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21 days
Duration

France
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Explore Paris | 21-day Small Group Tour Exploring Parisian Life

Sep 09 2024 to Sep 29 2024



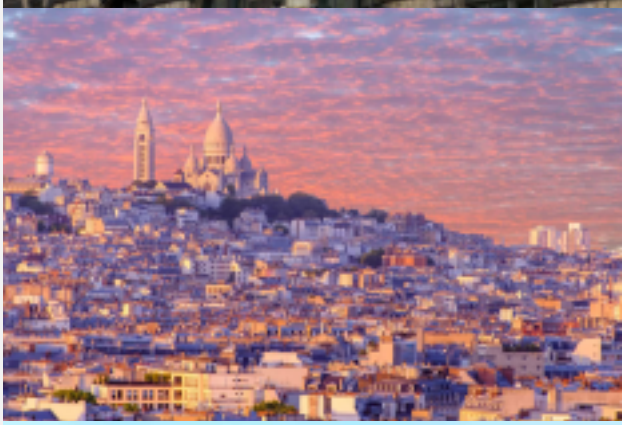
Explore Paris Small Group Tour

The Eiffel Tower, the Palace of Versailles, the Louvre (or more accurately, the Mona Lisa seen from behind a crowd of selfie sticks), and the Champs Elysees … sadly, most visitors to Paris only get to see a few familiar tourist highlights. But get away from the crowds and you'll discover the fascinating, gritty, and beautiful city that earns fierce loyalty from its locals and has entranced writers, artists, and visitors from

around the world.

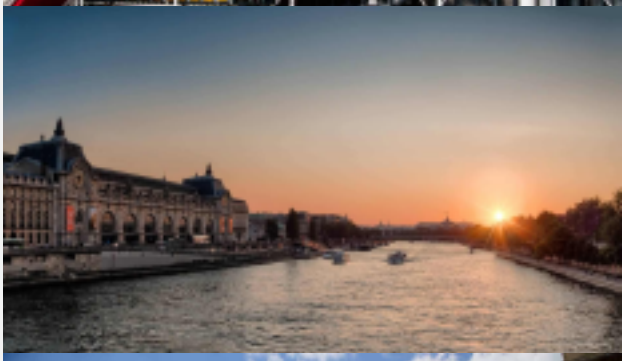
On our small group tour of Paris, we get to know the city beyond the tourist centres. Staying in self-catered apartments in one of Paris's central arrondissements, we live like locals, shopping for fresh produce and flowers at one of Paris's many local markets. Our program delves into the city's history, art, and culture, with a mix of guided tours and day trips, and plenty of time for you to explore the city on your own. We have several themed days, focusing on literature, fashion, art, and history, including:













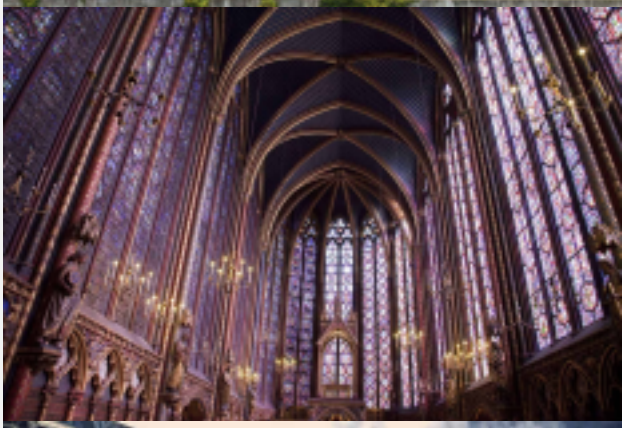
- Our first day is themed around the life and achievements of Napoleon, visiting the Arc De Triomphe and the Vendome Column; while the following day we visit the luxurious residence of his wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais, the Chateau de Malmaison. Our tour also includes days devoted to the turbulence of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution in France, and the French Enlightenment.
- We explore France's literary history, with visits to sites associated with Denis Diderot, Victor Hugo, and Alexandre Dumas, while investigating the allure of Paris for American bohemians and writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Jim Morrison. We soak up the famous literary vibe of the 'left bank' of the Seine River, in the Latin Quarter and Saint Germain des Pres neighbourhoods.
- We see key works of art in some of Paris's little-known galleries, and explore what makes Paris the world capital of fashion. We make a trip to Montmartre, where artists took inspiration from the *demimonde* at the Moulin Rouge.
- We see key churches, including Notre Dame Cathedral and Sainte Chapelle on the natural Seine island, Île de la Cité, and Sacre Coeur in Montmartre
- We also get out of the city on a day trip to Amiens, where we take a walking tour of the UNESCO World Heritage listed cathedral, and make a day tour of the Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte, a Baroque palace to rival the Palace of Versailles and the chateaux of the Loire Valley.

