

Exploring Paris

Paris is a city where taking in the street life—shopping, strolling, and hanging out—should claim as much of your time as sightseeing in churches or museums. Having a picnic in the Bois de Boulogne, taking a sunrise amble along the Seine, spending an afternoon at a flea market—Paris bewitches you with these kinds of experiences. For all the Louvre’s beauty, you’ll probably remember the Latin Quarter’s crooked alleyways better than the 370th oil painting of your visit.

1 Sightseeing Suggestions for the First-Timer

The following suggested itineraries will allow first-time visitors to experience Paris’s highlights in only a few days.

IF YOU HAVE 1 DAY Get up early and begin your day with some live theater by walking the streets around your hotel. Find a cafe and order a Parisian breakfast of coffee and croissants. If you’re a museum and monument junkie and don’t dare return home without seeing the “musts,” the top two museums are the **Musée du Louvre** and **Musée d’Orsay**, and the top three monuments are the **Tour Eiffel**, **Arc de Triomphe**, and **Notre-Dame** (which you can see later in the day). If it’s a toss-up between the Louvre and the d’Orsay, we’d choose the Louvre because it holds a greater variety of works. Among the monuments, we’d make it the Tour Eiffel for the panoramic view of the city.

If your day is too short to visit museums or wait in line for the tower, we suggest you spend your time strolling the streets. **Ile St-Louis** is the most elegant place for a walk. After exploring this island and its mansions, wander through such Left Bank districts as **St-Germain-des-Prés** and the area around **place St-Michel**, the heart of the student quarter. As the sun sets, head for **Notre-Dame**, standing along the banks of the Seine. This is a good place to watch the shadows fall over Paris as the lights come on for the night. Afterward, walk along the Seine, where vendors sell books and souvenir prints. Promise yourself a return visit and have dinner in the Left Bank bistro of your choice.

IF YOU HAVE 2 DAYS Follow the above for day 1, except now you can fit in on day 2 more of the top five sights. Day 1 covered a lot of the Left Bank, so if you want to explore the Right Bank, begin at the **Arc de Triomphe** and stroll down the **Champs-Élysées**, Paris's main boulevard, until you reach the Egyptian obelisk at **place de la Concorde**, where some of France's most notable figures lost their heads on the guillotine. Place de la Concorde affords terrific views of **La Madeleine**, the **Palais Bourbon**, the **Arc de Triomphe**, and the **Musée du Louvre**. Nearby **place Vendôme** is worth a visit, as it represents the Right Bank at its most elegant, with the **Hôtel Ritz** and Paris's top jewelry stores. Now we suggest a rest stop in the **Jardin de Tuileries**, west and adjacent to the Louvre. After a bistro lunch, walk in the **Marais** for a contrast to monumental Paris. Our favorite stroll is along **rue des Rosiers**, the heart of the Jewish community. Don't miss **place des Vosges**. After a rest, select a restaurant in **Montparnasse**, following in Hemingway's footsteps. This area is far livelier at night.

IF YOU HAVE 3 DAYS Spend days 1 and 2 as above. As you've already seen the Left Bank and the Right Bank, this day should be about your special interests. You might target the **Centre Pompidou** and the **Musée Carnavalet**, Paris's history museum. If you're a Monet fan, you might head for the **Musée Marmottan-Claude Monet**. Or perhaps you'd rather wander the sculpture garden of the **Musée Rodin**. If you select the **Musée Picasso**, you can use part of the morning to explore a few of the Marais's art galleries. After lunch, spend the afternoon on **Ile de la Cité**, where you'll get not only to see Notre-Dame again but also to visit the **Conciergerie**, where Marie Antoinette and others were held captive before they were beheaded. And you certainly can't miss the stunning stained glass of **Sainte-Chapelle** in the Palais de Justice. After dinner, if your energy holds, you can sample Paris's nightlife—whatever you fancy: the dancers at the **Lido** or the **Folies-Bergère**, or a smoky Left Bank jazz club, or a frenzied dance club. If you'd like to just sit and have a drink, Paris has some of the most elegant hotel bars in the world—try the **Crillon** or the **Plaza Athénée**.

IF YOU HAVE 4 DAYS Spend days 1 to 3 as above. On day 4, devote at least a morning to **Montmartre**, the community formerly known for its artists atop the highest of Paris's seven hills. Though the starving artists who made it the embodiment of *la vie de bohème* (Bohemian life) are long gone, there's much to enchant, especially if

you wander the back streets and avoid place du Tertre. Away from the tacky shops and sleazy clubs, you'll see picture-postcard lanes and staircases known to Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Utrillo. It's virtually mandatory to visit **Sacré-Coeur**, for the view if nothing else. If it's your last night in Paris, let your own interests take over. Lovers traditionally spend it clasping hands in a walk along the Seine; less goo-goo-eyed visitors can still find a full agenda. Try an evening at **Willi's Wine Bar**, with more than 250 vintages and good food. For a nightcap, we always head for the **Hemingway Bar** at the Ritz, where Garbo, Coward, and Fitzgerald once lifted their glasses. If that's too elegant, head for **Closerie des Lilas** in the 6th arrondissement, where you can rub shoulders with the movers and shakers of the film and fashion industries.

2 The Top Attractions: From the Arc de Triomphe to the Tour Eiffel

Arc de Triomphe ★★☆☆ At the western end of the Champs-Élysées, the Arc de Triomphe suggests an ancient Roman arch, only it's larger. Actually, it's the biggest triumphal arch in the world, about 49m (161 ft.) high and 44m (144 ft.) wide. To reach it, *don't try to cross the square*, Paris's busiest traffic hub. With a dozen streets radiating from the "Star," the roundabout has been called by one writer "vehicular roulette with more balls than numbers" (death is certain!). Take the underground passage and live a little longer.

Commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to commemorate the victories of his Grand Armée, the arch wasn't ready for the entrance of his empress, Marie-Louise, in 1810 (he'd divorced Josephine because she couldn't provide him an heir). It wasn't completed until 1836, under the reign of Louis-Philippe. Four years later, Napoleon's remains, brought from St. Helena, passed under the arch on their journey to his tomb at the Hôtel des Invalides. Since that time it has become the focal point for state funerals. It's also the site of the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in whose honor an eternal flame burns.

The greatest state funeral was Victor Hugo's in 1885; his coffin was placed under the arch, and much of Paris came to pay tribute. Another notable funeral was in 1929 for Ferdinand Foch, commander of the Allied forces in World War I. The arch has been the centerpiece of some of France's proudest moments and some of its most humiliating defeats, notably in 1871 and 1940. The memory of German troops marching under the arch is still painful to the French. Who can forget the 1940 newsreel of the Frenchman standing on the

Champs-Élysées, weeping as the Nazi storm troopers goose-stepped through Paris? The arch's happiest moment occurred in 1944, when the liberation-of-Paris parade passed beneath it. That same year, Eisenhower paid a visit to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a new tradition among leaders of state and important figures. After Charles de Gaulle's death, the French government (despite protests from anti-Gaullists) voted to change the name of this site from place de l'Étoile to place Charles de Gaulle. Nowadays it's often known as place Charles de Gaulle-Étoile.

Of the sculptures on the monument, the best known is Rude's *Marseillaise*, or *The Departure of the Volunteers*. J. P. Cortot's *Triumph of Napoléon in 1810* and Etex's *Resistance of 1814* and *Peace of 1815* also adorn the facade. The monument is engraved with the names of hundreds of generals (those underlined died in battle) who commanded French troops in Napoleonic victories.

You can take an elevator or climb the stairway to the top, where there's an exhibition hall with lithographs and photos depicting the arch throughout its history, as well as an observation deck with a fantastic view.

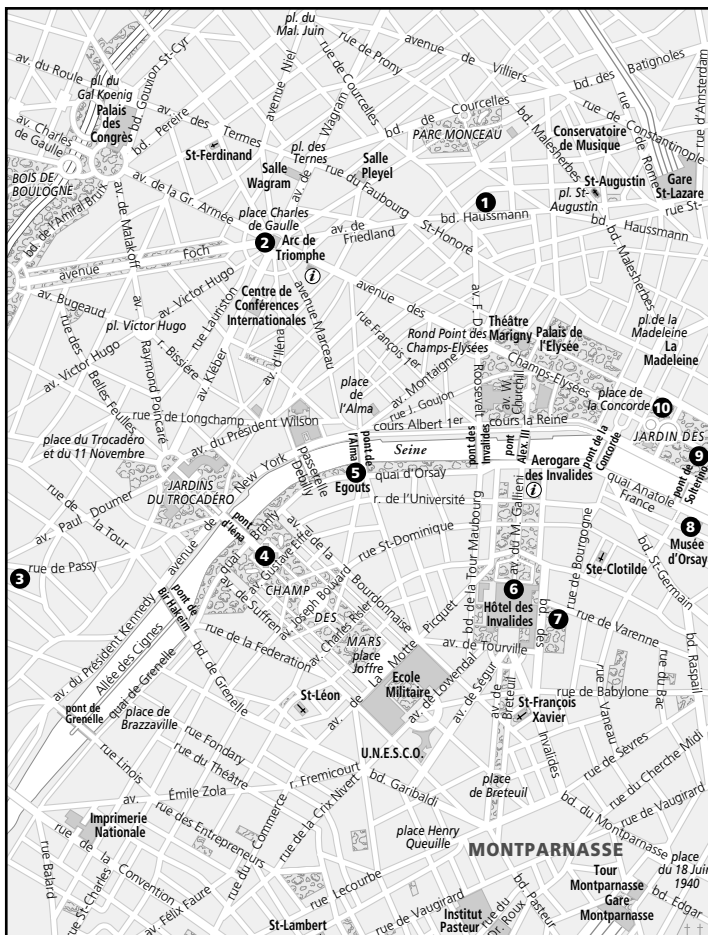
Place Charles de Gaulle-Étoile, 8e. ☎ 01-55-37-73-77. www.monum.fr. Admission 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 4.50€ (\$5.20) ages 18–25, free for 17 and under. Apr–Sept daily 10am–11pm; Oct–Mar daily 10am–10:30pm. Métro: Charles de Gaulle-Étoile. Bus: 22, 30, 31, 52, 73, or 92.

Basilique du Sacré-Coeur ★★ Sacré-Coeur is one of Paris's most characteristic landmarks and has been the subject of much controversy. One Parisian called it “a lunatic's confectionery dream.” An offended Zola declared it “the basilica of the ridiculous.” Sacré-Coeur has had warm supporters as well, including poet Max Jacob and artist Maurice Utrillo. Utrillo never tired of drawing and painting it, and he and Jacob came here regularly to pray. Atop the *butte* (hill) in Montmartre, its multiple gleaming white domes and *campanile* (bell tower) loom over Paris like a 12th-century Byzantine church. But it's not that old. After France's 1870 defeat by the Prussians, the basilica was

Tips Best City View

From the observation deck of the Arc de Triomphe, you can see up the Champs-Élysées and such landmarks as the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, Sacré-Coeur, and La Défense. Although we don't want to get into any arguments about this, we think the view of Paris from this perspective is the grandest in the entire city.

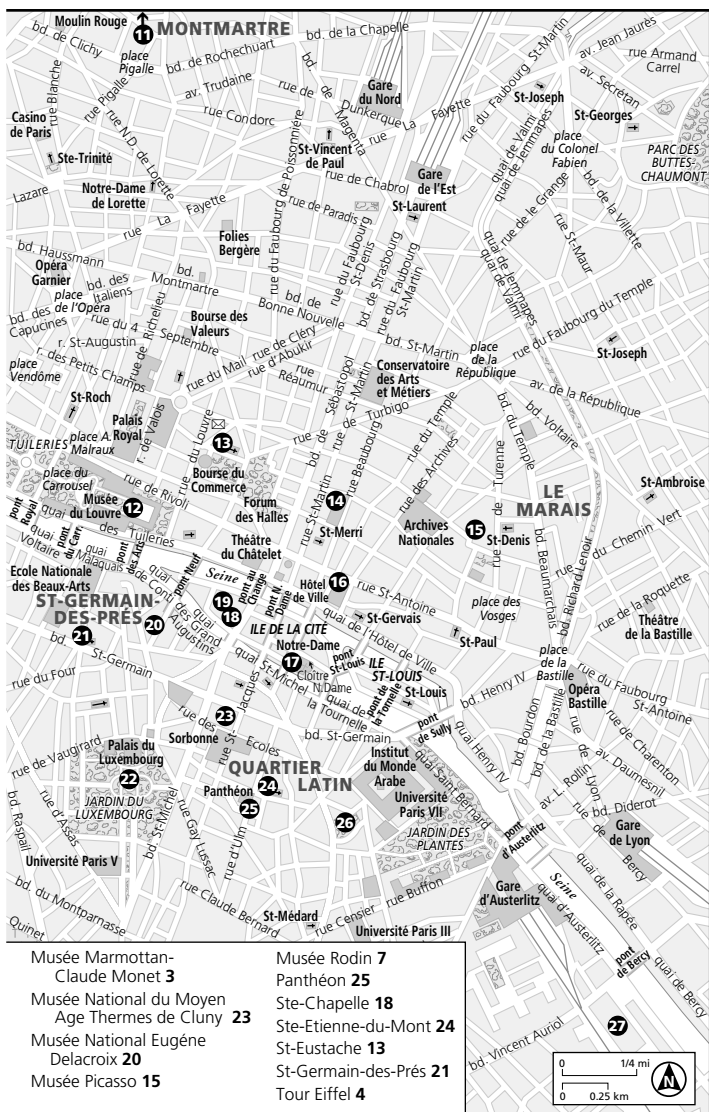
Top Paris Attractions



Arc de Triomphe **2**
 Arènes de Lutèce **26**
 Basilique de
 Sacré-Cœur **11**
 Basilique St-Denis **11**
 Cathédrale de
 Notre-Dame **17**

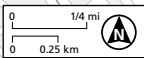
Centre Pompidou **14**
 Conciergerie **19**
 Galerie National de
 Jeu de Paume **10**
 Hôtel de Ville **16**
 Hôtel des Invalides
 (Napoléon's Tomb) **6**

Jardin des Tuileries **9**
 Jardin du Luxembourg **22**
 Les Égouts
 (Sewers of Paris) **5**
 Musée d'Orsay **8**
 Musée du Louvre **12**
 Musée Jacquemart-André **1**



- Musée Marmottan-Claude Monet **3**
- Musée National du Moyen Age Thermes de Cluny **23**
- Musée National Eugène Delacroix **20**
- Musée Picasso **15**

- Musée Rodin **7**
- Panthéon **25**
- St-Chapelle **18**
- St-Etienne-du-Mont **24**
- St-Eustache **13**
- St-Germain-des-Prés **21**
- Tour Eiffel **4**



planned as a votive offering to cure France's misfortunes. Rich and poor alike contributed money to build it. Construction began in 1876, and though the church wasn't consecrated until 1919, perpetual prayers of adoration have been made here day and night since 1885. The interior is brilliantly decorated with mosaics: Look for the striking Christ on the ceiling and the mural of his Passion at the back of the altar. The stained-glass windows were shattered during the struggle for Paris in 1944 but have been well replaced. The crypt contains what some of the devout believe is Christ's sacred heart—hence, the name of the church.

