



PARIS

The City of Light has been a beacon of culture for centuries. As a world capital of art, fashion, food, literature, and ideas, it stands as a symbol of all the fine things that human civilization can offer.

Paris serves up sweeping boulevards, chatty crêpe stands, chic boutiques, and world-class art galleries. Sip decaf with deconstructionists in a sidewalk café, then become part of an Impressionist painting in a tree-lined park. Cruise the Seine, ascend the Eiffel Tower, and roll or stroll down the avenue des Champs-Élysées. Master the Louvre and Orsay museums. Save some after-dark energy for one of the world's most romantic cities.

Some see the essentials and flee, overwhelmed. But with the proper approach and a good orientation, you'll fall head over heels for Europe's capital.

ACCESSIBILITY IN PARIS

Paris is more challenging than Belgium or London for people with disabilities. But if you can make a little extra effort and have a healthy sense of humor, you'll find the City of Light is worth it. The city has an information office for disabled people; unfortunately, most of their information is sketchy and limited (place Mazas 12e, tel. 01 43 47 76 60).

Public transportation in Paris can be difficult for wheelchair users. For example, you may need to wait a few extra minutes until a newer, accessible bus comes by. (Consider taking a taxi instead.) Paris' Métro is not accessible, but some RER (suburban subway) lines are. If traveling long distances by rail, you may want to book the Thalys train (first class

Accessibility Levels

This book rates sights, hotels, and restaurants using four levels:

Level 1—Fully Accessible: A Level 1 building is completely barrier-free. Entryways, elevators, and other facilities are specifically adapted to accommodate a person using a wheelchair. If there's a bathroom, it has wide doors and an adapted toilet and sink. Where applicable, the bathing facilities are also fully adapted (including such features as bath boards, grab bars, or a roll-in, no-rim shower). Fully adapted hotel rooms often have an alarm system with pull cords for emergencies.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible: A Level 2 building is suitable for, but not specifically adapted to accommodate, a person using a wheelchair. This level will generally work for a wheelchair user who can make transfers and take a few steps. A person who is permanently in a wheelchair may require some assistance here (either from a companion or from staff).

Level 3—Minimally Accessible: A Level 3 building is satisfactory for people who have minimal mobility difficulties (that is, people who usually do not use a wheelchair, but take more time to do things than a non-disabled person). This building may have some steps and a few other barriers—but not too many. Level 3 buildings are best suited to slow walkers; wheelchair users will require substantial assistance here.

Level 4—Not Accessible: Unfortunately, some places in this book are simply not accessible to people with limited mobility. This means that barriers such as staircases, tight interiors and facilities (elevators, bathrooms, etc.), or other impediments interfere with passage for travelers with disabilities. Buildings in this category might include a church tower that has several flights of steep stairs, or a museum interior that has many levels with lots of steps and no elevator.

For a complete listing of the Accessibility Codes used in this chapter, please see pages 6–7.

is wheelchair-accessible).

Many of Paris' top sights are fully accessible to wheelchair users (Level 1): the Louvre, the Palais Royal Courtyards, the Orsay, Eiffel Tower (up to the second level), Les Invalides (except crypt), Rodin Museum (ground floor only) and garden, the main floor of St. Sulpice Church, Luxembourg Garden, Montparnasse Tower, the Petit and Grand Palais, Grande Arche de La Défense, Victor Hugo House, Pompidou Center, Jewish Art and History Museum, Picasso Museum, and the Palace of Versailles.

Other sights will work for wheelchair users with some assistance (Level 2): Notre-Dame Cathedral interior (not the tower), Deportation Memorial, the lower level of Sainte-Chapelle, National Maritime Museum, St. Germain-des-Prés Church, Opéra Garnier (entry, but not tours), Jacquemart-André Museum, place des Vosges park, and the Erotic Art Museum in Montmartre.

Unfortunately, Paris also has a few sights that are best left to non-disabled travelers (or more adventurous slow walkers): Notre-Dame's tower, Paris Archaeological Crypt, Sainte-Chapelle upstairs chapel, Conciergerie, the top level of the Eiffel Tower, the upper level of the Rodin Museum, Cluny Museum, the Arc de Triomphe, the *Paris Story* film, Carnavalet Museum, Promenade Plantée Park, Père Lachaise Cemetery, and Sacré-Cœur Church.

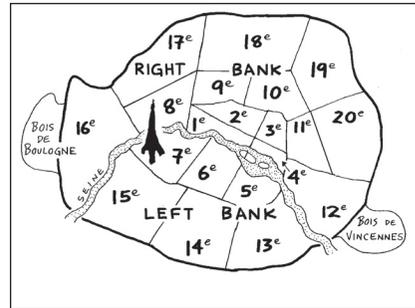
ORIENTATION

Paris (population of city center: 2,150,000) is split in half by the Seine River, divided into 20 *arrondissements* (proud and independent governmental jurisdictions), circled by a ring-road freeway (the *périphérique*), and speckled with Métro stations. You'll find Paris easier to navigate if you know which side of the river you're on, which *arrondissement* you're in, and which Métro stop you're closest to. If you're north of the river (the top half of any city map), you're on the Right Bank (Rive Droite). If you're south of it, you're on the Left Bank (Rive Gauche). The bull's-eye of your Paris map is Notre-Dame, which sits on an island in the middle of the Seine. Most of your sightseeing will take place within five blocks of the river.

Arrondissements are numbered, starting at the Louvre and moving in a clockwise spiral out to the ring road. The last two digits in a Parisian zip code are the *arrondissement* number. The abbreviation for the Métro stop is "Mo." In Parisian jargon, Napoleon's Tomb is on *la Rive Gauche* (the Left Bank) in the *7ème* (7th *arrondissement*), zip code 75007, Mo: Invalides.

Paris Métro stops are used as a standard aid in giving directions, even for those not using the Métro. As you're tracking down addresses,

Paris Arrondissements



these words and pronunciations will help: *Métro* (may-troh), *place* (plahs—square), *rue* (roo—road), *avenue* (ah-vuh-noo), *boulevard* (boo-luh-var), and *pont* (pohn—bridge).

Tourist Information

Paris TIs have long lines, offer little information, and charge for maps. This book, the *Pariscope* magazine (described below), and one of the freebie maps available at any hotel (or in the front of this book) are all you need. Paris' TIs share a single phone number: 08 92 68 30 00 (from the U.S., dial 011-33-8 92 68 30 00). For accessibility information, check out the “Tourisme & Handicap” section at www.parisinfo.com.

If you must visit a TI, there are several locations: **Grands Magasins** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; Mon–Sat 9:00–18:30, closed Sun, near Opéra Garnier at 11 rue Scribe, accessible entry by American Express office), **Pyramides** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, with an adapted desk to assist people who use wheelchairs; daily 9:00–19:00, at Pyramides Métro stop between the Louvre and Opéra), **Gare de Lyon** (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; Mon–Sat 8:00–18:00, closed Sun), **Montmartre** (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; daily 10:00–19:00, place du Tertre), and at the **Eiffel Tower** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; May–Sept daily 11:00–18:42, closed Oct–April). Both **airports** have handy information offices (called ADP; AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible, adapted toilet nearby) with long hours and short lines (see “Transportation Connections,” page *TK).

Pariscope: The weekly, €0.40 *Pariscope* magazine (or one of its clones, available at any newsstand) lists museum hours, art exhibits, concerts, festivals, plays, movies, and nightclubs. Smart tour guides and sightseers rely on this for the latest listings.

Other Publications: The American Church (see below) distributes a free, handy, and insightful monthly English-language newspaper called *Paris Voice*, which has useful reviews of concerts, plays, and current events (available at the American Church and about 200 locations throughout Paris, www.parisvoice.com). Also look for an advertisement paper called *France-U.S.A. Contacts*, with information on housing and employment for the community of 30,000 Americans living in Paris (free, pick it up at the American Church and elsewhere, www.fusac.fr). For a complete schedule of museum hours and English-language museum tours, get the free *Musées, Monuments Historiques, et Expositions* booklet from any museum.

Web Sites: Paris' TIs have an official Web site (www.parisinfo.com) offering practical information on hotels, special events, museums,

Daily Reminder

Monday: These sights are closed today—Orsay, Archaeological Crypt, Rodin, Carnavalet, Victor Hugo's House, and Versailles; the Louvre and Eiffel Tower are more crowded because of this. Napoleon's Tomb is closed the first Monday of each month (except July–Sept). Some small stores don't open until 14:00. Street markets, such as rue Cler and rue Mouffetard, are dead today. Some banks are closed. It's discount night at most cinemas.

Tuesday: Many museums are closed today, including the Louvre, Picasso, Cluny, Maritime, Pompidou, and Grand Palais. The Eiffel Tower, Orsay, and Versailles are particularly busy today.

Wednesday: All sights are open (Louvre until 21:45). The weekly *Pariscope* magazine comes out today. Most schools are closed, so many kids' sights are busy. Some cinemas offer discounts.

Thursday: All sights are open. The Orsay is open until 21:45. Department stores are open late.

Friday: All sights are open (Louvre until 21:45). Afternoon trains and roads leaving Paris are crowded; TGV train reservation fees are higher.

Saturday: All sights are open except the Jewish Art and History Museum. The fountains run at Versailles (July–Sept); otherwise, avoid weekend crowds at area châteaux and Impressionist sights. Department stores are jammed. The Jewish Quarter is quiet.

Sunday: Some museums are free the first Sunday of the month—and therefore more crowded (e.g., Louvre, Orsay, Rodin, Pompidou, Cluny, and Picasso). Several museums offer reduced prices every Sunday (Orsay, Cluny, and Rodin—other than first Sun of the month, when they're free). Napoleon's Tomb is open until 19:00 in summer. Versailles is more crowded than usual today, but the garden's fountains are running (early April–early Oct). Most of Paris' stores are closed on Sunday, but shoppers will find relief in the Marais neighborhood's lively Jewish Quarter and in Bercy Village, where many stores are open. Look for organ concerts at St. Sulpice and possibly other churches. The American Church often hosts a free evening concert at 17:00 or 18:00 (Sept–May only, but not every week). Many recommended restaurants in the rue Cler neighborhood are closed for dinner.

If You Need Medical Help

First, contact your hotelier, who is accustomed to dealing with emergencies.

Emergency rooms (called *Urgence*) are located in many Paris hospitals. To call an ambulance or paramedic (SAMU) anywhere in France, dial 15. To summon an ambulance in Paris, call 01 45 67 50 50. To reach the police, dial 17.

For the American Hospital, call 01 46 41 25 25 (63 boulevard Victor-Hugo, 92202 Neuilly, Mo: Porte Maillot, then bus #82). For SOS doctors, who charge affordable rates and will even come to your hotel, dial 01 47 07 77 77 or 01 48 28 40 04. Other useful numbers include the American Hospital Hotline (tel. 01 47 47 70 15), the English-language SOS Help crisis line (daily 15:00–23:00, tel. 01 47 23 80 80), and the emergency dental assistance hotline (tel. 01 43 37 51 00). You'll find listings for additional English-speaking doctors and dentists at www.paris-anglo.com (click on "Directory"). And for organizations offering counseling, check out www.pariswoman.com/paris/support_groups/counseling_health.htm.

A handy English-speaking pharmacy, Pharmacie les Champs, is open 24/7 (tel. 01 45 62 02 41, 84 avenue des Champs-Élysées, Mo: George V). The British and American Pharmacy is at 1 rue Auber (Mon–Fri 8:30–20:30, Sat 10:00–20:00, closed Sun, tel. 01 42 65 88 29).

children's activities, fashion, nightlife, and more. Two other Web sites that are entertaining and at times useful are www.bonjourparis.com (which claims to offer a virtual trip to Paris—featuring interactive French lessons, tips on wine and food, and news on the latest Parisian trends) and the similar www.paris-anglo.com (with informative stories on visiting Paris, plus a directory of over 2,500 English-speaking businesses).

American Church and Franco-American Center: This interdenominational church—in the rue Cler neighborhood, facing the river between the Eiffel Tower and Orsay Museum—is a nerve center for the American émigré community. The worship service at 11:00 on Sunday, the coffee hour after church, and the free Sunday concerts (generally Sept–May at 17:00 or 18:00—but not every week) are a great way to make some friends and get a taste of émigré life in Paris (Level 4—Not Accessible, fifteen 6" steps to enter; reception open Mon–Sat 9:30–13:00 & 14:00–22:30, Sun 9:00–14:00 & 15:00–19:00, 65 quai d'Orsay, Mo: Invalides, tel. 01 40 62 05 00, www.acparis.org). It's also a good place to pick up copies of *Paris Voice* and *France-U.S.A. Contacts* (described above).

Arrival in Paris

By Train: Paris has six train stations, all connected by taxi (the most accessible option if you can fold your wheelchair and place it in the trunk), bus (new ones are accessible), and Métro (dangerously poor access). All stations have ATMs, banks or change offices, information desks, telephones, cafés, newsstands, and clever pickpockets; most stations also have lockers (*consigne automatique*). For details about each station, see “Transportation Connections” on page *TK.

By Plane: For detailed information on getting from Paris’ airports to downtown Paris (and vice versa), see “Transportation Connections” on page *TK.

Helpful Hints

Heightened Security (*Plan Vigipirate*): You may notice an abundance of police at monuments, on streets, and on the Métro, as well as security cameras everywhere. You’ll go through quick and reassuring airport-like security checks at many major attractions. This is all part of Paris’ anti-terror plan. The police are helpful, the security lines move quickly, and there are fewer pickpocket problems than usual on the Métro.

Theft Alert: Although the greater police presence has scared off some pickpockets, these troublesome thieves still thrive—particularly on Métro and RER lines that serve high-profile tourist sights. Wear a money belt, put your wallet in your front pocket, loop your day bag over your shoulders, and keep a tight grip on your purse or shopping bag. Muggings are rare, but do occur. If you’re out late, avoid the dark riverfront embankments and any place where the lighting is dim and pedestrian activity is minimal.

Street Safety: Parisian drivers are notorious for ignoring pedestrians. Look both ways (many streets are one-way) and be careful of seemingly quiet bus/taxi lanes. Don’t assume you have the right of way, even in a crosswalk. When crossing a street, keep your pace constant and don’t stop suddenly. By law, drivers must miss pedestrians by one meter—a little more than three feet (1.5 meters in the countryside). Drivers carefully calculate your speed and won’t hit you, provided you don’t alter your route or pace.

Watch out for a lesser hazard: *merde*. Parisian dogs decorate the city’s sidewalks with 16 tons of droppings per day. People get injured by slipping in it.

Paris Museum Pass: This worthwhile pass, covering most sights in Paris, is available at major Métro stations, TIs, and museums. For

detailed information, see page *TK.

Museum Strategy: When possible, visit key museums first thing (when your energy is best) and save other activities for the afternoon. Remember, most museums require you to check daypacks and coats, and important museums have metal detectors that will slow your entry. The Louvre, Orsay, and Pompidou are open on selected nights (see “Paris at a Glance,” page *TK), making for peaceful visits with fewer crowds.

Public WCs: Carry small change for pay toilets, or enter any sidewalk café like you own the place and find the toilet in the back. Restaurants with accessible toilets are noted under “Eating,” page *TK; you may want to seek out American chain restaurants, like McDonald’s—more likely than the small, traditional places to have accessible toilets. The restrooms in museums are free and the best you’ll find. Modern, sanitary, street-booth toilets provide both relief and a memory (coins required, don’t leave small children inside unattended). Keep toilet paper or tissues with you, as some toilets are poorly supplied.

Bookstores: There are many English-language bookstores in Paris where you can pick up guidebooks (at nearly double their American prices). Most carry this book. My favorite is the friendly **Red Wheelbarrow Bookstore** (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) in the Marais neighborhood, run by charming Penelope and Abigail, who will come out to assist you if you need help with entry (daily 10:00–19:00, 22 rue St. Paul, Mo: St. Paul, tel. 01 42 77 42 17). Others include **Shakespeare and Company** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; some used travel books, daily 12:00–24:00, 37 rue de la Bûcherie, across the river from Notre-Dame, Mo: St. Michel, tel. 01 43 26 96 50), **W.H. Smith** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, no accessible toilet or elevator; Mon–Sat 10:00–19:00, closed Sun, 248 rue de Rivoli, Mo: Concorde, tel. 01 44 77 88 99), **Brentanos** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, no accessible toilet or elevator; Mon–Sat 10:00–19:00, closed Sun, 37 avenue de l’Opéra, Mo: Opéra, tel. 01 42 61 52 50), and **Village Voice** (AE+A, AI, 3" entry step; near St. Sulpice Church at 6 rue Princesse, tel. 01 46 33 36 47).

Parking: Most of the time, drivers must pay to park curbside (buy parking card at tobacco shops), but not at night (19:00–9:00), all day Sunday, or anytime in August when most Parisians are on vacation. There are parking garages under Ecole Militaire, St. Sulpice Church, Les Invalides, the Bastille, and the Panthéon for about €20–25 per

day (it's cheaper the longer you stay). Some hotels offer parking for less—ask.

Tobacco Stands (*Tabacs*): These little kiosks—usually just a counter inside a café—sell public transit tickets, cards for parking meters, postage stamps...and, oh yeah, cigarettes. To find one anywhere in Paris, just look for a *Tabac* sign and the red, cylinder-shaped symbol above some (but not all) cafés.

Getting Around Paris

Finding accessible transportation around Paris can be frustrating. Depending on your degree of personal mobility, your basic choices are Métro (in-city subway, generally not accessible), RER (suburban rail, tied into the Métro system, some stations with decent access), public bus (several accessible lines), and taxi (best access). For wheelchair users, taxis are the best option; if you prefer public transit, opt for the buses and skip the Métro. To save money on a trip to Versailles, it's worth considering the RER, though again, a taxi is easier.

By Taxi

Parisian taxis are reasonable, especially for couples and families. The meters are tamper-proof. Fares and supplements (described in English on the back windows) are straightforward. There's a €5.20 minimum. A 10-minute ride (e.g., Bastille to Eiffel Tower) costs about €10 (versus €1.07 to get anywhere in town using a *carnet* ticket on the Métro or bus).

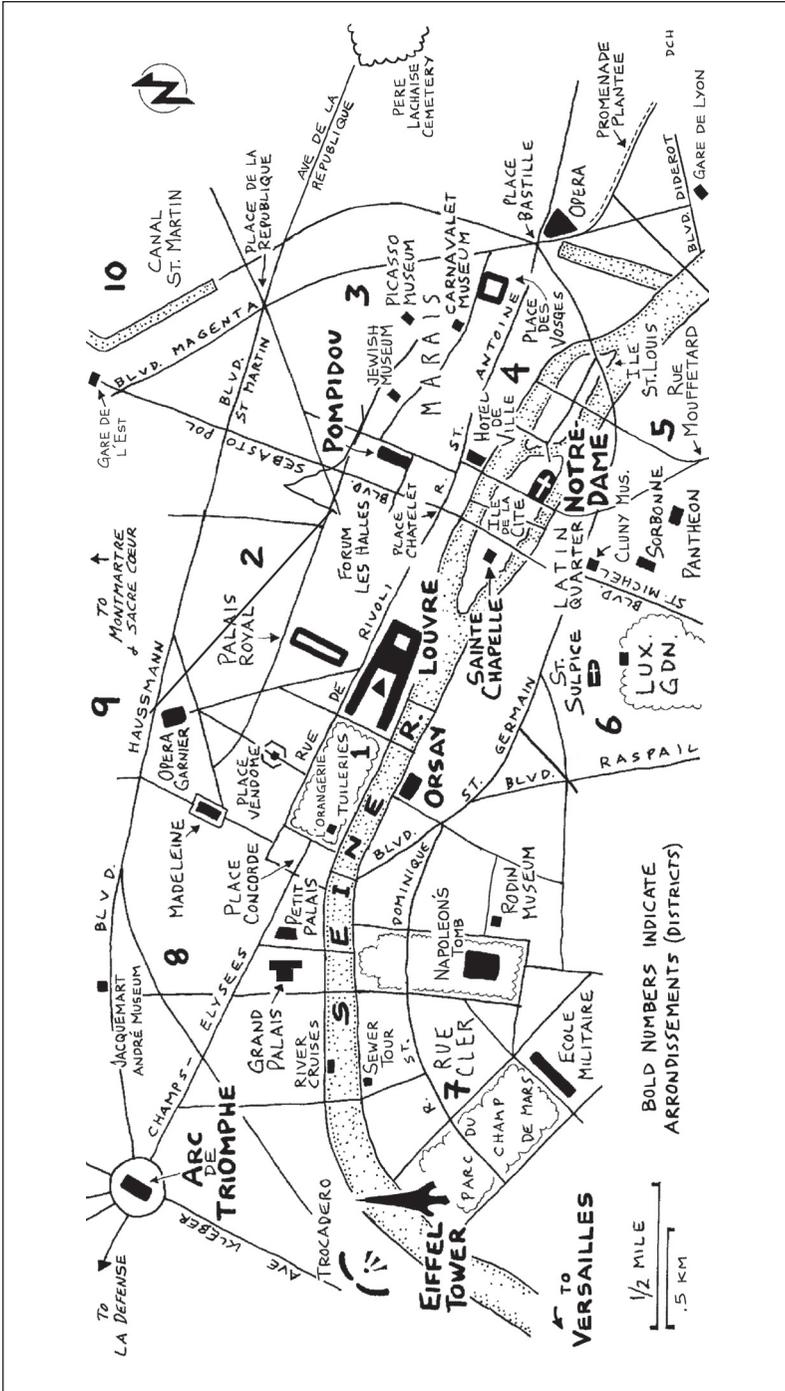
Higher rates are charged at night (19:00–7:00), all day Sunday, and to either airport. There's a €1 charge for each piece of baggage and for train station pickups. To tip, round up to the next euro (minimum €0.50).

You can try waving down a taxi, but it's often easier to ask for the nearest taxi stand ("*Où est une station de taxi?*"; oo ay oon stah-see-ohn duh taxi). Taxi stands are indicated by a circled "T" on good city maps, and on many maps in this book. A taxi can fit three people comfortably, and cabbies are legally required to take up to four for a small extra fee (though some might resist). Groups of up to five can use a *grand taxi*, which must be booked in advance—ask your hotel to call. If a taxi is summoned by phone, the meter starts as soon as the call is received, adding €3–6 to the bill.

Taxis are tough to find when it's raining and on Friday and Saturday nights, especially after the Métro closes (around 24:30). If you need to catch a train or flight early in the morning, book a taxi the day before.

Access: Ranges from Level 2—Moderately Accessible to Level

Paris



1—Fully Accessible. For wheelchair users, taxis (**AE+A**) and minibuses (**AE+A**) are the way to go. Some minibuses (**AE**) even have ramps (*le gambade*)—call ahead to request one (tel. 06 07 49 58 92 or tel. 06 07 22 41 61 to get an accessible taxi or minivan on demand; figure €40-55 for a trip across central Paris). Most drivers are happy to assist persons using wheelchairs. Once you're in the taxi, the driver will fold up your wheelchair and place it in the trunk.

By City Bus

Paris' excellent bus system is worth figuring out. Remember, even though buses use the same tickets as the Métro and RER, you can't use a single ticket to transfer between the systems—or even to transfer from one bus to another. One ticket buys you a bus ride anywhere in central Paris—but if you leave the city center (shown as zone 1 on the diagram on board the bus) or transfer to another bus, you must validate a second ticket.

Buses don't seem as romantic as the famous Métro and are subject to traffic jams, but savvy travelers know that buses can have you swinging through the city like Tarzan in an urban jungle. They also offer superior accessibility to the Métro. Anywhere you are, you can generally see a bus stop, each one complete with all the information you need: a fine city bus map, route maps showing exactly where each bus that uses this stop goes, a frequency chart and schedule, a *plan du quartier* map of the immediate neighborhood, and a *soirées* map explaining night service, if available. While the Métro shuts down about 24:30, some buses continue running much later.

After entering the bus, punch your ticket in the machine behind the driver, or pay the higher cash fare. When you reach your destination, push the red button to signal you want a stop. Even if you're not certain you've figured out the system, do some joyriding (outside of rush hour: Mon–Fri 8:00–9:30 & 17:30–19:30). Handy bus-system maps (*plan des autobus*) are available in any Métro station (and in the €7 *Paris Pratique* map book sold at newsstands). Major stops are displayed on the side of each bus.

Access: All newer buses are wheelchair-accessible (**AE, AI**, Level 1—Fully Accessible, with low floors and hydraulic ramp, identified by the standard wheelchair symbol). The following bus lines are fully accessible: #20 (which runs in the Marais neighborhood), scenic #24, #26, #27, #30, #31, #38, #39, #43, #53, #60, #62, #63, #80, #81, #88, #91, #92, #94, #95, and #96. You can find specific details on each of these bus routes at <http://infomobi.com/page4.php>. Older buses (**AE+A**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) have one 8" step to negotiate and an entry

Public Transit Tickets

The Métro, RER, and buses all work on the same tickets (note that you can transfer between the Métro and RER on a single ticket, but combining a Métro or RER trip with a bus ride takes two tickets). You can buy tickets and passes at a *tabac* (tobacco stand—described above) and at most Métro stations. While the majority of Métro stations have staffed ticket windows, smaller stations might discontinue this service as the Métro system converts to automated machines. A **single ticket** costs €1.40. To save 30 percent, buy a **carnet** (kar-nay) of 10 tickets for €10.70 (that's €1.07 per ticket—€0.33 cheaper than single tickets). It's less expensive for kids (ages 4–10 pay €5.35 for a *carnet*).

If you're staying in Paris for even just a few days, consider the **Carte Orange** (kart oh-RAHNZH), which pays for itself in 15 rides. For about €16, you get free run of the bus and Métro system for one week, starting Monday and ending Sunday. Ask for the Carte Orange *hebdomadaire* (ehb-doh-mah-dair) and supply a passport-size photo. Larger Métro stations have photo booths. The month-long version costs about €51—request a Carte Orange *mensuelle* (mahn-soo-ehl, good from the first day of the month to the last, also requires photo). These passes cover only central Paris. You can pay more for passes covering regional destinations (such as Versailles), but for most visitors, this is a bad value (instead, buy individual tickets for longer-distance destinations). Despite what some Métro agents say, Carte Orange passes are definitely not limited to residents; if you're refused, simply go to another station or a *tabac* to buy your pass.

The overpriced **Paris Visite** passes were designed for tourists and offer minor reductions at minor sights (1 day-€9, 2 days-€14, 3 days-€19, 5 days-€28), but you'll get a better value with a cheaper *carnet* of 10 tickets or a Carte Orange.

pole between the doors, making it a narrow opening. Some wheelchair users are able to board these buses with assistance.

By Métro

In Paris, you're never more than a quarter mile from a Métro station. Europe's best subway allows you to hop from sight to sight quickly and cheaply (runs daily 5:30–24:30). Learn to use it. Begin by studying the color Métro map at the beginning of this book.

Access: Level 3—Minimally Accessible. Slow walkers will find the

Métro challenging, but doable. For wheelchair users, the Métro is packed with barriers and very difficult to use, even with the help of a companion. Even though some of the newer trains are designed for accessible boarding, you'll have to negotiate lots of stairs and escalators (often broken)—usually without elevators—at most stations. As an alternative, wheelchair users who can make transfers and climb a few steps could find the RER useful for some trips (see “By RER,” below).

Pickpockets: Thieves dig the Métro. Be on guard. For example, if your pocket is picked as you pass through a turnstile, you end up stuck on the wrong side (after the turnstile bar has closed behind you) while the thief gets away. Keep back from Métro doors to avoid being a target for a theft-and-run just before the doors close. Any jostling or commotion—especially when boarding or leaving trains—is likely the sign of a thief or a team of thieves in action. Make any fare inspector show proof of identity (ask locals for help if you're not certain). Never show anyone your wallet.

How the Métro Works: Remember, the Métro does work for slow walkers, but not for wheelchair users. To get to your destination, determine the closest “Mo” stop and which line or lines will get you there. The lines have numbers, but they're best known by their end-of-the-line stops. (For example, the La Défense/Château de Vincennes line, also known as line 1, runs between La Défense in the west and Vincennes in the east.) Once in the Métro station, you'll see blue-and-white signs directing you to the train going in your direction (e.g., “*direction: La Défense*”). Insert your ticket in the automatic turnstile, pass through, reclaim your ticket, and keep it until you exit the system. Fare inspectors regularly check for cheaters and accept absolutely no excuses.

Transfers are free and can be made wherever lines cross. When you transfer, look for the orange *correspondance* (connections) signs when you exit your first train, then follow the proper direction sign.

Even though the Métro whisks you quickly from one point to

another, be prepared to walk significant distances within stations to reach your platform (most noticeable when you transfer). Escalators are common, but they're often out of order. To limit excessive walking, avoid transferring at these sprawling stations: Montparnasse-Bienvenue, Châtelet-Les Halles, Charles de Gaulle-Etoile, Gare du Nord, and Bastille.



Before taking the *sortie* (exit) to leave the Métro, check the helpful *plan du quartier* (map of the neighborhood) to get your bearings, locate your destination, and decide which *sortie* you want. At stops with several *sorties*, you can save lots of time and effort by choosing the best exit.

After you exit the system, toss or tear your used ticket so you don't confuse it with your unused ticket—they look virtually identical.

By RER

The RER (Réseau Express Régionale; air-ay-air) is the suburban arm of the Métro, serving destinations farther out of the center (such as Versailles, Disneyland Paris, and the airports). It also offers the disabled traveler more accessible stations than the Métro.

Access: The RER is cost-effective, but using it costs a lot of time and energy. The RER ranges from Level 3—Minimally Accessible to Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Only rarely will you find a completely flat, barrier-free surface throughout the duration of an RER trip (for example, 2" lips or steps are common). The RER is not ideal for wheelchair users as a primary means of getting around Paris, but it can work on certain journeys if you want to ride public transportation. Most stations on lines A and B are generally wheelchair-accessible, as is the trip on line C to Versailles. Even though the RER is designed to reach into the suburbs, it does make several stops in the city center—so you can use it (selectively) in town.

Using the RER: RER routes are indicated by thick lines on your subway map and identified by the letters A, B, C, and so on. Some suburban routes are operated by France's railroad (SNCF) and are called **Transilien**; they function the same way and use the same tickets as the RER. On Transilien trains (but not RER trains), railpasses are accepted; show your pass at a ticket window to get a free ticket to get through the turnstiles.

Within the city center, the RER works like the Métro, but can be speedier (if it serves your destination directly) because it makes fewer stops. Métro tickets are good on the RER when traveling in the city center. (You can transfer between the Métro and RER systems with the same ticket.) But to travel outside the city (to Versailles or the airport, for example), you'll need to buy a separate, more expensive ticket at the station window before boarding. Unlike in the Métro, you need to insert your ticket in a turnstile to exit the RER lines. Also unlike the Métro, not every train stops at every station along the way; check the sign over the platform to see if your destination is listed as a stop ("*toutes les gares*" means it makes all stops along the way), or confirm with a local before you board.

TOURS

Bus Tours

Non-Stop Bus Tours—Paris Vision (AE+A, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, must be able to step up into the bus) offers bus tours of Paris, day and night (advertised in hotel lobbies). I'd take a Paris Vision tour only at night (see "Nightlife," page *TK); during the day, the hop-on, hop-off bus tours (listed immediately below) and the Batobus (see below)—which both provide transportation between sights, as well as commentary—are a better value.

