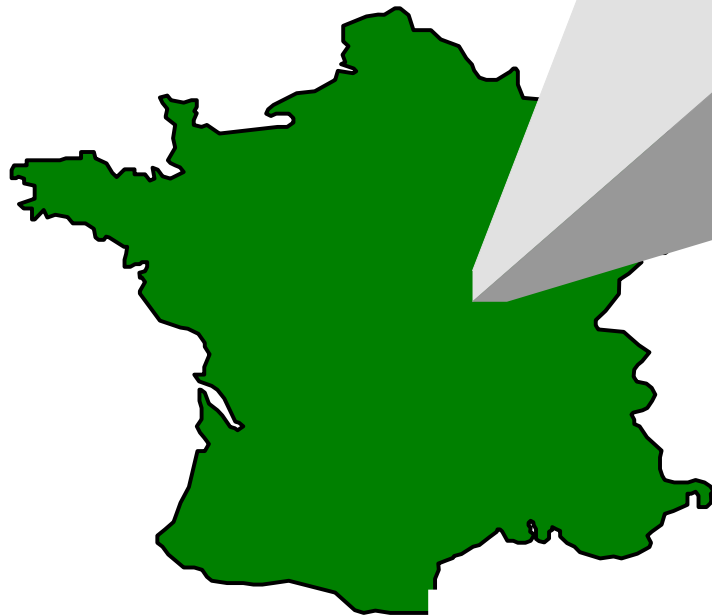


# THE DIJON STUDENT HANDBOOK

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# THE DIJON STUDENT HANDBOOK

*for the Wake Forest fall semester program to*

## **Dijon, France**



Congratulations on your acceptance into the program in Dijon! This semester promises to be one of your most memorable at Wake Forest. The people you meet, the friends you make, and the experiences you have will all be unforgettable. But now that you've been accepted, what's next? This handbook is designed to give you some idea of what you will need to take, to do, and to expect. It was originally created who-knows-how-long-ago by a student who had gone to Dijon and has been updated several times, most recently by two Dijon program students who went in Fall 2008. But don't forget that this is only a guide; it's merely intended to help to make the trip a little smoother for you and to let you know what to expect.

You can get a lot or a little out of the time you will be spending abroad; don't let this opportunity go by without trying to get the most out of it that you can!

**BON VOYAGE ET PROFITEZ-EN!**



### **The Dijon Program Website**

For information on passports and visas, your plane ticket to Europe, directions for getting from the Paris airport to the Dijon hotel, group excursions, classes, and much more, see the Dijon program website:

[http://www.wfu.edu/romancelanguages/study\\_abroad/dijon/index.html](http://www.wfu.edu/romancelanguages/study_abroad/dijon/index.html)

For questions, consult your program director, the Dijon program faculty administrator, or staff members of the Wake Forest Center for International Studies.

### **Your First Days in Dijon**

During your time at the hotel, you'll be living right next to all of the other Wake students. This is a great opportunity to do stuff together and to get to know one another. Also, take advantage of this time by familiarizing yourself with the *centre ville* of Dijon, as well as the public transportation system. Explore it with other students and have fun discovering the city!



### **What to Bring**

This is one of the most-asked questions, but it is also one of the most difficult to answer! The most important rule to follow is that you don't want to take more than you yourself can carry (from planes to trains to taxis). Remember that although your parents may help you take your luggage to the airport, when you reach France you will need to bring your bags through customs, and then carry them to a cab or train to the Gare de Lyon, put them on another train to Dijon, then take a taxi to the hotel. Two medium-sized suitcases (even better if they are on wheels) and a carry-on or backpack should suffice; any more than that will prove hard to manage. You may also want to bring a small duffel or daypack stuffed into your larger bags;

this will be useful on the group excursions when you need to pack more than a backpack but not as much as a large duffel or suitcase.

As for clothing, a good rule of thumb is to take half as much as you think you'll need - really and truly. The worst thing you can do is bring too much. Many students in our group had to send home bags with their family when they came to visit because they had brought too much and didn't wear it or have space to bring gifts back. Bring clothes that you don't mind wearing several times before washing them, as the French often do. (You'll get used to it, we promise!) Jeans are ideal. You'll need at least three, possibly four pairs. Also remember to bring a good pair of shoes. During the first month, you are travelling all over France, and walking A LOT! So make sure you bring something that will be comfortable to walk in if you have a two-hour tour and then time to explore a city. The last thing you want is to be stuck in uncomfortable shoes! If necessary, you can also ship things to your host family, but remember that you will not move in with them for at least a week after your arrival.



