



THE AGE OF ABSOLUTISM: **Paris in the 17th Century**

Bourbon kings Henri IV, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, and the Catholic church all left their marks on 17th-century Paris, a century some historians refer to as “le grand siècle”, the grand century. Grand 17th century buildings abound throughout the city. You’ll see many of them on this walk, starting with the **Louvre** where we’ll trace the contributions of each of the century’s powerful monarchs. From there you’ll cross back and forth over the river several times visiting grand Baroque monuments such as the **Institut de France** and the churches of **Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais** and **Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis**. You’ll also see quiet, peaceful squares including the **place Dauphine** and the lovely **place des Vosges**. You’ll have a chance to stroll through the predominantly 17th-century **Ile Saint-Louis** before hopping on a bus to the **Invalides quarter** of the city. The walk ends there with stops at Louis XIV’s largest and grandest Parisian building projects, the **Hôtel des Invalides** and the stunning **Dôme des Invalides**.

Start: Louvre (Métro: Palais-Royal/Musée du Louvre)

Finish: Dôme des Invalides (Métro: Varenne or La Tour Maubourg)

Distance: 3 - 4 miles plus a bus trip

Time: 4 - 5 hours

Best Days: Tuesday - Sunday

HISTORY

Politics and Economics

The story of 17th-century France is the story of how increasingly powerful monarchs consolidated and then dramatically expanded their power. Internally, the century was shaped by the growth of a strong central state which — as the century progressed — became more powerful and effective and took over many jobs previously performed by the church. Externally, by the end of the century, France became the most powerful country in Europe.



Henri IV

Henri IV (1589-1610), the first of the Bourbon kings, was a Protestant when he took the French throne. He waged a multi-year battle with Catholic factions who opposed his claim to the throne, laid siege to Paris for five years and finally converted to Catholicism after accepting that he could never take Paris otherwise. “Paris is well worth a mass,” he is said to have concluded. Henri IV’s reign marked a return to peace and prosperity in France after decades of religious wars. In 1598, he signed the Edict of Nantes granting tolerance to Protestants. His chief minister, the Duc de Sully, stabilized the currency and closely supervised the collection of taxes. Together, Sully and the king initiated many building projects in Paris, beginning the transformation of the neglected, crowded, and dirty city they inherited into a capital worthy of a powerful monarch.



Louis XIII

When Henri IV was assassinated (by a crazy radical Catholic), his son **Louis XIII** (1610-1643), took the throne as a minor. Power was held first by a regent, his mother Marie de Medici, and then by a Prime Minister, Cardinal Richelieu. Richelieu’s goal was to “make the king absolute in France and France supreme in Europe.” Richelieu was smart, tenacious and crafty. Within France he managed to put down a rebellion of French Huguenots and to crush nobles who resisted his efforts to establish the absolute power of the king. Externally, he freed France from dominance by the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. Louis XIII, for his part, finally managed to produce an heir after 23 years of marriage to Anne of Austria. But, like his father, he died before his son reached adulthood.

Consequently, the next king, **Louis XIV**, “**The Great**” (1643-1715) again took the throne as a minor and was educated by another cardinal, Cardinal Mazarin. Mazarin was a secretary to and protege of Richelieu. He continued to pursue Richelieu’s goals. When Mazarin died, Louis XIV assumed power himself, declaring, “L’état, c’est moi.” He claimed to rule by divine right, eventually becoming the first and greatest absolute monarch.



Louis XIV

Louis XIV controlled the nobility by creating a grand life style at Versailles to divert them from political pursuits. He also improved military organization and the administration of justice, and expanded the size and effectiveness of the state bureaucracy. Louis XIV’s reign was also dominated by 35 years of war (the War of Devolution, the Dutch War, the War of the League of Augsburg, the War of Spanish Succession) which gained some territory but ultimately ran up huge debts and destroyed the economy. He also set back religious tolerance by issuing the Edict of Fontainebleau (1695) revoking toleration previously extended to Protestants under the Edict of Nantes.

During the 17th century, France pursued **mercantilist economic policies**. The state provided a basic framework for economic growth, promoting tax revenues and national economic competitive advantages by levying protective tariffs, subsidizing a merchant marine, and expanding overseas trade and exploration to areas such as Canada (claimed as a French territory in 1663), the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, and the West Indies. Overseas trade brought in gold and raw materials from the Americas, and overall economic growth fostered the growth of an urban middle class.

