

A STUDENT GUIDE TO FOOD IN PARIS

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Note: This guide seeks to help familiarize students with the type of food and food shops they might find while studying in Paris. While I tried many foods and ate in many neighborhoods in the city I also follow a vegan diet and hence, will not be very insightful in terms of traditional meat and dairy based French cuisine.

Intro: Cité Universitaire's Maison du Provinces de France

The travel study program I did arranged our lodging at Cité Universitaire, a large campus / foundation located in Paris' 14th arrondissement which is on the left bank, south of landmarks like the Eiffel Tower and the Musée du Louvre.

Our house at Cité U was the Maison du Provinces de France – here we had a shared kitchen at each end of our floor. The kitchens were equipped with basic things like stoves, sinks, seating areas, microwaves and small countertop ovens.

Kitchen “essentials” to bring or buy:

1. A bowl and plate
2. Cutlery to eat with
3. Knife to cut fruit or bread with
4. Napkins or paper towels



Shopping For Groceries

Options: There are a variety of options for grocery shopping in Paris – here I have compiled a list of those nearest to Cité Universitaire. There are of course, other locations throughout the city and are very easy to find by making a quick Google Map search

1. **Outdoor / Open-Air Markets** | Markets are a good option if you like to try fruits and vegetables in season, it is also the most affordable option for all kinds of fresh foods. Depending on your program’s home base, there will most likely be a market near you once or twice a week – there is a bi-weekly one right down the street from the Maison du Provinces de France. Ask your professor or run a quick online search for outdoor markets in your area. However, for a large and must-see market experience, I would really recommend the Sunday morning Bastille Market.
2. **Small “Fruits & Vegetables” shops** | Produce shops in the city of Paris are very easy to find and recognizable by their labeled awnings and crates or stalls full of fruits and vegetables on display outside their doors.
3. **Franprix** | Franprix is probably the most convenient and commercial of the grocery options listed – it is the nearest grocery store to Cité U except for a poorly stocked store called LiDL across the street. It has most of the things you will need, including things like laundry detergent, dish soap, and plastic containers. Their make-it-yourself fresh orange juice is great – their



baguettes not so much. The prices on fresh produce are also higher at Franprix than at smaller shops or open-air markets.

4. **Bio c' Bon** | This shop was my favorite to visit in order to find things like kombucha, rice cakes, organic produce, non-dairy milks, and everything in between. It has a similar feel to Whole Foods, which was comforting and convenient for a veggie like me. Located about a block further down from the Franprix, it was somewhere I liked to go if I felt like I wanted a change.
5. **Elan Nature** | This shop is similar to Bio c' Bon, also a bit further down from Franprix and stocked with things more akin to Whole Foods than Ralphs.
6. **Boulangerie & Patisseries** | Last but not least, bread and pastry shops in France are abundant and delicious. The nearest one to our location at Cité U sold their baguettes for less than 1 euro – as do most places. They are a Parisian staple and will probably be a part of many of your meals in the city.



Recipes

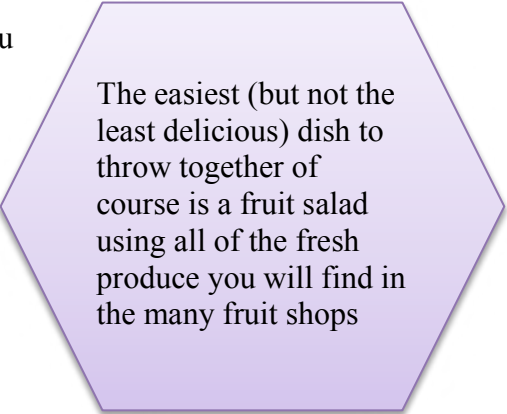
Eating fresh food is easy in Paris, but it can be tedious to carry ingredients to the dorm kitchen and expensive to purchase enough pots and pans for dishes composed of various parts. Hence, I compiled a list of the meals I prepared for myself throughout my program – all very simple and requiring of minimal equipment, ingredients, and time.

Overnight oats | For this first recipe you will need some sort of lidded container or small glass jar.

