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pedrosimoes7

Best High End Restaurants in Paris

Paris, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: From truffles à 'gaga' at Michel Rostang tucked away in Paris' bourgeoise, chic 17th Arrondisement to classic French cuisine with a modern touch at Jules Vernes in prime tourist territory at the Eiffel Tower to downstream at La Tour d'Argent in swanky St. Germain -- a dinner for two with a nice bottle of wine at anyone of these Parisain fine restaurants is likely to set you back as much as a round trip ticket from New York, but any trip to Paris wouldn't be complete without at least one dinner 'a la luxe.' So scour the discount airfare site and downgrade from business class and try to book a table at any of these super pricey Parisian culinary wonders. Even vegetarians have a spot on this list - check out L'Arpege.

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My List

contact:
tel: + 33 1 45 55 61 44
fax: +33 1 47 05 29 41
http:// http://www.lejulesverne-paris.com/

location:
Tour Eiffel, 5 Avenue Gustave Eiffel
Paris 75007

hours:
12.15-13.30 & 19.00-21.30pm Mon-Sat

1 Le Jules Verne

Jules Verne (Le)

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Reservations essential

DESCRIPTION: Working under the overall direction of the many-Michelin-starred Alain Ducasse, who is a household name in France, the young chef Pascal Féraud and his team of thirtysomethings present a menu that tries to give a modern touch to the dishes that are considered part of France's heritage. A meal here does not come cheap – the set menu is 200€ - but you are paying for top-class cooking in a unique location. There is a private lift (elevator) from the south pillar to carry you to the dining room 125 metres up in the air. The set menu might include green asparagus from Provence with truffled French toast, pan-seared turbot served Joinville-style with prawns and mushrooms or sautéd medallions of veal, while the à la carte features poached Brittany lobster and escalope of duck foie gras en cocotte and duckling cooked with turnips and plums in a cider reduction.
Feature image: © Paris Tourist Office / Amélie Dupont © NileGuide

contact:
tel: 01-43-54-23-31
fax: 01-44-07-12-04
www.latourdargent.com

location:
15-17 quai de la Tournelle, 5e
Paris 75005

hours:
Tues-Sun noon-1:15pm;
Tues-Sun 7:30-9pm

2 La Tour d'Argent

Photo courtesy of La Tour d'Argent

DESCRIPTION: This penthouse restaurant, a national institution, enjoys a panoramic view over the Seine and Notre-Dame. Although its reputation as the best in Paris has long been eclipsed, dining here remains an unsurpassed event, not because of the diminishing culinary reputation of this place, but because of the view of those flying buttresses of Notre-Dame. A restaurant of some sort has stood on this site since 1582: Mme de Sévigné refers to a cafe here in her letters, and Dumas used it in one of his novels. The fame of La Tour d'Argent spread during its ownership by Frédéric Delair, who in the 1890s started the practice of issuing certificates to diners who ordered caneton (pressed duckling). The birds are numbered: The first was served to Edward VII in 1890, and now the number has surpassed 1.2 million! For decades, the restaurant was owned by Claude Terrail, who became the most famous restauranteur in Europe. He died in 2006, and today management is handled by his son, André. A good part of the menu is devoted to duck, but the kitchen, of course, knows how to prepare other dishes. There are plenty of other places nearby where you can order food even better than that served here -- and at only half the price. © Frommer's

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contact:
tel: 01-58-36-12-50
fax: 01-58-36-12-51
www.pierre-gagnaire.com

location:
6 rue Balzac, 8e
Paris 75008

hours:
Mon-Fri noon-1:30pm; Sun-Fri 7:30-10pm

3 Pierre Gagnaire

DESCRIPTION: If you're able to get a reservation, it's worth the effort. The menus are seasonal to take advantage of France's rich bounty; owner Pierre Gagnaire demands perfection, and the chef has a dazzling way with flavors and textures. Stellar examples are roast duck, and turbot cooked in a bag and served with fennel and Provençal lemons. Chicken with truffles comes in two stages -- first the breast in wine-based aspic and then the thighs, chopped into roughly textured pieces. © Frommer's

Photo courtesy of Pierre Gagnaire

contact:
tel: 01-49-52-71-54
fax: 01-49-52-71-81
www.fourseasons.com

location:
31 av. George V, 8e
Paris 75008

hours:
Daily noon-2:30pm and 6:30-10:30pm

4 Le Cinq

DESCRIPTION: Since it was established in 1928 in honor of the king of England, there has always been a world-class dining venue associated with the Hotel George V. The configuration today dates from its acquisition by Toronto's Four Seasons group, which poured time, money, talent, and taste into a high-ceilinged room whose majestic decor evokes the Grand Trianon at Versailles. Within a gray and very pale pink dining room that shimmers with gold inlays, your dining needs will be supervised by a sophisticated staff that intuitively understands the needs and priorities of the hotel's widely divergent international clientele. Within 3 years of this restaurant's birth, it had been awarded three coveted stars by the Guide Michelin -- an honor that's accorded only very rarely. The menu changes frequently, but enduring favorites include a tart of artichokes and black Périgord truffles; cod seasoned with roast peppercorns; roast pigeon with peppermint and Sauternes; farm-raised veal sweetbreads; and a classic that has been on the menu since the days of Mistinguett and Piaf -- Bresse chicken "in the style of the George V," stuffed with crayfish and herbs. © Frommer's

Photo courtesy of Le Cinq

contact:
tel: 01-47-63-40-77
fax: 01-47-63-82-75
www.michelrostang.com

location:
20 rue Rennequin, 17e
Paris 75017

hours:
Tues-Fri 12:30-2:30pm; Mon-Sat 7:30-10:30pm

5 Michel Rostang

DESCRIPTION: Michel Rostang is one of Paris's most creative chefs, the fifth generation of a distinguished French "cooking family." His restaurant contains four dining rooms paneled in mahogany, cherrywood, or pearwood; some have frosted Lalique crystal panels. Changing every 2 months, the menu offers modern improvements on cuisine bourgeoise. Truffles are the dish of choice in midwinter, and you'll find racks of suckling lamb from the salt marshes of France's western coast in spring; in game season, look for pheasant and venison. Year-round staples are quail eggs with sea urchins; fricassee of sole; quenelles of whitefish with a lobster sauce; canard au sang (duck prepared in a duck press with a sauce of red wine, foie gras, and its own blood); and Bresse chicken with mushroom purée and a salad composed of the chicken's thighs. © Frommer's

Photo courtesy of Michel Rostang

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contact:
tel: 33 1 5628 1616
fax: 33 1 5626 1678
http://www.joel-robuchon.com/

location:
16 avenue Bugeaud
Paris 75116

6 Table de Joel Robuchon (La)

DESCRIPTION: This second venture of Joel Robuchon is known to be less annoying compared to its former counterpart L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon as they accept reservations. The place and the cuisine both have a modern touch to it. The Silken Gazpachos topped with fresh almonds are a must have. The crab and avocado dish is placed on a China egg and is served on a stone slab along with red ladles. Another must have is La Tarte aux Legumes Crus et Confits and for dessert the Le Pastel Délice. The meal can end with an espresso and a small plate of fresh caramel filled chocolates. The eatery is open on all days of the week so you can visit often. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 33 1 4705 0906
fax: 33 1 4418 9839
http://www.alain-passard.com/

location:
84 Rue de Varenne
Paris 75007

hours:
M-F 12:30p-2:30p, Dinner: 8p-10:30p

7 Arpège (L')

DESCRIPTION: At Arpege, you can gorge on vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals. This is perhaps one of the few places where vegetarians can have a feast. Adding traditional flavors to the food, Chef Alain Passard works wonders with his fingers. Try the squab with sugared almonds or the spiced tomato dessert. Reservation is a must so book well in advance. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 01-43-80-40-61
fax: 01-46-22-43-09
www.guysavoy.com

location:
18 rue Troyon, 17e
Paris 75017

hours:
Tues-Fri noon-2pm; Tues-Sat 7-10:30pm

8 Guy Savoy

DESCRIPTION: One of the hottest chefs in Europe, Guy Savoy serves the kind of food he likes to eat, prepared with consummate skill. We think he has a slight edge over his rival Michel Rostang , though Ducasse, at least in media coverage, surpasses them both. Although the superb meals comprise as many as nine courses, the portions are small; you won't necessarily be satiated at the end. The menu changes with the seasons and may include oven-roasted sole steaks with smoked seaweed, roasted John Dory stuffed with salsify and shellfish, or steam-baked Bresse chicken breast with lemongrass and Swiss chard. If you come in the right season, you may have a chance to order game, such as mallard and venison. Savoy is fascinated with mushrooms and has been known to serve a dozen types, especially in autumn. © Frommer's