Religion and Philosophy

Early in the 17th century, a resurgent Catholic church put Paris in the vanguard of the **Counter-Reformation**, the church’s response to the Protestant challenge. But by the end of the century, new ways of thinking were challenging the Catholic church in even more fundamental ways than the Protestants had. The growth and influence of the **scientific method** fundamentally reoriented Western thought away from a focus on religion and ancient wisdom and toward a belief in progress through experimentation and critical thinking.

A Frenchman, **René Descartes**, was an important figure in the scientific revolution. After deciding that his years of study had led to more doubt than understanding, Descartes decided to set aside his learning and to begin with one premise that seemed to him to be beyond doubt. “I think, therefore I am.” From this basic premise he developed an entire philosophical system.

Another French scientist and philosopher, **Blaise Pascal** is credited with devising a theory of probability. Later in life, he struggled to unite science and religion. In his *Pensées* (Thoughts), he tried to show that Christianity was not contrary to reason. Among other arguments, he combined his scientific and religious thinking by arguing famously that “God is a reasonable bet.”

Architecture

During the 17th century, grandiose **Baroque architecture** was at the center of the efforts of both the monarchy and the church to communicate and glorify their powers. The Counter-Reformation Catholic church used the Baroque style to win souls through drama and emotion, and to symbolize the Catholic church's resurgence in the face of earlier challenges from Protestantism. Absolute monarchs used the style to display and to reinforce their power.

The Baroque style originated in Rome at the end of the 16th century. The name is generally believed to be derived from "barroco", the Portuguese word for a deformed or imperfect pearl. The term was originally a term of derision, coined by 19th century detractors in referring to what they found to be especially bizarre examples of 17th and early 18th-century architecture.

Indeed, the signature characteristics of Baroque architecture all revolve around its generally "over-the-top" nature. While it may have the same classical origins as Renaissance architecture, it has **more of everything**. It is **more monumental, dramatic and theatrical**. It is **more decorated**, with columns, pediments, and sculpted decoration competing for space on facades, and colored marble, paint and gold leaf competing for attention inside. Baroque **domes** are **bigger** than Renaissance domes. And Baroque architecture has **more curves**. In fact, Roman Baroque architecture pushes classical references to such extremes, it almost seems to be defying rather than emulating its classical roots.



Val-de-Grace



Louvre

While French Baroque architecture took its original cues from Rome, it evolved by mid-century into a uniquely French adaptation of the style, often referred to as the **French Classical** or **French Classical Baroque** style. While it is definitely grander, more monumental and more decorative than the French Renaissance style, the French Classical Baroque style is **not as extreme** as the Roman Baroque. It is more restrained, less emotional and more intellectual, more toned down decoratively, and truer to classical models than its Roman Baroque counterpart. This description is even more true of secular than religious architecture. French 17th-century **churches** still took their inspiration from churches in papal Rome. On the other hand, the French kings and aristocracy who were the patrons for **secular buildings** were more intent on developing a uniquely French style. After the Academy of Architecture was created in 1671, the style of and rules for French classicism became very strictly defined.

Growth and Development

With the country finally at peace internally after the Wars of Religion, and the economy booming, the population of Paris increased dramatically in the 17th century. In 1600, the population was **300,000**. By 1700, it doubled to **600,000**. In 1638, the boundaries of the city increased by about a third. The city walls on the Right Bank were extended several blocks to the west to provide better protection to the Louvre and the boundaries on the Left Bank moved south. The extended Left Bank walls, called the "Fossés Jaunes" (yellow trenches) were named for the yellow limestone used to construct them.



Porte Saint-Denis



Porte Saint-Martin



André Le Nôtre

By 1670, Louis XIV felt the city was secure as a result of his conquests. He decided to demolish the city walls on the Right Bank and the walls on the Left Bank were allowed to deteriorate. The demolition of the city walls facilitated the integration of the suburbs (ie. the "faubourgs" outside the walls) into the city fabric. They were formally incorporated into the city limits in 1674. Where the city gates had been along the northern wall on the two main roads leading in and out of the city, Louis XIV built two huge triumphal arches, the **Porte Saint-Denis** and the **Porte Saint-Martin**. He replaced the walls themselves with broad boulevards where people could promenade and look out beyond the city. These boulevards were and still are called the "grands boulevards."

