# The Final 3 Months

The countdown checklist for your move to France: what to do at 90, 60, and 30 days out, and in that last unhinged week.

The last three months before our move to France in September 2025 were a blur of appointments, boxes, and goodbye dinners. Almost everything stressful about that stretch had the same root cause: doing things in the wrong order. So here is the right order.

## 01 90 days out

- [ ] **Lock in your long-stay visa appointment.** Applications go through your regional French consulate (via VFS Global). Slots disappear fast in summer. Book the moment your window opens.
- [ ] **Order apostilled birth and marriage certificates,** then get sworn French translations. This takes weeks and you will need them repeatedly in France.
- [ ] **Start the pet paperwork sequence.** Microchip first, then rabies vaccine, then a 21-day wait. If the order is wrong, you start over. (Full details in our pet guide.)
- [ ] **Get 2 to 3 shipping quotes** and pick your mover. Container space books out.
- [ ] **Sort your landing housing.** Where do you live the first 1 to 3 months? Book it. Your container will arrive after you do.
- [ ] **Give notice** on your lease, or start the sale or rental plan for your home.
- [ ] **Request full medical, dental, and vet records.** Paper copies plus PDFs.
- [ ] **Build the moving budget spreadsheet.** Visa fees, shipping, flights, pet costs, first months of double expenses. Seeing the number early prevents surprises later.

## 02 60 days out

- [ ] **Book one-way flights,** and book the pet on the same call if they are flying with you. Pet spots per flight are limited.
- [ ] **Arrange the health coverage your visa requires.** Most long-stay visas require proof of insurance covering you in France until the French system takes over.
- [ ] **Set up your US mail strategy.** A virtual mailbox service or a trusted family address. You will need a US address for years longer than you expect.
- [ ] **Audit your credit cards.** Keep at least one with no foreign transaction fees. (Our Capital One cards have been the reliable ones in France, and our Amex handled the big moving charges without blinking.)
- [ ] **List the cars for sale.** Time the handoff so you are not carless in your final week or paying insurance on a car in another country.
- [ ] **Make the cancellation list:** utilities, internet, streaming, gym, insurance policies, and every subscription hiding in your statements. Note the dates. Do not cancel yet.
- [ ] **Talk to your doctor about prescriptions.** Request the maximum supply your insurance allows, plus a letter describing each medication.

## 03 30 days out

- [ ] **Do the pet certificate math.** The EU health certificate must be issued within 10 days of arrival and endorsed by USDA. Book the vet appointment and plan the endorsement now, not the week of.
- [ ] **Confirm the container pickup date** and finish the photographed inventory.
- [ ] **Schedule utility shutoffs** for the day after you leave, not the day of. (Ask us how we know.)
- [ ] **Notify your banks of the move** and confirm your accounts, cards, and two-factor settings will work from France. Switch two-factor away from US SMS where you can.
- [ ] **Set up a power of attorney** if someone stateside will handle anything for you: the house sale, the car, the mail.

- [ ] **Get a small amount of euros in cash.** Enough for taxis and the first grocery run, not a briefcase.
- [ ] **Download the apps:** Google Translate (with French offline), SNCF Connect for trains, and your airline's app for the pet paperwork upload.
- [ ] **Say the long goodbyes now.** The last week has no room for them, and the good ones deserve better than a rushed coffee.

## 04 The final week

- [ ] **Final vet visit inside the 10-day window,** then USDA endorsement of the EU health certificate. This is the one deadline in the entire move with zero flexibility.
- [ ] **Assemble the carry-on documents folder:** passports, visas, apostilles, translations, pet certificate, prescriptions, bank statements. It never leaves your sight.

**Pro tip:** Photograph every page of the documents folder before you fly. Paper gets lost. Phones rarely do.

- [ ] **Pack suitcases with 2 weeks of real life:** clothes, medications, chargers, adapters, one towel each. The container is 6 to 12 weeks behind you.
- [ ] **Unlock your phone** and know your eSIM plan for landing.
- [ ] **Confirm arrival logistics:** airport pickup or train, keys to the landing housing, and where the pet rides.
- [ ] **Execute the cancellation list.** Utilities, subscriptions, the gym you have not visited since the decision to move.
- [ ] **Have one great dinner with your favorite people.** Not a task. Still mandatory.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Anything involving a government, a consulate, or a vet gets scheduled first. Everything else in this move will bend around you. Those three will not.

### WHAT WE LEARNED

- **One decision we would keep:** booking landing housing for a full two months. The container was late. We were not stressed. Those two facts are related.
- **One change we would make:** starting the apostille and translation orders a month earlier. Slow documents held up fast decisions.
- **One tip for speed:** run the move from one shared spreadsheet with dates and owners. If it is not in the sheet, it does not exist.

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**Keep going.** We publish the real numbers, the paperwork, and the occasional disaster every week. Videos at youtube.com/@husbandsinfrance, the newsletter at newsletter.husbandsinfrance.com, and everything else at husbandsinfrance.com.

Visa and pet requirements current as of July 2026. Confirm specifics with your consulate and vet. Rules move.