

How to Use Public Transportation in Paris

A Visitor's Guide to Parisian Mass Transit



RER

Bus

Métro

Anthony Atkielski

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Eighth Edition

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Cover art by the author

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How to Use Public Transportation in Paris

WHILE PARIS CERTAINLY HAS no shortage of traditional tourist attractions, it is nearly unique among the world's cities in its ability to make even the most mundane aspects of urban life seem charming and romantic. Visitors flock to museums and palaces in practically every metropolis of the globe, but how many cities other than Paris can boast that they have tourists paying for the privilege of visiting their sewers?

Despite this gift for transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, one of the most wonderful attractions of Paris often remains unvisited and unnoticed by tourists: namely, its superlative system of public transportation, epitomized by its famous subway, the Paris *Métro*. This is doubly unfortunate, because not only is this system interesting to visit for its own sake, but it is also the most practical and economical way to get from place to place within the city.

This guide is written for visitors interested in actually using Parisian mass transit, whether for the practical purpose of getting from place to place, or out of pure curiosity, or both. We explain how you can use the various Parisian modes of mass transportation to move around the city. The emphasis is mainly on the subway networks, which are the most useful parts of the system for visitors; but other parts of the system, such as commuter trains, trams, and buses, are touched upon as well. A French-English glossary helps you to recognize and pronounce the signs and other notices that you are likely to encounter in your use of public transportation.

Overview

Most of the daily commuter traffic in and around Paris is carried by trains. There are three interconnected train networks: a subway network that serves the city itself, called the *Métro* (which also includes a funicular and a few tramways); an express network that serves both Paris and nearby suburbs, called the *Réseau Express Régional* or *RER* (meaning “regional express network”); and a commuter train network that serves far-flung suburbs and towns near the metropolitan area.

Since the *Métro* was the first subway system in France, its name has also become a generic term in French for any kind of rail mass transit—so

when Parisians refer to “taking the métro,” they may actually be referring to any one of these three types of trains.

Mass transportation is managed by a bewildering blend of semi-governmental organizations, the most prominent of which are the *Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens* (Independent Paris Transport Authority), or *RATP*, and the *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français* (French National Railway Company), or *SNCF*. You’ll see the distinctive logos of one or both of these latter organizations everywhere you go while using mass transit. The Métro is managed primarily by the RATP; the commuter train network is managed primarily by the SNCF; and the RER is managed jointly by both, with some lines falling under RATP jurisdiction, and some under SNCF jurisdiction. There is a bit of rivalry between the two organizations at times, but overall they manage to cooperate quite effectively.

In addition to all the rail networks, Parisian mass transportation includes a very large fleet of buses, serving more than eight thousand individual bus stops. Unlike rail transportation, which is equally useful for both visitors and residents, the bus network is of limited usefulness for tourists, and so we will mention it only occasionally in this guide. The bus network is managed mainly by the RATP.

In the suburbs, there are many small public transportation systems of various kinds, such as buses and tramways. Many of these are affiliated with the large Parisian networks of the RATP and SNCF, and often tickets are interchangeable among them. However, because there are so many of these tiny networks and because they serve only or mostly the suburbs, we won’t attempt to describe them here.

The Métro

The Métro itself is a conventional subway system, similar to many other subway systems in the world (indeed, many other younger subway systems around the globe were modeled after the Paris system). The venerable Métro isn’t the world’s oldest or largest subway system, but it is arguably the best, with sixteen lines serving 380 stations. This part of the Parisian mass transit system is by far the most useful for tourists and visitors.

Almost all Métro stations are within the actual Paris city limits—that is, within the *boulevard périphérique*, the roughly oval automobile beltway that encircles the city. Each line is numbered and carries trains moving in both directions at regular, frequent intervals; the direction of a train is identified by the last station on the line in that direction. You can make a connection between one line and another (called a *correspondance* in French) at any station served by both lines, without leaving the Métro.

You can find a Métro station within easy walking distance of any point within Paris—no point in the city is more than 300 yards from a station, and most are much closer—and it is all you need to get quickly from place to place within the city itself.

All Métro trips cost the same amount of money, as long as you do not go outside the city limits. You use a single ticket to enter the system, and you keep that same ticket until you've finished your trip. You can make as many connections as you need to get from your departure point to your destination, as long as you don't actually leave the Métro. Most trips require only a single connection, and many require none at all; trips requiring two connections are exceptional.

The oldest line of the Métro, Line 1, has been around for more than a hundred years; the newest line, Line 14, was opened in 1999 and is completely automated. All of the network has been continually upgraded and expanded throughout its history.

The Métro operates roughly from 5 AM to midnight, with the exact times varying from one line to another. They operate later on weekends and holidays, but still close for part of the night. Twenty-four-hour operation is under discussion but still has not been implemented at the time of this writing. On some special occasions, the trains may exceptionally run all night. To be sure of not getting stranded, it's best to assume that the last Métro will be around midnight.

The RER

The RER is a network of high-speed trains that travel underground within Paris and extend out into the suburbs on surface lines. Within the city, RER stations are much fewer in number than Métro stations, but for long commutes, the high speed of the RER compensates for the inconvenience of its fewer stations.

There are five RER lines, identified by the letters A through E. Within Paris, Lines A and E run east-west, Lines B and D run north-south, and Line C does a bit of both. In contrast with most Métro lines, RER lines often split into different branches after they spread out into the suburbs. In other respects, the RER lines resemble those of the Métro.

Most RER stations within Paris allow for connections with any nearby Métro lines. Ticketing on the RER is based on the distance travelled, using a system of concentric fare zones centered on Paris. The city itself is Zone 1, and any ticket providing for travel through Zone 1 also allows travel on the Métro. If you stay within Zone 1 (that is, within the city) the same ticket allows you to use the Métro and RER interchangeably; you can even mix and match the two on a single trip.

Administration of the RER is shared between the RATP and the SNCF, with the RATP managing line A and part of line B, and the SNCF managing lines C, D, and E.

The RER is much younger than the Métro: the first RER line passing through the city (Line A) was completed in 1977. Line E was opened in 1999. As with the Métro, upgrading and expansion of the RER is an ongoing process.

The Commuter Train Network

The commuter train network serves the Paris suburbs, and interconnects with the Métro and RER at major railway stations within Paris. It uses the same tracks as the national railway system. Trains in this network resemble conventional cross-country trains, except for obvious adaptations to the high volume and short duration of commuter traffic—there are no sleeping or dining cars, for example, and usually there are no toilets. The ticketing scheme for commuter trains is simpler than that used for cross-country trains, and it is designed to resemble and fit in with that of the Métro, RER, and other public-transportation systems in the Paris region.

The commuter trains have numbers and serve certain stations at certain times, like conventional trains. Naturally, the average trip on this network takes considerably longer than a trip on the Métro or RER, in part because of the greater distances covered, and in part because commuter trains make a great many stops in the suburbs, and thus never build up much speed.

Commuter trains enter Paris only to stop at major railway stations, and make no other stops within the city. Métro and (usually) RER stations lurk beneath each of these conventional train stations, facilitating connections between the networks.

To travel within Paris or visit the more popular suburban destinations (Versailles, Disneyland, and so on), you don't need the commuter train network. In consequence, we won't be discussing it very much in this guide.

The Bus Network

Buses are an extremely common sight in Paris, and most major streets have special bus lanes set aside for them. There are well over 8300 bus stops in Paris, and the city's bus routes cover some 3300 kilometres—amazing numbers when you consider that the city itself is only a few kilometres across. Bus stops are much more closely spaced than Métro or RER stations, but bus routes are so circuitous and seemingly random (at least from the standpoint of a visitor) that you must know exactly where you are in the city, exactly where you are going, and exactly which bus routes lead to your destination in order to make efficient use of them. This works very

well for local residents who commute regularly over the same routes each day, but it is usually too complicated to be practical for the occasional visitor or tourist.

Bus lines have numbers, just as subway lines and commuter trains do. In theory, they serve specific stops at specific times, but traffic in Paris is so heavy and variable that the published schedules cannot be relied upon; it's easier to just stand at a bus stop and wait for one to come along (usually every ten or twenty minutes during weekdays). Bus travel is also quite slow, since heavy traffic limits the average speed of a city bus to about nine kilometres per hour. A recent increase in the number of dedicated bus lanes within the city has improved this a bit, but for pure speed, the bus still remains far behind the Métro. The main advantage of a bus for visitors is that it is considerably more scenic than the Métro, given that buses trundle about on city streets, whereas subway trains spend almost all their time in tunnels.

