I'm not a robot

The capital of the Alsace region has one of Europe’s largest medieval quarters. In Grand Île and Petite France cobbled streets weave between creaking timber-framed houses that have survived for hundreds of years. Strasbourg has been the subject of a centuries-long tug of war between France and Germany, and is all the more exciting and beautiful for it. We’re left with a city boasting beautiful turn-of-the-century districts built by the Germans, and hi-tech 17th-century fortifications designed by Vauban. The sense of cross-pollination continues in the cuisine and wine, and also in the presence of international institutions like the European Parliament. Lets explore the best things to do in Strasbourg: 1. Strasbourg Cathedral Source: FreeProd33 / ShutterstockStrasbourg Cathedral For 227 years up to 1874 this spellbinding sandstone cathedral was the tallest building in the world, and is still the highest surviving structure to have been built entirely during the medieval period. Writers have waxed lyrical about it for hundreds of years, and it’s hard not to be moved by the west facade or the view of the vaults that greets you once you step inside. Another astounding thing about the cathedral is how much of it dates to the 1100s, including the entirety of the apse on the east side of the building. You cannot turn down a trip to the top of the north tower, completed in 1439, and with views as far as the Black Forest, 30 kilometres away. 2. La Petite France Source: MarinaD_37 / ShutterstockLa Petite France The most photogenic area in the city: Millers, fishermen and tanners plied their trades in this district of waterways, weirs and locks crowded by black and white half-timbered (colombage) houses. These quaint old structures are from the 1500s and 1600s, and if you stand back and look up you can make out the opening in the roofs where animal hides were once laid out in the sun to dry. On some of the cobblestone streets like Rue du Bain aux Plantes the houses look unfeasibly top-heavy, and every few paces are traditional restaurants serving Alsatian specialities like choucroute garnie. 3. Parc de l’Orangerie Source: SilvanBachmann / ShutterstockParc de l’Orangerie Just across the Ill from the European Parliament and the Court of Human Rights, the Parc de l’Orangerie took shape during the revolution when 140 orange trees confiscated from Château de Bouxwiller were granted to the city. There are now only three of these trees remaining, and you can still see them on certain days in the park’s greenhouses. Naturally there’s a lot more to this fantastic park than that: You have a large boating lake, lots of long, leafy avenues, lawns, and even a mini-zoo and farm for kids. There’s also a stork reintroduction centre; this type of bird has a special place in Strasbourg folklore, and it’s meant to be good luck for a household if a pair perch on the roof. 4. Barrage Vauban Source: Leonid Andronov / ShutterstockBarrage Vauban Despite being built in the 1600s this fortified bridge and weir on the River Ill was a cornerstone of the city’s defences as late as the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. It was made with pink sandstone from the Vosges, according to plans drawn up by Vauban (the great French military engineer). The idea was that in times of siege it would raise the level of the Ill and flood the lands to the south, and also drop barriers to prevent invaders from passing through. There’s an internal corridor running the length of the structure and you can go up to the roof to see the towers of the Ponts Couverts and the cathedral. 5. Ponts Couverts Source: olrat / ShutterstockPonts Couverts Heralding your entry to Petite France is a set of three fortified bridges that you’ll know for their four tall square towers. These were built in the 1300s and were part of the city’s original line of ramparts. The bridges’ name is a bit of a misnomer these days as they aren’t actually covered any more: Up to the 1700s the crossings were protected by long roofs that would have offered cover during sieges. The bridges became obsolete after the Barrage Vauban was completed upriver and the roofs have been gone for almost 300 years, but the name survives. 6. Église Saint-Thomas Source: Kiev.Victor / ShutterstockÉglise Saint-Thomas Further proof that Strasbourg is at a cultural crossroads is this protestant church, which was the main Lutheran place of worship after Strasbourg became part of France in 1681. Église Saint-Thomas was completed in the 1520s and is the only example of a German-style hall church in the region. This means that unlike most churches in France, the nave and the aisles have the same height. They are brought under one roof and so are missing a clerestory (windows to light the nave). There’s much to explore inside, including a large gothic fresco of St. Michael and the stunning romanesque sarcophagus of Bishop Adeloch, from the 1100s. Finally, turn your gaze to the gallery organ from 1741, which was praised by Mozart when he played it in 1778. 7. Musée Alsacien Source: lauravr / ShutterstockMusée Alsacien With a supreme location in a 17th-century house on a quayside of the River Ill, the Musée Alsacien couldn’t be better placed to teach you about local traditions and art in the city. The galleries provide several reconstructions of historic home scenes and workshops, all presented with original ceramics, costume, furniture, tools, toys and everyday utensils. The most intriguing displays deal with the traditional “savoir-faire” of the Alsace region, so illustrating how, for instance, wine was pressed in the 1700s and talking you through the Roman origins of wine-growing. 8. European Parliament Source: Botond Horvath / ShutterstockEuropean Parliament When you reflect on the city’s past, it makes perfect sense that Strasbourg should be home to the European Parliament as it has always been a place where different cultures, faiths and languages have been reconciled. Strasbourg is one of three non-capital cities around the world to have an international institution, and the European Parliament needs to be on your itinerary. You may have to call ahead to get a tour of this modern cylindrical structure, housing the 750-seat debating chamber. Inside are three “internal streets”, one of which has a winter garden with a philodendron forest. 9. Palais des Rohan Source: Netfalls Remy Musser / ShutterstockPalais des Rohan This baroque Episcopal palace was built in the 1720s according to the designs of Robert de Cotte, the “first architect” of Louis XV. It’s a breathtaking building, erected for Cardinal Armand-Gaston de Rohan-Soubise the Prince Bishop of Strasbourg and loved for its high classical facade. It was modelled on the grand mansions in Paris from this time and the interior is as opulent as you’d imagine. There are three museums to browse inside, an archaeology exhibit in the basement, decorative arts on the ground floor and a display of fine art on the first floor. 10. Neustadt Source: Hadrian / ShutterstockNeustadt Strasbourg tripled in size in the 34 years between the Franco-Prussian War and the end of the First World War. This was the German period, and the speed of construction furnished a host of districts in Strasbourg with an architectural consistency that is hard to find anywhere else. These areas were designed to be the new centre of the city, with broad boulevards on a grid system, which was deemed more hygienic and efficient than the medieval street plan at Grand Île and Petite France. The Neustadt is roughly crescent-shaped, covering the western, northern and eastern parts of Strasbourg. Some bits to discover include the areas around the Parc de l’Orangerie, the University, Place de la République and Île Sainte-Hélène. 11. Le Vaisseau Source: Knowtex / Flickr | CC BYLe Vaisseau A useful rainy day alternative if you’re in Strasbourg with kids, Le Vaisseau is an interactive science museum for ages 3 to 15. Language shouldn’t be a problem either, as all the displays are in English, French and German. The idea is for children to get stuck in and enjoy themselves, which makes it easier for them to learn things as they go. So, for children aged 3 to 6, there’s a building site where they can build to their hearts’ content and with guidance learn about the processes of design and construction. There are 130 interactive exhibits like this one, as well as a 3D movie that is updated every few months. 12. Musée Historique de Strasbourg Source: Stetiukha Kristina / ShutterstockMusée Historique de Strasbourg Also by the River Ill, Strasbourg’s historical museum is in the city’s former slaughterhouse and deals with the period between the middle ages and the 18th century. There are weapons, maps, clothing, sketches and sculptures to help illustrate the complicated history of a city at the geographical, and also social, economic and political, nexus point of an entire continent. The shining star of the collection is a plan relief dating to 1727. This is a highly detailed 1/600 scale model of Strasbourg and its outskirts, covering almost 80 square metres. The detail is such that you make out all of the main landmarks, and, yes, the Ponts Couverts were still covered when the model was made! 13. Eglise Saint-Pierre le Jeune Source: Walencienne / ShutterstockEglise Saint-Pierre le Jeune Saint-Pierre le Jeune is remarkable because for 200 years it was divided in two by the Protestants and Catholics: The Protestants got the nave, while the Catholics used the choir. The building has architecture from many different periods too. In the crypt for instance are the vestiges of a Columban Church from the 600s, and the cloister is mostly romanesque, dating to the 1000s. Meanwhile the nave and its colourful frescoes are from the 14th and 15th centuries. In the gallery is an 18th-century organ designed by Johann Andreas Silbermann, the same man responsible for the organ at Strasbourg’s Church of Saint-Thomas. And like the one there this instrument has national renown, and was used by the organist Helmut Wacha to record the works of Bach. 14. Alsatian Food Source: meandering images / ShutterstockChoucroute If Strasbourg’s culture and architecture are a blend of German and French traditions then the same applies to the food. Choucroute is the obvious entry point, with sauerkraut (fermented cabbage with a sour flavour) combined with different kinds of sausages, including frankfurters and smoked Morteau, as well as cuts of pork and potatoes. Another classic served up at traditional ”stubs” around the old quarters is tarte flambée, bread dough rolled out, covered with fromage frais and topped with onion and lardons. If you visit in April or May Strasbourg goes crazy for white asparagus, as they do in German cities in asparagus season. In Strasbourg it’s roasted and then served with lentils and a poached egg. 15. Wine and Beer Source: JW-Photos / ShutterstockKronenbourg Alsace is the only French wine region in which most of the wines produced are varietal, and so made only with the grapes that give them their name. The most famous two are Gewürtztraminer, usually spicy and sweet and often paired with dessert or drunk as an aperitif, and Riesling, which is dry, complex and goes great with Alsatian classics like choucroute and pan-fried carp. Strasbourg is also slap in the middle of France’s most productive beer region, with hops grown west and north of the city. Brands known to all will be Fischer, Karlsbräu and Kronenbourg, but Meteor is an independent brewer operating just northwest of Strasbourg since 1640. From September 2016 Meteor has introduced a 90-minute guided tour followed by a tasting session. Written by Lisa Alexander Updated Dec 24, 2023 Author Lisa Alexander spent two years living in France and has traveled the country extensively. With its awe-inspiring cathedral, charming burghers' houses, and elegant Louis XV buildings, Strasbourg has a distinctive old-world character. The quaint cobblestone streets and picturesque canals of the medieval quarters (on the Grande-Île) are some of the cities main attractions for tourists. Strasbourg, FranceThanks to its advantageous location at the intersection of important traffic and commerce routes on the Rhine River, Strasbourg has prospered throughout its 2,000-year history. In the 13th century, it became the Holy Roman Empire's richest city, where art and learning flourished. Today, Strasbourg is still a city of culture. Besides its incredible collection of historic monuments, Strasbourg boasts exceptional museums of fine arts, archaeology, and traditional Alsatian crafts. Learn more about the best places to visit in the city with our list of the top things to do in Strasbourg. Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Strasbourg Considered one of the most beautiful monuments of Gothic architecture in Europe, the Cathédrale Notre-Dame presides over Strasbourg with its soaring tower. This spire, reaching 142 meters, was the highest point in the Christian world until the 19th century. The cathedral owes its delicate look to the construction from red Vosges sandstone, which is ornately embellished. Hundreds of Christian figures are sculpted from this stone on the façade. This elaborate exterior functions as a lesson in biblical stories. The 13th-century west front façade depicts scenes of the Christ's Passion, the work of Master Erwin and his successors. The south side of the façade features famous allegorical sculptures of the Church and the Synagogue created by a German artist circa 1230. The Strasbourg Cathedral has exceptional medieval stained-glass windows (dating from the 12th to 14th centuries) that compare in magnificence to those at the Cathedral in Chartres. The rose window is particularly splendid. In the south transept stands L'Horloge Astronomique, a Renaissance astronomical clock. This masterpiece of timekeeping entertains visitors with an automated parade of the apostles and a crowing rooster every day at 12:30pm. After touring the inside of the Cathedral, visitors can ascend to the top of the bell tower. The tower's viewing platform affords sweeping panoramas of the city, the Rhine plains, the Black Forest, and the Vosges Mountains. The cathedral is the heart of Strasbourg's UNESCO-listed Grande-Île district. The Grande-Île (a large island surrounded by the Ill River) is the historic center of the city. Mass is celebrated at the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Strasbourg, Monday through Friday at 7:30am and 9am and on Saturdays at 9am. On Sundays, the regular Mass is held at 9:30am and Mass with Gregorian chants is held at 11am and at 6pm. Address: Place de la Cathédrale, Strasbourg Strasbourg Cathedral Map (Historical) Quartier des Tanneurs (La Petite France) Within Strasbourg's UNESCO-listed historic center, the Quartier des Tanneurs (also known as "La Petite France") is a winding maze of canals and narrow, old streets lined by perfectly maintained half-timbered houses. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the neighborhood was home to the city's leather tanners and fishermen. The most charming street of the quarter is the Rue du Bain-aux-Plantes. Strolling along this cobblestone thoroughfare offers a chance to admire the traditional Alsatian houses with their flower-bedecked windowsills. Tourists should look out for the Maison des Tanneurs, a half-timbered house at 42 Rue du Bain-aux-Plantes. Built in 1572 and listed as a Historic Monument, the Maison des Tanneurs is now a fine-dining restaurant with cozy interior décor and an outdoor terrace overlooking the river banks. It's one of the best places to visit in Strasbourg for authentic Alsatian cuisine. To the southwest are the Ponts Couverts (Covered Bridges), which include four of the town's medieval defense towers. From the Grande Écluse covered bridge, there is a panoramic view of the Strasbourg cityscape. The Grande Écluse is open to the public during the day and illuminated at night. The Quartier des Tanneurs has an alluring riverside ambience. Along the tree-lined river banks, tourists and locals alike enjoy taking walks in this pleasant area, away from the urban hustle and bustle. Maison Kammerzell The Maison Kammerzell is the finest old burgher's house in the city. Considered a gem of Alsatian architecture, the Kammerzell House (built between 1427 and 1589) features half-timbered upper floors, exquisite leaded stained-glass windows, and rich carved ornamentation. The building's ground floor, with its carved stone arches, served as a space where merchants sold their wares during the 15th century. The Maison Kammerzell has been converted into a hotel and has a renowned fine-dining restaurant with windows that look out onto the cathedral's façade. Another interesting half-timbered house located in the area (at the Place de la Cathédrale and Rue Mercière) is the Pharmacie du Cerf. This building was constructed in the 14th century (with renovations in later centuries) on a site that functioned as an apothecary/pharmacy from 1268 until 2000. Nearby on the Rue des Juifs are the ruins of an ancient Roman fort, giving visitors a sense of the city's cultural heritage that dates back two millennia. Address: Maison Kammerzell, 16 Place de la Cathédrale, Strasbourg Official site: Eglise Saint-Thomas The Eglise Saint-Thomas is located on the site of an ancient church built in the early 6th century, dedicated to the Apostle Saint Thomas. After being destroyed by fire, the Saint-Thomas Church was rebuilt in the 12th century. During its 800-year-history, the Saint-Thomas Church has been most renowned for the role it played during the Protestant Reformation of Alsace. The church was a center of the Lutheran movement in the region. The church has a clock, which for 400 years has struck the hours four minutes too soon. The idea was to make itself heard before the Cathedral clock strikes. Continuing its tradition as a Protestant house of worship, the Eglise Saint-Thomas offers religious services on Sunday mornings at 10:30am. Midday prayers are held from 12:10pm until 12:30pm, Monday through Friday. Tourists may visit the church Monday through Saturday from 10am until 6pm and on Sundays from 12noon until 5:30pm. Address: 11 Rue Martin Luther, Strasbourg Eglise Saint-Pierre-le-JeuneThe Eglise Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune is steeped in history. The church was built in the 11th century on the site of a 7th-century Merovingian chapel. Although the building was renovated in Gothic style during the 13th and 14th centuries, the Romanesque elements are still evident in the 11th-century cloister. During the Reformation (beginning in 1524), the Eglise Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune became a Protestant house of worship. The Eglise Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune still serves as a Protestant church and hosts traditional religious services, concerts, and guided tours. Address: 7 Rue Saint-Léon, Strasbourg Maison de l'Oeuvre Notre-DameIn 1349, the workers responsible for the maintenance of the cathedral established the Maison de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame. The east wing of the building is the oldest part (and was renovated in the 16th century), and the west wing was built from 1579 to 1585. Today, the building houses the Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame, which has one of the finest collections of medieval and Renaissance art in Europe. This collection exhibits masterpieces of Alsatian art, created during the Romanesque era (early medieval period) through the Middle Ages and until 1681. On display are originals of sculpture from the cathedral as well as paintings and stained-glass windows. Visitors should be sure to see the 12th-century Tête de Christ (also known as the Christ de Wissembourg) window, one of the oldest known stained-glass windows. Address: 3 Place du Château, Strasbourg Palais RohanThe elegant 18th-century Palais Rohan was the former residences of the Bishop-Princes from 1732 to 1742 (until the French Revolution). The rest of the immense building houses three exceptional museums. Located on the first floor of the Rohan Palace, the Musée des Beaux-Arts (Museum of Fine Arts) has an excellent collection of paintings by Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, and French masters from the Middle Ages to modern times. There are works by Botticelli, Corot, Courbet, Delacroix, Giotto, Goya, El Greco, Rubens, Tiepolo, and Véronèse among others. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Museum of Decorative Arts) is located on the ground floor of the Rohan Palace, the former apartments of the Cardinals of Rohan. Visitors can see the sumptuous rooms of the bishop's apartment, including a library, print room, and chapel, as well as the collection of decorative arts. The collection includes ceramics, porcelain, paintings, time pieces, and goldsmith's art. Located in the Rohan Palace basement, the Musée Archéologique (Archaeological Museum) has one of the best collections of antiquities in France. The collection includes items from prehistory to the Middle Ages. Address: 2 Place du Château, Strasbourg Musée AlsacienLocated in a patrician house built in 1620, the Alsatian Museum displays a collection of folk art, furniture, costumes, and domestic items. Visitors can view thousands of objects that offer an insight into rural Alsatian life in the 18th and 19th centuries. The museum also features rooms that represent the interior style of different regions of Alsace, including the agricultural plains and the Vosges Mountains. A tour of the museum gives visitors a feel for the charm of Alsatian homes. Address: 23-25 Quai Saint-Nicolas, Strasbourg Place du Marché-aux-Cochons-de-Lait | Robert Cutts / photo modifiedNear the Maison de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame is the picturesque Place du Marché-aux-Cochons-de-Lait, one of the city's most charming squares. The square takes its name from the ancient market where suckling pigs (an Alsatian culinary specialty) were sold. Farther west is the former Grande Boucherie, built in the 16th century as a butchers' house. Today this building houses the Historical Museum (Musée Historique de la Ville de Strasbourg). Half-timbered homes along a canal in the Quartier KrutenauThe lively Quartier Krutenau combines old-world charm with trendy restaurants, fashionable shops, and art galleries. This district of canals and half-timbered homes was once where boatmen and fishermen lived, as indicated by the names of streets such as the Place Saint-Nicolas-aux-Ondes and the Rue de la Tour des Pêcheurs. This quarter has a friendly village atmosphere and is a pleasant area to take a sightseeing stroll. Historical Museum Located in the 16th-century Grande Boucherie (Butchers' House), the Historical Museum offers a comprehensive exhibit of paintings, graphic art, weapons, and everyday objects. The collections span the centuries from the medieval period to the French Revolution with a few rooms dedicated to the Napoleonic and modern eras. Visitors will learn about Strasbourg's politics, society, and economy throughout the ages. The museum dedicates exhibits to important political figures such as the famous General Jean-Baptiste Kléber. Also on display are the costumes and furniture of ordinary citizens, which offers insight into the everyday life of Strasbourg in times past. Address: 2 Rue du Vieux-Marché-aux-Poissons, Strasbourg Musée d'Art Moderne & Contemporain The Musée d'Art Moderne & Contemporain (Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art) occupies a sleek, contemporary-style building on the banks of the Ill River, near the Petite France quarter. Designed with vast windows and high ceilings, the spacious 10,000-square-meter gallery space is bright and airy. A must-see attraction for those who appreciate modern art, the museum boasts an expansive collection of 19th- and 20th-century paintings, including works by Alfred Sisley, Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Wassily Kandinsky, Hans Arp, Georges Braque, Paul Klee, Max Ernst, Auguste Rodin, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas. The museum also hosts temporary exhibitions. Address: 1 Place Hans Jean Arp, Strasbourg Parc de l'Orangerie To the southeast of the Palais de l'Europe is the beautiful Parc de l'Orangerie, the oldest park in Strasbourg. The Orangerie Park was created in the early 19th century for the Empress Joséphine. The garden's Pavillon Joséphine is now used for temporary exhibits, special events, and private receptions. The Parc de l'Orangerie was created in the style of an English Garden, with its inspiration taken from nature and pastoral landscapes. Perfect for leisurely strolls and picnics, the park has an idyllic atmosphere complete with winding walking paths, a lake, fountains, footbridges, and a waterfall. The Temple de l'Amour (Temple of Love) and other follies add to the romantic ambience. Children adore the abundance of things to do, including the park's playground, vintage race car track, miniature farm, and small zoo, which are free of charge. There is also a bowling alley, and it's possible to go boating on the lake. Gourmands should make a reservation at the park's Michelin-starred gastronomic restaurant, Le Buerehiesel (4 Parc de l'Orangerie). Housed in a refurbished 17th-century farmhouse, the restaurant features intimate dining rooms with refined décor, additional seating in a sunlight-flooded conservatory that looks out onto gardens, and a tree-shaded outdoor terrace. Address: Avenue de l'Europe, Strasbourg Palais de l'Europe Strasbourg was chosen as the capital of the European Union because the city became a symbol of reconciliation after the Second World War. Designed by Henry Bernard (a renowned French architect), the ultramodern Palais de l'Europe was built from 1972 to 1977 as a fortress-like structure of nine stories. The Palais de l'Europe is used by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Members of the European Parliament meet in the building's Assembly Chamber, a vast tent-like space with a circular seating layout. The Palais de l'Europe is open to the public for guided tours. Another rewarding thing to do is attend a Parliamentary Assembly debate, held in the Assembly Chamber during a plenary session. Address: Avenue de l'Europe, Strasbourg Christmas market in StrasbourgVisiting the Christmas Markets in Strasbourg is a must-do activity during the holiday season. This festive event has been a tradition since 1570, when it was called "Christkindelsmärik" ("Market of the baby Jesus"). Every year in time for the holidays, Strasbourg's houses, streets, and churches are decorated with Christmas lights, and a giant Christmas tree is placed at the Place Kléber. Throughout the city's historic center, around 300 "chalets" (stalls) sell Christmas decorations, artisanal gifts, gingerbread, and other seasonal Alsatian delicacies. Highlights of the Marchés de Noël include the artisans' chalets at the Place Broglie and Place de la Grande Boucherie, and the specialty food stalls at Place du Marché-aux-Poissons at the terrace of the Palais Rohan. The Marchés de Noël in Strasbourg is one of Europe's best Christmas markets and runs from November 25th until December 24th. Although the markets end (and the chalets are removed) late in the day on Christmas Eve, the holiday festivities continue through January 2nd. Music Festivals and Cultural Events Strasbourg has several excellent music festivals held throughout the year. Les Nuits Européennes in October celebrates a wide range of