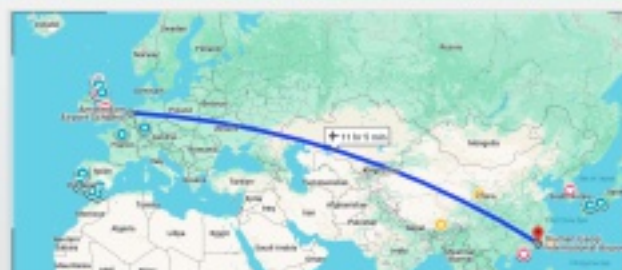


26 May - 2 June: Paris

2 - 9 June:  
Brussels/Brugge/Antwerp/  
Ghent

9 - 17 June:  
Amsterdam/Rotterdam/The  
Hague/Delft/Utrecht/  
Zaandam/Zaanse Schans

18 - 20 June: Xiamen



Day 1  
25 May 2024 (Sat)  
HK to Paris



Candice drove us to the airport

CX lounge offers  
limited foods.  
Drinks are ok.





Day 2

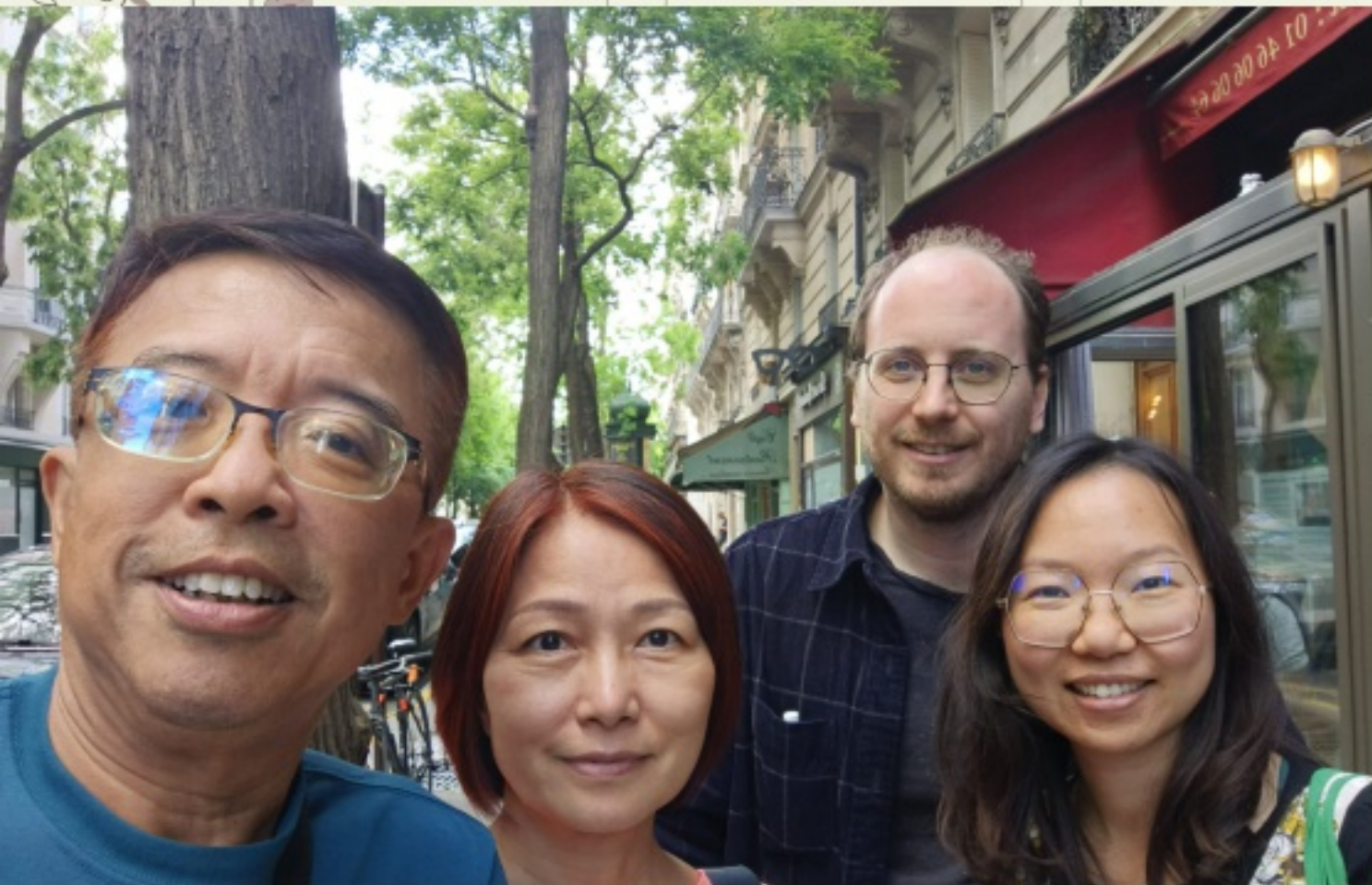
26 May 2024 (Sun)

