



## **Paris for Diana and Tom – Trip Notes** **November 27 to December 4, 2013**

I'm considering not doing 'trip notes' as how many times can we talk about Paris. Were someone looking for ideas for their own 'first' trip, I'd lead them to our March 2013 trip with Marie. After all, if you've been to Paris dozens and dozens of times (maybe over 50?) what is there new to write about except to say I LOVE PARIS!

While living a couple hours from Paris in the 70s we made numerous trips, some for a week, some for overnight, and some for even a day. Since then we've not missed many years of going back at least once a year if not more. The March trip with Marie was a delight to see Paris through the eyes of a teen but it made us homesick for the romantic street walking we'd normally do alone so off we go to Paris again. And again I hope. (I think Tom was caught looking at Paris apartments again!)

### ***The apartment - A Peaceful and Charming Ambiance***

*The apartment is located in the inner courtyard of a classical Parisian building in which an elevator takes you directly up to the apartment. The apartment has 2 bedrooms, both with king beds, 2 bathrooms and 2 toilets, a living room and a large and fully equipped kitchen. The living room has 2 comfortable couches and in addition to the living room there is a dining room with a large dining table which seats 6. Each bedroom has its own private bathroom. The first bathroom, decorated with marble tiles, has a bathtub with shower and the second bathroom with wooden floors has an American shower. We supply fluffy towels, bathrobes, liquid soap and hair dryers in each bathroom. The apartment has central heating and air conditioning. The apartment is equipped with a flat screen TV with cable, DVD, CD/radio player and phone all in the living room. The phone can make free international calls and there is a high-speed Internet connection (WIFI). The fully equipped kitchen has a refrigerator, dishwasher, oven, juice maker, coffee maker, toaster, iron and all utensils necessary for cooking and eating. There is also a room with a separate washer and dryer just next to the kitchen. Adding to the charm of the apartment, one can enjoy the full length view of a delightful private garden with beautiful trees from one of the bedrooms, the dining room and the kitchen. The living room and the other bedroom are on the building's inner courtyard side. The Saint Germaine rental flat sleeps 4 comfortably and there is additional space for 2 on two large sofas in the living room.*

*An Exceptional Neighborhood - Situated in St Germaine des Prés on the left bank, this location is the heart of Paris fashion, galleries, antique shops, traditional market streets and fabulous restaurants. The apartment is just a few minutes from the pedestrian streets of Saint Germaine and from the famous "Cafe Flore" and "Les Deux Magots" and also just next to the famous "Pont Neuf" bridge. There are also many museums, churches and gardens very close by, such as the Musée Rodin and the Musée d'Orsay, as well as the Luxembourg Gardens and its museum. The garden is famed for its calm atmosphere, beautiful statues and sculpture. It is a place where many Parisians enjoy going when the sun is out. From this incredible neighborhood you can walk to most Parisian sites and if public transportation is your choice, there are many metro lines and buses that come through the area.*

*Computer and Internet Access - WIFI is available and included in the rental of this apartment. We also provide a computer (PC) for your use, however, you are welcome to bring your own laptop and we will help you connect it.*

*What We Offer Our Guests - We will be at hand to meet and settle you into the apartment, answer questions and help out in any way we can. We can make restaurant, theater and activity reservations and recommendations. As we live in Paris we will happily share our knowledge, insight and experience with our guests. The rental price is all inclusive, including fresh flowers, French wine and croissants upon arrival, a computer with high-speed internet access, all electricity and heating charges, sheets, bathrobes, towels, soap and staples in the kitchen (salt, pepper, bottled water, coffee, tea, sugar and more.)*

What's the Left Bank? [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rive\\_Gauche\\_\(Paris\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rive_Gauche_(Paris))



The courtyard which blessed us with solitude. A view from the apartment's dining room, kitchen and one of the bedrooms.



Two bedrooms with two large modern bathrooms off each bedroom. This would also be suitable for two couples – as well as two married folks who don't care to share a bathroom.







**Photos?** I'll save most for you to see by clicking on Photo Shows at [www.TomsKoi.com](http://www.TomsKoi.com)

### ***Our daily diaries***

#### ***Thursday – Thanksgiving - Our first full day in Paris and yes it is worthy of Thanksgiving.***

Yesterday's flight was easy enough. We hadn't been so sure since there was a North Easter and the airlines were even offering to waive the change fees. People were experiencing flight cancellations. Even when we boarded the plane we were told that there would be turbulence about three hours out. If there was I don't think either of us noticed it. We had treated ourselves to lay flat beds and with a bit of extra booze and plenty of cough syrup for Diana there was enough sleep before landing in Paris. Had our driver showed up when he was supposed to it would have all been perfect. But pretty good as it was.

