

# Enter the world of temptation

*If the words 'glamour' and 'gourmet' conceptualise your ideal Parisian foodie experience then Café Angelina's elegant interiors, majestic chandeliers and fabulous pastries will leave your expectations flailing in the wake of the locals rushing for a seat.*

Angelina has established itself as a high point of Parisian gourmet pleasures. It's a luxury brand with a prestigious image that symbolises the 'French Way of Life'. Angelina's patisserie and tearoom has been a favourite spot of well-heeled Parisians, including Marcel Proust, Coco Chanel and Audrey Hepburn and just steps from the Louvre, it's unique in its faded 'belle époque' grandeur.

Almost everyone is here for one reason only: The chocolat chaud – the fragrant, gloriously rich, and impossibly thick hot chocolate Angelina's is famed for. It's a luscious blend of four l'Africain cocoa beans ground to a molten velvet potion so thick you need a spoon to consume it (had it been a tad thicker it would be reclassified a pudding). The chocolat chaud appears in a white porcelain pitcher of hot chocolate together with a smaller pitcher of whipped cream on the side. There will be audible ooh's and aahs from your fellow sinners watching the heavy velvet chocolate cling to the inside of the jug as you pour. Its density reminds me of a melted double chocolate bar – and I've been known to melt

a few of those in my time. In fact it could easily be enjoyed as a sauce for ice cream or profiteroles.

Sip, swallow (you may feel the need to chew), and fall into an intoxicating cloud of cocoa delirium; chocolate to the millionth power. It's only now that you can properly take in the over-the-top extravagance of Angelina's with its gilded boiserie, towering mirrors, waiters clad in tuxedos, clinking crystal, and Parisian matrons dressed in pastel shades of Chanel and elaborate Hermes scarves. You'll cosy up to the lusciousness of it all and may even convince yourself that you've seen Coco seated at table No 10. Reportedly, she was a daily customer – just for the hot chocolate.

Although you can't go wrong with anything sugar-dusted from the dazzling glass cases at the patisserie counter, if this is your first time you'll find the true meaning of sophisticated indulgence in Angelina's mouth-watering signature pastry – the traditional Mont Blanc. It's a simple patisserie ball, composed of chestnut cream vermicelli, Chantilly whipped





cream and meringue; and in France alone they sell 2,500 daily. The exact recipe remains well guarded, but together these ingredients leave you feeling as if you've been caught in a chestnut snowstorm.

Angelina's should be on every chocolate lover's must do list as this is quite literally, the best hot chocolate in the world! But don't be surprised if you need to wait for a table on weekends, especially at peak tourist times. If you want to skip the queues, get your hot chocolate and Mont Blanc to go from the takeaway counter to the right of the door. In fact, you can purchase bottles of the famous Chocolat Chaud to take home. I still have a bottle stashed in my fridge that I'm saving it for a dreadful day when I desperately need a little bit of Paris. Just knowing it's there lifts my spirits.

### Angelina History

The family that established the restaurant has roots in Eastern Europe where thick, sumptuous hot chocolate is a staple. The history behind this Parisian landmark began when the Rumpelmeyer family emigrated from Austria to settle in the Côte d'Azur region in the south of France. In the late 1800s, the Rumpelmeyers' had nostalgic thoughts about the tea-houses they left behind and decided to open their own tea-house in Nice. This proved to be a successful venture and they followed with more in Monte Carlo and Antibes. Building on these successes, in 1903, the Rumpelmeyers' opened the now-famous Parisian – Angelina. The interior looks like a traditional understated yet refined tea-house with marble-topped tables and lots of mirrors that give the dining area a larger-than-life feel, emphasising its many decorative flourishes. The walls are embellished with large paintings of various landscapes and subjects, each with a marked significance to the Rumpelmeyer family. Since its creation Angelina's remains

unchanged but recently had air-conditioning and disabled access added.

### The Pastry Chef

Head pastry chef, Christophe Appert, has had a distinguished career having worked at, amongst others, the Fairmont Monte Carlo – which gives him the perfect background to supervise the marvellous confectioneries created at Angelina.

### What to Eat?

For those with a waistline to watch, you'll want to leave your diet at the door as there are many pastries to sample. Like the Mille Feuille à la Vanille Bourbon – layers of caramelized flaky puff pastry sandwiched between layers of Bourbon vanilla cream; Tarte Citron – a sweet pastry with a smooth and sharp lemon cream filling; Saint Honoré is another Parisian classic with its caramelized choux pastry filled with vanilla cream with light whipped cream on top.

### Where is Angelina's?

There are six Angelina salons in Paris, two in Versailles, one in Lyon, another in Dubai, one each in Doha, Beijing and Qatar and fourteen in Japan. Their French flagship is located in the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli and is open daily from 07h30 (08h30 on weekends) till 19h00. ([angelina-paris.fr](http://angelina-paris.fr))

### Getting there

Forget short-haul flights and the delays and rigorous security inspections that come with it; door-to-door the entire Ashford to Paris journey took just on two hours with return fares starting at Euros 69. You only need to be at the station 30-minutes before departure, with no queues. Talk about no stress! Tickets are available from [eurostar.com](http://eurostar.com). 

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