

P-O Life

Le grand magazine anglais en petit format

pour tout savoir sur les Pyrénées Orientales



What's On

EVENTS
AROUND
THE
REGION



DISCOVER THE
REGION

DAY OUT FOR THE DAY OUT

FrenchLife

Opening
A BANK
ACCOUNT



A selection of events
from the Palais des Congrès

FREE / GRATUIT

n°18

August
September

Bed & Breakfast / Gîtes

Le Vieux Rosier 04 68 81 43 96
St Laurent Cerdans - www.davidandkates.com

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Artetra - Building, renovation 04 68 73 77 41
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04 68 98 02 33 - philippe.kessler@free.fr

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ALFMED - Perpignan & Céret 04 68 62 20 20
Accredited French training centre www.alfmed.com/uk
Carole Howarth - Perpignan 06 01 93 55 04
Language training - carole.howarth@neuf.fr
Susan Ramond 04 68 96 08 31
French / English language services

Carole Cassoly 04 68 96 21 46
help for administration & translation -
cassoly.carole@tiscali.fr
Lucie Grimal - Albères, Vallespir 06 80 67 83 29

Estate agency

Cas Immo - Prades 04 68 05 41 55
www.casimmo.fr - info@casimmo.fr
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Med & Mountain Properties 04 68 56 54 22
throughout P-O - www.medandmountain.com

General

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Shiatsu - massage 06 63 15 96 25

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Aubergine - made to measure 06 25 18 18 10
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Design Alu (all joinery) 06 28 14 65 91
Windows, doors, shutters, verandas, kitchens
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Gardens Zen spirit and minimalist gardens
Saper - Amélie les Bains 04 68 39 15 84
painting and decorating
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Générali - Argelès 04 68 81 02 10
Axa Assurances - Prades 04 68 81 02 10
agence.alabert@axa.fr

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Le pied dans le plat 04 68 87 17 65

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British TV in France 04 68 69 83 76
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CS Services 04 68 82 08 53

Taxi

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online reservation www.europataxi.fr

Wines

Château Esparrou 04 68 73 30 93

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.

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on www.anglophone-direct.com - the English speaking guide to the Pyrenees Orientales

Une publicité dans PO Life = une **publicité gratuite** sur le site
www.anglophone-direct.com, **Le guide des Pyrénées-Orientales sur le web !**

PO Life is available in all main tourist offices, most supermarkets, airport, Palais des Congrès, Leroy-Merlin Auchan, Carrefour Argelès, château Esparrou à Canet... (for more precise details, visit our site www.anglophone-direct.com)

Bonjour



We do hope you're having a great summer in the P-O amidst the correfocs, castellers and sardanes. Our August/September P-O Life brings you another walk with Leigh and Merry, our pick of events around the region, language exercises, daft jokes and plenty of general information about life in the P-O. We have also joined with the Banque Populaire in Céret to bring you a series of articles to help you to find your way around the intricacies of the French banking system!

On centre court (how can you tell I've been following Wimbledon?), you will notice that our centre fold girl, Jane Mann has once again been 'out for the day' to bring you more sparkling suggestions and ideas for enjoying our lovely region.

Over on the wine page, Jon Hesford of Domaine Treloar has put together a case of selected wines from small producers together with tasting notes for each bottle – guaranteed to set the conversation rolling at any dinner party – and big John has once again taken on the arduous task of testing out a selection of yummy restaurants - it's a hard job but someone has to do it!

Have a fantastic August/September in the shade of the Canigou

Fins aviat - Kate

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Edito ...

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Welcome to the Pyrénées-Orientales!

www.cdt-66.com

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PUIG DE SANT CRISTAU

This walk is steep in places, and took us about 5 1/2 hours in total (with lots of stops to admire the scenery!). The use of stout walking boots and a stick is definitely recommended, especially for some of the rockier climbs. The views are fabulous, overlooking Le Perthus, the Roussillon plain, and over to Canigou and Neolous.

Access : Map IGN 1:25000 Banyuls/Col de Perthus/Cote Vermeille (GPS) 25490T. The start point is St Jean de L'Albere on the D71 road from Le Perthus to Neolous. Park here in the pretty shaded village & start walking west along the road until you come to the yellow sign pointing up the hill labelled "Coll de Llinas" with a very optimistic time estimate of 1h20. The altitude here is about 540m and the Col is at 800m so it's quite a steep climb, but you get lovely views over Le Perthus and to Canigou. On the way you pass the mysterious Dolmen Na Cristiana, reputed to be the best example in the P.O, at 650m altitude, 490600E 4703650N with its massive Neolithic stones positioned incredibly precisely

Walk : Yellow marks throughout

✓ Walk from here, following the yellow (and sometimes blue) marks, traversing north and west below the Coll de la Branca. If you follow some orange marks leading to a big P7 painted on a rock, you've gone the wrong way; this seems to be a mountaineer's route straight up the hill! Continue up north to the Coll de Llinas 490300E 4704730N. From here you can enjoy the views over the Roussillon plain, Le Boulou and the new TGV track can be seen clearly at Montesquieu to the north.

✓ After catching your breath you continue along the well-defined track to the east, as it starts to zig-zag up to the Puig. On the north side of the peak there is another track which branches off above a concrete wall at 490920E 4704650N. Here you turn south-west to reach the peak,

Est-ce que le mot «french-kiss»
est français ou anglais? ☺☺☺
C'est un mélange de 2 langues...!!!!



continue following the path until you reach the small stone refuge built

on the top. This could provide basic shelter in a storm but few home comforts! The views from here (1000m altitude) are amazing with 360 degree vistas from Spain to the south, Canigou in the west and Neolous and the coast in the east. Time for a picnic.

✓ Going down you can either retrace your steps, or continue east along the ridge. There are two ways down, from Coll de la Font or Coll de Sant Joan 492150E 4704130N. The former looks steeper, so we took the latter which was still quite precipitous. It descends a long way through a thick forest of cork oaks, finally meandering through meadows back to the road into St Jean.

✓ At the total distance is about 9km, with 660 metres of ascent and descent so it requires a reasonable level of fitness, but it's well worth it for the views, and the appetite it gives you for your well-earned dinner!

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

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A LITTLE ASS OR A LOAD OF BULL?

Impossible around here to miss the **donkey sticker** on the back of some cars and the **bull stickers** on others! The donkey is the symbol of Catalonia, North and South, whilst the bull is the unofficial national symbol of Spain.



The whole thing actually goes back to the **Osborne sherry company** who put up large black silhouetted images of a bull in semi-profile to advertise their sherry on sites near to major roads throughout Spain. When a law was passed in the 1990s prohibiting such advertising, the bull was already nationally famous, so it was agreed that the bulls would remain, but the name Osbourne would be removed. There are now nearly one hundred examples of the Osborne bull advertisements, often sited on a low hilltop so as to be clearly silhouetted against the sky.

Car stickers and T shirts of the Osborne bull were by now all over Spain – a symbol of Spanish pride – so the Catalonians 'hit back' by producing their own unofficial national symbol – el burro – a symbol of Catalanian pride!

DO YOU LIVE NEAR A PRAT?

Well, best not to answer that one if you don't want to fall out with the neighbours but you will probably have noticed that there are a lot of **Prats** around. In fact, Prat is the Catalan word for **prairie or meadow**. Prats de Mollo, for example, is so called after Mollo, a village over the border in Spain, whose land was where Prats de Mollo is now, hence the prairies of Mollo.

OH YEUCH!

If you've just arrived in the region for your hols, you may not want to know this but . . . there have been sightings in the P-O of the Mygale, a general name for large hairy spiders, some of which we refer to as. . . . **Tarantulas!!** Arrggghhh! The particular one sighted several times around here is affectionately called a funnel web spider, a tunnel building tarantula relative, found mostly in southern Spain, and believed to be imported into our region in the **roots of very old olive trees**. Yes, they do bite and yes, it is poisonous- but take comfort. The bite is rarely fatal unless especially allergic. And more good news. They are unlikely to survive the comparatively cold winters here as opposed to southern Spain! Do take a peep in your shoes before you put them back on if you have been taking a nap near an olive grove!!

HIS ROYAL HAIRINESS!

Did you know that the man who was apparently responsible for the unification of Catalonia was called **Wilfred the Hairy** (El Pelut), Count of Barcelona, hailing originally from Ria near Prades? This hairy chappy also takes the credit, according to legend, for creating the blood red stripes on a gold background which make up the flag of Catalonia.

In the 9th century AD, Sunifred 1st was assassinated on the orders of the King of France, Charles II, known as Charles the Bald (le Chauve) (honest that was his title!). This murder took place in front of Sunifred's son, our very own hairy "El Pelut" who challenged the assassin to a duel on the Cerdagne Plateau, killed him, but was wounded himself in the process. **Dipping his hand in his own blood, he traced 4 bloody stripes** on the surface of his golden shield et voilà – the Catalan coat of arms was born!

THE VIA DOMITIA

The Via Domitia was **the first of the vast road networks in Gaul** (France) built by the Romans, to link Italy and Spain, and was planned by and named after the proconsul, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus in 118 BC. Arriving in Roussillon, the Via Domitia split up into two routes, the coastal route, passing through Elne, Saint-Cyprien, Argelès, Collioure, Port-Vendres and Banyuls and the inland route passing through Montescot, Le Boulou, Les Cluses and Le Perthus (Pannissars).

It then joined together again in La Jonquera to become the **Via Augusta**. The route was laid out in a virtual straight line, mainly a dirt road but paved or flagged where it passed through populated areas. Much is now abandoned or integrated into the modern road system but there are still ruins and remains all along the route, such as at **Panissars**, (turn right after entering Le Perthus and follow signs for Bellegarde) where you can also see the Via Domitia hewn out of the rock.



OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

Whether you are resident in France, buying a second home or intending to relocate in the future, life will be much easier if you have a French bank account, particularly if you are hoping to take out a loan or mortgage. P-O Life has joined up with the Banque Populaire in Cérêt, to guide you through the forest of paperwork and acronyms of the French banking system.

Opening a bank account

Documents needed

- ✓ Personal identification (an identity card or passport)
- ✓ Proof of your address in France (utility bill, rental or sales agreement dating back less than three months)
- ✓ Written proof of income or earnings

Your next step is to decide what type of account you want.

You may take out a cheque account (personal or joint), a savings account or both.

