



European
Joint
Support Unit

Living in Paris





PUBLIC TRANSPORT in PARIS

At first sight the Paris transport systems can seem rather bewildering, but they are not too complicated once you get used to them.

PARIS METRO

Metro tickets can be bought at any métro station which display the RATP sign or via Internet (www.ratp.fr) RATP includes the métro, RER, trains and buses. The website is available in French and English and includes an interactive map where you can get help with planning a route.

Passe Navigo – The *Passe Navigo* works like the Oyster card in London and can be ‘charged’ for a week, month or year. THERE IS NO PAY AS YOU GO OPTION. Cards need to be swiped on the purple *Navigo* sensor when entering the metro or the train station. Weekly *Navigo* passes run from Monday to Sunday inclusive. If you re-charge on a Wednesday, you will be charged for the full week. Monthly *Navigo* runs from the 1st to last day of the month. Be warned queues on the 1st of the month are long but you can charge the pass up to a week before the end of the month to avoid this. The annual pass, *Navigo Intégrale*, is payable by monthly direct debit and is cheaper. The *Passe Navigo* can be obtained directly in many stations – these stations are marked with an asterisk on the map below. You will need a passport photograph, proof of address, and your *relevé d’identité bancaire* (RIB) if you want to set up an annual pass.

For secondary school children and students under 26, the *Carte Imagine “R”* (equivalent to the *Passe Navigo*) provides around 45% discount but is only available as an annual pass and the application form needs to be stamped by the school they are attending. (although you can pay by direct debit in 9 instalments).

Monthly or annual passes cover the métro, the RER, the buses and the SNCF (main line suburban) trains in the whole of the Ile de France. It is a fixed cost for the five Ile de France Zones no matter where you live within those zones.

Please note: When using your Navigo card, you can only travel in the five-zone area. If you travel outside these zones you need to purchase extra tickets.

You must keep your ticket until you leave the station as there are frequent checks and ‘on the spot’ fines are then demanded if you do not have a ticket. You also need to validate your tickets or passes before travelling. The doors of most trains do NOT open automatically so be prepared to lift the latch yourself or press a button when getting into or out of the car. A warning bell is sounded about five seconds before the doors close. In order to follow the maps in the stations it is essential to know the name of the terminal station (i.e. end of line) and when changing lines you will need to look for the sign *Correspondance* where you will find directions for the line you want. The sign ‘*Sortie*’ means exit.

There are very few escalators in the *métro* and plenty of stairs. The distance between two different lines at the same station can sometimes be a very long walk and if you are only planning to go one stop it sometimes makes more sense to walk above ground.



RER

The RER is like a rapid *métro* with far fewer stops, which travels under and over ground and covers a much wider area than the metro. The RER has the advantage of being able to get you across Paris and out into the suburbs (*banlieue*) quickly. It can also be picked up in Paris at the combined metro/RER station and if you use it to travel in Paris only, a metro ticket / Navigo pass can be used. There are five lines (A-E).

SNCF

The SNCF goes from the main line stations to the suburbs (*banlieue*), and again, like the metro and RER, is quick, clean and punctual. SNCF tickets must be 'composted' ie self-stamped at one of the machines usually situated just at the beginning of the platform BEFORE you get on the train. Ticket inspectors make frequent checks and 'on the spot' fines are levied (50€).

For mainline SNCF trains, going outside the Ile de France, if you have not stamped your ticket before getting on the train, you can do so the first time the inspector comes through to check the tickets, but you will be fined thereafter.

BUSES

The buses run from 0630 to 2100 and you can use the same tickets on the bus as you do on the metro. If you get on a bus without a ticket you can buy an individual ticket from the driver. Remember to punch the ticket in the machine situated near the driver when entering the bus. If you have a *Passe Navigo* swipe your card on the machines situated on the bus. Passengers enter at the front of the bus and descend from the middle. When you are nearing the stop at which you wish to descend, press the button near the exit to indicate to the driver that you wish to get out. The bus routes are divided into sections, which are shown on a map in the bus itself. There should be a map of the bus route at the stop. Stops are either known by the same name as the nearest metro station, or by the nearest monument. Destinations are written on the side of the bus, and the end stop is written at the front. You may also encounter inspectors on the bus who can levy an 'on the spot' fine.

CONCESSIONS

FAMILLE NOMBREUSE

Families with three or more children can obtain a certificate from the main line stations, which entitles them to cheaper travel (and sometimes to cheaper entry to zoos, parks, museums, cinemas, swimming pools etc.). It is necessary to obtain one form per member of your family (including those at school in the UK). This form is returned, completed with two photographs of each child, copies of birth certificates, an *état civil* which is available from Consular Section, and the fee of €15.60. It will also be necessary to produce your identity card/passport.



CARTE ENFANT +

This SNCF pass is valid for one year, and costs €75. It guarantees a least 25% off on any tickets (including TGV, sleepers, etc) to the cardholder and up to 4 people accompanying. The cardholder is a child under 12 years old. You must provide a photo if your child is over four years old. If you have a child under four and a card in their name, they will be allocated a seat (instead of sitting on your lap) and you can be accompanied by 4 other people with discounts. It is available at any SNCF tickets desk, by phone on 08 36 35 35 35 or via Internet.

