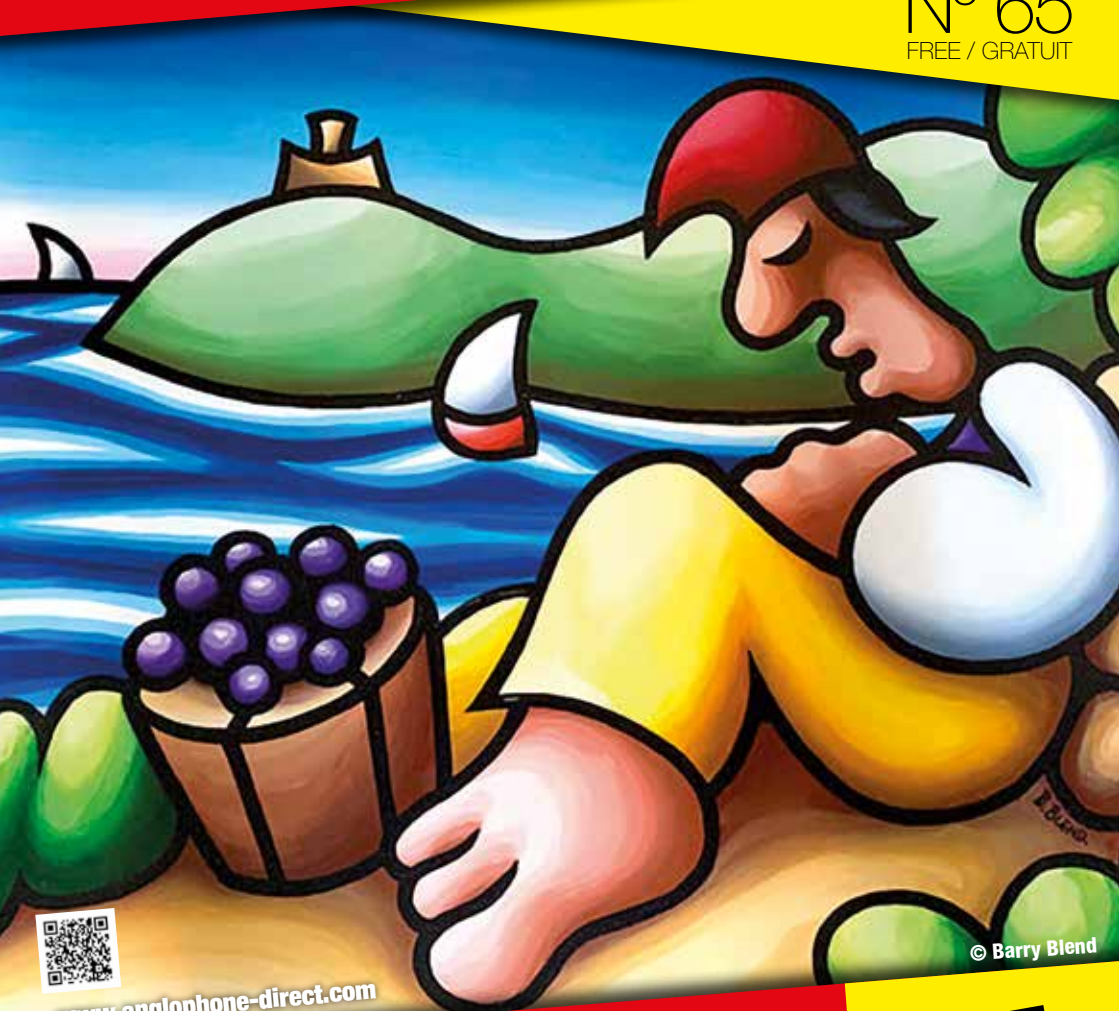


Autumn 2019

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales

N° 65
FREE / GRATUIT



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Editio ☺



What a summer this has been! Hot hot hot! By the time you read this, we might have had some rain – or not! We certainly need it! And here comes my favourite season, full of warm, sunny days, cold crisp mornings and evenings, (a 'petite laine' definitely recommended if you're staying out to watch the stars!).... We are sooooo spoilt here in the P-O.

In this edition, along with the usual, **we bring you advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for UK Nationals living and working in France**, some fabulous walks and days out, including a city break over the border, theatre and music, festivals and traditions, airport travel, airport news, lady urinals (yes, it's a win for female pee-quality), all things weird and wonderful... and the usual terrible joke to help you to improve your French with a smile!

Don't forget to visit our site on www.anglophone-direct.com to find out what's going on this autumn and over Christmas – markets, foires au gras, entertainment and events – or check out our forum and Facebook for restaurant reviews, local news, recommendations and advice, items for sale or wanted...

We do hope your autumn is golden.

Kate

Deux pêcheurs, assis sur
un poisson, se disputent:
L'un dit à l'autre
"Ne me parle pas sur ce thon!"



Thon – tuna
ton – tone

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LAST MINUTE: CERET: Villa approx 130m² living space with garden approx 437m². Ground floor: Living room, lounge, terrace, kitchen, bedroom, shower room/WC, utility room, garage. First floor: 4 bedrooms, bathroom, WC.

PRICE: 335 000 € • REF: 6914 Dpe N/A



CERET: High-quality build villa on a large plot approx 2200m² - complete with spacious terraces, balcony and veranda. Total living space approx 167m², including 60m² for conversion, plus workshop.

PRICE: 385 000 € • REF: 6874 Dpe D



ARLES-SUR-TECH: Village house on 3 levels. Approx 90m² living space. Ground floor: attractive, spacious entrance hall. 1st floor: kitchen and lounge leading out onto balcony. 2nd floor: 2 bedrooms and bathroom.

PRICE: 55 000 € • REF: 5394 Dpe F



ARLES-SUR-TECH: Detached, 3-bedroom villa on one level on a flat plot, approx 1600m², with its own watering system from the nearby stream. Lounge/living room, separate kitchen without appliances and bathroom to be done. Separate WC, garage.

PRICE: 230 000 € • REF: 6912 Dpe D



LAST MINUTE: MONTESQUIEU-DES-ALBERES: In a tranquil setting, luxury villa with breathtaking mountain views boasting generous volumes and character. Approx 317 m² living space, 8 rooms, pool. Approx 10 000 m² of land. Very rare on the market - A MUST-SEE!

PRICE: 798 000 € • REF: 7042 Dpe N/A



LAST MINUTE: MAUREILLAS: Village house in quiet location. Excellent condition. Entrance hall, fitted kitchen, living room, lounge, WC. 2 bedrooms, bathroom. 2 fabulous terraces, plus cellar and a garage.

PRICE: 176 500 € • REF: 7007 Dpe D



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Walk the region

PLAGE DES ELMES
TO COL DEL GASCONS,
BATTERIE DE LA GALLINE
AND BACK TO
LA PLAGE VIA VINAIGRERIE
DE LA GUINELLE

> view from plage des Elmes

Access:
map IGN 1:25000 Banyuls, Col de Perthus, Cote Vermeille 25490T

A straightforward 4 hour walk over 12 km with approximately 400m of ascent. Superb views across the hills and down to the sea. Walking boots and poles highly recommended. Some yellow way marks with red and white on GR10 section. Choose a cloudy day or cooler weather as there is no shade on much of walk. Take a hat and plenty of water. Mix of footpath, broad tracks and some sections of road.

START

Take N914 towards Banyuls sur Mer but turn left in front of the hotel at the first beach you reach (plage des Elmes) a couple of kilometres before the main town. Pass hotel and turn right beside it to find a public car park. Trees offer shade and public toilets are available. **Arrive early in peak season but at this time of year, parking is rarely an issue.**



THE WALK

Follow the broad track beside the car park and go under the bridge which is behind the car park. The track goes into vines, past a mas and has walls on each side. After very heavy rain this track becomes a river, but most of the year it is dry. (If there is water in it you will have to take a walk across the back of Banyuls to find start of the GR10 just after another railway bridge on the other side of station)

After 5 minutes the track becomes a footpath along the dry river bed.

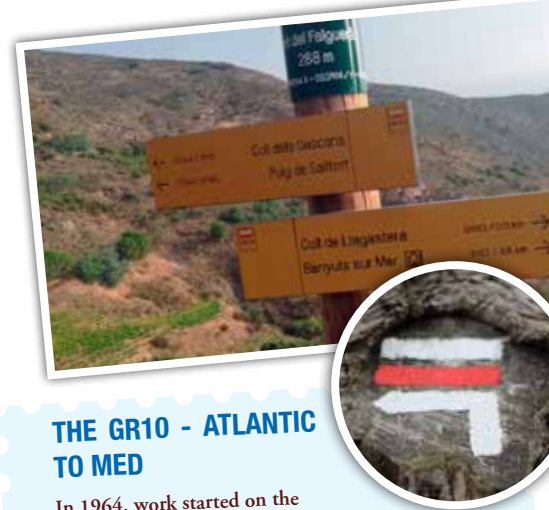
Have no fear – this is a path well trodden by locals!

Follow it for 5 minutes until you reach steps on right to metal bridge. Go up steps, turn left and cross using bridge.



Follow broad track uphill, bending right at top. Turn right when you meet another broad track. Pass a mas with horses and drop slightly **to meet the GR10 coming in on left near Coll de les Vinyes.**

Look down to Banyuls and **across to the white church of Notre Dame de la Salette behind the town.** Continue on GR10, pass a house, and meet D86. Cross road and continue on opposite side.



THE GR10 - ATLANTIC TO MED

In 1964, work started on the GR10 to join the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

The GR10 or 'Sentier Pyreneenne' as it is sometimes called, crosses the Pyrenees from ocean to sea via 866 km of indicated walking paths, with 48 km of ascent.

The route follows the French-Spanish border, sticking to the French side. Those attempting the entire trail often choose to do it west-to-east, from Hendaye on the Atlantic Ocean to Banyuls-sur-Mer.

Following red and white paint strokes, it's a linear walk, mainly waymarked very well, although at times the markings can be difficult to spot. It is mostly planned so that accommodation can be found at the end of each day's walk. Many walkers do individual sections over days or weeks, rather than take on the challenge of the whole walk in one go.

Although the footpaths are less demanding than the tracks on the higher level of the mountain (known as the HRP – Haute Route des Pyrenees) it is not an easy option, with some steep climbing, and the full walk apparently would take 50 – 60 days.

The best time for walking the GR 10 is late spring to early summer and late summer to early Autumn, as the mid summer heat can be very challenging and the midwinter snow renders some parts of the walk dangerous or impassable. Today, many GR (Grande Randonnée) walking routes cross several countries.

Excellent path heads gradually upwards, cuts the corner of a broad track/piste and then back into footpath.

Views open up towards Tour de Madeloc and further mountains.



> GR10 toward Madeloc

Carefully follow the red/white signs for GR10 along piste, principally, at this point, to emerge at the D86 with the Table d'Orientation alongside it at Col de Llagastera.

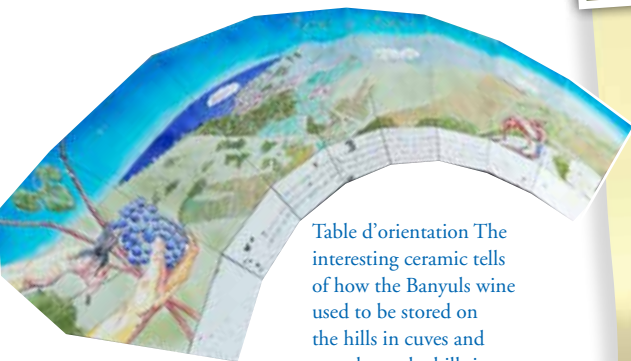


Table d'orientation The interesting ceramic tells of how the Banyuls wine used to be stored on the hills in caves and sent down the hills in ceramic lined pipes.

GR10 now takes to the road for a while so head upwards round a couple of bends to find a guidepost on the right. Take the footpath here and pass the Font del Falgueras to rejoin the road.



> Guidepost on leaving the D86

Cross the road and climb upwards, cross again to make final climb to D86 near Col del Gascons (387m).

Turn right to reach the Col. (1h 35mins from start)

[If you have not climbed to Madeloc before there is the option of doing so from the Col – follow the GR for 50metres and strike up right to a Batterie, to meet the tarmac road to the top. Allow a good hour for the Aller/retour and add this to total time for walk]



> Tour de la Madeloc

The clever network of signal towers (tours à signaux) that you see on the high mountain tops around the region date back to the 13th century. They were originally set up by the Kings of Majorque as a defence system to protect the Roussillon from invaders and to enable the passing of information around the region, using fire and smoke signals. One of many, the "Tour de la Madeloc" dates from circa 1285AD, and was modified by Vauban in the XVIIth century. The views are stunning, overlooking Collioure, Port Vendres and Banyuls, and south to Cap Cerbère and the Spanish border.

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BANYULS-SUR-MER: Located in the village, very pleasant village house approx 76m² with fabulous, sunny 15m² terrace. Living room with fireplace and open-plan kitchen. 3 bedrooms. Mezzanine.

PRICE: 945 000 €



CERBÈRE: Fantastic, architect's villa with breathtaking sea views located in a quiet area of Cerbère. 4 bedrooms, large living room, vast garage, a roof terrace and a swimming pool! Exceptional property in excellent condition.

PRICE: 359 000 €



BANYULS-SUR-MER: In the centre of the resort, spacious 3-bedroom house approx 85m² with breathtaking views over the sea and the mountains! Living room leading onto terrace, open-plan fitted kitchen, 2 shower rooms and a garage! Unique in Banyuls!

