

# The Brida Journal

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Week 48/2020

**Ideas and Conversations, for and by learners of English.**

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## A new home in England

*Emilie provides an interesting insight on her own particular happiness by moving from France to England.*

Fifteen years ago, Emilie moved from her native Normandy and joined her partner in England. Frédéric had already been living and working there for some time. It was a huge step for her, not speaking the language, a different culture, leaving her family...would it work out, or would it end up in failure? She had a simple plan B – if it doesn't work, pack-up, go back home and “book the trip to experience”.

Emilie was in for a surprise! She eventually settled in the town of Horley, just north of Gatwick Airport, about 30 minutes south of London and about 40 minutes north of Brighton on the south coast. It has to be said that this is a very dynamic, multi-cultural and diverse part of England, combining many different worlds.

Very early, she encountered the British attitude of, “getting on with it”. Moaning about something will not solve the problem. Life is not perfect, but it is what you make of it. It was different from her experiences in France where people seemed to complain more and do less to rectify it. So, accepting that “getting on with it” was the path forward, she and Frédéric developed a quality of life that uniquely suited them.

But what were the major differences in attitude and culture that they discovered and adapted to along their way? As they stepped forward, they discovered a people who seemed more adventurous. There was a wide choice of things to do, people to meet, all within a short radius of home. It was this choice, made by the people offering it and appreciated by those accepting it, that made life easier. And the acceptance that mistakes are allowed – you learn from them. What you do may not (yet) be perfect, but it's what you make of it.

Aside from learning to drive on the left (and now, when they visit France, trying to remember to drive on the right), people seemed more tolerant, less aggressive, more respectful of another person's space, in fact, even more laissez-faire than the French.

It wasn't long before Emilie and Frédéric found themselves in that unique British institution, “the Pub”. Known for their great atmosphere, the high quality but still down to earth food and a

decent selection of drinks, the pub is THE place to meet people. You strike up a conversation and engage in pleasant small talk. You make acquaintances and begin interacting with other people and become part of the local community. You are invited to afternoon tea, BBQs, to social events. But always with that particular “British reserve”, keeping a respectful distance, “not wanting to cause a fuss.”

Settling down, having, and raising two children and building a business took up the couple’s time. Emilie soon learnt that juggling responsibilities required a support network. The working day was and is comparably shorter than in France. In Normandy, she was still working in the early evening. In Horley, and working from home, the working day is done by about 5.30pm. Perhaps the biggest cultural difference is lunch. “We stop for a quick lunch here, not like in France, where everything closes for two hours. And the children are home from school much earlier too.”

All in all, they found that, with flexibility, they had more time to spend as a family unit and to go out and do things, socialise, and enjoy what the area has to offer. Further flexibility came with the huge support network provided by small businesses. Setting up a company in England is done in a matter of hours. As a result, there are many small businesses which offer a wide range of services at reasonable prices. Once a month, somebody comes by to wash the windows. Their four-bedroom house? The price is 30 €. Their two cars are washed for the same price once a month. It is more expensive than going to a car wash, but you get a cleaner car. For 60 € once a every three months, their dog is pampered from head to toe. You have the choices and the options. It’s what you make of it. Somebody in the pub, on local community notice boards or the other mums you meet on the school run, will recommend somebody.

Freeing up time is also made possible by one significant fact: a different shopping culture. The major supermarkets are open 24 hours. Most shops are open on a Sunday. Online shopping is more developed. Instead of going to a “drive”, all supermarkets deliver to your home. “Once I have finished the day, the kids are in bed, and it’s let’s say, 9pm, I can still go to the supermarket and buy my groceries, if I want to.” Emilie knows she can do it. It is one possibility in a range of options available to make life easier.

One major difference is the way families interact. Families in France are closer than in England. They live in close proximity, have more support from grandparents, the family gatherings on Sundays are important. “That is less here. The Sunday newspapers are so thick, people sit somewhere in their own space and “read the Sunday papers.”

