





# HOW TO PROTEST LIKE THE FRENCH

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France is a leading expert in cheese and pastries, but they also know a thing or two about exercising their right to dissent.



The French are no strangers to making their voices heard. From shutting down roads in entire cities to releasing piglets in grocery stores, the people of France have found creative ways to get their way.

These temper tantrums receive widespread public support, but can also be a detriment to the labor force; the French lose an average of fifty-eight work days due to protest.

Of the thousands of protests that the French have taken part in, here are some of the craziest:

The most recent Farmers Protest pushed back against the falling profits from cheaper imported goods. To win the fight, farmers blocked entire cities with tractors and other agricultural equipment. Some farmers even brought animals to release on the streets, adding to the chaos that was unfolding throughout the country.

The agricultural community further showed their displeasure by spraying government buildings with manure, and that wasn't the first time either. In doing so, some politicians heading into the office were forced to take an extra shower.

Other farmer protests that have become popular in France are the dumping of milk trucks across major highways. A similar debacle occurred with a Spanish wine truck entering the country. Farmers even smashed hundreds of thousands of eggs in rebellion to the low egg prices across the country.

While these protests may hurt French farmers' profits temporarily, they are highly committed and have found some unconventional ways to rally public support. Perhaps the most innovative tactic, French pig farmers released dozens of piglets around a grocery store in Southern France. The moral implications of purchasing bacon with a live pig sitting next to the cooler probably hurt the day's meat sales. Hopefully they stocked some vegetarian options.

More recent protests involve the French pension reform. Garbage collectors staged their own protest by refusing to collect trash, letting it accumulate on the streets of Paris. This made for a couple of smelly weeks for tourists and their photos, creating the trend #MacronGarbage.

Citizens have also taken measures into their own hands by hijacking ferry boats and melting plastic on train tracks, which suspended service to the U.K. and later raised ticket prices.

When Air France proposed cutting 3,000 jobs, workers and citizens around the country drew inspiration from Bastille and stormed the corporate headquarters, chasing the head of Labor Relations out of the building. During his attempted escape, protestors literally ripped the shirt off his back. As a result, the company reversed course, with leaders fearing they'd be chased next.

Singer and actress Courtney Love was caught up in the chaos, too. Amidst the anti-Uber protests, her Uber driver was taken hostage and the car was flipped. She took to Twitter saying, "This is France? I'd be safer in Baghdad."

The French know how to protest. In every instance, police arrive on scene, but very rarely do they intervene. Why? The right to protest is such an integral part of French society that it is protected in their constitution.

Maybe the rest of the world should start taking notice. Picture the change that could come if Americans started spraying government buildings and officials with manure. Hopefully they have a backup outfit in the office. The right to protest is protected in many countries around the world, so maybe we should let the chaos unfold. We, as citizens of the world, have a civic duty to uphold.

