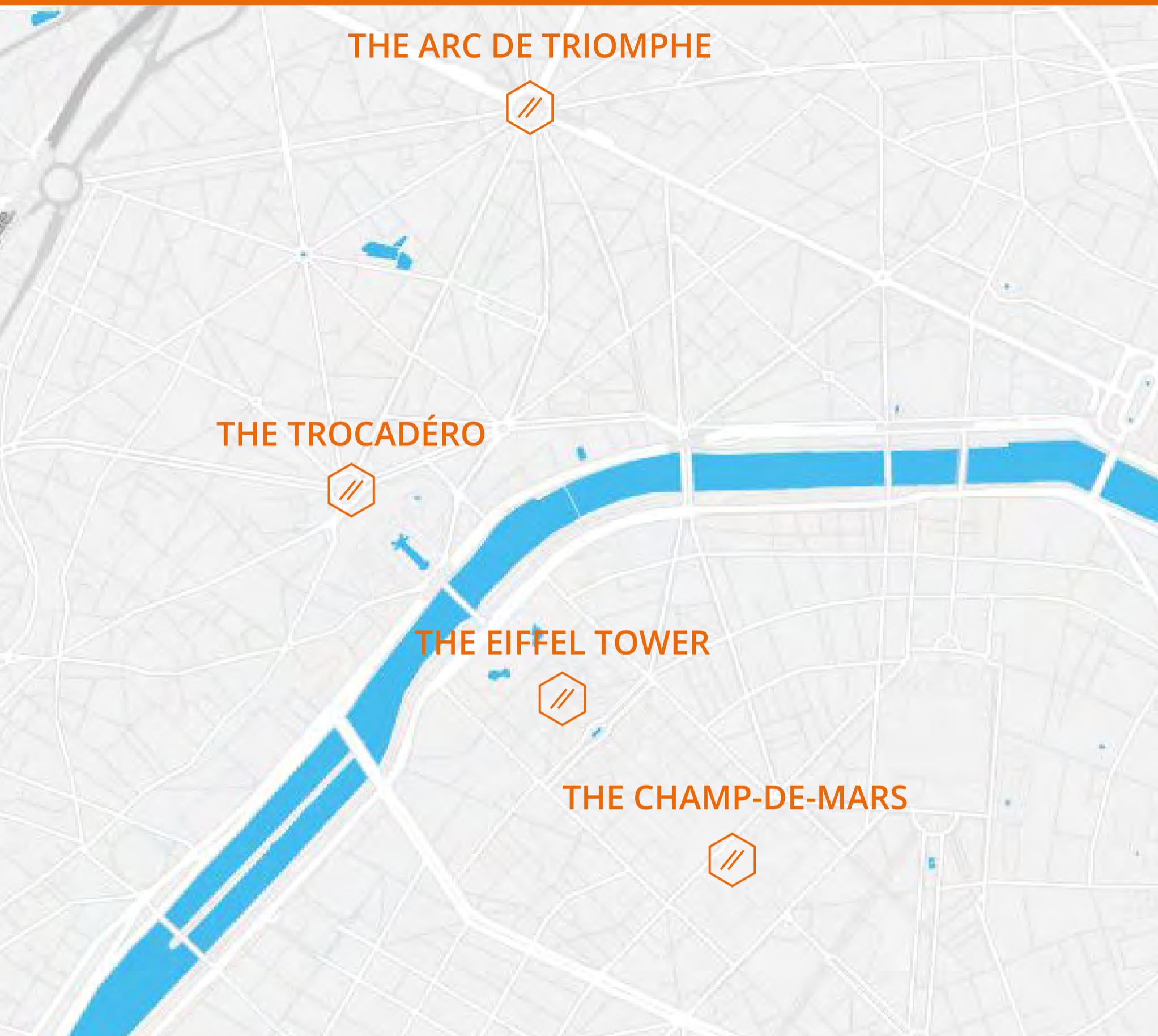




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Circuits
PARALLÈLES
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FROM ARC DE TRIOMPHE TO CHAMP-DE-MARS

THE TOUR : THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE, THE TROCADERO, THE EIFFEL TOWER, THE CHAMP DE MARS



Length :

- 3H00 walking
- ½ day with the Eiffel Tower visit
- The whole day with the ascent on the Arc de Triomphe's terrace, a Palais de Chaillot's museum and the Eiffel Tower visit.