Insider's tip: Although the view from the Arc de Triomphe is the greatest panorama of Paris, we also want to endorse the view from the gallery around the inner dome of Sacré-Coeur. On a clear day your eyes take in a sweep of Paris extending for 48km (30 miles) into the Ile de France. You can also walk around the inner dome, an attraction even better than the interior of Sacré-Coeur itself.

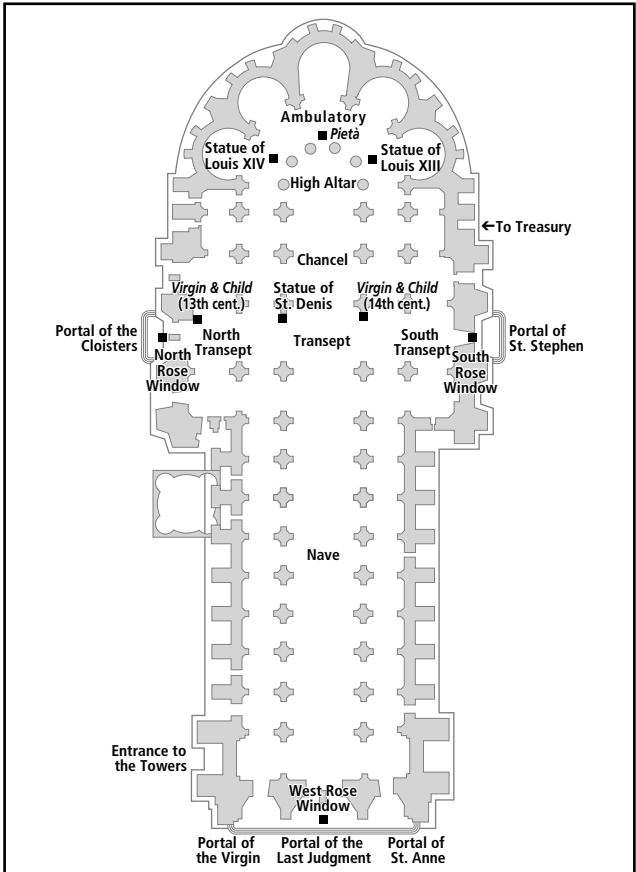
Place St-Pierre, 18e. ☎ 01-53-41-89-00. www.paris.org/Monuments/Sacre.Coeur. Free admission to basilica; joint ticket to dome and crypt 5€ (\$5.75). Basilica open daily 6am–11pm; dome and crypt daily 9am–6pm. Métro: Abbesses; take the elevator to the surface and follow the signs to the *funiculaire*, which goes up to the church for the price of a Métro ticket.

Cathédrale de Notre-Dame ★★ Notre-Dame is the heart of Paris and even of the country itself: Distances from the city to all parts of France are calculated from a spot at the far end of place du Parvis, in front of the cathedral, where a circular bronze plaque marks **Kilomètre Zéro**.

The cathedral's setting on the banks of the Seine has always been memorable. Founded in the 12th century by Maurice de Sully, bishop of Paris, Notre-Dame has grown over the years, changing as Paris has changed, often falling victim to whims of taste. Its flying buttresses (the external side supports, giving the massive interior a sense of weightlessness) were rebuilt in 1330. Though many disagree, we feel Notre-Dame is more interesting outside than in, and you'll want to walk all around it to fully appreciate this "vast symphony of stone." Better yet, cross over the pont au Double to the Left Bank and view it from the quay.

The histories of Paris and Notre-Dame are inseparable. Many prayed here before going off to fight in the Crusades. The revolutionaries who destroyed the Galerie des Rois and converted the building into a secular temple didn't spare "Our Lady of Paris." Later, Napoleon crowned himself emperor here, yanking the crown out of Pius VII's hands and placing it on his own head before crowning his

Notre-Dame de Paris



Josephine empress (see David's *Coronation of Napoléon* in the Louvre). But carelessness, vandalism, embellishments, and wars of religion had already demolished much of the previously existing structure.

The cathedral was once scheduled for demolition, but, because of the popularity of Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and the revival of interest in the Gothic period, a movement mushroomed to restore the cathedral to its original glory. The task was completed under Viollet-le-Duc, an architectural genius. The houses of old Paris used to crowd in on Notre-Dame, but during his redesign of

the city, Baron Haussmann ordered them torn down to show the cathedral to its best advantage from the parvis. This is the best vantage for seeing the three sculpted 13th-century portals (the Virgin, the Last Judgment, and St. Anne).

On the left, the **Portal of the Virgin** depicts the signs of the zodiac and the coronation of the Virgin, an association found in dozens of medieval churches. The restored central **Portal of the Last Judgment** depicts three levels: the first shows Vices and Virtues; the second, Christ and his Apostles; and above that, Christ in triumph after the Resurrection. The portal is a close illustration of the Gospel according to Matthew. Over it is the remarkable **west rose window** (✠✠), 9.5m (31 ft.) wide, forming a showcase for a statue of the Virgin and Child. On the far right is the **Portal of St. Anne**, depicting scenes like the Virgin enthroned with Child; it's Notre-Dame's best-preserved and most perfect piece of sculpture. Equally interesting (though often missed) is the **Portal of the Cloisters** (around on the left), with its dour-faced 13th-century Virgin, a survivor among the figures that originally adorned the facade. (Alas, the Child she's holding has been decapitated.) Finally, on the Seine side of Notre-Dame, the **Portal of St. Stephen** traces that saint's martyrdom.

If possible, come to see Notre-Dame at sunset. Inside, of the three giant medallions warming the austere cathedral, the **north rose window** (✠✠) in the transept, from the mid-13th century, is best. The main body of the church is typically Gothic, with slender, graceful columns. In the **choir**, a stone-carved screen from the early 14th century depicts such biblical scenes as the Last Supper. Near the altar stands the 14th-century *Virgin and Child* (✠), highly venerated among Paris's faithful. In the **treasury** are displayed vestments and gold objects, including crowns. Exhibited are a cross presented to Haile Selassie, former emperor of Ethiopia, and a reliquary given by Napoleon. Notre-Dame is especially proud of its relic of the True Cross and the Crown of Thorns.

To visit the **gargoyles** (✠✠) immortalized by Hugo, you have to scale steps leading to the twin **towers** rising to a height of 68m (223 ft.). Once there, you can inspect devils (some giving you the raspberry), hobgoblins, and birds of prey. Look carefully and you may see hunchback Quasimodo with Esmerelda.

Approached through a garden behind Notre-Dame is the **Mémorial des Martyrs Français de la Déportation de 1945 (Deportation Memorial)**, out on the tip of Ile de la Cité. Here, birds chirp and the Seine flows gently by, but the memories are far from pleasant. The

memorial commemorates the French citizens who were deported to concentration camps during World War II. Carved into stone are these blood-red words (in French): “Forgive, but don’t forget.” The memorial is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 9:45pm and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 9:45pm. Admission is free.

6 place du parvis Notre-Dame, 4e. ☎ 01-42-34-56-10. www.paris.org/Monuments/NDame. Free admission to cathedral; towers 6.10€ (\$7) adults, 4.10€ (\$4.70) ages 18–25 and seniors, free for children under 18; treasury 3€ (\$3.45) adults, 2€ (\$2.30) ages 12–25 and seniors, 1€ (\$1.15) ages 5–11, free for children under 5. Cathedral open year-round daily 8am–6:45pm. Towers and crypt Apr–Sept daily 9:30am–6pm; Oct–Mar daily 10am–5:15pm. Museum Sat–Sun 2–5pm. Treasury Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm; Sun 2–6pm. Métro: Cité or St-Michel. RER: St-Michel.

Hôtel des Invalides/Napoleon’s Tomb ★★ In 1670, the Sun King decided to build this “hotel” to house disabled soldiers. It wasn’t an entirely benevolent gesture considering the men had been injured, crippled, or blinded while fighting his battles. When the building was finally completed (Louis XIV had long been dead), a gilded dome by Jules Hardouin-Mansart crowned it and its corridors stretched for miles. The best way to approach the Invalides is by crossing over the Right Bank via the early-1900s pont Alexander-III and entering the cobblestone forecourt, where a display of massive cannons makes a formidable welcome.

Before rushing on to Napoleon’s Tomb, you may want to visit the world’s greatest military museum, the **Musée de l’Armée**. In 1794, a French inspector started collecting weapons, uniforms, and equipment, and with the accumulation of war material over time, the museum has become a documentary of man’s self-destruction. Viking swords, Burgundian battle axes, 14th-century blunderbusses, Balkan *khandjars*, American Browning machine guns, war pitchforks, salamander-engraved Renaissance serpentines, a 1528 Griffon, musketoons, grenadiers . . . if it can kill, it’s enshrined here. As a sardonic touch, there’s even the wooden leg of General Daumesnil, the governor of Vincennes who lost his leg in the battle of Wagram. Oblivious to the irony of committing a crime against a place that documents man’s evil nature, the Nazis looted the museum in 1940.

Among the outstanding acquisitions are suits of armor worn by the kings and dignitaries of France, including Louis XIV. The best are in the new Arsenal. The most famous one, the “armor suit of the lion,” was made for François I. Henri II ordered his suit engraved with the monogram of his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, and (perhaps reluctantly) that of his wife, Catherine de Médicis. Particularly fine are the

Frommer's Favorite Paris Experiences

Strolling Along the Seine. Lovers still walk hand in hand alongside it, and vendors on its banks still peddle everything from postcards to 100-year-old pornography. Some energetic types walk the full 11km (7-mile) stretch of the river, but you may want to confine your stroll to central Paris, passing the Louvre, Notre-Dame, and pont Neuf.

Window-Shopping Along the Faubourg St-Honoré. In the 1700s, this was home to the wealthiest of Parisians; today, it's home to the stores that cater to them. Even if you don't buy anything, you'll enjoy some great window-shopping with all the big names, like Hermès, Larouche, Lacroix, Lanvin, Courrèges, Cardin, St-Laurent, and Lagerfeld.

Enjoying an Afternoon of Cafe-Sitting. The Parisian cafe is an integral part of the city's life. Even if it means skipping a museum, spend some time at a cafe. Whether you have a coffee or the most expensive cognac in the house, nobody will hurry you, and you can see how the French really live. See our recommendations in chapter 4.

Taking Afternoon Tea à la Française. Get down to the business of rich, luscious desserts like Mont Blanc, that creamy purée of sweetened chestnuts. Try it at the grandest Parisian tea salon: **Angéline**, 226 rue de Rivoli, 1er (☎ 01-42-60-82-00); see p. 77. A close rival is the Salon de Thé Bernardaud, 9–11 rue Royale, 8e (☎ 01-42-66-22-55; Métro: Concorde), run by the Limoges-based manufacturer of fine porcelain. Teatime here is unique: A staff member presents you with five porcelain patterns and you choose the one in which you'd like your tea served.

Attending an Opera or a Ballet. In 1989, the acoustically perfect Opéra Bastille was inaugurated to compete with the grande dame Opéra Garnier, then reserved for dance only and eventually closed for renovations. Now the Garnier has reopened, and opera has returned to its rococo splendor. A night here will take you back to the Second Empire,

showcases of swords and the World War I mementos, including those of American and Canadian soldiers—seek out the Armistice Bugle, which sounded the cease-fire on November 7, 1918, before the general

beneath a ceiling by Chagall. Whether for a performance of Bizet or Tharp, check out these two major Paris landmarks. Dress with pomp and circumstance.

Discovering Hidden Montmartre. This is the most touristy part of Paris. But far removed from the area's top draw, Sacré-Coeur, another neighborhood unfolds—the true Montmartre. Wander on any of the back streets away from the souvenir shops. Arm yourself with a good map and seek out streets like rue Lepic (refresh yourself at the Lux Bar at no. 12), rue Constance, rue Tholozé (with its view over the rooftops of Paris), rue des Abbesses, and rue Germain-Pilon. None of these is famous, none is crowded with hordes of visitors, but each is flanked with buildings whose detailing shows the pride and care that permeates Paris's architecture.

Checking Out the Marchés. A daily Parisian ritual is ambling through one of the open-air markets to purchase fresh food to be consumed that day—some ripe and creamy Camembert or a pumpkin-gold cantaloupe. You can gather supplies for a picnic in one of the city's parks. The vendors arrange their wares into a mosaic of vibrant colors. Sanguine, an Italian citrus whose juice is the color of an orange sunset; ruby-red peppers; and golden yellow bananas from Martinique all dazzle the eye. Our favorite is on rue Montorgeuil, beginning at rue Rambuteau, 1er (Métro: Les-Halles).

Calling on the Dead: You don't have to be a ghoul to be thrilled by a visit to Europe's most famous cemetery, **Père-Lachaise** (p. 145). You can pay your respects to the earthly remains of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Oscar Wilde, Yves Montand and Simone Signoret, Edith Piaf, Isadora Duncan, Abélard and Héloïse, Frédéric Chopin, Marcel Proust, Eugène Delacroix, Jim Morrison, and others. The tomb designs are intriguing and often eerie. Laid out in 1803 on a hill in Ménilmontant, the cemetery offers surprises with its bizarre monuments, unexpected views, and ornate sculpture.

cease-fire on November 11. The west wing's Salle Orientale has arms of the Eastern world, including Asia and the Mideast Muslim countries, from the 16th century to the 19th century. Turkish armor (look

for Bajazet's helmet) and weaponry, and Chinese and Japanese armor and swords are on display.

