

CONTEXT PARIS: IN CONTEXT

Traveling to Paris "in Context" means embracing the soul of the city beyond its well-trodden paths. It's about diving into the heart of Paris, where every corner tells a story, every meal is a chapter in a long, flavorful history, and the true essence of the city is not just seen but felt.

At Context Travel, we guide you to the core of Paris, shining a light on hidden histories and local narratives, and connecting you with experiences that make the city eternally memorable. These recommendations are carefully curated by Context experts to bring you closer to the authentic spirit of Paris, celebrating its lesser-known treasures and profound cultural richness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pg 2 | Bites of Paris

Pg 3 | Paris Neighborhoods

Pg 4 | Local Shops

Pg 5 | Family Activities

Pg 6 | Read, Watch & Listen

Meet Your Context Guides

Rémy Delapierre LOCAL GUIDE



Born, raised, and educated in Paris, Rémy is a true Parisian. He knows his city and its region, especially Versailles, very well. He is a fan of French history and knows plenty of anecdotes about the history and kings of France that he would be happy to share with you. He enjoys guiding families, explaining history to children, and answering their questions. After all, they are often the most logical and sincere ones, aren't they?

"See Paris with an open mind, be ready for surprises, and set aside the idea of 'checking off' every monument on a list. If possible, save some time to get lost in a lesser-known neighborhood. Seeing Paris might be more about a state of mind than a specific itinerary: observe it slowly, with attention, and let yourself be immersed in its contrasts. And for the practical side, the daily metro pass is, of course, very efficient!"

Rhona Portizky CHEF



Rhona began her culinary training in Paris Michelin-starred kitchens. She taught cuisine and pastry at the French Culinary Institute in New York, where she started the pastry program. Rhona became one of the first woman executive pastry chefs when she worked at the Lespinasse restaurant in the Saint Regis hotel. Her love of teaching and writing led her to translate a dozen authoritative books on pastry, bread, and cuisine. Living in Paris the past 27 years, Rhona is constantly exploring its many culinary offerings.

"You can take a cruise all the way down Canal Saint-Martin. It's a great way of seeing Paris from a different view, and you're not going to find as many tourists who know that area. I also recommend seeing the bridges at night, they light up and it's so dramatic and beautiful."

Lindsey Hansen ART HISTORIAN



American by birth, Parisienne by luck, Lindsey has been living in Paris for more than a decade. She first arrived in the city for dissertation research, and never left. Lindsey holds an MA in Contemporary Art and a PhD in Medieval Art History. Her specialty is the architecture and sculpture of 13th-century French Gothic cathedrals, though she considers herself more a generalist with a love of all things art history. With nearly twenty years of teaching experience at all levels—from toddlers to adults in a variety of different contexts—she prides herself on creating engaging and educational guided tours for all ages of travelers.

"Getting lost on the back streets is, in my opinion, the very best way to really experience the city. When I first moved here in 2012, my favorite Sunday activity was to take the metro somewhere, and then try to get home by walking. I've discovered some of my favorite little neighborhoods, off-the-beaten-track restaurants and cafes, and hidden architectural gems this way. If I have some time before I have to be home, I still take a nice, long walk on the weaving back streets and appreciate the hidden treasures of my adopted home. More than a decade later, I'm still discovering new and exciting things!"

BITES OF PARIS

Discover mouthwatering dishes in Paris and the best places to savor them

Bouillon Chartier Grands Boulevards

Enjoy local dishes, made with quality products. Bouillon Chartier has built strong relationships with suppliers to offer a delicious and accessible menu.

[Google Maps →](#)

“The atmosphere is loud and bright, the waiter will ask you to decide quickly and then write the bill on the paper laid on the table. I like to order the onion soup, especially in the winter. It's also one of the only places you can find celery remoulade, which used to be the dish that the working class would order in basic restaurants a long time ago. So you don't find that in Paris anymore, but here they still have it on the menu. And it's wonderful.”

