

WEEKEND
LIKE A LOCAL IN

Paris



A MESSY NESSY MINI GUIDE



WEEKEND LIKE A LOCAL

DESTINATION

PARIS

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Friday Evening



Book dinner at **Le Bon Georges** and enquire ahead about ordering their famous giant soufflé at this jovial bistrot. Surrounded by visuals of bygone Paris and charming hosts, there's no need for Michelin-star restaurants in this city when you have places like this for French cuisine and hospitality at its best.

(45 rue Saint-Georges, 9ème; +33 1 48 78 40 30; open Mon-Fri for lunch & dinner)



After dinner, head to a secret Playhouse in Paris

On a leafy avenue in Montmartre, inside the former villa of the Hermès family at the top of a secret stairway, the **Hotel Particulier de Montmartre** has a very special bar called **Le Très Particulier**.

Spoil yourself with luxurious cocktails and schmooze with a diverse crowd of well-travelled guests of the hotel and in-the-know Parisians.

*(Enter through the gate at 23 avenue Junot, 18ème; +33 1 53 41 81 40;
open every day till 2am)*

Saturday



If you'd like to get some close-ups with the Eiffel Tower without getting too close to the tourist chaos, schedule in a breakfast with a Secret View of the Eiffel Tower...



Head to the **PariSeven** boulangerie near the Eiffel Tower, a postcard perfect pink bakery in the 7th arrondissement and pick up your profiterole, croissant or whatever tickles your fancy.

(20 Rue Jean Nicot, 7ème; +33 1 43 17 35 20; Mon-Sat 7.30am-8.30pm)

Then set off on a short ten-minute stroll to find my own secret view of the Tour Eiffel (pictured above right) a few minutes away on the hidden art nouveau style enclave, **Square Rapp** and peacefully enjoy your breakfast, and the French iron lady away from the crowds.

(Off avenue Rapp, 7ème)

Spend the rest of the morning at the **Marché Avenue du Président Wilson** across the river from the Eiffel Tower. All the sellers are masters of their craft, and the market fights for the title of the city's poshest food market, catering to the local clientele that's looking for only the best foie gras to serve their dinner party guests.

(Avenue du Président Wilson, 16ème; +33 1 45 11 71 11; 7am-2.30pm)



The Louvre's secret apartments

THE LOUVRE'S SECRET APARTMENTS

Generally I prefer to steer you away from the world's most visited museum and into the arms of more overlooked cultural foundations in the city, but there is one exception to the rule. An entire wing that escapes most tourists' radars: **Napoleon III's apartments.**

They're ghostly, gilded, and a veritable mini- Versailles. The apartments are hidden in the **Richelieu Wing**. Avoid the queue by the pyramid and slide in through the **Galérie du Carrousel** (an underground mall that connects to the Louvre) at number 99 rue de Rivoli. Once you're in, make your way to the museum's hub, which has escalators crawling up to different galleries (i.e. Denon, Sully). You want to aim for "Richelieu." You'll walk past a stunning series of staircases on your way to the apartments and you'll know once you've arrived. A plaque outside explains that "the rooms you're about to enter were refurbished during the Second Empire, and were part of what was, at the time, a brand-new wing of the Louvre (built between 1852 and 1857)."

The country's finest artists, decorators, upholsterers and the like were hired to work on the apartments, which were fashioned in the Louis XIV style. Thanks to sheer luck (and many restorative genies), they haven't changed a bit. Wander the corridors of never-ending red velvet, which ultimately lead you into a series of salons or "drawing rooms" with herds of chandeliers. There's a dining room that seems like it could comfortably seat a small village and a trompe l'oeil sky traversed by exotic birds.

The overall color palette for the space is made up of deep, plushy red and rich gold, but there are also some stunning rooms in robin egg blue and pastel pink. There's a charming portrait of Napoleon III's wife, Eugenie, who would entertain guests in the apartments, playing the piano and reciting poetry. We're so used to defining the Louvre by its (epic) fine arts collection, that we forget of its legacy as a home, and that's the real joy of visiting the apartments: drinking in the details of another life, and another era.

(99 Rue de Rivoli, 1er; open every day except Tuesday 9am-6pm, later openings till 7.45pm on Wed and Fri, free admission from 6-9.45pm on the first Saturday of every month; Louvre.fr)

BREAK FOR LUNCH NEARBY

Les Fines Gueules: At the foot of one of the most beautiful, almost-medieval buildings in Paris, take a seat at the bar or ask a table **en terrasse** at for an evening of Parisian people-watching while enjoying the freshest charcuterie, their legendary tuna tartare and superb cheese.

