



NAUGHTY PARIS

A Lady's Guide to the Sexy City





SECOND EDITION 2015



NAUGHTY PARIS

A Lady's Guide to the Sexy City



HEATHER STIMMLER-HALL



NAUGHTY PARIS
A LADY'S GUIDE TO THE SEXY CITY

Written by Heather Stimmler-Hall
Photos by Loop Photography

www.naughtyparis.com

Second Edition 2015
ISBN 978-2-9531870-5-2 (print)
ISBN 978-2-9531870-6-9 (eBook)

Caveat Emptor

As much as we like to think we were exhaustive in our research, places close, times change, obnoxious lowlifes get admitted into our favorite clubs and the Artful Dodger strikes just when you've purchased that darling new clutch purse. The author and publisher of Naughty Paris cannot accept responsibility for facts that become outdated, wardrobe failure, or for any inadvertent errors or omissions in this guide. Confirm in advance when it matters.

Text copyright © 2008, 2015 Heather Stimmler-Hall
Photos copyright © 2008, 2015 Kirsten Loop (except where noted)

The Naughty Guides are published in France by Fleur de Lire Press
77 avenue des Gobelins 75013 Paris
www.naughty-guides.com

Printed and bound in France by L'Imprimerie Escourbiac (GRAULHET - 81), a certified "Imprim'vert" printer using vegetable-based inks and 100% PEFC-certified paper from sustainably managed forests. www.escourbiac.com

Dépôt légal août 2014



CONTENTS

PART I *Bienvenue à Paris!*

AN INVITATION: IS THIS GUIDE FOR YOU?	10
THREE WAYS TO ENJOY NAUGHTY PARIS	14
A NAUGHTY PARISIAN HISTORY PRIMER	18
ON FRENCH MEN	29
A WOMAN IN PARIS	41

PART II *Tour Boudoir or Mine?*

HOTELS	53
<i>Luxury</i>	54
<i>Expensive</i>	61
<i>Moderate</i>	63
<i>Budget</i>	64
<i>Naughty Theme</i>	68
FOR INDEPENDENT LADIES	71
WHAT TO PACK	77

PART III *Sexy You!*

FRENCH BEAUTY	83
<i>Spas</i>	86
<i>Hair & Nails</i>	96
<i>Cosmetics & Perfume</i>	109
<i>Body Art</i>	117



LE LOOK PARISIEN	123
<i>Parisian Style</i>	125
<i>Parisian Fashion Shopping</i>	128
<i>Oh là là Lingerie</i>	147
<i>Sexy Shoes</i>	155
<i>Personal Shopping & Style Consultants</i>	161
<i>Fashion Guides</i>	167

PART IV *Get in the Mood*

SEXY CULTURE	171
<i>Your Naughty Paris Library</i>	172
<i>Your French Film Fix</i>	174
<i>Naughty Museums</i>	176
<i>All fresco Inspiration</i>	186
<i>Naughty Tours</i>	190
NAUGHTY SHOPPING	192
<i>Art & Literature</i>	193
<i>Toys for Madame</i>	203
<i>Latex, Leather & Fetish</i>	212
EROTIC EDUCATION	219
<i>Learn the Right Moves</i>	219
<i>The French Tongue</i>	226

PART V *After Dark Rendez-Vous*

WINE & DINE	236
<i>Ladies' Night</i>	240
<i>With your Beau</i>	253
<i>Intimate Dining à Deux</i>	262
<i>Sweet Afternoon Indulgences</i>	273
<i>Paris Dining Resources</i>	276
DANCING DIVA	279
<i>Flash & Fun</i>	280
<i>Selective & Seductive</i>	284
<i>Live & Laid Back</i>	288
<i>Retro & Latin Moves</i>	292
<i>Period Costume Balls</i>	298
SEXY SHOWS	301
<i>Cabaret</i>	301
<i>New Burlesque</i>	304
<i>Eye Candy for Ladies</i>	308
NAUGHTY ADVENTURES	313
<i>Libertine Clubs & Saunas</i>	318
<i>Fetish & Whips</i>	324
<i>Naughty Resources</i>	336
<i>Practical Info</i>	339
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	344
<i>About Us</i>	345
<i>Photo Credits</i>	346
<i>Index</i>	347



PART I

Bienvenue à Paris

AN INVITATION:

IS THIS GUIDE FOR YOU?

*“Paris is a place where
women are truly liberated”*

Paris is arguably the sexiest city in the world. As home to the historic Moulin Rouge, inspiration for Henry Miller’s scandalous novels, and the setting for the series finale of *Sex and the City*, the French capital has become the mythical embodiment of all that is romantic, passionate, decadent, and hedonistic. It’s not just about sex, *Mesdames*. The pursuit of pleasure permeates every aspect of Parisian culture, so that even the cuisine, the fashion and the language are elevated to sensual experiences. It’s no wonder so many women are drawn to the City of Light. Its unspoken promise of sexual (re)discovery speaks to our feminine sensibilities and inspires us to embrace our hidden desires. Paris, we feel intuitively, is a place where women are truly liberated.

Yet aside from the heavily promoted cabaret shows, the city’s truly naughty side has remained an elusive fantasy for most visitors. Until now. Naughty Paris is your personal invitation to discover the sexy side of the city you always knew existed, from swingers clubs and striptease classes to fetish parties and erotic art tours. But this guide is not just about breaking taboos, it’s also about capturing the right mood to incite – not extinguish – your passion. A careful selection of intimate and stylish hotels, bars, restaurants and dance clubs will help you set the scene for seduction, while the sexy lingerie boutiques, pampering spas and naughty toy shops will help awaken your inner *femme fatale*.

