Drinking Water in France

France is known for its high-quality drinking water, which is widely accessible. Whether you prefer **tap water** or **bottled water**, there are plenty of safe and affordable options to choose from.

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1. Tap Water in France

- **Availability**: Tap water (*eau du robinet*) is available in all homes, hotels, restaurants, and public spaces unless stated otherwise.
- **Quality**: French tap water is strictly regulated and considered **safe to drink** throughout the country, including major cities like Paris, Lyon, and Nice.
- **Taste**: The taste can vary depending on the region due to differences in water sources and mineral content.
    1. In some areas, tap water may have a slight **chlorine** taste, which is safe but can be noticeable.
- **Cost**: Free. In restaurants, you can request tap water by asking for a **“carafe d’eau”** (jug of water). By law, restaurants must provide free tap water if requested.
- **Sustainability**: Drinking tap water reduces plastic waste compared to bottled water.

Tip: If you dislike the taste of tap water, consider using a water filter like **Brita** to improve its flavor.

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2. Bottled Water in France

France has a rich tradition of producing high-quality bottled water, both **still** (*_plate_*) and **sparkling** (*_gazeuse_*). Bottled water is widely available in supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants, and vending machines.

A. Types of Bottled Water

- **Eau Minérale Naturelle**: Natural mineral water, sourced from underground springs, often with unique mineral compositions.
- **Eau de Source**: Spring water, naturally sourced but less regulated for mineral content.
- **Eau Gazeuse**: Sparkling water, naturally carbonated or artificially added with gas (CO_2).

B. Popular Bottled Water Brands

Here is a list of popular bottled water brands in France, categorized by type:

1. Still Water (Eau Plate)

1. **Evian**:
    1. Source: French Alps.
    2. Taste: Smooth and light with a subtle mineral flavor.
    3. Cost: Around €0.50–€1.00 for a 1.5L bottle.
2. **Volvic**:
    1. Source: Volcanic region of Auvergne.
    2. Taste: Very soft and neutral, low in minerals.
    3. Cost: Similar to Evian.
3. **Cristaline**:
    1. Source: Various regional springs in France.
    2. Taste: Clean and neutral. Popular for its affordability.
    3. Cost: About €0.20–€0.50 for a 1.5L bottle (one of the cheapest options).
4. **Vittel**:
    1. Source: Vosges mountains.
    2. Taste: Slightly mineralized, refreshing.

2. Sparkling Water (Eau Gazeuse)

1. **Perrier**:
    1. Source: Vergèze in the Gard region.
    2. Taste: Bold bubbles, refreshing and slightly salty.
    3. Cost: Around €0.80–€1.20 for a 1L bottle.
2. **Badoit**:
    1. Source: Saint-Galmier in the Loire region.
    2. Taste: Fine bubbles, smooth, light mineral flavor.
    3. Cost: Around €0.80–€1.20 for a 1L bottle.
3. **San Pellegrino**:
    1. Source: Italian Alps (popular in France).
    2. Taste: Strong bubbles, slightly salty.
4. **Salvetat**:
    1. Source: Southern France (Occitanie).
    2. Taste: Light bubbles, refreshing. Affordable option.

3. Low-Mineral or Specific Waters

1. **Contrex**: High in minerals like calcium and magnesium.
2. **Hepar**: Known for its high magnesium content, often used for digestive benefits.

C. Cost of Bottled Water

- **Supermarkets**:
    1. A **1.5L bottle** of still water (e.g., Cristaline) costs as little as **€0.20–€0.50**.
    2. Premium brands like Evian or Volvic cost around **€0.50–€1.00** per 1.5L.

3. Sparkling waters like Perrier or Badoit cost approximately **€0.80–€1.50** for 1L.

- **Restaurants and Cafés**: Bottled water costs significantly more:
  1. A small bottle of **still** or **sparkling water** (0.5L) can cost **€2–€5** depending on the restaurant.

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3. Where to Buy Drinking Water

Bottled water is widely available across France:

- **Supermarkets and Hypermarkets**: Carrefour, Leclerc, Intermarché, Monoprix, Auchan.
- **Convenience Stores**: Smaller shops like Franprix, Carrefour City, or Casino.
- **Vending Machines**: Found at train stations, airports, and public areas.
- **Restaurants and Cafés**: Offer bottled water or a carafe of tap water.

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4. Quality and Safety

- Both **tap water** and **bottled water** in France meet strict European Union standards for safety.
- Bottled water quality varies based on mineral content but is clearly labeled with **“composition analytique”** (mineral analysis) on the bottle.
- **Tap water** undergoes regular testing and monitoring to ensure safety.

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5. Environmental Considerations

- **Tap Water**: The most eco-friendly and cost-effective option. Use a reusable bottle for travel.
- **Plastic Bottles**: France has recycling systems in place, so always recycle plastic bottles in designated bins.
- **Glass Bottles**: Some premium water brands offer glass options for better sustainability.

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6. Summary

Type of Water	Examples of Brands	Taste and Quality	Cost	Where to Buy
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Tap Water	N/A	Safe, regional variations	Free	Everywhere
Still Water	Evian, Volvic, Cristaline	Smooth, low minerals	€0.20–€1.00/L	Supermarkets, cafés
Sparkling Water	Perrier, Badoit, Salvetat	Refreshing, various bubbles	€0.80–€1.50/L	Supermarkets, restaurants
Specialty Water	Contrex, Hepar	High minerals for health	€1.00–€1.50/L	Pharmacies, supermarkets

Recommendation: If you are visiting France, tap water is the most convenient, safe, and eco-friendly choice. For bottled water, **Cristaline** is affordable, while **Perrier** and **Badoit** are excellent sparkling options.

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