

TRAVEL

PARIS

The top 10 things to do in Paris

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Last summer, during the height of world protests against Israel as the summer war against Hamas waged on, my family and I travelled to Paris (<http://en.paris-info.com/discovering-paris>). We stayed right in the heart of the Jewish area, known as the Marais, and while there were certainly demonstrations taking place and some unfortunate incidents I must say that the authorities did such a good job maintaining law and order that we were able to pursue our intended itinerary without interruption.

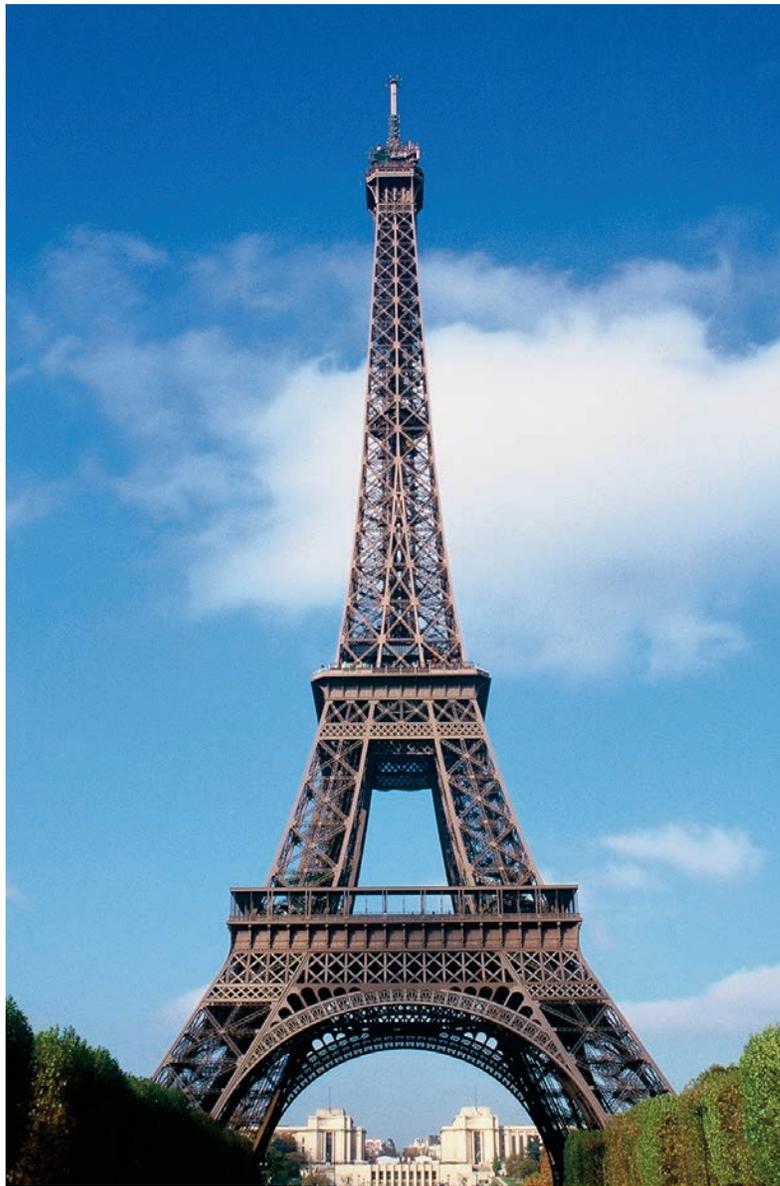
At Les Jardins du Marais (www.lesjardinsdumarais.com) we felt safe, used the metro station only steps away from the front door every day and spent a lot of time in the Jewish district, eating at kosher restaurants, frequenting Jewish stores and passing by synagogues and the Shoah Memorial.

The Jewish presence in France is thought to go back to the year 6 CE, when Roman Emperor Augustus banished Archelaus, the ethnarch of Judea. On the eve of World War II, there were about 300,000 Jews in France. In June 1940, Nazi Germany invaded France and occupied the northern part of the country (the occupation was extended to the southern part of France in 1942). The Nazis actively arrested and deported Jews, with the collaboration of the Vichy government. As a result, about 70,000 French Jews perished in the Holocaust.

Present-day French Jewry is estimated at half a million people and is the Diaspora's second largest community, after the United States. Paris and its suburbs are the home of the great majority of it (350,000). Other large Jewish communities include Marseilles (70,000), Lyon (25,000), Toulouse (23,000) and Nice (20,000).

Les Jardins du Marais at 74 Rue Amelot has 263 rooms and suites, an intimate restaurant and bar and excellent customer service. This is part of the Preferred Hotel Group (www.preferredhotelgroup.com). It is Jewish owned.

Here are the top 10 things to



No. 1 thing to do in Paris: visit the Eiffel Tower

do in Paris.