Naughty... but Nice

Naughty Paris is first and foremost a lady’s guide. It reveals a sexy and provocative city seen through the eyes of the fairer sex, for women who are no longer girls but who still want to have fun. On our own terms, of course. You won’t find anything nasty, seedy, illegal or disrespectful between these sheets. A lady’s guide has no place for brothels, escorts, peep shows or lap dancing clubs. This is not a manual for getting lucky, nor is it the last word on sex in this city. If you’re already well-initiated in the libertine “lifestyle” you may find Naughty Paris charmingly tame. If you’re the kind of woman who blushes in the lingerie department, then you might find it positively shocking. Whether innocently intrigued or downright daring, only you can decide which naughty pleasures are for you. This guide is simply a

*Throw your dreams into space like a kite,
and you do not know what it will bring
back... a new life, a new friend, a new love,
a new country.*

—ANNAÏS NIN

*One becomes aware in France, after having
lived in America, that sex pervades the air.
It’s there all around you, like a fluid.*

—HENRY MILLER

menu of the many sensual delights Paris has to offer to discerning ladies, not a prescription for wanton debauchery that you must follow or risk feeling like a prude. Whether you want to be titillated by a saucy cabaret or seduced in the city’s most exclusive sex clubs, this guide provides you with all the information you need to choose your own naughty adventure.



Naughty Paris is *not* for Everyone

To fully enjoy the establishments and opportunities that this guide presents, you should be a lady of legal age. In France that age is 18, and it applies to alcohol consumption as well as adults-only clubs. You should also be of sound mind and body, have a strong sense of self, of dignity, of direction (no maps here!) and – most importantly – of humor. With your tongue firmly in cheek when needed, your mind opened, and your preconceived notions and judgments aside, get ready to have some fun!



THREE WAYS TO
ENJOY NAUGHTY PARIS

*Be the sex goddess you
always knew you were.*



On Your Own

The exhilarating freedom, the endless possibilities, the lingering glances from handsome locals... Paris is a whole new city for women traveling solo. People are friendlier, more helpful, and more likely to strike up a conversation than if you were traveling with friends or a partner. Enjoy the rewards of your independence. Spoil yourself with a day of self-pampering, shopping for shoes, or reading Anaïs Nin's naughty diaries on a sunny café terrace. This guide includes a special selection of hotels suitable for independent women, as well bars and restaurants "For the Ladies" that are all solo-female-friendly.

With the Ladies

Nothing brings out a woman's sexiness more than the laughter and joy we experience with our closest friends. An excellent destination for bachelorettes, best friends, or elegant empty-nesters rediscovering the joys of feminine company, Paris never fails to inspire female bonding excursions. Whether it's a visit to the city's racy female-friendly toy boutiques, ladies night cocktails in the swankiest locals' bars, or a naughty male striptease show and pole-dancing lesson, some things are just more fun with friends. And when things get wild, you know you can all agree on one thing: "What happens in Paris, stays in Paris."

With Him

He may be your husband of 20 years or the charming young Frenchman who was wooing you all night at the bar. That's your business. This guide will help you live out your fantasies, whether you're here to inject a bit of Parisian naughtiness into a long term relationship or to engage in a steamy tryst. Check into a sexy boutique hotel, feed each other oysters in a candlelit restaurant, and flirt shamelessly in a secluded corner of an intimate bar. And if the mood is right and your accomplice willing, Naughty Paris can open the doors to the city's most exclusive libertine clubs and fetish soirées. With this guide, you can be the sex goddess you always knew you were.



Parlez-Vous Français?

You don't have to be a cunning linguist to interact with the Parisians. In the rare cases where no English is understood at all, your body language, a few essential French words and a patient attitude are all you need to ease open the gates of communication.





A NAUGHTY

PARISIAN HISTORY PRIMER

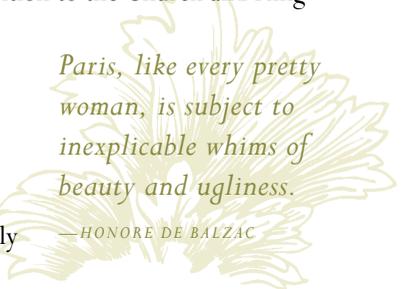


The French reveled in flaunting their liberal beliefs and hedonistic activities.

If Parisians seem more sexually sophisticated than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, it's only because they've had a long time to perfect their naughty ways. Paris is a city where the quest for *joie de vivre* has long been taken to its debauched extremes, with a reputation as a capital of forbidden pleasures and illicit indulgences spanning centuries. From royal dalliances of Reine Margot in the 16th century to the high-class brothels of the early 20th century, even today we remain enchanted and fascinated by the tales of those who once made Paris their playground for erotic exploits.

The Age of (Sexual) Enlightenment

Naughtiness is as old as the city itself, but it wasn't until the social and moral upheavals of the 18th century that *Parisiennes* began openly practicing what was once carefully hidden behind locked doors. Inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of atheism and antiroyalism, the pre-Revolutionary intellectuals known as *libertins* denounced religious conventions such as chastity and monogamy. As opposition to the Church and King continued to grow, support for legalized prostitution and liberal sexual practices spread through the city's fashionable circles. A whole new code of seduction – manipulative, self-serving, and heartless – was defined by Choderlos de Laclos' influential novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. “Pleasure at any price” (*Plaisir à tout prix*) became a common motto among the nobility, taken to its sadistic extremes by the infamous Marquis de Sade, who spent thirty years of his life imprisoned for his pornographic writings and sexually violent perversions.



Paris, like every pretty woman, is subject to inexplicable whims of beauty and ugliness.

— HONORE DE BALZAC

The Sexual Revolution

When the city's politics spiraled out of control during the 1789 Revolution and the subsequent Terror, sexual liberty became as much a part of the innate Rights of Man as *liberté*, *égalité*, or *fraternité*. Prostitution and pornography flourished, and nightly erotic 'shows' were conducted in such public areas as the Palais-Royal and the Place Dauphine. Women could be found for the willing in one of the many burgeoning brothels or cruising the streets near a *hotel de passe* that rented rooms by the hour. Though the same vices could be found in cities around the world, Paris began to set itself apart from other European capitals with its unabashed view of sexuality. Unhampered by secrecy, the French reveled – and still do, to a certain extent – in flaunting their liberal beliefs and hedonistic activities as evidence of their lack of Puritanical prudery.

