



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 29 – Planning a Paris Stopover: Marcie's Tips & Picks [Stopover Series]

Transcript is autogenerated

Cate (00:00)

If you're thinking about stopping in Paris on your way to or from Germany, definitely listen to this episode. It's part of our new stopover series, where I bring on destination experts to share practical tips and local favorites for European cities you can easily add to your Germany trip.

to the Germany Travel Planning Podcast, the show that helps you plan a super fun trip to Germany and today also Paris. My name is Cate and I'm your Germany Destination Specialist. I'm here to help you plan your best trip ever.

Today we're diving into Paris with Marcie Chung from Marcie in Mommyland. Marcie and I both have such a love for Paris and we share how to make the most of just a few days in the city, what to book in advance, where to stay, and we share some of our favorite magical moments. So let's dive in.

Cate (00:50)

Hi Marcie, so excited to talk with you today. Why don't we start with your introduction? Just tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do.

Marcie (00:59)

Hi, I'm Marcie Cheung and I run the family travel site marcyandmommyland.com. You can find me on Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, Marcie and Mommy Land. I love Paris. It's one of my favorite travel destinations and I can't wait to share my tips and tricks.



Cate (01:16)

So go ahead and tell us about your first time in Paris.

Marcie (01:20)

Absolutely. So I first went to Paris as a teenager on a school trip with my high school history teacher. And I actually turned 18 years old in Paris, which was pretty amazing. And I just remember being blown away by the Eiffel Tower, the Musee d'Orsay, the cute shops, the restaurants, just the ambiance. And I can't believe that we navigated around without cell phones and that we didn't get lost on the metro because this was back in

probably 2001 and life was so much different than it is now.

Cate (01:57)

Yeah, you sometimes I think back to traveling before we had cell phones and Google Maps and things that I'm like, how did we do it? How did we get around? I know I went to Paris in the nineties and I know that I found my way around and I do not remember how exactly I did that, but I know I did.

Marcie (02:14)

I feel like there were more public maps maybe. Like I feel like there were spots that we could stop and we could look and we could figure out where we needed to go next or like the metro maps and things like that. Like I feel like there were more resources and now I like, I don't see maps anywhere when I travel anywhere, even outside of Paris.

Cate (02:23)

Mm-hmm.

That is a really good point. Yeah, I think we used to go pick up a map at the tourism office as the first stop, and then we would study it. And maybe guidebooks also gave



directions. ~ And I think we just were so used to using the paper maps that, know, of course, we didn't think anything about it back then. But and I remember asking people all the time, too, we would just ask people on the street, hey, how do we get to this place? I don't really do that anymore.

Marcie (02:49)

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

No, because you have your phone, right? And you have Siri is telling you exactly walk four steps and get into this entrance of the Metro or like get off at this stop. And it's just, it's so clear that it's now it's like, gosh, I wouldn't want to ask anybody anything.

Cate (03:10)

Right, I know, exactly. So, you know, I can totally relate to your first time in Paris, because I was 20 the first time I was in Paris. I was in college. And my friends and I were studying in Germany, and we decided to do this like two week trip to go visit some places around Europe during our winter break. And I had always wanted to visit Paris. And when I got there, it was like very early January, right after New Year's.

And it just felt so magical. was like, just felt so like such a triumph to be in this city that I'd always dreamed about visiting and being there when it was dark at, you know, like four o'clock and we slept really late. So I always joke that we like basically saw Paris by night on that trip. And, but it was just so magical, like all the lights and the, just being in this beautiful town, I think it absolutely solidified my love for Paris. And it sounds like it's the same for you.

Marcie (03:36)



Yeah.

you ~

Absolutely. It is magical. That's like the best way to describe it. I don't I'm just smiling like the whole time I'm in Paris.

Cate (04:07)

Mm Yeah. I totally get it. You know, and I have friends who feel the opposite. Like I find people either really love Paris or they're just like, I don't like it at all. And I have some friends who don't like it. I don't understand it at all. But, you know, I'm definitely one of the people who loves it. So I love talking. That's why I wanted to talk to you and bring you on the podcast because I know that you love it as well.

Marcie (04:13)

Mm hmm. Yeah.

you

absolutely.

Cate (04:31)

So let's talk about accommodations. ~ Tell us where, like, is there a place in Paris where you like to stay or have you stayed in different neighborhoods? Do you like hotel, apartment? Let's talk about that a little bit.

