

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

French Life

The Aperero

Should I Stay or should I Go?

Out for the Day

Biodiversity in Banyuls

Festivals and Traditions

What's on around the region

Spring 2011
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Next to the restaurant "Le Clos des Lys"

Holà

The sun is shining, the cherry trees are sprouting a pale pink blossom alongside the fading golden hues of the mimosa - there's a fresh, fruity flavour in the air. Set all this against a backcloth of wedgewood blue sky broken up by a snow capped Canigou and hey! You're in the Pyrenees-Orientales! Elle n'est pas belle la vie?

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life in the Pyrénées-Orientales.
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Would you believe that I burnt my nose in January on a cliff top walk from Port Vendres to Banyuls and the tops of my ears in February on a bike ride to Saint Cyprien? Yes, winter has been mainly splendido, and spring is going to have to work hard to beat it.

In this edition, Frank Parkinson tells of big men with odd shaped balls, Colin Lamont plays a round, Christian Piquemal walks us up across the heights of Céret, John Frazer-Robinson dines Michelin style, and we head off on the trail of the laughing elephant, and other animals.

Joyeux printemps!

Kate & Jane



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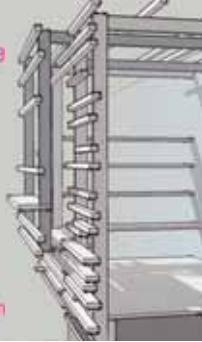
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Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

organises events, exhibitions, salons, concerts and conferences throughout the year. Check out their website on

www.congres-perpignan.com



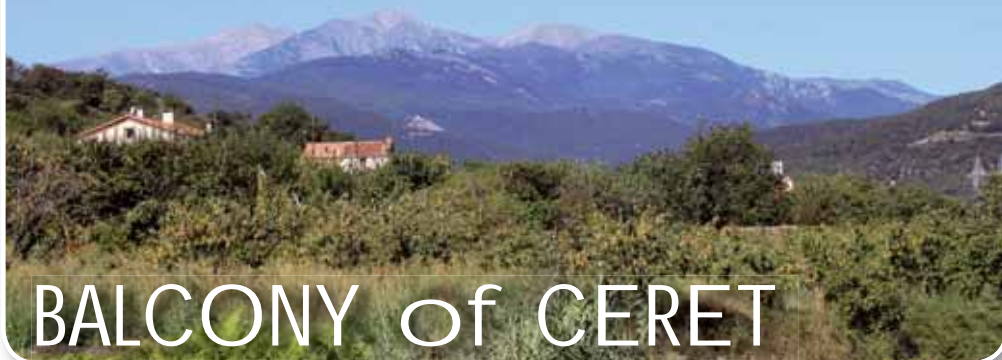
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Walk the region...

with Christian Piquemal



BALCONY of CERET

A bird's eye view of Roussillon


This is an easy trail mostly following ancient muleteers' tracks. Clear winter days and flowering springtime are the ideal periods for this half-day trip which you can combine with a visit to the colourful Saturday morning market. From the heights of Céret, walkers will enjoy wide panoramas including the Vallespir valley, the Canigou, the plain of Roussillon and (hopefully) the sandy coastline. The meandering way down is particularly inspiring as the footpath follows an old irrigation canal bringing water from the mountain of Fontfrède.

Access: No problem arriving in Céret but finding a place to park is never that easy on Saturdays. Still, at least it's free of charge.


Roadsigns: Yellow marks and signposts.


Gradient: from altitudes 160m to 410m.


The Walk: From the market place, find "La Capelleta" (old chapel housing an art gallery) and take Avenue d'Espagne, the road leading to Maureillas. Pass the rugby ground and a roundabout and soon after the "Camping Municipal", take the steps on the right, up to a new housing development. Follow Rue de Nogarèdes until Route de Falguerolle. Stick to the right and you soon reach a crossroads. **(0h35)** - **option:** the footpath on the right leads to the Cascade dels Baussos in 10 mn.

 Take the narrow footpath just in front. It goes up, sometimes abruptly, crossing woods of oak trees. Views expand as you walk from one

clearing to the other until you finally reach a partly renovated farmhouse "Mas d'en Pople". **(1h05)**

 After a well deserved break, follow the level track on the right of the mas to a wide open space of meadows. Take a small road on the right for a gentle stroll providing sweeping views. Forget the track on the left giving access to "Mas d'en Ribes" and, after a long bend of the road, don't miss the footpath down on the right. /0h15/

 Under cover of the forest this beautiful path leads to a lovely brook easy to ford. On the other side, you are crossing a private property (don't panic, owners kindly accept walkers!!) with a house ("Mas d'en Clic") you will pass on your right. Beware of the only difficulty of the trail: stepping down for 1m50 on slippery rocks. Firmly grab hold of the one and only unfortunate young tree!! **(0h25)**

 Past the house, the track goes up to a small platform with hundreds of young mimosas. After 50m or so, leave the track to take the footpath

Pourquoi les poissons ne vont-ils jamais en cours d'anglais ?
Parce qu'ils s'en fichent (pron fish)
(s'en ficher - to not care)

slightly on the left. It links up with the irrigation canal, which you will follow until reaching the outskirts of Céret. Most of the work, digging the rock and building the walls, was done between the 18th and 19th centuries. The municipality of Céret repaired it a few years ago but they didn't do a wonderful job!

👉 The footpath crosses the road twice before arriving at the Rue des Capucins in front of the old convent of the same name. Follow the street down to meet up again with Avenue d'Espagne. **(Oh45) - Total Walking Time: 3h05**



Christian Piquemal is a professional walking guide and a specialist of Catalonia. His programmes combine historical, natural and artistic discovery, often off the beaten track. More details on www.enchemin.com



Did you know...?

Cheeky Monkeys....

According to legend, around about the tenth century, the infamous Simiots, 'bêtes féroces assez semblables à des chats et même à des singes' terrorised

Arles-sur-Tech. These 'monkey men' came down from the mountains, raping, pillaging and destroying crops.

In despair, the abbot of Arles, Arnulfe, decided that the relics of a Saint were needed to balance out the many sins of the villagers, which were surely responsible for their plight. He journeyed to Rome and returned

with the relics of Abdon and Sennen, obscure Persian saints eaten by lions in the Arena of Rome, hidden in the false-bottom of a liquor barrel. The Simiots disappeared and peace was restored. "La Sainte Tombe" in which their bones were supposedly stored has run with pure water ever since, defying scientific explanation. Once a year the monks siphon out the water with a silver pump and hand out to pilgrims.



In the olden days....

.....the poshest house in the centre of small towns and villages was usually owned by the local landowner and called the 'maison de maitre' ('the master's house'). Those living in the surrounding 'maisons de village' were usually tenants but were allotted land on the outside of the village to grow

fruit and vegetables. As times changed, and village houses were sold, the allocated land went with the property. These allotments are still very much in evidence in the region, many with summer dining areas and terraces where grandparents entertain family during the fine weather and receive visitors.

Masses of style

The word 'mas' is a bit of a mix of 'maison' and 'manoir' and describes a traditional farmhouse or cluster of houses in Catalonia, or Provence, originally the home of a wealthy

family. They would usually be built in a well-sheltered spot, near a source of water, facing south to protect against the Mistral or Tramontane, with narrow windows to protect against heat and cold.



Non non, oui oui!

Can you remember old Noddy and Big Ears?

Well, guess what the translation of Noddy is in French – it's Oui Oui! Kind of makes sense doesn't it as we do nod our heads when we say 'oui'

His mate Big Ears, on the other hand, has been lost in translation somewhere as his French counterpart is called Potiron, meaning pumpkin!

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Although its origins are a little hazy, many believe that the tradition of April Fool's Day was born in France in the 16th century. In 1562, Pope Gregory changed the calendar from the Julian calendar, on which New Year started on April 1st, to the present day Gregorian calendar.

When King Charles IX toured his realm, he discovered that the date of New Year celebrations varied depending on the department. In 1564, he signed the 'Edict of Roussillon', declaring



January 1st as the official first day of the New Year throughout France.

Not everyone was happy about this and some continued to celebrate New Year on the 1st April. Those who had adapted called the others *Poisson d'Avril* (April fish) and played tricks on them, maybe because April fish are young and therefore easily caught!

The Road to Freedom.

There were several well-organised escape lines into Spain in operation throughout WW2.

The Chemin de la Liberte, a 50-mile trek, sets off over the Massif de Couserans in Ariège, one of the most difficult and treacherous escape routes over the Pyrenees, to Esterrri d'Aneuset in northern Spain. A high mountain route, chosen to avoid all official checkpoints and German patrols, extreme cold, perilous ledges and steep ravines had to be negotiated, often in pitch black darkness.

Despite the hardship, according to official statistics, there were 33,000 successful escapes across the Pyrenean chain.



Famous Frenchmen

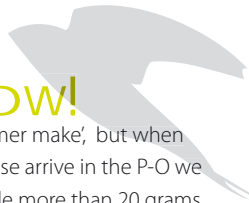
French journalist and fiction writer Gaston Louis Alfred Leroux (1868 - 1927) is best known for writing the novel 'The Phantom of the Opera' (*Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*), first published in 1909.

As a journalist, he was involved in an investigation into the Paris Opera House, whose basement contained a prison cell. Another of his articles described the 1896 events surrounding the death of a visitor to the Opera House when one of the chandeliers fell. All this provided material for the great novel to come, which did not in fact become popular until the early twenties when it was made into a silent film version with Lon Chaney in the lead.



Say ahhh.... but don't swallow!

Aristotle said 'One swallow does not a summer make', but when these harbingers of spring and summer promise arrive in the P-O we know for sure that winter is over. Weighing little more than 20 grams with brains no bigger than a pea, these cute little chaps accomplish the most amazing feats of navigation, flying thousands of miles using the sun, stars and familiar landscapes. If they nest in your porch, be willing to wade through bird poo, dried mud, bits of stick and occasional flying missiles – and expect them back every year.



