



48 HOURS IN

Paris

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

WELCOME

BY NATE CRUZ

GoingSolo.Life

Welcome to Paris. Forty-eight hours is enough time to fall in love with Paris — if you know where to go. This guide gives you a precise, hour-by-hour plan built around how the city actually flows: the right neighbourhoods in the right order, the restaurants Parisians choose, and the insider moves that separate a good trip from an unforgettable one.

How to Use This Guide

- 1 Read through once before you land — get the shape of both days in mind.
- 2 Screenshot the daily pages for offline use. No data charges on the day.
- 3 Follow Day 1's sequence closely. The route is designed to eliminate backtracking.
- 4 Give yourself permission to improvise. The best Paris moments are rarely planned.
- 5 Check restaurant tips the evening before. The best spots fill quickly.

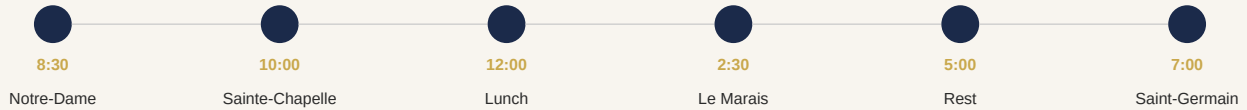
Essential Quick Facts

Currency	Euro (€). Cards accepted almost everywhere. Contactless is universal.
Transport	Navigo Easy card for Metro & buses. Tap in and out at every journey.
Weather	Pack a light waterproof layer every day. Paris rain is unpredictable.
Time Zone	CET (UTC+1) in winter, CEST (UTC+2) in summer. Check before departure.
Emergency	112 for all emergencies. 15 for SAMU (medical). 17 for police.
Tipping	5–10% in restaurants. Round up in cafés. Not expected in brasseries.

DAY ONE

Île de la Cité · Le Marais · Saint-Germain-des-Prés · Soho of Paris

Begin at the heart of Paris. Cross the river, discover where the city lives. End the evening in the most atmospheric neighbourhood on the Left Bank.



Morning 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

8:30 AM

Île de la Cité & Notre-Dame

Begin where Paris began. Île de la Cité is the medieval island at the heart of the city, and Notre-Dame — now in the final stages of its magnificent restoration following the 2019 fire — is experiencing a quiet renaissance. The exterior alone is extraordinary. Spend thirty minutes walking the island: the flower market, the Pont Neuf, the view back toward the Left Bank. This is Paris at its oldest and most essential.

Insider tip: Book your Notre-Dame visit in advance at notre-dame-de-paris.fr. Timed entry eliminates queues entirely. Morning slots offer the clearest light through the restored rose windows.

10:00 AM

Sainte-Chapelle

Five minutes from Notre-Dame, Sainte-Chapelle contains the most extraordinary stained glass in Europe. Fifteen windows of deep jewelled colour reach from floor to ceiling of the upper chapel. Entry is modest by Paris standards. Allow forty-five minutes — you will want to stay longer than you planned.

Insider tip: Buy a joint ticket for Sainte-Chapelle and the Conciergerie next door. Combined entry is better value than either alone. Avoid the lunch rush: the Conciergerie is quietest before 11:30am.

Afternoon 12:30 PM – 5:30 PM**12:30 PM****Lunch in Le Marais**

Cross to the Right Bank and walk into the Marais — Paris's best neighbourhood for lunch. Rue des Rosiers is the heart of the historic Jewish quarter: L'As du Fallafel at number 34 is the finest falafel in Paris, at roughly €7 for a wrap eaten on the street. For a sit-down alternative, Breizh Café on rue Vieille-du-Temple serves exceptional Breton crêpes and buckwheat galettes.

Insider tip: L'As du Fallafel queues are longest between 12:30 and 1:30pm. Arrive before noon or after 2pm for minimal wait. It is closed on Friday evenings and all day Saturday.

2:00 PM**Le Marais Walk**

The Marais rewards slow walking. Place des Vosges — Paris's oldest square, built in 1612 — is twenty minutes through the neighbourhood. The Musée Picasso and the Musée Carnavalet are both nearby; either is worth ninety minutes if the mood takes you. The covered arcades and courtyard galleries that line the backstreets are among Paris's most beautiful free experiences.

Insider tip: The Musée Carnavalet — the history of Paris in an Hôtel Particulier — has free permanent collection admission. It is consistently one of the most overlooked museums in the city.

4:30 PM**Rest & Recover**

Build ninety minutes into the afternoon. Find a café terrace, order a café crème, and sit down. Paris is a walking city and Day 1 will cover ten to fourteen kilometres depending on your pace. A proper rest now means you genuinely enjoy the evening.

