

Chapter 1

Best of Paris

J'adore Paris

I hope you are reading this as you plan a trip to Paris. While the dollar-euro ratio isn't great, and the inflated euro is so powerful that even locals are in pain (I don't mean bread), there's still a good time to be had.

In these pages are shopping lists that will help get your *jus* flowing. Paris is filled with great things to look at and buy. If you shop wisely, you may even save money. More realistically, you'll find something you can't find back home and at a reasonable enough price to feel pride.

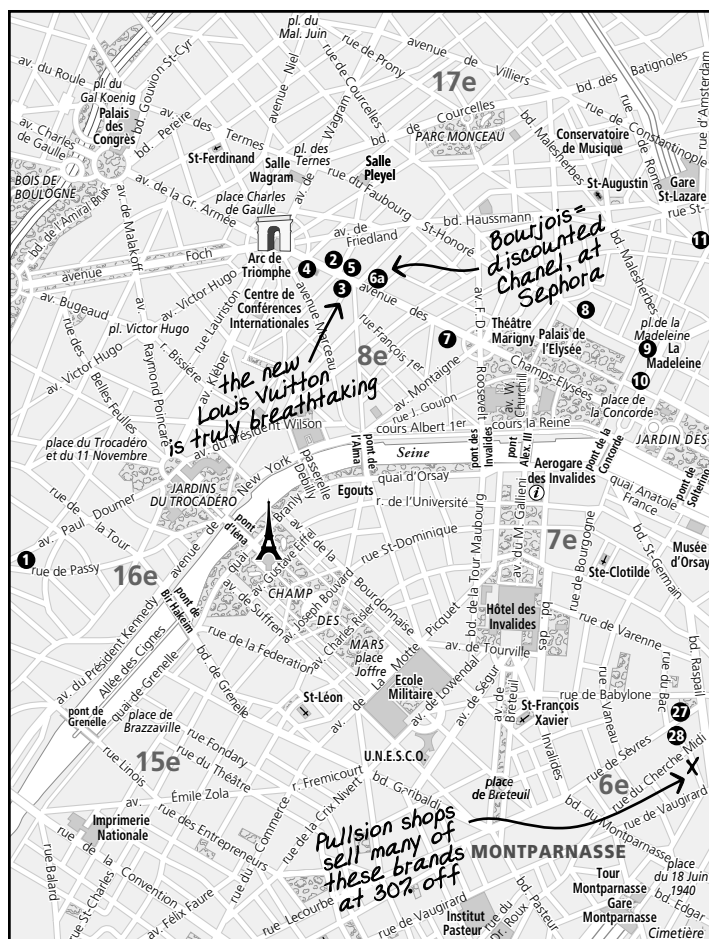
With that in mind, the selections in this chapter have been chosen for people in an incredible hurry, who have no time for leisurely strolling and shopping. If you have more time, you owe yourself the luxury of checking out the finds described elsewhere in this book. However, if you must hit and run, I hope these choices will be rewarding.

BEST SPECIALTY PERFUME SHOP

Salons Shiseido

142 galerie de Valois, Jardin du Palais Royal, 1er (Métro: Palais-Royal).

