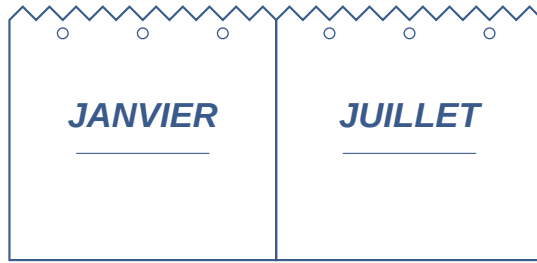


THE FUCKING FRENCH ***YEAR***



*Twelve Months. Twelve Truths.
One Country That Refuses to Apologize for Any of Them.*

thefuckingfrench.com

A Calendar of Contradictions

Every country has a year. France has twelve separate identity crises, scheduled in advance, repeated annually, and somehow never resolved.

This is not a coincidence. This is a system.

Other countries have seasons. France has moods, and they rotate with remarkable precision: the optimism of January, the resentment of March, the collective amnesia of August, the dread of September, the suspicious cheer of December.

This book follows the French year month by month. Not as a tourist would experience it, but as the French experience it themselves — from the inside, with full knowledge of how absurd it is, and zero intention of changing it.

We have lived this calendar. We will live it again next year. Exactly the same way.

Bonne année. Again.

JANVIER

The Month of Promises We Have Already Broken



January begins with a national tradition: the bonnes résolutions. Every French person makes them. Every French person breaks them by January 3rd. Nobody considers this a failure. It is simply how January works.

The resolutions are always the same — eat better, drink less, exercise more. By January 2nd, the cheese has already won. This is not weakness. This is an annual confirmation that some battles are not worth fighting.

Les Voeux du Président

On December 31st, the President addresses the nation. Twelve minutes, watched by almost nobody live and analyzed exhaustively by everybody the next morning. This is achieved through commentary by proxy — three headlines, a ninety-second clip, and by lunchtime you can argue about it with your in-laws.

La Galette des Rois

A puff pastry cake with a hidden ceramic figurine, the fève. Whoever finds it becomes king for the day and wears a paper crown, purchased for four cents and worn with the gravity of an actual coronation. One of the few French traditions that genuinely brings people together.



FÉVRIER

The Month We Pretend Not to Care About Love

The French invented romance. Or at least, the rest of the world has decided we did, and we have not corrected the record.

And yet every February 14th, French people perform an elaborate ritual of feigned indifference toward Valentine's Day, calling it an American invention — and then booking a table three weeks in advance, just in case.

This is not hypocrisy. This is nuance.

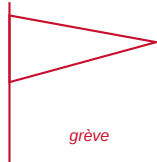
Les Vacances de Février

Mid-February brings the school ski holidays, staggered by zone, designed to prevent overcrowding and succeeding primarily in creating three separate periods of it instead of one. Those who go return with sunburned faces.

Those who stay home develop a quiet resentment that lasts eleven months.

MARS

The Return of the Strike



Spring arrives in France, and with it, la grève de printemps. Not a single event, but a season, a recurring climate pattern as predictable as rainfall.

Transit workers, teachers, pilots, farmers — someone, somewhere, decides that March is the correct month to remind the government that they exist. This is not chaos. This is choreography.

Le Changement d'Heure

Clocks move forward in late March, and the nation behaves as though this is a personal betrayal. Somebody's grandmother insists, every year, that this is 'bad for the cows,' despite owning no cows.

Le Printemps Awakens the Terrace

The first sunny Saturday triggers a mass migration to café terraces. A coffee is ordered outside, consumed while visibly shivering, and declared through chattering teeth: 'Il fait bon!' It does not. Nobody cares.



AVRIL

April Fools, Taken Far Too Seriously

April 1st involves poisson d'avril — paper fish secretly taped to the backs of unsuspecting colleagues, executed by fully grown adults with the focus usually reserved for actual achievements.

A 45-year-old accountant will spend genuine creative energy taping a paper fish to his manager's back without detection. When discovered, both parties laugh as though this is the funniest thing that has happened all year.

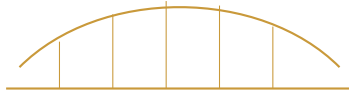
Les Asperges

April marks asparagus season, and an entirely unnecessary national debate about how to eat them. White or green. Hollandaise or vinaigrette. There is no correct answer. There is only a correct level of confidence with which you state your incorrect one.



MAI

The Month of Bridges



May is the most strategically inefficient month in the French calendar, and the most beloved.

Between May 1st, May 8th, Ascension, and occasionally Pentecost, France accumulates so many holidays that calculating actual working days becomes closer to advanced mathematics than calendar management.

This produces le pont — the bridge — converting a single holiday into a four or five day absence from productivity. Companies experience a coordinated, semi-voluntary collapse of attendance every May, and nobody apologizes.