We were in our apartment by about 9:30 in the morning and welcomed by Fred. We have known Fred from other apartments we rented from the same company. In particular an apartment in St Germaine des Prés this last March for Marie's spring break and in Palais Royal before then.

Somebody needed a nap. But we went around the corner to a nice little neighborhood restaurant instead and tried not just food but some coffees. It didn't work so we reverted to the apartment and somebody had a nap and the other somebody had too much coffee and wasn't able to sleep.

We made up for the laziness by walking a very long ways for a couple of folks who are not young chicks anymore and who had basically spent the night up. We made it all the way to the Louvre, by Concorde and the huge Ferris wheel through a Christmas festival and then to the end of the Champs Elyse. On the way we stopped off to a favorite Brasserie behind the Palais Royale. It's called Le Grande Colbert where we refreshed our memory of good Parisian food. We even got into the Comedy Francais - something I have tried to do on numerous visits to that area. We had spent a week in the Palais Royale in the past and never could get ourselves into that theatre.

There is an atmosphere in Paris that we feel upon landing. We feel it on the streets. We are always sure we are where we belong. We have done this at least 50 times and surely more when you think about us living about two hour drive away in the 70s.

On that note do remember that Tom looks, feels and acts French. He sounds French too when the vocabulary is tourist, food or housing (he was the housing officer for SHAPE/NATO in Belgium for five years in the 70s.)

We were not home until well after 1am. I then realized that we were like kids in a candy shop. We needed to see and taste it all. Or why else would we have ordered country pate and onion soup and

escargot all together as appetizers the first night. Why else would we subject ourselves to hours of walking to see the main sites. Why else would we stay out until the wee hours of the morning.

We would sleep like the dead and for stunning ten hours.

**From Ellen:** Fabulous! You're my kind of people! Do it all, taste it all, experience it all. As somebody's grandmother used to say, 'You can sleep when you're dead.'" Applause. Applause, Applause.

Also from Ellen about my going to Paris with a rotten cough and with many medications: And you have an awesome role model. He not only went to Italy after several small strokes, but he got himself to and from Hong Kong with a catheter in place. That's the incident that really impresses me!

***Friday - a real full day.***

After the sleep of the dead we revived. After all we are in our favorite city of all time. We revived enough to have another full day that lasted through 1:30 in the morning still again.

Around the corner and through the markets to grandmothers house. Oh no no it was to Kim's Hotel du Buci. We really like our neighborhood. Though it is quite near to the last place we stayed, it is a whole different atmosphere with restaurants clubs market small hotels and of course the converted condominium type apartments. The nightlife is heavy and busy with a lot of young people. And all through the day the restaurants are packed full of people sitting outside to eat and drink. They don't care that it's cold because that's the only place they can smoke. As a result restaurants have formed outdoor eating areas with heat lamps.

We were to meet our friend Kim at the hotel. We met Kim while we were on the Amalfi coast tour in June and we have been in touch ever since. We visited her at her home in deer Valley outside of Salt Lake City in August. Her business and residence are in Manhattan Beach. She invited us again to her Utah home over Christmas but I don't think that will be in the cards. Not that we wouldn't want to see her again as she is absolutely full of life and quite a role model for me. At the hotel meeting, Kim had just arrived from Los Angeles and was ready to go. But alas her Hotel hadn't been ready in time and she needed some time for a bit of rest so we went off on our own.

We took off in the misty rain towards the opera house and Madeline. That required going across the river but amusingly our magnetic field must have got confused because we walked in the opposite direction. Ellen always told us that when she was lost she had her best adventures and we agree so we didn't mind going in the wrong direction at all. I mean after all we are in Paris. Who is to complain.

The shops along the way to the opera and from the opera to the Madeleine including some of those at the Vendome are some of the best in Paris. Window shopping has always been one of our hobbies. The vitrines of Paris are worthy of time. The word for window shopping in French translates to licking the windows. These windows deserved licking. Did you know that while we have cupcake shops they have macaroons shops and chocolate shops.

One of our goals was to find the glove shop that Tom had been to a couple years ago. It took us walking the entire circumference of the Madeline to finally come upon it. Gloves are now on Diana's hands.

We had a very pleasant stop at a coffee shop on the Madeline Square near to the famous deli of all time: Fauchions. (Fauchions has probably been bettered now but it started gourmet take out forever ago.) Between coffee and wine and Calvados and adding a raspberry tart we were very satisfied to be in Paris.

We walked until somebody's feet needed duct tape. This is good because at this stage in life one ought to go to their max even if it means blisters. A very sweet story is the glove shop guy seeing Tom fixing his feet with duct tape and he came out to offer a couple band-aid blister guards.)

