

JOIE DE VIVRE

Our pick of splendid things, great and small, that showcase the joy of French life, from what to buy to where to go...



IMAGE © SEB BILLON

INSPIRATIONS

LIFT YOUR SPIRITS

You never really know an area of France until you've flown over it. (That's our theory, anyway.) When landmarks become specks, and fields stitch together into patchwork, only then can we truly appreciate the Hexagon's scale and beauty. This is where Compagnons du Vent excels with its beautiful *montgolfières*. From just €175 for a group of four, you can drift above the pastoral spread of Le Perche, across the river and rooftops of Blois, or cast a shadow over the vineyards of Vendôme. Heavenly...

● www.compagnons-du-vent.fr



ON AIME Encased in Limoges porcelain, topped with an engraved beechwood lid and sublimely fragranced, these candles from Jardin Retrouvé are on another level. www.lejardinretrouve.com

Little black book

Craving a gluten-free treat? We rifle through our address book for the hottest pudding parlours in Paris sans gluten



YUMMY & GUILTFREE

Gaufres are the name of the game at this swish eatery on rue du Temple. Waffles dusted with sugar; cheesecake waffles; waffles drizzled with caramel coulis – all with pockets of flavour in every 'notch' and served fashionably on a lollipop stick. *Trop mignon!* www.yummyandguiltfree.com



NOGLU

With bakeries in the 2nd and 7th arrondissements, Noglu serves gluten-free bread, salads, brioches, cookies, scones and madeleines, with some vegan options thrown in for good measure. A real all-rounder.

www.noglu.fr



CHAMBELLAND

Welcome to bread heaven. Even for those fortunate folk who can tolerate gluten, Chambelland's otherworldly *pains*, pastries and puds are essential. Don't miss the melt-in-your-mouth focaccia, either plain or topped with seeds for extra crunch.

www.chambelland.com



Kasia Dietz models her Ragusa bag, one of many travel-inspired totes produced in Paris

DESIGN

IT'S IN THE BAG

Paris rouses the artist in most of us, and many creatives have enjoyed their eureka moment in the City of Light (it's an apt nickname in more ways than one, *n'est-ce pas?*). For New Yorker Kasia Dietz, the capital inspired her jazzy hand-printed tote bags – a delicious mix of Parisian chic and '70s patterns with enough chutzpah to liven up any ensemble.

All of the brand's handbags, totes, clutches and purses are made in Paris, and named after the place that influenced their design, from the spangled Côte d'Azur to further afield. You're not just getting one look, either, but two different motifs thanks to the reversible canvas. Sustainability and versatility are also a major part of the brand ethos, and limited-edition products mean your new purchase is one-of-a-kind.

● www.kasiadietz.com

IMAGE © CATHERINE O'HARA

ON ÉCOUTE L'INDÉCIS

Unwind with the chillhop master

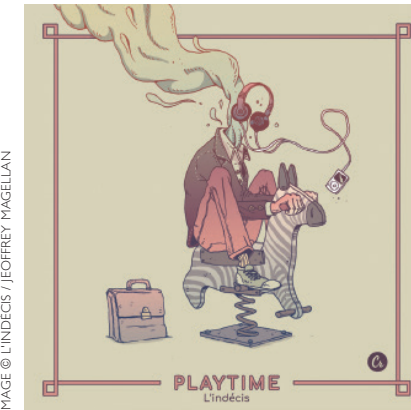


IMAGE © L'INDÉCIS / JEOFFREY MAGELLAN

French illustrator Jeoffrey Magellan is behind *Playtime*'s dreamy cover art

For those unfamiliar with chillhop, welcome to your initiation. *C'est simple*. Find a snug nook, slip on your best pair of headphones and sink into sensory bliss – this is a music genre committed to soothing its listeners (the clue's in the name), so you might as well play the part.

Chillhop is, for all intents and purposes, an electronic fusion of chill-out music and hip-hop. Common threads include a slow tempo, broken beats and jazzy

elements – the kind of mellow listening perfectly suited to your 'rainy Sunday' playlist, in other words. Sometimes, there are surprises, too – like the sound of fresh coffee being poured into a mug, or a poignant soundbite plucked from a film.

