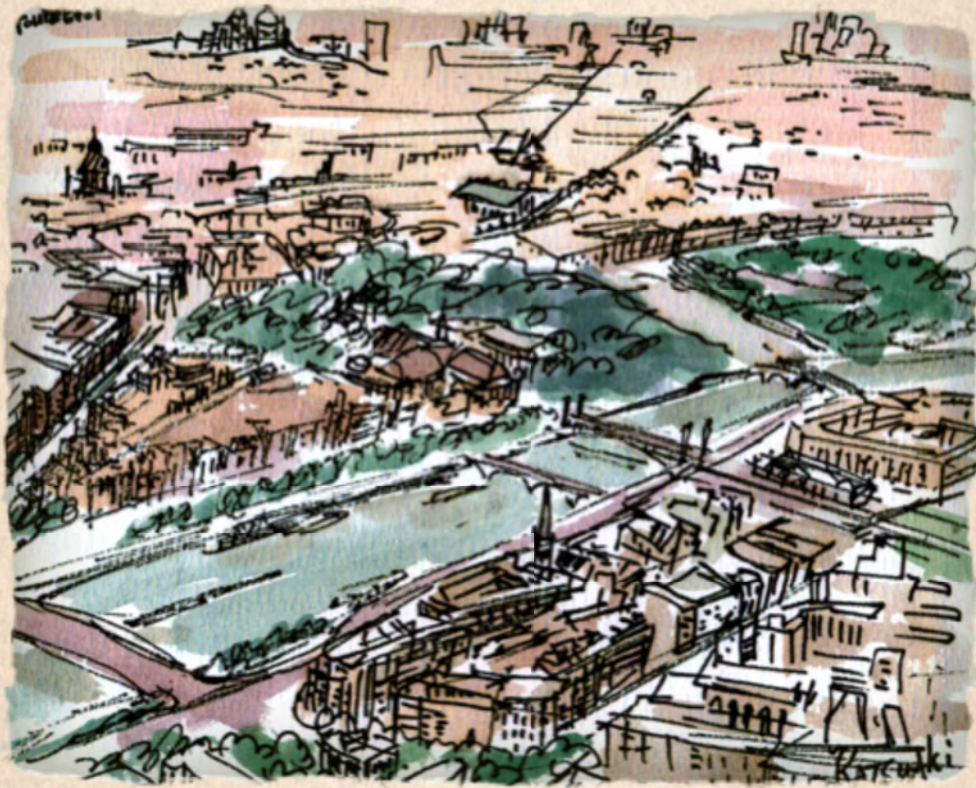


I See Paris, I See France,
I See You in Paris France



STEW ROSS

Art by Katsuaki Sato

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN THE TIME I HAVE IN PARIS?

INTRODUCTION

First of all, thank you for subscribing to my blog site. I'm pleased to be able to offer you this free download of an excerpt from my e-book, *I See Paris, I See France: I See You in Paris, France*. I decided to write the book because I remember the first time I visited Paris. I had absolutely no clue what I was going to do, let alone what I could fit into the time I had there.

Now, I'm a veteran visitor to Paris and have learned a few things. I wanted to share my experiences with you in hopes that your trip will be as efficient as possible.

This is meant for the first-time visitor to Paris but I hope returning visitors will also benefit from the information here as well as in the complete book.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at stew.ross@yooperpublications.com if you find anything you think I should include in any updates. I also accept guest blog posts. So don't hesitate to send me tales of your Paris discoveries and adventures.

WHAT TO DO?

The answer to this question depends on each traveler's interests, expectations, and time. Since this is likely your first trip to Paris, the natural answer is, "Everything."

Realistically, you can't do everything on your first trip, so you will be forced to prioritize based on your interests, the interests of your traveling companion(s), and the time you have. I decided to write this guide because I meet so many people who only are in the city for three days and seem to be totally unaware of the other cool things to do (i.e., other than the usual tourist sites).

Yes, there are some Parisian icons that can't be missed during your first visit (e.g., the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, etc.). However, you will be surprised by how much there is to do in Paris that you didn't even know existed. This is where I can help you prioritize your time. Keep in mind this list is just a start. There are many other places, sites, and things to do that didn't make my list. Once you've seen the icons and your *must see* attractions, concentrate on what interests you. If you're into cemetery walking, then by all means, carve out some time to see Père Lachaise Cemetery. If you like the macabre, then plan on three hours in the Paris Catacombs.

All I ask is to make sure you set aside enough time just to walk. You'll be surprised at what you will find unexpectedly. That's the fun of being in Paris, either for the first time or the seventh time.

Story

In October 2010 Sandy and I rented a gîte (vacation rental house) in the town of Honfleur (located in Normandy). We invited our three children and their spouses to stay with us for two weeks. None of them had ever visited Paris so we took them into the city for two days (basically an overnight trip). The purpose was to give them a taste of Paris. One of their questions was what to see in just the two days they had. I thought you might run into a similar dilemma and so I put together this list to assist you.

