



The World's Largest Flea Market

The history of the Flea Market traces back several centuries. It is inseparable from the history of the rag-and-bone men, who were to be found in the shadow of the so-called *fortifs*, or fortifications surrounding Paris.

Known variously as *chiffonniers* (ragmen), *biffins* (rag-and-bone men), *chiftires*, *crocheteurs* (picklocks, housebreakers) or — more poetically — *pêcheurs de lune* (moonlight fishermen), they traveled through the city by night, searching for old objects that had been thrown out with the rubbish, which they would then resell at the local markets.

flea [fli:] n блоха

rag-and-bone man [rægən' bəunmæn] n тряпичник, старьевщик

ragman (the same)

picklock [ˈpɪklɒk] n взломщик

housebreaker взломщик, громила



These traders soon decided to band together, and it was not long before the people of Paris gathered to gaze in wonder at the displays of miscellaneous objects spread out on the ground just beyond the gate at Clignancourt. Over time, the number of curious visitors steadily grew, as did the number of traders. It became fashionable, in fact, for a genteel population of collectors in their Sunday best to come and hunt for bargains among the bric-a-brac. The Flea Market was born!



miscellaneous [ˈmɪsəˈleɪniəs] а смешанный, разнообразный;разносторонний
genteel [dʒenˈti:l] а модный, изящный, элегантный
bargain [ˈbɑ:ɡɪn] n (торговая) сделка; выгодная покупка; дешево купленная вещь; v торговаться



The Paris Saint-Ouen Flea Market celebrated its centenary in 1985. Hosting 2500 dealers and covering more than 17 acres (7 hectares), it is the world's largest antiques market. Every weekend, between 120,000 and 150,000 visitors from the world over come in the hopes of finding a rare and treasured object. The market has become one of the highlights of Paris for locals and tourists alike, looking for particular items or simply delighting in a stroll through the massive complex of vendors.

vendor [ˈvendɔː] n юр. продавец, (фирма-)поставщик
stroll [strɔʊl] n прогулка v прогуливаться, бродить



“The Paris Flea Market, officially known as Les Puces de Saint-Ouen, is equal parts insane, awesome and totally mystifying. It’s a universe unto itself. You could furnish every room in your home and fill every drawer with purchases from Les Puces (“The Fleas”). You could also happily lose yourself wandering the alleyways for days and still not see every stall. It’s *enormous*.”

insane [ɪnˈseɪn] а разг. безумный

furnish [ˈfɜːnɪʃ] v *обставлять (мебелью), меблировать*

drawer [dɹɔː] n (выдвижной) ящик (стола, комода)

purchase [ˈpɜːtʃəs] n покупка



“You name it, this place has it: furniture, pictures, new and second-hand clothes — all at rock-bottom prices (especially if you're adept at haggling). There's a jovial fairground atmosphere, with the aroma of food wafting in the air and people crowding round the stalls, hoping to pick up a 1970s leather jacket or rare Louis XV chest of drawers. Make sure to bring cash, as stallholders seldom accept credit cards and the nearest available ATM always has a line.”

rock-bottom [ˈrɒkˈbɒtəm] а очень низкий (о ценах)

haggle [ˈhæɡl] v торговаться (about, over — о)

jovial [ˈdʒəʊvɪəl] а весёлый; общительный

fairground [ˈfeəgraʊnd] n ярмарочная площадь

ATM (также: cash machine) n банкомат (automated teller machine)



What do people seek at flea markets? The most popular purchases include furniture, kitchen appliances, clothes and accessories, and popular collector's items, such as old paintings, vinyl records, coins, silver and tableware.



















