

TRANSPORT

Few roads don't lead to Paris, one of the most visited destinations on earth. Practically every major airline flies through it, and most European train tracks and bus routes cross it.

As for getting around – easy! The metro system is vast, efficient and spans every pocket of Paris. Buses are more scenic but can be slowed by traffic, while getting to know the many different routes is an art in itself.

For those who prefer a spot of fresher air in their lungs, or who simply want to make getting from A to B a historical and aesthetic feast in itself, walking and Rollerblading are serious options. With city sights spread across a distance no greater than 10km, the major places of interest are pleasantly walkable. That is, of course, if Paris' innovative, highly praised communal bicycle scheme, Vélib' (opposite), doesn't tempt you into some footloose and fancy-free pedal-powered action.

Book flights, tours and train tickets online at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR

Most international airlines fly through Paris; for flight, route and carrier info contact **Aéroports de Paris** (☎ 39 50, from abroad +33 1 70 36 39 50; www.aeroportsdeparis.fr).

top picks

ONLINE TICKET RESOURCES

No great deal to be struck going straight to the airline website? See what these online airline ticketing resources throw up.

- **Anyway** (www.anyway.fr, in French)
- **Bargain Holidays** (www.bargainholidays.com)
- **Cheap Flights** (www.cheapflights.co.uk)
- **easyvols** (www.easyvols.com, in French)
- **ebookers** (www.ebookers.com)
- **e-mondial** (www.e-mondial.com, in French)
- **Go Voyages** (www.govoyages.com, in French)
- **Last Minute** (www.lastminute.com)
- **Opodo** (www.opodo.com)
- **Travelocity** (www.travelocity.com)
- **Voyages SNCF** (www.voyages-sncf.com, in French)

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Airports

Paris is served by **Aéroport d'Orly** and **Aéroport Roissy Charles de Gaulle**, both well linked by public transport to central Paris. More of a trek is **Aéroport de Beauvais**, which handles charter and some budget carriers, including Ryanair and Central Wings.

ORLY

The older, smaller of Paris' two major airports, **Aéroport d'Orly** (ORY; Map pp78–9; ☎ 39 50, from abroad +33 1 70 36 39 50; www.aeroportsdeparis.fr), is 18km south of the city. Its two terminals, Orly Ouest (Orly West) and Orly Sud (Orly South), are linked by a free shuttle bus service that continues to/from the airport car parks and RER C station **Pont de Rungis-Aéroport d'Orly** (see boxed text, p390); the Orlyval automatic metro links both terminals with the RER B station **Antony** (see boxed text, p390).

Need to get from Orly to Roissy Charles de Gaulle (or vice versa)? See [below](#).

ROISSY CHARLES DE GAULLE

Aéroport Roissy Charles de Gaulle (CDG; ☎ 39 50, from abroad +33 1 70 36 39 50; www.aeroportsdeparis.fr), 30km northeast of central Paris in the suburb of Roissy, has three *aérogares* (terminals) – aptly numbered 1, 2 and 3 – and two train stations served by commuter trains on RER line B3: **Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 1** (CDG1), which serves terminals 1 and 3, and the sleek **Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 2** (CDG2) for terminal 2. A free shuttle bus links the terminals with the train stations.

To get to/from Charles de Gaulle and Orly, take the RER line B3 to the Antony stop then pick up the Orlyval automatic metro (adult/child four to ten years €9.30/4.65) or hop

aboard the **Air France shuttle bus 3** (adult/child 2-11yr €16/8; ☎ 6am or 7am–10.30pm) linking the two airports. Both journeys take an hour, as does a taxi (€50 to €60). See p390.

BEAUVAIS

Charter companies and Ryanair, Central Wings and various other budget airlines land/take off at **Aéroport Paris-Beauvais** (BVA; ☎ 0 892 682 066; www.aeroportbeauvais.com), 75km north of central Paris.

BICYCLE

Two-wheeling has never been so good in the city of romance thanks to Vélib' (a crunching of *vélo*, meaning bike, and *liberté*, meaning freedom), a self-service bike scheme whereby you pick up a pearly-grey bike for peanuts from one roadside Vélib' station, pedal wherever you're going, and park it right outside at another.

A runaway success since its launch in 2007, Vélib' (☎ 01 30 79 79 30; www.velib.paris.fr; day/week/year subscription €1/5/29, bike hire 1st/2nd/3rd & each additional half-hr free/€2/4) has revolutionised how Parisians get around. Its 1451 *stations Vélib'* across the city – one every 300m – sport 20-odd bike stands a head (at the last count there were 20,600 bicycles in all flitting around Paris) and are accessible around the clock.

To get a bike, you need a Vélib' account: One- and seven-day subscriptions can be done on the spot at any station with any major credit card providing it has a microchip and pin number (be warned North Americans!).

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor transport generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

BIKES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bicycles are not allowed on the metro except on line 1 on Sunday and public holidays. You can, however, take your bicycle to the suburbs on some RER lines on weekdays before 6.30am, between 9am and 4.30pm, after 7pm, and all day on the weekend and on public holidays. More lenient rules apply to SNCF commuter services. Contact SNCF (p395) for details.

As deposit you'll need to pre-authorise a direct debit of €150, all except €35 of which is debited if your bike is not returned or is reported as stolen). If the station you want to return your bike to is full, swipe your card across the multilingual terminal to get 15 minutes for free to find another station. Bikes are geared to cyclists aged 14 and over, and are fitted with gears, antitheft lock with key, reflective strips and front/rear lights. Bring your own helmet though!

For more information on cycling in Paris, and a list of rental outlets where you can rent wheels for longer periods of time, see p320. Guided bicycle tours are listed on p406.

BOAT

For pleasure cruises on the Seine, Canal St-Martin and Canal de l'Ourcq, see p406.

For a more flexible, hop-on-and-off approach, sail with the **Compagnie de Batobus** (☎ 08 25 05 01 01; www.batobus.com; adult 1-/2-/3-day pass €12/14/17, student €8/9/11, child 2-16yr €6/7/8;

GETTING INTO TOWN

Getting into town is straightforward and inexpensive thanks to a fleet of public-transport options, listed under airport headings. Bus drivers sell tickets.

Pricier, door-to-door alternatives include taxi (€40 to €50 between central Paris and Orly, €40 to €60 to/from Charles de Gaulle, €110 to €150 to/from Beauvais; see p395 for taxi telephone numbers); or a private minibus shuttle such as **Allô Shuttle** (☎ 01 34 29 00 80; www.alloshuttle.com), **Paris Airports Service** (☎ 01 55 98 10 80; www.parisairportservice.com) or **PariShuttle** (☎ 01 53 39 18 18; www.parishuttle.com). Count on around €25 per person (€40 between 8pm and 6am) for Orly or Charles de Gaulle and €150 for one to four people to/from Beauvais. Book in advance and allow ample time for other pick-ups and drop-offs.

Aéroport d'Orly

Unless noted otherwise, these options to/from Orly call at both terminals.

Air France bus 1 (☎ 08 92 35 08 20; www.cars-airfrance.com; adult single/return €9/14; 🕒 6am–11.30pm from Orly, 5.45am–11pm from Invalides) This *navette* (shuttle bus) runs every 15 minutes to/from the eastern side of Gare Montparnasse (Map pp124–5; 30 to 45 minutes) and Aéroport des Invalides (Map pp128–9; 30 to 45 minutes) in the 7e. On the way into the city, passengers without baggage stowed in the coach hold can ask to get off at metro Porte d'Orléans (Map pp78–9) or metro Duroc (Map pp128–9).

Jetbus (☎ 01 69 01 00 09; adult/under 5yr €5.70/free; 🕒 6.20am–11.10pm from Orly, 6.15am–10.30am from Paris) Jetbus runs every 15 to 25 minutes to/from metro Villejuif Louis Aragon (Map pp78–9; 55 minutes), a bit south of the 13e on the city's southern fringe, from where a metro/bus ticket gets you into town.

Noctilien bus 31 (☎ 08 92 68 77 14, 08 92 68 41 14 in English; adult/4–9yr €6/3; 🕒 12.30am–5.30pm) Part of the RATP's night service, Noctilien bus 31 links Gare de Lyon (Map pp158–9), place d'Italie (Map pp162–3) and Gare d'Austerlitz (Map pp158–9) with Orly-Sud. It runs every hour and journey time is 45 minutes to an hour.

Orlybus (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–11yr €6.10/3.05; 🕒 6am–11.50pm from Orly, 5.35am–11.25pm from Paris) This RATP bus runs every 15 to 20 minutes between both terminals and metro Denfert-Rochereau (Map pp78–9; 30 minutes) in the 14e, making several stops in the eastern 14e en route.

Orlyval & RER B (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–10yr €9.30/4.65; 🕒 6am–11pm) From either terminal take the Orlyval automatic rail to the RER B station Antony, then RER B4 north (35 to 40 minutes to Châtelet, every four to 12 minutes). Orlyval tickets are valid for the subsequent RER and metro journey.

RATP bus 183 (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–9yr €1.50/0.75 or 1 metro/bus ticket; 🕒 6am–9.40pm from Orly, 5.35am–8.35pm from Porte de Choisy) The cheapest means of getting to/from Orly Sud, this slow public bus links the South Terminal with metro Porte de Choisy (Map pp78–9; one hour), on the southern edge of the 13e, every 35 minutes.

RER C & shuttle (☎ 08 90 36 10 10; adult/4–10yr €6/4.25; 🕒 5.30am–11.50pm) From the airport, hop aboard an airport shuttle bus (every 15 to 30 minutes) to the RER station Pont de Rungis-Aéroport d'Orly, then RER C2 train to

🕒 10am–9.30pm May–Aug, 10am–7pm Sep–mid-Nov & mid-Mar–Apr, 10.30am–4.30pm mid-Nov–mid-Dec & Feb–mid-Mar, 10.30am–5pm mid-Dec–Jan). Its fleet of glassed-in trimarans dock at small piers along the Seine and tickets are sold at each stop or tourist offices. For those keen to combine boat with bus, its Paris à la Carte deal allows two/three consecutive days of unlimited travel on Batobus boats and Open Tour buses (p407) for €37/40. Boats depart every 15 to 30 minutes from various stops:

Champs-Élysées (Map pp140–1; Port des Champs-Élysées, 8e; 🚶 Champs-Élysées Clemenceau)

Eiffel Tower (Map pp132–3; Port de la Bourdonnais, 7e; 🚶 Champ de Mars-Tour Eiffel)

Hôtel de Ville (Map pp98–9; quai de l'Hôtel de Ville, 4e; 🚶 Hôtel de Ville)

Jardin des Plantes (Map pp110–11; quai St-Bernard, 5e; 🚶 Jussieu)

Musée d'Orsay (Map pp128–9; quai de Solferino, 7e; 🚶 Musée d'Orsay)

Musée du Louvre (Map p86; quai du Louvre, 1er; 🚶 Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre)

Notre Dame (Map pp110–11; quai de Montebello, 5e; 🚶 St-Michel)

St-Germain des Prés (Map pp116–17; quai Malaquais, 6e; 🚶 St-Germain des Prés)

Paris' Gare d'Austerlitz (50 minutes). Coming from Paris, be sure to get the shuttle at Pont de Rungis that goes to the correct terminal.

Aéroport Roissy Charles de Gaulle

Air France bus 2 (☎ 08 92 35 08 20; www.cars-airfrance.com; single/return €13/18; 🕒 5.45am–11pm) Links the airport every 15 minutes with the Arc de Triomphe outside 1 av Carnot, 17e (Map pp140–1; 35 to 50 minutes) and the Palais des Congrès de Paris, 17e (Map pp144–5; 35 to 50 minutes).

Air France bus 4 (☎ 08 92 35 08 20; www.cars-airfrance.com; single/return €14/22; 🕒 7am–9pm from CDG, 6.30am–9.30pm from Paris) Links the airport every 30 minutes with Gare de Lyon (Map pp158–9; 45 to 55 minutes) and Gare Montparnasse (Map pp124–5; 45 to 55 minutes).

Noctilien night bus (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–9yr €7.50/3.75; 🕒 12.30am–5.30pm) Part of the RATP night service, Noctilien buses 120, 121 (linking Montparnasse, Châtelet, Gare du Nord) and 140 (linking Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est) go to Roissy-Charles de Gaulle hourly.

RATP bus 350 (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–9yr €4.50/2.25 or 3 metro/bus tickets; 🕒 5.45am–7pm each direction) Links Aérograres 1 and 2 with Gare de l'Est (Map pp152–3; one hour, every 30 minutes) and Gare du Nord (Map pp152–3; one hour, every 30 minutes).

RATP bus 351 (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult/4–9yr €4.50/2.25 or 3 metro/bus tickets; 🕒 7am–9.30pm from the airport, 8.30am–8.20pm from Paris) Links the eastern side of place de la Nation (Map pp78–9) with Roissy-Charles de Gaulle (55 minutes, every 30 minutes).

RER B (☎ 08 90 36 10 10; adult/4–11yr €8.20/5.80; 🕒 5am–midnight) RER line B3 links CDG1 and CDG2 with the city (30 minutes; every 10 to 15 minutes). To get to the airport take any RER line B train whose four-letter destination code begins with E (eg EIRE) and a shuttle bus (every five to eight minutes) takes you to the correct terminal. Regular metro ticket windows can't always sell RER tickets to the airport so you may have to buy one at the RER station where you board.

Roissybus (☎ 08 92 68 77 14; adult €8.60; 🕒 5.45am–11pm) Direct public bus linking several points at both terminals with rue Scribe, next to Palais Garnier, in the 9e (Map pp148–9; 45 to 60 minutes, every 15 minutes).

Aéroport Paris-Beauvais

Express Bus (☎ car park 08 92 68 20 64, airport 08 92 68 20 66; one way €13) Leaves Parking Pershing (Map pp144–5), west of the Palais des Congrès de Paris, three hours before flight departures (board 15 minutes before) and leaves the airport 20 to 30 minutes after arrivals, dropping passengers south of the Palais des Congrès on place de la Porte Maillot (Map pp144–5). Journey time is one to 1¼ hours and tickets can be purchased up to 24 hours in advance online (<http://ticket.aeroportbeauvais.com>), at the airport from **Ryanair** (☎ 03 44 11 41 41) and at a kiosk in the carpark. Only plane ticket holders can board the bus, so leave the farewell troops at home.

BUS

Local Buses

Paris' bus system, operated by RATP (see p393), runs from 5.45am to 8.30pm Monday to Saturday; after that another 20 lines continue until 12.30am. Services are drastically reduced on Sunday and public holidays, when buses run from 7am to 8.30pm. Among many *service en soirée* (evening service) routes – distinct from the Noctilien overnight services described on **right** – are route 26 between the Gare St-Lazare and Cours de Vincennes via Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est; route 38 linking Gare du Nord, Châtelet and Porte

d'Orléans via Blvd St-Michel; route 92 from Gare Montparnasse to place Charles de Gaulle and back via Alma Marceau; and route 95 between Porte de Montmartre and Porte de Vanves via Opéra and St-Germain. The same fares and conditions apply on evening routes as for regular daytime services. Most evening routes finish at around midnight.

Night Buses

Night buses pick up the traffic after the last metro (around 1am Sunday to Thursday, 2.15am Friday and Saturday). Buses depart hourly from 12.30am to 5.30pm. The RATP runs 42 night bus lines on its improved

VOGUE

That's the name of Paris' brand-spanking-new river metro (*métro fluvial*), set to sail along the Seine from the end of June 2008 for an initial two-year trial period.

Navettes (shuttle boats) will yo-yo between Gare d'Austerlitz (Map pp162–3) and the École Vétérinaire de Maisons Alfort, southeast of central Paris in the Val de Marne – a 40-minute journey door to door – and will initially stop at Bibliothèque Nationale de François Mitterrand, 13e (Map pp162–3), Bercy, 12e (Map pp158–9) and Port d'Ivry (Map pp78–9). Boats will run every 20 minutes (every 30 minutes between 10am and 5pm) from 7am to 8.30pm Monday to Friday, and every 30 minutes from 10am to 8pm Saturday and Sunday. One-week Navigo Découverte travel passes will be valid aboard; otherwise pay €3 for a single fare.

Noctilien network (www.noctilien.fr has information, maps and itineraries in English), including direct or semidirect services out to the suburbs. The services pass through the main *gares* (train stations) and cross the major axes of the city before leading out to the suburbs. Many go through Châtelet (rue de Rivoli and Blvd Sébastopol). Look for blue N or Noctilien signs at bus stops. There are two circular lines within Paris (the N01 and N02) that link four main train stations, St-Lazare, Gare de l'Est, Gare de Lyon, Montparnasse (but not Châtelet), as well as popular nightspots Bastille, the Champs-Élysées, Pigalle and St-Germain.

The buses are equipped with security surveillance systems linked to local police, and RATP staff members are posted at major points to help passengers. Do remain alert, however, and watch your bags and pockets – especially on weekends when the post-drinking crowd circulates.

Noctilien services are free if you have a Mobilis or Paris Visite (p394) pass for the zones in which you are travelling. Otherwise you pay a certain number of standard €1.50 metro tickets, depending on the length of your journey: the driver can sell you tickets and will explain how many you need to get to your destination.