Photo courtesy of Guy Savoy

contact:
tel: 33 1 5343 4340
fax: 33 1 5343 4301
http://www.hotel-bristol.com/

location:
112 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
Paris 75008

hours:

9 Le Bristol

DESCRIPTION: This elegantly appointed restaurant changes its decor seasonally. In winter, dine in a rotund-shaped room adorned with Hungarian oak and French Tapestry. In the summer, enjoy the beautiful garden of the Hôtel Bristol's courtyard. Award-winning chef Eric Fréchon is an ardent advocate of French culinary traditions and a personal admirer of great past chefs like Escoffier or Vatel. His cuisine, although spanning the French classics is revisited to enhance the recipes with exotic flavors and spices highly praised by the food critics. Patrons favorite include Roast Duck Breast with Spices and Orange-Caramelized Turnips or Macaroni with Foie Gras, Artichokes, and Truffles. © wcities.com

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Daily Noon-2:30p &
7:30p-10:30p

contact:
tel: 01-42-96-56-27
fax: 01-42-86-80-71
http://www.grand-vefour.com/fr/navigation.htm

location:
17 rue de Beaujolais, 1er
Paris 75001

hours:
Mon-Fri 12:30-1:45pm; Mon-Thurs 8-9:30pm

10 Le Grand Véfour

DESCRIPTION: This is the all-time winner: A great chef, the most beautiful restaurant decor in Paris, and a history-infused citadel of classic French cuisine. This restaurant has been around since the reign of Louis XV. Napoleon, Danton, Hugo, Colette, and Cocteau dined here -- as the brass plaques on the tables testify -- and it's still a gastronomic experience. Guy Martin, chef for the past decade, bases many items on recipes from the French Alps. He prepares such heavenly dishes as filet of lamb with wasabi, carved into rib sections and served with the smoked essence of its own juice. Other specialties are noisettes of lamb with star anise, Breton lobster with fennel, and cabbage sorbet in dark-chocolate sauce. The desserts are often grand, such as the gourmandises au chocolat (medley of chocolate), served with chocolate sorbet. © Frommer's

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Paris Snapshot

History

Cities with so many intact historical sites are rare. Monuments, museums, squares and gardens, in all their beauty, remind us of the extent to which Paris is and always has been in demand. It has been a theater in which major events have been staged, an intellectual, political and economic reference point since its foundation, and the residence of kings for several centuries. A city of the people and the middle classes, rich and poor, proud and sometimes treacherous, cosmopolitan yet insular. This cultural and sociological mix gives Paris an irresistible charm.

France's political, economic and cultural capital had modest and strictly rural beginnings; it started as no more than a little Celtic fishing borough, established in 3rd century BCE in the middle of the Seine on the Île de la Cité. The fortified and prosperousLutèce appealed to Caesar and his Roman army's greed, and they appropriated it in 52 BCE as one of the first Gallo-Roman cities. The first mention of the name Paris appeared in 207 CE, when thecivitas parisiorum(literally meaning city of the Parisians) stretched from the left bank of the Seine to the thermal springs of Cluny. Paris quickly attracted the favor of two saints who were to contribute to its construction. Saint Denis was the first Christian bishop to be beheaded by the Romans in 280 CE; his remains now lie in the Saint-Denis Basilica. Saint Geneviève became the patron saint of Parisians after miraculously repelling the invasion of the Huns in 451. Monasteries and abbeys flourished, including the powerful abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Près, erected in 558 under the aegis of King Childebert I. Many kings of the Merovingian dynasty were buried here. The Abbey in itself doesn't exist anymore but you can visit the remaining adjacent church, the Église Saint-Germain-des-Prés. While Charlemagne preferred Aix-la-Chapelle and suffered a long siege there at the hands of the Vikings in 885, Paris continued to repel the invasions of the barbarians with varied success until 987, when it regained its pride with the accession of Hugues Capet to the throne.

As capital of the tiny French kingdom, the city grew considerably between the 11th and 13th Centuries. The development of the city owed much to Philip II, known as Philippe-Auguste(1165-1223), son of Louis VII, who paved the streets and built the new market in the Halles, the circular ramparts, and the Louvre fortress(1204). These extravagant centuries saw the completion of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame(undertaken in 1163), and the Sainte Chapelle under Saint-Louis(in 1248). The medieval town was divided, with the commercial, political and religious areas on the right bank and the bastion of dissident intellectuals on the left. The most famous of these was Robert de Sorbon, whose college was the precursor of the famous university of the Sorbonne. With a population of 200,000, Paris had become the biggest city in western Christendom in the beginning of the 14th Century. But some black years were to follow with the famine of 1315, the plague of 1348 and the Hundred Years' War, when Paris was besieged by the English until 1436. Fortunately prosperity was to return in the 16th Century with François 1st to whom we owe the Hôtel de Ville, the college of France, the Hôtel des Tuileries and the Pont Neuf. He also transformed the old Louvre fortress into a Renaissance palace.

Paris sank into chaos once again with the religious wars and the terrible St-Barthélémy massacre of the Protestants during the nights of August 23rd and 24th, 1572. The fiercely Protestant regent, Henri III, had to flee the city and was succeeded by Henri IV in 1594 after he gave up the throne. A convert to Catholicism, he courted the hearts of Parisians by building the Place des Vosges, the Place Dauphine, and the Quais de l'Arsenal and Orfèvres.

Even more beautiful extensions to the city came under Louis XIII with the building of the Marais district(which retains its original character), and the Saint-Honoré and Saint_Germain suburbs. This was followed immediately by the construction of the Luxembourg Palace by Marie of Médicis, the Val de Grâce by Queen Ann of Austria, and the Palace of the Cardinal(now the Palais-Royal) by Richelieu. The establishment of the Royal Printing House, in 1620, the botanical garden located now in Jardin des Plantes and the French Academy consolidated the intellectual character of the capital.

Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, installed his sumptuous court at Versailles, leaving Paris to deal with theFronde from 1648 through 1652. This group protested against an absolute monarchy, but by isolating the king and his minions, it was only strengthened. Colbert, in charge of buildings, had superb monuments built by Mansart and Perrauls in honor of his sovereign: the colonnade in the Louvre, the Invalides, the Observatoire, the gates of St-Denis and Saint-Martin, the Salpêtrière hospital, and the Jardin des Tuileries. The opulent architecture offered a stark contrast to the over-populated and poverty-stricken Paris of the ordinary people.

The proliferation of cafés and literary salons, including the famous Procope, fostered new egalitarian and libertarian ideas that preceded the French Revolution, and contributed to the cultural reputation of Paris. At this time were constructed theÉcole Militaire, the Panthéon, the Place de la Concorde and the Palais-Royal Gardens, where the initial 1789 uprising was plotted; it was here that the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen were originally formulated, and numerous remaining royalists were executed. With the regent beheaded, Napoleon put Paris in the control of twoprefects charged with establishing a government. He set about creating the capital of Europe, establishing the Arc de Triomphe, the Stock Exchange in Palais Brongniart, the Place Vendôme, the Vendôme Column and the Saint-Martin Canal.

During the 19th century, the poverty of the people fueled the anti-royalist revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Napoleon III's Second Empire symbolized the start of a new era: above all a period of industrialization, efficiency and public health. Official architect, Georges Haussman, changed the face of the city, transforming its medieval character into the one we know today. Dirty lanes gave way to broad, tree-lined avenues and majestic buildings that were accessible by new means of transport. Parks and gardens were established, such as the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes. Success came with the Universal exhibition of 1889, whose specially built iron structure was designed as a temporary monument and is now

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the archetypal symbol of the City of Light; without the Eiffel Tower, Paris just wouldn't be Paris. The Sacré-Coeur Basilica was completed in 1910, as was the Palais de Chaillot.

Spared by the Great War, intellectual and artistic Paris attracted numerous important painters and writers, especially in the Montmartre district. The Second World War was a different story however, when the German army occupied the capital in June 1940; the city was eventually liberated in August 1944 by General Leclerc and General de Gaulle. The latter declared the Fifth Republic, which was to be challenged by a great social, economic and cultural upheaval in May 1968. This dissident movement arose in student circles and was led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit. The occupation of the Sorbonne and Nanterre universities degenerated into riots and barricades in the Latin Quarter. It was an unprecedented crisis whose shock tactics paralyzed the country with a general strike.

