

# Article #1

## France Restaurants

French dining is often considered a must in terms of Gastronomy. The best place to relish French food being France itself, why don't you indulge yourself with a culinary trip during your next holidays?

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You will find below useful info about eating out in France, with the different types of French venues from the traditional Bistro and Brasserie to the latest star restaurants.

### *Le Bistro*

Originally considered to be a Bar or a Cafe, the "Bistro" turned to be pleasant and typical restaurant, really popular amongst the French as well as foreigners! Their convivial - sometimes bustling - atmosphere and **reasonably priced meals** have made their success for a long time now.

French Bistro in Paris



French Bistros feature a historical décor, held either in ancient *tavernes* (in rural areas) or in early-20th century buildings like those you can commonly see in Paris. Each bistro has its own ambiance but these **cosy, cramped neighbourhood venues** are often busy, especially at lunchtime! Waiters are generally relaxed - even scatterbrain sometimes! - and blackboard French menus affordable (about €15-30). The decoration is as well very simple, small round tables, basic (often wooden) furniture, a few posters or paintings on the walls are the main features.

*Le Bistro* is indeed a perfect destination to enjoy simple - yet flavourful - French food! It is not surprising then that many Bistros in big cities like Paris are rapidly over-crowded. By the way, bear in mind that some of them are even famous for being great tourist destinations and the service is unfortunately often rude in that case.

### *French Brasserie*

The French name *Brasserie* was originally used for "brewery", but it turned to represent a certain type of large, busy restaurants proposing typical French food. The Brasseries are now renowned worldwide, referring to great **non-stop venues** which are generally open late and do not require booking in advance.

## Le Train Bleu Brasserie



Larger than the French Bistros, the traditional Brasseries have subsequently more extensive menus, offering **fine dining meals as well as simple dishes** (such as a grilled steak served with fresh Provençal herbs and delightful chips, a mainstay of the French Food!). Three-course meals are more expensive though (between €30 and €70).

Whilst the bistro tends to be an intimate gastronomic restaurants, the brasserie retains the charm of the ancient brewery; frequently loud, such restaurant will satisfy every lovers of beer and wine, and remains a great opportunity to experience the French *art de la table*.

French Brasseries also often feature a beautiful 19th-century décor, as examples *Bofinger's* (Paris, 11th) and *Train Bleu's* (Paris, *Gare de Lyon*) are really worth the visit!

An increasing number of Brasseries are now run by chain companies - *Flo*, *Maitre Kanter*, *Chez Clément* being the most renowned. These venues boast many seats and can readily host groups (a plus in busy towns like Paris!), but for this reason, they may not satisfy those who expect a more exclusive dining experience.

## Michelin Star Restaurants

To really indulge your taste buds and discover what the French gastronomy is, Michelin star restaurants are doubtless the perfect destinations!

The best restaurants of France were granted the so-called Michelin stars, creating the huge range range of "Michelin starred restaurants". Boasting from one to three stars, such restaurants ensure a high quality service, original and/ or elegant décor, fine wines and above all, terrific and sophisticated food.

The best-known **French Chefs** - awarded by several Michelin stars - are **Alain Le Nôtre**, **Paul Bocuse**, **Alain Ducasse**, **Bernard Loiseau**, **Claude Troisgros** and **Marc Veyrat**, to give just a few.

You can find every top addresses in the Michelin Guide (or Red Guide) for a fine-dining experience, or if you search for good values, have a look rather at the *Guide Gourmand* (the "Bib Gourmand" restaurants featuring forks and knives instead of stars).

## Traditional Auberge

The traditional *Auberges* restaurants are an excellent and pleasant combination of French gastronomy and *art de vivre*.

Generally situated in rural areas or at least in remote, peaceful surroundings, such venues are run by (independent) professional caterers and chefs who want to promote and highlight the products of their regions. **Authenticity, Simplicity and Quality** are the Auberges leitmotiv. Some country venues - named *Fermes Auberges* (referring to farm houses turned into restaurants) - even propose a hearty cuisine made of their own farm products.

Auberges' other plus is that the owners are generally extremely friendly, coming to speak with their guests and giving visitors interesting info about the region. Such convivial venues can be compared to the French *Chambres d'Hotes* when they also offer *Table d'Hote* (including dinner).

