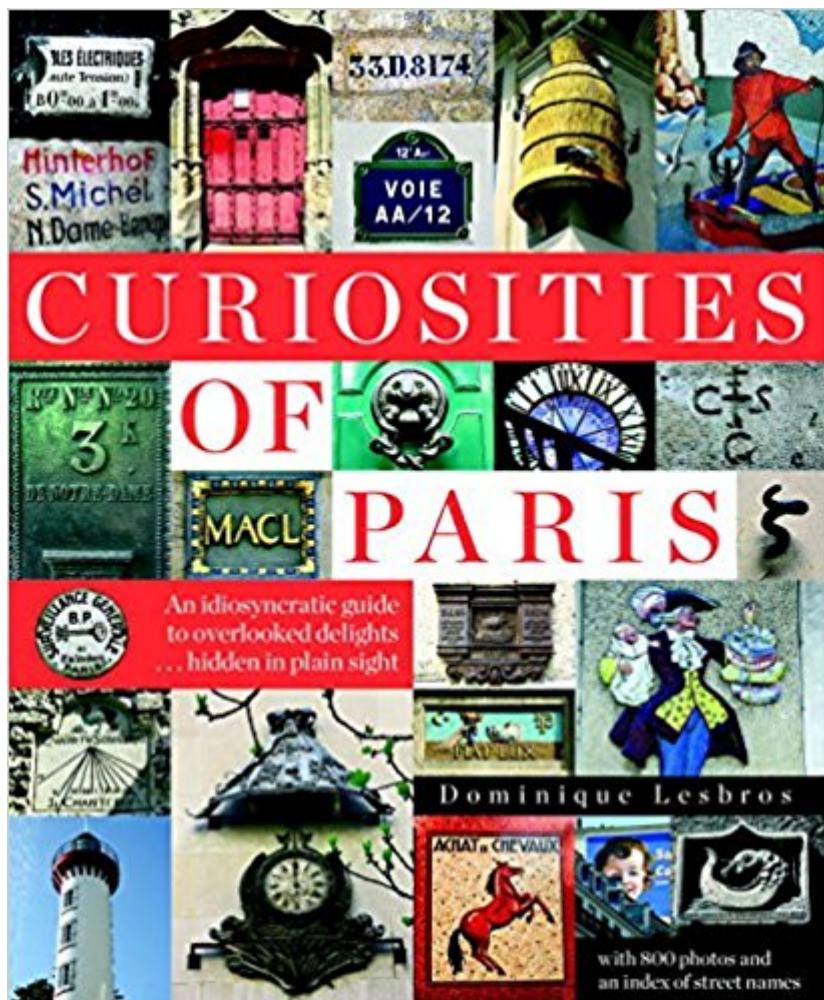


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# Curiosities Of Paris: An Idiosyncratic Guide To Overlooked Delights... Hidden In Plain Sight



