

# How to Change Trains from Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse

## Nervous about getting from Paris Gare de l'Est to Montparnasse?

*Update!! If traveling on the ICE from Germany, you can purchase your Metro ticket directly from the train personnel. It will cost you a few extra cents, but it's worth it if you are pressed for time.*

I purchased my train ticket from Mannheim, Germany to Tours, France several months using [SNCF](#). In preparation for the trip I decided to take another look at the ticket and familiarize myself with the times and connections. Imagine my shock when I realized I can't just cross the track or road to get to the Tours, France train. I need to change the train from Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse.



Paris Metro sign. Wikimedia Commons, photo by Fabio Venni (Flickr).

Yikes. I'm traveling alone and only speak a few words of French. *J'ai besoin d'aide* (I need help!). After my experience on the train from Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse, I calmly say, *Comme ci, comme ça!* I have no worries and neither should you. Just read on for my tips and instructions on taking the train from Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse.

## **My ticket**

I'm no stranger to European trains, planes, and metro stations; it's just that my print out ticket did not provide the details, let alone the instructions. Therefore, I'm here to tell you how easy it is to transfer from Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse.

## How to Calculate Your Journey

1. Confirm the arriving and the departure train station. For me the arrival station is Paris Gare de l'Est and the departure station Paris Montparnasse.
2. To plan your exact route, go to [RATP](#).
3. Click *Getting Around* and hover (rest) your mouse over *Routes*.
4. Enter the *From Station* such as Gare De L'Est (SNCF), Paris (There are other options, so choose the correct one).
5. Enter the *End Station* such as Gare Montparnasse (SNCF), Paris Paris (You'll see other options here too).
6. Enter the exact day and time you plan on leaving. These trains travel quite frequently, so if you miss one you won't have to wait long for the next one unless there's a strike or a station is being serviced. Don't worry, this info is available on the RATP website and they hardly ever strike in France. ☐
7. Select *All Modes, The Quickest* and then click *Search*.
8. Click *Print* and select all options.
9. Print to PDF or a printer to see the detailed instructions. Whew! You did it.

## Your Journey to Gare Montparnasse (SNCF), Paris

Have some Euro coins on hand for short single journeys, a 5 or 10€ note, or if many people are traveling, you can use a credit card to purchase your ticket.

## Watch Out for Pickpockets

This train station, like many others in the world is a haven for pickpockets. These gangs of professional thieves look normal (like you and I LOL). Often dressed like "real" business people, they signal to their comrades the next

approaching victim and before you know it you are the next victim. Your European dream quickly becomes a nightmare if you haven't prepared for the vacation.

I pack light and put everything in my locked suitcase including my purse before my journey to the metro. I keep only some small coins and/or my metro train ticket in my pocket. That's it!

1. Go to the nearest ticket kiosk to buy a ticket. I purchased two one-way tickets so I wouldn't need to stand in a long line on the way back home.
2. From Paris Gare de l'Est, you will either walk outside or use the underground stairs to head towards the Metro Gare de l'Est (Verdun). Note: This is the No 4 (deep purple-colored Metro line) whose end stop is Mairie de Montrouge.



Paris Metro sign

3. Once you reach the Gare de l'Est (Verdun), validate your ticket.
4. You will walk about 6 minutes to the Gare Montparnasse (SNCF), Paris.
5. Enter the train and find a seat as you will be on this

traveling for approximately 15 minutes (~13 stops) before reaching the Montparnasse-Bienvenue stop.



Paris Metro 4 (Direction Paris Gare de l'est to Montparnasse)

6. Exit the train station looking for the Gare Montparnasse (SNCF), Paris signs.
7. Now walk about 6 minutes to the Gare Montparnasse (SNCF), Paris.
8. Once inside the Gare Montparnasse station, look for your train and proceed to the track.
9. Find your seat, relax and finally begin to enjoy your vacation.



Paris Metro Line 4 Metro map from Paris Gare de l'Est' to Paris Montparnasse.

