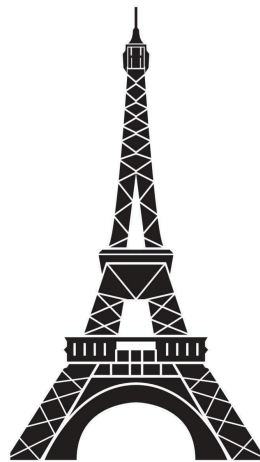




RICE UNIVERSITY

The Comprehensive Guide to Studying Abroad in France

By William Tsai '24



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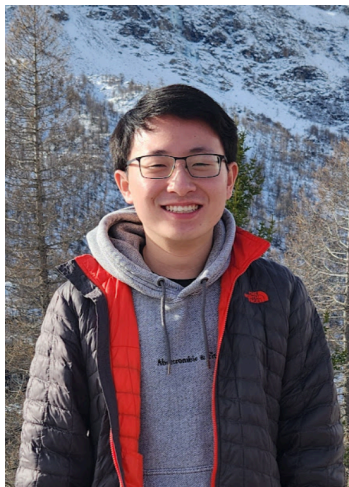
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Bienvenue !

Welcome to the guide to studying abroad in France. I'm so glad you found your way here, and I hope that you will find my guide useful. My name is William Tsai, and I was a Political Science, French Studies, and German Studies major who graduated in 2024. In the fall of 2022, I studied abroad for one semester at Sciences Po in Paris. It was a fulfilling experience, though it did not come without its challenges. However, I was able to overcome those challenges with the help of friends and the local community of which I became a part. It is in that spirit of giving back that I have created this guide, so that you can avoid making the same mistakes I made. Of course, every student who studies abroad encounters their own unique obstacles, and you may find yourself in a situation that this guide has no information on. If that is the case, I ask humbly that you connect with me so that I can continually improve this guide and update it, as regulations also change over time. You can also [reach out to me](#)¹ if you have any questions, concerns, or just want to have a conversation about studying abroad. I would also be happy to share with you the contact information for my landlord and other people who helped me along the way, but whose information I will not put on a publicly accessible document. Lastly, I want to give a disclaimer that, while I have tried to present all the information objectively, my opinion and experiences undoubtedly shape the way that I explain things in this guide. Ultimately, you will shape your study abroad experience into your own, just as I did. As such, I caution you against taking my word as the ultimate truth. You may find that applying for a visa to be extraordinarily easy while for me, it was quite the opposite. Or, you may have bad experiences with Parisian hospitality even though the people I encountered were warm and welcoming. In any case, I truly hope that, if you choose this path, you have a wonderful experience that you can look back on fondly.

Bon courage !

-William



¹ Or simply search "William Tsai Rice University LinkedIn," and my profile should be one of the results.

I. Is study abroad (in France) the right decision for me?

There are various considerations when it comes to making the decision to study abroad. It is often the first time that students are away from their friends for an extended period, in a country whose language they don't speak. Studying abroad in the spring or for an entire year also means missing Beer Bike, which might be a real consideration for some students. There's also the question of graduation and having enough credits to fulfill major and minor requirements. This section will break down the decision-making process and hopefully give you greater clarity on whether this is the right choice for you.

A. Calculating transfer credits — a warning to students considering Sciences Po

There are two types of credits that you can receive for studying abroad. The first is the generic TRAN 100 transfer credit. This simply counts towards the 120 credit hours you need to graduate. The second is department-specific credit (major or minor). For instance, I was able to get POLI 3XX credit for one of my courses, meaning it counted towards the 9 credit hours of political science electives I needed for the major. I was also able to get FREN 321 credit for courses I took abroad. However, the more common department-specific credit is by far the 3XX credit, which also happens to count towards the requirement for upper-level courses.

In order for you to have “guaranteed” transfer credits, the [transfer credit advisor](#) for the department must sign the [Undergraduate Request for Transfer Credit form](#) *before* you depart. Some will ask for syllabi and course work before they sign off, which means that you have no guaranteed transfer credits. In my case, Sciences Po does not even release their course descriptions and catalog until course registration opens, which meant that I had no guaranteed transfer credits. This makes studying abroad slightly unpredictable in terms of how it may impact graduation plans. So, if you're down to the wire and need every last credit in order to graduate, this may not be a wise choice. On the bright side, the transfer credit advisors that I communicated with were willing to fight on my behalf, working with the Registrar's Office to make sure that I got the credits I needed.

If your program calculates in terms of credit hours, you should have no issue with the amount of credit you are able to transfer over. However, if your program uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), note that [Rice's policy](#) states that “One ECTS credit is comparable to one-half (0.5) semester hour credit at Rice.” For Sciences Po, all normal courses were 5 ECTS credits, which meant that I received only 2.5 credit hours per course, which unfortunately does not round up to 3. As such, I had to work arduously with my transfer credit advisors to combine courses in order to surpass the magic “3” needed for a course to count for a major/minor. It is not impossible but still extremely difficult. Be prepared to devote some time to this after you return.

B. Assessing goals

What is it that you're looking to get out of this experience? There are many reasons for exploring study abroad. Some students are looking for language immersion, others are looking to study with a specific program or professor, and there are those that simply need a break from Rice. All of these are perfectly valid reasons. When I was abroad, I encountered exchange students who simply wanted to take the minimum amount of courses and spend the rest of their time traveling. I opted to take the maximum amount, yet still found that I had ample time to explore. The point of this section is for you to do a bit of reflection prior to committing. This will help you have a clearer understanding of whether certain programs are aligned with your interests and goals.

C. Evaluating alternatives

While the catalog of study abroad programs may change from year to year, is it important to explore all the options available to you. You can start by [browsing the list](#) from the study abroad office, then reach out to a study abroad advisor through email or find them at one of the weekly study abroad drop-in hours. You may notice that some of the programs are labeled CIEE, IES, or CIS. These are just some of the many third-party companies who facilitate study abroad programs. Typically, you will find that these programs are more structured for American students. If you like having that additional support to fall back on, these programs may be more suitable for you. On the contrary, if you're looking for a truly immersive experience, it is worth noting that these programs primarily serve Americans. For instance, I visited a friend who was studying abroad with IES in Amsterdam and found that he was living in an apartment complex with only Americans. Depending on what you are looking for, this may be a pro or a con.

D. Financial considerations

My semester abroad was significantly cheaper than a normal semester at Rice. This was because my housing and living expenses were cheaper, and because I was able to secure funding from fellowships. You can view the full breakdown in the appendix linked [here](#). It is important to note that your normal financial aid package will apply to the tuition portion of your study abroad expenses.

However, I understand that for certain programs and certain students, it may be more costly to go abroad. This is something that you would have to review with the study abroad office and the financial aid office. The advisors there are very knowledgeable and can help you estimate the costs.

II. Pre-departure preparations

Now that you've made a decision, it's time to prepare for your new adventure. This section will go over the preparations that apply to studying abroad in France, with a specific subsection for studying abroad in Paris. This is arguably the most important section, as front-loading your planning will make it so that you have fewer worries once you actually arrive.

A. Applying for a visa

U.S. citizens are permitted to stay in the EU without a visa for 90 days, which should cover certain summer programs. Otherwise, you will need to apply for a student visa to remain in France. The French bureaucracy does not move fast, so it is best to start this process as early as possible, up to three months before your arrival date.

France outsources their visa applications to a company called VFS Global, with the staff at the consulate in Washington D.C. being the ones who ultimately approve or deny visa applications. Additionally, there is a pro-consular review done by Campus France, a branch of the French government that acts as a liaison with the U.S. in higher education.

Step 1: Campus France

What you will need:

- Acceptance letter or *certificat de scolarité*
- Statement of motivation (cover letter)
- Scan of valid (not expired) passport
- Digital file of passport-style headshot

What to do:

- Go to campusfrance.org to create an account
- Submit all necessary documentation
- Pay the \$250 processing fee (or \$390 for expedited processing)

Step 2: Visa application

What you will need:

- Proof of completed and processed Campus France file
- Passport, green card, or U.S. visa

- Proof of funding (3 bank statements showing at least 615€ income per month)^{2, 3}
- Proof of accommodation (hotel reservation, rental agreement, sworn statement from host)⁴

What to do:

- Go to france-visas.gouv.fr to start your application
- Submit all necessary documentation
- Pay the 50€ fee
- Schedule your appointment

Step 3: VFS Global

What you need:

- Processed visa application
- Physical copies of passport-style headshots
- Your fingers and face

What to do:

- Using the VFS Global website, book an appointment at any of their offices (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Washington D.C.)
- Bring your physical copies of passport-style headshots to your appointment
- They will scan your fingerprints and take your passport. Be prepared to be without a passport for several weeks.
- Pay the \$40 fee (or \$88 if you opt for their full-service package)

Step 4: Wait

- VFS Global will mail your passport and all the documents to the French consulate in Washington D.C.
- There, the consular staff will either approve or deny your visa before mailing your passport back to you
- Your passport should now have a page with the visa, congratulations!

B. Additional visa considerations — words of warning

² So if you're staying for 10 months, you will need to show at least 6,150€ (about \$6,765, depending on current conversion rates) in your bank account.

³ A financial guarantor (parent, guardian) can also provide their bank statements in addition to a signed and notarized [form](#).

⁴ The easiest method is to book fully refundable reservations. Since booking.com would only let me book for up to 30 days, I ended up booking 4 hotel reservations for 1 month each and cancelled them all after I found housing.

If you ask Beata (the director of the study abroad office) about me, she might remember having to guide me through my nightmare situation with the visa application. I had the genius idea (despite everything, I don't regret it) of studying abroad in Leipzig, Germany the summer right before Paris. Thus, I didn't have time to complete my visa application before I left for Leipzig. At first, I tried to apply for a French visa from within Germany's borders, but then I was told that I would have to provide some proof of long-term German residency. While my host institution tried very hard to help me navigate that process, I ultimately did not have a rental agreement, utility bills, or anything else to prove that I was living in Germany. By the grace of God, there was a one-week break during my two-month summer program. Using Rice funds, I was able to book a flight back home to Boston (which was cheaper than to Houston), go in for my VFS appointment, and fly back to Leipzig several days later. You might be wondering, how did I fly back to Leipzig without a passport? I'm a dual citizen, and my second passport does not require a visa to enter the EU. I entered the EU using that passport, had my U.S. passport delivered to me, then flew back to Houston to advise for O-Week. When I finally flew to Paris, I had my U.S. passport with the visa inside. I tell you this story so you do not make the same mistakes I did. If you are planning on studying abroad the summer before, make sure you have the visa application process completed *before* you leave the United States. That applies if you plan on taking a trip or doing an internship abroad as well. For them to take your fingerprints, you need to go *in person* to one of the VFS locations listed above. Exemptions to biometrics are provided to spouses or family members of European citizens.

C. Applying for funding

The French department has a generous fellowship provided by Miss Clyde Ferguson Bull, class of 1926. It is roughly \$10,000 per semester, which is more than enough to cover rent, food, and travels. To apply for this fellowship, you must have completed at least one 300-level course before leaving for France and have a GPA of at least 3.00. If you satisfy those criteria, you can reach out to the department head of French Studies. You will have to provide a one-page personal statement explaining your motivations.

I was fortunate enough to receive the Bull Fellowship along with the Rebecca Elnekave Cassel Endowed Scholarship, administered by the study abroad office. I applied for the Fred von der Mehden Award from the political science department, but it was awarded to another student. You can find the full list of funding sources [here](#). For non-Rice funding, I recommend visiting the subreddit r/scholarships.

D. Study abroad office forms and procedure

Once your candidacy is confirmed, you will receive information from the study abroad office to login to their online portal. There, you will see a checklist to complete. Most of these items are self-explanatory, such as signing waivers. I will go over the more complicated ones:

1. Registering your travels with the Department of State

Visit step.state.gov and input your travel details. This serves simply as an added layer of security.

2. Enrolling in International SOS

Rice pays for the International SOS program, which sends periodic emails of dangerous happenings in your destination country. Being in Paris, I received an email at least once a week about a protest somewhere. One time, it actually helped since I needed to bike past the protest zone to get to Sciences Po. I took an alternate route and was glad I did. Follow this guide [from the study abroad office](#) to sign up.

3. Obtaining travel insurance

While there are many companies that provide travel insurance, I opted for the one recommended by the study abroad office: iNext. I paid \$177 for their basic plan, which covers up to \$25,000 for accidents and \$15,000 for sickness. You can also upgrade to their platinum plan for \$270 which covers up to \$100,000 for both accident and sickness. Fortunately, I never had to use the insurance, so I'm unsure about the quality of their service.

4. Medical evaluation

Before you depart, you will need to step in for a check-up at Student Health Services. It doesn't take too much time (I honestly spent more time walking to and from the clinic than in the clinic), and they mostly just want to be aware of any pre-existing conditions that may be exacerbated by being abroad. If you're good to go, the doctor will sign a form that you then upload onto your portal.

5. Budget worksheet

This part can be difficult, especially if you don't have housing secured yet. In my case, the study abroad office was very conservative with their estimates and ended up overshooting by quite a bit. Understandably, this is better than not having enough money by the end of your program. If you are interested in seeing my finances, you can jump to Appendix 1 by clicking [here](#).

