



ROISSY PAYS DE FRANCE

A region that straddles Val-d'Oise and Seine-et-Marne, with Roissy Airport as an internationally known landmark. An area with a wide diversity of people, towns and villages to discover, parks and forests to explore, and cultural and sports activities to enjoy, its 42 communes have plenty of surprises in store for visitors.

IN THIS GUIDE



Our favourite **places illustrated**
Visits, activities, hotels, restaurants and more, offering the best value for money and **all verified locally**
Maps to help you find your way around the area at a glance

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FREEDOM, RESPECT
AND SHARING.
THANK YOU TO ALL THE
'ROUTARDS' WHO SHARE
OUR CONVICTIONS.**



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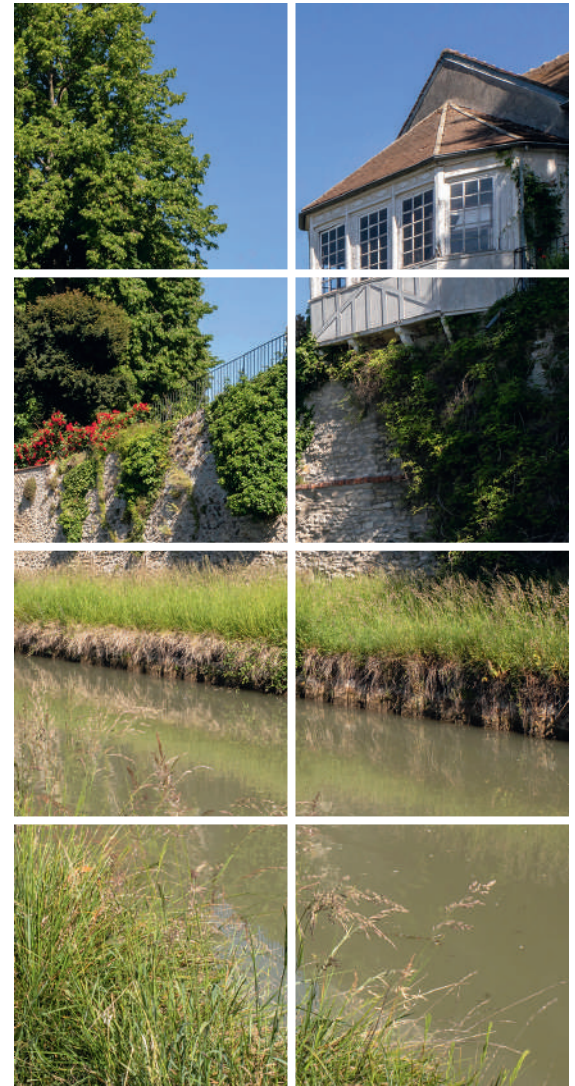
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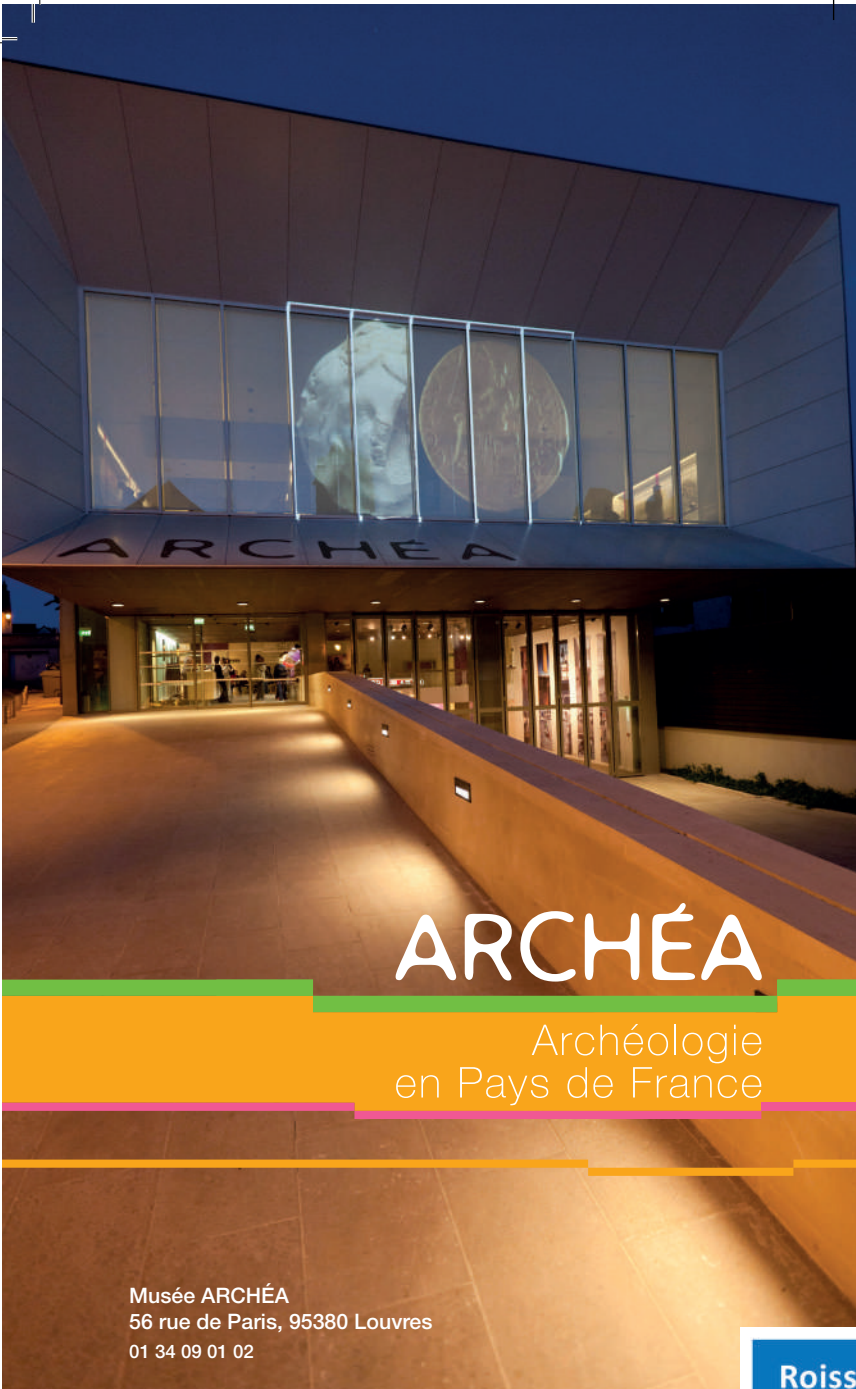


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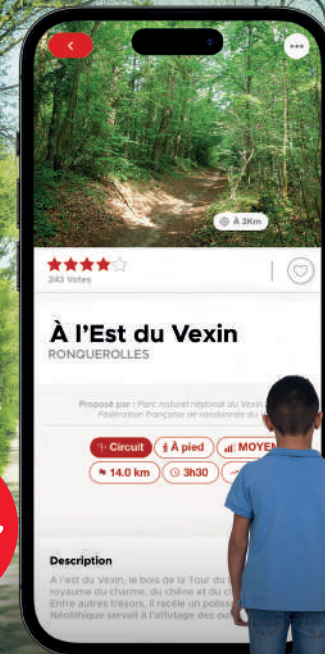
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Routard Editorial Team..... 4
- Foreword..... 8
- Our Top Picks 10
- Recommended Itineraries 18

HOW TO GET HERE 22

- By Car 22
- By Train 22
- By Bus 22
- By Tram 23
- By Air 23
- By Bike..... 23

USEFUL ROISSY PAYS DE FRANCE 24

- Roissy Pays de France: Some Figures 24
- Useful Addresses and Websites 24
- How to Get Around 26
- Festivals and Events 28
- Travel Writing 29

PEOPLE, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT 30

- Architecture and Heritage..... 30
- Local Cuisine and Produce 32
- Economy 34
- Geography..... 35
- History..... 36
- Nature and the Environment..... 37
- Sports and Leisure..... 39

ROISSY-EN-FRANCE AND AROUND 41

- Roissy-en-France 41
- Le Mesnil-Amelot 48
- Mauregard 49
- Épiais-lès-Louvres 50
- Chennevières-lès-Louvres
- Louvres 51
- Puisieux-en-France 54
- Le Thillay..... 56
- Vaud'herland

THE URBAN SOUTH-WEST 57

- Sarcelles..... 57
- Arnouville 64
- Bonneuil-en-France 66
- The National Air and Space Museum in Le Bourget
- Gonesse..... 68
- Garges-lès-Gonesse 71
- Villiers-le-Bel 73

NORTH OF SARCELLES 76

- Écouen 76
- Le Mesnil-Aubry 81
- Le Plessis-Gassot 82
- Bouqueval
- Fontenay-en-Parisis..... 82
- Goussainville 83

NORTH OF THE AIRPORT85

• Marly-la-Ville.....	85	Chantilly	
• Fosses.....	86	• Saint-Witz.....	93
Royaumont Abbey in Asnières-sur-Oise		Parc Astérix in Plailly	
• Survilliers.....	89	• Vémars.....	95
		• Villeron.....	96

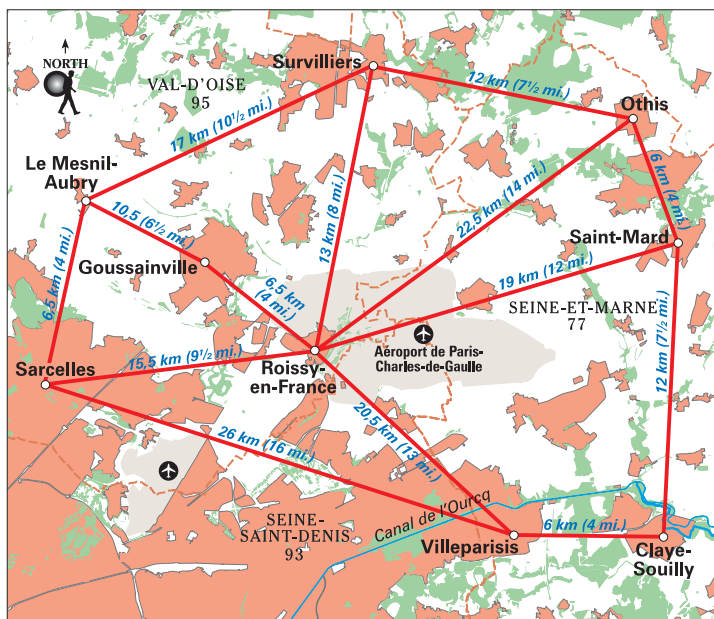
THE COMMUNES OF THE SOUTH-EAST97

• Villeparisis.....	97	• Gressy.....	103
• Mityr-Mory.....	99	• Nantouillet	
• Claye-Souilly.....	102	• Compans.....	105

TO THE EAST107

• Thieux.....	107	Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Rouvres	
• Juilly.....	108	• Othis.....	112
Great War Museum in Meaux		• Moussy-le-Vieux.....	114
• Dammartin-en-Goële.....	109	• Longperrier	
Saint-Mard, Les Yeux du Ciel in		• Moussy-le-Neuf.....	115

General Index.....	127
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ROUTARD EDITORIAL TEAM



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The story of *Le Routard*: In 1971, two students, Philippe and Michel, had a fierce desire to discover the world. Returning from a trip to Nepal, they came up with an idea for a different kind of travel guide, combining smart tips and cool itineraries, aimed at younger, penniless, would-be travellers in search of freedom. In 1973, after 19 rejections from publishers and the bankruptcy of their first

publishing house, the adventure finally began with Hachette. Today, *Le Routard* has more than 50 committed and serious researchers, who travel the world anonymously all year round, passionately seeking to re-establish their favourite places.

Thank you to all the 'Routards' who share our convictions: freedom and independence of spirit; discovery and sharing; sincerity, tolerance and respect for others.

OUR EXPERTS

Véronique de Chardon: from her past life as a historian, she has retained a love of heritage, which she collects during her travels, while also tasting local specialities. She loves sharing her favourite places, which she does with enthusiasm and humour, and encouraging *Le Routard* to explore new areas of France, ever eager to discover new places and meet new people.

Carole Fouque joined *Le Routard* in 1997. Her passion for authentic places and produce has inspired her love of travel, spurring her on to constantly push the boundaries of her voracious curiosity. An eclectic and a hedonist at heart, she has taken pleasure in sharing her discoveries with readers for the past 25 years.

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Le Routard symbols









Places

-  Hotel, hostel, guesthouse
-  Campsite
-  Restaurant
-  Terrace
-  Pizzeria
-  Bakery/sandwich shop
-  Patisserie
-  Ice cream parlour
-  Café/tea room
-  Café/bar
-  Bar with live music
-  Club/nightclub
-  Entertainment venue
-  Shop/market

Practical info


-  Tourist office
-  Post office
-  Internet access
-  Hospital/A&E
-  Suitable for people with reduced mobility

Sites

-  Tourist attraction
-  Viewpoint
-  Beach
-  Surf spot
-  Dive site
-  Recommended for children
-  Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site
-  Worth a detour

Transport

-  Airport
-  Train station
-  Bus station/bus stop
-  Metro station
-  Tram stop
-  Parking
-  Taxi
-  Share taxi
-  Boat
-  River boat
-  Cycle path/cycle route

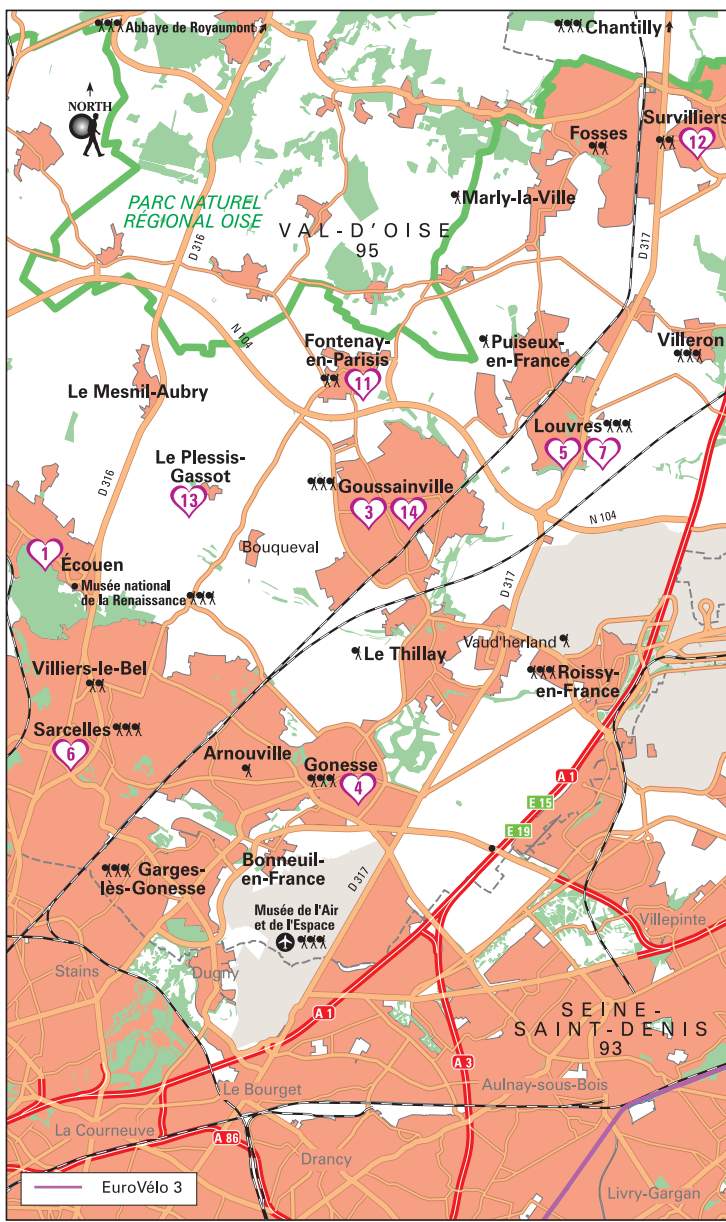
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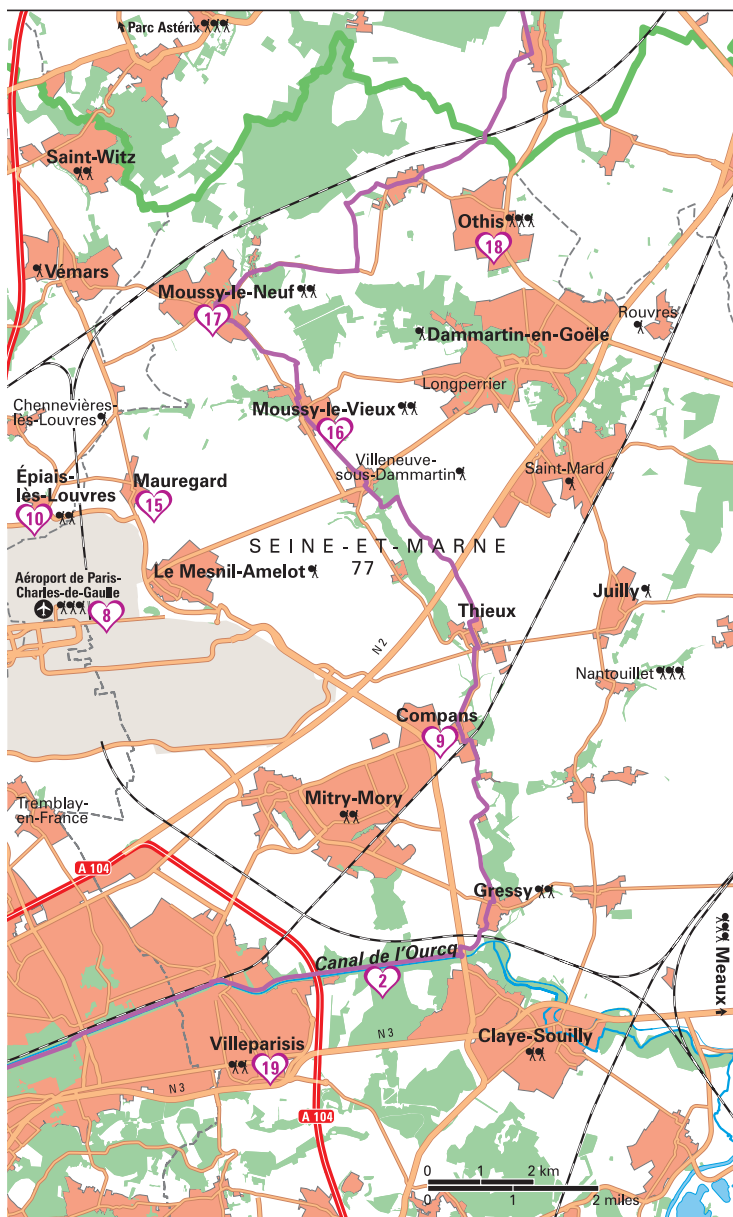
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ROISSY - PAYS DE FRANCE

The ***Pays de France***, which straddles the French departments of Val-d'Oise and Seine-et-Marne, with Roissy as its centre, referred to Francia, or the Frankish Kingdom, of the Merovinginian era, which comprised the part of Gaul between the Loire and the Seine, before designating the areas north-east of Paris that depended to a large extent on the Abbaye de Saint-Denis.

It is a rich and fertile land that has been occupied since the Neolithic period, when it was already a crossroad between worlds. In the villages and fields, old paved roads can still be found that once led from the nearby capital to Santiago de Compostela: one of the Way of St. James (Camino de Santiago) routes that crosses the region. It is easy to imagine the churches serving as landmarks for the pilgrims in this flat landscape. Some owe their rich decor to this manna that was even then falling from heaven. This ***rural, mainly farming, land*** had everything to appeal, with its timeless French character.

But everything sped up when the ***Charles-de-Gaulle Airport*** opened in 1974 in Roissy-en-France. Of the **42 communes in the Pays de France metropolitan area**, eight encircle the airport: Mitry-Mory and Compans to the south-east, Le Mesnil-Amelot and Mauregard to the north-east, Louvres and Goussainville to the north-west and Le Thillay to the west.

The idea of this guide is to ***go beyond clichés***, to look past the surface, to encourage 'Routards' to venture into this poorly known region of Île-de-France and to inspire tourists in transit to stop here; to help them discover a place that may have lost its local character, but that lacks neither assets nor attractions. Lots

of politicians, locals and members of associations have refused to be defeated and, with tireless energy and optimism, are seeking to make this region a **friendly and community-minded place by building on its strengths**.

It is inevitable that the **Rugby World Cup in 2023** and the **Olympic Games in 2024**, which are to be held in the surrounding communes, will in turn benefit Pays de France, as the one place able to absorb the crowds of supporters and participants with its record numbers of hotels.

We therefore encourage you to come and lose yourselves in the old village of Sarcelles or cycle between **Villeparisis and Claye-Souilly** beside the **Canal de l'Ourcq**. The canal partly intersects the route of EuroVelo 3 (also known as the Pilgrims Route and, here, as the Scandibérique), the famous cycle route that connects Scandinavia to the Iberian Peninsula. You will discover that the village of Louvres, in addition to housing the beautiful **Musée ARCHÉA**, also contains a wonderful microbrewery on a farm, that lots of farms offer pick-your-own or have a farm shop, that there is an old village in **Goussainville**, that the church in **Gonesse** contains a treasure and that one of Île-de-France's finest châteaux awaits you in **Écouen**.

**Pascal Doll, President of Roissy Pays de France and
Isabelle Rusin, Delegate Councillor for Tourism**

OUR TOP PICKS



© GARDEL Bertrand / hemis.fr

Marvel at the treasures exhibited at the Musée national de la Renaissance in Écouen.

Collections, mainly devoted to decorative arts, have found the perfect setting in this château. *p. 77*

Good to know: concerts are sometimes held on Saturdays in the Grande salle de la Reine, after the museum has closed. • musee-rennaissance.fr •



© Sylvain Larose, Agglomération Roissy Pays de France

2 Cycle along the Canal de l'Ourcq, between Villeparisis and Claye-Souilly; un superb and wonderfully shady cycle path. p. 23, 99, 105

Good to know: you can cycle from Paris and avoid the traffic and urban environment. Take a break in the pretty village of Gressy.



© Jean-Yves Lacôte - Roissy Pays de France - ARCHEA

3 Enjoy a spot of 'urbex' (urban exploration) in the old village of Goussainville, a fascinating site where time has stood still since its inhabitants left following the decision to build the airport. The village can be found at the end of the trail. p. 83

Good to know: the site is particularly photogenic.



4 Experience the heavenly sounds of the organ being played at the church in Gonesse.

Dating from 1508, it is a true marvel, visually as well as musically. *p. 69*

Good to know: concerts are held regularly and the organist often practises in the daytime.



5 At the Musée ARCHÉA in Louvres, discover the history of ancient and medieval Francia, which became Pays de France, the former domain of the Capetian kings, and admire objects unearthed during the many excavations that have been carried out in the region. *p. 52*

Good to know: there's always something going on at ARCHÉA; check the website for a list of the numerous events and workshops for families and children. • archea.roissypaysdefrance.fr •

6 Immerse yourself in Sarcelles' past by following the history trail in the old town, and see another side of the place. p. 60

Good to know: the Maison du patrimoine offers guided tours of both the old town and the housing estates. • sarcelles.fr •



7 At the Brasserie d'Orville, taste the delicious beers brewed at the farm with cereal grains grown here! p. 52

Good to know: the friendly bar is open every evening except on Sundays and Mondays, and there's a magnificent beer garden in the summer in the farm's courtyard.



8 Paris Aéroport invites you to explore behind the scenes of the Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, an unexpected world where nearly 90,000 people work around the clock at 700 different jobs. p. 45

Good to know: free guided tours (walking or by bus). Booking required. • entrevoisins.org •



9 At Cueillette de Compans, you can choose to eat happily and healthily by picking your own fruit and vegetables in the fields!

It would be hard to find fresh food that's tastier, cheaper and more seasonal. *p. 106*
Good to know: you can buy lots of local produce here that comes from farms in the surrounding area. • cueillettedecompan.fr •

10 Take a stroll in the delightful village of Épiais-lès-Louvres, one of the best-restored villages in Pays de France, which has two crosses listed as historic monuments. *p. 50*

11 In Fontenay-en-Parisis, embrace a 'liberty tree', a French Revolution chestnut tree that is impressive in terms of both its size and its beauty and well worth a hug! *p. 82*

Good to know: the village is charming, with its church, its lavoir and its old Michelin plaque.



12 In Surveilliers, delve into the origins of capitalism, with a visit to the museum that preserves a former cartridge factory and its workers' houses, built at a time when paternalistic businesses would take care of housing their workers. *p. 90*

Good to know: Surveilliers is situated at the edge of the Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France, which has created a short walk around the village, as well as around Fosses, another of the nature park's communes.



13 Lose yourself in the lovely little village of Plessis-Gassot, oddly located at the end of a cul-de-sac: you'll love its rural charm, its tranquillity and its beautiful church. *p. 82*

Good to know: in May and June, make the most of your visit by picking strawberries at the La Fraiserie du Plessis; in August and September, you can pick tomatoes, green beans, courgettes, peppers, aubergines and pumpkins • iledefrance-terredesaveurs.fr •

14 At **Le Roi du Poulet**, enjoy, in an authentic *churrasqueira*, a glass of *vinho verde*, octopus salad, roast chicken and a *pastei de nata*. A taste of Portugal in the middle of Goussainville, this place is as improbable as it is irresistible! *p. 84*

Good to know: with more than 130 nationalities present in the region, you can look forward to a culinary world tour.



15 In **Mauregard**, discover the joys of plane spotting: sit on a bench and watch these motorized big birds take off. *p. 49*

Good to know: as you would expect, security is tight in the area surrounding the airport, and places where you can admire landings and take-offs without danger are actually quite rare. Another well-known spot is at the Concorde memorial in Mitry-Mory.

16 In **Moussy-le-Vieux**, pay tribute to First World War French infantrymen on the *Chemin des Gueules cassées* ('war-wounded walk'). *p. 114*

Good to know: there's also a route you can drive, following the same theme, starting from Longperrier.

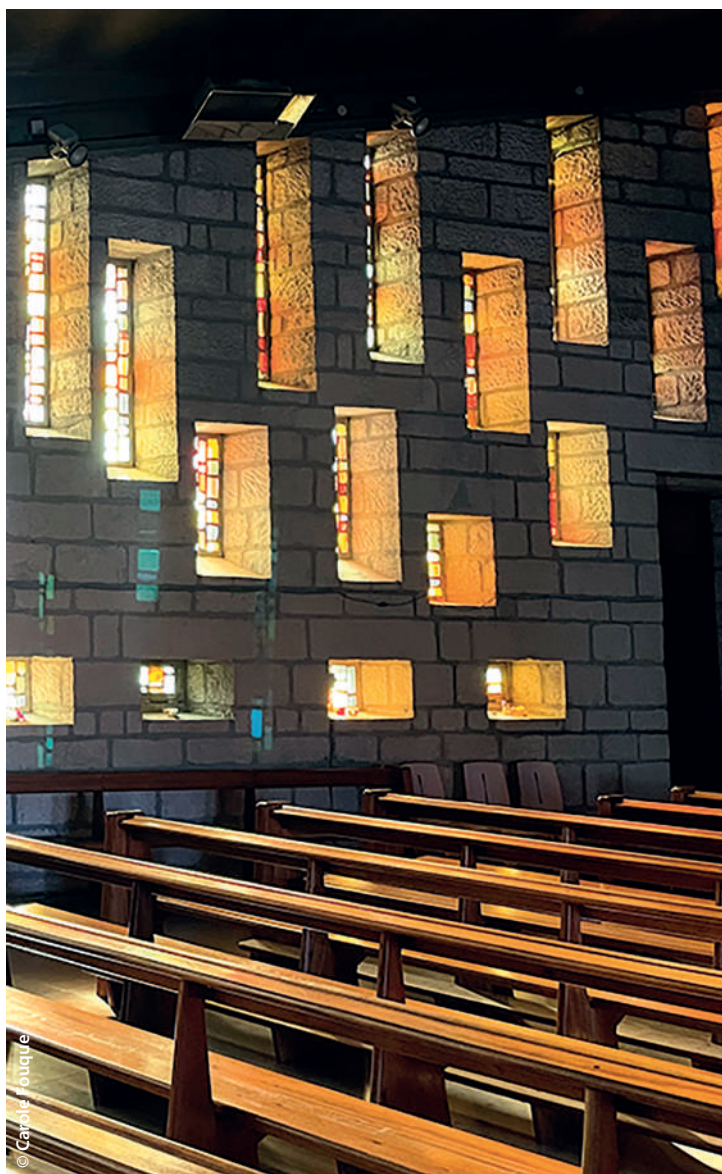
17 In **Moussy-le-Neuf**, you can stock up on fresh produce at any time of day or night from a gigantic vending machine. *p. 115*

Fun and unusual!

Good to know: a farmers' market is held every Saturday in the lovely covered market.

18 In **Othis**, admire the splendid finely carved door of the *Église Notre-Dame*. A masterpiece of the Renaissance. *p. 113*

Good to know: after your visit, take a walk in the footsteps of the poet Gérard de Nerval.



19

In Villeparisis, visit Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix, a church that has been given 'Architecture contemporaine remarquable' certification, where you'll discover natural concrete and understated stained-glass windows that are a dignified response to the sanctity of the place. p. 98

RECOMMENDED ITINERARIES

In a day

With little or no hesitation, we recommend you head for **Écouen** and its magnificent 16th-century **château**, which, in accordance with André Malraux's wishes, houses the **Musée national de la Renaissance**. If you arrive by train, you only have to cross the beautiful **forest** to arrive at the château. Its collections, which come from the Musée de Cluny in Paris, and are mainly devoted to the decorative arts, are magnificent. This pivotal period was a time of discovering the world, nature and the human body, when everything was a source of wonder and inspiration. The visit offers a total immersion, with so many rich and varied works on display that you certainly won't be bored. Spend the afternoon discovering the nearby village. The **Église Saint-Acceul** contains some Renaissance stained-glass windows that are equally beautiful. If you're visiting during the week, the church will be closed, but you can visit the municipal **pinacothèque** (art gallery). To make sure you miss none of the pretty alleys, farmyards and fine bourgeois houses, follow the **Parcours des Peintres** (painters' route). For there was a time when the Écouen school of painters was as famous as the Barbizon one, and this contributed to Écouen becoming a tourist destination in the 19th century. And time has stood still since, which makes it a delightful place to enjoy a stroll.

If you have transport, you could carry on to the pretty villages of **Plessis-Gassot** and **Fontenay-en-Parisis**, which are equally well preserved.

In a week-end

Depending on your tastes and the weather, we recommend spending the first day in **Louvres**, starting with the **Musée ARCHÉA** which, as its name suggests, contains the **archaeological collections of the Pays de France**. In addition to permanent and temporary exhibitions, the museum offers all sorts of activities and workshops, and with a bit of luck, you will be able to visit the **Site d'Orville**, where, in the Middle Ages, stood a splendid castle, which was unfortunately destroyed in the Hundred Years' War. Don't leave without visiting the **Brasserie d'Orville**, where delicious beers are brewed on the farm. A great place! A few miles further on, stop in **Villeron** to admire the magnificent **Ferme de Vaulerent**, a Cistercian grange that is definitely worth a glance, though unfortunately it is not open to the public as it is still a working farm.

Another possible option, if time allows and you enjoy cycling, is to spend a day on the **Scandibérique**. This cycle route, which links Scandinavia to the Iberian Peninsula (5,600 km/3,480 mi), passes through **Seine-et-Marne** and some of its prettiest villages. You could even reward yourself for your efforts by stopping off in **Gressy**, which has one of the most charming hotels in the Pays de France.

Spend Sunday in **Écouen**, of course, making a short detour via **Gonesse** to admire the superb organ in the **Église Saint-Pierre-Saint-Paul**, which dates from 1508 – a real treasure! Or alternatively, visit **Goussainville** and its strange old town.

IF YOU ARE...

Visiting as a family: you'll be spoilt for choice, which is good news! In terms of culture, there's the *Musée national de la Renaissance* in the *Château d'Écouen*, whose magic will keep children (and even bored teenagers) spellbound, and which organises workshops for families. And, of course, the *Musée ARCHÉA, in Louvres*, which seems to have made welcoming young visitors its primary mission, with an educational focus and a fun presentation of its archaeological collections. The museum invites visitors to read, listen, touch, play and even participate in an escape game! For those who love escape rooms, *Team Break in the Centre commercial Aéroville* offers two games suitable for children.

To make a family walk more fun, the *Baludik* application offers *digital treasure hunts* in different communes (Roissy-en-France, Le Mesnil-Amelot, Écouen, Dammartin-en-Goële); choose your story and solve the puzzles.

In this area, you'll also find lots of *parks for walking and picnicking in: the Parc des Prés-sous-la-Ville* (or Lac de Sarcelles), the *Parc de la Patte d'Oie in Gonesse* (where you can go horseriding), the *Fort de Stains in Garges-lès-Gonesse*, which in summer transforms into a genuine theme park, and the *Parc du Thillay*.

Another countryside pleasure is, of course, stocking up on supplies at a farm shop, such as those in *Gonesse* and *Arnouville*, but it's much more fun to go and pick your own fruit and vegetables in the field or orchard! At the farms *Les 2 Cueillettes de Compans* and *La Fraiserie du Plessis (Gassot)*, you can introduce your children to seasonal, healthy and colourful food at rock-bottom prices.

Most surprisingly, *Gonesse golf club* opens its putting green to children (from as young as three!) with mini – and cute – caddies and clubs, such as *Roissy golf club!*

A bit further afield are some other not-to-be-missed places particularly appreciated by families: the *Musée de l'Air in Bourget*, the *Château de Chantilly*, and, of course, *Parc Astérix!*

It's also worth noting that a mini break in Pays de France is a chance to introduce children to flavours from around the world. They are sure to enjoy eating their way through Italian pasta, Moroccan couscous, Chinese dumplings, Turkish kebabs and Portuguese chicken, and the wide choice of snack bars and little restaurants mean that you won't need to strain your family-outing budget.

Keen on architecture: the villages of *Écouen* and *Sarcelles* have developed walking trails that enable visitors to explore their architectural heritage. In *Écouen*, after visiting the château – a magnificent example of Renaissance architecture – the tourist office, housed in the Manoir des Tourelles, will give you advice on the best ways to explore the town, while the friends of the Église Saint-Acceul will invite you to discover the church, which is a stop on the Way of St James. In *Sarcelles*, the *Maison du patrimoine* will welcome you and guide you through the *vieux village (old town)* and the '*Grand Ensemble (housing estate) areas*, which have been listed as '*Architecture contemporaine remarquable*'; as are the churches of *Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix in Villeparisis*, *Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix in Arnouville*, *Sainte-Geneviève in Garges-lès-Gonesse* and *Saint-Michel in Goussainville*.

In **Roissy-en-France**, where the château has disappeared, you can visit **Charles-de-Gaulle Airport** which has continued to grow, terminal by terminal, since it was opened in 1974. The airport has been designed almost entirely by the architect Paul Andreu, who has been working on it for more than 30 years! La **Maison de l'environnement et du développement durable**, managed, like the whole of the airport, by ADP, offers regular discovery tours (on foot or by bus) through this incredible world, where nearly 90,000 people work day and night.

Pays de France has retained traces of its past with some **beautiful churches**, some of which owe their rich ornamentation to the passing through of pilgrims on their way to Compostela. Our favourites are: **Villiers-le-Bel, Gonesse** (especially for its organ!), **Le Plessis-Gassot, Fontenay-en-Parisis and Othis**. But those in **Roissy-en-France, Le Mesnil-Amelot, Sarcelles, Le Mesnil-Aubry, Mitry-Mory and Thieux** are also worth a look.

Although it is not open to visitors, the 72 m-long, 23 m-wide **Cistercian grange of the Ferme de Vaulerent** in Villeron is an architectural treasure of Pays de France. Although you can see the grange only from a distance, you can admire a fine model of it on display at the **Musée ARCHÉA**, which also recounts the evolution of architecture in this historically rural region.

