

Water

- Yes . . . Just ordinary water- from your tap.

In EU countries (including Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain and Italy, most places, in fact) the water you get from the tap has to be of “potable quality” – that means you must be able to drink it with no ill effects.

British TV viewers might remember the famous episode of *Only Fools and Horses* where the hero, Del Boy, bottles tap water from his local reservoir as a money making scam. His scheme for selling “Peckham Spring” water only goes wrong when he, himself, pollutes the water supply. Fact can be stranger than fiction as events turn out because there’s not an awful lot of difference, in reality, between some bottled water and tap water!

In French restaurants – even the top end, where “fine-dining” is the norm, “*un peu d'eau du robinet, s'il vous plaît*” (“a little tap water, please”) has never caused offence to owner or diner alike. If you’re trying to avoid alcohol as the most calorific ingredient of your drink and would like to avoid synthetic products as a substitute, try water. As well as being much cheaper and, probably just as good for you. It used to be the case in the UK, that restauranteur could charge for a glass of tap-water or even refuse to serve it all.

The law has changed since 6 April 2010. Under the terms of the revised Licensing Act 2003 it is now an offence for licensed restauranteurs (that is where they have a licence to serve alcohol) to turn down customers who ask for a glass of tap water free of charge. Refusal has been made punishable by a fine of up to £20,000, six months in prison or the drinks licence being revoked. Very good news: so remember to ask for water! It’s free and it’s good for you.

The only differences between tap water and bottled water are the chemicals they contain, some natural, some artificial: the biggest difference is tap water is either “hard” or “soft”. There should be absolutely no organisms. It’s always quite safe.



Tilly's Top Tip*: "Drinking a glass of water 20 minutes before you eat has the effect of tricking the tummy and mind into thinking that food is already being digested."

Tilly's Top Tips are taken from *Permanent Weight-Loss* by Dr James Henshall.