



Leseprobe

Mara Grimm

Bon Appétit Paris

A Guide to Eating and Living
in Europe's Most Stylish City

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Zum Buch

Your backstage pass to a true Parisian day of gustatory delights, this savvy insider's guide uncovers where to eat, what to order, and how to blend in while doing it.

Bon Appétit Paris isn't just about where to eat—it's about how to eat like a Parisian. Journalist and food lover Mara Grimm draws on years of experience living in the city to chart a delicious day of dining, from morning croissants to late afternoon apéros. The result is part culinary guide, part cultural decoding manual, and entirely irresistible. Organized around a typical "journée gourmande," the book follows the rhythm of real Parisian meals: petit déjeuner, déjeuner, goûter, apéro, and dîner. Along the way, Grimm answers essential questions: What's the difference between a brasserie and a bistro? When do you eat macarons? What drink pairs best with a planche apéro? And how exactly do you deal with a French waiter? Grimm's voice is authoritative, stylish, and full of practical charm. She offers etiquette tips, expert insights, and more than 80 carefully selected addresses across all 20 arrondissements—plus a handful of classic recipes to try in your own kitchen. Readers will also learn how to spot a proper baguette, avoid tourist traps, and experience the city's edible rituals with confidence and curiosity. Featuring more than 220 luscious color photographs and a compact, handbag-friendly design, *Bon Appétit Paris* is essential reading for travelers, food lovers, and anyone dreaming of the French capital—whether they're on a plane or in their living rooms.

Autor

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Mara Grimm arbeitet als freiberufliche Food-Journalistin. Ihre Restaurantkritiken, Interviews und Kolumnen erscheinen regelmäßig in Zeitschriften wie

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A GUIDE TO EATING
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PRESTEL

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PREFACE

For as long as I can remember, I knew that one day I would go and live in Paris. I would dream of the cliché: sitting in cafés and writing, contemplating the zinc roofs, going to the bakery each morning for a fresh baguette, enjoying a glass of wine at lunch and walking the streets for hours on end. My dream came from actually seeing this life lived: from the moment I started walking, my mother would take me with her to Paris twice a year to be immersed in art, gastronomy, fashion, beauty and life. We would browse the main museums, have lunch in newly established bistros and enjoy meals in old brasseries. Paris was where I learned all the important lessons about love and life, in addition to less important ones about fashion and style.

I became fascinated with Parisians: their love of food, their penchant for beauty, their sense of quality and the great and mysterious *je ne sais quoi*, about which volumes have been written. Needless to say I have devoured the style guides by icons such as Inès de La Fressange and Caroline de Maigret.

When my dream came true seven years ago and I was able to move to Paris for some of the year, I was under the illusion that I knew exactly how Parisians live. But I was still missing something. Although thousands of lessons about the fashion, love and style of Paris have been written, what about the city's eating habits? Why do Parisians go out for lunch so often, and what is the best way to treat French waiters? What tableware is a must-have and why is it that food trends hardly ever catch on in Paris? And also important: what to wear when going to a restaurant? I decided to do some research. The result is this culinary style guide, the book I would have loved to have had when I was dreaming about a life in Paris.

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LE BON GOÛT

If you want to eat like a Parisian,
you need to become a snob
immediately. But take note: it's all
about quality, not expense.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TASTE

Put six people at the table and the ritual commences: you open a bottle of champagne and discuss what you are going to eat. You continue by discussing what you are eating, followed by talking about what you have just eaten. And you conclude with a discussion about what you will be eating next week.

This is how Alain Ducasse described the perfect Parisian evening in *The New York Times*. And he was not exaggerating. To Parisians, food is more than just nutrition; it is culture, desire, love – and sometimes even poetry.

In some cases, the love Parisians have for food is so extreme that the president is judged based on his culinary preferences. The fact that Mitterand was unfaithful to his wife was of no importance whatsoever, because that was *la vie privée*. Also, this president enjoyed the admiration of many due to his insatiable appetite. On his deathbed, he ordered ortolans, oysters, *foie gras* and capon. The French had more issues with Sarkozy. Nobody cared about the stories of his corrupt behaviour, but his decision to remove cheese platters from the Elysée Palace menu because he wanted to lose weight was utterly unforgivable. This just goes to show that while you can get away with almost anything in France, you'll never get away with having bad taste.



