

The Markley Guide to Paris

(Note – This guide began in 1993 as advice to one of Meril's Mexican clients who was headed to Amsterdam on business and wanted to spend a weekend in Paris but had never been there before and spoke no French. Since then, and with the advent of the Internet, this Guide has evolved to focus less on detailed information about specific destinations and more on our favorite destinations, indulgences and the practical aspects of ensuring a good time in Paris. See back pages for listings of resources mentioned in the Guide.)

To foreigners visiting Paris-----

You will have so much to experience and so little time -- no matter how much of your itinerary you have allotted to Paris. Based on the premise that we enjoy international travel more when we feel less like a foreigner, we have included some reflections on Paris, Parisians and France before getting down to what to do, where to stay, etc.

If you keep a couple of generalizations in mind, hassles should be kept to a minimum and your visit should be wonderful:

- Nothing you hear about the French being rude is true, although occasionally they get fed up with tourists, even French ones, and who can blame them? After all, Paris is the #1 tourist destination in the world. Even in the off-season, there are huge numbers of visitors who all seem to be clustered around the *Louvre*.
- Any attempt you can make to communicate in French will be greatly appreciated and whole-heartedly encouraged. Even if your grammar ain't perfect, give it a try or at least learn to say "I'm sorry, but I don't speak French" -- "Je suis désolé, mais je ne parle pas français." [*Jeh suey day-zole-lay, may jeh neh parl pah frahn-say.*]
- If you don't know the word for something, just point and say, "Ce truc-là" [*Suh trook-lah*]. It's a catch-all term used by the French for "that thing there" and will prove useful in all instances.
- French people have a terrific sense of humor but may seem serious and formal until you've found something to laugh about together or have gotten to know each other a bit.
- French people are among the most scrupulously honest and fair people on the planet, who will go out of their way to help you out.
- Despite the constant shift in the political winds and attitudes about Americans, deep down the French like us and embrace our culture on many levels. This is in spite of a constant diet of anti-American sentiment served up by France's notoriously left-leaning intelligentsia.
- Virtually EVERYTHING will be closed on Sunday when French people enjoy doing things with their families or just enjoying not having to work. All that is open are the museums and some mediocre, touristy restaurants. Don't expect to do any shopping on Sundays except at train stations.
- Wear comfortable shoes for lots and lots of walking, including stairs. You'll be in a much better mood and more receptive to the magic of Paris if your feet don't hurt. For maximum comfort on cobblestones and other uneven surfaces, wear Vibram-soled shoes and leave the delicate Italian pumps for dinner at the Eiffel Tower where you can take the elevator to the top (for more information on what to take to France, consult our packing guide).

Before you leave for Paris, buy a copy of the Knopf Guide to Paris. Not to be confused with the less definitive Knopf "City Guide" series, the book is currently out of print but still available through Amazon.com It is marvelously illustrated, full of historical material and has the best practical information

we've found anywhere, even at the risk of being a bit out-of-date. Best of all, it's compact enough to fit in a jacket pocket or handbag while you're out enjoying the city.

There are innumerable websites dedicated to Paris but for reliable, up-to-date information, we recommend the *Maison de la France*, which is the official government tourism website (<http://www.franceguide.com>). On the site you can request a copy of their France Guide in English. It is an excellent resource for planning your trip to Paris as well as discovering other parts of the country. Many other websites, including the ones listed at the end of this Guide, contain versions in English.

Even if your French is limited, a wealth of information is available from the French Yellow Pages (<http://www.pagesjaunes.fr>). It has a White Pages option (*pages blanches*) with which it is possible to locate many things in Paris – just type in the name (*nom*) of the business and “Paris” where it says “localité.” When the address is retrieved, click on “plan/itineraire” for a street map and move your mouse to wherever you see an “M” on the map to locate the nearest *Métro* stop. Just print the map, and be on your way! Some listings also include the option to jump to the relevant website.

Getting around. If you arrive in Paris from the U.S., you will likely land at the airport known as Roissy Charles de Gaulle. It is incredibly busy and constantly under construction but in some areas it still retains that spacey, futuristic feel of the 1960s (original “Star Trek”) when air travel was reserved for the privileged few and Courrèges was the designer of choice.

From the airport, it is possible to take the *Roissybus* or Air France bus service to various points in the city (in French a tourist or private transport bus is called a “car” and a car is a “voiture”). As an alternative, the regional express train (RER) runs to central Paris, but it is difficult to negotiate with lots of baggage and we know of people who have had laptops and briefcases stolen on it. Our advice is to take a taxi, particularly if you're tired from an overnight flight and have a limited command of French.

The best way to get around Paris is on foot, since you will see more of the city and get that all important sense of what it is like to be French. But for longer distances, we adore the *Métro*. Maps are available in tourist guidebooks and from the ticket sellers at the *Métro* stations. The RATP/SNCF information center under the *Louvre* has lots of information including a brochure called *Paris Visite* that highlights places to visit, and includes a large-print map of the transport grid, and an index of *Métro* stations. If you want a slightly larger version of the color maps, by district, look in the middle section of the Paris Yellow Pages or *Pages Jaunes* at your hotel.

To navigate Paris like a French person, buy the pocket-size map book *Paris Classique par Arrondissement* and learn the districts or *arrondissements*. The book contains an exhaustive, alphabetical listing of streets and their relevant *Métro* stops along with *Métro*, bus and train maps and detailed listing of bus routes. Most of what you'll want to see is in the 1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 15th districts. Business cards and advertisements typically include the nearest *Métro* stop.

For public transport, there are various discount tickets available, some of which are tied into rail passes you must purchase in the U.S. and include a fee for free or discounted admission to certain museums. We recommend the greater freedom and flexibility afforded by the *Carte Orange* which can be bought at any *Métro* station and gives you a week of unlimited travel based on zones. Virtually all you will want to do and see is found in Zones 1-2, the cheapest ticket (good on the bus and certain regional trains as well as the *Métro*). The price of the weekly *Carte Orange* is approximately \$20 -- and compare this with the price of a single ticket (\$1.60) or a batch of ten tickets sold as a *carnet* (\$12). You will need a small photo of the kind you can get instantly for approximately \$4 at the machines you'll find in the major *Métro* stations. The picture can be black and white or color and should be 2.5cm by 3.0cm or about 1 3/4 inches by 2 1/4. Better yet, bring a picture with you from home and save the hassle.