There are a lot of forms to fill in (after all, this IS France!) so try to call in to your chosen bank and open your account in person if possible. The Banque Populaire will provide you with an English speaker to take you through the paperwork and fill in the application form (called a *mandate*)

RIB: Relevé d'Identité Bancaire

When you open your bank account, you will be given several copies of a RIB (Relevé d'Identité Bancaire) which provides all your account and bank details - account number, (numéro de compte) code guichet (sort code)... The RIB is similar to an IBAN in English and will be required by anyone who will be sending you funds, or taking utility payments from your account. RIBs are also provided in your cheque book and are available at bank cash points. Utility service providers such as EDF or telecom will automatically

send you a direct debit form (*prélèvement automatique*) with your first bill. Send this back to them signed and dated with a RIB. You will be asked for your RIB when setting up any transfer, monthly payments or receiving regular amounts into your bank. A RIB helps you to ensure that your account details are passed on correctly and mistakes are not made in the filling in of transfer requests.

TIP (*titre interbancaire de paiement*).

This is the detachable payment slip at the bottom of bills received, where you do not already have a regular direct debit or standing order set up. It is quite simply a one-off permission slip authorising the service provider to debit your account with the sum requested and will usually already be printed out with your account details. (If not enclose a RIB when sending back). Of course, if you are not resident, the easiest option is to set up a direct debit (*prélèvement automatique*) so that you do not have to worry about sending the payment slip back every month and ultimately risk being cut off if the payment does not arrive.

Transfers (*virements*)

Set up a 'virement permanent' for making regular payments of the same sum and a 'prélèvement automatique' for paying bills which vary in amount. Both are easily set up by sending your RIB to the party concerned who will then pass it on to the bank.

Useful vocab

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>distributeur</i> | <i>cash point</i> |
| <i>espèces</i> | <i>cash</i> |
| <i>billets</i> | <i>bank notes</i> |
| <i>compte courant</i> | <i>current account</i> |
| <i>compte d'épargne</i> | <i>savings account</i> |
| <i>découvert</i> | <i>overdraft</i> |
| <i>relevé de compte</i> | <i>statement of account</i> |
| <i>faire opposition</i> | <i>stop a payment order</i> |
| <i>solde</i> | <i>balance</i> |



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PERSONAL LOANS (car, home, student...)

SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT

INSURANCE (house, car, life insurance...)

Things you might need to know...

WATCH OUT FOR FLASHERS

There are more and more fixed 'radars' becoming operational in the P-O. Here are their locations to date, but watch out for mobile radars just about anywhere (but rarely during the lunch hour!!). Of course, the safest way to avoid being flashed is quite simply to stick to the limits.



- A9 - LES CLUSES direction North - 130 km/h
- D115 -SAINT-JEAN-PLA-DE-CORTS direction Le Boulou to Céret - 90 km/h
- D612A - TOULOUGES direction Thuir to Toulouges - 90 km/h
- D617 - CANET-EN-ROUSSILLON direction Perpignan to Canet-en-Roussillon - 110 km/h
- D83 - LE BARCARES direction Perpignan to Leucate - 110 km/h
- D900 - PERPIGNAN direction Narbonne to Perpignan - 110 km/h, avant
- D900 - PIA direction Narbonne to Perpignan - 110 km/h
- D900 - VILLEMOLAQUE direction Le Boulou to Perpignan - 90 km/h, arrière
- D914 - COLLIOURE direction Perpignan to Collioure - 90 km/h
- D914 - ELNE direction Argelès-sur-Mer to Perpignan - 110 km/h
- D914 - PERPIGNAN direction sens Perpignan to Cerbere - 110 km/h, avant
- N116 - LE SOLER direction Prades to Perpignan - 110 km/h
- N116 - RODES direction Prades to Perpignan - 90 km/h

| km over limit | fine | point loss on licence |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Less than 20 km/h | *68€ (or 135€ if speed limit lower than 50km) | 1 |
| between 20 km/h and 30 km/h | **135 euros | 2 |
| between 30 km/h and 40 km/h | 135 euros | 3 (plus possible licence suspension) |
| between 40 km/h and 50 km/h | 135 euros | 4 (plus possible licence suspension) |
| more than 50 km/h | 1500 euros | 6 (plus licence suspension and jail for second offence) |

* if paid in less than 15 days it is 45 euros, and if paid in more than 45 days it is 180 euros.

** if paid in less than 15 days it is 90 euros, and if paid in more than 45 days it is 375 euros.

- If you car is not registered in France, you will be granted 30 additional days to pay the fine. You can pay with «timbre amende» (special stamp purchased which you stick to the fine), cheque, phone (0820 11 10 10 - 0.12 euros TTC per minute) or via internet on www.amendes.gouv.fr.

- If you want to contest a fine, you can fill in the form which arrives with the fine. (Be sure of your facts or you could end up paying a larger fine). You may also ask for the picture of the infraction to prove whether it was you or not.



TELEVISION LICENCE (REDEVANCE AUDIOVISUELLE)

You will automatically be charged for your TV licence unless you use the tick boxes on your 'Taxe d'Habitation' form to state that you do not have a TV. You are expected to pay this tax even if you only receive English television or only use your set for DVD, video etc.

Bank holidays

15 August : 15th August - Assomption - «jour férié» celebrated by Catholics throughout France. Most shops and businesses close and there are festivities throughout France. According to a proverb, if it rains on that day, it will rain until the 'nativité' (8th September!)

Quand il pleut le jour de l'Assomption, il pleut jusqu'à la nativité

School holidays

Class will start again on september 2nd

TIME OUT AT THE BEACH

Look out for the following coloured flags on the beach to find out swimming safety and water conditions.

no flag Plage non surveillée (no lifeguard)

Green flag Baignade autorisée (supervised and fine for swimming)

Orange flag Baignade autorisée avec précaution (Supervised. Swimming allowed but may be dangerous)

Red flag Baignade interdite (no swimming) details of any danger may be posted next to lifeguard's hut

White flag «sélectionnée pure» (pure, clean water)

Yellow flag Presence de méduses, pollution etc (possible pollution, jellyfish etc)

What's on?

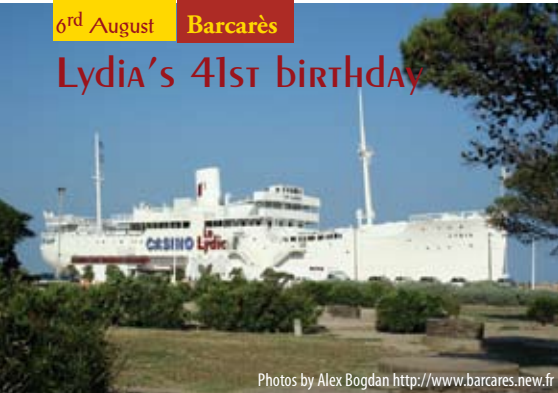
Our pick of events around the region. For a more detailed events calendar, visit us on www.anglophone-direct.com

2nd August **Pyrenées 2000**

Yee ha! Fancy a day out in the Wild West? Indian village, lasso, mechanical bull (try to stay on as it bucks), face painting, American car display, horse riding display, country music concert, line dancing display. . .

6rd August **Barcarès**

Lydia's 41st birthday



Photos by Alex Bogdan <http://www.barcares.new.fr>

Grand firework display, bal and 'setting alight' of the Lydia. This 1931-built 100 metre steamship was originally in service in Australia, under the name Moonta, followed by a time in Greece. She was sold to French owners in 1967 and was deliberately beached on the sands of Le Barcarès. In 2000, she was bought and restored by the Partouche Group who turned her into a casino, and nightclub, with bars and restaurant.

25th July - 4rd August

Mosset

Mosset Opera presents their own particular version of the Magic Flute. A fantastic experience.

Port Leucate 5th - 7th August

LES MÉDITERRANÉENNES

Between the beach and the oyster beds in Port Leucate, this three day Mediterranean festival looks set to offer a rich and varied programme with a cocktail of talent - both new and established - rock, pop and reggae - and the Charles Aznavour fans amongst you will be delighted to hear that the ageless crooner will be topping the bill!

More info: www.lesmediterraneennes.fr

7th August **Rivesaltes**

THE BABAU

Based upon the medieval legend of the «Babau», this festival relives the more dramatic moments of the tale of this legendary monster. Stilt walkers, fire eaters, jugglers, brass bands and the Rivesaltes giants, Galdric Trencavent and his wife, the giantess

Radegonda accompany the Babau through the streets to finally sacrifice him at nightfall in a dazzling cacophony of noise and fireworks.

Amélie les Bains 2nd August

FÊTE DE LA SOULE

Parades, games, live music, bodegas and a giant screen to watch the game of 'soule' played between local teams from the area. La Soule, (also known as choule), is a traditional team sport originating in Normandy, Brittany and Picardy. The 'soule' can be solid or hollow, made of wood or leather, sporting woolly pompons!

The yearly Canigou race honours the intrepid ice carriers of the early twentieth century, who used to climb high into the mountain, cut blocks of ice from the hillside, and run down the mountain with the ice on their backs to sell it in Vernet-les-Bains. On the first Sunday of August, each year, walkers and runners, many with loads on their backs, set off from Vernet-les-Bains, pass close to the Mariailles refuge, head for the summit of the mountain, and descend to Vernet down the north slope of Canigou, past the Cortalets chalet. Not for the faint hearted!

THE CANIGOU RACE

Canigou

3rd August





Catalan National Anthem

Based upon an anonymous ballad written in the second half of 1640, Els Segadors (the reapers) was declared the national anthem of Catalonia in 1993 by the Catalan Parliament and refers to the Revolt of the Reapers in Catalonia, calling upon the peasants to cut down the Spanish oppressors with their scythe!

EMBRASEMENT du PORT ET FEU d'ARTIFICE

One of the most talked about firework displays in the region, the 'setting alight' of the port and the firework extra-

vaganza attract folk from far and wide. The display is preceded at 19h by a 'sardinade' when local fishermen share their sardine catch in this traditional Catalan feast of grilled sardines, bread and aioli (garlic dip).

15th August

St Cyprien



9th August

Saint André

Bodegas, various events followed by a bal at the Théâtre de Verdre.

16th-17th August

Mont Louis

Historical reconstruction «Mont-Louis se raconte» followed by fireworks. Entertainment in the streets throughout the two days.