European and world music. From November through April, the Jazzdor festival presents a superb program of live jazz music, providing a stage for talented French jazz performers, as well as European and international jazz artists. From mid-September through the beginning of October, the Festival Musica dazzles audiences with classical music and a variety of other performances including jazz, blues, world music, opera, and musical theater. One of the most whimsical events in Strasbourg, the FARSe (Street Arts Festival) in mid-August brings lively animation to the streets and squares of Strasbourg's city center. Acrobats and clowns offer puppet shows, mini circus acts, juggling, magic tricks, and burlesque. Poets, musicians, and theater performers also provide entertainment to make audiences smile. Film buffs will appreciate the Festival Européen du Film Fantastique de Strasbourg, held at the end of September through early October. This unique festival is dedicated to the genre of fantastic cinema, including animation, science-fiction, fantasy, and horror. Place Gutenberg Place Gutenberg is found on the Grande-Île, a short walk from the cathedral. The square centers around a 19th-century statue dedicated to the famous Strasbourg resident Johannes Gutenberg, who invented the printing press around the decades of 1430 to 1450. The publication of the Gutenberg Bible in 1455 marks a momentous event in history; this bible was the first book to be printed by machine rather than copied by a scribe. On the southwest side of the square is the finest Neoclassical 16th-century building in Alsace, originally the Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall) and now occupied by the Chamber of Commerce. At the corner of the square near the Rue Mercière, there is a magnificent view of the front of the cathedral. Synagogue de la Paix Built in 1954, the Synagogue de la Paix was created to replace the historic synagogue on Quai Kléber that was destroyed by the Nazis in 1940. Although this monument lacks the grandeur and elegance of the original neo-Romanesque synagogue, it is an important landmark that serves the city's Jewish community, which has had a presence in Strasbourg since the 12th century. Behind the Synagogue de la Paix, the expansive Parc du Contades is a peaceful space, with leafy pathways ideal for enjoying an afternoon stroll. During summertime, jazz, classical, pop/rock, and other types of music concerts are held the Villa Osterloff bandstand located at the back of Contades Park. Address: Avenue de la Paix, Strasbourg Exploring the Beautiful Alsace Region: Although Strasbourg is less than a two-hour TGV (fast-velocity) train ride from Paris, it feels entirely different because of the distinctive regional architecture, culture, and cuisine. Highlights of Alsace include Colmar (30 minutes from Strasbourg by train) and the quaint villages in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains. Exploring Germany: Tourists may also enjoy visiting nearby attractions in Germany, which has a border just five kilometers east of Strasbourg. The Black Forest lies less than a one-hour drive away from the Alsace region, and the city of Stuttgart is a two-hour drive from Strasbourg. Strasbourg Map - Attractions (Historical) Destination The European capital and the capital of Alsace, Strasbourg exudes youthfulness and energy. If you love heritage, culture and the art of living, there's no doubt that you'll fall in love with this city! By plane15 minutes from Strasbourg Airport By carServed by the A4 and the A35 By train1h 46 min from Paris and 3h 45 min from Lyon It’s multicultural, enriched by its influences, forming a perfect bridge between past and present.Young, creative and trendy, it reflects the vitality of its inhabitants.The seat of European institutions, it is the proud symbol of democratic values. ©Max Coquard - Best Jobers Marked by its history, profoundly bicultural, Strasbourg boasts an exceptional architectural heritage! In a subtle blend of tradition and modernity, historical monuments now stand alongside the most modern structures. Admire Europe makes its mark on the heart of Strasbourg! The seat of many institutions, Strasbourg, a key European city, can be discovered through numerous visits that will bring to life the values of peace, democracy and reconciliation between peoples. Follow the guide ©AAA-Meyer Abounding in culture, Strasbourg and its museums await you! With their themed collections, unusual exhibitions, stunning artworks and historical treasures, these institutions are remarkable for their richness and diversity. Visit ©Nis&For When it comes to live entertainment, Strasbourg is renowned for the cosmopolitan aura of its cultural institutions. The Alsatian capital is proud to offer entertainment that’s open to a broad range of creative audacities, repertoires and tastes! Welcome! ©Boma Hôtel Literally just meters from Germany, Strasbourg is the heart of the Alsace region. Alsace has changed hands between France and Germany several times over its history, giving the city a dynamic, interesting, unique cultural heritage, architecture, and cuisine. Think half-timbered homes, medieval architecture, sauerkraut and wine, and technological inovation. Strasbourg is now a bustling metropolis, presiding over an area of geographic and cultural diversity- the Vosges mountains, coniferous forests, vineyards, and farmlands. I LOVE Strasbourg and think it’s one of France’s most fascinating and beautiful big cities. So, in this guide, you will find amazing sights and activities you can experience as you explore this incredible city. Read on for the best things to see and do in Strasbourg! No time to read now? Pin it to read later! ⬇ To help you navigate all Strasbourg has to offer, this article is broken up into its 3 main areas: A. The Grande Ile: The “Big Island” is home to Stasbourg’s old-town, with the most historic buildings and monuments. It was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. B. Petite France: A charming neighborhood on the western side of the Grande Ile. C. Neustadt: The New Town built by the Germans in the 1800s, full of beautiful, ornate buildings. It was added to the UNESCO designation in 2017. The Strasbourg Cathedral is the jewel of the Grande Ile and is an insanely massive cathedral that sits in a relatively small square – you really feel dwarfed by the building! In fact, the cathedral was the world’s tallest building from 1647 to 1874, until the cathedral in Hamburg, Germany surpassed it. The Strasbourg Cathedral took 250 years to complete and was finished in 1439. Because it took so long to build, multiple architectural styles are evident in the design. The earliest part of the church – the nave and transept – are Romanesque style, whereas the rest of the church is more French and German Gothic style. Intricate, detailed sculptures and latticework fill the entire facade, complete with flying buttresses, stained glass windows, and gargoyles. Inside you’ll find soaring ceilings of pointed arches, huge stained glass windows covering the walls. Hours: 8:30-11:15 and then from 12:45-17:45 Cost: Free Beyond the beautiful achtitecural and religious details and significance of the cathedral, perhaps the coolest and most unique feature is an astronomical clock in the back corner of the church. While you can see the 1500’s astronomical clock in the cathedral anytime, the clock performs a show with the pieces moving every day at noon. To see this, you’ll need to buy a special ticket for the clock show specifically from the ticket counter off of Place du Chateau. Tickets cost €4 and go on sale starting at 10 am the day of. You can also climb the towers of the cathedral to the panoramic rooftop terrace. You’ll climb a spiral staircase of 330 steps up the south tower, getting periodic views out of the small windows over the church roof and back to the city. Of course, at the top the views are incredible. I also really liked being up and close with the flying buttresses and gargoyles! The platform at the top of the cathedral sits right at the base of the tower and was used as a watchtower during the Middle Ages and Renaissance times, but was also a common leisure spot and social gathering place for families in the 18th and 19th centuries. Originally, the cathedral was supposed to have 2 spires, but the second tower, though started, was never completed. I don’t mind, though, as it gives it a distinctive look! Cost: €8 Maison Kemmerzell is the oldest building in Strasbourg and is a beautiful historic house covered in intricate wooden designs. It is located right on the Place de la Cathedrale and today is home to an upscale Alsacian restaurant. Place Kleber is the largest square in Strasbourg, and is lined with stately old buildings, a water feature, and a grand statue of J.B. Kleber, a decorated French general born in Strasbourg in 1753 who died in Cairo in 1800. This square contained a church and monastery in the Middle Ages, which were both demolished in the 1500s when the town officially converted to Protestantism.   Place Gutenberg is a charming little square with a carousel and a statue of Johannes Gutenberg, the man who developed a revolutionary invention – the printing press. Gutenberg began developing the plans for the printing press while living in Strasbourg from 1434-1444. He then moved to his hometown of Mainz, Germany, where he finally printed his first book in 1454. Almost immediately, nearly a dozen printing presses were founded in Strasbourg. The statue of Gutenberg was erected in 1840, and the name of the square was changed to Place Gutenberg. Today there’s also a carousel in the square. A fun sidenote: Originally, this was known as Place du Marché aux Herbes and was an important administrative center. In the 1200s, Strasbourg became a free city, which was a notable designation in the Middle Ages. Because of this designation, buildings were built around Gutenberg Square to help with the administration of the free city, including the former City Hall (Pfalz), the Chancellery (Kanzlei), and the Mint (Munz). When you need a break from walking, a boat tour on the Ill River is a fun activity and offers a unique perspective on the city. I recommend taking a Batorama boat tour, a 1-hour-and-15-minute cruise that circles the Grande Île before continuing up the Ill River to the European Parliament. As you cruise, you’ll listen to narration telling you about the different buildings you’re passing and some of the history behind them. You also get to watch the lock system of the canal in action – the boat will enter into a lock, the gates will close, and water will come in or out of the lock to match the water levels upstream. This was cool to experience! You can buy tickets for the boat tours online, at the Batorama ticket office on the Cathedral Square, or at the Batorama ticket office on the quai. The cost is approximately €15 for adults. Boat tours run approximately every 15-30 minutes throughout the day, and you can just buy your tickets the day of. I was here during high season and bought my ticket 45 minutes ahead of time without a problem. The Palais Rohan is a grand palace that sits between the Cathedral and the river. The palace was home to the bishops of Strasbourg who ruled the city, and also hosted French kings and Emporer Napoleon when they came to visit. Today it is home to 3 distinct museums: the Fine Arts Museum, the Museum of Decorative Arts, and the Archeological Museum, which we will discuss individually next. Hours: Weekdays from 10am-1pm and 2pm-6pm, Weekends: 10am-6pm, closed Tuesday Cost: You can buy an individual ticket to each museum for €7.50, or you can buy a one-day combo pass for €16. The combo pass also gives you entrance to all the other museums in Strasbourg, so it’s definitely the best value. If you’re visiting any of the other museums in the city, it’s worth visiting the Palais Rohan first for the combo ticket (which as far as I can tell was not available at other museums). The first of the museums in the Palais Rohan is the Fine Arts Museum, which contains European and Alsacian paintings spread across 20 rooms of the palace. The rooms are historic, with original flooring and ceiling and wall embellishments that make the setting very lovely. Most of the paintings are from the Renaissance period onwards. All of the paintings are European, but a few rooms concentrate on paintings done by Alsacian painters. I liked the artwork here – it was mostly secular and was a combination of portraits, landscapes, and group scenes. Don’t miss the lovely painting of Jeanne d’Arc (Joan of Arc) who was born and raised in the greater Alsace region. The Decorative Arts Museum is essentially a tour through the historical rooms of the Bishop’s Palace, which was built in 1732 for the Prince Bishop of Strasbourg (Armand Gaston de Rohan-Soubise). The palace was his residence, as well as the residence of the kings and other dignitaries who visited the city. Empress Josephine (wife of Napoleon) stayed at the Palais Rohan for two extended stays when Napoleon was off in his military campaigns. Bishop Soubise wanted a palace in the style of the Chateau de Versailles, and even commissioned plans from the King’s architect. As you might expect from a palace taking inspiration from Versailles, the palace rooms are gorgeous! Each room is sumptuously decorated, often with gold leafing designs on the ceiling and walls typical of the Rocaille style. Beautiful murals and sculptures, columns and pilasters, tapestries, and intricate embellishments and ornamentation cover the walls and ceilings. You’ll visit rooms such as the ballroom, the bishop’s room, the library, the chapel, and Emperor Napoleon’s morning room. I loved this museum and thought it was so beautiful and interesting. If you only do one museum in Palais Rohan, it should be this one. The final museum in the Palais Rohan is the Archeological Museum, which traces the history of people in the Alsace region from prehistoric times, through Roman times, and into early Medieval times. Stonework, sculptures, ceramics, tools, and other artifacts (including some skeletons!) are on display, with explanations about their history and cultural significance. This was my least favorite museum, but in general, I find archeological museums less interesting. If you are into archeology, you’ll probably really enjoy this museum. The Historical Museum of Strasbourg is located in what used to be the Grande Boucherie, or the old slaughterhouse. The slaughterhouse, which had been in use since the 1200s was converted to a museum in 1919. This is a great place to visit to learn about the fascinating history of the city and the entire Alsace region, and the many notable events that happened here. For example, at the end of the 1200’s Strasbourg became free from the Holy Roman Empire, becoming a free city not governed by the church or the empire itself. It was allowed to patrol its own walls, have its own market, mint its own money, and did not need to pay taxes or send troops to the Emporer. This degree of freedom was very unique for cities at the time. Strasbourg’s strategic location on the Rhine, plus its proximity to an important bridge, and on the border of both France and Germany, meant that it was hotly desired by both countries. Germany owned Alsace for generations until the 1600’s, when France’s King Louis XIV took control of the region following a series of wars. Here’s a quick overview of the flipflop that Alsace has done over the last 300+ years: 1697: King Louis XIV of France annexed Alsace from Germany following a series of conflicts and treaties 1871: Treaty of Frankfurt, which ended the Franco-Prussian War, brings Alsace back into Germany. 