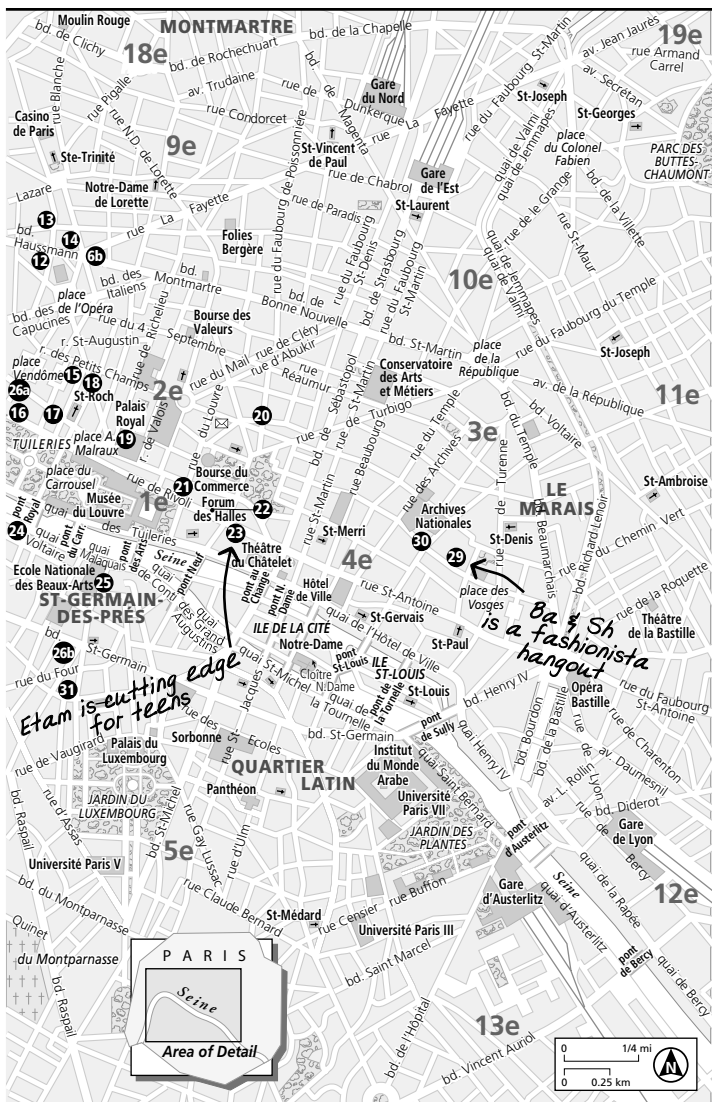
The Best of Paris



Adidas 21
 Anne Fontaine 26a, 26b
 Atelier Albani 8
 Au Printemps 11
 Ba & Sh 29
 BHV 22
 Bon Marché-Grand
 Epicène & St Placide 27
 Bonpoint 10
 Camille Lucie 16

Charvet 15
 Crea 28
 Didier Ludot 19
 Etam, Cité de la Femme 23
 Fabrice 25
 Franck et Fils 1
 Françoise Montague 17
 Galeries Lafayette 14
 Groyard 18
 Herve Chapelier 31

Hermès 9
 Lafayette Maison 12
 Le Drugstore 4
 Le 66 6a, 6b
 Le Shop 20
 Louis Vuitton flagship 3
 Manoush 30
 Marc Jacobs 19
 Moda di Andrea 13
 Monoprix 5



Philippe Model 18

Petit Bateau 2

Mr. Gas 20

Pierre Hardy 19

PSG 7

Rayure 29

Salons Shiseido 19

Sennelier 24

Sephora 6

This tiny shop, with high ceilings and royal purple decor, is the showcase of makeup genius Serge Lutens. He used to create makeup for Christian Dior and has now been with Shiseido for decades. His perfumes are also divine; even if you buy nothing, just look around and breathe deeply. The Jardin du Palais Royal is another terrific shopping experience, so check it out while you're here. Plan to spend several hours in this little piece of hidden Paris, a shopping heaven.

RUNNER-UP

Frederic Malle

140 av. Victor Hugo, 16e (Métro: Victor-Hugo).

Come here for the specialty scents, a smelling booth, and do-it-yourself or custom-made fragrance.

BEST MASS-MARKET PERFUME SHOP

Sephora

70 av. des Champs-Élysées, 8e (Métro: Franklin D. Roosevelt).

I don't care if you have Sephora at your local mall. The French stores are different, partly because Sephora is a large French chain and the flagship is right smack on the Champs-Élysées. This branch is even open on Sunday.