In addition to opening up the city by demolishing its walls and building broad boulevards, Louis XIV and the century's other two monarchs opened up the city in a number of other ways. New streets generally became straighter and wider. In addition to creating broad boulevards, Louis XIV also built wide avenues to link central parts of the city to outlying areas. The most famous of these avenues was the avenue des Champs Elysées, which Louis XIV had his landscape architect André Le Nôtre design with trees lining either side.

Royal squares developed during the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIV. They were a new Parisian phenomenon when they were built. In an otherwise dense and crowded city, the squares provided spaces for people to promenade and enjoy the outdoors.



Place des Vosges



Place des Victoires



Jardin des Tuileries



Jardin des Plantes

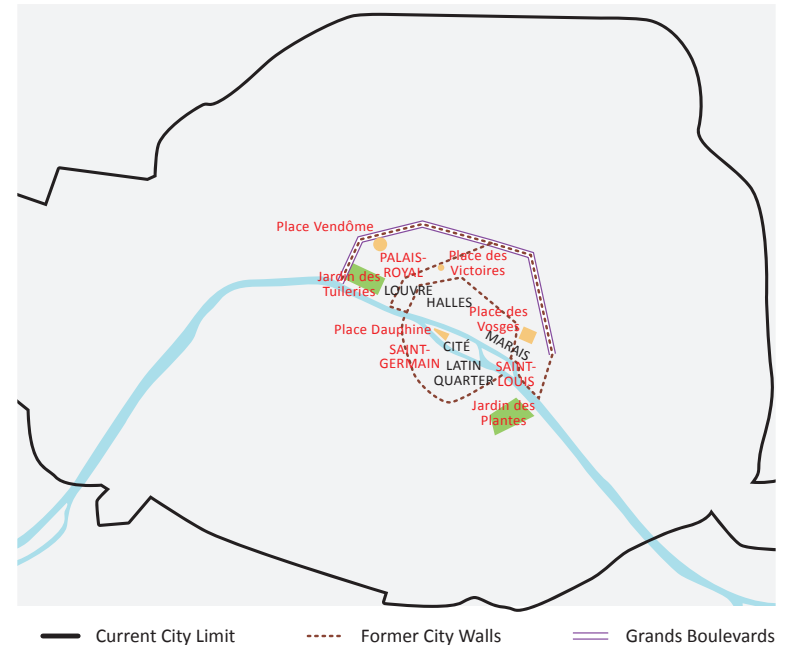
Henri IV planned three squares. Two were built, the **place Dauphine** and the place Royal (now called the **place des Vosges**). Later in the century, private developers with support from Louis XIV created two more squares, the **place des Victoires** and the **place Vendôme**. A statue of Henri IV on horseback was placed just outside the place Dauphine on the Pont Neuf. In the place des Vosges an equestrian statue of Louis XIII was placed at the center. Equestrian statues of Louis XIV were at the center of the squares developed during his reign.

During the 17th century, parks and gardens started to become a part of the city fabric. The formerly private **Jardin des Tuileries** was opened to the public, and a new park, the **Jardin des Plantes** was created. The Jardin des Plantes was the city's first public garden, planted with medicinal plants in 1633 by Louis XIII's doctor, and opened to the public in 1640. These gardens were built in a carefully ordered French style with plants organized into geometrically shaped sections. The French instinct was to control nature, in contrast to the English who developed less structured more natural gardens.

In addition to trying to open up the city, 17th-century monarchs and their ministers also tried to control and shape development. They attempted, for example, to regulate setbacks from streets. They also tried to use public works projects to create incentives for development to occur in certain areas.

