

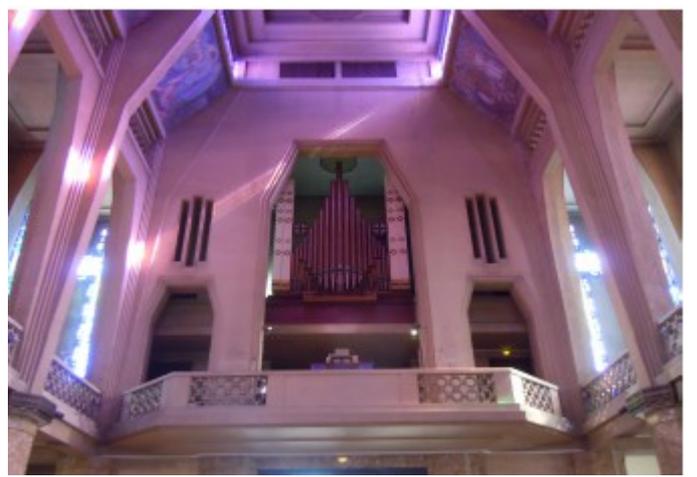
## Off-The-Beaten-Path Paris Tour Photos

Here is a sampling of photos of just a few of the sites/places/neighborhoods you'll be visiting on your Off-The-Beaten-Path Paris Tour. 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.

This tour will focus on eastern Paris (the Ménilmontant and Belleville neighborhoods), mostly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> arrondissements of Paris. You'll see a side of Paris outside of tourism that you'd never find on your own and which many Parisians I know have never seen. It is the Paris of the average, everyday Parisian and you'll experience a variety of its vibrant and eclectic neighborhoods.

After we depart from the bike store we'll cycle along some of Paris's major streets (which have dedicated cycle lanes separate from automobile traffic) for about 15-20 minutes until we arrive at the real starting destination of this tour in the lower part of the 20<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. Our first stop will be at the Eglise Saint-Jean-Bosco ("eglise" means "church" in French). While many people are familiar with the abundance of gothic cathedrals and churches in France not many people may know that after WWI there was a brief period where many modern churches were constructed in France in the Art Deco style and the Eglise Saint-Jean-Bosco is a classic example from this époque.





We move just a block away from the church where you'll learn that up until around the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century this part of Paris was not yet part of Paris. In fact it was the countryside and several vineyards once flourished in this neighborhood. By the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the vineyards had disappeared and the neighborhood had been incorporated into the city of Paris, as the city continued its centuries old tradition of expanding and swallowing up the adjacent towns and villages on its borders. At this time it was home to working class Parisians, many of whom had their own little workshops within their homes. After WWII the wrecking ball plagued much of outer Paris in attempt to create much needed housing for the masses of baby-boomers. But in between the modern high rise housing there are still little side streets and alleys that recall the memories distant to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

