

# Hostelworld Guide for Paris

One of the first things you notice when you walk around Paris is this: the French capital is just as you imagine it. Parisians lounge outside cafés drinking coffee, budding artists sketch whatever passes them into their sketch pads, and everywhere you look is another building which causes an immediate reaction to grab for your camera. Some of the world's best museums can be found here, the list of instantly recognisable landmarks is a lengthy one, and the nightlife is electric to say the least. But one of the French capital's best attributes is that when you want to do nothing but sit back and relax, it's hard to think of a better city in the world to people watch.

## In this Guide...

Useful Information  
After Dark  
Places to Eat  
Top Attractions  
Budget Tips  
Where to Shop

## The Essentials

### Getting There

**By plane:** Paris has three airports - d'Orly, Charles de Gaulle and Beauvais. The best way to the city from d'Orly, Charles de Gaulle is via train. If you fly into Beauvais, which is 75km northwest of the city centre, you will need to take the shuttle bus.

**By train:** Paris has six major train stations where trains from all over Europe terminate. The Eurostar from London terminates in Gare du Nord.

**By bus:** Nearly all long-haul bus journeys terminate at Gare Routière Internationale Paris-Gallieni in the 20th Arrondissement.

### Getting Around

**On foot:** Paris is an extremely flat city but also extremely big. If you don't like walking it is definitely an idea to rent a bike.

**By metro/RER:** The French capital has one of the most efficient underground rail systems in the world. The Metro and RER networks are integrated. It is said that you are never more than four hundred yards away from a metro stop.

**By bus:** A good bus service also operates around Paris but as the underground system covers the entire city, you might not need to use them.

### Useful phrases

**Hello:** Bonjour  
**Goodbye:** Au revoir  
**Please:** S'il vous plait  
**Thank you:** Merci  
**You're welcome:** De rien  
**Yes:** Oui  
**No:** Non  
**Of course:** Bien sur  
**Excuse me:** Excusez moi  
**How are you?:** Ca va?  
**Open:** Ouvrir  
**Closed:** Fermé  
**What is your name?:** Comment tu t'appelles?  
**My name is...:** Je m'appelle...  
**How much?:** Combien?  
**May I have the bill?:** L'addition s'il vous plait.

## Climate

January and February are the coldest months when the average temperature is 4°C, although it is known to drop below 0°C. In March temperatures begin to steadily rise, going from an average of around 8°C in March to a peak of 22°C in July and August. While this is the average temperature, summer days can get far hotter, sometimes reaching the 30°C mark. By September the days and evenings become cooler, and temperatures drop each month until December, with an average temperature of 5°C.

### Useful Information

**Language:** French  
**Currency:** Euro  
**Electricity:** 220 Volts AC/50Hz. 2-pin plug.  
**Area Code:** +33 (FR) 01 (Paris). Local numbers are 8 digits.  
**Emergency Codes:** Ambulance 15, Fire 18, Police 17  
**Time Zone:** Central European Time (GMT + 1)  
**Central Post Office:** 52 Rue du Louvre, 1st Arrondissement  
**Main Tourist Office:** 12 Avenue des Champs Elysées, 8th Arrondissement.

### Embassies

**US:** +33 (0)1 4312 2222  
**UK:** +33 (0)1 4451 3100  
**Canada:** +33 (0)1 4443 2900  
**Australia:** +33 (0)1 4059 3300  
**South Africa:** +33 (0)1 5359 2323  
**Ireland:** +33 (0)1 4417 6700  
**Germany:** +33 (0)1 5383 4500  
**Spain:** +33 (0)1 4443 1800  
**Italy:** +33 (0)1 4954 0300  
**New Zealand:** +33 (0)1 4501 4343

## Cheap Eats

**Creperie Beaubourg, 2 rue Brisemiche, 4th Arr.** If you're looking to try a traditional French crepe in pleasant surroundings try this cosy café by the Pompidou Centre. They have a huge selection and prices are extremely affordable. *Open daily from 12noon-11pm*

**Cafe Panis, Quai Saint Michel, 5th Arr.** This busy café just across from the Notre Dame Cathedral is full, basically 24 hours a day. Serving delightful crepes, it is frequented by locals along with tourists visiting the French capital's famed cathedral. *Open daily 24 hours; average crepe €5.*

**Rue de la Huchette, 5th Arr.** Eating out in Paris can be a tad expensive sometimes. When you don't have an awful lot of Euro to your name, and are looking for something fast and efficient, this street just behind Quai Saint Michel is littered with fast food joints, most of which serve Persian cuisine.

