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TRAVELLER

AUGUST 2015



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24 hours in Strasbourg

"This is one business trip you should try and take your partner on"

Not only is Strasbourg an international business hub, it's beautiful to boot



AS THE EUROPEAN capital and seat of the European Parliament, not to mention home to 40 European institutions,

Strasbourg is well set up for international business visitors. Indeed, it's home to 1,200 global companies, has a very profitable trade with Switzerland and Germany and is the third-largest banking centre in France, with its own innovation park, and is a world leader in healthcare discoveries. But the real kicker is that it's beautiful to boot, with chocolate-box buildings, Gothic cathedrals, pretty palaces and the meandering River Ill all supplementing the terrific transport system and glitzy hotels. Put it this way: this is one business trip

you should try and take your partner along for. Mireille Dartus, director of the Strasbourg Convention Bureau (mystrasbourg.com), shares her top tips.

00:00 Stay overnight

"Five-star Régent Petite France and Spa is a popular place to stay. It's in the medieval part of the city – which is a UNESCO World Heritage site – in beautiful surroundings overlooking the River Ill, with a mixture of traditional architecture and modern rooms, a gym and conference facilities. There's also a charming terrace where you can sit and watch the world sail by. Famous restaurant La Maison des Tanneurs (maison-des-tanneurs.com) is directly opposite if you have the opportunity..." *5 Rue des Moulins. regent-petite-france.com*

08:00 Breakfast

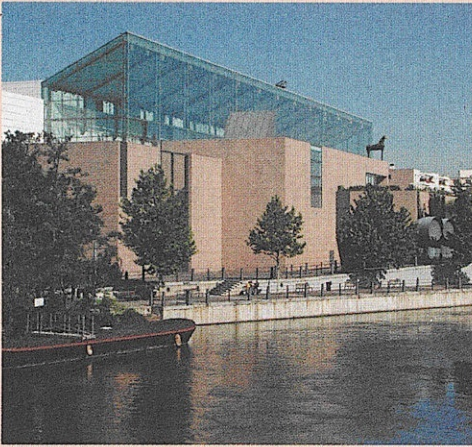
"Where better to enjoy the best breakfast in the city than in a hotel that's the very epitome of French luxury? Strictly speaking, the traditional French breakfast is croissants and coffee, but Sofitel Strasbourg Grande Ile is the place to go for a treat. The selection of crêpes, breads, *gaufres* (waffles), all sorts of egg dishes, pastries and fresh fruits is incredible." *4 Place Saint Pierre le Jeune. sofitel.com/Strasbourg*

10:00 Morning coffee

"If you didn't treat yourself at breakfast, Pâtisserie Suzanne is where to go. The windows are filled with cakes and almond-paste figurines, and you can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee on the terrace facing the beautiful 19th-century building of the

Strasbourg's mix of French and German heritage makes for unusual, and unusually pretty, cityscapes





From left The Museum of Contemporary Art is a great place for lunch, while dinner at 1741 won't disappoint your clients



Galleries Lafayette [department store]. Alternatively, if you just want to grab a quick cup, nearby Cafés Henri has been roasting a special blend since 1949." *25 Rue du 22 Novembre. patisseries-suzanne.fr 31 rue des Hallebardes. cafeshenri.fr*

12:00 A good business lunch

"On the terrace of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the bustling Art Café offers some great dishes and a very good prix-fixe menu. However, people also go there for the views – there are magnificent bay windows that frame the Ponts Couverts (covered bridges), one of the most famous vistas in Strasbourg, and the Notre Dame Cathedral. It's an exquisite place to take clients." *Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, 1 Place Hans Jean Arp. tinyurl.com/topo4hdj*

14:00 Take in some culture

"Now that you've been inspired by the lunchtime views, get out and explore Strasbourg. Visit the Notre Dame Cathedral and the nearby historic sites, such as the Place du Château, or go to any of the city's 12 museums. If you only have time for just one visit, go to the Notre Dame, which is celebrating its 1,000th anniversary this year. Climb its 330 steps for a view that's out of this world. You'll be able to see the entire historic city and the European quarter, including the buildings of Parliament, the Council of Europe and the Court of Human Rights."

Place de la Cathédrale. otstrasbourg.fr

18:00 Take clients for a drink

"The slick, brand-new Black&Wine bar is part of the four-star boutique Hôtel Hannong. It has a wonderfully designed modern terrace and is well known as the place to go to entertain clients. It's a traditional wine bar in that only wine is served, but that's not an issue when you have Alsace's finest vineyards at your disposal. Dress smart."

Hotel Hannong, 15 Rue du 22 Novembre. hotel-hannong.com

19:00 Celebrate over dinner

"The Michelin-starred Restaurant 1741 is on the Quai des Bateliers, right next to the water and one of the most romantic places in town. It provides a view of the Palais Rohan, designed by Robert de Cotte, who also worked on Versailles. It has small rooms in a boudoir style and you can hire private spaces for you and your clients. The food is high-quality French using plenty of local produce." *22 Quai des Bateliers. 1741.fr*

21:00 Take in a show

"Another option is to dine or enjoy the entertainment at the Royal Palace, a cabaret located about 30 minute's taxi ride from central Strasbourg. It's the third biggest cabaret in France, with dancers, singers and acrobats who can easily compete with the best that Paris and Las Vegas have to offer. After the live show, there's live music for dancing."

20 Rue de Hochfelden, Kirrwiller. royal-palace.com

THE RULES

01. Keep your counsel

The city's unofficial motto is 'Europtimist' and the locals are extremely proud of the European Parliament and its related institutions. Eurosceptics would do well to tread carefully during conversations.

02. Dress well

Jeans are normally reserved for the weekends. If you're lucky enough to be invited for dinner with a client, smart casual is advised.

03. Mind your manners

It's common courtesy to say *bonjour* or *bonsoir* to the host or proprietor when meeting someone – including shopkeepers. Even when leaving a shop where you didn't buy anything, *au revoir* will keep everyone happy.

04. Business cards

These are exchanged after the initial introductions. It's a nice touch to have one side of your card in French.

05. Don't over-shake

French handshakes are known to be curt and light. Aim for a loose grip with only one or two up and down movements.

