Paris, city, France (pâr'ēs, Fr. pârē'), city (1999 pop. 2,115,757; metropolitan area est. pop. 11,000,000), N central France, capital of the country, on the Seine River. It is the commercial and industrial focus of France and a cultural and intellectual center of international renown. The city possesses an indefinable unity of atmosphere that has fascinated writers, poets, and painters for centuries. Paris is sometimes called the City of Light in tribute to its intellectual preeminence as well as to its beautiful appearance.

Paris is the center of many major newspapers and periodicals, as well as all the major French radio and television stations. Elegant stores and hotels, lavish nightclubs, theaters, and gourmet restaurants help make tourism the biggest industry in Paris. Other leading industries manufacture luxury articles, high-fashion clothing, perfume, and jewelry. Heavy industry, notably automobile manufacture, is located in the suburbs. About one quarter of the French labor force is concentrated in the Paris area.

Transportation Facilities
Situated in the center of the Paris basin (see Île-de-France), and only 90 mi (145 km) from the English Channel, the city handles a great volume of shipping. Orly and Charles de Gaulle airports (the latter opened in 1974) and many major railroad stations make Paris one of the great transportation centers of western Europe. The Paris metro (subway), built in 1900, was modernized and extended during the 1970s. There are now 16 principal metro lines and a high-speed express subway system servicing the suburbs. The system's hub, Chatelet Les-Halles, is perhaps the largest, busiest underground station in the world. Paris is also the hub of the national rail system, with high-speed trains connecting it to most major European cities.

Points of Interest
Paris is divided into roughly equal sections by the Seine. On the right (northern) bank are the Bois de Boulogne and the adjoining Stade Roland Garros (site of tennis's French Open), Arc de Triomphe, the old Bibliothèque nationale, élysée Palace, Grand Palais, Georges Pompidou National Center for Art and Culture (see Beaubourg), Place de la Concorde, Opéra, Comédie Française, Louvre, Palais de Chaillot, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Grande Arche de la Défense, Champs élysées, and other great streets, sites, and boulevards. In the eastern part of the right bank is the Museum of the Art and History of Judaism, the Place de la Bastille and the Bastille Opera; to the north is Montmartre, the highest area in Paris, topped by the Church of Sacré-Cœur. Much of the right bank, which has many of the most fashionable streets and shops, has a stately air. At night many monuments and boulevards are floodlit. In the city's northeastern outskirts is the Parc de la Villette, home of the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie (1986), the Cité de la Musique (1995), the Philharmonie de Paris (2015), and other performance and exhibition spaces.

The left bank, with the Sorbonne, the French Academy, the Panthéon (see under pantheon), the Luxembourg Palace and Gardens, the Jardin des Plantes (site of the National Natural History Museum), the Chamber of Deputies, the Quai d'Orsay, and the Hotel des Invalides, is the governmental and to a large extent the intellectual section. The Latin Quarter, for nearly a thousand years the preserve of

https://ezp.raritanval.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/paris
university students and faculty; the Faubourg Saint-Germain section, at once aristocratic and a haven for students and artists (the celebrated Café des Deux Magots and Café de Flore are there); and Montparnasse are the most celebrated left-bank districts. The Eiffel Tower stands by the Seine on the Champ-de-Mars. In SE Paris, also on the left bank, is Paris Rive Gauche, a former industrial area redeveloped with a variety of newer buildings and renovations, many by prominent architects; the new Bibliothèque nationale (opened 1998) is there.

The historical nucleus of Paris is the Île de la Cité, a small boat-shaped island largely occupied by the huge Palais de Justice and the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. It is connected with the smaller Île Saint-Louis, occupied by elegant houses of the 17th and 18th cent. Characteristic of Paris are the tree-lined quays along the Seine (famed, on the left bank, for their open-air bookstalls), the historic bridges that span the Seine, and the vast tree-lined boulevards that replaced the city walls. Skyscrapers, apartment complexes, and highways have been added to the Paris scene in recent years.

**Government and People**

Paris is divided into 20 arrondissements (districts or boroughs), each of which has a local council and a mayor, but most of the power is held by the mayor of the City of Paris who is chosen by the city’s council. Paris and its suburbs together make up the eight departments of the Île-de-France administrative region, which is governed by an elected assembly, chairman (or president), and supervisor and overseen by a prefect appointed by the state.

Immigrants to France now constitute nearly 20% of Paris's population. The majority of these are Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian. Large groups of Indochinese have also immigrated to Paris. About 75% of all Parisians live in the suburbs due to high costs and a high population density in the city. New towns have been built, consolidating suburban areas, and a great deal of manufacturing and other industry takes place in the suburbs.

**History**

*Early History*

Julius Caesar conquered Paris in 52 B.C. It was then a fishing village, called Lutetia Parisiorum (the Parisii were a Gallic tribe), on the Île de la Cité. Under the Romans the town spread to the left bank and acquired considerable importance under the later emperors. The vast catacombs under Montparnasse and the baths (now in the Cluny Mus.) remain from the Roman period. Legend says that St. Denis, first bishop of Paris, was martyred on Montmartre (hence the name) and that in the 5th cent. St. Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, preserved the city from destruction by the Huns. On several occasions in its early history Paris was threatened by barbarian and Norman invasions, which at times drove the inhabitants back to the Île de la Cité.