## Paris' Food Markets

There are food markets scattered all over Paris. **Montorgueil Market** (Rue Montorgueil and Rue Montmartre, 1st) is good for both fresh fruit and pastries also. On Saturday mornings the market on **Boulevard des Batignolles** is also good for fresh fruits, and in particular organic produce. The **Mouffetard Market** (Rue Mouffetard, 5th) is where some of the city's bakeries are found, while the **Port Royal Market** (Bd Port-Royal, 5th) has not only food produce, but cheap clothing also.

**Pomme de Pain, 71 Champs Elysées, 8th Arr.** Eating on the Champs Elysées can be expensive. Very expensive. But you can't leave without sitting down to a bite to eat on one of the most famous boulevards in the world, and this fast-food restaurant has a good selection of combo-meals, most involving baguettes.

## After Dark

**Lush Bar, 16 Rue des Dames, 17th Arr.** This small bar just around the corner from Place de Clichy is one of Paris' coolest bars. Plant yourself on to a stool during the week and you're guaranteed to meet a local, while enter it on the weekend for a far livelier night. The English speaking staff are also extremely friendly. *Open daily from 4pm-2.30am.*

**Cithéa, 112-114 Rue Oberkampf, 11th Arr.** Cithéa is one of those clubs which can cater for every type of reveller - it has a bar area perfect for a few drinks, an area which is used as a club and, on occasions, there are live gigs here too. Open 7 nights a week, it is free most nights but can impose a cover charge at the weekend. *Open daily from 9.30am-5.30am.*

## Gay / Lesbian Paris

Gay Paree is exactly that and Paris' gay community lives very and more bars and clubs open every year. Most of these can be found around 'Le Marais', an area in the 4th arrondissement, just west of the Pompidou Centre. **Le Centrale** (33, Rue Vieille du Temple, 4th Arr) is one of Le Marais' oldest gay bars and forever popular. **Mixer Bar** (23, Rue Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie, 4th Arr.) is extremely popular with clubbers, while **Le Club 18** (18, Rue du Beaujolais, 1st Arr.) is one of the most popular gay clubs.

**Le Cabaret, 2 Place du Palais Royal, 1st Arr.** If you want to go to a nightclub, but still want to be able to segregate yourself from the rest of the clubbers when the going gets too much, Le Cabaret was designed for you. Veer away from the dancefloor you will find beds full of cushions in corners of the club. *Open Mon-Sat 9am-6am.*

**Le Lèche Vin, 13 Rue Daval, 11th Arr.** How many bars do you know where pictures of the Pope, God, the Virgin Mary, and other religious figures dangle from the walls? Not many, I know. Well now you know one. Aside from its pious tendencies, this bar in the extremely lively Bastille area has cheap beer and a great ambience. *Open daily 7pm-1.30am.*

**Le Galway, Quai des Grands Augustins, 1st Arr.** Irish bars are all over Paris although there is something very un-Irish about a lot of them. Across from the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Galway is an authentic Irish bar with plenty of Irish spirit and Irish staff. *Open daily from midday-2am and until 5am Fri & Sat.*

## Don't Miss

**Musée du Louvre, Cour Napoléon, 1st Arr.** The Louvre is arguably the world's most famous art museum which is mainly because it houses the world's most famous painting - Leonardo da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa'. Divided into three wings over four floors, make sure to leave enough time to see as much as possible. *Open Mon, Thurs, Sat, Sun 9am-6pm, Wed, Fri 9am-10pm, closed Tue; admission €10.*

**Cathédrale de Notre-Dame, 6 Place du Parvis-Notre-Dame, 4th Arr.** Recognised as one of the world's most beautiful cathedrals, Notre Dame is stunning. Completed at the beginning of the 14th Century after over 100 years of work, it is adorned with sculptures and stained glass windows. You can also visit the top of the towers for amazing views of the city centre. *Open from 10am daily; admission free, €7.50 for the towers.*