Events festival traditions....

School holidays
for our region

Half Term Ends 14th March
Easter holidays 23rd April to
9th May 2011

BANK HOLIDAYS

April 25th: Easter Monday (Lundi de Pâques).
1st May: May Day (La Fête du Travail)
8th May: La Fête de la Victoire 1945 (WW2 Victory)

MARCH

It's carnival time!.....

February and March see carnivals all over the P-O – singing, dancing, eating and drinking, live music, fancy dress, parades and fireworks. Watch out for the setting alight of the straw-filled Carnival king, symbol of infertility, sins, and bad luck, an important character in the traditions of modern carnival, who is burned in a spectacular ritual at the end of the festivities to ward off evil spirits.

Saturday 5th March

Fête de l'Huitre

Le Barcarès

Oyster fans will love this evening devoted to music, dance and oysters! And who knows – it might really improve your love life! More info: [04 68 86 16 56](tel:0468861656)

Saturday 19th March

Launch of l'année Kipling'

Vernet

One hundred years ago, Rudyard Kipling and his wife arrived in Vernet-les-Bains... A century later, the town pays homage to the famous author with a season of exhibitions, talks, stories, music... More info: [04 68 05 55 35](tel:0468055535).

Sunday 20th March

Rubber duck race Torreilles

Part of the carnival celebrations, 400 numbered rubber ducks are set loose on a unsuspecting public, in this very original race where you bet on a winner!

Thursday 24th March

Théâtre Municipal, Perpignan

'Por instantes de felicidade'
Contemporary dance from Brazil with Quasar www.theatredelarchipel.org

Canigou & Kipling

"I came here in search of nothing more than a little sunshine. But I found Canigou, whom I discovered to be a magician among mountains, and I submitted myself to his power... I watch him with wonder and delight. Nothing that he could do or give birth to would now surprise me, whether I met Don Quixote himself riding in from the Spanish side, or all the chivalry of ancient France watering their horses at his streams, or saw (which each twilight seems quite possible) gnomes and kobolds swarming out of the mines and tunnels of his flanks."

Rudyard Kipling

A selection of carnivals around the region...

Céret - Sat 12th - Sun 13th and Sat 19th - Sun 20th March

Vernet - Friday 18th March

Saint-Laurent-de-Cerdans - Sun 6th March & Bear Festival

Elne - 13th March

Argelès - Sat 5th March (eve)

Port Vendres - 6th March

Visit our site at

www.anglophone-direct.com
for more Carnivals



Don't forget to turn your clocks forward
- Sun March 27th 2011

APRIL

The Procession de la Sanch

Perpignan - Friday 22nd April

The brotherhood of "La Sanch" (pron sank, meaning blood) was founded in 1416 by Vincent Ferrier at the church of St Jacques in Perpignan, its mission to assist and accompany the condemned to their execution.

Happily, the original purpose no longer applies today, but the solemn, silent and theatrical hooded Procession de la Sanch still takes place every Vendredi Saint, (Good Friday), opening célébrations for Easter Holy week.

Long black robed figures march slowly through the streets of Perpignan to the sinister chant of "Miserere des pendus" and the beat of black veiled tambourines

At the head of the parade walks the 'Regidor', red hooded pace setter, intermittently ringing a bronze bell Over the centuries the Sanch has been

New Wine on the market for the elderly

On April 1st 2011, the producers of Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio will unveil a new wine, the product of a new hybrid grape that acts as an anti-diuretic. It is expected to reduce the number of trips to the loo during the night. The new wine will be marketed as... **PINOT MORE**



forbidden several times. It has always survived.

Processions also take place in....

Collioure (evening)

Arles-sur-Tech (evening)

Bouleternère (21st - evening)

Ille-sur-Têt (Regina 24th)

Céret (24th)

Tue 5th April

Jazz club Palais des Congrès, Perpignan

vocalist Sylvia Howard sings traditional jazz and blues.

Sat 16th - Sun 17th

Flower show Chateau Valmy, Argelès

Exhibitions and sales of plants and flowers, advice, mini farm, varied Entertainment...

More info Tel. **04 68 81 15 85**

Saturday 16th April

Perpignan cathedral

Blessing and distribution to the public of Catalan chocolate. Yummy!

Sun 17th April

Olive oil festival Sorède

Mon 18th April

Mémoires de Kipling

Vernet les Bains, casino

Violin, piano and soprano vocals play tunes inspired by Kipling's poetry.

Thursday 21st April

The Love Beatles

Centre Culturel, Peyrestortes

If you missed seeing the Beatles live in the '60s, don't miss this Beatles tribute band

Sun 24th - Mon 25th

Fête Américaine - Argelès

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

continued...



for detailed information visit:-
www.anglophone-direct.com

Events festival traditions....

APRIL ...continued

Friday 23rd April

Festival of Sant Jordi, the book & the rose
Literary events take place on the nearest weekend

"A rose for love and a book forever."

The rose: According to the legend, when Sant Jordi, Patron saint of Catalonia, killed the dragon, roses grew from the ground where its blood had been shed.

The book: April 23rd is the anniversary of the death of two great writers, CERVANTES (Don Quixote) and SHAKESPEARE, so

it was not by coincidence that UNESCO declared this date the International Day of the Book, a day to read, honour and offer books to friends and loved ones.

23rd - 24th April

Fête des Géants & Goigs Villefranche de Conflent

Minstrels play Catalan musical instruments (gralles, flaviol and tambourin), and giants parade through the Streets.... A fun fairy tale day.

23rd - 24th April

The Mondial du Vent 2011

La Franqui, Leucate. All the extreme sports meet up for funboard, kitesurf, sail-carting, kite flying..... with a bit of help from the Tramontane of course

Sun 24th - Mon 25th

Easter egg train from Rivesaltes to Axat.

Egg hunt in the forests & picnic on giant omelette. www.tpcf.com

Vide Greniers

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

MAY

The Spring Festival of the Aspres

7th May - 4th June

Once again this festival promises to be colourful, varied and entertaining.

The jazz concerts will take place in local wine domains and small village churches and are a brilliant way of exploring and enjoying the Aspres and sampling the delicious wines produced by the local producers.

On May 7th, at Chateau Planeres, St Jean Lasseille, the Virginie Teychene Quartet

promises to get the Festival off to a lively start. American, Brazilian and French jazz classics are interspersed with original compositions. Setting, wine, and ambiance combine to provide a warm welcome.

Eight concerts follow.

See the Angophone-Direct Newsletter for full details.

A passport ticket for five concerts is only 50 euros, Further information from [04 68 53 10 00](tel:0468531000) or [06 22 34 22 81](tel:0622342281).



MAY

Mayday (May 1st) Fête du Muguet & Fête du Travail

Give your loved ones lily-of-the-valley (Muguet) on May 1st, to wish them luck and happiness as spring arrives. As decreed by King Charles IX of France, who offered lily-of-the-valley to all the ladies of his court on May 1st, 1561, this is the one day that anyone in France can legally sell flowers.

May 1st is also the Fête du Travail, historically a day of parades, protests and parties for workers to demonstrate or celebrate battles and causes that union members have fought and won in years gone by.



Sunday 1st May

Fête du thym et de Forçà Réal **Corneilla la Rivière**

Vide grenier, street entertainment, sardanes, Castellars....

4th to 22nd May

Over the border...Girona **Temps de Flors**

The whole of Girona covers itself in Flowers. Parks and gardens offer free admission though monument sites may charge.

Sunday 8th

FETE DE LA VICTOIRE 1945 **Canet centre and seafont**

Military vehicles, tanks, re-creation of a 40s style US army camp. Live band playing Glenn Miller classics

Sunday 8th May

Carnival procession **Saint Cyprien port**

Saturday 14th

La Nuit des Musées **Around the region**

Free evening at Regional museums . www.nuitdesmusees.culture.fr/

Concert "Che Tango" **Amphithéâtre du Lycée** **Charles, Prades**

Vocals, guitar, and bandonéon (type of concertina) for tango lovers 04 68 9611 35

Sunday 15th

Festival de la moto Canet
Music from « Rock Country » & motor bike 'brocante'

Sat 28th - Sun 29th

Cherry festival and Festival **des Bandas Céret**

A colourful weekend of all things cherry, including cherry stone spitting and stoning competition, music, dancing and entertainment in the streets.

Sunday 29th May

Les rencontres **culturelles de Riquer** **Chapelle du mas** **Riquer, Catllar**

Three tenors from the opera Bastille
More info: 06 15 43 50 60

Sunday 29th May

French Mother's Day



for detailed information visit:-
www.anglophone-direct.com

Restaurant

La Table de Cuisine St André

Restaurant Review

*John Frazer-Robinson,
visits this truly outstanding
restaurant in the village
of St André in the Albères*



I believe the art of a great chef is not just to cook well but also to be inventive with the mixture of flavours and textures in their dishes. In a Michelin starred establishment that's an expectation. La Table de Cuisine, charming little restaurant in St André, is a much more modest establishment but in my opinion it equals these high standards for its combination of price and quality.

The only downside is that in the summer it doesn't have anywhere to sit outside.

My latest visit was in December. A party of four, our starters consisted of two Foie Gras, one wild mushrooms between a puff pastry top and bottom and a pumpkin soup. All declared excellent!!

Up came the mains – three of us opting for the wild boar and one for the fish choice. The three sanglier were both generous and gorgeous. A rich sauce accompanied it and, with chestnuts included, it was an absolute delight. Served on a mound of mashed potatoes with vegetables, two of which none of us could positively identify but all of which went superbly with the meat and its sauce. Jane's fish had a risotto on the side which was absolutely stunning and unlike any risotto any of us had ever tried before.

Surprisingly we all managed a dessert. These were really creatively prepared. Mine was the least exciting, a hardish cheese with almost a marmalade-style chutney and walnuts, whilst the others enjoyed a sumptuous range of gateaux,

chocolate creations and Robbie's even included a cup of coffee on his plate!

