

Travel to Paris for People with Restricted Mobility

Last update: September 15, 2018

Paris is a wonderful city, full of history, culture, art, architecture, and amazing cuisine. It's easy to understand why this cradle of French civilization has been the most visited city in the world. The city of Paris is working hard to understand the needs of all people living in and visiting the city and to improve universal access. Navigating the ancient streets, monuments and subway system of Paris can present certain challenges to persons with restricted mobility, but with a little planning and preparation, your visit to this beautiful city will be the thrill of a lifetime.

Where to stay

Hotels in Paris are much like the rest of the city's buildings. They can be old, with much smaller rooms than we are used to in the USA, and frequently don't have elevators large enough to accommodate a wheelchair, if there even are any. But, the more modern hotels can be very welcoming to wheelchair users. The best place to find information on hotels that can offer what you need is through the [Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau page on accessible hotels](#).

What to do

The following list includes some, but not all, of Paris's wheelchair-accessible attractions.

Outside

[Parks and Gardens](#)

Most of Paris's parks, gardens, and promenades are accessible, including the most famous, the Jardin du Luxembourg. The following parks are some of the most trustworthy in terms of accessibility.

[Parc de la Villette](#)

A new park in Paris's up-and-coming 19th arrondissement, Parc de la Villette was designed in order that anyone can access it, including persons with physical, visual, and aural disabilities. This park is a must-see for visitors looking for Paris's modern side (particularly if you like the Centre Pompidou).

[Champs Élysées](#)

The sidewalks are wide, flat, busy, and peppered with outdoor cafes. The Champs Élysées is easily one of the simplest streets in Paris to navigate via wheelchair, as well as being one of the most famous promenades in the world.

You can begin at the Louvre and proceed down through the former royal garden of the Tuileries (flat, but graveled, pathways). Continue past Place de la Concorde to the Champs itself. You can see the Arc de Triomphe in the distance, but there is much to see before you will get to Étoile (the rotary surrounding the monument). [Here is a map of the suggested route](#). Unfortunately, once you arrive at the [Arc de Triomphe](#), it is not entirely accessible.

[EuroDisney](#)

A trip to Paris is incomplete without a visit to the place that brings out the kid in all of us. EuroDisney can be counted on to be the most accessible place in Ile de France. Because it is fairly new in comparison to other attractions in Paris, it was built with accessibility in mind.

[Les Marchés](#)

The outdoor markets are typically on flat streets able to accommodate the widest wheelchair. However, try to avoid prime shopping hours because the crowds can be unforgiving.

Les Quais de Seine

One of the pleasantest, newest, and coincidentally most accessible, routes along the edge of the river is via [les nouvelles berges](#). Beginning at Quai Branly just east of the Pont de l'Alma, walkers, bikers and flâneurs of all kinds can descend a ramp from street level to river level. You can follow it until it ramps back up at Pont Royal, a distance of about 2 kilometer or 1.2 miles. Formerly an expressway, it was transformed in 2013 into the newest pedestrian paradise in Paris. It is full of trendy new cafés and interactive features for children and adults alike. [Click here for a map of the suggested route](#), and [click here for the official website](#).

River Cruises

There are many guided boat tour operations in Paris, each leaving from a different berth. They are:

[Bateaux Mouches](#) at Pont de l'Alma Rive Droite

[Vedettes de Paris](#) at Port de Suffren

[Bateaux Parisiens](#) at Port de la Bourdonnais

[Batobus Paris](#) at Port de le Bourdonnais

More information about accessibility can be found at the [ParisInfo page](#).

Inside

[Le Château de Versailles](#)

A car can be driven to unload handicap visitors immediately next to the Château, thus avoiding the hazardous cobblestones and unpaved walkways of the forecourt. Elevators are hidden but available for those who need it in the Château, and vehicles are available for rent to traverse the enormous grounds of the Jardin.

[Musée du Louvre](#)

The Louvre is equipped with conveniently-located elevators and handicap-accessible restaurants and restrooms. Some areas are impossible to reach with a wheelchair but the major attractions are accessible.

[Musée d'Orsay](#)

The Musée d'Orsay is similarly accessible as the Louvre, with elevators available for those who need it. Frustratingly, however, some visitors to the museum noted that the elevators themselves are somewhat difficult to access... Construction in recent years affects accessibility, check the website for details.

Cinemas and Theatres

Many cinemas and theaters have several sets of stairs and do not have elevators; call before planning a movie or show. However, the Mairie de Paris is making a big effort to improve accessibility in all aspects. Visit the Mairie's website for more [information about cinema accessibility](#) and [about theater accessibility](#).

