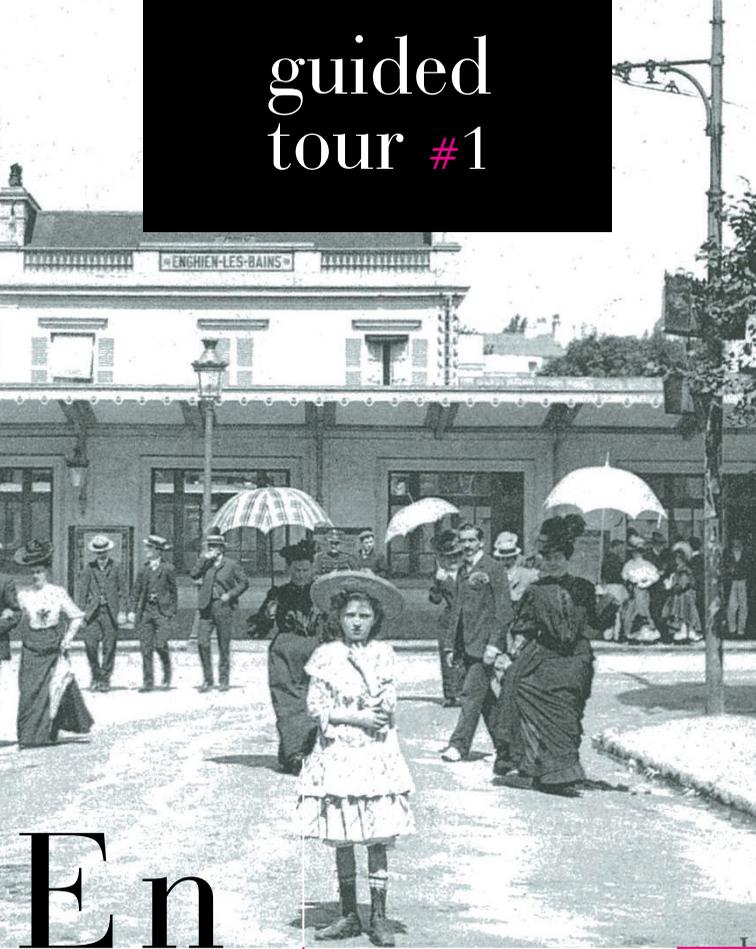


guided tour #1



Enghien-les-Bains

www.ot-enghienlesbains.fr/en



THE HISTORY OF A SPA TOWN

// Office de Tourisme //

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Opening times:

Mondays from 14:00 to 18:00,
Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10:00 to 13:00 and 14:00 to 18:00,
Sundays and bank holidays from 15:00 to 18:00

GROUP VISITS

Are you in charge of an association or work committee or just leading a group of 20 people or more? Would you like to organise a stay in or excursion to Enghien-Les-Bains?

We can arrange or provide support in the planning of your trip, including meals, accommodation and professional tour guides, etc.

