

## **France's Chirac rubbishes British food**

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**6 July, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### France's Chirac rubbishes British food

**BNE:** French President Jacques Chirac has landed himself in hot water over comments he made about British and Finnish cuisine. A reporter from France's *Liberation* newspaper alleges to have overheard Mr. Chirac making culinary quips to Russian and German leaders. President Chirac joked that Finnish food was the worst in Europe, followed closely by British fare. He said: "The only thing they [the British] have done for European agriculture is mad cow". An added swipe at British cooking was: "You can't trust people who cook as badly as that." His antagonistic remarks have stoked up Anglo-French rivalries ahead of the G8 summit, which begins on July 6.

Mr. Chirac's tasteless and unsavory asides may have connotations for Paris's 2012 Olympics bid. The final decision will be made on July 6 and two Finnish delegates are part of the deciding committee. British people have retaliated at Mr. Chirac's broadsides against their food by boycotting French produce. British newspapers too have had a field day lambasting the French leader for his irreverent diplomatic faux pas. Egon Ronay, a renowned food critic, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*: "A man full of bile is not fit to pronounce on food." *The Sun* was equally unrestrained, calling Mr. Chirac a "petty, racist creep"; while the *Daily Express* gibed, "he has lost his marbles".

## WARM-UPS

**1. BEST AND WORST:** In pairs / groups, tell each other why you believe your country's cuisine is the best in the world. Also, talk about which country has the worst tasting food in the world.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Jacques Chirac / hot water / Finnish cuisine / British food / mad cow disease / 2012 Olympics / French produce / supermarkets / faux pas / racism / marbles*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. FRENCH CUISINE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with French food. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**4. OPINIONS ON CHIRAC:** In pairs / groups, talk about how far you agree with these opinions about French President Chirac and his comments on food.

- a. He is a petty, racist creep.
- b. He should be forever congratulated for not supporting the war in Iraq.
- c. It's time for him to retire. Europe needs younger leaders.
- d. He's French and so he knows a lot about good quality food.
- e. A diplomat who makes ridiculous comments should not be at the G8 summit.
- f. Mr. Chirac made a joke. It seems the British have no sense of humour.
- g. I wonder if Mr. Chirac has ever tasted Finnish food.
- h. President Chirac has most definitely lost his marbles.
- i. I don't understand how Mr. Chirac can say fish and chips are not tasty.
- j. British food is among the best in the world nowadays. Finnish food is good too.

**5. WORLD CUISINE:** In pairs / groups, talk about the most delicious things about the following cuisines.

- Indian
- French
- Italian
- Korean
- English
- Chinese
- Thai
- American
- Japanese
- Finnish

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. The French president put his British dinner in the trash can.          | T / F |
| b. Mr. Chirac said Finnish food was the worst in Europe.                  | T / F |
| c. Mr. Chirac said British people could not cook well.                    | T / F |
| d. Mr. Chirac's jokes have eased Anglo-British tensions.                  | T / F |
| e. Paris's Olympic bid may be harmed by Mr. Chirac's remarks.             | T / F |
| f. British shoppers are boycotting French produce.                        | T / F |
| g. A British food critic said Mr. Chirac is an expert judge of good food. | T / F |
| h. Mr. Chirac loves playing with marbles.                                 | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| a. hot water        | bash        |
| b. quips            | blunders    |
| c. swipe            | insulting   |
| d. antagonistic     | comments    |
| e. stoked up        | comment     |
| f. asides           | tirades     |
| g. broadsides       | big trouble |
| h. faux pas         | gone crazy  |
| i. pronounce        | wisecracks  |
| j. lost his marbles | intensified |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. landed himself                 | swipe at                   |
| b. alleges                        | Anglo-French rivalries     |
| c. an added                       | Paris's 2012 Olympics bid  |
| d. antagonistic                   | field day                  |
| e. stoked up                      | remarks                    |
| f. may have connotations for      | pronounce on food          |
| g. British people have retaliated | in hot water               |
| h. newspapers too have had a      | his marbles                |
| i. not fit to                     | at Mr. Chirac's broadsides |
| j. he has lost                    | to have overheard          |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**ODD WORD OUT:** Place a line through the word that does not fit in the groups of three *italicized* words.

### France's Chirac rubbishes British food

**BNE:** French President Jacques Chirac has landed himself in *hot / troubled / mineral* water over comments he made about British and Finnish cuisine. A reporter from France's "Liberation" newspaper *claims / alleges / alerts* to have overheard Mr. Chirac making culinary *wisecracks / recipes / quips* to Russian and German leaders. President Chirac joked that Finnish food was the worst in Europe, followed closely by British fare. He said: "The only thing they [the British] have done for European agriculture is mad cow". An added *swipe / swine / dig* at British cooking was: "You can't trust people who cook as badly as that." His antagonistic remarks have *played down / intensified / stoked up* Anglo-French rivalries ahead of the G8 summit, which begins on July 6.

Mr. Chirac's tasteless and unsavory *besides / asides / remarks* may have *consultations / connotations / ramifications* for Paris's 2012 Olympics bid. The final decision will be made on July 6 and two Finnish delegates are part of the deciding committee. British people have retaliated at Mr. Chirac's *broadsides / broadsheets / tirades* against their food by boycotting French produce. British newspapers too have had a field day *lambasting / roasting / laminating* the French leader for his irreverent diplomatic faux pas. Egon Ronay, a renowned food critic, wrote in the "Daily Telegraph": "A man full of bile is not fit to pronounce on food." "The Sun" was equally unrestrained, calling Mr. Chirac a "petty, racist creep"; while the "Daily Express" *jeered / jived / gibed*, "he has lost his marbles".

