

Let's Talk About...

French Cuisine



**Warm French bread
baking in the oven has
such a wonderful scent. It
has a crispy crust and
warm, soft, fluffy center.
Add a pat of butter to a
warm slice, and you have
a delicious food for which
we can thank the French.**



The French do not normally serve bread with butter. Do you like to put anything on your bread? Butter? Jam? Honey? Other things?

**What are some of your
favorite types of food?**

French?

Italian?

Chinese?

American?

Other types?

French cuisine has a rich heritage. There are simple dishes made by peasants in the Middle Ages, and modern dishes created by master chefs with ingredients many of us have never even heard of. Food has always been important to the French.

When thinking of having a special meal, a lot of people want steak. For many, their favorite is filet mignon. This is an expensive cut of meat. The name sounds fancy, but it just means “small steak” in French. It is still a delicious treat.



Maksim Toome © 123RF.com

Many chefs claim that steak tastes best when served rare. Do you agree? Or do you like your steak well-done?

**Would you rather eat a
steak dinner or have a
hamburger?
Why?**

One region in France called Provence has a special mix of herbs and spices named after it. “Herbes de Provence” is used to flavor many foods, including chicken, fish, pork, and stews. It contains basil, thyme, fennel, and savory.

Omelets are so common in America that we don't think of them as being French. Napoleon once ate an omelet so delicious that he ordered every egg in town to be made into an omelet for his army. This started a tradition of making large omelets.



This is a Japanese version of an omelet. It is made with eggs, rice, vinegar, and soy sauce. Would you try it?

The world's largest omelet weighed nearly 6,000 pounds and was made in Canada.

What would you do if someone asked you to eat the whole thing?

Would it affect your decision if there were a large cash prize?

We usually think of crêpes for breakfast, but in France they are eaten anytime. Crêpes are very thin pancakes that are eaten plain, with fruit fillings, or even with liquor drizzled on them. Some chefs fill crêpes with vegetables, sausage, fish, or chicken.

Another popular French dish is Ratatouille. This is a stewed vegetable dish made from eggplant, zucchini, bell peppers, and tomatoes. It is seasoned with garlic, marjoram, and basil. It can be served as a side dish, with pasta, or even as a filling in crêpes.



This is Ratatouille. Does it look good to you?

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*Next Reader,
Please*

The French are also known for their baking prowess. Many people consider an éclair a great treat. This dessert is made with special, light pastry dough. It is often filled with custard and topped with chocolate—yum!

Many Americans enjoy sipping a cup of coffee while enjoying their favorite dessert. Things are a bit different in France. Most people drink coffee *after* their dessert.

**Éclairs are great desserts.
What are some of your
favorite desserts?
Pie?
Cake?
Ice cream?
Bread pudding?
Other desserts?**

It is impossible to discuss French cuisine without mentioning alcoholic beverages. The French are known for many drinks, especially cognac and champagne. The only place champagne can even be produced is in a specific region in France. Otherwise, it's called sparkling wine.



Some people like to drink champagne or wine with dinner. Do you like to do this? Why or why not?

Julia Child is one of the best-known American chefs. However, her style of cooking is based on French culinary principles. Julia was educated at Le Cordon Bleu in France and fell madly in love with French food.

**Julia Child had a cooking
show on TV.**

**Do you like to watch
chefs cook on TV?**

Why or why not?

Another passion of the French is cheese. There are about 400 distinct types of cheese made in France, each with their own flavor, smell, and texture. With so many options, it is hard to pick just one!



The French often serve cheese on a platter. Do you like to try different types of cheeses?

**Imagine being in Paris,
sitting at a café under the
Eiffel Tower. It's night and
the lights are shining. You
drink a cup of French
coffee and nibble on a
tasty éclair. Savoring
every bite, you realize that
French cuisine is truly
something special.**

**This completes our story
and discussion.**

***Would you like to do this
again sometime?***



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