Ask to visit the ancient wine cave beneath after dinner.

*(43 rue Croix des Petits Champs, 1er; +33 1 42 61 35 41;
lesfinesgueules.fr; open every day for lunch from 12pm & dinner from 7pm)*

Or

Ellsworth: For something a little more modern, this minimalist but still-charming restaurant is owned by a talented American couple, serving taste-bud tingling sharing plates and don't miss that dessert: chocolate sherbet, malt ice cream with salty crumble, espresso foam and meringue. Grab an early seat at the marble bar or reserve ahead.

*(34 rue de Richelieu, 1er; book online at ellsworthparis.com;
open Tues-Sat for lunch & dinner, Sun for brunch, Mon for dinner)*



Walk it off in the hidden arcades of the Belle Epoque

Start in the nearby elegant gardens and covered marble arcades of the **Palais Royal**, a seventeenth-century royal enclave sealed off from the busy boulevards near the Louvre. Beneath the fluted pilasters and Corinthian capitals, alongside flower beds and trickling water fountains, browse the time-capsule boutiques that still have their artisanal shop signs from a hundred years ago. Make your exit from the palace at the sign for the Grand Vefour restaurant and cut through to the next street by climbing a narrow staircase opposite. On your left, pay a visit to the charming “doll-house” boutique of **Olympia Le-Tan**.

Continue through the passageway to come out the other side on **Rue des Petits Champs**. Look for the round arch across the street that takes you through to **Galerie Vivienne**. This is your portal to the city's hidden network of covered passageways, built by visionary architects of the **Belle Epoque** to provide refuge from the bustling streets of Paris.

Lined with elegant shops, fashionable eateries, small theatres, reading rooms and even public baths, they were the stomping ground of the elegant urban dandies and the place to see and be seen before they were replaced by the modern department stores. Today, under the very same antique glass roofs, the small arcade shops have maintained their merchant spirit, selling rare books, old photographs and vintage bric-a-brac; ideal for rainy weather.

Galerie Vivienne, the grandest and most beautifully preserved of the Parisian arcades. At the end of the passage, to the right, discover the old map shop, an unmarked boutique filled with rare antique cartography. Turn right out of the arcade onto Rue Vivienne and continue until you find the entrance to your next Belle Epoque tunnel at number 38.

The time-travelling maze of the **Passage des Panoramas**, is home to the wonderful 200 year old restaurant, **Canard & Champagne**. Cross straight over the busy intersection of the Boulevard Montmartre to discover the animated **Passage Jouffroy** where you'll find one of the most improbable little hotels in Paris called the **Hotel Chopin** as well as a miniature furniture shop, **Pain d'Epices**. Keep going and you'll float across into the **Passage Verdeau** for more shops of a bygone era bathed in light from the glass roof above.



If you still have some steam before dinner, take a 15 minute stroll to one of two museums:

Musée de la Vie Romantique: Nestled at the end of a tree-lined pathway, a garden of bellflowers, lilacs and wisteria is thriving happily at la Musée de la Vie Romantique. The private townhouse that once entertained the likes of Delacroix, Chopin and Rossini has been a museum devoted to the Romantic Movement in the arts since 1981. From mid-March to mid-October, an old glasshouse next to the main house is home to a charming tea room serving lunch and Egyptian iced tea made with hibiscus flowers and cinnamon. On a sun-drenched afternoon, it's simply paradise.

(16 rue Chaptal, 9ème; museevieromantique.paris.fr; Tues-Sun 10am-6pm)

The Gustave Moreau Museum: Moreau was a heartfelt romantic, and a very dramatic Symbolist painter; we'd argue no one has painted more scenes of Salomé zapping off John the Baptist's head in a ball of light than Gustave. His atelier-turned-museum is in the 9th arrondissement, and aside from being filled with his paintings of unicorns, goddesses and seriously shamanistic mystical-flower-lady paintings, gives you a glimpse into his everyday life; his study and bedrooms are on display, as are all his personal effects, from ancient Roman vases to taxidermy butterflies. Not to mention, the most hypnotic staircase in Paris.