E. Don't forget to pack...

Everyone's packing priorities are different, so in this section, I'll keep it to the bare essentials:

- A physical copy of your *certificat de scolarité*
- EU plug adapters

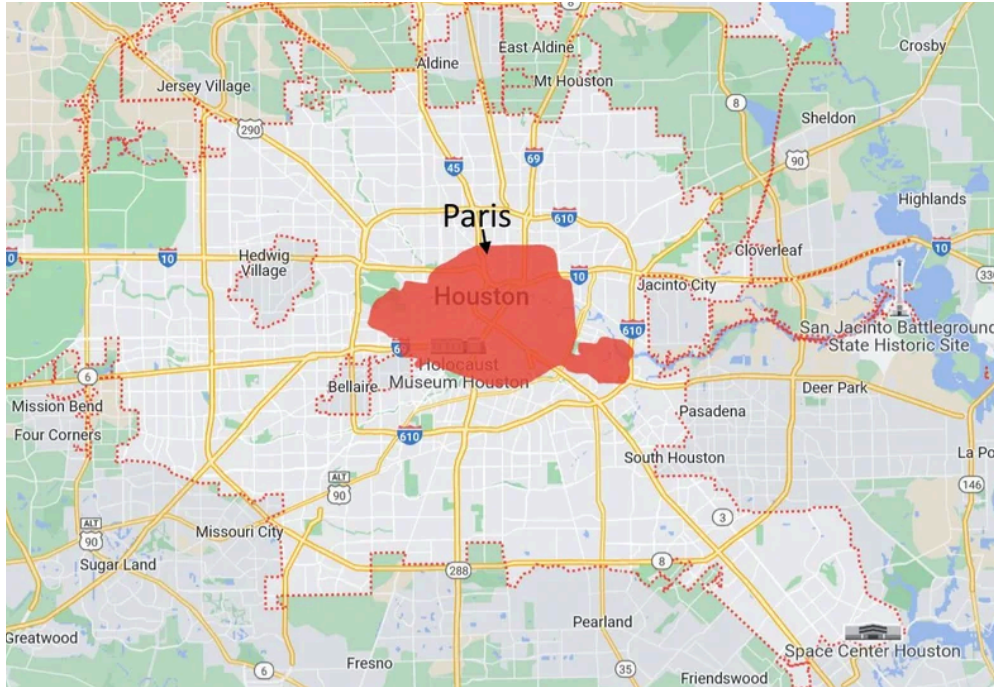
III. Pre-departure: Paris

The Eiffel Tower, l'Arc de Triomphe, le Louvre, and so much more! If you're here, that means you've made the choice to study in Paris. Perhaps you're a huge fan of art, looking for a multicultural environment, or just watched *Emily in Paris*. In any case, this section will provide you with the basics on how to survive and thrive in the city.

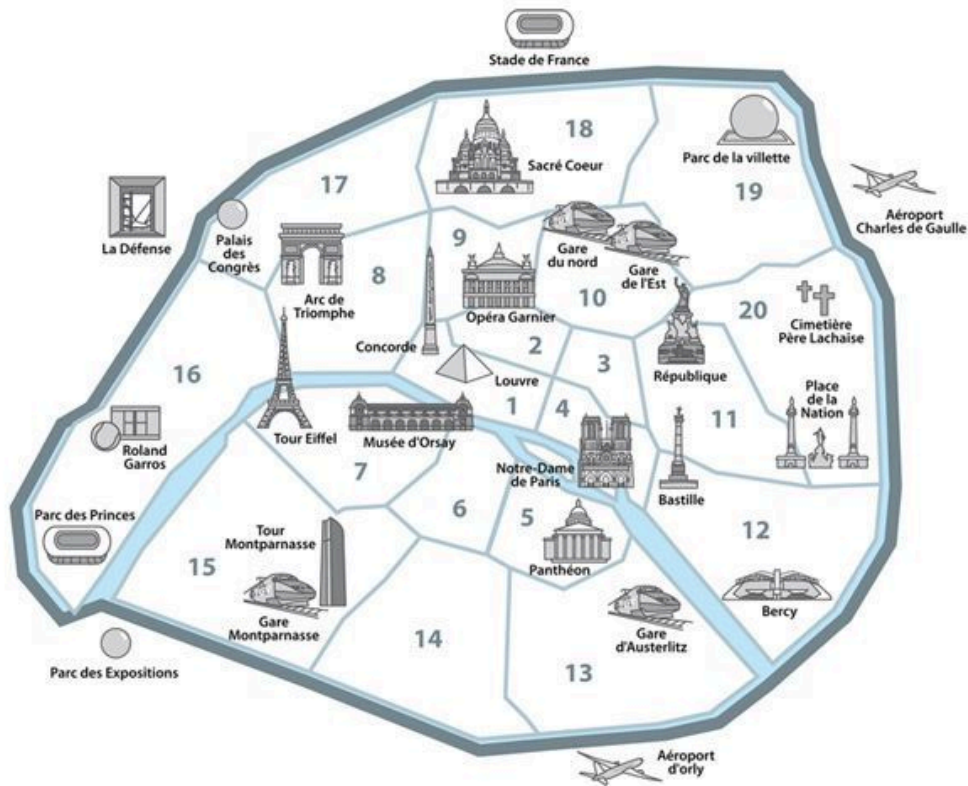
A. Understanding the geography of the city



As you can see in the map, Paris is essentially one big circle. It is around 7 miles (11 km) in diameter, or a half-hour bike ride to traverse the city. Compared to Houston, it is quite small and very much walkable.

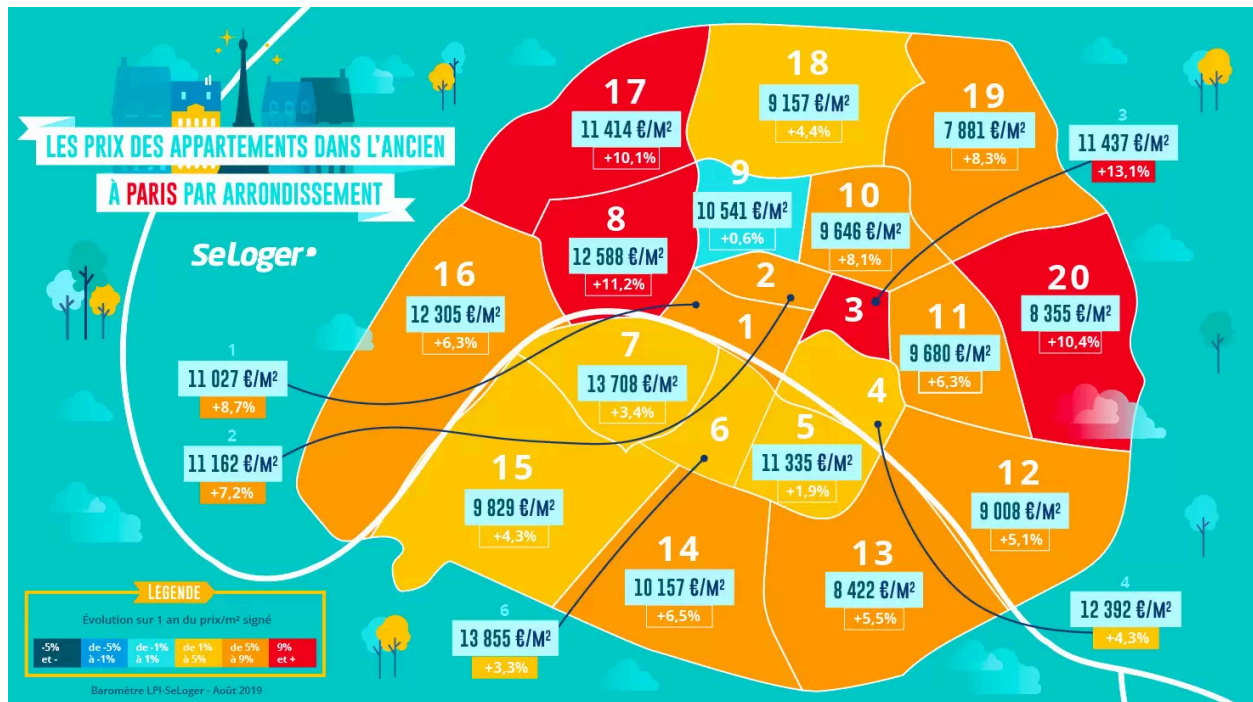


The city itself was divided into 20 “arrondissements” or districts in 1859. Each district has its own town hall, attractions, and unique identity. Here is a simplified map to show the arrondissements more clearly:



The river Seine cuts Paris roughly in half, and the area south of the river is called *rive gauche* while the area north is *rive droite*. For those of you who speak French, you will know that translates to left bank and right bank. It doesn't make sense, I know. *Rive droite* is the more densely populated half, with most of the night life occurring in the 9th, 10th, and 11th. The 5th through 7th are the more residential (and more expensive) arrondissements in *rive gauche*. La Sorbonne is located in the 5th while Sciences Po is in the 6th. For a more in-depth look at the perceptions of each arrondissement, check out [this crowdsourced map](#).

If you're deciding where to settle down, it is worth noting the differences in price in each arrondissement. The 1st to the 8th, and parts of the 13th to 16th will likely be more expensive.



Average price per square meter for apartments by arrondissement

Another common concern is safety. The 9th, 10th, and 17th through 20th are known to be the least safe districts. [This article](#) contains maps with the darker blue indicating more crime. For those of you that do not read French, the three maps are burglaries, assaults, and car thefts. If you choose to live outside of Paris, the 93rd district Saint-Denis is, statistically, more dangerous than Paris itself. But setting the numbers aside, do you actually need to be worried?

I can only attest to my personal experience, having been to most of the arrondissements. It may also be worth noting that I am a man, albeit 5'7 and 140 lbs, so my tolerance of risk may be higher or lower than yours. For starters, I would visit my friend every week who lived in Aubervilliers, the area in the 93rd just northeast of city limits. Immediately at the metro exits, there were groups of men loitering around trying to peddle cigarettes. My friend who lives there

said she had her phone stolen multiple times going in and out of the metro. I was also pickpocketed once on my way back from her home. However, so long as you keep your head down, walk quickly, and keep your phone hidden, you should be relatively safe. In other words, act like a local and these people will likely leave you alone. I am also a person of color, which made me less of a target compared to white people in that area.

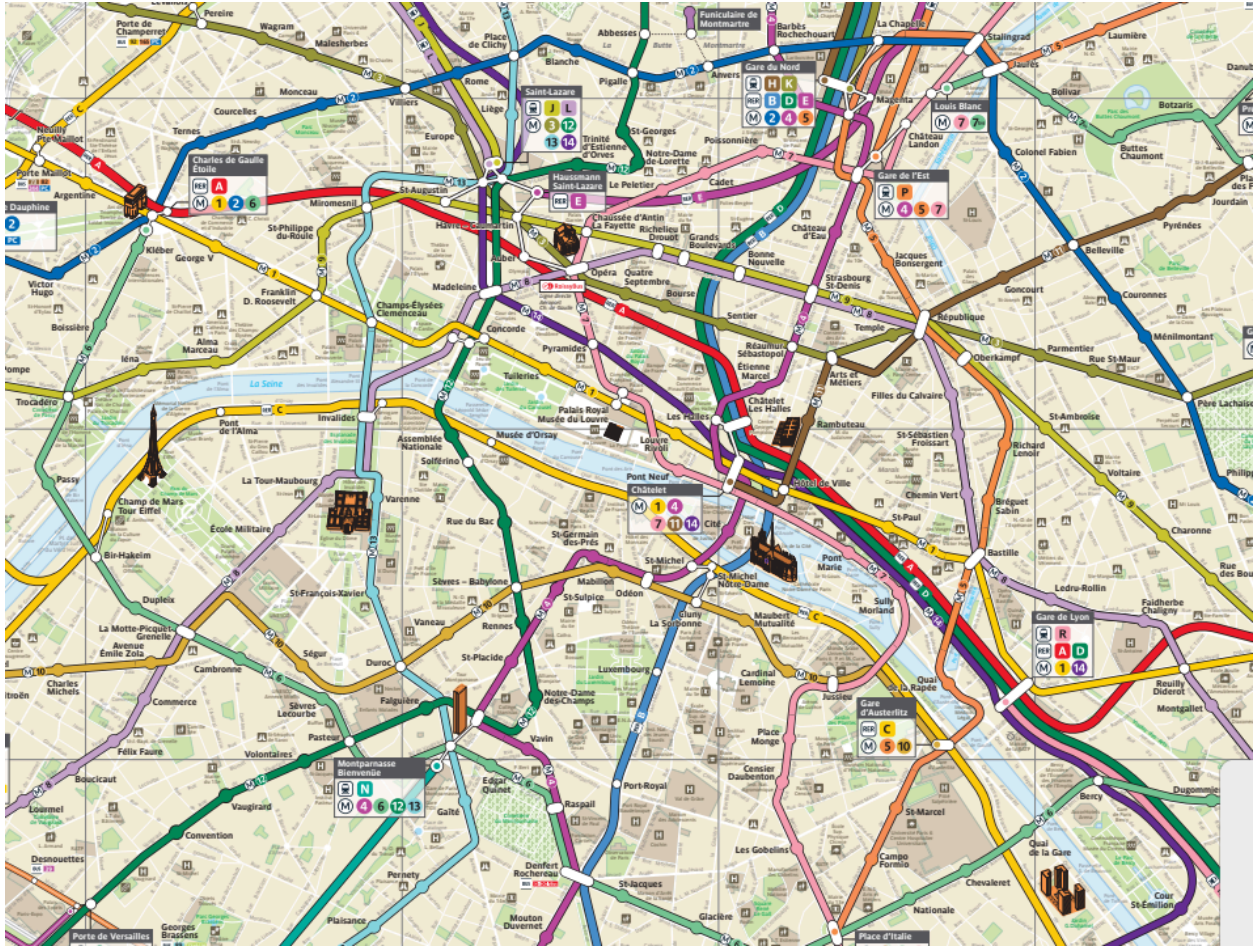
Moving on to the higher crime neighborhoods in *rive droite*, I found that it really was a mixed bag. Outside of the two stations for long-distance trains, Gare du Nord and Gare d'Est, you may find groups of homeless people, who once again, will most likely leave you alone so long as you act like a local. I had another friend who lived in the 18th, between Jules Joffrin and Simplon. He told me that the difference between his apartment and the area three blocks down was night and day, and this was evident to me as I walked back to the metro station late at night from his place.

