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TOP 10 LISTS

Top 10 best things to see & do in Paris

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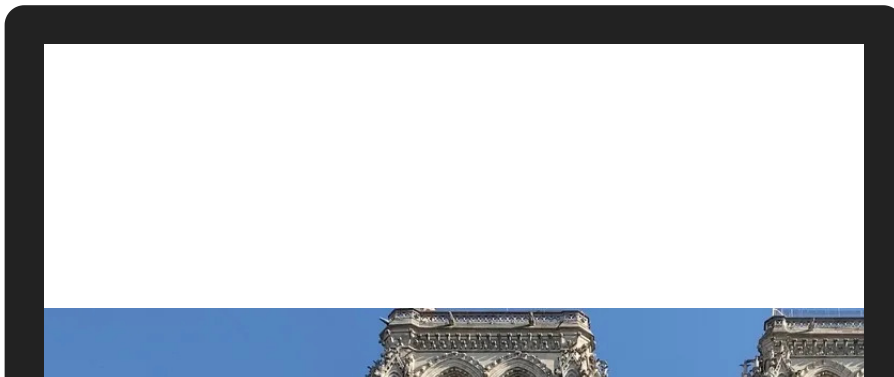
November 8, 2021 1

Monday **newsletters** always feature **top 10 travel lists** to inspire.

Today: Top 10 best things to see & do in Paris

Monumental squares, centuries-old churches, famous boulevards, the Seine and romantic bridges that cross it, magnificent palaces, and Montmartre's cobblestone streets make Paris the most glamorous and elegant of all cities. The City of Light has not only inspired painters, sculptors, writers, poets and composers but also practically every major world capital, with every city claiming its own Champs-Élysées. As you cruise on the Seine, stay in **luxury hotel**, or watch the world pass by from a café terrace, it's easy to understand why so many people fall in love with Paris. Here's my selection of the 10 best things to see & do in Paris.

There is more information (with YouTube videos) below my slideshow. What's your favorite thing to do in Paris? Leave a **comment**!



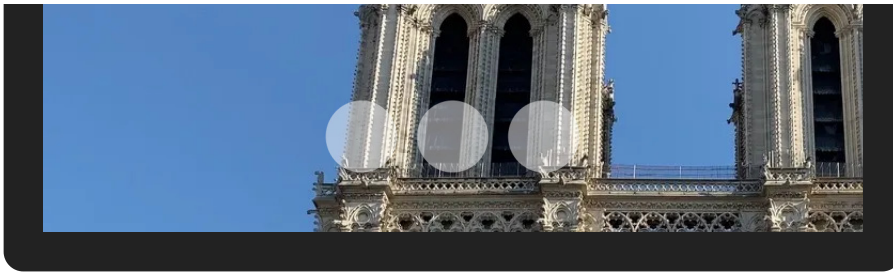
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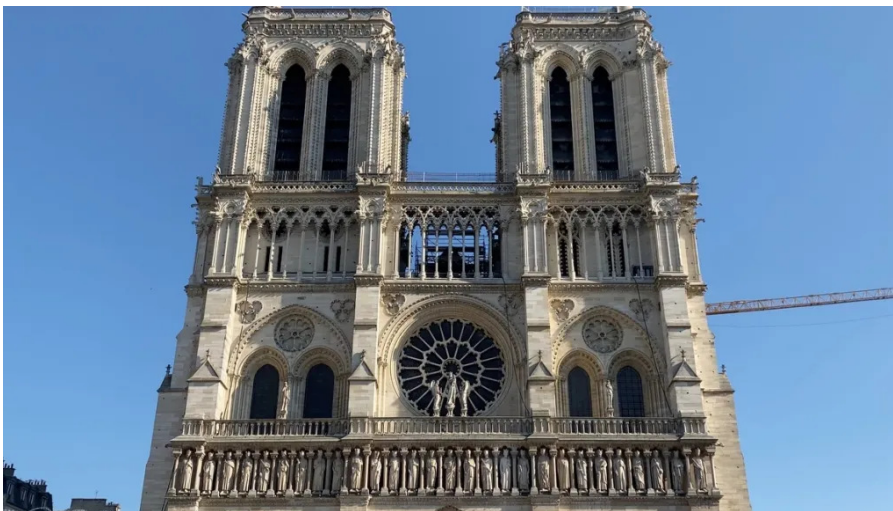
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10. ADMIRE THE NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL

Notre Dame de Paris is arguably the most famous religious monument in the world and widely considered one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture. The cathedral suffered desecration during the radical phase of the French Revolution in the 1790s, when much of its religious imagery was damaged or destroyed. During the 19th century, an extensive restoration project was completed, returning the cathedral to its previous state. Unfortunately, a destructive fire ravaged the cathedral on April 15th, 2019, destroying the iconic spire and the original wooden roof of the building. However, the eighteenth-century organ and two bell towers remain in-tact, and can still be seen standing from afar. Officials anticipate the Notre-Dame will remain closed for another five to six years before it is once again rebuilt and safe to enter.