This resto is small, all the food is prepared to order, and favours local producers and suppliers. Their wine list is carefully selected – mostly local – and biased towards the bio and natural wines.

There is a good value lunchtime 'menu' at 14€ and evening 'menus' start at 20€. All food is cooked and served by amiable owners Martine and Laurent Bronzzetti, so you may have to be a little patient..... but it will be well worth the wait.

In view of the size I'd recommend a reservation phone call. But be assured this is one not to miss!

Restaurant La Table de Cuisine,

8a Rue de Taxo,
66690 St André

Tel: 04 68 95 42 06

www.latabledecuisine.com



Cherry clafoutis

Traditionally made with the first sweet cherries of the season, and originating in the Limousin region, the cherries in a clafoutis are left unpitted to release their delicate almond flavour as they bake. Of course, if you don't want to risk losing your crowns, pitting might be a better solution!

- 100g/3½oz plain flour
 - 2 eggs lightly beaten
 - 100g/3½oz sugar
 - 250ml / 8 fl oz milk
 - 300g / 11 oz cherries (stoned or not)
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas Mark 6 and grease a cake tin
 2. Sift flour into bowl, and add sugar, milk and eggs. Mix well into a smooth, thick batter.
 3. Pour batter into cake tin and sprinkle over the cherries.
 4. Bake for 40 minutes.
 5. Dust with powdered sugar.

Delicious both hot and cold

TIP Clafoutis becomes soggy when refrigerated. Best to eat it all at once!



Health is just a bowl of cherries

Cherries get their bright red colour from '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.

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!!!

The excuse we all needed ladies!!

It seems that middle-aged women who drink a couple of glasses of wine every day may potentially enjoy a 'healthier old age' and a reduced risk of stroke, than women who only drink occasionally!

A study led by by Dr Qi Sun of Harvard University in Boston into the drinking habits of more than fourteen thousand women, who lived at least to seventy, revealed that those who partook of one or two glasses of wine most days in middle age had a 28 per cent better chance of 'successfully surviving' to old age, compared with non-drinkers or occasional binge drinkers. The study also revealed that this level of drinking was linked to a lower risk of stroke, as alcohol may help the body metabolise glucose more efficiently as well as reducing the risk of blood clots.

Cheers ladies! (hic)



The Guinness bar – Pure Genius!

Take a sprinkling of Ireland, a pinch of Catalonia, add a dash of southern France, mix them all together... et voilà! You're in O'Shannon's bar, a stone's throw away from the Castillet in the centre of Perpignan, enjoying the craic!

If you're just looking for great music (Beatles, Simply Red, Nickleback...), oodles of atmosphere and a pint of two of draught Guinness, Kilkenny or Grimbergen Rouge and Blonde, this traditional Irish pub awaits with cold beer and a warm welcome.

But if you're a sports fan, looking for back slapping buddies to shout the wins and weep the losses, a giant screen taking up half the wall at O'Shannons makes this pub THE Perpignan venue for watching all the main rugby, football and cricket



matches live. And if your dream team isn't leaping around the screen when you get there, just ask!

Perpignan born brothers Vincent and Emmanuel are your genial, english speaking hosts. These two cute Catalans with ready smiles and the gift of the gab took over the bar in October 2010 and are already planning great things for the future.

Remember the Guinness slogan "Good things come to those who wait"? Don't wait too long to pay the boys a visit. Sláinte!



O'SHANNON

The Guinness Bar in the heart of Perpignan

A warm welcome awaits

*Come and watch all the major
sporting events on our big screen
– rugby, football, cricket ...*

17 59



GUINNESS
DRAUGHT

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Double & Whipping Cream

Crème...

- fraîche - sour cream
- chantilly - sweetened whipped cream.
- fleurette - liquid heavy cream.
- fouettée - whipping cream.
- légère - light
- anglaise - custard.
 - brulée - custard with caramelised sugar crust

Cherry trivia

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!!)

There is no direct equivalent in France for double cream. Some 'crème fraîche' can be a decent substitute but you can't whip it. The 'souring' agent added varies from one cream to another so it is worth trying different ones until you find the right one to suit your taste.

For whipping, look out for Fleurette and the cardboard carton creams such as Elle et Vire. Choose 'épaisse' or 'entière' with a fat content of at least 30% for a consistency that resembles double cream. UHT cream (entière) will also whip but takes longer than English double.

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FIRE IN THE TROUSERS!

I watched, fascinated, as a French couple departed Cooper's English epicerie in Argeles sur Mer, with excited grins on their faces and a bag full of British bacon, gammon and sausages. Although I can't find a French language equivalent, I'm fairly sure that they were heading home for a 'fry up'!

Freezers and fridges with fresh and frozen food and relatively low prices give Coopers the edge over the big impersonal supermarkets offering limited English fare. It struck me that Coopers is 'the corner shop' that we should all support if we don't eventually want to see an end to small businesses in this region.

Malcolm himself would probably not be standing behind the counter if he hadn't been lucky enough to have fire in his trousers. On a solitary 'middle-age-crisis' trip around Europe, a lovely lady looking for a light asked him "Do you have fire in your trousers for me?" Middle age crisis over! Malcolm and Stéphanie now live happily ever after in Laroque, and the opening of Cooper's epicerie in Argeles in 2010 was the icing on the cake

Meet new friends and catch up with old ones any Wednesday between 4pm and 7pm when Malcolm invites you for complimentary apero, wine tastings and loads of other possibilities!

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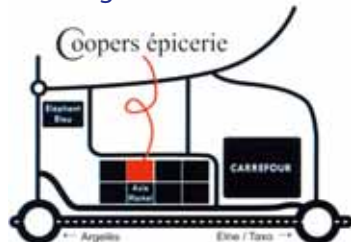
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Travel Insurance UK v France... ..No contest!

My Papa, a fit and sprightly gentleman in his late eighties, has struggled for the past ten years or more to find himself decent travel insurance in the UK.

When he finally found a company that was prepared to insure him at his age, the hoops he had to jump through, questions he had to answer, proofs of good health and past illnesses he had to provide, and finally the astronomical premium he had to pay, very nearly put him off travelling at all. Hopefully, he now has a good, though costly insurance company escape routes in it to empty a prison.

It came as a surprise

therefore to find that in France, there is NO age limit or medical history required to take out travel insurance, you are NOT penalised if you have the misfortune to have suffered from a chronic or serious illness, as in the UK, or told that the policy will not pay out on claims related to a past illness.

Policy prices seem so much more reasonable

Perles des assurances (true insurance statements)

- J'ai été victime d'un accident de travail alors que je faisais la sieste sous un pommier.
- Je conduisais depuis 40 ans lorsque je me suis endormi au volant.
- C'était jour de verglas. Je circulais très lentement dans ma voiture, quand le piéton m'a doublé à toute vitesse, par la droite et sur les fesses.

(pommier - apple tree volant - steering wheel
verglas- black ice circuler - to drive doubler - to overtake
sur les fesses - on his bottom)

too. A worldwide annual family policy for Mum, Dad and as many children as you care to admit to, appears to cost as little as 85€ tout compris!

And did you know too that limited travel insurance is already included in your home insurance policy? Check it out with your agent, it could well save you a few quid.



USEFUL VOCAB

Une assurance voyage = travel insurance

Une déclaration de sinistre = an insurance claim

Un courtier (d'assurances) (insurance broker)

Un agent d'assurance = insurance agent

Un/une assure(e) policy holder

Une franchise excess

Une catastrophe naturelle natural disaster

Un cas de force majeure unforeseen act of nature

Bonus-malus no claims bonus

Attestation d'assurance proof of insurance



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More than Maillol's Muse

Born in Kishinev, in what is now Moldova, in 1919, the Jewish Dina Vierny and her family moved to France where young Dina became model, muse and platonic companion to artist Maillol, from the mid-1930s. She remained with him until his death in a car accident in Banyuls in 1944.

After his death, she continued to promote his work, eventually creating the famous Musée Maillol in Paris.

She also posed for Matisse, Dufy and Bonnard

However, there was more to Miss Vierny than artist's model. Based at Maillol's home in Banyuls, and unknown to Maillol, she helped to smuggle refugees into Spain, easily identifiable from a distance by her trademark red dress, commemorated by Maillol in

one of his last paintings. When Maillol found out about her nocturnal activities, he showed her shortcuts and smugglers' routes known only to natives of the region, and even offered his studio at Puig del Mas as a safe house.

Michael Kaufman, deputy foreign editor at The New York Times said "People trying to escape the Germans were told to take the train to Banyuls and go to the station cafe, where they would find a young

woman in a red dress. She would lead them to a studio where they could sleep, and the next day they would walk a couple of miles into Spain. She saved the life of my father." Sadly, her own father died in Auschwitz.

Arrested by the Gestapo, she was released after six months when Maillol intervened by appealing to Arno Breker, Hitler's favourite sculptor.

She died in 2009, aged 89.

*Au musée, un monsieur regarde un tableau
« Ah ! Il est moche » dit-il.
« Mais c'est du Picasso » lui dit le guide.
Dans une autre salle, le monsieur dit :
« Ah ça aussi c'est moche. »
« Ah ça, Monsieur ? C'est un miroir!!!! »
tableau – painting, moche – ugly*





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Chambres d'Hôtes & Gite



on the Trail of the Laughing Elephant.

Who would have thought that a Perpignan baker and his son would create a vast industrial fortune from ready cut scraps of paper? Until Jean Bardou and his son Joseph invented ready to roll cigarette papers in neat little packets, smokers had to tear their own by hand from large sheets.

In the evening, in the back of the bakers shop, the family put together the packets of "hygienic" cigarette papers. At first they were sold in local pharmacies, but so great was their success, that, on the death of Jean Bardou, Pierre, the younger son, built "l'Hotel de l'Industrie du Papier a Cigarette" in Rue St Saver, a combined house and factory. He took as his logo the initials of his father, between which he imposed the lozenge shaped symbol of Perpignan. Immediately read as JOB, he incorporated the logo into his family name that became forever Bardou-Job.