Those who like unusual architecture and 'urbex' will want to visit the **old town of Goussainville**, a fascinating place that most of the locals left following construction of the airport. As the church is a listed building, the permit to demolish the village could not be signed and only some of the windows were bricked up.

Finally, a visit to the **Musée de la Cartoucherie in Surveilliers** will give you the chance to enjoy a stroll along a street in the workers' housing estate, a poignant reminder of industrial history and a paternalistic economy, while the restoration of the **Collège de Juilly**, the oldest secondary school in France, is a fine example of architectural frugality, as it will soon house 217 flats. A building site in the spirit of the times.

Sports lovers: whether you enjoy sports daily or just occasionally as a leisure activity, you'll find numerous, varied and high-quality sports facilities here. Lots of **parks and gardens**, such as the **Parc de la Patte d'Oie in Gonesse**, offer great fitness trails. And for those who enjoy swimming, or just splashing around and having fun in the water, the area has no fewer than **13 intercommunal swimming pools** (as well as a few others), including **Plaine Oxygène in Mesnil-Amelot**, where you'll also find a **skating rink**, as you will, too, in **Garges-lès-Gonesse**. At the **Centre sportif Nelson-Mandela in Sarcelles**, where champions go to train, you'll find an **Olympic-sized pool**. Horse-riders can go to the **Haras de la Fontaine Cypierre in Gonesse** and golfers have the choice between **18 holes in Roissy-en-France** and **9 holes in Gonesse**.

There are also **a dozen footpaths and cycle paths** across the region that you can enjoy walking or cycling and that are much more rural than you may imagine. Our favourite, of course, is the **Scandibérique**, the European cycling route that crosses the region over some 30 kilometres (18½ miles), alongside the Canal de l'Ourq, **between Villeparisis, Thieux and Ver-sur-Launette**. The **Concorde Memorial Airport cycle route**, a 27 km (17 mi) loop, which also passes near the canal, is also lovely. A shorter **route linking Roissy-en-France to Écouen** enables you to combine sport and culture.



Discover the highlights of our territory
with our City Tour Grand Roissy Escalles!



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Luzarches



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ROISSY
LAND OF BUSINESS & LEISURE

HOW TO GET HERE

BY CAR

Its position at the centre of the great transport corridor that links the Île-de-France region to the other big cities of north-western Europe means that the region is crossed by major roads and railways.

> 2 major radial roads: the **A1 motorway** and the **RN2 arterial road**. The main access road to the capital

from the north of France and Europe, the A1 crosses the region from north to south via Roissy. Running parallel to it is the D317; further to the east, the N2.

> The region is also served by the **Francilienne** towards Cergy, which links the A1 to Paris and Lille to the A4 near Marne-la-Vallée and the A3.

BY TRAIN

 The area is served by **4 lines of the Transilien network**.

> **RER B**: serves Roissy with two stations: Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 2 TGV (connections: airport terminal 2, TGV, Roissybus) and Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 1 (connections: airport terminals 1 and 3).

The Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 2 TGV station is a stop on national and southern European (Nice–Marseille–Montpellier), northern (Lille–Brussels), eastern (Strasbourg) and western (Bordeaux–Nantes and Rennes) rail links.

The RER B also serves Le Bourget (connection with tram no. 11).

Another branch (from Aulnay-sous-Bois) serves the Villeparisis–Mitry-le-Neuf and Mitry-Claye stations.

> **Line D** (from Malesherbes to Creil via Paris) serves the stations Sarcelles, Villiers-le-Bel–Gonesse–Arnouville–Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers–Fosses ... Creil.

> **Line H** (from Paris-Nord to Creil,

Deuil–Montmagny–Luzarches branch) serves Écouen–Ézanville (Musée national de la Renaissance).

> **Line K** (from Paris-Nord via Crépy-en-Valois) serves the stations Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux–Nantouillet, Dammartin–Juilly–Saint-Mard, Nanteuil.

New services for the region soon to be in operation

Line 17, from Grand Paris de Saint-Denis Pleyel, serving La Courneuve, Le Bourget RER, Paris–Le Bourget Airport, Triangle de Gonesse, Parc des Expositions, the Aéroport Charles de Gaulle stations and Le Mesnil-Amelot, is due to open in 2030.

> The Charles de Gaulle Express line, between Paris Gare de l'Est and Roissy will be brought into operation in 2027, making it possible to reach the capital in 20 minutes from the international airport.

BY BUS

> From Porte de la Chapelle, **line 350** for Roissy-CDG, which also serves Le Bourget (Parc des Expositions and the Musée de l'Air and de l'Espace). Allow just over an hour.

> The **RATP network serves the south of the region's** metropolitan area, and notably the communes of Sarcelles, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Villiers-le-Bel, Arnouville and Écouen.

BY TRAM

Tramway T5 connects the Place du 8-Mai-1945 to Saint-Denis and the Gare de Garges–Sarcelles in 20 minutes. This line completes and facilitates connections with the T1,

line 13 of the metro, the RER D and numerous bus lines, whose routes are adapted to the service offered by the tramway.

BY AIR

✈️ **Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport:** with three terminals, the international airport serves 300 cities around the world. It is the second largest airport in

Europe in terms of passengers and the largest in terms of freight.

✈️ **Paris–Le Bourget Airport:** the top business-jet airport in Europe.

BY BIKE

🚲 You can access the area by bike by leaving Paris on the ‘**Scandibérique**’, the French section of EuroVelo 3, the cycling route linking Trondheim (Norway) with Santiago de Compostela (Spain). In France, it crosses four regions and 20 departments and is 1,700 km (1,056 mi) long.

➤ The Scandibérique passes to the east of the area in Seine-et-Marne.

You can leave Paris and follow the Canal de l’Ourcq as far as Gressy, a 23 km (14½ mi) section, 90% of which is on cycle paths. Allow about 1 hour 40 mins. Then from Gressy, you can cycle to Ver-sur-Launette in Oise in the north of the area, a further 24 km (15 mi) (nearly all on cycle paths). Allow about 2 hours. An eco-friendly and healthy way to reach the destination.



An Air France Concorde at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport

USEFUL ROISSY PAYS DE FRANCE

Roissy Pays de France: Some Figures

- ❑ **Communes:** 42
- ❑ **Population:** 354,000
- ❑ **Jobs:** 185,000
- ❑ **Businesses:** 30,000
- ❑ **Area:** 342 km² (132 sq. mi)
- ❑ **2 Airports:** Le Bourget and Charles de Gaulle (Paris CDG).

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND WEBSITES

i Grand Roissy tourist office: 6, allée du Verger, 95700 Roissy-en-France. +33-(0)1-34-29-43-14.

● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ● Info on Écouen, Le Mesnil-Amelot, Roissy-en-France and Gressy, also Luzarches.

– **City Tour Grand Roissy Escales:** every summer, the tourist office lays on a city tour from six stations in the Roissy-airport zone that allows you to discover some great places in the area, depending on your interests. Five routes are offered: the Musée national de la Renaissance in Écouen, the Musée ARCHEA in Louvres, the Golf de Roissy, a boat trip on the Seine and the Plaine Oxygène leisure centre in Mesnil-Amelot. Buses will pick you up at specific times and follow a set route. An interesting and welcome initiative that will enable you to make the best use of your time between two flights, but that is also aimed at locals.

Prices: check the website. Reduced admission to the sites. Info and booking via the tourist office website and at the Grand Roissy and Écouen tourist offices, but you can also buy a ticket on the bus.

● roissypaysdefrance.fr ● The other essential website for finding out about daily life in the area (transport, sports facilities, etc.) as well as economic info.

● events.roissypaysdefrance.fr ● For info on excursions and events.

Some applications for exploring the area


● **valdoise-MyBalade** ● The Val-d'Oise app will give you info on all the department has to offer: tours, heritage, events and activities, as well as addresses of hotels and restaurants and much more besides.

● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ● The department's app to find lots of ideas for outings.


● **Baludik** ● A fun mobile app that offers treasure hunts on different themes, including two in Roissy, one in Mesnil-Amelot and one in Écouen.

● **Cirkwi** ● Activities and tours around the world and in France, including several in collaboration with the Grand Roissy tourist office.

EVENTS
L'AGENDA

Find all events 

Around you

 On the date you want

events.roissypaysdefrance.fr

**Roissy
Pays de
France**
AGGLOMERATION

**MUSÉE NATIONAL DE LA RENAISSANCE
-CHÂTEAU D'ÉCOUEN**

 **www.musee-rennaissance**

HOW TO GET AROUND

By public transport

– The **Grand'R** network, run by Keolis/Les Courriers d'Île-de-France, has eight regular routes serving 13 communes in Roissy Pays de France (Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Épiais-lès-Louvres, Fosses, Goussainville, LeThillay, Louvres, Marly-la-Ville, Puiseux-en-France, Roissy-en-France, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Vémars and Villeron). *Info and timetables on* ● keolis.cif.com ● roissypole.info ●

– The **Gonesse** network, run by Transdev/Trans Val de France, has eight regular routes, serving four communes in Roissy Pays de France (Arnouville, Bonneuil-en-France, Gonesse and Villiers-le-Bel).

– The **Goële** network, run by the Syndicat mixte de la Goële, of which the Roissy Pays de France conurbation is the main stakeholder (along with the Plaine et Monts de France community of municipalities and the Seine-et-Marne department), has 13 regular routes serving all the Seine-et-Marne communes in Roissy Pays de France, with the exception of Villeparisis.

– The Mityr-Compans-Villeparisis network, run by Keolis/Les Courriers d'Île-de-France, has 11 regular routes, serving six communes in the Roissy Pays de France area (Compans, Juilly, Mityr-Mory, Saint-Mard, Thieux and Villeparisis).

– **Apolo 7**: the Apolo 7 network, administered by the Communauté d'agglomération Paris-Vallée de la Marne and operated by Transdev/Trans Val de France, has nine regular routes, including two lines that serve three Roissy Pays de France communes (Claye-Souilly, Mityr-Mory and Villeparisis).

– **Transport à la demande** (on-demand transport) (TAD): a complementary service to the transport network, offered in areas where standard public transport (buses or coaches) is not available, in order to enable inhabitants to get to a station, hospital or school or to access a bus route. It is organised in two different ways:

➤ On a virtual route: as with a standard bus route, TAD has a fixed route and stops. The bus runs only when passengers have made a reservation.

➤ By area: there is no fixed route. TAD operates within a given area: depending on the point of departure, the passenger has access to one or more bus stops. The bus route is organised according to demand.

All these services function with the same pricing as a standard bus route. Note: this is not a door-to-door service: you need to go to a defined bus stop for your requested journey to be taken into account. The bus will run on its regular route but will add the additional stop that has been requested to its journey. Booking is requirement for all journeys. *Enquiries and bookings:* ☎ +33-(0)9-70-80-96-63 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm). ● tad.idfmobilites.fr ● App: ● TADÎle-de-France Mobilités ●

– **Fileo**: facilitates access to the Paris-CDG platform. *Daily 24/7.* ☎ +33-(0)1-74-37-24-77 (cost of a standard call to France). *Online or using the app* ● fileo.com/se-deplacer/reserver-votre-fileo ● Book ahead and this service will take you to your commune or to your workplace. Indicate the time and place of departure or arrival at Paris-CDG and your booking will be confirmed (up to 1 hr before departure).

By bike

The EuroVelo 3

In this region, the cycle route, known in France as 'la Scandibérique', passes through Ôthis, Moussy-le-Neuf, Moussy-le-Vieux, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Thieux, Compans and Gressy. It's a lovely way to discover the villages and the rural face of Roissy Pays de France along a very pleasant 30 km (18½ mi). Take your time and enjoy the fresh air! ● scandiberique.fr ●; see p. 23.

DES HISTOIRES divertissantes

200 ENSEIGNES,
30 RESTAURANTS, CINEMA,
SALLE D'ARCADE, ESCAPE GAME
AÉROVILLE, ROISSY EN FRANCE



AÉROVILLE

Centre de shopping & de loisirs

Découvrir les lieux culturels et les loisirs autour de Roissy CDG c'est possible en transports en commun !

Discover the cultural places and the leisure activities around Roissy CDG by public transports !

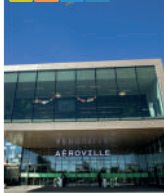
Golf International de Roissy
International Golf of Roissy
32 95-02



Château d'Écouen
The Castle of Écouen
27



Aéroville
Aéroville (Shopping center)
32 23 24 EX 100



Parc Astérix
Park Astérix
Prendre les Navettes Parc Astérix
au départ de la Gare de RoissyParis



Basilique Saint-Denis
Basilica of Saint-Denis
95-02 11



Abbaye de Royaumont
The Abbey of Royaumont
EX 100



KEOLIS

filéo

ROISSY
Aéroport Charles de Gaulle

On foot

The GR1: one of the oldest long-distance footpaths (grandes randonnées) in France. It starts at Porte Maillot in Paris, crosses the forests west of Paris, then makes a huge loop, allowing you to discover the diversity of l'Île-de-France: a total of 600 km (373 mi). The route markings are white/red. Two sections pass through the area. *Info:* ● ffrandonnee-idf.fr ●

➤ From the Gare d'Orry-la-Ville to the Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard: 37.5 km (23 mi).

➤ From the Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard to the Gare de Meaux: 21.5 km (13½ mi).

Topoguides from the Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre:

– *La Seine-et-Marne à pied*

– *Le Val-d'Oise à pied*

– *Le Parc naturel régional du Vexin français à pied*

– *Tour de l'Île-de-France GR 1*

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

– For precise dates and more info on the programme, visit: ● events.roissypaysdefrance.fr ● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ●

SPRING-SUMMER

– **Ekiden Roissy Pays de France:** *in April.* Marathon for teams of six, who take turns around the Roissy-en-France golf course.

– **Libre comme l'air:** *in April.* Children's book festival organised by the region's libraries. A chance to meet children's authors and illustrators and enjoy exhibitions, storytelling, readings, workshops for children – and a fair in Arnouville to close the festival.

– **Festival du Connétable:** *every other year in May, a weekend of festivities around the château in Écouen.* Discover Écouen's heritage over two days, with shows, concerts, exhibitions, lectures, craft fairs, plant sales and children's village activities.

– **Fête des Piscines:** *one day in mid-June. Free admission.* Take advantage of the numerous pool-related activities on offer: inflatables, aquarobics, aquabiking, outdoor activities, sports events.

– **L'été de la Toile filante:** free cultural events, notably open-air films, throughout the summer season in different towns in the regions.

– **Journées du patrimoine (heritage days):** *third w/e in Sep.* Discover places that are open only on this occasion.

– **Les Escales, musicales et gourmandes:** *in Jul and Aug. Free admission, from 7.30pm. Refreshment stall and food truck.* In the parks and public spaces of four local towns. A programme of concerts and DJ sets.

WHAT IS THE RELAIS EKIDEN?

It's a relay race of Japanese origin that involves teams of six runners. The sum of the distances run by all team members must equal that of a marathon: 42.195 km (26.219 mi). The six runners successively run distances of 5 km (3 mi), 10 km (6 mi), 5 km, 10 km, 5 km and 7.195 km (4.35 mi). The traditional 'baton' is a fabric scarf known as a tasuki, which is light, so as not to hinder the runner.

AUTUMN–WINTER

- **Festival Primo:** *three weeks from mid-Sep.* A festival devoted to street theatre organised in different communes with Le Moulin Fondu, a ‘Centre national des arts de la rue et de l’espace public’ (national centre for street theatre) based in Garges-lès-Gonesse.
- **Semaine européenne du développement durable (European sustainable development week):** *one week in mid-Sep.* The chance to participate in workshops to learn about eco-friendly practices. Also includes lectures, exhibitions, debates, etc.
- **Festival Les Envolées d’Automne:** *in Roissy-en-France.* An unmissable event in the choreographic calendar of Île-de-France with dance performances of various styles. Workshops are also offered.
- **Val-d’Oise ‘Image par Image’ animation festival:** organised in more than 30 towns in Île-de-France and 35 partnering cultural venues in Val-d’Oise (cinemas, theatres, cultural centres and libraries), allowing adults and children alike to learn to appreciate different kinds of animated films, through the diversity of their techniques and origins.
- **La Villeparisienne:** as part of ‘Octobre rose’ (breast cancer awareness month), the campaign to raise awareness of early breast cancer detection, a 4 km (2½ mi) sponsored walk and an 8 km (5 mi) sponsored walk are organised.
- **BAM!:** *mid-Oct to mid-Nov.* Pop culture festival organised by the regional network of libraries. Featuring films and TV series, video games, comics, music and internet culture.
- **En Images:** *mid-Nov to mid-Dec.* Festival devoted to photography and the cinema focussing on themes related to the region.

TRAVEL WRITING

- **Roissy (The French List),** by Tiffany Tavernier, trans. T. L. Fagan (Seagull Books, 2018). A novel relating the wandering of a woman in Roissy airport.
- **Roissy Express: A Journey Through The Paris Suburbs,** by François Maspéro, trans. P. M. Jones and D. Bellos (Verso Books, 1994).
- **Screening the Paris Suburbs: From the Silent Era to the 1990s,** by Philippe Met et als. (Manchester University Press, 2018).
- **AirGuide Destinations Airport Guide: Paris CDG, Orly,** by Aram Gesar (Pyramid Media Group, 2018).
- **Planning the Impossible: Urban Development and Spatial Strategies in the Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Region,** by Eirini Kasioumi (Birkhäuser, 2021).
- **The Château de Ecouen: The National Museum of the Renaissance,** by Alain Erlande-Brandeburg (Paris, RMN / Albin Michel, 1988).
- **Treasures of Ecouen,** Special edition, Connaissance des arts n° 340/1 (2007).

PEOPLE, CULTURE, ENVIRONMENT

ARCHITECTURE AND HERITAGE

Our dearly departed

The massive urbanisation of the region and the construction of the Charles de Gaulle Airport and the adjacent business parks have had two consequences: on the one hand, they have made it possible to gain a better understanding of certain archaeological treasures in the subsoil, now on display at the Musée ARCHEA in Louvres; on the other, they have led to the disappearance of heritage elements. How many old farms, calvaries and chapels have vanished?

Time had erased the Medieval **Château d'Orville (Louvres)**, built and destroyed during the Hundred Years' War, until its vestiges were discovered thanks to excavations that began in 1976. Also gone is the **Château des Caramans** in **Roissy-en-France**, a beautiful 18th-century house that was badly damaged by fire in 1794, and of which only the gable end of one of the wings remains.

Faith roads

'Europe was born on a pilgrimage', wrote Goethe, and many penitents have passed through here on the way to Compostela since the 10th century. The historic route left **Luzarches** to get to the Pays de France via **Écouen**, which was dominated by a fortress in the Middle Ages. This was replaced in the 16th century by the château of the Constable of France Anne de Montmorency, and is the jewel of the region's heritage. The elevated position of the château has meant that for more than 200 years it has coexisted with a strange puppet: an optical telegraph station that was set up here to enable the exchange of visual signals over long distances. Below the château, an early Église Saint-Acceul, of which nothing now remains, was a devotional stop on the road to Galicia. The current building, listed as a historic monument in 1840, was also built at the instigation of the Constable and has some remarkable period windows. Another heritage of the Renaissance, also listed in 1840, is the church in **Le Mesnil-Aubry**. A contemporaneous one in **Mitry-Mory** houses an exceptional 17th-century organ.

More often than not, however, churches have evolved with the times, and exhibit a variety of styles that blend well together. The one at **Othis**, for example, which is mainly Gothic, has a splendid Renaissance porch. The

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE...

You may not think it, but there is also an abundant vernacular heritage... in cemeteries! From the late 19th century until the First World War, in particular, the powerful flaunted their social status even in death. Here and there, in the vein of the famous Parisian Père Lachaise Cemetery, but on a smaller scale, you'll find funerary monuments worthy of local notables, including those of the lords of Louvres, in the eponymous commune; old Chennevières sepulchres, with strange ornamentation in the form of shrubs, flowers and other funerary symbols; and, in Bouqueval, the tomb of Jean-Joseph Sue, father of Eugène, French novelist and author of The Mysteries of Paris. Note the presence of crosses, cemeteries, calvaries and various commemorative monuments.

Église Saint-Martin, in Moussy-le-Vieux, has preserved its Gothic chancel but underwent major modifications until the 18th century. The rural Early Gothic style is represented by the *Église Saint-Étienne de Fosses* and its trefoil apse, surmounted by a bell tower and extended by a nave with two aspects: a Renaissance aisle and a Flamboyant Gothic one. In *Louvres*, there are two churches in one: *Saint-Justin*, again very composite, has a fine Romanesque portal dating from the 11th century, embellished with chevrons and diamond points; it is dominated by the bell tower of the old church of *Saint-Rieul*, which is a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic.

Rural houses

There is a long tradition of farming in this fertile land, as is evident from the Ferme de Vaulerent, the Cistercian grange in *Villeron* (14th century), an outbuilding of Chaalis Abbey, near which stands a 16th-century dovecot. Only aristocrats and major landowners, such as the monasteries, were entitled to a dovecot.

Much later, noblemen of the French court were partial to owning vast and comfortable rural houses here. One such is the *Château d'Arnouville*, built in the Classical style during the reign of Louis XV by one of his controller-generals of finances. Mid-ranking lords lived on farms similar to those of wealthy farmers. In the countryside, you can discover lots of farms, some still working, that for the most part date back to the 18th century. A *pigeonnier-porche* (a dovecot over a porch) symbolised the rank of its former owners. More curiously, elements of old farms have been preserved, renovated and integrated into urban environments, and given new uses. In *Gonesse*, for example, the Ferme de Coulanges has become a cultural centre, while the dovecot of the Ferme de Garlande (14th–15th century), its last vestige, stands in the centre of a small square surrounded by blocks of flats.

Special mention should be made of the classrooms and dormitories of the Collège de *Jully*. Built in the 18th century in the Classical style, this prestigious school was directed by the French Oratorians and was attended by the philosopher Montesquieu, the inventor Vaucanson and the astronomer and cartographer Cassini.

The history of the towns

Several communes have a large number of imposing town houses, most of which were built in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They are often located near the station in communes served by the railway, such as *Goussainville* and *Gonesse*. *Mairies-écoles* – buildings housing the town hall and primary school – also appeared in this period (*Puisieux-en-France, Villeron, Bouqueval*), when state education became obligatory.

As communes gradually became impoverished during the 20th century, these houses were sometimes abandoned by their owners and put to other uses (the current town hall in Gonesse is an example). The distinction thus emerged between ‘old town’ and ‘new town’, particularly apparent in the *building campaigns of the 1950s* and their blocks of flats, but also in the suburban housing estates of the interwar years.

Created in 2016, the French *Architecture contemporaine remarquable* certification encourages a rethink of certain preconceived ideas about the achievements of the *Trente Glorieuses* (the 30-year period of economic growth in France following the end of WW2). For example, the *Sarcelles* housing estate (Grand Ensemble, 12,368 homes!), of the *lieu-dit* Les Flanades. Several churches have also received this seal of quality, including Saint-Michel in *Goussainville*, Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix in *Arnouville* and *Villeparisis*, and Sainte-Geneviève in *Garges-lès-Gonesse*.

Neither have infrastructures been forgotten: part of *Le Bourget Airport* has been listed as a historic monument, with perhaps more to come. Note in passing that the commune of Saint-Witz has an old airport light, which guided aircraft on approach at night.

Meanwhile, **CDG Airport**, with its terminals exhibiting all styles of modernity since the 1970s, is the contemporary emblem of the whole region. Opened to the public in 1974 and designed by architect Paul Andreu, terminal 1 looks like a camembert when viewed from above. Its revolutionary circular building serves five satellites on different levels, linked by a mass of escalators. The interior, with its tubes of escalators going up and down looked so futuristic that British progressive rock band The Alan Parsons Project used it on the cover of their 1977 album *I Robot*. Three of this terminal's satellites have recently been given a complete overhaul to create a single – modernised, renovated and enlarged – one that is more in line with visitor experience, while respecting the architect's work.

LOCAL CUISINE AND PRODUCE

French cuisine

The Pays de France is a **vast fertile and cereal-growing plain**. For a long time, it was a granary for Paris, and the fame of '**Gonesse bread**' is evidence of this. But for many centuries, it also supplied the nearby capital with fruit and vegetables, largely produced by market gardeners, who sent their produce daily to the markets in Paris, notably the famous Halles Baltard.

In the early 20th century, Roissy, Sarcelles and Villiers-le-Bel were still covered with **market gardens**, green fields and flowering orchards. But even then, urbanisation and changes in lifestyle were sounding the death knell for food crops, which declined and eventually disappeared here. Nevertheless, we have managed to locate some **farms, including some offering pick-your-own**, where you can find local, seasonal produce. At **Compans**, you'll find a vast selection of fruit and vegetables to pick yourself: heritage tomatoes, onions, salad leaves, rhubarb, potatoes, chillies, green beans, squashes, raspberries, beetroot, parsnips and more. At **Gressy**, (77), the *Domaine de Pomamour* specialises in apples and pears, with no less than 12 varieties, but you'll also find several farms that sell directly to the public. Some have even had the bright idea of making their produce available via vending machines. The largest one is at **Moussy-le-Neuf**.

Note that there are also beekeepers producing **local honey** here, as well as the *Astruc* biscuit factory in **Villeparisis**, which makes madeleines and financiers that will delight anyone with a sweet tooth.

In terms of traditional drinks, the last vines were pulled up here during the phylloxera epidemic;

THE 'QUARANTE-DEUX' (42) IN SARCELLES

This is not a phone number but the name of a heritage variety of pea that was for many years grown (and improved) in Sarcelles, of which it became a speciality when market gardening predominated here. Ninety-six of the 350 ha (865 acres) of arable land were devoted to growing peas!

VILLEPARISIS JELLY

It was in Villeparisis, in 1947, that beekeeper Roger Bosc discovered the virtues of royal jelly and worked with INRA (the French National Institute of Agricultural Research) to hone his research. In 1955, he was able to supply a laboratory with 17 kg (37 lb) of this precious substance, and this is how the first beauty cream containing royal jelly came to be sold. In 1955, ORTF (the French Radio and Television Broadcasting Office) presented a documentary on Villeparisis's beehives and royal jelly, a food supplement that is now renowned worldwide for its health benefits.

to drink local, opt for beer and cider. Try the **ciders** and fruit juices, made by apple farmers, and the delicious **beers** brewed at the *Brasserie d'Orville*.

World cuisine

Today, nearly **130 nationalities** live in Garges, Sarcelles and Villiers-le-Bel. This impressive melting-pot is inevitably reflected in the local cuisine, as each of these communities has brought with it its own traditions, tastes, dislikes, produce and recipes, and opened its convenience stores, cafés and restaurants.

You will be spoilt for choice here, each wave of immigration having enriched the local cuisine, which has become less and less Parisian and more and more multicultural. Italians arrived with their pizzas, Jews with their falafel, North Africans with their couscous and their tajines.

Agoralim

This wealth of ethnic cuisines has also had an adverse effect, however, with the proliferation of snack bars and fast-food restaurants that offer not only the best of street food but also the worst of junk food. To combat unhealthy eating and to try to change the dietary habits of those living and eating in the region, Roissy Pays de France launched a major survey in March 2022, with the aim of reviving the tradition of more sustainable, local and accessible agriculture.

In the same vein, SEMMARIS, which already manages the Rungis market, launched the Agoralim project, with the aim of offering, in the north of the Île-de-France, **healthy and local food**, with fresh food that is produced, processed and distributed here. The **Triangle de Gonesse** (which has been established as a 'food democracy town') was chosen for this new northern Île-de-France agricultural development that covers a hundred hectares. The site is presented as a 'showcase of agroecological production' and has witnessed, among other things, the (re)creation of market gardening and open-field production areas. The aim of the project is primarily to supply the inhabitants and the approach is local-based and dynamic (favouring local produce, reducing pollution and transport costs, creating jobs and promoting healthy eating). The wealth of such produce that can be found on Pays de France market stalls underscores the urgency of feeding (well) a growing population (that includes 123,000 inhabitants currently living below the poverty line), while enabling the region to reconnect with its agricultural past.

TRAINING - INNOVATING - HEALTHY EATING

Agoralim will be established on four main sites in the Val-d'Oise department: Gonesse (agricultural production, vegetable processing, and training); Goussainville (producers' pavilion and distribution); Roissy-en-France (central kitchen and transformation) and Bonneuil-en-France (last-mile logistics). The project represents a cumulative investment of 14 billion euros and should enable the creation of 4,000–5,000 jobs.

WHAT ABOUT SOLIDARITY?

Since 2014, the conurbation has been heavily involved in an initiative to promote the development of a social economy that supports innovative projects guided by humanist values. In the context of gender parity and equality, 520 employer businesses – and 90% of associations – are working mainly in the sectors of sports and leisure, art and culture, social action and education.

ECONOMY

There are no fewer than 30,000 businesses in the **Roissy Pays de France metropolitan area**, ranging from artisans to multinational logistics giants. Between these two extremes, a whole variety of small and medium-sized businesses are thriving, as are non-profit organisations working in the social-economy sector.

Roissy = CDG

Roissy is synonymous with 'Charles de Gaulle'. Not the famous politician but the huge airport complex that bears his name. 'CDG', to those that know it well, is the **second largest European passenger airport** – after London Heathrow – and the tenth largest in the world. In 2019, before the Covid pandemic hit, 498,000 aeroplanes took off or landed here – that's 1,364 every day or nearly one every minute. Some 76 million travellers, carrying at least as many suitcases, passed through its eight terminals and 210 departure gates. These numbers dropped dramatically in 2020, of course, with 'only' 22.3 million travellers. The following year, 2021, saw a marked rise (42.9 million), and 2022 confirmed the upward trend.

In terms of freight, CDG ranks number one in Europe, with two million tonnes handled in 2019, which again was the reference year. Its platform, known as Cargo City, has nine cargo zones structured around four networks: luxury products, e-commerce and express freight, pharmaceuticals and fresh and perishable products. Logistics giants, such as Bolloré, Fedex, Servair, DHL and Air France Cargo, have set up in these vast spaces. La Poste also has its multimodal hub here – the largest of its kind in Europe and one that mobilises a thousand postal workers daily.

The ADP (Aéroports de Paris) group, which also operates Orly, is the owner of Le Bourget, too. Covering 553 ha (2.1 sq. mi) – hardly a small space! – it ranks first in Europe for business-jet flights. There were 54,000 aircraft movements here in 2019. The famous Paris Air Show, which is held here every other year, welcomed 2,400 exhibitors and 316,000 professional and other interested visitors in 2019. The 2021 show had to be cancelled due to Covid, but things were back to normal in 2023.

Stopping over

Unsurprisingly, local economic activity centres largely around the incessant coming and going of planes, notably the hotel and catering industry. The accommodation needs linked to CDG, reinforced by the attractiveness of Le Bourget and the proximity of the Paris Nord Villepinte convention centre, are colossal. There are **74 hotels and tourist residences** in the region, currently offering 10,800 rooms – an average of 145 rooms per hotel – making it the second largest hotel district in Île-de-France (after Disneyland Paris). Most of the major hotel chains are located in the area, offering overnight stays to suit virtually all budgets, from one to four stars: *EasyHotel*, *Louvre Hotels*, *Accor*, as well as *Sheraton*, *Pullman* and of course *Hilton* – normal, given how close Paris is.

In support of the airport

While the **Aéroports de Paris (ADP) group** alone employs around 3,500 people, the CDG site hosts nearly 900 businesses with, between them, 100,000 employees. A large number of companies have thus sprung up around it, benefiting from the proximity of this extraordinary infrastructure and contributing to its smooth operation. Boeing and Airbus, for example, are maintained by Standardaero France (Gonesse), which specialises in repairing and maintaining aircraft and even spacecraft! Logistics has the lion's share, with businesses such as International Freightbridge France (IFB), Qualitair & Sea International, and Herport, based in

Roissy-en-France, and the SeD Supply chain solutions in Marly-la-Ville, all four specialising in the chartering and organisation of transport. Wholesale trade is also omnipresent: machine tools and industrial equipment (DMG Mori France, Manutan SA), pharmaceuticals (Movianto France), computer hardware (Computacenter France, Brother France, Inmac Wstore), and even perishable foods, such as dairy produce and eggs (Sédifrais). In addition, the head office of EvoBus France SASU, which manufactures public transport vehicles, is located in Sarcelles.

Living off the land

But does this mean that there is no room for plant life in these particularly man-made environments? In fact, no, because there is still a lot of agricultural land in **one of the most fertile regions in France**. However, the whole sector is devoted to arable farming (wheat, corn, rape, beetroot) in very open landscapes, where there are also a few orchards. It is no coincidence that Foricher, specialist in the production of quality flours, bought Les Moulins d'Arnouville in 2017: this milling plant grinds 20,000 tonnes of wheat each year, producing flour with the Label Rouge quality certification. It is worth noting that in the whole of Val-d'Oise, only a few hundred of the 57,000 hectares are farmed organically, but things are moving in this regard, and in the right direction!

GEOGRAPHY

In geological terms, the whole region is located at the heart of the Paris Basin. This is a very broad plain resting on a limestone base formed in the Cretaceous (the time of the dinosaurs, between 145 and 66 million years ago), which was covered in the Paleocene with a layer of clay, marl, sand and other limestone and sediments.

At the edge of a nature park

Created on 1 January 2016, the Roissy Pays de France metropolitan area is bounded to the west by the Montmorency forest, while to the south, from Sarcelles to Villeparisis, it borders the Greater Paris area. The Pays de Meaux (Multien) extends to the east, and to the north it borders the **Parc naturel régional (PNR) Oise-Pays de France**, with its Chantilly and Ermenonville forests. **Fosses and Survilliers** fall partially within the perimeter of the nature park.

The metropolitan area is crossed north to south by the Beuvronne river, with a strangely named tributary, the Biberonne (a *biberon* is a baby's bottle), a river whose drainage basin covers 207 km² (80 sq. mi). Itself a tributary of the Marne, the lower course of the Beuvronne joins the Canal de l'Ourcq at Claye-Souilly (Seine-et-Marne).

To the west, the area is crossed by the Croult and the Petit Rosne, while the Ysieux runs to the north of the region.

Urbanism and rurality

Covering an area of 342 km² (132 sq. mi), the region straddles the departments of Seine-et-Marne and Val-d'Oise. There are more than 354,000 inhabitants, with a density of around 1,040 inhabitants per km² (402 per sq. mi). In total, there are 134,730 homes – double the number there were in 1968. With around 59,000 inhabitants, Sarcelles is the most heavily populated of the 42 communes. Next in line are Garges-lès-Gonesse (43,000) and Villiers-le-Bel (28,000). Two thirds of the population live in the seven largest communes. The commune with the smallest population is Le Plessis-Gassot, with just 74 inhabitants, showing a marked contrast between highly urbanised areas and predominantly rural ones.

Businesses are concentrated around Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), while the major agricultural areas are to the north and east.

By 2030, as part of the major Grand Paris Express, line 17 of the metro should link Saint-Denis-Pleyel to Le Mesnil-Amelot, serving, en route, terminals 2 and 4 of CDG, the parc expo (exhibition centre), the Triangle de Gonesse and Le Bourget Airport. This will significantly improve the daily life of inhabitants travelling from east to west (or the opposite), who currently have to travel via Paris.

HISTORY

To take a trip through the history of the region, from prehistoric times to the 18th century, head for the superb Musée ARCHEA in Louvres. Archaeological finds, unearthed during work on the extension of the Roissy airport as well as on various infrastructures and housing, have made it possible to retrace the ancient history of the region. Here is a brief description of what you can expect to learn there.

Prehistory

Nomadic hunter-gatherers spent time here around 100,000 years ago, leaving behind them various cut flints. In the Neolithic (5200–2200 BC), settled populations made more elaborate tools, in polished stone. The location of a flint mine dating from this period has been discovered at Gonesse. These men raised livestock and cultivated certain plants, marking the beginning of an ongoing farming tradition in the region.