22nd-24st August

Arles-sur-Tech

FÊTES MÉDIÉVALES

The ancient village of Arles-sur-Tech goes back to the XIIIth century.

Rendez-vous in the old part of the town for the Cour des miracles (thieves, beggars, lepers and all manner of street walker found in the region during the middle ages) marché medieval, (from apothecary to potter, glass blower to weaver, wood sculptor to blacksmith,

wander amongst the stalls of this medieval market with a difference) taverne de l'Ours (quench your thirst in this 'medieval' tavern!).... and all manner of medieval entertainment throughout the three days.



14th-18st August

Collioure

FESTIVAL of ST VINCENT AND FÉRIA

This festival was first celebrated in the year 1701, on the day when the relics of St. Vincent, the patron saint of Collioure, were returned to the village. Numerous festive events have been preserved such as the ronde du clocher (swimming around the port and bay), and there are games and competitions on the water, dancing, concerts and street music. The Catalan Procession on the Sea is a highlight of the celebrations, there are bodegas selling food and drink, and a grand firework display.



A superb walk at Canet plage

All year round

● Monday to Saturday

9h - 12h and 14h - 18h

● July and August

Monday to Saturday: 9h - 12h and 14h - 18h

Sunday: 10h - 12h / 15h - 19h

CHÂTEAU
L'ESPARROU

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4 €

What's on?

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



29th-31st August

Céret

FESTIVAL Tok TRAD

Three days of music, dancing, laughter and colour as Céret opens its streets to this long weekend of entertainment. Irish and folk music, dancing and much fun.



After a failed attempt to steal some paintings from the Louvre, a thief in Paris was caught only two blocks away when his van ran out of gas. He explained to the police Monsieur. I stole the paintings because I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh

30th-31st August

Barcarès

BODEGA DE MAR

A weekend of festivity, and entertainment in the streets with the running of the 'vachettes', music and fireworks. Bodegas will serve paella, BBQ...

2nd September

Villeneuve-de-la-Raho

LA RONDE DU LAC



Tourists and locals don their running shorts and meet up every year for this 10 km race

around the streets and the lake of Villeneuve-de-la-Raho. The adult's race is followed by a children's race so a good chance for all the family to work themselves up into a sweat! Or just go along and cheer them on! Cold drinks and fruit will be supplied throughout the route. Competitors should be ready at the 'starting block' in front of the salle de fetes at 10h.

The 'mini course' for children will take place between 10h - 11h.

6th -7th September

Canet village

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

Great fun for all the family, this medieval festival and market takes the town back in time with medieval crafts, stalls, XIIIth century costumes, fire eaters, sword fighting, re-enactments of medieval scenes, jugglers.....

Based on the theme 'street theatre', numerous theatre groups will present period plays in the streets. Archery for the children, open air cinema, and medieval market culminating in a grand firework display along with the 'setting alight' of the chateau.

11th September

Régional

THE DIADA DE CATALUNYA

A national holiday throughout Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, September 11th is in fact the anniversary of the day in 1714 when the Franco-Spanish army captured Barcelona, bringing an end to the region's independence. From political demonstrations to concerts, fireworks, parades through the streets, the day is punctuated in unique Catalan style by sardanes, gégants and castellers amongst other events. People wave senyeres or estelades (Catalan flags) and hang them on their balconies.

Céret throbs with life throughout this sporting weekend, with correfocs, pasta evening and fireworks on Saturday followed by the internationally renowned Ronde Céretane on Sunday.

Live music accompanies the departure of the competitors in 'la Ronde Céretane' as they set off under the plane trees in the Avenue d'Espagne, out into the countryside and up through the vineyards with mountains to the west and Med to the east to be greeted at the winner's line with music and festival atmosphere. BBQ stalls, dégustation and music all along the course.

Different races of 20km, (depart 9h30) 6km (depart 9h30) and children's race (depart 11h15) - For more details, visit www.rondeceretane.com

LA RONDE CÉRÉTANE

Céret 13rd - 14th September



30th August - 17th September

Perpignan

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL du PHOTOJOURNALISME

A two week exhibition of in-depth reports, photos and stories which have often not been published, Visa pour l'Image is a free event offering the public the opportunity to discover news photos they may not have seen, either because they had never been published or because they might shock, invite disapproval or offend

Presented in a variety of historical and cultural spots around Perpignan, the exhibitions are open every day from 10 a.m to 8 p.m., including week-ends.

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

Wow! September has arrived in a flurry of sunshine, with a fanfare of summer still to come. It really is one of the most lovely months of the year in the PO - a kind of shy summer season that hasn't been introduced, so doesn't want to flaunt itself, but knows it's got style!

Looking back over August, I wouldn't say it's one of my favourite months in the Pyrénées. Weather-wise it's often quite uninspiring, and lacks the vivid colours of some of the other months - the brazen, blatant yellow and gold of the mimosa in early spring, the girly pink fluffiness of the cherry

blossom in May followed by the mature red of the cherries in fruit, the stark and atmospheric brown of the bare vines in winter against the backdrop of a snow-topped Canigou and the beauty and fragility of the wild flowers in spring and autumn.

The people in the shops and cafés are different too. More stressed, more hurried, less time to talk. The whole region takes on a different atmosphere and speeds up for those precious few months when the tourists bring in much needed revenue. Between 'fete' and 'bal' the PO becomes a whirling hurricane of entertainment and restoration as it hurtles along its dizzy course towards the end of the season. The PO are still beautiful now, the mountains adorned in every shade of green imaginable, but in a rather faded way, as if they are waiting to shake off their summer fashions and slide into fresh autumn finery.

In commemoration of the placing of the first stone of the Obélisque in Port Vendres, on the orders of the Maréchal de France, comte de Mailly. Fancy dress parades through the streets, re-enactment of the placing of the first stone, circus workshops, historical games, rides in a carriage, concert Xim Xim (traditional dance music of central France) sardanes,

Catalan ballet, enactment of a pirate fight, jeu de foulard (bandana game)....

Count Joseph Augustin De Mailly d'Haucourt was born in April 1707. In 1726, he entered military service as a musketeer, but in true 'musketeer' style, he was exiled by the king in 1753 for 'stealing' one of the king's mistresses! Reinstated as commander in chief, De Mailly was the driving force behind the creation of Port Vendres as a port.



Selection of events from the Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

For the full programme of events visit www.congresperpignan.com

Events at the **PARC des EXPOSITIONS**

13th - 14th September 9.00 pm
- Festival arts design - Jewellery, body piercing, lingerie, t-shirts, music and various live shows throughout the weekend..

20th - 21st September- 10 am-7.00 pm
Salon santé nature - Different forms of health and natural living – aromatherapy, massage, health food, sport and exercise, stress management.

25th - 29th September- 10 am-8.00 pm
Salon de l'habitat et du cadre de vie-

Furniture, interior decoration, heating, lighting - everything to do with home, garden, and lifestyle

Events at the **PALAIS des CONGRÈS**

27th September- 9.00 pm - Election of Miss and Mr Catalonia
www.missmistercatalognenord.com

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

20th - 21st September

National

21st September Baillestavy

CATALAN donkey festival



The Catalan donkey has nearly disappeared in the region. Distinguishable by their height of 1,45m - 1,60m, a dirty black or brown colour, with a white circle around the eyes, white nose and belly, they are known to be stubborn, solid and agile, therefore perfect for the mountains.

Fortunately, they continue to be bred in the heights of Baillestavy where the annual donkey festival presents an occasion for games, dancing, music and of course donkey rides!

Argelès

26th September - 5th October

FÊTE DE LA ST CÔME ET ST DAMIEN

Every year, during the second fortnight of September, Argelès-sur-Mer pays homage to its patron saints, Saint Côme and Saint Damien.

According to legend, Argelès was struck by plague in the 17th century, an epidemic which disappeared on 27th September 1652 - the feast of the patron saints - and on which day the population made a

vow to carry out a solemn procession to honour them every year...

A variety of different events and entertainment punctuate 10 days of festivities, crashing to a grand finale on October 5th with the parade through the streets of the Argeles giants.

Perpignan

27th-28th September

LA FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL du DISQUE (FID)

Eglise des Dominicains - One of the largest record and CD fairs in Europe, the Festival International du Disque offers an enormous variety and choice of vinyl, cassettes and CDs for display and sale by dealers from all over the world. It is also a chance to see various artistes in concert, listen to music, look at cartoon strips, books, photos and meet up with others record buffs buyers and sellers from around the world!

JOURNÉES EUROPÉENNES du PATRIMOINE

Heritage weekend - This weekend, for the 24th year running, the department throws open the doors of many of its museums, exhibitions and cultural centres, and invites visitors and residents alike to share the Catalan culture. The aim? That the «heritage of the region be passed on to our children in order that they understand and recognise the importance of carrying it on into their future.»

Wherever you go this weekend, you will find free entry to monuments, exhibitions and attractions such as the Musée Départemental d'Art Moderne de Céret and le Château Royal de Collioure, the Centre de Conservation et de Restauration des OEuvres d'Art, unique in France, where you can join a guided visit (free) and see how the heritage is really preserved. (Conservation and restoration workshops and a chance to study techniques for preserving artwork will be much appreciated by the artists amongst you.)

Equally worth seeing are la Chapelle Notre Dame des Anges, la Maison de la Catalanité, le Palais des Rois de Majorque and the Prieuré de Serrabona as well as les Archives Départementales. A chance to visit the Mémorial du Camp de Rivesaltes should also not be missed, a stark reminder that misery is also part of the history of the PO. More details with time, place and opening hours : www.journeesdupatrimoine.culture.fr



SUPPORT HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL'S BAN CLUSTER BOMBS CAMPAIGN

Prats de Mollo

28th September

Handicap International invite you to join them in building a pyramid of shoes. Each shoe symbolises the lives and limbs lost to cluster bombs and other explosives of war. Bring along all your old shoes and place them on the pyramid to show your solidarity. After the protest, the shoes will be distributed to charitable organisations

Cluster bombs are canisters containing up to several hundred 'bomblets', which spread over a large area once dropped or fired. Millions of bomblets were dropped during recent conflicts in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, killing and maiming civilians. Cluster bombs which do not explode on impact effectively pose the same threat as landmines. They can explode at any time, killing and maiming sometimes long after a conflict has ended.



