

Central Paris Tour Photos

On the Central Paris Tour we'll see some of Paris's most iconic sites, monuments and landmarks. It is a timed tour of 3 hours in duration. I have a rough itinerary to follow but whether we see everything shown in the photos will depend on your cycling speed and the duration of any breaks you may take. The tour starts and ends at the bike rental store and the photos are sequenced in the order of the sites you'll see along the way. So let's get started!



Our first stop will be at Galerie Vivienne, considered to be the most beautiful of Paris's covered passages.



Just around the corner from Galerie Vivienne is the Palais Royal, originally the residence of Louis XIII's right-hand man, Cardinal Richelieu. Today as you walk through its arcades on the ground level you'll see its many high end fashion boutiques and trendy stores and restaurants. The upper levels of the building are occupied by The Ministry of Culture, The Conseil d'Etat and The Constitutional Council.



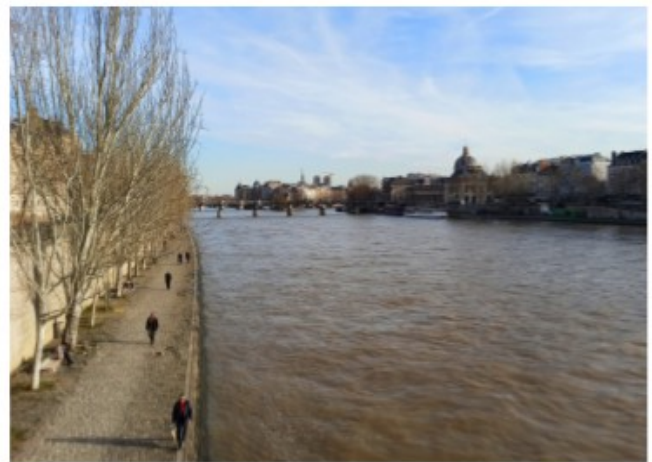
Just adjacent to the Palais Royal is the most famous landmark in central Paris, The Louvre.



To the west of The Louvre are The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and The Tuileries Gardens. The Arc was built between 1806 and 1808 to commemorate Napoleon's military victories of the previous year. The Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, at the far end of the Champs Elysées, was designed in the same year; it is about twice the size and was not completed until 1836. The Tuileries Gardens were created by Catherine de Medici for her Tuileries Palace in 1564. Her private garden was eventually opened to the public in 1667 and transformed into a public park after the French Revolution.



We'll move along from Paris's right bank and cross The Seine to continue our journey on Paris's left bank, but you'll be able to stop and take some photos on the bridge crossing The Seine.



The city of Paris has been making great strides in improving the city's already fantastic cycling infrastructure and new two lane cycle paths have recently been completed on both sides of the river. We'll pick up one of these cycle lanes for just a very short stretch before descending down to the banks of The Seine to cycle along another of Paris's bike/pedestrian zones, known as Les Berges de Seine. From here you'll see life along the river, watching the tourist cruise boats shuttle passengers up and down the river, and observing the péniches (former working river boats/barges which have been converted

