

STRASBOURG ITINERARY

Monument of General Kléber

Place Kleber, the largest square at the center of the city of Strasbourg in the heart of the city's commercial area, was named after general [Jean-Baptiste Kléber](#), born in Strasbourg in 1753. In the square is a statue of Kléber, under which is a vault containing his remains.

The general Kléber was a popular strategist under Napoleon Bonaparte and the leader of the famous expeditionary army in Egypt. In June 1800, general Kléber was murdered by a fanatic.

This monument, which can be found at Place Kléber, was built by the artist Philippe Grass in 1840.



Monday – March 12, at 16.00

The Republic Square

The Republic Square is one of the main squares of the city of Strasbourg. It is surrounded on three sides by five buildings only, of which none is residential: the Palais du Rhin, the National and University Library, the Théâtre national de Strasbourg, the Préfecture of Grand Est and Bas-Rhin, and the tax center Hôtel des impôts. All of these buildings are classified as monuments historiques. The fourth side of the square is void of buildings.

In the very centre of the square stands a War memorial statue by Léon-Ernest Drivier, inaugurated in 1936. It represents a mother holding two dead sons, alluding to the dual nature of Strasbourg's History between Germany and France. The memorial replaces an equestrian statue of Emperor Wilhelm I, commissioned in 1897, that stood on the square from 1911 until 1918.



The Palace of the Rhine

The Palace of the Rhine is a monument to the best of 19th century Prussian architecture and one of Alsace's best preserved examples of the German Neo-Classical style.

The architecture of this huge square building with its central dome was inspired by the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. It has extensive stables and stands in large, beautifully kept grounds.

The interior is as stunning as the exterior, with its frescoed dome in the Audience Hall, the delicately decorated vaulted ceiling in the main Ballroom and coffered ceilings in the other state rooms. The central staircase is magnificent in white marble with fountains and small ponds on each side of the stairs.

At the end of the Franco-Prussian War the newly installed German Government were faced with the problem of where to house the royal person should the emperor visit Strasbourg. The Imperial Palace was built on the Place de la Republique and inaugurated in 1889.

Between its opening and 1914 the emperor stayed there only a dozen times, which made the people complain about the cost of its construction. During the 1st World War the palace was used as a military hospital.

In 1920 it became the home of the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine, and its name changed from the Imperial Palace to the name it bears today. In 1923 part of it housed the Fine Arts and National Furniture of Alsace-Lorraine.

During the 2nd World War it became first the command base of the Nazi's and then the general quarters of Leclerc's army. It escaped demolition in the nineteen seventies; instead it was restored and today it shares the premises with the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles.



The National Theatre

The National Theatre of Strasbourg is a palace building on Strasbourg's Place de la République, now occupied by a theatre company of the same name, the National Theatre of Strasbourg (TNS).

The TNS was originally built to house the legislative assembly of the regional parliament of Alsace-Lorraine, after the area came under German control with the Treaty of Frankfurt (1871). It was built between 1888 and 1889 in Neorenaissance style by the architect partners August Hartel and Skjold Neckelmann.

In 1919, when Alsace-Lorraine returned to France, the French Government offered the building to the city of Strasbourg, which in turn offered it to the Strasbourg music conservatory, at the behest of its new director Guy Ropartz, who was refusing to occupy the Palais du Rhin opposite.

On 25 September 1944, the east wing of the building that contained the Chamber of the Assembly was destroyed by American bombing. It was reconstructed between 1950 and 1957, this time with a theatre auditorium replacing the assembly chamber.



The National and University Library

After the destruction of the municipal library and the city's archives by Prussian artillery during the Siege of Strasbourg, the German Empire founded a new library on 19 June 1872. The task of arranging its collections was given to historian and professor, Rodolphe Reuss.

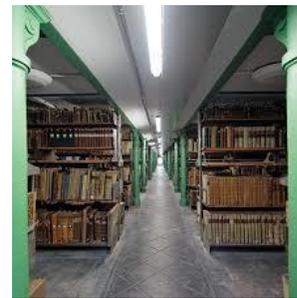
It became the regional library for the Reichsland Alsace-Lorraine, as, according to German tradition, every region should have at least one library. It was also an Academic library.

The collections grew quickly, thanks principally to donations from all across Europe and the United States. But, even in spite of these generous donations, many priceless manuscripts, such as the Hortus Deliciarum had been destroyed and could never be replaced.