- Remy, Local Guide

Chez Papa Montparnasse Vavin

Find rich cuisine at this restaurant located between Royal and Vavin port. Guests can enjoy cassoulet, duck breast, and gargantuan salads.

[Google Maps →](#)

“Go here for the duck. You can also find many dishes that are little known outside of France (and even outside the southwest). Be warned, it's delicious but quite rich.”

- Remy, Local Guide

Arpège

Be sure to make reservations in advance for this 3-Michelin-star restaurant that offers seasonal fine dining and vegan menu options.

[Google Maps →](#)

“Arpège serves, in an unassuming decor, par excellence food. Chef Alain Passard sources from his own gardens in which he grows many ingredients used in his dishes. He has the most respect for the items that he brings into his restaurant. There are vegetarian choices on his menu, and everything is simply but exquisitely made.”

- Rhona, Chef

Le Train Bleu

Stop in for an elegant and memorable dining experience within the busy Gare de Lyon, featuring murals and artwork from the 1900 World's Fair.

[Google Maps →](#)

“Go here for the experience. You'll be served classic dishes in a glorious setting from 1901. There is a large dining room with classic cuisine. Some dishes have gotten a modern update. Order the steak tartare and enjoy the hard-to-find side service - you can watch and have it prepared exactly to your taste. They also have smaller areas to sit and have a drink with simpler fare. It is simply stunning.”

- Rhona, Chef

Buzkashi

Visit for home-cooked Afghan food, a welcoming environment, and reasonably priced dishes.

[Google Maps →](#)

You can't ask for a better dining experience. My favorite thing is the vegetarian plate, which comes on a piece of bread, with different, beautifully seasoned vegetables. And then you can tear up the bread and use it as a spoon. It's just to die for.

- Lindsey, Art Historian

A. Lacroix Pâtisseries

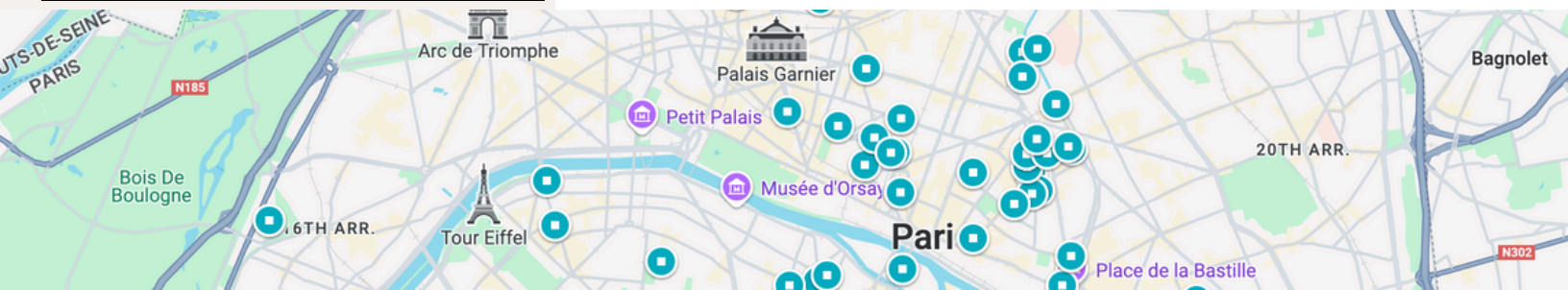
Nestled in the shadow of Notre-Dame's southern side, this quaint shop offers superb pastries, delightful coffee and chocolate, and a warm, inviting staff.

[Google Maps →](#)

“The desserts are artistic masterpieces, and at lunch, there is a meal special that comes with a fresh salad, a tartine, quiche or wrap, and one of Arnaud's incredible desserts. The price, the quality of the food, and the view can't be beat. The front display window shows off all of the pastries, but there's a whole room to sit in the back.”