1918: At the end of World War I, Alsace becomes French again as part of the peace deal. 1940: Alsace becomes German again following the fall of France to Germany in World War II. 1945: At the end of WWII, Alsace becomes French again for good. If you like history or just want some general knowledge about the origins and events that have shaped the region, then this is a great museum to visit. Exhibits are in French, German, and English, and audioguides are available in other languages. Information is generally presented in very small chunks and is very easy to consume. The Alsacien Museum is housed in a historic 16th-century building and gives a look at traditional Alsacien living, with typical living rooms and items from daily life displayed throughout the rooms. Displays include detailed examples of: Beautiful painted furniture typical of the region Different bed styles The special stoves used to heat the homes What a well-to-do wine grower’s living room might look like Typical kitchens and bedrooms filled with all the trappings of a kitchen (pots, pans, butter churns, stoves, baskets, plates, cutlery, etc) A pharmacy Plus, you can see examples of traditional Alsacian clothing. Women had a very distinct “uniform” of a red skirt and headdress with a black bow. Men wore a red waistcoat with large buttons. I found this museum to be fascinating and charming, creating a vivid look back into the past. The room setups, attention to small details, items of daily life, and outfits really helped paint a picture of what life would have been like in Alsace. Place Broglie is a long narrow square right in front of Hotel de Ville (City Hall). Today the place is fairly quiet and laidback, but in the Middle Ages it was a happening place full of upscale mansions, government buildings, and even a horse market. In 1740, linden trees were planted, turning the square into essentially a promenade. Saint Thomas is the second oldest church in Strasbourg (after the cathedral) and has been nicknamed the “Lutheran church”. Overall, this church is very underrated in the city, and the outside has more of a plain appearance, but there are some really interesting and notable features inside. First, the grand organ and stained glass rose window at the back of the church are gorgeous and you get a great view of them from the front of the church. Second, at the front of the church is a magnificent mausoleum and sculpture for the tomb of Maurice de Saxony, a Marshal de France. The sculpture depicts death beckoning Saxony into the grave and different symbols of France mourning his death. It is breathtaking! Finally, a second, smaller, free-standing organ is on display in the church. Mozart visited Strasbourg and played a concert on this organ in 1778. There are laminated informational cards available at the front to read as you wander the church – definitely grab one, the information is very interesting and really improves the experience. Hours: 10am-6pm Cost: Free The Ill River on the south side of the Grande Ile is incredibly charming, lined with walking paths, and gorgeous views over the water and quaint buildings lining the riverbanks. The north side of the Grand Ile is lined by the Canal des Faux Remparts and is also a nice area to walk. This side is a lot quieter, with a narrower waterway and more nature-focused pathways along the banks. Canal des Faux Remparts Watch for stairs down from the sidewalks to access the pathways, which are popular for walking, jogging, or hanging out – it’s definitely worth walking along at least part of the river/canal. Thanks to its long history with Germany, Alsacian food bears a lot of resemblance to German food. Almost every restaurant in town serves Alsacian cuisine, so it’s you’ll certainly have ample opportunity to try some delicious regional foods: Choucroute Garnie: A dish comprised of sausage, sauerkraut (choucroute) and sometimes boiled potatoes. Tarte Flambée: Similar to a pizza, this dish has a super thin crust that is usually wood-fired, topped with cream, onions, and ham or bacon. Bretzels: Alsacian pretzels, sometimes prepared with melted cheese or cinnamon sugar. Spaetzle: A buttery egg noodle dish, often cooked with “toppings” like chicken, tomato, and cheese. Kouglehopf: A regional pastry made with brioche dough and filled with rum-soaked raisins. A few recommended restaurants include: La Fignette (5, Rue de la Vignette) La Hache (11, Rue de la Douane) L’Argentoratum (14, Rue du Bain-aux-Plantes) Binchstub Restaurant (6, Rue du Tonnelet Rouge) The Strasbourg Christmas Market is known as the “Capital of Christmas” and is truly one of the most incredible holiday markets in Europe. From the end of November to end of December, twelve different markets fill the Grande Ile, with Place Kleber hosting an enormous Christmas tree. Lit decorations adorn the streets around town and the entire city has an air of festivity to it. It’s truly a magical and immersive experience and deserves a spot on your Christmas bucket list. (And if you’re coming to Strasbourg at Christmas, don’t skip the Colmar Christmas Market nearby). Petite France is a small but oh-so-cute neighborhood of Strasbourg on the west side of the Grande Ile. Here, multiple canals intersect with the Ill River and the Canal dex Faux-Remparts, and are lined with picture-perfect half-timbered houses, and flowers galore. The Petite France area is also known as the Quartier des Tanneurs and is named after all the tanners who worked in this neighborhood in the Middle Ages. The buildings were on the river to provide access to the water needed for tanning the leather, and had open galleries under the roofs used for drying hides. The best thing to do in Petite France is walk around and admire the incredibly adorable streets. Here is a look at some of the most beautiful spots in the quarter: The House of the Tanners dates back to 1572 and is one of the most emblematic homes in the neighborhood. It’s right on Place Benjamin Zix and today houses an Alsatian restaurant. This charming street is next to the canals that passes behind the Maison des Tanneurs. This charming bridge dating back to 1888 crosses the canals and offers some cute views! A canal-side street that looks back at the Maison des Tanneurs and Place Benjamin Zix. A peaceful walkway along the canal in one of the little “peninsulas” created by the canal system. A larger bridge that marks the entrance from the rest of the Grande Ile of Strasbourg into the Petite France quarter. The bridge offers fantastic views over beautiful buildings. This small pedestrian footbridge gives you an up close and personal look at the lock system of the canals, and can watch it in action if a boat cruise comes through (which they do every 15-30 minutes). Plus the view here is incredible – maybe my favorite in the whole Petite France neighborhood. You get the view of Maison des Tanneurs, the flowers, the other houses, and everything is just perfectly picturesque. The Barrage Vauban (Vauban Dam) and the Ponts Couverts (Covered Bridges) are the two main “attractions” in Petite France. They face each other where the canals of Petite France meet the confluence of the Ill River and Canal du Faux Remparts. The Canal des Faux Remparts runs along the north side of the Grande Ile and together with the Ill River, makes the Grande Ile an island. The dam was built between 1686-1700 and designed by Vauban, Louis XIV’s military engineer. The dam was designed to be able to open up the river and flood the surrounding countryside to make it inaccessible to attackers. While the defensive capabilities of the dam are not really necessary today, the dam is still working. Visitors can access a passageway through the dam, and can take the stairs up to a panoramic terrace on the top looking back to Petite France and the Ponts Couverts. View from Barrage Vauban to the Ponts Couverts The Ponts Couverts originally was a set of 4 covered bridges crossing the Ill River in succession, interspersed with towers. Today, the bridges are just ”regular” open-air stone bridges, with 2 of the historic towers still standing on the bridge. The Ponts Couverts directly face the Vauban Dam. Neustadt means “new city” in German and was built during between 1880-1914, when Germany controlled the region. The neighborhood tripled the city’s area, and today is included in Strasbourg’s UNESCO Heritage designation. The new town is still very much “Old World” European architectural style, and reminds me a lot of the Haussmanian architecture found in Paris – ornate stone facades with sculptures and embellishments. While most visitors stick to the Grande Ile, I think it’s really worth exploring Neustadt for a couple of hours – I was really impressed! These are some of the top attractions in this beautiful quarter. The Palais de Justice is a neo-Greek-style courthouse built in 1897. This beautiful building has a very impressive facade with Corinthian columns and is right on the Canal des Faux Remparts. Just next to the Palais de Justice is Eglise St. Pierre le Jeune, a unique church in Strasbourg thanks to its use of pink sandstone. The two rectangular towers of the church are very typical of Rhineland churches, and it also has a beautiful Latin-style dome in the church center. Black marble columns contrast with the white walls and the volume of the church is notable. The history is no less interesting – the church originally was shared between Protestants and Catholics for many years (although today it is just a Catholic church). Place de la Republique is the cultural and political hub of the Neustadt District and was designed to look like an “Imperial Square.” It is lined by several beautiful and massive buildings, such as the Palais du Rhin (the old Imperial Palace), the National University Library, and the National Theater of Strasbourg. The square is a lovely little green, with trees, flowers, greenery, and a large statue. Sitting at the tip of the Saint Helene Island is the Church of Saint Paul, a Protestant church built in the late 1800s and designed in a neo-Gothic style. It sits proudly watching over the riverbanks on the south side of the river. Further out from the Grande Isle, still in Neustadt, is the spacious Parc de l’Orangerie. This is a lovely park, filled with wide walking paths, French gardens, English gardens, and rose gardens. There are numerous spots to enjoy in the park, including a scenic pond where you can rent rowboats, a temple of love gazebo, a playground, multiple gardens, and lots of areas for relaxing. It’s a popular place with residents, but as a tourist, I also loved walking through the park and soaking up the ambiance. The Lycée des Pontonniers is a notable building constructed in Renaissance Revival architecture situated on the Canal dex Faux Remparts. It was originally a military barracks for the Pontonniers, a bridging unit that played a pivotal role in the Napoleonic Wars. In 1902 it was converted into a school for girls in 1902, and today is an international high school. It’s distinct and unique architecture makes it a standout along the canal. In 1949, Strasbourg earned the title “capital of Europe” as it became home to the European Parliament, along with key institutions like the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and the International Institute for Human Rights. Visitors can visit the Parliament building for free and take guided or self-guided tours of the building, the council rooms, and the rooftop terrace. You can see the main highlights of the Grande Ile and the Petite France neighborhoods with just 1 day in Strasbourg. However, to do everything on this list, I’d recommend a solid 2 days in the city. Strasbourg also makes a great base for visiting the other beautiful cities and villages of Alsace – there are so many beautiful spots! Strasbourg is popular and gets busy, but even in summer it was never so busy that the crowds