

JARDIN NELSON MANDELA : TERRAIN D'AVENTURES

LES HALLES PLAYGROUND



1st arrondissement
1 Allée Blaise Cendrars
Les Halles

 Les Halles
 Châtelet - Les Halles

With its rainbow collection of weird, wacky, and wonderful structures, this vibrant wonderland can't miss in delighting your kiddos as soon as they set their sights on its sprawling collection of outlandish options. Almost like a mini museum in its masterful use of swirling colors and abstract shapes, each piece of equipment has a little something spunky to excite and inspire your children for their best play in Paris. Recently renovated in the last few years, each section of the park produces a new opportunity for fascination and imagination.

You can take a trip on the triptych train for tykes who like transportation, or slither down the bright yellow slide. And adjacent to this paradise is a playground just for youngsters over seven years old—no baby siblings allowed. For these big kids, an exploration up, up into a collection of towering globes will make them feel like kings and queens of the castle.

Fortunately, supervised play is sometimes offered, so you might be able to rely on a professional to keep an eye out, as you check on a youngster or two at each of the separate playgrounds.

A word of advice for families with children on either side of seven years old: make sure both playgrounds are open simultaneously before your visit, or you'll have one or more severely disappointed little sprouts on your hands. Elsewhere throughout the Jardin Nelson Mandela, stroll along among the fountains; or pack a picnic and pick a perfect plot of grass to sit and snack. Look for a public bathroom close by at 44/46 rue Berger.



L'ÉCLAIR DE GÉNIE

PASTRY SHOP



4th arrondissement
14 rue Pavée

leclairdegenie.com

 Saint-Paul

Transforming a traditional French pastry into something new and tantalizing is the genius of the owner—Christophe Adam—of L'Éclair de Génie. The éclair is a favorite dessert dating back to the nineteenth century, but these particular pastries aren't your tired treats of yesteryear. Rather this delicacy has been reinvented in a vast variety of flavor combinations to surprise and delight hosts of salivating patrons.

Choose from the Praliné Noisette (hazelnut and praline), the Choco Coco (crispy milk chocolate with coconut cream filling), or the green apple vanilla, among many others.

Most are too detailed and beautiful to eat, so you'll have to decide whether to frame it or eat it (choose the latter!). And the decorations aren't limited by conventional methods; fancy yours with a photo of angelic cherubs or a message of love printed in icing? It might be your lucky day.

And if éclairs are not your dessert of choice ... you might be wrong. Just consider giving them another try, perhaps with the berry option sprinkled in edible gold. Or, if you're steadfast in your disapproval, you can peruse a selection of wrapped candy bars and bonbons to save a sweet snack for later.

The decor, not unlike the updated dessert, is quite modern, differing from your usual cozy bakery feel, but one glimpse of the vibrant varieties through the shop window will lure you in.

Éclairs run about five to six euros each, so choose your flavor carefully—or splurge on one of every option. With no tables inside to enjoy your treats, you'll want your next destination in mind: someplace you can rush to and get down to the business of eating.



L'ECLAIR DE GEL
FANTASME

PARIS PLAGES

PARIS BEACHES
(MID-JULY TO MID-AUGUST)



Rive Droite
from Louvre to Pont de Sully

  Pont Neuf or Pont Marie
or Sully Morland

Bassin de la Villette
     Jaurès

www.parisinfo.com

Should your visit fall in the summer months, specifically between mid-July and mid-August, make your way to Paris Plages—a series of temporary, artificial beaches for your sandy, sunbathing enjoyment along the banks of the Seine river. Marked by bright blue or white umbrellas, and even the occasional palm tree, this city-planned event brings a seaside sensibility to the steamy season for locals and tourists to appreciate.

Although swimming in the river is not allowed, no doubt much to the chagrin of your amphibious children, a host of other features will prove appealing—especially if you can find room in the mini pool.

Aspects of the setup change slightly every year, but you can expect paddle boating, mini golfing, and various food stalls, depending on the beach you choose. Luck might provide you an open set of deck chairs, an entertaining street performer, or a free musical concert. And recent years have included zip-lining and inflatable roller tubes specifically for children to experience. Most of the beach-centric games and sports take place on the large square facing the Hôtel de Ville, while water-based options are located at the Bassin de la Villette.

Of course, no matter which sunny spot you select for the group, you can challenge the youngsters to a sand castle-building contest (bring your own water) and uncover the architect within.

With easy access to an ice cream cone, plenty of activities to choose from or admire from afar, and a particular patch of beach to call your very own, some time relaxing at Paris Plages can prove just as rewarding on your vacation as any number of sightseeing ventures.

