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I have a question...

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Three Paris Plazas

Paris restaurants in general have terraces, plants and views – inside or out.

Some Paris plazas on the other hand have an added attraction, the feel of a small village.

Plazas are found everywhere in Paris. You have seen them in the movies. Maybe you have sat on one of the green benches next to a Wallace Fountain just because it is there.

A bit isolated from heavy car traffic, but still lively, three plazas in particular are worth a visit.

One has daily, permanent markets, regulars at its café, is close to the neighborhood city hall and at the foot of a famous Montmartre landmark.

Another lies close to Montmartre away from the street noise where the children play and passersby sit and watch others pass by.

The third was once a convent, then a covered market. Now merchants set up their stalls selling regional goods around Christmas time and at least seven restaurants surround the plaza.

Place Charles Bernard
The weekly magazine "Zurban" arrives in my mailbox every Wednesday. One week they had a little note about Place Charles Bernard in the 18th arrondissement. They wrote about a certain café and a certain patron with white hair who comes by every day with her dogs. They wrote about the daily market and the general neighborhood activity.

We went in search of this area down the street from the Mairie (city hall) and the OTHER side of Montmartre. When I saw the neighborhood I realized it was a rarity and that it could all disappear tomorrow.... That is what was so fantastic about this small area; it is what used to be all over Paris!

At Place Charles Bernard take a beer at le Reinitas (18 rue du Poteau) and watch everyone do their daily marketing, buy their papers and greet each other. If you plan on staying in the area and want to prepare a picnic, this is a great place to buy your roasted quail (caille) or chicken, cheese, veggies, fish, whatever.

Location, location
Metro Jules Joffrin – 18th arrondissement – This neighborhood is located between rue Ordener, rue du Poteau and rue Sainte-Isaure.

Origin of the name
Charles Jean Bernard (1856-1927) was a deputy in the mayor's office (18th arrondissement).

Place Gustave Toudouze
This little community gathering point featuring the green bench and the Wallace fountain is in the 9th arrondissement. This neighborhood has plenty of little restaurants and homes; around the corner is the shadow of Sacre Cœur.

While waiting for the Katoori restaurant to open, we sat next store at the tea salon sipping a beer and watched as one of the wait staff came out and began to bring Katoori to life, laying out the tablecloths, napkins, cutlery, etc.

Katoori (4, Place Gustave Toudouze, rue Henri-Monnier) is a bring your own bottle restaurant (see my " Restaurant" section for a writeup).

We made our reservation and went to the Shopi grocery store to buy our sparking wine (Blanquette de Limoux Brut - Jean Lafon for example). Click on the map to locate the Shopi.

People from the neighborhood were returning home from work, the streetlights and restaurant lights were brightening up the evening, a bus passed once in a while, but the area was relatively traffic free.

Location, location
Metro Saint-Georges, 9th arrondissement, rue Clauzel and rue Henri Monnier.

Origin of the name
Gustave Toudouze (1847-1904), romantic and dramatic author and journalist.

Place du Marché Sainte Catherine
This is one of the areas you can't help but want to pass through. It is so small, warm and inviting. Surrounded by a variety of restaurants, Jewish, Korean, traditional French, café style, and one that has food and magic shows for adults and children.

While searching for information about this area I linked to one of the restaurants on the plaza, the Pitchi Poï. All along I thought it was a Russian restaurant! It's a family-run Jewish restaurant featuring Yiddishland cuisine.

What is Yiddishland cuisine? Food ideas come from Strasbourg to Vladivostok, Warsaw, Moscow, Budapest, Bucharest, Kiev, Odessa, Boukhara and Samarkand, etc. Add to that the cuisine from the other side of the Mediterranean and French savoir faire . See their entertaining website at Pitchi Poï . The site is in English and French.

Location, location

Metro Saint-Paul; located in the 4th arrondissement, in the Marais between rue d'Ormesson and rue de Jarente.

Origin of the name

Sainte-Catherine-du Val-des-Écoliers was a convent. Although the plaza itself dates from 1783, the layout is typical of the Middle Ages. A fountain is at the end of the Impasse de la Poissonnerie.

The convent was razed in the 18th century and replaced in 1777 by the first Parisian covered market.

At this time, the Impasse de la Poissonerie (around the corner) was set up to be a fish market. The fountain on the dead end street was designed and constructed in 1783 by Caron (www.insecula.com) for more information).

By the 1930s this market was in disrepair and torn down.

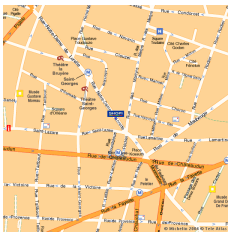
Recommended map book

Paris Pratique par arrondissement (guidebooks) – you can find it at kiosks and bookstores in Paris.

Lady and her dogs as they left the café

Bar/café le Reinitas Place Charles Bernard

Place Gustave Toudouze and the restaurant Katoori



Place Gustave Toudouze and where to find the Shopi grocery store for wine and beer