

PART ONE

PLANNING *before* YOU LEAVE HOME

GATHERING INFORMATION


IN ADDITION TO THIS GUIDE, we recommend that you obtain the following:

1. **THE DISNEYLAND RESORT PARIS BROCHURE** This covers Disneyland Resort Paris in its entirety, lists rates for Disney hotels and campsites, and describes Disneyland Resort Paris holiday packages and dining plans. The brochure is available from most travel agents or by calling Disney direct at ☎ 0844 800 8111. You can also download the brochure from www.disneylandparis.co.uk if you're in the UK, from www.disneylandparis.ie in Ireland, or from us.disneylandparis.com in North America.
2. **GUIDEBOOK FOR GUESTS WITH DISABILITIES** This guide covers both theme parks with accessibility information for rides and hotels. The guidebook can be downloaded from the websites immediately preceding.
3. **DISNEYLAND PARIS GUEST RELATIONS** can be contacted by phone at ☎ +33 1 60 30 60 30, by email at message_edl-admin@dpl.disney.com, or by post at Disneyland Paris, Communications Visiteurs, Boîte Postal 100, F-77777 Marne-la-Vallée, Cedex 4, France.
4. **MAISON DE LA FRANCE** (French Government Tourist Office) has a number of publications and brochures available that can be downloaded online at www.uk.franceguide.com (UK), www.us.franceguide.com (US and Canada), and www.ie.franceguide.com (Ireland). The same publications can be requested by post at the same web addresses, or by calling ☎ 0906 822 4123 in the UK, ☎ 514-288-4264 in Canada, and ☎ 514-288-1904 in the US. Various brochures available cover sights, dining, lodging, and more. Maison de la France also has offices in London at 178 Piccadilly, W1J 9AL; in New York at 825 Third Avenue, 29th floor (entrance on East 50th Street); and in Paris at 23 Place de Catalogne.

A WORD ON PHONING OR FAXING NUMBERS IN FRANCE

DON'T YOU JUST HATE IT WHEN A GUIDEBOOK gives you a foreign phone number and you have to search all over the book for the country code? To avoid delay and annoyance, please note the following:

To make a landline telephone call or send a fax to the Paris/Disneyland Paris area from the UK, dial ☎ **00** followed by **33** for France and **1** for the greater Paris area, then the local number. To call from a mobile phone, simply enter the plus sign (+), then the country and area codes, then the local number.

 **unofficial TIP**
Because we assume that most readers of this guide use mobile phones as their primary means of voice communication, we use the mobile format most often in this guide to indicate international numbers.

To make a landline phone call or send a fax from the United States or Canada, dial ☎ **011** followed by **33** for France and **1** for Paris, then the local number. (Substitute + for **011** on a mobile phone.)

Note that Paris-area numbers always begin with ☎ **01** and have ten digits. When dialling from *outside* of France you drop the initial zero; when dialling from *within* France you keep the zero, omitting the international and country codes. So to reach Disneyland Paris

Guest Relations at ☎ **01 60 30 60 30** from the UK, you'd dial **00 33 1 60 30 60 30**. From North America you'd dial **011 33 1 60 30 60 30**. (Again, on a mobile phone you'd drop **00** and **011** and add + for both of the previous examples.)

The numbers for the rest of France begin with ☎ **02, 03, 04**, and **05**; mobile numbers begin with ☎ **06**. Toll-free numbers begin with ☎ **08 00**. Be aware that any other **08** numbers will cost you anywhere from €0.02 to €1.18 (£0.02 to £1.06; \$.03 to \$1.72 US) a minute. Be aware that the French recite phone numbers in pairs (example: 01 60 30 60 30), so that's how you should give phone numbers as well to avoid confusion.

DISNEYLAND PARIS ON THE WEB

SEARCHING THE WEB FOR DISNEYLAND PARIS INFORMATION is like navigating an immense maze for a very small piece of cheese: there's a lot of information available, but you may have to wade through list after list until you find the Internet addresses you want and need. Following are the sites that we find most useful.

DISNEYLAND PARIS OFFICIAL WEBSITE At this all-purpose website (www.disneylandparis.com), you can select the language of your choice. Click on 'English' and you'll be given a further choice of the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, or other countries. The main difference between the sub-sites is that prices are listed in pounds for the UK, euros for Ireland, and US dollars for North America.

