

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales



Walk the Region
**RACOU TO
COLLIOURE**
Out for the day
**MURALS OF
MAURY**

SPRING 2012
FREE / GRATUIT N° 35



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Well, despite some temperamental teenage tantrums on the weather front, with the thermometer frantically gesticulating at silly minus temperatures, springtime crouches just around the corner. The buds and blossoms are beginning to mature all around us, mimosa and almond blossom, poppies and irises splash gold, red and pinky white, and a pale sun is preparing to bully away the rainclouds, squeeze out the Tramontane, and herald long sunny days to come. Doesn't it just make you want to skip?

The P-O will soon start gearing up for the holiday season, as restaurants and cafés re-open after a sleepy winter hibernation, and hopeful ventures, old and new, set up to provide sport, entertainment, and a range of activities for the incoming spring and summer tourists and residents alike.

In this issue, Leigh and Merry take you walking along the coast to Collioure, Louise Sayers checks out the Perpignan dining scene, John Fairclough brings us better news on flights in and out of the region, and Simon Newman talks of virgins and dragons!

As for Jane and I, we continue to poke our beaks into all things P-O - people and places, age old traditions, myths and legends.....such excellent fun.

Happy Springtime!

PS. How do you ask a French snake the time?
Quelle heure reptile?

Kate & Jane



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Index

Walk the region Le Racou beach to Collioure	6-7
Did you know?	8-9
Airport News	10-11
Events festivals & traditions	12-15
Pont du Diable - Céret	16
Food & drink	
Restaurant review - Loft Café.....	18-19
Calçotada	22
Le Jardin de Collioure.....	24
Asparagus	26
Out for the day	
Molig les Bains	30-31
Maury to Cucugnan via Quéribus	32-35
Les Orgues	36-37
Montpellier	38-39
Tautavel.....	40
Test your French	42-45
Améliorez votre Anglais	46-47
Over the Border Girona with Frog bus	48
Rugby Virgins and Dragons	50
Tax Efficient Investing in France	52
Things you might need to know	54-55
How to write a French cheque	57
Emergency numbers	59
P-O Life distribution points	59
English Speaking Services	60-63



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year. Check out
their website on

www.congres-perpignan.com



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Walk the region...

with Leigh And Merry Foster



LE RACOU BEACH TO COLLIOURE

Length: Just under 4km each way. **Time:** approx 2-3 hrs. Well marked and signposted

Anyone who loves the rocky scenery of the Cote Vermeille will enjoy this popular, short and fairly easy walk. It starts in Argelès, at the very end of Le Racou road behind the beach, near the car park, where the flat sandy landscape gives way to rocky hills.

Initially, head east along a paved driveway, then you have the option of doubling back west to follow the path to the top of a wooded slope where you can find the "table d'orientation" overlooking Racou beach and back towards port Argelès. In good weather it can be a lovely vantage point.

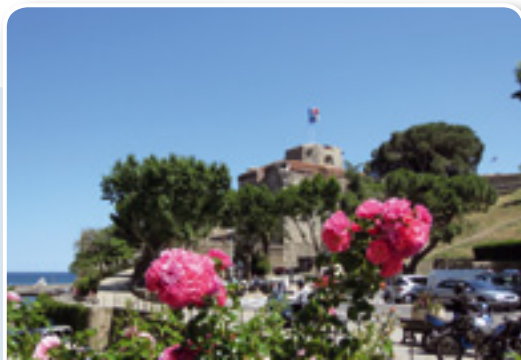
Heading back east, continue following the footpath, which quickly plateaus out along the top of the coastal hill and meanders down into the next cove, the Anse de Portails, which is shingle-covered and very secluded and pretty. On the way you can admire the easterly aspect of the Albères hills and up to the impressive tower at Madeloc.

The steps are cut into the rock in places, and look almost like a fantastic and very convenient natural feature!

After climbing the rocks next to the little house at the end of this cove, follow the well-marked path along the top of the low cliffs. Pass

through a gate at the camp-site of les Criques de Portails, and weave along the top of the cliffs with the camp-site to your right and the waves crashing dramatically on the rocks below to your left, until you descend to the Plage de l'Ouille. Draped over the cliffs are huge curtains of succulents and cacti, which were flowering beautifully when we were there.

There is a creek at the eastern end of the beach, which after heavy rains can be difficult to



cross, but in May we were able to jump it without even getting our feet wet.

The old sea-level cliff path to Collioure has been closed, it is so weather-damaged as to be dangerous, so another climb from l'Ouille takes you upwards to the highest point in the walk. Traverse (quite safely) above more cliffs where you can look down at the crystal-clear water between the rocks, so popular with boatloads of divers who look like families of strange seals from a distance. Pass below the intriguing Fort Carré (1758) perched on top of the hill, across the grassy slopes until you reach Fort Miradou, the northern-most part of Vauban's defensive wall of Collioure. Unfortunately you can't enter this active military base, so you have to turn inland through the car park and walk down into Collioure along the Route du Pla de las Fourques. Happily it isn't a busy road and you soon arrive in the back streets amongst the art galleries and cafés.

After a stop for lunch, or just a refreshing ice cream, you can set off back towards Racou for the return journey. The part of the path through the campsite is closed from 22h-08h, presumably to allow the campers a bit of peace after dark, so do check before you go that you won't be stuck once the gates are locked!



Old sailor saying
*Qui trop écoute la météo,
passe sa vie au bistro*



Did you know...?

Tax relief as we'd all like it!

When Villefranche-de-Conflent was built in 1095 by Guillaume-Raymond, count of Cerdanya and Conflent, it was known as Villa Franca (town of free-trade) and allowed special tax privileges

to attract skilled and assorted trades people. Settlers could live tax-free for three years, after which they could pay as little or as much as they wanted., whenever they chose.

FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS

Did you know that if you dangle your feet in the river at Laval, near Sorède in the Albères, you can have 'fish nibbling therapy' free of charge? And that isn't a 'poisson d'Avril'!

HIS HEART IN HER MOUTH

Lord Guillaume de Cabestany was a troubadour, soldier, poet, and lover of Saurimonde, wife of Raimond de Castell-Rossello and subject of many of his poems. So angry and jealous was Raimond, that he killed poor Guillaume, ripped out his heart, and had it cooked and fed to his wife at dinner. When she heard what he had done, she told him that the taste of Guillaume was so good that it would remain in her mouth forever and threw herself off the tower to her death.

The king of Aragon, Alphonse II, had Raimond put to death for his wrongdoing, confiscated his lands and castle and gave them to the parents of Guillaume and Saurimonde. He also arranged for the two lovers to be buried in the same tomb in front of the église Saint Jean, in Perpignan



UNLUCKY DATE FOR SOME

You may already know that 23rd April is the Festival of Sant Jordi (St George) Patron Saint of Catalonia and the day of the rose and the book, but did you also know that on April 23rd, 1616 both William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes (Don Quixote) died, and that William Wordsworth also died on that date in 1850?

LUNAR PYRENEES

Mountains on the moon are called Mons (singular) or Montes (plural) Amongst the mountain ranges on the near side of the moon you can find Montes Pyrenaicus, named after our very own Pyrenees, as well as Montes Alpes, Montes Jura..... Not sure about the skiing facilities up there!



THIS MEANING OF LIFE.....AND THE PRICE OF ALCOHOL!

According to the uSwitch Quality of Life Index, whilst the UK is officially the worst place to live in Europe, ('high living costs, poor work-life balance and low government spending on healthcare and education'), France is top of the spots yet again for quality of life. However, although Spain came second, many of those surveyed said that they would actually prefer to live there, as it seems that the Spanish live on average a year longer than the Brits, have the most holidays off work and the lowest alcohol prices!

42^P

Happy Springtime

Don't forget to offer those you love a little bouquet of Lily-of-the-Valley (Muguet) on 1st May, to wish them happiness and good luck for spring. It was actually King Charles IX of France, who started this tradition by offering Lily-of-the-Valley to all the ladies of his court on this day in 1561



Queen Amélie and Dan?

Amélie les Bains was originally called 'Les Bains d'Arles' but was renamed in 1840 by King Louis Philippe after queen Amélie. Just over the bridge, the pretty little hamlet of Palalda apparently comes from the Latin "Palatium Dani" meaning 'Dan's Palace'.

Céret cherry

The delightful Céret tradition of offering the first cherries of the season to the president of the Republic should provide a tasty and colourful little morsel for Giulia, recently born daughter of Nicholas and Carla, who might have the chance to nibble on her first ever cherry.

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

When American con artist Frank Abagnale, played by Leonardo DiCaprio in the 2001 film 'Catch Me If You Can' was sentenced to one year in Perpignan prison in 1969, he was transported back to the 17th century, with no light, no bed, no toilet, no wash basin, no drain, just a bucket. This grim stone building surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers cannot fail to capture your attention on the road out of Perpignan towards Toulouges.



