

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'll find Essential Information on what you need to know when you're planning your next trip to Paris.

Bonjour, I'm Rosemary,

I'm English but have been living in France for 20 years and I'm 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 enable them to understand and experience living in Paris as a local.

I hope 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'll 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 [Orangerie 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 and in the basement it holds a handful of works from several Impressionist masters. It’s 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. Closed Tuesdays.

Admission with the Paris Museum Pass is free or €12.50 without. You could add a guided museum tours in English, currently only available on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11.00am, for €22.50 (entry and tour). Café and Fabulous shop!

The 5th floor of the [Musée d’Orsay](#) is just Impressionist paintings and I’ve an annual ticket because I love it however it holds only 1 of the waterlily paintings. Closed Mondays. The museum with the most paintings by Monet, about 300 of them, is the [Marmottan Monet Museum](#) in the west of Paris (just 900 visitors per day as only 30 every 15 minutes and €14.50 per ticket). Open every day.



My favourite guided tour is of the Opéra Garnier:

The guided tours in English of the [Opéra Garnier](#), at 10.30am and 3.30pm. €23. Tours are nearly 2 hours. Alternatively, the new 5pm tour takes place when you



have the place to yourselves – brilliant for photos! This may be a shorter tour if there is a performance that evening, but the lack of other tourists outweighs that inconvenience €26. Open every day.

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.

Spend €15 walking round on your own with an audio-guide if you miss the guided tour. The ticket office is on the left if you're facing the main steps under the ramp that Napoleon had built following an attempt on his life so he wouldn't have to walk in but could drive into the building in his carriage.

My favourite monument is Sainte Chapelle:

I also love visiting Ile de la Cité and particularly [Sainte Chapelle](#) although the first time I went in I was totally underwhelmed. You entered 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 amazing 360° stained glass window structure is upstairs.

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



windows have all recently been restored and I recommend reading about the restoration as it is fascinating or at least [this and the videos of the restoration](#) and the double glazing! Entrance is €11.50, €18,50 if combined with the Conciergerie (has a 3D app that transforms the space to its original décor). Both are free with the Paris Museum Pass (timed slot required). Open every day.

On many evenings there are [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) into the [Catacombs](#), walking for about 45 minutes / 1½ miles with 200 other people, 12 at a time, through the cavernous chambers displaying the carefully arranged bones from 9h15 – 19h15.

Tickets costs €29 (€34 with audioguide) and is not part of the Paris Museum Pass. Tickets are only sold 7 days in advance of arrival but if you are lucky a last-minute ticket can be purchased only on the day (think it’s still €13). Open every day from 9.45am – 8.30pm.

Don’t have the time or can’t manage the steps, take their [online visit](#) for €3 in English or French!



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 which took a whole afternoon to show us 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 hunted for hours to find Jim Morrison – bit of a let-down actually.



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're 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 that has been converted into a planted walkway 'park' of nearly 5 kms / 3 miles.

You can check out the art-related shops on the Viaduc des Arts, below the first stretch of path, look for 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 then the walk then converts to a railway cutting and it's possible to walk through a wooded area, all the way to the edge of Paris! The oddest buildings are the police station with copies of Michaelangelo's Dying Slave statue (the back view of their bottoms is impressive) and some buildings that are split in two.





SOME GREAT RESTAURANTS FOR YOU TO TRY:

A couple of my 3 favourite local restaurants and some favourites elsewhere in Paris.

Au Virage Lepic: +33 1 42 52 46 79 61 rue Lepic 75018

My favourite is [Au Virage Lepic](#). 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's 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! Closed on Tuesday evenings, Wednesdays and lunchtimes on Thursday.

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



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. Closed Sundays and Saturday lunchtimes.



FURTHER AFIELD:

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

Normally closed in July, but not in 2021. 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!



It's not possible to book so line up outside the door for 6.45pm of [Relais de Venise](#) so as to be let in at 7pm to fill up the 2 storey restaurant. Any later and you'll 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.

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 could (maybe can) you get a set menu including starter, main course, cheese and dessert for €32! Currently closed Sat-Mondays.