The blogger [Man in Seat Sixty-One](#) has some great information on train travel, so visit his site for more info.

If you are traveling with a large family and/or with lots of luggage, I recommend taking a cab, but it will cost you. With many pre-arranged taxis, the minute the taxi departs the meter starts ticket. That means if there is a traffic jam, you'll pay for it even though you aren't in the taxi.

The [Taxi service G7](#) has English speaking operators in Paris is (+33) 01 41 27 66 99. Have the full address pre-printed to hand over to the taxi driver including the arrondissement number.

Reduce your carbon footprint and travel with less stress on the train. Happy sustainable train travel!

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# What to Pack for a Yoga

# Retreat

## Things to Pack for a Yoga Retreat? Here are some essentials you'll need to bring.

I decided to treat myself to a yoga meditation vacation near Tours, France and it's time to start thinking about what to pack for a yoga retreat. I still have a bit of time before the retreat, but really want to be prepared for my solo getaway.

During this retreat held at [Chateau de Montgoger Yoga](#) in St. Epain, I'll spend 7 glorious days practicing yoga, meditation, and eating delicious vegetarian foods. I'm traveling by train and will need to travel as light as possible. I don't want to over pack, yet I don't want to under pack. Oh my, such dilemmas for an event that should be calming.



Packing as light as possible for a yoga retreat isn't so easy.

## What to Expect

Wish I could tell you, but I have no idea. This is my first yoga retreat. In fact, my first retreat ever outside of Girl Scout camp. I re-started my practice after many years but feel it's the right time to treat myself with more love.

The daily schedule for the retreat includes silent walks in the forest, yoga, meditation, and the practice of breathing techniques. I'm using it as a guide to decide what to pack for a yoga retreat. If I don't get it right, I'll update the post after the retreat.



## Yoga Gear

- **Yoga mat** You'll need to bring your mat, but some yoga retreats such as [Chateau de Montgoger Yoga](#), supply the mats, blocks, belts, and other accessories.
- **Yoga hand towel** Great for when I want to wipe away the sweat and dry my hands. Also keeps me from slipping on the mat during extreme practices.
- **Yoga mat towel (My optional tip)** Highly recommended if you don't have time to clean and dry your mat between practices or if you'll be borrowing a yoga mat.
- **BPA-free water bottle**

## Yoga Clothing

I don't have a lot of yoga clothes. I still use some of my general exercise clothes that work fine for now. I wish I had more pretty yoga clothes, but the prices are pretty outrageous. Therefore, I will pack for a yoga retreat by bringing the following:

- **3 pairs of yoga pants.** One mid-calf, one wide leg, and one wide cuff that can double as dressy pants.
- **2 sports bras** If one is soiled I can quickly wash and dry it and have the second as a spare.
- **2 tank tops** Take at least one top that isn't super sporty, so it can be worn alone or with a shirt.
- **2 leggings** Who doesn't love leggings? They're perfect for relaxing and meditating.
- **1 pair of walking pants** Even if it's hot, during a forest walks one way to protect yourself from mosquitoes is to simply cover your legs. They can be washed and dried in a jiffy.
- **1 long sleeve shirt** Also for the silent walks in the forest, a camping shirt with roll-up sleeves is very versatile.
- **2 pairs undies per day** Sounds crazy, but hand washing

undies and finding a line to dry them in a shared room/bathroom ain't my thing.