Of course, the reputation of certain areas also change over time. For instance, from reading online guides and blogs, I got the impression that Pigalle was a dangerous area. But after going there myself, I found it not to be the case. There were plenty of people walking the streets even at night, many of whom were tourists.

In short, I would recommend touring the area around your apartment before signing the contract.

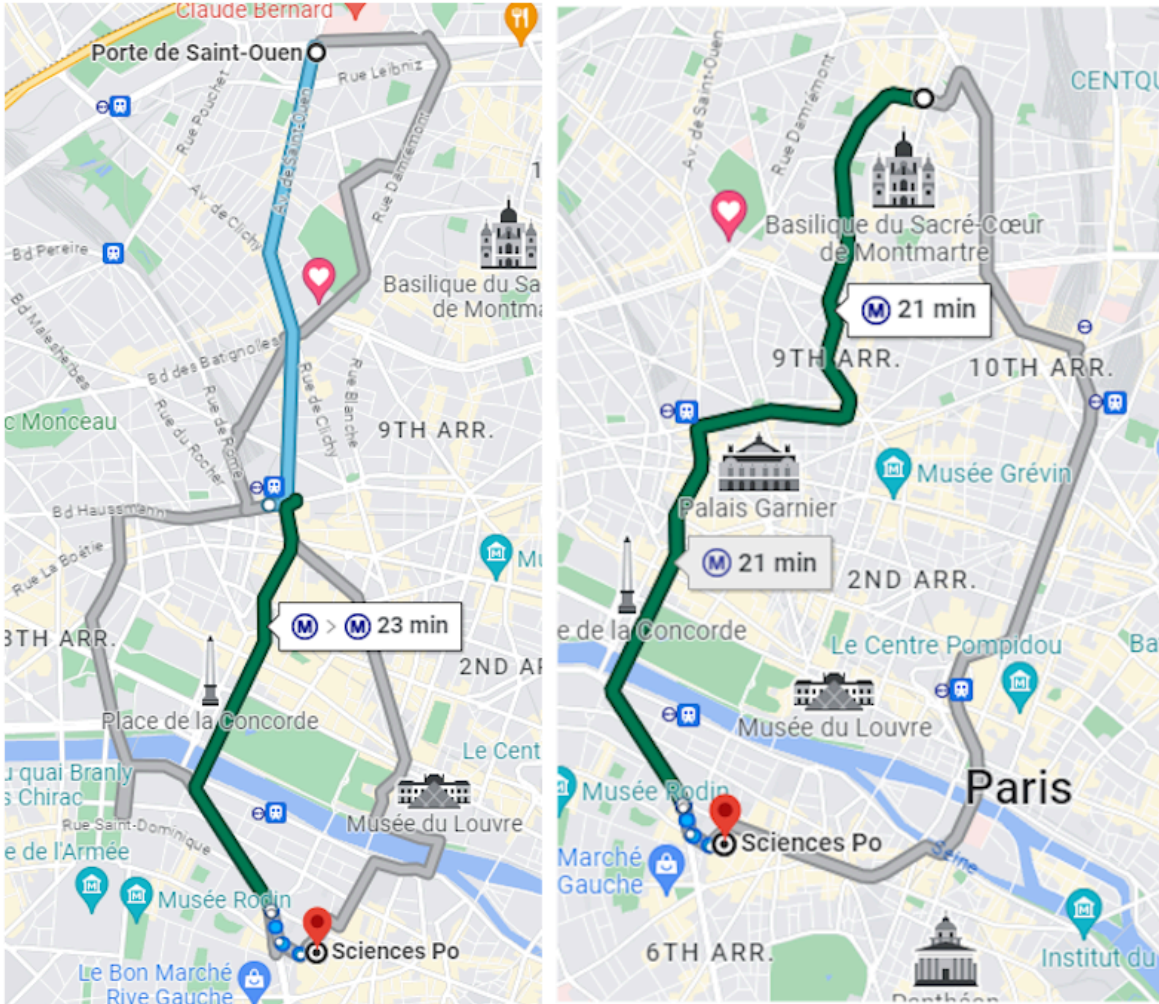
B. Guide to public transportation

The RATP network, with its combination of bus, metro, and commuter rail (RER), is a wonderful resource for getting around the city. It runs from [5:30am until 1am on weekdays or 2am](#) on weekends and holidays. However, it is also very prone to delays and may halt service when there are larger strikes/protests. In other words, public transport will get you just about anywhere you want to go, but you may arrive at your destination tired and late. Click [here for the train network](#) and [here for the bus network](#). There is also a ring of surface-level tramways that surrounds the entire city, which could be fun to ride if you're looking for a relaxing way to spend some time off.

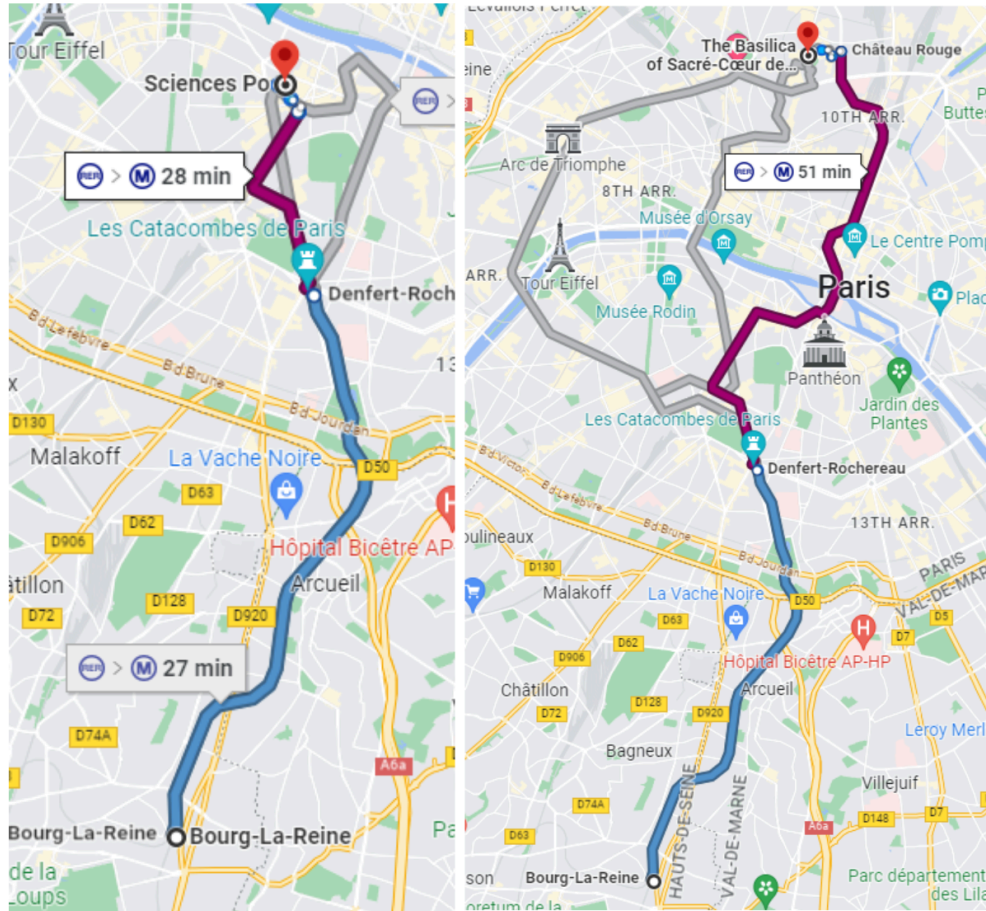


1. Calculating commute

When scouting out different locations to live in, don't forget to calculate travel time using the map app of your choice. For instance, my friend who lived in the 18th was almost at the city limits, but his daily commute was around 20 mins (right). I toured an apartment at Porte de St-Ouen with a similar commute time (left).



However, there are areas in the 16th and *rive gauche* that are half the distance away yet have double the travel time. Or, the quickest method of public transportation is a bus that only comes once every half hour. Once you factor in the RER lines, the equation for the quickest commute may change again. For instance, being on the RER B halves this one-hour commute by car. It is worth noting that in these examples, I am only calculating the commute time to one particular location. To get to the Sacré-Coeur from that same location would take almost an hour.



There is also the Vélib network of rentable bicycles, with stations all around the city that look like this:



Some streets have dedicated bike lanes while on other streets, bikes share a lane with buses. The Vélib was my primary method of transportation due to its convenience, speed, and affordability. The only drawback is that it becomes nearly impossible to bike during heavy rain or snow. The relative speed can also depend on traffic conditions. For instance, I would regularly bike from my apartment in Val-de-Grâce to Quai d’Orsay, a journey that Google claims takes 20 mins. Biking home late at night, I could make the trip in 10 if I didn’t hit any red lights. For those of you that bike regularly, you’ll know that elevation plays a huge role. Thankfully, some Vélibs have an electric motor to help you up those steep inclines.

2. Pricing

A one-way metro ticket from anywhere within city limits (Zone 1) is called a Ticket t+ and costs 2€⁵. As the RATP is phasing out physical tickets, you will need to load these tickets onto a Passe Navigo Easy card. There, you can also buy a “carnet” of 10 tickets for a discounted price. If you have an Android phone, you can download the Bonjour RATP app to load these tickets directly onto your phone. I mostly relied on these one-way tickets to get around when biking was not possible.

⁵ Updated pricing found here: <https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs/ticket-t>

There is also a subscription-based pricing with a *Passe Navigo*. If you are staying for one semester, the monthly cost is 85€⁶ and covers all zones, meaning you can spare the 12€ ticket to CDG airport. As a student, you are also eligible for a discounted annual membership, called *Imagine'R*, which costs 350€.⁷

If you decide to hop the gates or otherwise travel without a valid ticket, the fine is 75€. Tickets and *Navigo* passes can be purchased at most metro stations.

Vélib is considerably cheaper. The *V-Plus* subscription costs 3€/month for 30 mins of total use per day of the bikes, with a 1€/30min additional fee to use the electric bikes. The *V-Max* subscription costs 9€/month for 60 mins of total use per day and 45 mins *additional* time for the electric bikes, up to 2 trips. Further discounts are given to students and can be found [here](#).⁸

C. Comparing housing options

Finding a place to live will likely be the most difficult task in your pre-departure preparations. Rentals in Paris go quickly, and landlords are sometimes skeptical of non-Francophone tenants. There are also the real estate groups that cater exclusively to foreigners, but that also means that their prices are inflated accordingly. There are numerous websites that all have different listings, sometimes containing outdated information or places that have already been taken by someone else. From experience, I know it can be a nightmare to navigate, but hopefully this section will help to reduce some of that confusion.

Broadly speaking, you can find housing in the form of: homestays, shared apartments, studios, *chambres de bonne*, and Airbnbs. Each have their own advantages and drawbacks. I will briefly address homestays and Airbnbs, before moving on to the more comprehensive information about finding a normal apartment.

1. Homestay

A homestay, or *chambre chez l'habitant* (literally, “a room at the owner’s place”) is a fantastic option if you’re looking for a culturally immersive experience. Depending on the arrangement, you might be able to share meals with your host family while helping teach their kids English. Because you are only renting a room, the pricing will typically be more affordable compared to a studio. Families with two working parents might also give you a discount in exchange for cleaning the home or buying groceries. However, homestays in Paris are quite competitive, given

⁶ Updated pricing found here: <https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs/forfaits-navigo-mois-et-semaine>

⁷ Updated pricing found here: <https://www.ratp.fr/en/titres-et-tarifs/imagine-r-student-travel-pass>

⁸ Updated pricing found here: <https://www.velib-metropole.fr/en/offers>

that real estate itself is competitive. If you don't have any experience with childcare, you might be bested by another candidate, though fluency in English is always a bonus.

[Homestay.com](https://www.homestay.com) charges primarily per night and is not geared towards long-term stays. However, if you can find a room around \$30/night or less, you might be able to negotiate something with the homeowner. [Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.com) also has some homestay options, though the additional fees can be pricey.

A quick Google search for “chambre chez l’habitant” pulls up several more websites. However, they may be difficult to navigate if you do not know French.

The Sciences Po housing search tool only available to Sciences Po students has many homestay options, with the benefit that these landlords have been pre-vetted by the school.

There is also the recent trend of *cohabitation intergénérationnelle*, where students are paired with seniors who own prime real estate but may need additional aid with their daily lives. If you don't mind caring for the elderly, this can be a great living situation in a great location for a fraction of the price.

2. Airbnb

A variety of living situations can be found on Airbnb, ranging from homestays to studios to larger apartments. However, they all have one thing in common: they're overpriced. Because (short-term) Airbnbs are illegal in most of Paris, landlords are taking a risk by listing their property on the website. In return, they get to upsell tourists who don't know or don't care what reasonable rents are in Paris.

If budget is not a concern for you, Airbnb admittedly has the smoothest process that does not require any pre-signing of contracts or touring the apartment. For legal long-term stays, the landlord will have to make you sign a *bail mobilité*, a special lease for students and business professionals.

But seriously, Parisians will make fun of you if they find out you're paying more than four figures for a tiny studio in the 18th.