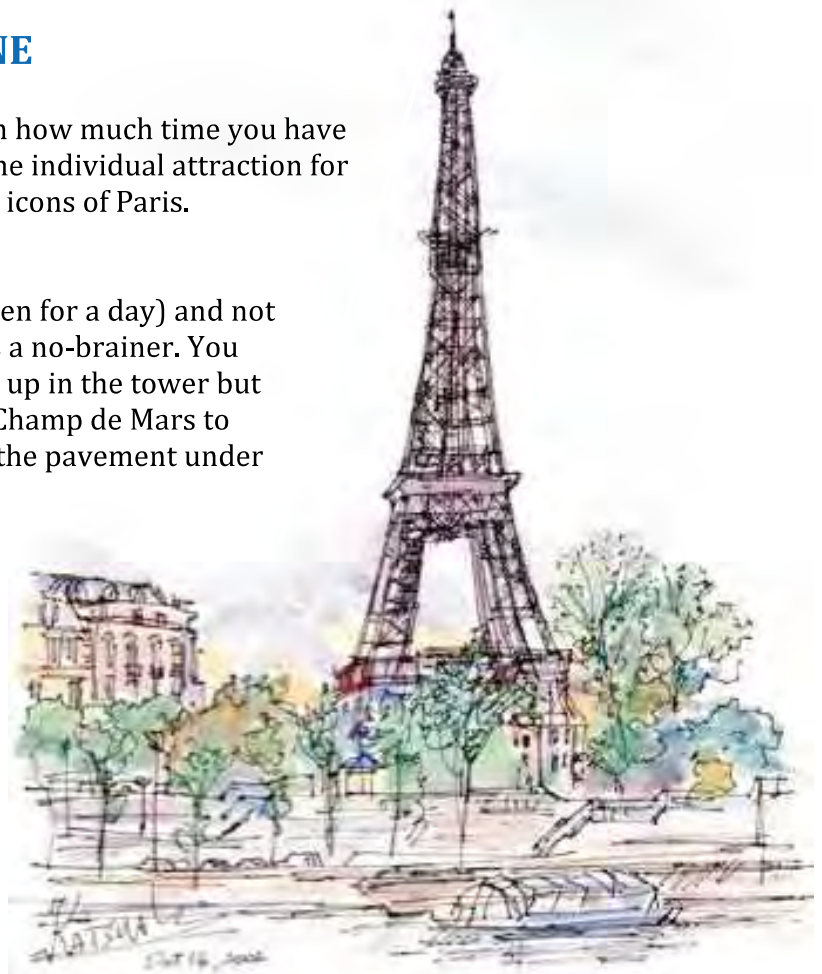
MUST SEE FOR EVERYONE

These are suggestions based not on how much time you have in Paris but on the importance of the individual attraction for the first-time visitor. These are the icons of Paris.

1. The Eiffel Tower

How can you go to Paris (even for a day) and not see the Eiffel Tower? This is a no-brainer. You may not have the time to go up in the tower but at least make it over to the Champ de Mars to see the tower. Lie down on the pavement under the center of the tower and take a picture for a great desktop photo.

The tower lights up every evening in a golden shade. Every hour for five minutes it puts on a spectacular sparkling light show. Make sure you go and see this display.



Tip

The Métro system is the best way to get around Paris. Your wait time is typically 1 to 3 minutes between trains. The average travel time between stops is 90 seconds. Always remember that the Métro stops running at 12:30 AM on Mondays through Friday and 2:15 AM on Saturdays and Sundays. This is important to know if you go out to the Eiffel Tower later in the evening to watch the spectacular light show (or even if you close down one

of the bistros or boîtes—nightclubs—far away from the place you're staying).

Advice

If you plan on going up the Eiffel Tower, make sure you buy your tickets online in advance of your trip (similar to buying your Paris Museum Pass). The ticket lines at the tower are extremely long to buy tickets once you get there. I would suggest that you get there early and preferably, when the tower opens.

I also suggest that prior to your visit, you check the hours the Eiffel Tower is open as well as admission prices on line: www.tour-eiffel.fr/

****** A must see attraction on your first visit.**

2. The Louvre

Another no-brainer as far as visiting, regardless of your available time in Paris. But here's where it gets sticky. You can spend two weeks in the Louvre and still not see everything. So before you go, make sure you understand how much time you have to wander around because this is the type of place where time stands still. Make sure you have a good idea of what *your* specific *can't miss* attractions will be (e.g., the Mona Lisa—everyone's favorite, the Venus de Milo, etc.).

Tip

Buy the Paris Museum Pass. You won't have to stand in line to purchase your tickets. Second, DO NOT enter through the main entrance located at the giant glass pyramid. Go to the Porte des Lions entrance. This "secret" entrance is located in the southwestern wing of the Louvre. With your back to the glass pyramid (facing the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel), walk across the street, under the Arch, and then turn left. Go across the grass and follow the wing almost to its end. There will be an arched doorway with two lioness statues flanking it.

Again, I suggest that you reference the Louvre's web site for up-to-date information before you visit. The French government is notorious for changing hours without any notification. Remember, they are going through some hard economic times and closing down an attraction for a while saves them money. (Now, I'm not saying they would do this at the Louvre, but it's something to keep in the back of your mind.) www.louvre.fr/en

