

P-O Life

Le grand magazine anglais en petit format

pour tout savoir sur les Pyrénées Orientales

FrenchLife **6**

CONSUMER RIGHTS

What's On



10 EVENTS
AROUND
THE
REGION

12



Food & Drinks

CRISTALLISED VIOLETS

20



CHERRIES

Living Off The Land



A selection of events
from the Palais des Congrès

FREE / GRATUIT

n°16

2018
April
May

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Language training - carole.howarth@neuf.fr

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We always ask if a business is registered. However, we strongly recommend that you ask to see the 'extrait K-bis' (pronounced kah-beess) or 'carte d'identification'. This will confirm that the contractor can legally carry out the work that you require.

2

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PO Life is available in all main tourist offices, most supermarkets, airport, Palais des Congés, Leroy-Merlin Auchan, Carrefour Argelès, France Europe Immo in Auchan... (for more precise details, visit our site www.anglophone-direct.com)

Bonjour !

Hmmm! Can you just feel the warmth of that sun on your face? Happy springtime!

If you're thinking that I've had a bit of a hairstyle change and ear extensions, and am looking like a bit of a dog, NE VOUS INQUIETEZ PAS! My hairy (and yes, slightly stinky but very loveable) hound, Bisou, decided to join us last month in street demonstrations as we face the continuing threat of the THT passing through our beautiful region.



A big «SORRY» to all those of you whose adverts we have not been able to place this month. We prefer to remain small and cute for the time being but to all our advertisers and sponsors, thank you so much for your support, and please don't stop ringing!! We wouldn't be here without you!

This month we are starting a series of articles to help you to understand and defend your consumer rights. If you have had any experiences, good or bad, of taking goods back, chasing tradesmen (or women come to that!) please let me know on info@anglophone-direct.com

Enjoy the fantastic weather to come and always think sunny!

Fins aviat (Catalan for see you soon) - Kate

SOMMAIRE

- 4 **Walk the region** **Did You Know?** TOUR Madeloc INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE REGION I LIFE IN GENERAL!
- 5 **French Life** STANDING UP FOR YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS
- 8 **Local news** Ticks - but not the type that you find in your exercise book!!
At the time of the year
- 10 **What's on?** OUR PICK OF EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

- 12 **Food and drink** RESTAURANT AND WINE REVIEWS
- 16 **Test your French** FRENCH LANGUAGE EXERCISES TO HELP YOU TO IMPROVE YOUR FRENCH
Améliorez l'Anglais
- 18 **Art life** STEPHEN MATUREIN fact or fiction?
- 20 **Spotlight on...** MAS DEU - six generations of family wine making tradition
Living of the Land A fruit that needs NO INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!

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TOUR DE LA MADELOC

Qu'est-ce qui est vert, tout petit et qui fait peur ? Un petit pois avec une mitraille. (mitraille = machine gun)



This is a steep walk, which takes 1-2 hours each way depending on your start point. The use

of stout walking boots and a stick is recommended, especially for some of the rocky scrambles.

Access : The start point is reached from the Collioure bypass N114, take the exit after the one for Le Racou. Follow the track by car up to the Table d'Orientation 505140E 4706076N – 307m alt. Park and enjoy the views from the table and identify places in the distance from the graphic guide. The hills in this area are described as being like a turkey's foot, with high ridges splaying out from each peak and separated by steep-sided valleys

Map IGN 1:25000 Banyuls/Col de Perthus/Cote Vermeille (GPS) 25490T.

Walk : Yellow marks throughout

✓ Walk from here, following the footpath, and signs to the Tour Madeloc. The path climbs steeply up the hillside (follow the yellow marks) up to the Batterie de Taillefer 493m alt. 505635E 4705381N. From here there is a rough road where you actually descend a little and can enjoy the views over Collioure and Port-Vendres and the neatly terraced vineyards to the north east. After about 700 meters the path

The "Tour de la Madeloc" continues our walk around the early-warning defence system set up by the Rois de Majorque to protect the Roussillon. Dating from circa 1285AD, the Madeloc was modified by Vauban in the XVIIIth century. The views are stunning, overlooking Collioure, Port Vendres and Banyuls, and south to Cap Cerbere and the Spanish border.

rises more steeply again and starts to zig-zag across the hillside as you climb towards the tower. There are also some amazing views to the west as you reach the turn on the north ridge of the hill, you can see Canigou's peak over the Alberes chain. After several zigzags you finally reach the top ridge of the hill and can see the tower, with its incongruous TV antennae belying its age. The tower is at 506134E 4704248N, 652m alt. The views on a clear day are stunning; to the west you can see the Tour de la Massane, to the east Banyuls-Sur-Mer and to the south, Spain!

✓ Once at the tower you realise that there is actually a road from Banyuls and those wishing to enjoy the views without spending the effort (or time) to hike all the way can drive (if brave enough to negotiate the narrow tracks and steep drops) almost to the top. From the centre of town, follow the D86 inland on the north side of the river under the railway bridge, turn right towards the cave cooperative, past the chapel of Notre Dame de la Salette and towards the Col de Llagastera. Then continue to the Col des Gascons. From here there is a good path up to the tower. The walk is about 1-1/2 km, still a good climb but with no rocky precipices to scale!

✓ Remember to take a camera and lots of water especially in summer. Coming down is easier but take care on the rocky patches. Allow 2½-3 hours for the whole walk.

Do you know of a great walk? Why not share it with us!

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Don't forget **Mothers' Day** (la Fête des Mères)
Sunday May 25th

LE DELACROIX - still WORTH A QUID OR TWO!



Did you know that French franc bank notes can **still be exchanged for Euros** in a *Banque de France*?

They each have a *date limite* - the last date that you can hand them in, in exchange for euros – if you happen to have a *Montesquieu* for example, you've just missed the deadline which was the 31st March 2008. The *Montesquieu* was in fact a 200F note - a fortune in the days of the franc but a mere 30 euros now. Never mind - if you happen to have a *Delacroix* lying around, (100F) you have **until 31st January 2009** to take it to the bank! (Delacroix was one of the most important of the French Romantic painters in the 19th century).

WANNA BUY A WATCH?

It is impossible to miss (and sometimes avoid) the **street sellers** in Le Perthus with their pouches of watches and sunglasses, or deep pockets full of video cameras and other electronic gadgets, but did you know that in French they are called *bonimenteurs* or (rather derogatory) *vendeurs à la sauvette*?