Enter the Elephant

Enter the laughing elephant.

His elder brother, Joseph, had struck out on his own. The Orient was all the rage, Egypt in particular. For his trademark, he chose the name "le Nil" and for his logo, a rampant laughing elephant. The railway station was becoming a new and fast-developing part of Perpignan and it was there that he chose the site for his factory. Now, if you walk the Avenue General de Gaulle from the station, at the end of the first block on your left, a private road is closed off by an iron grill. The large mansion with an imposing façade next to it, is the birthplace of the laughing elephant.

The two brothers

remained close, their cigarette papers business flourished. Both took good care of their "paperetes". In order to preserve their eyesight, Joseph installed the first ever neon electrical lights in his factory while Pierre created a beautiful glass



From 23 June to 09 October 2011 there will be an exhibition of the originals of all the Bardou-Job publicity posters from the turn of the last century at the Musée Rigaud in Perpignan. . . Not to be missed!"



ceilinged workshop in his Hotel de l'Industrie du Papier a Cigarette. They used up and coming artists to design their publicity posters. They dominated the economic life of Perpignan, their descendants were to influence the city's political life as well.

Eugene, Joseph's son, became the Mayor of Perpignan from 1894 – 1896. He also had an unusual chateau built just outside Elne. In the form of a Greek cross, topped by a glass cupola, it became known as Chateau d'en Bardou and many Bardou/Bardou-Job family parties were held there.

The Swiss connection.

The vegetable farmers who bought it upon Eugene's death rented it to Elizabeth Eidenbenz from 1939 – 1944. She was the

inspired and inspirational Swiss girl who, with her team of young nurses, rescued pregnant women from the Retirada camps of Argeles, Perpignan and Rivesaltes and saved the lives of almost 600 babies.

The "Swiss Maternity of Elne" in Chateau d'en Bardou can be visited every day from 15h – 19h and 14h – 18h.. It is closed from

20th December – 9th January.

A picture of the laughing elephant is to be found on the wall that backs onto the reception area. The rest of the building is dedicated to Elizabeth Eidenbenz and the memory of the humanitarian miracle she performed within its walls.

More of the Bardou Job family in the next edition of PO Life.





The Hills are alive of Marmottes...

The perfect spring day out for lovers of nature, wild flowers and very fresh air is to be had in the Nature Reserve of the Valley of Eyne. Take the N116 to Mont Louis and follow signs to Saillagousse turning off to Eyne. Drive straight through the village till you come to a well marked parking place with a small hut and map of walks.

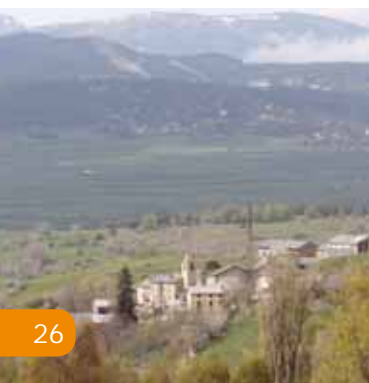
As you set off up the valley all you can hear is the rushing, tumbling water of the mountain stream. Swollen with melting snow, it hurtles through banks laden with spring flowers towards meadows thick with wild narcissi. Walk through the pine trees and, as you emerge from the forest, the path widens and ancient landslides of steep granite scree edge the beginning of the high pastures. Brilliantly golden kingcups splash deep yellow along tiny trickling tributaries. The river now runs close to the path. Sprouting from a clump of earth on the bank

and entirely circled by swirling water, a tuft of campanulas cascades sky blue bells beneath a miniature pine tree.

Flowers will draw you further and further up the valley. The dazzling blue of gentians, the pure beauty of pale primrose alpine anemones, bright yellow adonis, small wild crocus, scented daphne, all lead you on.

But flowers are not all:

Keep your eyes peeled and you may be lucky enough to see marmottes. Hibernating has finished and breeding begun. About the size of a badger, bristly



with the sound

A scenic walk along the Eyne Vallev

brown and beige fur, nose in the air, neat, round ears, little rodent teeth and bright eyes, sentinel marmottes are posted to warn of intruders.

Sometimes you may also see moufflon, their heads heavy with huge curled horns. Ancient forerunners of our domestic sheep, mouflon were domesticated in the Middle East six to seven thousand years ago and were introduced into the P.-O. in the 50's and 60's from Corsica.

Isards, the Pyrenean version of the Alpine chamois, with their smart, short pointed horns above striped faces, may also be cropping the first tender shoots of the spring grass.

When you reach the waterfall, patches of snow may still appear between the boulders and the going gets steeper. Ahead are

the mountains of the Spanish border. Time to turn back.

Back in London visitors flood into the Chelsea Flower Show and a very wonderful show it is too. In the Valley of Eyne you can share a myriad of water features and a profusion of natural spring flowers with a few marmottes, a herd of shy isards and a scattering of moufflon and feel very privileged and extremely lucky.

The walk can be as long as you chose to make it but allow a couple of hours each way. It is not difficult and the picnicking possibilities are unlimited.

For information on the transhumance and many other guided balades, some involving dolmen and menhirs, contact the Maison de la Vallée d'Eyne.

[04 6804 9705](tel:0468049705)



Out for the day...

The legacy of the Kings of Mallorca.

A Palace in Perpignan and a Castle in Collioure



An entire quarter of the old town in Perpignan is taken up by the Palais des Rois de Majorque (04 68 34 48 29). The entrance today is as circuitous as when it was designed in the 13th century to keep out attacking armies. Flights of steps zig zag within sheer redbrick ramparts until, eventually, the elegant gardens and substantial castle are reached. A superb palace, in the heart of the city. From the impressive Tour de l’Hommage the commanding view over mountain, plain, city and sea is a great introduction to the city. The surrounding convents, churches and the cathedral bear witness to the religious fervour of the Kings of Mallorca, the green parks and gardens cool and peaceful between the warm red bricks of the ancient buildings.

The angles of the walls and windows of the Palace are cut from the pink, blue, red and white marbles of the Pyrenees Orientales. The vast two story arcaded courtyard, the frescoed and tiled royal chapel and the great Gothic Hall display a strong Spanish Moorish influence. A tour of the two chapels, the Royal apartments and grand halls that surround the central courtyard gives an insight into the palace

life as it must have been lived in medieval times.

The Kings of Mallorca

Jaume II, 1243 – 1311, of Mallorca, inherited his kingdom from Jaume I, James the Conqueror, King of Aragon, Count of Barcelona, Lord of Montpellier. (His brother got Aragon. This was to cause trouble in years to come.)

He was known, justifiably,

as James the Builder. He built the Chateau Royal in his port of Collioure as well as fourteen new towns in Mallorca and two in Minorca. He began the Cathedral in Palma, renovated the Almudaina Palace and, on a neighbouring hill, built the palace of Beliver where he was to die.

In Perpignan, his new castle was designed as a suitable home for the Royal Family, of a style



to befit the Governor and King of the Kingdom of Mallorca and large enough to contain the court and impress visiting dignitaries. He chose the Puig del Rey, a hill within the city walls and dominating the countryside. It was the forerunner of many grand fortress palaces of the XIV century.

He supported the new religious orders and built convents and churches of the same traditional red brick and river stones as his palace. He made peace with the Andalusia Emirs and Magrebian rulers and with the Kings of Naples and Sicily. He blended Islamic inscriptions with Catholic decorations in his Royal Chapel.

A spot of brotherly bother...

In 1285, his brother Pierre III of Aragon forced his way into the town and, with 300 armed men, approached the still to be finished Palace. He wanted his younger brother's share of their inheritance. Pretending to be ill, Jaume took to his room. He summoned Ramon Pau, his architect. "Any secret passages out of here?"

Well no, but a handy drain from the kitchens passed under a corner of the royal bedchamber, leading to the ramparts and out into a wood. As Pierre slept Jaume crawled into the drain and escaped. When Pierre broke into his brother's room in the morning all he found was Jaume's pregnant wife. The King

of Mallorca was safely in his castle at Laroque des Alberes. Isolated in hostile territory, Pierre left Perpignan in a hurry.

Despite the brotherly conflict it was a period of peace and prosperity for Perpignan. Politics, commerce, religion, art all flourished. Textiles and leather were particularly successful.

He was succeeded by King Sanç (1277-1324). His was a harmonious reign. Perpignan continued to prosper. Sanç authorised the consuls of Perpignan to establish the first Loge de Mer. He released the imprisoned Knights Templar of Roussillon rather than burning them, as was their fate in the rest of France. He died aged 47, just after laying the first stone of the

Out for the day...



Gardens grew on the ramparts and in 1958 the Palais des Rois de Mallorca became the property of the department of the Pyrenees Orientales. On summer evenings concerts are often held in the gardens and the courtyard. Check the programme with the Tourist Office in the Palmarium or Palais des Congrès: **04 68 66 30 30**

new Cathedral St Jean

His nephew Jaume III (1315 – 1349) was the third and last King of Mallorca. Not a diplomat, he was killed in battle soon after selling Montpellier to the king of France.

During his reign however, musicians peopled the palace and exotic animals roamed the moat. Wolves, bears and lions for example... Later, in 1393, King Pierre of Aragon, upset by the fall in the ostrich population, forbade their hunting by the palace guardians.

Despite these diversions the Aragonese kings were finding

the palace outmoded. The last Royal visitors were Ferdinand II and Isabelle of Castille in 1493. French troops had been in occupation from 1462 – 1493 during which time Perpignan suffered many sieges. A Citadelle was begun round the Palais Royal, Ferdinand added an arsenal and Charles Quint started a major reinforcement programme at the beginning of the 16th century. After the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, Vauban, Louis XIV's military architect, planned further fortifications but, on the whole, Perpignan remained far from conflict.

Meanwhile, in Collioure...