9. ATTEND A CONCERT AT THE OPERA HOUSE

Commissioned by Napoleon III and completed in 1875, Charles Garnier's architectural masterpiece Palais Garnie is one of the most iconic opera houses in the world. Although most of the Paris Opera's productions now take place in the larger and more modern Opéra Bastille, visitors can still attend a concert or take a tour of the public areas of the theater. The façade is richly ornamented with marble arches and colonnades, grotesque masks and gilded statues. The interior is no less opulent. Frescoes, gold leaf, mosaics and sculptures adorn every room, and the lavish auditorium (Grande Salle) – with all red velvet seats and gilded moulding – has a ceiling painted by Marc Chagall in 1964. The Palais Garnier provided the inspiration for Gaston Leroux's novel *The Phantom of the Opera*. The book mentions a subterranean 'lake' created by the

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architect to stabilize the building's foundation. There is indeed a water tank beneath the building, but it is off limits to the general public.

- **Official website:** [Palais Garnier](#)



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8. MAKE A DAY TRIP TO VERSAILLES

Versailles, which has been on UNESCO's World Heritage List for 30 years, is one of the most beautiful achievements of 18th-century French art and [one of the most famous palaces in Europe](#). The site, located some 20 km (12 miles) southwest of Paris and easily reachable by public transport, began as Louis XIII's hunting lodge before his son Louis XIV (known as the Sun King) transformed and expanded it, moving the court and government of France to Versailles in 1682. Each of the three French kings who lived there added improvements to make it more beautiful. The château lost its standing as the official seat of power during the French Revolution in 1789. However, it still serves political functions today as heads of state are regaled in the Hall of Mirrors, and French politicians meet in congress here to revise or otherwise amend the French Constitution. With the gardens and the Palaces of Trianon, the magnificent park of the Château de Versailles spreads over 800 hectares.

- **Official website:** [Versailles](#)



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7. GET LOST IN THE LATIN QUARTER

The Latin Quarter is situated on the left bank of the Seine and is one of the oldest districts in Paris. The area takes its name from the Latin language, taught in the Middle Ages at many schools in the district. Parisians and tourists enjoy exploring this vibrant, artsy, and eclectic quarter, which is full of cosmopolitan restaurants, cafes, pubs and quirky boutiques. It's also easy to get lost in the quarter's maze of tiny, cobblestone alleys, evocative of medieval Paris. Awaiting discovery are ancient churches, botanical gardens, the world-famous Sorbonne University, and the imposing Pantheon, the resting place of great figures of the nation such as Victor Hugo, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Pierre and Marie Curie. On the border of the Latin Quarter, you'll find the beautiful Luxembourg Gardens, which were inspired by the Boboli Gardens in Florence and created upon the initiative of Queen Marie de Medici in 1612.



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6. WALK ON THE CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES

Known as the 'most beautiful avenue in the world', the Champs Élysées has been synonymous with luxury and prestige for more than 100 years and is lined with cinemas, restaurants, and cafés. It is a showcase for France's top brands such as Louis Vuitton, Guerlain, Ladurée, Dior, Lacoste, Cartier, Galeries Lafayette, as well as PSG and Séphora, open 7/7 and until late in the evening. On the first Sunday of each month, the avenue is closed to motor traffic and becomes the loveliest promenade in the world, for pedestrians and cyclists. At the top of the avenue, on Place Charles-de-Gaulle, is the Arc de Triomphe, a monument from the 19th century commissioned by Napoleon, as a tribute to his troops. At the start of the Champs Élysées is Paris's largest square, the Place de la Concorde, home to a 3,200-year old Egyptian obelisk. During the French Revolution, more than 1,000 people were guillotined on the square, including Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette, and Robespierre.