Hop-on, Hop-off Bus Tours—Double-decker buses connect Paris' main sights while providing running commentary, allowing you to get on and off along the way. You get a disposable set of earplugs (dial English and listen to the narration). You can get off at any stop, tour a sight, then catch a later bus. These are ideal in good weather, if you can climb up to the top deck. There are two nearly equal companies: L'Open Tours and Les Cars Rouges; pick up their brochures showing routes and stops from any TI or on their buses. You can start either tour at just about any of the major sights, such as the Eiffel Tower (both companies stop on avenue Joseph Bouvard).

L'Open Tours (AE+A, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) uses bright yellow buses and provides more extensive coverage (and slightly better commentary) on four different routes, rolling by most of the important sights in Paris. You'll have to ascend three steps to get on the bus (attendants will assist and wheelchair must fold to go under bus). These people welcome travelers who have disabilities, and will do their best to find a way to get you onto the bus. Their Paris Grand Tour (the green route) offers the best introduction. The same ticket gets you on any of their routes within the validity period. Buy your tickets from the driver (1 day-€25, 2 days-€28, kids 4-11 pay €12 for 1 or 2 days, allow 2 hours per tour). Two or three buses depart hourly from about 10:00 to 18:00; expect to wait 10-20 minutes at each stop (stops can be tricky to find—look for yellow signs; tel. 01 42 66 56 56, www.paris-opentour.com).

Les Cars Rouges' (AE+A, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) bright red buses are slightly more accessible. You'll have to make it up one step into the bus (wide entry). Attendants can help lift the wheelchair onto the bus, but then you'll transfer to a seat and the driver will place your folded wheelchair under the bus. This is cheaper than L'Open, but they offer only one route and just nine stops (2 days: adult-€23, kids 4-12-€12, tel. 01 53 95 39 53, www.carsrouges.com).

The Paris Museum Pass

In Paris, there are two classes of sightseers—those with a Paris Museum Pass, and those who wait in line. Serious sightseers save time and money by getting this pass.

For slow walkers unable to stand for long periods of time, the biggest advantage of the Museum Pass is avoiding lines. If you use a wheelchair, the reasons to buy a Museum Pass are less convincing: wheelchair users—even without the pass—are often allowed to enter museums free and can sometimes (but not always) bypass the line.

Most of the sights listed in this chapter are covered by the pass (see list below). Notable exceptions are: the Eiffel Tower, Montparnasse Tower, Opéra Garnier, Notre-Dame treasury, Jacquemart-André Museum, Jewish Art and History Museum, Grand Palais, La Grande Arche de La Défense, *Paris Story* film, Museum of Erotic Art, and the ladies of Pigalle.

The pass pays for itself with three or four admissions and gets you into most sights with no lining up to buy tickets (2 consecutive days-€30, 4 consecutive days-€45, 6 consecutive days-€60, no youth or senior discount). It's sold at museums, main Métro stations (including Ecole Militaire and Bastille), and TIs (even at airports). Try to avoid buying the pass at a major museum (such as the Louvre), where supply can be spotty and lines long.

The pass isn't activated until the first time you use it (you write the starting date on the pass). Think and read ahead to make the most of your pass. You could spend a day or two at the beginning or end of your Paris visit seeing free sights (e.g., Carnavalet and Victor Hugo's House) and sights that don't accept the pass (e.g., Eiffel Tower). Validate your pass only when you're ready to tackle the covered sights on consecutive days. The free directory that comes with your pass lists the current hours of sights, phone numbers, and the price kids pay.

The pass isn't worth buying for children and teens, as most museums are free for those under 18 (teenagers may need to show proof of age). Of the museums that charge for children, some allow kids in free if their parent has a Museum Pass, while others charge admission, depending on age (the cutoff age varies from 5 to 18). If a sight is free for kids, they can skip the line with their passholder parents.

Included sights you're likely to visit (and admission prices without the pass): Louvre (€8.50), Orsay Museum (€7.50), Sainte-Chapelle

(€7), Arc de Triomphe (€8), Napoleon's Tomb/Army Museums (€7), Conciergerie (€7), Cluny Museum (€5.50), Pompidou Center (€7), Notre-Dame tower (€7), Paris Archaeological Crypt (€3.50), Picasso Museum (€5.50), Rodin Museum (€5), L'Orangerie Museum (when it reopens, about €7), Maritime Museum (€9). Outside Paris, the pass covers the Palace of Versailles (€7.50, plus its Trianon châteaux-€5), Château of Fontainebleau (€5.50), and Château of Chantilly (€8).

Tally up what you want to see—and remember, an advantage of the pass is that you skip to the front of most lines, which can save hours of waiting, especially in summer. Note that at a few sights (including the Louvre, Sainte-Chapelle, and Notre-Dame's tower), everyone has to move through the slow-moving baggage-check lines for security.

To use your pass at sights, boldly go to the front of the ticket line, hold up your pass, and ask the ticket-taker: "*Entrez, pass?*" (ahn-tray pahs). You'll either be allowed to enter at that point, or you'll be directed to a special entrance. For major sights, such as the Louvre, Orsay, and Versailles, we've identified passholder entrances on the maps in this book.

With the pass, you'll pop freely into sights that you're passing by (even for a few minutes) that otherwise might not be worth the expense (e.g., the Conciergerie or Archaeological Crypt).

Museum Tips: The Louvre and many other museums are closed on Tuesday. The Orsay, Rodin, Carnavalet, Archaeological Crypt, Petit Palais, Victor Hugo's House, and Versailles are closed Monday. Some museums offer reduced prices on Sunday. Most sights stop admitting people 30–60 minutes before closing time, and many begin shutting down rooms 45 minutes before.

For the fewest crowds, visit very early, at lunch, or very late. Most museums have slightly shorter hours October through March. French holidays (on Jan 1, May 1, July 14, Nov 1, Nov 11, and Dec 25) can really mess up your sightseeing plans.

The best Impressionist art museums are the Orsay (see page *TK) and L'Orangerie (slated to reopen in spring 2006).

Many museums also host optional temporary exhibitions that are not covered by the Paris Museum Pass (generally €3–5 extra). You can find good information on many of Paris' sights on the French TI's official Web site: www.v1.paris.fr/EN/Visiting.

Boat Tours

Several companies offer one-hour boat cruises on the Seine (by far best at night).

Two companies are convenient to the rue Cler hotels: **Bateaux Parisiens** (AE, AI, ♥, Level 1—Fully Accessible) has smaller, covered boats with handheld audioguides and only one deck. The staff is very friendly to people with limited mobility (€9.50, kids age 4–11 pay €4.50, discounted half-price if you show a valid France or France-Switzerland railpass—does not use up a day of a flexipass, leaves from right in front of the Eiffel Tower, tel. 08 25 01 01 01). **Bateaux-Mouches** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) has the biggest open-top, double-decker boats and tour groups by the dozens (departs from pont de l'Alma's right bank, €7, kids 4–12 pay €4, daily 10:00–22:30, tel. 01 40 76 99 99). Both companies depart every 20–30 minutes (April–Oct daily 10:00–22:30; Nov–March there are fewer boats, and they stop running earlier).

The smaller, more intimate **Vedettes du Pont Neuf** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) are closer to the Marais area hotels. They depart only once an hour from the center of pont Neuf (2/hr after dark), but they come with a live guide giving explanations in French and English (€10, tip requested, kids 4–12 pay €5, tel. 01 46 33 98 38). To get to the river level, the wheelchair user goes one block upriver on the south side of the island to the ramp. This area has large, rough cobblestones to negotiate.

Walking/Wheeling Tours

Paris Walks—This company offers a variety of excellent two-hour tours, led by British or American guides. Their tours are thoughtfully prepared, relaxing, and humorous. Don't hesitate to get close to the guide to hear (range from Level 4—Not Accessible to Level 1—Fully Accessible; generally 2 tours per day, €10 each, private tours available, tel. 01 48 09 21 40 for recorded schedule in English, also posted at www.paris-walks.com, paris@paris-walks.com, run by Peter and Oriol Cane). Tours focus on the Marais (4/week), Montmartre (3/week), medieval Latin Quarter (Mon), Ile de la Cité/Notre-Dame (Mon), the “Two Islands” (Ile de la Cité and Ile St. Louis, Wed), *Da Vinci Code* tour (Wed), and Hemingway's Paris (Fri). Ask about their family-friendly tours. Call a day or two ahead to learn their schedule and starting point, and to find out which tour best fits your mobility level. These receptive, warm folks have welcomed wheelchair users on their tours in the past. Most tours don't require reservations, but specialty tours (such as the *Da Vinci Code* tour) require advance reservations and prepayment with a credit card (not refundable,

even if you cancel months in advance).

Context Paris—This organization, already well-established in Rome, has recently expanded to the City of Light. Their “intellectual by design” walking tours are led by docents (historians, architects, and academics) and cover both museums and neighborhoods, often with a fascinating theme (explained on their Web site). They welcome travelers with limited mobility on their tours. (If there’s an inaccessible stop on the tour, they’ll compensate you with another, more accessible option.) Still, it’s wise to call in advance and let them know your accessibility needs. Groups are small and can fill up (limited to 6 participants, generally 3 hours long and €50 per person plus admissions, tel. 06 13 09 67 11, www.contextparis.com, info@contextparis.com). While you’re welcome on their group tours, they will happily design a private tour (for more money) tailored to your interests and level of personal mobility.

Private Guides—For many, Paris merits hiring a Parisian as a personal guide. **Arnaud Servignat** is an excellent licensed local guide (€150/half day, €250/full day, also does car tours of the countryside around Paris for a little more, tel. 06 68 80 29 05, www.arnaud-servignat.com, arnaud.servignat@noos.fr). **Elizabeth Van Hest** is another highly likeable and capable guide (€170 maximum/half-day, €260/day, tel. 01 43 41 47 31, e.van.hest@noos.fr). These guides will take wheelchair users as long as they can transfer into a car or van. **Paris Walks** or **Context Paris** can also set you up with one of their guides; some Paris Walks guides are trained to work with families (both companies described above).

SIGHTS

Near the Tuileries Garden

Paris’ grandest park, the Tuileries Garden, was once the private property of kings and queens. Today, it links the museums of the Louvre, L’Orangerie, and the Orsay. And across from the Louvre are the tranquil, historic courtyards of the Palais Royal.

▲▲▲**Louvre**—This is Europe’s oldest, biggest, greatest, and second-most-crowded museum (after the Vatican). Housed in a U-shaped, 16th-century palace (accentuated by a 20th-century glass pyramid), the Louvre is Paris’ top museum and one of its key landmarks. It’s home to *Mona Lisa*, *Venus de Milo*, and hall after hall of Greek and Roman masterpieces, medieval



Paris at a Glance

▲▲▲**Louvre** Europe's oldest and greatest museum, starring *Mona Lisa* and *Venus de Milo*. **Hours:** Wed–Mon 9:00–18:00, closed Tue. Most wings open Wed and Fri until 21:45. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲▲**Orsay Museum** Nineteenth-century art, including Europe's greatest Impressionist collection. **Hours:** June 20–Sept 20 Tue–Sun 9:00–18:00; Sept 21–June 19 Tue–Sat 10:00–18:00, Sun 9:00–18:00; Thu until 21:45 year-round, always closed Mon. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲▲**Sainte-Chapelle** Gothic cathedral with peerless stained glass. **Hours:** March–Oct daily 9:30–18:00, Nov–Feb daily 9:00–17:00. **Access:** Ground floor is Level 2—Moderately Accessible; upper chapel is Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲▲**Eiffel Tower** Paris' soaring exclamation point. **Hours:** Daily March–Sept 9:00–24:00, Oct–Feb 9:30–23:00. **Access:** Lower and middle floors are Level 1—Fully Accessible; top floor is Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲▲**Arc de Triomphe** Triumphant arch with viewpoint, marking start of Champs-Élysées. **Hours:** Outside always open; inside open April–Sept daily 10:00–23:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–22:00. **Access:** Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲▲**Versailles** The ultimate royal palace, with the Hall of Mirrors, vast gardens, a grand canal, and smaller palaces. **Hours:** April–Oct Tue–Sun 9:00–18:30, Nov–March Tue–Sun 9:00–17:30, closed Mon. Gardens open early (7:00, 8:00 in winter) and smaller palaces open late (12:00). **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲**Notre-Dame Cathedral** Paris' most beloved church, with towers and gargoyles. **Hours:** Church open daily 7:45–19:00; tower open July–Aug Mon–Fri 9:00–19:30, Sat–Sun 9:00–23:00, April–June and Sept daily 9:30–19:30, Oct–March daily 10:00–17:30; treasury open daily 9:30–17:30. **Access:** Level 2—Moderately Accessible.

▲▲**Deportation Memorial** Monument to Holocaust victims, near Notre-Dame. **Hours:** April–Sept daily 10:00–12:00 & 14:00–19:00, Oct–March 10:00–12:00 & 14:00–17:00. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲Napoleon's Tomb The emperor's imposing tomb, flanked by army museums. **Hours:** April–Sept daily 10:00–18:00, summer Sun until 19:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–17:00, closed first Mon of month except July–Sept. **Access:** The attached museum is Level 1—Fully Accessible, but the tomb itself is Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲Rodin Museum Works by the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo. **Hours:** April–Sept Tue–Sun 9:30–17:45; Oct–March Tue–Sun 9:30–16:45, closed Mon. **Access:** Main floor is Level 1—Fully Accessible, but upper floor is Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲Cluny Museum Medieval art with unicorn tapestries. **Hours:** Wed–Mon 9:15–17:45, closed Tue. **Access:** Level 3—Minimally Accessible.

▲▲Champs-Élysées Paris' grand boulevard. **Hours:** Always open. **Access:** Level 2—Moderately Accessible.

▲▲Jacquemart-André Museum Art-strewn mansion. **Hours:** Daily 10:00–18:00. **Access:** Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Only the ground floor is accessible.

▲▲Pompidou Center Modern art in colorful building with city views. **Hours:** Wed–Mon 11:00–21:00, closed Tue. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲Jewish Art and History Museum Displays history of Judaism in Europe. **Hours:** Mon–Fri 11:00–18:00, Sun 10:00–18:00, closed Sat. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲Picasso Museum World's largest collection of Picasso's works. **Hours:** April–Sept Wed–Mon 9:30–18:00; Oct–March Wed–Mon 9:30–17:30, closed Tue. **Access:** Level 1—Fully Accessible.

▲▲Carnavalet Museum Paris' history wrapped up in a 16th-century mansion. **Hours:** Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00, closed Mon. **Access:** Level 4—Not Accessible.

▲▲Sacré-Cœur White basilica atop Montmartre, with spectacular views. **Hours:** Daily 7:00–23:00. **Access:** Level 4—Not Accessible.

jewels, Michelangelo statues, and paintings by the greatest artists from the Renaissance to the Romantics (mid-1800s).

Touring the Louvre can be overwhelming, so be selective. Consider taking a tour (see “Tours,” below), or follow my self-guided tour at the end of this listing. Focus on the **Denon Wing** (south, along the river): Greek sculptures, Italian paintings (by the likes of Raphael and da Vinci), and—of course—French paintings (neoclassical and Romantic). For extra credit, tackle the **Richelieu Wing** (north, away from the river), with works from ancient Mesopotamia (today’s Iraq), as well as French, Dutch, and Northern art; or the **Sully Wing** (connecting the other 2 wings), with Egyptian artifacts and more French paintings.

Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. Loaner wheelchairs are available. The museum is fully accessible by elevator, including stores and restaurants on the lower level—though there are few elevators, and readers report that they are sometimes out of order. There are accessible toilets throughout the building. Like most of Europe’s great museums, the Louvre is a modernized facility designed with the wheelchair user in mind. Still, the museum can be quite crowded, and there are sporadic obstacles that can make it difficult to maneuver a wheelchair.

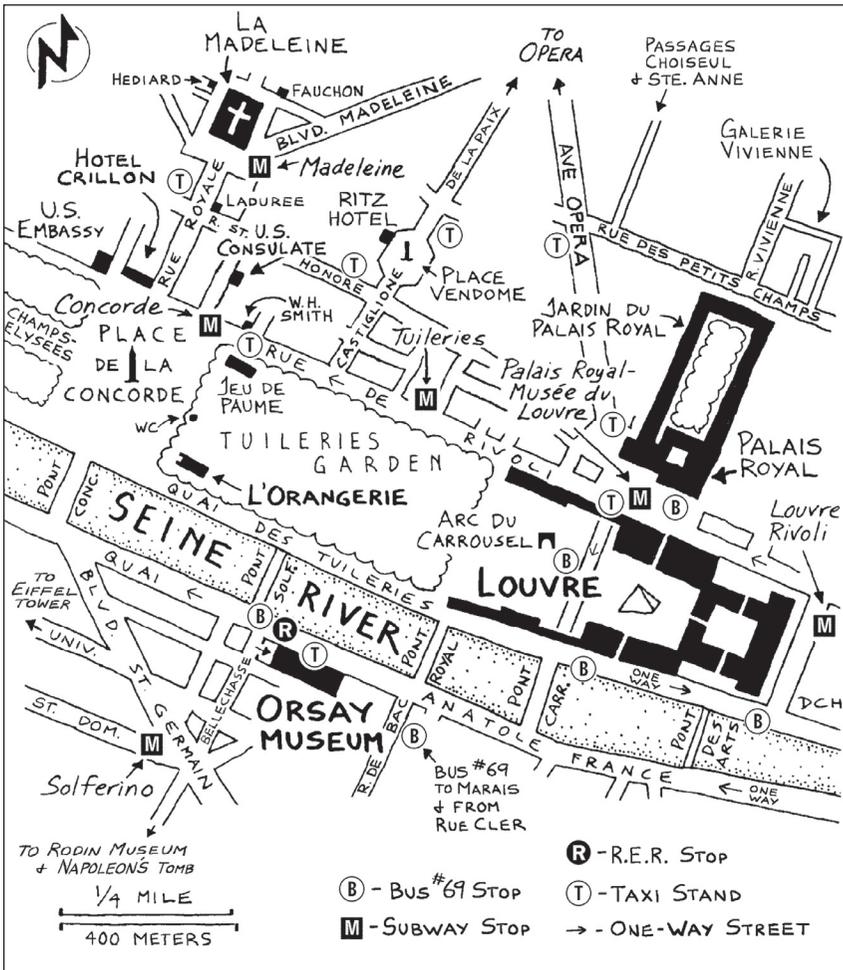
Cost: Free for wheelchair user and companion, otherwise €8.50, €6 after 18:00 on Wed and Fri, free on first Sun of month, covered by Museum Pass. Tickets good all day; reentry allowed. Optional additional charges apply for temporary exhibits. Tickets good all day; reentry allowed. The new self-serve ticket machines are faster than the ticket windows (they accept euro notes, coins, and Visa cards, but not MasterCard).

Hours: Wed–Mon 9:00–18:00, closed Tue. Most wings open Wed and Fri until 21:45. Evening visits are peaceful, and the pyramid glows after dark. Galleries start shutting down 30 minutes early. The last entry is 45 minutes before closing. Crowds are worst on Sun, Mon, Wed, and mornings.

Information: Pick up the free *Louvre Plan/Information* in English at the information desk under the pyramid as you enter. Tel. 01 40 20 53 17, recorded info: 01 40 20 51 51, www.louvre.fr.

Crowd-Beating Tips: Wheelchair users can skip to the front of the line; enter through the pyramid (elevator to the left on entry). If you’re a slow walker, you have several options for avoiding the line. Museum Pass-holders can use the group entrance in the pedestrian passageway between the pyramid and rue de Rivoli (under the arches, a few steps north of the pyramid, find the uniformed guard at the entrance, with the escalator down). Otherwise, you can enter the Louvre from its (usually less crowded) underground entrance, accessed through the “Carrousel du

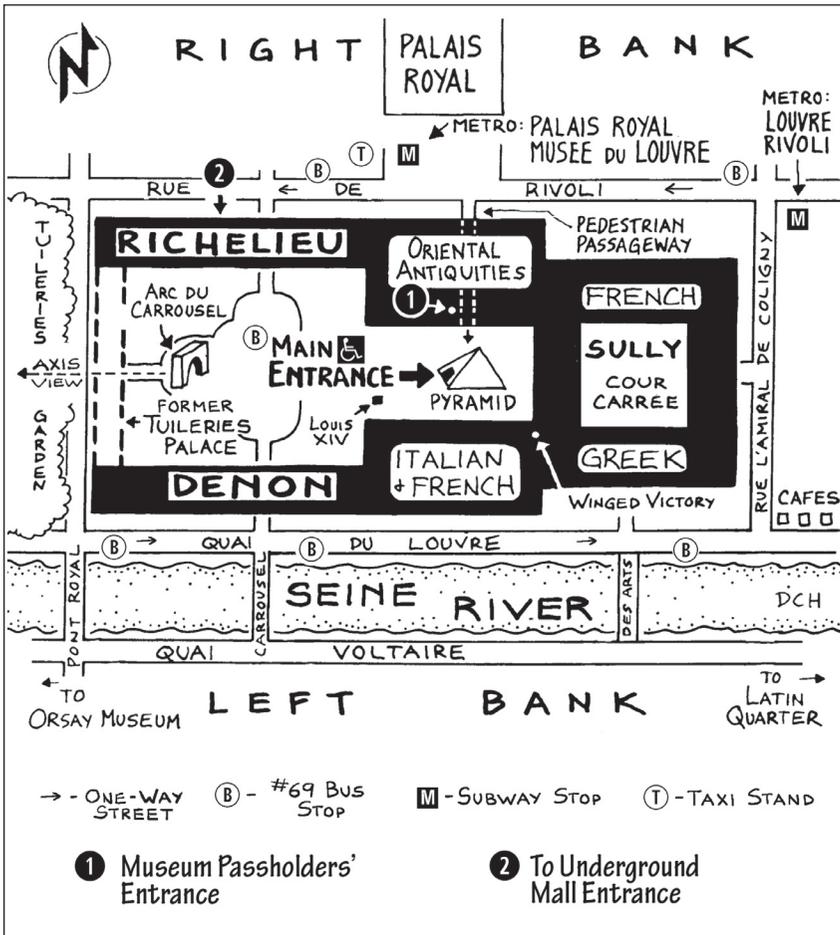
Paris Museums near the Tuileries Garden



Louvre” shopping mall. Enter the mall at 99 rue de Rivoli (the door with the red awning, daily 8:30–23:00) or directly from the Métro stop Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre (stepping off the train, exit to the left, following signs to Carrousel du Louvre-Musée du Louvre). The taxi stand is across rue de Rivoli next to the Métro station.

Tours: The 90-minute English-language tours leave three times daily except Sun (wheelchair users and slow walkers welcome; normally at 11:00, 14:00, and 15:45, €5 plus your entry ticket, tour tel. 01 40 20 52 63). Sign up for tours at the *Accueil des Groupes* area. Digital audioguides (available for €5 at entries to the 3 wings, at top of escalators) give you a directory of about 130 masterpieces, allowing you to dial a commentary

The Louvre



on included works as you stumble upon them.

➔ **Self-Guided Tour:** Start in the Denon wing and visit the highlights, in the following order (thanks to Gene Openshaw for his help with this).

Wander through the **ancient Greek and Roman works** to see the Parthenon frieze, Pompeii mosaics, Etruscan sarcophagi, and Roman portrait busts. You can't miss lovely *Venus de Milo* (*Aphrodite*). This goddess of love (c. 100 B.C., from the Greek island of Melos) created a sensation when she was discovered in 1820. Most "Greek" statues are actually later Roman copies, but Venus is a rare Greek original. She, like Golden Age Greeks, epitomizes stability, beauty, and balance. Later Greek art was Hellenistic, adding motion and drama. For a good example, see the

exciting *Winged Victory of Samothrace* (*Victoire de Samothrace*, on the landing). This statue of a woman with wings, poised on the prow of a ship, once stood on a hilltop to commemorate a great naval victory. This is the *Venus de Milo* gone Hellenistic.

The **Italian collection** is on the other side of *Winged Victory*. The key to Renaissance painting was realism, and for the Italians, “realism” was spelled “3-D.” Painters were inspired by the realism and balanced beauty of Greek sculpture. Painting a 3-D world on a 2-D surface is tough, and after a millennium of Dark Ages, artists were rusty. Living in a religious age, they painted mostly altarpieces full of saints, angels, Madonnas-and-bambinos, and crucifixes floating in an ethereal gold-leaf heaven. Gradually, though, they brought these otherworldly scenes down to earth. The Italian collection—including the *Mona Lisa*—is scattered throughout rooms (*salles*) 3 and 4, in the long Grand Gallery, and in adjoining rooms. After several years and a €5 million renovation, *Mona* has returned to her permanent home in the Salle des Etats, standing alone behind glass on her own false wall.

Two masters of the Italian High Renaissance (1500–1600) were Raphael (see his *La Belle Jardinière*, showing the Madonna, Child, and John the Baptist) and Leonardo da Vinci. The Louvre has the greatest collection of Leonardos in the world—five of them, including the exquisite *Virgin, Child, and St. Anne*, the neighboring *Madonna of the Rocks*, and the androgynous *John the Baptist*. His most famous, of course, is the *Mona Lisa*.

Leonardo was already an old man when François I invited him to France. Determined to pack light, he took only a few paintings. One was a portrait of Lisa del Giocondo, the wife of a wealthy Florentine merchant. When Leonardo arrived, François I immediately fell in love with the painting and made it the centerpiece of the small collection of Italian masterpieces that would, in three centuries, become the Louvre museum. He called it *La Gioconda*. We know it as a contraction of the Italian for “my lady Lisa”—*Mona Lisa*. Warning: François I was impressed, but *Mona* may disappoint you. She’s smaller and darker than you’d expect, located in a huge room, and behind a glaring pane of glass.

Mona’s overall mood is one of balance and serenity, but there’s also an element of mystery. Her smile and long-distance beauty are subtle and elusive, tempting but always just out of reach, like strands of a street singer’s melody drifting through the Métro tunnel. *Mona* doesn’t knock your socks off, but she winks at the patient viewer.

Now for something **neoclassical**. Notice the fine work, such as *The Coronation of Napoleon* by Jacques-Louis David, near *Mona* in the Salle

Daru. Neoclassicism, once the rage in France (1780–1850), usually features Greek subjects, patriotic sentiment, and a clean, simple style. After Napoleon quickly conquered most of Europe, he insisted on being made emperor (not merely king) of this “New Rome.” He staged an elaborate coronation ceremony in Paris, and rather than let the pope crown him, he crowned himself. The setting is the Notre-Dame Cathedral, with Greek columns and Roman arches thrown in for effect. Napoleon’s mom was also added, since she couldn’t make it to the ceremony. A key on the frame describes who’s who in the picture.

The **Romantic** collection, in an adjacent room (Salle Mollien), has works by Théodore Géricault (*The Raft of the Medusa*) and Eugène Delacroix (*Liberty Leading the People*). Romanticism, with an emphasis on motion and emotion, is the complete flip side of neoclassicism, though they both flourished in the early 1800s. Delacroix’s *Liberty*, commemorating the stirrings of democracy in France, is also a fitting tribute to the Louvre, the first museum opened to the common rabble of humanity. The good things in life don’t belong only to a small wealthy part of society, but to all. The motto of France is “*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*”—liberty, equality, and brotherhood.

Exit the room at the far end (past the café) and take the elevator down to find the large, twisting male nude who looks like he’s just waking up after a thousand-year nap. The two *Slaves* (1513–1515) by Michelangelo are a fitting end to this museum—works that bridge the ancient and modern worlds. Michelangelo, like his fellow Renaissance artists, learned from the Greeks. The perfect anatomy, twisting poses, and idealized faces look like they could have been done 2,000 years earlier. Michelangelo said that his purpose was to carve away the marble to reveal the figures God put inside. The *Rebellious Slave*, fighting against his bondage, shows the agony of that process and the ecstasy of the result.

Palais Royal Courtyards—Directly north of the Louvre on rue de Rivoli are the pleasant courtyards of the stately Palais Royal. Although the palace is closed to the public, the courtyards are open and fully accessible. As you enter, you’ll pass through a whimsical courtyard filled with stubby, striped columns and playful fountains (with fun, reflective metal balls) into another, curiously peaceful courtyard. This is where in-the-know Parisians come to take a quiet break, walk their poodle, or enjoy a rendezvous—surrounded by a serene arcade and a handful of historic restaurants.

Exiting the courtyard at the side facing away from the Seine brings you to the Galleries Colbert and Vivienne, good examples of shopping arcades from the early 1900s (courtyards free, always open).

Access: AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The Jardins de Palais Royal are accessible via a ramp that enters from the rue de Rivoli/Palais Royal side (enter and exit using this same ramp).

▲L'Orangerie Museum (Musée de l'Orangerie)—This Impressionist museum, lovely as a water lily, was due to reopen in the spring of 2006. (For the latest, ask at any Paris TI.) If it's open, you can leave the tree-lined, sun-dappled Impressionist painting that is the Tuileries Garden, and enter L'Orangerie (loh-rah-n-zheh-ree), a little *bijou* of select works by Utrillo, Cézanne, Renoir, Matisse, and Picasso. On the ground floor, you'll find a line of eight rooms dedicated to these artists. Downstairs is the finale: Monet's water lilies. The museum's collection is small enough to enjoy in a short visit, but complete enough to see the bridge from Impressionism to the Moderns. And it's all beautiful (likely €7, covered by Museum Pass, located in Tuileries Garden near place de la Concorde, Mo: Concorde). At press time, accessibility details were not yet available.

▲▲▲Orsay Museum—The Musée d'Orsay (mew-zay dor-say) houses French art of the 1800s (specifically, 1848 to 1914), picking up where the Louvre leaves off. For us, that means Impressionism. The Orsay houses the best general collection anywhere of Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, and Paul Gauguin.

