



gorgeous gated garden and a balcony overlooking the canal for everyone's use. **Details** B&B doubles are from €69 (locandasantiapostoli.com); Cannaregio

**Novecento**

This family-run boutique B&B is only a hop from Dorsoduro, a great area for bars, food and the Peggy Guggenheim museum. It's also near Venice's historic centre. Near by, the Ponte dell'Accademia is a wonderful spot at dusk for a view up the Grand Canal. The rooms at Novecento are luxurious, sexy and opulent; if the sun shines there's a lovely private courtyard and garden where you can have breakfast, which is a treat of home-made cakes, great coffee and a sweet and savoury buffet. **Details** B&B doubles are from €115 (novecento.biz); Calle del Dose da Ponte, San Marco

**Residenza de l'Osmarin**

In the east of the city is Castello, the "local's Venice", where this great-value, elegant B&B is located. It has a roof terrace with great views of the rio dell'Osmarin below; all the well-sized rooms have views of the canal and across the rooftops to the belltower of St Mark's. Breakfast is included, with the usual hams, cheeses and delicious home-made cakes. **Details** B&B doubles are from €100

**Great-value meals**

**Muro Frari**

This is possibly the best pizzeria in Venice — the gorgonzola, radicchio and Italian sausage and calzone were superb. **Details** Pizzas are about €13, half a litre of great house white is €7 (murovenezia.com); Sestiere San Polo, San Polo

**Osteria ai 40 Ladroni**

Brilliantly kitsch, this has a seascape mural on the wall and noisy locals propping up the bar — always a good sign. The spaghetti vongole is fantastic; or try the locally caught sea bass. The seasonal salads and vegetables are grown near by on Sant'Erasmo island. **Details** Two courses are about €25 (no website, 00 39 041 715 736); Fondamenta della Sensa, Cannaregio

**Osteria al Squero, Fondamenta Nani, Dorsoduro**

In Dorsoduro, a mix of Venetians of all ages can be found in the bacari (bars), grazing on cicchetti, which are bar snacks costing €1-€2 each. Four or five cicchetti would typically replace an evening meal — they could be crostini



Muro Frari

(residenzadelosmarin.com); di Maria Elisabetta Maniscalco, Castello **By Harriet Addison**

Harriet Addison was a guest of easyJet, which has flights to Venice from £23.24pp (one-way, including taxes and based on two people on the same booking), easyjet.com

topped with creamy gorgonzola, fig and roasted walnuts or arancini balls. They are eaten standing up, washed down with an aperol spritz (€2.50). Linger outside, perched beside the canal, overlooking the city's oldest (17th-century) working gondola yard. Along the street is Cantine del vino gia schiavi, a high-end wine shop that, come evening, is packed with elegant Italian men and women eating bargain €1.50 cicchetti and drinking €2 glasses of delicious wine. **Details** Cicchetti are from €1, wine is from €1.20 a glass (no website, 00 39 335 600 7513)

**Trattoria da bepi già, Campo SS Apostoli, Cannaregio**

A traditional Venetian trattoria, with a wood-paneled interior and wonderfully welcoming staff. The primi are outstanding and well-sized (try the tagliatelle with garlic, fresh mushrooms and porcini), the secondi (steamed spider crabs, Venetian-style liver with polenta) are also great whether you opt for meat or seafood (but are a little pricier than the primi); the tiramisu is worth saving space for. **Details** Primi are €12, three courses cost €35 (dabepl.it 00 39 041 528 5031); closed on Thursdays