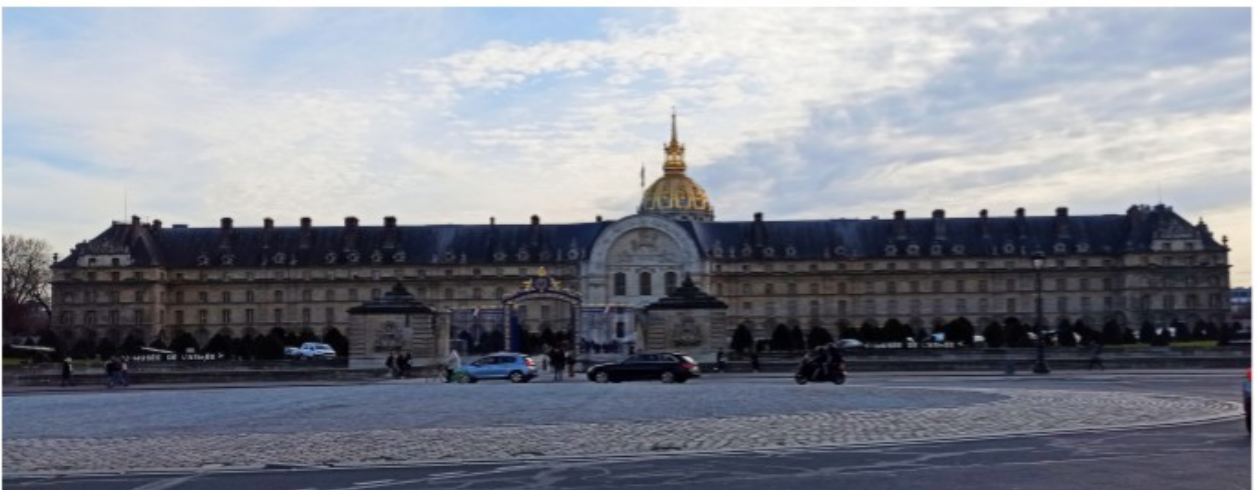


into floating homes for lucky Parisians, or into bars and restaurants for these seeking floating pleasure). We'll pass by the most beautiful bridge in Paris, Le Pont Alexandre III, and the adjacent glass domed Grand Palais.

Our next stop will be Paris's other most iconic landmark (along with The Louvre), The Eiffel Tower.



Then we head along to Les Invalides. Originally built as a military hospital by Louis XIV it now houses the Musée de l'Armée (Paris's military museum) and under its great, golden dome is the tomb of Napoleon.





Now you've see some of Paris's major sites so it's time to go and explore some of its lesser known side streets.







Then we'll be seeing a few more of the iconic Paris sights starting with a stop at The Luxembourg Gardens.



And then on to the Panthéon, which is the final resting place of several iconic French figures (Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, etc.). It is also the home of the enormous Foucault Pendulum, designed and built by astronomer Leon Foucault, which was hung beneath the dome to illustrate the rotation of the earth.



If you're a fan of the movie *Midnight in Paris* then just behind the Panthéon you'll see the steps where Owen Wilson's character Gil waits for his taxi to arrive, which is on the side steps of the church of SaintEtienne-du-Mont.



Then we'll move away from the Panthéon and make our way towards the Saint-Germain neighborhood.





Another famous film location is the church of Saint-Sulpice, which figured in *The Davinci Code*. Fans of the movie/novel come to see the famous "Gnomon" (called The Rose Line in the novel) and to seek other clues and secrets supposedly hidden within the church's architecture and decor.









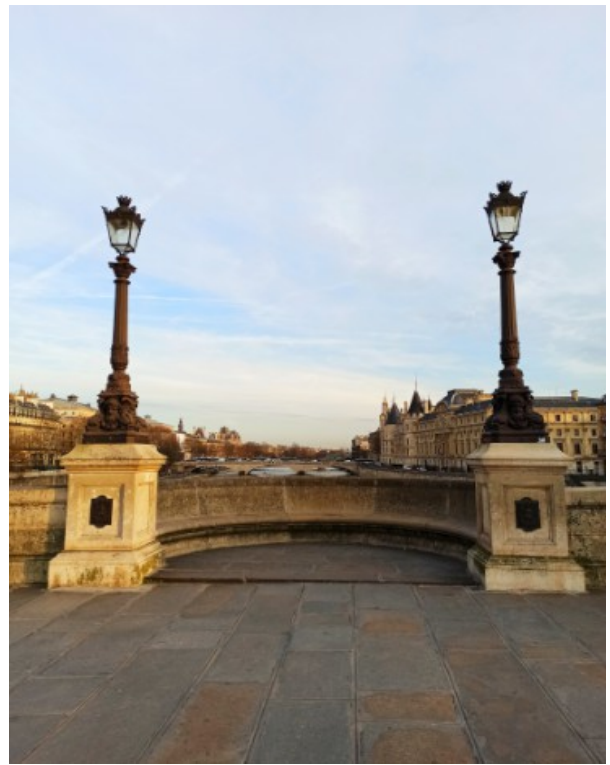
Moving on from the Saint-Germain neighborhood we visit its adjacent Latin Quarter neighborhood.





From The Latin Quarter we'll be crossing The Seine once more to visit the Ile-de-la-Cité and its famous Pont-Neuf bridge and even more famous Cathedral of Notre Dame.







And here is the last photo of Paris's beauty that you'll see before we arrive back at the bike store.

