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FAMILY TRAVEL BLOG

A teen in Paris

Careful planning pays off as a mother and her teenage fashionista daughter hit the French capital for some serious shopping (and a bit of culture)

By Harriet Green. Published on 19th April 2017



Image: Getty

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My goodness, it can be a struggle taking a teenager on a city break. Unlike toddlers, you can't just scoop them up when they start protesting, in a museum, that they'd rather be on their iPad.

The last time my daughter was in Paris she was three, and came down with an appalling case of chickenpox. We were staying in an uber-cool hotel — not

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The last time my daughter was in Paris she was three, and came down with an appalling case of chickenpox. We were staying in an uber-cool hotel — not absolutely welcoming to children at the best of times. Disaster!

It's taken a decade to muster the strength to try again. This time, my lovely girl stands as tall as me, has opinions of her own and has pestered me to return since starting secondary school.

Meet Nancy: she's a 13-year-old who adores fashion. She was wowed by the Alexander McQueen exhibition at the V&A and her kind godmother (who works in fashion) occasionally lets her go behind the scenes at London Fashion Week. So, I conceive a plan to take Nancy on a shopping tour of Paris, with the Louvre and other must-sees sneaked in around the edges.

I know from experience that fashionable hotels would be as likely to please her as anything outside them. For this trip, I choose two. For one night we'd stay at the Hotel du Petit Moulin (with wild interiors by Christian Lacroix) in the Marais, Paris's coolest fashion district. Then we'd spend two nights at the chic Grand Hotel du Palais Royal, bang opposite the Louvre.

To start, we wander the streets of the Marais soaking up the atmosphere, admiring Chanel's pop-up store and peering into the window of John Galliano. We buy rainbow macaroons at Pierre Hermé, then watch Paris's beautiful people wander past as we tuck into them on a bench.

Later, we meet Aloïs Guinut, who runs the blog [dresslikeaparisian.com](#) and offers fashion tours. I hired her for two hours to reveal hip vintage and outlet shops we'd never have found on our own. Aloïs is just the right side of cool for Nancy, and rocks gold skinny jeans. Under her guidance, Nancy tries vintage heels, a snappy camel coat and learns to tie a scarf à la Parisienne.

That evening, at the Grand Hotel du Palais Royal, the real magic begins. Our balcony gives a stunning view of the sparkling Eiffel Tower, brilliant-white Montmartre, and the Palais-Royal. If Parisians happened to look up, they'd see an English mother and daughter gasping at the beauty of the Paris skyline.

The Grand Hotel is literally a two-minute walk from the Louvre, and after breakfast we nip over before the crowds gather. Nancy is transfixed by the glass pyramid. She happily spends an hour wandering past the Botticellis, Michelangelos, Raphaels and Titians. Then, the Mona Lisa (though we actually enjoyed the crowds looking at it more than the painting itself).

Because the hotel is so close, we skip back again for a loo break (and a peek at an iPad), before setting out again.

We stroll through the Tuileries Palace (chatting about the French Revolution) then turn onto the Rue Saint-Honoré, passing the Alexander McQueen flagship, and into the legendary concept store Colette (Nancy's kind of 'museum').

Here, among heaving crowds, she admires clothes by Erdem, Balenciaga and Alaïa, gasps at shoes (and their prices), and enjoys the basement water bar (more



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OK

Here, among heaving crowds, she admires clothes by Erdem, Balenciaga and Alaïa, gasps at shoes (and their prices), and enjoys the basement water bar (more than 100 different varieties to drink). But the biggest hit is Colette's loo, with a heated seat and all manner of controls: Nancy runs out of there giggling at the sheer weirdness of it.

And after this happy hour of not-high culture, we leave having bought nothing but a two-euro packet of Marge Simpson tic-tacs.

We made great use of Uber — so useful, because it cut down exhaustion levels and allowed us to fit in so much. In our whistle-stop trip, we also packed in the Eiffel Tower; a stroll along the Seine onto the Île Saint-Louis, by way of Notre-Dame, and mother-and-daughter goofing about, in glorious sunshine, on the columns of the Palais-Royal.

All in all, this particular travel-with-my-teen proved a huge hit. Where shall we tackle next?

ESSENTIALS

Book a stay at the Grand Hotel du Palais Royal from €370 (£313) a night or the Hotel du Petit Moulin from €205 (£173) per night on a room-only basis, through Small Luxury Hotels of the World.

Travel from London St Pancras to Paris on Eurostar, with fares from €29 each way

Alois Guinut's fashion tour of the Marais is €100 (£85) for two hours.
dresslikeaparislan.com

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