- **3 pairs socks** Shoes aren't normally allowed in yoga centers, so I prefer to cover my toes. Also, I'll need them for the sport shoes.
- **Comfortable walking shoes** An absolute must for any trip. Invest in a good lightweight pair of sport shoes. Your feet will love you for it.
- **Flip-flops** Well, I'm not a ~~flip-slops~~, I mean flip-flop fan, but since we're sharing a bathroom, I might just make an exception just this once.
- **1 light sweatshirt or pullover** For walks in the forest, during meditation practice, or evenings under the moon light.
- **1 dress** Throwing in a 100% cotton dress that I'll probably wear after the day's session around dinner.
- **Headbands** Keeps my Afro-Caribbean hair out of my face and allows me to change my look. Uh oh! another diva statement.
- **Sarong** A sarong is so multi-functional and can double as a dress, skirt, shawl, meditation blanket, and much more.
- **Salwar kameez** (Another optional tip) I picked up a few the beautiful Salwar kameez (3-piece tunic, pant, and shawl) outfits while visiting India. Not only are they lovely, but practical too. The loose fitting pants are cool, the tunic top can be worn with leggings, and the scarf makes a great wrap. All pieces worn together are perfect for dress-up evening.
- **Travel wallet** The bare essentials such as cash, credit card, insurance card, ID. Leave all the other stuff at home.
- **Light/Foldable Rain Jacket**

## Tech Gear, Never Leave Home Without It

I should shut off during this retreat, but let's be realistic,

there are some essentials one must pack for a yoga retreat and they include the tech gear we have difficulty living without. I will indeed stay in touch with my husband, family, and friends, so will pack the following techie travel essentials yet keep them out of the practice area:

- **Smart phone and charger**
- **Kindle** (For the train ride to France)
- [Universal Travel Adapter/converter](#)

## Cosmetics/Toiletries

When you pack for a a yoga retreat trip, any trip, keep it light. The essential cosmetics and toiletries are scale breakers and weigh one down when traveling.

- **Shampoo** One that doubles for hair and body.
- **Hair Conditioner**
- **Deodorant**
- **Toothbrush and toothpaste**
- **Facial wipes** They double as a cleanser, toner, and light moisturizer.
- **Makeup** I'm a bit of a diva, but do need to protect my skin from the sun's harmful rays. I like the Kiehl's BB cream tinted moisturizer (SPF 50 PA +++ UV protection). It has everything I need.
- **Mosquito bracelet** I just purchased a bio-type bracelet that contains no DEET (That stuff is deadly ☹ ). The bracelet sachet fits on my wrist or ankle and is filled with an enhanced citronella gel. Never tried it before, but hoping it will repel the mosquitoes, gnats, and other creep-crawly insects.
- **Medications and first aid travel kit** I use homeopathic remedies and have a small, lightweight kit with the essential remedies. If you need to take medications, especially traveling to Europe, bring the original bottle in case you need a refill.

# Anything Else I Need to Pack for a Yoga Retreat?

Yes, most importantly, an open mind.

Namaste ☐

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## European Travel Myths

It's often comical to listen to first-time travelers give advice on traveling to Europe. Most times it's personal opinions on their experiences which is fine, often times though, it's just bad advice or not true.



Map of Europe

Check out some of the European travel myths I heard from people from all over the world on the plane last month.

### **1. Europe is really small, you can get everywhere in a few hours**

There are 28 European Union (EU) member countries. Russia, yes Russia, the world's largest country, is a part of Europe, but is not an EU member country. So technically, since Russian

occupies most of Eastern Europe and north Asia and is about 1.75 times the size of the US, Europe is not small at all.

Ok, the Russia example is a little far-fetched, but here's my point, if you want to drive from the northern part of Europe to a most-southern part such as from Copenhagen, Denmark to Rome, Italy, plan for a 20 hour drive time. Even driving from Hamburg to Munich will cost you about 7 hours according to Google Maps and that's on the German Autobahn, where there are driving areas without a speed limit.

The bottom line is you can't see all of Europe on the standard 10-day American vacation. You should plan accordingly, re-plan and come up with a realistic itinerary, contact an experienced Europe travel agent, or use Google Maps to get an idea of estimated driving times.

## **2. There's only one currency in Europe**

While it's true that the currency of the European Union member countries is euro (sign: €; code: EUR), people often forget when they travel to Switzerland for example, that they'll need Swiss Francs or when traveling to the Czech Republic they'll need Czech koruna (CZK).



© Wiki; Photo by Blackfish

It's always a good idea to have a mix of the local currency on hand and a couple of credit cards. Check with your banking institution for the best exchange rate and ideally, exchange a

few dollars to local currency before you travel.

