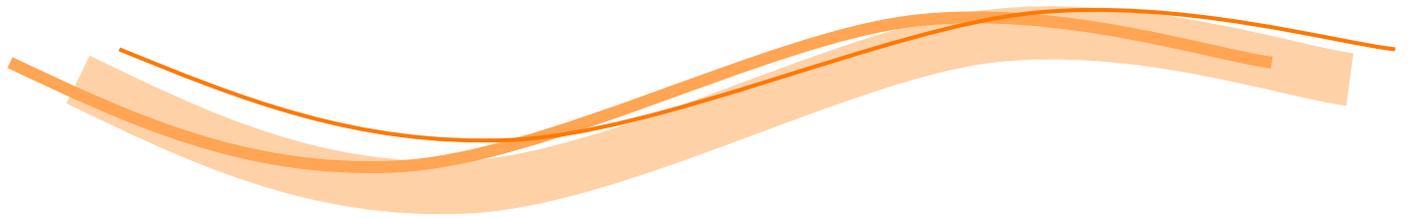




FRANCE





<p>FRANCE</p>	<p>France is made up of a blend of landscape and human history. This is a country that incorporates the stylish beaches of the South of France, the towering peaks of the Alps, the rich valleys of the wine growing regions and the wild Atlantic coasts of Normandy and Brittany.</p> <p>And it has always been made up of a fascinating cross section of society. From the feudal times illustrated in the magic moment to the social upheaval of the French Revolution to modern times - French culture has been a complex and noisy mix of farmers, workers, aristocrats, poets, artists, philosophers, explorers, scientists and more.</p> <p>Paris – “The City of Lights” is known for being at the forefront of culture. From couture to literature, whether socialite or scholar, it is to Paris that you go to feel the heartbeat of modern trends. Paris is the acknowledged capital of fashion, art - and people-watching! Chanel-clad ladies walk poodles along grand boulevards, motorists and pedestrians vie for right of way with Gallic exuberance and everyone lives life to the full. It’s a place where even if the waiter is rude the food will be delicious and the atmosphere can’t help but be – well - chic! Paris is all this and more – it is one of the most romantic and exciting cities on the planet. And all the sights, culture and fabulous cuisine are only a seven hour flight away.</p> <p>These Travel Notes focus on Paris as this is where most trips to France will begin and end. For more comprehensive planning resources for the rest of France, start with the French Tourism website at www.rendezvousenfrance.com</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>In northeastern Europe, in the north of France.</p>
<p>Geography</p>	<p>Paris is located in the north-bending arc of the river Seine and includes two islands, the Île Saint-Louis and the larger Île de la Cité, which form the oldest part of the city. Overall, the city is relatively flat, and the lowest point is 35 m (115 ft) above sea level. Paris has several prominent hills, of which the highest is Montmartre at 130 m (427 ft).</p>
<p>Name</p>	<p>The name Paris derives from that of its earliest inhabitants, the Gaulish tribe known as the Parisii. The city was called Lutetia, during the Roman era of the 1st to the 4th century, but during the reign of Julian the Apostate (360–363), the city was renamed Paris. It is believed that the name of the Parisii tribe comes from the Celtic Gallic word <i>parisio</i> meaning "the working people" or "the craftsmen."</p>
<p>Population</p>	<p>The city of Paris, within its administrative limits (the 20 arrondissements), has a population of about 2,230,000. Its metropolitan area is one of the largest population centres in Europe, with more than 12 million inhabitants. The population of France is 65 million.</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>French</p>

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Currency	The euro, which at the current rate of exchange (May 2014) is worth 1.52 Canadian Dollars
Tipping	In France, all prices shown include tax and service (the latter is around 15% of the total price). However, if the service has been particularly good, you may wish to leave a tip in order to show your appreciation. As a general rule, the amount is 5 to 10% of the total bill.
Government	<p>Paris is the seat of France's national government. For the executive, the two chief officers each have their own official residences, which also serve as their offices. The President of France resides at the Élysée Palace in the 8th arrondissement, while the Prime Minister's seat is at the Hôtel Matignon in the 7th arrondissement. Government ministries are located in various parts of the city; many are located in the 7th arrondissement, near the Matignon.</p> <p>The two houses of the French Parliament are also located on the Left Bank. The upper house, the Senate, meets in the Palais du Luxembourg in the 6th arrondissement, while the more important lower house, the Assemblée Nationale, meets in the Palais Bourbon in the 7th. The President of the Senate, the second-highest public official in France after the President of the Republic, resides in the "Petit Luxembourg", a smaller palace annex to the Palais du Luxembourg.</p>
Documentation	Canadian citizens holding a Canadian passport must have a passport valid for a minimum of 3 months after the return date and a return plane ticket for stays of up to 90 days.
Time zone	Six hours ahead of EST in Montreal and Toronto.
Health	<p>No vaccination is necessary to travel to metropolitan France and the health care system there is very good.</p> <p>Don't forget to take out travel insurance before you depart.</p>
Safety tips	Paris is generally a very safe city for tourists, but as with all large cities, use common sense to avoid dark streets at night and don't flash money or luxury items around.

CLIMATE	
General climate	Cold winters and warm summers are the norm, with moderate rainfall at any time of year. Average temperature in August is 26C.
Today's weather	For May 8 th 2014 the temperature is 17C with sun and cloud
Best time to visit	Spring is the most celebrated time to visit Paris of course, especially for the romantically inclined. Summer and fall are also delightful and I wouldn't turn my nose up at an opportunity to visit Paris in winter either!

GETTING THERE	
Flying	<p>Paris is served by two major airports: Orly Airport, which is south of Paris; and the Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, in Roissy-en-France, which is one of the busiest in the world.</p> <p>The Airport shuttle is a bus service from Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport</p>

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	<p>airport to several points in Paris. The Roissy Bus runs between Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport and Paris (stops on rue Scribe, just behind the Opéra Garnier) Departures every 20 minutes from 5.45am to 11pm, driving time from 45 to 60 minutes. Cost: 9.40 euros</p>
<p>Paris</p>	<p>The City of Paris is divided into arrondissements:</p> <p>Place de la Bastille (4th, 11th and 12th arrondissements, right bank) is a district of great historical significance, for not just Paris, but also all of France. Because of its symbolic value, the square has often been a site of political demonstrations.</p> <p>Place de la Concorde (8th arrondissement, right bank) is at the foot of the Champs-Élysées, built as the "Place Louis XV", site of the infamous guillotine. The Egyptian obelisk is Paris' "oldest monument". On this place, on either side of the Rue Royale, there are two identical stone buildings: The eastern one houses the French Naval Ministry, the western the luxurious Hôtel de Crillon. Nearby Place Vendôme is famous for its fashionable and deluxe hotels (Hôtel Ritz and Hôtel de Vendôme) and its jewellers. Many famous fashion designers have had their salons located here.</p> <p>Champs-Élysées (8th arrondissement, right bank) is a 17th-century garden-promenade-turned-avenue connecting Place de la Concorde and Arc de Triomphe. It is one of the many tourist attractions and a major shopping street of Paris.</p> <p>Les Halles (1st arrondissement, right bank) were formerly Paris' central meat and produce market, and, since the late 1970s, are a major shopping centre around an important metro connection station (Châtelet – Les Halles, the biggest in the world). The old Halles were destroyed in 1971 and replaced by the Forum des Halles. The central market of Paris, the biggest wholesale food market in the world, was transferred to Rungis, in the southern suburbs.</p> <p>Le Marais (3rd and 4th arrondissements) is a trendy Right Bank district. It is architecturally very well preserved, and some of the oldest houses and buildings of Paris can be found there. It is a very culturally open place. It is also known for its Chinese, Jewish and gay communities.</p> <p>Avenue Montaigne (8th arrondissement), next to the Champs-Élysées, is home to luxury brand labels such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton (LVMH), Dior and Givenchy.</p> <p>Montmartre (18th arrondissement, right bank) is a historic area on the Butte, home to the Basilique du Sacré-Cœur. Montmartre has always</p>

