

# Parisian History Cheat Sheet

**250 B.C.** **Celtic people** settle on the banks of the Seine River in what is now Paris.

**52 B.C.** The **Romans** arrive in Paris. Julius Caesar holds an assembly in the city. They call the Gallic tribe that occupies the area the "Parisii." The Romans call the city Lutetia. There is a Roman amphitheater from the time of Christ called Lutece that we might walk by.

**250** **St. Denis** (*san den ee*), Bishop of the Parisii people, is beheaded by the Romans in the area of Paris that is now Montmartre. Legend has it that he picks up his head after it is chopped off and walks several miles preaching a sermon. This is why St. Denis is always depicted headless, with his head in his hands. You can see a relief of him on the front of Notre Dame Cathedral. Some historians believe the name, Montmartre, might mean Martyr Mountain.

**451** **Attila the Hun** (from Hungry) heads toward Paris. A young nun named **Geneviève** encourages the Parisians to pray and stand firm. Attila and his legions of Huns avoid Paris. Geneviève is hailed as the city's savior and is later named the patron saint of Paris. She is also sainted and is now known as Saint Geneviève.

**496** **Clovis**, king of the Franks, becomes the first of the pagan barbarians to adopt christianity. Clovis defeats the Visigoths and pushes them out of what is now France. He makes Paris the capital and settles there. His palace was where the Concierge is today, on the same island as Notre Dame Cathedral.

**845** The **Vikings** sack Paris. They collect a large ransom in exchange for leaving.

**1163** The construction of **Notre Dame Cathedral** begins.

**1215** The **University of Paris** is founded.

**1220** King Philippe-Auguste builds a square château-fort to protect the western side of the city. This château is developed and expanded by subsequent kings over the next 600 years and later becomes the **Louvre**.

**1300s** The **Black Death** strikes the city.

**1400s** Urban revolts drive the royal court to abandon the city for almost 100 years. In 1466, perhaps 40,000 people died of **the plague** in Paris alone. (During the 16th and 17th centuries, the plague was present in Paris around 30 per cent of the time.)

**1492** Birth of **Margaret of Navarre**, the princess of France, Queen of Navarre, and Duchess of Alençon and Berry. She was married to Henry II of Navarre. Her brother became King of France, as Francis I, and the two siblings were responsible for the celebrated intellectual and cultural court and salons of their day in France. From Ligonier: "Religious poetry was the dominant genre for women in the pre-Reformation era. Protestant women did not discard this tradition; they redeemed it. Marguerite de Navarre

(1492–1549) was Protestantism's first published female poet. From her initial Roman Catholicism to recognizable Calvinism, Marguerite's poetry reflects her spiritual journey. But beyond being personal records of devotion, these poems were publicity for Reformed doctrine. Marguerite's last major work emphasizes and wonders at Christ's all-sufficient, complete work for His people. In publishing it, she challenged Rome's teaching on saints, indulgences, penance, and the Mass. It was a public proclamation of salvation by grace alone through faith alone." There is an intersection named for her in Paris along with a statue in Luxembourg Gardens.

**1517** A new wave of **indulgences** begin in Rome under Pope Leo X. "'...[I] absolve you ...from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they be...and remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account and I restore you...to the innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism; so that when you die the gates of punishment shall be shut... and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death.'" So terrible! This is just a point of historical interest because we sometimes assume that all cathedrals were built under these indulgences. For example, most of Notre Dame's laborers were skilled artisans.

**1533** **John Calvin** flees Paris, the home of his university days. Calvin, reformer of Geneva, was born at Noyen, France, in 1509. His father and mother wanted John and his older brother Charles to study for the priesthood. Both did, although Charles was known for his loose living. Calvin took the opposite course. So severe was he, that fellow students are said to have nicknamed him "the accusative case." The church appointed him to two benefices (paid church positions). However, Calvin's father changed his mind and had him switch his course of study to law. Meanwhile, a spiritual battle was raging in Calvin. He wrote, "My conscience was very far from being in a condition of certain peace." A sudden conversion around 1528 brought rest to his soul. Soon others were seeking to learn from him. In 1531, Calvin gave up law, relinquished his benefices, and began to teach the Reformation doctrines spreading through Europe. This soon brought him into danger because of his connection with Nicholas Cop, the rector of the University of Paris. On All Souls' Day 1533, Cop delivered a controversial sermon drafted by Calvin, which accused his fellow theologians of serious errors on Reformation lines: "They teach nothing of faith, nothing of the love of God, nothing of the remission of grace, nothing of justification, or if they do so, they pervert and undermine it all by their laws and sophistries. I beg of you, who are here present, not to tolerate any longer these heresies and abuses."