Marcie (04:43)

Totally. I have stayed in lots of different types of accommodations, areas, I guess, in Paris. I mean, last trip, I brought my best friend who had never been to Europe before. And we were going to London for a tour. And I was like, hey, let's hop to Paris for the few days before, because it's so close to London. And I love Paris. And I knew she



would love it. And so I found the West End Hotel, which is in the eighth arrondissement.

and it was gorgeous. It's like a four-star hotel and it was really easy for us to walk to the Arc de Triomphe and Eiffel Tower and the Champs-Elysees, tons of museums and shops and everything. And the rooms were just, they were so beautiful and it felt like almost like we were in a movie. And then we got these like massive keys from the front desk so.

every time we were done and we leaving, we'd have to like return the keys to the front desk and they would know that we were out. And then when we come in, they would like greet us. And it just felt, I don't know, it was just so special. ~ So that was like a really fun hotel that I did just with my friend. I didn't bring a family there. ~ But on my last trip with my kids, ~ we stayed at Hotel Leopold and that is near Luxembourg Garden. And it's in a really cute.

quiet neighborhood ~ that's easy to walk to shops and restaurants and stuff, but you don't feel like you're in like a super touristy area. And the rooms were huge. Like my kids slept in like a living room area. And then we had a bedroom to ourselves. And so I know when traveling to Paris or anywhere in Europe, it's always hard to find those family rooms. And this one, I just felt like we hit the jackpot with it.

Cate (06:24)

Those both sound really, really great. I'm gonna have to check those out. ~ Cause I'm looking, I'm thinking about my next trip to Paris and I'm thinking about staying in a different place. I'm gonna go check those out. ~ Yeah, I really liked both of those locations. You know, they're central, but ~ they're not in like a super busy, crazy part of Paris. You know, like there's that area, there's an area around the train stations where a lot of people go and ~ I've stayed over there once.

Marcie (06:34)



Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Cate (06:54)

Um, never again. No,

Marcie (06:55)

And then never again, right? Yeah.

Cate (06:57)

no. And actually I stayed near the, the God do know the, the train station one night when I was in my twenties and I was, um, I was there, you know, it was more like a, yeah, I was like a young backpacker at that time. And we stayed there because he had to be close to the train station. We stayed at the youth hostel. Oh my God. It was the worst thing ever. was like the worst place.

Marcie (07:01)

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah.

I know, I know.

I feel like, so we do a lot of train stations in Europe and I feel like that train station is the scariest. I think like my husband has, he actually had somebody try to pickpocket



him where he felt his hand like on his butt. And we were just like, it's the first time he's ever been like.

And it wasn't successful, but it was the first time he's ever felt violated anywhere traveling in Europe. was that train station, because it's just, it's so, I feel like chaotic and there's lots of people and it's just like, you're constantly on alert. It's just, it's really stressful, I think. And that whole area, I feel like it's stressful.

Cate (07:42)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah, yeah, I did not. I mean, it was was okay, but I was happy we were only there for one night. And then we actually moved to a different a different part of Paris because we were just meeting up with somebody who's coming in on the train. And yeah, I do not recommend that area at all. And my gosh, and even back then when I was a backpacker, like I stayed in some sketchy places that were cheap. And that one really even tested my limit. You know, it was it was not good. I don't think I slept the entire night.

Marcie (07:59)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Cate (08:21)

I was like so ready to

get out of there. So every other trip I've stayed more in, I think it's the 14th, I don't know how to pronounce it in French, I don't know. I'm not gonna try to it, the 14th district.



And I don't know why, we just like found a hotel there the first time I went and then I just always go back and I stayed in hotels and apartments. And it's great, it's a little bit further out.

Marcie (08:29)

Okay, yeah.

Cate (08:47)

from the city center, but it's just a neighborhood. I love that. can also, like it's near the Catacombs, I think. And last time I was there, I rented an apartment for a couple of weeks. And so I was right near this pedestrian market too. So that was, it was nice. I it was nice being out there, but it is further. So you do have to like.

Marcie (08:50)

Nice.

Okay.

Have fun.

Cate (09:11)

you're only there for a couple of days, it's probably not great to be out in that area. You probably want to be a little bit closer in.

Marcie (09:13)

Right.

That's the thing I always am telling people who are planning their trips to Paris to think about what they actually want to do in the city and how much time they're going to be there because it can take a lot of time just to travel, depending. And so if you know you want to do a couple of things and they're all in one neighborhood, just



stay in that neighborhood. Maybe you're paying a little bit more, but you're going to save so much time and stress. And so it might be worth it, especially if you're only there for two or three days.

Cate (09:43)

absolutely, totally agree. I will get the links to those hotels you mentioned and I'll put them in the show notes so anyone listening can go check them out because if you are gonna be there just for a couple of days, check out those hotels. Those are in really good locations. ~ You mentioned the apartment versus hotel and you know, I've done both as well.

Marcie (10:01)

Yeah.

Cate (10:04)

Do you, yeah, I guess what are your thoughts on, like, especially if you're going to be closer in for a couple of days, what are your thoughts on hotel versus getting an apartment?

Marcie (10:14)

Yeah, we have done both and I'm just I'm always hotel. I'm always team hotel and I know that that's sort of unusual for like a family traveling because a lot of people want more space and everything but I just find

I find apartment rentals to be stressful personally, because a lot of times I'm waiting for somebody to let me in or get a key or whatever. then it just, feel like it's not as flexible about like, if I'm arriving early or if I want, if I'm leaving later than checkout and I need somewhere to store my luggage and stuff. Like I feel like those are things that are tricky. And some of the places we stayed in Paris, like the apartments, I want to say like almost has like a mildew kind of smell or



I like it's just they're older, older places and I don't know. just, don't, I don't feel like I can relax as much. I just, I don't know. I like, I like hotels that are clean and that if I, you know, if I run out of towels or I need to ask a question or something, I feel like.