Montmartre, Basilica of Sacre Coeur de Montmartre

Traffic on Sunday is smooth so we arrived at bnb in Montmartre early in the morning. The district is full of beautiful classic buildings and stories of famous people who have lived here. In contrast with the quiet neighborhood, sightseeing spots are filled with tour groups.



The Basilica of Sacre Coeur is situated at the highest point of Paris where we have a good panoramic view of the city. The terrace garden and the Basilica itself are beautiful. But there are crowds everywhere.



Lunch with Ricko and her fiancé Antoine in a restaurant serving traditional French food. It's good to see that she has settled well in Paris, studying and working on what she chooses. And they are getting married very soon !!



A small gift from Roland Garros for their new home



Day 3 27 May 2024 (Mon)

Musée de l'Orangerie, Champs Elysees, Galeries Lafayette



Luckily, we arrived at the museum early in the morning before the crowd. Monet's water lilies are displayed nicely in a rotunda where we can sit in the center to enjoy the big paintings at a good distance.



Due to the imminent Olympics in Paris in July, there is much construction work near Concorde and several historic sites are closed.



Day 4 28 May 2024 (Tue)

Carnavalet Museum, St Paul's Church, Notre Dame, Commercial Beaugrenelle

The Carnavalet Museum is dedicated to the history of France and Paris. There are rooms that cover different periods of French history. The presentation is not particularly interesting and we just cover part of the museum.





After a quick lunch,  
we have a good rest  
sitting quietly at St  
Paul's Church.  
Though small, the  
architecture is  
complicated and  
meticulous.



A large part of Notre Dame was destroyed in the fire in 2019. It's now closed for restoration. But we can admire the splendid architecture just by looking at the facade.

Shopping at Commercial Beaugrenelle in the afternoon. The only thing special about this shopping mall is that it is a modern building. We hardly see this kind of building in Paris. Maybe the new buildings blend in very well with the environment so we don't notice them.



Day 5 29 May 2024 (Wed)

Bourse de Commerce, Curie Museum, Pantheon



Bourse de Commerce is a historic building now being used as a museum displaying the collection of Pinault. The round building itself is beautiful but the contemporary art being exhibited is not appealing to us. There is an exhibit with old men sitting on moving wheel chairs. The scene is shocking at first sight.







The Curie Museum is a very small museum located at Marie Curie's laboratory. The Curie family is really remarkable and the story is interesting.



The Pantheon is another gigantic historic building in Paris. Looking at the names of the people buried in the crypt, we realize we know too few famous French people.





Day 6&7 30&31 May 2024 (Thur&Fri)  
French Open





由於有上次澳網的經驗，知道會人很多很擠，故對今天的法網沒有太大期望。果然好嘅唔靈醜嘅靈，真是人山人海，大排長龍。到處人龍，所以今天主要都在買了票的場館內看，重頭戲只有施華利夫對哥芬。

晚上在一間曾經有米芝蓮的法國餐廳 [Chantoiseau] 吃了一頓豐富晚餐，味道不錯，惟餐牌選擇較少，價錢亦不便宜，不過這也可能是這些精緻小餐廳的特色。







**FRIDAY, MAY 31 2024**  
Women's Singles - Third Round  
Court Philippe-Chatrier - Completed

 C. Gauff [3]	6	6
 D. Yastremska [30]	2	4



**FRIDAY, MAY 31 2024**  
Women's Singles - Third Round  
Court Philippe-Chatrier - Completed

 I. Swiatek [1]	6	6
 M. Bouzkova	4	2

**FRIDAY, MAY 31 2024**  
Men's Singles - Third Round  
Court Philippe-Chatrier - Completed - 2h27 (Details)

 P. Koev	4	4	-	-
 J. Sinner [2]	6	6	+	-

**THURSDAY, MAY 30**  
Women's Singles - Second Round  
Court Suzanne-Lenglen - Completed

 A. Rus	3
 E. Rybakina [4]	6



**THURSDAY, MAY 30 2024**  
Men's Singles - Second Round  
Court Suzanne-Lenglen - Completed - By retirement of M. Kecmanovic

