



8 themed walks in Paris

Check out the most famous monuments, laze in the sun on the Seine quaysides, take a trip through the timeless heart of the city, stroll through unusual, popular, trendy or chic districts and discover all the charms of the capital à la carte





A walk through mythical Paris

A walk through mythical Paris

There is no escaping the fascination of this legendary district, starting of course, with the smile of the Mona Lisa and the hieroglyphs at the place de la Concorde. Then, at the Louvre, there is The Wedding Feast at Cana, The Winged Victory of Samothrace, discovered on the banks of the Aegean Sea and The Lacemaker by Vermeer. There's the Cour Carrée, the Grande Galerie, and the 175-metre colonnade – a brief history tour that continues up to the gates of the Elysée Palace.

There are also the voluted columns of the Grand and Petit Palais, the Seine from the railings of the Tuileries gardens, town houses in avenue Gabriel, fashion designers in avenue Montaigne, a few Picassos at the Orangerie. Visitors will fall under the spell of the silky bedroom of Jeanne Lanvin at the Decorative Arts museum and the palace of the courtesan Païva, a few steps from the rond point des Champs-Élysées. At the top of the avenue, the futuristic vessel-like Drugstore is quite impressive too. The 1918 and Liberation parades, the cycles of the Tour de France, the tanks of the 14 July, the celebrations following the 1998 Football World Cup all contribute to the making of a myth!

1 – Arc de triomphe et la tombe du Soldat inconnu (don't miss)

At the tip of the Champs-Élysées, directly in line with the Arc du Carrousel and the Arche de la Défense, is Napoléon's triumphant antique arch. Commissioned in 1806 to celebrate the victories of the Great Army, it was completed in 1836. Its huge proportions – 50 metres high and 45 wide – are decorated with fine sculpture by Cortot and Étex, along with Rude's famous Marseillaise. Described by Victor Hugo as “a heap of glory”, the arch became a national symbol and the centre of any parade. A flame is rekindled each evening at 6.30pm and the inscription “Here lies a French soldier, who died for his country” is written on the tomb of an unknown soldier laid to rest here in 192



2. Avenue des Champs-Élysées (don't miss)

Between Concorde and Étoile, is the emblematic section of a perspective that extends from the Louvre Pyramid to La Défense. The first steps of this “glorious way”, an obligatory passage for patriotic parades, were however modest. Lined with undergrowth, the avenue reached the current site of place de l'Étoile in 1724. A fashionable place to walk, the gardens were devastated at the fall of the Empire. They regained their splendour around 1840: candelabras, fountains, creamy pavilions, landscaping with flowers and copses date from this period of balls and theatres. It was one hundred years later that rapid development occurred when affluence spread to the west of the capital. The avenue was then adorned with prestigious palaces, cafés and restaurant terraces and cinemas – joined today by ready-to-wear fashion stores and high-tech showrooms. Everything can be found on the “Champs”: films, dresses, lunch, cotton and compresses, racing cars, yoghurts and fresh vegetables, books, CDs, perfume... from morning to midnight, sometimes 24 hours a day, often 7 days a week.



3. Musée Jacquemart-André

Nélie Jacquemart was commissioned to paint the portrait of Édouard André, the heir of a banking family. They were to remain inseparable and devoted their fortune to the collection exhibited in their mansion, built in 1875. The magnificent reception rooms, winter garden and private apartments are decorated with Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture, paintings by Boucher, Chardin and Fragonard and treasures of the Italian Renaissance collected on their trips abroad. The smoking room is English with Hoppner, Lawrence and Reynolds. The Flemish and Dutch masters of the 17th century, led by Rembrandt, are displayed in the library.



4. Parc Monceau

Straddling the 8th and the 17th arrondissements of Paris, the Parc Monceau is a delightful place to stroll. Created in 1769 by the Duc de Chartre and re-designed by Baron Haussmann under Napoléon III, it has some magnificent trees – including a 158-year-old sycamore maple 30-metres-high – and statues of writers and musicians.



5. Grand Palais

This majestic stone building with its floral decoration, crowned with a splendid metallic framed glass roof, was constructed for the Exposition Universelle in 1900. Architecturally daring in its time, the Grand Palais houses the Palais de la Découverte science museum in one of its wings, while its nave and galleries are a dream showcase... for dream exhibitions!