A CRASH COURSE IN CULINARY SNOBBERY

- Forget about supermarkets. Find a market or specialist shop for your grocery shopping. After seven years in Paris, for me it's perfectly normal to buy my cabbage lettuce at stand A, my chicory at stand B and my radishes two streets away.
- Choose the best quality you can afford. Better to eat a macaron from that great pastry chef once a week than a few cookies from the supermarket every day.
- Buy selectively. If the baker gives you a baguette that does not look quite crisp enough, nobody will frown if you ask for one that is *bien cuite*.
- In a best-case scenario, a real snob is only moderately enthusiastic. In Paris, you seldom hear someone saying that a dish was magnifique; usually, it's *pas mal*.
- Was that sauce a tad too salty? Your cake just that little bit too sweet? Chocolate mousse not airy enough, or the wine not what you expected? A snob will leave it – this also explains why most Parisians are so lean.



NAME DROPPING

For years now, Parisian style icons have been saying that wearing logos on clothing is a serious *faux pas*. A Parisian would rather die than be caught in the streets looking like a walking advertising board. My good friend Robin – a true-*bleu* snob from the Rue de Paradis – blatantly refuses to wear a t-shirt with even the smallest logo. He will take a key to scratch the logo off his Ray Ban's and even turns plastic bags inside out so nobody can see where they come from.

This may sound a bit extreme, but you will hardly ever see anyone in Paris wearing a t-shirt or sweater with the logo of a large fashion house. Chanel, Céline and Saint Laurent do make items with large logos, but these are almost exclusively sold to tourists. Parisians go by the basic assumption that you can buy your clothes wherever you want, but you never display designer names.

Name dropping is another *faux pas* in Paris. There is just one exception to this rule: when it comes to food. Food name-dropping is perfectly okay and it's more than *bon ton* to flaunt the names of producers and suppliers. Menus commonly state them and some restaurants even put the names of their suppliers in large letters on their windows: *Ici nous vendons des glaces Berthillon!* So there is not a Parisian soul who needs or wants to know that your bag is Hermès, but if your truffles are from Galis, your radishes from Erwan Humbert, courgettes from Domaine de Vernins or asparagus from Robert Blanc, you can shout it from the rooftops as loud as you like.

SEVEN NAMES TO IDOLISE

Alain Milliat

Twenty five years ago, farmer's son Alain shipped his fruit juices to the best sommeliers in France. And they were a hit: today, Milliat is a key component of Parisian menus. His tomato juice is especially delicious.

Jean-Yves Bordier

There is simply no way escaping Jean-Yves Bordier's butter: his name is spelled in giant letters on all of the menus, no exceptions.

Le Prince de Paris

Branded with the Eiffel Tower and lovingly referred to as Le Prince de Paris, this is the only ham that is still produced in Paris. Celebrated by top chefs such as Yannick Alléno.

Pierre Hermé

The ultimate Lord of the Macaron and godfather of the new generation of pastry chefs. If you come across his cakes anywhere, be sure to order them!

Poilâne

Although you might associate France with baguettes, sourdough bread is actually more traditional. The Poilâne family has kept this great tradition for no fewer than three generations. Baked in wood-fired ovens, Poilâne bread is made from four ingredients: flour, water, salt from Brittany and a sourdough starter.

Alain Ducasse

Alain Ducasse is a top chef who owns several starred restaurants in addition to a chocolate empire. In just a few years, his chocolate has become the best in the city.

Champignons de Paris

There was a time when extensive mushroom cultivation took place under the streets of Paris. In the nineteenth century, the city featured over three hundred mushroom growers; today, few are left. So if you ever come across real Champignons de Paris on a menu, be sure to order them.

UNFADED GLORY

Even after seven years in Paris, I never get tired of seeing those Parisians who seemingly casually threw on the right blouse, perfect sweater or somewhat oversized jacket. I am aware now that this casualness is merely appearance; their cavalier and elegant look is carefully supplemented with heirlooms, vintage bracelets and cashmere sweaters. Trends hardly ever have anything to do with this. After all, it's all about the classics.

This approach is also part of Paris gastronomy. Similar to the Parisian wardrobe, Parisian cuisine is averse to trends. Food trends hardly ever catch on in Paris, while classics are revered. Just as an outfit should have a certain degree of casualness, dishes should not look too neat or well-considered. Flowers and complicated garnishing? *Mais non!* Similar to Parisian women who will wear no more than one piece of jewellery, Parisian chefs will limit themselves to main ingredients, but they must excel in quality and simplicity. There's no such thing as too basic. Too old school? Not at all. After all, why innovate if the best has already been invented?

