



## ENLIGHTENMENT TO REVOLUTION:

# Paris in the 18th Century

France and Paris were changed dramatically by the Enlightenment and ensuing French Revolution. Likewise, many of the monuments and buildings you'll see on this walk were "reinvented" during the 18th century. The **Panthéon**, where this walk starts, began as a church sponsored by an absolute monarch and ended the century as a monument to the country's most famous Enlightenment figures. The **place de la Concorde**, where the walk ends, saw one monarch celebrated with a statue and another executed on the same site. **Saint-Sulpice** and **Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin** were transformed from churches to secular "temples" and back to churches again. And the **Palais du Luxembourg**, **Hôtel de Salm**, and **Palais Bourbon**, homes at the beginning of the century to royalty and aristocrats, ended the century as homes to the country's newly created democratic institutions. In addition to showcasing neoclassical buildings and monuments, the walk also provides an opportunity to wander through part of the **Saint-Germain des Prés** quarter, one of the city's most lively and interesting neighborhoods.

**Start:** Panthéon (Métro: Maubert Mutualité)

**Finish:** Place de la Concorde (Métro: Concorde)

**Distance:** 3 miles

**Time:** 3 - 4 hours

**Best Days:** Any day



## HISTORY

### Politics and Economics

As the 18th century began, France's monarchy and the Catholic church (known later collectively as the "ancien régime") were at the apex of their power and glory. But the excesses of the monarchy, Enlightenment ideas, and an increasingly powerful and restive bourgeoisie were leading inexorably toward the decline and ultimate destruction of the "ancien régime" in the bloody French Revolution.



Madame de Pompadour

**Louis XV** (1715-1774) although named "The Beloved" early in his reign, was ultimately one of the most detested kings in French history. Two regents and a cardinal, Cardinal Fleury, controlled the early part of his rule. Two of his mistresses, Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry dominated his later years. Over Louis XV's sixty years on the throne, government corruption and inefficiency grew. He pursued the War of Austrian Succession which exhausted the country's finances, and the Seven Years War (known as the French and Indian War in North America) which lost France its possessions in Canada.



Louis XVI

Unlike his predecessors, **Louis XVI** (1774-1793) was an adult when he took the throne. He inherited a country on the verge of bankruptcy and was not equipped by either temperament or intellect to deal with the situation. He did have several competent ministers who attempted to institute financial and political reforms, but the king's lack of support doomed these efforts to failure. He and his wife, Marie-Antoinette of Austria, ultimately lost their heads in the French Revolution.

Economically, the century was characterized by widespread **economic unrest**. Nobles and the clergy (2% of the country) owned over one third of the land but paid no taxes. There was a large and very poor underclass. The bourgeoisie were economically strong but politically weak and unhappy with high taxes.

Although the government was poor and on the verge of bankruptcy most of the time due to the pursuit of costly wars, it still sent men and arms to support the American Revolution against France's enemy England, adding still further to the country's economic problems. By the end of that war, over half the government's budget was going to service its debt.

## Religion and Philosophy

The political and economic situation in 18th-century France provided fertile ground for **Enlightenment** philosophers (known as "**philosophes**") who believed that natural "scientific" laws could be applied to social, economic and political as well as physical behavior.



Voltaire

**Voltaire**, the most well known of the "philosophes", was a prolific writer whose works helped spread Enlightenment ideas. He was especially strong in his critique of traditional religion and his advocacy for religious tolerance. **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** was born in Geneva but spent most of his adult life in France. His works such as *On Education* and *On the Social Contract* contributed to thinking on both education and democracy. **Denis Diderot** helped to popularize Enlightenment ideas in his life's work, the first encyclopedia.

**Montesquieu** was a strong critic of both the monarchy and the church, and made a far reaching contribution to political thought in arguing for the importance of checks and balances created by the separation of powers in government. **François Quesnay** made an equally important contribution to economic thought. He repudiated mercantilism and laid the groundwork for "laissez-faire" economics, arguing that allowing the economy to operate according to the laws of supply and demand would benefit society more than government regulation.

## The French Revolution

The French Revolution had its beginnings in 1789 when Louis XVI convened the **Estates-General** at Versailles for the first time in 175 years in a desperate attempt to achieve fiscal reform and raise taxes. Within the Estates-General there was a fundamental disagreement on voting. The **First Estate** (Clergy) and **Second Estate** (Nobles) wanted block voting since their two blocks would have dominated the **Third Estate** (the other 98% of the population). The larger Third Estate in turn wanted voting by head count where they would have dominated.

