Planning a 36 Hour Visit to Paris

— *Daniel Smith 2024/08/06 21:28*

36 Hours in Paris

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July 2024 Paris Summer Olympics
What you must know
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The Olympic Doom Everyone Predicted Never Came to Paris 2-Aug-2024

Paris is a city small in surface but very densely packed with 2 million residents. 44 million visit each year. In the summer of 2024, 15 million visitors are expected.

- From The 2024 Olympics will have
  - 3.3 million Olympic Games attendees
  - 15,000 athletes
  - 40,000 security agents
  - Thousands of workers and support

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Attention: since 2019, Notre Dame de Paris is closed.
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The exterior of Notre Dame de Paris is now wonderful but come back when the ancient fire-damaged Cathedral restoration has been completed.

Watch the reconstruction Notre Dame de Paris here. Target reopening is the third week of December 2025. Monitor the website.

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Attention: until late August 2024, the Eiffel Tower is closed.
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Important Videos for the Summer of 2024

Videos on a short trip to Paris: 36 hours

- What's Going On With the Paris Olympics? Thoughts from a Local
- Before You Travel to Paris Summer 2024
- Is Paris Ready for the 2024 Olympic Games? Thoughts from a Local
- Paris 2024 Summer Olympics: Everything You Need to Know
- First Timers Guide to Paris: What to Do & Not to Do (by a Local)! July 2024
- Why the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics are already an expensive nightmare for many locals and

tourists, July 23, 2024.

- Everything You Need to Know About Planning a Trip to Paris This Summer, 2024
- 5 Important Things To Know Before Visiting Paris During The 2024 Olympics
- Visiting Paris before, during and after Paris Olympics 2024
- Navigating Paris during the Olympics: how to avoid transport fare increases and more

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Advice for a 36 Hour Visit

Videos and Articles

- What to Do on the Left Bank [video]
- What to Do on the Right Bank [video]
- 36 Hours in Paris (2008) - The NY Times
- 36 Hours in Paris, 2024 Trip 101 Review

- 36 Hours in Paris (2006) [video]
- 36 Hours in Paris, on the Seine Facebook
- 36 Hours in Paris: The Perfect Paris Itinerary

- 36 hours in Paris Itinerary: How to Spend Your Time
- 36 Hours in Paris - A Beautiful Guide to Spending Time in Paris
- Paris Voice - 36 Hours in Paris

- The ESSENTIAL First Timers Guide to Paris (3-Day Itinerary)
- My "Paris Express" 3-Day Itinerary “My” meaning VBlogger “Paris Top Tips” guy.

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36 Hours: 'To Do'

36 Hours: To Do - Thumbs Up

It is impossible to see and do all the magnificent artwork and architecture in Paris within a few days. Here are some top visits. 36 Hours is quite limited so planning is required.


Be sure to buy tickets / entries online for every place you go. This is an absolute.

- **Cruise on the River Seine** - One of the Best! Choose carefully and select the Best Seine River Cruise. I enjoy a cruise on the river. A cruise is excellent to view diverse architecture of the city. Take a smaller cruise boat and avoid the traditional large *Bateaux Mouche*. Select a cruise boat and select a time near sunset, which is perfect to recover from a day of sightseeing.

- Walkng Tour in English - of which there are many. Be sure to tip your guide a couple euros or up to five euros if you like them.
- Visits
  - Paris Raspail Organic Market - Amazing Parisian Organic, Fresh Market. It is similar to *Farmers' Markets* in the US.
  - Eglise Saint Sulpice is one of the most significant churches in Paris, located in the 6th Arrondissement. Construction began in 1646 and continued into the 18th century, resulting in a grand Baroque and Neoclassical architectural masterpiece.
  - Cathedrale Sainte Chapelle Sainte-Chapelle is a stunning Gothic chapel located within the medieval Palais de la Cité on the Île de la Cité in Paris. It was commissioned by King Louis IX (Saint Louis) and completed in 1248. Originally built to house precious Christian relics, including the Crown of Thorns, Sainte-Chapelle is renowned for its extraordinary stained glass windows and its architectural beauty.

Top Two Art Museums in Paris

 recommended

- L'Orangerie - one of my top favorites. The grand attraction are the Murals of Claude Monet, “Water Lilies.” Don't miss the underground exhibitions. They are quite special.
- Musée d'Orsay - one of my two favorite museums in Paris. Certainly not a “hidden gem” but the works are magnificent. Take the elevators up to the top floor to enjoy the impressionist paintings and slowly work your way down the the awesome sculptures.