PRICE: 175 000 €



VILLELONGUE-DELS-MONTS: In the heart of the village, semi-detached, stone village house, approx 50m² in excellent condition. 2 bedrooms, 2 shower rooms, 2 terraces and a private parking space! Lots of charm! Great location!

PRICE: 494 000 €



LAROQUE-DES-ALBÈRES: Ideally located, Mediterranean-style detached house, approx 170m² - set in beautiful grounds with terraces and pool! Living room with wood-burning stove, 5 bedrooms, large covered terrace with summer kitchen. Rare in Laroque!

PRICE: 470 000 €



LAROQUE-DES-ALBÈRES: Unique in Laroque! Located in the centre, exceptional stone village house with generous living space, good-sized living room and 4 bedrooms. Plus, fantastic patio approx 110m² complete with summer kitchen, barbecue and swimming pool!

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From the Coll, walk along the D86, contouring below Madeloc ridge, round a couple of bends, for approximately 1km. As soon as you see the tower on

left, find a sign to La Galline on right and turn right down zig zag road to Batterie de la Galline. (2h 20m from start)



> sign to Batterie de la Galline



> View to Cosprons from La Galline



BATTERIE DE LA GALLINE

The Batterie with its impressive drawbridge entrance, was built in 1885-6 as a deterrent to further potential invading Spaniards at a time when France was nervous and feeling threatened by Spain. With room for 70 men, it was in fact hardly used. Constructed from severe well hewn rock and built in a strong military manner in a commanding position, it is intimidating and would have been difficult to breach by any army daft enough to climb the hill. After many years of dereliction, it is now being restored and renovated by a small association, L'Association La Galline'.

Pass the front entrance of la Galline and follow the piste downhill in a series of zig zags. Emerge at the hamlet of la Guinelle after 20 mins.

Entrance to Batterie de la Galline >



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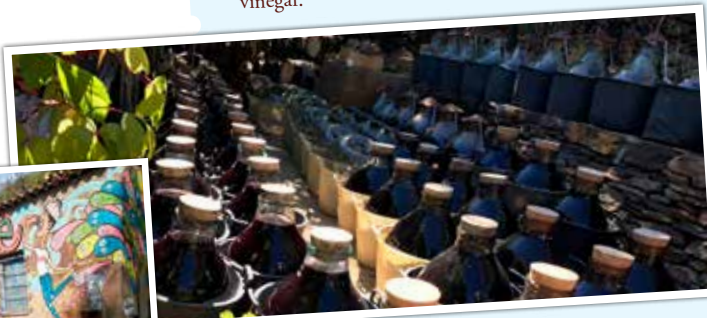
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TWO ROUTE OPTIONS HERE.

EITHER....take steps down from road in la Guinelle, just after sharp bend left and cut through to locally used lane below.

Start of footpath from la Guinelle. Turn right and soon pass the Vinaigrerie de la Guinelle in the valley, or call in for a tasting or purchase.



Vinaigrerie entrance >



Follow the little used lane for about 2.8 kms to reach the N914 at a roundabout

OR (about 1km longer than 1st option): Follow the road through la Guinelle and down to bridge over river. Turn right and walk into and through Cosprons.

About 0.75 kilometres the other side of Cosprons find a waymark sign to Paulilles and Banyuls. Turn right and follow path downhill. It changes from broad track to narrow path beside a wall. Turn left in valley to reach railway bridge. (Rear entrance to Paulilles car park on left). Pass under the bridge, turn right and take path alongside railway, gradually moving above and away from railway to emerge at roundabout on N914.

**"If the wine is good,
the vinegar will be good,"**

says Natalie Lefort, of the Vinaigrerie de la Guinelle, the only vinaigrerie in France producing its vinegars according to traditional wine based methods, organic and natural, no additives.

Aged outdoors beneath the Mediterranean sun, and based on naturally sweet and aromatic Banyuls wine grapes from local vineyards, why not pay them a visit, take a tour, and hear the fascinating story (in English if you prefer) of the making of this organic vinegar.

Try before you buy....**Vinaigre de Banyuls Rouge**, described as going well 'dans une salade, avec des crudités, sur des viandes et des poissons, avec des desserts (des fraises par exemple) or **Vinaigre de Banyuls Blanc**, 'un délice' to drizzle on 'poissons blanc, du saumon fumé, dans des huîtres ou dans une salade d'endives avec de l'huile de noix ou d'olive'. Sample fruity vinegars nutty vinegars.... **but remember you have to carry it back!**

Both options: Cross main road carefully and enter vineyard on other side. Immediately take footpath right at way mark sign. Drop down slightly and contour along the valley. The owner has stencilled his name on rocks!



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PLAGE DES ELMES
TO COL DEL GASCONS,
BATTERIE DE LA GALLINE
AND BACK TO
LA PLAGE VIA VINAIGRERIE
DE LA GUINELLE

WALK THE REGION WITH
TIM AND CHRIS PARKER

From valley **do not exit onto main road**: follow footpath alongside the convalescent home – **Helios centre**. At entrance to the centre turn right and look down onto plage des Elmes, and maybe head down for a refreshing dip if the temperatures allow. Otherwise, take footpath back to car park behind the hotel and head into Banyuls for a drink or dinner at one of several recommended restaurants.



> Elme plage

DON'T MISS THE FABULOUS FÊTE DES VENDANGES ON 12TH - 13TH OCTOBER IN BANYULS

Now in its 24th year, with thousands of visitors expected once again (so arriving early to find a parking space is recommended) the Fête de Vendanges turns the beach into a colourful, animated mass of eating and drinking, bands and musicians, jugglers, glee and laughter. Towards the end of the afternoon, Catalan Barques zig zag a ballet in the bay before bringing the "harvest" in to the shore.

Book your own free table on the beach (info from town hall) and invite your friends to make a day of it with you. Take your own food and drink, BBQ, or buy food and wine from the many beach bars and restaurants set up on the sands. A lively day of fun and bonhomie



BANYULS

Birthplace of **Aristide Maillol**, his sculpture 'Jeune Fille Allongée' relaxes on the seafront and his tomb lies beneath his beautiful "La Méditerranée" sculpture in the garden of the little museum, in the Roume valley just outside the town. He was very much part of the turn of the century art scene, **friends with Matisse, Derrain, Picasso, Dali**.

The vineyards of the naturally sweet Banyuls and the rich, red Collioure wines terrace their way down the mountains to the edge of the town. In **1860, Abbé Rous**, new Curé at the Chapelle de la Rectorie, first

tasted the local wine and declared it so delicious that he decided, through his network of Catholic contacts, to make it the communion wine throughout France.

When the railway reached Banyuls in 1870, this naturally sweet wine was soon being drunk in some of the best restaurants in the land as an apéritif and the perfect accompaniment to foie gras.

A pretty town with flower-filled alleys; a brilliant base for rambling and walking.



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non prisonniers à vie."*

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and hues - a milieu created with care, the fish released back into their natural habitat when they grow too big for comfort in tanks.

The 'Jardin Méditerranéen' of the Biodiversarium, hanging from the cliffs above the valley of Baillaury, gives a fascinating insight into Mediterranean plant life on the surface.
(Opens again April 2020)



www.biodiversarium.fr f: Biodiversarium

In the summer edition, we told of shady dealings and fabulous frescoes in a little chapel in a pretty, ruined village (p8).... but we forgot to tell you its name!

Casenoves

Across the bridge **from Ille sur Têt**, on the road to **Belesta**, along a small road on the left running along by the river, lies the **ruined village of Casenoves**, ('new houses' in Catalan).

Continue along the road till a sign informs you that have almost reached the **XI century chapel of St Sauveur**, once home to some of the oldest frescoes in Europe, now housed in the hospice in Ille. Clamber over rocks to arrive at this chapel, surrounded by ancient olive groves, the remains of the village and a tall imposing square tower.

Over the centuries, these tranquil ruins have been the inspiration for poets and artists.

Joseph Sébastià Pons, Catalan poet and close friend of **Aristide Maillol** wrote "**J'ai fait de Casenoves ma promenade favorite. Nul n'est**

plus cher que ce village en ruine". Designer and artist **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** painted several of his works around Ille sur Têt, (where he and his wife lived "for eight shillings a day, wine included"), inspired by walks to the abandoned village amidst olive and peach trees and vines.



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OUT ^{for} THE DAY

WITH PENNY PARKINSON

CAIXAS

a commune without a village

BY PENNY PARKINSON

You have probably crossed Caixas on your way to visit Castelnou without spotting this commune hidden in the rugged heart of the

Aspres. The only noticeable evidence of its existence is the red outlined signs as you enter and exit on the D2 and D48, now stating clearly that you are in Pais Catala!



THE GHOST OF CASTELNOU

Beautiful British agent Elisabeth, code name Cynthia, was sent to live in the Château de Castelnou during the Second World War. Her mission: to spy upon and seduce Vichy collaborators. After the Armistice, she returned to live in the Château. Today, her grave occupies a discreet corner of the grounds. When paranormal researchers arrived to search the medieval castle for unexplained phenomena, they described seeing exploding light bulbs and a photograph capturing a woman's silhouette in the mirror. Could this be Elisabeth? Or another character from the castle's long history? Any further exploration was put on hold in October 2017 with the sudden and mysterious closure of the castle. A mystery still to be solved!



> CASTELNOU

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CAIXAS

a commune without a village

Caixas - pronounced with the soft catalan 'sh' as **Ca-sh-as** and not **Cake-sas** - is not a village, it is grouping of four hamlets spread widely apart. These hamlets, **Fontcouverte, Candell, Sainte-Colombe de las Illas and Caixas** itself, were pulled together after the French Revolution to form one administrative area. Between these, there are smaller hamlets and a sprinkling of old farmhouses. Until comparatively recently, people here were self-sufficient with the family pig, goat, a few olives and vines - the availability of water being the dominating factor. The commune now counts around 140 inhabitants, compared to the 450 in the 19th century, a mixture of nationalities and incomers from other corners of France. Despite that, many of the old Catalan families remain - Doutres, Ausseil, Cammas, Julia - some having been here since the 13th century.

The Aspres, the range of hills between the Roussillon Plain and Canigou, are so called because of their harsh (âpre), dry and schisty landscape, a landscape with a beauty of its own. Kermes oaks, cork oaks, strawberry trees, gorse, lavender, thyme, rosemary, sage are in their natural habitat here. Walks are a delight, punctuated by the smell of the garrigue, but fire is a very real hazard.



To protect Caixas, the hamlet, a fire break has been established through the ecologically friendly munching of goats. **The fromagerie** is open to visitors by appointment where **Emilie and Sebastian's** award winning cheese can be bought. If you are lucky enough to be there at milking time, do sample the warm, fresh milk.



Caixas, the commune, is dominated by **Mont Hélène**, named after the mother of Constantine who gives her name to Elne. **This 'hill' reaches to 775m** with a watch tower from which the whole of the Roussillon plain is studied for smoke from July through to September. The commune is also criss crossed by fire roads, a bonus for 'randonneurs' as they give access to its heart. The jonquils in Spring on Mont Hélène provide a beautiful yellow carpet and, as you drag your gaze from the mediterranean, Canigou, in all it's splendour, is behind you.

Of the four churches, only **St Marc**, which clings to the edge of Mont Hélène, is open, although permission to view the others can be obtained through the Mairie. All of these are Pre-Romanesque and this one, oddly, is the **only church in Roussillon dedicated to St Marc**.

> Mairie



There is a pleasant walk from the Mairie and, for the VERY energetic, it is possible to continue to the top of Mont Hélène from the church. **A gentler ascent is by way of a Sentier Emilie.**

Les Sentiers d'Emilie is a series of published walks designed for families. Usually about two to three hours long, sometimes circular, other times linear, they are in very simple French, with diagrams.



CAIXAS

a commune without a village

Follow the signs **from the D2 to Notre Dame del Coll** (actually in Calmeilles, this is an interesting church which is open and still in use), continue past until you reach a parking area **on your right with the familiar Sentier Emilie board**. Once you have located the watch tower and drunk in the breathtaking views, make sure that you search around until you find the remains of a chapel facing Canigou. This was a point of pilgrimage in mediaeval times. And you can see why! **Don't forget your binoculars for a spot of birdwatching.**



Ste Marie of Fontcouverte is in a beauty spot adjoining the D2, well frequented by picnickers, and not far from a dolmen called Ramera which, with others, shows human activity in the area from the neolithic period. Ste Colombe, with a rare double nave, is easily accessed from the hamlet of that name.



St Pons is more difficult to get to as Candell no longer exists as a hamlet. It is well worth the effort, though, and **can be reached from Casefabre**, as well as across the fire roads from the D2 (it is signposted) if you are wanting a longer stroll. It has a lovely and well kept churchyard with topiary! It also boasts a strange tradition called the "anointing of the ears" which allowed the recipient to have the ear of God.

Finally, **St Marc, the original Parish church of Caixas**, was abandoned in the 15th century and a **new church, St Jacques, was built lower down the valley**. This church, in the Place de la Mairie, remains as the Parish church today and has an interesting retable which **was restored in 1878**.



