

Summer 2023

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales

N° 78
FREE / GRATUIT



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**OUT for
THE DAY**

....A Medieval
Fortress and
a Roman Ruin

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Edito ☺

COUCOU LES AMIS

Wine tastings, beer festivals, outdoor meals with street dancing, live music, sardanes, castellers, correfocs, gégnants...

Welcome to summer in the P-O!

We have some great **reader restaurant recommendations** for you to enjoy, along with days out, a multi-level **walk from Leigh, Merry and the Three Bears to burn off the calories**, music, dance, local wines, a cheeky joke or two, **airport news from Robbie**, goings on in Canet Lagoon with Lesley, Visa photo fest with Henry, ancient digs and castles, language exercises... Well that should keep you going for now!

And regular readers know that summer always brings out the silly in me, so **could these possibly be the worst jokes in 17 years of P-O Life?** Yes, I think I've nailed it! :-)

We'd love to hear from you!

Tell us a P-O story. What do you love here? What do you hate here? Have you had a good experience? A bad one? A weird one? **Tell us about your favourite restaurant**, a fascinating 'Did you Know' about the region, a favourite walk, drive or picnic spot... **Maybe you have a French language booboo to pass on or a good French joke... or even better, a really bad one!** If you'd like to share it, we'd love to publish it.

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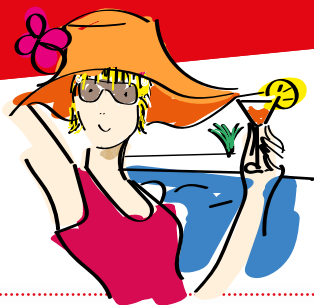
Prenez soin de vous mes amis. Splat on plenty of sun cream, and enjoy the magic of our P-O summer.

Kate

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Cover © Peter Spencer

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OUT ^{for} THE DAY

walk the region WITH LEIGH, MERRY and the Three (Cap) Bêars



CAP BÉAR WALK 1

Port Vendres to the Cap Béar lighthouse.

Medium difficulty, (5.8km 1½ to 2 hrs, ascent/descent about 200m)

🚗 Drive around **commercial port** towards **Cap Béar**. Park at camping car area behind Hotel des Tamarins or, if full, park up the hill at Redoute Béar. **Start on Chemin des Tamarins and pass between hotel and hill on which Redoute Béar sits.** Arrive at **Poisson Rouge** restaurant and ruins of Redoute Mailly.



Cap Béar and its lighthouse is an emblematic landmark of the P-O coastline, a historical monument, proudly protecting the beaches around Port Vendres since 1905.

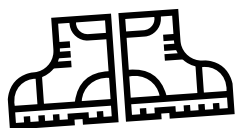
At 79m above sea level, this iconic building is as eye-catching on the inside as it is on the outside, its spiral staircase constructed from marble from Villefranche de Conflent and accentuated by opal blue walls.

For the time being, the state-owned and military-run lighthouse with its spectacular view is not open to the public...but watch this space as the government looks to sell the site to the 'conservatoire du littoral', who hope to open it up to all.

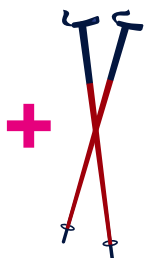


It's shocking to think **that we first did this walk almost 15 years ago!** It was well overdue for another look, but we're not quite as sprightly as we used to be so we decided to split the walk into three circuits.

You can still do the whole thing in one go (8km, allow 3-4 hours, about 500m ascent/descent), but **we found there's so much beautiful scenery to see on each section we were happy to spread it over a few days.**



**WALKING BOOTS
RECOMMENDED.**



(Map IGN 1:25000 Banyuls/Col de Perthus/Cote Vermeille (GPS) 2549 OT)

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After 750m you reach Anse de l'Espeluga and small beach. At 509830E 4707620N the footpath climbs, quite steeply in places, towards the road to Cap Béar, there are yellow marks throughout, and great views back over Port Vendres.

After 350m, reach the road, and a signpost to the left where the footpath continues to climb to right. After about 100m more climbing, the path turns left along the hillside, looking down over road and cliffs to sea below, with Fort Béar above.



Built in 1883 to protect the French border, Fort Béar sprawls across the top of the headland, looking more like a tourist destination than an active military installation. It played a key role protecting the Paulilles ammunitions factory during WWII and still belongs to the military today. Occasionally the public is allowed inside on the Journée du Patrimoine heritage days.

Continue for about 650m until you come to crossroads of footpaths at 510510E 4707020N. Turn left, down towards 1905 Phare de Béar, the last lighthouse before Spain. The footpath joins paved road to the lighthouse, so you can concentrate on admiring view to the south towards Banyuls and over stunning bay of Paulilles.

Take a break at the lighthouse, have a sandwich and enjoy the panorama. Coming back is all on road, still very pretty and much easier. From lighthouse, instead of returning to start you can also continue along coast path towards Paulilles, but we'll come to that later.



The next two circuits both start and end at Paulilles.

If you can, park at the free spot just after the railway bridge. You need to go under the old one on the right, there are a few shaded spaces under the trees. If that's full, use the car park a little further on at the roundabout to Cosprons.



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The bay of Paulilles consists of three beaches (**Bernardi, del Mitg and Fourat**) separated by rocky headlands, surrounded by steep and endless vineyards, and rugged mountains.

Sheltered by both the Béar and Ullestrell headlands, and protected by Port Vendres fort, chosen for its unpopulated position, **the site was perfect for the Nobel dynamite factory**. Today, a free industrial heritage museum explains the fascinating history of the site, picnic spots provide vast views over Med and mountain and large sepia murals on several of the restored buildings are a **fitting memorial to the explosion victims and dynamite makers of Paulilles**.



CAP BÉAR WALK 2

The second walk is quite easy (4.8km, 1 to 1.30 h, ascent/descent 110m). **Start at entrance to Clos de Paulilles restaurant and wine domaine**. Follow road towards old three-roofed stone building that features on winery's bottles.



Bear right up road passing buildings and head up into vineyards. A fork to the right is marked private, so don't take that one! Continue up road as it turns slightly left towards top at **Col de les Portes**, where it meets main road just under 1km from start.

At **Col de Les Portes**, you can get a great view down into Port Vendres, and perhaps see them unloading fruit from the huge ships that arrive from South America and all over the world. **If you want to descend into Port Vendres there is a path**, just below and to the right of main road, that joins up with D86b which you can follow down to port.



To get back to Paulilles, turn right at top and follow road past small car park. A sign says straight on is military property, and access is interdit, so **take track on right, down and past a few small villas**, following contours below private road.



After 900m at 510290E 4706580N come to little stone hut on ridge, a **good place to stop for drink and admire views** over the vineyards and down to bay below. The track turns east around hut towards headland, and **after 400m at 510650E 4706620N** come to a right-hand bend where a footpath meets track from your left. **This footpath goes to Ansa Santa Catarina** below the lighthouse. If you want to join up with first walk **return to Paulilles**, continue

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southeast down dirt track, which meanders through trees and vineyards with the occasional villa dotted about. **There are a couple of places where footpaths join up with the main sentier littoral below**, but if you like to look at the scenery rather than where you're putting your feet, **walking on the dirt track is easier and gives you almost the same beautiful vistas**.



After 1.3km come to a ruined stone building overlooking the vines. **Shortly after, at 510170E 4706070N**, choose either to go right and loop up through vines and down other side of the valley, or left down past trees joining up with coastal path below where it **descends to the Plage Bernardi**. If you're hungry or thirsty, the **Clos de Paulilles** serves very nice tapas and wine, and you can sit on the lovely terrace surrounded by vines. If not, just continue along beach 200m and take access road back to the D914 and return to your car.



OUT ^{for} THE DAY

Walk the region
WITH LEIGH MERRY
and... the Three (Cap) Bears

CAP BÉAR WALK 3

The third walk is medium difficulty, (4.2 km, 1½ - 2 hrs, ascent/descent 148m). It's a combination of marked sentier littoral and dirt track described in second walk.

Start at **Plage Bernardi** and follow yellow marks along coastal path, which climbs up and down between the many delightful little (and not-so-little) coves tucked away along southern shore of the headland, where you can stop for a picnic, or a swim in the sparkling clear water if you're so inclined.



The path is a little steep and narrow in places where it's worn away, **not ideal for those bothered by heights, or for small children.** It can also get very busy at weekends, so avoid those if you can.



After 1.6km, just to left of path at 510770E, 4706840N there is a pile of stones which marks a crossroads. Here you get a great view of the lighthouse perched on the headland. **You now have two options, either to continue following coastal path and go down to Ansa Catarina then up to the lighthouse.**



Looking down from the lighthouse towards the sea, the remnants of the German blockhouses still remain along with the large round pits which housed the machine guns, trained on the sea in case of allied invasion from the south. The rusted rails of the large guns are still intact in some areas.

Or you can return to Paulilles via a sharp left turn, and take footpath, described in second walk above, which joins the dirt track returning to Plage Bernardi.