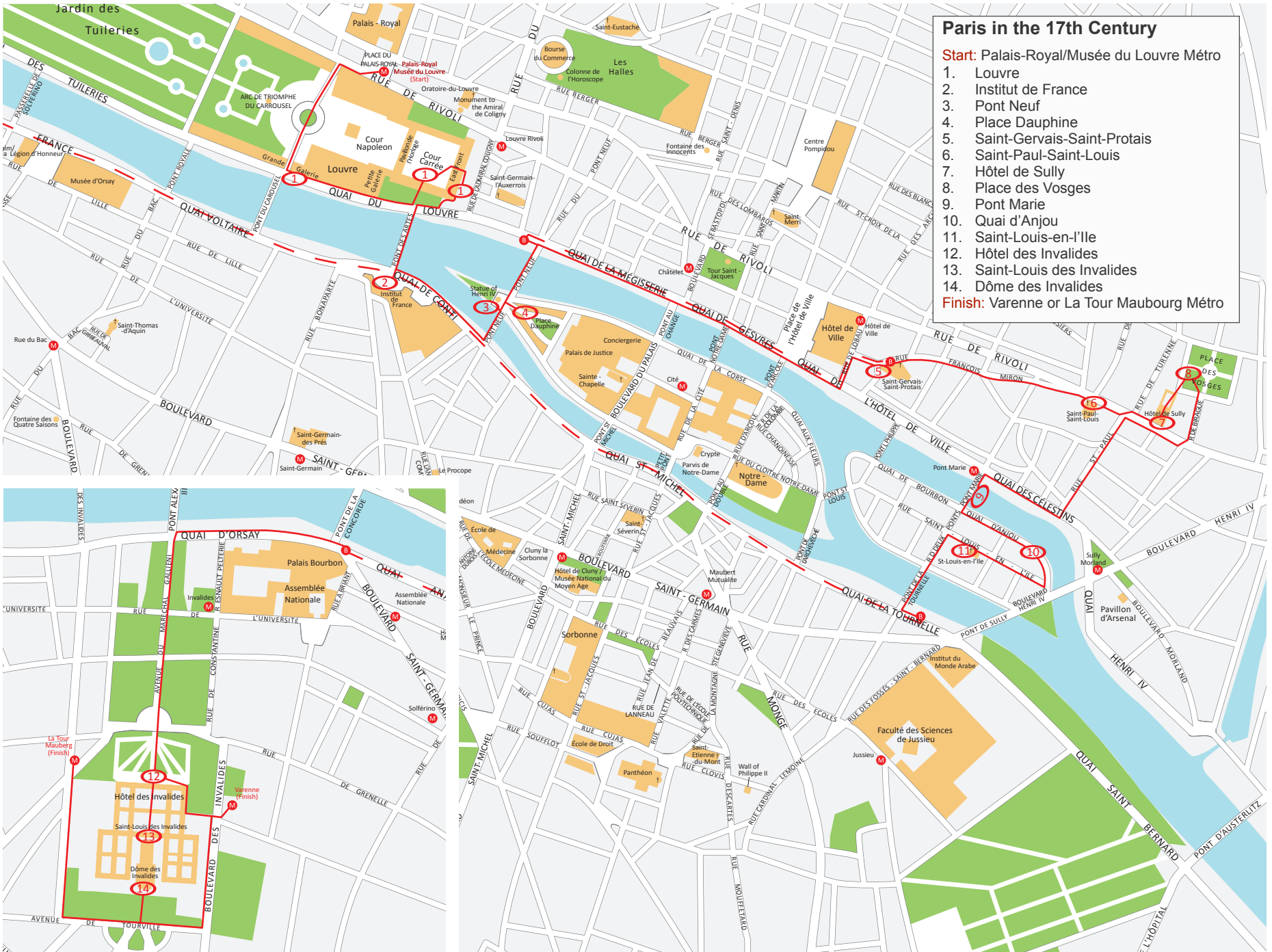
Despite efforts to control development and to clean and open up the city, many parts remained crowded and dirty. In fact, much of the impetus for the opening up of new quarters was a general interest among the rich in getting away from the congestion, dirt and smells of the center city. Three areas in particular became new sites for homes for the wealthy: **Saint-Germain des Prés**, the **Palais-Royal** quarter, and the **Ile Saint-Louis**. The Marais also continued to develop.