Confusion, distrust, and a misunderstanding led the Third Estate (as well as some sympathetic clergy and nobles) to walk out and hold a meeting on the Versailles tennis court where they declared themselves to be a **National Assembly**. They swore not to break up or go home until a constitution was established (the "**tennis court oath**").

Louis XVI finally recognized the National Assembly at the end of June, but by that time the Revolution was about to take off on its own. In Paris on July 14, 1789, rumors, hunger and a general restlessness caused a mob to storm the **Bastille** prison, a symbol of the “ancien régime.” Revolts and riots followed and spread from Paris to other parts of the country. From this point the Revolution went through several stages.



Over the next several years, relatively **moderate** leaders in the new National Assembly pursued political and economic reforms. They wrote the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen** in 1789 and in 1791 they produced a **Constitution**. They also abolished the feudal system and confiscated a large amount of church property. They limited the powers of the monarchy, but they did not abolish it.

In 1792, more **radical** leaders took control after Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette tried to escape France to join counter-revolutionary groups in Austria. They were caught and returned to Paris. The incident gave more radical groups an excuse to take control in the National Assembly. They abolished the monarchy, declared the **First Republic** and executed Louis XVI in January of 1793.

Meanwhile, other European powers led by frightened monarchs, organized to restore the monarchy in France. The revolutionaries responded to this external threat by raising a “citizen army” to confront their European enemies in a series of conflicts known collectively as the European Wars. Internally, they declared an “emergency” which in turn led to the **Reign of Terror** pursued by the **Committee of Public Safety**. During 1793-94, in the name of defending the Revolution from foreign and domestic enemies, 40,000 people were executed or killed including Marie-Antoinette and many of the revolutionary leaders themselves. Many churches were also destroyed, damaged, or converted to secular purposes.

In 1795, amidst continued confusion bordering on anarchy, a reactionary **Directory** was established. In 1799, the Directory, which had become almost a dictatorship, was overthrown in a **coup d'état**. The coup was led by a young general who had made a name for himself in the European Wars, **Napoleon Bonaparte**. Napoleon brought order to the country and negotiated peace treaties with France's enemies. His rise to power marked the end of the French Revolution.

## Architecture

Early in the 18th century, the **Rococo** style had some influence on architecture, particularly in interior decoration. The style became especially popular after the death of Louis XIV as aristocratic life shifted away from Versailles and back to more intimate Parisian townhouse settings. The name Rococo derives from two French words — “rocaille”, meaning grotto rock, and “coquille”, meaning shell. It references rococo's **naturalistic** decorative motifs such as shells, plants, flowers, curls, and swirls.



Hôtel de Soubise

The French Rococo style is more **delicate, refined** and **playful** than the earlier French Classical Baroque. Colors are **lighter** with more ivory and pastels. Columns are **thinner**. Architectural details are **less pronounced**. The Rococo style, however, was really little more than one last flourish of frivolity. It was too playful and lighthearted for churches and government buildings, and quickly lost its popularity among royalty and the aristocracy as well.

By mid-century, both ecclesiastical and secular architecture of all types converged around an even purer classical style than either **French Renaissance** or **French Classical Baroque**. This style is generally referred to as **neoclassical**. The neoclassical architectural theories espoused by the Academy of Architecture emphasized **proportion**, the **rigorously correct** use of classical features, and **high standards** for materials and construction.



Saint-Philippe-du-Roule

The resulting buildings were rather spartan, severe and **unadorned**, with **strong** rectangular and horizontal **lines**. They were dominated by **large projecting porticos** and **giant columns**. In short, churches and secular buildings alike came to look more and more like Greek and Roman temples. The neoclassical style's strict adherence to ancient Greek and Roman architectural ideals was very much in keeping with rational Enlightenment thinking and emerging democratic ideals which took their inspiration from Greek city states and from pre-imperial Rome.

## Growth and Development

During most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Paris continued to grow, albeit more slowly than it had in the prior century. From a base of **600,000** in 1700, the population rose to **660,000** just before the Revolution. By 1800, after the Revolution, it had declined to **550,000**. As a result, Paris lost its status as the largest city in Europe to London.