However you do it, safe walking and enjoy your day out!

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PRICE: 350 000 €

Ref 1555m



BANYULS SUR MER: Very pleasant house with sea view a step away from beach. Approx. 100sq.m with dining room, open-plan kitchen, living room with terrace and sea view. 3 bedrooms, bathroom. Garage.

PRICE: 188 000 €

Ref 1554m



VILLELONGUE DELS MONTS: 70 sqm detached stone village house with view. Street level: kitchen /dining area, shower room with WC. First Floor: sitting room with wood stove and terrace, two bedrooms and a separate WC on the 2nd and top floor. **Comfort and character!**

PRICE: 180 000 €

Ref 508A



BANYULS SUR MER: Exceptional location! Very pleasant studio apartment with terrace located on the beach! Approx 25sq.m with terrace (7sq.m). Living space with open-plan kitchen, shower-room with toilet. Private car park and air conditioning. **Rare, must see!**

PRICE: 789 000 €

Ref 1562m



LAROQUE DES ALBÈRES: Architect's villa of 171 sqm Exceptional location near shops. Fantastic plot over 6000 sqm with pool, south facing view and perfect privacy, Spacious 60 sqm living room, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 2 garages. **Must see!**

PRICE: 265 000 €

Ref 142T



CERBÈRE: Building plot with 1915sq.m located in quiet area close to centre of village. South facing with mountains and sea view from upper part of land. **Possibility to build up to 326sq.m.**

PRICE: 294 000 €

Ref 1569m



SOREDE: Very quiet area, close to all shops, 94 sqm south facing terraced villa with bedroom on ground floor on 319 sqm flat and fenced land with pool possibility! Bright living room with wood stove, separate kitchen. 2 bedrooms and a further bathroom upstairs. **Garage and attic space.**

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a medieval fortress AND A ROMAN RUIN...

Our day starts where French Catalonia melts into the Aude, **at the imposing Forteresse de Salses**, squatting on the strip of land between the Corbières hills and the Leucate lagoon.

Standing on the Roman-built Via Domitia, sunk deep into the red clay earth, its defensive moat guarding the border, **the château was of vital strategic importance to both French and Spanish in the XV century.**

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

Much is now abandoned or integrated into the modern road system but there are still ruins and remains all along the route, such as at **Panissars**, (turn right after entering Le Perthus and follow signs for Bellegarde) where you can also see the Via Domitia hewn out of the rock.

As the original northern frontier post of the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon, **the fort had been under attack by the Arabs and the French for centuries.** It was finally handed **back to France in 1659**, with the signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees.



On a plateau of the Corbières, near Salses, and clearly visible from the A9 motorway, stands the **'Porta dels Països Catalans'**, or **'Gate of the Catalan Countries'**. With panoramic views of sea and lagoon, this symbolic border between Languedoc and Roussillon is a first and last landmark for visitors arriving or departing the Pyrenees-Orientales.

The Languedoc, Roussillon, and Midi-Pyrénées have since combined to become l'Occitanie, but this eye catcher still lets you know that you have arrived in Catalan Country.



Vauban partially restored the fort and it became a state prison for the unfortunate **lady poisoners of Louis XIV's court**, before they began their life sentences in Fort Liberia, Villefranche de Conflent (another of Vauban's masterpieces).

OUT for THE DAY

a medieval fortress AND A ROMAN RUIN...

The 'affaire des poisons' (poison affair, nothing to do with fish!) rocked France during the 17th century, and resulted in several infamous lady poisoners being chained up in the 'prison des dames' of the chateau Fort Liberia at Villefranche de Conflent. Paranoia amongst royalty and nobility quickly led to hysterical pursuit of suspects, for poisoning and witchcraft. Many of the condemned were transferred to France's safest fortresses such as Salses, and chateau Fort Liberia in the P-O, where they were chained up and imprisoned for life.



To this day, the fort is considered a prime example of the transition from medieval castle to modern fortress, providing a fascinating glimpse into military history and architecture, with an interesting guided tour in several languages available – or just a stroll round the outer walls.

Concerts, workshops, historical reenactments and events take place regularly at this imposing venue. There is a gift and bookshop... and there are even some very un-medieval vending machines for the peckish!



www.forteresse-salses.fr

CENTRE DES MONUMENTS NATIONAUX



Capable of housing 300 horses and 1,500 men, it had 50 bakeries with provision also for sheep, pigs, and cows for milk and butter. Innovative also for its mastery of water for defence, it had flush gates to carry away overflow from the latrines, cool down the cannons and flood the moat. An ingenious Arabic-type fridge system used running water to maintain a constant 9-10 degrees to keep supplies fresh. Its massive walls, up to 10 metres thick, drawbridges and a huge central courtyard remain. Too sturdy and costly to destroy, it survived the centuries and was classified a Monument Historique in 1886.



Font Estramar in Salses-le-Château STILL WATERS RUN DEEP

Several divers have lost their lives trying to unravel the mystery of this underwater, seemingly bottomless cave next to a pretty lake. Visible from the A9 motorway as you head from Narbonne towards Perpignan, the Font Estramar, or fontaine de Salses lies at the foot of the Corbières in Salses-le-Château. The submerged cave is the deepest explored diving cave in Europe and its entrance passage amongst the deepest natural siphons in the world.

Explorations started in 1949 and well known underwater explorers such as Jacques-Yves Cousteau have tried without success to find the deep source of the cave.

Formed over more than 5 million years, its temperature remains a constant 17-18 °C throughout the year.

Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful freshwater caves in Catalonia, Font Estramar is beautiful but deadly. Go visit - but leave your diving gear at home!



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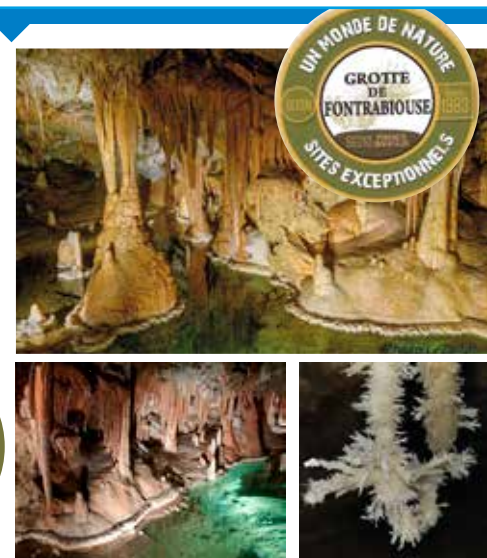
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OUT ^{for} THE DAY ... AND A ROMAN RUIN...

From Salses, we head back towards the motorway and over the P-O border to our **second destination, l'Oppidum d'Ensérune...** unless it's time for lunch, in which case you might want to take a bit of a detour along the **Leucate étang** (salt lake) to the **Centre Conchylicole**.

Oyster lovers will adore these delightfully **authentic oyster shacks** sitting unpretentiously on the water front, with ultra fresh, straight-from-the-sea-to-your-plate sea food to take away or eat in on pieds-dans-l'eau dining terraces.



a medieval fortress

If oysters make you oink, **continue into Narbonne and lunch in the pretty centre before taking direction Coursan/Béziers to the Oppidum d'Ensérune.** If you love history, the archaeological site of l'Oppidum d'Ensérune, Roman name for a fortified hilltop village, will not fail to delight.

Between Beziers and Narbonne, and dating back to the **middle of the 6th century BC**, the ruins of the **Oppidum d'Ensérune** were **discovered in the 1850s**, at the top of an isolated hill dominating the plain. Its location was surely chosen for this elevated position as well as its **proximity to the Via Domitia**.

This fascinating open-air dig invites the visitor to follow a roped-off, signposted trail through the archaeological **excavations, revealing vestiges of daily life in an ancient Celtic fortified town**, under Roman rule. Spectacular panoramas over the Mediterranean coast, the Canigou, and towards the foothills of the Montagne Noire make this visit a delightful melange of history and beauty.

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Nearby, you can also visit the Malpas tunnel, Europe's first navigable canal tunnel, built with much difficulty above a train line, a magnificent feat of engineering from the 1600s, and the one and only tunnel of the Canal du Midi. Built in 1679, to continue the canal beneath the Ensérune hill, (Ensérune means 'the pierced mountain'), an 8 feet wide platform runs along the entire length of the tunnel, so it could be used for a towpath. According to legend, a hermit lived in the tunnel in the nineteenth century. When he was hungry, he simply dropped down a basket and passing boats would fill it with food.



Look out across the site. Have the aliens finally landed? Is that an enormous crop circle? No, this is the **dry pond of Montady**, a giant dartboard more than 1km wide, formed by **patchwork quilt colours of fertile plots of land**, radiating outwards from the bull's eye after the swamp that it once was, was drained in the 13th century, leaving water to flow downward to the centre of the circle.



Thinking of selling a property in the Pyrénées Orientales? If so, please do get in touch with me. We may be based in the Vallespir, but we're expanding out quickly to the rest of the department because of the number of enquiries we're receiving.