3. Shared housing

If you know other Rice students studying abroad the same time as you, or you already have friends in Paris, shared housing might be the right path for you. Often, it is cheaper to split the rent for a larger 2-3 bedroom apartment than it is to get your own studio. Obviously, this comes

at the cost of some sacrifices in privacy. If you think you might feel lonely and need a support system, this could be another incentive to move in with others.

From my experience, I will say that this was not a common living situation amongst my exchange student friends, and more common for local students. I assume because the coordination required makes it difficult, especially when different members of the group have different priorities, preferences, and budgetary constraints. But, if you can get a group together and find a place, there are many benefits. Splitting groceries, dividing up household chores, and traveling as a group can stretch your dollar, so that you can use your funds on food, travels, designer bags, or whatever floats your boat.

4. Studios and chambres de bonne

This is by far the most common living situation from my experience. A studio or *chambre de bonne*, a room at the top floor of a Haussmannian building that used to house maids, provides the most privacy, and allows you to pick the place of your dreams without worrying about others' opinions. Often, these are one-room homes with a kitchen area and tiny bathroom. Certain *chambres de bonne* will even have the toilet *sur le palier*, which means it is shared with the other *chambres de bonne*. However, showers are in the room for personal use.

Traditionally, your landlord would live in one of the apartments in your building, since purchasing an apartment used to come with one *chambre de bonne* on the top floor. In case of emergencies, your landlord is then able to help you right away and is reachable at a moment's notice.

5. Cité Universitaire

This is a unique community of housing for academics, with each country having its own building. Situated at the southern border of the city, the area is full of greenery and has its own tennis courts, basketball courts, and baseball field.

D. Pricing, lease duration, and websites

For homestays, the average is around 500€/month, but can depend on the living situation. Beware of overpaying for poor locations, as many single family homes are further from the city center. For shared housing, it will depend on the number of people, but an individual should be paying no more than 1000€/month. For larger studios, anywhere up to 1200€/month is considered fair. If you're in a good location, you might even go up to 1500€/month. For a *chambre de bonne*, you can find ones as cheap as 400€/month even in a prime location, and up to

1000€/month can be considered reasonable. Note that [the CAF](#) can further decrease the cost of rent.

If you are paying more than 2000€/month (and not living in a penthouse by yourself), you're getting ripped off. Watch Tiktoks from [@salutbrian](#) for tours of apartments and corresponding rents. He's like the French version of Caleb Simpson.

In terms of lease duration, look for *location courte durée* if you're looking to lease for less than a year. You can decide on the ethics of this yourself, but [French law](#) also permits any tenant to break a lease given a 1-month advance notice for furnished apartments and 3 months for unfurnished apartments. In your last month, however, the landlord is permitted to give potential new tenants tours of the apartment.

Otherwise, the best solution is to look for *sous-locations*, or subleases. Those are most commonly found on leboncoin and can sometimes be against the rules of the apartment complex. Don't be surprised if, during your tour, you're told to go in through a back entrance or avoid the *gardien*.

Homestays:

- Airbnb
- Homestay.com
- Google search "chambre chez l'habitant"

Intergenerational homestays:

- Le Pari Solidaire
- Ensemble 2 générations
- Colette
- Google search "*cohabitation intergénérationnelle*"

Shared housing:

- Facebook groups
- Whatsapp groups
- Reach out to people you know

Studios, *chambres de bonne*, and all other housing

Non-French speaking friendly (but overpriced, often with hidden fees)

- Airbnb
- Paris Attitude
- Lodgis

- Paristay
- Morning Croissant

Used by locals

- Leboncoin - the French craigslist
- Pap.fr
- Seloger
- Bien'ici
- Logic-Immo
- Gens de Confiance
- Facebook groups

Special

- [Sciences Po portal](#) (for Sciences Po students only; vetted landlords)
- Jinka - an app that pulls listings from across the internet and notifies you of new listings matching your criteria
- My former landlord - reach out to me (see introduction)

E. Customary process for renting

If you're in France, usually the landlord (or tenant if it's a sublease) will create a listing. Within the next several days, they will schedule visits, which gives them an opportunity to vet tenants just as tenants are vetting the apartment. Afterwards, they will choose one tenant to take the lease. If the tenant agrees and dates are agreed upon, a lease will be signed and the money for the first month and safety deposit are wired at the same time.

If you're not in France, it's possible to do the tour virtually, but know that a landlord is more likely to choose someone who toured in-person.

When you sign the contract, your landlord will take you around the apartment to do an inspection called *état des lieux*. That way, if anything is damaged during your stay, your landlord has the right to deduct the cost from your security deposit.

F. Avoiding common scams

[10% of all listings are scams](#). If it seems too good to be true, it's probably a scam. If the photos look fake or do not match the description at all, it's probably a scam. If the landlord asks for a safety deposit before you even get to see the place, it's probably a scam. If the listing is a man looking exclusively for a female housemate, it may or may not be a scam, but it certainly is risky. Do NOT wire any money you don't feel comfortable losing before they hand you the keys and

sign the lease. Do not pay in cash (but also use your best judgement since the landlord could just be old and not like digital payments).

When you first enter the apartment, make sure to meticulously photograph all inconsistencies with the *état des lieux* or just general damages. Some landlords have been known to use tiny damages as justification for keeping your entire safety deposit.

If you lease with an agency, they commonly take an additional 1 month's rent as a processing fee. This is not a scam, just a ripoff.

This isn't a housing scam, but the Roma will often put small denomination coins in a transparent plastic cup and slide that cup into the middle of a busy sidewalk. An unsuspecting passerby will eventually knock it over, sending the coins flying. If that happens to you, just keep walking. They're just trying to guilt-trip you. Also learn to say no to the Roma that parade their children in the wealthier neighborhoods to beg. While you may think you're helping, they are actively barring their children from getting educated, instead using them as props for their own benefit.

IV. Touchdown and first week

This section will outline all the suggested errands you should run within your first week of arrival. It can be hectic, especially with jet lag, but you will definitely thank yourself later once school starts that you have all the tools you need to succeed.

A. Comparing the 3 airports

There are three airports that serve Paris. Paris-Beauvais is the smallest and only serves regional flights with low-cost airlines like Ryanair. If for some reason you're flying in through there, a shuttle makes the 1 hour drive between Porte Maillot and the airport. After arriving at Porte Maillot, you will need to take public transportation to enter Paris.

Orly is the second-largest airport, located south of Paris. Once you land, you can travel to the city using the OrlyBus which is 12€ or covered by an all-zones Navigo pass. You can also take the OrlyVal to Antony station, where you will transfer to the RER B.



The largest airport, where you will most likely end up, is Charles de Gaulle. Once you exit and pass immigration, look for signs for the RER B. The ticket is also 12€ or free with Navigo. Since CDG is northwest of the city, you will be traveling in the opposite direction from Orly.⁹

B. Finding your way around

If you are used to using Google Maps or Apple Maps, you may want to consider a switch once you arrive. For public transport, these two apps only use the scheduled timetables to calculate the most efficient route. Citymapper and the official Bonjour RATP app use the actual GPS tracking on trains and buses, making them far more accurate. Citymapper also more accurately estimates the walking time for transfers, which can be as little as 10 seconds across the platform or as long as a 10-minute walk if you're in Châtelet. If you're biking, Citymapper also takes into account small alleys and one-way streets you can go backwards on, drastically reducing your travel time.

⁹ Please beware that near baggage claim at CDG, there is a Roma woman who scams people by posing as an employee of a charity. When I alerted the airport staff of this, they said that they know her well, but they cannot charge her for trespassing like they would be able to in the U.S.

If you pay for the pro version, it can also generate routes that combine public transportation, biking, walking, etc. to get you from point A to B as quickly as possible.

One downside to Bonjour RATP is that its database of businesses is not as comprehensive, and so you might have to find the address of a place using Google Maps, then type that address into Bonjour RATP.

C. Getting a phone plan

Obviously, all of those apps will start draining your data. Fortunately, phone plans in France are an incredibly good value compared to those in the U.S. The major companies are Orange, Bouygues, and SFR. Like the major carriers in the U.S., these are full-service companies with stores across the country. As such, their operating costs are higher, which reflects in their price.

However, there are also budget networks that are just as good in terms of coverage. The most popular is Free, which is 13€/month for 110 GB data, unlimited talk and text, and 18 GB of roaming data. If somehow you need more than that, you can upgrade to their 20€/month plan which gives 210 GB and 35 GB when roaming.¹⁰ The easiest way to sign up is to go directly to any of their stores across the city. There, you will see self-serve kiosks where you input your information and pay. The kiosk will pop out a SIM card on the spot that you can then put into your phone. There are also store attendants who can help you if you get stuck.

¹⁰ Note that “roaming” refers to all travel outside of the EU (including Switzerland). Countries within the EU and French departments (DOM) are effectively France as far as the telecom company is concerned.

for 30 days, but you can get 20x that data with a local phone carrier. Additionally, you will need to sign up with a French phone number at various places, so this is not a long-term solution.

D. Signing up for a bank account

You might be asking: why in the world do I need a French bank account for a several-month stay? The answer is that some landlords will only take direct bank transfers, and social aid can only be deposited into a French bank account. There are workarounds which I will discuss in the [finances section](#).

The major banks in France are, in no particular order, Société Générale, Banque Populaire, La Banque Postale, BNP Paribas, Caisse d'Épargne, CIC, Crédit Agricole, and the bank I used, LCL. Most banks will offer a student account that is no-frills, no fees. This means that there is no real difference between the banks aside from location and customer service. I chose LCL because they offered me a tote bag and a plushie of their mascot if I signed with them, seriously. In order to sign up, you will need your passport, proof of residency, and your student ID or *certificat de scolarité*. With a bank account, you will now be able to [sign up for the CAF](#), make withdrawals and deposits at ATMs, and pay your bills and rent.

Another benefit is that you can also purchase *assurance habitation* or renter's insurance with whichever bank you choose. It is typically around 10€/month but can depend on your square footage. If you decide not to go with your bank's offer, you can also purchase this online with a number of insurance companies.

E. Validating your visa

Lastly, you will need to [validate your visa](#), turning it into a *titre de long séjour*. It's a simple process but costs 50€. Once you have your *titre de long séjour*, you can begin the process of applying for *assurance maladie*, which is the universal health insurance in France. I recommend doing this only if you know that you will incur regular medical costs. It may take several months to be approved, and by that time, you'd be preparing to return home if you're only in France for a semester. Even without French health insurance, regular doctor's visits are capped at 65€. For surgeries or recurring visits, reach out to your school's *pôle santé* for more information on how to get temporary coverage.

V. Daily survival, leisure, and travels

Now, you're hopefully settled into your apartment and ready for school to start. Take some time to decompress and explore the area around where you live. Take note of your local post office, bank branch, grocery store, and other places you might have to visit on a regular basis.

A. Running errands

Unless your plan is to eat out every single meal, you'll probably need to get groceries. The main grocery chains are Monoprix, Franprix, Carrefour, Aldi, and G20. For each brand, there are different "levels" of stores. For instance, Carrefour has Carrefour Express, Carrefour City, Carrefour Market, and Carrefour in order from smallest to largest. The smaller stores are more common, but the larger stores will have better selection and better prices. If you live in a shared house or are meal planning, you can also consider Auchan where you order online then pickup at any of their locations.

For fresh meats, fish, and vegetables, your best bet will be the *marché* or farmer's market. These are only open at select times, but there are many throughout Paris. In addition, establishing a relationship with the merchant may help you in the future, as they will tell you when certain shipments are coming in.

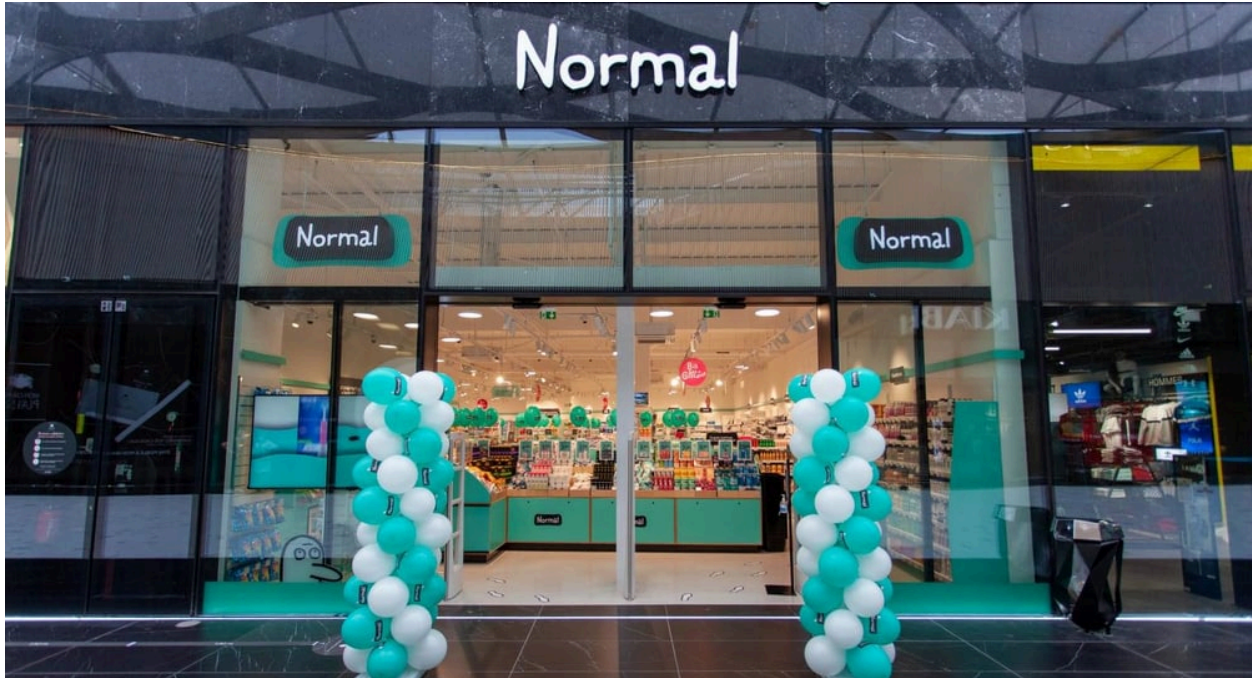
For breads and pastries, avoid the supermarkets and go to your local *boulangerie*. I went in for a quick breakfast every morning, and by the second week, the baker was waving to me as I walked past his store on my way back from school in the evenings.