On Roman remains first mentioned in 673, that were in turn built on Visigoth remains, King James the Builder built the Chateau Royal at the same time as his Palais Royal in Perpignan. You cannot miss it. It is the very heart of Collioure, imposing and grand, its walls plunging into the sea.

It is sometimes inaccurately known as the Chateau des Templiers. Not really surprising as their influence in the region was great and Collioure was their port. As the maritime power and strength of the Kingdom of



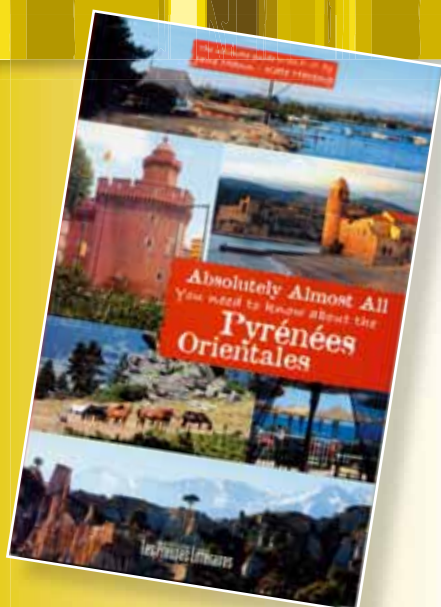
Aragon increased, Collioure remained an important port and the Chateau Royal, the Summer Palace, was occupied by the Aragonaise Royal family until 1642 when the French took up residence.

The medieval village of Collioure was grouped around the Chateau. With the Treaty of the Pyrenees and under the orders of Louis XIV, Vauban made a few alterations to the fortifications, the most drastic of which involved razing to the ground a large amount of the existing town and obliging the townsfolk to rebuild further north, where the town is today. The fortunes of the Chateau followed the fortunes of Collioure. It was occupied by the Spanish in 1793 only to be retaken by the French under Dugommier in 1794, since when it has remained French.

It was classified an historical monument in 1922 and used as a prison in 1939, the first concentration camp for the refugees from the Spanish civil war. Germans took up residence during the Occupation and it was still a sad place at the end of the war.

Now, owned by the General Council of the Pyrenees Orientales, shows and exhibitions are held within its ancient walls, music, dancing and festivals. Floodlights and fireworks light up the castle keep, and, every All Saints weekend Antique dealers from Perpignan and all over the world display their wares in every nook and cranny of the castle.

It can be visited daily, the views from the ramparts are splendid and exhibitions provide a living record of Collioure's rich military and maritime history.



Absolutely Almost All you need to know about the Pyrénées Orientales

Jane and Kate's guidebook, lavishly illustrated with its lively blend of information and essential facts is a must have for visitors and residents alike. If you have not already got your copy you can find it in the Maisons de la Presse in Prats de Mollo, Rivesaltes, Villefranche de Conflent, Laroque les Albères, Cerbère, Canet, Céret, Collioure, Banyuls, Perpignan, Argelès, Port-Vendres, Font Romeu, and Les Angles, Thuir or at the Aéroport de Rivesaltes, or order online from the FNAC : www.fnac.com



Out for the day...



BIODIVERSARIUM

Biological diversity in Banyuls

A day is never long enough for a visit to Banyuls sur Mer. You can take the tourist train for a visit to the Chapelle de la Salette ending with a tasting at the impressive Cave de Templiers. You can learn to sail, windsurf, dive or kayak, you can relax in one of the many cafés along the pretty little horseshoe shaped bay, enjoy local produce in street markets, and music in Place Reig. And now, to add to all the other attractions, the “Jardin Méditerranéen” will open on April 15th.

A combined “Biodiversarium” ticket allows you to visit both the garden hanging from the cliffs above the valley of the Baillaury and the fascinating Aquarium in the Laboratoire Arago. Both

sites offer opportunities for discovering, observing and learning about the spectacularly diverse natural world that surrounds Banyuls and forms la Cote Vermeille.

The Mediterranean Garden, a park of three hectares overlooking the vine-covered mountains leading up to the Col de Banyuls, reflects the richness and variety of plants that survive





© oob

JARDIN
MÉDITERRANÉEN
du Mas de la Serre

and flourish in a Mediterranean climate. The many species, both local and from zones with similar climates such as California, Australia, South Africa, are thriving in the sheltered, south facing garden. You may notice the fruits of a rare “Oranger des Osages” lying on the ground like so many petanque balls. American Indians extract their dye to tattoo their faces and

colour their clothes. They use the wood for making bows for their arrows.

There are picnic spots, sunny tables with spectacular views. Guided visits are available or you can wander at will and enjoy the peaceful beauty and, if you are very lucky, you may spot a tiny little musaregne, a minute shrew that lives in the cracks in the walls. There is an ant

chalet where the activity inside an theap can be observed. Throughout the year lectures, and workshops are available for all ages to enjoy in conjunction with the Aquarium. Whether your preference is to plunge yourself in the sub-marine world or to discover the surface richness of the Alberes mountainsides, the Biodiversarium ticket guarantees a fascinating insight into both



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Out for the day...



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facets of Banyuls' natural wealth.

Check www.biodiversarium.fr
04 68 88 73 39 or call at the Tourist
Office for details.

Between your visits to the garden
and the aquarium you may like to
relax in the Jardin de St Sébastien,
a delightful restaurant/tapas bar at
10 Av du Fontaulé, on the opposite
side of the road from the yacht
harbour. Menus start at 15.90 euros
and the tapas from 5 euros. Grills
and fresh fish dishes are a speciality,
the garden is shady and there is the
possibility of tasting the wines of the
Domaine St Sébastien as well.

Gourmet visitors in search of a
different day out should enquire
about the "Circuit Découvert". It
starts at 11am with a boat trip round
the nature reserve to inspect the
vineyards of St Sébastien, back to
the bar for an hour's wine tasting
followed by a five course lunch with
different wines with each course.
Well worth the 95 euros per person.

The patron, M. Fulliquet, is full of



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Biodiversarium à Banyuls sur Mer 2 sites, 2 univers... Pour découvrir la nature autrement...

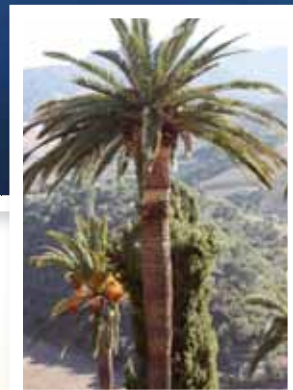
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www.biodiversarium.fr





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innovative ideas. He can arrange a "taxi-bateau" from Port Vendres, where he has Chez Pujol and the Restaurant le France, for an easy transfer. He is also planning another

wine tasting, garden restaurant in the old Dominican Convent in Collioure. PO Life will try to keep up with new developments as they happen...



Le Jardin de
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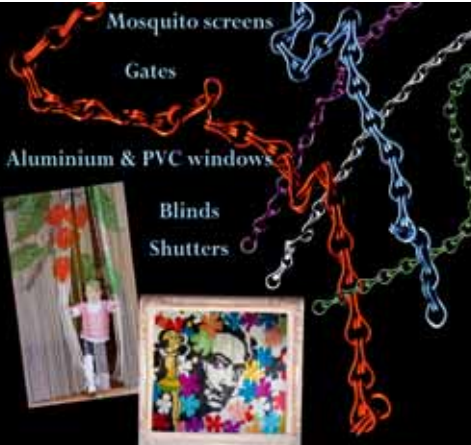
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Test your French

1 - J Pour janvier

Match up these words, all beginning with J, with their definitions.

durée de 24 heures	1	a jaune
de la hanche au pied	2	b jeudi
terrain où l'on cultive des plantes	3	c journal
couleur du soleil	4	d jeune
lance utilisé en athlétisme	5	e javelot
ensemble de feuilles imprimées	6	f jour
quatrième jour de la semaine	6	g jardin
pas vieux	8	h jument
la femelle du cheval	9	I jonquille
fleur jaune qui pousse au printem	10	J jambe

*Naughty,
naughty*

Some more choice expressions NOT to use with your grandmother!

Putain
equivalent to "oh cr-p!"

Je m'en fous
I don't give a damn

Connard!
rude way to call someone an idiot

Arrête tes conneries!
Cut the bullsh-t

J'ai pété un plomb
I freaked out /hit the roof

Bad joke disguised as history lesson

Qu'est qui s'est-il passé en 1111?
L'invasion des Huns.

(Remember we don't pronounce the h in French!)

Some cheesy pick up lines in French (to be taken with a 'pincée de sel' - if you get a slap, don't blame me 😊)

Est-ce que tu crois au coup de foudre?

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Ca t'a fait mal quand tu es tombée du ciel?

Did it hurt when you fell from Heaven?

Au voleur! Qui a pris toutes les étoiles du ciel pour les mettre dans tes yeux?

Stop thief! Who stole the stars from the sky and put them in your eyes?

Tu dois être fatigué(e) parce que tu as trotté dans ma tête toute la journée.

You must be tired. You've been running through my head all day.

Est-ce que tu embrasses les inconnus? Non?

Donc, je me présente.

Do you kiss strangers? No?

Then I'd better introduce myself.

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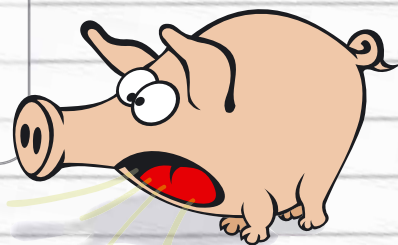
2 - Test your French slang!

mettre la sauce	1	a	to drink
poireauter	2	b	hair
une bagarre	3	c	policeman
picoler	4	d	sandwich
un casse-dalle	5	e	accelerate
les tifs	6	f	fight
un flic	7	g	dog
un clébart	8	h	nose
piéger	9	i	to hang about
le pif	10	j	to understand, get it

Question intellectuelle

Si on fait 'atchoum' quand on éternue avec la grippe normale, est ce qu'on fait 'atchoiiiink'" pour la grippe porcine ?