Le 1er Mai

Labour Day. Workers march to demand better conditions. Nobody works. A perfectly self-resolving holiday — the day you celebrate not working is also, conveniently, a day off.



JUIN

The Slow Collapse of the School Year

June is not a month. It is a six-week deceleration ritual, beginning with the first heat and ending with everyone collectively deciding that meaningful work is no longer happening until September.

Le Bac

France treats the baccalauréat with the gravity of a national referendum. Newspapers print the philosophy paper the next morning so everyone can attempt it over breakfast. Forty-five-year-olds experience nostalgic stress on behalf of eighteen-year-olds, reminding them 'in my day, it was harder.' It was never harder.

La Fête de la Musique

June 21st: free concerts everywhere, all night. A genuinely lovely tradition, started in 1982, that the rest of the world has been slowly copying ever since. We invented this one. We will remind you. Often.



JUILLET

National Pride, Scheduled Annually

Le 14 Juillet

Bastille Day. The military parade watched once a year with a sudden surge of patriotism by people who otherwise spend 364 days complaining about everything. By July 15th, normal service resumes.

Le Chassé-Croisé

Late July brings the great migration — those leaving July vacation cross paths with those starting August vacation, creating an entirely predictable traffic catastrophe. Radio stations report it like war correspondents, despite it happening on the same weekend every single year.

AOÛT

The Country Closes



fermeture annuelle

This requires no embellishment. It is simply true.

In August, France closes. Bakeries hang handwritten signs: 'Fermeture annuelle.' Doctors forward calls to colleagues also on vacation. Paris empties of Parisians and refills with confused tourists.

This is not a logistical failure. This is policy, unofficial but absolute. Try to schedule an important meeting in August. You cannot. Nobody can.

*August belongs to the beach, to the farniente, to doing nothing with
the same discipline other cultures apply to doing everything.*



SEPTEMBRE

The Real New Year

January 1st is, in France, a sentimental fiction. The real new year — the one that actually resets behavior — is la rentrée, the start of September.

This is when resolutions are actually made. When gyms fill up. When new notebooks are purchased with genuine optimism.

La Rentrée Scolaire

Parents approach school supplies with strategic planning reserved for military logistics. The liste de fournitures, with exacting specifications, is treated as sacred text. A nation transforms into a logistics task force, united by finding the correct 96-page grid-ruled notebook in burgundy, not maroon.



OCTOBRE

The Strikes, Season Two

If March is the spring strike, October is its more determined autumn counterpart. Cooler weather, renewed energy, and a government that has inevitably proposed something requiring immediate, visible, collective objection.

The French do not strike because they enjoy disruption. The French strike because it is, historically, one of the only methods that has reliably produced results. This is not romanticism. This is precedent.

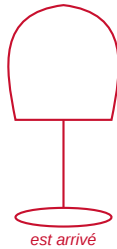
Premier Froid

October brings the year's first cold morning, and the year's first serious debate: 'On allume le chauffage, ou pas encore?' This question is postponed for three weeks until someone's grandmother visits and declares the apartment 'glacial.'



NOVEMBRE

Wine, Weather, and Remembering



Le Beaujolais Nouveau

The third Thursday of November is Beaujolais Nouveau day — the release of a wine that is, by any objective measure, extremely young and not built to age. This does not matter in the slightest. The celebration was never really about the wine.

Le 11 Novembre

Armistice Day. Observed with ceremonies at war memorials in every town, however small. One of the rare French holidays approached without irony, without complaint, and without a single joke.



DÉCEMBRE

Family, Food, and the Annual Negotiation

Noël en Famille

Christmas in France is a culinary event disguised as a religious one. The réveillon is planned with military precision: foie gras, oysters, a bûche de Noël, enough courses to require genuine stamina.

It is also, reliably, the year's most significant family tension — one uncle with loud political opinions, one aunt relitigating an old disagreement, one grandmother ending any argument with a single devastating remark while passing the cheese.

Le Réveillon du Nouvel An

December 31st arrives, the President speaks again, champagne is opened at midnight, and the entire ritual cycle prepares to begin again, exactly as it did twelve months earlier.



CONCLUSION

The Year That Repeats Itself, On Purpose

A foreigner observing this calendar might call it inefficient. Illogical. A country that takes a third of the year off, in increments, while complaining the entire time about not having enough rest.

They would not be wrong.

But there is a deeper logic here, one that has nothing to do with productivity and everything to do with rhythm. The French year is not designed to optimize output. It is designed to mark time.

Other countries measure a year in quarters and fiscal targets.

France measures it in bridges, in fermetures annuelles, in the precise moment the heating finally goes on, in a paper crown worn for one afternoon by someone pretending, just for a moment, to be king.

We would not change a single month of it.

Well — perhaps March. The strikes do get repetitive.

But we wouldn't cancel them either.



Bonne année. Again.

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