

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the interior of a Gothic cathedral. The image is dominated by a large, intricate rose window with a complex tracery pattern. Below the window is a balcony or triforium level, lined with a series of statues of figures in Gothic attire. The architecture is characterized by pointed arches, ribbed vaulting, and detailed stonework. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the textures and colors of the stone.

# Abby's Mini Guide to Paris

The print it out, stuff it in your pocket, only-the-essentials guide to what to see and do during your stay

Please visit us at [www.ParisWeekender.com](http://www.ParisWeekender.com)!

## Top Landmarks & Neighborhoods

- 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ile de la Cité (Notre Dame, the Conciergerie, Place Dauphine, Sainte-Chapelle), Ile St. Louis, the Louvre, the Pyramides du Louvre and the Cour Carrée, the Tuileries, Jardin du Palais Royal and the nearby shopping arcades such as Galerie Vivienne (see below for more on the arcades), Place Vendôme, rue Montorgueil and surrounding pedestrian streets, St. Eustache and the Jardin des Halles
- Marais (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>): Hotel de Ville, medieval houses such as the 15<sup>th</sup> century house on the corner of François Miron and Cloche-Perce, Place du Marché Sainte Catherine, rue des Francs Bourgeois (shopping), rue des Rosiers (for old Jewish quarter/middle eastern food), rue Vieille du Temple (shopping, bars), peek in the courtyard garden of the Musée Carnavalet, Place des Vosges, Pompidou Center (Beaubourg), Le Marché des Enfants Rouges
- Latin Quarter (5<sup>th</sup>): the Sorbonne, the Pantheon, Place Maubert, the Arènes de Lutèce (Roman ruins in the old Roman part of Paris), rue Mouffetard (pedestrian street popular with students, lots of shops, bars, market stalls), the Grande Mosquée (it takes a short time to see the parts of the Mosque open to the public, but stay for mint tea or the hamman!)
- Saint-Germain-des-Prés (6<sup>th</sup>): the Jardin de Luxembourg, Saint Sulpice, Saint Germain-des-Prés, rue de Buci & rue Saint-André des Arts, rue des Cannelles, rue Princesse, rue Guisarde (all three streets with cute restaurants, bars and boutiques), rue Bonaparte, the Pont des Arts (picnics), the quais
- 7<sup>th</sup>: Eiffel Tower and the Champs de Mars, the Assemblée Nationale, the Pont Alexandre III, Les Invalides (military museum, Napoleon's tomb)
- 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>: Place de la Concorde, Church of the Madeleine, walk down Faubourg Saint Honoré, the Palais Garnier (old Opera house that you can tour or see a performance in. The new opera house is at Bastille), Arc de Triomphe and the avenue des Champs-Elysées, Avenue Montaigne (fancy shopping street), "Diana's flame" sculpture at the southwestern end of Ave Montaigne near where Princess Diana died, galleries (old shopping arcades) of the 9<sup>th</sup>, rue des Martyrs in the 9<sup>th</sup> for a nice market street (weekends) leading up to Montmartre
- Montmartre (18<sup>th</sup>): The Sacré Coeur Basilica, the Place du Tertre, winding streets and stairways up to the top, the Moulin Rouge, Montmartre Cemetery

## Neighborhoods Outside the Usual Tourist Loop

- 10<sup>th</sup>: Canal St. Martin (bars, restaurants, walk along the canal or take a boat trip through the locks)
- 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>: Bastille (the narrow cobblestoned Rue de Lappe with a number of bars and restaurants, especially Latin American cuisine, and the cute cobblestoned Cour Damoye) and Marché d'Aligre (large open-air market). Also République (bars and clubs at night), Parc de Bercy and Bercy Village (where rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century wine warehouses have been restored as shops and restaurants).
- 13<sup>th</sup>: La Butte aux Cailles (cute cafés and alternative scene), Chinatown, the National Library (built by François Mitterrand ([www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr)), an impressive modern space with a great deck, movie theater, changing exhibits)
- 14<sup>th</sup>: Montparnasse: the cemetery, rue de la Gaiété (cafés), rue Daguerre (market street), the Paris Catacombs (1, Place Denfert-Rochereau in the 14<sup>th</sup> (Metro: Denfert-Rochereau), Tel: 01 43 22 47 63. Open Tues-Friday from 2-4 p.m. and weekends 9-11 a.m. and 2-4 p.m.)