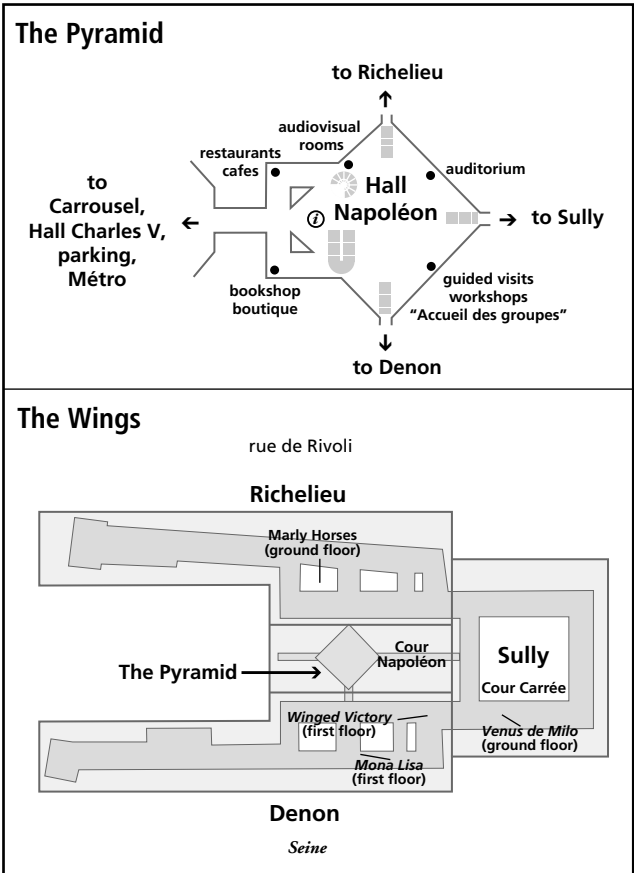
Then there's that little Corsican who became France's greatest soldier. Here you can see the death mask Antommarchi made of him, as well as an oil by Delaroche, painted at the time of Napoleon's first banishment (Apr 1814) and depicting him as he probably looked, paunch and all. The First Empire exhibit displays Napoleon's field bed with his tent; in the room devoted to the Restoration, the 100 Days, and Waterloo, you can see his bedroom as it was at the time of his death on St. Helena. The Turenne Salon contains other souvenirs, like the hat Napoleon wore at Eylau, the sword from his Austerlitz victory, and his "Flag of Farewell," which he kissed before departing for Elba.

You can gain access to the **Musée des Plans-Reliefs** through the west wing. This collection shows French towns and monuments done in scale models (the model of Strasbourg fills an entire room) as well as models of military fortifications since the days of the great Vauban.

A walk across the Cour d'Honneur (Court of Honor) delivers you to the **Eglise du Dôme**, designed by Hardouin-Mansart for Louis XIV. The architect began work on the church in 1677, though he died before its completion. The dome is the second-tallest monument in Paris (the Tour Eiffel is the tallest, of course). The hearse used at the emperor's funeral on May 9, 1821, is in the Napoleon Chapel.

To accommodate **Napoleon's Tomb** (★★★), the architect Visconti had to redesign the church's high altar in 1842. First buried on St. Helena, Napoleon's remains were exhumed and brought to Paris in 1840 on the orders of Louis-Philippe, who demanded the English return the emperor to French soil. The remains were locked inside six coffins in this tomb made of red Finnish porphyry, with a green granite base. Surrounding it are a dozen Amazon-like figures representing Napoleon's victories. Almost lampooning the smallness of the man, everything is done on a gargantuan scale. In his coronation robes, the statue of Napoleon stands 2.5m (8¼ ft.) high. The grave of the "King of Rome," his son by second wife Marie-Louise, lies at his feet. Surrounding Napoleon's Tomb are those of his brother Joseph Bonaparte; the great Vauban, who built many of France's fortifications; World War I Allied commander Foch; and the vicomte de Turenne, the republic's first grenadier (actually, only his heart is entombed here).

Place des Invalides, 7e. ☎ 01-44-42-37-72. Admission to Musée de l'Armée, Napoléon's Tomb, and Musée des Plans-Reliefs 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 5€ (\$5.75) students, free for children 18 and under. Oct–Mar daily 10am–5pm; Apr–May and Sept daily 10am–6pm; June–Aug daily 10am–7pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, and Dec 25. Métro: Latour-Maubourg, Varenne, or Invalides.



Musée du Louvre ★★★ The Louvre is the world's largest palace and museum. As a palace, it leaves us cold, except for the **Cour Carrée**. As a museum, it's one of the greatest art collections ever. To enter, pass through I. M. Pei's controversial 21m (69-ft.) **glass pyramid** ★—a startling though effective contrast of ultramodern against the palace's classical lines. Commissioned by the late president François Mitterrand and completed in 1989, it allows sunlight to shine on an underground reception area with a complex of shops and restaurants. Ticket machines relieve the long lines of yesteryear.

Tips **Some Louvre Tips**

The long lines outside the Louvre's pyramid entrance are notorious, but there are some tricks for avoiding them:

- Order tickets by phone at ☎ **08-03-80-88-03**, paying with a credit card, then pick them up at any FNAC store (☎ 01-49-54-30-00). This gives you direct entry through the Passage Richelieu, 93 rue de Rivoli.
- Enter via the underground shopping mall, the Carrousel du Louvre, at 99 rue de Rivoli.
- Enter directly from the Palais Royal–Musée du Louvre Métro station.
- Buy Le Carte Musées et Monuments (Museums and Monuments Pass), allowing direct entry through the priority entrance at the Passage Richelieu, 93 rue de Rivoli. For details on the pass, see “The Major Museums,” later in this chapter.

People on one of those “Paris-in-a-day” tours try to break track records to get a glimpse of the Louvre's two most famous ladies: the beguiling *Mona Lisa* and the armless *Venus de Milo* ★★☆☆. The herd then dashes on a 5-minute stampede in pursuit of *Winged Victory* ★★☆☆, the headless statue discovered at Samothrace and dating from about 200 B.C. In defiance of the assembly-line theory of art, we head instead for David's *Coronation of Napoleon*, showing Napoleon poised with the crown aloft as Josephine kneels before him, just across from his *Portrait of Madame Récamier* ★, depicting Napoleon's opponent at age 23; she reclines on her sofa agelessly in the style of classical antiquity.

Then a big question looms: Which of the rest of the 30,000 works on display would you like to see?

Between the Seine and rue de Rivoli, the Palais du Louvre suffers from an embarrassment of riches, stretching for almost a kilometer (half a mile). In the days of Charles V, it was a fortress, but François I, a patron of Leonardo da Vinci, had it torn down and rebuilt as a royal residence. Less than a month after Marie Antoinette's head and body parted company, the Revolutionary Committee decided the king's collection of paintings and sculpture should be opened to the public. At the lowest point in its history, in the 18th century, the Louvre was

home for anybody who wanted to set up housekeeping. Laundry hung in the windows, corners were pigpens, and families built fires to cook their meals in winter. Napoleon ended all that, chasing out the squatters and restoring the palace. In fact, he chose the Louvre as the site of his wedding to Marie-Louise.

So where did all these paintings come from? The kings of France, notably François I and Louis XIV, acquired many of them, and others were willed to or purchased by the state. Many contributed by Napoleon were taken from reluctant donors: The church was one especially heavy and unwilling giver. Much of Napoleon's plunder had to be returned, though France hasn't yet seen its way clear to giving back all the booty.

The collections are divided into seven departments: Egyptian Antiquities; Oriental Antiquities; Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities; Sculpture; Painting; Decorative Arts; and Graphic Arts. A number of galleries, devoted to Italian paintings, Roman glass and bronzes, Oriental antiquities, and Egyptian antiquities, were opened in 1997 and 1998. If you don't have to do Paris in a day, you might want to visit several times, concentrating on different collections or schools of painting. Those with little time should take a guided tour.

Acquired by François I to hang above his bathtub, Leonardo's *La Gioconda (Mona Lisa)* ★★ has been the source of legend for centuries. Note the guard and bulletproof glass: The world's most famous painting was stolen in 1911 and found in Florence in 1913. At first, both the poet Guillaume Apollinaire and Picasso were suspected, but it was discovered in the possession of a former Louvre employee, who'd apparently carried it out under his overcoat. Two centuries after its arrival at the Louvre, the *Mona Lisa* in 2003 was assigned a new gallery of her own. Less well known (but to us even more enchanting) are Leonardo's *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* ★ and the *Virgin of the Rocks*.

After paying your respects to the "smiling one," allow time to see some French works stretching from the Richelieu wing through the entire **Sully wing** and even overflowing into the **Denon wing**. It's all here: Watteau's *Gilles* with the mysterious boy in a clown suit staring at you; Fragonard's and Boucher's rococo renderings of the aristocracy; and the greatest masterpieces of David, including his stellar 1785 *The Oath of the Horatii* and the vast and vivid *Coronation of Napoleon*. Only Florence's Uffizi rivals the Denon wing for its Italian Renaissance collection—everything from Raphael's *Portrait of Balthazar Castiglione* to Titian's *Man with a Glove*.

Veronese's gigantic *Wedding Feast at Cana* (★), a romp of Venetian high society in the 1500s, occupies an entire wall (that's Paolo himself playing the cello).

Of the Greek and Roman antiquities, the most notable collections, aside from the *Venus de Milo* and *Winged Victory*, are fragments of a **Parthenon frieze** (in the Denon wing). In Renaissance sculpture, you'll see Michelangelo's *Esclaves (Slaves)*, originally intended for the tomb of Julius II but sold into other bondage. The Denon wing houses masterpieces like Ingres's *The Turkish Bath*; the **Botticelli frescoes** from the Villa Lemmi; Raphael's *La Belle Jardinière*; and Titian's *Open Air Concert*. The Sully wing is also filled with old masters, like Boucher's *Diana Resting After Her Bath* and Fragonard's *Bathers*.

The **Richelieu wing** (★★★) reopened in 1993 after lying empty for years. Now with an additional 69,000 sq. m (743,000 sq. ft.) of exhibition space, it houses northern European and French paintings, along with decorative arts, sculpture, Oriental antiquities (a rich collection of Islamic art), and the Napoleon III salons. One of its galleries displays 21 works Rubens painted in a space of only 2 years for Marie de Médicis's Palais de Luxembourg. The masterpieces here include Dürer's *Self-Portrait*, Van Dyck's *Portrait of Charles I of England*, and Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam*.

When you get tired, consider a pick-me-up at **Café Marly** in the Cour Napoleon. This cafe overlooks the glass pyramid and offers coffees, pastries (by Paris's legendary pastry-maker, Lenôtre), salads, sandwiches, and simple platters.

34–36 quai du Louvre, 1er. Main entrance in the glass pyramid, Cour Napoléon. ☎ 01-40-20-53-17, or 01-40-20-51-51 for recorded message, or 08-92-68-46-94 for advance credit card sales. www.louvre.fr. Admission 8.50€ (\$9.80). On Sun, free for children 17 and under; free for all ages first Sun of every month. Mon and Wed 9am–9:30pm (Mon short tour only); Thurs–Sun 9am–6pm (parts of the museum begin to close at 5:30pm). 1½-hr. English-language tours leave Mon and Wed–Sat at various times for 3.50€ (\$4.05); free for children 12 and under with museum ticket. Métro: Palais Royal–Musée du Louvre.

Musée d'Orsay (★★★) Architects created one of the world's great museums from an old rail station, the neoclassical Gare d'Orsay, across the Seine from the Louvre and the Tuileries. Don't skip the Louvre, of course, but come here even if you have to miss all the other art museums in town. The Orsay boasts an astounding collection devoted to the watershed years 1848 to 1914, with a treasure trove by the big names plus all the lesser-known groups (the symbolists,

pointillists, nabis, realists, and late romantics). The 80 galleries also include Belle Epoque furniture, photographs, objets d'art, and architectural models. There's even a cinema showing classic films.

A monument to the Industrial Revolution, the Orsay is covered by an arching glass roof allowing in floods of light. It displays works ranging from the creations of academic and historic painters like Ingres to romanticists like Delacroix, to neorealists like Courbet and Daumier. The Impressionists and post-Impressionists, including Manet, Monet, Cézanne, van Gogh, and Renoir, share space with the fauves, Matisse, the cubists, and the expressionists in a setting once used by Orson Welles to film a nightmarish scene in *The Trial*, based on Kafka's unfinished novel. You'll find Millet's sunny wheat fields, Barbizon landscapes, Corot's mists, and Tahitian Gauguins all in the same hall.

But it's the Impressionists who draw the crowds. When the nose-in-the-air Louvre chose not to display their works, a great rival was born. Led by Manet, Renoir, and Monet, the Impressionists shunned ecclesiastical and mythological set pieces for a light-bathed Seine, faint figures strolling in the Tuileries, pale-faced women in hazy bars, and even vulgar rail stations like the Gare St-Lazare. And the Impressionists were the first to paint that most characteristic feature of Parisian life: the sidewalk cafe, especially in the artists' quarter of Montmartre.

The most famous painting from this era is Manet's 1863 *Déjeuner sur l'herbe (Picnic on the Grass)*, whose forest setting with a nude woman and two fully clothed men sent shock waves through respectable society when it was first exhibited. Two years later, Manet's *Olympia* created another scandal by depicting a woman lounging on her bed and wearing nothing but a flower in her hair and high-heeled shoes; she's attended by an African maid in the background. Zola called Manet "a man among eunuchs."

One of Renoir's most joyous paintings is here: the *Moulin de la Galette* (1876). Degas is represented by his paintings of racehorses and dancers; his 1876 cafe scene, *Absinthe*, remains one of his most reproduced works. Paris-born Monet was fascinated by the effect changing light had on Rouen Cathédrale, and its stone bubbles to life in a series of five paintings—our favorite is *Rouen Cathédrale: Full Sunlight*. Another celebrated work is by an American, Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother*, better known as *Whistler's Mother*. It's said this painting heralded modern art, though many critics denounced it at

the time because of its funereal overtones. Whistler was content to claim he'd made "Mummy just as nice as possible."