Frédéric and Emilie together with one further employee own a small but highly efficient company. They are the connection between some of the UK’s biggest supermarket groups and family run cheese producers in France. Competing with the likes of Lactalis, this trio of people “make life easier” for everybody. Tesco Supermarket has over 2000 stores, and Waitrose has more than 400 stores. Frédéric and Emilie’s company “QST – Quality Sales Team” is the one face to the customer in the UK. On the other side of the channel, the company provides full support for French cheese producers who wish to export their cheese to the UK. Brexit? “Nobody knows what will happen. It will mean more paperwork. You just have to get on with it.”

For Emilie, this “British way of life” has one source, and she is an absolute fan of it. It is the Royal Family. The Royal Family is responsible for the cohesion of the country”, she said. It sets the example on how to live. Especially when their roles have not been earned through hard work but given to them by birth. “The Queen is such a strong woman”. There is the notion of

“charity”. The Royal Family’s dedication to charities, the giving, if you can and what you can, is one of the backbones of the United Kingdom. Charity shops now dominate the High Street. But they have no negative stigma about them. However, when Megan forced Prince Harry to break “with the family” the outcry was enormous. Both had broken with family values and tradition. But William and Kate had done wonders to bridge the gap. “I am really angry at Megan” Emilie said.

Life in England is a jigsaw puzzle. You pick the pieces you require to build the lifestyle you need or want. For Emilie, it is less stressful and more enriching. Would she and Frédéric return to France? “Only if absolutely necessary and if there were no alternative.” England is home. But, if France, then to the Alsace.

What does she miss? “The Boulangerie” she said. Whenever I visit my mother, I simply have to go to the Boulangerie across the road from her house. The smell, the taste... we have fresh bread in the Coop, but it’s not the same.”

# Tour de France 7 – Pau & Béarn

## *Geneviève takes us to Pau and its surroundings.*

Pau and Pyrenees are synonymous. It is a city in the south west and is the capital of the Béarn region with a population of 150,000 inhabitants. Although it is 85km from the Spanish border the Pyrenees are very visible. Walk along the Blvd de Pyrenees and you have a panoramic view of the mountains.

Pau is also the birthplace of Henri IV (1553 – 1610), King of France and Navarre. His reign was marked with religious tumults but also political pragmatism.

Pau's unique selling point is its climate. Influenced by the Basque coast, it has a temperate climate and enjoys a long Indian summer when the rest of the country is already significantly cooler. It is this, along with a harmonious architecture and plenty of attractions which draws the visitors, students, and many companies to the region.

British holiday makers visited the town from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first full 18-hole golf course in Europe was created by people from Scotland. So popular was the town, that it became the world's first holiday resort and a template for other towns to model their attractions in a similar fashion.

Pau is also the departure town to explore the rest of Béarn and the Pyrenees. About 30 km south-east of Pau is the famous pilgrimage town of Lourdes. It is of course known as the town where Marie-Bernarde Soubirous, in 1858, then aged 14 had visions of the Virgin Mary. Today, between 4 – 6 million visitors per year come to Lourdes to seek healing.

Not far from Lourdes are the magnificent Les grottes et le sanctuaire de Bétharram. Travelling by small train and a boat, you reach an underground lake. Then on foot, you can discover the five excavated gallery levels of different geological epochs. You can admire stalagmites, stalactites, cave draperies and columns, all in amazing shapes.

Oloron Sainte Marie is a small town at the entrance of the Béarn Valley. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site because the Romanesque cathedral from the 12<sup>th</sup> century has a magnificently sculptured entrance. Inside are also goldsmiths' and silversmiths' items, and an organ in the Baroque style. The town is also on the St Jacques de Compostela path.

There are plenty of markets to visit and see, there is a half marathon for the sports minded people, the first weekend in June. Nature lovers can enjoy breath taking panoramic views of the Pyrenees, rivers invite fisherman to catch trout and salmon.

The winds known as the “the foehn” sweeping in from the Atlantic give the Jurançon Wine their special characteristic taste.

Walking along the paths, you will see protected flora such as Edelweiss, the Venus Orchid and many others. The region also is home to many birds of prey, heather cockerels, snow partridges and rock ptarmigans. The Pyrenees are also the home of bears and otters.