Wishing you "goig"

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**. The eggs, symbol of the resurrection, are given to the singers in the streets by way of thanks... and often used later to make the *omelette Pascale* or Easter omelette.

April Fish Day

Of uncertain origins, many believe that the tradition of April fools' Day was born in the 1500s in France, at a **time when France celebrated the New Year on April 1st**. In 1562, Pope Gregory changed the calendar from the Julian calendar to the one we use today (the **Gregorian calendar**) and from then on, the New Year began on January 1st. Those who forgot or continued to celebrate New Year or the 1st April were called *Poisson d'Avril* (April fish) and had tricks played on them. (April fish are young therefore easily caught!)

Did you know?

PORT VENDRES WAR MEMORIAL

«Never in the field of human conflict, has so much been owed by so many to so few.»

Anthony Tuck of Argelès tells us... "The Avions war memorial at Port Vendres quotes the now legendary tribute from Winston Churchill to the **heroic pilots and aircrews** who, from June to October 1940 fought the Battle of Britain.

Among the names of sixteen courageous young French pilots remembered on the memorial are pilots MAURICE CHORON and EMILE FAYOLLE from Port Vendres, both of whom escaped to England on 20th June 1940 and were immediately thrown back into action, and were lost in battle. Today in London, close to Westminster Bridge, the new magnificent memorial unveiled in 2005 honours all the participants, from over a dozen countries, of that first great air battle. Listed in the French panel are Maurice Choron and Emile Fayolle, two of the immortal few.

SAY AH!

But don't swallow! At this time of year in the P-O, the whole swallow population will be **looking to nest chez vous**. Very cute but make sure you're a happy host and willing to wade through bird poo, dried mud and bits of stick if they've chosen your porch for their holiday home! Not suprisingly, the nest is built primarily by the female, although the male does some gathering of materials. Similar to real life chez the human species then, hey?

FIRST BITE OF THE CHERRY!

The presidents of France may come and go but the Céret tradition of offering the **first cherries of the season to the president** of the Republic continues, a first of course for Nicholas Sarkozy.

KNIGHTS OF PASSION!

The Knights templar or *templiers* were originally a group of **warrior monks** founded in the 12th century to **protect the highways and byways** and keep them safe, particularly for pilgrims. They took vows of poverty and chastity but nevertheless became very powerful in a very short period of time, as the excitement and heroic aura which surrounded them attracted many rich, high born lords, who gave up all their possessions to the order, according to the vow of poverty and communal sharing!

ACCEPTING A CREDIT NOTE (un AVOIR) -Traders are not obliged to take back goods or cancel an order if the product is not faulty. They may agree to give you a credit note. If the seller is at fault (defective merchandise, late delivery, etc), you are not obliged to accept this arrangement and can insist on your money back.

YOUR CONSUMER RIGHTS

It's never pleasant to make a complaint in any language, but when you are trying to put your point forward with a limited vocabulary and knowledge of your rights, it is particularly frustrating. Over the next few editions, we will give you some vocab and tips for standing up for your consumer rights.

Most problems encountered can be resolved amicably (and free of charge – remember that legal action is time consuming and expensive) simply by complaining to the supplier, manufacturer or distributor of the product or the service provider concerned.

Steps to take before considering legal action ...

- ✓ Send your complaint to the trader by **registered letter** (*lettre recommandée*) with **proof of receipt**. Make sure that you keep personal copies of all correspondence.
- ✓ If the dispute is with a large national company (Eg France Telecom) **ask if they have a mediator** (*médiateur*) whose job it is to deal with disputes.
- ✓ Write to (or visit) your **local consumer association** who can inform you about your rights, and assist you in settling your dispute with a trader or service provider.
("Maison d'Accès au Droit" in Perpignan (1 place Joseph Deloncle, 66000 Perpignan) open from Monday – Friday 8h00 - 12h00 and 14h00 - 17h00 Tel : 04 68 66 34 56 accueil_mad@yahoo.fr) They will **help and advise you**, and where necessary pass your case on to the relevant parties who will try to find a solution. The service is free and confidential.

✓ Where sales (*sales*) are concerned, you have the same rights as usual concerning **manufacturing defects and after-sales service**. The shopkeeper is still obliged to exchange or to reimburse an item that has a hidden defect or does not conform to its description, unless of course a specific fault was pointed out as the reason for its sale price.

✓ Download a **European consumer complaint form** (*formulaire européen de réclamation pour le consommateur*) from <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers> This form, in 11 languages, has been designed to **guide consumers in formulating their claims** via a multiple-choice lists of responses. Use it instead of a letter of complaint, always bearing in mind that it could be used in evidence if the case comes to court.

✓ Your final step before taking actual legal action is **the legal conciliator** (*conciliateur de justice*), a volunteer appointed by the court of appeal judge to try to settle disputes between consumer and trader out of court. (Contact details available in town halls or the magistrates' court (*tribunal d'instance*) in your area).

Next month : The next step... Taking legal action

Shoppers' rights

- If the product has a hidden defect ("vice caché") which renders the product unfit for the use for which it is intended, a replacement, a partial or total refund, or the cancellation of the whole contract can be obtained.
- If the product does not conform to its description, the consumer can demand the repair or replacement of the goods.
- If the product causes damage because it is defective, the trader is responsible for damage caused.

Useful vocab

Je voudrais... (chuh voodray...)

... voir le gérant/responsable (vwrah luh che-ron/rus-pon-sab) – see the manager

... faire une réclamation (fair oon ruk-lam-ay-shun) – make a complaint

... porter plainte (portay plant) – make a formal complaint (ie police station)

Je pense qu'il y a eu un malentendu (chuh ponse keel ee ah oo oon mal-on-ton-doo) – I think there has been a misunderstanding

J'ai l'intention de (chay lan-ton-shun duh...) – I intend to...

...vous poursuivre en justice (voo poor-sweev on chustees) – take you to court (sue)

...vous poursuivre en dommage et intérêts (voo poor-sweev on domm-aj-ay antarayay)

– sue you for damages

Une lettre envoyée en recommandé (oon lett on ruck-o-manday) – a registered letter

Un avis de réception (an avee duh ruh-cep-see-on) – acknowledgement of receipt

J'aimerais mieux régler notre problème à l'amiable mais... (chem-uh-ray mee-uh reglay not problem ah lemm-ee-abl may...) – I would prefer to settle out of court but...

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Things you might need to know.

