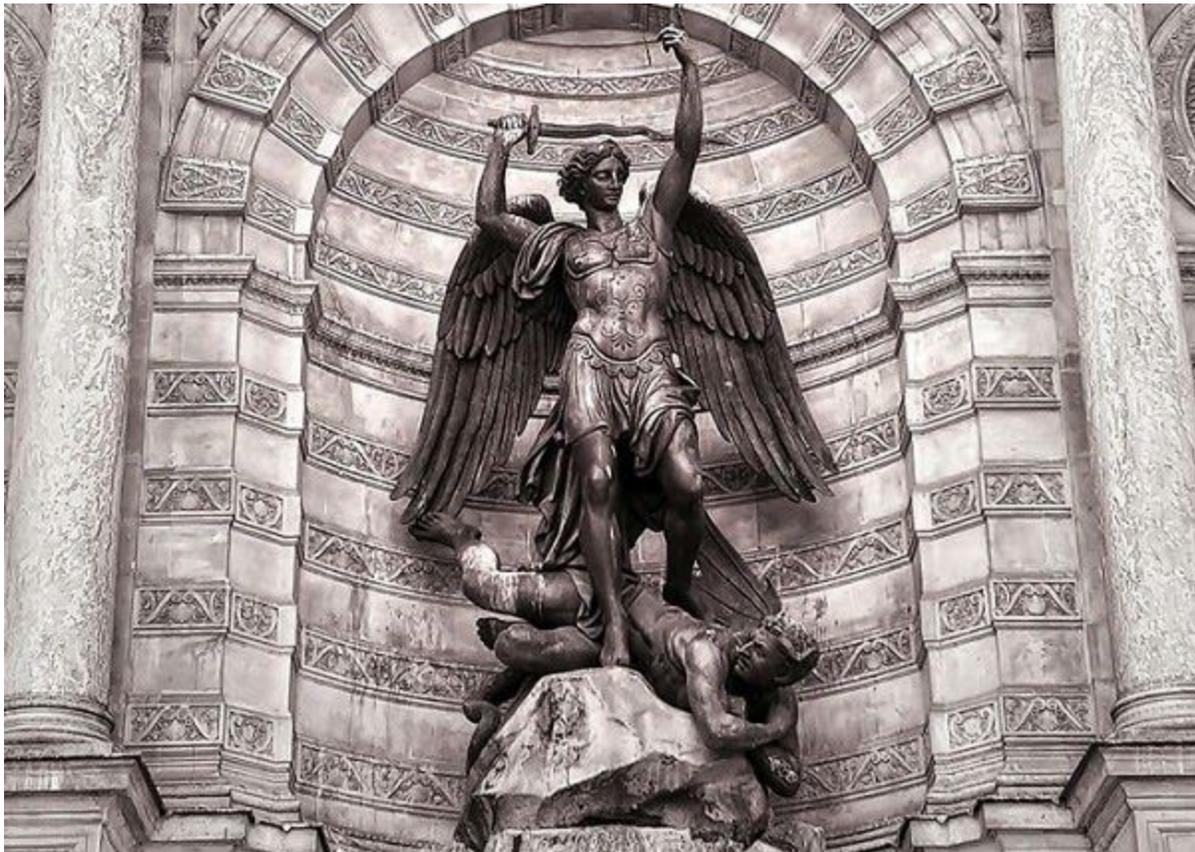


## Place Saint-Michel

The Place Saint-Michel is simple – a triangle between two streets, uniform buildings along both, designed by the same architect, a walk of smooth cobblestone.

The centerpiece is St. Michael defeating a devil; far above them are four statues symbolizing the four cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice.



This monument came to be because of the 1848 Revolution and a cholera epidemic in Paris that followed it which killed thousands.

This idea of abstract concepts given human form had been popular during the Revolution, the big one, representing the kind of big virtues – like the Four Cardinal Virtues – that everyone could strive for, instead of a single human being whose actions and legacy would turn people against each other.

Simultaneous with the creation of Place Saint-Michel, Napoleon III's renovation brought the Boulevard Saint-Michel into being, and that is the next part of our walk.

Facing the fountain with the river at your back, walk on Boulevard Saint-Michel, it's the street to your left. Walk away from the river along that street.

Ultimately, you'll be turning left on Rue des Écoles, but it'll be about five minutes to get there, and you can listen to the next track on the way.

### **Boulevard Saint-Michel**

The character of the street you're on – wide-open space lined with trees and long, harmonious buildings, plus, often, a view of some landmark in the distance – was a central part of the renovation plan, or the Haussmann plan, as it's also known.



Georges-Eugène Haussmann was a Paris technocrat. Aside from health reasons, he also made the case to the parliament that wide streets would help prevent quite so many revolutions in the future.

Many of the buildings along this road are fine examples of the French 2nd Empire style.

On the left side of the street, just after Boulinier, a used-books store, you'll see the ruins of ancient Roman-style baths. This is a preview of the Cluny Museum, which you'll be seeing from the front soon.

## The Sorbonne

The Sorbonne, or the University of Paris, has been here since 1150, making it the second oldest university in Europe. It's the place where some of the fundamentals of today's education system – things like doctoral degrees – were first put in practice.