17th Century Paris - Growth and Development



WALKING TOUR

Route Map



Logistics

Time and Distance: This walking tour includes a little less than **4 miles of walking** plus a **2-mile bus trip** along the Left Bank of the Seine from the Ile Saint-Louis to the Invalides. You can **cut off a mile** of walking, turning the 4 mile walk into a 3 mile walk, by taking a bus trip along the Right Bank between the Pont Neuf and the church of Saint-Gervais-St-Prottais. Bus links are described in more detail at the appropriate points in the walking tour. You can do this tour in a **4-hour morning or afternoon** (using the recommended bus trips). But there are lots of places to hang out along the tour route ... the place Dauphine, the place des Vosges, and the charming Ile Saint-Louis. You may also want to spend some time at the Musée de l'Armée in the Invalides. If you enjoy military history it's well worth a visit. A more leisurely paced walking tour could take the **better part of a day**. A good plan would be to do the walking tour from the Louvre to the Ile Saint-Louis in the morning, stop for lunch, and then take the bus over to the Invalides in the afternoon.

When to Go: On Mondays, you won't be able to gain access to the Hôtel de Sully courtyards and bookstore. The Invalides complex is closed on the first Monday of each month except during July and August. Try to take this walking tour on Tuesday through Sunday.

Start

*From the **Palais-Royal/Musée du Louvre Métro** station, walk south through the Louvre to the river. This walk begins along the building's southern front.*

Buildings and Monuments



1. Louvre

Work on the **Louvre** continued under each 17th century monarch. Henri IV continued work on the southeastern front of the **Grande Galerie** (1695-1610) linking the Louvre to the Tuileries Palace. Designs were done by Louis Métezeau and Jacques Androuet II du Cerceau. The initials H and G can still be seen on the façade, signifying Henri IV and his mistress Gabrielle d'Estrées. More significantly, Henri IV envisioned a plan to quadruple the size of the Cour Carrée. The first part of this plan was carried out under Louis XIII, who constructed the **Pavillon de l'Horloge** and northwestern part of the Cour Carrée (1624-54) according to a design by Jacques Le Mercier. Louis XIV completed the plan using Louis Le Vau for the design. He also began work on the huge classical **east front** (1661-73) of the Louvre. Claude Perrault's design for the east front marked a significant step in the development of a distinctly



French architectural style. Louis XIV's superintendent of buildings, Colbert, originally considered a number of designs proposed by the best known Baroque architect of the time, Italian Gianlorenzo Bernini. His designs were ultimately deemed too extravagant and impractical; Perrault's much more restrained and dignified "French" design was chosen instead. The huge, disengaged Corinthian columns and flat balustraded roof give the east front the appearance of an ancient temple, and were both significant departures from previous French designs. The east front also influenced the design of later Parisian buildings such as the Opéra Garnier. (www.louvre.fr ; Mo, Th, Sa-Su 9-6, We, Fr 9 AM-10 PM, closed Tu: 10 €)

From the east front of the Louvre, walk back toward the river; take a right then a left across the Pont des Arts which leads to the



2. Institut de France

Louis Le Vau designed the **Institut de France** (1662-69) in a style intended to emulate the Louvre. However, the Institut — with its dome and profusion of columns, carvings, and curves — is much more Baroque than the Louvre. Planned as a memorial to Cardinal Mazarin and as a school to educate students from the four provinces acquired during his ministry, it was originally called the Collège des Quatres Nations. The east wing still houses Mazarin's library, and his tomb is in the chapel. The rest of the building was given over in 1805 to the Institut de France which encompasses the five French academies. The most famous is the Académie Française which was founded in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu to preserve the French language. The academies of painting and sculpture and of architecture (since merged into the Académie des Beaux Arts) and the Académie des Sciences were also founded during the 17th century. They were part of the many efforts of the monarchy to both promote and control the development of virtually every aspect of French culture.

As you face the Institut, turn left and walk east along the river to the next bridge, the



3. Pont Neuf

The **Pont Neuf** (the New Bridge) is, ironically, the oldest bridge in Paris. It was begun by Henri III and completed in 1604 by Henri IV who contributed the idea for the most revolutionary aspect of the bridge's design. It was the first bridge in Paris to be constructed without buildings on it. For the first time, people were able to look out at the river and across to the new "modern" Louvre emerging on the Right Bank. The bridge quickly became used almost like a city square or park. Its openness, classical style and proportions set the tone for the new Paris Henri IV was trying to create. A water pump (since Samaritan woman giving Jesus a drink of water was built next to the bridge. The Samaritaine department store across the river takes its name from the pump's decoration. The statue of Henri IV on his horse was a precursor to the statues of other monarchs erected in a number of royal squares in Paris over the course of the following century .