Cop barely escaped imprisonment by fleeing. Someone tipped off Calvin that his rooms were about to be searched. On this day 2 November 1533, he escaped the city. The next year some Reformers posted diatribes against the mass and transubstantiation all over Paris—even on King Francis I's bedroom door. This infuriated the king. Soon the smoke of burning Protestants rose into the Parisian sky. Meanwhile, Calvin flitted from retreat to retreat. The increase in persecution convinced him to leave France altogether. He settled

in Basel, Switzerland, long enough to print his Institutes of the Christian Religion. Then Calvin ventured into Italy where he spent some months in evangelization before heading for Strasbourg (a free city-state at that time, now a part of modern France). French military maneuvers compelled him to detour through Geneva, where William Farrell commanded him in the name of the Lord to stay and help reform the city. A reluctant Calvin agreed, and there he became the best-known reformer next to Luther himself. More info here: <https://zwingliusredivivus.wordpress.com/2013/11/01/fun-facts-from-church-history-the-address-of-nicholas-cop/>

**1563** Construction is begun on the section of the Louvre known as the **Tuileries Palace**, which was destroyed by arson in 1871. It was built by **Catherine de Medici** and looked like the Louvre. She also built the Luxembourg Palace and Gardens, commissioning all of the female statues there. Want to know more about Catherine? Here you go!

"It's wrong to cast Catherine de Medici (b. 1519-d. 1589) as just a Machiavellian (ends justifies the means) matriarch whose ambition eclipsed her children's happiness... but it's equally wrong to paint her as a passive pawn of circumstance. Scandal followed Catherine throughout her tumultuous life, and it's clear she took an active role to survive and thrive in the deadly courts of Renaissance Europe. From her untimely birth, "security" was perhaps a foreign concept to Catherine. She went from an Italian prisoner of war in Italy, to a fertility-challenged princess of France, to a single mother thrust into religious conflict. She is most remembered as the Queen Mother to her three sons, who successively became Kings of France and relied on Catherine's guidance through the 16th century Wars of Religion. Here are some scandalous facts about Catherine de Medici, the deadly Queen Mother of France.

- On October 2 1533, the Pope Clement VII married Catherine off to the french Dauphin (the son of the King), Henri. The couple were lucky to be the same age—just 14 years old—but old men still wormed their way into the honeymoon. Henri's father, King Francis I, apparently stayed in the bedroom until the marriage was fully consummated, and the Pope visited the couple in bed the next morning to bless the previous night's "proceedings."
- Little is known about Catherine's education other than she was fluent in Greek, Latin, and French. From an early age, she was also a keen mathematician—an interest that proved handy in her later passion for astrology.
- The first ten years of Catherine and Henri's marriage were completely sterile. She looked into every trick to get pregnant, including drinking mule's urine and even putting cow dung and ground up stag antlers on the ground as "sources of life."

- Despite giving birth to ten children, Catherine outlived every single one, save for Henri III (who was stabbed to death just seven months after his mother's passing).
- In 1556, Catherine's late-starting but lucky streak with fertility came to a violent end when she almost died giving birth to twin girls, Victoria and Jeanne. Doctors had to break Jeanne's legs to save Catherine, thereby killing her in the womb. Her sister, Victoria, died seven weeks later. Physically and emotionally traumatized, Catherine would never conceive again.
- In 1572, Catherine forced her daughter to marry Henry de Bourbon, despite her own animosity towards French Huguenots like himself. Just six days later after the wedding, Catherine and Charles IX (her second son and king at the time) unleashed the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, a Catholic mob against French Protestants (Huguenots) that just happened to kill many of Henry's assembled in-laws!
- Catherine's daughter-in-law was the equally infamous Mary, Queen of Scots. (Mary married Catherine's eldest son, Francis II.) She had known Mary since the age of five and a half, when the little Scottish queen was brought to Paris and raised alongside Catherine's own children.