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AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH

Since my last report in the Winter edition on the availability of direct air links between the PO and nearby to the UK and Ireland, there have been a number of positive initiatives, some which have borne fruit, others which have not. The various airlines and airports have now published their timetables for Summer 2012 (ie the period from March 25th onwards).

At PERPIGNAN, it's a mixed bag. The Ryanair flights to Stansted have returned, but FlyBe have reduced their service to Southampton, although they have reintroduced one to Birmingham. As yet, no-one has filled the void created by BMBaby's decision to abandon Manchester. Aer Lingus have clearly decided to try at least another year for their Dublin route.

Ryanair seem to have made their peace with the authorities at GIRONA, so the outlook there looks a lot more rosy, with some old favourite British destinations back, though it has to be said that it is still nothing like the heyday of 3 years ago.

Services out of CARCASSONNE would appear to be at similar levels to last summer, though no other airline seems prepared to give Ryanair a run for their money there.

BEZIERS has seen a moderate increase in routes, with Ryanair's Manchester connection, and FlyBe's link with Southampton the highlights.

However, as with the winter, anyone looking for the widest choice of UK/Ire connections will have to go to BARCELONA. Ryanair have expanded their number of routes there to 6. EasyJet have added Southend to their offerings, and special mention should be made of a newcomer, Spanish low-cost carrier, Vueling, who have commenced routes to Edinburgh, Southampton and Cardiff.

As ever, this is correct at the time of writing (early Feb), and if there have been any significant changes before the summer edition, I will do my best to alert you.

PERPIGNAN	
Stansted	5x pw (Ryanair)
Birmingham	1x pw (FlyBe)
Southampton	1x pw (FlyBe)
Dublin	2x pw (Aer Lingus)

GIRONA - all Ryanair	
Birmingham	4x pw
Bournemouth	5x pw
Bristol	7x pw
Cork	2x pw
Doncaster	2x pw
Dublin	4x pw
Knock	3x pw
Luton	7x pw
Stansted	7x pw
Manchester	7x pw
Newcastle	3x pw

CARCASSONNE - all Ryanair	
Dublin	3x pw
Nott/East Mids	3x pw
Glas Prestwick	2x pw
Liverpool	3x pw
Stansted	7x pw
Bournemouth	2x pw

MONTPELLIER	
Gatwick	7x pw (EasyJet)
Birmingham	2x pw (Ryanair)
Leeds Bradford	2x pw (Ryanair)
Luton	2x pw (Ryanair)

BARCELONA	
Stansted	14x pw (Ryanair) 7 x pw (EasyJet)
Gatwick	40x pw (EasyJet) 7x pw (Monarch)
Luton	14x pw (EasyJet)
Heathrow	56x pw (BA/Iberia)
Edinburgh	4x pw (Ryanair) 7x pw Vueling
Leeds Bradford	3x pw (Ryanair) 5x pw (Jet 2)
Newcastle	5x pw (EasyJet)
Bristol	4x pw (EasyJet)
Liverpool	12x pw (Easyjet)
Manchester	5x pw (Jet2) 6x pw (Monarch)
Belfast	4x pw (EasyJet) 4x pw (Aer Lingus)
Dublin	7x pw (Ryanair) 7x pw (Aer Lingus)
Nott/E Mids	7x pw (Ryanair)
Glas Prestwick	7x pw (Ryanair)
Southend	7x pw (Easyjet)
Glasgow	3x pw (Jet 2)
Cork	3x pw (Aer Lingus)
Southampton	7x pw Vueling
Cardiff	3x pw Vueling

BEZIERS	
Bristol	4x pw (Ryanair)
Luton	4x pw (Ryanair)
Manchester	2x pw (Ryanair)
Southampton	3x pw (FlyBe)



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CARNIVAL

Youpi, it's carnival time with carnival processions all over the P-O – fancy dress, street parades, fireworks, singing, dancing.....along with the symbolic burning of evil spirits.

Carnival actually dates back to the ancient Greek spring festival in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine. It was a massive binge - a celebration of excess, and later the church, unable to suppress it, wisely adapted it instead to its own traditions. It became a last fling, a chance to eat, drink and be excessively merry before Lent, the 40 day period of fasting, abstinence, and purging of sins. The word 'carnival' is often interpreted as coming from the Latin 'carne vale', meaning 'farewell to meat' but it is also believed to stem from 'carrus navels' the 'naval car' or ship, which carried the Gods to the winter feasts. The medieval Church reinterpreted this as the Ship of Fools, on which sinners sail to their deaths, and so was born the carnival float.

Other aspects of Carnival are believed to derive from the ancient Roman festival Saturnalia, when

social rules of behaviour and class were reversed, masters waited on their slaves, men dressed like women, people wore fancy dress, paraded in the streets, and thus disguised, could be as wicked as they wanted.

A section of carnivals in the region

Elné	11th March
Céret	11th - 17th March
Torreilles	18th March
Vernet	23rd March
Port Barcarès	14th - 15th April



PROCESSIONS & PARADES



At exactly 8 a.m, accompanied by a sombre drumbeat, the 'statue du Ressuscité (Resurrection) and the 'statue de la Vierge' (virgin) arrive from opposite ends of the place de la mairie. Upon the shoulders of 'porteurs', they salute each other three times. This is the 'acato'. Believers and non-believers alike find this unique ceremony moving and memorable.

Procession de la Sanch Friday 6th April (Good Friday) Perpignan

Sinister black and red hooded and robed figures march slowly through the silent streets of Perpignan. Some walk bare-foot, others are on their knees as they move slowly forward to the solemn beat of black veiled tambourines. They carry 'misteris', full-size representations of the different scenes of the Passion, and crosses, crucifixes and religious statues weighing up to fifty kilos. Under these burdens, their suffering is not feigned. Prisoners, penitents, and executioner were hooded for maximum confusion as they accompanied the condemned to their execution. The death penalty has long since been abolished, but the Sanch lives on in Perpignan.

Night processions also take place in Collioure and Arles-sur-Tech (21h00)

Les Réginas April 8th (Easter Sunday) Ille-sur-Têt

Whilst Perpignan, Collioure and Arles are parading death, in Ille sur Têt a dawn drum roll announces life; both the Resurrection and the beginnings of spring, a rebirth and re-awakening of nature, celebrated annually in this age old Illois custom

Suddenly, the first Régina, the Régina de Coll, blasts out, a 130 strong choir, accompanied by 40 musicians. Follow the procession to the Jardins de la Rodona, where the second Régina, the Régine de Colomer is performed.

Coll and Colomer were two talented composers who wrote these 'Réginas', religious music for Easter.

Goigs dels ous

A tradition that dates back to the Middle Ages, the goigs dels ous (or joie des oeufs in French) are traditional Easter songs, ancient hymns sung by choirs in traditional Catalan costume, signaling a return to life after the sadness of winter.

Solemn choirs would wander the streets at night, and whole families would stand in their doorways and listen in fervent silence to the religious 'goigs'.

The eggs of the title were a symbol of the rebirth, the resurrection. Traditionally, the bachelor of the choir would carry a 'cistella' a basket for contributions of eggs, black pudding, charcuterie, wine..... ensuring that the singers would end up with everything they needed to cook up an Easter omelette the next day. Villagers would give these gifts in thanks for the music.

What's on Around the Region



We hate sending people off on wild goose chases, even in the hunting season! There are so many festivals, concerts, and events to herald in spring and summer in the Pyrenees Orientales, and sometimes they are sneakily brought forward, backwards, sideways, cancelled or changed. With this in mind, we bring you only a small selection of main, confirmed events here. Detailed, up-to-date What's On information will continue to be published on www.anglophone-direct.com and in our free weekly newsletter.

Don't forget to turn your clocks forward Sunday 25th March

2012 (during the night of Saturday/Sunday morning) Mornings will be darker but it will grow dark later.



BANK HOLIDAYS

8th April - Lundi de Pâques
1st May - Fête du Travail
8th May - Fête de la Victoire
17th May - Ascension
27th May - Pentecôte

School holidays for our region

Easter Holidays - 17th - 23rd April

Vide Greniers

Visit our site at www.anglophone-direct.com for an up-to-date list of the vide greniers in your area.

MARCH

Tuesday 6th March

Palais des Congrès, Perpignan. Che Malambo

Vibrant, exciting Argentinian dance Group **04 68 34 07 48**

Thur 8th - 9th March

Castillet Cinema, Perpignan.

Film: Une vie avec Oradour. Robert Hébras Lanois, one of only six persons to survive the massacre of Oradour, gives a meticulous account of the day...