The climate in Dijon is similar to Winston-Salem's and does pose a few packing frustrations. For example, the first few weeks will probably be hot so you'll definitely want a few pairs of shorts and T-shirts. But warm weather won't last long; a cold, wet, and sometimes long winter in Dijon is one of the few things you can always count on. You only need about two or three weeks' worth of summer clothes, so make sure you don't pack too many warm-weather clothes! For the colder weather, you'll need a sweatshirt, a few good sweaters and pairs of pants, several long- and short-sleeve shirts (that you can layer together), and at least a two-week supply of socks and underwear. For the first two months a light, waterproof jacket should suffice (with the sweatshirts/sweaters), but later on you will definitely need a heavy winter coat,

as well as serious gloves. If you can make the luggage space, bring the coat with you; if not, send it over before you leave for Europe. And pack a compact umbrella – it does rain! You will also need at least one nice, dress-up outfit for special dinners, concerts, or celebrations. For guys, this means one sports coat and a tie and a nice button-down shirt or two. For girls, bring one or two nice dresses or skirts. You won't need more than one or two of these really nice outfits, but you may find that the French dress up a little more in their day-to-day life than we do here on a college campus. Bring several casual dress shirts and things that you can layer as well as mix-and-match (girls may want to bring a few more casual skirt/sweater combos).

If you bring an electric razor or hair dryer, remember that you'll need to buy a converter before coming over. You may find that it's easier and cheaper to buy a hair dryer in France, rather than toting over your own as well as the converter. As for toiletries, don't forget that France *is* a civilized western-European country; you will be able to buy things like shampoo and toothpaste there, often the same brands that you find here. If you wear contacts, bringing a second pair and some extra solution is a good idea. Also, if you take prescription medicine, be sure to bring enough to last you the entire semester, or at least until your parents can bring more when they visit, and make sure you pack it in your carry-on so you aren't stuck without it if your bag gets lost. As for the specifics of your family, you may want to contact the person who previously stayed with your family; this will help your packing in terms of knowing what extras your family may already have (such as a hairdryer). Don't forget to bring your family a housewarming gift! Something typically American or representative of your home town is even better!



For the plane ride and the many trips you will be taking, don't forget an MP3 player, as well as a charger. You'll of course want to bring a camera, because you will never want to forget the beautiful places you visit! Make sure that you bring a converter for your charger and a case to protect your camera. The last thing you want is for anything to happen to it! Whatever else you decided to bring, remember one thing: it must be carried, and it can and will get heavy!

Once you have figured out all that you want to take, experiment with different ways of packing so you can find the one that will work best for you. One good tip for saving space is rolling all of your clothes – this will make them much more compact than simply folding them and it will also keep them relatively wrinkle-free. Also, put your shoes on the outside of your carry-on bags if possible, but if you need to pack them in your luggage, fill them with items such as socks. If you can wear your bulkiest shoes on the plane, do so.

### **Money**

In order to have a good time, money will be a necessity. However it doesn't take thousands to have fun. It's difficult to suggest a fixed amount to bring, as everyone is different in what and how they spend. A rough estimate would be \$1,500 to \$2,000, though the best way to determine the right amount for you is to talk to students who have recently been to Dijon and see what they spend and what they recommend. Don't forget that the exchange rate plays a large role in how much you'll need to bring.



Bring money over in whatever form you feel comfortable with. Some people from our group brought travelers checks, which will have to be converted to cash at a bank – they aren't accepted in French stores like they are in the U.S. Credit and debit cards are a good thing to bring because they stay current with the exchange rate. Be sure to call your bank or credit card company to tell them you'll be using the cards abroad. Remember that personal checks will not work in Europe.

When you think about how much to bring, think about how much you will be traveling

and where you will be traveling. Some cities are more expensive than others, and flights and trains vary in cost. On average, people from our group probably spent around \$250 per weekend, including travel, hotels and food. There are many cheap flights through companies such as Ryan Air from Paris which will save you a lot of money on your trips! Beginning in October, your classes at the university will usually meet four days a week, but be sure to check with your program director about the semester schedule before you start planning your travels! Keep in mind that your schedule will not be available until just before the first day of classes in October.

