

GLAMOROUS PARIS

Witness Paris in all its splendour of gold, marble and crystal. Admire the dome of the Opera House, the rue Royale and rue de la Paix, English tailors, tearooms, prestigious hotels, bellboys, the diamonds of place Vendôme, and the gardens of the Palais-Royal.

It's not just the nearby Comédie-Française theatre that puts on a show – the stores in this district are entertainment enough! Admire boxes (of the musical and chocolate variety), exhibition rooms hung with silks or artful displays of goat skins, antique engravings, and much more. Rumour has it though that these elegant arcades were home to risqué goings-on, where scooters now fly by. And if the truth be told, many a man has been ruined by dancing girls from the Opera House.

And, of course, there are the grands boulevards, these broad avenues with buzzing music halls, café-theatres, and numerous shows with a cheeky edge. Like the big department stores, which illuminate the boulevard Haussmann, this is the centre of chic with a sprinkling of stardust. Everything seems much more refined under the stained-glass art nouveau cupolas! That's what the Belle Époque was all about, and it's alive and well in this part of Paris.



**Palais-Royal (1st) • Madeleine (8th)
• Opéra (9th) • Grands Boulevards (9th)**



M Opéra (lines 3, 7, 8) • Madeleine (lines 8, 12, 14) • Palais-Royal (lines 1, 7)
• Grands-Boulevards (lines 8, 9) • Pyramides (lines 7, 14) • Tuileries (line 1)

- Passages and galleries**
- 1 Passage Bourg-l'Abbé
 - 2 Passage Brady
 - 3 Passage du Caire
 - 4 Pas. Choiseul/Ste-Anne
 - 5 Galeries Colbert/Vivienne
 - 6 Passage du Grand-Cerf
 - 7 Passage Jouffroy
 - 8 Galerie de la Madeleine
 - 9 Passage des Panoramas
 - 10 Galerie des Princes
 - 11 Passage Verdeau
 - 12 Galerie Véro-Dodat

DON'T MISS

Palais Garnier – Opéra national de Paris

The Opera House was inaugurated under the Third Republic, following fifteen years of setbacks, including the nightmarish discovery by the architect Charles Garnier, of an underground expanse of water. This rather deep lake, the stage for executions during the Commune, was the inspiration for writer Gaston Leroux's *Phantom of the Opera*. But let's start with the main auditorium, with its ceiling painted by Chagall, its eight-ton crystal chandelier, and purple velvet seats set around an Italian-style stage, where operas and ballets are performed. The vestibules and main staircase going up to the auditorium are made of marble and filled with sculptures of harps and lyres leading the dance. Outside, Baroque and neo-Renaissance styles intertwine above a flight of steps that are a popular place for people to meet up.



Place de l'Opéra (9th).
M° Opéra. Tel: 01 40 01 22 63.
Daily: 10am-4.30pm,
except for matinees and
exceptional events.
€8 – RR: €4.
www.opera-de-paris.fr

DID YOU KNOW?

Fish, fed by the scene shifters, glide through the underground waters of the Opera House and bees, from two hives on the roof, collect their nectar in the nearby Tuileries gardens.

Église de la Madeleine

The construction of the Madeleine church was fraught with drama. Scarcely had work begun in 1764, than it was stopped. Begun again in 1777, only to be interrupted by

the French Revolution, before being restarted under Napoléon, who altered the plans to make the building a pantheon to the glory of his armies. The building was designated a place of worship again and the church was completed in 1842. With no bell tower or cross on the outside, it's more like a Greek temple, with two monumental doors and a forest of Corinthian columns. From the top of the steps is a view worthy of Olympia: firstly the rue Royale, with its luxury goods and prestigious addresses, then the Obelisk at Concorde and beyond, looking in the same direction, yet another temple, the Palais Bourbon.



Place de la Madeleine (8th).
M° Madeleine. Tel: 01 44 51 69 00.
Daily: 9am-7pm.

COVERED ARCADES

At the beginning of the 19th century, Haussmann redesigned Paris. Built for the crowds thronging the café terraces and theatres along the boulevards, covered shopping arcades were a huge success with their boutiques of Chinese ornaments, curiosities and gifts, along with tea, chocolate and coffee houses. They were the meeting places for the elegantly dressed, a haven from wet weather. Then came the department stores. With the magic of electricity and pavements the passageways became less fashionable, and some were demolished. Indulge yourself!