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 most Western 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. Be prepared to wait 15 minutes for them to be cooked. The gratin dishes don't look too copious until you start eating... Deserts are all very reasonable, it was not possible on the last outing to pass up the tarte tatin and the chocolate fondant.

As it's tiny, other favourites on the island of Ile de la Cité are the fabulous, ancient [Au Bougnat](#) restaurant just behind Notre Dame and [Brasserie les Deux Palais](#) (take the menu of the day) opposite Sainte Chapelle/Conciergerie.

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



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EATING EXPERIENCE:

Timing:

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 hours find a larger restaurant, café or a chain restaurant, you'll not go hungry. Since Covid many now do 'service continu' which may or may not mean the entire menu is available but you'll get something.

Getting a Table:

Every restaurant / cafe / brasserie has to put their menu outside for everyone to see. Stand at the entrance or on the terrace until you've caught the eye of a waiter who will take you to your seat. (If you just plonk yourself down in 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' and they 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 they 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 French words on them and they'll keep replying in English, it's quicker for everyone!

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 15 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 use your “Indoor Voice” as they say and concentrate on your conversation, not that of your neighbours, which you cannot help overhearing.

Unlike the English, when not eating the French always keep 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 they may be on somebody else’s lap.

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’ve stopped eating because French people often signal that they’ve finished their meal by leaving their knife and fork in the three and nine o’clock positions.

Set Menus:

In practically every restaurant there will be some form of set menu, particularly for lunch and especially in the more expensive ones. I once went into the restaurant ‘Le Petit Zinc’ in Saint Germain, the waiter seated us, handed us our menus and proceeded to point out that the speciality 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!

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. Then you have to remember how to cut your cheese in the appropriate way (longwise, scooped out, from the outside to the inside, in a fan shape etc), it can be a nightmare if you’re with French people because they learnt these rules at nursery school!



Water:

As a Northerner, I consider the mark-up on bottled water as totally outrageous but if you want to buy them so be it. I also can't stand sparkling water so will always order a "carafe d'eau" (said like 'dough' - a jug of tap water). A carafe is free, perfectly drinkable in Paris and the waiter must bring you it even if you only order a coffee.

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. If you order coffee with milk in it after your meal 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%, normally on the bottom line of the menu, everywhere you eat, **in very small writing**, is automatically added to the price of everything listed on a menu. What you see is the actual price, no add-ons are necessary. However please leave a few euros for a meal and a few coppers for a drink, unless you think the service was bad.

Some waiters have started asking clients "what tip do you want to add" or adding it without asking. They normally have terrible reputations, inflated prices and a view of the Tower so they know you won't be back and they don't care. You have been warned.



WHERE TO FIND SOME GREAT ROOFTOP VIEWS:

The rooftop cafés of Printemps & Galeries Lafayette department stores:

From the 9th floor of these luxury department stores 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.



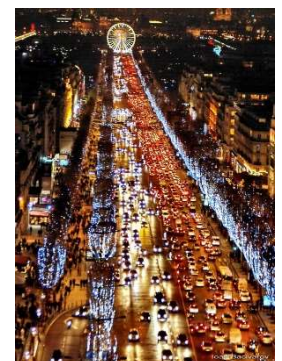
The Printemps terrace is on the 2nd floor of gourmet foods above the 5 floors for men. There are ‘tiny cafés’, all round the edge of the building each with a view of Paris.

The bigger view is from Galeries Lafayette’s roof (Ladies building) once you’ve looked up at the glass dome from the perfume department and walked the glass walkway into the void for a photo-op on the 4/F. Both are open 10am until 8-8.30pm each night. NB: you’ll recognise the shots of Paris from my [52 Clichy welcome video](#).

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. Free with your Paris Museum Pass.



Go into the best museum shop. Read my blog on how best to combine that view with the best restaurant in the area. <https://www.52clichy.com/the-very-best-view-of-paris/>



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



With its uninterrupted view of the Eiffel Tower and its capacity of only 50 people it fills up quickly but from 3pm to 8.30 pm no reservation is needed.

Cocktails start at €15, champagne is cheaper! but, like everywhere in Paris you can hug your drink and stay as long as you like.