A single ticket (the same ticket used for all forms of mass transit in Paris) is good for one trip between two points on one or more buses, trains, or trams within the city. Things get more complicated for rides within or towards the suburbs, which may require several tickets. If you buy your ticket directly from the bus driver as you board, the ticket is only good for one ride on that bus—you can't make any connections. The time between your first use of a ticket on a bus and the last use of the same ticket on a bus must not exceed 90 minutes.

All of the buses in Paris are managed by the RATP. Bus routes in the suburbs are often operated cooperatively by the RATP and local suburban transportation authorities.

Unlike the Métro and RER, the bus lines do not stop completely during the night. The *Noctilien* bus service continues with 35 lines all night long in Paris and a few suburbs, during the period when the normal daytime lines have stopped (from roughly 11 PM or so to 6 AM).

Other Transportation

There are a couple of other means of transportation included in Paris public transit. The Montmartre funicular (inclined railway) that takes you up the hill to the Sacré-Cœur basilica is part of the RATP system and accepts regular RATP tickets.

There are also a four tramway lines (like a long bus on rails) in and around the city that are considered part of the system. Their lines are numbered T1 through T4. They operate in essentially the same way as the Métro, but they don't serve areas that are likely to be interesting to tourists, so they won't be mentioned further here.

Means of transportation that are *not* part of the system are legion, and include taxis, the Batobus (a system of small boats that make multiple stops up and down the Seine river in a closed loop), tour buses (including the Open Tour system, even though it is run by the RATP), and so on.

Paying for Your Trips

Before you can use mass transit in Paris, it's important to know how to pay for it. Although public transportation in Paris is cheap in every case, there are a number of special pricing arrangements that can save you considerable money if you use mass transit often. In all cases, mass transit is cheaper than taxis or tour buses.

Paying for the Métro

The easiest way to obtain a Métro ticket is to buy it at the ticket window in a Métro station. It is only necessary to ask for *un billet*, and hand over €1.70. Ticket attendants often do not speak English very well, if at all, but most stations have ticket machines that work in multiple languages. Ticket windows usually accept both credit cards and cash. The machines accept coins and credit cards, and occasionally banknotes as well. You'll need your PIN to use a credit card, and be advised that some non-French credit cards may not work in the machines.

In an increasing number of stations, the automatic ticket machines are the *only* source of tickets; the RATP agents behind the window, if any, are there only to provide information and what the RATP mysteriously refers to as "after-sales service." In these stations, you'll have to buy your ticket from a machine. If the words *Vente* or *Billets* appear over the window, the human being inside still sells tickets.

As you might expect, buying one ticket at a time is the most expensive and inconvenient way to pay for your travel, especially as you begin using mass transportation more and more frequently. Fortunately, there are alternatives to the single ticket.

You can ask a ticket agent (or a ticket machine) for *un carnet*, which is a pack of ten tickets. At €12.00 for a pack of ten tickets, the carnet is about 30% cheaper than the same number of tickets would be when bought individually. Some machines distribute carnets of five tickets instead of ten (at a lower price, of course).

The RATP and SNCF also offer a large and confusing array of special-price plans for multiple-use tickets. These are tickets that you can use for more than one trip, within specified limits, at a lower cost per trip than you would have to pay with individual tickets. Many of these plans are available and/or interesting only for the city's residents, but some are cost-

effective for visitors as well, and a few are specifically intended for visitors. Among the plans that might suit visitors best are the following:

Mobilis: Good for unlimited travel for one day, on the Métro, bus system, RER, and commuter trains, within a specific range of zones. Some suburban routes and routes serving the airports are excluded. Mobilis are priced starting at €6.10.

Paris Visite: A no-hassle multiple-use ticket for visitors allowing unlimited travel for one to five consecutive days on any form of transport, within a specific range of zones. It is intended for tourists. Paris-Visite is *not* the most economical multiple-use ticket available, in most cases, but it is sometimes the easiest to understand and use. Prices start at €9.30 for three zones and one day (€4.65 for kids under twelve years of age).

Navigo card: The *Navigo* card is a form of stored-ride transit pass that consists of a special “smart” card that you wave at the turnstile, instead of the traditional small cardboard ticket with a magnetic stripe. The RATP is gradually introducing this to replace most other types of cardboard tickets. The only *Navigo*-based transit passes that are potentially interesting for visitors are the weekly and monthly passes, which we will describe momentarily.

There are two types of *Navigo* card, one of which is only available to residents of the Paris metropolitan area, and the other of which is available to anyone who wants it ... for a one-time fee of €5. Visitors must opt for the latter type of card (referred to as the *Navigo Découverte*)—which means that if you do not already have the *Navigo* card itself, you must add the cost of buying one to the cost of your first *Navigo* pass. You’ll need a small photo to stick onto the *Navigo* card, too; there are photo booths in many stations that can help you to obtain this (and note that this adds another several euro to the cost of getting the card).

The *Navigo* is a type of electronically-stored transit pass. What this means is that you buy a pass that allows multiple trips on the transit system under certain conditions, and then it is recorded electronically on the *Navigo* card, which can memorize the type of transit pass you have. The *Navigo* pass comes in monthly and weekly flavors, usable for one calendar month or one calendar week, respectively. (There’s a yearly flavor, too, but it’s only available to residents.) The monthly type is referred to as a *forfait mois*, and the weekly ticket is referred to as a *forfait semaine*. Both are usable for unlimited travel for the periods in question, within a specific range of zones. After a pass expires, you can buy another one, but you don’t need a new *Navigo* card; you can just record the new pass on the card (ticket machines and ticket windows have a device that does this). Weekly passes are always valid from a Monday to a Sunday, and monthly passes are always valid from the first to the last day of a calendar month. This

means that if you buy a weekly pass on Friday and use it that day, it will only be valid for three days, from Friday through Sunday. This is important to remember if you are staying for a week and arriving on a Wednesday. The cheapest pass covering Paris (one week, for Zones 1 and 2) costs €18.35. Remember, if this is your first pass, you'll also have to factor in the cost of the Navigo card itself and (possibly) the photo, which can add another €10 or more to the initial price.

These multiple-use passes are designed for residents of Paris. Ironically, the monthly pass is actually 16% more expensive than packs of individual tickets, assuming two trips per day. However, the law requires that Parisian employers reimburse half the price of the pass to employees who commute, and the RATP knows this, and with the reimbursement it works out cheaper than individual tickets. If you are visiting Paris only once and never intend to come back, you won't get this reimbursement; and that, plus the fact that the price of the Navigo card and photo must be taken into account, can make this plan less than economical for tourists unless they make more than two trips a day on the Métro.

The standard individual cardboard ticket in the Métro fits into a slot that is present on at least one turnstile at every entrance to the system. The Navigo card, however, need only be waved near the purple target on the turnstile. The card comes with a rigid holder to protect it, but it need not be removed from the holder before use. In fact, residents often keep the card in their bags or purses and simply wave these past the purple targets to pass through the turnstiles. The turnstiles beep when they have successfully read the card. The Navigo card is valid forever, so if you return to Paris one day, you can use it again, after having loaded it with a new monthly or weekly pass.

Not every station in the RER, Métro, or commuter network sells every type of ticket or pass, but major stations generally sell them all.

Paying for the RER and Suburbs

The payment procedures for the RER and commuter trains are no different from those for the Métro, and the tickets are largely interchangeable, particularly between the RER and the Métro. You can either buy a ticket specifically for the trip you wish to take (from a ticket window or a machine), or you can buy one of the tickets mentioned in **Paying for the Métro**, above, with the appropriate zones on it. A monthly pass for Zones 1 through 4 will allow you to travel for a month on the Métro, the RER, and the commuter network anywhere within the limits of Zones 1, 2, 3, or 4, by simply waving the Navigo card that contains it at all authorized turnstiles.