These "human aquariums", as the French writer Aragon described them, still offer an original shopping experience complete with wonderful wood panelling: discover the muffled charm and exciting creations of Passage Vivienne or Passage du Grand-Cerf, or the fascinating trinkets in Passage Choiseul; marble, art and knowledge await you in the Galeries Véro-Dodat and Colbert, while the prints, sepia photos and antique toys in passages Verdeau and Jouffroy contrast with the kitsch bazaar in the passage des Panoramas ...



Place de la Madeleine

The square surrounding the church also bears its name. Thoughts turn quickly to the little sponge cakes known as "madeleines", which Marcel Proust made famous many years after having lived at No 9. The square seems to have been given over to gourmet pleasures since 1854 when a certain Ferdinand Hédiard opened a delicatessen store here, joined in 1886 by that of Auguste Fauchon and followed by chocolate, truffle and caviar houses.



DID YOU KNOW?

To the right of the church, the Madeleine public toilets are free of charge and in the purest art nouveau style.

Place Vendôme



Louis XIV had desired a grandiose setting to embody absolute power at the heart of Paris. And Napoléon was quick to replace the king's statue, dismantled in 1792, with a bronze column made from 1,200 enemy canons. However, since the Second Empire, the square, an octagonal gem of classic urban design, has changed its affinities. Politics have given way to luxury, and the great names in jewellery have made place Vendôme and the adjoining rue de la Paix a continuous stream of diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

Place des Victoires

Before being given over to the cult of fashion and local fashion designers, this almost perfect circle was an important place for royal adoration. In order to curry favour with the king, the Marquis de la Feuillade designed the square to house a triumphant statue of the monarch. Louis was delighted but the courtier died in financial ruin.



DID YOU KNOW?

Behind place des Victoires, the military successes of Louis XIII were celebrated in the basilica of Notre-Dames-des-Victoires on the pretty place des Petits-Pères.

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DISCOVER

Palais-Royal*

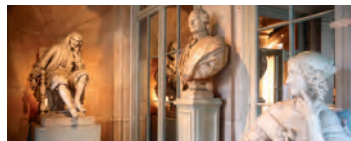
Richelieu started the saga by building his residence here; Louis XIV inherited it and gave it to his brother. Philippe d'Orléans and his son extended it. In 1780, the indebted Philippe Égalité opened up the area around the gardens to commerce: sixty buildings supported by arcades were built to house the stores. Prostitution, gambling and scandal took hold of the palace. And as the police were not authorised to operate there, it became a bastion for revolutionary unrest until 1793. The peaceful Palais-Royal now houses the Ministry of Culture and several institutions, some very chic boutiques, gourmet restaurants and a garden planted with four rows of lime trees. Although the striped Buren columns almost reignited the revolution here in 1986.



Place du Palais-Royal (1st). M° Palais-Royal – Musée-du-Louvre. www.monuments-nationaux.fr

Comédie-Française

Here are two words that inspire respect: Comédie-Française. And you're right here! This theatre is home to the prestigious French theatre group, the Comédiens-Français. And it's here, on the corner of Palais-Royal, that the theatre's permanent troupe, originating from the union of two troupes – Molière's and that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne – in 1680, has performed the French repertory since the end of the 18th century. Candelabras and busts of great writers escort you to the padded doors of the red and gold auditorium. Shhh!



1, place Colette (1st). M° Palais-Royal – Musée-du-Louvre. Reservations: 0 825 10 1680. www.comedie-francaise.fr

Grévin



Each new arrival is elected by a panel of personalities. Then follows a sitting, a wax and resin moulding, make-up, costume and accessories. Since 1882, the waxworks museum has been producing and displaying wax figures of great historical figures and stars of sport, the arts, science and politics. 250 personalities! Jimi Hendrix, Einstein and Louis XIV all under the same roof – improbable but true!

