

# SIGHTSEEING IN ILE-DE-FRANCE

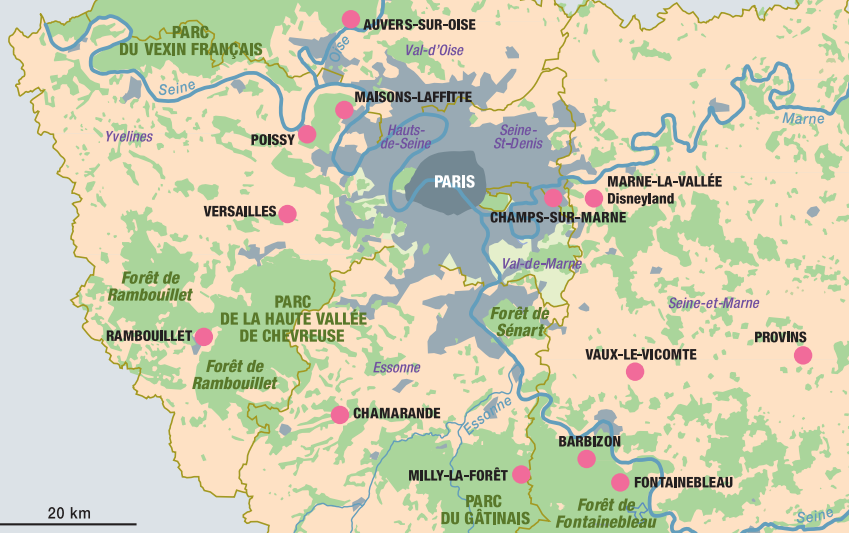
**T**empted by an excursion? Then leave Paris behind for a moment to visit the surrounding Île-de-France region. With nine royal towns, the Île-de-France is a land of chateaux – a tapestry of brick and slate tiles, interlacing of stucco, intricate hedging and elaborate garden water features. Whether historic or artistic, these trips are always a delight for the eyes.

In the 19th century, steam trains offered painters luminous landscapes on the outskirts of Paris. Follow them! Renoir set up his easel at Chatou, Van Gogh at Auvers-sur-Oise, and other no less-famous painters passed through Barbizon on the banks of the Marne. It is still a place for art.

Events and festivals, music, dance and theatre attract an ever larger public. And the region has something for everyone with theme parks and entertainment all year round.



**Seine-et-Marne (77) • Yvelines (78) • Essonne (91)  
• Hauts-de-Seine (92) • Seine-Saint-Denis (93)  
• Val-de-Marne (94) • Val-d'Oise (95)**



20 km

## DON'T MISS

### Château de Versailles\* **PASS**



This symbol of the absolute power and glory of Louis XIV was nothing more than a "modest hunting lodge" built for Louis XIII, until Louis XIV had it renovated in 1661 by his architect Le Vau. Still not sufficiently grand, the Sun King commissioned further extensions and embellishments, notably the Grand Appartement du Roi, and the fabulous Hall of Mirrors. The Queen's Bedroom can be seen just as Marie-Antoinette left it in 1789. Visitors can also discover her "private estate" – a haven of intimacy and simplicity compared to the baroque splendours of the chateau – and which includes the Théâtre and

Hameau de la Reine (a mock farm), the Petit Trianon, the dairy, an English garden, and more. The inventory of the chateau's treasures is innumerable, and extends to the French-style gardens designed by Le Nôtre and the Grand Trianon built for Madame de Maintenon.

**RP 834.**  
**78008 Versailles Cedex.**  
**Tel: 01 30 83 78 00.**  
**Daily except Mon, 1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec and official ceremonies.**  
**1 Apr to 1 Nov: 9am-6.30pm.**  
**2 Nov to 31 Mar: 9am-5.30pm.**  
**€15 – RR: €13 (including access to temporary exhibitions).**  
**Under 18s: free.**  
**Marie-Antoinette's Estate and Châteaux de Trianon: €10 – RR: €6 (from 4pm).**  
**Pass: Chateau and park and gardens €25 during the "Grandes Eaux Musicales" or "Jardins Musicaux" days in high season.**  
**[www.chateauversailles.fr](http://www.chateauversailles.fr)**

### DID YOU KNOW?

A visit to Versailles is more than just a visit to the chateau ... Special events and shows are also on the agenda: Grandes Eaux Musicales, Grandes Eaux Nocturnes, Fêtes de Versailles at the Neptune fountain, Versailles Off ... Not forgetting the Bartabas Equestrian Show Academy!