Paying for the Bus

Payment methods for the bus are the same as those for the RER and Métro, since the same tickets are used. However, when boarding a bus, you also have the option of paying for your ticket on the spot, by purchasing it from the driver, at the single-ticket price.

Tickets must be inserted into a small machine near the entrance of the bus. The machine will illuminate a green light and beep if it is pleased with the ticket. If you have a Navigo card, you can simply wave it at the purple target near the entrance door as you board the bus, and it will also beep cheerfully with a green light.

Regular Métro tickets and passes allow you to switch buses if you need to make a connection, and also allow *correspondances* (connections) with the Métro and RER networks. However, if you buy an individual ticket from the bus driver, that ticket is only good on that bus, for that trip—you'll need a new ticket if you wish to use any other part of the transit system. Tickets bought from the driver are also more expensive than tickets bought elsewhere (a single ticket from the bus driver will cost you €1.80, even though it doesn't allow any connections).

Finding Your Way

Now that you know how to pay for your trip, the next step is to learn how to find your way from one place to another using the various networks of the system. The Métro is the easiest of the four networks to use, and it also tends to be the most useful network for visitors.

Getting Around in the Métro

The first step in using the Métro is to find a Métro station entrance. Most Métro stations are underground, since only a small portion of this rail system is elevated. Stations are clearly marked, but discreet; you may not notice them unless you are specifically looking for them. Typically they appear as nondescript stairways descending into the ground, and are identified by signs showing M or RER or MÉTRO. You can simply walk down the stairs into the station of your choice.

We've already covered the matter of paying for your trip. We'll assume that you already have the necessary ticket (and any mention of a ticket also applies to Navigo cards and other passes, unless otherwise indicated).

With ticket in hand, look around for a map before passing through the turnstile. All stations have a large map on a wall somewhere, although it is not always obvious. You can also buy a small, plastic-coated Métro map in many bookstores or at a newsstand, and Métro ticket windows will give you a very tiny map for free. Some stations have fancy lighted maps, on

which you can push a button corresponding to your destination in order to see the route you must follow in order to reach it. A few stations have computerized kiosks that serve the same purpose. In any case, you need to find the station you've just entered, then find the station closest to your destination, then note the Métro line or lines connecting the two stations on the map.

After you've found the lines connecting your departure and arrival stations on the map, you must then choose the best path between the two stations. The method varies, depending on whether the two stations are on the same or different lines.

If both stations happen to be on the same Métro line, the path is obvious: you simply take a train on that line in the direction of your destination station, and get off when you reach that station. Keep in mind that signs showing the way to a train platform identify the direction of a train by the name of the last station on the line in the direction the train is travelling. For example, on Line 1 of the Métro, the platform at which westbound trains stop will be marked *DIRECTION LA DÉFENSE*, because *Grande Arche de la Défense* is the last station at the western end of this line. Eastbound trains on Line 1 will stop at platforms marked *DIRECTION CHÂTEAU DE VINCENNES*, *Château de Vincennes* being the name of the station at the eastern terminus of the line.

With only two exceptions,¹ all Métro directions are unique; that is, only one Métro train in Paris travels in any given direction. Because of this, as long as you find the direction you want, irrespective of the line(s) you take, you need not worry about going the wrong way.

If your destination is not on the same line as your point of departure, you'll have to change trains somewhere during your trip. This is called a *correspondance* (connection) in French. Find the line that serves your destination, find the line that serves your point of departure, and then find a station at which the lines meet; at that station, you'll need to change trains in the direction of your destination. If the two lines do not meet at any station, you'll have to change trains twice, using a third line that serves a station on your line and a station on the destination line—but this is very unusual, and in most cases only one *correspondance* is required. In any case, don't worry: changing trains is simple and instinctive once you get used to it.

Once you know how to get to the station closest to your destination, you can enter the “controlled area” of the Métro—this is RATP jargon for the

¹ The exceptions are Lines 2 and 6, both of which have their eastern terminus at Nation. In every case where any ambiguity exists, signs will indicate *DIRECTION NATION PAR DENFERT-ROCHEREAU* (for Line 6, which passes through this station as it arcs through the south side of the city), or *DIRECTION NATION PAR BARBÈS-ROCHECHOUART*, for Line 2, which passes through the corresponding station on its way through the north side of the city.

area beyond the turnstiles. You'll see two types of turnstiles in most stations: one type accepts the traditional cardboard tickets with magnetic stripes, and the other senses Navigo cards. The ones that accept paper tickets have an obvious slot in front to accept the ticket; the ones that accept Navigo cards have a purple target on them over which you wave the card. There will be at least one of each type at every entrance, and some turnstiles accept both traditional tickets and Navigo cards. Insert your ticket into the slot on the front of the turnstile, or hold your Navigo card close to a purple target. The machine will return your ticket from a slot on top of the turnstile, or it will simply beep and show a green arrow for a Navigo, and you may then proceed; take your ticket back, and pass through the turnstile. You must keep your ticket until you leave the controlled area of the Métro, in order to prove that you have paid. Spot checks by groups of uniformed RATP agents are frequent, and you'll be fined if you don't have a valid ticket.

An unpleasant beep and a red light on the turnstile means that your ticket is not valid; usually this means that you're using a single-use ticket that you've already used on a previous trip. Other possible causes are an attempt to go outside the zone(s) allowed by the ticket—if you are traveling into or from the suburbs—or a multiple-use ticket that has expired. Confusingly, the turnstiles also emit a slightly different, more pleasant beep when you have successfully used a Navigo card.

Once inside the controlled area, the secret to success is to *read all the signs*. As long as you follow the signs, you cannot become lost. No real knowledge of French is necessary. Just look for signs mentioning the direction, station, line, or *correspondance* that you wish to take, and follow them. Maps are present on every train platform as well, in case you forget your planned itinerary.

When you arrive on the platform, you need only wait for a train to arrive. This occurs as often as every 60 seconds during rush hour, and as infrequently as every ten or fifteen minutes during the slowest traffic periods (late at night on Sunday, for example). Trains on the Métro almost always arrive from your left as you stand on the platform; be sure to stand well clear of the edge.

Most trains have doors that open only if you press a button or lift a lever on the door. The newest trains have automatic doors that open by themselves. After a brief pause in the station, a warning buzzer will sound, and the doors will close again automatically. Don't try to board the train after the buzzer sounds, as this slows traffic, especially during rush hour.

As you ride the train, look carefully at the station names at each stop. The name of the station is always clearly marked on large signs visible from the train. On some lines, a recorded announcement is made at each station as

well. The trains also have maps of their routes on a sign over the inside doors of each car, and on newer trains lights indicate which station you're at for each stop.

When the train stops at your destination station or connection station, get off. Be sure to push the button or lift the lever on the door to open it, if you are not on one of the newer trains with automatic doors. Watch how others do it if you can't figure out how to operate the door. Passengers normally exit the train on the right, with respect to the train's motion (there are a few exceptions at the ends of some lines).

If you need to make a connection, follow the signs and find your way to the next train. Signs marked *CORRESPONDANCE* (typically in black text on an orange background) show the way to connecting trains. Signs marked *SORTIE* (typically in white text on a blue background) show the way out of the Métro. Take care not to exit the controlled area of the Métro when making a connection, or you'll have to use a fresh ticket to get back in; signs marked *LIMITE DE VALIDITÉ DES BILLETS* and automatic turnstiles mark the exits from the controlled area.

Signs in red, marked *PASSAGE INTERDIT*, mean "Do Not Enter," and if you follow them, you risk ending up on another platform, in another station, or on another planet. Signs marked *SORTIE DE SECOURS*, in green, are emergency exits only; use the normal exit instead, unless there is truly an emergency.

When you arrive at your destination station, follow the *SORTIE* signs all the way out of the Métro. If you were traveling on a single-use ticket, you can discard it once you've left the system; if you have a pass or multiple-use ticket, then obviously you'll want to keep it with you.

Getting Around on the RER

The RER is just a slightly more complicated variation of the Métro. The RER is extremely useful if you wish to travel outside Paris, or if you need to cover a large distance within the city fairly quickly.

Direct entrances into the RER are relatively rare, since the number of RER stations inside Paris is very small compared to the number of Métro stations—so don't walk around searching for one. Instead, make a connection from the Métro to the RER at a station served by both systems. You can make connections between the Métro and the RER freely as long as you stay within the city limits.