Nearer our times, in the Second Iron Age, the *Parisii* occupied the area and also cultivated fields in a wooded landscape. Tombs with war chariots containing important figures have been unearthed in Bouqueval and Le Plessis-Gassot, in Celtic necropolises.

From Antiquity to Modern times

The Romans brought their civilisation here. Excavations carried out on the site of the Vieille-Baune Gallo-Roman villa, in Le Thillay, have given us a better understanding of their way of life. The occupants enjoyed the use of a private bathing complex, with hypocaust heating. Other finds – painted plaster, money deposits, crockery – bear witness to their wealth.

The Franks settled here in the wake of Clovis's victory in Soissons, in 486. Too often reputed to be barbarians, they left behind in the soil important tokens of their brilliant civilisation: in Louvres, amidst dozens of Merovingian tombs, five aristocratic sepulchres were found to contain some remarkably splendid furnishings.

In the feudal period, the Montmorency family was the dominant power in the region, but the Abbaye de Saint-Denis also possessed numerous estates here. In 1438, during the Hundred Years' War, the Château d'Orville (Louvres) was entirely destroyed. In the 16th century, Constable Anne de Montmorency was responsible for building the magnificent Château d'Écouen, which today houses the collections of the Musée national de la Renaissance.

During these thousand or so years, a major pottery and ceramics industry grew up in Fosses.

Major changes in the 20th century

A rural region for centuries, the Pays de France experienced an **unprecedented urban and economic boom** in the 20th century. After the First World War, the Château de Moussy-le-Vieux became a convalescent home for 'gueules cassées', soldiers left facially disfigured after fighting in the trenches. The Château

d'Arnouville also played its part, becoming an asylum for victims of shell shock, soldiers whose minds had been disturbed in the trenches.

In communes served by the railway, whose network continued to grow, the population increased. In Goussainville, those less well-off bought undeveloped land. Labourers and employees working in the capital built their own unsanitary houses, lacking both water or electricity, on muddy roads. Schools were overcrowded and public services non-existent. Relying on a law passed in 1924 that aimed to improve housing estates, these '*mal lotis*' (badly off), as they were known, formed trade union associations that sought to gradually renovate these slums. They were aided by the Saraut and Loucheur laws of 1928: the first stipulated that the State would pay half the renovation costs; the second provided for long-term loans at an interest rate of 2% for those building in compliance with certain standards, and guaranteed the construction of 260,000 homes.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the construction of the Grands Ensembles, high-rise concrete buildings that grew up in Sarcelles, Villiers-le-Bel, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Gonesse, Goussainville and elsewhere. This urban landscape brought about significant road development, with four-lane roads and other interchanges. The movement was increased by **the opening, in 1974, of the Charles de Gaulle Airport**, straddling three departments (Val-d'Oise, Seine-Saint-Denis and Seine-et-Marne), and all the businesses that grew up around it.

This flurry of activity was accompanied by **successive waves of immigration**, which radically changed the structure of the local population. Firstly, there were Belgians, who came to lend a hand with harvesting before returning to their homes but eventually settled here and were employed in arduous jobs in the brickworks, gypsum quarries or on large construction sites. Next to arrive were Bretons and Picardians, who came in search of a better life. In the interwar years, when there was a shortage of manpower, Poles, Italians and Spaniards arrived in great numbers. In the three decades following the Second World War, first Portuguese, then Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians found employment in the automobile industry or on the construction sites for the Grands Ensembles, of which they became the main occupants, after a period living in hostels or slums. The last migratory waves, from sub-Saharan Africa, were of people fleeing famines or wars.

In the small garden of the town hall in Garges-lès-Gonesse, a simple transparent-glass plaque engraved with a planisphere pays tribute to the victims of the genocides in Armenia, Rwanda and the Holocaust.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you thought that prefects are shut away only in fine historic buildings in town centres, you'd be wrong! Le Bourget and CDG Airports also have their own prefects. Assisted by some 20 civil servants, their role is to ensure airport safety and security, as well as to coordinate various State activities.

NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A region with positive energy

The identified axes – preserving and increasing the area's woodlands, building on the herbaceous stratum of transport infrastructures and enhancing or restoring waterways – should make it possible to reveal and **improve the region's green and blue infrastructures**.

In fact, the biodiversity and landscapes of the conurbation have been affected by its historical function as a 'service' region. It has few biodiversity reservoirs, which have been damaged by the fragmentation of the landscape by infrastructures.

The aim of the green and blue infrastructure is to maintain and rebuild a network of exchanges so that animal and plant species can circulate, feed, reproduce and rest. A specific study is underway to define this infrastructure for all the open and natural spaces in the region, including a landscape approach and taking into account all the uses of the territory, particularly social ones.

So, at Le Mont-Griffard natural site, part of which has badly deteriorated, the goals are to preserve biodiversity, to widely incorporate active-mobility routes and to promote cultural history and heritage. This multi-infrastructure project serves as a transition between the Écouen forest (wooded infrastructure) and the agricultural spaces of the Plaine de France, notably the Parc de la Patte d'Oie in Gonesse, the Fort de Stains and the Triangle de Gonesse.

Since 2021, the Château gardens, the Orville archaeological site and the Marlots compensatory afforestation in Louvres as well as the Bois de Coudray in Puiseux-en-France, the Bois de l'Aviation in Roissy-en-France and the Saint-Witz afforestation have been maintained, with the objectives of ***managing the ecology and respecting plant cycles and the nesting periods of birds in the area.***

Despite the dominance of the airport and the numerous traffic routes, which tend to fragment the region, Roissy Pays de France also has large swathes of farmland, preserved natural spaces and numerous waterways. This heritage provides valuable sources of fresh air and recreation that help preserve the balance of nature, flora and fauna.

On the roadsides, you can observe sustainably landscaped ***natural spaces*** that may look like they are poorly maintained, but this is far from being the case. This approach, based on traditional farming practices, aims to preserve biodiversity by favouring late mowing, which preserves the natural wildlife habitats and respects reproductive cycles.

It is applied in the management of many of the natural spaces in the region where the municipality intervenes (Bois de Villeron, Bois de l'Aviation in Vaud'Herland, near the Bois des Marlots in Louvres, Bois de Puiseux-en-France, the gardens of the Château in Louvres, the Orville site in Louvres).

The ***preservation of the natural heritage***, recreational spaces and active-mobility routes are priorities for adapting the region to climate change. This is why the municipality is also committed to reflecting on new ways forward, as is the case at Le Mont-Griffard in Villiers-le-Bel and Écouen. This represents an important element of the region's green infrastructure as a space linking different environments (agricultural, forest, urban). The green and blue infrastructure consists of a network formed of terrestrial and aquatic ecological continuities. It contributes to improving the conservation status of natural habitats and species and to the good ecological status of bodies of water. Le Mont-Griffard is identified in the SCoT (Schéma de cohérence territoriale – territorial coherence plan) as an area to be preserved and enhanced in terms of ecological continuity.

In addition, ***agriculture represents an important part of the region's economic activity*** and a significant proportion of land consumption. Conscious of the need to preserve this activity, which participates in regional development and attractiveness, the municipality has drawn up an agricultural charter.

You can consult this agricultural charter on the municipality's website
 ● roissypaysdefrance.fr ●

The Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France

This nature park encompasses 70 communes in the departments of Oise and Val-d'Oise, stretching from Pont-Sainte-Maxence in the north to Mareil-en-France in the south and from Villiers-Adam in the west to Auger-Saint-Vincent in the east. Comprising the forests of Halatte, Ermenonville and Chantilly, 20,000 ha (77 sq. mi) of the area of the park is covered by forests, forming the Massif des Trois-Forêts. The park hosts a wide diversity of original natural habitats, including limestone grasslands, moors and wetlands. A large number of rare animal and plant species have been recorded here: some 50 protected vascular plants and around 40 insects of heritage significance.

i **Maison du Parc Château de la Borne Blanche:** 48 rue d'Hérivaux, BP 6, 60560 Orry-la-Ville. ☎ +33-(0)3-44-63-65-65. ● parc-oise-paysdefrance.fr ● A wealth of interesting brochures and literature can be downloaded from the website. ● **Geotrek** ●: an app for exploring the Parc naturel regional Oise-Pays de France.

➤ Two Roissy Pays de France communes are located within the park's perimeter: **Survilliers and Fosses**, both in the north of the region in Val-d'Oise and in the south of the park. A 13 km (8 mi) circular footpath, 'Fosses-Bellefontaine en Pays de France', starting from the Gare de Fosses (RER D from Paris), takes you on a walk in the Ysieux valley through fields and villages, such as Bellefontaine, from the riverside plain. Allow about 3 hrs.

SPORT AND LEISURE

There is no lack of sports facilities in the region, so make the most of them. You'll find addresses listed throughout this guide in the places where these quality community facilities are located.

In the water

With **13 swimming pools in the area**, those who love the water will be able to enjoy bathing, swimming and playing to their heart's content.

- piscine intercommunale (intercommunal swimming pool), Claye-Souilly
- intercommunal swimming pool, Fosses
- intercommunal swimming pool, Garges-lès-Gonesse
- Raoul-Vaux swimming pool, Gonesse (reopening in 2023)
- intercommunal swimming pool, Goussainville
- Plaine Oxygène leisure centre, Mesnil-Amelot
- intercommunal swimming pool, Louvres
- intercommunal swimming pool, Mitry-Mory
- intercommunal swimming pool, Roissy-en-France
- Christiane-et-Guy-Canzano intercommunal aquatic centre, Sarcelles
- intercommunal swimming pool, Survilliers
- Jean-Taris intercommunal swimming pool, Villeparisis
- Camille-Muffat intercommunal swimming pool, Villiers-le-Bel

On ice

- intercommunal ice rink, Garges-lès-Gonesse
- Michel Thomas de Plaine Oxygène intercommunal ice rink, Le Mesnil-Amelot

In books

The region has a network of public libraries that is rich and interesting in the way that it operates. It comprises **30 libraries, including multimedia and games libraries**, spread throughout the area, that share their collections and resources (more than

650,000 online documents, books, CDs, DVDs, video games, board games, etc.) via a website and a common catalogue, accessible via smartphone, computer or on site. This means that you can request documents to be sent to the library of your choice (there is also a resource centre at the Musée ARCHÉA in Louvres).

- intercommunal multimedia library, Arnouville
- George-Sand multimedia and games library
- Les Rossignols library, Fontenay-en-Parisis
- intercommunal multimedia and games library, Fosses
- Le Cube Garges intercommunal multimedia library, Garges-lès-Gonesse
- intercommunal library, Gressy
- intercommunal multimedia library, Juilly
- intercommunal library, Thillay
- L'Ouvre Livre multimedia library, Louvres
- Aventures et Escales multimedia library, Puiseux-en-France
- La Tuilerie multimedia library, Saint-Witz
- Anna-Langfus multimedia library, Sarcelles
- intercommunal multimedia library, Surveilliers
- Aimé-Césaire multimedia library, Villiers-le-Bel
- Erik-Orsenna multimedia library, Villiers-le Bel

For further info: ● mediatheques.roissy-paysdefrance.fr ●

On the ground

On foot

➤ Contrary to what you might expect, there are numerous walks to enjoy in the area. You'll find lots of routes to walk or cycle, including heritage and other thematic options, on the tourist office website.

By bike

🚲 ➤ **Route de l'aéroport mémorial Concorde:** ● <https://www.tourisme93.com/route-de-l-aeroport-memorial-concorde.html> ● This cycle loop will take you from the Canal de l'Ourcq near the Charles de Gaulle Airport via Claye and Mityr-Mory. Distance: 27 km (17 mi). Average time: 1 hr 50 mins Level: average on cycle paths and roads. Leave from the Gare du Vert-Galant in Villepinte.

🚲 ➤ Cycle route **Roissy-en-France/Écouen:** 14 km (8 ½ mi) (allow 1 hr) from one tourist office to the other.

🚲 ➤ 5 km (3 mi) loop in the Vallée Verte (1 hr 15 mins) on the outskirts of Roissy-en-France. There is also a 3 km (2 mi) loop for the less hardy.

🚲 ➤ Remember, too, that **two sections** of the **Scandibérique** run through the north-east of the area: Villeparisis/Thieux (13 km/8 mi) and Thieux/Ver-sur-Launette (18 km/11 mi). So you will be able to say that you've done (a small section of) the Scandibérique.

On horseback

■ **Haras de la Fontaine Cypierre:** *chemin des Cressonnières, 95500 Gonesse.* ☎ +33-(0)6-63-57-12-23.

In addition to riding lessons, the stud farm offers treks as well as courses during school holidays.

Golf

■ **Golf International de Roissy:** *allée du Golf, 95700 Roissy-en-France.* ☎ +33-(0)1-86-90-07-54. ● **jouer golf** ● 18-hole course in the Vallée Verte and le Bois de l'Aviation. There's also a driving range, a pitch and putt course and an indoor practice area.

Golf school. Restaurant open every lunchtime.

■ **Golf de Gonesse:** *15 av. Pierre-Salvi, 95500 Gonesse.* ☎ +33-(0)1-39-87-02-70. ● golfdegonesse.fr ● A 9-hole course ideal for beginners. There's also a golf school for children.

ROISSY-EN-FRANCE AND AROUND

Roissy-en-France, some 20 km (12½ mi) from Paris and in the east of Val-d'Oise, is the gateway to the region. Its immediate surroundings bordering Seine-Saint-Denis spread over into Seine-et-Marne, and this is, of course, the sector most impacted by the airport. With its maze of bypasses running through fields, it has plenty for visitors to explore and be fascinated by. Some of its villages have retained their rural charm, and you'll often question whether you're in the suburbs here or in the countryside. With 7,500 rooms, this area has more hotel capacity than anywhere else in France except Paris ... and Lourdes!

ROISSY-EN-FRANCE

(95700)

Population: 2,859

A town that is known about worldwide, because it is only two hours away from all the capitals of Europe, and yet actually very little known. How many visitors passing through the airport are aware that barely 2 km (1¼ mi) away is a Pays-de-France village that has been awarded 'Station de Tourisme' certification and that has a listed church and an authentic town hall? The town, which remains lively, despite being surrounding by large shopping centres, has several dozen very nice restaurants. Due to construction work linked to the airport, Roissy can pride itself on being one of the most excavated villages in France.

AN AIRPORT RISEN FROM THE GROUND

Previously a rural farming area at the heart of a plain, Roissy-en-France saw its fortunes change in 1974 with the creation of the Charles de Gaulle Airport, generally known as Roissy to distinguish it from Orly, which has had its airport since 1909. After the Second World War, under de Gaulle, the Roissy site was chosen for three main reasons: this location would involve few expropriations because very few inhabitants lived here; its size – 3,257 ha (12½ sq. mi) is the equivalent of a third of the area of Paris and the same as that of Lille; and, of course, for its proximity to the capital.

In 1960, the ordinance was signed for the construction of the airport in the middle of fields, and on 13 March 1974, T1 was opened. The terminal, nicknamed the 'Camembert' because of its shape, with its bold and very contemporary architecture, was designed by Paul Andreu, who continued to work on the airport for nearly 30 years and is responsible for most of the terminals.

How to get here

– **By RER train:** RER B: Paris Nord/ Aéroport CDG 1 et CDG 2.

– **By train:** Gare TGV SNCF de Roissy CDG (Thalys, Eurostar, InOui, Ouigo) TER.

– **By bus: line R4 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Villeron); **line Express 20 (transdev):** Roissypole

Aéroport CDG 1/Meaux (via Claye-Souilly); **line 23 (kéolis CIF)**: Aéroport CDG1/Villeperis (via Mitry-Mory); **line 24 (kéolis CIF)**: Aéroport CDG 1 terminal 2/Compans (via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye); **line (kéolis CIF)**: Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Villiers-le-Bel Puits la Marlière (via Roissy-en-France, Gonesse-Patte d'Oie, Cressonnières Hôpital de Gonesse); **line 32 (kéolis CIF)**: Aéroville/Goussainville Victor Basch (via Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1 Roissy-en-France, Le Thillay); **line 32 ZA (kéolis CIF)**: Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Goussainville (via Roissy-en-France); **line 39 (kéolis CIF)**: Villepinte/Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1 (via Aéroville); **line 350 (RATP)**: Paris Gare de l'Est/Roissy-pôle; **line 351 (RATP)**: Paris Nation/Roissy-pôle; **line 701 (kéolis CIF)**: Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Othis Beaupré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële); **line 702 (kéolis CIF)**: Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Gare

de Louvres RER (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-le-Vieux Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron); **line 95-01 (kéolis CIF)**: (Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG1/Survilliers-Fosses (via Épias-lès-Louvres, Mauregard, Vémars, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Fosses); **line 95-02 (kéolis CIF)**: Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles); **line 95-18 (transdev)**: Roissy-pôle/Cergy (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Rond-Point du Thillay); **Roissybus**: Paris Opéra/Aéroport CDG1 Terminals 1–3; **Noctilien (RATP): N140 and N143**: Gare de l'Est/Aéroport; **express bus 93 (kéolis CIF)**: from Bobigny, line 5 of the metro to the airport via the village of Roissy-en-France; **CDGVAL**: SNCF, RER B: free automatic shuttle bus serves all the Paris CDG terminals and stations. For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Addresses

📍 **Grand Roissy tourist office**: L'Orangerie, 6 allée du Verger. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-43-14. ● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ● Mon–Fri 9am–12.30pm, 1.30–6pm and Sat 9am–12.30pm, 1–4.30pm, May–Sep only. Interactive kiosks outside for info 24/7. Covering a large area around Roissy, the tourist office groups

together the communes of Roissy-en-France, Écouen, Luzarches, Gressy and Le Mesnil-Amelot. Guided tours of Écouen and thematic tours combined with visits to Goussainville or Royaumont Abbey. – **Mairie (town hall)**: 40 av. Charles-de-Gaulle ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-43-00 ● roissyenfrance.fr ●

Where to stay

With 33 hotels, you'll be spoilt for choice! Lots of them are chain hotels, of course. With one or two new hotels opening every year, competition between chains is fierce. In the long run, this is good for the customer: you have the guarantee of enjoying a top-quality room and, except during periods when there is a trade fair on at the Parc des Expositions de Villepinte, you can get very good deals in budget hotels as in 4-star ones.

In Roissy village

📍 | 🍷 **Hôtel-restaurant Aiden by Best Western Paris Roissy CDG**: 4 allée du Verger. ☎ +33-(0)1-77-80-22-00. ● bestwestern.fr ● Doubles €90–€200, up to €350 in peak season. Breakfast €17. Weekday set lunch menu €19; à la carte €38–€44. Charged parking. Shuttle bus to/from airport (€6, morning and evening). Close to the tourist office and to the Parc des Cinq continents, this chain hotel is

very pleasant. Entirely refurbished in a 'hippy-chic' style, the hotel offers several types of rooms, with themed decors (writer, freedom, music, style). Note that there is also a very good restaurant here, with an excellent set menu. Gym and sauna.

📍 | 📍 **Hôtel-restaurant Campanile Roissy:** *allée du Verger.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-80-40 (booking: ☎ +33-(0)8-92-23-48-12). ● *roissy.campanile.com* ● 600 m from the tourist office and the city centre. All year round, 24/7. Doubles €69–€95, family rooms. Breakfast €13.90. Restaurant: daily 12–2.30pm, 7–11pm (menus €20 and €26). Lots of special offers on line ('seniors', 'family', 'weekend' and other packages). Charged parking and shuttle bus to/from the airport. 269 modern, air-conditioned and soundproofed rooms (with triple glazing). A 3-star hotel offering good value for money.

📍 | 📍 **Hôtel-restaurant Pentahotel:** *12 allée du Verger.* ☎ +33-(0)1-30-18-21-00. ● *pentahotels.com* ● 600 m from the tourist office and the town centre. All year round, 24/7; restaurant daily 12–2pm, 6.30–10.30pm. Doubles €120–€215, suites and family rooms. Breakfast €12.50–€20 (with or without reservation). Shuttle bus and charged parking A 'new age' hotel, with online booking only, as is more and more often the case. But there is nothing unfriendly about the welcome – far from it. The hotel, like its bar-restaurant, where you can drink and snack at any time of day or night, is warm and inviting. 186 high-quality rooms (with a pinball machine or Play Station in family rooms!) Gym, steam room and sauna.

📍 | 📍 **Hôtel-restaurant Holiday Inn Paris – Cdg Airport:** *61 rue Houdart,* ☎ +33-(0)1-84-28-07-00 (booking: ☎ 08-11-98-00-02). ● *ihg.com* ● 300 m from the centre of Roissy. Doubles €154–€235, triples €180–€250. (Free for children under 17 sharing a room with their parents. Children under 12 can also eat free of charge.) Breakfast €15–€25. Menu €35. Free parking and shuttle bus.

This hotel, which opened in 2022, is one of the most recent in the area. Unsurprisingly, both communal areas and the 250 rooms feature modern architecture and interiors. At the Palm restaurant, the cuisine favours local produce. Well-equipped gym and sauna (7am–11pm).

📍 | 📍 **Hôtel-restaurant Paris Marriott Charles de Gaulle Airport Hotel:** *5 allée du Verger.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-53-53. ● *mariott.fr* ● All year round, 24/7. Doubles €129–€199 (family rooms and suites much more expensive). Breakfast €19–€29. Parking. Facing the tourist office and the Parc des Cinq continents, so ideally situated. Its somewhat pompous Palladian architecture is perhaps a nod to the fact that the former Château de Roissy once stood here. This 4-star hotel offers 300 air-conditioned and soundproofed rooms with, of course, the ultimate in comfort. There is a restaurant, Le Trivium, as well as a gym (also open 24/7).

Near the airport

📍 | 📍 **Hôtel-restaurant EKLO hotel:** *10 rue de l'Espérance.* ☎ +33-(0)1-85-43-01-00 ● *eklohotels.com* ● Doubles and studios about €51–€134; bed in a dormitory about €20. A mixed-accommodation concept – half hotel, half hostel – but very cosy and eco-friendly. Whether you choose a standard room, a mixed or single-sex dormitory or a family room (with tree-house-style beds for the children), everything is well-designed, functional and high quality (air-conditioning, TV, spotless bathrooms, etc.) There is something for everyone and the atmosphere is friendly.

📍 | 📍 **B&B Hôtel Paris Nord 2 CDG Aéroport:** *335 rue de la Belle-Étoile.* ☎ +33-(0)1-48-17-56-56. ● *hotel-bb.com* ● All year round, 24/7. Doubles €62–€162, family rooms. Breakfast €10.50. Charged parking and free shuttle bus to/from the airport. 134 light, bright, functional and well soundproofed rooms. There's also a restaurant and bar (in case you arrive late or feel peckish in the night).

📍 | **Hôtel-restaurant Courtyard by Marriott Paris Charles de Gaulle Central Airport:** 10 rue du Voyageur. ☎ +33-(0)1-74-37-20-70. ● marriott.fr ● Standard double €120–€550 or Executive €140–€570. Breakfast €25. Menus €28 and €33. Charged parking. A recent hotel offering 229 spacious, modern, air-conditioned and soundproofed rooms. Gym open 24/7.

📍 | **Hôtel-restaurant Moxy Paris Charles de Gaulle Aéroport:** 5 rue

du Signe. ☎ +33-(0)1-82-88-79-19. ● marriott.fr ● Note that the CDGVAL stops just in front of the hotel. Doubles €135–€200, family rooms. Breakfast from €15. Charged parking. Another recent hotel, designed in the ‘lifestyle’ spirit of the times with 292 little ‘capsule’ rooms (16 m²/172 sq. ft) and communal spaces (with warm and inviting furniture, table football and board games) and a gym that’s open day and night.

Where to eat

📍 | **Aux Trois Gourmands:** 24 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-09-51. Daily 11.30am–2.30pm, 6–10pm. Main courses about €9–€25.

The sort of restaurant that will appeal to the whole family, with sweet and savoury pancakes and grilled meats (matured rib of beef). It also offers a takeaway service (daily 9am–8.30pm; set menus around €7–€10) following the same formula as Roi du Poulet (see ‘Where to eat in Goussainville?’), with a choice of chicken, cod fishcakes or spare ribs.

📍 | **Cinq J Pizza:** 37 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-60-66. Daily 12–2.30pm, 6–9.30pm. Main courses about €13. A very welcoming Italian restaurant with a lovely shaded terrace, where you can satisfy your desire for pasta or for pizza baked in a wood-fired oven.

📍 | **Brasserie Le Village:** 47 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-84-63. Daily except Sat and Sun, 12–9pm. Weekday set lunch menu €17.90; à la carte €30–€43. A legendary place that opened more than 40 years ago. Traditional French home cooking that has been passed on from father to sons for three generations. A very pleasant dining room and terrace, and a warm welcome.

📍 | **La Brasserie du Terroir:** 5 chemin de la Dime. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-80-90. Mon–Fri 12–2.30pm and 6–9.30pm, Sat and Sun 5–10pm (bar open until 11pm). Menus €23 and €28. A large dining room where you don’t

feel cramped, serving hearty brasserie cuisine. A nice veranda.

📍 | **Les Fleurs du Cerisier:** 64 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-01-23. Daily except Sat lunchtime and Sun, 12–2pm, 6.30–10pm. Menus €14.50–€18; à la carte €23–€40. A large restaurant, with the inevitable Asian-style decor, that is often packed. Good food, served with a certain elegance (no buffet).

📍 | **Le Vivier de la Mer:** 65 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-06-86. Daily except Sat lunchtime and Sun, 12–2.30pm, 6.30–10pm. Seafood dishes and platters €18–€73/pp; à la carte about €50. An abundance of seafood that you can take your time to enjoy in the dining room or on the terrace. There’s also an oyster bar – a taste of Brittany in Roissy!

📍 | **Madame est servie:** 10 bis rue Dorval. ☎ +33-(0)1-75-41-11-13. Daily except Sun and Mon, 12–2.30pm, 6–10pm. Allow about €60 (main courses €29–€42). Undeniably the best restaurant in Roissy. Although the setting is rather cold (and very dark in the evening), the cuisine is creative and beautifully cooked, blending local produce with foreign flavours. It’s a shame that the price of this fine dining experience is not accessible to all.

Where to have a drink

🍷🍷 **Le Friendly:** 34 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-80-11-24-44. Daily except Sun, 11.30am–midnight (Mon

and Sat 4.30pm–midnight). Happy hour Tue–Fri 5–7pm. A nice pub in the town centre.

Things to see and do

✈️✈️✈️ **Charles de Gaulle International Airport:** – or CDG, as will be marked on the label on your suitcase, or ‘Roissy’, as the Parisians call it – is, with more than 76 million passengers a year, **the leading airport in France and the second largest passenger airport in Europe** (after London Heathrow). The airport, its terminals and its four runways stretch over 32 km² (12½ sq. mi), straddling three departments (Val-d’Oise, Seine-Saint-Denis and Seine-et-Marne). The complex is managed by **Paris Aéroport**, a subsidiary of Groupe ADP, as are Paris’s other two airports (Le Bourget and Orly), while Groupe ADP is also responsible for 10 aerodromes (and no fewer than 25 airports worldwide!). Groupe ADP is simultaneously builder, contractor and operator, which makes it one of the most prestigious companies in France. The company, which is based at CDG, owns all the airport land and facilities (except the train station, which belongs to SNCF); it has therefore been part of the adventure from the initial construction to the most recent extensions.

Since its opening in 1974, terminal T1 has been joined by a second generation of terminals – A, B, C and D – all designed by the same architect, Paul Andreu, as units to optimise aircraft positions. A revolution! A second revolution took place with intermodalism, in other words by facilitating connections with the road and rail network. In 1998, the creation of the large hub at Terminal F made it possible to make 22,000 connections per week, mainly to Europe.

Unlike Orly, Roissy operates 24/7, handling both passengers and freight. The airport is a true hive of activity, a real city within a city: 90,000 people work at the airport (120,000, if you count indirect and induced jobs). And it’s a world that Paris Aéroport invites you to discover via guided tours (see below).

🏰 **Église Saint-Éloi:** 8 av. Charles-de-Gaulle. Practically nothing remains of the medieval abbey. The charming church was originally built in the 14th century and would have been attached to the old 12th-century watchtower, transformed into a bell tower. The most remarkable parts date back to the Renaissance and include the apse and chancel, built in 1570 by Jacques de Mesmes, seigneur of Roissy, and the fine sculpted decor. The rest dates from the 17th and 18th centuries. The church has been listed as a historic monument since 1942.

🏰 **The Château des Caramans,** in other words the Château de Roissy, was built for Jean-Antoine de Mesmes in 1703, but it was ravaged by fire in 1794 and finally destroyed in the early 19th century. **A few remains** of it can be found in the Parc des Cinq continents (see ‘Finding some green space’ below), including the door of the old stables and another of the château. The plans of this magnificent 18th-century château and objects found during excavations can be seen at the Musée ARCHÉA in Louvres, and bear witness to the sumptuous lifestyle of this family of Parisian aristocrats – ‘nobles of the gown’ – who came here to enjoy the fresh country air.

🎮 **Escape Game Team Break:** 30 rue des Buissons, Aéroville, Centre commercial Aéroville. ☎ +33-(0)1-74-25-24-43. ● team-break.fr/cities/escape-game-aeroville-roissy ● Daily 9.15am–11.15pm. Prices vary depending on the number of people and the room chosen; allow between €22/pp (for 10 people) and €49/pp (for 2 people), and up to €25.50/€33 for Fort Boyard. These escape games, inspired by role-play wide games, have become very popular and are a great way to have fun with family or friends! There are puzzles to solve and challenges to overcome, and you can choose your world and level of difficulty. At Aéroville, lots of the games are

inspired by well-known TV programmes or series: Fort Boyard, Koh-Lanta, Prison Break, Lost... One of the most difficult ones will take you into a haunted hotel!

➤ **Baludik trail:** ● baludik.fr ● Allow about 1¼ hrs for 1.2 km (¾ mi) (remember to fully charge your telephone). This free mobile app (currently available only in French) allows you to visit the region in a new way, with fun walks and treasure hunts. For an original family walk to discover **the history and heritage of Roissy-en-France**, simply follow the clues to get to the next stage of the route. There, your phone will vibrate and the secret will be revealed, the puzzle solved. Clue by clue, you'll reach the goal. In Roissy, you'll need to help Marguerite, a plant collector, hunt for a rare specimen that is unobtainable anywhere else.

➤ The tourist office also offers an **interactive trail in the town centre**. At each stage, you can activate the NFC mode on your smartphone and obtain more information.

Things to experience

👤 **Maison de l'environnement and du développement durable de Paris – Charles-de-Gaulle:** 1 rue Louis-Couhé, 93290 Tremblay-en-France. ☎ +33-(0)1-48-64-63-82. ● entrevoisins.org ● Tue–Fri 8.30am–4.30pm. Free visit, booking required. The Maisons de l'environnement and du développement durable (MEDD – centres for the environment and sustainable development) were created by the Groupe ADP in 1995 with the aim of facilitating discussion between residents and those involved in the air-transport sector. Their role is to inform schoolchildren and the general public about the 300 different jobs at ADP (700 in total in the area), work in progress and the environmental policy (there are nearly 15,000 visitors per year after all!) Orly has its own centre. To this end, the centre regularly organises guided tours of the airport. The first tour takes the form of a **walking tour** that starts at the Maison de l'environnement and takes 1½–2 hrs (allow 2½–3 hrs in all), in the landside (in other words, the public zones) to the terminals, via the bus and TGV/RER stations. It is a great way to discover, in its entirety and from an unusual angle, a site that you would normally walk through without paying it any attention. The second option, **a tour in the heart of ADP territory**, allows you to discover, **on a bus** this time, the technical and maintenance zones and cargo areas. An original way to meet the firefighters and discover the flora and fauna.

As their name suggests, these centres are committed to working toward and communicating about sustainable development. You will learn that 800,000 trees have been planted in this area, that beehives are used to control air quality and that rainwater is collected, treated and redistributed. ADP's goal is to achieve zero CO₂ emissions with offsets by 2030 and zero emissions without offsets by 2050. This battle against pollution can only be won, of course, with the collaboration of the contractors and airlines.

◀ From the terrace, at the end of the pedestrian way, don't forget to admire the sublime Concorde, suspended in flight.

THE END OF THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE BIRD

On 25 July 2000, the Concorde flying to New York, on flight AF4590, crashed one minute and 28 seconds after take-off, causing the death of 109 passengers and crew members and four people on the ground. This tragedy sounded the death knell of this supersonic plane that had inspired so many dreams. Flying at over 2,000 km/h (1,240 mph), it could reach New York from Paris or London in under 3½ hrs, enabling passengers to get there and back in a day! You can find two memorials commemorating this terrible crash: one in Mityry-Mory, the other at the scene of the disaster in Gonesse.

In transit

➤ **City Tour Grand Roissy Escales:** ● grand-roissy-tourisme.com/city-tour-grand-roissy-escales ● Jul and Aug. Six stops leaving from Roissy, payment online or on board (see the website for timetable and prices.) For the numerous travellers every day who find themselves in transit at the Charles de Gaulle Airport or in the hotel district, but who have the right and time to escape, the Grand Roissy tourist office offers 'escales' (stopovers) that allow visitors to discover key sites of the area less than 22 km (13½ mi) away from Roissy (Paris excepted). The principle could not be simpler, and it is a great way to optimise time and minimise stress! After a quick booking procedure, buses take you at fixed hours and on predefined routes. Whether you're after culture, nature or shopping; whether you have a day, half a day or a whole evening to spare, you'll be spoilt for choice:

- Escale 'Art de vivre' to the Centre commercial Aéroville in Roissy-en-France, the Plaine Oxygène leisure centre in Mesnil-Amelot or the Roissy International Golf Course.
- Escale 'Culture' to the Musée national de la Renaissance at the Château d'Écouen.
- Escale 'Patrimoine' (heritage) to the Musée ARCHÉA in Louvres
- and finally, an Escale 'Parisienne' – the chance to take a river cruise on the Seine.

Finding some green space

✂️ **Parc des 5 continents:** ● valdoise-tourisme.com ● Free admission, daily all year round. As its name suggests, this park contains species from around the world, affirming Roissy-en-France's international status. You can get to it from the Eglise Saint-Éloi and the Orangerie. Stroll through it to take a step back in time and discover the history of Roissy, with the remains (the south door, the well, the stables) of an old château built in 1703 and the landing gear of the famous Concorde. You can also admire some modern sculptures. In the centre of the park, where photographic exhibitions and other events are regularly held, you'll also find a fitness trail with sports facilities and a bandstand.

For details of all the walks, visit ● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ●

🚲 ➤ **Roissy-en-France – Écouen:** 14 km (8½ mi) cycle route, starting from the tourist office. Allow 1 hr, on the cycle path.

🚲 ➤ Loop of more than 5 km (3 mi) in the Vallée Verte (1 hr 15 mins) on the outskirts of Roissy-en-France. There are also 1.5 km (1 mi) and 3 km (2 mi) loops for the less hardy.

Cultural venues

– **Cinema:** *Pathé Centre commercial Aéroville*, 30 rue des Buissons, **Tremblay-en-France.** ● cinemaspathe.gaumont.com ● 12 screens with certain films shown in 4DX and dolby surround! 2 'First' cinemas (with 'VIP cocoon' facilities).

– **Centre culturel et médiathèque de L'Orangerie:** 6 allée du Verger. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-48-56. A great selection of international films at this 400-seat venue.

Sports facilities

– **Intercommunal swimming pool:** 3 av. de Montmorency. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-45-68. *Aquarobics classes.* 25 m pool, sauna and steam room.

– **Golf International de Roissy:** allée du Golf. ☎ +33-(0)1-86-90-07-54. ● jouer.golf ● Daily 7.30am–8pm. 18 holes: €89/day Mon–Fri, €110/day

Sat and Sun; 9 holes: €53/day Mon-Fri, €65/day Sat and Sun. Opened in September 2020, it has an 18-hole course and a 6-hole pitch-and-putt course. The result of a project initiated by the commune of Roissy-en-France, managed jointly with the Roissy Pays de France conurbation committee and supported by the French Golf Federation, it extends across a vast

90 ha (222 acre) driving range and already hosts large-scale tournaments. A great green space near the airport zone, it was designed and landscaped by Michel Niedbala, a master in the field. Restaurant in the club house.

