

### 3 Days in Paris Itinerary

I get it! How do you spend *only* three days in Paris and feel like you've seen enough of the city to go home and tell your friends '*I've been to Paris*'? The trouble is, the city of lights is just so vast and there is so much to explore!

Included within this Parisian itinerary, you'll find three completely different Paris itineraries for each day, meaning that even if you have more or less time in the City of Light, then you can follow each day individually and at your own pace to really [get to know the city on a local level](#).

When it comes to food in Paris, there's no shortage of culinary experiences to be had and there's a restaurant or café on almost every street corner.

Unfortunately, this can make it a little bit tricky as to which places to go to, because of course not all eateries in Paris are made equal.

Check out our [foodie guide to Paris](#) for some of our top recommended places to eat in Paris! Day one of this itinerary is all about *classic Paris*, day two is more of a *chic guide*, and day three is about *getting to know the city on a local level*.

## Day One in Paris: The Classic Paris Itinerary

For your first day in the City of Love, you'll want to tick off as much of your [French bucket list](#) as possible. As such, the first 24 hours are all about seeing those iconic places which you've no doubt seen on countless postcards prior to your city visit. So indulge your inner tourist and rest well the night before- you've got a lot of ground to cover!

### Visit the Eiffel Tower for sunrise

What could possibly be more Parisian than catching a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower?! Start your day off the right way by partaking in an iconic photo walk along the Seine. Begin your [stroll at Trocadero](#) (metro line 9) and you'll be greeted with a stunning water mirror shot of the Eiffel Tower.

From there, head east towards Notre-Dame and Île de la Cité. Along the way to the Louvre, note that one of the best places to snap photos of the Eiffel Tower is Passerelle Debilly, a small passenger footbridge that was first opened for the World's fair in 1900.

Ever since then, The Eiffel accommodated millions of pedestrians, all eager to get a better view over the Eiffel Tower and Seine river. If you're not an early riser, then the light from this bridge is also perfect around sunset and is pretty lovely during the day as well!

Unlike many other Paris itineraries, I don't personally recommend ascending the Eiffel Tower! This is for a myriad of reasons, not least because you'll want plenty of precious exploration time by queueing to go up. Instead, waiting in the line for the Arc de Triomphe is much more rewarding and provides better views over the city.

### **Spend the morning checking out the Louvre**

After walking along the Seine for about 40 minutes, passing iconic sites such as the Alexandre iii bridge and the Tuileries Garden, you'll reach the world-famous [Louvre Museum](#) with *that* iconic glass pyramid.

When you think of the Louvre, your first thoughts are probably of elbowing your way through selfie sticks to catch a glimpse of the Mona Lisa. However, the Louvre museum offers so much more than a *maybe* smiling muse.

Home to medieval ruins and plenty of priceless artefacts from around the world, the Louvre also happens to be the largest museum in the world.

Highlights of the Louvre that aren't the Mona Lisa include the Winged Victory of Samothrace and the rather sumptuous Napoleon III Apartments. If you want to skip the Louvre and fancy seeing a smaller, offbeat museum instead, then I highly recommend seeing the Musée Jacquemart André or exploring the Musée National Gustave Moreau. *For more practical information, check out my guide to [things to know before visiting the Louvre](#)*

## **Spend the afternoon exploring Île de la Cité**

After visiting the Louvre, head on further down the river toward Île de la Cité and Île Saint Louis. As one of the first places in Paris to be inhabited, Île de la Cité is as rich in history as the flavour of its world-famous Berthillon ice cream.

If you're looking to explore more of this fantastic district of Paris, then my [free and self-guided walking tour](#) provides you with a complete Parisian itinerary for the area. First things first, forget Italian gelato and pick up the Parisian speciality of lemon sorbet.

Unfortunately, due to the [terrible fire of Notre Dame](#), the church that dominates this district is closed for the foreseeable future. Luckily, there are plenty of other hidden gems worth checking out, such as the [Gravestone Courtyard in Paris](#) (26 Rue Chanoinesse).

In mid-spring, Île de la Cité (*and specifically Square Jean XXIII*) is an incredible place to see some of the [best cherry blossoms in Paris](#). Other highlights of Île de la Cité include the chance to see the oldest clock in Paris, as well as some of the most beautiful medieval stained glass windows in the world in the form of Sainte Chapelle.

While on the little island, you may well also want to head to the cutest coffee shop in Paris, Au Vieux Paris d'Arcole for a quick coffee (*or glass of wine depending on the time*). Nearby, Rue des Chantres is one of the narrowest streets in the city and is one of the few remaining locations where you can glean a true sense of medieval Paris.

### **Spend the late afternoon/ evening wandering around Le Marais**

One of the must-see Parisian arrondissements, [Le Marais](#) is one of the only parts of the city to have escaped the complete and utter overhaul of Parisian architecture by Haussmann in the 19th-century. Instead, the area comprising of the 3e and 4e arrondissements of the city maintains its historic and medieval vibe.

