

CHRONOLOGY

ANTIQUITY

5th century

At the time there was a Paris market called the "Palu" (or Palud) market, established on Ile de la Cité. It was transferred to the right bank of the Seine, to Place de Grève (now Hôtel de Ville), which was safer when the Seine flooded.

MIDDLE AGES

1135

Louis VI (the Fat) bought from the bishop of Paris some marshlands outside the city at a place called "Les Champeaux", at the junction of the roads leading to the rich provinces of the North and the coast (now Rue Saint Denis and Rue Montmartre).

1441

Louis VII, the king who protected tradesmen against church clerics, allowed the bourgeois of Paris to set up at Les Champeaux.

1181

Philippe Auguste transferred the "Saint Lazare" fair. The merchants took over the marshes and market gardeners started cultivating the surrounding land.

1183

Philippe Auguste had two wooden buildings built to house the trading activities. From then on, this covered market was named "Les Halles" by Parisians. In those days, it was still a market that essentially traded in non food products.

1190

Philippe Auguste had a compound build that integrated the market into the city, which was to last some 780 years. The site now closed up at night. The merchants contributed to the cost by a rental fee and a tax on sales.

Mid 13th century

Louis IX had three new buildings built, including one for auctioning fresh fish. Les Halles became the largest market of the capital. It opened up to provincial merchants (Picardie, Champagne and Flandres in particular). It was by now a food market providing a wholesale function to supply Paris.

1284

Philippe le Hardi built several buildings for the "little people", so they could then start trading.

1368

The Market was open three days a week.

End of 14th century

Despite the royal decrees forcing merchants to set up at Les Halles, the market went into a decline in favour of trading through boutiques, set up in the city to avoid taxes.

MODERN ERA

1543

1st Les Halles reform

François I^{er} had the existing buildings pulled down and rebuilt new ones using an ordered plan. Around Les Halles various boutique houses were built to serve as storerooms and housing for merchants. They were called the "Piliers des Halles". The works began under **François I^{er}**, continued under **Henri II** and were completed in the reign of **Henri III**.

Previously weekly, the market now operated every day. A bread market and a cheese, egg and butter market were opened. By now, the Les Halles market only dealt in foodstuffs.

1720

To make some space, the plant market was moved to the Quai de la Mégisserie; only cut flowers remained at Les Halles. The wheat market was moved and built on its final location; it became the commodity exchange.

1785

The Cimetière des Innocents cemetery was moved south of Paris, creating space for the herb and vegetables market (large vegetables, garlic, onions, bay leaves).

CONTEMPORARY ERA

1811

Napoleon I, out of concern for "urban health", as well as the capital's food supplies, expressed the wish to reorganize this space to make it a central Paris location, extending from the wheat market up to the Innocents market.

The reconstruction of Les Halles was included in the plan to refurbish the city. The works should have been completed but political events brought this plan to premature halt.

1818

The administration of the Hospices was awarded the right to build three wooden sheds to house meat products (wholesale cooked meats, poultry, game, tripe). This was the start of the "Prouvaires" market, shortly joined by the potato market known as the "Légat" market.

1848

Rambuteau, the Prefect of the Seine, created a Les Halles Commission, appointed to decide whether to leave Les Halles in the existing location or move it. The plan by architects **Victor Baltard** and **Félix Callet** proposing a redevelopment was adopted.

1853

The first building was devoted to meat sales. This stone building proved heavy, massive, poorly adapted to sales. It was named the "Fort des Halles". On 3rd June 1853, **Louis Napoleon Bonaparte** suspended the works. The roofing for the Innocents market was abandoned and the market was destroyed.

Second half of 1853

Under the iron fist of Baron **Hausmann**, **Victor Baltard** prepared a second plan with a completely metal framework; it was an engineer's plan rather than an architect's plan. Between 1853 and 1870, ten pavilions were built, six on the east and four on the west, divided by an aisle under a glass roof.

1900

17,000 tons of fruit and vegetables transited through Les Halles, 678,000 tons in 1949.

1925 and 1929

The Paris city council refused to split up the market and move it to the outskirts of Paris.

1943

During the German occupation, the national Resistance committee, chaired by Georges Bidault, considered moving Les Halles.

1948

The idea was again raised under the term "market-stations". The idea was to move Les Halles to just outside Paris. The economic council rejected this idea, "for general reasons", requiring a central location.

1953

Traffic and access problems, poor hygiene and working conditions, the growth of sales outside of the pavilions and the growing number of intermediaries, rendered everything more complex and ultimately contributed to the sharp rise in distribution costs.

Moreover, by 1950, trade channels were shorter, while imports were growing, often using other channels and other locations. The central Les Halles markets no longer fulfilled their role of offering fair confrontation between supply and demand.

An interdepartmental committee therefore decided to build a network of so-called public interest markets aimed at simplifying transactions and assuring the transparency of commercial operations. The sharing of data was supposed to result in the emergence of a virtual national wholesale market.

The process started in the provinces, where the old markets were moved slightly closer to the outskirts, while following strict criteria (rail link, enclosed market, internal rules type, knowledge of deliveries and prices).

Paris would follow this schema.

6 January 1959: Decree No. 59-44

The Prime Minister, **Michel Debré**, confirmed the transfer of Les Halles.

December 1959

Choice of site - **Rungis**.

1961

Libert Bou appointed as commissioner in charge of developing the public interest market for the Paris region.

1962

Semmaris created

1969

The Baltard pavilions emptied. Their demolition began in 1971 despite a torrent of protests.

Night of 27 to 28 February 1969

Flowers moved

Night of 28 February to 1st March 1969

Last market day for Les Halles in Paris.

The move began at dawn and mobilized 20,000 people, 1,000 wholesale companies, 10,000 cubic metres of equipment, 5,000 tons of goods and 1,500 lorries.

3 March 1969

Official opening of Rungis Market.