Hotels just have so many more resources and if we need to like, you know, grab a taxi and, ~ or we don't know where we're going or we're needing help with something, I feel like it's always nice to have somebody at a front desk who can answer our questions or hold our luggage. Cause a lot of times we are arriving way before check-in or we're leaving way after checkout. And it's just, it's nice to know that there's like somebody else that we can sort of trust that can help us.

Cate (11:41)

Yeah, I agree. I think those are those are excellent points. Like you said earlier, it's just really thinking about what do you want to do there? And what is going to be the most convenient and a lot of times getting a hotel, especially for a couple of days is way more convenient. The time that I stayed in an apartment and I was a little bit further out in that neighborhood, I was there for two weeks and I was working for part of it. And but I had to like take time to go to the grocery store and get food and get toilet paper and get paper towels.

Marcie (12:06)

Yeah.

Exactly.

Cate (12:09)

and I had to clean the apartment before I left. And

a lot of those things you do not wanna have to do when you're only someplace for a few days.



Marcie (12:17)

Exactly.

Cate (12:19)

Let's talk about food because there's a lot of really good stuff to eat in Paris. So is there something like, you know, something that you ate that was really good or is it restaurant or cafe or, you know, tell us what you love.

Marcie (12:23)

Yes.

Absolutely. So one of my favorite places to eat in Paris is Chez Andre. And it's a restaurant that my husband had found online years ago when we planned our first family trip. And we had a six month old baby and we had a three year old son and he really wanted something that was sort of family friendly where we could eat French food because not every place in Paris is family friendly and that is totally fine. So we wanted to make sure we were being respectful and finding the places that our family would.

would be there, but we didn't make any reservations because we didn't, we weren't thinking about that. And so we just kind of walked up.

And it was completely full. It's a popular restaurant. And we were like really bummed because, you know, we had spent all day kind of trekking around with the kids. Everyone was tired. We were hungry. We're really looking forward to like, you know, having some really good food and somebody there, they were so nice and they actually like created a table for us. They like, they were like, hang on. And we didn't complain or anything. They were like, hang on a second. And they fit us in the corner of the restaurant. They were able to fit all four of us. And it was just such delicious French food. And they



so nice and caring to us and like they had kids menus they had everything and we just felt really taken care of and so now every trip we go back we always make sure to make a reservation there and I think that they have some of the best beef tartare that's one of my favorite dishes to get in Paris and not everywhere makes it the way I like it but theirs is it's so delicious and it's a large enough portion that it's like really easy to share with people

Cate (14:06)

That sounds awesome. Do you recommend making reservations?

Marcie (14:07)

you

definitely would recommend making reservations there just to guarantee it's one of those places I don't really know the history of it but if you go on their website you can find it but there are photographs of famous people kind of like all over the wall and it's been around for I feel like it's got to be like 80 years or 100 years something like really substantial and it's just sort of

It's not in a touristy area, but it's nearby touristy areas. And so it's it's like really convenient almost any, anywhere that you're like sightseeing. ~ I think that's really good. And then like one more place that we always stop is Corrette for their macarons. I know that macarons are like, well, they're one of my favorite cookies for sure. And I feel like I am a macaron snob and we were on a food tour one time and

they stopped at Corette and I was kind of like, this isn't, lottery is always like, you know, the really famous one or Pierre, Herme. And, so I was kind like, I don't know if I'm going to like this one. And it like, our jaws dropped. It was so delicious. The flavors were on point. And so now we always make sure that we get a box of macarons from Corette.



Cate (15:15)

that sounds good too. ~ So I will I'll link these up in the show notes as well, because I want to go check them out. And I'm sure some of the listeners will want to too. So I'll link those out. But that's not like great recommendations. So when I was thinking, I was thinking about my answer to this, and I came up with two things. One is, ~ and I don't have a specific restaurant or, ~ you know, place, because it's more just like what you could eat. ~ But I used to go to crepe restaurants, and I would

Marcie (15:17)

You

Yeah.

yeah.

Cate (15:43)

you know, just any one that I found that looked good. And I loved those. And I would love getting like the whatever the menu of the day was. And it was usually a savory crepe, often ham and cheese or something. And then a salad. And then I think it came with cider too, like hard cider. And then also, like a dessert crepe, I think right after that, I loved that. I mean, I was doing that in, you know, when I was a

Marcie (15:53)

Yeah.

yeah, yeah.

Cate (16:09)

know, in my 20s and then now I do that as an adult and that's just one of my favorite things. Love it.



Marcie (16:12)

Mm-hmm. yeah,

totally. Well, I was on a food tour one time and they said that it's actually traditional to have cider with the crepes. And I had never heard that before, but it was once she said it, it totally clicked. was like, yeah, I guess I have seen that paired everywhere.