Tickets & Fares

Short bus rides embracing one or two bus zones cost one metro/bus ticket (€1.50); longer rides require two tickets. Transfers to other buses or the metro are not allowed on the same ticket. Travel to the suburbs costs up to three tickets, depending on the zone. Special tickets valid only on the bus can be purchased from the driver.

Whatever kind of single-journey ticket you have, you must *oblitérer* (cancel) it in the *composteur* (cancelling machine) next to the driver. If you have a Mobilis or Paris Visite (p394) pass, flash it at the driver when you board. Do *not*

cancel the magnetic coupon that accompanies your pass.

Long-Distance Buses

Eurolines (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 43 54 11 99; www.eurolines.fr, in French; 55 rue St-Jacques, 5e; ☎ 9.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm & 2–5pm Sat; 🚗 Cluny-La Sorbonne), an association of more than 30 national and private bus companies that links Paris with points all over Western and Central Europe, Scandinavia and Morocco, can organise ticket reservations and sales. The **Gare Routière Internationale de Paris-Galliéni** (Map pp78–9; ☎ 08 92 89 90 91; 28 av du Général de Gaulle; 🚗 Gallieni), the city's international bus terminal, is in the inner suburb of Bagnolet.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The quickest way of turning your stay in Paris into an uninterrupted series of hassles is to drive. If driving the car doesn't destroy your holiday sense of spontaneity, parking the thing certainly will.

Driving

While driving in Paris is nerve-racking, it's not impossible – except for the faint-hearted or indecisive. The fastest way to get across the city is usually via the Blvd Périphérique (Map pp78–9), the ring road that encircles the city.

Hire

You can get a small car (eg a Renault Twingo or Opel Corsa) for one day for no more than €100, including unlimited mileage and insurance. Most of the larger companies have offices throughout Paris and at airports and main train stations, including **Gare du Nord** (Map pp152–3; 🚗 Gare du Nord). Several are represented at **Aérogare des Invalides** (Map pp128–9; 🚗 Invalides) in the 7e.

Avis (☎ 08 02 05 05 05; www.avis.fr, in French)

Budget (☎ 08 25 00 35 64; www.budget.fr, in French)

Europcar (☎ 08 25 35 83 58; www.europcar.fr, in French)

Hertz (☎ 08 25 88 92 65; www.hertz.fr)

National Citer (☎ 08 25 16 12 12; www.citer.fr)

Sixt (☎ 08 20 00 74 98; www.sixt.fr, in French)

Smaller agencies often offer more-reasonable rates and have several branches throughout Paris. Find a complete list in the *Yellow Pages* (www.pagesjaunes.fr, in French) under 'Location d'Automobiles: Tourisme et Utilitaires'.

ADA (☎ 08 25 16 91 69; www.ada.fr, in French) ADA has a dozen branches in Paris including **8e arrondissement** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 42 93 65 13; 72 rue de Rome, 8e; 🚗 Rome) and **11e arrondissement** (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 48 06 58 13; 34 av de la République, 11e; 🚗 Parmentier).

easyCar (www.easycar.com) This budget agency has cars at competitive prices from branches at main train stations including **Montparnasse** (Map pp124–5; Parking Gaité, 33 rue du Commandant René Mouchotte, 15e; 🚗 Gaité). Branches are in underground car parks and are fully automated systems; book in advance and fill in the forms online.

Rent A Car Système (☎ 08 91 70 02 00; www.rentacar.fr, in French) Rent A Car has 16 outlets in Paris, including **Bercy** (Map pp158–9; ☎ 01 43 45 98 99; 79 rue de Bercy, 12e; 🚗 Bercy) and **16e arrondissement** (Map pp132–3; ☎ 01 42 88 40 04; 84 av de Versailles, 16e; 🚗 Mirabeau).

If you've got the urge to look like you've just stepped into (or out of) a black-and-white French film from the 1950s, a motor scooter will fit the bill perfectly.

Free Scoot (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 44 93 04 03; www.free-scoot.com, in French; 144 Blvd Voltaire, 11e; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2–7pm Mon–Fri; 🚗 Voltaire) Rents 50cc scooters per day/24 hours/weekend/week from €30/35/75/145, and 125cc scooters for €45/55/110/245. Prices include third-party insurance as well as two helmets, locks, rain gear and gloves. To rent a 50/125cc scooter you must be at least 21/23 and leave a credit card deposit of €1300/1600. Free Scoot runs a seasonal branch in the **5e arrondissement** (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 44 07 06 72; 63 quai de la Tourneille, 5e; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2–7pm Mon–Sat mid–Apr–mid–Sep; 🚗 Maubert Mutualité).

Parking

In most parts of Paris, street parking costs €1 to €3 an hour and is limited to a maximum of two hours. Municipal public car parks, of which there are 140 in Paris, charge between €1.70 and €2.80 an hour or €20 to €25 per 24 hours. Most open 24 hours.

Parking attendants dispense fines ranging from €11 to €35, depending on the offence

and its gravity, with great abandon. To pay a fine, buy a *timbre amende* (fine stamp) for the amount written on the ticket from any *tabac* (tobacconist), stick a stamp on the pre-addressed coupon and post it in a postbox.

METRO & RER NETWORKS

Paris' underground network, run by RATP (Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens), consists of two separate but linked systems: the Métropolitain, aka the *métro*, with 14 lines and 373 stations (one more will open in 2008 and another in 2010); and the RER (Réseau Express Régional), a network of suburban lines (designated A to E and then numbered) that pass through the city centre. When giving the names of stations in this book, the term 'metro' is used to cover both the Métropolitain and the RER system within Paris proper.

Information

Metro maps of various sizes and degrees of detail are available for free at metro ticket windows; several can also be downloaded for free from the highly informative, comprehensive and useful RATP website (www.ratp.fr).

For information on the metro, RER and bus systems, contact **RATP** (☎ 3246 0 892 693 246; www.ratp.fr, in French; ☎ 7am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat & Sun).

Metro

Each metro train is known by the name of its terminus. On maps and plans each line has a different colour and number (from 1 to 14); Parisians usually refer to the line number.

Signs in metro and RER stations indicate the way to the correct platform for your line. The *direction* signs on each platform indicate the terminus. On lines that split into several branches (like lines 3, 7 and 13), the terminus of each train is indicated on the cars with backlit panels, and often on the increasingly common electronic signs on each platform giving the number of minutes until the next train.

Signs marked *correspondance* (transfer) show how to reach connecting trains. At stations with many intersecting lines, like Châtelet and Montparnasse Bienvenüe, walking from one train to the next can take a long time.

Different station exits are indicated by white-on-blue *sortie* (exit) signs. You can get your bearings by checking the *plan du quartier* (neighbourhood maps) posted at exits.

Each line has its own schedule, but trains usually start at around 5.30am, with the last train beginning its run between 12.35am and 1am (2.15am on Friday and Saturday).

RER

The RER is faster than the metro but the stops are much further apart. Some attractions, particularly those on the Left Bank (eg the Musée d'Orsay, Eiffel Tower and Panthéon), can be reached far more conveniently by the RER than by the metro.

RER lines are known by an alphanumeric combination – the letter (A to E) refers to the line, the number to the spur it will follow somewhere out in the suburbs. As a rule of thumb, even-numbered RER lines head for Paris' southern or eastern suburbs, while odd-numbered ones go north or west. All trains whose four-letter codes (indicated both on the train and on the lightboard) begin with the same letter share the same terminus. Stations served are usually indicated on electronic destination boards above the platform.

Tickets & Fares

The same RATP tickets are valid on the metro, the RER (for travel within the city limits), buses, trams and the Montmartre funicular. A ticket – white in colour and called *un ticket* – costs €1.50 if bought individually and €11.10 for adults (half-price for children aged four to nine years for a *carnet* (book) of 10. Tickets are sold at all metro stations; ticket windows and vending machines accept most credit cards.

One metro/bus ticket lets you travel between any two metro stations (no return journeys) for a period of 1½ hours, no matter how many transfers are required. You can also use it on the RER for travel within zone 1. A single ticket can be used to transfer between buses, but not to transfer from the metro to bus or vice-versa.

Always keep your ticket until you exit from your station; you may be stopped by a *contrôleur* (ticket inspector) and will have to pay a fine (€25 to €50 on the spot or €47 to €72 within two months) if you don't have a valid ticket.

TRAVEL PASSES

If you're staying a week or more, the cheapest and easiest way to use public transport in Paris is to get a combined travel pass that allows unlimited travel on the metro, RER and buses for a week, a month or a year. You can get passes for travel in two to eight urban and suburban

zones but, unless you'll be using the suburban commuter lines extensively, the basic ticket valid for zones 1 and 2 should be sufficient.

The Navigo system (www.navigo.fr, in French), like London's Oyster or Hong Kong's Octopus cards, provides you with a refillable weekly, monthly or yearly unlimited pass that you can recharge at Navigo machines in most metro stations; swipe the card across the electronic panel as you go through the turnstiles. Standard Navigo passes, available to anyone with an address in Paris, are free but take up to three weeks to be issued; ask at the ticket counter for a form. Otherwise pay €5 for a Navigo Découverte, issued on the spot but – unlike the Navigo pass – not replaceable if lost or stolen. Both passes require a passport photo and can be recharged for periods of one week or more.

A weekly ticket (*coupon hebdomadaire*) pass costs €16.30 for zones 1 and 2 and is valid from Monday to Sunday. It can be purchased from the previous Thursday until Wednesday; from Thursday weekly tickets are available for the following week only. Even if you're in Paris for three or four days, it may work out cheaper than buying carnets and will certainly cost less than buying a daily Mobilis or Paris Visite pass (see below). The monthly ticket (*coupon mensuel*; €53.50 for zones 1 and 2) begins on the first day of each calendar month; you can buy one from the 20th of the preceding month. Both are sold in metro and RER stations from 6.30am to 10pm and at some bus terminals.

TOURIST PASSES

The Mobilis and Paris Visite passes are valid on the metro, RER, SNCF's suburban lines (*opposite*), buses, night buses, trams and Montmartre funicular railway. No photo is needed, but write your card number on the ticket. Passes are sold at larger metro and RER stations, SNCF offices in Paris, and the airports.

The Mobilis card coupon allows unlimited travel for one day in two/three/four/five/six zones and costs €5.60/7.50/9.30/12.50/15.90. Buy it at any metro, RER or SNCF station in the Paris region. Depending on how many times you plan to hop on/off the metro in a day, a *carnet* might work out cheaper.

Paris Visite allows unlimited travel (including to/from airports) as well as discounted entry to certain museums and other discounts and bonuses. Passes are valid for either three, five or eight zones. The zone 1 to 3 pass costs €8.50/14/19/27.50 for one/two/three/five days. Children aged four to 11 years pay €4.25/7/9.50/13.75.

TAXI

The *prise en charge* (flagfall) is €2.10. Within the city limits, it costs €0.82 per kilometre for travel between 10am and 5pm Monday to Saturday (*Tarif A*; white light on meter). At night (5pm to 10am), on Sunday from 7am to midnight, and in the inner suburbs the rate is €1.10 per km (*Tarif B*; orange light on meter). Travel in the outer suburbs is at *Tarif C*, €1.33 per kilometre. There's a €2.75 surcharge for taking a fourth passenger, but drivers often refuse for insurance reasons. The first piece of baggage is free; additional pieces over 5kg cost €1 extra. When tipping, round up to the nearest €1.

Flagging down one of Paris' 15,500-odd licensed taxis can be hard, particularly after 1am. Some 'freelance' (illegal) taxis nip around town but are not organised (like minicabs are in London) and offer no guarantee on price or safety.

To order a taxi, call Paris' **central taxi switchboard** (☎ 01 45 30 30 30, passengers with reduced mobility 01 47 39 00 91; ♿ 24hrs) or reserve online with **Alpha Taxis** (☎ 01 45 85 85 85; www.alpha-taxis.com), **Taxis Bleus** (☎ 01 49 36 29 48, 08 91 70 10 10; www.taxis-bleus.com) or **Taxis G7** (☎ 01 47 39 47 39; www.taxisg7.fr, in French).

TRAIN

Suburban

The RER and the commuter lines of the SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer; ☎ 08 91 36 20 20, 08 91 67 68 69 for timetables; www.sncf.fr) serve suburban destinations outside the city limits (ie zones 2 to 8). Purchase your ticket *before* you board the train or you won't be able to get out of the station when you arrive. You are not allowed to pay the additional fare when you get there.

If you are issued with a full-sized SNCF ticket for travel to the suburbs, validate it in one of the time-stamp pillars *before* you board the train. You may also be given a *contremarque magnétique* (magnetic ticket) to get through any metro-/RER-type turnstiles on the way to/from the platform. If you are travelling on a Mobilis or Paris Visite (*opposite*) pass, do *not* punch the magnetic coupon in one of the time-stamp machines. Most but not all RER/SNCF tickets purchased in the suburbs for travel to the city allow you to continue your journey by metro. For some destinations, tickets can be purchased at any metro ticket window; for others you have to go to an RER station on the line you need to buy a ticket.

Mainline & International

Thanks to very fast TGV (*train à grande vitesse*) trains, of which the French are inordinately proud, many of the most exciting and scenic cities in provincial France are all within a few hours of the capital from one of six major train stations, each with its own metro station: Gare d'Austerlitz (13e), Gare de l'Est (10e), Gare de Lyon (12e), Gare du Nord (10e), Gare Montparnasse (15e) and Gare St-Lazare (8e). Each station handles passenger traffic to different parts of France and Europe. Information for **SNCF mainline services** (☎ 36 35, 08 92 35 35 35; www.voyages-sncf.com) is available by phone or internet.

The super-speedy **Eurostar** (☎ 08 36 35 35 39; in UK 0875 186 186; www.eurostar.com) links Gare du Nord with London's sizzling new St-Pancras International train station in a lightening two hours and not much longer with dozens of other regional stations in the UK; through-ticketing to/from Paris and 68 regional stations in the UK is now possible. Gare du Nord is likewise the point of departure/terminus for **Thalys** (☎ 36 35, 08 92 35 35 36; www.thalys.com) trains to Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne.

Mainline stations in Paris have left-luggage offices or lockers (*consignes*). They cost €4/7.50/9.50 per 48 hours for a small/medium/large bag, then €5 per day per item. Most left-luggage offices and lockers open from around 6am to 11pm.

TRAM & FUNICULAR

Paris has three tram lines (www.tramway.paris.fr, in French), although the majority of visitors are unlikely to use them: T1 links the northern suburb of St-Denis with Noisy le Sec on RER line E2 via metro Bobigny Pablo Picasso on metro line 5; T2 runs south along the Seine from La Défense to the Issy Val de Seine RER station on line C; and T3 traces a 7.9km-long curve around the southern edge of Paris from Point to Garigliano (15e), through Porte de Versailles (where it links with the T2), Porte d'Orléans, Porte d'Italie and up to Porte d'Ivry. Normal metro tickets and passes remain valid here and function in the same way as on the buses. Buy tickets at automatic machines at each tram stop.

One form of transport that most travellers will use is the Montmartre funicular, which whisks visitors up the southern slope of Butte de Montmartre from square Willette (metro Anvers) to Sacré Cœur.

BUSINESS HOURS

Small businesses are open daily, except Sunday and sometimes Monday. Hours are usually 9am or 10am to 6.30pm or 7pm, often with a midday break from 1pm to 2pm or 2.30pm. Shops that open Monday usually get started late (eg at 11.30am).

Banks usually open from 8am or 9am to between 11.30am and 1pm, and then 1.30pm or 2pm to 4.30pm or 5pm, Monday to Friday or Tuesday to Saturday. Exchange services may end 30 minutes before closing time.

Most post offices open 8am to 7pm weekdays and 8am or 9am till noon on Saturday.

Supermarkets open Monday to Saturday from 8.30/9am to 8pm, though a few now open on Sunday morning as well. Small food shops are mostly closed on Sunday and often Monday too, so Saturday afternoon may be your last chance to stock up on certain types of food (eg cheese) until Tuesday.

Restaurants keep the most convoluted hours of any business in Paris; for details see p228.

Most museums are closed one day a week: usually Monday or Tuesday. Some museums have a weekly *nocturne* in which they remain open until as late as 10pm one night a week, including the Louvre (Wednesday and Friday) and the Musée d'Orsay (Thursday).

CHILDREN

Paris is extraordinarily kid-friendly. Be it playing tag around Daniel Buren's black and white columns at Palais Royal (p88), laughing with puppets in Jardin de Luxembourg (p119), sailing down the Seine (p407) or resting little legs with a city sightseeing tour via one of its two above-ground metro lines (2 and 6), there really does seem to be a cheap childish pleasure around every corner here.

Some restaurants serve a *menu enfant* (set children's menu), usually for children under 12, though often starters or the savoury crêpes served in neighbourhood brasseries are more imaginative (*steak haché* and fries gets tiresome after two days). *Cafétérias* (p226) are a good place to bring kids if you just want to feed and water them fast and cheaply, as are French chain restaurants (p229).

Kids aged between six and 12 and keen to cook and consume their own creations can do so at Alef-Bet (p249).