Evening 7:00 PM – Late**7:00 PM****Saint-Germain-des-Prés**

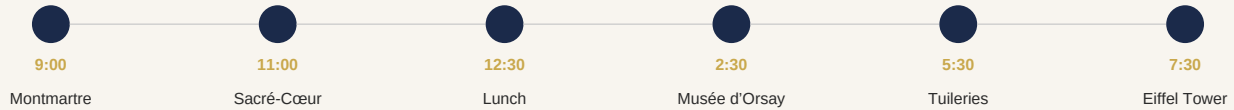
Cross to the Left Bank for the evening. Saint-Germain is Paris's literary and intellectual neighbourhood — Café de Flore and Les Deux Magots face each other on the boulevard, both genuinely historic and worth a drink regardless of the tourist premium. Wander the side streets toward rue de Buci for livelier, more local options.

Insider tip: Dinner reservation: Le Comptoir du Relais on Carrefour de l'Odéon is one of Paris's best bistros. Book well ahead for evenings. At lunch they operate as a brasserie with no reservations — a different but equally excellent experience.

DAY TWO

Montmartre · Musée d'Orsay · Tuileries · Eiffel Tower at Dusk

The Paris that locals call their own: a hilltop village above the city, the world's finest Impressionist collection, and Paris's most iconic view saved for the golden hour.



Morning 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

9:00 AM

Montmartre

Begin at the top. Montmartre sits on the highest point in Paris and still functions as a genuine village — steep cobbled streets, a working vineyard, neighbourhood boulangeries, and artists who have not yet been entirely displaced by tourism. Take the funicular from Anvers if your legs prefer it; walk up from Abbesses if you have the energy. The view over Paris from the steps of Sacré-Cœur, with the whole city laid out below, is among the finest in Europe.

Insider tip: Place du Tertre — the famous artists' square — is best seen early before it fills entirely. The rue Lepic street market is more authentically Montmartre and considerably less visited. Boulangerie Gontran Cherrier on rue Lepic is the neighbourhood's finest bakery.

10:30 AM

Sacré-Cœur & Surrounding Streets

Sacré-Cœur's white dome dominates the Montmartre skyline and entry to the basilica is free. The interior is atmospheric and worth fifteen minutes. Spend the remaining time in the streets immediately behind — rue Norvins, rue des Saules, rue de l'Abreuvoir — where the village character of Montmartre is most intact and most photogenic.

Insider tip: The Musée de Montmartre on rue Cortot is a small gem: Renoir, Utrillo, and Suzanne Valadon all had studios here. The garden with its view over the vineyard is exceptional. Allow 45 minutes.

Afternoon 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM**1:00 PM****Lunch near the Orsay**

Make your way to the 7th arrondissement. The streets around the Musée d'Orsay offer excellent lunch options at every price point. Rue de Grenelle and the surrounding backstreets have neighbourhood bistros and boulangeries worth exploring. Keep lunch lighter than last night — you are fuelling for the museum and a long evening.

Insider tip: The Musée d'Orsay has a beautiful café inside the former station. Consider a coffee there after you enter. The museum restaurant is formal and expensive but the café is accessible and worth it.

2:30 PM**Musée d'Orsay**

The Musée d'Orsay is, for 48 hours, the better choice over the Louvre. Housed in the extraordinary former Gare d'Orsay train station, it holds the world's finest Impressionist collection: Monet, Renoir, Degas, Seurat, Van Gogh, and Cézanne are all here. Go directly to the top floor and work downward. Allow ninety focused minutes. Museum fatigue is a genuine risk — leave while you still want to stay.

Insider tip: Pre-book your timed entry ticket at musee-orsay.fr to skip the queue entirely. The museum is open late on Thursdays until 9:45pm — the quietest and most atmospheric time to visit.

5:00 PM**Tuileries Garden & Palais-Royal**

Walk through the Tuileries from the river end toward the Louvre. The Louvre pyramid is worth seeing from the courtyard — the scale is remarkable — even if you are not going inside. Then step through the arch to the Palais-Royal gardens: one of Paris's finest quiet spaces, lined with elegant arcades and utterly unknown to most visitors.

Insider tip: The Palais-Royal arcades — Galerie Vivienne and Galerie Véro-Dodat nearby — are among the most beautiful covered passages in Paris. Galerie Vivienne is the finest and dates from 1823.