- Lindsey, Art Historian

Get our full restaurant list →



FAVORITE PARIS NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods to explore when looking for an authentic slice of Parisian life

Gros Caillou

Located between Les Invalides and the Eiffel Tower, this neighborhood has plenty of charming streets, a local market on Rue Cler, delightful bakeries and pastry shops, and small pedestrian alleys.

"It's quite clean. There's a lot of very nice boulangeries and little shops, many of which you cannot find in many other areas.

There's a shop where they sell bonsai and an old pharmacy that looks like an 18th century apothecary. It's an interesting place to stroll through.

And of course, you can finish near the Eiffel Tower or at Les Invalides."

– Remy, Local Guide

Odéon

Centered around the 17th-century Luxembourg Palace with its elegant gardens, Odéon thrives as a vibrant center for arts and culture. i

"You'll find publishing houses, art galleries, antique bookstores, and cafés. It's impressively quiet compared to the bustling boulevards.

Often, there's a marble plaque on a house indicating that a famous person lived there. Eventually, you'll arrive at the Luxembourg Gardens, nestled in greenery, where the orange trees are brought out from May to November."

– Remy, Local Guide

Saint Germain des Prés

This neighborhood is famous for its history and previously home to many literary and artistic figures. It is now a top shopping area with many amenities.

"There are so many lovely shops with delicious, elegant chocolates and pastries to taste."

– Rhona, Chef

Canal Saint-Martin

Find a mix of bohemian cafes, Indian restaurants, trendy bars, gourmet stalls, and art studios here.

"Walking along the canal is fun! If you like French movies, see the great classic *The Hotel Nord*, filmed in a hotel of the same name that exists today along the canal. Watch the canal when a boat is coming through; the canal's locks rise and lower.

It's enjoyable to explore this dynamic, edgy section of Paris, a lesser known area that is not so touristy. Get an ice cream along the way or something that you can nibble as you walk or sit and relax along the canal."

– Rhona, Chef

Buttes Chaumont

This area is known for its park with a waterfall and city views, as well as food shops on Rue de Belleville. To the west, it includes Bassin de la Villette, which becomes an urban beach with activities in summer.

"The Buttes Chaumont Park is my favorite park in the city, we used to live right at the doors to it. You can see Montmartre from the top of the hill; it's just idyllic and picturesque. When Haussmann and Napoleon were redesigning Paris, they wanted to create green spaces for the people. So they just took this space, raised it and built on it. It's all artificial, but it's meant to look like nature.

There's a Greek tempietto at the top of an artificial mountain, waterfalls and rivers flowing through the whole space, an artificial lake at its center and even bars and restaurants if you feel like a snack while walking around."

– Lindsey, Art Historian

Parc-de-Montsouris

This is one of the largest green spaces in Paris, between rue d'Alésia and the Cité Universitaire de Paris. The park's proximity to the Cité Universitaire makes it a favourite walking spot for students.

"Many of these villas started popping up during the Haussmannization of Paris. These beautiful little neighborhoods of houses are hiding on a back street off of a big boulevard with the big Parisian apartment complexes.

They're all individual homes, and they're often covered in vines, so in the fall when all of the leaves are changing it's just gorgeous. Turn west from the park and you'll walk into these rows of beautiful idyllic houses on these quiet streets. And there's just never any tourists there."

– Lindsey, Art Historian

UNIQUE LOCAL SHOPS

Explore distinctive local shops that offer authentic Parisian crafts, products, and histories

Mariage Frères

Stop in to be greeted with the fragrance of fine teas and discover a unique tea-flavoured cuisine and patisserie.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“When you step in, you can immediately smell many different perfumes of various teas. It almost feels like being brought on a journey far, far away.

You can taste a variety of teas and enjoy the atmosphere, which is wonderful“

- Remy, Local Guide

Marché aux Fleurs

Stroll through the orangerie-style pavilions that are filled with flowers, plants and quirky gifts. On a Sunday there is a Bird Market, and artists also flock here for inspiration.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“The flower market is an enchanted break during a stroll around Île de la Cité. You can purchase a packet of seeds to take home and carry the memory of fresh, green scents (olfactory memory is very powerful) right from the heart of Paris.”