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'Anglo' and 'French'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. ODD WORD OUT:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the exercise. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT CHIRAC/CUISINE SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about world cuisine or Jacques Chirac (or both).

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| • landed      | • unsavory   |
| • alleges     | • delegates  |
| • worst       | • retaliated |
| • agriculture | • lambasting |
| • swipe       | • fit        |
| • stoked up   | • marbles    |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
- c. Do you think it's a good headline?
- d. What do you think about President Chirac's comments?
- e. What do you think about French food?
- f. Is your country's food the best in the world?
- g. Is it OK for Mr. Chirac to make such jokes?
- h. Are his comments real jokes or just remarks made in bad taste?
- i. Do you think Mr. Chirac has lost his marbles?
- j. Do you think President Chirac is racist?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What would you think if President Chirac rubbished your country's food?
- d. Do you like going international and trying different cuisines?
- e. What do you know about British and Finnish food?
- f. Do you think Tony Blair should be angry at Mr. Chirac's humour?
- g. Have you ever boycotted the produce or goods of another country?
- h. Do you think Mr. Chirac is full of bile (bitterness)?
- i. Do the newspapers in your country take delight in lambasting the leaders of other countries?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

### FOOD FACTS:

Ask the other students in your class what they know about three different cuisines of the world (write them in the table). Write their answers below.

	Famous dishes	Taste	Healthiness	Variety	Spices
Cuisine 1 _____					
Cuisine 2 _____					
Cuisine 3 _____					

After you have finished, sit with a partner / in groups and discuss what you found out. Were you surprised at anything? Did you find out anything interesting?



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### France's Chirac rubbishes British food

**BNE:** French President Jacques Chirac has landed himself in \_\_\_\_\_ over comments he made about British and Finnish cuisine. A reporter from France's *Liberation* newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ overheard Mr. Chirac making culinary \_\_\_\_\_ to Russian and German leaders. He joked that Finnish food was the worst in Europe, followed closely by British \_\_\_\_\_. President Chirac said: "The only thing they [the British] have done for European agriculture is mad cow". An \_\_\_\_\_ at British cooking was: "You can't trust people who cook as badly as that." His \_\_\_\_\_ remarks have \_\_\_\_\_ Anglo-French rivalries ahead of the G8 summit, which begins on July 6.

Mr. Chirac's tasteless and \_\_\_\_\_ may have connotations for Paris's 2012 Olympics bid. The final decision will be made on July 6 and two \_\_\_\_\_ are part of the deciding committee. British people have \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Chirac's broadsides against their food by boycotting French produce. British newspapers too have had \_\_\_\_\_ lambasting the French leader for his irreverent diplomatic \_\_\_\_\_. Egon Ronay, a renowned food critic, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*: "A man \_\_\_\_\_ is not fit to pronounce on food." *The Sun* was equally unrestrained, calling Mr. Chirac a "petty, racist creep"; while the *Daily Express* gibed, "he has \_\_\_\_\_".

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the fallout from Mr. Chirac's comments. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. YUMMY:** Write a description of your favourite food. Describe exactly how you like it cooked / prepared, how it makes you feel and how important it is to you. Write about the history you have with this food. Read your descriptions to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar foods?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to French President Jacques Chirac. Tell him what you think of his comments on British and Finnish food. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. T      d. F      e. T      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. hot water	big trouble
b. quips	wisecracks
c. swipe	bash
d. antagonistic	insulting
e. stoked up	intensified
f. asides	comments
g. broadsides	tirades
h. faux pas	blunders
i. pronounce	comment
j. lost his marbles	gone crazy

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. landed himself	in hot water
b. alleges	to have overheard
c. an added	swipe at
d. antagonistic	remarks
e. stoked up	Anglo-French rivalries
f. may have connotations for	Paris's 2012 Olympics bid
g. British people have retaliated	at Mr. Chirac's broadsides
h. newspapers too have had a	field day
i. not fit to	pronounce on food
j. he has lost	his marbles

### ODD WORD OUT:

#### France's Chirac rubbishes British food

**BNE:** French President Jacques Chirac has landed himself in *hot / troubled / mineral* water over comments he made about British and Finnish cuisine. A reporter from France's "Liberation" newspaper *claims / alleges / alerts* to have overheard Mr. Chirac making culinary *wisecracks / recipes / quips* to Russian and German leaders. President Chirac joked that Finnish food was the worst in Europe, followed closely by British fare. He said: "The only thing they [the British] have done for European agriculture is mad cow". An added *swipe / swine / dig* at British cooking was: "You can't trust people who cook as badly as that." His antagonistic remarks have ~~*played down*~~ / *intensified / stoked up* Anglo-French rivalries ahead of the G8 summit, which begins on July 6. Mr. Chirac's tasteless and unsavory ~~*besides*~~ / *asides / remarks* may have ~~*consultations / connotations / ramifications*~~ for Paris's 2012 Olympics bid. The final decision will be made on July 6 and two Finnish delegates are part of the deciding committee. British people have retaliated at Mr. Chirac's *broadsides / broadsheets / tirades* against their food by boycotting French produce. British newspapers too have had a field day *lambasting / roasting / laminating* the French leader for his irreverent diplomatic faux pas. Egon Ronay, a renowned food critic, wrote in the "Daily Telegraph": "A man full of bile is not fit to pronounce on food." "The Sun" was equally unrestrained, calling Mr. Chirac a "petty, racist creep"; while the "Daily Express" *jeered / jived / gibed*, "he has lost his marbles".