



A Tale of Two Cities

Eurotripping

England and France

By Heather Leszczewicz

There are few cities that fall under “dream location.” You know, those cities that have such history, such presence in the world that they call to people. London and Paris are two cities which have that power to call visitors to them.

London is a city that has had so much influence on the world. It’s the city of the Queen and hundreds of recognizable monuments and locations. It’s a place not to be missed if you have the chance.

And Paris, well Paris is the “City of Lights” and one of the most romantic cities, if not the most romantic, in the world.

So here are some ideas for things to do and see if you ever get the chance.



London

The West End

londontheatre.co.uk

The West End rivals Broadway. It’s the chance to get a taste of culture on your trip. Plus as students, you could get a big break on tickets. Visit a theater the day of a performance and you could end up with pretty cheap concession tickets that equal out to amazing seats.

There are also stands that offer reduced tickets all over the place, but it’s always best to be wary of scalpers.

The London Eye

londoneye.com

It may seem like just a slow, although beautifully designed Ferris Wheel, but the London Eye gives people a bird’s eye view of London. Your “flight” would be a pricey £14.50, but it’s more than worth it. The line may also seem daunting, but it moves quickly.

St. Christopher’s Place

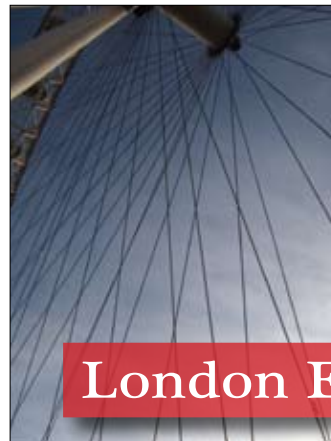
stchristophersplace.com

It’s not the easiest place to spot, with the entrance off of Oxford Street looking more like an alley with an ad than a shopping hot spot. But right across the street from the Bond Street Tube stop, there’s an area with wonderful specialty shops and eateries. Just be aware of the exchange rate. Shops, like Whistles, can make a paycheck disappear quickly.

Pret a Manger

pret.com

One of the biggest lifesavers when it comes to eating in London. At almost \$2 to £1, Pret is a cheap and tasty way to eat. There are locations everywhere, so finding at least one won’t be hard. They specialize in sandwiches, but not the plain and boring ham and cheese kind. It’s mostly grab n’go, but they have tables set up for those that



London Eye



The Eiffel Tower

tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk

Of course this is the monument that people most people think of when they think Paris. It's something that should be seen up close at least once, especially at night. The sparkling light show is something to behold, although it only happens for 10 minutes every hour on the hour at night.

Palace of Versailles

chateauversailles.fr/en

Who wouldn't want to see where Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette lived? It's a gorgeous piece of architecture; it's actually one of the most ornate as well. The Sun King spared no expense when building Versailles. But what's more astounding, besides the beauty of things like chandeliers and paintings would be the gardens. Visit during a warmer point in the season so that the fountains are on.

Go to the train station to get to the suburb of Versailles. There's a special deal for €19 which includes tick-

ets to and from Versailles as well as an admission ticket.

Musée d'Orsay

musee-orsay.fr/en

Everyone talks about the Louvre, like it has all the best pieces of art in the world. But really, the Musée D'Orsay is the one French museum you can spend hours at. See the work of Monet, Van Gogh and Degas. Many of his pieces were included in a Milwaukee Art Museum exhibit a few years back.

The beauty of the museum itself is astonishing (it was a former train station). The entrance fee is reasonable at €7.50.

The Catacombs

paris.fr

At 20 meters underground, there are six million bodies stacked on top of one another in a series of tunnels.

Probably one of the creepiest sights in Paris, but still worth a look. See how the bodies were stacked by bone type, not all together. Some people also got creative and made shapes, like hearts and crosses, with the skulls. At €3.50, it's not an expensive destination. It's a dark, damp walk best done in pairs. Don't get too spooked.