**The Eiffel Tower, Champ de Mars, 7th Arr.** Both Paris' and France's most instantly recognisable landmark, this was the world's tallest building when it was built in 1889. The views from the different observation decks are breathtaking. *Open Jan 1-Jun 18 + Aug 30-Dec 31 9:30am-8:30pm (11pm via lift), Jun 19-Aug 29 9am-midnight. Admission €4.50 (1st floor), €8.10 (2nd floor), €13.10 (top).*

## Where Icons Rest

**Père Lachaise Cemetery, 16 rue du Repos, 9th Arr** Best known as the resting place of Doors frontman Jim Morrison, other icons buried in this huge burial place include Oscar Wilde, Edith Piaf and Sandra Bernhardt. *open daily from approximately 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free admission.*

**Musée d'Orsay, 1 rue de Bellechasse, 7th Arr** Paris' second most famous art gallery is many people's favourite. Most of its pieces of art are works by Monet *Open Tues-Sun from 9.30am-6pm (to 9.45pm Thurs); admission €10..*

## Mark Your Calendar

**January - La Grande Parade de Montmartre** Since 1993 thousands have flocked to Paris' 18th Arrondissement for this annual colourful parade which includes big floats and bigger performances.

**February - Chinese New Year Celebrations** Every year a huge parade marches its way through Paris' 'Quartier Chinois' to celebrate the coming of the New Year. Keep an eye out for huge dragons.

**March - Banlieues Bleues Festival** Paris' most important blues festival attracts both national and international acts every year who perform at this annual event in the Seine St Denis suburb.

**April - Paris Marathon** Beginning on the Champs-Elysées, the annual Paris Marathon attracts over 30,000 athletes and passes by some of the city's best known landmarks.

**May - Montmartre Vintage Car Rally** This long-running race is one of Paris' most unique events and attracts thousands of onlookers who travel to Montmartre to cheer on the vintage cars.

**June - Fête de la Musique** Every year musicians perform for free to thousands of music-lovers all over Paris on the longest day of the year.

**July - Bastille Day** Commemorating the uprising that marked the beginning of the French Revolution, Bastille Day is France's biggest holiday.

**August - Festival Rock en Seine** The annual 2-day Festival Rock en Seine attracts some of the world's top acts and is held in the Saint Cloud Park just outside the city centre.

**September - Festival Ile de France** Spread out all over Paris, this annual music festival celebrates the end of the summer and lasts for the entire month.

**October - White Night in Paris** One night every October many of Paris' libraries, museums and parks stay open all night when insomnia becomes something of a past-time among Parisians.

**November - Paris Gay and Lesbian Film Festival** This film festival is one of the biggest gay/lesbian film festivals in the world and various short films, and features are screened.

**December - New Year's Celebrations** Its hard to think of a more spectacular firework display in Europe than the one in Paris on December 31st.

## Get Connected

**Le jardin de l'Internet, 79 Boulevard Saint-Michel, 5th Arr.** Enjoying pleasant surroundings close to Jardin du Luxembourg, this internet café is just as bright inside as it is out. Along with access to the web you can get yourself a quick sandwich too. *Open Mon-Sat 9am-11pm, Sun 10am-10pm; €2.50 per hour.*

**Cyber Cube, 12 Rue Daval, 11th Arr.** Just two minutes walk from Place de la Bastille, Cyber Cube is a bright internet café that spreads its terminals over two floors. *Open daily from 10am-10pm; 15c per minute. They also have branches on Rue Mignon (6th) & Rue d'Odessa (14th).*

**Village Web, 6 Rue Ravignan, 18th Arr.** This bright internet café in Paris' trendy Montmartre district is one of the city's airiest thanks to bright walls and wooden floors. Terminals are well spaced throughout the cybercafé so you are never on top of the next person. *Open daily from 9.30am-10pm; minimum purchase of 10 is €1.50.*

**Cybercafé de Paris, 15 Rue des Halles, 1st Arr.** Cybercafé de Paris opened in 1986 and is well-known. It is also extremely popular due to its location and size. *Open Mon-Sat 9am-midnight; €8 per hour.*

**Pacifica, 10 Rue Taine, 12th Arr.** Not far from Gare de Lyon and Gare de Paris Bercy, Pacifica, has helpful staff and you will never find it hard to find a terminal. *Open Mon-Fri 11am-8pm, Sat & Sun 3pm-9pm; €2.50 for 30 mins/€4 per hour.*