Information

Pariscope and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* (p302) both have decent 'Enfants' sections covering the week's shows, theatre performances and circuses for kids. Online see the exhaustive site, www.cityjunior.com (in French).

The newspaper *Libération* (p54) produces an English translation of its bimonthly supplement *Paris Mômes* (www.parismomes.fr, in French) called *Paris with Kids*. It has listings and other useful information aimed at kids up to age 12; focusing on the 'unusual' is its philosophy.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan includes useful advice for travelling parents.

Sights & Activities

Many museums organise educational, fun-packed *ateliers enfants* (kids' workshops) for children from aged four or six and upwards. Sessions cost €3 to €10, last a couple of hours, and must be booked in advance; some are in English. Favourites include hands-on art workshops at Les Arts Décoratifs (p84), Musée de la Halle St-Pierre (p171), Musée d'Orsay (p130), Palais de Tokyo (p135) and Centre Pompidou (p88); money- and medal-making at the Musée de la Monnaie de Paris (p120); meeting marine life at the Centre de la Mer (p109); learning about animals with activities and film at the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle (p113); and calligraphy, Arab music and mosaics at the Institut du Arabe Monde (p112).

Building an Eiffel Tower, Parisian church or entire village from thousands of miniature wooden planks is what kids do at the innovative *Centre Kapla* (Map pp152–3; ☎ 01 43 56 13 38; www.kapla.com/centre_kapla.html; 27 rue de Montreuil, 11e; sessions €10; ☎ 10.30am–6pm Wed, Sat & school holidays; 📍 Faïdherbe-Chaligny). It runs three 1½ hour building sessions daily; book in advance.

Around Paris, the mesmerising equestrian displays and stable visits at Versailles (p360) and Chantilly (p373) make magical half-day trips; the Disney (p384) and Astérix theme parks (p385) need at least a full day.

See the Neighbourhoods chapter for details on the following suggestions:

Children's Playgrounds Port de Plaisance de Paris-Arsenal (Map pp158–9; 4e; 📍 Bastille); Jardin du Luxembourg (Map pp116–17; 6e; 📍 Luxembourg); Square Willette (Map p169; Montmartre, 18e; 📍 Anvers)

CineAqua (Map pp132–3; 2 av des Nations Unies, 16e; 📍 Trocadéro)

Cité de la Musique (Map pp174–5; 221 av Jean Jaurès, 19e; 📍 Porte de Pantin) Saturday-morning educational concerts, music discovery workshops, concerts and shows for children.

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (Map pp174–5; Parc de la Villette, 19e; 📍 Porte de la Villette) Including the Géode, Cinax and planetarium.

Eiffel Tower (Map pp132–3; Parc du Champ de Mars, 7e; 📍 Champ de Mars-Tour Eiffel)

Exploradôme & Jardin d'Acclimatation (Map p178; Bois de Boulogne; 📍 Les Sablons) Interactive science, art and multimedia; plus a funfair to fill a day.

Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes (Map pp110–11; Jardin des Plantes, 5e; 📍 Jussieu or Gare d'Austerlitz) Near the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle.

Musée de la Curiosité et de la Magie (Map pp92–3; 11 rue St-Paul, 4e; 📍 St-Paul) Magic shows.

Palais de la Découverte (Map pp140–1; Champs-Élysées, 8e; 📍 Champs-Élysées Clemenceau)

Parc Zoologique de Paris (Map p177; Bois de Vincennes; 📍 Porte Dorée)

Babysitting

L'Officiel des Spectacles (p302) lists *gardes d'enfants* (baby-sitters) available in Paris.

Au Paradis des Petits (☎ 01 43 65 58 58) From €7 per hour (€10 subscription fee).

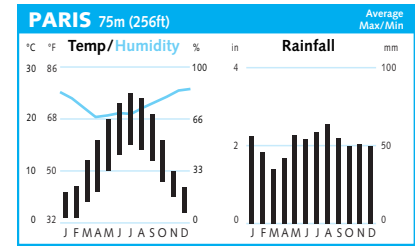
Baby Sitting Services (☎ 01 46 21 33 16) From €6.80 per hour (€11.90 subscription), €60 for 10 hours or one day.

Étudiants de l'Institut Catholique (Map pp116–17; ☎ 01 44 39 60 24; 21 rue d'Assas, 6e; 📍 Rennes) From €7.50 per hour (plus €2 for each session).

Fondation Claude Pompidou (☎ 01 40 13 75 00) Specialises in looking after children with disabilities.

CLIMATE

The Paris basin lies midway between coastal Brittany and mountainous Alsace and is affected by both climates. The Île de France region, of which Paris is the centre, records among the lowest annual precipitation (about



640mm) in the nation, but rainfall is erratic; you're just as likely to be caught in a heavy spring shower or an autumn downpour as in a sudden summer cloudburst. Paris' average yearly temperature is just under 12°C (2°C in January, 19°C in July), but the mercury sometimes drops below zero in winter and can climb into the 30s in the middle of summer.

You can find out the weather forecast in French for the Paris area by calling ☎ 0 892 680 275. The national forecast can be heard on ☎ 0 899 701 234 in French or ☎ 0 899 701 111 in one of 11 different languages. Call charges for either number are €1.35 then €0.35 per minute. Another number (French only) is ☎ 3250 charged at €0.34 per minute. The summary can also be read for free on the website of Météo France (www.meteofrance.com, in French).

COURSES

Cooking

What better place to discover the secrets of *la cuisine française* than in Paris, the capital of gastronomy? Courses are available at different levels and lengths of time and the cost of tuition varies widely. One of the most popular – and affordable – for beginners is the Les Coulisses du Chef **Cours de Cuisine Olivier Berté** (Map pp82–3; ☎ 01 40 26 14 00; www.coursdecuisineparis.com; 2nd fl, 7 rue Paul Lelong, 2e; 📍 Bourse), which offers three-hour courses (adult/12 to 14 years €100/30) at 10.30am from Wednesday to Saturday with an additional class from 6pm to 9pm on Friday. 'Carnets' of five/20 courses cost €440/1500.

Much more expensive are the **Paris Cooking Classes with Patricia Wells** (www.patriciawells.com; US\$5000) led by the incomparable American food critic and author at her cooking studio in rue Jacob, 6e. The class runs from Monday to Friday, is limited to seven participants and includes market visits, tastings, local transport and daily lunch. See the boxed text on p213. For

information about getting the kids in front of the stove, see p249.

Other cooking schools in Paris include the following:

Coin-Cuisine (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 45 79 01 40; www.coin-cuisine.fr, in French; 110 rue du Théâtre, 15e; 🕒 M Av Émile Zola) Courses of various themes and levels lasting from one to four hours (€16 to €80).

Cook'n with Class (Map p169; ☎ 06 31 73 62 77; www.cookwithclass.com; 21 rue Custine, 18e; 🕒 M Château Rouge) Morning/evening/full-day classes available for €135/135/200.

École Le Cordon Bleu (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 53 68 22 50; www.cordonbleu.edu; 8 rue Léon Delhomme, 15e; 🕒 M Vaugirard or Convention) Dating back to 1895, the Cordon Bleu school has professional courses as well as one-day themed workshops (€160) on topics like terrines and *viennoiserie* (baked goods), and two- (€299) and four-day courses (€869) on classic and modern sauces and the secrets of bread and pastry making.

École Ritz Escoffier (Map pp82–3; ☎ 01 43 16 30 50; www.ritzescOFFIER.com; 15 place Vendôme, 1er 🕒 Concorde) This prestigious cooking school is based in what is arguably Paris' finest hotel (though you also enter from 38 rue Cambon, 1er). A four-hour Saturday themed workshop (petits fours, truffles, carving fruit and vegetables, pairing food and wine etc) costs €135; a two-day introductory course is €920.

Language

All manner of French-language courses, lasting from two weeks to a full academic year, are available in Paris, and many places begin new courses every month or so.

Alliance Française (Map pp116–17; ☎ 01 42 84 90 00; www.alliancefr.org; 101 Blvd Raspail, 6e; ☎ 8.30am–7pm Mon & Tue, 8.30am–6pm Wed–Fri; 🕒 M St-Placide) French courses (minimum two weeks) at all levels begin every two weeks; registration (€55) takes place five days before. *Intensif* courses meet for four hours a day, start at 9am and 1.30pm and cost from €400/700 for two weeks/one month; *extensif* courses involve three hours of class for three days a week, start at the same two times and cost from €176/332.

Cours de Langue et Civilisation Françaises de la Sorbonne (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 44 10 77 00, 01 40 46 22 11; www.ccfS-sorbonne.fr; Galerie Richelieu, office C391, 17 rue de la Sorbonne, 5e; ☎ 10am–noon & 2–4pm Mon–Fri; 🕒 M Cluny La Sorbonne or Maubert Mutualité) The Sorbonne's prestigious French Language and Civilisation Course has courses for all levels. A four-week summer course starts at €530, while 20 hours a week of lectures and tutorials costs €1300 per semester. Instructors take a very academic (though solid) approach to language teaching.

Eurocentres (Map pp116–17; ☎ 01 40 46 72 00; www.eurocentres.com; 13 passage Dauphine, 6e; ☎ 8.15am–6pm Mon–Fri; 🕒 M Odéon) Intensive courses lasting two/four weeks with 10 to 14 participants cost from €660/1272. New courses begin every two, three or four weeks.

Inlingua (Map pp128–9; ☎ 01 45 51 46 60; www.inlingua-paris.com; 109 rue de l'Université, 7e; ☎ 7.30am–8.15pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1.30pm Sat; 🕒 M Invalides) Individual and group lessons for all levels, from 'first contacts' through to that linguistic state we all aspire to, 'full control'. It has seven centres, including in La Défense and Versailles. French lessons for kids too.

Institut Parisien de Langue et de Civilisation Françaises (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 40 56 09 53; www.institut-parisien.com; 2nd fl, 29 rue de Lisbonne, 8e; ☎ 8.30am–5pm Mon–Fri; 🕒 M Monceau) Four-week courses with a maximum of 10 students per class cost €148/222/296/370 for 10/15/20/25 hours a week plus an enrolment fee of €40.

Langue Onze (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 43 38 22 87; www.langueonzeParis.com; 15 rue Gambey, 11e; ☎ 11am–5pm Mon–Fri; 🕒 M Parmentier) Well-received independent language school with two-/four-week intensive courses of four hours' instruction a day for €390/630; evening classes (four hours a week) start at €175 for four weeks. Classes have a maximum of nine students.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

Duty-free shopping within the EU was abolished in 1999; you cannot, for example, buy tax-free goods in, say, France and take them to the UK. However, you can still enter an EU country with duty-free items from countries *outside* the EU (eg Australia, the USA) where the usual allowances apply: 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 250g of loose tobacco; 2L of still wine and 1L of spirits; 50g of perfume and 250cc of eau de toilette.

Do not confuse these with *duty-paid* items (including alcohol and tobacco) bought at normal shops in another EU country (eg Spain or Germany) and brought into France, where certain goods might be more expensive. Here allowances are generous: 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars, 400 small cigars or 1kg of loose tobacco; and 10L of spirits (more than 22% alcohol by volume), 20L of fortified wine or *aperitif*, 90L of wine or 110L of beer.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Museums, the national rail service SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer), ferry companies and other institutions give dis-

counts to those aged under 26 (ie holders of the International Youth Travel Card, IYTC), students with an International Student Identity Card (ISIC; age limits may apply) and *le troisième âge* (usually those aged over 60). Look for the words *tarif réduit* (reduced rate) or *demi-tarif* (half-price tariff) and then ask if you qualify. Those under 18 years of age get an even wider range of discounts, including free admission to the *musées nationaux* (national museums). Some 22 museums are free on the first Sunday of every month, though not necessarily year-round. For specifics, see p102.

The **Paris Museum Pass** (www.parismuseumpass.fr; 2/4/6 days €30/45/60) is valid for entry to some 38 venues in Paris – including the Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay as well as the Musée du Quai Branly and Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine. Outside the city limits but still within the Île de France region, it will get you into another 22 places, including the basilica at St-Denis (p182) and parts of the chateaux at Versailles (p360) and Fontainebleau (p368). The pass is conveniently available online as well as from the participating venues, branches of the Paris Convention & Visitors Bureau (p411), Fnac outlets (p302), RATP (Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens) information desks and major metro stations.

ELECTRICITY

France runs on 220V at 50Hz AC. Plugs are the standard European type with two round pins. French outlets often have an earth (ground) pin in which case you may have to have a French adapter to use a two-pin European plug. The best place for adapters and other electrical goods is the Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville (p203) department store near Hôtel de Ville or any branch of the electronics chain **Darty** (☎ 0 821 082 082; www.darty.fr, in French; ☎ 10am–7.30pm Mon–Sat), which has a **République branch** (Map pp92–3) 1 av de la République, 11e; 🕒 République) and a **Ternes branch** (Map pp144–5; 8 av des Ternes, 17e; 🕒 Ternes).

EMBASSIES

French Embassies & Consulates

Almost all of the French embassies and consulates listed following have information posted on the internet at www.france.diplomatique.fr.

Australia embassy (☎ 02-6216 0100; www.ambafrance-au.org; 6 Perth Ave, Yarralumla, ACT 26000); consulate (☎ 02-9268 2400; www.ambafrance-au.org; 26th fl, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Belgium embassy (☎ 02-548 8700; www.ambafrance-be.org; 65 rue Ducale, 1000 Brussels); consulate (☎ 02-548 8811; www.ambafrance-be.org; 42 Blvd du Régent, 1000 Brussels)

Canada embassy (☎ 613-789 1795; www.ambafrance-ca.org; 42 Sussex Dr, Ottawa, Ont K1M 2C9); consulate (☎ 416-847 1900; www.consulfrance-toronto.org; Suite 2200, 2 Bloor St East, Toronto, Ont M4W 1A8)

Germany embassy (☎ 030-590 03 90 00; www.ambafrance-de.org; Parizer Platz 5, 10117 Berlin); consulate (☎ 069-795 09 60; www.consulatfrance.de/francfort; Zeppellinallee 35 60325 Frankfurt am Main)

Ireland embassy (☎ 01-277 5000; www.ambafrance-ie.org; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Italy embassy (☎ 06-686 011; www.ambafrance-it.org; Piazza Farnese 67, 00186 Rome); consulate (☎ 06-686 011; www.ambafrance-it.org; Via Giulia 251, 00186 Rome)

Netherlands embassy (☎ 070-312 58 00; www.ambafrance-nl.org; Smidsplein 1, 2514 BT The Hague); consulate (☎ 020-530 69 69; www.consulfrance-amsterdam.org; Vijzelgracht 2, 1000 HR Amsterdam)

New Zealand embassy (☎ 04-384 2555; www.ambafrance-nz.org; 13th fl, Rural Bank Bldg, 34-42 Manners St, Wellington)

South Africa embassy Apr–Jan (☎ 012-425 1600; www.ambafrance-rsa.org; 250 Melk St, New Muckleneuk, 0181 Pretoria); embassy Feb–Mar (☎ 021-422 1338; www.ambafrance-za.org; 78 Queen Victoria St, 8001 Cape Town)

Spain embassy (☎ 91-423 8900; www.ambafrance-es.org; Calle de Salustiano Olozaga 9, 28001 Madrid); consulate (☎ 93-270 3000; www.consulfrance-barcelona.org; Ronda Universitat 22b, 08007 Barcelona)

Switzerland embassy (☎ 031-359 2111; www.consulfrance-geneve.org; Schlosshaldenstrasse 46, 3006 Berne); consulate (☎ 01-268 8585; www.consulatfrance-zurich.org; Signastrasse 1, 8008 Zürich)

UK embassy (☎ 020-7073 1000; www.ambafrance-uk.org; 58 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7JT); consulate (☎ 020-7073 1200; www.consulfrance-londres.org; 21 Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2EN)

USA embassy (☎ 202-944 6000; www.ambafrance-us.org; 4101 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007); consulate (☎ 212-606 3600; www.consulfrance-newyork.org; 934 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10021)

Embassies & Consulates in Paris

It's important to realise that your own embassy – the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen – can and cannot do to help you if you're in trouble. In general, it won't be much help if the trouble you're in is even remotely your own fault. Remember that you are bound by French law while visiting Paris. Your embassy will not be sympathetic if you commit a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance, but only if other channels have been exhausted. For example, if you need to get home urgently, a free ticket home is exceedingly unlikely – the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it might assist with getting a new passport, but a loan for onward travel is usually out of the question.

The following is a list of selected embassies and consulates in Paris. For a more complete list, consult the *Pages Jaunes* (Yellow Pages; www.pagesjaunes.fr, in French) under 'Ambassades et Consultats' or the website of the tourist office (www.parisinfo.com).

