

How to visit Paris in style

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For most people at the moment, travel is the last thing on their mind, understandably. For others (like me), it's something they live and breathe. Indeed, this current climate has only made me more determined to save this industry and keep inspiring people across the globe to reach for new experiences and explore. I hope that this article will inspire you to keep dreaming, stay positive and look forward to the future!

Paris is widely considered to be the capital of fashion. The French have been known for their ability to start style trends (whether fashion or culinary) ever since the epoch of Louis XIV at the court of Versailles.

No matter your reasons for visiting Paris, whether it be with family, on business, or a solo trip – you'll probably want to do so in style. Style in the sense here means more than just clothes, it is also about attitude and an overall way of being. Achieving that French *je ne sais quoi* can seem a bit intimidating for visitors to the City of Light- but it is actually more achievable than you might presume. We've broken down all the ways you can visit Paris in style- from the outfits you pack in your suitcase, to where you decide to stay, how you pass your time in the city and perhaps one of the most important – where you dine, blogs Maria Pasca.

What to pack



First comes first, you'll want to be quite methodical when it comes to choosing what to pack in your suitcase. Whilst in Paris, if you want to blend in with the locals, you'll want to dress appropriately. In Paris, you will never witness the natives wearing athleisure wear unless they are actually working out. There are a few cardinal rules to follow. The French, and Europeans in general, tend to dress up more so than what Americans may be accustomed to. First, despite how comfortable yoga pants are, most Parisians will only actually wear them inside the yoga studio (they'll usually change their clothes at the studio). And even in the heat of summer, you can forget the French wearing flipflop sandals. These are only considered appropriate for the beach- for the practical reason that if you're walking the streets of the city your feet are bound to get really dirty in flip flops.

Because you'll want to make sure you're appropriately dressed and your outfit doesn't scream tourist, you'll want to follow these French fashion tips. Start with the basics- jeans are your best friend. They are casual but can be dressed up with blazers, sweaters, a fashionable top and worn with boots or high heels. For the rest of your Parisian wardrobe opt for items of clothing that are mostly neutral colors – black, navy, tan and white. You can therefore mix and match several outfits and won't have to worry about bringing an oversized suitcase to

the airport. To these basics, add accentuating touches using brightly colored scarves and jewelry (both of which are easy to pack!).

For your shoes, as you likely will be spending a lot of time on foot exploring the city or wandering the galleries of its world famous museums, you'll want to be as comfortable as possible. But this doesn't mean you have to sacrifice style. The French are crazy about baskets (sneakers), so choose trendy pairs that not only feel good on your feet but catch the eye, too.

As for beauty, the French seem to have deceptively simple beauty routines. It is true that French women wear less makeup than their American counterparts, but what is valued here in France is a more detailed attention to skin and hair care. Preserving what nature gave you by using top quality skin and hair care products seems to be the rule the French follow. This rule does not just apply to women, Parisian men are known to be very conscious of their skin and hair care, as well.

If you're taking excellent care of your skin, no need to cover up with lots of makeup. Take the best care of yourself possible and you'll be already starting with a beautiful canvas, to which all you need to add is bright red lip stick.

To give your Parisian vacation a bit of style - think about choosing a hotel or private apartment that really speaks to the type of experience you would like to have while visiting France. Whether it be one of the iconic five star luxury Parisian hotels (The Four Seasons George V, Plaza Athenee, The Ritz Paris, Le Meurice)...or a hip boutique style hotel like Hotel Particulier in Montmartre, where you're staying stages the important backdrop for your trip and will set the tone for your experience and over all mood. If you opt for staying in a private apartment, you'll really have the opportunity to live like a Parisian. Consider looking for a private apartment rental in stylish neighborhoods like the Marais or St Germain-des-Pres.

Beat jet lag



Flights arriving to Paris from the US and Canada depart in the evenings and land in the morning, usually quite early. The key to having a great arrival to France without being in bit of travel fog is to ensuring you get great rest on the plane ride over the Atlantic. It is certainly worth it to travel by first class if it is within your budget, or to upgrade to seats with more leg room. That way, when you arrive in Paris you'll be feeling refreshed.