When you go through the turnstile for the *Métro*, your ticket (or your *Carte Orange*) will come back up. Be sure and keep it with you since there are occasionally inspectors on the trains checking tickets and you'll receive an instant fine if you can't produce them.

As you travel the *Métro*, you'll need to keep track of the end station of the line in order to determine the direction in which to travel. For example, if you're at the *Tuileries* and you want to go to the *Bastille* station, you'll need to take the No. 1 line in the direction of *Chateau de Vincennes*. *Sortie* means "exit" and *correspondance* indicates a transfer to another line. When changing, know both the number or color of the line you want and the end station for the direction in which to travel. You'll find signs in the tunnels indicating the names of all the stations and each car displays a map of the entire line in numerous places. As you exit a station, consult the *plan du quartier* or map of the area to find out where you will come up at street level and how to get to your destination. Bear in mind that address numbers which are consecutive are not necessarily across the street from one another. Be sure to note on the *plan* whether you will come up on the odd-numbered (*impairs*) or even-numbered (*pairs*) side of the street. Instead of the *Métro*, the bus is also an option if you want to see what's above ground, but they are slower and make numerous stops.

Traveling the *Métro* will likely give you more insights, quickly, into Paris and Parisians than any other experience. People tend to be serious and do not make eye contact, except with your shoes if they are of the typical American athletic variety. Beggars abound along with street musicians (who must audition and receive a license to entertain) and orators who recite their life story between stops before passing the hat. If you don't wish to contribute, simply ignore them and they'll move on in hopes of finding a more generous traveler. Panhandlers seem to be less aggressive in Paris than in the U.S. Pickpockets travel the lines most used by tourists (especially the #1 line including the *Louvre*) but violent crime is far below that of U.S. subway systems.

Although generally clean and a non-smoking zone, the *Métro* has an odor and charm all its own, not to mention lots of stairs and almost no elevators. From French friends we heard the story of a wildly successful Parisian businessman who took his fortune and went off to live out his days in a mansion on Mauritius, only to find unbearable his yearning for the familiar smell of the *Métro*!

For sheer convenience, speed and reliability, the *Métro* just can't be beat unless there is a strike. Unlike labor actions in the U.S., Parisian transport strikes tend to be politically motivated, announced in advance and selective (e.g., impacting several lines rather than the entire system) so that people can make other arrangements while still getting the point of the strike. (When we lived in Paris, the strikers used to rally in *Place St. Augustin* – just below my office window -- and play Edith Piaf recordings over a loudspeaker, making it difficult for us to conduct business.) It is likely that there will be some sort of labor action during even the briefest visit to Paris. Whether it's the *Métro*, the taxi drivers, the air traffic controllers, the airline catering companies, the pilots, the flight attendants or the museum guards – just do what the French do and shrug it off with the certainty that it will be short-lived.

Taxis are relatively cheap compared to some U.S. cities and are a great alternative for tired travelers. In addition to the fare on the meter, there will be a charge per piece of luggage. Always tip the driver at least 15%. Don't expect to hail a cab on the street -- go to the nearest taxi stand and take one of the waiting cabs. You can also phone a taxi company to pick you up at your location (you'll pay for the distance between the cab stand taking your call and where you are, even before your trip starts).

Where to start? If this is your first visit to Paris, we recommend you begin with one of the bus tours (with translation into multiple languages) offered by companies such as Cityrama whose brochures are prominently displayed in hotels. In a couple of hours you will get a complete flavor for the city and for what you might want to visit on your own. Alternatively, on Sunday you might want to take one of their excursions to *Giverny* (Monet's home and gardens), *Chantilly* (a medieval chateau whose name is the French term for "whipped cream"), *Versailles* (Louis XIV's palace), *Fontainebleau* (a royal hunting lodge in

Renaissance times and later Napoleon's residence), or *Chartres* (perhaps the most beautiful of France's numerous gothic cathedrals and a major destination for pilgrims in the Middle Ages).

You should also consider one of the boat tours on the Seine (another good thing to do on Sunday). The boats are enclosed in glass, so you won't freeze to death in winter. We suggest *Bateaux Mouches* since they run most frequently (every 30 minutes) and include commentaries in French, Spanish, Italian, German and Japanese. They leave from the Right Bank side of the *Pont de L'Alma*. It's the most glorious way to see *Notre Dame de Paris* and the *Louvre* complex, as well as the charming island, *Ile St. Louis*, and the beautiful Seine bridges.

What to visit? This Guide would be even longer if we listed all the places we would suggest visiting in Paris, so we have limited ourselves to some favorite places and tips for making the tourist experience less of a hassle. We suggest visiting museums as early as possible in the morning on weekdays (be sure to check which days they're closed) before the crowds arrive. Plan to do other things in the same area after the museum, for example, linking a visit to the *Cluny* (the Museum of the Middle Ages) with a leisurely walk across the Seine to the *Ste Chapelle* (more about these, below).

A stroll down the *Champs Elysées* from the *Arc de Triomphe* to the *Place de la Concorde* is perhaps the most celebrated walk in Paris. Unfortunately, the stores and cafés have become very touristy but you should stop for an expensive cup of coffee at *Fouquet's*, the most famous café on the street. After all, there's only one *Champs Elysées* in the world and you don't know when you'll be coming back.

We absolutely recommend you go up in the Eiffel Tower, since it's the only place in the city from which you can't see the tower! Actually, it's quite breathtaking. Even better, we suggest you eat there (see the *Jules Verne*, below). Or you can view the tower best from across the Seine at the *Place du Trocadéro* and have your picture taken with the tower in the background.