## Article #2

# French Culture - Attitude Towards Food

[Edit](#)

The French have had a different attitude towards food than the Australia, due to having different regions and perceptions, yet the pressures of modern life have started to catch up to them, causing their culture of food and meals to change.

### **Region Specific Influence**

Although France shares many of the same meals, some regions offer specialties depending on where located in France. The French are known to use ingredients that are local and fresh. They prefer not to have items that have been transported long distances. An example of this fact would be that the French regions located near water serve more seafood in their meals than the inland regions do. Also, in areas where fruits and herbs grow easily, these items will be more readily used in many meals.

### **French Perception on Meals**

For many years, the French have seen food as something to be enjoyed and tasted by all the senses, rather than just something to eat. For food preparers, such as restaurants, this “sense eating” changes the way they need to serve their customers. Their customers want many small portioned courses, appealing to their sense of smell, touch, taste, etc. Unlike Australia, where restaurants charge a bit more for a hefty meal, which often leads to leftovers, the French serve smaller portions, which contributes to a cost difference between Australian and French meals. They serve a lot more fresh vegetables and fruits, and meat is typically not the center of the meal. Families come together a couple times a day for about an hour and a half to enjoy the company and food. Food is more of a social aspect in France.

### **The Changing of French Food and Meals**

Unfortunately, the myth of French people not being able to get fat is about over. French obesity rates are growing immensely, about 5 percent annually since 1997. A recent statistic showed that 42 percent of the French population older than 15 years has a weight problem, almost a third is overweight, and 12.4 percent is obese. The culprit of this growing epidemic is the way France is changing its eating habits. France is getting away from the traditional family-based meals, and leaning towards a more convenient, fast paced driven economy, falling into the pressures of modern life. Over the past few years, the average French meal has gone from being an hour and a half, to just around 38 minutes. Markets for fast food such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken have grown vastly. While fast food chains are moving in, diet chains are right behind.

Michael Mullen, European product manager for Weight Watchers, said “The market in France is growing and we believe it has an excellent future.” The increasing weight change has led to clothing stores to start ordering bigger sizes in men and women’s apparel. From a business standpoint, the market for diet books, foods is going to start growing in France, just as it has boomed in the United States.

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# Article #3

By [SUSANA FERREIRA](#)

*Paris*

Until last year, eating the food of Paul Bocuse, one of France's most celebrated chefs, required a visit to L'Auberge du Pont de Collonges, his restaurant with three Michelin stars near Lyon. Diners there lounge beneath chandeliers and eat spoonfuls of his famous truffle soup—at €80 (about \$120) a bowl.

But there's now a cheaper option in Lyon—twin restaurants run by Mr. Bocuse called Ouest Express.



*Sipa Press/Newscom*

Marc Veyrat's Cozna Vera.

There are no truffles on the menu at these ultra-modern eateries. Instead, Mr. Bocuse offers hot plates of salmon ravioli for €6.40, and "le César Classic" burger for €9.40, made with local beef and served with a drink and a side or dessert.

Customers carry their trays to tables arranged in a bright, airy dining room or on a sunny terrace—or they take their meals to go. After opening the first Ouest Express early last year, Mr. Bocuse opened a second location last month in Lyon's Part-Dieu district downtown. Planning has begun for a third.

"A chain? Why not?" says Pierre-Yves Bertrand, director of operations and development for the Ouest Express brand. "Maybe even franchises. The objective is to expand."

Plenty of chefs in the U.S. and France have opened bistros, brasseries and other relatively affordable alternatives to their Michelin-starred eateries. France's master chefs now have taken the next step—designing and serving their own takes on fast food. Their interpretations are American-style lunches of salads and sandwiches, often priced as meal deals and packaged to be eaten on the run.



ENSL-Model'Ecotais

Sandwiches at Alain Ducasse's Be Boulangépicier.

The enthusiasm for *la restauration rapide* comes as consumers in France continue to feel a financial pinch. Meanwhile, the nation's historically frosty attitude toward American burgers and fries appears to be thawing. Once, McDonald's franchises in France were met with protests. But at the end of last year, McDonald's France says that the more than 1,100 Golden Arches throughout France rang up sales of €3.3 billion—an 11% increase over 2007.

"Fast food is the sector that is growing the fastest" among restaurants in France, says Claire Cosson, spokeswoman for Union des Métiers et des Industries de l'Hôtellerie, a French hospitality-industry group known as UMIH.