– **City Park:** *near the Tournelles sports centre, 55 rue Houdard. Open 8am–10pm.* You can enjoy a variety of outdoor sports here.

LE MESNIL-AMELOT

(77990)

Population: 1,173

At the end of the runways, a very peaceful old village with well-cared-for, if not preserved, architecture. A hotel area has developed around it and there are two good ones where you can make a stopover. *Plaine Oxygène* is one of the biggest leisure centres in the area.

How to get here

– **By bus:** *line 701 (kéolis CIF):* Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Othis Beauré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële); *line 702 (kéolis CIF):* Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare

de Louvres RER (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-le-Vieux Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful addresses

i **Mairie:** *2 rue du Chapeau, ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-51-18.* ● lemesnilamelot.fr ●

i **Grand Roissy tourist office touch screen information point:** *42 rue de Claye.*

Where to stay / Where to eat

🏠 Nomad Hotel – Paris Roissy CDG Airport: *34–36 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-78-90-15-50.* ● nomad-hotels.com ● *Doubles €70–€150 (more during festivals and trade fairs). Shuttle bus to/from the airport (€9/pp).* A contemporary and eco-friendly hotel with a red façade, cubic shape and living end wall, it will appeal to techies as well as those who love interior design. The large windows open directly onto a patio with trees and greenery; communal areas are warm and inviting, and you'll enjoy hanging out, playing games, reading and eating breakfast here. The rooms

are decorated in understated style and with high-tech comfort (everything is activated via a tablet, right down to the lights and colours of the shower!) There is also a small gym.

🍷 Le Nautilus: *36 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-54-00-00. Mon-Fri 12–2pm and Mon-Thu 7–10pm (last service 9.30pm). Lunchtime menus €24 and €31; à la carte €40–€51.* Sharing the same car park as the Hôtel Nomad, a traditional restaurant but one that is very much in tune with the times in mixing and blending its products and flavours. A very pleasant and contemporary setting with its zenithal lighting.

Things to see and do

✚ **Église Saint-Martin:** *Unfortunately closed except on Journées du patrimoine (heritage days).* Built in the 16th century and magnificently restored, the church stands, imposing and proud, in the centre of the village. Although it was built during the Renaissance, its architecture is very influenced by Flamboyant Gothic style. It was listed as a historic monument in 1911, which makes it all the more unfortunate that its polychromy and its altarpiece can only be seen on special days. In 2023, sound and light shows projected onto the façade of the church (*Fri-Sun, 6pm-midnight*): a spotlight on the building's stained-glass windows, gargoyles and mouldings.

➤ **Baludik trail:** ● baludik.fr ● *Allow 1–2 hrs for under 3 km (2 mi) (remember to fully charge your smartphone!).* This free mobile app (currently only in French) allows you to visit and explore the region in a new way, with fun walks and treasure hunts. For an original family walk to discover **the history and heritage of Le Mesnil-Amelot**, simply follow the clues to get to the next stage of the route. There, your phone will vibrate and the secret will be revealed, the puzzle solved. Step by step and clue by clue, you'll reach the goal. In Le Mesnil-Amelot, the trail is inspired by a legend that tells of treasure hidden by the mother of the Viscount of Dammartin before the French Revolution, which, of course, you need to find.

Sports facilities

– **Plaine Oxygène:** *rue de la Chapelle ☎ +33-(0)1-88-53-00-07.* ● vertmarine.com/plaineoxygene ● *Open daily, all year round, except 1 Jan, 1 May, 24 and 25 Dec; opening times vary depending on the day and time of year (enquire). Prices: €6 for adults and €4.80 for under 18s (€5 and €3.90 for guests). Offers swimming lessons and aquarobics, aquabiking and*

fitness classes. A large centre devoted to sports and wellness! In the pool area itself, there are sports, play and learning pools, another dedicated to aquabiking, a paddling pool and a large slide. In the wellness space are saunas, steam rooms and a jacuzzi. There is also a fitness area with a cardio-training platform and a weights room. And new in 2023: a great ice rink!

Cultural venues

– **Médiathèque municipale:** *rue du chapeau ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-56-85.*

MAUREGARD

(77990)

Population: 387

We love this tiny village. In addition to the fact that there is a very fine hotel here, the village centre – just two roads – has retained all its charm. On arrival, you're welcomed by a fine painted water tower that sums up Mauregard: a plane and a tractor! Or the other way round, perhaps. The 10th-century château of the old seigneurie has disappeared; all that remains is the trace of a venerable path in front of the small church. Mauregard is one of the best places for plane spotting (as it's one of the few places where it's safe to park). The mairie has even installed benches at the edge of the village, in the fields, so that visitors can sit comfortably to watch the planes land in the open. Both impressive and idyllic! We love the pretty paved path that leads from water tower to nowhere in particular any more.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 95-01 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pole-Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Survilliers-Fosses (Épiais-lès-Louvres,

Mauregard, Vémars, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Fosses). For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 12 rue de la Grande-Allée. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-42-48. ● mauregard.fr ●

Where to stay / Where to eat

🏠 | 🍷 | **Hôtel and Maison d'Hôtes Les Herbes Folles:** 3 rue de l'Église. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-36-17-18. ● hotelherbesfolles.fr ● **Doubles €85–€360. Dinner (7–10pm) with set menu €35. Transfer from the airport possible.** One of our favourites! This beautiful and elegant hotel, with its contemporary and sustainable architecture, occupies the farm buildings of the old château (which was destroyed in a fire). A lot of thought has gone into the interior decoration. The fabrics and wallpaper by Manuel

Canovas, as well as the concrete and steel, marry harmoniously with the old stone buildings. In the dining room, remember to look up and see the mechanism of the old distillery suspended above you. Stunning! The restaurant is excellent, with well-prepared homemade food and a menu that changes every evening. And just to reassure you: everything is perfectly soundproofed; the planes make no more noise than a car driving by every now and then.

ÉPIAIS-LÈS-LOUVRES

(95380)

Population: 113

One of the most charming, and best preserved and restored villages in Pays de France. In the 13th century, the monks of the Abbaye de Saint-Denis founded a monastery here and, later, probably in the 17th century, a fine seigneurial manor house was built here, then confiscated during the French Revolution and sold as a 'bien national'. Although not much remains of the building, you can still admire the fine farmyard. In the same Rue du Manoir (the village isn't very big!), you will also see a fine church, a cemetery that is remarkable for the cross that stands there, and one of the last 'mares pavées' (paved pond or ford), perfectly preserved. It's hard to believe that the airport runways are only a few metres from here!

How to get here

– **By bus: line R4 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Villeron); **line 95-01 (transdev):** Roissy-pole-Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Survilliers-Fosses (via Épiais-lès-Louvres,

Mauregard, Vémars, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Fosses). For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 8 rue du Manoir. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-14-60. ● epiais-les-louvres.fr ●

Where to eat

🍷 **L'Atelier:** 3 rue du Chapitre. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-36-92. *Mon-Fri 12-2.30pm and evenings, Sat and Sun for groups of 10+ people. À la carte €25-€51.* A restaurant and wine bar | that's renowned for its good homemade, traditional and creative cuisine. Business customers are delighted to find a friendly and gourmet restaurant so close to the airport.

Things to see and do

Two crosses, both listed as historic monuments.

🗿 **Cemetery cross:** it dates from 1645 and is an impressive 5.80 m (19 ft) tall. It is carved on all four sides, and some motifs can still be distinguished, including some rather macabre ones – a skeleton, a scythe, tears and a coffin – and others that are more cheerful, such as the heads of cherubs. Its iconography combines objects of daily life with symbols of death and resurrection.

🗿 **Hosannière cross:** *in the centre of the village.* Placed on top of a four-arched pedestal, it was an important stage in Easter Day processions.

AROUND ÉPIAIS

🌿 **Chennevières-lès-Louvres** (95380): a very pretty (and tiny) village of 305 inhabitants that for a long time specialised in growing hemp (Chennevières comes from the latin *cannabria*, the same root as the plant: *Cannabis sativa*). Incidentally, some of the French TV series *Groland* was filmed here.

📍 **Mairie:** 5 pl. de l'Église. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-14-30. ● chenevieres-les-louvres.fr ●

– **By bus: line R4 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Villeron).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

LOUVRES

(95380)

Population: 11,586

One of our favourite places in Pays de France – firstly, for its site and its archaeological museum; then, for its two adjacent churches, and also, we admit, for its microbrewery, which alone makes a detour worthwhile! Two of our favourites are to be found here, one of which should be consumed in moderation.

How to get here

– **By RER: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By bus: line R1 (kéolis CIF):** gare

de Survilliers-Fosses/Gare de Louvres (Marly-la-Ville, Puiseux); line **R4 (kéolis CIF)**; Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare

de Louvres (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Villeron). For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 84 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-47-34-34. ● ville-louvres.fr ●

Where to eat

🍷🍷 **Le Vivaldi:** 6 av. de la Gare. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-38-29. Daily except Sun, 12–2.30pm (last service). Lunchtime menus €16–€19. Main courses €13–€18; à la carte about €28. Behind the bar-tabac is a friendly brasserie that

is always full at lunchtime. The very reasonable set menu features burgers, salads, grilled meats and a dish of the day. And as the modern, smart setting is far from disagreeable, you can enjoy a pleasant time here.

Where to enjoy (or buy) a good beer

🍷🍷🍷 **Brasserie d'Orville:** 29 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-85-52-11-11. ● brasserie-d-orville.com ● Bar open Tue–Fri 5–11pm, Sat 4–11pm. We love it! For the place itself as well as the beers. Beers brewed and bottled on the farm, made with barley and malt grown on the farm, which you're invited to taste ... on the farm! That alone should be enough to whet your appetite, but the place is also very agreeable with its cheery rustic beer garden and its lovely contemporary-pub-style tap room. There are no fewer

than 12 draught beers on offer. The beers are characterful and more or less malted or hopped, and you can get some snacks to enjoy between sips.

🍷🍷 **Gamm'Vert:** ZA Le Ronce, RD 317. Mon–Fri 9.30am–12.30pm, 2–7pm; Sat 9.30am–7pm; Sun 9.30am–12.30pm, 2–6.30pm. In the food section, you'll find farm produce from Picardy and Île-de-France, including potatoes from the Grange de Vaulerand and Brasserie d'Orville beers.

Things to see and do

👤👤👤👤 **Musée ARCHÉA:** 56 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-09-01-02. ● archea.roissypaysdefrance.fr ● Wed–Fri 1.30–6pm, Sat and Sun 11am–6pm. Admission: €3.50, reductions. Annual pass: €10, reductions. Free for under 26s and plus 65s and on the 1st Sun in the month. For an additional fee, workshops for children and adults and, at no extra charge, tours, 'lecture-aperitifs', archaeological walks and shows are regularly offered. This educational and innovative museum seeks to make **the archaeological history of the area** accessible to a wide audience. It is no exaggeration to say that more than 900 excavations (prospective, preventative or scheduled) have been carried out over 87 sites and that the museum and its reserves house more than 80,000 items.

It all began with the discovery of the Saint-Rieul necropolis. The treasure unearthed was then exhibited in a small museum – much more modest in terms of both its ambition and its size. ARCHÉA, which opened in 2010, carries the designation '**Musée de France**' and contains objects collected in this area that corresponds to medieval Francia. With 1,500 m² (including 450 m² of exhibition space) spread over three levels, it perfectly fulfils its objectives. Its

architecture – modern and bright, largely open to the outside and offering a beautiful panoramic view of the village – makes it a pleasant place to learn while having fun. For its mission is essentially educational and everything has been designed to ensure that children enjoy their visit and want to come back. So, they can follow the tour using a booklet, and in lots of display cases, they'll be invited to make the link between an everyday object and an archaeological tool. The whole museum is designed to be interactive and tactile.

The first room is devoted to natural and geological riches that explain the distinctive destiny of this region north of Paris. As you follow the display cases on the first floor, you'll learn that humans were present here in **prehistoric times**, that the **Gallo-Romans** built themselves sumptuous villas here (see the frescoes from the *thermae* discovered at Le Thillay) and that frequent raids obliged the inhabitants to hurriedly bury treasures (like the bronzeware discovered in Roissy-en-France). Four fine models show how the architecture of the farms and villages has evolved since the time of the Gauls (with a superb reproduction of the Grange de Vaulerent). You'll also learn about the **feudal system** and the **Hundred Years' War**. At that time, Louvres found itself at the centre of the action because its Château d'Orville was a major part of the defensive belt built around Paris. So much so that it was destroyed by the French to prevent it falling into the hands of the English! The village was then built using its stones. Next, you come to the **16th and 18th centuries**, with the golden age of glazed pottery in Fosses and the arrival of tenant farmers and the construction of the (magnificent) Château de Roissy.

The second part of the museum is more thematic and focusses on **arable and livestock farming** from the Neolithic onwards, **crafts, games, dietary habits**, etc. The permanent exhibition ends with the museum's treasure, discovered in the **Saint-Rieul necropolis** and that come from the very first museum: these jewels date back to the time of Clovis (5th–6th century) and are remarkably well preserved. The inlaid garnets would have come from India or Sri Lanka! Fabulous! Throughout the visit, 'occupation' terminals explain the different ways of approaching archaeology, a fascinating and multifaceted science: experimental archaeology, archaeological surveying, archaeology of the built environment, the study of ceramics, paleocarpology (the study of fossilised seeds), zooarchaeology (the study of animal remains), etc. A dozen objects in the collections are audio-described, including the weather vane discovered during the excavations at the Château d'Orville.

Check out the museum's website for a **3D reconstruction of the Château d'Orville**, as well as other audiovisual resources! A short film gives you a taster of what it was like, but is ultimately frustrating because the château was razed to the ground in 1438. An eternal regret.

Every year, the basement hosts a **temporary exhibition**, which is always diverting. To note in 2023, *Patrimoines à la carte*, a large exhibition on the heritage diversity of the 42 communes of Pays de France (archaeological heritage, of course, but also mining, monuments and tourism), with an accompanying exhibition catalogue.

For enthusiasts, a **resource centre** is available free of charge on request.

– **An escape game**, '*Panique à Saint-Rieul*' is regularly offered by the Musée ARCHÉA.

✂ **Rue des Deux églises**: in the same road, facing or next to each other, are two churches, one lacking a tower (Saint-Justin) and the other without a nave (Saint-Rieul). Both these saints passed through Louvres, in the third and fourth centuries respectively, apparently leaving a lasting legacy. The Église Saint-Justin, built in the 12th century and modified until the 16th century, never had a tower. The Église Saint-Rieul was decommissioned during the French Revolution before being partially demolished in 1801 and turned into a prison. Its tower subsequently served as a bell tower for its neighbour. Original! Both are listed as historic monuments.

🏛️ Site archéologique d'Orville: *chemin d'Orville. Enquire at the Musée ARCHÉA. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-09-01-02. ● archea.roissy-paysdefrance.fr ● The site can be visited by groups by appointment from late Apr to early Oct, as well as by individuals on national archaeology days, national heritage days, excavations in July. 'Jeunes archéos' (young archaeologist) workshops are run every summer on the site for children aged 7–12 years. A landscaped path being created along the Croult valley already enables visitors to walk alongside and freely observe the site.* Excavations have been carried out at the archaeological site of the Château d'Orville, besieged and destroyed during the Hundred Years' War, every summer since 2001, and it would seem that the site has not yet given up all its secrets. We recommend that you start off by visiting the museum to gain an understanding of the importance of these remains, as the site is not impressive at first glance.

The excavation site has unearthed **remains of the 13th–15th-century château** but also a **village from the eighth and ninth centuries** (a Carolingian hut, granary and housing) and a **cut-stone bowl from the Renaissance period**. The project also aims to discover the techniques used in constructing buildings from wood and cob during the time of Charlemagne (eighth century). So, three buildings have already been reconstructed on a trial basis: two huts and a raised granary, as well as a bread oven.

🌳 Parc du Château: *entrances on rue du docteur Paul-Bruel and rue de Paris. Mar to mid-Nov, daily 7.30am–7.45pm; mid-Nov to end Feb, 7.30am–5.45pm.* A great green space in the centre of town, this lovely 3 ha (7½ acre) park with its 19th-century 'château' is full of charm. Planted mainly with sycamores, horse chestnuts and plane trees, there are some 50 different plant species here. Opposite the château, an impressive giant sequoia, 37 m (121 ft) tall (and 6.8 m/22 ft in circumference!) has been listed as an 'arbre remarquable' (remarkable tree).

Cultural venues

🎭 Espace Culturel Bernard-Dague: *rue du 8-mai-1945. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-31-21-12. ● ville-louvres.fr ● Theatre seating 566–1,000 people, offering a varied programme of theatre, music, dance, etc.*

– Médiathèque intercommunale L'ouvre livre: *161 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-89-25.*

Sports facilities

– Intercommunal swimming pool: *av. André-Malraux. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-77-88. Open all year round, daily, except certain public holidays; hours very variable depending on days and*

times of year (enquire). Prices: €4.50 for adults and €3 for under 18s (€3 and €2 for guests). One 25 m pool. Aquarobics and aquabiking classes.

PUISEUX-EN-FRANCE

(95380)

Population: 3,692

The old and more recent parts of the village are separated from each other by several kilometres of fields. The village retains a few remarkable buildings, which give it a certain charm. Most date back to the period when Puisieux was a Knights Templar commandery.

How to get here

– **By bus: line R1:** gare de Survilliers-Fosses/Gare de Louvres (Marly-la-Ville, Puisseux).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 2 pl. Jean Moulin, ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-68-94. ● puisseux-en-france.fr ●

Where to eat

🍷 🍴 **Le Pacific:** 6 rte de Marly, ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-39-79. Daily, except Sun and Mon, 12–2.30pm and 6–10pm. Pizzas €10.90–€15.90 and main courses €13–€15. Very good

pizzas cooked in a wood-fired oven. Perfect grilled meats. Friendly service and, as a bonus, a beach-bar-style terrace. Also offers takeaway.

Things to see

✙ **Église Sainte-Geneviève:** rue Lucien-Girard-Boisseau. Usually closed. We love its crooked tower and its two pepperpot turrets. It has been so modified over the centuries that it is difficult to date it precisely, but mention was made of it as early as the 12th century. Its rustic and fortified aspect give it a certain charm.

✂ On the same road, you can also see, at no. 48, an old tithe barn and, at no. 26, a lovely **dovecot** covered in Virginia creeper.

Where to buy beautiful peonies

🌸 **Société Girard-Boisseau:** 12 rue Claude Hugon. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-06-86. May and Jun, daily 8am–6.30pm.

Flower growers are rare in Île-de-France. Rare and therefore precious!

Finding some green space

➤ **A short hiking trail crosses the commune**, passing via Puisseux-village and its new parts, through fields and woods. On the way, you'll pass the Sainte-Geniève fountain and a fitness trail.

Cultural venues

🎭 **Salle de spectacle:** rte de Marly, ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-68-94 (mairie). Municipal entertainment venue seating 318–681, adjoining the André Malraux sports complex.

– **Aventures et Escales intercommunal library:** pl. Caroline Aigle. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-62-97-05. Daily except Sat pm and Sun.

LE THILLAY

(95500)

Population: 4,567

During road works on the D47 in 1987, important Gallo-Roman remains were discovered on the Vieille Baune plateau. Archaeological excavations were carried out urgently and were able to confirm the presence of a *vicus*, a Gallo-Roman village, comprising a once richly decorated villa, farm buildings and *thermae*. Occupied from the first to the sixth century (the villa itself is from the second and third centuries), this site was eventually abandoned, the last inhabitants preferring to settle along the Croult valley, on the site of the present village.

How to get here

– **By bus:** *line 11 (kéolis CIF):* Marché de St Denis/Goussainville (via Garges-lès-Gonesse, Arnouville, Gonesse, Le Thillay); *line 32 (kéolis CIF):* Aéroville/Goussainville Victor Basch (via Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1, Roissy-en-France, Le Thillay); *line 95-02 (kéolis CIF):* Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/

Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles); *line 95-18 (transdev):* Roissypole/Cergy (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Rond-Point du Thillay).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ● transdev-idf.com ●

Address and useful info

📍 **Mairie:** 21 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-91-11. ● mairie-le-thillay.fr ●

🍷 **Ferme Vaessen:** 46 rte de Roissy. Potato vending machine.

Finding some green space

🌿 **Lac du Thillay:** The Croult, which rises at Le Trou du Diable in Goussainville, forms a lake here that is very popular with both walkers and anglers. The local anglers' association regularly stocks it with trout and other freshwater fish.

Cultural venues

– **Intercommunal library:** pl. du 8-mai-1945. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-91-25.

AROUND LE THILLAY

🌿 **Vaud'Herland (95500):** covering just 9 ha (22 acres) and with only 110 inhabitants, Vaud'herland is one of the smallest communes in France. And everything is to scale: the church and cemetery are tiny, too!

📍 **Mairie:** 7 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-94-10. ● vaudherland.fr ●

THE URBAN SOUTH-WEST

A change of scenery! Fields and aeroplanes are much rarer here. Instead, you're right in the suburbs – a suburb of detached houses overshadowed by the housing estates. Each of these towns has retained a lively and commercial centre. Well served by the RER, these urban areas offer the advantage of good cultural and sports facilities, and there are even a few museums!

SARCELLES

(95200)

Population 59,196

Its toponym *Cercella* comes from *cerce*, meaning circles of casks, which makes sense when you realise that in the past, vines grew everywhere in Île-de-France and that there is evidence that casks used to be made here. But 'sarcelle' is also a species of small duck, and this confusion no doubt accounts for the web-footed birds that you'll see on the town's coat of arms. It's hard to imagine, but Sarcelles was, not so very long ago, covered in fields, vineyards and orchards. Specialising in market gardening, it was for a long time one of the communes that provided the capital with fruit and vegetables (and peonies!), most of its production being sent to the famous Halles de Paris. When we think of Sarcelles today, the first images that come to mind are much less idyllic. And yet it's not just a world of concrete that awaits curious visitors. Sarcelles is not only a (suburban) housing estate, it is also a town, with numerous awards for its flowers, but above all with a history and a heritage. In fact, there are two Sarcelles, the old town and the housing estate.

THE HOUSING ESTATES THAT HAVE ATTRACTED SO MUCH MEDIA ATTENTION

It all began with *Abbé Pierre's call for help* during the terrible *winter of '54*. In the midst of a housing crisis that was hitting the whole of France, but particularly the capital, the small Castors community decided to take action to help people at risk by building housing themselves and began approaching developers and builders. Very soon, the Caisse des dépôts et consignations (a French public sector financial institution), sensing a good deal, got on board. At that time, a lot of the area was farmland, but much of it had been abandoned. It was therefore very easy to expropriate the owners.

This first '**1,000 housing unit**' operation was entrusted to the architect **Jacques Henri-Labourdette**, who worked for 20 years to build Sarcelles. The idea was to take advantage of a pre-existing station, the Gare de Pierrefitte, nearby in Saint-Denis.

The number of housing units rose very quickly from 1,000 to 12,368! The first arrivals were mainly Parisians who had been poorly housed in slums, which, while they may have been picturesque, were very unsanitary. Here, they were amazed to discover modern and comfortable flats – a real luxury in post-War France. Each neighbourhood was designed as an island, a village, with footpaths, its own park or playground, green spaces, a school and a shopping centre.

It must be said that for the first 30 years, the inhabitants had happy memories and there was no stigma attached to living on these housing estates. Of course, the incessant building works of the early years also ruffled feathers, as can be seen in Jean Gabin's marvellous scene in *Any Number Can Win* (1963), where, having been released from prison, he wanders around Sarcelles searching for his house and discovering that blocks of flats have sprung up everywhere. And in 1962, newspaper articles coined the term 'sarcellite' to describe the depression of the first tenants, who found themselves adrift in the middle of this huge construction site. There followed, as we've said, happier times, when the inhabitants were glad to be outdoors and in a community. Sarcelles' good fortune at that time was to have chosen to build housing so economically that blocks of flats were limited to four storeys, like most housing estates in France, thus avoiding the need for lifts! Since the 1990s, institutions and associations – including Sarcelles et son histoire and Mission mémoires et identités – have attempted to change the often-negative view people have of this architecture. They have gathered lots of documentation and collected all sorts of accounts. In addition to their mission of protecting and promoting the heritage, they have also helped the inhabitants of Sarcelles to feel they belong here, to reclaim their identity, wherever they come from or were born.

SARCELLES: AN EXTRAORDINARY MELTING POT!

More than any other town, Sarcelles is the epitome of the urban housing development – commuter towns built during the post-war years to the mid-1970s (known in France as the *Trente Glorieuses*) to meet the population explosion.

It is worth putting things into context. The first towers were built in 1955 to resolve the housing crisis, then to house people arriving from former French colonies: *Pieds-Noirs* from Algeria, Sephardic Jews from Tunisia and Morocco, West Indian and Guyanese civil servants, etc. In the early 1980s, Asians, Africans and Assyrian-Chaldeans also came to live in the Paris region. In 20 years, more than 12,000 housing units sprang up! The population of Sarcelles, **the first new town in France**, rose from 8,400 in 1954 to 54,225 in 1975 and to 59,196 by 2019.

Recent history is, as we know, less glorious, and the image of Sarcelles has been tarnished. Obviously, as in many suburbs, we are witnessing impoverishment, ghettoisation and community withdrawal. Young people born in Sarcelles, but clearly rootless, have replaced the official names of the neighbourhoods, which most often referred to former plots of agricultural land.

For this town is also, and above all, a young estate: in 2019, 45% of the inhabitants were under 29 years old and only 16% were over 60. The town is home to more than **80 different nationalities**, not all with the same demographic weight: Assyrian-Chaldeans, North Africans, other Africans, Haitians, Spaniards, Vietnamese, Pakistanis ... Not forgetting those from overseas departments and regions of France. Sarcelles is therefore exceptionally ethnically diverse.

SARCELLES: ONE OF THE CAPITALS OF RAP!

Urban poetry, musical style: whether you like it or not, **rap is the most widely listened to and sold style of music in France**. Sarcelles is a pioneering town of rap music and hip-hop culture in France. Here, everything was driving young people to express through rap – the music of words – their anger and their struggles but also their attachment to their territory and their part of town, like the group Ministère A.M.E.R. and its members: Kenzy, Passi, Stormy Buggy (who wrote the lyrics of 'Sarcelles', which he calls the 'capitale des lascars' – shysters) and Doc Gynéco, the latest member of the group. In 1995, the group created its own production company, Secteur A, a collective that aimed to make a name for Sarcelles on the rap scene while Paris and Marseille were competing musically with NTM in Paris and IAM in Marseille. The collective, inseparable from Val-d'Oise, also

counted among its members Nèg' Marrons, based in Garges-lès-Gonesse, and Arsenik (Villiers-le-Bel). Like the political rap of a band such as NTM or the more poetic style of MC Solaar, the Sarcelles bands evoke daily life on the estates.

Sarcelles and its surrounding area have seen the launch of numerous bands, including Deblé-Men, Les Éléments, Kalibra and many more. Other styles of music and other bands also flourished, including Neg' Marrons, raggamuffin (a mix of reggae and zouk) musicians who founded the Première Classe record label in 1998; Rico; Sniper, who sing sixties-style music; and Black Toubab, who are more reggae in style. Driver, nicknamed 'Le maire de Sarcelles' (the mayor of Sarcelles) and considered to be a walking encyclopaedia of rap, hosts a show on OKLM radio, *Roule avec Driver*, where he tells stories about the life of rappers and big record labels.

Today, Sarcelles continues to be a **real melting pot for rappers** and other bands, many of whom made their debuts at REC Studio (10 avenue Pierre-Koenig, near the Conservatoire de musique). The studio has original accompaniment, rehearsal and recording facilities to support bands with their music projects.

SARCELLES AT THE CINEMA

As early as the 1950s, Sarcelles was used as a location by French film director Denys de la Patellière in *Rue des Prairies*. A few years later, after the towers had grown up, Henri Verneuil came here to shoot *Any Number Can Win* with Jean Gabin. From the 1970s onwards, the films became more political, for example, *Il n'y a pas de fumée sans feu* (There's no smoke without fire) by André Cayatte, who regularly dealt with societal subjects and denounces corruption in this film, and *Last Exit Before Roissy* by Bernard Paul in 1977, which tells of the disintegration of a couple overwhelmed by the dehumanising housing estates.

It was not until Malik Chibane's stories about the suburb in the 2000s – *Voisins, voisins* (Neighbours) in 2005 – that we were given a more realistic vision, lacking miserabilism, and a more optimistic view of coexistence between neighbours. The same is true of Karin Albour's film *La Petite Jérusalem*, the nickname given to a district of Sarcelles due to the large Jewish community that lives there.

How to get here

– **By RER: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By train: Line H:** Paris Nord/Luzarches (via Sarcelles-Saint-Brice, Écouen-Ézanville).

– **By tram: T5:** Marché de Saint-Denis/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Lochères).

– **By bus: line 133 (RATP):** Le Bourget RER/Sarcelles Bois d'Écouen (via Garges-Sarcelles RER, Les Lochères, Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice); **line 252 (RATP):** Porte de la Chapelle/Garges-Sarcelles RER; **line 268 (RATP):** Saint-Denis Université/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER (via Mairie de Sarcelles,

Puits-la-Marlière, Les Carreaux); **line 269 (RATP):** Garges-Sarcelles RER/Attainville (via Villiers-le-Bel, Gare d'Écouen-Ézanville); **line 270 (RATP):** Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Carreaux, Les Lochères); **line 370 (RATP):** Marché de Saint-Brice/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER (via Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice); **line 95-02 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles); **Line N 44 Noctilien (RATP):** Gare de L'Est/Garges-Sarcelles RER.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info

i **Hôtel de Ville:** 3 rue de la Résistance. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-21-40 ● sarcelles.fr ●

– **Markets:** at Lochères, the Grands Ensembles market (av Frédéric Joliot

Curie) Tue, Fri and Sun am (with nearly 300 stalls! See 'Things to See and Do', below); village market, rue Taillepie, Wed and Sat am.

Where to eat

The choice of restaurants in Sarcelles is seemingly infinite, reflecting the mosaic of communities that live here: Indian, Moroccan, Chinese, Japanese, African – you'll be spoilt for choice. As you might imagine, there are lots of cheap snack bars.

➤ **Sergioh:** 28 bd Albert-Camus. ☎ +33-(0)9-52-80-88-88. Daily 11am–10pm (11pm Fri–Sun). Kosher Tunisian takeaway offering bagels, sandwiches and dishes of the day.

● **Inoun:** 3 bd Albert-Camus. ☎ +33-(0)6-32-44-67-20. Daily except Fri and Sat 12.30–3.15pm, 7.30–11pm. Main courses about €16–€49. Adjoining the kosher family butcher's (where you can buy sandwiches and dishes to take away), this Jewish brasserie focuses on grilled meats, as you might expect. Kofta, merguez and kebabs, if you're on a budget, and lamb cutlets or rib of beef to share as a treat. People come here with their families, whatever their religious persuasion, so it's advisable to book!

● **O'Clos:** bd François-Mitterand. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-86-83. Mon 7.30am–8pm, Tue–Sat 7.30am–11pm.

À la carte about €20. A bar and tobacconist's with rather plain decor but friendly service. Good value for money.

● **Anamour:** 1 rue du Père-Heude. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-92-15-90. Daily 11.30am–3pm, 7–11pm; Sun 7–11pm. Menus €19.90 lunchtime, €23 evening.

This Turkish halal restaurant offers a self-service buffet and meats cooked in front of you on a wood barbecue in an original rotunda. The ribs of beef are impressive and the service attentive.

● **Sushi By:** 42 rue Pierre-Brossolette. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-87-31-99. Daily except Sun, 11am–2.15pm and 6–10.15pm. Menus €15.25–€30. A nice sushi restaurant for a light meal. The atmosphere is pleasant and appeals to its numerous regulars.

● **Qila:** 3 bd François-Mitterand. Daily except Sun, 11am–2.45pm and 6–10.30pm. Menus €20–€30; main courses about €10–€20. In the middle of the shopping centre, the atmosphere is nothing to write home about, but lovers of Indian food won't be disappointed.

Things to see and do

IN THE OLD TOWN

●●● **Maison du Patrimoine:** 1 rue des Pilliers. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-19-59-28. ● sarcelles.fr ● Wed 10am–12pm, 2–5pm, Sat 10am–12pm and by appointment for groups. It's always best to call. Guided tours of the village and of the Grand Ensemble (housing estate) by request (3–4 people min.). FREE.

The recommended starting point for any walk. Firstly, because it's in the courtyard that you'll find the first information board on the 'circuit historique' (history trail, see below), but also because you'll find lots of keys for understanding and exploring Sarcelles through the ages in its **permanent collections, temporary exhibitions, special events, publications and educational initiatives.** We particularly recommend that you follow the guided tours organised by the Maison du

Patrimoine team, who are committed to linking the different moments of Sarcelles' history and presenting them to locals or tourists. Don't miss the impressive model of the Grand Ensemble: an amazing Lego-built masterpiece! And make time to see the lovely garden. In the courtyard, you'll find the old church bell, which was taken down and replaced as it no longer rang as well after having been pierced by a bullet during the Liberation of Paris. Just behind it, also brought here from elsewhere, one of the town's few historical fountains, and opposite, a distance marker that still bears the old name of Seine et Oise.

🌿 **Inven'Terre:** ☎ +33-(0)1-39-94-53-88. ● inven'terre.org ● *Entrance via the garden or via the Maison du Patrimoine, when it's open. Daily except Sun, 10am–12pm, 2–5pm.* Faithful to its missions to raise awareness of the environment and sustainable development, to provide advice and information on energy-related matters, and to create environmental integration projects, Inven'Terre runs this educational garden, with workshops for adults and children all year round. You can exchange seeds, taste the honey from the educational garden's hives and take away a small souvenir, as they sell Montmagny honey. In what is quite a limited space, they have managed to recreate a pond, undergrowth, a vegetable garden planted with Île-de-France varieties and a conservatory orchard of Val-d'Oise varieties, making this garden a place of experimentation and discovery.

🚶🚶🚶 **History trail:** starting from the Maison du Patrimoine (or, when closed, from its garden). **In eight stages** (although two information panels have 'disappeared'). These superb panels, full of historical anecdotes, are illustrated with paintings and old views. It's a great way to travel back in time and discover the old town of Sarcelles. Some sites have changed very little, although the Petit Rosne, like a lot of rivers, was covered up after the Second World War. You'll also discover that **Maurice Utrillo** painted Sarcelles three times without ever moving from home: his mother, Suzanne Valadon, had offered him some postcards. Another surprise: at 10 rue de Chaussy, just behind the Place du 11 novembre, is hidden an old farmyard that has preserved its guard stone. Between the market and the church, if you look down, you'll find scallop shells nailed to the ground. You probably weren't aware, but one of the Ways of St James passes through Sarcelles!

🌿 **Église Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul:** *daily (entrance by the side door).* Listed as a historic monument in 1911, this church displays a mixture of architectural styles, marrying a Romanesque bell tower with a small Flamboyant Gothic door, a Renaissance façade and a large carved door by Jean Bullant, architect of the Château d'Écouen. Note the part in gritstone, a sign of the renovations that were carried out following the bombardments of the war in 1870. It has been completely restored and, for once, the door is open! Another reason to step inside!

🌿 **Ancien Manoir de Miraville:** *Hôtel de Ville de Sarcelles, 3 rue de la Résistance.* Built in 1885, its beautiful and remarkable architecture is Alsatian in style, as its owner, Frédéric Aylé, a merchant who had made his fortune in machine-made lace, came from Alsace. Although he was mayor of the commune from 1878 to 1896, this fine building with Neo-Renaissance embellishments did not, at that

TURN RIGHT AFTER THE VIRGIN MARY

Between the church and the market, you'll find the Maison de la Vierge (house of the Virgin Mary), so named because of the sculpture incorporated into its façade (which is in bad shape). This statue served as a landmark, for it was customary, at a time when few people knew how to read, to place markers on roads, crossroads and pilgrimage routes that would be clearly understood by everyone. Religious images were evidently the most popular.

time, house the mairie. With its mix of brick, ashlar and half-timbered walls, it is obviously charming. After Aylé died, the house was sold and turned into a very stylish hotel and restaurant that was frequented by well-to-do Parisians. It was no doubt at this time that the stained-glass windows and furnishings were lost. Rumour has it that the former mayor took the stained-glass windows with him to place in his Illbarritz manor house in the Basque Country. Bought back by the town, it has housed the town hall since 1964 and has been listed as a historic monument since 2011.