We met up with Kim again at her hotel and then walked to the old famous 1800s restaurant called Procope. We had been there with Marie in March and of course plenty of times prior to that. They are famous for their coq au vin. They are famous for their early days of getting the revolution formed there and with plenty of famous folks frequenting Procope since then. Kim with her usual wonderful hospitality had brought wine all the way from Los Angeles. I'm sure it was worth it- certainly it was for us.

Kim's hotel was more than fine and a four star accommodation. But hotels in Paris are notoriously small and your notoriously expensive. She was curious to see our apartment and after a midnight visit she is now totally convinced that that is the way to go. We had a delightful and finally a quiet chat while in the apartment and then walked her to her hotel. Coincidentally her hotel is Less than two blocks from our apartment. Hotel du buci. It was so late that we had to ring the bell and get the concierge to come open the door. But the neighborhood had not closed down and it had not quieted down and the kids were out en masse again on the streets because of needing to smoke. Tom said he still heard people at four in the morning. But I'm surprised he could hear it because we are so well insulated. Besides I was dead to the world.

Our apartment has an even more special feature in that one enters a huge door then goes across a courtyard to the other side and then into the building. So we have an ultra-quiet place. Quiet is probably an unusual feature of a residence in Paris. A garden outside our window is equally unusual. So we are in old Paris in an old historical looking building while at the same time we are in an apartment with all modern features.

Whatever / why ever is it happening that we're not getting to the end of our day till two and three in the morning? Like a couple of kids in the candy shop we can't end our day.





Café Procope off this very old and narrow street.



Kim with us at our favorite Brasserie (oldest restaurant in Paris - I think 1636) called Procope in Saint Germain des Prés. She brought a special wine and they were willing to uncork it for a very small fee.

***Saturday - it didn't start very early nor did it end very early***

We headed over to Montparnasse by way of using the metro. We had stopped by Kim's hotel on the way to pick her up. She comes to Paris as many as 4 to 6 times a year and knows the restaurant scene. She had chosen our restaurant. Le Coupole is an old noted brasserie. It is from the early 1900s and has been filled with many notable writers. One claim to fame I didn't particularly like was François Mitterrand having had his last meal of his life there. It was their noted dish of curry. I didn't like this very much because it was their famous dish that Tom had been looking forward to. Fortunately he survived - so far. It was prepared and served from a big copper pot by a costumed Indian. Too much. (Not to mention the nearly four hours.). But curry has been on their menu and a favorite since the beginning of time. Kim and I need a salmon dish that sounded like it was going to be a salmon shepherd's pie. But the ingredients came separately on the plate and were absolutely delicious. Then we had crème Caramel.

<http://www.lacoupole-paris.com/en/>

We had a Michelin guide book with a walking tour of which we made some effort toward. It included the Montparnasse Cemetery full of many famous dignitaries and writers and Nobel Prize winners and people Kim knew that we did not. She was schooled not only at Yale, got her masters in French history, but also studied at the Sorbonne and is fluent in French. So of course she's likely to know more of these people than we do.

In previous years and with a walking tour guide we had experienced the Pere La Chaise cemetery and we had also walked through this one. There is a special market just outside this Montparnasse cemetery that had attracted us in years past.

Continuing on our walk of course we got lost but what is new. We eventually ended at the Montparnasse tall skyscraper. It is the reason that Paris passed a law that no buildings could be

higher than four stories. Had our plan worked we would have been pleased with that building existed. But that's another story.

We went to the 59th top floor because there's a big panorama view and a bar. We were told to wait about 20 minutes. 30 minutes later I said hey at least five tables have emptied what about us ? We were finally shown to the inside but an inside table not along the window. We were told that to have a window table that you had to be taking dinner. But I had previously said I would take dinner in order to have a good table. Even with Kim using her fluent French we never could make out the logic of why we could not have a table. We encountered at least three different ugly French people. This is the old France that we have known in the past but more recently they have gotten nicer to tourists. I hope this is not a trend but it is worrisome because these were all fairly young people. We ended up just plain leaving but that might have been an hour later. As Tom reminds me we did get a couple good pictures to include the tour Eiffel all lit.

It was cold and we were irritated and couldn't quite decide what we did and didn't want to do so we ended up back at Kim's lovely hotel to have a drink. She is always very classy so she insisted upon the best of the Calvados. I insisted on a simple Calvados as I'm not so sure I can tell enough difference.

We were looking for an early evening and that has not exactly occurred. Again. We have not had an early evening since we've been here and we have to get up quite early for two different walking tours.