Versailles

Location, location

Think you've seen a London or Paris site in the movies? You probably have. Here are a few to know:

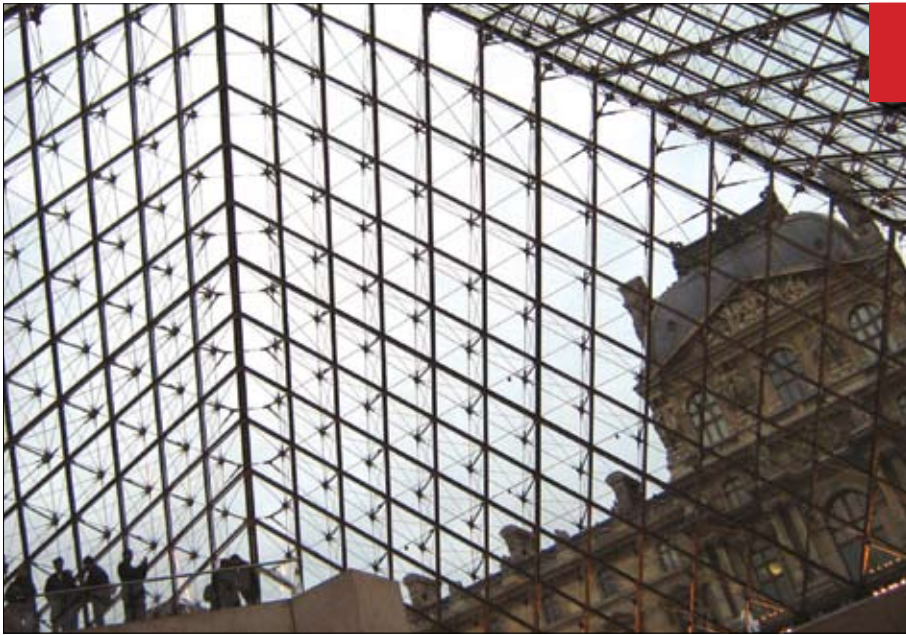
"Bridget Jones' Diary" — Bridget (Renee Zellweger) is often seen walking across Tower Bridge.

"Amelie" — With Sacre Coeur as a backdrop, Amelie (Audrey Tautou) has her crush running around in hopes of finding her.

"Matchpoint" — Director Woody Allen filmed several scenes in Covent Garden and at the Royal Opera House.

"The Da Vinci Code" — Filmed in both London and Paris. The Louvre and Westminster Abbey are two locals.

Travel Tips



Transportation It can be said that both London and Paris are walking cities. It's not hard to get around on foot with several must see sights in a short distance from one another. But, the best way to get around is by train and walk from that point on.

London Get an Oyster card when you first get into town. The rechargeable card is a timesaver that can be used on both buses and on the Tube. Put about £25 to start off with.

Paris Although they have a similar card system, it might be best to get a pack of 10, a carnet, for just over €10. Prices of train rides can vary and so it could be cheaper to purchase single tickets instead.

Plan out your days in advance. If there are certain places you'd like to see, there may be other things in the area that you can knock out as well. Pick up a city guide from your local bookstore and peruse Web sites that'll help with your city take over.

Try to know someone living in the city or go with someone who's been there before. Being a first time traveler to certain cities dampens the effect. It's more fun to get the insider's view rather than figuring out a map and only hitting tourist spots.

Free things to do are all around. Europe can be quite expensive when it comes to the exchange rate. It's not a bad idea to head off to the grocery store and grab sandwich fixings to save on meals. Also, there are plenty of places that you can get in free as a student. For example, at the Louvre on Friday nights after 6 p.m., people under 25 can get in free with I.D.

(Above) A look from inside the Louvre. (Right) The Peter Pan statue in London's Kensington Gardens. (Below) Sacre Coeur in Mont-matre. (Left)

Photos by Heather Leszczewicz