Cate (16:19)

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And it was just like the menu of the day, you know, and you get a couple of choices and it was reasonably priced and it's just such a great lunch. So that's one of my favorite things. And the other thing that I thought of ~ is when I well actually you can do this and even if you're in a hotel, but last time I was in Paris and I had the apartment there was a little grocery store down the street and I went and bought some butter and I accidentally got this salted butter like not just salted butter but like

Marcie (16:36)

Yeah, sounds great.

So good. ~

Cate (16:55)

the butter with the big flakes of salt in it. Yeah, I got

that and and I and then on the way home, I got I by the bakery and I just happened to get this fresh baguette I have never had it I get that good in my life. It was fresh right out of the oven. I took it home. It was still warm. And I just sat in my apartment with the windows open and I could see like the rooftops, you know, from where I was sitting. And I just



Marcie (17:07)

Ugh.

Yep.

Cate (17:21)

ate the baguette and with that salted butter and I was like oh my god this is the best thing I have ever had in my life.

Marcie (17:24)

Ugh.

probably pretty affordable too, right? Yeah.

Cate (17:31)

Oh, it was super cheap. It was

so cheap. Yeah. Oh, that was so so good. I kept going back to the bakery to get more more baguettes and I never got one that was as good as that first one but so so good. What about the Eiffel Tower? I assume you've been to the Eiffel Tower and I know there's different ways to experience it. So tell me about your experience with with the Eiffel Tower.

Marcie (17:36)

You

~

Yes.



Absolutely. Yes. So I have gone several times. ~ The first time was actually on my 18th birthday and we visited it during the day and then we went back at night. So I got to climb up the Eiffel Tower when it was all sparkling and that I think and maybe that's why I always think of Paris being so magical. was like I knew it was my birthday. I'm running through the Eiffel Tower. It's it's sparkling everywhere though, like, you know, the night sky, the skyline, everything. It was just so gorgeous. ~ So that was like super special.

And then recently we've gone back a couple of times and with my kids, the first trip we did, it was during springtime and we didn't even think about getting tickets ahead of time and we looked at the kids and they seemed really tired and didn't want to wait in line. So we just kind of like hung out. We walked around. You can still walk around the base of the Eiffel Tower and stuff for free. And that was pretty cool. But then when we went back when they were a little bit older,

I made sure to get the summit access tickets so that ~ you go all the way up as high as you can in Eiffel Tower. it was really nice because we got the tickets as part of a tour. And so ~ it just made it a lot faster. So I felt like we skipped a lot of lines. We just kind of got to zip right up, take our pictures. I think our tour guide had some trivia. So the kids won little prizes, which was really cool to keep them occupied while we were waiting. And we went during the summertime, so it was

crazy packed with people. ~ But I think that that's personally what I always recommend for people is to is to book some sort of skip the line tickets, just especially if you're only in Paris for a couple of days just to kind of maximize. ~ But I know that like going up in the Eiffel Tower isn't for everybody. ~ And so I think if people maybe want an alternative is to you can climb up the Arc de Triomphe. And I think a lot of people don't realize that.

But you can go to the top of that and that has a clear view, well, I guess on a clear day, of the Eiffel Towers. So if you want even cooler photos, I feel like it's still cool to



take pictures from the top of the Eiffel Tower. But I think when you take them from the top of the Arc de Triomphe and you can get the Eiffel Tower in the background, I think that that's almost more of a wow factor for people if they don't care where they're getting ~ a skyline view. ~ I think that that's kind of fun.

Cate (20:18)

Yeah, yeah, that's actually a really, really good tip. I was just thinking that one time when Aaron and I were there, that's exactly what we did. We were, we just went up to the top of the active champ and we're like, this is actually a really good picture. And it's one of my favorite pictures.

Marcie (20:24)

Mm-hmm.

Yes, exactly same. We have this family selfie and I have my youngest son is in a baby carrier. We're all looking at the camera and I was like, I love it. Cause it was just like the wind was blowing. It was just really cool.

Cate (20:34)

Yeah.

Yeah, I'm so glad you mentioned that I had totally forgotten about that. So when you went up to the top of the Eiffel Tower, did you do like the champagne things? I know you can get like a glass of champagne and and drink that at the top.

Marcie (20:44)

You

Yes,



we did not, but you can also get macarons. They have a, I think it's Lottery, has a little cafe up there too. And so we did not do that. My kids were tempted. ~ But I do know that that is something special that a lot of people do.

Cate (21:08)

Mm hmm. Yeah, I haven't done that either. I finally went up to the top last time I was there. I hate heights. Like I absolutely hate hate hate heights. And I decided on that trip, I was like, I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna force myself and I'm gonna go up to the top. And I did not buy tickets in advance. And I just like, managed to get a ticket and I went all the way to the top and the whole way up because that's a really long elevator ride. It's like holding on for dear life. I'm like, why am I doing this? But

Marcie (21:15)

~ yeah.

Yeah.

I know, yeah.

