

LIVING

7 Days In Heaven: A Fashion Lover's Guide To Paris

Paris on your bucket list? We're sharing seven must-see spots for fashion lovers, with a bonus patisserie recommendation or two to boot. Because if the fashion doesn't do it for you, surely the bread and cheese will. Or the pastries. Or the crepes.

By Julie Drake Jun 13th 2023 05 min read



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h, Paris. Seven days in the City of Lights (and couture!) will give you a real hankering to put money down on an apartment and apply for dual citizenship. Indisputably the fashion capital of the world, the glittering French city is a haven for fashion lovers all over the world – and of all tastes and income brackets. From luxury to thrift there is fabulous fashion to be found, just waiting to be chosen and cherished. And as the birthplace of modern fashion, the corresponding history is as rich as the *sélections*.

Home to singular visionaries that changed the fashion world forever – like Coco Chanel and Christian Dior – the foundation of fashion as we know it today was laid on these streets and in these *maisons*. It's true that, as Christian Dior once said, "one breathes in fashion with the very air of Paris." The unparalleled taste of these pioneers has filtered down through time and out onto the streets, as just about every Parisian woman walking by could easily be described as a bonafide fashionista. ("Street style" was never a more apt description than on the streets of Paris.)

But in a city with no shortage of artistic diversions (fashion is art at its core, no less), where do you begin? There's so much to see it can be overwhelming, and the FOMO can be crippling. But not today, Satan, because we saw – and shopped – it all, and are breaking down the seven must-see spots for fashion lovers, plus a few gastronomic recommendations (because we just can't help ourselves).

1. Dior 30 Montainge

You could argue that this is really where it all began, when Christian Dior first opened his own fashion house, or *maison*, in 1947. Of the endeavor, Dior said, "my desire [was] to create a house in my name. A house where everything would be new." He proved prophetic as his unique style was named the "New Look," and portrayed ultrafemininity with "rounded shoulders, a cinched waist, and very full skirt." It was well-received by tastemakers of the day, and within just a few years, the House of Dior had grown into a full-blown fashion empire.

The space underwent renovations beginning in 2020, and reopened two years later as a celebration of the man and the groundbreaking fashion moment. Today, the location is a Dior wonderland complete with gardens, a restaurant, a patisserie, and several boutiques featuring the label's ready-to-wear, haute couture, beauty, and jewelry. While you're there, don't forget to visit La Galerie Dior, or Dior museum, which honors the extraordinary career of one of the most pivotal figures in fashion history.

Whether you're shopping or simply perusing, visiting the iconic space is a magical experience, and we highly recommend stopping in. Make sure to pop over to the Rue Royale Ladurée after for some tasty macarons and the famous ispanhan pastry (a delightful combination of rose, raspberry, and lychee).

2. Chanel 31 Cambon

Speaking of flagship boutiques, 31 Rue Cambon houses Gabrielle Chanel's first *maison* (and apartment!), which is equally as magical. The other face of modern fashion, and more commonly known as Coco, Chanel's impact on the industry was incalculable. Dior said of the prolific designer, "In the age of great couturiers, Mademoiselle Chanel ... dominated all the rest. In her personality as well as in her taste, she had style, elegance, and authority."

Also, if you've worn pants recently, we apparently have Coco to thank for that. The BBC's Vivian Song reported that "Chanel is famously credited as the designer who popularized trousers, making them a key piece in women's wardrobes, and also for helping to liberate women from the tyranny of the corset. Instead of caging them in stuffy, superfluous designs, her clothes prioritized freedom of movement, mobility and comfort."

31 Rue Cambon now boasts an updated – and *très chic* – version of the inimitable designer's original *maison* and apartment. As the creator of some of the most beautiful pieces ever known to womankind, it would be a crime to miss out on

paying homage to the OG of fashion at her former inhabitance while in Paris. Just as it would be likewise criminal not to indulge in her favorite drink at her favorite tea room just a short walk away...

3. Angelina Paris

After visiting Coco's first fashion house, a walk down to Rue de Rivoli for a stop at the designer's favorite tea room is a must. Angelina, Paris' most famous *salon de thé*, is as beautiful as a Chanel original. You'll know it when you see it from the overflowing flowers adorning the exterior, and from the line out the door (its popularity has only increased since the famous designer's time).

The beauty crescendos once you get inside, with pastel mural covered walls and exquisite crown molding at every turn. Every detail has been thought through, and every aspect perfected in its multiple dining rooms and boutique. Rumor has it that Chanel's favorite order was the hot chocolate – so thick it sticks to your spoon – and the world-famous Mont Blanc dessert.