Public : All

Means of transport : by foot (There is a bus to go up the Avenue Kléber)



Access for persons with reduced mobility : yes if accompanied on the Arc de Triomphe's lift

Total distance : 4 km



Starting point : Place Charles de Gaulle (Charles de Gaulle Square) (RER station Ch. De Gaulle-Etoile, line A or stop Ch. De Gaulle-Etoile bus lines 22, 30, 31, 52, 73, 92 or metro lines 2 and 6)



THE PLACE DE L'ETOILE (« THE SQUARE OF THE STAR »)

Had you come here in the 17th century, you would have been in Neuilly. On the huntsmen's crossroads, located at the top of the colline du Roule (Roule Hill) surrounded by woods, there were fields, swamps and very few houses but that were badly frequented.

In the 1665s-1670s, as part of a new layout of the Louvre ordered by Louis XIV, **a first draft of the voie triomphale** (triumphal way, a Parisian historical axis going from the Louvre to La Défense) **was drawn by Le Nôtre** (Louis XIV's gardener). The route of this new avenue goes from the Tuileries Garden to the top of the Roule Hill. From 1671, the Palace of Versailles caught the King's interest. This avenue was clearly less interesting to him...

It was at the end of the 18th century that the place de l'Etoile became a circular esplanade and a famous promenade with its bars, open-air cafes and auditoriums.

Then, from the 1850s, under Napoleon III's orders who asked the baron Haussmann (Prefect of Paris) to take care of the capital town planning, **it found its current structure**. Twelve big and large avenues leading to the square and rich private mansions surrounded by gardens (called *hôtels des Maréchaux* « Marshal hotels » because of the name of the neighbouring avenues) were built at the crossing of the avenues.

If you climb up the Arc de Triomphe's terrace, you can clearly see the star-like construction. If there is not too much traffic you will be able to observe that the square pavement form a star. Dark coloured triangles point to the Marshals' hotels and red triangles point to the avenues.

In November 1970, the place de l'Etoile changed its name to place Charles de Gaulle.



 **To reach the Arc de Triomphe, first and foremost, do not try to cross the place de l'Etoile ! Between the avenue des Champs-Élysées and the avenue de Friedland there is an underpass that leads to the bottom of the monument.**