Even if churches and nature walks are not for you, do explore this unspoilt part of the P-O. **If you haven't the time to walk or to pack a picnic, then have a leisurely drive along the D2 and D48**. The views to the sea are stunning and around every corner you may also see Canigou. There is no refreshment in Caixas itself, but Castelnaud and Thuir have an abundance of restaurants and cafés.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- The churches with maps showing access <http://www.baladesromanes66.net>
- Photos of the churches and dolmens with maps <http://siterando66.free.fr>
- Fromagerie telephone 06 28 74 13 62 or find Emilie and Sebastien at Thuir market on Saturday mornings.





The Artaxa P-O Team
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Artaxa a fait un travail brillant du début à la fin - très rassurant et professionnel. *Mr N.B.*
- Grâce à Artaxa nous avons trouvé notre acheteur. La transaction s'est faite sans difficulté et très rapidement. *Mr et Mme R.*
- L'équipe d'Artaxa était là pour nous dès notre recherche initiale jusqu'à la négociation et la signature chez le notaire. *Mr et Mme D.*

- Un intermédiaire efficace entre le vendeur (à l'étranger) et moi-même, et disponible à tout moment. Je recommande Artaxa pour son sérieux et son relationnel. *Mme L.R.*
- We recommend Artaxa to anyone seeking to market their property with the maximum of efficiency and the minimum amount of stress. *Mr & Mrs W.*

- I wish other estate agents were as proactive & efficient as Artaxa. *Mr & Mrs S.*
- As a foreigner buying in France, Artaxa's support has been invaluable. A great property agent which surpasses all others! *Mrs S.C.*
- The Artaxa team are professional and have outstanding local knowledge and understanding of the property market. *Mr & Mrs K.*



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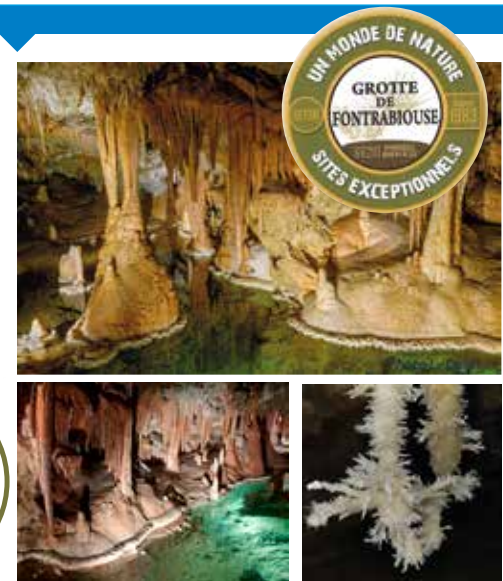
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CITY BREAK ^{In...} ZARAGOZA

WITH TONY AND ROBYN GOODMAN

When was the last time you jumped on a train and took a break? Well, we took on the hard task of trying it out for you, and have set up a great programme to help you to make the most of a few days away in Zaragoza.

The town

A quietly confident, civilised, visitor-friendly crossroad city for the past 2000 years, with Frank Sinatra's my kind of town feel. Goya's home town, with elegant alfresco dining, a vibrant El Tubo district, migras, chocolate and coffee, art and architecture, music, wine and Tapas as an art form. Uncrowded level strolling. It's not the second, third or even ninth biggest city - and that suits the inhabitants just fine.

How to get there

The mid morning daily direct SNCF/Renfe train really is the only option. Depart from Perpignan at a very civilised 11.17am and arrive in Zaragoza Delicias at 14.23pm. Walk-up fares are around 160€ return but can be significantly cheaper if booked in advance. Drivers should take the AP-2 from Barcelona. Intercity buses are another option. Ryanair flies direct from London Stansted.

Stay

Zaragoza hosts festivals and concerts year round, and has a great range of hotels and self catering options. Find something central for convenience and treat yourself, I'm sure you deserve it. Try the very excellent Hotel Alfonso, 4 star, (Calle del Coso), the ever reliable Ibis Styles, (Calle del Coso) or the NH Hotel Ciudad with a tram stop directly outside (Av. de César Augusto).

Programme...or just do your own thing of course



> Plaza de Nuestra Señora del Pilar

Close by is the very photographable Cathedral del Salvador, Gothic, Mudjar/Moorish, Romanesque. **The recently discovered Roman theatre** is also well worth a wander.



> Roman theatre

Day 1

Arrival. **First stop is the Tourist Office** (Plaza Nuestra Señora del Pilar) for maps, tours and perhaps the hop-on hop-off open top **tourist bus** to get your bearings (15E).

The nearby Basilique, a cornerstone of **Zaragoza's history with its Goya frescos**, is the next stop. Up to two hours is about right to stretch the legs and get a good understanding of its importance to the city. History-rich, top to toe art, consider taking a guided tour and ride the lift to the top of its **tower for a panoramic view of the city**.



> view from the top of Basílica

It's been a busy day so far. Time for a break? Perhaps a swim and some time in your room to **prepare for El Tubo**. Nobody dines in Zaragoza until 9 pm, don't bother venturing out unless it's for an uncluttered amble. At 9, shops throw open their doors, tables are laid and music fills the streets.



El Tubo is the revived tapas bar district. Just five small streets, it comes alive, family friendly, bright and totally Spanish. Each tapas bar has its specialities, portions are snack sized, usually between 6 and 8 euros. The routine is to bar hop, try one or two then move on.

Try the **Calamares at Casa Buisan**, **anchovies marinated in vinegar** and **croquettes at Donde Siempre** or the mushrooms at the brilliant **El Champi**. The very good local wines may seem familiar; Macabeu, Granache and Merlot. **The local Ambar ales** are world class. Most bars speak excellent English.

Day 2 Full day

Nicely grouped in the centre is the powerful **Musée Goya** (Calle Espoz y Mina). Taken in context, his dark menacing lithographs created in response to the Peninsula (Independence) War makes sense.



The **Musée Pablo Gargallo** (Plaza San Felipe) with its wistful Greta Garbo inspired pieces is a delight. His use of space within his pieces makes his art perfectly understandable. Allow up to 4 hours to see both, depending on your arty soul. Guided tours are available for both.



The refurbished **Palais de la Aljafería** is now the Aragonese Assembly. The setting for the opening scene in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, it is possible to visit most of the more important spaces. A good 15 mins walk from the centre of town or take one of the city's excellent buses.



There are plenty of shaded squares for quiet lunchtime dining. Try **Plaza San Pedro, Plaza Sant Marta or Plaza San Felipe**

The entire city is an architectural chocolate box, with treats and surprises everywhere.

Famous for its Asalto Street Art Festival, after lunch explore **Quartier San Pablo's street art**.

The water expo park with its Hara Zadid designed bridge is huge, or for the not so active take a bus tour.



Take a few moments back at the hotel for some well deserved R&R while you wait for the city to wake at 9 pm.

Certainly head back to **El Tubo** for more tapas, or perhaps try a more traditional restaurant such as **Casa Lac (Calle Mártires)**, **El Rincoin Aragona (Plaza San Pedro Nolasca)** or a favourite, **Montal Restaurant Plaza San Filip**.

Day 3

Your train back to Perpignan/Montpellier departs at **14.45. Time for some shopping!**

Zaragoza is chocolate lovers' heaven thanks to a local monk with a commercial eye, and a chap called Cortes. Get a **chocopass at the Tourist Office** or maybe just head over to **La Flor de Almibar** (Calle Casto Méndez Núñez) one of the oldest stores in town offering local fruit encased in chocolate as it should be. Sweet, slightly bitter, dark but not heavy.



A university town, bookshops abound for low mileage low cost reading material. **The Illustrated Armadillo (Calle las Armas)**, and **Re-Read Llibreria Low Cost (Calle del Coso)** are worth a visit.

Paseo de la Independencia is where you will find all the big name stores.

A COUPLE OF FESTIVAL DATES.....

> October 5 – 13

The city celebrates its annual **Las Fiestas del Pilar**, its signature event, a flower powered festival of music, dance, theatre. Events are held in the streets and plazas, free of charge. The main act of the Fiestas is the offering of flowers to the Virgin that takes place on the 12th. Be aware that during the Fiestas del Pilar the population of Zaragoza grows substantially so book early.

> November

Jazz Festival In its 36th year, one of Spain's premier festivals always features major headliners and local talent. Offers other activities such as jazz cinema, jam sessions, activities for kids, etc.

Acknowledgements:
Renfe/SNCF en cooperation –
Tourist Office, Zaragoza

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DID YOU KNOW



ROCK AND RAIN

We've had a few days of heavy rain this autumn, mixed in with the usual 'été indienne' but none to match the **20th May 1868 in Molitg les Bains when 313 mm fell in one hour.**

According to the 'bulletin météorologique' records of 1900, a man sheltering from the rain near the River Têt was cut in half by a large rock dislodged from the mountains by the heavy rain. Half of his body was found under the rock and the other half 12 km away near Eus. **Not a drop a rain fell in Perpignan that day.**



OUT ^{for} THE DAY

LE VILLAGE DE NOËL, LE BARCARES

a winter wonderland



Have you been good this year? If you have, you deserve a treat, so how about a visit to the 'Village de Noël' in Le Barcarès? (and even if you've been bad....well, it's Christmas!)



This winter feast just gets better and better every year! This year, **the entertainment extravaganza spreads across the sprawling gardens of the Lydia** and continues until mid-January, so if you haven't made plans for New Year's Eve yet, there's an idea to welcome in 2020.

You don't need to head for the mountains to enter an enchanting winter wonderland. It's right here by the beach! Alpine chalets, snow-covered pine forest, penguins (and loads of other surprises), two ice-skating rinks providing supervised skating for all levels...and even an ice museum with some amazing ice sculptures.

Soar high above the chalets on the 'Grande Roue', check out the animal park and the fun fair, try the kids' electric quad bikes, marvel at the Santa parades and fireworks...



And of course **the Lydia**. All dressed up in her finest, she is centre stage for showcasing the local wines and specialities of this beautiful region.

With bars and restaurants open 'til 2.00 am...It's **Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas!**



Le Lydia

This 1931-built, 100 metre Steamship is beached in the sands of Le Barcarès, serving as part of the resort - with spa, nightclub, bars, restaurants, etc. since June 1967. Originally providing an Australian coastal passenger service, she was **withdrawn in 1955 and was used for travel from Marseilles to Egypt via Italy and Greece**. Refitted to carry 460 passengers, she was laid up at Piraeus. Her engines were removed and she was towed to Le Barcarès where a special basin was cut into the sands and filled in, making her a permanent fixture in the Mediterranean resort. **Onboard this Christmas, don't miss a selection of tempting Catalan and regional culinary delights - as well as great artisanal gifts to buy for you and your loved ones!**

GETTING THERE

Take exit 13 or 14 off the RD 83

FOR MORE INFO

Office de tourisme: 04 68 86 16 56

www.portbarcares.com

Facebook: Le Barcarès Village de Noël

**GREAT
ENTERTAINMENT
AT PRICES THAT
MAKE REGULAR
THEATRE-GOING
EASY.**

Named after the lake on which it stands, this purpose-built theatre has plenty of parking space, access for the disabled, and offers high quality music, dance, theatre, comedy and culture - at prices that make regular theatre-going easy.



some highlights

Le Lac des Cygnes

Ballet

Saturday 5th October at 8.30pm
Magic moments with Tchaikovsky's
Swan Lake performed by the
Compagnie François Mauduit.

Glenn Big Band

Memories - Jazz & Swing

Thursday 17th October at 8.30pm
Climb on the Chattanooga Choo Choo with Glenn Miller, the Andrews Sisters, Duke Ellington, Cole Porter...

Le Baron Tzigane

Operetta

Sunday 10th November at 3pm
The Gypsy Baron. Hungarian landowner's son hopes to reclaim his land.

Tatie Jambon

Christmas Show

Saturday 14th December at 8.30pm
Bossa, samba, pop, électro...
Family concert, full of rock 'n' roll
and **Christmas spirit!**

-Free Cinema-

Check out the programme at www.theatre-de-letang.fr for the monthly dates of LES TOILES, FREE CINEMA FESTIVAL showing some great films on a variety of themes.

Why not get there early and take a stroll around the lake? Benches, picnic tables and a children's playground make this flat and easy lakeside stroll a pleasure.



Le Lac des Cygnes
Samedi 5 octobre - 20h30



Coup de Griffes
Mercredi 23 octobre - 20h30



Tatie Jambon
Spectacle de Noël
Samedi 14 décembre - 20h30



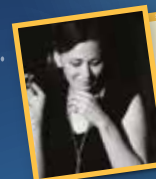
**GLENN BIG
BAND MEMORIES**
Jeudi 17 oct. 20h30



**LE BARON
TZIGANE**
Dimanche 10 nov. 15h



**MISTER
FRANCE**
Vendredi 15 nov. 20h30





STEPHANIE LIGNON
chante Barbara
Samedi 16 nov. 19h



**QUAND LES ÂNES
VOLERONT**
Mercredi 20 nov. 15h30



LES CAS TALENTS
Et si c'était ça le paradis ?
Samedi 23 Nov. à 20h30

 Billetterie : Tél. 04 68 38 34 95 - Du lundi au vendredi de 14h à 18h 
Les jours de spectacle de 18h à 20h30 - www.theatre-de-letang.fr - Magasins FNAC ou www.fnac.com

MUSIC, DANCE and THEATRE



A Automne musical en Vallespir

2019 21st September - 17th November

For a great day out, why not combine a concert with a visit to the Musée d'Art Moderne or MÚSIC (Musée des Instruments) in Céret - and an apéro or meal in one of the great bars and restaurants across the Vallespir (see pages 40-41)

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, this fabulous festival continues to promote the best in regional, national and international music with a collection of 12 superb concerts by professional musicians across the 10 communes of the Communauté de Communes du Vallespir. Organised by Musiques et Voix en Pays Catalans

PROGRAMME

Saturday 21st September at 17h

Le Perthus, Chapelle Fort de Bellegarde

Boccherini's
Sabat Mater
and Vivaldi's
Motet.
Soprano
and string
quartet.