Just as all the monarchs had left their mark on Paris, naturally the presidents of the Fifth Republic wished to be remembered through their great monuments. De Gaulle bequeathed the Roissy-Charles de Gaulle Airport; the Centre Georges Pompidou is a controversial memorial to the president of the same name; Giscard D'Estaing established the Musée d'Orsay and transformed the old abattoirs of la Villette into the Cité des Sciences. François Mitterand, during his 14 years as president(1981-95) carefully planned his monumental works to evoke controversy and excitement. Among these are the Arche de la Défense, the glass pyramid of the Louvre, the Opéra Bastille and the Bibliothèque nationale de France. When it comes to Paris, everyone has an opinion. ©

Hotel Insights

Paris, a capital famous for its fashion, history and artistic culture has numerous hotels. There are splendid palaces that epitomize French-style elegance. In the fashionable districts, luxury hotels cater to the needs of the most demanding clients and are also ideal for the business traveler. In the picturesque Montmartre and Marais areas, and on the Île de la Cité, the hotels are particularly charming. The intellectual Latin Quarter and Saint-Germain-des-Près entice visitors with the names of illustrious artists who have stayed there. In the bohemian east of town, you will find modestly priced accommodation.

The Golden Triangle

If Paris reigns supreme as the world capital of good living, it is a reputation built not only on the excellence of its cuisine but also on the quality of the accommodation on offer. Some of the most luxurious hotels are close to the Champs Elysées and the very elegant Avenue Montaigne including the palatial Hôtel George V, the Hôtel Plaza-Athénée and the Hôtel Franklin Roosevelt. These are also extremely convenient for the needs of the business community. Equally distinguished is the Ritz, a palace once graced by writer Ernest Hemingway, and Coco Chanel, founder of the eponymous fashion house. The Rue St-Honoré, one of Paris's most regal and elegant thoroughfares, is close at hand; the Hôtel Costes puts the Paris of Dior, Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent within walking distance. Many of these palaces have revived the luxury and décor of a particular period, with all its attendant grandeur and splendour(the Louis XIII room at the Georges V, the Napoleon room at the Costes and the Louis XVI room at the Ritz). Similarly, some of them havehaute couture on the spot, such as Hotel de Crillon and the very elegant Hotel Lutétia, which entrusted its redecoration to the famous fashion designer, Sonia Rykiel. For decades the richest people in the world have frequented these hotels. Should you have the means to stay in one of these palaces, you might well find yourself rubbing shoulders with celebrities in the hotel bar or restaurant.

On the other hand, you might want to try the art of cuisine in the Ritz-Escoffier School of Gastronomy located in the hotel of the same name. The Hôtel Costes, center of the empire belonging to the two Costes brothers from the Auvergne region, have followed up their majestic hotel by investing in numerous eating-houses in the capital. On the same spot there is a Costes restaurant, a Costes bar, not to mention a much-frequented sports club with a magnificent swimming pool in the basement.

The Marais

The older, smaller hotels are concentrated in the most picturesque areas. One of the oldest districts, the Marais, harbors numerous little private hotels, all characterized by their charm, like Hôtel Saint Louis Marais or Hôtel de la Bretonnerie and Hôtel des Chevaliers. This is also Paris' gay quarter. Other establishments located in buildings dating from the same period(17th Century) include the Hôtel St Paul-le Marais and Hôtel des Deux Iles, located on one of the oldest parts of the Capital, Île-Saint-Louis. The Île de la Cité and the Île Saint-Louis, where the two arms of the Seine meet, are ideal for a romantic stroll(Notre-Dame Cathedral is on Ile de la Cité).

The Latin Quarter

What can be said about the Latin Quarter? Elegance and intellect combine in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where in earlier times the great names of art and literature were drawn as to a magnet. If you want to immerse yourself in the bohemian universe of philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre you could check in at the Hotel Sully Saint-Germain. Saint-Michel neighborhood offer further more reasonable options like the Hôtel des Grandes Écoles or the Hôtel Résidence Monge, if you want to soak up the intellectual atmosphere and elite student's lifestyle.

Montmartre

Montmartre, with its Sacré-Cœur basilica and the Place du Tertre, is considered by some to be even more attractive. There, you will find some charming and picturesque hotels with reasonable rates, such as Hôtel Victoria or the Hôtel Caulaincourt Square.

Eastern Districts

In the city center, only a few establishments are affordable, but a little piece of heaven is to be found in Montorgueil pedestrian district: Hôtel La Marmotte, from where you will be able to find some of the trendiest shops alongside Rue Étienne Marcel. But most of the really inexpensive hotels can be found in the 10th Arrondissement near Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est. These hotels often gather an international and young crowd coming from all across the globe. Among the ones that offer good service and comfortable rooms, are the Hotel Jarry located in the bustling Indian district, the Hotel Le Cambrai and the Perfect Hotel& Hostel. Make sure you request a room furnished with a shower and a restroom if you wish so, as not all

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the rooms have both! The trendy Bastille area in the center of east Paris, once the district of furniture makers, also offers some reasonable options, such as the Absolute Hotel or the International Youth Hostel, very popular among hard-up globetrotters.

La Défense Business District

Finally, if you want to be sure of comfort and good value for money, there are numerous hotel chains available. Some are within the city, such as the Timhotel Montparnasse near the tower of the same name. Others serve the business area, La Défense, such as the Hôtel Mercure Paris La Défense, Novotel Paris La Défense, Hôtel Ibis Paris La Défense Centre and Hôtel Kyriad Paris La Défense. These hotels fill up really quickly during trade shows, so make sure you book your room in advance if you wish to attend one of them.
©

Restaurants Insights

If there's one word that symbolizes Paris, it is gastronomy. The French, always appreciative of the finer things in life, have a unique tradition of famous restaurants and great chefs. If you really love good food, you'll find true happiness here.
The latest, most fashionable restaurants mix innovation with traditional culinary techniques to serve classic French cuisine that's full of unexpected flavors. The café-restaurants, which are the pride of Paris, fit into the gastronomic landscape better than ever, with their beautifully presented and affordable food. Paris, always so cosmopolitan, has also been enriched by exotic cuisines from the four corners of the earth.

1st Arrondissement

In Paris, fine dining and great feasts(lasting up to three hours) are sacred, and the chefs in the most famous restaurants have turned their cuisine into a real art form. Paris features some of the most highly-praised restaurants and world-acclaimed chefs by International food critics, including the first arrondissement's Grand Véfour. Some other fine dining options can also be found in prestigious hotels, like Restaurant Le Meurice in the Meurice hotel. Combining touches of originality in both the food and design, the establishments of the Costes brothers are not to be missed. Café Costes was the first to set the trend a couple of years ago. Highly popular during cocktail hours, notably among the business crowd, Fumoir is a comfortable lounge with leather coaches and an upscale restaurant, serving elaborate, traditional French food. The Pharamond, offers an extraordinary setting and a meal to match: its décor dates from 1832, proof, if any were needed, that Paris' tradition of exceptional gastronomy is still going strong.

2nd Arrondissement

If you're looking for pastries, the oldestpâtisserie in Paris is Pâtisserie Stohrer, carrying deserts and sweets fit for a queen. A bustling area for Sunday brunch is on Rue Montorgueil, notably Au Rocher de Cancale, which is completely packed after noon.

4th Arrondissement

After a stroll in the narrow streets of Île-Saint-Louis, head to the oldest ice-cream artisan in the city, Berthillon. With more than 60 different flavors, their all-natural ice creams will enchant the whole family. The most exquisite includeCaramel Beurre Salé(caramel and salted butter), Raspberry-Rosa andPêche de Vigne(a kind of rare peach). At one point in time it was very hard to find a Parisian restaurant that served brunch. That time is behind us now, and brunch has become so popular that, at some places, you will have to wait a quite a while for a table. Le Loir dans la Théière is definitely worth the wait. All pies, tarts, and pastries are hand-made and fresh, and prices are more than reasonable. For tea, Mariage Frères has the best reputation. As for nightlife, one of the hottest spots in Paris is Georges at the top of the Beaubourg Museum.

5th Arrondissement

Tour d'Argent is one of Paris' culinary institutions, serving up dishes of worldwide renown.