- 15<sup>th</sup>: Follow the quais from the Eiffel Tower down to Parc André Citroën
- 16<sup>th</sup>: Go to Trocadero for a great view of the Eiffel Tower across the river, especially at night. One of the more posh neighborhoods—nice to stroll around the tree-lined avenues (for example, ave Victor Hugo) and admire the architecture.
- 17<sup>th</sup>: Parc Monceau, rue Poncelet (market street), Batignolles (park and square)
- 19<sup>th</sup>: Parc de la Vilette (open air movies in the summer, great outdoor space, cafés/bars along the Basin de la Vilette), Parc des Buttes Chaumont (rocky crags!) and Mouzaïa (cute residential area with little alleyways), Père Lachaise Cemetery
- Neuilly/Ile de la Jatte: Neuilly is one of the most posh suburbs of Paris. Similar to the 16<sup>th</sup>, it's nice to stroll around the tree-lined avenues on a sunny day. Ile de la Jatte is an island in the Seine with some cute houses, a few cafés and a nice park at the northern tip.

## Museums

Here are just the main art museums I'd recommend but you can find all the museums at: [www.museums-of-paris.com/](http://www.museums-of-paris.com/). Pick up a *Pariscope* guide from any kiosk (40 cent) for information on temporary exhibits.

- Louvre
- Musée d'Orsay (impressionists)
- Rodin Museum—best in nice weather when you can enjoy the garden.
- Picasso Museum
- Palais de Tokyo (modern art, changing exhibits)
- L'Orangerie (impressionists)
- Jeu de Pomme (changing exhibits)
- Grand Palais (changing exhibits)—go in part to see the building
- Georges Pompidou Center (modern art)—go in part to see the building. Be sure to go to top floor for the view of Paris, especially at night.
- For some lesser visited museums consider the Musée des Egouts (sewer museum), Musée du Vin (wine), Institute du Monde Arabe (museum of Arab culture), Musée Carnavalet (history of Paris), Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (Jewish art and history museum), Quai Branley (museum of primitive cultures), Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Fondation Cartier (modern art), Musée Marmottan Monet (impressionists, [www.marmottan.com](http://www.marmottan.com)).
- To see artists at work visit 59 rue de Rivoli in the 1<sup>st</sup> (formerly squatter artists, these studios are now legit and open to visitors ([www.59rivoli.org](http://www.59rivoli.org)) or Le CENTQUATRE in the 19<sup>th</sup> ([www.104.fr](http://www.104.fr)).

## Shopping

Do not miss out on the January (late January to mid-February) and summer (late June to late July) sales!

- Good neighborhoods for shopping (boutiques, etc.):

- St. Germain (rue de Rennes, Cherche-Midi for smaller boutiques, blvd St Germain itself). Check out my favorite little (affordable) art gallery (there are also smaller branches in the Marais and Montmartre): [www.carredartistes.com](http://www.carredartistes.com) .
- The Marais (4<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissements)
- Faubourg St.-Honoré and Avenue Montaigne (8<sup>th</sup>) for high end shops and good window shopping
- Department stores
  - Galeries Lafayette and Le Printemps on the right bank
  - Bon Marché on the Left Bank (and don't miss Le Grand Epicerie, the high-end international food market).
- Marchés. There are many open-air markets all over the city, generally a couple days a week in the morning until 1pm or so, though. It's the best place to buy fresh fruit and vegetables and olives, cheese, etc., but also random items like scarves and tablecloths at a discount. Below are a few of these markets. For locations and opening days and times for all (nearly 100) open-air markets in Paris, see <http://marche.equipement.paris.fr/?tid=289,300>.
  - Market on Ave Raspail (6<sup>th</sup>, between rue Cherche Midi and Rue de Rennes)—Tuesday & Friday (7:30am-2pm, though many stalls close earlier), Sunday (organic market, 8am-2:30/3pm, though many stalls close earlier)
  - Market on Rue Cler (7<sup>th</sup>)
  - Market and shops on rue Daguerre (14<sup>th</sup>)
  - Marché d'Aligre (12<sup>th</sup>)
  - Marché aux Enfants Rouge (3<sup>rd</sup>)—for buying food but also to eat there at one of the many international food booths
  - Rungis—the huge food market by Orly airport where restaurants get their supplies. Best to go super early in the morning Tues-Fri (fish market opens at 2am, other markets at 3am, 4am, 5am). Best by car (€8 toll) or there's the 216 bus from Denfert Rochereau. Technically, you're not supposed to walk in on your own, but go to La Marée restaurant by the fish market, have a seafood platter for breakfast, and they'll give you the requisite white coats to enter. [www.rungisinternational.com/](http://www.rungisinternational.com/)
- Marché aux Puces (huge flea markets) at Saint-Ouen ([www.marchesauxpuces.fr](http://www.marchesauxpuces.fr)) or at Porte de Vanves (<http://pucesdevanves.typepad.com/>).

