Make Me a Parisian Culture Pack

American Ideology 101

Recognizing cultural differences

#1 - First come, first served. In bold you'll recognize an American ideology, but in French culture there are other definitions for priority. In the restaurant the table that appears ready first is approached first. Bus seats are yielded to anyone older than yourself or anyone pregnant, ill, or injured (as in a stubbed toe).

#2 - Single file lines. In France it is referred to as a *"fil Indien"* gracefully acknowledging their American neighbors across the sea who insist on what some might consider uncomfortable, time consuming and space consuming method. (See American ideology #1)

#3 - The bigger, the better. In America big spaces indicate importance. From the "Master" bed room to the BIGger office, in America importance is illustrated by the space allocated. Imagine a world where important people do not drive around in bigger cars and families raise their children and host Bible studies in their 200 sq ft studio apartments.

#4 - The early bird gets the worm. In France the greatest honor you could give someone is the gift of time. The most highly revered restaurant wait staff are those who are so discrete you never know they are there. They watch discretely until all menus are closed to come take your order, allowing you all the time you need to decide. They respect you by never asking you to leave, which means they will never offer the bill until you've asked for it. If you need to finish your meal in less than two hours, please inform the person seating you that you need to place an order right away in order to make an engagement.

#5 - Etiquette is outdated. In France Etiquette and social classes are very much alive and well. Walking into a room, a shop, approaching a cashier or ticket counter without saying "Bonjour" first is like barging into someone's house without knocking.

Currency Exchange

Don't get duped

You may want cash for souvenirs and coffees along the way. ATM cards are the most effective and penalty free method of money transfer. If you don't have one, buy a prepaid Visa that works like cash. Archaic methods such as foreign cash, money orders, or travelers checks are difficult to exchange and will be penalized with HEAVY taxes.

Before you leave, talk to your bank about your upcoming travel. Be sure to list the countries you will be visiting also ask them to temporarily remove any restrictions on your card. Learn the PIN number for ATM card, you'll need it every time.

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Système "D"

Choosing to be a no-stress person

What do you do when you're out on the town and unforeseen circumstances ruin your plans? Insist that your plan was the best plan and it must work? Cancel and go back home?

Système "D" says you keep plowing on and new plans are thought up on a moments notice. If the cinema is sold out then go to a restaurant instead.

It sounds simple. But humility never is. Don't fight it, and don't let your pride ruin your attitude for the rest of the day. Choose to have a positive attitude and choose to be God's vessel no matter what might come your way.

How to avoid engagement

...During your first week in Paris

Don't smile at strangers.

Don't touch someone from the opposite gender.

Don't make prolonged eye-contact, this is reserved for gazing deeply into the eyes of your lover.

Do not, under any circumstances, give out your phone number to the opposite gender. (Give out a teammate's number for follow-up contact, or give your 'junk' e-mail that will not disturb you if you discover you're being stalked.)

Don't accept invitations to the *"discothèque."*

Don't accept one-on-one invitations, take a friend along just to be sure.

Simply enjoying a good movie with a new friend could be their idea of dating!!! In fact if only two of you show up then it most definitely is. Make your intentions clear. Walk away. Call a friend.

In France they never have a conversation to define the relationship, actions speak for themselves. If you gaze deeply into their eyes and say, "I'm not interested in dating," and then accept to see them again one-on-one; they will assume you are playing hard to get and count both outings as a successful date.

Keep Christ the center and purpose of your interactions at all times. Pray for wisdom.

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Everyday Etiquette

Leaving a good impression

Never call before 9h or after 22h.

Tip your server 2€ per couple at the table.

Tip taxis 10%.

Tip beauticians, delivery men, gas attendants, and coat room attendants 2€

Never be on time for dinner parties, always be ten to twenty minutes late.

Always be on time for luncheon parties, weddings and funerals.

Never offer chrysanthemums except at funerals; they are reserved for mourning.

Always greet shop attendants and cashiers with, *"Bonjour."*

If a shop attendant asks to help you, you can decline their assistance by saying, *"Je jette un coup d'oeil."* When you leave a boutique always say, *"Merci, Au revoir."*

Faux Pas to avoid

Culturally sensitive issues

Never ask a French person's age, or income. You can ask what kind of job he has and what region his family comes from.

Never discuss diets or weight. Definitely talk about cuisine, cooking, regional or family recipes and all things related to gastronomy. Everyone is a foodie, or will become one in Paris.