1. Simply fill up the jar (I bought a small glass jar with a lid) with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oats and enough milk (I used oat milk) to exceed the oats by a tiny bit.
2. Next, close the container and put into the fridge until ready to eat the next morning.
3. You can also use muesli (oats with things like raisins and other grains), which is easy to find in grocery stores or add toppings to your oats such as fresh berries, nuts, or dried coconut.

Rice and veggies | I made this the most throughout the month I think – a very simple throw together meal!

1. Eyeball the amount of water you will need to boil the rice – I had no measuring tools so eyeballing was my only measuring strategy.
2. While the water comes to a boil, wash and chop whatever vegetables you will be using – this was usually zucchini or green beans (or both) for me.
3. Once the water has boiled I add in the rice and after about 5-7 minutes add in the vegetables, salt, garlic powder, and a bit of crushed tomatoes (from a jar or tin, if you have it) for extra flavor.
4. After stirring everything up, *partially* cover the pot with its lid.
5. I generally would walk back to my room at this point, coming back periodically to check that the water had not run out or overflowed.
6. After about 20 minutes the rice should be done and the vegetables softened – ready to eat!



The easiest (but not the least delicious) dish to throw together of course is a fruit salad using all of the fresh produce you will find in the many fruit shops

Pasta in tomato sauce | The only ingredients needed for this are pasta, salt, garlic powder, onion (optional), and crushed tomatoes or tomato sauce.

1. First bring water to a boil in a pot.
2. Next add your pasta and some salt and stir.
3. Once the pasta is soft enough to eat – this takes less than 10 minutes – pour out as much water as you can.
4. Put back on the burner and add in the tomatoes, salt, garlic powder, and some chopped onion if you have it.
5. Stir it all up and put on the lid, reducing the temperature and stirring as needed.
6. After about 10 minutes the tomato and pasta should be much more incorporated and ready to serve – be sure to check periodically that the pasta does not stick to the bottom of the pot!

Avocado toast | This one isn't much of a recipe but as I did eat it a few times for breakfast so I thought I would include it!

1. Slice an avocado and spread half of it onto two slices of bread. I used rice crackers or sliced rye bread from Franprix alternatively.
2. Use a fork to mush the avocado and then top with lime and salt. If you have things like fresh tomatoes or sprouts, they make great toppings too – like an open faced sandwich!

Avocado salad | I have to admit I only made this once – it was delicious but I always veered towards the warm dishes for dinner. A salad is easy to throw together however, and here's what I used:

1. Open a bag of pre-washed salad greens and pour some onto a plate or bowl.

2. Top with half a can of corn kernels, some halved cherry tomatoes, halved red grapes, half an avocado, some lemon juice, and salt.

Restaurants

The most practical and fun way to eat in Paris is in restaurants, of course. Money-wise, it is advisable to budget in about 20 euros a day for this – for one meal out, or a meal and an afternoon treat. That amount could easily go up or down depending on the places you choose – or more specifically, the kind of food you want to eat. Most of the sit-down restaurants you will encounter throughout town will have prices above 12 euros per dish.

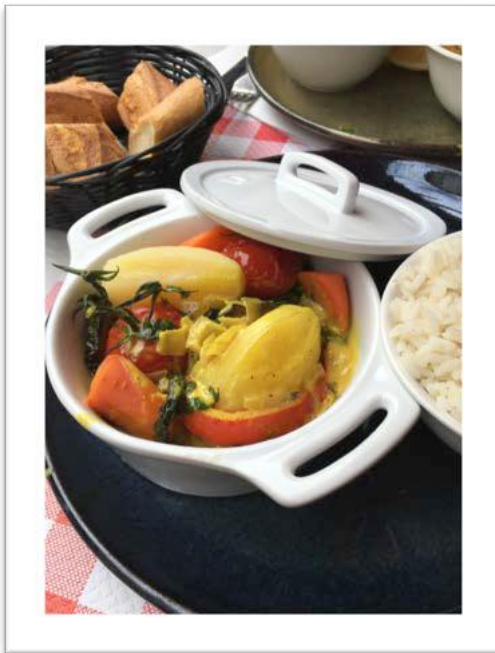
In addition to pricing, the general atmosphere and etiquette at traditional French sit-down restaurants (like brasseries and bistros) is also similar from establishment to establishment. Most will offer before-dinner drinks, appetizers, main meals, and desserts. Many will offer some kind of lunch special that comes with a starter and main dish or main dish and dessert – these will be posted on large menus outside the restaurant. Be aware of course that most restaurant meals are lengthy affairs. Even if you stick to one course, most restaurants are a great place for socializing with friends and enjoying some down time.

