

Winter/Spring
2024

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales

N° 80
FREE / GRATUIT



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CYCLE *the*
REGION
....Le Boucle
des Albères

OUT *for*
THE DAY
....Le Palais des
Rois de Majorque

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Edito ☺



Wow, what a non-winter that's been so far.
Spring is already bursting through here in the P-O, defying the rules for February and March, and cocking a snoot at the morning frosts that sometimes freshen up our awakening. Most of us are hoping for rain but loving the sunshine. What a mixed up weather region we live in!

Regular readers will have noticed that we're a little late getting out on the streets this season. Our only excuse is that the cat ate our homework...and we've had a bit of a financial flounder, but since we won the lottery (dream on) **we're back on the straight(ish) and narrow(ish) thanks to the support of the many loyal advertisers who never let us down.**

As always, a big big thank you to the amazing, generous hearted writers who add a touch of class with walks and rides, airport news, P-O nature, art and architecture..... You'll find all their names scattered liberally throughout the mag.
And to you dear reader. Whatever would we do without you?

Mimosa and almond blossom are splashing pale pinks and fluffy yellows in every direction, and **spring is in the air! Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, we wish you sunshine** (and rain) and a springtime of laughter and relaxation in this beautiful region. PS. What do you say to persuade a French bear to eat cheese? **"Cam-en-bert!"**

Kate

Here in the P-O, we are just a hop, skip and a jump away from Spain so learning the language is very useful!
"I've been trying to teach my 4 year old son to say 'please' in Spanish but he just can't pronounce it"
"That's poor for 4"
"Yes, that's what I keep telling him"



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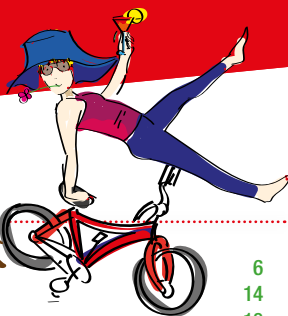


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DO YOU LOVE OUR FRONT COVER AS MUCH AS WE DO?

This acrylic painting by local artist **Bridget Rook-Waterhouse** was inspired by the plantain trees of Céret. She sketched a large picture, then cut it up and rearranged it in order to make a final painting. It is now in a private collection.

Impression: **ROTIMPRES** (Girona): 15.000 ex.
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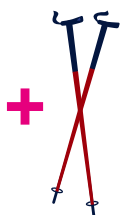
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A delightful circuit of 10.5 kilometres which takes about 3hrs 45mins and includes 250 metres of ascent. The official tourist guide book says it takes 2 hours 40 mins – unfortunately we are past the age of fell running! **Much of the route is in forest so offers good sun protection** if you're thinking of doing this walk later in the year. Some open sections of piste on the way back. Good paths with **yellow waymarks**.

Access: map IGN 1:25000 Ceret, Amelie-les-Bains-Palada 24490T



An excellent **medium level** walk.

The word 'mas' is a bit of a mix of 'maison' and 'manoir' and describes a traditional farmhouse or cluster of houses in Catalonia, or Provence, originally the home of a wealthy family. They would usually be built in a well-sheltered spot, near a source of water, facing south to protect against the Mistral or Tramontane, with narrow windows to protect against heat and cold. Most would have a 'rebois' - a special cold room to store meat and fresh produce before fridges were invented. Stone, red brick and wood were traditional construction materials. Many buildings featured an exterior staircase. On maps these buildings are called 'Mas' in Vallespir, but 'Can', meaning 'chez', can be found, or 'Al' – either of these being followed by the name of the proprietor.

START

Take D115 from Le Boulou to Pont de Reynès. Park in main car park next to 'le Fournil' former boulangerie, opposite the D15 leading to Reynès village.



THE WALK(S)

Cross road and walk up the Reynès road about 100 metres. **Turn into the estate Mas Trilles**, then take first road left which leads to woodland through a green gate.

A short steep slope leads up to a fast flowing water channel.



THE AUSTRIAN CROISSANT?

Talking of boulangeries, (such as le Fournil, found at the beginning of the walk) **did you know that the croissant, firmly associated with France, actually originated in Austria?**

August Zang, Austrian artillery officer, opened a Viennese Bakery in Paris in 1839, introducing Viennese specialties such as the 'kipfel', which quickly developed into the croissant as we know it, named for its crescent shape. Today, rising prices of butter, one of the main ingredients for a tasty croissant, mean that quality croissants are becoming more expensive to make and bakers are struggling to make a decent profit. Sacré Beurre! Could this be the end of the croissant as we know it?



Enter woodland and gradually ascend the earth and stone path towards the top of the ridge. After 25 minutes from start reach an area with fence on left. **Follow it and reach a wide piste (double track) straight ahead.**

Piste soon bends left (ignore descending one on right). Continue to follow it, ignoring all other side tracks. **Views are over to Amelie and beyond.**

Around 40 minutes into the walk reach a sharp hairpin bend. Turn right on the bend, entering a more open section with several summer gardens/huts and plots. Gradually head downwards passing 2 houses to emerge on small tarmac road (leading to Mas de Collet).

ALL AROUND REYNES:

Le Chemin des Mas

walk the region ALL AROUND REYNES *Le Chemin des Mas*

WITH TIM AND CHRIS PARKER



Turn left and **after 20 metres take signed path on left, leading to village of Reynès.**

After a descent on rock the path levels off and crosses a small river. A thoughtfully placed footbridge is there for when the river is more than a stream!



Arrive in front of the church at Reynès about 1 hour 15 mins from the start of the walk. A couple of seats under the trees provide a good place for a break/drink.



The site of Reynès was already inhabited between the Neolithic (5000 BC) and the Chalcolithic (2000 BC) periods. Archaeological excavations have uncovered a small polished greenstone axe, parts of several necklaces, and polished bone, all currently displayed at the **Maison du Patrimoine in Céret.**

The walk continues down the road to the right of the church. Pass a few houses on right to find a spring and the **old village lavoir.**



From here one option is to **walk up the road for about 15 minutes.** A more interesting option is to **take the path behind the lavoir** – at far side of the little green bridge – and follow it uphill to miss a few bends in the road and emerge at the road just where a long concrete drive leaves it.

Join the main road here and continue to a house named '**La Creu Can Coste**', situated on a sharp bend. Turn left onto piste to left of the house.



Follow piste 150 metres, then take path on left signed '**Mas Casals**'. Descend gradually over rocky then earthy paths to arrive at the Mas.



Cross the bridge and turn left. Go straight on at crossroad of paths (upper of 2 paths on left).



Continue to Mas Santol, noting, near the Mas, the overgrown remains of a 300 year old cork oak. Pass the Mas, down the drive to meet **tarmac road.**

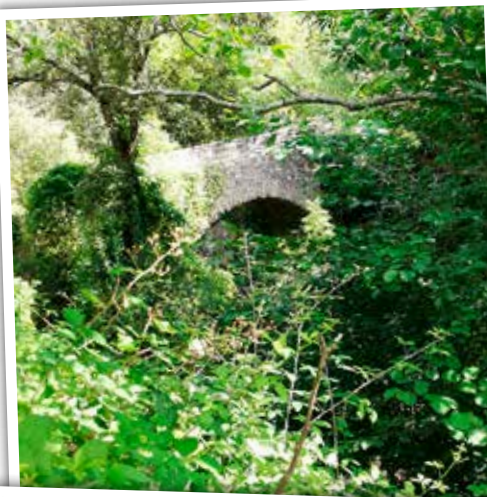


LET'S TORK CORK

Whilst cork oaks (chênes lieges) are plentiful in this southern part of France, few reach such a majestic size as **this magnificent tree in the grounds of Mas Santol, Reynès,** believed to be **the largest in the P-O.** There are a number of cork oaks in the same glade, but **this splendid specimen has a girth of 5.41 metres and an approximate height of 21 metres.** Unlike many in southern France, it is sufficiently sheltered from strong winds for the canopy to have also achieved an impressive spread. **The estimated age of the tree is between 250 and 300 years.** This is generally viewed as the maximum age for a cork oak. **At the beginning of 2023, the tree was officially measured by experts and the application was sent to the Guinness Book of Records,** in the hope of beating a **Portuguese cork oak** which presently holds the record.

Walk the region ALL AROUND REYNES *Le Chemin des Mas* WITH TIM AND CHRIS PARKER

Turn right. After 300 metres, road crosses a bridge. Notice the old Pont du Moulin on the left – detour to walk over it if you wish.



Walk up road about 50 metres to find narrow path on right going up into wood – **yellow arrow on road facing out of the path**. The path crosses the road a couple of times to arrive at **Col de Bossells**.



In the mid 1800s, Queen Amélie, wife of French King Louis Philippe, was regularly to be seen in Amélie-les-Bains taking the waters for her rheumatism, and the area was economically blooming. Towards the end of the century, the Elne - Arles sur Tech railroad line was built, the iron bridge having two sections: the lower part was used by cars and the upper part by trains. Today, much of the present and delightful cycle track taking you from Céret (and beyond) to Arles sur Tech was built in the tracks of this former train line.



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PRICE: 384 000 €

Ref 1539m



SOREDE: 102 sqm tastefully renovated stone village house with large terraces, swimming pool and garage, in the heart of Sorede, a step to all the shops, bars and restaurants!. 3 spacious en-suite bedrooms, storage room convertible into further living space. **A one of a kind property!**

PRICE: 212 000 €

Ref 513A



BANYULS-SUR-MER: Located in the centre of the village, a step away from the beach! Very pleasant one-bedroom apartment (42 sq.m) with terrace and private parking space. Very bright living-room with fantastic mountain view! **Air conditioning, lift. Excellent condition.**

PRICE: 578 000 €

Ref 1592m



SOREDE: in a very quiet residential setting close to all the shops, comfortable 150 sqm detached single storey villa on a 671 sqm flat and fenced land with swimming pool and view. 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large double living room and garage. **Property in perfect condition!**

PRICE: 144 000 €

Ref 518A



BANYULS-SUR-MER: A step away from the beach, very pleasant 27 sqm 1 bedroom apartment, spacious 17 sqm terrace with fantastic sea view. Living-room with open plan kitchen. Shower-room and toilet. **Very good condition.**

PRICE: 568 000 €

Ref 1582m



LAROQUE DES ALBERES: Exceptional location ! Walking distance to all the shops, on a 2700 sqm land with panoramic mountain view, 171 sqm detached villa with 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, spacious living room, large garages and sun catching pool! **Very rare!**

PRICE: 477 000 €

Ref 1602m



CERBERE: Outstanding 132 sqm property with large living-room and open plan kitchen, 2 bedrooms + 1 bedroom guest house with living-room and open plan kitchen. Exceptional sea view and sea front location. Very quiet area. **Fantastic terrasse with pool. Large garage.**

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walk the region ALL AROUND REYNES *Le Chemin des Mas* WITH TIM AND CHRIS PARKER

Turn left at the sign. The tarmac road soon becomes a piste/double stony track. Great views open up over the hills and the valley below. Follow piste to where it divides. Take left fork **signed Pont de Reynès (right is Céret)** and follow round the hill.



The piste weaves round the hills and gradually goes down to a small road where housing starts.

Turn right to follow the road back to Pont de Reynès, arriving on the opposite side of the river from where you started.

Maybe relax with a drink at the bar/restaurant opposite the car park!



Check out past P-O Life walks around Reynès (search our website at anglophone-direct.com) to visit the site of the **old Reynès talc mine**, not on this route. It was **operational from 1876 to 1978** and the material mined was used for **soap making in Marseille, porcelain making in Limoges** and also used in curing leather. In 1929 an aerial wire system was installed to carry the wagons down towards the valley and remnants of this can still be seen. The buildings are in bad repair and the entrance to the mine is closed off but it is amazing to think that it operated for so long. **In 1930, for example, 440 tons of talc were mined from this spot from some deep veins underground.**



The Eiffel-style iron bridge you will pass on your right shortly before parking at the beginning of the walk, was **built in 1883**, when the region's fledgling railroad linked Perpignan with the villages of the Vallespir and High Vallespir.

On **August 19th, 1944**, the retreat of German troops was thwarted by an ambush led by the Vallespir Maquis (resistance). Retired veteran soldier, **Captain François Madern, native of Reynès**, was killed in the shoot-out. Traces of bullet holes can still be seen in some places. At the end of the bridge is a memorial commemorating the historic event.

Over 80 years later, **Le Pont de Reynès**, also known as **Le Pont du 19 août 1944**, is well-preserved, and has been integrated into the cycle path passing over the former railway track.