The Sorbonne helped put Paris, and the Latin Quarter, on the map.

It's hard to overstate how many big names are connected with this institution, then and since: churchmen like John Calvin and Thomas Aquinas, scientists like Marie and Pierre Curie, writers like Voltaire, Balzac, Jean-Paul Sartre, T.S. Eliot, Elie Wiesel, Susan Sontag . . .

*On the opposite side of the street, you'll see a small green space, and on the right edge of it, across from the main doorways of the Sorbonne building, a street called Place Paul Painlevé. Walk down that street and take the first left turn. The Cluny Museum will be on your right.*

## Cluny Museum

This is the Cluny Museum, formerly the Cluny Mansion. The name comes from the Cluny monks who it belonged to, and they were named for the city where they were based.



In 1340, they obtained what was left of the thermal baths you saw earlier and built this structure beside them.

Today, it's France's National Museum of the Middle Ages. It's more an art museum than a history museum, with excellent exhibits on tapestries and stained glass.

Apart from those, the museum also has early medieval art from before the Gothic era – the style called Romanesque – medieval work from the Islamic world and the Byzantine Empire, and some other late, near-Renaissance pieces from the era of the tapestries.

There are also some much older artifacts in that oldest part of the property, the Roman baths.

It's open every day but Tuesday from 9:15 am to 5:45 pm. Regular tickets are 5 Euros, sometimes more if there's a special exhibit going on, and it's free for teenagers, EU citizens under 26, and, on the first Sunday of each month, for everyone. It's also free with a Paris Museum Pass.

*When you're done, put the doors of the Cluny Museum at your back, face toward the Sorbonne, and turn left. The street, Place Paul Painlevé, changes into Rue du Sommerard on the next block.*

*Turn left onto Rue Saint-Jacques. In a block, you'll pass through a large intersection with Boulevard Saint-Germain, another Hausmann road. Ahead of you, the road will seem to split; keep left to stay on Rue Saint-Jacques. After another smaller intersection, you'll see a distinctive church on the left, the Church of Saint-Severin.*

### **The Church of Saint-Severin**

Pause here for a moment to take in the atmosphere of the medieval city. Saint-Severin itself is a 13th-century church, and the Rue Saint-Severin, the road just past it, is from that same era.



Look down it to the left and you can imagine the crowdedness of these roads, shared by carts and pedestrians and animals and whatever was thrown from upper windows. And you can maybe also imagine how easy it would be to improvise a barricade across one of these streets if you wanted to.

*Immediately after the church, turn right onto the small Rue Galande. This was the other main Roman road. The road will split just ahead of you; go left, onto Rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre. You'll be able to see the towers of Notre Dame in the distance. Immediately on your right, you'll see a smaller, humbler church.*

### **Church of Saint-Julien-le-Pauve**

The Church of Saint-Julien-le-Pauve, or St. Julian the Poor, began construction in the 12th century, around the same time as Notre-Dame, and steady changes since have made it a mash-up of styles.



But it started off Romanesque, the early medieval style that preceded Gothic, and you can see the heaviness of that style, compared to which Gothic would have seemed so revolutionary.

While it was originally a Roman Catholic church, today it's used by Melkite Greek Catholics, who are part of an Eastern Catholic-community based in the Middle East.



The square is called the Square Rene Viviani, mostly known for its view of Notre-Dame.

The grounds are littered with big pieces of limestone – in the 19th century when Notre-Dame was renovated and also contains a locust tree believed to be the oldest tree in Paris, about 400 years old.

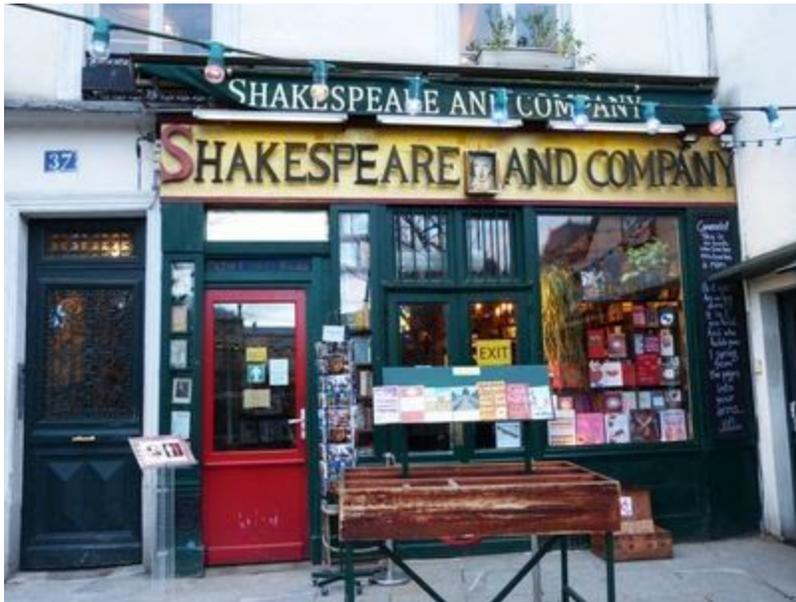
*Now, continue along Rue Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, toward the towers of Notre Dame.*

*At the end of the block on the left, you'll see a bookstore and café, Shakespeare and Company.*

## Shakespeare and Company Bookstore

This is the second of two bookstores called Shakespeare and Company, the other stood just southwest of here, and both focused on English language books.