Australia embassy ([Map pp166–7](#); ☎ 01 40 59 33 00; 4 rue Jean Rey, 15e; 🇲🇵 Bir Hakeim)

Belgium embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 44 09 39 39; 9 rue de Tilsitt, 17e; 🇲🇵 Charles de Gaulle-Étoile)

Canada embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 44 43 29 00; 35 av Montaigne, 8e; 🇲🇵 Franklin D Roosevelt)

Germany embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 53 83 45 00; 13-15 av Franklin D Roosevelt, 8e; 🇲🇵 Franklin D Roosevelt); consulate ([Map pp132–3](#); ☎ 01 53 83 46 70; 28 rue Marbeau, 16e; 🇲🇵 Porte Maillot)

Ireland embassy ([Map pp132–3](#); ☎ 01 44 17 67 00; 4 rue Rude, 16e; 🇲🇵 Argentine)

Italy embassy ([Map pp128–9](#); ☎ 01 49 54 03 00; 47-51 rue de Varenne, 7e; 🇲🇵 Rue du Bac); consulate ([Map pp132–3](#); ☎ 01 44 30 47 00; 5 blvd Émile Augier, 16e; 🇲🇵 La Muette)

Japan embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 48 88 62 00; 7 av Hoche, 8e; 🇲🇵 Courcelles)

Netherlands embassy ([Map pp128–9](#); ☎ 01 40 62 33 00; 7 rue Eblé, 7e; 🇲🇵 St-François Xavier)

New Zealand embassy ([Map pp132–3](#); ☎ 01 45 00 24 11; 7ter rue Léonard de Vinci, 16e; 🇲🇵 Victor Hugo)

South Africa embassy ([Map pp128–9](#); ☎ 01 53 59 23 23; 59 quai d'Orsay, 7e; 🇲🇵 Invalides)

Spain embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 44 43 18 00; 22 av Marceau, 8e; 🇲🇵 Alma-Marceau)

Switzerland embassy ([Map pp128–9](#); ☎ 01 49 55 67 00; 142 rue de Grenelle, 7e; 🇲🇵 Varenne); consulate ([Map pp166–7](#); ☎ 01 45 66 00 80; 13 rue du Laos, 15e)

UK embassy ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 44 51 31 00; 35 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e; 🇲🇵 Concorde); consulate ([Map pp140–1](#); ☎ 01 44 51 31 02; 18bis rue d'Anjou, 8e; 🇲🇵 Concorde)

USA embassy (pp140-1; ☎ 01 43 12 22 22; 2 av Gabriel, 8e; 🇲🇵 Concorde); consulate ([Map pp82-3](#); ☎ 0 810 264 626; 2 rue St-Florentin, 1er; 🇲🇵 Concorde)

EMERGENCY

The following numbers are to be dialled in an emergency. See p403 for hospitals with 24-hour accident and emergency departments.

Ambulance (SAMU; ☎ 15)

EU-wide emergency hotline (☎ 112)

Fire brigade (☎ 18)

Police (☎ 17)

Rape crisis hotline (Viols Femmes Informations; ☎ 0 800 05 95 95; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri)

SOS Helpline (☎ 01 47 23 80 80; ☎ in English 3-11pm daily)

SOS Médecins (☎ 01 47 07 77 77, 24hr house calls 0 820 33 24 24; www.sosmedecins-france.fr)

Urgences Médicales de Paris (Paris Medical Emergencies; ☎ 01 53 94 94 94; www.ump.fr, in French)

Lost Property

All objects found anywhere in Paris – except those picked up on trains or in train stations – are brought to the city's **Bureau des Objets Trouvés** (Lost Property Office; [Map pp166–7](#); ☎ 0 821 00 25 25; www.prefecture-police-paris.interieur.gouv.fr/demarches/article/service_objets_trouves.htm, in French; 36 rue des Morillons, 15e; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-4.30pm Fri; 🇲🇵 Convention), which is run by the Préfecture de Police. Since telephone enquiries are impossible, the only way to find out if a lost item has been located is to go there and fill in the forms in person.

Items lost on the metro are held by **station agents** (☎ 3246; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun) before being sent to the Bureau des Objets Trouvés. Anything found on trains or stations is taken to the lost-property office (usually attached to the left-luggage office) of the relevant station. Phone enquiries (in French) are possible:

Gare d'Austerlitz (☎ 01 53 60 71 98)

Gare de l'Est (☎ 01 40 18 88 73)

Gare de Lyon (☎ 01 53 33 67 22)

Gare du Nord (☎ 01 55 31 58 40)

Gare Montparnasse (☎ 01 40 48 14 24)

Gare St-Lazare (☎ 01 53 42 05 57)

HOLIDAYS

There is at least one public holiday a month in France and, in some years, up to four in the month of May alone. Be aware, though, that unlike in the USA or UK, where public holidays usually fall on (or are shifted to) a Monday, in France a *jour férié* (public holiday) is celebrated strictly on the day on which it falls. Thus if May Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, no provision is made for an extra day off.

The following holidays are observed in Paris:

New Year's Day (Jour de l'An) 1 January

Easter Sunday & Monday (Pâques & Lundi de Pâques) Late March/April

May Day (Fête du Travail) 1 May

Victory in Europe Day (Victoire 1945) 8 May

Ascension Thursday (L'Ascension) May (celebrated on the 40th day after Easter)

Pentecost/Whit Sunday & Whit Monday (Pentecôte & Lundi de Pentecôte) Mid-May to mid-June (Seventh Sunday and Monday after Easter)

Bastille Day/National Day (Fête Nationale) 14 July

Assumption Day (L'Assomption) 15 August

All Saints' Day (La Toussaint) 1 November

Armistice Day/Remembrance Day (Le Onze Novembre) 11 November

Christmas (Noël) 25 December

INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a good idea. There is a wide variety of policies available, so check the small print. EU citizens on public-health insurance schemes should note that they're generally covered by reciprocal arrangements in France.

You may prefer a policy which pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than you having to pay on the spot and then claim it back later. If you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. Ensure that your policy

covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

Paying for your airline ticket with a credit card often provides limited travel accident insurance, and you may be able to reclaim the payment if the operator doesn't deliver. Ask your credit card company what it's prepared to cover.

INTERNET ACCESS

Paris has a surfeit of internet cafés. Among the biggest, best and/or most central:

Baby Connect ([Map pp116–17](#); ☎ 01 40 62 98 00; 56 rue de Babylone, 7e; per 15/30/60min €1/2/4; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat; 🇲🇵 St-François Xavier) Very near La Pagode cinema.

Cyber Cube ([Map pp124–5](#); ☎ 01 56 80 08 08; www.cybercube.fr; 9 rue d'Odessa, 14e; per 15/30min €1/2, per 5/10hr €30/40; ☎ 10am-10pm; 🇲🇵 Montparnasse Bien-venue) One of three branches; expensive but convenient to Gare Montparnasse.

Cyber Latin ([Map pp116–17](#); ☎ 01 42 22 89 35; 35bis rue de Fleurus, 6e; per 15/30/60min €1.25/2.25/4, per 5/10/20hr €17/34/56; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-7.30pm Sat; 🇲🇵 St-Placide) Just west of the Jardin du Luxembourg.

Cyber Square ([Map pp92–3](#); ☎ 01 48 87 82 36; info@cybersquare-paris.com; 1 place de la République; per 5/15/30/60min €0.75/2.30/3.80/6, per 10/20hr €45/76; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat; 🇲🇵 République) This small but convivial place on two levels is entered from passage Vendôme.

Manga Square ([Map p86](#); 28 blvd de Sébastopol, 4e; per 1hr €3, per 5/10 hr €15/27.50; ☎ 1-10pm; 🇲🇵 Les Halles) Groovy cyber café in a shop selling Japanese comic books.

Milk ([Map pp110–11](#); ☎ 0 820 00 10 00; www.milkclub.com; 17 rue Soufflot, 5e; daytime per 1/2/3/5hr €4/7/9/12, night time per 3/10hr €6/13; ☎ 24hr; 🇲🇵 Luxembourg) This branch of a minichain of seven internet cafés, including a big **Les Halles branch** ([Map p86](#); 31 blvd de Sébastopol, 1er; ☎ 24hr; 🇲🇵 Les Halles), is bright, buzzy and open round the clock.

Netvision ([Map pp116–17](#); ☎ 01 43 25 13 90; 10 Gît le Cœur, 6e; per 1min €0.07, 20min €1.40; ☎ 10am-8pm; 🇲🇵 St-Michel) On a quiet street west of the blvd St-Michel.

Phon'net ([Map pp94–5](#); ☎ 01 42 05 10 73; 74 rue de Charonne, 11e; per 1/5/15/30hr €5/16/30/45; ☎ 10am-midnight; 🇲🇵 Charonne or Ledru Rollin)

Taxiphone Internet ([Map p169](#); ☎ 01 42 59 64 14; 2 rue de La Vieuville, 18e; per 5/10/20/30/60min €0.50/1.2/3/4, per 5hr €10; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat; 🇲🇵 Abbesses) One of the few internet cafés in high-rent Montmartre.

Web 46 (Map pp98–9; ☎ 01 40 27 02 89, fax 01 40 27 03 89; 46 rue du Roi de Sicile, 4e; per 15/30/60min €2.50/4/7, per 5hr €29; ☎ 10am–11pm Mon–Fri, 10am–9pm Sat, noon–11pm Sun; (M St-Paul) Pleasant, very well-run café in the heart of the Marais.

Zeidnet (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 44 07 20 15; www.zeidnet.com; 18 rue de la Bûcherie, 5e; per 10/30/60min €1/2.50/4; ☎ 10.30am–11pm; (M Maubert-Mutualité) Small and personal, handy to Notre Dame.

LAUNDRY

There's a *laverie libre-service* (self-service laundrette) around every corner in Paris; your hotel or hostel can point you to one in the neighbourhood. Machines usually cost €3.50 to €4.50 for a small load (around 6kg) and €5.50 to €8 for a larger one (about 10kg). Drying costs €1 for 10 to 12 minutes. Some laundrettes have self-service *nettoyage à sec* (dry-cleaning) machines.

You usually pay at a *monnayeur central* (central control box) – not the machine itself – and push a button that corresponds to the number of the washer or dryer you wish to operate. Some machines don't take notes; come prepared with change for the *séchoirs* (dryers) as well as the *lessive* (laundry powder) and *javel* (bleach) dispensers.

The control boxes are sometimes programmed to deactivate the machines 30 minutes to an hour before closing time.

Among centrally located self-service laundrettes are the following:

C'Clean Laverie (Map pp94–5; 18 rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud, 11e; ☎ 7am–9pm; (M Oberkampf)

Julice Laverie 56 rue de Seine, 6e; ☎ 7am–11pm (Map pp116–17; (M Mabillon); 22 rue des Grands Augustins, 6e; ☎ 7am–9pm (Map pp116–17; (M St-André des Arts)

Lav' Net (Map pp110–11; 88 bis blvd du Port-Royal, 5e; (M Port-Royal)

Laverie Libre Service 7 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1er, near the BVI Paris-Louvre hostel (Map p86; ☎ 7.30am–10pm; (M Louvre-Rivoli); 14 rue de la Corderie, 3e (Map pp92–3; ☎ 8am–9pm, (M République or Temple); 35 rue Ste-Croix la Bretonnerie, 4e (Map pp98–9; ☎ 7am–9pm, (M Hôtel de Ville); 25 rue des Rosiers, 4e (Map pp98–9; ☎ 7.30am–10pm; (M St-Paul); 216 rue St-Jacques, 5e, three blocks southeast of the Panthéon (Map pp110–11; ☎ 7am–10pm; (M Luxembourg) 63 rue Monge, 5e, south of the Arènes de Lutèce (Map pp110–11; ☎ 6.30am–10pm; (M Place Monge) 3 rue de la Montagne Ste-Geneviève & 2 rue Jean de Beauvais, 5e (Map pp110–11; ☎ 7am–11pm; (M Maubert-Mutualité); 116 rue d'Assas, 6e (Map pp116–

17; ☎ 7am–10pm; (M Mabillon); 94 rue du Dessous des Berges, 12e (Map pp162–3; ☎ 7.30am–10pm; (M Bibliothèque); 92 rue des Martyrs, 18e (Map p169; ☎ 7.30am–10pm; (M Abbesses); 4 rue Burq, 18e, west of the Butte de Montmartre (Map p169; ☎ 7.30am–10pm; (M Blanche)

Laverie Libre Service Primus 40 rue du Roi de Sicile, 4e (Map pp98–9; ☎ 7.30am–10pm (M St-Paul); 83 rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud, 11e; ☎ 7.30am–10pm (Map p155; (M Couronnes)

Laverie Miele Libre Service (Map pp94–5; 4 rue de Lappe, 11e; ☎ 7am–10pm; (M Bastille)

Laverie SBS (Map pp152–3); 6 rue des Petites Écuries, 10e; ☎ 7am–10pm; (M Château d'Eau)

Salon Lavoie Sidel (Map p169; 28 rue des Trois Frères, 18e; ☎ 7am–8.50pm; (M Abbesses)

LEGAL MATTERS

Drink Driving

As elsewhere in the EU, the laws in France are very tough when it comes to drinking and driving, and for many years the slogan has been: *'Boire ou conduire, il faut choisir'* (roughly – to make it rhyme in English too – 'To drive or to booze, you have to choose'). The acceptable blood-alcohol limit is 0.05%, and drivers exceeding that amount but still under 0.08% (the limit in the UK and Ireland) face a fine of €135; over 0.08% and it could cost you €4500 (or a maximum of two years in jail). Licences can also be immediately suspended. If you cause an accident while driving under the influence, the fine could be increased to €30,000. And if you cause serious bodily harm or commit involuntary manslaughter, you face 10 years in jail and a fine of up to €150,000.

The Police

Thanks to the Napoleonic Code on which the French legal system is based, the police can search anyone they want to at any time – whether or not there is probable cause.

France has two separate police forces. The Police Nationale, under the command of departmental prefects (and, in Paris, the Préfet de Police), includes the Police de l'Air et des Frontières (PAF; the border police). The Gendarmerie Nationale, a paramilitary force under the control of the Ministry of Defence, handles airports, borders and so on. During times of crisis (eg a wave of terrorist attacks), the army may be called in to patrol public places.

The dreaded *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS) – riot-police heavies to be avoided at all costs – are part of the Police Nationale. You often see hundreds of them, each bigger and butcher than the next and armed with the latest riot gear, at marches or demonstrations. Police with shoulder patches reading 'Police Municipale' are under the control of the local mayor.

The American concept of neighbourhood cops walking their beat or the British bobby giving directions does not exist whatsoever in France; police here are to maintain order, not mingle and smile. If asked a direct question, a French policeman or policewoman will be correct and helpful but not much more; assisting tourists is not part of their job description. If the police stop you for any reason, be polite and remain calm. They have wide powers of search and seizure and, if they take a dislike to you, they may choose to use them all. Be aware that the police can, without any particular reason, decide to examine your passport, visa, *carte de séjour* (residence permit) and so on. Do not challenge them.

French police are very strict about security. Do not leave baggage unattended; they are quite serious when they say that suspicious objects will be summarily blown up. Your bags will be inspected and you will have to pass through security gates not only at airports but also at many public buildings (including certain museums and galleries) throughout the city. If asked to open your bag or backpack for inspection, please do so willingly – it's for your (and our) safety ultimately.

MAPS

The most ubiquitous (and user-friendly) pocket-sized street atlas available is L'Indispensable's *Paris Pratique par Arrondissement* (€4.90), though the similar *Paris Utile* (€4.50) from Blay Foldex has its supporters. More detailed is Michelin's *Paris Poche Plan* (No 50; €2.20). All of these are usually available from newsstands and the Espace IGN (p213).

MEDICAL SERVICES

If you are not an EU citizen, it is imperative that you take out travel insurance before your departure. EU passport holders have access to the French social security system, which reimburses up to 70% of medical costs.

Hospitals

There are some 50 *assistance publique* (public health service) hospitals in Paris. If you need an ambulance, call ☎ 15; the EU-wide emergency number (with English speakers) is ☎ 112. For emergency treatment, call **Urgences Médicales de Paris** (☎ 01 53 94 94 94) or **SOS Médecins** (☎ 01 47 07 77 77 or 0 820 332 424). Both offer 24-hour house calls costing between €35 and €90 depending on the time of day and whether you have French social security.

Hospitals in Paris include the following:

American Hospital in Paris (off Map pp144–5; ☎ 01 46 41 25 25; www.american-hospital.org; 63 blvd Victor Hugo, 92200 Neuilly-sur-Seine; (M Pont de Levallois Bécon) Private hospital offering emergency 24-hour medical and dental care.

Hertford British Hospital (off Map pp144–5; ☎ 01 46 39 22 22; www.british-hospital.org; 3 rue Barbès, 92300 Levallois-Perret; (M Anatole France) A less-expensive private English-speaking option than the American Hospital.

Hôpital Hôtel Dieu (Map p105; ☎ 01 42 34 82 34; www.php.fr, in French; 1 place du Parvis Notre Dame, 4e; (M Cité) One of the city's main government-run public hospitals (Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris); after 8pm use the emergency entrance on rue de la Cité.

Dental Clinics

For emergency dental care contact either of the following:

Hôpital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière (Map pp162–3; ☎ 01 42 16 00 00; rue Bruant, 13e; (M Chevaleret) The only dental hospital with extended hours – from 6am to 10.30pm. After 5.30pm use the emergency entrance at 83 blvd de l'Hôpital, 13e (metro St-Marcel).