🗺️ **Musée naval:** 27 bd du Général-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-41-70. Open Sep-Jun: daily during school holidays and at other times on Sat, 2-6pm or by appointment. FREE. Visit on your own or on a guided tour. Run by the Amicale des anciens marins de Sarcelles-Garges and de sa région (society of friends of the old sailors of Sarcelles-Garges and its region), the enjoyable naval museum presents a rich collection of spectacular models as well as photographs and artefacts, many of them unusual, all brought back by seasoned sailors from their voyages around the world. They tell the story of the hard work involved in seafaring, of the military fleet since the creation of the French Navy under Louis XIV, and also of fishing and yachting. Visitors are invited to take the helm in a reconstructed cockpit.

IN THE GRAND ENSEMBLE

🗺️ **Heritage walk:** we recommend that you sign up for one of the **tours offered by the Maison du Patrimoine**, which will prevent you from just wandering around like a lost soul among the blocks of flats. This district, which has been awarded the certification labels 'Patrimoine du XX^e siècle' (20th-century heritage) and 'Architecture contemporaine remarquable' by the Ministry of Culture, can remain quite puzzling to the uninitiated, and it is worth visiting it with a guide who can help you open your eyes, change your outlook and discover the housing estate's hidden charms.

In the middle of the Parc Kennedy (see also 'Finding some green space' below), the pavilion known as the '**Hall d'exposition John Fitzgerald Kennedy**', designed by the team of the architect, Jacques Henri-Labourdette, of the Lochères housing estate in Sarcelles (1955-1976), is going to be restored thank to the Fondation du patrimoine (heritage foundation – the famous 'Mission Stéphane Bern'). Abandoned, graffitied and dilapidated, the building, which is raised on pilotis, is worth saving as an important witness of Sarcelle's history. Models and projects were once exhibited here. The idea is to open it to the public again, this time to host exhibitions and events and with a space to buy local farm produce, as a reminder of the Sarcelles' market-gardening history and as a way to promote city-farm projects. Meanwhile, you can enjoy a fascinating permanent exhibition presented at the Médiathèque Anna-Langfus. This exhibition can also serve as a starting point for the heritage walk for individual visitors who would like to discover the housing estate on their own ([a route map can be downloaded from the agglomeration's website](#)).

🗺️ **Église Saint-Thomas-Apôtre:** 7-11 rue du Champ-Gallois. Opened in 2004 and built in a Babylonian style, it is the largest Chaldean church in Europe.

Things to experience

🗺️ **Grand Ensemble market (or Les Lochères market):** av. Joliot-Curie. Tue, Fri and Sun am. The Sunday market at Sarcelles is not to be missed. With more than 300 stalls, it is mainly devoted to textiles (the biggest in France)... and fakes! Mountains of bags, caps, belts and other imitations of famous international brands, all at bargain prices! Amazing! Under its renovated cover is a food market, with a few stands where you can buy, to eat there or later, food with flavours from

around the world, enticed by the wonderful smells wafting from the stalls of spices, vegetables and exotic fruits. A unique and cosmopolitan atmosphere that inspires dreams of exotic places.

– **Station numixs, la maison du numérique (digital technology centre):** an ambitious project coming for September 2023 that aims to contribute to the transmission of knowledge and the exchange of good practices between all audiences and for all audiences. You'll find a co-working space here that offers an incubation scheme for start-ups, focussing on sectors of interest for which there is a 'potential' market in the region, to test and develop services and products. Alongside offices, there are also leisure areas (kitchen, tearoom, relaxation space, etc.)

Finding some green space

✂️ **Parc Kennedy: allée André-Ampère.** A city park in the middle of the housing estate, run and recently refurbished by the municipality, that regularly organises cultural events and leisure activities, including a big city-farm project for local inhabitants and schoolchildren to help them reclaim this green space in the town centre.

✂️ **Parc des Prés-sous-la-ville and Lac de Sarcelles: rue du Père-Heude. Daily 8am–7pm.** A large park on the edge of Sarcelles where families like to come at the weekend to enjoy a picnic, a barbecue or a walk around the lake. You can also fish here (carp, trout, pike, etc.) or play pétanque or shot put!

➤ You'll find details of all the walks on [● grand-roissy-tourisme.com](http://grand-roissy-tourisme.com) ●
➤ **Luzarches-Sarcelles: 26 km (16 mi) walking trail, starting from the Luzarches mairie. Clearly signed. Allow about 7 hrs.** The chance to make a stop in Écouen!

THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS IN SARCELLES!

Among the many friendly communities in the town, one is particularly curious and touching: the Assyrian-Chaldeans. There are about 16,000 in France and nearly 5,000 in Sarcelles and the surrounding area, their bastion in the Paris region. This is one of the oldest people groups on Earth, an ancient indigenous ethnic group of Mesopotamia, descended from the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Christians from the first century, they speak Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus.

THE URBAN SOUTH-WEST

Cultural venues

🎬 **Cinéma: CGR Sarcelles My Place. 2 contre-Allée Henri-Dunant. ● cgrcinemas.fr ● 10 cinemas (dolby sound and ICE immersive).**

🎭 **Salle André Malraux: rue Taillepie et Jacques Berrier, rue Pierre Brossolette. 📞 Info and booking office: ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-20-51.**

– **Médiathèque intercommunale Anna Langfus: pl. Jean-Moulin. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-93-27-80.** Offers a permanent exhibition on the Grands Ensembles (housing estates).

– Exhibitions are also held at the **École d'art Janine Haddad: 5 route de Garges. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-54-17.**

– Conferences, concerts, shows, etc. at the **Conservatoire de musique et de théâtre à rayonnement communal: 2 av. Paul Langevin. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-14-94.**

– And gatherings, workshops and shows at the **Livre-Échange: 72 rue Pierre Brossolette. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-93-07-82.**

Sports facilities

– **Centre aquatique intercommunal Christiane et Guy Canzano:** av Paul-Langevin. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-35-71. Open daily all year round, except 14 Jul and 15 Aug; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Prices: €5.50 for adults and €3.50 for under 18s (€4 and €2.50 for guests). Offers swimming lessons and aquarobics classes. This is the only swimming pool in the area with a 50 m Olympic pool, an adjoining 25 m pool, a teaching pool and a paddling pool. A solarium in the summer and cardio-training room with saunas and weight machines.

– **Centre sportif Nelson Mandela:** av. Paul-Langevin. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-75-34 or +33-(0)1-34-04-34-20 (Service des Sports). ● sarcelles. fr ● The pride of Sarcelles! And with good reason: this huge sports centre enables you to enjoy a vast range of sports, including at a very high level: tennis, bodybuilding, archery, rugby, football, athletics, karate, swimming (with an Olympic-sized pool) and more. The sports centre also hosts a number of national and international competitions and is, of course, on the starting blocks to prepare for the Olympic Games in 2024.

Famous people

– **Doctor Marius Galvani** (1844–1920): he put a stop to a terrible cholera epidemic in Sarcelles in 1892, by taking an inventory of infected households and recommending that people be wary of the water. Below the church stands a monument commemorating this man who ‘did no more than his duty as a man’.

– **Mel Bonis** (1858–1937): born Mélanie-Hélène Bonis, she lived and died in Sarcelles. A pupil of César Franck and Charles Koechlin, this post-Romantic composer with a romantic life had to make a career for herself under a pseudonym to disguise her true identity. She composed nearly 20 pieces, mainly for the piano, and probably played the organ at the Église Saint-Pierre et Saint-Paul.

– **Anna Langfus** (1920–1966): born in Lublin in Poland, she studied in Belgium before returning to her homeland in 1939. Following the German invasion, she was confined to the Warsaw ghetto and later joined the Resistance. In 1946, she managed to take refuge in France, where she wrote plays and novels. The first, published in 1960, tells of her experiences during the war. In 1962, she won the Prix Goncourt for her second novel, *Les Bagages de sable* (Bags of Sand). When she settled in Sarcelles in 1961, she got actively involved with the town’s reading club, a group of enthusiasts who loved reading and meeting together with other residents. After her death, the town paid tribute to her by naming the new library after her in 1969.

– See also the section on p. 58 devoted to the *great names of rap in Sarcelles*.

ARNOUVILLE

(95400)

Population 14,255

Today a tranquil residential suburb, Arnouville is the result of a fantastic dream of Jean-Baptiste de Machault, Comte d’Arnouville, who, in 1750, decided to build a huge château and a ‘new town’ with a very ambitious urban plan. He had the old houses of Ermenouville knocked down and his architects drew up a star-shaped design with a monumental fountain at its centre, and with wide, straight roads. ‘He is spending lavishly on his Château d’Arnouville-lès-Gonesse’, noted the Marquis d’Argenson in 1771, ‘he has

torn down the village and has made, in front of his house, a public square as big as the Place Vendôme; he is hoping that the king will pass there on his way from Compiègne, and he is making sure the road goes past it.'

How to get here

– **By RER: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnoville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Surveilliers-Fosses).

– **By bus: line 11 (kéolis CIF):** Marché de St Denis/Goussainville (via Garges-lès-Gonesse, Arnouville, Gonesse, Le Thillay); **line 20 (Transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnoville RER/Parc des Expositions; **line 23 (Transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnoville RER/Aulnay-sous-Bois; **line 27 (Transdev):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG1/Villiers-le-Bel (Puits-la-Marlière) (via Roissy-en-France, Gonesse (Patte d'Oie, Cressonnières Hôpital de Gonesse);

line 268 (RATP): Saint-Denis Université/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnoville RER (via Mairie de Sarcelles, Puits-la-Marlière, Les Carreaux)

line 270 (RATP): Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnoville RER/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Carreaux, Les Lochères); **line 95-02 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles).

A shuttle bus serves the market on Thu am.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Addresses and useful info

🏛️ **Mairie:** 15–17 rue Robert-Schuman. ☎ +33-(0)1-30-11-16-16. ● arnouville95.fr ●

– **Markets:** at the station, Wed, Thu and Sun am.

Where to eat

🍷 **Porto Moniz:** 2 av. Charles-Vaillant. ☎ +33-(0)1-71-87-86-51. Mon–Fri 11.30am–2pm; Sat 11.30am–2pm, 6.30–11pm. Lunch menu €15.50;

evening, main courses about €16–€18. You can enjoy traditional Portuguese and Madeiran dishes here: octopus, acras, bacalhau, etc.

Things to see and do

🏰 **Château d'Arnoville:** 7 rond-point de la Victoire. Private and not generally open to visitors. Open for Journées du patrimoine (heritage days), concerts and plant sales organised by the Institut. If you poke your nose through the château gates, you'll catch a glimpse in the distance of the long stone building, the only one designed by the architect Pierre Constant d'Ivry between 1750 and 1758 for Jean-Baptiste de Machault d'Arnoville, who was controller-general of the finances of Louis XV. The architect's plans envisaged a vast U-shaped design, but the minister was sacked, and work came to a halt. The original monumental door, a masterpiece of metalworking by a craftsman in the village, was taken in 1872 by Baroness Rothschild, who was also very enamoured with the wrought-iron main staircase. Since 17 October 2000, the façades and the roofs of the château and the orangery, the chapel, the rest of the main staircase and its shaft, two panelled drawing rooms and the park have been listed as historic monuments.

– The composer **Gabriel Fauré** (1845–1924) had bequeathed his concert piano to the Association d'aide aux blessés nerveux de guerre (association for the aid of

nervous war wounded), created in 1917 by the Herold family, who also owned the Château d'Arnouville. Neglected for decades, it was rediscovered then restored in 2014; the public can appreciate its sound at concerts organised each year during the month of May as part of the **Musicales d'Arnouville**, in the Église Saint-Denys (● le-piano-retrouve.com ●).

✠ **Église Notre-Dame de la Paix:** 16 av. Paul-Bert. Inaugurated in 1960, it now holds the certification label 'architecture contemporaine remarquable' for its large stained-glass façade and its ceramic Stations of the Cross.

✠ **Église apostolique arménienne Sainte-Croix-de-Varak:** 31-33 rue Saint-Just. Built in 1931, this church contains a memorial stone commemorating the 1,5 million victims of the Armenian genocide of 1915. With Sarcelles, Arnouville has the third largest Armenian community in Île-de-France. There is also another, evangelical, Armenian church here, as well as a Catholic one, Saint-Grégoire l'Illuminateur.

✠ **Église Saint-Jean-Apôtre des Chaldéens:** rue Jean-Jaurès, opposite the Gare de Villiers-le-Bel – Gonnesse – Arnouville. Inaugurated in 2016, as the Église Saint-Thomas-Apôtre in Sarcelles had become too small to accommodate worshippers following the persecution of Christians in the East. Its architecture – red, with oriental domes surmounted by crosses – is Chaldean-Babylonian in style, recalling the Mesopotamian origins of the Chaldeans. In keeping with the traditions of the Church and symbolism, the chancel faces East, and in accordance with its liturgy, the rite is celebrated in Aramaic.

Where to buy good produce

👤 **Ferme des Condos, or Ferme Lemoine:** 5 bis rue du Chemin-des-Dames. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-85-06-11. Mon-Sat 9am-8pm, Sun and public holidays 9am-12pm. Amazingly, the Lemoine family continue to farm cattle and to sell fresh milk by the litre in the middle of this urban area. They also sell apples in season as well as produce from other farms. Children are invited to visit the cows, as well as

their friends – sheep, goats, pigs and ducks – which will delight little ones, kitted out in their wellies!

🛒 **Eniz oriental grocery:** 63 rue Jean-Jaurès. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-85-08-91. Tue-Sat 9am-7pm, Sun 9am-6pm, Mon 1-7pm. A local fixture for more than 30 years, with more than 5,000 products to delight the Armenian community, Eniz is very popular in Arnouville and with everyone who loves Asian food.

Cultural venues

🎭 **Espace Charles Aznavour:** av. Paul-Vaillant-Couturier. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-87-10-65. ● arnouville95.fr ● Entertainment venue seating 550.
🎭 **Théâtre de Quat'sous:** 173 bis rue

Jean-Jaurès. ☎ +33-(0)6-60-05-72-12. ● theatrequatsous.wixsite.com ●
– **Médiathèque intercommunale:** 15-17 rue Robert-Schuman. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-85-39-96.

BONNEUIL-EN-FRANCE

(95500)

Population 1,253

Bonneuil-en-France has three small rivers: the Petit Rosne and the Morée, which flow into the Croult, which flows into the Seine. This is no doubt why, long ago, people settled in *Bonogilum*, on the edge of the *Crodoaldus flumen*.

These small rivers, 12.1 km (7½ mi), 25.1 km (15½ mi) and 12.4 km (7¾ mi) long respectively, have been covered or partially covered. The Morée was covered in the 20th century and has since been used as a departmental sewer. The Croult was culverted and covered in the 1950s. Having been responsible for three major floods that caused considerable damage, particularly at Sarcelles, the Petit Rosne has been the subject of major restoration work by the SIAH (Syndicat mixte pour l'aménagement hydraulique – Joint Syndicate for Hydraulic Development). A section has been reopened to bring the river back to life, by digging a new bed with meanders, lining it with stones and planting the banks. Other similar programmes are planned by the SIAH, using techniques that now make it possible to control considerably the flow of the river downstream, while respecting ecological imperatives.

Address

Mairie: 15 rue de Gonesse. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-86-30-40. ● bonneuil-en-france.fr ●

FURTHER AFIELD

☎☎☎ 🚶 **Musée de l'Air and de l'Espace:** Paris–Le Bourget Airport, 93352 Le Bourget. ☎ +33-(0)1-49-92-70-00. ● museeairespace.fr ● About 7 km (4½ mi) south-east of Bonneuil-en-France. Getting there: by RER: line B. Station: Le Bourget RER; by train: from the Gare du Nord. Daily except Mon 10am–5pm (until 6pm Apr–Sep). Admission €16, reductions. Access to the planetarium Wed pm, Sat and Sun, screening about 30 mins, book on site. (€5). Restaurant on the tarmac.

Since its construction for military use in 1914, Le Bourget aerodrome, the airport has been the site of events that have marked the collective memory of the whole world. It was here, first of all, that the aces of the First World War distinguished themselves. The end of the war saw the beginning of the great era of civil aviation. On 8 May 1927, Nungesser and Coli took flight in the *Oiseau blanc*, (white bird), a Levasseur with a tank full of fuel, heading for New York. They were never seen again. Two weeks later, Charles Lindbergh, an American, achieved the flight in the other direction, and landed at Le Bourget, to be welcomed by a frenzied crowd of 250,000 Parisians.

The public air terminal closed in 1975, when Orly, then Roissy took the lead. It has since become an **exceptional aeronautical and space museum**. Every other year in June (odd-numbered years), the airport and the Parc des expositions host the *Paris Air Show*. However, in addition to the ongoing military and business aerodrome activities, the air terminal, with its luxurious and discreet VIP lounge, continues to be used to welcome dignitaries and celebrities to Paris.

Entrance is via the concourse of the former air terminal beneath a majestic dome. The National Air and Space Museum of France is one of the most important museums in its field, with a collection of **more than 350 guaranteed original aircraft**, thanks to which you can revisit the legend of the great airmen and space pioneers: Santos-Dumont, Blériot, Saint-Exupéry, Guillaumet, Nungesser and Coli, Costes and Bellonte, André Turcat, Claudie Haigneré and more.

You begin the **chronological route** through the museum with the first flying machines: a room of hot-air balloons then an identical replica of the Voisin brothers engineering workshop at Issy-les-Moulineaux, which enabled Henri Farman to make the first flight (of barely 1 km½ mi) in a circular circuit in 1908. The aerial war of 1914–1918 is recreated in a display of the largest collection of heroic old planes to be found anywhere in the world. Parallel to this prestigious gallery, don't miss the display cases in the model room (a thousand, some of which are more than 150 years old), which will delight anyone who likes miniature models. The 1940–1945 section assembles some of the enemy aircraft that fought in the skies above Europe.

The **Space section** takes visitors to the stars. Here, you'll find, among other exhibits, the first *Sputnik*, the *Diamant* rocket and Jean-Loup Chrétien's cabin on the *Soyuz T-6* spaceflight.

More personal and moving is the Saint-Exupéry space, where a few remains of the French writer and pioneering aviator's plane, found at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Marseille, are on display.

The interwar years hall exhibits the rise of civil aviation and the great history of aerial exploration.

Next come the fighter planes of the **French Air Force**, which include an 'écorché' of a *Mirage F1* which enables you to see the internal structure of a modern fighter plane. The French prototypes hall exhibits unique models that have advanced aeronautical technology. In a hanger, side by side, stand two examples of the legendary aeroplane before commercial flights of *Concorde* were stopped in 2003.

GONESSE

(95500)

Population 26,142

It might not be immediately obvious, but Gonesse is worth a detour! This pleasant but very ordinary-looking little town hides a true treasure in its church: a monumental organ dating from 1508. A real beauty!

Heavily impacted by air traffic, and particularly by the crash of *Concorde* in 2000 (a memorial at the edge of the Parc de la Patte d'oie commemorates this tragic event), the town is doing everything it can to help people forget these negative aspects by focusing on its 'bucolic' side, transforming its former landfill site into a countryside park, for example. You'll also find a farm, a riding centre and a very pretty and reasonably priced golf course here.

It is likely that the arrival of the future line 17 of the Grand Paris Express will once again disrupt life in the commune.

GONESSE BREAD

The reputation of Gonesse bread in Paris markets grew from its consistently good quality. In fact, the village, which supplied the capital (and the royal court) with bread, boasted several dynasties of farmer-bakers, which enabled them to control wheat prices and never to run out of grain, while other bakers had to cut their flour with barley, rye or meslin. This reputation was such that it eventually benefitted the entire profession: millers, bakers, etc. Indeed, the wheat of the Gonesse plain is, along with the French (or Île-de-France) fleur-de-lis, one of the symbols on the town's coat of arms. But wheat isn't everything, and the purity of the water of the Croult also contributed to giving Gonesse its fine bread taste.

How to get here

– **By RER train RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By bus: line 11 (kéolis CIF):** Marché de St Denis/Goussainville (via Garges-lès-Gonesse, Arnouville, Gonesse, Le Thillay); **line 20 (Transdev):** Gare

de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Parc des Expositions; **line 23 (Transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Aulnay-sous-Bois; **line 27 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Villiers-le-Bel Puits-la-Marlière (via Gonesse-Patte d'Oie, Cressonnières Hôpital de Gonesse); **line 95-02 (kéolis**

CIF): Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/ Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles; **line 268 (RATP):** Saint-Denis Université/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER (via Mairie de Sarcelles, Puits-la-Marlière, Les Carreaux); **line 270 (RATP):**

Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse Arnouville RER/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Carreaux, Les Lochères); **line 370 (RATP):** Saint Brice/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville Marché RER (via Gare de Sarcelles Saint-Brice). For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 66 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-45-11-11. ● ville-gonesse.fr ●

Where to eat

🍷 **Benvenuti Al Sud:** 2 rond-point de Bonneuil. ☎ +33-(0)9-85-10-08-91. Mon 12–4.30pm, Tue–Fri 12–4.30pm, 7pm–0.30am. À la carte about €9–€24.

A large selection of good Italian specialities to eat in or take away. The restaurant is spacious and the service friendly.

Things to see and do

🏛️ **Église Saint-Pierre-Saint-Paul:** rue Brûlée. ● paroisse-gonesse.fr ● One of the largest churches in Île-de-France. Built in the 12th and 13th centuries and subsequently altered (its main façade, for example, was transformed in the 18th century), this church remains a fine example of High Gothic architecture and its rectangular plan is inspired by that of Notre-Dame de Paris. Its elevations and some of the decorations are more reminiscent of the Basilica of Saint-Denis, and some historians believe that it may have been created by the same master builder. There are some traces of the Romanesque period that are now hidden. But what draws your eye, is of course the **superb organ case of the tribune**, which dates from 1508 and is listed as a historic monument. With its pipes that have retained their multicoloured decoration and its painted panels of angelic musicians, it is a jewel of the Renaissance and a masterpiece of cabinetmaking. In 1680, the ensemble was completed with four new panels and a positive organ, fixed on the balustrade, which was also painted, but nothing detracted from the delicate harmony. Concerts are regularly held, and you may be lucky enough, as we were, to visit the church during a rehearsal. Magical!

🏛️ **The (future) Musée d'Histoire et de Société: Pôle culturel de Coulanges,** 24 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-45-97-67. Housed in the former hospice hospital, built in 1841, the new museum will be devoted to the history of education and health in the region and will examine the place of children in our society. Pending the museum's opening, a space at the Coulanges cultural centre is offering audiences a taste of what's to come with a programme of exhibitions, workshops and conferences.

Things to experience

🛍️ **Usines Center:** Parc des Expositions. ☎ +33-(0)1-85-08-35-50. ● usinescenter.fr ● Mon–Fri 10am–7pm, Sat and Sun 10am–8pm. 90 brands at outlet prices. Fashionistas take note!

Where to buy good produce

🌿 **Les Enfants du Maraîcher:** *chemin des Cressonnières.* 📞 +33-(0)7-68-22-35-66. ● Facebook ● Farm shop: Wed 5–7pm and Sat 9am–1pm.

Organic farm growing fruit and vegetables and run by the fourth generation of a market-gardening family.

Finding some green space

🌳 **Parc de la Patte d'oie:** ● *ville-gonesse.fr* ● Wed–Sun and public holidays 9am–7pm (mid-Oct to end Feb: 9am–5pm and closed on public holidays). Regular nature-awareness events. With its 80 ha (198 acres), this is the town's largest green space. Opened in 2017, it is the result of an ambitious project to transform the former municipal landfill site into a bucolic space, a bit like the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont in Paris's 19th arrondissement. Located in the Cressonnières industrial zone, between the town centre and the Triangle de Gonesse, the site was used for watercress beds (cressonnières) and to grow market-garden produce until 1964, and the idea today is to turn it back into a natural green space. Major work obviously needed to be done to secure and revegetate the site and to protect the water table. The environmental ambition is fully embraced and very topical. So, the grass is kept in check by animals that graze on it, to the delight of children and walkers; pasture areas have been preserved and educational panels inform the public about the wildlife and plant life present in the park. Two panoramic viewpoints enable you to see aeroplanes taking off or landing (depending on the wind), and one of them offers a distant yet impressive view of Paris, including the Eiffel Tower, the Sacré Cœur and La Défense. You'll also find a great fitness trail, benches and picnic tables.

➤ **Walk:** 4.2 km (2½ mi) loop starting from rue des Cressonnières. Routes for all the family, 1½ hrs (52 mins by mountain bike) A tranquil or more challenging walk in the woods or by beside the river.

➤ **History trail:** Discover the local history, the historic monuments and the remains of a local heritage, via information panels throughout the town. Download the leaflet from the town website. Starts from Église Saint-Pierre Saint-Paul; finishes at École Roger Salengro.

Cultural venues

🎬 **Cinéma municipal Salle Jacques-Prévert:** *pl. Aimé-Césaire, quartier de la Fauconnière.* 📞 +33-(0)1-77-80-92-91. ● *ville-gonesse.fr* ● Screenings in French (VF), original language (VO) and 3D.

🎭 **Salle de spectacles Jacques Brel:** *5 rue du Commandant Maurice*

Fourneau. 📞 +33-(0)1-34-45-97-60.

– **Bibliothèque annexe George Sand:** *3 pl. Marc-Sangnier.* 📞 +33-(0)1-39-85-22-21.


– **Médiathèque municipale-auditorium de Coulanges:** *4 rue Saint-Nicolas.* 📞 +33-(0)1-34-45-97-30.

Sports facilities

– **Raoul Vaux intercommunal swimming pool:** *square des Sports.* 📞 +33-(0)1-39-85-51-32. The swimming pool is to reopen in 2023 following two years of renovation work.

– **UGOLF Golf de Gonesse:** *15 av. Pierre-Salvi.* 📞 +33-(0)1-39-87-02-70. ● *jouer.golf/golf/ugolf-gonesse* ● Daily in high season, 8am–8pm; in low season, 8.30am–6pm (6.30pm Sat and

Sun). Closed 2 weeks in Dec. 9-hole course: €34/day Mon–Fri, €43/day Sat and Sun (reductions for under 26s). Lessons, including for young children. Children can practise here from 3 years old. One Up restaurant (open daily 12–2.30pm, until 3pm Sat and Sun; menus €20 and €25).

–  **Haras de la Fontaine Cypierre (equestrian centre):** *chemin des Cressonnières.* 📞 +33-(0)6-63-57-12-23. Horse rides from €31/hr, pony rides €11/hr. In addition to riding lessons, the centre offers treks as well as courses during the school holidays.

GARGES-LÈS-GONESSE

(95140)

Population 43,239

On the border between Val-d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis, the village, declared a 'royal town' by edict of Frankish king Dagobert, grew up beside the Croult, which powered the mills and encouraged the establishment of laundries. At the end of the 1950s, Garges was the subject of a major urban development project to create a new and entirely cooperative town. Three housing estates were created, with nearly 10,000 homes, to rehouse the inhabitants, including a large Portuguese community, of the slums that had grown up around the village. Today, it is a suburban town in bloom, located between Sarcelles and Le Bourget Airport.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By tram: T5:** Marché de Saint-Denis/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Lochères).

– **By bus: line 11 (kéolis CIF):** Marché de St Denis/Goussainville (via Garges-lès-Gonesse, Arnouville, Gonesse, Le Thillay); **line 95-02 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypolé Aéroport CDG 1/Gare

de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles); **line 133 (RATP):** Le Bourget RER/Sarcelles Bois d'Écouen (via Garges-Sarcelles RER, Les Lochères, Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice); **line 252 (RATP):** Porte de la Chapelle/Garges-Sarcelles RER; **line N 44 Noctilien (RATP):** Gare de L'Est/Garges-Sarcelles RER.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info

📍 **Mairie:** 8 pl. de l'Hôtel-de-Ville. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-53-32-00. ● villede.garges.fr ●

– **Saint-Just market:** *Thu and Sun.*

Where to eat

🍲 **Restaurant Coffee India:** 5 rue Marcel-Cerdan. Daily 12–3pm, 7–11pm. Quality Indian and Creole cuisine with a wide choice of dishes and self-service buffet. Show on

Fridays with Indian or Tahitian dancers or a West Indian evening.

Things to see and do

✠ **Église Sainte-Geneviève: rue du Colonel-Fabien.** Awarded 'Architecture contemporaine remarquable' certification, this red-brick church with contrasting green copper roofs, was built in 1966 and was designed by architect Marc de Saint-Rémy. Its nave is lit by the high arrowslit windows.

Finding some green space

👨👩👧👦 **Fort de Stains:** Garges wood was regenerated in 1981. Since then, it has been transformed each summer into a **leisure park** and offers a variety of activities: high ropes course, monkey bars, trampoline, pony rides, as well as numerous creative and science workshops. **Garges Plage (beach)** opens for two weeks in late July and early August, with water games, sports and aquatic activities, beach games, creative workshops, inflatables and themed evenings, for all ages.

THE URBAN SOUTH-WEST

Cultural venues

🎭 **Le Moulin Fondu:** currently located in Garges-lès-Gonesse, this national street theatre centre, the only certified 'Centre national des arts de la rue et de l'espace public' in Île-de-France, is moving to the area around the Gare du Triangle de Gonesse. This new building with high-ceiling spaces and space for up to 3,300 spectators will be able to host circus artists as well as large-scale street-theatre shows. It will also contain a costume workshop, accommodation for the artists and a large stage. In addition, the new centre will be equipped to welcome school groups in better conditions.

🎭 **Le Cube Garges: av. du Général-de-Gaulle.** ☎ +33-(0)1-34-53-31-00. ● lecubegarges.com ● New facilities in a lovely 8,000m² building with remarkable architecture. It contains an entertainment venue, a cinema, an auditorium, a music conservatoire, rooms for teaching dance, art and theatre and others for computer studies, a music studio, shared spaces and a new large intercommunal multimedia library. In short, it is a state-of-the-art centre for cultural, interdisciplinary and digital innovation that you can visit to your heart's content.

Sports facilities

– **Muriel Hermine de Garges-lès-Gonesse intercommunal swimming pool: 4 allée Jules-Ferry.** ☎ +33-(0)1-30-11-10-50. *Open all year round, daily, except certain public holidays; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Prices: €5.50 for adults and €3.50 for under 18s (€4 and*

€2.50 for guests). Swimming lessons and aquarobics classes.

Swimming pool covered in winter and open in summer, with a 25m-long, six-lane pool. 'Jardin aquatique' (water garden) for children on Saturday mornings.

Famous person

– **Kader Attia:** born to Algerian parents, the artist grew up in Garges-lès-Gonesse. He draws inspiration for his work from his youth spent in a cosmopolitan suburb and his dual culture. A graduate of the École nationale supérieure des Arts décoratifs de Paris, he exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and has since

participated in numerous international events. His work in a variety of media – photographs, installations and drawings but also ceramics and sculptures – examines contemporary issues such as decolonisation and the consumer society.

VILLIERS-LE-BEL

(95400)

Population 28,423

The old village is built at the foot of Mont Griffart, which leads through a wood to the national forest and to the Château d'Écouen. Before the creation of a collective water supply, the villagers had to climb to the top of the hill to get water from the Chauvée spring. The town centre is lively and cosmopolitan. Quite a nice place! Especially as there are a few heritage sites worth a look.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **En bus: line 20 (transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Parc des Expositions; **line 23 (transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Aulnay-sous-Bois; **line 24 (transdev):** Gare de Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER and return (via Gonesse); **line 27 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG1/Villiers-le-Bel Puits-la-Marlière (via Gonesse-Patte

d'Oie, Cressonnières Hôpital de Gonesse); **line 268 (RATP):** Saint-Denis/Université RER/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER (Mairie de Sarcelles, Les Carreaux); **line 269 (RATP):** Garges-Sarcelles RER/Attainville (via Villiers-le-Bel, Gare d'Écouen-Ezanville); **line 270:** Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER/Garges-Sarcelles RER (via Les Carreaux, Les Lochères); **line 370 (RATP):** Marché de Saint-Brice/Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville RER (via Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

THE URBAN SOUTH-WEST

Addresses and useful info

📍 **Mairie:** 32 rue de la République.
☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-28-27. ● ville-villiers-le-bel.fr ●

– **Markets:** Puits de la Marlière, Fri am; Quartier Carreau Sat am; pl Gounoud Sun am.

Where to eat

🍷 **Gourmet Steakhouse:** 1 av. des Entrepreneurs. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-91-40-78. Daily 11.30am–3pm, 6.30–11pm. Menus €15.50 lunchtime, €21.50 evening.

Turkish cuisine (Anatolian and halal) with grilled meats or self-service buffet.

Things to see and do

👤 **Église Saint-Didier:** rue Gambetta. Open 30 mins before each mass (Mon–Sat 5.30pm and Sun 10am); you'll have to make do and enjoy it! If you see the priest, ask him for the visitor's booklet. In the centre of the village, this

fine Gothic and Renaissance church has been listed as a historic monument since 1931. Several Christian buildings have succeeded each other on this site, from ancient times until this one, built in the 13th century. Enlarged and significantly altered, then refurbished in the 17th century, the church is nonetheless remarkable for its homogeneity. The Baroque ostentation is typical of the Counter-Reformation, a time of getting 'sheep' that had been led astray by Protestantism to return to the fold of the Catholic faith. Initially dedicated to Saint Eterne, the church changed its patron saint and its name after Anne de Montmorency offered it a relic of Saint Didier in 1561, thus asserting his power in this new fiefdom.

Entirely restored, it now houses a *Chemin de Croix* (Stations of the Cross), a contemporary work by artist Bernadette Da Silva. The organs (17th century), listed in 1939, have suffered significant damage, due to a lack of protection during the 10 years when the church was undergoing renovation. The original pipes and all the instrumental part are blocked with rubble and dust and are currently being restored so that they can resound again.

But what will inevitably strike you is the crossing, which is so crooked you will wonder how the building has managed to stand for so long! It would seem the architect was guilty of the sin of pride, wanting to build too fast, too fine and too big on unstable foundations. The delicate and elegant exterior has inspired more than one artist, notably Maurice Utrillo, who painted it in 1910.

✚ **Gallo-Roman well:** *2 rue Jules-Ferry*. The remains of a first- or second-century dwelling, today set into the ground floor of a town house (and protected by a pane of glass). It has been listed as a historic monument since 1978.

✚ **Maison des Têtes (House of heads):** *46 rue de la République*. A historic monument since 1938, the roof and façade date from the late 17th or early 18th century. The house is certainly very pretty with all its carved mascarons.

✚ **Chauvée fountain:** *ruelle Chauvée*. To find it, walk through the woods from the church and Rue Victor-Gouffé. For a long time, this was the village's only source of drinking water. You get to it down a few stone steps, which gives the place a cave-like feel, hence its name – cave, cavée, chauvée! We mention it really as an aside, as the whole site, and indeed the whole of Mont Griffard, deserves to be developed (a project that is actually under review!)

Finding some green space

Mont Griffard is still being redeveloped, a major felling and reforestation operation that will eventually enable 8,000 local species of trees and shrubs to be planted on a 1.3 ha (3.2 acre) site. Employees on integration programmes, trained in green-space and natural-landscape management, are working to create footpaths and educational trails. There are already a few information boards that show directions, places of interest and distances along the trail.

> **Les chemins du mont-Griffard (orange route):** *3 km (2 mi) circular walk (about 40 mins)*. Main entrance: Parc d'Astanières, the cemetery (avenue de la Croix-Baillet) or the Chemin du Coudray (avenue du 8 mai 1945).