If your apartment unit or building doesn't have washing machines, you'll need to go to the *laverie*, or laundromat. Make sure to bring some coins, since some older establishments don't take card. Typically, you'll pay around 3€ for a wash cycle and 1€ for 10 minutes in the dryer (they dry really quickly). Depending on where you live, you might be able to go back home and pick up your clothes later, but in some places, it's better to hang out there to keep an eye on your stuff. If you need something dry cleaned, you'll need to go to the *pressing*.

If for some reason, something minor needs to be fixed in your apartment, the Home Depot/Lowes equivalents are called *bricolage*, with the larger chains being Bricorama, Castorama, and Leroy Merlin.

For toiletries and other miscellaneous items, you have to pay a visit to Normal. Though there aren't very many locations, the prices are ridiculously cheap. Their 1€ rain ponchos are super handy as well. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention it.

In case you need a haircut, look for *coiffures* for the cheaper locations and *salons* for the more full-service operations.



B. Feeding yourself on a budget

In order to have enough money for travels, outings with friends, and more, it's vital to keep your other expenditures low. There are many tips, aside from cooking at home, that Parisians use to minimize their regular spending compared to tourists.

1. TooGoodToGo

This legendary app was founded on the premise of reducing food waste. At the end of the day, bakeries throw away their unsold products, perfectly good stuff that just can't be sold the next day. With TooGoodToGo, you can place an order from the app and pick up in a specified time window, usually as the store is closing or after it has officially closed. You'll get multiple meals worth of food for around 5€. TooGoodToGo has now expanded beyond bakeries, and restaurants are using it too. My favorite was a sushi buffet place that was about a 10 min bike ride from my apartment. For 7€, I got two huge boxes of food that I would then pair with microwave rice to eat for at least 3 meals. You need to bring your own bag to carry the food home, and the order will tell you if tupperware is provided by the store or if you have to bring your own.



There were ~10 pastries in the bag, a sandwich, and a baguette for 3€. The butter (purchased separately) was almost as much as everything else combined.



Sushi and entrees for 7€

2. Picard

Another French legend, Picard is a store that sells gourmet frozen food. No joke, it's actually really good. Some of their items can be reheated in a microwave, while others require a full oven. I recommend their pigs in a blanket, and I regularly bought their microwave rice. Make sure to sign up for their loyalty program for substantial discounts.



3. *Traiteurs Chinoises*

If you're looking for a ready-cooked meal, there is a branch of fast food in France that doesn't exist at all in the United States. The French Chinese takeout store is a unique format, with all the dishes precooked and put in a refrigerated display case. When you order, they put it on a plate and microwave it for you. Though it may not sound the most appealing, it's delicious and affordable. You also have the flexibility of paying by weight or buying a combo (which is usually better value). Instead of orange chicken, the French-Chinese classics are *poulet citronelle*, *porc laqué*, *riz cantonais*, and *perle de coco*.

4. Crous

While this organization provides scholarships, affordable housing, work-study, and much more, it's primarily known as the student cafeteria. However, it's not just for students. Certain Crous locations are accessible to the public and utilized by economically disadvantaged populations. Others are within school property and can only be accessed by the students of that particular school. They also vary in size, with some cafes only service sandwiches, pre-made meals, and drinks while others have full-sized kitchens. Look for this logo when you walk around the city, or use a maps app to find your nearest Crous.



5. IKEA

Just like in America, IKEA offers cheap eats and free coffee for IKEA Family members.

C. Restaurant recommendations in Paris

The French are very skeptical about restaurants highly rated on Google, Yelp, or TripAdvisor. According to one local I spoke to, tourists are the ones who mostly write reviews, and “you Americans have no taste buds.” Instead, look at [Le Guide Ultime](#) and follow their social media to see Tiktok-length reviews of restaurants.

1. Cosi - delicious brick-oven sandwiches for less than 10€ close to Sciences Po

2. Léon - seafood chain known for their mussels, slow service but decent food for the price
3. Café de l'Empire - classic French dishes in cozy ambiance
4. Any "Bouillons" - French-style tapas meant to be shared by the table
5. Le Malabar - French-American cuisine with good brunch, burgers, and desserts
6. Oroyona - the only place you'll ever need to go for crêpes (delicious and 5€ for one sweet crêpe, one savory crêpe, and a drink)
7. Shinjuku - all you can eat sushi for less than 20€ on weekday lunches
8. Xuehong - favorite restaurant of the students at l'École Normale Supérieure. I recommend their fried chicken cutlets over rice
9. Traiteur Bonheur - the best Chinese Takeout in all of Paris. 10€ for a three-course meal. I started going here so often that the owners refused to let me pay half the time and cooked me special items not on the menu. I recommend their eggplant, shrimp dumplings, and citronelle chicken. If you end up going, please say hi to the owners for me (you can show them my picture from the introduction). I miss really do them a lot :(

Avoid overrated tourist traps like Café du Flore, Les Deux Magots, Angelina, Le Procope, etc. If you want more recommendations, follow me on Beli @williamt1.

D. Places to visit in Paris

Of course, you'll want to spend some of your time outside the classroom exploring the city. One huge benefit is that, for all public museums, anyone under the age of 26 enters for free. Technically, it is only for EU citizens under 26, but if you present your French student ID, they won't ask to check your passport. Museums are also free for everyone on the first Sunday of every month. Because there are already a million guides online for places to visit in Paris, I'll keep my list short and simple¹¹:

- Bateaux Mouches (or any of their competitors) - boat tour up and down the Seine. Save money by booking on Groupon.
- Catacombs
- Guided tour for the Opéra Garnier - exceeded all my expectations, easily my favorite tour of the whole trip
- Château de Versailles - technically outside of Paris but accessible with the RER C
- Parc de Buttes-Chaumont - high elevation gives a wonderful view of the city
- Tour Montparnasse - much better views than going up the Eiffel Tower, because you can actually see the Eiffel Tower...
- La Sainte Chapelle - one of the most beautiful churches in Paris, built in the 13th century
- And of course, Notre Dame!

¹¹ For a more expanded list, check out this spreadsheet my friend Maria made: [📄 Places to visit in France](#)

E. Traveling across the country and abroad

Unlike in the U.S., you don't need a car to get around. In fact, you could take a train all the way to Turkey if you wanted. The TGV network and other European rail networks are incredibly efficient, and there are also plenty of low-cost airlines such as Ryanair, Wizz, easyJet, Vueling, and Transavia. Even in peak summer season, I've seen flights from Paris to Zagreb for as little as 25€. In this section, we will be reviewing the various transport options, as well as reviewing common vacation destinations.

1. Shorter distance trips

I'll admit that I didn't do as much domestic travel as I wanted, so I'm not an expert by any means. That being said, there are several ways to get around. BlaBlaCar is an app where people going on road trips can take a passenger along with them to help offset some of the fuel costs. Typically, they'll put on the app in advance that they will be traveling from, for instance, Paris to Marseille on August 10th at 10am with 3 empty spots in the car. You can then choose to pay for a ride in their car, so long as you agree to their timetable. This is a very budget friendly way to travel and a win-win for both parties.

FlixBus (and other bus companies) is another way to travel. You can book tickets online or through the app. The way the tickets are priced is that the more full a trip is, the more expensive the ticket. For instance, if you book a Christmas trip in August, the bus will probably be 0% full at the time of booking, giving you the cheapest ticket. If you book a trip the next day on a bus that has one seat left, you'd be paying for the most expensive ticket.

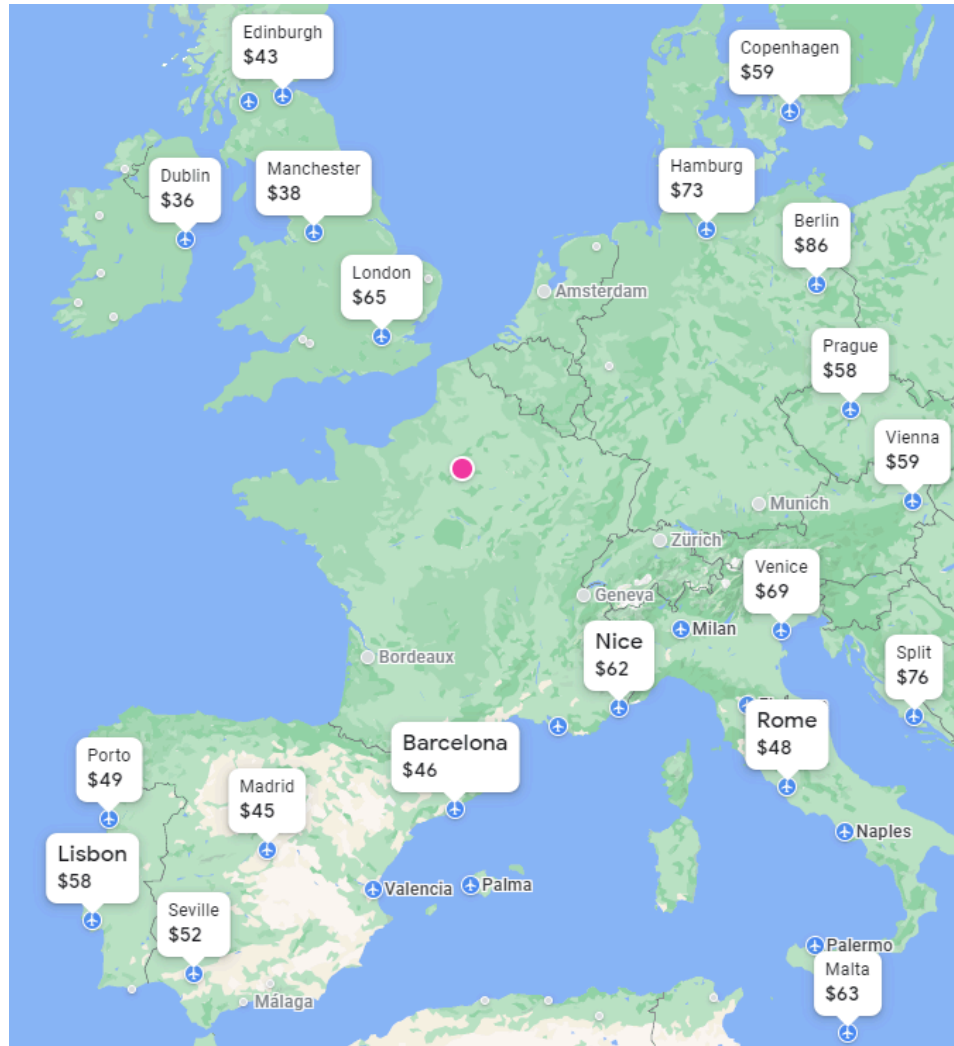
2. Medium and long distance trips

The TGV network can be used for both domestic and international trips. If you're planning to primarily travel domestically, I recommend getting a *carte avantage jeune* if you are 27 or under. For 49€, you pay at most 39€ for trips under 1:30, 59€ for trips between 1:30 and 3:00, and 79€ for trips over 3:00. In addition, you also get 30% off trips for an entire year, and free ticket exchanges/refunds up to 7 days before your travel date. While this may not sound like much, train tickets are sold similar to bus tickets in that last-minute travel can be very expensive. For instance, I purchased a ~120€ train ticket from Paris to Amsterdam around three weeks before the travel date. If I had the *carte avantage jeune*, I would have paid only 79€, plus the 49€ for the actual pass. My point is that in this case, the pass pays for itself after just one use.

Eurail is another amazing program for Americans and other non-EU residents. Essentially, the pass allows you to travel on *any* rail network in Europe. Here's how it works: you purchase a pass that specifies how many "travel days" you have in a given period. At the time of writing, a

[pass for 15 travel days within 2 months is \\$440](#). When you travel, you activate a travel day, good from 12am to 11:59pm. Within that time, you can take an *infinite* number of trains anywhere you want. You could get from Paris to Vienna using one travel day, or if counted as \$440/15 days, a little shy of \$30. If you purchase the largest package, which is 3 consecutive months of travel for \$800, that brings your daily cost down to less than \$10. Obviously, you probably won't be taking trains every single day in a row for 3 months, but it still may be worth it if you only travel on weekends and breaks. And as if that deal wasn't good enough, you technically only have to activate your travel day once you're being ticket checked. In France, your ticket is checked before you board. However, in countries like Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, ticket controllers patrol the train looking for people who just boarded. Sometimes, there won't be a ticket controller, they'll be on break, or they'll walk by you without noticing.

Lastly, low-cost carriers can be a tempting way to travel, especially with tickets less than 100€ to destinations like Greece, Ibiza, or Rome. However, you have to factor in additional costs of commuting to and from both your departure and arrival airports. Without a Navigo pass, you have to add 20€ to the total cost. These low-cost carriers also typically charge for additional luggage, so I'd suggest you pack light. Time can also be misleading. For instance, when I was traveling to Zurich, I briefly considered taking a 1 hour 15 minute flight compared to the 4 hour 5 minute train ride. However, once you factor in the 1-hour commute to the airport, that brings the time difference down to under 3 hours. Considering that you have to arrive at the airport 2 hours early (and only 20 minutes in advance for a train), the travel duration difference is negligible, especially considering that you can bring luggage on the train for no additional cost.