CARTE 12-25

This card for young people between the ages of 12 and 25 offers a reduction of at least 25% on tickets purchased with it.

REIMBURSEMENTS

You can be reimbursed for a ticket you do not use. The amount will depend on whether you have reserved a seat and when you seek reimbursement-i.e. before or after the day on which you should travel. For precise information on the SNCF consult *Le Guide du Voyageur* available at stations and SNCF *boutiques*.



CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Message is a voluntary organisation for Anglophone parents. Its aim is to provide support and a point of contact for Anglophone parents in Paris and the suburbs. It is an excellent way of meeting other people with babies and children and provides an invaluable network and information for parents with children of all ages. www.messageparis.org

SPRINT (Sharing Professional Resources, Ideas and New Techniques) is a non-profit organisation founded in Paris in 1986. It is a group of English speaking or bilingual professionals who work with children of all ages with special needs.

This group includes: Clinical Psychologists, Educational Psychologists, Family Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Learning Disability Specialists, Special Educators and Tutors, Psychomotor Re-educators, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Art Therapists, Music Therapists, Osteopaths and Alternative therapists.

SPRINT offers the Anglophone community information and referral services and presents specialists with an opportunity to network.

SPRINT is linked to a Parent Support Group, called SPAN.

If you have a child with special needs, you may wish to contact SPRINT and SPAN prior to your arrival in Paris.

Tel. 01 34 86 93 41/ 01 24 79 90 97 (president: Deanna Canonge)

Sprint.france@free.fr <http://sprint.france.free.fr>

GIFTED IN FRANCE

Gifted in France is a non-profit association created to help parents, caretakers, professionals and community leaders understand the educational, emotional and social needs of gifted children and twice-exceptional children living in France. Their objectives are: To work with like-minded organizations, at home and abroad, in order to improve and exchange information; to dispel common myths about the gifted population; organize conferences and workshops; and to participate in community outreach activities to attract gifted and talented children from different cultural, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. In 2010 GiF will be hosting its third annual Paris Spelling Bee in collaboration with the American Library in Paris. For more information please visit Gifted in France or email giftedinfrance@blogspot.com



BCWA (BRITISH AND COMONWEALTH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION)

Organises all sorts of cultural events both in and outside Paris. A very friendly organisation with a clubroom in the 16th arrondissement opens daily 10:30-15:30. They also have one of the best English libraries in Paris. There is a Boarding School Group which organises events for children at boarding school when they are in Paris during the holidays. Penny Girinsky, the Clubroom Secretary can be contacted on 01 43 49 45 29 or pennygirinsky@yahoo.com

WICE offers quality educational programmes for the international English-speaking community in Paris and the suburbs including TEFL courses.

BLOOM is the name given to a series of orientation talks for newcomers to Paris. It is organised by the WOAC (Women of American Church in Paris) and usually takes place on the first three Thursdays in October at the American Church, and in March. It is highly organised, includes talks on a variety of subjects including language problems, shopping for clothes and goods etc, schools, cooking and touches on many other topics to help newcomers settle in. Even if you have been in Paris for some time it is still worth going along because it is interesting and informative. It also gives you a chance to meet other newcomers from a wide variety of backgrounds and organisations. If you would like further information, please contact the CLO. BLOOM has produced an extremely informative newcomer's booklet 'Bloom where you're Planted'. You can buy a copy from the CLO.

British Community Committee: for a comprehensive list of **British Associations** in France flick through your copy of the British in France "Official Directory of Member Organisations" produced by the British Community Committee, or consult their website: www.britishinfrance.com.



LOCAL INFORMATION

Local Government is very strong in France and it is well worth paying an early visit to your local *Mairie* (Town Hall), which will provide information on all local services including:

Police Stations	Fire Brigades
Schools	Libraries
Medical Services	Social Services
Post Offices	Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture
Child Care Facilities	Sports Facilities

MAISON DES ASSOCIATIONS

The *Maison des Associations* for each *Mairie* produces a booklet outlining the activities, clubs and associations available in your area. It is published at the beginning of September (*la rentrée*).

All local *Mairies* organise classes on a wide range of subjects at a reasonable price. You can pick up this guide in your local *mairie* from the 1st of September.

Start by going to the *Accueil* (Reception) where you can browse through brochures and be directed to more detailed information. Also keep an eye on the municipal notice boards for details of local current events. Most towns in the *banlieue* (suburbs) have very active committees, with community events on a regular basis. The local *MJC*s (*Maison de la Jeunesse et Culture*) or *Maison de Citoyen* (you can find information at your local *Mairie* or on their website) and *Conservatoires* (for music and ballet classes) offer many daytime and evening courses for adults, and these can be a good way of meeting the French, and improving your language skills.

Information regarding swimming pools can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this section. The *Mairies* also manage the municipal tennis courts and will provide you with an application form for a '*Carte de Tennis*' on request.

Tip: The French tend to sign up well in advance for courses and activities so to avoid disappointment sign up as early as you can whenever possible, i.e. near the beginning of the year for classes in September. If you cannot sign up well in advance do, try anyway to see if there are places still available in your chosen activity.