We plan to pick up Kim at her hotel at 9:45am and go on up to the top of Montmartre for a tour. Then in the afternoon we will have a tour of historical old Paris focused around the Templars. If you can imagine it and it is a surprise but this will be a new area for us.

Croque monsieur for a late dinner in the apartment made by Chef Tommy Burton.

Oh well I meant to be doing laundry. Another day another time but priority is to experience Paris whether in clean or dirty clothes.

### ***Sunday - not all days go as planned but sometimes that's good***

It is like our friend Ellen says. Sometimes when I am lost I have my best adventures. In this case changing the schedule was a good adventure.

To start: It was like the middle of the night to get up in order to be at Kim's hotel and off on the metro and up to Montmartre for the start of a morning walking tour. Okay I confess it was only 8 o'clock but that felt like the middle of the night. (Between coughing during the night and jet lag that is our excuse.).

Tom and I have taken this walking tour maybe three times over the years. It is with a company owned by Brits called Paris walks. We started with them when only the two owners were guides many years ago. Now they seem to have dozens of young very professional and well educated guides. This March with Marie's Spring break vacation we took quite a few of the walking tours still again. Marie convinced us to do one we had not before which was a food tasting tour. (We did a multi-ethnic eating tour in Manhattan too.)

In the old village of Montmartre we discovered old winding streets, vineyards and a lot of history about some important artists of past days. We heard the stories of Renoir, Toulouse Lautrec, Van Gogh and Utrillo and saw where they lived and how they lived which was usually in poverty and under the influence of absinthe. Cabarets and street artist as well as many old homes. We ended at sacre cour and then went on our own to place de tertre where the artist's work and sell their art in the



square. Kim found two pieces of art that she sort of wanted and couldn't decide. In one case the artist couldn't be found and thus she couldn't negotiate so we took our leave. We would later go back and the art and artists were totally gone.



The artist's square of Montmartre and one artist work that Kim sort of wanted but missed. Then on our walk we found this cat atop momma's suitcase. Tom called it "Have Cat, Will Travel"



We have always enjoyed [www.paris-walks.com](http://www.paris-walks.com) as they have excellent guides who are well-educated, live in Paris, but usually with English as a first language. We would return up to the Montmartre hill after our restaurant stop and when the sun went down. Love this little restaurant picture.

It wasn't a waste of time going back because we went into Sacre cour in the night lights which is quite different. We also could see the view of the city and night lights. Christmas lights are just coming out. We also went back and found a clothing company that I have particularly enjoyed wearing their shirts called defense d'affiche. I suppose I have purchased a piece on many of our trips the last few years and in March we also got one for Marie.

Earlier (around 1 o'clock) we found a lovely restaurant that the guide had recommended. It was a local haunt and somewhat out of the line of tourist traffic and the guide sure did us a favor. It was a meal to remember and we stayed until four or 430. Tom is the one to describe our food so I'll hold off and we even took some pictures - looking like pure Americans in doing so.





Two ladies waiting. An Osso Bucco of Monkfish and then lobster broth with seaweed which was lobster in a thin ravioli exterior in a marvelous broth.

We finished our time on the hill of Montmartre by walking the small streets, buying a pastry from the shop that won the Parisian contest for best baguette and then some more window shopping.

If you remember from yesterday's report we had anticipated going to a new area and doing a second walking tour of the day. But there was simply too much to do where we were and the restaurant called as well as more looking around the hill so that's what we did.

It is really a special time if not privilege when you can come visit Paris and not feel pressured to see the major sites. We plan to just wander the back streets tomorrow. That is, until we have an 8 o'clock dinner over in this special section near to George V. Le fermette Maubeuf has a most elegant and famous interior and fine food. We know. We've been there a few times.

Darned but I'm still coughing. But all other body parts are working fine so how can I complain.

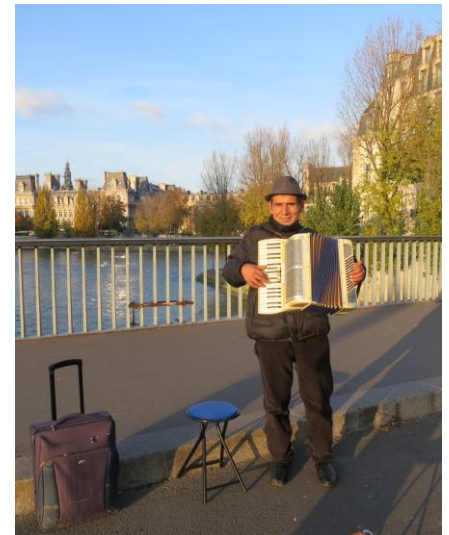
I just caught Tom looking at apartments for a future stay. . . .