6. Place de la Concorde

Work began on place Louis XV in 1755. It broke with the tradition of enclosed royal squares, to open up the perspective to the Tuileries gardens. The fine mansion houses – the Hôtel de la Marine and the Hôtel Crillon underlined the axis of the statue of the monarch – were demolished after thirty years. Place de la Revolution is where Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette, Danton and Robespierre were guillotined. However, place de la Concorde spells reconciliation. Louis- Philippe sought a monument that would cool revolutionary and royalist passions, which he found in the 3,300-year-old Obelisk, a gift from the pasha of Egypt. Erected in 1836, its 23 metres and 230 tons of pink granite took four years to travel from Luxor! Two fountains, embellished with golden mermaids and fish, enliven the grey, green and golden decor of the square.



7. Musée de l'Orangerie

Built in 1852, the Orangery of the Tuileries soon lost its fruit trees to become a storehouse, and a room for examinations and dog competitions. Its destiny was clarified when Monet chose it to house the complete cycle of the *Nymphéas* (Water Lilies) on which he worked from 1914. Since its renovation was completed in 2006, the panels of a landscape of water lilies, weeping willows, reflections of trees and clouds – 2 metres high, almost 100 long – have regained their beauty and meaning in daylight. This exceptional venue also does justice to the collection of art dealer Paul Guillaume of whom it was said “the paintings and statues whispered in his ear”. And ‘his’ Renoir, Cézanne, Rousseau, Modigliani, Marie Laurencin, Matisse, Derain, Picasso, Soutine and Utrillo paintings definitely reveal a certain flair.



8. Jardin des Tuileries (don't miss)

A wealth of works populate the terraces, the lawns and flowerbeds laid out in the French style, the copses and the areas around the ornamental ponds: an academic Spartacus on a marble pedestal and the contemporary Welcoming Hands, by Louise Bourgeois, plus classical allegories and Tinguely's tricolor. The green Maillol bronzes emerge from the labyrinth of hedges that connect the Tuileries to the Louvre. At the other end, in a direct line with the great axis, the garden opens out spectacularly onto Concorde. Lush greenery, games, refreshment chalets, and farniente lie between the two.



9. Musée du Louvre (don't miss)

The biggest museum in Paris, and home of the Mona Lisa, The Raft of the Medusa, and Venus de Milo was, first and foremost, the jewel in the crown of the kings, emperors and republics of France. From the sombre late-12th-century fortress to Pei's glass pyramid, inaugurated in 1989, many have reigned here and practically everyone has left their mark – Renaissance, Classic, First and Second Empire, contemporary... The Louvre, a museum since 1793, houses collections of Western art from the Middle Ages to 1848, and collections of ancient oriental, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman civilisations which preceded and influenced them, as well as graphic arts and Islamic arts.





Paris monumental

Paris monumental

The area around the Eiffel Tower is on a fitting scale to the tower itself. On a clear night, its beam sweeps through the sky in a radius covering 80 kilometres. The spectacle is awesome and one feels so small in this grandiose area with its massive buildings and vast green spaces!

Just opposite, for example, are the gems of the 1937 Exposition Universelle: seventy-one artists decorated the Palais de Chaillot and a quartet of architects designed the Palais de Tokyo and its white colonnade. On show in the latter is the acclaimed fresco *La Fée Électricité* by Dufy and the monumental *La Danse* triptychs by Matisse. For *La Porte de l'Enfer*, see the Musée Rodin.

And what spectacular perspectives – one stretching from the Esplanade des Invalides to beyond Pont Alexandre III, the other between the equestrian statues of the two marshals, Foch in place du Trocadéro and Joffre at the opposite end of the Champ-de-Mars, in front of the École Militaire. Did you know that this institution trained a young Corsican, who was “an excellent sailor”, and who was none other than Napoléon Bonaparte? Today, his imperial remains lie beneath the golden dome of the Invalides.

1. Trocadéro (don't miss)

The elevated “Troca” has a privileged viewpoint of the Eiffel Tower on the opposite bank of the Seine. Between the curved wings of the vast Palais de Chaillot – emblem of the 1930s – are gently sloping terraces and gardens, bordered by century-old Caucasian wingnut and hazel trees, and dotted with gilded bronze statues. Skaters and rollerbladers weave alongside the fountains beneath the gaze of Apollo and Hercules, sculpted on the pediment of the pavilions.