SOS Dentaire (Map pp162–3; ☎ 01 43 37 51 00; 87 blvd de Port Royal, 13e; (M Port Royal) A private dental office that offers services when most dentists are off-duty (8pm to 11pm weekdays, 9.45am to 11pm weekends).

Pharmacies

Pharmacies with extended hours:

Pharmacie Bader (Map pp116–17; ☎ 01 43 26 92 66; 12 blvd St-Michel, 5e; ☎ 9am–9pm; (M St-Michel)

Pharmacie de La Mairie (Map pp98–9; ☎ 01 42 78 53 58; 9 rue des Archives, 4e; ☎ 9am–8pm; (M Hôtel de Ville)

Pharmacie des Champs (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 45 62 02 41; Galerie des Champs, 84 av des Champs-Élysées, 8e; ☎ 24hr; (M George V)

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Among English-language newspapers widely available in Paris are the *International Herald Tribune* (€2.50), which is edited in Paris and has very good coverage of both French and international news; the *Guardian* and the more compact *Guardian Weekly*; the *Financial Times*; the *Times of London*; and the colourful (if lightweight) *USA Today*. English-language news weeklies that are widely available include *Newsweek*, *Time* and the *Economist*. For information about the French-language press, see p54.

The Paris-based *Fusac* (*France USA Contacts*), a freebie issued every two weeks, consists of hundreds of ads placed by companies and individuals. To place one yourself, contact **Fusac** (Map pp124-5; ☎ 01 56 53 54 54; www.fusac.fr; 26 rue Bénard, 14e; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Alésia or Pernety), still going strong after two decades. It is distributed free at Paris' English-language bookshops, Anglophone embassies and the **American Church** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 01 40 62 05 00; www.acparis.org; 65 quai d'Orsay, 7e; reception ☎ 9am-noon & 1-10pm Mon-Sat, 2-7.30pm Sun; 🚶 Pont de l'Alma or Invalides), which functions as a kind of community centre for English speakers and is an excellent source of information on au pair work, short-term accommodation etc. The free *Paris Times* (www.theparistimes.com), published monthly, is also worth a look. See the website for a full list of distribution points.

ORGANISED TOURS

If you can't be bothered making your own way around Paris or don't have the time, consider a tour by air, bus, boat, bicycle or on foot. There's no reason to feel sheepish or embarrassed about taking a guided tour. They are an excellent way to learn the contours of a new city, and even experienced guidebook writers have been known to join them from time to time. Most useful are the buses and other conveyances that allow you to disembark when and where you want and board the next one that suits you. They usually offer little or no commentary aside from calling out the stop names but offer the most freedom to do what you want.

True couch potatoes will head for **Paris Story** (Map pp148-9; ☎ 01 42 66 62 06; www.paris-story.com; 11bis rue Scribe, 9e; adult/student & 6-17yr/family €10/6/26, under 6yr free; ☎ 10am-6pm; 🚶 Auber or Opéra), which includes a 50-minute audiovisual romp through Paris' 2000-year history on the hour, with headset

Le Change du Louvre (Map p86; ☎ 01 42 97 27 28; 151 rue St-Honoré, 1er; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre) This moneychanger is on the northern side of Le Louvre des Antiquaires (p80).

Multi Change (Map pp116-17; ☎ 01 42 22 45 00; 180 blvd St-Germain, 6e; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 St-Germain des Prés) Just west of Église St-Germain des Prés.

Société Touristique de Services (Map pp110-11; ☎ 01 43 54 76 55; 2 place St-Michel, 6e; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat; 🚶 St-Michel) A *bureau de change* in the heart of the Latin Quarter.

Credit Cards

In Paris, Visa/Carte Bleue is the most widely accepted credit card, followed by MasterCard (Eurocard). Amex cards can be useful at more upmarket establishments. In general, all three cards can be used for train travel, restaurant meals and cash advances.

When you get a cash advance on your Visa or MasterCard account, your issuer charges a transaction fee, which can be high; check with your card issuer before leaving home. Some banks charge a commission of 4% (minimum around €6) for a cash advance though BNP Paribas does it for free (though the card-holder's issuing bank will probably do so) to a maximum of €1000. American Express takes a 5% commission on cash advances on Visa cards.

Call the following numbers if your card is lost or stolen. It may be impossible to get a lost Visa or MasterCard reissued until you get home so two different credit cards are generally safer than just one.

Amex (☎ 01 47 77 72 00, 01 71 23 08 38)

Diners Club (☎ 0 820 82 05 36, 0 800 22 20 73)

MasterCard/Eurocard (☎ 0 800 90 13 87, 01 45 67 84 84)

Visa/Carte Bleue (☎ 0 892 70 57 05, 0 800 90 20 33)

Travellers Cheques

The most flexible travellers cheques are issued by American Express (in US dollars or euros) and Visa, as they can be changed at many post offices.

Amex offices charges a commission on all travellers cheques of about 4% (minimum €2). If your Amex travellers cheques are lost or stolen while you are in Paris, call ☎ 0 800 83 28 20 (24-hour, toll-free). Reimbursements can be made at the main **American Express office** (Map pp148-9; ☎ 01 47 77 79 50; www.americanexpress.fr, in French; 11 rue Scribe, 9e; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Auber or Opéra).

Changing Money

In general, cash is not a very good way to carry money. Not only can it be stolen, but in France it doesn't usually offer the best exchange rates. What's more, in recent years ATMs and the euro have virtually wiped out *bureaux de change* and even centrally located banks rarely offer exchange services these days.

That said, some banks, post offices and *bureaux de change* pay up to 2.5% or more for travellers cheques, more than making up for the 1% commission usually charged when buying the cheques in the first place.

Post offices that have a Banque Postale can offer the best exchange rates, and they accept banknotes (commission €4.50) in various currencies as well as travellers cheques issued by Amex (no commission) or Visa (1.5%, minimum €4.50).

Commercial banks usually charge a similar amount per foreign-currency transaction. For example BNP Paribas charges €5.95 for cash while Société Générale takes €5.40 (or €11.40 if you don't bank with them). The rates charged on travellers cheques vary but neither BNP Paribas or Société Générale charge a fee to change travellers cheques in euros.

In Paris, *bureaux de change* are usually faster and easier, open longer hours and give better rates than most banks. It's best to familiarise yourself with the rates offered by the post office and compare them with those on offer at *bureaux de change*, which are not generally allowed to charge commissions. *Bureaux de change* charge anything between 6% and 13% plus €3 or €4 on cash transactions and 6% to just under 10% (plus €3) to change travellers cheques.

Among some of the better *bureaux de change*:

American Express Bureau de Change (Map pp148-9; ☎ 01 47 77 79 50; 11 rue Scribe, 9e; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Auber or Opéra)

Best Change (Map p86; ☎ 01 42 21 46 05; 21 rue du Roule, 1er; ☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Louvre Rivoli) Three blocks southwest of Forum des Halles.

CCO (Map pp82-3; ☎ 01 42 66 24 44; 12 blvd de Capucines, 9e; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat; 🚶 Opéra; Opéra branch (Map pp148-9; ☎ 01 47 42 20 96; 9 rue Scribe, 9e; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat; 🚶 Opéra)

European Exchange Office (Map p169; ☎ 01 42 52 67 19; 6 rue Yvonne Le Tac, 18e; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 Abbesses) A few steps from the Abbesses metro station.

Pharmacie des Halles (Map p86; ☎ 01 42 72 03 23; 10 blvd de Sébastopol, 4e; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, 9am-10pm Sun; 🚶 Châtelet)

Pharmacie Européenne (Map pp144-5; ☎ 01 48 74 65 18; 6 place de Clichy, 17e; ☎ 24hr; 🚶 Place de Clichy)

MONEY

France is among the 15 member-states of the EU (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) that have adopted the euro (abbreviated € and pronounced *eu-roh* in French) as its national currency. One euro is divided into 100 cents (*centimes* in French). There are seven euro notes in different colours and sizes; they come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500. The designs on the recto (generic windows or portals) and verso (imaginary bridges, map of the EU) are exactly the same in all 15 countries and symbolise openness and cooperation.

The eight coins in circulation are in denominations of €1 and €2, then one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents. The 'head' side of the coin, on which the denomination is shown, is identical throughout the euro zone; the 'tail' side is specific to each member-state, though euro coins can be used anywhere that accepts euros, of course. In France the €1 (silver centre with brassy ring) and €2 (brassy centre with silver ring) coins portray the tree of liberty; the 10, 20 and 50 cent coins (all brass) have *la Semeuse* (the Sower), a recurring theme in the history of the French franc; and the one, two and five cent coins (all copper) portray Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic.

Exchange rates are given in the Quick Reference section on the inside front cover of this book. The latest rates are available on websites such as www.oanda.com and www.xe.com. For a broader view of the local economy and costs in Paris, see p15.

ATMs

You'll find an ATM, which here is known as a DAB (*distributeur automatique de billets*) or *point d'argent*, linked to the Cirrus, Maestro, Visa or MasterCard networks, virtually on every corner. Those without a local bank account should know that there is usually a transaction surcharge of around €3 for cash withdrawals. You should contact your bank to find out how much this is before using ATMs too freely.

commentary in 14 languages; an interactive model of Paris called **Paris Miniature**; and **Paris Experience**, a gallery of five themed video clips.

Air

Hot-air balloon **Ballon Eutelsat** (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 44 26 20 00; www.aeroparis.com, in French; Parc André Citroën, 2 rue de la Montagne de la Fage, 15e; Mon-Fri adult/3-11 yr/12-17 yr €10/5/9, Sat & Sun €12/6/10, under 3yr free; ☞ 9am-5.30pm to 9.30pm (seasonal); M Balard), in the Parc André Citroën in southwestern Paris, lifts you 150m off the ground and offers fabulous views of Paris and the Seine. But don't expect to get very far; the helium-filled balloon remains firmly tethered to the ground. Be sure to call in advance as the balloon does not ascend in windy conditions.

A company called **iXAir** (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 30 08 80 80; www.ixair.com, in French; 4 av de la Porte de Sèvres, 15e; M Porte de Sèvres) at the Héliport de Paris next to the Aquaboulevard in the 15e offers circuits by helicopter over the city lasting between 25 and 45 minutes for €128 to €195. You should book 10 to 15 days ahead.

Bicycle

Fat Tire Bike Tours (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 56 58 10 54; www.fattirebiketours.paris.com; 24 rue Edgar Faure, 15e; ☞ office 9am-6pm; M La Motte-Picquet Grenelle) offers daytime bike tours of the city (adult/student €24/22; four hours), starting at 11am daily from mid-February to early January, with an additional departure at 3pm from April to October. Night bicycle tours (adult/student €28/26) depart at 7pm on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from mid-February to mid-March and in November and at the same time daily from mid-March to October. A day and night combination tour costs €48 for adults and €44 for students.

Participants can meet at the Fat Tire Bike Tours office, where you can store bags, log on to the internet and get tourist information, but tours actually depart from opposite the Eiffel Tower's South Pillar at the start of the Champ de Mars; just look for the yellow signs. Costs include the bicycle and, if necessary, rain gear.

The same company runs **City Segway Tours** (www.citysegwaytours.com) which, though not on bicycles, involve two-wheeled, electric-powered conveyances. Segway tours (€70), which follow an abbreviated route of the bike tours and last four hours, depart at 9.30am from mid-February to early January, with an extra

tour at 6.30pm from April to October. You must book these tours in advance.

Bike tours lasting three hours from cycle shop **Gepetto & Vélos** (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 43 54 19 95; www.gepetto-et-velos.com, in French; 59 rue du Cardinal Lemoine, 5e; tours €25; ☞ 9am-1pm & 2-7.30pm Tue-Sat, 10am-1pm & 2-7pm Sun; M Cardinal Lemoine) include guide, bicycle and insurance. There is also a branch in the **Latin Quarter** (Map pp110–11; ☞ 01 43 37 16 17; 46 rue Daubenton, 5e; ☞ 9am-1pm & 2-7.30pm Tue-Sat; M Censier Daubenton).

RATP-sponsored **Maison Roue Libre** (Map p86; ☎ 0 810 44 15 34; www.rouelibre.fr; Forum des Halles, 1 passage Mondétour, 1er; adult/under 26 yr €27/20, with own bike €17; ☞ 9am-7pm Feb-Oct, 10am-6pm Wed-Sun Nov & Jan; M Les Halles) has as many as 15 different themed bike tours from 12km to 26km lasting from three to eight hours. Tours operate on certain weekend days throughout the year starting at 10am, 2pm or 8pm. Consult the website for exact details. The **Bastille branch** (Map pp92–3; ☎ 0 810 44 15 34; 37 blvd Bourdon, 4e; M Bastille) keeps the same hours but shuts Wednesday and Thursday in winter.

Paris à Vélo, C'est Sympa! (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 48 87 60 01; www.parisvelosympa.com, in French; 22 rue Alphonse Baudin, 11e; ☞ 9.30am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm & 2-7pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30am-1pm & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; M St-Sébastien Froissart) This association with the cringey name (Paris by Bike is Nice!) has five different three-hour bike tours available for €34/28/18 for adult/12 to 25 years/under-12 years. Prices include bicycle and insurance.

Boat

Be it on what Parisians call *la ligne de vie de Paris* (the lifeline of Paris or the Seine) or the rejuvenated canals to the northeast, a boat cruise is the most relaxing way to watch the city glide by.

CANAL CRUISES

Canauxrama (Map pp158–9 & Map pp174–5; ☎ 01 42 39 15 00; www.canauxrama.com, in French; Bassin de la Villette, 13 quai de la Loire, 19e; Mon-Fri adult/6-12yr/student & senior €15/8/11, under 6yr free, admission afternoon Sat & Sun €15; ☞ Mar-Nov; M Jaurès) has barges that run from Port de Plaisance de Paris-Arsenal, 12e, opposite 50 blvd de la Bastille, to Parc de la Villette, 19e, along charming Canal St-Martin and Canal de l'Ourcq. Departures are at 9.45am and 2.30pm from Port de Plaisance de Paris-Arsenal during the season and, in summer

only, at 9.45am and 2.45pm from Bassin de la Villette. The cruise last 2½ hours.

Paris Canal Croisières (Map pp174–5; ☎ 01 42 40 96 97; www.pariscanal.com; Bassin de la Villette, 19-21 quai de la Loire, 19e; adult/4-11yr/senior & 12-25yr €17/10/14, under 4yr free; ☞ late Mar–mid-Nov; M Jaurès or Musée d'Orsay) has 2½-hour cruises from quai Anatole France (7e), northwest of Musée d'Orsay, at 9.30am and departing from Parc de la Villette for the return trip at 2.30pm.

RIVER CRUISES

On the Right Bank just east of Pont de l'Alma, **Bateaux-Mouches** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 42 25 96 10; www.bateauxmouches.com, in French; Port de la Conférence, 8e; adult/senior & 4-12yr €9/4, under 4yr free; ☞ mid-Mar–mid-Nov; M Alma Marceau), the most famous river-boat company in Paris, runs nine 1000-seat glassed-in tour boats, still the largest on the Seine. Cruises (70 minutes) depart eight times a day between 10.15am and 3.15pm and then every 20 minutes till 11pm April to September and 10 times a day between 10.15am and 9pm the rest of the year. Commentary in French and English.

From its base northwest of the Eiffel Tower, **Bateaux Parisiens** (Map pp132–3; ☎ 0 825 01 01 01; www.bateauxparisiens.com; Port de la Bourdonnais, 7e; adult/3-11yr €10.50/5, under 3yr free; ☞ every half hr 10am-10.30pm Apr-Sep, hourly 10am-10pm Oct-Mar; M Pont de l'Alma) runs one-hour river circuits with recorded commentary in 13 different languages.

La Marina de Paris (Map pp128–9; ☎ 01 43 43 40 30; www.marinadeparis.com; port de Solferino, quai Anatole France, 7e; M Musée d'Orsay) offers lunch cruises at 12.15pm (€51) and dinner cruises at 6.30pm (€45 and €59) and 9pm (€79). They last about 2¼ hours and a menu for those under 12 (€39) is available at all meals.

Vedettes du Pont Neuf (Map p105; ☎ 01 46 33 98 38; www.pontneuf.net; square du Vert Galant, 1er; adult/4-12yr €11/6; ☞ every half hr 10.30am-noon, 1.30-8pm & 9-10.30pm mid-Mar-Oct; M Pont Neuf), whose home dock is at the far western tip of the Île de la Cité (1er), has one-hour boat excursions year-round. From November to mid-March there are 13 departures from 10.30am to 10pm Monday to Thursday and 15 departures until 10.30pm Friday to Sunday.

Bus

In season, RATP **Balabus** (☎ 3246; www.ratp.fr; €1.40 or 1 metro/bus ticket; ☞ departures 12.30-8pm from La Défense, 1.30pm from Gare de Lyon Sun Apr-Sep), designed for tourists, follows a 50-minute route to/from Gare de Lyon (Map pp158–9) and La Défense

(Map p180), passing many of central Paris' most famous sights.

Located just opposite the western end of the Louvre, **Cityrama** (Map pp82–3; ☎ 01 44 55 60 00; www.pariscityrama.com; 2 rue des Pyramides, 1er; adult/4-11yr €18/9; ☞ tours 10am, 11.30am & 2.30pm; M Tuileries) runs 1½-hour tours of the city, accompanied by taped commentaries in 16 languages, three times a day year-round.