**1572**      **The Saint Bartholomew Day's Massacre** resulted in the death of 10,000 people (perhaps up to 70,000). At least 3,000 were killed in one day in Paris alone where the Huguenots had been tricked to come incautiously into Paris for a wedding that was to represent peace between Catholics and Protestants (referenced above). It changed the nature of the religious wars in France. The wars became more vicious after the massacre and the numbers of people killed rose greatly. This reflected the sectarian hatreds unleashed by the massacres. The massacre was intended to end the war or at least to weaken the Huguenot cause. The massacre did weaken the French Protestants but they rallied and fought fiercely. This is because after the massacre they knew that defeat meant extermination. They were also decidedly more militant and less willing, to compromise. The massacre did not end the war as expected by Guise and others it only prolonged the war. From a strategic point of view, the massacre was a complete failure. The religious wars dragged on until 1598 and by the time, some historians based on parish records believe that some three million people died as a direct and indirect consequence of the sectarian conflicts.

**1598**      Signed by Henry IV of France at Nantes on April 13th, 1598, the **Edict of Nantes** put a temporary end to the ferocious religious wars between Roman Catholics and Protestants which had torn France apart since the 1560s. Of the numerous assassinations and atrocities carried out by both sides, the most notorious was the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in Paris in 1572. The French Calvinists, who were known as Huguenots, were only in a minority in France, but they had created a virtual state within a state and held numerous fortified towns. Now, after skillful persuasion by Catholic diplomats and much hard bargaining, they accepted a document of ninety-two articles

granting them a measure of religious toleration as well as social and political equality. Huguenots were to be entitled to worship freely everywhere in France in private, and publicly in some 200 named towns and on the estates of Protestant landowners. They were permitted to inherit property, engage in trade, attend all schools and universities, and be treated in hospitals on the same basis as everyone else.

**1643** **King Louis XIV**, the Sun King, begins his reign. (The Sun King was a nickname that King Louis XIV received because he chose the sun as his personal symbol. Some sources state that "the Sun King" was a nickname that the king called himself, but others say it was given to him by his subjects. During his childhood he participated in a ballet where he played a character representing the sun. King Louis XIV was also compared to Apollo, the Greek god of the sun. He was a peaceful monarch who liked to perform and dance, just like Apollo. Other sources claim that Louis XIV was associated with the sun because of the brilliance with which he controlled his court at Versailles, which he built. Today, in the Palace of Versailles, the Apollo Room in the Grand Apartment was named in honor of the Sun God because this room was King Louis XIV's bedroom. The architecture and decoration of the city of Versailles features images of the king and aspects of Apollo combined to further emphasize his association with the sun.) You will hear him referenced as Louis Quatorze (15th). Gilded. The reign of France's Louis XIV lasted for 72 years, longer than that of any other known European sovereigns. In that time, he transformed the monarchy, ushered in a golden age of art and literature, presided over a dazzling royal court at Versailles, annexed key territories and established his country as the dominant European power. During the final decades of Louis XIV's rule, France was weakened by several lengthy wars that drained its resources and the mass exodus of its Protestant population following the king's revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

**1694** **Voltaire** is born in Paris. Voltaire was one of the main characters in the Enlightenment, which truly changed the entire world, for better and for worse. **The Enlightenment:** a European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. It was heavily influenced by 17th-century philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton, and its prominent exponents include Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Adam Smith. The Enlightenment was the precursor to Revolutions about to happen all over the world.

**1715** King Louis XIV dies. **Louis XV** was the great-grandson of King Louis XIV (ruled 1643–1715). Because his parents and his only surviving brother had all died in 1712 of smallpox, he became king at the age of five on the death of Louis XIV, his grandfather.

**1789** A mob of Parisians storms the Bastille and the Bastille surrenders to the citizens and the **French Revolution** has begun.

=== The Reign of Terror.

**1792** The monarchy falls and the **First Republic** is proclaimed.

**1793** **Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette** are guillotined. The Louvre becomes a public museum.

**1794** Robespierre and the members of the revolutionary tribunal are guillotined.

**1799** **Napoléon** enters Paris. Wishing to replicate the imperial style of ancient Rome, he orders the triumphal arches of the Carrousel and the Etoile, and the Vendôme Column.

**1804** In the Cathedral of Notre Dame, having snatched the crown from the pope and put it on his own head, **Napoléon** declares himself Emperor and his wife Josephine Empress of the French. This was his way of saying that he was head of the church and state. He also thought Emperor suited him better than king or president. This moment is one of the boldest moments in all of history.