6th Arrondissement

Le Procope is decked out in the finest fashions of Paris'Années Folles, and Ernest Hemingway finished"Le soleil se lève aussi" at the world renowned Closerie des Lilas. Parisians think of Les Deux Magots and Café de Flore as historic monuments just like the Eiffel Tower or Notre-Dame Cathedral. Visitors should make a point of visiting these historical establishments to truly soak up the atmosphere of the capital's glorious past; it's easy to imagine past celebrities and intellectuals dining in the luxurious period décor. L'Espadon Bleu offers fresh seafood at reasonable prices. If you're looking for authentic country bread, Poilâne bakery is the best bet. You will find the famousTartines made with this bread(toasted with cheese, vegetables, or prosciutto) at numerous cafés in the city. What is a good meal without an espresso in the end? Something is definitely missing–notably the chocolate served with it. The French are chocolate connoisseurs and you can find some chocolate artisans throughout the city, like the Maison du Chocolat that imports chocolate from Switzerland and Belgium.

8th Arrondissement

The 8th arrondissement is home to some of the finest Restaurants in France, with Pierre Gagnaire voted the third best restaurant in the world by the British magazineRestaurant, and the oft-celebrated Restaurant Alain Ducasse situated in Plaza Athénée hotel. Maxim's is a veritiable institution devoted to classic French cuisine, and another excellent yet expensive spot is Taillevent, which has wines that cost as much as a dress from Chanel. Paris has numerous fashionable spots where you go to see and be seen. Either for a glass of wine after shopping or for a futuristic dining experience, try Spoon- Food and Wine, where you can enjoy fusion food and fashion at the same time. Most of these restaurants have chic and trendy interiors, designed by popular architects like Philippe Stark at Spoon. For fashionistas and celeb-watching addicts, the Avenue, located on the prestigious avenue Montaigne where many famous designers have boutiques, is an ideal spot. For flavored and rare types of mustards and vinegars, the first established Boutique Maille is the best bet, and Hédiard and Fauchon stock some of the world's finest specialty foods. For desert, don't miss Maison de la Truffe for first rate truffles, and Haagen Dazs for it's world-renowned flavors. For the best macaroons(a kind of soft cookie filled with cream) in town, head to Ladurée, a house that has been established since 1862.

9th Arrondissement

A new trend arose in Paris as an alternative to cafés and bistros serving a rich

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food: healthy soup and juice bars. With an increasing number of vegetarians previously not having many dining options, they rapidly became a success. The soup and juice bar Soup& Juice perfectly illustrates the phenomenon. People don't always have time to sit at lunch for hours anymore, and they may want a healthy alternative to the sandwich booths and bakeries. With a dozen of locations across the city, you can grab a healthy meal at very reasonable prices.

10th Arrondissement

Brasseries began in the Alsace region, where the beer was actually brewed, so the tradition is that most brasseries(which literally means brewery), not only serve sauerkraut(an Alsatian specialty) but also seafood and shellfish such as scallops, oysters, mussels, clams, etc. The Brasserie Flo, located in a remote and quiet court in the 10th arrondissement, is a bargain for seafood lovers. The ingredients are extremely fresh and the décor reminds some patrons of Grandma's kitchen. Bistros are certainly the best value for price if you cannot afford the star-rated restaurants but still want to enjoy the best of French food. You can find many bistros and brasseries in the capital, serving the traditionalEntrecôte(rib-eye steak) orBavette à l'échalotte(flank steak dressed in a shallot reduction) with French Fries, the cheese orcharcuterie plate(cooked meats), and chocolate mousse or caramel crème. Julien, with itsBelle Époque décor, is a great place to sample the cuisine of a traditional brasserieà la française. If you're looking for seafood, La Marine offers a lovely dining experience alongside Saint-Martin Canal. For dessert, try Furet Tanrade, which offers exquisite chocolates in a cozy atmosphere.

11th Arrondissement

When Bastille became a hip district for nightlife, the spotlight fell on the hotel-restaurant, Sanz sans, which consistantly draws a lively crowd of revelers. For traditional meals from the Auvergne region, head to La galoche d'Aurillac. Try one of the specialties like the Lentilles from Le Puy or thecharcuterie plate—notably theFricandeau(a kind of pâté typical from that region). The cheese plate is a must-have here, since they mature the cheeses in their cellar. Another classic brasserie is Petit Bofinger in Bastille, more affordable than the original Bofinger. Chez Paul is one of the best bistros in Paris, but make sure to arrive early or be prepared to wait up to one hour for a table. The Bar à Soupes in Bastille is a charming place for healthy cuisine, and for oysters and shellfish, a great option is the Bar à Huîtres, an oyster bar in Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

12th Arrondissement

Cheese is to France what tea is to England; it is part of the national identity. There are more than 300 varieties of cheeses coming from various regions of the country. Neighborhood farmer's markets are the best places to sample and buy all the kinds of cheese you can imagine and probably some you didn't know existed. Choose from fresh, creamy, or dry goat cheese, soft and milkyCamembert, creamyBrie de Meaux, strongMunster orÉpoisses, and full-flavoredRoquefort. The Aligre Market is without a doubt the largest and the most comprehensive market in the city.

13th Arrondissement

Whether for sampling on site or souvenir shopping, wine is of course a must-have in France. You will find many wine shops in Paris, with an excellent selection of bottles coming from small French wineries or prestigious houses. The most widespread name in the city isNicolas. The wine merchant has brown flagships all over the city and carries affordable ordinary wines and more elaborate vintages. All the sales associates are very professional and can give you good advice on wine and meal pairings. The wine bar, Bar à Vins Nicolas located alongside fashionable Cour Saint-Émilion in Bercy-Village is a great spot to sample the selection they carry.

14th Arrondissement

Visitors should make a point of visiting several historical establishments to truly soak up the atmosphere of the capital's glorious past; it's easy to imagine past celebrities and intellectuals dining in the luxurious period décor. La Coupole offers all the splendor of Paris'Années Folles, and if you look out at the terrace of the Dôme, you may even see the ghost of Jean Paul Sartre. After all, Paris is magical.

16th Arrondissement

The Café de L'Homme offers an intimate dining experience behind its red curtains and warm wooden décor. Paris has countless fine specialty food stores, each only dedicated to one sort of delicacy. For caviar, go to Prunier.

17th Arrondissement

The Paradis du Fruit(literally"fruit's paradise") will enchant those in search of a perfect smoothie.

18th Arrondissement

Wepler is a well-established brasserie on place de Clichy.
©

Nightlife Insights

With its incomparable historic sites and the rich art collections, Paris is often thought of as the largest museum in the world. But Paris' culture is not just about the past; the City of Light also celebrates cinema and music, and the nightlife is as exciting as that of London or New York.

Museums

Paris has more than 60 museums, so chances are you will find one to accommodate your tastes and interests. They are usually open from 10a to 6p and most of them have a weekly late day, staying open until 9p(generally on Wednesdays or Thursdays). Public museums are usually closed on Tuesdays and private museums often close on Mondays. Let's begin with the king of them all, the Louvre with its magnificent glass pyramid. It houses without a doubt one of the most remarkable collections of paintings and sculptures in the world, including two legendary works: theVenus de Milo and theMona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci. Another major and highly popular museum–with 2.5 million visitors each year, the Musée d'Orsay is home to one of the most comprehensive collections of Impressionism masterpieces. The Georges Pompidou Center, also known as Beaubourg, has always divided Parisian opinion: its avant-garde architecture has been compared to a multicolored steamboat launched in the belly of Paris. If you are with kids or interested in science, the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in La Villette is not to be missed. Learn about human evolution at the Museum of Natural History and take a stroll afterwards in the beautiful Jardin des Plantes. Besides these essential landmarks, there are a number of small, themed museums that are worth a

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look, including the Picasso Museum in the charming Marais district. Less academic but still representative of an important part of Parisian culture, the Museum of Fashion and Textiles pays tribute to the Capital's biggest fashion houses. Finally, for those interested in anthropology and culture, the Musée du Quai Branly, with its prodigious collection of objects(300,000) coming from Australasia, Africa, and the Middle-East, will enable you to see from the perspective of a non-Western culture. The Institut du Monde Arabe is also of great interest to learn more about Middle-Eastern cultures. Many lectures and seminars are organized–at its café notably-to introduce neophytes to its amazing collection.

Galleries

Admission to galleries is free. Opening hours vary from one neighborhood to another, some open at night until 11p. Many of the city's most prestigious galleries are located in Saint Germain des Prés, either in Rue de Seine or Rue des Beaux-Arts like Galerie Claude Bernard. Most of them promote various styles of contemporary art, from Cubism to Abstractionism. Check out Galerie Maeght to dig into some of Miro's work and Galerie Arcturus for Selinger statues. Famous antiques galleries are gathered around Haussman Boulevard and Matignon Avenue, down the road from famous auction houseChristie's. More avant-garde galleries can be found around Beauboug and others have turned Bastille into an arty and trendy neighborhood, notably around Rue Keller and Rue de Charonne.