L'Open Tour (Map pp148–9; ☎ 01 42 66 56 56; www.pariscityrama.com; 13 rue Auber, 9e; 1 day adult/4-11yr €26/13, 2 consecutive days €29/13; M Havre Caumartin or Opéra), now part of the same group, runs open-deck buses along four circuits (central Paris, 2½ hours; Montmartre-Grands Boulevards, 1¼ hours; Bastille-Bercy, one hour; and Montparnasse-St-Germain, one hour) daily year-round. You can jump on and off at more than 50 stops. On the 'Grand Tour' of central Paris, with some 20 stops on both sides of the river between Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower, buses depart every 10 to 15 minutes from 9.30am to 7pm April to October and every 25 to 30 minutes from 9.45am to 6pm November to March. Holders of the Paris Visite card (p394) pay €22 for a one-day pass.

Walking

If your French is up to it, the sky's the limit on specialised and themed walking tours available in Paris. Both *Pariscope* and *Officiel des Spectacles* (p302) list a number of themed walks (usually €10) each week under the heading 'Conférences' or 'Visites Conférences'. They are almost always informative and entertaining, particularly those run by **Paris Passé, Présent** (☎ 01 42 58 95 99; http://parispassepresent.free.fr) and **Écoute du Passé** (☎ 01 42 82 11 81, 06 83 89 18 25).

Long-established and highly rated by readers, **Paris Walks** (☎ 01 48 09 21 40; www.paris-walks.com; adult/under 15yr/student under 21 from €10/5/8) has tours in English of several different districts, including Montmartre at 10.30am on Sunday and Wednesday (leaving from metro Abbesses, Map p169) and the Marais at 10.30am on Tuesday and 2.30pm on Sunday (departing from metro St-Paul, Map pp98–9). There are other tours focusing on people and themes, eg Hemingway, medieval Latin Quarter, fashion, the French Revolution and – yum-yum – chocolate.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Kodak and Fuji colour-print film is available in supermarkets, photo shops and certain Fnac stores, but it is relatively expensive

compared with a lot of other countries so it might pay to stock up before you leave home. Developing a 24-exposure film costs around €13 but can be almost twice that if you want your photos in a hurry. Printing 50 digitals (10cm x 13cm) costs between €9.50 and €12 plus €2 for developing.

It's getting increasingly difficult to find express photo labs in Paris. One place with labs for both traditional and digital work and highly recommended by professionals is **Négatif+** (Map pp148–9; ☎ 01 45 23 41 60; www.negatifplus.com, in French; 104-106 rue La Fayette, 10e; 🕒 8am–7.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm & 2–7.30pm Sat; 📍 Poissonnière).

PLACES OF WORSHIP

The following places offer services in English. For a more comprehensive list of churches and other places of worship, check the *Pages Jaunes* (Yellow Pages; www.pagesjaunes.fr) or the website of the tourist office (<http://en.parisinfo.com/guide-paris/worship>).

Adath Shalom Synagogue (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 45 97 96; www.adathshalom.org, in French; 8 rue George Bernard Shaw, 15e; 📍 Duplex) Conservative Jewish.

American Cathedral in Paris (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 53 23 84 00; www.americancathedral.org; 23 av George V, 8e; 📍 Alma Marceau) Protestant.

American Church in Paris (Map pp128–9; ☎ 01 40 62 05 00; www.acparis.org; 65 quai d'Orsay, 7e; 📍 Invalides) Nondenominational Protestant.

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Map pp174–5; ☎ 01 42 45 29 29; 64–66 rue de Romainville, 19e; 📍 Porte des Lilas) Mormon.

First Church of Christ Scientist (Map pp124–5; ☎ 01 47 07 26 60; 36 blvd St-Jacques, 14e; 📍 St-Jacques) Christian Scientist.

Mosquée de Paris (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 45 35 97 33; www.mosquee-de-paris.org, in French; 2bis place du Puits de l'Érmitte, 5e; 📍 Censier Daubenton or Place Monge) Muslim.

St Joseph's Catholic Church (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 42 27 28 56; www.stjoeparis.org; 50 av Hoche, 8e; 📍 Charles de Gaulle-Étoile) Roman Catholic.

Sri Manikar Vinayakar Temple (Map p169; ☎ 01 40 34 21 89; 72 rue Philippe de Girard, 18e; 📍 Marx Dormoy) Hindu.

POST

Most post offices (*bureaux de poste*) in Paris are open from 8am to 7pm weekdays and 8am or 9am till noon on Saturday. *Tabacs* (tobaccoists) usually sell postage stamps.

The **main post office** (Map pp82–3; www.laposte.fr, in French; 52 rue du Louvre, 1er; ☎ 24hr; 📍 Sentier or Les Halles), five blocks north of the eastern end of the Musée du Louvre, is open round the clock, but only for basic services such as sending letters and picking up poste restante mail (window 11; €0.54 per letter). Other services, including currency exchange, are available only during regular opening hours. Be prepared for long queues after 7pm and at the weekend. Poste restante mail not specifically addressed to a particular branch post office will be delivered here. There is a one-hour closure from 6.20am to 7.20am Monday to Saturday and from 6am to 7am on Sunday.

Each arrondissement has its own five-digit postcode, formed by prefixing the number of the arrondissement with '750' or '7500' (eg 75001 for the 1er arrondissement, 75019 for the 19e). The only exception is the 16e, which has two postcodes: 75016 and 75116. All mail to addresses in France *must* include the postcode. *Cedex* (*Courrier d'Entreprise à Distribution Exceptionnelle*) simply means that mail sent to that address is collected at the post office rather than delivered to the door.

Domestic letters weighing up to 20/50g cost €0.55/0.88. Postcards and letters up to 20/50g sent within the EU cost €0.65/1.25 and €0.85/1.70 to the rest of the world.

RADIO

You can pick up a mixture of the BBC World Service and BBC for Europe in Paris on 648 kHz AM. The Voice of America (VOA) is on 1197 kHz AM and 96.9 MHz FM. You can pick up an hour of Radio France Internationale (RFI) news in English three times a day (7am, 2.30pm and 4.30pm) on 738 kHz AM.

Pocket-sized short-wave radios and the internet make it easy to keep abreast of world news in English wherever you are. The BBC World Service can be heard on 6195 kHz, 9410 kHz and 12095 kHz (a good daytime frequency), depending on the time of day. BBC Radio 4 broadcasts on 198 kHz LW, and carries BBC World Service programming in the wee hours of the morning. The VOA broadcasts in English at various times of the day on 7170 kHz, 9535 kHz, 9760 kHz, 9770 kHz, 11805 kHz, 15205 kHz and 15255 kHz.

The following are some of the more popular French-language radio stations:

FP (105.1MHz FM) Eclectic mix of musical genres, with some news and cultural info; a favourite with Parisians and part of France Inter.

France Info (105.5 MHz FM; www.france-info.com) Operates 24-hour, all-news radio.

France Inter (87.8 MHz FM; www.radiofrance.fr/france-inter/accueil) Talk-back station specialising in music, news and entertainment.

Paris Jazz (88.2 MHz FM; www.comfm.com/live/radio/parisjazz) Jazz and blues.

Radio FG (98.2 MHz FM; www.radiofg.com) The station for house, techno, garage, trance, club news and gigs.

Radio Nova (101.5 MHz FM; www.novaplanet.com) Latino, clubs, modern beats.

TSF (89.9 MHz FM; www.tsfjazz.com) Popular jazz station.

RELOCATING

If you're considering moving to Paris and you are not a citizen of the EU you must have both a *carte de séjour* (residence permit; p412) and an *autorisation de travail* (work permit; p414). Neither is easy to come by.

For practical information on living and working in employment in Paris and France, pick up a copy of *Live and Work in France* by Victoria Pybus, now in its 5th edition, or *Living and Working in France: A Survival Handbook* by David Hampshire.

The fortnightly *Fusac* (p405) is an excellent source for job-seekers.

SAFETY

In general, Paris is a safe city and random street assaults are rare. The so-called Ville Lumière (City of Light) is generally well lit, and there's no reason not to use the metro until it stops running at some time between 12.30am and just past 1am. As you'll notice, women *do* travel alone on the metro late at night in most areas, though not all who do so report feeling 100% comfortable.

Metro stations that are best avoided late at night include Châtelet-Les Halles and its seemingly endless corridors, Château Rouge in Montmartre, Gare du Nord, Strasbourg St-Denis, Réaumur Sébastopol, and Montparnasse Bienvenue. *Bornes d'alarme* (alarm boxes) are located in the centre of each metro/RER platform and in some station corridors.

Nonviolent crime such as pickpocketing and thefts from handbags and packs is a problem wherever there are crowds, especially packs of tourists. Places to be particularly careful include Montmartre (especially around Sacré Cœur); Pigalle; the areas around

Forum des Halles and the Centre Pompidou; the Latin Quarter (especially the rectangle bounded by rue St-Jacques, blvd St-Germain, blvd St-Michel and quai St-Michel); below the Eiffel Tower; and anywhere on the metro during rush hour. Take the usual precautions: don't carry more money than you need, and keep your credit cards, passport and other documents in a concealed pouch, a hotel safe or a safe-deposit box.

Vigipirate is a security plan devised by the Paris city council to combat terrorism. Both citizens and visitors are asked to report any abandoned luggage or package at all times. When the full Vigipirate scheme is put into action, public litter bins are sealed, left-luggage services in train stations and at airports are unavailable, checks at the entrances to public buildings and tourist sites are increased, and cloakrooms and lockers in museums and at monuments are closed.

TAXES & REFUNDS

France's value-added tax (VAT) is known as TVA (*taxe sur la valeur ajoutée*) and is 19.6% on most goods except medicine and books, for which it's 5.5%. Prices that include TVA are often marked TTC (*toutes taxes comprises*; literally 'all taxes included').

If you're not an EU resident, you can get a TVA refund provided that: you're aged over 15; you'll be spending less than six months in France; you purchase goods worth at least €175 at a single shop on the same day (not more than 10 of the same item); the goods fit into your luggage; you are taking the goods out of France within three months after purchase; and the shop offers *vente en détaxe* (duty-free sales).

Present a passport at the time of purchase and ask for a *bordereau de vente à l'exportation* (export sales invoice) to be signed by the retailer and yourself. Most shops will refund less than the full amount (about 14%) to which you are entitled, in order to cover the time and expense involved in the refund procedure.

As you leave France or another EEU country, have all three pages of the *bordereau* validated by the country's customs officials at the airport or at the border. Customs officials will take one sheet and hand you two. You must post one copy (the pink one) back to the shop and retain the other (green) sheet for your records in case there is any dispute. Once the shop where you made your purchase

receives its stamped copy, it will send you a *virement* (fund transfer) in the form you have requested. Be prepared for a wait of up to three months.

If you're flying out of Orly or Roissy Charles de Gaulle, certain shops can arrange for you to receive your refund as you're leaving the country though you must complete the steps outlined preceding. You must make such arrangements at the time of purchase.

For more information contact the **customs information centre** (☎ 0 820 02 44 44; www.douane.minefi.gouv.fr; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri).

TELEPHONE

There are no area codes in France – you always dial the 10-digit number. Telephone numbers in Paris always start with ☎ 01. Mobile phones through France commence with ☎ 06.

Once the domain of France Télécom, the domestic *service des renseignements* (directory enquiries or assistance) is now offered by over a dozen operators on six-digit numbers starting with 118 (France Télécom, for example, uses ☎ 118 710, 118 711, 118 712 and 118 810). For a complete listing in French consult www.allo118.com.

Note that while numbers beginning with ☎ 0 800, 0 804, 0 805 and 0 809 are toll-free in France, other numbers beginning with '8' are not. A number starting with ☎ 0 810 or 0 811 is charged at local rates (€0.078 then €0.028) while one beginning with ☎ 0 820 and 0 821 cost €0.12 per minute, or even €0.15 if the prefix numbers are ☎ 0 890. The ubiquitous ☎ 0 892 numbers are billed at an expensive €0.34 per minute whenever you call. ☎ 0 899 numbers cost €1.35 per connection then €0.34 per minute. Numbers beginning with ☎ 0 897 cost a flat €0.562 per call.

Most four-digit numbers starting with 10, 30 or 31 are also free of charge.

France's country code is ☎ 33. To call a number in Paris from outside France, dial your country's international access code (usually ☎ 00 but exceptions include ☎ 011 from the USA and ☎ 001 from Hong Kong), then ☎ 33 and then the local number, omitting the first '0'.

To call abroad from Paris, dial France's international access code (☎ 00), the country code (see *right*), the area code (usually without the initial '0', if there is one) and the local number. International Direct Dial (IDD) calls to almost anywhere in the world can be placed

from public telephones. The international reduced rate applies from 7pm to 8am weekdays and all day at the weekend.

For international directory enquiries, dial ☎ 3212. Note that the cost for this service is €3 per call. Instead consult the phone book on the internet (www.pagejaunes.fr).

Selected country codes

Australia	☎ 61
Belgium	☎ 32
Canada	☎ 1
Germany	☎ 49
Ireland	☎ 353
Italy	☎ 39
Netherlands	☎ 31
New Zealand	☎ 64
South Africa	☎ 27
Spain	☎ 34
Switzerland	☎ 41
UK	☎ 44
USA	☎ 1

Mobile Phones

France uses the GSM 900 network, which is compatible with the rest of Europe, Australia and New Zealand but not with the North American GSM 1900 (though many North Americans now have GSM 1900/900 phones that do work in France) or the totally different system in Japan. If you have a GSM phone, check with your service provider about using it in France, and beware of calls being routed internationally, which can make a 'local' call very expensive indeed.

It's usually most convenient to buy a local SIM card from one of the major providers such as **Orange/France Telecom** (☎ 0 800 83 08 00 or ☎ +33 1 41 43 79 40 outside France; www.orange.fr, in French) has a €59 package that includes a Sony Ericson MP3 mobile phone, a local phone number and €5 of call time.

For more time, you can buy a prepaid Mobicarte recharge card (€5 to €100) from *tabacs* (tobacconist) and other places you'd buy a *télécarte* (phonecard); Mobicartes from €25 upward offer extra talk time (€5 bonus for €25, €10 bonus for €35, up to €50 extra for €100). If you don't mind changing your telephone number to a French one during your stay, you can also buy a local SIM card for your mobile (provided it's not blocked) for €20 (plus 10 minutes' talk time) and recharge with Mobicartes as you go along. The biggest outlet is **La Boutiques Orange** (Map pp140–1; 16 place de la Madeleine, 8e; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon-Sat; ☎ Madeleine).

Phonecards

All public phones can receive both domestic and international calls. If you want someone to call you back, just give them France's country code and the 10-digit number, usually written after the words '*Ici le...*' or '*No d'appel*' on the tariff sheet or on a little sign inside the phone box. Remind them to drop the '0' of the initial '01' of the number. When there's an incoming call, the words '*décrochez – appel arrive*' (pick up receiver – incoming call) will appear in the LCD window.

Public telephones in Paris usually require a *télécarte* (phonecard; €7.50/15 for 50/120 calling units), which can be purchased at post offices, *tabacs*, supermarkets, SNCF ticket windows, metro stations and anywhere you see a blue sticker reading '*télécarte en vente ici*' (phonecard for sale here).

You can buy prepaid phonecards in France such as Allomundo (www.allomundo.com, in French) that are up to 60% cheaper for calling abroad than the standard *télécarte*. They're usually available in denominations of up to €15 from *tabacs*, newsagents, phone shops and other sales points, especially in ethnic areas such as rue du Faubourg St-Denis (10e), Chinatown (13e) and Belleville (19e and 20e). In general they're valid for two months but the ones offering the most minutes for the least euros can expire in just a week.

TIME

France uses the 24-hour clock in most cases, with the hours usually separated from the minutes by a lower-case 'h'. Thus, 15h30 is 3.30pm, 00h30 is 12.30am and so on.

France is on Central European Time, which is one hour ahead of (ie later than) GMT. During daylight-saving time, which runs from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October, France is two hours ahead of GMT.

Without taking daylight-saving time into account, when it's noon in Paris it's 11pm in Auckland, 11am in London, 6am in New York, 3am in San Francisco and 9pm in Sydney.

TIPPING

French law requires that restaurant, café and hotel bills include a service charge (usually between 12% and 15%); for more information on tipping at restaurants and cafés, see p228. Taxi drivers expect small tips of between 5% and 10% of the fare though the usual proce-

dure is to round up to the nearest €1 regardless of the fare.

TOILETS

Public toilets in Paris are signposted *toilettes* or WC. The tan-coloured, self-cleaning cylindrical toilets you see on Parisian pavements are open 24 hours and are free of charge. Look for the words *libre* ('free'; green-coloured) or *occupé* ('occupied'; red-coloured).