We're looking for high-end properties because that's what I'm being asked for by potential buyers, especially the English-speakers, and we have a great network, throughout the PO, of partner agencies to help us sell them.

And as a bonus, I can offer you a free expert's report on the value of your home (supervised by my boss, graduate from the Institut de la Construction et de l'Habitat, Faculté de Droit de Montpellier) on presentation of this page of PO Life (you can keep it in the magazine though!).



Vous envisagez de vendre une propriété dans les Pyrénées Orientales ?

Alors, n'hésitez pas à me contacter. Nous sommes peut-être du Vallespir, mais notre activité s'étend rapidement au reste du département en raison du nombre de demandes que nous recevons.

Nous recherchons des propriétés haut de gamme, car c'est ce que me demandent les acheteurs potentiels, surtout les anglophones, et nous disposons d'un excellent réseau, dans toutes les PO, d'agences partenaires, pour nous aider à les vendre.

De plus, je peux vous offrir un rapport d'expert sur la valeur de votre maison (supervisé par mon patron, diplômé de l'Institut de la Construction et de l'Habitat, Faculté de Droit de Montpellier) sur présentation de cette page de PO Life (vous pouvez cependant la garder dans le magazine !).

Look out for our **FIVE agencies** across the Vallespir.

Le Boulou, Céret,
Amélie les Bains (2),
Arles sur Tech



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with HENRY SHAFTOE

If you happen to be in Perpignan at the end of the summer and notice an unusually large number of people wandering around with large cameras dangling from their torsos, it is because you have stumbled across «Visa Pour L'Image», the world's largest photo-journalism festival.

Although primarily aimed at professional photographers – the integral exhibitions (at the Couvent des Minimes, Eglise des Dominicaines and several other venues) are open to the public and are FREE!

Don't expect to see many pictures of cuddly kittens and glowing sunsets – this is photojournalism in the raw, so all human life (and particularly misery) is on display. However, there is also the «VISA – Off Festival» in various venues in Perpignan at the same time – a fringe festival which sometimes features more «arty» photography.

In addition to the displays of large format photos (of superb quality), there are free evening events at the historic Campo Santo (ancient burial ground, adjacent to the cathedral) where various awards



are presented, accompanied by projections onto a huge screen of the winning images (and that is free too, if you can get in – you need to queue well in advance).



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As you would expect of an international festival, the standard of photography is impressive. But some of the images (particularly of war-torn or famine-ridden areas) can be upsetting and, at times it feels somewhat «voyeuristic» to be looking at beautifully composed images of human suffering.

However, there are usually some spectacular images featuring wild-life and nature (often under threat, due to climate change and environmental degradation). There can be alarmingly amusing images too. For example, last year there was a series of images of people (in the USA) proudly displaying their various gun collections, including a pastor posing with his AK47 machine gun in front of his church – You didn't know whether to laugh or cry !

VISA has a permanent presence in Perpignan in the form of «the International Centre for Photojournalism», at the Couvent des Minimes, where, as well as administrative offices, there are free exhibitions of selected photojournalistic images, all year round.

This year «VISA pour l'Image» runs from the 2nd to the 17th of September, with projections in the Campo Santo between 4th-9th September.



Campo Santo, with St Jean Cathedral in the background



Restaurant REVIEWS

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER
SUMMER 2023



We love publishing your reviews, all restaurants that readers have enjoyed and recommended, based on personal opinion. They're honest (nous espérons!) objective, (assurément) 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, your standards might be higher....or lower – but they give you an idea of what's available.

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE....

Why not take in a concert before or after a great lunch or dinner at one of our reviewed restaurants, or our Eating Out Guide (p28) See also P40 for some great jazz!



CONCERTS IN THE VALLESPİR

A HEADS UP on this renowned music festival, celebrating the best in regional, national and international music.

PROGRAMME FROM 10TH SEPTEMBER TO 5TH NOVEMBER 2023

SUNDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER AT 5PM

LE PERTHUS - FÉLICIEN BRUT

SATURDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER AT 4.30PM

LES CLUSES - STABAT MATER DE BOCCHERINI

SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER AT 5PM

L'ALBERE - LOS JUTGLARS

SATURDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER AT 5PM

TAILLET- TRIO LLIBERTAT

FRIDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER AT 8PM

VIVES - TRIO MOURATOGLU (JAZZ)

SUNDAY 1ST OCTOBER AT 5PM

MAUREILLAS -CONCERT POULENC: GLORIA, LA VOIX HUMAINE

SUNDAY 8TH OCTOBER AT 6PM

ST JEAN PLA DE CORTS - BRASS BAND DE TOULOUSE

SOLISTE: LUCIENNE RENAUDIN-VARY

More concert dates to
come in next P-O Life.

For the full programme...

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billets@amuvall.org

☎ +33(0)6 31 14 77 14

Tickets 20€ Members 15€
Children u16 FREE
From 16 - 25 years
Non members 12€ Members 10€

LA SUITE

Perpignan...with Petra

Charming restaurant next to Place de la République. Excellent food, with friendly service. We had the chiffons de truite, on a plate of greens, nectarines, cherry tomatoes and egg, followed by the cabillaud which was cooked to perfection on top of a bed of nicely seasoned rice and vegetables, and a slice of almond cake - **this is going on my 'regular' list.** Menu 16,50€



8 Rue de la Fusterie, Perpignan
Tel: 06 51 41 53 69

CAN MARCEL

Canet Port...with Carole

Lunch today was excellent. Food very tasty good value with sea view Lunch menu 22 euros during the week and à la carte weekends and evenings. Friendly young owners. Always busy so probably need to book.



101 Prom. de la Côte Vermeille,
Canet-en-Roussillon
Tel: 04 68 80 64 55

MAISON DAHLIA

Perpignan...with Caroline

Ce soir en compagnie de ma copine Nathalie, nous sommes sorties à ce nouveau restaurant. Très bon, bel accueil, **une carte simple mais des plats excellents, et un très joli décor**



14 Rue de l'Ange, Perpignan
Tel: 06 36 53 19 26

IDEA RESTAURANT

Elne...with Andy

A restaurant of international quality. Tiny and every customer has the undivided attention of the chef. **It can only be a matter of time when the chef is whipped off to some Michelin Glory.** It won't work if you're A) in a hurry or B) have the kids with you looking for chicken nuggets. **For tastes and flavours it's difficult to beat.**



8 Rue de la République, Elne
Tel: 09 83 29 47 37

Restaurant



L'ETAPE FAST FOOD

Céret...with Pauli

I recommend L'Etape Fast Food, **American style Burger restaurant just beside Pont du Diable in Ceret. Fantastic gourmet burgers, absolutely delicious!** Lots of choice, quality produce and cooked to perfection. The chips are 'maison' very good, nice ambiance, good music, very clean place and friendly owner. They also have other meat on the menu and a kiddies burger. **20 € for gourmet burger, chips, and a beer, glass of wine, or soft drink.**



Pont du diable, 7 Pl. du Pont, Céret
Tel: 04 68 59 98 54

LE JARDIN DE COLLIOURE

Collioure...with Alistair

A lovely setting with parking if you pre-book and is quite literally outdoor dining with some cover for inclement weather. In winter they use the upstairs. **The food is wonderful and it's a very interesting place!**



4 Rte de Port-Vendres, Collioure
Tel: 04 68 95 12 52

FALGOS GOLF

St Laurent de Cerdans...with Virginie

Je le recommande absolument. Dépaysement assuré, cuisine excellente et accueil plus que sympathique. **Lieu magnifique au milieu des montagnes avec vue sur la mer.** Mangez dans l'ancienne bergerie, sur la terrasse, sous la véranda ou devant la cheminée. **Les saveurs sont un enchantement.**



Domaine de Falgos,
Saint Laurent de Cerdans
Tel: 04 68 39 51 42

OVER THE BORDER

...IN SPAIN

VORA ESTANY

Banyoles...with Maria

One of our favourite places in Banyoles. It is on the lakeside with tables inside and on the terrace. We have the menu out of laziness! **It's always good around €16.00** last time we were there.



Passeig Antonio Gaudí Banyoles
Tel: +34 972 57 63 53



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 ravis de vous entendre.

Send your comments to us at
info@anglophone-direct.com

No restaurant owners please ;-)

QUELQUES QUICKIES

LE PETIT REST'EAU

Argeles Port...with David

Only small as the name suggests but **excellent service and very good quality food!** Highly recommend!

Tel: 06 51 44 15 88

L'ALTO

Argeles-sur-Mer...with Martine

Fantastic food, not cheap but really good. Beautiful decor and **once a week they have a music night.** Usually Thursday or Friday night

Tel: 04 68 22 04 48

CHEZ GUBBI

Sainte Marie la Mer...with Annick

Pizza the size of a sombrero! All the food was delicious and had a lovely walk after lunch round the quaint little village

Tel: 06 37 85 37 65

LE FAMILY'S

Hauts de Canet...with Margaret

Great welcome, lovely tapas & great choices on the à la carte menu too. Very reasonably priced...Have eaten there three times & it just gets better every time!

