

DECOR TOURS
PARIS

PARIS
DISPATCH

No. 4: There's an App for That

Bon retour à tous!

This edition we focus on the necessary apps, the useful apps, the important apps, the quirky apps, etc. There's only one app that's required...but the rest are highly recommended!

Our Must-Have App

You will need to download WhatsApp to your phone and be comfortable using it, as this will be our primary form of group communication in Paris.

WhatsApp is a chat service, like you already have as a feature on your phone, but it allows us to seamlessly share texts, voice messages, high-res photos, documents (such as our schedule while in Paris), and more. Because it is platform-agnostic, all communication is easily accessible



by everyone in the group, whether you have an iPhone or an Android. Plus, many businesses in Europe use WhatsApp as a means of customer communication. Trust us, it makes scoring a reservation or booking a service much easier than trying to get through with a call!

How to get started with WhatsApp

WhatsApp is available for both Android and iPhone; you can find it on the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. The system requirements are Android 4.1 or newer or iOS 12 or newer, so compatibility shouldn't be a problem. The only requirement is an active cellular plan, as registration is based on your cell phone number.

Setting up WhatsApp is very straightforward. When you open the app for the first time, you'll be guided through a few set-up steps. Enter your mobile phone number when prompted, and this becomes your WhatsApp "address" and account ID. An SMS message will be sent to confirm that you actually own the number in question.

If you're using an Android phone, WhatsApp will pick up this SMS message automatically in most cases and carry on with the registration process. Registering WhatsApp on an iPhone may require you to manually punch in the

six-digit code, or at least tap on the autofill code above your keyboard, much like how SMS two-factor authentication works in other apps.

Once your phone number has been registered, there are a couple more prompts including permission to access your contacts and photos—both completely optional—after which you'll be ready to go.

Look for Deb Barrett at 630 207 0357 and Susan Schultz at 212 352 9968. Send us a message asking to be added to the Paris Jan 2026 group and we'll send you a confirmation. That's it for now...but the sooner you sign up, the sooner you'll start receiving additional info on Paris events—and not just those associated with DecoOff!

WhatsApp on your computer

You can get WhatsApp on your Mac or Windows PC, but while the Mac version works for lap/desktops, iPads and Apple Watch, the Android version is lap/desktop only. For Androids, it's important to note that this isn't a stand-



alone app. Instead, it's a companion to WhatsApp on your Android phone.

To use WhatsApp on another device, you'll need to link your computer with WhatsApp using your phone. The first time you open WhatsApp Desktop, you'll be shown instructions on how to do this, including a QR code you can scan from WhatsApp on your phone. If you're bringing a laptop or Apple tablet, this is sometimes an easier way to catch up on and respond to group messages once we're all back in our hotel rooms!

IMPORTANT! You *must* have WhatsApp active and be part of the Paris Jan 2026 group in order to participate in all Decor

Tours group events. Link for [iPhone](#), and [Android](#), and for [Apple lap/desktop](#) and [PC lap/desktop](#).

Getting Around

We'll be walking (a lot), and taking the Metro (a lot), but sometimes all you want to do is get off your feet and get back to the hotel quickly!

Google Maps

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

We've created custom Google maps for our group, so if you don't already have this on your phone, you really should add it!

Bonjour RATP

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

This is the official Paris Metro app that lets you plan routes and understand where to transfer across Metro and suburban trains, the tram system and city busses. Plus you can also now buy tickets directly through the app, check to see if there are any delays/disruptions on your routes, etc.

SNCF Connect

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

A similar app but for the nationwide railway service, in case you're coming to or leaving Paris by rail.

TGV InOui

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

For inter-Europe trains, or if you want to take the Chunnel to London, you'll need this app.



