

# *FAQ Gary's Paris Tours*

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## **GETTING TO KNOW GARY and THE REVISITING COMPANY**

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**Question: It seems like a thousand people give tours in Paris. What makes yours so special?**

Answer: Probably closer to two thousand. But none of them has my combination of experience, know-how and spirit of discovery along with the ability to personalize tours and advice. Not to mention that we'll enjoy each other's company.

**Q: Are you the right guide for every English-speaking visitor?**

A: My tours specially appeal to curious travelers, atypical travelers, experienced travelers, upscale travelers with a good spirit, people who like discovering food and drink, and families and multi-generational groups who don't need everything dumbed down for them. I'm not the right guide for those who complain constantly.

**Q: Let me get this straight, you're a travel writer, journalist, lecturer, consultant, and you also give tours and organize events. Isn't that a bit much?**

A: All of those activities are facets of my expertise in travel, culture and cuisine in France. They may sound like very different activities but are in fact all a part of same desire to share my knowledge and love for France while constantly learning more myself. Those activities also go under the umbrella of a legal French entity called The Revisiting Company.

**Q: Is The Revisiting Company a travel agency?**

A: No. In addition to touring, I can advise and can assist with itineraries and pre-reservations (meaning pre-payment), but my fee is typically based on time and know-how. Travel agents make final reservations and work mostly on commission. Since travel agencies and The Revisiting Company are complementary, we sometimes work together. Travel agencies can sell my tours and contract with me for advice for their clients and I can ask travel agencies to make hotel reservations for my clients. (Travel agents who would like to speak with me about my customized tours and services for their clients should send me a link to their agency website and their phone number.)

**Q: Are you French or American?**

A: I grew up in New Jersey, my home base has been Paris, France for many years, I return frequently to the U.S., and I have dual nationality.

**Q: Are you a licensed guide?**

A: In France there are two types of people who can get paid for guiding and accompanying you, guides-conférenciers and everyone else working legally. Guides-conférenciers (which can be translated as guide-lecturer) have a license that enables them to give tours in museums and historical monuments, along with other places and situations. They obtain the license following university studies and a diploma to that effect. I do not have the license or title of guide-conférencier. My high and broad level of knowledge and experience in tourism, art, history, culture, cuisine and wine in France stem from my work as a journalist and travel writer and lecturer, from preparing for specific tour requests, and from my passion for certain subjects. I work legally. There are places, notably museums, where a guide-conférencier is permitted to give a tour but where others, including me, cannot. When my clients are interested in a guided tour in a museum and places, I can call upon some terrific guides-conférenciers to lead that specific portion of a larger tour.

**Q: Are you one of those guides that's stands in front of a monument and makes a speech to silent foreigners then moves on to the next sight and makes another speech?**

A: If you want me to. But I think you'll find it far more interesting to have a dialogue, to give information while also talking about what's interesting to you at that sight, to experience a destination, to adapt to your interests as we go along, to try some good food and drink to hungry and thirsty travelers, to show you that there's humor in cross-cultural travel as well, and that there is much to learn and to enjoy by observing Paris together.

**Q: Are you available year-round?**

A: The short answer is "Yes." The long answer is that while Paris is my home base I travel a lot, and there are days in Paris when my writing and other activities take precedence. So I'm not always available. Send me your travel dates and let's see if we can make each other's schedules fit.

**Q: I see that you offer "Travel Therapy" and I've heard you talk about that in an interview. You aren't really a psychotherapist, are you?**

A: No, I'm not a psychotherapist, but my clients' well-being and happiness are essential to my work. I use the expression "travel therapy" somewhat tongue in cheek. Yet, if therapy is intended to make you a healthier version of yourself and to help you achieve those wonderful moments when you feel joyfully in tune with the place you're in and the people you're with, then there may be points in common with my touring. Think about it: what could be healthier and more meaningful when traveling abroad than for a woman and her 13-year-old daughter to find a shared interest in Monet's Water Lilies? Or to return to the hotel after a day of touring and want to make passionate love to your spouse? Or to realize that despite your reluctance you're ever so glad to have traveled to France with your 85-year-old parent? Or simply to sense that in this place and time you are happy? We can all use some travel therapy.

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## **PLANNING A TOUR or AN EVENT**

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### **Q: How far in advance should I contact you?**

A: There's no rule. We can start the conversation whenever you want to send a message. At least a month in advance is best. You aren't committed until you make payment, though another travel party might grab your desired date while you're undecided. You can always try at the last minute though as I might be available.