### Restaurants, Cafés, Bars

See my separate lists for specific restaurant and bar recommendations! Or here are some non-traditional ideas:

- In the good weather, one of my favorite things to do in Paris is to organize a picnic with friends. Here are my favorite spots (technically, you are not supposed to drink outside in these parks anymore, so bring a tote bag to hide the wine bottles!):

- *For the daytime*—My #1: Buttes Chaumont (19<sup>th</sup>), Luxembourg Garden (you can only picnic on the southern lawn towards Observatoire), Jardin du Carousel (1<sup>st</sup>), Champs de Mars (7<sup>th</sup>), Les Halles closer to St. Eustache (1<sup>st</sup>), Parc Monceau (17<sup>th</sup>)
- *For the evening*—My #1: Jardin du Carousel (1<sup>st</sup>, between the arch at the Louvre and the Tuileries), Champs de Mars (7<sup>th</sup>), ave Breteuil just south of the Hôtel des Invalides (7<sup>th</sup>), along the quais or on western tip of Ile de la Cité (1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> —bring a cloth because there is no grass), Parc de la Villette before an outdoor movie (19<sup>th</sup>)
- Sunday Night Dinner! For over 30 years, American Jim Haynes has been hosting dinners at his home in the 14<sup>th</sup>. Sign up here: [www.jim-haynes.com/index.htm](http://www.jim-haynes.com/index.htm)
- Check out this website for finding good restaurants based on neighborhood, theme, etc. and with photos of each restaurant: <http://exclusive-restaurants.com/>
- Or this site for Seine-side dining: [www.bords-de-seine.com/html/restaurants\\_75.html](http://www.bords-de-seine.com/html/restaurants_75.html).