In 2007, slightly more than half of the approximately 9.5 million meals purchased away from home in France were in traditional restaurants. "But every year they lose ground," Ms. Cosson says.

Another trend working in the quick lunch's favor, Ms. Cosson adds, is that the French are eating smaller lunches. In 1975, the average French meal lasted 90 minutes, according to the UMIH; by 2008, that time had shrunk to 30 minutes.

In the U.S., Wolfgang Puck was a pioneer in high-end fast food in 1991, when he launched a lower-priced alternative to his Beverly Hills, Calif., restaurant Spago—Wolfgang Puck Express, a chain of eateries at airports and other locations. Those, plus his line of packaged foods, quickly made the chef a household name.



*Eyede*

Takeout salads from Guy Martin's Miyou.

But in France, where marathon, multicourse meals have been a revered and deeply ingrained aspect of the national identity, master chefs have only recently begun whipping up takeout. Their interest in interpreting fast food is another sign of change.

Chefs say their use of fresh, local ingredients and their attention to detail sets their quick lunches apart from corporate fast food.

"The fact that we're eating quickly is not the problem," says Jean Lh eritier, president of the Slow Food France group, which promotes local products and agriculture. "If you can eat well at a fast-food restaurant, then I'm not opposed."

Marc Veyrat, a master of France's lauded *nouvelle cuisine*, once split his time between l'Auberge de l'Eridan and la Ferme de mon P re, his three-Michelin-starred restaurants in the Rh ne-Alpes region near Switzerland. Last year, he turned his attention to an organic casual eatery, Cozna Vera, overlooking Lake Annecy, where he serves a soup du jour for  5.80, and a burger piled high with fresh and roasted vegetables and served with a side of organic fries for  9.80.

Loyal to local farmers, he has this for his motto: "Respect the planet, savor nature."

Alain Ducasse, one of the most famous names in French cuisine and the head of an empire of restaurants, culinary schools and cookbooks, has two sandwich shops in Paris called Be Boulang picier and Caf  Be, where a fresh baguette Parisienne costs  4.75 and the popular C sar salad,  8.25.

At the two-Michelin-starred Le Grand V four restaurant in Paris near the Palais Royal, customers can sample chef Guy Martin's "menu plaisir"—a spread of the chef's selection of entr es, mains and desserts for  268. It's a far cry from Mr. Martin's sandwicherie Miyou, where a salad of fresh cod, fennel and spiced orange sells for  9.80, and a foie gras and mango confit baguette for  7.10.

At Thierry Marx's two-Michelin-starred restaurant Ch teau Cordeillan-Bages, in Pauillac, innovations include dishes decorated with ice cylinders and "virtual sausages," a rich meat-and-lentil soup served in a thin sausage-shaped casing, which a waiter snips open and spills onto a plate. Mr. Marx had once hoped to open a fast-food restaurant in Paris; instead, he is giving the rapide movement a different sort of boost, opening what he calls a "street-food academy."

The culinary program, hosted by the Lyc e H telier Saint-Michel, near Bordeaux, emphasizes "nomadic" foods that can be held in hand, eaten at a counter or taken to go. It has already welcomed its first group of aspiring restaurant-owners and chefs.

Mr. Marx traces his attraction to street food to his childhood in the M nilmontant neighborhood of northern Paris, a place still known for its diverse immigrant population of Eastern European Jews, Maghrebis, East Asians and West Africans. At Mr. Marx's academy, students learn to make the street foods of the Mediterranean basin, North Africa and Asia, and they take classes on making fresh pastas, healthy pizzas and other updated versions of regional specialties.

"The idea of takeaway food is very useful," says Mr. Marx, the chef. "We have 15 to 20 minutes for lunch, and often we eat in front of the computer."

The idea, he adds, is to prepare chefs to open their own corner fast-food stands—"good, independent corner boutiques."

## Article #4

# French schools on front line of obesity fight

**Fearing a US-style obesity epidemic, the French begin a Gallic battle of the bulge.**



An outlet for the U.S. fast-food chain McDonald's on Paris' Champs Elysees. The French government, concerned about obesity rates, has launched a program to improve awareness about health and physical fitness in schools. (AFP/Getty Images)

*Editor's note: France and Italy are at the forefront of European efforts to promote nutrition and exercise in schools, according to GlobalPost contributors in Paris and Rome. Read about a government-sponsored program to promote [healthful eating in Italy's schools](#), and a return to [market-based grocery shopping](#).*

PARIS, France - It's almost an unthinkable admission: the French concerned about their weight?