- Remy, Local Guide

The LEGO® Store Paris Les Halles

Explore a huge selection of LEGO toys and LEGO gifts for kids and adults, with themes to suit any age or interest.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“Very kid-friendly. The store is often full of surprises; the last time I was there, there was a giant Notre-Dame in Lego.

When you leave, you can buy beautiful postcards at a nearby stationery store. Even if you think you're not into Lego, you might end up buying something.“

- Remy, Local Guide

E.Dehillerin

Established in 1820, the shop is renowned for its copper cookware and has been serving chefs and home cooks (including Julia Child) for over a century.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“When I first came to Paris, I worked in a variety of restaurants—small restaurants, but also starred Michelin restaurants. I would go to Dehillerin where I wanted to buy every copper pot in the store...”

I still get lost here, like a kid in a candy store. Even if I'm going for one item, I often end up purchasing a bit more.”

- Rhona, Chef

G. Detou

This store invites you to discover all the cherished ingredients for baking and cooking. Once a hidden treasure for professionals, it now opens its doors to everyone, offering a delightful array of unique ingredients.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“The name is a pun on the French play-on-words for ‘I have everything.’ Originally, you would only see professionals shopping, but now any lover of cooking can go.

I suggest picking up some chocolates, vanilla beans, and almond flour. They also have all sorts of savory items such as mustards and a great assortment of black peppercorns. Specialty items are what it offers.”

- Rhona, Chef

Si Tu Veux

Located in Galerie Vivienne, this shop offers a variety of classic toys and books designed to aid children's learning through play. You'll recognize it by the giant wooden teddy bears at the entrance.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“This toy store is located inside one of Paris' famous covered passages, the Galerie Vivienne.

The owner is delightful and willing to help you find just what you need. Her shop is full of beautiful French wooden toys and fun games that children of all ages will enjoy.”

- Lindsey, Art Historian

Pays de Poche

Stop in to shop locally crafted jewelry, ceramics, sculptures, lighting and unique handmade objects.

[Google Maps →](#)

“Everything is handmade, if not by the owner, then by local artisans. You just have to go exploring because you never know what you're going to find. Everything is so fun and so unexpected in a lot of ways. It's very whimsical, which is why I like it.

- Lindsey, Art Historian

FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

The parks, museums, and kid-friendly places our experts recommend to keep young travelers engaged

Panthéon

The Panthéon is situated in the Latin Quarter at the heart of the Place du Panthéon.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“You can take the column path on the top of the Panthéon. This is something I discovered with my little boy. It's a unique view. There are about 200 steps to climb, but it's not a big deal with kids. And you can see Notre Dame, much more than from other places.”

- Remy, Local Guide

Aquarium at Palais de la Porte Dorée

With its 85 tanks and two terrariums, the aquarium presents tropical aquatic ecosystems and the species that inhabit them.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“The building is stunning Art Deco, with beautiful collections to see. The aquarium has a rich array of rare and exotic species that will delight children, and the little ones will love watching real crocodiles! Fascinating. It's also very close to the Vincennes Zoo, by the way.”

- Remy, Local Guide

Musée Marmottan Monet

Nestled in the 16th arrondissement, the Musée Marmottan Monet is a delightful art museum dedicated to the enchanting works of artist Claude Monet..

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“There is a very nice little garden here with games for the kids and you will have very nice restaurants close by. Nearby, there is a street for shopping called Rue de Passy with many nice shops.”

- Remy, Local Guide

Jardin Catherine-Labouré

The Jardin Catherine-Labouré is a 7,000 square-metre park in Paris' 7th arrondissement, formerly the convent garden of the Daughters of Charity, open to the public since 1977

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“This is a little gem of a hidden garden in the luxurious 7th district of Paris. It's walled-in, so you have to look carefully for the doorway. You can sit on the grass and have a picnic and as it is very child friendly, there are several play areas for various ages. They even grow produce which the children can explore.”

