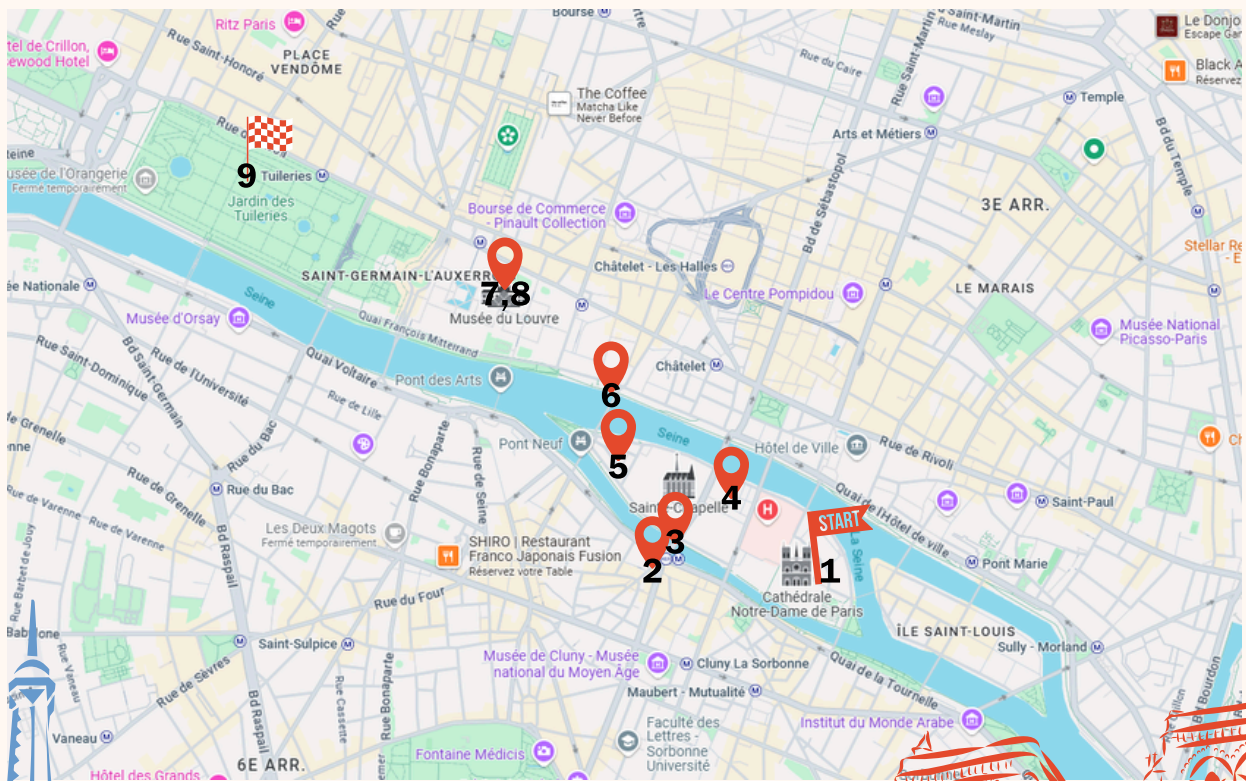


Paris: les incontournables

Autoguidée !



START



La Cathédrale Notre Dame de Paris

Notre-Dame was built from 1163–1345, construction beginning under the reign of Louis VII. The Gothic style emerged first in France and then quickly expanded through Europe. A style characterized by the search for light and height to emulate Heaven on Earth, churches became taller, with thinner walls of stained-glass windows. Flying buttresses allowed these structural innovations by shifting weight to the exterior structure.



Fontaine Saint Michel

Built in 1860 during the Second Empire by the architect Gabriel Davioud, this fountain was part of a larger plan to modernize Paris. The emperor Napoleon III wanted to upgrade the medieval city; thus narrow streets became ample boulevards with new Haussmanian buildings, green spaces, squares, and fountains like this one!