CORREFOC

A 'correfoc' is a Catalan tradition which ensures that any festival goes with a bang! Its meaning of «fire run» really says it

all! It consists of a parade through the streets, accompanied by loud music, bangers... a fiesta of sparklers, firecrackers, and roman candles with colles de diables, - groups of devils - who dance amongst the crowds as they play with fire and set off their fireworks, amidst a shower of sparks.

Great atmosphere, great fun but can be very frightening for small children and animals. Wear a hat and clothes that will protect you from the sparks. (Although there is usually a fireman or two there to put you out if the worst comes to the worst!!)

CASTELLS

(Catalan for castles) - a tradition which originated at the end of the 18th century in Valls, Tarragona, when rival groups of people called «colles», began to compete in constructing human towers. Those who take part in these tours are called castellers (castle-makers), fearless men and women who wear traditional catalan costume and climb on to each others shoulders to create a human pyramid, sometimes up to eight or nine storeys high and often topped off with a brave child, a bit like a cherry on a cake!



GÉGANTS

Enormous painted papier-mâché figures, sometimes 14 or 15 ft tall, with traditional clothing and a person inside. They usually appear in couples during the patron saint

holidays (Festa Major), carnivals and parades, often as king and queen, or some important person in the history of the town. They dance in the streets with little «big-heads» or «cap-grossos».

THE SARDANE

The sardane or sardana, is a traditional Catalonian circle dance, believed to be of Greek origin, designed to bring whole villages out



onto the village green and get them in party mood - a little like a more complicated version of the 'hokey cokey' in fact! Music for the sardane is played by a cobla, a wind band with double bass including typical Catalan instruments tenora, tible, flabiol and tamborí, alongside trumpet, trombone, fiscorns and double bass.

During his 30 year rule of Spain from the late 1940's to 1975, Franco considered the Catalan national pride and wish for independence to be arrogant and an insult to his authority. He passed a series of laws attempting to squash their traditions, language and culture. Among these laws was the banning of the Sardana. As often happens in the face of adversity, the dance soon became a powerful symbol of national unity, as folk from all walks of life, young and old, met up and proclaimed through their dancing, their pride in being Catalan, passing on this important part of Catalan culture from generation to generation.

LLEVANT DE TAULA

The expression 'Llevant de taula' literally means 'dessert' - that which is placed on the table last, then taken away. During a 'festa major' the principal festivals of the year, the Llevant de taula is the means by which a village raises funds for the fetes and entertainments. Strolling musicians with wind instruments (or these days floats with people in fancy dress or Catalan colours piping traditional Catalan music through speakers) travel from house to house, receiving small amounts of money to be put towards the village festivities. Expect to hear loud music and a knock on your door anytime from June onwards!

WINE Recommendations

John Fairclough suggests two wines of vastly differing character this month. "The connection via the "Rous" name is purely coincidental, I believe. Both are widely available from the producer, cavistes and supermarkets alike, and received prizes at the recent prestigious "Bacchus 2008" awards in Perpignan."

Domaine de Mas Rous

Vin de pays rouge - Cabernet Sauvignon 2005

In 1979, Jose Pujol took over the running of the Mas Rous vineyard just outside the pretty Alberes village of Montesquieu from his grandfather, the redoubtable Miquel Ros (Rous is a "frenchification" of this old Catalan surname).

As well as doing the standard, yet excellent Roussillon fare, Jose has experimented with new styles and grape varieties. This one is certainly unusual in that it uses Cabernet Sauvignon. Although completely different in character to the classic Bordeaux that use this grape, nonetheless there is still plenty of spicy blackcurrant evident. Aged, but not overly so, in oak. A winner with evening barbecues where lamb and beef grills predominate. 12.5% ABV 8€

Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut. *Ernest Hemingway*

Cave de l'abbé Rous

Collioure blanc, "CORNET ET CIE" 2007



The Abbé Rous co-operative is based in Banyuls, and is indeed famous for its sweet wines of the same name. 70% Grey Grenache, 10% White Grenache and 20% Roussanne are the varieties used to make this complex white. The vines are all on dry schiste overlooking the sea in the Collioure/Banyuls area, resulting in a distinctive aroma, with pineapple and melon particularly evident. The wine is a beautiful yellow gold colour, and should be drunk at about 8 deg C. The co-op suggest white meat to accompany, but I thought that with its mineraly overtones, it would also go very well with grilled fish, shellfish like St Jacques, and indeed certain types of cheese.

13.5% ABV 9€

Wine Club

Each month Jonathan Hesford of Domaine Treloar in Trouillas puts together a carefully selected case of the best of the region's wines, offering you a chance to sample wines from high-quality producers that are too small to supply the supermarkets. The case also includes a description of the wines plus his own tasting notes.»

The first carton is €56 and comprises the following wines :

AOC Côtes du Roussillon Blanc - Domaine Arcadie «Alba» 2006

VDP Côtes Catalanes Blanc - Domaine Olivier Pithon AB «Lais» 2006

VDP Côtes Catalanes Rosé - Domaine Vaquer «L'Ephemere» 2007

AOC Côtes du Roussillon Rouge - Domaine Treloar «Three Peaks» 2006

VDP Côtes Catalanes Rouge - Domaine des Soulanes «Jean Pull» 2007

AOC Côtes du Roussillon Rouge - Domaine Singla AB «La Pinède» 2005

This month's cartons will be available from: Aubergine in Maureillas - Domaine Treloar in Trouillas - Cave Gustumo in Canet-Plage - contact@gustumo.com

For more information email Jon at info@domainetreloar.com or telephone on 0468950229

Voulez vous votre pizza
coupée en 6 ou 12 morceaux,
monsieur?
En 6 s'il vous plait.
Je ne pourrais jamais finir 12 morceaux.

Restaurant reviews

SUMMER SELECTION



Over the last couple of summers, I've had several requests for brief details of recommended eating establishments around and about from locals and visitors alike who wish to use the summer months to explore a little further a field both in France and Spain. So, in no particular order, here is a short list of places I've enjoyed over the past year or so. I'd STRONGLY suggest a quick phone call in advance to check on opening times as these vary greatly, especially between the seasons.

✓ Starting over the border, those who can resist the temptation to head for the beaches of Roses etc will be well catered for at **CAN MACH** in Tapis (972 543311) on the Figueras-Coustouges road. A stone/wood mountain property it very much specialises in grilled meats. The same is true of **EL TRULL D'EN FRANCESC** near the reservoir in Boadella (972 569027), but here there is perhaps more of an emphasis on more creative dishes and fish is more in evidence.

✓ In the small, sleepy village of Lajuiga, just off the Figueras-Llanca road near Gariguella, is **LA JUI** (972 552607). This atmospheric place is a real find with wacky traditional décor and a sumptuously furnished main dining room. Prices for their inventive Catalan cuisine are remarkably low.

✓ Venturing a little further into Spain, are two that are very handy for those who use Girona Airport at this time of year. **CAN GENERAL** (972 473063) is a wonderfully lively family hostelry with a huge range of freshly prepared dishes and a mini zoo/play area to keep the kids amused. Turn right at the airport terminal roundabout in the direction of Aiguaviva and it's about 500m on your left. Backtracking slightly towards the Airport motorway turnoff, and right by the roundabout between there and the nearby Nil, you can't miss **LA ROCA PETITA** (972 477132). This very up-market place serves excellent Spanish and Catalan dishes in a wonderfully comfortable wood panelled restaurant, albeit at prices considerably higher than other mentioned establishments!

✓ In the end, though, the lure of the blue Mediterranean

is too strong, so let's head for the traditional little resort of L'Estartit, where boat trips to the Medes Islands can be had. There are several nice eateries here, but quality-wise **LA GAVIOTA** (972 752019) at 92 Passeig Maritim is hard to beat. The all-in 50€ per couple menu is outstanding value.

✓ Moving round the rocks to L'Escala, right on the waterside, is **VOLANTI** on Ronda D'Olla (972 770728). Here one can choose between traditional Spanish fare (the Paella is excellent), or something a little more Italian with wood-fired pizzas a speciality. The more up-market **ELS PESCADORS** next door is under the same management.



✓ Of course one doesn't have to venture as far as Spain to get a waterside dinner. In Port Vendres the recently refurbished **TRAMONTANE** (0468 820151) is right on the corner of the main quay, and brings new standards of excellence to the moderately priced dining scene in the port.

✓ Similarly, up the coast in St Cyprien Plage, opposite the main tourist office, and with plenty of tables virtually at the waters edge, **LA MARINE** (0468 390621) is under enthusiastic new management. While fish is king, there are plenty of imaginative meat dishes to be had here.

✓ A meal by the water need not, of course, mean the sea, and close to the river in Perpignan, the **RESTAURANT RUE SULLY** (0468 347721) on the street of the same name, is a tastefully modernised little bistro, not far from the main Post Office. I've only been for lunch but was impressed by the effort made to try and serve something unusual for the excellently priced lunchtime formule, which changes daily.

Here at PO Life we are always keen to hear of new restaurants that you've found. So if, in your travels in France or Spain you come across one that you feel is worthy of mention, don't be shy; contact us, (Email or Phone) so we can help others to share your discovery. You could even post your review on the forum of our website, www.glophone-direct.com.

Lavender Ice Cream

4 Egg yolks
75g - 3oz White Sugar
200ml - 6 fl oz full cream milk
6 fresh Lavender flower heads
200ml - 6 fl oz whipped/double cream

Whisk egg and sugar together until light and foaming. Gently heat milk with lavender flowers. Boil then strain

Return to heat over low heat, stirring constantly, until slightly thick and will coat back of a spoon. Do not boil. Put in fridge and when cold fold in whipped cream and place in freezer.

Another recipe from Cindy Guilbert's Recipes and Remedies easily found in the P-O. Contact her to see a selection of her handmade cards, jewellery and original gift ideas - marcel.guilbert@orange.fr - Tel 04 68 88 02 77

BASIC SANGRIA RECIPE

Of course, there are so many different possibilities for sangria but here is a basic recipe on which to build

1 bottle of dry red wine - Juice of 1 large orange and another in slices - Juice of 1 large lemon and another in slices - 2 Tbsp sugar - 1 Shot brandy or rum - 2 Cups lemonade or soda water

✓ Combine all the ingredients except for the lemonade or soda in a large punch bowl or jug, stirring well. Refrigerate overnight. Add lemonade or soda just before serving.