An American named Sylvia Beach opened it, and as both a bookstore and a lending library, it came to be the haunt of writers and artists, including Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso.



The bookstore provided more than just a place for future artistic celebrities to meet; it also stocked and eventually published books that were banned back home, including James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*.

This Shakespeare and Company was founded by George Whitman, who offered lodging to writers in exchange for volunteer work, and if you step inside, you'll see some of their beds.

*When you're done, go the last few steps along Rue St.-Julien-le-Pauvre and turn right onto Quai de Montebello. At the next intersection, you'll see a bridge to your left, the Pont au Double.*

*The next track is a last glance at the Left Bank before we move on to Île de la Cité. You can listen from anywhere around the Pont au Double.*

## **LEFT BANK - PONT au DOUBLE**

On the quais along the banks of the Seine, Shakespeare and Company has plenty of company in the bookselling business: bouquinistes, the booksellers who set up shop in little stalls along the river.

From around the bridge, you can get a few important views. First is the Seine itself. The name Seine comes from Sequana, the name of an ancient river goddess.

The river is the reason for human interest in this site going back millennia, and the Île de la Cité offered a relatively easy crossing, as well as an opportunity to build low bridges and control traffic up and down the river.

On the opposite side of the water from here is the Île de la Cité. From here you can see the big picture of the island.

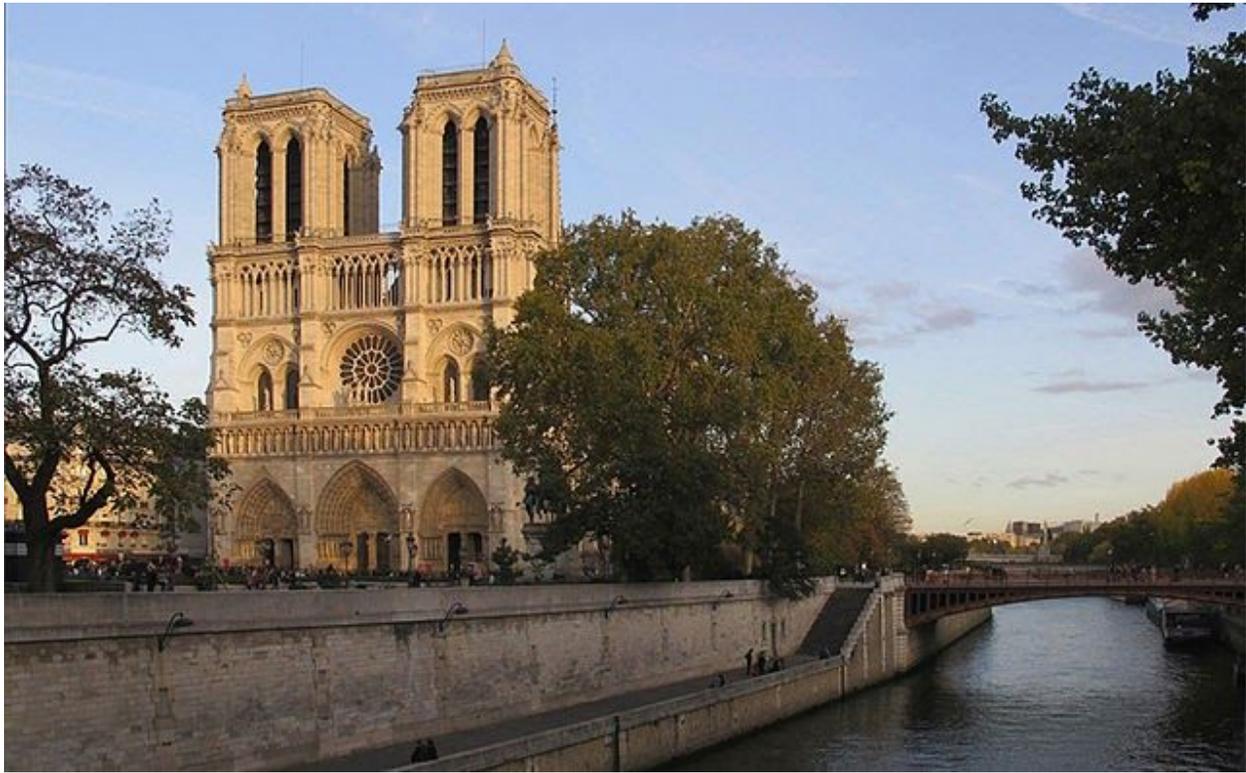
On the west end, to your left, is the Palais de la Justice, former site of the royal palace and still home to parts of the French government.

On the east side, to the right, has been religious turf for even longer – Notre Dame has stood here since 1163, before that was another Christian cathedral, before that was likely a Roman temple, and those were sometimes built on sacred sites that were older still.

Nowadays, there's not much on the island besides that; Haussmann eliminated most of the residences here.