Everything in the large shop is color-coordinated. Fragrances have their own section, with scads of testers and lots of scent strips. There's far more than perfume; in fact, you're better off not buying perfume here, since you'll get a better price from a discounter or duty-free shop. Sephora is good for bath and beauty products (an enormous selection, including its own line of shampoos and body lotions, makeup, and hair accessories).

This is a great place for girls, preteens, and women of all ages. The inexpensive sample-size products make fabulous gifts. You'll also find books, a *parapharmacie*, a mix-your-own perfume counter, and a computer to teach you everything

you need (or want) to know. There's also a good *détaxe* rebate here (14%).

BEST STATUS GIFTS UNDER \$25

- **Hermès** soap, sold in the Saddle Shop.
- **Lanvin chocolates**, available in any grocery store.
- **Amorino bonbons**, flavored bits of sugar you add to your coffee. Gorgeous on the table; melt in your mouth.
- **Champagne**. In addition to the ones you've heard of, there are several good champagnes that aren't as well known in the U.S.—I swear by *nv* (nonvintage) Alain Thiénot, found at Nicolas or Monoprix. See chapter 10 for buying champagne in Champagne.

BEST GIFTS FOR \$15 OR LESS

- **Amorino** bonbons: priced by the number of flavors in the box, so you can start at 5€ (\$7.50).
- Anything from **Sephora**, preferably the house brand of bath goodies. The big fat eye pencils in the house brand are hot.
- **Le String** is the French version of the thong—it has been banned in French high schools since local girls were doing a Monica Lewinsky with theirs. *Sacré tush!* Sloggi is a popular brand (it's Italian), although I buy the Sloggi wannabe, Scandy, because they make *élasticité extrême* (extreme stretch) in a microfiber string that is a dream for comfort and travel—it dries in hours. From Monoprix.
- **Hot-chocolate mix** (5€/\$7.50) from **Angelina**, 226 rue de Rivoli, 1er (Métro: Tuileries), the most famous tea shop in Paris.
- A box of **Mère Poulard** cookies (1.40€/\$2.10). These indescribably good butter cookies are imported from Mont St-Michel. Available in any grocery store.
- A bag of real French **coffee** (2.20€/\$3.30). I buy **Carte Noire**. Available in any grocery store.
- A jar of hard-to-find or exotically flavored **mustard** (2.20€/\$3.30). I buy Maille brand, either cassis and red

fruits or one named Provençale. Most fun when bought at Maille's own store, place de la Madeleine, 1er (Métro: Madeleine). Most grocery stores or gourmet markets have a large selection of unusual mustard tastes—even blueberry.

- A box or bag of **tea** . . . but nothing British or easily found in the U.S. We're talking about the famous mix of red fruits, or French herbs or flavors not known to the American palate. Grocery stores carry **Elephant** brand; **Mariage Frères** is a luxury brand with its own tearooms and distribution in department stores. My favorite is the Monoprix brand of *fruits rouge*.
- A bar of milled **soap**, from a made-in-France brand (*bien sûr*), teamed with *gant de toilette*, a French-style **washcloth**. The two pieces together don't have to cost more than 10€ (\$15). I like Roger & Gallet soaps, especially the more unusual scents, such as the cherry-and-tomato combination.

BEST GIFTS FOR KIDS

- **Monoprix**, a chain of "popular stores," is packed with items, ranging from a selection of books (Disney translations are nice) to LEGOS®. I also buy kids' clothes here.
- **Sephora** carries little animal-shaped bath-gel thingamabobs for .50€ (75¢) each. Each animal shape is a different scent, and there must be 20 of them in all.

BEST STORE FOR TEENAGE GIRLS

Etam, Cite de la Femme

73 rue de Rivoli, 1er (Métro: Pont Neuf).

An entire department store of style: fashion, beauty, even home touches and a cafe. It occupies a makeover of one of La Samaritaine's landmark buildings. Low prices.

RUNNERS-UP FOR TEENS & TWEENS

H&M

54 bd Haussmann, 9e (Métro: Havre-Caumartin).

