strip with popular resorts in many countries, but notably in France, where it extends along Mediterranean coast from Marseilles to La Spezia, Italy. Italian = “coast.” See also Cote d’Azur. Adrian Room, 201.</p>	
<p>Verdun. Town in east France on River Meuse, west of Metz. From Celtic dun = “mountain” or “fort,” with doubtful 1st element. Name perhaps meant something like defensive dam on the river (Meuse). Adrian Room, 241.</p>	
<p>Versailles. Town with famous palace of Versailles, south-west of Paris, France. From Latin versus = “slope” + ending – alia. Adrian Room, 242.</p>	
<p>Vichy. Resort and spa in central France. From Roman name Vicus calidus = “warm place,” referring to warm springs for which town is famous. Adrian Room, 242.</p>	
<p>Normandy. Region and historic province in north-west France. Named after Norsemen (“north men”) who invaded it in 9th century and settled here as Normans. Adrian Room, 173.</p>	
<p>Dunkirk. Port in north-east France, on the North Sea. From Flemish duine = dune + kerk = church, i.e. church on the dunes. Town grew up round church of the St. Eloi, built here in 7th century. Adrian Room, 86.</p>	
<p>Alsace. Historic territory in north-east France. Of uncertain origin. Once thought to be connected with Indo-European alive = “alder.” No proof that name is derived from River Ill. Original meaning lost as early as 7th century, when was called Alsatia. Adrian Room, 23.</p>	
<p>Lorraine. Historic province in north-east France. From Latin Lotharii regnum = “kingdom of Lothair”; in 843 empire of Charlemagne was divided by his grandsons: central territory (Francia media) went to one of them, Lothair I (795-855), who in turn partitioned it between his sons, the younger, Lothair II (reigned 855 – 69), receiving the north region, then extending west of River Rhine from North Sea to the Alps, and</p>	

corresponding to modern Lorraine. Adrian Room, 143.	
Calais. Town and seaport in north-east France on Straits of Dover. Named after Belgian/Gaulish tribe Caleti, whose name = “dwellers by the sea,” from Gaulish cul = “channel.” Otherwise name could perhaps derive from pre-Celtic root kal = “rock.” Adrian Room, 59.	