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## Paris for foodies

March 1, 2015 - Features - Tagged: Paris for foodies

*Love food? Want to learn about France? Then read on for our insider's guide to the very heart of French culture in the nation's capital, Paris*

When talking about a football player on the news in France, an announcer might explain that the player's 'mayonnaise has finally set'. 'My cabbage' is a French term of endearment, and 'potato' is a playground insult. Food permeates every aspect of French life, earning so much international respect it has been named a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. If you want to understand the French, you need to study their food, which requires a field trip to Paris, and some very delicious homework.



### Culinary classrooms

If you want to get serious with your study of French cuisine, take a tour or class to learn more about food in France: how to purchase it, where it comes from and how to prepare specific dishes at home. A few select classes are taught by Parisians who are passionate about sharing their culture with visitors from across the globe.

**Meeting the French** offers small group tours with a local guide who will whisk you in to the heart of local bakeries or cheese shops, introducing you to their staff as you observe the team at work. They offer a particularly delicious pastry tour **Chez Gerard Mulot**, a pastry chef who is famous for his macarons and whipped cream-filled meringues, as well as chocolates, frozen desserts and countless other delights.

Paule Caillat of **Promenades Gourmandes** is a charming Parisienne who offers gourmet walking tours of historic markets. She'll introduce you to a handful of the most respected artisans in the capital, taking you into the city's oldest pastry shop where you can take notes on how they invented the world-famous baba au rhum in 1835. Her favourite cheesemonger ages his comté for a remarkable 30 months and her butcher will explain classic French cuts of beef. Paule also offers cooking classes of traditional French recipes prepared in a cosy kitchen before being enjoyed as a class meal.

**Le Foodist** offers cooking lessons, wine tastings and hosted dinners seasoned with stories of French foods and their origins. Their charming sommelier Stéphane Bonnerot takes students on a tour of France, packing in lots of laughter while explaining, comparing and contrasting wines from six different regions. Students pay extra attention when he takes out his sword and demonstrates how to use it to open champagne with particular French flair.

It is hard to imagine enjoying French cuisine without appreciating French wines. Thierry Givone of **Wine Tasting in Paris** is a quintessential Parisian, particularly passionate about fermented grapes. His wine tastings, held in his brick-walled storefront in the historic Latin Quarter, are educational and informative. For a truly in-depth adventure, you can visit wineries with **Paris by the Glass's** Preston Mohr. He may have been born in the US, but Monsieur Mohr is a French gentleman at heart, with a diploma from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. Preston collaborates with several tour companies while also offering private visits of the prestigious houses of the Champagne region. Guests are invited to explore illustrious cellars and are offered tastings of France's sparkling, golden elixir.



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### Gourmet field trips

Guided tours and cooking classes are a great way to get behind the scenes but it is also rewarding to venture out on one's own, discovering delicacies at markets and shops while creating personal connections with men and women who are passionate about their wares. Paris has several market streets like the rue de Montorgueil, where food vendors work in permanent boutiques selling succulent treats to faithful customers.

**The Bastille Market** is an example of the 82 roving street markets that pop up throughout the city on alternating days. With over 100 stalls, this is one of the biggest markets in Paris, attracting a lively crowd every Thursday and Sunday.

The **Marché d'Aligre** offers both of these market experiences at one simple address, with a small flea market and an historic 19th-century covered market, **Marché Beauvau**, in the same spot. It is the ideal place for tasting foods not easy to find abroad, like the wild strawberries known as fraises des bois, artisanal sausages, raw milk cheeses and fine chocolates. Stop by the **Baron Rouge** wine bar for a taste of oysters fresh from the sea. It is also a great place for serious connoisseurs to pick up edible lessons to pack up and study in their home kitchens. Some of the most popular finds are chestnut honey (miel de châtaignier), fine sea salt petals (fleurs de sel), gourmet mustards or jams, and yet more artisanal chocolates. Cheesemongers are happy to vacuum pack purchases for the flight home, but it is advisable to avoid meat and dairy products that are illegal for import in most countries.