3. The best cities in Europe (in my opinion)

- Best architecture: Vienna; runner-up: Prague
- Best food: Any small Italian town, not the big cities; runner-up: Düsseldorf
- Nicest people: Amsterdam; runner-up: Leipzig
- Best scenery: Interlaken; runner-up: Sion

Honestly, take trips to wherever you want. I can't think of a single city you would regret going to. My only piece of advice is to also visit the smaller towns, not just large tourist cities. This was evident for me especially in Italy; I had a great experience in the Italian Alps, whereas my friends who went to Venice and Milan were somewhat disappointed. However, avoiding the beaten path comes with its own challenges. In tourist cities, the staff at most establishments will speak sufficient English. In smaller towns, it's a hit or miss and varies a lot by country. Germany's education system puts a greater emphasis on second language acquisition than, for

instance, France. So, getting around with only English is much easier there. You'll also find that attitudes change depending on the language you speak. It's worth taking some time before your travels to learn (and pronounce correctly) key phrases like "hello," "thank you," and "I'd like to order." Say hello to the beloved Duolingo bird, or if you're interested in furthering your language skills beyond the basics, I've been a French tutor for 3 years and can also teach introductory German. For more advanced German, I recommend reaching out to [Leonore Spiegel](#), who is a phonetics expert and very enthusiastic teacher. That being said, the best way to learn a language is without a doubt through immersion. Make some friends at the bar or the library, or anywhere in between. My first exposure to Swiss German was when an elderly man at the table across from me in the restaurant car of the train asked me for the time, and I learned from a bartender in Amsterdam that the Dutch really don't like when people speak German to them. When you travel, I urge you not to be caught up in the tourist bubble. Engaging with the locals can be just as interesting an experience as exploring the sites themselves. To conclude, I wish you the best of luck on your travels, and let me know if I should update the guide with any must-visit places (or places not worth visiting).

VI. Post-return process

And just like that, before you even realize it, your time abroad has come to an end. I hope this experience has been valuable for you and allowed you to broaden your cultural horizons. Unfortunately, there will be some administrative tasks to take care of once you return. This section will outline what that process looks like, and important deadlines to keep in mind.

A. Obtaining your official transcript

While the timeline may depend on your host institution, it is important to make sure that Rice receives your final transcript from your semester or year abroad. You can either have a physical copy mailed to the study abroad office or have electronic copies sent to abroad@rice.edu. Make sure that your host institution is not sending the transcript directly to the registrar.

B. Program evaluation form

On the same portal where you found your pre-departure checklist, there should be a new form where you can evaluate your experience. It is quite long if you take the time to give detailed answers, but can save your progress at any point. I'm not sure how the study abroad office uses the information you provide, but my assumption is that it will help to improve the experience of students in future years.

C. Welcome back meetings

Typically, there are also in-person events for those that are returning from abroad. There, you'll be able to network with other students and share your experiences. The employees of the study abroad office will also be there, so you can voice any complaints or ideas to fix certain issues you encountered. There will be free food, so don't miss it!

D. Navigating credit transfers

This will probably be the most complicated of all your post-return items, depending on which courses you took while abroad and how much credit you are trying to get. The basic process is quite straightforward: fill out the [Undergraduate Request for Transfer Credit form](#) and have it signed by the appropriate transfer advisor. Then, forward the signed form to the registrar's office.

In reality, the difficulty comes from deciding which credits to use for which majors/minors. This is most noticeable when you're coming back from a program that uses ECTS credits, which are worth half of a credit-hour. Another consideration is that, unlike with Rice courses, you cannot "double dip."

Let me use myself as an example to illustrate potential issues with credit transferring. I happened to take 6 courses while abroad. One of my courses was the equivalent of an LPAP and only worth 2 ECTS. There was also a course worth 10 ECTS, as it contained a lab portion. The remaining four courses were worth 5 ECTS each. This was where my conundrum began. I originally thought that I would be able to pool the four courses together into 20 ECTS credits or 10 credit hours, which at least rounds down to 9 if you account for the fact that most Rice courses are 3 credit hours. However, that is not an option, which meant I was left with four times 2.5 credit hours, which individually all round down and cannot be used to satisfy any major/minor requirements. With some negotiation with the departmental advisors, I was able to take my class with the lab (10 ECTS or 5 credit hours) and put 3 credit hours towards my political science major, and take the remaining 2 to put towards French. This was only possible because the course itself was a political science course, but taught in French. This ultimately pushed me over the threshold of what I needed in order to graduate.

E. Passing it forward

Thank you for making it all the way to this point in my guide. By this time, you should be totally done with any remaining work related to your study abroad experience. My final request for you is that—if this guide helped you at all—please contribute by letting me know about any changes that have been made to the process, or any typos. I'm happy to update the guide and add additional sections as needed. If you want to add any notable restaurants, sites, or vacation spots,

or just want to add anything from your experience to the guide, I welcome that wholeheartedly as well. I truly hope that this has been helpful, and I look forward to connecting with you.

VII. Appendix 1: Finances

I've included several more detailed breakdowns as appendices, since not everyone will need all the information given here. If you're worried or confused about finances and how much you should expect to spend, you're in the right place. There is also a very important section on the CAF that will be helpful to anyone who is not in an Airbnb or subletting.

A. Breakdown of my pre-departure budget and actual spending

Before the study abroad office will approve your application, you will need to review your budget with one of their advisors. In my opinion, they tend to be more conservative with their estimates, which is probably a good thing.

Tuition	
Program Tuition <i>Note: Exchange students pay Rice University tuition.</i>	\$ 27,050.00
Lab/Course Fees (if applicable) Tuition at foreign universities (esp. in the UK) may vary based on major/activities.	
Total Tuition	\$ 27,050.00
Room and Board	
Housing	\$ 6,000.00
Meals	\$ 3,000.00
Total Room and Board	\$ 9,000.00
Fees	
Study Abroad Enrollment Continuance Fee (\$456 per semester/\$228 summer) <i>Note: Exchange students: \$0</i>	\$ 0.00
Rice Student Activities Fee (\$59 per semester/\$0 summer)	\$ 59.00
Program Application Fee <i>Note: Exchange students: \$0</i>	\$ 0.00
Visa/Consular Fees	\$ 375.00
School of Record Transcript (if applicable)	
Total Fees	\$ 434.00
Other Expenses	
Roundtrip Airfare	\$ 1,500.00
Books/Supplies	\$ 300.00
Local Transportation	\$ 300.00
Personal Expenses	\$ 1,200.00
Health and Accident Insurance	\$ 400.00
Other (please explain) Cell phone + PPE / testing	\$ 400.00
Total Other Expenses	\$ 4,100.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 40,584.00

Program tuition is a fixed cost, so that number is completely accurate. For room and board, I ended up paying 500€/month, around 30€/month for utilities, and 8€/month for renter's insurance. Multiplying that out (538€/month * 4 months) comes to 2152€. However, there is also the CAF, which gave me over 200€/month in welfare, making my total closer to 1552€. I also paid an additional 200€ for one month of an Airbnb, which I stayed in for my first month while looking for more long-term housing. The Airbnb would have been 1000€ if not for a coupon I had, because a previous host had cancelled my booking. So, my actual total housing cost was around 1700€ or 2500€ without the coupon. This was comparable to many of my classmates, so I think the \$6000 estimate is quite conservative.

In terms of meals, using the strategies suggested above, I managed to spend less than 10€/day. Multiplying that out should be around 1200€. However, I also ate truffle pasta in Italy, Fondue Bourguignonne in Geneva, and paid my entire class's bill during a final-day outing to a pizzeria. With all of those accounted for, my food total did indeed come out to around 3000€.

My visa/consular fees were more than what the budget accounted for because I had to have them expedited. The Campus France fee was 390€, and the VFS fee was 135€, totaling 525€. If I add the plane tickets back home to make it to my visa appointment, it would be closer to 1700€, but obviously that was a unique situation that I hope you will not find yourself in.

My plane tickets from Houston to Paris were \$1400 round trip. However, plane tickets from Boston (my home) to Paris were only \$500 round trip, albeit with one stop. It may be worth researching whether it would be cheaper to fly from home than from Houston.

Books, aside from the Sciences Po souvenirs I bought voluntarily, cost me nothing. My professors were very anti-required purchases for their courses.

Local transportation in Paris, as I mentioned, is 85€/month for the metro or in my case, 8€/month for the bikes (with some additional metro tickets). If you're living in a place where you plan to metro around instead of bike, I might recommend budgeting more than \$300, because there may also be strikes when you have to Uber or taxi.

Because I was able to save on housing and food, I spend a lot more on personal expenses. One of my priorities was to travel around Europe. My Eurail pass was ~\$350, nightly hostel costs were around \$50/night, and daily food costs when traveling was closer to \$50/day. I spend around four weeks traveling, which comes out to over \$2000 spent.

I used Free for my phone plan, which I covered previously, costing 25€/month or 100€ total. I ended up paying an extra 60€ because I didn't realize that Switzerland was considered non-EU roaming.

In total, looking back at my credit card statements, I spent around \$6000 while in Paris. This did not include housing (which cannot be paid for with a credit card) or flights/visa costs, making the total cost closer to \$10,000 for study abroad one semester. The Bull Fellowship during my year was slightly more than that, so there is some wiggle room that is helpful.

B. Applying for the CAF

The CAF stands for *Caisse d'allocations familiales*, which is social welfare intended for families. Part of that system is the APL, or *Aide personnalisée au logement*, literally “personalized housing aid.” I suggest you begin your application as soon as you move in, but the benefits actually apply retroactively. My application wasn’t fully processed until December, so I received 3 months of CAF aid all at once.

Begin your application by [filling out details](#) of your apartment to estimate the amount of aid you will receive. You will then need to provide your contact information, your *titre de séjour* aka your validated visa, a copy of your *certificat de scolarité*, and a French bank account for them to deposit the funds into.

They will then mail you a physical letter with a code, which you will input online to confirm that you actually live at the address you provided. They will process your application, which might take a while, but you will be notified once you are approved.

You can find more information from [Sciences Po’s guide to the CAF](#). Please note that the website is in French, so you’ll have to use Google Translate if you don’t speak French.

C. Non-French bank accounts

If your apartment is not CAF eligible, you may not need to sign up for a French bank account. The process can be somewhat tedious, especially if you do not speak French. Certain larger bank branches, especially those closer to tourist areas, will have at least one representative who is fluent in English. However, that does not always guarantee that you will not be treated differently from a French client. There is also the common joke that when you try to sign the lease on an apartment, the landlord requires a French bank account, and when you go to the bank to sign up, they require a French address. Without the chicken, there is no egg; without the egg, there is no chicken. If this process is simply something that you find to be a waste of time and effort, there are workarounds to having a French bank account.

1. Revolut

Revolut is a relatively new online-only bank that is now being used across Europe. With everything done through an easy-to-use app, Revolut has found its niche with the younger generation. The main benefit of Revolut is that you can transfer money from US dollars to Euros with no fee, up to \$1000/month. After that, they take a meager 0.1% fee for these currency conversions. This is by far the best deal when it comes to converting your dollars to Euros and vice versa. To sign up, all you need is your US address and identification. Your Euros are held in a European (French) bank, meaning you can send transfers to other French bank accounts (such as that of your landlord) using an IBAN, or International Bank Account Number. However, your account does not have an IBAN of its own, so there is no way for non-Revolut users to transfer money to you. Nonetheless, this is a useful tool to have under your belt.

2. Charles Schwab Checking Account

Another longer term option (I stopped using Revolut after returning to the United States) is a checking account from Charles Schwab. I have been using this service long before my travels abroad, and it has proved to be incredibly useful. Because Schwab has very few bank branches, they opted instead to reimburse *all* ATM transaction fees instead of building new brick and mortar locations. The amazing part is that this not only works in the U.S., where transactions fees range from \$3-\$7 depending on the ATM, but also internationally. This means that I never have to worry about getting scammed at currency exchange centers, which are [more common the further east you go](#) in Europe. The only slight downside is that the checking account is bundled with a brokerage account (which you don't have to use if you don't want to), and they do a soft inquiry when you sign up. Otherwise, it gives complete peace of mind that you will always be able to withdraw cash wherever you are. This came in especially useful when I was in Czechia and other countries that did not use the Euro.



Your card has special travel features to give you peace of mind so you can focus on enjoying your globe-trotting, including:

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- ✓ Travel accident insurance.
- ✓ Travel and emergency assistance service.
- ✓ Roadside dispatch.



And don't forget, your Schwab Bank debit card offers you convenient travel benefits, like:

- ✓ Unlimited ATM fee rebates for cash withdrawals worldwide.¹
- ✓ No foreign card transaction fees.¹
- ✓ Real-time card lock/unlock.²
- ✓ Transaction and travel alerts.

For full details about all your Schwab Bank Visa® Platinum Debit Card benefits, visit the [Guide to Benefits](#) page today.

As a tip, there are certain European countries that are much more cash-dependent than others. For instance, most smaller, local stores in Germany will only take cash. On the other hand, the Netherlands has almost no cash-only establishments, though some will only take Maestro cards and not Visa or Mastercard. If you are forced to exchange physical US dollars for physical Euros, avoid private businesses and try to find post offices, visitor centers, etc.