### **Q: Why can't I just book a tour and pay online, no questions asked, instead of first sending a request message?**

A: Thanks for your enthusiasm. I like to have a few exchanges by email or telephone with potential clients. That's what customization is all about.

### **Q: There's such a variety of tours on this site that I don't know which to choose? Where do I start?**

A: Start by sending me some information about yourself, your travel party and your interests, along with your travel dates. Let me know what you're hoping to get out of this trip and if you've ever been to France before. I can then send you some ideas based on that information. I recommend including your phone number so that I can call you for 5-10 minutes to better understand what you're looking for and to explain how I can help. Finally, you don't have to choose a specific tour at all. You can say, "Gary, we'd like to tour with you for 2 days during our 5-day stay in Paris. Let's figure it out as we go along." And we will.

### **Q: I'm not sure that I really want a tour. While I'm considering it, could you just send me an itinerary or could you just send me a few restaurants and hotel suggestions?**

A: If you are asking me for assistance rather than seeking it online elsewhere then I assume that you respect my expertise and understand its value. You can request a phone consultation [here \(link\)](#). A portion of the fee for the consultation will then be deducted from your touring invoice should you decide to take a tour.

### **Q: You offer lots of walking tours, but one of the members of my travel party needs a slow pace and can't walk for miles on end.**

A: Paris is best toured on foot, punctuated by the use of various forms of public or private transportation. Visiting Paris is not a race, and there is no correlation between distance covered and the enjoyment one has. These are called walking tours but that doesn't mean that you'll be on your feet the entire time. There are well-situated park benches, cafés, tea rooms, restaurants and bars that lend themselves to insightful discoveries and great enjoyment through the course of a day. In fact, you might consider my Paris By Café Tour and various culinary tours that involve frequent well-chosen sit-downs.

I have toured with travelers from 4 to 89 years old and have always found a suitable pace for their discoveries, so please let me know if you have specific concerns about

walking. Usually it isn't the walking that's difficult for older travelers, it's the standing around.

Finally, if, for whatever reason, you would like to tour while using a full-time car service that can be arranged at additional expense.

**Q: Where will we meet for the tour?**

A: Since the tour is personalized we'll decide that together. If setting out in the morning it'll probably be most convenient for me to meet you at your hotel or apartment.

**Q: What if I've paid for a walking tour and then find that rain is forecast for that day? Is it canceled? Can I cancel?**

A: Each year millions of travelers enjoy Paris in the rain. We can either continue the walking tour as planned, preferably with umbrellas, or we can agree on alternate plans when we meet, for example a cheese tasting or a visit to a craftsman or designer. With or without rain, clients have been thrilled to spend the day going from café to restaurant to tea room to bar, learning various facets of life and culture and history along the way. Some of my most joyful tours are given sitting down.

**Q: What if I'm sick the day of the tour?**

A: I will do my best to find an alternate time to meet during your stay, but last-minute changes are rarely possible. Occasionally one person in a travel party will feel out of sorts or a bit tired the day of a tour, but that's no reason to ruin the day for the other person or persons in the travel party. In fact, the person who isn't feeling well in the morning often manages to meet up with us later in the day – or we return to the hotel to get him/her. Or the tour itself can be adapted to the pace of the person who isn't feeling well (less walking, more time inside, a slower pace, more onion soup –see answer to the question above about the rain). I can also help you at the pharmacy or help make an appointment with a doctor. Refer to the cancellation policy below. If still concerned about how illness can affect your plans, I recommend looking into how travel insurance would cover such a situation.

**Q: I don't have the budget for a private tour. Do you ever conduct group tours?**

A: About once or twice each month I create an exceptional semi-private excursions (Normandy, Champagne, others), events (wine tastings, cheese tastings, private dinners) and encounters (with a master craftsman, a designer, a specialist of some kind) for groups of 4 to 12 people. Fill out the Contact form with your travel dates and information about your travel party, along with an indication of what type of semi-private tour would interest you. Those taking a private tour with me may also be interested in a separate semi-private excursion, event or encounter during their stay. It can't hurt to ask if I've got something in the works for your travel dates.

