



“Don’t Miss” these food specialties in Reims



One of the charming aspects of *France’s* food is that each locale; big city, town and even tiny village has their own food, wine and aperitif specialties.

While you are enjoying your free time each day, here are some suggestions for local specialties to enjoy during lunch or perhaps to take home to remind you of how inspirational and delicious your week in *France* was.



Reims

Reims and *Epernay* are the two main towns in the *Champagne* region. Of course, *Champagne* is everywhere: in the shops, cafes and restaurants. Some of the luxury restaurants boast a wine list with over one thousand different *Champagnes*!

While you are enjoying your lunch and shopping in *Reims*, perhaps along the *Place d'Erlon*, keep an eye out for some of these specialties.



La Place Drouet d'Erlon is a pedestrian street in the center of *Reims*. You will find lots of shops, cafes and restaurants. Also, look for the “*Les Arcades*” with arched opening leading to tiny shops.



Biscuits Rose de Reims

Similar to a crisp lady-finger cookie, the biscuit was created around 1690 in *Reims*.

A baker wanted to make the most of the heat in the bread oven between the two batches, so he had the idea of creating a special dough; baking it twice, which is where the name "biscuit" or "bis-cuit" meaning "baked twice" in French. The biscuit initially was white. In order to add flavor to it, vanilla was introduced into the recipe.

This vanilla left brown traces on the biscuit. In order to hide them, the baker decided to add a natural color based on cochineal, a scarlet dye, to disguise his mistake. From this sequence of events, the Biscuit Rose de Reims was born. The biscuit is oblong in shape and is lightly sprinkled with confectioners' sugar.

NOTE: Regarding which food items you are permitted to bring back into the USA: if the food is shelf stable, you may bring it in. If it requires refrigeration, you may not bring it back to the USA.



The *Biscuit Rose de Reims* have many uses: an after-school snack, to serve with a glass of Champagne before you go to dinner, in desserts and sometimes in savory dishes that work well with slightly sweet flavors, such as foie gras.



Reims Ham

For lunch, you might want to look for “*Le Jambon de Reims*”. It is a specialty of *Reims* since the recipe was invented in 1855. The ham is marinated for 5 days and then cooked for 17 hours in a natural vegetable broth.



Reims Mustard

Of course, *Dijon* is renowned for its mustard. But *Moutarde de Reims* is a local specialty. You will find it in small shops and supermarkets.



Les Bouchons au Marc de Champagne

A “*bouchon*” is the French word for a wine/Champagne cork. It is also the name for a traffic-jam: the road has a “*bouchon*” meaning it is “*corked*”. In various parts of *France* candy makers and pastry chefs create chocolate corks filled with a strong brandy. In *Reims* you will see the *Bouchons* with “*Marc de Champagne*”. *Marc* is similar to brandy and is created by siphoning the grape juice after the press, from between the skins and stems and distilling it. The strength of the *Marc* is strong, but delicious with the dark chocolate.

Find the bouchons in chocolate shops, candy shops and wine shops.





Whisky from Reims

Whisky de la Montagne de Reims is a relatively new creation that has captured some attention by food and wine lovers. There are just a few producers. The most well regarded producer is *La Distillerie Guillon*, located near the national forest. They create single malt-based spirits, aged in oak barrels.





Potée Champenoise

Potée Champenoise is typically a cold weather dish of meats and vegetables simmered in a rich broth. Variations include bacon, sausages, smoked ham, cabbage, potatoes, turnips, carrots and sometimes white beans. It is hearty stew often served after the grape harvest.





Cheese from the Champagne Region

Of course, cheese is produced on farms. Cheese is immensely popular in *France*. There was once a charming folklore statement about the large variety of cheese available in *France*: “*There is a cheese for every day of the year*”. That is no longer true because of the many artisan cheese makers. There are now close to 2,000 different cheeses.

Many modern French are become more health consciousness and cutting back on high-fat food like charcuterie items, cheeses, etc.

While at a café or restaurant for lunch take advantage and taste some wonderful local cheese. Cheeses from the Champagne region include *Langres*, *Caprice des Dieux*, *Chaource*, *Pave d’Auge*, *Vignotte*, *Barberey*, and *Cendre de Champagne*.

Also, ask your server for recommendations for local cheeses. If you are lucky enough to see a cart of cheese offered – by all means take advantage of this rare opportunity to enjoy!





Massepain de Reims

Massepain de Reims, is a local sweet treat from *Reims*. They are similar to a macaroon made with ground almonds. They are a light brown color, distinguished sometimes by a hole made with a wooden cone dipped in sugar. You will find them in select pastry shops.





Boudin Blanc de Rethel

Boudin Blanc de Rethel is a white sausage made from the best cuts of pork, pork fat, eggs, milk, and a special blend of seasonings. The ancient recipe has been made in the *Rethel* district of *Ardennes* since the 17th century. *Boudin Blanc de Rethel* also comes flavored with various local ingredients like truffles, morels, leeks, and wild mushrooms. It's often grilled with mashed potatoes and a flavorful truffle sauce or a simple salad and sautéed chanterelles. Pair *Boudin Blanc de Rethel* with a *Champagne* made from predominantly *Pinot Noir*.