American Express is not accepted as widely as MasterCard or Visa although I find most hotels and finer restaurants do indeed accept American Express cards (my preferred cc for collecting points).

Major credit card companies now have traveler's check cards, because old-fashioned traveler's check are basically dead. These traveler's check cards looks like a regular credit card with your name on it and you use it like a regular credit card until you run out of the pre-selected amount of cash on it.

*Tip: Buy a small travel wallet with a large coin holder and bring only the basic cards. I doubt you'll be able to use your Walmart or Walgreens card in Spain.*

Also, many small shops and restaurants don't accept credit cards at all due to the high fees. They do often accept however, EC (Electronic cash) cards which are similar to using debit card system cash cards. Check with your banking institution for more details.

### **3. Stores and shops are always open**

After 12 years of living overseas this is still my pet peeve. What, can't buy a pair of jeans on Sunday? I enjoy a lazy Sunday around town or at home, but sometimes I would just like to go shopping for other than a candy bar or windshield wiper fluid on a Sunday.

Opening hours for pharmacies, banks, shops, museums and restaurants vary from country to country, so ask with your hotel receptionist for details.



Closed shop signs

*Tip: If you need an emergency item from a pharmacy, ask someone in your hotel which pharmacy is open on that particular Sunday.*

In general, stores and shops are closed on Sundays throughout Europe. In France on the other hand, bakeries are open until around 13:00 because the French like fresh baguettes. Me too as a matter of fact!

European store and shop opening exceptions are gas stations, airports, train stations where you can buy over-priced basic items such as milk, beer, and so on. In Europe there are special days where stores open on Sunday in conjunction with a festival or a special time of year.

#### **4. Everyone speaks English in Europe**

Well, almost all Europeans have had to learn some English in school, but that doesn't mean they will all be able to speak fluently, quickly, or confidently. Of course in larger metropolitan cities or university towns, I've noticed more Europeans have a very good grasp of the English language especially in Scandinavian countries.

*Tip: Don't yell when you speak to Europeans, most aren't hard of hearing and it makes you look really silly.*

In addition, you'll most likely find that in hotels and larger shopping malls, the staff will be able to communicate with you in English. Ideally, I recommend learning to say at least

'Hello', 'How are you?', 'Thank you', and 'Do you speak English?' in the country's local language. You'd be surprised how far it will get you.

The phrase book method doesn't work, because you'll get an answer in the local language unless you use a language converter smartphone app to communicate. □

## 5. All of my electrical devices function in Europe

Help! I'm traveling to Europe and need to know the following:

- Do I need a transformer?
- Do I need an adapter?
- Do I need a converter?
- What's the difference between an adapter and a converter?



SKROSS World Adapter Pro+USB (1 unit for all countries)

First things first, you don't need a transformer unless you plan on bringing some large electrical device like your toaster or microwave on vacation.

Adapters – Almost all laptops, tablets, smart phones, MP 3 players, e-book readers, and camera battery chargers, and many flat irons are dual voltage. This means they will work on 110 volts (United States voltage) and on 220 volts (Europe and



most other parts of the world voltage). They'll also work with electric frequencies ranging from 50 Hertz to 60 Hertz.

The main problem is figuring out how to get the square thingy into the round thingy or vice versa. In other words, you'll need an adapter plug, a connector that changes the plug shape to match the outlet for the country you are traveling to.

Converters – Hair dryers are a bit trickier. Since they are powerful and use a lot of juice, you'll need a converter to switch from 110 volts to a 220 volt source. Often, hair dryers do have a dual voltage switch to convert the voltage when in use. If you have one of those, you then would just need an adapter plug.



Dual Voltage Hair Dryer

*Tip: Don't forget to switch to the correct voltage for the country you are in, otherwise you'll destroy your hair dryer.*

I'd recommend leaving the hair dryer at home and either using the one in your hotel room or purchase a lightweight travel dual voltage hair dryer before you go on vacation. Don't forget, you'll still need an adapter.