While other tours in Paris jump from tourist spot to tourist spot, this extended city tour is for travellers who wish to really get to know the 'city of light', spending time as a tourist and time as a local.

On our tour you will live like a Parisian, living in self-catered apartments, getting around the city by Métro and suburban rail, and shopping like a local in one of Paris's many markets. The markets of Paris go back a long way – the first market can be traced back to the 5th century AD, when the city was called Lutetia. Today, the city's more than 90 active markets (69 of which are open-air) remain at the heart of daily life in the city. Food tour lovers will enjoy the **Marché International**

de Rungis, the world's largest wholesale food market (and the go-to of many a Parisian chef) and the upmarket **Marché des Enfants Rouges**, on a market site dating back to the 16th century. Markets also sell specialty goods, including flowers at the **Marché aux Fleurs** and books at the weekend **Le Marché du Livre**, while the city's **famous flea markets** are the perfect place to search for antiques or second-hand designer goods.







While our tour includes several group dinners, we also give you several nights to yourself. Since you're staying in a self-catered apartment, why not pick up some fresh produce and cook like a Parisian? Virtually all of the city's village-like arrondissements has its own market, selling fresh produce, cheese, cured meats, and bread. Bear in mind that most open-air markets are open only on certain mornings: luckily, the offical website of the Visitors Bureau of Paris has a list of markets along with opening times.

Another highlight of our tour is the chance to soak up some of the subtler details of Parisian architecture, including the city's many elegant arcades. Paris's arcades – covered passages built within larger buildings or between two buildings, lined with shops, restaurants, and cafes – were built in the late 18th and early 19th century as a way for the city's wealthy inhabitants to shop unencumbered by the dark, overcrowded city beyond. The first indoor gallery was constructed at the Palais Royal in 1786, and soon inspired similar walkways. The **Passage des Panoramas**, built in 1799, is a showcase of elegant 18th century architecture, while the **Galerie Vivienne** (built 1823) is decorated in intricate neo-classical decor. While in their heyday the arcades played host to a variety of shops, today, most are home to eateries, upscale boutiques, and antique sellers.

Explore Paris Small Group Tour Itinerary: a collection of in-depth experiences

While you're probably familiar with the Louvre Museum, the Musee d'Orsay and Marie Antoinette's hamlet, this tour takes you to **twenty-two museums, galleries, and key places of interest in Paris,** on a journey designed to go beyond traditional Paris sightseeing. Some of

the museums and galleries we will visit include:

- Musee de L'Arme
- Musee Rodin
- Musee les Arts Decortifs
- Musee Yves Saint Laurent Paris
- Musee du Vieux Montmartre
- Fondations Louis Vuitton
- Picasso Museum
- Marmottan Monet Museum
- Musee Maillol
- Musee des artes et Metiers
- Palais Decouverte
- Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte
- Jewish Museum
- Sainte Chapelle







In order to provide a authentic experience, every tour guide is a long-term resident of Paris, with an in-depth knowledge of the city's history, literature, and art, so that our clients can benefit from their expertise.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right-hand side of this page.

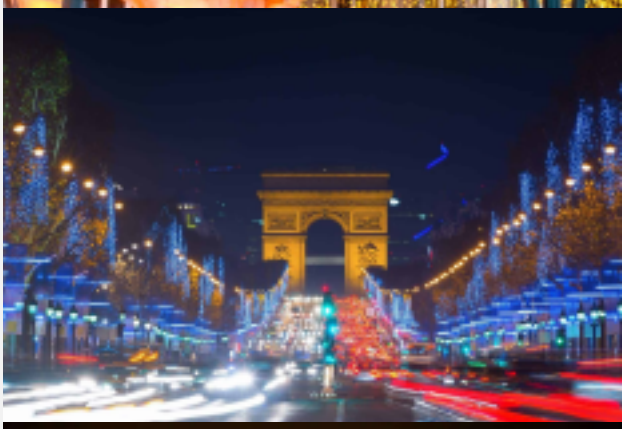
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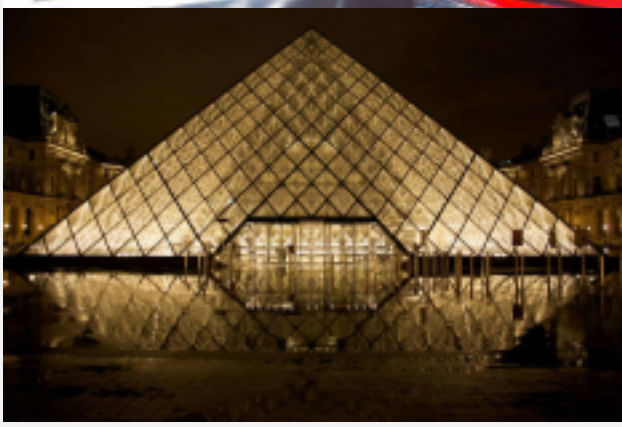
You may want to browse our country profile about France. Odyssey Traveller also publishes articles, designed for mature aged and senior travellers, to maximise your knowledge and enjoyment on your tour of