THE ARC-DE-TRIOMPHE

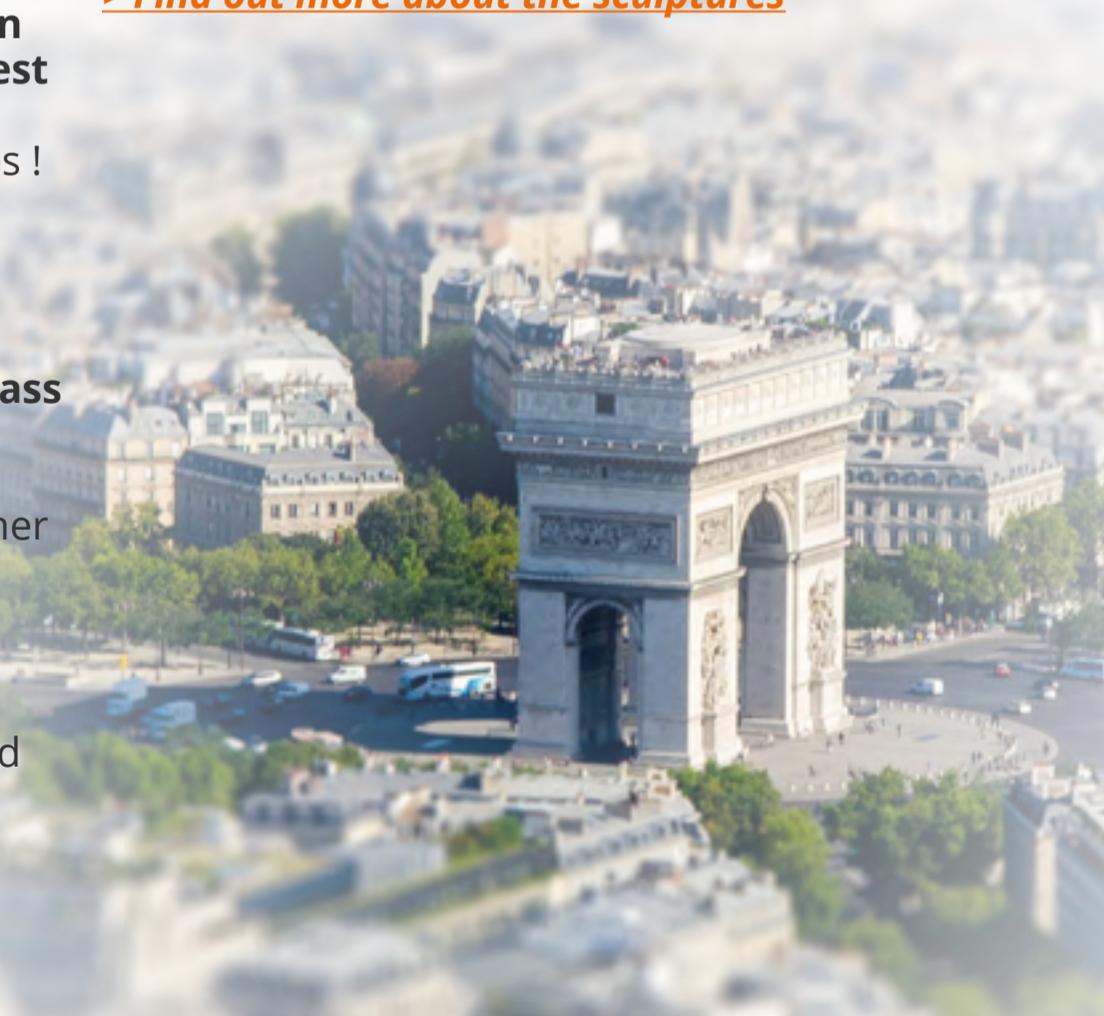
Napoleon, after his victory in Austerlitz (a Czechoslovakian city), **wanted to have a triumphal arc built to the glory of the Grande Armée** (« Great Army »). An imperial decree of February 1806 confirmed the decision. **The first stone was laid in August 1806.** The 6 metres deep foundations were finished in 1808. The plans taken on were those of the architect J.Chalgrin. There was a single arc surrounded by pillars (square pillars architecturally speaking) decorated with reliefs. Inside, there were rooms and empty spaces for stairs and pipes. **The architect took his inspiration from Roman arches but the proportions set - 50 metres high, 45 metres wide and 22 metres deep - were much bigger than the Arch of Septimius Severus' in Rome, which was then the biggest in the world.** It is huge but it completely fits the Champs Élysées !

In April 1810, Napoleon, for his wedding with the archduchess Marie-Louise of Austria and for her arrival in Paris, wanted to pass under the arch. But the problem was that its construction was not over yet ! The pillars were not higher than 3 metres. The solution found was to build a life-size window-dressing with wood, hessian and stucco. This model permitted to make some final modifications and approve the definitive project.

J.Chalgrin's death in 1811 and the Emperor's lack of interest for those extravagant plans slowed down the construction. They were stopped by the fall of the Empire in 1814 while the vaults were being constructed (20 metres). **The construction started again ten years later under Louis XVIII** (Louis XVI's brother). **In 1830, Louis-Philippe** came to power, **continued the construction and added the armies that fought between 1792 and 1815 to the monument dedications, thus paying tribute to the Empire and to the Republic.**

The Arc de Triomphe is different from the other monuments built during the same period thanks to the place granted to the big sets of sculptures. The themes and the sculptors chosen by Adolphe Thiers, Minister of the Interior and great connoisseur of art, **had to represent the « national spirit ».** **Twenty-two artists participated in the realisation of the decoration explaining the diversity of styles.**

[> Find out more about the sculptures](#)



In 1835, the construction work was about to be over. Then, the architect noticed that the Arc de Triomphe's interior walls were very bare. He suggested to engrave them with the big names of the Republique and the Empire. **The battles' names appear on the great arch's interior walls, respecting the geographic orientation** (French Eastern cities corresponding to the Eastern pillar etc) ; **the generals' names appear on the small arch's interior walls** and the names of the officers killed in action are underlined. In total, 384 names are engraved.

Eventually, the Arc de Triomphe was launched in July 1836 for the 6th anniversary of the Revolution of July by Adolphe Tiers. The families came and visited the monument and hoped to find a close relation's name among the big list of the armies' heroes. It seemed that a lot of names had been forgotten as the complaints kept coming ! Among them, a certain Victor Hugo, the french writer, did not find his father's name, the general Hugo. Until 1895, battles and generals' names (or equivalents) were added but not the general Hugo's yet...

