

Montparnasse & Southern Paris

MONTPARNASSE & 15E | PLACE D'ITALIE & CHINATOWN

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Ignoring the '70s smoked-glass exterior of **Tour Montparnasse** (p259) and zipping to the top for a glass of Champagne on the terrace, taking in one of the finest panoramas of Paris.

2 Prowling the spine-prickling, skull-and-bone-packed tunnels of Paris'

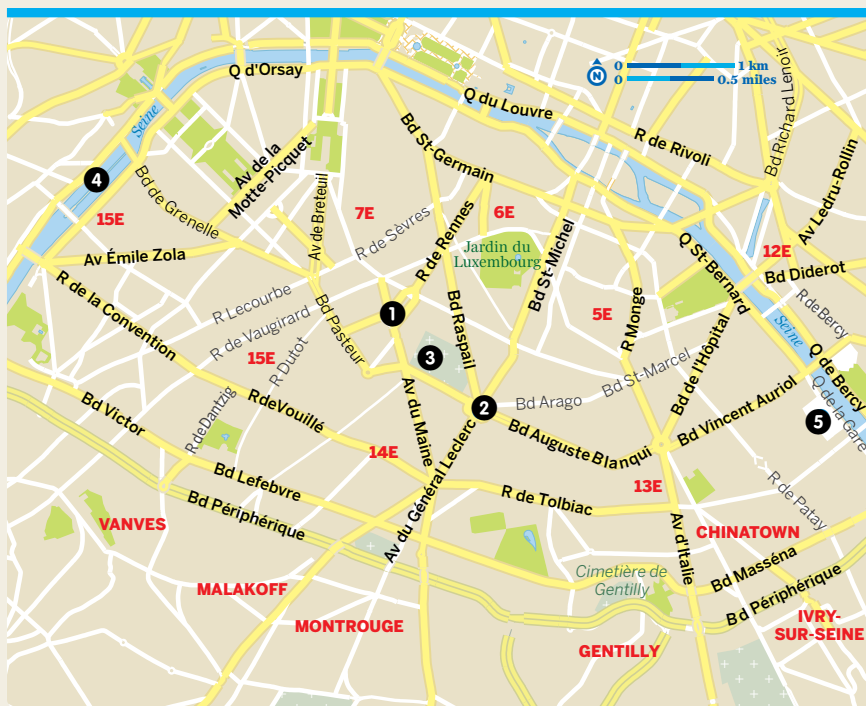
creepy ossuary, **Les Catacombes** (p258).

3 Visiting Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Serge Gainsbourg at **Cimetière du Montparnasse** (p260).

4 Strolling the tree-lined **Île aux Cygnes** (p260) from the Statue of Liberty

replica towards the Eiffel Tower.

5 Catching superb exhibitions at France's national library, the book-shaped **Bibliothèque Nationale de France** (p261).



For more detail of this area, see Map p426, p428 and p430 →

Explore: Montparnasse & Southern Paris

Tour Montparnasse is an unavoidable sight, but its observation deck offers an unrivalled spot for getting to grips with the lay of the land. At its feet are the cafes, brasseries and backstreets where some of the early 20th century's most seminal artists and writers hung out – albeit now swathed by urban grit. The area's tree-filled cemetery is a peaceful spot to escape to – and to visit the graves of many of those same visionaries.

West in the gentrified 15e, take in more great views by strolling the Île aux Cygnes or boarding a balloon 'flight' in the Parc André-Citroën, one of the capital's most innovative open spaces.

To Montparnasse's east, the ever-regenerating 13e is home to the country's national library as well as Paris' largest Chinatown. No matter where you end up for dinner in this sprawling southern sector of Paris, head back to the river to dance until dawn on the floating bars/nightclubs moored on the Seine's quays.

Local Life

- **Street life** Join locals shopping for flowers, cheese, charcuterie and more along rue Daguerre.
- **Track life** Explore Paris' former steam railway line on the newly reopened Petite Ceinture du 15e.
- **Breton life** Take a crêperie crawl through Montparnasse's 'Little Brittany'.
- **Fashion life** Find bargain designer seconds, samples and last season's stock on the 14e's rue d'Alésia.

Getting There & Away

- **Metro** Montparnasse Bienvenue is the transport hub for Montparnasse and the 15e. Bibliothèque and Place d'Italie are convenient stops in place d'Italie and Chinatown.
- **Bus** Buses help fill the gap in areas lacking comprehensive metro coverage. From Gare Montparnasse, bus 91 goes to Gare d'Austerlitz, Gare de Lyon and Bastille; bus 92 to Charles de Gaulle-Étoile; and bus 94 to Sèvres Babylone. Pick up bus 82 on bd du Montparnasse for Invalides and the Eiffel Tower. Bus 62 from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France crosses the 13e to rue d'Alésia and rue de la Convention. At place d'Italie, take bus 67 to Mosquée de Paris, Jardin des Plantes, Île de St-Louis, Hôtel de Ville and Pigalle, and bus 83 to the Jardin de Luxembourg and Les Invalides.
- **Bicycle** Handy Vélib' stations include 5-7 rue d'Odessa, 14e; 13 bd Edgar Quinet, 14e; 2 av René Coty, 14e; and two facing place d'Italie, 13e.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The metro is tailor-made for cross-town trips, but to whizz around Paris' perimeter, hop on the T3 tram. From the Pont du Garigliano, 15e, it currently skims the city's edge as far as Porte de la Chapelle, 18e. An extension to Porte d'Asnières, 17e, is due for completion in 2017, encircling some three-quarters of the city. Passengers use standard t+ tickets. For updates on Paris' trams, visit www.tramway.paris.fr.

Best Places to Eat

- Le Casse Noix (p263)
- Jeu de Quilles (p263)
- La Véraison (p263)
- Pho 14 (p265)
- Restaurant Variations (p266)

For reviews, see p262 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- Félicie (p268)
- Le Rosebud (p268)
- Le Select (p268)
- Tandem (p268)

For reviews, see p268 ➔

Best Floating Clubs

- Le Batofar (p268)
- Bateau El Alamein (p269)
- Petit Bain (p270)
- Péniche l'Improviste (p270)
- La Dame de Canton (p269)

For reviews, see p268 ➔