AGENCE

Arles sur Tech

Amélie-les-Bains

Céret

Le Boulou

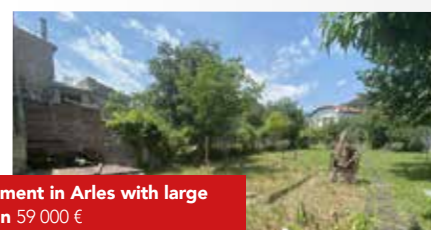
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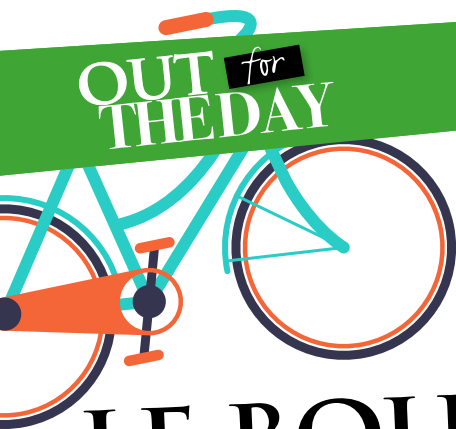
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native English speaker
living in Amélie
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OUT ^{for}
THE DAY



CYCLE the region

With Leigh and Merry Foster

LE BOUCLE DES ALBERES

Length 20km.
Duration 1-1.5 hrs.
Difficulty: easy with a few
moderate climbs
Total climb/descent 260m

This is one of our favourite circuits that we have done fairly regularly in the last few years. Recently there have been extensions and improvements to the EV8 cycle path (see <https://anglophone-direct.com/cycle-region-arages-laroque/>) which passes by Sorède, so we decided to try them out.



Our circuit started at the recently-opened **bicycle shop in Sorède**. You can buy or rent a bike here, www.facebook.com/bscycles66 the service is good and the bikes are very good quality. Merry's cousin joined us and wanted to rent an e-bike, which turned out to be very easy to ride (even uphill!) and comfortable.

Start off on the D2 Route de Laroque, heading west out of Sorède and down the hill, which is a great way to start. After climbing the hill into Laroque and traversing the town, **follow the signs to Saint Génis**. Just after the bridge that crosses the main river, **turn left towards Villelongue dels Monts on the D11, Avenue du Vallespir, opposite the primary school**. This road takes you out of Laroque into the pretty countryside and past a couple of camp sites.



About 1.2km from your stop, pass a spring labelled "Font del Carex" on the left, before continuing to climb into the centre of Montesquieu (alt. 179m) **where the D11 terminates at the T junction with the Grand Rue**.

After about 2km the road does a zigzag across a bridge and you start to climb into Villelongue. **This is where the e-bikes earn their keep!** In the centre of Villelongue you have to turn right, then left, to **stay on the D11, signposted to Montesquieu**. Pass the church and continue following the signs. On the way out of the village cross a bridge, and head down past the Boulodrome. After about 500 metres cross a river (alt 89m), then the road turns south and starts to climb towards Montesquieu. About 600 metres on, the road curves right, and there is a stopping place on the right where you can get a great view of the plain of Roussillon and have a breather!



After a short break continue to climb as the road winds up through the cork oaks and vineyards towards **Montesquieu**.



While here it's worth having a look at the site of the **11th c. medieval castle** – although very little of the original castle remains, the views from the top of the plain and the Albères are superb.

LE BOUCLE DES ALBERES



The anti-clockwise one way system means **you can't follow the D61** around the west side. After a short distance come to another T junction where you **ignore the 'Toutes Directions' sign and turn right**. This is the **Chemin de las Serres**, it's a quiet road, a bit gravelly in places, but it is a welcome descent through some lovely countryside and vineyards.



There is a small table d'orientation which describes the battle of Le Boulou, in which the castle played a decisive part.

After visiting the castle, you need to find your way back to the Grand Rue, and **follow it east to the Chemin du Roi which descends on the east side of the castle**.



At the bottom of the hill (alt 62m) reach another T junction and turn right on the **Rue de la Plansounade towards Villelongue** (it seems that this road could also be reached from Le Boulou if you're starting from there). **Follow this road/track, which has been resurfaced in places and painted with cycle path markings, for about 1.3km until you come to a brand-new metal bridge where you turn left across the Rivera de Vilallonga**. This is the newest part of the **EV8 cycle path**, and it winds its way east through vineyards and woodland until you reach the **Traverse de Villelongue** (alt 80m) about 3km from the T junction above. No doubt the cycle path is intended to continue from here in future, but for now you have to turn left and follow the **road down into Saint Génis des Fontaines**.

At the edge of the village there is a fork in the road. The right fork has a no entry sign, but it doesn't apply to bicycles! The official cycle path continues this way into the village, so just look out for any distracted drivers coming the other way!

Continue following the signs for the cycle path through the village, onto the Av des deux Catalognes. When you come to the water tower and the car park, **take Rue Pasteur on the right, pass the doctor's surgery and take the next right onto Rue des Jardins**. Alternatively, for a refreshment stop, continue straight into the centre of the village and **stop at the Bistrot des Albères** on the pleasant shady Place de la République. Once you reach the **Av des Albères**, head east towards **Sorède** and Laroque. At the next roundabout **take the first exit onto the D2, pass the camp site Fagamis l'Oasis**.

Continue on the D2 at the next roundabout climbing slowly towards **Laroque des Albères**. After about 1km on the left you can rejoin the EV8 heading east. Just after this **there is a new building which will apparently be an 'Aire de service vélos'** but at the time of writing it was unfinished. It's not clear what facilities the 'aire' will have, but it appears there will be a WC and possibly a café?



Continue to follow the cycle path signs until you reach the village of Sorède. At the T junction with Rue de la Gabarre turn right towards the village centre. In the centre turn right again on the D2 and you arrive back at the start. **Congratulate yourself on a great ride and have a cold drink at the Brasserie des Albères!**





In the heart of the Albères mountains lies la **Vallée des TORTUES**, an oasis of calm and home to over **30 species of turtles and tortoises from all over the world.**

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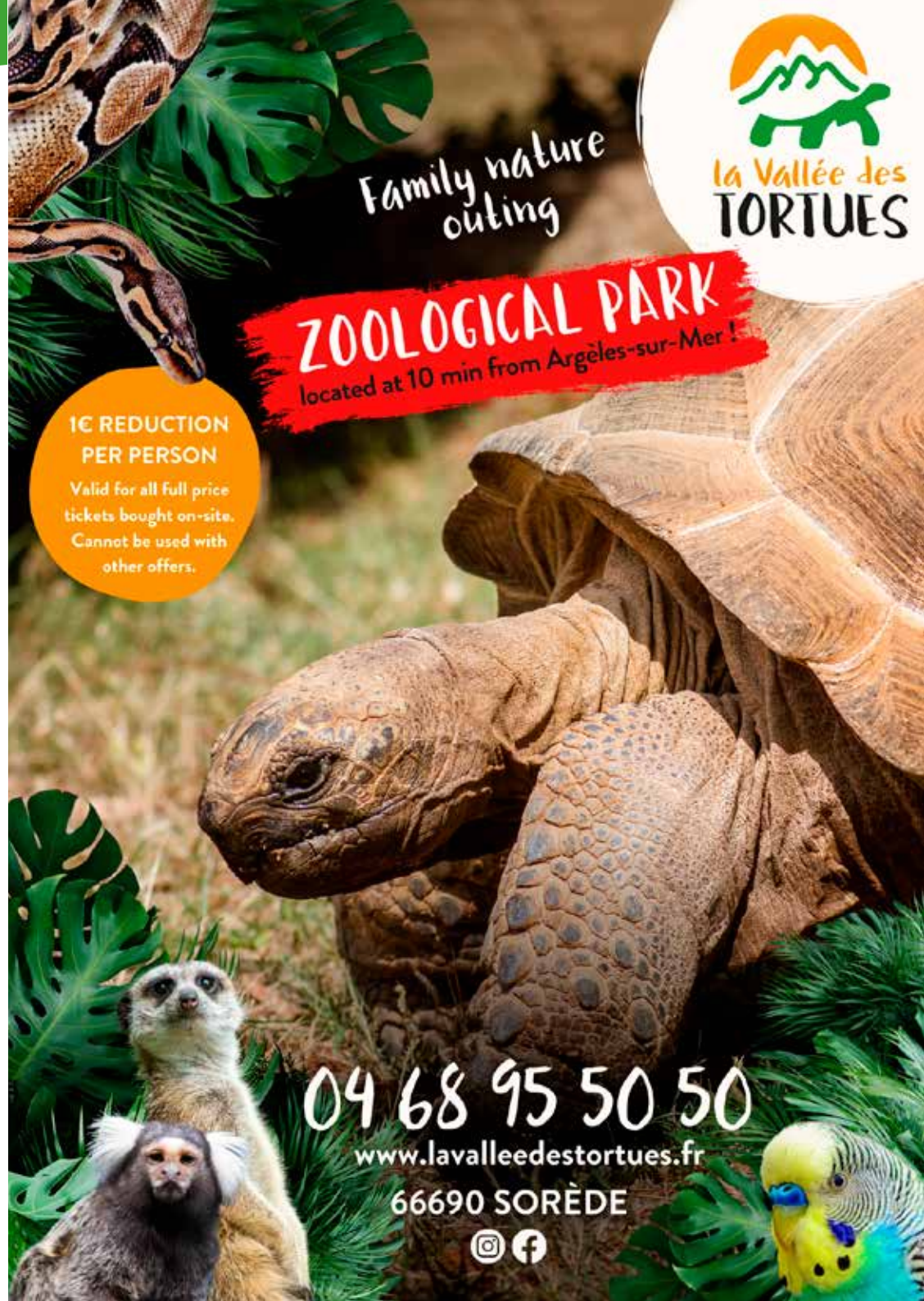
Be sure to **pay a visit to Bouffi, the 250kg gentle giant from the Seychelles.**

Look out too for meerkats, armadillos, marmosets, snakes, lizards and the immersive Australian aviary.

'En famille', entre amis and even seul(e), there is a **forest area with cooling moisture mist in summer**, a musical trail, snack bar, picnic and play area, and free additional activities including feeding time, animal stories....The perfect day out

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- L'iguane - *Iguana*
- La couleuvre - *Grass snake*
- Le dindon - *Turkey*
- le paon - *Peacock*
- L'oie - *Goose*
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Gorge-ous GORGES:

A gorge is a very deep crevice between two mountains or hills, formed by rivers running through and eroding rock over a very long period of time. Here are a couple to take your breath away.



Gorge DE LA CARANÇA

A day out at the Gorge de la Carança is a giddy adventure through stupendous mountain scenery – but it's not for the faint hearted!

Known also as **Le Sentier du Vertige** (very loosely translated as the dizzy trail), expect narrow ledges, (with cable handrail), **metal walkways, ladders and suspension bridges**, high above rushing water.

From the carpark, head over the bridge and follow the footpath as it winds steeply upwards, and into the Gorge.



Initially **cut out of the rock in 1943** to give access to the tunnel **taking the water of the Carança to the hydroelectric plant in Thuès**, the path hugs the steep limestone cliff.

In parts, you fear that one false move may send you hurtling down **400m into the gorge**, but the **wonderful views of craggy rocks**, splintered multi grey, white and ochre, the deformed trees and plants clinging tenaciously to the gorge walls, and the myriads of butterflies glittering and fluttering around your head, make every step as much a reward as a challenge.

It's elating and thrilling. **Dogs are NOT welcome.** Young **children should only walk if you and they are confident** that it is within their ability.

There are several options, with longer walks leading up the Gorge and meeting up with the GR10, and possibility of accommodation, so take a good map, plan ahead, visit their Facebook page (**Les Gorges de la Carança**), or **ring the Mairie at Thuès on 04 68 97 06 96** for more info.

And don't be surprised if you spot Indiana Jones on his way down, looking a bit stressed. If he can do it, so can you!



GETTING THERE

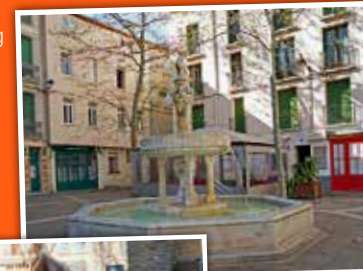
Head up the N116 towards Prades and on to Thuès (around 17 km after Villefranche de Conflent), and park in the car park (small charge - take cash). **You can also take the little yellow train** from Villefranche, getting off at Thuès-La Carança or the **1 euro bus, line 560**.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Lion in the Square....

Have you visited the pretty '**Place des Neuf Jets**' in old Céret? This historic square, in the very **centre of the cobbled town**, has a beautiful fountain topped by a sculpture of a lion. From the body of the lion come the water jets that give the square its name, the ninth being from the lion's mouth.

It's said that **when Céret and Roussillon belonged to the Kings of Aragon and Majorca** in medieval days, the **lion's head faced Spain**. **When it became French in the 17th century, the head was turned towards France**. At a later date a fight broke out between some visitors from Barcelona and some locals, which resulted in the lion being decapitated, later to be reconstructed.



....and the dove in the Place

In September 1953, Picasso arrived at the **Grand Café in Céret**, invited by Pierre Brune and friends in the **local communist party to celebrate the Saint Ferréol festival and the liberation of Céret 10 years earlier**.

Asking for a pen and ink, he drew an elegant sardane dance, added a dove and called it '**La Sardane de la paix**', offering it to his friends before he left.

A fountain, designed by **Juliette and Jacques Damville and located in Place Picasso**, beneath the Spanish gateway ramparts of Céret, celebrates the memory of this artistic act.