## Synopsis

Francophiles and Paris buffs will find something new and fascinating in this timeless guidebook, filed with sites, passageways, hotels, shops, and more. What if, instead of seeing only the Paris of 2017, you glimpsed Paris in Revolutionary times? Or Paris when it was home to 80,000 horses; or Paris lit by gaslight; or medieval Paris? What if, walking down a block in Paris, you recognized the signs, mosaics, pieces of hardware, and architectural details as relics of many centuries that have stories to tell of past eras? This is what *Curiosities of Paris* reveals. Each of the book's 800 photos of unique locations and architectural oddities—as well as utilitarian objects whose functions have long been obscured with the passage of time—discloses a previously unnoticed city. Even those who know Paris well might never have registered the thousands of details on every street that testify to the enduring presence of the past: the solar cannon at Invalides, street signs with the word “saint” and all *fleur-de-lys* removed; the unique features of Parisian street lighting. You'll never look at an elm tree the same way again. And, with *Curiosities of Paris* as your guide, you'll feel very in-the-know as you walk down the Champs-Élysées past all the auto dealerships. Organized by subject—including fountains and wells; centuries-old shop signs; vestiges of wars and ancient Egypt; hotels of legend; remarkable trees; sundials and meridians; equestrian Paris; romantic ruins; unusual tombs, stairways, and passageways; religious relics; mosaics; public barometers and thermometers; and hundreds more urban elements and anachronisms—the book also includes three themed walks (along the city's ancient walls, in the steps of Quasimodo, and through the French Revolution), as well as an index of street names. This absorbing compendium is an essential addition to the library of the armchair traveler and flâneur alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Lesbros' delightful guide to Paris...will entertain and educate nearly every step you might take in the City of Light. A fun, informative, and entertaining way to explore Paris, especially for those who enjoy their travels off the beaten path. The Library Journal adds, "this [book] is for the hardcore Paris aficionado, or the 'interstitial tourist,' who the book defines as someone who prefers to 'explore the nooks and crannies of the urban landscape rather than its more aristocratic facets.' Smaller than a coffee-table tome but more robust than a pocket guide, *Curiosities of Paris* offers up more than 800 photos accompanied by captions that, while brief, pack a punch. •The Paris Blog

Dominique Lesbros is a journalist and the author of many books about Paris, including *Paris Quiz*, also published by The Little Bookroom. Simon Beaver grew up in the south of England but moved to Paris nearly forty years ago and now lives in Brittany. For three decades he has been adapting books, television and movie scripts, songs, and biographies into English; writing subtitles; and recording voice-overs. Recently, he has added another string to his bow: concocting French versions of the HP Lounge app's humorous pop-star gossip.

This moderately small book is packed with seemingly countless numbers of oddities, landmarks, signs and more. My wife and I have been visitors to Paris for 20 years, and there are so many things in this book that I've never seen or heard of that it completely caught me off guard. Jammed to the gills with fun facts, small color photos, and vignettes, you can learn so much about the City of Lights just by picking the book up and opening it to any page. The book is designed to support browsing just like that, just with you want to have some random fun, or have only a few minutes. The book is also arranged so that you can read it in order, starting from the front, if you want a more comprehensive intake of the information. Whichever way you do it, though, it is sheer fun, and as I say, learning, about the world's greatest tourist destination. We've spent so many months there over the years to easily understand this is a city so endowed with history, so large, and so impacted (and impacting) with the outside world that one could spend a lifetime on it and still not know even the

most of it. But this book still surprised me with sites and facts that I had no idea about, a testament to the writer for the enormous amount of work that went into its development. A real plus is that the many, many photos in the volume are in full color, but this is not a professional photography book. Many of the items photographed and displayed in the book are in obscure, high, or recessed locations: it's amazing that so many of them could be photographed at all. So, this is not a book you purchase to look at photos of Paris. There are many of these out there, with set/scene shots taken with full-frame, wide format Hasselblad cameras. This is a book about the CURIOSITIES of Paris, and the small color photos are there to support the narrative. Now, the question is, can you use this book as a guide for the next trip to Paris? Technically, yes, you can, but you would have to work it out in advance because the book is not designed to easily locate each of these curiosities. Yes, the information is present to find them, but that again is not the focus of this book. If you are looking for a travel guide to the city, there are plenty of those, too, and many of them excellently done. This is a book for pure fun, and if you have visited the city (or even live there!) and want to see these curiosities, this book knocks the ball out of the park. And the way that learning is built into the book simply adds to the fun (for example, what is the origin of the term "cul-de-sac"?: you'll find it in here). What a great book that will challenge the most ardent of Paris fans, and will keep you coming back for more and more. A huge five stars for this labor of love. That it is so reasonably priced in spite of being crammed with color photographs is just whipped cream on the parfait!

as I do - you will surely discover some new and very interesting sites to visit from reading this book. There are a huge number of "curiosities", the photos are really good, and the written information is quite informative & interesting.

What a treasure! Taking it along on our trip to Paris, but even if you don't travel there, this book is so full of interesting tidbits.

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