For churches, *Notre Dame de Paris* is incomparable, although a bit dark on the inside if it's a cloudy day. As one of the great works of human civilization you should not miss it, along with a stroll around the outside. You can go up in the tower for a beautiful view of the city. If you are lucky, you will get to hear the organ or a choir rehearsing for services.

For late gothic architecture at its most refined and on a much smaller scale, visit the *Ste. Chapelle*, the royal chapel in the Ministry of Justice complex on the *Ile de la Cité*. But wait for a sunny afternoon so you can experience the full majesty of the stained glass. It's worth the effort, which includes passing through the metal detectors and having your backpack searched since the chapel is in the same complex where trials are going on and offices have spilled over into temporary trailers.

Of the art museums, the *Louvre* is undeniably the best in the world. It's extremely crowded on weekends and it is almost always difficult to see the European painting collection or to get within 10 meters of the *Mona Lisa*. While you're waiting to see her, we recommend studying Raphael's *Baldassare Castiglione*, just a few feet away. The Egyptian, Greco-Roman, and decorative arts collections are equally fabulous but usually less crowded. The sheer volume of great works of art leaves the visitor overwhelmed and our approach has been to go back and visit the paintings we love most rather than trying to see everything in the space of one day. The museum also has impressive shops for gifts, reproduction items and books on the arts (located at the below-ground level). In the same complex along the *rue de Rivoli*, is the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* with its wonderful collection of furniture, crystal, china and other decorative items from the Middle Ages through the 1960s. Not far away is the *Jacquemart-André*, a smaller museum, rich in paintings and decorative arts, housed in the former home of the people who amassed the collection.

For 19th century paintings, especially by the Impressionists, the *Musée D'Orsay* is the place to go. A converted train station, it houses works that were in the *Jeu de Paume* until a few years ago. You will find all the Impressionists in a well-lit but extremely crowded atmosphere. We recommend eating in the main restaurant, a lovingly restored version of the original waiting room and restaurant when the *D'Orsay*

was a train station. If you can't get in for lunch, stop by for afternoon tea or ice cream when the restaurant is typically less crowded.

Our favorite museum is the *Cluny*, which is now called the National Museum of the Middle Ages. It is near the *Sorbonne* on the Left Bank, and is housed in a medieval monastery whose foundation dates back to Roman times when it was a complex of baths. Its prize collection is the Unicorn Tapestries, the most phenomenal examples of the medieval weaver's art and still in good condition today. It also has a wonderful collection of medieval furniture (our favorite) and decorative arts. The bookstore in the museum is one of the best sources for books about medieval France, as well as for unusual gift items.

For the sheer delight of strolling and people-watching, we recommend the *Marais* district and the areas around the *Beaubourg* (Pompidou Center) and *Les Halles*. They all sort of blend together on the Right Bank. On the left bank near the *Sorbonne* and the *Blvd. St. Germain*, strolling, café sitting and coffee drinking are also great and even more "Bohemian," especially when including a visit to the booksellers' stalls along the riverbank.

Where to stay?

We have found that the best way to book a hotel in Paris is on the Internet – whether the hotel's own website, travel sites such as Travelocity, or reservation networks such as Best Western. We have never been fans of Best Western in the U.S. where, at least in Texas, they tend to be rather downscale motels on state highways. But in Europe we have had great success with Best Western's three and four-star hotels in a number of countries. The standards they must meet in order to be included in the network are reassuring for American travelers. The star system used to rate hotels in France is administered by the government and we have found it to be a very reliable indicator of amenities and price. If you go in the summer, be sure to find out if the hotel has air conditioning since most lower priced hotels do not and you may find it impossible to sleep with the windows open and mosquitoes buzzing around you.

Although no longer part of the Best Western network, our favorite hotel remains the *Beau Manoir* (on the Right Bank just off the *Place de la Madeleine*) because the decor is Louis XIII (one of our favorite periods in furniture design) with a comfortable, antique-filled sitting room and bar just off the lobby. Despite the elegant antique feel, it is a small yet modern hotel constructed in 1992 behind a 19th century facade and completely remodeled in 2002. We especially enjoy the sumptuous continental breakfast in the cellar or cave which must be one of the most beautifully finished basements in the city. The *Beau Manoir* boasts all the features we find essential – air conditioning, a small refrigerator, a quiet street but with quick access to several *Métro* stations, and proximity to our favorite tea salons, food stores and the neighborhood where we used to live.

If you want the more "authentic" Paris ambiance (which tourists love but as Paris residents, we hated) you'll need to stay on the Left Bank. An elegant hotel there is the *Hôtel Le Relais Christine*, converted from a monastery.

On the Right Bank are the more serious business hotels such as the Bristol, the Castiglione, and the Intercontinental (now with two properties -- one on the rue Castiglione and the other behind the *Opéra Garnier* on the *rue Scribe*, known as the Grand Hôtel).

Cheaper, is the *Alison* on the *rue de Surène*, where we stayed when we first arrived in Paris and it is still run by the same family with their Yorkshire terrier, Fidji. On the same street is the *Hôtel du Ministère*, renovated and elevated to a three-star property. Also in the lower price range is the Holiday Inn Garden Court on our old street, the *rue de Miromesnil*. While these hotels are inexpensive (by Paris standards), there are few restaurants open in the area on the weekend (although the hotels all serve breakfast) because the area is filled with commercial offices and government buildings. But the streets are quieter at night than on the Left Bank. If your goal is a comfy bed in an inexpensive room where you'll be doing little more than sleeping, these hotels are ideal.