### **Dijon, the Town**

Many former participants in the Dijon program remark that they find the city to be the Winston-Salem of France. To some extent this statement is true. In terms of size, Dijon has a rough population of 150,000 people. But the comparison doesn't go much farther, because remember that you are in France! The city has a very small feel to it; the centre ville is relatively compact, and the old, narrow, medieval roads that wind in and out of it fit into its 15<sup>th</sup>-century history. Dijon once was home to one of the most powerful families in all of Europe. The region of Burgundy and its capital were in fact more powerful than even Paris during part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The *Palais des Ducs de Bourgogne* in Dijon now houses the *Musée des Beaux Arts*, considered the second best art museum in France outside of Paris. Besides mustard, Dijon has some industry, but for the most part its small shops keep life in the town pretty busy. You'll soon find yourself familiar with le vin de Bourgogne, pain d'épice, crème de cassis, escargots, and many other delicacies and traditions.



## Transportation

Getting to know your way around Dijon will be exciting, so don't worry about getting lost. Maps are easy to find and the town itself doesn't take long to figure out, as it is relatively compact. The ticket office of the buses (Divia) is located at Place Grangier (near the Post Office). Don't worry about getting tickets or a map *as soon as* you get to Dijon, as the Wake professor will provide both after your first meeting. A certain amount of money will also be provided for transportation each month, especially for those who live outside of the center of town. You might want to consider getting a monthly pass, which will save you money in the long run if you are using the bus to get to and from school each day as well as taking the bus to explore Dijon. Be sure to punch (*oblitérer*) your ticket when you get on the bus (unless you have a monthly pass). Occasionally, two or three Divia reps will board the bus to ensure that all passengers have validated tickets. These random checks especially pick up after all the students return to school in October. Getting caught on the bus without a ticket will result in a sizeable fine, as the dumb American excuse doesn't always work. Each punch of the *carte* is good for one hour, including transfers. To signal an approaching stop, be sure to push the "*arrêt demandé*" button located on the poles in the bus.



## **Restaurants**

Dijon offers a wide range of restaurants. For when your parents come to visit, there are many higher priced and fancier restaurants. However, when you realize that you are buying most of your meals with your own money, you will start to look for some cheaper options. On campus, once you get your student ID, you have the option to buy meal tickets to use at the Restau-U. This is a great option because a meal ticket (you need to buy at least ten at a time) makes each meal about 2.80 euros. Each ticket is worth 10 points, and when you get into the cafeteria, you will see that each food item is worth a certain number of points. You generally get a pretty decent-sized meal for a very small amount of money. This is also great because you can go in between classes, and it is where many of the French students go to eat!

There are kebab places all over Dijon, as well as bakeries where you can buy croissants or little sandwiches. Some of the other less pricey options that students in our group recommended are:

### **Le Bory:** 33, Rue Amiral Roussin

A typical French crêperie! Very small and tucked in a small street, this restaurant offers great crêpes and galettes, as well as cider and a good choice of wines. This is a very small restaurant, but there is also “Le Petit Bory,” which, ironically, is larger and a little outside the center of Dijon.

### **La Guinguette:** 1, Cours Bourberain (off Rue Berbisey)

A little “hole in the wall” that caters to college students: the portions were really big, and it’s the only place in France that ever gave out to-go boxes for leftovers. They serve mainly tartiflettes and big, delicious omelettes.

### **My Wok:** 3, Boulevard De Sévigné

An almost fast food stir fry restaurant. Very popular among the students in our group because you have different choices in toppings, meats, and sauces for a very reasonable price. Also a WiFi spot!

### **Flunch:** 24, Boulevard de Brosses (Near Place Darcy)

Flunch is somewhat comparable to the Pit. There are different and various choices each night, but before picking your main meal, you can grab a salad, fruit, drinks and desserts. Another cheap and quick choice!

### **Café des Ducs:** 96, Rue de la Liberté (Place de la Liberation)

This is a great spot if you are looking for good people-watching and typical French dishes such as the delicious croque-monsieur!

**Mezzo di Pasta:** 16, Rue Musette

France's Italian fast-food! You pick a shape of pasta and a sauce and it is ready within a few minutes! Très bon marché!

**Le Verdi:** 24, Place Emile Zola

A fairly reasonably priced Italian Restaurant in the center of town. There are about ten restaurants in Place Emile Zola, with many different choices, so if you ever can't decide what you're in the mood for, make sure to head over there!

**La Tartiflette:** 10, Place Emile Zola

Also located in Place Emile Zola, make sure you try the wonderful raclette!

\*\*When ordering beef in a restaurant, remember these terms: "bien cuit" = well done; "à point" = medium rare; "saignant" = rare; "bleu" = very, very rare.

