

# Traveler's French

## CHEAT SHEET™

### EXCERPT

90% of the content is a glossary: simple A-Z listings like the first 4 pages here.

But there is a little supplemental material, such as the last 4 pages here.

• FREQUENT – GAMBAS

tray mahl frahn-say”

**frequent** = *fréquent* – “fray-kahnt”

**fresh** = *frais* – “fray”

**Friday** = *vendredi* – “vahn-druh-dee”

**fried** = *friture* – “free-tyoor”

**friend** = *ami* – “ah-mee”

**frites** = *French fries [US], chips (UK)* – “freet”

**F** **friture** = *fried* – “free-tyoor”

**froid** = *cold [temperature]* – “frwah”

**from** = *de* – “duh”

**fromage** = *cheese* – “fro-mahj”

**fromage de chèvre** = *goat cheese* – “fro-mahj duh shev-ruh”

**front desk** = *réception* – “ray-sepp-see-oan”

**front, before** = *avant* – “ah-vahn”

**front: in front of** = *devant* – “duh-vahn”

**fruit** = *fruit* – “froo-ee”

**fruits de mer** = *seafood* – “froo-ee duh mair”

**full** = *complet* – “koam-play”

**fumé** = *smoked, cured* – “foo-may”

**fumer** = *smoke [verb]* – “foo-may”

**funiculaire** = *funicular* – “foo-nee-koo-lair”

**funicular** = *funiculaire* – “foo-nee-koo-lair”

---

## G

---

**gagnez du temps** = *save time* – “gahn-yay doo tahmp”

**gambas** = *prawns, shrimps* – “gahn-bahs”

GARAGE – GATE •

- garage** = *garage* – “gah-rahj”  
**garage** = *garage* – “gah-rahj”  
**garage privé** = *private garage* – “gah-rahj pree-vay”  
**garbage can, dustbin** = *poubelle* – “poo-bell”  
**garden** = *jardin* – “jar-dahn”  
**gare** = *station* – “gar”  
**gare ferroviaire** = *railroad / train station* – “gar fair-ro-vee-yair”  
**gare routière** = *bus station* – “gar roo-tee-air”  
**gas, petrol** = *essence* – “ess-ahns”  
**gas: regular gas / petrol** = *ordinaire* – “or-dee-nair”  
**gas: unleaded gas / petrol** = *sans plomb* – “sahn ploan”  
**gas: super gas / super unleaded [Br]** = *super* – “soo-pair”  
**gas: diesel** = *gazole* – “gah-zoal”  
**gas station, petrol station** = *station-service* – “stah-see-oan sair-vees”  
**gas: Where is the nearest gas / petrol station?** = *Où est la station service la plus proche?* – “oo ay lah stah-see-oan sair-vees lah ploo proash?”  
**gate, door** = *porte* – “port”  
**gate: Which gate for...?** = *Quelle porte d'embarquement pour...?* – “kell port dahm-bar-kuh-mahn poor...?”  
**gate: Where is gate number...?** = *Où est la porte d'embarquement numéro...?* – “oo ay lah port dahm-bar-kuh-mahn noo-

• GATE – GO

mair-o...?”