Tel: 04 68 55 40 14

LA TABLE D'AIMÉE

Rivesaltes...with Petra

Lunch today with great friends and excellent food. **Beautifully presented, very tasty and fresh** with unusual combinations. Definitely recommend.

Tel: 04 68 34 35 77

MAS ALÉGRIA

St Esteve...with Harbeer

Nice welcome. **Very pleasant, fish very tasty.** Good place at a reasonable price. Husband chef and wife out front. Chef speaks some English. Looks like new menu is posted daily.

Tel: 04 68 28 19 14

FOOD and DRINK

Ideas for EATING OUT

Summer is here – and we have loads of eating-out suggestions for you, from a quick snack to the Full Monty (but you can keep your hat on!). Eat in, eat out, go pieds-dans-l'eau or big mountain views under the stars, choose Catalan, traditional French, Italian, Asian, vegetarian...

All the restaurants in our Eating Out Directory have chosen to support P-O Life, to help us to keep the website, newsletter and this mag free. Without our advertisers, we would not exist. Please support them in return.

Allez! Au restaurant, et bon appétit!



...BANYULS-SUR-MER

Le Fanal.....04 68 98 65 88
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...CANET EN ROUSSILLON

Le Jardin de Canet.....04 68 05 42 73
Sea food and fish.....www.lejardindecanet.com

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...ARGELES

La Table du Coin, port Argelès.....04 68 55 46 54
58-59 Esplanade du Nouveau Monde, Port Argelès

Chez Marie & Patrice

la Table du coin

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58-59 place du nouveau monde argeles sur mer

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13, av. Michel Aribaud - CÉRET

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Restaurant-Crêperie..... f: Le Pied Dans Le Plat

Le pied dans le plat
Restaurant · Crêperie
Moules-frites

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f Le Pied Dans Le Plat

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FOOD and DRINK

Ideas for EATING OUT

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Phone: 04 68 68 76 85

...PERPIGNAN

Vilavigne new wineshop 04 68 81 03 08
La Fauceille next to Maison Paré

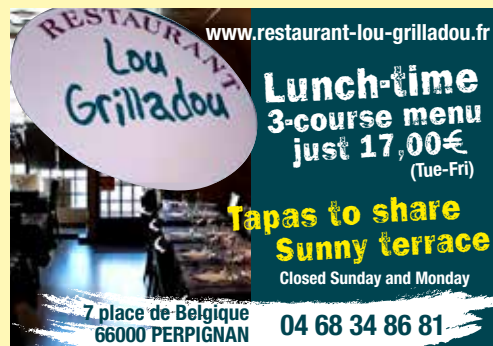


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...PORT- VENDRES

Les Poissonneries de la Côte Catalane 04 68 98 46 00
Indoor Fish Market & Oyster Bar . f:facebook.com/cotecatalane



Les Poissonneries de la Côte Catalane

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Anse Gerbal - La Criée, 66660 Port-Vendres

La Casa Catalane 04 68 22 22 76
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f restaurant-Kim-Long

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For reservations, telephone:
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78 avenue Maréchal Joffre
66740 Saint Genis des Fontaines

Par un beau soir de printemps,
un vieux couple partage une bonne bouteille
de vin du Roussillon devant les cerisiers
en fleurs sur fond de Canigou enneigé.

Emu, le vieil homme dit:

**"Je t'aime tellement, je ne sais pas comment
je pourrais vivre sans toi...."**

Sa femme lui répond :

**"C'est gentil mon cheri mais ça vient de toi..
ou c'est le vin qui te fait parler..... ?"**

Le vieux répond:

**C'est moi...
qui parle au vin.**

VOCAB

partage - share
fond - background

Emu - moved

tellement - so much

ça vient de toi - is that coming from you

ou c'est le vin qui te fait parler - or is it the wine talking



FOOD
and DRINK

ideas for
**EATING
OUT**

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Want to practice your French? Come and try our guided tours in French **with Alex**, native of Le Boulou.... with his charming Catalan accent.

Weekly program: guided historical tours of Céret, themed tours of Le Boulou and tours of Vallespir (**Le Perthus, Les Cluses, Maureillas, Saint-Jean**). Full program available at the Tourist Office or on our website.

©Fred Bora
Maison de l'eau
et de la Méditerranée
Le Boulou



MUSEUMS

CÉRET

- > Musée d'Art Moderne (see page 38)
- > Musée de la Musique
- > Centre d'Art et de Photographie Lumière d'Encre

MAUREILLAS-LAS ILLAS

- > Musée du Liège (Cork Museum)
- > Chapelle Saint Martin de Fenollar

LE BOULOU

- > Maison de l'Eau et de la Méditerranée
- > Maison de l'Histoire
- > Espace des Arts



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LÉA RÔM MASSAGE



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**THERMAL BATHS,
Le Boulou**



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is here for you, happy to help and
answer any questions to make your visit
to the Vallespir even more special.

Contact us

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Email
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More info:
www.vallespir-tourisme.fr



Fun and games in Céret:

CONSTELLATIONS

Ellen Turner Hall

The new exhibition in **The Museum of Modern Art** is chock full of fun-fair treats. My favorites were a singing and dancing sculpture, a polka-dot playroom and a wall of Where's Wally.

Featuring contemporary art for people who think they don't like it, "Constellations" opens up a playful universe of physical, aural and visual tricks. The effect on the visitor is disorienting.



Suspended from the ceiling **Julius Rolf's Four Large Black** is a set of four speakers gurgling out what sounds like the Tramontane. At the centre of each one crushed bits of charcoal shake, rattle and roll to the low growling sound.



From there you can enter the red and white polka-dot space of **Yayoi Kusama, Dots Obsession**. The exhibition poster does not do justice to this **total immersion experience** of floating amidst strange shapes and seeing yourself reflected in the mirrored walls. Think: Alice down the rabbit's hole!

A series of nine black canvases by **Tania Mouraud** appears **to be composed of a random pattern of lines**. The closer you look, however, you begin to discover letters that spell the title of the work **Who's the Enemy?**.



Something you can try at home with your children: recreate the universe with the three basic building blocks. Such is the proposition of **Masaki Nakayama** who photographed human bodies interwoven with metal shapes to form the circle, the triangle and the square.

Picasso experimented with the same three forms to deconstruct a guitar in his 1913 sketch book, on view in a slide show in the permanent collection. As usual, the ultimate child was there before us all.



CONSTELLATIONS runs from 13 May to 26 November. During this time many of the artists will be giving workshops.

For the workshops, contact:
service.educatif@musee-ceret.com.

For all other information:
www.musee-ceret.com

OUT ^{for} THE DAY

LOVE JAZZ?

Hosted for the first time in the P-O in 2016, the 8th Jazz en Tech Festival is back by popular demand... and expected to be even more of a roaring success in 2023!

From Friday **21st July to Sunday 6th August**, enjoy a truly eclectic programme featuring a wonderfully diverse range of jazz performers from USA, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Korea, UK, Italy, Romania, Sweden... and of course, from France as well as from our own beautiful Catalonia.

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(12 evening concerts + 1 concert in the Musée d'art moderne + 8 mini-street concerts)

MORE DETAILS & BOOKING: WWW.JAZZENTECH.COM

Fri. July 21 - 9:30 pm

Saint-Cyprien, Botanic Garden
Nicolle Rochelle & The Hot Sugar Band "Eleanora – Billie Holiday"
Entry: €10.00



Sat. July 22 - 10:00 pm

Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Cloisters
Akpé Motion
"Je t'aime moi non plus!"
concert: St Joan
FREE ENTRY



Tues. July 25 - 9:00 pm

Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines Cloister
Cécile Messyasz Quintet "En attendant Rio..."
Entry: €15.00



Entry: €15.00

Thurs. July 27 - 9:00 pm

Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines Cloister
concert: Sharon Clark Quartet
"Sharon Clark meets Mattias Nilsson" FREE ENTRY



PROGRAMME

Entry 1 night: €25.00
Entry 2 nights: €45.00
Entry 3 nights: €65.00

CÉRET SERIES

9:00 pm Place du Barri

Weds. August 2
China Moses Quintet



"The Vibe Tribe"
Thurs. August 3
Sly Johnson "55.4"



Fri. August 4
Les Nouvelles Divas du Jazz & their Octet



JAZZIN' STREETS

Sat. August 5 from 12:00pm Céret

A VERITABLE STREET FESTIVAL TAKING OVER 10 OF THE TOWN CENTRE'S CAFÉ TERRACES.

Concerts, musical parades, and lots more besides.

