

The French Meal



The French Meal: Market Shopping and Cooking in the South of France

with Julie Francis, Donna Covrett, Maria de la Torre

Dive into the art of French cooking as a philosophy, aesthetic, and attitude towards life. Whether the rich, concentrated flavors are from the halls of French gastronomy or the provincial home cook, a French meal is an ennobling experience, feeding soul and body. Join us in the enchanting region of Languedoc-Roussillon and be seduced by the succulence of the local specialties as we explore the cuisine du terroir, shopping at nearby village markets, meeting local food artisans, touring wineries and the cobblestone streets of medieval villages, as well as cooking and dining together. Enjoy a slow-paced food retreat under the gorgeous blue Mediterranean sky, experience the flavors and traditions that make France resonant with good living, and are sure to inspire your own home kitchen. From the excellent local cheeses and wines to the historical and architectural interests, plus cooking and yoga classes and market-fresh meals in the garden, we guarantee 'l'art de vivre'!

Note: this retreat is open to eight guests.

Instructors



JULIE FRANCIS

Chef Julie Francis, a Cincinnati (USA) native, has fond memories of her trips to Paris with her family to experience the markets and the amazing small chef-owned bistros that they loved. In her professional career as an acclaimed Cincinnati restaurateur and chef of Aioli and Nectar restaurants, (2001-2017) she promoted seasonal and local sourcing before it became popular. During her career, Julie was proud to participate in many Cincinnati culinary events like 1 Night 12 Kitchens, Cincinnati Food and Wine Classic, Luminosity, and Zoofari. She was honored to be invited to cook at The James Beard House with other esteemed Cincinnati Chefs in 2014. Julie was drawn to start her personal chef business, Nectar Personal Chef Services, after seeing the enjoyment that families and individuals experienced with her in home cooking, and how providing delicious, healthy food made people happy, and let them relax at home.



DONNA COVRETT

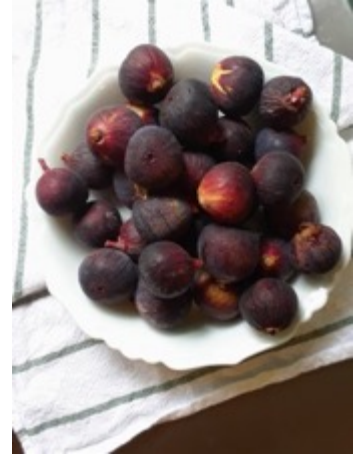
After 20 years in the culinary industry in the USA as a pastry chef and restaurateur, Donna moved behind the scenes into food journalism—five years with an alt-weekly publication and eight years as the food and dining editor for *Cincinnati Magazine*. In 2014 she co-authored a cookbook for Chef Dan Wright's popular restaurant SENATE, and launched Cincinnati Food and Wine Classic, a festival featuring local and national chefs, food artisans, brewers, winemakers, and storytellers showcasing their talents through demos, seminars, competitions, and tastings. Along with a storied career in the culinary industry, Donna has long-held an equally passionate career in the healing arts teaching yoga, mindful movement, and meditation in public classrooms and workplace environments, as well as working individually with clients to provide tools for optimal mobility.



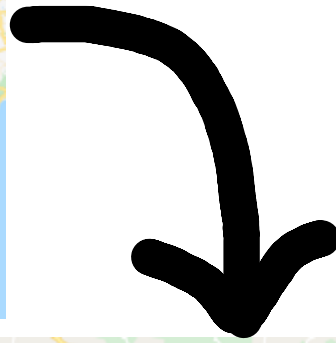
MARIA DE LA TORRE

Originally from Colombia, Chef Maria has been cooking for some 30 years, earning a Cordon Bleu diploma along the way. In recent years she has specialized in spices and sugarcraft, giving courses in UK, France, USA, and Colombia. To widen her spice knowledge, Maria has taken courses in India and Thailand, and often invites chefs from other countries to teach in her cooking school, Sugar and Saffron. Fluent in English, French, and Spanish, Maria regularly teaches in all 3 languages. The school moved into custom premises in the south of France in 2018, with its own herb and spice garden. Maria has also started a non-profit, the Little Conservatory of Flavors, to collect, video, and teach old recipes that are not being passed on to today's microwave generation.

Sites and Delights



Where is it?



Itinerary - Fall 2019

Part 1

Activities and times are subject to change

Tuesday: Arrive

- Arrival in Saint Clément, a charming Occitan village in Southern France.
- Pick up from airport (time as required)
- Get settled in accommodations; brief tour of village
- 5:30pm: one hour gentle yoga class to unwind bodies from travel (Donna Covrett)
- 7:30pm: dinner in the garden of Le Petit Conservatoire des Saveurs with local specialties

Wednesday: Uzès (Market Day)

Considered one of the best markets in France, Uzès offers beautiful period buildings and streets, plus delightful cafés and shopping.