Tom to Marie who was always pulling Tom's chain about wearing a LV scarf and that she wanted one. Marie who walked through this store with a big want list: "We were tempted to buy you a Christmas present here but since we never hear from you . . . ."

**Monday - Bright and early. Not.**

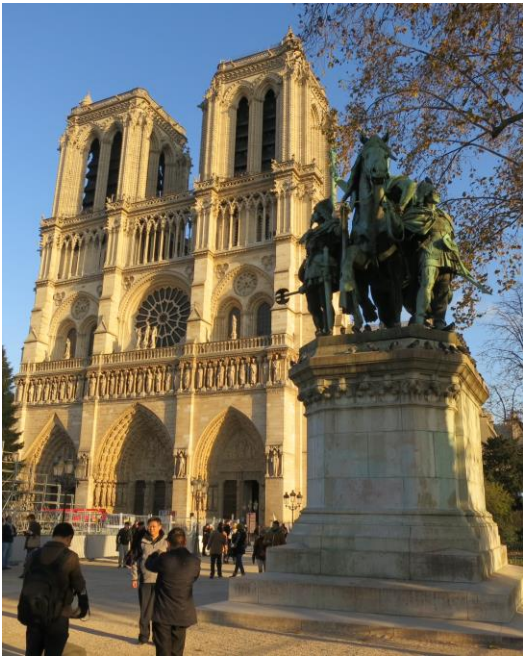
We could hardly believe how long we had slept in but it's no wonder when you get to bed after 2 AM. The museums are closed on Monday anyway so I didn't feel as much guilt as I might have.

We eventually headed out for a lovely walk in the first bit of bright sunshine we have seen in Paris this trip. Over the river and onto the



isle cite and Notre Dame. Lots of walking and we eventually ended up at the historical Le brasserie de l'isle St. Louie where we have been before. It is right after the bridge where we usually find an accordion player and this time was no exception.

There is an old long-ago story that continues and it has to do with an accordion player playing "Under Paris Skies." It was the same bridge and getting dark when we found our first accordion player. Under the Paris Skies. Then another day in an underground metro we found an accordion player that we swore was the same person playing the same song. Another trip the same accordion player and the same song. We get into Tom's car that plays random CDs and what almost always plays when we're ready for a trip but the same song. Here is our accordion player of this trip.



Notre Dame has been cleaned up for the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In March the front had scaffolding. Later in the evening it was to La Fermette Maubeuf and coincidentally to the same table we'd shared with Marie in March.

We walked until it was time to return to the apartment and dress for dinner. Dinner. I guess that's what we do best if not most. I'll leave that food story to Tom and it is a story not only about the food but about our entertainment. Gourmet food of five courses tasting menu and extravagant, elegant, smart dining partner too.

We could walk on the Champs de Elysee and see the Christmas lights. We also walked down the famous road called George V and into the hotel also called George V (now Four Seasons) where the Christmas decorations were worthy of the trip. This hotel always has out of sight and unique and glorious flower arrangements and decorations. With Marie we were there for a drink and a drink each cost more than most any of our dinners did.

Not getting home until 1am which half tiffs me that our day was pretty much spent eating. We had the tasting menu and I thought we were going to be turning the lights out on the restaurant but darned if they didn't let a couple tables come in near midnight.





These pictures are in the George V (Four Seasons) and include Tom doing a 'selfie' picture.

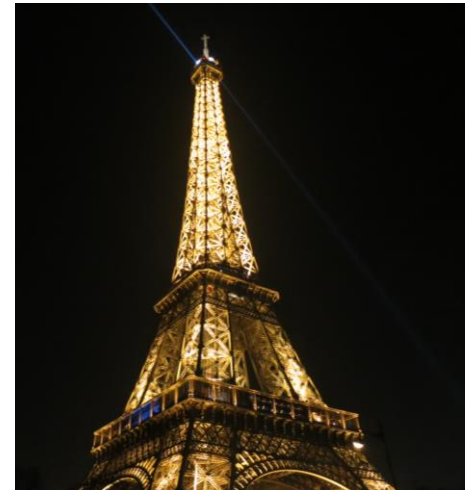
### ***Tuesday - the last full day***

Yes this is the last full day and of course we are sorry to be leaving. So you would think we would get up early in the morning in order to experience more of Paris. Maybe it's the atmosphere that makes me sleep better.

We walked and walked and walked and that is something we like to do best in Paris. One of our destinations was Park Monceau not only for the lovely Park which is a surprise in the middle of Paris but for the mansions or villas surrounding the park. There are two museums on the edge of the park, one of which we have enjoyed a Japanese art exposition. Alas but neither were open. We are accustomed to museums being closed on Monday but did not expect closure on Tuesday also.