Friday 27th September at 20h

Vivés, Eglise St Michel

Music from the opera.
with Patrice Fontanarosa (violin), Stéphanie Fontanarosa (piano), Sabine Riva (soprano).

Sunday 22nd September at 17h

Taillet, Eglise St. Valentin

Duo Canopée (harp and flute) -
from Bach to Piazzolla.



Sunday 29th September at 17h

Les Cluses Hautes, Eglise St Nazaire

Duo Cord'Eole. Viennese melodies from Mozart,
Strauss, Mendelssohn & Beethoven.



Sunday 6th October at 17h

St Jean Pla de Corts, Salle Polyvalente

Trio Thomas Leleu

Classical concert with tuba, piano and vibraphone.

Sunday 13th October at 17h

Le Boulou, Salle Les Echards

Carmina Burana by Carl Orff. Two
pianos and the Percussionists of
Barcelona with 100
singers including
soprano, tenor
and baritone,
directed by
Christian Papis.



Sunday 20th October at 17h

L'Albere, Eglise St Jean

The Trio Via Domitia: cello, guitar and flute.



Saturday 19th October at 17h

Reynes, Chapelle St Paul

Montréal Piano Duo.

Two pianos for two pianists.



Sunday 3rd November at 17h

Céret, Salle de l'Union

Mozart's

The Marriage of Figaro,
with Choir
'l'Accent Lyrique'
and 11 soloists.



Saturday 17th November at 17h

Maureillas, Foyer Communal

Closing concert: "An Evening at the Opera" presenting 3
soloists and 25 musicians from the Conservatoire in Perpignan.



Full price admission: 15€ - 17€

Members: 12€

Free for under 15s

Payment on arrival, but reservations recommended

Call 06 99 88 90 43

Email fcpc.ceret@gmail.com

Visit the website for more info.

www.amuvall.org

Restaurant REVIEWS



We love publishing your reviews. They're honest (mostly!) objective, (we hope) unrelated to advertising (bien sûr!) and cover a wide range of tastes, prices, and places. You might not always agree, the chef might be having a bad day, the restaurant might have changed hands, menus, staff, your standards might be higher...or lower – but they give you an idea of what's available.

LE CHANT DU POULPE

Port Vendres....with Jane

On the quayside in Port Vendres, this small restaurant specialises in local produce - **everything organic, even a lot of the wine**. It's part of the 'P-0 Slow Food' movement. Fresh fish from today's catch from the local fishermen on the quayside, meat raised properly outdoors, vegetarian and vegan options, unusual tapas. **Well worth a visit.**



13 Quai Pierre Forgas, Port-Vendres
Tel: 09 72 82 41 79

NU

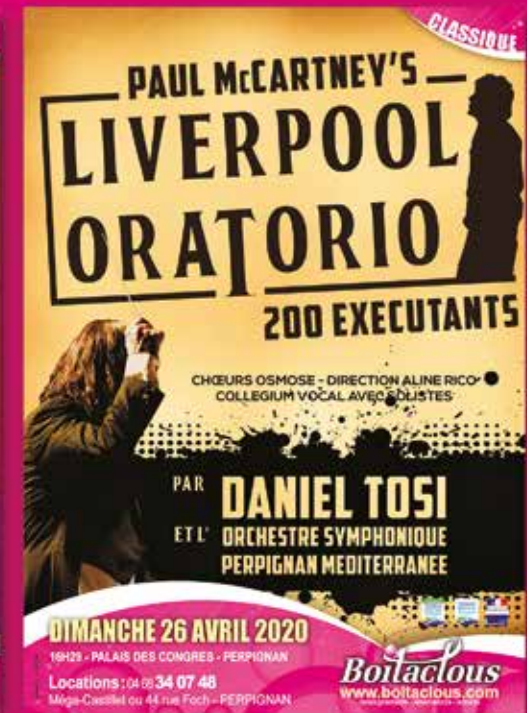
Canet-en-Roussillon... with Kate

Love this recently opened, organic restaurant and bar. Called Naked but you can leave your hat on...and the rest! Using **'only seasonal and fresh produce'**, sourced primarily from local farmers who use only organic farming methods' they do great cocktails, and the menu is original and varied with several veggie options.

Friendly waitress (**Charlotte - great English, lovely smile**) plucks fresh herbs from pots to garnish the dishes. Not cheap, but it doesn't feel cheap either. **Loved the fact that they asked us if we wanted a doggy bag for leftovers.**

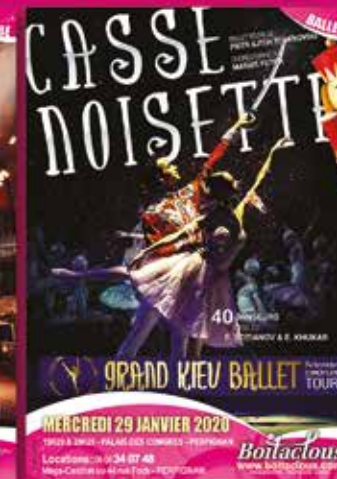


25 Avenue du Canigou,
Canet-en-Roussillon
Tel: 04 68 98 85 67



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SPECTACLES



www.boitaculous.com



Restaurant REVIEWS

LA DROGUERIE

Perpignan.... **with Elaine**

On the **corner of rues de la Cloche D'Or and des Augustins**, an unpretentious, friendly, traditional little trattoria with a shortish daily menu, and very popular with the local lunchtime crowd.

I had a fabulous smoked herring salad, zinging with flavour, and my companion was very happy with his homemade asparagus ravioli.



37 rue des Augustins
29 rue de la cloche d'or, Perpignan
Tel: 06 26 53 49 89

LE 35 BIS

Leucate Village.... **with Corita**

Food is always of a high standard and set in a beautiful setting. **Lunch time menu is particularly good value.**



35B Place de la République, Leucate
Tel: 04 68 33 92 60

LA SALAMANDRE

Sorède.... **with Victoria**

A lovely local gem! Delicious and beautifully presented food every single time... my slow cooked shoulder of lamb last week was to die for... best I have ever tasted. The tiramisu dessert is a delightful melange including cream, caramel and lovely salty crunchy bits. Lovely wine selection as well. **Very friendly English speaking owner**



7 rue Montnègre, Montner
Tel: 04 68 07 40 61

BODEGA LE 66

Villelongue dels Monts... **with Suzzane**

Love this relaxed restaurant. **Great moules, friendly service and fabulous Tapas!**



1 Quai de l'Amirauté, 66190 Collioure
Tel: 04 68 82 06 39

L'AXURIT

Villelongue de monts.... **with Malcolm**

This place is about the food and the magical touch of Nico. I'm regularly disappointed when I order a steak so ordering one here was my way of testing what Nico could do with one. I wasn't disappointed this time. **It was clearly excellent quality meat, cooked to perfection and served with a delicious Morrel sauce.** To start I really enjoyed the Aubergine and goats cheese Mille feuille and the Tiramisu ice cream to finish was lovely too. A really great evening of food from the **27€ menu.** I will be back.



29 Carrer de la Marinada,
Villelongue-Dels-Monts
Tel: 04 68 89 89 28

LE 17

Perpignan.... **with Robyn**

Had a delightful lunch here. Set menu, **3 courses 25€.** Delicious fresh fish for entree and main followed by a summer fruit dessert - very yummy. The restaurant has recently moved to a new location beside the cathedral and uses the courtyard beside the carillon. **Listed in the Michelin guide and highly recommended.**



1 rue Cite Bartissol, Perpignan,
Tel: 04 68 38 56 82

LE COURT BOUILLON

Pont de Reynès... **with Sarah...**

Recently opened, **this excellent little neighbourhood restaurant** has become our local favourite in an area where not much else shines. Very good value (and delightfully short) **evening menu €22.** The friendly young chef uses innovative ideas in preparing delicious and, importantly, locally sourced food. Also open as Cafe du Pont for breakfast and lunch.

AND with Karen

I only found Le Court Bouillon in Reynès a few weeks ago and had a truly delicious meal there. The cooking is quite sophisticated (a lot of it bio) and a bit more varied than the standard French cuisine. The flavour combinations were quite unusual, for instance cucumber boiled in mint in the sauce of the fish dish, which gave a wonderful hint of freshness to the dish. The chef is lovely and does everything - you can really feel it's a labour of love. **The menu changes each week on Tuesday, and he usually posts it up on Facebook.**



D115, 66400 Reynès
Tel: 04 68 07 54 88



Restaurant REVIEWS

Over the border

INTEGRAL

Figueres... **With Claudia**

I found this restaurant via the **Happy Cow App** (one to recommend to all vegans or vegetarians world-wide!). No outdoor seating but a cosy restaurant serving **excellent vegan food**, not easy to find in this area! A different set menu every day with 2 choices (2 soups, 2 mains, 2 desserts), and drink included. All 100% organic and vegan and the menu is really worth its price of **15,90€** which is quite moderate for the quality. I would strongly recommend to book a table (English spoken) as it can get quite busy. **This being part of Catalonia, lunch service starts at 1pm!**



Carrer de la Jonquera 30 (Figueres)
(near the Teatro Museo Dali)
Tel: +34 972 51 63 34

ESCOLA D'HOSTALERIA DE L'ALT EMPORDÀ

Figueres... **With Martina**

This is the **training restaurant of the Figueres catering college**. Three course menu at **13€** or delicious full 5 course 'degustación' menu for around **25€**. Starts with a nice glass of Cava, served by very attentive young students from the school... Best to reserve in advance.

www.ehae.cat/ca/restaurant-daplicacio.html
Que aprobeche! (Bon appétit!)



Av. Maria Angels Anglada, 15,
17600 Figueres, Girona
Tel: +34 972 52 55 56



Do you know a restaurant you would like to recommend?
We'd love to hear from you.
(Connaissez-vous un restaurant que vous voudriez recommander?
On serait ravi de vous entendre)
send your comments to us at info@anglophone-direct.com.
(no restaurant owners please!! :-)



DID YOU KNOW

YOU EITHER LOVE IT OR YOU HATE IT!

The name Marmite actually comes from the French word for cooking-pot (pronounced mar-meet) because it originally came in a small earthenware pot. You can still see the original 'Marmite' pot pictured on the front.



DOCTOR: WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?
ME: I HAVE PAIN IN BOTH LEGS



DID YOU KNOW

LA FETE DES CATHERINETTES 25th November



The 'Catherinettes' were ladies in their 20s who had not managed to hook themselves a husband by the 25th November, Feast of Saint Catherine, patron saint of young unmarried women.

In 19th century France, many single young ladies worked as hat makers. They would make hats for each other using traditional colours of yellow for faith and green for wisdom. The hats would be as outrageous as possible, worn all day, for all to see and wish them a speedy end to their single lives! Before reaching 25, a girl would pray for a 'mari de bon lieu!' (a well-situated husband).

After 25, she would pray for a husband who was 'supportable, ou qui, parmi le monde, au moins puisse passer!' (bearable, or who can at least pass as bearable) and approaching 30 would pray for 'Un tel qu'il te plaira Seigneur, je m'en contente!' (Send anyone Lord; I'll take it!).

'Capping Saint Catherine' (coiffer Sainte Catherine) became synonymous with still being still single after 25.

Parades of ladies wearing striking and outlandish hats can still be seen around on 25th November.



DID YOU KNOW

CAP BEAR IN A NEW LIGHT NOVEMBER

The lighthouse on the coast at Cap Béar has protected the beaches around Port Vendres since 1905. This state-owned and military-run site is not open to the public at present, but the government is hoping to sell the site to the conservatoire du littoral, who may well throw it open to visits in the future. At 79m above sea level, this iconic 'phare' is as eye-catching on the inside as it is on the outside, its spiral staircase constructed from marble from Villefranche de Conflent, accentuated by opal blue walls.

Don't be sad! Summer is definitely not over here in the P-O. A bright winter sun is still shining much of the time and many restaurants advertising in this edition remain open most of the season (though it's always worth giving them a ring in advance to be on the safe side!).
Bon app!