It is permitted to discuss political views if you know yours are compatible, but French people love debate, so be ready for the conversation to get heated.

Never give the prices of things you have bought, or ask how much they've paid. This goes for a sweater or a house.

Never ask to see someone's house, and never stop by unexpectedly.

Always kiss *"bissous"* with confidence. The general greeting in France is a kiss on each cheek. You do this the first time you see someone each day, the last time you say goodbye, and to say thank you. Different regions in France might kiss more than once each cheek. When in Paris and in doubt: touch right cheeks then left.

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Every Meal is a Cultural Experience

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages." Luke 10:5-7

You are about to embrace another culture. Consider every meal a classroom for learning.

Tell yourself you like vegetables, even ones whose names you can't pronounce!

Decide to be daring and try everything in this gastronomical capital of the world.

Dinner Etiquette

The graceful dance of eating

Les quinze minutes de politesse - Arrive fashionably late for dinner invitations.

Take off your shoes when entering a home. If your host has their shoes on, still offer to take off your shoes and insist that you enjoy stocking feet.

The first glass offered is the glass of friendship. It will determine whether you stay friends after the meal. Say yes, you don't have to love it, or even finish it. Just say, *"Oui, s'il vous plait."* (Yes, please).

The seat closest to the kitchen is the hosts'. Sit up straight at the table.

Always keep your hands on the table and never on your lap.

Once someone begins serving the meal you should open your napkin on your lap.

Do not start eating until everyone has received their course. Take your cues from the host each course.

Once everyone has food the host will wish their guests *"Bon Appetit"* and the guests will respond by wishing their host and the other guests Bon Appetit. Wait until the host begins eating to take your first bite.

Don't turn your plate once it's set in front of you.

Use your fork and knife. Keep your hands in sight. Cut one small bite at a time. Never fill your fork while you still have food in your mouth. Pose your fork on the table between bites.

Never serve yourself a beverage, always serve your neighbor.

Always accept wine offered; you don't have to drink it. Do not finish your glass. If you empty your glass it will be refilled for you by your host or your neighbor. They don't ask; an empty glass is a request for more.

Finish everything on your plate. Speak up if you don't want seconds or you will find a generous heap before you.

It is considered embarrassing to use the bathroom in someone's home; avoid asking if you can hold it.

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The Insisting Game

You don't have to like it - just play it

Rule #1 : If a French person insists on anything, respond by resisting with greater insistence.

Rule #2 : The more they insist, the more you insist.

Here are some real life examples.

The last piece of cake

French: Do you want this last piece of cake?

You: No.

French: Are you sure?

You: Yes.

French: Take it please, I insist.

You: No thank you.

French: Oh yum, I was hoping no one wanted it so I could have it.

Declining an inconvenient invitation

You: I can change my plans.

French: No, no, no.

You: No, I insist, I would be glad to cancel my plans for you.

French: No, please, come next week instead.

You: Are you sure?

French: Yes it would be my pleasure, I will even have time to bake a cake before you come.

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Walk like a Parisian

Tenez votre droite : Stand on the right and walk on the left when using escalators and moving walkways.

Un sac à la main c'est moins encombrant pour tous : A backpack could knock someone out in a crowded metro, they make sitting in public transportation impossible, if you try to stand wearing it you will be asked to take it off, and they are easy targets for thieves. Consider using shoulder sacs during this trip.

Les poches des autres : Empty your back pockets or someone else will. Sacs and purses must zipper securely.

Leave nothing at the hotel that you don't want stolen. In other words, bring to Paris only what you plan on carrying around with you all day.

Pickpockets target foreigners. Avoid clothing with American or Canadian symbols. Be discerning.

Don't stare back! If someone of the opposite sex is starting at you they are probably flirting.

Pack like a Parisian

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road." Luke 10:2-4

One pair of shoes to walk, walk, walk.

Layerable water resistant clothing. One pair of pants and sweater that can be spot treated if necessary.

Ample under shirts, socks, underwear for each day. Presentable socks. Don't embarrass your host when you take your shoes off upon entering a home.

A credit card or ATM card for making all souvenir purchases, or just getting coffee.

A shoulder bag that zippers securely to deter thieves. A travel umbrella and a travel pack of Kleenexes (handy while using public toilets that you won't be sitting on, and cleaning doggy-do off your shoes.)

Bible, Journal, Note pad, pen.