10. The Bateaux-Mouches (<http://www.bateaux-mouches.fr/en>) boat tours along the Seine River have daily departures throughout the day and in the evening, which are enhanced, in no predictable order, by the most prestigious monuments which have marked history.

9. The famous hop-on, hop-off bus tours (<http://eng.bigbus-tours.com/paris/home.html>) allows you to explore the city's top tourist attractions at your own pace. Throughout the ticket validity period, you can hop on and off the buses at

any of the Big Bus stops.

8. Notre-Dame de Paris (<http://www.notredamedeparis.fr/-English>), a masterpiece of faith, art and history, is the cathedral of the Catholic archdiocese of Paris. Access to the cathedral is open and free of charge every day of the year, during the opening hours.

7. The Palais Garnier (<http://visitepalaisgarnier.fr>) is a magnificent 1,979-seat opera house, which was built from 1861 to 1875 for the Paris Opera. Rent an audio guide, which comes on an iPad and is good for two people. We were mesmerized by

what we saw. This is said to be the most famous opera house in the world.

6. Internationally renowned for its rich collection of impressionist art, the Musée d'Orsay (<http://www.musee-orsay.fr>) also displays all western artistic creations between 1848 and 1914. Its collections represent all expressive forms, from painting to architecture, not forgetting sculpting, decorative arts and photography. You're sure to be dazzled by the beauty of the place

5. The Moulin Rouge (www.moulinrouge.fr) is quite simply the most famous cabaret in the world. Located in the Montmartre District, you will be entertained by a troupe of 80 artists, including 60 Doriss Girls recruited worldwide. Consider dinner at the Koff Deli (www.koff-paris.fr) nearby, which even has some kosher items on the menu.

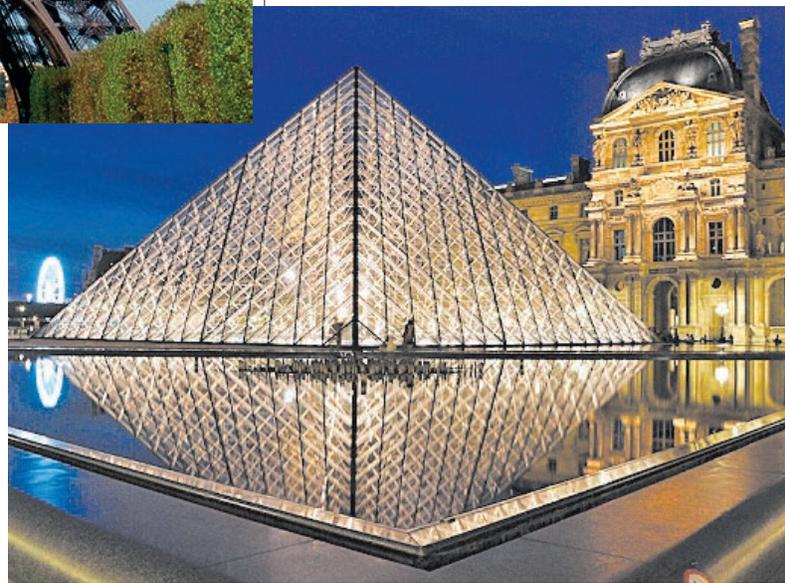
4. Located in the Marais district, in one of the most beautiful mansions in Paris, the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (www.mahj.org) retraces the historical evolution of the Jewish community through their cultural heritage and traditions.

3. The Shoah Memorial (<http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/index.php/en>) was opened to the public in January 2005. For the benefit of English-speaking visitors, on the second Sunday of every month, a guided tour in Eng-

lish is offered free of charge.

2. One of the biggest museums in the world and the home to three great ladies – Venus de Milo, Victory of Samothrace and Mona Lisa – the Louvre (www.louvre.fr/en) will take you hours to go through so plan your stops in advance. Its collections are spread over eight departments: Near Eastern Antiquities, Islamic Art, Egyptian Antiquities, Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Paintings, Sculptures, Decorative Arts, and Prints and Drawings dating from the Middle Ages to 1848. There are 35,000 works of art in 60,600 square metres of rooms devoted to permanent collections with 2,410 windows, 3,000 locks and 10,000 steps. The Louvre is open daily (except Tuesday) from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (on Wednesdays and Fridays you can go until 9:45 p.m.).

1. The Eiffel Tower (www.tour-eiffel.fr) is best experienced for pictures from the nearby Trocadero and then by buying a ticket to the second or top level for the best views of Paris. You can skip the lines and enjoy a world class meal in the process by reserving lunch or dinner at the exclusive Jules Verne Restaurant (<http://www.lejulesverne-paris.com>). It is at the second level and has an exclusive entrance and exit to the viewing platform.



The Louvre museum and pyramid by night, Paris's No. 2 place to visit in the city.