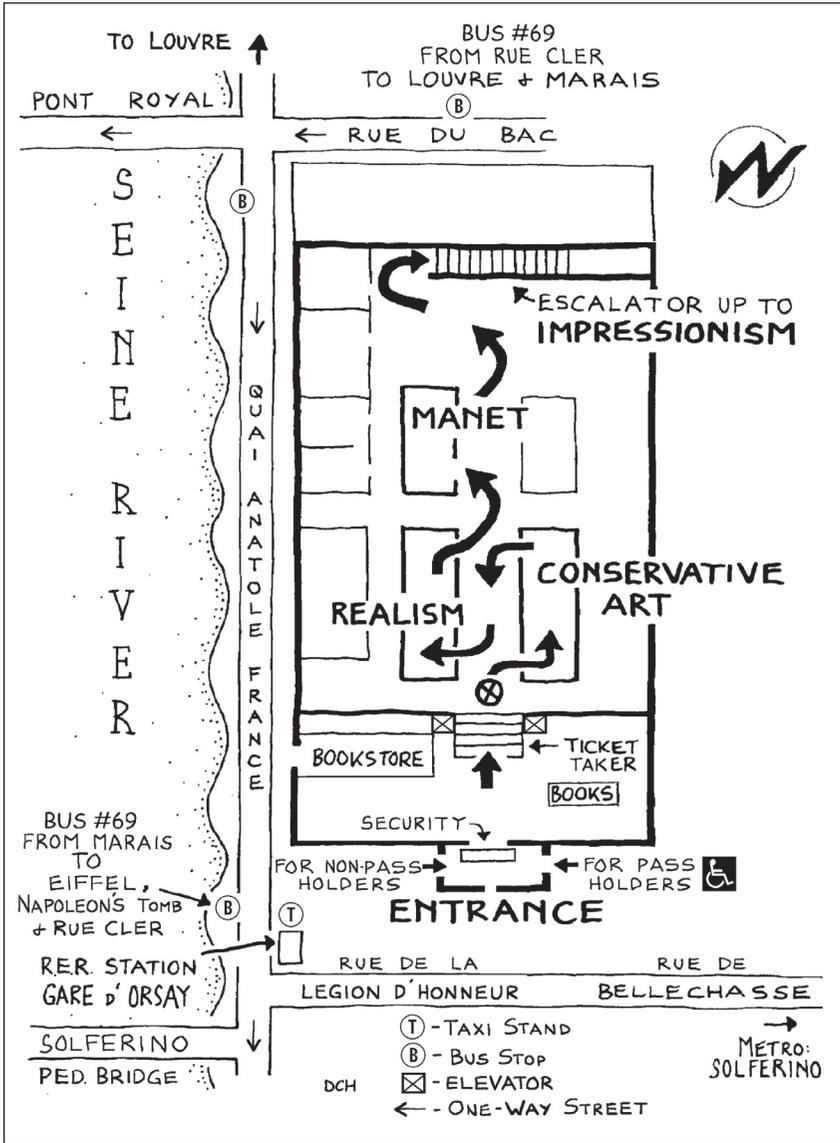
The museum shows art that is also both old and new, conservative and revolutionary. You'll start on the ground floor with the Conservatives and the early rebels who paved the way for the Impressionists, then head upstairs to see how a few visionary young artists bucked the system, revolutionized the art world, and paved the way for the 20th century.



Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The modernized Orsay building is designed to accommodate the wheelchair user. The *Museum Guide* has an overlay (available at information counter) that indicates accessible toilets, ramps, and elevators. Loaner wheelchairs are available.

Cost: €7.50; €5.50 after 16:15 and on Sun, free first Sun of month, covered by Museum Pass. Tickets are good all day. Museum Pass-holders and wheelchair users can enter quickly on the right side of the main

Orsay Museum—Ground Floor



entrance; ticket-buyers enter along the left (river) side.

Free Entry near Closing: Right when the ticket booth stops selling tickets (17:00 on Tue–Wed and Fri–Sun, 20:45 on Thu), you’re welcome to scoot in free of charge. (They won’t let you in much after that, however.) For one hour, you’ll have the art mostly to yourself before the museum closes. The Impressionism galleries on the upper level start shutting down first, so go there right away.

Hours: June 20–Sept 20 Tue–Sun 9:00–18:00, Sept 21–June 19 Tue–Sat 10:00–18:00, Sun 9:00–18:00, Thu until 21:45 year-round, always closed Mon. Last entry one hour before closing. The Impressionist galleries begin closing at 17:15, frustrating unwary visitors. Note that the Orsay is crowded on Tuesday, when the Louvre is closed.

Location: The Orsay sits above the RER-C stop called Musée d’Orsay. The nearest Métro stop is Solférino, three blocks south of the Orsay. Bus #69 from the Marais neighborhoods stops at the museum on the river side (quai Anatole France); from the rue Cler area, it stops behind the museum on the rue du Bac. A taxi stand is in front of the museum on quai Anatole France.

Information: The booth inside the entrance gives free floor plans in English. Tel. 01 40 49 48 41, www.musee-orsay.fr.

Tours: Audioguides are €5. Fully accessible English-language guided tours usually run daily (except Sun) at 11:30 (90-min tours–€6). Tours in English focusing on the Impressionists are offered Tuesdays at 14:30 (€6, sometimes also on other days).

Cuisine Art: There’s a pricey but *très* elegant restaurant on the second floor, with affordable tea and coffee served 15:00–17:30. A simple fifth-floor café is sandwiched between the Impressionists; above it is an easy self-service place with sandwiches and drinks. All of these are rated **AE, AI, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible.

🕒 **Self-Guided Tour:** For most visitors, the most important part of the museum is the Impressionist collection on the upper level. Here, you can study many pictures you’ve probably seen in books, such as Manet’s *Luncheon on the Grass*, Renoir’s *Dance at the Moulin de la Galette*, Monet’s *Gare St. Lazare*, James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s *Portrait of the Artist’s Mother*, van Gogh’s *The Church at Auvers-sur-Oise*, and Cézanne’s *The Card Players*. As you approach these beautiful, easy-to-enjoy paintings, remember that there is more to this art than meets the eye.

Here’s a primer on Impressionism: After the camera was invented, it threatened to make artists obsolete. A painter’s original function was to record reality faithfully, like a journalist. Now a machine could capture a better likeness faster than you could say Etch-A-Sketch.

But true art is more than just painted reality. It gives us reality from the artist's point of view, putting a personal stamp on the work. It records not only a scene—a camera can do that—but the artist's impressions of that scene. Impressions are often fleeting, so the artist has to work quickly.

The Impressionist painters rejected camera-like detail for a quick style more suited to capturing the passing moment. Feeling stifled by the rigid rules and stuffy atmosphere of the Academy, the Impressionists took as their motto, "Out of the studio, into the open air." They grabbed their berets and scarves and took excursions to the country, where they set up their easels on riverbanks and hillsides, or sketched in cafés and dance halls. Gods, goddesses, nymphs, and fantasy scenes were out; common people and rural landscapes were in.

The quick style and simple subjects were ridiculed and called childish by the "experts." Rejected by the Salon, the Impressionists staged their own exhibition in 1874. They brashly took their name from an insult thrown at them by a critic, who laughed at one of Monet's impressions of a sunrise. During the next decade, they exhibited their own work independently. The public, opposed at first, was slowly drawn in by the simplicity, color, and vibrancy of Impressionist art.

Historic Core of Paris: Notre-Dame, Sainte-Chapelle, and More

Many of these sights are covered in detail in the Historic Paris Roll or Stroll (plus map) on page *TK. If a sight's covered in that tour, I've only listed its essentials here.

▲▲Notre-Dame Cathedral (Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris)—This 700-year-old cathedral is packed with history and tourists. With a pair of 200-foot-tall bell towers, a facade studded with ornate statuary, beautiful stained-glass rose windows, famous gargoyles, a picture-perfect Seine-side location, and textbook flying buttresses, there's a good reason that this cathedral of "Our Lady" (Notre-Dame) is France's most famous church (Mo: Cité, Hôtel de Ville, or St. Michel; clean toilets in front of church near Charlemagne's statue).

Check out the facade: Mary with the Baby Jesus (in rose window) above the 28 Kings of Judah (statues that were beheaded during the Revolution). Explore the interior, echoing with history. Then wander around the exterior, through a forest of frilly buttresses, watched over by a fleet of whimsical gargoyles. Finally, if you are able, climb the cathedral tower (400 steps, no elevator).

Cathedral Access: AE, AI+A, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. The entryway and three-fourths of the main floor are wheelchair-accessible. There are three 6" steps to enter the area of the Mass and the treasury.

Cathedral Cost and Hours: Free, daily 7:45–19:00; treasury—€2.50, not covered by Museum Pass, daily 9:30–17:30; ask about free English tours, normally Wed and Thu at 12:00, Sat at 14:30.

Tower Access: Level 4—Not Accessible (400 steps). Hardy slow walkers can climb to the top of the facade between the towers and then to the top of the south tower.

Tower Cost and Hours: €7, covered by Museum Pass, July–Aug Mon–Fri 9:00–19:30, Sat–Sun 9:00–23:00, April–June and Sept daily 9:30–19:30, Oct–March daily 10:00–17:30, last entry 45 min before closing, arrive early to avoid long lines.

Paris Archaeological Crypt—This is a worthwhile 15-minute stop with your Museum Pass. You'll visit Roman ruins, trace the street plan of the medieval village, and see diagrams of how early Paris grew, all thoughtfully explained in English.

The first few displays put the ruins in their historical context. Three models show the growth of Paris—from an uninhabited riverside plot; to the Roman town of Lutece; to an early-medieval city, with a church that preceded Notre-Dame. A fourth model shows the current Notre-Dame surrounded by buildings, along with the old, straight road—the rue Neuve de Notre-Dame—that led up to the church (and ran right down the center of the museum). The ruins in the middle of the museum are a confusing mix of foundations from all these time periods, including parts of the old rue Neuve de Notre-Dame.

Press the buttons on the display cases to light up a particular section, such as the medieval hospital (along the far side of the museum), a well-preserved Gallo-Roman paved room, and a Roman building with “hypocaustal” heating (narrow passages through which hot air was pumped to heat the room).

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible. There are fourteen 6" steps down to the entryway. The inside is mostly level.

Cost, Hours, Location: €3.50, covered by Museum Pass, Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00, closed Mon, enter 100 yards in front of cathedral.

▲▲Deportation Memorial (Mémorial de la Déportation)—This memorial commemorates the 200,000 French victims of the Nazi concentration camps. As Paris disappears above you, this monument draws you into the victims' experience. Once underground, you enter a one-way hallway—studded with tiny lights—commemorating the dead, leading you to an eternal flame.

Access: **AE, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Use the accessible ramped entrance just past the steps. Once inside, the gardens are accessible, but the actual memorial chambers are not.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free, April–Sept daily 10:00–12:00 & 14:00–19:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–12:00 & 14:00–17:00. It's at the east tip of the island Ile de la Cité, behind Notre-Dame and near Ile St. Louis (Mo: Cité).

Ile St. Louis—The residential island behind Notre-Dame is known for its restaurants (see “Eating,” page *TK), great ice cream, and shops (along rue St. Louis-en-l’Île).

Cité “Métropolitain” Stop and Flower Market—On place Louis Lépine, between Notre-Dame and Sainte-Chapelle, you'll find an early 19th-century subway entrance and a flower market (that chirps with a bird market on Sun).

▲▲▲Sainte-Chapelle—The interior of this 13th-century chapel is a triumph of Gothic church architecture. Built to house Jesus' Crown of Thorns, Sainte-Chapelle is jam-packed with stained-glass windows, bathed in colorful light, and slippery with the drool of awe-struck tourists. Ignore the humdrum exterior and climb the stairs into the sanctuary, where more than 1,100 Bible scenes—from the Creation to the Passion to Judgment Day—are illustrated by light and glass.

Access: Ground floor only—**AE, AI, AT+A**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Unfortunately, the upstairs chapel (with the stained-glass windows) can be reached only by climbing a narrow spiral staircase, is Level 4—Not Accessible, though slow walkers will find it's worth the climb). Wheelchair-accessible toilets are near the Palace of Justice entrance, with one 4" curb to negotiate and a long ramp with no railing.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free for wheelchair users, otherwise €7, €10.50 combo-ticket covers Conciergerie, both covered by Museum Pass. Open March–Oct daily 9:30–18:00, Nov–Feb 9:00–17:00. Mo: Cité.

▲Conciergerie—Marie-Antoinette was imprisoned here, as were Louis XVI, Robespierre, Marat, and many others on their way to the guillotine. Exhibits with good English descriptions trace the history of the building, and give some insight into prison life. You can also relive the drama in Marie-Antoinette's cell on the day of her execution—complete with dummies and period furniture.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible. Visitors must negotiate a flight of stairs to get into the courtyard and lobby of the Conciergerie.

Cost, Hours, Location: €7, €10.50 combo-ticket covers Sainte-Chapelle, both covered by Museum Pass, April–Sept daily 9:30–18:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–17:00.

the tower was the marvel of the age, a symbol of progress and human ingenuity. Indeed, despite its 7,000 tons of metal and 50 tons of paint, the tower is so well-engineered that it weighs no more per square inch at its base than a linebacker on tiptoes. Not all were impressed, however; many found it a monstrosity. The writer Guy de Maupassant routinely ate lunch in the tower just so he wouldn't have to look at it.

There are three observation platforms, at 200, 400, and 900 feet; the higher you go, the more you pay. The top level is not wheelchair-accessible (see "Access," below), but for anyone, the view from the 400-foot-high second level is plenty good. Each level requires a separate elevator (and line). There are special accessible lifts on the east and west sides of the tower.

A TI/ticket booth is between the Pilier Nord (north pillar) and Pilier Est (east pillar). The stairs (non-disabled travelers can walk up to the 2nd level) are next to the Jules Verne restaurant entrance (allow \$300 per person for the restaurant, reserve 3 months in advance). As you ascend through the metal beams, imagine being a worker, perched high above nothing, riveting this giant erector set together.

The **top level** (900 feet) is tiny. And, because fewer visitors pay the extra money to go all the way, it's less crowded. All you'll find here is wind and grand, sweeping views. The city lies before you, with a panorama guide. On a good day, you can see for 40 miles.

The **second level** (400 feet) has the best views, because you're closer to the sights (non-disabled travelers can walk up the stairway to get above the netting). There's also a cafeteria and WCs (everything is fully accessible).

The **first level** (200 feet) has exhibits, a post office (daily 10:00–19:00, cancellation stamp will read Eiffel Tower), a snack bar, WCs, and souvenirs. Read the informative signs (in English) describing the major monuments, see the entertaining free movie on the history of the tower, and don't miss a century of fireworks—including the entire millennium blast—on video. Then consider a drink or a sandwich overlooking all of Paris at the fully accessible snack café outdoor tables in summer) or at the city's best view bar/restaurant, Altitude 95 (see page *TK).

Access: Everything on the first and second levels is **AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible. This includes accessible toilets on both levels, restaurants, and shops. The top level is Level 4—Not Accessible to wheelchair users, but some slow walkers can make it up the narrow, steep steps from the elevator to the observation deck. If you have your heart set on a high-altitude panorama of Paris, ascend the accessible Montparnasse Tower instead (see "Sights—Southeast Paris," below).

Cost and Hours: It costs €4 to go to the first level, €7.50 to the second, and €11 to go to the top (not covered by Museum Pass). Open March–Sept daily 9:00–24:00, Oct–Feb daily 9:30–23:00, last entry 1 hour before closing, shorter lines at night, Mo: Bir-Hakeim or Trocadéro, RER: Champ de Mars–Tour Eiffel, tel. 01 44 11 23 23, www.tour-eiffel.fr.

Tips: Wheelchair users can go to the head of the line. To avoid most crowds, go early (by 8:45) or late in the day (after 18:00, after 20:00 in May–Aug, last entry 1 hour before closing); weekends are worst. Ideally, you'll arrive with some light and stay as it gets dark.

To pass the time in lines, pick up whatever free reading material is available at the tourist stands at ground level. I liked the *Eiffel Tower Gazette*, a free newspaper featuring a century of Eiffel Tower headlines.

Before or after your tower visit, you can catch the fully accessible Bateaux-Parisiens boat (near the base of the tower) for a Seine cruise (see page *TK).

Best Views: The best place to view the tower is from **Trocadéro Square** to the north; it's a short roll or stroll across the river, a happening scene at night, and especially fun for kids. Consider arriving at the Trocadéro Métro stop for the view, then moving toward the tower. Another delightful viewpoint is the long, grassy field, **Le Parc du Champ de Mars**, to the south (great for dinner picnics). However impressive it may be by day, the tower is an awesome thing to see at twilight, when it becomes engorged with light, and virile Paris lies back and lets night be on top. When darkness fully envelops the city, the tower seems to climax at the top of each hour...for 10 minutes. (It's been doing this since the millennium festivities, when it was wired with thousands of special lights.)

National Maritime Museum (Musée National de la Marine)—This extensive museum houses an amazing collection of ship models, submarines, torpedoes, cannonballs, *beaucoup* bowsprits, and naval you-name-it—including a small boat made for Napoleon. You'll find some English information on the walls. The free audioguide is a godsend for *Master and Commander* types; kids like the museum either way.

Access: AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible.

Cost, Hours, Location: €9, kids-€7, covered by Museum Pass, Wed–Mon 10:00–18:00, closed Tue, on left side of Trocadéro Square with your back to Eiffel Tower, www.musee-marine.fr.

▲▲Napoleon's Tomb and Army Museums (Les Invalides)—The emperor lies majestically dead inside several coffins under a grand dome glittering with 26 pounds of gold—a goose-bumping pilgrimage for



historians. Napoleon is surrounded by the tombs of other French war heroes and fine military museums in Hôtel des Invalides. Non-disabled travelers can follow signs down the stairs to the crypt to find Roman Empire-style reliefs that list the accomplishments of Napoleon's administration. Check out the interesting World War II wing. The Army Museums' West Wing (with a focus on World War I) should reopen in 2006, while the East Wing (starring Napoleon) will likely close for renovation.

Access: Everything except the crypt is **AE, AI, AT, Level 1**—Fully Accessible. Loaner wheelchairs are available. Most of the museum is accessible for people using wheelchairs. The crypt itself, however, has an entryway of fifteen 4" steps and a 36"-high solid railing around the tomb. Be aware of large areas of rough cobblestone.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free for wheelchair user and companion, otherwise €7, covered by Museum Pass, April–Sept daily 10:00–18:00, summer Sun until 19:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–17:00, closed the first Mon of every month except July–Sept; Mo: La Tour-Maubourg or Varenne, tel. 01 44 42 37 72, www.invalides.org.

▲▲Rodin Museum (Musée Rodin)—This user-friendly museum is filled with passionate works by the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo. Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) sculpted human figures on an epic scale, revealing through the body their deepest thoughts and feelings. Rodin's statues rise from the raw stone around them, driven by the life force. With missing limbs and scarred skin, these are prefab classics, making ugliness noble. Rodin's people are always moving restlessly. Even the famous *Thinker* is moving. Rodin worked with many materials—he chiseled marble (though not often), modeled clay, cast bronze, worked plaster, painted, and sketched. He often created different versions of the same subject in different media.



Rodin lived and worked in this mansion, renting rooms alongside Henri Matisse, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (Rodin's secretary), and the dancer Isadora Duncan. Well-displayed exhibits trace Rodin's artistic development, explain how his bronze statues were cast, and show some of the studies he created to work up to his masterpiece (the unfinished *Gates of Hell*). Learn about Rodin's tumultuous relationship with his apprentice and lover, Camille Claudel. Mull over what makes his sculptures some of the most evocative since the Renaissance. For many, the gardens are the highlight of this museum. Here you'll find several of his greatest works, such as the *Thinker*, *Balzac*, the *Burghers of Calais*, and the *Gates of Hell*. The gardens are ideal for artistic reflection...or a picnic.

Access: Main floor only—**AE, AI, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible. Only the main floor of the museum is wheelchair-accessible (via an entry ramp); to get to the upper level, you'll have to be able to climb a flight of stairs (no elevator; Level 4—Not Accessible). The courtyard is made of rough cobblestone. The best part of the museum—the beautiful, sculpture-packed gardens—is fully accessible. Loaner wheelchairs are available.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free for wheelchair user and companion, otherwise €5, €3 on Sun, free first Sun of month, covered by Museum Pass. You'll pay €1 to get into the gardens only—which may be Paris' best deal, as many works are on display there. April–Sept Tue–Sun 9:30–17:45, closed Mon, gardens close 18:45; Oct–March Tue–Sun 9:30–16:45, closed Mon, gardens close 17:00. It's near Napoleon's Tomb (77 rue de Varenne, Mo: Varenne, tel. 01 44 18 61 10, www.musee-rodin.fr).

Southeast Paris: The Latin Quarter

This Left Bank neighborhood, just opposite Notre-Dame, is the Latin Quarter. (For more information and a self-guided tour, see the Historic Paris Roll or Stroll, page *TK.)

▲▲**Cluny Museum (Musée National du Moyen Age)**—This treasure trove of Middle Age (“Moyen Age”) art fills the old Roman baths, offering close-up looks at stained glass, Notre-Dame carvings, fine goldsmithing and jewelry, and rooms of tapestries. The star here is the exquisite “Lady and the Unicorn” tapestry: In five panels, a delicate-as-medieval-can-be noble lady introduces a delighted unicorn to the senses of taste, hearing, sight, smell, and touch.

Access: Level 3—Minimally Accessible. Large, rough cobblestones lead to the entrance, and the interior is even worse—multiple levels and lots of stairs without any elevators. The museum is not accessible for wheelchair users, but works for energetic, art-loving slow walkers.

▲St. Sulpice Organ Concert—Since it was featured in *The Da Vinci Code*, this grand church has become a trendy stop among the book’s fans. But the real reason to visit is to see and hear its organ. For pipe-organ enthusiasts,



this is one of Europe’s great musical treats. The Grand Orgue at St. Sulpice Church has a rich history, with a succession of 12 world-class organists (including Charles-Marie Widor and Marcel Dupré) going back 300 years. Widor started the tradition of opening the loft to visitors after the 10:30 service on Sundays. Daniel Roth continues to welcome guests in three languages

while playing five keyboards at once. (See www.danielrothsaintsulpice.org for his exact dates and concert plans.) The 10:30 Sunday Mass is followed by a high-powered 25-minute recital at about 11:35. Then, just after noon, the small, unmarked door is opened (left of entry as you face the rear). Non-disabled visitors scamper like sixteenth notes up spiral stairs, past the 19th-century Stairmasters that five men once pumped to fill the bellows, into a world of 7,000 pipes. Here, they watch the master play during the next Mass. You’ll generally have 30 minutes to kill (there’s a plush lounge) before the organ plays; visitors can leave at any time. If late or rushed, show up around 12:30 and wait at the little door. As someone leaves, you can slip in, climb up, and catch the rest of the performance (church open daily 7:30–19:30, Mo: St. Sulpice or Mabillon).

Tempting boutiques surround the church (see “Shopping,” below), and nearby is the Luxembourg Garden (described below).

Access: The main floor of the church is **AE, AI, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The upstairs organ loft, however, is accessed only by a tight staircase, and therefore Level 4—Not Accessible. To enter the main floor, use the ramp around the right side of building (as you face the church). To reach the accessible toilet, go to the right once you enter through this door (past the confessional and the sacristy to the Chapel of the Assumption).

▲Luxembourg Garden (Jardin du Luxembourg)—Paris’ most beautiful, interesting, and enjoyable garden/park/recreational area is a great place to watch Parisians at rest and play (free, open daily until dusk, Mo: Odéon, RER: Luxembourg). It’s ideal for families. These private gardens are property of the French Senate (housed in the château) and have special rules governing their use (e.g., where cards can be played, where dogs can be walked, where joggers can run, when and where

music can be played). The brilliant flower beds are completely changed three times a year, and the boxed trees are brought out of the *orangerie* in May. Challenge the card and chess players to a game (near the tennis courts), rent a toy sailboat, or find a free chair near the main pond and take a breather. Notice any pigeons? The story goes that a poor Ernest Hemingway used to hand-hunt (read: strangle) them here.

The grand, neoclassical-domed Panthéon, now a mausoleum housing the tombs of several great Frenchmen, is a block away.

If you enjoy the Luxembourg Garden and want to see more, visit the nearby, colorful Jardin des Plantes (Mo: Jussieu or Gare d'Austerlitz, RER: Gare d'Austerlitz) and the more elegant Parc Monceau (Mo: Monceau).

Access: AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The park has specific gated entrances that lead to paved or dirt paths.

Montparnasse Tower (La Tour Montparnasse)—This wheelchair-accessible 59-story superscraper is cheaper and easier to get to the top of than the Eiffel Tower, with the added bonus of offering one of Paris' best views—the Eiffel Tower is in sight, and the Montparnasse Tower isn't. If you couldn't go to the top of the Eiffel Tower to get your panoramic bearings, you can do it here instead, with easy access. Buy the €3 photo guide to the city, then go to the 56th floor and orient yourself. As you zip 56 floors in 38 seconds, watch the altitude meter above the door. Up top, scan the city, noticing the lush courtyards hiding behind grand street fronts.

Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The accessible elevator goes to the enclosed observation deck, panorama exhibit, and restaurant on the 56th floor of this 59-story building. The rooftop “panoramic terrace” is accessible only by stairs, but the views from the 56th floor are just as good. You'll find an accessible toilet in the shopping center below the tower.

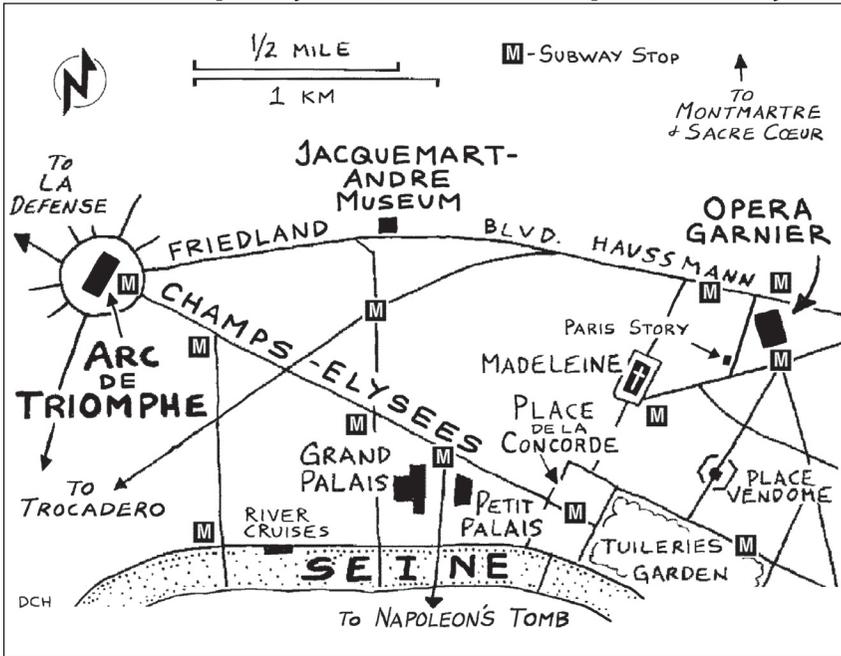
Cost, Hours, Location: €8.50, discount for wheelchair users, not covered by Museum Pass, April–Sept daily 9:30–23:30, Oct–March 9:30–22:30, last entry 30 min before closing, disappointing after dark, entrance on rue de l'Arrivée, Mo: Montparnasse-Bienvenue, www.tourmontparnasse56.com.

Northwest Paris:

Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, and Beyond

▲▲**Place de la Concorde and the Champs-Élysées**—This famous boulevard is Paris' backbone and has the greatest concentration of traffic. All of France seems to converge on place de la Concorde, the city's

Northwest Paris: Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, and Beyond



largest square. It was here that the guillotine took the lives of thousands—including King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Back then, it was called the place de la Revolution.

Catherine de' Medici wanted a place to drive her carriage, so she started draining the swamp that would become the Champs-Élysées. Napoleon put on the final touches, and it's been the place to be seen ever since. The Tour de France bicycle race ends here, as do all parades (French or foe) of any significance. While the boulevard has become a bit hamburgerized, a roll or stroll here is great fun. Still, this can be a challenging area for wheelchair users and slow walkers—with lots of traffic (Parisian drivers get the right-of-way) and stairs.

For a guided, accessible roll or stroll from the top to the bottom of the Champs-Élysées, see page *TK.

▲▲▲**Arc de Triomphe**—Napoleon had the magnificent Arc de Triomphe commissioned to commemorate his victory at the battle of Austerlitz. The foot of the arch is a stage on which the last two centuries of Parisian history has played out—from the funeral of Napoleon, to the goose-stepping arrival of the Nazis, to the triumphant return of Charles de Gaulle after the Allied liberation. Carvings on the pillars feature a mighty Napoleon

and excitable Lady Liberty. Pay your respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. From the base of the arch, an elevator or a spiral staircase leads to a cute museum about the arch. From there, stairs (but no elevator) lead to a grand view at the top, even after dark.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible.

The arch is in the middle of one of Europe's busiest traffic circles.

Adventurous slow walkers and non-disabled travelers can reach the base of the arch through an underground passage with stairs: twenty-five 6" steps down, then thirty 6" steps back up. The only way for a wheelchair user to reach the arch is to take a taxi to the center of the traffic circle and be dropped off at the base—which is both dangerous and illegal. Once at the arch, you can only take the elevator to the museum partway up (the rooftop viewpoint is accessed only by 46 stairs).

Cost, Hours, Location: The exterior is free to view. Admission to interior—€8, under 18 free, covered by Museum Pass, April–Sept daily 10:00–23:00, Oct–March daily 10:00–22:00. Mo: Charles de Gaulle-Etoile.

▲Opéra Garnier—This grand palace of the belle époque was built for Napoleon III and finished in 1875. From the grand avenue de l'Opéra, once lined with Paris' most fashionable haunts, the newly restored facade seems to say, "All power to the wealthy." And Apollo, holding his lyre high above the building, seems to declare, "This is a temple of the highest arts." While huge, the actual theater seats only 2,000. The real show was before and after, when the elite of Paris—out to see and be seen—strutted their elegant stuff in the extravagant lobbies.

Although the theater interior is mostly wheelchair-accessible for theatergoers, the in-depth walking tours of the Opéra are not. However you get inside, imagine the place filled with the beautiful people of the day. The massive foundations straddle an underground lake (creating the mysterious world of the *Phantom of the Opera*). The red velvet theater boasts a colorful ceiling by Marc Chagall (1964) playfully dancing around the eight-ton chandelier. Note the box seats next to the stage—the most expensive in the house, with an obstructed view of the stage...but just right if you're there only to be seen. The elitism of this place prompted President François Mitterrand to have a people's opera house built in the 1980s (symbolically on place de la Bastille, where the French Revolution started in 1789). This left the Opéra Garnier home only to ballet and



occasional concerts (usually no performances mid-July–mid-Sept). While the library/museum is of interest to opera buffs, non-disabled visitors will enjoy the second-floor grand foyer and Salon du Glacier, iced with decor typical of 1900.

Access: **AE, AI, AL**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. There is a ramp entry on rue Scribe and special seats accessible by lift for wheelchair users. Friendly customer service agent Sandrine (tel. 01 40 01 18 50) can help you with accessibility arrangements and ticketing. Non-disabled travelers enter through the front, off place de l'Opéra.

Cost, Hours, Location: €7, not covered by Museum Pass, daily 10:00–17:00, July–Aug until 18:00, closed during performances, 8 rue Scribe, Mo: Opéra, www.opera-de-paris.fr.

Tours: There are English tours of the building on most afternoons. Unfortunately, they involve climbing stairs and are rated Level 4—Not Accessible (€10, includes entry, 90 min, call to confirm, tour ticket window at opposite end of entry from regular ticket booth).

Nearby: American Express, a TI, and the *Paris Story* film (see below) are on the left side of the Opéra, and the venerable Galeries Lafayette department store (**AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible; top-floor café with marvelous views) is just behind. Across the street, the illustrious **Café de la Paix** (**AE, AI, AT** in attached hotel, Level 1—Fully Accessible) has been a meeting spot for the local glitterati for generations. If you can afford the coffee, this offers a delightful break.

Paris Story Film—This entertaining film offers a good and painless overview of the city's turbulent and brilliant past, covering 2,000 years in 45 fast-moving minutes. The theater's wide-screen projection and cushy chairs provide an ideal break from bad weather and sore feet, and the movie's a fun activity with kids. It makes a good first-day orientation.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible. Slow walkers must climb stairs to get to the theater (no elevator).