Liber-T badge - péage without pain

Regular users of French *autoroutes*, or those with right hand drive cars, may wish to invest in a "Liber-T badge" which allows you to pass through the péage without having to queue. With this *badge* your details are automatically recorded when you pass through the reserved lanes at any péage, (look out for

Speed limit reminder

	France	Spain
Motorway	130 km/h (110 when wet)	120 km/h
Open road	90 km/h (80 when wet)	90 km/h
Dual Carriageway	110 (100 when wet)	100 km/h
Built up areas	50 km/h	20-30 km/h

Always check the signs as speed limits may vary

If you need the emergency services in Spain, ring 112 and you will be able to talk to an operator in English

GREEN MACHINES

A new scheme introduced on 1st January 2008 means that you could end up paying a large chunk of *éco tax* if the car you have chosen is not eco-friendly, OR receive a sizeable rebate on your new car if it complies with the "green" code. The aim of the scheme is to penalise drivers who go for large, fuel-greedy cars and reward drivers who opt for smaller, cleaner vehicles. Do not necessarily rely on your car showroom to advise you - it may not always be in their best interest to direct you towards a smaller or cheaper model!!!



Bank holidays

Often extended into a long weekend if the holiday falls on a Tuesday or a Thursday, many businesses will "faire le pont" and take the Monday or the Friday off as well. (Major chains unlikely to do this).

May Day (La Fête du Travail) - Thursday 1st May
La Victoire 1945 (WW2 Victory Day) - Thursday 8th May
Ascension (the fortieth day of Easter) - 17th May
Pentecôte (Pentecost) - Sunday 11th May
Lundi de Pentecôte (Whit Monday) - Monday 12th May

School holidays for our region (Zone A) 2008

Easter Saturday 12th – Monday 28th April 2008
Summer Thursday 3rd July – Tuesday 2nd September 2008

the large T) without having to stop or collect a ticket. Register online on www.asf-telepeage.fr. Payment is 2 euros per month, or 20€ per year (with different price options available) which is only charged for months used, (ie if you don't use it at all for one month, you don't pay the fee) plus of course the toll itself. Charges are invoiced and taken from your credit card account once a month. There is also a refundable deposit of 30e to pay upfront in case you decide to disappear with the remote control!!

Driving offences: Remember that if you are stopped in France for a driving offence, you can receive an on-the-spot fine. If this happens to you, do insist on an official receipt from the officer collecting the fine.

DRIVING AND PENALTY POINTS

All drivers start with 12 points, from which between one to six points may be deducted per offence, depending on its gravity. One point is deducted for minor speeding offences; three for more serious speeding offences, dangerous overtaking, driving on the wrong side of the road or not wearing a seat belt. Drunken driving, manslaughter or driving without a licence warrant six points. If you lose four or more points your licence may also be suspended for a limited period. Visit www.reseaupointspermis.com where you can check the status of any points on your licence. More on this in the next issue.

Local news

WALTER BENJAMIN IN BANYULS

Walter Benjamin, (1892 – 1940) German-Jewish literary critic, posthumously one of the twentieth century's greatest philosophers, recently had a **plaque dedicated to him** in Banyuls-sur-Mer. It was from here that Walter, a fierce **critic of Nazism**, made his journey on foot towards the Spanish border, in an attempt to escape the Gestapo. Sadly, he never made it to his destination of Lisbon (and ultimately New York), as he was arrested in Port Bou and handed over to the collaborating Vichy authorities. He was found dead the next day, in his room at the Hotel de Francia but it was never completely clear whether his death (apparently resulting from an overdose of morphine tablets), was suicide or murder. Ironically, his death certificate was accidentally signed as "Benjamin Walter", so his Jewish origins were not obvious and he was buried in the actual cemetery instead of the area reserved for non-Catholics and unbelievers.

THT - THE FIGHT CONTINUES

After breathing a collective sigh of relief last year at the news that the THT would no longer be passing through the Vallespir or the Albères, the battle is on again with a vengeance as the *Non à la THT* (France) and the *No a la MAT* (Spain) lead the people in fighting the latest initiative to take this **double extra-high voltage line (400,000 volts each way) through Le Perthus**. Visit our site www.anglophone-direct.com for details of campaign meetings and demonstrations, and to register your support.

PARIS BY NIGHT

From 4th July 2008, a new night train service, *l'IDNight*, will run between **Paris and Perpignan**, leaving Paris at 23h47 on Fri, Sat and Sun, stopping at Nimes(7h30) and Montpellier. (8h16) and arriving in Perpignan at 10h. Tickets will be available for reservation by internet from just 15€. The train will be an ordinary TGV – no sleeping carriages – but there will be a bar and an *espace animation*. For those wishing to depart Perpignan, the train will leave at 22h on the same days and arrive in Paris at 7h11.

Vide-greniers (car boot sales)

The arrival of the good weather in the Pyrénées-Orientales brings out the *vide-grenier*, the nearest equivalent to the car boot sale, taking place mainly on Sundays. Great atmosphere, hotdogs, snails and beer (only joking about the hotdogs!) and a chance to get rid of those unwanted bits and pieces. Get there early if you want to get the bargains and avoid the rush! NB If you wish to display/sell at a *vide-grenier*, you will normally need to register in advance to book your 'emplacement' and show some proof of identity when registering. More information on how to do this from your local town hall.

APRIL

Sunday 6th

Banyuls del Aspres
Latour-Bas-Elne

Sunday 13th

Villelongue-dels-Monts

Sunday 27th

Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines

MAY

Sunday 1st

Argeles-sur-Mer
Canohès

Vernet-les-Bains

Canet (sea front)

Sunday 11th

Saint-Féliu-d'Amont
Saint-Nazaire

Port Vendres («brocante de la mer»)

Céret (stade Fondcave)

Le Boulou by-pass

Despite delays, the Le Boulou by-pass is definitely going ahead and is expected to be finished and open in 2009



"CAUSE THE POWER
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roofs in the Saint-Charles area will be **covered in solar panels** in a *photovoltaïque* project (conversion of solar energy into electrical energy) expected to **produce more than 11 megawatts** of electricity. This is a massive amount of electricity compared to the *parc éolien* (wind park) at Rivesaltes, which produces 8 megawatts, the solar power station Thémis near Font Romeu which produces 600kilowatts and the future solar power station, Powéo, at Torreilles, expected to produce 3 megawatts. Between them however, they put **the P-0 way up at the top of electricity producers in Europe**. The 11 megawatts per year (more than 10 million kilowatts) will feed the EDF network and the power to be produced has been described as *sans égal en Europe*. Ecologically speaking, the new project will result in **3,000 tons less of CO₂ emissions!** Fifty five million euros will be required to foot the bill and complete the project which is due to start this summer.