felt overwhelming and unmanageable. Still, waking up early and walking around before the crowds came out was a really nice way to enjoy the beauty of the town and have the sights all to myself. Even at 8:30, there was practically no one out and about in the tourist part of the Grande Ile. And of course, if you can visit in December for the Christmas markets, you absolutely should. You can get a great taste of the markets in a single day, but if you can spare two, you won’t regret it. Strasbourg is a truly unique and beautiful city in France, with so much to offer. Whether you’re exploring its attractions, learning about its history, sampling the distinctive cuisine, or simply enjoying the charming views, you’ll find plenty of memorable experiences. This article was produced by National Geographic Traveller (UK).As the capital of the historical region of Alsace, which has belonged alternately to both France and Germany over the centuries, Strasbourg has developed a distinct identity all of its own. The heart of local life is the Grande Île, an island on the River Ill in the historic centre of the city. Here, narrow, cobbled streets are overlooked by signature timber-framed architecture and the 466ft, 15th-century spire of the gothic Strasbourg Cathedral. Start by immersing yourself in the local crafts, clothes, traditions and dialect by visiting the cleverly curated Alsatian Museum, set in creaking medieval houses connected by wooden staircases and old passageways. Inside, over 5,000 artefacts — clothes and furniture, toys and religious artworks — paint a picture of rural life in Alsace between the 18th and 19th centuries. In contrast are the broad, pillared galleries of the Fine Arts Museum, located on the first and second floors of the Rohan Palace. Works on show include Nicolas de Largillière’s La Belle Strasbourgeoise, arguably the painter’s most famous work, and Cornelis Engelsz’s St Adrian Civic Guard. One of the largest paintings in the collection, it depicts more than 40 soldiers, whose eyes seem to eerily follow visitors as they walk down the hall. Lunch is on the hearty side. The city’s most famous dish is choucroute garnie, a local take on sauerkraut with pork cuts and sausages. The most renowned address for this is Maison Kammerzell, a striking 15th-century restaurant next to the cathedral. For something lighter, head to Mama Bubbele, just outside the Grand Île, and tuck into a tarte flambée. Known as Alsatian pizza for its fine pastry base, it’s served with creme fraiche, bacon and onions, among other toppings.Choucroute garnie — a local take on sauerkraut with pork cuts and sausages — is the city's most famous dish.Photograph by Cultura Creative RF, AlamyBut it’s one-Michelin-starred Au Crocodile that takes the city’s culinary crown. This fine-dining institution is named after a stuffed crocodile that hangs inside, brought back from Egypt by a captain in Napoleon’s army who lived in the building. Chef Romain Brillat’s seasonal menus are delicate and refined, in contrast to the city’s heavier traditional cuisine — think roasted monkfish with wild garlic and green asparagus or Jersey beef sirloin with lemongrass jus.Afterwards, take the five-minute walk to the Büchmesser (‘stomach measurer’) opposite the cathedral facade. This narrow arch, set out from the wall on the corner of Rue Mercière, has measured the girth of hungry locals since the Middle Ages. After your rich

Alsatian meal, you might just struggle to shimmy through sideways.The city's most loved artist of the modern era was cartoonist and illustrator Tomi Ungerer, and a namesake museum dedicated to his work shows his colourful children's illustrations and satirical work. It sits on the edge of the Neustadt district, whose UNESCO-listed architecture was built in the late 19th century when the city was German. It's markedly different from the medieval jumble of the Grande Île, with stately palaces, broad boulevards and an impressive mix of styles — Italian neo-Renaissance, neo-gothic and art nouveau — covering five centuries of European architecture. At the heart of the neighbourhood you'll find the circular and immaculate Jardin de la Place de la République, but for some wider green space, rent a bike from one of many Velhop stations, the local bike-sharing service. Strasbourg has 373 miles of cycling routes — more than any other city in the country — giving it the title of France's cycling capital. Pedal on to Parc de l'Orangerie, the oldest in the city, where you can canoe around a lake. Keep an eye out for storks, the symbol of Alsace: in 1960, this park opened the first reintroduction centre for the bird in the region. For a comfortable stay, check into Okko in the newly developed Presqu'île Malraux district, with doubles from €85 (£74), room only. This story was created with the support of the Strasbourg Tourist Office, Maison Kammerzell, Relais & Chateaux and Okko Hotels. Published in the Jul/Aug 2023 issue of National Geographic Traveller (UK).To subscribe to National Geographic Traveller (UK) magazine click here. (Available in select countries only). Prefecture and commune in Grand Est, France For other uses, see Strasbourg (disambiguation). Prefecture and commune in Grand Est, FranceStrasbourg Strossburi (Alsatian) Straßburg (German)Prefecture and communeStrasbourg Cathedral and the Old TownPonts CouvertsPalais RohanPetite FrancePalais du RhinHôtel BrionHemicycle of the European Parliament FlagCoat of armsLocation of Strasbourg StrasbourgShow map of FranceStrasbourgShow map of Grand EstCoordinates: 48°35′00″N 07°44′45″E / 48.58333°N 7.74583°E / 48.58333; 7.74583CountryFranceRegionGrand EstDepartmentBas-RhinArrondissementStrasbourgCanton6 cantonsIntercommunalityEurométropole de StrasbourgGovernment • Mayor (2020–2026) Jeanne Barseghian[1] (The Ecologists)Area178.26 km2 (30.22 sq mi) • Urban (2018[note 1])240.2 km2 (92.7 sq mi) • Metro (2019[note 1])2,227.1 km2 (859.9 sq mi)Population (2022)[2]291,709 • Rank8th in France • Density3,700/km2 (9,700/sq mi) • Urban (2020[3][note 1])484,217 • Urban density2,000/km2 (5,200/sq mi) • Metro (2020[4][note 1])860,744 • Metro density390/km2 (1,000/sq mi)Demonym(s)Strasbourgeois (masculine)Strasbourgeoise (feminine)Time zoneUTC+01:00 (CET) • Summer (DST)UTC+02:00 (CEST)INSEE/Postal code67482 /Dialling codes0388, 0390, 0368Elevation132–151 m (433–495 ft)Websitewww.strasbourg.eu1 French Land Register data, which excludes lakes, ponds, glaciers > 1 km2 (0.386 sq mi or 247 acres) and river estuaries. Part of a series onAlsaceRot un Wiss, traditional flag of Alsace History Germania Superior (Pagus Alsatiae) (83–475) Alemanni (circa 213–496) Alamannia (3rd-century–911) Duchy of Alsace (circa 630–699) Treaty of Verdun (843) Prince-Bishopric of Strasbourg (982–1803) County of Ferrette (11th-century–14th-century) Salm (1165−1793) Landgraviate of Alsace (1186–1646) Lower Alsace Upper Alsace Further Austria (13th-century–1648) Décapole (1354–1679) County of Hanau-Lichtenberg (1456–1736) Upper Rhenish Circle (1500–1679) Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine (1871–1918) Gau Baden-Elsaß (1940–1945) Alsace (1945–2016) Grand Est (2016–) European Collectivity of Alsace (2021-) Culture Coat of arms Flag Anthem People Language Demographics Musée alsacien (Hagenau | Strasbourg) Religionaccording toConcordat in Alsace-Moselle (1801):(including Lorraine) Catholic Church Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Strasbourg(Immediately subject to the Holy See) (Prince-Bishopric of Strasbourg) (Lorraine: Roman Catholic Diocese of Metz) Protestantism: Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine: Lutheranism: Protestant Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine Calvinism: Protestant Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine Jewish consistories: Strasbourg Colmar (Lorraine: Metz) Law Local law in Alsace-Moselle Concordat in Alsace-Moselle Administrative divisions Capital: Strasbourg Bas-Rhin (Unterelsaß) Arrondissement of Haguenau-Wissembourg Arrondissement of Molsheim Arrondissement of Saverne Arrondissement of Sélestat-Erstein Arrondissement of Strasbourg Haut-Rhin (Oberelsaß) Arrondissement of Altkirch Arrondissement of Colmar-Ribeauvillé Arrondissement of Mulhouse Arrondissement of Thann-Guebwiller Politics Regional Council of Alsace (1982–2015) Alsace independence movement Assembly of Alsace (2021-) Alsace in the European Union European Parliament elections Constituency Related topics Politics of France Politics of Germany Politics of the European Union vte Strasbourg (UK: /ˈstræzbɜːrɡ/ STRAZ-burg,[5] US: /ˈstrɑːsbʊərɡ, ˈstrɑːz-, -bɜːrɡ/ STRAHSS-boorg, STRAHZ-, -burg;[6] French: [stʁasbuʁ] ; German: Straßburg [ˈʃtʁaːsbʊʁk] [7][8]) is the prefecture and largest city of the Grand Est region of eastern France, in the historic region of Alsace. It is the prefecture of the Bas-Rhin department and the official seat of the European Parliament. The city has about three hundred thousand inhabitants, and together Greater Strasbourg and the arrondissement of Strasbourg have over five hundred thousand.[9] Strasbourg's metropolitan area had a population of 860,744 in 2020,[4] making it the eighth-largest metro area in France and home to 14% of the Grand Est region's inhabitants. The transnational Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau had a population of roughly 1,000,000 in 2022. Strasbourg is one of the de facto four main capitals of the European Union (alongside Brussels, Luxembourg and Frankfurt), as it is the seat of several European institutions, such as the European Parliament, the Eurocorps and the European Ombudsman of the European Union. An organization separate from the European Union, the Council of Europe (with its European Court of Human Rights, its European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines most commonly known in French as "Pharmacopée Européenne", and its European Audiovisual Observatory) is also located in the city. Together with Basel (Bank for International Settlements), Geneva (United Nations), The Hague (International Court of Justice) and New York City (United Nations world headquarters), Strasbourg is among the few cities in the world that is not a national capital that hosts international organisations of the first order.[10] The city is the seat of many non-European international institutions such as the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine and the International Institute of Human Rights.[11] It is the second city in France in terms of international congresses and symposia, after Paris. Strasbourg's historic city centre, the Grande Île (Grand Island), was classified a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988, with the newer "Neustadt" being added to the site in 2017.[12] Strasbourg is immersed in Franco-German culture and although violently disputed throughout history, has been a cultural bridge between France and Germany for centuries, especially through the University of Strasbourg, currently the second-largest in France, and the coexistence of Catholic and Protestant culture. It is also home to the largest Islamic place of worship in France, the Strasbourg Grand Mosque.[13] Economically, Strasbourg is an important centre of manufacturing and engineering, as well as a hub of road, rail, and river transportation. The port of Strasbourg is the second-largest on the Rhine after Duisburg in Germany, and the second-largest river port in France after Paris.[14][15] Until the fifth century AD, the city was known as Argantorati (in the nominative, Argantorate in the locative), a Celtic Gaulish name Latinised first as Argentorate (with Gaulish locative ending, as appearing on the first Roman milestones in the first century) and then as Argentoratum (with regular Latin nominative ending, in later Latin texts). That Gaulish name is a compound of -rati, the Gaulish word for fortified enclosures, cognate to the Old Irish ráth (see ringfort) and arganto(n)- (cognate to Latin argentum, which gave modern French argent), the Gaulish word for silver, but also any precious metal, particularly gold, suggesting either a fortified enclosure located by a river gold mining site, or hoarding gold mined in the nearby rivers.[16] After the fifth century the city became known by a completely different name, later Gallicized as Strasbourg (Lower Alsatian: Strossburi; German: Straßburg). That name is of Germanic origin and means 'town (at the crossing) of roads'. The modern Stras- is cognate with the German Straße and English street, both derived from Latin strata ("paved road"), while -bourg is cognate with the German Burg and English borough, both derived from Proto-Germanic *burgz ("hill fort, fortress"). Gregory of Tours was the first to mention the name change: in the tenth book of his History of the Franks written shortly after 590 he said that Egidius, Bishop of Reims, accused of plotting against King Childebert II of Austrasia in favor of his uncle King Chilperic I of Neustria, was tried by a synod of Austrasian bishops in Metz in November 590, found guilty and removed from the priesthood, then taken "ad Argentoratensem urbem, quam nunc Strateburgum vocant" ("to the city of Argentoratum, which they now call Strateburgus"), where he was exiled.[17] Main article: History of Strasbourg For a chronological guide, see Timeline of Strasbourg. Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor visiting Strasbourg in 1414, detail of a painting by Léo Schnug The Roman camp of Argentoratum was first mentioned in 12 BC; the city of Strasbourg which grew from it celebrated its 2,000th anniversary in 1988. The fertile area in the Upper Rhine Plain between the rivers Ill and Rhine had already been populated since the Middle Paleolithic.[18][19] Between 362 and 1262, Strasbourg was governed by the bishops of Strasbourg; their rule was reinforced in 873 and then more in 982.