

48 HOURS

IN PARIS

Laura French
rounds up the
best sights in Paris
for clients on a
two-day getaway

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City of love. City of light. City of art, culture, fashion, food... Paris is illustrious in almost every field, perennially popular with romantics and dreamers, fashionistas and foodies, artists and architects.

In fact, it's a hit with anyone who's charmed by strolling along peaceful river banks, sipping coffee on outdoor terraces and lingering over five-course lunches, all the while surrounded by champagne-coloured beaux-arts buildings and emerald-green, palatial parks.

One visit isn't enough. Alongside all the traditional sights there are modern art museums and eclectic flea markets, bohemian hangouts and cutting-edge restaurants, edgy neighbourhoods and world-renowned nightclubs – all of which mean you're never short of something new to see.

After a year spent living there I still felt like I'd only scratched the surface, and there's always a reason to return. To help inspire both you and your clients, we've put together a 48-hour guide, including classic must-see sights and unusual spots that'll have them feeling happily smug as they skirt past the three-hour queues at the Eiffel Tower.

DAY ONE

09.00: Montmartre. Kick things off with a trip to Sacré-Coeur, the iconic basilica perched above Paris in the artsy northern neighbourhood immortalised by the film *Amélie*. It's a steep climb up, but the panoramic city views are ample reward. Afterwards, while away some time exploring the cobbled lanes, souvenir shops and artists' square that make up Montmartre. Round it off by picking up a breakfast

treat at one of the city's best bakeries, Boulangerie Alexine.

10.30: Notre Dame. Hop on a metro to Gothic-era Notre Dame, where the architecture is just as impressive on the inside as the out, with its intricate stone columns and ornate chandeliers. Then climb to the top for swoon-worthy views over the city (free entry; €10 to climb the towers).

11.30: Musée d'Orsay. Wander west along the Seine, past the stone-built Pont Neuf – the city's oldest bridge – to reach the Musée d'Orsay. It's my favourite museum here, with colourful impressionist works by the likes of Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh and Degas, housed in a beautiful domed-ceiling building that started life as a 19th-century railway station (entry is €12; closed on Mondays). ➔

TOP TIP

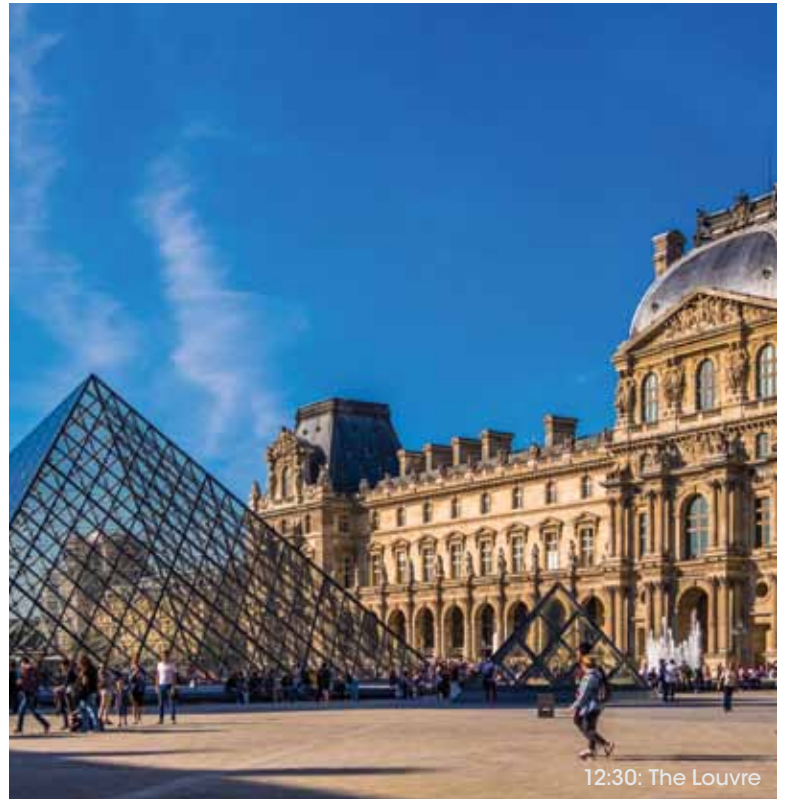
Many sights are free for under-18s and for 18-25s living in the EU; some are free for all on the first Sunday of the month