For the big splurge, such as we did for our tenth wedding anniversary (thanks to a deeply discounted rate available to KPMG personnel), we cannot say enough wonderful things about the *Hôtel de Crillon* on the *Place de la Concorde*. It is a palace built in 1775 and acquired by the Crillon family in 1788. Although lost to them during the Revolution, it was subsequently re-acquired and was owned by the family until 1909 when it was sold and became a hotel, playing host to film stars, royalty, presidents and ordinary tourists such as ourselves. The 18th century architecture and appointments have been beautifully preserved in the public areas, including the ballroom which is now the restaurant *Les Ambassadeurs*. The guestrooms are huge by Paris standards, high-ceilinged and brimming with antiques while the bathrooms are modern and spacious. Best of all, we felt every bit as welcome as the hotel's better-heeled or more famous patrons and found the staff unfailingly gracious and attentive. It was the experience of a lifetime and we highly recommend it to anyone wishing a sumptuous and romantic interlude of pampering on Paris' most famous square.

Where to eat? In general, it's hard to get a bad meal in Paris because a poor restaurant would have no business from Parisians. More and more, however, Paris has been invaded by fast-food shops along the lines of American burger joints and by more diverse international offerings such as Latin American and Thai.

Names such as *café* and *restaurant*, which are broadly defined in the U.S. have narrower applications in Paris. The range of formality, complexity, service and pricing run from the *café*, at the lower end of the scale, to the *restaurant* at the upper end. As the name implies, *cafés* are geared to coffee but serve other beverages, including alcohol; all with less emphasis on food. At the next level are *brasseries*, who owe their name to beer but also serve hot meals. The *bistro* is less formal than a *restaurant* and will likely feature a more complex menu of fresh, daily offerings and specials. At the top of the pile is the *restaurant*, a category which incorporates a wide range of prices and sizes. Many require reservations but your hotel should be able to make them for you.

When eating at a *restaurant*, you will be expected to order more than one course, plus a bottle of wine. You may be able to get by with ordering just a salad or appetizer at a *bistro* but don't be surprised if eyebrows are raised at a *restaurant*. Bear in mind that the economics of the restaurant business are different in France where there is typically only one "sitting" per table at lunch or dinner because diners spend longer time at meals. By law, *restaurants* are required to post a menu with prices, and so you can be sure of what you're getting into before you commit yourself to a table.

When entering an eatery or reviewing a menu, look for the *formule* followed by a price, e.g., €30. This typically means a three or four course meal, possibly with a glass of wine or coffee. It's usually a good value and features something different every day. Remember, in France an *entrée* is an appetizer, not the main course. Also, remember that a meal is a time to relax and enjoy -- both the food and the company -- and that Parisians want to eat at the same time and then linger for an hour or so over coffee. So, don't feel rushed and don't expect your plate to be whisked away the moment you put your fork down. Waitstaff are attentive but low-key and will respond to a raised eyebrow or nod of the head (please, no snapping of fingers and shouting "garçon"). Their gratuity is included in the bill, but it's always appropriate to leave some cash on the table, with more for outstanding service.

As to wine, we have found that unlike U.S. restaurants, the mark-up on wine is less hefty, leaving you the option of enjoying a better wine at a lower price. Also unlike U.S. restaurants, we have found the recommendations of a *sommelier* to be excellent -- typically offering various price ranges of items best-suited to your food selections.

Although a recent crack-down on drunk driving has led restaurants to offer "doggie bags" for a bottle of wine you do not finish, the notion of having the waiter bag up what you don't eat is still not acceptable. Indeed, with the smaller portions and leisurely pace of dining in Paris, people seldom leave anything on their plates! Learn to pace yourself and to savor, as the French do, and you'll never again view food or dining in quite the same way.

Because meals can be very filling (3+ courses) and expensive in Paris, consider doing one meal a day as a picnic -- whether in the nearest park or your hotel room. Bring along from home what utensils you'll need (but don't pack a knife or corkscrew in your carry-on luggage) and visit the *boulangerie* for a *baguette* and one of the grocery stores (such as *Monoprix* and *Franprix* or for better quality, *Galeries Lafayette* or *Bon Marché*) for your cheese (just pick one from the cheese case and have the clerk slice a bit off although even the pre-packaged *camemberts* are not bad). You can buy some fruit (take it to the scale and push the button with the picture of what you want -- it will print out a price sticker) and a bottle of wine and have a memorable feast in your hotel room. Look for anything *artésanal*, this implies a family business and extra care that the French are nuts about whether it's a *boulangerie* such as *Paul* or their favorite purveyor of *foie gras*. As to picking wine? If there's no sommelier at hand, our sure-fire method is to visit a local grocery store and buy something from a bin which is almost empty at the end of the day. If Parisians buy a lot of the wine, it is probably not only good tasting but a good value.

We could write a book about the *baguette*, and maybe someday we will, but in the meantime, forget everything you ever ate that was described as "French bread" and indulge in every *baguette* that comes your way. There is much debate in France about whether bread made from frozen dough can be designated as a *baguette* but even that tastes better than anything on offer in the U.S. (except at Eatzi's). The *baguette* can be a platform for a sandwich (such as the ultra-decadent *camembert* slices arranged on a buttered *baguette*) but is best savored alone or with your meal at a restaurant. Just tear off bite-size pieces and let the crumbs fall where they may since typically you won't be provided a bread plate. Butter is also not necessary and usually not in evidence, but if you want to be transported to taste-bud heaven, buy a little container of *Echiré* butter (from the region of *Deux Charentes*), which is only available in Paris at a couple of locations. The butter, with a wedge of *Morbier* (our favorite stinky cheese), a fresh *baguette*, and bottle of *Chinon* create a memorable feast. To assuage any guilt, include a healthy salad of *mâche* (lamb's lettuce) tossed with raspberry vinaigrette (don't forget to add sugar) and some chopped shallots. In any event, maximize your consumption of *baguettes* and don't forget their cousins, the *croissants*, since you'll have to search diligently and pay through the nose for anything remotely similar in the U.S. Remember that in France a croissant is a breakfast item and bakeries sell out of them early, and it's understandable when you step into a bakery and inhale the aroma of freshly baked croissants.