Classical Music

Those set on classical music will be thrilled by the opulent Opéra Garnier, home to Paris' ballet company, also known asles petits rats de l'opéra. The performances include the greatest operas and ballets, like Berlioz'sRomeo& Juliet or Tchaikovsky'sSwan Lake. Its ultra-modern counterpart, the Opéra Bastille concentrates more on music than dance performances and hosts great operas as well as symphonic concerts. Two other concert halls will enchant classical music connoisseurs, like Salle Pleyel which is home to Paris Symphonic Orchestra and Salle Gaveau, dedicated to chamber music.

Theaters

Paris is home to more than 140 theaters featuring various types of shows, from classic plays to avant-garde live performances, dance, comedies, musicals, etc. Unfortunately, almost all of them are in French, which can hinder your enjoyment if you don't speak the language. Nonetheless, certain theaters are worth a visit. The eminent Comédie-Française for example features classic comedies written by Molière that are accessible to a large audience. The Odéon Théâtre de l'Europe is a great alternative, as it hosts classic plays in their original languages. Théâtre de la Ville, once home to famous French actress Sarah Bernhardt, is an open door to performers of the world. From famous international dance companies like Merce Cunningham or Ann Theresa de Keersmeaker, many world renowned artists have come here. The program also includes a great selection of world music concerts, with artists coming from Asia–notably India–and the Middle or Far-East. Finally, the Théâtre du Châtelet, with its tradition of education and innovation, plays host to young talents and dance companies coming from all over Europe, and organizes many festivals drawing visitors from far and wide.

Cinemas

The famous film director, François Truffault, said that every French citizen is a cinema critic. No surprise then that Paris is a film-lover's paradise, with many cinemas in every district. The big complexes like the UGC Ciné Cité Les Halles or UGC Ciné Cité Bercy show more than fifteen films at once, mostly in their original languages. The MK2 chain, which not only screens blockbusters, but also independent French movies, has a faithful clientèle. MK2 Parnasse and MK2 Beaubourg have a more avant-garde selection than the other theaters of the chain. In the Latin Quarter, normally frequented by students, art and experimental cinemas carry on the French cinematic tradition of showing old films. The Studio Galande often puts on high quality film series and retrospectives.

Live Music

For the jazz lover, Paris recreates the atmosphere of New York with its many clubs in the St-Michel and St-Germain-des-Prés districts; check out great sounds at the Caveau de la Huchette. The legendary Olympia Hall still welcomes the great names of French pop, but it's faded slightly since the days when Jacques Brel and Edith Piaf pulled in the crowds. World-renowned bands and singers are more likely to fill up the Zénith or Bercy. Palais des Congrès plays host to musicals and multi-million dollars productions.

Sporting Events

Many international tournaments take place in Paris. For such major events, usually the Stade de France is the best stadium, as it can accommodate up to 80,000 people. Home games of Paris' soccer team(PSG) are hosted at Parc des Princes, not far from another major sport venue, Roland Garros Stadium, where the French Tennis Open takes place in June.

Bars

Parisian nightlife no longer lags behind London or Berlin. Paris counts numerous bars and clubs, all open later than those of London or Berlin. Bars close either at 2a(the vast majority of them) or 4a, whereas clubs close at 6a. Some are opened extra late until noon on the weekend. Aperitif starts at 7p-8p; dinner, at 9:30p-10p; bars fill up around Midnight until 2a; then, people head to the clubs at around 1:30-2a. The most vibrant neighborhoods include Bastille, Rue de Lappe, Rue de Charonne, and Rue de la Roquette, where you will find countless bars. Some of them are fancy wine bars, others are smaller local cafés, but all of them have that sort of uniqueness that is distinctly Parisian. Another popular district is found between République and Oberkampf, by far the most popular spot. Rue d'Oberkampf with Café Charbon is full of energy, brought by both locals and tourists. Alongside the Saint-Martin Canal, Chez Prune is practically a Parisian institution. The 5th arrondissement is also very lively: in the Latin Quarter itself between Métro Saint-Michel and Métro Cluny-La Sorbonne, girls head to the Latin Corner; students flock to pubs behind the Panthéon, between Place Descartes and Rue Mouffetard. TheHurling Pub, with its infused vodkas and wooden counter is a great hang-out, as well as theBombardier, an authentic Irish pub. More upscale bars can be found in Saint Germain des Prés or alongside the Champs-Élysées.

Clubs

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Paris has a flourishing club culture, with numerous places hopping and DJs in action all through the night. The hippest DJs play in Paris, like Bob Sinclar, Jeff Cortez and Dan Marciano at Queen on the Champs-Élysées. On Monday, disco nights at Queen are very popular, where House music fans bestow their patronage on the weekends. Another legendary club, the Bains Douches also hosts famous DJs like Tommy Marcus, Jef K and Jérôme Pacman to enchant the gay and gay-friendly clubbers. A less glamorous but more hip techno temple is the underground Rex Club, where Laurent Garnier, Carl Cox and Daft Punk often perform. After hours the trendy crowd interested in experimental techno and French electronic music heads to the Batofar, a red boat moored on the Seine. Another option is the Glaz'Art, an arty spot, where all kinds of arts and music are intertwined for live performances and crazy nights. For Salsa and Hip Hop, head to Barrio Latino in the Bastille district or to the Favela Chic near République metro. In the Pigalle neighborhood, you can hear great world music coming from Brazil, Mexico or the Middle-East at the Divan du Monde, or dance the night away to the sound of Rock music in the Elysée Montmartre. Finally, if you're looking for the most upscale select clubs, stay in the 8th arrondissement. The Milliardaire and Régine's are certainly the best bet to meet the classy crowd.

Cabarets

Visitors to the capital can take advantage of the cabaret culture and traditional French Cancan shows at the Moulin Rouge or enjoy some high-class cabaret at the world-renowned Crazy Horse.

Parks, Zoos, and Theme Parks

For those wanting to explore the many parks of the city, there are many options on each corner. A stroll in the Tuileries Garden is welcome after visiting the Louvre and the fresh air will regenerate your brain cells. In the Latin Quarter, take a break at the Luxembourg Garden where locals jog or play tennis throughout the day. If you are with kids, go to the Jardin des Plantes, where you can take your children to the zoo and to a Tropical Botanical Garden. The largest park in Paris, parc des Buttes-Chaumont–seen by some as a replica of Central Park-is great for families as it contains numerous children's playgrounds. The young crowd living in the neighborhood often organizes giant picnics and parties in the park. A beautiful view over the city can be caught on the top of the park's tower. A brief taste of Paris' entertainment scene would not be complete without mention of the epitome of family fun, Disneyland Paris. This remains the main attraction on Paris' doorstep, and visitors flock here from all over Europe. Family fun is also guaranteed at Parc Astérix and the wildlife park, Thoiry.-Aurélie Pichard
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Things to Do Insights

Paris, the City of Lights, is a stop on every intrepid travelers list of cosmopolitan cities to visit. Famous sites around the city vary from historical monuments to museums, as well as the famous shopping and restaurants. Paris holds something for everyone, from the art buff to the romantic to Baudelaire'sflâneur, which, roughly translated, is someone who adores wandering around the city merely to absorb the atmosphere and watch the people pass by.

Eiffel Tower

No trip to Paris is complete without a visit to the most famous monument and internationally recognized symbol of the city, the Eiffel Tower. The Tower sits at the top of the Champs de Mars, a beautiful green esplanade, which is perfect for sitting and reading or playing a pickup game of football. After a trip to the top, either via stairs or the glass elevators that allow you to see the views of the city in all her glory, try having lunch at the famous Le Jules Verne restaurant, which is conveniently located at the lower level of the tower: there is a special elevator provided to reach it. If you'd rather dine somewhere a little less expensive(or less overrun with tourists), you have two options: the Tower sits on the line between the 7th and 15th arrondissements. In the 7th, try neighborhood favorite Café de l'Alma, with a terrace view of the river Seine. In the 15th, Le Café du Commerce is the place to go: don't be surprised if you're the only tourist there, as this is well-known among natives as a place for excellent classic French cuisine. Either way, if you're in the vicinity of the Eiffel Tower, take advantage of the proximity of Invalides, where Napoleon Bonaparte is buried.

