

Getting Around Paris for Anxious Travelers



SailorAbroad 

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Types of Transportation Covered in this Guide

RER



Metro



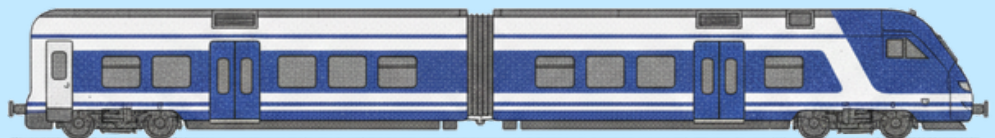
Bus



Bike



Train



SECTION 1: GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT INTO THE CITY WITHOUT STRESS

For many travelers, getting from the airport into the city is the most stressful part of the trip. I've traveled in and out of Paris many times, and in this section I'll walk you through the simplest, least overwhelming ways to get from both major airports, **Charles de Gaulle (CDG)** and **Orly (ORY)**, into Paris.

Flying into CDG

You have three main options:

Taxi – the least confusing and most convenient

Uber / Rideshare – ideal for groups or heavy luggage

RER B – the most budget-friendly option

Option 1: Take a Taxi (Most Stress-Free)

A taxi is often the easiest and least stressful way to get into Paris.

Steps:

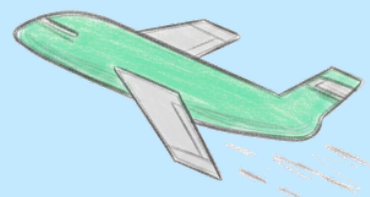
Exit baggage claim and follow the clearly marked “**Taxi**” signs to the official pickup area.

Important:

Avoid anyone approaching you inside the terminal offering a ride. Official taxis have a **roof sign**, and are easy to identify.

Cost:

€50–€70 (\$58–\$81), depending on **demand** and **time of day**.



SECTION 1: GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT INTO THE CITY WITHOUT STRESS

Tips for a Smooth Ride:

Confirm **the price** with the driver before leaving. Some drivers may try to increase the fare once you arrive.

Official Parisian taxis **must** accept card payments (Mastercard, debit, Apple Pay). Confirm this before leaving. If the driver insists on cash, politely request card payment or choose another taxi.

Taxis are the fastest and easiest option, especially if you're tired or carrying heavy luggage. They offer door-to-door service with no transfers, stairs, or ticket machines.

Option 2: Take Uber

Uber is convenient, especially for travelers in groups or with heavy luggage.

Pros:

- **Can** be **cheaper** than a taxi
- App-based and straightforward, therefore no negotiating

Cons:

- Prices fluctuate depending on demand and traffic

Finding the Uber Pick-Up Area at CDG

Terminal 1: Mostly international flights

Terminal 2: Large terminal split into T2A–T2G

Terminal 3: Smaller, primarily low-cost flights

Pick-Up Rules:

- Uber pick-ups are **not** at the arrivals curb
- Follow signs for **"Ride App Pickup"** or **"Taxi & VTC"** areas

Terminal-Specific Tips:

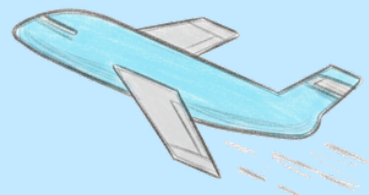
T1: Follow signs for **"VTC"** (requires a shuttle from arrivals)

T2: Pick-up location depends on the sub-terminal; usually near Level 0/Parking P0

T3: Single pick-up area near the parking lot

Additional Tips:

- Look for **"VTC / Ride App"** signs
- Wait at the designated pick-up point; drivers can be fined for curbside pickups
- Allow an extra 5–15 minutes for **walking or shuttling**
- If confused, ask airport staff since they usually speak English



SECTION 1: GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT INTO THE CITY WITHOUT STRESS

Option 3: Take the RER B (Budget-Friendly)

The RER B is the cheapest option, but requires more walking and navigation. The RER B is located in Terminal 2 and 3.