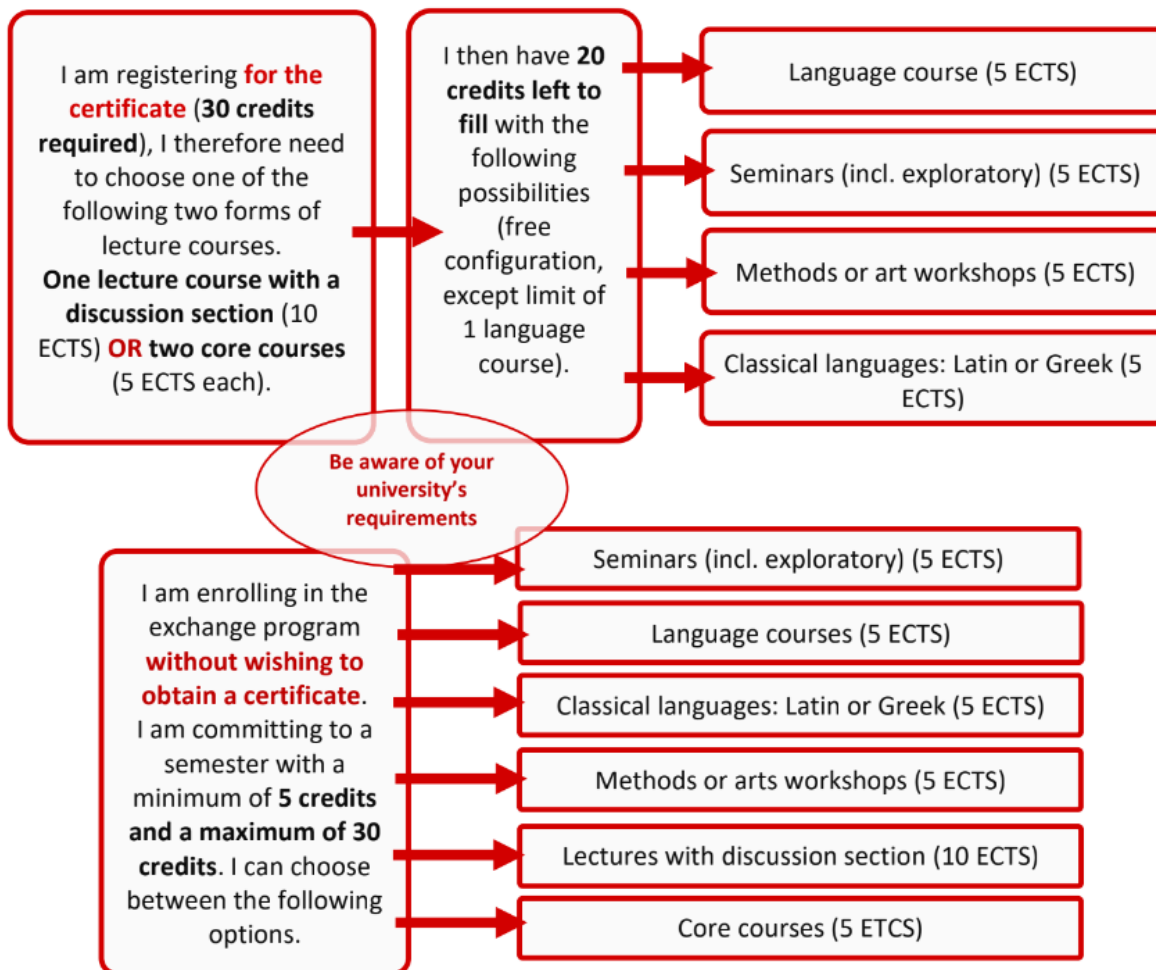
VIII. Appendix 2: Sciences Po

- classroom culture
 - reading grades
- homework workload and difficulty
- final exams
- buddy program

To say that Sciences Po is a good school would be an understatement. When I landed in Paris and went through customs, I was randomly questioned by an agent. When I told her I was from the United States, I was surprised that her stropy expression did not change. She then asked me how long I was staying and what I was doing. I told her I was an exchange student. She was unamused and asked me which school. As soon as I said Sciences Po and showed her my certificate, her whole demeanor changed : “Ah ! Très bien. Bienvenue à Paris, monsieur.” In other words, Sciences Po is like the Harvard or Stanford of France, but with a specialty in government. Public officials especially, like the ones I encountered at my local mayor’s office, treat you much better after they learn where you go to school. One of my classmates told a story, which I’m not sure is true, that he was stopped by a policeman after walking home after a night of partying (and perhaps some substance usage). Upon allegedly presenting his student ID, he was let go. Even if his story isn’t true, the power of the school’s reputation definitely is. That is not to say that Sciences Po students have their heads buried in their textbooks all the time. In fact, the school sponsors parties almost every weekend and will even rent out entire clubs. On the subject of clubbing, there are also plenty of [school clubs](#) on topics ranging from strategic interaction in international relations to a theater group called the Rhinoceros. Regardless of your interests and personality, you will be able to find your niche and friend group here.

A. Course registration

The course registration process begins in the summer, so you do not have the same opportunities like at Rice to discuss with peers and upperclassmen before committing to a schedule. During various points in the summer, the academic advising team will host several informational sessions specifically for exchange students. I found these particularly helpful, especially the open Q&As. The course catalog is not updated until just prior to registration, but you can use previous years’ catalogs to get an idea of which courses may be available. The freshman core courses, called *cours magistraux*, are offered every year. These include Political Institutions, Politics of Humanity, Core Economics, and more. In terms of class structure, they are most similar to ECON 101 or POLI 2XX at Rice: large lectures with smaller discussion groups. In addition, there are many electives which are typically taken by upperclassmen and are smaller. The workload for these electives is far lighter than in the core classes, so keep this in mind when creating a balanced schedule that leaves room for leisure and travel.



If you, like me, are interested in obtaining the Sciences Po certificate, you will have to follow the guidelines shown above. This means that you are taking the maximum allowed 30 credits, whereas many exchange students will opt to take less. The American students I spoke to were taking the minimum of two courses and using the rest of the time to travel. I opted to do the full courseload and took the following courses:

1. *Institutions Politiques* (10 ECTS)
2. Introduction to International Law (5 ECTS)
3. *Distinguer le vrai du faux* (5 ECTS)
4. *Campagnes électorales et situations de crise* (5 ECTS)
5. German B2 (5 ECTS)
6. Table tennis (2 ECTS)

While this was more than most of my peers, Sciences Po's workload does not compare to Rice's. For all of my classes, there were no more than three homework assignments for the entire

semester. Only one of the classes had an in-person final exam which, other than having to wake up early in the morning, was completely doable without any studying. For the LPAP-equivalent sports courses, there is often a sizeable waitlist as is the case at Rice. If you know where the class is held, you could always just show up and attend without receiving credit. My table tennis coach, Igor, was hilarious and easygoing. The class was well worth biking slightly further away to the local community center.

In terms of course and professor reviews, Sciences Po has a system very similar to Esther where existing students are able to see ratings provided by students from previous years. However, during my course registration period, I was not able to access that part of the portal, so I was effectively going in blind. Sometimes, the professor names are listed with the course, so you can look them up and do some research. My media studies class, for instance, was taught by journalist Thomas Huchon. He has a segment on TV where he combines humor with political commentary, and he seemed like a nice guy. His class ended up being one of my favorites, and he made a concerted effort to engage the non-French speaking students in class discussions. If you are hesitant to sign up for a course without first seeing the reviews, I suggest you reach out to someone who has done the Sciences Po exchange in the recent past.

Disclaimer: Course registration opens and closes in Paris time, so you may need to be awake at an odd hour to make sure you get the courses you want. Spots are filled on a first come, first served basis.

B. Welcome Programme

This is Sciences Po's version of O-Week that treats incoming students more like adults than children. The itinerary is more spaced out to allow for time to settle in, run errands, or simply explore the city. Every morning, there is an in-classroom methodology course that runs through the assignment and grading structures at Sciences Po. In my group, no one really took this seriously, and attendance dropped by more than half by the second day. This is because the ECTS credits offered for participating in the Welcome Programme do not count towards the certificate.

After the classroom component, the group leader takes his/her group on field trips, sometimes combining with other groups. My group leader, Théophile, took us hiking in Buttes-Chaumont, to the Musée d'Orsay, and on a scavenger hunt in Montmartre. He also showed us how to use the school library, which classrooms were in which buildings, and various other useful tips for the semester.

At night, Sciences Po hosts school-sponsored parties similar to publics at Rice. The first night, they reserved a boat on the Seine exclusively for Welcome Programme students to mingle and

make friends. The first drink is free, but all subsequent drinks are on your own dime. This is a great opportunity to meet new people in a casual environment. The parties, lasting until late into the night, were also the reason many students stopped showing up to the 8am methodology classes.

Overall, the Welcome Programme does a great job at integrating new students socially and academically to Sciences Po. You can select between the French and English Welcome Programme. I did the one in English so as to not overwhelm myself in the first week. Most of my group members were American, though there were several Japanese, Israeli, and Mexican students as well. If you are debating whether the Welcome Programme is worth arriving a week in advance and paying an additional 250€, I would highly recommend doing it so that you are not in the dark when school starts. The lack of stress around printing assignments, checking out a book, or figuring out where my classes were was, in my opinion, absolutely worth the cost. Théo would later go on to help me with various other aspects of Parisian life throughout the semester.



My Welcome Programme group at the Musée d'Orsay

C. Academics

As I previously mentioned, the academic part of Sciences Po was much easier than Rice. There were fewer assignments, grading was less strenuous, and there is less time spent in class (2 hours per week, per class).

However, there are still come caveats to the classes. Firstly, attendance is absolutely mandatory. Just like in high school, the professors would do role-call attendance. More than two unexcused absences result in automatic failure of the course. This is because the semester is a mere twelve weeks, so more missed class would severely hinder your ability to follow the material. If you're

used to skipping class at Rice, this may be more of a consideration for you. Participation is also a part of the grade in most classes, so it is not enough to simply show up.

Secondly, the grading system is out of 20. A 20/20 is practically impossible unless you are better than the professor himself. Anywhere from a 16-19 is seen as very good, with only the top students (allegedly such as former president François Mitterrand) making this grade. 14-15 is good, and students would generally be very satisfied to end with this grade. 10-13 is passing but not good—the average grade in every class as determined through a curve. Any grade below 10 counts as a fail. For Rice students, there is only 10 and above or below 10. All courses convert back to a pass/fail, so you only need to focus on having a double-digit grade.

Lastly, the stereotypical toxic competitiveness of Sciences Po is most evident in the freshman core classes. After a quiz or graded assignment, grades are read aloud in front of the class by last name (i.e. “Tsai, 13”). During this process, some students will celebrate while others sink into their seats. Knowing that I was pass/fail made me much less concerned, but seeing others’ reactions was nonetheless unsettling. If you are easily embarrassed, you may want to consider avoiding the core classes. On a more positive note, the competitiveness also means that it is very easy to join a study group for core classes. Notes and guides are openly shared between classmates on Google Drive, and in-person meet-ups are not uncommon. I mostly used the conversations with my classmates to practice my French, and gaining a better grasp of the material was just an added bonus.

I found the professors to be very approachable and quick to respond to emails. They truly care about their students, and many will offer extracurricular opportunities and recommendation letter writing if you are an active participant in their course. For three out of three of my small courses, the professor took the entire class out for a meal and drinks during the study days. This may come as a bit of a culture shock; I’m not sure how many of you have gone to a bar with your professors. Nonetheless, the fact that lasting relationships can be created in just a semester abroad shows the networking strength of Sciences Po and the impact it can have on your future.

D. Extracurriculars

The school offers plenty of opportunities outside of the classroom that are not available to the general public:

1. Buddy program

During the first week of school, students have the opportunity to sign up for a “buddy,” pairing exchange students with French students. This encourages intermingling, language immersion practice, and gives you one free friend to start the semester. I still keep in touch with my buddy

Paul, who was a freshman when I was at Sciences Po. He showed me several spots around the city where he liked to eat, and we discovered a great Chinese buffet together during one of our outings. It was through him that I was able to practice the type of French that is not taught in the textbooks. He spoke extremely quickly and did not enunciate sometimes, which ultimately trained my ear to understand native French speakers better. He was not particularly keen on honing his English skills, which ended up being great for me as we primarily spoke French together. You can specify your language preferences in your buddy form that they use to match you with someone.

2. Social gatherings and parties

The *Bureau des Éléves (BDE)*, *Association Sportive (AS)* and *Bureau des Arts (BDA)* are the three large student organizations that host events throughout the semester. These are often parties where they reserve the entire venue, whether it be a club, bar, or somewhere more unique. Tickets are cheap but sell out quickly, and you can pay online or in-person at their club outposts near the cafeteria. *Melting Potes* is another organization exclusively dedicated to the integration of exchange students. They oversee the Buddies as well as plan trips to other cities in Europe. These are flat-fee, discounted trips as they book hotel rooms and tours in bulk. During my semester there, they planned trips to the châteaux of the Loire Valley, to Amsterdam, and to Normandy. If you hate planning for trips, this is the way to go. As someone who is very particular about visiting certain places, I opted to go with a smaller group of friends when traveling.

3. Additional clubs

The full list of clubs at Sciences Po Paris [can be found here](#). There is also a club fair within the first several weeks of school where you can meet the representatives and learn more about each club.

4. Guest lectures and discussions

As the premier political science institution in Europe, Sciences Po hosts foreign and domestic political celebrities alike. While I was there, I was able to attend visits from the opposition leader of Belarus, the Colombian president, Angela Merkel, François Hollande, and many others. The sign up link for tickets is emailed to every student, so you have to be quick to be the first in line. Security is also often increased during visits from high-level officials, so plan to get to class early if you know one is coming. Some of the guests will even stay afterwards to chat with the students. Here I am with the representative of Taiwan to France, François Wu:



5. Spontaneous events and celebrations

Lastly, the school hosts various events throughout the semester that are sent through an email to students. For example, there was a night of wine, cheese, and dancing in the school courtyard complete with catering and a DJ. Another event that was more to my liking was an orchestral and opera performance put on by students. These are held in the evenings after classes are over and are a great tool for procrastination.