DAY TRIPS FROM PARIS:

If you're staying 5 days or more it's 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 shuttle train from St Lazare. You walk past Notre Dame market (most well-known in Versailles) on your way to the château so collect picnic provisions. On Tuesday, Friday & Sunday there is a vast outdoor market there, even better!

You're obliged to see the chateau first as you have a timed ticket, but note that the Grand Trianon, Petit Trianon and the Hamlet don't open until 12.00 and are at the farthest point of the grounds so decide whether to head there before working your way back through the gardens and fountains or vice-versa.

Your Paris Museum Pass only works for the Chateau, there's a +/-€9 supplement for the Trianons & Gardens due to there being a music or water show almost every day. The Château is closed on Mondays.





Ask for dinner recommendations in Versailles or return using a different route - the RER C train which you catch at the front of the château. It stops at stations along the Seine so you can get out at the Eiffel Tower or the St Michel area.

There are other things to do in Versailles. Opposite are the Stables which host late afternoon [performances with the horses](#) and after you can see the carriages and stables. The [‘Small’ Stables](#) on the right now host the Greek, Etruscan and Roman antiquities that used to be in the Louvre – Free access every afternoon.

Gardeners will find the [King’s Kitchen Garden](#) (Potager) fun, next door to the Chateau created to feed everyone at Court – talk about keeping your ecological footprint small. 9 hectares still ‘working’. Costs only €3 - €5!

Giverny:

[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 lines to enter used to be appalling but most will book a timed ticket, you should too. You can go independently by train to Vernon and pick up the shuttle bus. Some organised bus trips are all day affairs but as you cannot picnic in the gardens you’ll 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. Visit Mercier, loved their underground train ride tour, such fun and very informative and if you’re intending buying go to Esterlin too.



Reims is only 45 minutes away on the TGV although there are not too many trains each day so be organised. Book a tour with Taittinger, GH Mumm or Veuve Clicquot plus there are 3 UNESCO World Heritage sites as this city is where all the early French kings were crowned.

Chartres is a gorgeous country town only 1h from Paris by train from Montparnasse station. 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 with a guide such as [Bayeux Shuttle](#), 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, or leap on a bus in Paris arranged by [City Wonders](#).

Alternatively, stay with military historian Matt and archaeologist Vanessa at their fabulous B&B, [l'Hotel de Herc ](#), take their personalised [guided tours](#) of the Normandy/Loire valley, [Normandy beaches and battlefields](#) or even trace your family history by [walking in the footsteps of a relative](#) on their D-Day landing.

Even further:

Big, fast clean trains are a speciality in Europe so leap on a TGV and within an hour you could be in Lille wandering the old town. In any other year you might be eating mussels and chips with a beer in your hand in Brussels within 90 minutes or in only 2 hrs 20 mins you could be in central London.

Thankfully, you can still, in 3hrs, 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's likely you'll be walking about 20 000 – 25 000 steps per day (2 000 is approx. 1 mile). You may want to save your feet.

Perhaps you'll decide to take public transport to somewhere and then walk all day and, weary, jump on the metro/bus to come home. Whatever you choose, it's 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 station. 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.

We are transitioning to credit card plastic cards for travel and I've lots of these cards if you arrive without needing to buy one to get to 52 Clichy.

Choice 1) If you're visiting for a few days, your best bet is to buy individual journeys, currently priced at €16.90 for 10 journeys which work on both the metro and the buses and that card is called a Navigo Easy.

Choice 2) For longer stays, if you are coming in bad weather / when it's dark more or if you have mobility issues buy a weekly Navigo Découverte card. You'll need a photo(copy) of any photo ID to stick on it and this gives you unlimited journeys for a week starting Monday - Sunday. **Major** details written about this in the email you'll receive just before arrival.

You can also try to purchase single tickets prior to arrival in Paris on the Eurostar train because inside the train stations the queues can be murderous.



How to use the Metros and buses:

When using the metro there is a purple circle on the entry machines and it reads your Navigo card. There is no machine to use in order to exit.

On the buses there is the same purple circle on the doors. 1 journey is classed as anywhere on the metro or anywhere on a bus including multiple changes but not a mix of both metro with bus!