The weather was sunny and brisk and just perfect for walking. One of the most elegant streets was called Rue Rembrandt. Nice address.

Maybe of interest, we find free Wi-Fi signs in the parks and some restaurants: Free Wi-Fi not. It just claims so but apparently one must be a local and apply for a password.



After giving up on the museums we ended up with a very pleasant stop at le Grand Cafe de la Poste for coffees and calvados. That fueled is for another Long walk, way across bustling champs Elysee and down avenue George V still again. We got as far as place Alma and the river until an elegant candle lit restaurant called to us. There was a huge window fronting the place.

It was at Chez Francis in a window seat watching the tour Eiffel lights blink the light show every hour on the hour. Tom had only missed steak tartare so he remedied that desire.

We continued our walk across the bridge and on and on until we were again standing under the Eiffel Tower. We had been there before with bicycles riding underneath. We had been there before with Marie in the snow this last March. We have been there any number of times and my



more memorable experience under the tour Eiffel was for the marathon. We would hope it would not be the last.

We continued our walk along the Champs de Mars where we lived at one time in a most memorable apartment. It was about one in the morning in this apartment when I looked up in the big skylight and saw the Eiffel Tower sparkling. We hadn't realized there would be a light show.

We got as far as Ecole Militaire before deciding it was pretty windy and fairly cold and a metro would make sense. Home before 10pm made sense because we had to pack yet and get up at 5am for a car to the airport.



Restaurant for the Last Supper and view from our window table with the Eiffel Tower lights blinking each hour.

***Why not move to Paris?*** Here is a pretty good description why our plans to retire in Europe didn't happen. There is a fourth reason to not stay in Europe living as a foreigner: one can get too attached to being a foreigner and never having to really adjust fully to living. Never having to do everything right. Never getting very far in a career. It's like an excuse since one knows there is never full acceptance.



**The New York Times** - November 27, 2013

"An American Neurotic in Paris" by Pamela Druckerman

PARIS — *A few years back I took the ultimate expatriate plunge: I started doing psychotherapy in French. I figured that, as part of the deal, I'd get free one-on-one French lessons. And I hoped that if I revealed my innermost thoughts in French, I might finally feel like an ordinary Parisian — or at least like an ordinary Parisian neurotic.*

*I soon realized this was a doomed enterprise. Each week I'd manage to vaguely sketch out my feelings and describe the major characters in my life. But it was hard to free associate when I was worried about conjugating verbs correctly. Sometimes I'd just trail off, saying, "Never mind, everything's fine."*

*I'm aware that there are worse things to be than an American in Paris. You could be, for example, a Congolese in the Democratic Republic of Congo. But as I spend my 10th Thanksgiving here, permit me a moment of reflection. Because Thanksgiving prompts the question that expatriates everywhere face: Shouldn't I be going home?*

*The Americans in Paris tend to fall into three categories. There are the fantasists — people nourished by Hemingway and Sartre, who are enthralled with the idea of living here. The moneyed version of this person lives as close as possible to the Eiffel Tower. The Bohemian version teaches English or tends bar, to finance his true vocation: being in France.*

*Then there are the denialists — often here for a spouse's job — who cope with living in Paris by pretending they're not in Paris. They tap into a parallel universe of Anglophone schools, babysitters and house painters, and get their French news from CNN.*

*Finally there are people like me, who study France and then describe it to the folks back home. We're determined to have an "authentic" French experience. And yet, by mining every encounter for its anthropological significance, we keep our distance, too.*

*No matter how familiar Paris becomes, something always reminds me that I don't belong. The other evening, as I chastised the lady who had cut in line at the supermarket, I realized she was grinning at me — amused by my accent. During conversations in French, I often have the sensation that someone is hitting my head. When surrounded by Parisians, I feel 40 percent fatter, and half as funny. Even my shrink eventually took pity and offered to do the sessions in English. (It turns out she's fluent.)*

*The question of whether to stay is especially resonant for Americans in Paris, because many feel that they live here by accident. Not many foreigners move to Paris for their dream job. Many do it on a romantic whim. Expatriates often say that they came for six months, but ended up staying for 15 years. And no one is quite sure where the time went. It's as if Paris is a vortex that lulls you with its hot croissants and grand boulevards. One morning, you wake up middle-aged — still speaking mediocre French.*

*I wasn't sure how long I'd live here, but I did expect my stay to follow a certain expatriate narrative: You arrive; you struggle to understand the place; you finally crack the codes and are transformed; you triumphantly return home, with a halo of foreign wisdom and your stylish bilingual children in tow.*

