

## The 69 Bus – See All the Top Sights in Paris!

There are so many advantages to taking the public buses in Paris, and it's one of my favorite "Live like a Parisian" tips that I like sharing with my friends. While the Métro is a convenient and fast way to move around Paris, the buses are also a fabulous way to see the city. Why ride underground when you can enjoy the breathtaking beauty of Paris at every turn? Bus 69 crisscrosses one of my favorite neighborhoods in the 7th arrondissement and connects it with the Musée d'Orsay, the 6th arrondissement and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Notre Dame, the Louvre Museum, the Marais, the famous Père Lachaise cemetery and more. Bus 69 travels an east-west route across Paris, starting at the Eiffel Tower and finishing at Pere Lachaise before returning along a slightly different route. **bus stop called Rapp-La Bourdonnais, Bosquet – Saint-Dominique.**

From the Eiffel Tower, the bus travels eastward along Rue Saint-Dominique past many stores and eateries including the Gregory Renard chocolate store, Café Constant and La Fontaine de Mars restaurant. You'll also find souvenir stores, pharmacies, clothing boutiques, florists, coffee shops and much more in this charming Parisian neighborhood.

The second stop along Rue Saint-Dominique is at **St. Pierre du Gros Caillou** named after the church nearby. Hop off at this stop for the famous [Rue Cler market street](#). This is a great food shopping spot in Paris – lined with specialty food shops, excellent cheese shops, butchers, fish shops, fruit and vegetable vendors and even supermarkets. You can find everything you need for a gourmet meal at home along Rue Cler!

Continue on a few more blocks, and you will see the broad green space, the Esplanade des Invalides on your right, and the golden dome of Les Invalides in the distance. The Esplanade is frequently used for local sporting events...soccer, American football, and the French boules. Stop here to visit Les Invalides, built in the 17th century as military hospital, which is now a military museum and sumptuous final resting place of Napoleon Bonaparte. **Bus stops: La Tour Maubourg – Saint-Dominique, Esplanade des Invalides.**

At the end of the Esplanade des Invalides you'll find the gorgeous Pont Alexandre III bridge, with its ornate street lamps and the gold statues and decorations. It is often considered one of Paris' most beautiful and dramatic bridges, and appears in the final romantic scenes of Woody Allen's movie [Midnight in Paris](#). Cross the Pont Alexandre III bridge to reach the glass domed Grand Palais and the Petit Palais just on the other side of the Seine.

The 69 bus route continues along Rue St. Dominique until merging with Boulevard Saint-Germain. Get off here for excellent shopping along Boulevard St-Germain, which you can follow just a short distance to the heart of the 6th arrondissement around Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Enjoy the high-end shopping and take a break at one of the historic literary cafés – Deux Magots, Brasserie Lipp, Café Flore. **Bus stop: Bac – Saint-Germain**

After a short distance on Boulevard Saint-Germain, the bus route turns left on Rue du Bac and in just a few blocks you are crossing the Seine to the Right Bank over the Pont Royal. Just near the corner of Rue du Bac and Boulevard St-Germain you'll spot [Deyrolle](#), one of the quirkiest and most entertaining shops in Paris! Founded in 1831, this taxidermy shop has a fascinating selection of animals of all shapes and sizes (some even dressed in clothing!) as well as displays of insects, shells, botanical prints and all kinds of curiosities. If you enjoyed the movie *Midnight in Paris*, one of the party scenes was filmed at Deyrolle! **Bus stops: Bac – Saint-Germain, Pont Royal – Quai Voltaire**

Once across the Seine, the beautiful Tuileries gardens are right in front of you with the Louvre Museum on the right. The bus turns right on Quai Francois Mitterrand and continues alongside the Seine. If you want to stroll the Tuileries gardens, get off on the first stop once you cross the Seine, which is the Pont Royal stop. **Bus stop: Pont Royal**

The next sight you will pass on the left side is the incomparable Louvre, with its I.M Pei designed glass pyramid. Exit here (stop: Quai Francois Mitterrand) to visit the Louvre, or just stroll along the Seine. **Bus stop: Quai Francois Mitterrand**

Continuing on past the Louvre, look to your right for the pedestrian bridge Pont des Arts, also known as “Lovers Bridge.” It has become a romantic tradition for couples to place padlocks on the bridge as a symbol of undying love. You may see locks all along the bridge, even though the city of Paris has attempted to remove the locks because some consider them to be an eyesore. **Bus stop: Pont des Arts**