09.00: Sacré-Coeur



10.30: Notre Dame



12.30: The Louvre

➔ **12.30: The Louvre.** Loop back along the Seine and cross the Pont des Arts to reach the Louvre. The world's largest art museum and former home of the monarchy, this palatial building now houses more than 38,000 pieces, spanning ancient Egyptian artefacts to Michelangelo sculptures, plus the most talked-about painting on the planet, *Mona Lisa* (entry is €15; closed on Tuesdays).

14.00: Lunch at Angelina. Ten minutes away on the rather plush Rue de Rivoli you'll find this famous salon de thé. A Parisian institution since 1903 and once an aristocratic haunt for the likes of Coco Chanel, it offers delightful French classics such as croque monsieurs in elaborate belle époque surroundings, with rich, creamy hot chocolates and exquisite cakes its forte.

15.00: Jardin des Tuileries. Just next to it sits Jardin des Tuileries, a manicured stretch of green filled with colourful flower beds, marble statues and an elegant lily-pad pond. While you're



Jardin des Tuileries is filled with colourful flower beds, marble statues and an elegant lily-pad pond

here check out the Musée de l'Orangerie, where huge paintings by the likes of Monet, Cézanne and Sisley are displayed in an elegant glass pavilion (entry €9).

16.00: Champs-Élysées. Walk straight from the Musée de l'Orangerie to reach Place de la Concorde, the spot where Marie Antoinette and King Louis XVI were guillotined, then continue along the tree-lined Champs-Élysées Avenue via a string of shops to reach the colossal Arc de Triomphe. Built under Napoleon, this giant isn't only Insta-worthy from road level – climb its 40 steps at night and you'll see the iconic Eiffel Tower glowing gold against a



✓ What's new?

- ▶ Paris's first digital art museum, the Atelier des Lumières, opened in April with immersive exhibitions and artist-inspired light installations.
- ▶ The Musée Yves Saint Laurent opened last year on the site of the designer's former fashion house, with rotating exhibitions presenting his collection.
- ▶ Eating Europe Tours has launched its first Paris food tour, 'Hip Eats and Backstreets', taking clients on a culinary journey round the 10th arrondissement (€85 per adult from 12-4pm Tuesday to Saturday).



3 OF THE BEST OTHER SIGHTS

Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen:

Considered to be the world's biggest flea market, this is a hotspot for antiques dealers, attracting up to 3,000 traders and 180,000 visitors every weekend.

The Catacombs:

The skeletons of more than six million people can be found in this underground tunnel network, which is now open to tourists – as fascinating as it is gruesome.

Super Break offers commissionable tickets.

Lido:

Everyone's heard of the cancan shows at the Moulin Rouge, but for an alternative suggest the Lido, which offers glitzy cabaret shows with quintessentially French three-course dinners.



16.00: Champs-Élysées



14.00: Angelina



20.00: Shang Palace



12.30: Saint-Michel

PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK

➔ backdrop of glittering lights, and cars illuminating the Champs-Élysées like a trail of blazing fireflies (entry is €8 for adults, €5 for students).

19.00: Champ de Mars. From the Arc de Triomphe it's just a hop, skip and a jump over the river to Champ de Mars – home of the Eiffel Tower. No visit to Paris would be complete without a quick stop to see this mammoth structure up close, and the stretch of green in front is a hotspot for picnics and photos.