The **Paris Pastry** app is a great way to explore the sweeter side of Paris without a guide, but with plenty of guidance. Created by American pastry chef David Lebovitz, who has been living and baking in Paris for over a decade, the app features 370 of the very best chocolate, candy, pastry, and ice-cream shops in the city. The app lets you search by your present location, favourite pastry shop, or the next neighbourhood you'll be visiting.

Serious sweet lovers will find their pleasure in the prestigious 7th arrondissement, where some of the city's most respected confectioners have set up shop along the rue du Bac. Just steps from the metro stop with the same name, **Chapon** has a chocolate mousse bar featuring single estate concoctions. On the next corner, **Jacques Genin** is famous for his exquisite chocolates and exotic caramels, while next door **Du Pain et Des Gateaux** specialises in delectable cakes, as does **La Pâtisserie des Rêves** just a few doors down. The sweets at **Angelina's** look almost too good to eat and **Le Bac à Glace** turns out ice-creams and daring sorbets, such as white cheese with orange blossom. At the end of the block **La Grande Épicerie de Paris**, the city's premiere gourmet grocery, has a pastry counter that is surrounded by the best foods France has to offer.

### Meet the chef

All this culinary research can create quite an appetite and Paris has the answer with a seemingly endless number of restaurants, each more tempting than the next. If you'd like to continue your studies, choosing a restaurant with an open kitchen turns a simple meal into a performance, where you learn as you eat. **Ty-Breiz** is the quintessence of a crêperie from Brittany, with the large hot plates required to make the savoury, thin buckwheat pancakes called galettes, visible from the quaint dining room, as tradition dictates. In Paris' autumn (October to November), diners can order girolle mushrooms that have been recently harvested from local forests, and the salted caramel dessert crêpes are irresistible throughout the year.

For a taste of contemporary cuisine, reserve a table at the exceptional **Néo-Bistrot Septime**, where popular chef Bertrand Grébaut proudly puts out a beautiful presentation of the best possible ingredients. Following the popular farm to table movement, chef Grébaut's dishes are full of flavour without unnecessary fuss or fanfare, served on rustic wood tables in an industrial space.

Meet chef **Pierre Sang Boyer** and his guests seated at the one community table in a streamlined, modern space. This Top Chef winner opened his eponymous address last year, offering a fixed menu of inspired cuisine with a strong Asian flair. The fixed menu means you are at the chef's mercy as he decides the courses for the meal, which you'll be sharing at a common table with other guests, adding a strong sense of adventure to the evening.

For a formal evening with the stars – Michelin stars – **L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon** offers a unique dining experience that is considered to be among one of the World's 50 Best. In the black-clad dining room guests sit at a bar that encircles the kitchen, savouring an exclusive peek at some of the world's most promising chefs hard at work. Small tapas-style servings make it possible to order a number of dishes, for maximum pleasure.

### Paris Markets

Whether visitors opt for the permanent market street or roving street markets, it is all about the food, creating a similar scene – colourful produce spilling onto the streets, the aroma of freshly baked breads,



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crushed citrus, and ripe cheeses mingling with the cries of daily specials. Gypsies sell fresh cut flowers from the countryside, women fill their wheeled caddies until they're overflowing, gossip is exchanged and laughter shared. Vendors tempt visitors with a little Gallic charm and tasty free samples. More info:<http://meslieux.paris.fr/marches>

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- Ty Breiz 52 boul Vaugirard, 15th arrondissement | +33 1 43 20 83 72
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- Pierre Sang Boyer 55 rue Oberkampf, 11th arrondissement
- L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon 5 Rue Montalembert, 7th arrondissement | +33 1 42 22 56 56

**Also recommended**

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Gecko Publishing publishes travel and lifestyle magazines that aim to change perceptions of a destination. With a particular bias towards Africa, the company has been publishing Msafiri since 2005, and is particularly proud of its relationship with Kenya Airways.

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