The next bridge on your right is the Pont Neuf, the oldest bridge in Paris, which crosses the tip of Ile de la Cité. Get off the bus at one of the stops listed above to visit the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, the Conciergerie, Sainte-Chapelle and explore the Ile de la Cité and the Ile St. Louis, the two famous islands in the middle of the Seine. **Bus stops: Pont Neuf – Quai du Louvre, Chatelet, Hotel de Ville**

Hop off on either of the next two stops (Chatelet or Hotel du Ville) to begin your exploration of the islands, including the iconic Notre-Dame Cathedral and the Gothic St. Chapelle with its stunning stained glass windows. Don't miss the very moving Deportation Memorial, behind Notre-Dame, built to remember the 200,000 French men, women and children who were deported during WWII and died in Nazi concentration camps.

The two islands, Ile de la Cité and Ile St. Louis, are linked by a pedestrian bridge and you should definitely stroll around the Ile St. Louis as well. Stop in at [Berthillon](#) for glacé (closed Monday & Tuesday), or make reservations for a themed dinner with strollingtroubadours at Nos Ancetres les Gauloise...a bit touristy, but lots of fun, especially the do-it-yourself salad basket delivered to your table.

Shortly after passing Notre Dame, the bus cuts a diagonal to the left, away from the river and into the beginnings of the Marais, which is a vibrant shopping and dining neighborhood and home to several lovely parks and museums. If you exit at the Birague stop, walk north about 1 block on the Rue de Birague and you find yourself in the lovely

Place des Vosges. Visit the Victor Hugo Museum in the southeast corner of the Place to see where Hugo lived when he wrote *Les Misérables*.

Then wander further north and west behind the Place into the heart of the Marais. Best time for strolling and people watching is Sunday since many of the shops are open here (when the rest of Paris' shops are closed). Try out the famous falafel at L'As du Falafel (the baba ganoush is outstanding!) and enjoy the quaint feeling strolling the Rue des Rosiers. **Bus Stop: Birague**

The route continues along Rue St. Antoine, which has numerous nice restaurants (Petit Bofinger is also nice for lunch, with a reasonable prix fixe menu). The bus then enters the grand Place Bastille, with its soaring center column marking the former site of the famous prison. It was on this spot on July 14, 1789 that Parisians stormed the Bastille and French Revolution began. The new Paris Opera, with its modern gray glass architecture, is located just across the Place de la Bastille.

To your left, running north of the Place on Boulevard Richard Lenoir, you will find Marché Bastille, one of the largest outdoor markets in Paris (produce, cheese, fish, meats, poultry, kitchenwares, etc.), open Thursdays from 7am – 2:30pm and Sundays from 7am – 3pm. Exit here as well if you want to take the cruise on Canal St. Martin. It leaves from the Port du Arsenal, between the monument and the Seine, and travels upward through the locks of old Paris. **Bus Stop: Bastille – Rue Saint-Antoine, Bastille**

Continuing on bus 69, your route continues another 8-9 stops where it terminates at Place Gambetta and the famous Père Lachaise cemetery. This is the final resting place for famous historical figures, including Frederic Chopin, Oscar Wilde, Edith Piaf, Haussmann, Modigliani, Moliere, Abelard and Heloise, Sarah Bernhardt, Jim Morrison, Proust, Pissarro, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas and thousands more. While you can get off at the stop labeled “Père Lachaise,” you may find it easier to stay on until the last stop at Gambetta and walk down the street to the side entrance. **Bus Stops: Roquette – Père Lachaise, Gambetta**

The **number 69 bus is a great sightseeing route in Paris**, and for the price of a single ticket (€1.90), you can ride for 90 minutes in either direction, hopping on and off as you wish. With so much to see on the 69 route, you could easily spend your whole vacation visiting the museums, churches, shops, restaurants and monuments on this line. Be sure to print out a map of the line from the RATP website and bring it with you as you travel the route.



Paris buses accept the same ticket as the Metro and can be purchased from the bus driver. A “carnet,” or 10-pack of tickets, is the best value if you plan to use the public transportation system. When you get on the bus, validate your ticket in the little machine behind the driver. Always enter the bus at the front, and exit in the middle. Push the red

button ahead of your stop to signal the driver to stop. Watch the map and be aware of the names of stops just before your intended stop, so you have time to collect yourself and proceed to the middle, ready to exit when the bus stops. The names of each stop are posted on the top or sides of each bus stop waiting area.

Enjoy your ride through Paris on the number 69 bus!