Highlights of this area of the city include treading in the footsteps of [Nicolas Flamel](#) (*yes, that guy from Harry Potter was a real person and he lived in Paris!*), seeing a former medieval mansion which has since been transformed into a public library ([Hôtel de Sens](#)), and of course, enjoying a picnic in the oldest public planned square in Paris, Place des Vosges.

### **Enjoy the sunset by going up the Arc de Triomphe**

If you time your visit right, then you'll be rewarded with what is probably the best sunset view the city has to offer. So, if you're looking to splurge out on one panoramic view while in Paris (*and don't feel like waiting hours to go up the Eiffel Tower!*) then make it a trip to the [Arc de Triomphe](#).

### **Go on a Seine Dinner cruise**

If there's one activity that I highly recommend to get a better feel for the city, it's by taking a Seine River cruise. One of the most affordable options is to take a one hour cruise which will take you past Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, and other iconic sights.

## **Day Two in the French Capital: Chic Paris Itinerary**

Whereas day one in Paris involved waking before the crack of dawn (*quite literally*) in order to see the sunrise over Paris, day two of this three-day itinerary will allow you a little rest before going out to explore for the day. Day two is all about wandering around the chicest areas of the city and seeing where all the writers and artists would hang out in the 20th-century...

### **Spend the morning Exploring Saint-Germain-des-Prés Neighbourhood**

Paris' Chicest neighbourhood is *the* place to go if you fancy heading to the shops and splashing out on a wearable souvenir. It also happens to be one of the most picturesque neighbourhoods in the city for taking photos.

And so, if you're looking to capture some photos with no people in them, the earlier you go out, the better! Saint Germain comprises of the [6th district](#) of the city and focuses on a church of the same name, the former Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Highlights of this district include oodles of quaint coffee shops, many luxury hotels, countless antique stores and the church of Saint Sulpice (*which was featured in the [Da Vinci Code](#)*).

### **Enjoy a light bite (or refreshments) at Café de Flore**

While in the 6th arrondissement, be sure to visit at least one historic coffee shop. My personal recommendation? [Café de Flore](#). And yes, while this bistro and restaurant is a little on the pricier side of things, wander in at any given moment and you can expect to be greeted with exceptional service and a mouth-watering wine list.

First opened in the 1880s during the Third Republic, Café de Flore is easily one of the oldest coffeehouses in the French capital and has since become an institution of the city in its own right.

As such, over the years it has gained such a reputation that it has been frequented by many a famous person, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. Today, the typically Parisian institution is also one of the best places to get [brunch in Paris](#).

## **Spend early afternoon ascending the Panthéon**

You can't visit Paris and not check out the city from above at least once (or twice!)... The [Paris Panthéon](#) has everything you want from a Parisian attraction: culture, history and a whole lotta beautiful architecture. It's the final resting place of great French patriots such as Marie Curie and Voltaire.

Most days, there are guided tours up the dome of the Panthéon where you can spy 360-degree views of the city from above. Other highlights of the Paris Pantheon include the Fouque pendulum, as well as many murals and frescoes depicting Paris' patron Saint, Saint Genevieve.

After all, the mausoleum was once a church dedicated to the Saint. Nearby, head to the small church tucked away behind the Panthéon (*that of [Saint Étienne du Mont](#)*) and you'll soon discover the last surviving rood screen in a Parisian church.

Other treasures worth noting are some fantastic stained glass windows in the back rooms and the fact that a gilt gold and glass coffin in an often overlooked chapel actually houses the relics of Saint Genevieve herself.

## **Spend the afternoon taking a day trip to Versailles**

Of course, no three days in Paris itinerary would be complete without at least a quick mention of the Royal Palace of Versailles and perhaps even a day trip to the Royal City! Please note that while the Palace is a must-see, the [town of Versailles](#) itself is also well worth a wander around if you get the chance.

Best seen any day other than Monday (when the Palace, Grand Trianon, and Petit Trianon are in fact closed), the Palace of Versailles may well be the most famous château in the world.

Versailles started out as a small hunting lodge in the Middle Ages (much like the Palace of Fontainebleau). However, all this changed when Louis XIV decided he needed to own the most extravagant palace in Europe. No wonder he's often referred to as the Sun King!

## **Day Three: Offbeat Paris Itinerary**

Having explored the more 'touristy' parts of the city, your third day in Paris is going to be more about getting to know the city at a local level. Today is all about exploring those areas which are often missed during a 'classic' Paris itinerary in favour of more iconic attractions like the Louvre, Notre Dame, or the Eiffel Tower. Of all the Paris itineraries included within this list, day three is probably my favourite!

## **Spend the morning wandering around Montmartre**

Of all the things to fill your time during your long weekend in Paris, I highly recommend walking around [Montmartre](#) and soaking up the 18th arrondissement's ambience.