Just because many of the restaurants you walk by look similar – large awnings, bistro chairs, round tables, and similar menus – does not mean there is not a wide array of cuisines to be found and enjoyed in the city. Below are some of the places I tried and would recommend.

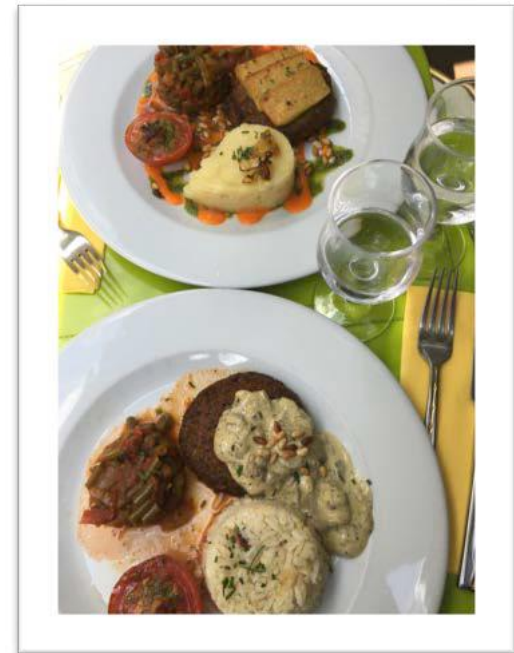
ivlo | 10 Rue Lucien Sampaix: This was the first vegan restaurant that I found in Paris. Not every single item on the menu is vegan – some are vegetarian – but most of it is. I believe they have different menu items everyday. The afternoon that I visited they offered a *formule midi*, which included the *entrée* and *plat*. I chose a gazpacho as a starter and a “steak” dish for my main meal. The price was very reasonable (15.50 euros) and the flavor just as good. My favorite thing was actually their juice of the day (5.50 euros) – apple, celery, carrot, and lemon – it was incredibly fresh and delicious!



Shakespeare and Company Café | 37 Rue de la Bûcherie: You most likely are familiar with the Shakespeare and Company bookstore in Paris, right beside it is this little café. It is reasonably priced – especially their salad of the day, which changes throughout the week and costs less than 10 euros. The service and food is different than traditional French restaurants: you order and pay at the register and then sit down and wait for your tray of food. The language lends a different vibe – it is an English-speaking establishment – and paying first means you linger or leave as you please. In addition to the salad of the day they offer smoothies, fresh juices, and sandwiches (regular or bagel) of the day – all cost less than 8 euros. They also have things like kombucha and healthy chocolate bars (and have a great view of Notre Dame)!



La Bohème du Tetre | 2 Place du Tetre: A friend and I found this place after our class at St. Pierre de Montmartre. It happened to be right across from the church and the outdoor seating was great for people watching. Their vegan options were a vegan hamburger and a vegan curry dish – I went for the latter. It was creamy, hearty, and delicious – I wish I had gone back a second time! The price was reasonable in my opinion; it came with a fruit salad dessert as well, all for 20 euros. Be sure to ask for tap water, or you’ll be stuck paying 7 euros for a glass bottle of Evian.