Typically, you will make a connection between the Métro and the RER in order to move more quickly across the city. A connection in the opposite direction, from RER to Métro, will then take you to your final destination, if the RER station itself is not your destination. In practice, however, you'll

find that few trips within the city itself justify connections with the high-speed RER.

The most important difference between the Métro and the RER is in the pricing of tickets. A single Métro ticket is generally good for any trip within the city limits, with or without RER connections. However, once you move outside the city, you'll need a ticket that matches the distance you are travelling if you plan to use the RER, calculated using the concentric zone system mentioned earlier in this guide. For such trips, always make sure you have the right ticket for your trip, or you may end up stuck in a deserted RER station in the suburbs, with no choice but to retrace your steps and buy a new ticket.

At most stations, you must use your ticket to enter *and* to exit the RER. If you are entering the RER, the turnstile will return your ticket to you. If you are leaving the RER and the system, the turnstile will usually keep your ticket. If you are leaving the RER but continuing on the Métro, the turnstile will return your ticket. A turnstile that beeps is a turnstile that isn't happy with your ticket—usually because you have travelled beyond the zone limits of the ticket, or because you've mixed up your tickets and you are trying to get out with a ticket different from the one you used to get in. You can't get out of the RER without a valid ticket, so be careful.

Unlike Métro trains, in which you usually enter and exit cars on the right side of the train with respect to the direction of travel, RER trains may load or unload passengers from either side, depending on the station—so be sure to observe carefully as you arrive at your destination station to determine which side is the side from which you'll get off. They don't always arrive from the left as seen from the platform, either, so be alert. During low-traffic periods, short trains may be in service (look for TRAIN COURT on the lighted departure displays—*court* means “short”); when they are, be sure that you're standing close to the center of the platform, or you may find that the train stops fifty feet away from you and you'll have to run to get on or wait for another train.

Métro trains stop at every station on their respective lines, but this is not true for RER trains. All RER trains stop at every RER station on their lines *within Paris*, but stations outside of Paris may only be served by every third or fourth train. Lighted destination boards on the platform indicate the stations served by each arriving train; the wise traveller glances at these boards before boarding a train for the suburbs, so as to avoid surprise excursions to Versailles, Bordeaux, or Jupiter.

Most RER lines split into several branch lines as the main line reaches the suburbs. Once again, you must be careful to take a train that continues on to the branch you want, if you are going outside the city. The destination stations indicated on the platform will usually make it obvious which

branch of the line is being served by an arriving train; announcements in the train are also made before the branch is taken, if you understand spoken French. The newer RER trains have lighted displays inside over the doors that show the current station and the other stations that will be served by the train.

Moving About in the Suburbs

If you are planning to travel extensively in the suburbs, you will eventually need to use the network of suburban commuter trains, all of which are operated by the French National Railways.

Commuter trains have one of the main railway stations inside Paris as their point of departure or final destination. All of these railway stations have a Métro station below them; two of them have combined Métro and RER stations. You must leave the controlled area of the Métro or RER to make a connection, however.

The easiest way to find a train departing for your destination is to look at the departure boards in the station: just board a train for which the departure board indicates a stop at your destination. If you don't see your destination on the board, you are either at the wrong railway station or your destination station simply isn't marked (this is especially likely if the destination station is small). Check the departure displays in front of individual platforms as well, as they are more detailed in their list of stations served. If you still cannot find a train, you'll need to buy an *indicateur* (train schedule) at a newsstand in the station. Train schedules are thick little books in French, and they can be fiendishly complicated to read, so be prepared to spend some time decoding them. If you are at the wrong station, you'll have to take the Métro or RER to the correct station.

The tickets used for commuter trains are similar to those used for the Métro and RER, but they are not necessarily identical. The fare system is similar to the concentric zone system used on the RER. You can buy tickets at a ticket window, or you can buy them from coin-operated machines in the station.

Tickets should be inserted into the Métro-like automatic turnstiles that silently guard the commuter-train platforms. In some cases there are no turnstiles. In still other cases, you'll need to time-punch (*composter*) your ticket in one of the little orange machines that beckon to travellers at strategic points in the station. Watch other commuters if you're not sure which of these actions is appropriate.

Whenever you venture into a railway station in search of a commuter train, keep in mind that the word BANLIEUE appears on signs referring to the suburbs, whereas GRANDES LIGNES appears on national and international rail lines. This is true for automatic ticket-dispensing machines as

well. Avoid anything with GRANDES LIGNES on it unless you fancy spur-of-the-moment trips to Amsterdam or Istanbul. Helpful hint: If the ticket issued to you by a machine is roughly the size of a small envelope, you are probably buying a GRANDES LIGNES ticket; commuter tickets are the same size as Métro tickets. There is some overlap between the two for destinations in the most distant villages in the Paris region, so if you are unsure, ask for assistance at a ticket window.

Like any conventional train, a commuter train will leave and arrive at stations at predetermined times, so check schedules and departure boards. The most frequent departures take place about every fifteen minutes during rush hour, on the most heavily travelled routes. Scheduled times are usually quite well respected in practice.

Some commuter trains may have both first-class and second-class cars. You need a first-class ticket to ride in first class; you can ride in second class with either class of ticket.

Getting to and from the Airports

If you are visiting Paris from the United States, chances are that you will enter and leave France by air. If you have a significant amount of luggage, a taxi or airport shuttle is *by far* the most practical way to get to and from the two passenger airports serving Paris (*Charles de Gaulle* airport to the north of the city, and *Orly* airport to the south).

If you have only a small amount of luggage, however, be advised that the mass transit systems of Paris do serve the airports. RER line C indirectly serves Orly (there is a shuttle from the *Aéroport d'Orly* station to the airport itself). A fully-automated, rubber-tired Métro-like line, called *Orlyval*, also connects the two Orly air terminals, *Orly Ouest* (Orly West) and *Orly Sud* (Orly South), with the nearby town of Antony and Line B of the RER. Combined tickets allowing travel on Orlyval, the RER, and the Métro are available in Métro and RER stations, and at the Orlyval stations at the airport. Just remember that Orlyval and the RER connect only at the *Antony* station south of Paris; frequent signs help remind you of this. The direction to take to reach Paris from the *Antony* station is MITRY-CLAYE or ROISSY-AÉROPORT CHARLES-DE-GAULLE; from Paris to *Antony*, follow the direction ST. RÉMY-LES-CHEVREUSE.

To reach Paris from the Charles de Gaulle airport, take the free airport shuttle from the air terminal to the nearby RER B station. At the RER station, simply follow the directions ROBINSON or ST. RÉMY-LES-CHEVREUSE. To reach the airport from Paris, take RER line B and follow the direction ROISSY-AÉROPORT CHARLES-DE-GAULLE.

Allow at least 90 minutes for the trip to either airport from Paris—more if you are travelling very late or very early. Be sure to allow time for

connections, too. Remember that mass transit is practical only if you have a limited amount of luggage; otherwise, take a taxi.

An Example: Getting to Disneyland® Paris

Since Disneyland Paris, east of the French capital, receives as many visitors as the city itself these days, instructions for reaching this popular resort may serve as an example of how to use public transport for traveling to and through the suburbs.

The Disneyland Paris Resort surrounds the *Marne-la-Vallée_Chessy* station on Line A of the RER. Since this station is also the eastern terminus of branch A4 of that line, you need only enter the RER and take a train in the direction of MARNE-LA-VALLÉE_CHESSY. Not all trains have this station as their terminus, so check destination boards on the platforms to make sure that the train you are boarding is headed towards the correct terminus.