> **Parcours de l'eau to Villiers-le-Bel** (blue route): *2 km (1¼ mi) circular walk (about 30 mins)*. Start at *Rue du Docteur-Rampont*, opposite the *Collège Martin-Luther-King*. Audio tour (to download from ● izi.travel/fr/d916-parcours-de-l-eau-a-villiers-le-bel/fr ●) traces the history of water in the town from the Gallo-Roman period until today's installations.

> **Le chemin de petite Randonnée** (yellow route): links the Écouen, Plessis-Gassot and Gonesse sections of the GR 655 (long-distance footpath).

> **A 3 km (2 mi) walk along the route of the old tramway** of Villiers-le-Bel.

Cultural venues

- **Médiathèque intercommunale Erik Orsenna:** 97 av. Pierre-Sémard. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-85-82-20.
- **Médiathèque intercommunale Aimé Césaire:** 1 pl. Victor-Hugo. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-80-39.
- **Espace Marcel Pagnol:** rue Gounod. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-94-07-55.

Theatre and concert venue.

- **Micro-Folie:** at the *Maison Jacques-Brel*, 44 av. Pierre-Sémard. Book via the Town's cultural service. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-94-07-55. A digital museum to learn about digital arts via a mini-lab and virtual-reality headsets.

Sports facilities

- **Camille Muffat intercommunal swimming pool:** 60 av. Champ-Bacon. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-29-81-15. Open daily all year round, except 1 Jan, 15 Aug and Christmas; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Prices: €5.50

for adults and €3.50 for under 18s (€4 and €2.50 for guests). This indoor pool includes a 25m lane-swimming pool and a 250m² leisure pool with whirlpools, a river with hydromassage jets and a paddling pool. Solarium in the summer.

NORTH OF SARCELLES

Less than 4 km (2½ mi) from Sarcelles stands the Château d'Écouen, which houses the (superb) Musée national de la Renaissance. Beyond it, walkers will discover beautiful countryside and pretty and well-preserved villages.

ÉCOUEN

(95440)

Population 7,125

In 1969, Minister of Culture André Malraux once again changed the destiny of this Val-d'Oise commune by deciding to move the Renaissance collections of the Musée de Cluny (now dedicated exclusively to medieval art) to the Château d'Écouen. Since then, the renown of the magnificent château, built in 1538 by the Constable of France Anne de Montmorency, has been such that the rest of the town tends to get forgotten, despite its charms, which include a church with some truly remarkable stained-glass windows.

You can enjoy a pleasant walk around the old town, with its alleys and its barn doors, which recall its farming past, before painters settled here in great numbers and transformed Écouen into an elegant place to live or visit. At that time, Americans would flock to its seven hotels, and the Écouen school was as famous as the Barbizon one. Although today most of these painters have been forgotten, they enjoyed their heyday with a style of genre painting. These painters were rich enough to build some fine villa-studios, which you can admire today by following the pretty *Parcours des peintres* (painters' route). In places, the route intersects with the *Way of St James*, which passes through Écouen.

A great place to spend a weekend, or to pass a wonderful day at least!

THE FIRST SMS IN HISTORY

In 1793, Chappe established the first telegraphic connection between Ménilmontant (now part of Paris), Écouen and Saint-Martin-du-Tertre. In the midst of the turmoil of the Revolution, communication needed to be established between the Convention and the armies of the North attempting to push back the Prussians, who were determined to put a king back on the throne of France after the execution of Louis XVI. Chappe offered his invention to the Convention and chose three raised points spread over a distance of 35 km (22 mi) as the crow flies. It took nine minutes to deliver a message of about 20 words: much faster than a messenger on horseback!

How to get here

– **By train:** **Line H:** Paris Nord/Luzarches (via Sarcelles-Saint-Brice, Écouen-Ézanville).
– **By bus:** **line 269 (RATP):** Garges-

Sarcelles RER/Attainville (via Villiers-le-Bel, Gare d'Écouen-Ezanville).
For more info: ● ratp.fr ●

Addresses and useful info

■ **Écouen tourist office:** 1 pl. de l'Église, in the Manoir des Tourelles. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-85-32.

● grand-roissy-tourisme.com ● **Daily except Tue, 10am–12.30pm, 1.30–6pm.** A small but interesting exhibition

on Chappe's great telegraphic adventure, which revolutionised the world of telecommunications. Literature, map, brochures and walks.

📍 **Tearoom run by the Association de la Société historique: at the Manoir des Tourelles, below the tourist office. Sat and Sun 2–6pm.** Run by enthusiastic and engaging volunteers. You'll also get the chance to take a guided tour of the church with Les

Amis de l'église Saint-Aceul, who are on duty at the tearoom at weekends.

– Another association based in the Manoir des Tourelles pays tribute to the sculptor Léon Hingre.

– There is also an art gallery managed by the mairie and a stained-glass workshop run by the association Escale.

📍 **Mairie: pl. de la Mairie.** ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-09-00. ● ecouen.fr ●

Where to stay / Where to eat /

Where to have a drink and enjoy a pastry

📍 **Hôtel du Parc: 22 rue Paul-Lorillon.** ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-03-21. ● il-maestro.com ● *Right in the town centre. Doubles €110–€140. Breakfast €12.50.* The former home of painter Jules Paulin Lorillon housed the Tribunal d'instance (civil court) for a while until its closure. The town then decided to showcase this fine house, located at the heart of a lovely park, and to transform it into a hotel with five rooms, which are rather lacking in character, however.

📍 **Il Maestro: the same address as the Hôtel du Parc. Daily except Sun evening and Mon. Tue–Fri lunchtimes, menus €22 and €28. Main courses €19–€36; à la carte €37.50–€65.** Italian food served under a very pleasant contemporary glass roof or, in summer, on the terrace in the park.

📍 **À la table des Rois: in the château (independent entrance).** ☎ +33-(0)1-39-35-24-48. 🍷 *Daily except Mon and Tue, 10.30am–5.30pm. Menus €16 and €20.* The museum's cafeteria

has an impressive appearance with its fireplace, high ceilings, terracotta tiles and wood panelling. In addition to the menu of the day, you can enjoy a waffle, a crêpe or just a drink, at any time of day. The terrace has a magnificent view of the château and the village.

📍 **Iscoam: 1 rue Emmanuel-Duverger.** ☎ +33-(0)6-25-45-42-36. 🍷 *Daily except Sun, 12–3pm, 7–11pm. Main courses about €14–€25; à la carte €25–€42.* On the site of the restaurant *À la descente du bois*, as can be seen from the lovely postcard on the signpost on the *painters' route*. The cuisine is unashamedly diverse, with prime rib of beef, Italian pasta, Japanese noodles and Tunisian dishes, as well as tajine on Wednesday and couscous at the weekend! Alcohol-free beer and wine only.

📍 **There is also the small tearoom run by the Association de la Société historique: Sat and Sun 2–6pm. See above.**

NORTH OF SARCELLES

Things to see and do

🏰 **Musée national de la Renaissance: Château d'Écouen.** ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-38-50. ● musee-renaissance.fr ● 🍷 *Daily except Tue, 9.30am–12.45pm, 2–5.45pm (5.15pm Oct to mid-Apr). Closed 1 Jan, 1 May and 25 Dec. Admission: €5; reductions; free for under 26s and on the first Sun of every month. Sat and Sun, guided tours of the château, the museum collections and/or of the current exhibition (€5–€7 depending on the visit, in addition to the admission fee). Family workshops with visits on the 1st Sun of the month, 2–4pm. Access to the park, designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart in the 17th century, is free (daily 8am–7pm mid-Apr to Sep, 8am–6pm Oct to mid-Apr).*

The history of the Château d'Écouen is linked to that of its close neighbour at Chantilly in Oise. Both were built by Constable of France Anne de Montmorency and later belonged to the same owners, the Condé family.

Its classical-style architecture is the work of architects **Jean Goujon and Jean Bullant** (who also designed the belltower of the village church).

The château received some prestigious guests: the royal couple Henry II and Catherine de' Medici, for whom apartments were specially designed. After the château was abandoned by the Condés and pillaged during the Revolution, many of the 16th- and 17th-century works that once filled Écouen, including the superb stained-glass windows of the Galerie de Psyché and the chapel, were scattered and are now on display at the Louvre or Chantilly. The museum reflects the tastes cultivated during the Renaissance for the strange, marvellous, unusual and unknown, and is remarkable for its rich and varied collections and the judicious layout of its displays. Guaranteed 'wow' effect in every room!

Virtually all the château has been preserved as it was when it was built, between 1538 and 1555, with the exception of the east wing (the entrance wing). Take time to admire, as you pass through the rooms, each of the 12 painted fireplaces – true masterpieces.

– **On the ground floor:** in the *chapel* are displayed the *Last Supper* by Marco d'Oggiono (a contemporary copy – so of the period – of that of Léonard de Vinci), a high altar in gilded carved wood recounting the life of Christ and, just above it, a beautiful altarpiece in enamel-painted copper relating the Passion of Christ in the style of engravings by Dürer; to the side, in the sacristy, is a beautiful 17th-century positive organ. Next, the *salle des armes* presents a rich collection of arquebuses, cranequin crossbows, numerous 16th-century pistols and armour that will delight children.

– **On the first floor,** you'll discover, first of all, the Constable's apartment with its superb tiled floor, its magnificent painted fireplaces (one depicting a hunting scene, the other relating an episode in the life of Jacob) and its magnificent furnishings. Next, you arrive in *Madeleine of Savoy's apartment*, with its Venetian spinet covered with polychrome wood marquetry enhanced with gilding, its remarkable Farnèse cabinet and its three Lérian and Laureolle wall hangings, inspired by a Spanish chivalric story. A little further on is the sublime and not-to-be-missed *Psyche gallery* with the *David and Bathsheba* hanging, woven in Brussels in the early 16th century for Henry VIII of England (the Gobelins Manufactory was not yet in existence), which in total is no less than 75m (246 ft) long (in 10 sections, Biblical scenes relate the story of King David and the beautiful Bathsheba with a total of nearly 600 figures). After the *King's study* and his *bedchamber*, you arrive in the *great hall*, all of which made up the apartments of Henry II, which should not be missed, notably for the monumental fireplace in polychrome marble and the glazed tiling. In the *Scipio leathers room*, seven enormous painted-leather panels recount the saga of the Roman general who defeated Hannibal. There are a few stained-glass windows to admire before you climb the stairs.

– **On the second floor,** the *Iznik ceramics room* is a chance to remember that the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) was contemporaneous with the building of the château, and that the Ottomans were fascinated by Chinese culture and in turn fascinated Westerners, which contributed to the spread of this splendid and characteristic white and blue decor. Among the tableware services in the *French ceramics room*, don't miss the superb ewer, known as a Saint-Porchaire ewer, with a satyr on one side and a lizard with a gaping mouth on the other, and the fascinating ceremonial dishes by Bernard Palissy. The rendering is so realistic that it was claimed that he created his moulds from living animals. More authentic than the real thing! There are some beautiful finials, too. Next come the 16th-century *stained-glass room* and the *Cassoni room*, with its marvellous wood paintings that were in fact partitions or the lids of wedding chests intended to decorate the bedroom of the newlyweds. The '*arts du feu*' (*fire arts*) gallery presents a collection of Italian ceramics, painted enamel and glassware. Then follows the *German stoneware room*, with its rather elegant beer tankards. To finish, there is the *goldsmithery room*, most of the pieces in which were bequeathed by the Rothschild family. Here, you'll see, among other marvels, one of the museum's masterpieces: a Daphne in gilded silver and coral. Also worth seeing is a spoon-fork that must have been very useful to 16th-century *Routards!*

- **Back on the ground floor:** with its *kitchens*, where some lapidaries and beautiful model of the castle are displayed. If you've not reached saturation point, and time permits, you can admire some beautiful pieces of furniture in the rooms that follow. In any case, hurry and get to the *scientific and technical instrument rooms* with their famous and fabulous nave-shaped self-winding clock, known as a Charles clock, and a magnificent goldsmith's bench covered in marquetry representing hunting, war and tournament scenes. The visit finishes with Catherine de' Medici's apartment.
- ◀ – Take a detour via the **château terrace** to admire the view. An orientation table created by ARCHÉA enables you to decipher the landscape.
- one temporary exhibition each year, focussing on aspects of the Renaissance (tableware, medicine, diplomacy, books, etc.).
- **Concerts** are held on some Saturdays, in the grande salle de la reine, after the museum has closed (*free, booking required; duration: 1 hr*) as well as others during the Pontoise Baroque Festival (*admission fee, ● festivalbaroque-pontoise.fr* ●)

☀☀☀ **Église Saint-Aceul:** open Sat and Sun only, 2–6pm, enquire at the tearoom at the *Manoir des Tourelles*; volunteers will be happy to open up the church and give you a guided tour. The church, like the château that overlooks it, dates from around 1536. And like the château, it was commissioned by Anne de Montmorency. It contains some incomparable Renaissance stained-glass windows that should on no account be missed. The first relate the history of the Montmorency family and the transition to the Condé dynasty, who decided to settle in Chantilly rather than Écouen. You can still see the three fleur-de-lis of the Condé family on one of the pillars. As often is the case, the windows, which can be read like a comic, mix Biblical scenes and historical episodes. So, to the right of the altar, you will see Marguerite of Savoy kneeling (she gave birth to 12 children, all of whom reached adulthood!) Elsewhere, you'll find recounted family quarrels between the Montmorency and Coligny families during the Wars of Religion. Another series of windows, dating from 1544, tells the story of the Virgin Mary. These ones were funded by private donations, which explains their less sumptuous representations. The chapel beneath the belltower was added in 1550, hence the strange plan that lacks a transept. This same belltower houses three bells: the largest, weighing more than 1,400 kg bears the coat of arms of Anne de Montmorency; the other two weigh 'only' 850 kg and 600 kg respectively. The elegant organ dates from the 19th century and can be heard at concerts held in the church (*four times a year*).

☀☀☀ **Parcours des Peintres (Painters' route):** Pick up the map from the *Manoir des Tourelles* (at the tourist office). The route starts (in theory) from the little garden behind the *Manoir des Tourelles*, which leads up to the *château*. This **20-stage route** enables you to walk around Écouen without missing any of its charming and sometimes hidden treasures. Well signposted and interspersed with **information panels illustrated with paintings and old views**, it also enables you to discover the town's finest houses, most of which date from the Belle-Époque, to meet up in places with the Way of St James and to step back in time into the history of Écouen, which has not merely lived in the shadow of its château. You can combine this route with the **eight other panels** of the **Parcours culturel (culture route)** Behind the lovely mairie, opposite the church, take a look at an old '**grange à champarts**' (in other words a granary, wrongly called a 'tithe barn') and stop on

THE BIRTH OF THE RENAISSANCE

The 'Renaissance' was invented by historians in the 19th century to refer to this period that was said to have rediscovered humanism and Classical art after the medieval 'dark ages'. This period was nevertheless a pivotal point in European history in artistic, scientific, philosophical, technical and intellectual terms. Inspired by Italy, architecture was transformed, and became very French thanks to the political will of a royal power that was asserting itself at that time.

NORTH OF SARCELLES

the **lovely Place Jean-Levacher** to admire a beautiful 17th-century residence that was altered in the 19th century by the painters Duverger and Dangelas.

🎨🎨 **Pinacothèque d'Écouen:** *at the mairie.* ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-09-00. ● *ecouen.fr* ● *Daily except Thu pm, Sat pm and Sun 8.30am–12pm, 1.30–6pm. FREE.* The commune has acquired a large number of paintings by the Écouen School and displays them to the public in the *salle du Conseil municipal*. You will find some of the greatest names of the period (although many have since been forgotten), including Edouard Frère, Auguste Schenck, Guillaume Seignac, Paul Lorillon and Emmanuel Duverger. A chance to take a stroll through the village of Écouen in the 19th century. If the picture gallery is closed, you can always admire the works of these artists on ● *peintres-ecouen.com* ●, a virtual museum dedicated to the painters of Écouen.

➤ 🧭🚶 **Baludik trail:** ● *baludik.fr* ● *Allow 1½ hrs for a 2 km (1¼ mi) walk (remember to fully charge your smartphone!).* This free mobile app (currently only in French) allows you to visit and explore the area in a new way, with fun walks and treasure hunts. For an original family walk in Écouen, simply follow the clues to get to the next stage of the route. There, your phone will vibrate and the secret will be revealed, the puzzle solved. Step by step and clue by clue, you'll reach the goal. At Écouen, you'll help **Pierre-Edouard Frère, the famous founder of the school of painters**, and other renowned artists of the region, to organise the finest of exhibitions, while battling against opposing forces.

Where to buy good produce

🍷 **La Fourmilière 95:** *12 pl. de l'Église.* ● *lafourmiliere95.com* ● *Wed–Fri 3.30–7pm and Sat 10am–1pm, 3.30–7pm.* Sale of local produce from Ile-de-France, favouring organic and sustainable farming and social and

solidarity economy networks.

🍷 **Écouen tourist office:** *1 pl. de l'Église, in the Manoir des Tourelles.* Also sells regional produce and local souvenirs.

Finding some green space

🌳🌳🌳 **Forêt régionale d'Écouen:** this magnificent forest, covering an area of 105 ha (260 acres), surrounds the château, built on the top of its mound, and extends towards Villiers-le-Bel and Mont Griffard. If you're coming from the station on foot, you'll walk through some of it to get to the château, but it is worth a visit for its own sake. Planted with oaks and chestnut trees and lined with lovely paths, it hosts a variety of plant species and wildlife. Don't miss the **château gardens**, designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the **Hortense fountain** and the historic site of Chappe's semaphore telegraph (see above).

An orienteering course has been laid out for the athletic.

➤ **Parcours des arbres:** *walking trail (1 hr, 2.4 km/1½ mi).* Starts from the Parc Charles-de-Gaulle (**10 bis rue de la Grande Fontaine**) and arrives at the Place de l'Église. Discover the names of some remarkable trees, including red oak, Judas tree, catalpa, evergreen magnolia, tulip tree, Ginko biloba, common yew, magnolia, mulberry tree, cedar, plane tree, sequoia, lime tree, silk tree, horse chestnut.

🚲 **Roissy-en-France – Écouen cycle route:** *1 hr, 14 km (8½ mi).* Starts from the Roissy-en-France tourist office, arrives at the Écouen tourist office.

Cultural venues

🎭 **Grange à dîmes:** *rear courtyard of the Mairie d'Écouen.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-04-03-41 or 📠 +33-(0)6-38-47-70-69 (Sat and Sun).

● theatredelavallee.fr ● ecouen.fr ● **Price:** €15, **reductions.** Contemporary music concerts are held here, organised by the association 'À qui le tour ?' (whose turn is it?). Other events add to the programme.
 ∞) ↑) **Open-air cinema at the château:** end Aug to early sept. **FREE.** Booking required. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-38-38-52 ou ● musee-renaissance.fr ●

Two to four times each summer the courtyard of the Château d'Écouen turns into an open-air cinema!

– **Bibliothèque André Malraux:** 21 rue du Four-Gaudon. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-90-33-29.

– **Centre culturel Simone Signoret:** 14 av. du Maréchal-Foch. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-33-09-00.

Famous people

– **Anne de Montmorency** (1493–1567): This Constable of France (in other words head of the military and diplomacy) served kings François I and Henry II. A great benefactor, he owned the châteaux of Écouen and Chantilly, where he displayed his magnificent art collections.

– **Paul-Constant Soyer** (1823–1903): one of the emblematic painters of the Écouen school, he taught **Mary Cassatt** (1844–1926), one of the precursors of Impressionism.

LE MESNIL-AUBRY

(95720)

Population 880

Less than 6 km (4 mi) from Écouen, the seignury of Le Mesnil-Aubry was one of the last acquisitions of the Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, in 1554. Today, this tranquil little – but long – village has preserved some old houses around its church, which is very imposing (at 40m long and some 20m wide). Its belltower, too, is extravagant. It has been recently restored and is worthy of interest but is unfortunately closed.

How to get here

– **Mobil'R:** Le Mesnil-Aubry/gare Écouen-Ézanville.

– **Communal shuttle:** a free shuttle service serves the Gare

d'Écouen (**Mon–Fri am and evening reserved for village residents**).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** pl. de la Mairie. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-71-10-16. ● le-mesnil-aubry.fr ●

Where to eat

📍 **Chez Ago:** 36 rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-71-83-36. **Lunch Mon–Sat €15.50.** On the village square, the village's bar-tabac-PMU (bar/

tobacconist's/betting shop) offers a low-priced lunch menu that will satisfy any backpacker, hiker or pilgrim.

Cultural venue

– **Bibliothèque municipale:** pl. de la Mairie. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-71-10-16.

LE PLESSIS-GASSOT

(95720)

Population 76

An adorable, tiny village at the end of a no through road that you will love for its rural charm, its gentle tranquillity, its mairie located in a farmyard and its beautiful fortified (but closed) church.

Useful address

Mairie: 9 pl. de la Ferme-du-Château. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-88-16-11. ● mairie-leplessisgassot.fr ●

Where to buy good produce

🍓 **La Fraiserie du Plessis:** 1 rue des Blancs-Manteaux. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-88-71-09. ● iledefrance-terredesaveurs.fr/produit-en-ile-de-france/adherents/la-fraiserie-du-plessis ● Open only during strawberry season: May and Jun, daily 9am–9pm. Sales from vending machines. In 2011, Guillaume and Nathalie installed the first fruit and vegetable vending machine in

Val-d'Oise. They currently fill 72 trays during strawberry season. They grow two varieties on 2,000m² (½ acre) of land: 'Ciflorette' and 'Magnum'. They also sell their floral honey in this way. – Aug and Sep (daily 9am–12h, 2–7pm), **seasonal pickings** of sweetcorn, tomatoes, green beans, courgettes, peppers, aubergines, pumpkins. And, as always, their honey for sale.

AROUND LE PLESSIS-GASSOT**BOUQUEVAL (95720) POPULATION 291**

A tiny country village that has retained its homogeneity. Not far from the church, locals meet at **Le Val Bussien**, the only (and precious) shop that doubles up as a café, billiard room and betting shop.

Mairie: pl. Eugène-Sue. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-92-84-98. ● mairiedebouqueval.fr ●

FONTENAY-EN-PARISIS

(95190)

Population 2,050

Another pretty Île-de-France village that has managed to retain its rural charm. Climbing to the church, you reach a delightful square where, in the past, the market and two big fairs were held. And here, between the mairie and the church, monumental and majestic, stands a 'liberty tree', a horse chestnut that is impressive both for its size and its beauty.

Useful address

Mairie: 10 pl. Stalingrad. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-71-11-07. ● fontenay-en-parisis.fr ●

Things to see and do

✠ **Église Saint-Aquilin:** at the top of the village. For a long time, the church housed a holy relic of Christ that drew pilgrims in great numbers, which explains the richness of its interior and exterior decoration. It is also one of the largest churches in Pays de France. Gothic in style, it has been listed as a historic monument since 1886.

✠ Further down, on rue Albert-Galle (and rue de l'Échelette), you'll find two other curiosities: a **lavoir**, with its surprising four-pitched roof, and an **old Michelin plaque** marking the entrance to the village, via the 'chemin de grande communication n°47' (GC47), at a time when the department was still called Seine-et-Oise. Nowadays, this type of signage is very rare and so quite nostalgic.

Where to buy good produce

🌿 **Ferme du Parisis:** rue de l'Échalotte. ☎ +33-(0)6-61-41-45-81. Farm shop Thu and Sat 9am-12pm, Fri 9am-6pm. Potatoes, but also straw, hay and chicken feed, for sale.

Cultural venue

– **Bibliothèque intercommunale:** foyer polyvalent, allée de Rosières. ☎ +33-(0)6-10-24-25-24.

GOUSSAINVILLE

(95280)

Population 30,844

Goussainville epitomises the suburban housing estates of the inter-war years, and architecture and urban-planning enthusiasts are invited to come and stroll along these residential streets, with their self-built houses, garden cities and fine villas, and to discover the water towers created at the instigation of the estates' inhabitants. Make sure you take time to wander around the old village, where 250 residents still live, for a true 'urbex' experience. This is a village sacrificed to the airport, almost completely emptied of its inhabitants and frozen in time – and very photogenic!

➤ Watch the documentary film *Naissance d'une banlieue, mort d'un Village*, by Sidney Jézéquel (2000), available on ● dailymotion.com ● in French only.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By bus: line 11 (kéolis CIF):** Marché de St Denis/Goussainville (via Garges-lès-Gonesse, Arnouville, Gonesse, Le Thillay); **line 32 (kéolis CIF):** Aéroville/Goussainville Victor Basch (via Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1, Roissy-en-France, Le Thillay); **line 32 ZA (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare

de Goussainville (via Roissy-en-France); **line 95-02 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Sarcelles-Saint-Brice RER (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Le Thillay, Gonesse, Arnouville, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Sarcelles); **line 95-18 (transdev):** Roissypole/Cergy (via Roissy-en-France, Goussainville, Rond-Point du Thillay); **GBUS:** circular route starting from the bus station.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info

Mairie: *pl. de la Charmeuse.* ☎ +33-(0)1-39-94-60-00. ● *ville-goussainville.fr* ●

– **Markets:** *pl. de la Charmeuse (in the centre) Tue am and Sat am; Les Grandes Bornes (rue Peltier) Wed am.*

Where to eat

🍷🍷 **A Nossa Casa – Le Roi du Poulet:** *86 bd du Général-de-Gaulle.* ☎ +33-(0)1-30-18-01-40. *Daily 9am–8pm. Allow €10–€25.* We'll share a secret with you: this highly unlikely place is actually quite irresistible! In fact, we've really fallen for this little slice of Portugal in the middle of Goussainville! What a joy to savour authentic *churrasqueira*, a glass of *vinho verde*, octopus salad, codfish balls, roast chicken and *pastei de nata*.

And another joy: the terrace, next to the car park, where you can watch the planes landing!

🍷 **Anamour:** *14 rue des Artisans.* ☎ +33-(0)7-51-24-97-73. *Daily 12pm–1am, Sat and Sun 11.30am–2.30pm, 6.30–10.30pm. À la carte €30–€91.* This halal restaurant, renowned for its wood-fired grills, has a DJ on Fri and Sat evenings, when the large restaurant doubles up as a dance floor.

Things to see and do

🏡🏡🏡 **The old village, or 'Vieux-Pays'** was already beginning to decline by the 1960s, the mairie and shops having moved to be closer to the railway. But it was the opening of Roissy Airport in 1974 that really changed everything, as the old village found itself right in the line of one of the runways! Legally obliged to buy back homes in the affected areas, but hoping to get a good deal, ADP offered residents a fairly attractive price for their houses. Despite this, 300 of the 1,000 inhabitants decided to stay. The situation turned into a tragicomedy when it turned out that the abandoned houses could not be demolished because they were located less than 500 m away from the church, which is listed as a historic monument. And so they were saved ... or rather bricked up. And as noise pollution from the airport prohibits any new developments, the village finds itself stuck in a time warp. While the place is gently sliding into ruin and becoming covered with graffiti, a few stalwarts continue to live here. A **lovely Art Deco school** still welcomes children. In the **municipal park (daily 8am–9pm)**, the 'château' falls further into disrepair each year.

Cultural venues

🎭 **Cinéma Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt:** *82 bd Paul-Vaillant-Couturier.* ☎ +33-(0)1-39-88-96-60. ● *ville-goussainville.fr* ● 1 screen.

🎭 **Espace Pierre de Coubertin:** *rue*

Anquetil. ☎ +33-(0)1-39-88-96-84. Theatre and concert venue.

– **Médiathèque municipale François-Mauriac:** *20 rue Robert-Peltier.* ☎ +33-(0)1-39-88-15-64.

Sports facilities

– **Intercommunal swimming pool:** *rite de Montmorency.* ☎ +33-(0)1-30-18-95-60. *Open all year round, daily, except certain public holidays; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Prices: €5.50*

for adults and €3.50 for under 18s (€4 and €2.50 for guests). Lane-swimming pool of 25 m, leisure pool, diving area, paddling pool, sauna, steam room and large solarium open in the summer.

NORTH OF THE AIRPORT

Here, you'll find a few medieval villages and vast swathes of countryside that, though becoming urbanised, are still relatively preserved.

MARLY-LA-VILLE

(95670)

Population 5,683

As a point of interest, it was at Marly that François Dalibard, the great French naturalist and physicist of the 18th century experimented with the first lightning rod on 10 May 1752. In seeking to reproduce Benjamin Franklin's experiments in his garden and in studying the nature of lightning, he proved that thunderstorms are an electrical phenomenon that we can guard against.

How to get here

– **By bus: line R1 (kéolis CIF):** gare de Survilliers-Fosses/Gare de Louvres (Marly-la-Ville, Puiseux).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 10 rue du Colonel-Fabien. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-47-46-46. ● marly-la-ville.fr ●

Things to see and do

✂️ **Two old water towers: rue Gabriel-Péri.** At the entrance to the village, you can still see two big ashlar towers topped with metal cisterns. In 1882, in order to build the water-lifting machine that would supply drinking water to the village, a 70m-deep borehole needed to be drilled, but the 5,000 l/h that the pump delivered was insufficient and the two 40m³ cisterns were replaced by a water tower in 1970. The twin towers are very photogenic (and are soon to be entirely restored).

✂️ **Street art: roundabout between rue Roger-Salengro and rue Jacques-Duclos.** During the summer, the Espace culturel Lucien Jean Marly-la-Ville offers guided tours to discover these frescoes scattered around the town.

✂️ **Marly-la-Ville quarries:** The Association des Fouines de Marly souterrain (3 allée des Bouleaux. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-27-38) organises unusual visits on Journées européennes du Patrimoine (European heritage days). This association, created in 2002, aims to study and preserve Marly-la-Ville's underground heritage, notably the old underground building-stone quarries. It monitors the galleries and accesses in collaboration with the municipality of Marly-La-Ville.

✂️ **Église Saint-Étienne:** built between 1220 and 1240 and listed as a historic monument in 1933, the church is a fine example of Gothic architecture.

Finding some green space

✂️ **Parc Salvador Allende: 73 rue Roger Salengro, between Marly and the old village of Fosses.** A large grassy space with a playground and a lake that you can walk around and even fish in.

➤ Walk around Marly-la-Ville via Hérivaux: *Allow 5¼ hrs. Distance: 17 km (10½ mi). Circular walk starting and finishing at rue Delanchy in Marly-la-Ville. Download the PDF on ● visorando.com ●* Alternating between countryside, forest and villages, the route takes you past the Château d'Hérivaux, the abbey and the remains of old 13th-century mill and through the village of Bellefontaine and along the banks of the Ysieux and the lake.

Cultural venues

∞ **Espace Culturel Lucien Jean:** rue Marcel-Petit. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-31-37-60.

– **Bibliothèque Municipale Henri Marlé:** 7 allée des Noisetiers. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-72-74-14.

FOSSÉS

(95470)

Population 9,934

Even if the village is keeping the memory of its history alive, it is hard to imagine that this tranquil and pretty place was home to a hundred potters in the 17th and 18th centuries. Fossatussiens (as the villagers are called) had specialised in pottery and ceramics since the Middle Ages, thanks to significant deposits of clay on the banks of the Ysieux. As is often the case, the new town presents less interest for tourists, who will find a large shopping centre and all sorts of restaurants (pizza, kebab, etc.)

Fossés is one of the two gateways (the other is Survilliers) to the Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France, which extends beyond Chantilly.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fossés).
– **By bus: – line R1 (kéolis CIF):** Gare de Survilliers-Fossés/Gare de Louvres

(Marly-la-Ville, Puiseux); **line 95-01 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole-Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Survilliers-Fossés (Épiais-lès-Louvres, Mauregard, Vémars, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Fossés). For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Addresses and useful info

📄 **Mairie:** 1 pl. du 19 Mars 1962. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-47-40-40. ● ville-fosses95.fr ●

📄 **Maison du Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France:** 48 rue

d'Hérivaux 60560 Orry-la-ville. ☎ +33-(0)3-44-63-65-65. ● destination.parc-oise-paysdefrance.fr ●

– **Markets:** pl. du Marché Tue am; av. Barbusse Thu and Sun am.

Where to eat

🍕 **C Pizza:** 12 av. Henri Barbusse. ☎ +33-(0)1-30-29-49-03. Mon–Thu 11am–2.30pm, 6–10.30pm, Fri 6–11pm, Sat and Sun 11am–2.30pm, 6–11pm. Pizza €12–16.50. To eat in or take away, delicious pizza cooked in the Italian tradition on stone in a

(natural and untreated) wood-fired oven. The pizzaiolo garnishes his pizzas generously with fresh quality produce. A great atmosphere.

🍕 **Le Lysieux:** 30 rue Jean-Jaurès. ☎ +33-(0)9-52-76-33-73. Daily except Sun, 11.30am–3pm, 6.30–10.30pm

(11pm Sun). *Weekday set lunch menus €11.90; other menus €13.90–€16.90. À la carte €18.50–€39.40; pasta and pizzas*

€11–€17. A good restaurant in the new town offering pasta, pizzas, burgers and grilled meats in a pleasant setting.

Things to see and do

👤👤 The village: small and quite pretty, with, at its centre and next to each other, the adorable *Eglise Saint-Étienne* (listed as a historic monument) and the *Letourneur farm*. The latter is being developed and in 2026 will host the 'Archéosite des potiers de la vallée de l'Ysieux' (archaeological site of the potters of the Ysieux valley), a branch of the ARCHÉA museum (see p. 52). This fine project plans to restore the potters' ovens and various archaeological remains and was awarded 'Patrimoine d'intérêt régional' (heritage of regional interest) certification by the Île-de-France region in July 2018. The centre's mission is to bear witness to the past while creating a dialogue with a more contemporary production and to revitalise the town centre.

Where to buy good produce

🛒 Ferme de Basile: 700 av. de Beaumont. ● lafarmedebasile.fr ● Tue–Fri 3.30–7pm, Sat 9.30am–12.30pm and 1.30–5.30pm. Farm shop selling local produce: fruit and vegetables, meat, cream, spices, etc. Grown on the organic farm (by the fourth generation of market gardeners): asparagus, strawberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, squash, lettuces, etc. The shop also sells produce from neighbouring Hauts-de-France and Île-de-France and even, in the case of certain fruits, from the South of France.

Finding some green space

➤ **Walk from Fosses to Bellefontaine:** 13 km (8 mi), allow about 4 hrs. Start at the *Gare de Fosses* or the *football field car park* (by the water tower). A walk in the Ysieux valley. The route is also suitable for mountain biking. A pleasant end to the route at Bellefontaine, with its lavoir and pond.

➤ **Walk from Survilliers to Orry via the Coye forest:** 17 km (10½ mi), allow about 5½ hrs. Download the PDF

on ● visorando.com ● A lovely walk, most of it through the forest, from one station to the other. The first half is fairly flat or downhill; the rest is quite hilly. The route is mainly on good dirt or sandy tracks and some paths.

➤ **Walk from Fosses to Saint-Mard, alongside the Biberonne:** about 23 km (14½ mi), allow about 7 hrs. Download the PDF on ● visorando.com ● A walk from one station to the other (following part of the GR1, 'Grand tour de Paris de gare à gare', long-distance footpath) through fields, woods, villages and the Goële plain, crossing the Biberonne several times. You'll pass a few ponds and some lovely churches along the way.

A DREAM OF 1,000 SWIMMING POOLS

Following the defeat of the French swimming team at the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968, it was decided to build more swimming pools throughout France. A competition was launched, and won by architect Bernard Schoeller with his so-called 'tournesol' (sunflower) pools. The concept is simple and brilliant: a swimming pool covered by a plastic dome with egg-shaped windows that can be opened to a quarter of its circumference in the summer. One hundred and eighty-three of these pools were built before production ceased for various reasons, including technical ones.

Cultural venues

🎬 🎭 **Cinéma intercommunal de l'Ysieux:** *pl. de la Liberté.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-09-31-34 (*answerphone*) ou +33-(0)1-34-72-88-40 (*administration*).