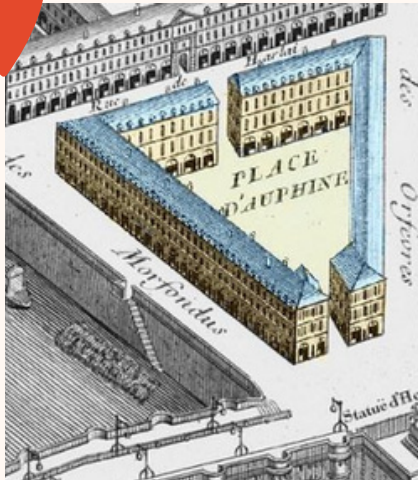
Pont Saint Michel

This bridge is one in a long line of former bridges built in its place...the first ever was constructed in the XIV century, but it and others erected in the same spot were constantly destroyed by floodings of the Seine. The bridge you see today was built under the command of Napoleon III in 1857. Made of stone and stamped with the imperial “N” of Napoleon, it was built to stay.



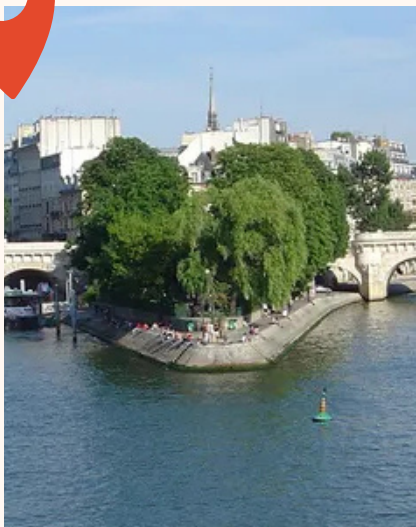
L'Île de la Cité

L'Île de la Cité is one of the several natural islands we can find along *La Seine*. Here lies the origin of the city of Paris. Around the year 200 B.C., the Celtic tribe of the Parisii settled here, founding the town of Lutèce. By the year 506, it became the capital of the kingdom of the Franks and by the Middle Ages it was the political, spiritual, and cultural center of France.



Place Dauphine

Let's go back in time to discover this square built in 1607 by King Henri IV. He had just inaugurated the first royal square (present-day Place des Vosges) and the Pont Neuf, so he decided to continue the works. This enclosed square was built with 32 identical houses around it, and was called the second royal square, *Place Dauphine*, in honor of his son, the *dauphin* and future Louis XIII.



Pont Neuf

Even if its name translates to the "New Bridge", it's actually the oldest in Paris! It was built between 1578 and 1607. At the time, it was the only bridge that crossed the Seine, even traversing Île de la Cité. It was King Henri III who started its construction; however, the equestrian statue you'll spot in the middle represents Henri IV. It was taken down during the French Revolution but restored in 1818!



Le Louvre

The Louvre was built as a fortress in 1190 by King Philippe Auguste. By 1364, it became a royal residence, lush with different galleries and apartments of opulent furnishings and private art collections. After the French Revolution, they were made accessible to the general population, marking the first time art was made available to the wider public in a museum setting. Today it holds over 500,000 pieces!



La pyramide du Louvre

In 1980, the architect Ieoh Ming Pei created this glass pyramid, an iconic work of art in the court of the palace. It was part of a project to modernize the museum, as the number of visitors was growing rapidly. It allowed direct access to the lower level of the museum and the three main wings.



Le Jardin des Tuileries

In 1564, Catherine de Médicis, widow of Henri II, filled with nostalgia for the Florentine gardens of her childhood, ordered the construction of a garden adjacent to the Louvre Palace. It was redesigned in 1664 by André Le Nôtre, Louis XIV's iconic gardener. He modelled it after Versailles, creating a geometrically perfect space. Les Tuileries were open to a select public, but after the French Revolution they became accessible to all.