The Best of the Rest

- Le Musée Rodin The Musée Rodin Paris, France, is an art museum that was opened in 1919, primarily dedicated to the works of the French sculptor Auguste Rodin. It has two sites: the Hôtel Biron and surrounding grounds in central Paris, as well as just outside Paris at Rodin's old home, the Villa des Brillants at Meudon, Hauts-de-Seine. The collection includes 6,600 sculptures, 8,000 drawings, 8,000 old photographs and 7,000 objets d'art. The museum receives 700,000 visitors annually.
- Le Petit Palais - a reasonably small museum with a small restaurant, toilets and places to sit on a balcony overseeing a wonderful garden. I would not say that it is a place 'worth a detour' but if you are in the area, do stop and enjoy.
- Musée Louvre - Exceptional. You can spend days in this enormous palace. I hesitate to recommend Le Louvre to first time visitors. There is so much to see, and almost certainly, your attention will grow weak after a couple of hours. A visit is very fatiguing and quite confusing because of the enormity. Careful planning is necessary, and plan on a half day to visit.
- Mussée Jacquemart-André oops. **Closed until 6-Sep-2024**. The Musée Jacquemart-André has the finest private collection of art works in Paris, combined with the atmosphere of a large nineteenth-century residence. The Jacquemart-André Museum contains collections worthy of the greatest museums: works from the Italian Renaissance, works by great Flemish masters, French works from the 18th century. Short half day visit. The restaurant ambiance is amazing. Food is OK and expensive.

36 Hours Not To Do - Thumbs Down

- 12 Things Not To Do in Paris by a Local
- Versailles - a magnificent opulent palace, home to King Louis IV and of course Marie Antoinette. Take a train of 1 hour, 1 hour return, stand in line for several hours, stand looking at fancy old stuff, if you become hungry, eat bad food. Basically, a visit to Versailles is one very long day, guaranteed to make you totally wiped out and in need of a full day to recover. Still interested?
- Dinner Cruise on the Seine - no. Please do not. Bad food, bad service. Expensive. Why not take a cruise then eat at a good restaurant?
- Eiffel Tower - Um. OK. The only way to remotely enjoy is to buy advance tickets online and arrive early. Be prepared to wait, even in a fast lane. I've been there many times and won't go again. Sorry. Oh yeah. August of 2024, it might be closed. Check before buying an online ticket. Information varies.
- Cabarets and Night Clubs - [meh. Go if you want]. Iconic Cabarets are Moulin Rouge, Crazy Horse or Le Lido. Fine if you like to watch bare-chested, tall Eastern-European girls dancing around in feather costumes while you eat / drink overpriced offerings. Terrific for graduating male High-School students.

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36 Hours: Eat

See a more detailed page Eat in Paris

French Food Tour in PARIS, FRANCE (by a Local)!

Crêperie

A crêperie restaurant is **fabulous for lunch** and very accessible for visitors. Best crêperies are described here The 9 best crêperies in Paris. Avoid the street crêpe makers because they make many crêpes ahead. If you must go for a street vendor, ask for a fresh crêpe. Tell the guy [usually a guy] that you want to take a photo of him making your crêpe. If he still does not want to make a fresh one, say “desole” and find another who will.

1. **Une gallette** - savory buckwheat 'pancake' such as a gallette complète, traditional with ham and egg.
2. **Une crêpe** - an eggy sweet and a simple [my favorite is une crêpe au citron] or fancy with whipped cream and chocolate.
3. **A bottle of cidre brut** for two [don't worry, it contains alcohol but about as much as beer]. Cidre is served in traditional handmade ceramic bowls or cups.

Traditional French Bistro

Best Bistros in Paris in 2024. Traditional Bistros server “French Home Food” that follow a traditional formula. It is not [usually] innovative cuisine but for a visitor –> **Traditional French Bistros** are must try… like these Top 5 Bistros in Paris You Need To Try! (Where Locals Eat)

Boulangerie / Pâtisserie

- Macaron - French macarons are tiny, expensive and the most delicious flavor bite that will forever remind you of your stay in Paris. Many Pâtisseries have them, but the top ten places are here.
- Boulangerie / Patisserie Maison Thevenin

Bouillon

A Bouillon Restaurant originated as an affordable eatery with huge cauldrons of soup and broth. Bouillons were very popular at the turn of the 19th Century and reflect architecture and installations of that time, such as Art Nouveau. An example is the excellent Bouillon Racine in the 6th Arrondissement.