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	<p>had a history with artists and has many studios and cafés of many great artists in that area.</p> <p>Montparnasse (14th arrondissement) is a historic Left Bank area famous for artists' studios, music halls, and café life. The large Montparnasse – Bienvenue métro station and the lone Tour Montparnasse skyscraper are located there.</p> <p>Avenue de l'Opéra (9th arrondissement, right bank) is the area around the Opéra Garnier and the location of the capital's densest concentration of both department stores and offices. A few examples are the Printemps and Galeries Lafayette grands magasins (department stores), and the Paris headquarters of financial giants such as BNP Paribas and American Express.</p> <p>Quartier Latin (5th and 6th arrondissements, left bank) is a 12th-century scholastic centre formerly stretching between the Left Bank's Place Maubert and the Sorbonne campus. It is known for its lively atmosphere and many bistros. Various higher-education establishments, such as Sciences Po Paris, the École Normale Supérieure, Mines ParisTech, and the Jussieu university campus, make it a major educational centre in Paris.</p> <p>Faubourg Saint-Honoré (8th arrondissement, right bank) is one of Paris' high-fashion districts, home to labels such as Hermès and Christian Lacroix.</p>
Distances	The distance from north to south and from east to west in France is about 1000 kms and the coastline totals 3427 km.
The Paris Métro	<p>The Métro is Paris' most important transportation system. The system, with 300 stations (384 stops) connected by 214 km of rails, comprises 16 lines, identified by numbers from 1 to 14, with two minor lines, 3bis and 7bis, so numbered because they used to be branches of their respective original lines, and only later became independent. In October 1998, the new line 14 was inaugurated after a 70-year hiatus in inaugurating fully new métro lines. Because of the short distance between stations on the Métro network, lines were too slow to be extended further into the suburbs, as is the case in most other cities. As such, an additional express network, the RER, has been created since the 1960s to connect more-distant parts of the urban area. The RER consists in the integration of modern city-centre subway and pre-existing suburban rail. Nowadays, the RER network comprises five lines, 257 stops and 587 km of rails.</p> <p>A single ticket costs 1.70 euros and a « carnet » of 10 tickets is 12 euros.</p> <p>The Mobilis ticket: grants unlimited access on all public transportation</p>

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	<p>for one day.</p> <p>Paris Visite card: this pass is available for 1, 2, 3 or 5 consecutive days and gives unlimited access to public transportation within the chosen area (or a certain number of « zones ») The card can be bought at the airports, tourist office welcome desks and the main metro or RER stations.</p>
Trains	<p>Paris is the hub of the French high speed train network. By train, London is now just two hours and 15 minutes away, Brussels can be reached in 1 hour and 22 minutes (up to 26 departures/day), Amsterdam in 3 hours and 18 minutes (up to 10 departures/day), Cologne in 3 hours and 14 minutes (6 departures/day), and Marseille, Bordeaux, and other cities in southern France in three hours.</p>
Car Rental	<p>All the main car rental companies are present in France, such as Hertz, Avis, National, while others are specific to France or Europe, such as Europcar, Ada, Sixt. To rent a car, the minimum age varies from 21 to 25 years old, depending on the rental agency. You must also have a credit card in your name. Some agencies may also require that you've had your driver's license for at least one year. Check specific rules with individual rental companies before booking. Most international car-rental agencies discount standard rates if you reserve ahead and pay in advance.</p> <p>If you are just staying in Paris I recommend that you do not rent a car, but walk and use public transit.</p>
Buses	<p>Don't hesitate to travel by bus, it's a great way to discover the city. There are a wide variety of routes, many of which go through the city centre, along the Seine River banks or through well-known historical areas. The bus network with its 59 routes perfectly matches and complements that of the metro. The installation of special bus lanes along the main roads has improved journey times. For an idea of your journey time, allow around 5 minutes per stop, sometimes more if the traffic is busy.</p>
Other Transport	<p>Bicycle taxis, tuk-tuks and other pedal powered vehicles are an easy way to make a simple journey or to have a guided tour of the capital in an environmentally-friendly way. Just as for a traditional taxi, a telephone call is all that is needed for your bicycle taxi to arrive at the place requested. Enjoy an open-air trip through the streets of Paris! The celebrated 2CV, the legendary car by Citroën, takes aficionados from all around the world on a discovery tour of Paris with a driver-guide at the wheel. Tours aboard this original convertible last from an hour and a half to three hours</p> <p>- Taxi bicycles - Cyclopolitain – www.cyclopolitain.com - Taxi King Clovis – www.taxikingclovis.com - Segways, trikkes and Vespas - Paris Trikkes – www.paristrikkes.com - Paris by Scooter –</p>

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	<p>fr.parisbyscooter.com (Vespa) - 2 CV car - 4 Roues Sous 1 Parapluie – www.4rs1p.com - Paris Authentic – www.parisauthentic.com</p>
<p>Boats</p>	<p>Boats and cruises are very pleasant to move about or discover Paris. Batobus: is a boat shuttle service, available from 10am to 7pm. The boats run every 15 to 30 minutes, and take you to several stops along the river. A one-day pass is 13 Euros, 2 days for 17 Euros and 20 Euros for 5 consecutive days. Itinerary and details on http://www.batobus.com/ Cruises on the river are very relaxed, and a pleasant way to see Paris from the river. Several packages are offered, such as discovery or dinner cruises. For companies, schedules, rates and departure points, go to bateaux parisiens, bateaux mouches or for more Paris Tourist Office.</p>
<p>Passes</p>	<p>With so many museums and historic sites in the city, it is not easy to know where to begin or how to get around. The Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau has all the solutions for enjoying the top sights in Paris with the all-inclusive Paris City Passport — the ideal way to save time and money. They have hand-picked the contents to ensure that your passport is a cost effective purchase during your stay, whatever option you choose. Transport, museums, cruises ... Available for 1, 2, 3 or 5 days, the Paris City Passport makes life easy! Paris City Passport (see details of each kit below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paris Visite : Paris Visite gives you unlimited access to transport: bus, metro, tram and RER, so that you can travel around as you wish during your stay from zone 1 to 3. - Paris Museum Pass* : This pass gives you access to more than 60 museums in Paris and the Paris region including: the Louvre Museum, the Versailles Estate, the Panthéon, the Towers of Notre-Dame, the Arc de Triomphe, the Tomb of Napoléon I. - Louvre Museum** : Formerly the residence of the Kings of France, the Louvre is one of the French capital's most renowned sites. With its rich past and collections, it is one of the world's greatest museums. - Bateaux Mouches sightseeing cruises : A cruise that will show you all the magic of the Seine riverbanks aboard a boat of the famous Bateaux-Mouches riverboat company. Cruise 1h10 - Cars Rouges 1 day + : Discover the major sights of Paris on Open-Top Double Decker Buses and Hop on; Hop off at your leisure to visit several sights as Eiffel Tower, Champs de Mars, Louvre Museum, Notre Dame, Orsay Museum... - Montparnasse Tower + : Discover every bit of Paris from the 56th