There are several 3rd-party apps for Paris Metro and general city navigation that are helpful, because they are focused specifically on routes and trip planning, without all the extra content the official apps have. These include Metro Paris — [iPhone](#) only
Paris Metro — [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)
Citymapper — [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)

Taxis & Car Services

If those dinner reservations you booked are across town, the front desk or concierge at the hotel can book a car, or the doorman can hail a taxi, but if you're out and about and just want to “not deal” with the Metro, try:

Uber
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

If you've never used this app, it's very simple to set up and install, and works in almost every major city in the world.

Bolt
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

An Uber alternative that is extremely popular in Europe. You may often have better luck using Bolt than Uber. Note: There is Lyft in Paris, if you prefer that over Uber, but honestly it's a distant 4th to Bolt, Uber and G7.

G7
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

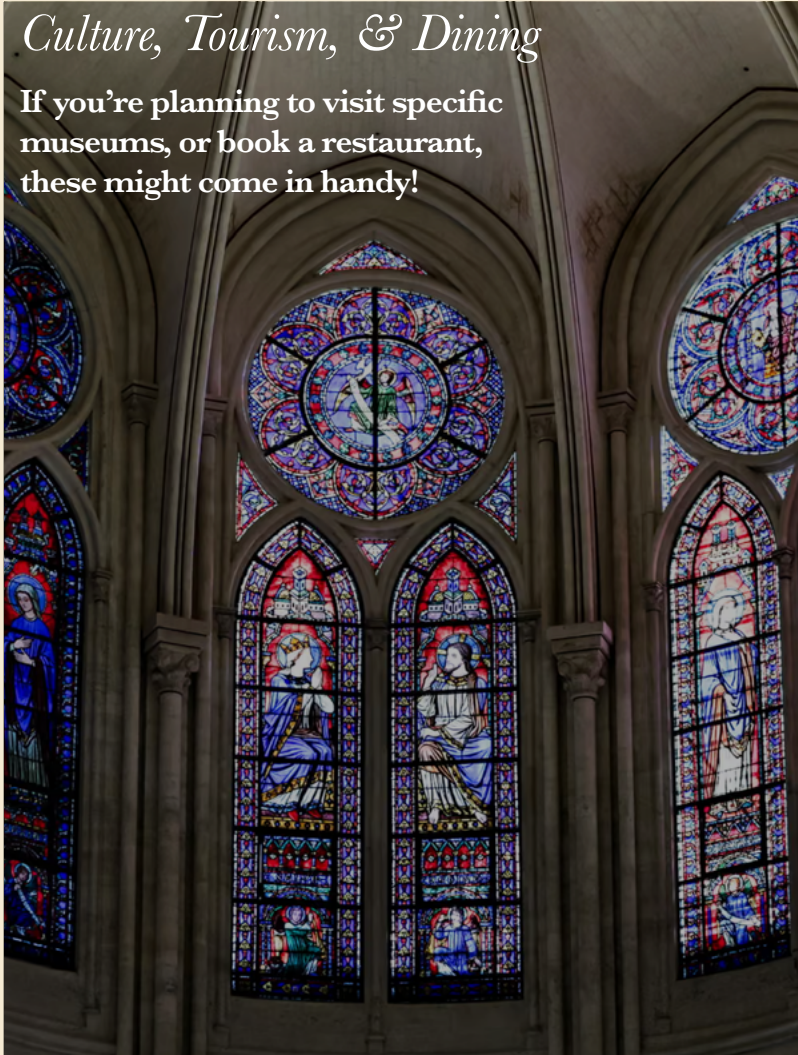
This is the local Paris “taxi” app, with sometimes faster response times than Uber, but typically more expensive



Black Lane
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)
This is an international limo service, just in case you really want to travel in style.

Culture, Tourism, & Dining

If you're planning to visit specific museums, or book a restaurant, these might come in handy!



Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

The official application of Notre-Dame de Paris (available in English) will allow you reserve your free entry and includes audio tours detailing both original details and information regarding the restoration.

Notes: Time slots for visits are released gradually, sometimes only a few hours before the visit. At the most, slots are available 1-2 days in advance, which is why we find the app handy vs. booking via the website. You can do it more spur-of-the-moment while stopping for a coffee, etc. And while a reservation is not necessary, we highly recommend it.