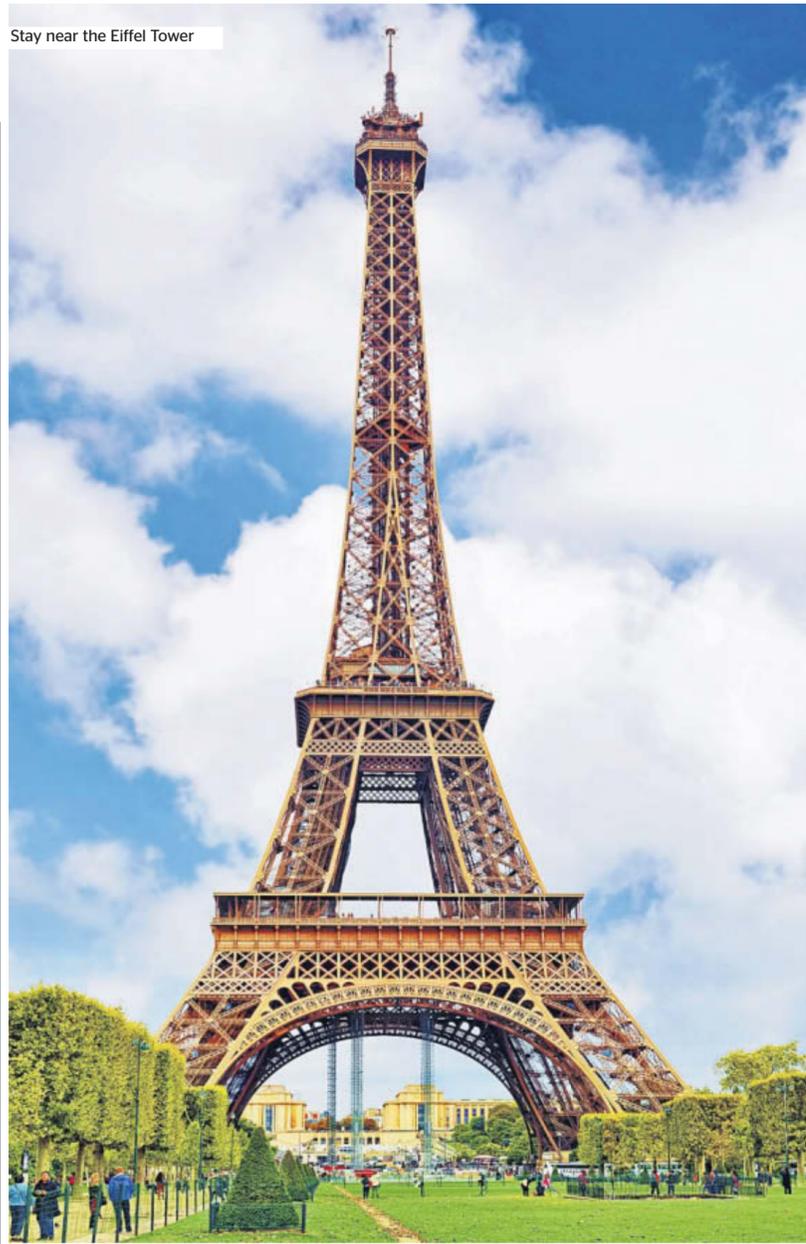
**Osteria la bottega ai Promessi Sposi**

La bottega, almost hidden on a quiet back street, is romantically lit, unpretentious and welcoming. Either eat cicchetti (hearty bar snacks) standing at the bar, or sit down for a constantly changing seafood menu. **Details** Three courses are €30-€35 (no website, 00 39 041 241 2747), closed on Wednesdays, reservations essential; Calle dell'Oca, Cannaregio

**Budget tip**

Buy a church pass (Chorus Venezia) for €12, which gives entry to 18 churches in Venice, including the jaw-dropping Basilica dei Frari and more intimate churches such as the Church of San Vidal (chorusvenezia.org).

Stay near the Eiffel Tower



WITALY EDUSH/GETTY IMAGES

**Paris**

**Where to stay**

**Hotel Phileas**

Next to Saint Lazare train station, this new, well-run little hotel opens through automatic sliding doors that lead to a corridor decorated with candy-coloured striped wallpaper. The 39 reasonably sized rooms are over six floors, with a vibrant-but-tasteful colour scheme, wide beds, free wi-fi and electric blinds. Some rooms suit families because two can be booked with a private door entrance. Free afternoon coffee and tea are served in a pleasant lounge. Expect decent scrambled eggs and coffee at breakfast. **Details** B&B doubles are from €100 (phileashotel.com); rue d'Amsterdam, 9th arrondissement

**Hotel Villathéna**

A few streets north of the Phileas, Hotel Villathéna is in a distinguished 19th-century building on a quiet side street. The reception opens on to a ruby-red and pink breakfast room and lounge, with modern art and a retro look. Beyond is a marvellous corkscrew staircase with a wrought-iron balustrade — and upstairs are 43 smart rooms with low-slung beds, little shower rooms and room service (delivered from a brasserie around the corner). Upgrade to a top-floor "executive" room (€50 extra) for more space, pictured below. **Details** B&B doubles are from €100 (villathena.com); rue d'Athènes, 9th arrondissement

**Hotel Design Sorbonne**

Striking pattern wallpaper, avant-garde modern art and French antique chairs painted silver with bold upholstery... Hotel Design Sorbonne, a short walk from the Jardin du Luxembourg, is chic and well positioned, with tempting room rates. The 38 arty rooms are reached along darkened corridors with black and white pictures of Paris in colourful frames adorning the walls. Breakfast is served in a bright and airy room by a courtyard. **Details** B&B doubles are from €100 (hotelsorbonne.com); rue Victor Cousin, 5th arrondissement

**Budget tip**

Check Eurostar's website for its two-for-one deals for some sights such as the Musée d'Orsay, when you show your Eurostar ticket at the door.