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	<p>and 59th observation floors which offer you stunning views of the city in all directions.</p> <p>*included in the Paris City Passport 2, 3 or 5 days only. ** included in the Paris City Passport 1 day. + : included in the Paris City Passport 3 days + and 5 days + only.</p>
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<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>There are more than 1,450 hotels and 75,000 rooms in Paris: Parisian hotels are constantly being renewed and offer quality, competitiveness and diversity. The choice is huge: a grand hotel, an apartment rental, a youth hostel, a bed & breakfast, the choice is yours.</p> <p>Outside of Paris the choice is still wider, encompassing canal barges, country cottage rentals, chateaux and villas.</p>
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<p>TARGET GROUPS</p> <p>Kids</p>	<p>To enjoy the marvels of Parisian museums and monuments as a family, what could be better? Awaken the curiosity of your children by communicating your own interest in art and science, share the thrill of a trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower, the bell-towers of Notre Dame Cathedral or the Montparnasse Tower. Many museums and monuments offer guided visits and workshops for kids, accompanied or not by their parents, who can perhaps take the chance to have a break or do some shopping.</p> <p>Most are free for under-18s, or reductions apply if not. These activities and guided tours give rise to an extra charge and often need to be booked in advance. It's worth knowing too that large families can often benefit from special reductions in certain museums.</p> <p>Finally, the museum and monument pass, for grown-ups, is just the ticket for families: your high-spirited offspring can accompany you free of charge, without having to queue.</p> <p>Europe's most visited theme park, Disneyland Paris, offers total sensory overload for the whole family in its five lands: Main Street, U.S.A., Adventureland, Frontierland, Fantasyland, and Discoveryland. Fairy tales come alive in Sleeping Beauty's Castle, and adventurers will love Indiana Jones and the Temple of Peril.</p> <p>Parc de la Villette, Paris's largest park, includes 10 different gardens that guarantee the whole family a memorable day. Here you'll find the Garden of Childhood Fears, with its mysterious musical forest; the Garden of Acrobatics, with games involving balance and movement; the Dragon Garden; the Garden of Mirrors; and more. The park includes vast open spaces ideal for picnics and games.</p>
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	<p>Cite des enfants in the 19th, a museum for kids within the Cite des Sciences et de l'Industrie, is interactive, fun, and educational. There are two separate sections for the 3-5 set and the 5-12 set. The tots section has simple exhibits designed to be pushed, prodded, and poked. The section for older kids is more sophisticated with scientific experiments and tv studios. Métro Porte de la Villete</p> <p>Jardin du Luxembourg in the 6th. It would be counted as a travesty not to take your under 10 year old to the Jardin du Luxembourg, long a favorite with Parisien children. With its world famous merry-go-round, a pond for sail boats, a puppet theater, pony rides, chess players, children's playground, it has something for every kid (with comfortable chairs for weary parents thrown in!). The marionettes du luxembourg, the puppet theater, stages classic French puppet shows in French but should be easy to understand. There are numerous places for a snack.</p> <p>Parc des Buttes-Chaumont in the 19th. Buttes-Chaumont is great for those with children that like to run, climb, and explore. Built on the site of an abandoned quarry, the park is roughly bowl-shaped with a 30-meter-tall peak situated in the middle of a pond at the park's center. There are trails up the rock, caves, waterfalls, a suspension bridge, and a small stone gazebo on the top of the rock with a 360-degree view. There is also a puppet theater and a playground.</p> <p>Parc Zoologique in the 12th. Like all things in France, this zoo is different because of a 236 foot artificial mountain bang in its center. Take elevators to the top and enjoy the view or watch the mountain goats do their stuff on the sides. Lions, tigers, and everything designed to delight kids can be found in the zoo if the mountain doesn't do it for your kids.</p>
<p>Teens</p>	<p>Les Catacombes, a creepy underground ossuary, will have the teenagers transfixed. Wander through almost 2km of labyrinthine corridors lined with six million bones, transferred here from Parisian cemeteries over 200 years ago. In the past, it served as a quarry, where stone was extracted for building, and during World War II, the French Resistance used the tunnel system to outsmart the German soldiers. For the summer months of July and August, the Jardin des Tuileries hosts a funfair (www.feteforaine-jardindestuileries.com), a special amusement park that boasts all the classic amusements such as a shooting gallery, trampolines, and a century-old wooden carousel. The enormous Ferris wheel provides superb views over Paris.</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>Really? You need suggestions for romance in the Romantic Capital of the World? I think not! Be a teenager in love again in this magical city and enjoy the whole rose-tinted ambience. Just make sure that you are with the one you love!</p>

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Honeymoons & Weddings	As a honeymoon destination, Paris is difficult to beat. It was perhaps the original honeymoon destination from centuries ago and continues to be a magnet for honeymooners around the world.
Seniors	<p>You are never too old to enjoy Paris! In fact, Seniors often have a little more time to spend on the trip, so consider one or two of the nearby attractions as well:</p> <p>Opulent Versailles is usually at the top of visitors' list, but the magnificent châteaux of Fontainebleau and Vaux-le-Vicomte shouldn't be overlooked.</p> <p>The towns of Giverny and Auvers-sur-Oise are ideal destinations for art fans. Medieval church aficionados should make the pilgrimage south to the world- renowned Chartres Cathedral with its spectacular stained-glass windows.</p>

UNIQUES	<p>The Eiffel Tower</p> <p>This towering monument, inaugurated by Gustave Eiffel during the World Fair is a landmark site 324-metres-high. Its graceful metallic structure has dominated the Seine riverbanks and Champ-de-Mars for more than 120 years. At nightfall, it sparkles with lights to mark the change from one hour to the next – an unforgettable sight for those who love Paris. This feat of engineering has been the inspiration for numerous artists, poets, painters, writers and film makers. It is the most visited monument in the world. As well as taking the lift up the three floors, there are also temporary exhibitions to see and the private apartment that the engineer Eiffel had installed there.</p> <p>An unmissable monument and symbol of the capital, the Eiffel Tower weighs a total of 10,100 tons. Created in 2 years, 2 months and 5 days, it was erected for the World Exhibition in 1889 and celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2009.</p> <p>It can be ascended by stairs or lifts: shops on the 1st floor; on the 2nd floor, you will be tempted by a gourmet meal at the very famous Jules Verne restaurant, at 125 m above ground; lastly, on the 3rd floor, put your head in the clouds and enjoy an exceptional 360° view!</p> <p>Top floor by lift: €13.40</p>
Surprising	Paris is the most popular tourist destination in the world with 45 million tourists annually.
History	<p>Paris started life as the Celto-Roman settlement of Lutetia on the Île de la Cité, the island in the Seine currently occupied by the Cathédral de Notre Dame. It takes its present name from name of the dominant Gallo-Celtic tribe in the region, the Parisii. At least that's what the Romans called them, when they showed up in 52 BCE and established their city Lutetia on the left bank of the Seine, in what is now called the "Latin Quarter" in the 5th arrondissement.</p> <p>The Romans held out here for as long as anywhere else in the Western Empire, but by 508 CE they were gone, replaced by Clovis of the</p>

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Franks, who is considered by the French to have been their first king. Clovis' descendants, aka the Carolingians, held onto the expanded Lutetian state for nearly 500 years through Viking raids and other calamities, which finally resulted in a forced move by most of the population back to the islands which had been the centre of the original Celtic village. The Capetian Duke of Paris was voted to succeed the last of the Carolingians as King of France, ensuring the city a premier position in the medieval world. Over the next several centuries Paris expanded onto the right bank into what was and is still called le Marais (The Marsh). Quite a few buildings from this time can be seen in the 4th arrondissement.

The medieval period also witnessed the founding of the Sorbonne. As the "University of Paris", it became one of the most important centres for learning in Europe -- if not the whole world, for several hundred years. Most of the institutions that still constitute the University are found in the 5th, and 13th arrondissements.