Wear culturally sensitive attire, you should not wear short skirts, ties, ball caps, or shorts for men or women. If you're serious about becoming Parisian - wear black

Basic rule of thumb, less than 10 days : pack ONLY a carry-on. More than 10 days : pack everything into your carry-on that you cannot afford to lose or be without for a few days (in case luggage is lost or late).

Expect to carry your luggage up and down many stairs and across cobblestones; if you can't carry it, don't bring it.

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Learn a little French

French people are flattered when people butcher their language.

Locals will be more impressed by your attempts to speak their language than by your insistence that they understand yours. Learn these few key phrases and you may find doors opening for you: Sign up for a class. Download a tutorial. Get all the French apps. that exist and have fun doing it.

Greeting properly

Use *"Vous"* until they tell you otherwise.

Say *"Bonjour"* to your neighbors and cashiers.

Always say M. Mme. Mlle. without the sir-names.

Hello (day): *"Bonjour Madame"* (to a woman), *"Bonjour Monsieur"* (speaking to a man).

Hello (night): *"Bonsoir Madame," "Bonsoir Monsieur"*

Please: *"S'il vous plaît."*

Thank you: *"Merci."* Yes: "*Oui."* No: "*Non."*

You're welcome: "*Je vous en prie"* It is less flattering to say "De rien."

Excuse me: *"Excusez-moi, pardon"*

Goodbye: *"Au revoir"*

Taking leave (day) Have a nice day: *"Bonne journée."* (night) Good evening: *"Bonne soirée."*

See you ...tomorrow *"À demain"*, ...soon *"À bientôt"* It is less chic to say "À la prochaine."

My name is___ "*Je m'appelle___*"

Nice to meet you - *"Enchanté"*

Who is calling?: *"C'est de la part de qui ?"*

Hold on please: *"Ne quittez pas."*

May I leave a message?:*"Puis-je laisser un message?"*

Turn on the magic.

French people love to be your knight in shinning armor, but not if you're presumptuous or prideful, so turn on your puppy-dog-eyes and repeat after me:

Sorry to bother you, but I have a problem... *"Excuse-moi de vous déranger mais j'ai une problème..."*

Where is the restroom?: *"Où sont les toilettes ?"* It is less attractive to say "le WC."

Please speak more slowly: *"Parlez plus lentement, s'il vous plaît."*

I don't understand: *"Je ne comprends pas."*

I don't know: *"Je ne sais pas."*

Do you speak English?: *"Parlez-vous anglais ?"*

I would like: *"Je voudrais…"*

How much is it?: *"C'est combien ?"*

Can I pay by credit card?: *"Puis-je payer avec la carte de bleu ?"*

What time is it?: "*Quelle heure est-il ?"*

Dine: (midday) *"Déjeune"* or (evening) *"Dîne."* Don't say "mange" for a meal.

I am looking for... *"Je cherche..."*

How long does it take to get there?: *"Ça prend combien de temps pour y aller ?"*

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Life as a Light Bearer

What is our role in society?

During your stay feel free to explore your identity. What does it mean to a French person when you introduce yourself as a Christian? Does France need missionaries? What is a Christian's role in society? What is the missionaries' role in society?

Dialog with other harvest workers to discover there personal calling and different views of our identity here.

Dialog with Christian nationals about their role in reaching their friends and their views of missionary endeavors.

Engage Christian nationals in your outreach. Encourage their initiative to suggest methods to be a light. Illustrate sharing your faith in attractive easy to learn methods that disciples can imitate easily and without fear.

Don't Say We Didn't Warn You

The truth behind "You'll never be the same."

It sounds exciting and adventurous, when they say that after a cross-cultural trip, "You'll never be the same!" But what are they really saying?

If you don't like the same food when you return, will you be disappointed? If you don't care for the same chit-chat, will your friends be bored? If you don't fight for the same causes, will your family understand?

If you did a good job of becoming Parisian then it will be a challenge to re-transform into your home culture as well.

Be intentional, choose only the best of both worlds. Let yourself be different, but don't break the rules. *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men." Romans 14:17-18*

How to you act and what do you "admit" when you get back home? *"So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves." Romans 14:22*

Try to avoid the urge to convert your friends to become Parisian. Let a conversation go by now and then without mentioning France. Listen to your friends with a new inquiring ear, take an interest in learning about them and their dreams.

Read a book on re-entry or your home culture. Study it, as you studied France.