Ideas for EATING OUT



...COLLIOURE

Can Pla04 68 82 10 00
Open Feb to Mid-Nov..... www.restaurant-can-pla-collioure.com
L'Ambroisie04 68 09 79 07
Home-made, seasonal and local fare. f: Restaurant-Lambroisie
La Cave à Fédé04 68 37 80 66
Terrace bar, wine by the glass..... www.cave-fele-collioure.com
Le Jardin de Collioure04 68 95 12 52
Grilled meat & fish, snails www.lejardindecollioure.com

...ELNE

Le Carasol Hôtel & Restaurant04 68 22 10 42
info@hotelcarasol.com www.hotelcarasol.com
Au Remp'Arts04 68 22 31 95
Open all year www.remparts.fr

...ILLE-SUR-TET: See Casenoves article

Le Square04 68 61 48 40
Only fresh ingredients Shady terrace

...LAROQUE-DES-ALBÈRES

Cave Le Carignan04 68 56 83 01
Cosy Wine Bar... Belgian beers, wine at winegrowers' prices
Café des Artistes04 68 89 76 53
GAA and rugby coverage, WIFI www.cafedesartistes66.com

...LAS ILLAS

Hostal dels Trabucayres04 68 83 07 56
Resto-Hôtel-Gîte <https://hostaldelstrabucayres.fr>

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...BANYULS-SUR-MER: see Banyuls article

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Opposite Caves Byrrh f: bellacosa.thuir
Arbequina04 68 34 46 64
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P-O RECIPES

Not much beats a sweet chestnut hunt on a bright, crisp, autumn day in the P-O. Delicious roasted, steamed or pureed, chestnuts are gluten free, low in calories compared to most other nuts, and rich in minerals and vitamins. Look out for a 'castanyada' near you, village festival celebrating the sweet chestnut, traditionally held on the 1st November at Toussaint, but a hot treat on any cold day of the year. And as Halloween approaches, and the shops are full of pumpkins, why not combine the two and make some soup?



INGREDIENTS (4 PEOPLE)

250g cooked and peeled chestnuts
250g peeled and cubed pumpkin
750ml chicken or vegetable stock
2 onions, chopped
couple of stalks of celery, chopped
1 – 1½ Tbsp chopped fresh herbs (oregano works well)
salt and pepper
good pinch nutmeg
cream
chopped chives



- > Slit chestnuts and boil for 10-15 minutes. Remove outer shell & peel.
- > In a large saucepan combine stock, chestnuts, pumpkin, onion, celery & chopped herbs.
- > Bring to boil, reduce and simmer over moderate heat until pumpkin & chestnuts are tender.
- > Blend until smooth, season to taste with salt, freshly cracked pepper & nutmeg.
- > Add a little cream into bowl and top with chives.

(Also delicious without blending if you enjoy a thin, tasty soup with chunks!)

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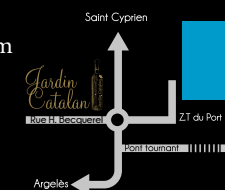
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Along the same lines as bouillabaisse, but bolder and more colourful, this rustic Catalan fisherman's stew is traditionally served on Christmas Eve to fortify people through the late night mass. The more variety of seafood you can fit in, the better. Serve with crusty bread and lots of cava.

INGREDIENTS (4 PEOPLE)

- About 2 kilos of fish and seafood:
Mussels or clams
Large prawns, peeled (leave four unpeeled for garnish)
Squid rings
Firm white fish, like monkfish or sea bass
Cooked lobster or langoustines (it's Christmas, after all)
To save time you could even use a bag of frozen seafood mix meant for paella
- About 3 cups fish stock (packet is fine)
- 2 medium onions, roughly chopped
- 1 large red pepper, chopped (or a jar)
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 400g tin tomatoes
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 pinch of saffron
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon of paprika
- Half a cup ground almonds
- Olive oil

HOW TO DO

Sauté the **onion**, **pepper** and **garlic** in the **olive oil** until soft
Add the **saffron**, **bay leaf**, **almonds**, **paprika** and **tomatoes**; simmer for 5 minutes or until amalgamated
In another pan, toss the **seafood and pieces of fish** briefly in the **olive oil** for 2 minutes
Add the **wine** to the sauce, then the fish and seafood, and stock to cover
Simmer until the fish and seafood are cooked through – about 5 minutes
Serve with **lemon wedges** and chopped **parsley**.

Buen provecho!!



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"Qu'est-ce que tu veux?"

Le mec répond :

"Viens me pousser! Il faut que tu viennes me pousser"

Excédé le propriétaire de la maison lui dit :

"Je ne te connais pas, et en plus il est 4 heures du matin, alors dégage d'ici et ne me dérange plus"

De retour dans la chambre, il se remet au lit, mais sa femme qui a tout entendu, lui dit :

"Quand même tu exagères, cela t'est déjà arrivé d'être en panne la nuit, tu aurais pu le pousser ce pauvre type !

- Ouais, mais il fait froid et en plus il est bourré !!!

- Raison de plus pour l'aider, il ne va pas y parvenir tout seul.

Vraiment, je suis très déçue de ton attitude."

Pris de remords, il se rhabille et descend.

"Hé mec. C'est d' accord, je me suis habillé exprès pour venir te pousser. Tu es où?"

Et le mec bourré répond: "Ici, sur la balançoire!"



USEFUL VOCAB

Un mec - a guy

bourré - drunk (vulg)

Viens me pousser -
come and give me a push

Il faut que tu viennes -
you have to come....

Excédé - infuriated

propriétaire - owner

Je ne te connais pas -
I don't know you

en plus - what's more...

dégage d'ici -
get out of here

De retour - back...

Quand même - really!

cela t'est déjà arrivé -
has it never happened
to you

être en panne -
to break down

ce pauvre type - poor guy

tu aurais pu le pousser - you
could have given him a push

Raison de plus -
all the more reason

il ne va pas y parvenir -
he'll never manage it

déçue - disappointed

pris de remords -
overcome with remorse

se rhabille - dresses again

C'est d' accord -
I agree (I'll do it)

exprès -
specially, deliberately

la balançoire - the swing

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DON'T FORGET TO TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK.

Sunday 27th October 2019
(clocks go back one hour during the night of Saturday/Sunday morning)

BANK HOLIDAYS

Sunday 27th October 2019

People visit cemeteries and place chrysanthemums on the graves of family members (most shops closed)

11th November - Armistice of WWI (1918).

Remembrance ceremonies and flowers placed on war memorials (most shops closed). Recently suggested that this day should represent all wars.



SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FOR OUR REGION

(zone c)

Half term: 19th October - 4th November

Christmas: 21st December - 6th January 2019

SOME CATALAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

THE PESSEBRE

A representation of the Nativity Story. Sometimes these Nativity scenes come alive, **PESSEBRES VIVANTS**, as the leading characters, dressed in period clothes, take their places in meticulously decorated stage-sets portraying traditional, historical and biblical scenes. They may sing, talk, or just stand/sit without moving, often amidst spectacular special effects and lighting.



THE CAGANER

This small statue, usually of a Catalan peasant, wearing traditional red stocking hat (a barretina,) sits with trousers half down, in a 'toilet' position, often found crouching in a corner of the Pessebre making his small contribution to the land! Today, all manner of politicians, sports stars and celebrities are given the dubious honour of being turned into a 'caganer'.



THE CAGA TIÓ

Meaning literally 'shit log', this hollow log is painted with a smiley face, covered with a blanket and 'fed' every night from December 8th. **On Christmas Day, he is beaten with sticks to make him drop the sweets and gifts placed inside him.**



SANTS INNOCENTS

28TH DECEMBER

Also known as the '**Festival of the Crazy**', today this ancient festival is more for young children - practical jokes and silly stories, much like April Fool's Day in Britain. The newspapers sometimes take advantage of this day to invent news, so watch out for what you read!



THE HOME DELS NASSOS

31ST DECEMBER

Legend says that the 'man of noses' starts the new year with as many noses as the year has days, losing one every day. By New Year's Eve day, the only day that he can be seen, he only has one nose left! One of his relatives is the 'home de les orelles', same story but this time with ears, who appears on the 30th.



THE DAY OF THE THREE KINGS

5TH JANUARY

A big celebration for children telling of the arrival of the kings with toys and sweets. At bedtime, they leave shoes and a snack near the window. On the morning of the 6th, good kids find gifts from the kings, and naughty ones find a piece of coal (usually accompanied by a gift!)



Travel to and from the P-O has become more and more problematic over the past few years. Not only do we have to look further away for suitable flights, but transport to and from the chosen airport can also pose different problems. We don't have all the solutions, but we do have some lovely readers who are happy to share their experiences. How about you? Can you provide any tips for getting to and from an airport?

TO BARCELONA AIRPORT BY TRAIN...

WITH GILL AND FIONA



At this time of year, flight options from the UK to the P-O are limited and many flights require travel to and from Barcelona airport. We decided to take a day trip to this beautiful city (it's a hard job but somebody has to do it!) and check out train travel to El Prat airport, Barcelona.



From here to an AIRPORT

THE 'ALLER'

To Barcelona Airport

Head for **Figueres**, a 20 minute drive from the Spanish border at **Le Perthus**, and follow signs for **Figueres-Vilafant station** to take the fast train to Barcelona.



Be careful. Vilafant is not the main station in Figueres although if you do accidentally end up at the small main station just off the centre, you can still get a train to Barcelona; cheaper tickets but a much longer journey of around 2hours 55mins.

No reason to get lost though as Vilafant is well signposted with signs for **AVE**, the name for the TGV in Spain. The train journey takes 55 minutes to Barcelona Sants train station.

There is a large car park next to the entrance. Check out www.saba.es for more details and reservations.

Alternatively you can start your journey from **Perpignan** but there are fewer train options.

To check train times and buy tickets:

<http://www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros>. If you prefer to use an English website for buying train tickets use www.loco2.com/

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From here to an AIRPORT

The AVE/TGV train goes into **Barcelona Sants Estació**. From here you need to take another train directly to the airport. (or a bus or taxi directly outside the station of course, but we are only looking at train travel on this trip.) **This 'navette' always runs from either platform 9 or 10 and takes 19 minutes.** (Notorious for very clever pickpockets, keep your hand on your luggage and any valuables well out of reach.)

THE 'RETOUR'

From the main airport, cross over the covered bridge and **take the navette train back to Sants Estació**, a journey of 19 minutes. Sit on the left hand side of the train and **get off at 'Barna Sants'** (the platform sign reads **Barcelona Sants**). At Sants, go upstairs to the main train station. Take the fast train **Figueres – Vilafant** which takes 55 minutes. The platforms for the fast train are on the far right of the ticket office. **The trains only run from platforms 5 or 6.**

Beach and Fly?

Want to give your sun tan a final blast before handing over your hire car and catching your plane in Barcelona....and avoid sitting for too long in a stuffy airport full of winter germs? **Why not wait on the beach?** Check out a couple of seaside towns near Barcelona El Prat Airport worth a visit.

Around 20 minute drive from the airport.... Sitges

Lively and authentic Spanish seaside resort with delightful old town full of attractive buildings, shops and restaurants, bars and museums, pleasant beach and pretty marina.

Around 25 minute drive from the airport.... Vilanova i la Geltrú

Pretty marina, plenty of shops and great fish restaurants, old walls, medieval castle, museums, ancient church and clean, wide beaches.



>VILANOVA BEACH

Or just behind the airport... El Prat de Llobregat beach

Long and sandy beach, perfect for 'plane spotters and a **crick in your neck as they land and take off just over your head every 5 minutes or so!** (Warning: the area between the airport and the beach is a little dodgy! Only choose this option if you can go there by car.)



CARCASSONNE AIRPORT TO THE P-O

WITH ALAN FOSTER

When coming to stay in the PO, it's easy to fly to the nearest airport, hop in a hire car and drive on. But as car hire costs escalate, **here is an alternative suggestion for anyone lucky enough to be able to take advantage of public transport (particularly a €1 bus)** which takes them to Perpignan before mid-day.

THE 'ALLER'

We flew to **Carcassonne** [flights from various UK airports] and took a €6 navette to the station and checked into a modestly priced central hotel. A wander over to the Cité over the footbridge, a quick look inside the chapel on the right before you cross the river, back to the old part for maximum charm, and supper in one of our favourite restaurants.

The next morning, you can get a train to Perpignan, but **we took the (very) early morning Ouibus (www.ouibus.com)** direct to Perpignan (approx €11 for 2), picked up some breakfast, and **then a €1 bus to our second home in Port Vendres.**

>CARCASSONNE



'THE RETOUR'

Our return was particularly pretty. **After a €1 bus to Perpignan, we took the 12.20 € 1 bus to Quillan** – sit on the right side of the bus for the best views of the Cathar castle, the river and the red train route. In May the wild flowers by the roadside were spectacular. We took a picnic to eat. If you prefer, **you can stop at Axat, for white water rafting and other river fun** (check times first).

Quillan itself is small and quiet, with the Aude running through it. **There are various hotels in Quillan: we stayed near the station, but the best views are from the Castle Hotel, on the river, opposite the ancient ruined castle.**



>QUILLAN

In the morning, there is a €1 bus (it seems to be an almost permanent bus replacement service) from the station to Carcassonne, (www.ter.sncf.com/occitanie) with plenty of time for lunch before picking up the navette back to the airport.

So..... the total return cost for two people was under €50 - €24 for the navettes, €11 for Ouibus and an astonishing €8 in €1 buses – plus two nights in a hotel and the flights of course.

PS On our last trip, in June, we returned on the €1 bus to Quillan. The wild flowers had gone, replaced with growing vines and trees groaning under apricots ready to harvest. **We had an hour or two in Quillan, a picnic by the river, before taking another €1 bus on to Limoux.** Bisected by the river, with the station on one side and most of the hotels and restaurants on the other, it's the home to France's oldest sparkling wine, Blanquette (older than Champagne), and it's "little sister" Crémant. There must be few nicer things than sitting in the main square in the sunshine with a chilled flute of bubbles.



The easiest way to pay for this journey is to purchase a booklet of 10 tickets (T10-1 zone) which also cover buses and the Barcelona metro, and can be bought from a machine in the main station. They can be kept for the return journey and future use too.

At the airport, check which terminal you are flying from. (Ryanair is usually Terminal 1.) **For Terminal one it's a short walk from the train station using a pedestrian linked tunnel.**

For Terminal 2 use the free airport bus which takes about 10 minutes.





