

The Arc de Triomphe In Paris France

Contributed by Martyn Davis
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The Arc de Triomphe is just one of many landmarks in Paris that you can visit when on holiday, and standing at over 51 metres high you can be sure to find this with ease.

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So when you start planning your holiday to France, you are no doubt going to try and find out what you can do, see, or visit, but when it comes to Paris, there are so many different monuments and landmarks, that it is sometimes a hard job deciding on what to see next!

One place we would highly recommend you go and see is the Arc de Triomphe, which is a remarkable monument that was built to honour those who fought for France.

Now, you may have heard of the famous Avenue des Champs-Élysées, which is known around the world for its shops, restaurants, hotels plus much more, this is where you can find the Arc de Triomphe, positioned at the western end of the Champs-Élysées, standing in the centre of the Place Charles de Gaulle.

{bot_wrgoogle}This is also the second largest triumphal arch it stands over 51 metres high and was commissioned by Napoleon and designed in 1806 but was not actually completed until the 1830's during the reign of King Louis-Philippe. But it is hard to imagine how large this monument really is, so to give you an idea, only a few weeks after the World War I victory parade in Paris, a pilot flew his biplane right through the centre of it!

When visiting the Arc de Triomphe you will find that it is also home to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and has an eternal flame, which by the way, is the first eternal flame to be lit in Western Europe since the year 391 and it burns in memory of the dead who were never identified from World War I and World War II, but although it is never meant to be put out, it was once when a drunken man decided to urinate on it, and yes, you guessed it, he was quickly arrested!!

Over the years, numerous political figures have paid their respects at the tomb including President John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline and when President Kennedy was assassinated, Jacqueline decided to do a similar tribute with an eternal flame. So the French President went to Washington to attend the funeral and witnessed the lighting of the flame that had made a lasting impression on Jacqueline Kennedy since her visit to France.

Now getting back to this historic landmark in Paris itself, you will be able to see richly sculptured friezes of soldiers depicted upon the masonry. And in the attic of the Arc de Triomphe as you look up there are 30 shields which are engraved with the names of major revolutionary and Napoleonic military victories. Also on the inside walls it lists the names of hundreds of French generals.

Also, the Arc de Triomphe has become a focal point for many events and on 11th November, which was the date of the armistice between France and Germany signed in 1918, there is now a ceremony held on this date every year, plus there have also been numerous parades and other major events and another is the major parade held every year on Bastille Day, which is actually the largest in Europe.

But probably one of the main reasons that most people know about the Arc de Triomphe from all over the world is through the famous cycle race, The Tour de France as this plays an important role for the participants, because the minute this fabulous monumental arch comes into view, the cyclists know the race is almost finished. No doubt why you see a few smiles on their faces at this point, especially as the Tour de France ends on the Champs Élysées with the crowds cheering to the very exhausted participants.

Obviously you can reach the Arc de Triomphe at a more leisurely pace, by the Paris bus tours, hiring a bike or taking a stroll along the Champs-Élysées and utilising the tunnel on the north side, which goes underneath the notorious intersection and is safer than dodging the traffic!

Although walking around the outside is free, if you want to venture inside to the museum to learn more about its history

and go to the top to get a great view, there is a small fee but being open to the public for visits until after 10pm, The Arce de Triomphe provides a great view in the evening of the shimmering lights along the Avenue des Champs Elysees.

Plus the views in the day from the top, with the Eiffel Tower in one direction, the Grand Arche and business district in another direction, obviously the Champs Elysees and even the Sacre Coeur Basilica in the distance, makes a tremendous spot to experience the wonders of Paris.

Yet unfortunately, there is no lift so it is not accessible to the disabled and there are a lot of steps to climb, so you do need to be reasonably fit and able for the climb to the viewing platform, but it is well worth the effort!

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