****** A must see attraction on your first visit.**

3. Île de la Cité / Notre Dame

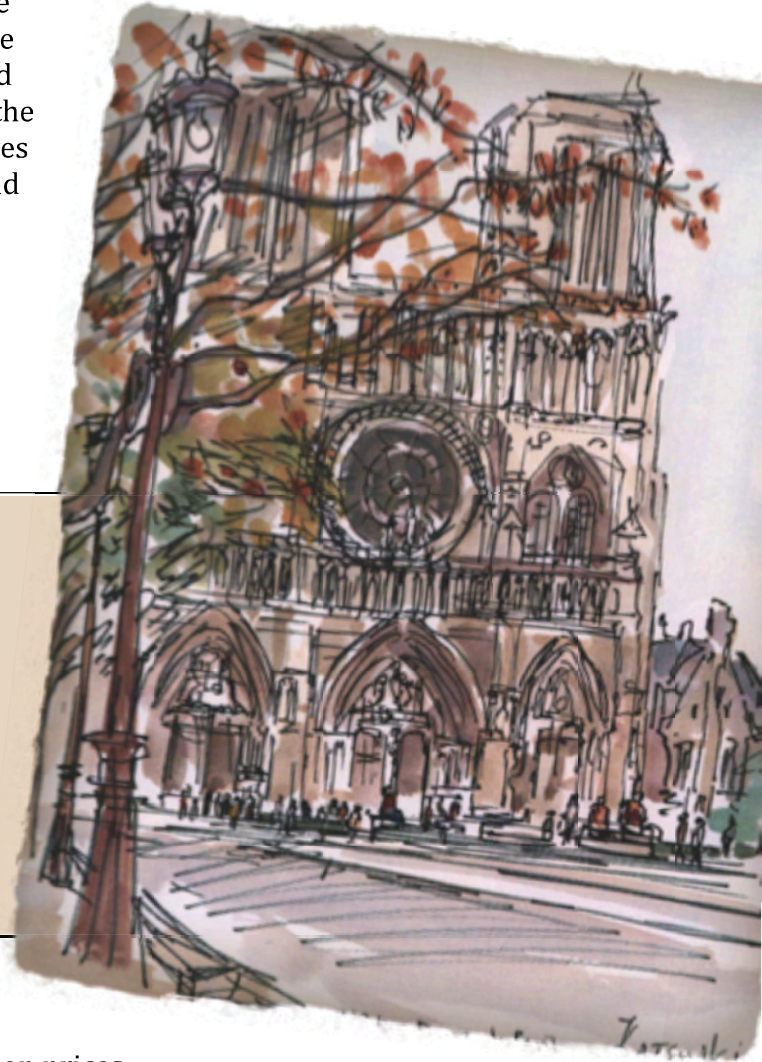
Another icon of the city—a postcard picture. This is the center of the city. In fact, look for the plaque in the ground that denotes the exact center of Paris. There are many things to do on the island if you have time. Visiting the inside of the cathedral is a must. A separate tour of the towers (and gargoyles) can be arranged. Across the

square from the cathedral is the underground museum where you can see the preserved Roman ruins along with dioramas of what it looked like 2,000 years ago.

Also on the island are the Palais de Justice (including the spectacular Sainte-Chapelle chapel and its stained glass windows) and the Conciergerie. The Justice Palace was the original palace of the king and today serves as the headquarters of the Paris police and the courts. The Conciergerie is a former prison and much of it is preserved from the Middle Ages. This is where Marie Antoinette was incarcerated prior to her trial (in the Justice Palace) and her eventual execution on the Place de la Concorde.

Advice

If you have time, walk across the bridge connecting the island to another island, the Île St. Louis. While I've never tried it, I'm told the gelato and ice cream in the little shop at the end of the bridge are some of the best in the world. Our favorite restaurant is on this island.



The tour of the Conciergerie is something not to miss if you have the time. Check on line for hours and admission prices before you go: www.conciergerie.monuments-nationaux.fr/ Use *Google Translates* to switch from French to English.

****** A must see attraction on your first visit.**

4. Jardin des Tuileries / Place de la Concorde

Commonly known in English as the Tuileries Gardens, it is the land between the Louvre and the Place de la Concorde. It is a beautiful walk and one you should take. The Place de la Concorde has a rather notorious past. It was the plaza where many of the executions (including those of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette) took place during the French Revolution.

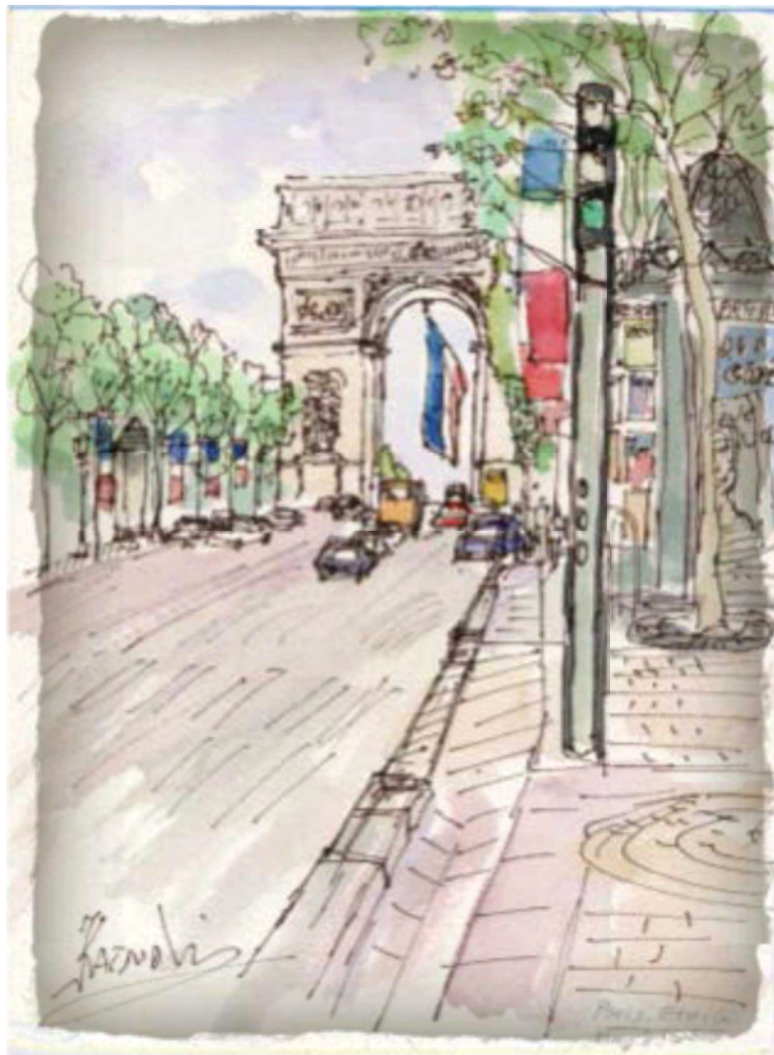
****** Because of its proximity to other attractions, this would be something I recommend on your first visit.**

5. **Arc de Triomphe / Champs-Elysees**

Again, this is one of those postcard sites. This monument was begun by Napoleon to commemorate the sacrifices of the soldiers and citizens in the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Situated in the Place Charles de Gaulle, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier lies beneath it. The Champs-Élysées has long been one of the chic areas of Paris. However, during recent times, the area has gone down hill and Parisians pretty much stay away from here. It's mostly tourists and pick-pockets on this street any more.