Cost, Hours, Location: Adults-€8, kids-€5, family of 4-€21, not covered by Museum Pass. Individuals get a 20 percent discount with this book in 2006 (no discount on family rate). The film shows on the hour daily 9:00–19:00. Next to Opéra Garnier at 11 rue Scribe, Mo: Opéra, tel. 01 42 66 62 06.

▲▲ Jacquemart-André Museum (Musée Jacquemart-André)—This thoroughly enjoyable museum showcases the lavish home of a wealthy, art-loving, 19th-century Parisian couple. After wandering the grand boulevards, you now get inside for an intimate look at the lifestyles of the Parisian rich and fabulous. Edouard André and his wife Nélie Jacquemart—who had no children—spent their lives and fortunes

designing, building, and then decorating a sumptuous mansion. What makes this visit so rewarding is the fine audioguide tour (in English, free with admission). The place is strewn with paintings by Rembrandt, Botticelli, Uccello, Mantegna, Bellini, Boucher, and Fragonard—enough to make a painting gallery famous. Plan on spending an hour with the excellent audioguide.

Access: AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Only the ground floor is accessible.

Cost, Hours, Location: €9, not covered by Museum Pass, daily 10:00–18:00, elegant café, at 158 boulevard Haussmann, Mo: Miromesnil or St Philippe de Roule, tel. 01 45 62 11 59, www.musee-jacquemart-andre.com/jandre.

Petit Palais (and its Musée des Beaux-Arts)—This free museum recently reopened after renovation. You'll find a broad collection of paintings and sculpture from the 1600s to the 1900s. To some, it feels like a museum of second-choice art, as the more famous museums in Paris have better collections from the same periods. Others find a few diamonds in the rough from Monet, Renoir, Boudin, and others; some interesting Art Nouveau pieces; and a smattering of works from Dutch, Italian, and Flemish Renaissance artists.

Access: AE, AI, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. They have guards who take wheelchair users through the Palais, and also have parking reserved for people with disabilities.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free, Tue–Sun 10:00–17:40, closed Mon, across from Grand Palais, avenue Winston Churchill, just west of place de la Concorde, tel. 01 40 05 56 78.

Grand Palais—This grand exhibition hall, built for the 1900 World's Fair, is busy with generally worthwhile temporary exhibits. Get details on the current schedule from TIs or in *Pariscope*.

Access: AE, AI, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible.

Cost, Hours, Location: €10.50, €9 after 13:00, not covered by Museum Pass, open Mon and Thu–Sun 10:00–20:00, Wed 10:00–20:00, closed Tue, avenue Churchill, Mo: Rond Point or Champs-Élysées.

▲La Défense and La Grande Arche—On the outskirts of Paris, the centerpiece of Paris' ambitious skyscraper complex (La Défense) is the Grande Arche. Inaugurated in 1989 on the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, it was dedicated to human rights and brotherhood. The place is big—38 floors holding offices for 30,000 people on more than 200 acres. Notre-Dame Cathedral could fit under its arch. The complex at La Défense is an interesting study in 1960s land-use planning. More than 150,000 workers commute here daily, directing lots of business and



development away from downtown and allowing central Paris to retain its more elegant feel. This makes sense to most Parisians, regardless of whatever else they feel about this controversial complex.

For an interesting visit, take the Métro to the La Défense stop, explore La Grande Arche (take the accessible elevator to the top for great

city views and displays on the arch's construction), then roll or stroll among the glass buildings to the Esplanade de la Défense Métro station, and return home from there. After enjoying the elegance of downtown Paris' historic, glorious monuments, it's clear that man can build bigger, but not more beautiful.

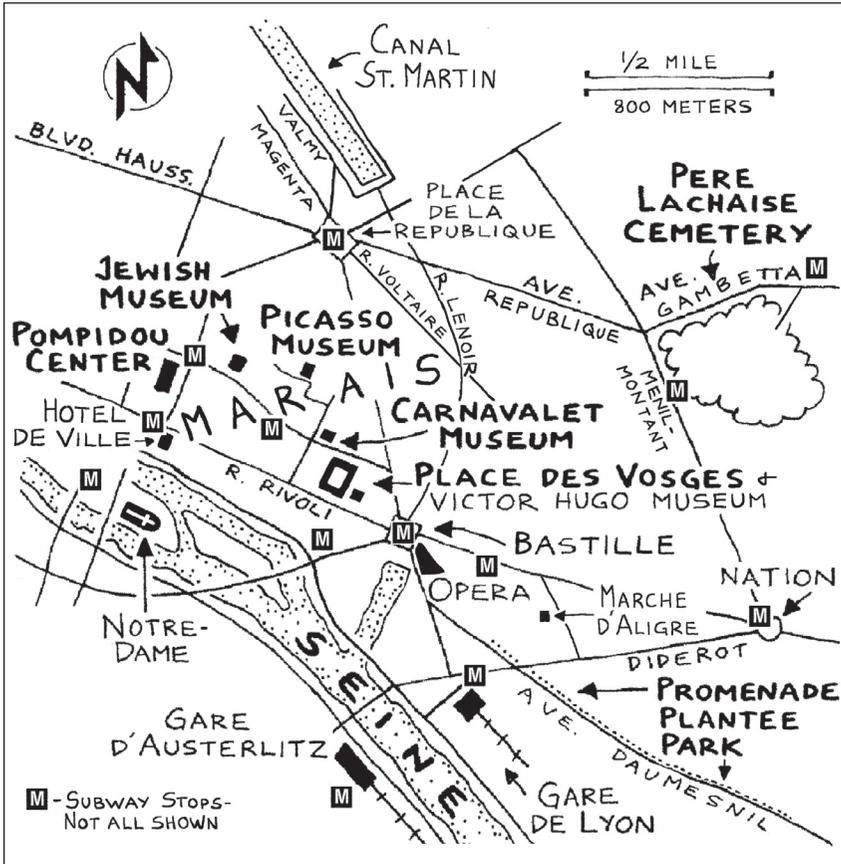
Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. A combination of elevators, ramps, and stairlifts makes the Grande Arche fully accessible to wheelchair users. Don't be shy to ask the staff for assistance (operating stairlifts, finding the accessible route, etc.).

Cost, Hours, Location: La Grande Arche elevator—€7.50, kids—€6, family deals, not covered by Museum Pass, daily 10:00–19:00, July–Aug until 20:00, RER or Mo: La Défense, follow signs to *La Grande Arche*, tel. 01 49 07 27 57. The entry price includes art exhibits and a film on the Arche's construction.

Northeast Paris: Marais Neighborhood and More

The Marais neighborhood extends along the Right Bank of the Seine from the Pompidou Center to the Bastille. It contains more pre-Revolutionary lanes and buildings than anywhere else in town and is more atmospheric than touristy. It's medieval Paris. This is how much of the city looked until the mid-1800s, when Napoleon III had Baron Haussmann blast out the narrow streets to construct broad boulevards (wide enough for the guns and ranks of the army, too wide for revolutionary barricades), thus creating modern Paris. Originally a swamp (*marais*) during the reign of Henry IV, this area became the hometown of the French aristocracy. In the 17th century, big shots built their private mansions (*hôtels*), close to Henry IV's place des Vosges. When exploring the Marais, stick to the west–east axis formed by rue Sainte-Croix de la Bretonnerie, rue des Rosiers (the heart of Paris' Jewish community), and rue St. Antoine. On Sunday afternoons, this trendy area pulses with shoppers and café crowds.

Northeast Paris: Marais Neighborhood and More



▲Place des Vosges—Study the architecture in this grand square: nine pavilions per side. Some of the brickwork is real, some is fake. If you are able, go to the center, where Louis XIII sits on a horse surrounded by locals enjoying their community park. Children frolic in the sandbox, lovers warm benches, and pigeons guard their fountains, while trees shade this retreat from the glare of the big city. Henry IV built this centerpiece of the Marais in 1605. As hoped, this turned the Marais into Paris' most exclusive neighborhood. As the nobility flocked to Versailles in a later age, this too was a magnet for the rich and powerful of France.



With the Revolution, the aristocratic elegance of this quarter became working-class, filled with gritty shops, artisans, immigrants, and Jews. **Victor Hugo** lived at #6, and you can visit his house (**AE, AI, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible; free, Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00, last entry 17:40, closed Mon, 6 place des Vosges, tel. 01 42 72 10 16). Leave the place des Vosges through the doorway at southwest corner of the square (near the three-star Michelin restaurant, l’Ambrosie) and pass through the elegant **Hôtel de Sully** (great example of a Marais mansion) to rue St. Antoine.

Access: The park is Level 2—Moderately Accessible. The sidewalks around place des Vosges are at street level, but to get into the courtyard at the square’s center, you’ll have to negotiate three stairs down, then another three back up (no railing).

▲▲**Pompidou Center (Centre Pompidou)**—Europe’s greatest collection of far-out modern art is housed in the Musée National d’Art Moderne, on the fourth and fifth floors of this colorful exhibition hall. (Note that



if you’re here during the 2006 renovation, the collection may be condensed on either the fourth or fifth floor.) The building is “exoskeletal” (like Notre-Dame or a crab), with its functional parts—the pipes, heating ducts, and escalator—on the outside, and the meaty art inside. It’s the epitome of modern architecture, where “form fol-

lows function.” Once ahead of its time, the 20th-century art displayed in this museum has been waiting for the world to catch up with it. The 20th century—accelerated by technology and fragmented by war—was exciting and chaotic, and this art reflects the turbulence of that century of change. In this free-flowing and airy museum (with great views over Paris), you’ll come face to face with works by Matisse, Picasso, Chagall, Dalí, Warhol, Kandinsky, Max Ernst, Jackson Pollock, and many more. And after so many Madonnas-and-Children, a piano smashed to bits and glued to the wall is refreshing

The Pompidou Center and its square are lively, with lots of people, street theater, and activity inside and out—a perpetual street fair. Kids of any age enjoy the fun, colorful fountain called *Homage to Stravinsky*, next to the Pompidou Center. If you need a light meal or snack, try the places lining the Stravinsky fountain. Don’t miss the free exhibits on the ground floor of the Center. If you are able, ride the escalator for a great city view from the top (ticket or Museum Pass required), and consider the good mezzanine-level café.

Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. The vast entry ramp has bumpy cobblestones, but if you like modern art, it's worth the trip to reach the fully accessible interior.

Cost, Hours, Location: €7, free first Sun of month, covered by Museum Pass, Wed–Mon 11:00–21:00, closed Tue, Mo: Rambuteau, tel. 01 44 78 12 33, www.centrepompidou.fr.

▲▲Jewish Art and History Museum (Musée d'Art et Histoire du Judaïsme)—This fascinating museum is located in a beautifully restored Marais mansion and tells the story of Judaism throughout Europe, from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem to the theft of famous artworks during World War II.

The museum illustrates the cultural unity maintained by this continually dispersed population. You'll learn about the history of Jewish traditions, from bar mitzvahs to menorahs, and see the exquisite traditional costumes and objects around which daily life revolved. Don't miss the explanation of "the Dreyfus affair," a major event in early 1900s French politics. You'll also see photographs of and paintings by famous Jewish artists, including Chagall, Modigliani, and Soutine. A small but moving section is devoted to the deportation of Jews from Paris.

Helpful, free audioguides and many English explanations make this an enjoyable history lesson (red numbers on small signs indicate the number you should press on your audioguide). Move along at your own speed.

Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, ♥, Level 1—Fully Accessible.

Cost, Hours, Location: €7, includes audioguide, not covered by Museum Pass, Mon–Fri 11:00–18:00, Sun 10:00–18:00, closed Sat, 71 rue du Temple, Mo: Rambuteau or Hôtel de Ville a few blocks farther away, tel. 01 53 01 86 60, www.mahj.org.

▲▲Picasso Museum (Musée Picasso)—Tucked into a corner of the Marais and worth ▲▲▲ if you're a Picasso fan, this museum contains the world's largest collection of Picasso's paintings, sculptures, sketches, and ceramics, and includes his small collection of Impressionist art. The art is well-displayed in a fine old mansion with a peaceful garden café. The room-by-room English introductions help make sense of Picasso's work—from the Toulouse-Lautrec-like portraits at the beginning of his career to his gray-brown Cubist period to his return-to-childhood, Salvador Dalí-like finish. The well-done €3 English guidebook helps Picassophiles appreciate the context of his art and learn more about his interesting life. Most will be happy reading the posted English explanations while moving at a steady pace through the museum—the ground and first floors satisfied my curiosity.

Access: AE, AI, AL, Level 1—Fully Accessible. Leaving rue Thorigny, wheelchair users will need to cover 100 feet of bumpy cobblestones to reach the museum.

Cost, Hours, Location: €5.50, free first Sun of month, covered by Museum Pass, April–Sept Wed–Mon 9:30–18:00, Oct–March Wed–Mon 9:30–17:30, last entry 45 min before closing, closed Tue, 5 rue de Thorigny, Mo: St. Paul or Chemin Vert, tel. 01 42 71 25 21, www.musee-picasso.fr.

▲▲**Carnavalet Museum (Musée Carnavalet)**—The tumultuous history of Paris is well-portrayed in this museum, offering a good overview of everything from Louis XIV period rooms, to Napoleon, to the belle époque. Unfortunately, accessibility is difficult, and explanations are in French only—though many displays are fairly self-explanatory.

The Carnavalet, which opened in 1880, is housed in two Marais mansions connected by a corridor. The first half of the museum (pre-Revolution) dates from a period when people generally accepted the notion that some were born to rule, and most were born to be ruled. This section is difficult to follow (rooms numbered out of order, no English descriptions, and sections closed due to understaffing) so see it quickly, then concentrate your energy on the Revolution and beyond.

The Revolution is the museum's highlight. Fascinating exhibits cover this bloody period of French history, when atrocious acts were committed in the name of government “by, for, and of the people.” The exhibits take you from events that led up to the Revolution, to the storming of the 100-foot-high walls of the Bastille, to the royal beheadings, and through the reigns of terror that followed. They then trace the rise and fall of Napoleon, and end with the Paris Commune uprisings.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible (packed with stairs, no elevator).

Cost, Hours, Location: Free, Tue–Sun 10:00–18:00, closed Mon; avoid lunchtime (12:00–14:00), when many rooms close; 23 rue de Sévigné, Mo: St. Paul, tel. 01 44 59 58 58.

▲**Promenade Plantée Park**—This two-mile-long, narrow garden walk on a viaduct was once used for train tracks and is now a joy. Part of the park is elevated. At times, you'll walk along the street until you pick up the next segment. The shops below the viaduct's arches (a creative use of once wasted urban space) make for entertaining window-shopping.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible. With many stairs up and down, this is inaccessible to all but the most energetic slow walkers.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free, opens Mon–Fri at 8:00, Sat–Sun at 9:00, closes at sunset. It runs from place de la Bastille (Mo: Bastille) along avenue Daumesnil to Saint-Mandé (Mo: Michel Bizot). From

place de la Bastille (follow “Sortie Opéra” or “Sortie rue de Lyon” from Bastille Métro station), go down rue de Lyon with the Opera immediately on your left. Find the steps up the red brick wall a block after the Opera.

▲Père Lachaise Cemetery (Cimetière du Père Lachaise)—Littered with the tombstones of many of the city’s most illustrious dead, this is your best one-stop look at the fascinating, romantic world of “permanent Parisians.” More like a small city, the cemetery is confusing, but maps will direct you to the graves of Frédéric Chopin, Molière, Edith Piaf, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein, Jim Morrison, Héloïse and Abélard, and more (helpful €2 maps sold at flower stores near either entry).

Access: Level 3—Minimally Accessible. With lots of steps and cobble, uneven terrain, the cemetery is best left to energetic slow walkers.

Cost, Hours, Location: Free, Mon–Sat 8:00–18:00, Sun 9:00–18:00, actually closes at dusk. It’s down rue Père Lachaise from Mo: Gambetta, or across the street from the Père Lachaise Métro stop (also reachable via bus #69).

North Paris: Montmartre

Explore Paris’ highest hilltop (420 feet) for a different perspective on the City of Light. Trace the footsteps of the people who’ve lived here—monks stomping grapes (1200s), farmers grinding grain in windmills (1600s), dust-coated gypsum miners (1700s), Parisian liberals (1800s), modernist painters (1900s), and all the struggling artists, poets, dreamers, and drunkards who came here for cheap rent, untaxed booze, rustic landscapes, and cabaret nightlife. With vineyards, wheat fields, windmills, animals, and a village tempo of life, it was the perfect escape from grimy Paris.

▲▲Sacré-Cœur—The five-domed, Roman-Byzantine basilica of Sacré-Cœur took 44 years to build (1875–1919). It stands on a foundation of 83 pillars sunk 130 feet deep, necessary because the ground beneath was



honeycombed with gypsum mines. The exterior is laced with gypsum, which whitens with age.

Access: Level 4—Not Accessible. Wheelchair users and others with limited mobility will probably want to skip the church interior. If you do go, take a taxi to the foot of the church steps. From there, you’ll have to climb 26 steps with no railing to reach the

entry. Once you're inside, it's all on one level.

Cost, Hours, and Location: Free, daily 7:00–23:00. Non-disabled travelers can pay €5 to climb 260 feet up the tight and claustrophobic spiral stairs to the top of the dome (Level 4—Not Accessible; June–Sept daily 9:00–19:00, Oct–May daily 10:00–18:00).

Getting There: A taxi to the top of the hill saves time and avoids sweat (tell the driver to take you to the foot of the church steps). Non-disabled travelers and slow walkers can take the Métro to the Anvers stop (1 Métro ticket buys your way up the funicular and avoids all but the last 26 stairs) or the closer but less scenic Abbesses stop.

Nearby: One block from the church, the **place du Tertre** was the haunt of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and the original bohemians. Today, it's mobbed with tourists and unoriginal bohemians, but it's still fun (go early in the morning to beat the crowds).

Pigalle—Paris' red-light district, the infamous “Pig Alley,” is at the foot of butte Montmartre. *Ooh la la.* It's more shocking than dangerous. Roll or stroll from place Pigalle to place Blanche, teasing desperate barkers and fast-talking temptresses. In bars, a €150 bottle of cheap champagne comes with a friend. Stick to the bigger streets, hang on to your wallet, and exercise good judgment. Cancan can cost a fortune, as can con artists in topless bars. After dark, countless tour buses line the streets, reminding us that tour guides make big bucks by bringing their groups to touristy nightclubs like the famous Moulin Rouge (Mo: Pigalle or Abbesses).

Museum of Erotic Art (Musée de l'Erotisme)—Paris' sexy museum has five floors of risqué displays—mostly paintings and drawings—ranging from artistic to erotic to disgusting, with a few circa-1920 porn videos and a fascinating history of local brothels tossed in. It's in the center of the Pigalle red-light district.

Access: AE, AI, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible.

Cost, Hours, Location: €7, definitely not covered by Museum Pass, daily 10:00–2:00 in the morning, 72 boulevard de Clichy, Mo: Blanche.

Disappointments de Paris

Here are a few negatives to help you manage your limited time:

La Madeleine is a big, neoclassical church with a postcard facade and a postbox interior.

The **Bastille** is Paris' most famous non-sight. The square is there, but confused tourists look everywhere and can't find the famous prison of Revolutionary fame. The building's gone, and the square is good only as a jumping-off point for Promenade Plantée Park (see page *TK).

Finally, much of the **Latin Quarter** is a frail shadow of its once bohemian self. The blocks nearest the river (across from Notre-Dame) are more Tunisian, Greek, and Woolworth's than old-time Paris. The neighborhood merits a wander, but you're better off focusing on the area around boulevard St. Germain and rue de Buci, and on the streets around the Maubert-Mutualité Métro stop.

Palace of Versailles

Every king's dream, Versailles was the residence of the French king and the cultural heartbeat of Europe for about 100 years—until the Revolution



of 1789 ended the notion that God deputized some people to rule for Him on Earth. Louis XIV spent half a year's income of Europe's richest country turning his dad's hunting lodge into a palace fit for a divine monarch. Louis XV and Louis XVI spent much of the 18th century gilding Louis XIV's lily. In 1837, about 50 years after the

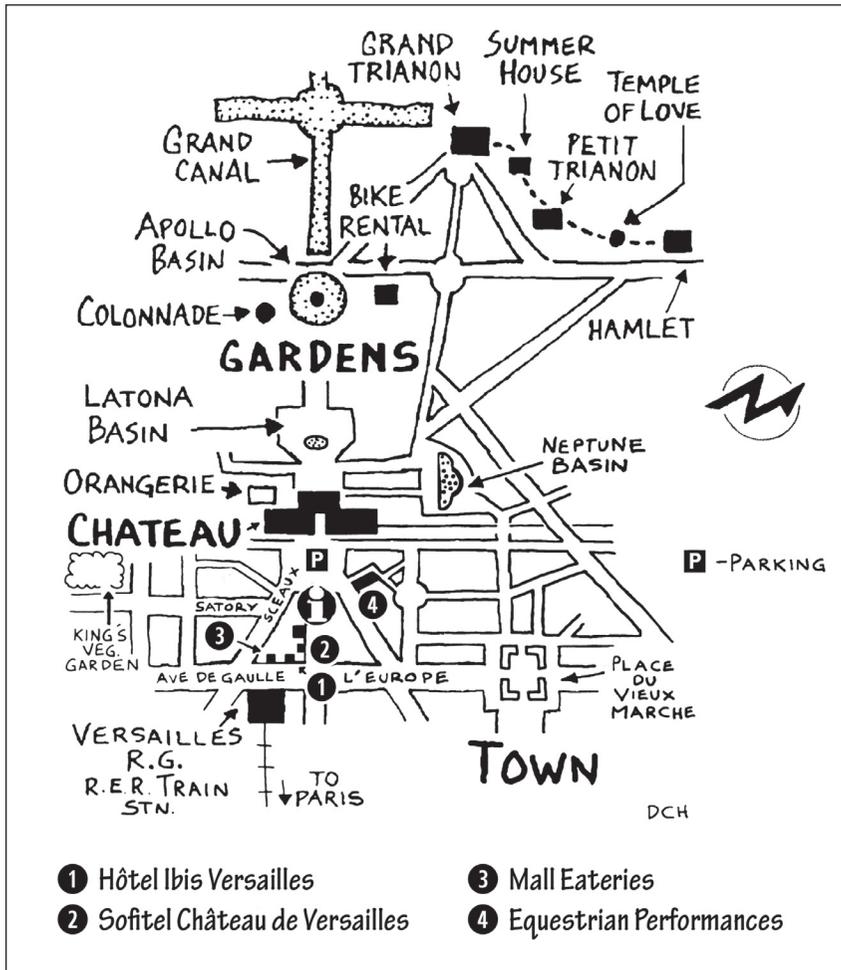
royal family was evicted, King Louis Philippe opened the palace as a museum. Europe's next best palaces are Versailles wannabes.

Palace Access: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible. For arrival by train or car from Paris, see page *TK. From the palace entrance gate, proceed over cobblestones toward the palace (the building with the clock, facing the gate), which was Louis XIV's original hunting lodge. Continue toward the clock until you crest the gradual rise (which used to have steps, but has recently been made wheelchair-accessible). At the top of the rise is the only fully accessible entry, Entrance H (on your right). Consider using the nearby adapted toilet (see below) before entering. When you're ready to enter the palace, ring the bell at Entrance H. A wheelchair user (and a companion) may enter the palace free. Loaner wheelchairs are available. Once inside, an accessible lift will take you to the main floor. Wheelchair users have access only to this main level—but that's where the most interesting sights are anyway (described under "Palace," below). Accessibility details on the rest of the Versailles grounds are described below.

Accessible Toilet: The accessible toilet (€0.50) is near Entrance C, which is just opposite Entrance H. To reach this fully adapted toilet, go into the Entrance C tunnel and follow signs.

Cost: There are several different parts of the palace, each with a

Versailles



separate admission. The **State Apartments** are free for a wheelchair user and companion; otherwise €7.50 (€5.50 after 15:30, under 18 free, covered by Paris Museum Pass).

The **gardens** are free, except on weekends April–Sept, when the fountains blast and the price shoots up to €6 (see “Fountain Spectacles,” below).

Entering the **Grand and Petit Trianon Palaces** costs €5 together (free for a wheelchair user and companion; covered by Paris Museum Pass).

There are several other, lesser sights: the **King’s Private Apartments** (costs €4.50 for audioguide, or visit with guided tour, see “Guided Tours,”

Versailles Renovation—2006 to 2010

The château will be undergoing a massive reorganization to better accommodate its hordes of visitors in the next few years. Rather than the various entries and tours, one grand and user-friendly entry will eventually allow all visitors to enter and flow freely through everything in the palace and grounds for one simple (but higher) price. The palace attic, currently unused, will become a vast 19th-century French history museum. A path across the giant cobbles will enable people who use wheelchairs more comfortable access. And there will be many more toilets. The first step in this vision: Starting in 2006, the gardens are free (except during the fountain spectacles on spring and summer weekends).

below), the sumptuous **Opera House** (only by guided tour, see below), and the **Mesdames Apartments** (exclusively covered by One-Day Pass, see below).

A **One-Day Pass** covers your entrance to just about everything, gives you cut-the-line privileges, and provides audioguides throughout your visit. If you're seeing everything (and don't have a Paris Museum Pass), this can be a money-saver. The pass gives you priority access to the State Apartments, the King's Private Apartments, Mesdames Apartments, both Trianon Palaces, the shuttle train around the gardens, and Les Grand Eaux Musicales (see "Fountain Spectacles," below; note that these run only on summer weekends). If you buy this pass in Paris, it covers your train ride to and from Paris (€21, sold at Paris train stations, RER stations that serve Versailles, and at FNAC department stores). The same pass (without transportation) is sold for €20 at the palace.

Guided Tours: The in-depth guided tours of Versailles are not wheelchair-accessible (there are stairs and other barriers along the route). Slow walkers and non-disabled travelers may want to consider these tours (€5/60 min, €7/90 min, €9/2 hrs; note that you have to pay the €7.50 entry fee for the State Apartments separately from any tour). To take a guided tour, make reservations immediately upon arrival, as tours can sell out by 13:00 (first tours generally begin at 10:00; last tours usually depart at 15:00, but as late as 16:00). The tours can be long, but those with an appetite for the palace history enjoy them. Even if you decide not to pay for the tour up front, keep your ticket as proof you've paid for the palace entry—in case you decide to take a guided tour after you've wandered through Versailles by yourself.

Touring Versailles from A to M

Note that all of this information is subject to change over the next several years. But in all likelihood, the following is what you *should* find at Versailles:

Entrance A to State Apartments (without Pass): If you don't have a Paris Museum Pass or One-Day Pass, and you want to tour the palace on your own (with €4.50 audioguide), join the line at Entrance A. Enter the palace and take a one-way wander through the State Apartments from the King's Wing, through the Hall of Mirrors, and out via the Queen's and Nobles' Wing.

Entrance B-2 to State Apartments (for Passholders): This entrance is for people with a Paris Museum Pass or One-Day Pass who want to tour the palace on their own (with €4.50 audioguide). Note that those taking a guided tour can enter the State Apartments without a wait through this entrance.

Entrance C to King's Private Apartments (without One-Day Pass): If you lack a One-Day Pass, enter here to tour Louis XIV's private bedroom, other rooms, and the Hall of Mirrors, with the help of a dry but informative audioguide (€4.50 admission includes audioguide, not covered by Paris Museum Pass). The Sun King's bedroom and Hall of Mirrors are part of the State Apartments tour, so the King's Private Apartments offer nothing really different to the casual visitor than what you'll see on the main State Apartments tour.

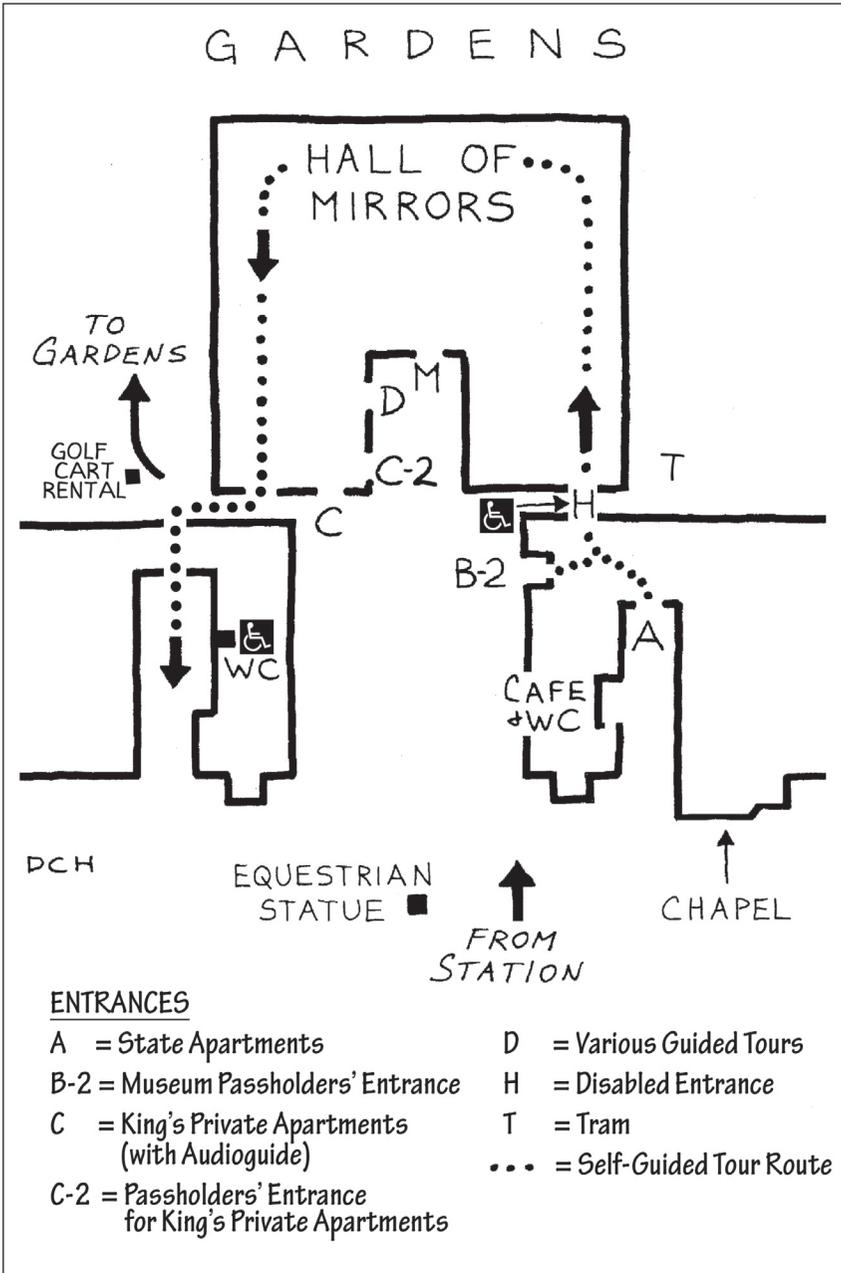
Entrance C-2 to King's Private Apartments (for One-Day Passholders): Same as C, but for visitors with a One-Day Pass.