Thursday 8th March

Théâtre de l'Archipel, Perpignan

Grupo Compay Segundo
 Exciting, infectious Afro Cuban big band. **04 68 62 62 00**

Saturday 17th March

Galerie Marianne, Argelès village

Les Musicales d'Argelès
 Concert with saxophone, tuba and flute **04 68 81 50 60**

Saturday 31st March

Laroque-des-Albères

Cap Rando Group or family ramble accompanied by team 'Challenge' - a bit of fun competition between teams. Open to all **06 33 56 26 38**



for detailed information visit:
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APRIL

Sunday 1st April

Arles-sur-Tech Foire aux chevreaux (baby goats)

Produce fair with arts, crafts, local products, and cute baby goats **04 68 39 11 99**

Sat 7th - 8th April

Villefranche de Conflent Fête des Géants & Goigs

Minstrels play Catalan musical instruments (gralles, flaviol and tambourin), and giants parade through the Streets... **04 68 53 77 02**

Sun 8th - 9th April

Rivesaltes to Axat

Easter egg Train (TPCF)
 Take a ride with the Easter bunny. Egg hunt, picnic and Easter omelette. **04 68 59 99 02**

Sun 8th - 9th April

Argelès Fête Américaine

Yee ha! Demos of country and western, exhibition of American cars and motor bikes, red Indian village, mechanical bucking bronco, stage coach rides.....

Sunday 15th April

Maury Festival of wine and chocolate Chocolate workshops with world champion desert makers and patissiers, a glass of Maury in one hand and a chocolate creation in the other - life can be so hard!! **04 68 50 08 54**

Sat 28th-29th April

Perpignan

La Nuit des Longs Capots

Vintage car rally with over 70 'beautiful bodies' representing sports cars produced since the 1950s.

28th April - 2nd June

Aspres Music Festival

Colourful, varied and entertaining festival of jazz concerts, which take place in local wine domains and small village churches, a great way of exploring the Aspres and sampling delicious wines produced by local producers. **04 68 53 10 00**

Thur 17th - 20th May

Destination Mer. Canet

Four days dedicated to water sports and sailing, free try outs, competitions and demos with kite-surfing and wake boarding specialists, music, Fiesta Latina Show, Batucada, (samba style Brazilian percussion) fireworks.... **04 68 86 72 00**

Saturday 19th May

Around the region

La Nuit des Musées

Free evening at regional museums with special events for the occasion NB Not all museums will participate www.nuitdesmusees.culture.fr

Sunday 20th May

Perpignan Marathon

All profits from this semi marathon (21,100 km) and ten kilometre race go to charitable organisations. If you don't want to run, why not go along and support - all in a good cause. www.marathonperpignan.com **06 99 27 20 00 / 06 19 40 79 02**

MAY

Tuesday 8th May

Canet Fête de la Victoire 1945

Re-creation of a 40s style US army camp, procession of military vehicles, Sherman tank etc, live music playing Glenn Miller classics....

12th to 20th May

Girona Festival of Flowers.

Parks, gardens and public buildings are covered in magnificent, multicoloured displays of flowers

Thur 17th - 20th May

Banyuls-sur-Mer Ascension

Flamenca. Flamenco music, dance and guitar as Banyuls echos to the sounds of Spain.

Saturday 26th May

Theatre de l'Etang, Saint Estève Tribute to James Brown

A unique show of live music with the Béziers Rhythm & Blues Band. **04 68 38 34 95**

Sat 26th - 27th May

Céret La fete de la Cerise

Cherry festival and Festival des Bandas **04 68 87 00 53**



The Legend of the Pont du Diable - Céret

Many bridges built in medieval Europe were named 'the Devil's Bridge' as they were often amazing feats of architecture, built by hand with skills considered beyond human capabilities. Le Pont du Diable in Céret, a 14th-century bridge with a 46-metre span, at the time of its construction the world's largest bridge arch, has its own story attached.

In the fourteenth century, the two banks of the River Tech were joined by a wooden bridge, which was regularly washed away by the wind and rain. The Cérétans decided to build a more solid bridge out of stone, but engineers declared it impossible, as the banks were too steep. However, one engineer, attracted by a large sum of money proposed, took on the challenge.

His first attempt was destroyed by a storm, his second by the collapsing of the scaffolding, sending the nearly finished bridge crashing down into the River Tech.

The angry Cérétans finally gave him a deadline, after which he would be hanged for taking the money and not completing the work!

The night before the fatal deadline, as violent weather threatened to carry the unfinished bridge away again, a tall, dark stranger approached him.

"This evening, at midnight, the bridge will be finished. In return, you must give me the first living being to cross the bridge."

The desperate engineer agreed, and the stranger disappeared in a puff of sulphur.

Realising the gravity of his act, the engineer arrived at the bridge on the stroke of midnight, as the devil was about to place the last stone, and sent a black cat across the bridge. Surprised, the devil dropped the stone, leaving the bridge unfinished as he followed the cat as far as Le Boulou to claim its soul, and to this day, the bridge remains unfinished. No one is able to replace that one last stone.

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LOFT Café PERPIGNAN

**Restaurant
Review**
with
Louise Sayers



Perpignanais by birth, english speaker and self-confessed Anglophile, the charming owner of the recently opened Loft Café, Jean-Michel Dutois, places his focus firmly on quality food, impeccable service and creating a convivial friendly atmosphere.

Located in Perpignan old town, slap bang in front of the cathedral, Loft is the only bar/restaurant offering alfresco dining in the square. The interior is crisp, clean and stylish with an attractive bar, contemporary furniture and recent artwork adorning the walls.

There are different menus at Loft for lunch and dinner. The lunch menu featured salads, pizzas, pasta, cold plates and two specials, which change daily, one meat (11 euros) and one fish (13 euros). The meat dish was spatchcocked chicken in a brandy cream sauce served with

mashed potatoes and spinach and the fish a 'Parillade', mixed seafood platter with rice. Both were beautifully presented and declared delicious by my fellow diners. I went for a pizza which was crisp of base and generous of topping – as a pizza should be.

The wine list is a work in progress with a large selection of mostly local wines at present, but Jean-Michel will be expanding his list of new world wines in the coming months.

There is a good choice of desserts with classics such as tarte tatin, lemon meringue pie and fig tart, as well as lighter

choices such as fromage blanc. We chocoholics all sampled the warm brownies, unanimously enjoyed and not too rich and cloying, as they so often are.

The dinner menu offers the choice between tapas, plates of charcuterie specially sourced from 3 different regions of Spain, or an à la carte menu. The tapas are substantial dishes and most with a lovely twist on the traditional, such as prawns with mango salsa and ginger confit, or beef with sweet and sour peanut sauce.

The à la carte menu changes monthly. At present, the starters are a selection of salads priced from 8 to 11 euros, or the tapas menu. Main courses start at 17.90 euros and are imaginative and enticing, such as tenderloin of pork with a gin reduction and winter vegetables or roasted and sliced John Dory with beurre blanc and confit tomatoes with basil.

If you don't want lunch or dinner, how about morning coffee and a read of the paper in a relaxing environment, or

afternoon tea and a crêpe or something from the dessert menu? In the evenings, the after-work crowd congregate for an apéro at the bar, and on Thursday nights, Loft is a magnet for lovers of live music with bands playing jazz, blues and bossa nova.

This is Jean-Michel's first foray into the restaurant business and we all know just how hard it is setting up a new venture in the current climate. I urge you to support him and drop by for a coffee, afternoon tea, lunch, an apéro or dinner. You will certainly be assured of a very warm welcome.

Louise Sayers runs Med and Mountain's Help in France service, providing assistance for homeowners and non-French speakers throughout France www.medandmountain.com

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Food & drink





BUNYETES


Also known as 'Oreillettes' or 'merveilles', bunyetes are traditionally made and eaten at Easter all over Catalonia. These flat, fried 'pancakes' flavoured with orange flower essence, swell in oil, become crisp, and are served dusted with granulated sugar, much like beignets or doughnuts.


1 1/2 teaspoons instant dry yeast • 4 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled • 4 eggs • a few drops orange flower water • 1 tablespoon lemon zest, finely grated • 1 lb plain flour • 1/4 teaspoon salt • fine white sugar • 1 litre of vegetable oil for deep frying

 Prepare soft dough by mixing together all the ingredients.

 Knead well on floured surface until smooth and elastic.

 Cover with cling film and leave for about 2 hours.

 Spread with rolling pin then stretch the pastry with fingers until very thin. (Although quite tasty, avoid eating the raw dough, it will give you wind!)

 Cut into squares and drop into hot oil. When one side is golden brown and crisp, turn and cook other side until golden. They cook very quickly - be careful not to burn them!

Bon apétit!



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CALÇOTADA

THAT'S ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU'VE GOT ME INTO

**Sunday 4th March
Vernet-les-Bains**

This Catalan tradition can leave you in a fine old mess, but onion lovers will sigh with pleasure at these 'calçots' (pronounced cal-show) served up with a 'sauce romesco' at a convivial 'calçotada,' (communal calçot get-together) and accompanied by entertainment, live music and dancing. Calçots are a variety of long, thick green onion (rather like skinny leeks) that have their peak season in January, February, and March. They are normally cooked on a barbecue and turned and turned until entirely blackened outside and soft and sweet inside. They are served on an upturned terracotta roof

tile, dipped in salvitxada or romesco sauce, (in Vernet, one of the secret sauce ingredients is 'les gnores' a mystery to solve for the linguists amongst you) and accompanied by red wine or cava.