Denfert-Rochereau



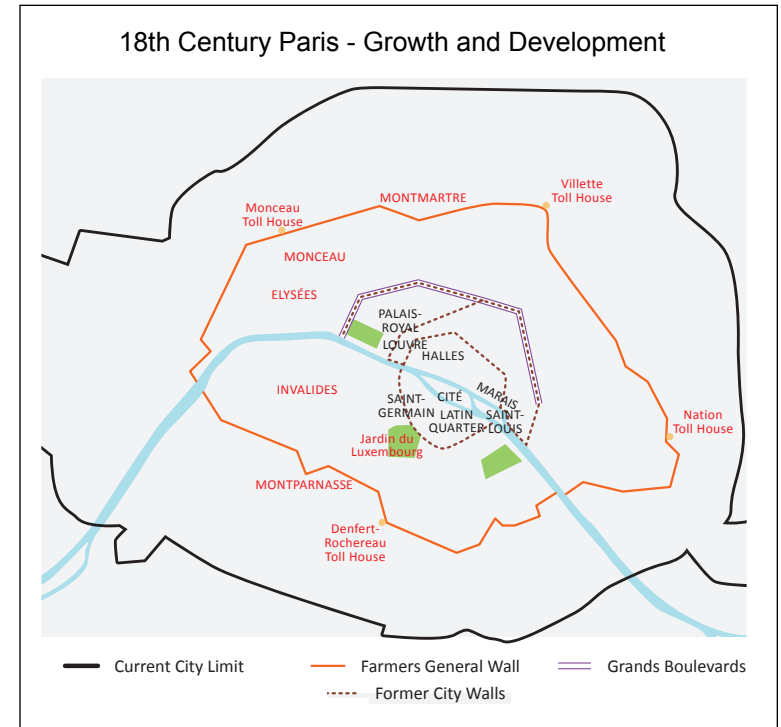
Parc Monceau

In 1784, a new kind of city wall was built around Paris, not for security but to help collect taxes on goods entering the city. The **Farmers General Wall** (“fermiers généraux” were tax collectors) generally followed the outline of the city limits set late in the previous century. The wall was not popular. Some consider it to be among the factors causing the dissatisfaction and unrest leading to the French Revolution. One clear effect of the wall was to stimulate development of entertainment districts just beyond the wall where untaxed liquor was cheaper. The entertainment districts of **Montmartre** and **Montparnasse** originated in this era. Toll houses from this wall remain today in several parts of the city including **Nation**, **Denfert-Rochereau**, **La Villette**, and **Parc Monceau**.

Density and uncontrolled growth were ongoing concerns. Carriages and foot **traffic** clogged narrow streets. Sanitation was a major issue. Some **sewers** were covered over, and officials tried to solve **water** problems with various kinds of pumps. Overburdened **cemeteries** also became a major issue. Several cemeteries were closed and their contents moved to catacombs in old quarries on the Left Bank. After fire wiped out much of London in 1666, **fires** also became a major worry.

