



Paris

ebook Edition

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Paris

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THE AUTHORS

Steve Fallon

Steve, who has worked on every edition of *Paris* and *France* except the first, visited the ‘City of Light’ for the first time at age 16 with his half-French best friend, where they spent a week drinking *vin ordinaire* from plastic bottles, keeping several paces ahead of irate café waiters demanding to be paid, and learning French swear words that shocked even them. Despite this inexcusable behaviour, the PAF (border police) let him back in five years later to complete a degree in French at the Sorbonne. Now based in East London, Steve will be just one Underground stop away from Paris when Eurostar trains begin departing from Stratford in 2010. *C’est si bon...* Steve was the coordinating author and wrote the Introducing Paris, Getting Started, Background, Sleeping, Gay & Lesbian Paris and Directory chapters. He also cowrote the Neighbourhoods, Shopping, Eating, Drinking and Nightlife & the Arts chapters.

Nicola Williams

For Nicola, a British journalist living and working in France for the past 12 years (home is a hillside house with Lake Geneva view in Haute Savoie), it is an easy flit to Paris where she has spent endless amounts of time eating her way around and revelling in the city’s extraordinary art and architecture. When she’s not working for Lonely Planet, she can be found in the Alps skiing or hiking, strolling around Florence or having fun with family in Britain and Germany. Nicola has worked on numerous other Lonely Planet titles including *France, Provence & the Côte d’Azur* and *The Loire*. Nicola wrote the Sports & Activities, Excursions and Transport chapters. She also cowrote the Neighbourhoods, Shopping, Eating, Drinking and Nightlife & the Arts

chapters.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Will Salter

In the last 12 years, Will has worked on assignment in over 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific region as well as Antarctica. He has produced a body of award-winning work that includes evocative images of travel, portraits and sport. He sees photography as a privilege, a rare opportunity to become intimately involved in people's lives. Will is based in Melbourne, Australia, with his wife and two children. His website is www.willsalter.com.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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GETTING STARTED

WHEN TO GO

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BLOGS

Paris is a dream destination for countless reasons, but among the most obvious is that it requires so very little advance planning. Tourist literature abounds, maps are excellent and readily available, and the staff at tourist offices are usually helpful and efficient. Paris is so well developed and organised that you don't have to plan much of anything before your trip.

But this is fine only if your budget is unlimited, you don't have an interest in any particular period of architecture or type of music, and you'll eat or drink anything put down in front of you. This is Paris, one of the most visited cities of the world, and everyone wants a piece of the action. First and foremost, book your accommodation well ahead. And if you have specific interests – live big-name jazz, blockbuster art exhibitions, top-end restaurants – you'll certainly want to make sure that the things you expect to see and do will be available or open to you when you arrive. The key here is advance planning ([Click here](#)).

WHEN TO GO

As the old song says, Paris is lovely in springtime – though winterlike relapses and heavy rains are not uncommon in the otherwise beautiful month of April. The best months are probably May and June – but early, before the hordes of tourists descend. Autumn is also pleasant – some people say the best months of the year to visit are September and October – but of course the days are

getting shorter and in October hotels are booked solid by businesspeople attending conferences and trade shows. In winter Paris has all sorts of cultural events going on, while in summer the weather is warm – sometimes sizzling. In any case, in August Parisians flee for the beaches to the west and south, and many restaurateurs and café owners lock up and leave town too. It's true that you will find more places open in August than even a decade ago, but it still can feel like a ghost town in certain districts. For more information on Paris' climate, [Click here](#).

To ensure that your trip does (or perhaps does *not*) coincide with a public holiday, [Click here](#). For a list of festivals and other events to plan around, see below.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- an adaptor plug for electrical appliances
- binoculars for viewing detail on churches and other buildings
- an immersion water heater or small kettle for an impromptu cup of tea or coffee
- tea bags if you need that cuppa since the French drink buckets of the herbal variety but not much of the black stuff
- premoistened towelettes or a large cotton handkerchief to soak in fountains and use to cool off in the hot weather
- sunglasses and sun block, even in the cooler months
- swimsuit and thongs (flip-flops) for Paris Plages or swimming pool
- a Swiss Army knife, with such essentials as a bottle opener and strong corkscrew

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FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Innumerable festivals, cultural and sporting events and trade shows take place

in Paris throughout the year; weekly details appear in *Pariscope* and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* [Click here](#). You can also find them listed under 'What's On' on the website of the **Paris Convention & Visitors Bureau** (www.parisinfo.com). The following abbreviated list gives you a taste of what to expect throughout the year.