Selection of events from the Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

For the full programme of events visit www.anglophone-direct or www.congresperpignan.com

Events at the PALAIS des CONGRÈS

15th April - 8.30 pm - Les Rendez-vous du Caveau de la Huchette Named after the famed Paris Jazz club, «Caveau de la Huchette», this regular jazz 'club' brings together talented jazz musi-

cians. In this concert, we meet Marcel Azzola, accordionist to such French greats as Brel and Piaf

10th-17th April Festival Confrontation Institut Jean Vigo- Theme : Love not war – cinema of the 70s- for a full programme

of films, www.inst-jeanvigo.asso.fr

Exhibitions at the PARC des EXPOSITIONS

3rd – 4th May Classic car fair 9am - 7pm

17th -18th May - Second hand car fair 9am - 8pm

Mieux vaut prévenir que guérir (prevention is better than cure)

WHAT IS A TICK ?

Ticks are not insects, but tiny blood sucking parasites which live in **woodland and grassy areas**. They are often found in tall grass, where they will rest at the tip of a blade so as to attach themselves to a **passing animal or human**. The tick will usually drop off the animal when full, but this may take several days.

THE BITE

When feeding, ticks make a small hole in the dog's skin, attach themselves, and **insert piercing mouthparts** that remove blood.

REMOVAL

It is important to remove ticks **as soon as possible** as the risk of infection becomes greater the longer the tick is attached.

They should be **removed carefully** and slowly. If the attached tick is broken, the mouthparts left in the skin may **transmit disease** or cause a secondary infection. It is worth **wearing gloves**, especially if you have open cuts or wounds on the hands.

Grasp the tick **at the point where their mouthparts enter the skin**, with tweezers, or a special instrument found in chemists called a «crochet Tire-Tic®», and pull straight out with firm pressure.

A small amount of flesh should be seen attached to the mouthparts after the tick is removed. **Do not squeeze the body** of the tick because that will make it "sick" and lead to more risk of contamination. Don't attempt to remove it through burning or chemicals. After removing the tick, don't forget to wash your hands, and wash

and **disinfect the wound**.

If a tick is removed from a human, it is worth saving it in a sealed container in case symptoms develop later.

PREVENTION

You can avoid most tick bites around your home by **keeping grass cut short**; removing leaf litter and brush from around your home, keeping woodpiles and birdfeeders off the ground and away from your home, placing patio furniture, swing sets, etc. away from the wooded sections of your property and using a **preventive product on your dog** such as FrontLine.

Ticks may be welcome in a classroom but not chez Mary-Angela Donohoe, who tells us about one lesson she would prefer to put a cross under!

"When the winter ended I decided I liked the rustic look of the log basket containing a few logs and so I kept it in my living space. As the warmer weather came I began to notice tiny little bugs trundling around the floor, but I paid no attention to them! One evening I was giving my very old dog a cuddle and as I did numerous bugs started falling from his fur onto my lap; closer inspection revealed that there were a number of them embedded in his ears and around his eyes – it was then I realised that he was infected with ticks. Two nights in succession I sprayed his bed with a pesticide and in the following mornings there were in excess of 30 dead ticks in and around his bed. At this point I felt slightly alarmed by the sheer quantity of them and began to search for the source. I checked an opened bag of plaster (close to my dog's bed) and as I unfolded the top a cascade of ticks flew out in all directions. Essentially these creatures had taken up residence next to a fast food outlet (my poor old dog). By this point I was feeling more than a little paranoid. Quite by chance the log basket became the focus of my attention! I picked up a log and knocked it on the floor and an unbelievable quantity of ticks fell out. It took a considerable time before my home was tick free. I found them in all sorts of strange places: in the folds of clean linen, between the pages of books, in drawers and cupboards. Apparently they are able to sense danger and can hide away until the danger has passed."



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What's on?

Our pick of events around the region. For a more detailed events calendar, visit us on www.anglophone-direct.com

FETE DE LA SANT JORDI AND DAY OF THE BOOK AND THE ROSE

Sant Jordi, Patron saint of Catalonia and French equivalent of St George, was a **Christian Roman soldier**, martyred around 303AD for refusing to renounce his faith. According to legend, he happened across a **dragon** terrorising the inhabitants of a town by demanding a daily lamb and a young girl picked out at random to snack on. As luck would have it, the short straw was drawn by the **king's daughter** but help was at hand! St Jordi rescued the damsel and **roses grew from the ground** where the dragon's blood was shed. What is more, the king and his subjects all converted to Christianity as a sign of their gratitude. The Catalan

Regional
Celebrated on or around 23rd April

king often turned to Jordi after that for his help against the "infidel" and several countries, including England, made him their patron saint. In 1456 Sant Jordi day was declared a public holiday for Barcelona. At the end of the 19th century, Sant Jordi became a **Catalan symbol** as it was felt that his struggle against the dragon was similar to the Catalan struggle for freedom. Sant Jordi day is on the 23rd April and this day has also become the **day of the book and the rose**, the rose petals symbolising the blood shed by the dragon. Offer a rose to your true love, or even better, buy him/her a book!

LE PRINTEMPS DANS LE VENT

26th-27th April
Saint Cyprien



Grand meeting of kites - From Maillol beach to Port Cypriano beach - look up to the skies! Also "blokart" tryouts (a kind of buggy with a sail), boomerang fabrication, demonstrations of different kite flying techniques...

1st - 4th May Canet port CANET BOAT SHOW

This nautical exhibition presents **new and second-hand boats**, afloat and ashore, sailboats, powerboats, jet-skis, cruise catamarans.... Different public services will be present to answer your questions; there will be various activities and technical demonstrations such as security measures, opening of life rafts, using the distress rocket, demonstration of helicopter rescue, and the possibility of trying out different water sports. For the children there are bouncy castles and various playgrounds around the resort.



Wind sport festival : Leucate opens its door for a week to lovers of the sea, the waves and the wind. All the **extreme sports** meet up for the 2008 edition of this yearly event. On the programme this year will be **fun-board, kitesurf, sail-carting, demos and participation in roller skating, kite flying...** and many related forms of entertainment throughout the week... with a bit of help from the Tramontane of course!