As with most musicians these days, the dulcet tones of French producer L'Indécis can easily be found on YouTube and SoundCloud. One of the most influential chillhop artists out there, his work is an essential segue into the genre and an antidote to life's everyday stresses. Start with super-smooth tracks 'Staying There' and 'Soulful'; you'll feel the stirrings of tranquillity, nostalgia, wanderlust... and everything in between.

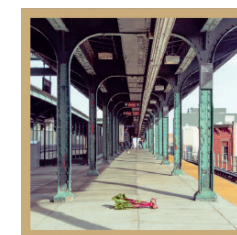
IF YOU LIKE THIS, YOU MIGHT LIKE...



NUJABES

The 'father of chillhop', the late Jun Seba's music is compulsory listening.

Modal Soul
Hydeout Productions



BIROCRATIC

In his own words: "Hi-fi, hypercolour grooves made in a bedroom in Brooklyn".

Beets 4
Birocratic



FKJ

French Kiwi Juice is a popular multi-instrumentalist from Tours.

French Kiwi Juice
Roche Musique



INSTAFRANCE

For your chance to be featured, tag your best Instagram pics with **#francetodaymagazine**

1. A flower-laden *vélo* snapped by [bljewell2018](#) in whimsical Ribeauvillé
2. Paris, captured by [dunwoodydave2008](#)
3. One of Montpellier's intricate little details, spotted by [fiona_travels](#) >>

UNIQUE RETREAT

EDGE OF THE OCEAN

Sitting on north Finistère's Coast of Legends, a rugged stretch of scenery marked by vanilla beaches and foam-splitting rocks, La Butte Hôtel is ideally positioned on the cusp of the ocean. With such lovely surroundings, it's no surprise that this ultra-modern building is dotted with tall windows, offering a glimpse out onto the Bay of Goulven – and into the maritime scenery that defines Brittany.

In fact, this relationship with the sea permeates everything in La Butte. It can be observed in the glass-flanked infinity pool, heated to 29°C and offering swimmers a luxurious soak with far-reaching views over the fields and ocean. It's in the hammam and sauna, using water to soothe weary muscles.

It's even in the food. La Table de La Butte, the on-site restaurant and beating heart of the whole operation, features all sorts of local surf and turf, including blue lobster, shrimp from the Bay of Goulven, poached oysters, Morlaix scallops, abalone, line-caught fish, charcuterie, poultry, seasonal fruit and vegetables. Excellence from Michelin-starred chef Nicolas Conraux prevails in every mouthful and, after a robust meal, guests can swoon over his selection of desserts: Breton cake with caramelised banana and fig; chocolate and vanilla *feuilleté* parcels; a groaning cheeseboard complete with ginger and honey.

Of course, there are plenty more pleasures to tide guests over. Slimming massages, facial treatments, body scrubs and a civilised break in the tea room are all par for the course. As for the service – well, there's a reason La Butte packs four stars under its belt. Staff are always happy to recommend local sites and shops, book a spa appointment or order a meal to your room. Relax: you've found your home from home.

● **La Butte**, 12 rue de la Mer, 29260 Plouider www.labutte.fr



ON ADORE No more jostling for the last scoop of raclette – these miniature sets ensure you get your fill of melted cheese! www.lavantgardiste.com



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ways to...

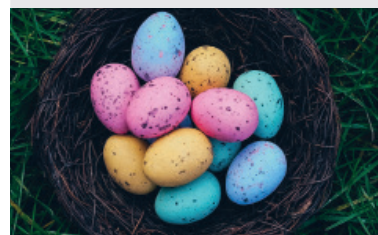
CELEBRATE
EASTER

Falling in April this year, Easter in L'Hexagone is a merry occasion where indulgence is key



WINDOW SHOP

Keep your eyes peeled for Paris's whimsical window displays. As well as traditional hens and eggs, France celebrates with chocolate fish and flying bells! Supposedly, *les cloches* soar off to the Vatican to mourn Jesus, before their triumphant return *avec chocolat* on Easter Sunday.



GO ON A HUNT

We're not talking piddly back-garden forages, here. Every year, the Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte hosts an extravagant egg hunt with brightly-coloured little numbers, alongside pony rides, riddles, face painting and other fun, family-sized activities.

HAVE A SLICE OF
(GIANT) OMELETTE

Who said that all Easter eggs have to be of the chocolate persuasion? If you like your *œufs* fried, look no further than Bessières in Haute-Garonne. Locals cook up a giant omelette using 15,000 eggs and everyone queues for a slice!