Many French still eat the big meal of the day, with wine, at lunchtime -- which is 12:30, period. For tourists, this can take too long, cost too much, and leave you too lethargic for the rest of the day's adventures. An alternative is to grab a sandwich or salad at one of the many *Mi-do-re*, *Brioche Dorée* or other French-style fast food restaurants and postpone a treat for later in the afternoon -- tea. Yes, the French are terribly keen on tea and do it superbly, particularly at places such as *Ladurée* and the various branches of *Mariage Frères* (both of which are even open on Sundays). The tea ritual has now built itself into our Paris routine along with stocking up at *Mariage Frères* on loose tea to take home with us. They have hundreds of flavors (our favorites are *Eros* and *Exotique*) along with a book describing them, so plan to spend the afternoon trying several varieties and nibbling on cucumber or smoked salmon sandwiches followed by a piece of fruit tart. The plantation shtick is a bit much in the decor and uniforms of the waiters, but overall it is a sumptuous experience defining how one luxuriates in Paris.

Our other favorite tea spot is *Ladurée* on the *rue Royale* (on the corner of the *rue St.-Honoré*) midway between the *Places de la Madeleine* and *Concorde*. Pass through the bustling crowd at the take-out counter on the ground floor and head for the stairs. Upstairs (the first floor, as defined in France) is a beautiful but cramped room where you can enjoy a leisurely tea away from the tourist rabble. It is usually crowded but especially during the twice-yearly Fashion Week it is crammed with models and couture types on break from the nearby fashion houses (we ran into an editor of *Vogue* and several famous models on our last visit). You may have to wait but it is worth it in order to have tea and pastry. We recommend the *Mont-Blanc*, a tower of chestnut paste on a meringue base or anything involving chocolate. *Ladurée* is known for its macarons, a chewy confection encased in a sweet crust, in a wide variety of sizes, colors and flavors. Don't confuse them with "macaroons" -- coconut is nowhere to be

found. On your way out, buy a few (they are sold by the kilo) and enjoy a memory of Ladurée at a later time. Best of all, *Ladurée* is open on Sundays into the evening when, if you want something light yet good to eat in this area, nothing else is open.

For eating on Sunday afternoon, in desperation you may head for the *Carousel du Louvre*, as do many French people. It's fast food stuff, cafeteria style, but the roasted chicken place is actually quite good.

If you want to read up on pastries and plan in advance where to visit and what to eat, we recommend *Paris Boulangerie-Pâtisserie* by Linda Dannenberg (1994, Clarkson Potter). The pictures of the goodies and her excellent descriptions should get you in the mood for your visit and she includes recipes for readers daring enough to imitate the grand patissiers.

For an inexpensive and quick meal with a view, we suggest the rooftop cafeteria at *La Samaritaine*, a department store on the right bank. The view of the city is wonderful, and in warm weather you can eat outside. Other department stores, such as *Printemps*, also have wonderful restaurants or it is possible to graze their ample grocery departments and eat on the spot at counters set up with cutlery and napkins.

If you can get a reservation, one of the most memorable places to eat in Paris is the *Jules Verne* restaurant in the Eiffel Tower. On short notice, your best chance is getting in for lunch or for Sunday dinner. Otherwise you may have to reserve several months ahead by telephone or fax (not e-mail). Be sure to request a table by a window. If you can't get a reservation, you can go up simply to have a drink at the bar. The ride by private elevator up into the tower is not for the chicken-hearted, but the food is worth the trip. Unlike the rule in the U.S. (if the restaurant has a view, the food will stink), the *Jules Verne* has some of the best food in Paris. And it's not any more expensive than other fine restaurants. Food recommendations include any dish made with veal liver (*foie de veau*) and any dessert made with chocolate. Come hungry, because they feed you very well, including little treats between courses and with coffee.

For a taste of country and outdoor eating in the heart of Paris, we suggest *La Guinguette* on the *Ile de la Grande Jatte* -- an island in the Seine at Neuilly but within sight of the *Arc de Triomphe*. Especially after a busy day with the Impressionists at the *Musée d'Orsay*, a visit to this island and its prominent role in the works of Seurat and other 19th century masters will be a delightful way to relax.

For that really big splurge, the only one of Paris' truly old and great restaurants we were lucky enough to try (thanks to a client's expense account) was *Le Grand Véfour*. The restaurant dates back to the 18th century and the chairs have plaques bearing the names of the rich, the famous and the notorious who have dined there over the years. It seems that there is at least one waiter per person and the food is indescribably delicious. About the only thing it lacked on our visit was French people -- being filled instead by foreign business people like ourselves.

At *Les Ambassadeurs*, Chef Dominique Bouchet serves up incredible meals in the former ballroom of the former palace, now the *Hôtel de Crillon*. While not having as many Michelin stars as *Le Grand Véfour*, we found the food to be innovative and delicious beyond belief, with the service incomparable. On our only visit, we happened on truffle season where highlights included a chestnut soup with coconut milk, truffle slices and tiny squares of *foie gras* floating in it. It was incredible and I longed to lick the bowl!

One of our favorite restaurants, and a winner on the "extraordinary but not a big splurge" list is *La Ferme Saint-Simon*. It is on the Left Bank off the *blvd. St. Germain*. They have menus in English and, unlike some restaurants, the waiters are very kind and helpful to people who do not speak French fluently. The owner, Francis Vandenhende, explained to us that the restaurant had been the favorite of a U.S. television news producer and she featured it on a broadcast some years back. Since that time, they've had a loyal following of American visitors. But the overwhelming majority of diners are well-turned-out French people -- the ultimate compliment for a fine restaurant. Be sure and have a *Chinon* wine,

preferably from the *Beau Séjour* vineyard. This is a red wine from the Loire Valley that does not travel to the U.S. and should be savored as often as possible in its homeland.

If you're staying at the *Hôtel Beau Manoir* or any of the other hotels listed in the 8th district, you'll want to maximize your visits to the nearby *Fauchon* on the *Place de la Madeleine*. *Fauchon* is likely the world's most famous gourmet store and restaurant complex. If you want to buy *foie gras* or any other French delicacy, this is the place to do it and they will pack everything for easy transport or send it back to the U.S. for you. But watch out for their quirky and outmoded payment system – you will receive a plastic card (which only recently replaced a handwritten *chit*) to take to the cashier. Upon payment, you'll receive a receipt to take back to the food department where you selected your items and to pick up your beautifully wrapped articles.