Step 1: Find the RER B Station

Terminal 1: Take the CDGVAL shuttle to **Terminal 3**

Terminal 2: Station is connected (look for “Gare RER / RER B”)

Terminal 3: Station is connected (look for “Gare RER / RER B”)

Step 2: Buy Your Ticket

- Get a ticket to central Paris (ex. Châtelet–Les Halles)
- It costs **€14** per person
- Buy tickets at machines or ticket counters (English available)
- **Keep your ticket** since you'll need it to exit the barriers in Paris

Step 3: Board the Train

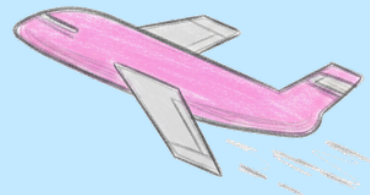
- Take RER B toward **Robinson, Saint-Rémy-lès-Chevreuse, or Massy-Palaiseau**
- Trains run every 10–15 minutes
- The travel time is about 35–45 minutes

Major Central Paris Stops:

- Denfert-Rochereau
- Saint-Michel (Notre-Dame)
- Châtelet–Les Halles (major hub with metro lines 1, 4, 7, 11, & 14)

Tips:

- Much cheaper than a taxi, especially for solo travelers
- Requires stairs, walking, and navigating busy stations
- If you want the smoothest possible start to your trip, consider a taxi or Uber



SECTION 1: GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT INTO THE CITY WITHOUT STRESS

Flying into Orly Airport

Orly is smaller and easier to navigate than CDG, making it less stressful for first-time travelers.

Option 1: Take a Taxi

- Follow signs for official taxis and ride-hailing apps after baggage claim
- Confirm the price and payment method before leaving
- **Do not** accept rides from random individuals

Option 2: Take Uber

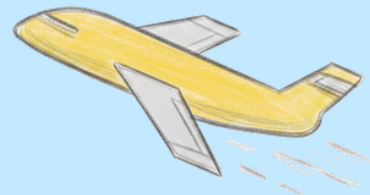
- Rideshare pick-up areas are clearly labeled “**VTC / Rideshare**”
- Orly has four terminals; the app will guide the driver to your terminal
- **All** terminals are within short walking distance

Option 3: Take Metro Line 14

- Metro signs are clearly marked inside and outside the airport
- Purchase a ticket at a machine or ticket booth
- It costs **€14** to travel to Paris
- Validate your ticket at the entrance gate
- Take **line 14** and transfer to your hotel’s metro line

Tips:

- Tickets can be purchased using the “**IDF Mobilités**” App or “**Bonjour RATP**” App
- Tickets can be stored on a **virtual** Navigo card via “Apple Wallet” or “Google Wallet”
- Tickets have **no expiration** date, which saves time later



SECTION 2: TRANSPORTATION PASSES EXPLAINED SIMPLY

Paris transportation offers several options. Below are my picks for you:
Option 1

Option 1: Navigo Easy

- It costs €2 for the physical card (tickets sold separately)
- This is the option **I recommend** for most tourists
- It's a simple, reusable, contactless card

How to Buy and Load the Card:

- Go to a ticket kiosk and select your preferred language
- Choose to buy a **new card** or **reload** an existing one
- Place your card on the blue circle to reload

Select the Tickets You Want:

- The **metro, train, & RER** cost €2.55 per ticket
- The **bus and tramway** cost €2.05 per ticket
- You can load **different ticket types** on the **same card**
- Pay using card/contactless payment
- The machine will issue your card and allow you to print a receipt



Important:

DO NOT THROW THE CARD AWAY. It costs money, but once you have it, you can recharge it indefinitely.

Ticket Validity:

- The **metro/train/RER tickets** are valid for **2 hours** from first validation (including transfers, but not re-entry)
- The **bus/tram tickets** are valid for **1.5 hours**, including transfers



SECTION 2: TRANSPORTATION PASSES EXPLAINED SIMPLY

Options 2 & 3

Option 2: Navigo Découverte + Forfait Navigo Semaine

- It costs **€5** for the physical card + **€32.40** for the weekly pass
- The Navigo Découverte is the physical card required **to load** the Forfait Navigo Semaine (weekly pass)
- This pass includes **unlimited** metro, bus, tramway, RER, and train access
- Worth it if you'll use transport 14+ times in a week

Important Requirements:

- You **must** attach a **photo ID** (3cm x 2.5cm) and **sign your name**
- Photo booths are available in stations (€5–€8)
- Without a photo and signature, **you can be fined**
- Navigo Easy cards do not require a photo



VERY IMPORTANT:

- The weekly pass only works **Monday through Sunday**
- If you buy it on Saturday, it only works for Saturday and Sunday
- **Make sure you buy it at the beginning of the week**

Tips:

- If buying tickets makes you nervous, go to a staffed ticket booth, because they can help you purchase the correct option
- Kids under 4 years old ride for free

Option 3: Mobile App Tickets

If you want to avoid physical cards and ticket lines, mobile tickets are an option.