You can go to the top of the Arc de Triomphe but go on line first and check out the hours before you make the journey down the Champs-Élysées: www.arc-de-triomphe.monuments-nationaux.fr/ Use *Google Translates* to convert from French to English.

****** A must see attraction on your first visit. I recommend you find a cab to take you to the monument. It is a long walk from the Place de la Concorde and the traffic can be quite daunting.**



YOU PLAN ON STAYING FOR ONE WEEK

Now that you've been to the *must see* sites, here are some of the more interesting sites that you'll want to visit if you have more time.

1. **Musée National Auguste Rodin**

Absolutely a *must see* attraction for the weeklong visitor. This assumes you enjoy art museums, specifically sculpture. It is located in the house Rodin used as a studio (the former Hôtel Biron). Your visit is divided into two sections: the visit inside the house and a stroll around the gardens surrounding the house. I guarantee you'll walk away impressed—I've never met anyone who hasn't—especially with the gardens.

Fact

You will see many mansions, residences, or former residences referred to as *hôtels*. These are NOT hotels or motels. They are the mansion or town residence of the wealthy or nobility. Typically the owner's name comes after the word, *Hôtel*. So if Sandy and I lived in Paris, I suppose we could call our residence Hôtel Ross. Well, not really since we're not wealthy and certainly not members of nobility.

For hours and admission prices, visit the web site: www.musee-rodin.fr/en/home

2. **Place de la Bastille**

Although this can be disappointing on first glance (especially if you expected see a large, old fortress), I think a visit to the Place de la Bastille is warranted. A prison/fortress built in 1639 once stood here. The prison housed many famous prisoners including the Marquis de Sade and the "Man in the Iron Mask."

The attack on the prison on 14 July 1789 started the French Revolution. It was somewhat ironic that only 7 prisoners were found that day in the prison (The Marquis de Sade had been transferred to another prison only days before the attack.) Actually, Louis XVI was seriously contemplating tearing down the fortress but was too late when the citizens of Paris took over the job from him.

The column in the center of the plaza commemorates the 1830 Revolution. Most visitors think the fortress stood in the center of the plaza—it didn't. The actual site of the fortress is where the Rue Saint-Antoine meets the roundabout.



3. Musée d'Orsay

This museum is located in a former rail station which was converted in 1986 to a museum dedicated to impressionist paintings. Frankly, next to the Louvre, I think it is the best art museum in Paris. (The Rodin museum is third in my opinion). Its collection is quite extensive and revolves all the time.

For updated information on hours and admission prices, check out the museum's web site:

www.musee-orsay.fr/en

4. Palais Royal

Built in 1634 for Cardinal Richelieu, it was turned over to the monarchy upon the cardinal's death. Over the years it was owned by the junior line

of the Bourbon monarchy, the House of

Orléans. It was outside the Café Foy (Galerie de Montpensier: Unit 57–60) on 12 July 1789 that Camille Desmoulins jumped up on a table and shouted to the mob, "Fight to the death." Two days later, the Bastille fell.

My book, *Where Did They Put the Guillotine?—Marie Antoinette's Last Ride*, will take you through the Palais Royal and show you where the famous shops, cafes, and other significant retail outlets were during the French Revolution.

Advice

Be careful when taking photos of the retail shops inside the Palais Royal. The shopkeepers can be quite sensitive to this. We tried to take a photo for one of my books and it caused quite a scene.

5. Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris

If you are interested in the history of Paris, this is a museum you don't want to miss. The exhibits will take you from the origins of the city up until the mid 1970s. Located in two former hôtels (i.e., residences), the second floor of the Hôtel Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau is dedicated to the French Revolution (you enter the museum through the Hôtel de Sévigné). Here you will find artifacts such as the chess set Louis XVI used while a prisoner in The Temple, personal effects of Robespierre, and locks of hair from the royal family.

If you like this museum, you will likely want to visit the Cluny Museum for its exhibits of medieval artifacts.

Advice Allow a minimum of three hours for this museum.

For updated information on hours and admission prices, check out the museum's web site: www.carnavalet.paris.fr/en

6. Hôtel de Ville

Remember what I said about the word *hôtel*? The Hôtel de Ville is not the local Holiday Inn franchise. It is Paris' city hall where the municipal government (called the commune) of Paris sits. In front of the Hôtel de Ville is the plaza once called the Place de la Grève. It was here that public punishments were carried out, including some of the most atrocious executions. The Place de la Grève once sloped down to the river where the city's first port was located. Here, goods would be unloaded and distributed throughout the city. The current building was built after a fire in 1870 destroyed the original one.

Story Every city has a city hall and they are all called Hôtel de Ville. I met a fellow at harbor side in Honfleur one day—an American. He couldn't understand why the local hotel couldn't accommodate him. He pointed across the harbor to the Hôtel de Ville. I had to fill him in. True story.