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE GUITARE

19th April - 3rd May Saint Cyprien

As part of the *Cypriales de Printemps*, Saint-Cyprien will organise the 4th international festival for guitar, starting on Saturday 19th April and continuing for three weekends with **masters of the guitar**, amateur and professional, any style, but always **acoustic**. This year the programme features in particular classical, flamenco and "the Americas" - 18h00/20h30 - Eglise de Saint-Cyprien village.

19th - 20th April Perpignan VINTAGE CAR RALLY

Nuit des Longs Capots (Vintage car rally)
Departure at 10 h30 from the front of the Palais des Congrès.



Catalan proverb
Si plou per Sant Jordi les cireres en orris !
If it rains on St. George's day, there will be no cherries!

12th May

Campler

PILGRIMAGE TO NOTRE DAME du CORAL

It is on this *lundi de Pentecôte*, or Whit Monday, that the traditional pilgrimage to the Ermitage Notre Dame du Coral, in the commune of Prats-de-Mollo, will take place.

Remote and isolated, pilgrimages to Notre Dame du Coral have been taking place since the 15th century. In 1428, the hamlet of « Miralles » was destroyed by an earthquake but its chapel was miraculously saved! According to legend, a wooden statue

representing the Virgin and previously from the original tiny chapel built on the site, was found in a tree trunk, sparking of pilgrim fever and leading to the building of the present church and hermitage.

From 1730 to 1911 the chapel was occupied by a wandering hermit (un ermite forain) who travelled from door to door with his *Capelleta*, a sort of portable trunk containing religious objects, to obtain funds to maintain the buildings.

Over the years, the chapel has sheltered pilgrims, soldiers, hermits, and religious cults.



18th May

Perpignan

MARATHON de PERPIGNAN

Every year, more than 800 participants meet in front of the Castillet at 9h00 to take part in «courir pour la vue, courir pour la vie». All profit from these two separate races, a marathon and a 10km race, goes towards the purchase of special equipment for the visually and hearing impaired. Both races take place on a maximum of cycle tracks and small, traffic free roads.

GIRONA FLOWER FESTIVAL

10th - 18th May

Girona

Girona explodes into colour for nine days as private homes, public buildings, monuments, steps, streets, squares are adorned inside and out with stunningly beautiful, often amazingly original flower and plant displays. An extravaganza of colour and smell.



18th May

Sorède

TRAIL du SOLEIL

22kms of mountain race: Departure at 9h00 from the car park of the Vallée des tortues. Info: 04 68 89 08 05.

31st May - 1st June

LA FÊTE Céret de LA CERISE

Céret cherry festival and Céret de Bandas:

The annual cherry festival in Céret is a colourful weekend of stone spitting, music, dancing and entertainment in the streets, not to mention the inventive recipes involving cherries served up in the local restaurants... or why not try a glass of cherry beer, cherry wine, cherry pie, cherry pasty..?

Excerpt from online diary 'My Life in the P-O'

Went into Céret today and there were cherry stalls absolutely everywhere. Just ordinary people like you and me who had set stalls up in their garages, gardens, on the pavement, in front of their house - just everywhere. Personally, I'm cherry-bound (a little like egg-bound but more comfortable I would imagine) and am getting a bit bored with cherry pie, cherry tart, cherries in liqueur, cherry pasty, cherries on toast, baked cherries, fried cherries, grilled cherries, cherry paté, cherry sundae, cherry quiche, cherries with spam, cherry rissoles, cherry pizza, coq aux cherries, cherry burgers, cherry stew, cherries à la king.....!

The shops are suddenly full of melons and peaches and exotic fruit, sandals and shorts and suntan cream and the café 'trottoirs' feature a melange of nationalities, smiling and smoking, drinking and chatting, or just sitting and watching the world go by. There's a warmth in the air that is not purely meteorological...and on that long and possibly non-existent word, I take my leave.

9th - 17th May

Perpignan

SIROCCO FESTIVAL

Every May, the Sirocco festival puts together a week of concerts, conferences, dance, music and various exhibitions at different venues all around Perpignan. If you like **Latin American dance and music**, flamenco, jazz and raunchy percussion, Perpignan is the place to be over this week. Most of these events are free, with the aim of promoting and celebrating Latin America and Catalonia in an atmosphere of fun and colour.

For further info on programme contact l'Office du Tourisme de Perpignan on 04 68 66 30 30.



Cuisine

1 egg
 castor sugar (sucre semoule)
 violet flowers

✓ Separate the white of an egg and whisk well. Take a violet flower and dip into the egg white and then dip or sprinkle with castor sugar and place on a tray lined with grease-proof paper and leave in warm place for 48 hours. Use on cake, icecreams or even in salads.

CRISTALLISED VIOLETS

Cindy Guilbert of St Laurent de Cerdans is in the process of producing a handwritten and hand illustrated book of Recipes and Remedies of common herbs which can easily be found in the garden, hedgerows and pistes. Look out for more of Cindy's delightfully unusual recipes, such as Lavender Ice Cream, in P-O Life over the next few months.



Contact Cindy to see a selection of her handmade cards, jewellery and original gift ideas - marcel.guilbert@orange.fr
 Tel 04 68 88 02 77

WINE Recommendations

Two more wines to try this month as recommended by Henri at Cellier des Arcades in Ceret. Incidentally Henri now has added cheese to his repertoire. Sourced from a renowned cheese merchant in Toulouse he has an ever changing choice of a dozen or so fine cheeses, including a superb Stilton. To that end he is hoping to organise an evening during the summer where attendees can try examples of his new venture alongside some interesting local wines. More details in the next issue of PO Life.

This month he has suggested a couple of reds from relatively new producers who have an interesting, if not unusual pedigree.

Clot de l'Oum

ST Bart Vieilles Vignes 2004

Eric met his Brazilian partner Leia whilst working in Berlin. They soon realised that they shared a common love of wine, and in 2002 acquired 16 hectares of vineyards near Belesta. Deciding to keep the sturdy old vine stock of Carignan Syrah, and Grenache, as they found yields to be of exceptional quality, this wine is truly remarkable for a first-time effort, particularly as they utilise totally "bio" methods of production. Bursting with highly concentrated red fruit flavours, and mineral overtones, it offers the drinker a magical experience, with very unusual, but pleasant, aftertastes.