Bastille

Don't be surprised if you don't see an actual monument at the Place de la Bastille: remember that the prison was broken down in 1789, during the French revolution, and the Place, or square, is all that is left. This is no reason not to visit this vibrant neighborhood, however. The Bastille neighborhood is an excellent place to visit both during the day and at night as it is famous for its nightlife. Daytime excursions include the Staint-Martin Canal, which is an excellent place to go relax, especially on the weekends when cars are not permitted, and you are free to sit at an outdoor café and enjoy a few minutes of quiet in the otherwise bustling city. If you're a fan of the recently released “La Vie en Rose”(French title: La Môme) about the life of Edith Piaf, consider a trip to the museum devoted to her life. Bastille by night is excellent, both for eating and bar-hopping. For an original French-Asian meal that redefines fusion cuisine, try funky Le Zinz. As for bars, try anything along the Rue de Lappe, where swarms of Parisians invade every Saturday night. Le Havanita is more laid-back than some of the clubs and is a great place to get your evening started, while Brazilian club Favela Chic is ideal for dancing the night away.

L'Arc de Triomphe

While the Eiffel Tower is famous for its views of the city, the Arc de Triomphe in the middle of the Champs-Elysées is a far better place to see the city and its famous arrondissement structure. When you've finished, take a stroll down the Champs-Elysées, the famous boulevard with the best real estate in all of Paris. Most restaurants on the Champs-Elysées take their privileged location to mean that they don't have to try when it comes to food—try dining elsewhere, but enjoy window shopping on this famous avenue. When you've finished browsing the designer shops, take a little walk over to Place de la Concorde to see the Egyptian obelisk in the center of the square. You're now on one side of the Jardin des Tuileries, the garden that is attached to the Musée du Louvre. Have a stroll through the gardens before visiting the museum, and be sure to have an African hot chocolate at Angelina's, on the Rue de Rivoli, which runs parallel to the gardens. If it's gotten late, you can also drop by the famous Buddha Bar for a drink.

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Notre Dame

The famous home of the hunchback is a gorgeous cathedral right on the Seine River. Once you've visited it, you have your choice of sights to see. Literary buffs should stop by the Shakespeare and Co. bookstore. While most enthusiasts say it's nothing compared to its glory days, when it housed homeless writers who have since become household names, a walk amongst its musty shelves seems to bring those times back to the present. A wander through the neighboring Latin Quarter will open your eyes to the wonder of the Greek kebab sandwich: lamb, salad, tomatoes, fries and the famous “sauce blanche,” or white garlic sauce, for a mere five euros. Adjacent to the Latin Quarter, along the quay, you can browse the wares of thebouquinnistes, the booksellers who open shop every afternoon to sell antique books and postcards, as well as touristy trinkets. If you haven't had your fill of churches, Sainte Chapelle, with its famous stained glass windows, is worth a visit, although be aware that it's one of the only churches that requires an entry fee. The Institut du Monde Arabe, right behind Notre Dame, is a very interesting place to visit if you're interested in Arab studies. And at the very top, there is a café which offers the only view of its kind over the top of the cathedral.

Sacré Coeur

Montmartre, of Amélie fame, is home to the Basilique du Sacré Coeur, the gorgeous white church that can be seen atop the mountain from the city proper on a clear day. After visiting the church(no pictures inside allowed), take a stroll down the winding streets behind it, and have a look at the Montmartre vineyards. If you're lucky enough to be visiting in November, you may be able to pick up a bottle of the wine that is made here. In order to reach the top of the mountain, you must get off the metro at Abbesses. Take advantage of this, and explore the neighborhood. One of the best baguettes in Paris can be found on Rue des Abbesses at Le Grenier à Pain. Travel down further to reach Pigalle, the Parisian red light district. The famous French can-can dancers still perform at Le Moulin Rouge, and you can get tickets to a dinner performance if you like. If not, try a no-less entertaining dinner at Le Refuge des Fondus, where the waiters hoist you over the communal table to reach your seat on the inner bench, and the wine is served in old-fashioned glass baby bottles.

Guided Tours

Walking Tours Paris Walks(+33 01 48 09 28 40/http://www.paris-walks.com/) Paris Walking Tours(http://www.paris-walking-tours.com/) Classic Walks(+33 01 56 58 10 54/http://www.classicwalksparis.com/index.shtml)

Bike Tours Fat Tire Bike Tours(+33 01 56 58 10 54/http://www.fattirebiketoursparis.com) Bike About Tours(+33 06 18 80 84 92/http://www.bikeabouttours.com) Paris Bike Tour(+33 01 42 74 22 14/http://www.parisbiketour.net)

Boat Tours Bateaux Mouches(+33 01 42 25 96 10/http://www.bateaux-mouches.fr/) Bateaux Parisiens(+33 01 46 99 43 13/http://www.bateauxparisiens.com/) Vedettes du Pont Neuf(+33 01 46 33 98 38/http://www.vedettesdupontneuf.com/)

Bus Tours Paris City Rama(+33 01 44 55 60 00/ http://www.pariscityrama.com/index.htm) Les Cars Rouge(+33 01 53 95 39 53/http://www.carsrouges.com/) L'Open Bus Tour(+33 01 42 66 56 56/http://www.ratp.fr/)

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Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

Two airports take care of the enormous amount of traffic flying in and out of Paris: Paris-Charles de Gaulle, handling most international flights and Orly, taking care of most domestic routes. You can find important information about all Paris airports at:http://www.aeroportsdeparis.fr/

Charles de Gaulle Aiport(CDG)

Looking like something from the future or just out of George Orwell's mind, Paris-Charles de Gaulle International Airport(CDG)(+33 1 4862 2280/http://www.aeroportsdeparis.fr/) resides 22.5 kilometers/14 miles northeast of Paris. Not only is the structure a bit imposing, but the mass of humanity trying to move from point to point in the airport can make for a frustrating and confusing experience. But most of the airport's customer service representatives are quite friendly, speak English, and are more than willing to help you. Free ADP shuttle buses(each color coded green or blue depending on terminal) connect the three terminals, which are loaded with shops, restaurants and bars, play areas for the kids, ATMs, information booths and currency exchange centers. Parking is ample and a number of hotels are perched in the center of the airport grounds. Most international airlines descend into Paris-Charles de Gaulle at some point. Major carriers include:

Air Berlin(+33 811 025 102/http://www.airberlin.com) Air Canada(+33 825 880 881/http://www.aircanada.com) Air France(+1 800 237 2747/http://www.airfrance.com) Air Malta(+33 1 58 18 64 07/http://www.airmalta.com/) Air Transat(+1 877 872 6728/http://www.airtransat.com) Alitalia(+33 820 315 315(France)/http://www.alitalia.com) All Nippon Airways(+1 800 235 9262/http://www.fly-ana.com) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/http://www.aa.com) Blue1(+372 668 0140/http://www.blue1.com) Blue Air(+40 21 208 86 86/http://www.blueair-web.com) BMI Baby(+33 890 710 081(France)/http://www.bmibaby.com) British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/http://www.british-airways.com) Cathay Pacific(+1 800 233 2742/http://www.cathaypacific.com) Condor(+1 800 364 1667/http://www7.condor.com) Continental Airlines(+1 800 523 3273/http://www.continental.com) Corendon Airlines(+31 23 75 10 600/http://www.corendon.com) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/http://www.delta.com) Easy Jet(+44 20 7241 9000/http://www.easyjet.com/) FlyBe(+44 1392 268 529/http://www.flybe.com) Germanwings(+44 870 252 1250/http://www1.germanwings.com) Iberworld Airlines(http://www.iberworld.com) JAL Japan Airlines(+1 800 525 3663/http://www.ar.jal.com/en) Lot(+1 212 789 0970/http://www.lot.com) KLM(+33 0890 710 710/http://www.klm.com/travel/fr_en/) Korean Air(+1 800 438 5000/http://www.koreanair.com) Lufthansa(+33 826 10 3334(France)/http://www.lufthansa.com) Northwest Airlines(+1 800 225 2525/http://www.nwa.com) Norwegian(+47 21 49 0015/http://www.norwegian.no) Qantas(+1 800 227 4500/http://www.qantas.com) Singapore Air(+1 800 742 3333/http://www.singaporeair.com) Sterling.dk(+33 1 55 69 5571(France)/http://www.sterlingticket.com) TAP Portugal(+351 707 205 700/http://www.flytap.com)

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United Airlines(+1-800-538-2929/http://www.ual.com) Vueling(+33 800 90 5461(France)/http://www.vueling.com) Wizz Air(+33 825 54 0001/http://www.wizzair.com) Zoom Airlines(+33 800 21 3266/http://www.flyzoom.com)

There are more than enough ways to get into the center of Paris, including a wealth of inexpensive options and those that require a hefty wallet.

