

Meta title: Plan your next holiday to Paris

Meta description: Plan the trip of a lifetime to Paris and experience Paris like a Parisian. Read this article for more info.

See Paris The Way Parisians Do

There's a reason why Paris is called the City of Lights. Just one look at the twinkling lights that illuminate the Eiffel Tower every evening or the welcoming lights from cosy shops during the icy winter months will have you agreeing with those who've dubbed Paris *La Ville Lumière*.

Paris boasts many well-known tourist sites – the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre... the list is endless – and every tour which promises travellers the 'Paris experience' has these staples on the itinerary. However, if you REALLY want to see the true Paris you're going to need to visit the out-of-the-way places that only the Parisians love. Like these ones.

The Custodian Of The City

If you ever visit Paris, the first stop on your journey must be the Montmartre. This region of the city is at the very top and, with the Sacré Coeur as the main feature, it keeps silent watch over the city. However, the real gem of the Montmartre is the bustling life around it.

Whereas other regions of Paris have decent-sized roads, in the Montmartre the roads are barely wide enough to fit a car. The streets are thronged with people who are either on their way to visit the Sacré Coeur or are stopping at the countless discount clothing shops where they scrounge in large bins for a gorgeous garment.

As you walk up the streets, which are all on an incline, you'll come across the artists' square that is lined with coffee shops. Here, artists congregate and they either sell their finished paintings or take commissions from passers-by. The favourite are usually portraits.

Many areas of Paris are just tourist traps and every single shop sells memorabilia – from T-shirts emblazoned with the Eiffel Tower to keyrings that bear the French flag. Yes, Montmartre does have the odd tourist shop here and there but this is where Parisians congregate and come there because they love being here.

The Best Ice Cream In The World

If you are an ice cream-lover, you have not lived until you've had ice cream from Berthillion. Started in 1954 by Raymond Berthillion, this little piece of ice cream heaven is situated on Île Saint Louis which is the smaller of the two islands in the Seine.

Open from Wednesday to Saturday, at any given time you'll find there's a queue snaking out of their door and down the road. And it's not made up of tourists – it's the locals who clamour to sample a taste of Berthillion heaven.

Once you get your ice cream – and we really recommend the chocolate sorbet! – saunter down to one of the quays along the Seine. Grab a seat on a bench or, if you can't find one, sit on the side of the river with your feet dangling over the edge and watch the river flow by, while contemplating life.

Paris is so much more than the buildings, streets and cars. There is a soul to the city, something which many flock to come and experience. In the process they discover themselves and fall in love – not just with their partners but with *l'esprit de Paris*.