This 168-seater cinema is classed as an 'Art et Essai' (arthouse) cinema and 'Jeune Public' (with programming

for children/youth). It is soon to add another cinema and a rooftop for open-air screenings.

– **Ludo-médiathèque intercommunale:** *1 pl. du 19-mars-1962.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-47-40-43. **Multimedia** and games library.

Sports facilities

– **Intercommunal swimming pool:** *rue Fernand-Picquette.* ☎ +33-(0)1-

34-68-65-49. In summer, its roof opens completely, like a sunflower.

FURTHER AFIELD

🏰 🏰 **Abbaye de Royaumont:** *in Asnières-sur-Oise (95270).* ☎ +33-(0)1-30-35-59-00. ● royaumont.com ● 🚰 (90%). About 15 km (9½ mi) north-west of Fosses via the D 922. Free shuttle bus on Sat and Sun from the Gare de Luzarches (Paris-Gare du Nord). Daily 10am–6pm (5.30pm Nov–Mar) for self-guided tours with digital touch panels. Guided tours: Apr–Oct, Sat at 2.30pm and 3.45pm, Sun and public holidays at 11.30am, 2pm and 3.30pm; Nov–Mar, Sat at 2pm and 3.15pm, Sun and public holidays at 11.30am, 2pm and 3.15pm. Ticket office closed 12.45–1.45pm. Admission: €10 (access to the abbey and the garden, guided tour included); reductions; free for children under 3. Family pass: €28. Allow 1 hr to visit. A lovely bookshop at the entrance. Some Sun at 3.30pm, events on a variety of themes: music, history, architecture, nature, arts and crafts, dance, etc. No extra charge.

Without doubt **one of the most beautiful Cistercian abbeys in Île-de-France.** Located in a wooded setting, the buildings are enhanced by the numerous little canals and ponds that surround them.

Founded in the 13th century by Louis IX, under the direction of his mother, Blanche of Castile, the abbey was richly endowed. This royal abbey at the heart of Pays de France, home of the Cistercians, would have housed up to 120 monks under Louis IX, and was his first foundation. During the Revolution, the abbey was sold as a 'bien national' (national property) and was bought by Marie-Antoinette's gambling banker, who turned it into a cotton mill. Nuns made it their novitiate from 1869 to 1905 and carried out major restoration work. During the First World War, it served as a military hospital.

Today, Royaumont is a **foundation that welcomes artists from around the world** to participate in research and creation programmes, as well as in extramural concerts held as part of the Royaumont Festival.

Entrance to the grounds is via a shady path surrounded by canals, in which you can see the abbey, facing you, reflected in the water. Extensive restoration work has restored it to its former glory. On the left, the building crossed by a small canal is that of the latrines (60 back-to-back seats, which you can imagine above the arches). It is virtually the only one of its kind. You may be surprised at the height above the outlet (perhaps to avoid any risk in times of flooding!). On the right, only the bases of the pillars of the abbey church remain: it was originally as big as Notre-Dame de Paris! Among the remains, note the surprising and romantic 40m stair turret, which defies the laws of equilibrium. At the base of its roof, look for the little grotesques, cocking a snook at the Cistercians, who prohibited all figurative representations within their walls. – Only the **ground floor of the main building** is open to visitors. The cloister, the largest Cistercian one in France, is well preserved and surrounded by a lovely

garden, designed by Achille Duchêne in 1912. On the left as you enter is a beautiful 13th-century refectory, its two naves separated by two columns of a single block (monolith), where you can admire the pipe organ with its 2,573 pipes, built by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll in 1864, and the impressive flooring made of 40,000 tiles, handcrafted from period models. Still in the cloister, on the right of the main entrance, the sacristy has an astonishing pointed barrel vault and contains medieval statuary.

– Outside, you'll find a **medieval garden**, comprising several dozen plants in nine squares, beneath the kitchens and refectory. In addition to its pleasing appearance, it evokes the principles of the medieval garden and invites visitors to discover the history of the plants. Hidden in the gardens (on the right of the entrance) is an artificial grotto, designed by the nuns in the 19th century using stones from the church. A belvedere has been built at the top that allows you to observe the **vegetable garden**, which is cultivated on permaculture principles.

🍷 **Bar-tearoom: Sat and Sun from 12pm. Light meals and cakes.** In the latrine building, you can make yourself comfortable in cane chairs around a modern wooden bar that blends in

perfectly with the old stone setting. Alternatively, weather permitting, take a seat on the terrace next to the little canal and watch the ducks swimming.

– **Festival de Royaumont: at the abbey, vocal and instrumental concerts every weekend from late Aug to mid-Oct; also dance performances. See the website for the programme. Booking: ☎ +33-(0)1-30-35-58-00.**

SURVILLIERS

(95470)

Population 4,278

At the edge of the Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France, this village, whose economy had been exclusively rural, experienced a radical change in the early 20th century with the installation of an ammunition factory, which brought Survilliers into the industrial era and made it a 'new town' of its time.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER D:** Paris Nord/Creil (via Garges-Sarcelles-RER, Villiers-le-Bel-Gonesse-Arnouville, Goussainville, Les Noues, Louvres, Survilliers-Fosses).

– **By bus: line 95-01 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG

1/Gare de Survilliers-Fosses (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Mauregard, Vémars, Saint Witz, Survilliers, Fosses); **line R1 (kéolis CIF):** Gare de Survilliers-Fosses/Gare de Louvres (Marly-la-Ville Puisseux-en-France).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

🏛 **Mairie:** 3 rue de la Liberté. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-26-00. ● survilliers.fr ●

Where to eat

🍷 **Bistrot de Survilliers:** 13 rue du Houx. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-68-26. Mon–Fri 12–2.30pm. Menus €13.90 and €16.90. The village's bar-tabac is

also a nice restaurant with a tasteful decor. The home-cooked menu of the day attracts a local crowd as well as businessmen and women in the know.

Things to see and do

🗺️ **Musée de la Cartoucherie:** 24 Grande-Rue. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-26-00 (*mairie*) or +33-(0)1-34-68-54-73 (*library*). *Open by request; phone to book an appointment. FREE.* The former gymnasium of 'La Cartoucherie française' (French ammunitions factory) has been turned into a little museum. Ammunition is no longer made here, but the factory is still operational and makes security equipment such as airbags. In its day, the site stretched over 16 ha (40 acres). Founded in 1903, the company was not making a fortune with its cartridges for hunting rifles and fairground shooting galleries, but with the outbreak of the First World War a few years later, its fortunes changed when it started manufacturing primers. You'll learn all about its history through the displays of its gleaming, meticulously maintained machines (such as the 1910 tube-rolling machine, which could fill 1,200 tubes per hour – they had previously been rolled by hand!) It all makes for a fascinating visit, particularly if you add in a walk around the **workers' houses** next to the museum, which bear witness to life in the 1920s when capitalism was paternalistic. At that time, there were some 200 houses on the site! You will see a few workers' gardens and the former refectory, which, though it still houses the canteen, was once a real hub of life.

🗺️ **The Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France** has published a little leaflet to help you discover the village of Survilliers. **In five stages (2.4 km/1½ mi, allow 1½ hrs)**, this circular route enables you to discover the hôtel de ville (rebuilt in the early 20th century in a neo-Louis XIII style) and its garden, the Place du Calvaire (and its old well), the church, the Place de la Bergerie and, of course, the Cartoucherie district.

🗺️ **Église Saint-Martin:** listed as a historic monument since 1945. Built in the late 15th century, the church belongs to the Gothic and early Renaissance period. Inside, note the furnishings, the stained-glass windows and the tombstones.

Finding some green space

➤ **A walk around Survillier:** 3 km (2 mi). *Allow: 1½ hrs. Download the sheet on* survilliers.fr ● A walking trail developed by the commune that enables you to take a tour of the village in 12 stages (with 12 information panels that relate the history of the places).

Cultural venue

– **Médiathèque intercommunale:** 50 rue de la Liberté. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-54-73.

FURTHER AFIELD

CHANTILLY (60500)

Population 11,200

A few words suffice to evoke Chantilly: château, forest, horses and ... cream! Its château houses one of the finest museums in France, while the forest of oak and lime trees that surrounds it is considered one of the jewels of the Paris green belt (and is part of the Parc naturel régional Oise-Pays de France). Chantilly is also famous in the equestrian world for its racetrack and its horse training centre.

TO WHOM DO WE OWE CHANTILLY CREAM?

The recipe has existed since the 16th century, so before the famous François Vatel (1631–71) who is sometimes, wrongly, credited it with its invention. But the term 'crème chantilly' didn't appear until the late 18th or early 19th century, when it was used in the context of the 'goûters champêtres' (country tea parties) held by the princes of Condé. And it had little in common with the sweet cream spray you can buy today.

ONCE UPON A TIME ...

A Gallo-Roman, Cantilius (the origin of the name Chantilly), finding the region splendid, build a large agricultural estate here. At the end of the 13th century, the seigneurs of Senlis built a château here that was destroyed during the Jacquerie (peasants' revolt of 1358). **In 1527**, the famous Constable Montmorency, returning from the wars in Italy, added to the old château a **Renaissance palace**, today known as the 'petit château' or 'Capitainerie', the only surviving evidence of this period.

After the last of the Montmorencys, Henry II, took up arms against Louis XIII, who had him beheaded at the first opportunity (1633), his assets passed to his brother-in-law, Henri II de Bourbon, Prince of Condé. The son of the latter, known as the Great Condé (for his military exploits rather than his height – he was only 1.57m/5ft 2in tall) had the park magnificently landscaped by André Le Nôtre and held splendid parties here.

During the French Revolution, only the small château survived destruction. The last of the Condés allegedly committed suicide in decidedly troubling circumstances, bequeathing the property to his godson, the **Duke of Aumale**, fifth son of Louis-Philippe. From 1876 to 1883, the Duke rebuilt the château in Renaissance style, as you can see it today. At the end of his life, in 1886, he donated it, along with his magnificent collections, to the Institut de France, but with very strict conditions: nothing should be sold or loaned and the works should be displayed as they were at that time.

How to get here

– **By RER train:** **RER D:** Paris-Nord
Gare de Chantilly-Gouvieux.

For more info: ● [snCF-connect](#) ●

Useful address

📍 Tourist office: 73 rue du
Connétable. ☎ +33-(0)3-44-67-
37-37. ● [chantilly-senlis-tourisme.](#)
[com](#) ● Mon–Sat except Tue pm,

9.30am–1pm, 2–5.30pm (plus Sun
and public holidays May–Sep,
9.30am–1pm, 2–5.30pm).

Things to see

👤👤👤 **Domaine de Chantilly:** ☎ +33-(0)3-44-27-31-80. ● [domainedechantilly.com](#) ● Apr–Oct, daily 10am–6pm; Nov–Mar, daily except Tue, 10.30am–5pm. Closed Jan. Park open until 6pm (8pm Apr–Oct): make the most of it; the park is often empty (perhaps because there's an admission fee?). Pass Domaine (château, park and Musée du Cheval – show costs extra): €17; reduced price €13.50. Park only: €8; reduced price €6. Audioguide included. Guided tours of the Duke of Aumale's private apartments, daily (limited places): extra charge of €5.

– **Access to the château:** via the bridge between the two ponds. On the right, you'll notice a long Classical-style white building: the Château d'Enghien.

– When you're here, it's difficult to get a **view of the whole estate**. However, if you arrive in Chantilly via the D 924, you'll get a splendid view of it from the village of Vineuil-Saint-Firmin.

– 👤👤👤👤 **The château:** contains the **large suites** and the **Musée Condé**, one of the richest fine art museums in France – second only to the Louvre – with a fantastic collection of old paintings. **The small suites can also be visited, but booking is required and there is an extra charge.**

You are free to explore the large suites on your own and admission is included in the pass.

– **The Reading Room:** nearly 19,000 extremely rare books make this the finest collection assembled by an amateur. It includes, notably, the *Tres Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (a facsimile of which is on display) and works by Ronsard and Du Bellay.

– **The Large Corner Room:** furniture decorated with Beauvais tapestries. Made entirely by hand, they were incredibly labour-intensive: it took a worker a day to complete 1 cm²!

– **The Grande Singerie:** gilded with gold leaf. The work of Christophe Huet, and one of the rare examples of singeries, which were very fashionable in the 18th century. Singeries were paintings featuring monkeys dressed up and behaving as humans (as musicians or apothecaries, for example), so highlighting human vanity.

The Condé Museum

The Stag Gallery: the former dining room of the Duke of Aumale, overlooked by the gallery where the musicians would play during mealtimes. The wooden coffered ceiling is decorated with the coats of arms of the successive families of Chantilly. Impressive Gobelins tapestries (17th century) and, of course, the collection of hunting trophies.

– **The Gallery of Painting:** crowned with a glass roof for natural lighting. Note the 19th-century-style hanging of the 85 paintings, which, according to the last wishes of the Duke of Aumale, can not be modified. A large number of masterpieces from all periods, including lots of paintings by Poussin and Carrache.

– **The Isabelle Room:** paintings from different French painting movements of the 19th century (Delacroix, Théodore Rousseau and Ingres) plus some Dutch seascapes.

– **The Santuario:** contains probably the most important of the museum's works, notably the sublime *Orléans Madonna* and the *Three Graces* by Raphael and, above all, 40 miniatures painted in about 1455 by Jean Fouquet, for a book of hours.

– **The Tribune:** a large octagonal room, illuminated by a central lantern, with an exquisite, richly decorated ceiling. It contains numerous masterpieces, including the most well-known portrait of *Molière* by Mignard.

The Duke of Aumale's private suites are open only for guided tours (12 per group), for an extra charge of €5. Book on site or, better, online.

– 🚶🚶🚶 **The grounds:** see practical info above for times and prices. In the summer, you can take a trip on the lake (pedalo or rowing boat) or hire bicycles or a golf cart (for an extra charge). Dogs are not allowed, even on a lead.

Continue down the path until you reach the maison de Sylvie, preceded by a beautiful garden designed by Le Nôtre. The path then takes you to the parterres and ponds of Le Nôtre, who laid out the Grand Canal and its perpendicular appendage, the Manche, by diverting the river Nonette. On the axis of the Manche lies the amphitheatre-style sloping lawn. On either side of the parterres are two groves known as the 'philosophers' groves', because the intellectuals who visited the Grand Condé liked to spend time reflecting in the shade of the plane trees here. On the far left is an English garden, laid out in the early 19th century, with some beautiful features: the Island of love, the temple of Venus, the Beauvais cascades. The visit ends at the Jeu de Paume, built in 1756, near the Porte Saint-Denis.

– 🚶 A little tourist 'train' enables you to take a guided tour of the park with commentary. You can also picnic near the maze in a dedicated picnic spot.

– 🚶🚶🚶 **Musée du Cheval – Grandes Écuries:** ☎ +33-(0)-3-44-27-31-80. ● domainedechantilly.com ● Same opening hours as the château. Admission included in the Pass Domaine: €17; reduced price €13.50. In addition to the château, the pass includes this visit to the Great Stables and the Museum of the Horse, with an equestrian show of 30–45 mins (at 11am and/or 2.30pm, except on

the afternoon of the 'grand spectacle'). Booking required (we advise you to do so online), Apr–Oct (plus at Christmas), 'grand spectacle équestre': €22 (more than 70 performances, including a visit to the stables). Bar and café on the premises.

These splendid stables were built in the 18th century by the Duke of Bourbon, who was convinced that he would be reincarnated as a horse. At the time, this veritable palace housed 220 horses, the duke's 23 horse-drawn carriages and all attendant personnel: grooms, coachmen, etc.

Today, you will find the **Musée du Cheval** here. The museum traces the importance of this animal in human history with 15 rooms containing hundreds of artistic and ethnological exhibits, displayed in an entertaining way. An interesting visit whether or not you're mad about horses. Other attractions include the **stables** with their still-occupied stalls and impressive 28m-high dome, under which equestrian shows are held daily.

SAINT-WITZ

(95470)

Population 2,341

Its location at the motorway exit, just 5 km (3 mi) from Parc Asterix (as well as just 13 km (8 mi) from the Mer de Sable amusement park and 11 km (7 mi) from the Parc d'Ermenonville much loved by Jean-Jacques Rousseau) explains the many (chain) hotels here, which swells the number of **Wéziens** and **Wéziennes** (as locals are called) every night! The village is also very quiet, but is home to a curiosity ... read on!

How to get here

– **By bus: line 95-01 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/ Gare de Survilliers-Fosses (Épiais-lès-Louvres, Mauregard, Vémars, Saint Witz, Survilliers, Fosses).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 1 pl. Isabelle de Vy. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-26-20. ● saint-witz.fr ●

Things to see and do

🦋🦋 **The aeronautic Saint-Witz lighthouse:** 30 rue de Paris. This intriguing pylon, surmounted by a mini platform, was part of a series of lights to aid air navigation at night and in foggy weather. Built during the interwar period, they were intended for use by the French air mail service and were lit just before a plane was due to fly over by a resident who would climb the ladder up to the light. So, the first air traffic controllers were a teacher, a village policeman and a miller! Listed as a 'Patrimoine d'intérêt régional' (heritage site of regional interest), the Saint-Witz lighthouse is the penultimate lighthouse on the line that linked Brussels to Paris before Le Bourget was opened.

🦋 **Moulin de Saint-Vy:** just next to the 'lighthouse'. This is the last of the many mills that once covered the Butte de Montmélian, the highest point in the commune (at an altitude of 169m!). Dating from 1843, it lost its sails and its mechanism in a fire. It used to be visible for 20 km (12½ mi) around!

Finding some green space

➤ **Circuit Saint-Witz-Vémars:** A 11 km (7 mi) circular walk (allow about 3 hrs), starting from the car park of the sports centre on rue Robquin. A relaxing walk that evokes the memory of Charles Péguy and François Mauriac, one a poet, the other a winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, both of whom died here. On the way, you'll see, on the hill, the Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Montmélian, known as the Chapelle Péguy. The poet spent a night of prayer there before perishing under enemy bullets in August 1914. The 19th-century lavoir is also of interest. It is located on the site of the 'Fontaine aux Chiens' spring, which supplied the village with drinking water before the arrival of running water.

Cultural venues

📖 **Médiathèque and Espace culturel La Tuilerie:** 8 rue André-Berson and rue de Paris. ☎ +33-(0)1-30-29-14-62.

La Tuilerie houses an intercommunal multimedia library and a theatre/concert hall that can seat nearly 200 people.

FURTHER AFIELD

👣👣👣👣 **Parc Astérix:** 60128 Plailly. ☎ +33-(0)9-86-86-86-87 (ticket office) ● parcasterix.fr ● 8 km (5 mi) north of Saint-Witz on the A1. Access: RER B, Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle-1 stop, then head for the Parc Astérix ticket office on platform A3. Shuttle bus every 30 mins, from 1 hr before the park opens until 1 hr after it closes. Open Apr–Dec (enquire for exact dates, which change every year). Daily Apr, Jul and Aug and during autumn half-term holidays (closed Mon and Tue in May and Jun, and open Sat and Sun only in Sep and Oct) 10am–6pm or 7pm (time attractions close) + Christmas holidays 11am–7pm. Admission prices: adults €59; children €51; free for children under 3. Season ticket (unlimited visits to Parc Astérix for 1 year): adults €149; children €139. Offers available on the website. Charged parking: €20/day.

A few tips from the Cunning Gaul

- If you can, come and visit our Gaulish friends early in the season (April or May) and during the week: there will be fewer people.
 - Some attractions are water based, so don't forget to bring waterproofs or a change of clothes.
 - Adopt the 'Gaulish touch' with the Parc Astérix mobile app, which gives real-time information on queue times and tells you everything you need to know about the park's attractions and shows.
 - Get your children measured at the reception or in the shops near the park entrance. They will then receive a stamp or bracelet corresponding to their height. That way you won't need to get them measured before each attraction.
 - To avoid the queues, go against the flow. When you arrive in the morning, start with the attractions at the centre of the park, then move on to a show or two, which should keep you busy until around 2pm. After a late lunch (restaurants are busiest from 12 to 1.30pm), enjoy the attractions nearer the park entrance.
- It's of a manageable size, very friendly, great fun, authentic and not at all pretentious. In addition, the scenery is a real success (it was approved by Uderzo, in fact) and, from the menhirs to the thatched huts, you really feel like you've entered the world of the comic. There are attractions for all ages, so something for everyone. And finally, a round of applause for the shows!
- Parc Astérix is divided into six worlds: **Gaul**, where you'll find Asterix's village, the **Roman Empire**, **Ancient Greece** (a brilliant reconstitution of a little village on the edge of the Aegean Sea, with its taverns and its white and blue houses), **Through**

time, for a trip from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, the **Vikings zone**, for thrill-seekers, and **Egypt**, with its mammoth – or, as the French say, *pharaonique* – attraction, Oziris! In fact, the park isn't huge, so you can explore all of it in a day without needing to rush.

Shows

Programme and times available at the entrance. Remember to plan your day around the shows you want to see (some are on only once or twice a day).

VÉMARS

(95470)

Population 2,494

In the old Château de la Motte (now the mairie), you'll find a room paying tribute to François Mauriac, the town's most famous resident, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1952. His fans will also be able to visit his tomb, as the author of *Thérèse Desqueyroux* is buried with his wife in the commune's cemetery.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 702 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres RER (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Mousseyle-Vieux, Mousseyle-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron); **line 95-01 (kéolis CIF):**

Roissy-pole-Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Survilliers-Fosses (Épias-lès-Louvres, Mauregard, Vémars, Saint-Witz, Survilliers, Fosses).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** *rue Léon-Bouchar*. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-33-40. ● mairiedevemars.fr ●

Things to see and do

📍 **Musée François-Mauriac:** *in the mairie.* ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-33-40. ● mairiedevemars.fr ● *By appointment; Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, 9am–12pm and 2–6pm. Thu 2–6pm and Sat 9am–12pm. FREE.* The word museum is a bit of an exaggeration: one room, in which the writer's desk has been recreated and some of his personal effects collected together, on the ground floor of this house, which used to belong to his wife, Jeanne Lafon, and now houses the mairie. Mauriac stayed here many times after his marriage in 1913, and the house served as the base for his propaganda work against the German occupiers from 1940.

📍 **Église Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul:** ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-30-70 *(to collect the key).* The church was restored in 1849, in 1882, and more recently at the beginning of the 21st century, and is in an excellent condition. It has a bell, cast in 1653, named Catherine that rings in D flat. A second bell, named Laurence, which sounds A flat, was cast in June 2019 in the presence of the town's residents.

Finding some green space

➤ **Saint-Witz to Vémars circular walk 11 km (7 mi):** *for details, see pp. 94.*

Cultural venue

– **Bibliothèque associative:** at the mairie, 5 rue Léon-Bouchard.
☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-33-40.

VILLERON

(95380)

Population 2,000

The land once belonged to Chaalis Abbey, whose monks decided to build a farm and a remarkable grange here in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, this fabulous ‘cathedral of wheat’ is only rarely open to the public, but its vast size makes it easily visible from the road. It is one of the finest medieval buildings in Île-de-France. The rural and residential village developed much later and is of less interest.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 702 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres RER (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-le-Vieux, Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron); **line R4 (kéolis CIF):**

Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (via Épiais-lès-Louvres, Chennevières-lès-Louvres, Villeron).
For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 25 rue Saint-Germain. ☎ +33-(0)1-34-68-15-00. ● villeron.fr ●

Things to see

🏰🏰🏰 **The Cistercian grange of the Vaulerent (or Vaulerand) farm:** You can only see the outside of it, and from a distance. Listed as a historic monument since 1889, it is sadly open only about once a year (enquire at ARCHÉA in Louvres, where you can see – small consolation – a model of the grange).

Built in about 1220–30 in limestone and surmounted with a wooden roof and 150 tonnes of flat roof tiles, it is of an impressive size: 72 m (236 ft) long, 23 m (75 ft) wide and 20.5 m (67 ft) tall. Its 13 bays could contain 6,500 m³ (nearly 229,500 ft³) of grain! It is nicknamed ‘Devil’s grange’ after a farmer allegedly sold his daughter’s soul to the devil in exchange for a roof over the barn, on condition that this could be built during the night to protect his crops. According to the legend, he tricked the Devil by getting the cock to crow before dawn, thus saving his child but leaving the roof unfinished. In fact, this untiled space would have ensured good aeration of the grain.

Today, the famous ‘Ferme de Vaulerent potatoes’ are grown here, as the farm is still in operation (but there is no farm shop).

THE COMMUNES OF THE SOUTH-EAST

Between Villeparisis and Claye-Souilly, you can walk alongside the Canal de l'Ourcq (which celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2022). The banks of the canal still resonate with the voices of the colourful community that worked here in the 19th century, when the Ourcq was the main transportation route between Meaux and Paris. At the beginning of the 19th century, Napoleon was wanting to make Paris the most modern city in Europe, but it lacked an adequate water supply. So, it was decided to create a canal linking the river Ourcq to Paris to divert its course. The creation of the canal (1802–21) not only supplied Paris with drinking water but also established a new freight transportation route to the capital. Commercial shipping flourished here until the second half of the 20th century, when the railways took over. Since the 1980s, pleasure boating has been the main activity on the canal. In the 1990s, the banks of the canal were developed as a green space for leisure activities and active mobility. They have also become a paradise for street art: along the Canal de l'Ourcq street-art route, artworks of various sizes appear on a path or in front of a bridge. With graffiti, frescoes, tags, collages, stencils, and more, there's something for everyone. A very contemporary way to brighten up the route: even teenagers will want to get on their bikes!

VILLEPARISIS

(77270)

Population 26,580

The town's name comes from the Gallic tribe of the Parisii (who also gave their name to the city of Paris), who inhabited the area during ancient times, as is evidenced by the sarcophaguses that have been found here. For a long time, there were only fields and marshland here: the town only really developed with the arrival of the railway. Parisians would come here for a day or the weekend to garden, and later, when paid leave became the norm, would spend their holidays here. Then, in the post-war years, they began to move here with their families. Over time, the small allotments gained sheds, which gradually evolved into small houses. It is surprising to see that the town has retained its star-shaped plan with the station at the centre and the layout of the plots, which explains why this rather spread-out town is still very suburban and surrounded by fields, with neither high-rise nor low-rise blocks of flats.

Villeparisis is crossed by the Canal de l'Ourcq for a little over 5 km (3 mi) and is easily reached by bike from the Bassin de la Villette. You can also continue the walk as far as Claye-Souilly and Meaux. The 'Scandibérique' (EuroVélo 3) follows a stretch of this lovely route along the tow path.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF PROUST

Proust lovers will have noticed that one of the characters in In Search of Lost Time is none other than the Marquise de Villeparisis. This is no coincidence, given that Guermentes, the imaginary birthplace of the family of the famous Palamède de Guermentes, in other words the Baron de Charlus and his nephew Robert de Saint-Loup, is the name of a village just a few kilometres away.

How to get here

– **By RER train: RER B:** Gare du Nord/ Gare de Mitry-Claye (via Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf).

– **By bus: line 3 (kéolis CIF):** Villeparisis centre/Gare de Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf; **line 16 (kéolis CIF):** Gare de Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf/Compans(via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye); Le

Villepa, **lines 17, 18 and 21 (kéolis CIF):** (Villeparisis intramuros, market, centre); **line 23 (kéolis CIF):** Villeparisis/Aéroport CDG 1 (via Mitry-Mory); **line 71 (kéolis CIF):** circulaire Gare Villeparisis Mitry-le-Neuf.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info:

📍 **Mairie:** 32 rue de Ruzé. ☎ +33-(0)1-64-67-52-00. ● villeparisis.fr ●

– **Market:** pl. du marché Wed, Fri and Sun am.

Where to eat

📍 🍷 **Le Balthazar:** av. Jean-Monnet. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-35-87-75. Daily except Mon evening. Weekday lunch menus €14.50 and €18.90; main courses about €11–€42. With grilled matured meats, burgers, salads and pizzas, the menu has something for everyone. The setting is pleasant, with a large Babylonian fresco (and certainly nicer than the terrace, which overlooks the supermarket car park).

📍 🍷 **Bistro Régent:** av. Jean-Monnet.

☎ +33-(0)1-60-21-15-39. Daily 11.45am–2.30pm, 6.45–10.45pm (11pm Thu and 11.15pm Fri and Sat). Main courses €14.90–€25. This brasserie recommended by Michelin-starred French chef and TV personality Philippe Etchebest has made meat its speciality: tartare, entrecôte, magret... served with as many homemade chips as you can eat.

📍 **La Trattoria:** 31 rue J. Jaurès, en centre-ville.

Things to see and do

📍 🏰 **Église Notre-Dame-de-la-Paix:** 105 av. du Général-de-Gaulle. Built in 1955 and inaugurated three years later, this beautiful church, with its curves and vertical lines, is the work of architect Maurice Novarina. The separate belltower is more recent (1995), but is inspired by the architecture of the church, and it has to be said that the marriage is a great success. The interior – as understated as the exterior – has some beautiful abstract stained-glass windows that diffuse a lovely coloured light. The church has been awarded the ‘Architecture contemporaine remarquable’ certification label.


📍 🏰 **Musée de l’Histoire locale Francis-Écoutin:** Parc Honoré de Balzac, 60 rue Jean Jaurès. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-21-21-00. Sat 10am–12pm, or Mon–Fri by appointment.


Where to buy good produce

📍 🏠 **Biscuiterie Astruc:** 4 rue Denis-Papin. ☎ +33-(0)1-64-27-84-82. ● biscuiterie-astruc.fr ● Tue–Fri 10am–1pm, 2–7pm. Located on the industrial estate, this family biscuit factory, founded in 1927, is a dark horse: the quality is excellent and its ‘clean label’ guarantees that

its products contain no additives, colouring or preservatives, while the classic recipes (financiers, madeleines, etc.) are made with local wheat and eggs from free-range hens. Sold retail or by the kilo, these delicious biscuits and cakes are great value for money. A real bargain!

Finding some green space

 **The Canal de l'Ourcq**, for walking or cycling (see above), to Gressy and Claye-Souilly.

>  **EuroVelo 3: the section from Villeparisis to Thieux, 13 km (8 mi), allow an hour.** The 1,700 km French section, known here as the 'Scandibérique', of EuroVelo 3 (from Trondheim in Norway to Santiago de Compostela in Spain) crosses the Seine and the Marne. Between Villeparisis and Gressy, the route follows the canal. After that, you'll need to share the road with cars.

Cultural venues

 **Centre culturel municipal Jacques Prévert: pl. Pietrasanta.** ☎ +33-(0)1-64-67-59-60. ● ccjp. fr ● A 650-seater auditorium that is renowned in Île-de-France, both for the quality of its acoustics and for its rich and varied programmes: dance (ballet, contemporary, hip-hop), circus, concerts, classic and boulevard theatre, as well as shows for children. In front of the cultural centre, you can admire a work by the father of op art, artist Victor **Vasarely**: a big 'V', symbol of the town. Several of his lithographs

are also on display at the Hôtel de Ville.

In addition to the cultural centre, you'll also find a music conservatoire and multimedia and games libraries here.

– **Médiathèque municipale Elsa Triolet: pl. Pietrasanta.** ☎ +33-(0)1-60-21-21-60.

– **Conservatoire de Musique: 3 chemin de la Couronne.**

– **Ludothèque: pl. du Market (games library).**

Sports facilities

– **Piscine intercommunale Jean Taris: 88 av. de Berny.** ☎ +33-(0)1-64-27-52-70. *Open all year round, daily except for public holidays; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Rates: €4.50 for adults and €3 for under 18s (€3*

and €2 for guests). One of the famous 'sunflower' swimming pools built in the 1970s and 1980s, with their iconic roofs that can be partially opened in summer. In the centre is a 25m lane pool.

MITRY-MORY

(77290)

Population 20,648

Although the commune, which includes several villages, is very spread out, the old town remains very rural, despite being at the end of the runways! This makes it a mecca for plane spotting, and has saved it from rampant urbanisation. At the heart of the Espace naturel régional de la Plaine de France (which aims to preserve the agricultural areas south of the airport), the town pursues a policy of enhancing its biodiversity and combatting pollution: conservation grazing, planting flowers, installing beehives, redevelopment of the Moulin des Marais wood, etc. It also seeks to be 'edible', with herbs, fruits and vegetables available from the Jardin des sens, the pretty vegetable garden by the Mitry-le-Vieux church, and apples that can be picked in the orchard planted at the entrance to Mitry-le-Neuf. What a lovely idea!

How to get here

– **By train: By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard) **by TER.**

– **By RER train: RER B:** Gare du Nord/Gare de Mitry-Claye (via Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf).

– **By bus: line 9 (transdev):** Gare de Meaux/Gare RER de Mitry-Claye (Mitry-Mory) (via Claye-Souilly; **line 16**

(**kéolis CIF**): Gare de Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf/Compans (via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye); **line 23 (kéolis CIF):** Aéroport CDG1/Villeparisis (via Mitry-Mory); **line 24 (kéolis CIF):** Aéroport CDG 1 Terminal 2/Compans (via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info:

📍 **Mairie:** 11–13 rue Paul-Vaillant-Couturier. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-21-61-10. ● mitry-mory.fr ●

– **Market:** *pl. Centrale Tue and Sat am.*

Where to stay

🏠 **Ace Hôtel Paris Roissy:** ZAC de la Villette aux Aulnes, rue Galilée. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-94-80-20. ● ace-hotel-mitry.com ● Doubles €66–€88. Breakfast €7.10. Free private car park.

Nothing glamorous, but the 80 rooms are spacious, well-equipped and soundproofed, with basic decor in pleasant colours. Convenience store, café and restaurant on site.

Where to eat

In Mitry-le-Vieux

🍛 **À L'Himalaya:** 3 rue Paul-Vaillant-Couturier. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-27-90-94. Daily 12–2.30pm, 7–11pm. Mon–Fri lunchtime menu €13.50, other menus €19.50–€27.50. Indian halal food that will keep everyone happy, including vegetarians and those on a tight budget.

🍝 **Le Colombier:** 40 rue Paul-Vaillant-Couturier. ☎ +33-(0)1-80-70-99-60. Daily except Mon, 12–2.30pm (Sun 11am–3pm), 7–10.30pm. Mon–Fri lunchtimes, set menu €17; main course dishes €17–€50. Sun self-service brunch buffet €18; €8 for children. In the village centre, a magnificent restaurant set up in a renovated old farm. Everyone comes to eat in this spacious restaurant (as a family or a couple, with friends or colleagues), meeting up for Sunday brunch, a burger or great grills, with matured meat from selected breeds. The atmosphere is friendly, the service

excellent and the manager very attentive to the well-being of his customers. Our favourite restaurant in the area.

In Mitry-le-Neuf

🍝 **La Chouannerie:** 3 pl. Pasteur. ☎ +33-(0)1-64-67-95-25. Daily except Sun and Mon, 12–2pm, 7–10pm. A la carte about €21–€30. A crêperie with a pleasant atmosphere offering a good selection of crêpes and galettes with delicious fillings.

🍝 **O resto:** 7 rue Paul-Vaillant-Couturier. ☎ +33-(0)1-64-27-10-64. Mon–Fri 11.45am–2.30pm. Main courses, pasta and pizzas about €9–€23. A great place to enjoy a tasty and authentic Italian lunch. Everything is homemade, and made to order, using fresh, quality produce, beautifully presented. A good selection of fresh pasta dishes and grilled meats. A good spot for lunch, with a pleasant atmosphere and attentive service.

Things to see and do

For those who don't want to miss anything, several themed trails (history, urban, nature) are available to download from the mairie's website that will help you explore the town's heritage.

In Mitry-le-Vieux

✂ ✂ **Église Saint-Martin:** *open for mass and for concerts and special events.* Built in the 16th and 17th centuries, extended in the 18th century and listed as a historic monument in 1973. In the mid-17th century, Cardinal Richelieu, lord of Mitry, donated to the church a remarkable organ, also listed. With 34 stops and four manuals, it can play nearly 80 different notes! If the church is open, take a look, too, at François I's salamander and the *Adoration of the Magi*, a painting by Gabriel-François Doyen.