You can move around the region in many different ways, walking, cycling, on horseback, in snowshoes. There are many different sports activities for you to choose from.

In the heart of the Béarn is the Vallée d'Ossau, an ideal destination to rejuvenate body and soul.

Les eaux d'Eaux-Bonnes, are thermal springs which have been benefitting people since the reign of François 1 (1494, crowned 1515, died 1547). The waters are known to heal wounds and help ease rheumatism. Gourette is a large ski resort with many different runs, levels, and possibilities. Or simply walk along the “Shepherds » path and learn about their way of life and work.

Again, as we pedal forward on our tour, we leave behind a beautiful region with more to do and see than can fill these lines. But we must continue, as we head north to Charente Maritime. I will send you a postcard when I get there.

# My Tehran

## *Keyvan describes what you can do and see in this surprising city.*

Describing a city that is 7000 years old and with a population of over 8 million is not easy. But these are some of the things I would show you.

One very important street in Tehran that connects the west with the east of Tehran is called Enghelab Street. The other, that connects the south of Tehran, from Tehran Main Station with the north, by the Tajrish Bazaar and the Tochal Buttresses is Valiasr St.

In the southern district of Tehran is the old and traditional Tehran Bazaar, (Metro Khayyam, Open 9 – 6 Saturday to Wednesday, 9-4 Thursday & Friday) where you can buy everything you need, from food to clothes made of gold, shoes, of course carpets, in fact everything.

Just to the north is the Palace of the Ancient Kings of Iran who lived in Tehran for about 200-250 years. It is called Shams Ol-Emareh. (Open daily 9-5). It is part of the Golestan Palace complex and considered to be the most stunning of all the buildings there. It was built in 1830 and was the tallest building in its day. The decoration is a mixture of traditional Iranian and European styles.

The old places in Tehran are Hassan Abad Square, which has old buildings and traditional Iranian arches. It was built in 1780. On each of the square's corners is an identical building.

At the intersection of Valiasr Street and Enghelab Street, a theatre complex and a mosque with a modern facade have been built. The Vali Asr Mosque does not look like a typical mosque as it does not follow the rules of Islamic architecture. The mosque therefore blends in with the local neighbourhood. The building's flowing lines lend it a heightened sense of spirituality, but the construction has been controversial. It is worth mentioning that the Tehran Municipal Theatre (Shahzad Theatre) has been in operation for more than 70 years.

Not far from where I lived is a pastry shop called French Pâtisserie. It's located at the intersection of Abu Reihan Enghelab Vesal, which offers very delicious and varied cakes.

The Milad Tower, which is mainly used for television and radio, is located in the northern part of the Gisha district. It is 435 meters high and there is a revolving restaurant at the top. At the bottom is the Milad hospital.

At the end of Valiasr Street, north of Tehran, there is the Tajrish Bazaar and Tajrish Mountains. It is not as touristy as the Tehran Bazaar in the south of the city.

In the north western outskirts of the city is Lake Chitgar. The total area of the complex is about 250 hectares, of which 130 hectares is the lake and the rest park. The crown level of the lake is 1268.5 meters above sea level and the maximum water level of the lake is 1267.5 meters. The lake is drained during the wet seasons from the beginning of January to the end of April. The volume of the lake behind the dam is estimated at 6.9 million cubic metres.

Another place of interest in Tehran is the Bridge of Nature. The length of this bridge is 300 meters, and the weight of its structure is 2000 tons. Nature Bridge is the largest vehicle-free

bridge in Iran. This bridge has an area of 7,000 square metres and the width of the bridge varies between 6 metres and 13 metres at different locations. The main body of the bridge is built on a tripod and for its construction, 14,000 pieces of steel of different dimensions at a height of 40 metres were assembled and installed. More than 102 km of welding and 6,200 cubic metres of concrete were carried out for the construction of this bridge.

To eat, I would take you to my brother's restaurant, the Anahita Cafe restaurant is located in Takht Tavous. It offers coffee and confectionery and typical Persian dishes, with grilled meats and chicken, fresh vegetables, beans, rice. It is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Tehran and open Saturday to Thursday 12 noon to 9pm.