### **Notre Dame (Exterior)**

This cathedral was started in the 1100s and enhanced with some of its flashiest elements over the next few centuries. You can see one of those additions: the flying buttresses, those gracefully curved stone supports arrayed along the side of the building.



The cathedral has 2 beautiful rose windows, both designed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but they were recreated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and they weren't the only parts of the cathedral added so recently.

The same is true of much of the stained glass, the spire (now destroyed by the fire), all the gargoyles, and the heads of statues on the western side.

To help fund that restoration, Victor Hugo penned his novel Notre-Dame de Paris, known in English as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

Looking at the cathedral from the front, you can see an overwhelming amount of sculptures and reliefs. For a time when most attendees were illiterate and didn't understand the Latin language in which the sermons were given, the church façade itself was the illustrated version of the Bible.

Over the main western doors, on what's called the tympanum, is a relief of Judgement Day, with the separation of souls bound for eternal paradise or eternal torment.

To the left, over the Portal of the Virgin, is a statue of Saint Denis, who would have needed no introduction for most attendees. He was beheaded by the Romans for the threat he posed to other religions.

Now, he's a patron saint of Paris, and he's also known across the Catholic world as someone to pray to for relief from headaches.

In April 2019, a fire led to the collapse of much of the roof and a spire, plus collateral damage from impact, smoke, and water to much of the rest of the building and the artwork inside. Hundreds of firefighters contained the disaster and kept it from doing more harm.

The target year for reopening is 2024. In the meantime, early September 2020 is the planned time frame for reopening the archaeological crypt under the parvis. It contains remains of the Roman city, plus models of what Notre-Dame looked like at the various phases of its life. You can see them for 9 Euros, or for free with a Paris Museum Pass.

From here, we're headed to Rue de Lutèce. With the cathedral at your back, proceed across the parvis and turn right onto Rue de la Cité. There'll be a large building on your left. Immediately after that building, turn left onto Rue de Lutèce. It's a small street that runs between that large building and the adjacent park.

## **RUE DE LUTECE**

Straight ahead, you can see the Palais de la Justice, which is our next stop. To your right is a two-century-old outdoor flower and plant market, operating from 9:30 am - 7 pm daily.



“Lutèce,” the name of this street, is a word you may have seen. It’s the French variation of “Lutetia,” the ancient Roman name for this city. The full name was Lutetia Parisiorum – Lutetia of the Parisii.

The Parisii were the tribe that lived in this area before Roman conquest, and as you may have guessed, they give the city its modern name.

I’ve described a few things as Roman in the course of the tour – the better way to say it would be Gallo-Roman – the region’s population were the Gauls, a Celtic people, and while they were conquered by the Romans, local culture in the early centuries CE was a fusion of both.

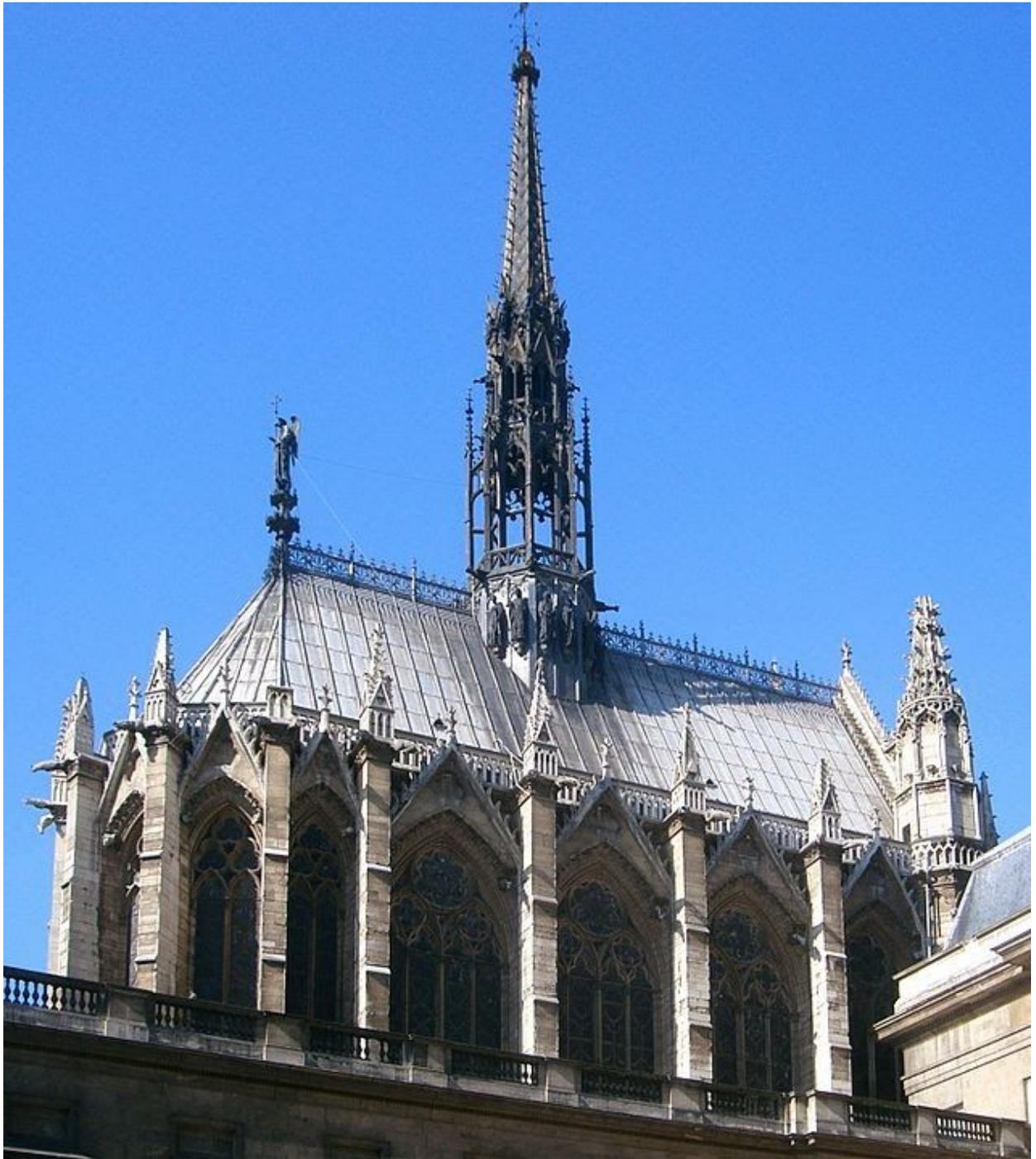
There’s a limited understanding of the geography of ancient life here – the ancient Gallic city was probably out west in today’s suburbs, and the Roman city, originally on the Left Bank, moved onto the island in the third century to be more easily defended.

