

# Paris

## **My (apologetic but unapologetic) Introduction:**

I lived in Paris for a year in 2012, and because I wasn't working, I had plenty of time to explore my new home. So here are my top tips, my favourite places and things to do. I do apologise that this is such a large document - some of it caters to the tourist just in Paris for few days – monuments, churches and the famous touristy areas to walk around. But some is more for the real Francophile who spends a few weeks or months in Paris.

But either way, I would definitely recommend that you spend some time before you go exploring the internet. It's amazing what you can find in a few hours online – there are plenty of websites catering to the tourist, you can book a lot of things in advance online, and research things you want to do. I'd also really recommend looking at some blogs – many ex-pats live in Paris and write about lots of interesting things. And now that we all have iPads, iPhones etc you can download some really useful apps to help you get around.

So I hope you enjoy this and that it helps you to find something special to do when you're in Paris - one of my favourite places in the world!

## **Tourist Information:**

### **Tourist Office:**

25 Rue des Pyramids, 1st

Nearest Metro: Pyramids (line 7, 14)

Open: 10am - 7pm every day (including Sundays)

Free maps, lots of brochures, and they can organize tours as well

Website: <http://en.parisinfo.com>

In the summer months there is also a tourist stand on the Champs-Élysées.

### **Useful Paris Tourist Websites:**

**Trip Advisor:** [http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Tourism-g187147-Paris\\_Ile\\_de\\_France-Vacations.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Tourism-g187147-Paris_Ile_de_France-Vacations.html)

**TimeOut:** <http://www.timeout.fr/paris/en>

**Official Paris:** <http://www.paris.fr/english>

**AboutParis:** <http://goparis.about.com>

**Lonely Planet:** <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/paris>

## **Transport:**

### **Metro and Bus - RATP:**

[http://www.ratp.fr/en/ratp/c\\_21879/tourists/](http://www.ratp.fr/en/ratp/c_21879/tourists/)

The **metro** is by far and away the easiest way to get around and easy to get the hang of. You can get printed maps (mini and large) at most larger metro stations, or find PDFs of the maps online.

Here is a [PDF](#) of the metro.

You can download an RATP iPhone app as well – very useful to look at the metro and bus maps, and plan journeys.

You buy tickets at machines in the metro stations – they can take credit cards or cash (depending on the machine), and you can change the language to English. You can get tickets for single or return journeys between two stations. But the most cost effective way is by buying tickets called a T+ in a lot of 10. These give you one ride on the bus or metro (no matter the distance or number of stations) anywhere within central Paris. So not on the RER lines) This makes them cheaper per journey. Generally speaking, the tourist passes are very expensive, and I don't think you would make enough trips per day to make this worthwhile. Don't forget that everything is much closer than you think it is in Paris, so often rather than changing lines, you can walk between 1-2 stations.

**Buses** are a little harder to work out the routes, but are a great way to get around because you can see more as you're travelling along. You can get maps from metro stations and PDF maps on the RATP website. Once again you can use a T+ ticket for one bus trip. Most buses have an electronic sign that indicates the next stop, and the final station. The bus stops have all the information about the routes and usual times on their signs.

The **RER lines** (A = red, B = light blue, C = yellow) go out of Paris to the outer suburbs. You can't use the T+ tickets for the RER, but they are also bought on the same machines in metro stations. Just select an individual or return ticket to the RER station you need.

### **To and From the Airport – Charles de Gaulle:**

Taxi is the easiest way, and costs about 50-60€ depending on where you're going in Paris. The exception can be if you get stuck in horrendous peak hour traffic.

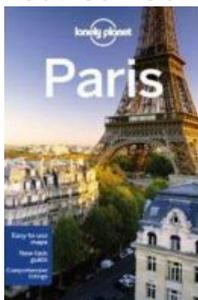
If you're up for public transport, it is actually very easy. You catch the RER-B (light blue line) from the airport into the centre of Paris for just under 10€. The two largest central Paris stations are Gare du Nord and Châtelet-Les Halles. From these you can change to the metro line of your choice depending on where you're going (using the same ticket).

### **Taxis:**

Taxis are actually pretty cheap in Paris as long as you're not going huge distances (outer suburbs) or in peak hour traffic. And they are so numerous, it is never a problem to get one from a designated taxi stand, or flag one down in the street. Most drivers will speak English and they know Paris extremely well unlike Perth taxi drivers!

## **Books About Paris:**

### **Tourist Books:**



The **Lonely Planet Paris** is the definitive guide, best for budget travellers and has all the important information. Most of it is online so you don't need to buy the book.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/france/paris>

I would also recommend their iPhone app – it is easier than carrying the heavy book around and means you can look at maps on your iPhone rather than looking nerdy holding a tourist map!

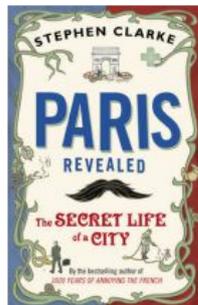


**My Little Paris** by Fanny Pechiodat, Amandine Pechiodat and Anne-Flore Brunet is a gorgeous book with interesting ideas, and secret places to go, mainly aimed at women. Shopping, beauty, markets and cool new hidden bars. They also have a really good website and blog – I used this a lot for ideas of places to go and things to do. <http://www.mylittle.fr/mylittleparis/en/>

### Other Books:

There are tons of books set in Paris or France that are fun to read before you go – but one that is a bit more travel orientated is:

**Paris Revealed** by Stephen Clarke



And a hilarious book based on the blog of the same name to help you understand the cultural differences between you and the French is:

**Stuff Parisians Like** by Olivier Magny



**Here's some more French themed books I enjoyed:**

The Paris Wife – Paula McLain

Almost French – Sarah Turnbull

The Sweet Life in Paris – David Lebovitz  
A Family in Paris – Jane Paech  
Shannon Bennett's Paris – Shannon Bennett  
My Life in France – Julia Child  
Anything by Stephen Clarke – he has a whole series mocking the French  
A Year in Provence – Peter Mayle

## Blogs:

There are literally hundreds of blogs written about Paris. So you can find just about anything you might be interested in. Lots are fashion and food related of course. Here's a few of my favourites:

[PerthGirlParis](#) – a shameless plug for the blog that I wrote!

[TheParisBlog](#) – great blog written by expats with hundreds of posts in lots of categories.

[Out and About in Paris](#) – an American living in Paris who gets up to lots of cool things.

[My Little Paris](#) – from the book of the same name, a girl's guide of things to do in Paris.

[GirlsGuideToParis](#) – Another girl's guide – tons of ideas with lots of categories.

[David Lebovitz](#) – an American chef in Paris – definitely the authority on where to get the best pastries!

## Apps (for iPhone or iPad):

**Lonely Planet Paris City Guide** – has offline maps so you can get around by looking at your phone rather than looking like a nerd and pulling out a giant map. A great guide with lots of information.

**TimeOut Paris** – also has maps and lots of information.

**J'aime Paris** – information about things to do for free in Paris.

There are various **language apps** with some useful words and phrases, and most of them can say them to you so you can get the pronunciation.

Translator apps are useful but not always accurate.

**My Little Paris** – the app for the blog of the same name.

**David Lebovitz** – this chef and blogger also has an app.

**La Fourchette** – to search for and book restaurants online.

Some **museums** like the Louvre have their own apps with lots of useful information.

**Collins French English Dictionary** – very expensive but a must buy if you're learning French – the best dictionary around and comes with a verb conjugator.

Some **monuments** even have their own apps – like the Eiffel Tower.

You can get Paris **walking apps** as well – with themed journeys to follow and audio guides to tell you about what you are seeing.

## Learning French:

If you're going to Paris for a while, definitely try to learn some French. It will make everything a little easier.

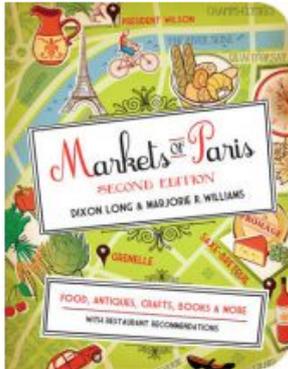
[Michel Thomas French](#) – I can really recommend this programme. You can get CDs or a digital download for your iPod. A really enjoyable series, gives you lots of confidence with learning vocabulary and the pronunciation. There's a beginners and advanced course.

[Alliance Française](#) – If you want to go more hardcore, this is the school where I did French lessons, and I would definitely recommend them. They have schools all over the world, so there may be one near you that you can start learning in – there is one in Perth (Nedlands). The style is French immersion – so the lessons are in 100% French! The school in Paris is in the 7<sup>th</sup>, a great student-y location. There are a number of different programmes - you can do weekly evening classes, or full time lessons.

## Markets:

I really loved the markets in Paris, and I tried to get to as many as I could. There are a few different kinds of markets, and they are well worth a visit. A very comprehensive book to get if you're really interested is:

**Markets of Paris** by Dixon Long and Marjorie Williams



## Market Websites:

**Food Markets:** <http://goparis.about.com/od/shopping/a/Paris-food-markets.htm>

If you can read a little French, this website is a complete up to date list of all the markets by arrondissement: <http://equipement.paris.fr/?tid=289> and lists the days, opening hours a list of the vendors and the nearest metro stations.

## Antiques and Flea Market:

The most famous and largest flea market is the **Puces de la Porte de Montreuil**:

Location: Avenue de la Porte de Montreuil, 20<sup>th</sup>

Nearest metro: Porte de Montreuil (line 9).

Open Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, 10am – 5pm.