If you don't know of a 'calçotada' in a village near you, they can be ordered at many typical Catalan restaurants, particularly in south Catalonia. They will probably supply you with a bib, and some may even offer gloves!

Traditionally, sausages or lamb are served up after the calçots, followed by crema Catalana.

To eat, peel off the blackened outer layer, dip liberally into the sauce, hold above the head and start from the bottom that is dripping in sauce. Bon apétit!

The Catalan tradition for an '-ada' or ('ade' in French) describes a collective meal for many, usually based around a single ingredient, a good excuse for some highly unusual, charming and community spirited festivals. Some examples are bullinada, (fish stew) cargolada, (grilled snails) ollada, (winter stew) escalivada, (grilled veggies) calçotada, (char grilled onions).....



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GUINNESS
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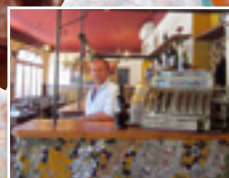
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Le Jardin de Collioure

There's nothing quite like it in Collioure!

New on the restaurant scene this Spring, Le Jardin de Collioure, soon to open in the old Dominican Convent, will add a new dimension to dining in Collioure. The actual renovation project in itself is remarkable, the conversion of the derelict part of this 12th century building, the oldest building in Collioure, a truly mammoth task, but owner Franck Fulliquet, dynamic and innovative Catalan 'de souche' (born and bred) rarely sits still long enough to ponder on the enormity of the task that he has undertaken.

With two gardens, one to be a roomy outdoor eating area and the other a 'bar à vin' for tapas and wine tasting, original secret passages, vaulted interior dining room, free parking, the option to choose and weigh your own fish or cut of meat, there really is nothing quite like it in Collioure.

Far from the madding crowd, tucked away for maximum peace and quiet, yet in the very heart of Collioure, the house and surrounding gardens of the Dominican Convent and St Dominique Church in Collioure were donated to the Dominican Order

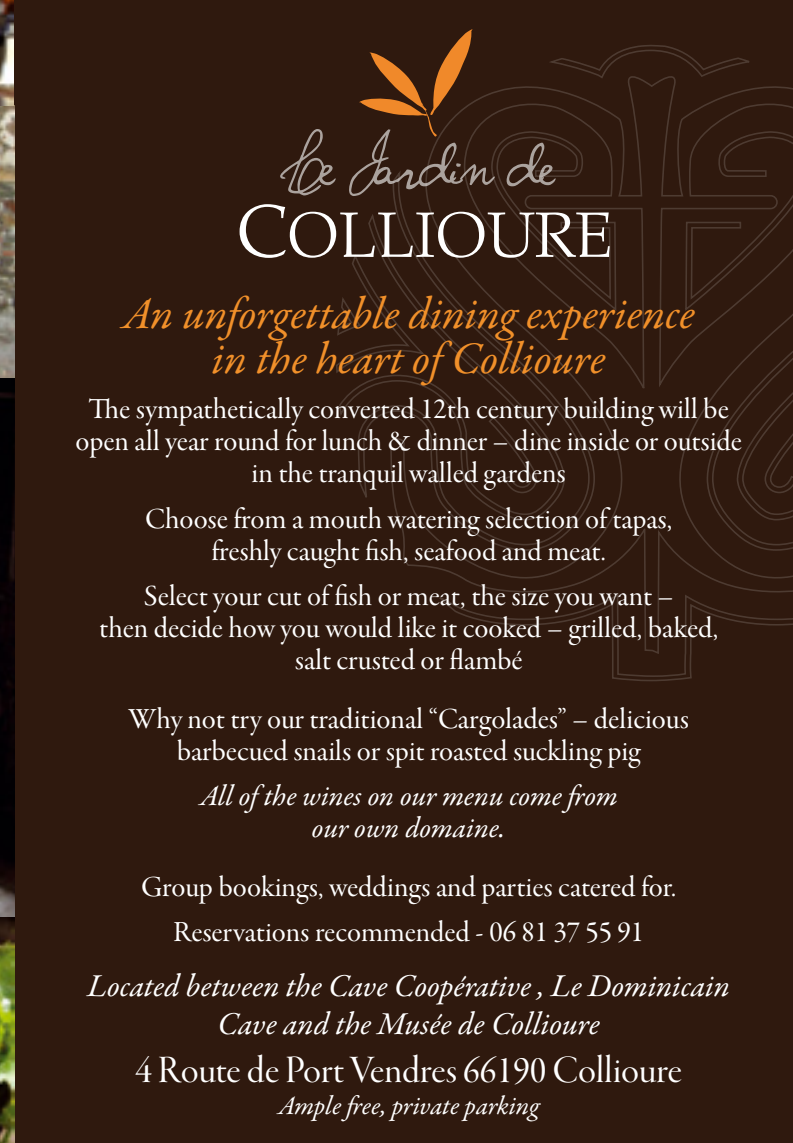
in 1290.


The vast adjoining church, with vaulted roof was bought in 1926 by the wine growers of Collioure and turned into a stunning 'cave', now stocking the AOC Collioure and Banyuls wines of 160 vigneron. A guided tour of the beautiful old building, tastings of the many wines, and a visit to the pretty little art gallery next door, following lunch or preceding dinner in the 'Jardin' is sure to make a delightful day out.

The restaurant will also rent out 'casiers' - large private wine lockers where customers can store up to 25 bottles of wine, which they can drink with friends in the pleasant garden when they wish - no obligation to eat.

Good service and a spacious, tranquil and comfortable environment are amongst Franck's priorities. Price and facilities allow access to all, as menus will start from 15€50, and the restaurant is well equipped for the disabled. Scheduled to open at the end of April, your first visit to Le Jardin de Collioure is unlikely to be your last.

BON APETIT!




Le Jardin de COLLIOURE

An unforgettable dining experience in the heart of Collioure

The sympathetically converted 12th century building will be open all year round for lunch & dinner – dine inside or outside in the tranquil walled gardens

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Select your cut of fish or meat, the size you want – then decide how you would like it cooked – grilled, baked, salt crusted or flambé

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ASPARAGUS WHAT A SUPERHERO!

Don't miss out on gathering delicious wild asparagus at this time of year. This elusive, fern-like plant, thin, spindly, and packed with flavour, is rather good at concealing itself amongst the briars and grasses of the undergrowth, but hunting them down can become a great day of fun-filled adventure, leading you to strange and unexplored places.

Asparagus has been around for many hundreds of years. Ancient herbal remedy and recipe books applaud it as both food and medicine, with a mention in the oldest surviving Roman recipe book, 'Apicius', thought to have been compiled in the late 4th or early 5th century.

Where vitamins and nutrients are concerned, asparagus is low in calories and sodium, a source of folic acid, potassium, vitamins K and A, and dietary fibre, a natural diuretic, reducing swelling and water retention and recommended for its detox, anti-aging and aphrodisiac qualities.

And that's not all! Recent research has also identified 'saponins', associated with improved blood pressure, improved blood sugar regulation, and better control of blood fat levels. Wow! What a superhero!

In 1891, Pellegrino Artusi, author of 'The Science of Cookery and the Art of Eating Well' carried out some research into improving the unpleasant smell of chamber pots after an asparagusfest and noted that "the nasty odour ... can be transformed into



the sweet smell of violets by adding a few drops of turpentine to the chamber pot".

In fact, the distinctive smell in urine after eating asparagus is believed to be due to sulphur-containing amino acids that break down during digestion, although it seems that not all of us have a gene that enables us to smell the resulting effects on our pipi!! Lucky for some!

Homemade quiche with wild asparagus.

Pie pastry (pâte brisée) or puff (pâte feuilletée)

Bunch of wild asparagus

1 shallot


1 clove of garlic


125g 'lardons'


3 eggs


milk

gruyère cheese

 Chop up the asparagus, garlic and shallot and fry in olive oil for 5 mins. Fry the lardons.

 Prepare the 'migaine' (the basic part of any quiche recipe) by beating together three eggs, 1/2 cup of milk, and adding salt and pepper.

 Shape the pastry into the mould, add the lardons and asparagus mixture, cover with grated gruyere and pour the migaine over it.

 Place in the oven at a temperature of 180°C for 25 -30 min.

(Merci à Martine-Sophie)



Visit this famous ancient Lintel in the nearby church in Saint Genis des Fontaines

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château d'hôtes, hôtel de charme et spa

Just 5 mins from Prades

Grand Hotel of Molitg les Bains...

As promised in the Autumn edition, here we are back at the Grand Hotel of Molitg les Bains.

At the far end of the main salon is a grand piano, beside it, the bust of Pablo Casals, the famous cellist who, on escaping the Spanish Civil War, settled in Prades. As a protest against the Republican defeat, he refused to play in public, until, one day he was persuaded to play at the White House in USA with his friend Rostropovitch. After that he gave concerts in Prades and Prades gave him a small house in which to practice and live. He also gave cello lessons. But when he fell in love with Martita, a young Puerto Rican student, the people of Prades threw him out. Mme Barthélémy proposed giving them a house in the Grand Hotel and from then, on each time he was in Europe, he came to stay.

