

The scent of Paris

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As you walk around Paris's many neighbourhoods, let yourself be led by your nose. In Cyrano de Bergerac's country, even if you don't speak the language, your nose can appreciate its multitude of scents.

Paris has been described as “the joy of living in a myriad of little things: the scent of a cup of coffee and croissants in the morning,” elegant women in grey suits “smiling in the streets, the smell of hot bread,” the pungent smells in the food markets, the bouquet of “a bottle of wine shared with friends,” the trail of mythic perfumes wafting over the doorsill of luxury boutiques like incense in houses of worship in a country that believes only in life.

Paris is the mingled scent of books and bouquets of flowers and the baked goodness of children's afternoon snacks in the city's public gardens. The exquisite chocolate, spicy scents of the latest pastry shops, and the savoury deliciousness of Michelin-starred restaurants and impromptu picnics in park squares. It is the mineral fragrance that wells up in the foyers of Haussmannian buildings and from the alcoves of palace hotels, and the scent of the precious intimacy of its boutique hotels. And, always, Paris is the odour of the city's wooden benches and the frivolity and cheerfulness of its neighbourhoods.

Here in the most visited and celebrated city in the world, Parisians have a carefreeness that has transformed Pere Lachaise cemetery into the largest park in the city. Paris has always known how to live and laugh. The only thing you no longer find is that nostalgic scent of dusty museums, which have all been renovated at great expense.