Café-owners do not appreciate you using their facilities if you are not a paying customer. When desperate, try a fast-food place, major department store or even a big hotel. There are free public toilets in front of Notre Dame cathedral, near the Arc de Triomphe, east down the steps at Sacré Cœur, at the north-western entrance to the Jardins des Tuileries and in some metro stations. Check out the wonderful Art Nouveau public toilets, built in 1905, below place de la Madeleine, 8e (Map pp140–1). In older cafés and bars, you may find a *toilette à la turque* (Turkish-style toilet), which is what the French call a squat toilet.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The main branch of the **Paris Convention & Visitors Bureau** (Office de Tourisme et de Congrès de Paris; Map pp82–3; ☎ 0 892 68 30 00; www.parisinfo.com; 25-27 rue des Pyramides, 1er; ☎ 9am–7pm Jun–Oct, 10am–7pm Mon–Sat & 11am–7pm Sun Nov–May, closed May Day; ☎ Pyramides) is about 500m northwest of the Louvre.

The bureau also maintains a handful of centres elsewhere in Paris, listed following (telephone numbers and websites are the same as for the main office). For details of the area around Paris, contact Espace du Tourisme d'Île de France, p360.

Anvers (Map p169; opp 72 blvd Rochechouart, 18e; ☎ 10am–6pm, closed Christmas Day, New Year's Day & May Day; ☎ Anvers)

Gare de Lyon (Map pp158–9; Hall d'Arrivée, 20 blvd Diderot, 12e; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Sat, closed May Day) In the arrivals hall for mainline trains.

Gare du Nord (Map pp152–3) 18 rue de Dunkerque, 10e; ☎ 8am–6pm, closed Christmas Day, New Year's Day & May Day; ☎ Gare du Nord) Under the glass roof of the Île de France departure and arrival area at the eastern end of the station.

Syndicats d'Initiative de Montmartre (Map p169; ☎ 01 42 62 21 21; 21 place du Tertre, 18e; ☎ 10am–7pm; ☎ Abbesses) This locally run tourist office and shop is in Montmartre's most picturesque square and open year-round.

Information offices beyond central Paris include those at La Défense and St-Denis:

Espace Info-Défense (Map p180; ☎ 01 47 74 84 24; www.ladefense.fr; 15 place de la Défense; ☎ 9am-5.15pm Mon-Fri; **M** La Défense Grande Arche) La Défense's tourist office has reams of free information, including the useful *Discover La Défense* brochure and details on cultural activities.

Office de Tourisme de St-Denis Plaine Commune (Map p182; ☎ 01 55 87 08 70; www.saint-denis-tourisme.com, in French; 1 rue de la République; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Oct-Mar, 10am-1pm & 2-4pm Sun Apr-Sep; **M** Basilique de St-Denis) This helpful tourist office is 100m west of the basilica.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Paris is an ancient city and is thus not particularly well equipped for *les handicapés* (disabled people): kerb ramps are few and far between, older public facilities and bottom-end hotels usually lack lifts, and the metro, dating back more than a century, is inaccessible for those in a wheelchair (*fauteuil roulant*). But efforts are being made and early in the new millennium the tourist office launched its 'Tourisme & Handicap' initiative in which museums, cultural attractions, hotels and restaurants that provided access or special assistance or facilities for those with physical, mental, visual and/or hearing disabilities would display a special logo at their entrances. For a list of the places qualifying, visit the tourist office's website (www.parisinfo.com) and click on 'Practical Paris'.

Information & Organisations

The SNCF has made many of its train carriages more accessible to people with physical disabilities. A traveller in a wheelchair can travel in both the TGV (*train à grande vitesse*; high-speed train) and in the 1st-class carriage with a 2nd-class ticket on mainline trains provided they make a reservation by phone or at a train station at least a few hours before departure. Details are available in the SNCF booklet *Le Mémento du Voyageur Handicapé* (Handicapped Traveller Summary) available at all train stations. For advice on planning your journey from station to station contact the SNCF service **Acces Plus** (☎ 0 890 64 06 50; www.accessibilite.sncf.com, in French).

For information on accessibility to all forms of public transport in the Paris region,

get a copy of the *Guide Pratique à l'Usage des Personnes à Mobilité Réduite* (Practical Usage Guide for those with Reduced Mobility) from the **Syndicat des Transports d'Île de France** (☎ 0 810 64 64 64; www.stif-idf.fr). Its **Info Mobi** (www.infomobi.com, in French) is especially useful. Also helpful is the **RATP's Assistance Voyageurs à Mobilité Réduite** (Assistance for Travellers with Reduced Mobility; ☎ 01 53 11 11 12).

For information about what cultural venues in Paris are accessible visit the website of **Access Culture** (www.accessculture.org).

Access in Paris, a 245-page guide to the French capital for the disabled, was being updated at the time of research and should be available from **Access Project** (www.accessinparis.org; 39 Bradley Gardens, West Ealing, London W13 8HE, UK) by the time you read this.

The following organisations can provide information to disabled travellers:

Association des Paralysés de France (APF; ☎ 01 40 78 69 00; www.apf.asso.fr, in French; 17 blvd Blanqui, 75013 Paris) Brochures on wheelchair access and accommodation throughout France, including Paris.

Groupement pour l'Insertion des Personnes Handicapées Physiques (GIHP; ☎ 01 43 95 66 36; www.gihpnational.org, in French; 10 rue Georges de Porto Riche, 75014 Paris) Provides special vehicles outfitted for people in wheelchairs for use within the city.

Mobile en Ville (☎ 06 82 91 72 16; 1 rue de l'Internationale; www.mobile-en-ville.asso.fr, in French; B.P. 59, 91002 Evry) Association set up in 1998 by students and researchers with the aim of making independent travel within the city easier for people in wheelchairs.

VISAS

There are no entry requirements for nationals of EU countries. Citizens of Australia, the USA, Canada and New Zealand do not need visas to visit France for up to three months. Except for people from a handful of other European countries (including Switzerland), everyone, including citizens of South Africa, needs a so-called Schengen Visa, named after the Schengen Agreement that has abolished passport controls among 22 EU countries and has also been ratified by the non-EU governments of Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. A visa for any of these countries should be valid throughout the Schengen area, but it pays to double check with the embassy or consulate of each country you intend to visit.

Visa fees depend on the current exchange rate but transit and the various types of short-stay (up to 90 days) visas all cost €60, while a

long-stay visa allowing stays of more than 90 days costs €99. You will need: your passport (valid for a period of three months beyond the date of your departure from France); a return ticket; proof of sufficient funds to support yourself; proof of prearranged accommodation; a recent passport-sized photo; and the visa fee in cash payable in local currency.

If all the forms are in order, your visa will usually be issued on the spot. You can also apply for a French visa after arriving in Europe – the fee is the same, but you may not have to produce a return ticket. If you enter France overland, your visa may not be checked at the border, but major problems can arise if the authorities discover that you don't have one later on (for example, at the airport as you leave the country).

Carte de Séjour

If you are issued a long-stay visa valid for six months or longer, you should apply for a *carte de séjour* (residence permit) within eight days of your arrival in France. Students must apply in person for a *carte de séjour* at the **Centre des Étudiants Étrangers** (Foreign Student Centre; Map pp166-7; ☎ 01 53 71 51 68; 13 rue Miollis, 15e; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-4pm Fri; **M** Cambronne or Ségur). Arrive early – the queues can be mammoth.

Those holding a passport from one of the original EU member-states and seeking to take up residence in France no longer need to acquire a *carte de séjour*; their passport or national ID card is sufficient. Citizens of any one of the 10 so-called accession countries that joined the EU in 2004 who wish to stay permanently must for the time being apply to the Service Étranger (Foreigner Service) office on the ground floor next to *escalier F* (stairway F) in the **Préfecture de Police** (Map p105; ☎ 01 53 71 51 68; www.prefecture-police-paris.interieur.gouv.fr, in French; 1 place Louis Lépine, 15e 4e; ☎ 8.30am-4.50pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-4.15pm Fri; **M** Cité) for guidance.

Foreigners with non-EU passports must go to one of two offices, depending on the arrondissement in which they're living or staying. The offices are open from 9am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and from 9am to 4pm on Friday. The office that deals with 1er to 10e and 15e to 18e Arrondissements is **Hôtel de Police** (Map pp144-5; ☎ 01 44 90 37 17; 19-21 rue Truffaut, 17e; **M** Place de Clichy or La Fourche); for 11e to 14e and 19e to 20e Arrondissements go to **Hôtel de Police** (Map pp124-5; ☎ 01 53 74 14 06; 114-116 av du Maine, 15e 14e; **M** Gaité).

Long-Stay & Student

If you would like to work, study or stay in France for longer than three months, apply to the French embassy or consulate nearest to you for the appropriate *long séjour* (long-stay) visa. For details of au pair visas, which must be arranged *before* you leave home (unless you're an EU resident), see p414.

Unless you hold an EU passport, it's extremely difficult to get a visa that will allow you to work in France. For any sort of long-stay visa, begin the paperwork in your home country several months before you plan to leave. Applications cannot usually be made in a third country nor can tourist visas be turned into student visas after you arrive in France. People with student visas can apply for permission to work part-time; enquire at your place of study.

Visa Extensions

Tourist visas *cannot* be extended except in emergencies (such as medical problems). If you have an urgent problem, you should call the Service Étranger (Foreigner Service) at the Préfecture de Police (see left) for guidance.

If you don't need a visa to visit France, you'll almost certainly qualify for another automatic three-month stay if you take the train to, say, Geneva or Brussels and then re-enter France. The fewer recent French entry stamps you have in your passport the easier this is likely to be.

If you needed a visa the first time around, one way to extend your stay is to go to a French consulate in a neighbouring country and apply for another one there.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

In 1923 French women obtained the right to – wait for it – open their own mail. The right to vote didn't come until 1945 during De Gaulle's short-lived postwar government, and a woman still needed her husband's permission to open a bank account or get a passport until 1964. It was in such an environment that Simone de Beauvoir wrote *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex) in 1949.

Younger French women especially are quite outspoken and emancipated but self-confidence has yet to translate into equality in the workplace, where women are not infrequently passed over for senior and management positions in favour of their male colleagues. Women attract more unwanted

attention than men, but female travellers need not walk around Paris in fear: people are rarely assaulted on the street. However, the French seem to have given relatively little thought to sexual harassment (*harcèlement sexuel*), and many men still think that to stare suavely at a passing woman is to pay her a compliment.

Information & Organisations

France's women's movement flourished as in other countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but by the mid-80s had become moribund. For reasons that have more to do with French society than anything else, few women's groups function as the kind of supportive social institutions that exist in English-speaking countries.

La Maison des Femmes de Paris (Map pp158–9; ☎ 01 43 43 41 13; <http://maisondesfemmes.free.fr> in French; 163 rue de Charenton, 12e; ☎ office 9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 🚶 Reuilly Diderot) is a meeting place for women of all ages and nationalities, with events, workshops and exhibitions scheduled throughout the week.

France's national **rape-crisis hotline** (☎ 0 800 05 95 95; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Fri) can be reached toll-free from any telephone, without using a phonecard. It's run by a group called **Collectif Féministe contre le Viol** (Feminist Collective Against Rape; CFCV; www.sosviol.com).

In an emergency, you can always call the **police** (☎ 17). Medical, psychological and legal services are available to people referred by the police at the **Service Médico-Judiciaire** (☎ 01 42 34 86 78; ☎ 24hr) of the Hôtel Dieu (p403).

WORK

Although there are strict laws preventing non-EU nationals from being employed in France, it's possible to work 'in the black' (ie without the legally required documents). Au pair work is popular and can be done legally even by non-EU nationals.

To work legally in France you need a *carte de séjour* (p412). Getting one is almost impossible if you aren't a citizen of the EU, unless you are a full-time student. At the same time non-EU nationals cannot work legally unless they obtain an *autorisation de travail* (work permit) before arriving in France. This is no easy matter, as a prospective employer has to convince the authorities that there is no French person – or other EU national, for that matter – who can do the job being offered to you.

In addition to the fortnightly *Fusac* (p405), an excellent source for job-seekers, the following agencies might be of some assistance.

Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi (National Employment Agency; ANPE; www.anpe.fr, in French), France's national employment service, has lists of job openings and branches throughout the city. The **ANPE Hôtel de Ville branch** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 01 42 71 24 68; 20bis rue Ste-Croix de la Bretonnerie, 4e; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 9am–noon Thu; 🚶 Hôtel de Ville) assists those residing in the 1er, 4e and 12e arrondissements.

Centres d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse (CIDJ; Youth Information & Documentation Centres; www.cidj.com, in French) offices have information on housing, professional training and educational options, and notice boards with work possibilities. Its **Paris headquarters** (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 44 49 12 00, 0 825 090 630; 101 quai Branly, 15e; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 1–6pm Thu, 9.30am–1pm Sat; 🚶 Champ de Mars–Tour Eiffel) is a short distance southwest of the Eiffel Tower.

Doing Business

If you are going to Paris on business, it's a good idea to contact one of the main commercial offices or your embassy's trade office in Paris before you leave home, to establish contacts and make appointments. These include the following:

American Chamber of Commerce (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 56 43 45 67; www.amchamfrance.org; 1st fl, 156 blvd Haussmann, 75008 Paris)

Australian Trade Commission (Map pp166–7; ☎ 01 40 59 33 85; www.austrade.gov.au; 4 rue Jean Rey, 75015 Paris)

Canadian Government Department of Commercial & Economic Affairs (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 44 43 29 00; www.amb-canada.fr; 35–37 av Montaigne, 75008 Paris)

Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris (Map p86; CCIP; ☎ 01 55 65 40 03, 0 820 012 112; www.cci.fr, in French; Bourse de Commerce, 2 rue de Viarmes, 75001 Paris)

France-Canada Chamber of Commerce (Map pp128–9; ☎ 01 43 59 32 38; www.ccf-france-canada.com, in French; 5 rue Constantine, 75007 Paris)

Franco-British Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 53 30 81 30; www.franco britishchamber.com; 3rd fl, 31 rue Boissy d'Anglas, 75008 Paris)

Irish Embassy Trade Office (Map pp132–3; ☎ 01 44 17 67 04; www.embassyofirelandparis.com; 4 rue Rude, 75016 Paris)

New Zealand Embassy Trade Office (Map pp132–3; ☎ 01 45 01 43 10; www.nzembassy.com/france; 7ter rue Léonard de Vinci, 75116 Paris)

UK Embassy Trade Office (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 44 51 34 56; www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr; 35 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 75008 Paris)

US Embassy Trade Office (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 43 12 23 83; www.buyusa.gov/france/en; 2 av Gabriel, 75008 Paris)

If you are looking to set up a business in France and need a temporary office or secretarial assistance, contact the following:

Copy-Top (www.copypop.com, in French; ☎ 9am–7pm)

This chain is useful for photocopying, printing etc and has 28 outlets in central Paris, including a **Bastille branch** (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 48 05 80 84; 87 blvd Voltaire, 11e; 🚶 Voltaire) and a **Montparnasse branch** (Map pp124–5; ☎ 01 42 22 80 58; 52 blvd du Montparnasse, 15e; 🚶 Montparnasse Bienvenüe).

NewWorks (www.newworks.net, in French; ☎ 9am–7pm) This service bureau chain can supply most of your office and secretarial needs and serve as your temporary office too. There are four outlets, including **Champs-Élysées branch** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 72 74 24 54; 10 rue du Colisée, 8e; 🚶 Franklin D Roosevelt).

Volunteering

Under what's called the au pair system, single people aged 18 to 27 can live with a French family and receive lodging, full board and

some pocket money in exchange for taking care of the kids, babysitting, doing light housework and perhaps teaching English to the children. Most families prefer young women, but some positions are also available for men. Many families want au pairs who are native English-speakers; knowing at least some French may be a prerequisite. For practical information, pick up the recently updated *Au Pair and Nanny's Guide to Working Abroad* by Susan Griffith and Sharon Legg and visit the website of the **International Au Pair Association** (www.iapa.org).

By law, au pairs must have one full day off a week. Some families may provide metro passes. The family must also pay for French social security, which covers about 70% of medical expenses (get supplementary insurance if you are not an EU citizen).

Residents of the EU can easily arrange for an au pair job and a *carte de séjour* after arriving in France. Non-EU nationals who decide to look for au pair work after entering the country cannot do so legally and won't be covered by the protections provided for under French law.

Check the bulletin boards at the American Church (p405) and the classifieds in *Fusac* (p405) for job ads. In the latter, you'll find au pair work listed under 'Childcare'.

LANGUAGE

Whatever you may have heard about the French people and their reputation for arrogance when it comes to foreigners on their beat who don't speak their language, you'll find any attempt to communicate in French will be much appreciated. What is usually perceived as arrogance is often just a subtle objection to the assumption by many travellers that they should be able to speak English anywhere, in any situation, and be understood. You can easily avoid the problem by approaching people and addressing them in French. Even if the only sentence you can muster is *Pardon, madame/monsieur, parlez-vous anglais?* (Excuse me, madam/sir, do you speak English?), you're sure to be more warmly received than if you stick blindly to English.

Be Polite!