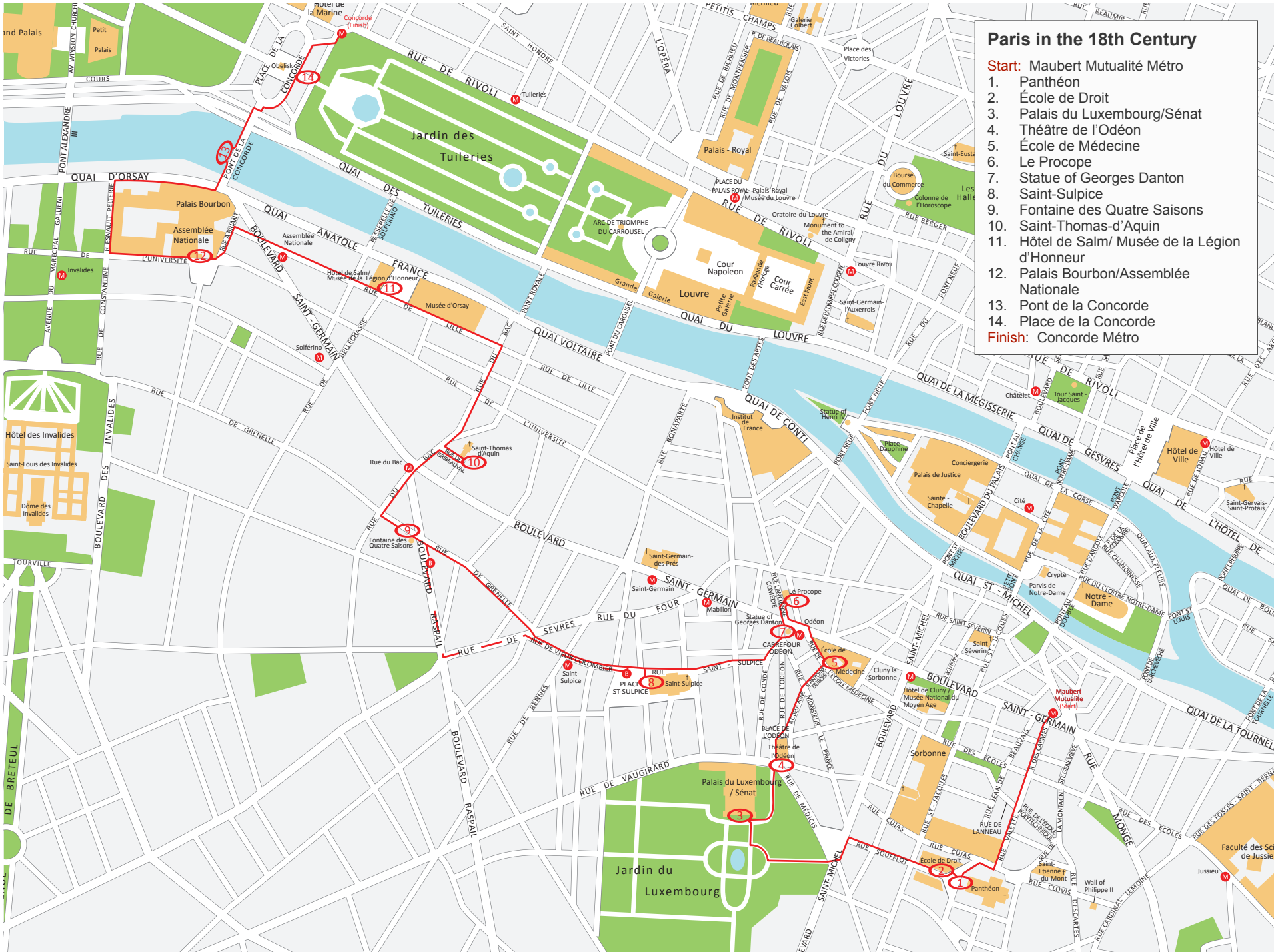
A few efforts were made to open up the city. In 1783-84, building regulations were promulgated tying building heights to street widths and prohibiting streets narrower than 33 feet and buildings higher than 66 feet. Toward the end of the century, the **Jardin du Luxembourg** was opened to the public, adding significantly to the city’s inventory of open space.

Development continued to push into outlying areas. The **Saint-Germain des Prés** quarter grew dramatically. When Madame de Pompadour, a mistress to Louis XV, moved into the **Elysée Palace** near the Champs Elysées, other mansions followed in that area. Growth in the **Monceau** area followed the development of the Champs Elysées. The building of the Hôtel des Invalides, the Dôme des Invalides, and the École Militaire stimulated growth in the **Invalides** quarter. As the rich moved into these new areas, some inner city areas (ie. the Marais and some of the Latin Quarter) became poorer and more crowded.



# WALKING TOUR

## Route Map



- Paris in the 18th Century**
- Start:** Maubert Mutualité Métro
1. Panthéon
  2. École de Droit
  3. Palais du Luxembourg/Sénat
  4. Théâtre de l'Odéon
  5. École de Médecine
  6. Le Procope
  7. Statue of Georges Danton
  8. Saint-Sulpice
  9. Fontaine des Quatre Saisons
  10. Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin
  11. Hôtel de Salm/ Musée de la Légion d'Honneur
  12. Palais Bourbon/Assemblée Nationale
  13. Pont de la Concorde
  14. Place de la Concorde
- Finish:** Concorde Métro

## Logistics

**Time and Distance:** This walking tour is a little over 3 miles. Plan on about 3 hours including visits to the Panthéon and Saint-Sulpice. You can cut off about a half mile of walking by taking the 63 bus from Saint-Sulpice to the next stop on the walk. (See description of Saint-Sulpice for details.)