Suppose that you wish to travel to Disneyland from a hotel near the Montparnasse tower on the Left Bank (south side) of Paris. The closest Métro station to this high-rise building is the *Montparnasse_Bienvenue* station beneath the Montparnasse railway station. One way to proceed is as follows:

1. Enter the railway station and follow the white-on-blue signs until you find yourself in front of the entrance to the Métro (the Métro can be reached by escalators or stairs from ground level, just inside the entrance to the railway station).
2. At the Métro entrance, purchase a round-trip ticket (“*un aller-retour*”) for *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy*. The ticket is actually two separate tickets, one to be used for the trip to Disneyland, and one to be used for the trip back (you can use either one either way). You can purchase the ticket at the ticket window, if you speak French. You can also purchase it from a machine using coins or a credit card; the machines work in English as well as French, but they may not always accept non-French credit cards. These tickets will usually be explicitly marked with the words SECTION URBAINE and the name of the *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy* destination station, meaning that they are valid for travel between any Métro station in Paris proper (that’s what *section urbaine* means) and this station east of Paris.
3. Put one ticket in your pocket or wallet, and insert the other into a turnstile to enter the Métro. The turnstile will return the ticket; keep it with you until the end of the trip.
4. Read all signs carefully. Look for signs with the number six in a circle (indicating the number of the Métro line you wish to take). Some of these signs will point the way to *Charles-de-*

Gaulle_Etoile, while others will point the way to *Nation*. Follow the signs that lead to *Charles-de-Gaulle_Etoile*. Continue this until you find yourself on a subway platform, with a sign hanging over the middle of the platform marked DIRECTION CHARLES-DE-GAULLE_ÉTOILE.

5. Wait for a train. Depending on the day of the week and the time of day, you may wait from sixty seconds to twenty minutes. The train will arrive from the left as you face the tracks.
6. When the train stops at the platform, lift the lever on the door to open it, wait until anyone leaving the train has done so, and step aboard before the buzzer sounds. The door will close automatically before the train moves.
7. Stay on the train until you reach the *Charles-de-Gaulle_Etoile* station. This will be the eleventh and last station on the line after departing from the *Montparnasse_Bienvenue* station.
8. At *Charles-de-Gaulle_Etoile*, get off the train. Open the door by lifting the lever, if no one else does. (Note: At this particular station, which is a terminus of line 6, you must get off on the *left* side of the train.)
9. Read the signs carefully again. Look for the letter A in a circle, in red, indicating RER line A. Follow signs pointing to line A.
10. After walking down a few corridors, you'll find yourself confronted by turnstiles. Use the *same* ticket you used at *Montparnasse_Bienvenue* to get through these turnstiles. The turnstile will return the ticket, so don't forget to take it back.
11. Follow the signs again, and look for the letter A in a circle, accompanied by the words *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy*. When you reach the bottom of the first set of escalators, one corridor will lead to *Saint-Germain-en-Laye*, and another set of escalators will lead downwards towards *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy*; take care to walk towards the latter.
12. Continue to follow the signs as before. Eventually, you will end up on a large platform.
13. Lighted destination boards are suspended over the platforms. Look at your destination board. If the light next to MARNE-LA-VALLÉE_CHESSY is lit, the next train to arrive will take you to *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy*, your destination. If this station is not lit, the next train is going elsewhere, so do not board it. If MARNE-LA-VALLÉE_CHESSY doesn't even appear on the destination board, you're on the wrong platform.

14. When a train arrives while the destination board shows MARNE-LA-VALLÉE_CHESSY as a destination, get aboard. Push the green button on the door to open it.
15. Take a seat, if possible; the ride is about 45 minutes long. Don't use the folding seats in the car if the car is very crowded (during rush hour, for example). Handicapped persons, pregnant women, and persons with young children (under four years of age) have priority if seating is limited, in seats so marked.
16. Stay on the train until it reaches the *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy* station, which is also the end of the line. At *Marne-la-Vallee_Chessy*, get off the train. Press the button on the door to open it after the train stops, if necessary.
17. Follow the blue signs marked SORTIE until you are once again confronted by turnstiles. Use the same ticket you used to originally enter the Métro to pass through these turnstiles. The turnstile will keep your ticket, because you are leaving the RER. Since the RER station is right in the middle of the Disneyland Resort, you're there as soon as you walk out of the station.

Disneyland is in Zone 5, so if you have a multiple-use ticket (explained earlier in this guide), make sure it is good for at least Zone 5 before using it to travel to Disneyland. If you are only visiting the park once, buy two individual tickets, one to reach the park, and one to return to Paris; if you are visiting several days in a row, buy a multiple-use ticket.

Getting Around on a Bus

The bus system in Paris works extremely well for the city's residents, but it is of questionable utility for the visitor, because it requires such an intimate knowledge of the layout of the city and of the bus routes in question. However, it is more scenic than the subway, if time is not a concern, and provided that you know exactly where you are and where you are going. Additionally, if you have problems climbing or descending stairs (ubiquitous in the Métro), the bus system may be more practical; many buses are designed without steps or can tilt to accept wheelchairs.

To ride the bus, find a bus stop near you, then look on the map of bus routes and stops at the bus stop to find your destination station. There are thousands of bus stops and over a hundred bus routes, so this may take a while. Once you find your departure and destination stops, the process is similar to that used for the Métro, except that it is often more difficult to find a *correspondance* with bus routes, since many of them do not intersect; if you are determined to go the entire route by bus, you may have to change buses several times. At the same time, however, the bus routes are designed to follow the most heavily traveled traffic patterns in the city, so

if you know the city well and you are on one of these routes, there is a surprisingly good chance that you might find your destination on the very same route.

The bus system uses the same tickets used in the Métro. When the bus arrives, verify that it is serving the line you wish to ride. Most bus stops are served by multiple routes; the route served by a given bus is clearly marked on the front and sides of the vehicle. Board the bus at the front door (other doors are for exit only, unless otherwise marked), place your ticket into the cancellation machine near the door (or wave your Navigo card at the purple target), and take a seat, or stand if there is no place to sit. If you have no ticket at all, you can buy one from the bus driver when you board—but be aware that tickets bought from the driver are good only on that bus, and cannot be used to make connections with other buses or other forms of transport.

As the bus rolls along, a display near the ceiling at the front of the bus will announce each stop as you approach it. There may be a voice announcement as well. When you see your stop approaching, look for a red button on one of the stainless-steel railings or columns in the bus, and press it; this signals the driver that someone wishes to get off at the next stop—otherwise he may not stop, unless people are waiting to get on. When the bus stops, you can get off. Exit via the rear door(s), not via the front door.

If you need to change buses or connect with the Métro, you can use the same ticket, as long as it has been less than 90 minutes since you first used the ticket—and provided that it is not a ticket that you bought from the bus driver (those are only good on the bus where they are purchased).

A handful of bus lines (*e.g.*, those serving the airports) serving the airports require either special tickets with separate pricing or multiple/special tickets priced according to the distance you wish to cover.

Miscellaneous Information

The following paragraphs provide a bit of miscellaneous information that is handy to have when using public transportation in Paris.

Access for the Disabled

Parisian mass transit holds both good news and bad news for disabled persons, depending on the nature of their disability.

For persons suffering from reduced mobility, such as those who use wheelchairs or cannot otherwise climb and descend stairs, the Paris subway system is very unfriendly indeed. Most of it was designed long before access for the handicapped became a concern, and stairways

abound in every station. Retrofitting stations with elevators or escalators is technically difficult and expensive, although it is gradually advancing. The newest lines, such as Line 14, provide access for wheelchairs and other persons with mobility problems, in the form of elevators, escalators, and ramps. Overall, only about 10% of all Métro and RER stations are navigable without climbing or descending stairs.

For travelers who are deaf or blind, the situation is much more favorable, and both groups can and do use the Métro effectively, with a little practice and a few precautions. Many ticket windows are equipped with induction loops for use with compatible hearing aids; another option for ticket purchase is a ticket machine with a video display. Service animals for the blind are allowed throughout the RER and Métro, and they ride for free when they are accompanied by their owners. Deaf travelers should be careful of the doors on trains, since their closure is often announced by a buzzer alone, with no visual signal (except on the newest Métro lines, which include visual indicator lights over each door as well). Blind travelers should be prepared to ask directions frequently on their first use of a given Métro route, or should try to travel with a sighted companion who can help with reading the innumerable signs in the Métro; however, since the Métro does not change, an itinerary can be memorized and followed thereafter with little or no assistance from anyone else, particularly compared to surface transportation. Rough rubber plates on most platforms allow blind travelers to locate the edge of train platforms, although this should not be relied upon in all stations. The newest lines (such as Line 14) incorporate platform doors that make it impossible to fall off the platform; the older lines have open platforms. Newer lines also have audible announcements of each station as the train arrives at the platform, although they can be hard to understand (even if you understand French).