One of the most famous snack and sandwich places in Tehran is the Fereydoon Sandwich, which is so delicious that its customers wait in long queues and for a long time to buy their sandwich and eat it on the street because there is no room inside the shop. (Eshqyar Street, open daily 11am – 11pm)

One of the most beautiful nature spots in Tehran for the weekend is that of mountaineering, located north of Tehran.

Tehran is an exciting and very welcoming city, well worth visiting.



# Scones

## Ingredients

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 350g self-raising flour, plus more for dusting</li> <li>• ¼ tsp salt</li> <li>• 1 tsp baking powder</li> <li>• 85g cold butter, cut into cubes</li> <li>• 4 tbsp golden caster sugar</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150g pot natural full-fat yogurt</li> <li>• 4 tbsp full-fat milk</li> <li>• 1 tsp vanilla extract</li> <li>• 1 egg beaten with 1 tbsp milk, to glaze</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Method

Put a baking sheet in the oven at 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Put the flour, salt and baking powder into a food processor, then whizz in the butter until it disappears. Pulse in the sugar, tip into a large bowl, then make a well in the middle.

Warm the yogurt, milk and vanilla together in the microwave for 1 min or in a pan; it should be hot and may well go a bit lumpy looking. Tip into the bowl and quickly work into the flour mix using a cutlery knife. As soon as it's all in, stop.

Tip the dough onto a floured surface, then, with floured hands, fold the dough over a few times – just enough to create a smoothish dough. Press out to about 4cm/1½in thick, dip a 7cm cutter into more flour, then stamp out 4 rounds, flouring the cutter each time. Squash the remainder lightly together, then repeat until the dough is used up. Brush tops with egg wash, scatter flour over the hot sheet, then lift the scones on. Bake for 12 mins until risen and golden. Best eaten just warm, or on the day.



