

# *The Brida Journal*

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Week 51/2020

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

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## **Tour de France, Stage 8 Charente Maritime (Part 1)**

It was a lovely, warm day and now the evening is mild. Just relax on the cushions, at a table made of recycled wood and savour the sunset with a delicious glass of wine. Whilst you are sitting, sniff the ocean air, filled with iodine, experience the “embrun marin”, the typical local “sea spray”. Then, taste the fresh mussels, with delicious French bread of course. At the same time, listen to the waves as they roll in from the Atlantic and follow the seagulls circling in the air above you, listening to their “caw, caw, caw”.

The tide is out. Let’s go to the lighthouse! It is four centuries old but was restored in 2014. It is 67m high, and there are 301 steps to the top. Once there, you are rewarded with a view of the estuary. The best way to visit the lighthouse is to go by boat, especially because visiting it depends on the tide. However, you can walk to the lighthouse, with a guide, during low tide. It takes 15-20 minutes. Just beware of the quicksand. It is a must place to see and admire the interior.

Or let’s try another adventure! Paddle in a canoe along the « Estuaire de la Seudre ». It is an ideal place for bird lovers to observe birds as it shelters a niche birdlife. But not just the birds, there are fish, reptiles, and otters which habit this magnificent estuary.

Welcome to Charente Maritime, it’s a completely different world here.

### **Ile d’Oléron / Oysters / Wine/ Fort Boyard**

What a selection. Let’s go! To reach the island from the mainland you cross the 3027m long bridge built in 1960’s. The island is 175 km<sup>2</sup> making it France’s second largest island after Corsica. There is no shortage of things to do and see here.

The island is well known for its oyster basins called “Les bassins de Marennes”. Oysters are in abundance. So, tuck in, fresh with a squirt of lemon juice. The island is rich with a diverse landscape. There are many beaches, forests, swamplands, and nature reserves. Everything is protected to allow the peaceful cohabitation of fauna and flora. You have dunes, boulders, forest, vineyards, oyster canals and fish locks. A huge variety on an island of 175 km<sup>2</sup>. To help you discover this island, there are over 130 km of cycling paths for you to ride on. The small artisanal

Port de la Cotinière was modernized and is now the premier fishing port in the department. Great for a little rest.

The historical citadels are worth visiting and are ready to tell their stories. An absolute must is the climb up the Chassiron lighthouse. You feel as if you are at “end of the world.” The compensation is a panoramic view of the île de Ré, the Antioche lighthouse and the fish locks at low tide.

And then, of course, there is the “local star” Fort Boyard. It was originally built to protect the coast and served as a prison for a few years. Today, it has become infamous for the French TV series of the same name. It is like escape room, but the prizemoney which is discovered is donated to charities.

### **Wine, (Auxerois, Cognac) Oysters, Fruits de Mer, Mills, Salt**

Surprise! In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the vineyards of Charentais were the largest in the world, covering an area of 200,000 hectares. Sadly, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, phylloxera destroyed almost all the vines in the territory. Only the vines planted in the sand survived.

The local red organic wine is a blend of “Merlot Noir” and “Cabernet Franc”. The white organic wine made is made from “Colombard” grapes, one the of the oldest in the region and the organic white wine, “Sauvignon”, the most grown grape variety in Charentais.

There are also many mills on the island. You should go to the windmill “Moulin de la Plataine” built in 1650 at Bourcefranc-le Chapus. A windmill has two grinding stones on top of each other. The other is the tower mill.....

Oh, don’t forget the saltworks of Marennes-Oléron. They still exist today. In the past the customs officials built “tourettes” to control the loading of the salt. Well, actually it’s a bit of a mystery. It is not known if it was for the control or storage of the salt. But then...

But I must stop here. I have oysters to eat and wine to drink. See you next time.

# Origami with Kayvan

*Kayvan explains his passion for folding paper and how you too can learn to make interesting things.*

I was introduced to origami through the construction of a simple plane and a small paper boat by my parents and my brother when I was very young. But for almost two to three years now, my studies in origami have been continuing in a very serious and professional way.

At the beginning of 2020, when, due to Corona, I had to stay home for about four months, I had fun with paper, and the animals I made were very funny and entertaining. I decided to turn “work” into a hobby. It is nice to share this with my friends on YouTube and Instagram.

The challenge with origami, for me, is that you test yourself and that you do this by hand, using only a sheet of paper. You can make interesting and strange shapes. You can make these shapes look very simple or very complex and difficult.

I decided to set up a channel on YouTube, with animals that are very simple to make, folding paper, step by step. After 10 or 15 to maybe 20 very simple animals, my friends will have gained more experience. They will have learned and realised why you fold a sheet of paper in a certain way. They understand the specific purpose of each sheet of paper.