Also, people-watching while eating or drinking is a French pastime. Do not be surprised when you walk by a restaurant and everyone watches you. The French are not discreet about staring, and you'll definitely get used to it! Many cafes have outdoor tables and chairs that do not have people facing each other while eating, but instead have both chairs facing the street.



### **Grocery Stores and Shopping**

Before you go grocery shopping, make sure you talk to your host family about keeping your own food in the house and being able to cook in the house. Although there were students in our group who could cook in their houses, some other families did not want students to use the kitchen, or only to use it for special occasions, so make sure that you talk to your family about this before bringing home food.

Like many European cities, Dijon has an open market. The market is generally open from the morning until the early afternoon on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. This is a good place to find fresh foods, but there are also many vendors that sell clothing and jewelry.

There are many grocery stores around Dijon, including one near Les Halles. Two larger stores, Monoprix and Carrefour, are great places to get toiletries like shampoo, toothpaste, etc., food items like snacks and groceries, or even cheap shoes and clothes. Monoprix, kind of the French equivalent of Target, is in centre ville; Carrefour, which is more like Walmart, is on the edge of town, about a 20-minute bus ride from centre ville.



*Les Halles*

### **Museums**

There are several interesting museums in Dijon that can provide entertainment for an afternoon, and are a great activity to do with your host family. Le Musée des Beaux Arts warrants a couple of trips as there is much to see, including the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy. It is especially

interesting after the trip to Paris and after having studied some art history. Le Musée Magnin, Le Musée Archéologique, Le Musée d'Histoire Naturelle and Le Musée d'Art Religieux are also worth a visit.

Le Musée Magnin's permanent exhibition of paintings and statues is interesting and they have special exhibits that are very well done. Le Musée de la Vie Bourguignonne is rather large and elaborate. It is a good museum to visit at the beginning of the trip, as a sort of introduction to the history of the town and the region. There are also several other museums around town and a good place to get information about all of them is the Office de Tourisme, between Place Darcy and the gare. Most of the museums are free, so that's another reason to go!

### **Parks**

During those warmer fall days a trip to Lac Kir can be quite enjoyable. There is a nice trail around the four-kilometer perimeter that is ideal for jogging or walking. It's also a good place to picnic. Parc Darcy is a good place to relax or do work and is right downtown by Place Darcy. Parc de la Colombière, located past Place Wilson, is yet another large park in the Dijon area. Finally, there is a huge park out at Toison D'Or with basketball courts, walking paths, and even outdoor ping pong and chess tables. Soon you'll discover that little parks and gardens are speckled throughout town and are great places to talk, read, nap, or people-watch.

### **Nightlife**

There are plenty of bars and fun places to go out in Dijon. The following are a few that past groups frequented:

#### **Flannery's**

This pub is very close to Place Darcy near Cathédrale Saint Bénigne. It's a relaxed atmosphere with a lot of TVs where they frequently show soccer games and sometimes there is live music. The drinks are a little on the pricey side and the crowd is slightly older. Nevertheless it is a nice place to hang out and great times will be had by all who enter.

#### **Club Salsa**

Put on your dancing shoes and head to this Mecca of fun near Place de la République. Drinks are moderately priced and although it can get pretty crowded, it has been dubbed by some the best place to dance.

#### **Chat Noir**

This nightclub attracts a young crowd with its excellent dance floor. There was a rumor that heels for girls are mandatory, but this is not true. Chat Noir is a fun time, however there is a 4

Euro cover charge and drinks are expensive. The coat check is expensive as well so if you can, leave it at home.

### **Colors**

This club has a convenient location in the centre commercial downtown, but the cover charge can be a bit much and like at Chat Noir, the coat check is expensive. However the drinks are moderately priced and there is a nice dance floor.

### **Chez Nous**

This hole-in-the-wall bar is a real experience. Drinks are cheap and you are guaranteed to meet some characters as everyone there is always very friendly and interested in talking to newcomers.

### **Beer Country**

This bar has, as its name suggests, a huge variety of beers so it's a great place to try something new. The atmosphere is relaxed and people are friendly.