**gate change** = *changement de porte d'embarquement*  
– “shanzh-mahn duh port dahm-bar-kuh-mahn”

**gâteau** = *cake* – “gah-toe”

**gauche** = *left [direction]* – “goash”

**gazole** = *diesel* – “gah-zoal”

**gendarmerie** = *police force, police station* – “jahn-dar-muh-ree”

G

**German** = *allemand* – “al-mahn”

**Germany** = *Allemagne* – “al-mahn-yuh”

**get** = *obtenir* – “ob-tenn-eer”

**get: How do I get to...?** = *Comment je vais à...?* – “ko-mo zhuh vay ah...?”

**get: Where can I get...?** = *Où puis-je obtenir...?* – “oo pwee-zhuh ob-tenn-eer...?”

**gigot d'agneau** = *leg of lamb* – “jee-go dahn-yo”

**girl, daughter** = *fille* – “fee”

**girlfriend** = *petite-amie* – “pu-teet ah-mee”

**glacé** = *ice, iced, ice cream* – “glah-say”

**glass [cup]** = *verre* – “vair”

**glasses [spectacles]** = *lunettes* – “loo-nett”

**gloves** = *gants* – “gahn”

**gluten** = *gluten* – “gloo-tenn”

**gluten free** = *sans gluten* – “sahn gloo-tenn”

**go** = *aller* – “ah-lay”

**go: I go** = *Je vais* – “zhuh vay”

**go: I am going to...** = *Je vais à...* – “zhuh vay ah”

**go: we go** = *nous allons* – “nooz ah-loan”

**go: we are going to** = *nous allons à* – “nooz ah-loan ah”

**go: It goes [OK; OK?]** = *Ça va* – “sah vah”

**go up, climb** = *monter* – “moan-tay”

**Go away!** = *Allez-vous-en!* – “ah-lay vooz ahn!”

**goat cheese** = *fromage de chèvre* – “fro-mahj duh shev-ruh”

**gold** = *or* – “or”

**gold: solid gold** = *or massif* – “or mah-seef”

**gondola lift, cable car [for steep slope]** = *téléphérique* – “tay-lay-fay-reek”

**good** = *bon, bien* – “boan, byahn”

**good evening** = *bonsoir* – “boan-swahr”

In the evening, *bonsoir* must always be the first word out of your mouth when talking with a French-speaker. During the day, say *bonjour* (“boan-jor,” hello) instead. Always add *monsieur* (“muh-syuh,” guy), *madame* (“mah-dahm,” woman), or *mademoiselle* (“mahd-mwah-zell,” girl).

**goodbye** = *au revoir* – “o ruh-vwahr”

*Au revoir* must always be the last words out of your mouth after talking with a French-speaker.

**gorge** = *throat* – “gorj”

**goutte** = *drop [medicine]* – “goot”

**grand** = *big* – “grahn”

**grandes lignes** = *main lines* – “grande leen-yuh”

• GRAPEFRUIT – GYM

**grapefruit** = *pamplemousse* – “pahm-pluh-moos”

**grapes** = *raisin* – “rah-zahn”

**gratuit** = *free of charge* – “graht-wee”

**gratuit illimité** = *free unlimited* – “graht-wee ee-lee-mee-tay”

**gratuity [tip]** = *pourboire* – “poor-bwahr”

**gray** = *gris* – “gree”

**Great Britain** = *Grande-Bretagne* – “grahnd breh-tahn-yuh”

**green** = *vert* – “vair”

**green beans** = *haricots verts* – “ah-ree-ko vair”

**green salad** = *salade verte* – “sah-lahd vairt”

**green tea** = *thé vert* – “tay vair”

**grève** = *strike [labor]* – “grev”

**grey** = *gris* – “gree”

**grillé** = *grilled, toasted* – “gree-yay”

**grilled, toasted** = *grillé* – “gree-yay”

**grippe** = *flu* – “griep”

**gris** = *gray, grey* – “gree”

**gros** = *big* – “gro”

**ground floor [Br], first floor [US]** = *rez-de-chaussée* – “ray duh sho-say”

**ground transportation** = *transports* – “trahns-por”

**group** = *groupe* – “groop”

**groupe** = *group* – “groop”

**guichet** = *ticket window* – “gee-shay”

**guichet automatique** = *ticket machine* – “gee-shay o-toe-mah-teek”

**guided tour** = *visite guidée* – “vee-zeet gee-day”

**gym** = *salle de sport* – “sahl duh spor”

# Getting by in French

**First word** out of your mouth must always be *bonjour* (“boan-jor,” hello). In the evening, instead say *bonsoir* (“boan-swahr,” good evening). Always add *monsieur* (“muh-syuh,” guy), *madame* (“mah-dahm,” woman), or *mademoiselle* (“mahd-mwah-zell,” girl).

**Last words** out of your mouth must always be *au revoir* (“o ruh-vwahr,” good-bye).

**Requests:** Anytime you ask anybody for anything – even just information – end your request with *s’il vous plaît* (“seel voo play,” please). Many listings here include “svp” as a reminder. After people respond, say *merci beaucoup* (“mair-see bo-koo,” thank you very much).