Gorge-ous GORGES:

There is nowhere to stop on the narrow road but there are carparks at both ends to leave your vehicle and walk, so even the driver gets the opportunity to appreciate the amazing views on foot.

Popular for canyoning and hiking, signs nevertheless warn that we should not go down to the gorge without the correct equipment and supervision, but on a hot day, the temptation of cool rock pools below is clearly too much for many, and signs are largely ignored.

Gorge DE GALAMUS (& Ermitage de St Antoine)



Nature and the Agly River sculpted the spectacular Gorges de Galamus, which curls and snakes through vertiginous limestone cliffs with stunning viewpoints.

Franciscan monks built the mystical sanctuary of the Ermitage de St Antoine, carved into the almost vertical cliff overlooking the Galamus gorges. It was accessible only by donkey until intrepid abseilers armed with pick axes hacked out the road in 1880.

Following a typhus epidemic in 1782, the cave behind the Ermitage de St Antoine, became a chapel, which one could easily imagine as a place of magic, black or white, with its strange symbols and indecipherable words etched into stone and marble surfaces.

This spiritual oasis is free of charge but there is a donation box to show your appreciation.

A little café sells postcards, snacks, drinks and ice creams and the shady courtyard is perfect to relax, meditate, contemplate life and enjoy the rather special atmosphere in the shade of the ancient plane tree, planted in 1782.

GETTING THERE

Take the D117 from Perpignan towards St Paul de Fenouillet, turn right to St Paul and follow the signs for "Gorges de Galamus".



Get High at Fontrabiouse

Why not take some time off the skiing to rest those weary legs and visit the highest cave in France?

Not far from the ski slopes of Formiguères, the impressive Grotte de Fontrabiouse is set on two levels, a fascinating and perfectly preserved underground world with instructive tour and passionate guide.

Underground lake, stalagmites and stalactites in a spectacular array of colours - and perfect conditions for maturing wine, so you can end your visit with a taster!



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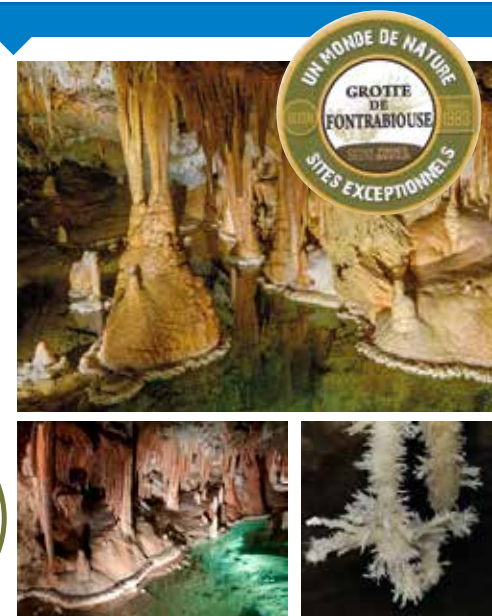
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Le Palais des Rois de Majorque, Perpignan

JAMES THE BUILDER

Jaume II of Mallorca, (1243 – 1311) inherited his kingdom from Jaume I, known as the Conqueror. He became King of Aragon, Count of Barcelona, Lord of Montpellier.



He was known, justifiably, as James the Builder. He **built cathedrals, castles** and renovated palaces in Mallorca and Minorca as well as the **Château Royal in Collioure**. The **Palais des Rois de Majorque** is a **Gothic palace in central Perpignan**, suitable for the Royal Family, easily large enough to contain the court and impress visiting dignitaries. **He chose the Puig del Rey**, a hill within the city walls, dominating the countryside with stunning views from the impressive red brick ramparts across the city roofs to **Canigou**, to **Quéribus** and the plain in between.

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

Made up of a succession of citadels added by various kings over the years, **the Palais des Rois de Majorque was finally fortified by Vauban for Louis XIV in 1679.**

STEP INSIDE

The entrance is as circuitous today as when it was designed in the 13th century to keep out attacking armies.

Flights of steps zig zag within sheer redbrick ramparts until, eventually, the elegant gardens and substantial castle are reached.

The angles of the walls and windows of the Palace are cut from the **pink, blue, red and white marbles of the Pyrénées-Orientales..**

It contains a beautiful chapel, some rather austere royal apartments and a **grand courtyard**.



Wild lions once roamed the moat, though **you can visit safely now to wander round or attend summer events and concerts** often to be enjoyed within its walls.

The vast two story arcaded courtyard, the frescoed and tiled royal chapel and the great Gothic Hall display a strong Spanish Moorish influence.

From the impressive **Tour de l'Hommage** the commanding view over mountain, plain, city and sea is a great introduction to the city.

A tour of the two chapels, the Royal apartments and grand halls that surround the central courtyard gives a great insight into the palace life as it must have been lived in medieval times.

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Festivals and TRADITIONS

Costumes, confetti, floats, fancy dress and fantasy, bandas and barracudas, giants and other popular traditions..... It's carnival time around the region!

And this year, why not pop into the tourist office in Argelès, sign up to actually join the procession in your own fancy dress and get multicoloured confetti to sprinkle as you walk. Great fun for the kids... great fun for the adults too!

THE ORIGINS OF CARNIVAL

Carnival actually dates back to the ancient Greek spring festival in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine. It was a massive binge – a celebration of excess, and later the church, unable to suppress it, wisely adapted it instead to its own traditions.

It became a last fling, a chance to eat, drink and be excessively merry before Lent, the 40 day period of fasting, abstinence and purging of sins.



It's Car- nival Time!



THE CARNIVAL FLOAT

There are different schools of thought on the etymology of carnival.

Because Catholics are not supposed to eat meat during Lent, some believe they called their festival **carnevale**, "farewell to meat." Others argue that '**carrus navels**' the 'naval car' or ship, which carried the Gods to the winter feasts is the early inspiration for the carnival float. **The medieval Church** reinterpreted this as the **Ship of Fools**, and so was born the carnival float.

A LITTLE WICKED

Other aspects of Carnival are believed to derive from the ancient Roman festival **Saturnalia**, when social rules of behaviour and class were reversed, masters waited on their slaves, men dressed like women, people wore fancy dress, paraded in the streets, and thus disguised, could be as wicked as they wanted... without ending up a guest at the local gendarmerie!



THE CARNIVAL KING

The straw-filled **Carnival king**, symbol for infertility, sins, and bad luck – is an important character in the traditions of modern carnival, and is burned in a spectacular ritual at the end of the festivities.

➤...➤

ARGELES-SUR-MER

Sunday, March 03
15h, departure from the Post Office
(Route Nationale)

Saturday, March 16
20h, departure from the Post Office
(Route Nationale)
followed by the **Carnival Ball**
at Espace Jean-Carrère

ville-argelessurmer.fr

Festivals and TRADITIONS it's carnival time!

SOME STRANGE CARNIVAL TRADITIONS AROUND THE REGION...

IN SAINT LAURENT DE CERDANS....

Watch out for the '**monaca**', a strange monster with two bodies, two heads and four pairs of legs, who represents the end of winter and the arrival of spring and terrorises young girls and children in the streets.



Watch out too for the '**escalfador**', a copper bowl in which pig's hair is burnt, causing a very unpleasant smell. This is carried by two young people disguised as old people whose aim is to quietly slip the bowl under the skirts of the young girls and women.

IN PRATS DE MOLLO....

Check out the Tio-Tio. Dressed in white, covered in flour, and equipped with a lit candle, participants dance round in a circle and try to set the person in front alight! 'Le porteur du balai' is on hand to put any unfortunates out with his broom!

IN AMÉLIE-LES-BAINS....

Pope Grégoire organised prayers and processions in 590 to chase away the plague spreading throughout Europe. In pretty Palalda, they were dropping like flies. They prayed to Saint Grégoire who sent the '**Ange exterminateur**' (Exterminating Angel) to end the plague. Every spring, '**Sa majesté carnaval Grégoire**' and the Swiss Guard lead a procession through the streets of Amélie. Behind walk the villagers, dressed in white, wearing '**caparutxa**', pointed hats style Sanch/Ku Klux Klan.



As they walk, they sprinkle flour around them and mutter '**Adéu pobre carnaval**' as they accompany the Carnival King to his fiery death, cleansing all around of their sins!

Watch out too for the **Casament Tremblant**, old Catalan carnival custom which parodies and ridicules marriage via the mock marriage of two men, usually particularly hairy and macho.

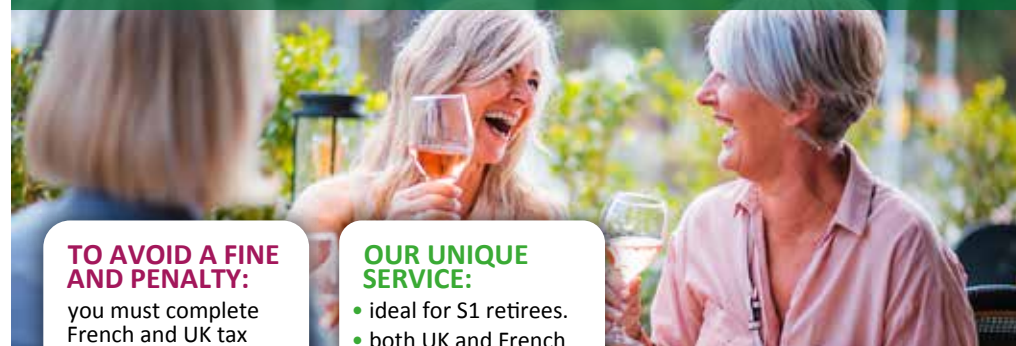
The '**ceremony**' is presided over by a mock mayor, '**witnesses**' and '**family**' who accompany the '**wedding procession**' through the streets.



Some say that it was started years ago to 'point a finger' at certain couples in the village, whilst others say that it is simply based on an original and amusing alternative to a stag night! French humour at its weirdest?

Check dates at LOCAL TOURIST OFFICES and put them in your diary for 2025 if you've missed them this year.

ARE YOU A UK PENSIONER WITH S1 STATUS?



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Leap Year - Année bissextile

A leap year is a year with 366 days, instead of the usual 365. It was Julius Caesar who introduced the Leap Day in 45 BCE, in order to bring the various religious calendars back into alignment. In fact, Leap years are necessary because the actual length of a year is nearly 365.25 days, not 365 days as we all believe. Leap years occur every four years, and years that are evenly divisible by four (2020, for example) have 366 days.

This extra day - (bisextus in Latin) is added to the calendar on February 29. Still with me?

The Romans went on to insert another day between February 23 and 24, and called it '**Bis VI Kal Mart**' (Second sixth day before the First of March obviously DOH!)

When the days of the month were numbered in sequence in the Middle Ages, the day was moved to the last day of February, but the term bissextile remained.

Bis in French describes something that happens twice.

eg *J'habite à 5 bis, rue de Perpignan.*

I live at 5 A

un itinéraire bis - detour, diversion

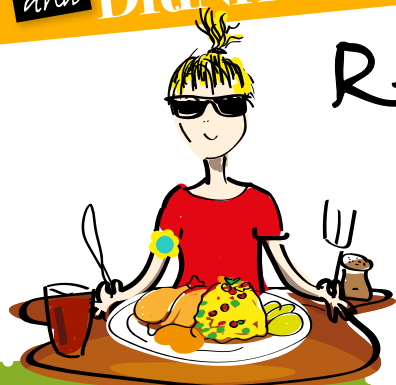
So there you are. Older but probably not much wiser!!





Restaurant REVIEWS

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER
WINTER/SPRING 2024



We love publishing your reviews on both sides of the border. They're honest and objective, (*bien sûr!*) and cover a wide range of tastes, prices, and places.

You might not always agree, the chef might be throwing a wobbly, your standards might be higher....or lower – but they give you an idea of what's available.

SABAI SABAI

Argelès...with David

10/10 for my **Thai Green curry**. Proper hot chilly flavour with lots of spices. I would definitely select Asian dishes as a Thai entrecôte didn't work. Duck with Tamarind was also a little unusual but if you're after a curry, it's spot on.

2 Av. des Platanes,
Argelès-sur-Mer
Tel: 07 86 71 68 09

RELAIS DE SCEAURY

Rasiguères...with Julie

Our 'go to' restaurant when we fancy a nice meal or have visitors.

Food, service, decor & price always spot on. The menu offers 3 options: petite faim/ moyenne faim/ grande faim, depending on your appetite and **the food is excellent**.

Advisable to book tho.



1 Rue du Ctre, Rasiguères
Tel: 04 68 63 33 42



LE POIVRE ROUGE

Rivesaltes...with Marian

Always a good experience, today we had a shared tapas plancha for starters, himself had the entrecôte, I had the fish and chips, and desserts were a café gourmand and tarte citron deconstructed....**all delicious, and I have to say pretty well the best fish and chips I've had outside the UK**. Food is hot and fresh, service impeccable, and cheerful, can't fault it.