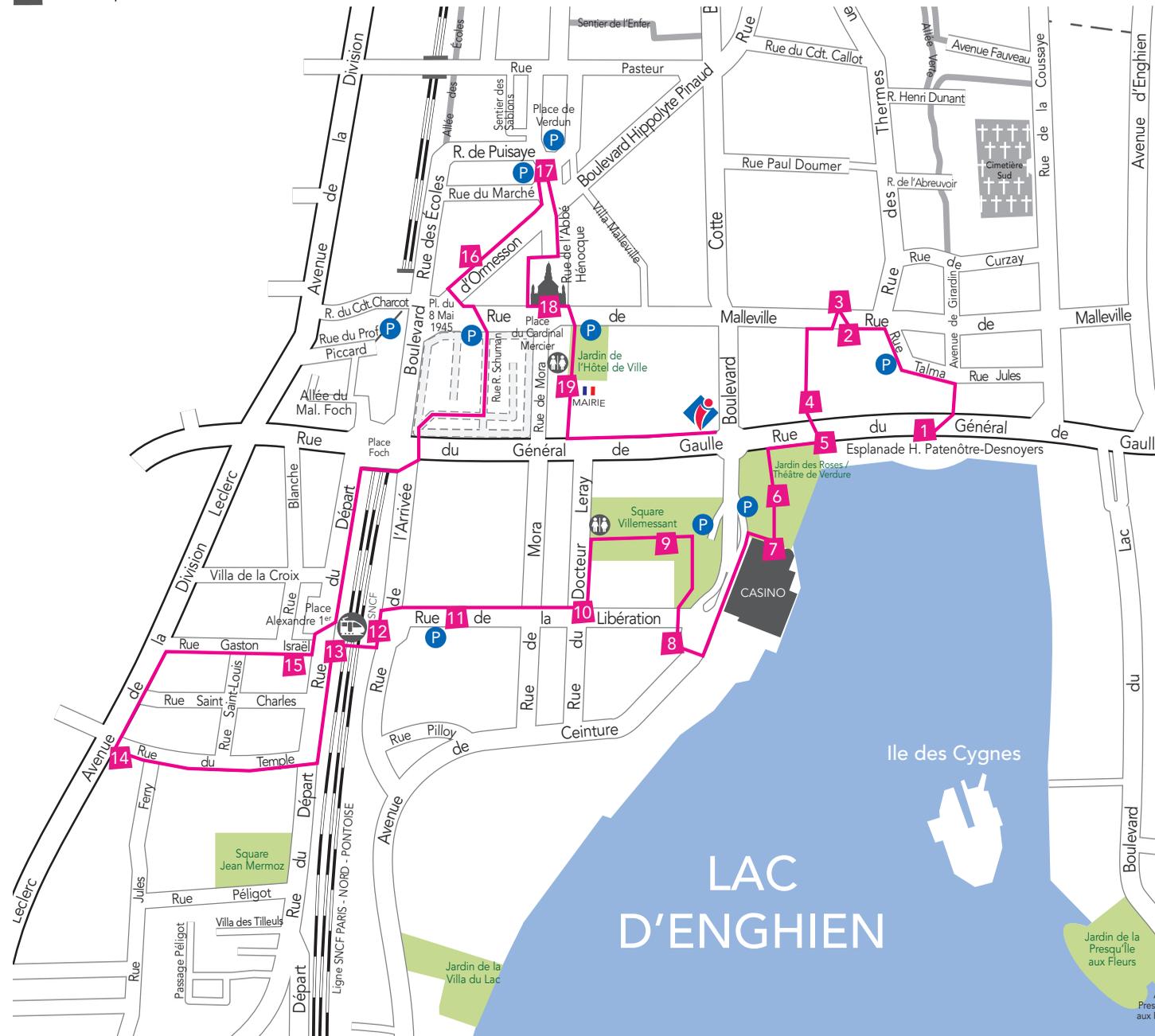
+ Please contact us for a quote :
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ENGHIEN-LES-BAINS
TOURISME & CONGRÈS

- Tourist and Conference Office
- Car park
- Railway station
- Public washrooms
- St Joseph's Church

GUIDED TOUR
THE HISTORY OF A SPA TOWN
1H30
2.9 KM / 2 MILES



1 THE LAKE

In the 12th century, an area of swampland was reclaimed. This resulted in the formation of the « Etang-Neuf-sous-Montmorency » lake starting at the earth embankment on a level with the present-day esplanade.

The lake currently covers an area of 43 hectares. It's relatively shallow (less than 2 metres deep), with a circumference of 3km. It has two extensions: the Northern lake at Soisy-sous-Montmorency and the Western basin at Saint-Gratien. The Île des Cygnes (Swan Island), an artificial island in the middle of the lake, was created in 1860 and is not accessible on foot. The boating club and the sailing school have their headquarters there.

The lake and its shores have been a listed site since 1942.



2 LES THERMES (38, rue de Malleville)

The lake's sulphurous qualities were discovered in 1766 by Father Cotte, a priest at the Collegiate Church of Montmorency. Nowadays the hot springs at Enghien, the most sulphur-rich in France, are recommended for respiratory and ear, nose and throat ailments.

The first licence to exploit the waters dates back to 1772, but real development into a spa resort happened with the arrival of Dr Péligré, former administrator of the Saint-Louis hospital in Paris. In 1865, the public benefit of Enghien's waters was recognised by decree.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the company La Société d'Exploitation des Eaux et Thermes d'Enghien-les-Bains was made responsible for managing the lake and its immediate surroundings; it took over the licence for the hotel (now the 4-star Grand Hôtel Barrière), the spa, the Rose Garden and the casino.

In the 1950s, this was the best equipped establishment in Europe for the treatment of pharyngitis, sinusitis and other ear, nose and throat ailments. The number of people taking the waters continued to grow, reaching 146,000 visitors a year.