✂ **Walk around the village:** behind the church there is a farm and two walls of street art leading to an old cobblestone path through the fields. Very picturesque – and surprising, when aeroplanes emerge above the trees. One of our prettiest photo spots.

Out of the ordinary

✂ **Plane spotting at the Concorde crash memorial:** although you can't get to either the memorial, located near the runway on the Mitry-Mory side, or the stèle erected to commemorate the Concorde crash (see also Gonesse), you can park in the car park and watch the planes. Watching them take off and land has a childlike appeal, and you'll be surprised at the number of plane spotters you'll see climbing up the smallest embankment or wall or even standing on their stepladders!

Finding some green space

✂ ✂ **Bois du Moulin des Marais:** *main entrance via the D 139, as you leave Mory.* What was once the biggest expanse of marshland in Île-de-France is now a beautiful landscaped wood of 60 ha (nearly 400 acres). Classed as an 'Espace naturel sensible' (sensitive natural site), it is home to numerous plant and animal species. A **marked trail** leads to the Fontaine Gravier lake (*étang*). On the way, you'll pass a curious 'dolmen', an ancient bog, some hornbeams, ash, maples, poplars, hazelnut trees, yews and hawthorns. And, depending on the season, you may be able to pick redcurrants, wild strawberries, blackberries or mushrooms, and even spot a deer, a fox, a pheasant or a wild boar. It's hard to imagine such biodiversity in the town!

➤ **Route de l'aéroport, mémorial Concorde:** *cycle route. Distance: 27 km (17 mi); average time: 1 hr 50 mins; difficulty: average, on cycle paths and roads. Starts from the Gare de Vert Galant and finishes at Villepinte.* This loop will take you from the Canal de l'Ourcq to the outskirts of the port area, passing by the Claye road and Mitry-Mory.

Cultural venues

∞∞ **Cinéma Municipal Le Concorde:** 4 av. des Bosquets. One screen showing French and international films.
– **Médiathèque municipale Georges**

Brassens: 16 av. Jean-Jaurès.
☎ +33-(0)1-60-21-22-50.
– **Centre culturel L'Atalante:** 1 rue Jean-Vigo. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-54-44-80.

Sports facilities

– **Intercommunal swimming pool:** *rue Estienne-d'Orves.* ☎ +33-(0)1-64-27-06-12. *Open all year round, daily except 1 and 8 May; hours very variable depending on days and times of year (enquire). Rates: €4.50 for*

adults and €3 for under 18s (€3 and €2 for guests). Four lanes in a 25m pool, plus a small pool, and a solarium in the summer. Aquarobics and scuba-diving classes.

CLAYE-SOUILLY

(77410)

Population 12,372

Claye-Souilly, a town in bloom, marks the entrance to the Pays de Brie, and has a surprisingly provincial atmosphere given its proximity to Paris. A lovely château houses the mairie, a long shopping street attracts regular customers and the old port is a reminder of the Canal de l'Ourcq's inland navigation vocation. A charming place for a stop!

How to get here

– **By train: By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard); **by TER.**

– **By RER train: RER B:** Gare du Nord/Gare de Mitry-Claye (Mitry-Mory) (via Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf).

– **By bus: line 9 (transdev):** Gare de Meaux/Gare RER de Mitry-Claye

(Mitry-Mory) (via Claye-Souilly); **line 18 (transdev):** Claye-Souilly/Gare RER de Mitry-Claye); **line Express 20 (transdev):** Roissy-pole Aéroport CDG 1/Meaux (via Claye-Souilly); **line 21 (kéolis CIF):** Mairie annexe de Claye-Souilly/Marché de Villeparisis. For more info: ● ratp.fr ● transdev-idf.com ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info:

🏛️ **Mairie:** 1 allée André-Benoist. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-26-92-00. ● claye-souilly.fr ●

– **Market:** *pl. de Gaulle, Wed and Sat am.*

Where to eat

➡️ **Au Duc de Claye:** 46 rue Jean-Jaurès. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-26-85-00. *Daily except Sun pm and Mon, 6.30am–7.30pm (8pm Sat).* A genuine patisserie that has won a number of awards. This is mainly a shopping street, which means you can stock up along the canal.

🍷 **La Closerie:** 16 rue Wolfgang-Amadeus-Mozart. *Set menus €29.90–€31.50, another menu €42.50; à la carte about €44–€92.* A restaurant that is well known to

food lovers. Here, the charcuterie is *ibérico* or from Gascony, meat is matured and sold by the kilo, and the cuisine is traditionally French, with suckling pig, heritage vegetables and dishes in sauce. There's also a very fine selection of seafood. And a friendly welcome. Although the prices are 'chic', the atmosphere remains warm and inviting, as people come here to eat well and enjoy themselves.

Where to buy good produce

🍷 **Ferme du Gué au Prieur:** *chemin de Charny*. ● *ferme-de-claye-souilly.com* ● *Farm shop Fri and Sat 9am–12pm, 2–6pm*. Sells organic farm produce: vegetables, fruit, lamb, poultry, eggs, honey, etc.

🍷 **Ferme des Monts Gardés:** *Les Monts Gardés*. 📞 +33-(0)6-25-97-45-60.

● *agrofile.fr* ● *Farm shop Sat pm by appointment*. On a former railway wasteland, 35 ha (86 acres) of organic crops and agroforestry (combining trees and food crops) experimentation. Sells fruit and vegetables, honey and jams, apple juice, eggs, lamb and poultry.

Finding some green space

🚶🚶🚶 **Canal de l'Ourcq:** between Claye-Souilly and Meaux, the asphalt track gives way to a rather stony towpath.

🌳 **Claye-Souilly forest:** this regional forest of 442 ha (1.7 sq. mi), though surrounded or crossed by two main roads (A 104 and RN 13), remains a lovely green space, accessible via the canal, that offers some lovely views of the Pays de France and Les Monts de la Goële. Nature walks (sometimes at night for a total sensory experience) are organised regularly by the **Agence des espaces verts d'Île-de-France** (90–92 av. du Général-Leclerc, 93500 Pantin). 📞 +33-(0)1-83-65-38-00. ● *aev-iledefrance.fr* ●

Things to experience

🛍️ **Shopping promenade:** *3 rue Robert-Schuman*. ● *shoppingpromenade-clayesouilly.fr* ● *Daily 10am–7.30pm*. A big shopping centre with a cinema, bowling alley and restaurants, too.

Cultural venues

🎭 **Espace André-Malraux:** *pl. Charles-de-Gaulle*. 📞 +33-(0)1-60-27-01-78. 300-seater auditorium.

🎭 **My Ciné:** *rte Nationale, 3 lieu-dit Les Masures*. Three cinemas screening

French and international films, with Dolby Atmos.

– **Médiathèque municipale de l'Orangerie:** *4 allée André-Benoist*. 📞 +33-(0)1-60-26-92-10.

Sports facilities

– **Intercommunal swimming pool:** *allée de la Piscine*. 📞 +33-(0)1-64-66-47-34. *Open all year round, daily except some weekends and public holidays; hours very variable depending on days and times of year*

(enquire). Rates: €4.50 for adults and €3 for under 18s (€3 and €2 for guests). A four-lane, 25m pool plus a paddling pool. In summer, there's an outdoor space with a lawn, terrace and table-tennis tables.

GRESSY

(77410)

Population 773

Gressy, a tranquil village crossed by the Canal de l'Ourcq, turns out to be a destination in its own right, with a fine hotel and restaurant, where you can

🌿 **Ferme de la Garenne:** *rue Saint-Denis. Open in Dec, daily 10am–7pm (Tue and Thu 1.30–7pm).* OK, so you can't eat them, but what a pleasure to be able to select your Christmas tree at the nursery! Choice of spruce or Nordmann fir.

🌿 **Blette comme chou:** *47 rue Royale, 77410 Saint-Mesmes. ☎ +33-(0)6-37-12-45-42. About 4 km (2½ mi) north-east of Gressy. Wed–Fri 3–7pm and Sat 9am–12.30pm.* The farm,

which specialises in growing potatoes, has opened a shop selling only farm produce. As they also sell produce from neighbouring farms, you can find (almost) anything here! Freshness and seasonality guaranteed. You can also buy, from a refrigerated vending machine, accessible 24/7, eggs, fruit and vegetables, farm groceries and, of course, potatoes! Two other such vending machines can be found at Othis and Saint-Mard.

Finding some green space

🌿 **Macquer pond and park:** at the heart of the village, a superb and charming municipal park where you can have a sit down or take a stroll. The natural pond is now fed by an arm of the Beuvronne and joins the Canal de l'Ourcq Canal, providing part of its supply. You'll also find tennis courts and a great fitness trail here.

🚲 **The Canal de l'Ourcq and the EuroVelo 3:** as in Villeparisis and Claye-Souilly (Gressy is between the two), it's a great pleasure to cycle or walk along the banks of the canal and the towpath. As far as Gressy, the two routes combine; at Gressy, the EuroVelo 3, the long-distance cycle route that links Scandinavia to Spain, turns off towards Compans and Thieux, while the canal continues on to Claye and Meaux (52 km/32 mi from Paris). A lovely walk or cycle beside the water, sheltered from traffic and on a good asphalt path as far as Claye.

➤ **A short circular walk in the Goële plain east of the Beuvronne river:** *on foot. Time: about 3 hrs. Distance: about 11 km (7 mi). Start at av. du Château de Gressy. No route markings.*

Cultural venues

– **Bibliothèque intercommunale:** *12 av. du Château. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-27-92-37.*

AROUND GRESSY

🏰 **Nantouillet:** this marvellous village, which you pass through between Gressy and Juilly, is not actually part of the Pays de France. But it is difficult not to mention it, and even harder to resist the timeless appeal of its church and its Renaissance château. Although the latter, built by Cardinal Antoine Duprat, private tutor then chancellor to François I, is now a ruin, it is still very beautiful. From the pretty Roman bridge, the view is picture perfect!

COMPANS

(77290)

Population 830

Overflown by aeroplanes and crossed by EuroVelo 3, this village is home to the Cueillette de Compans, one of our top picks in the Pays de France. And it's just as well, as, located in the valley of the Biberonne, a tributary of the

Beuvronne, the rural village has retained no notable heritage sites. In the past, there were traces of Gallo-Roman villas and two pretty windmills at Condé and Ouacre (the latter dating from the 12th century), but nothing is now visible. But never mind: the pick-your-own place has plenty to keep you fed and occupied!

How to get here

– **By train:** **By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard); by TER.
– **By bus:** **line 16 (kéolis CIF):** Gare de Villeparisis-Mitry-le-Neuf/Compans (via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye); **line 24 (kéolis CIF):** Aéroport CDG 1

Terminal 2/Compans (via Mitry-Mory, Gare de Mitry-Claye); **free municipal shuttle bus:** Tue and Fri to Villeparisis market and shopping centres (reserved for residents).
For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 1 rue de la Mairie. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-26-10-06. ● mairiedecompans.fr ●

Where to buy good produce

🛒 🚶 **Les 2 Cueillettes de Compans:** 23 rue de l'Église. ● cueillettedecompans.fr ● **Pick-your-own and farm shop:** Mon 2–7pm; Tue–Fri 9am–12pm, 2–7pm; Sat and Sun 9am–7pm. In the shop, you can stock up on good produce, mainly from the Pays de France but also from Hauts-de-France: meat, charcuterie, cheese, drinks, fruit juice and groceries. You'll also find everything you need for a picnic (except fresh bread). But the greatest pleasure here remains picking your own, with around 50 types of seasonal fruit and vegetables (as

well as flowers!) to choose from: squash, potatoes, carrots, turnips, salad leaves, tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, strawberries, raspberries, pears, plums and some 20 varieties of apples. The setting is as bucolic as you could wish for, despite the constant passage of planes overhead. Amazing! We love it!

🛒 **Les Belles Rousses:** 45 rue de Saint-Lambert. ● lesbellesrousses@gmail.com ● **Facebook** ● Sells farm beef and veal to order in 5 and 10 kg packs every other month.

TO THE EAST

THIEUX

(77230)

Population 908

Crossed by the Biberonne and Beuvronne rivers and served by the station that it shares with Nantouillet (an adorable neighbouring village near Gressy). Take advantage of Journées du patrimoine (heritage days) to discover its church, which contains a beautiful altarpiece. Further down, there's a pretty picnic site, opposite an abandoned mill, and a restored lavoir. There are also two fine 18th-century farms, but they are privately owned and hidden from view behind their high walls.

How to get here

– **By train:** **By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compiègne, Thieux-Nantouillet and

Dammartin-Jully-Saint-Mard); **by TER.**

For more info: ● ratp.fr ●

Useful addresses

🏠 **Mairie:** 17 Grande-Rue. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-26-23-04. ● mairiedethieux.fr ●
🍷 **Atoo Alimentation:** 2 rue du Saule-Madame. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-26-45-75. Daily 9am (10.30am Sat)–1.30pm,

3.30–11pm. A convenience store in the village centre: very practical for stocking up if you're cycling on the EuroVelo 3.

Where to stay / Where to eat

🏠 🍷 **Le Relais des Trois-Villes:** 18 rue des Trois-Villes. ☎ +33-(0)6-29-52-03-66. Daily except Fri pm and Sat and Sun, 6am–3pm, 5–8pm. A bar and

tobacconist's that comes to the rescue of cyclists with its daily menu, and even has a few bedrooms on the first floor.

Finding some green space

🚲 ➤ **EuroVelo 3:** the section from Villeparisis to Thieux, 13 km (8 mi), allow an hour. From Gressy onwards, the cycle route leaves the Canal de l'Ourcq, and until you reach Thieux, you'll be sharing the road (the D9) with cars; the route is neither protected nor signposted. Thieux is also the *start of a second section towards Ver-sur-Laurette (18 km/11 mi, 1½ hrs)*, via Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-le-Vieux and Moussy-le-Neuf, which follows the N2 and D26E. This stretch is best reserved for experienced cyclists used to cycling on busy roads.

JUILLY

(77230)

Population 1,937

This small rural commune can boast of having been home to a famous boarding school attended by some now-famous boarders.

How to get here

– **By train: By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard), **by TER.**
– **By bus: line 708 (kéolis CIF):** Othis

Beaupré/Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard (via Mairie d'Othis, Centre de Saint-Mard).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 8 rue Pierre-Loyer. ☎ +33-(0)1-64-36-23-32. ● juilly77.fr ●

Things to see

✂ **Collège de Juilly:** created in 1638 under Louis XIII, this is the oldest *collège* (secondary school) in France. Until the 1980s and '90s, 1,000 students attended the school, 600 of them as boarders. Famous ex-pupils include: Montesquieu, the Duke of Antin, Jérôme Bonaparte, the cartographer Cassini, actors Philippe Noiret and Claude Brasseur, singer-songwriters Jean-Jacques Debout and Michel Polnareff and even the criminal Jacques Mesrine. Closed as a school since 2012, the building, once restored, will contain 217 flats, which will double the population! The PLU (local urbanisation plan) prohibits building in the airport zone, so there was an urgent need to restore and save this fine building by finding a new use for it. A frugal approach to architecture that is very much in keeping with the times.

✂ **Église Saint-Étienne:** already reconstructed in 1535, the church was rebuilt again in the 19th century by architect Louis Auguste Boileau, who also designed the Bon Marché department store in Paris. Its originality lies in its iron framework, pillars, capitals and ribbing, resting on stone and cement bases and floors.

Finding some green space

➤ **Walk around Beuvronne and the Ru de la Maquerelle on the Goële plain:** 11.5 km (7 mi), allow about 3½ hrs. The route starts behind the church, in the *rue Saint-Louis* in Juilly. Mostly in the open countryside, through large expanses of cultivated land, the route passes three villages: **Juilly**, **Vinantes** and **Nantouillet**. A pleasant walk along the Canal de l'Ourcq.

➤ The GR1 (long-distance footpath) crosses the forest and goes past Meaux station.

Cultural venue

– **Médiathèque intercommunale:** 2 rue des Mésanges. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-44-79-49.

FURTHER AFIELD

☞☞☞ ♣ **Musée de la Grande Guerre:** rue Lazare-Ponticelli, **Meaux**. 18.5 km (11½ mi) east of Juilly and 3 km (2 mi) north-east of the town centre (signposted); 10 mins by bus from the Gare de Meaux (line G). ☎ +33-(0)1-60-32-14-18. ● museedelagrandeguerre.eu ● 🚫 Daily except Tue, 9.30am–6pm (last entry 30 mins before closing). Closed 1 Jan, 1 May, 10 days during Aug and 25 Dec. Admission: €10; free for under 26s; reductions. Audioguides included for adults and children. Bookshop. Allow 2 hrs to visit. Temporary exhibitions, concerts, conferences, reconstructions, etc.

This magnificent and vast museum stands at the foot of the great American Monument that commemorates the Battles of the Marne: *La Liberté éplorée* ('The Tearful Liberty'). Housed in a beautiful building created specially to display the astounding collection of 50,000 pieces assembled by Jean-Pierre Verney, a specialist in the field, it welcomes visitors with sound effects that immediately put them in the context of the Great War.

Inside, the modern and effective museum design brilliantly retraces the terrible hours of the conflict through **two routes**. The first, **chronological**, takes you from the Franco-Prussian War (1870) to the end of the First World War (1918): it explores the emergence of the idea of vengeance in France after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the patriotic shaping of young minds (through games and dressing up as soldiers) before presenting the European context. Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo, leading to a barrage of mobilisation orders in every language. Two narrow corridors, which you walk along with soldiers in uniform to the sound of the songs of the time, lead to a huge space, where the war explodes in all its horror. The second route explores different **aspects of the War in smaller side galleries**. These tell the story of soldiers from the colonies and of women behind the scenes (the 'war godmothers'), the war-wounded (in an impressive 'Bodies and Suffering' section) and everyday life in the trenches. The route ends with 'The Illusion of Victory' and the harsh demands of the Treaty of Versailles, which led, inevitably, to the Second World War. A fascinating museum that we recommend for all ages.

TO THE EAST

DAMMARTIN-EN-GOËLE (77153) Population 11,273

The collegiate church here bears witness to this town's prestigious past. It still stands at the end of the main shopping street, but is, unfortunately, closed to the public. Also worth seeing is the beautiful Empire-style mairie, at one time the courthouse, and behind it, a 15th-century covered market.

How to get here

– **By train:** **By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard) **by TER.**

– **By bus: line 701 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Othis Beaupré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële);

line 707 (kéolis CIF): Rouvres/Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard (via Dammartin-en-Goële).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** 79 rue du Général-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-85-50. ● dammartin-en-goele.fr ● The

commune has published a small tourist guide, available from the mairie.

Where to eat

🍲 **Le Marrakech:** 52 rue du Général-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-42-73. Daily except Mon, 12–2.30pm, 7–10.30pm (9.30pm Sun). Mon–Fri set lunch menu €16.50; main courses €14–€23.50. Take a taste trip to the other side of the Mediterranean with couscous, tajines, kebabs and other Moroccan classics.

🍷 ➤ **Kosy Time:** 112 rue du Général-

de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-87-07-02-02. Daily 11.30am–11.30pm. Mon–Fri lunchtimes, set menus €12.50 and €17; pide or sandwich menus €20.50–€24.50; main courses €13–€35; sandwiches about €9. An upmarket café serving nice Turkish specialities: hummus, falafels, grilled vegetables, *pides*, barbecued meats.

Things to see and do

✝️ **Collégiale Notre-Dame:** rue de l’Hôtel-Dieu. *Not to be confused with the parish church.* Listed as a historic monument in 1939, but sadly closed. So, you won’t be able to see the mausoleum of Antoine de Chabannes (1408–88), famous for having been one of Joan of Arc’s companions, or the 17th-century high altar. You can take consolation from the fact that, in 1873, the collegiate church was in such a poor state that it was decided to demolish it; the only parts that were preserved were the Flamboyant portal and the bell tower, both of which can be seen from outside! It was rebuilt in 1902. Facing the church, the hospice chapel used to house a small archaeological museum, but that is also now closed. You will have to make do with the 18th-century distance marker, recognisable by its fleur-de-lis, which signposted the old royal road, and a stone bearing the Montmorency coat of arms. Beneath it, but inaccessible, is a **tithe cellar**, where, as its name suggests, the proceeds of the tithe were stored. An old well on the square completes the picture.

➤ **Baludik trail:** ● baludik.fr ● Allow 1 hr. This free mobile app (currently in French only) enables you to visit Dammartin-en-Goële and discover its history and heritage in a new way, through fun walks and treasure hunts. For an original family walk, simply follow the clues to get to the next stage of the trail. There, your telephone will vibrate and the secret will be revealed, the puzzle solved. Step by step and clue by clue, you’ll reach the goal. At Dammartin, you’ll need to open a chest that may contain the necklace of the Order of Saint Michael of the Count of Chabannes.

– **History trail:** a walk through the town to see some remarkable houses and other heritage sites. Map available on ● dammartin-en-goele.fr ●

Cultural venue

– **Ludo-médiathèque intercommunale George Sand:** *place des Prieurs*. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-54-97-32. (Multimedia and games library.)

AROUND DAMMARTIN

✂ **Saint-Mard (77230):** a major commercial hub on the N2, with a big industrial and hotel zone. In the centre, the church, usually closed, contains a polychrome wooden statue of Saint Mard dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. You'll also find, on rue du Moutier, a **Blette comme Chou farm fruit and vegetable vending machine** (see p.105). The GR1 (long-distance footpath) crosses the commune heading towards Dammartin-en-Goële and Juilly.

– **By train: By transilien K:** Paris-Nord/Crépy-en-Valois (via Mitry-Claye, Compans, Thieux-Nantouillet, Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard), **by TER.**
– **By bus: line 707 (kéolis CIF):** Rouvres/Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard (via Dammartin-en-Goële); **line 708 (kéolis CIF):** Othis Beaupré/

Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard (via Mairie d'Othis, Centre de Saint-Mard); **line 709 (kéolis CIF):** Longperrier/Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

📄 **Mairie:** *11 rue de la Mairie*. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-11-12. ● saint-mard77.fr ●

– **Bibliothèque municipale:** *7 bd de la République*. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-29-95.

Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin

✂ **Les Yeux du ciel:** *rt de Stains (77230)* ● groupe-ect.com ● Imagine a pair of giant eyes, 400 m wide, staring at the sky! This work of art, the unveiling of which is planned for the Olympic Games in 2024, will be visible only from the sky. This incredible art project by architect Antoine Grumbach is part of a wider cultural and environmental initiative that aims to recover waste from the construction industry and to recycle the earth from the Grand Paris construction site.

Where to stay

🏠 **Gîtes La Bullote:** *19 rue de Paris, 77230 Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin*. ☎ +33-(0)6-16-37-43-21. A lovely and nicely renovated 18th-century farm offering 12 comfortable and well-equipped gîtes that can accommodate 2–8 people. Barbecue available. Also a function room for 80–100 people. Excellent welcome.

– **By bus: line 701 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Othis

Beaupré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële); **line 702 (kéolis CIF):** Roissy-pôle Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres RER (Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-le-Vieux Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ● EuroVelo 3 also passes through Villeneuve.

📄 **Mairie:** *35 rue de Paris*. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-43-35. ● villeneuve-sous-dammartin.fr ●

✂ **Rouvres (77230):** at the heart of this tiny farming village of 910 inhabitants you'll find a lovely brick church, built in 1906. That's about all there is to see in this village that has more than once found itself on the front line: in 1814, against the Russian

and Prussian armies, and in 1914, during the First Battle of the Marne. On the night of 7 September, the 600 Taxis of the Marne passed through Dammartin, Saint-Mard and Rouvres. That's no small claim to fame!

Behind the railway, you can take a short walk on an old cobbled road past hazelnut orchards. A fitness trail has been laid out along the tracks.

– **By bus: line 707** (kéolis CIF): Rouvres/Dammartin-Jully-Saint-Mard (via Dammartin-en-Goële).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

■ **Mairie:** *pl. de la Mairie*. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-41-66. ● rouvres77.fr ●

Finding some green space in and around Dammartin

➤ **Walk from Fosses to Saint-Mard, along the banks of the Biberonne:** see above, 'Finding some green space in Fosses', for details.

➤ **Circular walk from Dammartin-en-Goële to Loisy:** about 22 km (13½ mi), allow about 6½ hrs. On the way there, the route follows the GR1 from Dammartin-en-Goële to Loisy, alongside the Thève, whose source is in the commune of Dammartin, for some of the way. On the way back, you'll discover Ver-sur-Launette and Othis. The route starts and finishes at the cemetery car park in Dammartin-en-Goële.

➤ **Circular walk from Dammartin-en-Goële to Montgé-en-Goële:** about 22 km (13½ mi), allow about 6¾ hrs. On the way, the route follows the GR1 from Dammartin as far as the Montgé Regional Forest. On the way back, you'll discover the commune of Rouvres.

➤ **Butte de Montgé:** about 8 km (5 mi), allow 2½ hrs. A short circular walk, north of the N3 between Dammartin-en-Goële and Meaux, passing through the forest on the crest of the hill, then returning via the plain at the foot of its southern slope. The route starts and finishes in rue Neuve, which leads to the Montgé-en-Goële cemetery.

➤ **Walk from Saint-Mard to Meaux via the isolated outcrops of Goële:** About 21 km (13 mi), allow about 6½ hrs. (Note that you can get a train in the morning from the Gare du Nord to Dammartin-Jully-Saint-Mard and return from Meaux to the Gare de l'Est.) A route (following the 'Grand tour de Paris', the GR11, from station to station) through forest, cultivated plain and the Goële hills and along the banks of the canal. Don't miss the geodesic chimney.

➤ **Parc de la Corbie and its arboretum:** open Wed–Sun 10am–7.30pm. On a sloping site of more than 6 ha (15 acres), a large part of it wooded, you'll find a clearing with a pond as well as an arboretum with some large trees, including plane trees, cedars and lime trees. A lovely spot for a picnic.

OTHIS

(77280)

Population 6,834

'A town in the countryside', to quote the municipal slogan! But our top pick is the superb Renaissance portal of the Notre-Dame church. At the Revolution, Othis was attached to the district of Meaux; until then it had depended on the town of Senlis. The town also pays tribute to French writer and poet Gérard de Nerval, who grew up in Valois and remained attached to the region.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 701 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Othis Beauré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële); **line 708 (kéolis**

CIF): Othis Beauré/Gare de Dammartin-Juilly-Saint-Mard (via Mairie d'Othis, Centre de Saint-Mard).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Where to eat

📍📍📍 **Lublin Restaurant:** 2 rue Gérard-de-Nerval. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-59-76. At the entrance to the town. Tue–Fri and Sun 12–2pm, plus Sat 7–9pm and Sun 12–2pm. Mon–Fri set lunch menu €16.90 and dish of the day €19.90; evening menu €26. À la carte about €26–€42. The chef can be proud of his

success. Having travelled the world and gained experience working with some top chefs, he is now excelling in Othis, to the great delight of his regular customers. A pleasant dining room and terrace where you can enjoy your meal, a warm atmosphere and attentive service.

Things to see and do

👤👤👤 **Église Notre-Dame:** tour Sat am 10am–12pm. The architecture of the church, built between 1500 and 1573, is very medieval in style, with its solid Briard bell tower, but its **portal**, attributed to the sculptor Jean Goujon, is a real **Renaissance masterpiece**, with finely sculpted and decorative tracery and rather exuberant columns, friezes, rose window and sculptures. The contrast between the two is quite striking. The church has been listed as a historic monument since 1875.

Where to buy good produce

🛒 **Blette comme Chou vending machine:** rue Gérard-de-Nerval (next

to the church). Accessible 24/7. (See p.105.)

Finding some green space

You can get details of walks from the mairie or on ● goelerando.fr ●

➤ **Sur les pas de Nerval (In the footsteps of Nerval):** A 5.8 km (3½ mi) walk between Othis and Dammartin, starting from the church (first information board and map, which you can photograph or download).

➤ **Parc de Beauré:** 9 km (5½ mi), allow 2½ hrs). An opportunity to visit the pretty village of Beaumarchais (now part of Othis).

➤ **Le PR d'Othis (Othis hiking trail):** 15.3 km (9½ mi), allow 6 hrs. Towards the Parc de la Corbie and Dammartin.

➤ **Les Jardins de la Goële (Goële gardens):** 10.5 km (6½ mi), allow 3 hrs. And **Le grand puits Blein (Blein great well):** 6 km/3¾ mi), allow 1¾ hrs. Two variants of the previous route.

➤ **La mare Lorillard (Lorillard pond):** 6.5 km (4 mi), allow 1¾ hrs.

Famous person

– **Gérard de Nerval** (1808–55): this poet and writer was a major figure of 19th-century French Romanticism. In *The Daughters of Fire*, a collection of short stories and poems that include the short story 'Sylvie' and 'Chansons et Legendes du Valois' (Songs and legends of Valois). Othis has kept his memory alive, and today you'll see a road and a bar/restaurant/tobacconist's named after him as well as a Rue des Filles du Feu and the Jardins de Sylvie! There is also a monument dedicated to him.

MOUSSY-LE-VIEUX

(77230)

Population 1,677

The town centre, which seems newer than that of Moussy-le-Neuf, has gone down in history as the place that welcomed the 'Gueules cassées' (soldiers facially disfigured in WW1), who had been abandoned to their fate without any war pension. A memorial path is dedicated to them.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 702 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-

le-Vieux, Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Useful address

📍 **Mairie:** pl. Marcel-Hatier. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-43-06. ● moussy-le-vieux.fr ●

Things to see

👤 Although the Château de Moussy, purchased in 1926 by the Union des Blessés de la Face et de la Tête (association of the wounded to the face and the head), is privately owned and you can now view only the exterior, the mairie has created, in commemoration of the centenary of the Great War, a '**Sourire quand même**' (smile anyway) trail with nine information boards and a memorial path that leads up to the church. (A map is available from the mairie). Moving, educational and essential. The panels also provide a lot of information about the village's history and heritage.

✝️ **Église Saint-Martin:** listed as a historic monument, the church has a strange profile with its Gothic chancel and its much lower Renaissance nave.

Where to buy good produce

🌿 **Le Jardin des Vignettes:** ch. des Vignettes. ● vmassat@gmail.com ● Farm shop Fri 10am–12pm, 5–7pm

(or 24/7 from the vending machine at Moussy-le-Neuf). Seasonal organic fruit and vegetables.

Finding some green space

➤ The mairie distributes a map/guide showing several **walking trails** as well as a dozen sheets detailing circular walks ranging from 2.8 km (1¾ mi) to 13.5 km (8½ mi) (allow 40 mins to 3½ hrs), also available on ● citytrail.com ●

AROUND MOUSSY-LE-VIEUX

✂ **Longperrier** (77230): as soon as you leave the main road and the commercial zone, you'll find a simple and pretty village (but with 2,500 inhabitants), where you can hear children's laughter mingle with the drone of aeroplanes overhead. This is still a very rural place: some of the roads around the 12th-century church are not even tarmacked. In the lovely mairie, you can get details of the **Circuit des Gueules cassées**, a 16 km (10 mi) driving tour that will take you through Moussy-le-Vieux, Othis and Dammartin.

– **By bus: line 701 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Othis Beaupré (via Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Longperrier, Dammartin-en-Goële); line 709 (kéolis CIF): Longperrier/Gare

de Dammartin-Jully-Saint-Mard.

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

ℹ **Mairie:** 2 rue de Maincourt. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-00-04. ● mairie-longperrier.fr ●

MOUSSY-LE-NEUF

(77230)

Population 3,263

A 'new' village that is not all that new: the presence of Gallo-Roman settlements has been attested and its church dates back to the 13th century! There are also some fine farm buildings in this pretty village, which remains rural and well preserved. Not far from the impressive structure of the beautiful covered market, you'll find the ruins of the Église Sainte-Opportune and the remains of an old priory.

How to get here

– **By bus: line 702 (kéolis CIF):** Roissypole Aéroport CDG 1/Gare de Louvres (Le Mesnil-Amelot, Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin, Moussy-

le-Vieux, Moussy-le-Neuf, Vémars, Villeron).

For more info: ● ratp.fr ● keolis-cif.com ●

Address and useful info:

ℹ **Mairie:** pl. Charles-de-Gaulle. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-03-42-38. ● moussy-le-neuf.fr ●

– **Market:** Sat am, under the lovely covered market.


Where to eat

🍷 **L'Atelier:** 33 rue Cambacères. ☎ +33-(0)1-60-35-85-33. Mon–Fri

12–2pm, plus Fri 7–8.45pm. Set menus €19.50 and €24. À la carte

€31–€45. A restaurant in the village centre that is appreciated for its good homemade food. The popular menu of the day adds to the limited à la carte menu.


Where to buy good produce

 **Fruit and vegetable vending machine:** *next to the post office.* Stocked by the Jardin des Vignettes, the organic farm in Moussy-le-Vieux (see above), this huge vending machine enables you to stock up on seasonal fruit and vegetables at any time of day or night. Very practical.

Where to stay

 **Aire de camping-car (caravan/ motorhome park):** *rue Lampéazard.* Open all week, €3/night, max 5 nights.

Things to do

 **Bowling Escape Factory:** *rte de Vemars, Intermarché car park.* ☎ +33-(0)1-60-27-27-71. ● escapefactory.fr ● *Bowling Mon–Fri 4pm (1pm Wed)–midnight (2am Fri); Sat 11am–2am; Sun 11am–7pm. Allow €5–€8, depending on the time.* Twenty bowling alleys, a laser game in a 300 m² maze, an amusement arcade (with lots of games for 4+ years) and six billiard tables. You'll also find a bar, a restaurant and a fitness centre here.

GENERAL INDEX

A RNAUVILLE	64	Meaux.....	109
Asnières-sur-Oise.....	88	MESNIL-AMELOT (LE)	48
B ONNEUIL-EN-FRANCE.....	66	MESNIL-AUBRY (LE).....	81
Bouqueval	82	MITRY-MORY	99
Bourget (Le).....	67	MOUSSY-LE-NEUF	115
C hantilly.....	90	MOUSSY-LE-VIEUX	114
Chennevières-Lès-Louvres	51	N antouillet	105
CLAYE-SOUILLY	102	O THIS.....	112
COMPANS.....	105	Our Top Picks	10
D AMMARTIN-EN-GOËLE	109	P eople, Culture, Environment ...	30
É COUEN.....	76	Plailly	94
ÉPIAIS-LÈS-LOUVRES.....	50	PLESSIS-GASSOT (LE).....	82
F ONTENAY-EN-PARISIS.....	82	PUISEUX-EN-FRANCE.....	54
FOSSÉS.....	86	R ecommended Itineraries	18
G ARGES-LÈS-GONESSE	71	ROISSY-EN-FRANCE	41
GONESSE	68	Rouvres	111
GOUSSAINVILLE.....	83	S aint-Mard	111
GRESSY	103	SAINT-WITZ.....	93
H ow to Get Here	22	SARCELLES	57
J UILLY.....	108	SURVILLIERS	89
L e Bourget	67	T HIEUX	107
LE MESNIL-AMELOT	48	THILLAY (LE)	56
LE MESNIL-AUBRY.....	81	Tremblay-en-France	46
LE PLESSIS-GASSOT	82	U seful Roissy Pays de France	24
LE THILLAY	56	V aud’Herland	56
Longperrier	115	VÉMARS.....	95
LOUVRES	51	Villeneuve-sous-Dammartin	111
M ARLY-LA-VILLE.....	85	VILLEPARISIS.....	97
MAUREGARD.....	49	VILLERON	96
		VILLIERS-LE-BEL.....	73

Share your experiences, discoveries and tips with us

Help us bring this book up to date. Let us know if information is out of date. You can also let others benefit from the new places you've found and your top tips. We'll send a free copy of the next edition to those who send us the best letters, in terms of the quality and relevance of the information. A few tips though:

- Write to us as soon as possible so that we can include your finds in the next edition.
- Don't forget to tell us which book you'd like to receive.
- Check that your comments relate to the current edition and note the relevant pages of the guide concerned.
- When you indicate hotels or restaurants, make sure you give their precise address and, in large cities, the best way (means of transport) to get there. If you can, attach the business card of the hotel or restaurant you've described. In any case, thank you for your many letters.

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