Directly across the street from the statue of Henri IV, you will find the entrance to the



4. Place Dauphine

The Pont Neuf was "new" at the time it was built not only because of its design but also because it was part of a broader "urban design" scheme which also included the adjacent rue Dauphine and place Dauphine. The **place Dauphine** (1607-19) is another example of Henri's IV's foresight and vision. It was the first royal plaza in Paris. The project was a microcosm of the more open and classical new Paris Henri IV was trying to create. Development rights were granted to private developers but the crown controlled the architecture. Henri IV demanded that the building facades be identical and that other aspects of the project (the gardens and placement of statuary) be designed as a coherent whole. Originally, there was only one way in, at the apex of the triangle. The street cutting through the back of the plaza was created in the 19th century.

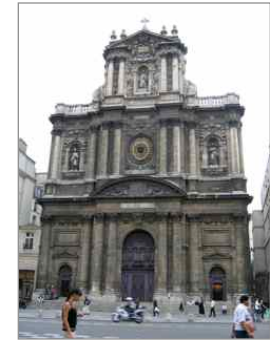
*Go back to the Pont Neuf and head over to the Right Bank. A pleasant walk along the river will take you to the Hôtel de Ville; take a left behind the Hôtel de Ville onto rue de Lobau and a right a block later into the plaza in front of Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais. Or, after you cross the bridge, turn left to the Pont Neuf-Quai du Louvre bus stop where you can **catch the 76 bus**; get off three stops later at the Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais stop immediately adjacent to the church.*



5. Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais

Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais (1494-1540/1616-1621) shows the beginning of the 17th-century stylistic transition from **Gothic to Baroque** architecture. The body of the church, designed by Martin Chambiges in the early 16th century, is Flamboyant Gothic. Salomon de Brosse's western façade, built much later, is Baroque, the first façade in Paris to have all three orders (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian). The facade of Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais was certainly influenced by Roman Baroque churches but differs from them in a significant way. Roman church facades typically had two stories; Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais has three stories. The need for the high three-story facade was driven by the high Gothic structure behind it. The façade served as a template for several other churches in Paris including Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis. Inside, the transept has Renaissance balconies, so all three early styles — Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque — are represented in the church's design. (Daily 5:30 AM-9 PM)

Turn right as you exit the church, then turn right on to rue François Miron; follow it until it joins rue de Rivoli; a short block later, Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis will be on the right.



6. Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis

The Jesuit church of **Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis** (1627-41) is representative of the many Catholic institutions built in Paris during the Counter-Reformation in the first half of the 17th century. It was built on land given to the Jesuits (who were in the vanguard of the Counter-Reformation) by Louis XIII. The invitation was meant to signal the beginning of a new Catholic dawn in France, and the church and associated monastery became a major center of Christian and aristocratic life in Paris. Cardinal Richelieu gave the first mass there. The dome of Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis was one of the first domes built in Paris, a contemporary of the Sorbonne and forerunner of the Invalides. It emulates Saint Peter's in Rome but unlike Saint Peter's, it is obscured by the high three-story facade. The façade emulates Saint-Gervais-Saint-Prottais but is larger and more elaborately decorated. The interior is based on the simple Jesuit plan, an axis without side aisles or ambulatory. Like most Jesuit churches, it is very elaborately decorated. The oval windows at either end of the transept are a Baroque adaptation of Gothic rose windows. (www.saintpaulsaintlouis.com ; Mo-Fr 8-8, Sa 8-7:30, Su 9-8)

After exiting the church, cross the street and turn right; walk along rue de Rivoli; the entrance to the Hôtel de Sully will be on the left.