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## **PAYMENT**

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**Q: Can we pay you in cash once in Paris? Can we pay part in advance, part afterwards?**

A: Your first tour and any consultation or organizational time must be paid for in full in advance via Paypal. You can purchase additional tours once in Paris, though I can't guarantee last-minute availability. For additional tours, cash payment is possible as is payment via Paypal. There is no cash discount.

**Q: But I don't have a Paypal account.**

A: You can pay through Paypal with your credit card without having a Paypal account.

**Q: Will I have additional bank charges?**

A: Billing from The Revisiting Company is in euros, so your credit card may show an exchange fee if your account is in another currency. The Revisiting Company doesn't itself add on charges beyond the euro amount you've agreed to. Contact your bank or credit card for further details on their charges.

**Q: Will you hold a date for me even though I haven't yet paid?**

A: You should make payment only when you're confident that the tour date(s) is/are right for you. I can pencil in a date as a reminder to myself that you're considering it, and may even let you know if I receive another request for the same day or am in the process of making alternate plans (not guaranteed). But I can't block off unpaid dates for those who have never toured with me.

**Q: Do you guarantee satisfaction with the possibility of partial or full reimbursement?**

A: No. Here's why. 1. I make it very clear who I am and my approach to touring and if you have any doubts you can always ask in advance. 2. I cannot be held responsible for strikes, the weather, unexpected closings, pickpockets, etc., or for the services of third parties. 3. Some people are never satisfied. Not that I've ever met any of them on my tours.

**Q: When you call upon outside guides, how are they paid?**

Answer: As noted above, I am not a travel agent and The Revisiting Company is not a travel agency, so our business is not based on selling other peoples' or companies' products and services at a commission. When reserving the services of a guide-conférencier, something I would only do as part of a much larger touring, organization and consulting, I generally prefer that the client pay that guide directly. Guides and connoisseurs that I partner with for other tours and events, such as for

the Style Women Tour and for chocolate or wine tastings, may be paid by The Revisiting Company as part of a larger tour and organizational package.

**Q: What is your cancellation policy?**

A: As noted above, you should make payment only when you're confident that the tour date(s) is/are right for you. I understand that unforeseen events at home or while traveling may cause you to cancel part or all of your trip. I try to be flexible. But I must also be compensated for my prep work and for possibly refusing other work or building my schedule around the blocked date(s).

**For partial or full cancellations up to 7 days prior** to the start of your only tour/event or your series of tours/events, you will be refunded up to 70% of my fee.

**For partial or full cancellation between 7 days and 72 hours prior** to the start of your only tour/event or your series of tours/events, you will be refunded up to 35% of my fee.

**No refund can be given for cancellations within 72 hours of the start** of your only tour/event or your series of tours/events.

**When no touring is involved, payments for consultations and organization cannot be reimbursed at all once payment is made, whether you then travel or not.**

**Expenses**, which may make up a part of the overall cost of a tour (e.g. a tour involving a cheese tasting, private transportation, or engaging another guide), are at most 90% refundable at any time *before* those funds are spent or otherwise engaged. I must, however, abide by the payment and cancellation policies of the provider involved in those expenses (e.g. the cheesemonger, the transportation company, the guide), who may have requested full or partial pre-payment. If they reimburse 50%, I can then reimburse you up to 90% of that amount.

Any reimbursement can only be made via Paypal, unless otherwise agreed in advance of your initial payment and indicated on the invoice.

This policy is subject to change. The applicable cancellation policy will be detailed on your invoice when billed so that you will be well aware of it prior to payment.

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## **RESERVATIONS AND TICKETS**

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**Q: Can you make hotel and train reservations for me? How about restaurants?**

A: Without assuming the role or liability of a travel agency, I do sometimes help clients of my touring and organizational services with reservations either as an adviser (i.e. I recommend a certain hotel or restaurant) or by making a pre-reservation (i.e. I can call a restaurant or hotel to hold a reservation for a client who will then confirm directly shortly thereafter). My preferred clients, accepting full responsibility to do so, will sometimes give me their credit card details in order for me to secure certain reservations. In any case, all financial dealings and cancellation policies are between you and that business. On the rare occasion that I will purchase train tickets in advance for a client, I do so as part of a touring package for an excursion that has been paid for in full.

**Q: Can you purchase museum tickets, museum passes or metro tickets for us?**

A: Possibly, as a convenience as part of a touring and organization package, but again I am not a travel agent or official reseller. More likely, I'll show you how easy it is to do all that when we meet or explain how you can do so at a reasonable price online before you travel.