Pablo Casals found, at the Grand Hotel, a sanctuary where he could practice his music and relax in the beauty of the surroundings. Mme Barthélémy remembers well how, when he rehearsed, all the family and staff would listen. She describes vividly the joyous, informal occasions with everyone sitting on the grass, on walls, in the trees, all enjoying every note he played.

The family had a fifteen bell clarion made in his honour. It plays his famous composition "Cant dels Ocells", the song of the birds in which he tells the world of the sadness and regret of the Catalan People, for whom, tomorrow, it will be a song of peace and hope. It was played every time he arrived.

To this day the Grand Hotel hosts many concerts and art exhibitions. Residents and

non residents alike are welcome to come and eat or take a drink on the terrace where Pablo Casals played, explore the grounds, have a treatment, enjoy the concerts. Guests eating in the restaurant can use the pool and, during school holidays there are often activities designed with children in mind. The hotel staff are multi lingual and happy to tell you the programme.

While visiting the Grand Hotel, the old village of Molitg should not be ignored. At its medieval centre is the 12th century church against which leans the 14th or 15th century Chateau de Molitg. In fact the church tower was the lookout of the chateau and the faithful used to have to traverse the chateau courtyard to enter the church. It was considerably altered in the 19th century and now, during the Pablo Casals summer festival, concerts are held there. It is open from April to November on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 10h – 18h.

Drive further up the valley from the Grand Hotel and you will come to Mosset, a fortified medieval village on the old frontier between the Kingdom of France and that of Aragon. The narrow alleys, vestiges of the ramparts, and the ruined castle all tell of a long and sometimes troubled history. From the clock tower of the church of St Julien and Ste Baselisse a fir tree sprouted in the year of the French Revolution. It has grown a mere 2.9 metres in the past two hundred years and is regarded as a symbol of the tenacity of the good folk of Mosset. The Tour de Parfum, a museum dedicated to smell, is an extra olfactory experience to add to a very varied day out in and around the Grand Hotel of Molitg les Bains.

After visiting either village, the Grand Hotel is the place to stop and relax with a cool drink on the terrace, surrounded by beautiful gardens and listening, as did Pablo Casals, to the song of the birds.



Out for the day...

Maury to Cucugnan via Quéribus



The little town of Maury, on the N117 after Estagel, is well known for its wine. Particularly its naturally sweet wine. It is less well known for its murals. Few people stopping on the way to Quéribus to taste the wine know of the "Chemin de Trompe l'Oeil". In 1998, Bernard Gout, master muralist from Perpignan, was invited by the town council to decorate a few walls of the old village. Well worth exploring the quiet alleys of the old village to see how well he has succeeded in "tricking the eye"...

Start at the Maison du Terroir, passing three old men on a bench in the sun, before entering for a degustation or for a gourmet meal at the excellent Pascal Borrell restaurant. In the adjoining Tourist Office, pick up a map of the trail. Walk back past the three old men who have not moved a whisker and, all along the wall of the Cave Co-operative the now suspicious eye can discern the hand of Bernard Gout in a dog guarding the entrance to a wine cave, the vigneron looking around his cellar door, a



Out for the day...



chair waiting to be sat on in the sunshine. Turning the corner, is that a fountain or not? Or that horse, looking over its stable door? True or false? And Café La Marquise Grise on the way to the Mairie? That looks an attractive place for a coffee...

The skill of Monsieur Gout, his lightness of touch, humour and the sheer beauty of his creations quickly turn the walk into a treasure hunt.

The bucolique scene in the Place Victor Hugo is the work of Emmanuel Bolzoms, the rest are all Bernard Gout's.

At the end of most of the side streets, high on the skyline, is the unmistakable shape of Chateau de Queribus the last Cathar Castle to fall in 1255. It could almost be taken for a Trompe d'Oeil but is, of course, solid, spectacular and needs visiting.

From the cave Co-operative, follow the signs to Cucugnan, passing Bernard Gout's row of wine

cellars, and climb and climb until the road slips out of the P.O. and into the Aude and the road to the Chateau appears on the right. After visiting the Chateau, or merely admiring it from the car park, there is the possibility of a gentle walk of about an hour each way to Cucugnan and back. Alternatively, anyone who does not feel like walking, could drive down to Cucugnan to greet the walkers on their arrival.

Walkers need to turn their backs to the Castle, and, passing the "organic" "dry" WCs on their right, take the piste that curves around the hillside, descending slightly. The views are constantly big and beautiful. Goats graze on the garrigue, the scent of the herbs floats on the air and, after forty minutes or so, the little town of Cucugnan can be seen sitting in its wide valley backed by receding peaks of dramatic mountains.



Cucugnan is a good base for exploring other Cathar Castles or enjoying long walks in the beautiful countryside. It is also the home of Claire Campbell, a skilled and ever patient teacher whose one to one French lessons are actually a pleasure and allow time for discovering the joys of the region as well as improving one's French. [06 78 15 19 29](tel:0678151929), www.cours-a-cucugnan.com or email: campbell_claire53@yahoofr





Les Orgues



If you swish past Ille sur Têt on the express way part of the N116, on the far bank of the Têt river you will see strange limestone cliffs rising out of the trees that line the bank: Les Orgues d'Ille. To reach them you need to go through Ille sur Têt and cross the river following the signs to Belesta. The road to the site is indicated right on a sharp left hand bend by the tuileries. Buy your tickets and collect an informative leaflet at the entrance hut. The path to the site is a pleasant walk through agricultural land until you reach the amphitheatre formed by the cliffs of les Orgues, gigantic columns rising ten to twelve metres with almost bonsais vegetation sprouting from their tops.

by repetitive drips of water carrying a grain of sand or flake of clay down the side of a sandy rock column, carving out a gully as they fall. The effect is of a slightly eerie but beautiful and very fragile landscape.

It is a landscape that has taken five million years to develop and is reminiscent of those found in Cappadocia in Turkey or the Brice Canyon in the United States. It is now in its last phase, the erosion phase. Gradually rain will sweep the last of the columns to the sea and les Orgues will cease to exist. However this will take a while, it does not rain too often and plenty of time remains to visit the site and marvel.

Les Orgues d'Ille can also be seen if you take a left at the first roundabout over the bridge, arriving

at the 'Plan d'Eau', a popular shady picnic spot by the river complete with barbeques and stone tables. It is backed by the same limestone cliffs, same sandy rock formations as the site itself.

Walks along the river, up in the direction of 'Puig Pedros' or to the old ruined village of Casanoves are gentle and easy, more a 'ballade' than a walk. It is a peaceful and pleasant place in which to while away an afternoon at any time of the year. The vegetation is almost tropical in its exuberance close to the river, giving way to peach orchards and olive groves further on. Parasol pines stand sentinel on the tops of the cliffs and the arid scrubby garrigue covers the hills, home to French lavender and thyme and nesting birds.



right. This is it." It's a shame because the delightful baroque architecture that dominates this city (minaret-style rooftops are in abundance too) is a joy to behold and a more dramatic, contemporary counterpoint would have worked a treat, though to be fair, this rather bland building is spectacular once inside.

A trip to Montpellier is a recharge for the soul. It's a feel-good, dynamic and elegant city eminently do-able in a day from most corners of the PO. Go on, make the effort.

The city of Montpellier is consistently voted one of the top places to live in France - by no less than the French themselves. Close to the Mediterranean it has glorious baroque architecture, a lovely old quarter, chic shopping, plenty of cultural hotspots and no end of eclectically inspired restaurants. And the good news for visitors is that it's scale can be done justice to even on a day trip.

With Europe's oldest university, students are in great evidence wherever you go, doing what students do best - lounging, leaning, larking, flirting, texting, tweeting, meeting, eating and very possibly studying. The city is also home to several hi-tech companies (like Dell Computers) dominated by youthful employees. This generational bias ensures the city feels alive and energetic at every turn - a vibe all ages can tap into and feel rejuvenated.

Twelve years ago Montpellier introduced trolley-trams to the city centre as a part of its eco-friendly transport policy. Colour coded for different routes

(some are vibrantly multi-floraled) and carrying a quarter of a million people a day, they're regular and cheap, going as far as the Etang de L'Or at Pérols eight kilometres away. Bicycle rental is also encouraged, with a convenient pick up/drop off scheme in place throughout the city. Bike theft though, both in part and in whole, is endemic with sad remains of velos-that-were left forlornly chained to lampposts all over the city.