**1815** **Napoléon's** army is defeated by Wellington at Waterloo. Napoléon abdicates June 22 and is exiled.. The Bourbons are briefly restored to the throne of France.

**1833** **The Obelisk of Luxor** arrives in Paris. A gift from the Viceroy of Egypt, Mohammed Ali Pasha, it is a 3300-year old stone needle that bears hieroglyphics telling the story of Ramses II. It is put at the Place de Concorde in the spot where the statue of Louis XV was before the Revolution.

**1848** Barricades erected during 3-day civil strife mark another revolution and the proclamation of the Second Republic. France has its first legislative assembly. **Prince Louis Napoléon Bonaparte** (later known as Napoleon III when he declares himself emperor) wins the presidency by 5 million votes, continuing the legacy of Bonapartes.

**1848** In 1848, **Hausmann** was an ambitious civil servant determinedly climbing the ranks when Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte – nephew and heir of Napoléon I– returned to Paris after 12 years' exile in London to become president of the French Second Republic. Bonaparte, later known as Emperor **Napoléon III**, hated what he saw in Paris. In his absence, the population of Paris had exploded from 759,000 in 1831 to more than a million in 1846 – despite regular outbreaks of cholera and typhoid that killed tens of thousands. The French capital was overcrowded, dingy, dirty and riddled with disease. Why, Bonaparte pondered, was it not more like London, with its grand parks and gardens, its tree-lined avenues and modern sewage system? Paris, he declared, needed light, air, clean water and good sanitation.

Hausmann was an imposing figure both physically – at 6ft 3in – and intellectually. Born into a bourgeois military family with strong Lutheran ties, he had been a brilliant student at elite Paris colleges, and personified the Protestant work ethic. Portraits show a tall, solid, often studious figure with a not unkind face, often sporting a chin-strap beard and, in later years, thinning hair. France's interior minister believed Hausmann to be the ideal candidate for the job of Prefect of the Seine and overseer of Napoléon III's plan to transform the city. "He is one of the most extraordinary men of our time; big, strong,

vigorous, energetic and at the same time clever and devious," wrote De Persigny to the emperor. "He told me all of his accomplishments during his administrative career, leaving out nothing: he could have talked for six hours without a break, since it was his favorite subject, himself." Haussmann got the job. A week after his appointment in the summer of 1853, he was summoned to the emperor's official residence at the Palais des Tuileries, where Napoléon III produced his plan for Paris. It showed a map of the city with three straight, dark lines drawn over it: one running north-to-south and two east-to-west either side of the Seine, all cutting through some of the most densely populated but historic areas of central Paris. "This is what I want," Napoléon III told Haussmann. It was the start of the most extensive public works program ever voluntarily carried out in a European city, turning Paris into a vast building site for more than 17 years. Haussmann cut a swathe through the cramped and chaotic labyrinth of slum streets in the city centre, knocked down 12,000 buildings, cleared space for the Palais Garnier, home of the Opéra National de Paris, and Les Halles marketplace, and linked the new train terminals with his long, wide and straight avenues. Less well known is Haussmann's commissioning of an outstanding collection of street furniture – lampposts, **newspaper kiosks**, railings – and the decorative bandstands in the 27 parks and squares he created. Below ground, Haussmann oversaw the installation of les égouts, the city's complex sewage network. He also commissioned reservoirs and aquaducts to bring clean drinking water to the city. On his orders, gas lamps were installed along the widened cobbled streets; now when the elegant flâneurs who strolled the 137km of new boulevards retired for the night, the revelers and prostitutes who emerged from the bars and the shadows could walk safely. The new streets came with trees and broad pavements along which café terraces sprang up, soon to be filled with artists and artisans enjoying "absinthe hour". The Palais Garnier was built on the orders of Napoléon III as part of Haussmann's grand reconstruction. But republican opponents criticized the brutality of the work. They saw his avenues as imperialist tools to neuter fermenting civil unrest in working-class areas, allowing troops to be rapidly deployed to quell revolt. Haussmann was also accused of social engineering by destroying the economically mixed areas where rich and poor rubbed shoulders, instead creating distinct wealthy and "popular" arrondissements.

**1863** The revolutionary **impressionist** exhibit begins at the Salon des Refusés, featuring works by Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, and Paul Cézanne ushering in a new age in art.