Parisian Brothels

After the chaos of the Revolution, the Empire imposed its own sense of order on the new sexual mores of the city in the 19th century. More than 180 of the infamous *maisons de tolérance*, brothels legally registered by the State, were operating in Paris by 1810. Strictly regulated by French law, each employee was registered and weekly health-inspections were mandatory. Most brothels were found in the artistic enclaves of Montmartre and Montparnasse, offering customers the realization of their wildest fantasies – for the right price. Costumes, theatre sets, and a plethora of women and boys were kept at hand to reenact any flight of fancy. Their opulent settings and cabaret entertainment attracted some of the most illustrious figures of the early 20th century, such as Humphrey Bogart, Mae West, Edith Piaf and even the Prince of Wales (future King Edward VII), who bathed in a copper tub filled with Champagne at Le Chabonais.

Cabarets and Cancans

The French cabaret scene emerged alongside the brothels at the end of the 19th century, particularly in Montmartre's red-light district of Pigalle. This colorful and raunchy world, immortalized in the paintings of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, allowed men and women of all classes to escape the usual rules and social barriers. The brothel girls who made up the original dancers at the famous Moulin Rouge, opened in 1889, performed a vulgar and provocative interpretation of the traditional working-class party dance known as the Cancan. Audiences were both shocked and enthralled. In a Parisian nightlife guide published in 1898, the French Cancan dancers are described as “an army of young girls who dance this divine hullabaloo...with such elasticity when they launch their legs upwards that we may presume that they are at least as flexible with their morals.” As the popularity of dance hall entertainment grew, the “working girls” were replaced by the professional dancers who continue to impress us today with synchronized high kicks, rather than sexual high jinks.

Naughty History Book

Want to know more about King Edward VII's scandalous years living in Paris as a young prince? Delve into author Stephen Clarke's titillating biography *Dirty Bertie: An English King Made in France* (2014, Random House) to learn how this naughty monarch's French seduction skills were the key to his future diplomatic prowess.

19th-century Courtesans

Somewhere between the low-brow world of brothels and the respectable world of the *haute monde*, were the pampered ladies of the *demimonde*. Also known as *les Grandes Horizontales*, these courtesans became a mainstay of high society, always in the public eye despite their notoriety and questionable morals. The era's best-known *demimondaines* were Marie Duplessis, La Présidente, La Païva and Cora Pearl, veritable celebrities who were wooed publicly by men such as Charles Baudelaire and Prince Napoléon. Neither prostitutes nor mistresses, they lived extravagantly on the favors of their rich lovers and enjoyed a level of freedom from the strict social codes that upper class women were expected to follow.

The Crazy Years

After the hardships of the Great War, Paris rebounded with another wave of joyous hedonism known as *Les Années Folles*. An influx of pleasure-seeking Americans, fleeing Prohibition and close-mindedness back home, arrived just in time to take advantage of the *laissez-faire* party atmosphere and the dollar's strong exchange rate. The prominence of eroticism and liberal sexuality inspired the works of writers and artists such as Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, Man Ray, Brassai, and the Surrealist intellectual Andre Breton, who viewed sex as the most important of man's irrational urges. Famous lesbians like Gertrude Stein and the wild child Natalie Barney lived their lifestyle openly, hosting influential *salons* in their Montparnasse homes, while the young African-American dancer Josephine Baker became an overnight sex symbol when her 1925 *Revue Nègre* debuted at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The emergence during this period of the first “Made in Paris” pornographic films and electronic vibrators finally sealed the city's reputation as the European capital of naughtiness. Black Tuesday brought an end to the free-flowing Champagne in 1929, but the spirit of the times lived on in such novels as Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. “At last,” said poet Ezra Pound, “an unprintable book that is fit to read.”

You can find women who have never had an affair, but it is hard to find a woman who has had just one.

– 17TH-CENTURY WRITER,
DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD



The Rise & Fall

The popularity of Paris as a destination for carnal diversions gave rise to a whole new industry of travel guides catering to male visitors. In Bruce Reynolds' 1927 guidebook, *Paris with the Lid Lifted*, American and English travelers were walked through such delicate social interactions as picking up a Parisian woman or finding and utilizing the services of the neighborhood brothel. As other industries (and countries) crumbled during the World Wars, the Parisian sex industry continued to thrive during the Occupation with brothels that catered specifically to Officers or other Ranks, as well as to their usual clients.

Arletty, an ex-prostitute and later star of *Les Enfants du Paradis*, summed it up: "My heart is French, but my ass belongs to the world." But after the Liberation, this lax attitude toward enemy relations was just another reason to close down the brothels for good. In 1946 French authorities – acting on the orders of Marthe Richard, an influential World War I spy and ex-prostitute – shut down the *maisons de tolérance* and auctioned off their glitzy interiors. Far from putting an end to the sexual activities of Parisians and visitors, however, these closures merely pushed traditional prostitution underground, while opening avenues for new expressions of eroticism.

Cultural Revolution

Undeterred by Marthe Richard and her name-bearing law, Paris kept her place in lascivious circles with her leading role in the cultural revolutions that would eventually loosen the binds of a very conservative post-war France. Existentialist writer Simone de Beauvoir gained fame in 1949 for her feminist treatise *The Second Sex*, as well as for her "untraditional" lifelong relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre. In the 1950s, the original Paris-based Olympia Press published erotic and controversial novels including Nabokov's *Lolita*, J. P. Donleavy's *Ginger Man*, and Pauline Réage's *Story of O*, and American beat poet and gay rights

It's true that the French have a certain obsession with sex, but it's a particularly adult obsession. France is the thriftiest of all nations; to a Frenchman sex provides the most economical way to have fun. The French are a logical race.