Whilst the Polygone shopping mall provides plenty of retail therapy, it's yawningly predictable - you could be anywhere. Far more uplifting is the city's old quarter, with quirky little shops so specialist that you wonder how on earth they make a living. One I saw sold only white blouses, its display window consisting of nothing else. Another, an old-fashioned wig and hair-piece shop, had its wares displayed on macabre model heads of differing 'skin' colours, all cracked and faded - unsettling to behold but compelling viewing! However the old quarter mostly consists of elegant boutiques, inviting delis,

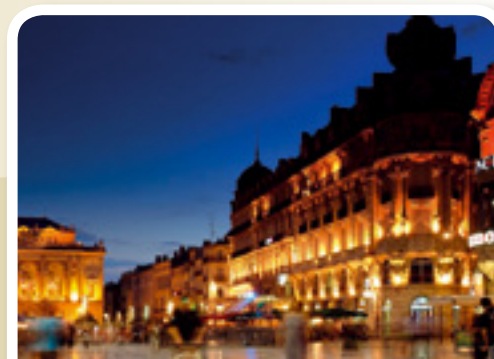
bijou art galleries and tasteful interior furnishers. As you'd expect, eateries of all cuisines are plentiful and if Moroccan's your thing, Les Jardins de Marrakech gets consistently good ratings on the blogs.

According to Montpellier's tourist guide, a must-see (as well as the celebrated and recently refurbished Musée Fabre) is the modern Corum opera house, at the end of a long, windswept park area off the Place de la Comédie. When I finally got there, I thought, "Right, I've found the car park, where's the actual opera house then? Oh,

Getting there : Drive - park and ride from the Odesséum car park, J29 on the A9. Costs 4 Euros and includes 2 tram tickets.

Train - Fast, though not especially frequent, from Perpignan. 1hr 50mins, from 38 Euros return. Be aware on arrival there can be aggressive begging around Montpellier's Gare St Roch concourse.

Coach - Get a group together and hire a coach +driver from 15 Euros a head return, drop off in city centre. Check out Argeles Tourisme and Frogbus for deals.

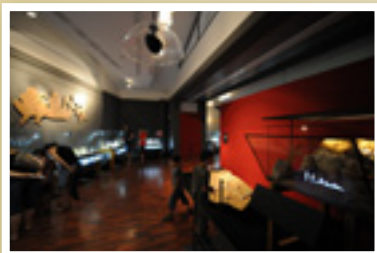


Out for the day...

THE EARLIEST EUROPEANS DID NOT ACTUALLY SETTLE IN BRUSSELS... ...MANY CHOSE TAUTAVEL...

So where did they come from 1.8 million years ago? What did they do?

The story of those first Europeans is to be found in le Nouveau Centre d'Interpretation in the Palais de Congrès of Tautavel.



Open from 14h30 – 17h30, the very reasonable entrance ticket is 2 euros for adults, 1 euro child or take an 8 euro adult, 4 euro child ticket to visit the Tautavel Museum and Centre of Prehistory as well, an inspiring place, where students come from all over

Easy to find by taking the small road between the Town Hall and the Post Office with their attractive ceramic mosaic decorations. A ceramic mosaic panel "l'homme arrive en Europe" assures you are on the right path.

The exhibition tells the story of man's arrival in the Caucasus from Africa all those millions of years ago and plots his journey towards Asia and Europe.

It is clearly shown, easy to grasp and fascinatingly presented. From the days before he had learnt to hunt and following the trail of the tools he made and the fossil remains of ancient animals, it starts with a shadow puppet show. In it, a group of our ancestors is shown removing the meat from a deer killed by a sabre tooth tiger, illuminated by the fire of an erupting volcano the ashes of which will smother them and leave us a record of their passing.

Through Italy, France and Spain we follow him in a series of 3 dimensional optical plays, in a large tactile virtual book and on a touch screen scanner as he becomes a hunter, discovers fire, builds himself huts, comes to stay...

the world to study Prehistory, where the original archaeological finds are stored and where copies are meticulously made for use in exhibitions and museums worldwide.

Walking to the Museum through the village it is hard to resist the many wine caves offering tastings of the excellent wines of Tautavel, or the brilliant and stylish Raku pottery of Juan and Marilyne Verdy, or the grenat jewelers, or the tempting restaurants. In fact in the summer edition we will explore both the village and the surrounding countryside in depth. But, for a taster and a riveting outing for all ages, the First Europeans of Tautavel beckon...



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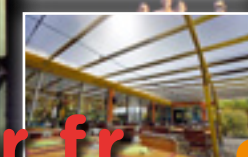
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Test your French

1 - O POUR OPERA!

Match up these words, all beginning with O, with their definitions.
(Why not try to work them out first without looking at their equivalents?)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|---|-------------|
| On doit le faire | 1 | a | oie |
| Contraire de neuf | 2 | b | orteils |
| Médecin qui soigne les yeux | 3 | c | ombre |
| Doigts des pieds | 4 | d | ongle |
| Fleur parfumée | 5 | e | obligatoire |
| Gros oiseau au plumage blanc | 6 | f | oursin |
| Endroit qui n'est pas éclairé | 7 | g | oculiste |
| Partie dure à l'extrémité des doigts | 8 | h | ortie |
| Petit animal qui vit dans la mer | 9 | I | occasion |
| Plante qui pique | 10 | J | œillet |



Language tip

Tout à l'heure - in a moment/a little while ago (depending on tense)

A tout à l'heure - see you later

Tongue twister (Virelangue) (Répétez trois fois)

Cinq chiens sortent seuls ce soir

A bit about bout

'**Bout**' (pron boo) is another of those little words with many meanings. It can be a bit, a piece, an end, a tip, a point, a stub..... and of course it has multiple useful expression to confuse and confound!!

Here are a few.

- le bout du monde
the middle of nowhere
- un bon bout de chemin
quite a long way
- un bon bout de temps
quite a long time
- à bout de bras
at arm's length
- à bout de forces
exhausted, worn out
- à bout de souffle
out of breath
- au bout du fil
on the other end of the telephone
- du bout des lèvres
on the tip of the tongue
- jusqu'au bout
right to the end
- montrer le bout de son nez
to show one's face

2 - TROUVEZ LA BONNE DÉFINITION

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. piste
a) drunk
b) ski run, track
c) glue stick | 3. ortie
a) nettle
b) big toe
c) should do (in Scottish) | 4. bûche
a) mouth
b) butcher
c) log |
| 2. gorgée
a) mouthful
b) overeat
c) stuff | 5. dalle
a) dawdle
b) valley
c) paving stone | |

3 - WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?

The following French expressions all involve one of our favourite pets, the pussycat. Can you find their meanings in English?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|---|--|
| Appeler un chat un chat | 1 | a | The apple doesn't fall far from the tree |
| À bon chat, bon rat | 2 | b | To have other fish to fry |
| Avoir d'autres chats à fouetter | 3 | c | It tastes like dishwater |
| Avoir un chat dans la gorge | 4 | d | Sweetie, poppet |
| C'est du pipi de chat | 5 | e | To have a quick wash |
| Les chiens ne font pas des chats | 6 | f | There was no-one around |
| Mon petit chat | 7 | g | To give up (trying to guess) |
| Donner sa langue au chat | 8 | h | Tit for tat |
| Faire une toilette de chat | 9 | i | To have a frog in your throat |
| Il n'y avait pas un chat! | 10 | j | To call a spade a spade |

Language tip

Most words used to express quantity are followed by de/d' (invariable)

eg Donnez moi plus de chocolat et beaucoup de bonbons!

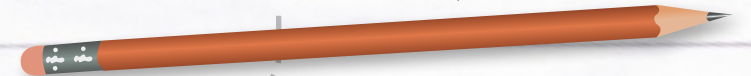
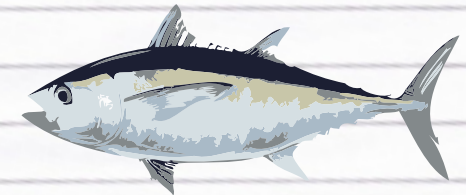
- assez (de) - enough
- beaucoup (de) - a lot
- encore de - more
- moins (de) - less, fewer
- pas mal de - quite a few
- peu (de) - few, little, not very
- plus (de) - more
- tant (de) - so much, so many
- trop (de) - too much, too many

Blague Bébête

Deux pêcheurs, assis sur un poisson, se disputent:

L'un dit à l'autre

« Ne me parles sur ce thon! »
(thon - tuna : ton - tone)



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Test your French

4 LE POLICIER ET LE MUSICIEN

Use the words at the bottom to fill in the blanks. Careful! A couple of red herrings have snuck in!

Un ¹..... de police s'arrête ²..... un musicien ³..... dans le métro.
Avez-vous un ⁴..... pour jouer ⁵..... l'accordéon ici ?
Non monsieur l'agent...
Alors, accompagnez ⁶..... s'il vous plait !
Bien ⁷....., monsieur l'agent ! ⁸..... voulez-vous chanter ?

a. agent, b. permis, c. moi, d. jouant, e. Quoi, f. Que, g. devant, h. joue, i. sûr, j. de

Vouloir – to wish or to want

Vouloir is one of the most common irregular French verbs, with loads of useful phrases worth learning off by heart.