Where to shop? People always ask us where we shop in Paris. The answer is, we don't, except for antiques and certain food items still unobtainable in the U.S. Due to tightly limited distribution channels and complex regulations limiting sales to twice a year, price competition is virtually unknown and the American pastime of bargain hunting has little application in France other than in the several factory outlet malls which have sprung up well away from major cities. If you're expecting to find this year designer jacket at 50% off, you're better off sticking to the U.S. retailers offering the designer's wares. Flea markets offer knock-offs of branded goods.

First, a matter of shopping etiquette. When entering and leaving a shop it is essential to interact with the attendant. On arrival, offer up a "Bonjour Monsieur" or "Bonjour Madame" (use "Mademoiselle" for any woman who looks like she may be under 40 -- typically, she won't be offended even if she's married since she'd rather be viewed as a young miss). Upon leaving, say "Au revoir et merci" or "Au revoir Monsieur", etc. Like so many aspects of politeness in France, no one really puts much stock in them unless they're omitted.

Don't be surprised if salespeople tend to hover about you. It's not that they expect you to steal something, it's rather that French customers are used to being "attended" unlike Americans who prefer shopping in isolation until the moment for payment arrives.

France runs on Visa or *Carte Bleu*. But don't leave your MasterCard at home, since it's preferred in other European destinations. Diners Club and American Express are accepted in a number of places, but their prices usually reflect an expected upscale clientele. Forget travelers checks. French merchants don't want them since they have to pay a fee to the issuer to get their cash. Instead, take along your ATM card and get cash in francs when you need them for the items that you can't charge.

Things in Paris are expensive and it's best not to think about the U.S. equivalents for such items as a cup of coffee or a soft drink. Almost everything (other than food) includes value added tax (VAT) in the sticker price unlike the U.S. where sales tax is added at the register. So you're already paying an extra 20%. If you buy around \$240 worth of goods in one store, you can get a large portion of the value added tax refunded. Be sure and ask for the refund form, which the store must fill out. Then get it validated at the airport when you leave (you have to be able to show the goods so go to the *Dé-taxe* window before you check your luggage) and then drop the refund form in the mail. Save plenty of time before your flight to accomplish this task as the lines at the *Dé-taxe* window can get quite long. Also, be sure to buy a stamp for your envelope ahead of time so you can drop it in any mailbox at the airport. A 15-20% savings through a tax refund is far better than the discount and limited selection most duty free shops offer.

If you plan to shop for souvenirs, probably the best place is the row of small shops along the *rue de Rivoli* opposite the *Louvre*. There are plenty of T-shirts, plastic Eiffel Towers, etc. For interesting and artistic gifts there are the museum shops I've already mentioned.

The major department stores (*grand magasins*) are also good places to find souvenirs as well as nice gift items. Most will give you a discount if you are a foreign tourist with passport and you spend enough

money! On the Right Bank, the major stores are *Galeries Lafayette* and *Printemps*. Both are worth a visit to see the main halls beneath the magnificent art-deco stained-glass domes. On the Left Bank, our favorite store is *Bon Marché* (which means "good buy" in French but is really no cheaper than any other store).

Lafayette Gourmet (the food section of *Galeries Lafayette*) or the food court at the department store *Bon Marché* is where we stock up on French delicacies before leaving the country. These include *Valrhona* chocolate for baking and eating, *confit de canard* (duck thigh-leg combinations preserved in duck fat), *fond de veau* and *fumet de poisson* (sauce starters for veal and fish dishes), small containers of duck *foie gras* and screw-top bottles of wine (for the airplane). As more and more items become available in the U.S. at stores such as Dean & DeLuca and Central Market, we feel less compelled to hoard and to drag hefty suitcases of French treasures back from France.

Speaking of transport, we always buy items ahead for a picnic on the plane on the way back to the U.S. After all, there's nothing worse after a week or so of the world's best cooking than to spend 11 hours on a flight full of mediocre offerings. While famous for its chocolates and pastries, we enjoy stocking up at *Dalloyau* on such items as mini-quiches, salads and other snack items to take with us on the plane. Since our flights are usually early in the morning, we stock up the night before and then divert our taxi to one of the numerous *Mi-Do-Re* restaurants on the way to the airport (for the price of an almond croissant, we have no trouble convincing a driver to stop).

If you'd like to visit the great fashion houses, the most concentrated group is found on the *rue du Faubourg St. Honoré* (between *Place Beauveau* and the *rue Royale*). Particularly impressive are the boutiques of Christian La Croix and Gianni Versace. And you will also pass by the *Elysées Palace*, official residence of the president of France. At the end of your walk, reward yourself with coffee and a pastry at *Ladurée* on the *rue Royale*.

Perhaps the most time-honored gift from Paris is a ladies' scarf or men's tie from Hermès. The scarves run about \$300 apiece, and ties are around \$125. The flagship store on the *rue du Faubourg St. Honoré* is consistently mobbed with foreign tourists and the somewhat imperious clerks will show you a scarf or two and expect you to make an instant decision. For a more leisurely, civilized pace and the opportunity to be invited to rummage ever so daintily through the drawers of scarves, visit the Hermès store in the Hilton Hotel near the Eiffel Tower.

If you want to be particularly adventuresome and distinctly Parisian, take the *Métro* line No. 4 in the direction of *Porte d'Orléans* to the next-to-last stop (*Alésia*). The *rue d'Alésia* is lined with stores described as "stock." This means inventory over-runs and close outs from major ready-to-wear designers. Don't expect to find the array of the typical U.S. factory outlet mall, but by Parisian standards it's quite extraordinary. Our favorite store on the street is a tiny shop selling leather goods, scarves and ties. It is Marjan's and is the only place we found in Paris where you can buy designer silk products at discounted prices. If you go, give our regards to the owners (they have cousins living in Cincinnati).