Yet when the French school year begins this fall, more than 7,000 students will find themselves the volunteers in an experiment to improve awareness about health and physical fitness — and which coincides with official concerns about rising obesity rates in France.

The project, baptized “Morning Classes, Afternoon Sports,” and taking effect in 124 middle and high schools across the country and in overseas departments, was devised as an antidote to school violence and absenteeism and as a way to help students develop team-building skills, according to Luc Chatel, the French education minister.

But the program’s other inevitable benefits are consistent with recommendations by a panel of health experts commissioned in 2009 by President Nicolas Sarkozy to devise a plan for addressing rising obesity in France.

More physical activity at school - whether as a result of installing basketball courts or game posts in schoolyards - promotes physical activity as a way of life, according to one of the 19 suggestions intended to help France stay ahead of the prevention curve.

Not that the average French person needs to give up buttery pastries, rich sauces and red wine tomorrow.

“The so-called obesity epidemic is about 20 years behind the United States and 10 years behind Great Britain,” said Arnaud Basdevant, a nutritionist and expert on obesity tapped by Elysee to lead the team that will ultimately implement the country’s three-year action plan to fight obesity that came out of the commission’s

findings. “This time lag shows that France was committed to the prevention and management of obesity somewhat earlier than the U.S. and the U.K.”

Roughly 14.5 percent of the adult population - about 6.5 million people - was considered obese in 2009 compared with 8.5 percent in 1997, according to figures from the latest ObEpi Roche survey, which has been monitoring the nation’s expanding waistline since 1997. Every three years, the national institute of health and medical research, Inserm, and market research company TNS Sofres distribute 20,000 questionnaires to households in order study the evolution of obesity.

### [Ads by Google](#)

- [5 Foods you must not eat:](#) Cut down a bit of stomach fat every day by never eating these 5 foods. [Beyonddiet.com](#)

Despite the progressive increase, France’s obesity levels are close to those of the United States in the late 1970s, said Basdevant and Susan Yager, a New York City-based writer and lecturer on nutrition and food. But an average of 250,000 people joining those ranks every year is helping to close that gap, whether the reason is the creep of fast food into the French diet, people working outside the home having less time for long meals or evolving values.

The country’s early adoption of a proactive approach is credited with some successes. Since 2001, Basdevant said, France has had an established National Health and Nutrition Program, a Ministry of Health initiative that has included obesity prevention.

In 2004, when health officials found that the percentage of overweight young people had climbed to 17 percent in 20 years, the government responded by removing all soda and snack machines from the 20 percent of middle schools and 50 percent of high schools that carried them.

The national health program is credited with stabilizing weight gain and obesity in children, improving the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by adults and helping to reduce the population’s salt intake, according to a national health survey conducted in 2006 and presented in 2007 by the French Institute for Public Health Surveillance, a public institution that reports to the Ministry of Health.

There are plans to go further. Following the presidential panel’s report issued in December, Sarkozy announced in a letter addressed to Basdevant in June that he was setting aside 140 million euros to implement a national obesity plan over the next three years.

The plan is three-pronged, Basdevant said. The first component aims to create centers for medical care and surgical treatment of obesity and to organize a “care chain.” A research component, as a second element, will look at various factors that contribute to obesity, including economic and social dimensions while prevention, as a third component, will be established gradually.

“It is a multi-factorial disease resulting from the interaction of biological, behavioral, environmental and economic factors,” Basdevant explained in an email message. “The preventive strategy is therefore highly complex and can only be multi-focal and multi-partner.”

The national approach contrasts with that of weight-loss programs like Jenny Craig, as it “pushes ahead with a successful solution to address a major public health issue,” according to a press release issued by Nestlé in March when the program that “combines its ready-made meals with individual consultation” arrived on the French market. Jenny Craig offers a personalized program that requires customers seeking to lose weight to eat pre-packaged meals available for purchase at the company’s weight loss centers.

Valerie Berrebi, a spokeswoman for Nestlé who handles the Jenny Craig account, said colleagues with direct knowledge of how the program was faring in France so far were unavailable for comment since most were just returning from summer holiday.

“They were indeed a solution looking for a problem,” Yager said, referring to Jenny Craig. Her latest book, "The Hundred Year Diet," focuses on America’s \$55 billion diet industry and the “national obsession with food, dieting, deprivation, and weight loss.”