- Rhona, Chef

City of Music - Paris Music Museum

Dedicated to introducing children to music, from young toddlers to older children.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“This is where my son, still a musician today, first touched a violin. They have a lovely guided visit for children, and at the end they give out different instruments to try. When my son touched the violin he said, 'This is it, mom, I have to get music lessons.' And he was five years old. It's a little bit of a trip from the center of the city, but easy to get to.”

- Rhona, Chef

Paris Sewer Museum

Explore the museum's unique 150-year history and learn about today's environmental efforts in a beautifully renovated building that you can spot from the Seine.

[Google Maps →](#)

[Website →](#)

“Underneath the city streets are streets of sewers, and they're actually marked with the same names as the streets above. Haussmann and Napoleon were trying to rid Paris of cholera, and they were the first people who developed the sewers as we know them today. The museum also offers a history of floods in Paris... If the river gets too high, literal gates will open and let the extra water into the sewers to keep the river from overflowing. It's a really cool history of Paris through a different lens, and I think it can be interesting to every age range.”

- Lindsey, Art Historian

READ, WATCH, LISTEN

Books, shows, movies, and podcasts recommendations from our experts to enrich your travel experience

READ

Bel-Ami

By Guy de Maupassant

[Buy Online & Support Your Local Bookstore →](#)

"It's the story of an ambitious character in late 19th-century Paris, the Paris painted by the Impressionists, which you can see at the Musée d'Orsay. After his wedding at the Madeleine Church, the main character gazes longingly at the National Assembly; you get a bit of all of Paris in this book.

– **Remy, Local Guide**

The Belly of Paris

By Emile Zola

[Buy Online & Support Your Local Bookstore →](#)

"The iconic setting in 19th-century Paris reveals the front- and behind-the-scenes of the Grand Central Market."

– **Rhona, Chef**

La Bonne Cuisine

By Madame E. Saint-Ange

[Buy Online →](#)

"This is one of the most important cookbooks on classic French cuisine and pastry."

– **Rhona, Chef**

Metronome

By Lorànt Deutsch

[Buy Online & Support Your Local Bookstore →](#)

"This book traces Paris' history using the names and locations of the city's metro stations. It's a description of each station, as well as a look at the history of Paris and of France. It's a really interesting way to explore the history without being dry."

– **Lindsey, Art Historian**

WATCH

Celine Dion at the Opening Ceremony

[Watch on Youtube →](#)

"Is there anything more captivating? I can't think of many things that captivate the soul of Paris more."

– **Remy, Local Guide**

Ratatouille

[Watch on Disney+ →](#)

"It's a very family-friendly film. Many wonderful views of Paris are beautifully animated, and the little rat is named Rémy (like me) and is very sweet."

– **Remy, Local Guide**

Lupin

[Watch on Netflix →](#)

"There are so many reference points in this series to the city. If you've been, then you can watch the show and get an added layer of connection, because so much of it is filmed in Paris."

– **Lindsey, Art Historian**

LISTEN

Chopin in the Latin Quarter

[Listen to Chopin on Spotify →](#)
[Listen to Chopin on Apple Music →](#)

"Attend a Chopin piano concert in a small church. Concerts are held every evening in the Latin Quarter, in Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre and Saint-Ephrem. You just have to read the red or yellow posters displayed all around the area."

– **Remy, Local Guide**

Les Champs-Élysées

[Listen on Spotify →](#)
[Listen on Apple Music →](#)

"This iconic song is about the famous street with the feel of how it once was when cafés abounded. Originally in French, it's easy to find the translation."

– **Rhona, Chef**

99% Invisible

[Listen on Spotify Podcasts →](#)
[Listen on Apple Podcasts →](#)

"The episode 'Chambre de Bonne' gives people the history of Haussmann's Paris, of the Chambre de Bonne and what its function was, and how things are changing today. When you're walking through the city, you can look at any building and understand more about it."

– **Lindsey, Art Historian**