The present-day building, which is a work of architects August Hartel and Skjold Neckelmann, was opened in 1895.

After the territory of Alsace-Lorraine had been reverted to France following World War I, the question arose as to whether or not this library should be renovated and reopened. After some hesitation, the French government decided to keep the library.

The library now holds about 3,000,000 volumes, which is the second largest collection in France. The collection contains, amongst other things, ca. 6.700 manuscripts and 5,200 papyri.



The Prefecture of the Bas-Rhin

The Préfecture de la région Grand-Est et du département du Bas-Rhin was built from 1907 until 1911, based on designs by Ludwig Levy. The façade was decorated with statues of lions by Alfred Marzloff. The building also housed ministries of Alsace-Lorraine. It is a more austere example of Baroque Revival architecture. It is classified as a monument historique since 1996



The Strasbourg Opera House

L'Opéra national du Rhin, located on Place Broglie, performs in Alsace, and includes the Opéra in Strasbourg, Mulhouse with the "Ballet de l'Opéra national du Rhin", , and Colmar the "Opéra Studio", a training center for young singers, in Colmar. A reflection of its importance is the status of “national opera” which it has held since 1997.

The first opera house opened in Strasbourg in 1701 in a converted granary. After a fire and temporary locations, a new Théâtre municipal opened in the Place Broglie in 1821. This building was virtually gutted during the German bombardment of 1870, but it was rebuilt in identical style, re-opening in 1873.

The merger to form the Opéra du Rhin took place in 1972 under the conductor Alain Lombard, with the Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg and the Orchestre symphonique de Mulhouse being the performance orchestras in those locations. In the early years, Lombard attempted to revive the repertoire, as well as attract big names such as Birgit Nilsson and Montserrat Caballé



Thursday, March 15, at 12.15

Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Strasbourg/ Cathedral of Our Lady

In France you'll see a lot of cathedrals.

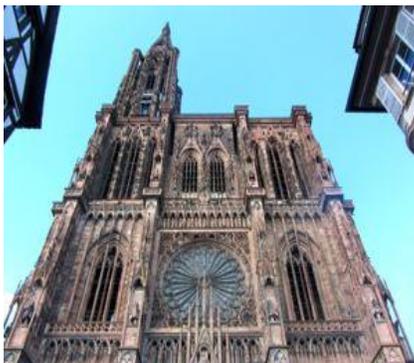
They are wonderful amazing buildings, but the Strasbourg Cathedral stands out, for its unique and delicate structure and its distinctive red sandstone. With its soaring spire, it was the tallest building in the world from 1647 to 1874.

The building is covered in exquisite carvings and statues. The central door depicts the passion of Christ, while the left (north) door shows virtues overcoming vices, and the right door presents the "wise virgins" and the "foolish virgins." Over the years some of these have been replaced, and the originals can be seen at the nearby Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame.

Higher up, various kings are shown on horseback, and they seem to be riding right out of their perches. There are several pairs of these, visible from different angles.

The main symbol of Strasbourg Cathedral is its single bell tower that is surmounted by a 142 m spire. The building that you see today was built on the site of a Romanesque basilica that was commissioned by the bishop of the town in 1015. Unfortunately, that construction was destroyed by a fire in 1176. A new one was commissioned but took over three centuries to build until it was completed in 1439. Over the next centuries, however, many additions were made to the cathedral, especially to its façade. The magnificent façade, with its rich and intricate decorations, is a true wonder, especially the 'curtain' that is made of stone harps. The central portal, with statues of Old Testament prophets in its five arches, is one of the key attractions.

The rose window, visible over the central door, is impressive from the outside, but stunningly beautiful when seen from the inside. Walk to the front and look back to admire the lovely rose window. The yellow branches are said to represent 32 ears of corn, symbolizing the wealth of the area in the Middle Ages.



The Astronomical Clock

The cathedral is also home to a historic **Astronomical Clock**, located in the front of the church, in the right transept.

The original clock was built in the 16th century, and was renovated a couple of times, most recently in the 19th century. Its mechanism is said to be unique, and it includes various dials and displays, such as a perpetual calendar and a display showing the position of the sun and the moon.

The gold hands of the clock show mean solar time, or "temps moyen"; the silver hands show Central European Time, labelled "heure publique". In winter, mean solar time is approximately 30½ minutes behind Central European Time.