Clovis I and several other Merovingian kings made Paris their capital; under Charlemagne it became a center of learning. In 987, Hugh Capet, count of Paris, became king of France. The Capetians firmly established Paris as the French capital. The city grew as the power of the French kings increased. In the 11th cent. the city spread to the right bank. During the next two centuries—the reign of Philip Augustus (1180–1223) is especially notable for the growth of Paris—streets were paved and the city walls enlarged; the first Louvre (a fortress) and several churches, including Notre-Dame, were constructed or begun; and the schools on the left bank were organized into the Univ. of Paris. One of them, the Sorbonne, became a fountainhead of theological learning with Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas among its scholars. The university community constituted an autonomous borough; another was formed
on the right bank by merchants ruled by their own provost. In 1358, under the leadership of the merchant provost Étienne Marcel, Paris first assumed the role of an independent commune and rebelled against the dauphin (later Charles V). During the period of the Hundred Years War the city suffered civil strife (see Armagnacs and Burgundians), occupation by the English (1419–36), famine, and the Black Death.

**During the Renaissance**

The Renaissance reached Paris in the 16th cent. during the reign of Francis I (1515–47). At this time the Louvre was transformed from a fortress to a Renaissance palace. In the Wars of Religion (1562–98), Parisian Catholics, who were in the great majority, took part in the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day (1572), forced Henry III to leave the city on the Day of Barricades (1588), and accepted Henry IV only after his conversion (1593) to Catholicism. Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII’s minister, established the French Academy and built the Palais Royal and the Luxembourg Palace. During the Fronde, Paris once again defied the royal authority. Louis XIV, distrustful of the Parisians, transferred (1682) his court to Versailles. Parisian industries profited from the lavishness of Versailles; the specialization in luxury goods dates from that time. J. H. Mansart under Louis XIV and François Mansart, J. G. Soufflot, and J. A. Gabriel under Louis XV created some of the most majestic prospects of modern Paris.

**The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

During the late 17th and the 18th cent. Paris acquired further glory as the scene of many of France’s greatest cultural achievements: the plays of Molière, Racine, and Corneille; the music of Lully, Rameau, and Gluck; the paintings of Watteau, Fragonard, and Boucher; and the salons where many of the philosophes of the Enlightenment gathered. At the same time, growing industries had resulted in the creation of new classes—the bourgeoisie and proletariat—concentrated in such suburbs (faubourgs) as Saint-Antoine and Saint-Denis; in the opening events of the French Revolution, city mobs stormed the Bastille (July, 1789) and hauled the royal family from Versailles to Paris (Oct., 1789). Throughout the turbulent period of the Revolution the city played a central role.

**Napoleon to the Commune**

Napoleon (emperor, 1804–15) began a large construction program (including the building of the Arc de Triomphe, the Vendôme Column, and the arcaded Rue de Rivoli) and enriched the city’s museums with artworks removed from conquered cities. In the course of his downfall Paris was occupied twice by enemy armies (1814, 1815). In the first half of the 19th cent. Paris grew rapidly. In 1801 it had 547,000 people; in 1817, 714,000; in 1841, 935,000; and in 1861, 1,696,000. The revolutions of July, 1830, and Feb., 1848, both essentially Parisian events, had repercussions throughout Europe. Culturally, the city was at various times the home or host of most of the great European figures of the age. Balzac, Hugo, Chopin, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Delacroix, Ingres, and Daumier were a few of the outstanding personalities. The grand outline of modern Paris was the work of Baron Georges Haussmann, who was appointed prefect by Napoleon III. The great avenues, boulevards, and parks are his work. During the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), Paris was besieged for four months by the Germans and then surrendered. After the Germans withdrew, Parisian workers rebelled against the French government and established the Commune of Paris, which was bloodily suppressed.

**Under the Third Republic**

With the establishment of the Third French Republic and relative stability, Paris became the great industrial and transportation center it is today. Two epochal events in modern cultural history that took
place in Paris were the first exhibition of impressionist painting (1874) and the premiere of Stravinsky's "Sacre du Printemps" (1913). In World War I the Germans failed to reach Paris. After 1919 the outermost city fortifications were replaced by housing developments, including the Cité Universitaire, which houses thousands of students. During the 1920s, a time of enormous cultural and social activity, Paris was home to many artists and writers from the United States and elsewhere. German troops occupied Paris during World War II from June 14, 1940, to Aug. 25, 1944. The city was not seriously damaged by the war.

Contemporary Paris

Paris was the headquarters of NATO from 1950 to 1967; it is the headquarters of UNESCO and the European Space Agency. A program of cleaning the city's major buildings and monuments was completed in the 1960s. The city was the scene in May, 1968, of serious disorders, beginning with a student strike, that nearly toppled the Fifth Republic. In 1971, Les Halles, Paris's famous central market, called by Zola the “belly” of Paris, was dismantled. Construction began immediately on Chatelet Les-Halles, Paris's new metro hub, which was completed in 1977. The Forum des Halles, a partially underground, multistory commercial and shopping center, opened in 1979. Other developments include the Georges Pompidou National Center for Art and Culture, built in 1977, which includes the National Museum of Modern Art. The Louvre underwent extensive renovation, and EuroDisney, a multibillion dollar theme and amusement park, opened in the Parisian suburbs in 1992. A number of major projects in the city were initiated by President François Mitterrand (1981–95); they include the new Bibliothèque Nationale, the glass pyramid at the Louvre, Grande Arche de la Défense, Arab Institute, Bastille Opera, and Cité de la Musique.

Bibliography

McAuliffe, M., Twilight of the Belle Epoque (2014) and When Paris Sizzled (2016).

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA

APA


Chicago


Harvard


MLA