In the late 18th century, there was a period of political and social upheaval in France and Europe, during which the French governmental structure, previously a monarchy with feudal privileges for the aristocracy and Catholic clergy, underwent radical change to forms based on Enlightenment principles of nationalism, citizenship, and inalienable rights. Notable events during and following the revolution were the storming of the Bastille 4th arrondissements, and the rise and fall of Napoleonic France. Out of the violent turmoil that was the French Revolution, sparked by the still known Passion des Français, emerged the enlightened modern day France.

The Paris of today was built long after the Capetian and later the Bourbon Kings of France made their mark on Paris with the Louvre and the Palais Royal. In the 19th century, Baron von Hausmann set about reconstructing the city, by adding the long straight avenues and replacing many of the then existing medieval houses, with grander and more uniform buildings.

The twentieth century was hard on Paris, but thankfully not as hard as it could have been. Hitler's order to burn the city was thankfully ignored by the German General von Choltitz who was quite possibly convinced by a Swedish diplomat that it would be better to surrender and be remembered as the saviour of Paris, than to be remembered as its destroyer. Following the war, the city recovered quickly at first, but slowed in the 1970s and 1980s when Paris began to experience some of the problems faced by big cities everywhere: pollution, housing shortages, and occasionally failed experiments in urban renewal. During this time however, Paris enjoyed considerable growth as a multi-cultural city, with new immigrants from all corners of the world, especially La Francophonie, including most of northern and western Africa as well as Vietnam and Laos. These immigrants brought their



	<p>foods and music, both of which are of prime interest for many travellers. Immigration and multi-culturalism continues in the 21st century with a marked increase in the arrival of people from Latin America, especially Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. In the late 1990s, it was hard to find good Mexican food in Paris, whereas today there are dozens of possibilities from lowly taquerias in the outer arrondissements to nice sit-down restaurants on the boulevards. Meanwhile Latin music from salsa to samba is all the rage (well, alongside Paris lounge electronica). The 21st century has also seen vast improvements in the general liveability of Paris, with the Mayor's office concentrating on reducing pollution and improving facilities for soft forms of transportation including a huge network of cycle paths, larger pedestrian districts and newer faster metro lines. Visitors who normally arrive car-less are the beneficiaries of these policies as much as the Parisians themselves are.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>Frommer's Guides to Paris and to France</p>
<p>1000 Places to see before you die</p>	<p>Paris is of course a major entry in 1,00 Places. It lists the top 10 sights:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arc de Triomphe 2. Sacre-Couer 3. Centre Georges Pompidou 4. Eiffel Tower 5. Hotel des Invalides and Napoleon's Tomb 6. The Louvre 7. Musee de Cluny 8. Musee d'Orsay 9. Musee Picasso 10. Notre Dame
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Paris is famed throughout the world for the beauty and variety of its monuments. Towers, churches, palaces, archways, bridges or fountains... an extraordinary collection of landmarks that transports us back in time. Of course, Paris wouldn't be Paris without the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame or Sacré Coeur. And each evening a special magic takes over the city when all these splendid constructions are illuminated! A sense of romance along the Pont Neuf, a shiver in the catacombs or an exotic mood at the Mosque: Paris is also a mix of atmospheres and cultures. From the must-see to the more unusual, all these monuments relate two thousand years of the capital's history. Most of the monuments in Paris stay open at the weekend and close on one weekday, as well as on some public holidays. They are usually open late one evening a week. Guided tours often need to be booked in advance and special reductions are available for children and groups.</p>
<p>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>Paris' most popular sport clubs are the association football club Paris Saint-Germain FC, the basketball team Paris-Levallois Basket, and the rugby union club Stade Français. The 80,000-seat Stade de France, built for the 1998 FIFA World Cup, is located in Saint-Denis. It is used</p>

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	<p>for football, rugby union and track and field athletics. It hosts annually French national rugby team's home matches of the Six Nations Championship, French national association football team for friendlies and major tournaments qualifiers, and several important matches of the Stade Français rugby team.</p> <p>Paris also hosted the 1900 and 1924 Olympic Games and was venue for the 1938 and 1998 FIFA World Cups and for the 2007 Rugby World Cup.</p>
Tennis	<p>There are 43 public tennis courts in Paris for recreational use. The courts in the Jardin de Luxembourg (6e; Métro: Saint-Placide) are particularly nice. There is also in the Marais at 5-7 rue Neuve-Saint-Pierre (4e; Métro: Saint Paul). The fee for an hour of play is 7.50€ in an open courts, and 14€ for covered courts.</p>
Swimming	<p>Paris offers some three dozen public swimming pools called piscines. They are found throughout the city, and a complete list of them is available at www.sport.paris.fr . Admission to any municipal pool is 3€;</p>
Hiking	<p>Paris is a city best seen on foot, so pack some comfortable walking shoes!</p> <p>La Promenade Plantée, a former railway line abandoned since 1969, has been transformed into a 4.5km pedestrian walkway that runs through the 12th arrondissement. It begins near Bastille at the Avenue Dausmenil and ends at the Bois de Vincennes. Have fun cutting through the city on this elevated green path, planted with all sorts of plants and trees.</p>
Cycling	<p>Although the starting point and the route of the famous Tour de France varies each year, the final stage always finishes in Paris, and, since 1975, the race has finished on the Champs-Élysées.</p> <p>Paris offers a bike sharing system called Vélib' with more than 20,000 public bicycles distributed at 1,450 parking stations, which can be rented for short and medium distances including one way trips.</p> <p>The 2014 Tour de France honors the memory of winners who fell during First War. From July 05, 2014 to July 27, 2014. The peleton did not ride during the Great War, and a sizeable proportion of its members joined the front lines and the inferno of trench warfare. Many of them lost their lives, including three previous winners of Le Tour: François Faber, Octave Lapize and Lucien Petit-Breton. Tour de France will pay homage their memory, and the memory of the millions of soldiers who fell. The route of the 2014 edition will visit many places where the war left its mark. After starting from Yorkshire, Le Tour will follow the front line and go through Flanders, Artois, Aisne, Champagne, Verdun and the Vosges mountains. Lille, Arras, Reims, Epernay, Nancy and Mulhouse will all host stages.</p>
Skating	<p>In the deep of winter (usually around Christmas to Feb), Paris officials set up two huge outdoor rinks, each of which is free (not counting the 4€</p>

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	for skate rental). The better of the two is in front of the Hotel de Ville in the 4th (Métro: Hôtel-de-Ville). It's open Monday to Thursday noon to 10pm, Friday noon to midnight, and Sunday 9am to 10pm. Smaller but still charming is at the Eiffel Tower in the 7th (Métro: Bir Hakeim). It's open every day from 10:30am to 10:30pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am to 8pm.
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CULTURE	
Arts	With something like 140 theatres and show venues, Paris is a real feast for the eye: major productions, historical reconstructions, musicals and much more, all for your pleasure and enjoyment. For an intake of culture, the ultimate in dramatic art is on offer in Paris: classical and contemporary plays, a new take on Greek tragedy, light comedies and vaudeville, one-man shows and stand-up, opera, dance or poetry: the choice is huge and varied. European and international productions are often staged in the original language with surtitles in French.
Music	Whatever your age or tastes, Paris has something for you, from electronic to classical, jazz to gospel, pop, rock, hip-hop, ragga, groove or even those typically Parisian popular songs, with music and lyrics that have travelled the world... Singing stars and leading musicians from all over the world inevitably come to Paris to perform at least once on its legendary stages, either in front of audiences of thousands... or in the charming intimacy of the smaller venues. In Paris the “Fête de la Musique” is celebrated annually, but all year round music is everywhere, in the metro, in the street, in the cafés and churches
Films	French cinema is second only to Hollywood in its richness and of course this is centred on Paris. For a film that is full of Parisian atmosphere I recommend the charming “Amelie” (see my Pinterest board: http://pinterest.com/TravelShow/movie-places/)
Museums	Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Monet, Rodin, Delacroix or Picasso: all these icons of the art world are represented in the museums of Paris. But art is also prehistory, antiquities from the four corners of the world, collections of miniatures and precious objects, or even the future of space exploration... The majority of Parisian museums are open at the weekend and closed on Monday or Tuesday as well as some public holidays. Most of them stay open late one evening each week. Guided tours often need to be booked in advance. Admission to the permanent collections of museums run by the Paris City Council (Ville de Paris) is free and admission to national museums is free on the first Sunday of each month. Certain museums also offer free admission other days of the week. The Louvre Today, the Louvre is one of the most important and most visited

