

The Islands

EATING | DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE | SHOPPING

Neighbourhood Top Five

① Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris (p195)

Reverling in the crowning glory of medieval Gothic architecture before ascending the cathedral's towers to take in the awe-inspiring panoramas.

② Sainte-Chapelle (p200)

Reading richly coloured biblical tales, exquisitely

told through stained-glass imagery with a grace and beauty impossible to find elsewhere.

③ Conciergerie (p201)

Learning how Marie-Antoinette and thousands of others lived out their final days at this 14th-century palace-turned-prison before being beheaded.

④ Crypte Archéologique (p198)

Delving underground to discover fascinating Gallo-Roman, medieval and Haussmanian archaeological remains.

⑤ Berthillon (p202)

Savouring the sweetness of this famous Parisian ice cream during a stroll along the riverbanks.



For more detail of this area see Map p396 ➔

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Queues to see the sunlight stream through spectacular stained glass at Sainte-Chapelle can be staggeringly long. To speed things up, first visit the Conciergerie and buy a combination ticket covering admission to both the old prison and the chapel. With this *billet jumelé* you can skip Sainte-Chapelle's ticket queue and enter via the line for museum-pass holders and combination tickets. You'll still need to go through a security check.



Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Berthillon (p202)
- ➔ Café Saint Régis (p202)
- ➔ Les Voyelles (p202)
- ➔ Le Caveau du Palais (p202)
- ➔ Mon Vieil Ami (p203)

For reviews, see p202. ➔



Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Les Jardins du Pont-Neuf (p203)
- ➔ Taverne Henri IV (p203)
- ➔ Café Saint Régis (p202)
- ➔ Le Bar du Caveau (p203)

For reviews, see p203. ➔



Best Places for Romance

- ➔ Notre Dame rooftop (p195)
- ➔ Pont St-Louis (p202)
- ➔ Pont Neuf (p201)
- ➔ Square du Vert-Galant (p201)

For reviews, see p201. ➔

Explore: the Islands

Paris' landmark cathedral, Notre Dame, dominates the Île de la Cité, so where better to start your explorations? (Heading here first also means you'll beat the crowds.) In addition to viewing its stained-glass interior, allow around an hour to climb the spiralling stairs to the top of the towers, and another to explore the archaeological crypt.

For even more beautiful stained glass, don't miss the nearby exquisite chapel, Sainte-Chapelle, a few footsteps from the intriguing prison the Conciergerie.

Cross the Pont St-Louis to the enchanting little Île St-Louis. After lunch at the deliciously Parisian hang-out Café Saint Régis, browse the island's boutiques and buy an iconic Berthillon ice cream from its flagship premises to take to the water's edge.

After a traditional French meal at 'old friend' Mon Vieil Ami, stroll back over the Pont St-Louis, where you're likely to catch buskers, for a glass of wine at the Île de la Cité's venerable wine bar Taverne Henri IV or a cocktail at its new floating bar Les Jardins du Pont-Neuf. If you're still going strong, cross the Pont Neuf for entertainment options on either side of the Seine.

Local Life

➔ **Art life** Europe's largest surviving medieval hall, the Conciergerie (p201), hosts cutting-edge, contemporary art exhibitions.

➔ **Market life** The most atmospheric place to buy blooms to brighten a Parisian apartment (or hotel room) is the Île de la Cité's ancient flower market, Marché aux Fleurs Reine Elizabeth II (p203).

➔ **Busking life** Pont au Double (linking Notre Dame with the Left Bank) and Pont St-Louis (linking the two islands) buzz with street performers in summer.

➔ **Picnic life** Pick up gourmet sandwiches from Huré (p203) and find a bench in the gardens behind Cathédrale Notre Dame.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro** Metro Cité (line 4) and Pont Marie (line 7) are the closest stations.

➔ **Bus** Bus 47 links Île de la Cité with Le Marais and Gare de l'Est; bus 21 with Opéra and Gare St-Lazare. On Île St-Louis it's bus 67 to Jardin des Plantes and place d'Italie, and bus 87 through the Latin Quarter to Champ de Mars.

➔ **Bicycle** Handy Vélip' stations include one by the Cité metro station, two by Notre Dame, and another at 41 quai de l'Horloge, Île de la Cité.

➔ **Boat** The hop-on, hop-off Batobus (p334) stops opposite Notre Dame on the Left Bank.