[20] In 1262, the citizens violently rebelled against the bishop's rule (Battle of Hausbergen) and Strasbourg became a free imperial city. It became a French city in 1681, after the conquest of Alsace by the armies of Louis XIV. In 1871, after the Franco-Prussian War, the city, as part of the Imperial Territory of Alsace–Lorraine, became German again, until 1918 (end of World War I), when it reverted to France. Strasbourg was captured by the German army in June 1940 at the end of the Battle of France (World War II), and subsequently came under German control again through formal annexation into the Gau Baden-Elsaß under the Nazi Gauleiter Robert Wagner; since the liberation of the city by the 2nd French Armoured Division under General Leclerc in November 1944, it has again been a French city. In 2016, Strasbourg was promoted from capital of Alsace to capital of Grand Est. Strasbourg played an important part in the Protestant Reformation, with personalities such as John Calvin, Martin Bucer, Wolfgang Capito, Matthew and Katharina Zell, but also in other aspects of Christianity such as German mysticism, with Johannes Tauler, Pietism, with Philipp Spener, and Reverence for Life, with Albert Schweitzer. Delegates from the city took part in the Protestation at Speyer. It was also one of the first centres of the printing industry with pioneers such as Johannes Gutenberg, Johannes Mentelin, and Heinrich Eggestein. Among the darkest periods in the city's long history were the years 1349 (Strasbourg massacre), 1518 (Dancing plague), 1793 (Reign of Terror), 1870 (Siege of Strasbourg) and the years 1940–1944 with the Nazi occupation (atrocities such as the Jewish skull collection) and the British and American bombing raids. Some other notable dates were the years 357 (Battle of Argentoratum), 842 (Oaths of Strasbourg), 1538 (establishment of the university), 1605 (world's first newspaper printed by Johann Carolus), 1792 (La Marseillaise), and 1889 (pancreatic origin of diabetes discovered by Minkowski and Von Mering). Strasbourg has been the seat of European institutions since 1949: first of the International Commission on Civil Status and of the Council of Europe, later of the European Parliament, of the European Science Foundation, of Eurocorps, and others as well. Detailed OSM map of Strasbourg. Strasbourg is situated at the eastern border of France with Germany. This border is formed by the Rhine, which also forms the eastern border of the modern city, facing across the river to the German town Kehl. The historic core of Strasbourg, however, lies on the Grande Île in the river Ill, which here flows parallel to, and roughly 4 kilometres (2.5 mi) from, the Rhine. The natural courses of the two rivers eventually join some distance downstream of Strasbourg, although several artificial waterways now connect them within the city. The city lies in the Upper Rhine Plain, at between 132 and 151 metres (433 and 495 ft) above sea level, with the upland areas of the Vosges Mountains some 20 km (12 mi) to the west and the Black Forest 25 km (16 mi) to the east. This section of the Rhine valley is a major axis of north–south travel, with river traffic on the Rhine itself, and major roads and railways paralleling it on both banks. The city is some 397 kilometres (247 mi) east of Paris.[21] The mouth of the Rhine lies approximately 450 kilometres (280 mi) to the north, or 650 kilometres (400 mi) as the river flows, whilst the head of navigation in Basel is some 100 kilometres (62 mi) to the south, or 150 kilometres (93 mi) by river. In spite of its position far inland, Strasbourg has an oceanic climate (Köppen: Cfb),[22][23] though with less maritime influence than the milder climates of Western and Southern France.[24] The city has warm, relatively sunny summers and cool, overcast winters. The third highest temperature ever recorded was 38.5 °C (101.3 °F) in August 2003, during the 2003 European heat wave. This record was broken, on 30 June 2019, when it reached 38.8 °C (101.8 °F) [25] and then on 25 July 2019, when it reached 38.9 °C (102.0 °F). The lowest temperature ever recorded was −23.4 °C (−10.1 °F) in December 1938.[26] Strasbourg's location in the Rhine valley, sheltered from strong winds by the Vosges and Black Forest mountains, results in poor natural ventilation, making Strasbourg one of the most atmospherically polluted cities of France.[27][28] Nonetheless, the progressive disappearance of heavy industry on both banks of the Rhine, as well as effective measures of traffic regulation in and around the city have reduced air pollution in recent years.[29] Climate data for Strasbourg-Entzheim (SXB), elevation: 150 m (492 ft), 1991–2020 normals, extremes 1924–present Month Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Year Record high °C (°F) 17.6(63.7) 21.1(70.0) 26.3(79.3) 30.0(86.0) 34.6(94.3) 38.8(101.8) 38.9(102.0) 38.7(101.7) 33.4(92.1) 29.1(84.4) 22.1(71.8) 18.3(64.9) 38.9(102.0) Mean maximum °C (°F) 13.4(56.1) 15.7(60.3) 20.5(68.9) 25.7(78.3) 29.3(84.7) 32.8(91.0) 33.9(93.0) 33.4(92.1) 28.3(82.9) 23.8(74.8) 17.4(63.3) 13.7(56.7) 35.0(95.0) Mean daily maximum °C (°F) 5.2(41.4) 7.3(45.1) 12.1(53.8) 17.0(62.6) 20.9(69.6) 24.4(75.9) 26.4(79.5) 26.1(79.0) 21.6(70.9) 15.8(60.4) 9.4(48.9) 5.9(42.6) 16.0(60.8) Daily mean °C (°F) 2.5(36.5) 3.6(38.5) 7.4(45.3) 11.3(52.3) 15.5(59.9) 18.9(66.0) 20.6(69.1) 20.3(68.5) 16.1(61.0) 11.5(52.7) 6.3(43.3) 3.3(37.9) 11.4(52.5) Mean daily minimum °C (°F) −0.2(31.6) 0.0(32.0) 2.6(36.7) 5.7(42.3) 10.1(50.2) 13.4(56.1) 14.9(58.8) 14.5(58.1) 10.7(51.3) 7.2(45.0) 3.3(37.9) 0.8(33.4) 6.9(44.4) Mean minimum °C (°F) −8.9(16.0) −6.7(19.9) −3.8(25.2) −1.1(30.0) 3.7(38.7) 7.6(45.7) 9.7(49.5) 8.7(47.7) 4.7(40.5) 0.0(32.0) −3.3(26.1) −7.6(18.3) −11.3(11.7) Record low °C (°F) −23.6(−10.5) −22.3(−8.1) −16.7(1.9) −5.6(21.9) −2.4(27.7) 1.1(34.0) 4.9(40.8) 4.8(40.6) −1.3(29.7) −7.6(18.3) −10.8(12.6) −23.4(−10.1) −23.6(−10.5) Average precipitation mm (inches) 35.4(1.39) 34.1(1.34) 38.6(1.52) 41.8(1.65) 77.2(3.04) 68.5(2.70) 71.9(2.83) 61.3(2.41) 54.6(2.15) 59.5(2.34) 47.6(1.87) 45.2(1.78) 635.7(25.03) Average precipitation days (≥ 1.0 mm) 9.1 8.3 8.5 8.6 10.8 10.2 10.4 9.5 8.0 9.6 9.2 10.2 112.3 Average snowy days 7.0 6.7 3.3 0.7 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.1 2.2 6.0 25.9 Average relative humidity (%) 86 82 76 72 73 74 72 76 80 85 86 86 79 Mean monthly sunshine hours 55.5 85.8 146.4 186.9 209.1 226.4 239.7 224.2 173.5 100.4 55.2 44.2 1,747.3 Source 1: Meteo France (snow days 1981–2010)[30] Source 2: Infoclimat.fr (relative humidity 1961–1990)[31] Strasbourg is divided into the following districts:[32] Bourse, Esplanade, Krutenau Centre Ville (Downtown Strasbourg) Gare, Tribunal (Central Station, Court) Conseil des XV, Orangerie Cronenbourg Hautepierre, Poteries Koenigshoffen, Montagne-Verte (Green Hill) Elsau Meinau Neudorf-Musau Neuhof 1 (including Ganzau) Neuhof 2 Robertsau Port du Rhin (Rhine's Harbor) Panorama from the Barrage Vauban with the medieval bridge Ponts Couverts in the foreground (the fourth tower is hidden by trees at the left) and the cathedral in the distance on the right La Petite France during golden hour Strasbourg, Cathedral of Our Lady The city is chiefly known for its sandstone Gothic Cathedral with its famous astronomical clock, and for its medieval cityscape of Rhineland black and white timber-framed buildings, particularly in the Petite France district or Gerberviertel ("tanners' district") alongside the Ill and in the streets and squares surrounding the cathedral, where the renowned Maison Kammerzell stands out. Notable medieval streets include Rue Mercière, Rue des Dentelles, Rue du Bain aux Plantes, Rue des Juifs, Rue des Frères, Rue des Tonneliers, Rue du Maroquin, Rue des Charpentiers, Rue des Serruriers, Grand' Rue, Quai des Bateliers, Quai Saint-Nicolas and Quai Saint-Thomas. Notable medieval squares include Place de la Cathédrale, Place du Marché Gayot, Place Saint-Étienne, Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait and Place Benjamin Zix.Maison des tanneursIn addition to the cathedral, Strasbourg houses several other medieval churches that have survived the many wars and destructions that have plagued the city: the Romanesque Église Saint-Étienne, partly destroyed in 1944 by Allied bombing raids; the part-Romanesque, part-Gothic, very large Église Saint-Thomas with its Silbermann organ on which Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Albert Schweitzer played;[33][34] the Gothic Église protestante Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune with its crypt dating back to the seventh century and its cloister partly from the eleventh century; the Gothic Église Saint-Guillaume with its fine early-Renaissance stained glass and furniture; the Gothic Église Saint-Jean; the part-Gothic, part-Art Nouveau Église Sainte-Madeleine etc. The Neo-Gothic church Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux Catholique (there is also an adjacent church Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux Protestant) serves as a shrine for several 15th-century wood-worked and painted altars coming from other, now destroyed churches and installed there for public display; especially the Passion of Christ. Among the numerous secular medieval buildings, the monumental Ancienne Douane (old custom-house) stands out. The German Renaissance has bequeathed the city some noteworthy buildings (especially the current Chambre de commerce et d'industrie, former town hall, on Place Gutenberg), as did the French Baroque and Classicism with several hôtels particuliers (i.e. palaces), among which the Palais Rohan (completed 1742, used for university purposes from 1872 to 1895,[35] now housing three museums) is the most spectacular. Other buildings of its kind are the "Hôtel de Hanau" (1736, now the city hall); the Hôtel de Klinglin (1736, now residence of the préfet); the Hôtel des Deux-Ponts (1755, now residence of the military governor); the Hôtel d'Andlau-Klinglin (1725, now seat of the administration of the Port autonome de Strasbourg) etc. The largest baroque building of Strasbourg though is the 150-metre-long (490 ft) 1720s main building of the Hôpital civil. As for French Neo-classicism, it is the Opera House on Place Broglie that most prestigiously represents this style. Strasbourg also offers high-class eclecticist buildings in its very extended German district, the Neustadt, being the main memory of Wilhelmian architecture since most of the major cities in Germany proper suffered intensive damage during World War II. Streets, boulevards and avenues are homogeneous, surprisingly high (up to seven stories) and broad examples of German urban lay-out and of this architectural style that summons and mixes up five centuries of European architecture as well as Neo-Egyptian, Neo-Greek and Neo-Babylonian styles. The former imperial palace Palais du Rhin, the most political and thus heavily criticized of all German Strasbourg buildings epitomizes the grand scale and stylistic sturdiness of this period. But the two most handsome and ornate buildings of these times are the École internationale des Pontonniers (the former Höhere Mädchenschule, with its towers, turrets and multiple round and square angles[36] and the Haute école des arts du Rhin with its lavishly ornate façade of painted bricks, woodwork and majolica.[37] The baroque organ of the Église Saint-Thomas Notable streets of the German district include: Avenue de la Forêt Noire, Avenue des Vosges, Avenue d'Alsace, Avenue de la Marseillaise, Avenue de la Liberté, Boulevard de la Victoire, Rue Sellénick, Rue du Général de Castelnau, Rue du Maréchal Foch, and Rue du Maréchal Joffre. Notable squares of the German district include Place de la République, Place de l'Université, Place Brant, and Place Arnold. Impressive examples of Prussian military architecture of the 1880s can be found along the newly reopened Rue du Rempart, displaying large-scale fortifications among which the aptly named Kriegstor (war gate). As for modern and contemporary architecture, Strasbourg possesses some fine Art Nouveau buildings (such as the huge Palais des Fêtes and houses and villas like Villa Schutzenberger and Hôtel Brion), good examples of post-World War II functional architecture (the Cité Rotterdam, for which Le Corbusier did not succeed in the architectural contest) and, in the very extended Quartier Européen, some spectacular administrative buildings of sometimes utterly large size, among which the European Court of Human Rights building by Richard Rogers is arguably the finest. Other noticeable contemporary buildings are the new Music school Cité de la Musique et de la Danse, the Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain and the Hôtel du Département facing it, as well as, in the outskirts, the tramway-station Hoenheim-Nord designed by Zaha Hadid. Place Kléber The city has many bridges, including the medieval and four-towered Ponts Couverts that, despite their name, are no longer covered. Next to the Ponts Couverts is the Barrage Vauban, a part of Vauban's 17th-century fortifications, that does include a covered bridge. Other bridges are the ornate 19th-century Pont de la Fonderie (1893, stone) and Pont d'Auvergne (1892, iron), as well as architect Marc Mimram's futuristic Passerelle over the Rhine, opened in 2004. The largest square at the centre of the city of Strasbourg is the Place Kléber. Located in the heart of the city's commercial area, it was named after general Jean-Baptiste Kléber, born in Strasbourg in 1753 and assassinated in 1800 in Cairo. In the square is a statue of Kléber, under which is a vault containing his remains. On the north side of the square is the Aubette (Orderly Room), built by Jacques François Blondel, architect of the king, in 1765–1772. The Pavillon Joséphine (rear side) in the Parc de l'Orangerie The Château de Pourtalès (front side) in the park of the same name Strasbourg features a number of prominent parks, of which several are of cultural and historical interest: the Parc de l'Orangerie, laid out as a French garden by André le Nôtre and remodeled as an English garden on behalf of Joséphine de Beauharnais, now displaying noteworthy French gardens, a neo-classical castle and a small zoo; the Parc de la Citadelle, built around impressive remains of the 17th-century fortress erected close to the Rhine by Vauban;[38] the Parc de Pourtalès, laid out in English style around a baroque castle (heavily restored in the 19th century) that now houses a small three-star hotel,[39] and featuring an open-air museum of international contemporary sculpture.