

Paris 2011 Journal

Saturday March 12 – Market Day. There are two outdoor markets near our apartment, one near forum Les Halles in the Place St. Eustache and one at Place Baudoyer. Google maps timed each one as 12 minutes walk. As it turned out we started by walking to the nearest Post Office to mail a few letters and post cards. I saw it when I was returning on Friday from my cello lesson. It is at rue Pastourelle and rue des Archives.

The Post Office is self-service so we had to remember how to figure out how to use the machine to weigh the letter, enter which category and location and then put in coins to pay the required postage. We ended up asking a clerk for help when we got stuck. It turned out we missed a step. In the future, it will be simple and quick. Paying for postage with coins is a good way to get rid of the copper pennies, 2- and 5-cent coins, although we are limited to 20 coins per purchase. Those pennies accumulate quickly.

Since we were on rue des Archives, the closest market was straight south to rue de Rivoli and left to Place Baudoyer. The day was warm and bright and the place is large enough for maneuvering room. We needed a lot of things.

We toured to see all of the stalls (about 20) before beginning to load up our “caddy” (we used to call it a “pousette” but that is for babies!) We began with cheese.



Vegetables were next, although we didn't use this particular vendor.



Not shown here is a stall at the entry that had prepared hot food – beef Bourguignon, paella, choucroute – as well as sausages, deli meats and terrines. We bought beef Bourguignon and paella for dinners and two terrines. We picked up some potatoes roasted with onions and chicken. The big wok at the left holds the potatoes we bought.



As we left with our goods packed in our grocery cart and in the big cloth bag, I took a photo of the BHV, which is a huge department store that was recommended to us by our rental agent Gerald. We'll have to go in and explore it one of these days. I thought the red banners advertising a special 6-Day Sale were interesting.



As we walked back to our apartment we passed several stores selling oriental carpets. Then we came on an open door where a special exhibition was being held. We stepped in from the busy street and came into a tranquil courtyard with beautiful rugs displayed on the walls. This is the Cloister Billettes. I had seen the name and wondered about it because Billettes means tickets and that combination puzzled me. I'm sure there is some historic significance to it. Maybe Barbara can tell me.



We dropped our goods off at the apartment then walked the 1 ½ blocks to the Monoprix to finish our shopping. There was no wine or water at the market.

After lunch we shopped the Internet for a concert and decided on the free one at St. Elisabeth de Hongrie on rue de Temple. It is quite a historic church and is at the top of rue de Temple near where the Templars had their enclosure. It was more than a building. There were gardens and farms and buildings where they sheltered people, including a king during an uprising. It no longer exists.

We arrived 45 minutes early for the concert and saw that we had time before procuring a seat so we wandered. Just north of the church is the Place de la Republic where there was a parade in progress. We watched and read the banners. They were demonstrating to protest high rents, bad living conditions and demanding better standards and laws protecting tenants. There were groups from other cities marching by holding banners stating their city and their demands. In the news there recently have been cases where apartment buildings burned, killing residents but also revealing substandard conditions – peeling paint, leaking roofs, non-functioning sanitary facilities.

The concert was quite stunning. The group was “La Cantate des Muses” playing Handel, Popera, and Bach on ancient instruments (except the electronic keyboard that was the organ). The instrumentalists were superb as was the mezzo soprano. The entry was free with a collection at the end. Oboe, bassoon, cello, 2 violins and a viola, organ and mezzo soprano made up the group. They listed a concert schedule of 6 concerts around Paris. We will certainly make it a point to hear them again.

After the concert we crossed the street to check out a Monoprix store. It is a large one with some clothing and a large cosmetics section. It isn't as large as the one near the Gare Montparnasse but it is much larger than the one near our apartment.

We were in time for my 6 p.m. Skype appointment with Leslie and Ava. I was delighted that Ava was able to recognize me on the screen this time. Ava is now 19 months old. She turned to Leslie and said Nana? So we knew that she knew it was me. Remarkable. Ernie and I had face time with the two. Ava was kind of limp so she stayed in Leslie's arm through most of the ½ hour conversation. This surprised me since she is at a very active age. She is probably feeling the effects of a recent measles vaccination.

For dinner I warmed up the potatoes and the beef Bourguignon and boiled the Brussels sprouts. We had the grand mere terrine as the first plate (in France the first course is called the “entrée”).