Disneyland Paris Phone Numbers

Animal Care Centre	☎ +33 1 64 74 28 84
Annual Passport Office	☎ +33 1 60 30 60 69
Baby Care Centre	☎ +33 1 64 74 26 00
Buffalo Bill's Wild West Store	☎ +33 1 60 45 71 00
Central Reservations	☎ +33 1 60 30 60 53
Conference Bookings	☎ +33 1 60 45 75 00
Conference Bookings (UK)	☎ 0181 222 1000
Disney Store Travel Centre (UK)	☎ 0171 287 1819
First Aid Centre	☎ +33 1 64 74 23 03
Golf Reservations	☎ +33 1 60 45 68 90
Guest Relations	☎ +33 1 60 30 60 30
Lost Children	☎ +33 1 64 74 24 00
Lost Property	☎ +33 1 64 74 25 00
Mail-Order Disney Merchandise	☎ +33 1 64 74 44 30
Ticket Sales	☎ +33 1 60 30 60 30

The other official Disneyland Paris sites are **www.disneylandparis.ie** (Ireland) and **us.disneylandparis.com** (North America). None of the official sites are terribly helpful for accessing any information but the most basic. To dig deeper, click on 'Site Map' at the bottom of the sites' home pages.

BEST UNOFFICIAL WEBSITE DLRP Magic (**www.dlrpmagic.com**) is a comprehensive, easily-navigable website devoted entirely to Disneyland Paris. It's relatively meagre as regards information on restaurants and hotels, but the site owner indicates that new detail is forthcoming.

BEST PODCAST Disney Brit Podcast (**www.disneybrit.com**) is a weekly UK-based podcast about Disney parks, focusing on Disneyland Paris and Walt Disney World. In addition to the podcast, the website has discussion forums for Disney-travel-related questions and answers.

TOURIST INFORMATION SEINE-ET-MARNE (where Disneyland Paris is located) visitor information can be found at **www.tourisme77.com**. The **Paris Tourist Office** is at **www.parisinfo.com**; the tourism website for greater Paris – a region collectively known as Paris–Île-de-France – is at **www.pidf.com**.

TRANSPORT INFORMATION Information, schedules, and ticket purchases for the Eurostar high-speed train between London St Pancras and either

 **unofficial TIP**
A lot more ticket options, discounts, and special deals are on offer at Disneyland Paris's UK website, **www.disneylandparis.co.uk**, than at the corresponding Irish or North American sites.

Paris or Marne-la-Vallée–Chessy (Disneyland Paris) are available at www.eurostar.com. Information on busses, transportation from the airports, the Métro underground, and RER train service can be found at www.ratp.fr. Click on the *tiny* UK symbol at the upper right of the page for English.

FOR FAMILIES For trading tips and opinions on family travel, we like www.deabirkett.com. A good general site is www.family-travel.co.uk. An excellent discussion board on travelling with children can be found at www.takethefamily.com.

FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS Check out www.queensinthekingdom.com, the website of the *Queens in the Kingdom* guidebook to all things gay in Disney parks around the world. (Click on ‘Disneyland Paris’ in the list on the left at the home page.)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND CUSTOMS

AN IDENTITY CARD IS REQUIRED for citizens of European Union (EU) countries to enter France. British, American, and Canadian nationals are required to present a valid passport. For a good summation of passport and visa requirements, see www.wordtravels.com/travelguide/countries/france/visa.

TAKING YOUR PET

FOR EACH ANIMAL YOU WISH TO BRING with you to France you’ll need to obtain an EU **Pet Passport**, a booklet containing an identification number and proof of current vaccinations. The passport may be issued only by a licenced veterinarian; both the passport and the relevant vaccinations should be kept current by the vet. Before issuing an EU Pet Passport, the vet must confirm that the animal has been identified with a microchip in the neck or tattoo in the ear and that all rabies vaccinations are up to date.

Disneyland Paris operates an **Animal Care Centre** that is adjacent to the main car park. You must present an EU Pet Passport and/or an updated Sanitation Certificate for your dog or cat to be admitted. An anti-rabies vaccination is mandatory. Your animal must be tattooed inside the ear (or have an implanted microchip) and have an up-to-date rabies vaccination certificate (more than one month and less than one year old) issued by a licenced vet. Any animal left at the centre by a guest may stay there only for the length of the guest’s stay at Disneyland Paris.

 **unofficial TIP**
Many Paris–Île-de-France hotels that accept pets are listed at www.petfriendlyholidays.com and www.dogfriendly.com. For more regulations governing pets travelling from and back into the UK, see www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/index.htm.

TIMING YOUR VISIT

SELECTING THE TIME OF YEAR FOR YOUR VISIT

CROWDS ARE LARGEST AT DISNEYLAND PARIS during the summer and during specific holiday periods during the rest of the year. The busiest time of all is Christmas Day through New Year's Day. The two weeks around Easter are also extremely busy. To give you some idea of what *busy* means at Disneyland Paris, more than 65,000 people have toured the resort in a single day! Although this level of attendance is far from typical, the possibility of its occurrence should prevent all but the ignorant and the foolish from challenging Disneyland Paris at its busiest periods.

