

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

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SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Hot, sticky sports and ice-cool Parisians seemingly don't go together. *Au contraire*: not only are Parisians mad about watching sport, they play it too. The only trifling difference between us and them is that they wouldn't be seen dead walking down the street in their tracksuit (or working out in their lunch hour).

As the French capital, Paris is privy to big games in world-class stadiums, and there are bags of opportunities to see great sporting moments unfold before your very eyes. Out of the arena, it's dead easy for all those closet *sportifs* (sportspeople) to stay fit (and sickeningly slim). Be it cycling, swimming, lounging on the beach, street blading with the masses or practising the silent art of t'ai chi in the Jardin du Luxembourg, this urban landscape is action-packed.

The best single source of information on sports – spectator and participatory – is the free, 500-page *Parisports: Le Guide du Sport à Paris* (www.sport.paris.fr, in French), published online and on paper by the **Mairie de Paris** (Paris Town Hall; Map pp98–9; ☎ 39 75; www.paris.fr; Hôtel de Ville, 29 rue de Rivoli, 4e; 📍 Hôtel de Ville); **mairies** (town halls) in every *arrondissement* have information on sports in their own patch. For sports stadiums, venues, public spaces and associations surf www.parisinfo.com.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Whether you want to hobnob with the stars at a *spa de luxe* or dance the samba on the Seine, Paris has spaces to suit every whim. Spoil yourself.

HAMMAMS & SPAS

Nothing beats a lavender-and-ginger massage, perfumed foot soak or flop in a traditional Turkish bath (hammam) between sips of *thé à la menthe* (mint tea) after a hard day slogging the city sights.

ESPACE JOÏYA Map pp140–1

☎ 01 40 70 16 49; www.joia.fr; 6 rue de la Renaissance, 8e; 30min/1hr/90min €45/80/115; 🕒 10.30am–7pm Mon–Thu, 10.30am–9pm Fri & Sat; 📍 Alma-Morceau

The creation of former Russian model mad about Asia, Julia Lemigova (she looks like Julia Roberts), this exclusive spa unwinds wound-up city slickers with detox and de-stress massages using natural and essential oils. The truly indulgent can go for a four-hand massage, followed by a bento box lunch (€25) in the stylish *salon de thé*. Or plump for both options: a 30-/60-minute massage and bento lunch costs €65/100.

HAMMAM DE LA MOSQUÉE DE PARIS

Map pp110–11
☎ 01 43 31 38 20; www.la-mosquee.com; 39 rue Geoffroy St-Hilaire, 5e; admission €15; 🕒 men 2–

9pm Tue & 10am–9pm Sun, women 10am–9pm Mon, Wed, Thu & Sat, 2–9pm Fri; 📍 Censier Daubenton or Place Monge

Massages at this atmospheric hammam cost €1 a minute and come in 10-, 20- or 30-minute packages. Should you fancy an exfoliating body scrub and mint tea, get the 10-/30-minute massage *formule* (€38/58). There are lunch deals for rumbling tummies. Bring a swimsuit but hire a towel/dressing gown (€4/5). No children under 12 years.

SPA HARNN & THANN Map pp82–3

☎ 01 40 15 02 20; www.harnn-spa.fr; 11 rue Molière, 1e; massage from €75; 🕒 11am–9pm Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat, 11am–10pm Thu; 📍 Pyramides This relaxing 'natural home spa' is another heady one for the senses. Masseuses soothe muscles with traditional Thai massage techniques and an aromatic mix of plant and essential oils. Particularly inventive are its Wednesday Les Petit Duos – a 30-minute massage for one worn-out mum or dad plus kid (aged six to 12 years) – and its after-work *bien-être* (well-being) deal for couples, which includes a foot bath, massage *en duo* and dinner at a neighbouring Thai restaurant. A 20-minute lounge in the peacock-blue hammam costs €20.

SPA NUXXE Map pp82–3

☎ 01 55 80 71 40; www.nuxe.com; 32 rue Montorgueil, 1e; massage from €75; 🕒 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7.30pm Sat; 📍 Les Halles

PARKOUR & FREERUNNING

Should you be stopped dead in your tracks on the streets of Paris by a feline figure scaling two buildings with a death-defying leap, vaulting a statue or springing off a lamppost, no sweat: that's Parkour. Throw in a 360° backflip and triple somersault and you have its more flamboyant acrobatic brother, Freerunning.

