

French For Gringos Lesson 5 Ordering Food Drink 2026 10 06

' 2026 Morning Update • French for Gringos • Tue, 06 Oct 2026 15:28:48 GMT • 3:47

Maya: Welcome to French for Gringos, lesson five! I am Maya, this is Devon, and today we are doing something you will use every single day in France and QuØbec: ordering food and drink with total confidence.

Devon: That's right. By the end of this lesson, you will walk into any bistro in Paris or MontrØal and order like a pro. Let's eat.

Maya: Phrase one is the most useful sentence in restaurant French: je voudrais. It means I would like. Pronounce it "zhuh voo-dreh" the zhuh is soft, like the s in measure, and dreh rhymes with day.

Devon: So when you want something, you say, je voudrais un cafØ. That's "zhuh voo-dreh uhn kah-feh", and it means I would like a coffee. It's polite, it's formal enough, and it works everywhere.

Maya: Phrase two: la carte. Say "lah kahrt", and it means the menu the list of individual dishes. Here's a classic gringo trap: in France, le menu, "luh meh-new", is the fixed-price set meal, NOT the menu of dishes. If you ask a waiter for le menu, he'll bring you the prix-fixe list. So ask for la carte when you want to browse everything.

Devon: Good one. Phrase three is simple: pour moi. Say "poor mwah" mwah rhymes with bra. It means for me. So you can point at something and say, pour moi, je voudrais ça. For me, I'd like this. Even without perfect French, that sentence gets you fed.

Maya: Phrase four: je vais prendre. Say "zhuh veh prahn-druh". It means I'm going to have, and literally it means I'm going to take. So: je vais prendre le poisson. That's "zhuh veh prahn-druh luh pwah-sohn", and it means I'm going to have the fish. Very natural, very French.

Devon: Phrase five is one you'll use at the END of every meal: l'addition, s'il vous plaît. Say "lah-dee-syohn, see voo pleh". That's the check, please. In France the check never comes until you ask, because the waiter thinks you're enjoying your evening. Which is kind of lovely. So when you're ready, say it with confidence.

Maya: Phrase six, for the thirsty travelers: encore de l'eau, s'il vous plaît. That's "ahn-kor duh low, see voo pleh", and it means more water, please. And here's a money tip: in restaurants in France, tap water is free by law. Ask for une carafe d'eau, "oon kah-rahf doe" a pitcher of water and it costs you nothing.

Devon: And phrase seven, when you're done ordering: c'est tout, merci. Say "seh too, mair-see". That's all, thank you. Short, clean, perfect.

Maya: Time for our demo dialogue. I'm the customer, Devon is the waiter.

Devon: Bonsoir! Vous avez choisi? That means, have you decided?

Maya: Oui. Je voudrais le poulet, s'il vous plaît. Yes, I would like the chicken, please. Et un verre de vin rouge. And a glass of red wine.

is generous, but nobody expects a percentage like in America. And one more thing: no one will ever rush you. Linger over coffee for an hour is normal, welcome, and honestly the whole point.

Devon: Recap drill time! Repeat after us. Number one: je voudrais. "Zhuh voo-dreh". I would like.

Maya: Number two: l'addition, s'il vous plaît. "Lah-dee-syohn, see voo pleh". The check, please.

Devon: Number three: pour moi. "Poor mwah". For me.

Maya: You did it! You're officially a restaurant survivor. Tomorrow, lesson six: eating like a local, with dietary needs, delicious compliments, and handling the check. À bientôt, gringos!

Devon: À bientôt!