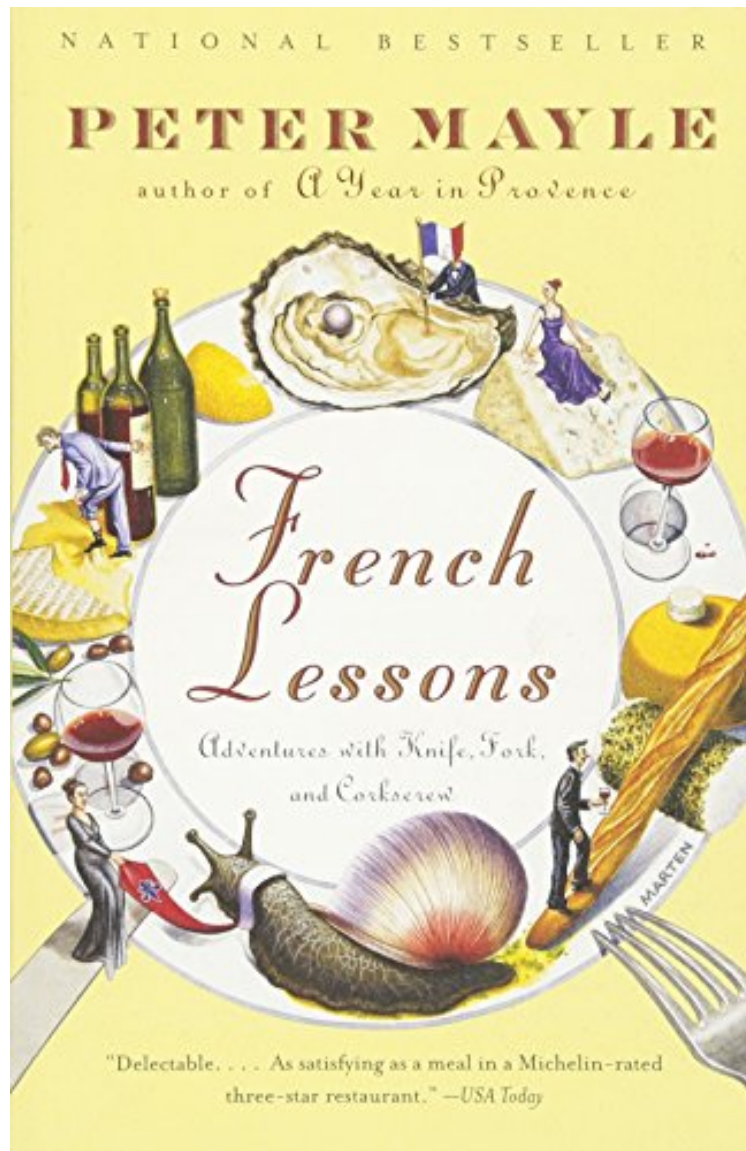


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French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork, and Corkscrew

Peter Mayle

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#244667 in Books Peter Mayle 2002-04-09 2002-04-09Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.99 x .65 x 5.171, .56 #File Name: 0375705619240 pagesFrench Lessons Adventures with Knife Fork and Corkscrew | File size: 70.Mb

Peter Mayle : French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork, and Corkscrew before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork, and Corkscrew:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "The Thigh-Tasters of Vittel"By Bobby MatherneOpen this book