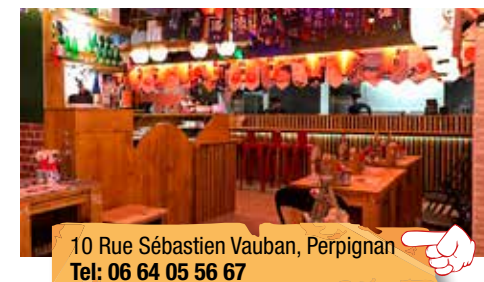


Rue Georges Méliès Cap Roussillon,
Rivesaltes (Commercial and leisure centre)
Tel: 04 68 84 71 30

TOKYO MENJA

Perpignan...with Petra

Traditional ramen specialties (noodle dishes). The best find in a while - **beautifully prepared food**, great service and charming ambience - reservations recommended. **It was completely full**.



10 Rue Sébastien Vauban, Perpignan
Tel: 06 64 05 56 67

LA PAUSE POLAR

Perpignan...with Robyn

New bookshop/cafe with great coffee and home made cakes plus interesting books with a selection in English. She will also accept secondhand books if you have some you don't want to throw away. It's opposite Casa Xanko. **And it stocks PO Life magazine!**



7 bis Rue de la Main de Fer, Perpignan
Tel: 04 11 64 88 74

LE BISTROT

MasGuerido...with Harbeer

Chef Anata was the chef at 'La table d'Aimé' in Rivesaltes and left to **open his own restaurant**. Always satisfying.



13 Av. André Ampère, Cabestany
Tel: 09 81 91 83 90



CHEZ TA MERE

Near Perpignan...with Jan

Had a girly night out just opposite the Porsche garage Perpi. Basically a burger, pizza, grillade tapas food and trendy cocktails. **There is a DJ for dancing** - odd little dance floor but it does the job. It seems to be an in place so jammed on Saturday night and service was v. slow - ordered at 8.30, served at 10.45. When it came it was cold so back it all went. **Good place for a group do though, but not the place for an intimate date night!**



72 Chem. de la Fauceille, Perpignan
Tel: 04 68 62 92 51

A CHOICE OF RESTAURANTS IN MAURY...
with Anne

LA MAISON DU TERROIR

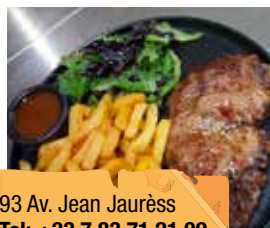
After a few years in the doldrums, **the Maison du Terroir has a new chef** and the **Plat du jour** is good with a daily changing menu.



2 Av. Jean Jaurès
Tel.: +33 4 68 68 92 54

AU REGAL

Opposite the bar also had **new owners**, changing menu plus pretty good wraps and burgers.



93 Av. Jean Jaurès
Tel: +33 7 83 71 21 09

LE PICHENOUILLE

Is a **barbecue meat on the vine place** if you're after a meat feast with specials on Sundays .. simple but good quality.



33 Av. Jean Jaurès Horari:
Tel: +33 4 68 59 02 18

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 ;-)

FANCY A FOURSOME
with Peter

COTE SAISONS

Laroque des Albères

Never lets us down. **Food and service excellent** (not an extensive menu which is always a good sign). In the heart of Laroque, with **gently lit garden merging with the interior.**



10 Av. de la Côte Vermeille,
Laroque
Tel: 04 34 12 36 51

L'HORTA DE CAN PATXEI

Gualta (Spain)

Tucked away off the main road (GI-643) in its own orchards, **lovely setting and delicious, fairly priced, Catalan food.** Service excellent and welcoming, generally full house (mainly locals). Often visit after golf at Gualta



Ctra. de Torroella a Parlavà, Km. 2,
17257 Gualta, Spain
Tel: +34 872 00 90 48

CAMELOT

Torroella de Montgrí (Spain)

Set in the backstreets of Torroella the small entrance leads into an impressive vaulted dining area. The daily menu is €22 and provides a good selection of starters, mains and desserts all with a Catalan tinge. **Always chocker block, mainly with locals, so always a good sign.**



Ronda Països Catalans, 5, 17257
Torroella de Montgrí, Spain
Tel: +34 972 75 80 58

LA MAREE DE JOE

Canet en Roussillon

Tasty tapas bar on sea front, named after owner, ex South African rugby player Joe Gillingham. **Well-priced meals and drinks.** I had an excellent dish of moules/frites. Others had sardines after tapas starters. Fast, efficient, and friendly service.



Prom. de la Côte Radieuse, Canet
Tel: 06 21 78 05 74





Ideas for EATING OUT



The winter weather has been amazing, but with no crystal weather ball, many restaurants closed as usual and sunny ports and beach promenades didn't leave much choice for outside dining.

However, spring is on the way and restaurants are sprucing up their 'trottoirs' and terraces, putting up their parasols, brushing up their barbecues and planchas, sharpening their choppers.....Open air eating will soon be back on the menu. The following restaurants support this magazine and help us to stay free. Please support them when you can. **BON APP.**

P-O Life

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EATING OUT

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ideas for EATING OUT



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- Quoi?
- T'as une banane dans l'oreille!
- Quoi?
- T'as une banane dans l'oreille!
- Parle plus fort, j'ai une banane dans l'oreille!



Scallops with Clementine Sauce

WITH SUZANNE DUNAWAY

A delightful, quick and
pretty dish with scallops,
for late spring/summer.

Ingredients

- 6 clementines, juiced
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- Pinch of saffron
- Fresh pepper and salt
- Pinch of sugar
- 12 sea scallops, cut in half horizontally
- Squeeze of lemon
- A small bit of fresh basil, parsley or coriander chopped fine
- Grilled pine nuts or almonds, chopped fine
- Roquette leaves

Method

In a small saucepan, **cook the clementine juice**, saffron and 1 spoon of butter with a pinch of salt **until it is the consistency of a light syrup**. Set aside. If your mandarins are very sweet, squeeze a little lemon into the sauce.

Heat a skillet, melt the rest of the butter and **sauté the scallops quickly** just until done, about 2 minutes.

Add the syrup to coat the scallops and serve on warm plates, **sprinkled with the grilled pine nuts and chopped fresh basil, parsley or coriander**.

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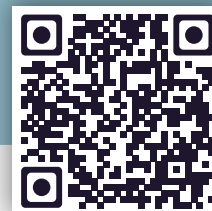
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Les Diners de Gala



HAVE YOU TRIED ANY OF THE OFF-THE-WALL RECIPES IN THE UNSURPRISINGLY ECCENTRIC DALI COOKBOOK YET?

The introduction to 'Les Diners de Gala', published in 1973, warns that "If you are a disciple of one of those calorie-counters who turn the joys of eating into a form of punishment, close this book at once; it is too lively, too aggressive, and far too impertinent for you."

Recipes are exotic, erotic and experimental, including such delicacies as "Thousand Year Old Eggs", "Veal Cutlets Stuffed With Snails", "Frog Pasties", and "Toffee with Pine Cones", punctuated by plenty of weird and wonderful Dali musings, illustrations and photos.

Below is one of the few that could actually translate to the average kitchen without too much planning.

CASANOVA COCKTAIL

The juice of 1 orange
1 tablespoon bitters (Campari)
1 teaspoon ginger
4 tablespoons brandy
2 tablespoons old brandy (Vielle Cure)
1 pinch Cayenne pepper

This is quite **appropriate when circumstances such as exhaustion, overwork or simply excess of sobriety** are calling for a pick-me-up.

AT THE BOTTOM OF A GLASS, COMBINE PEPPER AND GINGER. Pour the bitters on top, then brandy and "Vielle Cure." Refrigerate or even put in the freezer.

Thirty minutes later, remove from the freezer and stir the juice of the orange into the chilled glass.

*Drink... and wait for the effect.
It is rather speedy.*







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FRIDAY 8TH MAY

On this date in 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced:

"Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight tonight, Tuesday the eighth of May" marking victory for Europe over Germany, but not the end of World War Two. **The end came on 15th August 1945 after two atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.** World War Two was finally over – and what a cost!

Here in France, VE Day or 'Victoire 1945' is a national holiday, usually celebrated with church services, ceremonies and parades. **The President lays a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the foot of the Arc de Triomphe at the top of the Champs Elysée.**



FRENCH WORD FOR FRENCH KISS



To French kiss is actually an English description. **Until 2014, there was no single word for this in French.** Today, the word **'galocher'**, a slang term that had been around for a while meaning to kiss with tongues, is in the Petit Robert French dictionary.

The word, originally a slang term, comes from "la galoché," an ice-skating boot!

Don't ask me!

Life

GAUDY OR GAUDÍ?

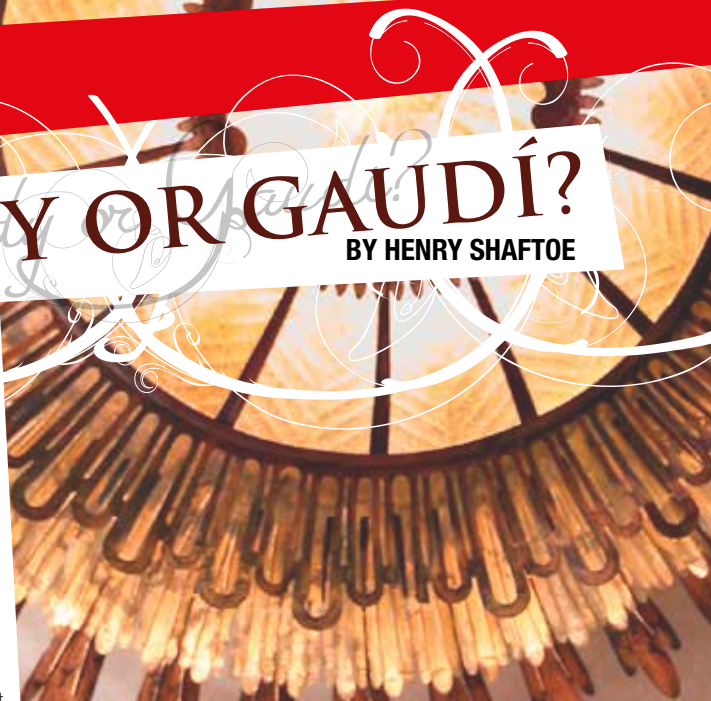
BY HENRY SHAFTOE

Antoni Gaudí (1852 – 1926) ranks among the world's most innovative architects and his masterpiece – the Basilica of the Sagrada Familia, in Barcelona, is arguably Europe's most spectacular building.

You can now get to **Barcelona from Perpignan on the AVE** high speed train in **1 hour 20 minutes**, if you want to visit the great man's works, including **Parc Guell** and several domestic buildings.

His 'signature' characteristics include extensive **use of curves and colourful broken tiles**. However, if you just want a small taste of his architectural '**modernista**' style, you need to go no further than **Alénya** or **Perpignan**.

In the **Jardin Taulera, Alénya** (just behind the **Cave Ecoiffier**, in the village centre) you will find a **perfect copy of Gaudi's seating in Parc Guell, Barcelona**.



And there is another Gaudi-influenced site in the surprising interior of the **Café Republic**, in central Perpignan.



A couple of other buildings in Perpignan, if not Gaudi copies, express the same Catalan '**modernista**' spirit. You can find these at **Avenue des Pervenches** and **Rue des Remparts la Réal**.



Lovers of 'white cube' architecture may find these examples gaudy, but **personally I am thankful for the influence of Gaudi**.

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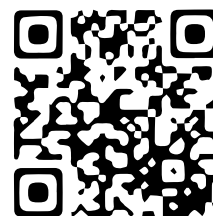
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P-O Life

Getting STONED

The poster depicts the briqueterie Sainte-Marcelle in Saint-Jean-Pla-de-Corts, the last remaining brickworks in the Pyrénées-Orientales region.

Look out for this iconic architectural style in towns and villages around the P-O – a sort of rough-hewn look that makes use of local materials: **rough hewn rocks, huge pebbles (cailloux) and flattened bricks, (confusingly known as cayroux)**. Most of the latter were probably **produced at the brickworks**. These 'cayroux' are used to bond and stabilise the 'cailloux' and are often laid in horizontal double courses every metre or so up a wall. Even the walls of the St Jean Cathedral in Perpignan are built like this.



Check out the artist, **Mireille FABRE** at her workshop, 7 rue de la Ville-St Jean Pla de Corts (old village) contact: mirfabre66@orange.fr



GUESTHOUSE IN THE HEART OF
THE VINEYARDS

MEETINGS & EVENTS

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Bank holidays

Monday 1st April:

Easter Monday (Lundi de Pâques)

Friday 1st May: May Day

(La Fête du Travail)

Friday 8th May:

La Fête de la Victoire 1945 (WW2 Victory Day)

Monday 20th May:

Pentecost (Pentecôte)

Dont forget.....Sunday 26th May:
Mother' Day (La Fête de Mères)

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT?

8h FRIDAY 29TH MARCH

LES REGINAS

In Ille sur Têt Les Reginas celebrate the Resurrection and the beginnings of spring.

At 8 a.m. the 'statue du Ressuscité (Resurrection) and the 'statue de la Vierge' (virgin) arrive from opposite ends of the place de la Mairie on the shoulders of 'porteurs'. They salute each other three times. This is the 'acato'.

