

GETTING AROUND THE AIRPORT

Charles de Gaulle, Paris

CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT (CDG)—or Roissy as the French call it—is the main airport that most Americans will visit when arriving and departing from Paris. The airport is quite large and has grown over the years to accommodate the thousands of passengers that pass through it daily. Leave it to the French to re-invent the wheel, so to speak. Travelers arriving and departing are never on the same level of the airport—making it necessary to always pay attention so you don't end up someplace you don't belong.

If you are arriving at Paris and not connecting to another flight, the airport is reasonably easy to navigate. Just follow the crowd as you de-plane—it's about that simple. The halls are marked to direct you to immigration control, baggage, and eventually out to the arrivals area where you can catch ground transportation.

If you are flying home from CDG, here are a few tips to reduce your stress levels and make your life easier.

- Get to the airport early. Two to 2 ½ hours is recommended, and you'll need it.
- Go directly to your airline's check-in and be prepared to stand in line. Once you have checked in and relinquished your suitcase, you should do any eating, duty free shopping, and visits to the restroom while you are on the same level as check-in. Once you take the escalator to the next level where you clear security it is very difficult to get back to the check-in level. Plan to go up the escalator no later than 1 hour before your flight.
- At the top of the escalator you will follow signs to your gate. You will be within sight of your gate when you see security. Once again be prepared to stand in line. Because security is not centralized as it is in most airports, and because once through security there is no food, no shopping, no restrooms, and no return—many people get into the security queue later than they should, causing long security lines right as flights are boarding.
- If by chance you get caught in the security line and you hear your flight boarding, get the attention of an official and they can move you to the front of the security line.



Changing flights at CDG?

Life just got more challenging. But, fear not, the Air France web site gives very good directions that you can print out and take with you to guide you from terminal to terminal. In 2009 most of the women on the WTT Morocco tour had to transfer flights at CDG and no one got lost or missed their connection. The link is under “Information and Services” / “At the Airport”/“Paris—Charles de Gaulle Transfers.” Once there you will put in your “arriving from” city and “departing to” city. ❖

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