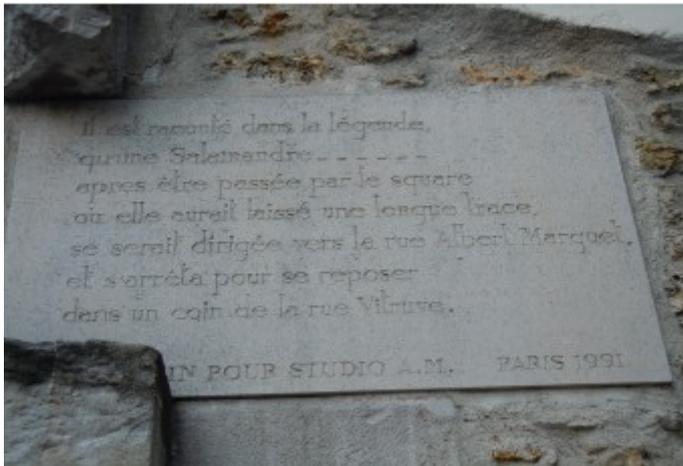




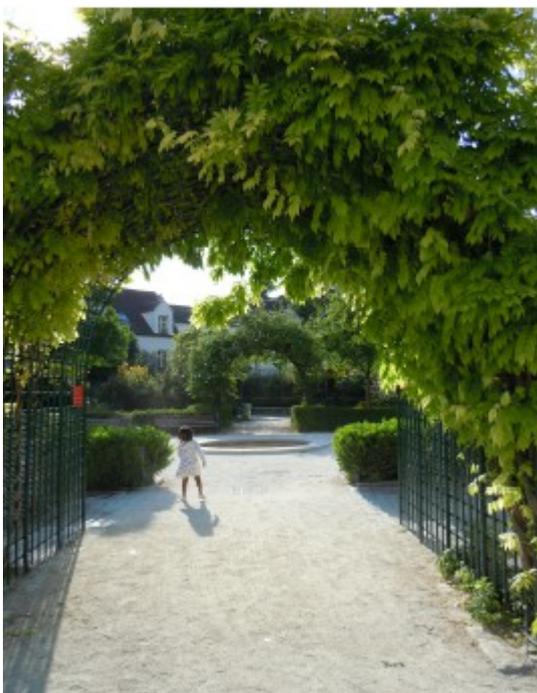
Unlike central Paris, with its international chain stores and high end fashion boutiques, in the outer arrondissements you'll find quirky, independently owned businesses that cater to those with "off the beaten path tastes" as well as to the immigrant community. Let's have a look at what's on offer.



Now that we're done shopping let's go do some more sightseeing. Paris is full of quirky legends and on our journey we'll encounter a memorial to just such a legend which concerns a salamander. The legend recounts that a salamander once passed by a nearby square and after leaving a long (slimy) trace while continuing towards the rue Albert Marquet, it paused on a street corner along rue Vitruve.



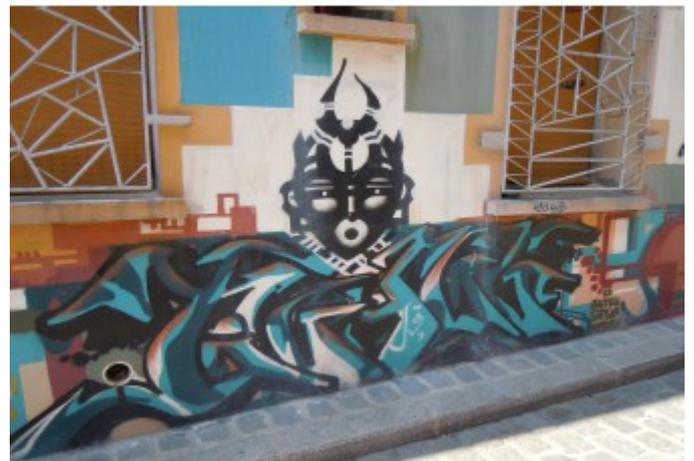
Despite being a major world city with a population of over 2 million inhabitants, Paris is dotted with over 400 parks and gardens scattered throughout every arrondissement. Most people are familiar with its major parks and gardens but the tiny parks and gardens in out of the way places account for the vast majority of the green space within the city.



Prior to being incorporated into Paris many parts of outer Paris were small villages with their own village centers and we'll see some of those.



Many artists make their home in the eastern arrondissements, working in either their own studios or out on the street.



Some of the residents fancy themselves to be artists and decorate their windows with their creations, with varying degrees of success.



More street art, from the professionals.



If anyone is familiar with the famous early 20<sup>th</sup> century French singer Edith Piaf (there is a movie about her called *La Vie en Rose*, with the French actress Marion Cotillard portraying Edith Piaf) then we'll be cycling past a little square named in her honor and where you can stop at the local bar/café (which also bears her name) and have a drink. Inside the bar is like stepping back in time as the bar decor doesn't seem to have changed much in the last 50 years and you'll find black and white photos of Edith Piaf adorning the walls. Just outside the bar is a small sculpture/statue of Edith Piaf and while I'm sure it was meant to pay her homage it is one of the ugliest statues I've ever seen. I can't help but think that she'd be rolling in her grave if she knew this statue existed.



Just around the corner from the bar (and the ugly statue) is one of the prettiest little neighborhoods in the 20<sup>th</sup> arrondissement. I'll tell you all about it once we're there (it's a secret).



