**'It's time the French quit bashing1 British food'**

***Are the French developing a secret fondness for British cuisine? And will they ever admit it? Paris-based blogger Naomi Firsht explores this spikey issue.2***

Having lived in France for five years, the number of times I’ve heard my home cuisine insulted by a French person is too high to count. It seems to be wired into their DNA: French food is the best in the world and British fare3 isn’t fit for an animal to eat. I have done my best to undo French stereotypes. So now it’s time for the French to admit how much they really like British grub4, because they do.

A couple of years ago, when Marks & Spencer opened on the Champs Elysées, there was a queue to enter for the first three weeks. These people wanted scones, cheddar cheese and pork sausages, and guess what? Most of them were French. They love our pies, sandwiches, bread and Victoria sponges; they just don’t like to admit it…Or do they?

The last few months have seen the advent of a fish & chips truck, the Daily Wagon, and the opening of the very [first fish and chip shop in Paris, The Sunken Chip](http://www.thelocal.fr/20130913/restaurants-paris-set-for-fish-and-chip-revolution), based in the trendy Canal Saint Martin area. This fish & chips restaurant gets top marks for authenticity, thanks to its British chefs. Fat chunky chips, crispy battered haddock and mushy peas with mint are served in a cardboard dish with disposable wooden knives and forks. When I was there, the tables were full. In all I counted two English people, including me, the rest were French.

So what about the rest of our fine British cooking? The latest trend in new Paris cafés is small New York style coffee shops that serve, amongst other baked goods, fresh scones with jam.

Fusion food and British-inspired dishes are also becoming more commonplace in the French capital. Le Bal Café in the 18th arrondissement is a perfect example of an Anglo-French blend. Run by two chefs, one English, the other French-Irish, the menu is British-based and includes Welsh rarebit, kippers on toast, scones and porridge. I went for brunch and once again found the restaurant bursting with5 Parisians all chowing down on fry-ups and bacon pie.

It looks to me like it’s time to stop the British food bashing. No-one’s saying that our national gastronomy is better than that of France (quelle idée!) but it’s not all baked beans on toast. We do have some culinary tricks up our sleeves.

Naomi Firsht(in the blog *Sous les toits)*

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1to bash: critiquer

2spikey issue: sujet épineux

3fare: nourriture

4grub: nourriture (familier)

5bursting with: plein de