Website: <http://www.st-ouen-tourisme.com/en/decouvertes/fiche/302-marche-aux-puces.html> or <http://www.parispuces.com/en/Default.asp>

Lots of neighbourhoods have antique and flea markets on the weekends at various times through the year, so often you will just come across one.

## Permanent Food Market Streets:

These markets are so old that rather than temporary stalls they are shop

fronts. They are open most days and still have a huge selection of shops and good produce. My favourites were:

**Rue Montorgueil**, 2<sup>nd</sup>, nearest metro station: Étienne Marcel (line 4).

Pedestrian street closed to traffic, lots of restaurants, bars and cafes, all different types of cuisines and market shops. Also some quirky shops to buy gifts. **La Maison Stohrer** is one of the oldest bakeries (from the 1700s) in Paris and has delicious treats. The other really good bakery is right up the top (north) end on the right hand side. **L'Escargot** was shut for refurbishment whilst I was in Paris, but it is one of the oldest restaurants in Paris. There is a nice juice bar at the bottom of the street and even some day-spas.

**Rue Cler**, 7<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro station: École Militaire (line 8).

Also a pedestrian street with market shops. A fantastic place to visit – I took all our visitors here. There is every kind of market shop here – good bakeries, butchers, fish, fruit and vegetables as well as wine shops, chocolate shops. The cheese shop, **Marie-Anne Cantin** (12 rue du Champ de Mars) off to the side is one of my favourites in Paris, and the staff are so happy to help you out, and speak English well. Good bakeries, some lovely alfresco cafes to sit and have lunch and people watch, especially the two on the corner of rue du Champ de Mars.

### **My Favourite Markets:**

#### **Farmer's Market on Avenue President Wilson:**

Avenue du President Wilson, nearest metro: Alma Marceau (line 9), markets open Wed and Sat 7.30am – 2.30pm

This is the farmers market I could walk to from our place and I shopped there twice a week. It is one of the largest food markets in Paris with a large range of organic produce. There are lots of fruit and vegetable stalls, leather handbags, jewellery, scarves, hot chickens, butchers, an Italian stall, a Greek stall, olives, dried fruits and nuts, honey, numerous cheese stalls, a wine and foie gras stall (with a very eccentric owner!) a hipster guy that only sells snails, a few bakeries, seafood, beautiful flowers, some bric a brac, kitchen stuff etc. But the best stall by far is the Bretagne crêperie by Gerard and Evelyn – the best crepes and galettes in all of Paris! Try the *complet* (ham, cheese and egg) or if you fancy sweet – salted caramel butter or banana and nutella.

#### **Enfants Rouges:**

39 rue de Bretagne, 3<sup>rd</sup>, nearest metro: Arts et Métiers (line 3, 11)

A small covered market, lots of good food choices and communal benches to sit and eat at. A very eccentric baker in the middle road that flirts with everyone and sometimes gives you free little treats! On the outer edge there is a really cool photograph store where you can rummage through millions of old black and white photographs.

#### **Marche Raspail**

rue Raspail, 6<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro: Rennes (line 12)

A food market on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays, large range of produce. Check this out if you're going shopping along rue de Rennes or up the Montparnasse Tower.

### **Bouquinistes:**

The famous green bookstalls along the river Seine have all sorts of interesting things. On the right bank from the Quai du Louvre to Pont Marie, and on the left bank from the Quai de la Tournelle to Quai Voltaire. There are postcards, vintage posters, old Paris maps, magazines, books and of course those Eiffel towers in every size and colour. They are worth a look though for souvenirs. Nearest Metro: Palais du Louvre (line 1). They are open daily from about 11am until sundown.

### **Flower Markets:**

**Ile de Cité** – the oldest flower market is in glass covered stalls on the island. Some really interesting plants and flowers to see, the orchid shop is amazing. Open every day except Sunday, nearest metro: Cité (line 4).

There are also some flower stalls around Madeleine church (Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro station: Madeleine (line 8, 12, 14).

## **Shopping:**

Those that know me know that I love shopping! So below are my Paris shopping tips.

### **Sales:**

There are huge government mandated sales in January/February and June/July so these are the best times to get a real bargain. You can look up the exact dates for each year online. The department stores have the best discounts, and then the chain stores. But even some designer goods can be cheaper than normal.

### **Supermarkets:**

Not only do you buy groceries here (they generally have a large selection of international foods) it is the best place to buy alcohol (actually good wine from 1.50€ a bottle to champagne and spirits), and famous French branded foods – chocolates, teas, biscuits and foie gras. So it is a good place to come to buy souvenirs and gifts.

[Monoprix](#) – They are all over the place, one of the largest is in the middle of the Champs-Élysées. I can really recommend buying some ham (*jambon*), some cheese and a bottle of wine/champagne from here to enjoy in a park with a baguette.

[Carrefour](#) – another supermarket brand, often larger stores in the suburbs.

[Franprix](#) – the smaller version of Monoprix.

Most of these are very small supermarkets, so there is not a broad range of stock.

### **Kitchen Shops:**

You can buy kitchenware much cheaper in Paris – if you can take it back in your luggage or post it home! [Le Creuset](#) is less than half the price of

Australia. Most of the kitchen shops are around Les Halles (nearest metro: Châtelet-Les Halles (lines 1, 4, 7, 11, 14)). All the big department stores have a good kitchen section. A much lighter but still classic French kitchen souvenir would be a set of knives from [Laguiole](#) – they are the famous French knives that have a bee on the top.

[G Detou](#) (58 rue Tiquetonne, 2<sup>nd</sup>) – one of the best shops for baking/food. Has Vahlrona chocolate – allegedly the best in the world.

[E Dehillerin](#) (51 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1<sup>st</sup>) – where the chefs all shop, not cheap but amazing quality.

[Bovida](#) (36 rue Montmartre, 1<sup>st</sup>) – I bought a lot of kitchen stuff here, really good range.

A Simon (48 and 52 rue Montmartre, 1<sup>st</sup>) – two large stores, mainly cookware porcelain and baking.

[Mora](#) (13 rue Montmartre, 1<sup>st</sup>) – mostly baking, desserts.

[La Vaissellerie](#) – lots of stores in Paris, a fantastic shop (one of my favourites) with quirky kitchen Paris/French themed souvenirs (like napkins, place mats, tins and coffee mugs), and white porcelain (every size and shape), and best of all, everything is really cheap.

## Department Stores – Le Grand Magasins:

### Galleries Lafayette :

40 Boulevard Haussman, 9<sup>th</sup>.

<http://www.gallerieslafayette.com>

Open daily (except Sundays) 9.30am – 8pm

### [Store Guide](#)

Nearest Metro: Havre-Caumartin (line 3, 9) or Chaussée d'Antin – La Fayette (line 7, 9)

My favourite department store in Paris – my home away from home! There are actually 3 stores – the Women's is the main one (makeup, shoes, handbags and clothes, children's clothes, toys, luggage). The whole entire basement is shoes for those with a fetish – just about every brand you've ever heard of is here. Products range from top end designer (fun to look at) to the more reasonably priced so this is actually somewhere you can shop. The sales are incredible, and you can get up to 70% off. I can highly recommend the **Café Lafayette** at the top on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with a salad bar, hot meals, soup, desserts, pastries and coffees and wine that comes out of post-mix type dispensers. Good prices and pretty decent food. So great for lunch or a champagne and gelato pit stop! There are a couple of restaurants up there too. You can sit and look at views of the Eiffel tower and the Opera House. There is a good souvenir section on level 6 as well. And free toilets here (very useful!). In the summer months you can go onto the **roof top** for a fantastic view over the whole of Paris. Complete with fake grass, couches and a hotdog and ice cream stand. People lie down and take their tops off to sunbake! The Women's store is the original and most famous – with a gorgeous central makeup hall looking up to the spectacular **dome** – a definite photo opportunity looking up. Also get a photograph from one of the balconies on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor – looking down at the makeup hall, another great shot. The Men's store is worth visiting for the amazing **gourmet food section** – a huge wine cellar, and excellent place to buy gifts and souvenirs like chocolate, fois

gras and cheese. The Homewares store has everything you can imagine for the house. Between the three buildings there are actually quite a few cafes, restaurants, a McDonalds and even a champagne bar, so there is something for everyone. It is best to get a store map from the information desk at the main entrance from Boulevard Haussmann, they come in English and then you can plan your eating and shopping – otherwise it is too overwhelming! It is quietest in the mornings and can get very crowded with tourists in the later afternoon and early evening.

### **Printemps**

<http://departmentstoreparis.printemps.com>

64 Boulevard Haussmann, 9<sup>th</sup>.

Open daily (except Sundays) 9.30am – 8pm

Nearest Metro: Havre-Caumartin (line 3, 9)

The more upmarket department store. Generally designer stuff, and fewer things you could actually afford to buy! But a really beautiful place to wander around (beautiful displays) and is much less crowded than Galeries Lafayette. Once again, it's divided into 3 stores – Women's (main store), Men's and Beauty/Kids/Homewares. The **Brasserie Printemps** is an amazing restaurant on level 6 of the Women's store – underneath a huge glass dome – I would highly recommend it. The food is modern and excellent, not too expensive and the wait staff lovely (and speak English). There is also a **Cojean** in the basement. My favourite part though is the **window displays** – they change approximately monthly and are absolutely gorgeous. Worth a look and some photos.