If you do find yourself very tired during your first day in Paris because of the time change, try your best not to give in to the tiredness and avoid sleeping. If you can make it through that first day and get to bed at a relatively normal time, you'll usually wake up at a regular time in the morning on your second day and be ready to take on the city.

For your arrival to Paris, whether by plane or by train, navigating the RER train and the metro with large suitcases can be quite a hassle. You may consider hiring a private car service that will meet you at the airport or train station and bring you to your hotel or apartment rather than having to wait in line for a taxi.

Alternatively, there are also shuttle buses that run directly from the airports to landmarks in central Paris like the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Gare de Lyon and Opera. These buses are quite comfortable and have Wifi onboard.

Now that you've arrived in Paris and are settled in your hotel, how will you spend the rest of your visit to the City of Lights in style?

Private museums and custom tours



Depending on what your interests are, Paris has something for everyone. If you happen to be a museum aficionado, you might consider reserving a high quality private tour for you and your party. These are especially convenient when visiting such monuments as the Louvre Museum and the Chateau of Versailles. When visiting in a group, you'll typically have a special entry and avoid long waits in line. Depending on the agency you choose, most private tour guides will typically meet you at your Parisian accommodations and then travel with you in a chauffeured car or van to the site you will be visiting.

Even if you've been to a museum before, touring with your own private guide is the best way to experience French monuments. You'll be able to ask questions and learn so much more than you would otherwise get from an audio guide.

In addition to museums and historical sites, many agencies also offer customizable itineraries for your visit, so you can pick and choose what you're going to see and do in Paris based on your particular interests. Plus, private guides will always have local insider knowledge about the best restaurants and spots to try in Paris during your visit.

Fine dining



Paris has no shortage of fine dining. The French capital boasts over 100 Michelin starred establishments within the city. From traditional French cuisine, to contemporary and fusion – there is choice that will suit everyone's taste.

The following Parisian restaurants all have three Michelin stars and are certainly worth the visit while you're in Paris. In addition to award-winning gastronomic fare, these restaurants each possess exquisite style and luxurious ambiance:

Arpege – chef Alain Passard's restaurant has been open for over 30 years and features organic vegetable inspired dishes that come straight from the restaurant's own vegetable gardens.

Guy Savoy – located in an 18th century neoclassical building and former home to the Paris Mint, Guy Savoy is

famous for its classic cuisine with contemporary twists.

L'Ambroisie – within the elegant Place des Vosges in the Marais, L'Ambroisie has had three Michelin stars for 30 years and proposes traditional French dishes.

Alléno Paris au Pavillon Ledoyen – The Pavillon Ledoyen is located in the gardens of the Champs-Élysées in and has been the home to the prestigious restaurant since 1792. Chef Yannick Alléno is known world-wide for his audacious modern cuisine.

Alain Ducasse au Plaza Athénée – the iconic restaurant features a natural Haute-Cuisine menu of fruit and vegetables that have been hand picked in the morning and then make their way onto your plate that evening.

Épicure – located in the elegant Le Bristol Hotel, Epicure is known for unforgettable French cuisine.

Le Cinq held within the Four Seasons Hotel George V is the sophisticated Le Cinq restaurant, proposing refined French cuisine made with modern techniques.

Pierre Gagnaire – this posh restaurant located not far from the Champs-Élysées is known for having the most inventive menu in Paris.

Le Pré Catelan – nestled within the Bois de Boulogne in the western part of Paris, Le Pré Catelan has been around since 1875 offering haute cuisine in a bucolic setting.

While it isn't hard to find extraordinary gastronomy in Paris in stylish settings, don't forget that in addition to fine dining another great option is to visit one of the city's many open air markets. Experience the joy of choosing fresh vegetables, poultry and meat, and then finding the perfect cheese and wine. As you walk down the cobblestone streets, baguette in hand, you'll really begin to feel like you've adopted the Parisian style.