The least busy time of all, of course, is during the cold-weather months. With waiting areas for most attractions protected from the weather, and with covered walkways allowing guests to move around much of the parks without being exposed to the elements, cold-weather touring is tolerable, if not exactly comfortable.


Note, however, that during the colder months (except holiday periods), the theme parks close early, and all evening parades and fireworks and some stage shows are discontinued. Even so, our research team was so impressed with the relative ease of touring in the fall, spring, and other 'off' periods that – at the risk of being blasphemous – we would rather take our children out of school for a while than do battle with the summer crowds.

DISNEYLAND PARIS AND PARIS

MOST PEOPLE VISITING DISNEYLAND PARIS are likely to be combining the trip with a stay in Paris. First, let's consider the best time of year to visit the entire area – taking into consideration that the best time to go to Disneyland Paris is *not* always the best time to visit Paris.

Paris's weather, while temperate, is only slightly more appealing than London's: it's not as cold and there's no fog, but it is damp and overcast much of the time. From November to March you can almost always count on rain at some point in the day. Even in summer, damp, dreary days are not uncommon.

Luckily, most precipitation is not in the form of heavy downpours that interfere with activity, but, rather, light rains that start and stop throughout the day – just enough to be annoying. Get used to carrying around a fold-up umbrella or using that anorak.

 **unofficial TIP**
While lines for attractions are short to non-existent from late fall to early spring, the resort's hours of operation are likewise short, with both the Disneyland and Walt Disney Studios parks closing at 6 p.m. These hours are sufficient to enjoy the attractions but do not leave enough time for parades, live entertainment, full-service dining, or shopping.

unofficial TIP

Paris's best weather is in September, when you can almost always count on delightfully-clear blue skies and temperatures around 21°C (70°F). The air is dry, it's still light late in the day, and the Parisians are in a noticeably good mood.

The good news is, you don't have to worry about the scorching-hot days that so often wilt enthusiasm at Walt Disney World and Disneyland in the US. 27°C (81°F) is a hot summer day in Paris.

Naturally, any day on which the weather is good means the resort will be more crowded. Touring on a clear day is, of course, vastly preferable to getting poked with someone's umbrella as you queue up for Dumbo. But unless you have a lot of time and flexibility,

you shouldn't let rain keep you away from Disneyland Paris. (For one thing, even if it's raining when you leave your hotel, it might have stopped by the time you get to the theme park.) Even when the rain is coming down in torrents, Disneyland Paris is a spectacle. Imagine

PARIS AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

MONTH	CELSIUS	FAHRENHEIT	MONTH	CELSIUS	FAHRENHEIT
January	2°–6°	35°–43°	July	15°–24°	59°–75°
February	2°–8°	35°–46°	August	15°–23°	59°–73°
March	4°–11°	39°–52°	September	12°–21°	54°–70°
April	7°–15°	45°–59°	October	9°–16°	48°–61°
May	10°–19°	50°–66°	November	5°–10°	41°–50°
June	13°–22°	55°–72°	December	3°–7°	37°–45°

PARIS RAINFALL

MONTH	NUMBER OF RAINY DAYS	MONTHLY RAINFALL	AVERAGE HOURS OF SUNSHINE PER DAY
January	10	55 mm (2.2")	2
February	9	45 mm (1.8")	3
March	7	30 mm (1.2")	5
April	6	40 mm (1.6")	6
May	8	50 mm (2")	7
June	9	50 mm (2")	8
July	8	55 mm (2.2")	8
August	8	60 mm (2.4")	7
September	8	50 mm (2")	6
October	8	50 mm (2")	4
November	8	50 mm (2")	2
December	9	50 mm (2")	1

swarms of guests in yellow Disney ponchos racing frenetically from one covered area to another. If you could see the theme parks from the air on such a day, you might imagine the complex was being attacked by giant killer bees.

Getting Down to Specifics

Although holiday patterns of neighbouring countries are likely to affect the park's attendance throughout the year, the Paris school calendar has the biggest potential impact.

PARIS'S SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Fall Break	Last week in October–1 November
Christmas Break	The week before Christmas–New Year's weekend
Winter Break	Mid-February–1 March
Easter/Spring Break	2½ weeks beginning at Easter
Summer Holiday	Early July–second week in September

Additionally, the periods during which neighbouring countries have school breaks should be taken into consideration.