### **Bon Marche:**

<http://www.lebonmarche.com/en.html>

24 rue de Sevres, 7<sup>th</sup>

Nearest Metro: Sevres-Babylon (line 10, 12)

Open daily (except Sundays) 10am – 8pm

The beautiful left bank department store. Like Printemps, pretty fancy, not a lot you would actually buy, but a beautiful store to walk around. It is worth visiting for the amazing gourmet food section – [La Grande Epicerie](#) - the best food shop in Paris with a large international section (Asian foods, Italian, American but alas, no vegemite though!). A large wine cellar, fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, cheese, pastries and cakes, beautiful hors d'ouvres, takeaway meals and salads.

### **BHV:**

<http://www.bhv.fr>

52 rue de Rivoli, 4<sup>th</sup>

Nearest Metro: Hotel de Ville (line 1, 11)

Open daily (except Sundays) 9.30am – 7.30pm

This store is a large department store with a hardware section in the basement. Regular brands for the most part and regular prices to match. Clothing, accessories, makeup, children's clothes and toys, and lots of kitchen stuff. They have a large section of French cotton napery – a nice souvenir.

### **Chain Stores I Liked:**

Most of these stores have multiple locations in Paris. They are often at the large malls. These websites are mostly in French, if you look for *magasins*, *boutiques*, or *trouvez nous* (find us) you can search for store addresses and find them with Google Maps.

### **Clothing and Accessories Shops:**

[Zara](#) – Spanish brand with women's, men and children's clothing and accessories. One of my favourites.

[Massimo Dutti](#) – Fancier version of Zara, medium prices, lovely clothes and accessories.

[The Gap](#), [Gap Kids](#), [BabyGap](#) – men's, women's, and children's clothing and accessories. American so they fit! Have Gap Paris T shirts and hoodies which make good presents.

[Banana Republic](#) – 22 Avenue Champs-Élysées, the upmarket version of The Gap, American, so the clothes will fit. Definitely a favourite of mine and my husband.

[Naf Naf](#) – young women's clothing and accessories.

[Promod](#) – young women's clothing and accessories.

[Benetton](#) – women's, men's and children's clothing. Great 100% woollen jumpers and cardigans in lots of colours.

[Agnes B](#) – French brand with beautiful, but expensive clothes.

[Comptoir des Cotonniers](#) – lovely clothes, medium to expensive prices.

[Desigual](#) – Spanish store with very bright colourful clothing, really different – I love it! Great dresses and jackets and colourful handbags. Medium prices.

[Cop Copine](#) – French brand, expensive women's clothing. Trendy.

[Kookai](#) – medium priced women's clothing, French brand.

[Uniqlo](#) – Japanese casual clothes, cheap but great quality. I got lots of leggings, thermals, socks, woollen jumpers and plain tops here.

[Caroll](#) – French brand, medium to expensive priced women's clothing.

[Maje](#) – French brand, women's clothing. Medium to expensive prices. Classic.

[Sandro](#) – French brand, women's clothing, medium to expensive prices.

[Tara Jamon](#) – She's Canadian, but lives in Paris. Nice clothes especially dresses. Expensive prices.

George Hogg – 71 rue du Bac, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Rue du Bac (line 12). The upmarket brand from Benetton, everything in 100% wool and lots of colours – jumpers, cardigans, scarves.

[Nat & Nin](#) – 2 Parisian sisters started their own leather accessories brand. You can get it at the department stores or a tiny shop called [Sophie's Sacs](#) that has hundreds of leather bags in every colour for great prices at 149 rue de Rennes, 6<sup>th</sup>. Nearest Metro: Saint Placide (line 4).

[Scotch & Soda](#) – men and women's trendy Dutch clothing. Medium prices.

[The Kooples](#) – trendy French clothing brand, expensive.

[Zadig & Voltaire](#) – trendy French clothing brand, expensive.

[Loft Design By](#) – trendy French brand, men's and women's clothing.

### **Beauty Shops:**

[Sephora](#) – the enormous one is on the Champs-Élysées and is makeup heaven (and open until midnight every day)! A must see if you want skin care, perfumes or makeup. The staff mostly speak English and will give you a

makeover if you agree to buy some products. A great idea to do before a night out!

[Marionnaud](#) – like Sephora – beauty products, but not as large or as many brands.

[L'Occitane en Provence](#) – I know this is in Australia now, but it's more special when you've bought your hand cream in Paris I reckon.

**French pharmacies** are on just about every corner and stock a large range of beauty products, French skin care ranges, and everything is really cheap.

[Yves Rocher](#) – French skincare/beauty brand, sort of like the Body Shop. All natural products.

[Body Minute](#) – These small beauty shops are all over Paris, and are the best place to go if you need any waxing done. No appointments are necessary, and it is cheap but good quality.

Hairdressers - This can be scary in France, but I've found that the chain store [Jean Claude Biguine](#) often has staff that speak English. As well as haircuts and colours, they do nails and other beauty things.

### **Jewellery Shops:**

All the high end jewellery stores are around **Place Vendome** (1<sup>st</sup>) and rue de la Paix. Nearest metro: Tuileries (line 1). Including my favourite, Tiffany & Co! A very special place to wander around and look in the windows. There are also some jewellery shops like Cartier on the Champs-Élysées. The department stores have all the major jewellery brands as well, but generally have a much smaller range.

[Creations d'Ici d'Ailleurs](#) - 65 rue de Rennes, 6<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro station: Saint Sulpice (line 4) - Really cool silver and gold plated silver jewellery with semiprecious stones. Lots of colours and matching necklace, ring and earring sets, very reasonably priced.

### **Shoes:**

Shoes in Paris are much cheaper than Australia and still good quality.

[Aldo](#) – Shoes - cheap.

[Bata](#) – Shoes - cheap.

[Andre](#) – Shoes - cheap.

[Eden](#) – Shoes – cheap.

[Manfield](#) – medium priced shoes – some well known brands here.

[San Marina](#) – medium priced shoes. My favourite shoe store.

[Minelli](#) – medium priced shoes.

[Rudy's Shoes](#) – a great store for classic ballet flats, in leather, in lots of colours for only 35€ wish I'd bought lots more!

### **Homewares:**

[Habitat](#) – trendy, and a good place for art and homewares.

[Maison du Monde](#) – for real Francophiles – everything French style for your home, a great place for souvenirs.

[Muji](#) – Japanese stationary and homewares store, one of my favourites!

[Zara Home](#) – Great homewares store, European styling.

[Colette](#) – 213 rue Saint-Honoré, 1<sup>s</sup> (nearest metro: Tuileries (line 1)). A concept store with clothes, homewares, jewellery and gifts. Expensive, cool and very trendy. I wanted to buy so many things in this store!

[Conran Shop](#) – 117 rue du Bac, 7<sup>th</sup> (nearest metro station: Sèvres-Babylone (lines 10, 12)). Gorgeous designer homewares and furniture.

### **English Books:**

The [Virgin Megastore](#) on the Champs-Élysées has an English section and a good French language section as well.

[Shakespeare and Company](#) – 37 rue de la Bûcherie, 5<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Saint-Michel (line 4). The original English bookshop in Paris, a quaint jumble of books in the Latin Quarter, right amongst all the cafés. They have lots of events here as well so a good ex-pat hangout.

[WH Smith](#) – 248 rue de Rivoli, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12). An enormous bookshop with lots of English magazines as well.

[Brentano's](#) – 37 Avenue de l'Opéra, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nearest metro: Opéra (lines 3, 7, 8). American bookshop with lots of great souvenirs and gift ideas and lovely stationary.

### **Gourmet Food Shops:**

I love all the French gourmet food shops. They are fun to visit and browse around and a great place to buy gifts and souvenirs. And lots of them have cafés attached so you can have a meal or afternoon tea there.

[Fauchon](#) – 24-26 Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14). My favourite gourmet food store. Chocolates, pastries, cakes, macarons, teas, coffees, condiments, spices – practically everything. There is a little café here and you can have lunch or a cake and hot chocolate. Highly recommend it!

[Nicolas](#) – wine shop with lots of outlets in Paris. Often they will speak English and are happy to help you out.

[Hediard](#) – 21 Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14). And 31 Avenue George V, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: George V (line 1) Gourmet food shop, lots of variety.

[Ladurée](#) – There are a number of stores in Paris. My two favourites are: 75 Avenue des Champs-Élysées, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: George V (line 1) and 16 rue Royale, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12) I overheard someone say in line once that this is the Tiffany and Co of macarons – and that is true! From the Tiffany coloured green vintage styled boxes, tons of ribbon and those delicious candy coloured macarons. This place is a must see but you always have to line up to buy your macarons. Macarons will last 48 hrs in a fridge, and are very delicate, so I recommend buying a set in a box – but you can buy from one to hundreds! I must have eaten hundreds of them in my time in Paris! The boxes are gorgeous – a nice keepsake, and you get to choose which colour you want. You can have afternoon tea and high tea here – I very much recommend this, it is decadent and lots of fun. Their cakes are incredible.

[Pierre Hermé](#) – A number of boutiques in Paris - 4 rue Cambon, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12) and 39 Avenue de l'Opéra, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nearest metro: Opéra (lines 3, 7, 8) Another famous macaron brand, and actually they are yummiier and have more interesting flavours compared to Ladurée.

[Poilâne](#) – 8 rue due Cherche-Midi, 6<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Sèvres—Babylone (lines 10, 12) and 38 rue Debelleye, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Nearest metro: Filles du Calvaire (line 8). One of the oldest, most famous boulangerie in Paris. The sourdough bread made with organic stone ground flour and using a starter from the last century is incredible. Also cute vanilla biscuits in the shape of a teaspoon to stir into your tea or coffee! They have an attached restaurant where you can order an open sandwich with lots of topping choices on the famous bread. Their lunch formula is really cheap and includes a soup, the open sandwich and a glass of wine. A great place for a reasonably priced lunch.