7. Hôtel de Sully

The **Hôtel de Sully** (1624-25) was designed by Jean Androuet du Cerceau for Mesme Gallet who earned his fortune as a financier and lost it as a gambler. In fact, he was such an inveterate gambler he is said to have gambled away his daughter's gems and replaced them with fakes. Gallet had to sell the mansion to his creditors. It is named for Henri IV's wealthy and influential finance minister, the Duc de Sully, who acquired it later. It has a typical hôtel plan with the main living area between the entry courtyard and the garden and two nearly symmetrical service wings on either side. The building at the back of the garden was originally an orangery. The Baroque stone façades of the main building are decorated with differently shaped pediments over the windows on each



story, scrolls over the dormer windows, and allegorical sculpture. The Four Seasons are on the main block with the male figures on the courtyard side representing Autumn and Winter and the female figures on the garden side representing Spring and Summer. The Four Elements — Air, Fire, Earth, and Water — are on the wings. There is a lovely carved plaster molded ceiling over the central staircase, and the bookstore in the main building has a very pretty painted wood ceiling and an excellent collection of books about Paris. (62 rue Saint-Antoine; courtyard and bookstore Tu-Su 10-6, closed Mo)

Walk to the back of the garden behind the Hôtel de Sully; in the back right corner you will find a passageway leading you right into the place des Vosges.



8. Place des Vosges

Henri IV's grandest project was the **place des Vosges** (1609-12), originally called the place Royale. The square was conceived as the site of a silk manufacturing venture with workshops on the north side, and housing for artisans on the other sides of the square. The silk manufacturing project was part of a broader royal mercantilist program. The goal was to stem the export of gold and silver to purchase luxury goods abroad by developing a domestic capacity to manufacture luxury goods. Workshops were built on the north side of the square, but as housing was built on the other sides, the square increasingly became attractive as investment property and housing. Eventually, the workshops were demolished to make way for more housing. At the time the square was built, it was striking for its scale, its vast open space, and the uniformity of



its facades (required by the monarchy). Originally, entry was planned to be only through the arches of the King's and Queen's pavilions on the south and north sides. The northeast corner was in fact enclosed until the 19th century, but the northwest corner has always remained open. An equestrian statue of Louis XIII was placed in the middle of the square in 1639. This square influenced the design of many subsequent squares in France and even as far away as England where it shaped the design of London's first square, Covent Garden.

Exit the place des Vosges through the southern pavilion onto the narrow rue de Birague which will take you back to rue de Rivoli; cross the street, turn right then left two blocks later on to rue Saint-Paul; when you reach the river turn right; the first bridge you reach will be the Pont Marie.



9. Pont Marie

The **Pont Marie** connects the Left Bank to the **Ile Saint-Louis**. It is the only one of the island's original bridges still standing today. The bridge is named for Christophe Marie, the first developer of the island. The island was created in 1614, early in the reign of Louis XIII, when the Ile des Vaches (previously a cow pasture) and the Ile Notre-Dame were joined together to create one island, the Ile Saint-Louis. The island quickly became a fashionable place to live. It was the first section of Paris to be designed with a straight grid street pattern.

Cross the bridge and turn left on to the



10. Quai d'Anjou

Architect Louis Le Vau lived on the **quai d'Anjou** and designed many of the houses on the quay. The **Hôtel de Lauzun** (17 quai d'Anjou) was built in 1656/57 by Le Vau for an arms dealer, Charles Gruyn. It was subsequently bought by the Duc de Lauzun, one of Louis XIV's favorite military commanders. It has a restrained facade framing a beautiful wrought-iron balcony. Le Vau designed and lived in the house at 3 quai d'Anjou. He also designed the **Hôtel Lambert** between 1642 and 1652 for Jean-Baptiste Lambert, a counselor and secretary to the king. The Hôtel's garden side faces the river at the very tip of the island. There is a huge gated entrance at 2 rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île. Le Vau's design for the Hôtel Lambert and Charles Le Brun's beautiful interior decoration were both universally acclaimed in their time, and made Le Vau's and Le Brun's reputations. They went on to become two of the principal designers of Versailles. Unfortunately, the Hôtel Lambert is not open to the public.

At the end of the island, turn right onto rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île. The church of Saint-Louis-en-l'Île will be a little over two blocks down on the left.