You can take tours of the city hall but they are very infrequent and conducted in French. The best web site to find the hours and tour information is: www.en.parisinfo.com.



YOU PLAN ON STAYING FOR TWO WEEKS

1. **Musée Picasso**

We've never been to this museum. It is located in the Marais District in a former residence. Every time we go to visit, it is closed. But it is an attraction that remains on our list of things to do.

For updated information on hours and admission prices (and to see if the bloody thing is open), check out the museum's web site: www.museepicassoparis.fr/en

2. **Luxembourg Palace & Gardens**

I include this in the list for folks who stay in the city for over a week. The reason is that on Sundays, the city pretty much folds up. On a beautiful day, you'll find Parisians taking their day off in the parks. The Luxembourg gardens are one of the more popular parks. Sandy and I always go there on Sunday to just sit and watch. We take our lunch with us and picnic by the fountain. It's fun to watch the kids launch and sail their boats (*le bateau*) in the little lake with the fountain.



Advice

The gendarmes patrol this area frequently. Don't move your chairs right up to the edge of the lake. They will come over and make you move them away.

3. Place Vendôme

Look around the perimeter of this square. Recognize some of the more expensive retail stores? This is ground zero for shopping. Probably the most famous business located in the Place Vendome is the Paris Ritz Hotel. A statue of Louis XIV (the Sun King) once stood in the center, but was torn down during the Revolution. Today, the column crowned by Napoleon dominates the square. The column was erected by Napoleon to commemorate his victory at Austerlitz and is made of bronze from captured Russian and Austrian cannons.

Story

Many famous people are associated with the Paris Ritz Hotel. Coco Chanel moved in here during the early 1930s. Sophia Loren always stayed here when in town. Cole Porter wrote, "Begin the Beguine" while staying at the Ritz. Movie scenes were shot here. The German Luftwaffe used the hotel as its headquarters during the occupation from 1940 to 1944. The bar here is named after one of the most famous clients, Ernest Hemingway. He "liberated" the hotel and the bar during the two-week liberation of Paris. On 31 August 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Al-Fayed dined in the Imperial Suite. Several hours later, they died in a car crash in the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris.

Hemingway once said, "When in Paris the only reason not to stay at the Ritz is if you can't afford it." Well, if you can afford it, try the web site at www.ritzparis.com/en

4. Place des Vosges

Located in the Marais District, this is Paris's oldest existing square and once, its most fashionable. On this spot once stood the Hotel des Tournelles (the residence of King Henri II). A joust was held in its courtyard in 1559 and Henri II took a lance through his eye and subsequently died. (Henri II was one of the only French kings who enjoyed the sport of jousting.) His widow, Catherine de Médicis, had the structure torn down and moved back to the Louvre. The current buildings (called Place Royale) were built by King Henri IV in 1612 and it was his intent to relocate his court there. Unfortunately, he was assassinated before he could move.

Story

Some of the famous residents in the Place des Vosges included Madame de Sévigné (owner of the hotel where the Carnavalet Museum is located—born at No. 1), Victor Hugo (writer of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*—lived at No. 6 from 1832 to 1848), Sully (Henri IV's great minister—lived at No. 7), and Cardinal Richelieu (Louis III's great minister—remember the three musketeers?—lived at No. 21 from 1615 to 1627).

5. Montmartre

This was once a village to the north of Paris. It is a hill or butte where the *moulins à vent* (windmills) once stood. It became a very bohemian area in the early 1900s when the artists (such as Picasso) moved here. It is very famous for the Moulin Rouge, a dance hall that pioneered the outrageous (at that time) dance called the can-can. Immortalized by Toulouse Lautrec, the dance hall still exists. The Basilique du Sacré-Coeur is worth the walk up its stairs for its unbelievable view of the city. This is another popular Sunday destination for Parisians.

For those of you who want to take in the can-can, you should visit the Moulin Rouge web site at: www.moulinrouge.fr/

6. Outdoor Paris Markets

We love to hang out at the large outdoor markets. These have just about everything under the sun you would ever want to eat. It is one of the many times I wish I lived in Paris—just to shop at the markets. When we rent an apartment, we make sure we eat dinner in the apartment at least once during our stay. It's easier to go out to dinner but we want to shop at least once at the markets.

Fact

Now here's the dirty little secret the French don't want you to know: most of the restaurants serve you pre-prepared food. Yep, very few prepare their meals from scratch. They also won't let you in on the fact that most of the produce and other products in the cute open air markets come from one or two central sources.

Here are some tips courtesy of Annie Fitzsimmons, USA Today article (25 October 2013) entitled, *The Secrets to Shopping Paris Markets*.

1. Three letters that matter: M.O.F.

This stands for *Meilleur Ouvrier de France*. It signifies the merchant is the best craftsman.

2. It's their house.

The same rules apply at the outdoor market as when you walk into a retail establishment. The only difference is there are no walls or front door.

Stew: Greet the proprietor with a *Bonjour*.

3. There are no monopolies.

Every market is required to have more than one vendor for each type of product. If you don't like one vendor, go to the others.

4. A long line doesn't mean the vendor/product is the best.

There's a line for a reason but it's not always due to quality.

5. Bakery trips should be quick.

Get in line and get out. This means knowing what you want by the time you are waited on.

Stew: My observations have been that the vendors aren't very patient with people who can't make up their minds and they will let you know it.

6. **Cheese takes longer.**

Parisians take their time in picking out their cheese. So again, get in line but don't hesitate to ask for help in choosing the right cheese.

Stew: Sort of the opposite of the bakery.

7. **Don't touch.**

Unlike the grocery stores or vegetable stands in America, you *NEVER* should touch the fruits or vegetables. Ask for assistance. The vendor will gladly assist you in picking out the proper food.