For stylish French leather handbags you may want to shop from home on the net or pay a visit to London. We recommend Vanilla, located in a sort of mini-mall on Kings Road in Chelsea near trendy Sloane Square. You can pick your style and order the type and color of leather for elegant and French-made handbags at a fraction of their price in Paris or simply visit the store and buy from their wide range of stock on hand in London. Alex or Rachel will help you, when you need it, without that high-pressure hovering we've come to expect in Paris.

Parisians don't have the closets full of clothes that we do, and it is not unusual to repeat an outfit in the course of the week. They buy prudently and may spend a fortune on that season-making item from a trendy boutique and then hit the semi-annual sales for accompanying pieces. But if you're a female over 5'4" and 80 pounds, forget shopping for clothes that will fit you and stick to the designer offerings at Saks and Neiman's!

If you are interested in purchasing antiques, there are various areas of the city to visit. Upscale retail antique shops are located on the Left Bank across from the Seine from the Louvre in the *Carré des Antiquaires* and in the *Louvre des Antiquaires* (across the *rue de Rivoli* from the *Louvre*).

For the consummate antique experience, however, we recommend the *Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen*. “Puces” is misleading since it refers to flea market when in reality the Saint-Ouen complex of back streets, markets, stands and shops is, collectively, the world’s largest antiques market with more than 2000 vendors. For the wholesale dealers, the main market day is Friday in the early hours. Most are done for the day and off to the bar for a morning glass of wine by 9:00 a.m. when Parisians are just starting to arrive in their offices. Retail dealers are open Saturday and Sunday, and occasionally on Monday mornings. They use the rest of the week to search for stock and attend the many auctions of antiques both in Paris and the countryside. Most retail dealers specialize in particular periods (e.g., *Directoire* or *Louis Philippe* furniture,) or types of goods (ceramics, bronzes, vintage clothing, military memorabilia, books, taxidermy, jewelry, etc.).

To get to Saint-Ouen, we suggest taking a taxi and asking the driver to drop you off on the *rue des Rosiers* at the *Marché Dauphine*. By *Métro*, the closest stop is *Clignancourt* but in order to cross the *Périphérique* or ring-road expressway, you will have to navigate through the Clignancourt flea market with its huge stocks of athletic shoes, leather goods and a high proportion of pick-pockets. Make the *rue des Rosiers* your focus and you will see the bulk of the enclosed markets (*marchés*) such as Dauphine, Malassis, Paul Bert, Serpette, Biron, Vernaison, etc. which run off this street. Simply wander up and down the covered aisles and find yourself amazed at the array of goods to delight collectors of all sorts. Please contact us if you would like a list of our favorite dealers in Saint-Ouen.

One of the drawbacks of the market in Saint-Ouen (and in Paris, as well) is the lack of public facilities. What there are tend to be less than inviting “Turkish toilets.” Restaurants and cafés in the area do not offer much more. We have found the best and cleanest of modern public toilets to be at the back of the *Marché Malassis* where for €1 you have access to a spotless, attended bathroom.

Although we used to buy quite a bit of our stock in Paris, we have shifted our focus to the hinterlands because by the time items reach Paris they have been through numerous dealers and mark-ups. However, there are still interesting things to find at a price the buyer and seller are happy with. To achieve this, bargaining is essential. Americans tend to hate the process but we have learned to love the banter and the play-acting, all part of an elaborate ritual to arrive at the ideal price...or not. While some dealers speak English, the best bargaining is done in French. But if all else fails, result to a piece of paper where prices are suggested in writing. And don’t forget the rule we have learned the hard way, “the best time to buy an antique is when you see it.” Tomorrow, it or you could be gone!

If the purchase is for export, there should be no value added tax, but you will not be able to get this advantage unless you use a transporter. The tax authorities have cracked down on VAT fraud in the last several years with antique dealers among their targets. However, numerous transport companies operate in the market and can arrange to pick up your purchase from the seller, pack it, insure it, and deliver it by air or sea freight to the U.S. For years we have been using *EDET International* and they have an office open on weekends on the *rue des Rosiers* (at an entrance to *Marché Biron*) staffed with English-speaking staff who can get you all you need to start buying and shipping.

For books on antiques and the arts, there is the *Louvre* bookstore, mentioned above as well as *Lardanchet* on the *Place Beauveau* and whose entrance is across from our former apartment building. *Lardanchet* always has a number of interesting things in stock, including out-of-print and hard-to-find items. Their knowledgeable staff can steer you in the right direction and order things you’re having trouble finding. Best of all, they will ship to the U.S. (tax-free) so you do not have to lug heavy books back on the plane with you.

Beyond Paris? While Paris is the focus of this Guide and of most people's visits to France, there is so much more to explore in this captivating and engrossing country. We hope to expand future editions of this Guide to include Provence and especially the Langue d'Oc, Provence's unjustifiably neglected neighbor.

Thanks to the high-speed train (TGV) station just an escalator-ride below the main arrival hall at Roissy Charles de Gaulle, within a scant three hours from landing in Paris you can arrive at Avignon, the gateway to Provence, and gulp great gobs of the lavender-laden, citrus-enhanced *mistral* of this formerly Roman province.

But, in the meantime, *bon voyage!*

Meril & Michael Markley
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Names and Addresses

(Note – if dialing from outside France, drop the first “0” and replace it with the country code “33.” Arrondissement or district numbers are shown in parenthesis with the last two numerals being the district, e.g., 75008 is the 8th district.)