Well, and then was

it really crowded? Like when we've gone, it's like packed.

Cate (21:39)

It was, yes.

Yeah, the elevator was very crowded and the person in the elevator who was, you know, like running it, I was like, how do they do this all day long? Up and down, like that's like the worst, that'd be the worst job for me. But I'm so glad I did it.

Marcie (21:49)



I know.

Cate (21:54)

Something that I used to do when I was ~ younger in Paris, I didn't go to the top. I would just do the really cheap ticket and we could just walk up and get tickets. I don't know if you can do that anymore, but we would just walk up to the window where you would get the ticket to walk up to the first and the second platform.

Marcie (22:12)

Mm-hmm.

Cate (22:14)

And that was the cheapest, easiest way to get up to the second platform.

Marcie (22:14)

totally, yeah. Yes. And it's still a great view from there. We've done that too. ~ So I think if you can't get all the way to the top, you shouldn't discount it completely because that is kind of fun, even if you're just part way up, because you do get a great view and you're still inside the Eiffel Tower, which is just kind of a cool bragging point.

Cate (22:36)

Yeah, I agree,

What about like lesser known experiences or something unique?

Marcie (22:42)

Totally. So on our first family trip to Paris, I did a bunch of research, obviously, and I found ~ this company called Paris Greeters, or I guess I should call it like an organization because they're all volunteers. And basically it is a group of volunteers of people, and they have these all over the world. We did one in New York City too, ~ but.



in Paris, there are locals that will guide you around their neighborhood. And I think they don't they don't actually like the term guide because it's like a it's it's sort of like a free walking experience. They don't even think they like the term tour, but like it really is.

a tour with a local of their neighborhood and our guide was so sweet. It was an older gentleman. I think he was actually president maybe of the Paris Greeters Association and he just walked us around his local neighborhood. We like met for

a latte before we kicked off. like at one point he was like pushing our baby in a stroller and we went to a park where they got to like play with local French kids. And he was telling us about some of his travels. And it was just, I think we were probably with him for three or four hours. And it was just such a relaxed experience of like walking with the local. He took us into like, ~ gosh, it was like a hotel where they had Olympic sized swimming pool and there was some significance of it. don't even remember at this point, but

Like just everything that he was just pointing out were things that we would have just walked straight past and not thought twice of, or like we even went into like ~ a greenhouse in an area that I would have thought would have been private property, but it was open to the public and it was just something unique. was like just part of his normal walk when he's doing a morning walk, the places he stops and he would chat with people and.

It just, really made us feel ~ sort of like we were locals, even though like we were clearly tourists. ~ It was just something that I had never heard of and I'm so glad we did it because it was a very meaningful experience.

Cate (24:43)



I love that. I love that. That is so awesome. And you know, it's funny because that actually totally relates to the one that I had thought of, which was just exploring random neighborhoods in Paris. So because that's, mean, that was like some of my best memories are just going out, just going, taking the Metro to some random neighborhood and then wandering around and seeing what's there. And I love even more being, being guided or, you know, just like being

Marcie (24:45)

Yeah.

Yeah, totally.

Yeah.

Yes.

Cate (25:11)

going around with somebody from the neighborhood. I love that even more. ~ that's so awesome.

Marcie (25:14)

Yeah, well it's like a great

place to ask your random questions and stuff too because like my my husband he really likes ~ gosh what a duck confit and so he was trying to be like where can I find duck confit and everything and he was kind like yeah like local people don't really eat that here you know like you're gonna have to go to a tourist restaurant for that he was like because he thought it was like the super local dish kind of thing and so it was just nice to get that feedback from somebody just kind of where can ask like any question you have.



Cate (25:18)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm. So is that like just a Paris organization or is it for France or do they have it in other locations other countries?

Marcie (25:48)

Yeah, so they have, you go, gosh, I'm trying to think of like, I think it's just called Greeters is like the international organization. And so they have them for different places. So like for New York, I think it's called Big Apple Greeter. ~ And maybe they changed the name, I don't know. But like, so they have them for like, very like big cities. there's just, they're for all over the world. And so you can just go to their website and you find them and then you submit an application because you're not guaranteed. It's not like you just sign up for it. You have to like,

secure your accommodations, so have to say where you're staying, the kind of the things you're interested in, kind of about your trip, and then kind of the how long you're going to be there. And then they will get back to you at some point if you're a good fit for the organization and they have a greeter for you. And then they will tell you what day and time you're meeting them. So it's kind of one of those things that like, yeah, you kind of like do it first, and then kind of like wait around to see like if, if it works out and then you can plan your trip kind of around that.

or book things that are, that you can cancel or rebook or something like that. Like make sure your schedule is a little bit flexible until you kind of have it nailed down. So that was the only kind of tricky part about it, but it was totally worth it. I'm like really glad that we did it.

Cate (27:03)



~ I'm going to look that up. I'm going see what they have for Germany because I think that could be really interesting too. Yeah. I'm so glad you mentioned that. That's awesome. Did you take any day trips when you're on any of your visits to Paris?

