



# **A PARIS GUIDE**

## **EAT & DRINK**

### **CAFE CONSTANT**

This restaurant is a MUST. It's just around the corner from the Eiffel Tower and is my favorite restaurant in Paris. The owner, Christian Constant, is a Michelin rated chef who opened this place a few blocks down from his fancier restaurant. They don't take reservations and you may have to wait a few minutes for a table, but it is totally worth it. Everything is delicious. The first time I went here, I ordered "des oeufs de notre enfance" which basically means "eggs of our childhood" and I was absolutely delighted that this was a stunning presentation of what we know as deviled eggs with the most delicious French mayonnaise (if you've never had French mayonnaise, you haven't lived!). My grandmother taught me at a young age how to make deviled eggs and they have become my specialty, so I was positively thrilled to see such a simple dish presented in such a creative way. My only regret was that this was before Blackberry's with international capabilities had cameras (yes, I said it), so the only image of this beauty is in my mind.

## **ANGELINA**

For a totally decadent experience, the African hot chocolate at Angelina's tea room cannot be missed. It is so thick that they serve it with a big glass of water (and a bowl of whipped cream).

## **HOTEL LE MEURICE**

If you're looking to do something fancy one night or looking to celebrate, I recommend having a cocktail at the Hotel Le Meurice. As one of the most beautiful hotels in Paris, it is a part of the exclusive "Palace" hotels which is a designation for those few hotels that are higher than five stars in the city. It was one of the German headquarters during WWII and has a rich history. Take a seat at the intimate Bar 228 and soak it all in.

## **PLACE DU MARCHÉ SAINT-HONORE**

This neighborhood is just on the other side of the Louvre and is such a fun hang out spot for cocktails and dinner. The restaurant lined courtyard fills up with people on beautiful days and allows you your pick for the evening. I recommend Nomads or L'Absinthe.

## **FLOTTES**

Located on the rue Cambon not far from Marché Saint-Honoré, this very traditional French brasserie is just my cup of tea with an intimate setting. The food is great and last time I was there the waiter spoke very broken English which is a good sign of it not being too touristy. It has everything you could want as a good brasserie does.

## **BERTHILLON ICE CREAM**

There are many restaurants that serve up this local treat, but the actual Berthillon storefront is located on the Ile St. Louis just across the bridge from Notre Dame. They serve up perfect little scoops of ice cream and sorbets in flavors that you won't find in your freezer aisle. Go for the double cone!

## **SEE & DO**

### **MUSEE D'ORSAY**

Personally, I think the Louvre is really overwhelming and can be insanely crowded. To me, Musée d'Orsay is perfect. Located in a renovated old train station, the building alone is a sight to take in. It houses most of the famous impressionist works.

### **MUSEE MARMOTTAN MONET**

This is my favorite museum in Paris and not just because it was steps from my old apartment. It's located in an old house with an entire floor dedicated to Monet's waterlilies. The paintings are enormous, allowing you to clearly see his digression into blindness.

### **SAINTE-CHAPELLE**

A Gothic church in the heart of the city which once was used by the Kings of France makes Sainte-Chapelle one to not miss among a sea of beautiful churches. Standing inside on a beautiful day (try to plan accordingly) and admiring the stained glass, it's hard to believe it was built in the mid-1200s.

## **SAINT-ETIENNE-DU-MONT**

Yes, I'm recommending another church because it is my favorite in all of Paris and maybe even the world. Tucked behind the Pantheon, close to Luxembourg Gardens and just up the street from the Latin Quarter, most tourists don't know of its existence though it's near many of the major tourist attractions. Simply put, it is amazing. The staircases are carved from one single stone.

## **LE MARAIS**

As the gay and Jewish quarter of the city, it is one of the most interesting neighborhoods with a big personality. Quaint streets lead to beautiful little parks and shops. The Middle Eastern food is abundant with the most famous spot being L'As du Fallafel. It's not fancy, but it's worth it. The Centre Pompidou, the modern art museum, is also located in this area. If you're unsure of modern art, it's worth going once at least to check out the quirky building. If you're like me, once is enough. If you don't qualify leggings hanging from a ceiling with television screens blaring things at you as art then walk down the street to the Picasso museum.

## **PLACE TROCADERO**

There is a large esplanade that overlooks the tower and the Seine. You'll get that picture perfect shot like the one I took at the top of this article.

## **PICNIC AT CHAMPS DE MARS**

If the weather is good on the weekends, pack a picnic dinner (wine included) and head down to the Champ de Mars park in front of the Eiffel

Tower. Join others doing the same and when the Eiffel sparkles every hour for 10 minutes, cheer loudly alongside everyone else as if you're watching a fireworks show. You'll feel like a local.

## **VELIB**

Paris has an amazing bike rental system called Vélib which was in place before any of the cities in the US had a bike share program. You buy a card for about 8€ for the week and you can pick up a bike at any bike rack and ride all over the city and drop it off at another rack. Many of the streets in the city have a bike lane. It's a great way to explore the city!

## **ST. GERMAIN**

This area is filled with great shopping and restaurants, but stay away from those that display their menu outside in five different languages as those are a tourist trap. Two of the most famous cafés in all of Paris are located here: Les Deux Magots and Café de Flore. Take a seat in either of these and feel like you're sitting back in Hemingway's Paris. One of my favorite things to do in this area is to just wander around. My French class was located nearby, so I used to get off the Métro one stop early before class and purposely get lost. I would take every twist and bend in the road and every little side street. This lead me to discovering some cool little jewelry shops and churches.

## **FOUR SEASONS GEORGE V**

While the George V is definitely luxury, it's a more approachable luxury than Le Meurice if you're not a paying guest. Dine in the courtyard at Le Cinq or simply go just to view Jeff Leatham's incredible floral displays. The hotel has a monthly budget of something like 80,000€ for flowers alone. The hotel particularly comes to life during the Christmas holiday season. Take a stroll up the street when you're done admiring the

flowers to the Louis Vuitton flagship store. Floor upon floor of accessories that make for great window shopping even if you're not in the market for a new purse. If you are, however, keep in mind that the prices are currently much cheaper than what you will find here in the States. If you purchase something, they will monogram the item for free and take you to the top floor to give it to the craftsman. Picking out the font and color is fun and definitely a nice touch.

## **LADUREE**

I used to hate macarons. Ok, hate may be a strong word, but I just didn't understand the appeal of them. Then the Hotel Hermitage in Monaco sent a box of Ladurée to my room and they caught my attention. I visited the shop as soon as I got to Paris and haven't looked back. The box and packaging alone makes it a worthwhile visit as they make beautiful gifts.

Once your feet are not doubt aching after the above list, my biggest recommendation is to just pause and take it all in. The sights, the sounds, the smells. All of them are uniquely Paris. The best way to do this is to sit at a café with a glass of wine or a cappuccino on any street. Remember all that “culture” you were adverse to? By sitting at that café and people watching, you are unknowingly experiencing one of the best things about French culture. C'est la vie!