Born in the Parisian suburbs, the craze of getting from A to B without letting *anything* get in your way has since gained a cult following in cities worldwide. And anything really means *anything*, be it a stairwell, metro station entrance, Vél'ib' bike stand or 25m gap between rooftops. One YouTube video tags it as 'dudes fiddling around with buildings' (a fair enough assumption), but this is a discipline fusing sport, art and philosophy with serious backbone. Plain dangerous, in fact, whether you do or don't know what you're doing.

Two godlike men with a cinematic screen presence and muscles to die for are behind the French-bred discipline, which some say was the natural progression of New York's 1970s breakdance: David Belle (b 1973; <http://kyzr.free.fr/davidbelle>) and Sébastien Foucan (b 1974; www.foucan.com). The two played together as kids growing up in the Parisian suburb of Lisses, 40km south of the centre, and in 1989 as fearless adolescents they put a name to their increasingly dare-devil street antics – Parkour, from the French military's '*parcours du combattant*' (obstacle courses).

But in the 1990s, then a fireman, Foucan found his outlook shifting subtly away from Belle's as the philosophical lure of martial arts and yearning for greater freedom of expression kicked in. Thus, in 2001, he came up with his own, more expressive brand of Parkour called Freerunning. While Belle and his followers (known as *les traceurs*) ruthlessly track the shortest, most efficient route from A to B, Foucan's team focuses on aesthetics and creativity of movement – hence the gravity-defying stunts and acrobatics choreographed in most Freerunning movements. As much a mental as physical challenge (indeed, 'obstacles' are not always what they seem), both brands advocate the extreme sport as a way of life in which inner balance plays as crucial a role as physical prowess.

Naturals when it comes to the silver screen, Belle and Foucan are both film stars. A black belt in Gong Fu, Belle struts his stunts as a do-gooder ghetto kid in Luc Besson's *Banlieue 13* (2004), aptly set in a drug- and gun-riddled Parisian suburb in 2010. Among Foucan's spellbinding credits are James Bond movie *Casino Royale* (2006) and Madonna's 2006 'Confessions' world tour.

A regular in *Elle* and other French glossies, this Zen spa lounging in a medieval wine cellar with old stone walls and wood-beamed ceilings is where stars and supermodels find peace. An orgy of 45-minute massages (Thai, Chinese, Californian, Yoga, Shiatsu), including rhythmic ones to music (€80); skin treatments; French pedicures and manicures; and so on.

GYMS

Many Paris gyms and fitness clubs allow one-off or short-term memberships.

CLUB MED GYM

☎ 08 20 20 20 20; www.clubmedgym.com, in French

In addition to 13 gyms, Club Med runs 'Club Med Waou' (basically, 'Club Med Wow') centres offering luxurious settings and spa facilities; check the website for locations. Club Med Gym branches include **Palais Royal** (Map p86; ☎ 01 40 20 03 03; 147bis rue St-Honoré, 1er; 🕒 7.30am–10pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7pm Sat, 9am–5pm Sun); 📍 Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre); and **République** (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 47 00

69 98; 10 place de la République, 11e; 🕒 7.30am–10pm Mon–Fri, 8am–7pm Sat, 9am–5pm Sun; 📍 République), which is entered via rue du Faubourg du Temple.

ESPACE ST-LOUIS Map p105

☎ 01 43 26 93 99; www.espace-saint-louis.com, in French; 51–53 rue St-Louis en l'Île, 2e; 1/10/20 sessions €18/150/240; 📍 Pont Marie Take your pick of keep-fit courses at this fun fitness space on an island: pilates, Hatha or Ashtanga yoga, Qi Gong, salsa, samba, flamenco, modern jazz. Pay €10 to try a one-hour *cour* or buy a carnet. Recommended are the classes aboard a *péniche* (barge) on the Seine; details online.

VIT'HALLES BEAUBOURG Map pp98–9

☎ 01 42 77 21 71; www.vithalles.com, in French; 48 rue de Rambuteau, 3e; admission €25, 10-entry carnet €199; 🕒 8am–10.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7pm Sat, 10am–7pm Sun; 📍 Rambuteau This squeaky-clean health club gets fabulous reviews from local residents and blow-ins; it follows the Les Mills fitness programme.

