Scénario : Chez le traiteur

Chantal organise l’anniversaire de sa fille. Elle passe chez Monsieur Michel, le traiteur, pour passer commande.


M. Michel : Très bien, Madame. Est-ce que ce sont des adultes ou des enfants ?

Chantal : Les deux.

M. Michel : C’est pour midi ou le soir ?

Chantal : En fin d’après-midi, en fait. Donc il ne faut pas que ça soit trop copieux.

M. Michel : D’accord. Vous serez combien ?

Chantal : Onze ou douze, je ne suis pas sûre…

M. Michel : Disons douze. Et vous voulez y mettre combien ?

Chantal : Oh, pas plus de 100-120 euros.

M. Michel : Très bien. Voilà, je peux vous proposer un assortiment de canapés, petites bouchées apéritif salées, avec des mini pizzas, mini quiches, petits choux farcis, etc. Et on peut y ajouter quelques légumes crus, ce n’est pas trop cher et c’est rafraîchissant. Pour 10 portions chacun, ça vous coûtera environ 10 euros par personne.

Chantal : Et bien c’est parfait ! Est-ce que vous pouvez livrer à domicile ?


Chantal : Merci beaucoup.

Chantal is planning her daughter’s birthday party. She goes to Mr Michel’s shop, the caterer, to place an order.

Chantal: Good morning, Sir. I’m having a little birthday party next Saturday with some friends, and I would like to order a few hors d’oeuvre or appetizers.

Mr Michel: Very well, Madam. Are they adults or children?

Chantal: Both.

Mr Michel: Is it for lunch or dinner?

Chantal: In fact, it is for the end of the afternoon. So it shouldn’t be too filling.

Mr Michel: All right. How many will be there?

Chantal: Eleven or twelve, I am not sure…

Mr Michel: Let’s say twelve. And how much do you want to pay?

Chantal: Oh, no more than 100-120 euros.

Mr Michel: Very good. Here we are, I can offer you a set of canapés, small salted appetizers, with mini pizzas, mini quiches, stuffed pastry shells, etc. And we can add some raw vegetables, it is not too expensive and refreshing. For 10 portions per person, it will cost you approximately 10 euros per person.

Chantal: Well, that is perfect! Do you make deliveries?

Mr Michel: Of course, give me the address, and the time, and we will deliver the trays.

Chantal: Thanks a lot.

Birthday Party (cont’d)

Diner or teatime?

The party can simply be a diner in the evening, an afternoon at teatime if you invite only children, or a late evening after diner if there are no children. Such gatherings rarely take place during the lunchtime. If you invite both adults and children, a good formula is to chose the end of the afternoon. The easiest thing to do if you want to avoid a few headaches, and also to make sure to do things properly, is to order some appetizers from a local caterer to accompany the aperitif. See above how to place an order at the caterer’s. And, of course, you will have to order a birthday cake at a pastry shop. You can ask them to write “Happy Birthday” on the cake, and
Birthday Party (cont’d)

As regards the drinks, some champagne or good quality sparkling wine (such as Crémant de Bourgogne, cheaper than champagne) is always welcome for a birthday party. And the children too like sparkling drinks made with fruit juices. But if you organize the party at aperitif time, you can also simply offer traditional French drinks served at that time, different according to the region: Kir or Porto almost everywhere, pastis in the south, Pineau des Charentes in the west, etc.

You must also be aware that when French people are invited to someone’s house, they always bring something! Of course, for a birthday they will offer a gift to the person concerned. But it is not impossible that they also come with a bottle of something to drink! They may even ask you what they could bring. But unless you know them very well, it is better not to give them a list of what you need…

By the way, if children are invited to the birthday of one of your kids, it is a good idea to prepare small gifts for each of them, gifts that they could, for example, win during a game (See our third Scenario page 17).

And don’t get upset if your guests arrive a little late. In France, it is in good taste to arrive at least 10-15 minutes late, sometimes even more. It is even impolite to arrive exactly on time – and even more so to get there early! A good thing to know, when you too are invited out…

Happy Birthday!

Don’t forget the candles!

Quelques expressions et mots courants

Un anniversaire = a birthday
Un anniversaire de mariage = an wedding anniversary
Bon/joyeux Anniversaire ! = Happy Birthday!

Un cadeau d’anniversaire = a birthday present
Une carte d’anniversaire = a birthday card
Un dîner d’anniversaire = a birthday diner
Une fête d’anniversaire = a birthday party
Un gâteau d’anniversaire = a birthday cake

Une soirée anniversaire = might be a birthday evening, but also a celebration evening of any event.

Quel âge as-tu/avez-vous ? = How old are you? (be careful not to ask the question in this direct way to a French woman, even if you know her quite well! She may not appreciate it at all).

Cela te/vous fait quel âge maintenant ? = How old are you now? (idem)

Un carton d’invitation = a small invitation card (an invitation card would be une carte d’invitation)
Passer une commande chez le traiteur = to place an order with the caterer
Commander le gâteau chez le pâtissier/à la pâtisserie = to order the cake at the pastry shop
Décorer la maison, la table… = to decorate the house, the table…
Organiser une surprise = to organize a surprise
Allumer les bougies = to light the candles
Souffler les bougies = to blow out the candles
Faire un vœu = to make a wish