## Our special offers for this week. Celebrating British Cheeses

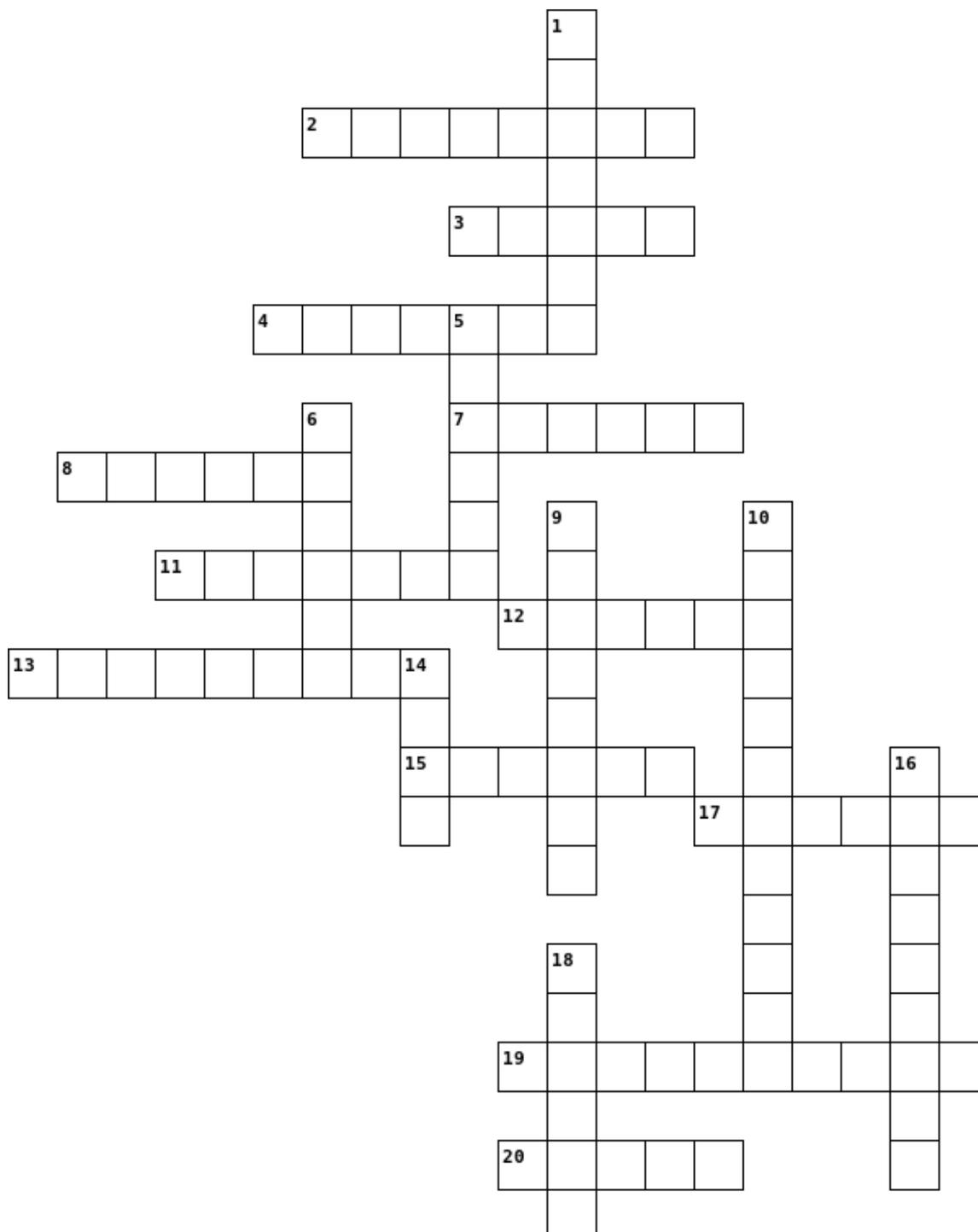
Aged Red Leicester 200 g € 2.00	British Blue Stilton 220 gr, €1.70	Cheshire Cheese 220 gr €1.55
Double Gloucester Chive & Onion Cheese Slices 150 g €1.95	Wensleydale Cranberry Cheese 200 gr, €1.75	Mexicana Hot Cheddar Cheese Slices 160 g €2.15
Peppercorn and Chipotle Leicester Cheese 200 g €2.50	Fat free pineapple cottage cheese 300 gr €1.00	Marmite Cheddar Cheese Bites 5 x 20 g €1.30
Mature Cheddar Cheese 550 g €4.00	Cornish Brie 160 gr. €1.50	Creamy Lancashire Cheese 250 g €1.68
Paneer Block Cheese 225 g €1.50	Ilchester Applewood smoked cheddar cheese 185 g €2.10	Shepherds Purse Harrogate Blue 100 gr €2.50

Offers while stocks last. Valid from November 23, 2020 to November 28, 2020.

## Strange English. Can you make sense of the following sentence?

*A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.*

# Brida Gymnastics - Vocabulary



**Across**

2. Mountains on French Spanish border
3. The country with the largest democracy
4. Symbolic line in the middle of the planet
7. Frozen mass in the northern Hemisphere
8. Structure connecting Copenhagen with Malmö
11. Most famous pilgrimage city in France
12. Ocean between Australia and South Africa
13. Lake bordering on Austria, Germany and Switzerland
15. Mt Etna is here
17. The sea between Helsinki and St. Petersburg
19. City in the District of Columbia
20. Number of states in the USA (as a word)

**Down**

1. Most widely known English cheese
5. River in London
6. Biggest city in Iran
9. Animal population of Antarctica
10. Most northern town on Earth
14. To the right on a map
16. Capital of Singapore
18. Largest country in South America

**Solution 47.20****Across**

1. heating
4. bathroom
6. lamp
7. table
8. house
10. tap
11. fridge
13. roof
14. brick
15. Front door
16. window
18. drawer

**Down**

2. toilet
3. garage
5. cupboard
9. kitchen
12. sink
15. floor
16. wall
17. bed

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### Third Party Inspirational Sources

classifieds: gumtree.ie or gumtree.co.uk,  
the supermarket: various supermarket websites in the United Kingdom