ACTIVITIES

Entertainment weeklies *Pariscopie* and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* (p302) list what's on.

CYCLING

Plenty more Parisians are pedal-powered thanks to **Vélib'** (see p389 for details); for imaginative and unusual cycling itineraries suggested by Parisians, subscribe to its monthly online newsletter and read the blog (<http://blog.velib.paris.fr/blog>, in French).

Including tracks in the Bois de Boulogne (16e) and Bois de Vincennes (12e), Paris has 370km of *pistes cyclables* (cycling lanes) running throughout the city, as well as a dedicated lane running parallel to about two-thirds of *blvd Périphérique*. On Sunday and holidays, large sections of road are reserved for pedestrians, cyclists and skaters under the scheme *Paris Respire* (below).

The **Mairie de Paris** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 39 75; www.paris.fr; Hôtel de Ville, 29 rue de Rivoli, 4e; M Hôtel de Ville) is an invaluable source of information for cyclists: it allows free downloads online at www.velo.paris.fr of its *carte des itinéraires cyclables* (map of cycling itineraries) mapping every Parisian cycling path; pick up a paper version at local *mairies*. This is also the place to find itineraries, rules and regulations detailed in its free booklet *Paris à Vélo* (Paris by Bicycle). More detailed is *Paris de Poche: Cycliste et*

Piéton (Pocket Paris: Cyclist and Pedestrian; €3.50), sold in bookshops.

For information on guided bicycle tours, see p406.

Bicycle Hire

FAT TIRE BIKE TOURS Map pp166–7

☎ 01 56 58 10 54; www.fattirebiketoursparis.com; 24 rue Edgar Faure, 15e; 1hr/day/weekend/week €2.50/15/25/50; ☎ 9am-7pm; M La Motte-Picquet Grenelle

Fat Tire is a friendly Anglophone outfit that rents three-speed cruisers, kids' bikes, trailers, tandems and so on. Show a driver's licence or passport and leave €250 deposit on your credit card.

GEPETTO & VÉLOS Map pp110–11

☎ 01 43 54 19 95; www.gepetto-et-velos.com, in French; 59 rue du Cardinal Lemoine, 5e; half-/full-day/weekend/week €7.50/14/23/50; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sun; M Cardinal Lemoine

New and secondhand bicycles plus repairs. To rent, show your passport and leave a €325 deposit.

MAISON ROUE LIBRE Map p86

☎ 01 44 76 86 43, 08 10 44 15 34; www.rouelibre.fr; 1 Passage Mondétour, 1er; 1hr/4hr/weekend €4/10/28, weekday/Sat or Sun/night from 5pm €10/15/7, electric bikes 1hr/4hr/weekday/Sat or Sun

€6.50/16/16/26; ☎ 9am-7pm mid-Jan–mid-Dec; M Les Halles

Sponsored by the city's public transport system, this is *the* place to rent a bike – pedal powered or electric (with which you can rent a €32 audioguide). Seniors, students and under-26s get a 10% discount. Insurance, helmet and baby seat are included. The deposit is €150, and you need some form of ID. Its outlet at **Bastille** (Map pp92–3; ☎ 01 44 71 54 54; 37 *blvd Bourdon*, 4e; M Bastille) shares the same hours. From 10am to 6pm Sunday and public holidays April to October, bikes can also be rented from 'cyclobuses' (bikes stored on big buses) around the city, including **Denfert-Rochereau** (Map pp124–5; cnr rue Daguerre & av Général Leclerc, 14e; M Denfert-Rochereau).

PARIS À VÉLO, C'EST SYMPA! Map pp94–5

☎ 01 48 87 60 01; www.parisvelosympa.com, in French; 22 rue Alphonse Baudin, 11e; half-day/10hr/weekend/week €10/13/25/60; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30am-1pm & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-6pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; M St-Sébastien Froissart Cringe-worthy name ('Paris by Bike, it's Nice!'), yes, but it rents tandems for the price of two bikes and organises great thematic bike tours around Paris. Deposit €250 (€600 for a tandem) with a credit card or your passport.