 M. Kecmanovic	1	0
 D. Medvedev [5]	6	5



**FRIDAY, MAY 31 2024**  
Women's Doubles - First Round  
Court 8 - Completed - 3h05 (Details)

 D. Hahn [2]	 F. Hahn [2]	4	1 <sup>+</sup>		
 S. Hahn	 A. Hahn	1	6 <sup>+</sup>	+	+

**THURSDAY, MAY 30 2024**  
Men's Singles - Second Round  
Court Suzanne-Lenglen - Completed - 2h2

 A. Zverev [4]	7 <sup>+</sup>	6	6
 D. Goffin	6 <sup>+</sup>	2	2

**FRIDAY, MAY 31 2024**  
Men's Singles - Third Round  
Court Philippe-Chatrier - Completed - 2h2

 P. Koev	4	4	4	-
 J. Sinner [2]	6	6	6	-

We are much more prepared for our second day of tennis. Watched four matches featuring Sinner, Swiatek, Gauff and 謝淑薇. Weather continues to disappoint. We can avoid the rain inside the stadium but not the cold.





Day 8 1 Jun 2024 (Sat)

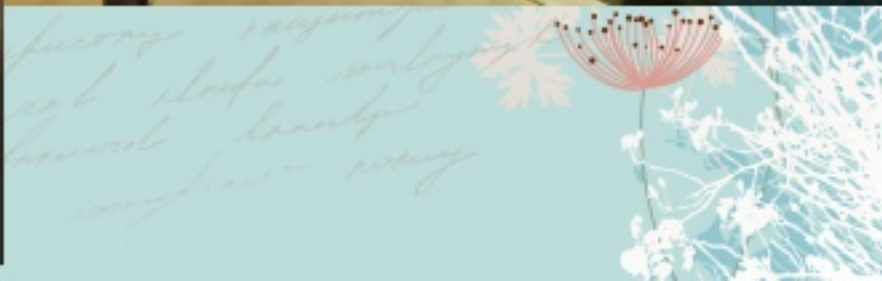
## Cluny Museum

Interesting and beautiful artifacts from the medieval, including tapestries, sculptures, stained glass, ivories etc. Very rich collection but a bit fragmented. A famous tapestry is called the lady and the unicorn.



### The Lady and the Unicorn

Tapestries were popular since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and remained so throughout the entire modern period. They were highly sought-after to decorate churches, castles and the homes of the elite. The Lady and the Unicorn, a six-piece tapestry cycle featuring the coat of arms of the Le Viste family, is a magnificent example of the millefleurs style, featuring a background strewn with floral motifs. Its iconography long remained a mystery but has since been partly identified as five pieces representing the five senses. The sixth tapestry, with the inscription *Mon seul désir* ("My only desire"), remains an enigma. The cycle celebrates a family as well as a form of harmony and beauty.







Incidentally, we met a large protest supporting Palestine at Place de la Republique.



Lunch at a Hong Kong tea house called Bing Sutt 冰室, though I cannot recommend their 奶茶.



Day 9 2 Jun 2024 (Sun)  
Paris to Brussels by train.  
Meet Samuel and Sandy at bnb

 eurostar

Day 10 3 Jun 2024  
Royal Gallery of St Hubert, Grand Place, European Parliament, Gudo Cathedral

The Royal Gallery of St Hubert consists of shopping arcades in glass-roofed streets built in the 19th century. It is packed with beautifully decorated shop windows. We tasted some chocolate from famous brands. The flavors and texture are good, but I find them a bit too sweet.



The buildings around Grand Place are magnificent. The area is busy and full of restaurants. We have lunch at the Square to enjoy Belgian food and the great view.





Royal Gallery of Saint Hubert



Manneken Pis



The visitor center in the European Parliament is very big, but not much to see



Rather expensive dinner. Good beers. But the seafood is just so-so







The Gudula Cathedral is a robust structure. As there are not too many visitors, we can sit quietly to see the beautiful stained glass windows which are quite different from those we usually see.