Evening 7:00 PM – Late**7:30 PM****Eiffel Tower from Trocadéro**

Cross the Seine to the Trocadéro esplanade. The view of the Eiffel Tower from here at dusk is the finest in Paris — and entirely free. The tower begins its hourly light show at nightfall, which lasts five minutes and is genuinely spectacular. If you have booked summit access, this is the time for it. If not, the Trocadéro view costs nothing and disappoints nobody.

Insider tip: The Eiffel Tower sparkles for five minutes at the top of each hour after dark. The first show is at nightfall and the last at 1am. Plan around it — it is one of Paris's finest free spectacles.

The No-Tourist-Trap Food Guide

Organised by meal type. Prices per person, excluding drinks. None of these have photos on the menu.

BREAKFAST & COFFEE		LUNCH	
Du Pain et des Idées	€4–8	L'As du Fallafel	€7–10
10th arr. The finest croissants in Paris. Arrive early — they sell out.		Le Marais. The best falafel wrap in Europe. Eat it on the street.	
Poilâne	€5– 9	Breizh Café	€14–22
Saint-Germain. The legendary sourdough bakery. Take a loaf. Take two.		Le Marais. Exceptional Breton galettes in a beautiful room.	
Café de Flore	€8–14	Septime La Cave	€18–28
Saint-Germain. Historic, beautiful, worth the premium for one sitting.		11th arr. Natural wines and excellent small plates. Book ahead.	
Ten Belles	€4–6	Chez Denise	€22–35
10th arr. The finest specialty coffee in Paris. Minimal, excellent.		1st arr. Old Paris bistro. Order the bone marrow. Go hungry.	
DINNER		CAFÉS & PATISSERIES	
Bistrot Paul Bert	€40–55	Pierre Hermé	€3–6
11th arr. The Platonic ideal of the Paris bistro. Book well ahead.		Multiple. The finest macarons in Paris. Non-negotiable.	
Frenchie	€65–80	Jacques Genin	€4–8
2nd arr. Refined seasonal cooking. One of Paris's finest small restaurants.		3rd arr. Exceptional chocolates and the best mille-feuille in the city.	
Le Comptoir du Relais	€35–48	Angelina	€10–16
Saint-Germain. Classic bistro from chef Yves Camdeborde.		Rue de Rivoli. The legendary hot chocolate. Allow time for the queue.	
Loulou	€45–60	Ladurée	€5–8
Tuileries. Beautiful terrace with Louvre views. Worth it for the setting alone.		Multiple. The original macaron salon. Beautiful rooms, worth one visit.	

The Metro, Buses & Getting Around

The Navigo Easy Card

Purchase a Navigo Easy card at any Metro station or the airport for €2. Load a carnet of 10 single tickets (€16.90) or individual zone tickets as needed. The card works on the Metro, RER within central zones, and buses. Tap in at every journey — there are no daily caps as with London, so plan your routes to minimise unnecessary trips. Contactless bank cards are accepted on buses but not yet universally on the Metro.

Lines You Will Actually Use

Line 1 (Yellow)

The most useful tourist line. Runs east–west through the centre. Louvre–Rivoli, Châtelet, Bastille, and La Défense.

Line 4 (Purple)

North–south spine. Essential for Montmartre (Barbès), Notre-Dame (Cité), and Montparnasse.

Line 12 (Green)

Montmartre (Abbesses) to Saint-Germain-des-Prés and beyond. The Montmartre visitor's line.

Line 13 (Blue)

Saint-Lazare to Montparnasse via Invalides and the 7th. Useful for the Musée d'Orsay area.

RER C

Surface rail along the Seine. Essential for the Eiffel Tower (Champ de Mars) and Versailles day trips.

RER B

Direct from CDG Airport to central Paris in 35 minutes. Cheaper and faster than any taxi.

Practical Transport Tips

Avoid rush hour

8–9:30am and 5:30–7pm on weekdays. The Metro is unpleasant. Sit in a café, walk, or take a bus — Paris is better on foot anyway.

Use Google Maps in transit mode

Real-time RATP data is integrated and accurate to the minute. The most reliable navigation available.

Bus Line 69 is a free tour

Runs from the Eiffel Tower through Saint-Germain, the Marais, and the 11th. Sit upstairs for the view.

Vélib' Bikes

€3 day pass. Docking stations every 300 metres in central Paris. Free for the first 30 minutes per trip.

Walking distances

Paris is deceptive. What looks short on the Metro map can be a 25-minute walk. Always check Google Maps for actual distance.

The Rainy Day Plan

It will rain. Possibly for an entire morning. Here are the finest Paris experiences that work even better under grey skies.