**Context** communicates half your message for you. If, for example, you’re at any ticket booth, the clerk has a pretty good idea of what you probably want. Just holding up two fingers communicates that you want two tickets.

**Talk with your hands:** Point at whatever you’re talking about: the train platform, the sweater, the menu item, the part of your body that hurts. Everyone understands pointing. Pantomime everything, with or without words. You’ll get by half the time by just pointing at something and shrugging your shoulders with your palms up and your eyebrows arched.

**Try French first.** If that fails, say “Sorry, my French is

terrible” (Désolé, je parle très mal français – “day-zo-lay zhuh parl tray mahl frahn-say,”), then “Do you speak a little English?” (Parlez vous un peu aingles? “par-lay voo uhn puh ahn-glay?”).

**Write it down:** Write numbers and prices (or ask the other person to), unless you’re sure. Some Europeans write 1 as 1 and 7 as 7.

The symbol for euros is €. Whereas Americans would write €1,234.56, most Europeans would write the same price either €1.234,56 or with a space: €1 234,56.

Also ask them to write down other key info for you, like the Metro line you must take, which stop to get off at, streets to take, etc. Show that note

to people later as a way of asking whether you’re going the right way.

**Key words only:** Instead of trying to say a complete correct sentence like “Is this the right way to the Louvre?” just point in the direction you think it is and ask “Louvre?” Instead of asking “Where does the train to Avignon leave from?” just look confused and ask “Avignon?”

**Most versatile word:** Point at anything and say *ça* (“sah,” that or this). It will mean whatever your gestures and the context suggest. As a question, *ça?* can mean things like “What is that?” or “Can I have that?” As a statement, *ça* can mean “I’ll take that one,” “That’s the one,” etc.



**OK:** Whatever the situation, when in doubt, point and say *ça va* (“sah vah,” OK). Use it thirty times a day. As with *ça*, it can mean whatever your gestures and the context suggest. As a question, *ça va?* can mean “Is what I’m doing OK?” “Is this enough money?” “Does this work?” “How are you?” or whatever else the situation requires. Holding up a credit card and saying *ça va?* means “Do you accept credit cards?” As a statement, it can mean “It’s OK,” “That’s fine,” “That’s plenty,” “I’m fine,” and so on.

**Negations:** To make something negative, add *pas* (“pah,” not) after the verb. Example: *je veux* (I want); *je veux pas* (I don’t want). Proper written French also puts the word *ne* before the key word: *je ne veux pas* (I don’t want). But it’s OK to leave off *ne* when speaking.

**Pronunciation:** You’ll never pronounce French words right without years of immersion or practice. Just imitate the way French-speakers tend to end words. Ham it up. Settle for close enough. If people get the drift of what you’re trying to say, mission accomplished.

**Little words before nouns:** As in English, nearly every French noun is preceded by some little word, usually *l’*, *la*, or *le* (the). Here they are:

a = *un, une*

the = *l’, la, le, les*

my = *mon, ma, mes*

your = *ton, ta, tes /*

*votre, vos*

our = *notre, nos*

of the = *de la, de l’, du,*

*des*

You’ll never get them right without lots of study, so don’t sweat it. If you use *le* (“luh”) all the time, people

will understand, even when it's not the correct word.

### **Written French:**

Many French words are spelled almost like English: connection and *connexion*; pharmacy and *pharmacie*; dangerous and *dangereux*. But they are not pronounced like similar English words.

Ignore the little marks above letters, which matter only to French-speakers.

The first half of any given French word is probably pronounced more or less the way it is spelled; the second half of that word probably sounds nothing like its spelling. But try to sound it out. You'll probably pronounce it wrong, but people will

know what you meant and appreciate that you tried.

**Plurals are silent.** Written French adds a silent *s* at the end to make a word plural. So singular and plural are pronounced the same. For example, *adulte* and *adultes* (adult, adults) are both pronounced "ah-dooht." If a noun is plural, its article and adjective will also be plural. Example: *les chaussures rouges* (the red shoes).

**Gender:** Every French noun is either masculine or feminine. The article and adjective that go with it match its gender. Don't bother guessing which words should be which gender. Just know that an *e* at the end of a French noun can make that word feminine: A good apricot is *un bon abricot*; a good peach is *une bonne pêche*.