

# Je t'aime Paris!

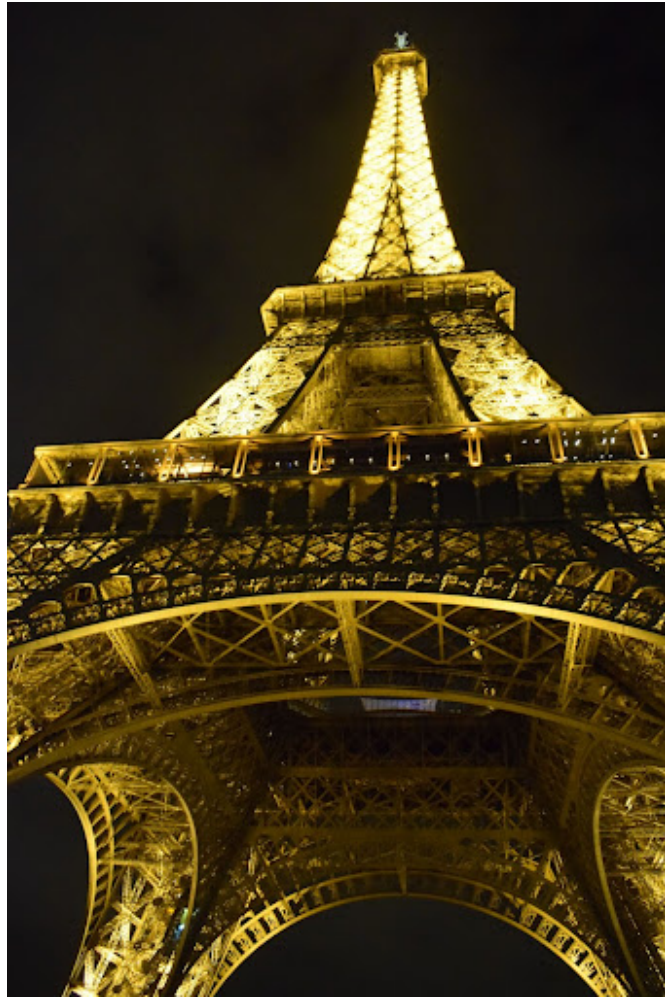
Paris, the capital of France, is considered one of the most romantic cities in the world and is a popular travel destination for couples. We have all noticed that social media abounds with photos of men and women proposing to their partners in front of the iconic Eiffel Tower. The big screen has added to the romantic allure of Paris by depicting whirlwind relationships in Hollywood movies like *Before Sunset*, *French Kiss*, and even in the Hindi film, *An Evening in Paris*.

So, as a young, dreamy-eyed 20-year-old girl, I deserve to be forgiven for expecting this city to conjure up the tall, curly-haired, dimpled smile man of my dreams when I visited it a few years ago.

But while these ludicrous wishes remained unfulfilled, Paris did not leave me untouched. The few days I lived here, I fell in love with its history, buildings, food and warmth. A steadfast and all-sustaining love that has me longing to revisit it.

## My Moments of Love in Paris

I experienced my very first moment of Parisian love when I glimpsed the **Arc de Triomphe** on our way to the hotel. Amongst the tallest arches in the country, it was first commissioned by the famous emperor, Napoleon. It witnessed some of the most iconic moments in French history, such as the French revolution and the victory of France and its allies in World War II. Below the arch lies the Tomb Of the Unknown soldier, symbolic of those army men who lost their lives in different wars. An eternal flame is lit there every morning and evening to honour their sacrifice.



**Eiffel Tower** (Photo Credit: Dr  
Nikhita Gune)

My second starry-eyed moment was when I caught the first glimpse of the majestic **Eiffel Tower**, sparkling against the inky night sky while standing in the **Trocadero Square**. You can take in a full-length view of the structure from this spot.

For your actual visit to the Tower itself, it is recommended that one purchase skip the line tickets either through their website or a tour agency, as this is one of the most visited sites in the city. Once you enter the Tower, you can use the stairs or a lift to see Level 1 and Level 2, that house observation decks to gaze at the Parisian skyline.

While the views, even at this height, are spectacular, one must view the Top-level, placed at 276m. The whole experience of travelling in the lift to the top will allow you to appreciate the lattice-like design of the structure,

consisting of iron rods laced against each other. As someone who is claustrophobic, this was one of the few elevator rides I actually enjoyed.

And, of course, the ride was made sweeter by the panoramic view waiting for me at the top. My heart actually skipped a few beats, just like the emotion you feel on meeting a loved one.

My third moment of love came when I visited the Gothic Cathedral of Notre de Dame on the banks of the River Seine. While its entire architecture is magnificent, its beautiful rose-stained windows and its bells caught my eye the most.

Unfortunately, part of the church was destroyed in a fire in 2019, and it is currently under re-restoration.

## **Other Historical Sights in Paris**

Besides the monuments mentioned above, a visit to Paris is incomplete without touring the world-famous **Louvre** museum. As an avid fan of Dan Brown and his novel, The Da Vinci Code, while entering the grounds, I was excited to note many of the landmarks highlighted in his books, such as the famous glass pyramids.

The museum itself is expansive and highlights the works of luminaries in art, sculpting and so on. Though the painting of the Monalisa is instantly recalled by most people when the Louvre is mentioned, in my humble opinion, there are many artworks there that outshine this painting. Keep aside an entire day or more, if possible, to do a detailed tour of the premises.



**Interiors of the Paris of Versailles** (Photo Credit: Dr Nikhita Gune)

Another must-see place in Paris is the opulent **Versailles Palace** and its stunning gardens located away from the city. A guided tour of the palace is recommended, as the entire building is replete with artworks and rooms symbolizing French history and the lavish lifestyle of its monarchs.



**Garden of Versailles** (Photo Credit: Dr Nikhita Gune)

The gardens, too, are adorned with fountains and sculptures and are home to thousands of species of trees and flowers.

## **Stepping Away From History**

While a lot of Paris is about its history and architecture, don't forget to take an evening away to dress up in your formals and enjoy the **Moulin Rouge** staged in Paris. Over an indulgent three-course meal accompanied by champagne, you can see around 80 dancers engage in the cabaret dance. The dances are interred with acts from acrobats and circus artists.

Also, a night cruise along the River Seine is an absolute must.

## **Travel and Food Considerations**

To make the trip easier on you, it is recommended that one should book tickets and guided tours to all the well-known attractions in advance while planning the itinerary. This will save valuable time and allow you to take the sights, without worrying about standing in long lines. Travel services like the Big Bus agency will provide you with full-day passes for buses that run between the city's key landmarks.

Food is an absolute joy to consume, whether you are a vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Throughout the city, you will find quaint cafes with outdoor seating serving the best of European cuisine. But my favourite dish here was the flaky melt-in-the-mouth chocolate croissant. I sincerely declare that I could have had it for every meal if allowed!

## **Bidding Adieu!**

When my brief sojourn in Paris ended, I packed my bags with a heavy heart, hoping against hope I would get to see the city again. Not as a stranger passing through, but as one of its

own, who had all the time in the world to sit on the banks of the Seine and spin my beloved fairytales!

**Featured image source: Image by Walkerssk from Pixabay**