20.00: Dinner at Shang Palace, Shangri-La Hotel. If you've had your fill of French food for the day, head to the Shangri-La Hotel just around the corner to sample France's only Michelin-starred Chinese restaurant, where the likes of Peking duck with pancakes and giant paprika king prawns are paired with wines straight from the hotel cellar, beneath glittering chandeliers and Asian-inspired decor.

Afterwards, head to Le Bar Botaniste at the hotel for unique cocktails featuring ingredients such as pollen, rhubarb and cardamom, inspired by horticultural fan Prince Roland Bonaparte, who lived here.



Start your day the proper way with a coffee and croissant on Place des Vosges, the oldest square in the city

DAY TWO:

09.00: The Marais. Start your day the proper way with a coffee and croissant on Place des Vosges, the oldest square in the city. Chic cafe Carette Vosges serves fresh, buttery pastries on an elegant arcade terrace that's surrounded by ornate 17th-century buildings, including the former house of Victor Hugo, author of *Les Misérables*.

Afterwards, stroll the medieval lanes that make up the Marais, Paris's main Jewish quarter, which is filled with bagel shops, upmarket boutiques and independent galleries.

10.30: Canal Saint-Martin. Wander north to Canal Saint-Martin, a romantic waterway in the trendy (if slightly gritty) area of République that draws in

creative, bohemian locals who meander along, sipping coffee on al fresco terraces. Barge trips are on hand to whisk you along its pretty, tree-shaded waters and there's a handful of 'bobo' ('bohemian-bourgeois') cafes – including Chez Prune, which serves excellent coffee, brunches and cocktails right by the water's edge.

12.30: Saint-Michel. Take the metro over to Saint-Michel, on the west side of the Latin Quarter. Home to the Sorbonne and once a hotspot for philosophy types, it's lined with olde-worlde bookshops (check out Shakespeare & Co), artsy cinemas, crêperies and fondue restaurants, which make it the perfect spot for lunch on a cobbled street.

14.30: The Panthéon. While you're in Saint-Michel, pay a visit to the Panthéon, an imposing former church where the tombs of some of France's most famous figures – including Voltaire, Rousseau and Marie Curie – have been held since the French Revolution. Today, visitors can glimpse them before climbing up the dome for 360-degree views over the surrounding neighbourhoods (entry is €9 for adults). ➔



Rates at the **Shangri-La Paris** start at €850 per night for a Superior Room. shangri-la.com/paris

Osprey Holidays offers a two-night B&B break to the three-star New Hotel Opera, with flights from Luton, from £269 departing September 3. ospreyholidays.com/travel-agents

➔ **16.00: Jardin du Luxembourg.** Stroll five minutes west and you'll find Jardin du Luxembourg, one of Paris's most beautiful parks thanks to its opulent palace and lush greenery. Especially striking is the Medici Fountain, a glistening mirror pool of water framed by an ornate-looking statue.

17.30: Musée Rodin. Around 20 minutes west lies another of my personal highlights, the Musée Rodin, housed in a charming restored chapel. The real draw, though, is the garden, where sculptures are tucked between colourful flowers, hedges and water features (entry is €5 for the garden and €11 for the whole museum).

19.00: Montparnasse. A half-hour walk south takes you to the Montparnasse Tower, a 59-floor skyscraper stretching nearly 700ft. Speedy lifts whisk you to the top, where an excellent bar/restaurant serves cocktails against a backdrop of twinkling lights – all without the queues of the Eiffel Tower.

Just round the corner from here is Montparnasse Cemetery, home to the burial places of French icons including philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and poet Charles Baudelaire.

21.00: Bastille. When night falls head to Bastille, over in the east. This 'shabby-chic', slightly grungy

neighbourhood draws in a young, cool crowd with a plethora of food spots – try L'Ecailler du Bistrot for exceptional seafood or Café Divan for casual French classics. If you still have energy, head to one of the cocktail bars that line the ever-buzzing Rue de la Roquette and round off your flying visit in hipster style. **TW**



16.00: Medici Fountain, Jardin du Luxembourg

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