Stew: I've never seen the vendor slap someone's hand but I have seen the nasty looks.

Here are some good outdoor markets (and market streets) you can visit in Paris:

- Rue Montorgueil (and Rue des Petits Carreaux)

This is a market street with vendors in permanent stalls. It is close to Saint-Eustache church and Les Halles (the historic marketplace of the Middle Ages).

- Closed on Monday
- Open: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM - 6 PM
Sunday mornings

- Marché Monge

This is one of those local secrets that are now out in the open. The market is located on the Place Monge. It is near the Jardin des Plantes, the Arènes de Lutèce (an ancient Roman amphitheater), and the Panthéon.

- Open: Wednesday, Friday, 7 AM - 2:30 PM
Sunday, 7 AM - 3 PM

- Marché des Enfants Rouges (Market of the Red Children)

There was an orphanage near here where the orphans dressed in *rouge* (red). This market dates back to 1628. It's small but the ethnic food choices are diverse. It is located in the Marais District at 39, rue de Bretagne.

- Closed on Monday.
- Open: Tuesday - Thursday, 8:30 AM - 1 PM; 4 PM - 7:30 PM.
Friday, Saturday, 8:30 AM - 1 PM; 4 PM - 8 PM.
Sunday, 8:30 AM - 2 PM.

7. **Panthéon**

This is the former church dedicated to Paris's patron saint, Saint Geneviève. King Louis XV became gravely ill and made the promise that if he recovered, he would build a church to St. Geneviève. Well, he recovered. During the French Revolution, the leaders renamed the church the Panthéon and decided to bury the Revolution's martyrs in the church. Two of the first to be buried were Jean-Paul Marat and Mirabeau (although both were later disinterred). Today, it is a mausoleum for France's great men. Only two women are currently buried there. Only one woman is buried based on her individual accomplishments—Madame Curie. The French government has recently voted in three more women. Frankly, I don't know why they've never voted in Madame Roland.

For updated information on hours and admission prices, check out the museum's web site:

www.panthéon.monuments-nationaux.fr/en



8. **Père Lachaise Cemetery**

This is one of the most incredible cemeteries you'll ever visit. It is huge and is a who's who of residents. Again, it is one of those destination points where Parisians like to stroll through on Sundays. (Contrary to popular reports, Parisians do not picnic here—it is against the law.) If you are a photographer, you'll love this place. (The ravens sitting on top of the tombstones make for very cool atmospheric black and white photos.) Reserve several hours for just walking around. Take a look at a list of its permanent citizens before you go so you'll have an idea where to stop and pay your respects. Oh, and yes, Jim Morrison is still buried there. (His family finally obtained permanent residency for his remains.) Hope you're there when Jim's creepy impersonator is standing by the grave. If he's there, slip him a couple of Euro to have your picture taken with him—I wish I had.

Advice

There are no official tours given by the staff of the cemetery. Several fellows have made a career of giving very informative and inexpensive group tours of the cemetery. You can get a free map of the cemetery by visiting the guardhouses at the Porte des Amandiers and Porte Gambetta. An official cemetery guide map can be downloaded from www.pariscemeteries.com/page/perelachaise.html. Most visitors suggest purchasing the *Metropolitains Edition* at the vendor located next to the Père Lachaise Métro stop. They say it is the most complete map of the cemetery and its occupants.

Hours for all Paris cemeteries (except the Picpus Cemetery) are the same. Go to www.pariscemeteries.com for current information.

9. Saint-Denis Cathedral

This is the royal necropolis. The crypt of the original church dating back to 400 is still there. In fact, the first acknowledged king of France, Clovis, is buried here. Most of the French kings and queens were buried here. Unfortunately, many of them are no longer here. During the Revolution, orders were given to empty the coffins and the remains were dumped either into the river or a big pit. However, the tombs are quite impressive. The crypt contains the heart of the Dauphin, Louis XVII along with the tombs of the Bourbon dynasty.

Story

This is one of those unexpected experiences that make for priceless stories. You have to take number 13 Métro line to the second to last stop (towards Saint-Denis-Université). It's about a 40-minute ride. After Sandy and I went through the church and crypt, we decided to walk around the town. We walked down a wide boulevard until I turned to her about five streets in. I said, "You know, I think we'd better turn around and walk as fast as we can back to the Métro station." When we got back to our hotel, the concierge told us never to walk in that section of town again. You see, we were at ground zero for where the Paris riots began two years earlier. The Imam who incited those riots had his office right around the corner from where we were.

Advice

When you go to Saint-Denis and are finished, go right back to the Métro station and return to Paris.

For hours and admission prices, please visit Saint-Denis's web site: www.saint-denis.monuments-nationaux.fr/en

10. Hôtel de Sens

This building is one of the only four medieval residences remaining in Paris. Built in the late 1400s, Queen Margot (the annulled wife of Henri IV) lived here after

returning to Paris from her 18-year exile in Provence. She was very active with her young male companions. At some point, she had two lovers at the same time. Unfortunately, the two met up outside the main entrance one morning and one of them was shot and killed by the other. They caught the shooter and his scaffold was constructed just outside the entrance you see today. Queen Margot sat in one of the windows to view the execution of the killer. When her former lover refused to make amends to the queen, she flew into a rage and yelled, "Kill him, kill him." Look at the exterior of the front of the building. Can you locate the cannon ball imbedded in the wall? It was left there from the 1870 Commune. Today, the former medieval residence is an art gallery (the Forney Art Gallery).