3 THE SYNAGOGUE (47, rue de Malleville)

A great many synagogues were built in the 19th century, a sign of the presence of the Jewish community. The synagogue at Enghien-les-Bains was constructed in 1889 for the Jews who came from Alsace to take the waters.

4 LA SOURCE DU ROY

It was after Louis XVIII was cured that Les Thermes spa really began to prosper. The king was cured of a leg ulcer after taking a treatment in the sulphurous waters. From then on, Parisian high society rushed to Enghien-les-Bains.

The pavilion that you see today is the only remnant of the 1950s spa complex. The spring was mainly used for drinking cures. It has now fallen into disuse, and no longer flows.



5 LE PAVILLON DU LAC (66, rue du Général de Gaulle)

The first « Pavillon Chinois » restaurant is believed to have been acquired after the universal exhibition of 1867. It was the epitome of the exoticism in fashion at seaside and spa resorts at that time. It was the iconic image of the town until it was pulled down in 1911.

A new structure was then built: a domed building with a rotunda, which featured a monumental entrance to the casino gardens. Later the pavilion lost its dome, and also the boat storage provided under the arches in its bedrock during the 1960s.

6 LE JARDIN DES ROSES (ROSE GARDEN)

Up to the mid-19th century, the Hôtel des Quatre-Pavillons stood on this spot. It gave access to the entrance to the Casino, and visitors had to pay an entrance fee that varied according to the day and the event. Festivals and concerts were held there regularly until a swimming pool was built in the 1950s. It was then pulled down and the area was completely redeveloped during the 1990s, when it became a municipal garden.



7 THE CASINO (3, avenue de Ceinture)

The first municipal casino was designed by Edouard Autant and inaugurated in 1901. It was in the shape of a yacht with its prow thrusting over the lake. This was replaced in 1909 by a new casino, with a theatre that opened the following year.

During the 1914-1918 war, it was turned into a military hospital. In July 1920, it was banned from operating by a ministerial decree. In 1931, this ban was lifted by law and the casino was able to open its doors once again. It was then renovated in line with the Art Deco aesthetic.

The most recent major restoration of this building took place in 2005, instructed by the Groupe Barrière. The architect Louis Soors erected a glass façade to add a massive entrance atrium, with nautically-themed decorative work by Jacques Garcia.

8 LA SALLE DES FÊTES (18, avenue de Ceinture)

The Salle des Fêtes (concert hall) was built between 1896 and 1897, thanks to a legacy from Mr Regnault, a rich landowner of the town.

This hall was the venue for the spa resort's many arts activities before the Théâtre du Casino was built in 1910. It was managed by the Société d'Exploitation des Eaux et Thermes d'Enghien up to this date.

The building was altered and enlarged in 1949-1950, and the façade was completely restyled.

9 LE SQUARE VILLEMESSANT

Hippolyte de Villemessant, a journalist and newspaper editor, gave the then-obsolete newspaper Figaro a facelift in 1854 (he renamed it Le Figaro). He turned it into a major weekly for high society. He invented a « news in brief » column and started new sections such as « readers' letters » and « Classified ».

He resided at Enghien-les-Bains from 1867 until he died. His property, which stood on the present-day site of the square, was turned into the Kursaal after his death.

He was one of the principal shareholders in the Société d'Exploitation des Eaux et Thermes d'Enghien.

10 VILLA IN RUE DE LA LIBÉRATION (17, rue de la Libération)

The present-day town still has a great many villas, built during the 19th and 20th centuries. A villa designed by the Leseine brothers stands at 17 rue de la Libération, and several other examples of their work can be seen in the town.

Their style is characteristic of a trend in architecture that was in fashion at that time: Eclecticism. Eclecticism combines a variety of influences: Norman and Flemish (regional) architecture, with Gothic and Classical overtones.

11 LE CENTRE DES ARTS (12-16, rue de la Libération)

Rue de la Libération, formerly called Rue du Casino, is the street that takes visitors from the station to the Casino. In the early 20th century, the Garnier distillery, which focused mainly on exports, occupied number 16, where the Centre des arts now stands.

In 1975 the distillery moved to Fécamp. The town bought the site and turned it into the home of the Centre Culturel François Villon, and finally in 2003 the Centre des arts. A designated « Space for Digital Creation » subsidised by France's Ministry for Culture and Communication, this cultural establishment has a wide-ranging programme and is a hub of innovation.