The Cathedral is usually open from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM every day, and until 10pm on Thursdays, although opening times may vary for special events. On weekdays, Masses are celebrated at 8:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 6:00 PM. Additional masses may be scheduled for feast days, so keep that in mind when scheduling your visit.

[Website ticket link](#), if you prefer.

Château de Versailles

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

The official app of this always-in-demand destination. It provides opening times, transportation, and other FAQ's, along ticketing options and access to the online boutique.

While onsite, there are various audio tours, interactive maps, all with audio, text, and/or video "bonuses" for more in-depth information. All of these are accessible on-site options are available off-line so no wifi connection needed.

Most of the other major Paris museums, etc., do not have their own apps. You can search for third-party guide apps for the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, etc., and choose which ones you're most comfortable with.

But, one recommendation we do have is to try BloombergConnects; an app that partners with various cultural institutions around the world. In Paris, there is an interactive guide to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, as well as static guides to the Arc de Triomphe, the Catacombes, the Conciergerie, the Palais-Royale, and many of the city's smaller museums.

BloombergConnects: Art + Culture

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

For dining, we have a couple of pieces of advice:

1) If you are determined to get into a specific restaurant, start your research now! Some hot spots open up reservations only a month in advance, on specific days/times.

2) If you don't know yet where you'd like to try, start re-searching by key words. Do you want a night view of the Eiffel Tower? Sit at a chef's table? Instagramable interiors? Have the best cassoulet in Paris?

Once you have some plans, take advantage of our hotel's concierge service. [Email them](#) your info and requests and ask them to try to score rezzies for you.

3) For apps, we suggest downloading both The Fork and the Michelin Guide. Many Parisian restaurants use The Fork to manage their bookings, vs. Resy or similar apps in the U.S. And the Michelin Guide, although it's a bit clunky to use, can help steer you away from not-great to good/better/best options, based on the neighborhood you're in (or what to go to) and your budget.

The Fork

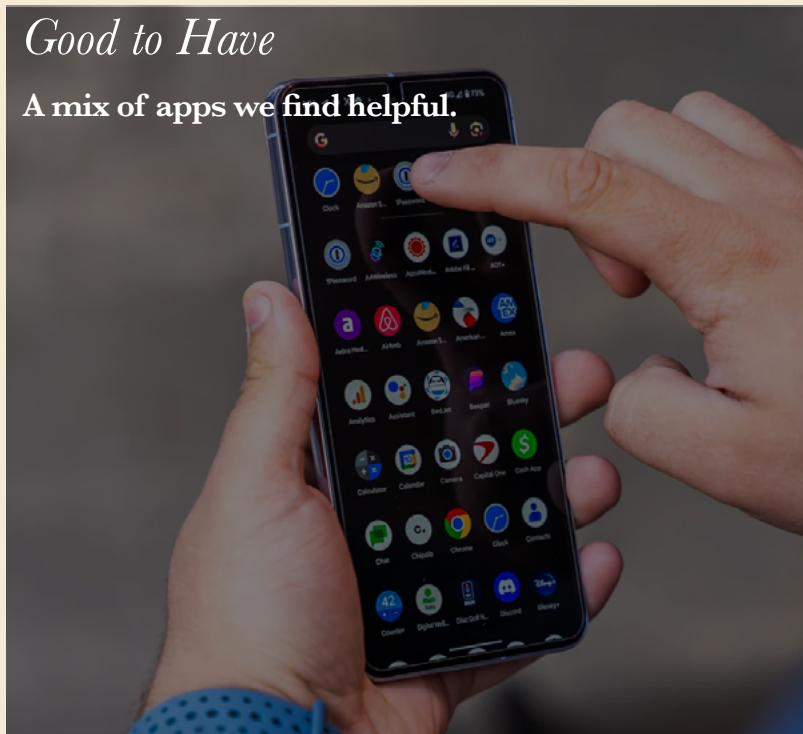
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Michelin Guide

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Good to Have

A mix of apps we find helpful.