Also delicious is the fraisier (strawberry) cake and Paris-Brest pastry. Whatever you order, we recommend savoring it while imagining what it would have been like to sit next to Coco as she sketched out her latest conception.

4. Rouje

At this point in the article, it's probably time we get to some actual shopping (this is a fashion piece, after all). In our humble opinion, you can do no better than a stop at the quintessentially French fashion brand, Rouje. Known for their "breezy Parisian attitude," "feminine chic" and "retro charm," everything from the label feels like a celebration of color and the female form.

Created by Parisian poster girl Jeanne Damas and made to last, you could design an entire capsule wardrobe from Rouje pieces alone, and you would be the best dressed woman in town – and most likely mistaken for a real Parisian left and right. Pop over to the shop in the 2nd arrondissement so you can follow it up with a visit to Odette for a delicious cream puff or two (impossible to choose just one!).

5. Galeries Lafayette

Speaking of shopping, how about the mall to end all malls? (Hard to even call something this spectacular a mall.) Whether or not you've been much of a department store girl pre- this moment, post- this moment we're betting on a full conversion. One of the oldest department stores in the world at over 100 years old,

this building is as much a work of art as it is a place of business.

Neo-Byzantine windows in the domed ceiling let in a beautifully warm light, and sit atop a circular array of five floors of stores. Shop any number of the 3,500 brands housed therein, and then escalator up to the top floor for a pastry and *café* and some seriously breathtaking views.

6. Ultramod Mercerie Paris

This one's for the maker-fashionista, or anyone who cosplays one in her spare time. In LoveShackFancy founder Rebecca Hessel Cohen's favorite ribbons and trims shop, the dainty treasures lining the walls and drawers are enough to make the least talented among us want to sit down at a sewing machine and whip out the next big thing in fashion. Or at the very least grab a ribbon or two to tie up in your hair as you stroll the Parisian streets and dream up your next pastry conquest. *C'est une belle vie.*

7. Monet's Gardens in Giverny

Not technically in Paris, and not technically about fashion, but as the ultimate spot for beauty and inspiration (isn't that what fashion is about, after all?), we'd be remiss not to suggest a jaunt to Claude Monet's home and gardens in the beautiful town of Giverny. Just 90 minutes outside the city, this time capsule of a town doesn't look too dissimilar from the way it did when Monet lived here. The quaint community feels like it's worlds – and decades – away from the urban hustle and bustle. Just as you breathe in fashion with the air of Paris, in Giverny, you breathe in peace and tranquility. As far as the site, it is said that Monet spent all his time and money on his gardens, and it appears to have been well-spent.

A sprawling expanse of cohesive chaos, the variety of florals and foliage is a thing to behold. The pinnacle is the water lily pond, which Monet depicted many times in his paintings. Crossing the bridge over the pond feels like going back in time to a more peaceful, less technologically-plagued world. And while there will never be another Monet, you might start to think that, despite having no training or skill, even you could become a world-class painter with this spectacular landscape as inspo.

During the summer you can also tour his home, which, thanks to the bright and thoughtful decor, is an artist's dream. Even the dining room – described as being "bathed in golden sunshine" – was designed to evoke familial happiness and harmony. When you're ready to leave this little slice of heaven, stop at La Parenthèse for lunch and enjoy the finest bread and cheese in town, on the patio, like a local.

Bonus: Restaurant De La Tour

We'd be unethically gatekeeping if we didn't mention the best meal we've ever eaten at the most charming restaurant we've ever patroned, as a bonus. Just around the corner from the Eiffel Tower is a tasteful, unassuming spot owned by a husband and wife duo that offers cuisine exquisite as it is memorable. The three course meal is served with impeccable presentation and timing, with a leisurely break in between courses for taking in the ambience. We recommend the smoked sausage with mustard sauce and creamy vegetable risotto.

Finish with the molten chocolate cake or caramelized apple for dessert, followed by a moonlit walk to the Eiffel Tower, and you've got yourself one of those most *parfaite* days you won't soon forget.

À Bientôt

If Paris has been on your list for a while, our enthusiastic recommendation is that you move it to the top and get yourself there, stat. And no, you don't have to be old money to do it. We saved airline and hotel points by using credit cards to pay for rent (and everything else) for the last few years, and were thus able to fund a large portion of the trip. (Making your dreams come true on a budget *c'est possible!*) What we didn't know is that we would spend just as much on pastries once we got there, which, being worth their weight in gold, left us with absolutely no regrets. Money isn't everything, but pastry and fashion are, so whatever sacrifice you have to make to get to the land of pain au chocolat and Chanel, will be worth it. *Bon voyage, mes amies!*

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