MAJOR EUROPEAN SCHOOL-HOLIDAY PERIODS

Christmas/New Year's	Mid-December–early January
Winter Break	Mid-February–mid-March
Easter/Spring Break	Mid-April–early May
Summer Holiday	Late June–early September
Fall Break	Mid-October–early November

Best Periods to Visit Disneyland Paris

A careful reading of the above lists will point to a few periods throughout the year when crowds should be the lightest:

- January (after New Year's weekend)–the first half of February
- Second half of March–the first half of April (or a week before Easter)
- Second half of May–first three weeks in June
- Mid-September–first half of October
- Mid-November–first half of December

SELECTING THE DAY OF THE WEEK FOR YOUR VISIT

THE CROWDS AT DISNEYLAND PARIS are made up mostly of out-of-France visitors during the off-season and interim seasons, with the French accounting for 60% or more of the crowds during warm-weather months. Though

 **unofficial TIP**
Mid-September through the first half of October is the time of year that combines the fewest crowds with the best weather. The next best time is the second half of May through the first three weeks in June.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN PARIS

1 January	New Year's Day (<i>Jour de l'An</i>)
Easter (<i>Pâques</i>), Easter Monday	(<i>Lundi de Pâques</i>)
1 May	Labour Day (<i>Fête du Travail</i> , May Day)
8 May	VE (<i>Victory in Europe</i>) Day
Ascension Day	(<i>Ascension</i> , sixth Thursday after Easter)
Pentecost	(<i>Pentecôte</i>)
Whit Monday	(<i>Lundi de Pentecôte</i> , second Monday after Ascension)
14 July	Bastille Day (<i>Fête Nationale</i>)
15 August	Assumption (<i>Assomption</i>)
1 November	All Saints' Day (<i>Toussaint</i>)
11 November	Remembrance Day (<i>Armistice 1918</i>)
25 December	Christmas Day (<i>Noël</i>)

the French find Disneyland Paris terribly expensive, the quality of the entertainment has pretty much won them over. The people of Paris now think of Disneyland and Walt Disney Studios parks as their own. Yearly passes cost less than a year's membership to a health club, and Disney management has intensified its efforts to appeal to the local market.

What all this means is that weekends are usually packed. Sundays, followed closely by Saturdays, are the busiest days of the week, combining local patronage with weekend and holiday travellers. Because some French children still attend classes on Saturday mornings when school is in session, the park usually does not get extremely crowded until late morning or early afternoon. Additionally, many visitors coming from afar use part of Saturday morning to get settled at their hotels. All of this is relative, of course. Saturday mornings are always much busier than weekday mornings.

After weekends and holidays, Wednesday is likely to be the next busiest day of the week. This is because during the school year, French schools are closed on Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday are generally the quietest days of the week. Because most museums are closed on Tuesdays and others on Mondays, the beginning of the week is an ideal time to schedule your visit to the park in all months except July and August. Thursdays, likewise, are usually not too crowded, and Fridays will vary.

All things considered, we recommend the following on any week without holidays, except during the months of July and August:

BEST DAYS

1. Monday
2. Tuesday
3. Thursday
4. Friday

WORST DAYS

1. Sunday
2. Saturday
3. Wednesday

In July and August, Saturday and Sunday will continue to be the busiest days, followed by Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday and Friday will usually be days of lighter attendance, and Thursdays will vary.

THE DISNEYLAND PARIS CALENDAR

THE RESORT CELEBRATES A NUMBER OF HOLIDAYS and events each year with special entertainment, decorations, parades, and activities.

ST. DAVID'S WELSH FESTIVAL Early March. Showcases Welsh storytelling, face-painting, and fireworks. Mickey and Minnie appear in traditional Welsh garb.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY 17 March. Features Celtic song and dance led by those famous Irish rodents Chip and Dale (who knew?).

MICKEY'S NOT-SO-SCARY HALLOWEEN PARTY Four evenings in October at Disneyland Park. Fantasyland is spooked up with festive Halloween decorations. There are tricks and treats and special entertainment starring the Disney characters. Wear your costume! Admission runs €22 (£20, \$33 US) for both adults and children.

DISNEY'S HALLOWEEN PARTY 31 October at Disneyland Park. Like the Not-So-Scary party elevated to a fever pitch, with the whole park getting into the act. Admission is €28 (£25, \$41 US) regardless of age.

DISNEY'S BONFIRE SPECTACULAR/GUY FAWKES NIGHT Staged on three nights in early November. Includes music, entertainment, fireworks, and a floating bonfire on Lake Disney – think Viking funeral without the dead people.

Christmas and New Year's is a special (though crowded) time to visit Disneyland Paris. The parks, Disney Village, and the resort hotels are awash in Christmas decorations. There are special holiday shows in the theme parks and a Christmas parade at Disneyland Park. For €44 (£39, \$63 US) for adults and €16 (£14, \$23 US) for children ages 3–11, you can attend Mickey's Magical Christmas Dinner at Disneyland Park. The evening includes a buffet dinner, a meet-and-greet with the Disney characters (all in Christmas outfits), and an interactive dance party with the characters. New Year's Eve in Disneyland Park is highlighted by a parade, fireworks, special entertainment, and the obligatory countdown to midnight.