### Fontainebleau\* and Barbizon

Fond of hunting here, the kings of France built a manor house, which was embellished by thirty-four successive kings, to become the grandiose Château de Fontainebleau in the midst of a huge forest. Between the Cour du Cheval Blanc and the Jardin de Diane, one goes from enaissance rooms to the apartment of Napoléon I, from state apartments to the Chinese museum of the Empress Eugénie. From 1830 to

1875 the more modest hamlet of Barbizon, on the edge of the forest, attracted a colony of landscape painters, later known as the "Barbizon school". The Auberge du Père Ganne, where they stayed, is now a museum and displays memorabilia relating to Corot, Millet, Renoir, Sisley, etc.



Office de tourisme du Pays de Fontainebleau.

Tel: 01 60 74 99 99.

[www.fontainebleau-tourisme.com](http://www.fontainebleau-tourisme.com)



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Every Sunday and public holiday, from April to October, a direct train operates between Paris-Gare du Nord and Auvers-sur-Oise.

### Château d'Auvers-sur-Oise

At the heart of Auvers-sur-Oise, the multimedia tour at the Château d'Auvers "Voyage au temps des Impressionnistes" takes you on the trail of the great impressionist painters, who marked the history of this village: Daubigny, Pissarro, Cézanne, Monet, Van Gogh.

Rue de Léry.

BP 21, 95430 Auvers-sur-Oise/Cergy-Pontoise.

Tel: 01 34 48 48 48.

Tues to Sun.

1 Apr to 30 Sept:

10.30am-6pm.

1 Oct to 31 Mar:

10.30am-4.30pm.

€12. 6-18yrs: €7.90.

Under 6s: free.

[www.chateau-auvers.fr](http://www.chateau-auvers.fr)

#### DID YOU KNOW?

In the Oise, less than one hour from Paris, the Chantilly estate with its chateau, Musée Condé, park, gardens, grand stables, etc. is open to the public and is one of the jewels of French heritage.

Domaine de Chantilly **PASS**

Tel: 03 44 27 31 80.

Daily, except Tues.

[www.domainedechantilly.com](http://www.domainedechantilly.com)

### Disneyland Paris



It's a fact – children are not the only ones to enjoy parades, shows, stores, themed restaurants, magical hotels, and giant attractions and rides. Travelling through the five different imaginary countries of the park, there are many surprises in store: the buccaneers in Adventureland, the chateau of Sleeping Beauty in Fantasyland, Nemo's submarine, the 36-metre high Space Mountain, a 13-floor plummeting drop in the Tower of Terror ... In 2010, there are new stars: Princess Tiana, Buzz Lightyear, Remy, Stitch, Sulli ... The heroes of the new Disney generation announce their arrival in breathtaking shows and parades. And from summer 2010, the brand new Toy Story Playland will open at Walt Disney Studios park with no less than three interactive attractions devoted to the great stars of the Toy Story cartoon films.

77777 Marne-la-Vallée.

RER A Marne-la-Vallée – Chessy.

Tel: 0 825 30 60 30 (€0.15/min).

Until 8 Nov 2010.

1 day/1 park: €53; 3-11s: €45.

1 day/2 parks: €67; 3-11s: €57.

[www.disneylandparis.com](http://www.disneylandparis.com)



### Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte



Three geniuses of the 17th century – the architect Le Vau, the painter and sculptor Le Brun and the landscape gardener Le Nôtre – combined their talents so well to create this site that Louis XIV subsequently commissioned them to work on the Château de Versailles. The view of the dome, the painted decors and hangings in the Salon des Muses, the borders in the French-style garden, its ornamental ponds and fountains are spellbinding. And the candlelit visit – well, that goes without saying!

77950 Mincy.

Tel: 01 64 14 41 90.

Daily: from 27 Mar to 7 Nov (closed Wed, except July and Aug).

€16 – RR: €13.

Under 6s: free.

[www.vaux-le-vicomte.com](http://www.vaux-le-vicomte.com)

For half-day sightseeing-trips outside Paris – in the Hauts-de-Seine, the Val-de-Marne or Seine-Saint-Denis *départements* – see p.74, p.88 and p.96.

