

# Aperitif - One of Life's Small Pleasures of French Lifestyle

Perhaps my favorite French custom is *l'heure de l'apéritif*, a time to transition between the day's activities and the evening meal with a beverage and a few nibbles. *Apéritif*, derived from the Latin *aprire*, meaning 'to open', is designed to open up the palate and stimulate the appetite. A light alcoholic beverage and a few snacks at the end of the day with friends, family and good conversation is truly one of life's small pleasures.

I recently discovered Pastis and it has become my apéritif of choice. Originating in 1920 in the [south of France](#), Pastis is an anise flavored liqueur poured over ice, then diluted with water. The amount of water varies to one's taste, but a 1 to 5 ratio is common. And, fun little aside, Pastis turns milky white when mixed with water.

If the flavor of black licorice isn't your proverbial cup of

tea, have yourself a glass of rosé, sparkling wine, a beer or another light cocktail.



The experience would not be complete without some delicious accompaniments, small bites to prepare you for the meal to come. While there are no hard and fast rules, the tidbits should be small finger foods, a variety of textures and definitely include something salty. I prefer an assortment – a little tapenade, a crunchy, salty nut, a slice of saucisson (dry cured sausage), some olives, bread or crunchy crackers – a little of this, a little of that. Just enough to leave you wanting more.

During warm weather, head outside, take in the evening air. Or sit by the fire during the cooler months, light a few candles and decompress from the day with those you love.