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	<p>museums in the world. It is also the biggest museum in Paris, extending over 210,000 m². This former royal palace, residence of the Kings of France has a long history from the Capetian kings of the 12th century to the present day. During the French Revolution, in 1793, it was transformed into a national museum. In 1988, President François Mitterrand decided to make the Louvre the greatest museum in the world and commissioned the architect Ieoh Ming Pei. The latter built the 20-metre-high glass pyramid which forms the entrance to the museum. The museum presents 35,000 works, in eight different departments: Oriental Antiquities, Egyptian Antiquities, Greek, Etruscan and Roman antiquities, Islamic arts, Sculpture, Art Objects, Paintings, and Graphic Arts. Among the most famous works on show are The Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci, La Liberté Guidant le Peuple by Eugène Delacroix, The Venus de Milo, or the Code d'Hammurabi.</p> <p>Musée Rodin My personal favourite is the Musée Rodin, located in the Hotel Biron, at the crossroad of the Boulevard de Invalides and the rue de Varennes. This is where the works and collections by French sculptor Auguste Rodin are exhibited in a private mansion. This 18th century hotel particulier is surrounded by a peaceful and romantic three-hectare green setting with underbrushes, ponds, rose gardens, lawns and flower beds. This French garden full of plants, trees and shrubs is scattered with sculptures by Auguste Rodin.</p> <p>There is no longer an institution, a museum or a major exhibition that doesn't have a smartphone application. In Paris, the major museums have invested in technology with applications revealing their finest works, accompanied by explanations in several languages. Such museums include the Louvre with its application My Museum, which includes games to spice up a visit, the Musée Cluny or the Musée d'Orsay with its '100 masterpieces' application. Some temporary applications are linked to an exhibition like for example that at the Grand Palais or the Musée du Quai Branly. A special mention for the 'Paris Comic Street' app created by the Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine. It enables visitors to (re)discover the architecture of Paris through comic books and fun clues. Exponaute is an application with a GPS system that lists what's on in museums nearest to the point of research. This free application also includes a calendar of events, press reviews and photographs. My Museum (Le Louvre) - www.mymuseum.fr</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>It seems like there's almost always something happening in Paris, with the possible exceptions of the school holidays in August and February, when about half of Parisians are to be found not in Paris, but in the Alps or the South of France respectively. The busiest season is probably the autumn, from a week or so after la rentrée scolaire or "back to school" to</p>

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around Noël (Christmas) theatres, cinemas and concert halls book their fullest schedule of the year.

Even so, there are a couple of annual events in the winter, starting with a furniture and interior decorating trade fair called Maison & Object in January.

In February le nouvel an chinois (Chinese New Year) is celebrated in Paris as it is in every city with a significant Chinese population. There are parades in the 3rd and 4th arrondissements and especially in Chinatown in the 13th south of Place d'Italie. Also in February is the Six Nations Rugby Tournament which brings together France, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Italy.

The first of two Fashion weeks occurs in March: Spring Fashion Week, giving designers a platform to present women's prêt-à-porter, ready to wear, collections for the following winter.

The French Tennis Open in which the world's top players battle it out on a clay court runs during two weeks starting on the last Sunday in May.

By the time its done in June, a whole range of festivities start up.

Rendez-vous au Jardin is an open house for many Parisian gardens, giving you a chance to meet Parisian gardeners and see their creations.

The Fête de la Musique celebrates the summer solstice (21st June) with this city-wide free musical knees-up. Finally on the 26th of June is the

Gay Pride parade, featuring probably the most sincere participation by the mayor's office of any such parade on the globe.

The French national holiday Bastille Day on the 14th of July celebrates the storming of the infamous Bastille during the French Revolution.

Paris hosts several spectacular events that day of which the best known is the Bastille Parade which is held on the Champs-Élysées at 10:00

and broadcast on television to most of the rest of Europe. The entire street will be crowded with spectators so arrive early. The Bastille Day

Fireworks is an exceptional treat for travellers lucky enough to be in the city on Bastille Day. The Office du Tourisme et des Congress de Paris

recommends gathering in or around the champs du Mars, the gardens of the Eiffel Tower.

Also in July, Cinema en Plein Air is the annual outdoor cinema event that takes place at the Parc de la Villette, in the 9th on Europe's largest

inflatable screen. For most of July and August, parts of both banks of the Seine are converted from expressway into an artificial beach for

Paris Plage. Also in July the cycling race le Tour de France has a route that varies annually, however it always finishes on the last Sunday of

July under the Arc de Triomphe.

On the last full weekend in August, a world-class music festival Rock en Seine draws international rock and pop stars to barges on the Seine

near moored off of the 8th.

During mid-September DJs and (usually young) fans from across Europe converge on Paris for five or six days of dancing etc.



	<p>culminating in the Techno parade - a parade whose route traces roughly from Pl. de Bastille to the Sorbonne, and around the same time the festival Jazz à la Villette brings some of the biggest names in contemporary jazz from around the world.</p> <p>The Nuit Blanche transforms most of central Paris into a moonlit theme-park for an artsy all-nighter on the first Saturday of October, and Fashion Week returns shortly thereafter showing off Women's Prêt-à-Porter collections for the following summer; as we've noted winter collections are presented in March.</p> <p>The third Thursday in November marks the release of Le Beaujolais Nouveau and the beginning of the Christmas season. This evening, the Christmas lights are lit in a ceremony on the Champs-Élysées, often in the presence of hundreds (if not thousands) of people and many dignitaries, including the president of France.</p> <p>Paris Carnaval - February The annual Paris Carnaval procession goes by many names - including the Promenade du Boeuf Gras (Fat Cow Parade). Led by the Fat Cow herself, it revives an age-old tradition begun in 1274. Parisians come out in force to participate in this cheerful procession, also known as the Pantruche Carnaval and the Saint-Fargeau, which makes its way through the capital's streets, accompanied by trumpeters and other musicians, to the Hôtel de Ville</p>
<p>Events Outside Paris in 2014</p>	<p>NORMANDY</p> <p>70th anniversary of the Battle of Normandy From June 5 to August 21, 2014</p> <p>2014 will be marked by celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the Landing and the Battle of Normandy. Besides the official ceremonies held on June 6, many events throughout the year will highlight this important page in history. In Norman cities and villages, shows and animations will enliven the month of May, and from June 1 to 9, 2014, don't miss the D-Day Festival, organised each year to pay tribute to the Landing troops. The most spectacular event will no doubt be the Blaze of the Coast on June 5. Over some 80 kilometers, 24 sites will launch fireworks at the same time, in an impressive synchronised show.</p> <p>Alltech FEI 2014 World Equestrian Games in Normandy Coinciding with the Chinese-calendar year of the horse, 2014 in Normandy will be marked by the organization of the leading and most coveted equestrian competition in the world. Normandy will celebrate the horse with the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, held from August 23 to September 7, 2014, at the Caen Exhibition Center. More than 600 countries, 1,000 competitors and 500,000 spectators are</p>

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expected to attend. With an action-packed program of events, the competition promises to be a great celebration of horses, highlighting the beauty and history of horse culture and its influence over time. The competition's main theme: a journey through time, continents and imagination.