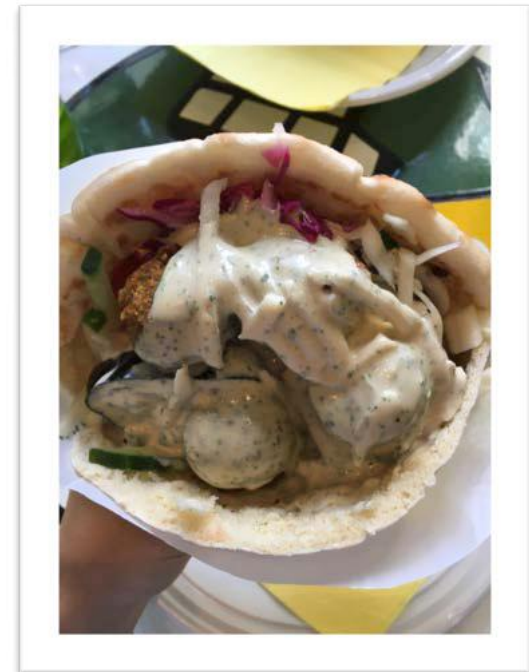
Le Portager du Marais | 24 Rue Rambuteau: I would go back here even just for the neighborhood it is in – the Marais is one of my favorites. The vegan food was delicious however, and the prices comparable to other French

establishments. I ordered a *plat* (16.50 euros) that consisted of a quinoa patty, rice, and some vegetables, and shared a dessert (8.50 euros) with a friend. My dish had the option of tomato or mushroom sauce for the patty and our waitress recommended the mushroom – it was wise to follow her advice. The mushroom sauce was amazing! Our dessert was a small chocolate cake decorated with a red fruity sauce and custard – it was delicious as well, of course.

Ristorante Del Arte | 20 Boulevard Saint-Michel: This place is an Italian food chain restaurant that I believe has multiple locations. I know many people dislike going to chain restaurants while abroad but I don't mind it – especially with a month-long stay. In addition, Del Arte doesn't feel too commercial, and the food was delightful. I ordered a vegetarian pizza without cheese and it did not disappoint. The crust was soft and fluffy, the sauce flavorful, and the toppings sufficiently cooked. I didn't catch a photo unfortunately but take my word for it – it looked and tasted great! Two more points in favor of Del Arte: the prices are affordable (hearty individual pizzas for less than 15 euros) and they have a pamphlet with allergy information if you request it from your server.



L'as du Falafel | 34 Rue des Rosiers: We walked through Rue des Rosiers as a class during a walking tour of Roman Paris. The street is full of lovely looking Jewish bread shops as well as quite a few falafel restaurants. The place I tried was L'as du Falafel where I ordered the falafel pita. It was hearty, indulgent, and delicious! It would be cool I imagine, to visit other falafel shops on this street – although L'as seemed to be very popular. We arrived at the nick of time; right before the noon lunch rush filled the place and formed a line out the door. Prices were very affordable, and the service efficient and polite.



Bertillon | 29-31 Rue Saint-Louis en Ille: This ice-cream shop is iconic of Paris for a reason – they have very unique flavors both in cream and sorbet forms. My favorites were the peach and the fig sorbets, although I heard the honey nougat ice cream was incredible. Be prepared to wait in line and spend about 5 or 6 euros for a couple of scoops!

Amorino | 31 Rue Vieille du Temple: Although Bertillon is iconic and I really, really liked it, I'm not afraid to say that I loved Amorino. It is by no means as Parisian as Bertillon – Amorino is Italian, and it is also a chain. They have multiple locations throughout Paris – and one in Beverly Hills too. Their selling point for me was their extensive and creative vegan flavors. I was hooked on the pistachio and chocolate – both surprisingly creamy and flavorful for sorbets. Here you pay by size rather than flavors, so you can get a medium or large bowl or cone and fill it up with all the flavors you'd like – also for about 5 euros.

Dietary Restrictions

You may have noticed that all of my restaurant recommendations and recipes are vegan-friendly. I personally travelled to Paris slightly worried that I'd have to carry around a plastic container with food for myself every day. I found however, that the city was a lot less intimidating and easier to navigate food-wise than I expected for myself.

Although I know most people will not have this on their mind, I thought it might be helpful to point out that this is probably true for many other dietary restrictions as well. Being prepared and finding some restaurants that you want to check out in several neighborhoods is a good place to start, regardless of dietary needs.

There are definitely options out there if you are willing to do a little searching. When it comes to food allergies as well, learning some of the terminology in French will be helpful. Things like allergy cards or even knowing the terms for “no nuts” or “no shellfish” will go a long way in ensuring both you and your body are happy while abroad.