At the end of Rue de Lutèce is Boulevard du Palais, with the massive palace complex on the opposite side of the street.

## **PALAIS DE JUSTICE AND SAINTE-CHAPELLE**

Altogether, what you see here is the Palais de la Cité. The site has served state functions as far back as being the home of Roman governors in the early years CE, and for French kings, it was the royal palace until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when it moved to various locations across the Seine on the Right Bank, including the Louvre.

From here you can see Sainte-Chapelle or the Sacred Chapel, easily identified by the tall steeple on the left side of the complex.



As for going inside Sainte-Chapelle, the wait can be long, but you'll see some of the world's most impressive stained glass.

The upper chapel, up a narrow spiral staircase from the entrance and once only accessible by the king and his family, is surrounded by windows, and a comprehensive cleaning and restoration completed in 2014 has them in ideal form.



The lower chapel, the portion originally made for the general population of the palace, has a highly decorated Gothic vaulted ceiling.

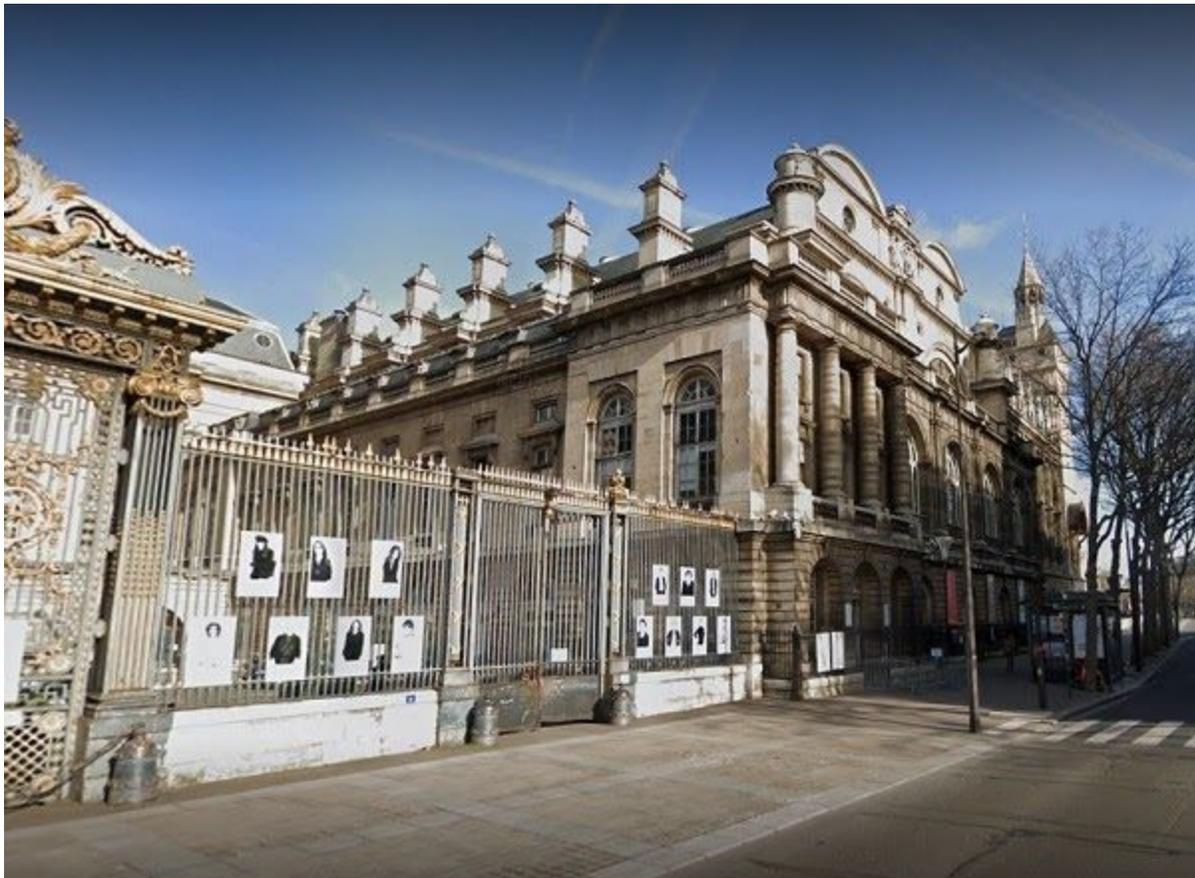
Sainte-Chapelle is open daily from 11 am to 7 pm; tickets are 11 Euros and fifty cents. You can also get a joint ticket with our next stop, the Conciergerie, for 17 Euros, but it's only available from the Conciergerie ticket desk; you won't find it online. You can also be admitted with a Paris Museum Pass. The entrance is to the left of the main gates of the palace.