### A Few Other Ideas

- *Bateaux Mouches* (boat trip) on the Seine: very touristy but you have to do it once! Or there are boat tours of the Canal St. Martin and Bassin de la Villette: [www.france-for-visitors.com/paris/guide/canal-trips.html](http://www.france-for-visitors.com/paris/guide/canal-trips.html) or [www.canauxrama.com/](http://www.canauxrama.com/)
- *Cabaret*: Au Lapin Agile ([www.au-lapin-agile.com](http://www.au-lapin-agile.com)), Crazy Horse, Lido, Moulin Rouge are some of the more famous ones
- *Concerts*: most of the churches around Paris have frequent classical music concerts. Look for the posters, especially around the Latin Quarter (rue de la Huchette) or pick up a *Pariscope* guide from any kiosk (40 cent) for concert times and all the information imaginable on that week's events in Paris (opera, museum openings, shows, concerts, movies, etc.) New *Parisscopes* come out on Wednesdays. The Church of the Madeleine seems to have free classical music concerts at 4pm each day. There are also frequent music festivals (jazz, etc.) around town—check out *Pariscope*. There are also a number of jazz clubs, for example: [www.caveaudelahuchette.fr](http://www.caveaudelahuchette.fr).
- *Wine Tasting*: at O Chateau ([www.o-chateau.com/](http://www.o-chateau.com/)) (highly recommended!) or the Museum of Wine ([www.museedevinparis.com/francais/programme-des-cours](http://www.museedevinparis.com/francais/programme-des-cours)). Also check to see if there is a wine fair in Paris when you are visiting—I highly recommend them! (example: [www.mer-et-vigne.fr/](http://www.mer-et-vigne.fr/)). Or do it yourself Wine Tasting at Wine by One (9 Rue des Capucines in the 1<sup>st</sup>).
- *Montmartre Vineyard* ([www.commanderie-montmartre.com](http://www.commanderie-montmartre.com)). It's not generally open to the public, but O Château (wine tasting company) runs tours every day at 3pm: [www.o-chateau.com](http://www.o-chateau.com).
- *Cooking classes*: Spend a few hours one afternoon learning to cook French food (and then eating it!) Here's one school whose pastry class I enjoyed quite a bit: Cookin' with Class, 21 rue Custine in the 18<sup>th</sup>, [www.cooknwithclass.com/](http://www.cooknwithclass.com/).
- *Photography classes*: For those who speak French and want to see Paris from another perspective (while honing their photography skills), sign up for a 4-hour session for €85 (approx. 1 hour of instruction, 2 hours of shooting photos in the chosen location in Paris, 1 hour of critique): [www.jeveuxetrephotographe.com](http://www.jeveuxetrephotographe.com).
- *Cemeteries*: Montmartre, Montparnasse, Père Lachaise are the major ones.
- Explore the *parks* in the nicer weather: Jardin de Luxembourg (6<sup>th</sup>), Tuileries (1<sup>st</sup>), Jardin du Palais Royal (1<sup>st</sup>), Jardin des Plantes (5<sup>th</sup>), Bois de Boulogne (west of Paris), Bois de Vincennes (southeast of Paris), Garden of the Rodin Museum (7<sup>th</sup>), Champ de Mars (7<sup>th</sup>), Parc Monceau (17<sup>th</sup>), Parc des

Buttes Chaumont (19<sup>th</sup>), Parc de la Vilette/Basin de la Vilette (19<sup>th</sup>) for movies in the park on a giant inflatable screen on summer nights, Parc de St. Cloud (Boulogne: <http://parc.de.saintcloud.free.fr/>), Parc de Sceaux (Sceaux, take RER B south to Parc de Sceaux station, about 30 minutes from St. Michel: [www.parc-de-sceaux-92.net](http://www.parc-de-sceaux-92.net) ).

- Explore the old *shopping arcades/covered passages*, primarily in the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement. Here is a list of the best ones (with “\*” indicating my real favorites):
  - Passage Véro-Dodat, between rues Bouloi and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1<sup>st</sup>)
  - \*Galeries Vivienne and Colbert, accessible from rue des Petits-Champs, rue Vivienne or rue de la Banque (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - \*Passage des Panoramas, accessible from rue St Marc and Boulevard Montmartre (2<sup>nd</sup>)
  - Passage Jouffroy, between rue de la Grange Batelière and Boulevard Montmartre (9<sup>th</sup>)
  - Passage Verdeau, accessible from rue de la Grange Batelière and Faubourg Montmartre (9<sup>th</sup>)
  - \*Passages du Grand Cerf and Bourg l'Abbé, accessible from rue St-Denis (2<sup>nd</sup>)

And if that's not enough, try:

- Passage Ben Aïad (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Passage Brady (10<sup>th</sup>)
- Passage du Caire (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Passage Choiseul (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Galerie de la Madeleine (8<sup>th</sup>)
- Passage du Ponceau (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Passage du Prado (10<sup>th</sup>)
- Passage des Princes (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Passage Puteaux (8<sup>th</sup>)
- Passage Vendôme (3<sup>rd</sup>)

(See [www.passagesetgaleries.org/texts/passages/2fiches\\_passages/liste\\_passages.html](http://www.passagesetgaleries.org/texts/passages/2fiches_passages/liste_passages.html) for more details)