1 rue de Bellechasse or 62 rue de Lille, 7e. ☎ **01-40-49-48-14**. www.musee-orsay.fr. Admission 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 5€ (\$5.75) ages 18–24 and seniors, free for children 17 and under. Tues–Wed and Fri–Sat 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am–9:45pm (June 20–Sept 20 9am–6pm); Sun 9am–6:30pm. Métro: Solférino. RER: Musée d'Orsay.

Sainte-Chapelle ★★ Countless writers have called this tiny chapel a jewel box. Yet that hardly suffices. Nor will it do to call it "a light show." Go when the sun is shining and you'll need no one else's words to describe the remarkable effects of natural light on Sainte-Chapelle. You approach the church through the Cour de la Sainte-Chapelle of the Palais de Justice. If it weren't for the chapel's 74m (243-ft.) spire, the law courts here would almost swallow it up.

Begun in 1246, the bi-level chapel was built to house relics of the True Cross, including the Crown of Thorns acquired by St. Louis (the Crusader king, Louis IX) from the emperor of Constantinople. (In those days, cathedrals throughout Europe were busy acquiring relics for their treasuries, regardless of their authenticity. It was a seller's, perhaps a sucker's, market.) Louis IX is said to have paid heavily for his relics, raising the money through unscrupulous means. He died of the plague on a crusade and was canonized in 1297.

You enter through the *chapelle basse* (lower chapel), used by the palace servants; it's supported by flying buttresses and ornamented with fleur-de-lis designs. The king and his courtiers used the *chapelle haute* (upper chapel), one of the greatest achievements of Gothic art; you reach it by ascending a narrow spiral staircase. Viewed on a bright day, the 15 stained-glass windows seem to glow with Chartres blue and with reds that have inspired the saying "wine the color of Sainte-Chapelle's windows." The walls consist almost entirely of the glass, 612 sq. m (6,588 sq. ft.) of it, which had to be removed for safekeeping during the Revolution and again during both world wars. In their Old and New Testament designs are embodied the hopes and dreams (and the pretensions) of the kings who ordered their construction. The 1,134 scenes depict the Christian story from the Garden of Eden through the Apocalypse; you read them from bottom to top and from left to right. The great rose window depicts the Apocalypse.

Sainte-Chapelle stages **concerts** in summer, with tickets at 19€ to 25€ (\$22–\$29). Call ☎ **01-42-77-65-65** from 11am to 6pm daily for details.

Palais de Justice, 4 bd. du Palais, 4e. ☎ **01-53-73-78-50**. www.monum.fr. Free admission. Apr–Sept daily 9:30am–6:30pm; Oct–Mar daily 10am–5pm. Métro: Cité, St-Michel, or Châtelet–Les Halles. RER: St-Michel.

Tour Eiffel (★☆☆) This is without doubt one of the most recognizable structures in the world. Weighing 7,000 tons but exerting about the same pressure on the ground as an average-size person sitting in a chair, the wrought-iron tower wasn't meant to be permanent. Gustave-Alexandre Eiffel, the French engineer whose fame rested mainly on his iron bridges, built it for the 1889 Universal Exhibition. (Eiffel also designed the framework for the Statue of Liberty.) Praised by some and denounced by others (some called it a “giraffe,” the “world’s greatest lamppost,” or the “iron monster”), the tower created as much controversy in the 1880s as I. M. Pei’s glass pyramid at the Louvre did in the 1980s. What saved it from demolition was the advent of radio—as the tallest structure in Europe, it made a perfect spot to place a radio antenna (now a TV antenna).

The tower, including its TV antenna, is 317m (1,040 ft.) high. On a clear day you can see it from 65km (40 miles) away. An open-frame-work construction, the tower unlocked the almost unlimited possibilities of steel construction, paving the way for skyscrapers. Skeptics said it couldn't be built, and Eiffel actually wanted to make it soar higher. For years it remained the tallest man-made structure on earth, until skyscrapers like the Empire State Building surpassed it.

We could fill an entire page with tower statistics. (Its plans spanned 6,000 sq. yards of paper, and it contains 2.5 million rivets.) But forget the numbers. Just stand beneath the tower and look straight up. It's like a rocket of steel lacework shooting into the sky.

To get to **Le Jules Verne** (☎ 01-45-55-61-44), the second-platform restaurant, take the private south foundation elevator. You can enjoy an aperitif in the piano bar, then take a seat at one of the dining room's tables, all of which provide an inspiring view. The menu changes seasonally, offering fish and meat dishes that range from filet of turbot with seaweed and buttered sea urchins to veal chops with truffled vegetables. Reservations are recommended.

Champ de Mars, 7e. ☎ 01-44-11-23-23. www.tour-eiffel.fr. Admission to first landing 3.70€ (\$4.25), second landing 7€ (\$8.05), third landing 10€ (\$12); stairs to second floor 3.20€ (\$3.70). Sept–May daily 9:30am–11pm; June–Aug daily 9am–midnight. Fall and winter, stairs open only to 6:30pm. Métro: Trocadéro, Ecole Militaire, or Bir-Hakeim. RER: Champ de Mars–Tour Eiffel.

3 The Major Museums

Turn to “The Top Attractions,” above, for a comprehensive look at the **Musée du Louvre** and the **Musée d'Orsay**.

If you're a cultural buff, consider a purchase of **Carte Musées et Monuments** (Museum and Monuments Pass), admitting you to

some 70 museums in Paris and its environs. It's estimated that if you plan to visit three or four museums, it's worth the investment in this card, which is sold at all major museums and Métro stations. A 1-day pass costs 22€ (\$25); 3 consecutive days, 38€ (\$44); and 5 consecutive days, 52€ (\$60). Information is available at Association InterMusees, 4 rue Brantôme, 3e (☎ 01-44-61-96-60). Métro: Rambuteau. See p. 29 for details on the **Paris-Visite** pass, valid for 1 to 5 days on the public transport system, including the Métro, the city buses, the RER (regional express) trains within Paris city limits, and even the funicular to the top of Montmartre.

Centre Pompidou ★★ ★ Reopened in January 2000 in what was called in the 1970s “the most avant-garde building in the world,” the restored Centre Pompidou is packing in the art-loving crowds again. The dream of former president Georges Pompidou, this center for 20th- and 21st-century art, designed by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, opened in 1977 and quickly became the focus of controversy. Its bold exoskeletal architecture and the brightly painted pipes and ducts crisscrossing its transparent facade (green for water, red for heat, blue for air, yellow for electricity) were jarring in the old Beaubourg neighborhood. Perhaps the detractors were right all along—within 20 years the building began to deteriorate so badly a major restoration was called for. The renovation added 450 sq. m (4,844 sq. ft.) of exhibit space and a rooftop restaurant, a cafe, and a boutique; in addition, a series of auditoriums was created for film screenings and dance, theater, and musical performances. Access for visitors with disabilities has also been improved.

The Centre Pompidou encompasses five attractions:

Musée National d'Art Moderne (National Museum of Modern Art) ★★ ★ offers a large collection of 20th- and 21st-century art. With some 40,000 works, this is the big attraction, though only some 850 works can be displayed at one time. If you want to view some real charmers, seek out Calder's 1926 *Josephine Baker*, one of his earlier versions of the mobile, an art form he invented. You'll also find two examples of Duchamps' series of dada-style sculptures he invented in 1936: *Boîte en Valise* (1941) and *Boîte en Valise* (1968). And every time we visit we have to see Dalí's *Hallucination partielle: Six images de Lénine sur un piano* (1931), with Lenin dancing on a piano.

In the **Bibliothèque Information Publique (Public Information Library)**, people have free access to a million French and foreign books, periodicals, films, records, slides, and microfilms in

nearly every area of knowledge. The **Centre de Création Industriel (Center for Industrial Design)** emphasizes the contributions made in the fields of architecture, visual communications, publishing, and community planning; and the **Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique-Musique (Institute for Research and Coordination of Acoustics/Music)** brings together musicians and composers interested in furthering the cause of contemporary and traditional music. Finally, you can visit a re-creation of the Jazz Age studio of Romanian sculptor Brancusi, the **Atelier Brancusi** (★), a minimuseum slightly separate from the rest of the action.

The museum's **forecourt** is a free "entertainment center" featuring mimes, fire-eaters, circus performers, and sometimes musicians. Don't miss the nearby **Stravinsky fountain**, containing mobile sculptures by Tinguely and Saint Phalle.

Place Georges-Pompidou, 4e. ☎ 01-44-78-12-33. www.centrepompidou.fr. Admission 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 5€ (\$5.75) students, free for children under 18. Special exhibits 9€ (\$10) adults, 7€ (\$8.05) students, free for children under 13. Wed–Mon 11am–10pm. Métro: Rambuteau, Hôtel-de-Ville, or Châtelet–Les Halles.

Musée Jacquemart-André (★★) This is the finest museum of its type in Paris, the treasure trove of a couple devoted to 18th-century French paintings and furnishings, 17th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings, and Italian Renaissance works. Edouard André, the last scion of a family that made a fortune in banking and industry in the 19th century, spent most of his life as an army officer stationed abroad; he eventually returned to marry a well-known portraitist of government figures and the aristocracy, Nélie Jacquemart, and they went on to compile a collection of rare decorative art and paintings in this 1850s town house.

In 1912, Mme Jacquemart willed the house and its contents to the Institut de France, which paid for an extensive renovation and enlargement. The salons drip with gilt and the ultimate in *fin-de-siècle* style. Works by Bellini, Carpaccio, Uccello, Van Dyck, Rembrandt (*The Pilgrim of Emmaus*), Tiepolo, Rubens, Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard, and Mantegna are complemented by Houdon busts, Savonnerie carpets, Gobelin tapestries, della Robbia terra cottas, and an awesome collection of antiques. The three 18th-century Tiepolo frescoes of spectators on balconies viewing Henri III's 1574 arrival in Venice are outstanding.

Take a break with a cup of tea in Mme Jacquemart's high-ceilinged dining room, adorned with 18th-century tapestries. Salads, tarts, *tourtes* (pastries filled with meat or fruit), and Viennese pastries are served during museum hours.

158 bd. Haussmann, 8e. ☎ 01-45-62-11-59. www.musee-jacquemart-andre.com. Admission 8€ (\$9.20) adults, 6€ (\$6.90) ages 7–17, free for children 6 and under. Daily 10am–6pm. Métro: Miromesnil or St-Philippe-du-Roule.

Musée Marmottan–Claude Monet ★★ In the past, an art historian or two would sometimes venture here to the edge of the Bois de Boulogne to see what Paul Marmottan had donated to the Académie des Beaux-Arts. Hardly anyone else did until 1966, when Claude Monet's son Michel died in a car crash, leaving a then-\$10 million bequest of his father's art to the little museum. The Académie suddenly found itself with 130-plus paintings, watercolors, pastels, and drawings. Monet lovers could now trace the evolution of the great man's work in a single museum. The collection includes more than 30 paintings of Monet's house at Giverny and many of waterlilies, his everlasting fancy, plus *Willow* (1918), *House of Parliament* (1905), and a **Renoir portrait** of the 32-year-old Monet. The museum had always owned Monet's *Impression: Sunrise* (1872), from which the Impressionist movement got its name. Paul Marmottan's original collection includes fig-leafed nudes, First Empire antiques, assorted objets d'art, Renaissance tapestries, bucolic paintings, and crystal chandeliers. You can also see countless miniatures donated by Daniel Waldenstein.

2 rue Louis-Boilly, 16e. ☎ 01-44-96-50-33. www.marmottan.com. Admission 6.50€ (\$7.50) adults, 4€ (\$4.60) ages 8–24, free for children 7 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Métro: La Muette.

Musée National du Moyen Age/Thermes de Cluny (Musée de Cluny) ★★ Along with the Hôtel de Sens in the Marais, the Hôtel de Cluny is all that remains of domestic medieval architecture in Paris. Enter through the cobblestoned **Cour d'Honneur** (Court of Honor), where you can admire the flamboyant Gothic building with its vines, turreted walls, gargoyles, and dormers with seashell motifs. First the Cluny was the mansion of a rich 15th-century abbot, built on top of/next to the ruins of a Roman bath (see below). By 1515, it was the residence of Mary Tudor, widow of Louis XII and daughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. Seized during the Revolution, the Cluny was rented in 1833 to Alexandre du Sommerard, who adorned it with medieval artworks. After his death in 1842, the government bought the building and the collection.

This collection of medieval arts and crafts is superb. Most people come to see *The Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries* ★★, the most acclaimed tapestries of their kind. All the romance of the age of chivalry—a beautiful princess and her handmaiden, beasts of prey, and house pets—lives on in these remarkable yet mysterious tapestries

discovered only a century ago in Limousin's Château de Boussac. Five seem to deal with the senses (one, for example, depicts a unicorn looking into a mirror held by a dour-faced maiden). The sixth shows a woman under an elaborate tent with jewels, her pet dog resting on an embroidered cushion beside her, with the lovable unicorn and his friendly companion, a lion, holding back the flaps. The background in red and green forms a rich carpet of spring flowers, fruit-laden trees, birds, rabbits, donkeys, dogs, goats, lambs, and monkeys.

The other exhibits range widely: Flemish retables; a 14th-century Sienese John the Baptist and other sculptures; statues from Sainte-Chapelle (1243–48); 12th- and 13th-century crosses, chalices, manuscripts, carvings, vestments, leatherwork, jewelry, and coins; a 13th-century Adam; and recently discovered heads and fragments of statues from Notre-Dame de Paris. In the fan-vaulted medieval chapel hang tapestries depicting scenes from the life of St. Stephen.