**Hotel Mayet**

About half-an-hour's stroll southwest of Île de la Cité, Hotel Mayet is a jolly hotel with street-art-style murals in the lobby and a little bar with wine for €4 a glass



Hotel Villathéna



Hotel Mayet



Hotel Phileas

(or €19 a bottle). The staff are upbeat, and give good recommendations on nearby restaurants. The rooms come with sisal carpets, blown-up black and white pictures of actors and models from the early-20th century and vibrant colours. You can upgrade to a more spacious "superior double" for €10. **Details** Doubles are from €82; breakfast is €13pp extra (mayet.com); rue Mayet, 6th arrondissement

**Hotel Le Pavillon**

In the Invalides district, not far from the Eiffel Tower, this charming 15-room eco-hotel is set off a short alleyway that runs off rue St Dominique. There's a little sun-trap courtyard with multicoloured tables and chairs (where drinks are served in warmer months), plus a lovely basement breakfast room with exposed stone walls and beams. The style in the rooms is quirky and slightly kitsch: abstract art, silvery bedcovers and ruby-red leather sofas. **Details** Doubles are from €80; breakfast is €14pp extra (green-spirit-hotels.com); rue St Dominique, 7th arrondissement **By Tom Chesshyre**

Tom Chesshyre was a guest of Eurostar and Atout France (france.fr). Eurostar (eurostar.com) has London St Pancras-Paris returns from £58

**Where to eat**

**Sésame Café**

This laid-back café — popular with art students — has simple tables on an old stone floor and a small bar with cocktails served by dancing waitresses. Soups, curries, bagels, bruschetta and salads make up the menu; the vegetarian curry and lasagne are especially popular. **Details** Three courses are about €25 (au-sesame.com); quai de Calme, 10th arrondissement

**Le Petit Lyon**

Le Petit Lyon is a friendly café popular with actors, musicians and writers. Simple dishes include salmon with penne or tomato salad with prawns; all washed down with €3 glasses of wine. **Details** Three courses are about €20 (00 33 1 45 26 31 19); rue de Vintimille, 9th arrondissement

**Bourgogne Sud**

If you enjoy food from Burgundy, book a table here. Starters include Burgundy snails, poached eggs in a delicious meurette-style sauce and chicken livers. The rum baba cake is great. **Details** The three-course set menu is €26.50 (bourgogne-sud.fr); rue de Clichy, 9th arrondissement

**Thoumieux**

This hip gourmet brasserie has red leather banquettes, mirrored columns and swift service. The new head chef, Sylvestre Wahid, has created a light menu: salmon with steamed seaweed, beef tartare, chicken with truffles, salads and pumpkin soup. **Details** Three-course set lunch menu €29; must book (thoumieux.com); rue St Dominique, 7th arrondissement

**Allard**

This wonderful restaurant is in Saint Germain-des-Prés. Traditional French dishes are prepared by head chef Laëtitia Rouabah. Opt for the lunch set menu with dishes such as French onion soup, veal blanquette with pilau rice and vanilla-coffee composition. **Details** Three-course set lunch menu €34; must book (chateauxhotels.com, restaurant-allard.fr/en); rue Saint-André des Arts, 6th arrondissement

**Berlin**

**Where to stay**

**The Johann**

An oasis of calm, the Johann is down a side street in edgy Kreuzberg. Cosy, quiet and very welcoming, its rooms are decorated in typical Berlin Altbauflair style and are minimalist but comfortable, with parquet floors, high ceilings and exposed brick walls; bathrooms have heated floors. There's a courtyard garden for summer breakfasts (all organic), as well as an elegant bar for a late-night tittle. It's within walking distance of several metro stops and you can hire bikes if you fancy a jaunt along the canal. **Details** Doubles are from €84, breakfast €7.50 (hotel-johann-berlin.de); Johanniterstrasse, Kreuzberg

**Adina Apartment Hotel Berlin Checkpoint Charlie**

This apartment hotel, just off Leipzigerstrasse, is in a brilliant location, a short walk from Unter den Linden, the Brandenburg Gate and the smart shops on Friedrichstrasse. Even the smallest studio apartments, decorated in red and grey, are roomy, all have kitchenettes, there's a small indoor pool and gym, and while breakfast is not cheap, it's a great spread. **Details** Studio doubles are from €87, breakfast €15 (tfehotels.com); Krausenstrasse, Mitte



Michelberger Hotel

**Michelberger**

Hipsters are the core clientele at the supremely relaxed Michelberger, an old factory with a funky design aesthetic, surrounded by bars and clubs. Boho rooms range from cosy doubles (which really are tiny) to The Big One, with six single beds. The 24-hour bar/café is wonderful (the breakfast buffet is a thing of beauty), there's table tennis in the courtyard and a beer garden in the lobby. It's opposite the Warschauer Strasse U-bahn station and is a favourite with musicians, so get a room facing the courtyard and bring earplugs just in case. **Details** Doubles are from €70; breakfast is €16pp (michelbergerhotel.com); Warschauer Strasse, Friedrichshain

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