Department Stores – Galeries Lafayette, Bone Marche (Le Grande Epicerie) – large range of gourmet foods of all different kinds.

[Lavinia](#) – 3 Boulevard de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14) One of the largest wine shops I saw in Paris – 3 levels and every style of wine and spirit possible! Staff are knowledgeable and happy to help you in English.

[Berthillon](#) - 31 Rue Saint-Louis en l'Île, 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Pont Marie (line 7). The most famous ice cream and sorbets in France. Fantastic – my favourite is chocolate and salted caramel butter (*caramel beurre sale*)

[Maille](#) – 6 Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14). The famous French mustards and vinegars. They have some really different flavours. A good gift idea.

[Angelina](#) – 226 rue de Rivoli, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Tuileries (line 1). The most famous and decadent hot chocolate in the world! Well worth a visit. They also have amazing cakes and pastries. The chocolate éclairs are the best I ever had. They do a high tea and lunches as well.

[Maxims](#) – 3 rue Royale, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12) The French nouveau styled restaurant and food shop. Great chocolates!

**High tea** at a famous French hotel. All the big famous hotels do high tea, and it is a very special experience to get all dressed up and go with your girlfriends. Mostly they cost around 50€, and you get a selection of sweet and savoury treats, a cup of tea or hot chocolate, and often a glass of champagne if you want! The Rtiz was closed for renovations whilst I lived in Paris, so we went to the [Galerie George V](#) (at the Four Seasons Hotel) – this was one of the best things I did in Paris, a very memorable experience. A beautifully decorated room with lots of fresh flowers everywhere, a piano player and great quality people watching. Definitely a must do!

[La Cure Gormande](#) - Lovely shop with biscuits, chocolates and lollies. They come in lovely French themed tins that make a great souvenir.

There are many different brands of chocolate shops in Paris – all of them are fantastic, I couldn't pick a favourite! "Designer" chocolate can be very expensive though!

### **French Designer Shops:**

As well as stand alone stores (more fun to visit) most of the designer brands are sold at the large department stores.

[Longchamp](#) – 404 rue Saint-Honore, 1<sup>st</sup> (nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12). My favourite Paris accessories brand that is not as expensive as some of the others – nice wallets, leather handbags and those infamous *Le Pilage* fold up bags in every colour – addictive! They can cost as little as 50€, so good for presents and souvenirs.

[Lancel](#) – Paris handbag and accessories brand. Largest stores are at Place de l'Opera and 127 Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

[Lanvin](#) – 15 and 22 rue du Faubourg Saint Honore, 8<sup>th</sup>. Paris brand of clothing and accessories.

[Louis Vuitton](#) – I don't need to introduce the original French designer brand! Largest (flagship) store is 101 Avenue des Champs-Élysées (corner Avenue George V). Be prepared to queue unless you get there in the morning. Has amazing window displays that are worth a look.

[Christian Louboutin](#) – If you want to buy shoes in Paris it has to be these iconic red-soled shoes. Every French woman has them! There are 3 stores in Paris, but be prepared to queue to get in. The quietest store is the one at 19 Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1<sup>st</sup>. The basic pumps cost from about 425€ which is around half the price of David Jones in Perth. And in the covered arcade next to the store is a boot makers [Minuit Moins 7](#), who put a red rubber protective layer on the sole that is stamped with Christian Louboutin for 25€ – worth it to preserve that distinctive red sole. They have a 2 week waitlist but can post your shoes worldwide with FedEx.

[Marc Jacobs](#) – 19 Place du Marché Saint-Honoré, 1<sup>st</sup> (nearest metro: Tuileries, line 1). Not really a French brand, but he lives in Paris! I love the Marc by Marc Jacobs bags - classic.

[Chanel](#) – lots of boutiques all over Paris, usually divided into themes like clothes, accessories et. Check out the jewellery store on 42 Avenue Montaigne, 8<sup>th</sup>.

[Dior](#) – 30 Avenue Montaigne, 8<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro: Franklin-Roosevelt (line 1, 9) Has amazing window displays that change approximately monthly.

[Hermes](#) – scarves and bracelets that are quintessentially French.

[Repetto](#) – everything ballet, including those gorgeous leather ballet shoes in hundreds of colours.

### **Souvenirs:**

[Yellow Korner](#) – photographs of all kinds of things, including Paris.

[Arteum](#) – at CNIT and Carousel de Louvre. An art shop with really quirky homewares and gifts.

There is a large souvenir section, with pretty good quality products on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of **Galeries Lafayette**.

[Universe de Leo](#) – a small gift shop in an arcade off the Champs-Élysées (number 76-78). Cool and quirky souvenirs, lots of stationary.

Touristy areas are generally packed with souvenir shops, but the quality is mostly not very good – mass produced made in China kind of stuff. Examples include around Notre Dame, along rue Rivoli, Montmartre, the Champs-Élysées and in the Latin Quarter. Great for kids, but not so much for yourself. I recommend looking in smaller little boutiques as you're wandering around. That way you can choose something more special.

### **Shopping Malls:**

There are not very many American style shopping malls in Paris.

[Quatre Temps](#) – is at **La Defense**, the business district with the high rise buildings to the east of the Arc de Triomphe. Catch the line 1 metro all the way to the end. It is worth visiting La Defense to wander round and see all the modern buildings, abstract art and the huge modern Arc. As you get out of the

station above ground Quatre Temps is the largest mall on 4 levels with many chain and designer stores here, movie cinemas and lots of cafés and restaurants. **CNIT** is another mall on the other side that is a bit smaller but has some lovely shops, especially homewares. They are both open on a Sunday.

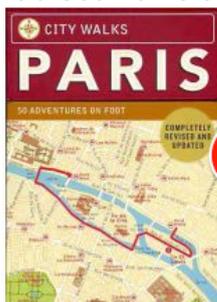
[Forum Des Halles](#) – Underground mall from the 1970s that is dingy but undergoing a huge renovation currently – hopefully will be nicer eventually with a park over the top. You enter through the enormous metro station Châtelet-Les Halles (lines 1, 4, 7, 11, 14). A teenage shopping mecca – all the chain stores, clothing, children's, homewares. Not really any good food places. I would not really recommend visiting here – Quatre Temps is larger and nicer.

[Carousel de Louvre](#) – A lovely small mall underneath the Louvre – the inverted pyramid is in the centre by the Apple store and a good photo op. Nearest metro: Palais Royale-Musée du Louvre (lines 1, 7). Unlike most Paris shops, it is open on a Sunday. There is a great large food hall with international cuisine and some really interesting shops to buy souvenirs and gifts. There is an Arteum, a Fragonard perfumery, gourmet food shops and jewellery. I really enjoyed wandering around here.

## Walking Around Paris:

It is really easy to just walk around Paris – this is what I spent most of my time doing, and everything is much closer than you imagine. By walking around and getting a little bit lost you find all sorts of interesting things – beautiful buildings, tiny churches, hidden gardens, quirky shops and some very interesting people watching! I used to pick an area or *arrondissement* (suburb) and just wander around. You generally get much better food away from the touristy areas as well.

An idea is to create a route on Google maps before you head out, that way you can read about the tourist sites on the internet and know a bit about what you are looking at. I used [Wikipedia](#) a lot for that. I also had a set of cards that had set walks that were all really great:



### Paris Walks:

There is a great walking group called **Paris Walks** (<http://www.paris-walks.com>) who do regular walking tours in English. They cost 12€ and are run usually by students. Generally you meet at the top of a metro station at a particular time. You get a bit of history, some interesting tales and each walk is in a particular areas or has a theme – medieval, Montmartre, Jewish Quarter, and even a chocolate walk!

## Areas I Liked To Walk Around:

Now the theme here is mostly shopping and food related! But I loved to wander down these particular streets or areas.

**Rue Saint Dominique**, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: La Tour-Maubourg (Line 8). Walk from Boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg west to Avenue Bosquet. A lovely neighbourhood street with lots of great shops – one of my absolute favourites as it was close to my place, I went a few times a week. 2 excellent bakeries – the croissants at Le Moulin de la Vierge (number 64) are the best around! There is a Starbucks, a macaron shop on the corner that has reasonably priced treats, Japanese takeaway, supermarkets (Franprix and Carrefour), a few restaurants and bars (including a cocktail bar and an Irish pub – O'Briens), Natalys (nice baby store), some shoe shops, a lovely scarf shop, and a range of clothes shops. As you walk along, you get a fantastic photo opportunity of the Eiffel Tower, jutting through the apartment buildings.

**Boulevard Haussman**, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Lots of metro stations along here. Perhaps the largest shopping precinct with the department stores Galeries Lafayette and Printemps. There are all the chain stores on this street and their surrounds, so a good one stop shop.

**Place de la Opera**, 9<sup>th</sup> ([Le Palais Garnier](#), corner of rue Scribe and rue Auber, 9<sup>th</sup>). Nearest metro: Opera (lines 3, 7, 8)). The Opera House is definitely worth a visit. There are lots of shops, restaurants and bars in this area too. So there is something for every taste and budget. Lots of cheap Japanese eateries are here.