Fri. July 28 - 9:00 pm

concert: **Prats de Mollo** Parvis de l'Eglise des Saintes Juste et Ruffine / **Chacun son Sud Trio** "Dépaysements"
Entry: €15.00



Sat. July 29 - 9:00 pm

Le Boulou, Parc du Casino
Florin Gugulica Quintet
"Florin Taraf!"
FREE ENTRY



Tues. August 1 - 9:00 pm

concert: **Palau-del-Vidre** Parvis de l'Eglise Saint Sébastien
Nico Morelli Quintet
"Un-folk-ettable Two"
Entry: €15.00

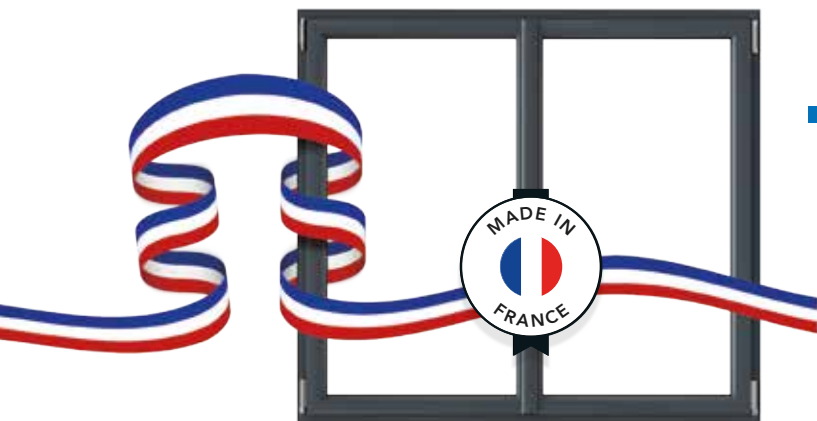


Sun. August 6-9:00 pm

Corsavy - Parc communal
concert: Barret-Lazarevitch-Allouche Trio
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P-O Life
for

Mont Louis and the '11E RÉGIMENT PARACHUTISTE DE CHOC'

Known as the '11th choc', this elite parachute unit of the French army used to be part of the SDECE (Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage), roughly equivalent to the British Special Air Service (SAS). The unit motto 'Qui ose gagne' (who dares wins), accentuates this link, **its logo Bagheera, a golden wing and the letters RCP** (Regiment De Chasseurs Parachutistes).



The unit was formed in 1946 and stationed in Mont-Louis, the highest garrison in France, where their initial training was inspired by SOE (Special Operations Executive) training, their post war mission to go wherever needed.

They were trained in 'psychological warfare', and prepared for "clandestine operations, airborne or otherwise, that could range from building demolition to sabotage or elimination of enemies".

Today, Mont Louis is the home of the CNEC (Centre national d'entraînement commando). Their other P-O base is in Collioure. The two centres train soldiers to survive in war zones, so don't panic if a boot-polish-faced commando steps out of the trees on a mountain walk, or a muscle-bound, scuba diver slithers out of the sea on Collioure beach - they're just on manoeuvres!



DO COMMANDOS GO COMMANDO?

Did you know that going commando means not wearing underwear? Believed to have originated amongst American soldiers who preferred not to wear underwear in field conditions because of its tendency to retain sweat, some say it is also related to the Scottish military term "going regimental" referring to wearing no underwear under the kilt.

SAFTI

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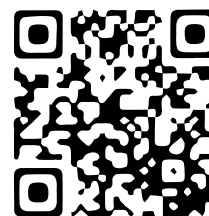
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Festivals and TRADITIONS

BANK HOLIDAYS

Festivities and fireworks throughout France

14th July
Fête de la Bastille
(Fête Nationale)

15th August

Assomption
Commemorating the departure of Mary from this life and the assumption of her body into heaven.

(Most shops close although more and more large supermarkets remain open)



BASTILLE DAY 14TH JULY

As the poor starved to death on the streets of Paris, the King's breakfast consisted of 4 chops, a full chicken, six poached eggs and a slice of ham, washed down with a bottle and a half of champagne. The poor, the starving, the sick, and the tired, became more and more resentful.

The scene had long been set for the events to follow. The storming of the Bastille prison marked the beginning of the French Revolution of 1789, and led to the end of the monarchy, and the start of the First French Republic.

'Bastille' comes from old French bastide, meaning fortress and the Provençal 'bastida' meaning built. As well as holding political prisoners, such as writer Voltaire, who spoke out against the government, it was also a weapons and ammunition store.

The day of the storming and fall of the Bastille was declared a French national holiday in 1880, a celebration of the birth of the Republic.

Millions of euros go up in flames every year to mark the event, with dancing, live music and a whole lot of celebrating.

Check with Tourist Offices for exact dates and details. Many evening events take place on the night of the 13th.

AND LOOK OUT FOR...

Correfocs

More popular in south Catalonia than north, this Catalan tradition, meaning 'fire runs', will make sure that any festival goes with a bang - literally. Originating from a form of mediaeval street theatre, this spectacular show of devils and fireworks represents the fight of good against evil. Leave your health and safety head at home as groups of 'diables' wearing horns and masks, accompanied by loud music, weave amongst the crowds waving sparklers, firecrackers, roman candles, spitting fire around them....

The Generalitat de Catalunya suggests... "If by any chance your clothing catches fire, throw yourself on the ground. Do not run and spread the flames!"

Great fun, but can be frightening for small children and animals.



CASTELLS

Fascinating to watch, this tradition originated at the end of the 18th century in Valls, Tarragona, when rival "colles" (groups) began to compete in constructing human towers. These castellers (castle-makers), wear traditional Catalan costume and climb on to each others' shoulders to create a human pyramid, sometimes up to eight or nine storeys high and usually topped off with a brave child, who raises one hand with four fingers erect, in a gesture said to symbolise the stripes of the Catalan flag. This treasured Catalan tradition is kept alive by non-profit associations who are always on the look out for volunteers to climb, or just to support. Check out your local tourist office for an association near you.

GÉGANTS

Enormous painted papier-maché figures, sometimes 14 or 15 ft tall, with traditional clothing and a very hot person inside! They usually appear in couples during the patron saint holidays (Festa Major), carnivals and parades, often as king and queen, or some important person in the history of the town. They dance in the streets with little "big-heads" or 'cap-grossos'.



SARDANE

Often performed at popular celebrations and community festivals, the Sardane is considered the national dance of Catalunya. A traditional circle dance, slow with small, precise steps, it is believed to be of Greek origin, designed to bring whole villages out into the streets, and get them in party mood - a little like a more sober and complicated version of the 'hokey cokey' in fact! Join in! What better way to make friends and take a little exercise at the same time.

Crit'air Criteria Clean Air stickers

In order to reduce urban pollution, petrol cars, vans and motorhomes first-registered before 1997 and diesels prior to 2001 are banned in certain areas of several major towns, with more to follow.

These 'zones à faibles émissions mobilité' or 'ZFE-m' were set up in Paris several years ago. Grenoble followed in 2022 and Strasbourg in January 23, with ZFEs introduced fairly recently in Lille, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse and Annecy. Montpellier is set up for this July and Perpignan in 2025.

The Crit'Air anti-pollution sticker, placed on the windscreen, is an official 'vignette' to show the pollution level of a vehicle. There are six stickers, from the 'greenest' at 100 per cent, pure-electric sticker, to the naughty number 5 covering Euro 2 diesel-engine cars registered from January 1, 1997 – December 31, 2000.

One sticker covers the car for all ZFEs for life. The fine for not displaying a sticker is €68 at time of writing.



MONTPELLIER AND SCAMS....

Valerie Mclellan tells us more

"Having recently visited Montpellier, the Crit'Air sticker is on my radar.

The town has the infrastructure in place now and is meant to begin implementing in July 2023.

What's important to know is that the system applies to vehicles registered both in France and abroad, regardless of whether resident, tourist or just passing by.

In just a few clicks it's possible to find out the Crit'Air level needed for a vehicle; all that's needed is the vehicle's European Emissions Standard, and that's on the registration document.

The sticker can be ordered online. It's a one-off job, so no need to renew. The price is the same for all stickers and at present is **3,72 euros**. That may change but won't break the bank.



SCAM ALERT

THE SCAM

As always beware of fraudsters and intermediaries. After my trip to Montpellier I received a scam demand for payment of a fine, saying I had driven through a low emission zone. The system wasn't even running then!

That sinking Feeling...

Traditional Catalan Fishing Boats

with SIMON NEWMAN

It was the perfect storm of 1913. Local fisherman, Josep Llanas, was caught off the port of Collioure with his sails torn to shreds as huge waves broke over the boat's bows, flooding the hull. Frantic efforts to bail were to no avail. He prayed to Our Lady Notre Dame de Consolation for safe delivery.

Mercifully that day, the patron saint of Catalan fishermen responded to the prayer with a message to remove the sinking boat's rudder. Our stalwart mariner, by now up to his plums in freezing briny, just managed to complete this task before his stricken vessel disappeared beneath the surface. Miraculously, the howling wind turned around and clinging to the wooden rudder for buoyancy Josep was blown back towards the harbour where eager hands dragged him safely ashore.



