

THE INTERVIEWS



Lisa Rankin

Founder, Flavors of Paris. Foodie Tour Guide. Photographer.

About Lisa

I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada and moved to Paris two years ago. I own a company called Flavors of Paris, where I do small-group English-language walking and tasting tours in the neighborhood of *Saint-Germain-des-Prés*.

One of my new passions is photography. In my free time, I like to take photography workshops, explore the neighborhoods of Paris, and take photographs.

Of course, even when I am not working, I love to eat and to drink wine.

What To Do In Paris (The Basics)

I think a bus tour of the city when you first arrive gives a good overview of Paris and its highlights.

At the risk of sounding shameless, a little neighborhood tour like the ones I run is also always a good idea. We take our clients to little artisanal food shops, markets, and restaurants that they wouldn't normally venture into. It gives people an insider's view of living like a Parisian and they can use that knowledge for the rest of their stay.

Hidden Gems for Seasoned Travelers

When I'm not thinking about eating, I love to shop. The *Clignacourt* flea market (officially known as *Les Puces de Saint-Ouen*) is the largest of its kind in Paris. It is like a rabbit warren of little streets, antique stands, and vendors where you can find all sorts of treasures from different eras. Be attentive to your wallets and purses there. It is a haven for pick-pockets, as well.

Another of my favorite places is the *Viaduc des Arts*. It was once a raised suburban railway that has now been converted into a center of art galleries and fine craft shops. Along the top

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of the viaduct is a lush, green promenade known as the *Promenade Plantée*. If you are looking for a little break from the hustle of the city, this is the place to go.

Where to Stay

The wonderful thing about Paris is that it is a city of neighborhoods. Each one has its own character.

Le Marais district is great for its color and vibrancy—and it has some wonderful ethnic restaurants.

Then there is *Saint-Germain-des-Prés* with its chic, artsy feel. It has a unique blend of high quality shops and restaurants with lots of great private galleries and independent bookshops. They don't call it "the neighborhood of arts and letters" for nothing.

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Another great neighborhood is *Montmartre*. It is probably the most bohemian of the three I have listed. This is also the hilliest part of Paris, with lots of stairs, great views, and quaint eating establishments.

Day Trips

The Palace of Versailles is one of those places that is so grand and so ostentatious, it's hard to get your head around it when you see it. The direct train takes just an hour from central Paris.