(atchoum – achoo éternue - sneeze
grippe porcine – swine flu)



What am I?

On me trouve dans une huître et on m'enfile pour faire des colliers, des bracelets...

Une perle

Tongue twister (Virelangue)

(Répétez trois fois)

Sam cherche ses chaussons
chez chère Suzanne

Language tip

In French, there is no single word for...

to lock = fermer à clé (close with a key)

drop = laisser tomber (let fall)

shallow = peu profond (not very deep)

Blague bête

Quelles sont les villes de France qui,
une fois réunies, donnent 21 ?

Troyes, Foix, Sète.

(7x3 = 21)



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Test your French

3 - Match up the useful expressions!

Arrête de tourner autour du pot	1	a	It's driving me mad!
Prenez votre temps	2	b	That's right, for sure
Bien sûr que non	3	c	Talk of the devil!
Ça me prend la tête!	4	d	That goes without saying
J'ai un petit creux	5	e	Take your time
C'est clair	6	f	I'm fed up
Bon débarras!	7	g	Stop beating about the bush
Quand on parle du loup	8	h	I'm a bit peckish
J'en ai marre!	9	i	Good riddance
Cela va de soi!	10	j	Of course not!

Useful grammar construction

Etre en train de faire quelque chose

to be in the middle of doing something

Je suis en train de manger

I'm in the middle of eating

Il est en train de parler

he's (in the middle of) talking

Deux oeufs dans une poêle:

Oeuf 1: Il fait chaud, hein?

Oeuf 2: Aaaaah!

Un oeuf qui parle!!!



4 Fill in the blanks, using the vocabulary below.

1. Ah non! Je suis en retard et ma voiture ne ¹..... pas.
2. On se connaît bien. On peut se ²..... ?
3. Éteins la clim! Tu ³..... l'électricité
4. Je ne sais pas s'il faut ⁴..... - la main ou faire la ⁵.....

a serrer b gaspilles c tutoyer d bise e démarre



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5 More 'faux amis'

Choose the correct definition

- Peter**
 - to fart
 - to stroke
- Action**
 - effort
 - stock or share
- Dalle**
 - Valley
 - Paving stone
- Devis**
 - quote
 - tool
- Marmite**
 - Cooking pot
 - Sandwich spread

Language tip

He told me to.... Il m'a dit de... + infinitive

He told me not to.... Il m'a dit de ne pas... + infinitive

Eg Il m'a dit de venir à 11h

He told me to come at 11h

Il m'a dit de ne pas arriver en retard

He told me not to arrive late

Useful expression

Un bouc émissaire

A scapegoat



Don't confuse.....

Un peu (de).. a little bit (of)..

Peu de..... not many, few of...

Elle mange un peu – she eats a little

Elle mange peu – she eats very little

Bon Conseil ! Traversez la rivière avant d'insulter le crocodile !



6 Trouvez la bonne définition

- périmé**
 - hors date
 - hors d'oeuvre
 - hors sujet
- épave**
 - relie le bras au tronc
 - un trottoir
 - un bateau échoué
- marteau**
 - un outil pour frapper
 - un vêtement contre le froid
 - venant de la planète Mars
- supprimer**
 - ajouter à la fin
 - faire disparaître
 - réduire le volume
- drapeau**
 - tissu qui porte les couleurs du pays
 - tissu que l'on met sur le lit
 - tissu pour se moucher



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

Test your french - answers

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

Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - Match up the synonyms

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Incredible | a. earlier |
| 2. Nice | b. display |
| 3. Weak | c. amazing |
| 4. Entertainment | d. diversion |
| 5. Sample | e. bright |
| 6. Clever | f. specimen |
| 7. Harvest | g. feeble |
| 8. Cheeky | h. insolent |
| 9. Before | i. pleasant |
| 10. Exhibition | j. yield |

Useful Expressions...

Sod's law

(Loi de l'emmerdement maximum!)

Quelques phrases argotiques, (dont certaines sont vulgaires) pour demander à quelqu'un de s'en aller. (A ne pas utiliser avec la grand-mère de votre voisin !)

Get lost!
Go to hell!
Beat it
Push off
Run along
Scram!
Shove off
Sod off

Ouch, that English humour!

What do you call a blind deer?

No idea!

(blind - aveugle deer - un dain)

...and another one

What do you call a blind deer with no legs?

Still no idea!

(Still - immobile)



2 - Trouvez la bonne réponse

1. How long have you lived here?

- a. For five years.
- b. Since five years.
- c. During five years.

1. Where shall we meet?

- a. Tomorrow.
- b. In front of the Castillet.
- c. Steak and chips.

2. Do you have any pets?

- a. Yes, one son of 18.
- b. Yes, I often get indigestion.
- c. Yes, one hamster and a budgie

3. What kind of work do you do?

- a. I work every day.
- b. I'm a teacher.
- c. I work in Perpignan

4. What do you usually drink?

- a. Tea of course! I'm British!
- b. With my friends.
- c. I'll have a pint please.

5. What time did you eat last night?

- a. At seven.
- b. boles de picolat!
- c. With my family.

3 - Testez votre 'English' idiomatique.

1. If something is expensive it costs.....

- a) an ugly shilling
- b) a pretty penny
- c) a pathetic pound

2. We make a bad situation worse by adding.....

- a) water to the wine
- b) petrol to the tank
- c) fuel to the fire

3. When two people are identical, they are like....

- a) two peas in a pod
- b) two drops of water
- c) two puppies in a basket

4. If somebody is described as being 'all bark and no bite', they are...

- a) quite harmless
- b) very hairy
- c) vegetarian

5. If you are 'at a loose end' you are....

- a) overweight
- b) bored
- c) a bad loser

6. If you are making an effort to be polite, you should...

- a) mind your Ps and Qs
- b) look after your A to Z
- c) recite the alphabet

7. If you are 'full of beans' you are...

- a) a good cook
- b) lively
- c) smelly

8. If somebody 'kicks the bucket' they.....

- a) die
- b) clean the house
- c) are careless

9. If you have a 'chip on your shoulder', you...

- a) have dandruff
- b) have a hangover
- c) are angry about something in your past

Virelangue

Répétez trois fois
Silly Stella
stays so slim

Bon Conseil

Viagra is now available in powder form to put in tea. It might not help your sexual performance but it will certainly stop your biscuit from going soft when dunked!

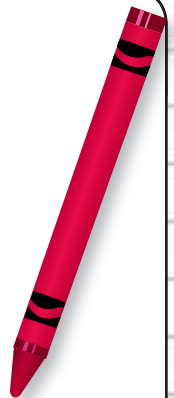
(available – disponible
dunk – tromper).



4 - J - is for January

Trouvez les définitions de ces mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec J

jacket	1	a	run slowly
jewel	2	b	a pullover
jog	3	c	to make you laugh
join	4	d	face bone which hold the teeth
joke	5	e	a precious stone
jug	6	f	a puzzle
jersey	7	g	tired after long journey
jaw	8	h	fasten together
jigsaw	9	l	a pot for liquids
jet lag	10	j	a short coat





Visiting the dentist.....

The tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth.

France is well known for its exceptional healthcare service, and used to be one of the leading lights in innovative dentistry. Today, dentists struggle with low prices imposed by the government for basic dental treatments and are often unable to afford cutting edge technology in their 'cabinets'.

We spoke to English speaking dentist, Docteur Jacques (dentists are known as 'Docteur') in Laroque des Albères who gave us the following information.

The good news...

The majority of dentists are "conventionné"

(charge standard fees). This means that a large percentage of the treatment that he or she offers will be carried out within the framework of the French health service and will be reimbursed at 70%, the rest being paid by yourself or your 'mutuelle' or top up insurance.

Most basic treatment is covered, including checkups, fillings, extractions, X rays, treatment for gum disease.....

And the not so good...

However, not all dental treatment is covered by your dentist, even if he or she is "conventionné".

False teeth, crowns and dental implants are only partially covered and will cost you a pretty penny without a very good top up policy.

For example, a porcelain crown may typically cost around 500 Euros of which the 'security social'



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Patient à son dentiste: "Docteur, j'ai les dents jaunes, que me conseillez-vous ?"

Dentiste: "Eh bien, vous devriez porter une chemise marron....!"

would reimburse 75 Euros. The rest would be up to you and, if you are lucky, your insurance.

Quote for dental treatment

Prices can vary enormously for these treatments, so it might be worth shopping around. Set rates for basic dental treatment are considered so low by dentists, that they feel obliged to charge an arm and a leg for the few treatments not dictated by the state.

You should always ask for a 'devis', a quote before signing up for non-reimbursable dental treatment.

The 'Little mouse'

French children are visited by 'la Petite souris' when they lose a tooth, rather than the tooth fairy.

Fortunately, children are offered a free dental check (BBD or bilan bucco- dentaire) every three years, between 6 and 18. A letter will be sent from the Caisse

USEFUL VOCAB

Useful phrases for visiting the dentist

Chez le dentiste
at/to the dentist

Cabinet dentaire
dental surgery

Checkup
une consultation initiale

tooth - la dent

upper/lower tooth -
la dent du haut/bas

wisdom tooth
la dent de sagesse

gums - les gencives

dentures - une prothèse
dentaire

to bleed - saigner

to pull out - arracher

to rinse - rincer

J'ai... I have
...un abcès - abscess

...une dent cassée
broken tooth

...une carie - a cavity

j'ai besoin d'...I need..
...une couronne - a crown

...un plombage (provisoire)
a (temporary) filling

...une piqûre - an injection

...un canal dentaire
root canal treatment

...un détartrage
teeth cleaning

j'ai mal aux dents - I've got
toothache

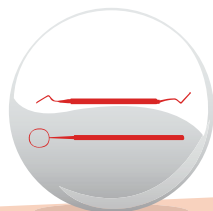
Ca fait mal - that hurts

Aiiiiiiii! - Owwww!

Primaire d'Assurance Maladie which you should take to your dentist.

