

Eating in France – A Cheat Sheet



Some things to know :

- When entering a restaurant or a store, it is customary to say “Bonjour” to everyone present (a collective “Bonjour” to no one in particular is fine).
- Many restaurants do not open until 6pm or later.
- Tax is included in the price of the meal on the menu. No additional tax is added.
- Tipping is NOT necessary or expected.
- In a sit-down, dine-in restaurant, you won’t get the bill unless you ask for it (see the Useful Phrases section)
- You must use an “inside voice.” The table next to you shouldn’t be able to hear your conversation. In cafes and restaurants, the tables are quite close together, so be aware of this.
- You cannot get free refills of soda (it’s illegal in France to give free refills). If you want a second one, you’ll have to buy it.

Fast food

- Most fast food restaurants (McDonald’s, Quick, Burger King) have self-order kiosks that you can put in English to make ordering easier. You can then pick it up at the counter when your number is called.
- If you want water, you must ask for tap water (un gobelet d’eau – *uhn go-blay dough*) or you will have to pay for a bottle of water.
- You might get ice in your drink in a fast food restaurant, but not always.

Sit-Down, Dine-In

- If you’d like water (not a bottle) you’ll have to ask for it (un carafe d’eau – *uhn carafe dough*)
- If you’re paying with cash, you will likely pay at the register (à la caisse – *ah lah kess*). If you’re paying with a card, the waiter/waitress might bring the card reader to your table. (Again, tipping is neither necessary nor expected)
- In Paris, your waiter/waitress will likely speak English. Asking them if they do in French is much appreciated (see Useful Phrases).
- Ice in drinks is very uncommon.

Useful Phrases

Do you speak English? – Parlez-vous anglais? – *Parlay voo ahnglay?*

(Can I have) the bill, please? – Puis-je avoir l’addition, s’il vous plaît? – *Pweez-zhe av-wahr laddi-syohn, see voo play?*

Do you have...? – Avez-vous...? – *Ah-vay voo...?*

Fries – des frites – *day freet*
Chicken – du poulet – *doo poo-lay*
Pork – du porc – *doo porr*
Duck – du canard – *doo canarr*
Soda – du coca – *doo koh-kah*
Ice – des glaçons – *day glah-sohn*

Be polite!

Hello – Bonjour – *Bone-zhoor*
Excuse me – Pardon – *Pahr-dohn*
Please – S’il vous plaît – *See voo play*
Thank you – Merci – *Mayr-see*
You’re welcome – De rien – *Duh ree-ahn*
Goodbye – Au revoir – *Oh ruh-vwahr*