



45 MINUTES FROM PARIS, THIS CHARMING CITY IS A PERFECT WEEKEND TRIP- OH LA LA!

By Piper Anderson

Nestled within the rolling green hills of the champagne region of France, the city of Reims is both stylish and welcoming. Rebuilt after World War I in the art deco style of the 1920s, the spirit of bubbly infuses this charismatic city with a fizzy feeling of fun. If you look closely, champagne is everywhere: from the famous biscuits roses – pink cookies you plop in champagne – to the flute-like designs seen on every tram. There is no better place to pour a sparkling glass, breathe in the scent of fermentation and get lost in golden effervescence.

CHIC: WHERE TO BE CLASSY



Become a champagne connoisseur by touring the chalk cellars of one of the dozen big-name champagne houses in Reims. However, if you want a more personal experience, tour one of many smaller houses along the countryside champagne routes. Yves Couvreur in charming Rilly-la-Montagne (a seven-minute train ride from Reims) is absolutely lovely; the tasting includes countless glasses and, if you're lucky, lunch and conversation with the friendly owner.



VOIR: WHAT TO SEE

The Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Reims soars above the city. As the coronation site of French kings for a thousand years, nothing will prepare you for the first breathtaking glimpse of this behemoth, with its delicate arches, bursting stained-glass roses and intricately carved angels. Stop at the classically French Terroir des Rois behind the cathedral to stock up on champagne, preserves and postcards, and then visit the hauntingly beautiful Basilique St-Rémi. Next door to this 11th century church is the Musée Saint-Rémi, filled with Gallo-Roman archaeological finds.





LES COURSES: WHERE TO SHOP

Visit the newly restored les Halles Boulingrin for a classic French market experience: stalls drip with colorful fruits and vegetables, fresh oysters, traditional French sausages and a fragrant assortment of cheeses perfect for picnicking in Parc Léo Lagrange. For all your wardrobe needs, the fashion scene in Reims is infused with impeccable French style – beautiful neutrals, simple pieces and elegant cuts. Browse the mixture of well-known brands and cute boutiques along rue de Vesle and le cours Jean-Baptiste-Langlet for all your sartorial needs – and don't forget to peruse the glamorous Galeries Lafayette.



MANGER: WHERE TO EAT



For a traditional brasserie experience, go to Brasserie du Boulingrin, a charming and well-loved restaurant with art-nouveau flair. It's easy on the budget too – for 21 euros (\$25) you can get an entrée, plat and du vin of your choice! For a more modern experience, check out Le Gaulois on the busy pedestrian Place Drouet-d'Erlon, or the colorful and sunny Lou Creative Food for organic and vegetarian options! Finally, make sure to stop by one of Reims' many boulangeries to buy a fresh baguette.



BOIRE: WHERE TO DRINK

Your heart will melt over the mouthwatering desserts in Waïda et Fils, a charming tearoom with a striped awning and glowing interior. Check out Oma Coffee for a sweet coffee-shop vibe, or Le Cabasson for a quirky and cozy atmosphere filled with worn board games, stacks of books and chintzy but charming décor. Also, the ritzy Café du Palais is a perfect place to sip champagne surrounded by exquisite art deco style.



FAIRE LA FÊTE: WHERE TO PARTY

A bit of a sleepy city, Reims nevertheless has the popping Ernest Hemingway bar. Located on lively pedestrian walkway Place Drouet-d'Erlon, Hemingway is a vibrant spot that's a hit among university students. Next door is the equally popular La Bodega – when the weather is fair, tipsy young people spill out onto the warmly lit cobblestone streets, drinking and laughing and dancing.

DES CONSEILS: EXTRA TIPS

France is known for its l'art de vivre – the French take their time and savor the finer things in life. Embrace French culture while in Reims by lingering for hours at an outdoor café and watching the world go by. Fair warning: since Reims isn't Paris, a bit of basic French is necessary if you visit here – bonjour and merci go a long way! The most important phrase you'll need is je voudrais (pronounced "jeuh voo-dray") which means "I would like" – as in, je voudrais un croissant. Et voila!