When it comes to buses, many are equipped or designed for travelers with reduced mobility, but they still present inconveniences. Buses may be considerably more difficult to use for blind travelers than the Métro and RER; but an abundance of visual cues ensures that deaf travelers will be at no great disadvantage, and there is no buzzer to listen for. Most buses now have visual and audible announcements of each stop.

Security in the Métro

Security throughout the Parisian transit system is excellent overall. It is extremely unlikely that you will be inconvenienced in any of these networks. Police surveillance is plentiful, and you will occasionally see police officers in uniform patrolling stations and trains. Plainclothes police officers also are on duty more discreetly in many locations.

As a general rule, you should use the same common sense that you would use at home, plus a little extra caution to account for the fact that you are in unfamiliar surroundings. Some stations in the Métro and the RER are slightly risky very late at night, just before service ends. Some stations are deserted late at night; you may be the only traveller present, and thus an obvious target. Paris has a relatively low crime rate compared to large American cities, but that doesn't mean that there is no crime at all, and tourists are always more vulnerable than the locals in any city.

By far the most serious security problem in trains and on buses is the presence of pickpockets. It is not at all unusual for visitors to have their pockets picked if they are inattentive. Pickpockets specifically target tourists, because they are more likely to be carrying money, and they are less likely to be paying attention, and additionally because their credit cards often don't require a PIN (all French credit cards require a secret PIN in order to be used). Rush hours, when passengers are closely packed in buses and trains, are the high-risk times for pickpocketing—buses in particular present an elevated risk. Of course, none of this is unique to Paris or to its transportation system, but if you've never been in similar situations before, you should remain on guard to protect your wallet or purse. A good rule to keep in mind is that the easier it is for you to get to your wallet, the easier it is for pickpockets to steal it as well.

Another petty crime that has been a problem in recent years is theft of cell phones, and especially smartphones; thieves have been known to snatch a cell phone from a person's hand and run off with it. More than half of all "grab-and-run" thefts in the Métro are thefts of these highly-prized gadgets. Cell phones work in the Métro, but you might want to avoid using yours in situations where someone could whisk it out of your hand and run away with it.

Every Métro, RER, and commuter-train car has one or more red emergency handles near the doors. In an emergency, pulling on this handle signals the engineer and stops the train. These handles should be used only if someone is in *immediate danger*. The authorities have no tolerance for pranks.

In Métro and RER stations, a small intercom, usually a yellow box with a red button, allows you to talk to the stationmaster in case of emergency. Press the button and wait for an answer, then announce which platform you are on (by giving the direction served by the platform), and explain the problem. Although it is unlikely that the stationmaster will speak English, he will certainly understand that something is wrong and send someone to investigate.

Trains in the Métro cannot leave the station while any of the doors on the train are open, but it is best not to test this feature of the system. The doors

on the Métro are locked while the train is moving, whereas the doors on commuter trains are not; so do not attempt to open the doors on the latter until the train has stopped.

An emergency pull-tab behind a breakable window in Métro and RER stations interrupts electrical power to the rails or catenary of trains passing through the station. This device is for use only if someone actually falls onto the rails and risks electrocution.

Regulations, Schedules, Amenities

There are quite a few rules and regulations governing the Métro and RER, and we list a few of the more important ones below. However, this being France, enforcement is often light or nonexistent.

If you have a camera or camcorder, be advised that transit regulations prohibit photography without a permit in the Métro and RER—but this regulation is not rigorously enforced, especially against ordinary-looking tourists. Taking pictures in *railway* stations is fine as long as you don't use a tripod or other equipment likely to disturb other travellers, and provided that you do not stray from areas open to the public (no walking along the tracks allowed, for example). At one time you could walk onto the platforms and take pictures freely, but today you must have a ticket in hand to walk onto the platform, thanks to the increasing security paranoia of recent years.

Smoking is prohibited in all buildings open to the public in France, including all railway and subway stations. Spitting is prohibited in trains and stations.

Very large pieces of luggage are not allowed on the Métro and RER, or on buses. It isn't very practical to transport luggage in the Métro, anyway. This is the main reason why the RER isn't necessarily a good choice for getting to and from the airports, if you have any bags. Take a taxi if you have luggage.

Animals are not allowed on the Métro and RER unless they are very small and carried in a cage or other enclosure. The exception is service animals such as guide dogs for the blind, which are permitted everywhere and travel for free, when in the company of their owners.

Begging and loitering are generally prohibited. Things like playing music for money, selling candy or other merchandise, and related activities, are also generally prohibited. However, some merchants and a small number of musicians have permits, and they can be recognized by the badges they wear, issued by the RATP. In fact, the RATP auditions musicians each year, and issues permits to the 300 best among them. They are allowed to play in stations, but not on the platforms or in the trains.

Again, most of these regulations are virtually never enforced, so you'll see plenty of musicians playing music on trains, dogs without enclosures, people smoking, and so on.

Trains run generally from about 5 AM to at least midnight, depending on the line and station. The hours between 1 AM and 5 AM are used for maintenance on the Métro and RER, and for freight traffic on the commuter-train network. A special all-night bus service, Noctilien, is available on 35 selected bus lines in Paris and in some of the suburbs; it uses the same tickets as the regular Métro.

There are no toilets on Métro and RER trains, and there are few toilets within the controlled area of the Métro and RER networks. Commuter trains and railway stations usually have toilets. Most toilets are pay toilets. Some railway stations now have extremely clean public toilets with attendants, such as those operated by the McClean™ chain, but they typically cost one euro per use instead of the 50 cent or so charged in other restrooms.

Labor Strikes

Technical problems interfering with Parisian mass transportation are rare, albeit not as rare as they used to be. The real problem is continual labor strikes that cripple all or part of the system on a regular basis—they are one reason why Paris lost its bid for the Olympics in 2012.

Mass-transit workers are among the most strike-prone workers in France, even though their employment conditions are extremely generous by the standards of many other industries. They will strike for the most trivial of reasons, often with very little advance notice, and sometimes for extended periods. Most strikes, however, last only a day, and affect only certain Métro lines. The affected lines may stop completely or simply run trains much more slowly. The bus network is rarely affected.

Strikes at the SNCF may affect commuter trains or parts of the RER, but these are somewhat less frequent than RATP strikes.

In some seasons, there may be transit strikes roughly once a week, so be prepared. It won't generally prevent you from getting around, but it may slow you down or make use of the Métro impractical. You'll know there's a strike when you arrive on a platform and see ten times the normal number of people waiting for a train. Public announcements are usually made as well (on video displays, and audibly).

Glossary

The following brief glossary lists some of the words and phrases you are most likely to encounter in the Métro, RER, or commuter-train networks.

Two pronunciations are given for each term, the first being an Americanized pronunciation that isn't exact but is close enough and is easy for Americans to say, and the second being the actual French pronunciation, in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