A poor fisherman with no insurance, Josep could ill-afford the cost of building a new boat with which to continue his livelihood. On the bright side however, at least he didn't have to buy a new rudder. Local fishermen chipped in and Josep was soon back at sea plying his trade in a new craft that carried the name of the saint who, he was convinced, had saved his life. As it turned out, it was to be one of the last traditional Catalan fishing boats to be built, for by the end of WW1 the internal combustion engine had replaced sail on most new commercial vessels. Josep's boat can still be seen today moored at the main quay at Port Argelès from where she is regularly taken out on regattas.



Local folklore has it that the boat is divinely blessed and will always steer it's skipper and crew back to port safely. Doubters could always take along a GPS as backup.



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Summer/Autumn 2023 by Robbie Shaw

As is the norm in airline scheduling there have been some small changes since our last Airport News. Although Nimes and Avignon to the P-O are not 'la porte à coté' it is a pleasant train ride between the two along the Mediterranean coast, and don't forget, those over 60 years old get a 10% discount on train tickets.

The following schedules cover the Summer and early Autumn period until 28 October.

Remember that the timetables below are just a guide. Airlines constantly change schedules according to demand, so apologies if there are any I have missed.

Winter schedules will start on Sunday 29th October. Safe travel!

FRANCE BEZIERS



Like Carcassonne, **Ryanair** has a free run at this small airport.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BRISTOL	2-3	RYANAIR 26 March-25 Oct
EDINBURGH	2	RYANAIR 27 March-26 Oct
LUTON	2	RYANAIR 29 March-28 Oct
MANCHESTER	3	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
SHANNON	2	RYANAIR 27 March-27 Oct
STANSTED	3	RYANAIR 28 March-28 Oct

CARCASSONNE



Ryanair remains the sole operator here. Last September my wife flew **Carcassonne-Cork**, booking only a few weeks notice – the fare was €15!

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
EAST MIDLANDS	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
EDINBURGH	2	RYANAIR 27 March-26 Oct
MANCHESTER	3-4	RYANAIR 26 March-27 Oct
STANSTED	7	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
CORK	2	RYANAIR 28 March-28 Oct
DUBLIN	4	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct

MONTPELLIER



EasyJet operate from both **Gatwick** and **Luton**. The latter only for a short period. The **British Airways** flight from **Heathrow** which operated only in 2018 appears not to be operating again this year.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
GATWICK	13	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
LUTON	3	EASYJET 27 JUNE-2 Sep
GATWICK	3	BRITISH AWYS 27 May-28 Oct

Who invented the first
airplane that wouldn't fly?
The Wrong Brothers.



NIMES

Ryanair is the sole operator for P-O readers. **Luton** has been dropped, but **Dublin** and **Edinburgh** are now served along with **Stansted**.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
DUBLIN	2	RYANAIR 1 May-26 Oct
EDINBURGH	2	RYANAIR 29 March-28 Oct
STANSTED	2	RYANAIR 29 March-28 Oct

PERPIGNAN

Good news for Yorkshire lass Kate, **Ryanair** have listed twice-weekly flights to **Perpignan** from **Leeds Bradford**. If you haven't travelled from this airport recently, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the makeover to the departure lounge which now has shop, **extra space upstairs** and **smiling, helpful, English speaking staff** to help you out if you need advice.



FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BIRMINGHAM	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
DUBLIN	3	AER LINGUS 3 May-30 Sep
LEEDS BRADFORD	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
STANSTED	5	RYANAIR 26 March-26 Oct

TOULOUSE / BLAGNAC

Ryanair have added service to **Birmingham** whilst **Manchester** will be introduced by **Jet2**

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BIRMINGHAM	2	RYANAIR 28 March-28 Oct
BRISTOL	7	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
EDINBURGH	3	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
GATWICK	4-6	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
HEATHROW	28	BRITISH AWYS 26 Mar-28 Oct
STANSTED	10	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
DUBLIN	3	AER LINGUS 26 March-28 Oct
	3	RYANAIR 27 March-27 Oct



SPAIN

BARCELONA / EL PRAT



As always, a huge variety of flights to **Barcelona**, most of which run all year round, but with seasonal increases. **Ryanair** now operate flights from **Luton** and **Newcastle**, though **Prestwick** has been dropped. There are now four operators on the Manchester route. **easyJet** have dropped the **Newcastle** and **Southend** service but added **Manchester**. This summer **Vueling** are no longer offering flights from **Belfast City**, **Cardiff**, **Cork** and **Newcastle**. **Glasgow** has lost the **Jet2** service but gained **easyJet**. **Jet2** have added **Birmingham**.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BELFAST INT'L	3-5	EASYJET 27 March-27 Oct
BIRMINGHAM	2	JET2 26 March-29 Oct
	6	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
	7	VUELING 26 March-28 Oct
BRISTOL	10-14	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
EAST MIDLANDS	7	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
EDINBURGH	9	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
	4	VUELING 26 March-27 Oct
GATWICK	24-33	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
	53	VUELING 26 March-28 Oct
GLASGOW INT'L	2	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
HEATHROW	49	BRITISH AWYS 26 Mar-28 Oct
LEEDS BRADFORD	2-4	JET2 27 March-30 Oct
LIVERPOOL	3-7	EASYJET 26 March-27 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
LUTON	12-14	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 26 March-27 Oct



What do you call a flying primate?
A hot air baboon.

MANCHESTER	4-5	JET2 26 March-31 Oct
	6-7	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
	10	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
	10	VUELING 26 March-28 Oct
NEWCASTLE	2	RYANAIR 26 March-26 Oct
STANSTED	28	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
DUBLIN	14	AER LINGUS 26 March-28 Oct
	19	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct
	11	VUELING 26 March-28 Oct



GIRONA

Ryanair have added **Belfast**, **Birmingham**, **East Midlands**, **Manchester** and **Shannon**. **Jet2** who suddenly found the airport a few years ago once again have a whole raft of flights.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BELFAST	1-2	RYANAIR 31 March-27 Oct
BIRMINGHAM	2	JET2 1 May-27 Oct
	2	RYANAIR 3 June-28 Oct
BOURNEMOUTH	2-5	RYANAIR 31 March-28 Oct
BRISTOL	1	JET2 27 May-30 Oct
	4-6	RYANAIR 27 March-28 Oct
CORK	2-4	RYANAIR 26 March-27 Oct
DUBLIN	2-6	RYANAIR 27 March-27 Oct
EAST MIDLANDS	1	JET2 27 May-28 Oct
	2	RYANAIR 26 March-22 Oct
GLASGOW	1	JET2 28 May-24 Sep
KNOCK	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
LEEDS BRADFORD	2	JET2 From 30 April-29 Oct
	4	RYANAIR 2 June-26 Oct
MANCHESTER	2-4	JET2 1 May-30 Oct
	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
NEWCASTLE	1	JET2 7 May-29 Oct
SHANNON	2	RYANAIR 1 June-26 Oct
STANSTED	2	JET2 1 May-30 Oct
	7	RYANAIR 26 March-28 Oct



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P-O Life

Spanish SLIP-UP – TRAINS TOO TALL FOR TUNNELS Schadenfreude!

We really shouldn't laugh at other people's misfortunes **but** our neighbours over the border apparently made a serious **miscalculation this year in the design of their new trains**, meaning that they would no longer fit through the tunnels!



The error was spotted by the subcontractor engaged to manufacture the new fleet for the regions of Cantabria and Asturias. **The €161 million contract covered over 30 new trains for a line** which is known to have smaller tunnels than the rest of the network.

All the preliminary studies had already been carried out but the smaller dimensions were somehow overlooked.

Fortunately the building of the new trains had not yet begun but the design and conception had been a lengthy (and costly!) process, which is now delayed by an additional 2 to 3 years.

In addition to the commuter trains in Cantabria and Asturias, the error will also affect the Basque Country, Galicia, Castilla y León and Murcia.

The president of Cantabria, **Miguel Ángel Revilla**, denounced the fiasco as “a monumental blunder” and called for “heads to roll”. His call was answered on Monday when Renfe's president, **Isaías Táboas**, resigned and the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Transport, **Isabel Pardo de Vera**, was dismissed.

Like we said...

oops!



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THE nature OF CANET LAGOON PART II

With Lesley McLaren



Canet lagoon and surrounding marshland has long been an important habitat for many different creatures – either as a permanent home or stopping-off place. But now the lagoon has been colonised by vicious invaders that devour everything they can get their claws into. Scientists fear for the eco-system, while fishermen fear for their livelihoods.

Total surface area protected: about 1867 hectares

Surface covered by water: about 4.8 sq km

Maximum depth 1m

Separated from the Mediterranean by a long sand bank (and, these days, a road)

Seawater enters via the Grau des Basses inlet – controlled by sluice gates.

Freshwater drains into it from a 260 sq km area, via rivers Réart, Agouille de la Mar, Fosseille & Llobère

Fishermen's nets are apparently empty of fish and eels but full of non-native blue crabs (les crabes bleus). Native to the Atlantic coast of America, the crabs most probably got here via ships' ballast water. Having entered from the sea, in five years they've taken over the lagoon.