### **Movies, Theater, and Music**

There are many movie theaters in town that show French as well as dubbed American and other foreign films. Generally there will be a student discount. Some theaters around town are the Eldorado, Cinéma le Darcy and Olympia. The **Eldorado** plays indie films, lots of foreign and French films, and shows films in the *version originale* (e.g. American films in English). The 2 pm showing is always 4 euros, a deal. The cinema is located just past Place Wilson, towards the university. **Cinéma Le Darcy** is a standard French movie theater with half a dozen films, 2-3 of which are usually American. Tickets are 6-7 euros with a student ID. The **Olympia** is a bigger theater with more screens, huge auditoriums, and more American films. The tickets cost about as much as at Darcy. A multiplex can be found at **Toison D'Or**, the shopping mall.

Remember that seeing French films or TV is a great way to practice your listening skills and provides you with current slang that you could then use at any of the bars or clubs to let people know you're hip!

Many great concerts, plays and operas come to town so keep your eyes and ears open. The **Opéra de Dijon** has a full schedule of events: <http://www.opera-dijon.fr/>

### **Athletic Facilities and Other Activities**

You will have access to the facilities at the University through intramural activities, including basketball, tennis, racquetball, social dance, paragliding, karate, track, and many more. Getting involved in intramurals is a really great way to meet French students. Another enjoyable sports-related activity is going to one of Dijon's soccer team's matches.

Separate from the university there are several parks in which you can play basketball, throw a Frisbee, or just relax. Lac Kir and Parc de la Colombiere are both great areas if you're interested in going for a run.

In addition to playing intramural sports, students in past groups have joined the university chorale, taken ballet classes at a local dance studio, joined a local ultimate Frisbee team, volunteered at a soup kitchen, taken private voice lessons, hiked in the area around Dijon, etc.

## **Communicating**

### *Calling the States*

The best way to phone home is Skype. It's free to download and it's free to talk to anyone else who is on Skype. Another great thing Skype has is a deal where you pay a flat fee for a few months and then you can call any land line or cell phone in the U.S. You can read more about options at: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en/allfeatures/callphones/>

### *Calling in Europe*

There are several options in terms of cell phones once you are in France. International phones can be bought in the U.S. before you leave; these are nice for times when you are traveling around Europe. You pay, in dollars, at the end of the semester when you turn your phone in. This is less hassle than pay-as-you-go options, but the downside is that you may not be as conscientious about how much you are using it. See:

<https://www.piccellwireless.com/latest/index.php>

Another option is to buy a cell phone once you get to France. Orange is the name of one company and their store is located downtown. You can buy any amount of minutes for these phones at any *Tabac*. This is convenient because *Tabacs* are everywhere and you just get more minutes when you need them. However be sure to clarify if texting is included. A downside of this option is that things can get tricky when you leave France. Be sure to look up the code of the country to which you are traveling before you head out on your journey.

Another possibility is to bring your own physical phone and then buy a French SIM card and plan at the Orange store. This doesn't work on every phone, and your phone needs to be "unlocked" first. Check with your cellphone carrier before leaving the U.S.!

E-mail is of course a great way to communicate as well. McDonald's has free Wifi, but be sure to buy a little something if you plan on being there for an extended period of time. The majority of host families will have Wifi and there is also free Wifi at the university.

## **Your Host Family**

Needless to say, life with your family should be extremely agreeable for you. One thing you should understand before going over is that all families are not alike. In general, however, most families look upon the students in their home as "visitors and friends" rather than "another

member of the family.” Don’t get down on yourself if there is more of a distance than you had hoped there would be – Getting to know each other will take some time. Your family offers the BEST outlet for learning conversational French, and it’s an opportunity that depends on you and your own efforts. Host families love to watch as you improve your French, so don’t be shy about asking questions or asking them for something. At the end of the semester some students find themselves saying, “I wish I hadn’t been so hesitant about initiating things with my family.” You don’t want to feel that way so stay positive and chat away.

One thing that we can’t overemphasize is the importance of asking – from the very beginning – what you can and cannot do or use in the house. A common problem is that awkward feeling of “not being sure” how to do something in your house or if you’re allowed to do it at all. By asking all these questions right away, you can avoid possible future problems and misunderstandings and make life much easier for yourself. Some things to inquire about are the kitchen (Can you store groceries or use space in the fridge?), the laundry facilities (Will you do your laundry, or will your family do it? If you’ll be doing it, when is a good time? How do they work?) and the telephone (Can you call people locally? What about people calling you – is that OK? When?) Also, what about having visitors over? What about when the host family isn’t home? These are things that are best taken care of on the first or second day. It will make your homestay much more comfortable.