You could also add..... sliced strawberries, peaches, fresh blueberries, raspberries, kiwi, a shot or two of gin, more brandy or rum!

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The Days Out this time involve Castles. The frontier between Spain and France has changed since the XI –XII centuries when they were built so we will tend to slip out of the P-O and into Aude a bit.

Château de Salses

Château de Salses, an imposing and beautiful castle squats on the strip of land between the Corbières hills and the Leucate lagoon. Of vital strategic importance to the Spanish in the XV century, sunk deeply into its defensive moat and guarding the border with France, it is now surrounded by peaceful apricot orchards and vineyards. The traffic thundering past it down the A9 have another 30 or 50 kms to go before the Spanish border, the threatening tramp of invading French soldiers is a distant memory. Massive walls, up to 10 metres thick, draw bridges and a huge central courtyard capable of sheltering 1200 men and 300 horses, remain.

The French finally wrested it from the Spanish in 1642. Partially restored by Vauban, it became a state prison and housed the unfortunate "poisonnières" of Louis XIV's court before they began their life sentences in Fort Liberia, Villefranche de Conflent (another of Vauban's masterpieces). Too sturdy and too costly to destroy, it survived the centuries and was classified a Monument Historic in 1886. Visit it! It is considered a prime example of the transition from medieval castle to bastion fortress and provides a fascinating glimpse into military history and architecture. The guided tour is most informative and, for those with no interest in history, a stroll round the outer walls or a tasting at the **Caveau du Château**, near the entrance, open 7/7, 9-12/14-18, can fill in the time most agreeably. 0468386207 www.arnauddevilleneuve.com



and Leucate

On the opposite side of the lagoon lies Leucate. Windsurfers, flamingos and a highly productive oyster industry make good use its waters. Leucate beach is long and sandy. There is a naturist encampment, the "Desparado" riding ranch, there are wonderful walks over the cliffs, a ruined castle to explore... A day is hardly long enough to sample all the pleasures Leucate has to offer.

Access to the oyster fishing huts that line the narrow waterway between the lagoon and the sea is from the D627 road that runs from Leucate to Barcares. Turn off at the sign to the Centre Conchylicole. Almost all the huts offer tasting menus of the freshest and plumpest oysters imaginable, ideally accompanied by a chilled glass of crisp local white wine. They also sell oysters and conveniently pre-cleaned mussels to take home. All are welcoming and good, **L'Aquarium** is our favourite: open all year round. 0468409236.

On the beach itself, each year from mid June till the end of August the **Restaurant Les Pilotis** rebuilds itself on wooden stilts. Oysters (of course) feature on the deliciously tempting menu as do a la planxa fish and gambas. A good wine list complements both the food and the view half way to Africa. Booking recommended: 0626341786



Gorges of Galamus and Château de Puilaurens

Two options here:

Either, after visiting Ch. de Peyrepertuse, continue on the D14 Duilhac road, round the back of the castle and wind your way through Soulatgé to Cubières sur Cinoble and so on through the awesome **Gorges of Galamus**.

Or, from Estagel, drive straight up the D117 to St Paul de Fenouillèdes and turn right towards the Gorge.

Leave your car in the large parking and take the footpath to the **Hermitage of St Antoine**. It clings to the side of the gorge above the turbulent waters of the

Agly river hurtling between the tall grey cliffs far below. The first written records date from the XV century, and continue till the last hermit/priest, Père Marie, died of hunger and cold in 1870. A legend from further back in time tells of two troubadours, Gadamus and Giles, who, in 1090, were making their way from castle to castle. Stopping at Puilaurens, Gadamus fell in love with the beautiful Sylvaine. Unfortunately, as they left, they were accosted by a band of brigands in the Forest of Fanges and Giles was killed before Gadamus could frighten them off. As he died he made Gadamus promise to carry his soul to Jerusalem. This Gadamus did. He sojourned awhile in the Egyptian desert monastery of Saint Antoine and, a year later returned to Puilaurens only to find that Sylvaine had died of the plague. Heartbroken, he spent the rest of days in the cliff caves named after the Egyptian hermit Saint. Now you may visit the Hermitage with its **Cave Chapel** and, in the shady courtyard, buy drinks, biscuits and postcards. Nearby a steep and dangerous path descends to the river and rock pools, or you can

walk up to the road for easier access further on.

Pot holing and canyoning are popular, the scenery is spectacular and the road hacked out of the towering 500 m cliff face in the 1880s is dramatic. Swimming in, or picnicking by the rock pools is a joy. *Tourist Information 0468490757*



Following in the footsteps of Gadamus, return to the D117, turn left and drive to Lapradelle. You will see **Chateau de Puilaurens** rising high above the village and the valley of the Boulzane. It was used by the Cathars for refuge in 1245/46 and was one of the main defences of the border against the Spanish until 1659. A noble and fairytale castle, it is easily accessible by a 20 minute shaded walk from the car-park. From the battlements there are marvellous views over the village, the 1904 railway viaduct and the **Forest of Fanges**. *0468206526. Don't miss the free*

Puilaurens of Yesteryear Exhibition. 0468205489



Conflent villages, churches and marvellous music



all over the world in the graceful cloisters. (You may notice half the cloisters are missing: they are to be found in the Cloisters Museum in New York.) As the cool abbey church fills, small bats can be seen flitting about in the high vaulted ceiling. But, once the musicians start playing, the bats are forgotten; the music commands our undivided attention.

From 26th July to 13th August the Conflent is alive with the Sound of Music. It is the time of the Pablo Casals Festival of Chamber Music. Started in 1950 in Prades, the adopted town of the world famous cellist and conductor Pablo Casals, the festival continues to present an inspiring series of concerts played by some of the greatest musicians of our day. Pablo Casals himself participated up to the age of 90. In 1976, at the suggestion of the violinist, Fred Mucciolini, an Academy of Music was set up to welcome young musicians and give master classes in instruments of Chamber Music. The Student Concerts held in the last week of the festival present a great opportunity to visit the charming villages of the Conflent, and to listen to the stars of tomorrow performing in the small churches packed full of gems of Baroque Art and proud parents.



Some concerts are held in St Pierre in Prades, a grand church boasting the largest Baroque Altar in France; others in outlying villages. 0468963307 for reservations and enquiries. This year the Student Concerts will be held in: Thues, Ria, Finestreet, Codalet, Campoussy, Olette, Rigarda, St Pierre de Prades and Mosset.

The atmosphere is intimate and the size of the churches ensures that everyone can see and feel a part of the event. Arriving early you can stroll around the remote villages, enjoy their beauty, cobbled streets and old stone buildings before going into the cool church to benefit from the music. The standard is unbelievably high, the pieces played with a passion that is almost tangible. All you are asked to do is to contribute to the student's end of term party.

St Michel de Cuxa's beautiful and peaceful Abbey is the main venue. Discreetly dressed in soft summer clothes, local music lovers mingle with music lovers from

As well as hosting student concerts Mosset is home to the Mosset Opera. This year their own particular version of the Magic Flute runs from the 25th July to the 4th August. A fantastic experience if there are any tickets left.

The villages are, of course, well worth visiting in their own right. So many different ones, each surrounded by different countryside and offering different charms. Explore for yourselves, you will find many, many more. Enjoy them!



Sometimes... it Rains



Jane Mann has some ideas of how to fill those holiday days when the P.O. goes into monsoon mode.

Thuir, a lively town, full of sculpture and good restaurants, is probably most famous for the **Caves Byrrh**: A veritable cathedral to Aperitifs, it was started by the Violet family more than 100 years ago. Simon Violet began manufacturing his Byrrh, from local wine, aromatic plants and quinine in 1866. Instantly popular, a station hall was ordered from the Gustave Eiffel workshops. From it 30 million litres made their way annually to 350,000 customers world-wide. Now, not only Byrrh but Cinzano, Dubonnet, Ambassadeur and Suze are made and matured in the 600 huge oak barrels that line the chais leading to the biggest oak barrel in the world. 10 metres high it contains 420,500 litres. A fascinating guided tour takes you through the station concourse, shows you how the wines are flavoured and fortified to make the aperitifs, passes by evocative old advertising posters and ends with a tasting. *Open 7/7. Entrance 2 euros, visits every 15 mins from 9h to 11.45 and 14.30 – 17.45 in summer. Res: 0468530542. www.byrrh.com*

Opposite, a modest museum to the Chasse displays samples of local birds and beasts, stuffed and looking a bit dusty, in glass cases. *Open July/August.*

Can Marty on Bvd Leon-Jean Gregory is the place to head to for lunch or dinner. Traditional French and Catalan menus, a comprehensive wine list, friendly service and a faithful local clientele make this the place to eat in Thuir. *Res: 0468536140 closed Sun/Mon.*

Remember the sculpture! I love the voluptuous lady outside the Post Office and find the **Hommage des Déportées** by Pierre Content on Av Guillaud particularly moving.

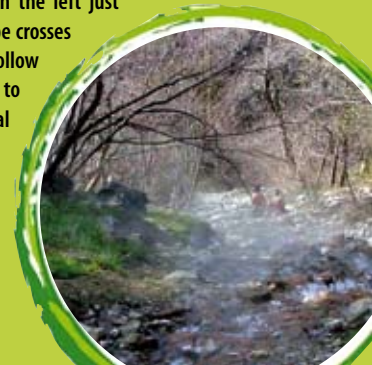


Why not get wet in the rain at the Hot Baths of St Thomas les Bains?

Drive up the N916 direction Andorra and turn left CD28 just after Fontpedrouse. Three open air baths of hot mineral waters cooled to 37 degrees, the hammam, the jacuzzi plus a series of massage treatments make it the perfect place to relax in calm serenity, surrounded by high mountains and stunning scenery. *Open 7/7 Check times and book treatments on: 0468970313*

Discover a range of beauty and skin care products based on thermal plankton at the **Authentica Beaute Boutiqe**. They stock natural slimming remedies, anti aging creams, essential oils, teas and tisanes, soaps, shampoos, herbs and a wealth of other treats and presents. *0468971544 www.authenticabeaute.com*

For nature lovers, further up, towards Prats Ballguer, if you park on the left just before a water pipe crosses the road you can follow a footpath leading to a series of natural hot pools. Great picnic place but be careful of the waters, they can be very very hot.