- 8am: breakfast in garden
- 9am: depart for Uzès
- 10am: tour of Ducal city of Uzès and stop at local bakery; market shopping to purchase ingredients for Wednesday dinner, and Thursday class + dinner
- 1pm: Lunch al fresco in Uzès market square
- 3pm: return to St. Clément
- 4pm: three dinner courses prepared by group from ingredients sourced at market; or relaxing free time
- 7pm dinner in the garden

Thursday: Culinary Class at Le Petit Conservatoire des Saveurs

- 8am breakfast in the garden
- 9am: culinary artisan tours (olive oil producer, boulanger/chocolatier, fromager)
- Noon: St. Clément; light lunch of salad, charcuterie, and baguette
- 1pm: cooking class, producing entrée, salad, and dessert for evening meal (Julie Francis & Donna Covrett)
- 5pm: tour & tasting; Domaine de Trépaloup, St. Clément's award-winning independent winery. (Optional free time)
- 7pm: dinner in the garden

Friday: Coastal villages: Sète, Bouzigues, Frontignan, and Pinet

Lunch in Bouzigues, a lovely Mediterranean coastal town known for its oysters, mussels, and seafood restaurants. Wine tasting in Pinet, home of the Picpoul grape (one of the oldest French varieties) and Frontignan to sample the local wines made with a unique variety of Muscat grape.

- 8am: breakfast in the garden
- 9am: depart for Sète (fish market, procure fish for Saturday meal)
- noon: restaurant lunch in Bouzigues (overlooking Etang de Thau)
- 2pm: depart for wine tasting tour
- 5pm: return to St. Clément
- 7pm: dinner in the garden (Maria de la Torre)

Itinerary - Fall 2019

Part 2

Saturday: Sommières (Market Day)

With its ancient Roman bridge, the charming town of Sommières is full of interesting medieval references, garden market, and a very popular marché aux puces (flea market).

- 8am breakfast in the garden
- 9am: depart for Sommières
- 10am: tour market, purchase favorite foods for lunch and ingredients for dinner
- Noon: al fresco communal lunch in the market square
- 2pm: Visit to St. Christol wine education center. Wine tasting and return to St. Clément.
- 4pm: dinner courses prepared by group from ingredients sourced at market (Julie Francis, Donna Covrett & Maria de la Torre), or relaxing free time
- 7:30pm dinner in the garden

Sunday: Viaduc de Millau and Caves de Roquefort

Ranked as one of the great engineering achievements of all time, the Millau viaduct is a cable-stayed bridge that spans the valley of the Tarn River. Built in steel and concrete, its elegant design is of striking beauty. The Roquefort caves are located in the small village of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon at the base of the Rocher de Combalou, a limestone plateau instrumental in the development of Roquefort cheese.

- 8am: breakfast in garden
- 9am: depart
- 10am: Coffee at Millau center; photo opportunity
- 11:30am: Roquefort caves and Société, a Roquefort producer
- 1:00pm: lunch
- 2:30pm: return to St. Clément
- 5:30pm: Depart for Nîmes; tour of important sites
- 7pm: Dinner at Jérôme Nutile's restaurant, Le Bistr'AU

Monday: Aigues-Mortes

A magnificent walled medieval city, Aigues-Mortes was originally located on the Mediterranean coast, but with constant changes of the Rhône River Delta now stands several miles inland on the coastal marshland of the Petite Camargue.

- 8am: breakfast in garden
- 9am: depart for Aigues-Mortes
- 10:00am: Tour Aigues-Mortes; boulangerie to taste the traditional Fougasse d'Aigues-Mortes
- 1pm: lunch
- 3:00pm: tour of the salin d'Aigues Mortes, the largest salt marsh in France.
- 4:30pm: return to St. Clément
- 6pm: 1-hour gentle yoga class (Donna Covrett)
- 7:30 pm: dinner in the garden

Tuesday: Au Revoir

Breakfast and departure from Saint Clément

Transportation to Montpellier airport or Nîmes train station as needed

Details, Details

Session: Sept. 17 to Sept.24, 2019

- What:** The French Meal: Market Shopping and Cooking in Southern France
- When:** Arrive Tuesday September 17th, 2019; Depart Tuesday September 24th, 2019
- Where:** 45 Rue du Moulin d'Huile, 30260 St. Clément, Gard, France
Sugar and Saffron Cooking School
<https://sugarandsaffron.wildapricot.org/>
- Who:**
- Julie Francis, Personal Chef; owner of Nectar Personal Chef Services
 - Donna Covrett, pastry chef and yoga teacher
 - Maria de la Torre, Cordon Bleu chef and owner of Sugar and Saffron Cooking School

- Cost:** USD \$2500, payable in full by July 15, 2019, or earlier, which includes:
- All meals (with the exception of a few restaurant meals), plus local wines and cheeses
 - Unpretentious single or double occupancy room in nearby house, some with private bathroom, some with shared bathroom
 - All cooking instruction, ingredients, and equipment
 - Yoga classes, yoga mats, and props
 - Transportation to and from Montpellier airport (MPL) or Nîmes TGV train station
 - Touring in 9-seater mini-bus, plus knowledgeable tour by guide Tim Fallen-Bailey

The following services / upgrades are at an additional cost:

- Transportation to and from Marseille airport (transportation to or from other airports or train stations beyond Montpellier, Nîmes, or Marseille must be arranged by traveler)
- Accommodations in a nearby hotel if you prefer (we will make the arrangements)
- Meals and beverages in local restaurants (other than lunch)
- Private yoga class, yoga therapy, or Thai Massage

Minimum retreat size: 4 people Maximum retreat size: 8 people

If the minimum number is not reached by the payment deadline, we may cancel this event.

Booking and Information: **Contact Tim Fallen-Bailey** **Email:** timfb@mac.com