Price 17€ 14% ABV

NEW WINE FOR SENIORS

The producers of Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio wines, have developed a new hybrid grape that acts as an anti-diuretic. It is expected to reduce the number of trips older people have to make to the bathroom during the night. The new wine will be marketed as... PINO MORE Remember... you heard it through the grapevine - April 1st.



C'est la pénicilline qui guérit les hommes. Mais c'est le bon vin qui les rend heureux. Alexander Flemming

Vin Eric Laguerre

Le Ciste 2004

The highly acclaimed product of another Eric. M. Laguerre learned his craft with that doyen of the PO wine world Gérard Gauby, and struck out on his own when he converted the family home near St Martin Fenouillet into a winery. Unusually working closely alongside the large local Anglo-Saxon community, Eric has chosen Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Grenache as grape varieties, and again, this wine is excellent as a first production. Damsons and plums dominate, with subtle hints of spiciness, but for the type, a surprising light freshness is present. One to drink on its own or with light red meats such as lamb.

Price 12€ 14% ABV



Your questions

WE HAVE SOME MAURY «POLLEN» PORT. ONCE OPENED HOW LONG CAN WE KEEP IT? IT IS SO LOVELY AND WOULDN'T WANT TO LOSE IT SO SOON.

It depends on the style of the Maury. If it is a rancio style (smells like Port and Madeira) it will last for a few weeks as it has already oxidised. If it is a fresh style (smells like wine) it will not last as long.

Pollen Maury is delicious stuff, and is one of our favourite aperitifs. We were introduced to this wine by owners of some of the vineyards whose grapes go into the wine. Chilled is how they served it to us in their home so chilled is how we now drink it. Keep it chilled in the fridge and it will last several days, though a bottle rarely lasts more than 3 days anyway because it is so "Mauryish".

Taxi?

Did you know that the word 'cab' (as in taxi-cab) actually comes from the Spanish for goat (cabra) as the first carriages for hire were so bumpy that they reminded people of goats bouncing around in the hills!

The "Cayrou", appropriately tucked away in the old stone part of Argelès Ville at 18 rue du 14 Juillet, was a **particularly pleasant surprise**. Small and cosy (just 18 covers) the owners Cyrille (a talented and passionate chef) and Rolande have made the most of the character of the place, decorating in a modern and tasteful style. At lunchtime there is a 16€ two course menu, but the evening choice is between a 28 and 36€ menu, both of which change monthly, according to the most market fresh ingredients. We plumped for the 28€ one with delightfully light crabmeat croquettes as the highlight of the starters, and mains of a choice of seared fresh cod steak with a beetroot and lemon coulis or a supreme of chicken accompanied by a creamy risotto. Delicious sweets followed with a choice of a coffee



Restaurant reviews

AUBERGE DE CAYROU

ARGELÈS

John Fairdough



mascarpone mousse or a light panna cotta with a very unusual berry and pepper sauce. According to the menu, the 36€ offering included langoustines as a starter, and a fillet of lamb or pavé of wild sea bass for main course. Naturally, all the dishes are available as single courses for those with a smaller appetite.

The small touches that set a **good restaurant** apart from an ordinary one are all there at Le Cayrou including complimentary "amuse bouches", almost a course in itself, of seared scallops with a *vouté* of mussels.

The choice of wines is wide, though not cheap by local standards.

Open for two years now, Le Cayrou is a very welcome addition to the dining scene in Argelès, which can too often be classed as mediocre. Because of the small size, it is recommended that, as the season progresses, **reservations** are made (04 68 81 34 08). Closed all day Wednesday and Saturday lunch.

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Match up these common French acronyms and abbreviations

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| ASSEDIC 1 | a | genetically modified food |
| RIB 2 | b | emergency medical service |
| TVA 3 | c | minimum wage |
| SDF 4 | d | Parking ticket or fine |
| OGM 5 | e | VAT |
| SMIC 6 | f | bank account details |
| P-V 7 | g | unemployment payment agency |
| SPA 8 | h | homeless |
| TTC 9 | i | RSPCA |
| SAMU 10 | j | tax included |

...and here's a little cheater to help you out!

Association pour l'Emploi Dans l'Industrie et le Commerce
-Relevé d'Identité Bancaire - Taxe à la Valeur Ajoutée - Sans Domicile Fixe - Organisme Génétiquement Modifié - Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnel de Croissance - Procès-Verbal Société Protectrice des Animaux - Toutes Taxes Comprises - Secours d'Aide Médicale d'Urgence

Trouvez le chiffre qui manque (find the missing number)

- 1 À --- pas d'ici - a stone's throw from here
2 Tous les --- jours - once a week
3 Voir --- chandelles - To see stars
4 Merci ----- fois - Thanks a million
5 Recommencer de ----Start from scratch

Match up these idiomatic sayings

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Bien sûr que non 1 | a | I have a lot on my plate |
| Je m'en mords les doigts 2 | b | to draw lots (for something) |
| Tirer (quelque chose) au sort 3 | c | I could kick myself |
| J'ai d'autres chats à fouetter 4 | d | There is no such word as 'can't' |
| C'est tombé du ciel 5 | e | I have other fish to fry |
| Quoi qu'il arrive 6 | f | It's a godsend |
| C'est bête à pleurer 7 | g | of course not |
| J'ai un compte à régler! 8 | h | whatever happens |
| Impossible n'est pas français 9 | i | I've got a score to settle |
| J'ai du pain sur la planche 10 | j | It is too stupid for words |

Répétez cinq fois !

Virelangue

Trois petites truites crues

Three small uncooked trout

Choose the correct definition

1. point d'interrogation:

- a) police interrogation office
b) question mark
c) information cent

2. fauteuil:

- a) armchair
b) error
c) wheelchair

3. préservatif

- a) supplement
b) complete
c) condom

4. limace:

- a) lime
b) lemon
c) slug

5. pile:

- a) battery
b) mound
c) painful lump

Remplissez les blancs avec les mots ci-dessous

Un automobiliste 1 en panne sur une route de campagne. Il sort 2 sa voiture pour 3 le capot et commence 4 chercher la panne. Une vache arrive et 5 dit: "Je 6 que c'est les bougies!" L'automobiliste, 7, court 8 le fermier. "Votre vache 9 de parler et elle m'a dit que la panne vient des bougies!" "Ne l'écoutez pas répond le fermier. Elle ne connaît 10 aux voitures." (bougie - spark plug) a vient - b trouver - c de - d à - e lui - f rien - g parie - h tombe - i ouvrir - j choqué

Don't just say something is très bien. Say it is...