## DISCOVER

### Villa Savoy\* **PASS**

This villa revolutionized the traditional conception of a house. White and smooth on a green lawn, it applies the main principles of Le Corbusier: free-standing pillars, roof garden, free facade, and long windows.

82, rue de Villiers. 78300 Poissy.

Tel: 01 39 65 01 06. Daily except Mon, 1 May, 1 Nov, 11 Nov, 25 Dec to 1 Jan. From 1 Mar to 30 Apr, from 1 Sept to 31 Oct: 10am-5pm. From 2 May to 31 Aug: 10am-6pm. From 2 Nov to 28 Feb: 10am-1pm and 2-5pm. €7 – RR: €4.50 (18-25yrs).

Under 18s: free. [www.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://www.monuments-nationaux.fr)

### Domaine de Chamarande

Invited each year to the (17th century) chateau and its 98-hectare landscaped park, contemporary creation is revealed in all its forms, with exhibitions, dance, music and more.

38, rue du Commandant-Arnoux.

91730 Chamarande. Tel: 01 60 82 52 01. Free. [www.chamarande.essonne.fr](http://www.chamarande.essonne.fr)

### Medieval city of Provins



Visitors come here to admire the ramparts of the medieval city, the former capital of the counts of Champagne and a market town, which is today a Unesco world heritage site. One goes away dazzled by the falconry and cavalry demonstrations and by the fantastic battles between knights.

Office de Tourisme de Provins.

Tel: 01 64 60 26 26. [www.provins.net](http://www.provins.net)

### Château de Maisons\* **PASS**

A listed monument since 1914, this chateau, built by the architect François Mansart between 1632 and 1646, is a model of the French style of architecture: magnificent facades, elegant proportions, high chimneys, etc. In 1777, the Comte d'Artois – brother of Louis XVI – became the owner of the estate and had work carried out there until he ran out of money. After the Revolution, the chateau was sold and

bought many times before being purchased by the State in 1905 to save it from demolition.

2, av. Carnot. 78600 Maisons-Laffitte.

Tel: 01 39 62 01 49. Daily except Tues and public hols.

From 2 May to 30 Sept: 10am-12.30pm and 2-6pm.

From 1 Oct to 30 Apr: 10am-12.30pm and 2-5pm.

€7 – RR: €4.50. Under 18s and 1st Sun of the month (Nov to May): free. [www.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://www.monuments-nationaux.fr)

### Château de Champs-sur-Marne\*

Many films are regularly shot here: *Ridicule* by Patrice Leconte (1995), *Marie-Antoinette* by Sofia Coppola (2005) ... The chateau is also famous for other reasons: it is an example of classic architecture and remains a comfortable residence: rocaille decor, fine furniture, as well as, painted wooden panelling by Christophe Huet – the painter of animals admired by the marquise de Pompadour. The French-style formal gardens are wonderful.

Domaine national de Champs-sur-Marne.

31, rue de Paris. 77420 Champs-sur-Marne.

Chateau closed for restoration until 2011.

Free access and admission to park. Contact for opening times. [www.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://www.monuments-nationaux.fr)

### Château de Rambouillet\*

Situated in the middle of a wonderful estate of woodland, water features, islands and gardens, the Château de Rambouillet was originally a royal residence, before attracting several French presidents who organized hunting parties here or summer holidays. François I, who loved to hunt died here, Louis XIII, like Louis XV and Louis XVI (and many others ...) commissioned major work here. For example, the Queen's Dairy – under Louis XVI for Marie-Antoinette – or the Bergerie Nationale, the Ermitage or the Shell Cottage.

78120 Rambouillet. Tel: 01 34 83 00 25.

Daily except Tues and public hols.

From 1 Apr to 30 Sept: 10am to 12-noon and 2-6pm. From 1 Oct to 31 Mar:

10am-12-noon to 2-5pm.

Closed when the French president is in residence. €7/€6.50.

Gives admission to the chateau, the Laiterie de la Reine and the Chaumière aux Coquillages.

Under 18s, and 1st Sun

of the month (Nov to May): free.

[www.monuments-nationaux.fr](http://www.monuments-nationaux.fr)