Downstairs are the ruins of the **Roman baths**, from around A.D. 200. The best-preserved section is seen in room X, the frigidarium (where one bathed in cold water). Once it measured 21m × 11m (69 ft. × 36 ft.), rising to a height of 15m (49 ft.), with stone walls nearly 1.5m (5 ft.) thick. The ribbed vaulting here rests on consoles evoking ships' prows. Credit for this unusual motif goes to the builders of the baths, Paris's boatmen. During Tiberius's reign, a column to Jupiter was found beneath Notre-Dame's chancel and is now on view in the court—called the "Column of the Boatmen," it's believed to be the oldest sculpture created in Paris.

In the Hôtel de Cluny, 6 place Paul-Painlevé, 5e. ☎ 01-53-73-78-15. Admission 5.50€ (\$6.35) adults, 4€ (\$4.60) ages 18–25, free for children 17 and under. Wed–Mon 9:15am–5:45pm. Métro: Cluny–La Sorbonne.

Musée National Eugène Delacroix This museum is for Delacroix groupies, among whom we include ourselves. If you want to see where he lived, worked, and died, this is worth at least an hour. Delacroix (1798–1863) is something of an enigma to art historians. Even his parentage is a mystery. Many believe Talleyrand was his father. One biographer saw him "as an isolated and atypical individualist—one who respected traditional values, yet emerged as the embodiment of Romantic revolt." Baudelaire called him "a volcanic crater artistically concealed beneath bouquets of flowers." The museum is on one of the Left Bank's most charming squares, with a romantic garden. A large arch on a courtyard leads to Delacroix's studio—no poor artist's studio, but the creation of a solidly established man. Sketches, lithographs, watercolors, and oils are hung throughout.

6 place de Furstenberg, 6e. ☎ 01-44-41-86-50. www.musee-delacroix.fr. Admission 5€ (\$5.75) adults, 2.60€ (\$3) ages 18–25, free for children 17 and under. Wed–Mon 9:30am–5pm. Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés.

Musée Picasso ★★ When it opened at the beautifully restored Hôtel Salé (Salt Mansion, built by a man who made his fortune by controlling the salt distribution in 17th-c. France) in the Marais, the press hailed it as a “museum for Picasso’s Picassos.” And that’s what it is. The state acquired the world’s greatest Picasso collection in lieu of \$50 million in inheritance taxes: 203 paintings, 158 sculptures, 16 collages, 19 bas-reliefs, 88 ceramics, and more than 1,500 sketches and 1,600 engravings, along with 30 notebooks. These works span some 75 years of the artist’s life and ever-changing style.

The range of paintings includes a remarkable 1901 self-portrait; *The Crucifixion* and *Nude in a Red Armchair*; and *Le Baiser (The Kiss)*, *Reclining Nude*, and *Man with a Guitar*, all painted at Mougins on the Riviera in 1969 and 1970. Stroll through the handsome museum seeking your own favorite—perhaps the wicked *Jeune garçon à la langouste (Young Man with a Lobster)*, painted in Paris in 1941. There are also several intriguing studies for *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon*, which shocked the establishment and launched cubism in 1907. Because the collection is so vast, temporary exhibits featuring items like his **studies of the Minotaur** are held twice per year. Also here is Picasso’s own treasure trove of art, with works by Cézanne, Rousseau, Braque, Derain, and Miró. Picasso was fascinated with African masks, many of which are on view.

In the Hôtel Salé, 5 rue de Thorigny, 3e. ☎ 01-42-71-25-21. www.paris.org/Musees/Picasso. Admission 5.50€ (\$6.35) adults, 4€ (\$4.60) ages 18–25 and seniors, free for children 17 and under. Apr–Sept Wed–Mon 9:30am–6pm; Oct–Mar Wed–Mon 9:30am–5:30pm. Métro: St-Paul, Filles du Calvaire, or Chemin Vert.

Musée Rodin ★★ Today Rodin is acclaimed as the father of modern sculpture, but in a different era his work was labeled obscene. The world’s artistic taste changed, and in due course in 1911 the French government purchased Rodin’s studio in this gray-stone 18th-century mansion in the Faubourg St-Germain. The government restored the rose gardens to their 18th-century splendor, making them a perfect setting for Rodin’s most memorable works.

In the courtyard are three world-famous creations. Rodin’s first major public commission, *The Burghers of Calais*, commemorated the heroism of six citizens of Calais who in 1347 offered themselves as a ransom to Edward III in return for ending his siege of their port. Perhaps the single best-known work, *The Thinker*, in Rodin’s

own words, “thinks with every muscle of his arms, back, and legs, with his clenched fist and gripping toes.” Not completed when Rodin died, *The Gate of Hell*, as he put it, is “where I lived for a whole year in Dante’s *Inferno*.”

Inside, the sculpture, plaster casts, reproductions, originals, and sketches reveal the freshness and vitality of a remarkable artist. You can almost see his works emerging from marble into life. Everybody is attracted to *Le Baiser (The Kiss)*, of which one critic wrote, “the passion is timeless.” Upstairs are two versions of the celebrated and condemned **nude of Balzac**, his bulky torso rising from a tree trunk (Albert E. Elsen commented on the “glorious bulging” stomach). Included are many versions of his *Monument to Balzac* (a large one stands in the garden), Rodin’s last major work. Other significant sculptures are the soaring *Prodigal Son*, *The Crouching Woman* (the “embodiment of despair”), and *The Age of Bronze*, an 1876 study of a nude man modeled after a Belgian soldier. (Rodin was falsely accused of making a cast from a living model.) Generally overlooked is a room devoted to Rodin’s mistress, Camille Claudel, a towering artist in her own right. She was his pupil, model, and lover, and created such works as *Maturity*, *Clotho*, and the recently donated *The Waltz* and *The Gossips*.

In the Hôtel Biron, 77 rue de Varenne, 7e. © 01-44-18-61-10. www.musee-rodin.fr. Admission 5€ (\$5.75) adults, 3€ (\$3.45) ages 18–25, free for children 17 and under. Apr–Sept Tues–Sun 9:30am–5:45pm; Oct–Mar Tues–Sun 9:30am–4:45pm. Métro: Varenne.

4 The Important Churches

Turn to “The Top Attractions” earlier in this chapter for a full look at the **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame**, **Basilique du Sacré-Coeur**, and **Sainte-Chapelle**.

Basilique St-Denis ★★ In the 12th century, Abbot Suger placed an inscription on the bronze doors here: “Marvel not at the gold and expense, but at the craftsmanship of the work.” France’s first Gothic building that can be dated precisely, St-Denis was constructed between 1137 and 1281 and was the “spiritual defender of the State” during the reign of Louis VI (“The Fat”). The facade has a rose window and a crenellated parapet on the top similar to the fortifications of a castle. The stained-glass windows—in stunning mauve, purple, blue, and rose—were restored in the 19th century.

The first bishop of Paris, St. Denis became the patron saint of the monarchy, and royal burials began in the 6th century and continued

until the Revolution. The sculpture designed for the **tombs**—some two stories high—span French artistic development from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. (There are guided tours in French of the Carolingian-era crypt.) François I was entombed at St-Denis, and his funeral statue is nude, though he demurely covers himself with his hand. Other kings and queens here include Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne, as well as Henri II and Catherine de Médicis. Revolutionaries stormed through the basilica during the Terror, smashing many marble faces and dumping royal remains in a lime-filled ditch in the garden. (These remains were reburied under the main altar during the 19th c.) Free organ concerts are given Sundays at 11:15am.

Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, 2 rue de Strasbourg, St-Denis. ☎ 01-48-09-83-54. Free admission. Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–7pm, Sun noon–7pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Nov 1 and 11, Dec 25. Métro: St-Denis.

St-Etienne-du-Mont ★★ Once there was an abbey here, founded by Clovis and later dedicated to St. Geneviève, the patroness of Paris. Such was the fame of this popular saint that the abbey proved too small to accommodate the pilgrimage crowds. Now part of the Lycée Henri IV, the Tour de Clovis (Tower of Clovis) is all that remains of the ancient abbey—you can see the tower from rue Clovis. Today the task of keeping St. Geneviève's cult alive has fallen on this church, practically adjoining the Panthéon. The interior is Gothic, an unusual style for a 16th-century church. Building began in 1492 and was plagued by delays until the church was finally finished in 1626.

Besides the patroness of Paris, such men as Pascal and Racine were entombed here. St. Geneviève's tomb was destroyed during the Revolution, but the stone on which her coffin rested was discovered later, and her relics were gathered for a place of honor at St-Etienne. The church possesses a remarkable early-16th-century **rood screen**: Crossing the nave, it's unique in Paris—called spurious by some and a masterpiece by others. Another treasure is a wood **pulpit**, held up by Samson, clutching a bone in one hand, with a slain lion at his feet. The fourth chapel on the right when you enter contains impressive 16th-century stained glass.

1 place St-Geneviève, 5e. ☎ 01-43-54-11-79. Free admission. Sept–June Mon–Sat 8:30am–noon and 2–7pm, Sun 9am–noon and 3:30–7:30pm; July–Aug Tues–Sun 10am–noon and 4–7:15pm. Métro: Cardinal Lemoine or Luxembourg.

St-Eustache ★★ This Gothic and Renaissance church completed in 1637 is rivaled only by Notre-Dame. Madame de Pompadour and Richelieu were baptized here, and Molière's funeral was held here in

1673. The church has been known for organ recitals ever since Liszt played in 1866. Inside rests the **black-marble tomb** of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the minister of state under Louis XIV; atop the tomb is his marble effigy flanked by statues of *Abundance* by Coysevox and *Fidelity* by Tuby. The church's most famous painting is Rembrandt's *The Pilgrimage to Emmaus*. There's a side entrance on rue Rambuteau.

2 rue du Jour, 1er. ☎ 01-42-36-31-05. www.st-eustache.org. Free admission. Daily 9am–7pm. Sun Mass 9:30am, 11 am, and 6pm; Sun organ recitals 5:30pm. Métro: Les Halles.

St-Germain-des-Prés ★★ It's one of Paris's oldest churches, from the 6th century, when a Benedictine abbey was founded here by Childebert, son of Clovis. Alas, the marble columns in the triforium are all that remain from then. The Normans nearly destroyed the abbey at least four times. The present building has a Romanesque nave and a Gothic choir with fine capitals. At one time, the abbey was a pantheon for Merovingian kings. Restoration of the site of their tombs, **Chapelle de St-Symphorien**, began in 1981, and unknown Romanesque paintings were discovered on the triumphal arch. Among the others interred here are Descartes (his heart, at least) and Jean-Casimir, the king of Poland who abdicated his throne. The Romanesque tower, topped by a 19th-century spire, is the most enduring landmark in St-Germain-des-Prés. Its church bells, however, are hardly noticed by the patrons of Les Deux Magots across the way.

When you leave the church, turn right on rue de l'Abbaye and have a look at the 17th-century pink **Palais Abbatial**.

3 place St-Germain-des-Prés, 6e. ☎ 01-43-25-41-71. Free admission. Daily 8am–8pm. Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés.

5 Architectural & Historic Highlights

Arènes de Lutèce Discovered and partially destroyed in 1869, this amphitheater is Paris's most important Roman ruin after the baths in the Musée de Cluny (p. 134). Today the site is home to a small arena, not as grand as the original, and gardens. You may feel as if you've discovered a private spot in the heart of the city, but don't be fooled. Your solitude is sure to be interrupted, if not by groups of students playing soccer then by parents pushing strollers down the paths. This is an ideal spot for a picnic—bring a bottle of wine and baguettes to enjoy in this vestige of the ancient city of Lutétia.

At rues Monge and Navarre, 5e. No phone. Free admission. May–Sept daily 8am–10pm; Oct–Apr daily 8am–5:30pm. Métro: Jussieu.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Site Tolbiac/François Mitterrand The French National Library opened in 1996 with a futuristic design by Dominique Perrault (a quartet of 24-story towers evoking the look of open books); this is the last of the *grand projets* of the late François Mitterrand. It boasts the same grandiose scale as the Cité de la Musique and houses the nation's literary and historic archives; it's regarded as a repository of the French soul, replacing outmoded facilities on rue des Archives. The library incorporates space for 1,600 readers at a time, many of whom enjoy views over two levels of a garden-style courtyard that seems far removed from Paris's urban congestion.

This is one of Europe's most user-friendly academic facilities, emphasizing computerized documentation and microfiche—a role model that will set academic and literary priorities well into the future. The public has access to as many as 180,000 books plus thousands of periodicals, with an additional 10 million historic (including medieval) documents shown to qualified experts. Though the appeal of this place extends mainly to serious scholars, there's a handful of special exhibits that might interest you, as well as concerts and lectures. Concert tickets rarely exceed 15€ (\$17) for adults and 10€ (\$12) for students, seniors, and children; a schedule is available at the library.

Quai François-Mauriac, 13e. ☎ 01-53-79-49-49. www.bnf.fr. Admission 3.50€ (\$4.05). No one under 16 admitted. Tues–Sat 10am–8pm; Sun noon–7pm. Métro: Bibliothèque François-Mitterrand.

Conciergerie ★★ London has its Bloody Tower and Paris has its Conciergerie. Even though the Conciergerie had a long regal history before the Revolution, it was forever stained by the Reign of Terror and lives as an infamous symbol of the time when carts pulled up constantly to haul off fresh supplies of victims for Dr. Guillotin's wonderful little invention.

Much of the Conciergerie was built in the 14th century as an extension of the Capetian royal Palais de la Cité. You approach through its landmark twin towers, the **Tour d'Argent** (where the crown jewels were stored at one time) and **Tour de César**, but the **Salle des Gardes (Guard Room)** is the actual entrance. Even more interesting is the dark and foreboding Gothic **Salle des Gens d'Armes (Room of People at Arms)**, utterly changed from the days when the king used it as a banquet hall. However, architecture plays a secondary role to the list of prisoners who spent their last days here. Few in its history endured tortures as severe as those imposed

on Ravailac, who assassinated Henry IV in 1610. In the Tour de César, he received pincers in the flesh and had hot lead and boiling oil poured on him like bath water before being executed (see the Hôtel de Ville entry below). During the Revolution, the Conciergerie became a symbol of terror to the nobility and enemies of the State. A short walk away, the Revolutionary Tribunal dispensed a skewed, hurried justice—if it's any consolation, the jurists didn't believe in torturing their victims, only in decapitating them.

