

Post



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More beautiful streets and perfect soufflés - May 16, 2025

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SUMMARY

Started today's touring in the 14th arrondissement, one we haven't spent a lot of time in. First stop was the extensive outdoor marché August-Blanqui and a nearby bakery where we bought things for our picnic lunch. Then on to the last two stops on our "most beautiful streets" exploration. They did not disappoint! Enjoyed our delicious "pique-nique" in the beautiful parc Montsouris then returned to the Saint-Germain area to buy items for tomorrow's train picnic. Happy hour at the hotel then a fabulous soufflé dinner at our favorite restaurant, le

Récamier. - Karen

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DETAIL

Today is another day of “most beautiful” streets, parks, eating and (hopefully less) drinking. We walked around 8 miles yesterday and climbed 31 flights of stairs, according to the gang in Cupertino. Hopefully less of that too, today. But it will be nice out. It’s 7:00 am and it’s 48 outside but should get up to 69 with sunshine all day. It’s not summer here yet and the radiator creaks and taps as it keeps the room warm against the cool morning outside.

Stop one is a marché, one of the many street markets snaking endlessly down some purpose built boulevard. From above it must look like a giant centipede with the shoppers in the middle, the vendors along each side and their trucks backed up to their booths along the outside. The metro drops us in the middle and we think it prudent not to join the fray until we’re all the way to one end. It’s a long way promising a lot of market to keep us entertained.

Once in the market we see the most beautiful produce imaginable. The cloth coverings scatter the bright sunshine illuminating everything perfectly. We dream of spending more time here in an apartment with a proper kitchen doing lots of cooking. Beyond fruit and produce there's meat, fish, cheese, prepared foods, ladies under things, and lots of options to have your old chairs re-caned. We have a picnic planned for later in the day so we buy bright red cherry tomatoes, luscious strawberries, an avocado, and a ratatouille-adjacent cooked vegetable medley.

Beyond the marché, a busy boulangerie provides us with sandwiches (two jambon fromage) and two types of quiche. We round out our order with a pain au chocolate and a pain raisin, to eat now. The last two we devour on a bench by the sidewalk under the shade of towering chestnut trees. A long string of hand-holding second graders walk past, looking on with envious despair as we take our last bites of the pastry.

A short walk takes us to our next stop, another (hopefully) beautiful street with the unlikely name Thermopyles. Initially it's mostly big graffiti walls and city workers scraping weeds out of the dry earth with old hoes. We're nervous that this may be a bomb. But we round a couple of corners and it truly is lovely, going on forever in a straight line. There are tall white windowed walls on either side with flowers planted here and there and the occasional monster wisteria climbing the wall as if trying to tear it all down. The vines are a thick mass of green. Sadly we're too early for the profusion of flowering cascades that will eventually cover the healthy wisteria.

We take a short bus ride to our next 'prettiest street', and for this ride Nancy's phone begrudgingly gives up one of the tickets she'd purchased earlier. The street is just off the Parc Montsouris ("mount mouse park", if our French translation isn't failing us). The street's name is Square Montsouris, which is odd as it isn't a square, it's a street. We walk from one end to the other and marvel at the cute houses and lush rose and other flower bushes exploding into the air above where we're walking. The place is lovely and being this close to the park, on a street this quiet, the euros per square meter must be obscene.

Back at the park Karen and I remember when we'd been here a decade or two before. I don't recall, though, the lush green lawn being so expansive. It's one big green wave of gentle hillside dotted with the occasional couple engaged in 'conversation' or someone doing yoga or a family enjoying a picnic on a big blanket. We eat our picnic on a park bench, half in and half out of the sun, as taste dictates. It's all good and we don't miss not having wine (too much).

