

Right Bank (about 20 minutes or half an hour from the rue St. Honoré to the rue Bayard)

To follow Maitre Dubon home from work (see Chapter 1, p. 20), begin on the rue St. Honoré, one block in from the rue de Rivoli, anywhere west of the Palais Royale and the Louvre. Admire the fancy boutiques as you walk and pick out an office building for Dubon before you get to the rue de Castiglione. (If you are doing some tourism, you can also cut north here to see the place Vendôme.)

The next block or so (rue Cambon or the rue St. Florentin) turn left and cut down to the rue de Rivoli where it meets the place de la Concorde. Dubon proceeded south down the eastern side of the square and then west across the bottom of it, noting the statues of the cities of France that stand at its four corners. The statues are still there – Strasbourg, once draped in black, was uncovered after Alsace and Lorraine were returned to France at the end of the First World War. But you are also going to encounter a huge amount of car traffic that did not exist in Dubon's day. Use the pedestrian crossings and look out for aggressive drivers coming up on your left.

As you reach the river, continue along the cours de la Reine, now a wide boulevard with several lanes of traffic and some green space along by the river. In Dubon's day it would have felt a lot more like open country, with riders on horseback taking the air and a huge open space where the Grand Palais and Petit Palais now stand. You can see them on your right; in 1897, the site was only being cleared for their construction for the Paris Exhibition of 1900. (The metro was also built for that occasion: if Dubon did not want to walk home, he could take a new electric tram that would have run along the quai des Tuileries and cours de la Reine, a route now replaced by the No. 1 metro line.)

Cross the bottom of the avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt and the place du Canada (France is always generous in honouring foreign friends) and you will have reached, on your right, the rue Bayard. The older buildings on the street would have been constructed around the time of Dubon's marriage in the late 1870s. It's a short street: you can quickly pick out a nice house for him.

If instead of this walk, you want to retrace Dubon's steps from his office to Madeleine's apartment (Chapter 6, p. 66) on the rue de Gramont in the 2nd, get out your map and plot a route from the rue St. Honoré, perhaps up the rue St. Roch, across the avenue de l'Opéra, up the rue Gaillon and eastwards along the rue du Quatre Septembre. Madeleine's street is now filled with sushi restaurants.