

# French cuisine

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French Cuisine is one of the most popular types of food around these days and is known worldwide for its quality. The French gained their techniques through history in pretty much one form. They got most of their notoriety because of the fact that they were ruled by so many different people. There were many different countries and groups of people who conquered the French region throughout the past 2000 years. So each time a new ruler conquered them new ideas and techniques were introduced to the French cuisine.

France is said to have begun their culinary art in the 16th century by the wife of Henry II, Catherine de Medicis. They brought personal cooks with them wherever they went. Later on as it became more solidified French Cuisine had cookbooks being made in the 19th century. *La Cuisine Classique* by Urbain Dubois and Emile Bernard. In the book they suggested serving food while still hot and were criticized heavily for it but the French enjoyed it and it's now adopted worldwide by everyone. An average day in France begins with breakfast, which is known as *le petit déjeuner*.

This usually consists of coffee or hot chocolate, and sometimes a croissant which is made of a flaky, butter-based pastry or bread. *Pain au chocolat* is like a croissant but has a chocolate filling. Lunch is pretty laid back. It usually begins with *hors d'oeuvre*, or appetizers. Meat or fish follows, and the meal ends with cheese, fruit, or sometimes a dessert. After school many kids eat a generally healthy snack of fruit or some bread to tide them over. This is known as *le goûter*. The evening meal is when the whole family gets together and talks about their day. This always has a few courses.

Most dinners end with wine and a desert of some sort. L'Ap©ritif is a national custom in France. It occurs before the meal where the family gathers about a half an hour or so before a meal to share a drink, a small appetizer, and conversation with family, friends, and neighbors. It is an established social activity which is enjoyed by people of all ages, and which forms an important part of home life and in restaurants. There are many dishes that are either rare or exclusive to the French people. For example, Pot au Feu is dish of simmered meats and vegetables.

Bouillabaisse is from The Provence and region and is made with fish, often with their heads, and shellfish in a spicy soup. Sauces are exclusive to the region they are from. Horseradish is from the Alsace region, mustard is from the Dijon region, Aioli is from provence, and rouille from Languedoc. These are perfect examples of region specific foods. Meats used in France are similar to the sauces. Ducks and Geese are common ingredients in meals unlike most parts of the world. Many of the stews created in France are not eaten in the United states.

The Vegetable stews usually don't cross the Atlantic Ocean. Belgian Endive and Swiss Chard are made only in France. Cheese is another exclusive product. It is made in the Northern region and France is known for these cheeses. Muenster cheese now worldwide was born in Northern France. Swiss Cheese and German cheese are often imitated and popular in France. Bread is extremely popular in France and there are many specialties. A baguette is a long thin piece of bread Icing and many sugar toppings are added to bread to make it a dessert in many parts of France.

France has many original pieces of food that have been imitated but they are always known for their quality. This has a lot to do with the type of training the Chefs go through. Most go through at least a 3-4 year program which includes hotel management. Then they have an internship type program afterward to give them hands-on experience. Holidays such as Bastille day cause the French to go all out. Everyone either cooks or attends a huge meal for family and friends. Christmas dinner is similar to the U. S. whereas close family get together and have a long meal with numerous courses.

These usually last for a long time because they chat a lot on these special occasions. France's cuisine is very popular, and at the same time very expensive. Haute Cuisine was created and means Gourmet cooking. It always uses premium ingredients and no one ever complains about it never tasting bad. But the French are quick to critique a bad meal. It is not considered very disrespectful to tell the cook you did not like the meal. The French are different than everyone else in almost everything they do, including how they act and how they cook.