After being seized by a crowd of peasants who stormed Versailles, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were brought here to await their trials. In failing health and shocked beyond grief, *l'Autrichienne* ("the Austrian," as she was called with malice) had only a small screen (sometimes not even that) to protect her modesty from the gaze of guards stationed in her cell. By accounts of the day, she was shy and stupid, though the evidence is that on her death she displayed the nobility of a true queen. (What's more, the famous "Let them eat cake" she supposedly uttered when told the peasants had no bread, is probably apocryphal—besides, at the time, cake flour was less expensive than bread flour, so even if she said this, it wasn't meant cold-heartedly.) It was shortly before noon on the morning of October 16, 1793, when her executioners came for her, grabbing her and cutting her hair, as was the custom for victims marked for the guillotine.

Later, the Conciergerie housed other prisoners, including Mme Elisabeth; Mme du Barry, mistress of Louis XV; Mme Roland ("O Liberty! Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name!"); and Charlotte Corday, who killed Marat while he was taking a sulphur bath. In time, the Revolution consumed its own leaders, such as Danton and Robespierre. Finally, one of Paris's most hated men, public prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville, faced the guillotine to which he'd sent so many others. Among the few interned here who lived to tell the tale was American Thomas Paine, who reminisced about his chats in English with Danton.

1 quai de l'Horloge, 1er. © 01-53-40-60-93. www.monum.fr. Admission 6.10€ (\$7) adults, 4.10€ (\$4.70) ages 18–25, free for children under 18. Daily 9:30am–6pm. Métro: Cité, Châtelet, or St-Michel. RER: St-Michel.

Hôtel de Ville ★ On a large square with fountains and early-1900s lampposts, the 19th-century Hôtel de Ville isn't a hotel but Paris's grandiose City Hall. The medieval structure it replaced had witnessed countless municipally ordered executions. Henry IV's assassin, Ravailac, was quartered alive on the square in 1610, his body tied to four horses that bolted in opposite directions. On May 24, 1871, the

Communards doused the City Hall with petrol, creating a blaze that lasted for 8 days. The Third Republic ordered the structure rebuilt, with many changes, even creating a Hall of Mirrors evocative of that at Versailles. For security reasons, the major splendor of this building is closed to the public. However, the information center sponsors exhibits on Paris in the main lobby.

29 rue de Rivoli, 4e. ☎ 01-42-76-43-43. Free admission. Information center Mon–Sat 9:30am–7pm. Métro: Hôtel–de-Ville.

La Grande Arche de La Défense ★ Designed as the architectural centerpiece of the sprawling satellite suburb of La Défense, this massive steel-and-masonry arch rises 35 stories. It was built with the blessing of the late François Mitterrand and extends the magnificently engineered straight line linking the Louvre, Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, avenue de la Grande Armée, and place du Porte Maillot. The arch is ringed with a circular avenue patterned after the one winding around the Arc de Triomphe. The monument is tall enough to shelter Notre-Dame beneath its heavily trussed canopy. An elevator carries you up to an observation platform, where you get a view of the carefully planned geometry of the surrounding streets.

You'll notice nets rigged along the Grande Arche. When pieces of Mitterrand's *grand projet* started falling to the ground, they were erected to catch the falling fragments. If only such protection existed for all politicians' follies!

1 place du parvis de La Défense, Puteaux, 15e. ☎ 01-49-07-27-57. Admission 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 5.50€ (\$6.35) for children 4–17. Daily 9am–8pm.

Panthéon ★★ Some of the most famous men in French history (Victor Hugo, for one) are buried here on the crest of the mount of St. Geneviève. In 1744, Louis XV vowed that if he recovered from a mysterious illness, he'd build a church to replace the Abbaye de St. Geneviève. He recovered but took his time fulfilling his promise. It wasn't until 1764 that Mme de Pompadour's brother hired Soufflot to design a church in the form of a Greek cross with a dome reminiscent of St. Paul's in London. When Soufflot died, his pupil Rondelet carried out the work, completing the structure 9 years after his master's death.

After the Revolution, the church was converted into a "Temple of Fame" and became a pantheon for the great men of France. Mirabeau was buried here, though his remains were later removed. Likewise, Marat was only a temporary tenant. Voltaire's body was exhumed and placed here—and allowed to remain. In the 19th century, the building

changed roles so many times—a church, a pantheon, a church again—that it was hard to keep its function straight. After Hugo was buried here, it became a pantheon once again. Other notable men entombed within are Rousseau, Soufflot, Zola, and Braille. Only one woman has so far been deemed worthy of placement here: Marie Curie, who joined her husband, Pierre. Most recently, the ashes of André Malraux were transferred to the Panthéon because, according to President Jacques Chirac, he “lived [his] dreams and made them live in us.” As Charles de Gaulle’s culture minister, Malraux decreed the arts should be part of the lives of all French people, not just Paris’s elite.

Before entering the crypt, note the striking frescoes: On the right wall are scenes from Geneviève’s life, and on the left are the saint with a white-draped head looking out over medieval Paris, the city whose patron she became, as well as Geneviève relieving victims of famine with supplies.

Place du Panthéon, 5e. ☎ 01-44-32-18-00. Admission 7€ (\$8.05) adults, 4.50€ (\$5.20) ages 18–25, free for children 17 and under. Daily 10am–6pm (last entrance 45 min. before closing). Métro: Cardinal Lemoine or Maubert-Mutualité.

6 Parks & Gardens

JARDIN DES TUILERIES

The spectacular statue-studded **Jardin des Tuileries** 🌳🌳, bordering place de la Concorde, 1er (☎ 01-44-50-75-01; Métro: Tuileries or Concorde), is as much a part of Paris as the Seine. Le Nôtre, Louis XIV’s gardener and planner of the Versailles grounds, designed the gardens. Some of the gardens’ most distinctive statues are the 18 enormous bronzes by Maillol, installed within the Jardin du Carroussel, a subdivision of the Jardin des Tuileries, between 1964 and 1965, under the direction of then-Culture Minister André Malraux.

About 100 years before that, Catherine de Médicis ordered a palace built here, the **Palais des Tuileries**; other occupants have included Louis XVI (after he left Versailles) and Napoleon. Twice attacked by Parisians, it was burned to the ground in 1871 and never rebuilt. The gardens, however, remain. In orderly French manner, the trees are arranged according to designs and even the paths are arrow-straight. Breaking the sense of order and formality are bubbling fountains.

JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG

Hemingway once told a friend that the **Jardin du Luxembourg** 🌳🌳 in the 6th arrondissement (Métro: Odéon; RER: Luxembourg) “kept us from starvation.” He related that in his poverty-stricken days in

Paris, he wheeled a baby carriage (the vehicle was considered luxurious) through the garden because it was known “for the classiness of its pigeons.” When the gendarme went across the street for a glass of wine, the writer would eye his victim, preferably a plump one, then lure him with corn and “snatch him, wring his neck,” and hide him under the blanket. “We got a little tired of pigeon that year,” he confessed, “but they filled many a void.”

The Luxembourg has always been associated with artists, though children, students, and tourists predominate nowadays. Watteau came this way, as did Verlaine. Balzac didn't like the gardens at all. In 1905, Gertrude Stein would cross them to catch the Batignolles/Clichy/Odéon omnibus, pulled by three gray mares, to meet Picasso in his studio at Montmartre, where he painted her portrait.

Marie de Médicis, the wife of Henri IV, ordered the **Palais du Luxembourg** built on this site in 1612, shortly after she was widowed. A Florentine by birth, the regent wanted to create another Pitti Palace, where she could live with her “witch” friend, Leonora Galigal. Architect Salomon de Brossee wasn't entirely successful, though the overall effect is Italianate. Alas, the queen didn't get to enjoy the palace, as her son, Louis XIII, forced her into exile when he discovered she was plotting to overthrow him. She died in poverty in Cologne. For her palace, she'd commissioned from Rubens 21 paintings that glorified her life, but they're now in the Louvre. You can visit the palace only the first Sunday of each month at 10:30am, for 8€ (\$9.20). However, you must call ☎ **01-42-34-23-62** to make a reservation.

You don't really come to the Luxembourg to visit the palace; the gardens are the attraction. For the most part, they're in the classic French tradition: well groomed and formally laid out, the trees planted in patterns. Urns and statuary on pedestals—one honoring Paris's patroness, St. Geneviève, with pigtailed reaching to her thighs—encircle a central water basin. Another memorial is dedicated to Stendhal. Kids can sail a toy boat, ride a pony, or attend an occasional Grand Guignol puppet show. And you can play *boules* (lawn bowling) with a group of elderly men who wear black berets and have Gauloises dangling from their mouths.

7 Cemeteries

Sightseers often view Paris's cemeteries as being somewhat like parks, suitable places for strolling. The graves of celebrities are also a major lure. Père-Lachaise, for example, is a major attraction; the other cemeteries are of lesser interest.

Cimetière de Montmartre ★ This cemetery, established in 1795, lies west of Montmartre and north of boulevard de Clichy. Russian dancer **Vaslav Nijinsky**, novelist **Alexandre Dumas fils**, impressionist **Edgar Degas**, and composers **Hector Berlioz** and **Jacques Offenbach** are interred here, along with **Stendhal** and lesser literary lights like **Edmond** and **Jules de Goncourt** and **Heinrich Heine**. A more recent tombstone honors **François Truffaut**, film director of the *nouvelle vague* (new wave). We like to pay our respects at the tomb of **Alphonsine Plessis**, heroine of *La Dame aux camélias*, and **Mme Récamier**, who taught the world how to lounge. **Emile Zola** was buried here, but his corpse was exhumed and promoted to the Panthéon in 1908. In 1871, the cemetery was used for mass burials of victims of the Siege and the Commune.

20 av. Rachel, 18e. ☎ 01-53-42-36-30. Free admission. Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; Sat 8:30am–6pm; Sun 9am–6pm (to 5:30pm in winter). Métro: Blanche or Place Clichy.

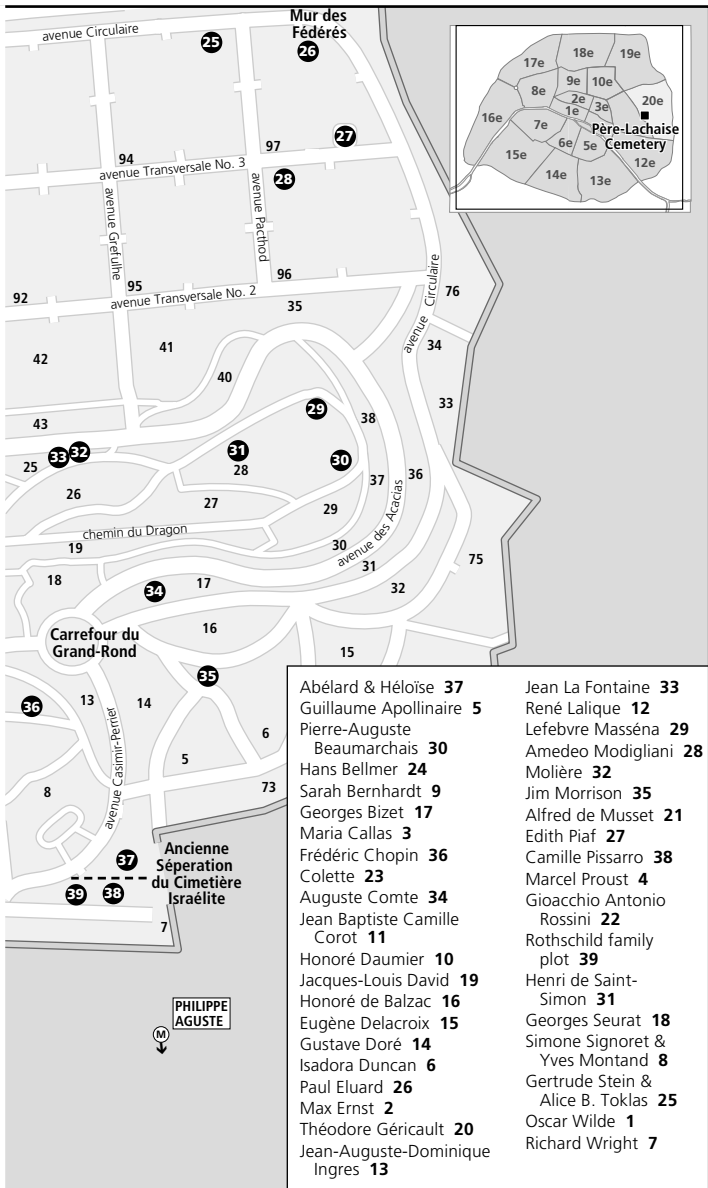
Cimetière du Père-Lachaise ★★ When it comes to name-dropping, this cemetery knows no peer; it has been called the “grandest address in Paris.” A free map of Père-Lachaise is available at the newsstand across from the main entrance (also see the map on p. 146).

Everybody from Sarah Bernhardt to Oscar Wilde to Richard Wright is here, along with Honoré de Balzac, Jacques-Louis David, Eugène Delacroix, Maria Callas, Max Ernst, and Georges Bizet. Colette was taken here in 1954; her black granite slab always sports flowers, and legend has it that cats replenish the roses. In time, the little sparrow, Edith Piaf, followed. The lover of George Sand, poet Alfred de Musset, was buried under a weeping willow. Napoleon’s marshals, Ney and Masséna, lie here, as do Frédéric Chopin and Molière. Marcel Proust’s black tombstone rarely lacks a tiny bunch of violets (he wanted to be buried beside his friend/lover, composer Maurice Ravel, but their families wouldn’t allow it).