The French attitude toward food, she noted, is very different, as France has always put such a premium on nutrition. To illustrate just how much, Yager, who is based in New York but said she travels to France at least once a year, cited examples of French children being weighed at schools and letters sent home to parents to alert them about any weight-related problems. In the United States, she said, such intervention might yield a reaction from parents of “don’t tell us what to feed our children.”

“They have got to resist the impulse to give in to the quick and easy fixes,” said Yager, who said she would be disappointed to see France go down the diet route. “That is going to catch up with people.”

Closing the nutritional divide is one of the areas Basdevant and his colleagues will focus on in implementing a national plan. They’ll also be looking more closely at economic factors, since obesity has greater impact on the lower socio-economic segment of society, according to research cited by Basdevant and Jean-Michel Oppert, both of whom worked with the government commission.

“It’s not about finding a scapegoat and believing that in beating that we’ve solved the problem,” Basdevant said. He advocates acting on a variety of axes, ranging from the environment to a city’s transport policy, from the meals served to children at school to individual behavior.

“It is a lengthy process,” he said, “but any preventive action requires time.”

## Article #5

### Quick (restaurant chain)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



A typical Quick drive-thru location, in [Montigny-lès-Cormeilles, France](#).

**Quick** is a French chain of hamburger fast food restaurants. It is one of [Europe's](#) largest restaurants chains. In recent years, its worldwide expansion has accelerated.

Quick is similar in theme to [McDonald's](#). In [2007](#) it was "nationalised" by the French government through its investment holding company [CDC](#).

# History

The chain was first established in 1971 in [Schoten, Belgium](#), and as of December 31, 2004 operated over 400 restaurants in [Belgium](#), [France](#), [Egypt](#), [Algeria](#), [Morocco](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [Andorra](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Spain](#), [Russia](#) and [Armenia](#). 72 % of these restaurants were operated as [franchises](#).

The first French Quick opened in [Aix-en-Provence](#) on July 19, 1980. Beginning on March 3, 2007, Quick also had restaurants in [Algiers](#), the capital of [Algeria](#). The first two [Russian](#) Quick restaurants opened in [Moscow](#) and [Tula](#) on March 21, 2008.

# Menu

As of July 2011, Quick's burger lineup included:

- the Cheeseburger
- the Suprême Cheese
- the Quick'n Toast
- the Giant
- the Long Chicken
- the Long Chicken Barbecue Bacon
- the Long Bacon
- the Long Fish

The "Giant" (which, despite its name, is similar in size to the other burgers) is the most popular choice, constituting about 50% of Quick's burger orders.<sup>[[citation needed](#)]</sup>

Quick does not salt [French fries](#) behind the counter, leaving it up to the diners to salt the fries themselves. The fry containers bear the phrases "Meer of minder gezouten, aan u de keuze" in [Dutch](#), or "Plus ou moins salés: à vous de décider" in [French](#), both meaning "*More or less salted: you decide.*"

A [vegetarian](#) burger was available for a limited time in the 1990s but was discontinued due to low demand in the Belgian and French markets. Quick did offer a grilled cheese sandwich as a meatless option.

In February 2010, Quick announced that eight of its French franchises would offer [halal](#) menus to cater to the Muslim population<sup>[1]</sup>, a number that increased to 22 in August 2010, and only halal menus are being served since then.<sup>[2]</sup> The move has caused controversy from politicians across various parties, including Roubaix's socialist mayor, [Marine Le Pen](#) of the [National Front](#) and the [UMP](#), France's ruling political party<sup>[3]</sup>.

In 2011, Quick unveiled *Le Double Mix*, a two-in-one sandwich featuring a bread-bun done two different ways on each half, with each side having its own dressings. Available in hamburger or chicken varieties, *Le Double Mix* is being sold as a limited-run sandwich, through April 18, 2011.<sup>[4]</sup>

# [\[edit\]](#) Controversy

On January 22, 2011, 14-year-old Benjamin Orset died after eating two contaminated hamburgers at a Quick Restaurant in [Avignon](#), France. An autopsy report concluded that Benjamin died from food poisoning. Traces of [staphylococci](#) were detected in the boy's body, as well as in five of the eight employees. Quick's managing director, Jacques-Edouard Charret, has refused to accept responsibility for the death of the boy.<sup>[5]</sup>