Cool

Super

Extra

Exceptionnel

Extraordinaire

Formidable

Génial

Nickel (slang)

Remarquable

Sensationnel

VARY YOUR LANGUAGE!

Comment appelle-t-on un squelette qui parle sans arrêt ?

Un haut-parleur (os-parleur) !!

ANSWERS TO 'TEST YOUR FRENCH' PO LIFE n°15

- 1 1j 2d 3h 4i 5e 6g 7b 8f 9c 10a
2 1a 2b 3b 4b 5a
3 1h 2g 3j 4b 5d 6c 7f 8e 9a 10i
4 1e (pratique) 2c (snack) 3a (allée) 4f (responsable) 5b (ridicule) 6d (rusé)

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Améliorez votre Anglais

Lisez ces proverbes connus... et trouvez leurs contraires

- 1
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| The bigger, the better. ❶ | ❷ Talk is cheap |
| Knowledge is power ❷ | ❸ Fools never differ |
| Absence makes the heart grow fonder ❸ | ❹ Opposites attract |
| Money talks. ❹ | ❺ Ignorance is bliss |
| Two heads are better than one. ❺ | ❻ The best things come in small packages. |
| Many hands make light work. ❻ | ❼ If you want something done right, do it yourself. |
| Great minds think alike. ❼ | ❽ Out of sight, out of mind. |
| Birds of a feather flock together. ❽ | ❾ Too many cooks spoil the broth |

Répétez cinq fois ! Tongue twister

A stone's throw away
(pas loin d'ici)

Make, Do or Get?

- 2
- 1 an effort
 - 2 the shopping
 - 3 the sack
 - 4 (someone) a favour
 - 5 permission
 - 6 a mess
 - 7 the message
 - 8 one's best
 - 9 someone's help
 - 10 an appointment

Phrase utile

Bottoms up ! (Tchin tchin !)

Confusing words 3

1. I spend time _____ all kinds of music.
A hearing
B listening to
2. He did very _____ in the exam.
A good
B well
3. You should never _____ on a bend
A overtake
B take over
- 4 What exactly did you _____ to him?
A say
B ask
5. I don't have _____ money left
A any
B some
6. Help! He has _____ my bag
A robbed
B stolen
7. You look very _____ in that skirt
A female
B feminine
8. He _____ us all about his holidays
A said
B told

✓ Would you like... vs Do You Like...?

Would you like ...? - voudriez-vous ...?

Do you like ...? - aimez-vous ...?

Eg Would you like a cup of tea?

Do you like tea?

Weather saying

N'er cast a clout til May is out

(Don't go out without a coat until after May)

4 Choisissez la bonne préposition

- 1 -- my opinion, she speaks good English (at/in/on)
- 2 It is different -- what I expected (from/to)
- 3 We are worried -- the results of the test (for/about)
- 4 I am not good -- playing the piano (for/at)
- 5 The beach was crowded -- people (with/of)

Trouvez les synonymes

- 5
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| animated ❶ | ❷ to annoy |
| to admit ❷ | ❸ polite |
| to irritate ❸ | ❹ confident |
| fortunate ❹ | ❺ lively |
| perhaps ❺ | ❻ to imitate |
| well mannered ❻ | ❼ maybe |
| to mimic ❼ | ❽ correct |
| to cope ❽ | ❾ to manage |
| self-assured ❾ | ❶ lucky |
| right ❶ | ❷ to confess |


Réponses d'Améliorez votre Anglais PO Life n° 15

- 1 walking/when/came/said/that/replied
- 2 1d 2j 3a 4b 5c 6i 7h 8e 9f 10g
- 3 1b 2b 3b 4a 5a 6b 7b 8b
- 4 1 sing 2 pl 3 sing 4 sing 5 pl 6 sing 7 sing
- 5 1f 2h 3a 4b 5g 6c 7j 8d 9e 10i

VARIÉZ VOTRE VOCABULAIRE!

Ne dites pas que quelque chose est "good" Dites...
It's
brilliant
great,
marvelous
fantastic
superb
wonderful
perfect
sound


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Quand poussent les petits pois ?
 En avril : car les petits pois sont d'avril
 (les petits poisson d'avril!)

STEPHEN MATORIN

MULTICULTURAL CATALAN



Photo by Steven Vaughan - © /TM 2003
 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation
 //Universal Studios /Miramax Film Corp.

July 1789 was a chaotic month to be a student in Paris, yet Don Esteban Matorin y Domanova was unperturbed. He had come to The University well prepared as a graduate of the Dublin

School of Medicine. His Irish father and Catalan mother had died when he was young, and he had been raised by his godfather at the family estate in the Province of Lérida, in Catalonia. For him, the Revolution was exhilarating. But his ardour cooled by 1793, as France under Bonaparte opposed Catalan independence. That shift and the events of 1800 defined his career. At a concert in Port Mahon, Minorca, he met Jack Aubrey, a British navy officer, who was in need of a doctor for his ship, the HMS Sophie. So he signed on, under the shorter name of Stephen Matorin. That began a lasting friendship and long duty with the British navy as well as service on land, where he became a spy for British naval intelligence during the Napoleonic wars.

Though busy doctoring on a ship at war, Matorin pursued other interests. He became a skilled naturalist and a member of the Royal Society, specialising on the studies of birds, beetles and tortoises. He was an accomplished cellist and often played duets with Aubury, a violinist. The record of the engagements of the HMS Sophie fill 20 volumes, two made into a film and many detailing action off the coast of what now is the Pyrénées-Orientales. Likewise, several skirmishes on land were in the Pyrénées-Orientales, as when Aubury and Matorin fled French pursuers over the border into Spain at a point about 7 km east of Le Perthus, Aubury disguised in a bearskin.

It's the stuff of great fiction – which, of course, it is. Dr. Matorin, Master and Commander Aubury, the HMS Sophie and all the incidents are accurate though fictional portrayals of early 19th century life on board a British navy warship, from the hand of Patrick O'Brian (1914-2000), who lived in Collioure from 1949 on and wrote many of the Aubury-Matorin sea stories there.

The museum "Les Collections de Saint Cyprien" concentrates mainly on daring, sometimes shocking exhibitions, mostly following a theme of "collections" YORUBA is a private collection of fascinating African art which has never before been shown to the public.



