

Celebrating the French calendar year

French A2 (elementary) · Lesson

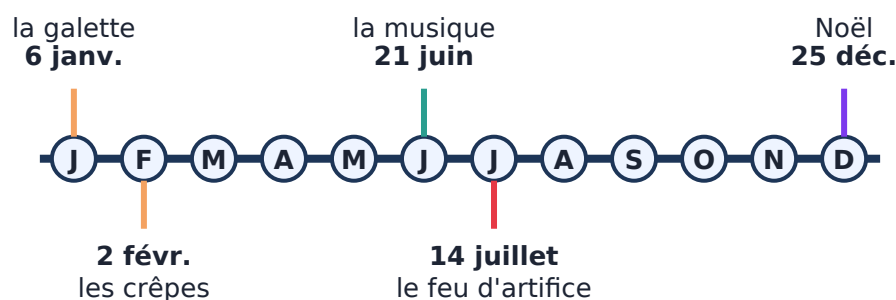
Quick answer: French celebrations follow a fixed calendar: la Chandeleur on February 2 with crêpes, la Fête de la musique on June 21 with free concerts, le 14 juillet with a parade and fireworks, and Noël on December 25. To give a date, say le + number + month, with no capital letters.

Level: French A2 (CEFR elementary) · **Standards:** CEFR A2, Reading

Which holidays mark the French year?

Four dates come up again and again with colleagues, neighbors and shopkeepers. Learn each date together with its tradition.

Date	Celebration	Tradition
le 6 janvier	l'Épiphanie	la galette des rois, a cake with a small hidden charm
le 2 février	la Chandeleur	les crêpes
le 21 juin	la Fête de la musique	free concerts in streets and squares
le 14 juillet	la Fête nationale	le défilé, le feu d'artifice, le bal
le 25 décembre	Noël	le sapin, les cadeaux, a family meal



Five dates to remember on the French calendar.

Culture note

Since 1982, la Fête de la musique fills French towns every June 21: amateurs play on sidewalks and concerts are free. On July 14, a military parade crosses Paris in the morning and fireworks close the evening. France has eleven public holidays a year, called les jours fériés.

How do you say a date and wish someone well?

Rule: dates and seasons

Give a date with le + number + month: le 21 juin. Only the first of the month is an ordinal: le 1er mai, said le premier mai. Months and days never take a capital letter. To say "in" a month, use en: en juillet. For seasons use au printemps, en été, en automne, en hiver.

Wishes to know

- Joyeux Noël ! — Merry Christmas!
- Bonne année ! — Happy New Year!
- Bonnes fêtes ! — Happy holidays!
- Joyeuses Pâques ! — Happy Easter!
- Bon anniversaire ! — Happy birthday!

Watch out

English says "June 21" or "the 21st of June". French puts the day first and uses no word for "on" except le: Je pars le 14 juillet. — I leave on July 14. Never write en le 14 juillet or le juillet 14. Also match the wish to the noun: Joyeux Noël but Bonne année.

How do you talk about plans for a celebration?

Use the near future: a form of aller + an infinitive. Nous allons voir le feu d'artifice. — We are going to watch the fireworks. Mélissa va préparer des crêpes. — Mélissa is going to make crêpes.

Subject	aller	Subject	aller
je	vais	nous	allons
tu	vas	vous	allez
il / elle / on	va	ils / elles	vont

Fête de la musique

le 21 juin, à 19 h

Cour de l'école Saint-Jean, Nantes

On apporte un plat à partager !

Guitares, voix, tambours : tout le monde joue.

Réponse avant le 15 juin, s'il vous plaît.

A neighbor's invitation: date, time, place, request.

Zoé's tip

Say a date like a postal address: small to big. Day first, then month. Then hang one image on each anchor: crêpes in winter, music at the start of summer, fireworks in mid-July, presents in December.

Key points to remember

- Dates are written day first: le 21 juin, le 14 juillet.
- Only the first of the month is an ordinal: le 1er mai.
- Use en with months (en juillet) and seasons except spring (au printemps).
- Wishes: Joyeux Noël, Bonne année, Bonnes fêtes.
- The near future is aller + infinitive: nous allons voir le feu d'artifice.

Celebrating the French Calendar Year: frequently asked questions

When is the Fête de la musique in France?

It takes place every year on June 21. Concerts are free and amateurs can play in the street. Many towns also close a few streets to cars that evening.

How do you write a date in French?

Write le + number + month, for example le 25 décembre. Use le 1er for the first day of a month. Months are written in lowercase letters.

What do French people eat on la Chandeleur?

They eat crêpes on February 2. Many families make them at home, sweet with sugar, jam or chocolate spread.

How do you say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in French?

Say Joyeux Noël for Christmas and Bonne année for the New Year. You can also say Bonnes fêtes

to wish someone happy holidays in general.

Is July 14 a public holiday in France?

Yes, le 14 juillet is a jour férié. Most offices and many shops are closed, and towns organize fireworks in the evening.