

My summer vacation: The Louvre Museum

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20190925-01

September 25, 2019



Raymond Chen

My wife and I spent an afternoon at the Louvre Museum with another family. (We left the kids with a third family.)

You should preorder the timed-entry tickets to save yourself a very long wait in line. As at the Eiffel Tower, the people checking tickets were not sticklers about the time window.

The Mona Lisa had been temporarily relocated to the top floor due to renovations. The line to see the Mona Lisa extended from Level 2, down the stairs to Level 1, to the ground floor, to the lower ground floor, to the basement, then *back out the entry gates* into the lobby.

That's right. You had to queue up to see the Mona Lisa even before you reached the turnstile and scanned your ticket.

My wife and I decided not to see the Mona Lisa. The other family, however, opted to go for it.

It turns out that the Louvre has a ton of art that isn't the Mona Lisa. (Who knew?) We looked at other art works, and then decided to visit the Angelina's inside the museum for some of their famous hot chocolate. On our way to Angelina's we found our path blocked by a room with a staff member and a "no entry" sign. I asked the staff member how to get to the coffee shop. She explained that due to the relocation of the Mona Lisa, this particular room is part of the exit path for people who have finished looking at the famous painting.

She then asked, "Only two of you?"

I confirmed that there were only two of us.

She said, "Okay, I'll let you through. Go down this hall, then take the first left. Go past the staircase, and it's on your left."

She added, "And, you know, you could just sneak into the Mona Lisa line if you wanted."

I assured her that we wouldn't.

"You are good people," she replied.

We enjoyed our beverages and struck up a conversation with a woman at the table next to us. She was enjoying a drink and relaxing while her family stood in the Mona Lisa line.

As we finished up, her family arrived. She asked them, “Was it worth the wait?”

Their reply: “Totally not worth it.”

When we left the museum, the other family was still in line to see the Mona Lisa. Afterward, they sent us a text message. “Not worth it.”

Bonus chatter: The huge line to see the Mona Lisa does mean that if you are interested in decorative arts, you have the entire wing almost to yourself. It so happens that I’m interested in decorative arts.

In the decorative arts section, there was a platter that claimed to depict a naval battle. It looked like a jumble of shapes. But we stayed with it, and eventually the shapes turned into soldiers and swords, rendered with remarkable detail. It was like a Magic Eye moment where patience yields rewards. You can’t do that when you get 10 seconds to look at a painting.

Bonus bonus chatter: The Napoleon Apartments are also a great place to visit instead of standing in the Mona Lisa line.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