Taxis:

A minimum journey is now €7.30, an average price from any of the Paris train stations is €10, rarely €15. 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 €55. An Uber might seem cheaper but they can't drive in the taxi lanes and as Paris hates cars you could very easily be stuck in an almighty traffic jam (and if it's the airport, they can charge a supplement making them dearer than a taxi). Besides which I prefer BOLT or G7.

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, closest station is Saint Lazare (a 5 minute walk away) crosses Paris diagonally and 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 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'll 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').

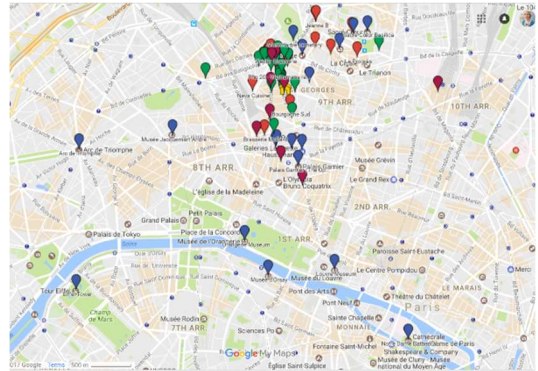


Rue de Clichy is half a mile long from Place de Clichy, which is marked on the map, to the Trinité church at the bottom, just behind the Opéra. The distance from 52 Clichy to the river Seine and the Louvre Museum is a straight line of 1.2 miles.

So Paris is a TINY city!



52 Clichy is in an ideal base precisely because it isn't next to a 'Tourist Attraction', it's 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, school children being dropped off at the school by the Trinité church 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 front door closes, the road is forgotten.

So what is just outside our 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 with small children will appreciate the tree-shaded **children's park** for the under 8s 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.

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 and a great Chinese up the street 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, loads of places to eat and the main event is the **pharmacy** is open 24/7 if you need Compeed blister plasters as protection for your feet (one of only 10 pharmacies that are open 24/7 in Paris).



For **organic food** lovers there are Naturalia on Place de Clichy and one of only 3 organic food markets in Paris is at Place de Clichy every Saturday morning. There are 2 VEGAN bakeries within a couple of minutes. 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?

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.

Rue d'Orsel is famous for its hundreds of fabric 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!



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 into 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 (there's a glass walkway on the 4th floor out into the void of the dome) even more fun 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. But take a breath there and inhale the vision of all that gold!

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** before heading 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:

- 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.
- Café prices may seem expensive but you're paying for both the coffee and 'renting' the table. Once you've ordered you can stay as long as you like, the waiter will not bring you your bill unless you ask for it. Occasionally they change shifts and cash up but even in that case paying isn't a reason to leave.
- The French can't make cappuccino, it's a long espresso with froth plopped on, save €5 and order something else.
- 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. Even the parks do too.
- Unless you're **really** brave, don't 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. It smells soooo bad! Androuillette is NOT androuille sausage.

Security:

- You absolutely need travel insurance!
- 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 anyone who looks as if they might be carrying lots



of cash, but anybody's wallet, watch or sunglasses will do. Be aware. They can also distract you with a deaf / dumb 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 is allowed to so he can and will drive through. Do not for one moment think you have right of way just because you are also legally crossing the road.

Touristy things:

- Guide books are great – they often have decent maps but if not, I have millions! The Dorling Kindersley books are the best as their maps are by far the best.

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

- The best hop-on hop-off bus tour is 'TooT', there's also Big red Bus, but there are many fewer buses since Covid so get on and go round once then stay on until you have found a place for lunch and get off – you've 'done' it now.

- The easiest way to see the Museums and Attractions is to purchase a Pass. The best one is still the [Paris Museum Pass](#) for 48hrs, 96hrs or 144hrs consecutively. This can be downloaded! Only 6 places need to be pre-booked with a time slot with this pass the others have a special line for this Pass. Don't confuse this with the 'Paris Pass' which is 5 times the price for the same thing.



- Book a few days in advance for things that get booked up quickly like the Louvre and the Orangerie. The Catacombs tickets only go on sale a week in advance. The Eiffel Tower gets its own email when you book!

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'd love to hear from you.

A bientôt,

Rosemary ☺

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