Entrance D to King's Private Apartments and Opera (with a Guided Tour): This is the place to book a guided tour (see page *TK), and where you enter when it's time for your tour to begin. You'll visit the King's Private Apartments (Louis XV, Louis XVI, and Marie-Antoinette), the chapel, and the Opera.

Entrance H: If you use a wheelchair, you'll enter the château through here (described in detail under "Palace Access" on page *TK).

Entrance M to Mesdames Apartments (for One-Day Passholders): This exhibit gives a look at the private apartments of the eight daughters of King Louis XV (exclusively for visitors with the One-Day Pass, includes 30-min audioguide). It's Versailles' least interesting sight, as the rooms are quite barren, there's little about their lives to actually see, and the commentary is mostly about the paintings hanging on the walls.

Versailles Entrances



Hours: The **palace** is open April–Oct Tue–Sun 9:00–18:30, Nov–March Tue–Sun 9:00–17:30, closed Mon. Last entry is 30 minutes before closing. The **Grand and Petit Trianon Palaces** open at noon. The **gardens** are open daily from 7:00 (8:00 in winter) to sunset (as late as 21:30 or as early as 17:30).

In summer, Versailles is especially crowded between 10:00 and 13:00, and all day Tue and Sun. Remember, the peasant mobs gave Marie-Antoinette a pain in the neck, too, so relax and let them eat cake. For fewer crowds, go early or late: Either arrive by 9:00 (when the palace opens, touring the palace first, then the gardens) or after 15:30 (you'll get a reduced entry ticket, but note that the last guided tours of the day generally depart at 15:00, though sometimes as late as 16:00). If you arrive midday, see the gardens first and the palace later, at 15:00. The gardens and palace are great late. On one of my visits, I was the only tourist in the Hall of Mirrors at 18:00...even on a Tuesday.

Information: A helpful TI (**AE, AI**, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is just past the Sofitel hotel between the RER station and the palace (April–Sept daily 9:00–19:00, Oct–March daily 9:00–18:00, tel. 01 39 24 88 88, www.chateauversailles.fr). You'll also find information booths inside the château (at Entrances A and B-2) and, during peak season, kiosks scattered around the courtyard. The useful *Versailles Orientation Guide* brochure explains your sightseeing options.

Palace: To tour the palace on your own, join the line at entrance A if you need to pay admission. Those with a Paris Museum Pass or One-Day Pass are allowed in through entrance B-2 without a wait. Wheelchair riders use Entrance H. (For the complete procedure for wheelchair users, see “Palace Access,” above. For more entry options, see “Touring Versailles from A to M” sidebar.) Enter the palace and take a one-way roll or stroll through the State Apartments from the King's Wing, through the Hall of Mirrors, and out via the Queen's and Nobles' Wing.



The Hall of Mirrors was the ultimate hall of the day—250 feet long, with 17 arched mirrors matching 17 windows with royal garden views, 24 gilded candelabra, eight busts of Roman emperors, and eight classical-



style statues (7 are ancient originals). The ceiling is decorated with stories of Louis' triumphs. Imagine this place filled with silk gowns and powdered wigs, lit by thousands of candles. The mirrors—a luxury at the time—were a reflection of an era when aristocrats felt good about their looks and their fortunes. In another age altogether, this was the room in which the Treaty of Versailles was signed, ending World War I.

Before leaving at the end, work your way clockwise around the **Hall of Battles**, the long room filled with the great battles of France murals. If you don't have *Rick Steves' Paris*, the guidebook called *The Châteaux, The Gardens, and Trianon* gives a room-by-room rundown.

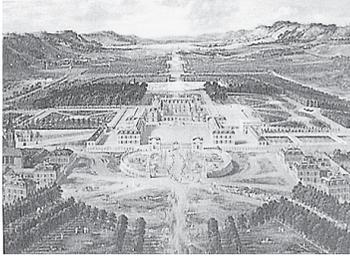
Getting Around the Gardens: It's a leisurely and lengthy roll or stroll from the palace, down to the canal, past the two Trianon palaces to the Hamlet.

The fast-looking, slow-moving **tram** for tired tourists leaves from behind the château (north side) and serves the Grand Canal and the Trianon palaces. It's designed for walkers, and is not wheelchair accessible (Level 3—Minimally Accessible). You can get on and off as you like (€5, free with One-Day Pass, 4/hr, 4 stops but not the Hamlet, commentary is nearly worthless). The accessible golf carts, described below, are better for people who use wheelchairs.

Gardens Access: The gardens are wheelchair-accessible (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible)—wheelchair riders can use the ramps (also used by tourist train and horse-drawn buggies) to access the dirt and small-stone pathways. The Grand Trianon is accessible, but the Petit Trianon is only minimally so. Parts of the grounds, such as the Hamlet, are accessed via a rough path that may be challenging for wheelchair users. There are several restaurants (most of them moderately accessible) and toilets (only one is accessible) sprinkled throughout the garden. The wheelchair-accessible toilet is located near the entrance of the Grand Trianon (see below).

Accessible Golf Carts: There are no accessible taxis in Versailles, but there are golf carts for use on the palace grounds (€28/hr). Three of the golf carts are adapted to be accessible (hold up to 4 people plus 1 wheelchair). These carts can effectively travel over 80 percent the immense grounds outside the palace. You can rent them at the Orangerie side of the palace (go through Entrance C tunnel and turn right).

Palace Gardens: The gardens offer a world of royal amusements. Outside the palace is *l'orangerie*. Louis, the only person who could grow oranges in Paris, had a mobile orange grove that could be wheeled in and out of his greenhouses according to the weather. A promenade leads from the palace to the Grand Canal, an artificial lake that, in Louis'



day, was a mini-sea with nine ships, including a 32-cannon warship. France's royalty used to float up and down the canal in Venetian gondolas.

While Louis cleverly used palace life at Versailles to “domesticate” his nobility, turning otherwise meddling nobles into groveling socialites, all this pomp and ceremony hampered the royal family as well. For an escape from the public life at Versailles, they built more intimate palaces as retreats in their garden. Before the Revolution, there was plenty of space to retreat—the grounds were enclosed by a 25-mile-long fence.

The beautifully restored **Grand Trianon Palace** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is as sumptuous as the main palace, but much smaller. With its pastel-pink colonnade and more human scale, this is a place you'd like to call home. The nearby **Petit Trianon** (AE, AI+A, Level 3—Minimally Accessible), which has a fine neoclassical exterior and an interior that can be skipped, was Marie-Antoinette's favorite residence (see “Cost” and “Hours,” above).

You can almost see princesses bobbing gaily in the branches as you move through the enchanting forest, past the white marble temple of love (1778) to the queen's fake-peasant **Hamlet** (*le Hameau*; interior not tourable, exterior visitable only via a gravelly, sandy path that may be difficult for wheelchair users). Palace life really got to Marie-Antoinette. Sort of a back-to-basics queen, she retreated further and further from her blue-blooded reality. Her happiest days were spent at the Hamlet, under a bonnet, tending her perfumed sheep and her manicured gardens in a thatch-happy wonderland.

Fountain Spectacles: On spring and summer weekends, classical music fills the king's backyard, and the garden's fountains are in full squirt (April–Sept Sat–Sun 10:30–12:00 & 15:00–16:30, finale 16:50–17:00). On these “spray days,” the gardens cost €6 (not covered by Paris Museum Pass, ask for a map of fountains). Louis had his engineers literally reroute a river to fuel these fountains. Even by today's standards, they are impressive. Pick up the helpful *Les Grandes Eaux Musicales* brochure at any information booth. Also ask about the various impressive evening spectacles (Sat in July–Aug).

Equestrian Performances: The Equestrian Performance Academy (Academie du Spectacle Equestre) has brought the art of horseback riding back to Versailles. You can watch its rigorous training sessions every morning except Mon and Fri (€7, Tue and Fri–Sun at 10:00 and 11:00).

The weekend spectacle (Sat and Sun at 14:30, €15, 75 min) features the same students parading their stuff to music without instructor interruptions. The stables (Grande Ecurie)—where you can buy tickets—are across the square from the château, next to the Poste (tel. 01 39 02 07 14, www.acadequestre.fr).

Cafés: The cafeteria and WCs are next to Entrance A (stairs make them Level 4—Not Accessible). You’ll find a sandwich kiosk and a decent restaurant (**AE+A, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) at the canal in the garden. For more recommendations, see “Eating in Versailles,” below. A handy McDonald’s is immediately across from the train station (fully accessible toilet without crowds).

Getting There: From downtown Paris, take the RER-C train from any of these RER stops: Gare d’Austerlitz, St. Michel, Musée d’Orsay, Invalides, Pont de l’Alma, and Champ de Mars (€6 round-trip, covered by railpass—show pass at SNCF ticket window and get a *contremarque de passage*, which you’ll keep until you exit the station, 30 min one-way). If you use a wheelchair, the Invalides station offers the best access (arrive at the station early and ask for assistance at the ticket counter—they will prepare an elevator for your use). Any train whose name starts with a V (e.g., “Vick”) goes to Versailles; don’t board other trains. Get off at the last stop (Versailles R.G., or “Rive Gauche”—not Versailles C.H., which is farther from the palace), and exit through the turnstiles by inserting your ticket. If you use a wheelchair, tell them that you’ll need a ramp to get of the train once at Versailles, so they can call ahead and make arrangements. Once you arrive, leave the train using this ramp and find the ramp that leads outside (on the right side of the station as you leave the platform). This ramp deposits you onto avenue du Général de Gaulle. (Across the street is a McDonald’s with a fully accessible toilet, as well as other restaurants—described below.) From this train station, it’s about a third of a mile to the palace: By wheelchair or by foot, turn right as you leave the station and go to the first intersection, where you’ll turn left down avenue de Paris. Follow this accessible boulevard directly to the palace.

When returning to Paris from Versailles, look through the windows past the turnstiles for the departure board. Any train leaving Versailles serves all downtown Paris RER stops on the C line (they’re marked on the schedule as stopping at “*toutes les gares jusqu’à Austerlitz*,” meaning “all stations up to Austerlitz”).

Taxis for the 30-minute ride between Versailles and Paris cost about €30 one-way (like all Paris taxis, most require you to make a transfer into the car so the driver can fold your wheelchair and place it in the trunk; for a fully wheelchair accessible minibus option that costs

more, see page *TK).

To reach Versailles from Paris by **car**, get on the *périphérique* freeway that circles Paris, and take the toll-free A13 autoroute toward Rouen. Follow signs into Versailles, then look for *château* signs and park in the huge pay lot in front of the palace (7 spaces are reserved for visitors with limited mobility). The drive takes about 30 minutes one-way.

Town of Versailles: After the palace closes and the tourists go, the prosperous, wholesome town of Versailles feels a long way from Paris. The central market thrives on place du Marché on Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday until 13:00. Across the street from the RER station is a cluster of restaurants, shops, Internet cafés, and hotels (described below). Consider the wisdom of picking up or dropping your rental car in Versailles rather than in Paris. In Versailles, the Hertz and Avis offices are at Gare des Chantiers (Versailles C.H., served by Paris' Montparnasse station).

Sleeping in Versailles: Versailles, with easy, safe parking and accessible, reasonably priced hotels, can be a good overnight stop. Park in the château's main lot while looking for a hotel, or leave your car there overnight (free 19:30–8:00). Get a map of Versailles at your hotel or at the TI. **Hôtel Ibis Versailles** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB, ♥, Level 1—Fully Accessible) offers fair value and modern comfort, with 85 air-conditioned rooms, but no character. Packed with young people and business travelers, this hotel features an accessible restaurant and coffee bar. Reserve ahead for one of its three adapted rooms, which have roll-in showers (Db-€60 Fri–Sun, or €90 Mon–Thu, extra bed-€10, breakfast-€6.50, across from RER station, 3 blocks from the palace at 4 avenue du Général de Gaulle, tel. 01 39 53 03 30, fax 01 39 50 06 31, h1409@accor-hotels.com). **Sofitel Château de Versailles** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB+A, Level 1—Fully Accessible) has a great location near shops and restaurants and just two blocks from the palace. It has three adapted rooms with suitable bathrooms (Db-€320–390, 2 bis avenue de Paris, tel. 01 39 07 46 46, h1300@accor-hotels.com).

Eating in Versailles: All of these eateries are fully accessible (AE, AI, AT, Level 1). You'll find them in a little accessible mall on avenue du Général de Gaulle, next to McDonald's and across from the train station: **A la Coiffe Bretonne** is your best bet for crêpes in a friendly, cozy, countryside setting (daily 12:00–14:30 & 19:00–22:30, tel. 01 30 21 78 22). **Class' Croute** offers sandwiches, salads, and desserts (daily 10:00–18:00, tel. 01 39 07 26 56). **Chez César Les Manages** is a cozy sit-down pizzeria (daily 12:00–24:00, tel. 01 39 53 02 29). To surf the Web nearby, try the fully accessible **Internet@** (AE, AI, AT, Level 1; €4/3hrs, daily 9:00–20:00, tel. 01 39 53 30 30).

SHOPPING

Even staunch anti-shoppers may be tempted to partake in chic Paris. Exploring the elegant and outrageous boutiques provides a break from the heavy halls of the Louvre, and, if you approach it right, a little cultural enlightenment.

Here are some tips for avoiding *faux pas* and making the most of the experience.

French Etiquette: Before you enter a Parisian store, remember the following points.

- In small stores, always greet the clerk by saying “*Bonjour*,” plus the appropriate title (*Madame*, *Mademoiselle*, or *Monsieur*). When leaving, say, “*Au revoir, Madame/Mademoiselle/Monsieur.*”
- The customer is not always right. In fact, figure the clerk is doing you a favor by waiting on you.
- Except in department stores, it’s not normal for the customer to handle clothing. Ask first.
- Observe French shoppers. Then imitate.

Department Stores: Like cafés, department stores were invented here (surprisingly, not in America). Parisian department stores, monuments to a more relaxed and elegant era, begin with their spectacular perfume sections. Helpful information desks are usually nearby (pick up the handy store floor plan in English). Most stores have a good selection of souvenirs and toys at fair prices and reasonable restaurants; some have great view terraces. Choose from these great Parisian department stores: Galeries Lafayette (**AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible; behind old Opéra Garnier, Mo: Opéra), Printemps (**AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible; next-door to Galeries Lafayette), and Bon Marché (**AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible; Mo: Sèvres-Babylone).

Boutiques: I enjoy window-shopping, pausing at cafés, and observing the rhythm of neighborhood life. While the shops are more intimate, sales clerks are more formal—mind your manners.

Here are four very different areas to explore. Streets and sidewalks are accessible, but some of the specific shops are not. If a place isn’t accessible, just savor the window-shopping (or, as the French say, “window-licking”).

A roll or stroll from Sèvres-Babylone to St. Sulpice allows you to sample smart, classic clothing boutiques while enjoying one of Paris’ prettier neighborhoods—for sustenance along the way, there’s La Maison du Chocolat at 19 rue de Sèvres, selling handmade chocolates in exquisitely wrapped boxes.

The ritzy streets connecting place de la Madeleine and place Vendôme form a miracle mile of gourmet food shops, jewelry stores, four-star hotels, perfumeries, and exclusive clothing boutiques. Fauchon (Level 4—Not Accessible), on place de la Madeleine, is a bastion of over-the-top food products, hawking €7,000 bottles of Cognac (who buys this stuff?). Hédiard (AE, AI, AT, ♥, Level 1—Fully Accessible), across the square from Fauchon at #21, is an older, more appealing, and accessible gourmet food shop. Next door, La Maison des Truffes sells black mushrooms for about €180 a pound, and white truffles from Italy for €2,500 a pound.

For more eclectic, avant-garde stores, peruse the artsy shops between the Pompidou Center and place des Vosges in the Marais (along rue Ste. Croix de la Bretonnerie and rue des Rosiers).

For a contemporary, more casual, and less frenetic shopping experience, and to see Paris' latest urban renewal project, visit Bercy Village, a once thriving wine warehouse district that has been transformed into an outdoor shopping mall (Mo: Cour St. Emilion).

Flea Markets: Paris hosts several sprawling weekend flea markets (*marché aux puces*, mar-shay oh poos; literally translated, since *puce* is French for flea). While these markets are often moderately accessible, the crowds and tight aisles can make them unappealing to wheelchair users. These oversized garage sales date back to the Middle Ages, when middlemen would sell old, flea-infested clothes and discarded possessions of the wealthy at bargain prices to eager peasants. Today, some travelers find them claustrophobic, crowded, monster versions of those back home, though others find their French diamonds-in-the-rough and return happy.

The Pucés St. Ouen (poos sahn-wahn) is the biggest and oldest of them all, with more than 2,000 vendors selling everything from flamingos to faucets (Sat 9:00–18:00, Sun 10:00–18:00, Mon 11:00–17:00, closed Tue–Fri, pretty dead the first 2 weeks of Aug, Mo: Porte de Clingancourt, tel. 01 58 61 22 90, www.st-ouen-tourisme.com and www.parispuces.com).

Street Markets: Several traffic-free street markets overflow with flowers, produce, fish vendors, and butchers, illustrating how most Parisians shopped before there were supermarkets and department stores. While some areas of these markets might be inaccessible, wheelchair users can generally find their way around them well enough. Good market streets include the rue Cler (Mo: Ecole Militaire), rue Montorgueil (Mo: Etienne Marcel), rue Mouffetard (Mo: Cardinal Lemoine or Censier-Daubenton), and rue Daguerre (Mo: Denfert-Rochereau). Browse these

markets to collect a classy picnic (open daily except Sun afternoons and Mon, also closed for lunch 13:00–15:00).

Souvenir Shops: Avoid souvenir carts in front of famous monuments. Prices and selection are better in shops and department stores. The riverfront stalls near Notre-Dame sell a variety of used books, magazines, and tourist paraphernalia in the most romantic setting.

Whether you indulge in a new wardrobe, an artsy poster, or just one luscious pastry, you'll find that a shopping excursion provides a priceless slice of Parisian life.

NIGHTLIFE

Paris is brilliant after dark. Save energy from your day's sightseeing and get out at night. There's nothing like experiencing the City of Light when it's lit up. If a **Seine River cruise** sounds appealing, check out "Tours," on page *TK.

Pariscope magazine (see "Tourist Information," page *TK), offers a complete weekly listing of music, cinema, theater, opera, and other special events. *Paris Voice* newspaper, in English, has a monthly review of Paris entertainment (available at any English-language bookstore, French-American establishments, or the American Church, www.parisvoice.com).



Music

Classical Concerts—For classical music on any night, consult *Pariscope* magazine; the "Musique" section under "Concerts Classiques" lists concerts (both free and for a fee). Look for posters at tourist-oriented churches. From March through November, several churches regularly host concerts, including St. Sulpice (**AE, AI, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible, described on page *TK), St. Germain-des-Prés (**AE+A, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, four gentle steps to get in the front door), and Sainte-Chapelle (Level 4—Not Accessible). Look also for daytime concerts in parks, such as the Luxembourg Garden (**AE, AI**, Level 1—Fully Accessible). Even the Galeries Lafayette department store offers concerts (**AE, AI, AL, AT**, Level 1—Fully Accessible). Many concerts are free (*entrée libre*), such as the Sunday atelier concert sponsored

by the American Church (Level 4—Not Accessible; Sept–May at 17:00 or 18:00 but not every week, 65 quai d’Orsay, Mo: Invalides, RER: Pont de l’Alma, tel. 01 40 62 05 00).

Opera—Paris is home to two well-respected opera venues. The Opéra Bastille (**AE, AI, AL**, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is the massive modern opera house that dominates place de la Bastille. Come here for state-of-the-art special effects and modern interpretations of classic ballets and operas. In the spirit of this everyman’s opera, unsold seats are available at a big discount to seniors and students 15 minutes before the show (Mo: Bastille, tel. 01 43 43 96 96). The Opéra Garnier (**AE, AI, AL**, Level 1—Fully Accessible), Paris’ first opera house, hosts opera and ballet performances. Come here for less expensive tickets and grand belle époque decor (ramp entry on rue Scribe and special seats accessible by lift for wheelchair users; Mo: Opéra, tel. 01 44 73 13 99). For tickets, call 01 44 73 13 00 (wheelchair users call 01 40 01 18 50), go to the opera ticket offices (open 11:00–18:00), or—best—reserve on the Web at www.opera-de-paris.fr (for both opera houses).

After-Dark Bus Tours

Several companies offer evening tours of Paris. I’ve described a reliable one below. These trips are sold through your hotel (brochures in lobby) or directly at the offices listed below. You save no money by buying direct.

Paris Illumination Tours (**AE+A**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, must be able to step up into the bus), run by Paris Vision, connect all the great illuminated sights of Paris with a 100-minute bus tour in 12 languages. The double-decker buses have huge windows, but the most desirable front seats are reserved for customers who’ve bought tickets for the overrated Moulin Rouge. Left-side seats are marginally better. Visibility is fine in the rain.

You’ll board with a United Nations of tourists, get a set of headphones, dial up your language, and listen to a tape-recorded spiel (which is interesting, but includes an annoyingly bright TV screen and a pitch for the other, more expensive excursions). Uninspired as it is, the ride provides an entertaining first-night overview of the city at its floodlit and scenic best. Bring your city map to stay oriented as you go. You’re always on the bus, but the driver slows for photos at viewpoints (adults–€24, kids under 11 ride free, departures 19:00–22:00 depending on time of year, usually April–Oct only, reserve 1 day in advance, departs from Paris Vision office at 214 rue de Rivoli, across the street from Mo: Tuileries, tel. 01 42 60 30 01, fax 01 42 86 95 36, www.parisvision.com).

SLEEPING

I've recommended hotels in various areas of Paris. Each area has its own characteristics and charms (which I've described). Reserve ahead for Paris—the sooner, the better. Conventions clog Paris in September (worst), October, May, and June (very tough). In August, when Paris is quiet, some hotels offer lower rates to fill their rooms (if you're planning to visit Paris in the summer, the extra expense of an air-conditioned room can be money well spent). For advice on booking rooms, see "Making Reservations" in this book's Introduction.



Old, characteristic, budget Parisian hotels have always been cramped. Retrofitted with elevators, toilets, and private showers (as most are today), they are even more cramped. Even three-star hotel rooms are small and often not worth the extra expense in Paris. Some hotels include the hotel tax (*taxe du séjour*, about €1 per person per day), though most will add this to your bill.

Recommended hotels have an elevator, unless otherwise noted. Quad rooms usually have two double beds. Because rooms with double beds and showers are cheaper than rooms with twin beds and baths, room prices vary within each hotel.

Continental breakfasts run about €6–9, buffet breakfasts (baked goods, cereal, yogurt, and fruit) cost about €8–14. Café or picnic breakfasts are cheaper, but hotels usually give unlimited coffee.

Get advice from your hotel for safe parking (consider long-term

Sleep Code

(€1 = about \$1.20, country code: 33)

S = Single, **D** = Double/Twin, **T** = Triple, **Q** = Quad, **b** = bathroom, **s** = shower only, * = French hotel rating system (0–4 stars). Unless otherwise noted, credit cards are accepted and English is spoken (in fact, hotels with 2 or more stars are required to have an English-speaking staff).

parking at either airport—Orly is closer—and a taxi in). Garages are plentiful (€20–25/day, with special rates through some hotels). Meters are free in August. Self-serve laundrettes are common; ask your hotelier for the nearest one (“*Où est un laverie automatique?*”, ooh ay uh lah-vay-ree auto-mah-teek).

Rue Cler

(7th *arrondissement*, Mo: Ecole Militaire, La Tour-Maubourg, or Invalides)

Lined with open-air produce stands six days a week, rue Cler is a safe, tidy, village-like pedestrian street. It's so French that when I step out of my hotel in the morning, I feel like I must have been a poodle in a previous life. How such coziness lodged itself between the high-powered government district and the wealthy Eiffel Tower and Invalides areas, I'll never know. This is a neighborhood of wide, tree-lined boulevards, stately apartment buildings, and lots of Americans. The American Church, American Library, American University, and many of my readers call this area home. People with disabilities will find a warm welcome and more ♥'s per square block than anywhere else in Paris. The neighborhood streets are accessible for people using wheelchairs. Many of the stores are fully accessible, while others may have an entry step.

Hotels here are relatively spacious and a good value, considering the elegance of the neighborhood and the higher prices of the more cramped hotels in other central areas. For sightseeing, you're very close to the Eiffel Tower, Napoleon's Tomb, the Seine River, and the Orsay and Rodin museums. The fully accessible Invalides Métro/RER station (Level 1, has elevator) is also nearby.

Become a local at a rue Cler café for breakfast, or join the afternoon crowd for *une bière pression* (a draft beer). On rue Cler, you can eat and browse your way through a street full of pastry shops, delis, cheese shops, and colorful outdoor produce stalls. Afternoon *boules* (outdoor bowling) on the Esplanade des Invalides is a relaxing spectator sport (look for the dirt area to the upper right as you face Les Invalides; see sidebar on page *TK). The manicured gardens behind the golden dome of Napoleon's Tomb are free, peaceful, and filled with flowers (at southwest corner of grounds, close at about 19:00). A fully accessible esplanade leads you through the grounds.

While hardly a happening nightlife spot, rue Cler offers many low-impact after-dark activities. Take an evening roll or stroll above the river through the parkway between pont de l'Alma and pont des Invalides. For an after-dinner cruise on the Seine, it's a short roll or stroll to the

river and the Bateaux-Mouches (see page *TK). Or go into Champ de Mars park to admire the glowing Eiffel Tower. For more ideas on Paris after hours, see “Nightlife” on page *TK.

Tourist Information: Your neighborhood TI is at the Eiffel Tower (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible; May–Sept daily 11:00–18:42, closed Oct–April, all-Paris TI tel. 08 92 68 30 00).

American Church: The American Church and Franco-American Center (Level 4—Not Accessible, fifteen 6" steps to enter) is the community center for Americans living in Paris. They offer interdenominational worship services (every Sun at 11:00) and occasional concerts (most Sun at 17:00 or 18:00 Sept–May—but not every week), and distribute the useful *Paris Voice* and *France-U.S.A. Contacts* (reception open Mon–Sat 9:30–13:00 & 14:00–22:30, Sun 9:00–14:00 & 15:00–19:00, 65 quai d’Orsay, Mo: Invalides, tel. 01 40 62 05 00, www.acparis.org).

Services: There’s a **post office** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) at the end of rue Cler on avenue de la Motte-Picquet, and a handy **SNCF train office** at 78 rue St. Dominique (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible; Mon–Sat 8:30–19:30, closed Sun).

Laundry: Laveris Eclat (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a squeaky clean, modern, and roomy spot with one 3" entry step (daily 7:00–22:00, 3 rue Augereau).

Shopping: For groceries, two nearby locations of Le Marché Franprix (109 avenue de la Bourdonnais and 9 rue du Champ de Mars) are both Level 1—Fully Accessible. **Rue St. Dominique** is the area’s boutique-browsing street.

Internet Access: Two Internet cafés compete in this neighborhood: **Com Avenue** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is best (€5/hr, shareable and multi-use accounts, Mon–Sat 10:00–20:00, closed Sun, 24 rue du Champ de Mars); **Cyber World Café** (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 8" doorstep) is more expensive and less accessible, but open later (Mon–Sat 12:00–22:00, Sun 12:00–20:00, 20 rue de l’Exposition, tel. 01 53 59 96 54).

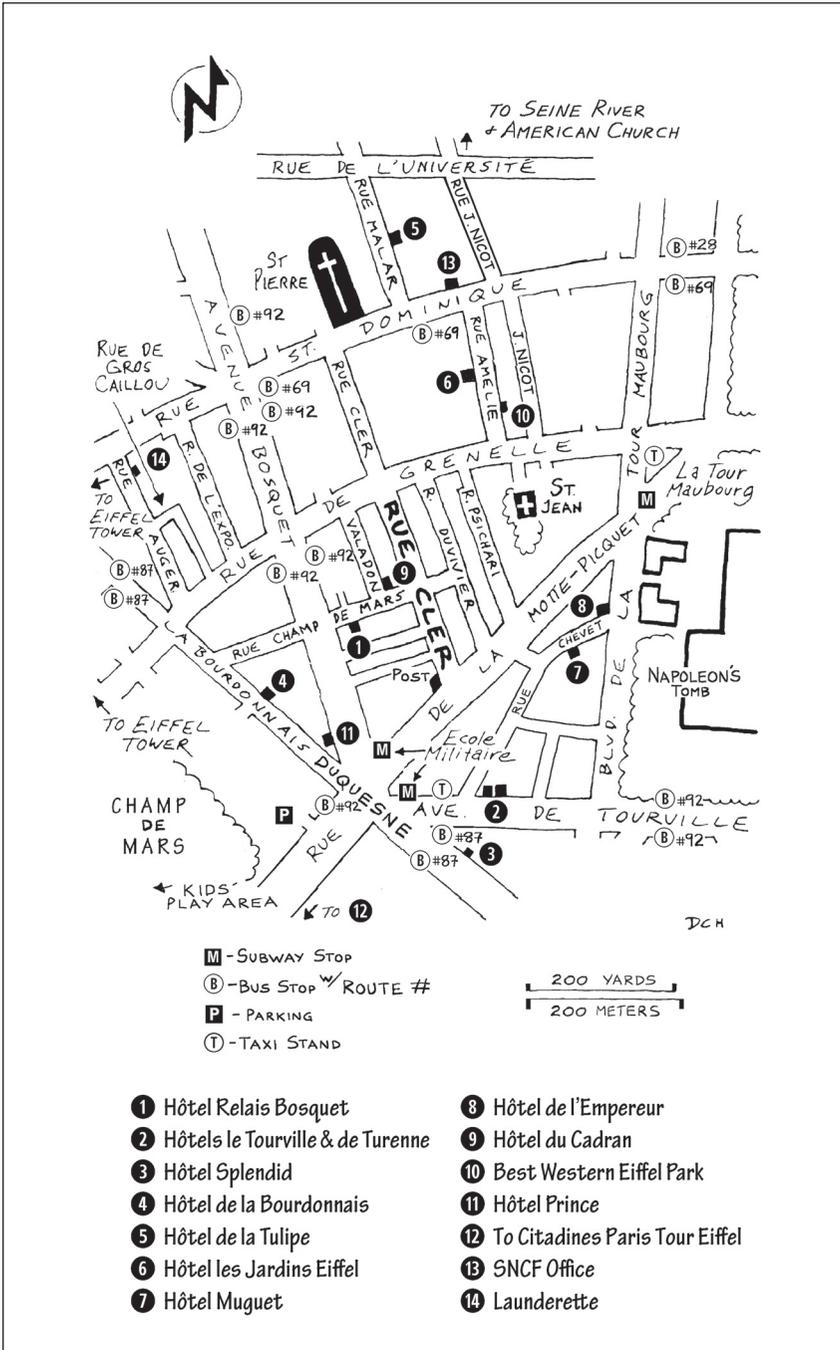
In the Heart of Rue Cler

Many of my readers stay in the rue Cler neighborhood. If you want to disappear into Paris, choose a hotel elsewhere.

Level 1—Fully Accessible

Hôtel Prince** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB, ♥), across avenue Bosquet from the Ecole Militaire Métro stop, has a spartan lobby and good rooms at very reasonable rates, considering they’re air-conditioned (Sb–€70, Db

Rue Cler Hotels



The Rules of *Boules*

Throughout Paris—and particularly on Les Invalides' big "front lawn," near the rue Cler neighborhood—you'll see citizens playing *boules*.