Day 11 4 Jun 2024 (Tue)  
Day trip to Brugge



Brugge is a small city full of medieval buildings. It is even more tourist oriented than Brussels. There are shopping streets selling international brands. We had a relaxing day, just looking at the city house, cathedrals and museums from the outside and strolling along the canal to enjoy the scenery.









Day 12 5 Jun 2024 (Wed)  
Flea market, murals, BELvue Museum



Saw a few comic murals, but they are not as big or eye-catching as those we saw in Glasgow.

The flea market at Marche aux Puces is selling very old, torn second hand items. Surprisingly, a lot of transactions are going on





BELvue Museum is very good. Presenting the history as well as the present situation of Belgium in a way that's easy to comprehend. We find answers to questions coming up in these few days. Including language issues, immigrants, Belgian Nobel peace prize winners....





Day 13 6 Jun 2024 (Thur)  
Day trip to Antwerp

The first thing we do in this city is strolling along shops in the diamond district. As there are historic buildings such as City House and cathedrals in every city, we spend little time on this part here. Instead we visited the Museum aan de Stroom which is housed in a specially designed modern building. Though we can't see the present Antwerp port which is the second largest in Europe, there are remains of a quiet port and warehouses along River Scheldt next to the museum.





## Museum aan de Stroom



Antwerp from the rooftop of Stroom

## China Town



The day ends with a heartwarming dinner where the owner played Cantonese songs for us. It is a small restaurant next to the our bnb and the beef tartare is surprisingly good



Day 14 7 Jun 2024 (Fri)  
Day trip to Ghent



Ghent is a pleasant city with a large tourist district. We took a boat tour and listened to stories about the historic guild houses along the canal. It's easy to travel in this city as major attractions are concentrated in the old city around the canal.

Highlight of the day is visiting the Castle of the Counts (Gravensteen) and climbing to the rooftop to see the city. After visiting some sites, has the feeling that the country is more beautiful on pictures.





Day 15 8 Jun 2024 (Sat)

## Musical Instruments Museum, Horta Museum

A rich collection of musical instruments from around the world are being exhibited in the Musical Instruments Museum, including many that we have never seen before. It is interesting to listen to extracts of music played by the instruments on display.







Horta Museum is the house built by Horta, the pioneer of Art Nouveau architecture. The design of the house and furniture is peculiar but the exhibits are not kept in a very attractive condition.



After spending several days in the area with lots of immigrants(Muslims), we see the busy and lively part of the cosmopolitan city on the last day in Brussels.





Day 16 9 Jun 2024 (Sun)

Brussels to Amsterdam by train



A walking tour in the afternoon to listen to a bit of culture, architecture and history of Amsterdam. Interesting to know that about 15,000 bicycles are pulled out of the canals each year.



Day 17 10 Jun 2024 (Mon)

World Press Photo, Royal Palace, Van Gogh Museum

Due to the rain, we hop into an indoor World Press Photos exhibition that displays photos telling stories from around the world. The award winning photos are mainly on themes about disaster and war. Seeing all the distressing scenes, we realize how lucky we are.



The Royal Palace appears grey and dirty on the outside. Surprisingly, the interior is kept in good condition. Even the carpets, curtains and furniture appear clean and elegant. The Palace is still used for state visits and royal occasions.



# Oog in oog met Van Gogh

## Face to Face with Van Gogh



The Van Gogh Museum focuses on the life of Van Gogh along with his paintings. Most of his famous paintings that we have heard of are not kept here.





Day 18 11 Jun 2024 (Tue)

National Museum of the Netherlands, boat cruise, flower market, Heineken Experience



The Rijksmuseum is new and spacious, offering a comfortable environment for us to enjoy Dutch art and history. Rembrandt's artwork is interesting as there are always stories behind. The analysis on selected paintings available helps us to appreciate the famous artwork. The other exhibits such as porcelain and silverware are also very beautiful, reflecting the Dutch Golden Age.





The audio guide of the canal cruise is neither useful nor interesting. The tour does provide a chance for seeing the big and small canals all over the city, the numerous bridges, the interesting canal houses and house boats.

As we have missed the Tulip festival in April, I wish to see some flowers in the flower market. To my disappointment, the market is mainly selling seeds and bulbs.