Marcie (27:07)

Yeah, yeah, check. Yeah. Yeah.

Yes, so I have done a couple of day trips. The most memorable ones were to the Palace of Versailles, which is really popular, and then also to Guverney, which is Monet's house and garden. And that is the one that I recommend to people the most because it blew me away. Like we went in the summertime and everything was at full bloom and you we got to walk around the ponds that had the lily pads in it and ~ just walking through the

Cate (27:22)

Mm-hmm.

Marcie (27:44)

house everything. just it felt so special and I think it would still feel special like during the springtime or early fall but like you definitely want things to be blooming. I can't imagine it would be as magical in colder months where it's not as pretty ~ outside because so much of it is the gardens. ~ But that was I mean hands down my favorite day trip I've done and every trip in the future like I'm I'm constantly like how can we fit in like a half day or full day

to go do that just because it was so it's just beautiful and it's just I don't know it's so different it's it's outside of Paris ~ but not too far I feel like it's it's maybe like an hour or so and you can take the train or we did a tour so we took a tour bus that took us there and we got to explore around and then we went in and have lunch and then we actually did ~ we did it paired with the Palace of Versailles for the afternoon so ended



up being like a 12-hour tour day which ~ I don't know if I would necessarily recommend doing that but

It was a way for us to kind of see a couple of things ~ on the same tour. But the Palace of Versailles, like I feel like that's something that we did when I on my first trip when I was a teenager. And then we went back with the kids on our last trip. And ~ it is it's just really impressive. you know, whether or not you even know the history, you know, like for for my kids, they didn't really know much about ~ French history, ~ but they were just kind of blown away by the Hall of Mirrors and

Just all the like opulence, I guess. ~ But there's tons of things to do outside. Like the gardens are really pretty and they have ~ like golf carts that you can rent and so you can zip around to explore a little bit more. there's, ~ I don't know, just like, you know, lots of things to do. like, you know, whether or not the palace is actually on your bucket list, just even being in the areas is just pretty cool.

Cate (29:35)

I agree. Every single thing you said. Those are the two day trips that I had on my list too. So I'm just going to say yes. Yeah. Yep. Same exact thing. Yeah. I absolutely like I liked Versailles. I went there first and then on a later trip, I went out to Monet's house and garden and I loved that. I just, love Monet. I've always loved Monet and just being out there, it was, it was magical. I mean, it was just the best. I spent the whole day out there.

Marcie (29:38)

You

I think they're the most popular ones, probably.

Yeah. Yeah. Same.



Yes.

Cate (30:05)

And I just took the train and I was by myself. I was on a solo trip and it was awesome. I had a really good salad at a ~ little restaurant that was just down from his house. And then I wandered around the little town and it was the best day. I absolutely loved it.

Marcie (30:12)

Nice.

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. I feel like anyone, if they have an extra day that they aren't sure what to do, like that is perfect.

Cate (30:28)

Yeah, I agree, absolutely. I even think I liked it, like in my memory, I liked that even better than Versailles and I had a good time in Versailles, yeah. So I think either one would be great, but yeah, going out to Monet, if you like Monet, definitely go out and visit the house and garden. It's awesome.

Marcie (30:34)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Yeah. and even

the gift shop area, like it was massive and we found so many cool goodies. Like we love gift shops, but that was like the best gift shop. just, got like a puzzle ~ that was ~ for Monet's garden. I found, we found like kids books. found, just, so many things. It was just unreal.



Cate (31:03)

Mm-hmm, yeah, I totally agree. So is there a moment from any of your trips in Paris that you look back and you're like, this was just one of those core magical moments?

Marcie (31:15)

Absolutely. So ~ before we went to Paris with the kids for the first time, my oldest was three years old, and I got him a Paris guidebook that had tons of photos in it. And it was, I think it was like a kid specific Paris guide, something like that. It was really small though. ~ And I told him to thumb through it and pick out an activity that he wanted to do. And so I had it in the car. And so when I pick him up,

from preschool, I'd be like, hey, take a look at the Paris book, see if something looks cool. And so he picked out the toy boats at Luxembourg Gardens. And I was like, ~ okay, yeah, we could totally do that. And so we found time on our trip. was like gorgeous weather the day we went and we actually got toy boats, like I think it was like 15 minutes before.

they closed or something like that. And so it was like perfect timing. And my son just like he completely lit up once he like realized like how to do it. And you saw all these other kids doing the toy boats. And it was just, it was so special that like we did it on our last trip, like even though the kids are a little bit older, they were like, can we go back and do toy boats again? And so we did it. And then they were like, can we do this like the next day? Like, it's just, it's just, it's like really iconic. And it was just, it's like such a simple activity, but like everyone was just

happy and beaming and I was like I think that like even if they're in their 30s and we go on another trip to Paris with them I'll be like let's do the toy boats like it was just so special.

Cate (32:39)



Yeah. yeah. I've seen kids out doing that. I mean, as an adult, I think it looks like fun. I love that you have that memory with your kids. And that definitely will be something that you'll go back and you'll continue doing that together. That's so awesome. I know my magical moment is, it's the same type of thing, but it's when ~ Aaron and I

Marcie (32:45)

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely.