**Rue de Rennes**, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Montparnasse – Bienvenüe (Lines 4, 6, 12, 13). Visit the **Montparnasse Tower**, then walk up Rue de Rennes all the way to Boulevard Saint Germain in the Latin Quarter. At the base of the tower there is a shopping mall (not very good but with a small Galeries Lafayette). Rue de Rennes is lined with lots of the chain stores and interesting gift shops. There are movie cinemas (with films in English) at Cinema Gaumont. A nice jewellery shop at number 65, [Creations d'Ici d'Ailleurs](#) and a great shop with reasonably priced leather handbags in every colour imaginable at [Sophie's Sacs](#) at number 149. Also cafes on every corner. Lots of shoe shops on this street too.

**Rue du Bac**, 6<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Rue du Bac (Line 12). Another lovely neighbourhood street. Walk south from the metro station on the corner of Boulevard Raspail. There are gorgeous (and mostly expensive!) shops along here. Lots of homewares and kooky gift shops with interesting things to look at and buy. Some nice cafes, French stationary, woollen jumpers at George Hogg (number 71). Designer homewares in the [Conran Shop](#) at number 117. And you end up at the fancy department store, Bon Marche, and it's incredible food store at [La Grande Epicerie](#), near the Sèvres-Babylone metro station. And nearby rue de Sèvres has lots of the chain shops. Whilst you're here walk along Rue de Babylone about 10 minutes to get a coffee from [Café Coutume](#)

at number 47– my favourite coffee spot in Paris. Fantastic (mostly Australian!) staff.

**Latin Quarter, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Boulevard Saint Germain, 6<sup>th</sup>.** Nearest Metro: Line 4 stations such as Saint-Michel, Odéon or Saint-Germain-des-Prés. A long street of designer shops, cafés, bars, chocolate and macaron shops and chain stores. Nearby **Boulevard Saint Michel** is the heart of the Latin Quarter with a square at the river end with a large sculpture and water fountain. Lots of nearby nightlife – cheap bars and cafés because it is a student area. Also many art galleries are around here. The buildings of the Sorbonne university are quite majestic. The church Saint-Germain-des-Prés is one of the oldest in Paris so worth a visit as is my favourite church, [Saint Sulpice](#). And the nearby cafés Les Deux Magots and Café de Flore at Place Saint-Germain-des Prés are famous for their historical patrons like Hemingway, Camus and Picasso. Just don't order a coffee there – it will set you back 8-12€! [The Pantheon](#) is here and well worth a visit as is the Luxembourg Gardens.

**The Islands** – Île de la Cité and Île Saint-Louis. Nearest metro: Cité (line 4). These are definitely worth a visit, and not just for Notre Dame Cathedral, and Sainte Chapelle. The wealthiest Parisians live here in gorgeous apartments, and so there are lots of gorgeous shops, art galleries and cafés to match. Homewares, clothing, jewellery, handbags, souvenirs and gifts. The best ice cream in Paris is at [Berthillon](#), 29-31 rue Saint Louis en l'Île. My favourite is salted caramel (*caramel beurre salé*) and chocolate.

**Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>.** Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12 and 14). The Madeleine church is large and beautiful. There are flower markets along the east side with a beautiful variety of blooms. And in the streets around the church are all the famous food shops in Paris. Fauchon, Hediard, Maison de la Truffle, Nicolas and Lavinia wine shops, Ladurée and Maille mustards. Also some homewares like Zara Home and Habitat, and lots of designer shops.

**Place du Marché Saint Honoré** – A secret area just north of rue Rivoli. Walk north from the Tuileries metro station (line 1) A modern glass building with surrounding little cafes and bars including an African themed place with stuffed animals like zebras! A New York style burger joint, and a nice little bakery chain, [Le Pain Quotidien](#) has a café here with lovely sandwiches and breads. There are some nice designer shops like [Marc By Marc Jacobs](#).

**Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré** - One of the longest designer shop streets in Paris. Runs from the 8<sup>th</sup> (corner of Avenue Franklin Roosevelt, just north of the Rond Point Champs-Élysées) towards Les Halles in the 1<sup>st</sup>. Every designer brand has a boutique along here, many multiple times! And lots of chain stores as well. Hermes, Christian Louboutin and Longchamp all have large stores here. It is a beautiful street to walk along and peruse shop windows. The buildings are all lovely. There are cafés (but expensive). The **Palais Élysées**, a gorgeous building where the president lives is always surrounded by police.

**Avenue des Champs-Élysées** - I don't need to introduce the most famous street in Paris in the 8<sup>th</sup>. The first section near the Arc de Triomphe is very touristy with lots of designer and chain stores. There is the largest Cartier, Sephora and Louis Vuitton stores here. Marcs and Spencers and a large Monoprix supermarket. The Virgin Megastore and FNAC. The infamous nightclub style store of (has to be seen to be believed) Abercrombie and Fitch with 2 hour queues of young hipsters, pumping music, and models as sales staff. You can get a polaroid photo taken with a half naked male model, but the store is so dark you can't tell what colour the merchandise is! There are cafés and restaurants (generally overpriced and not very good food), a Starbucks and a McDonalds. Chains like Zara, Benetton, The GAP and Banana Republic have stores here. There are movie cinemas (Cinema Gaumont) that show films in English. The Lido cabaret is here. And a nightclub called Queen. If you do want to eat here, I can recommend Pizza Pino for medium priced but good Italian food. And I would highly recommend the Renault café (great food and cocktails). Drug Store Publicis is an interesting store with English magazines in the front section and a great café that does a Sunday brunch and good cocktails. Stand at one of the crossing points in the middle of the road to take great photos in either direction. The shops are all open really late – some until midnight, and are open on a Sunday unlike most other Paris shops. There are also lots of arcades along the north side, worth looking into for the decoration and art sculptures but also some nice shops. Once you escape the shopping crowd, continue through the Rond Point and past the **Grand Palais** and **Petit Palais**. The next section is lovely, lined by trees and neighbouring parks. Then **Place de la Concorde** with its Egyptian obelisk. The Tuileries Garden is well worth a stroll through. And then you can finish up in front of the Louvre.

**Avenue Montaigne, 8<sup>th</sup> and Avenue George V, 8<sup>th</sup>** – These run off the Champs-Elysees and have a number of designer shops along them as well as fancy hotels and expensive (but amazing) restaurants. All the high end brands are represented here. Dior, Chanel, Louis Vuitton (etc!)

**Place de la Vendôme, 1<sup>st</sup>** - Nearest metro: Tuilleries (line 1). Just walk north from rue Rivoli. The Ritz Hotel, and all the designer jewellery shops make this a beautiful square to walk around. The column in the centre is quite spectacular with its surrounding beautiful buildings. Tiffany & Co is just north along rue de Paix.

**Rue Rivoli, 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup>**. From Place de la Concorde, walk east. It is a very long street. In the first part it is quite touristy with lots of souvenir shops, but some nice shops as well. The biscuit chain [La Cure Gormande](#) has a store here, there are some quite nice shops and there is [Angelina](#) for the best hot chocolate in the world! Past the Tuilleries and the Louvre, and it turns into a shopping mecca with all the chain stores, and heaps of shoe shops. All the way to the department store [BHV](#) and Hôtel de Ville. You will also walk past **Tour Saint Jacques** – an ornate tower that is all that is left of an old church. Just north of rue de Rivoli and the Louvre is the **Palais Royal**.

**Montmartre, 18th** – The highest part of Paris with its crowning jewel – the basilica Sacre Coeur. A really lovely spot to walk around along the cobbled winding streets. Catch the metro (line 2) to Blanche. Walk along some of the famous streets: Boulevard de Clichy has the Moulin Rouge and all the sex shops and clubs. Rue Lepic is a winding street with lots of permanent food shops of all different kinds. You also see the café from the movie *Amélie* on here. There is a cemetery, 2 very old windmills, lots of street art and sculptures, Paris' smallest working vineyard, some famous restaurants – *Le Maison Rose* and cabarets – *Au Lapin Agile* (where Picasso and Hemingway hung out). Lots of art shops and artists painting in Place du Tertre. A great place to buy souvenirs and gifts and there are lots of unique homewares, clothing and gift shops around. Also lots of bars and cafés to eat at. A great place to do a formal walking tour with the [Paris Walks](#) company.

**The Marais – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>**. Nearest metro: Saint Paul (line 1). This is the gay area of Paris and the old Jewish Quarter so a really lovely area to walk around – one of my absolute favourites. Lots of history, gorgeous medieval buildings, art galleries and very trendy shops and cafés. You can do a walking tour around the Jewish Quarter with the [Paris Walks](#) company. Some of the sights around here include:

**Hôtel de Sens** (1 Rue du Figuier) and **Hôtel de Sully** (62 rue Saint Antoine) – 2 amazing renaissance buildings.

**Place des Vosges** – A beautiful hidden garden completely surrounded by terraced houses. Has the Victor Hugo museum and some lovely restaurants.

Rue des Rosiers and rue Pavée - The Jewish temples and bakeries and yummy Lebanese food shops are along here.

[Saint Paul Village](#) – rue Saint Paul. A series of interconnected laneways and hidden shops, artisans and cafés.

Saint Paul Church – on rue de Rivoli, just near the Saint Paul metro station.

Place du Marché Sainte Catherine – Just off rue de Turenne, there a quaint little square with some lovely cafés to enjoy al fresco dining in the summer months.

Rue des Francs-Bourgeois – a great shopping street with some really trendy small boutiques.

**Bastille** – Metro: Bastille (lines 1, 5, 8) The tall column representing the French Revolution and the modern Paris Opera House.

**Les Halles, 1st** – Metro: Châtelet-Les Halles (lines 1, 4, 7, 11, 14). Although the underground shopping mall **Forum des Halles** is quite dingy and the park above is getting refurbished at the moment, this is still a cool area to wander around. Lots of pedestrian streets north of rue de Rivoli, like rue Saint Denis with lots of shops, bars, cafés, tattoo parlours and nightclubs. Saint Eustache church. The market street rue Montorgueil is worth a visit and nearby rue Montmartre is a great hopping street.

