



A GIFT FOR LA SEMAINE DU GOÛT

Taste the French Way

Five Senses, a Little French Flair



Small discoveries. Simple pleasures. Something to share.

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Bonjour,

Growing up in Provence, I learned that the pleasure of food begins long before the first bite. It begins at the market, with the colors of the season, the scent of fresh herbs, and the anticipation of bringing a few good ingredients home.

A ripe tomato in summer. An apple in autumn. A piece of bread with a beautiful crust. Simple things can give us so much pleasure when we take a moment to notice them.

For La Semaine du Goût, France's Week of Taste, I invite you to bring a little of that curiosity into your own kitchen. Look, smell, touch, listen, and taste. There is no need for special equipment or the "right" words. Your impressions are enough.

Try these little discoveries on your own, or gather someone around the table. Compare what you notice. You may be surprised by how differently we experience the very same bite!

Avec plaisir,

Huguette

Huguette Marsicano · Founder, French Moods

AN INVITATION TO NOTICE

A Table for the Senses

Five discoveries, a little French flair

Set out a pear, good crusty bread, two olive oils, and fresh rosemary. Choose a favorite plate, clear a little space, and give each sensation a moment.

01 SIGHT

Compose a little beauty.

Slice the pear and arrange it beside the bread. Notice the colors, shapes, and empty space before you take a bite.

How does the presentation change your anticipation of tasting?

02 SMELL

Discover a memory.

Smell the rosemary, then gently rub a leaf and smell again. Describe the fragrance before naming the herb: woody, bright, resinous?

Does it bring back a place, a season, or a moment?

03 TOUCH

Explore contrast.

With clean fingers, feel the crust and soft interior of the bread. Taste a piece, followed by a slice of pear. Notice texture in your mouth, too.

How much pleasure comes from crispness, softness, or juiciness?

04 SOUND

Listen to the bite.

Break the bread near your ear. Listen as you bite into the pear. Take another bite with your eyes closed and your attention on the sound.

What does listening add to the experience?

05 TASTE

Compare with curiosity.

Pour the oils into separate dishes. Taste each on a small piece of the same bread. Pause between them. Notice fruitiness, bitterness, and a peppery finish.

Which would you choose for a ripe tomato? For warm bread?

A LITTLE MYSTERY AROUND THE TABLE

Le Jeu des Sens

A little French tasting game

For two people or a few friends. Allow about 20 minutes. No expertise needed, just curiosity and a willingness to compare impressions.

Prepare your tasting table

Two breads, two olive oils, two apple or pear varieties, and a few fresh herbs. Set out small portions. Label the pairs A and B, hiding their names. Take turns being the host for the herb round.

1 Predict with your eyes

Look at the two fruits. Predict which will be sweeter, and write down your choice. Save the tasting for round four.

2 Follow your nose

Close your eyes while the host holds a sprig of rosemary, thyme, or mint nearby. Describe the scent before guessing the herb. Swap roles.

3 Feel, then taste

With clean fingers, explore a piece of each bread, then taste. Which has the more pleasing contrast between crust and crumb?

4 Listen to the crunch

Taste each fruit with your eyes closed. Which sounds crisper? Which tastes sweeter? Compare with your earlier prediction.

5 Choose in secret

Taste the two oils on pieces of the same bread. Each person writes A or B as a favorite, plus three words describing it. Share your words before revealing your choices.

The little reveal

Reveal the ingredients and compare impressions. There are no points to win: the pleasure is in discovering, and different preferences are part of the game.

FRENCH MOODS

ADD A LITTLE FRENCH TO YOUR LIFE

A SAVORY TART WITH A SWEET AUTUMN NOTE

Tarte fine aux poires

Pear, cheese & walnut tart

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINUTES • BAKE 25-30 MINUTES

A tarte fine is a thin pastry tart that lets its toppings shine. This French-inspired version pairs pears with goat cheese or blue cheese: choose the flavor that invites you in.

Gather your ingredients

- 1 sheet all-butter puff pastry (about 9 oz / 250 g), thawed
- 2 ripe but firm pears, cored and thinly sliced
- 4 oz / 115 g soft goat cheese or blue cheese, crumbled
- ¼ cup / 30 g walnuts, roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves; freshly ground black pepper
- 1-2 teaspoons honey, to finish

Make something delicious

- 1 Heat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Unroll the pastry onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Lightly score a ½-inch border without cutting through. Prick the center with a fork.
- 2 Scatter half the cheese inside the border. Arrange the pear slices in a single, slightly overlapping layer. Add the remaining cheese, walnuts, thyme, and a little pepper.
- 3 Bake for 25-30 minutes, until the edges are deeply golden and the base is crisp. Check toward the end; loosely cover with foil if the nuts darken too quickly. Rest for 5 minutes, then finish with honey to taste.

Before you choose: taste, then imagine

Taste a tiny piece of goat cheese with your eyes closed, then try the blue cheese. Pause between them. Notice tang, salt, creaminess, and the flavor that lingers. Now imagine sweet pear, toasted walnuts, and thyme alongside each. Which combination would you like to bring to life? Try your favorite with a slice of pear before deciding.

At the table: Serve warm, cut into small squares to share, or with a green salad. With a stronger blue cheese, begin with less honey and add it after tasting.

THE PLEASURE OF SIMPLICITY

Pommes au four

Baked apples with honey & thyme

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINUTES • BAKE 30-45 MINUTES

Pommes au four are a simple French home dessert: apples baked until tender. This version pairs honey with a little thyme, bringing an autumn fruit together with an herb familiar in Provençal kitchens.

Gather your ingredients

- 4 medium baking apples, such as Golden Delicious or Braeburn
- 4 teaspoons honey, plus a little more to serve if desired
- 4 teaspoons unsalted butter, or 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 4 small sprigs of fresh thyme
- 4 tablespoons water

Make something delicious

- 1 Heat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Core the apples from the top, leaving the bottom intact to hold the filling. Score a shallow line around each apple's middle to help the skin open as it bakes.
- 2 Place in a small baking dish. Fill each apple with 1 teaspoon honey, 1 teaspoon butter (or ½ teaspoon olive oil), and a small sprig of thyme. Pour the water into the dish.
- 3 Bake for 30–45 minutes, until a knife slides easily into the flesh. Timing depends on the size and variety. Spoon the warm pan juices over the apples and remove the thyme stems before serving.

At the table: Serve warm in small bowls, with the fragrant juices. For a little tasting together, divide one apple into small portions. Notice how baking changes its scent, texture, and sweetness.

More small pleasures & hands-on gatherings: frenchmoods.com