Then wow! The first 'Régina' (religious music for Easter), blasts out: a 130-strong choir, accompanied by 40 musicians. Follow the procession to the Jardins de la Rodona, where the second Régina is performed. Believers and non-believers alike find this unique ceremony moving and memorable.

15h

LA PROCESSION DE LA SANCH

On Good Friday (Vendredi Saint), long black or red hooded and robed figures march slowly through the streets of Perpignan to the solemn beat of black veiled tambourines. Some walk barefoot, others are on their knees. It's impressive and disturbing.

In 1416, Vincent Ferrier founded the brotherhood of 'La Sanch' (the blood) in the church of St Jaques in Perpignan, to assist and accompany the condemned to their execution.

They carry 'misteris', full-size representations of the different scenes of the Passion, and crosses, crucifixes and religious statues weighing up to fifty kilos. Their suffering is not feigned!

The death penalty may have been abolished long ago, but the Sanch lives on.

Night processions also take place in Collioure and Arles-sur-Tech.



BOOKS AND ROSES unlucky date for some

You may already know that **23rd April is the Festival of Sant Jordi (St George) Patron Saint of Catalonia and the day of the rose and the book**, but did you also know that **on April 23rd, 1616 both William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes (Don Quixote) died** - and that **William Wordsworth also died on that date in 1850?** Make sure to look right and left before you cross the road to buy your book or your rose!



TO ROME.... WITH BELLS ON

Have you noticed that church bells ring out everyday throughout France - apart from Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday? In fact, on that day, every single church bell throughout France stops ringing in remembrance of the death of Christ.

Children commenting on the silence, in the days before Playstation, Smartphones and Ipads, were told that the Bells had flown to Rome to see the Pope, before returning to their towers on Friday to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.



GOOD EGG

An egg a day keeps the doctor away? Could it be true? **The giving and receiving of Easter eggs first began in France during the 4th Century A.D.** Many believed that if you ate an egg for breakfast that had been laid on Good Friday, you would remain fit and healthy until the following Easter.



FÊTE DU MUGUET & FÊTE DU TRAVAIL

Don't forget to offer your loved ones **Lily-of-the-Valley (Muguet) on May 1st**, the day in **1561 when King Charles IX of France offered the flower to all the ladies of his court.** Today, anyone can legally sell flowers without a license on that date, as long as they are a reasonable distance away from the nearest flower shop.



MAKING YOUR POOL MORE WATER EFFICIENT

Olivier of TPM Piscine Services (and for transparency the editor's husband) gives us a few pointers

TPM

Piscines Services

Not everyone is lucky enough to have a pool, considered frivolous by many in this present and urgent state of drought, but there are ways of making your pool more water efficient and a well managed pool actually uses less water than a family of four flushing the toilet once a day after a pee and a poo! :-)



1. Pools should not be emptied every year. A well balanced water should last up to 3 to 5 years, longer for water treated with non chlorine tablets.

2. Avoid chlorine tablets especially poor quality ones which contain stabilisers and oblige regular renewal of water. Much better options are salt units, hydrogen peroxide pumps etc..

3. Stop evaporation by installing a bubble cover, security and bar cover, or automatic shutters.

4. Stop splashing!

5. Store and reuse rainwater, but remember it will need more chemicals to stabilise as opposed to tap water.

6. Store and reuse water from overflow of the pool.

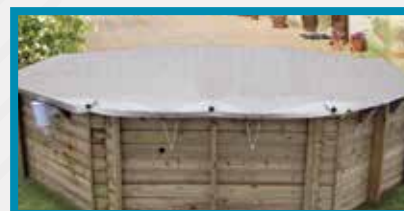
7. Don't backwash sand filters too often. Twice in season is enough. Use pressure gauge as indicator. Sunscreen is important but clogs up the filter and increases need to backwash.

8. Reuse water from backwashes in separate tanks to let it decant. **Add a filter and a chlorine neutraliser to reuse water for garden.**

9. Use an electric robot to clean your pool instead of vacuuming through the filter.

10. ASK FOR ADVICE FROM A PROFESSIONAL.

Don't let the water restrictions stop your renovation. We save your water during the work and re-use it after.



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As usual, my best suggestion is to constantly monitor the airline websites yourself. Summer schedules start on Easter Sunday 31 March. During the summer, frequency of service increases as the months go on.

FRANCE

BEZIERS

Like **Carcassonne**, **Ryanair** has a free run at this small airport. **Edinburgh** does not start till June.



FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BRISTOL	3-4	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct
EDINBURGH	2	RYANAIR 2 June - 29 Sep
LUTON	3	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 25 Oct
MANCHESTER	3	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 25 Oct
SHANNON	2	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 24 Oct
STANSTED	3	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct

CARCASSONNE

Ryanair remains the sole operator here. New service is from **Bournemouth**, but **Edinburgh** has been dropped. Cork does not start till June.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BOURNEMOUTH	2	RYANAIR 1 May - 26 Oct
EAST MIDLANDS	2	RYANAIR 3 April - 26 Oct
MANCHESTER	4	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 25 Oct
STANSTED	7	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
CORK	2	RYANAIR 3 June - 25 Oct
DUBLIN	4	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 25 Oct

SPRING/SUMMER 31 MARCH-26 OCTOBER 2024 by Robbie Shaw

Covid-wise the airline schedules seem to be somewhat more normal now, but of course things are still liable to change.

For instance I checked the BA website for the Gatwick to Montpellier flight which showed a starting date of 2nd February. Only a day later that had changed to 4th April.

This covers the summer schedules period from 31 March (Easter Sunday) till the end of the summer schedules on 26 October but beware: airlines constantly change schedules due to demand, so please refer to these tables only as a helpful guide rather than written in stone.

MONTPELLIER

EasyJet operate from both **Gatwick** and **Luton**. The



latter only for a short period. **British Airways** have a new Gatwick service. These are operated by their Gatwick subsidiary British Airways Euroflyer.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
GATWICK	2-3	BRITISH AWYS 2 Apr - 24 Oct
	12	EASYJET 31 Mar - 26 Oct
LUTON	2	EASYJET 26 June - 31 Aug

NIMES

Ryanair is the sole operator for P-O readers, but **Edinburgh** has been dropped.



FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
DUBLIN	2	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 23 Oct
STANSTED	2	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 25 Oct

PERPIGNAN

Good to see our local airport coming back with a few UK offerings. **Leeds** starts earlier this year. If you are looking at the websites and find the fares to P.O. are very high look at the rugby fixture list and that could explain it. Often changing just a few days can reduce the fare, and car hire prices. Also fares are generally cheaper midweek, especially in the summer months – or ridiculously expensive in school mid-term.



FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BIRMINGHAM	2	RYANAIR 2 June - 29 Sep
DUBLIN	2-4	AER LINGUS 1 May-29 Sep
LEEDS BRADFORD	2	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct
STANSTED	5	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct

TOULOUSE / BLAGNAC

There tends to be more flights to **Toulouse** from



UK regional airport in the winter due to skiing opportunities, with **Andorra** not too far away.

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

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BIRMINGHAM	2	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 25 Oct
BRISTOL	7	EASYJET 26 March-28 Oct
EDINBURGH	3	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
GATWICK	6	EASYJET 31 March-25 Oct
HEATHROW	22	BRITISH AWYS 26 Mar-26 Oct
STANSTED	10	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
DUBLIN	3	AER LINGUS 31 March-22 Oct
	4	1 Apr - 26 Oct

SPAIN

BARCELONA / EL PRAT

MORE THAN JUST A PRAT

Did you know that the full name for Barcelona Airport is actually Barcelona Josep Tarradellas El Prat, named after the first President of Catalonia.

As always a huge variety of flights to **Barcelona**, most of which run all year round, but with seasonal increases. For those unfamiliar, take care on the Barcelona ring-road, one wrong turn could be very time consuming. Quite a few changes. **Ryanair** have restarted **Cork** and **Prestwick**. **Birmingham** has been added to the **easyJet** schedules – only four airlines on the route now! This summer **Vueling** are no longer offering flights from **Edinburgh**, **British Airways** now operate a service from **London City** airport.



FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BELFAST INT'L	4-5	EASYJET 31 Mar - 25 Oct
BIRMINGHAM	2-4	EASYJET 31 Mar - 24 Oct
	2	JET2 31 Mar - 24 Oct
	7	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	7	VUELING 31 Mar - 24 Oct
BRISTOL	12-14	EASYJET 31 Mar - 24 Oct
	6	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 26 Oct
EAST MIDLANDS	9	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
EDINBURGH	8-10	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 26 Oct
GATWICK	25-28	EASYJET 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	53	VUELING 31 Mar - 24 Oct
GLASGOW INT'L	4	EASYJET 31 Mar - 26 Oct
GLASGOW PRESTWICK	4	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct
HEATHROW	55	BRITISH AWYS 31 Mar - 24 Oct
LEEDS BRADFORD	2	JET2 1 Apr - 25 Oct
LIVERPOOL	2-3	EASYJET 1 Apr - 26 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 25 Oct

LONDON CITY	4	BRITISH AWYS 31 Mar - 24 Oct
LUTON	14	EASYJET 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	7	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
MANCHESTER	8	EASYJET 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	4	JET2 31 Mar - 25 Oct
	11	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	10	VUELING 31 Mar - 24 Oct
NEWCASTLE	3	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 26 Oct
STANSTED	28	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
CORK	2	RYANAIR 3 Apr - 24 Oct
DUBLIN	14	AER LINGUS 31 Mar - 24 Oct
	21	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
	11	VUELING 31 Mar - 24 Oct

GIRONA

In the last couple of years there had been a big increase in flights to Girona. **Ryanair** has renamed



the 737-MAX8 as the 737-8200, and many are now in service, with more to come. Subject to aircraft deliveries the number of flights listed could well change. **Ryanair** services to **Girona** have increased with several starting earlier than last season.

FROM	NUMBER OF WEEKLY FLIGHTS	AIRLINE
BELFAST	1-2	RYANAIR 2 Mar - 26 Oct
BIRMINGHAM	2	JET2 1 Apr - 25 Oct
	2-4	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 24 Oct
BOURNEMOUTH	7	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
BRISTOL	1	JET2 4 May - 26 Oct
	3-5	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 25 Oct
CORK	2-3	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct
DUBLIN	4	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct
EAST MIDLANDS	1	JET2 5 May - 20 Oct
	3-4	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 24 Oct
GLASGOW	1	JET2 5 May - 20 Oct
KNOCK	2	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 23 Oct
LEEDS BRADFORD	2	JET2 From 31 Mar - 24 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 2 Apr - 26 Oct
MANCHESTER	2-4	JET2 1 Apr - 25 Oct
	5	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 26 Oct
NEWCASTLE	1	JET2 31 Mar - 20 Oct
SHANNON	3	RYANAIR 1 Apr - 25 Oct
STANSTED	2	JET2 1 Apr - 26 Oct
	10-12	RYANAIR 31 Mar - 26 Oct



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OVER THE BORDER:

Figueres, Sant Ferran



The 'Castell de Sant Ferran', built in Figueres in the mid 18th century, is the largest bastioned fortress in Europe and could house 4000 men.



The walk around the perimeter of the castle is a flat 3km with superb views over the Empordà plain out to the sea. The castle itself is a real treat for Spanish military historians, and fans of Napoleonic architecture.

The last meeting of the Republican Parliament was held at Sant Ferran on 1 February 1939, as Republican troops and supporters headed north towards an uncertain welcome in the Pyrénées-Orientales.



GUIDED TOURS

You can take a 4X4 tour around the moat, perfect for those with reduced mobility as you can stay in the jeep and still get a really good look around.

For a more active tour, you can combine off-road vehicles with a ride in a small dingy around the deep underground cistern.

NOT FOR THE CLAUSTROPHOBIC.



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Débroussaillage

WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE
THE WOOD FOR THE TREES...

'Débroussaillage'
(or débroussaillage)
laws for property
owners are being
imposed more
rigorously in these
difficult time of
drought.

If you are the owner of land which
is less than 200 metres from
woodland, brush land or moors, it is
your legal responsibility to limit fire
risk by clearing and cutting back all
undergrowth within 50 metres of your
property.



This should be completed by mid April,
after which the ONF (Forestry Commission)
can and will start imposing fines on everyone
who has not cleaned and strimmed around their
properties.