**1875** Construction of the **Opéra Garnier** is completed.

**Sept. 18, 1884** **Eiffel** registers a patent "for a new configuration allowing the construction of metal supports and pylons capable of exceeding a height of 300 metres".

**1885** **Victor Hugo** dies in Paris. He is somewhat credited for saving Notre Dame from ruin due to the interest generated by The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

**Feb. 14, 1887** Soon after construction on the **Eiffel Tower** has begun, an article entitled "Protest against the Tower of Monsieur Eiffel" appears in the Le Temps newspaper. It is addressed to Monsieur Alphand, the World's Fair's director of works. It is signed by Guy de Maupassant, Alexandre Dumas, Jr., Charles Gounod, William Bouguereau, Charles Garnier, and others. It reads in part: "We come, we writers, painters, sculptors, architects, lovers of the beauty of Paris which was until now intact, to protest with all our strength and all our indignation, in the name of the underestimated taste of the French, in the name of French art and history under threat, against the erection in the very heart of our capital, of the useless and monstrous Eiffel Tower, which popular ill-feeling, so often an arbiter of good sense and justice, has already christened the Tower of Babel."

**Feb. 14, 1887** In the same day's paper, **Eiffel** responds to the critics in an interview. He says: "For my part I believe that the Tower will possess its own beauty. Are we to believe that because one is an engineer, one is not preoccupied by beauty in one's constructions, or that one does not seek to create elegance as well as solidity and durability? Is it not true that the very conditions which give strength also conform to the hidden rules of harmony?"

**1887-1889** During the period of construction, **the Eiffel Tower** is referred to by artists and intellectuals as: "this truly tragic street lamp," "this belfry skeleton," "this high and skinny pyramid of iron ladders," "a half-built factory pipe, a carcass waiting to be fished out with freestone or brick."

**1889** The World's Fair is held in Paris. **The Eiffel Tower** receives two million visitors and is held in awe as the world's tallest building.

**1900** Paris hosts the 1900 Summer **Olympics**. The first Métro line opens, running from Porte de Vincennes to Porte Maillot.

**1914-1918** **WWI** brings 2 million American soldiers to France. Paris is saved from the Germans by the Battle of the Marne.

**1918** **American Prohibition** begins, leading many American intellectuals and writers to move to Paris.

**1919** **The Treaty of Versailles** is signed with France attempting to exact reparations from Germany.

**1920s** The **Americans who lived in Paris** included novelists Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, bookseller Sylvia Beach, author Gertrude Stein, songwriter Cole Porter, composers Aaron Copland and George Gershwin. Others from outside France were Soviet composer Igor Stravinsky, Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, Polish scientist Marie Curie and Irish novelist James Joyce. The French certainly played their roles, too, in the cultural mayhem. They included novelist Marcel Proust, painters Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, fashion designer Coco Chanel, numerous composers, carmakers André-



Gustave Citroen and Louis Renault, military leader Charles de Gaulle plus filmmaker Jean Renoir, the painter's son.

**1921** Ernest **Hemingway** and his wife Hadley Richardson move to Paris.

**1922** James Joyce's *Ulysses* is published by Sylvia Beach, owner of the Paris bookstore **Shakespeare and Company**.

**June 1940** **Paris falls** to German occupying forces.

**1944** The Allies land at Normandy beach. Hitler orders General von Choltitz to destroy Paris, which he ignores.

**Aug. 24, 1944** General von Choltitz surrenders and **Paris is finally free** from the Germans.

**1958** **Charles de Gaulle** is elected president.

**1960s** The Tour Montparnasse (Montparnasse Tower), a modern skyscraper, is constructed, causing many to complain that it ruins the skyline created by Haussman. Some call it the *fly that is on the soup of Paris*.

**1962** Algeria regains independence. Approximately 700,000 **French colonists** from Algeria return to France. The population of Paris grows instantly to 1.2 million.

**1964** **Hemingway's** memoirs of his years in Paris, *A Moveable Feast*, are published posthumously.

**May 1968** "Les évènements de Mai 1968" ("The Events of May 1968") **protests** occur, with 9 million workers going on strike, student demonstrations, and the resignation of president Charles De Gaulle.

**1986** The Orsay Museum opens.

**2018** The "yellow vest" movement begins in protest to a gas tax.