Post-lunch we check out more of the park, including the lake, ending up, conveniently at an RER (regional train) station. Being regional, the stations are further apart, so you either get to your destination more quickly or you're dropped a lot further away than you'd like (or both). For us it's perfect, we end up at the Luxembourg Gardens, where the French Senate convenes. We stroll the perimeter, admiring the hundreds of huge nature photos they have on display.

At the Saint Germain market we stroll through the independent stalls and eventually enter the Ep!c Market, where Marks and Spencer used to be. The place is pretty amazing with food from around the world. What they have from America doesn't seem to reflect well on us. Syrup, pancake mix, marshmallow fluff, and lots of sugary cereals, including one mimicking the Kit-Kat chocolate candy bar.

Here we add to our picnic for our train south tomorrow with olives, a cheese tray, and some good looking roasted red pepper and feta spread. From there we hit a chocolate shop (Maison Georges Larnicol) on Saint Germain for an assortment of goodies including Kouign Amann (a squished, overcooked pastry that looks like a mistake but tastes like crunchy sweet goodness). The name somehow is pronounced Queen Aman.

One last stroll down a cute, narrow pedestrian street (Cour du Commerce St-André) — there since the 1500's at least — before heading back to our hotel. We pass Le Procope where I believe the French Revolution was fomented. This cute alley really is a must if you're coming to Paris.

After some relaxation time in the rooms we head back down to the lobby for one last happy hour (we have to save money somewhere!). It's cool out, so we don our scarves and sports coats before heading back out. This time our target is dinner at Le Récamier for soufflés. We ask and Thomas is very familiar with this restaurant, though he's never been.

This reservation was made weeks ago and 6:15 was the latest we could get (that wasn't 9:00) and we have to sit inside (pout). We ask in our best French and they're happy to seat us outside. The food is stellar, as always, and the wait staff is a hoot. We ask if our waiter will take a picture and he quickly takes my phone to oblige. "Of you", I add. He laughs and takes pictures of us and ends with a picture of him with us in the background. This place never fails to deliver and the soufflés are perfect. The Grand Marnier soufflé comes with its own full-sized bottle of the liquor and our waiter challenges us to finish it. We do make a half-hearted effort.

Thankfully we have to walk 'home' back to our hotel in the cool evening air and slowly fading light. We need to work off at least a few calories.

Photos



Heading out for the day, passing a hotel we see where they have all kinds of spring plants ready to plant. The Parisians take such pride in making their buildings look so pretty.



At the market we're drooling over the beautiful produce (and everything else on offer).



The mushrooms also called out to us to make soup or something, but we have no kitchen. Maybe next time.



Finally at our first "beautiful street", Thermopyles. What we're greeted with initially wasn't to our taste.



The street redeemed itself and we're sure as spring becomes summer becomes fall the different flowers blooming will be spectacular.



These, in bloom now, especially caught our eye. The matching of the yellow grate, and the middle of the flower, seem to be made for each other.



Walking from beautiful street to beautiful street wasn't too painful either. We lazily strolled down this tree lined pedestrian walkway with flowers periodically on one side or the other.



The second 'beautiful street', oddly named "Montsouris Square" didn't disappoint either. The houses (what you could see of them) were pretty but they were obscured by so many flowering bushes. Not a bad problem to have.



At Parc Montsouris we remember being here but we don't remember such an expanse of beautiful lawn. It called out to people to lie down and nap or read or whatever, and people were.



We chose a bench for our picnic. Here we're practicing our 'simultaneous strawberry eating'. They were from Belgium, not France, and were fine.



All around the Jardin de Luxembourg were nature photos, including this one of a few penguins.



At the Saint Germain Market. Such fun. Around the corner was the Marks and Spencer replacement: Ep!c Market.



FARNSNIENTE

Passing in front of Le Procope. So many delightful places to dine on this narrow alleyway.



To our favorite Le Récamier for Soufflé dinner. Yummy and entertaining.



Karen and Ron expressing surprise at the height of their dinner soufflés.



Such height!



Our cute waiter, hamming it up for the camera.

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