10, bd Montmartre (9th). M° Grands-Boulevards. Tel: 01 47 70 85 05. Mon to Fri: 10am-6.30pm. Sat, Sun, sch and public hols: 10am-7pm. Last admission 1hr before closing time. €19.50. 6-14s: €11.50. RR: €16.50/€10. www.grevin.com



Grand Rex – Les Étoiles du Rex



Founded in 1932 on the Grands Boulevards, the Grand Rex, a listed building, is one of the largest cinemas in Europe with its 2,800 seats under a star-studded ceiling, its Mediterranean baroque decor and art deco façade. The 50-minute audioguided and interactive show Les Étoiles du Rex reveals the behind-the-scenes of cinema, from the shooting to the screening of a film: archive images, special effects room, sound effects room and projection room, etc. 1, bd Poissonnière (2nd). M° Bonne-Nouvelle. Visits in English, French, Italian and German. Tel: 01 45 08 93 58. Wed to Sun and public hols: 10am-7pm. Daily during sch hols. €9.80 – RR -12s: €8. www.legrandrex.com



Pinacothèque de Paris

Now located in a historic site, the Pinacothèque de Paris seeks to bring the works of contemporary artists – such as Suzanne Valadon and Maurice Utrillo in 2009 – to a much wider audience. 2,000 sq m. are devoted to exhibitions, partly sourced from private collections.

28, place de la Madeleine (8th). M° Madeleine. Tel: 01 42 68 02 01. Admission rates variable according to exhibition. Under 12s: free. www.pinacothèque.com

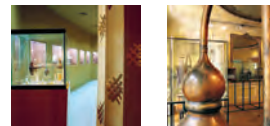
Musée Maxim's

Maxim's was chic and decadent in 1900. During the Belle Époque, courtesans curled up in the rooms above the restaurant, which have been recreated with objects from Pierre Cardin's art nouveau collection. Discover suggestive paintings, Tiffany lamps, a table set for an intimate supper and a bed carved by Majorelle, evoking the rustle of petticoats of the famous beauty Otero.

3, rue Royale (8th). M° Concorde. Last: 01 42 65 30 47. Wed to Sun: 2-5.30pm. Public hols: closed.

Musée du parfum Fragonard

Under the painted ceilings and stucco of a Napoléon III town house, is this charming perfume museum – a place to dream among distillation jars, presentation boxes on marble dressing tables, and caskets of opaline and glass from Murano and Bohemia. Hints of musk, zests of amber, the spicy fragrances of iris, and touches of aniseed and carnation may evaporate, but you still have perfume bottles in coloured glass, crystal bottles with silver chains and sprays set in pewter with silk pom-poms.



Musée du parfum Fragonard. 9, rue Scribe (9th). M° Opéra. Tel: 01 47 42 04 56. Mon to Sat: 9am-6pm. Sun and public hols: 9am-5pm. Free guided tour. www.fragonard.com

Théâtre-Musée des Capucines. 39, bd des Capucines (2nd). M° Opéra. Tel: 01 42 60 37 14. Mon to Sat: 9am-6pm. Free guided tour.

Paris Story!

Take a multimedia museum where Victor Hugo brings the history of Paris to life; add an interactive model

"Paris-Miniature" and "Paris expérience" with thematic videos screened on a revolutionary 3D screen: 2,000 years in the history of the capital for you to enjoy.

11 bis, rue Scribe (9th). M° Opéra. Tel: 01 42 66 62 06. Daily, every hour (translation in 14 languages): 10am-6pm. €10. 6-18s: €6. www.paris-story.com

Bibliothèque nationale, site Richelieu

Newly embellished, it now stages temporary exhibitions in the crypt and in the magnificent Mazarine and Mansart galleries. It has retained the departments of Manuscripts, Maps and Plans, Music, Prints and Photography, Theatrical Arts, and Money, Medals and Antiques. Reassuringly, this venerable institution, founded in the distant era of Charles V, and established on the Richelieu site since 1721, has also kept its treasures: the throne of Dagobert, the fan of Diane de Poitiers, the nine enamelled earthenware cupolas of the great reading room, and much more.

58, rue de Richelieu (2nd). M° Bourse. Tel: 01 53 79 49 49. Mon to Sat: 9am-6pm.

Sun: noon-7pm. Temporary exhibitions in the Mansart (photography) and Mazarine galleries and the crypt (except Mon). Musée des Médailles et Antiques: daily: 1-5.45pm, Sat: 1-4.45pm, Sun: noon-6pm. www.bnf.fr

Bourse de Paris – palais Brongniart



In 1987, after over 150 years of the clamour and shouting of stockbrokers, silence finally reigned under the cupola of the Palais Brongniart. The stock exchange was computerised and today the neoclassical temple encircled with columns opens its marble hall and nave, decorated with wood panelling and frescoes, to curious visitors. Around the famous trading floor, glass cubicles and a blackboard displaying stocks and shares recreate the atmosphere of the trading floor. Rue Vivienne (2nd). M° Bourse. Tel: 01 49 27 55 55.