It Can Be Windy too

Here are a few more ideas.

All worth visiting, ring to check opening hours.

- ✓ The Aquarium at Banyuls sur Mer 0468887373
- ✓ The Church and Cloisters of St Genis des Fontaines 0468898433
- ✓ The Tropic of Butterflies at Elne 0468378377
- ✓ The Modern Art Museum in Ceret 0468872776
- ✓ St Laurent de Cerdans Museum of Traditional Crafts 04 6839 5575. While there don't miss the Cabra factory of Espadrilles 04 6839 5130 Or the fab fabrics of Les Toiles du Soleil 0468395002
- ✓ The Museum of Catalan Agriculture in St Michel de Lotes 0468847640
- ✓ The Museum of Prehistory at Belesta 0468845555
- ✓ The Grottes des Grandes Canalettes at Villefranche de Conflent 0468962311
- ✓ The Art Centre of St Vicens near Cabestany 0468500218
- ✓ Pop down to Spain and visit the Dali Theatre Museum in Figueres.

The rainy days are few and far between. Make the most of them! On windy days all rainy days suggestions apply a few more...

The Cote Vermeille and the Alberes: Drive the panoramic routes like the Route des

Vinobles from Banyuls sur Mer to Madeloc taking in the Cave des Templiers for a tasting and tour. Or over the Col de Banyuls to the Spanish Abbey of St Cyr (Sant Quirze), beautiful views, walking and a handy Bar Grill restaurant. 0034 972 1931 Wander round Collioure. Plenty of bars, restaurants, shops and art galleries to pop into there if the wind gets too strong. Port Vendres Fish Market (La Criée) is fascinating and the oyster bar an easy place to while away an hour while choosing your fish for supper. Closed between 12.30 and 3.30 pm The Church and Priory of Villelongue dels Monts, a jewel of Romanesque Art set in the forests above the little village of Montesquieu des Alberes. 0468896461 Shopping in Le Perthus, a street full of cheap booze, souvenirs and ceramics but also an interesting fort designed by Vauban (who else?) and archaeological remains of the Roman route from France to Spain.

The Vallespir: Up the D115 at Arles sur Tech a wonderful visit to the XIII century Abbey, its cloisters and the medieval city. Tourist Office 0468391199 3.5 kms further on the Gorges du Fou, narrowing to 1 metre, narrowest gorge in the world(?) well in France anyway and open from April to November. 0468391621 Prats de Mollo and the Fort, (Vauban again) and the "afternoon spectacle de cavalerie". Tourist Office: 0468397083

In the Têt Valley: Castelnou, near Thuir is a perfect medieval walled village topped by a castle. It has good restaurants and interesting artisanal workshops. The Priory of Serrabonne is austere and beautiful and the church of Boule d'Amont further up the D618 contains real gems of Baroque Art. 0468840930 Les Orgues of Ille sur Têt, limestone rocks reminiscent of Cappadocia are fascinating. 0468841313 The drive from Ille sur Têt to Montalba le Chateau and then Marcevol with its beautiful Priory 0468960140, through Abroussols down into Prades via Eus is stunning and full of stopping off places of interest. St Michel de Cuxa, 0468961535 and the Abbey of St Martin de Canigou, 0468055003 are both magic outings. Catch the little Yellow train from Villefranche de Conflent and go at least as far as Font Romeu to visit the Four Solaire. Up at Les Angles the Parc Animalier is a delight, All the animals of the P-O at liberty in large paddocks and enclosures and a well laid out trail to follow.

In the valley of the Agly: A Roman Aqueduct at Ansignan. A wine journey through the Cotes de Roussillon Villages of Caramany, Latour de France, Cassagnes, Montner, Rasiguères to name but a few... A wine tasting lunch at Chateau de Jau, Cases de Penne 0468389138. Have a wander round Perpignan itself. Good shopping, beautiful and interesting churches and historic monuments, Planeta Magic, Espace Polygone, 0618001944 for the kids, loads of bars, cafés and restaurants... tourist office 0468663030 to check out guided tours

Plenty to do while the Tramontane blows away the clouds and keeps the P-O skies clear and sparkling.



Match up these idiomatic sayings 1

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| J'ai les cros 1 | a | I've got butterflies in my stomach |
| J'ai la gueule de bois 2 | b | That drives me crazy |
| Ne le prends pas sur ce ton 3 | c | I'm hungry |
| Ça me prend la tête 4 | d | Don't take it like that |
| J'ai le trac 5 | e | I have a hangover |

Faux amis Choose the correct definition for these French words which were specially invented to confuse French language learners! 2

1. String

- a) Thong!
b) For tying someone up

2. Ball trap:

- a) Painful experience
b) clay pigeon shooting

3. Trainer:

- a) To drag
b) To exercise

4. Waters:

- a) Cascade
b) Toilet

5. Truc:

- a) Thingy
b) lorry

Useful phrase
C'est du pipi de chat
It tastes like
dishwater!
(Lit. cat's pee!)

Trouvez la bonne définition 4

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| à vos souhaits! 1 | a | Heat wave |
| tant mieux 2 | b | Get well soon |
| volontiers 3 | c | Pot luck |
| faire la navette 4 | d | All in one go |
| à la prochaine 5 | e | Instructions |
| d'un seul coup 6 | f | To commute |
| à la bonne franquette 7 | g | Willingly, with pleasure |
| mode d'emploi 8 | h | until next time |
| Remets-toi vite. 9 | i | All the better! |
| canicule 10 | j | Bless you! |

Répetez cinq fois !
Virelangue
Un chasseur sachant chasser sait chasser sans son chien de chasse
A hunter who knows how to hunt, can hunt without his dog!

Je commence par une E et finis par une E et je contiens une lettre.
Qui suis je ?
une enveloppe - car ça contient une lettre

3 Complétez ces phrases sur région

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| On peut visiter.... 1 | a |sont les rayons bronzants du soleil |
| Les UVB..... 2 | b |est moins joli qu'un petit cochon rose |
| Les Dragons Catalans 3 | c |est un pain plat provençal |
| Un sanglier.. 4 | d | est un club de Rugby à XIII français |
| La fougasse..... 5 | e |s'appelle Llabanere |
| Les sapeurs-pompiers..... 6 | f |est une danse traditionnelle catalane |
| L'aéroport de Perpignan.... 7 | g |est nécessaire pour éviter les incendies |
| Le débroussaillage..... 8 | h | le musée Dali à Figuières |
| La sardane 9 | i |interviennent pour les accidents de voiture |

✓ "Savoir" or "Connaître"?
Savoir" and "Connaître both mean 'to know'?
How do we differentiate between the two?
Use 'Savoir' when following it by a second verb
Eg Je sais parler Français Tu sais danser la sardane?

Use 'Connaître' when following it by a noun:
Eg Il connaît mon frère
Connaissez-vous la route pour Perpignan ?

VARY YOUR LANGUAGE!
Say...
je n'ai plus faim or *«je suis rassasié/e»* (ra-sa-ee-ay)
for 'I'm full/I've had enough to eat'
Use the following to link your sentences and make them sound more natural ...
Alors - so
donc - therefore
Après - after
ensuite - next
puis - then

ANSWERS TO 'TEST YOUR FRENCH' PO LIFE N°17

- 1 1vert 2bleu 3noir 4rouge 5blanc 6blanc 7bleue
8blanche 9rose 10rouge
2 1g 2i 3d 4f 5b 6h 7a 8d 9c 10e
3 1e2i3b4j5f6h7a8c9d1g0

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Améliorez votre Anglais

✓ Origines intéressantes

good-bye - originally a contraction of 'God be with ye (ye = you in old English)'; 'God' developed into 'good', and remained so for 'good day', 'good evening', etc.

Phrase utile
That's just my cup
of tea!
C'est parfait
for moi!

Répétez cinq fois ! *Tongue twister*
Unique New York.

Trouvez l'équivalent en Français pour ces expressions anglaises

- 1
- | | |
|--|--|
| You can hear a pin drop ① | Ⓐ ça fait réfléchir |
| That's food for thought! ② | Ⓐ ça n'a rien à voir |
| It's on the tip of my tongue ③ | Ⓒ Il est très distrait |
| I put my foot in my mouth! ④ | Ⓓ Il n'y a aucune bruit |
| Let's kill two birds with one stone ⑤ | Ⓒ Je l'ai acheté pour pas grand-chose |
| I bought it dirt cheap ⑥ | Ⓕ j'ai fait une bêtise |
| Careful! He's a wolf in sheep's clothing ⑦ | Ⓓ le mot va venir |
| He is extremely absent minded ⑧ | Ⓖ Il est moins gentil qu'il n'a l'air |
| Her bark is worse than her bite ⑨ | Ⓐ elle est plus gentille qu'elle n'a l'air |
| That's beside the point ⑩ | Ⓓ je l'ai au bout de la langue |

Lisez le texte remplissez les blancs 3

Collioure, Matisse and Fauvism

In 1 1905, Henri Matisse landed in Collioure, 2 for light and a new style of 3. It was in Collioure 4 he painted the famous Open Window, with vibrant colours and reflex ions that did not 5 in with the 6 - vermilion masts of blue boats floating on pink waves 7 a sky of turquoise, and pink. The world 8 what art would be in the twentieth 9 as the fauves became the forerunners of 10 expression of colour «When I put a green,» Matisse was 11 to have said later «it is not grass. When I put a blue, it is not the sky.» And so was 12 Fauvism

A fit B born C free D below E reported F glimpsed G spring H that I century J searching K expected L painting

RÉPONSES D'AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS PO LIFE N° 17

- 1 1f 2d 3i 4h 5g 6j 7c 8b 9a 10e1 make 2
2 1a 2b 3a 4b 5b 6b 7a 8b
3 1g 2h 3c 4a 5i 6e 7j 8f 9b 10d
4 1f 2i 3h 4a 5g 6j 7b 8c 9d 10e

2 Trouvez la bonne réponse

1. Where can I fill up with petrol?

- A Very expensive.
B There's a garage round the corner.
C Yes, you can

2. What's your favourite pastime?

- A waking
B walk
C to walk

3. How often do you go on holiday?

- A In August.
B For two weeks
C Twice a year

4. Where did you go yesterday?

- A I goed to Perpignan
B I went to Perpignan
C. I go to Perpignan

VOCABULAIRE!