Turn right and go a few steps down Boulevard du Palais. Soon on the left you'll see La Conciergerie.

## LA CONCIERGERIE

2 Boulevard du Palais

The Conciergerie is famous as the last residence of Queen Marie Antoinette before she was executed early in the French Revolution. It was also a prison before and after her time.



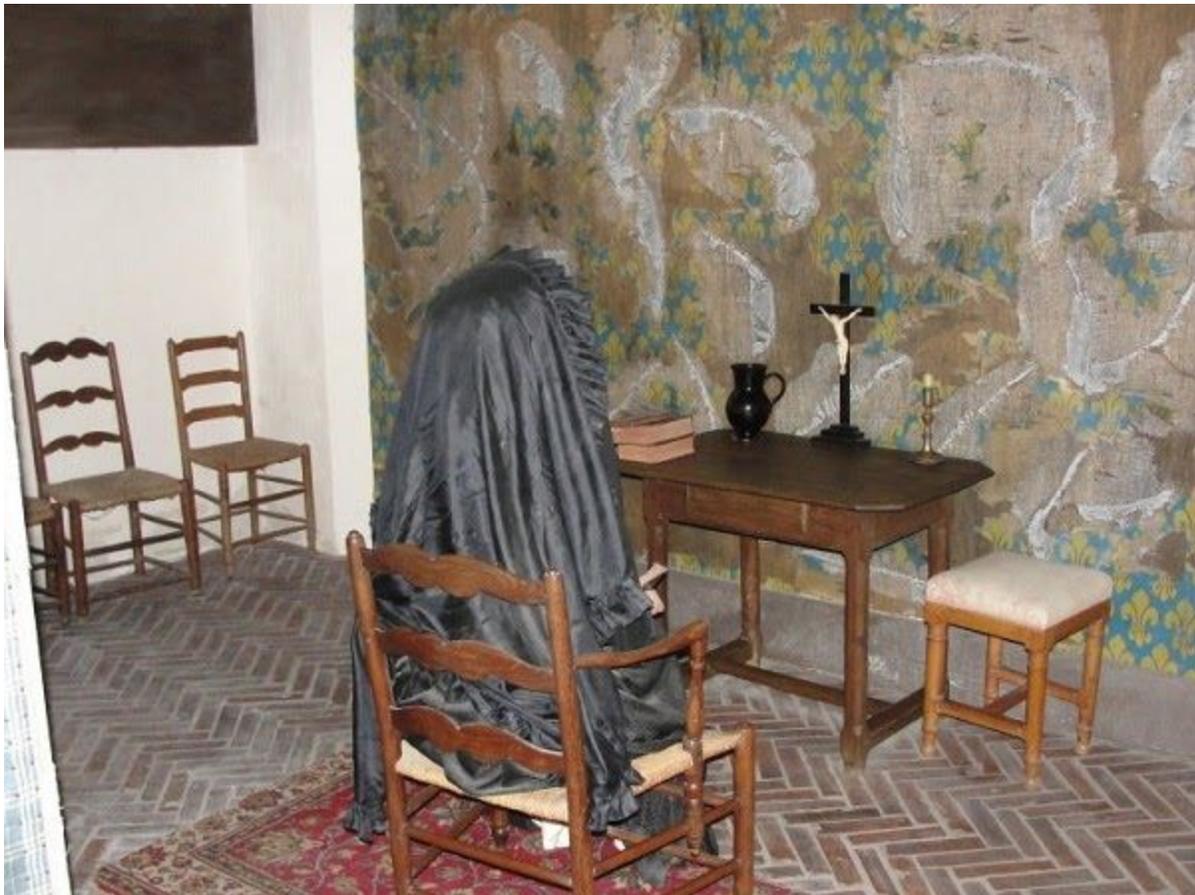
The royal palace had moved to new locations across the Seine in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. But some state functions stayed behind, here, including to this day part of the French court system.

(In the absence of the king himself, the place was run by a surrogate – a concierge – giving this building its name.)

While the Revolution began with the liberation of a prison, the Bastille, it soon took over the palace and found uses for everything here.

