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Blue-Green Spaces In Megacities



Photo of Paris by [Drew Coffman](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Parks, squares, gardens, and rooftop gardens are beloved in Paris. A garden in France is un lieu social (a social place), where children play and laugh, you can have lunch with a colleague, play chess, read a book or play badminton. Everything listed above paints a modern-day picture of a typical French garden.

In metropolis, the contrast between green oasis and brutal steel-and-glass architecture is striking but yet so habitual. There are, of course, exceptionally beautiful architectural masterpieces all over Paris, but not everywhere. It's especially noticeable when you commute to the city from the nearby towns in the region of Île-de-France.

My favourite garden in Paris is [Jardin des Plantes](#) (Garden of Plants). The main botanical garden in France is almost 400 years old and has an impressive collection of plants. I never think of this garden as one of the top botanical gardens on the planet; or that it was a royal garden once. When I enter it, all I think about is flowers.

Spring begins, gorgeous peonies and elegant poppies are all I want to see. It's easy to set foot into this garden, but difficult to leave it because of all the beauty.

I don't know which garden is the most beautiful in Paris. Maybe it's the wrong question to ask in the first place, because there are a lot. I hope if somebody decides to visit Paris, famous or little-known gardens and parks will be in their agendas alongside The Eiffel Tower and The Louvre.

Every Day

Gardens and parks in Paris are one thing. Most of them are famous all over the globe and perceived as iconic tourist attractions. Parisians might see them differently for obvious reasons, the same way, for example, they perceive avenue Champs-Élysées. I once heard that you're considered to be a true Parisian if you haven't been on Champs-Élysées since you were 12 years old. Indeed, when you live in such a city for a long time, a lot of legendary places are seen differently, especially if you casually pass them by every day.

Each megacity has its own cultural and historical heritage. But what about the everyday lives of the citizens in a big city? Can they see blue-green spaces a lot on their way to work? Can they easily access and enjoy them? Are these spaces only found in certain districts of the city, or are they scattered all over the urban landscape?

A myriad of urbanization projects is now making progress in implementing blue-green infrastructures (BGI) across the globe. Not only do they offer solutions to adapt to climate change in urban areas but also make cities healthier and a better place to live on a day-to-day basis, which is my favourite part. Citizens are usually highly involved in such projects alongside policymakers. It's the opinion of the citizens that help create the sustainable blue-green infrastructure that they want to use.

In Europe, cycling routes, urban farms and 'garden' streets are among the most popular. In Paris, the above-mentioned Champs-Élysées is going to have its major makeover into an "extraordinary garden" after the city hosts the Summer Olympics in 2024:

"There will be hundreds more trees as well as larger sidewalks, less traffic, and a walkway that connects over 200 acres of green space, from the Arc de Triomphe through Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries Garden, which faces the Louvre Museum."

I have lived in both big cities and small towns. It seems that the lack of sustainable blue-green infrastructure and higher levels of inequality are one of the biggest challenges that big cities face. If you were to live in a big city, how would you imagine it? If you lived there, what would you change?