By Car

Driving out of the airport can be taxing on the nerves(especially if you do not speak or read French), and once you manage to find your way, traffic rushing toward the center of town is nothing short of a nightmare. For jet-lagged travelers, driving is either a great adventure or a nail biting obstacle. The best bet to get into central Paris is to locate the A1 and head southwest. From there the motorway options are ripe with possibilities, but a good map will keep you from getting lost or run over. Onsite car hire companies are: Avis(+1 800 230 4898/http://www.avis.com) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com) Europcar(+33 825 825 490/http://www.europcar.com) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com) National(+1 800 227 7368/http://www.nationalcar.com) Sixt(+33 820 00 7498/http://www.e-sixt.com).

By Taxis

Taxis are one of the more expensive options(EUR 40-EUR 60 depending on destination) and trips can take up to an hour in traffic. There are only two official taxi companies in Paris: Taxis G7(+33 1 4739 4739/http://www.taxisg7.fr) and Taxis Bleus(+33 891 70 1010/http://www.taxis-bleus.com). For getting from the city to the airport, try Alpha-Airport(+33 1 4585 4545) where you will find friendly English speaking reservation staff and the ability to make a 24 hour advance reservation. In addition(like many other countries), there are a number of non-regulated taxis. If you choose to use a non-regulated taxi service, make sure you agree on a price before your departure as sometimes drivers try to take advantage of tourists. From the airport to central Paris should be around EUR 50. A supplement of about 15% applies to rates at night(between the hours of 7p-7a), on Sundays, and on public holidays. Ranks are located outside the terminal arrivals hall.

By Shuttle and Limousine

Door-to-door van service is available though Blue Airport Shuttle Paris(+33 1 3011 1300/http://www.paris-blue-airport-shuttle.fr) and Paris Airports Service(+33 1 5598 1080/http://www.parisairportservice.com). Must Limousine Service(+33 1 45 62 3077/http://www.mustlimousines.com) and Agence VIP Car(+33 1 4500 1211/http://www.agencevipcar.fr) are among the luxury car and limo services.

By Bus and Train(RER)

Getting into town via coach is a more economical transportation alternative; fares usually range from EUR 8 to 13 depending on your destination. Air France(+33 1 4156 8900/http://cars.airfrance.fr) operates two lines of bus service from CDG airport: Line 2 departs from the terminals to Porte Maillot and Étoile. Departures are every 15 minutes from 5:45a-11p. Line 4 connects the airport with Montparnasse and Gare de Lyon, leaving every 30 minutes from 7a-9p. RAPT(+33 1 4468 2020/http://www.ratp.fr), the local public transportation company, employs the Roissybus, which heads off from each terminal from 5:45a-11p every 15 to 20 minutes for a 45 minute direct jaunt to the Place de l'Opéra. The fare is EUR 8.20. Public bus 350 jogs to Gare de l'Est train station and bus 351 connects Roissy with the Nation metro stop. These buses run daily but stop during the night.

If you are traveling light, the Regional Express Network(RER) B line train(http://www.ratp.fr) is the way to go. It leaves from the TVG Station in Terminal 2(via an ADP bus if coming from other terminals) for Gare du Nord, Châtelet-Les-Halles, Saint-Michel, Denfert-Rochereau and beyond every 4-15 minutes from around 5am to midnight. Each stop links with the Paris Metro. It is also the quickest way to go to the city center.

Orly Airport(ORY)

Orly(+33 1 4975 1515) is the smaller of the two airports and at 14.4 kilometers/9 miles due south, it's closer to the city center, but unfortunately most international airlines fly right over it to Paris-Charles de Gaulle. Planes pull into one of the two terminals(South, West), and free shuttle buses join the terminals. Shops ranging from duty free to newsstands, restaurants, bars, currency exchanges, and ATMs are dispersed throughout both terminals. A business center is in the west terminal and a business lounge is in the south terminal. Airlines include:

Air Canada(+33 825 880 881/http://www.aircanada.com) Air France(+1 800 237 2747/http://www.airfrance.com) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/http://www.aa.com) All Nippon Airways(+1 800 235 9262/http://www.fly-ana.com) British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/http://www.british-airways.com) Cathay Pacific(+1 800 233 2742/http://www.cathaypacific.com) Continental Airlines(+1 800 525 0280/http://www.continental.com) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/http://www.delta.com) JAL Japan Airlines(+1 800 525 3663/http://www.ar.jal.com/en) Lot(+1 800 223 0593/http://www.lot.com) KLM(+1 800 447 4747/http://www.klm.com) Korean Air(+1 800 438 5000/http://www.koreanair.com) Lufthansa(+1 800 645 3880/http://www.lufthansa.com) Northwest Airlines(+1 800 225 2525/http://www.nwa.com) Qantas(+1 800 227 4500/http://www.qantas.com) Singapore Air(+1 800 742 3333/http://www.singaporeair.com) United Airlines(+1 800 241 6522/http://www.ual.com)

By Car

If you are ready to take on the speedy roads of Paris, wind out of the airport and hop on the A6 going north to hit the city center via Porte d'Orléans(A6a) or the Porte d'Italie(A6b). For more of a warm up to driving in Paris opt for the N7 to the Paris Porte d'Italie. Rental car companies are located in the arrivals hall and include: Avis(+1 800 230 4898/http://www.avis.com) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com) Europcar(+33 1 494 61 570/http://www.europcar.com) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com), National(+1 800 227 7368/http://www.nationalcar.com) Sixt(+820 00 7498/http://www.e-sixt.com).

By Taxi

Taxis ranks are located outside the arrivals hall of each terminal. Although rather expensive(EUR 20-EUR 60), especially if you are heading to the suburbs and at peak traffic hours, it may be a good option if you are tugging along a houseful of luggage. Remember to negotiate a fare with you driver in advance if you are not using one of Paris' official taxi companies, Taxis G7(http://www.taxisg7.fr/+33 1 4739 4739)

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or Taxis Bleus(http://www.taxis-bleus.com/ +33 891 70 10 10).

By Shuttle

Airport Shuttle(+33 1 30 11 13 00/ http://www.airportshuttle.fr) and Paris Airports Service(+33 1 55 98 10 80/ http://www.parisairportservice.com) offers door to door service to and from the airport. Limo services include Must Limousine Service(+33 1 45 62 30 77/ http://www.mustlimousines.com) and Agence VIP Car(+33 1 4500 1211/http://www.agencevipcar.fr).

By Bus and Train(Orlyval and RER)

Air France(+33 1 41 56 8900/http://cars.airfrance.fr) has coach service between Orly and Invalides every 15 minutes from 6am to 11pm for EUR 7.50. Jetbus darts between Orly and Villejuif-Louis Aragon Metro station, which links with Line 7. RAPT's(+33 1 44 68 2020/ http://www.ratp.fr) Orlybus will cart you from either terminal to the Denfert-Rochereau metro station, an efficient and popular option among travelers. Bus 180 departs from the south terminal and terminates at the Porte de Choisy metro station with stops at various RER stations in between. Train service has two options: Catch a free shuttle bus from either terminal to the Pont de Rungis, Orly Station and hop the RER C line train, which leaves for Paris every 15 minutes. The other route is via the Orlyval monorail, which leaves each terminal's arrivals area every seven minutes, for the Antony station where the RER B line heads into Paris.

Getting Around

To the credit of Napoleon III and his much maligned administrative chief(and city planner) Georges Haussmann, Paris was transformed from a battle torn dilapidated walled town into the cherished urban showcase that it is today. The relatively compact 20 districts(arrondissements) unfold clockwise like a spiraled croissant with the Seine splitting the city into a right bank and a left bank. Broad tree lined avenues give way to squares that branch out to narrow cobblestone streets and even thinner pedestrian alleyways filled with shops or cafes or even markets. Thus, walking is the best means to get around, and each new street and each new corner presents another focal point and another example of the city's envied civic artistry.