NORD-PAS DE CALAIS

The “Great War Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas-de-Calais

There remains today a rich yet little-known First World War heritage in the Nord-Pas de Calais region. Military cemeteries, memorials and wartime remains bear silent yet poignant witness to the events that caused this conflict. The “Great War Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas-de-Calais” offer visitors an opportunity to discover the sites, to understand these crucial times in European and world history and to pay homage to the men and women, some of whom came from Antipodean shores, who lay down their lives in the region.

4 Remembrance Trails in Nord-Pas de Calais

- : The Front
- : The war of movement and the first German occupation
- : Coastline, the support base of the Ally forces
- : Reconstruction of destroyed territories

www.remembrancetrails-northernfrance.com

PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Anjou Vélo Vintage

From June 28, 2014 to June 29, 2014

A warning to cycling lovers, retro fashion enthusiasts – do not miss the 4th edition of the Anjou Vélo Vintage in Saumur! This trendy and international rendez-vous gathered 2 650 cyclists on the roads and 20 000 visitors on the 100% vintage festival last year.

Truthful to the legend of the Anjou Vélo Vintage, this 4th edition promises numerous surprises. On Sunday pedal on one of the three entirely remapped routes between Loire, castles and vineyards - treat yourself to La Rétro, the new legendary race of 150 kms for road slaves - and experience again the spirit of the period races with the criterium in the historic heart of Saumur on Saturday.

Yesterday's bicycle and fine machinery experts, decoration and retro style specialists, make-up artists, barbers, hairdressers, stall-holders, swing dancers, singers, street performers or acrobats: during two days the Vintage Festival settles in Saumur. Around a hundred animations will be offered again in a unique, unconventional and friendly atmosphere.

<http://int.rendezvousenfrance.com/events/anjou-velo-vintage>



Nantes- les Machines de l'île

Les Machines de l'île are a totally unprecedented artistic project. Born from the imaginations of François Delarozière and Pierre Orefice, it is at the crossroads of Jules Verne's "invented worlds", the mechanical universe of Leonardo da Vinci, and of Nantes' industrial history, on the exceptional site of the former shipyards.

Some strange machines came to populate the Île de Nantes. After the Grand Éléphant, this is now the turn of a Manta Ray, a Sea Snake and of all kinds of incredible boats to take possession of the banks of the Loire River. These uncommon machines were born from the hands of the constructors of the company La Machine and came to life in between those of Les Machines de l'île, in the public eye. Their backwards and forwards between the building workshop and the Galerie give impetus to the movement at the heart of the former Dubigeon naves. They convey a mysterious reality to this island just like the time when vessels were launched there for all the trips of the world.

<http://www.lesmachines-nantes.fr/en/press/>

FRENCH RIVIERA.

Cinema - Grace of Monaco launches the Cannes Film Festival
The Grace of Monaco movie, filmed on the French Riviera, will open this year's Cannes Film Festival, held from May 14 to 25. Directed by Olivier Dahan, the movie stars Nicole Kidman as Grace Kelly.

Cinema-themed visits

- The city of Cannes, including the Palais des Festival, the Croisette Promenade, the Intercontinental Carlton Hotel and its Grace Kelly suite.
- A guided tour of Villefranche, star of the Seventh Art, highlights different film settings and allows visitors to experience how space can be transformed depending on period, style and directorial inspiration.
- With RENT A CLASSIC CAR, give yourself the star treatment in a vehicle made famous by cult films. It's the ideal way to discover the French Riviera's cinematic circuit!

www.cms.cotedazur-tourisme.com

PROVENCE- Marseille

The MuCEM, the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations, the first major national museum dedicated to the civilisations of the Mediterranean for the 21st century, offers two new exhibitions: "Carnivals and masquerades in Europe and the Mediterranean

In addition to hosting the Marseillaise Pétanque World Championship, celebrating an authentic local sport, sailing sports will also have pride of place with the Europa Cup, Les Voiles du Vieux Port and other regattas that remind us of Marseille's close ties with the sea.



ATTRACTIONS

Here are some tour suggestions using Paris as your base – these tours are available through a variety of operators and may be pre-booked before you leave.

Hop on / Hop off Tour

See Paris at your own pace with a one-day or two-day hop on / hop off pass. With four interconnected routes, this is the easiest way to get around Paris and see all the sights. Take time out to explore the Paris you've been looking for: historical, romantic, fashionable, fun and shopper friendly.

Parc Asterix Theme Park Tickets and Transport

Planning on taking the family to Parc Asterix Amusement Park outside Paris? Transportation and entrance fees are all taken care of, so all you need to do is have fun! Parc Asterix Amusement Park transfers from Paris are ideal if you prefer to travel independently and have fun at your own pace.

Paris to Bruges Day Trip

Include a day trip to the charming town of Bruges in Belgium's Flemish region on your Paris holiday. You'll visit one of the most beautifully preserved medieval towns in Europe. In summer you'll cruise down Bruges famous canals and see why the city is known as the "Little Venice of the North".

Seine River Cruise and Paris Illuminations Tour

Paris is especially enchanting when the lights go on in the evening, so take this short 2.5-hour tour to sample the city's magic first-hand. Start your evening with a lamp-lit cruise along the Seine River, then see more of Paris' brilliant city lights by taking a Paris illuminations tour around the capital. Your evening in Paris is then free for you to enjoy.

Seine River Cruise, Paris Illuminations and Dinner on the Champs-Elysees

Spend a magical night out on the town in Paris. Start your evening with a lamp-lit cruise along the Seine River, then see more of Paris' city lights by taking a Paris illuminations tour around the capital. Follow your tour of Paris by night with a late dinner on the fabled Avenue des Champs-Elysees, the world's most beautiful boulevard.

Eiffel Tower, Seine River Cruise and Paris Illuminations Night Tour

Paris is enchanting by night, so take this comprehensive four-hour tour to experience the magic first-hand and discover why Paris is known as

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the "City of Light". You'll visit the illuminated Eiffel Tower, take a one-hour evening cruise on the Seine River and tour Paris' floodlit monuments at night.

Loire Valley Castles Day Trip: Chambord, Cheverny and Chenonceau

Take a day tour from Paris to visit the three most famous chateaux of the Loire Valley: beautiful Chenonceau Castle, privately owned Chateau de Cheverny and, perhaps most magnificent of them all, the Chateau de Chambord. You'll witness the glamour and grandeur of French royalty and aristocracy, and gain insights into "castle life" in these Renaissance riverside castles.

Paris Seine River Dinner Cruise

Spend an evening gliding along the Seine River in Paris aboard a riverboat. You'll enjoy a three-course dinner and drinks on your cruise along the Seine, admiring the floodlit Paris monuments and buildings from your special vantage point on Paris' famous river.

Dinner and Show at the Paris Moulin Rouge with Transport

Experience the heady nightlife of Paris with a three-course dinner and show at the Paris Moulin Rouge, home of the French Cancan in bohemian Montmartre. Wine and dine while watching the Moulin Rouge's brilliant new show, "Feerie", the essence of Parisian cabaret. While at the Moulin Rouge you'll enjoy fine traditional French food such as foie gras, pate or fine seafood. Your tour includes transportation to Moulin Rouge by air-conditioned coach from a central Paris location.

Disneyland Resort Paris with Transport

Discover Disneyland Resort, a Magical Kingdom not so far away - somewhere between a place where you wish upon a star and dreams come true, and classic Disney heroes and heroines live once upon a time in fairytales that are, happily, never ending.