– HOLLYWOOD SCREENWRITER ANITA LOOS

activist Allen Ginsberg set up residence – and a following – on the Left Bank. But the French were uncharacteristically behind their Anglophone contemporaries on one front, only approving the sale of the birth control pill in 1967. Students at the University of Paris, protesting their institutionalized “sexual repression” symbolized by the separate academic buildings for men and women, sparked nationwide general strikes in May 1968 that would eventually usher in a new era of free love and liberal thinking. Sexual liberation was so much at the forefront of the French social culture of the time that film censorship was almost entirely removed in 1973. A year later the controversial soft porn film *Emmanuelle* (based on the 1957 novel by Emmanuelle Arsan) became an overnight success, with more than fifty million spectators around the world, a dozen spin-offs, and a decade-long run at a Champs-Élysées movie theatre. Eroticism had once again trumped its more priggish relations, and libertinism, exhibitionism, and fetishes became part of the everyday sexual landscape.

Modern Naughtiness

Today, many of promiscuous Paris’ landmarks bear little resemblance to their past selves, and visitors seeking the sublime often find that the erotic has long since given way to the hardcore. Pigalle is overrun with peep shows, “hostess” bars, and their pushy sidewalk hustlers preying on unsuspecting male passers-by. And since the intervention of Marthe Richard, Parisian brothels and prostitution along the Rue St-Denis have been almost wholly appropriated by street pimps and impoverished immigrants. On the flip side, sexuality is such a commonplace and commercialized aspect of the modern cityscape that it’s become almost banal. Sex-saturated images are everywhere in French advertising, the Moulin Rouge allows children to attend its cabaret show, and even the Paris Tourism office now promotes lap dancing clubs on its website.

For Us, By Us

Not surprisingly, women have been at the forefront of the city’s latest naughty rebirth. Female-owned swinger’s clubs and boudoir-like sex toy shops bring a lady’s touch to what was once a very masculine domain, the art of burlesque strip-tease has made a comeback, and no other book caused more of a

sensation than the nymphomaniac memoirs of Catherine Millet (*Catherine M*), a respected art critic and founder of the high-brow art magazine, *Art Press*. One of the most controversial and daring film directors of the moment is Catherine Breillat, whose highly intellectual erotic films mixed genres when she cast porn star Rocco Siffredi in her 1999 film *Romance*. It seems only fitting that the absolutely fabulous Pamela Harriman would become ambassador to France under President Clinton. Respectfully called “The greatest courtesan of the century” by legendary broadcaster Bill Paley for her many illustrious marriages and lovers, she was the first female foreign diplomat awarded France’s Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor. The French still appreciate a lady who knows how to have fun.

No Burning in Hell

During the politically turbulent 1800s, government censorship tried to reign in the unfettered sexuality of the preceding century. Any printed materials deemed “contrary to good morals” were confiscated and banned. But not burned. A special collection, kept in a locked cabinet of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (National Library) was created in the 1830s by state librarians who had the foresight to collect everything that could be of cultural or historic interest to future scholars, including banned books, erotic prints and pornographic pamphlets. Known officially as *L’Enfer*, its 1700-strong collection was originally made up of salacious books from the Royal Library, then supplemented throughout the century by private collections confiscated during raids and customs inspections, particularly under the Second Empire. Only bona fide scholars who could prove the necessity of seeing particular works were permitted access to the collection, which only reinforced its mythical reputation. Evolving public morals *oblige*, *L’Enfer* was symbolically closed in 1969 (although the collection was reassembled in 1983 for practical purposes). Yet it wasn’t until 2007 that 350 representative works were finally presented to the general public (over the age of 16) in the National Library exposition “L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque: Eros au Secret.”

Five Books to Feed Your Mind

Don't know the Belle Epoch from the Lost Generation? Confused by references to St-Germain or Montmartre? Sometimes a little historical context is in order. Go from clueless to clever with a little help from these books.

Parisians: An Adventure History of Paris (by Graham Robb)

Experience the Terror, Napoléon's rise to power, the Nazi Occupation and even the 2005 suburban riots through the eyes of prostitutes, policemen, murderers, poets and spies in a series of fascinating stories, all based on true events.

Paris Was a Woman: Portraits from the Left Bank (by Andrea Weiss)

Also a documentary film, this inspirational book recounts the amazing lives of women who left their home countries to come to Paris between the wars for the freedom to be artists, poets, independent book sellers, and, yes, even lovers.

Kiki's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900-1930 (by Billy Kluver and Julie Martin)

An intimate biography of Alice Prin, aka Kiki de Montparnasse, an outrageous, charming and beautiful artist's model – and often lover – to some of the greatest figures of the Parisian art world: Man Ray, Picasso, Brancusi, Matisse, Modigliani, Cocteau...

Into a Paris Quartier (by Diane Johnson)

The author of "Le Divorce" writes an engaging portrait of St-Germain-des-Prés, its history, haunts and legendary residents, including Queen Margot, Thomas Jefferson, Josephine Bonaparte, Gertrude Stein, Oscar Wilde, and D'Artagnan.

The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafes, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour (by Joan DeJean)

Of course you already *knew* that the French are synonymous with style, but did you know they *invented* it? A fascinating study of how the Sun King Louis XIV forever changed our perception of luxury and fine living.





ON FRENCH MEN

The Parisian metrosexual is a lean, mean seduction machine. And he knows it.

French men, according to any number of surveys, magazine articles and talk shows, are considered the best lovers in the world. While it would be presumptuous to assign sexual superiority to any particular nationality, stereotypes exist because they often contain a grain of truth. The French certainly have a flair for romance, but they are also complicated creatures full of contradictions. French men can be both imperious and wildly passionate, keenly sensitive and carelessly cruel. And for every over-confident Don Juan there's a tongue-tied Frenchman too timid to approach a beautiful woman. French men, especially Parisians are different from American men, from British men...probably from all other men! This is not meant to be the last word on *les français*, but it should help give you an idea of what to expect should you have the opportunity to meet them during your Parisian sojourn.