By Metro, Bus and RER

RAPT(+33 8 92 69 32 46/http://www.ratp.fr) coordinates and manages the city's comprehensive public transit system, which consists of 14 metro lines and nearly 300 stations, more than 400 bus routes, three tram lines and the Réseau Express Régional(RER) suburban rail network. The system is divided into six zones, although in most cases tourists will stay within the first three zones, and various ticket packages are available ranging from single one way fares to acarnet(book of ten). Acarnet is around EUR 11.10, whereas a single ticket is EUR 1.50. A Paris Visite pass allows unlimited rides on all forms of public transport and comes in blocks of 1-5 days and for 1-6 zones. You can purchase a card at either airport or any metro, RER, tram station or bus counter.

Although the network may appear confusing at first once you pick up a map it is actually quite uncomplicated to decipher. Plus, the fact that metro stations are seldom located more than a few blocks from any point in the city center makes it one of the most convenient in Europe. The metro stations are marked with an'M' and the lines are marked by number(1-14). RER trains are listed by letter(A-E). Because of the numerous forks on the rail lines, especially on RER routes, it is essential to know the terminus of the train you are catching. This way you will avoid hopping on the wrong train, which is easy to do if you are not paying attention. Buses, also listed by number(20-96 in the 20 districts), once slogged along in Paris traffic but now dedicated lanes have made them more efficient. The three tram lines reside on the outskirts of the city and are rarely used by tourists. Balabus is a public bus that offers a fifty minute tour of the area's major attractions like the Musée d'Orsay, Louvre, Notre Dame and the Opera Bastille.

Trains run from around 5:30a until about 1:00a daily. On Fridays and Saturdays, the Metro runs up to 2:00a. Bus service usually ends around 8p-10p. Night buses operate after hours.

By Car

Driving in Paris may be challenging, but it is not as bad as driving in other European cities like Rome or Barcelona. Parisian drivers are a sophisticated sort(they actually slow to a stop at yellow lights) but being behind the wheel does bring out their primal urges. Just try changing lanes during rush hour. Traffic on the outskirts of the city and on major boulevards in the city center inches along at a snail's pace and parking is literally non existent especially after dark. You may end up parking a full metro ride from your hotel, because most do not have lots or garages. And just because you see locals prop up on the sidewalk, don't follow the lead: the city has little qualms about towing at all hours of the night.

Roads marked with an"A"(Autoroutes) are wide, speedy(128km/80mph speed limits) expressways that usually involve tolls once you venture outside the major cities. Roads designated with an"N"(National) are two lanes and toll free. Many parallel the main expressways, which is convenient, but the roads do have a few drawbacks: 1) due to the two lane set up and the lower speed limit it takes longer to get where your are going, 2) they are riddled with roundabouts, 3) if you are driving cross country you will literally go through the center of every town on the way. That is quaint at first but becomes tiring after a while as all the towns begin to look the same 4) France's truckers use the roads and have no problem letting you know it is their road and 5) construction delays are seemingly ever occurring.

The A1 and N1 from the north, A13, N13 and N14 from the northwest, N12 from the west, A11 from the southwest, A10, N20, A6 from the south and the A3 and A4 from the east all converge on the city. TheBoulevard Périphérique(periphery) winds around the circumference of the city, but once you exit off this road you are quickly thrown into an organic maze of streets that make having a map a must to navigate.

By Taxi

Taxis are good late at night after the trains stop running. Ranks are positioned about every couple of blocks, outside the airports, train stations and many of the main tourist attractions like the Eiffel Tower. Rates start at EUR 2.50 and the meter rates are around EUR.60-EUR 1.50 per kilometer with a minimum charge of EUR 5. You can also call or have your hotel dispatch a cab. Companies include: Taxis G7(+33 1 47 39 4739/http://www.taxisg7.fr/) and Taxis Bleus+33 891 70 1010/http://www.taxis-bleus.com/).

By Batobus

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Batobus(+33 1 4411 3399/http://www.batobus.com/english/index.htm) has a fleet of big glass window boats that float up and down the Seine seasonally stopping at eight attractions including the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame.

By Bike

An effort by the city to reduce the congestion and pollution caused by cars has led to a service called Vélib(a combination of"vélo," meaning bike, and"liberté," meaning freedom) that allows paying members to borrow bikes from the numerous stations around the city and return them at any other station. Both year-long subscriptions and one-day passes are available, with the first half hour free and the subsequent time on a sliding scale to promote the prompt return of bicycles and their continued rotation. More information can be found at the website:http://www.velib.paris.fr/

Although you will probably want to avoid the cobblestoned traffic nightmare of Champs-Elysées, it is not a bad idea to see Paris by bike, although it does have its hazards. More than 60 miles of bike lanes share major thoroughfares, along with trails through parks and along the Seine making the city rather biker friendly. Plus, it may be the only spot on the globe where you can see commuter cyclists maneuvering the streets of Paris with a cigarette in hand. Paris à Vélo(+33 1 4887 6001/http://www.parisvelosympa.com) rents cruiser and tandem bikes and provides guided tours.

Leaving Paris By Rail

Six major stations and various smaller ones encircle Paris sharing the rail workload. For the most part each serves trains arriving and departing form the point of compass on which the station is perched(i.e. east, west, south). But there is considerable overlapping, especially for domestic routes, so make sure you arrive at the right station if you are booked in advance. Stations include:

Gare du Nord(home to Eurostar(http://www.eurostar.com), which has daily high speed jaunts between Paris and London, via the Chunnel, and Paris and Brussels. It is also the hub for trains exiting to northern France, Holland, and Belgium).Gare de L'Est is the international gateway to central Europe with trains sprinting to Germany, Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland.Gare de Lyon links Paris with Lyon, the French Riviera, Italy and points in Switzerland.Gare d' Austerlitz serves the Loire Valley, southwest France, and Spain.Gare Montparnasse links Paris to western and southwestern France.

The quantity of train operators and the mind boggling number of passes(Inter Rail, Eurail Select, Eurail Flexi, Eurail Saver, Eurail Flexi Saver, Euro Domino, etc,) being peddled can be overwhelming, especially for a novice rail traveler. The last thing you want to do is have a brain freeze and end up in Brussels when you packed the bathing suit for beach time in Barcelona. Rail Europe(+1 877 257 2887/http://www.raileurope.com) does an excellent job of making sense of the complicated origami of high speed and traditional(slow) routes and breaks down the difference between the likes of TGV, Thalys, Eurostar, Talgos, AVE and the seemingly endless array of rail service providers. It also lists the various pass options so you can find the right fit for your travel.

The country's national rail company, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français(SNCF)(http://www.sncf.com), is famous for its track record of efficiency(meaning trains are usually on time; a rarity in Europe) and its race-car on rails TGV(http://www.tgv.com) bullet trains, which link Paris with the major cities of France and with Geneva, Switzerland. Daily service to London is available through Eurostar(http://www.eurostar.com/). About 20 trains link Paris to London in 2 hours and a half. Daily service to Brussels is also available on Thalys(http://www.thalys.com), which also links Paris with Amsterdam, Cologne and Geneva among other northern European cities. Artesia trains run high speed routes between Paris and Milan and Paris and Turin up to five times a day. Elipsos/Tago Night Trainhotels has various classes of overnight sleeper service to Madrid on the Fanscico de Goya and to Barcelona on the Talgo Joan Miro. You can also book night trains to Berlin, Hamburg and Hanover.
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Fun Facts

Paris Country: France

Paris By The Numbers

Population: 2,153,600(2005 census) Elevation: 315 feet/ 96 meters Average Annual Precipitation: 25 inches/ 641 millimeters Average Annual days of rain: 187/year Average January Temperature: 39 °F/ 4 °C Average July Temperature: 68 °F/ 20 °C

Quick Facts

Major Industries: Service, Tourism and Hospitality, Commerce, Banking, Computer engineering Ethnic Mix: Italian, Polish, German, North African and African(in the 10th, 18th and 19th arrondissement), Chinese(in the 13th arrondissement), Hindi and Pakistani(in the 10th arrondissement), Vietnamese, etc. Electricity: 220 Volts AC, 50 Hz round two-pin plugs Time Zone: GMT +1 Country Dialing Code: 33 Area Code: 01

Did You Know?

Paname is Paris' nickname in slang. It may derive from the name ofPanamá(like the city) meaning enormous. In slang Parisians are also calledParigots by people outside of the city, but it's considered at least pejorative, if not an insult, so use it carefully.

Orientation

The River Seine breaks the city into theRive Droite(Right Bank) north of the river and theRive Gauche(Left Bank) south of the river. Paris is only 6 by 7 miles/10 by 11 kilometers, which means you can walk across the capital in less than two hours.
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