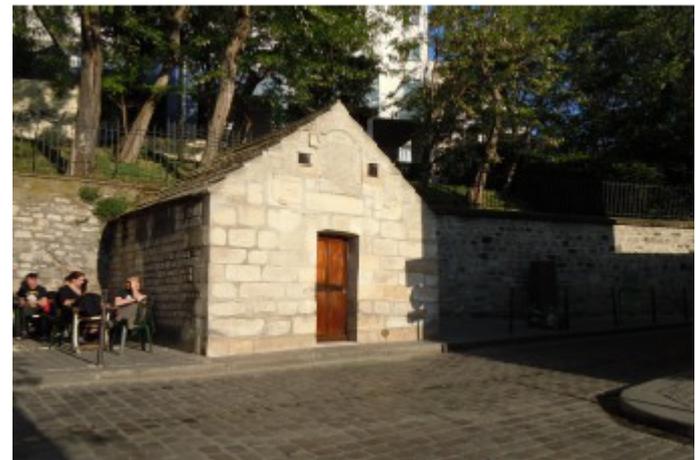


While it is true that much of the post WWII Paris architecture meant to house the masses is pretty uninspiring (high rise buildings mostly dating from the 1960's and 1970's), there are the occasional whimsical and non-traditional examples of how modern architecture can be a bit more fun.



Leaving the modern architecture behind, let's get back to some of those charming little alleys that are also home to some of Paris's artists (or those who consider themselves artists).





By this point in the tour we'll have arrived at one of the highest points in Paris, where you'll have a panoramic view over the city.



After you've taken your panoramic photos we'll continue cycling on.



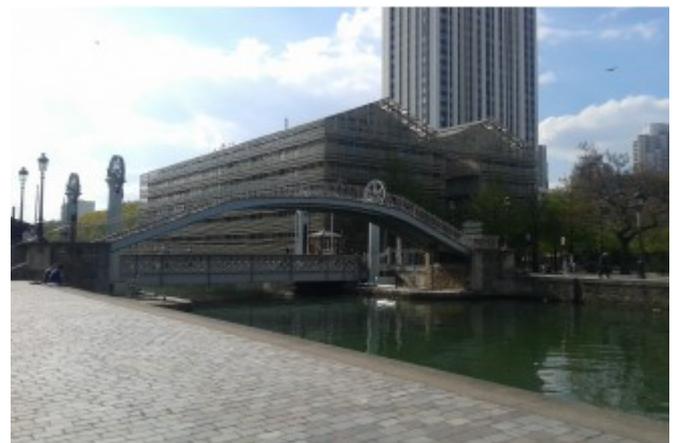
If anyone's hungry there's time to stop for a bite to eat.

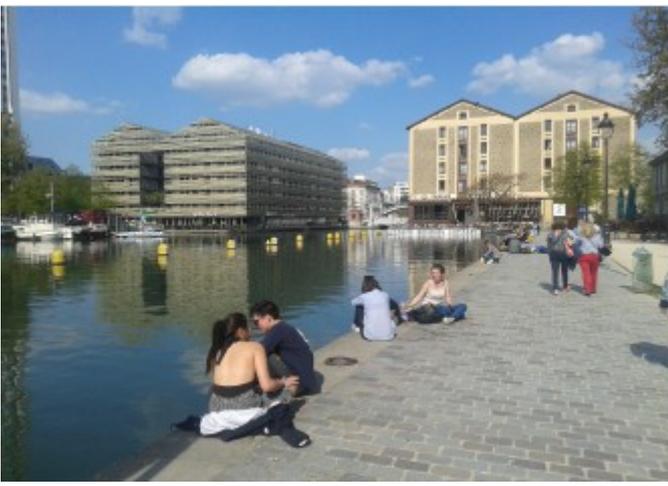


We've been to the heights of Paris so now it's time to start making our way back down towards the city center. Along our descent you'll see another of the lovely little residential neighborhoods that can be counted among Paris's hidden gems off the beaten path. It's a secret so I can only show you the photos since I want to surprise you.



After we've finished our descent we'll be heading into the home stretch of our tour with a ride along the bike paths of the Canal de la Villette / Canal Saint-Martin.





After leaving the canal we'll cycle along some side streets until we arrive back at our starting point of the bike store, where I'm sure you'll be satisfied that you had one of those experiences of finding the hidden gems you've dreamed about but never thought you'd be able to find.:)