VÉLO CITO Map pp166–7

☎ 01 42 73 60 21; 97 rue Mademoiselle, 15e; www.velocito.fr, in French; day €25; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar; M Cambronne, Commerce & Vaugirard

The pedal-weary can opt for extra power with a smart electric bicycle to cruise around the city from this 15e outlet; rental is by the day only and you need to leave your passport as a deposit. Its Right-Bank branch (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 43 38 47 19; 7 rue St-Ambroise, 11e; M St-Ambroise) shares the same hours. Both distribute an excellent free map (1:53:000) detailing some lovely *pistes cyclables* starting at RER stations around Paris.

SKATING

Be it across Tarmac or ice, skating is big – see p303 for street spots to catch entertaining free demos. See *opposite* for details of traffic-free streets to cruise down on Sundays.

In-line Skating

Serious bladers use the bus lanes; others scoot along pavements and cycling lanes. Up to 15,000 take part in the weekly *randonnées en roller* (skating rambles).

The 30km **Pari Roller Ramble** (☎ 01 43 36 89 81; www.pari-roller.com, in French) kicks off on *place Raoul Dautry, 14e* (Map pp124–5; M Montparnasse Bienvenue) at 10pm Friday (arrive at 9.30pm), returning at 1am.

The **Rollers & Coquillages Ramble** (☎ 01 44 54 07 44; www.rollers-coquillages.org) afternoon skate departs from behind the Nomades bike shop (below) on Sunday at 2.30pm, returning around 5.30pm.

NOMADES Map pp92–3

☎ 01 44 54 07 44; www.nomadeshop.com, in French; 37 *blvd Bourdon*, 4e; half-/full-day weekdays €5/8, weekends €6/9, weekend €15, 5 days Mon-Fri €23, full week €30; ☎ 11.30am-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun; M Bastille Paris' 'Harrods for roller-heads' rents and sells equipment and accessories, and gives courses at five different levels. Elbow and knee guards/helmets cost €1/2. Deposit of €150 or an identity card or passport.

Ice-Skating

From December to early March, the city maintains several pretty-as-a-picture outdoor *patinoires de Noël* (Christmas ice-skating rinks; www.paris.fr, in French). Access is free but *patins/casques* (skates/safety helmets) cost €5/3 to rent. Rinks include **Patinoire de l'Hôtel de Ville** (Map pp98–9; ☎ 39 75; *place de l'Hôtel de Ville*, 4e; ☎ noon-10pm Mon-Thu, noon-midnight Fri, 9am-midnight Sat, 9am-10pm Sun; M Hôtel de Ville) and **Patinoire de Montparnasse** (Map pp124–5; ☎ 39 75; *place Raoul Dautry*, 14e; ☎ noon-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun; M Montparnasse Bienvenue). The national library rink in the increasingly happening 13e, **Patinoire de la Bibliothèque François Mitterand** (cnr rue des Moulins & av de France; ☎ 9am-8pm late Dec–early Jan; M Bibliothèque) opens for one month from late December to late January.

DJs turn Friday and Saturday evenings into something of an ice disco at the **Patinoire Sonja Henie** (Map pp158–9; ☎ 01 40 02 60 60; www.bercy.fr, in French; 8 *blvd de Bercy*, 12e; adult/under 26yr €4/3, Fri & Sat €6/4, skate hire €3; ☎ 3-6pm Wed, 9.30pm-12.30am Fri, 9.30pm-12.30am Sat, 10am-noon & 3-6pm Sun Sep-May; M Bercy), an indoor ice-skating rink in the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy.

Art Deco in style, 800 sq metres in size and worth the trip is **Patinoire Pailleron** (Map pp174–5;

PARIS BREATHE

Now a well-established operation, Paris Respire ('Paris Breathes') kicks motorised traffic off certain streets at certain times to let pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters and other non-motorised cruisers breathe. While it drives its usual traffic jams and pollution to other spots in the city instead, it makes Sundays very pedal-pleasurable.

The tracks listed here are off-limits to cars on Sunday and public holidays. For updates on exact routes and detailed maps see www.velo.paris.fr.