**When To Go:** This walk can be done on any day of the week. The two main sights you will most likely want to visit, the Panthéon and Saint-Sulpice, are open daily. If you want to visit the Légion d'Honneur (interesting but not necessarily worth organizing your whole schedule around), it's only open Wednesday-Sunday from 1-6 PM.

**Helpful Hint:** If you take this walk on Sunday, try to arrive at Saint-Sulpice around 11:30 AM. A thirty-minute organ concert, on the church's world-famous organ, usually follows the conclusion of the 10:30 AM mass.

## Start

*This walking tour begins at the Panthéon. The closest Métro station is **Maubert Mutualité**. From the station, head up the hill away from the river along rue des Carmes which becomes rue Valette and dead-ends at the north side of the Panthéon.*

## Buildings and Monuments



### 1. Panthéon

The **Panthéon**, formerly the church of Sainte-Geneviève, (1756-91) was built by Louis XV who vowed to rebuild the old Sainte-Geneviève church as thanks for his recovery from a serious illness. Ironically, since Louis XV was one of France's most unenlightened kings, the building he began now holds the tombs of many great Enlightenment figures including Voltaire and Rousseau. The Panthéon was designed by Jacques-Germain Soufflot. The high ceilings inside are supported by external flying buttresses, but to make the building look more classical, they are hidden behind walls. The huge dome was inspired by and no doubt designed to rival Saint Peter's in Rome and Saint Paul's in London. The dome presented some problems during construction. Cracks appeared and



there was some controversy as to whether they were due to Soufflot's design or poor workmanship. While poor workmanship was generally implicated, the design for the dome was nonetheless modified several times before it was completed. The interior is in the form of a modified Greek cross. The original design had huge windows to light the interior, but the windows were bricked up when the building was converted to a pantheon. The facade, with its portico of giant Corinthian columns and very secular appearance, is a prime example of the 18th-century neoclassical architectural style. ([www.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://www.monuments-nationaux.fr) or [www.panthéonparis.com](http://www.panthéonparis.com) ; daily Apr-Sep 10-6:30, Oct-Mar 10-6, 8€)

*From the front of the Panthéon, head across the plaza to the building to the right with the concave facade.*



### 2. École de Droit

The law school, the **École de Droit** (1771-74), was designed, like the Panthéon, by Jacques-Germain Soufflot. He envisioned a semi-circular plaza in front of the Panthéon framed by two buildings with concave facades. The Ionic columns on these buildings' porticos were intended as a counterpoint to the Panthéon's Corinthian columns. Only the law school was completed before the Revolution. The other building now framing the plaza and housing the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement town hall, was built in 1850 in the same style. The concept of a plaza in front of the Panthéon was a departure from earlier churches which were usually built very close to the buildings around them. It is typical of the opening up of the city that occurred during the 18th century. Plazas were created not only in front of new churches, but also in front of older churches such as Notre-Dame and the church of the Sorbonne. In addition to the plaza, Soufflot also designed the rue Soufflot leading from the Panthéon to the Jardin du Luxembourg.

*Walk down the hill on rue Soufflot to the Jardin du Luxembourg; walk through to the center of the garden where you'll see a large pool and the Palais du Luxembourg next to it.*



### 3. Palais du Luxembourg/ Sénat

While the **Palais du Luxembourg** was built in the 17th century, its current function, as home to the French **Sénat**, has its roots in the 18th century and the French Revolution. Salomon de Brosse designed the Palais (1612-22) for Henri IV's widow Marie de Medici, in a style intended to remind her of the Pitti Palace in her native Florence. She was forced into exile by her son Louis XIII and his minister Cardinal Richelieu before the building was completed. The facade on the boulevard de Vaugirard is original. In the early 19th century, Alphonse de Gisors added a new assembly hall and facade facing the garden which reproduces the original facade. The French Sénat originated during the Revolution when the Constitution of 1795 created a



bicameral legislature. The upper house at that time was referred to as the Council of Ancients, presumably because its members had to be over 40, in contrast with the lower house where the age requirement was only 30. The Council of Ancients was housed in the Palais in 1799 but Napoleon abolished it when he came to power. Over the next century, the Sénat saw many changes to its name, location and functions. It was returned to the Palais in 1879 and has been called the Sénat since 1958. Today the Sénat has 346 members, half of whom are elected every three years by 150,000 local elected officials called the "grands électeurs."

