
Fact Sheet – Don't say Je Veux in French

Je veux means “I want”, which is a rather rude way of asking for something in France, even aggressive. For example: *Je veux un café ! Je veux celui-là ! Je veux une table près de la fenêtre.* It's like demanding that you want something **now** - give it to me!

Here are eight much more acceptable and polite ways of asking for something in French:

1. **Je voudrais**

The polite classic. For example, **je voudrais un café s'il vous plaît**. I would like a coffee please.

This expression is perfect for formal situations. Respectful, soft and smooth.

2. **J'aimerais**

More refined, more elegant, the French touch. For example: **J'aimerais goûter le vin rouge s'il vous plaît**. I would like to taste the red wine please.

3. **Est-ce que je pourrais avoir...**

Could I have... Very common, very polite. For example: **Est-ce que je pourrais avoir un verre d'eau s'il vous plaît ?** Could I have a glass of water please ? You are asking, not demanding and that's a real game changer.

4. **Pour moi, ce sera...**

Very French. For example : **Pour moi, ce sera une salade niçoise**. For me, it will be a niçoise salad. This expression is confident, not pushy.

5. **Je vais prendre**

I will have. Simple, direct, but totally fine. For example: **Je vais prendre un croissant s'il vous plaît**. I will have a croissant please. You will hear this expression everywhere.

6. **Il me faudrait...**

I would need... This one is more formal, useful in shops or paperwork. For example: **Il me faudrait deux tickets s'il vous plaît**. I would need two tickets please.

The last two are super casual. Very native expressions that most of the textbooks never teach.

7. **J'ai envie de... ou Ça me dirait bien de...**

I feel like, or I'd like/love to. Very casual, perfect for friends. These expressions sound natural and real.

For example:

J'ai envie d'une pizza, I feel like pizza.

Eh mais, ça me dirait bien une raclette ce soir. Hey, but I'd really like some raclette tonight.

8. **Vous pouvez me mettre... ?**

Can you give me ? You will hear this expression all the time at markets or bars.

For example: **Vous pouvez me mettre 200g de fromage s'il vous plaît ?** Can you give me 200 grams of cheese please ? This expression is super common, authentic French.

Turn over the page to test yourself to see how much you have remembered.

Questions :

1. Which is the correct way to order mint tea? (one good answer)
2. If you want to order pizza with friends? (there are two good answers)
3. Classic restaurant phrase? (there are two good answers)
4. Which phrase should you avoid if you want to sound polite? (only one answer)

Answers :

1. Je voudrais un thé à la menthe
2. J'ai envie d'une pizza
Ça me dirait bien une pizza
3. Pour moi, ce sera
Je vais prendre
4. Je veux