

PARIS

"If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you."

~ **Ernest Hemingway**

Paris is a city where literature lingers—in quiet bookshops, smoky cafés, and the margins of every arrondissement. Writers have come here to find themselves, lose themselves, reinvent themselves. From 19th-century realism to expat memoirs and contemporary autofiction, Paris has always been a city built as much from stories as from stone.

This guide is just a starting point for exploring the literary history that surrounds the city of love.



Set in Paris

Ernest Hemingway – **A Moveable Feast**

- ❖ A nostalgic, sharply drawn portrait of Hemingway's early years in 1920s Paris, alongside Fitzgerald, Stein, and cafés that became legend.

Simone de Beauvoir – **The Mandarins**

- ❖ A semi-autobiographical novel set in postwar Paris, exploring politics, philosophy, and intimate personal struggles among the city's intellectual elite.

James Baldwin – **Giovanni's Room**

- ❖ Set in the shadows of 1950s Paris, this groundbreaking novel explores identity, queerness, and alienation with unflinching beauty.

Patrick Modiano – **Missing Person**

- ❖ A dreamlike detective novel by the Nobel Prize-winning author, tracing memory, loss, and Paris's postwar ghosts.

Lauren Elkin – **Flâneuse**

- ❖ A genre-defying mix of memoir, criticism, and city-walking that invites readers to rediscover Paris through the eyes of women who wandered it.



Linked to Paris

- ❖ Victor Hugo – His Paris is both epic and intimate, from Les Misérables' barricades to the towers of Notre-Dame.
- ❖ George Sand – Novelist, feminist, and literary icon, she defied convention and helped shape the intellectual life of 19th-century Paris.
- ❖ Jean-Paul Sartre & Simone de Beauvoir – Partners in life and thought, their writing and philosophy were shaped in Paris's cafés and Left Bank apartments.
- ❖ Marguerite Duras – Experimental, poetic, and political, Duras made Paris central to her spare, haunting narratives.
- ❖ Annie Ernaux – Nobel Prize-winning author whose deeply personal writing turns memory, class, and womanhood into precise, unsparing literature.
- ❖ Marie Darrieussecq – Blurring reality and surrealism, Darrieussecq's Paris is often uncanny—a space where identity, language, and the body shift beneath the surface.
- ❖ Faïza Guène – A fresh voice from the Parisian suburbs, Guène writes sharp, witty novels that highlight the lives, humour, and struggles of second-generation immigrant communities in modern France.



Literary Sites

- ❖ Shakespeare & Company – The most famous English-language bookshop in Paris, once a haven for Hemingway and now a pilgrimage site for readers from around the world.
- ❖ Cimetière du Montparnasse – Final resting place of Baudelaire, Beauvoir, Sartre, and other literary luminaries—perfect for a reflective wander.
- ❖ Maison de Victor Hugo – A museum in the author's former apartment on Place des Vosges, offering insight into his life and work.
- ❖ Café de Flore & Les Deux Magots – Iconic Saint-Germain cafés where Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, and countless others wrote, argued, and observed.
- ❖ Musée de la Vie Romantique – Tucked away at the foot of Montmartre, this charming museum was once the home of painter Ary Scheffer and a salon for writers like George Sand. A peaceful spot to explore the literary and artistic circles of 19th-century Paris.
- ❖ Le Procope – The city's oldest café, dating back to 1686. Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and later Hemingway all passed through. Still serving coffee and conversation under chandeliers.



Explore more...

Bookshops worth a detour

- ❖ Librairie Galignani – One of the oldest English-language bookshops in Paris, known for elegant shelves and a well-curated collection.
- ❖ Librairie Jousseume (Galerie Vivienne) – A charming 19th-century bookshop tucked into a covered passageway, specialising in rare and vintage finds.
- ❖ L'Écume des Pages – A Left Bank favourite with late-night hours and shelves full of French and international literature.
- ❖ Abbey Bookshop – A delightful maze of English books in the Latin Quarter, run by a Canadian expat who loves a good literary chat.

A Literary Walk

Begin in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where cafés and bookshops trace the footsteps of existentialists and expatriates. Cross the Seine to the Île de la Cité, passing Notre-Dame and the bouquinistes along the river. End at Shakespeare & Company, just across from the cathedral, and pick up something to read on a park bench by the water.



PASSPORT TO LITERATURE