Their success is partly due to an ability to withstand temperature variation from 6 to 37 degrees and water of variable salinity; they grow fast, have a voracious appetite and no natural predators (after humans) except octopuses. Not many of those in the lagoon! At present, the only known way of controlling the invasion is to remove as many as possible. In 2021 fishermen voluntarily netted 10 tons. Last year: 14 tons. It's a never-ending battle but funding has finally been granted to support ongoing removal and further research.



Blue crabs are good to eat, fortunately, so not all may be wasted – look out for them on menus in due course! However, if you see one on the beach or in the sea, don't be tempted to pick it up to barbecue later. They have no fear and will come towards you, claws waving. And those claws don't just pinch, they cut!

Moulted exoskeletons of juveniles are unique: increasing from 6cm to 10cm in just 2 days

Females can lay up to 2.5 million eggs and "paint their fingernails": unlike all-blue males, the tips of females' claws are red (as pictured)

Carnivorous & highly aggressive, they even eat one another

OTHER FAUNA

In summertime you might see birds like the ridiculously lanky Black-winged Stilt (Échasse blanche).



It's tough for nesting couples, though, because their chicks often fall prey to Marsh Harriers (Busards des roseaux), which also breed here.



Black-winged Stilt – nest-building



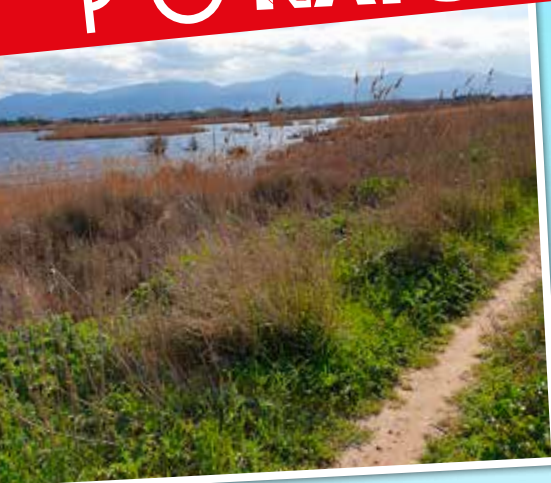
Female Marsh Harrier



Lesley McLaren is one of "The Warblers" – a group of natural history enthusiasts in the PO. Photos by "The Warblers" unless otherwise stated. www.mediterraneanpyrenees.com · Twitter @66warblers



P-O NATURALLY



Among the reptiles, as well as little lizards that abound throughout the P-O, you may be lucky enough to come across a big and quite rare **Ocellated Lizard (le lézard ocellé)** basking in the summer sun. They are very shy, however, so won't hang around once they know you're there.



Floridan turtles (les tortues de Floride) are common. While non-native and somewhat invasive, they mainly impact our Mediterranean pond turtles.

Among mammals, there are signs of **foxes (renards)**, **polecats (putois)** and occasionally even **otters (loutres)**, but because these tend to be nocturnal, they are hard to spot.



Coyup (les ragondins) are the animals you're most likely to see in fresh or brackish water around the lagoon.



The area covered by water has halved since 1750 and the lagoon is now **considered close to the end of its natural evolution**, because of urbanization and increasing isolation from the sea, plus diminishing salinity due to freshwater draining in from the plain. Even if rainfall remains generally as low as last autumn and winter, a freak storm could have a devastating impact. There's a risk, for example, that it could fill in completely in a single flood event, should the river Réart burst its banks. **It's up to us to help it endure for as long as possible.**



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and at our Book Exchange at

Laroque-des-Albères, Café des Artistes
10h30 to 12 noon,
Third Monday of the month



unbelievably bad joke...

but good
for your French

Un type fait du stop sous la pluie, au bord de la route du Perthus. Il fait noir et un terrible orage se déchaîne.

Personne ne s'arrête. Le temps est si mauvais qu'il ne voit pas plus loin que 2 mètres devant lui.

Tout à coup il voit une voiture qui s'approche lentement et qui s'arrête. Le gars monte dans la voiture et ferme la porte, très soulagé d'être sorti de l'orage. Il commence à dire merci quand il se rend compte qu'il n'y a pas de conducteur.

Quoi ? Comment ? Mais.... mais.....ce n'est pas possible ! La voiture démarre doucement. Il y a beaucoup de virages sur la route de Perthus. Effrayé, il commence à prier et juste avant d'arriver sur le virage, la porte du conducteur s'entre-ouvre et une main entre et fait tourner le volant.

Paralysé de peur, il s'accroche à son siège, et reste immobile. La main apparaît à chaque fois qu'il y a un virage sur la route et notre héros, complètement paniqué, réussit à descendre de la voiture et part en courant jusqu'au village le plus proche, où il entre dans le bar, tremblant, demande un grand whisky, le boit cul sec, et raconte à tous ce qui lui était arrivé.

Une demi-heure plus tard deux hommes complètement trempés, l'air très fatigués, arrivent dans le bar et l'un dit à l'autre :

"Regarde là-bas, c'est l'abruti qui est monté dans la voiture pendant qu'on la poussait!"

Un type - a guy
faire du stop - to hitchhike
se déchaîne - is raging
personne ne s'arrête - nobody is stopping
le temps - the weather
Tout à coup - suddenly
Le gars - the guy/chap
soulagé - relieved
il se rend compte - he realises
conducteur - driver
La voiture démarre - the car sets off
doucement - slowly
virages - bends
effrayé - terrified
prier - pray
s'entre-ouvre - half opens
le volant - the steering wheel
il s'accroche à son siège - he hangs on to his seat
réussit à descendre - manages to get out
partir en courant - runs off
le plus proche - the nearest
cul sec - in one go/down in one
ce qui lui était arrivé - what happened to him
trempés - soaked
l'air très fatigués - looking very tired
là-bas - over there
l'abruti - idiot
pendant qu'on la poussait - while we were pushing it



Tongue Twister

Répétez trois fois
Seize jacinthes sèchent dans
seize sachets sales.
(jacinthes - hyacinths)

Test your FRENCH

See Page 73 for answers



1 L is for Lapin

Match up the words, all beginning with L, with their definitions.
(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| lambeau 1 | a Désagréable à regarder |
| langoustine 2 | b Crustacé de la mer à carapace rose |
| lecteur 3 | c Pour laver le linge |
| libellule 4 | d Animal qui n'existe pas ! |
| librairie 5 | e Morceau déchiré de tissu |
| lavabo 6 | f Insecte à 4 longues ailes transparentes |
| licorne 7 | g Quelqu'un qui lit |
| limace 8 | h Escargot sans coquille |
| lessive 9 | i Magasin qui vend des livres |
| laid 10 | j Bassin avec robinet fixé au mur |



Useful Expression

J'arrive –
I'm on my way/I'll be there soon

Réflexions

Est-ce que personne ne trouve
étrange qu'aujourd'hui des
ordinateurs demandent à des
humains de prouver qu'ils ne
sont pas des robots ?

(Personne (ne) – nobody)

Pourquoi les canards sont toujours à l'heure?

Parce qu'ils sont dans l'étang
(à l'heure - on time,
dans l'étang - in the lake,
dans les temps - on time)



Faux Amis

Oh, those false friends. Some words were
surely invented just to confuse
French language learners! Here are just a few!

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| String 1 | a To drag/trail |
| Blesser 2 | b Toilet |
| Waters 3 | c Warning |
| Actuellement 4 | d Deposit |
| Assister (à) 5 | e Now |
| Piles 6 | f To be present |
| Ball trap 7 | g Thong |
| Acompte 8 | h To injure |
| Avertissement 9 | i Batteries |
| Trainer 10 | j clay pigeon shooting |



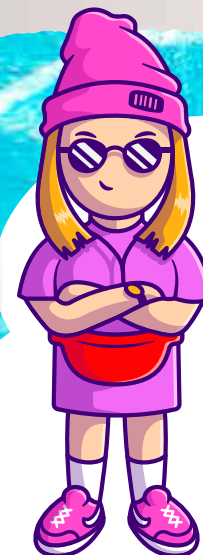
3

Remplissez les blancs avec les mots ci-dessous

Horace - Je ne1.... plus aller à l'école. Ne me2.... pas s'il te plaît. Les élèves me
détestent et les profs aussi. Je veux3.... à la maison Ethel - Absolument4.... question.
Dans la vie, il5.... faire des efforts. Horace - Mais ce n'est pas6....! Donne7.... deux
raisons8.... y aller. Ethel - La première, tu9.... 52 ans. La deuxième, c'est10.... le
directeur ! "

a as b juste c veux d pour e faut f rester g force h moi i toi j pas

Quel est le réseau social
préféré des pêcheurs ?
TRUITEUR
(truite – trout)



Some French text language (textos) -
not to be used in your essays please kids!!