I promise you that you certainly won't regret it! As the haunt of actors, writers and artists alike for decades, Montmartre has become a breeding ground of creativity and in places like [Place du Tertre](#), you can still see artists painting *en plein air* to this day.

From the quirky vintage and antique shops that dot the area to the numerous cobblestoned roads, Montmartre has a completely unique vibe that's not replicated anywhere else in the city. Plus, of course, it's also home to the world-famous [Sacré-Coeur](#) as well as plenty of [secret spots in the 18th](#) which few ever get to visit.

Think: [La Maison Rose](#) (a coffee shop Picasso once frequented), *Place Dalida* (a square along the end of the prettiest street in Paris) and [Square Marcel-Bleustein-Blanchet](#) (where you'll find the view of the Sacré-Coeur and a great green space to enjoy a picnic).

## **Explore the Hidden Villages of Paris**

The words 'Wine' and 'France' are a pretty good pairing. That's why I was so excited when I discovered that there are [hidden vineyards throughout the city](#), as well as plenty of secret villages. You see, Paris used to be much smaller than it now is and the surrounding hills were populated by villages which were communities in their own right.

Today, many of these little pockets of calm remain peaceful and retain their 'French village vibe' to this day. Some of the best places to visit in Paris where you'll find a life outside of Paris ambience include [Butte Bergeyre](#), Cité Florale, and Square de Montsouris.

### **For lunch: pick up a pastry (or two!)**

What activity is possibly more Parisian than sitting in a café and munching on a pastry? If you're spending three days in Paris then this is an activity that you *have* to try!

Before you leave the city of love tomorrow (or later today), make sure that you've at least tried one of the many tempting pastries that the city has to offer. Otherwise, check out my guide on [how to order coffee in Paris](#) so as to get your order just like a local!

## **Spend the afternoon visiting the Grand Department Stores & Pigalle**

If you've chosen to spend the morning in Montmartre rather than heading to one of Paris' secret villages, then it's a quick walk down the hill to see another side of Paris yet again. From Montmartre, head down towards Opera.

Along the way, you'll pass by the world-famous 'Moulin Rouge' and through the 'red-light' district of Paris. Once at the Grand Department stores, you'll soon discover that there's something going on all year long. Sales are state-regulated in France and so only take place during the summer and in the winter.

The two grand shopping complexes along Boulevard Haussmann are that of Galeries Lafayette and Printemps. During Christmastime in the city, both stores are decked out with stunning window displays.

The main art-deco cupola of Galeries Lafayette boasts a [larger than life-sized Christmas tree](#) which has a different theme each year. Galeries Lafayette is also home to one of the best free panoramic views in the city in the form of [Galeries Lafayette rooftop terrace](#).

## **Eat traditional French food**

End your stay the right way by taking yourself out for dinner where there are only two options on the menu (meat or cheese) and the wine is served in baby bottles. Yes, you read that correctly! Pay a visit to [Le Refuge des Fondues](#) (17

*Rue des Trois Frères, 75018 Paris*) for a truly French experience on your final night of this 3 days in Paris itinerary.

The friendly restaurant is always packed with the sound of tourists and locals alike, and while the cheese isn't the best in town, the atmosphere certainly is! What's more is that the door handle leading into the place is even in the shape of a baby bottle! Be sure to book your reservation in advance as this popular spot often has a queue lining up out of the door!

## **Paris essentials for your French Capital itinerary**

Whether you're looking to spend three days or three weeks in Paris, you'll need to pack a few Parisian essentials in your bag to ensure that you can make the most of your trip. Heading to Paris for the first time? Here are my very [top tips for first-time visitors to Paris](#).

### **Paris guidebook**

For when your phone runs out of battery or technology just fails (as it so often does), you'll want an old-school guide book for all of the best maps, itineraries, and café suggestions the city has to offer.

## **French phrasebook**

French is the official language of France and it can help to know a few simple French phrases before you go. Always be sure to say 'Bonjour' when entering a store as it's polite and carry a small french phrasebook and dictionary with you in your bag

## **Books about Paris**

Before you visit the City of Light, then you may well want to read some fiction and historical works and memoirs about the city. Here are my very top creme de la creme picks for the best [books about Paris!](#)

## **Walking tours of Paris**

Like many other European capital cities, Paris is a place best explored on foot. Just be sure to bring bottles of water and suitable footwear- those cobbled lanes sure are pretty but they're not conducive to walking well in heels! If you're looking for a free and self-guided tour of Paris, I've created guides for:

[\*Le Marais Walking Tour: History & Medieval Architecture\*](#)

[\*Montmartre Walking Tour: The best of offbeat Paris\*](#)

[\*Old Paris Walking Tour \(Best of Île de la Cité, Latin Quarter & Le Marais\)\*](#)