I used to do this more for fun. But it can be used for other reasons. For example, at an occasion with my son's friends. I made a bird and fox origami for 30 people in class and gave the lamb to his friend. Maybe one day they will ask their teacher to teach the rest of the children how to make animal origami.

To my friends who watch my videos, I suggest watching my work several times and to go slowly and become more competent so that they can learn folding in the necessary order. As we move forward, it becomes more and more difficult. You can improve.

After 3 months of work, you can look back and see that what you did in the first few weeks and that it was very easy. You can easily do it yourself without looking on the internet and are ready to do a much more difficult figure.



What happens, when you are a close-knit group of friends and suddenly, one day, without any warning, you are excluded for no reason?

This is precisely the question the Japanese author Haruki Murakami asks in his bestselling novel “Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage”.

A group of five teenagers, 3 boys and 2 girls all volunteered for a school holiday project. Each person was unique and the group of five all complemented each other perfectly. Growing up in Nagoya, Japan’s fourth largest city, situated between Tokyo and Osaka, these teenagers lived by special rules. Five was the optimum number, becoming two couples was not desired as one would lose out. Furthermore, the group would only be complete if all five did something together.

Of these 5 people, only Tsukuru’s name could not be associated with a colour and this led him to feel inadequate. Not having a colour meant not having an identity and very little self-esteem. Whilst four friends stay in Nagoya after graduating from high school, Tsukuru leaves to move to Tokyo and study Engineering. He then works in his dream job, building railway stations. He leads a quiet, uneventful life but he regularly goes home, until one day, the contact is broken, and no reason is given.

Tsukuru’s pilgrimage begins with the contemplation of suicide. It seems the only logical step for a colourless person to undertake. By some miracle, after 6 months of agony, he emerges out of this phase, a physically changed man. Tsukuru, becomes friends with a younger male student, called Haida. So intense is their friendship and so close their interests that Tsukuru is forced to question himself again, as strange dreams, stories and classical music take him on a mental pilgrimage. The friendship remains platonic and after two years, Haida leaves without any word. A sense of déjà vu returns to Tsukuru.

Sixteen years after the break-up of the original group of five, Tsukuru, now 36, meets and falls in love with Sara, who is 2 years older. As they date, she senses that he is blocked and encourages him to explore the source of his pain and resume his pilgrimage by discovering his past. He returns to Nagoya and travels to Finland to seek the truth. In the process he learns more about himself and that not having any colour, being transparent, can actually be a virtue. Others see you differently to how you see yourself.

This is a book about friendship, human relationships, the pain and suffering that people can inflict on each other when truth, protection, and trying to do what is best gets unnecessarily confused and misunderstood.

*Haruki Murakami, Colourless Tsukuru Tazaki and his years of pilgrimage*, originally published 2015. The book has also been translated into French (L'incolore Tsukuru Tazaki et ses années de pèlerinage) and into German. (Die Pilgerjahre des farblosen Herrn Tazaki.)

Do you have a book you would like to recommend? Why not write about it.



# Mint chocolate coins

(to put in the Christmas stocking)

## Ingredients

- 400 gr chocolate (you can use a mixture of dark, brown and white), roughly chopped.
- Natural mint extract.
- Toppings (optional) such as finely chopped nuts, freeze dried berries, whatever you fancy really.
- You will also need plastic coin moulds or metal / silicone mini muffin or cupcake tins and chocolate foil wrappers to wrap the coins.

## Method

Put the chocolate in a heatproof bowl, then put the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, don't let the bowl touch the water. If you are using different types of chocolate, you should use separate bowls. Once melted, take the bowls off and let cool for about 5 minutes. Stir in a few drops of mint extract, then set aside for 10 minutes to cool a little more.

Spoon the chocolate over the coin mould, or over the base of a cupcake or muffin tin, to the thickness of a typical coin used in your country. Then swirl with a stick for a marbled effect. Sprinkle your favourite toppings if you are using any and let set in the fridge for several hours.

Once the chocolate is firm, remove the moulds and wrap the chocolate in foil. Store somewhere cool and dry until you go shopping.