Cate (33:01)

went to Paris together and we each had been there separately, but it was really fun to be there together at the same time. And we got a picnic and we went to that lawn that's right in front of the Eiffel Tower. mean, it's like total cliché, right? But it's so fun. And we just got some wine and cheese and baguette and chocolate and we sat on the lawn and it was summer. And we were just having this like amazing two month trip around Europe.

Marcie (33:05)

Yes. yes, yes. I love it though.

Cate (33:28)

And I think we also were deciding that, we do want to get married. You know, it was like that whole thing. And we're just looking at the Eiffel Tower and it's just beautiful weather. And it's just one of those moments where you're like, oh, life is great.

Marcie (33:28)

Nice.

Yeah. Yeah.



Absolutely, I can picture it immediately. I love that you did that.

Cate (33:44)

Yep.

Yeah. And I go back every time I go to Paris, whether it's with just me or with Aaron or someone else, I go and sit on that lawn and look up the Eiffel Tower and it just reminds me of that moment. Yeah. Yeah.

Marcie (33:57)

Yes, I love that.

Cate (34:00)

The last few things I want to touch on are language and transportation because these are things that ~ I'm asked about all the time when I work with clients who are going to Germany. So let's talk a little bit about ~ language. how much French do you feel like you need to get by in Paris?

Marcie (34:19)

I feel like you don't need any French to get by. It is very helpful if you do know just a handful of words or phrases to be polite, but in my experience, ~ Parisians will smile and then they'll answer you in English because they'd rather you not butcher their language, which I totally understand. ~

But one thing that's been super helpful in Paris is Google Translate. And so most people can get that on their phone pretty easily. my husband is, he's really extroverted, so he likes chatting with people when we travel. And he uses it, like when we're in taxis in Paris, to have like full on conversations with drivers, like whether it's about like the other cars on the road or like, know, about, you know, what's going on, you know, in Paris or like, where's, you know, great places to eat, whatever, like just chit chatty kind of stuff. And so he does it nonstop.



Cate (35:00)

You

Marcie (35:10)

and they always get a kick out of it because I think they're so used to people not talking to them ~ that they really do get a kick out of it and they answer back and he holds the phone and then he reads the translation of what they just said and it's pretty fun. ~ besides that, I would say like a lot of people in Paris ~ do speak English and so it's not uncommon. mean, obviously there's American tourists but it's also so close to London. ~

that it's pretty easy to get around. I took French in high school and I minored in it in college, but I honestly don't speak the language. ~ It's languages are very difficult for me, but it was helpful to know that just to be able to read signs or instructions or something for things. But I feel like if you know any of the romance languages, like so many of those root words are so similar that you would be able to figure out what's going on.

Cate (36:07)

Yeah, I agree. Aaron speaks Spanish, he doesn't know any French, but he's gotten by fine. think partly because he can recognize some things. And I don't speak very good French. I learned it in high school a little bit in college as well. And I always like to try to try to use it. I've got like, you know, baby French at the most. And yeah, it's okay. I mean, I can like order things and ask a few questions and stuff like that. And that's yeah, that's totally fine. So

Marcie (36:12)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.



Yes, same.

Yeah.

Cate (36:34)

Yeah, I agree. I mean, you can definitely go to Paris if you don't know, ~ don't know much French. And I love the idea of using the Google Translate like that. Yeah, that's really good. Have you flown directly into Paris? Like have you gone through Charles de Gaulle or do usually take the train or?

Marcie (36:47)

Yes,

yes, so I've done it a couple ways. So I have flown direct. I've also, and then I took the channel on my last trip to Paris, because we were going to London right after. ~ So I definitely, yeah, I know how to get in and out of Paris pretty well.

Cate (37:04)

Have you ever had any issues with Charles Seagal Airport? And the reason why I ask is because I get asked that question a lot. And ~ I've flown through there once and I had read that it can be really chaotic and everything. So I like really prepared for my, I was like flying into Charles Seagal and then I was switching over to my flight into Germany and I had no problems. I mean, it was totally fine. I think I just set the bar super low and I was prepared. But I will say that they went on strike and

Marcie (37:19)

You

Yeah.



You

Cate (37:34)

hour after my flight left. So I narrowly avoided potential disaster. But what has your experience been like? Or do you have any tips to

Marcie (37:37)

no. ~

I mean, it's been smooth sailing for me. Like I feel like it's just like any other international airport that I've been to. ~ Nothing, I don't think that it's like scary or anything, but I do love that you brought up that strike because I feel like not only for airports, but also for Metro and things like that. Like there are strikes like.

I want to say like sort of frequently in Paris. So it's good to like make sure that you're checking the news a little bit on your trip, just in case. Like I think we were there one time and there was a garbage strike. And so it was just something that like, you know, and it was summertime, of course. And so it was very fragrant when we were walking around. So it was just kind of like one of those things that's like, yeah, like this doesn't happen typically where I live. And so it's just like, OK, you just might want to keep an eye on that in case there is a strike. But ~

Cate (38:22)

~ huh.