British teeth

Interestingly, Docteur Jacques has noticed a marked decline in the previously high standards of British mouths over the past 20 years, since NHS dentists became so sparse on the ground.



P.O - La passion de l'ovalie

Bill Shankly, the legendary manager of Liverpool Football Club, once said that "football isn't a matter of life and death - it's more important than that".

In the PO, the passion for the oval ball, be it Rugby à quinze (union) or Rugby à treize (league) is just as great. In a department of less than 450,000 people there are two professional clubs: USAP (quinze) who play in France's Top 14, and the Catalan Dragons (treize) who play in the Super League along with thirteen clubs mainly from the North of England.

It is easy to know when the Dragons are playing at home - you can see hundreds of pale English supporters taking in the PO sunshine while quaffing huge amounts of beer, much to the delight of the grateful Perpignan bar owners. Playing away, of course, supporters from the sun-drenched south of France don't seem to understand the delight to be had from spending a wet winter weekend in Wigan,

Warrington or the like, and so there are more Catalans on the field than in the stands!

Of the two teams, USAP (l'Union Sportive



Arlequins Perpignanaï) has the bigger following, with the stadium Aimé-Giral (la cathédrale) holding nearly 15,000 spectators. Aimé-Giral is named in honour of the young fly-half of the immediately pre-First World War Perpignan team that won the French championship, and then went on to be largely wiped out in the war. To this day l'USAP

play in a light blue jersey - the same colour as that worn by the French soldiers in that conflict.

USAP play in the purely French Top 14, except when they get into the European Rugby (Heineken) Cup, when they might meet clubs from Italy or any of the British Isles. This year

they are doing well in the H-Cup and will play a quarter-final "at home" in Barcelona against Toulon.

Rugby union is a simple game with complex rules; a game that no-one, not the players, and certainly not the referee, fully understands. The fans, of course, understand everything, and cheer, hiss or boo accordingly. But for all the noise and excitement, there is never any crowd trouble at a match of rugby. Supporters of both teams mix freely in the stands - all aggression is confined to the playing field.

Win or lose, the PO's passion for the oval ball will warm the coldest winter day.



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30 APRIL - 18h30 - DRAGONS V HUDDERSFIELD



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Some useful rugby terms!

- Un plaquage - a tackle
- Une mêlée - a scrum
- Une touche - a lineout
- Une essai - a try
- Une transformation - a conversion
- Un demi de mêlée - a scrum half
- Un demi d'ouverture - a fly half or stand-off half
- Un avant - a forward
- Un arrière - a fullback
- Un ailier - a winger
- Un arbitre - a referee
- Un en-avant - a knock-on or forward pass
- Une pénalité - a penalty
- Une chandelle - an up-and-under

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Letsgetphysical...

Playing around – golf that is

with Colin Lamont

The withdrawal symptoms of the addicted golfer denied a regular fix of the frustration and fleeting triumphs that make golf what it is, are just too painful to contemplate. Be reassured then that there are golfing opportunities in the Pyrénées Orientales, four to be exact, and each has something unique to offer.

was opened between the villages of Villeneuve de la Raho and Montescot. It is inevitably still rather raw but offers an enjoyable enough round of golf. The greens are in good condition, the fairways are getting better established but alas the tees are a let-down. The standard of my game might make such a demand faintly risible, but I don't think it too much to ask to have your feet roughly on the same level as your ball when on the tee. There is a practice range but no other facilities, just a wee hut where you pay your dues and can get a can of beer. It is worth a game, worth keeping an eye on to see how it develops

The St Cyprien club beside the Etang de Canet offers a 9 hole course, La Forêt and a challenging 18 hole course, Etang Canigou. At 2963 metres and a par of 35, La Forêt is no mere stroll through the trees and bushes which are a pleasant distinguishing feature of the course. Etang Canigou, is a bit of a monster at 6475 metres (Par 73). It is described as "Type Links" on its website, but it is certainly not a links course,

being mostly flat. Trees, water hazards and impenetrable reed beds lie in wait for the wayward shot although the reeds tend to be marked off as lateral water hazards so the penalty for losing your ball is not as severe as it would otherwise be. The setting alongside the étang and with Canigou as backdrop is superb. The clubhouse facilities are excellent. www.golf-saint-cyprien.com

Two years ago, a new 9



Enfin j'ai compris ce jeu. Quand la balle part dans une douce courbe à droite, on appelle ça un SLICE, quand il part à gauche, on appelle ça un HOOK et quand il vole tout droit, on appelle ça un MIRACLE!!

and worth supporting. www.golfclubdemontescot.com

Having only pursued my winter obsession of skiing on the slippery slopes above Font Romeu, a proper account of the 9 hole course there will have to wait. I have heard good things said of it and look forward to doing battle on it.

www.golf-font-romeu.fr

Up in the hills towards Coustouges on the Spanish border lies Falgos, a hotel and leisure complex which includes a gem of an 18 hole course. If the first thing you notice about St Cyprien is that it is flat, the

first thing you notice about Falgos is that it is not. Falgos excels in making clever use of the very hilly land with much ingenuity going into managing the topography of the area. Each hole seems unique. The demands on accurate shot-making are considerable and each shot has to be thought through, but the rewards of getting it right are high. The stunning beauty of the mountain scenery is a bonus. The facilities are excellent www.falgos.com

Happy golfing: may all your bogeys be pars and all your pars be birdies.



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by Penny Parkinson - Cancer Support France

Three Local Charities - an update

Did you know that there are three locally based charities working to help children and families affected by illness and handicap? Read on to see what these associations are doing now and how YOU might be able to help them. "Enfants & Santé Pyrénées Languedoc Roussillon" (ES PLR), "Meli-M'Elodie's" and "Cancer Support France - Sud de France" (CSF Sud) are all French registered associations working in the P-O, linked by a common aim - to give support.



"Pour guérir plus, guérir mieux, le plus vite possible, partout en France" the slogan of ES PLR sums up their aim - the funding of research to ensure that more children survive with the best possible chance of leading a normal life! ES PLR is looking for donations to fund enormous research programmes across France. Every euro that you donate goes directly to research! Contact them at www.esplr.com or by e-mail at pyreneeslanguedocroussillon@enfants-sante.asso.fr.



Meli-M'Elodie's

Meli-M'Elodie's aims to distract children from their illness by providing games or music, internet access, visual and interactive entertainment, to help them to enter another world away from pain and suffering.

Meli-M'Elodie's needs funds, but also seeks people prepared to give their time. If you could help in either way, e-mail the association at melimelo66wanadoo.fr@orange.fr



Check out the anglophone website for details of charitable and fund raising events throughout the region

www.anglophone-direct.com



« Je continue à penser
malgré tout que les hommes
sont foncièrement bons »

Anne Frank.



Finally, CSF Sud supports anglophones living in the Aude, Ariège and P-O who are affected by cancer. The range of support given by the association is vast - from helping someone to complete a form to accompanying them to a consultation; visiting a patient in hospital to talking to a family member; providing information about the French health system to making appointments!

Although CSF Sud is NOT a fund raising organisation, it does need to raise enough to cover the costs of providing its service and the aim is to raise €1500 towards this in the P-O. It also needs new members and supporters. If you would like to help, then please consider becoming a member, membership is only €10 a year and brings no other obligation.

If you would like a membership form or to be added to the Newsletter mailing list, contact Penelope Parkinson on pennycsf66@gmail.com who can also give you further details of CSF and, in particular, CSF Sud (66). And have a look at the website and forum at www.cancersupportfrance.info and www.csf-forum.org.

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www.laposte.com->Already living in France->Online Shop->Redirection and Holding.

You can organise a temporary or permanent, international redirection ("réexpédition temporaire ou définitive internationale") so that you can have your mail forwarded to you from France to your home abroad. If you move within France, arrange national redirection ("réexpédition définitive nationale") so that all the mail sent to your old address will be forwarded to your new address.

It's not free of course (what is these days?) but you will also receive a useful pack with sample letters (lettres types) to enable you to inform other services of your move, (CPAM, CAF, banks...) pre stamped change of address cards, and loads of tips and advice for moving house.

The border is no more. So what's new?

Nothing actually. Customs booths on the A9 motorway have been dismantled, and the physical border between France and Spain has been pulled down..... but the allowance of five cigarette cartons (1,000 cigarettes) ten litres of spirits etc PER CAR still stands. In fact, whilst border checks are no longer legal, there is nothing to stop customs officers carrying out regular spot checks once your vehicle has entered the country. 'Contrôles' are carried out several times a week, particularly on the roundabout approaching Le Boulou from Le Perthus. If stopped and found to be over the limit, the goods will be confiscated, you will receive a fine (often on the spot) and possibly be asked to accompany them to the customs offices just outside Le Perthus

Driving licences

The old pink French driving licence is to be replaced by a new 'credit card' style digital licence from 2013. The new system will enable the French authorities to exchange driving offense data within the European Union, and crack down on foreign offenders. It will also provide a long discussed opportunity for France to bring in medical examinations to check out fitness to drive for elderly drivers. At present, there is no age limit.

British Nationals resident in France may choose to keep their British license or request a French one at the nearest "Préfecture".

Useful websites...

- Check the status of any points on your licence, and find out how to get them back. www.reseaupointsperms.com
- Find out all about your electricity bill in English, pay your bill or submit your electricity meter readings online www.edf-bleuciel.fr (click on 'foreigners' in top right)
- Transport goods cheaply within France or abroad www.shiPLY.com
- Looking for a ride? This carpool site allows you to search for drivers travelling all over France and hitch a ride, or offer one. www.covoiturage.fr

Going phishing ?

Brits abroad tend to handle their finances by Internet.

This means that you must be permanently on the look out for 'phishers' and 'pharmers'

'Phishing' is the sending of a fraudulent email falsely claiming to be an established business, in order to obtain personal details (bank accounts, passwords), which are then used for identity theft.