Each player starts with three iron balls, with the object of getting them close to the target, a small wooden ball called a *cochonnet*. The first player tosses the *cochonnet* about 30 feet, then throws the first of his iron balls near the target. The next player takes a turn. As soon as a player's ball is closest, it's the other guy's turn. Once all balls have been thrown, the score is tallied—the player with the closest ball gets one point for each ball closer to the target than his opponent's. The loser gets zero. Games are generally to 15 points.

A regulation *boules* field is 10 feet by 43 feet, but the game is played everywhere—just scratch a throwing circle in the sand, toss the *cochonnet*, and you're off. Strategists can try to knock the opponent's balls out of position, knock the *cochonnet* itself out of position, or guard their best ball with the other two.

with shower-€89, Db with tub-€107, Tb-€115, 66 avenue Bosquet, tel. 01 47 05 40 90, fax 01 47 53 06 62, www.hotel-paris-prince.com). In accessible rooms, the bathroom is fully adapted with bars, including the tub.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel Relais Bosquet*** (AE+A, AI, AR, AB+A) is modern, spacious, and a bit upscale, with snazzy, air-conditioned rooms, electric darkness blinds, and big beds. Gerard and his friendly staff are politely formal (standard Db-€150, spacious Db-€170, ask about occasional promotional rates and off-season discounts, claim free Rick Steves breakfast at time of booking, extra bed-€20, family suites, free Internet in lobby, parking-€14, 19 rue du Champ de Mars, tel. 01 47 05 25 45, fax 01 45 55 08 24, www.relaisbosquet.com, hotel@relaisbosquet.com). The entryway has one 6" step. There is one large ground floor room that is suitable for a wheelchair user (large entry and bathroom, but no grab bars for toilet or bath).

Hôtel du Cadran*** (AE+A, AI, AR+A), while perfectly located and with a nice lobby, lacks charm in its tight, narrow, and way-overpriced rooms (Db-€170-180, air-con, 10 rue du Champ de Mars, tel. 01 40 62 67 00, fax 01 40 62 67 13, www.hotelducadran.com). There is one 6" entry step and a ground-floor room designated for wheelchair users (but it has a narrow entryway and lacks a wheelchair-accessible bathroom).

Near Rue Cler

The following listings are within a few blocks of rue Cler. The first listing is on the other side of the Champ de Mars park, near Métro stop La Motte-Picquet-Grenelle; the rest are near Métro stop Ecole Militaire or RER: Pont de l'Alma.

Level 1—Fully Accessible

Citadines Paris Tour Eiffel*** (AE, AI, AR, AB, AL) is an apartment-hotel offering two adapted rooms in the sophisticated Grenelle district close to cafés, brasseries, and antique shops (Db-€152, 132 boulevard de Grenelle, Mo: La Motte-Picquet-Grenelle, tel. 01 53 95 60 00, www.citadines.com). The Citadines chain has 12 different apartment-hotel locations in Paris, each with at least one fully adapted room. For details, check www.citadines.com or call 01 41 05 79 05.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel de la Tulipe*** (AE+A, AI+A, AR, AB+A), three blocks from rue Cler toward the river, is unique. The 20 smallish but artistically decorated rooms—each one different—come with little, stylish bathrooms and surround a seductive wood-beamed lounge and a peaceful, leafy courtyard (Db-€140, Tb-€160, 2-room suite for up to 5 people-€250, no elevator or air-con, 33 rue Malar, tel. 01 45 51 67 21, fax 01 47 53 96 37, www.paris-hotel-tulipe.com, friendly Bernhard behind the desk). There is one 2" entry step. One more interior 4" step leads to a large, open courtyard-access room that has worked for wheelchair users with assistance in the past (large bathroom is suitable, but not adapted).

Hôtel de la Bourdonnais*** (AE, AI, AL, AR+A, AB+A, ♥) is a *très* Parisian place, mixing Old World elegance with professional service, comfortable and generous public spaces, and mostly spacious, traditionally decorated rooms (Sb-€125, Db-€155, Tb-€175, Qb-€195, air-con, Internet in lobby, 111 avenue de la Bourdonnais, tel. 01 47 05 45 42, fax 01 45 55 75 54, www.hotellabourdonnais.fr, hlab@hotellabourdonnais.fr). The staff is welcoming, and the entry and elevator are fully accessible. There are no specially adapted wheelchair-accessible rooms or bathrooms, but the doors are wide and the rooms are large.

Hôtel de Turenne** (AE, AI, AL) is simple and well-located, with the cheapest air-conditioned rooms I found. Even though the halls are depressing, the lobby is smoky, and the rooms could use some work, the price is right. There are five truly single rooms and several connecting rooms good for families (one 2" entry step, accessible elevator but no accessible rooms; Sb-€64, Db-€74–86, Tb-€104, extra bed-€10, 20

avenue de Tourville, tel. 01 47 05 99 92, fax 01 45 56 06 04, hotel.turenne.paris7@wanadoo.fr).

Hôtel Splendid*** (AE+A, AI, AR, AB+A, ♥) is Art Deco modern, professional, and worth your while if you land one of its three suites with great Eiffel Tower views. Sixth-floor rooms have small terraces and sideways tower views. All of the rooms seem a bit pricey, as they are not air-conditioned (Db-€170, Db with balcony and view-€180, Db suite-€230, ask about occasional promotional rates, 29 avenue de Tourville, tel. 01 45 51 24 77, fax 01 44 18 94 60, splendid@club-internet.fr). This hotel has hosted wheelchair users in the past and welcomes persons with disabilities. There's one 1" entry step and two large rooms for wheelchair users (grab bars by the toilet, but tub is not accessible).

Hôtel le Tourville**** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB+A) is the classiest and most expensive of my rue Cler listings. It's surprisingly intimate for its four stars—from its designer lobby and vaulted breakfast area to its pretty but small pastel rooms (fully accessible except for the shower; small standard Db-€170, superior Db-€220, Db with private terrace-€240, junior suite for 3-4 people-€310-330, air-con, 16 avenue de Tourville, tel. 01 47 05 62 62, fax 01 47 05 43 90, www.hoteltourville.com, hotel@tourville.com).

Near La Tour-Maubourg Métro Stop

The next four listings are within two blocks of the intersection of avenue de la Motte-Picquet and boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg.

Level 1—Fully Accessible

Hôtel les Jardins Eiffel*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB, ♥), on a quiet street, feels like a modern motel, but earns its three stars with professional service, its own parking garage (€21/day), and a spacious lobby. The 80 rooms—some with private balconies (ask for a room *avec petit balcon*)—are comfortable, if unimaginative (Sb-€136, Db-€157, extra bed-€30 or free for a child up to 10, check online for occasional deals, air-con, Internet in lobby, 8 rue Amélie, tel. 01 47 05 46 21, fax 01 45 55 28 08, www.hoteljardinseiffel.com, paris@hoteljardinseiffel.com). Wheelchair users can avoid the single 2" entry step and access the hotel's elevator in the garage. The hotel has two wheelchair-accessible rooms (including adapted toilets and bathtubs with grab bars; they will place bench in tub). They host many wheelchair-using guests and are very welcoming.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel Muguet** (AE+A, AI, AR, ♥), a peaceful, stylish, and immaculate refuge, gives you three-star comfort for a two-star price. This

delightful place offers 43 tasteful, air-conditioned rooms, a greenhouse lounge, and a small garden courtyard. The hands-on owner, Catherine, gives her guests a restful and secure home in Paris (Sb in a double room-€95, Db with one big bed-€110, twin Db-€125, big Db with view and balcony-€165, Tb-€160, 11 rue Chevert, tel. 01 47 05 05 93, fax 01 45 50 25 37, www.hotelmuguet.com, muguet@wanadoo.fr). There are two 8" steps at the entry and no specially adapted rooms. Three large rooms are designated for wheelchair users (but lack fully accessible bathrooms).

Hôtel de l'Empereur** (AE, AI, AL, AB+A) lacks intimacy, but it's roomy and a fair value. Its 38 pleasant rooms come with real wood furniture and all the comforts except air-conditioning. Streetside rooms have views, but some noise; fifth-floor rooms have small balconies and Napoleonic views (Db-€90, Tb-€120, Qb-€140, 2 rue Chevert, tel. 01 45 55 88 02, fax 01 45 51 88 54, www.hotelempereur.com, contact@hotelempereur.com). The entry and elevator are accessible, and the bathrooms are suitable, but there are no adapted rooms. Even so, the hotel has accommodated wheelchair users in the past.

Best Western Eiffel Park*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB+A) is a dead-quiet, relatively modern concrete business hotel with all the comforts, a friendly staff, 36 pleasant if unexceptional rooms, and a rooftop terrace. (Db-€170-185, check online for promotional rates, 17 bis rue Amélie, tel. 01 45 55 10 01, fax 01 47 05 28 68, www.eiffelpark.com, reservation@eiffelpark.com). By Paris standards, this place is about as accessible as it gets. The only less than fully accessible feature is the big bathroom (suitable, but not adapted).

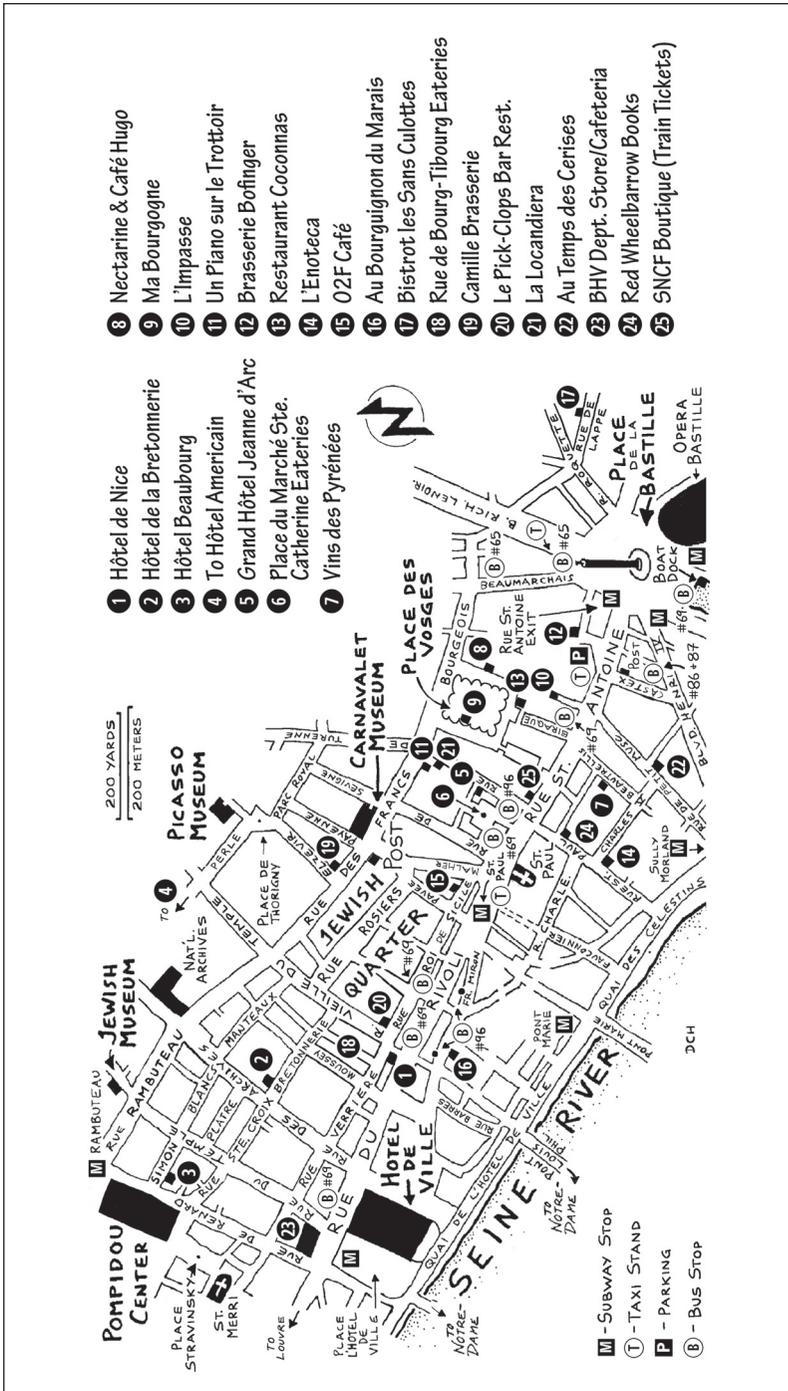
In the Marais, near the Pompidou Center

(4th arrondissement)

Those interested in a more Soho/Greenwich Village locale should make the Marais their Parisian home. Not long ago, it was a forgotten Parisian backwater, but now the Marais is one of Paris' most popular residential, tourist, and shopping areas. This is jumbled, medieval Paris at its finest, where classy stone mansions sit alongside trendy bars, antique shops, and fashion-conscious boutiques. The streets are a fascinating parade of artists, students, tourists, immigrants, and babies in strollers munching baguettes. The Marais is also known as a hub of the Parisian gay and lesbian scene. This area is *sans* doubt livelier (and louder) than the rue Cler area.

In the Marais, you have these sights close at hand: Picasso Museum, Carnavalet Museum, Victor Hugo's House, the Jewish Art and History Museum, and the Pompidou Center. You're also near Paris' two

Marais Hotels and Restaurants



islands (Ile St. Louis and Ile de la Cité), home to Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle. The Opéra Bastille, Promenade Plantée park, place des Vosges (Paris' oldest square), Jewish Quarter (rue des Rosiers), and nightlife-packed rue de Lappe are also close by. (For sight descriptions, see "Northeast Paris," page *TK; for the Opéra, see page *TK.)

The Marais runs from the Pompidou Center to the Bastille; my recommended hotels are closer to the Pompidou Center. The Hôtel de Ville Métro stop works well for all of these hotels, unless a closer stop is noted.

Tourist Information: The nearest TI is in the Gare de Lyon (Mon–Sat 8:00–18:00, closed Sun, all-Paris TI tel. 08 92 68 30 00).

Services: Most banks and other services are on the main drag, rue de Rivoli, which becomes rue St. Antoine. Accessible Marais **post offices** are on rue Castex and on the corner of rue Pavée and rue des Francs Bourgeois. There's an accessible **SNCF Boutique** where you can take care of all train needs on rue St. Antoine at rue de Turenne (Mon–Sat 8:30–20:00, closed Sun). A quieter SNCF Boutique lies nearer the Gare de Lyon at 5 rue de Lyon (Mon–Sat 8:30–18:00, closed Sun).

Markets: The Marais has two good, accessible open-air markets: the sprawling **Marché de la Bastille**, around place de la Bastille (Thu and Sun until 12:30); and the more intimate, untouristy **Marché de la place d'Aligre** (daily 9:00–12:00, cross place de la Bastille and go about 10 blocks down rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, turn right at rue de Cotte to place d'Aligre; or, easier, take Métro line 8 from Bastille toward Créteil-Préfecture to the Ledru-Rollin stop and continue a few blocks southeast from there). For your Parisian "Sears," find the **BHV (AE, AI, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible)** next to Hôtel de Ville.

Bookstore: The Marais is home to the friendliest English-language bookstore in Paris, **Red Wheelbarrow (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; daily 10:00–19:00, 22 rue St. Paul, Mo: St. Paul, tel. 01 42 77 42 17)**. Abigail and Penelope sell most of my guidebooks and carry a great collection of other books about Paris and France.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel de Nice (AE+A, AI+A, AL, AR+A, ♥)**, on the Marais' busy main drag, is a turquoise-and-rose, "Marie-Antoinette does tie-dye" place. Its narrow halls are littered with paintings and covered with carpets, and its 23 non-air-conditioned rooms are filled with thoughtful touches and include tight bathrooms. Twin rooms, which cost the same as doubles, are larger and on the street side—but have effective double-paned windows (narrow halls, tight spaces, stairs lead to lovely breakfast

room; Sb-€74, Db-€105, Tb-€128, Qb-€140, extra bed-€20, 42 bis rue de Rivoli, tel. 01 42 78 55 29, fax 01 42 78 36 07, www.hoteldenice.com, contact@hoteldenice.com).

Hôtel de la Bretonnerie*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB+A, ♥), three blocks from the Hôtel de Ville, makes a fine Marais home. It has a big, welcoming lobby, classy decor, and tastefully appointed rooms with an antique, open-beam warmth (one large suitable room has large marble-floored bathroom, one small step up to toilet with enough space for a wheelchair to go up step, but no grab bars; perfectly good standard “classic” Db-€110, bigger “charming” Db-€145, Db suite-€180, Tb-€170, Tb suite-€205, Qb suite-€235, no air-con, between rue Vieille du Temple and rue des Archives at 22 rue Ste. Croix de la Bretonnerie, tel. 01 48 87 77 63, fax 01 42 77 26 78, www.bretonnerie.com, hotel@bretonnerie.com).

Hôtel Beaubourg*** (AE+A, AI, AL, AR, ♥) is a fine three-star value on a quiet street in the shadow of the Pompidou Center. Its 28 rooms are wood-beam comfy and air-conditioned, and the inviting lounge is warm and pleasant (two entry steps, breakfast room in inaccessible basement but free room service; standard Db-€105, bigger twin Db-€120, 11 rue Simon Le Franc, Mo: Rambuteau, tel. 01 42 74 34 24, fax 01 42 78 68 11, www.hotelbeaubourg.com, htlbeaubourg@hotellerie.net).

Hôtel Americain** (AE, AI, AL, AR-A, AB+A) has two suitable rooms that are very small (Db-€60–70, breakfast-€5, closer to place de la République than to the heart of the Marais, 72 rue Charlot, tel. 01 48 87 58 92, www.paris-hotel-american.com).

Grand Hôtel Jeanne d’Arc** (AE, AI, AR, AB+A), a lovely and well-tended hotel with thoughtfully appointed rooms, is ideally located for (and very popular with) connoisseurs of the Marais. It’s a fine value and worth booking way ahead. Sixth-floor rooms have views, and corner rooms are wonderfully bright in the City of Light, though no rooms are air-conditioned. Rooms on the street can be noisy until the bars close (one suitable ground-floor room offers decent access, Sb-€60–86, Db-€86, larger twin Db-€100, Tb-€120, good Qb-€150, 3 rue de Jarente, Mo: St. Paul, tel. 01 48 87 62 11, fax 01 48 87 37 31, information@hoteljeannedarc.com).

Luxembourg Garden Area (St. Sulpice to Panthéon) (6th *arrondissement*)

This neighborhood revolves around Paris’ loveliest park and adds quick access to the city’s best shopping streets and grandest café-hopping. Sleeping in the Luxembourg area offers a true Left Bank experience,

without a hint of the low-end commotion of the nearby Latin Quarter tourist ghetto. The Luxembourg Garden, boulevard St. Germain, Cluny Museum, and Latin Quarter are all at your doorstep. Here you get the best of both worlds: youthful Left Bank energy and the classy trappings that surround the monumental Panthéon and St. Sulpice Church. The nearest **TI** is across the river in Gare de Lyon (Mon–Sat 8:00–18:00, closed Sun, all-Paris **TI** tel. 08 92 68 30 00).

The first five hotels are all within a block of St. Sulpice Church, and two blocks from the famous boulevard St. Germain (Mo: St. Sulpice). This is nirvana for boutique-minded shoppers—and you'll pay extra for the location. Métro stops St. Sulpice and Mabillon are equally close. The last hotel (Port-Royal-Hôtel) is away from the Seine and other tourists in an appealing work-a-day area on the edge of the 13th *arrondissement*.

Level 1—Fully Accessible

Esprit St. Germain**** (AE, AI, AL, AB, AR), with plush surroundings and services, is the place for a splurge extraordinaire (Db-€260, 22 rue St. Sulpice, tel. 01 53 10 55 55, www.espritsaintgermain.com).

Citadines Saint-Germain-des-Prés*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB) is situated on the River Seine, opposite Notre-Dame. Nearby are many restaurants, art galleries, cafés, RER and bus lines, as well as two beautiful outdoor gardens (Db-€190–205, 53 ter, quai des Grands Augustins, tel. 01 44 07 70 00, www.citadines.com, stgermain@citadines.com).

Hôtel la Perle*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB) is a pricey pearl in the thick of the lively rue des Canettes, a block off place St. Sulpice. At this snappy, modern, business-class hotel, sliding glass doors open onto the traffic-free street and a fun lobby built around a central bar and atrium greets you (two fully adapted rooms, one with a roll-in shower; standard Db-€173, bigger Db-€195, luxury Db-€235, air-con, 14 rue des Canettes, tel. 01 43 29 10 10, fax 01 43 34 51 04, www.hotellaperle.com, booking@hotellaperle.com). Right outside your door are several accessible restaurants, including La Crêpe Rit du Clown (€3–8 crêpes and salads, 6 rue des Canettes), as well as pizza and French fare.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel Left Bank Saint-Germain*** (AE+A, AI, AR, AB+A, ♥), a Best Western, offers Old World, wood-paneled, exposed-beam charm, Oriental carpets, and a chandeliered salon (one 2" entry step, one huge convenient ground-floor room, bathroom has grab bars but unadapted tub; Db-€210–252, cheaper promotional rates often available, 9 rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, tel. 01 43 54 01 70, www.bestwestern-leftbank.com).

Hôtel Relais St. Sulpice*** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB+A, ♥), on the small street just behind St. Sulpice Church, feels like a cozy bar, with a melt-in-your-chair lounge and 26 carefully designed, air-conditioned rooms, most of which surround a leafy glass atrium (two ground-floor rooms have large, mostly adapted bathrooms with unadapted tubs; Db-€170–205 depending on size, most Db-€170–180, sauna free for guests, 3 rue Garancière, tel. 01 46 33 99 00, fax 01 46 33 00 10, www.relais-saint-sulpice.com, relaisstulpice@wanadoo.fr).

Port-Royal-Hôtel* (AE+A, AI, AR, AB+A) has only one star, but don't let that fool you. This 46-room place is polished bottom to top and has been well-run by the same proud family for 67 years. You could eat off the floors of its spotless, comfy rooms, two of which are on the main floor for easy roll-in (S-€39–51, D-€51, big hall showers-€2.50, Db-€77–87 depending on size, Tb-€89, cash only, requires cash deposit, on busy boulevard de Port-Royal at #8, Mo: Les Gobelins, tel. 01 43 31 70 06, fax 01 43 31 33 67, portroyalhotel@wanadoo.fr).

Near Canal St. Martin

(10th and 11th *arrondissements*, Mo: République, Oberkampf)

This up-and-coming neighborhood is just north of the Marais, between place de la République and Canal St. Martin. It feels real and reminds me of how many other neighborhoods looked 20 years ago. This area is the least touristy of those I list, and its hotels and restaurants tend to be great values (for restaurant suggestions, see page *TK; for nighttime fun, head over to rue Oberkampf and join the crowd). This neighborhood is less polished and more remote—but if you can put up with some rough edges and don't mind using taxis or public transportation for all of your sightseeing, you'll save plenty.

The murky canal is the central feature of this unpretentious area, with pleasing walkways, arching footbridges, and occasional boats plying its water. A flowery parkway covers the canal where it goes underground toward place de la Bastille. The parkway plays host to an open-air market on Tuesdays and Fridays until 14:00. When the weather agrees, the entire neighborhood seems to descend on the canal in late afternoon, filling the cafés, parkway, and benches. This neighborhood is convenient to the Nord and Est train stations, as well as to the Pompidou Center and the place des Vosges in the Marais.

Level 2—Moderately Accessible

Hôtel de la République** (AE+A, AI, AR, AB+A) is a well-run establishment a block toward the canal from place de la République. Rooms

are sufficiently comfortable, with good natural light, showers instead of baths, and small balconies on the fifth floor (Sb-€50–61, Db-€60–Tb-€70–81, 31 rue Albert Thomas, Mo: République, tel. 01 42 39 19 03, fax 01 42 39 22 66, www.republiquehotel.com). An inviting wheelchair sits in the front entrance (which has one 3" entry step). There is a fairly tight ground-floor room that's suitable but not adapted, with a small bathroom.

Holiday Inn Paris République*** (AE, AI, AR, AL, AB+A) is a hip splurge on a happening street that's a bustling gathering place for tea and conversation. Two accessible restaurants punctuate the sprawling lobby (four roomy, accessible studios have adapted toilet and suitable bathtub; Db-€150, can be much higher during conventions, 10 place de la République, tel. 01 43 14 43 50, www.paris-republique.holiday-inn.com).

Elsewhere in Central Paris

These fully accessible accommodations are scattered around the city center.

Level 1—Fully Accessible

Novotel Les Halles (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB) is a well-located, clean, modern, upscale chain hotel with six adapted rooms near the Louvre (Db-€195, check online for discounts, 8 place Marguerite de Navarre, tel. 01 42 21 31 31, www.accorhotels.com, h0785@accor.com).

Hôtel Pavillon Louvre Rivoli (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB) is clean, upscale, and handy to the pulse of the city (one fully adapted room, Db-€200, 7 rue Jean Lantier, tel. 01 42 33 45 32).

Hôtel Ibis Gare du Nord La Fayette (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB) is a basic, clean, and predictable chain hotel handy to the accessible Nord train station for RER and Thalys trains (three fully equipped and adapted rooms, Db-€95, 122 rue La Fayette, tel. 01 45 23 27 27).

EATING

The Parisian eating scene is kept at a rolling boil. Entire books (and lives) are dedicated to the subject. Paris is France's wine and cuisine melting pot. While it lacks a style of its own (only French onion soup is truly Parisian), it draws from the best of France. Paris could hold a gourmet's Olympics and import nothing.

Parisians eat long and well. Relaxed lunches, three-hour dinners, and endless hours of sitting in outdoor cafés are the norm. Local cafés, cuisine, and wines become a highlight of any Parisian adventure—sightseeing for

your palate. Even if the rest of you is sleeping in a cheap hotel, let your taste buds travel first-class in Paris. (They can go coach in London.)

You can eat well without going broke, but choose carefully—you're just as likely to blow a small fortune on a mediocre meal as you are to dine wonderfully for €20.

By following the suggestions offered below, you'll have a better dining experience.

My recommendations are centered predominantly near the recommended hotels in the rue Cler and Marais neighborhoods; you can come home exhausted after a busy day of sightseeing and have a good selection of restaurants right around the corner. And evening is a fine time to explore these delightful neighborhoods. I've provided accessibility information for each place. Unless otherwise noted (by **AT** or **AT+A**), these restaurants do *not* have accessible toilets.



Tipping

Virtually all cafés and restaurants include a service charge in the bill (usually 15 percent, referred to as *service compris* or *prix net*), but it's polite to round up for a drink or meal well-served. This bonus tip is usually about 5 percent of the bill (e.g., if your bill is €19, leave €20). In the rare instance that service is not included (the menu states *service non compris*), tip 15 percent. When you hand your payment plus a tip to your waiter, you can say, “*C'est bon*” (say *bohn*), meaning, “It's good.” If you order your food at a counter, don't tip.

Breakfast

Petit déjeuner (puh-tee day-zhuh-nay) is typically *café au lait*, hot chocolate, or tea; a roll with butter and marmalade; and a croissant—though more hotels are starting to provide breakfast buffets with fruit, cereal, yogurt, and cheese (usually for a few extra euros, and well worth it). While breakfasts are available at your hotel (about €8–14), they're cheaper at corner cafés (but no coffee refills; see also “Café Culture,” below). It's fine to buy a croissant or roll at a bakery and eat it with your cup of coffee at a café. Better still, some bakeries offer worthwhile breakfast deals with juice, croissant, and coffee or tea for about €3 (consider the chain of bakeries called La Brioche Dorée). If the urge for an egg in the morning

gets the best of you, drop into a café and order *une omelette* or *oeufs sur le plat* (fried eggs). You could also buy or bring from home plastic bowls and spoons, buy a box of cereal and a small box of milk, and eat in your room before heading out for coffee.

Picnics and Snacks

Great for lunch or dinner, Parisian picnics can be first-class affairs and adventures in high cuisine. Be daring. Try the smelly cheeses, ugly pâtés, sissy quiches, and minuscule (usually drinkable) yogurts. Local shopkeepers are accustomed to selling small quantities of produce. Try the tasty salads to go and ask for *une fourchette en plastique* (a plastic fork).

Gather supplies early for a picnic lunch; you'll probably visit several small stores to assemble a complete meal, and many close at noon. Look for a *boulangerie* (bakery), a *crèmerie* or *fromagerie* (cheeses), a *charcuterie* (deli items, meats, and pâtés), an *épicerie* or *magasin d'alimentation* (small grocery store with veggies, drinks, and so on), and a *pâtisserie* (delicious pastries). For fine picnic shopping, check out the street market recommendations in the Shopping chapter. While wine is taboo in public places in the United States, it's *pas de problème* in France.

Supermarchés offer less color and cost, more efficiency, and adequate quality. Department stores often have supermarkets in the basement, along with top-floor cafeterias offering not really cheap but low-risk, low-stress, what-you-see-is-what-you-get meals. For a quick meal to go, look for food stands and bakeries selling takeout sandwiches and drinks. For an affordable meal, try a *crêperie* or café.

In stores, unrefrigerated soft drinks and beer are half the price of cold drinks. Milk and boxed fruit juice are the most inexpensive drinks. Avoid buying drinks to go at streetside stands; you'll find them far cheaper in a shop. Try to keep a water bottle with you. Water quenches your thirst better and cheaper than anything you'll find in a store or café. I drink tap water in Paris and use that to refill my bottle. You'll pass many fountains on Paris streets with good water (but if it says *non potable*, it's not drinkable).

For good lunch picnic sites, consider these suggestions. The Palais Royal (across the place du Palais Royal from the Louvre) is a good spot for a peaceful, royal picnic, as is the little triangular Henry IV park on the west tip of Ile de la Cité. The pedestrian pont des Arts bridge, across from the Louvre, has great views and plentiful benches, as does the Champ de Mars park below the Eiffel Tower. For great people-watching, try the Pompidou Center (by the *Homage to Stravinsky* fountains), the elegant

place des Vosges (closes at dusk), the gardens behind Les Invalides and surrounding the Rodin Museum, and the Tuileries and Luxembourg Gardens.

Café Culture

French cafés (or *brasseries*) provide budget-friendly meals and a relief from museum and church overload. Feel free to order only a bowl of soup and a salad or *plat* (main course) for lunch or dinner at a café.

Cafés generally open by 7:00, but closing hours vary. Unlike restaurants, which open only for lunch and dinner, meals are served throughout the day at most cafés—making them the best option for a late lunch or an early dinner.

It's easier for the novice to feel comfortable when you know the system. Check the price list first, which by law must be posted prominently. You'll see two sets of prices; you'll pay more for the same drink if you're seated at a table (*salle*) than if you're seated at the bar or counter (*comptoir*). At large cafés, outside tables are most expensive, and prices can rise after 22:00.

Your waiter probably won't overwhelm you with friendliness. Notice how hard they work. They almost never stop. Cozying up to clients (French or foreign) is probably the last thing on their minds.