### www.

[www.tour-eiffel.fr](http://www.tour-eiffel.fr)  
[www.parispubs.com](http://www.parispubs.com)  
[www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)  
[www.discoverfrance.net](http://www.discoverfrance.net)

## Retail Therapy

**Galleries Lafayette, 40 Boulevard Haussmann** Galleries Lafayette is home to a few things: the world's largest perfumery, over 75,000 different brand names, free fashion shows - this place has it all. *Open Mon-Sat from 9.30am to 7.30pm.*

**Rue St. Martin** This small street between Quai de Gesvres and the Pompidou Centre is lined with shops selling cheap but chic clothing. Take the time out to sift through the endless rails of clothing in various shops and you could pick up a leather jacket for under €50 or a retro top for under €20.

**Le Forum des Halles, 1/7, Rue Pierre Lescot, 1st** This underground shopping centre in the heart of Paris is Paris' largest and has the broadest range of shops, catering for all budgets and tastes. It is huge so if you want to find something new give yourself a few hours to ensure you cover the whole complex. *Open Mon-Sat 10am-7.30pm.*

## Paris' Flea Markets

Paris is teeming with flea markets. Some are specialist markets catering for antique dealers but there are bargains to be found if you don't mind sifting through endless clothing rails. The **St-Ouen Flea Market** (Porte de Clignancourt, 18th Arr.) is the largest of its kind in the world and while it markets itself as an antique market, you will find new/second hand clothes after a quick rummage. **Porte de Vanves Flea Market** (Blvd. Lefebvre, 14th Arr.) is also good for clothes.

**Tati, 76, Av. de Clichy, 17th** Paris is famed for its department stores, and if you leave Galleries Lafayette somewhat disheartened because you don't have €40 for a pair of socks which took your fancy, Tati should suit you better - this is the cheapest department store in the city. *Open Mon-Sat 10am-7pm; other branches around the city.*

## Budget Tips

**People watch outside a café** The French are a very passionate race and watching them go about their daily lives is one of the most enjoyable things you can do. Get yourself comfy outside one of the city's omnipresent cafés, sit back and watch the world go by.

## The First Sunday of the Month

All of Paris' big museums are free on the first Sunday of the month. This includes the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée Picasso, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Musée de l'Histoire de France and Musée Rodin. Other municipal museums such as Musée de l'Histoire de Paris and Crypte Archéologique de Notre Dame are free every Sunday morning between 10am-1pm.

**While away an afternoon in a park** The French capital has some best-kept parks in the world, and it doesn't cost a thing to pull up one of the free chairs and relax for a while. Jardin du Carrousel before Le Louvre is adorned with endless statues, Jardin du Luxembourg lies in front of a palace of the same name, while the view of the Eiffel Tower from Parc du Champ de Mars is unforgettable.

**Have a few drinks before a few drinks!** Drink prices in Paris are notoriously expensive and don't really favour the budget traveller. On the other hand, prices of bottles of wine do. So before hitting the town, hit the local 'supermarché' for a cheap bottle of plonk!

**Buy travel passes rather than paying for individual journeys** A trip on the metro costs €1.25. Rather than paying for 10 single journeys buy a 10-ticket pass (carnets) for €8.38. If you plan on staying for more than 3 days, buy a Carte Orange for €15. They cover zones 1 and 2.

## A Day in Paris...

Visit the Eiffel Tower, Paris' most instantly recognisable landmark. Get down early to avoid the queues and go up to the top.

Stroll up the banks of the River Seine to Place de la Concorde. Enjoy views of the Champs Elysées and L'Arc de Triomphe.

After a leisurely stroll through Jardin du Carrousel, visit one of the world's most famous museums, Musée du Louvre.

After exploring the Louvre, exit and stroll down Rue de Rivoli. Turn left onto Rue St. Martin and search for bargains in its shops!

Further up is the Pompidou Centre/Museum of Modern Art which is worth a visit. Even if you don't go in, go and see the building itself.

Just across the Seine on Ile de la Cité is where the Notre Dame Cathedral stands proud and this is a must-see. There is a nice park to relax behind the cathedral.

Walk back up to Place de la Concorde and stroll down the never-ending Champs Elysées, full of cafés, places to eat, and, eh, car showhouses.

At 10pm the Eiffel tower sparkles for 10 minutes and every hour after until 1am. Get back down to it as this is not to be missed.

Get yourself to Place de la Bastille and finish the night off dancing away!