

Pre-Bordeaux Paris Tour

May 12th -15th

There's a lot of good information crammed into these five pages. You're mostly on your own in the City of Lights, but it's an easy city to navigate and explore.

In this packet, you have

- This orientation Letter
- Hotel area map
- Paris Metro Primer
- Paris Metro Pass*
- Paris Museum Pass*

*Keep these secure. It will cost to replace them!

Paris Arrival

All guests arriving in Paris are on individual schedules. There is no group transportation arranged from the airport to the hotel, so you're on your own. These are my suggestions, in order of preference:

1. Uber is the least expensive way for 2 travelers to get into the city. €60 is a good daytime estimate for a sedan. Uber charges go to the credit card on your Uber account. Make sure this card doesn't charge fees for foreign transactions.
2. Taxi is a close second, though you're paying the driver by cash or credit card instead of paying through the Uber app on your phone.
3. RATP buses or RER regional trains operate from the train station at CDG Airport to with a few blocks of the hotel. The schedules vary greatly depending on when you're ready to travel. This is for the budget conscious traveler with costs from €10-€20, one way. Bonjour RATP is a good phone app for transport.

[Villa Pantheon](#)

41 Rue des Ecoles, Paris

33 1 53 10 95 95

Expect your room to be ready after 3:00 PM on your arrival date. Your room, tax and continental breakfast has been prepaid. Great location, beautiful public areas, close to the Seine, and to the Metro. The nearest metro is Maubert Station on the #10 train line. The next closest station is Saint Michel/Notre Dame Station on the #4 train line. When you arrive at the hotel, provide your passport to the desk. If asked, mention that you are part of the NW Travel group.

Weather

Weather in Paris is very much like Seattle. Expect an average high of 65 and a low of 49. Plan for rain, and be thrilled if it stays dry. In a typical year, you can expect about 30% chance of rain during mid-May.

Safety

Paris is a big city. There are parts of the city you should avoid, but they're well outside the tourism zone. Violent crime in the more traveled parts of the city is rare. You may encounter theft in the form of pickpockets or other scams. En garde! Much of this theft takes place when you're distracted. Be aware of your surroundings even as you're enjoying the view from the Sacré-Cœur, staring at the top of the Eiffel Tower, or getting through a Metro turnstile.

Getting Around

3-day pass

You've got a three-day pass for unlimited daily transit on le Metro in zones 1-3. The last page of this letter will provide the confidence you need to ride the underground like a local. When I choose a hotel in Paris, proximity to the metro is an important consideration. It's a great way to get around.

Your Museum Pass

Two consecutive days

Your Museum Pass is valid for entry for 2/24-hour periods. The timer starts the minute you make your first visit. I've included a list here of the museums that honor the pass. Some museums are closed certain days of the week. Some require a reservation to compliment your pass.

Do your research at parismuseumpass.fr to plan your three days in the city. This is also the site where you book your timed admission for the most in-demand museums. You may need to create a ticket account to make your reservation. That link:

<https://www.ticketlouvre.fr/louvre/b2c/index.cfm/user-registration>

Friday Evening Cruise

Friday, May 13th

The only event we have planned as a group is the sightseeing cruise on the Seine Friday evening. The company I once liked that offered a 90-minute cruise seems to have disappeared. I've booked a 1-hour sightseeing cruise with a glass of bubbles that will depart from Pont Neuf on the Ile de la Cite. You can meet us at the Vedettes du Pont Neuf dock at 8:00 PM. The boat departs at 8:30 and, with a sunset at 9:22, should be the optimal time to see the Paris monuments from the river. The walk from the hotel is

22 minutes. I'll lead the march at 7:35 for anyone who wants an escort to the pier. We'll return to the pier at 9:30, walking back to the hotel afterward.

Departing for Bordeaux

Sunday, May 15th

We're all traveling on one high-speed train from Gare Montparnasse to Bordeaux's St Jean Station. I've split the group into three train cars to avoid the inevitable bottleneck of 30 Americans with multiple bags trying to squeeze into one train compartment. I will distribute your ticket to you en-route to the station.

When you board the train, place your large bag in the storage area at the end of the car, and continue to your seat. Do not take your large bag upstairs. There's overhead space only for smaller bags. These trains come and go in a hurry. We don't have a lot of extra time to get on.

We are booked as follows:

TGV INOUI 8572 Paris/Montparnasse Bordeaux/St Jean 10:11 12:17

Cars 1-12 seats, Car 2-14 seats, Car 3-12 seats.

Our pick up from the hotel will be at 9:00 AM. I'd like everyone in or near the lobby a few minutes before that so that we can load the coach and be on our way on schedule. We're not far from the train station, you never know how traffic is going to mess with your schedule.

Once we arrive at Montparnasse, you'll get your bag to bring with you to the platform. You'll need your photo ID and your ticket to access the platform. Your ticket will be given to you on the coach.

We go through the ID check to board the train, then head to our track (voie), likely either 1 or 2. I'll check the screen before we make our move. It's possible this train will be on the platform already and we'll load at our leisure. It's also possible that this train will arrive with only 5-6 minutes of loading time. Please don't wander too far away from the assigned track.

TGV Trains are very comfortable with WiFi, reclining seats, and a bar car. Our journey takes about 2 hours. Once we arrive in Bordeaux, we'll exit the station, pull off the side out of traffic, while I locate the coach that will take us to the ship. We'll be early, and check in may not begin right away. I suggest you park your bag and join me across the Quai des Chartrons at Molly Malone's for a pint.

Additional notes for Paris:

- Refer the section on dining off the ship when it comes to restaurant etiquette and expectations.
- Don't forget your "Bonjour" or "Bon Soir" when interacting with the locals. It makes a world of difference to start with an egalitarian greeting, then throw a "Merci Monsieur or Madam" around for good measure.
- Be alert on le Metro, in museums, and other tourist sites. Pickpockets are very good at what they do!
- Plan your days in advance. Make your museum entrance reservations ahead of time.
- With only three nights in Paris, study up. There are hundreds of You Tube videos with suggested sites and activities. Rick Steves, Vagabrothers are two producers of well-thought-out videos. There are some that are hardly watchable. I'll let you decide.

Fun Tour options to consider:

- If you want a good overview of the city, book a hop on/off bus ticket. Great way to see Paris from a double-decker bus. Ask the front desk where to buy tickets
- Consider attending the Moulin Rouge Cabaret
- Pay your respects to Oscar Wilde and Jim Morrison at Pere Lachaise Cemetery
- Go underground at the Paris Catacombs-not for the claustrophobic
- Enjoy the view from Sacre Coeur in Montmartre. Take the Funicular
- Paris Sewer Museum-Channel your inner Phantom
- [Sandeman's](#) "free" walking tour Paris starts very close to the hotel (google it)

Rideshare Pickup/Dropoff Instructions for Charles de Gaulle International Airport

1. Request the right vehicle size

Keep in mind your luggage requirements. Choose a ride option that will comfortably fit all of the passengers and your suitcases.

Proceed to Ground Transportation on Arrivals Level.

After getting off a flight, follow the signs to "Ground Transportation" and "Baggage Claim." When ready, walk outside and look for "Passenger Pickups" or a designated area labeled, "TNC/Rideshares." It's best not book the driver until you have your bags in hand and are heading to the pick up point.

2. Notify your driver of your location

Call or message your driver with information such as Terminal, Door Number and any other information that will help locate you.