



Paris

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Best Places to Eat

- » Septime(p66)
- » AuPassage(p120)
- » L'AOC(p122)
- » Derrière(p121)
- » BouillonRacine(p126)

Best Place to Stay

- » HôtelCrayon(p104)
- » LePradey(p104)
- » MamaShelter(p107)
- » L'Hôtel(p111)
- » Hôtel Particulier Montmartre(p106)

Why Go

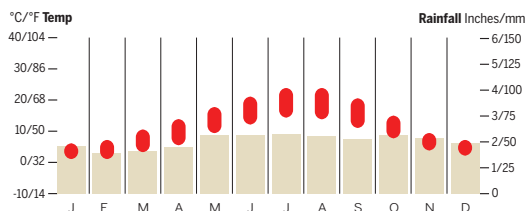
In the springtime, the fall, the winter (when it drizzles) or the summer (when it sizzles!), to paraphrase Cole Porter, France's romanticised capital seduces every moment of the year.

No matter the season, Paris has a timeless familiarity, with more recognisable landmarks than any other city. The wrought-iron Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe standing sentinel above the Champs-Élysées, ethereal Notre Dame, lamp-lit bridges spanning the Seine, art nouveau cafes spilling onto wicker-chair-lined terraces, and graceful parks, gardens and esplanades: they are indelibly etched in the minds of anyone who's visited – and the imaginations of anyone who hasn't (yet).

Equally alluring is Paris' fabulous food – from cosy neighbourhood bistros through to triple-Michelin-starred temples to gastronomy, and from scrumptious patisseries, *boulangeries* (bakeries) and *fromageries* (cheese shops) to heady street markets – as well as its stylish shopping and its priceless artistic treasures, showcased in incomparable museums.

When to Go

Paris



Jun & Jul Concerts every Saturday and Sunday afternoon during the Paris Jazz Festival.

Mid-Jul–mid-Aug The Seine's riverbanks become a sandy beach with sunbeds, parasols and palm trees.

Oct Museums, bars and more stay open all night during Nuit Blanche.

Cooking & Wine-Tasting Courses

If dining in the city's sublime restaurants whets your appetite, there are stacks of cookery schools (p101) – from famous institutions to private Parisian homes – offering courses that suit all abilities, itineraries and pockets. Many courses include shopping and market visits.

Where there's food in France, wine is never more than an arm's length away, and plenty of places in the capital offer wine tastings and instruction for all schedules, levels and budgets.

Some cooking and wine-tasting courses (p101) are run in English, while those that are in French usually offer at least some level of English translation; confirm language requirements when you book.

FOR FIRST-TIMERS

The pinch-yourself panorama from place de la Concorde – taking in the Tuileries, the length of av des Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe, and the Eiffel Tower – is an unforgettable introduction to the French capital, as is the view from the Palais de Chaillot's terrace across the Jardins du Trocadéro to the tower (especially when it's sparkling at night).

The tower is also an ideal spot to board a river cruise (or the hop-on, hop-off Batobus) along the Seine, and float past Parisian landmarks like the Louvre and Notre Dame.

Other vantage points perfect for acquainting yourself with the city include the rooftops of the Centre Pompidou cultural centre and the art nouveau department store Galeries Lafayette, as well as the steps of Sacré-Cœur basilica.

Top Five Signature Splurges

- » Flit between flagship *haute couture* (high fashion) houses in the Triangle d'Or (Golden Triangle; bordered by av Georges V, Champs-Élysées and Montaigne), St-Germain's storied shops, and emerging designers in the Haut Marais (p137).
- » Feast on *baiser Ladurée* (layered almond cake with strawberries and cream) at Champs-Élysées patisserie Ladurée (p60).
- » Concoct your own personal fragrance at Le Studio des Parfums (p142).
- » Sip a decadent hot chocolate at *salon de thé* (tea room) Angelina (p129).
- » Spend an evening at Paris' oldest and most palatial opera house, the Palais Garnier (p 137).

ARRONDISSEMENTS

Paris is split into 20 *arrondissements* (districts), and addresses always include the *arrondissement* number – 1er for *premier* (1st), 2e for *deuxième* (2nd), 3e for *troisième* (3rd) etc.

Fast Facts

- » **Population** 2.2 million
- » **Area** 105 sq km
- » **Hotel overnights/year** 35.7 million
- » **Signature drink** France's finest are all here; don't miss a Bloody Mary from its inventor, Harry's New York Bar.

Need to Know

Most museums close Monday, but some, including the Louvre and Centre Pompidou, close Tuesday instead.

Resources

- » Paris Info (www.parisinfo.com)
- » Secrets of Paris (www.secretsofparis.com)
- » Paris By Mouth (<http://parisbymouth.com>)
- » My Little Paris (www.mylittleparis.com)

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