



market and head to the chic left-bank Jardin du Luxembourg. Or opt for the bohemian Parc des Buttes Chaumont to stay away from the throngs of tourists. A bottle of wine or cider, a *baguette de tradition*, a mix of charcuterie (just ask the vendor and he'll put something delicious together), a wedge of smelly Brie de Melun and a few perfectly ripe Pêche de Vigne make for an excellent introduction.

When you visit a market, you must forget about time. Nobody ever seems to be in a hurry, and everybody always seems to buy more food than their rickety caddies can handle. Why aren't they in a hurry? Because the *vendeur* needs all the information he can get to fully understand how you intend to use your potatoes (*purée* or *poêlée*?) or when you plan on consuming the purple figs. This way, he can make you the perfect little *panier* (since seldom do vendors let you touch their produce), based on questions like:

*Gros ou petit?* (Big or small?)

*Mûr ou pas trop mûr?* (Ripe or not very?)

*Pour combien de personnes?* (For how many people?)

Let's say you're buying apples and pears. You're going to be instructed not to eat the pears for at least another two days because they were harvested only last night and need to ripen. You *always* comply. Buying apples is also a big decision – this one is *très croquante* (very crisp) or that one is *un peu acidulée* (a little acidic) or the other one is *parfaite* for a tart.

The meat stand will leave you pondering your purchases the most. Should you buy the *terrine de canard* or the *rillettes de porc* to smear on your baguette during aperitif hour in the evening? Or should you buy the massive garlic-smoked *saucisson* instead? Buying a fat, bloody piece of *onglet de bœuf* is a no-brainer.

For a bottle of red wine to go with that onglet, you can pop into a shop marked "cave à vin" – you shouldn't have trouble finding one because much like the markets, they are ubiquitous.

If you're the type who likes to bring home local flavours in your suitcase, then *saucisson sec*, *piment d'espelette*, *fleur de sel*, vacuum-packed *pâté* and jars of Christine Ferber jam are just what you need. Find these dry goods at La Grande Epicerie.

So, on your visit to Paris this August, skip the queues of the Louvre in favour of the queue for a *poulet rôti* (roast chicken). Rent an apartment with a kitchen instead of staying at a fancy hotel. And swap your camera bag for a straw-shopping basket. You can't go wrong. *Bonne dégustation!* 🍷

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### PAIN AU CHOCOLAT PIT STOPS

Forget all the lofty claims of the list of bests out there – everyone knows that the best pain au chocolat in Paris is the one that's still warm in your hands and redolent of Charentes butter, eaten as you walk the hilly, cobbled paths of Montmartre in the shadow of the Sacré-Coeur. Still, if you're in any of these neighbourhoods, these are the pit stops worth making

- ★ Au Levain d'Antan, 6 Rue des Abbesses
- ★ Gontran Cherrier, 22 Rue Caulaincourt
- ★ Du Pain et des Idées, 34 Rue Yves Toudic
- ★ Maison Landemaine, 4 Rue du Poteau

### MARCHÉ ON!

Fresh ingredients are necessary for any good meal, no matter how simple. Pick yours up at these standout markets

- ★ *Marché Place des Fêtes*
- ★ *Marché Président Wilson* (Joël Thiébault is a *maraicher* – someone who grows the produce he sells – worth seeking out)
- ★ *Marché d'Aligre*
- ★ *Marché Convention*

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## CHEF'S TABLE

BY SHAHEEN PEERBHAI

### AN OUTDOOR FOOD MARKET IN PARIS IS A BEAUTIFUL THING

“In France, cooking is a serious art form and a national sport,” wrote Julia Child. The presence of over 90 outdoor food markets in the capital alone testifies to this national obsession. Chance upon them, ask a local for the nearest one, or search for a “*marché*” on paris.fr.

My first proper introduction to an outdoor food market was when I was studying French cuisine at Le Cordon Bleu culinary school. The students were guided through *Marché Saint Pierre* in the 18th Arrondissement, where the chef introduced us to the glorious foods of France: oysters, foie gras, cheese and charcuterie, Garigette strawberries and *crostnes*. He quizzed us on meat cuts and acquainted us with goat cheese producers. We returned to school with a mixed bag of things to taste – aspic-coated *terrines*, jars of *cassoulet* and giant goose eggs, among others. Should you wish to indulge in something similar, the school offers day-long market courses for visitors.

If you prefer to simply saunter through a market to soak in the atmosphere, then pack yourself a little picnic basket from the