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

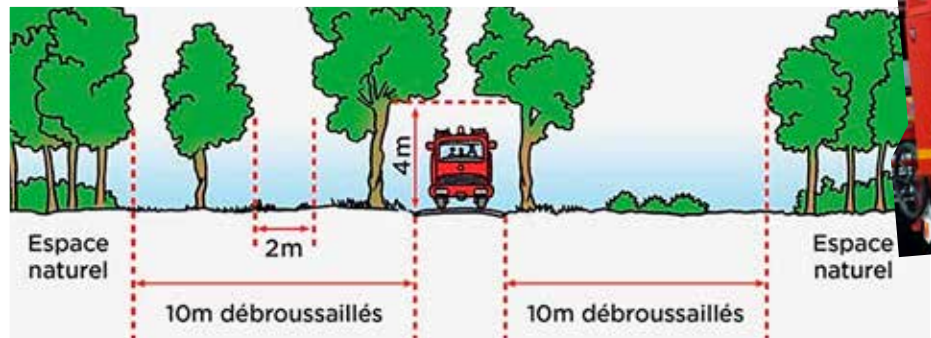
- 50 m around any buildings
- 10 m deep on either side of private
paths or roads leading to buildings (this is to
enable the fire services to pass in safety)

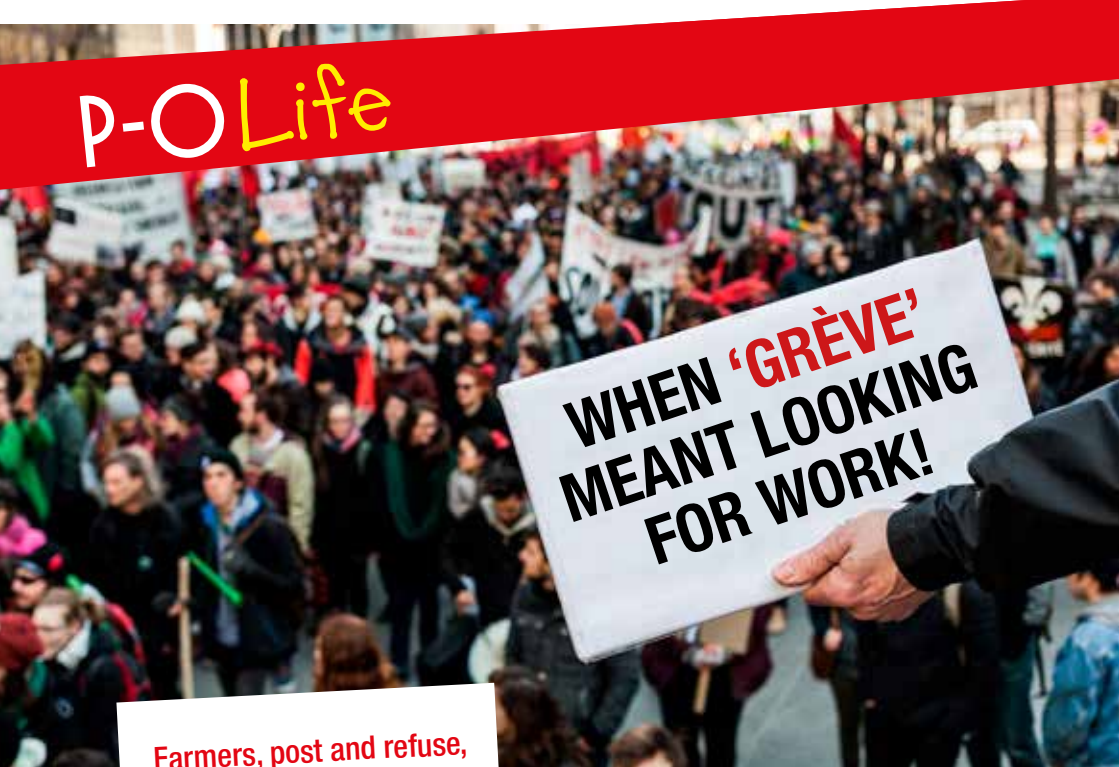
In towns and on housing estates,
(les lotissements) it is the responsibility of the land
owner to clear the land.

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

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

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





Farmers, post and refuse, trains and boats and planes....

we don't need to be fluent in French to recognise the word 'grève' - we hear it often enough - but did you know that grève used to mean the opposite of going on strike?



The word itself, which also means sandbank or pebbly beach, actually comes from Place de Grève, a flat and sandy area on the banks of the River Seine in Paris (now Place de l'Hôtel de Ville).

Out of work Parisians would gather there every morning to 'faire grève' in front of the town hall, in the hope of being offered work, maybe loading or unloading boats transporting goods up and down the river.



Today, strikes, demos, and protests are part of the French way of life.

Here's a bit of vocab to make it a little easier to understand in the news.

THE PEOPLE

A crowd - *une foule*
 A striker - *un(e) gréviste*
 A demonstrator - *un(e) manifestant/e*
 A sympathiser/supporter - *un(e) sympathisant*
 A state representative - *un(e) représentant de l'état*
 A tax payer - *un(e) contribuable*
 A pensioner - *un(e) retraité*
 A union member - *un(e) syndicaliste*
 The police - *les forces de l'ordre, la police*
 A lorry driver - *un camionneur*

WHEN TEMPER FRAY...

To use violence - *avoir recours à la violence*
 A riot - *une émeute*
 A rioter - *un émeutier/casseur*
 An activist - *un militant*
 Riot police - *la police anti émeute (les CRS)*
 To chant - *scander*
 Tear gas - *le gaz lacrymogène*
 A petrol bomb - *un cocktail molotov*
 A water cannon - *un canon à eau*
 To ransack - *saccager*
 To provoke - *provoquer*
 Angry - *en colère*
 To throw projectiles - *lancer des projectiles*



GENERAL

To go on strike - *se mettre en/faire grève*
 A general strike - *une grève générale*
 A (hunger) strike - *une grève (de la faim)*
 A (peaceful) demo - *une manifestation (pacifiste)*
 A go-slow (when vehicles block roads by driving very slowly) - *une opération escargot*
 Strike notice - *Un préavis de grève* (unions must give 5 days notice before calling a strike)
 A march/parade - *un défilé*
 A banner - *un étendard/une banderole*
 A placard - *une pancarte*
 A meeting/gathering - *un rassemblement*
 A demand/claim - *une revendication*
 To demand that - *exiger que* (+ subjunctive)
 To change things - *faire bouger les choses*
 To support... - *apporter son soutien à...*
 A day of action - *une journée d'action*
 A blackleg - *un jaune*
 A leaflet - *un tract*
 Union - *un syndicat*
 Picket line - *un piquet de grève*
 (A feeling of) *unease* - *(Un sentiment de) malaise*
 Social unrest - *les troubles sociaux*
 To solve a conflict - *résoudre un conflit*
 To express one's concern about... - *Exprimer son inquiétude concernant...*



OUT ^{for} THE DAY



Unbelievably BAD JOKE (but good for your French)

Une gentille vieille dame monte dans le bus à 1 euro pour Perpignan et s'assoit juste derrière le chauffeur. Comme il a l'air sympathique, elle lui offre des cacahuètes, qu'il accepte volontiers. La journée a été longue et il a un petit creux.

Elle lui tend le sac à plusieurs reprises et, à chaque fois, il en reprend une poignée.

Au bout d'un moment, il lui demande pourquoi elle n'en prend pas elle-même.

"Oh, jeune homme", dit-elle, "Je ne peux pas croquer. Regardez. Je n'ai pas de dents".

"Pourquoi les avez-vous achetées alors?" demande-t-il

"Ah", répond la gentille vieille dame. J'adore sucer le chocolat dont ils sont recouvertes!".

USEFUL VOCAB

s'assoit - sits
il a l'air - seems
cacahuètes - peanuts
volontiers - with pleasure
La journée - the day
il a un petit creux - he's peckish
Elle lui tend - she holds out
à plusieurs reprises - several times
à chaque fois - each time
il en reprend - he takes another
une poignée - handful
Au bout d' - after/at the end of elle
n'en prend pas - she doesn't take any
elle-même - herself
trop durs - too hard
croquer - crunch
sucer - suck
dont ils sont recouverts -
(in which) they're covered



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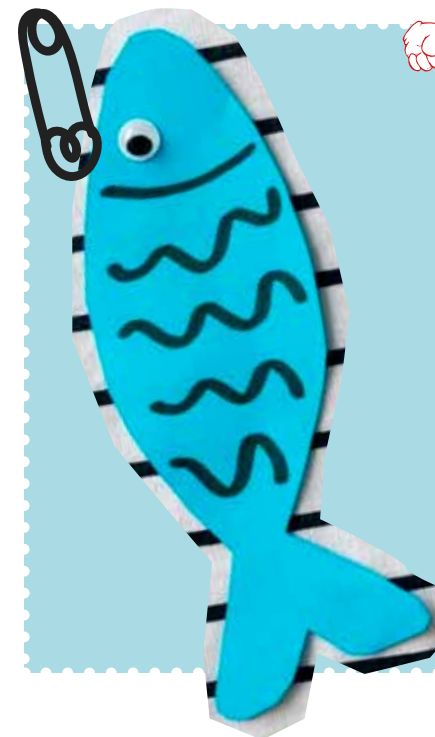
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PPE QUALITE



DID YOU KNOW

Poisson d'Avril

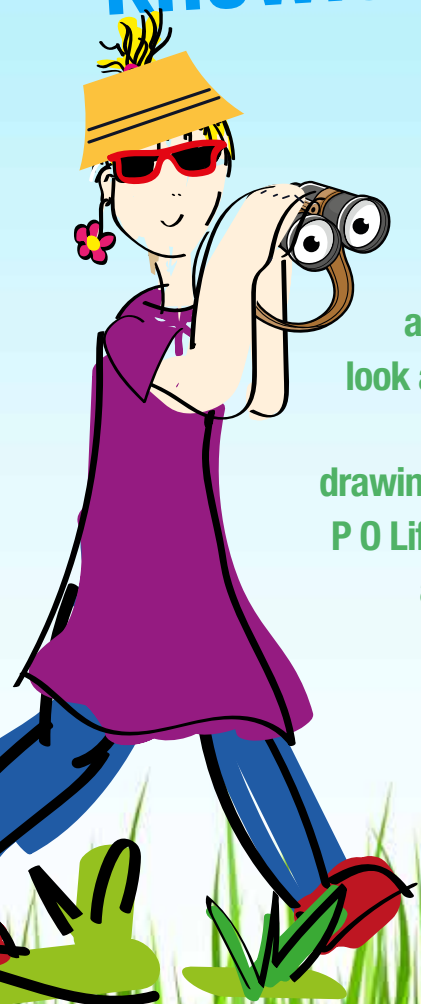
Although its origins are a little hazy, many believe that the tradition of April Fool's Day was born in France in the 16th century. In 1562, Pope Gregory changed the calendar from the Julian calendar, on which New Year started on April 1st, to the present day Gregorian calendar.

When King Charles IX toured his realm, he discovered that the date of New Year celebrations varied depending on the department. In 1564, he signed the 'Edict of Roussillon', declaring January 1st as the official first day of the New Year throughout France.

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

Test your nature knowledge...

With
Lesley McLaren



As usual
in winter,
we take
a quizzical
look at natural
history,
drawing on past
P O Life articles
and other
sources!



MAKE YOUR CHOICE

- What's the length of pellets that Kestrels regurgitate?
 - 2 - 2.5cm
 - 3 - 3.5cm
 - 4 - 4.5cm
 - 5 - 5.5cm
- How much rain did Perpignan get in November 2023?
 - 6.6mm
 - 10.5mm
 - 20.4mm
 - 30.9mm
- How many eggs can female Blue Crabs lay?
 - Up to 1.0 million
 - Up to 1.5 million
 - Up to 2.0 million
 - Up to 2.5 million
- What is this beetle called?
 - Helm Beetle
 - Rhinoceros Beetle
 - Stag Beetle
 - Longhorn Beetle



- What type of orchid is this?
 - Fragrant
 - Early Purple
 - Western Marsh
 - Pyramidal
- In which season do Harvester Ants swarm?
 - Spring
 - Summer
 - Autumn
 - Winter



TRUE OR FALSE

- The maximum depth of Canet Lagoon is 3m
- Beech Martens like jam
- Only the male Blue Crab's claw tips are blue
- Harvester Ant colonies contain several queens
- Griffon vultures nest on rocky ledges around Canigou
- Bonelli's Eagle is the most common eagle in the Albères

T F

☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐


DON'T YOU JUST KNOW IT?

- What do Little Owls eat?

- What are Harvester Ants' spoil heaps called?

- Name this common butterfly

- Name the three types of egret seen in the PO

- Name this bird, common in our vineyards & orchards in summer

- How can you tell the Mediterranean Sea is friendly?



ANSWERS



MAKE YOUR CHOICE



- 1 b) 3 - 3.5cm
- 2 a) 6.6mm (That's 89% less than usual in November, according to l'Indépendant!)
- 3 d) Up to 2.5 million
- 4 b) Rhinoceros Beetle
- 5 a) Fragrant
- 6 c) Autumn

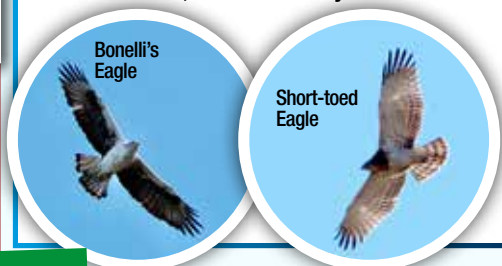


Lesley McLaren is one of "The Warblers" – a group of natural history enthusiasts in the PO. Photos by "The Warblers" unless otherwise stated.
www.mediterraneanpyrenees.com
Twitter @66warblers



TRUE OR FALSE

1. **False.** The maximum depth of Canet Lagoon is 1m
2. **True.** Beech Martens (like Pine Martens) have a very sweet tooth!
3. **True.** The tips of female Blue Crabs' claws are red
4. **False.** Harvester Ant colonies only ever have one queen
5. **False.** Canigou is unsuitable for griffon vultures, which like to nest in colonies on ledges in gorges and on cliffs at lower levels
6. **False.** Short-toed is the most common eagle in the Albères. It's often mistaken for Bonelli's, which also has a pale body underneath, but is incredibly rare.