[40] The Jardin botanique de l'Université de Strasbourg (botanical garden) was created under the German administration next to the Observatory of Strasbourg, built in 1881, and still owns some greenhouses of those times. The Parc des Contades, although the oldest park of the city, was completely remodeled after World War II. The futuristic Parc des Poteries is an example of European park-conception in the late 1990s. The Jardin des deux Rives, spread over Strasbourg and Kehl on both sides of the Rhine opened in 2004 and is the most extended (60-hectare) park of the agglomeration. The most recent park is Parc du Heyritz (8,7 ha), opened in 2014 along a canal facing the hôpital civil. As of 2020, the city of Strasbourg has eleven municipal museums (including Aubette 1928),[41] eleven university museums,[42] and at least two privately owned museums (Musée vodou and Musée du barreau de Strasbourg). Five communes in the metropolitan area also have museums (see below), three of them dedicated to military history. The collections in Strasbourg are distributed over a wide range of museums, according to a system that takes into account not only the types and geographical provenances of the items, but also the epochs. This concerns in particular the following domains: Old Master paintings from the Germanic Rhenish territories and until 1681 are displayed in the Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame (MOND); old master paintings from all the rest of Europe (including the Dutch Rhenish territories) and until 1871, as well as old master paintings from the Germanic Rhenish territories between 1681 and 1871, are displayed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts; paintings since 1871 are displayed in the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCS). Decorative arts until 1681 are on display in the MOND, decorative arts from the years 1681 until 1871 are on display in the Musée des arts décoratifs, decorative arts after 1871 are on display at the MAMCS, with items from each epoch also shown in the Musée historique. Prints and drawings until 1871 are displayed in the Cabinet des estampes et dessins, save for the original plans of Strasbourg Cathedral, displayed in the MOND. Prints and drawings after 1871 are displayed in the MAMCS, and in the Musée Tomi Ungerer/Centre international de l'illustration (the combined number of prints and drawings amounts to well over 200,000). Artefacts from Ancient Egypt are on display in two entirely different collections, one in the Musée archéologique and the other belonging to the Instituts d'Égyptologie et de Papyrologie of the University of Strasbourg. A room in the Musée des Arts décoratifs The Musée des Beaux-Arts owns paintings by Hans Memling, Francisco de Goya, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, Giotto di Bondone, Sandro Botticelli, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, El Greco, Correggio, Cima da Conegliano and Piero di Cosimo, among others. The Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame (located in a part-Gothic, part-Renaissance building next to the cathedral) houses a large and renowned collection of medieval and Renaissance upper-Rhenish art, among which original sculptures, plans and stained glass from the cathedral and paintings by Hans Baldung and Sebastian Stoskopff. The Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain is among the largest museums of its kind in France. The Musée des Arts décoratifs, located in the sumptuous former residence of the cardinals of Rohan, the Palais Rohan displays a reputable collection of 18th century furniture and china. The Cabinet des estampes et des dessins displays five centuries of engravings and drawings, but also woodcuts and lithographies. The Musée Tomi Ungerer/Centre international de l'illustration, located in a large former villa next to the Theatre, displays original works by Ungerer and other artists (Saul Steinberg, Ronald Searle ...) as well as Ungerer's large collection of ancient toys. The Musée archéologique presents a large display of regional findings from the first ages of man to the sixth century, focusing on the Roman and Celtic period. It also includes a collection of works from Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece, assembled and bequeathed by Gustave Schlumberger.[43] The Musée alsacien is dedicated to traditional Alsatian daily life. Le Vaisseau ("The vessel") is a science and technology centre, especially designed for children. The Musée historique (historical museum) is dedicated to the tumultuous history of the city and displays many artifacts of the times, including the Grüselhorn, the horn that was blown at 10 every evening during medieval times to order the Jews out of the city. The Musée vodou (Voodoo museum) opened its doors on 28 November 2013. Displaying a private collection of artefacts from Haiti, it is located in a former water tower (château d'eau) built in 1883 and classified as a Monument historique. The Musée du barreau de Strasbourg (The Strasbourg bar association museum) is a museum dedicated to the work and the history of lawyers in the city.[44][45] The Université de Strasbourg is in charge of a number of permanent public displays of its collections of scientific artefacts and products of all kinds of exploration and research.[46] The Musée zoologique is one of the oldest in France and is especially famous for its collection of birds. The museum is co-administered by the municipality. The Gypsothèque (also known as Musée des moulages or Musée Adolf Michaelis) is France's second-largest cast collection and the largest university cast collection in France. The Musée de Sismologie et Magnétisme terrestre displays antique instruments of measure. The Musée Pasteur is a collection of medical curiosities. The Musée de minéralogie is dedicated to minerals. The Musée d'Égyptologie houses a collections of archaeological findings made in and brought from Egypt and Sudan. This collection is entirely separate from the Schlumberger collection of the Musée archéologique (see above).[47] The Crypte aux étoiles ("star crypt") is situated in the vaulted basement below the Observatory of Strasbourg and displays old telescopes and other antique astronomical devices such as clocks and theodolites. Musée Les Secrets du Chocolat (Chocolate museum) in Geispolsheim[48] Fort Frère in Oberhausbergen[49] Fort Rapp in Reichstett MM Park France, a military museum, in La Wantzenau[50] The commune of Strasbourg proper had a population of 291,313 on 1 January 2021,[9] the result of a constant moderate annual growth which is also reflected in the constant growth of the number of students at its university (e. g. from 42,000 students in 2010 to 52,000 students in 2019).[51] The metropolitan area of Strasbourg had a population of 853,110 inhabitants in 2019 (French side of the border only),[4] while the transnational Eurodistrict had a population of 1,000,000 in 2022. In the Middle Ages, Strasbourg (a free imperial city since 1262), was an important town. According to a 1444 census, the population was circa 20,000; only one third less than Cologne, then a major European city.[52] Historical populationYearPop.±% p.a.1793 47,254— 1800 49,056+0.54%1806 51,465+0.80%1821 49,680−0.24%1831 49,712+0.01%1836 57,885+3.09%1841 70,298+3.96%1846 71,992+0.48%1851 75,565+0.97%1856 77,656+0.55%1861 82,014+1.10%1866 84,167+0.52%1871 85,654+0.35%1875 94,306+2.43%1880 104,471+2.07%1885 111,987+1.40%1890 123,500+1.98%1895 135,608+1.89%1900 151,041+2.18%YearPop.±% p.a.1905 167,678+2.11%1910 178,891+1.30%1921 166,767−0.64%1926 174,492+0.91%1931 181,465+0.79%1936 193,119+1.25%1946 175,515−0.95%1954 200,921+1.70%1962 228,971+1.65%1968 249,396+1.43%1975 253,384+0.23%1982 248,712−0.27%1990 252,338+0.18%1999 264,115+0.51%2007 272,123+0.37%2012 274,394+0.17%2017 280,966+0.47%2020 290,576+1.13%This graph was using the legacy Graph extension, which is no longer supported. It needs to be converted to the new Chart extension.Source: EHESS[53] and INSEE (1968-2017)[54] 2012 % 2007 % Total population 274,394 100 272,123 100 0–14 years 47,473 17.3 46,263 17.0 15–29 years 77,719 28.3 78,291 28.8 30–44 years 54,514 19.9 54,850 20.2 45–59 years 45,436 16.6 47,236 17.4 60–74 years 30,321 11.1 27,060 9.9 75+ years 18,931 6.9 18,424 6.8 This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (May 2024) (Learn how and when to remove this message) Strasbourg is the seat of internationally renowned institutions of music and drama: The Orchestre philharmonique de Strasbourg, founded in 1855, one of the oldest symphonic orchestras in western Europe. Based since 1975 in the Palais de la musique et des congrès. The Opéra national du Rhin The Théâtre national de Strasbourg The Percussions de Strasbourg The Théâtre du Maillon The "Laiterie" Other theatres are the Théâtre jeune public, the TAPS Scala and the Kafteur. Musica, international festival of contemporary classical music (autumn) Festival international de Strasbourg (founded in 1932), festival of classical music and jazz (summer) Festival Augenblick, film festival held annually since 2005. Festival des Artefacts, festival of contemporary non-classical music Les Nuits électroniques de l'Ososphère Strasbourg European Fantastic Film Festival is an annual film festival devoted to science fiction, horror and fantasy. It was known as the Spectre Film Festival before 2008. Strasbulles is the annual comic con, also known as the European Festival of Bande Dessinée The Strasbourg International Film Festival is an annual film festival focusing on new and emerging independent filmmakers from around the world. Christkindelsmärik, held from the end of November through December, is an annual Christmas market that dates back to 1570.[55] Strasbourg, well known as a centre of humanism, has a long history of excellence in higher education, at the crossroads of French and German intellectual traditions. Although Strasbourg had been annexed by the Kingdom of France in 1683, it still remained connected to the German-speaking intellectual world throughout the 18th century, and the university attracted numerous students from the Holy Roman Empire, with Goethe, Metternich and Montgelas, who studied law in Strasbourg, among the most prominent. With 19 Nobel prizes in total, Strasbourg is the most eminent French university outside of Paris. Until 2009, there were three universities in Strasbourg, with an approximate total of 48,500 students in 2007, and another 4,500 students attended one of the diverse post-graduate schools:[56] Strasbourg I – Louis Pasteur University Strasbourg II – Marc Bloch University Strasbourg III – Robert Schuman University The three institutions merged in 2009, forming the Université de Strasbourg. Its component schools include: Sciences Po Strasbourg (Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg), the University of Strasbourg's political science and international studies centre The EMS (EM Strasbourg Business School), the University of Strasbourg's business school The INSA (Institut national des sciences appliquées), the University of Strasbourg's engineering school The ENA (École nationale d'administration). ENA trains most of the nation's high-ranking civil servants. The relocation to Strasbourg was meant to give a European vocation to the school and to implement the French government's "décentralisation" plan. The ISEG Group (Institut supérieur européen de gestion group) The ECPM (École européenne de chimie, polymères et matériaux) The EPITA (École pour l'informatique et les techniques avancées) The EPITECH (École pour l'informatique et les nouvelles technologies) The ITIRI (Institute de traducteurs, d'interpretes, et de relations Internationales) The INET (Institut national des études territoriales) The IIEF (Institut international d'études françaises) Three IUTs (Instituts universitaires de technologie located in Schiltigheim, Illkirch, and Haguenau) The ENGEES (École nationale du génie de l'eau et de l'environnement de Strasbourg) The CUEJ (Centre universitaire d'enseignement du journalisme) TÉLÉCOM Physique Strasbourg (École nationale supérieure de physique de Strasbourg), Institute of Technology, located in the South of Strasbourg (Illkirch-Graffenstaden) Two American colleges have a base in Strasbourg: Syracuse University, New York, and Centre College, Kentucky. There is also HEAR (Haute école des arts du Rhin) the celebrated art school, and the International Space University in the south of Strasbourg (Illkirch-Graffenstaden). The European Center for Studies and Research in Ethics [57] is a tertiary establishment for research and education in Ethics. This center is located at the premises of the old faculty of medicine in Strasbourg. The Center's name in French is CEERE (Centre européen d'enseignement et de recherche en éthique). International schools include: Multiple levels: European School of Strasbourg (priority given to children whose parents are employed at the European institutions) International School Strasbourg For elementary education:[58] École Internationale Robert Schuman International School at Lucie Berger Russian Mission School in Strasbourg[59] For middle school/junior high school education:[58] Collège International de l'Esplanade For senior high school/sixth form college:[58] Lycée International des Pontonniers (FR) Lycée International Jean Sturm National Library The Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire (BNU) is, with its collection of more than 3,000,000 titles,[60] the second-largest library in France after the Bibliothèque nationale de France. It was founded by the German administration after the complete destruction of the previous municipal library in 1871 and holds the unique status of being simultaneously a students' and a national library. The Strasbourg municipal library had been marked erroneously as "City Hall" in a French commercial map, which had been captured and used by the German artillery to lay their guns. A librarian from Munich later pointed out "...that the destruction of the precious collection was not the fault of a German artillery officer, who used the French map, but of the slovenly and inaccurate scholarship of a Frenchman."