You will be given a room of your own (with sheets for your bed) and a key, allowing you to come and go as you please. Beyond that, each family will be different in what they give you or allow you to do. Some families will invite their students on family trips or to big dinners; others will see you as having a life very separate from their own. Most will be somewhere in between. You will have to test the waters yourself to see where your family falls between these two extremes. One thing to remember, however, is the following: your integration into the life of your family is in part dependent upon you and the effort YOU make. You are the one who needs to initiate conversations or make suggestions or invitations. Often the family will accept you and treat you like someone who wants to be a part of their family if you act like that from the beginning. As with many people, your family will often wait to see who you are before letting you know who they are; use the opportunity to express to them what you want or hope to get out of the relationship with them. Be patient and put in a good effort!

Some suggestions for breaking the ice: offer to help with the cooking or dishwashing or cleaning (but don’t be offended if they prefer to do all this themselves – this is a very French point of view); bring pictures of your American family and ask about pictures they have hanging in their house; talk about what you do at Wake besides study French. Take every advantage to be as much a part of your family as possible.

### **Personal Travel**

Certainly, most of your memorable experiences will take place in France, but you’ll want to take advantage of the ease of travel and number of vastly different countries and cultures located in

such a concentrated area. Fortunately, Dijon is centrally located in both France and in Europe, facilitating travel within France and internationally.

The first question is determining where to travel. All countries in Western Europe are reached relatively easily, as well as several in the East, as long as you don't mind a lot of travel time. As far as when to go to a certain region, some would recommend traveling to more northern destinations early in the semester when the weather will still be relatively nice. Then when the weather starts to get colder you can head south to the Riviera, Spain, or Italy. On the other hand if you're into winter sports, you may want to save your trip to Switzerland or Austria for November. No matter where or when you choose to travel, there are several considerations you first must make.

The first consideration is an obvious one: transportation. Trains run regularly in and out of Dijon in all directions. A really great option for students is to buy the "Carte douze vingt-cinq" which then gives you a discount on every ticket you buy. You can buy train tickets at the SNCF store on Rue du Bourg. Avoid buying them online if you're going to use an American credit card because this can cause difficulties when you try to get the tickets out of the machine at the gare. When planning a trip, allow time for connections to avoid getting stranded anywhere. In all train stations across Europe there are easy-to-read schedules indicating times of all departures and arrivals, so don't worry about having to know another language to get around. Remember that traveling at night can be a great way to save money since you won't need to find a hostel or hotel for that night. Special sleeping cars, although more expensive, can be reserved and are more comfortable than trying to sleep in normal cars.

As far as money is concerned, when traveling to other countries, the train stations in most major cities will have exchange bureaus, or a bank will usually be nearby and you can use the ATM. Think about buying a book like *Lonely Planet: Europe*, which will have helpful information about train stations and can help you plan your trip. Hostelworld.com is also very helpful in terms of finding places to stay.

When staying in hostels don't expect luxury (you might have to bring your own towel), but do look at each trip as another opportunity. You will meet many interesting people while traveling, so don't be shy about striking up a conversation or making new friends – most people, especially those traveling alone, are more than willing to meet new people. Do exercise common sense, however, and be careful with your luggage, documents, and valuables. Also try to travel with at least one other person, for both added security and companionship. Wherever you decide to go, make sure you take advantage of the opportunities – Remember that you are having a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

### **Miscellaneous Tips and Info**

#### *Parents Coming to See You*

Parents sometimes want to plan to come over and see you, and it can be lots of fun. Since much of September will be spent on group excursions, it is best if they come after the month of

September. Another benefit of them coming a little later is that they can take home your summer clothes that you will not need. Also, if they come a little later in the semester you will have had a chance to get to know Dijon. As far as finding a hotel goes, ask your host family for recommendations or stop by the Office du Tourisme for a full listing of hotels in Dijon.

*Souvenirs, Pictures and a Journal*

While you are abroad try to find souvenirs that will remind you of your incredible time. For example you could bring back some typical Dijon or French items, such as wine, mustard, books, music, etc. Most of these you can find at Monoprix for much less than you will pay at a specialty store in town. Even good wine is cheaper in France than in the U.S., so that can make a great gift.

Taking pictures is essential, so make sure you have a camera you can use and the necessary accessories like cords and chargers and things. A personal journal, in English or in French, is a great idea. You'll find that all of your experiences, especially those at the beginning of the program, will soon be behind you. Being able to look back on a journal is a great thing to be able to do and can provide some laughs as well. Try to write it in every day, or at least every other day, so you'll be able to remember what you did and how you felt.