DON'T YOU JUST KNOW IT?

1. Small mammals & birds but also large invertebrates such as worms, crickets, & beetles
2. Middens
3. Cleopatra
4. Cattle, Little & Great
5. Woodchat Shrike
6. It waves 🐼



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THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN ...!



READER DAVID WARNS.....

This time, Car Park machines.

You know those nice little QR codes that you can scan with your phone to make a payment? The scammers' latest brainwave is to stick their own little QR code over the real one so they can nick all sorts of info about you and your card.

A quick peel to check is the way to thwart 'em. Keep your eyes peeled.....



After the Norman invasion of England in 1066, French language became the preferred tongue of the governing, educated and upper classes whilst the 'common people' continued of course to speak English and mocked the users of French by speaking French badly and adding 'pardon my French'.

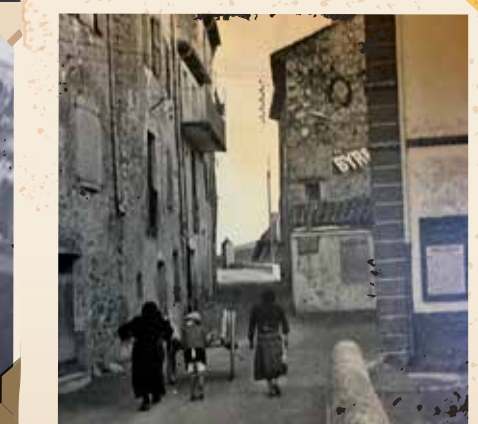
A dip into the P-O's past: **Amélie-les-Bains-Palalda** Between the Wars

BY JAMES TROLLOPE

What was it like to live in the P-O around hundred years ago?

Well, these photos, part of an album of 200, may give you some idea of **life in Amélie-Les-Bains-Palalda between the wars**. Present day residents will, no doubt, notice what has changed and what has remained the same. Having bought the album sight unseen at auction and knowing little about the town I would be interested in any comments.

jamestrollope56@icloud.com



LAÏCITÉ

For those readers who have applied, or are applying, for French nationality, **laïcité** should be a familiar concept; heralded as the fourth element to France's famous 'liberté-égalité-fraternité' motto.

Here we take a look at what the word means and where it came from, as well as the implications on daily French life.

ORIGINS

The concept of limiting the church's role in governance was brought to the fore by the **Philosophes des Lumières** of the 18th century.

Prior to the French Revolution of 1789, the church played a major role in running the country. The King was believed to be chosen by God and his key advisors were powerful clergymen.

Diderot, Montesquieu, Voltaire, the big guns of French philosophy and culture, all played their part in limiting the monarchy's rule and creating a more democratic governing system, which after some tumultuous to-ing and fro-ing, would become the republic on which France's current system is based.



LAÏCITÉ - PRONUNCIATION

First up, the pronunciation, and it's not an easy one!

For the phoneticists among us, the dictionary provides the following model: [la.i.si.te].

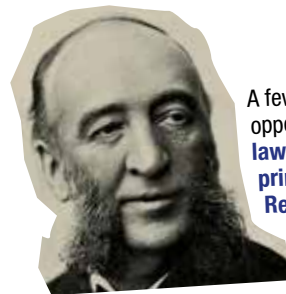
For the rest of us, it goes something like this: [lie - ees - eet - ay]

DEFINITION

The dictionary gives us the following definition:

'Principe de séparation de la société civile et de la société religieuse.'
(The separation of civil society and religious society.)

In English, we might call it **secularism**, but the notion of laïcité in French culture is a well-defined, legal concept, conceived to protect religious freedom for all, both believers and non-believers.



A few decades later, **Jules Ferry (1832 – 1893)**, who opposed the empirical rule of Bonaparte, wrote the laws that restored obligatory, free and secular primary education to the constitution of the Third Republic, after the fall of the Second Empire. The modern understanding of laïcité can therefore be traced back to him.

10 years after Ferry's death, in 1905, **Republican-Socialist, Aristide Briand (1862 – 1932)** wrote the **Loi de séparation des Églises et de l'État**, extending laïcité to all public/civil affairs.



MODERN LAÏCITÉ



© Dawid

France in the 21st century is a diverse melting pot of ethnicities, cultures and religions. We're well aware that we're not living in a utopia, but as Anglophones abroad, we are proud to be part of it. Nevertheless, it makes laïcité a bit trickier, with separation sometimes being perceived as an infringement of religious freedom, and even as persecution.

In a 2021 poll, 70% of the French people surveyed agreed with laïcité as defined by law but under 20% believed that, in practice, it actually succeeds in bringing society together.

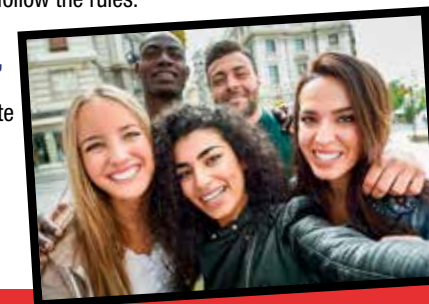
Tensions over visible displays of religious symbols in public were once considered a major threats to laïcité. Today, the above poll revealed that respondents' main concerns were the rise of intolerance linked to a lack of social diversity.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE?

For anyone with even a basic grasp of the French language, you'll be familiar with the many 'irregular' verbs and elements that just don't follow the rules.

There's a similar laxism in regards to laïcité, particularly when it comes to bank holidays! **Easter, Ascension, Pentecôte, Assomption, Christmas...** it seems we can overlook the non-separation of state and church when it comes to having an additional day off!

We're all for a day off... oops, we mean tolerance!!





POPULATION ALERT AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

If you find yourself in an area involving imminent danger (weather, nuclear, health, technological, industrial, serious road, rail or air accidents, public security, terrorist attack.....), you will receive a **priority notification on your mobile, EVEN IF IT'S LOCKED**. It may be accompanied by a **specific sound signal and vibration** which can be quite loud but don't panic. This new system is being trialed at the moment throughout France (and the UK) so hopefully, it will just be a test.

Expect to see agitated phone owners around you looking frantically at their phones too.



FR-Alert is the new population alert system, operational since June 2022, enabling mobile phone owners to receive **targeted and relevant real time warnings if they are present in a danger zone, and instructions on action needed to protect themselves.**

THE TECHNICAL STUFF

It is all far too clever for our simple minds to explain in detail but **basically it works by 'cell broadcast'**, notifications to our mobile phones via **radio waves**, which pass through telecommunication antennas, and 'geolocation SMS', the broadcasting of an SMS within a specific geographical area. Phew! Get it?

Put it together with existing warning systems such as the 2000+ emergency sirens already in place, television channels, radio stations, social networks.....and you have warning technologies which reach 95% of the French population, although warnings are given at a regional level.

The system does not work if you have your phone on airplane mode, but to be honest, you would probably be better off not knowing about an impending disaster when thousands of feet up in the air!

You can find out more at www.service-public.fr



A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMERGENCY SYSTEMS IN FRANCE

SIGNAL TOWERS AND SMOKE SIGNALS

Long before cell broadcasts, geolocation SMS and social media, the fastest way to pass the word was fire and smoke from the clever network of **signal towers (tours à signaux)** that you see on the high mountain tops around the region.

Originally set up by the **Rois de Majorque** as a defence system to **protect the Roussillon** from invaders, information was passed quickly around the region, **using smoke during the day and bursts of fire at night**. The signals were called '**farons**' and the '**faraoner**' was trained to **communicate with black or white smoke**, discontinuous or continuous according to the danger. **For example, one cloud of smoke might indicate 500 men on foot.**



EMERGENCY SIRENS

Much much later came the '**tocsins**', alarms or signals sounded by a bell, **used for warning or alerting the population in France up to the Second World War** when they were gradually replaced by sirens.

From 1948, the sirens were mainly located along France's land borders, described as '**défense passive**' but the Cold War brought about an increase in sirens throughout the country.

Today, this national network of **4,500 sirens**, (the '**réseau national d'alerte**' or RNA) are **tested for one 1 minute and 41 seconds on the first Wednesday of each month around midday**, (11.45 in the north, 12.00 in the centre, and 12.15 in the south). Short sequences are also used in some communes to alert volunteer firemen to man their posts for fire or accident, **although this happens less today thanks to mobile phones and pagers**

WHY ONE MINUTE AND 41 SECONDS? >...



The signal should be clearly audible without causing anxiety! It is believed that limiting it to 3 repetitions of 1 minute and 41 seconds makes it effective without causing stress.

Originally, the signal was 1 minute, the maximum for electromagnetic sirens to sound without tripping. The 41 seconds was added as technology improved.



DO PANIC...

.....if you hear the siren sound in three sequences, separated by a silence of five seconds, as this means there is some kind of imminent and major catastrophe!

The FR Alert system is likely to provide more information but remember this is still being tested at this point.

www.service-public.fr



A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMERGENCY SYSTEMS IN FRANCE



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Official advice from the Ministry of the Interior is to

- get out of vehicles
- leave children at school, as they are the school's responsibility
- avoid using phones to keep networks clear for rescue groups
- keep away from windows
- avoid lighting flames
- remain in shelter once found until the all clear.

Of course, all this good advice rather depends upon the nature of the emergency!

STAY SAFE!



SME Languedoc Roussillon

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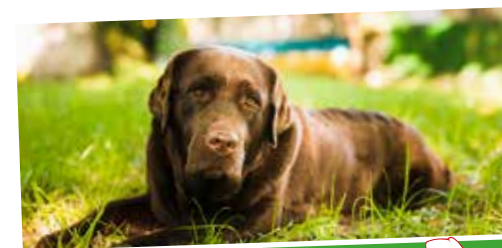
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ZA de la Tuilerie, Av de la Tuilerie, 66740 ST GENIS DES FONTAINES



NOT REALLY A CRIME!

Many P-O visitors start or end their holiday in Barcelona...but like any big city, it's a hotspot for street crime and mellow relaxed holiday makers are right at the top of the hit-list of potential victims. Why is there so much petty crime?

Unfortunately, Spanish law classes any theft worth less than €400 as a 'falta', a misdemeanour, rather than a 'delito' or crime, resulting in such a very small fine if caught, that regular theft more than pays for the penalty!



PAIN IN THE GRASS!

Does your dog love running around in long grass? Keep an eye out for signs of him shaking his head violently, or pawing his ear, as this could mean that a seed of foxtail barley or similar species of grass has entered his ear. If not removed, this can cause infection and even perforate the eardrum. Seeds can become embedded in the paw, or even eyes and nose, all of which can be very harmful to your dog (and to your wallet if you have to visit the vet). Take particular care where grass has been cut, and had time to dry



Répétez trois fois
J'ai bu un bien bon verre
de bon vin blanc

Test your FRENCH

See Page 83 for answers



1 N is for Non!

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

- | | | | |
|-------------|----|---|---|
| niche | 1 | a | qui se passe la nuit |
| nœud | 2 | b | l'orifice du nez |
| nocturne | 3 | c | Linge utilisé pour couvrir la table |
| net | 4 | d | enlacement complexe de deux ou plusieurs cordes |
| Néerlandais | 5 | e | abri d'oiseau |
| narine | 6 | f | petite cabane d'extérieur pour chien |
| naufnage | 7 | g | propre |
| néfaste | 8 | h | langue officielle des Pays-Bas |
| nid | 9 | i | qui cause du mal |
| nappe | 10 | j | perte d'un bateau en mer |

FEELING CHILDISH? SAY...
CACA-BOUDIN
(Yukky poo!)

LANGUAGE TIP *Savoir or Connaître?*
'Savoir' and 'Connaître' both mean 'to know'
so how do we differentiate between the two?

Use 'Savoir'..... when following
it by a second verb (expressing the
idea of HOW to do something)

Eg
Je sais parler Français
Tu sais danser la sardane?

Use 'Connaître'... when
following it by a noun

Eg
Il connaît bien les Pyrénées-
Orientales
Connaissez-vous la route pour
Perpignan ?

Bad Joke

COMMENT SAIT-ON
QUAND C'EST UN
GORILLE QUI SONNE
À LA PORTE?

ÇA FAIT
KING-KONG!



2 Feeling fruity ?

Or even vegetably? Can you find
the meaning of these French idioms
which all contain fruit & veg?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|---|-----------------------------|
| Avoir un cœur d'artichaut | 1 | a | To compromise |
| Faire chou blanc | 2 | b | Get yourself over here! |
| Ramène ta fraise | 3 | c | It's the last straw |
| Raconter des salades | 4 | d | To fall in love easily |
| Tomber dans les pommes | 5 | e | To tell fibs |
| C'est la fin des haricots | 6 | f | To hang around |
| Appuyer sur le champignon | 7 | g | It's none of your business |
| Couper la poire en deux | 8 | h | To faint, pass out |
| Ce n'est pas vos oignons | 9 | i | To draw a blank |
| Faire le poireau/poireauter | 10 | j | To put your foot on the gas |

Language tip Don't confuse.....

