

24 Hours in Paris

It was hard for me to look at a map of Paris with only twenty-four hours at my disposal. I always want to make the most out of a new place. Suck the marrow out of it, as John Keating would say. But, twenty-four hours? The best I could do was accept that I wouldn't suck the marrow out of anything. I'd barely get a taste, but a taste is better than nothing at all.

I was staying an hour north of Paris when I decided to make the impromptu trip into the city by myself. I know there's a lot more to Paris than the Eiffel Tower, but that's what I wanted to see. I wanted to stand beneath that iconic wrought iron beast and say 'I'm here'. And I wanted to finish reading my book in a Parisian café, which at the time was 'All The Light We Cannot See' by Anthony Doerr. I keep that in mind, and with minimal planning, set off for the city.

12 pm. When I arrive in Paris by train, it is raining. I think Paris looks pretty in the rain. I find last minute accommodation at Hôtel Mogador on Rue de la Victoire. I won't say this is the best €120 I've ever spent, but it is a seven-minute walk from the Jardin des Tuileries.

1 pm. I leave the hotel as quickly as I arrive. Before reaching the garden, I stop for lunch at L'Imperial. I don't look at the reviews. I just really like the red chairs. I order an espresso, which is something I seem to only do in European cities. I order salmon on spinach and like it. The prices are what you'd expect being right next to the Tuileries and the Musée du Louvre. I order a glass of Merlot because it is the only glass of wine on the menu I know I can pronounce.

2:30 pm. I walk through the Jardin des Tuileries. It is drizzling and grey, but I am able to appreciate it nonetheless. I can imagine it in spring with the blossomed trees lining the walkways and it makes my

heart warm. There is a vibrant carousel, holding only one child driving a red train and his mom with her umbrella standing by. There are playgrounds, cafés that don't look open, and beautiful chestnut trees, water-basins, and statues.

3:00 pm. I loop around and walk out toward Place de la Concorde where I buy a ticket for the ferris wheel. I see the Eiffel Tower for the first time in clear view.

3:45 pm. It begins to snow and I don't want to be outside. I walk to Musée Jacquemart-André, about a 25-minute walk. I am close to the Louvre but anticipated large crowds and long lines on this dreary Saturday afternoon put me off. So, I opt for one of my other choices. I am intrigued by the reviews online (this I do check) and the fact that it seems to be a rather small museum. The old mansion aesthetic is captivating and the lack of a queue on this particular Saturday is ideal.

5:30 pm. It is time to see la tour Eiffel up close and personal. It is a 35-minute walk, and I have a good podcast on deck. The snow has let up and I don't need my umbrella so life is good.

6:00 pm. I stop at the Castle Café for another espresso and to finish my book. I sit outside because they have heat lamps. I keep brushing the top of my head to make sure my hair isn't burning, it's that hot. I love this café because it sits on the corner of a street that frames the Eiffel Tower perfectly.

6:45 pm. I call an Uber to take me to Le Carrousel for dinner, a place near L'Imperial that I had scoped out earlier. When I get into the car, the man asks if I'd seen the tower light up yet and I say I don't know what he is talking about. He laughs and, next thing you know, we are driving past the Eiffel Tower, on the hour, in a sea of twinkling lights. I stick my head out the window and laugh.



Le Carrousel is fit for my needs. I order a Margarita Pizza and a Heineken and am very happy. The waiter, who speaks three different languages, is warm and friendly and keeps checking in on me. I start poking on the Bumble app ([link to bumble article](#)) to see if I can find a friend to grab a drink with. It is St. Patrick's Day after all.

8:30 pm. I give the waiter a hug, say 'thanks for being so good to me'. I walk back to Hôtel Mogador to freshen up.

10:00 pm. I meet Hannah for drinks at Le Sans Souci, a cozy bar in Pigalle. It is only a ten-minute walk from my hotel. Hannah is a recent college graduate who recently quit her full-time job and is doing some solo travel. This resonates with me, as I am in a similar situation. Le Sans Souci is a perfect nightcap and I like my new friend.

12:00 am. I fall asleep happily at Hotel Mogador.

9:00 am. I wake up refreshed. I opt out of the €12 hotel breakfast and walk to the Arc de Triomphe, a relatively close landmark. After taking years of French class in grade school, the Arc de Triomphe is a name I've always recognized. Time to put a face to the name, you know?

9:40 am. The sun is peeking through so I'm taking advantage of this scene. There are a lot of people and they are taking a lot of pictures. Two German men ask me to take their photo. I ask them to take mine, too. They do and want one with me as well, which is weird, but I go with it.

10:00 am. It is time for my final meal in Paris. I walk toward Paris Nord, the train station I need to be at for noon. I walk almost the entire way when I stumble upon Capri Saint-Honoré. I sit outside under the heat lamps as it begins to snow. I order des oeufs, un pain au chocolat and, of course, un expresso.

12:00 pm. By noon, I'm on the train, snacks in tow. I've got a new book to read called *Returning to Earth* by Jim Harrison. I strike up a conversation with the older woman next to me, a Parisian local. She says, I'm sorry you had to see it in the rain.

I smile and tell her, don't be sorry at all.