Paris:

- Exploring France by rail some tips
- Ten of the best travel books on France
- Ten things to do in France when you visit
- Designing Paris
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- Ten of the Best art galleries in Europe to visit
- A guide on France for mature travellers
- Loire Valley History







External articles to assist you plan your visit to France

- A guide to Alsace
- History of Alsace: Britannica.com
- Burgundy's climate: a UNSECO world heritage listing
- Avignon, the Palace of Popes
- History of Avignon, 15-18th century
- Exploring Chatres cathedral
- Wars of Religion: France

- Published articles on French history

Enjoy Odyssey's long stay city tours

This trip to Paris is one of Odyssey's specialty long-stay city tours, which allow our clients to live like locals in some of the great cities of the world. Our in-depth focus was inspired by Ina Caro's book, *Paris to the Past: Traveling Through French History by Train,* which inspired our first French History by Rail tour in 2012.

Since that first long-stay tour, we have added the following cities to our list:

- Rome
- Florence
- Barcelona
- Berlin walking tour
- Discovering Berlin
- Contemporary Japan
- Lisbon & Barcelona

There will be more long stay tours to follow, centred on the cities that our clients have indicated that they most want to return to explore further. If you've ever imagined living in Paris, Berlin, or Tokyo in a period of historical or cultural ferment, our tours are for you. Spend three weeks living as a local, and delve into all that a city has to offer.

Highlights

1. We stay in apartments in the heart of Paris, meaning we can quickly see the best of the city, and relax in comfort
2. Days themed around Art, Literature, History, and fashion, in which we immerse ourselves in the city's rich culture

3. A visit to Alexandre Dumas's home, the Chateau du Monte-Cristo
4. The Palais Galliera, Paris's only dedicated museum of fashion
5. A half-day excursion to Rueil-Malmaison, including a visit to the beautiful Chateau Malmaison

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Paris

Overview:

On arrival in Paris, you will make your own way to your apartment. In the evening, we meet for a welcome dinner.

Day 2

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today we enjoy a full guided tour of Paris, constructed around the life and achievements of Napoleon.

Napoleon did a lot for Paris and many of the monuments he built can still be seen today. A local guide take us to see some of the main sights related to the grand historical figure, such as the Vendome Column, the Arc du Triomphe and the Boulevard des Marechaux.

Day 3

Locations: Paris and Rueil-Malmaison

Overview:

Today, we continue with the theme of Napoleon. In the morning, we take an excursion to Rueil-Malmaison where we visit the Chateau de Malmaison. This chateau was oncethe residence of Empress Joséphine de Beauharnais and the final residence of Napoleon in France. In the afternoon we return to Paris and the rest of the day is free to enjoy at your leisure.

Day 4

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today, we embark on a full-day guided tour that guides us through the drama of The French Revolution, one of the most influential historical events not only in France, but also globally.

We visit the Place de la Bastille, the Tuileries Gardens, the Place de la Concorde, and finish the day with a visit to the stunning Musee de l'Armee. In the evening, we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 5

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Paris is among the richest cities in the world when it comes to art, and this tour takes advantage of that. Today, we enjoy a full day guided tour which includes the Outdoor Sculpture Museum, the Musee Rodin and the Musee les Arts Decoratifs. Pending availability, we will attend an opera performance in the evening, possibly at the Palais Garnier.

Day 6

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today is all about fashion. We have a local guide for the day to take us through a number of fashion museums and areas with high fashion shops

We'll visit the Palais Galliera, the only dedicated fashion museum in Paris, the Musee Yves Saint Laurent and walk through the famed Triangle d'Or.