Avoir envie
(de faire quelque chose) to fancy
(doing something)

with....

Jaloux- Jealous
J'ai envie d'une bière fraîche
I fancy a cold beer
Je suis jaloux de sa bière fraîche
I'm jealous of his cold beer



3 Take a Break

Find the English for these useful French expressions,
which all use the verb 'casser' to break.

- | | | | |
|---|----|---|---------------------------------------|
| Ne te casse pas la tête | 1 | a | At the very worst/most... |
| A tout casser | 2 | b | He's a real daredevil |
| Elle casse souvent du sucre sur le dos des gens | 3 | c | Get lost! |
| Ils ont cassé les prix | 4 | d | She often talks behind people's backs |
| Il me casse vraiment les couilles (vulg.) | 5 | e | Come on, let's go |
| C'est un casse-cou | 6 | f | They've slashed the prices |
| Allez, on se casse! | 7 | g | I'd like to smash his face in! |
| Il est casse-bonbons | 8 | h | Don't worry about it |
| J'ai envie de lui casser la gueule (sl) | 9 | i | He's a pest |
| Casse-toi (sl) | 10 | j | He really p-sses me off! |

Worse Joke

QUE SE PASSE-T-IL QUAND 2
POISSONS S'ÉNERVENT ?
LE THON MONTE

(thon – tuna ton – tone)

Useful Expression

IL A UNE TÊTE À CLAQUE
He looks like he needs a good slap/very irritating

Test your idiomatic French.

1. 'Ce n'est pas la mer à boire' veut dire que c'est...
a) sec b) salé c) largement possible
2. Si vous êtes 'crevé', vous êtes...
a) fatigué b) malade c) gonflé
3. Quand vous avez 'la chair de poule' vous avez...
a) froid b) honte c) faim
4. Si je suis 'haut comme trois pommes' je suis...
a) gros b) petit c) affamé
5. Si j'ai 'du pain sur la planche'...
a) j'ai faim b) je suis farineux c) j'ai beaucoup de travail
6. Si je 'file à l'anglaise' je...
a) pars en vacances b) cours après les filles c) pars sans permission
7. Quand vous avez 'la dalle' vous avez...
a) mal à la tête b) faim c) peur
8. Si vous faites beaucoup d'efforts sans résultats, on dit que vous pédalez dans...
a) le cassoulet b) la choucroute c) le couscous
9. Quand vous faites quelque chose 'à fond de train', vous le faites
a) lentement b) en retard c) vite
10. L'expression 'poser un lapin' veut dire...
a) aller à la chasse b) ne pas aller à un rendez-vous c) manger un ragoût

Because of/thanks to...

A cause de...

...(negative eg A cause de son retard, je n'ai pas gagné)

Grace à...

(positive eg Grace à mon amie, je suis arrivé à l'heure)

Test your FRENCH



Can the jokes get any worse? They most certainly can...
**OU HABITE LA FEMME DU HAMSTER ?
AMSTERDAM**

Interesting word SAUCISSONNER

to slice/divide up, tie up with string/rope
(as you would tie up a saucisson!)

Eg Le cambrieleur a saucissonné sa victime avant de fouiller la maison)

Speech Fillers

Every language needs **conversation fillers** — non-sensical little words to plug a gap during an awkward silence, or when you can't find the right word. Here are a few with some very rough English equivalents.

alors/du coup... - so...

bon - ok, right.

mais bon... - anyway

bon ben - right, well

eh bien/enfin - well...

c'est-à-dire... - what I mean is...

euh... - er...

à la limite - I suppose, I mean.

donc - sooooo

hein ? - eh?

Un ange passe - everyone's gone quiet!

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DID YOU KNOW

TARLÀ OF THE RAMBLAS

The legendary **Tarlà** hangs from a pole on the Ramblas throughout springtime in Girona.

Originally made out of sawdust, with a wooden head, today dressed as a jester, the tradition of this puppet dates back to the middle ages.

When the Black Death swept through the unsanitary, narrow streets, the authorities quarantined the rue de l'Argenteria to prevent further spreading of the plague. Bored, unhappy residents, stuck for weeks or months in their homes, were entertained by a young acrobat known as 'Tarlà' with displays of acrobatics on poles erected between the narrow buildings.

Five hundred years later, the puppet is hung every year at either end of the street, symbolising festivity and solidarity.



Améliorez votre ANGLAIS

See Page 83 for answers

Dangerous Tongue twister (virelangue)

Repeat quickly x
3....

If a dog chews
shoes, whose
shoes does he
choose?

Useful Expression
Talk of the devil!
(Quand on parle du loup)

2 Trouvez la bonne réponse

- Where do you usually eat lunch?
 - Sandwich
 - With Kate.
 - At 12:00.
 - In a restaurant.
- How often do you go skiing?
 - On Saturday.
 - For a week.
 - Every year
 - With friends.
- What kind of work do you do?
 - I work every day.
 - I'm a teacher.
 - I work in Perpignan
 - I work too much
- What do you like to drink?
 - Tea of course! I'm British!
 - Saturday evening.
 - I'll have a pint please.
 - With my friend

Really Bad Jokes

Where do sheep go on holiday?
To the Baaaaa-amas.

What is it called when a cat
wins a dog show?
A cat-has-trophy.

How do you help
an injured pig?
Call a hambulance.

What do you call a gorilla with
bananas in its ears?
*Anything you like,
he can't hear you.*



1 S is for Simple

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui
commencent tous avec la lettre S.

- | | | | |
|--------------|----|---|---|
| seal | 1 | a | selfish |
| seed | 2 | b | strap to hold person in place |
| shallow | 3 | c | long thin piece of twisted thread |
| sore | 4 | d | large sea animal with flippers |
| spare | 5 | e | used to hold a broken bone in position |
| splint | 6 | f | not deep |
| seldom | 7 | g | something extra to be used if necessary |
| string | 8 | h | produced by a plant to grow new plants |
| seatbelt | 9 | i | tender, painful |
| self centred | 10 | j | not often |

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Jill Merriam on 06 31 26 84 30

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Catalan...



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Fabregue, 15 Avenue Louis Prat, Prades.
10h15 to 12 noon, Third Wednesday
of the month

and at our Book Exchange at
Laroque-des-Albères, Café des Artistes
10h30 to 12 noon,
Third Monday of the month



AYGUATÉBIA-TALAU

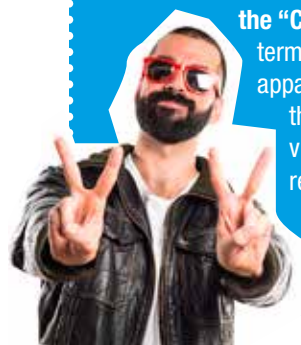
is one of the smallest communes
in the P-O with just 36
inhabitants.

Its name comes from the latin 'aqua
tepida' (tepid water).

Nobody seems to know why the
residents are known as

the "Carrallots", a
term which has no
apparent link with
the name of the
village, but
refers to a

well-endowed
man in
Catalan...



Ian Turner treats us to a P-O inspired haiku
poem, short, unrhymed and with a specific
three-line, seventeen-syllable format.

humid garrigue
on and off the vintners' trail
a svelte buck flits

Why not have a go at
writing one of your own?

LANGUAGE

Améliorez votre ANGLAIS

3

Trouvez les synonymes

- | | | |
|---------------|----|----------------|
| weak | 1 | a earlier |
| well mannered | 2 | b ailment |
| entertainment | 3 | c remarkable |
| sample | 4 | d diversion |
| coast | 5 | e seashore |
| illness | 6 | f specimen |
| amazing | 7 | g feeble |
| before | 8 | h nevertheless |
| eclectic | 9 | i polite |
| however | 10 | j varied |

Interesting Expression

It takes two to tango
Les torts sont
partagés

4

Des idiomes très British.

Pouvez-vous trouver leur équivalent en français?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| He looks dodgy | 1 | a Quelle mauviette! |
| He's a decent bloke | 2 | b C'est un peu casse pied |
| What a big girl's blouse | 3 | c Merci |
| It's a bit of a faff | 4 | d Ca caille dehors! |
| Nice to have a good old chinwag | 5 | e Je te passerai un coup de fil |
| What a load of old codswallop | 6 | f C'est du n'importe quoi |
| It's brass monkeys out there | 7 | g C'est un mec bien |
| He's got the dreaded lurgy | 8 | h Il a chopé un virus |
| I'll give you a bell | 9 | i Ca fait du bien de papoter |
| Ta! | 10 | j Il a l'air louche |

Did you know?

A recent scientific study showed that out of 2,293,618,367 people, 94% are too lazy to actually read that number.

Ton partenaire a une araignée au plafond? Voici quelques idiomes amusantes pour le lui dire....gentiment.

1. He's a sandwich short of a picnic
2. If he had a brain, he'd be dangerous
3. He's not the sharpest knife in the drawer
4. He's out to lunch
5. The lights are on but there's no-one home!



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Miranda

When artist **Bridget Rook-Waterhouse** moved from Céret to a sea-view apartment at St Cyprien, **she decided the only thing lacking was a mermaid on the terrace.** So she made a larger than life-size wire-mesh frame and set about creating a colourful **papier-mâché sirène, called Miranda.**

"I have worked on Miranda for many months and was pleased when the time came to give her a final coat of yacht varnish," says Bridget, "I shall now get back to my easel, painting a commission for a friend whose favourite colour is blue! That suits me well, as we have a glorious view of the sea and sky, which is mostly blue, but **even on stormy days, there is a beauty about it**".

Let's hope Miranda will enjoy the view too!



Things You might NEED To KNOW

BRITISH PASSPORT HOLDERS IN FRANCE

From Tuesday 16 January, Brits abroad will be able to register or re-register to vote in UK elections, no matter how long they have been out of the country.

You will also be able to donate to your favourite party!! :-)

You will need to provide details of address and time you were last registered or resident and prove identity and past connection to the area.

Check out the process online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote for applying for a postal or proxy vote if you don't wish to return to the UK to vote in person.



Passport AND Carte de séjour

Heading back to the UK. When you go through passport control, remember you need both passport AND carte de séjour or you could be faced with a fine of 98 euros.



Parking at Perpignan Airport?

Although the TravelCar discount pre-booking system is no longer working, don't just pay at the machines when you get back. Take your ticket to the reception desk and they are operating a discount scheme similar to the TravelCar one but without the need for pre-booking.

(Thanks to Howard for providing info)

Good news for second home owners

Long-stay visas will soon be issued automatically to British citizens owning a second home in France, exempting them from having to make an application for a long-stay visa. Recently voted through definitively by the French parliament, this 'automatic' visa will allow second home owner to stay in France for more than 90 days.

**STOP PRESS.....
VOTED OUT. EXCITEMENT OVER!**



UPDATING YOUR CARTE VITALE

Your carte vitale contains all the information necessary to prove your entitlement to the French health service, and should be updated at least once a year, particularly after change in circumstances (marriage, change of address, bank...)

Simply ask for a 'mise à jour' next time you visit your local pharmacy, or slot it into a 'borne' found in some hospitals or your local CPAM. (Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie.)... et Robert est ton oncle!

BUYING OR SELLING A SECOND HAND CAR IN FRANCE?

Try the new government mobile app **Simplimmat.gouv**, intended to simplify both the handover from seller to buyer and the creation of the new log book (carte grise.)



WHEN YOU POP YOUR CORK...

Did you know that there are used wine cork collection points (points de collecte des bouchons de liège) all around the region? For example, there is one in Céret Mairie, and another two in the same town so no excuses if you generate rather a lot of wine corks chez vous - (and we're not judging lol). Keep all the corks until you have time to trot down to your nearest CCP and recycle. A plus: they don't make that 'we-drink-a-lot-of-bottles-of-wine-in-our-house' noise that bottles make when you throw them into the recycle bin!



DID YOU KNOW?



WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Did you know that France has more local councils, town halls and administrative add-ons than any other country in Europe, many of which administer populations of less than 200 inhabitants?

Various attempts to merge neighbouring local councils have even sometimes ending up creating MORE layers of red tape rather than less and in some (rare) cases, a certain amount of not-so-friendly competition!

The government is now offering financial incentives to persuade municipalities to cooperate together and passing certain responsibilities (along with their financing) from smaller set-ups to inter-communal councils...but not without some resistance! Vive la France!

LANGUAGE EXERCISES ANSWERS

TEST YOUR FRENCH

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

AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS

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



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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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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Au musée, un monsieur
regarde un tableau
"Ah! Il est moche" dit-il

"Mais c'est du Picasso"
lui dit le guide

Dans une autre salle, le
monsieur dit

"Ah ça aussi c'est moche"

"Ah ça, Monsieur?
C'est un miroir!"

tableau – painting,
moche – ugly



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