[61] The municipal library Bibliothèque municipale de Strasbourg (BMS) administers a network of ten medium-sized libraries in different areas of the town. A six stories high "Grande bibliothèque", the Médiathèque André Malraux, was inaugurated on 19 September 2008 and is considered the largest in Eastern France.[62] As one of the earliest centres of book-printing in Europe (see above: History), Strasbourg for a long time held a large number of incunabula — books printed before 1500 — in its library as one of its most precious heritages: no less than 7,000.[63] After the total destruction of this institution in 1870, however, a new collection had to be reassembled from scratch. Today, Strasbourg's different public and institutional libraries again display a sizable total number of incunabula, distributed as follows: Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, ca. 2,120,[63] Médiathèque de la ville et de la communauté urbaine de Strasbourg, 349,[64] Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire, 238,[65] Médiathèque protestante, 66,[66] and Bibliothèque alsatique du Crédit Mutuel, 5.[67] One of Strasbourg's trams passes over one of its canals, while a tourist trip boat passes underneath. Train services operate from the Gare de Strasbourg, the city's main station in the city centre, eastward to Offenburg and Karlsruhe in Germany, westward to Metz and Paris, and southward to Basel. Strasbourg's links with the rest of France have improved due to its recent connection to the TGV network, with the first phase of the TGV Est (Paris–Strasbourg) in 2007, the TGV Rhin-Rhône (Strasbourg-Lyon) in 2012, and the second phase of the TGV Est in July 2016. Strasbourg also has its own airport, serving major domestic destinations as well as international destinations in Europe and northern Africa. The airport is linked to the Gare de Strasbourg by a frequent train service.[68][69] City transport in Strasbourg includes the Strasbourg tramway, which opened in 1994 and is operated by the regional transit company Compagnie des Transports Strasbourgeois (CTS), consisting of 6 lines with a total length of 55.8 km (34.7 mi). The CTS also operates a comprehensive bus network throughout the city that is integrated with the trams. With more than 500 km (311 mi) of bicycle paths, biking in the city is convenient and the CTS operates a cheap bike-sharing scheme named Vélhop. The CTS, and its predecessors, also operated a previous generation of tram system between 1878 and 1960, complemented by trolleybus routes between 1939 and 1962.[70] Being on the Ill and close to the Rhine, Strasbourg has always been an important centre of fluvial navigation, as is attested by archeological findings. In 1682 the Canal de la Bruche was added to the river navigations, initially to provide transport for sandstone from quarries in the Vosges for use in the fortification of the city. That canal has since closed, but the subsequent Canal du Rhône au Rhin, Canal de la Marne au Rhin and Grand Canal d'Alsace are still in use, as is the important activity of the Port autonome de Strasbourg. Water tourism inside the city proper attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists yearly. The tram system that now criss-crosses the historic city centre complements walking and biking in it. The centre has been transformed into a pedestrian priority zone that enables and invites walking and biking by making these active modes of transport comfortable, safe and enjoyable. These attributes are accomplished by applying the principle of "filtered permeability" to the existing irregular network of streets. It means that the network adaptations favour active transport and, selectively, "filter out" the car by reducing the number of streets that run through the centre. While certain streets are discontinuous for cars, they connect to a network of pedestrian and bike paths which permeate the entire centre. In addition, these paths go through public squares and open spaces increasing the enjoyment of the trip. This logic of filtering a mode of transport is fully expressed in a comprehensive model for laying out neighbourhoods and districts – the fused grid. At present the A35 autoroute, which parallels the Rhine between Karlsruhe and Basel, and the A4 autoroute, which links Paris with Strasbourg, penetrate close to the centre of the city. The Grand contournement ouest (GCO) project, programmed since 1999, planned to construct a 24-kilometre-long (15 mi) highway connection between the junctions of the A4 and the A35 autoroutes in the north and of the A35 and A352 autoroutes in the south. This routes well to the west of the city in order to divest a significant portion of motorized traffic from the unité urbaine.[71] The GCO project was opposed by environmentalists, who created a ZAD (or Zone to Defend).[72] After much delay, the GCO was finally inaugurated on 11 December 2021 as the A355 autoroute.[73] The average amount of time people spend commuting on public transport in Strasbourg on weekdays is 52 min. 7% of travellers on public transport travel for more than 2 hours every day. The average amount of time people wait at a stop or station for public transport is 9 min and 11% of passengers wait for more than 20 minutes on average every day. The average distance people usually travel in a single trip on public transport is 3.9 km (2.4 mi), whilst none travels for more than 12 km (7.5 mi) in a single direction.[74] The Palace of Europe of the Council of Europe Main article: European Institutions in Strasbourg Strasbourg is the seat of over twenty international institutions,[75] most famously of the Council of Europe and of the European Parliament, of which it is the official seat. Strasbourg is considered the legislative and democratic capital of the European Union, while Brussels is considered the executive and administrative capital and Luxembourg the judiciary and financial capital.[76] Strasbourg is the seat of the following organisations, among others: Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (since 1920) Council of Europe with all the bodies and organisations affiliated to this institution (since 1949) European Parliament (since 1952) European Ombudsman Eurocorps headquarters, Franco-German television channel Arte European Science Foundation International Institute of Human Rights Human Frontier Science Program International Commission on Civil Status Assembly of European Regions Centre for European Studies (French: Centre d'études européennes de Strasbourg) Sakharov Prize Main article: Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict France and Germany have created a Eurodistrict straddling the Rhine, combining the Greater Strasbourg and the Ortenau district of Baden-Württemberg, with some common administration. It was established in 2005 and has been fully functional since 2010. Stade de la Meinau, home of RC Strasbourg Sporting teams from Strasbourg are the Racing Club de Strasbourg Alsace (football), SIG Strasbourg (basketball) and the Étoile Noire (ice hockey).[77] The women's tennis Internationaux de Strasbourg is one of the most important French tournaments of its kind outside Roland-Garros. In 1922, Strasbourg was the venue for the XVI Grand Prix de l'A.C.F. which saw Fiat battle Bugatti, Ballot, Rolland Pilain, and Britain's Aston Martin and Sunbeam. In 2006 Strasbourg hosted the Grand Depart of the Tour de France. The city is home to SN Strasbourg, a First division water polo team that plays its home games at the Piscine de la Kibitzenau. Honours associated with the city of Strasbourg: The Medal of Honor Strasbourg Sakharov Prize seated in Strasbourg City of Strasbourg Silver (gilt) Medal, a former medal with City Coat of Arms and Ten Arms of the Cities of the Dekapolis[78] For a more comprehensive list, see List of people from Strasbourg. Further information: University of Strasbourg § Notable academics and alumni; Observatory of Strasbourg § Notable astronomers; and List of bishops, prince-bishops and archbishops of Strasbourg In chronological order, notable people born in Strasbourg include: Eric of Friuli Johannes Tauler Sebastian Brant Jean Baptiste Kléber Louis Ramond de Carbonnières François Christophe Kellermann Marie Tussaud Ludwig I of Bavaria Charles Frédéric Gerhardt Louis-Frédéric Schützenberger Gustave Doré Émile Waldteufel Jean-Georges Cornélius René Beeh Jean/Hans Arp Charles Münch Hans Bethe Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont Marcel Marceau Tomi Ungerer Elizabeth Sombart Arsène Wenger Petit Pio Marmaï Matt Pokora Barbara Pravi In chronological order, notable residents of Strasbourg include: Johannes Gutenberg Hans Baldung Martin Bucer John Calvin Joachim Meyer Johann Carolus Johann Wolfgang Goethe Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz Klemens Wenzel von Metternich Georg Büchner Louis Pasteur Ferdinand Braun Albrecht Kossel Georg Simmel Albert Schweitzer Otto Klemperer Marc Bloch Alberto Fujimori Marjane Satrapi Paul Ricœur Jean-Marie Lehn See also: List of twin towns and sister cities in France Strasbourg is twinned with:[79] Boston, United States, since 1960[79][80] Leicester, United Kingdom, since 1960[79][81][82] Stuttgart, Germany, since 1962[79][83] Dresden, Germany, since 1990[79][84] Strasbourg has cooperative agreements with:[85] Jacmel, Haiti, since 1991 (Coopération décentralisée) Fez, Morocco, since 1999 (Coopération décentralisée) Douala, Cameroon, since 2005 (Coopération décentralisée) Vologda, Russia, since 2009 (Coopération décentralisée) Oran, Algeria, since 2015 (Coopération décentralisée) Kairouan, Tunisia, since 2015 (Coopération décentralisée) Moscow, Russia, since 2016 (Coopération décentralisée) Kampala, Uganda, since 2018 (Coopération décentralisée) Kagoshima, Japan, since 2019 (Coopération décentralisée) The opening scenes of the 1977 Ridley Scott film The Duellists take place in Strasbourg in 1800. The 2007 film In the City of Sylvia is set in Strasbourg. Early February 2011, principal photography for Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (2011) moved for two days to Strasbourg. Shooting took place on, around, and inside the Strasbourg Cathedral. The opening scene of the movie covers an assassination-bombing in the city. One of the longest chapters of Laurence Sterne's novel Tristram Shandy (1759–1767), "Slawkenbergius' tale", takes place in Strasbourg.[86] An episode of Matthew Gregory Lewis' novel The Monk (1796) takes place in the forests then surrounding Strasbourg. A part of the story in White Album 2 takes place in Strasbourg. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart called his Third violin concerto (1775) Straßburger Konzert because of one of its most prominent motives, based on a local, minuet-like dance that had already appeared as a tune in a symphony by Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf.[87] It is not related to Mozart's ulterior stay in Strasbourg (1778), where he gave three concert performances on the piano. Havergal Brian's Symphony No. 7 was inspired by passages in Goethe's memoirs recalling his time spent at Strasbourg University. The work ends with an orchestral bell sounding the note E, the strike-note of the bell of Strasbourg Cathedral. British art-punk band The Rakes had a minor hit in 2005 with their song "Strasbourg". This song features witty lyrics with themes of espionage and vodka and includes a count of 'eins, zwei, drei, vier!!', even though Strasbourg's spoken language is French. On their 1974 album Hamburger Concerto, Dutch progressive band Focus included a track called "La Cathédrale de Strasbourg", which included chimes from a cathedral-like bell. Strasbourg pie, a dish containing foie gras, is mentioned in the finale of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical Cats. Several works have specifically been dedicated to Strasbourg Cathedral, notably ad hoc compositions (masses, motets etc.) by Kapellmeisters Franz Xaver Richter and Ignaz Pleyel and, more recently, It is Finished by John Tavener. ^ a b c d Only the part of the urban area on French territory. ^ "Répertoire national des élus: les maires" (in French). data.gouv.fr, Plateforme ouverte des données publiques françaises. 13 September 2022. Archived from the original on 28 June 2020. Retrieved 2 December 2022. ^ "Populations de référence 2022" (in French). The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies. 19 December 2024. ^ "Unité urbaine 2020 de Strasbourg (partie française) (67701)". insee.fr. 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