*Walk around the east side of the Palais (the right side as you stand with your back to the pool) and out to the street where you'll find the Théâtre de l'Odéon just across the street.*



### 4. Théâtre de l'Odéon

The **Théâtre de l'Odéon** (1779-82) was sponsored by Louis XVI as a new home for the Comédie Française and inaugurated by Marie-Antoinette. Louis XVI stipulated that the theater had to hold at least 1,900 people, making it the largest theater in Paris. It is one of the last examples of large-scale building carried out by the "ancien régime." It was designed by Marie-Joseph Peyre and Charles de Wailly with classical columned facades and a simple geometric form. It was the first free-standing theater built in Paris. The area around the theater was designed for easy movement of traffic and as a backdrop for the theater's then very unprecedented design. Today the theater, now called the Théâtre de l'Europe, is one of France's six national theaters. ([www.theatre-odeon.fr](http://www.theatre-odeon.fr))

*With your back to the north side of the theater, walk across the place de l'Odéon and angle slightly off to your right onto rue C Delavigne which, after you cross rue Monsieur le Prince, turns into rue Antoine Dubois, a pedestrian street with a flight of steps; the street ends at the rue de l'École de Médecine where just across the street you will find the ...*



### 5. École de Médecine

The **École de Médecine** was originally constructed by the Académie Royale de Chirurgie (surgery). At that time, surgery was a separate profession from medicine. In fact, it began as part of the same guild as barbers. The schools of surgery and medicine merged in 1794 and were renamed the Faculté de Médecine in 1808. Today the facility houses a medical history museum and a branch of the University of Paris. Jacques Gondoin designed the court facades (1776-86) with classical Ionic columns on the main building and a Corinthian-columned portico marking the surgery amphitheater. The extensions to the building were built in the late 1800's. During the French Revolution, when members of the Assemblée Nationale decided to develop a more humane and egalitarian method of execution, they called on two members of the medical schools to help them. Dr. Antoine Louis and Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin (for whom the instrument is named) came up with a design for the guillotine.

*Exiting from the courtyard of the École, turn right and walk along the building until you reach boulevard Saint-Germain; cross the street; turn left, then turn right onto rue de l'ancienne Comédie where you'll find ...*



## 6. Le Procope

**Le Procope**, on rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, opened in 1686 as a cafe for "fashionable gentlemen" to drink coffee, considered at the time to be an exotic new beverage. It is best known as the 18th-century gathering place of Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and many other "philosophes" whose theories and writings were the philosophical underpinnings of the Revolution. Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin also mingled there when they were in Paris. In recognition of its Enlightenment roots, the cafe was redecorated in the late 1980's in 18th-century style. The food is a bit expensive, but even if you don't stop to eat be sure to peek at the furnishings inside. ([www.procope.com](http://www.procope.com) ;daily 10:30 AM - 1 AM)

*Return to boulevard Saint-Germain, cross the street, and you'll find a large ...*



## 7. Statue of Georges Danton

**Georges Danton's** career is emblematic of the ups and downs experienced by many of the French Revolution's leaders. During the early stages of the Revolution, Danton, a lawyer, was considered to be a radical because he advocated the complete overthrow of the monarchy. More moderate leaders, then in power, were focused only on limiting the monarch's powers. By the later stages of the Revolution, Danton was viewed as a moderate. Although he was one of the original members of the Committee of Public Safety, he was not an enthusiastic supporter of the Reign of Terror. He saw the Committee's bent toward mass executions, prophetically, as a two-edged sword that could be turned against the Committee. Indeed, Danton and many of his fellow Committee members were ultimately arrested and executed by more radical factions.

