

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

Reading List

France: A History: from Gaul to de Gaulle

by John Julius Norwich

I can still feel, as if it were yesterday, the excitement of my first Channel crossing (as a child of nearly 7) in September 1936; the regiment of porters, smelling asphyxiatingly of garlic in their blue-green blousons; the raucous sound all around me of spoken French; the immense fields of Normandy strangely devoid of hedges; then the Gare du Nord at twilight, the policemen with their képis and their little snow-white batons; and my first sight of the Eiffel Tower... This book is written in the belief that the average English-speaking man or woman has remarkably little knowledge of French history. We may know a bit about Napoleon or Joan of Arc or Louis XIV, but for most of us that's about it. In my own three schools we were taught only about the battles we won: Crécy and Poitiers, Agincourt and Waterloo. The rest was silence. So here is my attempt to fill in the blanks...

John Julius Norwich (at 88) has finally written the book he always wanted to write, the extremely colourful story of the country he loves best.

From frowning Roman generals and belligerent Gallic chieftains, to Charlemagne (hated by generations of French children taught that he invented schools) through Marie Antoinette and the storming of the Bastille to Vichy, the Resistance and beyond, FRANCE is packed with heroes and villains, adventures and battles, romance and revolution. Full of memorable stories and racy anecdotes, this is the perfect introduction to the country that has inspired the rest of the world to live, dress, eat -- and love better.

Parisians: An Adventure History of Paris

by Graham Robb

No one knows a city like the people who live there - so who better to relate the history of Paris than its inhabitants through the ages? Taking us from 1750 to the new millennium, Graham Robb's *Parisians* is at once a book to read from cover to cover, to lose yourself in, to dip in and out of at leisure, and a book to return to again and again - rather like the city itself, in fact.

'Quirky, amused and très British' Julian Barnes

'A collection of true stories, culled from Robb's insatiable historical reading and lit by his imagination . . . So richly pleasurable that you feel it might emit a warm glow if you left it in a dark room' John Carey, Book of the Week, *Sunday Times*

'This book is the sort of triumph that we have no right to expect to come from anyone in the steady way that Robb's masterly books come from him' Philip Hensher, *Daily Telegraph*

'As Parisian and as bracing as a freshly mixed Pernod and water' *New York Times*

Paris: Biography of a city

by Colin Jones

'Paris is the World, the rest of the Earth is nothing but its suburbs' - Marivaux

In this intelligently-written and supremely entertaining new history, Colin Jones seeks to give a sense of the city of Paris as it was lived in and experienced over time. The focal point of generation upon generation of admirers and detractors, a source of attraction or repulsion even for those who have never been there, Paris has witnessed more extraordinary events than any other major city. No spot on earth has been more walked around, written about, discussed, painted and photographed. With an eye for the revealing, startling and (sometimes) horrible detail, Colin Jones takes the reader from Roman Paris to the present, recreating the ups and downs in the history of the city and its inhabitants. Attentive to both the urban environment and to the experience of those who lived within it, PARIS: BIOGRAPHY OF A CITY will be hugely enjoyed by habitual Paris obsessives, by first-time visitors, and by those who know the city only by repute.

The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps

by Eric Hazan

A radical guide to Paris through art, literature and revolution.

The Invention of Paris is a tour through the streets and history of the French capital under the guidance of radical Parisian author and publisher Eric Hazan.

Hazan reveals a city whose squares echo with the riots, rebellions and revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Combining the raconteur's ear for a story with a historian's command of the facts, he introduces an incomparable cast of characters: the literati, the philosophers and the artists—Balzac, Baudelaire, Blanqui, Flaubert,

Hugo, Maney, and Proust, of course; but also Doisneau, Nerval and Rousseau.

It is a Paris dyed a deep red in its convictions. It is haunted and vitalized by the history of the barricades, which Hazan retells in rich detail. *The Invention of Paris* opens a window on the forgotten byways of the capital's vibrant and bloody past, revealing the city in striking new colors.

We'll Always Have Paris: Trying and Failing to Be French

by Emma Beddington

As a bored, moody teenager, Emma Beddington came across a copy of French *ELLE* in the library of her austere Yorkshire school. As she turned the pages, full of philosophy, sex and lipstick, she realized that her life had one purpose and one purpose only: she needed to *be* French.

Instead of skulking in her bedroom listening to The Smiths or trudging to Betty's Tea Room to buy fondant fancies, she would be free and solitary, sitting outside the Café de Flore with a Scottie dog at her feet, a Moleskine on the table and a Gauloise trembling on her lower lip.

And so she set about becoming French: she did a French exchange, albeit in Casablanca; she studied French history at university, and spent the holidays in France with her French boyfriend. Eventually, after a family tragedy, she found herself living in Paris, with the same French boyfriend and two half-French children. Her dream had come true, but how would reality match up? Gradually Emma realized that she might have found Paris, but what she really needed to find was home.

Written with enormous wit and warmth, *We'll Always Have Paris* is a memoir for anyone who has ever worn a Breton T-shirt and wondered, however fleetingly, if they could pass for une vraie Parisienne.