For hours of admission, please visit the gallery's web site:
www.bibliotheque.forney@paris.fr

11. Hôtel de Cluny

This is the Musée National du Moyen Âge (National Museum of the Middle Ages). Like the Hôtel de Sens, this building is one of the four remaining residences in Paris built during the Middle Ages. Today it houses artifacts from Paris, specifically during the city's medieval period. It is also the site where the old Roman baths were located. The museum displays the 15th century tapestries of The Lady and the Unicorn (there are five). The altar piece from Saint-Denis dating back to 1250 is also on view.

Fact

Do you remember seeing the statues on the exterior of Notre Dame? Well, these are statues of various saints throughout history. Unfortunately, during the French Revolution, the citizens thought they were statues of French kings and they decapitated every one of them. No one knew what happened to the heads until restoration work was performed on Notre Dame in the late 1800s. During some of the excavations, they found the heads. The original heads are now displayed at the Hôtel de Cluny.

Story

Mary Tudor, sister of the English king, Henry VIII, resided here after her husband, the French king Louis XII, died. Louis XII's successor, Francis I, kept Mary here until he was sure she wasn't pregnant. If she had been and a baby boy had been born, Francis would have lost his job.

Before you visit the museum, visit them at: www.musee-moyenage.fr for hours of admission.

SUBSEQUENT VISITS TO PARIS

1. Other Cemeteries

If you're into cemetery visits, you'll want to visit the Montmartre Cemetery and some of its more famous residents. Buried here are Alexandre Dumas—writer, Edgar Degas—painter, François Truffaut—movie director/actor, and a family called Sanson. Another cemetery would be the Montparnasse Cemetery. Here you'll find Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre—writer and philosopher, respectively, Alfred Dreyfus—army officer, Samuel Beckett—novelist and Nobel Prize winner, and André Citroën—auto manufacturer.

Fact

The Sanson family were folks you would never want to meet in their professional capacity. For six generations, a member of the family served the king (and later, the Revolutionary government, Napoleon, and the republic) as the official executioner of Paris and France.

Don't miss one of my future books, *Where Did They Bury Jim Morrison, the Lizard King? —A Walking Tour of Paris Cemeteries*. I'll take you around to the various Paris cemeteries and point out some of the more interesting permanent residents. The Sanson family is only one.

2. Paris Catacombs

This is really an attraction you shouldn't miss. I put it here only because it really depends on your interest level. This is an underground tour with a lot of walking and stair climbing, and it is not for the claustrophobic or those with health problems. These are the underground caverns where millions of skeletons are buried -- the final resting place of Paris citizens after they were kicked out of their cemeteries located within the city limits. It really is fascinating but very macabre.

Advice

Go early, as lines are long. If it's been raining, postpone this attraction for another day.

Again, you should check for current hours and admissions policy at their web site: www.catacombs.paris.fr

3. Montparnasse

This was ground zero for the "Lost Generation." During the 1920s, the artists moved here after Montmartre became too expensive. Here on the Left Bank, the cafes and bistros catered to the artists, American expatriates, writers, intellectuals, and other assorted characters. This generation included F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, William Faulkner, Miro, James Joyce, and even the Russian émigré, Leon Trotsky.

Advice

If you haven't already seen Woody Allen's movie, "Midnight in Paris," you've missed out on a good movie. It's about the lost generation in Paris. Enough said. Maybe I should do a walking tour book based on the Lost Generation? Let me know what you think.



4. Hôtel des Invalides

Originally built by Louis XIV, this facility housed soldiers disabled in war (somewhat akin to our veteran's hospitals). It is known today as the site of Napoleon's tomb. It is also a museum of French wars and has an excellent museum dedicated to World War II. Its medieval museum is well worth the trip to see the original armor from some of the medieval kings. It's amazing what has survived all these years and you'll wonder where they got all this stuff.

Here's their web site for current information:

www.musee-armee.fr/en

5. Centre Pompidou

If you want to see an example of extreme contemporary architecture, go visit the Pompidou Center. All of the utilities are on the outside of the building. I think it's hideous. The thought process was that repair costs would be lower due to easier access. What they forgot was that Paris experiences weather just like every other place, including bad weather. Since its completion in the 1970s, the repair costs have skyrocketed because the weather destroys the utility units and large replacement costs are incurred.

While some may find this building off-putting, others may be intrigued by its unique architecture. Inside is the largest modern art museum in Europe as well as a public library. The web site for current exhibitions, hours, and admission policy is:

www.centrepompidou.fr/en

SIDE TRIPS

1. Normandy Beaches

If you've never visited the beaches of Normandy and you're in Paris for a week or so, I highly recommend you take two days (minimum) to go to Normandy. The train ride to Caen is two hours from Paris. Make sure you have a private guide to take you around. We left Paris in the late afternoon (which gave us time to walk around the city) and the next day met our guide at our hotel. After stopping off in the morning to see the Bayeaux Tapestry, we spent the remainder of the day going around to the usual sites, ending with the trip to the American Cemetery. Our guide dropped us off at the train station in time to catch the 7:00 PM train back to Paris. We really could have used two days touring the area.

Advice

One of the things I've learned over the years is to use private guides. The extra cost of a private guide is so well worth it. In Europe, the guides earn college degrees in being a tour guide. They can offer flexibility in planning an itinerary, they can customize your tour, they will get you into areas that are normally not available for the general public, and they can help you avoid long lines. We've been with guides who have shown us things that 99.9% of the tourists will never see.