Eating out

One of Paris's biggest draws is its amazing cuisine. However, one of its biggest disappointments is the cramped nature of many of its restaurants. Checking [yelp](#) can offer some hint as to their accessibility. Many of them can accommodate a wheelchair, but it is nonetheless advisable to make a reservation and inform the restaurant staff of your needs so that you can find a comfortable table.

Do beware of the restrooms in brasseries and cafés; they are usually on the basement level accessible only by narrow staircases.

[David Lebovitz](#), Paris-based American food blogger, wrote a post about accessible travel in Paris with a focus on dining.

Accessible bathrooms: [The Good Loo Guide](#)

The Access in Paris blog has published an excellent resource on this important matter called The Good Loo Guide. They go to the effort of describing their criteria for accessibility as well as a description of the location and dimensions of each bathroom mentioned in the guide.

How to get around

Métro

The Paris métro was built over 100 years ago, and some stations resemble warrens in their helter-skelter makeup. Although plans are being made to retrofit the stations, only one line is currently fully elevator accessible to wheelchair users – ligne 14. Many other stations have had escalators installed, but even those are randomly placed and might not always be functional. Unless you are good with stairs, you should probably avoid the métro. The trams and commuter rails, however, are much more accessible. Visit the [InfoMobi](#) website for more information about the various forms of accessibility available in Ile-de-France.

Buses

Bus drivers are very patient in waiting for someone to who requires a few extra moments to enter or exit, but are not available to assist. Some, but not all, buses are also equipped with the technology to allow easy on-and-off for wheelchair users. Use the [RATP website](#) to plan your itinerary. Sticking with buses, and using lots of patience, will be your best bet if you are on a budget.

Taxis

Taxis can be convenient, but none of them are wheelchair vans like the ones we have in NYC, so be prepared to put your wheelchair in the trunk. They are also almost always cash only. That being said, you can get door-to-door service in a taxi at any hour of day or night. A comprehensive explanation of taxis is available via the [Secrets of Paris blog](#).

The pricing is available on [Paris's public service website](#). It shows the pricing for day, night, and outside the city. You can also calculate an estimated fare price using websites such as [WorldTaxiMeter.com](#).

Walking

Paris is a very small city, about the size of Manhattan. If you have the proper assistive devices, Paris can be very easy to navigate on foot or using a wheelchair. The sidewalks are mainly trustworthy and there are usually cutouts to cross the street. You might feel like you're off-roading, though, when you get to a cobblestoned area. Check distances on your Paris Pratique while putting together your day's itinerary.

One major exception to this is Montmartre, where some stairways are labeled as streets. Definitely plan to use a taxi or the [Montmartrobus](#) to navigate this neighborhood.

Paris Pratique

If you plan to use non-taxi forms of travel, it is advisable to carry a copy of [the Paris Pratique](#) with you to keep from getting lost. It is a detailed map of each arrondissement of Paris showing each street with an index in the back. It is truly indispensable! You can find a copy for around 5€ at Fnac (Paris's version of Barnes and Noble) or for a little more at many bodegas.

Further resources

[Access in Paris Guide](#)

This very well researched guide was written slowly over time by a group of disabled visitors to Paris. It covers getting to and around in Paris, major sights in and around Paris, and their Good Loo Guide, which is possibly the only one of its kind.

CNFLRH: Comité National Français de Liaison Pour La Réadaptation des

Handicapés- 236 bis, rue Tolbiac, 75013 Paris. Tel: 01.53.80.66.66. Fax: 01.53.80.66.67. Minitel: 3614 HANDITEL

[Disabled Travelers' Guide to the World](#) – a blog and guide written by a traveler with disabilities and her companion, all over the world.

English Language Library for the Blind- 35, rue Lemercier, 75017 Paris, Tel: 01.47.34.36.22. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9am to 5pm. Many guidebooks have special sections on handicap accessibility

[Paris-Ile-de-France for Everyone-](#) an excellent guidebook for the handicapped visitor to Paris. It is available at the Tourist Office on the Champs Elysées. In addition to general information, the guide offers routes and agendas that can help plan a visit.

[Rick Steve's Europe for Travelers with Disabilities](#) – from the Rick Steve guides, this webpage written by a traveler with disabilities offers helpful advice on traveling alone and links to tours for those who prefer company.

[Sage Traveling](#) – a website and forum for disabled travelers in Europe.

[Wheelchair Accessible France](#) – a tour group specializing in France for those with disabilities

<http://en.parisinfo.com/how-to-get-to-and-around-paris/info/follow-the-guide/transport-and-disability-getting-around-paris>