

PARIS LIKE A LOCAL

To appreciate the City of Light as the locals do, you can start by learning some of the daily rituals of Paris life. These simple, fun pleasures will quickly get you into the swing of being Parisian.

Shop Like a Parisian

Parisians prefer the boisterous atmosphere of bustling street markets to the drab *supermarchés*. Even if you're just buying picnic fixings, you can follow suit. For a full listing of Paris's markets, check out the city hall Web site at www.paris.fr, but these are some of our faves.

Le Marché d'Aligre, just off the Rue du Faubourg St-Antoine beyond the Opéra Bastille, dates back to the 18th century. Open Tuesday through Sunday, the market has fruit, vegetables, cheese, meat, fish, and poultry, as well as a host of other products. The best selection is on the weekend. And if flea markets are your thing, Paris has three that can satisfy any bargain hunter. At **Les Puces de Montreuil** (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, 9 AM to 7:30 PM, métro Porte de Montreuil) dig through the heaps of old clothes until you make a find, probably for less than €3. **Les Puces des Vanves** (weekends, 9 AM to 7:30 PM, métro Porte de Vanves; Avenue de la Porte de Vanves and Rue Marc Sangnier) is two in one: in the morning, collectors revel among old furniture, stamps, postcards, and almost everything else imaginable; in the afternoon, merchants of new and vintage clothing take over. **Les Puces de St-Ouen** (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, 9 AM to 7:30 PM, métro Clignancourt), otherwise known as the Clignancourt flea market, is a little more expensive, but a real treasure trove. Bypass the noisy stands near the métro in favor of the buildings beyond the elevated highway, where antiques dealers and vintage-clothing boutiques provide a real blast from the past. You might not *need* to buy flowers, but the flower markets are lovely for wandering, and you can cheer up a budget hotel room with a few daisies in a water glass. Try one of the **Les Marchés aux Fleurs**: at Place de la Madeleine (Tuesday to Sunday, 8 AM to 7:30 PM), Place des Ternes (Tuesday to Sunday, 8 AM to 7:30 PM), or Place Lépine (Monday to Saturday, 8 AM to 7:30 PM, with the bird market Sunday morning).

Drink Coffee Like a Parisian

Le café in Paris isn't simply a drink that begins the day: it's a way of life. Though Parisians do stop at the counter to order a quick *café expresso, bien serré, s'il vous plaît* ("good and strong, please"), more often people treat the café as an extension of their apartments, with laptops precariously balanced, cell phones ringing, and business being done; in Paris the café is the place to work, read, and chat with friends, any time of the day. Think of Simone de Beauvoir, who spent more time at the **Café de Flore** (E172 *bd. St-Germain*, 6e P01-45-48-55-26) than in her chilly apartment. Choose a café with a patio or good windows for people watching, or pause at the nearest counter, and you're in for a dose of Parisian café culture. Most locals have their own favorites, and we've listed some of our top choices on the neighborhood Getting Oriented pages; you're bound to find your own preferred haunt(s).

Walk Like a Parisian

Paris was made for wandering, and the French have coined a lovely word for a person who wanders the streets: *le flâneur*, one who strolls or loiters, usually without a destination in mind. In Paris the streets beckon, leading you past monuments, down narrow alleyways, through arches, and into hidden squares. As a flâneur, you can become attuned to the city's rhythm and, no matter how aimlessly you stroll, chances are you'll end up somewhere magical. Some of our suggestions for wandering are along the Seine, into the poetic streets of **St-Germain**, or into the tangled lanes around the **Bastille** and **Canal St-Martin** area. Strolling is a favorite Sunday pastime for the locals—but you're on vacation, so you can be a flâneur any day of the week.

Eat Baguettes Like a Parisian

The Tour Eiffel might be the most famous symbol of Paris, but perhaps the true banner of France is the *baguette*, the long, caramel-color bread brandished at every meal. Locals take inordinate pride at finding the best *baguette* in the neighborhood. To find a worthy *boulangerie*—a bakery that specializes in bread, as opposed to a *pâtisserie*, specializing in pastries—look for a line outside on weekend mornings. Three faves in Paris are **Arnaud Delmontel** (E39 *rue des Martyrs* P01-48-78-29-33), **Jean-Pierre Cohier** (E270 *rue du Faubourg St-Honoré* P01-42-27-45-26), and **Boulangier de Monge** (E123 *rue Monge* P01-43-37-54-20). Note that some *boulangeries* follow the traditional three-step customer service protocol: first you place

your order at the counter and receive a receipt; then you pay at the *caisse* and get your receipt stamped; finally, you return to the first counter to exchange the stamped receipt for your package of edible art. As you're leaving the bakery, do as many Parisians do—nibble the end of the crust to taste the bread while it's still warm.

Eat Pastries Like a Parisian

High prices are making luxury all the more elusive in Paris, but there's one indulgence most people can still afford, at least occasionally—fine pastries. As you can see when you stop in at any of Paris's extraordinary pâtisseries (pastry shops), a whole different and wonderful array of French treats await. Tops on our list are the deliciously airy and intense *macarons*—nothing like the heavy American macaroons you might be familiar with. **Ladurée** (E16 rue Royale, 8e P01-42-60-21-79) claims to have invented these ganache-filled cookies, but two Left Bank pâtissiers also have particularly devoted fans of their *macarons*: the flavors at **Gérard Mulot** (E76 rue de Seine, 6e P01-43-26-85-77) include pistachio, caramel, and terrific orange-cinnamon, and **Pierre Hermé** (E72 rue Bonaparte, 6e P01-43-54-47-77) has exotic ones like peach-saffron, olive oil, and white truffle. The classic opera pastry—almond cake layered with chocolate and coffee cream—can be found at **Lenôtre** (E61 rue Lecourbe, 15e P01-42-73-20-97), but devotees also flock to the fine-food emporium **Fauchon** (E26 pl. de la Madeleine, 8e P01-47-42-60-11). Another traditional pastry is the *mont-blanc*, a mini-mountain of chestnut puree capped with whipped cream, best rendered by **Jean-Paul Hévin** (E3 rue Vavin, 6e P01-43-54-09-85). And those really in the know watch for anything from the Tokyo-born **Sadaharu Aoki** (E35 rue Vaugirard, 6e P01-45-44-48-90); look for his green-tea madeleines and black-sesame éclairs. Many of the sweet spots mentioned here have multiple locations; only the original store is listed.