2. Tour Eiffel (don't miss)

Stop to gaze up at all of its 324 metres! The tower was saved from demolition after twenty years because of its scientific utility. A few more figures: 10,100 tons, 2,500,000 rivets, 1,665 steps, two years of relentless work for the 50 engineers and 132 workers directed by Gustave Eiffel, and approximately 230 million visitors since its construction. The tower is a special landmark symbolizing Paris and France throughout the world and it sparkles every evening until 1am (in winter) or 2am (in summer)



3.Champ-de-Mars (don't miss)

The vast park laid out below the famous tower has nothing warlike about it, and even boasts a Wall of Peace! Its name, borrowed from the god of war, relates to the early history of the “champ” as an exercise area for the young cadets of the military school. Later, as the centre point of the Expositions universelles, it was chosen as the site of the biggest attraction of 1889, the Eiffel Tower.



4.Musée du Quai Branly (don't miss)

Devoted to the art and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the non-Western Americas, it is situated on quai Branly opposite the Seine and close to the Eiffel Tower. Designed by the architect Jean Nouvel and inaugurated in 2006 by President Jacques Chirac, it comprises five buildings over a surface area of 40,600 m2. The main building which houses the exhibitions is in the innovative shape of a metallic bridge and is a reminder that the Eiffel Tower is close by



5.Hôtel national des Invalides (don't miss)

In 1671, Louis XIV decided to build "a royal hostel that would be large and spacious enough to house all officers, crippled, old and retired alike". The ‘pensioners’ began arriving in 1674. The Église Saint-Louis – or ‘Soldiers Church’ – and the Église du Dôme (transformed into a military pantheon) were built afterwards. This magnificent ensemble, with its wonderful green lawn, today houses canons with rather disturbing names such as ‘The Scourge’, the Ministry of Defence and the Musée de l’Ordre de la Libération, Musée des Plans et Reliefs and Musée de l’Armée. The Musée de l’Armée houses the tomb of Napoléon, the department of arms and ancient armoury and that of the two world wars



6.Musée Rodin

Housed in the Hôtel Biron, an 18th century former mansion house, the Rodin museum boasts French gardens laid out with plants, shrubs and trees, and decorated with sculptures by the artist. Auguste Rodin took up residence here in 1908, surrounded by a park teeming with brambles and rabbits. The museum opened in 1919, two years after his death. Sculptures in marble, bronze, and terracotta alternate with drawings by the master, works by Camille Claudel (his muse), paintings by his friends Carrières, Monet, Van Gogh and others. In the garden, roses and statues have replaced the rabbits, but the charm remains unique.





Paris River Seine

Paris River Seine

Following the Seine through Paris is a way of enjoying a thousand different escapades on the river, its bridges and islands. Daytime or night time, Left Bank or Right Bank, you will appreciate the buzz of activity along the quaysides and the lapping of the waves. There are any number of ways to relax – aboard a boat, cycling, walking briskly, sauntering lazily, or working out, dining, dancing on barges, exploring an area between two exhibitions, taking a post-shopping break, or sunbathing in a swimsuit. You never fail to be filled with wonder at these riverbanks, classed as a world heritage site by Unesco.

Through the arch of a bridge you'll catch sight of the Grand and Petit Palais, people fishing, mallard ducks circling in the water, the Louvre playing hide and seek with a pleasure boat, Notre-Dame looming up to the sound of a street musician playing a violin and, in the distance, the silhouette of a crane in a naval construction yard between weeping willow trees.

Paris owes its motto to the Seine, **fluctuat nec mergitur** – “it is buffeted by the waves but does not sink”. The Seine tells the story of Paris, from its birthplace on the Île de la Cité to the transformation of the quays at Bercy upstream and the triumphant Eiffel Tower downstream.

1. Seine riverside booksellers

For four hundred years, booksellers offering an array of great and less familiar literature have lined the embankment walls on both sides of the river, from the Pont Royal to the Pont de Sully. Each of these small green boxes offers up a marvellous assortment of rare books, original editions, engravings, postcards, illustrated journals, comic strips, novels, or intriguing odds and ends, to passers-by.



2. Bridges of Paris (don't miss)

These thirty-seven bridges offer stunning views of the city seen from the river and recount thirtyseven wonderful stories of kings, battles, legends etc, to discover with the wind in your hair. Since it was built in 1604, the Pont Neuf, Paris's oldest bridge with its 385 sculpted masks and famous half-moon-shaped turrets, has seen the entire history of Paris go by. The Pont Alexandre III, star of the 1900 Exposition Universelle, is a celebration of Franco-Russian friendship with an exuberance of sculpted nymphs and garlands, bronze candelabras and gleaming gold equestrian statuary. The Pont des Arts – the haunt of lovers – is also a favourite place to linger for dreamers and picnickers, as is the Léopold-Sédar-Senghor footbridge, which links the Musée d'Orsay to the Tuileries gardens. The city's most recent bridge is the Simone de Beauvoir wooden footbridge, which links the weighty knowledge of the Bibliothèque Nationale library to the gardens of Bercy in a graceful, uplifting arch. That leaves thirty-two bridges: discover your favourite





Village Paris

Village Paris

Following in the footsteps of a horde of street entertainers, climb the picturesque “Butte” (little hill), crowned by the Sacré-Coeur – the second most-visited site in Paris. A leisurely stroll will enable you to enjoy the pleasures of this wonderful Parisian ‘village’.