**Saint Martin Canals, 10<sup>th</sup>** – Metro Bastille (lines 1, 5, 8). Walk towards the Seine from Bastille to see the canal Saint Martin and the house boats. There is an art market here on the weekends. Then follow Boulevard Richard Lenoir north (a really long way!) Around République there are lots of parks and gardens along the concrete canal banks. In the canals people row boats, live

in houseboats and even (gross) swim in the summer! It's filled with old guys playing boules and young picnic-ers. There are lots of modern buildings and trendy bars and cafés. You can do a boat cruise (don't imagine that would be that great though), but it is fun to stand on the quaint bridges and watch the boats go through the lochs.

## Covered Arcades:

I spent a day wandering around with my camera looking at all the old covered shopping arcades from the 1800s. Some are quite debilitated but others are beautifully restored. They can have murals on the walls, beautiful painted or glass ceilings and old shop signs. Most are filled with lovely shops and cafés – a really great place to find some interesting things to buy. You can search online and find lots of blog posts about them and compile a list and make your own walking plan. However most of them are all around the same area in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and many are interconnected. Here are some of my favourites:

**Galerie du Palais Royal** – 6 rue de Montpensier, 1<sup>st</sup>. See my note about the Palais Royal.

**Galerie Véro-Dodat** – 19 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1<sup>st</sup>. Has a [Christian Louboutin](#) store at the end!

**Galerie Colbert** and **Galerie Vivienne** run parallel to each other off rue des Petits-Champs, 2<sup>nd</sup> (numbers 4 and 6). They are beautifully restored. Colbert is part of the Sorbonne university, and Vivienne has beautiful little shops and cafes inside.

**Passage Choiseul** is also along rue des Petits-Champs, 2<sup>nd</sup> (number 40), and although pretty is more run down than the other. There are some nice little shops inside.

**Passage du Grand-Cerf** – 145 rue Saint Denis, 2<sup>nd</sup>. This has a glass ceiling and some nice jewellery, antique and leather shops and cute little gift shops.

**Passage des Panoramas** – 11 Boulevard Montmartre, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Very old fashioned lovely little passage with some great restaurants, lots of book, stamp and coin shops and some little gift shops.

**Passage des Princes** – 5 Boulevard Italiens, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Beautiful glass ceilings and has a kids theme with lots of toy shops.

**Passage Jouffroy** – 10-12 Boulevard Montmartre, 9<sup>th</sup>. Directly opposite Passage des Panoramas, a lovely little arcade with a glass roof, shops and cafes.

**Passage Verdeau** – 6 rue de la Grange-Batelière, 9<sup>th</sup>. Continues on from Passage Jouffroy. Glass ceiling and cute little shops.

## Monuments and Buildings:

[Eiffel Tower](#) – Champ de Mars, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Bir-Hakeim (line 6). My absolute (and everybody's I'm sure) favourite monument. Make sure you are prepared to line up for a long time, especially in summer. You can buy your tickets there or online. Definitely worth it to get a ticket to the very top. It is a stunning day time view when you can take lots of photos, but night time is spectacular. Unless you have a tripod though, your photos will look crappy. If you can climb the 720 odd stairs, those queues are much faster than the lift

queues. There are some lovely restaurants in the tower, I can highly recommend Alain Ducasse's restaurant [Le Jules Verne](#). A very special and romantic spot for an amazing French (and expensive!) meal. The best spots to take Eiffel Tower photos is from the platform in front of the Trocadero and also from the surrounding park – Champ de Mars. The Trocadero gardens and palace – Palais de Chaillot are a nice area to walk around, they house some museums including a maritime one. And make sure you see the tower sparkling on the hour for 5 minutes every hour after sunset. It's magical!

[Arc de Triomphe](#) – Place Charles de Gaulle, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Charles de Gaulle-Étoile (lines 1, 2, 6). At the top of the Champs-Élysées. Well worth the climb to the top for a fantastic view down the street to the Louvre. And to watch the crazy traffic in the round-about.

[Montparnasse Tower](#) – Boulevard du Montparnasse, 15<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Montparnasse-Bienvenüe (lines 4, 6, 12, 13). One of my favourite tourist attractions in Paris. If you've already done the Eiffel Tower, this is a must do. It is cheaper, there's never a very large queue, and the 360 degree view is spectacular – mostly because it actually includes the Eiffel Tower. Also great to do in the daytime or at night.

[The Opera House \(Palais Garnier\)](#) – 8 rue Scribe, 9<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Opéra (lines 3, 7, 8). You can actually go to the ballet here – you buy the tickets online. But it is worth a visit inside which you can do on your own, although twice a week they do guided tours in English. The inside is absolutely spectacular.

[Grand Palais](#) - Avenue du Général Eisenhower, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Champs-Élysées-Clemenceau. A beautiful building to look at on the outside, and has various museums and exhibitions on the inside, and a lovely restaurant located in the river side.

[Petit Palais](#) – Avenue Winston Churchill, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Champs-Élysées-Clemenceau. Another beautiful building, with an art museum on the inside, and a lovely garden café.

**Palais Royal** – 8 Rue de Montpensier, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre (lines 1, 7). A palace with a lovely central garden. The surrounding covered passages have some cute little quirky shops and cafes. At the Louvre end of the building near the French Comedy theatre, is an interesting outdoor modern art installation by Daniel Buren.

[Hôtel de Ville](#) – 29 rue de Rivoli, 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Hôtel de Ville (lines 1, 11). The town hall of Paris is a spectacular building, that in the winter time has an outdoor ice-skating rink in front, and in the summer a pretend beach. There are often art or photographic exhibitions inside.

## Churches:

They are lovely little churches in every neighbourhood, and you can look inside any of them for free. Make sure in the summer you have something to cover your shoulders (no singlet tops allowed). Here are some of my favourite ones to visit.

[Notre Dame Cathedral](#) – Place Jean-Paul II, 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Cité (line 4). The most famous cathedral in Paris – so you often have to queue for a while to get in. A lovely rose window. It is well worth it to climb the towers to the top – a beautiful view, and you get close to those famous gargoyles. Make sure

you walk around to the garden at the back, the side and back of the church is just as lovely as the front.

[Sainte Chapelle](#) – 8 Boulevard du Palais, 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Cité (line 4). A hidden little gem inside a government building (so you have to pass through the Gendarmerie security on the way in – no pocket knives!) A tiny medieval chapel with the most amazing stained glass. Often very long queues but worth a visit.

[Saint Sulpice](#) – Place Saint Sulpice, 6<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Saint Sulpice (line 4). My favourite church in Paris. Beautiful on the outside and in a lovely square with a water fountain and some nice (designer-ish) shops nearby. And inside is the famous rose line as mentioned in Dan Brown's the *Da Vinci Code*.

[Sacre Coeur](#) – 35 Rue du Chevalier de la Barre, 18<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Anvers (line 2). This large white basilica is the crowning jewel of Montmartre. A spectacular building with a huge mosaic tiled dome in the centre. You can climb to the top for an amazing view across Paris.

[The Pantheon](#) – Place du Panthéon, 5<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Cardinal Lemoine (line 10). Not a church anymore but a secular building dedicated to science. Well worth a visit to see Foucault's Pendulum and the famous people buried in the crypt.

[Madeleine](#) – Place de la Madeleine, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14). Lovely church one the inside with its distinctive green roof and Roman style columns, but quite run down on the outside.

## **Cemetery:**

[Père Lachaise](#) – Avenue Gambetta, 20<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Père Lachaise (lines 2, 3). Paris' largest cemetery up on the hill is lovely to stroll around with large trees, cobbled streets and lots of really interesting mausoleums. Lots of famous people are buried here (Jim Morrison, Edith Piaf etc) and you can buy maps in nearby shops and newspaper stalls with the grave locations marked on them. There is a central crematorium which is a working funeral home, so you can't visit inside.

[Catacombs of Paris](#) – 1 Avenue du Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy (Place Denfert-Rochereau), 14<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Denfert Rochereau (lines 4, 6). Although I tried to go here a few times, the queues were always extremely long, so I never actually got inside. I would definitely recommend getting there at opening time or even earlier.

## **Museums:**

For all these museums, I recommend buying your tickets beforehand – that way you can avoid some very long queues. You can buy them online on most of the museum's individual websites, or through a tourist centre. But a very convenient way is to go to the Virgin Megastore, or FNAC on the Champs-Élysées – go to the *Billetterie* section where they sell tickets to all the major monuments, concerts, events and the museums. If you can afford the extra money – the audio-guides are invaluable sources of information and makes the visit more pleasurable when you can listen to some facts about what you are looking at.

[Musée du Louvre](#) – rue de Rivoli, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Palais Royal - Musée du Louvre (lines 1, 7). The largest and most famous museum in Paris is a must see. Walk around the outside of the building – it is beautiful. And those famous glass pyramids in the centre square. Plan your visit before you go, so you don't waste time – you will need to spend at least a few hours here. You can buy a Louvre iPhone app which has an audio-guide included. The most famous displays are indicated on the supplied map – Michelangelo sculptures, the Venus de Milo, Da Vinci paintings etc. The Napoleon apartments are also worth a visit. In the north wing there is a decorative arts museum, [Les Arts Decoratifs](#). This has jewellery, furniture and other interesting exhibits. There are lots of cafés and restaurants within the Louvre complex and a nice large shopping mall – Carousel de Louvre.

