

Bastille & Eastern Paris

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Opéra Bastille (p191) Taking in a backstage tour and opera, ballet or concert recital at this modern monolith, on the landmark square where revolutionaries stormed the Bastille in 1789.

2 Promenade Plantée (p182) Joining Parisians for a weekend jog or stroll along the foliage-laced path of this

elevated city park, uniquely at home atop a 19th-century railway viaduct.

3 Château de Vincennes (p183) Exploring Paris' only medieval castle, complete with prerequisite keep and sublime 16th-century royal chapel.

4 Parc Zoologique de Paris (p183) Thrilling the

children with lion, white rhino, giraffe and wolverine spottings through camouflaged spy towers at the city's state-of-the-art zoo.

5 Cinémathèque Française (p182) Catching timeless cinematic classics at this little-known cinema museum, an ode to Parisians' beloved seventh art.



For more detail of this area see Map p394 ➔

Explore: Bastille & Eastern Paris

Bastille isn't known for its sights, but it's nonetheless a fascinating area to explore on foot. As it's still authentically residential in most parts, a wander will give you a taste of everyday life in one of Paris' most dynamic neighbourhoods. For a more voyeuristic glimpse, ascend to elevated park Promenade Plantée, which looks down on the streets around you and offers the occasional peek through an apartment window.

Bastille's main attraction is not aimless *flânerie* (urban strolling), however: this former working-class district doesn't exactly have the same visual knockout factor as central Paris. It's best for dipping your toes into a vibrant restaurant scene dominated by young, creative chefs; its scores of popular, inexpensive bars and cafes; and the profusion of evening entertainment, from avant-garde opera to indie rock and dancing on a Seine-moored barge.

You may be reluctant to leave the city behind with so much to explore, but an easy trip to the Bois de Vincennes, the city's largest park, never disappoints. From a castle and zoo to outdoor concerts, bike excursions, pick-up football matches and picnics, it's one of the most-loved spots in the capital to unwind *al fresco*.

Local Life

➔ **Bistro life** The 11e and 12e have an unusually high number of old-school bistros that have preserved much of their original decor, such as the much-celebrated Chez Paul (p187) and neighbourhood favourites like Au Vieux Chêne (p186).

➔ **Market life** Fabulous markets include classic Parisian street markets like the Marché Bastille (p184), and Marché d'Aligre (p189), where food shops, wine bars and restaurants fan out into the surrounding streets.

➔ **Green spaces** Eastern Paris just might have the city's best collection of parks. The Promenade Plantée (p182) and Parc de Bercy (p184) are easy escapes, but on weekends many Parisians decamp to the much larger Bois de Vincennes, with beautifully landscaped Parc Floral de Paris (p183) at its green heart.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro** Lines 1, 8 and 9 are major east-west arteries, while line 5 heads south across the Seine and north to the Gare du Nord. Line 14 serves Bercy.

➔ **RER** The east-west RER A stops at Nation and Gare de Lyon en route to central and western Paris.

➔ **Bicycle** There are three Vélip' stations around place de la Bastille: on bd Richard Lenoir, bd Bourdon and rue de Lyon.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

While the area immediately surrounding the Bastille has spawned a clutch of faceless bars and restaurant chains, walking east along trendy rue de Charonne or along rue du Faubourg St-Antoine to Ledru-Rollin and Faidherbe-Chaligny brings you to a much more interesting neighbourhood, filled with exciting dining addresses, atmospheric cafes and all the quirky, unusual shops that make a city great. Tiny rue St-Nicolas is a particularly tasty street for foodies.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Dersou (p188)
- ➔ Le 6 Paul Bert (p186)
- ➔ Clamato (p186)
- ➔ Septime (p188)
- ➔ L'Écailler du Bistrot (p186)

For reviews, see p184. ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Le Baron Rouge (p189)
- ➔ La Cave Paul Bert (p189)
- ➔ Café des Angles (p189)
- ➔ Concrete (p189)
- ➔ Septime La Cave (p190)

For reviews, see p189. ➔

Best Entertainment

- ➔ Opéra Bastille (p191)
- ➔ La Cinémathèque Française (p191)
- ➔ La Flèche d'Or (p191)
- ➔ Badaboum (p191)

For reviews, see p191. ➔