

## Homesick



I have been traveling in and out of my country since I was 18, but I've recently **realised** that this is the longest time I've been away without a little month's break or something in the middle. **Lately** I've been feeling kind of **homesick**, so I thought I would share with you a few reasons why.

You might laugh, since French cuisine is among the best in the world, but I miss my American food! Although I've recently become vegetarian, I can tell you that when I go back to the US this July, I will not be adhering to my new **diet**, although I must add that the vegetarian and vegan restaurants are so incredible that even meat eaters would be surprised to learn that what they are eating isn't **actually** meat. Vegetarians have so many more options there!! But the thing I miss the most is Tex-Mex, which is a mix of Texan and Mexican cuisine. Think spicy salsa and guacamole with tortilla chips and everything covered in **lime** juice, fresh tomatoes and **cilantro**. Also, if you have never eaten a thick Texas rib-eye steak, you have not yet lived. Sadly I know the difference involves things like injected hormones and chemicals but if I only get to eat it once every 2 or 3 years, it's OK, right? Speaking of beef, did you know that hot dogs are made of beef and not pork, like they are here? They are a **billion** times better, especially with fresh onions on top and some American mustard. Finally I have to say that one of the best culinary inventions is the giant soft pretzel. I love them so much that I found a way to make them **from scratch** here! It takes me three hours but sometimes I just have to have them. The only bad part is that you absolutely need American mustard with them, and I've just **run out of** my stash!

Another reason why I miss the US is because of the opportunities there. If you want to study oceanography, there is a university only 20 minutes away from you, teaching it! (Also, **side note**, why is oceanography so difficult to study here, the ocean is RIGHT THERE!) If you want to learn vinyasa yoga, well you have a choice of 7 studios in your neighborhood! If you want to take piano lessons, there are 30 teachers in your area and someone will probably even come to your house. If you want to order a spiralizer (seriously this is a recent problem I have had here, I can't get anyone to ship one to Reunion!) (oh and a spiralizer is something that turns vegetables into **noodles**.) well you just take five minutes deciding on the style you want on Amazon and it shows up at your door in only 8-10 working days! If you want ANYTHING at ANYTIME, whatever you can dream up, you can have, be, or do. You are only limited by your ambition and imagination. And I guess by money too.

Did you know in the US, the customer has the power? Capitalism certainly has it's flaws, but when you decide to spend your hard earned money somewhere, the company at least **pretends** to make you feel important. Because they know you can just as easily turn around and spend your money somewhere else. And they definitely want you to stay. I used to **wait tables** at a bar. The wait staff is paid \$2.13 an hour,



just enough to cover taxes. You bring home only what you earn in **tips**. (Which, by the way, is 20 percent of your bill in the US, if you ever travel there! That's why the restaurants are so much **cheaper**, gratuity is not included!) So the wait staff is motivated to make you the happiest/**drunkest** person you can possibly be. The more happy you are, the more likely you are to come back, to tell you friends to come with you, and to request your really lovely waitress who always takes good care of you. We have a time limit in the US. In general, you are supposed to be greeted at your table within one minute of sitting down, and a drink should be in your hand within the first five minutes. If your beer is down to the last quarter, you will be handed another one without even having to ask for it. The last few times I've been to a restaurant here, I've waited about 20 minutes for someone to stroll over to my table and ask what we want. Then they either forget what we ordered or mess it up **somehow**, or they take another hour to get the food on the table. I'm not exaggerating, this happens more than it doesn't here. And in Reunion, when your hot water **breaks down** in your apartment, your **landlord** will apparently take the first few days to argue with you about why you should pay to replace his fifteen year old water heater, and then when he concedes, he'll send two incompetent guys who can't **fix** the problem for another five days. Back home, the landlord would have that changed out in a day, and if for some reason he couldn't, he'd offer you some kind of "I'm sorry" **gift** like restaurant tickets or a **fruit basket**. They want you to stay and be happy, write nice reviews about them online and tell everyone how **awesome** they are.

So, I invite anyone to meet me in the US in July! We will share some great Tex-Mex at a restaurant with excellent service, and then go off to our yoga/singing classes because YES WE CAN!

## Vocabulary

realise - se rendre compte de

lately - récemment

homesick - nostalgique

diet - régime

actually - en fait

lime - citron vert

cilantro - coriandre

a billion - milliard

from scratch - à partir de zéro

run out of - à court de

side note - notes secondaires

noodles - nouilles

pretend - prétendre

wait tables - servir des tables

tips - pourboire

cheaper - moins cher

drunkest - plus ivre

somehow - d'une façon ou d'une autre

break down - tomber en panne

landlord - propriétaire

fix - réparer

gift - cadeau

fruit basket - corbeille de fruits

awesome - impressionnant