- **By the Seine:** from quai des Tuileries, 1e, to Pont Charles de Gaulle, 12e, on the Right Bank; and on the Left Bank from the eastern end of quai Branly near Pont d'Alma, 7e, to quai Anatole France, 7e (from 9am to 5pm).
- **Latin Quarter, 5e:** rue de Cluny and from place Marcelin Berthelot by the Sorbonne to the rue Mouffetard market via rue de Lanneau, rue de l'École Polytechnique and rue des Descartes (from 10am to 6pm).
- **Bastille, 11e:** Rue de la Roquette and surrounding streets (from 10am to 6pm July and August).
- **Montmartre and Pigalle:** all the streets in Montmartre, 18e, encircled by rue Caulaincourt, rue de Clignancourt, *blvd de Rochechouart* and *blvd de Clichy* (from 11am to 7pm April to August, 11am to 6pm September to March); and rue des Martyrs, 9e (from 10am to 1pm).
- **Canal St-Martin, 10e:** a particularly scenic area around quai de Valmy and quai de Jemmapes (from 10am to 6pm winter, 10am to 8pm summer); in July and August yet more streets running south from quai de Jemmapes become car-free.
- **Bois de Boulogne:** (from 9am to 6pm Saturday and Sunday) and **Bois de Vincennes** (from 9am to 6pm Sunday).
- **Jardin du Luxembourg, 6e:** immediate surrounding streets including parts of rue Auguste Comte, rue d'Assas, *blvd St-Michel* and *rue des Chartreux* (from 10am to 6pm March to November).

☎ 01 47 20 27 70; 32 blvd Édouard Pailleron, 19e; adult before/after 8pm €4/6, carnet of 10 tickets before/after 8pm €34/26, skate hire €3; ☎ during school holidays except Jul & Aug noon-10pm Mon, Tue & Thu, 9am-10pm Wed, noon-midnight Fri, 9am-midnight Sat, 10am-6pm Sun; during term time noon-1.30pm & 4-10pm Mon, Tue & Thu, noon-10pm Wed, noon-1.30pm & 4pm-midnight Fri, noon-midnight Sat, 10am-6pm Sun), open year-round except July and August.

BOULES & BOWLING

Don't be surprised to see groups of earnest Parisians (usually men) playing *boules* (known as *pétanque* in southern France) – France's most popular traditional game, similar to lawn bowls – in the Jardin du Luxembourg (Map pp116–17) and other parks and squares with suitably flat, shady patches of gravel. The Arènes de Lutèce *boulodrome* (www.arenedelutece.com, in French) in a 2nd-century Roman amphitheatre in the Latin Quarter is a fabulous spot to absorb the scene. The player who tosses his *boules* (biased metal balls) nearest the small wooden *cochonnet* (jack) wins. Sports shops and supermarkets sell cheap sets of *boules*, should you have the urge to have a spin at it.

Come dark, tenpin bowling takes over. Prices for games depend on the time and day of the week. Among the best and/or most central alleys:

AMF BOWLING DE MONTPARNASSE

Map pp124–5
☎ 01 43 21 61 32; www.bowling-amf.com, in French; 25 rue du Commandant René Mouchotte, 14e; games €4.50-6, shoes €2; ☎ 10am-2am Sun-Thu, 10-4am Fri, 10-5am Sat; ☎ Montparnasse Bienvenue This centre, just opposite Gare Montparnasse, has 16 lanes.

BOWLING MOUFFETARD

Map pp110–11
☎ 01 43 31 09 35; www.bowling-mouffetard.abcailles.com, in French; 13 rue Gracieuse & 73 rue Mouffetard, 5e; games €3.10-6.20, shoes €2; ☎ 3pm-2am Mon-Fri, 10am-2am Sat & Sun; ☎ Place Monge Intimate, friendly place with eight lanes and two entrances; games are cheapest on weekday afternoons.

TENNIS

Again, the *Mairie de Paris* (☎ 39 75, reservations 01 71 70 70; www.tennis.paris.fr; open court per hr adult/under 26yr €6.50/4, covered court €12.50/7) is the contact.

The city runs some 170 covered and open tennis courts in dozens of locations (hours vary considerably); reserve by telephone or online. Courts include **Luxembourg** (Map pp110–11; ☎ 01 43 25 79 18; Jardin du Luxembourg, 6e; ☎ Luxembourg); **Candie** (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 43 55 84 95; rue de Candie, 11e; ☎ Ledru Rollin); and **Neuve St-Pierre** (Map pp92–3; ☎ 01 42 78 21 04; 5 rue Neuve St Pierre, 4e; ☎ St-Paul).

SWIMMING

Paris has almost 40 public swimming pools. Most are short-length pools and finding a free lane to swim laps can be tricky. Opening times vary widely; Wednesday afternoon and weekends when kids are off school are the busiest. Unless noted otherwise, admission costs €2.60/21.50 for a single ticket/carnet of 10 and €1.50 a dip for Paris residents under 26 years.