- Je veux – I want
- Je voudrais – I would like to ...
- J'aurais voulu – I would have liked to..
- Je veux que tu fasses
- I want you to do/make..
- Comme tu veux/vous voulez – suit yourself
- Sans le vouloir – unintentionally
- Je t'en veux – I'm cross with you
- Je ne t'en veux pas - No hard feelings
- Je veux bien – yes please!
- Si vous le voulez bien - If you don't mind

Useful expression

Il est facile à vivre
He's easy to live with
Even more useful for the ladies
Il n'est pas facile à vivre!!

Useful grammar construction

Venir de + infinitive – to have just done something
je viens de manger – I have just eaten
Il vient d'arriver – he has just arrived

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5

MATCH UP THESE IDIOMATIC SAYINGS

Il y a quelque chose qui cloche.	1	a	. It's on the tip of my tongue.
Quelle mouche t'a piqué?	2	b	I couldn't resist!
Ça me reviendra.	3	c	He/she's putting it on.
Motus et bouche cousue.	4	d	He's a real pain in the neck!
C'est un vrai casse-pieds.	5	e	Heads or tails?
Tel père, tel fils.	6	f	What's bugging you?
c'est du cinéma.	7	g	Like father, like son.
Pile ou face?	8	h	Something's not quite right.
Je l'ai sur le bout de la langue.	9	i	Mum's the word.
J'ai craqué.	10	j	It will come back to me.

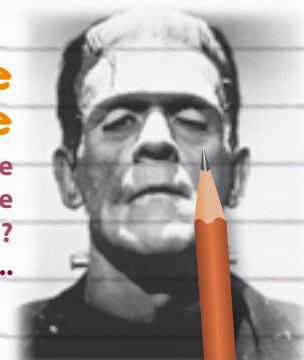
What the devil...?

One of the longest words in the French dictionary - hexakosioihexekontahexaphobie (29 letters) describes a fear of the number 666.



Une blague bête

Comment s'appelle le frère de Albert Einstein ?
Franck...



6 - These familiar words are used quite regularly in French, and whilst not actually rude, they are indisputably slang. Can you find their meanings in English?

bide	1	a	house
charabia	2	b	toilet/bog (v. impolite)
baraque	3	c	car
toubib	4	d	disgusting
chiottes	5	e	business/nightclub
bagnole	6	f	face, mug
berk	7	g	gobbledygook
boîte	8	h	ninny, bird brain
tronche	9	i	belly
nunuche	10	j	doctor

Test your french - answers

1 - 1e 2l 3g 4b 5j 6a 7c 8d 9f 10h
2 - 1b 2a 3a 4c 5c
3 - 1j 2h 3b 4f 5c 6a 7d 8g 9e 10f
4 - 1a 2g 3d 4b 5j 6c 7i 8f
5 - 1h 2f 3j 4i 5d 6g 7c 8e 9a 10b
6 - 1i 2g 3a 4j 5b 6c 7d 8e 9f 10h

Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - TROUVEZ L'ÉQUIVALENT EN FRANÇAIS POUR CES EXPRESSIONS IDIOMATIQUES

- | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| Advice is cheap | 1 | a | elle a le don de la parole |
| A little bird told me | 2 | b | C'est un pince-sans-rire |
| She has the gift of the gab | 3 | c | Il est fou |
| He has a screw loose | 4 | d | C'est un moulin à paroles |
| I can take it or leave it | 5 | e | Coûte que coûte |
| He keeps a straight face | 6 | f | C'est mon petit doigt qui me l'a dit. |
| They're like chalk and cheese | 7 | g | Il est à poil |
| By hook or by crook | 8 | h | Ils sont comme le jour et la nuit |
| He's in his birthday suit | 9 | i | Les conseillers ne sont pas les payeurs. |
| She can talk the hind legs off a donkey | 10 | j | Cela ne me fait ni chaud ni froid. |

Reflexions

Why is 'abbreviation' such a long word?

Different ways to say

THANK YOU

- Thanks a million
- I'm so grateful for what you've done
- How can I ever thank you?
- I owe you one
- Thanks so much for your help
- Thanks for everything



Ne dites pas à votre ami(e)/partenaire qu'il/elle est 'fat'.

Dites lui qu'il est...

- plump
- chunky
- chubby
- overweight
- porky
- tubby

2 -

Trouvez l'équivalent en américain pour ces mots anglais

BRITISH ENGLISH AMERICAN ENGLISH

- | | | | |
|----------------|----|---|-----------|
| lorry | 1 | a | sick |
| autumn | 2 | b | yard |
| caravan | 3 | c | truck |
| dustbin | 4 | d | fall |
| pavement | 5 | e | sidewalk |
| condom | 6 | f | gas |
| petrol | 7 | g | eraser |
| garden | 8 | h | trash can |
| ill | 9 | i | trailer |
| rubber (gomme) | 10 | j | rubber |



3 -

Un peu d'argot... Trouvez la bonne traduction

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|---|--------------------------|
| He'll go ballistic | 1 | a | Je suis écœuré |
| I am cheesed off | 2 | b | elle a du fric |
| She's a fit bird | 3 | c | c'est une belle nana |
| I'll have a bash | 4 | d | il sera furieux |
| I am gutted | 5 | e | c'est une blague |
| It's a wind-up | 6 | f | j'en ai marre |
| I'm trying to suss it out | 7 | g | j'essaie de comprendre |
| I've screwed up | 8 | h | j'ai foiré |
| I'm hitting the sack | 9 | i | Je me couche |
| She's worth a few quid | 10 | j | je vais tenter ma chance |

A daft joke.

What do you call an Igloo without a toilet?

An Ig!
(loo - mot poli et familier pour toilettes)



A very silly joke.

There are three kinds of people in this world - those who can count and those who can't!

4 -

Trouvez l'équivalent de ces mots qui sont si proches... et pourtant si différents.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----------|
| Bill (restaurant or café) | 1 | a | tarif |
| Tip | 2 | b | frais |
| Fare | 3 | c | pourboire |
| Fine | 4 | d | amende |
| Bill (public services etc) | 5 | e | facture |
| Expenses | 6 | f | addition |

5 - O - is for Opera

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec la lettre O

- | | | | |
|----------|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| oak | 1 | a | many times |
| oven | 2 | b | this shellfish might contain a pearl |
| often | 3 | c | in the open air |
| opponent | 4 | d | where fruit trees grow |
| orchard | 5 | e | belonging to us |
| oyster | 6 | f | animal that swims and eats fish |
| owl | 7 | g | large tree with hard wood. |
| outside | 8 | h | someone on the opposite side |
| ours | 9 | i | a night bird |
| otter | 10 | j | for cooking food |

Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Crispy coated crusts crackle and crunch.

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Southern French towns and cities are typically very quiet after 8pm but Girona comes alive in the evening to a cacophony of the sounds of people socialising and enjoying themselves. Steeped in Catalan culture and traditions, Girona has plenty to offer at night with a very active theatre, lots of festivals throughout the year and busy bars, restaurants and cafes.

Did you know?

- There are **6 museums** in Girona city
- Girona has **2** of the world's top **10 restaurants** and 6 in the top 100
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Origins of 'Mascot'

French composer Edmond Audran wrote hit operetta, La Mascotte in 1880, about farm girl Bettina who brought good luck to all around her, as long as she remained a virgin. The title was taken from Provençal slang word 'masco', meaning witch.

As the show grew in popularity, the word was adopted around Europe to describe a person or object which brings good fortune.

Virgins and Dragons

with Simon Newman

Knowing almost nothing about rugby I did the sensible thing before going along to see my first Catalan Dragons match, by asking a friend who did.

After explaining that the Dragons are League, not Union, and the games are completely different, he went on to talk about schisms, codes, rucks and mauls. I listened patiently, nodding every now and then as if I knew what any of that meant. Then I turned to the Internet, where I found the BBC Sport, 'The Basics of Rugby League,' a step-by-step guide that assumes no prior knowledge. If you are a complete rugby virgin like me then I cannot recommend this site highly enough. It even starts with the priceless line, "The aim of the game is to score more points than the other side." Now that's my kind of explanation.

So, with a tenuous grasp of the basic rules and the scoring system, I went along with a couple of (similarly first-time) friends to the Stade Gilbert

Brutus in Perpignan to see the Dragons's return match against the Leeds Rhinos. Did I enjoy it? You bet. Did it matter that I didn't know enough about the rules? Not a bit.

For starters, the atmosphere was brilliant. Packed stadium, a friendly, expectant buzz and nary a hint of boorish behaviour from start to finish. Fans were aged by my rough estimation to be between 2 and 82, and I'd say there was a 70% male 30% female make-up to the crowd. And near to us I even spotted (keep in mind we were standing in the terraces having booked too late for seats) a young couple holding a babe in arms. Pounding rock music preceded the introduction of the teams (Queen's "We Will Rock You" - cheesy maybe, but spot-on for the occasion) with star-spangled cheerleaders strutting their stuff all around the stadium.

One advantage of the terrace is that even though safely ensconced behind a barrier, you're practically on the touchline so when the action does come

your way it's extremely up close and personal. The pace was fast and furious throughout with plenty of crunch moments that left you wondering how on earth the human frame can survive the full-on impact of 110 kilos of muscle, bone and for all I know, granite.

