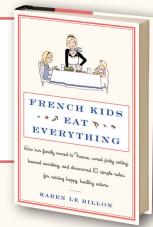
HOST AN "Eat Like a French Kid" DAY IN YOUR CLASSROOM



FOOD is an important part of French culture, and mealtime is one of the most fun parts of the day for French children. Eating a sit-down meal together

with their family is an important daily routine for French kids. French students also have a sit-down meal at lunchtime in their school "restaurant." Lunch is the biggest and most important meal of the day, and the French like eating healthy, freshly prepared food, so French children don't bring a packed lunch from home. The school lunch usually has the traditional four courses that make up a French meal: a vegetable starter (favorites include beet salad, radishes, or greens), a main dish (roasted meat, or fish) with a vegetable side dish, cheese (or another dairy product, like yogurt), and dessert (usually fresh fruit, but there is a sweet treat once a week). There is only one choice on the menu so everyone eats the same thing. Vending machines and fast food are banned in all French schools, and kids are given "taste training" lessons in the classroom to introduce them to vegetables and new foods. That way, they learn to love lots of foods (including vegetables!) from a young age.

We hope this event will help your students enjoy eating more like French kids do.



- 1. Try everything on your plate! The French tell their children: "You don't have to eat it, but you do have to taste it." Learning to like new foods is like learning to read—you have to practice!

 Question for discussion: Is there a food that you didn't like at one time that you have now learned to like?
- 2. "One snack per day," called the *goûter*, is the traditional rule for French children. Their parents tell them: "It's OK to feel a little hungry; that way you'll enjoy your next meal."

 Question for discussion: Why would the French limit snacks? What do you think of this idea?
- 3. The French encourage children to talk about their food, to develop vocabulary and an appreciation for food. This also helps children to learn to familiarize themselves with new foods. Asking children questions about taste, texture, smell, color, and appearance of the food they're eating helps them enjoy food more. It also slows down their eating, helping to avoid wolfing down their food! Questions for discussion might range from: asking for examples of foods which represent the four main taste categories (sweet, salty, sour, bitter) for younger children; to asking older children about how taste buds work.

Table Manners & Eating Habits

CONTINUED

4. This is a traditional French food rule: "Eat three meals per day, sitting down at a table—with no distractions." This means: no TV, no computer games, no phones.

Question for discussion: Is this how you eat? If not, what would have to change for this to happen?

5. To ask a child if they are done eating, a French parent will say: "As-tu encore faim?" or "Tu n'as plus faim?" Literally, this translates as "Are you still hungry?" Children are encouraged to stop eating when they no longer feel hungry and not to keep eating until they feel full.

Question for discussion: Is there a difference between the feeling of being full, and the feeling of no longer being hungry?

NEXT, HERE'S A Short French Lesson TO SHARE WITH STUDENTS

Delicious: Délicieux
Please: S'il vous plait
Thank you: Merci
Fork: fourchette
Spoon: la cuillère

Plate: *l'assiette*Glass: *le verre*Napkin: *la serviette*(yes, same French word is

Knife: le couteau

Bread: le pain
(specifically, la baguette, served at every French meal)

Water: l'eau

Tablecloth: *la nappe*

Bon Appetit!

used for towel!)



AND, OF COURSE, HERE ARE Three Simple Recipes

Beet Popsicles

Beets are not something that North American kids often eat. French kids, on the other hand, love them. So, how to get your students to eat beets? Why not start by introducing them to the taste of beets in a fun way: **Beet Popsicles**.

Thoroughly wash 4 to 6 raw beets. Cut off the tops and tails and discard. Then place the beets in a relatively deep pot. Don't bother peeling (the peels slide off with ease once boiled).

Cover the beets with water, put on a lid, and boil. (The lid on the deep pot prevents red beet splat-

ters all over your stove-top). After 20 to 30 minutes, test them to see if they're done by sliding a knife in: they should be the texture of a slightly undercooked potato.

Drain the beets and save the cooking water which is now beet juice. Set beets aside for beet salad. Mix the beet juice (which will be deep red) with equal parts apple juice. Freeze in your favorite home popsicle maker.

The most fun part of all: these beet popsicles will turn your kid's tongues and lips bright pink (which they love).

Classic French Beet Salad

Beet Salad is a staple in French homes and schools. Beets are excellent sources of iron.

4 to 6 boiled beets

fresh parsley (I prefer flat rather than curly)

2 tbsp olive oil

1 thsp wine vinegar (white vinegar works too, but you might want to use a little less)

1 tsp honey or maple syrup

Take 4 to 6 boiled beets and remove skins (they'll simply peel off like a banana peel). Dice into bite-sized cubes. Fine-chop the parsley, and sprinkle on top.

In a separate, small bowl, mix together olive oil, vinegar, and honey (or maple syrup). Drizzle on top. Serves well cold or at room temperature.

Keeps well in the fridge for a couple of days.

Zesty Orange Salad

Preparation: 5 minutes

Servings: 4 adult servings (or 8 child-size servings)

This dessert salad is a great way to introduce a new flavor to children. The sweetness of the orange offsets the bitterness of the orange zest. Children will be reassured by the familiar (the pieces of orange) and so hopefully will be more willing to try something new: the thin, almost playful curlicues of sweetened orange rind.

Have children watch you prepare this dish, and let them sample if they are curious. When serving, remember that eating can sometimes be about encountering new tastes rather than consuming large quantities.

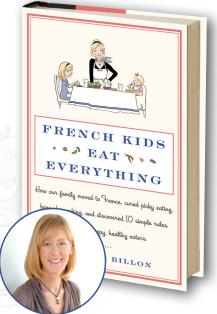
- 4 seedless oranges
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1. To make the zest, wash 1 orange, dry it, and use a paring knife to carefully peel the outer layer, taking only the very outside of the rind and avoiding any of the white pith underneath. Slice the zest into very thin strips.
- 2. Make a syrup by mixing 1/2 cup water with the sugar in a small saucepan and cooking it over medium heat just until it bubbles. Add the zest, and cook for 10 minutes, or until the zest is tender and the syrup is golden but not brown or caramelized.
- **3.** Peel the remaining oranges, removing the zest and pith so that you have just the fruit itself left. Slice the oranges crosswise and place them in little salad bowls. Pour the zest and syrup on top. Serve immediately!

Tip: Because of its sweetness, the French would serve this as a dessert, even though it is called a "salad."

French kids enjoy everything from beets to broccoli, salad to spinach, mussels to muesli. And they've got pretty nice table manners at a young age, too.

Now, imagine what it would be like to relocate—with your two young daughters—both picky eaters—to your spouse's hometown in northern France. That's what happens to Karen Le Billon—and she shares the story of her family's food education and the food rules she learned from her French family, friends, and neighbors in French Kids Eat Everything: How Our Family Moved to France, Cured Picky Eating, Banned Snacking, and Discovered 10 Simple Rules for Raising Happy, Healthy Eaters.

Patricia Wells, author of *The Provençe Cookbook*, had this to say about *French Kids Eat Everything*: "Humorous as well as instructive, this culinary adventure will change the lives of parents and children alike." After reading about the Le Billon family's food journey, you'll find yourself asking, "Isn't it time to rethink the way we feed our children at home and at school?"



Visit Karen's blog for more recipes and advice! www.KarenLeBillon.com