Boys, no hiding what you don't have: Bermuda and boxer shorts are a no-go in public pools. With the exception of nudist Roger Le Gall, men and boys must don a pair of skintight trunks (*slips de bain*). Most places also demand that everyone wears a *bonnet* (swimming hat), sold at most pools for a few euros.

FOREST HILL

AQUABOULEVARD

Map pp166–7
☎ 01 40 60 10 00; www.aquaboulevard.com, in French; 4-6 rue Louis Armand, 15e; adult/child 3-11yr €20/10; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Thu, 9am-midnight Fri, 8am-midnight Sat, 8am-11pm Sun; ☎ Balard Aquaboulevard delights with water slides and shutes, waterfalls and wave pools in its fun-filled tropical 'beach' and aquatic park. The less frivolous can keep fit with tennis, squash, golf, gym and dance classes. No children under 3 years; last admission is 9pm.

PISCINE DE LA BUTTE AUX CAILLES

Map pp162–3
☎ 01 45 89 60 05; 5 place Paul Verlaine, 13e; ☎ during school holidays 1-6pm Mon, 7am-7pm Tue & Wed, 7am-6pm Thu-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun; during term time 7am-8.30am, 11.30am-1.30pm & 4.30-7pm Tue, 7am-7pm Wed, 7am-8.30am & 11.30am-6.30pm Thu & Fri, 7am-8.30am & 10am-6.30pm Sat, 8am-6pm Sun; ☎ Place d'Italie This positively stunning pool, built in 1924 and now a heritage listed building, takes advantage of the lovely warm water issuing from a nearby artesian well. Come summer, its two outdoor pools buzz with swimmers frolicking in the sun.

PISCINE JOSÉPHINE BAKER

Map pp162–3
☎ 01 56 61 96 50; quai François Mauriac, 13e; admission Jul & Aug adult/concession first 2hr €5/2.60, then per hr €5/2.60; ☎ 1-3pm & 5-9pm Mon & Thu, noon-5pm & 7pm-midnight Tue & Fri, 1-9pm Wed, 10am-8pm Sat & Sun; ☎ Bibliothèque or Quai de la Gare

Built over two years at a cost of €2 million, this striking *piscine* afloat the Seine is style indeed (named after the sensual 1920s Afro-American singer, what else could it be?). More of a spot to be seen than thrash laps, the two 25m by 10m pools lure Parisians like bees to a honey pot in summer when the roof slides back. Shut for work since November 2007, the 90m-long metallic barge should reopen in 2008.

PISCINE KELLER

Map pp166–7
☎ 01 45 71 81 00; 14 rue de l'Ingénieur Keller, 15e; adult/child €2.60/1.50; ☎ noon-10pm Mon & Fri, 7-8.30am & noon-10pm Tue & Thu, 7am-8pm Wed, 9am-9pm Sat, 9am-7pm Sun, slightly different hours during school holidays; ☎ Charles Michels This brand-new indoor pool with state-of-the-art glass roof that slides back on warm days opened in mid-April and is a particular splash with Parisians keen to swim beneath the stars.

PISCINE PONTOISE

Map pp110–11
☎ 01 55 42 77 88; 19 rue de Pontoise, 5e; adult/concession €3.70/2.20, 10-entry carnet €30.20/19.40; ☎ during school holidays 7-8.30am & 11am-11.45pm Mon, 7am-7.30pm & 8.15-11.45pm Tue & Thu, 7-8.30am, 11.30am-7.30pm & 8.15pm-11.45pm Wed, 7-8.30am, 11am-8pm & 9-11.45pm Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 8am-7pm Sun, shorter hr during term time; ☎ Maubert Mutualité A beautiful Art Deco-style indoor pool in the heart of the Latin Quarter, Piscine Pontoise measures 33m by 15m and offers a €9 ticket for all in the evening, covering entry to the pool, gym and sauna.

PISCINE ROGER LE GALL

Map pp158–9
☎ 01 44 73 81 12; 34 blvd Carnot, 12e; ☎ during school holidays 10am-8pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8am-9pm Wed, 10am-7pm Sat, 8am-7pm Sun; during term time noon-2pm & 5-8pm Mon, Tue & Thu, noon-2pm & 5-9pm Fri, noon-7pm Sat, 8am-7pm Sun; ☎ Porte de Vincennes With its grassy lawns to lounge about on and twin-set of pools, indoor and out, many readers reckon this is Paris' best (blvd Périphérique is a tad close for our comfort).