A novelty for us first-timers was the funky-coloured, electric "Tonka" model car that appears regularly on the scene, buzzing along at breakneck speed to deliver the "teeing-up" thingy used for the goal kick, apparently called, um a tee.

Reflecting the experience on our way home I felt that despite knowing probably less than a quarter of what's necessary to fully appreciate the game I still came away with a sense of having had a great afternoon's entertainment - and at 17 Euros, (3 Euros for kids) pretty good value too. If you fancy giving it a go, check out the website below for details of their next home game. Old hands and rugby virgins alike will all be welcomed.

www.catalandragons.com or www.bbc.co.uk/sport (go to Rugby League and you'll find The Basics under Laws and Equipment.)

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that the "Tonka" toy that whizzes on with the Tees is a replica of the Citroen driven by Sébastien Loeb - World Rally Driving Champion?




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To find out more about the different policies available and how they could help maximise your investments and save both you and your loved ones French tax, we would recommend that you seek further advice from an experienced financial advisor.

To learn more about AV and how they work as well as a range of other financial issues please visit our website www.anglophone-direct.com

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Things you might need to know...



OFF THE RADAR

From January 4th, 2012, both sat navs and smart phones which warn of speed camera locations are illegal in France, and offenders face a fine of €1500.

In fact, it is illegal to have an "avertisseur de radar" in your car, even if you are not using it. Cars that have a fitted GPS giving advanced warning of speed cameras should have the GPS updated with a new map which does not show 'radars'

According to the Tom Tom website

"If you have the TomTom Speed Camera service on your device, you are breaking the law if you continue to receive the speed camera warnings and you risk getting a fine.

Disable Speed Camera alerts for France on your device.

Update your device with the latest Speed Cameras. This will remove the Speed Cameras for France from your device."

This will also make a few extra quid for SatNav sellers!

Le Moine, le Moineau et le Renard



Un moine tibétain marche sur une route glacée de montagne et entend un faible pépiement.

Il voit par terre un tout petit moineau à moitié mort de froid. Il le prend et le réchauffe dans ses mains.

"Que faire?", se dit-il "Si je le garde avec moi au couvent le chat le mangera. Si je le laisse ici, il va mourir de froid."

Soudain une idée lui vient. Pour le protéger du gel, il place l'oisillon dans une bouse fumante de vache sacrée, et continue sa route, l'âme en paix.

L'oisillon se réchauffe et commence à chanter à plein gosier sa joie d'être encore vivant.

Un renard qui passe par là, entend la bouse de vache chanter. Intrigué, il s'approche, découvre notre moineau, et le croque.

Les moralités : Celui qui te met dans la merde ne te veut pas forcément du mal.

Celui qui t'en sort ne te veut pas forcément du bien.

moine – monk
entend - hears
pépiement – chirp, tweet
par terre – around him
moineau – sparrow
à moitié mort – half dead
réchauffe – warms
couvent – convent
protéger – to protect
gel - frost
l'oisillon - fledgling
bouse fumante
l'âme - soul
réchauffe – warms up
renard - fox
croque - eats
moralité - moral
celui qui – he who
te met – puts you
forcement – necessarily
t'en sort – gets you out

V
O
C
A
B

Exchanging your UK Driving licence for a French 'permis de conduire'

Did you know that the UK Licence has an expiry date? As the DVLA in the UK do not allow foreign addresses on UK licences, if you are near the expiry date, it may well be a good time to exchange your driving licence for a French one if you are a resident of France. It is a free service, surprisingly easy (those of us who wrestle regularly with the French admin system will know exactly why I use the term 'surprisingly') and can be done at the mairie, prefecture or police municipale.



Not sure how to read out your email address.

@ = arobas (arrowbass)
 dot = point (pwan)

Compulsory Car Blow Job

From July 1st, drivers in France must carry a breathalyser kit (éthylotest) in their car to enable them to check their alcohol levels, or face fines of up to 17 euros.

Research has shown that alcohol is the biggest cause of road deaths in France.

The legal limit is 0.5 grams per litre.



HAVING A BREAK DOWN?

In 2011, the price for breakdown services (repairing on site or towing away) on motorways and dual carriageways went up from 114,50 euros to 117 euros for vehicles weighing less than 3,5 tons. This is a set price charged by approved garages. Fifty per cent will be added to that price if the callout is between 6pm and 6am, weekend or bank holiday.



Calling 08 numbers from France

You may have noticed how difficult (and costly) it is to call 08 numbers in Britain, from France. If you are with France Telecom, you are able to do this by changing the 00 44 + number to 80 44 + number. Many other telephone companies do not offer this service, so it is worth trying to find an alternative number. Try the site SayNoTo0870.com which has a large database of alternative company numbers.

And within France.....

...watch out for telephone numbers beginning with "08". Some may be free, some cheap, others expensive. **MORE ON THIS IN THE NEXT ISSUE**

Absolutely Almost All you need to know about the Pyrénées Orientales

Absolutely Almost All You Need to Know about the Pyrenees-Orientales. Lavishly illustrated with its lively blend of information and essential facts, Jane and Kate's guide book is a must have for lovers of the P-O.

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Careless Love - The perfect beach novel. A tale of sex, love, commitment, fidelity and family played out against a backdrop of windswept Cornish beaches, deepest Gloucestershire countryside and the Mediterranean sunshine of the French Pyrenees. - www.amazon.co.uk

Collioure from A to Z - An eclectic mixture of information, anecdotes, history, photographs and stories of Collioure, its inhabitants and visitors.

If you have any problems getting hold of these books email jane.mann@wanadoo.fr



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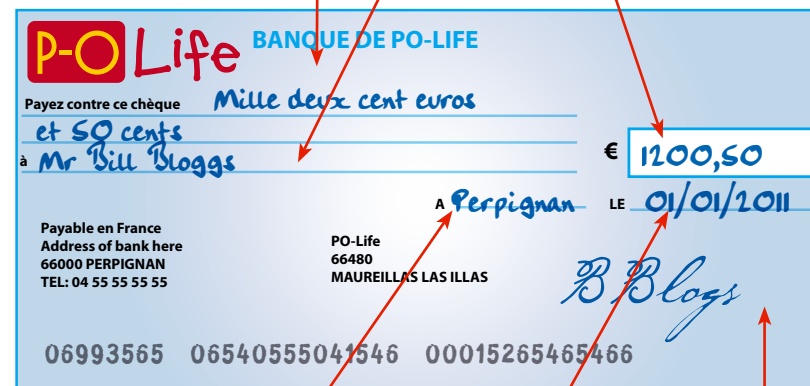
How to write a french cheque

It's not rocket science, but it can be quite confusing, particularly as the amount and the payee are reversed compared to an English cheque.

Amount in letters (write the cents in letters or numbers.)

Name of payee

Amount in numbers (use a comma in place of the decimal point e.g. €25,75)



Place cheque written (doesn't have to be accurate)

Date

Signature

The numbers

0 zéro	16 seize	74 soixante-quatorze	90 quatre-vingt-dix	1,000 mille
1 une	17 dix-sept	75 soixante-quinze	91 quatre-vingt-onze	2,000 deux mille
2 deux	18 dix-huit	76 soixante-seize	92 quatre-vingt-douze	10,498 dix mille quatre cent
3 trois	19 dix-neuf	77 soixante-dix-sept	93 quatre-vingt-treize	quatre-vingt-dix-huit
4 quatre	20 vingt	78 soixante-dix-huit	94 quatre-vingt-quatorze	1,000,000 un million
5 cinq	21 vingt et un	79 soixante-dix-neuf	95 quatre-vingt-quinze	a billion un milliard
6 six	22 vingt-deux	80 quatre-vingts	96 quatre-vingt-seize	
7 sept	23 vingt-trois	81 quatre-vingt-un	97 quatre-vingt-dix-sept	<i>If you need numbers higher than this, please give us a call. We'd love to meet you!</i>
8 huit	30 trente	82 quatre-vingt-deux	98 quatre-vingt-dix-huit	
9 neuf	40 quarante	83 quatre-vingt-trois	99 quatre-vingt-dix-neuf	
10 dix	50 cinquante	84 quatre-vingt-quatre	100 cent	
11 onze	60 soixante	85 quatre-vingt-cinq	101 cent un	
12 douze	70 soixante-dix	86 quatre-vingt-six	125 cent vingt-cinq	
13 treize	71 soixante et onze	87 quatre-vingt-sept	200 deux cents	
14 quatorze	72 soixante-douze	88 quatre-vingt-huit	201 deux cent un	
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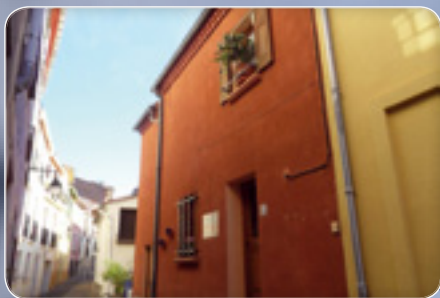
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