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Speak The Culture: France



Synopsis

A guidebook can show you where to go, a phrase-book what to say when you get there. Only Speak the Culture: France will lead you to the nation's soul. This easy-to-use cultural companion reflects what it means to have grown up with Camus, Cézanne, De Gaulle and Bardot; it captures the spirit of France and delves deep into the Gallic psyche. Through exploring the people, the movements and the lifestyles that have shaped the French experience, you will come to an intimate understanding of France and the French. There are many travel guides and manuals on living in France. Speak the Culture: France is different: a superbly designed, informed and entertaining insight into French life and culture and who the French really are. Recommended by the Institut français du Royaume-Uni, the Official French Government Centre of Language and Culture in the UK For new residents, business travellers, holidaymakers, students and lovers of France everywhere, Speak the Culture: France is an engaging companion and guide to an enviably rich civilization at the heart of Europe. Excerpt: "It would be wrong to imagine that your average Frenchwoman just pops into Chanel on the Rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré whenever she needs a new bag, cardy or fragrance. While a significant minority do indulge in ready-to-wear lines produced by designer labels, most are happy with less brand-conscious garments. Small boutiques and historic department stores like Le Bon Marché and Les Galeries Lafayette sell the big brands, but many French are happy to buy anonymous clothes at knockdown prices in chain stores like Tati, or even in the hypermarket."

Book Information

Series: Speak the Culture

Paperback: 300 pages

Publisher: Thorogood; Bilingual edition (January 18, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1854184938

ISBN-13: 978-1854184931

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1.1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #129,858 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Students #281 in Books > Travel > Europe > General #743 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General

Customer Reviews

"How refreshing and, to be honest, reassuring to come across a book of such high quality.... If you want to unravel French DNA, read this book. Thanks to good research and a modern, reader-friendly layout, it paints a true picture of French culture in such a way that you can read about a subject thoroughly or just pick little snippets of interesting information....This is a very impressive book indeed...a pleasure to readIt should come with a 'Learning guaranteed' certificate." (France magazine)"In intelligent tabloid style, it gallops through history (from Cro-Magnon to Sarkozy in 14 pages: brilliant), art, literature, music, food and more besides. Overlooking hardly anything of importance, it's a miracle of compression spiced with good trivia....Read the book carefully and you will have the skeleton of French culture." (Daily Telegraph)"Even as Eurostar relocates to a gloriously refurbished St Pancras station and the journey time between London and Paris is shaved even closer, more and more people on both sides of the Channel are taking advantage of the extra opportunities this highly cherishable link offers us. And for those already in love with France (not to mention the ever-increasing legions of converts), Speak the Culture: France will be an invaluable aid and companion. Actually, no publisher has attempted anything quite like this, and the publishers Thorogood are to be much applauded for their ingenuity and achievement. The subtitle is Be fluent in French Life and Culture, and that facility is just what this remarkable volume offers, cramming an amazing mass of information into its well-designed pages. Everything is here, from French art and literature, architecture, media, sport, fashion and (of course) food and drink. But while not being in the slightest dumbed down, the information here (while often dealing with such weighty subjects as Proust and French existential philosophers) is delivered in a concise and highly accessible style (and aided considerably by the clever graphics which have a nicely self-mocking subtext--when was that last seen in a book on a foreign country?). So, you're sitting on Eurostar, and a fresh espresso is to hand. Don't reach for the glossy magazine the train company provides--crack open Speak the Culture: France and you'll be thoroughly toolled up for your visit to the City of Light." (Barry Forshaw Travel Journalist)"For anybody living in France, visiting the country on holiday or simply interested in French life, Speak the Culture: France is essential reading." (Living France Magazine)"A veritable cultural kaleidoscope of famous, influential and significant activities, events, place and people that add up to France."

(French Property News)

Andrew Whittaker has travelled widely and written extensively on France and the Mediterranean countries.

Speak the Culture - France: Be Fluent in French Life and Culture is an absolute must-have book. This 295-page book is extremely good at helping us to get inside the French mind to best understand the culture and people speaking the language. Surely, all of this will make our second trip to Paris and then Lyon even more fun, better and interesting than before. Yet another must-have book to buy on if you really want to truly understand and enjoy traveling to France, exploring French culture, and learning the language. Best of all, it can be read chapter-by-chapter, or in order of personal interest. The perfect French culture reference book in English.

Bought it for a class, came in good condition and I could use it for my class.

Excellent articles about French life and culture. This is the text for the French Culture course (for non-French majors, taught in English) at Sacramento State University, California. Good preparation material for advanced placement, SAT, and CEFL exams in French.

This book is for my class. I don't like it. Very wordy and hard to read. It doesn't even have a table of content.

The book is a great reference on many aspects of the French civilisation in its current state as well as its history. Luckily it lacks that unavoidable "I Love France but Not the French" Anglo-Saxon attitude (or at least it is not that pronounced as elsewhere due to the format of the book) which is a very rare thing in itself for a book about France written in English.

This volume is a treasure trove of information that will help American visitors recognize some of the cultural pitfalls that await them in France.

Needed this for a French civilization course. Easy to read, well-organized, good info, 5 stars.

Looking at the cover of this book, I found myself thinking, "Oh...F. Couldn't the author sit still long enough to put some other letters in there....an R, A, N, C...E, maybe? Then people would know what the book is about." And as I read through it, I found myself thinking, "Oh...couldn't the writer sit still long enough to write more than 5 sentences on each subject...? Then people would know what the book is about." Well, not that I didn't generally know - it was about "F". The basic lack of structure,

analysis, organization, and in-depth coverage of topics made this book a very hard read. First, it is split into various chapters on the different aspects of life and culture in France. Those chapters - while following a basic theme - are riddled with side notes, footnotes, and, in the case of some pages, with only notes. There wasn't enough information provided on any one topic to make me feel like I'd actually learned anything. And, faced with so many loosely connected facts at a time, I wasn't able to retain any of them. When something caught my attention I had to google it to actually understand it. I'm sure some would think it an interesting read; maybe people already highly knowledgeable about France would find the odd fact here and there to talk about over hors d'oeuvres at a chic party overlooking the Seine...but for people looking to gain beginning insight into the country and the culture, a fairly comprehensive picture, I would suggest a different read.

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