- *Walking tours*: Paris Walks give good tours in English—about 2 hours for €12 rain or shine, generally no reservations needed ([www.paris-walks.com/index.html](http://www.paris-walks.com/index.html)). We went on “Paris during the Occupation and Liberation” (around Tuileries, rue Faubourg Saint Honoré and the lower Champs-Élysées) and “Writers of the Left Bank” (around Saint Michel and the Luxembourg Garden) and they were both excellent. Or follow your own walking tour—some suggestions: the Latin quarter, St-Germain-des-Prés, the Marais, Montmartre, along the quais of the Seine and the two islands, Canal St. Martin, the Viaduc des Arts (starts from behind the opera house at Bastille), any of the parks.
- *Running/rollerblading*: Check out this site for running routes in parks in the Paris area: [www.runningmaps.eu/spip.php?rubrique2](http://www.runningmaps.eu/spip.php?rubrique2). The quais are closed on Sundays and make a great spot for running or rollerblading. For the not-so-faint-of-heart, join thousands of others of Pari-rollers for a spin around Paris at night (meet Montparnasse, Fridays at 9:30pm: [www.pari-roller.com/](http://www.pari-roller.com/)).
- *Bike Tours*: try Mike's Bikes (especially the nighttime tour) [www.mikesbiketoursparis.com/](http://www.mikesbiketoursparis.com/) or just rent your own Velib' (<http://www.velib.paris.fr/>)!
- *Relax at a hammam*: La Grande Mosquée de Paris ([www.la-mosquee.com/htmlfr/hammamfr.htm](http://www.la-mosquee.com/htmlfr/hammamfr.htm)) (there's a great tea room even if the hammam is not your thing), or the women-only Hammam Pacha ([www.hammampacha.com/](http://www.hammampacha.com/)) (a bit pricey at €35 per entrance—to steam room, soaking pool, sauna, showers, relaxation room—with all treatments extra but worth it if you have a few hours and go with friends or a book for the relaxation room. You can also have lunch or dinner there. Open until 11pm Thurs & Fri.) Also recently opened is l'Echappée at 64, rue de la Folie Mericourt in the 11<sup>th</sup>, Tel. 01 58 30 12 50, [www.lechappee.com/](http://www.lechappee.com/). It's a bit more modern and upscale than the

more traditional and arabesque Hammam Pacha, so it depends on your preference. Though L'Echappée is a bit cheaper as well—€45 includes a 10-15 min *gommage* (scrubbing) session. L'Echappée has a great restaurant for lunch, light dinner and a Saturday/Sunday brunch as well.

- *Eurodisney*—accessible by public transport (RER) from Paris (<http://parisweekender.com/2011/09/how-to-make-your-visit-to-euro-disney-hassle-free/>).
- *Festivals, etc.*: Check to see if you are visiting Paris during one of the many festivals or holidays, for example:
  - January 1—New Year's Eve (the crowds fill in the Champs-Élysées or the Champs de Mars)
  - June 21—Fete de la Musique (music all over town, all night long)
  - October—Nuit Blanche (concerts, museum exhibits, etc. open all night long)
  - *Sporting events*: Roland Garros (French open) in late May/early June, the Tour de France finishes up on the Champs-Élysées in late July, check out what is going on at Stade de France (soccer, rugby, concerts, etc.)
  - For more info on festivals, holidays, special events, etc. see [www.paris.world-guides.com/events.html](http://www.paris.world-guides.com/events.html) or [www.secretsofparis.com/paris-calendar/](http://www.secretsofparis.com/paris-calendar/).
- For more ideas, check out these Paris blogs: <http://chocolateandzucchini.com/> (mostly about food!), [www.secretsofparis.com](http://www.secretsofparis.com), [www.davidlebovitz.com/paris](http://www.davidlebovitz.com/paris), <http://hipparis.com/>, <http://girlsguidetoparis.com/> and [www.theparisblog.com/](http://www.theparisblog.com/).