- abribus** /ah-bree-booss | ab.bi.bys/ *nm* : A covered bench that provides shelter for bus riders at bus stops.
- accès** /ahk-say | akɛ/ *nm* : Access. *Accès aux quais*, This way to the platforms. *Accès principal*, Main entrance. *Accès réservé aux voyageurs munis de billets*, This entrance for travellers with tickets only.
- agent** /ah-zhawn | a.ʒɑ̃/ *nm* : Agent (of transport authority). *Agent de contrôle*: transport agent who spot-checks tickets on trains or in stations.
- alarme** /ah-lahrm | a.lɑ:ʁm/ *nf* : Alarm.
- aller-retour** /ah-lay ruh-tour | ale bə.tu:ʁ/ *nm and adj* : Round (return) trip. *Un billet aller-retour*, a round-trip (return) ticket.
- appareil de contrôle** /ah-pah-ray duh kawm-trohl | a.pa.ʁɛ:j də kō.tʁol/ *nm* : Turnstile, or any device used to control access to the “controlled area” of the Métro or RER.
- appoint** /ah-pwan | a.pwɛ̃/ *nm* : *Faites l'appoint*, Use correct change.
- appuyer** /ah-pwee-yay | a.puj.je/ *vt* : Press. *Appuyer pour ouvrir*, Press to open.
- APTR-ADATRIF** /ah-pay-tay-ehr ah-dah-treef | a.pe.te.ɛ:ʁ a.da.tʁif/ *nm* : former name of OPTILE.
- arrêt** /ah-ray | a.ʁɛ/ *nm* : (Bus, train) stop. *Arrêts desservis*, Stops served (by bus, train). *Arrêt demandé*, Stop requested (of bus driver). *Marquer l'arrêt*, To make a stop (on a bus or train route).
- arrière** /ahr-ee-air | aʁiɛ:ʁ/ *nm* : Rear. *Arrière des trains courts*, Trailing end of short trains (on RER and commuter platforms).
- arrivée** /ahr-ee-vay | a.vi.ve/ *nf* : Arrival; destination.
- attentif** /ahr-tawn-teef | a.tɑ̃.tif/ *adj* : Aware. *Attentifs, ensemble*, Everyone aware (slogan).
- avant** /ah-vawn | a.vɑ̃/ *nm* : Front. *Avant des trains courts*, Front of short trains (on RER and commuter platforms).
- banlieue** /bahn-leeyuh | bɑ̃.ljø/ *nf* : Suburb. *Train de banlieue*, Suburban commuter train.
- billet** /bee-yeh | bi.jɛ/ *nm* : Ticket. *Billets*, tickets. *Limite de validité des billets*, Tickets no longer valid beyond this point. *Accès limité aux voyageurs munis de billets*, This entrance for travellers with tickets only. *Billet non valable*, Ticket expired or ticket invalid. *Reprenez votre billet*, Take back your ticket.
- carnet** /kar-neh | kaʁ.nɛ/ *nm* : Pack of five or ten tickets.

- Carte Améthyste** /kart-ah-may-teest | kaʁt a.me.tist/ *nf trademark* : A transit pass issued to certain Parisian senior citizens, handicapped persons, and war veterans that allows free or discount access to the entire Parisian mass-transit system throughout the metropolitan area.
- Carte Émeraude** /kart-aim-road | kaʁt em.ʁod/ *nf trademark* : A transit pass issued to certain Parisian senior citizens, handicapped persons, and war veterans that allows free or discount access to the entire Parisian mass-transit system with Paris alone.
- Carte Rubis** /kart-roo-bee | kaʁt ʁy.bi/ *nf trademark* : A transit pass issued to certain Parisian senior citizens, handicapped persons, and war veterans that allows free or discount access to the mass transit within the Paris region on lines operated by OPTILE only.
- ¹**cent** /sent | sɛ̃t/ *nm* : A unit of currency equal to 1/100 of a EURO. *Treize euros et trente cents*, €13.30.
- ²**cent** /sawn | sɑ̃/ *adj* : (One) hundred.
- centime** /sawn-teem | sɑ̃.tim/ *nm* : **1.** ¹Cent. **2.** A unit of the old French national currency (no longer legal tender) equal to 1/100 of a French franc (about €0.0015).
- chef** /shɛf | ʃɛf/ *nm* : *Chef de station*, Stationmaster. *Pour appeler le chef de station*, Press here to call stationmaster.
- colis** /koh-lee | kɔ.li/ *nm* : Package. *Signalez tout colis suspect*, Report any suspect package.
- composter** /kawn-pohs-tay | kɔ̃.pɔs.te/ *vt* : To time-punch a ticket.
- contrôle** /kawn-trohl | kɔ̃.tʁol/ *nm* : Inspection. *Agent de contrôle*: RATP agent responsible for checking that everyone in the Métro is carrying a valid ticket or TITRE DE TRANSPORT. *Appareil de contrôle*: turnstile.
- correspondance** /kor-es-pawn-dawnss | kɔ̃.ɛs.pɔ̃.dɑ̃s/ *nf* : Train-to-train connection. *Prendre le correspondance sur le quai*, Descend to the platform to make connections.
- défense** /day-fawns | de.fɑ̃s/ *nf* : Prohibition. *Défense de fumer*, Smoking prohibited. *Défense d'entrer*, No admittance. *La Défense*: A high-rise business district just northwest of Paris.
- départ** /day-pahr | de.paʁ/ *nm* : Departure.
- descente** /day-sawnt | de.sɑ̃t/ *nf* : *Descente interdite*, Do not get off the train on this side.
- desservi** /day-sehr-vee | de.sɛʁ.vi/ *pp* : Served. *Cet arrêt n'est pas desservi le dimanche*, this stop is not served on Sundays.
- direction** /dee-rehks-yawn | di.ʁɛk.sjɔ̃/ *nf* : Direction; the station that is the terminus of a given train.
- Éole** /ay-ohl | e.ɔl/ *nf trademark* : Line E of the RER.

euro /euh-roh | œv.o/ *nm* : The unit of currency throughout France and most of the European Union, with a value close to that of one U.S. dollar.

Eurostar /uh-roh-star | œ.vɔ.sta:v/ *nm trademark* : A special TGV train that connects France and the United Kingdom via the Channel Tunnel.

exact /egg-zahkt | eg.zakt/ *adj* : Correct. *Mettez la somme exacte*, Use correct change.

fermé /fehr-may | fɛ.v.mɛ/ *adj* : Closed.

forfait annuel /for-feh ah-noo-ehl | foʋ.fɛ a.ny.ɛl/ *nm* : A yearly transit pass, recorded on a NAVIGO CARD, and valid for travel during one calendar year within specified zones.

forfait semaine /for-feh suh-mehn | foʋ.fɛ sɔ.mɛn/ *nm* : A weekly transit pass, recorded on a NAVIGO CARD, and valid for travel during one calendar week, Monday through Sunday, within specified zones.

forfait mois /for-feh mwah | foʋ.fɛ mwah/ *nm* : A monthly transit pass, recorded on a NAVIGO CARD, and valid for travel during one calendar month within specified zones.

gare /gahr | ɡa:v/ *nf* : (Railway) station. *Gares desservies*, Stations served.

grève /grehv | ɡʁɛv/ *nf* : Labor strike. *En grève*, on strike.

Imagine “R” /ee-mah-zheen-air | i.ma.ʒin.ɛ:v/ *nm trademark* : A type of low-cost annual transit pass sold exclusively to resident students under 26 years of age.

incident /an-see-dawn | ɛ̃.si.dɑ̃/ *nm* : Incident; problem. *Suite à un incident grave de voyageur, le trafic est totalement interrompu*, Because of a serious passenger accident, train service has been completely suspended.

indicateur /an-dee-cah-tuhr | ɛ̃.di.ka.tœ:v/ *nm* : Train schedule.

interdit /an-tehr-dee | ɛ̃.tɛv.di/ *adj* : Prohibited. *Passage interdit*, Wrong way. *Interdit au public*, No admittance. *Stationnement interdit*, No loitering. *Fumer interdit*, Smoking prohibited.

lacune /lah-koon | la.kyn/ *nf* (RATP) : Gap (between the platform and a train).

ligne /leen | lij/ *nf* : Line. *Grandes lignes*, National/international rail network. *Lignes de banlieue*, suburban (commuter) rail lines.

Météor /may-tay-or | me.te.o:v/ *nm trademark* : Line 14 of the Métro.

Métro /may-troh | me.tʁo/ *nm* : The conventional subway network serving the city of Paris proper. Also called the *réseau urbain* (city network).

microbus /mee-kroh-booss | mi.kʁo.bys/ *nm* : A very small bus with a capacity of 22 passengers that serves certain lightly-travelled bus routes.

Mobilis /moh-bee-leees | mo.bi.lis/ *nm trademark* : A type of one-day multiple-use ticket.

mois /mwah | mwa/ *adj* : Month. (See FORFAIT MOIS.)

monnaie /muh-nay | mɔ̃.nɛ/ *nf*: Change. *Je rends la monnaie*, I can make change.

mouvement social /moov-mawn sohss-yal | muv.mã so.sjal/ *nm* (*official term*): Labor strike.

Navigo /nah-vee-goh | na.vi.go/ *nm trademark*: A type of “smart card” that replaces more traditional tickets and does not require physical insertion into a turnstile.

Navigo Découverte /nah-vee-goh day-koo-vehrt | na.vi.go de.ku.vɛʁt/ *nm trademark*: A type of NAVIGO card that can be bought for €5 by anyone, not just residents of Paris.