Steps:

- Download **"Bonjour RATP"**
- Create an account and **upload a photo of yourself**
- Go to the **"Tickets"** tab and create a digital card
- Purchase single tickets or a weekly pass
- Add the card to **"Apple Wallet"** to scan at entrances



SECTION 3: HOW TO USE THE METRO WITH CONFIDENCE

Paris has many metro lines, but tourists only need to know these ones:

Line 1



Line 4



Line 6



SECTION 3: HOW TO USE THE METRO WITH CONFIDENCE

These are the major stops for these lines:

Line 1

Charles de Gaulle–Étoile
(Arc de Triomphe /
Champs-Élysées)

Tuileries

Louvre–Rivoli

Châtelet

Saint-Paul (Le Marais)

Bastille

Line 4

Denfert-Rochereau
(Catacombs)

Montparnasse–Bienvenüe

Saint-Germain-des-Prés

Saint-Michel (Notre-Dame)

Châtelet

Strasbourg–Saint-Denis

Line 6

Charles de Gaulle–Étoile

Bir-Hakeim (Eiffel Tower)

Montparnasse–Bienvenüe

Denfert-Rochereau

Bercy

Bonus

Montmartre / Sacré-Cœur:

Line 12 → get off at Abbesses

Moulin Rouge:

Line 2 → get off at Blanche



SECTION 3: HOW TO USE THE METRO WITH CONFIDENCE

Every metro line runs in two directions. Always confirm you are boarding the train going the correct way.

Step-by-Step Example: Going to the Eiffel Tower

- Let's say you start at **Montparnasse–Bienvenüe**
- You need **line 6** (light green)
- Find a metro entrance labeled with the line 6 icon
- Validate your Navigo card before entering
- Look for the direction signs after the gates

To reach Bir-Hakeim:

- From Montparnasse–Bienvenüe, follow signs for **Charles de Gaulle–Étoile**



Tips:

- Your starting station name is displayed outside the entrance and near ticket booths
- Each line is **color-coded**
- Inside the train, a diagram shows all stops and available transfers
- **To transfer** lines, follow signs inside the station and do not exit
- Look for the icon of the line you want to switch to

Metro Etiquette:

- If crowded, remain standing and avoid using fold-down seats
- Some trains require **pressing a green button** or **lifting a metal handle** to open doors
- Say **"Pardon"** politely if you need to move through a crowd
- When doors beep and lights flash, **do not rush inside**, patiently wait for the next train
- Stand away from the tracks while waiting
- Use **"Bonjour RATP"** to check live traffic and closures

SECTION 4: WHEN TO TAKE THE BUS

I generally recommend avoiding buses during the day, especially in summer. They can be crowded, hot, and slow due to traffic.

When Buses Make Sense:

- At **night** (less traffic and often faster)
- When metro lines are closed or under construction
- They are **cheaper** than the metro

Buying Tickets:

- You can use your Navigo Easy or weekly pass for the bus, but if you do not have any more tickets available you can buy them on your phone.
- Tickets are no longer sold onboard
- You can text **"93100"** with BUSXX (XX = bus number)
- For example, **BUS47** or **BUSN01**
- The ticket is billed to your phone bill

Using Navigo:

- Validate your card on the scanner when boarding

Important:

- **Wave** clearly to signal the bus to stop **to pick you up**
- Press the **red button** located throughout the bus **to request a stop** before exiting



Show the confirmation message to the driver.

SECTION 5: TAKING A BIKE

It is possible to rent bikes around the city. There are two popular brands called “Lime” and “Vélib”.

Riding bikes in the summer is a great way to explore the city.

Lime (Electric)



Price & Steps:

- 30 cents/min. + 1 euro to start
- Download the “**Lime**” App
- Look on the map to see available bikes
- Select a **bike/scan QR code** on bike to **start**
- **To end** the ride, find a **parking zone** on the app
- End the ride on the app, and **photograph the parked bike**

Vélib’ (Electric & Mechanical)



Price:

- **One-way-trip** ticket is **€3** for 45 min
- If the bike is **mechanical (green)**, then it’s **+€1** for each additional 30 min
- If the bike is **electric (blue)**, then it’s **+€2** for each additional 30 min
- Multiple day passes are also available
- Download the “**Vélib**” App

Steps:

- Look for a station and find a bike
- On the bike, click the **check mark button**, and if it is the first use you will input the **account number** and **pin code** given to you at **registration**

Important: If the bike is damaged or doesn’t work, **report it** to the app and select a different bike.

When returning the **Vélib’**, make sure to **lock the front wheel** into the station to ensure the ride has ended.

SECTION 6: DAY TRIPS TO DISNEY & VERSAILLES

The RER is different from the Metro; it's a larger train that travels outside central Paris. You need to use the RER to reach these destinations.

