

Beach French!

For a long time I've wanted to stop at Café Marguerite in Venice (or maybe it's in Marina del Rey). The city line cuts *diagonally* through Washington Blvd right where it hits the beach...



Authentic? Well all the staff (cook, waiters, everybody) speaks French, and English is reserved for the patrons... **Comprenezvous?**

A quick glance at the menu indicated I could get a valid food-review for \$12.50 including tip. Ha! A steal! In-I-went...

First-off, I had simply pointed at a table. A plain-old-table. **Viola!** Note this is an actual French word, (pronounced “Wal-la” with the accent on the second syllable) and means –in Greek- “Eureka” or in English (loosely translated) **Holy Sh*t!** although prudes typically use the so-dull “presto” translation but I digress...



The above appeared and I, with my \$12.50 projected-tab still echoing in my (soon to be proven pea-sized) brain, began to gloat... I would get so much for very-little-\$. Note that this is near-beachfront dining, “upscale”.

The bread was wonderful, the butter (“buerre”) perfect. And so... What to order...

Hmmm... I need a “sample”. What would one-meal prove? And **everyone** knows that any restaurant can make a great *expensive* meal but what about a great *cheap* meal? Order from the appetizer list!

- 1) Salad. Half-portion, mixed-greens with (honest) “secret vinaigrette”. \$5.
- 2) Three-pate’ selection. \$6.

Genius. Let the feast begin! Well my table now looked like this...



This is worthy of a close-up...



This is ***the best*** \$5 salad I've ever had. Whatever the "secret" in the dressing, it was superb.

Ah-ha now the pate selection...



A word about pate': *It has a density rivaling **depleted uranium!*** That's right... If you have just one of the little slabs above, then –for instance- fall out of a boat even while wearing a life-vest ***too bad you sink to the bottom like a stone RIP.***

I have deduced this is exactly the reason no Frenchman has ever won an Olympic medal in swimming.

Superb as a description of the pate' is an injustice.

Now, lets do the calorie math:

- A) Two loaves of bread (I had finished the first, and **viola** instantly appears loaf #2)
- B) Many many pads of butter
- C) Salad (normally “calorie benign” but who knows the chemistry of the “secret ingredient”?)
- D) Three pads of pate’ (one was goose-liver, the other two were described to me **in French** by the maitre’d). Thanks, pal.

Finished, so-proud to have received a **stupendous meal** for \$12.50... I discovered... ***I couldn't get up!*** (the “pate’ thing”). Oops. What-to-do?

Sugar! I needed a sugar-rush to rise and make it to the car! I ordered this...



Tasty eh? Well here's a close-up hee hee...



Fresh-fruit-in-custard. ***Incroyable!*** (“Incredible”).

Well time-to-go. I'm thinking my \$12.50 (tip-included) estimate was now \$16 all-inclusive.

Sacre bleu! \$20 and I needed to add tip!

Humbled, w/o fine-wine to blame for my 35% math-error. I left a 20% tip (total expenditure \$25) and slinked off in “gastronomic bliss”.

But hey there's an upside... Economy-of-scale!

I had ordered a half-salad, “mixed greens” = \$5. But I could have gotten a full-Caesar (w/shrimp) for \$12 viola! That raises my total bill (tax/tip included) by just \$8 to \$33. Add a glass of wine for \$6 (+tax/tip) and that’s \$40.

Split the salad with your date (“so romantic”), give her the glass of wine (“I would love to join you but I’m driving”) and you-are-her-hero for a lousy \$40! WooHoo! Date-o-nomics!

In closing, experience has told me it is near-impossible to make a French waiter smile. A maitre’d is even less inclined to emote “positive vibes”. But I did it!

The waiter had come over, I asked to see the dessert cart before he spoke. A small grin. He brought the cart, started to speak, whereupon in my best French I said **Non!** And pointed to the fruit-cup. The waiter was not able to give his spin on the selection. He slinked away in disgust. Too bad.

Next, not seeing this, the maitre’d came over and intoned **dessert?** Expecting of course “no, thank you” (Americans, especially Californians, don’t generally order dessert) but I answered (with a smile) “**already ordered**” wow big grin and off-he-went.

Fin!