This clock contains probably the first perpetual mechanical Gregorian computus, designed by Schwilgué in 1816. In the 1970s, Frédéric Klinghammer built a reduced replica of it.

Once inside you'll have time to observe and take pictures of the clock. Then there is a 20 minute video about the clock's history and functioning—more standing.

Finally, at 12:30, the astronomical clock will go into action and the automatons will start to move. An angel will sound a chime, and the twelve apostles will pass in front of Jesus. Just below that, figures representing the stages of life pass before Death.



The Rohan Palace

The Palais Rohan (Rohan Palace) in Strasbourg is the former residence of the prince-bishops and cardinals of the House of Rohan, an ancient French noble family originally from Brittany. It is a major architectural, historical, and cultural landmark in the city. It was built next to Strasbourg Cathedral in the 1730s, from designs by Robert de Cotte, and is considered a masterpiece of French Baroque architecture. Since its completion in 1742, the palace has hosted a number of French monarchs such as Louis XV, Marie Antoinette, Napoleon and Joséphine, and Charles X.

Reflecting the history of Strasbourg and of France, the palace has been owned successively by the nobility, the municipality, the monarchy, the state, the university, and the municipality again. Its architectural conception and its iconography were intended to indicate the return of Roman Catholicism to the city, which had been dominated by Protestantism for the previous two centuries. Thus the prelate's apartments face the cathedral, to the north, and many of the statues, reliefs and paintings reflect the Catholic dogma.

Since the end of the 19th century the palace has been home to three of Strasbourg's most important museums: the Archaeological Museum (Musée archéologique, basement), the Museum of Decorative Arts (Musée des arts décoratifs, ground floor) and the Museum of Fine Arts (Musée des beaux-arts, first and second floor). The municipal art gallery, Galerie Robert Heitz, in a lateral wing of the palace, is used for temporary exhibitions.

The palace is structured around a large and paved courtyard. It has a trapezoidal plan, and the land falls away toward the river Ill. To compensate for the slope, the riverside (southern) façade of the main wing has four floors, while the courtyard (northern) façade has three floors. The half-buried floor corresponds to the basement and now houses the archaeological museum. The riverside façade is thus both the highest and the widest of the palace. The terrace before it, facing the *quai des Bateliers*, is closed at both ends by elaborate wrought-iron gates adorned with the coat of arms of the House of Rohan.

The front of the palace designed in a more Baroque style than the rest of the palace, is wide and curved. The central gate is framed by two pairs of columns and juts out in the shape of a Triumphal arch. The upper part of the front section is crowned with statues representing allegories of faith such as "Religion" and "Eucharist", and personifications of Christian virtues such as "Mercy" and "Penance".

The wooden portal (oak) and the walls east and west of the gate are decorated with trophies and heraldic symbols relating to the House of Rohan and the episcopal polity.



Gutenberg Square

One destination that should be on your “must see” list is the Place Gutenberg which lies in the center of medieval Strasbourg, not far from the Cathedral.

This large square is a favorite for locals and tourists alike as it has a lot of excellent cafes and restaurants. The Chamber of Commerce building occupies one side of the square and is easily recognizable with its Renaissance style, but with the sloping roof that is typical of Alsace, where winter snow is a way of life.

There is a 16th century hotel on the square where Arthur Young was staying when revolutionists destroyed the city’s magistrates records and where today art exhibitions are held on the ground floor. Another attraction is the flea markets that often set up around the statue in the center of the square.

This is a statue dedicated to Johannes Gutenberg; it was sculpted by David d’Angers in 1840 and features the famous printer holding a piece of parchment on which is inscribed the words “Et la lumière fut” (And behold, there was light) from the Book of Genesis. Around the base of the statue bas reliefs depict notable scenes from Gutenberg’s life.

Not many people know that apart from being the inventor of the first mechanical, movable printing press in Europe in 1439 and the publisher of the Gutenberg Bible in 1455, Gutenberg lived in Strasbourg between 1434 and 1444, where he was an apprentice goldsmith, set to follow in his father’s footsteps.



The Kammerzell House

This half-timbered (of wood) house very impressive is a High Gothic building. Today, a popular restaurant is inside.

The Kammerzell House served as a house for commercials in the past.

