

# **PARIS ON 100 EUROS A WEEK**

## **Includes Accommodation, Food, Transportation and Tourist Attractions**

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Some people won't be willing to go completely ghetto to be in Paris for such little cash a week, but if you are someone who complains that you don't have enough money to travel, here are some tips for you to make it happen

on a budget. Getting to your destination is the most expensive, but once you're there you can enjoy the place for very little money!

Paris is a ridiculously expensive city. I was even shocked. The fact that it's so expensive, made me want to compile a list of things and places for you to enjoy it for cheap or free. You probably won't go to the extreme that

is required to do Paris for 100 euros a week but it can be done and you can see and do a lot!

### **Maps – FREE**

You can get free maps all over Paris. I got one at the airport but used it so much that it ripped. I got another one at a hotel, that ripped too. I think I went through 3 maps! Hotels are your best bet for a good free one. Maps include a metro and RER map as well.

### **Accommodations – FREE**

If you want to stay anywhere for free, use couchsurfing.org. Stay with a local for FREE! Not only will you get some great insider tips but you can save money too.

### **Transportation around Paris – 9-29EUROS**

There are several options here. Most of us will stay within zones 1-3. The cheapest pass is to get a Navigo card for 5 euros at metro stations where there is an attendant. Make sure you have a photocopy of your passport picture for them to use. This is the card locals use. If you arrive on a Sunday, Monday or even Tuesday you can buy a week's pass for about 18euros which will be good till the following Sunday. If you're arriving mid week, they have tourist passes for several days. I combined half my trip with walking and half with using the metro. I purchased a two day pass for 15euros and did all my metro related trips on those days, places which were too far for me to walk. I did do a lot of walking though, usually over 20km on many days. I know, I'm nuts. Paris isn't a city for unfit people. Unless you have the cash to rent a car or have a chauffeur, you'll have to do a lot of walking, even if you're taking the metro. I even had to up my food intake to keep my weight up as I was walking so much. They also sell a 5 day pass for 29euros, 3 day pass for 21euros and 1 day pass for 9euros. The passes are good for the Metro, Buses and RER. These can be bought from machines at all metro stations.

### **Food & Wine – 30 EUROS**

The cheapest way to eat is to buy groceries and cook yourself. I perused a number of grocery stores in the area I was staying in (luckily there were about 5 chains I could check out). A chain called DIA is by far the cheapest grocery store you'll find. (like Aldi in the US and various countries in Europe). Most other grocery stores were quite expensive. For example, you can buy 250gr of generic coffee there for about 0.75euros.

They even have ready made Quinoa that you can microwave for about 2euros which is good for two

portions. I also saw a bag of 6 mini avocados from Spain for 1.50euros. One day I purchased a gigantic salad, with dressing a fork and a napkin for 2 euros and it was really good. A little money here goes a long way. If you spend 25 euros you should be able to eat for the week if you play your cards right. Bread is under 1 euro as well. I purchased some instant coffee for about 2euros (though you can find it cheaper) and it lasted me the week. Although not the best, you can buy a bag of 10 Pain au Chocolat there as well for under 2 euros. Toasted in a toaster oven, they'd be edible!

Since most people won't be around their accommodations to cook for lunch, packing sandwiches and fruit for lunch and/or dinner is a good idea. I normally ended up at home for dinner (people here eat dinner late, around 8-9pm and I did this as well) so I cooked or prepared small meals on most nights. I bought a large bottle of water and just filled it with tap water afterwards. I also had a small bottle which I filled and sometimes took with me on days out.

I don't drink wine (I know, weird considering this is my culture!) but you can buy a bottle at DIA or even another grocery store for under 3 euros. Treat yourself! Even the cheap wine is supposedly drinkable here.