January & February

FESTIVAL DES MUSIQUES DU NOUVEAU AN

www.parisparade.com

The New Year Music Festival, relatively subdued after the previous night's shenanigans [Click here](#) with marching and carnival bands, dance acts and so on, takes place on the afternoon of New Year's Day at the Palais de [Chaillot](#) at Trocadéro.

LOUIS XVI COMMEMORATIVE MASS

www.monuments-nationaux.fr

On the Sunday closest to 21 January, royalists and right-wingers attend a mass at the Chapelle Expiatoire ([Click here](#) marking the execution by guillotine of King Louis XVI in 1793).

FASHION WEEK

www.pretparis.com

Prêt-à-Porter, the ready-to-wear fashion salon that is held twice a year in late January and again in September, is a must for fashion buffs and is held at the Parc des Expositions at Porte de Versailles in the 15e arrondissement (metro Porte de Versailles), southwest of the city centre.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

www.paris.fr

Dragon parades and other festivities are held in late January or early February in two Chinatowns: the smaller, more authentic one in the 3e, taking in rue du Temple, rue au Maire and rue de Turbigo (metro Temple or Arts et

Métiers); and the larger, flashier one in the 13e in between porte de Choisy, porte d'Ivry and blvd Masséna (metro Porte de Choisy, Port d'Ivry or Tolbiac).

SALON INTERNATIONAL DE L'AGRICULTURE

www.salon-agriculture.com

A 10-day international agricultural fair with produce and animals turned into dishes from all over France, held at the Parc des Expositions at Porte de Versailles in the 15e (metro Porte de Versailles) from late February to early March.

March–May

BANLIEUES BLEUES

www.banlieuesbleues.org, in French

The 'Suburban Blues' jazz and blues festival is held over five weeks in March and April in the northern suburbs of Paris, including [St-Denis](#), and attracts some big-name talent.

PRINTEMPS DU CINÉMA

www.printempsducinema.com, in French

Cinemas across Paris offer filmgoers a unique entry fee of €3.50 over three days (usually Sunday, Monday and Tuesday) sometime around 21 March.

FOIRE DU TRÔNE

www.foiredutrone.com, in French

This huge funfair, with 350 attractions spread over 10 hectares, is held on the pelouse de Reuilly of the Bois de Vincennes (metro Porte Dorée) for eight weeks from late March to mid-May.

MARATHON INTERNATIONAL DE PARIS

www.parismarathon.com

The Paris International Marathon, usually held on the first Sunday of early April, starts on the av des Champs-Élysées, 8e, and finishes on av Foch, in the

16e. The **Semi-Marathon de Paris** is a half-marathon held in early March; see the website for map and registration details.

FOIRE DE PARIS

www.foiredeparis.fr

This huge modern-living fair, including crafts, gadgets and widgets, and food and wine, is held from late April to early May at the Parc des Expositions at Porte de Versailles in the 15e (metro Porte de Versailles).

ATELIERS D'ARTISTES DE BELLEVILLE: LES PORTES OUVERTES

www.ateliers-artistes-belleville.org, in French

More than 200 painters, sculptors and other artists in Belleville (metro Belleville) in the 10e open their studio doors to visitors over four days (Friday to Monday) in mid-May in an event that has now been going for two decades.

LA NUIT DES MUSÉES

www.nuitdesmusees.culture.fr, in French

Key museums across Paris throw open their doors at 6pm for one Saturday night in mid-May on 'Museums Night' and don't close till late. Some also organise special events.

FRENCH TENNIS OPEN

www.rolandgarros.com

The glitzy Internationaux de France de Tennis – the Grand Slam – takes place from late May to mid-June at Stade Roland Garros (metro Porte d'Auteuil) at the southern edge of the Bois de Boulogne in the 16e.

June–August

FOIRE ST-GERMAIN

www.foiresaintgermain.org, in French

This month-long festival of concerts and theatre from early June to early July

takes place on the place St-Sulpice, 6e (metro St-Sulpice) and various other venues (see website) in the quartier St-Germain.

FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE

www.fetedelamusique.fr, in French

This national music festival welcomes in summer on Midsummer's Night (21 June) and caters to a great diversity of tastes (including jazz, reggae and classical) and features staged and impromptu live performances all over the city.

