

Myths and Rants About The French

I cannot think of the nationality more so than the French that draws either a positive or negative reaction. Either people rave or rant about one of the fabled myths regarding French culture. The leading city in France is multicultural Paris, a true melting pot with North African, West African and Jewish influences. The snail or better yet escargot shaped Paris is divided into the Right Bank and Left Bank and into 20 arrondissements better known as districts. Everyone has heard the rant and myth that the French are rude. Just like New Yorkers the French are friendly and helpful. I can attest from personal experience since I visit Paris often and speak very little truthfully not a word of French. As your mother always stated, you get what you give so if you approach the French with standard bonjour and make an attempt to speak French regardless of how bad you speak, you will always receive a gracious welcome. Trust me, you will earn brownie points for attempting to speak the language. Another myth is that American lifestyle is not much different than the culture in France. It is, when you arrive in Paris, you definitely need to click your heels a couple of times because you are not in Kansas. Simply get used to bidets, W/Cs (water closets) and stairs, lots of them. The French are known to linger their meals and sit in a cafe for hours sipping away, enjoying conversation for hours. If you are from a warm climate, air conditioning is not considered a necessity. Even when you do find an air conditioner do not expect it work like the ones in you will in Tempe, Arizona. The elevators if the building has one are usually tiny and to some even coffin like. Do not forget that French cities are thousands of years old and in the US the cities at best are hundreds of years old. Yes, the French do wear jeans. But some how matched with a scarf and the fashion flair of the overall population, it does not even hint at grunge. Since Paris is the fashion capital of the world, Parisians are usually put together and jeans is a staple in most wardrobes as France. I guess with the decline of the dollar and the escalating euro, Paris is reported to be one of the most expensive cities in the world. It is a fact that the museum admissions are reasonable, the metro fare the equivalent if not cheaper than New York City and with prix fixe menus, good value can be found in France. Just like any major tourist city, if you choose to spend there are always outlets for you to add up your expenses especially in the cafes and bars. Another common myth is that the Paris metro system is dirty and not safe. The Paris metro system arguably functions like a Swiss watch and considered by most Parisians safe during all hours of the day. Of course, there is the occasional pick pocket but as a savvy visitor, common sense is the fundamental ingredient when visiting any metropolitan city.

About the Author

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