### Eating out – 20 euros

If you want to eat out and not spend an arm and a leg, you'll have to resort to some sandwich chains, small ethnic places or bakeries. The bakery near my apartment served a combo for 6euros and I got a baguette sandwich (veggie), a dessert (usually a tart) and a drink. Near Les Halles (outside) I noticed tons of ethnic food places with cheap combos and Falafels for 4euros or so. I only treated myself to dinner out one night and it wasn't expensive considering. I paid 18euros for a gigantic Ethiopian Veggie Combo and a mineral water. I saved my appetite all day for this meal. A little italian place on my street also served pasta dishes for 8 euros. I also saw a few Korean places serving 8 euro combos. The key is to keep your eyes open and take note. Inexpensive meals are there, you just have to find them.

### Crepes, Coffee and Macarons – 10 EUROS

Of course you'll want to experience a little of the culture by sitting in a cafe, eating a macaron or a crepe!

Crepes are everywhere. You can get a sugar crepe for as little as 1.50euros! While walking, you'll come across many places and prices vary. The average price of a sugar crepe is 2euros. If you walk around outside near Les Halles, there are TONS Of food places offering crepes to go. There are no shortages of establishments which serve crepes.

Believe it or not, the most amazing macarons are at McCafe's which are all over Paris but not in every McDonalds. I admit, I am not a fan of McDonalds and actually banned them for 7 years until The Fabulously Broke blogger swore that these were the best and cheapest macarons in Paris (THANK YOU!). Well yes, they ARE! Macarons generally go for about 1.50-2 euros a piece (they are small ones). The McCafe ones are 6 for 4.50euros and are bigger! The raspberry ones are my favourite. Laduree is notably the most famous place to get them but every time I went by there, the line up was a half an hour long so I didn't even bother trying those. I actually got a free jumbo macaron from the bakery near my place. It was good, sure, but the McCafe ones were better.

Of course sitting in a cafe is something we all want to do when in Paris. Your best bet is to explore non tourist neighbourhoods (probably where your couchsurfing host will be). In the area where I was, I found a spot which served coffee for 1 euro! (cafe alongee). The place is called SECCO and there are two locations in Paris. They serve it in a small paper cup and I could sit outside as they had about a half a dozen tables set up. I've paid as much as 4 euros for a coffee, which was in the Latin Quarter and it came with a glass of water and a decadent square of dark chocolate. Nice, but so xpensive. Bakeries are a good place to

get a coffee, try ones on side streets which have 2-3 tables right outside. If you see any places with a terrace, you'll pay a hefty price for a cup. McDonalds serves coffee for 1.30euros OR 1 euro for an espresso but it's likely not the kind of environment you want to sit in. Who wants to sit in McDonalds in Paris? Smaller places serve coffee for 1.20euros, you just have to shop around.

#### Tourist Attractions

I generally avoid tourist traps like the plague but let's face it, some things need to be seen!

#### Pere Lachaise Cemetery (metro Pere Lachaise) – FREE

I spent almost 3 hours here and could have spent all day hadn't I had other things to do. It's huge. I visited Oscar Wilde's, Jim Morrison's and Moliere's gravesites. It is such a beautiful cemetery. I had been here twice before as I have been to Paris a few times but it was one of the places I wanted to go back to. You can really get lost in there. You can get a free map of the grounds when you come in the main entrance. This would be a nice place to eat lunch on a bench, there are several around to rest.

#### Jardin du Luxembourg (metro Luxembourg) – FREE

Really pretty gardens and there is also a playground for kids. Nice in the spring or summer.

#### Le Louvre Grounds / Fragonard Perfume Museum – FREE

If you happen to be in Paris on the first Sunday of the month, getting into the Louvre Museum is free! (otherwise it's 10euros). You can walk around the grounds and see the beautiful buildings and also visit the Fragonard Perfume Museum which is free and on site.

#### Champs Elysee & Arc de Triomphe – FREE

Famous street with many unaffordable shops and the infamous Arc de Triomphe. Walking around is fun to people watch. I didn't spend a whole lot of time there as it was crowded and everything was expensive, even a coffee. It's definitely a must see if you've never been to Paris.