Musée de l'Orangerie

Free on first Sunday of the month. Monet's Water Lilies panels fill two oval rooms in natural light. One of the most extraordinary rooms in Paris. Allow 90 minutes.

Shakespeare and Company

The legendary English-language bookshop on the Left Bank, facing Notre-Dame. Browsers are welcome for as long as they wish. The upper reading rooms are extraordinary.

Les Galeries Lafayette

Not primarily for shopping. The Art Nouveau glass dome of the main building is one of Paris's finest interior spaces. Free entry. The rooftop terrace has excellent views.

Palais-Royal Arcades

The covered arcades flanking the Palais-Royal gardens are among the finest in Paris. Galleries, antique dealers, and quiet cafés. Completely sheltered. Worth an hour of unhurried exploration.

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

Free permanent collection. Matisse, Picasso, Modigliani, and the largest Dufy in existence. In the Palàis de Tokyo complex. Consistently overlooked and never crowded.

Père Lachaise Cemetery

Paris's most famous cemetery is genuinely beautiful: winding paths, elaborate tombs, and the graves of Chopin, Oscar Wilde, Edith Piaf, and Jim Morrison. Free, open daily, unexpectedly peaceful.

Queue-Beating Strategies

Book online the evening before — the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, and Notre-Dame all offer timed entry. Online booking eliminates the same-day queue for no additional cost.

Arrive at opening. Major Paris attractions are quietest in the first 45 minutes. The 10am crowd arrives around 10:45am.

Visit Tuesday through Thursday. Monday sees closed museums (the Louvre closes on Tuesdays; the Orsay on Mondays). Friday and Sunday bring the highest visitor numbers.

Skip the Seine River Cruise. A 35-minute trip with a tourist commentary. Walk the Seine instead — it costs nothing, moves at your pace, and the view is identical.

Know Your Arrondissements

Le Marais (3rd & 4th)

HISTORY, FOOD & CULTURE

The best neighbourhood in Paris for wandering. Jewish quarter, contemporary galleries, the finest falafel, and Place des Vosges. Gay-friendly, architecturally extraordinary, and genuinely local once you get off the main drag.

Saint-Germain-des-Prés (6th)

LITERARY LEFT BANK

Café de Flore, Les Deux Magots, the Musée d'Orsay nearby, and the most elegant shopping streets in Paris. Expensive to live in; perfect for an evening or a long afternoon.

Oberkampf / 11th

YOUNG & LOCAL

Where Parisians in their twenties and thirties actually spend their evenings. Rue Oberkampf and the surrounding streets have the densest concentration of good bars and casual restaurants in the city. Minimal tourists.

Palais-Royal / 1st

ELEGANT & CENTRAL

The Louvre, the Tuileries, the Palais-Royal gardens, and the covered arcades. Central Paris at its grandest. The Jardin du Palais-Royal is among the most beautiful public spaces in the city.

Montmartre (18th)

VILLAGE & VIEWS

Paris's most photographed hill. Sacré-Cœur, winding cobbled streets, a working vineyard, and a village atmosphere that somehow survives the tourism. Best explored before 11am or after 6pm.

Île de la Cité / Île Saint-Louis

HISTORIC HEART

The two islands at the medieval centre of Paris. Notre-Dame, Sainte-Chapelle, and the Conciergerie on the Cité. Île Saint-Louis is smaller, quieter, residential, and home to Berthillon ice cream — the finest in Paris.

7th Arrondissement

GRAND & QUIET

The Eiffel Tower, the Musée d'Orsay, Les Invalides, and some of the most beautiful residential streets in Paris. Calmer than the central arrondissements. Excellent for an afternoon walk.

Batignolles / 17th

QUIET & UNDERRATED

A residential neighbourhood northwest of the centre that most visitors miss entirely. Village market, independent cafés, and the most consistently good neighbourhood restaurants in Paris at the most reasonable prices.

The Le Havre Connection

Paris is the natural gateway to Atlantic cruises departing from Normandy. Le Havre — the port of Paris — is less than 2 hours 15 minutes by direct train from Gare Saint-Lazare, making it one of the most convenient cruise embarkations in Europe. Your 48 hours in Paris can serve as the ideal opening chapter to any Atlantic sailing.

Getting to Le Havre

By Train (Recommended)

SNCF Intercités runs direct services from Paris Saint-Lazare to Le Havre every 1–2 hours. Journey: approximately 2h15. Book in advance at [sncf-connect.com](https://www.sncf-connect.com) for the best fares — typically €25–45 each way. The train station in Le Havre is ten minutes from the cruise terminals by taxi.