*But 10 years on, I've gone way off that script. Those stylish children threaten to mutiny if I even mention the possibility of moving. I've got a French mortgage, and I'm on the French equivalent of the P.T.A. It's like being a stranger in a very familiar land. I haven't cracked the codes, but I no longer feel entirely out of sync: When the whole country goes into mourning after a beloved singer or actor dies, these days I actually know who the guy was.*

*Sometimes I yearn to be in a place where I don't just know more or less what people are saying, but know exactly what they mean. But I'm no longer fully in sync with America either. Do people there really eat Cronuts, go on juice fasts and work at treadmill desks?*

*The thought of becoming an ordinary American again scares me. We expatriates don't like to admit it, but being foreign makes us feel special. Just cooking pancakes on Sunday morning is an intercultural event. I imagine being back in the United States and falling in with a drone army of people who think and talk just like me — the same politics, the same references to summer camp and '70s television.*

*But the fact is, those drones are my people. I end up gravitating toward them in Paris, too. The biggest lesson I've learned in 10 years is that I'm American to the core. It's not just my urge to eat turkey in late November. It's my certainty that I have an authentic self, which must be expressed. It's being so averse to idleness that I multitask even when I'm having my head shrunk. And it's my strange confidence that, whether I stay or go, everything will be fine.*

Pamela Druckerman is the author of "Bringing Up Bébé: One American Mother Discovers the Wisdom of French Parenting."

## **Rick Steves: Fancy French restaurants are worth the splurge**

*Splurging at a French restaurant often includes dining leisurely at an outdoor table.*

*Coming from a picnicking, backpacker travel heritage, it's taken me decades to recognize the value of a fine meal. Now I can enthusiastically embrace a long, drawn-out "splurge meal" as a wonderful investment in time and money.*

*Nowhere is this more true than in France. French cuisine is sightseeing for your taste buds. You're not just paying for the food -- it's a three-hour joyride for the senses -- as rich as visiting an art gallery and as stimulating as a good massage.*

*Some Americans are intimidated when they go to a fine French restaurant, but they needn't be. Many waiters speak English and are used to tourists. Here's what my friend and co-author, Steve Smith, and I recently experienced at a fine restaurant in Amboise, in the midst of France's château-rich Loire Valley.*



*French restaurants usually open for dinner at 7 p.m. and are typically most crowded at about 8:30 -- it's smart to make a reservation for your splurge meal, which we did the day before. In France, you can order off the menu, which is called a carte, or you can order a multi-course, fixed-price meal, which, confusingly, is called a menu. Steve ordered a basic menu and I went top end, ordering off the carte.*

*French service is polished, professional, and polite, but not chummy. Waiters are professionals who see it as their job to help you order properly for the best possible dining experience. If you get a cranky waiter ... join the club. Even the French love to complain about grouchy service.*

*Aurore, our waitress, was no grouch. She smiled as I ordered escargot (snails) for my first course. Getting a full dozen escargot rather than the typical six snails doubles the joy. Eating six, you're aware that the supply is very limited. Eating twelve, it seems for the first eight like there's no end to your snail fun. Add a good white wine and you've got a full orchestral accompaniment.*

*My crust of bread lapped up the homemade garlic-and-herb sauce. I asked Aurore how it could be so good. With a sassy chuckle she said, "Other restaurateurs come here to figure that out, too." Then she added, "It's done with love." While I've heard that line many times, here it seemed believable.*

*In France, slow service is good service (fast service would rush the diners and their digestion). After a pleasant pause, my main course arrived: tender beef with beans wrapped in bacon. Slicing through a pack of beans in*



*their quiver of bacon, I let the fat do its dirty deed. A sip of wine, after a bite of beef, seemed like an incoming tide washing the flavor farther ashore.*

*My crust of bread, a veteran from the escargot course, was called into action for a swipe of sauce. Italians brag about all the ingredients they use. But France is proudly the land of sauces. If the sauce is the medicine, the bread is the syringe. Thanks to the bread, I enjoyed one last encore of the meat and vegetables I'd just savored.*

*This colorful array of cheeses at a French restaurant in Amboise makes it hard to skip the cheese course.*

*Shifting my chair to stretch out my legs, I prepared for the next course -- a selection of fine cheeses. It sounds like a lot of food but portions are smaller in France, and what we cram onto one large plate they spread out over several courses.*

*Aurore brought out her cheese platter. It was a festival of mold on a rustic board; the vibrant-yet-mellow colors promising a vibrant array of tastes. With the cheeses there was a special extra item: raisins soaked in Armagnac brandy. The lovingly sliced collection of cheeses arriving on my plate made me want to sing (but out of consideration for Steve, I didn't).*



