



# FRENCH TOAST!

Vive la  
France—  
especially in  
New York  
BY LESLIE JAY

**ORDER A FLUTE OF CHAMPAGNE** and drink to the special relationship between the City of Light and the Big Apple. On Jul. 14, 1789, angry Parisians stormed the Bastille fortress. Their actions helped overthrow the monarchy and gave sympathetic Americans a reason to throw a party just 10 days after their own Independence Day, Jul. 4. Therefore, in the spirit of liberty, equality and festivity, here are 14 Gallic things to do, see and buy in New York in honor of Bastille Day.

**1 un. GREET LIBERTY** An internationally beloved icon of freedom and the warm welcome the United States extends to refugees, the **Statue of Liberty** (Liberty Island, 1.212.363.3200) is herself an immigrant, designed and constructed in France on a frame built by the engineer of the Eiffel Tower. The copper-clad figure was dedicated in 1886, a year after her arrival on these shores, and got her green complexion with exposure to air. Starting Jul. 4, the public can once again ascend to her crown and look out over New York Harbor. **Statue Cruises** (departure from Battery Park, 1.877.523.9849) provides ferry service to Lady Liberty and her neighbor, the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.



## trois.



**DEVELOP FLOUR POWER** Renowned for its intense single-session classes, New York's **International Culinary Center** (above; 462 Broadway, at Grand St., 1.646.254.7000) will have home cooks rolling in French bread dough this month. Baguettes are on the educational menu on Jul. 11 at 6 p.m., while croissants head the curriculum on Jul. 25 at 10 a.m. Each hands-on class is held in a fully equipped instructional kitchen, lasts four hours and costs \$195 per person.

## cinq.

**RAISE A GLASS** Although the French didn't invent wine, they certainly have perfected it. **Crush Wine & Spirits** (right; 153 E. 57th St., btw Third & Lexington aves., 1.212.980.9463) stocks French vintages by the thousands. To toast the victory of commoners over monarchs, Stephen Bitterolf, one of the store's buyers, recommends wines of humbler, rustic origins. Two of his top picks are Domaine de la Pépière's 2007 Muscadet-sur-Lie, a Loire Valley white, and Domaine du Vissoux's 2007 Chernette Beaujolais, a red from Burgundy. For something more effervescent, Bitterolf suggests Crush's "grower" champagnes, which are made by small producers who grow their own grapes.

## deux.

**TAKE A LUXURY CRUISE** There is no shortage of fine French restaurants in New York, from cozy neighborhood bistros serving up such standards as onion soup and steak frites to chic establishments bedecked with Michelin stars. But the dining experience that most closely replicates a romantic table for two in Paris is **Bateaux New York** (Chelsea Piers, Pier 61, Hudson River & W. 23rd St., 1.866.817.3463). With the City of Light's famed Bateaux-Mouches—those sleek glass-enclosed dinner boats that ply the Seine—as its model, *Bateaux New York* cruises the Hudson and East rivers at lunch, brunch and dinner, serving up stunning views of the Manhattan skyline with the *pâté de campagne*.

## quatre.

**APPROACH THE BARRICADES** Every July, the **French Institute Alliance Française** (22 E. 60th St., btw Park & Madison aves., 1.212.355.6100) cordons off E. 60th Street between Lexington and Fifth avenues for "Bastille Day on 60th Street." The six-hour festival, held on Jul. 12, celebrates the friendship between France and the United States and features singing, dancing, French street food—think *crêpes*—and games. The theme? *Art de vivre à la française*, or the art of living life the French way.



## six.

**SAY CHEESE** Cheese makes people smile, but French cheeses send gourmets into ecstasy. For those who want to experience joy in a portable format, **Artisanal Fromagerie, Bistro & Wine Bar** (2 Park Ave., enter on E. 32nd St. btw Park & Madison aves., 1.212.725.8585), which specializes in the world's finest cheeses (below), can prepare a *panier pique-nique* (picnic basket) for alfresco dining and fill it with imports such as Selles-sur-Cher, a mild goat cheese from central France; Ossau Iraty Pardou Arriou, a sweet sheep's-milk cheese made in the Pyrénées; and Fourme d'Ambert, a cow's-milk blue cheese crafted in Auvergne. Each picnic basket includes a baguette and madeleines.