Some tombs are sentimental favorites: Love-torn graffiti radiates 1km (half a mile) from the tomb of Doors singer **Jim Morrison**. The great dancer **Isadora Duncan** came to rest in the Columbarium, where bodies have been cremated and “filed” away. If you search hard enough, you can find the tombs of that star-crossed pair **Abélard** and **Héloïse**, the ill-fated lovers of the 12th century—at Père-Lachaise they’ve found peace at last. Other famous lovers also rest here: A stone is marked “**Alice B. Toklas**” on one side and “**Gertrude Stein**” on the other, and eventually France’s First Couple of film were reunited when **Yves Montand** joined his wife,

Père-Lachaise Cemetery





- | | |
|--|---|
| Abélard & Héloïse 37 | Jean La Fontaine 33 |
| Guillaume Apollinaire 5 | René Laliue 12 |
| Pierre-Auguste
Beaumarchais 30 | Lefebvre Masséna 29 |
| Hans Bellmer 24 | Amedeo Modigliani 28 |
| Sarah Bernhardt 9 | Molière 32 |
| Georges Bizet 17 | Jim Morrison 35 |
| Maria Callas 3 | Alfred de Musset 21 |
| Frédéric Chopin 36 | Edith Piaf 27 |
| Colette 23 | Camille Pissarro 38 |
| Auguste Comte 34 | Marcel Proust 4 |
| Jean Baptiste Camille
Corot 11 | Gioacchio Antonio
Rossini 22 |
| Honoré Daumier 10 | Rothschild family
plot 39 |
| Jacques-Louis David 19 | Henri de Saint-
Simon 31 |
| Honoré de Balzac 16 | Georges Seurat 18 |
| Eugène Delacroix 15 | Simone Signoret &
Yves Montand 8 |
| Gustave Doré 14 | Gertrude Stein &
Alice B. Toklas 25 |
| Isadora Duncan 6 | Oscar Wilde 1 |
| Paul Eluard 26 | Richard Wright 7 |
| Max Ernst 2 | |
| Théodore Géricault 20 | |
| Jean-Auguste-Dominique
Ingres 13 | |

Simone Signoret. (Montand's gravesite attracted much attention in 1998: His corpse was exhumed in the middle of the night for DNA testing in a paternity lawsuit—he wasn't the father.)

Covering more than 44 hectares (109 acres), Père-Lachaise was acquired by the city in 1804. Nineteenth-century sculpture abounds, as each family tried to outdo the other in ostentation. Monuments also honor Frenchmen who died in the Resistance or in Nazi concentration camps. Some French Socialists still pay tribute at the **Mur des Fédérés**, the anonymous gravesite of the Communards who were executed in the cemetery on May 28, 1871. When these last-ditch fighters of the Commune, the world's first anarchist republic, made their final desperate stand against the troops of the French government, they were overwhelmed, lined up against the wall, and shot in groups. A handful survived and lived hidden in the cemetery for years like wild animals, venturing into Paris at night to forage for food.

16 rue du Repos, 20e. ☎ 01-55-25-82-10. Free admission. Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; Sat 8:30am–6pm; Sun 9am–6pm (to 5:30pm early Nov to early Mar). Métro: Père-Lachaise.

8 Paris Underground

Les Catacombes ★ Every year an estimated 50,000 visitors explore some 910m (2,985 ft.) of tunnel in these dank catacombs to look at 6 million ghoulishly arranged skull-and-crossbones skeletons. First opened to the public in 1810, this “empire of the dead” is now illuminated with electric lights over its entire length. In the Middle Ages, the catacombs were quarries, but by the end of the 18th century, overcrowded cemeteries were becoming a menace to public health. City officials decided to use the catacombs as a burial ground, and the bones of several million persons were transferred here. In 1830, the prefect of Paris closed the catacombs, considering them obscene and indecent. During World War II, the catacombs were the headquarters of the French Resistance.

1 place Denfert-Rochereau, 14e. ☎ 01-43-22-47-63. www.multimania.com/houze. Admission 5€ (\$5.75) adults, 3.30€ (\$3.80) seniors, 2.50€ (\$2.90) ages 16–25, free for children under 14. Tues–Sun 2–4pm. Métro: Denfert-Rochereau.

Les Egouts ★ Some sociologists assert that the sophistication of a society can be judged by the way it disposes of waste. If so, Paris receives good marks for its mostly invisible sewer network. Victor Hugo is credited with making them famous in *Les Misérables*: Jean Valjean takes flight through them, “all dripping with slime, his soul

filled with a strange light.” Hugo also wrote, “Paris has beneath it another Paris, a Paris of sewers, which has its own streets, squares, lanes, arteries, and circulation.”

In the early Middle Ages, drinking water was taken directly from the Seine and wastewater poured onto fields or thrown onto the then-unpaved streets, transforming the urban landscape into a sea of rather smelly mud. Around 1200, the streets were paved with cobblestones, and open sewers ran down the center of each. These open sewers helped spread the Black Death, which devastated the city. In 1370, a vaulted sewer was built on rue Montmartre, draining effluents into a Seine tributary. During Louis XIV’s reign, improvements were made, but the state of waste disposal in Paris remained deplorable.

During Napoleon’s reign, 31km (19 miles) of sewer were constructed beneath Paris. By 1850, as the Industrial Revolution made the manufacture of iron pipe and steam-digging equipment more practical, Baron Haussmann developed a system that used separate channels for drinking water and sewage. By 1878, it was 580km (360 miles) long. Beginning in 1894, the network was enlarged, and laws required that discharge of all waste and storm-water runoff be funneled into the sewers. Between 1914 and 1977, an additional 966km (600 miles) were added. Today, the network of sewers is 2,093km (1,300 miles) long. It contains freshwater mains, compressed air pipes, telephone cables, and pneumatic tubes. Every day, 1.2 million cubic meters of wastewater are collected and processed by a plant in the suburb of Achères. One of the largest in Europe, it’s capable of treating more than 2 million cubic meters of sewage per day.

The city’s sewers are constructed around four principal tunnels, one 5.5m (18 ft.) wide and 4.5m (15 ft.) high. It’s like an underground city, with the street names clearly labeled. Each branch pipe bears the number of the building to which it’s connected. These underground passages are truly mammoth. Sewer tours begin at pont de l’Alma on the Left Bank, where a stairway leads into the city’s bowels. However, you often have to wait in line as much as half an hour. Visiting times might change during bad weather, as a storm can make the sewers dangerous. The tour consists of a film, a small museum visit, and then a short trip through the maze. **Warning:** The smell is pretty bad, especially in summer.

Pont de l’Alma, 7e. © 01-53-68-27-82. Admission 3.80€ (\$4.35) adults, 3.05€ (\$3.50) students, seniors, and children 5–12, free for children under 5. May–Oct Sat–Wed 11am–5pm. Closed Nov–Apr. Métro: Alma-Marceau. RER: Pont de l’Alma.

9 Neighborhood Highlights

Some of Paris's neighborhoods are attractions unto themselves. The 1st arrondissement probably has a higher concentration of attractions per block than anywhere else.

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM: ILE DE LA CITE & ILE ST-LOUIS

ILE DE LA CITE ★★★ WHERE PARIS WAS BORN

Medieval Paris, that blend of grotesquerie and Gothic beauty, bloomed on this island in the Seine (Métro: Cité). Ile de la Cité, which the Seine protects like a surrounding moat, has been known as “the cradle” of Paris ever since. As Sauval once observed, “The Island of the City is shaped like a great ship, sunk in the mud, lengthwise in the stream, in about the middle of the Seine.”

Few have written more movingly about its heyday than Victor Hugo, who invited the reader “to observe the fantastic display of lights against the darkness of that gloomy labyrinth of buildings; cast upon it a ray of moonlight, showing the city in glimmering vagueness, with its towers lifting their great heads from that foggy sea.” Medieval Paris was a city not only of legends and lovers but of blood-curdling tortures and brutalities. No story illustrates this better than the affair of Abélard and his charge Héloïse, whose jealous uncle hired ruffians to castrate her lover. (The attack predictably quelled their ardor; he became a monk, she an abbess.) You can see their graves at Père-Lachaise (see “Cemeteries”).

Because you'll want to see all the attractions on Ile de la Cité, begin at the cathedral of Notre-Dame. Proceed next to the Sainte-Chapelle moving west. After a visit there, you can head northeast to the Conciergerie. To cap off your visit, and for the best scenic view, walk to the northwestern end of the island for a view of the bridge, pont Neuf, seen from Square du Vert Galant.

The island's stars, as mentioned, are **Notre-Dame**, **Sainte-Chapelle**, and the **Conciergerie**—all described earlier. Across from Notre-Dame is the **Hôtel Dieu**, built from 1866 to 1878 in neo-Florentine style. This is central Paris's main hospital, replacing the 12th-century hospital that ran the island's entire width. Go in the main entrance and take a break in the spacious neoclassical courtyard whose small garden and fountain make a quiet oasis.

Don't miss the ironically named **pont Neuf** (“New Bridge”) at the tip of the island opposite from Notre-Dame. The span isn't new—it's Paris's oldest bridge, begun in 1578 and finished in 1604. In its

day it had two unique features: It was paved and it wasn't flanked with houses and shops. Actually, with 12 arches, it's not one bridge but two (they don't quite line up)—one from the Right Bank to the island and the other from the Left Bank to the island. At the **Musée Carnavalet**, a painting called *The Spectacle of Buffoons* shows what the bridge was like between 1665 and 1669. Duels were fought on it, the nobility's great coaches crossed it, peddlers sold their wares, and entertainers like Tabarin went there to seek a few coins from the gawkers. As public facilities were lacking, the bridge also served as a de facto outhouse.

Just past pont Neuf is the “prow” of the island, the **square du Vert Galant**. Pause to look at the equestrian statue of beloved Henri IV, who was assassinated by Ravaillac (see the entry for the Conciergerie). A true king of his people, Henri was also (to judge from accounts) regal in the boudoir—hence the nickname “Vert Galant” (Old Spark). Gabrielle d'Estrées and Henriette d'Entragues were his best-known mistresses, but they had to share him with countless others, some of whom would casually catch his eye as he was riding along the streets. In fond memory of the king, the little triangular park continues to attract lovers. It appears to be a sunken garden because it remains at its natural level—the rest of the Cité has been built up during the centuries.

ILE ST-LOUIS ★★ Cross pont St-Louis, the footbridge behind Notre-Dame, to Ile St-Louis, and you'll find a world of tree-shaded quays, town houses with courtyards, restaurants, and antiques shops. (You can also take the Métro to Sully-Morland or Pont Marie and cross the bridge.) The fraternal twin of Ile de la Cité, Ile St-Louis is primarily residential; nearly all the houses were built from 1618 to 1660, lending the island a remarkable architectural unity. Plaques on the facades identify the former residences of the famous. **Marie Curie** lived at 36 quai de Béthune, near pont de la Tournelle, and sculptor **Camille Claudel** (Rodin's mistress) lived and worked in the Hôtel de Jassaud, 19 quai de Bourbon.

The most exciting mansion—though perhaps with the saddest history—is the 1656–57 **Hôtel de Lauzun**, 17 quai d'Anjou, built for Charles Gruyn des Bordes. He married Geneviève de Mouy and had her initials engraved on much of the interior decor; their happiness was short-lived, because he was convicted of embezzlement and sent to prison in 1662. The next occupant was the duc de Lauzun, who resided there for only 3 years. He had been a favorite of Louis XIV until he asked for the hand of the king's cousin, the

duchesse de Montpensier. Louis refused and had Lauzun tossed into the Bastille. Eventually the duchesse pestered Louis into releasing him, and they married secretly and moved here in 1682, but domestic bliss eluded them—they fought often and separated in 1684. Lauzun sold the house to the grandnephew of Cardinal Richelieu and his wife, who had such a grand time throwing parties, they went bankrupt. Baron Pichon bought it in 1842 and rented it out to a hashish club. Tenants Baudelaire and Gautier regularly held hashish soirees in which Baudelaire did research for his *Les Paradis artificiels* and Gautier for his *Le Club des hachichins*. Now the mansion belongs to the city and is used to house official guests. The interior is sometimes open for temporary exhibits, so call the tourist office.

Hôtel Lambert, 2 quai d’Anjou, was built in 1645 for Nicholas Lambert de Thorigny. The portal on rue St-Louis-en-l’Île gives some idea of the splendor within, but the house’s most startling element is the oval gallery extending into the garden. Designed to feature a library or art collection, it’s best viewed from the beginning of quai d’Anjou. Voltaire and his mistress, Emilie de Breteuil, lived here—their quarrels were legendary. The mansion also housed the Polish royal family for over a century, before becoming the residence of actress Michèle Morgan. It now belongs to the Rothschild family and isn’t open to the public.

Nos. 9, 11, 13, and 15 quai d’Anjou also belonged to the Lamberts. At **no. 9** is the house where painter/sculptor/lithographer Honoré Daumier lived from 1846 to 1863, producing hundreds of caricatures satirizing the bourgeoisie and attacking government corruption. He was imprisoned because of his 1832 cartoon of Louis-Philippe swallowing bags of gold extracted from the people.

Near the Hôtel de Lauzun is the church of **St-Louis-en-l’Île**, no. 19 bis rue St-Louis-en-l’Île. Despite a dour exterior, the ornate interior is one of the finest examples of Jesuit baroque. Built between 1664 and 1726, this church is still the site of many weddings—with all the white stone and gilt, you’ll feel as if you’re inside a wedding cake. Look for the 1926 plaque reading “In grateful memory of St. Louis in whose honor the city of St. Louis, Missouri, USA, is named.”

RIGHT BANK HIGHLIGHTS

LES HALLES ☞ For 8 centuries, **Les Halles** (Métro: Les Halles; RER: Châtelet–Les Halles) was the city’s major wholesale fruit, meat, and vegetable market. In the 19th century, Zola called it “the underbelly of Paris.” The smock-clad vendors, beef carcasses, and

baskets of vegetables all belong to the past, for the original market, with zinc-roofed Second Empire “iron umbrellas,” has been torn down. Today the action has moved to a steel-and-glass edifice at Rungis, a suburb near Orly. In 1979 the **Forum des Halles**, 1–7 rue Pierre-Lescot, 1er, opened. This large complex, much of it underground, contains shops, restaurants, and movie theaters. Many of the shops are unattractive, but others contain a wide display of merchandise that has made the mall popular with residents and visitors.

For many visitors, a night on the town still ends in the wee hours with a bowl of onion soup at Les Halles, usually at **Au Pied de Cochon (The Pig’s Foot)**, 6 rue Coquillière, 1er (p. 73), or at **Au Chien Qui Fume (The Smoking Dog)**, 33 rue du Pont-Neuf, 1er (☎ 01-42-36-07-42). One of the classic scenes of old Paris was elegantly dressed Parisians (many fresh from Maxim’s) standing at a bar drinking cognac with blood-smeared butchers. Some writers have suggested that 19th-century poet Gérard de Nerval introduced the custom of frequenting Les Halles at such an unearthly hour.

