

Paris 3-Day Walking Tour: See Paris Like a Local



.The view of the Eiffel Tower from the southwest

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Things You Need to Know

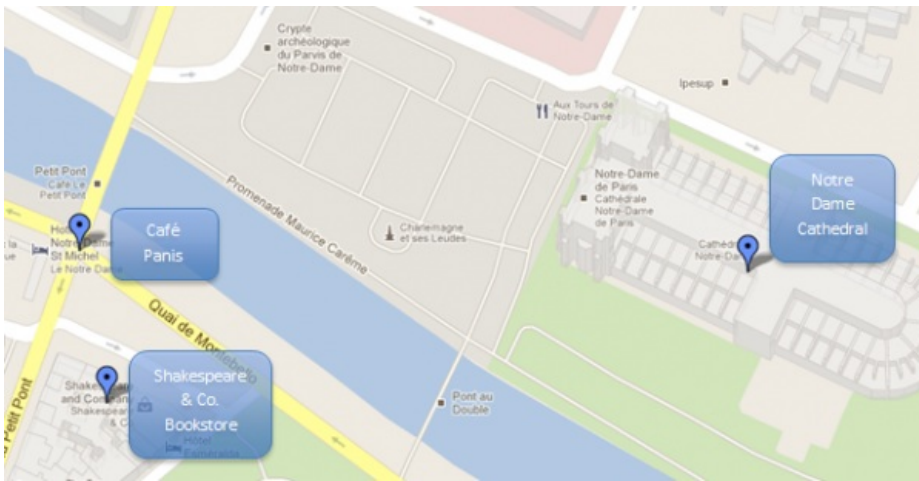
[FREE Travel Guide!](#)

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Day 1

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am -- Notre Dame and Ile de la Cité 9:30



Take a few hours to discover the center of Paris! Ile de la cité – quite literally, city island – is the historical heart of Paris and the site of the first settlement on the banks of the Seine by the Gaulish Parisii tribe 3500 years ago. Today, it's home to one of the most famous sites in Paris, Notre Dame Cathedral.

You can access Ile de la cité and Notre Dame via métro line 4, stop Cité. Walk from here to the cathedral: as you exit the métro, you'll see the spire of the Sainte Chapelle to your left. Turn away from it and walk with your back to the spire to the street at the end of the square. Cross the street and turn right; you'll see the cathedral on your left after the Hotel-Dieu hospital!

Notre Dame

Price: Free

Duration: 1 ½ hours

Hours: 8:00am – 6:45pm (weekends until 7:15pm)

Address: 6, parvis Notre-Dame

Website: <http://www.notredamedeparis.fr/>



The Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris -- Our Lady of Paris -- is one of Paris' most visited monuments. Built in 1163, the cathedral is perhaps most famous for its Rose Windows as well as its gargoyles, a key element in Victor Hugo's masterpiece, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, or *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. Victor himself was actually quite displeased with the English translation of his title: for him, the main character of his novel was the eponymous cathedral, not Quasimodo.

Religious scholars (or former Catholic school students) will recognize Bible and religious stories inscribed all over the interior and exterior walls of the cathedral. The cathedral is named for Mary; you can see the depiction of the assumption of Mary into Heaven over the entrance on the far left. A statue of Saint Denis, one of the patron saints of Paris, holding his own head sits below; it's the the third statue in from the left. This is Saint Denis' most common depiction, as he was martyred at the top of Montmartre (Mont des Martyrs or Mount of the Martyrs) in the 18th arrondissement by beheading.

Inside, you'll find the famous Rose Windows, as well as the beautiful organs: the choir organ near the altar and the concert organ at the back. A schedule of free concerts is available at the information booth by the entrance for those who would like to hear it played.

Local's Tip: *Be sure to stop in the chapel housing three to-scale replicas of the cathedral, at the eastern end of the cathedral (the furthest end from the entrance and exit doors, behind the altar): two were commissioned by the cathedral, and one was given as a gift by a gastroenterologist who makes to-scale models as a hobby.*

Be sure to visit the outside of the cathedral as well: as you exit, turn left and walk through the park that runs along the side and rear of the cathedral. If you look towards the top of the cathedral from behind, you'll see 16 bronze statues surrounding the metal spire. The spire was added in the 19th century by Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, charged with renovating the cathedral, which had fallen into disrepair. He also added the statues, which represent the 12 apostles and 4 evangelists.

Across the street from the back end of the cathedral, you can also visit a free Holocaust memorial. It was built in a deliberately claustrophobic way in order to incite the same feelings of stress and panic that Holocaust victims would have felt, making for a very moving exhibit.

Café Panis

Price: 2-15 euros

Duration: 15-30 minutes

Hours: 8:00am - 12:00am

Address: 21, quai Montebello

Stop for coffee, a quick snack or an early lunch at Café Panis, just over the bridge from Notre-Dame into the Left Bank (to your left as you exit the cathedral). While eating in touristy areas can be very hit or miss, Café Panis is a safe bet. The *croque monsieurs* here are excellent, served on Poilane bread, a hearty country bread with great flavor. Café Panis also offers as a handful of vegetarian options, like delicious grilled sandwiches, a rare find in Paris!

Snag a seat on the outdoor terrace and order a "café" for an espresso or a "café crème" for the equivalent of a latté or coffee with milk. Black American coffee is rarely drunk in France, but you can get an americano by ordering a "café allongé."

Local's Tip: *When eating on a terrace, beware of your surroundings. People frequently lose their telephones and wallets when they leave them on tables whilst dining, as professional thieves and pickpockets only need moments before snagging these items. Put your bag in your lap or under your chair with all pockets closed and one handle wrapped around a leg of the chair or table, and be sure to put phones, cameras and wallets inside zipped pockets when possible.*

This area is especially popular with teams of thieves who distract you by passing you a petition and steal your belongings while you're distracted. If anyone offers you a petition to sign, keep your hands on your personal belongings, look them in they eye, and assertively say, "Non."

11:30 am -- Walk along the Seine

- **Price:** FREE
- **Duration:** 30 minutes