(14 rue de la Rochefoucauld, 9ème; musee-moreau.fr; closed Tues)



Musée de la Vie Romantique



Musée Gustave Moreau

DINNER PLANS

Maison Maison: A hidden restaurant inside the limestone banks of the Seine. An old maintenance cave for the city has been transformed into an intimate little restaurant with 30 covers, serving fresh and delicious Mediterranean food. Looking out of the windows at the river Seine glistening under the moonlight, you'll feel a little bit like you're dining in Venice.

*(63, Parc Rives de Seine, 1er; +339 67 82 07 32;
open Mon 3pm-2am, Tues-Sun 11am-2am)*

La Belle Hortense: Start your evening at this wine bar in a bookshop in the heart of the Marais, offering charcuterie and sharing plates from the sister restaurant across the street...

(31 rue Vieille du Temple, 4ème; +33 1 48 04 71 60; open every day, 5pm-2am)

Take a book or a bottle away with you and hop over to the other side of the street to **Au Petit Fer à Cheval**. The decor hasn't changed at this century old Parisian brasserie, with its unique horseshoe shaped bar. Locals know there's a hidden dining room at the back.

(30 rue Vieille du Temple, 4ème; +33 1 42 72 47 47; open every day, 9am-2am)

Hop back to the wine bar after dessert for another round of booze and books if you like; it's the only wine cave/library in Paris that stays open until two in the morning.

(31 rue Vieille du Temple, 4ème; +33 1 48 04 71 60; open every day, 5pm-2am)

Caché: Set inside an old warehouse hidden down an alleyway. Perhaps you can check out [this neighbourhood](#) nearby before and it's also right next to this entrance to those [abandoned railway tracks](#).

*(13 Villa Riberolle, 20ème; +33 1 71 39 54 51;
open for dinner on Saturday from 7pm to 2am)*



Caché

Sunday



Sleep in, you deserve it. Plan for a late breakfast on the **Old Railway Tracks**.

On the abandoned train tracks of the "Little Belt" railroad, a surviving relic of a bygone era, closed since 1934, some creative Parisians built a hangout in the former **Gare Ornano** of the Petite Ceinture.

This clubhouse even has its own permanent DIY workshop corner in the station where you can learn to restore and reuse old and unwanted objects; maybe a broken chair you picked up at the flea market- hence the name **La Recyclerie**.

(83 Boulevard Ornano, 18eme; Larecyclerie.com; +33 1 42 57 58 49)



On a crisp sunny Sunday, there really is no better place to be in Paris than **les Puces (the flea market) of St.Ouen.**

The epicenter of authentic Paris, le Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen is an ideal little society of its own, made up of village-like alleys and small streets, persevered by an intellectual and cultivated community of vendors who make it all happen. Les Puces is made up of several maze-like markets, some indoor, some outdoor. Get lost inside the charming tiny streets of **Marché Vernaison**, find old photographs, prints and knick knacks in the **Marché Dauphine** and find that vintage Louis Vuitton trunk at **Marché Paul Bert**. You can follow my little guide [here](#).

Hungry? Find a secret bistrot hidden deep in the flea market. Open since 1967, **Chez Louissette** is the highlight of any visit to Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen. Hungry antique hunters and dealers crowd around little tables to eat lunch (mains €15 to €20) and hear old-time singers belt out numbers by Piaf and other classics, accompanied by the accordion; you might even be tempted to get up and dance with a fellow diner.

*(Enter Marché Vernaison at 99 rue des Rosiers and find it down the rabbit hole;
93400 Saint-Ouen; +33 1 40 12 10 14)*



I know I'm asking a lot for a Sunday, but you simply can't finish the weekend without an afternoon stroll in Hidden **Montmartre**...

I remember when I first saw it, **Avenue Junot**, the cobblestone road that winds up to Montmartre lined with some of the most delicious architecture in Paris. Its art deco ironwork, those tall glass windows bathed in light for artists in residence, colorful cul de sacs peeking out from behind corners; here is the Paris they wrote books and poems and made movies about.

Explore this little piece of Parisian paradise with [my map of Avenue Junot](#).



DINNER AT MY VALENTINE BISTROT

Nestled in a quiet backstreet, **Le Temps de Cerises** is one of the few enduring little gems of “la vie quotidienne” from a bygone Paris. With its unchanged mosaic facade, this little 18th century house has earned itself the title of a historical monument and the neighbourhood’s best kept secret.

Inside, we could be stepping back 50 years in time to 1955, when the same photographs on the wall, the newspapers hung from the same hooks in the corner and the same old clock chimed on the hour as if any of the regulars were ever in a rush to leave this timeless place. So yes, as far as Parisian bistros, go, Le Temps de Cerises is as authentic and as local as it gets. Between the cozily curtained window nooks, rickety old café chairs and the red-chequered napkins, Le Temps de Cerises is just effortlessly and organically charming unlike so many of the tourist traps that try to clone Parisian charm like they’re in Disneyland.