The Swedish phenomenon has copies of the latest looks for men, women, and children at affordable prices. This is the flagship; there are other, smaller branches around town.

New Look

Forum Les Halles, 1er (Métro: Les Halles).

British import that competes with H&M.

BEST KITSCH

It's not hard to find kitsch in Paris—just stroll the tourist traps along the rue de Rivoli or up and down the slopes near Sacré-Coeur.

Buyer Beware

Although you may be attracted to the winking and blinking Eiffel Tower lamps in various TTs (tourist traps), or even the more upmarket version at Maison Lafayette (about 200€/ \$300), take my word for it—the best Eiffel Tower lamp you can buy is sold for \$30 in Target stores all over the U.S.

BEST WHIMSY

Mr. Gas

44 av. Etienne Marcel, 1er (Métro: Etienne Marcel).

Gas has been around for years: It's a teeny-tiny jewelry shop that sells colorful, creative whimsies. Now, "Mr. Gas" has added a clothing store next door. Funky, exotic, and hip. I was told there'd be glitz.

RUNNERS-UP

Fabulous jeweled canvas handbags and totes can be had for 83€ (\$125) at **Vidna** (p. 203) and **Rene Derhy** (p. 117)—these are among the best buys of my last trip.

BEST INSPIRATION

There are several stores in Paris that fashion editors and style mavens return to over and over, mostly for ideas. I find that

these stores are not so helpful for women over 50 who pray to squeeze into a size 14, not a size 4, but if you just want to be inspired . . .

Manoush

75 rue Vieille du Temple, 3e (Métro: St-Paul) and 217 rue St-Honoré, 8e (Métro: Concorde); also in Cannes and Toulouse.

I've never seen more hype for a store—except maybe **Colette** (p. 13). I find it the best of a group of newish stores that are getting a lot of buzz.

They have accessories and designer clothes and claim to be midprice range (about 200€/ \$300 for a dress). Everything is flashy, sexy, and creative; let's call it the "BoHo Hotstuff" look—you know, short skirts, handbags with funny slogans, rabbit-fur car coats. I'd dare say the look is more important in the south of France than in Paris, but that's just my two centimes worth. By the way, these accessories are carried in the U.S. at Bloomies and Kitson (in LA).

MOST FUN IN A MONOPRIX

Normally I buy clothes in a Monoprix, but having way too many of those in my closets around the world, I decided to spend my \$100 budget on makeup. What a blast! I bought just about everything I could from the Jean-Claude Biguine line, and some fat eye crayons from Mavala; I got Liquid Clubbing from Bourjois (liquid eye liner), mascara from the Biguine line (including one called Mocha—very unusual), and my beloved Lierace foundation, called Aqua-D (sable is my color), which is sort of a tan in a tube. My final splurge was Teint Ultra Prodigeux from Nuxe, which has promised me a healthy glow to my skin without self-tan.

BIGGEST SPLURGE

I can't believe I did this, but I paid over 67€ (\$100) for a 1.4-ounce tube of makeup from Sisley. The 23€ (\$35) I paid for a

Dior lipstick is equally upsetting, unsettling, and exhilarating. Are these products worth it? I doubt it. Am I? Absolutely.

BEST FASHION ICON: TRADITIONAL

Blame it on Pablo Picasso or Coco Chanel, but the traditional striped fisherman's T-shirt has become an iconic fashion statement.

This time, the colors are not so traditional (although you'll have no trouble finding navy-and-white or red-and-white stripes). The wacky colors are usually sold in specialty stores. Brands to check out include **Le Phare de la Baleine**, passage l'Havre, 9e (Métro: St-Lazare), part of a small chain that specializes in marine looks from Brittany; **Amour Lux**, a line sold all over France (I buy mine at Galeries Lafayette) that makes the shirts in wild colors; and **St-James**, 13 rue de Rennes, 6e (Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés), which has free-standing stores and perhaps the best colors, but the highest prices. You may be shocked by the prices—often 40€ (\$60) or more—but in this case, you're paying for quality (they wear forever) rather than *la mode*.

