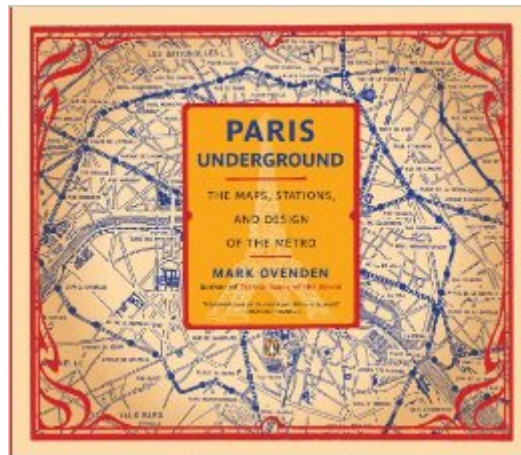


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Paris Underground: The Maps, Stations, And Design Of The Metro



Synopsis

The delectable follow up to *Transit Maps of the World* with a French twist. A word-of-mouth sensation, *Transit Maps of the World* garnered rave reviews and offered delicious eye-candy to the many who devoured its lusciously designed pages. In *Paris Underground*, Mark Ovenden turns his attention to the famous Paris transit system with its inimitable Art Nouveau inspired stations and Art Deco signage. More than one thousand maps, diagrams, and photographs—historical and current—along with fascinating factual tidbits and enthusiastic, informed commentary embellish this gorgeous cultural history of the Métro's design and construction. Transit buffs, Francophiles, and anyone who appreciates beautiful design are sure to make *Paris Underground* the season's must-have volume. [Watch a Video](#)

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is somewhat of a rarity for these days, a visual feast of visuals, graphics, diagrams, and, yes, content. Printed on a slightly larger than usual format, and laid out in full color on semi-glossy, heavyweight paper, the book will adorn nearly any table on which it is laid. Although the book could be of interest to most anyone simply by virtue of its gorgeous design and layout, the volume really becomes a delight for those who have used the incredible Paris Metro System anytime in the past decades. The book consists primarily of variants of metro maps printed over the last (and current) century, and although it includes some photos, it is really focused on the representational diagrams of the metro in all its incarnations over the years. Of particular emphasis is the design and stylistic decisions that were made on each iteration of the map to increase clarity, improve speed of use,

and also to represent the system in a pleasing and distinctive format. Some of these discussions, though written at a level of detail that will surprise non-cartographers, are fascinating explorations of the work and effort that goes into these kinds of maps, and this one in particular. The accompanying text also lays out in some detail the construction and extensions of the system built after Line 1, and serves to make this book something that can serve as a long-term exploration of the Metro. Pair this book up with Plotkin's *The Paris Metro: A Ticket to French History* (which has a more developed layout in text of each individual metro station across the entire 14 Lines), and you'll really have a grand exposition of the system.

Brilliantly evocative in its typography and layout starting with the first inside page continuing with chapter headers numbered with the pastel circles of the various Metro lines, Mark Ovendon's wonderful tribute to the history and evolution of a subway that combines engineering with French élan. The layout of the text itself is informative, visually sumptuous, filled with stylistic puns. There are huge numbers of maps, photographs and interesting graphics. This is art, politics, sociology and design rolled into one. On a personal note, on a recent trip to Paris, which sparked my interest in the book, I had the opportunity to travel on all of the Metro lines and 4 of the 6 RER lines. It did not take long to make sense of the system. I was relieved to learn that La République where I was based has the most complex series of passages between platforms, though IMHO the area around Les Halles comes close. Having read this book, on my next trip, I hope to be able to pay more attention to the architectural details of the stations and get out to some of the newer ones such as La Défense and Auber. The book also discusses stations that are no longer used and phantom stations that appeared on the maps, sometimes for decades, but were never built. What the book does not do is discuss rolling stock or gauges of track. It does observe that Metro cars are interchangeable between lines, implying the same gauge, though this is rarely done. The cars are themselves interesting, possibly unique, in that doors do not open automatically but require the passenger to either press a button or turn a lever. On the design side Ovendon only has the briefest mention of tickets which also changed over the years.

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