[Musée D'Orsay](#) - 5 Quai Anatole France, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Solférino (line 12). My favourite museum in Paris. A beautiful building in an old train station, amazing Impressionist art and lots of Van Gogh paintings. Some lovely cafés and a great view from the roof top across the river to the Louvre with Sacre Coeur in the background.

[L'Orangerie](#) – Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12) A very small museum in the Tuileries Gardens. Well worth a visit to see Monet's water lilies in custom designed round rooms – very special. You can buy a ticket in combination with the Musée d'Orsay.

[Palais du Tokyo](#) - 13 Avenue du Président Wilson, 16<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Alma-Marceau (line 9). Modern art museum with some really unusual exhibitions.

[George Pompidou Centre](#) – 19 Rue Beaubourg, 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Hôtel de Ville (lines 1, 11). The most famous modern art museum in Paris. Take a walk around the outside to see the incredible building with its “guts” on the outside. Has a fantastic view from the top, and a really nice gift shop at the bottom. The area surrounding the museum is great to walk around, lots of nice cafés, bars and restaurants, great little souvenir shops and street art – murals and sculptures.

[Les Invalides](#) – Place Vauban, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: La Tour-Maubourg (line 8). The military museum is a lovely building, make sure you visit the church at the back with Napoleon's tomb, it is very spectacular.

[Musée Rodin](#) – 79 rue de Varenne, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Varenne (line 13). A lovely small museum dedicated to Rodin where his most famous sculptures like the Gates of Hell and the Thinker are in a garden, so best to visit in spring or summer.

[Fragonard](#) – 9 rue Scribe, 9<sup>th</sup> (nearest metro: Opéra (lines 3, 7, 8) Really a shop with a small perfume museum attached that is free to visit. But I still really enjoyed visiting and buying some unique perfumes (of course!)

## **The Seine:**

Spending time walking along the left and right banks of the Seine is a lovely experience. In the spring and summer Parisians sunbake half naked on the cobblestones! In summer they do the [Paris Plages](#) (fake white sand beaches along the river bank complete with food and drinks, games like boules and play equipment for children) in front of Hôtel de Ville on the right bank. On Sundays they close some of the roads long the river banks so you can walk, jog, cycle or rollerblade along the river. There are small parks to picnic in, and

lots of shady trees. The houseboats are really interesting to peek into. The Bouquinistes sell their books and touristy wares out of the green stalls.

### **Boat Cruises:**

There are a number of companies, but the one we thought was good was: [Bateaux Mouches](#) – At the bottom of Pont de l'Alma, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Alma Marceau (line 9). You can do a day time or night time boat cruises – you go underneath all the bridges and get to see lots of the famous monuments. The ones without a meal are not as nice although much cheaper. I would highly recommend the lunch or dinner cruise where you get a three course meal with wine and musical entertainment – a very memorable experience!

### **Bridges:**

I love all the bridges across the Seine in Paris. There are more than 30 of them. They are all unique and range from quite modern to classical in design. You can spend some time walking across them, and you can see lots of them if you go on a river cruise. They are great spots to take photographs from. Some of my favourites are below:

**Pont Neuf** – Across the west end of île de Cité, the oldest bridge in Paris, and has castle-like turrets.

**Pont Alexandre III** – Between the Grand Palais and Les Invalides. My favourite bridge in Paris with its gold statues and old fashioned lamp posts. Kiss your lover on here and you'll be together forever!

**Pont d'Iena** – Between the Trocadero and the Eiffel Tower.

**Pont des Arts** – Next to the Louvre. A wooden pedestrian bridge covered in locks. The tradition is that you buy and engrave a lock with you and your lover's names, put it on the bridge and throw the key into the Seine, then your love will last forever! A romantic spot and great for photographs.

**Pont Marie** – Across the middle of île Saint Louis.

**Pont Notre Dame** – Across the middle of île de Cité.

**Paserelle Debilly** – A unique looking pedestrian bridge near the Eiffel Tower.

**Pont d'Arcole** – Interesting green bridge near Hôtel de Ville.

**Pont de la Concorde** – A great spot to get a photo of Pont Alexandre III and the Eiffel Tower.

**Pont de Grenelle** – A bit off the beaten track, but on the island in the middle is the small Statue of Liberty.

### **Parks:**

Obviously parks are best visited in the spring and summer when there are lots of flowers. In the summer the Parisians flock to the parks to have picnics and and take all their clothes off – a sight to see! Most of the parks have children's sections with carousels and other fairground type rides, trampolines and food and drinks. You are generally not allowed to walk or play on the grassed areas at certain times (!) – so look out for the signs. There are actually garden police that wander round to enforce this!

**Bois de Boulogne** – In the 16<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro: Port Maillot (line 1). The largest park on the outskirts of Paris, where the Roland Garros tennis stadium is, a horse racing centre (Hippodrome de Longchamp), lots of lakes and

various parks and even a forest section. Don't go after dark – when the creatures of the night come out! But a great place to exercise.

[Jardin d'Acclimatation](#) – In the 16<sup>th</sup>, at the northern end of the Bois de Boulogne, nearest metro Les Sablons (line 1). A great place for children, with some animals and birds (a bit sad though – they are in cages), gardens, rides and fairground-type attractions.

[Parc des Buttes Chaumont](#) - 1 rue Botzaris, 19<sup>th</sup>, nearest metro: Pyrénées (line 14). A lovely park in the north with cliffs, a waterfall, and even a temple.

**Jardin de Tuileries** – Place de la Concorde, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Concorde (lines 1, 8, 12). From Place de la Concorde to the Louvre. A lovely formal garden to stroll in. Sit in the famous green chairs around the lakes and fountains, see priceless statues scattered throughout the garden. Visit the l'Orangerie museum. There is a children's section with rides, and in the summer a large fairground sets up along rue de Rivoli. The Ferris Wheel at the Place de la Concorde end is worth it for the great views up the Champs-Élysées. There are some ice cream stalls, and expensive cafés in the centre. In front of the Louvre, it is filled with flowers in spring and summer.

**Luxembourg Gardens** – rue de Vaugirard, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Rennes (line 12). A lovely garden and palace. Lakes, fountains, lots of statues and in the summer hundreds of flowers. Often musical acts play in the summer underneath the rotundas. Also near the Pantheon.

**Champ de Mars** – Surrounds the Eiffel Tower in the 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: École Militaire (line 8). Lovely spot for a picnic with some cheese and a baguette looking up at the Eiffel Tower. Across the Seine are the **Trocadero Gardens** which offer a great view of the tower.

**Park Monceau** - 35 Boulevard de Courcelles, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Monceau (line 2). Once a private park for the wealthy surrounding Parisians, this lovely park has a rollerskating rink for children, Roman and style statues, an Egyptian pyramid, and a waterfall. Lovely flowers in the spring and summer.

Canals Saint Martin – Not really a park but a series of canals in the 10<sup>th</sup> with some parks along the banks. You can

## Food and Drink:

There are way too many good restaurants in Paris to mention! The food is generally really good in Paris, as long as you don't go to a really touristy place. That rules out anything along the Champs-Élysées! Often the small local neighbourhood place can be more authentic, have much better food and be cheaper. The most common style of place is a *brasserie*. You can just have a drink here (without food), coffees or have a meal. And they don't mind if you sit as long as you like.

A website we used all the time to search for and book restaurants (all you need is an email address to sign up) is [La Fourchette](#), best if you can negotiate a bit of French, because the [English version](#) isn't as comprehensive. There is also an iPhone app. With this website, you can sign up with an email address. That way you can browse for restaurants by location or type of food. You can see some menu options and prices as well. There are often deals so that you get a meal free or a percentage discount off the meal. We only went to restaurants that had above 7.5 ratings and had a successful experience

every time. The best thing is, that you can book a table online, and get instant email confirmation even up to 10 mins before eating time, so you don't have to speak any French!

Some other restaurants we enjoyed include:

[Julien](#) - 16 rue du Faubourg Saint Denis, 10<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Stasbourg-Saint Denis (lines 4, 8, 9). A kitsch art nouveau restaurant in a slightly dodgy area that is very touristy, but does a fantastic (and reasonably priced) set menu with 3 courses (classic French dishes to choose from – snails, foie gras, steak and chips, duck, crepes Suzanne, profiteroles) with an apéritif (I quite like a *kir royale* – champagne and blackcurrant liqueur) and half a bottle of wine (red or white) per person. I can really recommend this place – the waiters speak English and the food is excellent every time.

[Pavilion Ledoyen](#) – 1 Avenue Dutuit, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Champs-Élysées-Clemenceau (lines 1, 13). Another extremely expensive but amazing degustation – they best meal I've ever had in my whole life!

Celebrity chefs are revered in Paris, and anyone with a Michelin star can charge what they like! You can easily find these places [online](#).

Any of [Alain Ducasse's](#) restaurants are fantastic for a very special occasion (translation: extremely expensive!)

### **Boulangeries:**

Don't go to a chain bakery like Paul or Brioche Doree! Support the small local bakeries. Their croissants and baguettes are way better, and there is one on every second street corner. You can get premade baguettes with lots of different fillings and salads as well as the breads and pastries. They often have lunch "formulas" – with a baguette, pastry or cake and a drink for cheaper.