To reach Disneyland: Take RER A (red line)

- A standard Metro-Train-RER ticket or Navigo Week Pass is sufficient



Access to RER A from Paris Stations:

Charles de Gaulle-Étoile
Auber
Châtelet-Les Halles
Gare de Lyon
Nation
La Défense

Direction Matters:

- Take **RER A** to **Marne-la-Vallée-Chessy**
- Do not** take trains going toward Boissy-Saint-Léger
- Marne-la-Vallée-Chessy is the **final** stop, so you can't miss it. Disneyland is directly outside the station.

SECTION 6: DAY TRIPS TO VERSAILLES & DISNEY

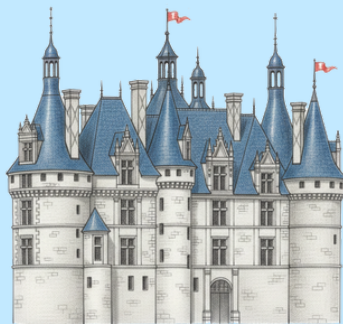
Tickets are one-way, so make sure that you have a return ticket

To reach Versailles: Take RER C (yellow line) or train line L, a standard Metro-Train-RER ticket or Navigo Week Pass is sufficient



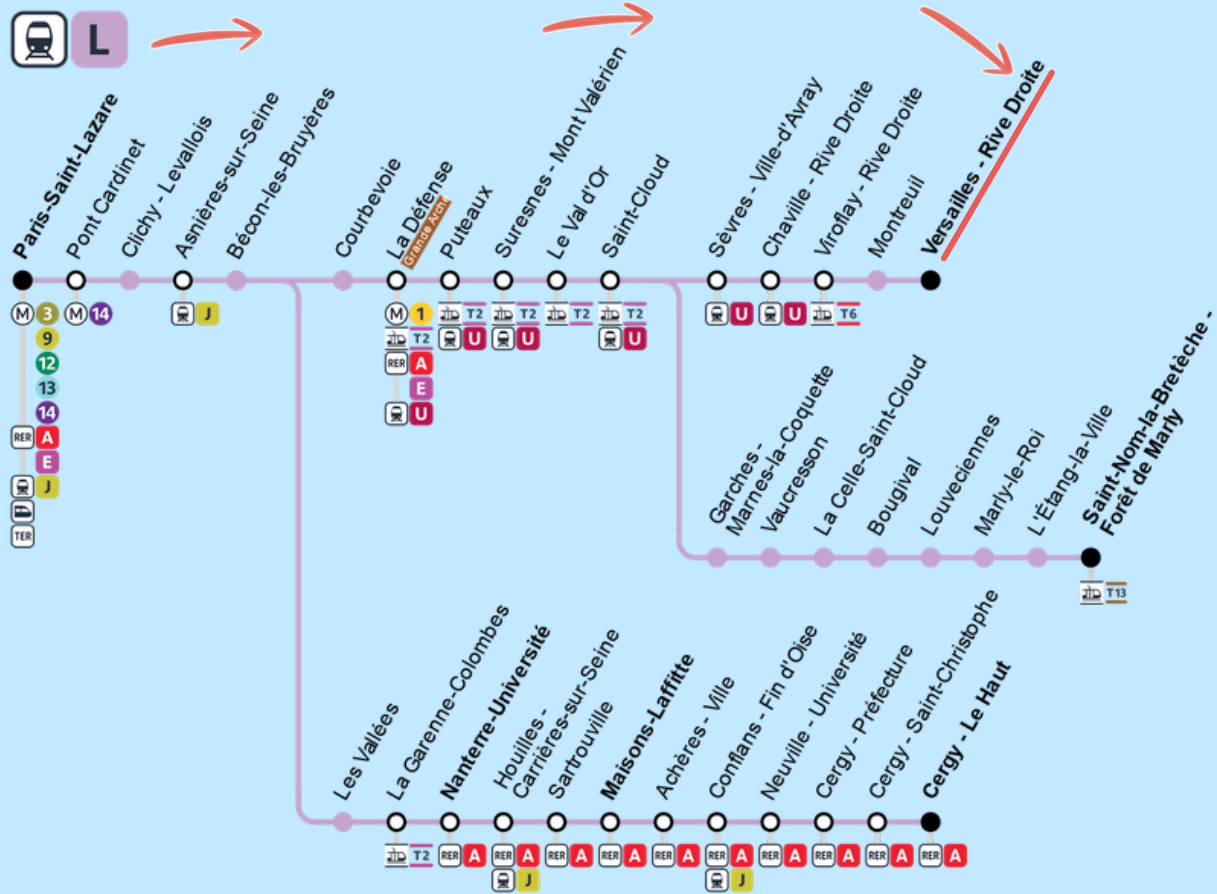
Access to RER C from Paris Stations:
Champs de Mars–Tour Eiffel
Invalides
Musée d'Orsay
Saint-Michel–Notre-Dame
Paris-Austerlitz

Take RER C towards **Versailles Château Rive Gauche**. From the station, walk 15–20 minutes to the château main entrance.



