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In France, Did You Know ...?

- Doctors still make house calls.
- When buying groceries, you need to bag your purchases yourself.
- It is against the law to use your cell phone while driving.
- Many schools close at noon on Wednesdays.
- Many businesses are closed on Mondays.
- Utility and phone bills are sent out every two months.
- Dogs are welcome in restaurants.
- It is rare to find a public phone that accepts coins. Most only accept phone cards.

“C’est la vie” in France

Living and traveling in a country offer two completely different experiences. No doubt that’s why the French, who live in one of the most popular vacation destinations in the world, are more likely to thoroughly explore their own country before setting foot into another.

This doesn’t mean that the French don’t appreciate other cultures. On the contrary, they love to learn about any culture— its food, climate, people, politics. But beautiful and romantic France has a lot to offer, and according to many who live there, why leave its borders when on holiday? For the most part, living in France is an extension of vacationing there: you have the pleasure of looking at the historical buildings, navigating the gray cobblestone streets, eating in nice restaurants, smelling fresh baked bread. The main difference lies within the workplace.

The French businessman is educated and typically the chief breadwinner. This sometimes calls for long hours and requires great dedication. However, balance between life and work is important to the

French with a strong priority placed on the home and family. For example, French families take advantage of long weekends for a vacation get-away. Families share a meal together every evening. Husbands and wives often shop for groceries together on Saturdays.



Photo by John Schindler

L’art de vivre —the art of living — means to take part in the beauty of what life has to offer. It is precisely this extraordinary appreciation for the art of living that most of us find enviable about the French.

Gourmet foods, fine wines, splendid re-

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We welcome your comments or contributions. Please email us at visavis@culuralawareness.com.

At **Cultural Awareness International**, we dedicate ourselves to promoting communication and understanding amongst the world’s cultures — an important consideration as the world has become everyone’s “oyster”. People today are choosing to be culturally savvy. Communication and cultural awareness are the keys to their successful transition. **CAI** continues to be the premier resource for international business needs. *“Live local - work global.”*



Cheers,
Priscila A.C. Montana,
President and CEO

FRANCE: Suggested Reading

On Rue Tatin: A Culinary Account of Life in Small Town Europe

More than a few books have been written about the fine wines, the cuisine, travel, and history of France. Indeed, people from all over the world have chosen to live in France, and books recounting their experiences are not hard to come by.

A wonderful new book by Susan Hermann Loomis, *On Rue Tatin: Living and Cooking in a French Town*, focuses on the author's personal reminiscences as a newcomer to France some 20 years ago and her life since as a resident. Loomis' positive attitude and willingness to make the most of what France has to offer makes her an inspirational example of how to best undertake a move to a new country.

Rue Tatin is unusual in its format in that every chapter ends with recipes that serve

to accentuate the author's experiences with people she met along the way. Moreover, Loomis admits that she thinks about food all the time. With eating virtually a national sport in France, *Rue Tatin* provides you a rare opportunity to explore a very real part of the French culture.

Loomis succeeds in offering the reader far more than a culinary memoir. Her extraordinary talent at being a good neighbor in her adopted country gives us insight into the heartfelt generosity of the French people. After eight years in Louviers, Loomis and her family have woven themselves neatly into the way of life in a French provincial town. She makes you want to do the same!

Lorraine Gachelin



Photo by John Schindler

C'est la Vie *(Continued from page 1)*

gions, breathtaking sights, beautiful people. France is an expert at fine living, and it can be a marvelous experience for anyone willing to understand and adapt to the culture. For instance, learning the language opens up opportunities to be a part of the people. Becoming a regular customer at the local *boulangerie* (bakery) or wine store makes you part of that community.

Of course, everything is not always bright. The weather can be gloomy and damp during the winter. The people often keep to themselves, although usually acknowledge you with a *hello* or *good-bye*. The notion of customer service sometimes seems nonexistent. Strikes are common and seem to paralyze the country. The latter calls for long lines at the grocery stores. In a panic, the French always stock up on kilos — and that means many, many kilos — of butter, flour, and sugar. They can't bear the thought of living without these staples for the duration of a strike.

Like anywhere else, France has its good aspects, balanced by less desirable ones. To tell someone that life there is perfect would be untruthful. For anyone in search of beauty, elegance, and *l'art de vivre*, France is hard to beat.

Lorraine Gachelin



For nearly twenty years, the world of international business has looked to Cultural Awareness International (CAI) as the leading resource of comprehensive intercultural and destination / relocation services for their global employees. Leading global corporations rely on CAI for everything from preview trip, orientation, home search, and settling-in assistance to highly-personalized, in-depth intercultural services available worldwide.

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