It is notably the only public *naturiste* pool in Paris where you can swim nude. In July and August admission costs more.

SPECTATOR SPORT

Depending on what time of year you're here, this is the city to see all types of matches and events. Sports daily *L'Équipe* (www.lequipe.fr, in French), and entertainment and activities supplement *Figaroscope* (www.figaroscope.fr, in French; published every Wednesday in *Le Figaro*), can tell you what's on; as can box offices – which sell tickets for most sports events – situated inside branches of Fnac and Virgin Megastore (p302) for bigger events. Or follow the 'what's on' link at <http://en.parisinfo.com>.

FOOTBALL

Paris' magnificent **Stade de France** (p183; tickets €20 to €100), north of the centre in St-Denis, is where France's home matches kick off.

The city's only top-division football team, **Paris-St-Germain** (☎ 01 47 43 71 71; www.psg.fr), wears red and blue and plays its home games at the 48,500-seat **Parc des Princes** (Map p178; ☎ 32 75, 01 47 43 72 56; www.leparcdesprinces.fr; 24 rue du Commandant Guibaud, 16e; tickets €20-80; ☎ box office 9am-7pm Mon-Fri & 3hr before match; ☎ Porte de St-Cloud), built in 1970.

RUGBY

When at home Paris-based team **Stade Français CASG** (☎ 01 40 71 71 00; www.stade.fr) plays north at the small **Stade Jean Bouin** (Map pp132–3; ☎ 01 46 51 00 75; 26 av du Général Sarraill, 16e; tickets €5-35; box office ☎ 11am-2pm & 3-7pm Tue-Fri, 2-7pm Mon & Sat; ☎ Exelmans) and occasionally at the **Stade de France** (p183). The finals of the *Championnat de France de Rugby* take place in late May and early June.

TENNIS

By far the glitziest annual sporting event in Paris is the French Open, the second of four Grand Slam tennis tournaments, held on clay at the 16,500-seat **Stade Roland Garros** (Map p178; ☎ box office 08 25 16 75 16, from abroad +33 1 47 43 52 52; www.rolandgarros.com, in French; 2 av Gordon Bennett, 16e; ☎ Porte d'Auteuil) in the Bois de Boulogne from late May to mid-June. Tickets are expensive and like gold dust; they go on sale mid-November and bookings must be made by March. One week prior to the competition

(on the first day of the qualifiers), remaining tickets are sold from the **box office** (📞 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) at the entrance to the stadium.

The top indoor tournament is the Paris Tennis Open, usually held in late October or early November at the **Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy** (Map pp158-9; 📞 01 40 02 60 60, box office 08 92 39 01 00; www.bercy.fr, in French; 8 blvd de Bercy, 12e; 🚇 Bercy).

CYCLING

Joining the tens of thousands of spectators along the av des Champs-Élysées to watch the final leg of the world's most prestigious cycling race, the three-week **Tour de France** (www.letour.fr), is a must for those in Paris towards the end of July.

The 3000km-long route changes each year, but three things remain constant: the inclusion of the Alps, the Pyrenees and, since 1974, the race finish on av des Champs-Élysées. The final day varies from year to year but is usually

the 3rd or 4th Sunday in July, with the race finishing some time in the afternoon. If you want to see this exciting event, find a spot at the barricades before noon.

Track cycling, a sport at which France excels, is held in the velodrome of the **Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy** (Map pp158-9; 📞 01 40 02 60 60; www.bercy.fr, in French; 8 blvd de Bercy, 12e; 🚇 Bercy).

HORSE RACING

Spend a cheap afternoon relaxing at the races with Parisians of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life. The easiest racecourse to get to is **Hippodrome d'Auteuil** (Map pp132-3; 📞 01 40 71 47 47; www.france-galop.com; Champ de Courses d'Auteuil, Bois de Boulogne, 16e; 🚇 Porte d'Auteuil), host to steeplechases six times a month from February to late June or early July, and early September to early December. Standing on the lawn in the middle of the track is free, but a seat in the stands costs €3 or €4 (under 18s free).