#### Eiffel Tower grounds & La Seine – FREE

You can see the Eiffel tower from many places in Paris. Get off at the nearest metro (Champ de Mars – Tour Eiffel) and walk around the tower for a great view! No need to go up the tower! Once you've seen the tower, you can cross the bridge and walk along La Seine which is very pretty.

#### Bateau Mouche OR Montparnasse Tower 4.50 11euros

I've done the Bateau Mouche along La Seine the few times when I was there before. The sad thing is that it's a touristy thing to do but is really worth the 11euros to cruise along La Seine and see Paris from the water. It's one of those things worth investing in if you have the extra cash. If you take the free walking tours, you'll get a special coupon to pay only 4.50euros for a boat tour, so do the free walking tour first to get a better deal! (see below)

Montparnasse Tower is great too at 10euros per adult. You have a 360degree view of Paris which is breath taking. These two tourist attractions are worth spending the money and both are worth the entry price.

#### Notre Dame Cathedral – FREE

I don't like churches so I did not go in here. In addition, the line ups here are ridiculously long. It is a must see, at least the outside! The history is fascinating. If you take the free walking tour they will give you a lot of the history so do that first, then go in. It's supposedly very beautiful! If you see a line up, just keep in mind that they let about 20 people in or so every 15mins, so you could be there for a long time. Get there

early if possible.

### 3 Guided Walking Tours – FREE

I actually discovered this on the last 2 days of my trip. There are three tours available to you for FREE, though tipping is encouraged if you have it on hand. The volunteers don't get paid and live on tips. I took two tours and gave her 10 euros in total though many people gave some change. Give whatever you can afford. There is the Left Bank Latin Quarter Tour, The Right Bank Paris Landmarks Tour and the Notre Dame & The Heart of Paris tours. Two are 90mins and one is 60mins. One word: Awesome. All tours are in English.

At the end of the tour they give you a special package with all kinds of deals and you have passes to cut in line for certain tourist attractions. I'd say do these tours at the beginning of your trip to take advantage of all the deals they give you! For more information: [www.discoverwalks.com](http://www.discoverwalks.com). They will take a picture of the group so you'll end up with a free photo to download from their website!

### General Tips

I recommend doing as much walking as possible. I found a lot of places just by walking all over the place. Had I taken the metro everywhere I would have missed some great discoveries! Venture down side streets and less touristy areas if you are feeling adventurous.

### Internet Tips

If you are not blessed with free internet where you are staying (I wasn't!), Starbucks is the only place I found which offered free Wifi though

I had a lot of issues and couldn't always connect. Bring a Mac or your Ipad if you have one. Windows will give you trouble. Now mind you, there could be other spots but I didn't find any. I purchased a coffee for 2.50 euros and they hand you a card with a login and password which is good for 30mins. I usually ask for 2 and they'll give them to me. I did on a couple of days only as I couldn't usually connect but if you are on a really tight budget you might want to try and go to Hostels and ask them if you can hook up there free.

Charles de Gaulle Airport also allows 15 free minutes of Wifi!

### Vegetarianism in Paris

Paris is not very vegan friendly at all, not even very vegetarian friendly either and the tour guide even said it. Unless you want to hunt down some veggie restaurants, pay lots of money and run around to find them, you'll have to make due. Or pack food for the whole day and cook your dinners. I never found tofu, not even in a big grocery store. I rarely had the internet so I couldn't look things up and had to resort to basic foods at the grocery store or become vegetarian instead of vegan. As I said earlier, I treated myself to an amazing vegan Ethiopian meal but I was not willing to spend 20 euros a night on dinners. For hardcore vegans, make sure to be prepared. For those of us who are a bit more flexible, you might have to eat a little cheese to keep you going, as there isn't much else to give you protein unless you are prepared to spend a lot of money or travel around to find things. Even ethnic restaurants (which many are generally veggie friendly) had little to no vegetarian dishes. Crazy, I know. I've made some avocado sandwiches which kept me going but there are only so many of those I want to eat.