



[Stories](#) [Destinations](#) [Discussions](#) [Classifieds](#)

**Paris France
Stories**

[Home](#) > [Stories](#) > [Tour Paris](#) > [Gastronomy by the Seine](#)

- [Ask Karen](#)
- [BP Information](#)
- [French Food](#)
- [French History](#)
- [French Life](#)
- [French Travel](#)
- [French Wine](#)
- [Paris Hotels](#)
- [Paris Monuments & Museums](#)
- [Paris Restaurants](#)
- [Paris Shopping](#)
- [Tour France](#)
- [Tour Paris](#)

**Paris France
Destinations**

- [1st Arr, 2nd Arr, 3rd Arr,](#)
- [4th Arr, 5th Arr, 6th Arr,](#)
- [7th Arr, 8th Arr, 9th Arr,](#)
- [10th Arr, 11th Arr, 12th](#)
- [Arr, 13th Arr, 14th Arr,](#)
- [15th Arr, 16th Arr, 17th](#)
- [Arr, 18th Arr, 19th Arr,](#)
- [20th Arr, Ile-de-France,](#)
- [Paris, The Louvre](#)
- [Museum](#)



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- [Versailles Tour](#)
- [Seine River](#)
- [Paris Photo](#)
- [Paris Excursion](#)

Gastronomy by the Seine

By [Monique Y. Wells](#)



On the Fourth of July 2008 weekend, Paris will join London, Prague and Madrid in the tradition of holding an annual culinary festival. Called Gastronomy by the Seine, this historic first annual international gourmet festival is designed for food, wine and luxury hospitality professionals. The event celebrates culinary traditions, regional specialties, seasonality and the evolution of flavors and tastes, as well as skilled crafts in table art (such as fine cutlery and crystal) and culinary equipment. Gourmet literature in the form of cookbooks, culinary guides, magazines, and epicurean

memoirs will also be featured. The theme of the event is "Innovation, Creativity and Haute Cuisine for All".

None other than American New Cuisine will be featured at this food *fête*! The impressive Committee of Honor that will oversee the festival has American chefs Traci Des Jardins, Michael Lomonaco, and Geoffrey Zakarian sitting alongside the likes of Guy Savoy, Hélène Darroz and Michel Blanchet. And American food writers and critics such as Paula Wolfert and Gael Greene will be among those animating the numerous professional round table discussions that will take place on July 4th and 5th. A festive inaugural dinner will take place aboard *Le Paquebot* of the Yachts de Paris fleet on Independence Day evening under the patronage of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë.

A major feature of the festival will be the Young European Chefs Cooking Competition. Fifteen young chefs, aged 18-26, who are either in cooking school or already in possession of a professional culinary degree, will compete for prizes to be awarded for the best prepared salmon *entrée* (including three side dishes and a sauce) and the best "free style" chocolate dessert. Though the name of the contest specifies European chefs, candidates from the U.S. and Canada have been admitted to this year's competition.

Professional cooking demonstrations by *les grands chefs* and tasting workshops are also a part of the festival. Participants will be able to experience an absinthe fountain (at the European dinner only), a food and tea pairing and a spice bread workshop. Norwegian salmon and Irish beef are featured food items at this year's festival.

Chef Culinary Network (CCN) and Yachts de Paris are the principal organizers of Gastronomy by the Seine. Their original intent was to open the festival to the public, but for logistical reasons, this first event has been created primarily for culinary professionals. Still, for those who are willing to pay the entry fee, places are available to the public. The organizers have indicated that, in future years, this summer festival will be designed for both professionals and the general public and that it will take place over a longer period of time.

The Festival was chosen to be the gastronomic side of the European Cultural Season organized as part of the French Presidency of the European Union. Appropriately, the second night's dinner aboard Yachts de Paris will honor Europe. The prizes for the culinary competition will be awarded at this event in the presence of the delegations of the 27 member countries of the E.U., elected members of the European parliament and members of the European Commission.

All festival activities will take place on board Yachts de Paris, docked alongside Quai Henri IV facing Notre-Dame Cathedral and Île de la Cité. But the organizers have also foreseen that attendees may want to partake of one or more activities that are held on land. They have therefore organized the "Off" Festival, which will consist of:

- A guided visit of the Baccarat museum
- A tour of the wholesale market Rungis [A guided visit to the rue Mouffetard & Place Monge markets](#)
- A guided tour of the historic Arsenal library and 18th century gastronomy books from the Marquis de Paulmy collection.

Reservations are required for the Mouffetard/Monge market visit, as only one will be offered and a maximum of 15 persons will be able to attend. This tour will take place on Sunday July 6 from 10 AM to 12 noon.

For more information about Gastronomy by the Seine, please visit www.gastronomyfestivals.com.

Monique Y. Wells is co-owner of the travel planning service [Discover Paris!](#) – partner in the Gastronomy by the Seine festival and provider of the Mouffetard/Monge market visit. For a 25% discount on the festival entry fee, enter the Discover Paris! promotional code: GBSUSAO1 when you order your ticket online. To reserve for the market visit, please [click here](#).