Name	Address	Metro Stop	Phone/Fax/Web (http://www.)
Travel & Sightseeing:			
Maison de la France (official site)			franceguide.com
Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG)	Roissy en France		01-48-62-22-80 adp.fr
Paris Transport (RATP)	Tourism office located below the Louvre	Palais Royal	08-92-68-77-14 ratp.fr
Cityrama Sightseeing	145, rue St.-Honoré (75001)	Louvre- Rivoli	01-44-65-61-00 cityrama.com
Bateaux Mouches	Pont de L’Alma (right bank) (75008)	Pont de L’Alma	01-42-25-96-10 bateaux-mouches.fr
Cluny Museum (Musée National du Moyen-Age)	6, place Paul Painlevé (75005)	Cluny or Odéon	01-53-73-78-00 musee-moyenage.fr
Musée Jacquemart- André	158, Blvd. Haussmann (75008)	Miromesnil	01-45-62-11-59 musee-jacquemart-andre.com
Musée du Louvre	34, Quai Louvre (or enter from rue de Rivoli) (75001)	Palais Royal	01-40-20-50-50 louvre.fr
Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Palais du Louvre)	107, rue de Rivoli (75001)	Palais Royal	01-44-55-57-50 ucad.fr
Musée D’Orsay	62, rue de Lille (75007)	Solférino (RER- Musée D’Orsay)	01-40-49-48-14 musee-orsee.fr
Notre Dame Cathedral	6, place Parvis Notre Dame (75004)	Cité	01-42-34-56-10
Sainte Chapelle (Conciergerie)	22, avenue Victoria (75001) (in the Ministry of Justice)	Chatelet	01-53-40-60-80
Hotels:			
Hôtel Alison	21, rue de Surène (75008)	Madeleine	01-42-65-54-00 01-42-65-08-17 F
Hôtel Beau Manoir (Best Western)	6, rue de l’Arcade (75008)	Madeleine	01-53-43-28-28 01-53-43-28-88 F hotelbeaumanoir.com
Hôtel Bristol	112, rue du Faubourg St. Honoré (75008)	Champs Elysées	01-53-43-43-00 01-53-43-43-01 F lebristolparis.com
Hôtel Castiglione	40, rue du Faubourg St. Honoré (75008)	Concorde	01-44-94-25-25
Hôtel de Crillon	10, place de la Concorde (75008)	Concorde	01-44-71-15-00 01-44-71-15-02 F www.crillon.com
Hotel Intercontinental	3, rue Castiglione (75001)	Tuileries	01-44-77-11-11 intercontinental.com
Hôtel du Ministère	31, rue de Surène (75009\8)	Madeleine	01-42-66-21-43 01-42-66-96-04 F minsterehotel.com

Le Grand Hôtel Intercontinental	2, rue Scribe (75009)	Auber	01-40-07-32-32 intercontinental.com
Holiday Inn Garden Court Paris Elysées	24, rue de Miromesnil (75008)	Miromesnil	01-43-12-87-87 holiday-inn.com

Eateries:

Brioche Dorée (multiple locations)	66, rue de Rivoli (75004)	Hôtel de Ville	01-48-04-59-21
Dalloyau	101, rue du Faubourg St. Honoré	St.-Philippe- du-Roule	01-42-99-90-00 dalloyau.fr
Fauchon	30, place de la Madeleine (75008)	Madeleine	01-47-42-91-10 01-47-42-90-30 F fauchon.fr
Fouquet's	99, avenue des Champs Elysées (75008)	George V	01-47-23-50-00 lucienbarriere.com
Ladurée	16 rue Royale (75008)	Concorde, Madeleine	01-42-60-21-79 laduree.fr
La Ferme Saint- Simon	6, rue de Saint-Simon (75007)	Rue du Bac	01-45-48-35-74 fermestsimon.com
La Guinguette de Neuilly	12, blvd. Georges Seurat (92200 Neuilly-sur-Seine)	Pont de Neuilly (plus taxi)	01-46-24-25-04
Le Grand Véfour	17, rue du Beaujolais (75001)	Palais Royal	01-42-96-56-27
Le Jules Verne	Eiffel Tower, Champ de Mars (75007)	Bir Hakeim	01-45-55-61-44 01-47-05-29-41 F tour-eiffel.fr
Les Ambassadeurs	10, place de la Concorde (in the Hôtel de Crillon) (75008)	Concorde	01-44-71-15-00 www.crillon.com
Mariage Frères	260, rue du Faubourg Saint- Honoré	Ternes	01-46-22-18-54 mariagefreres.com
Mi-do-re (multiple locations)	12, rue de Rome (75008)	St.-Lazare	43-87-15-33
Paul (Boulangerie)	37, rue Tronchet (75008)	Havre Caumartin	01-42-93-41-03 paul.ma

Shopping:

EDET International	85 rue des Rosiers (Marché Biron – Saint-Ouen)	Clignancourt	01-48-59-11-73 edetinternational.com 01-49-45-07-17 (weekends)
Fauchon	(see Eateries, above)	Madeleine	
Galeries Lafayette	40, blvd. Haussmann (75009)	Havre Caumartin	01-42-82-34-56 galerieslafayette.com
Hermès	24, rue du Faubourg St.- Honoré (75008)	Concorde or Madeleine	01-40-17-47-17
Hermès (Hilton Hotel)	18, avenue de Suffren (75015)	Champ de Mars	01-45-66-89-29
Bon Marché	38, rue de Sèvres (75007)	Vaneau or Sèvres Babylone	01-44-39-80-00 lebonmarche.fr
Librairie Lardanchet	100, rue du Faubourg Saint- Honoré (75008)	Champs- Elysées or Miromesnil	01-42-66-68-32 01-49-24-07-87 F lardanchet.fr
Louvre des Antiquaires	2, place du Palais Royal (entrance rue de Rivoli)	Palais Royal	01-42-97-27-27 louvre-antiquaires.com
Marjan's	102, rue d'Alésia (75014)	Alésia	01-45-42-93-33

Printemps	64, blvd. Haussmann (75009)	Havre Caumartin	01-42-82-50-00 printemps.com
Puces de Saint-Ouen	Rue des Rosiers area of Saint-Ouen	Clignancourt	08-92-70-57-65 parispuces.com
Samaritaine	19, rue de la Monnaie	Pont Neuf or Chatelet	01-40-41-20-20 lasamaritaine.com
Vanilla	122 Kings Road (Chelsea) London SW3 4TR	Sloane Square	(44) 0207-225-1822 vanilla-paris.co.uk

Updated May, 2004