Giverny and Monet

Visit the beautiful home and garden that inspired the master of Impressionism, Claude Monet, on a half-day tour from Paris. The tour takes in Monet's restored home, garden and workshop at Giverny, where the famous Impressionist artist lived from 1883 to 1926. A particular highlight is the water-lily pond with its famous Japanese bridge which featured in many of Monet's masterpieces.

Versailles and Giverny Day Trip

See more than Paris and take a day trip to Monet's garden at Giverny and Louis XIV's palace of Versailles. The full-day tour combines the



	<p>two most popular excursions from Paris in one trip. You'll explore France's royal history at the incomparably grand Versailles palace and see the gardens that inspired so many of Claude Monet's masterpieces at Giverny.</p> <p>Paris Evening Tour on an Open-Top Bus Tour the world's most romantic city on an open-top coach ride through Paris at night. On a balmy summer's evening, this nonstop after-dinner tour of the "City of Light" is the best way to see Paris's night-time illuminations.</p> <p>Mont Saint Michel Day Trip Take a full-day tour from Paris to one of the most popular attractions in France, the fairytale island of Mont Saint Michel off the coast of Normandy. You'll visit the exquisite Benedictine abbey of Mont Saint Michel, one of the wonders of Europe. You'll also have free time to take a walk around the fascinating World Heritage listed island, which becomes separated from the mainland at high tide when the causeway is flooded by the sea.</p> <p>Normandy D-Day Battlefields and Beaches Day Trip Take a poignant, memorable day trip from Paris to visit the Normandy battlefields and landing beaches of World War II. You'll visit famous wartime sites and the American cemetery, spend time on the historic beaches and gain invaluable insights into the wartime experience of the Allied soldiers and the French citizens they liberated.</p> <p>Loire Valley Castles Small Group Day Trip from Paris by Minivan The day dedicated to "Renaissance" starts with a visit of Amboise Castle, where King Francis 1st welcomed Leonardo Da Vinci at the end of his life. After lunch (included), you leave for Chenonceau Castle and the day finishes with a visit of Chambord.</p>
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>The "Beach" of Paris -- Relaxing under a palm tree on a chaise lounge sounds more Caribbean than Parisian, but a nearly 5km stretch of sandy shore opens along the Seine each summer. With the Eiffel Tower looming in the background, visitors and locals can enjoy the plage (beach), splash in fountains, swing in hammocks, play volleyball, or enjoy a picnic. Just don't go into the polluted water of the murky Seine!</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>There are just two zoos within Paris: in the Jardin des Plantes and the Bois de Vincennes. To enjoy seeing animal species from the forests of Europe, the jungle, mountains, deserts and other lesser-known territories, all you need to do is head just a few miles outside of Paris. Move close to the big cats through a glass tunnel, get goosebumps at the sight of the reptiles in aquariums and vivariums, marvel at the flying feats of falcons and other birds of prey, enjoy the somersaults and</p>

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	<p>mischievousness of the monkeys, or daydream in the butterfly house... For those with a vehicle, the safari parks in the Paris region will provide some great memories.</p> <p>The Paris Zoological Park re-opens in 2014. Having been under renovation since 2011, the Paris Zoological Park, formerly called the Zoo of Vincennes opens 12th April 2014. The Paris Zoological Park closed in 2008. Three years later, the National Museum of Natural History, who owns the park, started a major renovation project. Redesigned from top to bottom, the new park will promote biodiversity and visitors will be able to see species in their original ecosystems. In the vast enclosures, the park reconstructs the 5 geographical zones - from Patagonia to Sahel, passing through Europe, the Amazon and Madagascar. Visitors will be able to see more than a thousand animals of 179 different species, many of which are endangered.</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>Two of Paris' oldest and famous gardens are the Tuileries Garden, created in the 16th century for a palace on the banks of the Seine near the Louvre, and the Left bank Luxembourg Garden, another former private garden belonging to a château built for Marie de' Medici in 1612. The Jardin des Plantes, created by Louis XIII's doctor Guy de La Brosse for the cultivation of medicinal plants, was Paris' first public garden. A few of Paris' other large gardens are Second Empire creations: The former suburban parks of Montsouris, Parc des Buttes Chaumont, and Parc Monceau (formerly known as the "folie de Chartres") are creations of Napoleon III's engineer Jean-Charles Alphand. Another project executed under the orders of Baron Haussmann was the re-sculpting of Paris' western Bois de Boulogne forest-parklands; the Bois de Vincennes, on the city's opposite eastern end, received a similar treatment in years following.</p>
<p>Gardens</p>	<p>Jardin des Tuileries Linking Place de la Concorde to the Louvre, this superb garden is the largest in Paris (25.5 hectares). Created in 1564 by Catherine de Médicis, re-landscaped by Le Nôtre in 1664, this outdoor 'museum' features – among others – sculptures by Maillol. A Unesco site since 1991, the Tuileries was integrated into the national Louvre estate in 2005.</p>
<p>Historic Buildings</p>	<p>Three of the most famous Parisian landmarks are the 12th-century cathedral Notre Dame de Paris on the Île de la Cité, the Napoleonic Arc de Triomphe and the 19th-century Eiffel Tower. The Eiffel Tower was a "temporary" construction by Gustave Eiffel for the 1889 Universal Exposition, but the tower was never dismantled and is now an enduring symbol of Paris. The Axe historique is a line of monuments, buildings, and thoroughfares that run in a roughly straight line from the city-centre westwards. The line of monuments begins with the Louvre and continues through</p>