Noctambus /nohk-tahm-booss | nɔ̃k.tam.byʃ/ *nm trademark*: See NOCTILIEN

Noctilien /nohk-teel-yan | nɔ̃k.til.jɛ̃/ *nm trademark*: A nighttime network of 35 bus lines that serves Paris and some suburbs during the night and replaces the old Noctambus network.

OPTILE /up-teel | ɔ̃p.til/ *nm trademark*: A group of transit systems affiliated with the RATP and serving mostly the Paris suburbs, formerly APTR-ADATRIF.

Orlybus /or-lee-booss | ɔ̃ʁ.li.bys/ *nm trademark*: A shuttle bus service between Paris and Orly airport.

Orlyval /or-lee-vahl | ɔ̃ʁ.li.val/ *nm trademark*: A fully automated light rail system that serves Orly Airport and connects with the Anthony station of the RER.

ouvert /oo-vehr | u.vɛ:ʁ/ *adj*: Open.

Paris Visite /pah-ree vee-zeet | pa.ʁi vi.zit/ *nm trademark*: A type of multiple-use ticket intended for tourists.

partie /pahr-tee | paʁ.ti/ *nf*: *Partie de train restant en gare*, These cars remain in the station.

passage /pah-sahj | pa.sa:ʒ/ *nm*: Passageway. *Passage interdit*, Wrong way. *Passage public*, Pedestrian underpass.

passager /pah-sah-zhay | pa.sa.ʒɛ/ *nm*: Passenger.

première classe /prum-yehr | pʁɛ̃m.jɛ:ʁ klas/ *nf*: First class. *Vous êtes en première classe*, you’re in first class.

quai /kay | ke/ *nm*: Platform. *Accès aux quais*, This way to the platforms.

rame /rahm | ram/ *nf* (RATP): Train. *Rame à quai*, train at the platform.

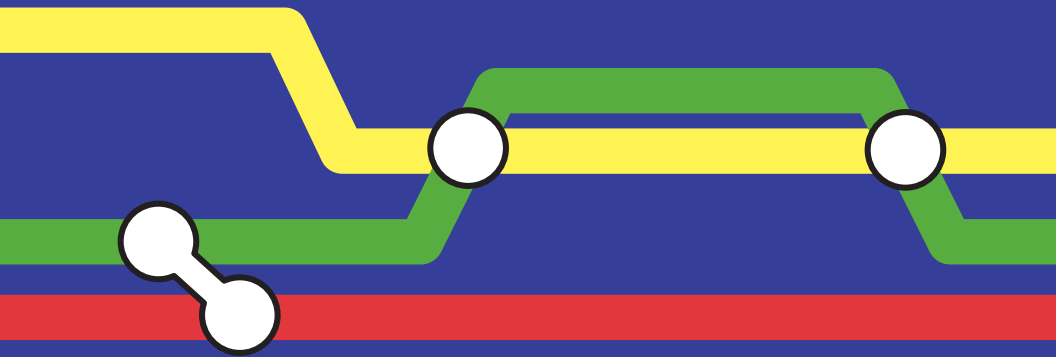
RATP /err-ah-tay-pay | ɛʁ.a.te.pe/ *nf abbrev*: The *Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens*, or Independent Paris Transport Authority.

RER /air-uh-air | ɛʁ.ə.ɛʁ/ *nm abbrev*: The *Réseau Express Régional*, or Regional Express Network, a system of high-speed subways that interconnect with the Métro.

- Roissybus** /rwah-see-booss | ʁwa.si.bys/ *nm* : A shuttle bus service between Paris and Charles de Gaulle airport.
- semaine** /suh-mehn | sə.mɛn/ *adj* : Week. (See FORFAIT SEMAINE.)
- SNCF** /ess-ehn-say-ehf | ɛs.ɛn.se.ɛf/ *nf abbrev*: The *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français*, or French National Railway Company.
- section** /sehk-syawm | sɛk.sjõ/ *nf* : A fare segment of a bus line. *Section urbaine*: The portion of the Parisian transit system that is within the actual city limits of Paris.
- secours** /suh-koor | sə.ku:ʁ/ *nm* : Help. *Au secours!* Help!
- service** /sehr-vees | sɛ:ʁ.vis/ *nm* : Service. *Hors service*, Out of order. *En service*, Ready for use. *Service interrompu*, Service discontinued. *Service perturbé*, Delays expected. *Réservé au service*, Authorized personnel only. *Service normal*, Standard service. *Service spécial*, Non-scheduled service. *Service partiel*, Partial or limited service.
- sortie** /sor-tee | soʁ.ti/ *nf* : Exit. *Sortie de secours*, Emergency exit.
- station** /stah-syawm | sta.sjõ/ *nf* : Station.
- sauvette** /soh-veht | so.vɛt/ *nf*: *Vente (des billets) à la sauvette*: Illegal sale (of tickets), as by unauthorized persons in the subway system.
- tarification** /tah-ree-fee-kah-syawm | ta.ʁi.fi.ka.sjõ/ *nf* : *Tarification spéciale*, Special tickets required.
- terminus** /tehr-mee-noos | tɛ:ʁ.mi.nys/ *nm* : Terminus; end of the line.
- TGV** /tay-zhay-vay | te.ʒe.ve/ *nm abbrev* : *Train à Grande Vitesse*, a very high-speed (300-kph/200-mph) full-size trainset operated on many national and international rail lines by the SNCF.
- Thalys** /tah-leees | ta.lis/ *nm trademark* : A special TGV train that serves primarily Belgium.
- ticket** « t » /tee-keh tay | ti.kɛ te/ *nm trademark* : *brand name for* A standard Métro single-use ticket.
- Ticket Jeunes** /tee-keh zhuhn | ti.kɛ ʒœn/ *nm trademark* : A multiple-use ticket for persons under age 26 and valid only on weekends and holidays for selected zones.
- titre de transport** /teetruh duh trawns-pohr | ti:tʁ^ø də tʁɑ̃s.pɔ:ʁ/ *nm (RATP)* : Ticket.
- train** /tran | tʁɛ̃/ *nm* : Train. *Train court*, Short train. *Train long*, Full-length train. *Avant du train*, The first car of the train stops here. *Arrière du train*, The last car of the train ends here. *Avant des trains courts*, Short trains start here. *Arrière des trains courts*, Short trains end here. *Train à quai*, The train is at the platform. *Train à l'approche*, The train is entering the station.

- Transilien** /trawn-seel-yan | tʁɑ̃.sil.jɛ̃/ *nm trademark* : The rail network of the Paris region as operated by the SNCF.
- travaux** /trah-voh | tʁɑ.vo/ *nm pl* : Works; construction. *Secteur en travaux*, Construction area.
- tripode** /tree-pud | tʁi.pɔd/ *nm (RATP)* : Turnstile.
- valider** /vahl-ee-day | va.li.de/ *vt* : To insert a ticket into an automatic turnstile.
- vigilant** /vee-zhee-lawn | vi.zi.lɑ̃/ *adj* : Vigilant. *Soyons vigilants ensemble*, Let's all be watchful.
- Vigipirate** /vee-zhee-pee-raht | vi.zi.pi.ʁat/ *adj service mark* : *Plan Vigipirate*: A government program to reduce the incidence of terrorist attacks in the country, as by closing trash cans or sanisettes, or other security measures.
- voie** /vwah | vwa/ *nf* : Right-of-way; track. *Interdiction de traverser les voies*, Crossing the tracks is prohibited. *Départ voie A*, Departure on track A.
- voyageur** /vwah-yah-zuhr | vwa.jɑ.ʒœ:ʁ/ *nm* : Passenger. *Ce train ne prend plus de voyageurs*, This train is no longer in service.
- zone** /zohn | zon/ *nf* : Zone. *Zone tarifaire*: One of the eight concentric transit-fare zones centered on Paris, and numbered outwards from Paris (the city itself is Zone 1). *Zone contrôlée*: The area of the Métro beyond the turnstiles, within which a valid ticket is required.

How to Use Public Transportation in Paris is a clear, compact guide to the comprehensive mass transit system of the City of Light, intended for tourists and other visitors to the French capital. The three interconnected rail networks are covered, as well as the city's bus system. A French-English glossary is included to help in understanding signs.



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