### **Coffee:**

Coffee in Paris is depressingly crap. Unless you like espresso (which they do very well according to my husband!), the problem is that they don't do Italian style coffees very well. The beans are bitter and strong, they use long life milk (tastes disgusting!) and the same coffee order can come in many different permutations. One friend once had a cappuccino with a shot of espresso in the cup and canned whipped cream on the top! If you're going to brave it here are some options:

**Starbucks** – yes it's an American chain, and they still use long life milk, but they have coffee styles we're used to like lattes. There's quite a few outlets around Paris.

*Café* – an espresso.

*Café au lait* – means a milky coffee with 1 shot of espresso in a cup, like a flat white. Can also be called a *café crème*.

*Café noisette* – like a short macchiato with a shot of espresso in a small cup and a dash of warm milk. Although sometimes the milk is given to you warm or cold in a mini jug on the side.

*Café noir* – long black coffee.

And I have to mention the *Café Gourmand* – one of my favourite treats in Paris for dessert. You get an espresso (easily changed to the coffee of your choice) and a few little desserts – mini versions of the restaurants' regular

desserts – mini macarons, small morsels of chocolate cake, a mouthful of mousse – very decadent!

The only way to get great coffee though is to go to a café run by Australians or New Zealanders! Although a bit off the beaten track these places make fantastic lattes and macchiatos, and the wait-staff are all young English speaking hipsters.

[Cafe Cotonne](#) - 47 rue Babylone, 7<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Sevres-Babylone (line 12). My favourite hangout. Does a great Sunday brunch as well.

**Kookaboora** - Corner of Avenue Trudaine and Rue des Martyrs, 9<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Pigalle (lines 2, 12). Also fantastic coffee so worth the trip, and you get to talk to some Aussies.

### **Good Lunch Spots:**

[Pret-A-Manger](#) – The English chain store has a few outlets in Paris. The yummiest sandwiches around. There is one on rue Marbeuf, 8<sup>th</sup>.

[Cojean](#) - There are a number of these scattered all over central Paris. They have baguettes, salads, and in the winter soups and warm dishes. Cakes, biscuits and drinks too. And a juice bar with yummy concoctions. Cheap and great quality western style lunch spot.

### **Bars:**

[Ô-Château](#) – 68 Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearest metro: Les Halles (line 4). The best wine bar in Paris! Run by Parisian wine entrepreneur, Olivier Magny, who wrote a fantastically funny book called *Stuff Parisians Like*. You can go for a drink - there are hundreds of wines to taste by the glass, and you pay for a small, medium or large tasting. I'd recommend a flight of tastings, with 3 glasses themed by reds, whites, champagnes or by grape variety. They have fantastic food including share plates to nibble on – the cheese platter is one of the best I ever had, and the foie gras amazing. They also do wine tasting sessions which are great value, lots of fun and you can learn a little bit about French wine. This was without a doubt our favourite hangout in Paris. All the wait-staff are really lovely, extremely knowledgeable and speak English well. One guy even lived in Margaret River for a few years!

Some good night life areas are:

**Latin Quarter** (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>) – hundreds of bars, restaurants and cafes.

**Marais** (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) – Lots of really cool cafes and bars, also the gay bar area.

**Bastille** (4<sup>th</sup>) – Rue de Lappe and surrounding streets. Lots of restaurants, bars, cafes and nightclubs.

**Montmartre** (18<sup>th</sup>) – Bit dodgy at night in the red light district at its southern end on Boulevard de Clichy with lots of sex clubs and the Moulin Rouge but also lots of bars and nightclubs. Further north is a bit quieter and still lots of choice.

Around **Les Halles** and the **Pompidou Centre** (4<sup>th</sup>) – lots of pedestrian only streets with hundreds of bars and cafes, and restaurants.

**Champs-Elysees** (8<sup>th</sup>) – very touristy and expensive, but a cool nightclub called [Queen](#) is right in the centre (number 102).

## **Wine:**

Not going to give you a French wine lesson - that would take years! But you can buy excellent wine in the supermarket for under 5€ so don't let the price put you off. In a store like [Nicolas](#) or [Lavinia](#) you can also get excellent advice in English. Those interested in serious cellar stocking can look at the wine sections of [Galleries Lafayette](#) and [Bon Marche](#) as well. Definitely try to do a wine tasting course in Paris – they are lots of fun and very informative.

## **Apartments:**

I would recommend renting a short stay apartment if you come to Paris for a week or longer. They are cheaper than hotels and can be really lovely. They are often a little bit away from the really touristy areas, so you can also become more of a local - living in a neighbourhood and buying fresh baguettes from the local bakery every day!

There are many websites, but some that our friends had success with are:

[Paris Attitude](#)

[Friendly Rentals](#)

## **Entertainment:**

### **Burlesque Shows:**

Nearly every tourist in Paris sees a burlesque show. They are worth doing for a very different experience – it's a really fun night out! I tried all of them out, so here are my comments. Book tickets online, and I would definitely recommend to book the ticket with included champagne – you get better seats than the stand alone ticket. The dinner tickets are very expensive, and the food is quite average. Get dressed up for these or they won't let you in.

[Moulin Rouge](#) – 82 Boulevard de Clichy, 18<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Blanche (line 2). The original and classic. Montmartre is a slightly dodgy area at night with all the surrounding sex clubs, so don't go alone.

[Lido](#) – 116 Avenue de Champs-Élysées, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: George V (line 1). Great location on the Champs-Élysées, and the biggest show – the most acts, the most amazing costumes.

[Crazy Horse](#) – 12 Avenue George V, 8<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Alma Marceau (line 9) I thought this was the best show – intimate, more modern, more of an authentic burlesque show, less touristy and the most sexy!

### **Comedy Show:**

[How To Become Parisian In 1 Hour](#) – A rude, hilarious one man show in English by Olivier Giraud. (No children – sex references and lots of swearing). Pokes fun at the Parisians and all their quirks and a few other culture bashing references (mainly American) as well. One of the best things I did in Paris – definitely do this one night! In the Théâtre des Nouveautés, 24 Boulevard Poissonnière, 9<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Grands Boulevards (lines 8, 9)

**Music:**

[Bataclan](#) – 50 Boulevard Voltaire, 11<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Oberkampf (lines 5, 9). This is a Chinese pavilion-come kooky bar and an excellent venue for live music.

You can buy tickets to concerts and events at the *Billetterie* sections of [FNAC](#) and the [Virgin Megastore](#) on the Champs-Élysées.

**Cooking Lessons:**

I would highly recommend doing some cooking lessons whilst you're in Paris. They are lots of fun and a memorable experience. We did a ton of lessons at [Cookn' With Class](#). Located at 18 rue Custine, 18<sup>th</sup>. Nearest metro: Château Rouge (line 4). The chefs are French, Australian and American and all the classes are in English. All the classes I did were fantastic – Macarons, French Desserts, French Bread Making, and Croissants. The best overall one is the Market Class. You get to go and visit a market street and go to all the vendors – butcher, bakery, cheese shop, fish shop and fruit and vegetable shop. You then go back and make a 4 course meal which you then enjoy with a bottle(s) of wine! You can do this for lunch or dinner. Can highly recommend Alex Dreyer – the American chef.

**Bus Tours:**

There are a number of companies that do open top bus tours, and they each have slightly different routes. The only problem with doing this in Paris is that the traffic can be quite bad, and so it can take a really long time to get a relatively short distance, and sometimes you have to wait a long time at the bus stops. I would recommend them for older people, people with mobility issues and new tourists to Paris as it gives you a good overall picture of the city, and goes to all the main monuments and tourist areas. You just buy a day (or more) pass and hop on and off as you like. For the more adventurous – I think it is easier to just catch the metro and walk – and definitely a lot cheaper.

[Big Bus Tours](#) – the red buses.

[L'Open Tour](#) – the yellow/green buses.

**Other Practical Information:****Mobile Phones:**

You can get prepaid phone SIM cards for most phones including the iPhone from [Orange France](#). There are lots of outlets around central Paris, most of the staff speak English. You can buy cards for as little as 5€ which you can use for phone calls (local French numbers and French mobiles), SMS, MMS and mobile internet data. They are explained in French [here](#). This is really useful so you can use Google Maps to get around, and your other travel apps.

**Toilets:**

A big problem is that there are not many public toilets at all in Paris. There are some public free standing toilets (grey) in some touristy areas that cost 50c. Other toilets can be found at:

**McDonalds** - free

**Starbucks** – but you need to buy something to get the code.  
The **department stores** all have free toilets.  
**Shopping malls** have toilets that you need to pay for.

## **Day Trips From Paris:**

There are a number of day trips you can easily do from Paris on the RER trains. Here are my favourites:

[Château Versailles](#) – A must see. It will take most of a day to do the tour of the palace and walk around the gardens. In the summer, you can go in the evening to walk around the gardens and see the fountains light up in time to music and fireworks – a very memorable experience.

**Giverny** – Visit Claude Monet's House and [Garden](#). Beautiful in the spring and summer.

[Château Fontainebleau](#) – Another lovely château and garden about an hour out of Paris in a charming little village.

**Saint Germain-En-Laye** – an outer suburb of Paris where all the English and Aussie ex-pats live with a charming central old town, great shopping, and a château with a large forest to tramp around in. Catch the RER-A (red line) to the end.

[Chartres](#) – Has an impressive cathedral. Climb to the top for the view! Also a charming old town with cobbled streets to walk around.

[La Vallée Village](#) – I didn't go here, but some friends did and really enjoyed it. It's a purpose built outlet shopping town with lots of famous designer brands. It's easy to get to on the RER-A (red line) train, or you can buy a package that includes a return bus trip from the centre of Paris.

[EuroDisney](#) – Very popular with adults and kids alike! But if you've already been to one of the USA Disneylands, this is not as good.