By FlixBus / BlaBlaBus

Coach services from Paris operate to Le Havre in around 2h45–3 hours. Cheaper than train but less reliable on timing for embarkation day. Better suited to post-cruise travel when schedules are flexible.

By Private Transfer

Approximately €150–200 depending on vehicle size and timing. Worth considering for groups or if travelling with heavy luggage on embarkation morning. Book 48 hours ahead.

Timing Your Paris Stay

Pre-Cruise (Recommended)

Arrive in Paris two days before embarkation. Use this guide for Day 1 and Day 2. On embarkation morning, take the 7:30 or 8:00am train from Saint-Lazare — you arrive in Le Havre with comfortable time before check-in opens at most terminals.

Post-Cruise

If your cruise returns to Le Havre in the morning, a 10am or 11am train puts you in Paris by early afternoon — leaving a full evening before an overnight flight home. Store luggage at Saint-Lazare and go straight to the Marais.

Overnight in Le Havre

For very early departures, one night in Le Havre makes sense. The Vent d'Ouest is the finest boutique hotel in the city, five minutes from the Art Deco market hall — Le Havre is more architecturally interesting than most cruise passengers realise.

Paris as a Cruise Embarkation: Seine River Cruises

For river cruise passengers, Paris itself is an embarkation point. Viking River Cruises, Uniworld, Avalon Waterways, and AmaWaterways all operate Seine itineraries departing from central Paris — typically from the Port de Grenelle near the Eiffel Tower or the Port de Solferino near the Musée d'Orsay. For these passengers, this guide covers your pre-cruise days; the ship becomes your base from day three. Paris to Honfleur, Vernon, and the Normandy coast is among the finest river itineraries in Europe.

Half a Day in Le Havre

Le Havre City Centre

Rebuilt after WWII by Auguste Perret, Le Havre's centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The modular concrete architecture is more beautiful than it sounds. The Espace Oscar Niemeyer is the centrepiece.

Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux (MuMa)

The finest Impressionist collection outside Paris, overlooking the harbour. Boudin, Monet, Pissarro. Free permanent collection. Worth 90 minutes.

The Old Port & Quai de Southampton

Walk to the cruise terminals and you can often see ships at berth. The waterfront restaurants near the ferry terminal are good for a final French lunch before embarkation.

What Nobody Tells You About Paris

Always say Bonjour first

Before every interaction — in shops, cafés, pharmacies — say “Bonjour”. Not doing so is considered rude in a way that is difficult to overstate. It costs nothing and changes every subsequent interaction.

Table service is everywhere

Unlike London pubs, you sit down first in virtually every Paris café and restaurant. A server will come to you. Walking to a counter to order is not the norm. Sitting at a terrace table is always available regardless of whether you order food.

Tipping is different here

Service is included in almost all Paris bills (service compris). Tipping is appreciated but not expected. Rounding up to the nearest €5 on a dinner bill is perfectly appropriate. Leaving nothing is not considered rude.

The Metro is faster than any taxi

Paris traffic in the central arrondissements can be extraordinary. For any journey under 6km in central Paris, the Metro will be faster than a cab regardless of the time of day. The one exception is very early morning.

The boulangerie schedule

The best boulangeries open at 7am and often sell out of their finest products by 9am. The croissant you have at 7:30am is a fundamentally different experience from the one at 10am. Plan accordingly.

A café table is yours for as long as you want

In Paris, once you sit at a café table, it is yours. No one will rush you. No one will suggest you move on. The culture of nursing a coffee for an hour while reading is entirely normal. Embrace it.

Everything closes for lunch

Many smaller shops and some local services close between 12:30 and 2:30pm. Plan errands accordingly. This is not inconvenience — it is Paris insisting that lunch is important. Agree with it.

Pharmacies are remarkable

French pharmacies carry a wide range of quality skincare, sun protection, and health products at better prices than anywhere in the UK or US. The green cross sign is everywhere. Worth a browse even if you need nothing.

Paris awaits.

You have the plan. You have the restaurants, the route,
the insider moves, and the cruise connection.
All that remains is to go.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Screenshot Day 1 and Day 2 schedules for offline use
 - ☐ Reserve restaurants requiring advance bookings
 - ☐ Download Google Maps Paris offline (Settings → Offline Maps)
 - ☐ Load Navigo Easy card or confirm contactless is enabled
 - ☐ Pre-book Notre-Dame, Musée d'Orsay, and Eiffel Tower for timed entry
 - ☐ Check train times to Le Havre if cruising onwards
 - ☐ Pack your waterproof layer. Every single day.
-

Your interactive map is one scan away.
All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.

goingsolo.life/maps/paris

