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A Visit to Opéra Garnier

During a visit to the [Opéra Palais Garnier](#), you might have the rare opportunity to view the painted stage curtain raised and open to reveal part of the stage. We did when we took the guided tour. It is the most affordable way to get this close (seats in the orchestra for a ballet run as high as 130 euros).

The guided visit is worth the time to take. You can visit the opera on your own, but to be able to sit in the plush red velvet seats under the Chagall ceiling and chandelier, hear anecdotes and explanations, and ask questions is quite exciting.

We arrived at 11:15 a.m. on a Saturday morning hoping for two things: one, that some space would be left for the 11:30 a.m. tour, and two, that the curtain would be raised.

All of the scenery can either be raised or lowered within the the rectangular stage portion of the Opéra behind the auditorium. The Arc de Triomphe would fit in this portion it is so tall and so deep. Our guide related this and other anecdotes during our visit. Others were about scandals of current performances, tales of the Phantom of the Opera, how the Chagall ceiling sparked the interest of the masses to return to view performances, where the lightning rod is located, etc.

The auditorium is not always accessible. No one knows when it will be closed. Performers, whether musicians or dancers may want to practice and the auditorium will be closed to visitors. The electricians were preparing for the next performance and allowed the auditorium to remain open during our visit.

If you choose the general visit instead of the guided, you will not be allowed to sit in the orchestra section seats.

Guided visit

The guided visit consists of a general visit to the theater, its history, architecture and its different activities. After the visit, you are free to re-enter and wander at your leisure. The tour lasts about 1 1/2 hours.

Visit times vary throughout the year. In English, daily at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.; weekends at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (always check for updates during winter months and [French school holidays](#))

The "guided visit" web page provides the last admission fees, hours and how to find the Opera. The entry for accompanied and unaccompanied visits has moved. Find the map on the Garnier website.

Guided tours in English are held every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. During summer holidays from July 1 at August 31, tours are every day at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. During school holidays (Autumn holiday, Christmas holiday, Winter holiday, Spring holidays) every day at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Check their website for special events and openings and closings.

When you buy your tickets on line for a guided visit of the Palais Garnier (available in English) you may or may not have the choice of reserving a day and time on line. You can come to the ticket window one half hour before the visit with your ticket and book a place (individual visits are limited to 30 people). They will reissue your ticket for you. Avoid having the performance closed for rehearsal. It is recommended that you take the morning guided tour.

Discover the Palais Garnier and the Opera Bastille on a [virtual visit](#) (*Visite virtuelle*) to both Garnier and Bastille.

Unaccompanied Visits

You may visit the great staircase, the foyers, the auditorium*--limited to one balcony area, the museum and the temporary exhibition hall freely every day from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (last admission is 4:30 p.m.)

Closed January 1st, May 1st, and on days when a matinee performance or a special event is scheduled. Plan on the morning tour instead of the afternoon.

* For artistic or technical reasons (rehearsal), the auditorium may not always be accessible.

Métro: Opéra, lines 3, 7, 8 - RER: line A, station Auber

Bus: lines 20, 21, 22, 27, 29, 42, 52, 53, 66, 68, 81, 95

Car park: Place Vendôme

Information : To reserve by phone: +33(0)825 05 44 05

For all additional information, please call: + 33 (0)1 41 10 08 10

Reduced price museum entry tickets

During an eight-day period, use your [Opera Garnier](#) visit ticket to get a reduced prices at the Musée d'Orsay and the [Musée Gustave Moreau, Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine](#). Your [Musée d'Orsay](#) ticket is good for same day visits to either [Musée de l'Orangerie](#) or the [Musée Rodin](#) - see the website for details.

Sometime in 2010, the Opera Palais Garnier is opening a restaurant. Guess what it is called?! Phantom of the Opera!

Recommended reading

Palais Garnier, National Opera of Paris

Éditions du patrimoine

Code: 782858 226191

Seven euros (you can buy this at the Opera Garnier giftshop. I found my at the Hotel Sully bookstore on rue Saint-Antoine (4th).)



Chagall's ceiling 1964



Grand Foyer



1,900 seats in red velour



Tapestry representing coffee in the Glacier or refreshment room



Guide book