WINTER 2019 / 20

The winter season starts after the last weekend in October. Some flights might operate into the first week of November. What is really noticeable is how few flights to the south of France there are in the winter compared to the summer months. Some airline schedules completely omit the south of France at this time of year. The startling news is at **Girona** where, for the second winter running, there are no winter flights from either the UK or Ireland, incredible after a really busy summer. Once again Barcelona's **El Prat airport** has the vast majority of traffic.

NOVEMBER 2019 – MARCH 2020 FRANCE



BEZIERS

Like Carcassonne, Ryanair has a free run at this small airport. In the summer five routes were operated, but this has now been cut to just Luton for the winter months.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
LUTON	2	RYANAIR

CARCASSONNE

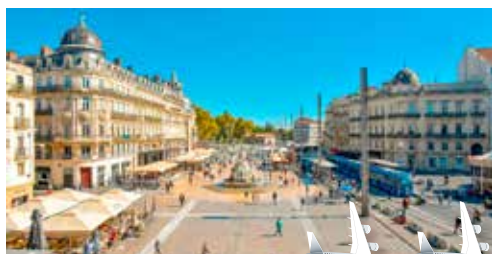
Ryanair remains the sole operator here, with three routes operating in the winter.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
MANCHESTER	2	RYANAIR
STANSTED	3	RYANAIR
DUBLIN	2	RYANAIR

MONTPELLIER

The airport we use as easyJet has daily flights from Gatwick in the summer, and in fact this London airport is the only UK destination served this winter as the Luton service terminates in the autumn.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
GATWICK	4 - 7	EASYJET



NIMES

Ryanair is the sole operator for P-O readers, but not in the winter.



PERPIGNAN

Sad news is that yet again we have a winter with no direct UK flights or Irish flights.

TOULOUSE / BLAGNAC

More flights to Toulouse from UK regional airport in the winter due to skiing opportunities, with Andorra



not too far away. Ryanair has increased Stansted flights to twice daily. In contrast easyJet has reduced their flights from UK regional airports.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BRISTOL	4	EASYJET
EDINBURGH	2	RYANAIR
GATWICK	14	EASYJET
HEATHROW	20	BRITISH AIRWAYS
LUTON	2 - 4	EASYJET
STANSTED	14	RYANAIR
DUBLIN	3	AER LINGUS

Please note that these are the average number of flights per week, and will be variable in the shoulder and peak seasons. If you think I have missed any then please contact us at P-O.

SPAIN

BARCELONA / EL PRAT

New here is a daily Ryanair service from Luton, whilst the Manchester service has increased. Stansted too has increased to five flights a day. Vueling have increased their Gatwick flights to 43 a week, with some very good midweek fares. Both easyJet and Norwegian have increased their Gatwick flights giving an amazing 96 scheduled flights a week between Gatwick and Barcelona!

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BIRMINGHAM	7	RYANAIR
BRISTOL	9	EASYJET
EDINBURGH	6	RYANAIR
GATWICK	39	EASYJET
	14	NORWEGIAN
	43	VUELING
GLASGOW INT'L	2	JET2
HEATHROW	52	BRITISH AIRWAYS
LEEDS-BRADFORD	2 - 4	JET2
LIVERPOOL	6	EASYJET
	3	RYANAIR
LUTON	22	EASYJET
	7	RYANAIR
MANCHESTER	2 - 4	JET2
	9	RYANAIR
NEWCASTLE	2 - 4	EASYJET
SOUTHEND	2 - 3	EASYJET
STANSTED	35	RYANAIR
DUBLIN	11 - 14	AER LINGUS
	18	RYANAIR

GIRONA



Ryanair has confirmed its intention to close the airline's base in Girona airport from January 2020, blaming the decision on falling profits and the delay in the delivery of the grounded Boeing 737 MAX, that has left the company with 900 more pilots and crew than it needs. They added that Girona is not profitable in the winter season.

At the time of writing, (mid September) Ryanair has not yet identified which routes may continue to operate.

All being well, Jet2 will use Girona again next year.

P-O Life

HOT PINK lady Loos

Squatting - and we're not talking about illegal house occupation - is coming to town! How do you feel about open-air peeing next time you attend a festival or outdoor event ladies?



Lapee Urinals (yes, really. I josh you not) are a bright pink Danish creation now **distributed by a company right here in Occitanie, near Toulouse**. They will be hired out for outdoor functions where ladies may wish to pee quickly and safely, without having to put up with the usual long queues. (Pipi only, in, out shake it all about and back in time for the next set!)



So how does it work? "Guys have to be covered only from the front but the female has to be covered from front and back" explain designers **Gina Périer** and **Alexander Egebjerg** so this lady loo, based on the idea of a man's urinal unit, has raised sides for privacy and a more generous bullseye to aim for in the centre.

Each spiral has three units, allowing three pee-ers at a time. Head and shoulders pop out of the top (depending on your height) so users can be 'aware of their surroundings', chat to the neighbour, discuss the weather....

It's definitely a win in the struggle for pee-quality!

These lady loos have no doors, need no water or electricity and are believed to be more hygienic and much quicker and easier to use than the usual portapotties supplied on festival grounds.

Well, the increased hygiene gets my vote, the lack of privacy less so - and I anticipate problems for short-legged ladies like myself.



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PERPIGNAN / CÉRET

P-O Life BREXIT: travelling with YOUR PET

Pet passports, micro-chips and tattoos have made travelling through Europe with animals relatively simple. However, once Britain leaves the EU, British citizens, and their pets, will no longer qualify as part of this scheme. In fact, following a no-deal Brexit, the UK will be considered as an 'unlisted' country, with a whole new set of criteria that pets and their owners must adhere to.



The latest from the British government (September 2019) states:

"To make sure your pet is able to travel from the UK to the EU after Brexit, you should contact your vet at least four months before travelling to get the latest advice."

Although Britain has said that UK border agency staff will continue to accept pet passports for animals coming from Europe in to the UK, it has been suggested that they will not be accepted going the other way.

....>>

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Returning TO THE UK

For the moment, the UK has confirmed that the Pet Passport will continue to be accepted when travelling with your pets. There will be no change to the current regulations in terms of preparing your pet for re-entry into the UK.

LOOPHOLE?

According to the British government website, you do not have to wait the 3 months before travelling if your pet has a successful blood test before leaving the EU.

As with all things Brexit, these details are JUST GUIDELINES until the UK's divorce settlement is finalised. However, if you're planning to travel between France and the UK around Christmas, it may well be worth making a rendez-vous with your vet sooner rather than later.

Travelling TO FRANCE

A current EU pet passport issued in the UK will not be valid for travel to the EU if the UK becomes an unlisted country so you will need to do the following, at least 3 months before your date of travel:

- A UK vet must take a blood sample at least 30 days after your pet's last rabies vaccination and send the sample to an EU-approved blood testing laboratory
- The results of the blood test must show a rabies antibody level of at least 0.5 IU/ml
- The vet must give you a copy of the test results and enter the day the blood sample was taken on an animal health certificate
- No more than 10 days before your date of travel, you must visit an official vet to get a health certificate, which will be valid for a UK departure within the following 10 days. It will also be valid for onward travel through Europe and a return to the UK for 4 months.

TO OBTAIN THE CERTIFICATE, YOU WILL NEED:

- Your pet's vaccination history
- Your pet's micro-chipping date
- A successful rabies antibody blood test result



For more details, visit the government website at www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexite



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Tried and TASTED



WITH **TONY GOODMAN**

Red, Red Wine and Chicken Dinner Winner

It's been another fantastic high summer in the PO. Visitors, heatwaves, grilled fish and concerts. The days are now comparatively cooler, air's fresher. Time for a roast chicken dinner, yorkshire pudding, seasonal veg and one of the region's lighter reds.

THE WINE

CHATEAU JAU

JAUIAU 1er 15%

Le Jaja de Jau Merlot 13.5%

Lovely deep red. Fruity never floral aroma. Plenty of red cherry and gentle pepper. A great fun, fantastic value performer. 4.50€ Serve 14° - 16°C.



JONQUERES D'ORIOLA

La Canaille Vin épicurien 12.5%

Mourvèdre, Grenache Noir, Syrah. Deep rose to ruby red. Light with plenty of peppery charm. Fresh forest fruit aroma. It would enjoy a few minutes in the fridge if its hot out.

7.90€ Serve 14°C



CHATEAU CALADROY

Pierre Droite Cotes de Rousillion 14%

Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre. Deep red. Plenty of Val de L'Agly schist and southern French tannins. Elegant, long legged and lovely. Black olive with hints of liquorice.

20€ Serve 14 – 17C



CHATEAU VALMY

V DE VALMY ROUGE 12.5%

Luscious deep ruby red Grenache/Syrah entertainer. Structured, lighter, will not overpower the roast chicken. Berries, liquorice and round soft tannins. Fantastic value 7.90€ Serve around 15°C

THE CHICKEN DINNER

- Choose a free range slightly plump mature bird.
- Hot water over the skin, dry well then olive oil all over.
- Slide a knob of butter under the breast skin.
- Simple herb stuffing or a thin peel of lemon, a garlic clove and a thyme sprig. Lightly season.
- Plenty of heat for the first 15 minutes then slow and low for flavour develop.
- Rest around 10 mins.

For the pudding use Mary Berry's batter. Dial the oven all the way up. Sunflower oil only for the tin, batter in when it starts to fizz. Ready when tall and tanned.



Comments or questions?
Contact me at:
wineclub66@gmail.com

All things weird & WONDERFUL

This time we're exploring the weird, the wonderful & one or two myths about creatures both common & rare that live alongside us in the PO.



> HOW DO SNAKES EAT LARGE PREY?

They don't dislocate their jaws. The upper and lower jaws are connected by a super-stretchy ligament which allows them to open their mouths wide enough to swallow whole prey much bigger than themselves. Digestive juices subsequently break down the animal. Yum.



THE NON-VENOMOUS LADDER SNAKE (COULEUVRE À ÉCHELONS) - COMMON HERE - CAN GULP DOWN RABBITS AND BIRDS



> WHAT'S THE LIFE EXPECTANCY OF A BUTTERFLY?

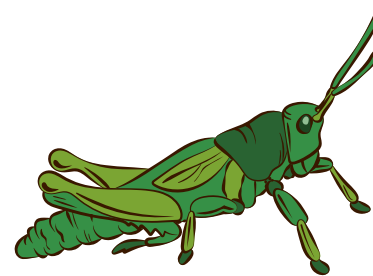
It would be too sad if these flying jewels lived for one day only. Happily, most survive for several weeks and some species hibernate, such as the PO's stunning Cleopatra (Citron de Provence), finding shelter in plants like ivy.



♂ MALE CLEOPATRA. FEMALES ARE PALE YELLOW, WITHOUT THE ORANGE FLUSH



THE PAINTED LADY > (BELLE-DAME) MIGRATES HUGE DISTANCES

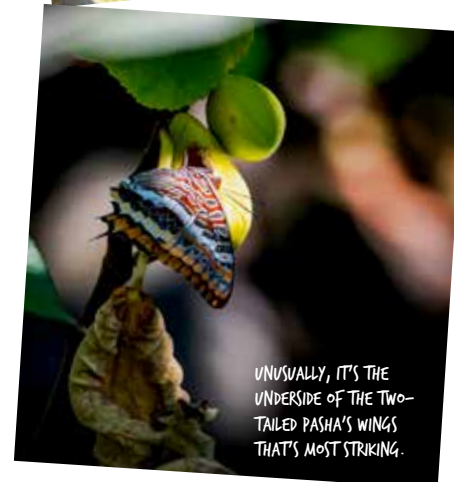


> NOT ALL BUTTERFLIES FEED ON FLOWERS

Arguably our most spectacular butterfly, the two-tailed Pasha (Nymphale de l'arbousier) gets its French name because the caterpillars feed exclusively on Strawberry trees (l'arbousier). The butterfly, however, only drinks nectar from fruit - never flowers. If you have a fig tree, why not leave some fruit for them and other insects to enjoy?



EASY TO MISTAKE FOR A SMALL BIRD WHEN SEEN IN FLIGHT FROM THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE. THIS ONE IS COMPETING WITH A EUROPEAN HORNET.



UNUSUALLY, IT'S THE UNDERSIDE OF THE TWO-TAILED PASHA'S WINGS THAT'S MOST STRIKING.

HUMMINGBIRD HAWKMOTH (SPHINX) >



> CAN INSECTS HEAR?

Yes. Hearing can help them with communication, navigation and defense. Many have the same mechanism as the eardrum of humans and other animals, although it's not necessarily on their head. In the bush cricket, it's on their legs!



GREAT GREEN BUSH CRICKET (GRANDE SAUTERELLE VERTE)

- Crickets and grasshoppers, along with butterfly and moth caterpillars, also use small, stiff hairs to sense sound vibrations. Caterpillars often respond to sound by exhibiting defensive behaviours; some will stop moving while others will contract and rear up.
- Weirder still, certain hawkmoths have a structure in their mouths that enables them to hear ultrasonic sounds such as those produced by echolocating bats.
- And some insects possess a group of sensory cells on their antennae that collect auditory information in vibrations. Bees use it to help locate food sources.



BIRDS



> WHERE DO THEY SLEEP?