Standard Menu Items: *Croque monsieur* (grilled ham and cheese sandwich) and *croque madame* (*monsieur* with a fried egg on top) are generally served day and night. Sandwiches are least expensive but plain—and much better—at the *boulangerie* (bakery). To get more than a piece of ham (*jambon*) on a baguette, order a sandwich *jambon crudité*, which means garnished with veggies. Omelettes come lonely on a plate with a basket of bread. The daily special—*plat du jour* (plah dew zhoor), or just *plat*—is your fast, hearty hot plate for €10–16. Regardless of what you order, bread is free; to get more, just hold up your bread basket and ask, “*Encore, s'il vous plaît.*”

Salads: I order salads for lunch and for lighter dinners. They're typically large—one is perfect for lunch or a light dinner, or split between two people as a first course. Among the classics are *salade niçoise* (news-waz), a specialty from Nice that typically includes green salad topped with green beans, boiled potatoes (sometimes rice), tomatoes (sometimes corn), anchovies, olives, hard-boiled eggs, and lots of tuna; *salade au chèvre chaud*, a mixed green salad topped with warm goat cheese and toasted bread croutons; and *salade composée*, “composed” of any number of ingredients, such as *lardons* (bacon), *comte* (a Swiss-style cheese), *roquefort* (blue cheese), *œuf* (egg), *noix* (walnuts), *jambon* (ham, generally

Coffee and Tea Lingo

By law, the waiter must give you a glass of tap water with your coffee or tea if you request it; ask for “*un verre d’eau, s’il vous plaît*” (uhn vayr doh, see voo play).

Coffee

French	Pronounced	English
<i>un express</i>	uh nex-press	shot of espresso
<i>une noisette</i>	oon nwah-zeht	espresso with a shot of milk
<i>café au lait</i>	kah-fay oh lay	coffee with lots of milk
<i>un grand crème</i>	uhn grahn krehm	just like café au lait, large size
<i>un petit crème</i>	uhn puh-tee krehm	just like café au lait, small size
<i>un grand café noir</i>	uhn grahn kah-fay nwahr	cup of black coffee, closest to American-style
<i>un décaffiné</i>	uhn day-kah-fee-nay	decaf—can modify any of the above drinks

Tea

French	Pronounced	English
<i>un thé nature</i>	uhn tay nah-tour	plain tea
<i>un thé au lait</i>	uhn tay oh lay	tea with milk
<i>un thé citron</i>	uhn tay see-trohn	tea with lemon
<i>une infusion</i>	oon an-few-see-yohn	herbal tea

thinly sliced), *saumon fumé* (smoked salmon), and the highly suspect *gésiers* (chicken livers). To get salad dressing on the side, order *la sauce à part* (lah sohs ah par).

Wine and Beer: House wine at the bar is cheap (about €3 per glass, cheapest by the pitcher—*pichet*, pee-shay), and the local beer is cheaper on tap (*une pression*; oon pres-yohn) than in the bottle (*bouteille*; booteh-ee). France’s best beer is Alsatian; try Kronenbourg or the heavier Pelfort (even heavier is the Belgian beer Leffe). *Une panaché* (oon pan-a-shay) is a refreshing French shandy (7-Up and beer). For a fun, bright, nonalcoholic drink of 7-Up with mint syrup, order *un diablo menthe*

(uhn dee-ah-bloh mahnt). Kids love the local lemonade (*citron pressé*; see-trohn preh-say, you'll need to add sugar) and the flavored syrups mixed with bottled water (*sirups à l'eau*; see-roh ah loh). The ice cubes melted after the last Yankee tour group left.

Restaurants

Choose restaurants filled with locals, not places with big neon signs boasting *We Speak English*. Consider your hotelier's opinion. If a restaurant doesn't post its prices outside, move along.

Restaurants open for dinner around 19:00, and small local favorites get crowded after 21:00. To minimize smoke and crowds, go early (around 19:30). Beware: Many restaurants close Sunday and Monday.

If a restaurant serves lunch, it generally begins at 11:30 and goes until 14:00, with last orders taken at about 13:30. If you're hungry when restaurants are closed (late afternoon), go to a café; most serve all day.

If you ask for the *menu* (muh-noo) at a restaurant, you won't get a list of dishes; you'll get a fixed-price meal. *Menus* (also called *formules*), which offer three or four courses, are generally a good value if you're hungry: You get your choice of soup, appetizer, or salad; your choice of three or four main courses with vegetables; plus a cheese course and/or a choice of desserts. Service is included (*service compris* or *prix net*), but wine and other drinks are generally extra. Restaurants that offer a *menu* for lunch often charge about €5 more for the same *menu* at dinner.

Ask for *la carte* if you want to see a menu and order à la carte like the locals do. Request the waiter's help in deciphering the French. Go with his or her recommendations and anything *de la maison* (of the house), as long as it's not an organ meat (*tripes, rognons, andouillette*). Galloping gourmets should bring a menu translator; the *Marling Menu Master* is good. The *Rick Steves' French Phrase Book*, with a Menu Decoder, works well for most travelers. The wines are often listed in a separate *carte des vins*.

In France, an *entrée* is the appetizer. *Le plat* or *le plat du jour* (plate of the day) is the main course with vegetables (usually €10–16). If all you want is a salad, find a café instead.

Parisians are willing to pay for bottled water with their meal (*eau minérale*; oh mee-nay-rah!) because they prefer the taste over tap water. If you prefer a free pitcher of tap water, ask for *une carafe d'eau* (oon kah-rahf doh). Otherwise, you may unwittingly buy bottled water. To get inexpensive wine at a restaurant, order table wine in a pitcher (*un pichet*; uhn pee-shay), rather than a bottle (though finer restaurants usually offer only bottles of wine). If all you want is a glass of wine, ask for *un verre de vin* (uhn vehr duh van). A half carafe of wine is *un demi-pichet* (uhn duh-

mee pee-shay), a quarter carafe (ideal for one) is *un quart* (uhn kar).

To get a waiter's attention, simply say, "*S'il vous plaît*" (see voo play)—please.

In the Rue Cler Neighborhood

The rue Cler neighborhood caters to its residents. Its eateries, while not destination places, have an intimate charm. My favorites are small mom-and-pop eateries that love to serve traditional French food at good prices to a local clientele. You'll generally find great dinner *menus* for €20–30 and *plats du jour* for around €12–16. Eat early with tourists or late with locals. Unless otherwise noted, all of these restaurants are nearest the Ecole Militaire Métro stop.

Closer to Ecole Militaire, Between Rue de la Motte Picquet and Rue de Grenelle

Café de l'Esplanade (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, 2" entry step with wide door, wheelchair users are seated close to door) is your opportunity to be surrounded by chic, yet older and sophisticated Parisians enjoying top-notch traditional cuisine as foreplay. There's not a tourist in sight. It has a sprawling floor plan: Half its tables (with well-stuffed chairs) fill a plush, living-room-like interior, and the other half are lined up outside under its elegant awning facing the grand Esplanade des Invalides in front of Napoleon's Tomb. Dress competitively, as this is *the* place to be seen in the 7th *arrondissement* (€20 *plats du jour*, €45 plus wine for dinner, open daily, reserve ahead—especially if you want a curbside table, non-smoking room in the back, 52 rue Fabert, Mo: La Tour-Maubourg, tel. 01 47 05 38 80). This is the only actual business on the entire esplanade that stretches all the way to the Champs-Élysées.

Léo le Lion (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 3" entry step)—small, softly lit, and traditional, with velvet booths—is well-respected by locals for both fish and meat. The plush interior feels like a marionette theater (€20 *plats*, closed Sun, 23 rue Duvivier, tel. 01 45 51 41 77).

Le Florimond (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is ideal for a special occasion. The ambience, while spacious and quiet, is also intimate and welcoming. Locals come for classic French cuisine with elegant indoor or breezy streetside seating. Friendly English-speaking Laurent—with his playful ties changing daily—will take good care of you (€32 *menu*, closed Sun, good and reasonable wine selection and explosively tasty stuffed cabbage, reservations smart, non-smoking, 19 avenue de la Motte Picquet, tel. 01 45 55 40 38).

Thoumieux (AE, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), the neighborhood's classy, traditional Parisian brasserie, is a popular local institution. It's big and white-tablecloth dressy, with formal, no-nonsense waiters. As the owner is from southwest France, much of the menu is as well (€15 lunch *menu*, 3-course €33 dinner *menu* includes wine, open daily, 79 rue St. Dominique, Mo: La Tour-Maubourg, tel. 01 47 05 49 75). They open at 18:30, and head waiter Pascal advises making a reservation if arriving after 20:00.

La Terrasse du 7ème (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a sprawling, happening café with classic outdoor seating and a living-room-like interior with comfy love seats. Located on a corner, it overlooks a grand and busy intersection with a constant parade of people marching by. A meal here is like dinner theater—and the show is slice-of-life Paris (no fixed-price *menu*, great *salade niçoise*, open daily until 2:00 in the morning, at Ecole Militaire Métro stop, tel. 01 45 55 00 02).

Le Petit Niçois (literally, "The Little Nice"; AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) feels *très* Mediterranean, from its warm colors to its menu selections. This is where rue Cler natives go for their southern seafood fix (€24 *menu*, open daily, 10 rue Amélie, tel. 01 45 51 83 65).

Café du Marché (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 3" entry step) boasts the best seats, coffee, and prices on rue Cler. The owner's philosophy: Brasserie on speed—crank out great food at great prices to trendy locals and savvy tourists. It's high-energy, with waiters who barely have time to smile...*très* Parisian. This place is ideal if you want a light lunch or dinner (good, hearty €10 salads) or a more substantial but simple meal (filling €11 *plats du jour*, listed on chalkboard; open Mon–Sat 11:00–23:00, Sun 11:00–17:00, for dinner arrive before 19:30—it's packed at 21:00, can be smoky, at the corner of rue Cler and rue du Champ de Mars, at 38 rue Cler, tel. 01 47 05 51 27). Their new **Tribeca Restaurant** (AE, AI, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible), next door, offers similar value but more space, a calmer ambience, an accessible toilet, more patient service, and a menu focusing on pizza and Italian cuisine.

Ulysée en Gaule (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), in a prime location right on rue Cler, offers good, cheap, front-row seats for the people-watching fun. The Ulysée family—Stephanos, Chrysa, and their English-speaking son Vassilis—seem to make friends with all who drop by for a bite. The family loves to serve Greek dishes, and their excellent crêpes (to go or sit down for €2 extra) are your cheapest rue Cler hot meal (daily 8:00–22:30, 28 rue Cler, tel. 01 47 05 61 82).

Petite Brasserie PTT (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 5" entry step) is a classic time-warp, popular with postal workers and

offering traditional café fare at reasonable prices next to the PTT (post office) on rue Cler. They offer a great *deux pour douze* breakfast deal for Rick Steves readers: two American breakfasts (normally €8 each) for €12 total (closed Sun, opposite 53 rue Cler).

Café le Bosquet (AE, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, entry and main floor are fully accessible) is a vintage Parisian brasserie with dressy waiters and a classic interior or sidewalk tables on a busy street. Come here for a bowl of French onion soup, a salad, or a three-course *menu* (€18), and mix it up with waiters Daniel, Nina, and Antoine (closed Sun, many choices—including vegetarian options—from a fun menu, the house red wine is plenty good, reservations smart on weekends, corner of rue du Champ de Mars and avenue Bosquet, at 46 avenue Bosquet, tel. 01 45 51 38 13). This place has regular wheelchair-using customers.

Between Rue Grenelle and the River

Altitude 95 (AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is in the Eiffel Tower, 95 meters (about 300 feet) above the ground (€21–31 lunches, €50 dinners, dinner seatings nightly at 19:00 and 21:00, reserve well ahead for a view table; before you ascend to dine, drop by the booth between the north/*nord* and east/*est* pillars to buy your Eiffel Tower ticket and pick up a pass that enables you to skip the line; Mo: Bir-Hakeim or Trocadéro, RER: Champ de Mars-Tour Eiffel, tel. 01 45 55 20 04, fax 01 47 05 94 40).

L'Affriolé (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step) is a small, trendy eatery where you'll compete with young professionals to get a table. Entering this elegant but rollicking dining hall, you immediately feel you're eating at a restaurant well-deserving of its rave reviews. Menu selections change daily, and the wine list is extensive, with some good bargains (€35 *menu*, closed Sun–Mon, 17 rue Malar, Mo: La Tour-Maubourg, tel. 01 44 18 31 33). The staff has welcomed wheelchair users through the years.

Au Petit Tonneau (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step) is a souvenir of old Paris. Fun-loving owner-chef Madame Boyer prepares everything herself, wearing her tall chef's hat like a crown as she rules from her family-style kitchen. The small, plain dining room doesn't look like it's changed in the 25 years she's been in charge. Her steaks and lamb are excellent (€28 for 2 courses, €35 3-course *menu*, open daily, can get smoky—come early, 20 rue Surcouf, Mo: La Tour-Maubourg, tel. 01 47 05 09 01).

La Fontaine de Mars (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 3" entry step) is a longtime favorite for locals, charmingly situated on a classic, tiny Parisian street and jumbled square. It's a happening scene, with tables jammed together for the serious business of good eating. Reserve in advance to get a table on the accessible ground floor—which is better anyway, to enjoy the fun street-level ambience (€25 *plats*, open nightly, where rue de l'Exposition and rue St. Dominique meet, at 129 rue St. Dominique, tel. 01 47 05 46 44).

Le P'tit Troquet (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 3" entry step), a petite eatery taking you back to the Paris of the 1920s, is gracefully and earnestly run by Dominique. She's particularly proud of her *foie gras* and lamb. The delicious, three-course €29.50 *menu* comes with fun, traditional choices. Its delicate charm and gourmet flair make this a favorite of connoisseurs (closed Sun, reservations smart, 28 rue de l'Exposition, tel. 01 47 05 80 39).

La Casa di Sergio (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) serves gourmet Italian cuisine family-style. Only Sergio could make me enthusiastic about Italian food in Paris. Sergio, a people-loving Sicilian, says he's waited his entire life to open a restaurant like this. Eating here involves a little trust...just sit down and let Sergio spoil you (€27–32 *menus*, open nightly from 18:30, 20 rue de l'Exposition, tel. 01 45 51 37 71). Sergio may be moving to a larger, nearby location soon—but he's worth seeking out (ask at your hotel). The current location has one 6" doorstep and a small entryway, but Sergio has been known to take the door off the hinges to allow a wheelchair user into his restaurant—you will feel welcome.

Chez Agnès (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 6" entry step), the smallest of my recommended Paris restaurants, is not for everyone. It's tiny, flowery, family-style, and filled with kisses on the cheek. Eccentric but sincere Agnès (a French-Tahitian Roseanne Barr) does it all—cooking in her minuscule kitchen and serving, too. Agnès, who cooks “French with an exotic twist” and clearly loves her work, makes children feel right at home. Don't come for a quick dinner (€23 *menu*, closed Mon, 1 rue Augereau, tel. 01 45 51 06 04).

Café de Mars (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is an indoor/outdoor sidewalk café with spiffy French service and a varied local menu at reasonable prices. Watch the local shoppers, businesspeople, and university students bustling by (€5–12 dishes, Tue–Sun 12:00–14:30 & 19:00–23:00, closed Mon, 11 rue Augereau, tel. 01 45 55 76 99).

La Gourmandine (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) serves up the hearty country food of Normandy with charming, traditional,

low-beamed-cozy, elegant atmosphere (€7–16 dishes, Mon–Fri 12:00–14:30 & 19:00–23:30, Sat 19:00–23:30 only, closed Sun, 28 rue Surcouf, tel. 01 45 51 61 49).

L'Ami Jean (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) offers excellent Basque specialties at fair prices. The chef has made his reputation on the quality of his cuisine, not on the dark, simple decor. Arrive by 19:30 or call ahead—by 20:00, there's a line out the door of people waiting to join the shared tables and lively commotion of happy eaters (€15 for a plate of mixed Basque tapas, €28 *menu*, closed Sun–Mon, 27 rue Malar, Mo: La Tour-Maubourg, tel. 01 47 05 86 89).

Restaurant la Serre (AE+A, AI, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 7" entry step) is reasonably priced and worth considering (€11–15 *plats*, good onion soup and duck specialties, closed Sun–Mon, 29 rue de l'Exposition, tel. 01 45 55 20 96, Margot).

Picnicking in Rue Cler

The rue Cler is a moveable feast that gives “fast food” a good name. The entire street is clogged with connoisseurs of good eating. Only the health-food store goes unnoticed. A festival of food, the street is lined with people whose lives seem to be devoted to their specialty: polished produce, rotisserie chicken, crêpes, or cheese.

For a magical picnic dinner at the Eiffel Tower, assemble it in no fewer than five shops on rue Cler. Then lounge on the best grass in Paris, with the dogs, Frisbees, a floodlit tower, and a cool breeze in the parc du Champ de Mars.

Asian delis (generically called *Traiteur Asie*, most of them accessible) provide tasty, low-stress, low-price take-out treats (€6 dinner plates, the one on rue Cler near rue du Champ de Mars has tables). **Ulysée en Gaule** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), the Greek restaurant on rue Cler across from Grand Hôtel Lévêque, sells take-away crêpes (described above). The elegant **Lenotre charcuterie** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) offers mouthwatering meals to go (open daily until 23:00, at Ecole Militaire Métro stop). **Real McCoy** (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a little shop selling American food and sandwiches (one 2" entry step; closed Sun, 194 rue de Grenelle). There are small **late-night groceries** (AE, AI, Level 1—Fully Accessible) at 186 and 197 rue de Grenelle (open nightly until midnight).

Breakfast in Rue Cler

Hotel breakfasts, while convenient, are generally not a good value. For a great rue Cler start to your day, drop by the **Petite Brasserie PTT**

(**AE+A, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 5" entry step), where managers Jerome and Eric promise Rick Steves readers a *deux pour douze* breakfast special (2 “American” breakfasts—juice, coffee, croissant, ham, and eggs—for €12; described above). **Café la Roussillon** (**AE+A, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step) serves a good American-style breakfast for €9 (open daily, at corner of rue de Grenelle and rue Cler, tel. 01 45 51 47 53). To eat breakfast while watching Paris go to work, stop by **La Terrasse du 7ème** (**AE+A, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible; described above). The **Pourjauran** bakery (**AE, AI**, Level 1—Fully Accessible), offering great baguettes, hasn’t changed in 70 years (20 rue Jean Nicot).

In the Marais Neighborhood

The trendy Marais is filled with locals enjoying good food in colorful and atmospheric eateries. The scene is competitive and changes all the time. I’ve listed an assortment of eateries—all handy to recommended hotels—that offer good food at reasonable prices, plus a memorable experience. For maximum ambience, go to the place des Vosges or place du Marché Ste. Catherine (several restaurants listed below on each of these squares).

Dining on Romantic Place des Vosges

On and near this square, which offers Old World Marais elegance, you’ll find five very different eateries. Roll or stroll around the entire arcade—fun art galleries alternate with enticing restaurants. Choose the restaurant that best fits your mood and budget; each one has perfect arcade seating and provides big space-heaters to make outdoor dining during colder months an option. Also consider a drink or desert on the square at Café Hugo or Nectarine after eating elsewhere. The place des Vosges is near the St. Paul and Bastille Métro stations.

Restaurant Coconnas (**AE, AI, AT+A, ♥**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is the dressiest option, with classic French cuisine, refined ambience, black-suited waiters, and artfully presented gourmet dishes (€30 *plats*, €15 *entrées* and deserts, closed Mon, on the river side of the square at #2, tel. 01 42 78 58 16).

Ma Bourgogne (**AE, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a classic old eatery where you’ll sit under arcades in a whirlpool of Frenchness, as bowtied and black-aproned waiters serve you traditional Burgundian specialties: steak, *coq au vin*, lots of French fries, escargot, and great red wine. Service at this institution comes with food but few smiles (€32 *menu*, open daily, dinner reservations smart, cash only, at northwest

corner at #19, tel. 01 42 78 44 64).

Nectarine (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step, accessible street dining with heaters) is small and demure—with a wicker, pastel, and feminine ambience. This peaceful teahouse serves healthy €10 salads, quiches, and €12 *plats du jour* both day and night. Its fun menu lets you mix and match omelets and crêpes. Its huge deserts are splittable, and dropping by here late for sweets and a drink is a peaceful way to end your day (open daily, at #16, tel. 01 42 77 23 78).

Café Hugo (AE, AI, AT+A, ♥, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, wheelchair-friendly, with accessible street dining), named for the square's most famous resident, is best for drinks only, as the cuisine does not live up to its setting (open daily, at #22).

At **Un Piano sur le Trottoir** (literally, "A Piano on the Sidewalk"; AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), you'll enter through the red door into the last century. An antique piano greets you at the entry of this beautifully restored French dollhouse. The exquisite French menu makes it a good place for a special night on the town (*menus* for €15, €19, or €24; à la carte dishes for €8–27; Tue–Fri 19:00–23:00, Sat 12:00–15:00 & 19:00–23:00, Sun 12:00–15:00, closed Mon, 7 rue de Francs Bourgeois, tel. 01 42 77 91 91).

Near the Bastille

To reach these restaurants, use the Bastille Métro stop.

Brasserie Bofinger (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), an institution for over a century, is famous for fish and traditional cuisine with Alsatian flair. You're surrounded by brisk, black-and-white-attired waiters. The sprawling interior features elaborately decorated rooms reminiscent of the Roaring Twenties. Eating under the grand 1919 *coupole* is a memorable treat (as is using the "historic" 1919 WC downstairs). Check out the boys shucking and stacking seafood platters out front before you enter. Their €33 three-course *menu*, while not top cuisine, includes wine and is a good value. The kids' menu makes this restaurant family-friendly (accessible door to right of main entrance, open daily and nightly, reservations smart, mostly non-smoking, 5 rue de la Bastille, don't be confused by the lesser "Petite" Bofinger across the street, tel. 01 42 72 87 82).

L'Impasse (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step), a relaxed bistro on a quiet alley, serves an enthusiastically French three-course *menu* for €28. Françoise, a former dancer and artist, runs the place *con brio* (closed Sun, 4 impasse de Guéménée, tel. 01 42 72 08 45). Françoise promises anyone with this book a free glass of *byrrh*—it's pronounced "beer," but it's a French port-like drink.

Bistrot les Sans Culottes (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), a zinc-bar classic on lively rue de Lappe, serves traditional French cuisine with a proper respect for fine wine (€24 3-course *menu*, closed Mon, 27 rue de Lappe, tel. 01 48 05 42 92). Stay out past your bedtime. Eat here. Then join the rue de Lappe party.

Au Temps des Cerises (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step) is a *très* local wine bar. While they serve lunch plates, it's better for an early dinner or a pre-dinner glass of wine. "Dinner" will be limited to bread, dry sausage, cheese, and wine served by goateed Yves and his wife, Michele. A mixed plate of cheese (€3.50), meat (€3.50), and a carafe of good wine (€3–6) surrounded by the intimate and woody Old World ambience can be a good light meal (Mon–Fri until 20:00, closed Sat–Sun, at rue du Petit-Musc and rue de la Cerisaie).

Vins des Pyrénées (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry step) is younger and livelier, with fun ambience, inexpensive meals, some smoke, and a reasonable wine list (open daily, 25 rue Beautreillis, tel. 01 42 72 64 94).

In the Heart of the Marais

These are closest to the St. Paul Métro stop.

On place du Marché Ste. Catherine: This small, romantic square, just off rue St. Antoine, is an international food festival cloaked in extremely Parisian, leafy-square ambience. On a balmy evening, this is clearly a neighborhood favorite, with five popular restaurants offering €20–30 meals. Most of the restaurants here are accessible, but lack accessible toilets (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible). Survey the square, and you'll find a popular French bistro (Le Marché) and inviting eateries serving Italian, Korean, Russian, and Greek. You'll eat under the trees, surrounded by a futuristic-in-1800 planned residential quarter.

L'Enoteca (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 2" entry step) is a high-spirited, half-timbered wine bar–restaurant serving reasonably priced Italian cuisine (no pizza) with a tempting *antipasti* bar. It's a relaxed, open setting with busy, blue-aproned waiters serving two floors of local eaters (€10 pastas, €15 *plats*, open daily, across from L'Excuse at rue St. Paul and rue Charles V, 25 rue Charles V, tel. 01 42 78 91 44).

Camille (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), a traditional corner brasserie, is a neighborhood favorite with great indoor and sidewalk seating. White-aproned waiters serve €10 salads and very French *plats du jour* (from €16) to a down-to-earth but sophisticated clientele (open daily, 24 rue des Francs Bourgeois at corner of rue Elzévir, tel. 01 42 72 20 50).

Le Pick-Clops Bar Restaurant (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a happy peanuts-and-lots-of-cocktails diner with bright neon, loud colors and a garish local crowd. It's perfect for immersing yourself in today's Marais world—a little boisterous, a little edgy, a little gay, fun-loving, easygoing...and no tourists. Sit inside, on old-fashioned diner stools, or streetside to watch the constant Marais parade. The name means "Steal the Cigarettes"—but you'll pay €10 for your big salad (daily 7:00–24:00, 16 rue Vieille du Temple, tel. 01 40 29 02 18).

O2F (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a simple, casual café with youthful, fun atmosphere and a mostly gay clientele (€16–24 *menus*, Mon–Sat 11:00–2:00 in the morning, closed Sun, off rue de Rivoli at St. Paul Métro, 4 rue du Roi de Sicile, tel. 01 42 72 75 75).

La Locandiera (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is a small coffee, breakfast, and ice-cream bar with great prices (€5–8 dishes, Mon–Fri 8:00–18:00, Sat–Sun 9:00–17:30, indoor and outdoor seating, 27 rue de Turenne, tel. 01 40 27 93 10).

Dining Closer to Hôtel de Ville

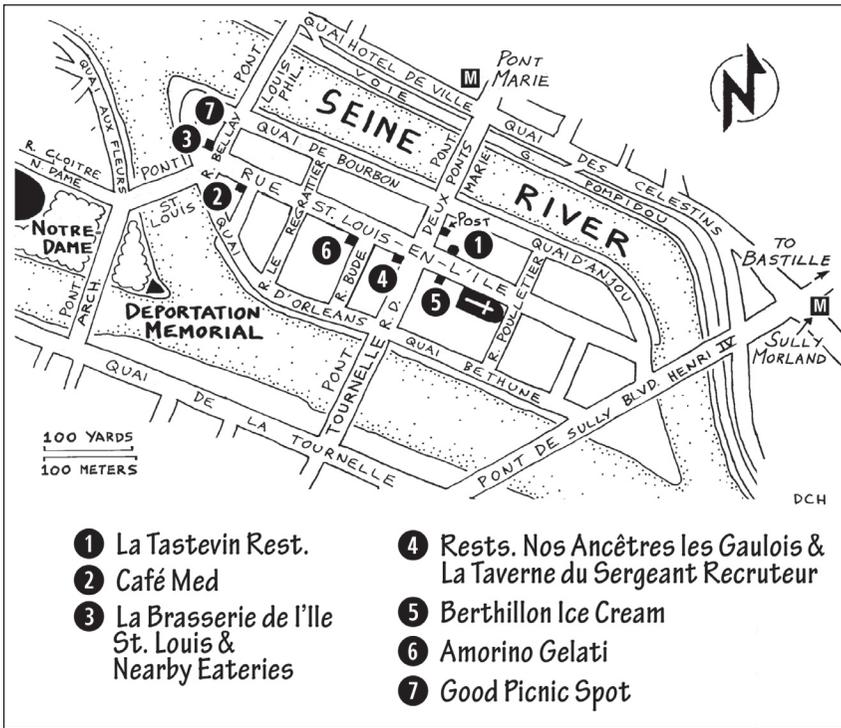
These eateries, near the Pompidou Center, appear on the map on page *TK. To reach them, use the Hôtel de Ville Métro stop.

Au Bourguignon du Marais (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, challenging entry) is a small wine bar–bistro south of rue de Rivoli. Wine-lovers won't want to miss it. Gentle, English-speaking Jacques offers excellent Burgundy wines that blend well with his fine, though limited, selection of *plats du jour*. The escargots are the best I've had, and the dessert was...*délicieux* (allow €35–45 with wine, closed Sat–Sun, call by 19:00 to reserve, 52 rue Francois Miron, tel. 01 48 87 15 40).

A Happening Marais Square: Rue de Bourg-Tibourg (just off rue de Rivoli), busy with a fun assortment of popular eateries under its bushy trees, is worth surveying. **Le Fou d'En Face** (only outdoor tables are accessible) specializes in wine and *pot-au-feu* (beef stew–€19). The lively and cheap **Restaurante Sant Antonio** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) serves up pizza, salads, and Italian. **Feria Café** (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) offers a traditional French menu.

BHV Department Store's (AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible) fifth-floor cafeteria provides full accessibility, nice views, an escape from the busy streets below, and no-brainer, point-and-shoot cafeteria cuisine (Mon–Sat 11:30–18:00, closed Sun, at intersection of rue du Temple and rue de la Verrerie, 1 block from Hôtel de Ville). The store also has accessible changing rooms, if you're in the mood for a little shopping.

Ile St. Louis



Ile St. Louis

The Ile St. Louis is a romantic and peaceful neighborhood to window-shop for plenty of promising dinner possibilities. Cruise the island's main street for a variety of options, from cozy *crêperies* to Italian eateries (intimate pizzerias and upscale) to typical brasseries (a few with fine outdoor seating facing the bridge to Ile de la Cité). After dinner, sample Paris' best sorbet and roll or stroll across to the Ile de la Cité to see an illuminated Notre-Dame, or enjoy a scenic drink on the deck of a floating café moored under the Notre-Dame's right transept. All of these listings line the island's main drag, the rue St. Louis-en-l'Île (see map on page *TK; to get here, use the Pont Marie Métro stop). Consider skipping dessert to enjoy a roll or stroll licking the best ice cream in Paris (described under "Ice-Cream Dessert," below).

Le Tastevin (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is an eight-table, mother-and-son-run restaurant serving top-notch traditional French cuisine with white-tablecloth, candlelit, gourmet elegance under heavy wooden beams. The *menus* start with three courses at about €30 and offer plenty of classic choices that change with the season to ensure

freshness (open daily, good wine list, reserve for late-evening eating, 46 rue St. Louis-en-l'Île, tel. 01 43 54 17 31; owner Madame Puisieux speaks just enough English, while her son, Jean-Philippe, tends the kitchen).

Medieval Theme Restaurants: Nos Ancêtres les Gaulois (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 8" entry step) on rue St. Louis-en-l'Île is famous for its rowdy, medieval-cellar atmosphere. Ideal for barbarians—as the name (“Our Ancestors the Gauls”) implies—they serve all-you-can-eat buffets with straw baskets of raw veggies (cut whatever you like with your dagger), massive plates of pâté, a meat course, and all the wine you can stomach for €35. The food is just food; burping is encouraged. If you want to eat a lot, drink a lot of wine, be surrounded with tourists, and holler at your friends while receiving smart-aleck buccaneer service, this food fest can be fun (open daily from 19:00, at #39, tel. 01 46 33 66 07). **La Taverne du Sergent Recruteur (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 8" entry step)**, next door, serves up the same formula with a different historic twist: The “Sergeant Recruiter” used to get young Parisians drunk and stuffed here, then sign them into the army. You might swing by both and choose the...“ambience” is not quite the right word...that fits your mood.