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LE MAS DEU

As you drive towards Trouillas on the D612, dominating the sea of vines, you will see the imposing 18th century stone and brick outbuildings of Mas Deu. Slightly to the left is a thick grove of dark trees through which can be seen a tower, an old chapel and some ruined walls. This is all that remains of the 12th century Commanderie of the Knights Templar.

These soldier knights, returning to France from the Holy Land, made Mas Deu their administrative and religious headquarters in Roussillon. The walls were fortified, the house grand, a church was built. At the height of their power they controlled over 800 hectares and the largest vineyards in Europe. They drained lagoons, ordered the salt trade, farmed cattle, branched out into property development and mortgages. They monopolised Perpignan's bakeries, possessed mills, olive groves, tanneries and became successful bankers. They imported foreign fancy goods from their base in Collioure. They became extremely powerful.

In the early 1300s Philippe Le Bel decided enough was enough.

On the 13th of October 1307, acting in the name of the Pope, the King and the Church, all Knights Templar in France were arrested and thrown into prison. Mas Deu became a centre of the Inquisition.

Wine has been grown there since Roman times. During and after the time of the Templars this tradition continued. At the start of the 14th Century, Arnaud de Villeneuve, Physician to the Kings of Aragon, created the first ever Vin Doux in the cellars of Mas Deu. His method of stopping the fermentation of the naturally sweet wine with a small amount of eau de vie is used to this day. Through all the skirmishes and battles between French and Spanish in the centuries that followed, the vineyards kept producing. By 1852, Mas Deu wines were dominating the local market as well as being exported all over the world.

Between the wars the property was split up and a number of the vineyard workers formed the Cave Cooperative of Trouillas. The château and church continued to be used for marriages and christenings by illustrious families connected to Mas Deu's past. By 1935 Astor and Rose Oliver owned the buildings and 25 hectares of vines, but, during the 2nd World War Mas Deu once again became

Bon conseil : Mangez un crapaud vivant au réveil et rien de pire ne pourrait vous arriver de la journée (Eat a live toad first thing in the morning, and nothing worse can happen to you for the rest of the day.)

a headquarters. This time of the Occupying German Army. The beautiful old buildings were used as an ammunition depot. On 17th of August 1944, before retreating, an explosion blew most of them up. All that remains now in the dark grove of tall trees is the north tower, some of the fortified wall and the chapel.

And the vineyards and the 18th century out-buildings. There Claude Oliver continues six generations of family wine making tradition with flair and enthusiasm. He is constantly working to replant and improve his vines, believing in quality over quantity. « Wine is like love, » claims his father, a charming artist and poet, « without passion, it cannot exist. »

Claude makes sure his wine not only exists but is amongst the best of the region. He wins medals and prizes. He favours organic production. His mother was one of the first female oenologues in France. His wine bottle labels bear witness to his property's Templar past, some wines are named after his illustrious predecessors, and others after his children. A tasting with Claude Oliver is an education, a pleasure and a delight. He will talk you through his crisp, well balanced whites, onto the rich reds, explaining the vinification, the grape varieties, how and when they should be drunk and enjoyed. In English, French or Catalan, his enthusiasm is infectious and his wines reflect the care and skill that goes into their making.

In May 2008 a concert will be held in the vast cave, an art exhibition will fill the walls. Later in the year Claude intends to hold tasting lunches, serving traditional Catalan food. He is more than happy to give tutored tastings to small groups. Ring 04 6853 1166 for information, or drop in as you speed across that long straight road towards Trouillas. You may be sure of a warm welcome.



There are about 7,000 cherries on an average cherry tree, with each tree capable of producing more than 100 pounds of fruit in a season. (Well! Go on then! Count them and prove me wrong!!)

CERISES

Yippee! Here come the cherries! A fruit that needs no introduction, the delightfully elegant pink cherry blossom which precedes the arrival of the fruit itself is a treat to the eye, signalling late spring/early summer in the P-O.

Said to date as far back as 300 b.c., cherries were actually named after the Turkish town of Cerasus, from where they were first exported to Europe in Roman times.

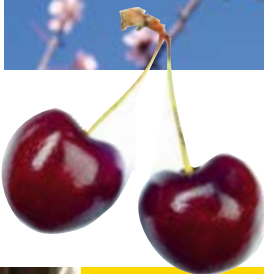
In China, the cherry blossom is a symbol of feminine beauty.

In Japan, cherry blossoms symbolize the transience of life because of their short blooming times.

PICKING, STORING AND FREEZING

Pick cherries with stems on for longer shelf life. Cherries picked without stems should be used as soon as possible. Fresh cherries will remain in good shape for up to a week in the fridge.

They are also great to freeze for later use in ice cream, sauces, pies... particularly if cooked before freezing. Simmer gently for about 15 minutes in syrup (450g sugar to a litre of water or 9 oz to 1 pint), using 500ml of syrup to 1kg (1 pint to 2 lbs) of fruit (including stones). If you have time, pit them (remove the stones) before freezing, unless you like the slightly almondly flavour they give to the fruit.



HEALTH BENEFITS

Cherries have been shown to have several health benefits. The pigments that give cherries their bright red colour are called anthocyanins, disease-fighting pigments possessing antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-ageing and anti-carcinogenic properties. They protect the body from disease and possibly slow the aging process down a little. (Pass those cherries over here!!)

In general, the darker the cherry colour, the higher the anthocyanin content.

Cherries are believed to contain high levels of melatonin which, besides being an anti-oxidant, has been shown to be important for the function of the immune system and a potent antioxidant that may help improve the body's natural sleep patterns.

It is also claimed that fresh cherries or cherry juice

help towards relieving some of the symptoms of gout by lowering uric acid levels, but this has yet to be proved.

Obviously, amounts of these various beneficial properties in a single cherry are negligible but every little helps!!!



Recipe

CHERRY SMOOTHIE

A thick, frosty drink of cherry juice concentrate, frozen cherries, blueberries, lowfat milk, lowfat yogurt and vanilla, topped with a mix of dried cherries and chopped nuts.

1/2 cup cherries pitted - 1/2 cup low fat milk - 1/4 cup plain lowfat yogurt - 2 tablespoons fresh blueberries - 1

tablespoon cherry juice concentrate - 1 tablespoon honey - 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract - Sprinkle of cinnamon (optional) - 8 ice cubes - slivered toasted almonds - chopped cherries

✓ Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth. Pour into two chilled glasses. Garnish with the almonds and chopped cherries. Serve immediately.



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