Day 7

Locations: Paris

Overview:

You have the full day to explore Paris at your leisure.

Day 8

Locations: Paris and Le Port-Marly

Overview:

In the morning, we take a trip to Le Port-Marly, where we visit the beautiful Chateau du Monte-Cristo, once the home of Alexandre Dumas and named for his famous novel. Today, the chateau is a museum dedicated to the writer's life. In the afternoon, we return to Paris and the rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 9

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today we take a guided tour of Paris that is themed around the Enlightenment period, following in the footsteps of some of the great eighteenth century thinkers. We visit the Pantheon, a neoclassical church, and view le Procope and le Palais Royal, and a statue of the magnificent philosopher Denis Diderot.

We end the day with dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 10

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today, we turn once again to the history of the city, with a guided tour of central Paris. We enter the Musee du Vieux Monmartre, visit Sacre Coeur, Place du Tertre, Moulin de la Galette, Moulin Rouge, and more!

Day 11

Locations: Paris and Lille

Overview:

In the morning we board a train to Lille. On arrival, we take a walking tour of the city, before having free time to explore Lille on your own. We return to Paris by train in the late afternoon.

Day 12

Locations:

Overview:

Today is another day dedicated to art in Paris. We have entrance to the newly opened Fondation Louis Vuitton, le Jeu de Paume, and the Picasso Museum, each magnificent in its own way.

Day 13

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Throughout the years, Paris has been the home to many authors, natives and those who have moved there. Today, we enjoy a tour that focuses on the city's literary side. With a local guide, we visit the Cimetière du Père Lachaise where many famous authors and artists such as Jim Morrison are buried. Then we visit the Maison Victor Hugo and the Notre-Dame Cathedral which inspired Hugo's "Hunchback of the Notre Dame".

We also visit the old and well known bookshop Shakespeare & Company, the first outlet to publish James Joyce's Ulysses . Other stops on the tour include the British Embassy where Somerset Maugham was born and La Closerie des Lilas. Ernest Hemingway lived nearby this café and it was here that he read the first finished manuscript of The Great Gatsby by Scott Fitzgerald. Pending availability, we end the day with an evening ballet performance.

Day 14

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today is themed around science, and the industrial revolution. We visit the Musee des artes et Metiers and the Palais Decouverte with a local guide. During the tour the group will also view the Institute de France, the building itself is only open to visitors one weekend per year (the 3rd weekend of September). During the tour the guide will discuss the importance of the Industrial revolution and why it was not as spectacular in France as it was in its neighbouring countries.

Day 15

Locations: Paris and Maincy

Overview:

Today the group will visit the Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte in the morning. This is a baroque french chateau with glorious gardens. In the afternoon we return to Paris and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Day 16

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today we focus on the various cultures that come together to make Paris what it is. A guide will walk us through the Marais area where many Jews live, here the will visit the Jewish Museum and the Shoah Memorial which commemorates the Jews that were deported during WWII. Afterward we visit Sainte Chapelle, a church well known for its spectacular glass stained windows. To end the day we visit the Arab World Institute.

Day 17

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today is free to explore Paris at your leisure.

Day 18

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today is another when we focus on Paris's rich literary history. A local guide takes on a journey through the famous Latin Quarter, including the Bibliotheque Mazarine, La Sorbonne, and the Ceramic Mosaics at Cluny-La Sorbonne metro station. We also visit Jardin de Luxembourg, among other local literary sites.

Day 19

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today, we focus on the history of film in Paris, visiting locations that have been used in films and television.

We visit the open-air market Carré Marigny which was used in the film Charade (1963), the Pont Alexandre III Bridge which was used in the movie a Midnight in Paris, the Place Dauphine which was used in the series Sex and the City, The Louvre Pyramid, Le Nemours, and many more sights.

Day 20

Locations: Paris and Amiens

Overview:

In the morning we board a train to head to Amiens. On arrival, we'll be met by a local guide to show us around the city. We will also visit the late-19th-century home of Jules Verne, with preserved interiors, his effects & a winter garden. In the afternoon we will return to Paris, with

the rest of our final full day free to wander the city. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner.

Day 21

Locations: Paris

Overview:

Today, we make our own way to the airport for departing flights.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 20 nights of serviced apartment accommodation.
- 5 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Service charges and gratuities.
- Touring by local public transport and local inter city trains.
- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Services of a Tour Leader.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfares and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of personal nature like laundry, phone calls and meals not included in the itinerary.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8

kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.