11. Saint-Louis-en-l'Île

Saint-Louis-en-l'Île was built between 1664 and 1726 as a parish church for the newly developing neighborhood on Ile Saint-Louis. It was designed by Louis Le Vau. The plain exterior of the church is rather unusual for its time. The clock tower was added to the church in the 18th century. The interior decoration is clearly Baroque with Corinthian pilasters, carvings and gilding. There is even a cupola over the nave which is not visible from the street. (www.saintlouisenlile.catholique.fr ; Mo-Sa 9-1, 2-7:30, Su 9-1,2-7)

Continue on rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île to the next corner; turn left on rue des Deux Ponts and cross over the Pont de la Tournelle onto the Left Bank; turn left to the quai de La Tournelle bus stop; catch the 24 bus for about 2 miles along the river to the Assemblée Nationale stop just before the bus turns onto the bridge over to the place de la Concorde; get off and continue walking west along the river to the Pont Alexandre; turn in toward the Esplanade des Invalides and follow the avenue du Maréchal Galliéni to the huge Hôtel des Invalides at the end of the esplanade.



12. Hôtel des Invalides

The **Hôtel des Invalides** (1670) was built by Louis XIV to house disabled soldiers who previously stayed in monasteries or more often lived on the streets as vagrants. It is the largest building of his reign next to Versailles. The complex was a virtual city within a city with dormitories for 3,000 men as well as kitchens, dining rooms, health facilities and workshops. The main structure was designed by Libéral Bruand, but work was taken over by Jules Hardoin-Mansart when the king and his ministers grew impatient with Bruand's slowness. Hardoin-Mansart generally kept with Bruand's design for this part of the structure. The dormer windows along the façade of the Hôtel are all different, each with helmets and shields. The long, somewhat monotonous facade is broken up in the middle by a large entrance framed by a triumphal arch. The pediment of the arch frames an equestrian relief of Louis XIV.

Enter the Hôtel des Invalides through the arch; the entrance to the church of Saint-Louis des Invalides is at the back of the courtyard.



13. Saint-Louis des Invalides

Saint-Louis des Invalides was designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart as a place of worship for the soldiers staying in the Hôtel des Invalides. This church was originally part of a very unusual design. It was the soldiers' part of a larger church and was linked to the royal part of the church (now the Dôme des Invalides) by an oval sanctuary where an altar serving both parts of the church sat. When the Dôme des Invalides was redesigned in the 19th century to receive Napoleon's tomb, the soldiers' part of the church was walled off from the Dôme des Invalides by a glass screen and given its own altar.

Exiting from the courtyard, make your way around either side of the complex to the huge



14. Dôme des Invalides

The French Baroque style reached its pinnacle in Paris with what is now known as the **Dôme des Invalides** (1680-1706). For this part of the church, Jules Hardouin-Mansart adapted a design he inherited from his great uncle, the well-known and influential architect, François Mansart. He designed the inside of the church in a Greek cross plan with circular chapels in each corner connected to each of the crossings. The huge dome is set on a drum with twelve windows supplying natural light to the church. The design for the interior of the dome was very innovative. Rather than placing an opening at the top of the dome as was typical for the time, Hardoin-Mansart adopted a design from his uncle involving two domes. The ceiling of the higher dome is uninterrupted, covered with frescos and blue sky and beautifully lit from below by windows concealed by a second truncated interior dome. The multi-storied exterior of the church has much stronger vertical lines than most Baroque churches. This appearance is due to the somewhat elongated shape of the dome and the fact that it is topped by a lantern and a very tall thin spire.



The original function of the Dôme des Invalides church has never been clear. It may have been intended as a Bourbon family funerary chapel or perhaps as a pantheon for military heroes. Today, the tombs of many of France's military heroes are, in fact, enshrined in the church along with Napoleon's tomb. (www.invalides.org; Apr-Sep daily 10-6, Oct-Mar daily 10-5, closed first Mo of each month; Dôme des Invalides open to 7 in Jul and Aug; 9 € combined ticket for Dôme des Invalides and Musée de l'Armée)

Finish

*After you visit the church (and the Musée de l'Armée if you choose) you have a choice of two **Métro** stations; the **Varenne** station is to the east (right) of the complex heading back toward the river along the rue de Varenne; or La **Tour-Maubourg** station is to the west (left), heading toward the river along boulevard La Tour-Maubourg to rue de Grenelle.*