Marcie (38:34)

A lot of times, I mean, feel like there is some notice, you know, for Metro and stuff. Like, I feel like people kind of know, okay, we can't use that today, you know.

Cate (38:43)



Mm Yeah. Yeah. And I, you know, I felt like there was crowded and it took some time to get through different lines. And, you know, but it was okay. I mean, it really wasn't any worse than any other airport that I have been to, you know, and if you're going, I was there in December, it was kind of busy. But ~ I didn't really feel like it was that bad. Had I arrived in a couple hours later and encountered the strike, I might have a very different story to tell. But

Marcie (38:51)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Right. Well, but you know what, but that also brings up a good point about like when you're arriving, because sometimes if you're arriving with a bunch of other international flights, like going through customs or immigration or whatever, it be tricky at any airport, you know, but I think that that's something ~ to keep in mind. Like, I don't know, you know, if people are going to like reschedule their flights or whatever, but like sometimes, you know, you go ~ through passport control and you're like,

there's nobody here or other times you're like why is there a two hour wait because all the airplanes have landed at the same time.

Cate (39:40)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So before we wrap up, I would love to hear, know, do you have another trip planned to Paris and like, what keeps you wanting to go back to the magical city?

Marcie (39:51)

Totally. Well, I think when I think about Paris, I want to go back because of the food, the shopping, and just the ambiance. And I'm heading to London for a tour. doing this Jane Austen ~ has its 250th anniversary this year, 250th birthday, I think, this year. So



there's a bunch of events and stuff happening in England. So I'm doing this Jane Austen Agatha Christie Book Club Tour in October.

which I am super excited about. I'm a super like book nerd. But if I'm already gonna travel there, I think the tour is like 10 days or something, I'm like, well, maybe I should tack on a few days in Paris before or after my tour. So I'm kind of debating that right now. If I want to go by myself, if I want to meet up with anybody, if there's maybe somebody on the tour that wants to go with me. I haven't quite decided yet. So that's still kind of maybe in the air. And then if not,

I was thinking maybe of going for spring break next year with the family because they do want to go back to Paris. And I think Paris in the springtime can be really cool too.

Cate (41:01)

Mm-hmm. Well, I think you should go both times for sure.

Marcie (41:03)

You know, I agree with you. I think that that sounds delightful.

Cate (41:06)

And you know, like go solo. I spent two weeks there once ~ because I was kind of working remotely and it was great. I wasn't sure I would like being there for two weeks by myself, but I had plenty to do and it was great. you know, I wouldn't hesitate to go do a solo trip to Paris at all.

Marcie (41:11)

Okay, cool. Yeah, I'm thinking about it seriously.

Cate (41:27)



Yeah, I know I want to go in the next year or two. And, and I really, really want to go back. I really miss it. And I am I am I really, really want to do like a cooking class or baking class, and maybe do a private guide somewhere or the greeters that you're telling me about. And I want to do a food tour, like I want to go do some of the experiences that I haven't done yet. And

Marcie (41:30)

yeah.

It's beautiful.

Yeah.

Yes, do that.

my gosh, okay, we did a Julia Child food tour that you would probably love and it ended like we ate at a restaurant that she used to eat at all the time and we got to see her apartment. ~ And it was so funny is like we did that trip, I think maybe three or four years ago and my oldest son brought it up casually in class. They were talking about Julia Child and he's like, yeah, I've totally been to her apartment. And he like gave all this facts that he had learned on this tour that I didn't even know he was paying attention to. But we got to eat like her favorite foods along the way and

and it was, I think you would really love it.

Cate (42:24)

I think I would too. I definitely have to know about this. I want to do that. That was so fun. Okay. I am so excited to go back to Paris now. mean, well, maybe at some point we'll be in Paris at the same time. I know that would be so fun. Well, Marzi, thank you so much. Why don't you tell us again where we can find you online?



Marcie (42:25)

Yes.

Yeah.

Yes, we should meet up. Yes.

Absolutely, so my website is marciandmommiland.com and I talk about family travel, but also solo travel and ~ Kid free travel so it's not just kid related stuff and you can follow me on Instagram Facebook or Pinterest and I'm at Marci and mommy land

Cate (43:07)

And you also have a Hawaii website, right?

Marcie (43:09)

I do, yes. So I have visited Hawaii more than 40 times, which I know sounds insane, but my mom lives there, so there's an excuse. And I have hawaitravelwithkids.com and also hawaitravelspot.com are my websites. And I have a bunch of Hawaii guidebooks for kids, for solo travelers, for ~ couples, all those kinds of things that you can find on those websites.

Cate (43:34)

Great, and so I will link your websites up in the show notes. So for our listeners, definitely go check the show notes. You'll see ~ links to Marcie's websites and also to all the things that we mentioned today. So Marcie, thank you so much. It was so fun to talk with you.

Cate (43:48)

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