In December 2013, Enghien-les-Bains, recognised by UNESCO as a City of Media Arts, became the smallest town in the world to implement a flagship digital project.



12 STATION

The growth of the railways in France during the 1830s had an impact on Enghien. At that time, every seaside or spa resort had to have a railway station. It was a crucial factor in a town's evolution as a visitor destination.



Enghien's first station was inaugurated on 11th July 1846, and rebuilt in 1866.

The 12 kilometres (7 miles) separating Paris and Enghien took 20 minutes, and the train brought ever-increasing crowds in the height of summer. Trains ran from 7am to midnight.

13 LA HALLE DU REFOULONS

In parallel with the doubling of the railway lines of the main station, a new station was built in 1866, but all that remains of it is one hall. It linked Enghien-les-Bains with Montmorency, via Soisy-sous-Montmorency.

The train was nicknamed Le Refoulons (« The Let's-Push ») because its locomotive was positioned at the rear of the coaches, due to the steep slopes. Le Refoulons made its last journey on 30th June 1954, and the railway lines were taken up in 1956.

14 THE TEMPLE (155, avenue de la Division Leclerc)

The Temple of the Reformed Church of Enghien-les-Bains was constructed in 1855. It was one of the first temples built in the Paris area (most of them went up towards the end of the 19th century).

Its construction was financed by the Protestant communities who came on holiday to the towns of Enghien-les-Bains, Soisy-sous-Montmorency and Montmorency. In 1932 the building was renovated and enlarged, then in 1936 the entrance porch was added, together with the staircase leading up to the gallery.

15 MISTINGUETT'S HOUSE (5, rue Gaston Israël)

The third house in Rue Gaston Israël was the birthplace Mistinguett, the famous music hall artist of the 1920s and 1930s.

Mistinguett, or Jeanne Florentine Bourgeois, to give her her real name, came from humble origins and started out selling nosegays to the gentlemen who visited the casino. She became a music-hall legend, embodying the cheeky banter and the charm of Paris. She is buried in the town's North Cemetery.+

16 GROUPE SCOLAIRE D'ORMESSON SCHOOL COMPLEX

The town's administration services expanded in line with its demographic growth (from 377 inhabitants in 1851, to more than 11,000 in the 1930s). To meet the new needs of the population, one thing the municipal authorities had to do was to place Enghien's children in state schools.

In 1883 the town began to give consideration to the siting of a school complex. The building was constructed in 1902-1903. In the 1930s this establishment was too cramped and so the large building along Boulevard d'Ormesson was built.

17 INDOOR MARKET (Place de Verdun)

To replace the open air market that used to be held in Place de Verdun, deemed outdated, a new indoor market was built by the town architect Henri Moreels in 1927. It comprised three market halls of metalwork closed on the exterior by brick walls.

In 1978, this building was pulled down and replaced by a new market hall, a car park and a property development (renovated again in 2014). Nowadays the market is held in the morning on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.



18 L'ÉGLISE SAINT-JOSEPH ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH

The first church, funded by Mrs Moreno de Mora, was built between 1858 and 1860 on a simple floorplan, one nave with four bays. In 1866, two aisles were added and the base of the belltower was altered.

In 1927, a second extension was requested by the Abbé, as the church had become too cramped for the number of parishioners. The decorative elements are borrowed from the Romanesque repertoire: a bestiary of fantastic animals, grotesque grinning faces and stylised vegetation.

What makes this church unusual is its Gothic-style interior elevation: slender cast-iron columns support the vaulted roof in place of the usual stone pillars. They give transparency to the nave, leaving more room for the congregation. In the mid-19th century, this choice of architectural design was uncommon.



19 TOWN HALL AND GARDENS (57, rue du Général de Gaulle)



It was not until 1863-64 that a town hall and school was built by Blondel, on Rue de Mora, on the site where the Post Office stands today.

By the end of the 19th century, the administrative buildings were no longer large enough to accommodate the municipal functions. The Paillard property, a holiday residence at number 57, La Grande-

Rue (now Rue du Général de Gaulle), was acquired in 1895.

Today's Town Hall is still there, but the building has been considerably altered, and annexes were added later as the town employed more staff.

In parallel with the growth of the town's administrative services, its road network also grew: in 1851 there were 13 roads, whereas today there are around a hundred, most of which were designed after the 1930s.



To find out more about the history of Enghien-les-Bains and its heritage... Themed guided tours are run by the Tourist and Conference Office from April to October.