NEXT QUESTION? / A HOLIDAY GUIDE

Bonjour!
My Little Guide to France



ALEX J. HOUSSE

Bonjour!

My Little Guide to France

Alex J. Housse

What if I say it wrong?

Jack had one question about France.

“What if I say it wrong?”

“Then you can say it again,” said Grandma.

“What if they say something back?”

“That’s generally what happens,” said Ruby.

“Can I start with something where they say the same thing back?”

“Bonjour,” said Ivy.

“Bonjour,” said Jack.

Shoes heard the front door open and went to see whether France had brought anything to eat.

Why does everyone keep saying bonjour?

In France, a quick *bonjour* is a friendly way to begin when you walk into a small shop, greet a neighbour or ask someone for help.

Long ago, manners at the French royal court even decided who got a seat. Some duchesses had the right to sit on a stool in front of the queen.

That was a court rule. Today’s little courtesy is simpler. Say *bonjour* to the neighbour before you ask if you can stroke their dog.

The baguette gets a hello

At the house in Pau, a neighbour arrived with a baguette.

“Bonjour, monsieur,” Ivy said.

“Bonjour !” said the neighbour.

Shoes stretched his nose towards the bread.

“What’s really going on?” asked Jack. “Is he saying hello?”

“To the baguette,” said Ruby.

TRY IT ON HOLIDAY

Bonjour !

Hello! / Good morning!

bon-ZHOOR



LITTLE FRENCH FACT

Bonjour joins *bon* (good) and *jour* (day).

The plumpest croissant

Jack had his eye on the biggest croissant.

“Bonjour,” he said to the baker. “Un croissant, s’il vous plaît.”

The baker reached for the one beside it.

“Celui-là, s’il vous plaît !” said Jack, pointing.

“Good choice,” said Ivy. “We can share it. I’ll carry it.”

“I bet you will,” said Jack.

“Merci, au revoir !” he called to the baker.

TRY IT ON HOLIDAY

Un croissant, s’il vous plaît.

One croissant, please.

uhn krwah-SAHN, seel voo PLAY

Celui-là = that one (suh-lwee LAH)



LITTLE FRENCH FACT

The final **t** in *croissant* is silent. You can hear the **t** in *sept* (seven).

Where’s the loo?

After a run around Parc Beaumont, Jack went very still.
“Grandma…”
They ran into the café by the park. Grandma took one look at him. “Ask the person at the counter.”
“Excusez-moi, où sont les toilettes, s’il vous plaît ?” said Jack.
The woman pointed down the hall.
Jack ran. Shoes ran too. At the door, Jack turned round.
“You had the whole park,” he told Shoes.

TRY IT ON HOLIDAY

Où sont les toilettes, s’il vous plaît ?

Where are the toilets, please?

oo sohn lay twa-LET, seel voo PLAY



LITTLE FRENCH FACT

Look for **WC** on signs. You can say *les toilettes* even if there's only one loo.

The bill, please

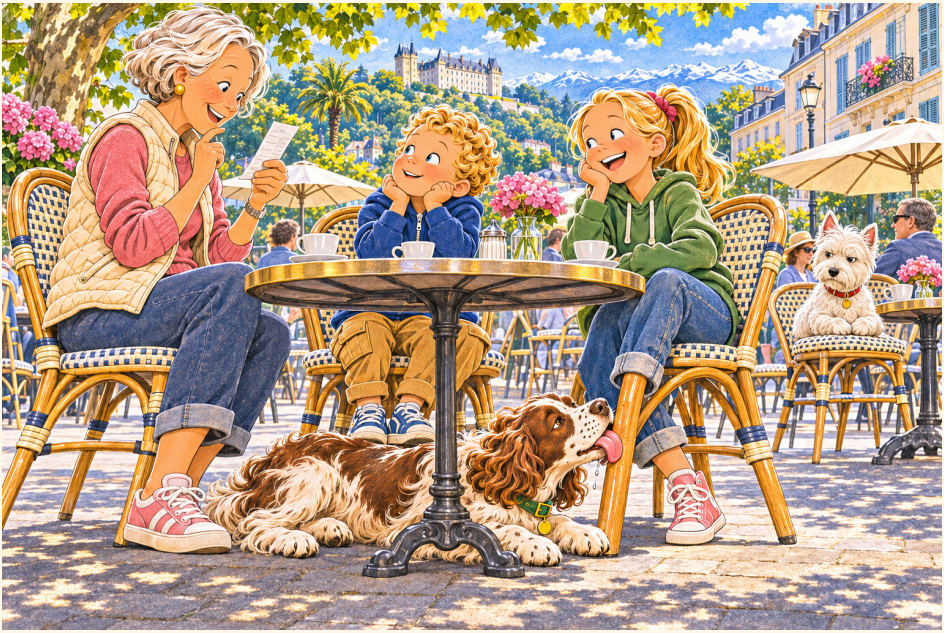
At a café on the Boulevard des Pyrénées, Grandma said “Bonsoir !” when they arrived. Jack could see mountains beyond the tables.
Later, Grandma asked the waiter for the bill.
“L’addition, s’il vous plaît.”
“Are we doing maths?” asked Jack.
“We are if you want to know how much your second hot chocolate cost.”
Under the table, Shoes licked a chair leg. The little white dog at the next table moved closer to its owner.

TRY IT ON HOLIDAY

L’addition, s’il vous plaît.

The bill, please.

la-dee-SYON, seel voo PLAY



LITTLE FRENCH FACT

Bonsoir (bon-SWAHR) means good evening. Try it when you greet someone in the evening.

A book about the signs

“What’s an *entrée*?” asked Jack.

“A starter,” said Ruby.

“I thought it was the way in.”

“We came in on the funicular,” said Ruby. “Imagine that turning up on a plate.”

Later, Jack spotted a sign that said **LIBRAIRIE**.

“Can I borrow a book?”

“You can buy one,” said Ruby. “It’s a bookshop.”

Jack looked through the window. “Do you think they sell a book about what all the other signs mean?”

In France, an *entrée* on a menu is a starter. On a US menu, an entrée is usually the main course.
A library is *une bibliothèque*.

Your turn to say it

Hello! / Good morning!

Bonjour !

bon-ZHOOR

One croissant, please.

Un croissant, s’il vous plaît.

uhn krwah-SAHN, seel voo PLAY

Where are the toilets, please?

Où sont les toilettes, s’il vous plaît ?

oo sohn lay twa-LET, seel voo PLAY

The bill, please.

L’addition, s’il vous plaît.

la-dee-SYON, seel voo PLAY

Thank you, goodbye!

Merci, au revoir !

mair-SEE, oh ruh-VWAR

Good evening!

Bonsoir !

bon-SWAHR

Count your bonjours. Tick a box each time someone says it back.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Shoes says hello to the bag first.

FOR GROWN-UPS

Find these places in Pau

Start with the funicular, then look for the bakers at Les Halles. Leave time for a run around Parc Beaumont and a mountain view from the Boulevard des Pyrénées.

Find walks and places to visit on Historic Pau.

historicpau.fr

Scan to open Historic Pau