***Insider Note:** This information isn't meant to be a dating guide for long-term relationships, where the codes are completely different and men tend to be on their best behavior. Even if you happen to find yourself in the arms of a perfect Parisian Prince, keep in mind that the ephemeral nature of a vacation fling can't help but heighten the intensity of any emotions, both yours and his. Enjoy your passionate rendez-vous, but keep the French wedding chapel fantasies in check.*

The Frenchman, by nature, is sensuous and sensitive. He has intelligence, which makes him tired of life sooner than other kinds of men. He is not athletic: he sees the futility of the pursuit of fame; the climate at times depresses him...

—ANATIS NIN

Natural Born Romantics

French men don't choose to be more romantic; they're just born that way, blessed with Latin genes and a history of courtly love dating back to the Medieval troubadours. Immersed in a culture that lovingly savors cuisine, wine, art and beauty, Parisian men simply can't help but know a thing or two about vintage Champagne, fine-tailored shirts, 18th-century art, or how to host a memorable dinner party without breaking a sweat. When a French man invites you for a picnic of wine and cheese on the quays of the Seine followed by an art house film screening in the Latin Quarter, he's not putting on an act to impress you. That's just the way of life for the average Parisian. Not that they aren't aware of the way their seductive culture — especially the French language — makes foreign women swoon. He may act blasé about the Eiffel Tower, but if your Frenchman prefers to stroll back from the restaurant along the banks of the Seine rather than taking a taxi, it's because he's keenly aware of the mood-enhancing effects of the Parisian skyline.

“The French way of hitting on a girl is definitely more romantic,” observes Veronica, an American journalist who has lived in France for close to a decade. “They appeal to what women are looking for.”

Metrosexual Tendencies

Many heterosexual Parisian men have adopted the metrosexual lifestyle, shamelessly meticulous about their physical appearance in a way that used to be reserved for boys who like boys. Like modern dandies, they prefer Italian leather shoes to sneakers, designer jeans and fitted jackets rather than sweatshirts. They have as many beauty products in their bathroom as we ladies do. And while these Parisian men may sport sexy stubble, they are not afraid of hair removal below the belt. But don't believe for one moment that all of this preening makes them effeminate. The Parisian metrosexual is a lean, mean seduction machine. And he knows it. Still, a touch of arrogance is easy to forgive in any gentleman considerate enough to keep his family jewels clean shaven.

The Art of Flirtation

You have to be very fond of men. Very, very fond. You have to be very fond of them to love them. Otherwise they're simply unbearable.

—MARGUERITE DURAS

On the street, in cafés, at the market, or even in the office... the French do it everywhere. No location is too banal nor any occasion too serious for a bit of harmless flirting. And the best part is that everyone can participate in this equal-opportunity pastime, no matter what your age or marital status. First-time visitors may initially be shocked by the knowing winks and appreciative compliments that they receive throughout their stay, especially when they come from men who are obviously not single, or when there's a significant age difference... in either direction. While eye contact and a smile in a nightclub will be taken as an open invitation to make a pass, in most situations flirting is merely a pleasant form of communication. French women bask in flirtatious attention from shopkeepers and waiters; even if there's no real intention (or interest) in going further, it puts a smile on everyone's face.



After several years on the French dating scene before marrying her own Parisian, American-born editor Allison Lightwine knows a thing or two about the local seduction techniques. “When it comes to chatting up women, the world is a Frenchman’s oyster. While flirting is a fact of life in French culture, it’s not necessarily used as means to get a girl into the *boudoir*. Both men and women regard flirting as a dance of seduction that spices up the daily grind. If it leads to something more, *pourquoi pas?*”

“In Paris, where desire is considered natural rather than sinful, anything can take place...if you want it to,” adds Amy, a Canadian-born poet and longtime Paris resident.

A Stereotypical Catch-22

French men aren’t the only ones suffering from unfair stereotyping. Some men in Paris, French and otherwise, seem to consider foreign women as easy sexual conquests. It doesn’t help that they tend to form their opinions based on certain aspects of American and British pop culture like “Sex & the City,” Paris Hilton, “Bridget Jones’ Diary,” and wet t-shirt contests. On the flip side, Americans in particular also get labeled as Puritanical prudes thanks to our country’s seemingly collective outrage over Janet Jackson’s wardrobe failure, Monica Lewinsky, and the lack of paper gowns in French doctors’ offices. Damned if you do, damned if you don’t? Of course, it would be silly to try to divine the intentions of your Parisian suitors, so just be yourself and don’t feel single-handedly responsible for rehabilitating your country’s reputation.

The flamboyant blonde Brit Rebecca Catt fondly recalls her party days as a young and very single fashion editor in Paris. “Being blonde and buxom is a sure-fire route for a head-on collision with half the city. Blonde = Scandinavian = sex addict. And wearing colourful clothes and not the national uniform of black also lays you seriously open to attack. Random men would come up to me in the street and invite me for coffee with salacious looks in their eyes, while their female counterparts would almost push me off the pavement with their eyes shooting out spiky arrows of disapproval.”

French Men Try Harder

Whether it's typical Gallic arrogance, the thrill of the chase, or the expectations of the demanding *Parisiennes*, very little can deter an amorous Frenchman once he's in hot pursuit. In America, "No means No." In France, no means "I'm not convinced." Don't be surprised if his powers of persuasion may eventually win you over. If not, be prepared to stand your ground. A lady never gives into pressure just to be "polite." If he persists, send him your iciest glare or walk away, but don't explain yourself or let him engage you in a debate. Verbal sparring for a Frenchman is almost as much fun as sex, even if he has to do it in broken English. Silence is the best tactic.

"I remember the general manager of a huge company, a real French man," recounts Nicolas, a French businessman in his 40s. "He had a meeting to negotiate a very complex dismissal with an employee and his lawyer, yet he spent the whole meeting trying to seduce the lawyer. No need to tell the results!"