A newspaper correspondent described today’s scene: “Les Halles is trying to stay alive as one of the few places where one can eat at any hour of the night.”

LEFT BANK HIGHLIGHTS

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES ★★ This neighborhood in the 6th arrondissement (Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés) was the postwar home of existentialism, associated with Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, and an intellectual bohemian crowd that gathered at **Café de Flore**, **Brasserie Lipp**, and **Les Deux Magots**. Among them, black-clad poet and singer Juliette Greco was known as *la muse de St-Germain-des-Prés*, and to Sartre she was the woman who had “millions of poems in her throat.” Her long hair, black slacks, black sweater, and black sandals launched a fashion trend adopted by young women everywhere. In the 1950s, new names appeared, like Françoise Sagan, Gore Vidal, and James Baldwin, but by the 1960s, tourists were firmly entrenched.

St-Germain-des-Prés still retains an intellectually stimulating bohemian street life, full of many interesting bookshops, art galleries, *cave* (basement) clubs, bistros, and coffeehouses. But the stars of the area are two churches, **St-Germain-des-Prés**, 3 place St-Germain-des-Prés, and **St-Sulpice**, rue St-Sulpice (for both, see “The Important Churches,” earlier in this chapter), and the **Musée National Eugène Delacroix**, 6 place de Furstemberg (p. 135). Nearby, **rue Visconti** was designed for pushcarts and is worth visiting today. At **nos. 20–24** is the residence where dramatist Jean-Baptiste Racine

died in 1699. And at **no. 17** is the house where Balzac established his printing press in 1825. (The venture ended in bankruptcy, forcing the author back to his writing desk.) Such celebrated actresses as Champmeslé and Clairon also lived here.

10 Organized Tours

BY BUS

Tours are offered by **Cityrama**, 149 rue St-Honoré, 1er (☎ 01-44-55-61-00; Métro: Palais Royal or Musée du Louvre), which operates double-decker red-and-yellow buses with oversize windows and multilingual recorded commentaries giving an overview of Paris's history and monuments.

By far the most popular is a 2-hour bus ride, with recorded commentary in your choice of 10 languages, through Paris's monumental heart. Departing from place des Pyramides, adjacent to rue de Rivoli, 1er, it's offered eight times a day between May and October, and four times a day between November and April. The cost is 24€ (\$28) per person; free for children under 12. Other, more specialized (and detailed) tours include a 3½-hour "**Artistic Tour**" that encompasses the interiors of Notre-Dame and the Louvre (Mon and Wed-Sat, departing at 9:45am), priced at 48€ (\$55). Guided tours to the mammoth royal palace at **Versailles** depart twice a day (at 9:30am and 2:45pm) year-round for a price of 58€ (\$67) per person. And 5-hour jaunts to the majestic gothic cathedral at **Chartres** depart every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday April to October at 1:45pm for a per-person price of 48€ (\$55). Tours of **Paris by night** depart at 10pm April to October for a price of 24€ (\$28) per person. Any of these night tours can be supplemented—for an additional fee—with add-ons that include river cruises on the Seine and attendance at selected cabaret shows.

CRUISES ON THE SEINE

A Seine boat tour provides sweeping vistas of the riverbanks and some of the best views of Notre-Dame. Many of the boats have open sun decks, bars, and restaurants. **Bateaux-Mouche** cruises (☎ 01-40-76-99-99; Métro: Alma-Marceau) depart from the Right Bank, next to pont de l'Alma, and last about 75 minutes, costing 7€ (\$8.05) for adults and 4€ (\$4.60) for children 5 to 15. May to October, tours leave daily at 20- to 30-minute intervals, beginning at 10am and ending at 11:30pm; November to April, there are at least nine departures daily from 11am to 9pm, with a schedule that changes according to demand and the weather. Three-hour **dinner cruises** depart daily at

8:30pm and cost 125€ (\$144), depending on which *prix-fixe* menu you order; jackets and ties are required for men. Less formal **lunch cruises**, departing every day at 1pm and returning about 2 hours later, cost 50€ (\$58) per person.

Some people prefer longer excursions on the Seine and its canals. The 3-hour **Seine et le Canal St-Martin** tour, offered by **Paris Canal** (☎ 01-42-40-96-97), requires reservations. The tour begins at 9:30am on the quays in front of the Musée d'Orsay (Métro: Solférino) and at 2:30pm in front of the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie at Parc de La Villette (Métro: Porte de La Villette). Excursions negotiate the waterways of Paris, including the Seine, an underground tunnel below place de la Bastille, and the Canal St-Martin. Tours are offered twice daily from mid-March to mid-November; the rest of the year, on Sunday only. The cost is 16€ (\$18) for adults, free for children under 4. With the exception of trips on Sundays and holidays, prices are usually reduced to 12€ (\$14) for students and seniors, and to 9€ (\$10) for children 4 to 11.

11 Shopping

Shopping is a favorite pastime of Parisians; some would even say it reflects the City of Light's soul. This is one of those rare places where you don't have to go to any special area to shop—opportunities surround you wherever you are. Each walk you take will immerse you in uniquely French styles. The windows, stores, people, and even their dogs brim with energy, creativity, and a sense of visual expression found in few other cities.

You don't have to buy anything to appreciate shopping in Paris—just soak up the art form the French have made of rampant consumerism. Peer in the *vitrines* (display windows), absorb cutting-edge ideas, witness new trends, and take home with you a whole new education in style.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

BEST BUYS

PERFUMES, MAKEUP & BEAUTY TREATMENTS A discount of 20% to 30% makes these items a great buy; qualify for a VAT refund (see below) and you'll save 40% to 45% off the Paris retail price, allowing you to bring home goods at half the U.S. price. Duty-free shops abound in Paris and are always less expensive than the ones at the airports.

For bargain cosmetics, try out French dime store and drugstore brands like **Bourjois** (made in the Chanel factories), **Lierac**, and

Galenic. Vichy, famous for its water, has a skin-care and makeup line. The newest retail trend in Paris is the *parapharmacie*, a type of discount drugstore loaded with inexpensive brands, health cures, beauty regimes, and diet plans. These usually offer a 20% discount.

FOODSTUFFS Nothing makes a better souvenir than a product of France brought home to savor later. Supermarkets are located in tourist neighborhoods; stock up on coffee, designer chocolates, mustards (try Maille or Meaux brand), and perhaps American products in French packages for the kids. However, to be sure you don't try to bring home a prohibited foodstuff, see "Entry Requirements & Customs" in chapter 1, "Planning Your Trip to Paris."

FUN FASHION Sure you can buy couture or *prêt-à-porter* (ready to wear), but French teens and trendsetters have their own stores where the latest looks are affordable. Even the dime stores in Paris sell designer copies and hotshot styles. In the stalls in front of the department stores on boulevard Haussmann, you'll find some of the latest accessories, guaranteed for a week's worth of small talk once you get home.

GETTING A VAT REFUND

The French **value-added tax (VAT—TVA** in French) is 19.6%, but you can get most of that back if you spend 182€ (\$209) or more in any store that participates in the VAT refund program. Most stores participate.

Once you meet your required minimum purchase amount, you qualify for a tax refund. The amount of the refund varies with the way the refund is handled and the fee some stores charge you for processing it. So the refund at a department store may be 13%, whereas at a small shop it may be 15% or even 18%.

You'll receive **VAT refund papers** in the shop; some stores, like Hermès, have their own, while others provide a government form. Fill in the forms before you arrive at the airport and expect to stand in line at the Customs desk for as long as half an hour. You're required to show the goods at the airport, so have them on you or visit the Customs office before you check your luggage. Once the papers have been mailed, a credit will appear, often months later, on your credit card bill. All refunds are processed at the point of departure from the **European Union (EU)**, so if you're going to another EU country, don't apply for the refund in France.

Be sure to mark the paperwork to request that your refund be applied to your credit card so you aren't stuck with a check in euros

that's hard to cash. This also ensures the best rate of exchange. In some airports, you're offered the opportunity to get your refund back in cash, which is tempting. But if you accept cash in any currency other than euros, you'll lose money on the conversion rate.

To avoid VAT refund hassles, ask for a Global Refund form ("Shopping Checque") at a store where you make a purchase. When leaving an EU country, have it stamped by Customs, after which you take it to a Global Refund counter at one of more than 700 airports and border crossings in Europe. Your money is refunded on the spot. For information, contact **Global Refund**, 707 Summer St., Stamford, CT 06901 (☎ **800/566-9828**; www.globalrefund.com).

DUTY-FREE BOUTIQUES

The advantage of duty-free shops is that you don't have to pay the VAT, so you avoid the red tape of getting a refund. Both Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports have shopping galore (de Gaulle has a virtual mall with crystal, cutlery, chocolates, luggage, wine, pipes and lighters, lingerie, silk scarves, perfume, knitwear, jewelry, cameras, cheeses, even antiques). You'll also find duty-free shops on the avenues branching out from the Opéra Garnier, in the 1st arrondissement. Sometimes there are bargains, but most often not. Usually these stores jack prices up, so even though there's no duty, you're not getting a good deal. In general, these duty-free shops are best for last-minute buys or the impulse shopper who feels he or she is leaving Paris without having bought enough.

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual shop hours are Monday to Saturday from 10am to 7pm, but hours vary, and Monday mornings don't run at full throttle. Small shops sometimes close for a 2-hour lunch break and may not open at all until after lunch on Monday. Thursday is the best day for late-night shopping, with stores open to 9 or 10pm.

Sunday shopping is limited to tourist areas and flea markets, though there's growing demand for full-scale Sunday hours. The department stores are now open on the five Sundays before Christmas. The **Carrousel du Louvre**, a mall adjacent to the Louvre, is hopping on Sunday, but closed on Monday. The tourist shops lining rue de Rivoli across from the Louvre are open on Sunday, as are the antiques villages, flea markets, and specialty events. There are several food markets in the streets on Sunday. The **Virgin Mega-store** on the Champs-Élysées, a big teen hangout, pays a fine to stay open on Sunday.

SHIPPING IT HOME

Shipping charges will possibly double your cost, and you may have to pay duties on the items (see above). The good news: The VAT refund is automatically applied to all shipped items, so there's no need to worry about the 182€ (\$209) minimum. Some stores have a \$100 minimum for shipping. You can also walk into any post office and mail home a jiffy bag or box of goodies. French do-it-yourself boxes can't be reopened once closed, so pack carefully. The clerk at the post office will help you assemble the box (it's tricky), seal it, and send it off.

GREAT SHOPPING NEIGHBORHOODS

Here are the best of the shopping arrondissements:

1ST & 8TH ARRONDISSEMENTS These two arrondissements adjoin each other and form the heart of Paris's best Right Bank shopping strip—they're one big hunting ground. This area includes the **rue du Faubourg St-Honoré**, where the big designer houses are, and the **Champs-Élysées**, with hot mass-market and teen scenes. At one end of the 1st is the **Palais Royal**, one of the best shopping secrets in Paris, where an arcade of boutiques flanks each side of the garden of the former palace.

Also here is **avenue Montaigne**, Paris's most glamorous shopping street, boasting 2 blocks of ultrafancy shops, where you float from big name to big name and in a few hours can see everything from Dior to Caron. Avenue Montaigne is also the address of **Joseph**, a British design firm, and **Porthault**, makers of the poshest sheets in the world.

2ND ARRONDISSEMENT Right behind the Palais Royal is the **Garment District (Sentier)**, as well as a few sophisticated shopping secrets, such as **place des Victoires**.

In the 19th century, this area became known for its *passages*, glass-enclosed shopping streets—in fact, the world's first shopping malls. They were also the city's first buildings to be illuminated by gaslight. Many have been torn down, but a dozen or so have survived. Of them all, we prefer **Passage den Grand Cerf**, between 145 rue St-Denis and 10 rue Dussoubs (Métro: Bourse), lying a few blocks from the Beaubourg. It's a place of wonder, filled with everything from retro-chic boutiques and (increasingly) Asian-themed shops. What's exciting is to come upon a discovery, perhaps a postage-stamp-size shop with a special jeweler who creates unique products such as jewel-toned safety pins.

3RD & 4TH ARRONDISSEMENTS The border between these two arrondissements gets fuzzy, especially around **place des Vosges**, center stage of the Marais. The districts offer several dramatically different shopping experiences.

On the surface, the shopping includes the “real people stretch” (where all the nonmillionaires shop) of **rue de Rivoli** and **rue St-Antoine**, featuring everything from Gap and a branch of Marks & Spencer to local discount stores and mass merchants. Two “real people” department stores are in this area, **Samaritaine** and **BHV**; there’s also **Les Halles** and the **Beaubourg** neighborhood, which is anchored by the Centre Pompidou.

Hidden in the Marais is a medieval warren of twisting streets chockablock with cutting-edge designers and up-to-the-minute fashions and trends. Start by walking around place des Vosges for galleries, designer shops, and special finds, then dive in and lose yourself in the area leading to the Musée Picasso.

Finally, the 4th is the home of the **Bastille**, an up-and-coming area for artists and galleries where you’ll find the newest entry on the retail scene, the **Viaduc des Arts** (which actually stretches into the 12th). It’s a collection of about 30 stores occupying a series of narrow vaulted niches under what used to be railroad tracks. They run parallel to avenue Daumesnil, centered around boulevard Diderot.

6TH & 7TH ARRONDISSEMENTS Though the 6th is one of the most famous shopping districts in Paris—it’s the soul of the Left Bank—a lot of the good stuff is hidden in the zone that turns into the residential district of the 7th. **Rue du Bac**, stretching from the 6th to the 7th in a few blocks, stands for all that wealth and glamour can buy.

9TH ARRONDISSEMENT To add to the fun of shopping the Right Bank, the 9th sneaks in behind the 1st, so if you choose not to walk toward the Champs-Élysées and the 8th, you can head to the city’s big department stores, all built in a row along **boulevard Haussmann** in the 9th. Department stores include the two big French icons, **Au Printemps** and **Galeries Lafayette**.