Employez les mots suivants pour rendre vos phrases plus naturelles...
but - mais
so - donc
then - puis
after that - après
next - ensuite
although - bien que...

4

Trouvez l'équivalent Argot, mais pas vulgaire!

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| We're having a ball ① | Ⓐ C'est gratuit |
| He is stark raving bonkers! ② | Ⓐ elle est très stressée |
| I don't have any dosh ③ | Ⓒ Veux-tu une tasse de thé ? |
| Would you like a brew? ④ | Ⓓ J'ai les mains sales |
| Don't be such a chicken ⑤ | Ⓒ On s'éclate ! |
| It's a freebie ⑥ | Ⓓ Il est fou |
| My hands are grubby ⑦ | Ⓓ Ne sois pas si lâche |
| She is very uptight? ⑧ | Ⓓ Je n'ai pas d'argent |

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MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE, Collioure

FAUVISM FORT

A windmill on the skyline signals its location. From its courtyard, two paths lead up to the windmill, one through a copse of cactus, the other through a terraced olive grove. Its neighbour is Le Dominicain, until 1926 a monastery and since then a winery of AOC Collioure and Banyuls.

The Museum is newer. It was opened in the early 1980s at the behest of a group of art enthusiasts, who persuaded the municipality to buy the villa theretofore owned by Gaston Pams (1918-1981), the Senator from the Pyrénées-Orientales. But its roots go back to two brief years at the beginning of the 20th century, when Collioure was a stronghold of the Fauvism movement in modern art.



The movement began in 1905 when **Henri Matisse and André Derain arrived in Collioure**. They had been students of Gustave Moreau, the École des Beaux-Arts professor who had inspired the movement facetiously named by a critic after Fauves, French for "wild beasts", for its daring colours. The movement ended in 1907, but reverberations of it rippled throughout art, noticeably including Picasso's two years at Céret 1911-1913.

Sea Picture - a poem by R.L. Hughes

The Tramontana cracks its cheeks,
heaps up rank on rank of waves,
driving them towards the shore
to rage and rampage over rocks
until, corralled and caged
in the canyon of the bay,
they, fuming and foaming,
surging and breaking,
waste themselves upon the beach
or, trapped and baffled, leap
and beat against the cliffs,
splayed fingers of foam
clutching at crevice and crack,
only to fall back
into the grip of the undertow
that drags them down to
the chaos and darkness
of the shingle-rattling,
swirling and heaving,
wind-mad whirlpool sea.

Today, the Museum features exhibitions of modern art and hosts festival events. It is a "window open on Fauvism" that extends beyond its walls, in the Chemin du Fauvisme, a walking circuit of reproductions of works at 20 sites around Collioure. And despite its name, it goes beyond modern art. It is the home of a Foundation in memory of Spanish poet **Antonio Machado**, who fled the Spanish Civil War and in 1939 died and was buried in Collioure. And it's a repository of information on Anglo-Irish novelist Patrick O'Brian (1914-2000), who lived in Collioure from 1949 on and wrote many of his famed sea stories there. Fittingly, one of the principal characters of the stories is Dr. Stephen Maturin, who is Irish-Catalan.

Musée d'Art moderne de Collioure, Villa Pams Route de Port-Vendres, 66190 Collioure, Tel: 04 68821019, www.collioure.net/musee.asp.

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The Jet Swimmer is suitable for everyone who loves to relax in the water. The main benefit is that there is no turning point, so you can keep on swimming, as long as you wish, great for sportsmen training for long distances, but also for the young and the not so young who will have hours of fun in the Jet Swimmer. If you have physical conditions such as painful joints and muscles, are recovering from illness, or are a little overweight, you will soon see positive results thanks to the Jet Swimmer. The Jet Swimmer is also suitable for water fitness with some equipment like a rowing machine.

The benefits of the Jet Swimmer?

Well, most importantly, you only need a limited space. The Jet Swimmer measures 570 x 220 cm, so it's really ideal for a smaller garden or a village house.

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Local news

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK IN THE WATER.....

Summer 2008 is predicted to be a **bumper jellyfish sting year** on the Cote Vermeille.

It seems that global warming and the decrease in its natural predator, (swordfish, red tuna....) is creating ideal conditions for *méduses* or jellyfish to breed. However, scientists are less worried about the plagues of jellyfish anticipated this year, than the implications of this for the ecosystem of the ocean. No need to panic when you go to the seaside but it might be worth taking a 'jellyfish kit' of vinegar and a soothing cream to the beach 'just in case'.

CLEAN RESORTS

Languedoc-Roussillon is **at the top of the list in France for the cleanliness of its lakes and beaches.**

Eighteen resorts have been awarded the increasingly prestigious Pavillon bleu, a touristic label which classes resorts according to a range of criteria such as the quality and standard of their beaches and ports, their environmental efforts towards rubbish disposal and water treatment and their customer service in general. Amongst these resorts are Argelès, Canet, Le Barcarès, Saint Cyprien, Sainte Marie, and Torreilles.

AUCHAN ROUNDABOUT

Some tongue in cheek advice for negotiating the roundabout near Auchan (taken from our P-O forum at www.anglophone-direct.com)

"Keep in the correct lane. And avoid going at mid-day if at all possible: hungry people are aggressive - especially men!"

"It's the complete lack of lane sense, use of indicators, respect for others, and above all, common sense, that makes the «magic roundabout» a clear front runner in «PO's most hellish stretch of road» competition"

"I quite like the challenge - probably the closest I'll get to participating in an 'extreme sport'"

"Just take your hands off the wheel, and don't make eye-contact".

Vide-greniers (car boot sales)

Taking place mainly on Sundays, the vide-grenier, the nearest equivalent to the car boot sale, is 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 our local town hall.

AUGUST

Saturday 2th
Sainte-Marie-la-Mer
Port Leucate

Sunday 3rd

Mont-Louis
Maury

Joch

Saturday 9th

Sainte-Marie-la-Mer

Sunday 10th

Saint Cyprien

Sunday 17th

Saint-Laurent-de-la-Salanque

Saturday 23rd

Torreilles

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 7th

Vinça

Saint-André

Saturday 13th

Collioure

Sunday 21st

Le Boulou

Vernet-les-Bains

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

...but not a drop to drink. Yes, it seems that despite heavy rains in May, the département des Pyrénées-Orientales is still desperately **short of water** and measures put into place last September 2007, placing **restrictions on our water usage**, were renewed on the 15th May 2008, and are expected to remain in place until 15 September 2008. This includes amongst other things, the **use of water for leisure activities, washing your car and watering gardens.** Failure to respect these restrictions could result in a fine of 1 500 to 3 000 €.

Private pools may not be emptied and filled.

However, they may be topped up in the evening, between 20h - 24h and the morning from 5h - 8h. Vegetable gardens may be watered in the evening, between 20h - 24h and the morning from 5h - 8h

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GENERALI
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Phlebotomus actually comes from the Greek *phleps*, *phlebos* meaning 'vein' referring to the blood sucking habit of sand flies

The 'Phlebotomus' or 'sandfly' is a small, hairy species of mosquito, straw coloured or brown, whose buzz is hardly noticeable but whose 'bite' can be fatal to dogs. This unpleasant little beastie can carry and transmit **leishmaniasis**, (pronounced leash man eye a sis), a disease first recorded in the Pyrénées-Orientales in 1920 and which as yet has **no vaccination**. There is however preventative medication available and it is important to protect your dog against this **from March to October** in the P-O.

These villains are rarely seen during the day. Their favourite habitat is gardens, parks and woodland or any humid place. In fact, the name 'sand fly' is misleading as you will not find them on the beach!

As with the common mosquito, only the female bites. When she does so, parasites are deposited on the skin. A tiny skin lesion - called a chancre - appears at the site of the bite, usually in the **muzzle or the ear**. The parasite then invades the dog's cells, spreads into the internal organs and can begin to damage the immune system.

Any dog can catch Leishmaniasis, although there is some evidence to indicate that larger dogs are more susceptible.



Warning signs

Symptoms can be quite vague initially, and the disease can really only be detected by a blood test.

Some vets recommend a once or twice yearly blood test to ensure that your dog is not infected.

Eventual symptoms may include

loss of hair around the eyes

and nose, unusually fast nail

growth, weight loss despite

continued good appetite,

unexplained scabs on the

body, dandruff, bald patches on the skin, conjunctivitis...

Prevention

- Use **Scalibor collars** with deltamethrin from March to November. Ordinary flea/tick collars do not provide protection.

- Use **anti-repellent soap** to bath dog from May to Nov.

- Don't walk your dog in rural or wooded areas after twilight

- Keep well informed about the disease in order to give your dog the best protection you can.

IN YOUR GARDEN, IT IS TIME TO...

August:

- Prune your vines to allow more sun to get to the «grappes» – it will improve the quality
- Cut the grass less often and leave longer so the sun does not harm it
- prune 'glycines' (wisteria)
- If your conifers are dry, check for red spiders.
- light pruning on cherry trees, take off about 30 cm of branches at the top,

September:

- prune «tamaris», «lagestoemia», «hibiscus»
- prepare the planting for trees and shrubs

Vallespir Paysage Gardening services - 06 12 99 25 52

Useful vocab

Je voudrais protéger mon chien contre les phlébotomes / la leishmaniose

(chuh voodray pro-tej-ay mon she-an cont lay flay-bott-ome/lab lech-man-ee-oz)

I would like to protect my dog against Phlebotomus

Avez vous des renseignements/bons conseils pour éviter la leishmaniose

(avay-voo day ron-sen-yub-mou/bon consay poor ay-veet-ay lah lech-man-ee-oze ?)

Do you have any info/good advice to avoid leishmaniasis

Collier – collar

pipettes (spot-on)

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A foreigner with limited French is advised to opt for an **INSURANCE AGENT**. In every town, there are branches of major insurance companies. They should be able to advise you, in English if you're lucky, and help to set up your initial cover, modify it later and in general make the whole process easy and painless. Most importantly, they are the quickest contact point in case of emergency.

- ◆ **BROKER**: Offers a choice of various insurers, but is probably tied into specific companies and solely commission based.
- ◆ **BANKS**: Have their own insurance companies or work with an insurer. Somewhat less flexible in formulating specific insurance requirements, and probably more time consuming in case of claims procedures.
- ◆ **ON-LINE**: Unless your French is reasonable and you are prepared to be patient (both for the initial form filling and later possible claims), leave this way of insuring for a later date.