*Follow rue de Condé away from boulevard Saint-Germain and the carrefour Odéon to rue Saint-Sulpice; turn right and walk three blocks to the plaza in front of Saint-Sulpice which will be on your left.*



## 8. Saint-Sulpice

**Saint-Sulpice** (1646-1732) was constructed on the site of an earlier parish church when a larger church became necessary to serve the growing Saint-Germain neighborhood. The church was definitely larger than its predecessor. In fact, Saint-Sulpice rivals Notre-Dame in size. It is wider and nearly as high, although Notre-Dame is longer. Construction of the church was interrupted numerous times due to lack of funds and political events, most notably the French Revolution. At least half-a-dozen architects were involved in the design over the course of 130 years. The facade, begun in 1732, is typical of its time in that it is relatively unadorned and very classical in appearance. The center section was originally topped by a pediment. It was worked on by two different architects. The first was strongly influenced by Saint Paul's in London. The second architect did not rebuild the original pediment after it was destroyed by fire. After the original tower designs were criticized, the north tower was modified, but funds ran out before the south tower could be changed. As a result the two towers are slightly different.



Like the Panthéon, Saint-Sulpice's design included a plaza in front. Unfortunately, the plaza is often filled with rather shabby-looking market stalls which obscure an open view of the church. Saint-Sulpice's grand organ is famous throughout Europe. It is well worth attending the thirty-minute recital that occurs most Sunday mornings after the 10:30 AM mass. ([www.paroisse-saint-sulpice-paris.org](http://www.paroisse-saint-sulpice-paris.org) ; daily 7:30-7:30)

*Find rue du Vieux Colombier at the northwest (far right) corner of place Saint-Sulpice; follow the street away from the plaza; it curves right and then jogs slightly left across a large intersection and becomes rue de Grenelle; stay on rue de Grenelle; after you cross boulevard Raspail you won't be able to miss the Fontaine des Quatre Saisons on the left.*

*Alternate route: At the bus stop adjacent to place Saint-Sulpice on rue Saint-Sulpice, take the 63 bus four stops to Varenne-Raspail; continue walking in the same direction the bus was going to rue de Grenelle; turn left across the street and continue on rue de Grenelle to the fountain on the left.*





## 9. Fontaine des Quatre Saisons

The grandiose **Fontaine des Quatre Saisons** (1739-1745) is the largest of thirty fountains built in Paris during the 18th century. It was built to supply water to the growing Saint-Germain neighborhood and to honor Louis XV whose accomplishments are extolled in an inscription on the fountain. It was designed by Edmé Bouchardon, the king's sculptor. Between the small figures carrying fruits of the four seasons are three larger figures representing the City of Paris with the Seine and Marne rivers reclining at her feet. Unfortunately, the fountain is crammed into a very narrow street and in contrast to the abundant statuary, there are only two very small water spouts. Voltaire's quote regarding the fountain sums up the situation rather well, both architecturally and functionally, "...too much stone for too little water." Voltaire and others also made rather unflattering comparisons between this fountain and fountains in Rome with their open plaza settings and abundantly gushing sprays of water.

*Continue on rue de Grenelle to rue de Bac; turn right on rue de Bac; after crossing boulevard Saint-Germain continue another block to rue de Gribeauval; turn right and you will see Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin on the left.*



## 10. Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin

The history of **Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin** is similar to that of Saint-Sulpice. It was begun in the 17th century and finished in the late 18th century with work delayed due to both a shortage of funds and the intervening Revolution. Work on the church began in 1683. The choir was built in 1722 and the facade was completed in 1770. The facade is typical of the simplified two-story Counter-Reformation style popular at the time. It is very similar to the much larger Saint-Roch on the Right Bank. The interior has a beautiful ceiling fresco painted in 1724. The church was founded by Dominican monks. It became a parish church in 1791, ministering to part of the rapidly growing Saint-Germain quarter previously served by the Saint-Sulpice parish. Several years later, revolutionaries confiscated the church and turned it into a Temple of Peace. It was restored to the Catholic church in 1802. ([www.eglisesaintthomasdaquin.fr](http://www.eglisesaintthomasdaquin.fr); daily 9-5 Sep-Jun, check website for Jul-Aug hours which are more limited)

*Walk back to rue de Bac and turn right; in three blocks turn left onto rue de Lille; you'll find the Hôtel de Salm just across the plaza from the Musée d'Orsay.*



## 11. Hôtel de Salm/Musée de la Légion d'Honneur

The **Hôtel de Salm** (1782-87/1866-70) was originally designed by Pierre Rousseau for a German Prince, Friedrich de Salm-Kyrburg. He built the mansion as part of an overall attempt to gain status and influence in the French court. The Prince only lived there a short time before he was executed during the Revolution. The building's rather austere courtyard colonnade was inspired by the courtyard of the École de Médecine. The villa-like oval facade on the north side is more decorated. It originally opened onto a garden leading down to the river. The design of the Hôtel de Salm influenced Jefferson's design for his home, Monticello. Jefferson spent considerable time in Paris and his political as well as his architectural ideas were significantly influenced by French Enlightenment thinkers.