Heineken Experience is more about presenting the brand rather than the brewing process. The tour ends with beer tasting in a pub-like room. We are too calm to sink into the joyous atmosphere.



Day 19 12 Jun 2024 (Wed)

Day tour to Zaandam and Zaanse Schans (風車村)



Zaandam is a small and quiet city. Nice to walk around to see the cute Inntel Hotel, 彼得小屋, Monet's house, City House and canal houses.





The main attraction of Zaanse Schans is of course the windmills. Luckily, the weather is fine, though quite windy. We didn't enter the windmills to learn about their history. It was a pleasant journey just to see the windmills at different distances in the picturesque area





Day 20 13 Jun 2024 (Thur)  
Day trip to Hague and Delft



We arrived at the International Criminal Court in Hague but failed to enter because we didn't bring our passports.

Briefly visited Mauritshuis and saw the famous painting 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' by Vermeer. He is renowned for his ability to capture light and create mood. Just got time to focus on a few famous paintings.



Delft is a city known for making ceramics. We saw some historic as well as some contemporary pieces in the Prinsenhof Museum. The exhibits, especially the modern ones, are not particularly impressive. Another bonus of this museum tour is the story of the Dutch national father 'William the Silent'.



William the Silent (1533-1584), more commonly known in the Netherlands as William of Orange, was the leader of the Dutch revolt against the Spanish Habsburgs that set off the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) and resulted in the formal independence of the United Provinces in 1648. He was assassinated in Delft in 1584.



Day 21 14 Jun 2024 (Fri)

Day trip to Rotterdam :

Cube House, Market Hall, Depot Biojmans, Erasmus bridge



The Cube House is a bold idea in which each house is a tilted cube with the corner at the top. There are 3 irregular floors with slanting walls. You have to climb narrow spiral staircases to go up. Moving around this house is not easy.

The Market Hall is a combination of residential area plus food stalls in an upside-down U-shape structure. All I can say is it is an innovative design.







Depot Biojmans is a warehouse of artwork-rather than a museum. Architecture of the bowl-shaped structure is special, but the exhibits appear randomly placed. There is not much to see.



Walking across the Erasmus Bridge is unexpectedly pleasant



Day 22 15 Jun 2024 (Sat)  
Day trip to Utrecht, Red Light District



Utrecht is a vibrant city, full of shopping streets, restaurants and cafes. Met a lively Saturday market selling authentic cheese, bread and fresh food and it was full of people. A second layer of walkway just next to the water is a special feature of the canals here.

Experienced the amazing  
Red Light District in  
Amsterdam at 10:00 pm 水泄  
不通, sex shows and bars  
are crowded. Smell of  
cannabis everywhere.





Day 23 16 Jun 2024 (Sun)

National Maritime Museum, Fabrique des Lumières



Not much history and mainly artifacts. Food for Thought exhibition to explore food supply issues. Again just thought provoking and no solutions attempted.

A light and sound experience. A first for us and quite enjoyable.







*Happiness*

La Paella dinner hosted by Samuel & Sandy. Engaging conversations.





Day 24 17 Jun 2024 (Mon)  
Anne Frank tour. Fly to 廈門



Strolling historic sites and hearing stories about the Jews here during World War II. Very informative and stories are linked to give a general picture and then leading to that of Anne Frank. Life during wartime is terrible!



Fly to Xiamen in the evening.  
Enjoyed the humongous KLM lounge.



Day 25 18 Jun 2024 (Tue)

廈航的飛機平穩寧靜，一覺睡到早上，如果不是延誤問題，體驗應是很好。本以為廈航提供的酒店就在機場附近，誰知竟在十多公里外。

Day 26 19 Jun 2024 (Wed)

廈門市內遊：自行車道、科技館、逛SM新生活廣場、陶陶居

早上去沿海自行車道，單車和遊人都寥寥可數，設施荒廢，並不是想像中的旅遊點。途中遇上大雨，改為室內活動，去了科技館和逛商場。科技館較適合兒童，我們興趣不大。商場巨大，國際品牌林立，店舖寬敞，但人流不多，都不想入內打擾。陶陶居則不外如是，早一晚在酒店旁的餐館食海鮮來得更好味



Day 27 20 Jun 2024 (Thur)  
廈門飛香港 一切順利 依時到達