And going from one ‘village’ to another you can venture as far as the popular Batignolles area, a hidden gem, before wandering through the Saint-Georges theatre district and the little place Gustave-Toudouze.

Surrounded by bell towers, the day begins at the counter of a café with a café crème and crusty buttered baguette.

One can browse idly, filling one’s shopping basket full of delicious treats in rue Lepic, rue des Martyrs, rue Caulaincourt... and also with fabrics in rue d’Orsel and the Saint-Pierre market, and why not guitars in rue de Douai and rue Victor-Massé. **Lunch is at a bistro** offering simple, hot dishes or crunchy salads

And given that the village is a bit of a ‘fashion victim’, there are designer boutiques and galleries to check out amid the charcuteries and dairy shops. In the evening, you can dress up, stay casual, dance the java, enjoy the nouba or a fiesta, or just go to the movies

1. Cimetière de Montmartre

Lovers of Montmartre come to the cemetery to admire the outdoor art, catch a glimpse of the sun, watch the squirrels hopping between maple trees or to make the acquaintance of a string of poets, generals, thinkers, inventors and the Lady of the Camellias. Discover Vigny, Nijinsky or Guitry in a labyrinth of mossy rows and irregular stone steps. Cross the path of stray tomcats, a bust of Rodin, the bridge of Caulaincourt and finally, Alexandre Dumas, Zola, Degas and Dalida. Then, it’s off again to look for Poulbot, Truffaut and Feydeau. Up above the statues and carved chapels, and the tombs of Stendhal and Berlioz, a brood of young sparrows chirp high in the chestnut trees. Eleven enchanting hectares.



2. Moulin de la Galette

The ‘Blute-fin’ and the ‘Radet’ together make up the ‘Moulin de la Galette’. These windmills were once used to grind wheat, flowers or to press grape harvests. The ‘Blute-fin’ became known as the Moulin de la Galette in 1860, when it was transformed into a venue for festive dances. It was here that Renoir painted the famous ‘Bal du Moulin de la Galette’, which you can admire at the Musée d’Orsay. Later transformed into a music-hall, a television studio and then a restaurant, the Moulin de la Galette has continued to attract artists from all disciplines and from all over the world!



3.Place du Tertre (don't miss)

Welcome to picture-postcard Montmartre, with its restaurant terraces and artists' easels and portrait painters, who share 140 allotted spaces – 1 sq.m. for two artists working alternately. But the historic village square merits a little tour



4.Butte Montmartre

Venice has its gondolas, Montmartre its steps – physically demanding but Romanesque in the extreme. Countless novels, legends and “fabulous destinies” are set in the Butte, such as the Bateau-Lavoir in place Émile-Goudeau, where Picasso painted the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and the café made famous by *Amélie* Poulain in rue Lepic. The grocery from the film is higher up on rue des Trois-Frères. And there's even more climbing to do – but Montmartre's well worth it! Walk up rue Tholozé, for example, for a film or a drink in the winter garden of a tiny cinema patronised by Buñuel and Cocteau. Pause at the top of the street under the last remaining windmills, before continuing on up... Keep going! At the top is Sacré-Cœur, surrounded by a labyrinth of extraordinary little streets, and a vineyard, where the grape harvest is celebrated each year. There is also the flattering bust of Dalida in the square of the same name, breathtaking views over the rooftops of Paris, amazing crowds and hundreds of tranquil spots. From the square de la Turlure or the rue de la Chevalier-de-la-Barre, the Sacré-Cœur is just as wonderful from the side, the back or the front!



5.Basilique du Sacré-Cœur (don't miss)

In 1873, the National Assembly voted for the construction of a basilica devoted to the Sacred Heart on the butte Montmartre. The site was chosen as much for its altitude (127 metres) as for its symbolism; it was sanctified long before with the martyrdom of Saint Denis and sullied by the violent acts of the Commune, in 1870. Pitfalls, controversies, underground quarries, and 83 buried pillars caused the work to extend over forty years. All these efforts were rewarded! From below, the Romano- Byzantine contours take on the appearance of a whipped-cream palace set on a hill of gardens and terraces: green and white outlined against swathes of azure. The view from the top of the steps, and especially from the top of the dome, is simply stunning.