Politeness pays dividends in Parisian daily life and the easiest way to make a good impression on Parisian merchants is always to say *Bonjour Monsieur/Madame/Mademoiselle* when you enter a shop, and *Merci Monsieur/Madame/Mademoiselle, au revoir* when you leave. *Monsieur* means 'sir' and can be used with any adult male. *Madame* is used where 'Mrs' or 'Ma'am' would apply in English. Officially, *Mademoiselle* (Miss) relates to unmarried women, but it's much more common to use *Madame*, unless of course you know the person's marital status! Similarly, if you want help or need to interrupt someone, approach them with *Excusez-moi, Monsieur/Madame/Mademoiselle*.

If you want to learn more French than we've included here, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's comprehensive but user-friendly *French Phrasebook*.



SOCIAL

Meeting People

Hello.
Bonjour/Salut. (polite/informal)
 Goodbye.
Au revoir/Salut. (polite/informal)
 Please.
S'il vous plaît.
 Thank you (very much).
Merci (beaucoup).
 Yes/No.
Oui/Non.
 Do you speak English?
Parlez-vous anglais?
 Do you understand (me)?
Est-ce que vous (me) comprenez?
 Yes, I understand.
Oui, je comprends.
 No, I don't understand.
Non, je ne comprends pas.

Could you please ...?
Pourriez-vous ..., s'il vous plaît?
 repeat that **répéter**
 speak more **parler plus lentement**
 slowly
 write it down **l'écrire**

Going Out

What's on ...?
Qu'est-ce qu'on joue ...?
 locally **dans le coin**
 this weekend **ce week-end**
 today **aujourd'hui**
 tonight **ce soir**

Where are the ...?
Où sont les ...?
 clubs **clubs/boîtes**
 gay venues **boîtes gaies**
 places to eat **restaurants**
 pubs **pubs**

Is there a local entertainment guide?
Y a-t-il un programme des spectacles?
 Where is the toilet?
Où sont les toilettes?
 condom
préservatif

PRACTICAL

Question Words

Who? **Qui?**
 Which? **Quel/Quelle? (m/f)**

When? **Quand?**
 Where? **Où?**
 How? **Comment?**
 How much/many? **Combien/Combien de?**

Numbers & Amounts

0 **zéro**
 1 **un**
 2 **deux**
 3 **trois**
 4 **quatre**
 5 **cinq**
 6 **six**
 7 **sept**
 8 **huit**
 9 **neuf**
 10 **dix**
 11 **onze**
 12 **douze**
 13 **treize**
 14 **quatorze**
 15 **quinze**
 16 **seize**
 17 **dix-sept**
 18 **dix-huit**
 19 **dix-neuf**
 20 **vingt**
 21 **vingt et un**
 22 **vingt deux**
 23 **trente**
 24 **quarante**
 25 **cinquante**
 26 **soixante**
 27 **soixante-dix**
 28 **quatre-vingts**
 29 **quatre-vingt-dix**
 30 **cent**
 1000 **mille**

Days

Monday **lundi**
 Tuesday **mardi**
 Wednesday **mercredi**
 Thursday **jeudi**
 Friday **vendredi**
 Saturday **samedi**
 Sunday **dimanche**

Banking

I'd like to ...
Je voudrais ...
 cash a cheque **encaisser un chèque**
 change money **changer de l'argent**
 change some **changer des chèques**
 travellers cheques **de voyage**

Where's the nearest ...?
Où est ... le plus prochain?
 ATM **le guichet automatique**
 foreign exchange **le bureau de change**
 office

Post

Where is the post office?
Où est le bureau de poste?

I want to send a ...
Je voudrais envoyer ...
 letter **une lettre**
 parcel **un colis**
 postcard **une carte postale**

I want to buy ...
Je voudrais acheter ...
 an aerogram **un aérogramme**
 an envelope **une enveloppe**
 a stamp **un timbre**

Phones & Mobiles

I want to buy a phone card.
Je voudrais acheter une carte téléphonique.
 I want to make a call (to Australia/to Rome).
Je veux téléphoner (en Australie/à Rome).
 I want to make a reverse-charge/collect call.
Je veux téléphoner avec préavis en PCV.
 ('PCV' is pronounced 'pay say vay')

Where can I find a/an ...?
Où est-ce que je peux trouver ...?
 I'd like a/an ...
Je voudrais ...
 adaptor plug **une prise multiple**
 charger for my phone **un chargeur pour mon portable**
 mobile/cell phone for hire **louer un portable**
 prepaid mobile/cell phone **un portable pré-payé**
 SIM card for your network **une carte SIM pour le réseau**

Internet

Where's the local internet café?
Où est le cybercafé du coin?

I'd like to ...
Je voudrais ...
 check my email **consulter mon courrier électronique**
 get online **me connecter à l'internet**

Transport

What time does the ... leave?

À quelle heure part ...?

bus	le bus
ferry	le bateau
plane	l'avion
train	le train

What time's the ... bus?

Le ... bus passe à quelle heure?

first	premier
last	dernier
next	prochain

Are you free? (taxi)

Vous êtes libre?

Please put the meter on.

Mettez le compteur, s'il vous plaît.

How much is it to ...?

C'est combien pour aller à ...?

Please take me to (this address).

Conduisez-moi à (cette adresse), s'il vous plaît.

FOOD

breakfast	le petit déjeuner
lunch	le déjeuner
dinner	le dîner
snack	un casse-croûte
eat	manger
drink	boire

Can you recommend a ...

Est-ce que vous pouvez me conseiller un ...

bar/pub	bar/pub
café	café
restaurant	un restaurant

A table for two, please.

Une table pour deux, s'il vous plaît.

Is service/cover charge included in the bill?

Le service est compris?

Do you have a menu in English?

Est-ce que vous avez la carte en anglais?

I'd like the set menu.

Je prends le menu.

I'd like the dish of the day.

Je voudrais avoir le plat du jour.

I'm a vegetarian.

Je suis végétarien/végétarienne. (m/f)

May I see the wine list?

Puis-je voir la carte des vins, s'il vous plaît?

I'd like a glass of red/white wine.

Je voudrais un verre de vin rouge/blanc, s'il vous plaît.

Cheers!

Santé! (pronounced 'son-tay')

The bill, please.

La note, s'il vous plaît.

I don't eat ...

Je ne mange pas de ...

meat	viande
fish	poisson
seafood	fruits de mer

For more detailed information on food and dining out, see p223.

Food Glossary

MEAT, CHICKEN & POULTRY

agneau	lamb
bœuf	beef
brochette	kebab
canard	duck
charcuterie	cooked or prepared meats (usually pork)
côte	chop of pork, lamb or mutton
cuisses de grenouilles	frogs' legs
dinde	turkey
escargot	snail
foie	liver
foie gras de canard	duck liver pâté
jambon	ham
lapin	rabbit
lard	bacon
porc	pork
poulet	chicken
rognons	kidneys
saucisson	large sausage
veau	veal
viande	meat
volaille	poultry

ORDERING A STEAK

bleu	nearly raw
saignant	very rare (lit: 'bleeding')
à point	medium rare but still pink
bien cuit	lit: 'well cooked', but more like medium rare

FISH & SEAFOOD

anchois	anchovy
anguille	eel
calmar	squid
chaudrée	fish stew
coquille	scallop
St-Jacques	
crabe	crab
crevette grise	shrimp

crevette rose
fruits de mer
huitre
langouste
moules
poisson
saumon
thon
truite

VEGETABLES

ail
asperge
betterave
carotte
céleri
champignon
chou
citrouille
concombre
courgette
échalotte
épinards
haricots
haricots verts
laitue
légumes
lentilles
maïs
oignon
petit pois
poireau
poivron rouge/vert
pomme de terre
riz
salade
tomate

prawn
seafood
oyster
crayfish
mussels
fish
salmon
tuna
trout

garlic
asparagus
beetroot
carrot
celery
mushroom
cabbage
pumpkin
cucumber
courgette (zucchini)
shallot
spinach
beans
French (string) beans
lettuce
vegetables
lentils
sweetcorn
onion
peas
leek
red/green pepper
potato
rice
salad or lettuce
tomato

FRUIT & NUTS

abricot
arachide
banane
cacahuète
cassis
cerise
citron
fraise
framboise
marron
melon
noisette
orange
pamplemousse
pêche
poire
pomme
prune
raisin

apricot
peanut
banana
peanut
blackcurrant
cherry
lemon
strawberry
raspberry
chestnut
melon
hazelnut
orange
grapefruit
peach
pear
apple
plum
grape

BASICS

beurre
chocolat
confiture
crème fraîche

farine
huile
miel
œuf
poivre
sel
sucre
vinaigre

butter
chocolate
jam
cream (naturally thickened)
flour
oil
honey
egg
pepper
salt
sugar
vinegar

DRINKS

au lait
avec sucre
bière
café
eau
eau minérale
lait
jus d'orange
thé
vin rouge/blanc

with milk
with sugar
beer
coffee
water
mineral water
milk
orange juice
tea
red/white wine

EMERGENCIES

It's an emergency!

C'est urgent!

Could you please help me/us?

Este-ce que vous pourriez m'aider/nous aider, s'il vous plaît?

Call the police/a doctor/an ambulance!

Appelez la police/un médecin/une ambulance!

Where's the police station?

Où est le commissariat (de police)?

HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?

Où est ... le/la plus prochain/e? (m/f)

chemist (night)	la pharmacie (de nuit)
dentist	le dentiste
doctor	le médecin
hospital	l'hôpital (m)

I need a doctor (who speaks English).

J'ai besoin d'un médecin (qui parle anglais).

I have (a) ...

J'ai ...

diarrhoea	la diarrhée
fever	de la fièvre
headache	mal à la tête
pain	une douleur

GLOSSARY

(m) indicates masculine gender, (f) feminine gender, (pl) plural and (adj) adjective

accueil (m) – reception (eg at a hotel)
adjoint (m) – deputy mayor
alimentation générale (f) – grocery store
ancien régime (m) – ‘old order’; France under the monarchy before the Revolution
apéritif (m) – a drink taken before dinner
arrondissement (m) – one of 20 administrative divisions in Paris; abbreviated on street signs as 1er (1st arrondissement), 2e or 2ème (2nd) etc
auberge (de jeunesse) (f) – (youth) hostel
avenue (f) – avenue (abbreviated av)
banlieues (f pl) – suburbs
belle époque (f) – ‘beautiful age’; era of elegance and gaiety characterising fashionable Parisian life roughly from 1870 to 1914
bière à la pression (f) – draught/draft beer
bière (f) – beer
bière blonde (f) – lager
billet (m) – ticket
billetterie (f) – ticket office or window
biologique or **bio** (adj) – organic
boucherie (f) – butcher
boulangerie (f) – bakery
boules (f pl) – a game played with heavy metal balls on a sandy pitch; also called *pétanque*
brasserie (f) – ‘brewery’; a restaurant that usually serves food all day long
brioche (f) – small roll or cake, sometimes made with nuts, currants or candied fruits
bureau de change (m) – currency exchange bureau
bureau des objets trouvés (m) – lost and found bureau, lost property office
cacher (adj) – kosher
café du quartier (m) – neighbourhood café
carte (m) – a book of (usually) 10 bus, tram, metro or other tickets sold at a reduced rate
carrefour (m) – crossroads, intersection
carte (f) – card; menu; map
carte de séjour (f) – residence permit
cave (f) – (wine) cellar
chai (m) – wine storehouse
chambre (f) – room
chambre d’hôte (f) – private room, usually bed and breakfast
chanson française (f) – ‘French song’; traditional musical genre where lyrics are paramount
chansonnier (m) – cabaret singer
charcuterie (f) – a variety of pork products that are cured, smoked or processed, including sausages, hams, pâtés and rillettes; shop selling these products
cimetière (m) – cemetery
consigne (f) – left-luggage office

consigne manuelle (f) – left-luggage locker
correspondance (f) – linking tunnel or walkway, eg in the metro; rail or bus connection
cour (f) – courtyard
DAB (m) – distributeur automatique de billets; ATM
défendu – prohibited
dégustation (f) – tasting, sampling
demi (m) – half; 330ml glass of beer
département (m) – administrative division of France
dessert (m) – dessert
digestif (m) – ‘digestive’; a drink served after a meal
eau (f) – water
eau-de-vie (f) – ‘water of life’; any of a number of brandies made from fruits, berries or nuts
église (f) – church
embarcadère (m) – pier, jetty
entrée (f) – entrance; first course or starter
épicerie (f) – small grocery store
escalier (m) – stairway
espace (f) – space; outlet
exposition universelle (f) – world exhibition
fête (f) – festival; holiday
ficelle (f) – string; a thinner, crustier 200g version of the baguette not unlike a very thick breadstick
fin de siècle (adj) – ‘end of the century’; characteristic of the last years of the 19th century and generally used to indicate decadence
forêt (f) – forest
formule (f) – similar to a *menu* but allows choice of whichever two of three courses you want (eg starter and main course or main course and dessert)
fromagerie (f) – cheese shop
funiculaire (m) – funicular railway
galerie (f) – gallery; covered shopping arcade (also called *passage*)
galette (f) – a pancake or flat pastry, with a variety of (usually savoury) fillings; see also *crêpe*
gare or **gare SNCF** (f) – railway station
gare routière (f) – bus station
gendarmerie (f) – police station; police force
grand magasin (m) – department store
grand projet (m) – huge, public edifice erected by a government or politician generally in a bid to immortalise themselves
Grands Boulevards (m pl) – ‘Great Boulevards’; the eight contiguous broad thoroughfares that stretch from place de la Madeleine eastwards to the place de la République
halles (f pl) – covered food market
hameau (m) – hamlet
hammam (m) – steam room, Turkish bath
haute couture (f) – literally ‘high sewing’; the creations of leading designers
haute cuisine (f) – ‘high cuisine’; classic French cooking style typified by elaborately prepared multicourse meals

hors service – out of order
hôtel de ville (m) – city or town hall
hôtel particulier (m) – private mansion
interdit – prohibited
intra-muros – ‘within the walls’ (Latin); refers to central Paris
jardin (m) – garden
jardin botanique (m) – botanical garden
jeux d’eau (m pl) – fountain displays
kir (m) – white wine sweetened with a blackcurrant (or other) liqueur
laverie (f) – laundrette
laverie libre-service (f) – self-service laundrette
libre-service – self-service
lycée (m) – secondary school
mairie (f) – city or town hall
maison de la presse (f) – newsagent
marché (m) – market
marché aux puces (m) – flea market
marché couvert (m) – covered market
marché découvert (m) – open-air market
menu (m) – fixed-price meal with two or more courses; see *formule*
musée (m) – museum
musette (f) – accordion music
navette (f) – shuttle bus, train or boat
nocturne (f) – late night opening at a museum, department store etc
orangerie (f) – conservatory for growing citrus fruit
pain (m) – bread
palais de justice (m) – law courts
parc (m) – park
parvis (m) – square in front of a church or public building
passage (couvert) (m) – covered shopping arcade (also called *galerie*)
pastis (m) – an aniseed-flavoured aperitif mixed with water
pâté (m) – potted meat; a thickish paste, often of pork, cooked in a ceramic dish and served cold (similar to terrine)
pâtisserie (f) – cakes and pastries; shop selling these products
pelouse (f) – lawn
pétanque (f) – see *boules*
pied-noir (m) – ‘black foot’; French colonial born in Algeria
place (f) – square or plaza
plan (m) – city map
plan du quartier (m) – map of nearby streets (hung on the wall near metro exits)
plat du jour (m) – daily special in a restaurant
point d’argent (m) – ATM
poissonnerie (f) – fishmonger, fish shop

pont (m) – bridge
port (m) – harbour, port
port de plaisance (m) – boat harbour or marina
porte (f) – door; gate in a city wall
poste (f) – post office
pourboire (m) – tip
préfecture (f) – prefecture; capital city of a *département*
produits biologique – organic food
quai (m) – quay
quartier (m) – quarter, district, neighbourhood
raï – a type of Algerian popular music
RATP – Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens; Paris’ public transport system
RER – Réseau Express Regional; Paris’ suburban train network
résidence (f) – residence; hotel usually intended for long-term stays
rillettes (f pl) – shredded potted meat or fish
rive (f) – bank of a river
rond point (m) – roundabout
rue (f) – street or road
salle (f) – hall; room
salon de thé (m) – tearoom
séance (f) – performance or screening (film)
service des urgences (f) – casualty ward, emergency room
SNCF – Société Nationale de Chemins de Fer; France’s national railway organisation
soldes (m pl) – sale, the sales
sonnette (f) – doorbell
sono mondiale (f) – world music
sortie (f) – exit
spectacle (m) – performance, play or theatrical show
square (m) – public garden
syndicat d’initiative (m) – tourist office
tabac (m) – tobacconist (which also sells bus tickets, phonecards etc)
tarif réduit (m) – reduced price (for students, seniors, children etc)
tartine (f) – a slice of bread with any topping or garnish
taxe de séjour (f) – municipal tourist tax
télécarte (f) – phonecard
TGV – train à grande vitesse; high-speed train
tour (f) – tower
tous les jours – every day (eg on timetables)
traiteur (m) – caterer, delicatessen
Vélib’ (m) – communal bicycle rental scheme in Paris
vélo (m) – bicycle
version française or **v.f.** (m) – literally ‘French version’, a film dubbed in French
version originale or **v.o.** – literally ‘original version’, a nondubbed film in its original language with French subtitles
vin de table (m) – table wine
voie (f) – way; railway platform

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