The Hôtel de Salm was partially burned down during the Commune of 1871 but was completely restored later. It now houses the **Musée de la Légion d'Honneur**. The Légion d'Honneur was created by Napoleon in 1802. In the spirit of the French Revolution, it was the first honorary order based on merit in civilian or military life, and not on heredity. Previous orders created by the monarchy were limited to noblemen and to Catholics. The Légion was and is open to all men, and some women, of all ranks, professions and religions. (64 rue de Lille; [www.musee-legiondhonneur.fr](http://www.musee-legiondhonneur.fr); We-Su 1-6, free)

*Continue on rue de Lille until it dead ends at rue A Briant; turn left then right onto rue de l'Université and you'll be at the back of the ....*



## 12. Palais Bourbon/ Assemblée Nationale

France's lower house of Parliament, the **Assemblée Nationale** is housed in two former 18th-century mansions designed by Jean Auber and constructed between 1726 and 1730. The **Palais Bourbon**, now holding the assembly halls, was built for Duchesse Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, daughter of Louis XIV and his best known mistress, Madame de Montespan. The **Hôtel de Lassay** was built for the Marquis Armand de Lassay, the Duchesse's counselor and lover. It now houses the residence of the President of the Assemblée. The Assemblée Nationale has its origins in the French Revolution when the members of the Third Estate broke from the Estates General meeting at Versailles and declared themselves an Assemblée Nationale. The revolutionaries confiscated the Palais Bourbon in 1792 and moved the Assemblée to it in 1795. The terms "left wing" and "right wing" date from this period. More radical Assemblée members sat to the left of the President and more conservative members to the right. The Assemblée Nationale currently has 577 members elected from single-member districts for 5-year terms.

*Continue along rue de l'Université; turn right onto rue R Esnault Pelterie; when you reach the river turn right then left onto the ...*



## 13. Pont de la Concorde

The **Pont de la Concorde** (1786-91), formerly Pont Louis XV, was built to connect the new place de la Concorde to the Saint-Germain and Invalides areas. It was started before the Revolution and ironically, given its original name and sponsor, was completed after the Revolution with stones from the demolished Bastille. The bridge was the first bridge in Paris designed by an engineer rather than an architect. Its designer, Jean-Rodolphe Perronet was the first director of the newly created École des Ponts et Chaussées (School of Bridges and Roadways). Perronet's engineering knowledge enabled him to design smaller support piers and a longer center span than were typical of earlier bridges.

*Cross the bridge to the ....*



## 14. Place de la Concorde

The **place de la Concorde** (originally the place Louis XV) was built to link older areas on the Right Bank to the newly developing areas to the west, and to honor Louis XV. A statue of the king, designed by Edmé de Bouchardon, was placed in the center in 1763. The statue, like statues of monarchs in other plazas, was knocked down during the Revolution. This particular plaza was also the place where over 1,000 people were guillotined during the Revolution, including Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. The **Hôtel Crillon** and **Hôtel de la Marine** (1766-75) as well as the square's overall layout were designed by Ange-Jacques Gabriel. The square is a departure from previous Parisian square designs in that it has buildings on only one side. This approach allowed the city's grand east-west axis leading from the Tuileries to the Champs Élysées to be maintained.



The designs of each hôtel, terminal structures at either end flanking recessed colonnades, consciously evoke the east front of the Louvre. However, the designs reflect 18th-century Rococo and classical influences. In contrast with the Louvre, the columns are single rather than double, they are much thinner, and the decoration on the buildings is much lighter and more playful than the east front's decoration. In 1778, the Hôtel Crillon was the site of the signing of a treaty of friendship, commerce and alliance between France and the newly formed United States. In fact, France was the first country to recognize the United States. It may seem strange that France, a monarchy at the time, was so closely aligned with the United States, a fledgling democracy. What united France and the United States was their common enemy, Great Britain. ([www.crillon.com](http://www.crillon.com))

## Finish

*You will find the **Concorde Métro** station at the northeast corner of the plaza.*