I do recommend calling ahead to make a booking for your table because you’ll be competing in a small space with the local residents coming in for their evening glass of terroir wine and side of cheese.

(31 rue de la Cerisaie, 4ème; +33 1 42 72 08 63)



FIGHT THE SUNDAY BLUES WITH THE BLUES

The oldest jazz club in Paris, **Le Caveau des Oubliettes** is remembered as a hotspot of post-war jazz, where Parisians went to forget the troubles of war...

Blues jazz – you know the kind that consists of a soulful harmonica player, a dirty electric guitar solo and lyrics like, “woman you ain’t no good for me” – is seriously seductive and oddly uplifting music.

On Sunday nights, Le Caveau des Oubliettes, is exactly where you need to go to be seduced by the best live blues in Paris. A 12th century underground wine cellar that draws in the music-savvy crowd, be sure to get there before 9pm to get a seat.

*(52 rue Galande, 5eme; +33 1 46 34 23 09; jazz nights on Thurs & Sun;
open every day from 5pm til late)*

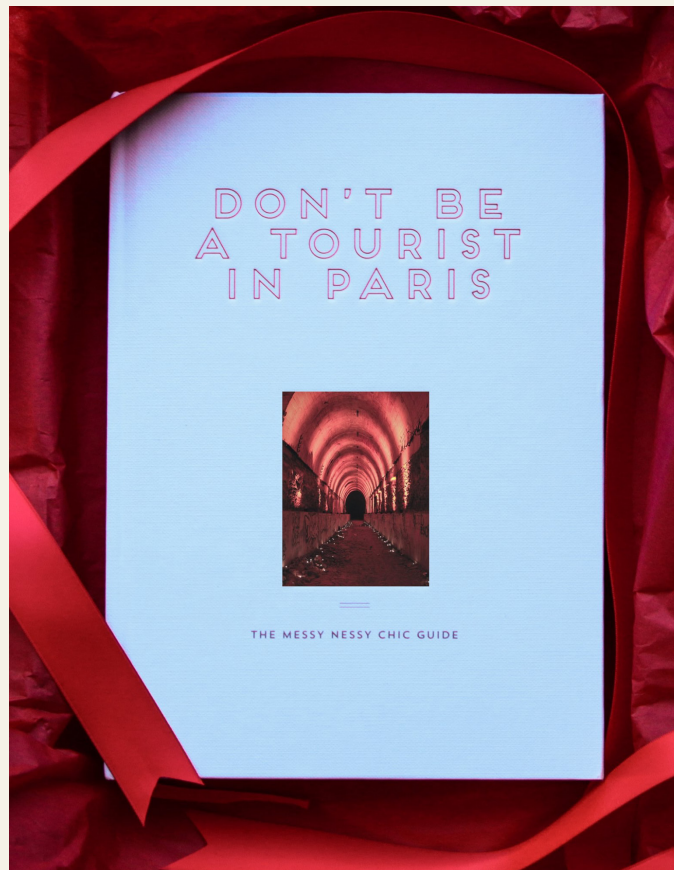
Bonus Tips



©Marin d'Eau Douce

Discover Paris in a sidecar. Feel the wind in your hair, racing down the Parisian boulevards and whizzing through backstreets, escorted by a time-travelling gentleman 'sidecarist.' Despite the lack of tourists, [Retro Tours](#) is open for business.

Do some boutique shopping around the cool **Canal Saint Martin** neighbourhood (**Rue de Marseille** and **Rue Beaurepaire** have some great boutiques) and afterwards take a picnic / apéro on the canal with the [Marin d'Eau Douce](#), you can rent their little motorboats (very affordable and no licence needed!).



DON'T BE A TOURIST IN PARIS

I too, came for a weekend in Paris. Seven years later, I'm still here.

And guess what? I have a book called **Don't be a Tourist in Paris**. A vault of local secrets, insider advice and little-known urban anecdotes. The result of ten years of discovery in one of the most fascinating cities on earth, this is not your average guide book. This is the ultimate bible to Paris unknown.

If you enjoyed this little portal into my favourite Paris secrets then never lose touch with my current/future posts by following me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or indulge yourself in some Parisian pictorial goodness over on my Instagram.

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