and you're in for a fourteen course meal, which if you read it through without stopping, might last as long as a typical Provencal lunch, about 3 hours, and you will consume about five glasses of different wines along the way as you conjure up your "Inner Frenchman" and give thanks "For What We Are About to Receive". You'll discover why Frenchmen were called Frogs by the British during the two World Wars -- it was because of their love of eating frogs, something the British turned up their noses on while the French inhaled deeply over the prospect of, as in the chapter, "The Thigh-Tasters of Vittel". Rather than sporting blue noses, the French honor their celebrated chickens in "Aristocrats with Blue Feet". Instead of overdressing for every meal like the Brits, there is a restaurant in the south of France known for "Undressing for Lunch". With cities around the world featuring a marathon run through their streets, Frenchmen converge for "A Connoisseur's Marathon" in various stages of dress and undress annually. Or you might enjoy some bobbing, weaving, and imbibing "Among the Flying Corks in Burgundy". And after stopping for boudin noir, or trying to find some, one might opt for "A Civilized Purge" at a health spa known more for its sumptuous repasts than its Spartan fasts. . . . As Mayle winds down his marathon of fourteen courses through the festivals of France, he divulges as a parting shot, the background to the famous Michelin travel directory in "The Guided Stomach". I had my first set of Michelin Radial tires on an MG TD I bought in 1972, and I wondered back then, "How did a company known for its fancy automobile tires end up making the Michelin Guide?" Now, some 38 years later, I find the answer in a book about eating and drinking -- it is a story about how the rubber hits the road.[page 208] It was 1900, the year of the first Michelin guide to France . . . It is a pocket-sized volume, this first edition, of just under four hundred tightly set, busy-looking pages, and it was given away to owners of voitures, voiturettes, and even velocipedes by the brothers Michelin. They had created the removable pneumatic tire in 1891, and the guide was their way of encouraging motorists to wear out as much rubber as possible by extending their travels throughout France. The Guided Stomach portion of the Michelin Guide was to come later, as there were no food establishments listed in the first editions of the Guide. Getting there alive back then seemed more important than getting there well fed.[page 210] Readers of that first guide were invited to write to Michelin with their comments, and they could hardly fail to have been impressed by the fund of technical and geographical information contained in the little book. But how many of them, I wonder, wrote in to ask that burning question so close and dear to any French heart at any time, but even more so after a hard day on the road. What's for dinner? Because although hotels were listed, restaurants weren't. The guide was, after all, intended to be a survival manual for motorists driving primitive machinery that frequently broke down. A man whose valves and grommets were giving him trouble could hardly be expected to give much thought or attention to a menu. Heretical though it may sound, in those early years, mechanics were more important than chefs. As we wend our way to the end of this guided tour of Mayle's psyche, we follow him and his wife to one of the establishments still alive and cooking since that original 1900 guide. It is a hotel and restaurant in Avignon, Hotel d'Europe.[page 222, 223] Looking through the pages of the 2000 edition, you will find 116 establishments that were recommended in the original guide a hundred years ago. One of these monuments happens to be the Hotel d'Europe in Avignon, not far from us, and we thought it would be interesting to see how it was holding up under the weight of all those years. In fact, the hotel was doing brisk business long before the Michelin brothers discovered it. Built in the sixteenth century, it was acquired by a widow, Madame Pierron, who opened her doors to travelers in 1799. Bigwigs of every description came to stay: cardinals and archbishops, princes and statesmen, even Napoleon Bonaparte. History doesn't relate whether Josephine came, too, but it seems he had fond memories of the place. When he was fighting in Russia, surrounded by officers complaining about the discomforts of war, he showed little sympathy. "Sacrebleu!" he is reported to have said. "We're not at Madame Pierron's hotel." In this famous hotel, Mayle toasted all of us, including you, dear Reader, as collectively we constitute Monsieur Tout le Monde.[page 224] It had been a lovely evening, and it marked the end of a certain stage in the preparation of this book -- the end of that leisurely, enjoyable, and often well-fed process that I like to call research. A toast seemed appropriate. We drank to chefs, particularly French chefs. And then we raised our glasses again to that unsung hero of the table, custodian of the nation's stomach, and seeker after gastronomic immortality, wherever he can find it: Monsieur Tout le Monde. Let's hope he's with us for another hundred years. The "Last Course" is like the famous toast, "The King is dead. Long live the King." The next step is for Monsieur Tout le Monde, Mr. Everyman, the intrepid traveler in each of us, to walk in Mayle's footsteps through the muddy field, don a Day-Glo wig for the marathon, dodge the flying corks of Burgundy, and sleep in the Hotel d'Europe where Robert Brown and Elizabeth Barrett spent their elopement. Today the Book, tomorrow the World! The remainder of my review can be found in DIGESTWORLD ISSUE#103 by Bobby Matherne. 39 of 41 people found the following review helpful. e (excellent) mayle! By Bruce Loveitt This is another wonderful book by Mr. Mayle. It is interesting, informative and very funny. I think some critics give Mr. Mayle the short end of the stick, as it is sometimes felt that his books are just "fluff". What's wrong with being entertaining, though? And if anyone bothers to take a careful look, Mr. Mayle is a very, very good writer. His sentences are polished gems, and I would put him right up there with the best novelists in terms of sheer writing ability. If you like France and you like food, you will like this book. Mr. Mayle travels around going to various festivals that celebrate the eating of snails, or frogs legs, or cheese, etc. There are a couple of absolutely hilarious chapters, one dealing with the "beautiful people" being undressed for lunch in a seaside restaurant in St. Tropez, and the other dealing with going to a

health spa, French style. (You have the choice between eating off of the low calorie menu or the gourmet menu. Caloric content is not given on the gourmet menu. After all, this is France!) Scoop this book up as quickly as you can and enjoy every bite. Bon Appetit! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. In my opinion By Suzanne Labontel If you are planning a trip to France this book will give you an insight into that odd, contrary, and fascinating culture of the French. I have read all of Mayle's books and consider them a guide not only for tourism but as insight into the French lifestyle. A must read, "A Year in Provence".