GAY PRIDE MARCH

www.gaypride.fr, in French

This colourful Saturday-afternoon parade in very late June through the Marais to Bastille celebrates Gay Pride Day, with various bars and clubs sponsoring floats, and participants in some pretty outrageous costumes.

PARIS JAZZ FESTIVAL

www.parcfloraldeparis.com; www.paris.fr

There are free jazz concerts every Saturday and Sunday afternoon in June and July in the Parc Floral de Paris (metro Château de Vincennes).

LA GOUTTE D'OR EN FÊTE

www.gouttedorenfete.org, in French

This week-long world-music festival (featuring rai, reggae and rap) is held at square Léon, 18e (metro Barbès Rochechouart or Château Rouge) from late June to early July.

PARIS CINÉMA

www.pariscinema.org

This two-week festival in the first half of July sees rare and restored films screened in selected cinemas across Paris.

BASTILLE DAY (14 JULY)

www.paris.fr

Paris is *the* place to be on France's national day. Late on the night of the 13th, *bals des sapeurs-pompiers* (dances sponsored by Paris' firefighters, who are considered sex symbols in France) are held at fire stations around the city. At 10am on the 14th, there's a military and fire-brigade parade along av des Champs-Élysées, accompanied by a fly-past of fighter aircraft and helicopters. In the evening, a huge display of *feux d'artifice* (fireworks) is held at around 11pm on the Champ de Mars, 7e.

PARIS PLAGES

www.paris.fr

Initiated in 2002, 'Paris Beaches' is one of the most inspired and successful city recreational events in the world. Across four weeks, from mid-July to mid-August, three waterfront areas are transformed into sand and pebble 'beaches', complete with sun beds, beach umbrellas, atomisers, lounge chairs and palm trees. They make up the 3km-long stretch along the Right Bank embankment from the quai Henri IV at the Pont de Sully (metro Sully Morland) in the 4e to the quai des Tuileries (metro Tuileries) below the Louvre in the 1er; a 1km-long 'beach' below the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and across from the Parc de Bercy in the 13e on the Left Bank; and the area around the Bassin de la Villette in the 19e (metro Jaurès). The beaches are open from 8am to midnight daily.

TOUR DE FRANCE

www.letour.fr

The last of 21 stages of this prestigious, 3500km-long cycling event finishes with a race up av des Champs-Élysées on the third or fourth Sunday of July, as it has done since 1975.

September & October

JAZZ À LA VILLETTE

www.villette.com, in French

This super 10-day jazz festival in early September has sessions in Parc de la Villette, at the Cité de la Musique and in surrounding bars.

FESTIVAL D'AUTOMNE

www.festival-automne.com

The Autumn Festival of arts has painting, music, dance and theatre at venues throughout the city from mid-September to mid-December.

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

www.journeesdupatrimoine.culture.fr, in French

As elsewhere in Europe on the third weekend in September, Paris opens the doors to buildings (eg embassies, government ministries, corporate offices – even the Palais de l'Élysée) normally off-limits to outsiders.

TECHNOPARADE

www.technopol.net, in French

Part of the annual festival called Rendez-vous Électroniques (Electronic Meeting), this parade involving some 20 floats and carrying 150 musicians and DJs wends its way on the periphery of the Marais on the third Saturday of September, starting and ending at place de la Bastille, 12e.

NUIT BLANCHE

www.paris.fr

'White Night' (or more accurately 'All Nighter') is when Paris 'does' New York and becomes 'the city that doesn't sleep at all'. It's a cultural festival that lasts from sundown until sunrise on the first Saturday and Sunday of October, with museums and recreational facilities in town joining bars and clubs and staying open till the very wee hours.

FÊTE DES VENDANGES DE MONTMARTRE

www.fetedesvendangesdemontmartre.com, in French

This festival is held over the second weekend in October following the harvesting of grapes from the Close du [Montmartre](#), with costumes, speeches and a parade.

FOIRE INTERNATIONALE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

www.fiacparis.com

Better known as FIAC, this huge contemporary art fair is held over five days in late October, with some 160 galleries represented at the Louvre and the Grand Palais.

November & December

AFRICOLOR

www.africolor.com, in French

This African music festival is held for the most part in venues in the suburbs surrounding Paris from late November to late December.