A+ > A plus tard (See you later)
Biz > bisous (Kisses)
Koi29 > Quoi de neuf ? (What's new?)
a2m1 > À demain (See you tomorrow)
MDR > Mort de rire (Lol)
NSP > ne sais pas (Dunno)
EDR > écroulé de rire (Lol)
KDO > cadeau (Present)
DSL > Désolé (Sorry)
PK > Pourquoi (Why)
MDA > Merci d'avance (Thanks in advance)



Bonbons!

The following expressions all use bon/ne. Can you find their English equivalent?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----|---|---|
| Bonne continuation | 1 | a | Good riddance |
| Bon débarras | 2 | b | Safe journey back |
| Bon rétablissement | 3 | c | Enjoy the rest of whatever you're doing |
| Bon appétit | 4 | d | Safe journey |
| Bonne journée | 5 | e | Get well soon |
| Bonne réception | 6 | f | All the best/Hang in there |
| Bon courage | 7 | g | Have a good day |
| A quoi bon ? | 8 | h | Hope this reaches you safely |
| Bonne route | 9 | i | What's the point? |
| Bon retour | 10 | j | Enjoy your meal |



Fun with bodily functions!

Roter (rott-ay)- to burp
"Excusez-moi, j'ai roté!"

Baver (bav-ay) to dribble
"Attention! Vous bavez!"

Cracher (crash-ay) - to spit
"Eloignez-vous! (keep away)
Il crache quand il parle !

Great expression *Chanter en yaourt*

This French expression has absolutely nothing to do with dairy products but describes making up or mumbling the lyrics when you pretend to sing along to a song that you don't know!

5

Innit!

Like most languages, French has many informal shortened versions of longer words. Here are just a few. Can you find their equivalents in English?

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----|---|--------------------|
| regio | 1 | a | brother-in-law |
| un beauf | 2 | b | honest, dependable |
| d'acc | 3 | c | waste |
| la der des ders | 4 | d | the news |
| la fac | 5 | e | OK |
| l'hosto | 6 | f | brilliant |
| comme d'hab | 7 | g | hospital |
| le gaspi | 8 | h | the very last one |
| impec | 9 | i | university |
| les actus | 10 | j | as usual |

Useful Expression

Ça tombe bien
That works out well /time is right

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Chupa chups and Dali

Have you tried Chupa Chups lollipops? Even if you don't have a sweet tooth, you can't really miss these brightly coloured teeth-rotters at the tills in most French shops and supermarkets - but did you know that their logo was designed in 1969 by Salvador Dali?.



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OOOOPS. TOILET HUMOUR WITH MARIA

My dear husband often mispronounces the endings of French words. One day we met our neighbour's wife. He breeds hunting dogs. "Bonjour Madame" he confidently launches "vous avez encore des chiottes chez vous ?" Deep gulp from me. The lady didn't bat an eyelid. "Oui, il y en a beaucoup".

chiots = puppies
chiottes = bog, slang for toilet



Améliorez votre ANGLAIS

See Page 73 for answers

**Tongue twister
(virelangue)**

Répétez trois fois
**A snake sneaks
to seek a snack**

**Very silly
joke**

**What's orange
and sounds like
a parrot?**

A carrot

1 P is for Papa

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

pandemonium	1	a	friend
posh	2	b	animal companion
plum	3	c	dried plum
penultimate	4	d	confusion and disorder
pal	5	e	farm machine for breaking up soil
painter	6	f	nontechnical name for haemorrhoids
piles	7	g	next to the last
pet	8	h	oval, fleshy, edible fruit
plough	9	i	artist or decorator
prune	10	j	luxurious or upper class

2

Pouvez-vous trouver les définitions de ces mots, rentrés cette année dans le dictionnaire anglais? (Même les anglophones auront du mal !)

Carolean	1	a	Lying flat on the stomach with legs stretched out
Splooting	2	b	Covid related political scandal over social gatherings restrictions
Partygate	3	c	extended period of instability and insecurity
Permacrisis	4	d	relating to Charles III

English humour!

Why don't elephants chew gum?
They do, just not in public

Silly!

Why does a seagull fly over the sea?
Because if it flew over the bay, it would be a bagel

What do you call a beehive without an exit?

Unbelievable. (un-bee-leave-able)
(beehive - ruche)

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DID YOU KNOW

The english term **flea market** comes from the French 'marché aux puces' so named from the first flea markets which were in Paris and would often be the type of items that might be **infested with fleas.**



LANGUAGE

Améliorez votre ANGLAIS

3

Confusing words

1. He gets _____ very easily.
a boring b bored
2. I haven't been back to England _____ five years.
a since b for
3. I usually finish work _____ 6pm
a by b until
4. It is difficult to choose _____ the two
a amongst b between
5. Do they still _____ your passport at the Spanish border?
a check b control

**Fin des vacances?
Vous quittez vos nouveaux
amis, vos nouveaux
chers? Ne dites pas
Goodbye... dites...**

- Cheerio
- Bye-bye
- So long Farewell
- Toodle pip (old fashioned)
- Bye for now
- All the best
- Parting is such sweet sorrow (Shakespeare)
- See you later alligator (definitely not Shakespeare lol)
- Laters

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

- > Run along
- > Shove off
- > Get lost!
- > Scram!
- > Piss off (très vulgaire)
- > Go to hell!
- > Beat it
- > Push off

4

Trouvez la bonne comparaison

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|---|-------|
| as --- as a coot | 1 | a | mad |
| as --- as a bus | 2 | b | clear |
| as --- as a fruitcake | 3 | c | quick |
| as --- as a whistle | 4 | d | drunk |
| as --- as mud | 5 | e | bald |
| as --- as a wink | 6 | f | flat |
| as --- as a post | 7 | g | clean |
| as --- as a lord | 8 | h | deaf |
| as --- as dishwater | 9 | i | big |
| as --- as a pancake | 10 | j | dull |

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IT'S DYNAMITE!

When Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833 - 1896) invented dynamite, he set up factories throughout Europe, including one at Paulilles, on the road between Port Vendres and Banyuls in 1871. The site is now a small museum, workshop and exhibition centre, and well worth a visit.



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The French Social Security site recommends that all French residents take a Carte Européenne d'Assurance Maladie (CEAM) with them when travelling to other EU countries or Switzerland.

This card will ensure free or subsidized medical treatment (depending on the country visited of course) and is easy to obtain, assuming that you are already part of the great machine that is the French medical system.



MAISON SECONDAIRE HERE IN THE P-O?

No more tax d'habitation. Yippee! But if your house or holiday home is not your main residence, some communes are still going to tax you anything from 20% to 60%, starting in 2024. Oops! Watch this space or find out more at

https://france-insider.com/?utm_source=po-life



DON'T FORGET TO UPDATE YOUR 'CONTROLE TECHNIQUE'?



Obligatory in France since 1992, any vehicle without the CT (MOT) risks fines of up to 750 euros, according to how long the vehicle has been on the road without it.

For example, the fine is 135 euros if recently expired, going down to 90 euros if the fine is paid within three days. Beware if you're a slow payer or just don't have the dosh. It increases to 375 euros after 45 days, and if still unpaid, can go to court where it can reach its maximum amount of 750 euros!

Failure to respond at all to fine could lead to immobilisation of the vehicle, impoundment, confiscation of the 'carte grise' (log book) or even towing away of car.

THAT'S THE TICKET

The government's latest anti-waste initiative brings an end to receiving a printed receipt in shops unless you specifically ask.



Not only are these little strips printed 30 billion times per year – that's a lot of paper – but they also contain toxic substances such as endocrine disruptors.

Originally set for 1st April, the enforcement date has been pushed back to 1st August, although many shops are already asking:

"Vous voulez le ticket?"

FAKE PARKING TICKET SCAM



The latest scam across the whole country is the placing of fake parking tickets on windscreens.

The QR code on these forged tickets takes you to a very realistic, yet entirely fake version of the government's fine-paying website.

If you receive a parking ticket, double check that the QR code is taking you to <http://antai.gouv.fr>, or even better, don't scan anything and try to manually input the reference number into the government's official fine-paying website: <http://amendes.gouv.fr>

LANGUAGE EXERCISES ANSWERS

TEST your FRENCH

- 1 1e 2b 3g 4f 5i 6j 7d 8h 9c 10a
- 2 1g 2h 3b 4e 5f 6i 7j 8d 9c 10a
- 3 1c 2g 3f 4j 5e 6b 7h 8d 9a 10i
- 4 1c 2a 3e 4j 5g 6h 7f 8i 9d 10b
- 5 1b 2a3e 4h 5i 6g 7j 8c 9f 10d

AMÉLIOREZ votre ANGLAIS

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



EMERGENCY numbers



15 SAMU
(medical emergency)

17 POLICE
emergency

18 Fire service
emergency

112 European
emergency line

114 Emergency number
for the deaf and hard
of hearing by SMS

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Gas emergency 08 00 47 33 33

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, l'eau du bébé arrive, la poche des eaux a percé.

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