Timeless Paris

Timeless Paris

Who said that ancient stone wasn't exciting? In the Latin Quarter and on the Île de la Cité and Île Saint-Louis, which form the historic heart of Paris, they are charged with emotion, light and magical shadows. Embark on a treasure hunt and discover the impressive sculpted façade of Notre-Dame or the sublime series of stained-glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle.

Venture through the labyrinth of alleyways on the Left Bank, once bustling with hawkers, charlatans, already rebellious students, and cut-throats. Or like Baudelaire and Camille Claudel, opt for a gentle walk past private mansion houses on the Île Saint-Louis.

Walking this way, you will pass bishops, rare birds and tulips at a little flower market, a queen, several poisoners, and the Girondins assembled for their last banquet at the Conciergerie.

You will come across scientists from the Museum, mammoths and Japanese cherry-blossom trees, the jewellery of fine ladies of times gone by at the Hôtel de Cluny, Gallo-Romans at a grand event or the baths, and the patron saint of Paris...

1, Sainte-Chapelle

Reputed to have once housed Christ's Crown of Thorns, the Sainte-Chapelle boasts spectacular stained glass windows which resemble veritable walls of light. The Sainte-Chapelle is incontestably a jewel of French Gothic architecture.



2. Musée du Moyen Âge – Thermes et hôtel de Cluny

Since 1843, the Musée National du Moyen Âge has encompassed two architectural marvels: the Gallo-Roman baths, dating from the end of the 2nd century BC, and the Hôtel des Abbés de Cluny, built in the 15th century. The main building and the wings of the hôtel reveal the layout of subsequent centuries, but, in the exuberant interlacing of the curves of the façade, the Middle Ages is resplendent... and even more so inside. Sculpture, gold and silver plate, ceramics, tapestry, furniture, and everyday objects provide a unique picture of medieval art and society. Between the little chapel sculpted with foliage and the secular sanctuary dedicated to the La Dame à la Licorne (The Lady with the Unicorn) tapestries, there is an extensive collection of golden crowns, Byzantine ivory, daggers and coats of chain mail



3.Quartier latin

On the Left Bank, in the vicinity of the University founded in the 12th century, latin was the language most commonly spoken by professors and students. This tradition seems to have died out but the name remains. Around the Sorbonne, the Collège de France, prestigious schools and the Sainte-Geneviève library, there are still numerous bookshops, publishers, and cafés, where students revise for their exams, as well as tiny art-house cinemas. Of course, the Saint- Michel fountain is not only a meeting point for students, many businesses have now moved into the area, but the memory of Professor Abélard and the paving stones of May 1968 still remain here and there



4.Panthéon

Its dome dominates the Latin Quarter and gives its name to the similarly solemn square, at the centre of which it stands. This colossal civic temple worthily upholds the motto inscribed on its pediment that honours the nations great men. An irony of history, this monument dedicated to Republican liturgies was commissioned by Louis XV in 1744 to honour Sainte-Geneviève. But with the Revolution underway, the scarcely finished basilica was transformed into a civic temple in 1791 and consecrated as the national Panthéon in 1885, at the funeral of Victor Hugo. A synthesis of neoclassical and Gothic-style architecture, it also houses the tombs of Pierre and Marie Curie, Alexandre Dumas, Jean Jaurès, André Malraux, Jean Moulin, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire



5.Jardin des plantes

Wander peacefully among the statues, lime trees from Russia, the olive trees from Bohemia, and twenty or so trees over one hundred years old. The oldest – a Cedar of Lebanon – was planted in 1734. Climb to the belvedere, at the top of a little hill named Labyrinthe, for a romantic embrace or to embrace the view. You'll pass school children out on the trail of dinosaurs or here to learn about gardening. Explore the hot houses, the educational vegetable garden, the Alpine garden, and the rose, iris, rock and peony garden



6. Les îles de la Cité et Saint-Louis

Despite being the birthplace of Paris, these two neighbouring islands, embraced by the arms of the Seine, are very different. On the Île de la Cité, amid a flurry of uniforms and lawyers' gowns, you go from one historic site to another: place Dauphine, the Conciergerie, Sainte-Chapelle, Hôtel-Dieu, Notre-Dame... The Pont Saint-Louis marks the boundary – often with music – beyond which lies the tranquility of sumptuous mansion houses. A refuge for artists and poets, the Île Saint-Louis is also a haven for gourmets judging by the profusion of restaurants, cafés, ice-cream makers and confectioners, whose tempting windows line the rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île.



7. Notre-Dame de Paris

The beginning of its long construction coincided with the choice of Paris as a capital and, on the square in front of the cathedral, a bronze star inscribed “zero kilometre” indicates the centre of the country in terms of travelling distances. A symbol of Gothic art, its harmonious layout seems to be the work of just one architect, yet dozens followed on from the 12th to the 19th century, the date of its restoration by Viollet-le-Duc. The cathedral has witnessed Saint Louis, barefoot, wearing the Crown of Thorns in 1239, the coronation of Napoléon in 1804, the celebration of the Liberation of Paris in 1944... and you too, as you climb the 422 steps leading to the top. Like Victor Hugo's Quasimodo, you will then find yourself face to face with some of its grimacing gargoyles. You will also be able to make the acquaintance of the thirteen-ton bell named Emmanuel, and enjoy a breathtaking view across the rooftops of Paris.



8. Conciergerie

This important vestige of the Capetian palace offers a remarkable testimony to 14th century civil architecture with its Salle des Gens d'Armes, the Salle des Gardes and the kitchens.





Trendy Paris

Trendy Paris

Take a gentle stroll between the place du Châtelet and place des Vosges to enjoy a spot of shopping, or discover local heritage... in fact, everything is possible as long as you know how to juggle with different styles.

The medieval Jean-sans-Peur Tower surges out from amongst **Hausmanian buildings**, while the flamboyant Gothic architecture of the Saint-Jacques Tower is just a stone's throw from the fountain at Châtelet, built in praise of Napoléon I. The square in front of the neo-Renaissance Paris City Hall is also an impromptu venue for beach-volleyball.

The church of Saint-Eustache, where Molière was christened, stands next to the metallic footbridges of the Les Halles gardens. A few steps away from the Renaissance bas-reliefs of the Fountain of the Innocents is the **Pompidou Centre**, symbol of 20th-century architecture and home to modern and contemporary art collections.

The Marais district combines a whirl of creative design with the delights of the Jewish Quarter, around rue des Rosiers, and a magnificently preserved historic centre. Busy streets give way to tiny enclosed squares and gardens and numerous museums, including the Carnavalet, Picasso and the National Archives, housed in mansion houses that rival each other in splendour.

1. Musée des Arts et Métier

The metro station sets the tone. Since the bicentenary of the museum, in 1994, the Arts et Métiers metro station has taken on the appearance of Jules Verne's submarine the 'Nautilus', complete with copper walls and portholes. In this faithfully renovated abbey, the history of technology from the 16th century onwards is split into seven domains: communication, construction, energy, scientific instruments, materials, mechanical engineering, and transport. Visitors will learn all about great inventions and stand in wonder before the automatons and velocipedes, Lavoisier's late-18th-century laboratory or Clément Ader's airplane, just a century older.



2. Pompidou Centre

Made of glass and steel, an escalator zigzags up its exterior in a transparent tube, matched by vertical pipes, also on the outside, representing blue for air, green for water, yellow for electricity and red for the elevators. The interior has a surface area of 7,500 sq.m. on each of its five floors. Contemporary culture is for everyone, and the choice here is impressive: exhibition rooms, performance spaces, a cinema, and a gallery for children, etc. and, of course, the national museum of modern art. Design in the 20th century and current movements are explored via a thematic approach that combines all forms of visual art and audiovisual expression.



3. Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme

The culture and traditions of the Jewish community come to life in this 17th-century town house, with its rich collection of stunning, popular, religious, everyday, humble, precious, ancestral and near contemporary objects, such as paintings by Chagall, Modigliani and Soutine



7.Place des Vosges

Completed in 1659, the mansion which houses the museum has retained the cheeky nickname “Salé” (salty) in memory of the ostentatious tastes of its first owner who made a fortune by taxing salt. Behind its monumental façade, you can admire a unique collection of works by Picasso. 203 paintings, 158 sculptures, more than 3,000 engravings and drawings, sketchbooks, etc.



5.Mémorial de la Shoah

Opened on the site of the tomb of the Unknown Jewish Martyr, the Memorial is a place of remembrance and documentation about the Shoah and also a “museum of vigilance”, designed for teaching, learning and experiencing. A bastion against oblivion, the Wall of Names, perpetuates the memory of the 76,000 Jewish victims deported from France with the cooperation of the Vichy government.



6.Musée Carnavalet – histoire de Paris

The museum of the history of Paris takes its visitors from the dug-out canoes of the Gallic Parisii tribe to the bedroom of Marcel Proust. Two resplendent adjoining townhouses offer the perfect setting for this fascinating story. The Hôtel Carnavalet, built in 1548, traces the history of the Gallo-Roman, Merovingian and Carolingian city, the Paris of the Renaissance, and the wars of Religion, etc. In the Hôtel Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, it is Paris-Revolution, then Napoléon leaving on one of his campaigns with his personal effects in gilded silver. And again it is the Paris of Mucha, art nouveau, a ballroom from the roaring Twenties, etc



4.Musée Picasso

Formerly known as the “place Royale”, this square has remained intact – miraculously so – since it was commissioned by Henri IV in 1604. The thirty-six townhouses have constituted a perfect symmetry from the day they were built, with their brick façades, deep-pitched slate roofs and the ground floor made up of a gallery of arcades for walking. Add a few musketeers and you’d think you were in a swashbuckling adventure film... or back to the splendid carousel that inaugurated the square in 1612 to celebrate the wedding of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria





Artists' Paris

Artists' Paris

Welcome to the Left Bank, the Babylon of beautiful things, where browsing through the pages of a fashion magazine or an art revue is an art in itself. This elegant world is sprinkled with chic and shock fashion designers, art galleries, antique galleries, literary cafés, and publishing houses with a whole string of prizes. Not surprising when you consider what the muses have given it – the Académie Française, the Théâtre de l'Odéon, the Beaux-Arts, the Musée d'Orsay, not to mention, Montparnasse which, during The Roaring Twenties, was a Mecca for artists from all over the world, before drawing them to Saint-Germain.

So much to see! Everywhere, art spills over the threshold of museum-workshops and boutiques. There is the Centaure by Césaire at the Carrefour de la Croix-Rouge, 17th-century wrought-iron balconies in rue de Buci and rue Saint-André-des-Arts, the Fontaine des Quatre Parties du monde, on avenue de l'Observatoire. And if the urban scene sets your head spinning, then go for greenery in the Luxembourg gardens, the parks of Montsouris, Georges-Brassens and the Jardin Atlantique.

1. Musée d'Orsay

Plans to demolish it in 1970 were overturned just in time and the Orsay train station became a listed building. Its immense volumes were transformed into a museum whose canopy, nave, cupolas, pillars, iron girders and stucco decors draw unanimous praise. The huge clock in the glass roof of the central alley dominates a chronological layout over three main levels, focussing on the major artistic movements in Western art from 1848 to 1914: painting, sculpture, graphic arts and art objects, as well as furniture, architecture and photography. The period was so productive, the collections so rich in wonderful works (and in -isms: expressionism, fauvism, etc.) that it seems impossible to cite one unique masterpiece



2. Eglise Saint-Sulpice

This church is as big and as magnificent as a cathedral. The work which started in the 17th century on the original 13th-century building and continued over 135 years has left treasures from each period: a choir decorated with statues by Bouchardon, a Virgin and Child and two stoups in the shape of shells sculpted by Pigalle, the Chapelle des Saints-Anges whose frescoes occupied (or exhausted?) Delacroix during the last 10 years of his life. Every year, many visitors come to admire the treasures of this church – a marvellous concentration of history.



3. Saint Germain des Prés

The area is bound by the Seine, the Luxembourg gardens, the boulevard Saint-Michel and rue des Saints-Pères. Its name comes from the church, the first stones of which date from 557, and the oldest still visible remains from around the year 1000: an islet of eternity surrounded by the waves of flighty fashion! From the 1920s, the frenzied literary and art cliques gravitated towards the cafés of Saint-Germain. During the Liberation, existentialism took off, led by Camus and Sartre, while basement jazz shook the foundations with Sidney Bechet on the clarinet and the writer Boris Vian on the trumpet. This era is legendary but Saint-Germain remains an oasis of ancient streets full of wonderful places for art, books and the latest must-have little items .



4.Odéon

People in a hurry or just strolling by, traffic, cafe lights, historic facades, sinuous lines of people queuing in front of cinemas ... That is what the Odéon district looks like at almost any time of day. A lively place full of cultural attractions right in the heart of historic Paris!



5.Jardin du Luxembourg

Children love the Luxembourg gardens for their wooden horses, their model yachts to push along with a cane on the ornamental pond, for their refreshment kiosks, puppet theatre, ponies, etc. Others too, appreciate the setting: artists with their easels, chess players, daydreamers, students with their notepads, computers ... The wrought-iron chairs are perfect for a delightful nap below the Dames de France which form a circle of statues. What would Marie de Médicis think of the success of the palace and garden commissioned by her? At the time, the widow of Henri IV had sought to recapture a little of her native Florence. The Fontaine Médicis with all its niches and nymphs is all that remains of the Italianate grotto that she had built in 1630. The palace has become the seat for the Sénat (the upper house of the French parliament).



6. Parc Montsouris

Like the Buttes-Chaumont, this landscaped garden of the Second Empire takes its inspiration from the parks of London. The grotto, artificial mounds and valleys are so convincing that even the crested tit and the serin are duped. On the island, they nest close to turtles from Florida, male mallard ducks and their female companions. Around the lake, there are rolling lawns, play areas, a ginkgo biloba and 1,399 other trees, and even a weather station





Glamorous Paris

Glamorous Paris

Witness Paris in all its splendour of gold, marble and crystal. Admire the dome of the Opera House, the rue Royale and rue de la Paix, English tailors, tearooms, prestigious hotels, bellboys, the diamonds of place Vendôme, and the gardens of the Palais-Royal.

It's not just the nearby Comédie-Française theatre that puts on a show – the stores in this district are entertainment enough! Admire boxes (of the musical and chocolate variety), exhibition rooms hung with silks or artful displays of goat skins, antique engravings, and much more. Rumour has it though that these elegant arcades were home to risqué goings-on, where scooters now fly by. And if the truth be told, many a man has been ruined by dancing girls from the Opera House.

And, of course, there are the grands boulevards, these broad avenues with buzzing music halls, café-theatres, and numerous shows with a cheeky edge. Like the big department stores, which illuminate the boulevard Haussmann, this is the centre of chic with a sprinkling of stardust. Everything seems much more refined under the stained-glass art nouveau cupolas! That's what the Belle Époque was all about, and it's alive and well in this part of Paris.

1. Palais-Royal

Richelieu started the saga by building his residence here; Louis XIV inherited it and gave it to his brother. Philippe d'Orléans and his son extended it. In 1780, the indebted Philippe Égalité opened up the area around the gardens to commerce: sixty buildings supported by arcades were built to house the stores. Prostitution, gambling and scandal took hold of the palace. And as the police were not authorised to operate there, it became a bastion for revolutionary unrest until 1793. The peaceful Palais-Royal now houses the Ministry of Culture and several institutions, some very chic boutiques, gourmet restaurants and a garden planted with four rows of lime trees. Although the striped Buren columns almost reignited the revolution here in 1986.



2. Place des Victoires

Before it became a hot spot for fashion and local designers, this almost perfect circle was the idea of a rich marquise to pay tribute to King Louis XIV



3.Covered arcades

At the beginning of the 19th century, Haussmann redesigned Paris. Built for the crowds thronging the café terraces and theatres along the boulevards, covered shopping arcades were a huge success with their boutiques of Chinese ornaments, curiosities and gifts, along with tea, chocolate and coffee houses. They were the meeting places for the elegantly dressed, a haven from wet weather. Discover the muffled charm and exciting creations of Passage Vivienne or Passage du Grand-Cerf, or the fascinating trinkets in Passage Choiseul; marble, art and knowledge await you in the Galeries Véro-Dodat and Colbert, while the prints, sepia photos and antique toys in passages Verdeau and Jouffroy contrast with the kitsch bazaar in the passage des Panoramas...



4.Place Vendôme

A gem of classic urban architecture and symbol of absolute power, the Place Vendôme has always been synonymous with elegance and wealth. Since the Second Empire, politics have been replaced by luxury goods. Today, upscale jewellers have their boutiques here and showcase precious items. Perfect for window shopping.



5.Palais Garnier – Opéra national de Paris

The Opera House was inaugurated under the Third Republic, following fifteen years of setbacks, including the nightmarish discovery by the architect Charles Garnier, of an underground expanse of water. This rather deep lake, the stage for executions during the Commune, was the inspiration for writer Gaston Leroux's Phantom of the Opera. But let's start with the main auditorium, with its ceiling painted by Chagall, its eight-ton crystal chandelier, and purple velvet seats set around an Italian-style stage, where operas and ballets are performed. The vestibules and main staircase going up to the auditorium are made of marble and filled with sculptures of harps and lyres leading the dance. Outside, Baroque and neo-Renaissance styles intertwine above a flight of steps that are a popular place for people to meet up.