Story

Our guide at the beaches was Jacques. He's a retired Sorbonne professor who 25 years ago decided to become a tour guide for the Normandy beaches. He knows everything. He has taken dignitaries, returning survivors, the survivor's children and grandchildren, and others on thousands of tours. He was Steven Spielberg's consultant on the beach scenes for the movie, "Saving Private Ryan." I could go on and on with stories from our day with Jacques. I just may write some blog posts—check out www.stewross.com

2. Giverny

Giverny is a commune in the Eure department located in northern France and the location of Claude Monet's home. The gardens and the lily pond are the major attractions. Monet constructed the often-painted lily pond and its iconic bridge along with the remainder of the immense gardens so that he could study color and light. The large reception area where tickets are sold was his studio. It was here that he painted the 48 large paintings of the lily pond.

For additional information, visit the web site: www.fondation-monet.com/fr

3. Bayeaux Tapestry

While you're in Normandy, don't leave without visiting the tapestry. It is a hand-embroidered account of the 1066 Battle of Hastings where William the Conqueror

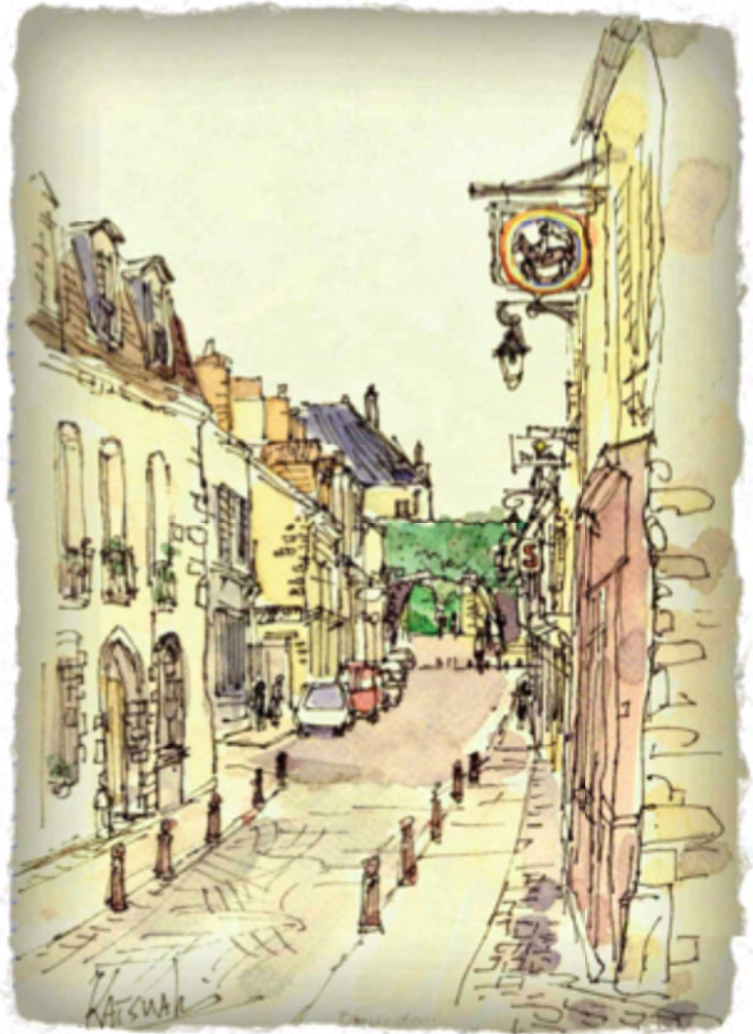
defeated Edward, the beginning of the centuries long hostilities between England and France. The actual date the tapestry was created is not clear, but the earliest written account of it was in 1476. Today, many historians believe it was created within 50 years of the battle.

This is one of those attractions where you will find long lines. It is best to get there early (or better yet, get a guide like we did—Jacques—who can get you in before it opens to the public). If you're not so fortunate to have Jacques, here is the web site:

www.bayeuxmuseum.com

I have not included everything as you can well imagine. There are so many places to go and see that it would be impossible to list them all. As I complete my walking tour books based on historical periods and events in Paris and other walking cities, I uncover some of the most amazing sites. French teachers have reviewed my manuscripts and told me they have stood on certain sites mentioned in the book and never realized the significance to certain historical events.

The most important advice I can give you, as a tourist to Paris, is to **WALK**. Please leave time to explore. The most memorable situations are the ones you run into without any expectations.



Story

I have to tell you why I picked the images for this little book. These watercolors of Paris remind me of the paintings I saw in Paris back in the 1960s. I grew up in Holland and visited Paris many times. Watercolors similar to these were sold by the artists who set up shop along the banks of the Seine. Today, you can still find the artists along the Seine selling their original artwork. Take some time to stroll by and look at their work.

4. Versailles Palace and Versailles Village

Located only approximately 12 miles outside Paris, Versailles Palace is one of those wonderful sites that can't be missed. If you don't get there on your first visit, please make room in the itinerary of your second visit to see the palace, the grounds, and the village.

Versailles Palace originated from a hunting lodge constructed by Louis XIII in 1624 in the Versailles forest. There was a small medieval village located nearby. His son, Louis XIV, made the decision to build a palace in Versailles and move the royal court out of Paris. There were four primary building periods: 1664–1668, 1669–1672, 1678–1684, and 1699–1710. Louis XIV moved his court to Versailles in 1682 and there it remained until October 1789 when his great-great-great grandson, Louis XVI, was forced to move back to Paris.

Advice

Most people visit only the palace and the adjacent grounds. Many first-time visitors don't even know there is a village. Don't miss the opportunity to visit Versailles Village. The food is wonderful, the markets are great to stroll around, and there is a tremendous amount of history associated with the beginning of the French Revolution. My book, *Where Did They Put the Guillotine? —A Walking Tour of Revolutionary Paris (1789–1794)—Volume One*, will take you on a comprehensive walk of Versailles Village as the events of the Estate General procession unfold.

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