SECTION 6: DAY TRIPS TO VERSAILLES & DISNEY

If you want to take train line L:
Go to Saint-Lazare or Pont Cardinet train station.



At Saint-Lazare:

- Go upstairs to **line L** platforms (it's at the top)
- Scan your Navigo card to access the platforms
- I **don't recommend** buying tickets at this station because the **machines are slow** and it's crowded
- Make sure to have enough tickets loaded onto your pass **before**
- Check screens for **Versailles-Rive Droite**
- Platform numbers appear shortly before departure
- Make sure to enter the correct train that matches the **direction, number, and color** that you want

Platform Colors:

Pink: platforms 1–11

Green: platforms 12–21

Blue: platforms 22–27

Once you board the train, get off at **Versailles-Rive Droite** and **walk** 25 minutes to the château.

SECTION 7: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Congratulations for making it this far. I know this is a lot of information to take in. The good news is that Paris transportation becomes very simple once you understand the basics.

But what if something goes wrong? Closures, wrong directions, or confusion can happen. The key is staying calm.

1st Problem



Metro Closures



Solution



- Check **Bonjour RATP** for live updates
- Use an alternative bus route if available
- Walk from a nearby station if possible
- Switch to a different metro line that reaches a similar area

2nd Problem



Your Phone Dies or You Get Lost



Solution



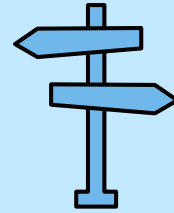
- Exit at the next station and ask **RATP staff** or nearby people
- Go to a large hub like **Châtelet** to reorient yourself
- Stations clearly display line numbers, colors, directions, and exits
- **Choose the direction** based on the **last station name**
- Exit to street level since it's easier to navigate **above ground**
- Always carry a **portable charger**, especially if you are using digital tickets

SECTION 7: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

3rd Problem



Wrong Direction or Missed Stop



Solution



- If you go in the wrong direction by accident, get off at the **next** possible stop.
- Take the stairs up to the exit, but **do not exit**, simply walk to the other platform following the signs to go in the correct direction
- If you **miss** your stop, **exit** the metro **as soon as you realize**.
- If you're not too far, then you can just walk to your destination

4th Problem



Metro Patrol Checks



Solution



As long as you've paid and validated, there's nothing to fear.

To avoid fines:

- Always **validate** your pass
- Use the **correct ticket** type
- Don't jump gates
- Attach a **photo** and **name** to **Navigo Découverte** cards

SECTION 7: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

5th Problem



Traveling With a Service Animal



Solution

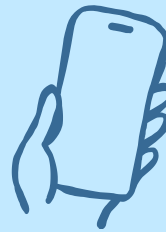


- Certified service dogs are allowed **free of charge**
- Must be **leashed** or harnessed
- Documentation is recommended
- **Emotional Support Animals** are **not** recognized as service animals
- ESAs over 13 lbs must wear a muzzle
- Large dogs **may be** restricted during peak hours
- Small animals must be in carriers
- For pets, taxis or Ubers are often easiest

6th Problem



Pickpocketing



Solution



Unfortunately, pickpocketing happens. I was personally pickpocketed in the metro, and I want to help you avoid it.

Tips:

- Assume someone is **always watching**
- **Never** put your phone **in your pocket**, even if it's brief
- Keep valuables secured and close to your body
- Never use your phone **near train doors**
- Be especially alert at gates, stairwells, and **validation points** (this is where mine was stolen)

If it happens:

- Alert **RATP** staff immediately
- Call the police at **17** if you have a description

THANK YOU & GOODLUCK

Getting around Paris doesn't have to be overwhelming. You don't need to know everything or get it perfect because the system is flexible, help is always available, and mistakes are easy to fix.

This guide was designed to give you simple, practical tools so you can move around Paris with more confidence and less stress. Choose the transportation option that feels right for you, take things one step at a time, and trust that you'll find your way.

Paris is meant to be enjoyed. I hope this guide helps you feel calmer, more prepared, and ready to explore the city.

You don't need to read this all at once. Save it on your phone or print the sections you need. This guide is meant to be used when you need it most.

Where To Find Me:

Blog: sailorabroad.com

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