Sainte-Chapelle became storage, the space where the parliament of nobles met became the home of the assembly and the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the prison became... the prison.

The royalty and their supporters, and eventually all kinds of perceived enemies, were imprisoned, tried, and executed, close to 3000 of them in this building alone.



In terms of going inside, the Conciergerie is a stark, simple building compared to Sainte-Chapelle, although still majestically Gothic. Some spaces are set up as they would have looked during the Revolution,

including the cell of Marie-Antoinette, which is now a chapel dedicated to her.

You can fully immerse yourself in the building's Revolutionary history by borrowing a histopad, a bit of a virtual reality device which will translate the whole building back to that era as you explore. They rent for 5 Euros.

Exhibits are in French and mostly also English. It's open daily from 10:30am to 6:30pm; tickets are 9 Euros and fifty cents, or, again, you can get in with a Paris Museum Pass or that 17 Euro joint ticket with Sainte-Chapelle.

At the end of the block, on the corner of the palace, is the first of the palace's four towers, Tour de l'Horloge.

## **TOUR DE L'HORLOGE**

“Tour de l'Horloge” means clock tower, and the clock is hard to miss. This was the first public clock in Paris, installed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although the decorated face you see now came along a couple hundred years later and has been restored a few times since.



The figures on either side are personifications of law and justice – you may be able to see the plaque on the left and the scales on the right.

The clock face is covered by a small roof. If you have especially sharp eyes and you look straight up at the underside of that roof, you can see a repeating pattern of intertwined letters: sometimes H and C, for King Henri II and his queen, Catherine de Medici, and sometimes H and M, for King Henri IV and his queen, Marguerite de Valois.

Our next stop is behind the palace, so in a moment you'll turn left and walk along the water down Quai de l'Horloge, then turn left again onto Rue de Harlay.

## **PLACE DAUPHINE**

Place Dauphine is another city square, a triangle really; the rows of buildings that border it on the north and south sides slowly converge, leading to the edge of the island.



Make your way gradually through to that point.

King Henri IV had a son, who would eventually become King Louis XIII, but until he took the throne, he was the Dauphin, or the crown prince.

Dauphin also means dolphin; a couple of them are featured on the French coat of arms.

Anyway, during his son's boyhood, Henri IV converted a private palace garden into a public square and called it Place Dauphine, or Crown Prince Square.



The buildings have mostly been redone since then; you can get a feel for the original square at the other end, the last buildings where the two sides converge to frame a statue of Henri IV.

### **Pont Neuf**

The space where Henri stands is called the Square du Vert Galant, and it's a relatively new piece of land. River islands like Île de la Cité naturally build up this way on their downstream side.



The New Bridge, when it was actually new at the start of the 1600s, just touched the tip of the island.

Today, Pont Neuf is the oldest bridge still running across the Seine, and the others have followed its lead: this one was specifically designed not to have houses on it, so as to offer a view of the Louvre, which is where we're going next.

Turn right and cross the bridge toward the Right Bank. Then turn immediately left onto Quai du Louvre. It's about a kilometer or a thirteen-minute walk to reach the Louvre; the next track will prepare you for what you'll see there and explain some of what you'll see on the way.

## **QUAI DU LOUVRE**

First, the sights on the Left Bank.

Directly across the Pont Neuf you can see the Monnaie de Paris, France's mint, operating for more than a millennium and still producing Euros today.



The building includes a museum on the history of the institution itself and on other money-related matters.

Next to it, you'll see a wide building with a dome in the middle, the Institut de France. Founded as a school, this is the home to intellectual institutions like the Académie Française.

The Academy does many things, including giving life-changing monetary prizes to artists, but it's best known for promoting a stiff view of what constitutes correct French.



It opposes popular use of English terms like “le weekend” or “le ordinateur.” And it also continues a policy, going back to the French Revolution, of opposing any official recognition for the many non-French languages spoken in France. French as you see it written and hear it spoken here is the regional language of Paris, and Paris’ political stature has made Parisian French the best-known way of speaking in the country.

The Revolution believed that an informed populace all needed to speak the same language, but if you traveled beyond Paris then or now, you'd find things anything but uniform.

There's Breton, a Celtic language spoken in the northwest, Catalan and Provençal, Romance languages spoken in the south, Flemish and Alsatian, Germanic languages spoken in the northeast, and Basque, a language unrelated to anything else in Europe, spoken in the southwest.

As of now, French is the only official language in France, and the status of regional languages is one of many hot questions in modern French politics.

Crossing the river in front of the Institut de France is another bridge, the Pont des Arts or Bridge of the Arts, named to match with the Louvre, the Palais des Arts or Palace of the Arts. It's a pedestrian-only metal bridge commissioned by Napoleon, and the view it offers makes it a popular spot for artists or just souvenir photographers.



There's a tradition – purely touristic – of attaching locks to the bridge; you'll endear yourself to Parisians if you decide not to do this.

The near end of the Pont des Arts marks about the beginning of the massive Louvre Museum. You could enter from this end, but I'll suggest going all the way to the end of the Louvre, right by the next bridge, the Pont du Carrousel, turning right, and entering via the area next to the Tuileries Gardens. That way, you'll end the tour between two beautiful and enticing landmarks.