Translation

Everyone needs some help deciphering something—a menu, a label, a sign, etc. And, when you want to very specific about an allergy, request, address confirmation, etc, these apps are life-savers!

Google Translate
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

DeepL
[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

In General

If you haven't already, download the app for your airline(s). It's often hard to hear gate change, delays, and other announcements in busy airports.

Also download the apps for your credit cards and bank(s). If something goes wrong with your credit or debit cards, or if they get lost or stolen, these apps can provide immediate info, cancellation, re-issue of a new card and, in some cases, issue a digital card for immediate use.

While in France, we recommend:

France 24, a French news station in English. [Available online](#) as well.

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Flush, a toilet finder app that's not always 100% reliable, but when you need it...

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

And, if you've heard about how various regions, sectors, etc. of France are often on strike—you heard right. For updated information check [C'est la Greve](#). There's no app, but you can follow on FB, IG, LinkedIn, etc.



Haussmann's Paris: Symmetry and Splendor

45 MIN TOUR

★ 4.89

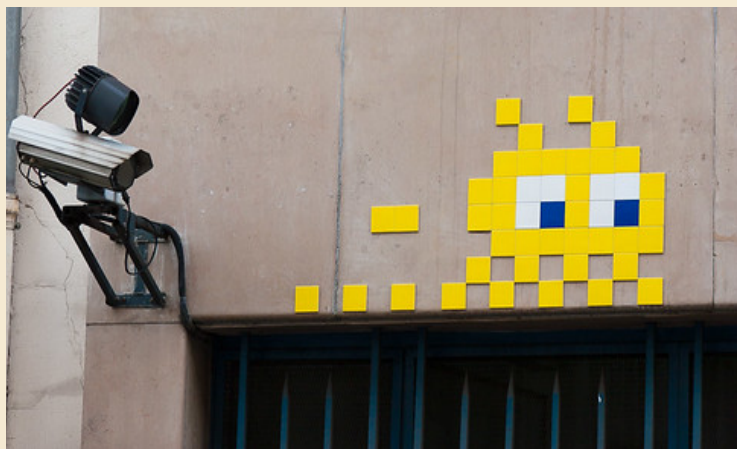
If you'd like to do something interesting and off-the-beaten path, try Carom, an app that connects people with local experiences in London, Paris and New York. These include private gallery tours, intimate concerts, small group dining meet-ups, and more.

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Another recent favorite is [Le Walk](#), a free, immersive guide to the city that opens your eyes to hidden gems, secret histories, and the stories behind buildings, neighborhoods, art, and more. It also has highlights and insights while visiting the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Arc de Triomphe, L'Hôtel des Invalides, and key locations. But, available for [iPhone](#) only!

Paris is home to the street artist known as [Invader](#), and if you look, you'll see their signature pixelated installations throughout the city, often "in conversation" with the neighborhood or nearby stores. "I've been taking pictures of these for years, finding them at random" says Susan. "But now, there's an app, developed by the artist, to help find them and it also documents those that have been removed."

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)



French Language Apps

We're not making any recommendations here because everyone learns differently!

There are dozens of YouTube videos, Facebook groups, Instagram lessons, Spotify podcasts, and more you can use to learn with, if that's more your style. And there are now lessons that use AI to assist with your learning. But these are the “big” and some not-so-big names those in previous groups have used.

[Babbel](#)

[DuoLingo](#)

[Pimsleur](#)

[Rosetta Stone](#)

[Mondly](#)

[Rocket Languages](#)

[JumpSpeak](#)

[LingoPie](#)

[BBC](#)

[Busuu](#)

[TV Monde 5](#)

[French Pod](#)

[The French Experiment](#)

[Lawless French](#)

[InnerFrench](#)

[TalkPal](#)

[Promova](#)

[Mango](#)

[Preply](#)





In the next issue of the

PARIS DISPATCH

No. 5: The Art of French Etiquette

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