Dangerous Liaisons

Don't assume your suitor is single. He won't assume you are – or care either way. For the Parisian playboy, any unaccompanied (and sometimes even accompanied) woman is fair game for a *petite aventure*. "Sorry, I'm married," will not faze him in the least (see above for the reasons why). While the French haven't cornered the market in infidelity, the culture tends to romanticize the practice with a "don't ask, don't tell" policy adopted by men and women alike. This is best illustrated by the widespread tolerance of the *le cinq-à-sept* ("five to seven"), that special time of day between leaving work and arriving at home when lovers meet to engage in a bit of covert extra-curricular activity.

"The natural solution to avoiding the bad apples is to pick one that already has a stamp of approval from someone else," says Allison. "Apparently it's much more interesting to conquer occupied territory than to strike out for virgin shores!"



Rules? What Rules?

Dating etiquette is confusing enough, even without the language and cultural barriers. The French don't have any book of "Rules" to follow, but to avoid any needless embarrassment or discomfort, there are a few subtle "codes" you should know before your *rendez-vous*. If you invite him up to your hotel room for a drink, or accept to dine at his place (without any other guests), you've pretty much given him the green light for some naughty action. Of course a lady is always free to change her mind, but he would be understandably perplexed and annoyed that you sent him mixed signals. To maintain the option of a more elegant retreat, meet at a restaurant instead, or even just for drinks before deciding if you want to sit through an entire meal. It's also important to know that if a French man invites you out, he pays. This doesn't imply you're obliged to "do" anything in return. Your scintillating company is compensation enough.

"There are no rules actually, but codes... or signals," explains Nicolas. "The target is quite simple: to go or not to go together... to bed! A dinner at home is a clear signal, so there's no doubt on the issue if you accept. Assuming this mandatory part has been achieved, then we can talk for hours and enjoy the meal, where maybe the US practice is to talk for hours with no insurance of going to bed. What a big loss of time and efficiency," he adds, laughing.

Sexual Taboos

After centuries of breaking any and all sexual taboos in the pursuit of *liberté*, very little can shock or offend Parisians in the bedroom. Practices that might elicit nervous giggles back home hardly raise eyebrows in French society, where swingers' clubs and threesomes (even with two men and one woman) are practically considered mainstream. It may be prudent to know that *sex à la derrière* (not the official French term, *ahem*) is considered part of their regular sexual repertoire, not something that needs to be negotiated or discussed in advance. With the inherent language barriers and the French male tendency to act first and apologize later, you may find yourself at the receiving end of an unauthorized rear entry.

"If you go with your gut instinct and let your hair down, you might just find yourself in something like a scene out of a naughty French film – what more titillation could a girl want?" says Allison. "As long as you're ready for a no-strings-attached roll in the hay, going out with a pick-up *artiste* can be fun and sexually enlightening. Just don't expect him to call you in the morning."

The Bad and the Ugly

At their worst, French men can be selfish, egotistical and blatantly manipulative in their relationships. Spoiled by their mothers (Latin roots *oblige*), they grow up thinking that every woman finds them attractive and charming. Inferiority complexes are masked by arrogance and cynicism, while their flawed Cartesian logic and distaste for outward displays of emotion (particularly by the women they've certainly wronged) make them as coldheartedly calculating as their obvious antihero, *Dangerous Liaisons'* Vicomte de Valmont. The Frenchman may wear his passion on his sleeve, but don't talk to him about love, and certainly don't ask about "the relationship". Luckily, most visitors aren't in town long enough to see their Parisian paramours transform into these fickle Doctor Hyde's.

"When I first came to France, I was rabidly pursued by a young man working for one of my company's clients. Thinking of the possible complications, I politely brushed off all of his advances – that is, until a romantic promenade after a sales conference cracked my resolve," says Allison. "Ironically, after I had capitulated and started asking about the state of our relationship, he cooled off. 'American girls are too complicated!' he groaned. Looking back, I see that he had a point. Why waste all that breath analyzing the situation when you could be making out?"

The Good News

If you've got your heart set on your very own French lover, don't bother trying to channel your inner Parisienne. Your accent when you speak the language, the way you muddle up verb conjugations and

People always like things that seem exotic.

—BRITISH ACTRESS/
SINGER JANE BIRKIN.

masculine and feminine nouns, or the fact that you may speak no French at all is, to many French men, sexy. Your very foreign-ness is what is most attractive.

“It’s more interesting to date women that aren’t from here, they’re much more *exotique*,” declares Alexandre, a handsome Parisian *dragueur* (flirt) at Régine’s Club.

“French women can be so *difficile*,” adds his friend Cyril. “We love foreign women!”

“Apparently my accent when I spoke French – which believe me I tried my darnedest to gallicise as much as possible – was sexy,” says Rebecca, in her distinctly British accent. “A brief diatribe of bubbly nothings peppered with atrocious grammar was all it took to have a veritable line of suitors vying for my attention. That and of course my facility to have a good time. French girls, for all their subtle beauty, are not very good at letting their hair down. They won’t leap on a table and sing “Hey big spender!” and down three tequila shots at the bar. And there you have it, my fellow Anglophones, the key utensil in our seduction tool box: Spontaneity! It’s just not done over here and when administered in carefully measured doses it will win over the heart and minds of any French monsieur you fancy bedding.”

CyberSexy

Here are a few websites where you can meet the locals from the comfort of your own computer. They’re all in French, but you’ll have no trouble finding a few who can converse in English.

Meetic www.meetic.fr The European version of the classic dating site Match.com.

Points Communs www.pointscommuns.com A site where you meet based on cultural interest such as movies, music, books, etc.

POF www.pof.com The international site Plenty of Fish has a large following in France.

Attractive World www.attractiveworld.net A site “for demanding singles” that carefully screens applicants.

Flirting Vocabulary

For help deciphering his sweet nothings *en français*, see the **French Tongue** section of the **Get in the Mood** chapter.