For most, a nest is only constructed to hold eggs and chicks. Outside the breeding season songbirds will roost in trees or some kind of vegetation. Cavity-nesters, such as some owls and woodpeckers (**hiboux et pics**), may use the same hole to sleep in overnight as they did for nesting, but they usually have a number of possible roosting sites in their territories.

- In wintertime here, the orchards and vineyards are popular feeding sites for mixed flocks of **goldfinches, chaffinches and linnets** (**chardonnerets élégants, pinsons des arbres, linottes mélodieuses**). They will form communal roosts several kilometres away, in the inner branches of trees (especially oaks).
- Throughout the summer, **swallows and house martins** (**hirondelles rustiques et hirondelles de fenêtre**) have several broods in the same mud nests under the eaves of village houses. In Africa for the winter, however, they find safety in numbers in shared roosts, often at reedbed sites where they perch together on reed stems.

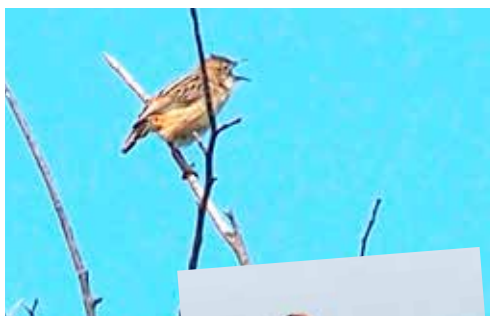


HOUSE MARTIN NESTS

> DO MALES AND FEMALES SING THE SAME SONGS?

Males are generally more **tuneful** because they're trying to attract a mate and proclaim their territory. While **females do communicate with calls**, most species don't sing the same song as their partners. Robins (**rougegorges familiers**) are one exception.

- Male **golden orioles** (**loriots d'Europe**), arriving here from Africa in late April, have a distinctive **tropical, liquid song**. Although females might sing a weaker version, they are more often associated with a harsh, rasping call that's a cross between an angry cat's squawk and the "kwaach" of a jay (**geai des chênes**).
- Male **cuckoos** (**coucous gris**) call "cook-oo!", whereas **females make a sound like bathwater gurgling down a plughole!**
- The instantly recognizable "too-whit too-whoo" of the **tawny owl** (**chouette hulotte**) is in fact a duet. The **female calls "too-whit" and the male responds, "too-whoo"**.



THE MALE FAN-TAILED WARBLER (**ISTICOLE DES JONCS**) CALLS "ZIP...ZIP...ZIP" IN FLIGHT ABOVE GRASSLAND



THE MALE WOODHAT SHRIKE (**PIE-GRIÈCHE À TÊTE ROUSSE**), A SUMMER RESIDENT OF PO ORCHARDS, HAS AN UNREMARKABLE SONG – A MISHMASH OF HITTERS AND WHISTLES.

MAMMALS



> BLACK SQUIRRELS IN THE PO?

Not really. The only species here is the red squirrel (**écureuil roux**) – it's just that some are so dark they appear black.

> WHAT'S THAT CAT?

The **genet** (**genette commune**) was introduced by Moors in the Middle Ages but is now considered indigenous. Though common here, **they are rarely seen because they're nocturnal**. They can squeeze their flexible bodies through any opening larger than their heads, and have retractable claws – useful for climbing trees to hunt birds. But **their diet is mixed and also includes small mammals, bats, birds' eggs, frogs, millipedes, centipedes, scorpions and fruits**.



GENET © GUÉRIN NICOLAS

Wild cats (**chats sauvages**) live in remote wooded areas. They are distinguishable from the normal tabby by their bigger size and three broad, black stripes towards the end of their thick tail. These are rare and very shy but do cross-breed with domestic cats.



WILD CAT © ACONAGUA



WILD CAT >

> FOXES KILL FOR FUN. DON'T THEY?

Foxes (**renards**) are unlikely to view killing as a sport in the same way some humans do, but their predatory instinct is so strong, they'll kill any available surplus prey – especially if it's an easy catch. If possible, **they may bury some or all of the surplus, to eat another time when hunting is less good**. It's a successful survival strategy. After taking one bird from a henhouse they may intend to keep returning for the rest, but often don't get the chance because the owner will have cleared up the corpses.

- Foxes are related to wolves, jackals and dogs but are the only members of the dog family that can climb trees
- However, unlike dogs, **they have vertically-oriented pupils** which allow them to see in dim light. So, like cats, they are most active after sundown
- Also like cats, they have sensitive whiskers and spines on their tongues



SEA CREATURES

► NOT-SO-FRIENDLY DOLPHINS?

Infrequently spotted in this part of the Med, dolphins (**dauphins**) have a dark side: they sometimes attack and kill porpoises – for no reason apparent to us humans – but don't eat them. And males are also prone to sexual harassment and infanticide!

OCTOPUSSY FACTS

- Only molluscs, crustaceans, and some fish need fear octopuses (**poulpes**) – they don't harm us.
- Their brains have signs of complexity and electrical patterns similar to those of humans.
- But while the human brain can be seen as a central controller, all 8 limbs of an octopus can act on their own or in coordination with one another.
- Among other displays of intelligence, these creatures can build shelters for themselves with stones or shells, & the Mimic octopus can change its shape, movement and behavior to impersonate at least 15 different – often venomous – species.
- And yet, after mating, males will die within a few weeks. The females protect their eggs for several months but die once the eggs have hatched. What a waste of brain power!



DID YOU KNOW

Have you ever wondered what the D in D-Day stands for?

It stands for 'day' exactly the same as the french equivalent 'Jour-J' and the Spanish 'Día-D'.

In the army D-Day is the specific day on which a combat attack or operation is planned.

The best known D-Day was Operation Overlord on June 6th 1944 during World War II, the day of the Normandy landings. Many other operations entitled D—Day have also taken place. Operation Dragoon was the codename for the lesser-known but equally important Allied invasion of Provence which took place 2 months later on 15 August 1944 to liberate southern France from Nazi occupation. Under heavy attack, the German Army abandoned southern France.

The hour an attack to take place is designated, not surprisingly, H-Hour.



LE DORMEUR DU VAL

BY
ARTHUR
RIMBAUD

C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent; où le soleil de la montagne fière,
Luit; C'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

Un soldat jeune bouche ouverte, tête nue,
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pale dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme:
Nature, berce-le chaudement: il a froid.

Les parfums ne font plus frissonner sa narine;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au coté droit.

*It is a green hollow where a stream gurgles,
Crazily snagging its silver tatters on the grasses;
Where the sun shines from the proud mountain:
It is a little valley bubbling over with light.*

*A young soldier, open-mouthed, bare-headed,
With the nape of his neck bathed in cool blue cress,
Sleeps; he is stretched out on the grass, under the sky,
Pale on his green bed where the light falls like rain.*

*His feet in the yellow flags, he lies sleeping. Smiling as
A sick child might smile, he is having a nap:
Cradle him warmly, Nature: he is cold.*

*No scent makes his nostrils quiver;
He sleeps in the sun, his hand on his breast
At peace. There are two red holes in his right side.*



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Barry BLEND

Barry Blend, true to his name, loves nothing more than mixing things together.

Like a magician, he performs feats of dazzling dexterity with shapes and forms, investing his work with depth and whimsy at the same time.

On his **Dog's head guitar**, the image stripped to its essentials is twisted onto the playing surface. The teeth seem to be biting off the neck while the eyes and one ear are curled around the base of the body. The distortion of forms is reminiscent of Picasso, but with Mr. Blend's special brand of humour.



A guitar was all Blend owned when he discovered Collioure over 35 years ago. He made the switch from travelling troubadour, to the more sedentary life of an artist once he met his wife who also painted watercolours on the port.

His love of music lives on in the paintings and sculptures displayed in **his gallery on Rue de la Fraternité**.

Guitars, trumpets and tubas expand or contract as in a cartoon. Blend gives free reign to his iconoclastic representation of familiar shapes which seem to be pushing their way out of the confines of the canvas.



In fact, he has created a group of works in which elements escape from the painted surface altogether: a billowing sail, the three-tiered wedding cake of the Chateau Royal or a cat's paw burst into the third dimension.



Starting in 2008, Blend has produced a series of sculptures. Constructed with polystyrene and resin, then painted and covered with a multitude of varnishes, these pieces are exuberant experiments in expansion and compression. **His sculpture of a piano player** is refined to two bulbous hands and a bow-tied head resting on the purple and white keys. In his **saxophone player sculpture**, the bell of the horn swells to massive dimensions, dwarfing the cool cat musician in his green fedora and electric blue suit.



This autumn issue of P.O. Life bears a cover especially designed by Barry Blend on the theme of the **grape harvest**. Now is a good time to visit his gallery and discover the surprising works of this original artist.

For further details see: www.barryblend.com

Test your FRENCH

Tongue Twister

Repeat quickly three times!

Un plat plein de pâtes plates

See Page 89 for answers

1 T pour Thé!

Match up the words, all beginning with T with their definitions

(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

toile	1	a	l'arrière du pied
tintinnabuler	2	b	on y met l'argent pour économiser
tabouret	3	c	femelle du porc
tuyau	4	d	fabriquée par une araignée
truie	5	e	sorte d'agrafe pour réunir des papiers
trombone	6	f	couper pour donner une forme
talon	7	g	ce qui reste de la pomme
tirelire	8	h	h long tube
trognon	9	i	le bruit des cloches
tailler	10	j	siège haut sans dossier

Blague Sexiste

Une femme demande à son mari
 "Pourquoi tu me regardes comme ça?"
 "J'ai le hoquet"
 "Et alors?"
 "Et bien, j'essaie de me faire peur."
 (le hoquet – hiccups et bien – well/so
 me faire peur – to frighten myself)

Language Tip

Pas mal de – quite a few
 Il y a pas mal de bons
 restaurants à Perpignan

2

As Clear as Mud

Can you finish off these well known similes...as quick as a flash?

Boire comme... (Drink like a fish)	1	a	une casserole
Simple comme... (Easy as A,B,C)	2	b	un renard
Dormir comme... (Sleep like a log)	3	c	un clou
Manger comme... (Eat like a horse)	4	d	un pot
Sourd comme... (Deaf as a post)	5	e	un trou
Maigre comme... (Thin as a lath)	6	f	un loir
Chanter comme... (Sing badly)	7	g	une vache espagnole
Rire comme... (Laugh your head off)	8	h	une baleine
Rusé comme... (Crafty as a fox)	9	i	quatre
Parler français comme... (Speak french badly)	10	j	bonjour

3

Confused? You soon will be! More of those false friends to remind you that learning french is not always *une promenade dans le parc!* Here are the french words. Can you find their english equivalents?

location	1	a	advert
bouton	2	b	item of clothing
pub	3	c	spot
coin	4	d	bread
soldes	5	e	dirty
car	6	f	change
sale	7	g	coach
monnaie	8	h	sales
habit	9	i	rental
pain	10	j	corner



Really Silly Joke

Un cactus dit à un autre :
 "Connais-tu le langage des hommes, toi?"
 "Oui" répond l'autre cactus. "C'est facile.
 Ils disent tous "AïE!"."
 (Aie - ouch)

Another Very Silly Joke

Une maman demande à son fils Paul, est-ce que je suis une bonne mère?
 Maman, je m'appelle Lucien!

Words that sound the same, spell the same but have different meanings.

un avocat — an avocado
 un avocat — a lawyer



Test your FRENCH

4

TEST YOUR IDIOMATIC FRENCH

1. L'expression 'filer à l'anglaise' veut dire...

- a) ... partir en vacances
- b) ... courir après les filles
- c) ... partir sans permission

2. Si vous avez 'les dents longues', vous êtes...

- a) ... malade
- b) ... ambitieux
- c) ... un vampire

3. Quand vous avez 'la chair de poule' vous avez ...

- a) ... froid
- b) ... honte
- c) ... faim

4. L'expression 'perdre la boule' signifie...

- a) ... être gros
- b) ... devenir fou
- c) ... perdre un jeu

5. Si vous vous creusez la tête, vous...

- a) ... allez à l'hôpital
- b) ... réfléchissez
- c) ... travaillez dans le jardin

6. Si 'j'appuie sur le champion' je...

- a) ... fais la cuisine
- b) ... me promène dans les bois
- c) ... roule très vite

7. L'expression 'poser un lapin' veut dire...

- a) ... aller à la chasse
- b) ... ne pas aller à un rendez-vous
- c) ... manger un ragout

8. Si quelqu'un 'te prend la tête'...

- a) ... il t'énervé
- b) ... il te coiffe
- c) ... il te frappe

9. Si ça coûte 'bonbon'...

- a) ... c'est sucré
- b) ... c'est cher
- c) ... c'est gratuit

Useful Expression

MINE DE RIEN... ..

Without realising, despite appearances, you'd hardly notice, you'd never realise....

This is one of those expressions with loads of meanings which must adapt to context

Eg Mine de rien, il a fait un bon travail.

You wouldn't have expected it but he did a good job.

Il a réussi mine de rien à lui faire sourire.

Somehow or other, he got him to smile.

Language Tip

NOT ALL PLURALS ARE FORMED BY ADDING S.

Nouns ending in s, x, and z... don't change in the plural

Nouns ending in eau or eu ... add x

Nouns ending in al... change to aux

SOME NOUNS DON'T FOLLOW ANY RULES AT ALL

5

CAN YOU FIND THE PLURALS OF THESE NOUNS?

oeil

nez

monsieur

hôpital

ciel

chapeau

prix

travail

mademoiselle

bus

Och Aye THE NOO!