A delightful, delicious, and best-selling account of the gustatory pleasures to be found throughout France, from the beloved author of *A Year in Provence*. The French celebrate food and drink more than any other people, and Peter Mayle shows us just how contagious their enthusiasm can be. We visit the Foire aux Escargots. We attend a truly French marathon, where the beverage of choice is Chateau Lafite-Rothschild rather than Gatorade. We search out the most pungent cheese in France, and eavesdrop on a heated debate on the perfect way to prepare an omelet. We even attend a Catholic mass in the village of Richerenches, a sacred event at which thanks are given for the aromatic, mysterious, and breathtakingly expensive black truffle. With Mayle as our charming guide, we come away satisfied (if a little hungry), and with a sudden desire to book a flight to France at once.

.com Peter Mayle, author of the bestselling *A Year in Provence* has done it again--but differently. Traveling this time beyond his adopted Provence throughout France, the food and travel writer has produced *French Lessons*, a celebration of many of that country's gastronomic joys. Whether pursuing La Foire de Fromages, the annual cheese fair at Livarot; a Burgundian marathon offering runners Mdoc refreshment; or a village truffle mass that concludes with a heady dgustation of the newly blessed tuber, Mayle takes his readers in hand and shows all. Wide-eyed yet knowing, ever affable but with a touch of mischief, he's an ideal companion, the best possible narrator of his lively food adventures. Mayle's gastronomic baptism occurs when, as a 19-year-old, he dines for the first time in France. "At the first mouthful of French bread and French butter," he writes, "my taste buds, dormant until then, went into spasm." The paroxysm leads to serious food-and-wine perambulations--and, finally, to chapters including "The Thigh-Taster of Vitel" (a frog-eating fete); "Slow Food" (snail love in Martigny les Bains) and "The Guided Stomach" (an investigation of the Michelin Guide restaurant inspection), among others. Readers are also present for a debate on the secret of the perfect omelet; a search for the best possible chicken in Bourg-en-Bresse; and a visit to a St. Tropez restaurant notable for its scantily clad habitus. Those familiar with Mayle's work, and those yet to discover it, are in for a treat. --Arthur Boehm From Publishers Weekly In this latest book, part travelogue, part guide to cuisine, Mayle leaves his beloved Provence behind and sets out to experience gastronomic pleasures available at food festivals and celebrations throughout France. The always curious and friendly Mayle befriends colorful locals at such events as a frog's-leg festival in Vitel, where "thigh tasting" is regarded as a reverent act. The best advice when eating escargots, he finds, is that one should eat them "through the nose, not through the eyes." By far the most fascinating and bizarre event is a Catholic mass in the village of Richerenches whose main purpose is giving thanks for the adored, rare and costly black truffle. Mayle's wry, colorful and playful prose effectively conveys just how seriously the French take their food. Simon Jones, who also gave a wonderful reading of Mayle's *A Dog's Life*, is a highly entertaining performer with a voice and energy reminiscent of John Cleese. Paired with Mayle's witty and unpretentious style, his reading makes listening to this book delicious and satisfying. Simultaneous release with the Knopf hardcover. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Former British ad man Mayle has made a career out of living in the South of France and writing marvelously compelling, best-selling books about it. And may he never quit--either living in the South of France or writing about it. In his latest book, his eighth, which is organized into 13 chapter-essays, he relives some of his most precious moments reveling in the cuisine of his adopted homeland. Insisting in his introduction that he does nothing more in this book "than scratch the surface of French gastronomy," he nevertheless proceeds to tell savory, sensual, positively transporting stories about his encounters with Gallic gustatory delights and about his growing appreciation of the central place food occupies in French life. He notes that back in England he was raised with "undisturbed" taste buds, but now they pop, perk, sit up, and take notice. Mayle also pays homage to the occupation of professional waiter as it is practiced in France, and his descriptions of the meals they serve allow us to practically taste the frog legs and truffles right along with him. Another highlight is his profile of the Michelin Guide, which is both fascinating and edifying. His book will inspire readers to travel, eat fine food, and, last but not least, applaud evocative writing for its own sake. Fans of Mayle's will relish every page. Brad Hooper Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved