

A Local's *Essential Guide* **to PARIS**

**WHERE TO GO & WHAT TO DO IN PARIS
PLUS SOME VERY HELPFUL HINTS
FOR HAVING A FABULOUS TIME**



by Rosemary Allan



Welcome to **Where to go and What to do in PARIS**, where you will find Essential Information on what you need to know when you are planning your next trip to Paris.

Bonjour, I'm Rosemary, I am English but have been living in France for 20 years. I am the owner of "**52 Clichy**", situated in central Paris where I welcome guests from all over the World and help them discover the hidden gems of this beautiful city and also to enable them to understand and experience living in Paris as a local.

I hope to be able to welcome you to "52 Clichy" very soon.

A bientôt,

Rosemary



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This guide is meant to help you get the most out of your trip to Paris, so this is what you will find inside :

MY FAVOURITE “MUST SEE” THINGS IN PARIS plus some that are “Off the Beaten Track”

SOME GREAT LOCAL RESTAURANTS and a few others further afield

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DINING EXPERIENCE

WHERE TO FIND SOME GREAT ROOFTOP VIEWS

DAY TRIPS FROM PARIS

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT if you are not walking everywhere

GETTING THE BEST FROM THE FRENCH

MY LOCAL AREA

FAQ’s



MY FAVOURITE “MUST SEE” THINGS IN PARIS :

Whilst I have a list as long as your arm of fun and interesting things to do in Paris, here I have listed my favourite Museum, my favourite Tour and my favourite Monument.

I love visiting the museum L’Orangerie :

The [Orangery Museum](#) is the kid sister to the Musée d’Orsay situated in the grounds of the Tuileries Gardens a few steps away from the Louvre and opposite the Musée d’Orsay which is the other side of the river Seine. L’Orangerie is a small building with about 12 rooms in the basement each containing a handful of works of the Impressionist masters. It is possible to wander round the collections and take in the beauty of each but at the same time not be left overwhelmed.

The main event, however, is on the ground floor where in 2 huge oval rooms there are 8 of Monet’s gigantic waterlily paintings.



Each room housing 4 paintings forming a continuous panorama - Monet planned every detail, even to how the light would shine on the paintings through the glass roofs.

English guided museum tours are available on Saturdays at 11am and Monday and Thursdays at 2.15pm. Admission with the Paris Pass is free or €9.00 without.

The Musée d’Orsay’s 5th floor is just for Impressionist paintings and I do visit it regularly however it holds only 1 of the waterlily paintings. The museum with the most paintings by Monet is the Marmottan Monet Museum.



My favourite guided tour is of the Opéra Garnier :

The guided tours in English of the [Opéra Garnier](#), at 11.00 am or 2.30pm, are brilliant. They are nearly 2 hours long and go everywhere in the building unless there is a new performance and the dancers (it's normally ballet performed here) are practicing on stage.



You may even find out the real facts on which Phantom of the Opera was based and I think it is worth going just to have an explanation of how to read the stories contained in the Chagall ceiling.

At €13.50 per person I don't think it is worth saving a few euros to walk round on your own with an audio-guide for €5. You access the ticket office on the right side if you are walking down the hill from 52 Clichy under the ramp that Napoleon had built following an attempt on his life so he would not have to walk in but he could drive into the building in his carriage.

My favourite monument is Sainte Chapelle :

I also love visiting Ile de la Cité and rather than go to Notre Dame I now prefer [Sainte Chapelle](#) although the first time I went in I was totally underwhelmed because you enter via a very dark, low-ceilinged room without windows.



Then I spied someone going up a very narrow staircase just to the side of the entrance and, phew, who knew, well I should have done I suppose, the church was built as a 2 storey building and the most beautiful 360° stained glass window structure is upstairs.

This is because when it was built for the 10th century kings they never walked on the ground so from the Palace (which was turned into a prison where Marie Antoinette amongst others were held) now the [Conciergerie](#) next door, the hallways connected to Sainte Chapelle above



ground. The glass windows have all recently been restored and I recommend reading their documentation about the restoration as it is fascinating.

Tours in English cost €15 or just entrance is €10, €15 with the Conciergerie added in or free with the Paris Museum Pass. It is closed for lunch.

In the evenings at 7pm and 9pm there are almost always classical concerts in Sainte Chapelle, except for January and February (because the church is not heated)!

and **“OFF THE BEATEN TRACK”** :

Creepy Catacombs :

The ossuary of Paris, near Montparnasse, holds the uprooted skeletons of 6 million Parisians, some up to 900 years old, moved from over-flowing cemeteries and packed (and that is the right word!) into a small part of the 186 miles of tunnels created by limestone mining for the stone to build Paris.

Descend the 19 metre spiral staircase (130 steps) walking for about 45 minutes / 1½ miles with 200 other people, 12 at a time, through the cavernous chambers displaying the carefully arranged bones.



Seriously consider purchasing the [Catacombs](#) ‘jump the queue’ ticket costing €27 including audioguide which can only be booked online otherwise go in the afternoon when the 2 hour queue may have subsided.

More dead people! Père Lachaise :

Walking round [Père Lachaise Cemetery](#) is one of Paris’s best free attractions. I’ve spent afternoons wandering and once took a tour in French where in a whole afternoon they highlighted only about 50 of the million or so graves contained in the 44 hectare site.



Oscar Wilde's is now protected by huge panes of glass but those of Gertrude Stein, Molière, and Frederic Chopin are much more accessible. I still haven't seen Jim Morrison's grave.

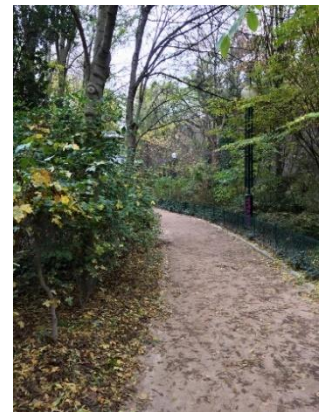
Pick up a map in a building next to the main entrance, no-one will help you because this is where real work is carried out – the staff are busy assisting Parisians who want to rent a plot for 30 years. Then if your family don't pay for its renewal you are dug up and sent to the ossuary built into the hillside.



Walk the Coulée Verte from Bastille to the Vincennes woods :

Starting close to the Bastille, take the part-elevated, disused railway line which has been converted into a planted walkway 'park' of nearly 5 kms / 3 miles.

If you are interested in checking out the art-related shops on the Viaduc des Arts, below the first stretch of path, check signs on road corners as it can be quite difficult to know how to get back up onto the railway line.



You pass some very strange buildings and get completely different skylines of the city as there aren't many opportunities to look over the walls because of the flowerbeds and trees. The walk then converts to a railway cutting so it's possible to walk through a wooded area, all the way to the edge of Paris.

I think the oddest buildings are the police station with copies of Michaelangelo's Dying Slave statue (the back view is impressive) and some buildings that are split in two.





SOME GREAT RESTAURANTS FOR YOU TO TRY :

I have listed my 3 favourite local restaurants and 3 of my favourites elsewhere in Paris.

Jeanne B : +33 1 42 51 17 53 61 rue Lepic 75018 Open every day

Opened only in 2013, [Jeanne B](#) is a modern restaurant, with a super 2 and 3 course menu. Soups, terrines, pies and their star item, black-footed Chicken from Challans (in the Loire Valley).



For meaty mains, I love the lamb or one of the slow-cooked pork options which are often on the menu though I normally order soup and the vegetarian tart which is full of colourful beans.

Au Virage Lepic : +33 1 42 5246 79 61 rue Lepic 75018 Closed Tuesdays

My real favourite though is [Au Virage Lepic](#), next door to Jeanne B but on the opposite side of the style spectrum!



Doggedly in the 80's with Phil Collins regularly on the tape machine (I am sure it is the original cassette), red and white tablecloths, black and white photos of stars on the walls (I think the most recent is 2011 but even the owners can't agree).

I never order anything other than the onion soup, which they say is the best in Paris and I am not going to contradict them on that, and the duck confit so take it on trust that the steaks are gorgeous as is the lamb... there is always a tart with crème fraiche for desert to keep me quiet even if it is Tarte Tatin in June. They don't have a set menu and you must order a main course.

p.s. The loo is down a vertiginous, spiral wrought iron staircase – you need both hands to steady yourself on the way down and pull yourself back up!



Bourgogne Sud : +33 1 48 74 51 27 14 rue de Clichy Closed Sunday

Head down the hill to find [Bourgogne Sud](#) and as the name suggests it is bursting with Burgundy region specials. There are 4 menus, 2 for weekday lunchtime and 2 for any time, and they are all a bit fussily distracting.



It's hearty, convivial food and the beef bourguignon cooked in its own casserole dish, just slightly stuck to the bottom enough to be rich and completely melt in the mouth, served with the most amazing mashed potatoes, is legendary. Most of the wines are from the same region

as the chef – Mâcon.

I have a long list of recommended local restaurants, cafés and bistros so do ask for it or take a look [HERE](#).

FURTHER AFIELD :

A la Biche au Bois : +33 1 43 43 34 38 45 avenue Ledru Rollin 75012
2 blocks from the Gare de Lyon is the amazing family run restaurant, [A la Biche Au Bois](#).

All the normal French rustic delights are on the menu, the home-made pates and terrines are all delicious, the Coq au vin is served in its own casserole dish, every variation of a steak is on the menu with the best home-made fries.



You get to choose your cheese from the board brought round by your waiter, the goat's cheese options are heavenly as are the deserts. The wine list is short but as the menu is based solely around comfort food the choice between a couple of good reds is all you need. Where else can you get a set menu including starter, main course, cheese and desert for €32!



Bistro des Augustins : +33 1 43 54 04 41 39 quai des Grands Augustins

The [Bistro des Augustins](#) faces the booksellers between the bridges Pont Neuf at the Westernmost point of the Island and Pont Saint Michel. Look for the red awning and pop into this amazing little restaurant which is famous for its gratin main course dishes at €10.



Everything is created in the tiny open kitchen to the side of the bar and the 2 young men who run it are delightful. The gratin dishes don't look too copious until you start eating... The deserts are all €5 so it was not possible on the last outing to pass up the tarte tatin and the chocolate fondant.

Relais de Venise : +33 1 45 74 27 97 271 bd Pereire 75017 Closed in July

My whole family were champing at the bit to eat here again the night before we got married, and every other time they visit – enough said really!



Be in the queue for 6.45pm outside the door of the [Relais de Venise](#) waiting to be let in at 7pm to fill up the 2 storey restaurant straight away. Any later than 7 pm arrival will mean that you will just have to wait for someone to finish.

Once inside the most complicated choices are to know how you want your steak cooked and which of the three choices of red wine to choose. The menu is straightforward - green salad with walnuts and secret sauce as a starter then piping hot steak with another secret sauce and the most delicious home-made fries, Twice.

If you can cope with a dessert afterwards then try the leaning tower of Pisa 'Vacherin' and you will be back outside on the pavement by 8.30pm.



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EATING EXPERIENCE :

Timing :

The smaller restaurants tend to be open for lunch from midday to 2.30pm and then reopen again at about 7pm for the evening. From 7-8.30pm probably the only people in any restaurant will be tourists, the French preferring to dine from around 8.30pm or later.

If you want to eat outside these lunch and dinner hours there are many possibilities in larger restaurants, the cafés or in the chain restaurants so you will not go hungry.

Getting a Table :

Every restaurant / cafe / brasserie has to show their menu for anyone to see from outside, stand at the entrance or on the terrace until you have caught the eye of a waiter who will take you to your seat. (If you just plonk yourself down at the nearest available seats you could be sitting there until hell freezes over because no one will admit that they have the responsibility of serving you.)

Waiters :

The job of being a waiter in France is a profession and is taken seriously. Treat him as a human being, smile, say 'Bonjour' to your waiter who will immediately return with English menus and start talking to you about really interesting subjects which define your nationality like Manchester United, the one time he went to New York or just how far Australia is from anywhere.

9 times out of 10 they speak better English than your French so go with the flow. Don't get upset, practice your three words of French on them and they'll reply back to you in English!

There are definitely still places where the waiters are surly, rude or downright obnoxious but they are now, thankfully, very few and far between. They seem to have been to charm school in the last 10 years!



Etiquette when at table :

Paris is the land of the small restaurant, probably smaller than your living room. Tables are frequently touching so learn to lower your voice and concentrate on your conversation, not that of your neighbours, which you cannot help overhear...

Unlike the English, when not eating the French always keep a hands and forearms on the table. This is because the French like to know where everyone's hands are, if they are under the table there might not be on their lap they may be on somebody else's.

When you're nearly finished your meal, just chattering away, this is the point at which you risk having your plate spirited away by a waiter who thinks you have stopped eating because French people often signal that they have finished their meal by leaving their knife and fork in the three and nine o'clock positions.

Set Menus :

In practically every single restaurant there will be some form of set menu, especially in the more expensive ones. Last year a friend and I went to the restaurant 'Le Petit Zinc' in Saint Germain, the waiter seated us, handed us our menus and proceeded to point out that the speciality of the restaurant was the Sea bass, priced at an unholy €112 per person then I spotted one of the small chalkboards that were dotted around on some of the tables... offering a 2 course fixed-price menu for €28!

Water :

As a Northerner, I consider the mark-up on bottled water as totally outrageous but if you want to do it so be it. I also can't stand sparkling water so will always order a 'carafe d'eau' (a jug of tap water) which of course is free and perfectly drinkable.



Cheese :

Eat with a knife and fork, no making sandwiches with your baguette... Start at the least strong cheese on your plate and work up to the strongest – it can be a nightmare if you are with French people because practically each cheese is cut in a different way, longwise, scooped, from the outside to the inside, in a fan shape etc and they obviously know them all because they learnt it at pre-school!

Coffee :

Means an espresso. If you are going to drink anything else after a meal this could be an ‘allongé’ i.e. just twice as much water in the same cup of coffee, but if you order anything in which you add milk, it will turn a Frenchman’s stomach, just like it will turn yours once you’ve drunk it!

Asking for the Bill :

Your waiter will not provide you with a bill unless you ask for one - general hand waving as if signing your signature works well as a signal. However, if you don’t want to move off you can bring out your book, laptop, newspaper and spend the next hour happily occupied without any interference from him. He is salaried. He is not living off tips. He knows that when you have ordered you have actually rented space at the table until you are willing to give it up.

Tipping :

A service charge of 15% is automatically added to the price of everything listed on a menu. What you see is the actual price, no add-ons are necessary. You will see ‘service compris 15%’, normally on the bottom line of the menu, everywhere you eat, **in very small writing**.

You don’t need to leave more than a few euros for a meal and a few coppers for a drink, unless you want to.



WHERE TO FIND SOME GREAT ROOFTOP VIEWS :

The rooftop café of Printemps department store :

From the 9th floor of this luxury department store situated just behind the Opéra Garnier you have a staggering view of the glass rooftop of the Grand Palais with the Eiffel Tower directly behind it and when you turn around you have a sublime view of Sacré Coeur in Montmartre.



The terrace is on the 2nd floor of gourmet foods above the 5 floors for men. It's been completely refurbished with separate areas for each type of food, like tiny cafés, all round the edge of the building each with a view of Paris.

It's open from 9.35am until 8pm each night except on Thursday, for late night shopping, when it closes at 10pm. NB : it is where the shots of Paris were taken for the welcome to 52 Clichy video. <http://www.52clichy.com>

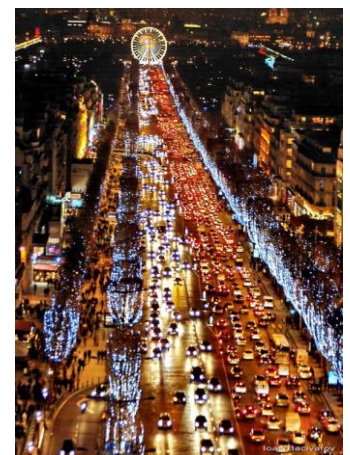
Arc de Triomphe :

Totally the best view of traffic honking and beeping on the 8 unmarked lanes around the [Arc de Triomphe](#) is from the roof of this amazing monument.

Great views of Paris rooftops during the day and in the evening of the twinkling Eiffel Tower, on the hour for 5 minutes. If you have your Paris Pass then entrance is free.

Go into the best museum shop and the excellent World War 1 museum before walking down. Read my blog on how best to combine that view with the best restaurant in the area.

<http://www.52clichy.com/the-very-best-view-of-paris/>





Holiday Inn Notre Dame's rooftop bar '43 Up on the Roof :

Whilst I am loath to suggest anywhere else you might decide to stay, this rooftop bar is special. It's only open from the beginning of May to the end of September and all non-guests must book via email well in advance.



The bar's capacity is only 50 people and that is quickly reached (with hotel guests being given preference obviously) but it also means it is never over-crowded so the ambiance is relaxed. Cocktails start at €15, champagne is cheaper! but, like everywhere in Paris you can hug your drink and stay as long as you like because you are paying to rent the table.

Reserve by email : fb.notredame@hotels-res.com

DAY TRIPS FROM PARIS :

If you are staying 5 days or more it is certainly possible to take in a trip outside Paris.

Versailles :

The [Château de Versailles](#) is your closest Day Trip option being only 30 minutes from Central Paris by train. Inside the Chateau grounds the Grand Trianon, Petit Trianon and the Hamlet don't open until 12.00 so if you are there in the mornings you can either brave the massive crowds going through the Chateau or wander the gardens and fountains then hit the Hamlet and Trianons at midday and return at the end of your day, around 2 hrs before closing, to view the chateau.



'Later' is the best time to avoid the crowds inside the Chateau but your feet might be complaining. Your Paris Museum Pass only works for the Chateau, there is a €9 supplement for the Trianons & Gardens due



to there being a music or water show almost every day. The Chateau is closed on Mondays.

Ask me for dinner recommendations in Versailles or come home on the RER C train which you catch at the front of the chateau. The RER train can drop you off on the Seine so you can get out at the Eiffel Tower or Musée d'Orsay stops, for example.

Giverney :

[Monet's home and gardens](#) are open from mid-March to the end of October each year. There are 2 gardens, the flower garden and then the Japanese water garden on the other side of the road. Whatever time you go the garden will always be in bloom, it was planted in order that Monet always had something to paint.



The queues to get inside the property are often overwhelming so a tour may be a good idea where they let you jump the line, there are also jump the line tickets if you want to travel independently by train to Vernon and pick up the shuttle bus. Some bus trips are all day affairs but as you cannot picnic in the gardens you will need to leave the property and eat in the town.

Champagne region :

Epernay is the town we used to go to for our wine tastings and vast purchases up and down the Avenue de Champagne at Mercier, loved their underground train ride tour and Esterlin... it was sooo much fun!

Reims is only 45 minutes away on the TGV although there are not too many trains each day so be organised. Many of the major champagne houses are here - Taittinger, GH Mumm and Veuve Clicquot and 3 UNESCO World Heritage sites too as this city used to be where all the early French kings were crowned.



Chartres :

[Chartres](#) is a gorgeous country town only 1h from Paris by train from Montparnasse station, only 10 minutes on the line 13 metro from us. The town boasts a UNESCO world Heritage listed Cathedral and, when asking a guide what I could learn from him in an hour he replied that he couldn't show me the entire cathedral but he could explain 1 of the windows... overwhelming!

Fancy a far flung adventure? :

Further afield you could easily visit Normandy, jump on the train to Bayeux, see its famous tapestry and then take a tour of the Normandy beaches, it's a long day but worth it, made easier because the trains leave from St Lazare which is just at the bottom of the road.

Alternatively, the TGV trains are so fast that within an hour you could be in Lille wandering the old town, in 90 minutes in Brussels eating mussels and chips with a beer in your hand, in only 2 hrs 20 you can be in central London and in 3hrs you could even be sunning yourself on the south coast in Marseille having lunch on the port!

In a country with such excellent transportation links, all Europe is at your feet.



USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT if you're not walking everywhere :

It is likely you will be walking about 20 000 – 25 000 steps per day on average (2 000 is approx. 1 mile). So, if you may want to save your feet.

Perhaps you may decide to take public transport to somewhere and then walk all day and, weary, jump on the metro or a bus to come home, whatever you choose, the metro/bus system is an easy, comprehensive, and safe way to travel through Paris.



Everything is close in Paris. Were you ever to have an uninterrupted view you would almost always be able to see your next metro. Metros arrive about every 2-3 minutes and take an average of only 90 seconds to travel between stations.

I find the buses a little more challenging just because I still haven't worked out how to get back home although going (if it doesn't entail a change), is easy.

Normally your best bet is to buy a carnet of 10 individual tickets, currently priced at €14.90 and they work on both the metro and the buses. You can only buy a single bus ticket on the bus (which costs a whole €2). If you don't use all the tickets don't worry, they never expire!

Try to purchase a carnet prior to arrival in Paris at the airport or on the Eurostar train because at the Paris train stations/airport the ticket machines take only coins or a credit card with a chip/pin.

The queues can be murderous or worse this is where you will find the 'helpful man' who offers to assist you to buy a ticket – it will almost always be a scam, I say almost always because I did once help a man and I was quite traumatised trying to make sure he didn't think I was scamming him!



How to use the Metros and buses :

When using the metro, a ticket is swallowed by the ticket machine, you rescue it and you keep it, no matter how many changes you decide to make underground until you are again above ground where you can finally throw it away. There is no second machine to put it through before you exit.

On the buses there is a little slot for tickets just behind the driver's seat to stamp your ticket, same idea, keep hold of it until the end of your journey. 1 journey / ticket is classed as anywhere on the metro or anywhere on a bus including multiple changes but not a mix of both!

Taxis :

One recent change has been the application of a higher base rate for taxis due to Uber issues so a minimum journey is now €7.50, an average price from any of the Paris train stations is €10, rarely €15, however a taxi from CDG to 52 Clichy is now a fixed price, regardless of how long it takes if you are stuck in traffic etc, at €50.

Difficulties moving around? :

For those who have wheelchairs, strollers or have difficulty with steps, we are surrounded by bus routes which follow each metro route plus, plus. I have a bus route book in each property. Also, the metro line 14, which starts at Saint Lazare (5 minutes walk away) and crosses Paris diagonally is the only **wheelchair – friendly metro line** with elevators at each station.

Other information about travelling as a **disabled person** :

<https://wheelchairtravel.org/paris/public-transportation/>

I provide very detailed information of how to get from wherever you arrive in Paris to 52 Clichy using trains, airport buses, metros, buses or taxis so don't worry, you will arrive safely and quickly to our red door.



TOP TIPS FOR GETTING THE BEST FROM THE FRENCH:

People say the French are rude or arrogant, they aren't, but they are quite formal and appreciate politeness. So, when anyone falls foul of their ideals on how one should behave, it can bring on a French freeze!

Asking questions :

As an English person I would naturally approach a stranger (shop assistant, waiter, ticket office, man on the street... etc) with "Excuse me, could you".

In France you must always start with "Bonjour" and say it whilst making eye contact and smiling.... otherwise they will simply think you are bad mannered and, being upset by that, are not then well-disposed to offer assistance.

Personally, I used to have a hard time making eye contact and saying Hello to people I don't know – it still isn't necessarily a default mechanism) but trust me, it works wonders, so use it everywhere and liberally, even if that is the limit of your French language skills.

When you are walking into our courtyard at 52 Clichy and you see anyone walking out they will always say "Bonjour", even the smallest children, and they will expect one in return.

Your language skills :

Use whatever few words you have. I think everybody will agree that hearing a French person speaking English is lovely on the ears. Well, give up on the nervousness, the French ALL think that hearing English voices speaking French is CUTE!!! There is no accounting for taste!

How is this possible when we mutilate their language? They will tell you they adore our 'petit accent', of course that part is poetic license because they are rarely talking to someone with a 'petit' accent.



The Bise (kissing) :

Strangely for such a formal lot, they are very demonstrative with people they know well, lots of kissing, hugging including men kissing other men friends and definitely men kissing their male family members.

If you meet French people socially, friends of friends etc, you will be allocated the same level of friendship by the French as your friends so when you are leaving they may still shake hands because you are foreigners and if you want to keep the interaction formal jump straight in there with your right hand so there is no confusion...

Because if not there will probably be a goodbye 'bise'. Your right cheek against their right cheek. Just cheeks brushing and a little air-kissing (so you just look like a goldfish pouting). In Paris it is once on each cheek.



I cannot underline enough the NO touching with lips rule, yuk. I do know someone who plants their lips on my cheeks and it's awful. And just so you know, if you kiss someone new on the lips, they will interpret that as you wanting to date them!



THIS LOCAL AREA

52 CLICHY is situated in the district known as Opéra / Grand Magasins, best known for the beautiful Opéra Garnier and the luxury shopping area including the world-famous department stores [Galeries Lafayette](#) and [Printemps](#).

It is also known as the 9th arrondissement; on the map it is the pale orange section in the middle on the North side of Paris, called the Right Bank, (you need to be a sailor to understand why it's called 'right').

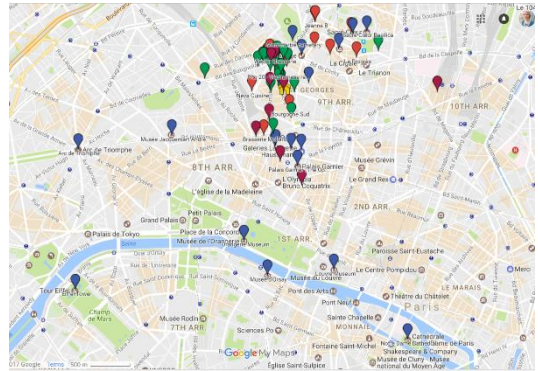


Rue de Clichy is half a mile long from Place de Clichy, which is marked on the map, to the Trinité church at the bottom, just behind the Opéra. The distance from 52 Clichy to the river Seine and the Louvre Museum is a straight line of 1.2 miles.

So Paris is a TINY city!



52 Clichy is in an ideal base precisely because it isn't next to a 'Tourist Attraction', it is just a couple of minutes' stroll away from them, but enough to avoid the crowds and keep our shops, restaurants and services 'local'.



Don't get me wrong, rue de Clichy is a BUSY street. There are 5 theatres between Place de Clichy and Galeries Lafayette so there are always people about.

That's good, it's not a lonely street, but any noise and busy-ness (bin/trash lorries buses, schoolchildren being dropped off at the school by the Trinité church, tour buses and general traffic) all THAT noise, is blocked by the front of our building, the part that faces the road. Walk into this courtyard and once the red door closes, the road is forgotten.

So what is just outside our red doors?

The bakery! [Maison Landemaine](#) is just 70 paces away if you need their award-winning croissants, almond pain au chocolat, apple chausson, nut breads, multi-grain baguette, I have to stop I could fill a page.

But then of course I haven't mentioned their home-made pastries and cakes.... OMG. Would you dare, as one delightful guest did – ask for a big box and say "I'll take one of each"? They also have a café so you can eat indoors or outside, and at the same time watch them baking through the huge glass windows.



Opposite we have a **Supermarket** that's open 7 days a week, where you can pick up everything you might need if you are staying in the apartment and I still run across when I visit friends for speciality salt, duck confit (weighs a ton) or anything with crème of chestnuts in it...



What can you find in 100 yards? :

Up the hill towards Place de Clichy there are 2 speciality wine shops (let's get that in first) so you can buy something gorgeous and pop it in the fridge with your cheeses and patés.

Boys will love 2 shops specifically for them, one selling shirts and ties and next door is fascinating – [Planete Rasoir](#) – selling everything to do with male personal grooming and they have 2 American style barber's chairs in the window where they offer cut-throat razor hair-cuts, beard trims and shaves... This area is also where there are many **model (train etc) shops**, one on rue d'Amsterdam is even called Au Pullman and has a moulded silver metal front! There is a button next to the door to make the train start, so sweet.

Families will appreciate the tree-shaded **children's park** with slides, sandpit and climbing frames etc just 2 minutes away, it's enclosed with a child-proof gate and there are lots of benches from which to watch the little daredevils. There is a **laundrette** just next door if, for whatever reason, you don't use the washing machine in the apartment or the B&B.

Obviously there are some **great French cafés and restaurants** to eat in, just ask for my list of best local restaurants or click [HERE](#), but if you want a takeaway there is also an amazing Vietnamese restaurant, guests tell me it is better than anything they have eaten in Los Angeles, a great Chinese up the street and the Italian on the corner who will make anything on his menu to take away if you just want to flop in the living room, exhausted.

If you want to venture a whole 200 yards to Place de Clichy :

Place de Clichy is always lively. The **pharmacy** is open 24/7 if you need blister protection for your feet (one of only 10 that are open 24/7 in Paris).

And we will ignore Starbucks and McDo except that between the 2 of them is a little cubby hole selling, books of 10 metro/bus tickets, cigarettes and lottery tickets – huge queues all the time!



For **organic food** lovers there are 3 shops, Naturalia, Bio coop and Epicerie Générale, plus of course there is one of only 3 organic food markets in Paris at Place de Clichy every Saturday morning. There is also a renowned Herbalist - people come for miles to buy from them.



Specialist shops have tended to congregate together in Paris, to the West of St Lazare train station is where musical instruments are made and repaired - need a new violin bow?

Rue d'Orsel is famous for its hundreds of material and sewing shops congregating around the 5 storey building, Marché St Pierre, at the bottom of the hill below **Sacré Coeur**. Some guests come with empty suitcases for patchwork materials!

Just a little further afield, a 5 minute walk, you can be standing in front of the **Moulin Rouge** and the wonderful, quirky, eclectic area that is Montmartre. If you think you might enjoy the Moulin Rouge spectacle I always suggest you take dinner in one of my favourite restaurants and then go to the 9pm show, eating a very good meal with 2000 other people may be your thing but I prefer just to drink champagne whilst watching the show.