JUMPING INTERNATIONAL DE PARIS

www.salon-cheval.com, in French

This annual showjumping tournament features the world's most celebrated jumpers at the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy in the 12e arrondissement (metro Bercy) in the first half of December. The annual International Showjumping Competition forms part of the Salon du Cheval at the Parc des Expositions at Porte de Versailles in the 15e (metro Porte de Versailles).

top picks

UNUSUAL EVENTS

- **Paris Plages** (opposite) – the next best thing to the seaside along France's smallest urban beaches
- **Gay Pride March** (opposite) – feathers and beads and

participants in and out of same

- **Fête des Vendanges de Montmartre** (left) – lots of noise for a bunch of old (and some say sour) grapes
 - **Louis XVI Commemorative Mass** – right-wing sob-fest for aristocrats, pretenders and hangers-on
 - **Salon Internationale de l'Agriculture** – lots to smell (cowpats) and hear (braying donkeys) and see (lambs gambolling) and eat and drink at Europe's largest agricultural fair
-

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

Mass is celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve at many Paris churches, including Notre Dame, but get there by 11pm to find a place.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blvd St-Michel (5e), place de la Bastille (11e), the Eiffel Tower (7e) and especially av des Champs-Élysées (8e) are the places to be to welcome in the New Year.

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COSTS & MONEY

If you stay in a hostel or in a showerless, toiletless room in a bottom-end hotel and have picnics rather than dining out, it is possible to stay in Paris for €50 a day per person. A couple staying in a two-star hotel and eating one cheap restaurant meal each day should count on spending at least €75 a day per person. Eating out frequently, ordering wine and treating yourself to any of the many luxuries on offer in Paris will increase these figures considerably.

If greater Paris were a country, its economy would rank as one of the world's largest (in fact, placing at No 17). The 617,000 companies employing just over five million people in Île de France contribute to the region's €415 billion GDP, which accounts for upwards of a third of the total for all of France. The service industries employ the most people – almost 82% of the

workforce, of which 4% are in tourism. Not surprisingly, only 0.5% of Parisians are involved in the primary industries of agriculture, forestry or fishing.

Manufacturers – software developers, electronic industries, pharmaceuticals, publishers – employ about 18% of the workforce. As most industry is located outside the Périphérique [Click here](#), about the only factories you're likely to see during your visit are those lining the highway from Charles de Gaulle airport. As a result, 50% of Parisians commute out of – rather than into – the city every day to work.

That is, those who have a job to commute to do. Unemployment is currently at a low of around 7.5% nationally, and the jobless rate for Paris is about half that figure. However, for youths living in the dire housing estates surrounding the city, the figure reaches more than 20%, one of the reasons that the *banlieues* (suburbs) erupted into violence at the end of 2005 [Click here](#). Bids by the previous government to reduce the number of jobless youth through its controversial CPE plan [Click here](#) were stymied early the following year when a million workers and students took to the streets in protest. They argued that the law, which would allow companies with more than 20 employees to fire workers under 26 within the first two years of employment with no severance pay, encouraged a regular turnover of cut-rate staff and did not allow young people to build careers. The French government decided to withdraw the CPE altogether later in 2006.

To a certain extent the government's ability to boost employment through training and aid is crimped: it simply doesn't have the money. First and foremost is the need to reduce debt, which stood at almost 67% of GDP in 2007. The country was also in danger of breaching EU rules regulating national debt – again – if it didn't cut its spending. The national public deficit was expected to rise to over 3% of GDP in 2008, which is above the EU limit.

To fill the national coffers, France has raised billions of euros by selling stakes in state-owned companies. In late 2007 and early 2008 it sold a stake of 2.5% in the power company Électricité de France and one of 3.3% in Aéroports de Paris, the company that manages Charles de Gaulle and Orly

airports. It's not the first time that the government has flogged the family silver.

HOW MUCH?