Traditional Café

Breakfast

- Boulangerie / Patisserie Maison Thevenin - Choose a Crossant and a couple Macarons

Afternoon Apéro or Lunch

- l'Horizon Cafe - Saint Placide
- Le Trait d'Union - Saint Placide
- Le Nemrod Paris - Saint Placide & rue Cherche-Midi]] One hears that famous French movie stars who live on trendy rue Cherche-Midi, frequent this café.

A *Real* Bar à Vin

A Parisian visit would not be complete without a sampling of wine with the perfect accompaniments. Here is a simple guide to a Bar à Vin in Paris plus a few solid suggestions

36 Hours: Sleep

Places to stay tend to be expensive near tourist attractions, less costly farther away. But consider time on transport if you stay far from the center of Paris. You could spend more than one hour per day of your precious time on the metro. Hmmm.

 Specific recommendations are difficult to make. Hotels vary and short-term rentals vary.

 Be sure to book your place to stay well in advance for the summer of 2024. There are rumors that there are more openings this summer of 2024 but let's not take the risk, eh?

Certainly there are great and not so great places to stay in Paris. Let's explore...

- Where to Stay in Paris: Guide to the Top 10 Best Areas
- The Best Places to Stay in Paris France
- Where to stay in Paris: the 5 BEST neighborhoods
- Where to Stay in Paris: Best & Worst Areas (by a Local)! When Lucile says “Stay in Paris” I think she means “Live in Paris”

Stay on the Left Bank

Where to Stay in Paris Left Bank and Why

Staying in the Left Bank (Rive Gauche) of Paris offers a charming and culturally rich experience, with a distinct ambiance compared to the Right Bank. Known for its artistic and intellectual history, the Left Bank is home to numerous landmarks, cozy cafes, and vibrant neighborhoods. Here are some key areas to consider and why they might be perfect for your stay:

Saint-Germain-des-Prés

Why Stay Here:  recommended

- **Historic and Cultural Significance:** Saint-Germain-des-Prés is synonymous with Parisian intellectual life. It was once the hub of writers, philosophers, and artists, including Sartre, Beauvoir, and Hemingway.
- **Cafes and Boutiques:** Famous cafes like Café de Flore and Les Deux Magots offer a quintessential Parisian experience. The area is also dotted with chic boutiques, art galleries, and antique shops.

- **Landmarks:** Close to the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, one of the oldest churches in Paris, and the beautiful Luxembourg Gardens.

Latin Quarter (Quartier Latin)

Why Stay Here:  recommended but expensive 

- **Vibrant and Youthful Atmosphere:** Home to the Sorbonne University, the Latin Quarter has a lively student population, adding a youthful and dynamic vibe.
- **Historical Sites:** Visit the Pantheon, the Cluny Museum, and the stunning Saint-Étienne-du-Mont church. The area's medieval streets are perfect for wandering and discovering hidden gems.
- **Cafes and Bookstores:** The Latin Quarter boasts numerous cafes, bookstores like the iconic Shakespeare and Company, and an eclectic mix of restaurants.

Montparnasse

Why Stay Here:

- **Artistic Heritage:** Montparnasse was the heart of the Parisian art scene in the early 20th century, frequented by artists like Picasso, Modigliani, and Chagall.
- **Skyscraper Views:** The Montparnasse Tower offers panoramic views of Paris, including the Eiffel Tower.
- **Transportation Hub:** Montparnasse is well-connected, with the Gare Montparnasse train station providing easy access to other parts of Paris and beyond.

Rue Mouffetard and Place Monge

Why Stay Here:

- **Market Street:** Rue Mouffetard is a charming, narrow street with a lively market, offering fresh produce, cheese, and baked goods. It's one of the oldest streets in Paris, retaining its historical charm.
- **Quaint and Cozy:** The area around Place Monge is quieter and offers a village-like atmosphere within the city, with plenty of cafes and small shops.

Odéon and Luxembourg

Why Stay Here:

- **Luxembourg Gardens:** Staying near the Luxembourg Gardens provides easy access to one of Paris's most beautiful parks, perfect for leisurely strolls and picnics.
- **Cultural Venues:** Close to the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe, a prominent theater in Paris, and the Senate housed in the Luxembourg Palace.

- **Elegant Surroundings:** The area is known for its elegant architecture, charming streets, and a mix of high-end shops and cafes.

7th Arrondissement (near the Eiffel Tower)

Why Stay Here:

- **Iconic Views:** Proximity to the Eiffel Tower and Champ de Mars park makes this area popular for its stunning views and leisurely walks.
- **Museums and Monuments:** Visit the Musée d'Orsay, Les Invalides, and the Rodin Museum.
- **Upscale and Quiet:** The 7th Arrondissement is more residential and upscale, offering a quieter stay with a touch of luxury.