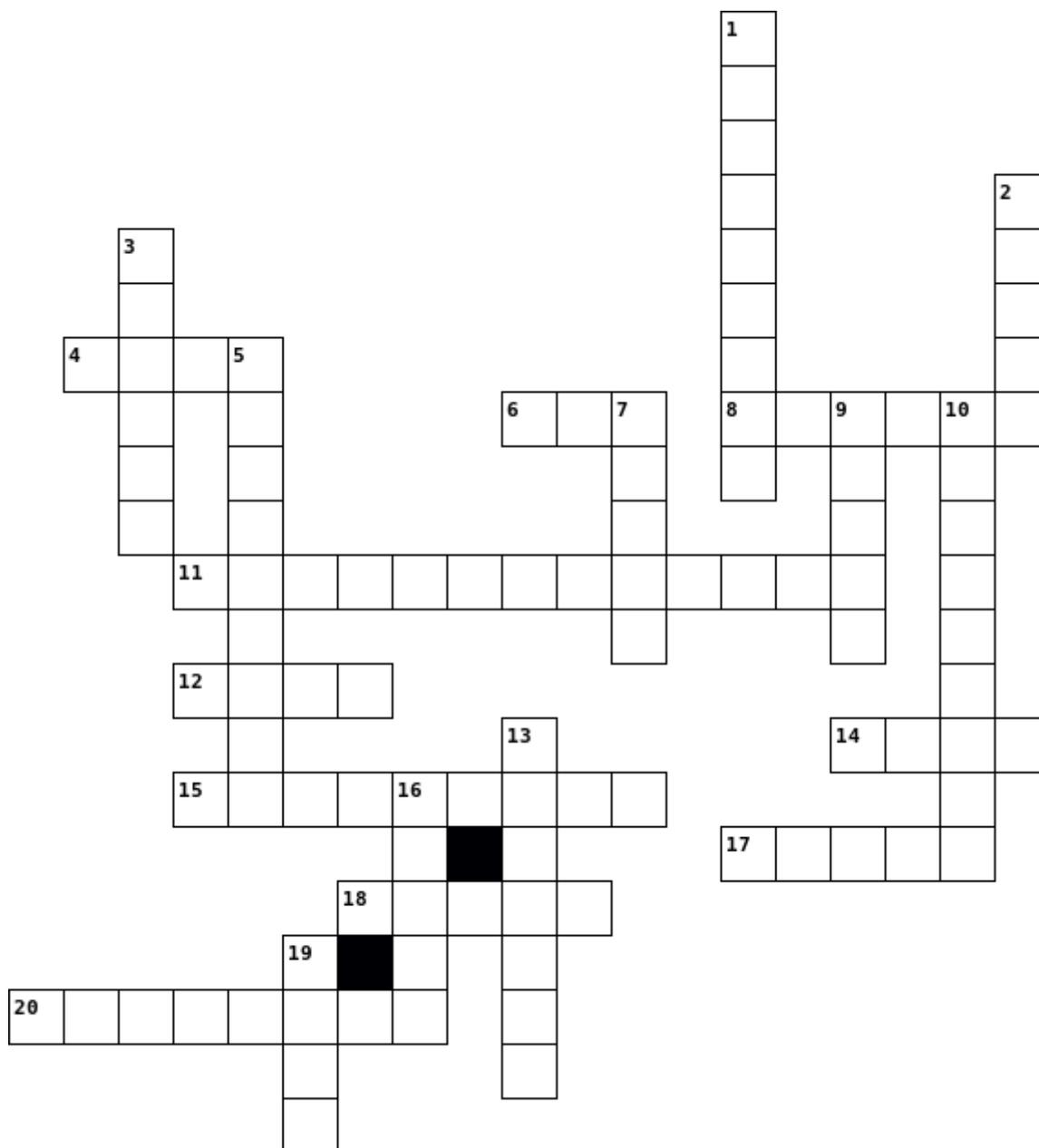
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Offers while stocks last. Valid from December 14, 2020 to December 19, 2020.

**Strange English.**  
**Can you make sense of the following sentence?**  
*The man who fell in an upholstery machine is now full recovered.*

# *Brida Gymnastics - Opposites attract*



**Across**

4. It was unwise to say that the teacher was .....
6. Well, let me say, last summer was really dry, this one is really quite .....
8. You know, my room is always tidy, but my brother's room is always....
11. Your sofa is so comfortable, mine seems to be much more .....
12. An elephant is huge, but the mouse it fears is .....
14. Life in the country is quiet and I think, cities are .....
15. That dessert is horrible, but this one is .....
17. John is a tall person, but his best friend is really quite....
18. How do you fit a square plug into a ..... hole?
20. Jane thinks her husband is not ugly, instead, she thinks he is .....

**Down**

1. Jane's husband thinks she is not plain, he says, she is very .....
2. crying is a sign of being sad, but when you laugh, you are .....
3. The living room is dark, but the kitchen is warm and .....
5. This necklace was not cheap, actually, it was quite....
7. In court, you must not tell lies, instead, you promise to tell the ...
9. In the morning, I feel rested, but after a long day, I feel really....
10. I find grammar quite easy, but it can be ..... to explain.
13. My sister is older than me, I am actually much ..... than her.
16. Flying to Australia is travelling far, but the internet brings it .....
19. It's too hot for tea, do you have anything .....?

**Solution 50.20****Across**

1. on
3. away
5. at
6. at
8. after
9. next
11. on
14. In front of
16. on.
17. in
18. before

**Down**

2. Next to
3. at
4. at
5. ar
6. across
7. in
8. at
10. every
12. on
13. in
14. in
15. over
16. on
17. in

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