I could spend days wandering around **Montmartre**, it has resisted the call to conform and it is here you will also find great restaurants, clothes designers and lots of fabulous independent art galleries.

There are also museums, churches, the amazing Sacré Coeur basilica which is open from 6am until 12pm every day and vestiges of the lives of Impressionist artists on every one of the windy, cobbled streets.



ONE OF MY FAVOURITE STROLLS THROUGH PARIS :

A favourite walk is to turn left out of 52 Clichy and walk straight, literally straight, to the Tuileries Gardens and the Louvre. It's only 1.2 miles away so it shouldn't take long, except

I wander down the hill, past Trinité church, which is quite striking, then a few minutes further to Galeries Lafayette where I pop in to the store's ground floor (bags, perfumes etc,) pshish some perfume on under their amazing glass dome 6 storeys high, a tourist attraction in its own right, even more so at Christmas when the space is filled with an enormous Christmas tree, then cross the road to the Opéra.

Often on the front there are musicians playing for the people sitting on the steps so sometimes I listen for a while.

Directly in front of the Opéra is Avenue de l'Opéra, very wide, no trees going due South so no shade in Summer and not very many fun shops but does take you past the Palais Royale Gardens directly to the Louvre in 10 minutes.

I prefer to take the road baring slightly right, rue de la Paix. It is not as wide as Avenue de l'Opéra so you can see the windows of the luxury shops on both sides, it's slightly sheltered from the sun, and you pass Napoleon's column in front of the **Ritz Hotel** and directly on to the **Tuileries Gardens**.

That part doesn't take 10 minutes, more like 2 hours because I spend my time window shopping, looking in all designer windows, deciding to have tea at the Ritz (great scones in the English tea room) and then wandering the length of the Tuileries gardens before arriving at the Louvre.



FAQs :

Café culture :

- Yes you can drink water from the tap and/or re-fill your water bottles. I order (free) tap water 'carafe d'eau' rather than bottled water in restaurants.
- Café prices may seem expensive but you are paying for both the coffee and 'renting' the table. Once you have ordered you can stay as long as you like, even work on your novel, the waiter will not bring you your bill unless you ask for it.
- The French can't make cappuccino, it's a long espresso with froth plopped on, save €5 and order something else.
- Catch the waiter's eye in order to point at the table you want to sit down at even in the most ordinary café. In restaurants always wait to be seated.
- Unless you are **really** brave, do not ever order Andouillette sausage, the translation is Chitterling sausage but this anodyne name does not conjure up a description for the most revolting tripe (pork lower intestine) sausage slathered in mustard sauce. Androuillette is NOT androuille sausage.
- If you are going to use the bathrooms in a café, make sure you order a coffee 'un express' as it is polite to pay for something. If you want to use those grey things in the street, you are on your own, I have never tried, they look scary!
- Almost all cafés have wifi, ask the waiter for the password.

Security :

- The police all carry their guns, this does not mean they are about to shoot someone, they want to look intimidating ;-). Ask anyone else for help but them if you get lost!
- Pickpockets are everywhere, invariably small groups of young girls who look for easy targets, particularly Asians as they think may be carrying lots of cash, but



anybody's wallet or sunglasses will do. Be aware. They can also distract you with a petition or the 'dropped gold ring' scam.

- Unless there is a Stop sign for cars they will not necessarily even slow down when you are crossing the road EVEN if the little green man is shining for you! Cross in packs, if the car driver sees a half-decent gap he will drive through. Do not for one moment think you have right of way just because you are legally crossing the road

- You absolutely need travel insurance!

Touristy things :

- The best hop-on hop-off bus tour is [Open Tour Cityvision \(Red, White and Blue buses\)](#). They have 3 circuits.



- Museum entrance is free for under 16s (under 26 if European).

- The easiest way of seeing the Museums and other Attractions is to purchase a Queue-Jumping museum pass. The best one is still the [Paris Museum Pass](#) for 2, 4 or 6 consecutive days.



- Guide books are great – they often have decent maps but if not, I have millions! The Dorling Kindersley books are the best though because their maps are much better than anyone else's.



I hope you have enjoyed reading this guide to Paris and that you are inspired to visit Paris whether it is for the first or the tenth time.

Please do take a look at my website by clicking [HERE](#).

I look forward to welcoming you to your Paris Home Away From Home and, of course, do ask me any questions you may have, I would love to hear from you.

A bientôt,

Rosemary ☺



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