

Longchamp

Location, Parking and Access

The course is located in the south west corner of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

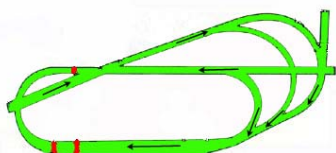
By car the course is reached from the Boulevard Périphérique taking the Porte Maillot de Allée exit or the Porte de Passey et Route de l'Hippodrome exit.

By Métro take line 10 in the Boulogne Pt de St. Cloud direction and get off at Porte d'Auteuil. From there a shuttle bus runs on weekend and holiday meetings. Alternatively the course is a 20 minute walk from the Métro station.

By air Charles de Gaulle airport is about a 75 minute journey via RER line B and Métro line 10 (€8.50 each way)

Parking is in the centre of the course, accessed by a tunnel, and costs €1 mid-week and €2 weekends.

Course Layout



Longchamp's configuration is somewhat complex with four "round" courses and a straight course over which 5f (1,000m) metre races are run.

The grande piste is the outer loop and this one is used for the Arc, it is 2,750m, just under 1¾ miles. The other courses are the moyenne (2,500 m, just over 1½ miles), the nouvelle, effectively a spur off the grande allowing for 7f races (1,400m) and the petite (2,150m just over 1¼ miles)

To complicate matters even further there are three winning posts. One on the straight 5f course and two on the main home straight, which one is in use depends on the course and distance. It is not unknown for jockeys to ride a finish to the wrong post, which are quite a distance apart.

This configuration actually allows for 46 different combinations of races / distances at the course and races are run from 5f (1,000m) through to 2½ miles (4,000m)

Admission

Admission, compared to the UK is exceptionally cheap.

For mid-week racing admission is €3, at weekends €4 and for the Arc meeting €8.

Students and over 60's get in half price and under 18's are free.

Overview

There is little doubt Longchamp is one of the grand racecourses in the world.

It is also a course of contrasts. On Arc de Triomphe day the course is heaving, packed to the rafters with a fantastic atmosphere, albeit with something of a British bias.

On other days the place resembles a ghost town, attracting no more than a few hundred racegoers. Needless to say these days have no atmosphere and border on the depressing and it is a terrible waste of resources.

There are three main grandstands.



The two main stands the Moulin and Jockey Club are virtually identical.

The lower levels have terraced viewing, most of which is under cover. The steppings are gentle and, consequently, viewing can be restricted if you have somebody tall standing in front of you.

The upper levels are reserved for restaurants, seating and private boxes.



The third stand is located near the furlong marker and, at the Arc weekend, is reserved for clients of Horseracing Abroad. This stand has seating under cover.

The stands are fronted by hard standing.

Viewing is reasonable, however the 5f course is a very long way away from the stands and if that is not bad enough, at the Arc meeting the marquees in the centre of the course severely impacts viewing of the sprint course.

Indeed these same marquees also impact viewing of parts of the round courses as well.

The area behind the stands is a combination of grass and hard standing and is well landscaped.



There is a large lawn facing the main gate, with gardens, a statue and hedging.

There are a number of buildings behind the stands, almost forming a quadrangle, which house toilets, bars, fast food outlets etc..

Additionally there are a number of terraces behind the stands, offering views of the rear areas and, at one end, the parade ring.

At the Arc meeting there are a plethora of big screen televisions so you have no excuse for missing the action.

Catering

As would be expected there is a huge range of options in terms of eating.

There is a panoramic restaurant in the Moulin stand offering spectacular views of the course. Offering a la carte with main courses between €24 and €39. Or there are set menus at €25 and €38.

There are a number of other restaurants offering both formal and informal dining.

There are fast food outlets cheeseburger €5 (€9 with fries), hot dog €3 (€7 with fries) although it should be pointed out the portion of fries is of a very questionable size.

Sandwiches are around €5

Crêpes and waffles are available at prices varying from €3 to €5.50, depending on the filling you choose.

Beer and wine are freely available for around €3.50 to €5 a go. Water is €2.50 a bottle, fizzy cans €4

Ancillaries

Bookmakers

Obviously there are no bookmakers at Longchamp where there is a tote (PMU) monopoly.

A full range of bets are available and different windows have different minimum bet limits. The minimum bet is €2. Some windows have a minimum €10 and I did see one with a €100 minimum.

On Arc day there are long queues at all the windows. The other important thing to bear in mind is the PMU is not as fast as the UK Tote when it comes to calculating dividends. As some quieter meetings it can take up to 35 minutes for the dividends to be declared, so be patient and don't bet on the last race if you are in a hurry to get away.

Racecard

The general meetings have the standard French form sheets. Just factual details and no colours. There are also available at the Arc meeting and are useful as a form guide. Indeed they even produce an English version on Arc day.

At the Arc meeting they also produce an excellent racecard. Colour cards for all races in summary form and full colour details for the major races, as well as the history of all the major races. Full of information and a prime example of what a racecard should be.

84 pages packed full of information, OK it is nearly all in French, although there is a PMU guide in English.

Best of all the racecard is free.

Toilets

Plenty of them both permanent, and at the Arc meeting, temporary facilities.

Of course there are queues at the Arc meeting, especially for the ladies facilities.



Parade Ring



Said to be the inspiration for the new Ascot parade ring this is, arguably the highlight of the course.

Full of trees and surrounded by tiered viewing the area is invariably popular, giving an intimate view of the horses as they parade. Indeed many racegoers spend the entire afternoon here watching the racing on the two nearby big screens..

Contact Details

	www.france-galop.com/Longchamp.30+M52087573ab0.0.html
	01 44 30 75 00

Inspection Dates

<i>Date</i>	<i>Weather</i>	<i>Type</i>
05/10/08	Generally overcast with showers	8 flat Arc meeting
04/10/09	Overcast becoming brighter late on	9 flat Arc meeting
03/10/10	Sunny	9 flat Arc meeting