

Travel Journal Entry 9: En Route to Paris

Hi Everyone,

I really enjoyed my time in Kenya, but now it's off to Paris. I'm flying from Nairobi to Amsterdam, which is a nine hour and five minute flight. I have a two hour layover in Amsterdam and then I fly to Paris, which will take one hour and 15 minutes.

I can hardly wait to get to Paris! There is so much to see and do. Paris is one of the world's leading business and cultural centers and is thought to be one of the greenest and most livable cities in Europe. Paris is also an important fashion city, so there are always lots of interesting and beautiful styles to see.

About 42 million tourists each year visit "La Ville-Lumière" which means 'City of Light'. It is a city full of history, culture, attractions, world class art galleries, museums and so many beautiful parks and gardens. Many people also believe Paris is a city full of love and romance.

The headquarters of the French Federation of Scouting is located in Paris, so hopefully I'll be able to meet some Guiding friends and maybe pick up a souvenir or two when I stop by for a visit.

Ta ta for now!

Your Pal,

Zoë



Travel Journal Entry 10: Paris, France

Greetings Trekkers!

Well, after a long flight, here I am in Paris! Bonjour, mes amies! Before I start exploring this amazing city, I need to head to Le Regent Montmartre hostel to drop off my bags and take a quick nap. I'll be using the Metro to get around the city which will make getting places easier, and is sure to be a bit of an adventure itself!



Day 1

My first stop today was at one of the city's most famous symbols: the Eiffel Tower. It's 320 meters tall (about 81 stories), so you can pretty much see it from all over the city. (To compare, the CN tower is 553.33 meters tall or 147 stories.)

The Eiffel Tower was designed Gustave Eiffel to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the French Revolution and unveiled in 1889 for the World Exhibition. Did you know that the tower is made up of about 12,000 iron pieces designed separately and then held together with 7 million nails? The Eiffel Tower is great to visit, but there sure are a lot of stairs to climb...over 1600! Here are some great pictures of the tower:

<http://www.aviewoncities.com/gallery/paris/eiffeltower.htm>. My next stop was the Arc de Triomphe. This monument is at the centre of the Place Charles de Gaulle which is formed by the intersection of 12 streets and is at one end of the Champs-Élysées. Construction started in 1806 but it was not actually completed until 1836. It is a very famous landmark, and there sure is a lot of traffic circling around it! I climbed to the top and had a great view of the city. Take a look for yourself here: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/arcdetriomphe.htm>.

After visiting the Arc de Triomphe, I decided it was time for something to eat and to head back to the hostel. I found a cute café for dinner where I had a delicious crêpe filled with mushrooms, spinach and chicken. Crêpes are very thin pancakes that can be filled or topped with all types of things and are popular all over France.

Day 2

Paris is known for its high fashion or "haute couture", and many designer stores are on the Champs-Élysées. I thought it might be fun today to take a walk along this famous street and look in all of the windows. I wasn't disappointed! It certainly lived up to its reputation as "the most beautiful avenue in the world". After 'window-shopping', it was time to rest in a café for some lunch. There are between 350 and 400 different types of cheese in France so I thought I better try some. I practiced my French and ordered "du fromage" (some cheese), "du pain" (some bread) and "le jus de pomme" (apple juice).

For the afternoon I visited the Louvre, which is one of the largest museums in the world. There are about 35,000 objects of all different types of art from prehistory to the 19th century. I didn't see them all, but I did see the Mona Lisa, which is the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Some parts of this wonderful museum were built as early as 1546. Here are some pictures of the museum (<http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/louvre.htm>) and the Mona Lisa (<http://www.parisdigest.com/museums/joconde.htm>).



Before heading back to the hostel, I found my way to the Fédération Du Scoutisme Français; the Guiding headquarters in France. Did you know there are five different organisations that are part of Guiding in France? I was able to learn a lot about each of them from my new French Guiding friends.

Day 3

Today it was off to Notre Dame, which is probably the most famous of all cathedrals. This building is even older than the Louvre. It took about 185 years to build and was completed in 1345. There are lots of unique features to the way its design including famous gargoyles on the cathedral walls. Have a look: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/notredame.htm>. Just outside Notre Dame is Point Zero, the point from where distances are traditionally measured in France. You have to look carefully to find it; it's a bronze star in the cobble stones. Many people think that if you stand on it and turn in a circle that you can make a wish and it will bring you luck!

I spent my afternoon relaxing in the jardin (garden) at the Palais du Luxembourg. The palace was originally owned by the Duke of Luxembourg and its gardens cover about 22.25 hectares (55 acres). At the centre of the park is a large fountain called the Grand Bassin and there are many statues, paths and chairs throughout the park. Anyone can grab a chair and move it to where they want to sit in the park. Take a look at some of the beautiful gardens here: <http://www.aviewoncities.com/paris/jardinduluxembourg.htm>. I found a great spot out of the sun where I could watch some people playing Boules, (or Petanque). This is a game played on the grass where players throw metallic balls at a target. To end my time in Paris, I took an evening boat tour on the Seine River. I got a last look at many of the beautiful places throughout the city as well as a view of Île de la Cité, the oldest settlement in Paris dating back to the 3rd century BCE.

It has been a wonderful and exciting few days in Paris!

“Bon nuit” (Goodnight)

Zoë



Girl Guides of Canada Guides du Canada

Updated 07/2012