An hour's car parking: from €1 (street), €2.40 (garage)

Average fair/good seat at the opera: €40/60

Cinema ticket: €5.90 to €9.90 (adult)

Copy of Le Monde newspaper: €1.30

Coffee at a café bar: from €1.20

Grand crème at Champs-Élysées café terrace: €4.50

Metro/bus ticket: €1.50 (€10 for 10)

Entry to the Louvre: €9 (adult)

Litre of bottled mineral water: from €0.70 (supermarket), €1 (corner shop)

Pint of local beer: from €6.50 (€5 at happy hour)

Pop music CD: €13 to €18

Street snack: from €2.50 (basic crêpe or galette)

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INTERNET RESOURCES

Wi-fi is widely available at midrange and top-end hotels in Paris (sometimes for free but more usually for something like €5 per one-off connection) and occasionally in public spaces such as train stations and tourist offices. For a list of almost 100 free-access wi-fi cafés in Paris, visit www.cafes-wifi.com (in French).

If you don't have a laptop or wi-fi access, don't fret: Paris is awash with internet cafés with their own computers, and you'll probably find at least one in your immediate neighbourhood.

In terms of websites to consult before you go, **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com) is a good start for many of the city's more useful links. The following English-language websites are useful when wanting learn more about Paris (and France).

Expatica (www.expatica.com) Lifestyle website for internationals living in countries worldwide, including France, with regularly updated news, features and blogs.

French Government Tourism Office (www.francetourism.com) Official tourism site with all manner of information on and about travel in France, with lots and lots on Paris too.

Go Go Paris! Culture! (www.gogoparis.com) Clubs, hangouts, art gigs, dance around town, eat and drink – everything a culture vulture living in Paris needs.

Mairie de Paris (www.paris.fr) Your primary source of information about Paris, with everything from opening times and what's on to the latest statistics direct from the Hôtel de Ville.

Paris Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.parisinfo.com) The official site of the Office de Tourisme et de Congrès – the city's tourist office – is super, with

more links than you'll ever need.

Paris Digest (www.parisdigest.com) Useful site for making pretravel arrangements and for its forum.

Paris Pages (www.paris.org) Has good links to museums and cultural events.

Paris Woman (www.pariswoman.com) Deals with news and issues and events affecting expatriate women in Paris.

RATP (www.ratp.com) This invaluable (and easy to use) website from the city's transport network will help you negotiate your way around town.

ADVANCE PLANNING

A couple of months before you go Try to book your accommodation months ahead, especially if it's high season and you want to stay in a boutique hotel like the Hôtel Caron de [Beaumarchais](#), a 'find' such as the Hôtel Jeanne d'[Arc](#) or some place offering exceptional value for money like the Hôtel du Champ-du-[Mars](#). Take a look at some of the 'what's on' websites listed on opposite or the entertainment magazines *Pariscope* and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* [Click here](#).

A month before you go If you're interested in serious fine dining at places like Le Grand Véfour [Click here](#) or the [Casa Olympe](#) and there's more than one of you, book a table now. Now is also the time to visit the Fnac and/or Virgin Megastore websites [Click here](#) to get seats for a big-ticket concert, musical or play.

Two weeks before you go Blockbuster exhibitions at venues such as

the [Grand Palais](#) or [Centre Pompidou](#) – or even a visit to the [Louvre](#) – can be booked in advance via Fnac or Virgin Megastore for a modest fee. Sign up for an email newsletter via Expatica (opposite) and read some up-to-date blogs.

A day or two before you go Make sure your bookings are in order and you've followed all the instructions outlined in this chapter.

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BLOGS

If there's one country in Europe where blogging is a national pastime (so *that's* what they do outside their 35-hour work week) it's France. The underbelly of what French people think right now, the French blogosphere is gargantuan, with everyone and everything from streets and metro stops to bands, bars and the president having their own blog. For an informative overview (did someone say three million bloggers in France and counting?) see **LeMondeduBlog.com** (www.lemondedublog.com in English & French). Parisian *star du blog* **Loïc Le Meur** (www.loiclemeur.com in English & French) – one of France's most widely read and watched (this serial entrepreneur vid-blogs like mad at www.loic.tv) – considerately blogs a best-of-blog list at www.eu.socialtext.net/loicwiki/index.cgi?french_blogosphere.

For clubbing, music and nightlife links [Click here](#). Blogroll to tune into politics, fashion/kitchen gossip, happenings and bags more in the capital (in English):

Chocolate & Zucchini (<http://chocolateandzucchini.com>) Food-driven blog by a 28-year-old foodie called Clotilde from Montmartre.

Le Blageur à Paris (www.parisblagueur.blogspot.com) On-the-ball, engaging and inspirational snapshots of Parisian life from one of the city's most enigmatic bloggers, a 32-year-old French *fille* called Meg Zimbeck.