BY PENNY O'KANE



The Comrie Pipe Band from Perthshire are coming to the PO this October to showcase their music and to bring a tiny bit of Scotland to the region. The 20-piece band, including bagpipers, drummers, a fiddler, accordionist and dancer, will be parading through the streets in their full regalia playing a medley of traditional Scottish tunes.



> LA CORNEMUSE - BAGPIPES

You can catch them in Maureillas, Perpignan, Collioure, Figueres and Ceret between the dates of 14 and 18 October (precise dates and times to follow).

The band are raising money locally for the trip to France, and Maureillas Sans Frontières are organising fund-raising activities for their expenses while they are in the region. There is a concert of Scottish music and dance in Maureillas on 21 September, and there are tombola tickets on sale now. If you would like to help keep the "auld alliance" alive by selling or buying raffle tickets, lending a hand or making a donation however small, please contact Ruth L'Hostis at maureillassansfrontieres@hotmail.fr.

So grab your tartan, adjust your sporrans and come and skip the Gay Gordons to welcome this talented band to the PO.

DID YOU KNOW

PIN A CORNFLOWER NEXT TO YOUR POPPY.

The poppy is a powerful and iconic symbol of remembrance in England, but did you know that the French have an equivalent, 'Le Bleuet de France', their own poignant reminder of the First World War? This cornflower used to grow abundantly in France, and, like the poppy, was often the only sign of life, and colour amidst the mud and desolation of WW1. It was also used to describe new, young soldiers of WW1, whose bright blue uniforms initially stood out in sharp contrast to the grey and muddy misery of the trenches.

Still relatively unknown internationally (and little known amongst the younger French generation), funds from its sale continue to support veterans and their families. Look out for Le Bleuet de France on November 11th, the only day it is sold, and pin a cornflower next to your poppy.



Améliorez votre ANGLAIS

See Page 89 for answers



**Tongue twister
(virelangue)**

**Fresh
fried fish !**

**Do NOT Read
the Next
Sentence.**

**You little rebel.
I like you.**

1 C is for Cool!

Trouvez la définition des mots suivants
qui commencent tous avec la lettre C

- | | | | |
|----------|----|---|----------------------------|
| cackle | 1 | a | young cow/back of leg |
| cheat | 2 | b | shout of encouragement |
| customer | 3 | c | thick, sweet, yellow sauce |
| crust | 4 | d | hold close in your arms |
| coward | 5 | e | underground room |
| cellar | 6 | f | act dishonestly |
| custard | 7 | g | who is afraid |
| calf | 8 | h | hard outer layer |
| cuddle | 9 | i | Loud, silly laugh |
| cheer | 10 | j | person who pays |

Quelquefois nos corps nous déçoivent. Un peu de vocabulaire au cas où !

To have hiccups (hik-ups) - avoir le hoquet "Oh no, I have hiccups again"
To sneeze - éternuer "Ah...ah... ah... I'm going to sneeze!"
To break wind/to fart "Ooops Sorry. I just farted!"
To burp - roter "Pardon me, I burped"
To dribble - baver "Be careful! You're dribbling!"
To spit - cracher "Move away. He spits when he speaks!"

Language Tip

take - prendre
take over - prendre la main
overtake - doubler, dépasser

3 Encore quelques expressions qui sont 'very British' Trouvez leur équivalent en Français.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---|------------------------------|
| The full Monty | 1 | a | Je suis fatigué |
| It's a doddle | 2 | b | Je suis très content |
| I'm cream crackered | 3 | c | C'est du n'importe quoi |
| It's a load of codswallop | 4 | d | Il est malade |
| They're chockablock | 5 | e | Ils sont pleins à craquer |
| I'm dead chuffed | 6 | f | Il était époustoufflé |
| He's full of beans | 7 | g | Le maximum, tout |
| Don't get shirty! | 8 | h | Ne sois pas de mauvais poil! |
| He was gobsmacked! | 9 | i | Il pète le feu! |
| He's got the dreaded lurgy | 10 | j | C'est facile |

2 Remplissez les blancs

An 1 grandma brings a bus driver a 2 of
peanuts every day.

At first the bus driver 3 the peanuts but after a
4 of eating them he says: "Please don't bring
me peanuts anymore. Eat them 5".

Granny answers: "No 6. I don't have any 7 left.
I prefer just to suck off the 8 around them."

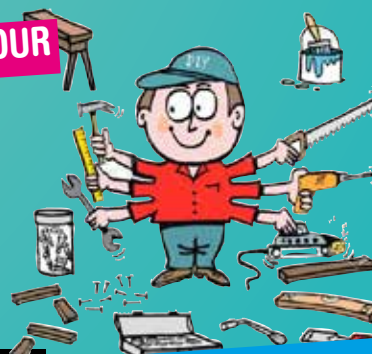
a yourself b bag c week d thanks e teeth
f enjoys g old h chocolate

OUCH ! THAT ENGLISH HUMOUR

My friend said to me:
"What rhymes with orange"
I said: "no it doesn't"

What did the pirate say when
he turned 80 years old?
"Aye matey."

What did you think
of that new
restaurant on the
moon?
Food was good,
but there wasn't
much atmosphere.



USEFUL ADVICE!!!

Ladies. Don't nag! If a man says he
will fix something, he will do it.
There's no point reminding him about
it every year!
nag - être sur le dos de qn

4

Complétez les phrases avec le
bon adjectif pour compléter ces
comparaisons connues

- As ___ as a bat (ne voit pas bien)
- As ___ as a bee (très occupé)
- As ___ as a mule (obstiné)
- As ___ as an eel (difficile à attraper)
- As ___ as a feather (pas lourd)
- As ___ as a fox (rusé)
- As ___ as the hills (ancien)
- As ___ as a mouse (pas bruyant)
- As ___ as a coot (sans cheveux)
- As ___ as a bone (besoin d'eau)

light crafty busy dry stubborn
bald slippery crafty old quiet
bald dry blind busy

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Things You might NEED To KNOW



FROZEN PENSIONS?

Hundreds of thousands of British pensioners live in 'frozen' countries, (Australia, Canada New Zealand....) where their UK state pension has not changed since their move abroad.

It seems that this could now apply to expats in EU countries if Britain leaves the EU with no deal!

The DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) state that, whilst the government will continue to pay out yearly increases for the first 3 years of a move, there is as yet no guarantee in place that pensions will continue to benefit from inflation rises after that period

LINKY ELECTRICITY METERS

Between now and 2021, the ERDF will install 28 million 'smart' meters to replace electricity meters.

The 'Linky' communicates directly with the electricity provider, transmitted via a technology called Power-line communication (PLC), giving more accurate information and more precise billing.

However, thousands of people across France have been refusing the mandatory installation because of medical concerns over the electromagnetic waves emitted from them, citing various disorders such as headaches or sleep problems, arising after the installation. Some are also worried about how their energy information will be used.

For now, the installation is free, but resisters couldn't end up paying for this obligatory.



CARTE DE SEJOUR ON-LINE

Bearing in mind that Brexit information is ever-changing, from October, British nationals living in France should be able to apply for their Carte de Sejour permit on-line. The new website, (address not yet published at time of writing), will be in English, simple to navigate, and process applications for those already residing in France at the time of Brexit.

This online platform is intended to standardise the application process across the country. Watch this space!

MOTORWAY MOVES

Do you sometimes hang about too long in the middle or left lane of the autoroute, meant for overtaking only? In future, if you are spotted doing so, you will be liable for a fine of up to €150. A €35 fine and three points on your driving licence can also be applied for changing lanes without indicating!



READER'S WARNING

Be particularly vigilant when entering & exiting larger retail stores in the region.

We were approached by a young-ish white male, who jumped out of a large transit van, and tried to engage us in conversation in Auchan car park. As he chatted, four other youths jumped out of the back of the van and started to approach our vehicle.

Fortunately, we had the doors locked and only wound down the window to enter into brief conversation.

It was obvious, if we had not been alert, they would have tried to open the doors & grab our shopping. We drove off mid conversation as the situation just felt wrong & made sure he didn't follow by driving around the roundabout twice.

Stay alert at all times. Lock your doors & only open your window to a comfortable distance. Place any shopping out of sight. If in doubt, don't engage & drive away.



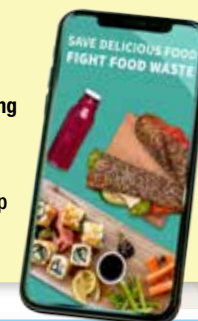
GÉOTREK PYMED

An innovative new app, launched by the communauté de communes Albères-Côte Vermeille-Illibéris to help hikers in the region better prepare their walks. Website and mobile application, FREE downloadable route maps, and also covers outdoor activities available across the P-O such as diving, horse riding, cycling, trail running, sailing... Translated into English, German, Catalan and Spanish, it even works offline, so no problem if you're out of network range! You can contribute to the collective

safety of our region by launching the alert for incidents such as fires, rock falls, route blockages etc.

TOO GOOD TO GO

This app is designed to help reduce the staggering amount of food wastage we create by enabling consumers to buy unsold food from a variety of shops and restaurants all over Europe which would otherwise go to waste. Restaurant and shop owners post their unsold food or meals, and you pick them up at cut price! [Download from Google](#)



DÍA DE LA HISPANIDAD

12TH OCTOBER

Not a good weekend to pop over the border, this Spanish national holiday, held annually on October 12th, commemorates the date Christopher Columbus set foot in the Americas. Processions and parades throughout the country, and much of Spain closes to party.

LANGUAGE EXERCISES ANSWERS

TEST YOUR FRENCH

- 1d 2i 3j 4h 5c 6e 7a 8b 9g 10f
- 1e 2j 3f 4i 5d 6c 7a 8h 9b 10g
- 1i 2c 3a 4j 5h 6g 7e 8f 9b 10d
- 1c 2b 3a 4b 5b 6c 7b 8a 9b 10c
- 1 yeux 2 nez 3 messieurs 4 hôpitaux 5 cieux 6 chapeaux 7 prix 8 travaux 9 mesdemoiselles 10 bus

AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS

- 1i 2f 3j 4h 5g 6e 7c 8a 9d 10b
- 1g 2b 3f 4c 5a 6d 7e 8h
- 1g 2j 3a 4c 5e 6b 7i 8h 9f 10d
- 1 blind 2 busy 3 stubborn 4 slippery 5 light 6 crafty 7 old 8 quiet 9 bald 10 dry



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Cancer Support France 04 68 69 01 37

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International

directory enquiries 118 700

International Mastercard 08 00 90 13 87

Local weather forecast 08 36 68 02 66

GDF (gas problems) 08 10 43 30 66

EDF (electricity problems) 05 56 17 40 70

You can use 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.

Useful Vocabulary

Help > *Au secours!*

It's an emergency > *C'est un cas d'urgence*

I need an ambulance > *J'ai besoin d'une ambulance*

I've had an accident > *J'ai eu un accident*

The house/car is on fire > *La maison/voiture a pris feu*

My husband has had a heart attack/stroke > *Mon mari fait une crise cardiaque/a souffert un AVC (accident vasculaire cérébral – pronounced ai vai cai)*

My child is choking > *Mon enfant s'étouffe.*

I'm bleeding (a lot) > *Je saigne (beaucoup).*

I'm diabetic, I need insulin > *Je suis diabétique, j'ai besoin d'insuline.*

My wife is having the baby, her water has broken > *Ma femme accouche, le bébé arrive, la poche des eaux a percé.*

JUST A LITTLE PRICK



I know, I know....same old title, same old content every year....but the title makes this immature editor giggle and the content is a reminder that flu can be very serious and it is easily prevented.

Buy your own vaccine at the chemist for around 8 euros (note that the usual percentage is still reimbursed by the state), and make an appointment with a local doctor, nurse or vet (joking) to administer it. Anybody can do this, whether you're registered in the French Health System or not. The jab is particularly recommended for over-65s and for those with health problems which could make them more vulnerable to the bug. If you are amongst the above, you will probably receive a letter recommending the vaccination, along with a 'prise en charge' voucher for free vaccination. If this is the first time you receive the voucher, you will need to see your doctor beforehand, so that he or she can be sure that the vaccine is suitable for you.



LA DER DES DERS

The 'Grande Guerre' of 1914-1918 was referred to at the time as "la der des ders" (the last of the last). The informal term for a French World War I infantryman was a 'poilu' or 'hairy one', coined from the caricature image of the bear-like, bearded and moustached French soldier, much used in propaganda at the time.

The stereotype of the Poilu was brave but undisciplined. During the disastrous 'Chemin des Dames' offensive of 1917, they were said to have gone into battle baa'ing like sheep, to symbolise lambs to the slaughter.... as proved to be the case.



DEAD PLEDGED UP TO THE HILT!

Are you still paying off your mortgage? Well, we can't help out with that but you might be interested to know that the word itself comes from old French meaning "dead pledge" (mort gage), so called because the arrangement 'dies' either when the debt is paid or when payment fails.

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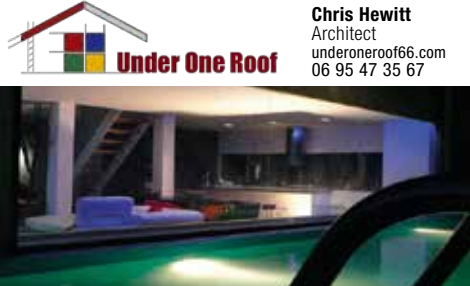
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