Pharming is slightly different. Instead of relying upon the victim accepting a "bait" message, it re-directs them to a bogus Web site even though they have typed the correct address of the site they are trying to access. (Don't ask me how they do it!)

No genuine bank or building society will ever ask you for personal details by email.



Land Ahoy!

If you need to check out land details (boundaries etc) of a property, or a plot of land, visit www.cadastre.gouv.fr.

The 'plan cadastral' is the French equivalent of the land registry and presents online plans for the whole of France. Easy to use, with an English version, you simply enter the address of the property, (or you can search by commune or town if you don't have a specific address in mind) for a list 'parcelle' (plot) numbers, which show buildings, size of land, and the place name (lieudit) of the property. It can be a little confusing - zoom in and out until you identify what you are looking for.

Use this in conjunction with government run site www.geoportail.fr, (similar but not the same as Google Earth) which provides high-resolution maps and aerial photos of French territories, and you have a load of useful information at your fingertips.



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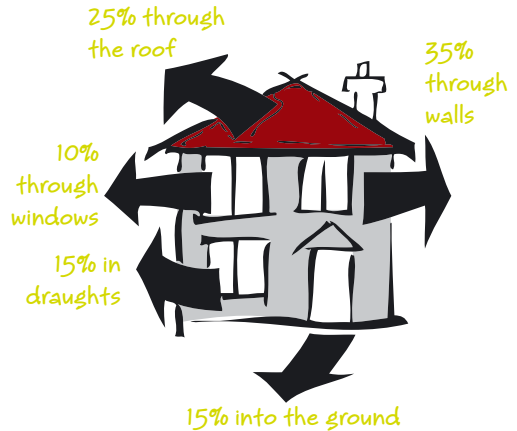


Warm the cockles of your house

Winter may be over but if your heating has been working full time to compensate for all the irritating little draughts that seep into the old bones, now may be a good time to consider the different types of insulation available in France

Around 46% of all France's energy is consumed by homes and businesses. To encourage us to insulate our homes, the state offers tax credit of 15 % to 25 % as long as installation is carried out by a professional, and a VAT rate of 5,5%. If you don't pay taxes, you will receive a cheque from the 'bureau des impôts' once a declaration and bills have been sent by your builder. This initiative may soon come to an end so if you are intending to insulate, don't hang around too long.

Efficient insulation can dramatically reduce the cost of heating and cooling your home, cutting your energy consumption by up to 60%, but did



Where heat is lost in your home

you know that it is now a legal requirement that all new builds be insulated? And that in the near future, all new houses will have to have "isolation thermique par l'extérieur"? Exterior insulation such as boards stuck on to the outside of a building, covered with a mesh reinforcement, base coat and covered in good old south of France 'crepi' can make an enormous contribution to retaining heat and cold, and save you a fortune on your fuel bills.

In home insulation, the R-value (facteur R) is an indication of how well a material insulates. The higher the R-value, the better the insulation

It's pointless to install a new air con or heating system without good insulation. In a region of extreme heat and cold such as ours, it really is worth taking a long hard look at how you insulate your home.

Did you know that the word '**curfew**' comes from the French '**couvre-feu**' (cover-fire) and refers to the medieval practice of ringing a bell every night for public safety, to remind people to blow out lights and damp down fires. Street lamps would also be 'covered' or put out, and once dark, it could be dangerous to wander the streets.

The pros and cons of different insulations

	R value per inch	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fibreglass/ Rockwool	R 2.5 - R 3.7	Best quality / price.	Irritant Not Ecological
Expanded polystyrène, Extruded, polyuréthane	R 3 - R 5.5	Thin cross section	Less durable Not Ecological
Natural wools: hemp, flax, duck down..	R 2.5 - R 3.7	Good durability Ecological	Can be expensive
Hay bales	R 0.90- R 2.4	Ecological. .	Very thick - may attract mice etc
Wood Fibre	R 2.5	Good durability Ecological.	Expensive
Perlite (siliceous volcanic rock)	R 2.7	Very Durable	Heavy/ expensive.

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The Aperero

Should I stay....

... or should I go now?

Did you know that the word 'apéritif' comes from the Latin 'aperire' meaning to open or uncover? As it is typically served before a meal to whet the appetite, (as opposed to a 'digestif', which is served at the end of a meal to aid digestion), it opens both appetites and a bottle or two.

In the mid 19th century, chemist Joseph Dubonnet entered a competition run by the French authorities to find a way of persuading French soldiers in North Africa to drink bitter quinine, to protect themselves against malaria. He created a wine-based drink containing herbs, spices and peels, along with the medicinal quinine. This original aperitif was 'purely for medicinal purposes' of course. (Hummm, how many times have we heard that excuse?). It was not really until the 20th century that the social drinking of alcohol before a meal became fashionable.

A small selection of typical traditional aperitifs

Byrrh (pronounced beer— can be confusing!)

Of course we must start with this local red-wine-based quinine drink created in 1866 by Simon Violet in Thuir and promoted as "tonic, stimulant and hygienic". In fact, the Caves Byrrh, now part of the Pernod-Ricard group, is apparently the largest producer of wine-based aperitifs in France.

Pastis

One of France's national treasures, a result of soaking anise, licorice root and other aromatics in alcohol, pastis became popular in the 1920'S

after absinthe was made illegal. (Pernod was the original absinthe maker). It is produced under many labels, each having its own secret recipe and variation.

Kir and Kir Royale

A mix of white wine and crème de cassis (Kir), or champagne/fizzy wine and cassis (Kir Royal), this drink is actually named after Canon Felix Kir, priest and hero of the French resistance during World War II and mayor of Dijon from 1945-1968.

Suze

Distilled from the roots of the gentian plant, and immortalized in a Pablo Picasso collage entitled "Glass and bottle of Suze", it is believed that Suze was created by Fernand Moureaux in 1885 and named after his sister-in-law, Suzanne, who was known to be partial to a drop or two of the hard stuff!

Today, the apero is often more than just a drink – it's a social occasion, a time for friends, families and neighbours to get together. before returning to their own homes for dinner.



So what are the popular drinks round here and how long should an 'apéro' last before we run the risk of outstaying our welcome?

Evelyne « Moi, c'est le champagne ou le whisky. Combien de temps? Ça dépend. Ça peut durer toute la nuit! Si les gens s'incrument, ça ne me dérangé pas. Mon mari par contre, c'est un ours. Il râle quand il a faim. »



Emilie « Moi, je ne bois pas souvent. Maintenant que je suis maman, ça m'agace vite si les gens restent trop longtemps. Deux heures maximum pour moi. Je n'aime pas les gens qui ont picolé et qui prennent le volant. »



Claude « Comme beaucoup de femmes d'ici, je prends du Muscat. Si les gens arrivent vers 7h et ils sont encore là à 9h, je fais avec et je les invite à manger. J'ai toujours quelque chose dans le congélateur au cas où. »



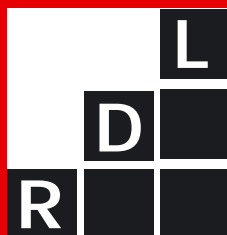
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<p>Ça peut durer - it can last</p> <p>Si les gens s'incrument if people overstay their welcome/ gate crash/are hard to get rid of</p> <p>Par contre on the other hand</p> <p>Un ours – a bear</p> <p>Il râle – he moans</p>	<p>ça m'agace – it irritates me</p> <p>picoler – to booze</p> <p>prendre le volant – to drive</p> <p>ils sont encore là - they're still there</p> <p>je fais avec – I make do</p> <p>au cas où – in case</p>
--	--

The 'apéritifs dinatoires' have become fashionable recently in France – multiple small sweet and savoury dishes, which can generally be eaten with fingers, including verrines, small glasses filled with layers of food such as hot scallops, salmon, prawns, avocado...



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When you can't see the wood for the trees...

'Débroussaillage' laws for property owners

If you are the owner of land which is less than 200 metres from woodland, brush land or moors, it is your legal responsibility to limit fire risk by clearing and cutting back all undergrowth within 50 metres of your property. This should be completed by April 15th, after which the ONF (Forestry Commission) can and will start imposing fines on everyone who has not cleaned and strimmed around their properties.

The land should be 'débroussaillé' or cut away as follows:

- 50 m around any buildings
- 10 m deep on either side of private paths or roads leading to buildings (this is to enable the fire services to pass in safety)

In towns and on housing estates, (les lotissements) it is the responsibility of the land owner to clear the land.

In rural areas, it is the responsibility of the person whose property may be at risk, even if he or she is not the landowner

FAILURE TO OBSERVE THESE REGULATIONS COULD RESULT IN A FINE AND MAY AFFECT YOUR INSURANCE CLAIM AND PAYOUT IN CASE OF FIRE.

If you are doing your own débroussaillage, don't forget that more and more 'déchetteries' (rubbish tips) require a magnetic card to gain entry. These cards can be obtained at the déchetterie in your commune, by taking with you proof of residence (a service bill), photo ID, and the carte grise (registration doc) of your car.

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GDF (gas problems)	08 10 43 30 66
EDF (electricity problems)	05 56 17 40 70
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You can use the The European emergency number 112 in any EU country from any telephone. You do not need a card or money to ring this number from a pay phone. 112 may also be used from a mobile to connect you with all emergency services.

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Properties of charm throughout the Roussillon



Real Estates' new property gallery is now open at 1 place de la République, next to the 'Tins' car park in Céret, from where we are happy to welcome clients between 9h00 and 19h00 non-stop Monday to Saturday and 9h00 to 12h00 on Sundays



Near Perpignan: Stunning architect designed villa offering 4 double bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 lounges and 2 kitchens – quality fixtures and fittings throughout. A well designed garden with 10m pool in non-overlooked location. Classe énergie : B
672.000€



Saint Laurent de Cerdans: Recently renovated 3 bedroom townhouse with lovely views from its roof terrace. 196m² of accommodation over 3 floors plus a large basement of 72m². Classe énergie : E
189,000€

If you are looking to buy or sell a property contact:



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