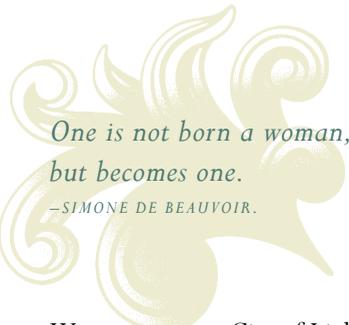


A WOMAN IN PARIS

There's a sexy, confident, feminine, feisty and powerful Parisienne inside every woman.

Paris is for Women

Women have a unique relationship with Paris. The city seduces us, inspires us, and calls to us like no other place in the world. Paris has come to embody the ideal of *liberté*, where we are free to acknowledge and embrace who we really are as women. This is, after all, where Anaïs Nin embarked on her sexual awakening, where American-born French expatriate entertainer-singer Josephine Baker aroused audiences with her famous “banana dance,” and where Kiki de Montparnasse became an enchanting muse to some of the most illustrious artists of the 20th century. Even today, women come to Paris looking for



*One is not born a woman,
but becomes one.*
—SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR.

something they can't get at home: feminine fulfillment. Here we find the permission to let our womanly qualities shine, to be appreciated and adored and revered as the beautifully complex creatures that we are. In Paris we are neither bystanders nor objects of the cityscape, but actors and protagonists; we are the *raisons d'être*.

We can come to City of Light and bask in the city's culture, its cuisine, and the attention we receive from charming French men. But what really intrigues us are the Parisian women. They seem unfathomable exotic birds, otherworldly and indecipherable. Yet if you were lucky enough to stay in Paris long enough, you would discover that despite their fiercely individualistic nature there are a few common traits that characterize *les Parisiennes*. And even if you're not French, you can capture the same *esprit* with the right attitude.

Parisiennes are Feminine

In Paris, women are unapologetically feminine. They wear inappropriately tall high heels to work, would never be caught dead in public without makeup, and expect men to hold the door for them. But this hardly means that they're weak. In fact, for Parisian women their femininity is their strength, not a weakness that must be overcome or ignored. The battle of the sexes exists in France like any other western country, but *les Parisiennes* choose to level the playing field using weapons of mass seduction. They make the most of their feminine wiles: charm, beauty, intuition, sensitivity, and cunning. Obviously the definition of "politically correct" and "feminism" differ from what women are used to on the other side of the Atlantic.

"French feminism has few of the sharp edges it has in America. In France, it's softer, fuzzier. The French girl can be a feminist and still unequivocally love men," writes Debra Ollivier in *Entre Nous*. In Anglophone cultures, feminism tends to focus on equality of the sexes by denying their differences, to the extreme

where women are considered "just like men" in more ways than one. In France, feminism is not about being aggressive, angry, or — *mon dieu!* — masculine.

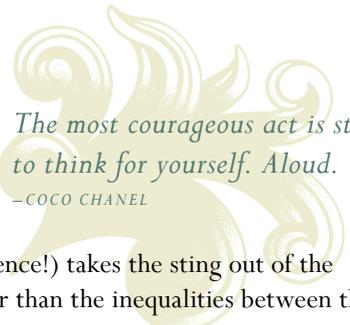
"The famous French expression *vive la difference!* (hurray for the difference!) takes the sting out of the disparity between men and women by highlighting the contrasts rather than the inequalities between the sexes," writes French author Véronique Vienne in *The Art of Being a Woman*.

Intellectually speaking, French feminism has its complicated theories and ideals based on psychoanalysis and the body. And while most of the French may be more interested in theories rather than results, Parisian women tend to take a more pragmatic approach to feminism. Instead of getting herself all worked up over the way things "should be," she adapts herself to the way things are to get what she wants.

Parisiennes are Confident

One of the most captivating qualities of Parisian women is their self confidence. They wear it like a fine couture gown, perfectly fitted to their body, their age, their style. It shows in the way they carry themselves, and the way they interact with others. What makes them so confident is their keen awareness that being attractive has very little to do with superficial looks.

While Catherine Deneuve or Brigitte Bardot may represent unattainable ideals of glamour and sophistication, most French women are not classic beauties. They tend to be rather short, with unremarkable, almost mousy features. But they more than make up for it with mental prowess. Wit, confidence, and a personal sense of style will get you further in Paris than Botox and bleached teeth. In America, boys don't make passes at girls wearing glasses. In France, however, *filles à lunettes*, *filles à quequettes* (loosely translates as "girls who wear glasses are girls who like male appendages"). If you're a woman in the country of love, your specs are downright sexy à la "naughty librarian." This just



*The most courageous act is still
to think for yourself. Aloud.*
—COCO CHANEL

Beyond the beauty, the sex, the titillation, the surface, there is a human being. And that has to emerge.

— ACTRESS JEANNE MOREAU

illustrates the wider mentality in France that you don't have to be a supermodel to be attractive to the opposite sex. In fact, you don't even have to be young, thin or trendy. Liberating and equalizing, every woman has the chance to make the most of what she was born with.

See the *Sexy You!* chapter for insider Parisian tips on looking your best.

Parisiennes are Appreciated

What's the fun in getting dressed to the nines, teetering around in your stilettos and squeezing into a little sliver of a dress, if no one ever appreciates the effort? Even if you're really dressing up for yourself, it doesn't hurt the ego at all to receive a few respectable smiles of approval from the opposite sex. And in Paris, they'll do more than just smile. Parisian women expect to be admired and appreciated for all the hard work they put into looking good. That's why all of the chairs on café terraces face the sidewalk. In a culture that embraces all forms of pleasure without hang-ups, there's no pretense that Parisians are doing anything other than checking each other out.

For foreign women who are new to the City of Light, the attention can be a bit overwhelming. The stares, double-takes, comments and *oh la la's* can take place anywhere, from cafés and bakeries to nightclubs and museums, no matter your age or how conservatively you're dressed. To some, it may seem like borderline harassment, but whether you're flattered or annoyed by the attention, handle it with grace *à la Parisienne* and simply glide past without acknowledgment or breaking your stride. You just might find an added spring in your step or the hint of a smile on your face for the rest of the day.

