

## Paris, France



### Report made by

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- **Date:** October, 2022.

### General information of the city

- **Name of the city and country:** Paris, France
- **Description:** Paris, the capital of France, is both known as the city of light and as the city of love. It has no peer with its unique charm and romance. A city threaded by the Seine river and flooded with history, with its majestic palaces, world renowned museums and unmistakable monuments. If you visit, Paris will sweep your heart away.

### Transportation accessibility

- Only line 14 of the subway is partially wheelchair accessible (that'd be less than 10% of the total subway system). The [Paris accessibility transportation](#) website says all line 14 stations are accessible, but we've check them on place and some of them have still works underway and don't have elevators (e.g. Gare de Lyon). Works will probably be finished soon, but, still, if you go be aware of potential issues.
- As for visual accessibility, all stairs on the subway have tactile contrast strips.
- Also, subway arrivals on the platform and next stops are announced via loudspeakers.

- The bus network is 100% wheelchair accessible with automatic ramps. Signal the driver when the bus is approaching for it to be deployed.
  - **Buses are free for wheelchair users.** Even though, some of them have payment machines near the ramp entrance, you're not expected to pay.
  - Some bus lines tend to get crowded (e.g. 91 or 72 near the Eiffel Tower), but we managed to board on our wheelchair nonetheless.
  - Buses have visual and audio signs that announce the next stop (only the next one). Visual signs are sometimes difficult to see from wheelchair spots and audio announcement sometimes play with little time before the stop, so it's recommended to use Google Maps or the [Bonjour RATP](#) app to keep track of your route.
  - Bus stops have visual signage with information of next buses coming and estimated time. There are also buttons with Braille, although audio feedback didn't work when we tried. Nevertheless, newer buses also announce their line number and destination when they get to the stop.
  - Otherwise, you can use the application [Bonjour RATP](#) to know when buses are coming. The application is also useful to plan your trips using different transportation systems in Paris.
  - Accessible taxis can be booked via regular mobility apps. We tried [G7 app](#), which is specific for Paris taxis, and it worked well.
  - The RER train system is partially accessible. Most A and B line trains and stations, which cross Paris from East to West and from North to South and go to surrounding cities, are wheelchair accessible (check the [list here](#)). Some stations in other lines are also accessible (for instance, the stations on to L line Versailles Rive Droite and Paris-St Lazare, which can be used to go to Versailles Palace).
  - On RER trains, to board with a wheelchair, you need to ask station staff for assistance (in person or by using the comm help buttons, although in person works better). They'll ask your destination, put a manual ramp for you to board and wait for you when you get off. The service is not fast, though, so don't rely on it if your schedule is tight.
  - Tramway lines T1, T2, T3 and T5 are all wheelchair accessible, although they don't go near the city center, but instead circle the city.
  - The Montmartre cable car is also wheelchair accessible.
- **Score: 2/5.** Subway accessibility is nearly nonexistent. Fortunately, buses are 100% wheelchair accessible and are also free of charge for wheelchair users. However, they can get crowded and are not the fastest means of transport. RER train lines A and B, may be useful to cross the city, but the assistance service needs to improve speed wise. Accessible taxis are also available, through website or app booking.

## **Streets accessibility**

- Streets in the center of Paris are mainly flat. Nevertheless, if you go towards the 9th district, they are a bit uphill and, if you continue towards Montmartre, they are steep.
  - All sidewalks have curb cuts to cross streets. Most of them are alright (though not 0-level), but some are more shady.
  - All curb cuts have also tactile pavement, which is consistent throughout the city.
  - Sidewalk pavement also differs depending on the area. In the city center, most sidewalks are smooth with concrete pavement. However, it's quite common for there to be works on streets and sidewalks, so you should watch your step or your wheels nonetheless.
  - Also, there are many garage exits made with cobblestone that cross sidewalks along all the city.
  - In Montmartre, sidewalks are made entirely of cobblestone and they are also narrow and most have restaurant tables, shop products, etc., on them, thus they are impossible to use for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments. You have to walk/wheel on the street, which is also made of cobblestone and has many steep slopes. Fortunately, there aren't many cars around the area.
  - Around 50% of traffic lights have buttons for people with visual impairments. They tell you the name of the streets on the intersection, which is a nice feature, and if the light is red. When green, if the button has been pressed, they start beeping. These traffic lights are present in all major crossings.
  - Many wider streets need to be crossed in two steps, due to either the presence of cycling lanes or a separation between street directions. Watch out your step in these crossings.
  - In some touristic areas there are streets exclusive for pedestrians. For instance, around Chatelet-Les Halles and also really nice strolling areas next to the banks of the river Seine. The section on the right bank (the Louvre one) from near Bastille to Tulleries Garden is really recommended (including the Tulleries Gallery Tunnel). There are several access ramps to this promenade (a bit steep, as they were originally for cars).
  - Every now and then, there are public toilets on the streets. They are wheelchair accessible.
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Aside from the area of Montmartre, which has really steep slopes and is entirely made of cobblestone, the rest of sidewalks in Paris are quite good, especially on wider streets, with concrete pavement and curb cuts everywhere. However, the garage exits made from cobblestone and the common works on the street and sidewalks, make it a must to watch your step or your wheels! Having pedestrian promenades along the banks of the river is a great bonus. Also, visual accessibility is