*Then came dessert. Mine was a tender crêpe papoose of cinnamon-flavored baked apple with butterscotch ice cream, garnished with a tender slice of kiwi. That didn't keep me from reaching over for a snip of Steve's lemon tart with raspberry sauce.*

*Even though we'd finished our dessert, Aurore didn't rush us. In France your waiter will not bring your bill until you ask for it. For those in a rush, here's a good strategy: When you're done with your dessert, your waiter will ask if you'd like some coffee. This gives you the perfect opening to ask for the bill.*

*Our entire meal cost us about \$60 each. You could call it \$20 for nourishment and \$40 for three hours of bliss. Even if you're not a "foodie," I can't imagine a richer sightseeing experience, one that brings together an unforgettable ensemble of local ingredients, culture, pride, and people.*

## ***Itinerary***

### **Wed Nov 27**

6:10pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#904

### **Thu Nov 28**

7:35am Arrive Paris Charles deGalle CDG

Apartment 24 rue Dauphine 75006 Paris – metro Odeon in St Germain des Pres

Tele in apt 09-52-96-62-16 [pva2rent@gmail.com](mailto:pva2rent@gmail.com) [www.parisvacationapartments.com](http://www.parisvacationapartments.com)

Fred for check in: 06-11-23-29-98.

**Description** 2 bedroom, 2 bath, 936 SF, in inner courtyard, yes washer and dryer, yes WiFi

*The apartment is located in the inner courtyard, of a classical Parisian building in which an elevator takes you directly up to the apartment. The apartment has 2 bedrooms, both with king beds, 2 bathrooms and 2 toilets, a living room and a large and fully equipped kitchen. The living room has 2 comfortable couches and in addition to the living room, there is a dining room with a large dining table which seats 6. Each bedroom has its own private bathroom. The first bathroom, decorated with marble tiles, has a bathtub with shower and the second bathroom with wooden floors has an American shower. We supply fluffy towels, liquid soap and hair dryers in each bathroom. To ensure your comfort, the apartment has central heating and air conditioning for the summer. The apartment is equipped with a flat screen TV with cable, DVD, CD/radio player and phone all in the living room. The phone can make international calls and there is a high-speed Internet connection (WIFI). The fully equipped kitchen has a refrigerator, dishwasher, oven, juice maker, coffee maker, toaster, iron and all utensils necessary for cooking and eating. There is also a room with a separate washer and dryer just next to the kitchen. Adding to the charm of the apartment, one can enjoy the full length view of a delightful private garden with beautiful trees from one of the bedrooms, the dining room and the kitchen. The living room and the other bedroom are on the building's inner courtyard side. Situated in St Germain des Prés on the left bank, this location is the heart of Paris fashion, galleries, antique shops, traditional market streets and fabulous restaurants. The apartment is just a few minutes from the pedestrian streets of Saint Germain and from the famous "Cafe Flore" and "Les Deux Magots" and also just next to the famous "Pont Neuf" bridge. There are also many museums, churches and gardens very close by, such as the Musée Rodin and the Musée d'Orsay, as well as the Luxembourg Gardens and its museum. The garden is famed for its calm atmosphere, beautiful statues and sculpture. It is a place where many Parisians enjoy going when the sun is out. From this incredible neighborhood you can walk to most Parisian sites and if public transportation is your choice, there are many metro lines and buses that come through the area.*

**Tourist:** How to see La Chapelle? Trocadero area. Sephora visit. Museum near marathon apartment. Find smaller museums and those that are in ex-palaces. Montmartre. George V area restaurant.

[www.Paris-Walks.com](http://www.Paris-Walks.com): Fri at 2:30 French Revolution; Sun at 10:30 Montmartre and 2:30 Medieval Paris and Templars; Mon at 10:30 Cite.

### **Sat Nov 30**

1:00pm Meet Kim at Le Coupole

### **Wed Dec 4**

6:30am Car service booked

9:25am Depart Paris CDG via UA#905

12:00noon Arrive Newark EWR

### **Tele contacts:**

Clara cell phone - 06-63-60-67-14

Karina cell phone - 06-42-00-82-07

Fabienne cell phone - 06-95-56-15-48

Rosie cell phone - 06-95-33-24-61

Maps of Paris: <http://www.parisvacationapartments.com>



Go to the page of the apartment you are renting and click on it. When you get to the page, scroll down and you will find a detailed map of the neighborhood around the apartment.

Métro map: [http://www.ratp.info/orienter/f\\_plan.php?fm=pdf&loc=reseaux&nompdf=minimetro&lang](http://www.ratp.info/orienter/f_plan.php?fm=pdf&loc=reseaux&nompdf=minimetro&lang)

See Outlook email file for more apartment information sent by Paris Vacation Apartments

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