IX. Appendix 3: La langue française

Now while it is true that I experienced no discrimination while in France, many have attributed that to my fluency in French prior to departing. It is to some degree true that the French judge more based on language capacity (and dress) than on other superficial qualities. To that extent, I find that it would be very useful for anyone planning on studying abroad in France to have basic command of the French language.

If you are serious about beginning those studies several months prior, I would recommend Duolingo, [EasyFrench](#), and the textbook *Bien Dit!* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. I'm also happy to put you in touch with native French speakers who might be interested in spending time in conversation with you in both French and English.

For those of you that simply want to get by, these are phrases I recommend you memorize. They were by far my most commonly used phrases in daily life:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Parlez-vous anglais? | 1. Do you speak English |
| 2. Excusez-moi | 2. Excuse me |
| 3. Pardon | 3. (Use this when squeezing past people on the metro) |

Now for more situational phrases:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 4. Je voudrais... | 4. "I would like..." (when ordering) |
| 5. L'addition, s'il vous plaît | 5. Asking for the check |
| 6. Ça sera tout, merci | 6. "That will be all" usually said as a response to "Et avec ceci ?" |

If you would like a more comprehensive list, there are numerous websites and blogs that have more specialized information for your particular situation. Sciences Po also offers French courses to learners of all levels. Outside of school, various churches offer free or low-cost programs primarily designed for new immigrants.

Let me know if you have any trouble with learning French, and I will do my best to help you out or put you in touch with someone who can!

X. Appendix 4: Emergencies and Legal Trouble

While I truly hope that your experience is smooth and nothing unexpected comes up, there are times when you will need to deal with situations that you may not be equipped to handle. That is to say that the support networks you had at Rice—your magisters, RAs, family, and friends—are no longer present to help you. They might also not be knowledgeable about the issue you are facing. What do you do then? While I cannot cover every single situation, I can go over my personal experiences and the knowledge I have gained from them. In this section, I will cover medical and mental health situations, contacting the police, and running into legal trouble.

A. Medical

For starters, do *not* be worried about being able to cover medical costs. Unless you are in long-term care, the universal healthcare coverage is infinitely better than in the United States. I was shocked to receive my bill for a medical issue I had, which was the same cost as a trip to the grocery store. That being said, the process of navigating the medical system is not quite as simple.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, it may not be your first instinct, but you should call the firefighters (*pompiers*) who are trained to handle some minor situations and can transport you to the nearest hospital *completely free of charge*. I was shocked to hear of this government service when I was helping out a friend in need of assistance. The firefighters were incredibly nice and efficient, even offering to give the doctors at the hospital my phone number to call me for updates.

For mental health crises, transportation to the nearest hospital can be done through the firefighters. If you need EMTs, there is the *Service d'aide médicale urgente* or SAMU. More often than not, they will not necessarily be able to do more than the firefighters could for a mental issue. If you are at Sciences Po, there is an on-campus psychiatry service free to students.

In non-emergency situations, you may still need to see a doctor for whatever reason. For instance, I needed a French doctor's note in order to enroll in my table tennis course at Sciences Po. For this, look no further than doctolib.fr. This is the platform that has an entire list of doctor's offices. You can schedule an appointment online or find the contact information for that office on their page. It should also state what the co-pays are and whether they take the universal healthcare. For an ordinary checkup, there are two tiers of prices, 25€ or 65€. Since I needed an expedited note, I opted for an office that had greater availability but the higher co-pay. They did not even ask to see my insurance card (which had not arrived yet). At the end of my appointment, the secretary simply took my credit card and charged me the 65€. It was a smooth process and much better than seeing the doctor in the United States.

B. Housing

Whether your landlord unexpectedly evicts you, or the conditions of your housing are not as described (meaning the place is inhospitable or in violation of building code), there are several free resources at your disposal.

The first is the Abbé Pierre Foundation. Named after a priest who dedicated his life to helping the homeless, this organization manages several volunteer lawyers and lawyer associations that can give you advice on how to proceed with your issue. They also have emergency housing in the worst case scenarios.

Secondly, every town hall has its own free ADIL counselors who are jurists specializing in housing rights. Sometimes, another town hall will have better availability or quality of care than the one in the arrondissement where you live. You can schedule an appointment with any town hall; but be warned that the soonest one may be several weeks out.

Lastly, the mayor's office also has a public lawyer known as the *conciliateur de justice*. He/she has the authority to mediate potential disputes between you and your landlord, you and a neighbor, or you and a flatmate. Perhaps you have an issue with your housing contract, or you want someone to look at it before you sign. Perhaps you believe that your landlord is acting in violation of that contract. These are issues that the *conciliateur* can handle. Similar to the ADIL counselor, you can reach out to the offices at any town hall. It may be worth considering that the wealthier arrondissements may provide better service. My *conciliateur* also completely changed his attitude once he found out that I was a student at Sciences Po, his alma mater.

If none of these options lead to a solution, the next step would be to contact a private lawyer. I outline how to do this in the following section.

C. Legal

For arbitration assistance, please see the paragraph on the *conciliateur de justice* from the previous section. If you need additional help, there is a “lawyer bus” that goes around Paris provided free legal assistance. I have attached a scan of their pamphlet:

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Retrouvez aussi les avocats bénévoles sur RDV au sein de permanences organisées dans les locaux de nos partenaires partout dans Paris !
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5 PERMANENCES GÉNÉRALISTES HEBDOMADAIRES SANS RENDEZ-VOUS TOUTE L'ANNÉE SAUF LES JOURS FÉRIÉS

LUNDI DE 17H À 20H
Devant le 19 avenue de Choisy, Paris 13^e
M7 Porte de Choisy

MARDI DE 17H À 20H
Devant le 14 avenue de la Porte Montmartre, Paris 18^e
M14 M18 Porte de Clignancourt

MERCREDI DE 17H À 20H
Devant le 4 avenue Marc Sangnier, Paris 14^e
M13 Porte de Vanves

JEUDI DE 17H À 20H
Devant les 116-118 Boulevard Bessières, Paris 17^e
(à proximité du lycée Honoré de Balzac.)
M13 M15 M16 Porte de Clichy

SAMEDI DE 10H À 13H
Devant le 6 rue Charles et Robert, Paris 20^e
M9 M10 M20 Porte de Montreuil

CE QU'IL FAUT SAVOIR SUR LES PERMANENCES
Trois avocats bénévoles assurent les permanences, dans 3 boîtes séparées afin de respecter au mieux la confidentialité des consultations et le secret professionnel.
Les consultations sont anonymes et gratuites, l'accueil est inconditionnel.
Si l'usager, une fois sa consultation passée souhaite que l'avocat rencontré se charge de la défense de ses intérêts, il existe la procédure de demande de droit de suite qui consiste à lever l'anonymat de l'avocat une fois l'autorisation de droit de suite obtenue auprès du Bâtonnier, permettant ainsi à l'usager de poursuivre le traitement de sa demande avec l'avocat d'origine évidemment pas tenu par cette demande et peut refuser de suivre le dossier.

4 PERMANENCES SPÉCIALISÉES TOUTE L'ANNÉE SAUF LES JOURS FÉRIÉS

Chaque dernier lundi du mois, de 12h à 15h
ACCESSIBLE AVEC OU SANS RDV
PERMANENCE DÉDIÉE AUX PROBLÉMATIQUES JURIDIQUES RENCONTRÉES PAR LES PERSONNES LGBTIQ+
Parvis de la Mairie du 11^e arr. 12 place Léon Blum, Paris 11^e
M9 Voltaire
Renseignements et sur possible sur : barreausolidarite@avocatparis.org
01 44 32 47 37 / 01 80 27 22 63

Un mercredi sur deux, de 12h à 15h
ACCESSIBLE AVEC OU SANS RDV
PERMANENCE DÉDIÉE AUX FEMMES VICTIMES DE VIOLENCES
Devant le 7 rue des Maraischers, Paris 20^e
M11 M13 M20 Porte de Vincennes
Renseignements et sur possible sur : barreausolidarite@avocatparis.org
01 44 32 47 37 / 01 80 27 22 63

Chaque premier mardi du mois, de 12h à 15h
SANS RDV ENGAGEMENT
PERMANENCE DÉDIÉE AUX PROBLÉMATIQUES JURIDIQUES RENCONTRÉES PAR LES SENIORS OU LEURS AIDANTS
Devant le 2 rue Eugène Spillès, Paris 7^e
en face de la Mairie Paris-Centre
M3 M4 Arts et Métiers ou M8 Filles du Calvaire

Tous les mardis, sauf les 1^{er} mardi du mois, de 12h à 16h
SANS RDV ENGAGEMENT
PERMANENCE SPÉCIALISÉE EN DROIT DES ÉTRANGERS ET DROIT D'ASILE
Place de la Chapelle, Paris 18^e
Derrière la station de métro « La Chapelle » de la ligne 2
M20 M21 M24 La Chapelle

Tous les vendredis, de 14h à 17h
SANS RDV ENGAGEMENT
PERMANENCE SPÉCIALISÉE EN DROIT DES ÉTRANGERS ET DROIT D'ASILE
Avenue de la porte Aubervilliers, Paris 18^e
au niveau du Jardin Anatole Vin
M7 Porte de la Villette puis M20 Porte d'Aubervilliers ou M5 Rosa Parks

Le « Bus de la Solidarité » est un dispositif mis en place par le Barreau de Paris en 2003, en partenariat avec la Ville de Paris et l'association Droits d'Urgence.

Each town hall will also have a pamphlet outlining the free services they provide, including legal aid, mental health professionals, and specialists in handling discrimination or sexual crimes. Here is the one for the 5th arrondissement, where I lived.

VOTRE SANTÉ EST PRÉCIEUSE

ASSISTANT DE SERVICE SOCIAL DE L'ASSURANCE MALADIE (CRAMIF)
Il accompagne les assurés sociaux et les travailleurs indépendants et garantit quatre grandes missions : faciliter l'accès aux soins des personnes en situation de précarité, prévenir la désinsertion professionnelle, agir pour l'autonomie des personnes malades, handicapées ou âgées et favoriser le bien vieillir. Sur RDV au 3646 ou sur amel.fr (ma messagerie)

LA PERMANENCE SOUFFRANCE ET TRAVAIL
Cette permanence propose une écoute personnalisée et une aide juridique aux personnes qui rencontrent des difficultés dans leur environnement professionnel.
Sur RDV par mail souffrance.travail.05@gmail.com ou par tel. au 06 07 02 87 66

PARLER AVEC UNE PSYCHOTHÉRAPEUTE
Consultations gratuites d'une praticienne certifiée EMDR Europe (thérapie des traumas reconnue par l'OMS), certifiée en PNL et en Hypnose.
Sur RDV au 01 56 24 03 93

EN QUÊTE D'INFORMATIONS POUR FAIRE VALOIR VOS DROITS

AVOCATE SPÉCIALISÉE DANS LES VIOLENCES SEXISTES, SEXUELLES ET RACISTES
Elle vous aide à faire valoir vos droits si vous êtes victime de discriminations dans votre vie personnelle ou sur votre lieu de travail.
Sur RDV sur cabma05-solidarite@paris.fr ou 01 56 81 74 65/66

LES AVOCATS GÉNÉRALISTES DÉSIGNÉS PAR LE BARREAU DE PARIS
Ils vous informent de vos droits sur les questions familiales, professionnelles, sur le droit des victimes, des étrangers, etc. Les avocats apportent des conseils personnalisés mais ne sont pas autorisés à intervenir directement dans votre dossier.
Sur RDV à la mairie du 5e ou 01 56 81 74 66 / 65

LA CLINIQUE JURIDIQUE DE PARIS
Ces permanences juridiques sont assurées par les étudiants de l'École de Droit de la Sorbonne. Les thèmes varient en fonction des demandes : droit du travail de la famille, des successions, etc.
Sur RDV sur www.cliniquejuridiquedesorbonne.com

UN NOTAIRE À VOTRE ÉCOUTE
Il vous conseille en matière immobilière, de fiscalité, de droit de la famille ou des sociétés.
Sur RDV à la mairie du 5e ou 01 56 81 74 66 / 65

Maison des droits et de la famille

logement
santé justice
famille
médiation
fiscalité

Consultations gratuites

**Rendez-vous :
accueil de la mairie ou 01 56 81 74 65**

Mairie du 5e arrondissement
21, place du Panthéon 75005
www.mairie05.paris.fr

If they are not able to assist or if you have a more urgent legal issue, you will need to see a private lawyer. My professor of law at Sciences Po is a practicing lawyer who is fluent in both French and English. Although his office is in the suburb of Pontoise, he frequently comes into the city to teach and could likely meet you for a consultation. Here is his contact information. If you tell him I sent you, he might even give you a discount:

Maître Bamdad SHAMS
7 Rue Eric de Martimprey, 95300 Pontoise, France
+33 1 30 30 46 27
bamdadshams@gmail.com

He is not only a fantastic professor but a great generalist lawyer who has knowledge in several fields pertaining especially to international cases. If you have immigration or visa issues, housing issues, or even criminal accusations, he will be able to either handle your case directly or refer you to one of his colleagues.

That being said, do not be surprised that his rates reflect his demand and expertise. While it is not free like the other resources linked above, costs are still significantly better than what they would be here in the United States. I also trust him more to give a fair quote compared to other English-speaking lawyers who may take advantage of the fact that you do not understand the French legal system.