Conclusion

Staying on the Left Bank of Paris immerses you in a blend of history, culture, and vibrant city life. Whether you prefer the historic charm of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the youthful energy of the Latin Quarter, the artistic legacy of Montparnasse, the market bustle of Rue Mouffetard, the elegance around Luxembourg, or the iconic sights near the Eiffel Tower, the Left Bank offers a variety of neighborhoods to suit different tastes and preferences. Each area provides a unique experience, making your stay in Paris truly memorable.

Stay on the Right Bank

Where to Stay in Paris Right Bank and Why

Staying on the Right Bank (Rive Droite) of Paris offers a vibrant and diverse experience, with a mix of historical landmarks, upscale shopping, and lively neighborhoods. The Right Bank is known for its iconic attractions and bustling atmosphere. Here are some key areas to consider and why they might be perfect for your stay:

Le Marais

Why Stay Here:  excellent. Try the northern Marais.

- **Historic and Trendy:** Le Marais is one of Paris’s oldest districts, known for its well-preserved medieval architecture and trendy vibe. It's a lively area with a rich history.

- **Cultural Diversity:** The neighborhood is home to a mix of communities, including a significant Jewish quarter, LGBTQ+ friendly areas, and chic boutiques and cafes.
- **Museums and Galleries:** Visit the Picasso Museum, the Carnavalet Museum, and numerous art galleries. The area is also known for its hidden courtyards and historic mansions.

Champs-Élysées and the 8th Arrondissement

Why Stay Here:

- **Iconic Boulevard:** The Champs-Élysées is one of the most famous streets in the world, lined with theaters, cafes, luxury shops, and the Arc de Triomphe at its western end.
- **Luxury and Elegance:** The 8th Arrondissement is home to high-end hotels, luxury boutiques, and fine dining establishments.
- **Cultural Landmarks:** Visit the Grand Palais, Petit Palais, and the beautiful Parc Monceau. It's also close to the Élysée Palace, the official residence of the French President.

Montmartre

Why Stay Here:

- **Artistic Heritage:** Montmartre is famous for its bohemian history and as a haven for artists like Picasso, Van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec.
- **Iconic Landmarks:** The Sacré-Cœur Basilica offers stunning views of Paris, and the Place du Tertre is known for its street artists and vibrant atmosphere.
- **Charming Streets:** Wander through the cobblestone streets, enjoy the quaint cafes, and visit the unique museums like the Espace Dalí.

Louvre and Palais Royal

Why Stay Here:

- **Cultural Heart:** Staying near the Louvre puts you in the heart of Paris’s cultural scene, with the Louvre Museum, the Palais Royal, and the Tuileries Garden within walking distance.
- **Elegant and Central:** The area is elegant and central, providing easy access to other major attractions, including the Seine River and the Île de la Cité.
- **Shopping and Dining:** High-end shopping along Rue Saint-Honoré and numerous fine dining options are available.

Opéra and Grands Boulevards

Why Stay Here:

- **Entertainment Hub:** The area around the Opéra Garnier is bustling with theaters, music halls, and cinemas. It's a lively part of the city known for its vibrant nightlife.
- **Shopping District:** Home to the famous department stores Galeries Lafayette and Printemps,

perfect for shopping enthusiasts.
- **Historic Buildings:** The area features stunning 19th-century architecture and grand boulevards, adding to its charm and elegance.

Bastille and Faubourg Saint-Antoine

Why Stay Here:

- **Historic Significance:** The Bastille area is historically significant, known for the Bastille prison, a key site of the French Revolution.
- **Vibrant and Trendy:** Today, it's a trendy neighborhood with a lively nightlife, numerous bars, restaurants, and clubs.
- **Artisan Shops:** The nearby Faubourg Saint-Antoine is famous for its artisan workshops and furniture shops, reflecting the area's traditional craftsmanship.

Conclusion

Staying on the Right Bank of Paris offers a dynamic blend of history, culture, shopping, and entertainment. Whether you prefer the historic and trendy vibe of Le Marais, the luxury of the Champs-Élysées, the artistic charm of Montmartre, the cultural heart near the Louvre, the entertainment hub around Opéra, or the vibrant nightlife of Bastille, the Right Bank has something to suit every taste and interest. Each area provides a unique Parisian experience, making your stay in the City of Light unforgettable.

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