Most insurance contracts will be renewed automatically unless you give two months written notice by registered letter.



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 and 18 Rue du Marechal-Foch 66000 Perpignan

minus 10% on presentation of this advert

Living off the land

THE OLIVE TREE (OLEA EUROPAEA)

The olive tree is among the oldest known cultivated trees in the world, and fossilised leaves going back as early as



8,000BC have been found in Roquevaire in southern France. It's actual cultivation is believed to have started around 4000BC in Greece and eventually spread to other Mediterranean countries.

Some olive facts

- The first Olympic flame was a burning olive branch.
- The olive is classed as a fruit.
- The olive is 20% oil
- It is said that Moses granted olive growers an exemption from military service, so honoured was the fruit.

The legend

The olive has provided food, fuel, timber and medicine since ancient times, and is regarded as a symbol of peace and wisdom, a great representation of laid back Mediterranean living

According to Greek legend, it was the **result of a quarrel** between Athena, goddess of wisdom and science, and Poseidon, god of the sea. The story goes that the two of them were arguing over the protection of a new town. In order to resolve the dispute, Zeus suggested that each make a gift to humanity and the god judged that the most useful gift would be granted the right to protect the town.

Poseidon touched a rock and out leapt a magnificent horse capable of carrying many riders and arms. **Athena** touched a piece of land and brought out a tree which could feed, heal wounds and colds, and live forever. She was pronounced the winner and given the protection of the town which bears her name, Athens.

The growing

The hot dry summers and cool winters of the Mediterranean are the ideal habitat for the olive tree which is virtually drought resistant, once established, and needs little summer watering. It may take more than five years to produce its first fruit, but has an extremely long and productive life and can continue to thrive for **up to 600 years**.

The preparing

The only difference between green and black olives is the **ripeness** — green are picked when they are immature, black remain on the tree longer. Here is one way (out of several possibilities) to prepare. Place both black and green olives in a bucket of water and **change the water every day for the next 2 weeks**. After 2 weeks, place the olives in another bowl filled with vinegar. Allow to marinate for 2 days. Remove the olives from the vinegar and place them on a tray, covering them with coarse salt. Leave them in salt for a day, brush off excess and add to brine solution. (One litre of water to approximately 250mls to 400mls of vinegar). Add a handful of salt

and 1 tablespoon of sugar plus herbs and garlic if you wish!

Health benefits

Olives are high in monounsaturated fat, iron, Vitamin E, and dietary fibre. Pulverised olive leaves were used in the past in a tea drink to lower fevers, and as treatment for **malaria, to treat wounds, relieve haemorrhoids, a general antiseptic**. Today, the reported benefits of olive leaf extract ranges from boosting energy to aiding in the treatment of viral conditions, flu and colds, fungal infections, chronic fatigue and allergies... Research has shown that the leaves may also help to lower blood sugar levels, and high blood pressure. Even the bark of the olive tree was used in ancient times to treat wounds.

Olive leaves may be gathered at any time of the year, dried and used to make a tea by soaking about 2 teaspoons of dried olive leaf in 5 or 6 ounces of boiling water for 30 minutes.

Tapenade

Tapenade is a Provençal dish whose base consists of puréed or finely chopped olives, capers, and olive oil, a delicious and easy-to-make spread that you can use as a dip, or topping for fish and poultry. Its name comes from the Provençal word for capers, tapéno.

- 100g stoned black olives,
- 2 tbsp capers, drained and rinsed
- 1 plump garlic clove, crushed
- 85ml extra-virgin olive oil
- anchovies or anchovy paste, (optional)
- squirt of lemon juice (optional)
- fresh cracked black pepper

Place pitted olives in a food processor with garlic, capers, anchovies or anchovy paste, lemon juice and pepper and blend until smooth. Leave the motor running and pour in the oil slowly. Season to taste.

NEW Pool SECURITY Update

All pools, whether they be private or on premises which are rented out, should now have a safety system fitted. This covers all in-ground and partially in ground pools.



Failure to respect the security rules and regulations could result in a 45,000€ fine and criminal charges of death by negligence, should a fatal accident occur.

There has been much confusion in the past surrounding the laws for swimming pool security in France but most pool owners are now clear on the requirements

and have purchased alarms, fencing, pool covers, shutters, or sliding glass covers to conform to safety rules laid out by the government.

However, last month, Luc Chatel, secretary of state responsible for 'consommation et de l'industrie' stated that five out of six pool sensor alarms (the cheapest of the different security options and therefore widely used) are unfit for use and should be withdrawn from the market. Only one of the six tested passed recent trials simulating a child falling into the water.

These alarms, whilst in no way dangerous for users, are believed to give a false sense of security, particularly for parents of young children, who are more likely to take their eyes off the child if the alarms are set.



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The models to be withdrawn are below although it is not yet clear whether alarm owners will be reimbursed or lose out completely. If you have one of these alarms, you are advised to contact the manufacturer to find out where you stand. More information to follow in future issues.

- ✓ Aqualarm DET10 - Nexatis
- ✓ Sensor Premium - MG International
- ✓ Sécuripool - Securipool International
- ✓ Alpool- JB 2005 - JR International et Alpotec
- ✓ Poolguard PGRM-2E - Energie engineering



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LE PERTHUS

“Spain to the left of me, France is to the right, here I am... stuck in the middle with you” (Taken from Ode to Le Perthus by Stealers Wheel)

Not really written in honour of Le Perthus but walk down the main street of Le Perthus from the large car park on your left as you head from Le Boulou – and you are still totally in France until you arrive at the ‘borne’ or marker on the left hand side, a little further down from the town hall. At this point, Le Perthus becomes **Spanish on the left hand side and French on the right**, a rather bizarre border which dates back to the signing of the treaty of the Pyrénées, (1659) and immediately begs the question “when should we stop saying ‘Bonjour’ and start saying ‘Hola’? And if we are stuck in the middle, do we say ‘Bola’? Or ‘Honjour’?

Most of the large shops on the left (Els Limits) are resolutely Spanish and belong to the municipality of La Jonquera, so of course the booze and tobacco ring up at **Spanish prices**, which explains the permanent presence of sweaty, jostling bodies (on the left hand side!) heaving shopping trolleys of pastis and Saint Miguel along the narrow, packed pavements, towards cars that are mainly parked in large car parks to be found at either end of the town.



Marca Hispanica pyramid
Built in 1976 on the border between France and Spain, from stones excavated from the building of the motorway, the monument Marca Hispanica was designed by Ricardo Bofill, and dedicated to Catalonia, its red brick columns symbolising the four stripes on the Catalan flag.

The presence of the *bonimenteurs* or (rather derogatory) *vendeurs à la sauvette* - street sellers surreptitiously touting their wares of sunglasses, video cameras, watches.... only adds spice to the slightly seedy fairground feel for some. For others, Le Perthus is somewhere to visit quickly, make your purchases, and skedaddle!

Of course, there is a lot more to Le Perthus than cheap booze, paella pans and sombreros! It was an **important passage** (via Dolmitia) through the Pyrénées in Roman times, and if you head up to the **fort of Bellegarde** there are spectacular views from its high walls (Vauban himself is said to have remarked, «nothing overlooks this place») and some fabulous walks in the area of the fort...

In the 14th century, Le Perthus was known as Pertusium de parrochia Santa Maria de Clusa. Ouch! Imagine filling that in on a form every time you're faced with French bureaucracy! The name Perthus comes from the latin «pertusiare» (to drill or pierce) or 'percer' in French as it is a main point of passage between France and Spain.

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Possibly **Hotdogging**, two people in an inflatable canoe as opposed to eight on a raft?

Or why not the "Hydrospeed" way of experiencing the pleasure of swimming turbulent waters clinging to a rather special float? All roads leading to "**Roc Aqua**" are a delight to drive. Whether the D117 from Estagel towards Quillan or from Prades to Mosset and over the Col de Jau to Axat, either way the countryside through which you pass is dramatic and grand. Arriving at the roundabout of the Bears, at the junction of the D117 and D118, continue towards Quillan. Almost immediately on your left is a restaurant. Take the next left and you will see Roc Aqua. There you will be kitted out in wet suits, life jackets and helmets till you resemble a team of Buzz Lightyears. You will be driven to a launch pad, given instructions and then you're off: 8 to a raft, 2 to a hotdog, 1 to a hydrospeed.

All the guides have state diplomas, they speak English, they are experienced, professional and fun. During your hour or so's white water adventure they will make sure you are safe and enjoying every moment.

Swish through rapids, catch your breath in cool pools, race through narrow gorges, under low growing trees; swirl through Axat, round the Bear's roundabout and finally, after St Martin de Lys, swim to shore. Your exhilarating, exciting whirling watery ride down the Aude is over.

Same Enterprise, different river: At **Têt Adventure** in Marquixanes just off the N116 between Ille sur Tet and Prades **Canyoning** is

quite a bold way to explore parts of the P-O lesser mortals never see. From the Discovery Version (jumps up to 6 metres,

short natural slides and abseiling up to 10 metres) to the Canyon Sport Version (jumping and sliding up to 10 metres, and abseiling up to 40 metres, some through waterfalls), all you need is to be over 8 years old, know how to swim and be in good physical condition

(these are also requirements for rafting). Wear swimwear and a pair of tennis shoes. You will get wet. All other kit is provided.

Another idea, slightly gentler, is **Tubbing** down the river on a specially


designed inflatable tyre. Great fun. But Tet Adventure is set in a wooded adventure playground by the river Tet. Why not attack any of the increasingly difficult runs high up in the trees? A series of nets, ropes, zip wires and other obstacles challenge your skill and courage. Once again all is well supervised, well equipped and, for the non participants, a

café offering drinks and snacks is the place from which to watch your loved ones swinging through the branches or bobbing down the stream.


All the guides and instructors are passionate about their work and the beautiful environment in which they operate. Their enthusiasm is infectious. Ring 0624038060 or 0468057212 and catch some! Tarif varies from 12 euros for an hour's Tubbing to 75 euros for 6 hours Rafting. Rafting, Hydrospeed, Hotdogging and Canyoning are only available in August, Têt Adventure is open till the end of September.



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