## sept.

**EAT SOMETHING SWEET** The quotation often, and perhaps erroneously, attributed to Marie Antoinette—"Let them eat cake"—is better rendered as "Let them eat brioche," referencing the popular egg-enriched roll. But for Bastille Day and every day of the year, **Bouchon Bakery** (Time Warner Center, 10 Columbus Circle, 3rd fl., W. 60th St. at Broadway, 1.212.823.9366) has sweeter fare in mind for Francophiles—its namesake Chocolate Bouchons. Sprinkled on top with confectioner's sugar, the intensely flavored cork-shaped cakes can make any chocoholic lose her (or his) head.

**huit.** **EXERCISE GOOD SCENTS** A visit to **L'Occitane** (101 University Pl., btw E. 12th & E. 13th sts., 1.212.673.8630) conjures up the romantic Provençal region, famed for its *parfumeries*. Building on that tradition, L'Occitane makes skincare, body care and fragrance products that look as luxurious as they feel and incorporate essences of fruit blossoms, lavender and even green tea. A shaving line for men uses cade, a beneficial wild juniper grown in the South of France that soothes and protects the skin.



**neuf.** **MAKE AN ARTFUL PURCHASE** French innovations in printing resulted in a poster boom that extended from the late-19th well into the 20th century, as companies adopted the colorful medium to promote their products. Although the pieces were intended to be disposable, they are prized today for their arresting graphics. Collectors can judge their merits at the **Ross Art Group** (532 Madison Ave., 4th fl., at E. 54th St., 1.212.223.1525), which sells vintage originals, framed or unframed.

PHOTO: "PAN AMERICAN-FRANCE," C. 1960, COURTESY ROSS ART GROUP

**dix.** **GET ENLIGHTENED** Ooh-la-Lalique! In a long career, glass master René Lalique (1860-1945) made everything from jewelry and perfume bottles to automobile ornaments. **Paul Stamati** (Manhattan Art & Antiques Center, 1050 Second Ave., Gallery 90, btw E. 55th & E. 56th sts., 1.212.754.4533) has one of the world's largest collections of Lalique's Art Deco chandeliers (left), sconces and table lamps, the appeal of which is crystal clear.



**douze.** **MAKE A NAIL CALL** Cover most of the fingernail with a translucent pink color, apply white to the tips and *voilà*, the French manicure. **Sabrina** (218 Madison Ave., entrance on E. 36th St. btw Park & Madison aves., 1.212.683.4320) specializes in French manicures and pedicures. The salon's décor is fun—mirrors with mosaic frames, lamps with beaded shades and a poster of actress Audrey Hepburn as *Sabrina*, the shy chauffeur's daughter who goes to Paris and returns to Long Island a swan.

**treize.** **DOG DAYS** In a linguistic irony, a canine breed refined in France is known to the English-speaking world by a word derived from *pudelhund*, German for "water dog." Now seen more commonly on land, poodles are smart and people-oriented. Fans of these puppies can adorn their suitcases with pink poodle luggage tags from the **New York Dog Shop** (46 W. 73rd St., btw Central Park West & Columbus Ave., 1.212.595.0800).

**quatorze.** **DRESS SMART** For centuries, fashionistas have made clothes calls to France, home of *haute couture*. But high style can be had at moderate price points. Paris-based chain **Comptoir des Cottonniers** (right; 155 Spring St., btw Wooster St. & Broadway, 1.212.274.0830) specializes in cheerful, well-cut dresses and separates—including mother-and-daughter sets—in natural fabrics. For father and son, colorful matching bathing suits from men's and boys' swimwear firm **Vilebrequin** (1070 Madison Ave., at E. 81st St., 1.212.650.0353) are right in season.