Men want to adore you, Ladies. Put your guard down when you come to Paris, and let them adore you.



Parisiennes Know Their History

Despite the fact that many American girls are told that their brains are valued over beauty, this message conflicts with the airbrushed images in the media, and eventually sows the seeds of doubt. Not so with Parisian women. Sure, they have the same pressure to conform to supermodel standards, but they've got an even stronger message imbedded in their subconscious: women are powerful. They know this because, from the time they are born they are surrounded by the images, the history books, the art and the legends about the strong female role models who have shaped over two millennia of French history. From St-Geneviève, who saved the city from the Huns, to the brave Joan of Arc and the feisty Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, Parisian girls grow up learning about their kings' mistresses, and how they were often much older and sometimes even more powerful than the monarchs themselves. French literature is full of stories that illustrate the irresistible allure of the wise and witty woman of character over the pretty and shallow ones. And Parisian mothers pass this confidence along to their daughters.

A woman has to be intelligent, have charm, a sense of humor, and be kind. It's the same qualities I require from a man.

—CATHERINE DENEUVE

Parisiennes Know Their Worth

Parisian women are so confident in their inherent worth that they are famously intolerant of being treated as anything less than goddesses by their men. They've been called demanding, controlling, calculating – and much worse – but when Parisian women feel disrespected, they're a force to be reckoned with. The *sang froid* she's usually known for will suddenly give way to a storm

of emotions delivered with typical Latin intensity. She will be heard, and she will not be a doormat, even if it means causing a scene in public. And if the man doesn't measure up, she simply moves on, with her characteristic Cartesian logic. "If a shoe doesn't fit, you don't buy it. Your foot isn't going to change its shape, right?" writes author Debra Ollivier in *Entre Nous*. "Same goes for men. If he's not right for you, drop him. Unless you want to walk around in pain, you move on to new merchandise."

Parisiennes are Mysterious

"American women show, Parisian women suggest," said Olivier, a young French sommelier who has lived on both sides of the Atlantic. "The way they dress, the way they act around men... there's no mystery with American women." It's true that Parisian women are notoriously hard to read. They reveal very little about themselves to anyone outside their closest circle of friends. This air of mystery puts them in a position of power, while their men are helplessly left guessing.

The French often refer to a woman's *jardin secret*, the metaphorical secret garden she keeps hidden for herself. Even her husband knows not to pry into this private space. Unlike some western cultures, the French believe it's actually healthier to have secrets in a relationship. Maybe her secret garden is simply an embarrassing beauty ritual, or a weakness for vapid romantic comedies. But it could also imply a discreet bit of plastic surgery, a hidden bank account, or a lover. But in the Parisian world of relationships, this "don't ask, don't tell" policy helps maintain a certain distance that keeps the intrigue alive.

In American culture, we're not only raised to be polite, but we're also encouraged to be outgoing and brutally honest. We think the more personal things we share about ourselves, the closer we'll be to our men (and we expect the same in return). But when you come to Paris, learn to play your cards closer to your heart. That handsome French suitor is looking for seduction, not a new pal. No need to tell him your entire life history, or even your name, for that matter. And the hint of a smile is much more intriguing than a toothy grin. To return to the garden metaphor, imagine yourself as the slightly overgrown garden labyrinth that draws him in, not the perfectly trimmed formal garden he can enjoy from the window.

Unlock Your Inner Parisienne

If truth be told, women in Anglophone cultures actually go through a lot of effort to stifle our feminine side. We enthusiastically embrace the audacious, aggressive, and inherently masculine-tinged version of sexiness, while subconsciously equating femininity with being overemotional, vulnerable, or powerless. You certainly didn't grow up in this day and age as a Modern Woman by using your feminine wiles. But as the Parisian women have shown, there's something very empowering about making the best of your womanly strengths and weaknesses. Take a break from political correctness when you come to Paris, and feel free to relax and express yourself in ways you never thought you could do back home.

Ironically, being a foreigner in Paris can give women more freedom than their French counterparts. We have no family pressures or societal expectations, and the handy tactic of feigning ignorance if we break one too many codes of conduct. There's a sexy, confident, feminine, feisty and powerful *Parisienne* inside every woman. Your trip to Paris is the chance to let her blossom as you embark on your naughty adventures!

We travel, some of us forever, to seek other states, other lives, other souls.

—ANAÏS NIN

Books for Finding Your Inner Parisienne

Two Lipsticks and a Lover (sold in the U.S. under the title *All You Need to Be Impossibly French: A Witty Investigation Into the Lives, Lusts, and Little Secrets of French Women*) by Helena Frith Powell. A fun and witty investigation into what makes French women so stylish, with practical tips and insightful interviews with French fashion icons.

The Art of Being a Woman by Véronique Vienne. A French woman's advice on the sexiness of self-acceptance and experience the "joie de vivre" of our lives.

True Pleasures: A Memoir of Women in Paris by Lucinda Holdforth. A personal journey of a woman exploring Paris, looking to transform her own life through the inspiration of the city's many celebrated rule-breakers, style-setters and divas from Colette and Coco Chanel to Marie Antoinette and Pamela Harriman.

French Women for All Seasons: A Year of Secrets, Recipes, and Pleasure by Mireille Guiliano. More secrets from the author of *French Women Don't Get Fat* on how to enjoy the little pleasures in life.

Entre Nous: A Woman's Guide to Finding Her Inner French Girl by Debra Ollivier. A clever and entertaining book on the French woman's secrets for being stylish, with an emphasis on making the best of what you are born with.



France, A Love Story: Women Write About the French Experience, edited by Camille Cusumano. A collection of stories by two dozen women describing the country they love and why they fell under its spell.

Fatale: How French Women Do It by Edith Kunz. A peek into the mysterious ways Frenchwomen manage to appear sexy, smart and recklessly chic without even trying.

Je T'Aime, Me Neither by April Lily Heise. A semi-biographical novel recounting a young Canadian woman's amorous misadventures with more than her fair share of Parisian lovers.