La Brasserie de l'Île St. Louis (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is situated at the prow of the island's ship as it faces Ile de la Cité, offering purely Alsatian cuisine (try the *choucroute garni* for €17), served in Franco-Germanic ambience with no-nonsense brasserie service. This is your perfect balmy-evening perch for watching the Ile St. Louis promenade—or, if it's chilly, the interior is plenty characteristic for a memorable night out (closed Wed, no reservations, 55 quai de Bourbon, tel. 01 43 54 02 59). In the little square adjacent to La Brasserie de l'Île St. Louis, you'll find three charming little spots serving a perfect variety of French goodies inside or on the sidewalk: **Le Flore-en-l'Île (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible)** serves tea, pastries, ice cream and light lunches; **Terrasse Chauffee (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible)** serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner French comfort food (including a €16 *menu*); and **The St. Regis (AE, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible)** also serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner with crêpes and light meals, plus an €18 *menu*. All three eateries are on the corner of rue Jean du Bellay and rue St. Louis-en-l'Île.

Café Med (AE+A, AI, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, two 6" entry steps), near Notre-Dame at #77, is best for inexpensive salads, crêpes, and light €12 *menus* in a tight but cheery setting (limited wine list, open daily, tel. 01 43 29 73 17, charming Eva). There's a similar *crêperie* just across the street.

Riverside Picnic

On sunny lunchtimes and balmy evenings, the *quai* on the Left Bank side of Ile St. Louis is lined with locals who have more class than money, spreading out tablecloths and even lighting candles for elegant picnics. Otherwise, it's a great place for people-watching. The *quai* is accessible via the long ramp of Quai d'Orléans, visible from the pont St. Louis.

Ice-Cream Dessert

Half the people strolling Ile St. Louis are licking an ice cream cone, because this is the home of *les glaces Berthillon*. The original **Berthillon** shop (**AE+A, AI+A**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible, one 4" entry doorstep and one interior 4" step), at 31 rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile, is marked by the line of salivating customers (closed Mon-Tue). It's so popular that the wealthy people who can afford to live on this fancy island complain about the congestion it causes. For a less famous but at least as tasty treat, the homemade Italian gelato a block away at **Amorino Gelati** (**AE+A, AI+A**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) is giving Berthillon competition (no line, bigger portions, easier to see what you want, and they offer little tastes—Berthillon doesn't need to, 47 rue St. Louis-en-l'Ile, tel. 01 44 07 48 08). Having some of each is not a bad thing.

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

Trains

Paris is Europe's rail hub, with six major train stations, each serving different regions: Gare de l'Est (eastbound trains), Gare du Nord (northern France and Europe), Gare St. Lazare (northwestern France), Gare d'Austerlitz (southwestern France and Europe), Gare de Lyon (southeastern France and Italy), and Gare Montparnasse (northwestern France and TGV service to France's southwest). Any train station has schedule information, can make reservations, and sell tickets for any destination. Buying tickets is handier from an SNCF neighborhood office—including those at Louvre, Invalides, Orsay, Versailles, and airports—or at your neighborhood travel agency. It's worth the small fee. Look for *SNCF* signs in their window that indicate they sell train tickets.

Schedules change by season, weekday, and weekend. Verify train schedules shown in this book (to study ahead on the Web, check Germany's excellent all-Europe Web site, <http://bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en>). The nationwide information line for train schedules and reservations is tel. 3635. Dial this four-digit number, then press "3" for reservations or ticket purchase when you get the message (you may get

sent to a French-only phone tree as SNCF tries to automate its services; if so, hang up and ask your hotelier for help). Press 321 for Eurostar information, or 322 for Thalys. This incredibly helpful, time-saving service costs €0.34 per minute from anywhere in France (ask for an English-speaking agent and hope for the best, allow 5 min per call). The time and energy you save easily justifies the telephone torture, particularly when making seat reservations (note that phoned reservations must be picked up at least 30 min prior to departure).

All six train stations have banks or change offices, ATMs, information desks, telephones, cafés, newsstands, and clever pickpockets. Because of security concerns, not all have baggage check, though those with this service are identified below.

Métro and RER trains, as well as buses and taxis, are well-marked at every station. When arriving by Métro, follow signs for *Grandes Lignes*-SNCF to find the main tracks.

Each station offers two types of rail service: long distance to other cities, called *Grandes Lignes* (major lines); and suburban service to outlying areas, called *banlieue* or RER. Both *banlieue* and RER trains serve outlying areas and the airports; the only difference is that *banlieue* lines are operated by SNCF (France's train system, called Transilien) and RER lines are operated by RATP (Paris' Métro and bus system). You may also see ticket windows identified as *Ile de France*. This is for Transilien (SNCF) trains serving destinations outside Paris in the Ile de France region (usually no longer than an hour from Paris).

Paris train stations can be intimidating, but if you slow down, avoid peak times, take a deep breath, and ask for help, you'll find them manageable and efficient. Bring a pad of paper for clear communication at ticket/info windows. All stations have helpful *accueil* (information) booths; the bigger stations have roving helpers, usually in red vests. They're capable of answering rail questions more quickly than the information or ticket windows.

Access: Most of Paris' train stations are generally accessible, though each station has areas that a wheelchair user can't access. Most platforms can be reached by wheelchair, but sometimes the wheelchair user will be assisted by staff. Most stations have accessible toilets and elevators. When you arrive at any station, ask an attendant for assistance, or report to the *accueil* (information) booth.

SNCF, the French rail company, has a telephone number with detailed recorded information about accessibility for every station in France (tel. 08 00 15 47 53). The catch: it's all in French. In a pinch, recruit a hotelier or another friendly local to call for you.

Below, we've listed specific access information only for the Gare du Nord station, which you'll use to connect to most destinations in this book (e.g., London, Amsterdam, Bruges, and the Rhine via Köln).

Station Overview

Here's an overview of Paris' major train stations. Métro and RER trains, as well as buses and taxis, are well-marked at every station. When arriving by Métro, follow signs for *Grandes Lignes*-SNCF to find the main tracks.

Gare du Nord

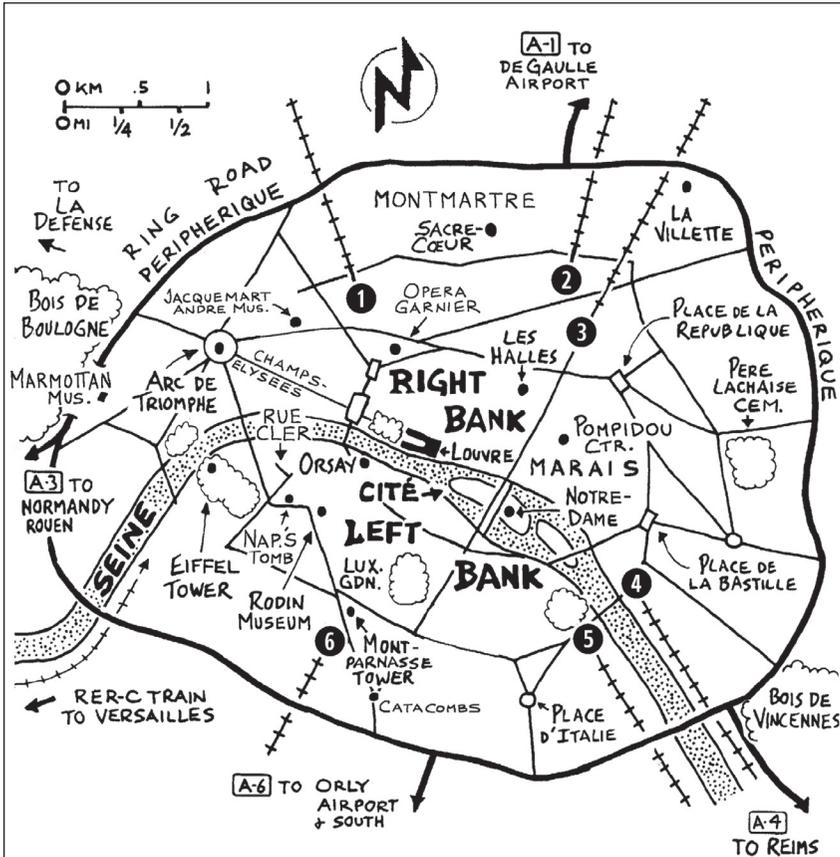
This vast station serves cities in northern France and international destinations north of Paris, including Copenhagen, Amsterdam (see "To Brussels and Amsterdam by Thalys Train," below), and the Eurostar to London (see "To London by Eurostar Train," below).

Arrive early to allow time to navigate this station. If you arrive by Métro, follow *Grandes Lignes* signs (main lines) and keep going up until you reach the tracks at street level. *Grandes Lignes* depart from tracks 3-21, suburban (*banlieue*) lines from tracks 30-36, and RER trains depart from tracks 37-44 (tracks 41-44 are 1 floor below). Glass train information booths (*accueil*) are scattered throughout the station, and information-helpers circulate (all rail staff are required to speak English).

The tourist information kiosk opposite track 16 is a hotel reservation service for Accor chain hotels (they also have free Paris maps). Information booths for the **Thalys** (high-speed trains to Brussels and Amsterdam) are opposite track 8. All non-Eurostar ticket sales are opposite tracks 3-8. Passengers departing on **Eurostar** (London via Chunnel) must buy tickets and check in on the second level, opposite track 6. (Note: Britain's time zone is one hour earlier; times listed on Eurostar tickets are local times—Parisian time for departing Paris and the British time you'll arrive in London.)

Access: AE, AI, AT, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Some parts of the station are accessible only by escalator, not elevator. Wheelchair users can find an accessible toilet alongside track 3 (push button near door to be let in). Another accessible toilet is located near track 36. The platforms are at street level, so elevators are not needed to leave the station. There are accessible elevators to the lower level, where car rentals and the Métro are located. As you go toward the exit with the taxi stand, you'll find the elevators located just inside the doorway on the right-hand side (go to floor "-1").

Paris Train Stations



Paris Train Stations & Destinations

- ① Gare St. Lazare: To Normandy (also Vernon/Giverny)
- ② Gare du Nord: To London, Brussels, Amsterdam & N. France (also Charles de Gaulle Airport, Chantilly & Auvers-sur-Oise)
- ③ Gare l'Est: To E. France, S. Germany, Switzerland & Austria
- ④ Gare de Lyon: To Italy & SE France (also Fontainebleau, Melun/Vaux-le-Vicomte & Disneyland)
- ⑤ Gare d'Austerlitz: To SW France, Loire Valley & Spain
- ⑥ Gare Montparnasse: To SW France, Loire Valley, Normandy & Brittany (also Chartres & Mont St. Michel)

Key Destinations Served by Gare du Nord *Grandes Lignes*: **Brussels** (12/day, 1.5 hrs, see “To Brussels and Amsterdam by Thalys Train,” page *TK), **Bruges** (18/day, 2 hrs, change in Brussels, one direct), **Amsterdam** (5/day direct on fast Thalys train, 4 hrs; more with a transfer in Brussels, 5 hrs. For details, see “To Brussels and Amsterdam by Thalys Train,” page *TK), **Copenhagen** (1/day, 16 hrs, two night trains), **Koblenz** (6/day, 5 hrs, change in Köln), and **London** Eurostar via Chunnel (17/day, 3 hrs, tel. 08 36 35 35 39, see “To London by Eurostar Train,” page *TK).

By *Banlieue*/RER Lines: **Chantilly-Gouvieux** (hrly, fewer on weekends, 35 min), **Charles de Gaulle Airport** (2/hr, 30 min, runs 5:30–23:00, track 4), **Auvers-sur-Oise** (2/hr, 1 hr, transfer at Pontoise or St Ouen).

Gare Montparnasse

This big and modern station covers three floors, serves lower Normandy and Brittany, and offers TGV service to the Loire Valley and southwestern France, as well as suburban service to Chartres. At street level, you'll find a bank, *banlieue* trains serving Chartres (you can also reach the *banlieue* trains from the second level), and ticket windows for Ile de France trains in the center, just past the escalators.

Most services are provided on the second (top) level, where the *Grandes Lignes* arrive and depart. Ticket windows and an information booth are to the far left (with your back to glass exterior). *Banlieue* trains depart from tracks 10–19. The main rail information office is opposite track 15. Taxis and car rentals are to the far left as you leave the tracks. Air France buses to Orly and Charles de Gaulle Airports stop in front of the station, down the escalators and outside.

Key Destinations Served by Gare Montparnasse: **Chartres** (20/day, 1 hr, *banlieue* lines), **Pontorson/Mont St. Michel** (5/day, 4.5 hrs, via Rennes, then take bus from Pontorson; or take train to Pontorson via Caen, then bus from Pontorson), **Dinan** (7/day, 4 hrs, change in Rennes and Dol), **Bordeaux** (14/day, 3.5 hrs), **Sarlat** (5/day, 6 hrs, change in Bordeaux, Libourne, or Souillac), **Toulouse** (11/day, 5 hrs, most require change, usually in Bordeaux), **Albi** (7/day, 6–7.5 hrs, change in Toulouse, also night train), **Carcassonne** (8/day, 6.5 hrs, most require changes in Toulouse and Bordeaux, direct trains take 10 hrs), and **Tours** (14/day, 1 hr).

Gare de Lyon

This huge and bewildering station offers TGV and regular service to southeastern France, Italy, and other international destinations (for more

trains to Italy, see “Gare de Bercy,” below). Frequent *banlieue* trains serve Melun (near Vaux-le-Vicomte) and Fontainebleau (some depart from the main *Grandes Lignes* level, more frequent departures are from one level down, follow RER-D signs, and ask at any *accueil* or ticket window where the next departure leaves from). Don't leave this station without relaxing in Le Train Bleu Restaurant lounge, up the stairs opposite track G.

Grande Ligne trains arrive and depart from one level, but are divided into two areas (tracks A–N and 5–23). They are connected by the long platform along tracks A and 5, and by the hallway adjacent to track A and opposite track 9. This hallway has all the services, including ticket windows, ticket information, banks, and shops (including Virgin Records/Books). *Banlieue* ticket windows are just inside the hall adjacent to track A (*billets Ile de France*). *Grandes Lignes* and *banlieue* lines share the same tracks. A tourist office (Mon–Sat 8:00–18:00, closed Sun) and a train information office are both opposite track L. From the RER or Métro, follow signs for *Grandes Lignes Arrivées* and take the escalator up to reach the platforms. Train information booths (*accueil*) are opposite tracks A and 11 and downstairs. Baggage check (daily 6:45–22:45) is down the stairs opposite track 13 (keep straight off the escalator then turn left). Taxi stands are well-signed in front of the station at and one floor below.

Air France buses to Montparnasse (easy transfer to Orly Airport) and direct to Charles de Gaulle Airport stop outside the station's main entrance (opposite tracks A to L, roll or stroll across the parking lot—the stop is opposite the Café European; €12, 2/hr, normally at :15 and :45 after the hour).

Key Destinations Served by Gare de Lyon: **Vaux-le-Vicomte** (train to Melun, hrly, 30 min), **Fontainebleau** (nearly hrly, 45 min), **Beaune** (12/day, 2.5 hrs, most require change in Dijon), **Dijon** (15/day, 1.5 hrs), **Chamonix** (9/day, 9 hrs, change in Lyon and St. Gervais; 1 night train), **Annecy** (14/day, 4–7 hrs), **Lyon** (16/day, 2.5 hrs), **Avignon** (9/day in 2.5 hrs, 6/day in 4 hrs with change), **Arles** (14/day, 5 hrs, most with change in Marseille, Avignon, or Nîmes), **Nice** (14/day, 5.5–7 hrs, many with change in Marseille), **Venice** (3/day, 3/night, 11–15 hrs, most require changes), **Rome** (2/day, 5/night, 15–18 hrs, most require changes), and **Bern** (9/day, 5–11 hrs, most require changes, night train).

Gare de Bercy

This smaller station handles some night train service to Italy during renovation work at the Gare de Lyon (Mo: Bercy, one stop east of Gare de Lyon on line #14).

Gare de l'Est

This single-floor station (with underground Métro), which serves eastern France and international destinations east of Paris, is in the midst of a renovation to accommodate new TGV service to Reims and Strasbourg. Expect changes from this description: Train information booths are at tracks 1 and 26; the info booth at track 18 is for Transilien trains serving suburban areas; ticket windows are in the big hall opposite track 8; luggage storage (*consigne*) is through the hall opposite track 12; and Métro access is opposite track 18.

Key Destinations Served by Gare de l'Est: Note that by 2007, many of these trip times will be much shorter, thanks to new TGV train service—**Colmar** (12/day, 5.5 hrs, change in Strasbourg, Dijon, or Mulhouse), **Strasbourg** (14/day, 4.5 hrs, many require changes), **Reims** (12/day, 1.5 hrs), **Verdun** (5/day, 3 hrs, change in Metz or Chalon), **Munich** (5/day, 9 hrs, some require changes, night train), **Vienna** (7/day, 13–18 hrs, most require changes, night train), **Zürich** (10/day, 7 hrs, most require changes, night train), and **Prague** (2/day, 14 hrs, night train).

Gare St. Lazare

This relatively small station serves upper Normandy, including Rouen and Giverny. All trains arrive and depart one floor above street level. Follow signs to *Grandes Lignes* from the Métro to reach the tracks. Ticket windows are in the first hall at departure level. *Grandes Lignes* (main lines) depart from tracks 17–27; *banlieue* (suburban) trains depart from 1–16. The train information office (*accueil*) is opposite track 15. There's a post office (PTT) along track 27, and WCs are opposite track 19. There is no baggage check. You'll find many shops and services one floor below the departure level.

Key Destinations Served by Gare St. Lazare: **Giverny** (train to Vernon, 5/day, 45 min then bus or taxi 10 min to Giverny), **Rouen** (15/day, 75 min), **Honfleur** (6/day, 3 hrs, via Lisieux, then bus), **Bayeux** (9/day, 2.5 hrs, some with change in Caen), and **Caen** (12/day, 2 hrs).

Gare d'Austerlitz

This small station provides non-TGV service to the Loire Valley, southwestern France, and Spain. All tracks are at street level. The information booth is opposite track 17, and all ticket sales are in the hall opposite track 10. Baggage check, WCs, and car rental are near track 27, along the side of the station, opposite track 21. To get to the Métro, you must go outside to either side of the station.

Key Destinations Served by Gare d'Austerlitz: **Amboise** (8/day in 2 hrs, 12/day in 1.5 hrs with change in Tours' St. Pierre-des-Corps), **Cahors** (7/day, 5–7 hrs, most with changes), **Barcelona** (1/day, 9 hrs, change in Montpellier, night trains), **Madrid** (2 night trains only, 13–16 hrs), and **Lisbon** (1/day, 24 hrs).

To Brussels and Amsterdam by Thalys Train

The pricey Thalys train has the monopoly on the rail route (for a cheaper option, try the Eurolines bus; see below). Without a railpass, you'll pay about €80–100 second class for the Paris–Amsterdam train (compared to €45 by bus) or about €60–80 second class for the Paris–Brussels train (compared to €25 by bus). Even with a railpass, you need to pay for train reservations (second class–\$13, first class–\$26). Wheelchair users and one companion get discounted first-class fares with minimal restrictions. Anyone should book at least a day ahead, as seats are limited (toll tel. 08 25 84 25 97).

Access: **AE+A, AI, AT**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Wheelchair users can pay for second class on Thalys trains, but reserve first-class accessible seats at no additional charge. Wheelchair users should alert Thalys at the time of booking that they will need assistance, then arrive 30 minutes before departure so Thalys staff can prepare for boarding with ramps. On Thalys trains, only first class is accessible, with designated spaces for wheelchairs. Train cars 1, 11, and 21 have a seat with a mobile base to make transfers easier. These three cars also have accessible toilets.

To London by Eurostar Train

The fastest, most accessible, and most convenient way to get to London is by rail—through the “Chunnel.” For information on this option, see page *TK.

Airports

Charles de Gaulle Airport

Paris' primary airport has two main terminals, T-1 and T-2, and two lesser terminals, T-3 and T-9. Most flights from the United States serve T-1 or T-2. Due to ongoing construction at T-1, it's impossible to predict which airlines will serve this terminal—call ahead or check their Web site (tel. 01 48 62 22 80, www.adp.fr). Terminals are connected every few minutes by a free *navette* (shuttle bus; **AE, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible), though a new train zips travelers between the terminals effortlessly. The RER (Paris suburban train, connecting to Métro) stops at T-2 and T-

3, and the TGV (tay-zhay-vay, stands for *train à grande vitesse*—high-speed, long-distance train) station is at T-2. There is no baggage storage at the airport. Beware of pickpockets on *navettes* between terminals, and especially on RER trains. Do not take an unauthorized taxi from the men greeting you on arrival. Official taxi stands are well-signed. For the latest information on either of Paris' airports, check www.adp.fr.

General Airport Access: AE, AI, AL, AT+A, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. Although Charles de Gaulle airport has basic accessibility features, wheelchair users have reported that this can be a challenging place to navigate. The TI's *Passager à Mobilité Réduite* guide lists the accessibility of the airport and its hotels and restaurants.

Terminal 1 (T-1): This circular terminal has one main entry and covers three floors—arrival (*arrivées*, top floor), departure (*départs*, one floor down) and shops/boutiques (basement level). For information on getting to Paris, see “Transportation between Charles de Gaulle Airport and Paris,” below.

Arrival Level: You'll find a variety of services at the gates listed below. Expect changes to this information as airport construction proceeds. Blue signs will verify the gates listed below.

- Gate 36: Called “Meeting Point” (*Point de Rencontre*), this gate has an information counter with English-speaking staff, a café, and an ATM. Ask here for directions to Disneyland shuttle (€14, daily 7:30–21:00).
- Gate 2: Outside are Air France buses to Paris and Orly Airport (see below).
- Gate 10: Outside are Roissy-Buses to Paris (buy tickets from driver); upstairs is access to car rental.
- Gate 16: A bank with lousy rates for currency exchange.
- Gate 18: Taxis outside.
- Gate 20: Shuttle buses (*navettes*, **AE, AI**, Level 2—Moderately Accessible) for Terminal 2 and the RER trains to Paris. Take the elevator down to level (*niveau*) 2, then go outside (line #1 serves T-2 including the TGV station; line #2 goes directly to the RER station). A new intra-airport train also shuttles riders between the various terminals.

Departure Level (*niveau* 3): This is limited to flight check-in, though you will find ADP information desks here. Those departing from T-1 will find restaurants, a PTT (post office), a pharmacy, boutiques, and a handy grocery store one floor below the ticketing desks (*niveau* 2 on the elevator).

Access for Terminal 1: AE, AI, AL, AT, Level 1—Fully Accessible, but the toilets and elevators can be hard to find. If you'll be taking the train to Paris, check in with the RER-SNCF information booth to prepare for your journey—they will show you to the elevator. For general assistance for persons with reduced mobility, call 01 48 62 28 24.

Terminal 2 (T-2): This long, horseshoe-shaped terminal is dominated by Air France and divided into several subterminals (or halls), each identified by a letter. You can walk or roll from one hall to the other. Halls are connected to the RER, the TGV station, and T-1 every five minutes with free *navette* shuttle buses (**AE, AI,** Level 2—Moderately Accessible; line #5 runs to T-1).

The RER and TGV stations are below the Sheraton Hotel (access by *navettes* or on foot). Stops for *navettes*, Air France buses, and Roissy Buses are all well-marked and near each hall (see “Transportation between Charles de Gaulle Airport and Paris,” below). ADP information desks are located near Gate 5 in each hall. Car-rental offices, post offices, pharmacies, and ATMs (*point d'argent*) are also well-signed.

Access for Terminal 2: AE, AI, AL, AT+A, Level 2—Moderately Accessible. While the interior of the terminal is fully accessible, not all toilet areas are accessible. If using the train to get into Paris, check in with the RER-SNCF information booth to prepare for your journey. For general assistance for persons with reduced mobility, call 01 48 62 59 00.

Transportation between Charles de Gaulle Airport and Paris: Three efficient public-transportation routes, taxis, and airport shuttle vans link the airport's terminals with central Paris. All are well-marked, and stops are centrally located at all terminals. The most accessible route downtown is via taxi or with an airport shuttle.

Taxis with luggage will run about €50 with bags, more if traffic is bad. You can request a minibus with a ramp for accessibility, which costs more than a normal taxi. (For details, see page *TK.)

Airport shuttles offer transportation between either of Paris' airports and your hotel, and (since they have more space than cabs) are good for single travelers or families of four or more. Airport pickup must be booked ahead and can be slow given unpredictable arrival times of international flights (plan on a 30-minute wait at the airport; taxis are easier for getting into Paris). Standard airport shuttles (**AE+A,** Level 2—Moderately Accessible) cost about €20–30 for one person, €30–40 for two, and €40–52 for three. A fully accessible van, adapted for wheelchair users, is more expensive (**AE, AI,** Level 1, €130 for wheelchair user plus up to 5 other passengers, reserve a week in advance, available through Golden Air—see below). Some offer deals if you do a round trip, and

most are more expensive at night (20:00–6:00). Be clear on where and how you are to meet your driver.

Golden Air is the most reliable of the many shuttles (from Paris to Charles de Gaulle: €27 for one person, €17 per person for two; from Charles de Gaulle to Paris: €35 for one person, €20 per person for two; tel. 01 34 10 12 92, fax 01 34 10 93 89, www.paris-airport-shuttle-limousine.com, goldenair@goldenair.net).

Sleeping at or near Charles de Gaulle Airport: Hôtel Ibis** (AE, AI, AL, AT, AR, AB, Level 1—Fully Accessible), outside the RER Roissy Rail station at T-3 (the first RER stop coming from Paris), offers standard and predictable accommodations (Db-€80–90, near *navette* stop, free shuttle bus to all terminals, tel. 01 49 19 19 19, fax 01 49 19 19 21, h1404@accor.com). **Novotel***** (AE, AI, AL, AT, AR, AB, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is next door and the next step up (weekend Db-€135, weekday Db-€160, tel. 01 49 19 27 27, fax 01 49 19 27 99, www.novotel.com).

Orly Airport

This airport feels small. It's good for rental-car pickup and drop-off, as it's closer to Paris and far easier to navigate than Charles de Gaulle Airport.

Orly has two terminals: Sud (south) and Ouest (west). Air France flights arrive at Ouest, and all others use Sud. At the Sud terminal, you'll exit the baggage claim (near Gate H) and see signs directing you to city transportation, car rental, and so on. Turn left to enter the main terminal area, and you'll find exchange offices with bad rates, an American Express office, an ATM, the ADP (*Espace Tourisme*, a quasi-tourist office that offers free city maps and basic sightseeing information, open until 24:00), and an SNCF rail desk (next to ADP, daily 7:45–12:00 & 13:00–20:00, sells train tickets and even Eurailpasses). Downstairs is a sandwich bar, WCs, a bank (same bad rates), a newsstand (buy a phone card), and a post office. Car-rental offices are located in the parking lot in front of the terminal opposite Gate C. For flight info on any airline serving Orly, call 01 49 75 15 15. For information on either of Paris' airports, visit www.adp.fr.

Transportation between Orly Airport and Paris: Several efficient public-transportation routes, taxis, and a couple of airport shuttle services link Orly with central Paris. Wheelchair users will find taxis and minibuses to be the most convenient option. The gate locations listed below apply to Orly Sud, but the same transportation services are available from both terminals.

Air France buses (outside Gate K) run to Montparnasse train station (with many Métro lines) and to Invalides Métro stop (€8 one-way, €12 round-trip, 4/hr, 40 min to Invalides). These buses are handy for those staying in or near the rue Cler neighborhood (from Invalides bus stop, take the Métro to La Tour Maubourg or Ecole Militaire to reach recommended hotels; see also “RER trains,” below). Air France buses also run to Charles de Gaulle Airport (€16, 2/hr, 80 min). Remember that to continue on the Métro, you’ll need to buy a separate ticket (for ticket types and prices, see “Getting Around Paris,” page *TK).

Jetbus (outside Gate H, €5.50, 4/hr) is the quickest way to the Paris subway and the best way to the Marais neighborhood. Take Jetbus to the Villejuif Louis Aragon Métro stop. To reach the Marais neighborhood, take the Métro to the Sully Morland stop.

The **Orlybus** (outside Gate H, €6, 3/hr) takes you to the Denfert-Rochereau RER-B line and the Métro, offering subway access to central Paris, including the Latin Quarter and Notre-Dame Cathedral, as well as the Gare du Nord train station.

These two routes provide access to Paris via **RER trains**: an ADP shuttle (Orly Rail bus) takes you to RER-C (Pont d’Orly stop), with connections to Gare d’Austerlitz, St. Michel/Notre-Dame, Musée d’Orsay, Invalides, and Pont de l’Alma stations and is handy for some Rue Cler hotels (outside Gate G, 4/hr, €5.50). **Orlyval trains** take you to the Antony stop on RER-B (serving Luxembourg, Châtelet-Les Halles, St. Michel, and Gare du Nord stations in central Paris, €9, includes RER ticket).

Taxis are to the far right as you leave the terminal, at Gate M. Allow €25–35 with bags for a taxi into central Paris.

Airport shuttles are good for single travelers or families of four or more, but better from Paris to the airport (see “Charles de Gaulle Airport,” above, for a company to contact; from Orly, figure about €23/1 person, €30/2 people, less for larger groups and kids).

Sleeping near Orly Airport: Two chain hotels, owned by the same company, are your best option near Orly. **Hôtel Ibis**** (AE, AI, AL, AT, AR, AB, Level 1—Fully Accessible) is reasonable, basic, and close by (Db-€65, tel. 01 56 70 50 60, fax 01 56 70 50 70, h1413@accor.com). **Hôtel Mercure***** (AE, AI, AL, AR, AB, Level 1—Fully Accessible) provides more comfort for a higher price (Db-€130–160, tel. 01 49 75 15 50, fax 01 49 75 15 51, h1246@accor-hotels.com). Both have free shuttles to the terminal.

Beauvais Airport

Budget airlines such as Ryanair use Beauvais Airport, offering dirt-cheap airfares, but leaving you 50 miles north of Paris. Still, this small airport has direct buses to Paris (see below). It's ideal for drivers who want to rent a car here and head to Normandy or north to Belgium. The airport is basic (the terminal for departing passengers and baggage claim is under a tent, and waiting areas are crowded and have few services), but it's being improved as it deals with an increasing number of passengers (airport tel. 08 92 68 20 66, www.aeroportbeauvais.com; Ryanair tel. 08 92 68 20 73, www.ryanair.com).

Transportation between Beauvais Airport and Paris: Buses depart from the airport 20 minutes after flights arrive, taking you to Porte Maillot, which has a Métro and RER stop on the west edge of Paris (bus costs €13, takes 90 min). Buses depart Paris for Beauvais Airport three hours before scheduled flight departures (catch bus at Porte Maillot in parking lot on boulevard Pershing next to Hôtel Concorde-Lafayette). Bus tickets must be booked 24 hours in advance; call Beauvais Airport for details or buy tickets on their Web site (see contact info above).

Taxis run from Beauvais Airport to Paris: €120 to central Paris, €130 to Orly Airport, and €110 to Charles de Gaulle Airport. Taxis to Beauvais' train station or city center cost €11. **Trains** connect Beauvais and Paris Gare du Nord (20/day, 80 min).