BEST FASHION ICON: NEW AGE

Hervé Chapelier

390 rue St-Honoré, 8e (Métro: Concorde); 1 rue du Vieux-Colombier, 6e (Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés); 3 rue Gustave Courbet, 16e (Métro: Victor-Hugo); 53 bd de Courcelles, 8e (Métro: Courcelles).

Hervé Chapelier makes brightly colored nylon tote bags. As handbags, these are totally passé, but as totes, market baskets, and weekend gear totes, they are sublime. The major department stores stock a lousy selection, so head to the free-standing stores. The best location is the flagship, not far from the rue Royale in the heart of the best shopping in town. I use the large tote bag for my dog. Check out the new line of bags in supple leather.

BEST ONE-TRICK PONY

The trick is the very French look of black and white teamed together for casual or dress-up. Both of these brands sell only white or black shirts, blouses, and tops.

Anne Fontaine

64 rue des Sts-Pères, 6e (Métro: Sèvres-Babylone); 50 rue Etienne Marcel, 2e (Métro: Etienne Marcel); 12 rue Francs-Bourgeois, 3e (Métro: St-Paul); and many others.

Ms. Anne has shops all over town and boutiques in the major department stores. She sells only two things: white blouses and black blouses. She also has shops in select U.S. cities and an outlet store at La Vallée. And, yes, now she has a spa too. We came for the classic white shirts.

Rayure

8 rue Francs-Bourgeois, 3e (Métro: St-Paul).

Rayure is not as expensive as Anne Fontaine, and doesn't have as many stores (though the line is also sold in department stores). It carries more white shirts than black, but is competitive with Anne Fontaine in terms of styling.

BLOCK TO WATCH

Check out the two parallel streets rue St-Roch and rue du 29 Juillet in the 1er (Métro: Tuileries)—they are filling up with adorable tiny shops. To get my drift, pop into **Dominique Denaive**, 7 rue du 29 Juillet, 1er (☎ 01-42-61-78-22; www.denaive.com), for resin jewelry and accessories.

BEST NEW SHOPPING AREA

Well, this is an old area that's always been hot but is now getting, uh, hotter. I'm speaking of the Marais, but not the touristy haunts—instead, the little side parts that tourists have yet to discover. Head to the new **Blanc d'Ivoire** flagship to get my drift, 25 rue Saintonge, 3e (☎ 01-42-77-09-35). Also find the

rue Ferdinand Duval, which is getting to be a beauty street. Start at the **Different Company**, no. 10 (☎ 01-42-78-19-34).

If you're strong, you can keep moving east, bypass the Bastille, and take the rue du faubourg St-Antoine into more new little stores off side streets.

BEST MARKETING FOR TRAVELERS

We shoppers are the winners here—despite the temporary loss of CDG airport terminal 2E and its fabulous shopping, there are many other new stores in Paris train stations, including a Monoprix in the **Gare du Nord** (for Eurostar shopping) and a brand-new Sephora in the **Gare de Lyon** (for trains heading to Provence and Côte d'Azur). These stores offer great last-minute gift shopping and browsing opportunities while you're waiting to depart.

BEST MARKETING FOR GUYS

Paris has gone bonkers for skin care for men. Department stores, Sephora stores, and even pharmacies have lots of shelf space devoted to the notion. The first such concept store is **Comptoir de l'Homme**, 5–7 rue de Tournon, 6e. All guy skin care, all the time. ☎ 01-46-34-04-18.

BEST ETHNIC FASHION STORE

Mia Zia

4 rue Caumartin, 9e (Métro: Havre-Caumartin).

Lest you forget that many parts of the U.S. were once French colonies, note that numerous stores throughout Paris reflect French roots in other parts of the world. Mia Zia sells clothes and home style with a touch of North Africa, which makes them great for resort wear without being costume-y. ☎ 01-44-51-94-45. www.miazia.com.

