

Travels with Anzie – 2021 France and Covid

France is trying to get its population vaccinated, but, as in the states, there are lots of protests. The French are very independent people and every week-end there is a march or demonstration in almost every town in France. People are protesting wearing masks and the vaccine.

However, you would not want to be an unvaccinated tourist here or even a French national. In fact, I'm not sure you could even enter the country. You have to show your Covid vaccine pass sanitaire (health pass QR code) in every café (even outdoor), restaurant, museum, club or theater. Fortunately, when we arrived, we went to the local pharmacy with our US Covid vaccination cards. and the pharmacist entered us into the French national health system. She gave us a printed version with a QR code that we copied and use ALL the time. There is a national health app that most people have on their phones so they only flash that. Unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to download that, so we just use the paper copy. Also, masks have to be worn in every indoor establishment – bank, restaurant, theater, post office or supermarket. In fact, only outdoors in the open air can you take off your mask. Chuck and I are always forgetting our masks and having to return to the car to get them.

In order to promote getting the vaccine, French TV, sponsored by the government, have two very clever ads. One shows a dinner party with friends or an outdoor barbeque. Someone makes a comment about the Covid vaccine and the debate begins – and the French **love** to talk and debate. Some of the guests are already vaccinated, while others repeat the myths and stories found online. Then the screen goes black with just two sentences: “You can debate anything except the statistics. In France eight in ten Covid deaths are those who are unvaccinated.”

The second ad shows people at a concert, a couple dining in an expensive restaurant, a woman walking through a museum, young people dancing at a club and a soccer team running onto the field with fans cheering. Again the black screen that says: “Get vaccinated and return to living your life fully.” France has 75.7% partially vaccinated and 67.6 fully – US is 65.8% partially and 56.8 fully per 100,000 population.

The only indoor place we have been that didn't require showing the QR code health pass (though masks were required) was at the crematorium Chuck described in his last email. And I have to admit I felt a little freaked at being with so many people crowded together, not knowing if they were vaccinated.

We just now talked about it, and decided we'd wear our masks more at home also. Back Oct 30th

Love - Anne/Anzie and Chuck