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	<p>the Tuileries Gardens, the Champs-Élysées, and the Arc de Triomphe, centred in the Place de l'Étoile circus. From the 1960s, the line was prolonged even farther west to the La Défense business district dominated by a square-shaped triumphal Grande Arche of its own; this district hosts most of the tallest skyscrapers in the Paris urban area. The Invalides museum is the burial place for many great French soldiers, including Napoleon; and the Panthéon church is where many of France's illustrious men and women are buried.</p> <p>The former Conciergerie prison held some prominent Ancien Régime members before their deaths during the French Revolution. Another symbol of the Revolution are the two Statues of Liberty located on the Île aux Cygnes on the Seine and in the Luxembourg Garden. A larger version of the statues was sent as a gift from France to America in 1886 and now stands in New York City's harbour.</p> <p>The Palais Garnier, built in the later Second Empire period, houses the Paris Opéra and the Paris Opera Ballet, while the former palace of the Louvre now houses one of the most renowned museums in the world. The Sorbonne is the most famous part of the University of Paris and is based in the centre of the Latin Quarter. Apart from Notre Dame de Paris, there are several other ecclesiastical masterpieces, including the Gothic 13th-century Sainte-Chapelle palace chapel and the Église de la Madeleine.</p>
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<p>OTHER ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Shopping</p>	<p>Paris, the fashion capital, gives everyone the opportunity to treat themselves, with prices for everyone in all shopping districts. From famous avenues, to big department stores and little streets, shopping comes in all forms: decor, luxury, high-tech, gourmet, and more. Parisian department stores are architectural jewels which have become essential places to visit in the same way as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame or the Louvre Museum. Genuine temples of shopping, you will find today's most fashionable brands there to suit all budgets! Fashion and beauty items, decorative objects and gastronomic pleasures are all souvenirs that you can bring back in your case. Here are the two most famous names:</p> <p>PRINTEMPS The most modern selection of fashion, luxury and beauty goods - Printemps showcases the most sought-after fashion, luxury and beauty brands on innovative concept floors in 3 specialist stores covering 43, 500 m² that are unique in Paris and Europe.</p> <p>GALERIES LAFAYETTE In the heart of the Opera district, the capital of fashion's department store, houses the greatest names in fashion, beauty, accessories and</p>
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	<p>tableware in its two shops. The biggest perfumery in the world is situated under its Neo-Byzantine dome. As for fashion, all of the designers and couturiers have taken up residence there</p>
<p>Markets</p>	<p>The Paris markets go back to the 5th century. Paris was called Lutetia and its first market, "Palu", was in the Ile de la Cité district. The market-place provided an opportunity to exchange both merchandise and ideas. Palu eventually disappeared, but the markets continued to blossom. By 1860, there were 51. With the re-opening of the Enfants Rouges market, the oldest covered market in Paris, and with the creation of new markets (with the development of consumer trends), the capital can today boast more than 90 markets of all shapes, sizes and specialities.</p> <p>Choose between 65 open-air markets or 13 covered markets. They sell everything, but above all you will find high quality fresh products, and a level of professionalism that is often handed down from father to son. Coster-mongers, butchers, delicatessen dealers, fishmongers, poulterers, dairywomen and florists all offer the freshest products available. And between the 1st and the 20th, there will be a market in every district of Paris, bringing a flurry of life to the capital and its inhabitants.</p> <p>Good to know: the covered markets are permanently open, whereas the open-air markets are only on two or three mornings a week (generally from 7am to 2.30pm). For late risers, there are also after-noon markets: the Saint-Honoré (1st district), Bourse (2nd), Baudoyer (4th) and Bercy (12th) markets are on Wednesdays and the Anvers (9th) market is on Fridays.</p> <p>For 100 % natural products, there are 3 organic markets: Raspail (6th, Sundays from 9am-2pm), Batignolles (8th, Saturdays from 9am-2pm) and Brancusi (14th, Saturdays from 9am-2pm).</p> <p>In order to deck out your balcony or garden with flowers, the flower markets are a must: the Place de la Madeleine (8th, from Monday to Saturday, from 8am-7.30pm), the Place des Ternes (17th, every day except Monday, from 8am-7.30pm) and the "Marché de la Cité, in the Place Louis Lépine and on the banks of the Seine nearby (4th, every day except Monday, from 8am-7.30pm, together with the bird market on Sundays from 8am to 7pm).</p> <p>For fans of fashion there is the clothes market: Carreau du Temple (3rd, from Tuesday to Saturday from 9am-7pm and on Sundays from 9am-12pm). And stamp-lovers will want to be at the bottom of the Champs-Élysées (8th) on Thursdays, Saturdays and all day on Sundays.</p> <p>Paris also has markets dedicated to creativity, which are in fact outdoor galleries, where art lovers can meet artists, painters, sculptors, engravers and photographers, and can purchase their favourite works at "workshop prices: the Bastille (11th, Saturdays from 9am-7.30pm)</p>

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	<p>and Edgar Quinet markets (14th, Sundays from 9am-7.30pm). If you like bargain hunting in a friendly and cosmopolitan atmosphere, head for the Aligre Market where old clothes, fruits, vegetables and second-hand goods are all mixed up together (12th, every day except Mondays, from 7.30am-1.30pm). Not forgetting, of course, the Puces” (the Paris flea-markets) where you can find every imaginable type of article: from old collectors papers to clothing, second-hand goods and antiques from all eras. Professionals tend come early to find rare bargains, whilst the general public often spend entire days here: the Vanves (14th, Saturdays and Sundays from 7am-7.30pm), Clignancourt (18th, from Saturday to Monday from 7am-7.30pm) and Montreuil Puces” (20th, from Saturday to Monday from 7am-7.30pm).</p>
<p>Nightlife</p>	<p>At night, Paris takes on another look: a museum visit takes on an air of mystery; shopping is quiet and relaxed, a rollerblading outing exhilarating ... There is something for everyone in rock, jazz, pop or disco bars and clubs. Not forgetting events like Nuit Blanche and Museums Night.</p> <p>Ballet and opera at the glittering Opéra Garnier, Molière classics at the Comédie Française, and cancan at the infamous Moulin Rouge --Paris nightlife reaches from sublime to borderline sleazy. A young, trendy crowd parties around the Bastille, gay Marais, and the effortlessly hip bars in Oberkampf, where DJs play at industrial-chic Nouveau Casino. Dress to the nines to slip past picky doormen in clubs around Champs-Élysées like celebrity-magnet Le Baron, and rock the Seine dancing to techno on moored party boat Batofar.</p>
<p>CUISINE</p>	<p>Paris is renowned worldwide as a capital of gastronomy: a winning combination of talent, expertise and high-quality French produce. To sample the delights of traditional French cuisine, the choice of restaurants and cafés is simply huge, each with its own particular atmosphere and style. Parisian restaurants, ambassadors of good taste, offer up an endless range of flavours: tasty country dishes, Mediterranean specialities, recipes from all over the world, a galaxy of cold meats and cheeses, creative desserts... Restaurants, bars, brasseries, tea rooms, ice cream parlours, open-air cafés or pubs invite gourmets from all over the world to a real culinary feast.</p>
<p>Food</p>	<p>Paris is arguably the world capital of gastronomy. Starred and reputed restaurants, local bistros, regional cuisine, fast-food, world flavours, the tasting of exceptional produce ... Quality and variety confirm the capital's reputation.</p>
<p>Wine</p>	<p>What can I possibly say about French wine that hasn't been said a million times already? It is one of the many joys of a trip to Paris, as here in the centre of French culture, you have the choice of every wine region in France.</p> <p>Taking an Aperitif: The apéro (predinner drink) is a common ritual in</p>

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	Paris, where Parisian meet in their favorite local bars and bistros for a chat and a drink, usually around 7pm. The aperitif is meant to open the appetite, and classic examples include white wine, champagne, pastis, or vermouth.
Restaurants	<p>For a memorable splurge, book one of the city's opulent three-star palace restaurants, like Le Plaza Athenée or L'Astrance, or book ahead for a table at one of the trendy bistronomies that combine gastronomy with bistro pricing -- Frenchie, Le Chateaubriand, Rino, and Spring are all hot right now.</p> <p>Here's a specific suggestion from our friends at Frommer's:</p> <p>Le Grand Véfour Tucked inside the Palais Royal and boasting one of the most beautiful restaurant interiors in Paris, Le Grand Véfour remains a history-infused citadel of classic French cuisine. This restaurant has been around since the reign of Louis XV. Napoleon, Danton, Hugo, Colette, and Cocteau dined here -- as the brass plaques on the tables testify -- and it's still a gastronomic experience. Guy Martin, chef for the past decade, continues to serve the restaurant's signature dishes like Prince Ranier III pigeon and truffled oxtail parmentier alongside new dishes that feature more contemporary flavors like yuzu and tonka bean. Other specialties are noisettes of lamb with star anise, Breton lobster with fennel, and cabbage sorbet in dark-chocolate sauce. The desserts are often grand, such as the gourmandises au chocolat (medley of chocolate), served with chocolate sorbet'</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	http://ca-en.franceguide.com/brochures/home.html?NodeID=409
Websites	www.rendezvousenfrance.com for all your French trip planning needs.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	I have been to France and to Paris many times – always memorable! Here is one of my 'magic moments' there....
Magic Moment	Mont Saint-Michel appears on the otherwise flat horizon as we approach the Atlantic coast. It grows in stature as the surrounding lands fall away to reveal a fortified abbey and town perched up to 300 feet above the tides, one kilometer off the coast. It looks more fairy-tale castle than real. As we cross the connecting causeway we see the reflection of the feudal society that constructed it. On top God, the abbey and monastery, below this the great halls, then stores and housing, and at the bottom, outside the walls, fishermen and farmers' housing. We share but a moment of its one and a half thousand years of history, but we are happy to have experienced this amazing place...

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