RUNNER-UP

R by 45RPM

4 rue du Marché St-Honoré, 1er (Métro: Tuileries).

For an interesting runner-up, but with clothing from Japan (which, of course, was never under French protection), look inside this small shop. Here, jeans and clothes are made from block-printed Japanese fabrics and bandannas. © 01-47-03-45-45. www.45rpm.fr.

BEST FRENCH BRANDS FOR LARGE AMERICAN BODIES

While I do not consider myself immense, let's face it, if you are larger than a size 6, you do not have a French body. Most French clothes are made up to size 44 (American size 12) and some go to size 46 (size 14); but they are cut small and, even if purportedly large enough, many don't fit. Do not panic. Here's my secret list of brands that have their own size system or go up to size 52—these are all available in the major department stores: **Lilith, Weill, Weinberg, and Yohji Yamamoto.**

For casual clothing, I often visit the men's department. **Warning:** A French men's XL in mass-market clothing may still be too small.

MOST INTERESTING FASHIONISTA HEADS UP

Watch this space for a full report—but just as Paris is a city of music and a city for science, a new city for fashion (**Cité de la Mode et du Design**) is being built in the 13e. The center will host a fashion institute and exhibition spaces (and runways, *bien sûr*) and is part of the city's attempt to liven up the area between the Gare du Austerlitz and the Bibliothèque National, along the Seine's Left Bank.

MOST HYPED OLD STORE IN PARIS

Groyard

233 rue St-Honoré, 1er (Métro: Tuileries).

I used to list this store along with Louis Vuitton, which was a coincidence because they're alike yet totally different. Older than Vuitton, Groyard has long been the insider's preferred brand of luggage, steamer trunks, and travel gear. It, too, has

a specific logo, but unlike Vuitton, it has remained a hidden source. Few people even knew of its store right behind the Hôtel Meurice and near the famed boutique Colette. Although Groyard was first known for its luggage, the company now suddenly makes the must-have handbag or tote bag of the decade.

The venerable firm was bought in 1998 and old traditions were maintained while a new design team moved in. Suddenly, a small gimmick has been added and the skies turn bright, the sun shines, the band plays, and the waiting list is 6 months long. All that Groyard has done is to offer its regular pattern in bright colors, along with the additional service of monogramming its canvas in contrasting hues. You can also get a crown emblazoned. The result is so hot that not only do you have to fork over a movie star's ransom, but you also must wait a long time. But, honey, *ooh-la-la*.

Insider's tip: Buy your bag in France, but have the monogram or printing done in the U.S., where the waiting line is only 3 months long. The line is sold at Bergdorf's and Neiman Marcus; free-standing stores are opening in the U.S., including a new one just opened on Union Square in San Francisco. Expect to pay 1,133€ (\$1,700) for the tote bag and another 333€ (\$500) for the monogram. There's a new bowwow store across the street.

MOST HYPED FRENCH STORE IN THE WORLD

Colette

213 rue St-Honoré, 1^{er} (Métro: Tuileries).

If you've never done it, then do it now. And don't ask Karl Lagerfeld for his autograph—he just hangs around trying to get new ideas. The store is a gallery on the ground floor, with trendy merchandise as objets d'art; there's a cafe with water bar in the basement. Upstairs there's designer fashion, most of which is put away. You sit and the saleswoman brings.
© 01-55-35-33-90.

BEST SILLY IDEA I'VE EVER HAD, PART 1

I bought one of those touristy Eiffel towers to put on top of my Christmas tree. They sell them all over town at news kiosks and TTs; I bought the 15€ (\$23) size. See p. 7.

BEST SILLY IDEA I'VE EVER HAD, PART 2

This idea belongs to my friend Muffy, not me—she buys the smaller size Eiffel Tower and then glues jewels and charms all over it. Expensive item in terms of time and craft products and vintage jewels and buttons, but it's a fabulous gift.