Although this house bears the name Kammerzell, its owner in the 19th century, it actually owes its current appearance to Martin Braun, a cheese merchant who acquired it in 1571. He kept only the stone ground floor, dating from 1467, and rebuilt the house with three corbelled-out storeys and three floors in the loft in 1589.

The rich decoration on the façade, both secular and sacred, was inspired by the Bible, Greek and Roman Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Restoration work carried out in 1892 made the whole building darker, but this decoration still testifies to the cultural influences of a 14th-century Strasbourg burgher. One of the façades, below the windows, is decorated with astrological signs.

Inside the building, you can admire remarkable frescoes painted by Leo Schnug in about 1905.



The Alsatian Museum (Musée Alsacien)

The Alsatian Museum (Musée Alsacien) was opened to the public in 1907, with the direct goal of documenting the region's rich history and also against attempts to "Germanize" Strasbourg. The museum itself is dedicated to all aspects of daily life for Alsatians from the 18th and 19th centuries. The Musée Alsacien is housed in three former period homes that are linked by connecting passages and a maze of stairways. A charming inner courtyard, with its tumbling vines and traditional woodwork makes for a perfect photo-op location. The houses are Renaissance period timber framed homes located on the banks of the Ill River on Quai Saint-Nicolas. The city purchased the properties in 1917.

Altogether, the museum incorporates some 30 different rooms, most of them displaying period furniture, homeware, images, tools, toys, traditional clothing and costumes, religious artefacts and more. Some of the rooms have been perfectly reconstructed to provide visitors with an authentic look into pre-industry and early industrial Alsace. The activities of craftsmen from these times, including clog makers, blacksmiths and saddle makers are all explained using tools and other authentic props. Visitors will also find a rich collection of objects that documents the history of the region's Jewish population.



The Strasbourg Historical Museum (Musee Historique de Strasbourg)

The Strasbourg Historical Museum (Musee Historique de Strasbourg) is located in the city's former slaughterhouse (Grande boucherie), a building constructed in 1587 and home to the city's butchers and has been used as a museum since 1920. The museum is dedicated to Strasbourg's rich cultural, social, political and economic history from the early Middle Ages until present day.

The museum pays tribute to great figures from the city's history, including General Jean-Baptiste Kleber, a military leader during the French Revolutionary Wars. The lives of ordinary citizens from years long past are also examined through period furniture, costumes, and so forth. All in all, there are around 1500 objects that are dedicated to everyday life through the ages, from the 13 th century and up until 1800.

Some of the attractions of the Strasbourg Historical Museum include a plan relief of the city dating from 1727, which shows the city and its surroundings as they stood, on a 1:600 scale. Visitors will also be able to view military weapons and uniforms, paintings and graphic art. Other highlights include artillery objects from the mid 1700's, coats of arms and antique coins from the 12 th to the 15 th centuries and mechanical toys from the 19 th and 20 th centuries.

In recent years, the museum's curators added new rooms which reflect the period from 1800 to 1949, including Napoleon's famous visits to the city.



La Petite France

La Petite France, on the western end of the Grand Île (Strasbourg town center) is a lovely place to visit by boat or on foot.

This historic area is surrounded by water, the River Ill and various canals cutting through the middle of it. Seeing its many historic half-timbered homes reflected in the water is a lovely sight.

It wasn't always that way. Historically, La Petite France was a poor section of the city, occupied by mills and tanneries, both of which depended on the river and its downward flowing branches to support their work.

The area also served as a port, transporting Alsatian wine and other cargo.

For many years it was just a dirty, smelly place, until the industrial age came along and things changed. Since the middle of the 20th century, La Petite France has been transformed into a charming tourist destination, with its many 16th and 17th century houses preserved.

One of the most famous is the Maison des Tanneurs, the House of the Tanners, which dates from 1572.

You can also see the locks through which the boat tours pass, and watch the water rising (or lowering) to facilitate passage.

At the far end, beyond the towers and covered bridges, is the Barrage Vauban, or Vauban Dam. Designed by the noted French military engineer Vauban, it was built in 1681 as a defensive structure: the flood gates could be closed, flooding the southern part of the city and protecting it from attack. A second level was added in the 19th century and a panoramic terrace in the mid 20th century.

You can easily walk to La Petite France from the cathedral or other central parts of Strasbourg. You'll cross over the lovely Pont Saint-Martin, which marks the entry to La Petite France. Also look for the Pont du Faisan, an interesting revolving bridge.