good with consistent tactile pavement on all crossings and accessible traffic lights, with audio cues saying the name of the streets on the junction, on around 50% of them.

## **Restaurants & shops**

- It's really hit or miss, as around 50% of shops and restaurant entrances are wheelchair accessible, either by being zero level or by ramps.
  - The state of accessible entrances varies a lot depending on the street. There are streets where most are accessible and streets where most are not.
  - Nevertheless, as the city is full of restaurants and shops (literally everywhere), finding an accessible place should not be a problem, although it may not be your first option.
  - Most inaccessible entrances only have a single step ranging from 5cm to 30cm, so some wheelchair users may be able to manage nonetheless.
  - Also, many restaurants or cafes have either tables outside or enclosed (mostly accessible) terraces.
  - Nearly all restaurants on corners have tables outside, so if you don't want to look too much, street corners are your best bet.
  - Accessible toilets are hard to find in restaurants.
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Even though many entrances are not wheelchair accessible, the sheer amount of options, plus the common cafe and restaurant terraces, make up for it. If you don't want to look too much for an accessible food option, street corners are your best bet. On the other hand, accessible toilets are hard to find.

## **Hotels & accommodation**

- Paris has many old buildings, so many hotels and apartments are not accessible.
- Nevertheless, most high-end or newer hotels are wheelchair accessible and also have accessible rooms.
- There are many 3 to 4 star hotels that are listed as accessible at online platforms, such as Booking.com.
- These hotels may indeed have accessible entrances and elevators, but may not have rooms with accessible bathrooms. The search filter for accessible hotels in such platforms can be very useful for some users, but you should still check directly with the hotel depending on your needs.
- The opposite is also possible, some accessible hotels don't list that they have wheelchair accessible rooms when booking online, but do indeed have them. Contacting directly by e-mail or phone is recommended.
- Here's a [list of hotels that do have accessible rooms](#).

- As for AirBnB options, few of them are listed as having elevators and accessible entrances. Even if they do, contact with the owner ensuring your accessibility needs will be met is most recommended.
- Accommodation in Paris is expensive all-year round. For “cheaper” alternatives, if you don’t want to spend a lot of time on the bus to reach the center, try options near accessible RER A or B train line stations that can get you fast Gare de Lyon, Chatelet and the likes. Nevertheless, keep in mind the comments on the [Transportation section](#).
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Despite many hotels not being wheelchair accessible, there are also many that are. Nevertheless, accommodation is expensive all-year round and lower budget options in the outskirts, may take a lot time to get to the city center due to poor subway accessibility. Being near an accessible RER A or B train line stations may be an alternative.