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5. VISIT MUSEE D'ORSAY

Musée d'Orsay is internationally renowned for housing the largest collection of Impressionist and post-Impressionist masterpieces in the world, by painters including Monet, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Cézanne, Seurat, Sisley, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. Many of these works were held at the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume prior to the museum's opening in 1986. The museum's collections represent all expressive forms, from painting to architecture, as well as sculpture, the decorative arts and photography. You're sure to be dazzled by the beauty of the place: a train station that looks like a palace, inaugurated for the 1900 Universal Exposition. At the end of 2011, the museum reopened all of its entirely renovated spaces as well as some new rooms: Post-Impressionist artists at the heart of the museum, the redesign of the Impressionists gallery, a new temporary exhibition space, plus a new 'aquatic' decor for the Café des Hauteurs, designed by Brazilian designers, the Campana Brothers.

- **Official website:** [Musée d'Orsay](https://musee-l'orsay.fr/)



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4. EXPLORE MONTMARTRE

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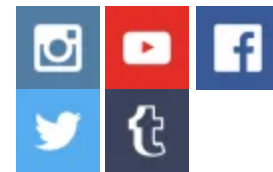
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Featuring cobblestone streets, street art, and lively bistros, Montmartre is full of charm. Perched on the top of a small hill in the 18th arrondissement, the most famous Parisian district has lost none of its village atmosphere that appealed so much to the artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. A real melting pot of art and inspiration for the cinema, Montmartre still gives as much pleasure to those who stroll around it and figures high on the list for a stay in Paris. Montmartre's top attraction is the Sacré-Cœur basilica, a place of worship in Romano-Byzantine style dedicated to the heart of Christ. For an unobstructed view over Paris, nothing beats the view from the forecourt of the building or, even better, that from the top of its majestic dome. Also, if there is one film associated with Montmartre, it is '*Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*.' This internationally-acclaimed film by Jean-Pierre Jeunet renders all the charm of the legendary district on the big screen. The cafe where Amélie worked still exists!



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3. CLIMB THE EIFFEL TOWER

Also known as the Iron Lady, the Eiffel Tower (la Tour Eiffel) symbolizes the grandeur of Paris. Named after the engineer Gustave Eiffel, the tower was constructed from 1887 to 1889 as the entrance to the 1889 World's Fair. It was initially criticised by some of France's leading artists and intellectuals for its design, but it has become a global cultural icon of France and one of the most recognisable monuments in the world. The tower is 324 metres (1,063 ft) tall – about the same height as an 81-story building – and is comprised of 18,000 iron parts held together by 2.5 million rivets. Climbing the Eiffel Tower is a highlight for many visitors to Paris: observation decks on the 1st, 2nd and top floor offer incredible panoramas over the City of Light. Be prepared though for long winding security lines and long waiting times for the elevators to get up the tower (booking your ticket online is highly recommended).

- **Official website:** [Eiffel Tower](#)

2. STROLL ALONG THE SEINE

Since the Gaulish Parisii tribe settled here in Roman times, Paris has been built up on either side of the Seine. The history of the city's development can be followed along the banks of the river, which are a UNESCO World Heritage site. From historic monuments and

architectural gems to waterfront developments, this walk – or cycle ride – will take you on a journey back in time. You can cross from one side to the other by one of the 37 bridges that connect the two sides of the city. This includes famous bridges like the majestic Pont Alexandre III (built in 1891 to celebrate the Franco-Russian alliance) and the Pont Neuf (Paris' oldest bridge whose construction began in 1578). The riverside walk is especially beautiful on a warm and sunny spring or autumn day, when thousands of Parisians and tourists are flocking to the Seine's riverbanks to enjoy the romantic views and have a drink.



1. SPEND A DAY AT THE LOUVRE

A visit to the Louvre lets you discover Western art from the Middle Ages to 1848, as well as a large number of ancient civilizations. Long before it became a museum, the building was the residence of the kings of France: first a dark fortress and then a stately palace home to French heads of state until 1870. After being redesigned, partially destroyed, and then rebuilt many times over, today it is a museum open to everyone. From here you can see the grand perspective stretching through the Tuileries Gardens and up the Champs Élysées. Considered to be one of the **greatest museums in the world**, visitors flock to the Louvre to see its extraordinary collections and incomparable masterpieces: Leonardo da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa' of course, but also the 'Venus de Milo', the 'Victory of Samothrace', 'Liberty guiding the People' and the 'Raft of the Medusa', which are just some of a collection of more than 460,000 works, from ancient civilizations to the 1840s.

- **Official website:** [Louvre](https://www.louvre.fr/)



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