

Paris Waiters Race Through History

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. waitstaff: (noun) /'weɪt.stæf/ - People who work in a restaurant, cafe, or similar establishment, serving customers and taking orders.
Example: The waitstaff at the restaurant provided excellent service and made us feel welcome.
2. crowned: (verb) /kraʊnd/ - Declared as a winner in a competition, often in a formal ceremony.
Example: Pauline Van Wymeersch was crowned the fastest waitress after winning the race.
3. ambassador: (noun) /æm'bæs.ə.dər/ - A person who represents and promotes a profession, country, or organization.
Example: Samy Lamrous became an ambassador for the waitstaff profession in Paris after his victory in the race.
4. moody: (adjective) /'muː.di/ - Having unpredictable changes in mood, often in a negative or challenging way.
Example: The moody weather in Paris made the waitstaff race more challenging for the participants.
5. essence: (noun) /'es.əns/ - The core nature or most important quality of something.
Example: The essence of French cafes lies in their relaxed atmosphere and excellent service.
6. distinct: (adjective) /dɪ'stɪŋkt/ - Clearly different or easily recognizable from others.
Example: Each French cafe has its own distinct character, thanks to the dedicated waitstaff.



Usain Bolt might be the fastest human, but his speed would likely slow down if he tried balancing a tray while running through the streets of Paris. On March 24, a couple of hundred waiters and waitresses dressed in their uniforms gathered for a 2-kilometer race that started and

finished at City Hall. Each participant had to balance a tray containing a croissant, an empty coffee cup, and a full glass of water as they raced through the streets.

This waitering race is a Parisian tradition that first took place in 1914 but has not been held for the past 13 years. The race highlights the skills of **waitstaff** in Paris, celebrating the newly **crowned** fastest waitress and waiter, Pauline Van Wymeersch and Samy Lamrous. These winners will serve as **ambassadors** for the important French profession of waitering.

As France prepares for the Paris Olympics this July, the profession faces a big task ahead, taking orders from millions of visitors. Van Wymeersch, who completed the race in 14 minutes and 12 seconds, began working as a waitress at age 16 and has remained dedicated to the profession ever since. Despite the challenges of the job, she describes it as being part of her DNA, and she cannot imagine another life for herself.

Winners Van Wymeersch and Lamrous were rewarded with medals, two tickets each to the July 26 Olympic opening ceremony along the River Seine, and a night at a Paris hotel. The race itself was a celebration of the skillful and sometimes **moody** waitstaff, who play a vital role in giving French cafes and restaurants their unique character.

These dedicated professionals provide a space for the French people to gather, discuss the world, fall in and out of love, and relax. Without their hard work and dedication, the **essence** of French culture would be lost, as their role in the country's cafes and restaurants is essential for creating the **distinct** atmosphere that people love.

DISCUSSION

1. How do you think you would do in a race balancing a tray with food and drinks? Would you be fast or slow?
2. If you could create your own waitering race, what would you add to make it even more fun and challenging?
3. The waitering race came back after 13 years. What other traditions would you like to see revived in your community?
4. How important do you think the waitstaff will be during the Olympics? What challenges might they face?
5. What job or career could you imagine being passionate about, just like Pauline Van Wymeersch is with waitering?
6. The winners of the race received medals and tickets to the Olympics. What other rewards could be given to celebrate waitstaff?
7. How do you think the atmosphere of cafes and restaurants would change without dedicated waitstaff? What is your favorite thing about café culture?