### **Tourist attractions accessibility**

- All major tourist attractions (The Eiffel Tower, Louvre and Orsay museums, Versailles, parks, etc.) are wheelchair accessible, except for Montmartre, which is only feasible if you can manage cobblestone and steep streets combined.
- Museums also have in place accessibility features for people with visual or hearing disabilities. Nevertheless, most of them are only for French speakers or for French Sign Language signers. On the other hand, audioguides are available in different languages.
- Most tourist attractions also have accessible toilets, be it inside the attraction or nearby. However, some of them are a bit small and accessibility could be better.
- In attractions where there are restricted areas for people with disabilities, such as the 3rd floor of the Eiffel Tower (which is not accessible to people with mobility impairments due to evacuation potential issues) or the 59th floor of Montparnasse tower (accessible only with stairs from the 56th floor observation area), there are huge discounts for people with disabilities.
- Furthermore, admission in Versailles, the Louvre museum, the Orsay museum and others is free for people with disabilities (showing proof of disability) and a companion.
- Also, parks in Paris tend to be wheelchair friendly. Most have paved or compact dirt paths, although there are also some areas with gravel.
- On the bad side, as mentioned above, there are some tourist attractions with inaccessible areas for people with mobility impairments. For example, for wheelchair users, Arc de Triomphe may be better to watch from Champs Elysées Avenue or the roundabout around it, as the underground paths to get to it are not accessible and crossing the roundabout is really dangerous (no zebra crossings and lots of traffic).
- Currently, Notre Dame Cathedral is closed for visits, but can be seen from the outside.

- You should also expect areas with cobblestone in Versailles, the aforementioned Montmartre and around or nearby other monuments, like the Notre Dame or the Opera.
- Paris famous boat rides, run by the company Bateaux Mouches, are also wheelchair accessible. Both the pier and the boat are accessible, although there are no accessible toilets on board. However, there are accessible toilets on the pier (on the right bank between the bridges “Pont des Invalides” and “Pont de l’Alma”). There are other boat companies, although accessibility varies among them.
- **Score: 3.5/5.** Despite cobblestone in Montmartre and outside Versailles and some other monuments and inaccessible observation decks in some attractions (all of them offering discounts), such as the 3rd floor of the Eiffel Tower, all major tourist attractions are wheelchair accessible. There is also free admission for people with disabilities and a companion in Versailles and the Louvre and Orsay museums, among others. Available visual and hearing accessibility tends to be only for French speakers or French Sign Language signers, although audioguides are indeed available in different languages.

## Getting there

- Paris has 3 airports: Charles-De-Gaulle (CDG), which is the largest; Orly (ORY), which is also a common arrival for international flights; and Beauvais (BVA), mostly used by Ryanair and other low-cost airlines.
- Charles-De-Gaulle has easy city center access by train (RER B line). First, you need to take the CDG Val shuttle train to the RER station. Then, if you’re a wheelchair user, once at the station, you should ask for assistance in order to board the train with a ramp. It may take a few extra minutes, but it’s the cheapest option to get to the center of Paris. For the two RER B train station serving Charles-De-Gaulle it is recommended to book assistance in advance at [accesplus@transilien-sncf.fr](mailto:accesplus@transilien-sncf.fr). To book in advance, though, you need to know the train’s schedule, which can be difficult as flight arrival and boarding off the plane times can vary greatly (more if assistance is needed).
- CDG RoissyBuses are now wheelchair accessible and can take you from CDG to Paris-Opera in around 60 minutes.
- For Orly, first, you should take the Orlyval shuttle train to Antony station. There you transfer to the RER B line. Here, assistance can be requested in place (no need to book it in advance).
- The OrlyBus that takes you from the airport to Place Denfert-Rochereau (near Montparnasse) in around 30 minutes is also wheelchair accessible.
- As for BVA airport, the official shuttles of the airport to Paris Pershing Porte Maillot bus stop (linking to bus line 82) are also wheelchair accessible.

- Other options to go from the airports to Paris and vice versa are accessible taxis from the G7 company (see [Transportation section](#)) or other private companies.
  - Here's a [link with more accessibility details on how to get from the airports to Paris](#).
  - Finally, you can get to Paris by high-speed train from other European cities, such as London, Brussels or Amsterdam, from Gare du Nord (connecting to RER B trains and to many bus lines in the city), or Barcelona and other cities in the South of France, from Gare de Lyon (connecting to RER A trains and many bus lines). Both stations and buses are wheelchair accessible, although you also need to book assistance for high-speed trains in advance ([if operated by SNCF, here's the online form](#)).
- **Score: 4/5.** All arrivals have accessible connections to the city center or get you directly to the center, if on a high-speed train. However, if you get to Paris by plane, aside from shuttles, taxis and buses, all train-based options are not direct and require doing transfers.

### **Overall accessibility score**

- **Score:** 20/30. Overall **3.3/5 stars**.
- **Summary:** Accessibility doesn't stand out in any area, but it is not bad either, except for the terrible subway accessibility. Nevertheless, most tourist attractions are accessible, with free admission or huge discounts for people with disabilities and one of their companions, and also rides on the bus are free for wheelchair users.