



PARIS

Julia Child once said, “In France, cooking is a serious art form and a national sport”, and this still holds true today. If you’re looking for a girlie getaway with a culinary twist, there’s no better location on the planet. Going on a gourmet weekend to Paris is like winning Willy Wonka’s Golden Ticket. Except better. Both are bastions of edible delights beyond your wildest dreams. Unlike Wonka’s, however (here comes the spoiler, kids), Paris is real. And it’s only an hour-and-20-minute flight away.

MARKET GUIDE

If you’re in Paris for a weekend or extended break, you’d be well advised to take in a gourmet tour of a market or two. While restaurants in the French capital offer some mouthwatering options, Paris’ food markets are a treasure trove of edible delights. From the freshest baked bread to artisan cheeses, there is something for every palate. Learn about the history of the area and the vendors as you nibble your way through the neighbourhood. Place Monge Market, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, €20 per person; parissweetparis.com.

COOKING LESSON

Eating your weight in cheese and chocolate is all very well, but for travellers looking to hone their culinary skills, an afternoon in a French cookery school is a must. Olivier Berté teaches private

groups in his atelier, Les Coulisses du Chef, based in the heart of the city. Incredibly talented, good humoured and patient with his time, Olivier can make even the least enthusiastic novices feel accomplished in the kitchen. Take your mum, sisters or a group of girlfriends along for a day of fun and feasting, coursdecuisineparis.com.



THE COCOA TRAIL

Even spring showers can’t dull the enthusiasm of a chocolate tour. Paris offers tourists plenty of options, with guided tours taking in lots of interesting and delicious stops along the way. Pierre Hermé is the chef lauded for his precision and excellence over the holy trinity of sweets – chocolate, cake and macarons. His dark chocolate cherry ganache is the stuff that culinary dreams are made of. His macarons don’t come with the fancy packaging of world-famous maison Ladurée, but what they lack in style, they more than deliver in taste. The chef changes his flavours seasonally, which means there’s always something new to try. Vanilla and lavender is a must-sample.

Michel Cluizel’s shop is another popular pitstop, where a chocolate fountain embedded into the wall is a modest representation of the delights that linger behind the counter. Baking enthusiasts will especially enjoy this visit, as the chef supplies many of the ingredients needed to give your cakes that certain *je ne sais quoi*. Baking nibs anyone?

No chocolate tour of Paris is complete without a trip to Angelina, the famous tearooms that lure sweet teeth of all generations. Built by Antoine Rumpelmayer for his daughter-in-law in 1903, the old-fashioned patisserie and décor designed by the famous Belle Époque architect Édouard-Jean Niermans draws large crowds, so expect queues. Famous for its hot chocolate, which is sweet and syrupy, the salon offers a taste of old-school Paris, perfect for thirsty tourists in need of refreshment.