While you're walking, a bit of advice on navigating the Louvre. It's worth going in, even if you only have a little while – it's open 9 am - 6 pm every day but Tuesday. It doesn't matter how early or late you arrive; the Louvre is the largest art museum in the world, and although they don't have the

world's largest collection, there are hundreds of thousands of items on display, so you'll have to make choices about what you want to see.

Despite its size, the Louvre can be crowded, but the crowds tend to be thickest around the most famous items. Maybe the most commonly viewed piece in the museum could be entitled "Tourist taking selfie with the Mona Lisa." So if waiting isn't your game, avoiding the best-known artworks can be one useful strategy.

You can also steer by subject. The museum is split into eight departments: Egyptian Antiquities; Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities; Near Eastern Antiquities; Islamic Art; Paintings; Sculptures; Decorative Arts; and Printing and Drawing.

One of the simplest ways to plan your visit is to just pick one department. You might still have some navigating to do – some of the departments are split across multiple locations in the museum – but each one has its own identifying color to help you find your way.

You can also get the museum's help in structuring your time. Short guided tours of each section are available seasonally; look for a link in the notes for more information.

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-guidees>

You can also get the help of the museum digitally – their website offers self-guided walks on a variety of themes, and you can search them by theme, by the amount of time you want to spend, or by other criteria. Again, the link is in the notes.

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/parcours>

The museum hosts events, including lectures, films, and music. More often than not, the language of these events is French, but if that's not a deal-breaker, you can find yet another link in the notes.

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/louvre-auditorium>

Once you arrive, you'll get a feel for the scale of the Louvre. It's a giant 12<sup>th</sup>-century palace, which occasionally was the royal residence before the court moved to Versailles in 1682, and it's been steadily modernized, to the point of having a giant glass pyramid at the center. The pyramid is the entrance; you enter the museum from underground and then climb floors as you need to from inside. The process of entry takes a little while – there's a security check, past which you're not allowed to carry large bags, and there are the ticket lines.

Tickets are 17 Euros if bought online, 15 Euros if bought in person, or free for anyone under 18, EU residents under 26, or anyone with a Paris Museum Pass.

There are several entry lines, depending on whether you've already bought a ticket and whether you have any kind of special needs. Online tickets require you to choose a time, but they can mean a faster entrance. Fast means half an hour. Slow means longer. Given the long wait and the size of the museum, it's wise to wear comfortable shoes and eat before you go in, especially given that eating and drinking aren't allowed in the museum except where food and drinks are sold.

Once you've passed through the line, the choices begin, with several entrances to pick from; audio guides are available whichever way you go, 5 Euros each, in nine languages.

Hopefully all this has helped you plan. But when you arrive in view of the pyramid, we have one more option to see. The next and final track covers a bit of the history of this site and the Tuileries Gardens.

## **LOUVRE MUSEUM AND TUILERIES GARDENS**

The Louvre used to be a royal palace, and it's easy to tell. It remained private after the royalty moved out, and it housed a private collection of art until the Revolution, at which point, in 1793, it was opened to the public.

The open space to the west of the Louvre, centered on a large sculpted hedge, is the Place du Carrousel, and it used to be the location of another royal palace – the Tuileries Palace, destroyed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It left behind the arch opposite the Louvre – the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel, built to celebrate the military victories of Napoleon and to welcome arrivals to that palace.

Beyond it are a couple of stairways, leading down into the former location of the moat, which contains some sculptures from the old palace.

And beyond that is the Tuileries Gardens. At one time an exclusive royal garden, this too became public during the Revolution, and it's another option for the next part of your adventure. It's free to enter and open 7am to 11pm daily. It's bigger than the Louvre, so you could easily find yourself walking further in this park than you have through the entire tour so far. But there are a couple of cafes around the middle if you need somewhere to rest, and the park offers a lot to see – it's a sculpture garden with about 200 pieces, including several by famous French sculptor Auguste Rodin. You're asked not to touch the sculptures and to keep off the grass.

Between late April and late October, there's a tour of the garden at 3:30pm each weekend day and some holidays. The tours meet at the triumphal arch.

At the other end of the gardens are two more museums – the Jeu de Paume, closed for construction through spring of 2021, and the Orangerie, open 9am-6pm Wednesday through Monday, 11 Euros, or included in a Paris Museum Pass. Beyond them is Place de la Concorde, the Champs Élysées, and lots, lots more.

With all those choices at hand, we'll conclude things here.

For transport, you have a few options nearby. On the opposite side of the Louvre from the river is the Rue de Rivoli; turning right there would lead you to the Palais Royale/Louvre Museum metro stop, which connects to the 1 and 7 lines, and turning left would bring you to the Tuileries metro stop, which connects to the 1 line. And quite a few bus lines have stops right here in the Place du Carrousel. For more ideas in Paris, including things to do in the Latin Quarter, Marais, and Montmartre, check out our website, linked in the notes.

And look for our articles and audio tours about lots of other cities - you'll find links in the notes for those, too.

Thank you for listening and bon voyage!

<https://freetoursbyfoot.com/free-walking-tours-paris/>