### Day trips & Weekend Trips from Paris

There are lots of options if you want to go away for a day or for one or two nights when you come to Paris. You can pick pretty much any region in France (even if you don't want to go far from Paris) and find cute towns and nice château B&Bs. This is my favorite website for good towns to visit: [www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org/-Les-villages-.html?lang=en](http://www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org/-Les-villages-.html?lang=en). These sights are good for finding château B&Bs: [www.chateauxcountry.com](http://www.chateauxcountry.com) and [www.chateaux-france.com](http://www.chateaux-france.com). Below are some of my favorite options for trips (more or less in order of distance from Paris). See <http://parisweekender.com/daytrip-ideas/> and <http://parisweekender.com/weekend-itineraries/> for additional suggestions and details on getting there and what to do when you are there.

- A number of parks can make for a nice day or half-day trip, especially if you bring along a picnic. Try my favorite parks outside the city: Parc de Sceaux (Sceaux, take RER B south to Parc de Sceaux station, about 30 minutes from St. Michel: [www.parc-de-sceaux-92.net](http://www.parc-de-sceaux-92.net)) and Parc de St. Cloud (Boulogne: <http://parc.de.saintcloud.free.fr/>).
- Versailles—best to visit in nicer weather as the gardens are a highlight. Any easy day trip: avoid lines by purchasing a train and château/gardens entrance ticket in one at an SNCF (train) boutique.
- Giverny—Monet's own garden and the inspiration behind a lot of his impressionist paintings. Take the train from St. Lazare to Vernon and rent bikes from the shop right outside the station. It's about a 4-5 km ride to Giverny. Makes for an easy day trip.
- Fontainebleau (château and forest)—about an hour from Paris. The forest has great hiking/biking trails.
- Champagne—about an hour or hour and a half from Paris. O Château runs day tours to Champagne (8am-7:30pm): [www.o-chateau.com](http://www.o-chateau.com). Honfleur in Normandy is about a 2 hours' drive if

you have a car. The Loire Valley, northern Burgundy, and many other regions of France are close enough for a day trip though more time is preferable.

- Loire Valley—only a little over an hour to get to the start from Paris. This article just came out on good chateau B&Bs in the Loire:  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/TRAVEL/getaways/06/04/loire.valley.hotels/index.html>
- Brussels/Bruges—Brussels is only 1h20 on the Thalys train, and it's another 1h30 or so to Bruges (I believe they have some direct trains as well), a beautiful mid-size city great for a day or a whole weekend. With an extra day you can rent bikes and ride in the countryside or along the canal to the Dutch border.
- Honfleur/Normandy—Honfleur is about a 2-hour drive (without traffic) and a very cute town near the coast with a harbor and a bunch of shops, restaurants. A bit further are the D-Day beaches (west of Honfleur for the WWII beaches or up to Etretat for rock formations). There are also some beautiful and less traveled regions inland in Normandy, not too far from Paris.
- London—2h20 hours or so now on the Eurostar.
- Burgundy—an hour to Montbard on the high-speed train (northern Burgundy) or 2 to 2h30 further south, or you can drive from Paris (2-3 hours). Great wine tasting.
- Lyon (about 2h30 hours by train)
- St. Malo/Dinard—on the Brittany/Normandy border. Most efficient to take the train to St. Malo (maybe 3 hours) and rent a car there (to see Mont St. Michel and the surrounding area) but driving from Paris is not much longer.
- Vannes/Auray and the Gulf of Morbihan—about 2h30 on the train, a great weekend escape in good weather for hiking the coastal path (GR34) and visiting some of the nearby villages.
- Aix-en-Provence/Avignon—My favorite part of this region is the Luberon (Gordes, Rousillon). It's 2h45 on the train to Avignon or Aix.
- Marseille (about 3 hours by train)
- Bordeaux—a bit further than Burgundy (3 hours on high speed train) but great wine tasting. Easy train ride from Bordeaux to St. Emilion (30 minutes or so).
- Dordogne—highest concentration of nice little towns and castles anywhere, nice countryside. A bit further though—3 hours on the train to Bordeaux or Toulouse and maybe a 2-hour drive from there.
- Train to Geneva (3h30) then from there you can rent a car and visit a number of places (Chamonix, Val de Bagnes area, Gruyeres)
- Nice/Cote d'Azur—best to fly (45 min) if you have less than 3 days (about 5h30 by train). From there you can visit Italy (San Remo), Villefranche, Eze, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Antibes, Cannes, Saint Paul de Vence.

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