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# PARIS



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BEST ATTRACTIONS

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MONUMENTS & SITES

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BEST FAMILY HOTELS

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KID-FRIENDLY SITES

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FUN IN PARIS!

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THEME PARKS & DISNEY

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# INTRODUCTION

“Bienvenue a Paris!” So you’ve decided on a visit to the famous City of Lights. Well you’re in good company. So many celebrities/icons have been drawn to it’s beautiful streets. Famous writers have flocked there in droves - Ernest Hemmingway, Henry James, Edith Wharton and Henry Miller. And they’re not the only one’s. From poets to scientists, song writers to politicians, everyone loves Paris. Oscar Wilde even lies peacefully in his grave not far from Jim Morrison. In fact, Americans especially have had a enduring love affair with this romantic city.

Paris gets it’s nickname, the ‘City of Lights’ from it’s fame as the centre of ideas and enlightenment, and certain areas of the city still have that progressive, literary feel. It’s all the more appropriate now that they’ve lit up the Eiffel Tower with a dazzling light display every evening. You’ll no doubt have heard it called the City of Romance too; and who wouldn’t want to fall in love on the banks of the famous river Seine.

But there’s plenty to attract young minds too. The city is bursting with gruesome historic tales that will make little jaws drop. Stand

on the spot where the King and Queen of France met their bloody demise on the guillotine. See if you can hunt down the famed Hunchback at Notre Dame Cathedral. March like Napoleon up the Champs Elysees, to the monument that celebrates his battles - The Arch de Triumph. Or follow the steps of the Da Vinci Code characters around the city.



Kids of all ages will find plenty to do, leaving you to sample the gourmet food and fine wines.

Paris is easy to navigate once you’ve worked out the layout. Take a look at a map of the city that has the ‘Arrondissements’ marked out. An arrondissement is an area/suburb and they are labeled by number from one to 20. They spiral out from the centre, like a snails shell, with the 1st Arrondissement in the centre and the

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20th on the periphery. You'll probably spend most of your time in Arrondissements 1 through 8.

Each arrondissement has its own feel and you'll experience a dozen mini-cities in one:

-In the first arr. you'll find Notre Dame Cathedral and the Louvre.

-The 4th is on the idyllic Ile de la Cite where you can eat a scoop of world famous ice cream.

-In the artsy left bank (arr. 5 & 6) you can hang out with the students or take part in the latest philosophical debate.

-The swanky 7th is the most desirable residential area in Paris and also holds the Eiffel Tower.

-In the Golden Triangle (Paris' exclusive 8th district) you'll want to sit at cafes and people watch.

Each area is filled with its own unique treasures and can occupy your family for a full day in its own right.

*Hint:* You can tell which arrondissement an attraction is in by looking at the final two numbers in its zip/postcode. So a building whose address ends with 75004 is in the 4th Arrondissement.

From the city of Paris you can also explore the surrounding attractions. For more history visit the splendor of the Palace of Versailles. If the family can't bare to look at another museum there are plenty of theme parks to escape to (Page 56).

### **France Trivia:**

France is the largest country of Western Europe with 550 000 km<sup>2</sup>.

There are about 60 millions inhabitants in the whole of France.

The city of Paris has about 2,160,000 people living in it.

Paris itself covers about 41 square miles.

The altitude of Paris averages between 90ft and 120ft above sea level.

# WHAT TO EXPECT

Expect to be dazzled by grand architecture, great, gut-busting food and lots of history. In this city you've got to loosen your belt and enjoy the finer things in life. Great art, mouth watering croissants and the smelliest cheeses by a long run.

Spring time in Paris is famous and for good reason. You get the perfect mix of sunshine and smiles. The local Parisians can get stony faced in winter, but as the spring thaws out the ice it works its magic on the people too. Everybody gathers for three hour lunch breaks, lazily enjoyed at their favorite café.

But this blissful time also brings the crowds so expect long waits outside the Louvre. Book tickets in advance at this busy time of year.

Things close down in August, when the temperature rises unbearably high, and the locals head for the Riviera.

You'll find quite a few smaller shops boarded up, with a small sign saying, "Back in September."

But don't let that put you off. The lines for attractions are shorter and the sun is sure to shine - just be prepared to sweat a little. Double check opening times of smaller attractions during August as they may have restricted hours.



Every summer, two miles of the Right Bank of the Seine river is turned into a beach, complete with white sand, palm trees, and sun beds. Activities abound at the beach including volleyball, football (soccer), sand castle making, and water sports.

Important to note, however, is that the Seine beach becomes crowded very early so for those averse to crowds, this may not be a good option.

Also, while a nice beach for

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having fun, don't get carried away. The Seine river is not fit for swimming in and the aim of this beach, according to project designer Jean-Christophe Choblet, is lazing and strolling by the water, not in it.

If you've arrived in Paris in the winter when the rains and high winds threaten, make for the safety of the galleries and museums. There really are so many you'll be spoilt for choice.

The Louvre can keep you occupied for a full day (it's far bigger than you'll ever imagine), as you point out the Mona Lisa to any budding artists. If all the culture just seem plain "boring" to your group why not try a 'Da Vinci Code' tour. That way restless teens are kept occupied while you tour guide takes you through the museum.

Paris has a number of charming carousels that are especially popular with younger children. They can be found in the Jardin Des Tuileries, in the Parc du Champ de Mars, at bottom of the hill of Sacre Coeur in Montmartre, and in the Luxembourg Gardens.

The local Parisians are a particular sort. Fiercely proud of their city they'll proclaim their city the best in the world. I'd suggest following suit in the interest of harmony.

A basic knowledge of French manners will make your vacation all the more enjoyable. When you walk into a shop or up to a counter, the simple pleantry, "Bonjour Madame/Monsieur," will work wonders... Even if you can't say another word in French.

Most people working in the tourist areas will have a good grasp of English so you'll probably get by just fine. But by having a little French vocabulary up your sleeve (like Merci - Thank you, S'il vous plait - Please) you'll undoubtedly have a better time.

Pick up a small phrase book before you go if your French from school is a little rusty.

#### **French Fun Fact:**

"La Marseillaise", France's national anthem, was composed in Strasbourg in 1792, not in Marseilles as its name might induce to think.

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