

PRESS RELEASE



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Marseille will welcome the Olympic flame as it begins its journey through France



Please download here the visuals illustrating the arrival of the Flame in Marseille:
<https://sharing.oodrive.com/share-access/sharings/s5OCrVsi.S5Lk5f59#/filer/share-access/4XN5qDEQAY4>

Please download here the videos of the Belém: <https://admin-mediatheque.paris2024.org/bm50hn10j>
PW: BELEM

In spring 2024, the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch Relay, sponsored by Coca-Cola and the BPCE group, with its two major banking networks Banque Populaire and Caisse d'Épargne, will begin its journey through France starting in Marseille, host city of the sailing and football competitions. After being lit at the site of the ancient Olympic Games in Greece, Olympia it will then travel to Athens. From Athens, the Olympic flame will be carried to Marseille aboard the Belem, a majestic three-masted tall ship belonging to the Caisse d'Épargne Belem foundation. With close historical links to Greece, Marseille promises to welcome the Olympic flame with great fanfare as it embarks on its journey across France. A tradition on which Paris 2024 will put its own spin.

Olympic Torch Relay, the first unmissable highlight of the Olympic Games

The Olympic Torch Relay is a key tradition of the Olympic Games, symbolising peace, unity and friendship between people. Before each edition of the Games, the flame lighting ceremony takes place at the temple of Hera in Olympia, Greece, recognising the ancient Olympic Games. The sacred flame is lit by the sun's rays and is then carried by the torch. From Olympia, numerous torchbearers selected for the honour will take turns to carry the torch first to Athens and then on its journey from

Marseille. At the end of its journey, the Olympic flame will light the cauldron during the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, which will then be declared open.

From Athens to Marseille, a modern epic reflecting the spirit of Paris 2024

In spring 2024, **Marseille will have the honour and good fortune to be the first city to welcome the Olympic flame on French soil.** The flame will arrive at the **Old Port of Marseille, where the Torch Relay will begin,** before travelling across the country over a period of several weeks and finishing its journey in Paris. **The Belem, a majestic three-masted ship, will carry the flame across the Mediterranean Sea** from Athens to Marseille, two cities closely connected by a shared history.

Supported by the BPCE group, Paris 2024 partner and Torch Relay sponsor, the voyage across the Mediterranean will be reminiscent of **a true Homeric epic, taking the flame from the home of the Ancient Games to the country of light. A highly symbolic and meaningful journey of sport for Paris 2024** which, along with its partners, is committed to bringing the French people together to celebrate the energy, values and benefits of sport.

After being welcomed to the French coastline by an armada of boats, the Belem will moor, marking the start of **a huge popular festival on the city's waterfront, a unique celebration made possible by Coca-Cola, Paris 2024 partner and Torch Relay sponsor, associated with the city and local actors.** A partner of the Olympic Games since 1928 and of the Torch Relay since 1992, Coca-Cola will organise a series of festive events aimed at the masses, and at young people in particular. Coca-Cola is firmly committed to young people, helping them, through charitable initiatives, to access sporting, social and professional opportunities on a daily basis.

Marseille, a deeply symbolic city to welcome the Olympic flame

For Paris 2024, **Marseille (and, more broadly, Bouches-du-Rhône and Southern France Region) was an obvious choice as the Olympic flame's first port of call on French soil.**

Historically, the cities of Athens and Marseille are inextricably linked by their ancient past and their influence on the Mediterranean region. Founded 2,600 years ago, Marseille is both a former Greek colony (Massalia) and the oldest city in France. **Marseille was also an obvious choice on account of its centuries-old sporting culture.**

Having been fully involved in the Paris 2024 project from the very start, Marseille will be a key stakeholder during the Games, with its two competition venues: the Marseille Stadium, which will stage football matches, and the Marina, where the sailing events will take place. Throughout the Games, the city's port will also be the home of the Maxi Banque Populaire XI, an exceptional yacht designed for amazing adventures that will draw the admiration of both sailing enthusiasts and passers-by. During the summer of 2024, Marseille will be hosting numerous celebratory events for everyone to enjoy, ensuring this global event is a great celebration.

Full route to be unveiled in May 2023

Following the Olympic flame's arrival, Marseille will host the first stage of the Olympic Torch Relay, the start of an epic nationwide journey that will last several weeks and mark the beginning of France's Olympic Games celebrations. **Full details of the Torch Relay route will be revealed in May 2023.**

Tony Estanguet, President, Paris 2024 *“Paris 2024 chose the city of Marseille for many reasons, some historical, some symbolic, some geographical... The key role that sport occupies in the city and in the hearts of its residents was a crucial factor, as was the city’s close involvement in the Paris 2024 project, including its hosting of sailing and football events. We are especially delighted to see the Olympic flame in Marseille because this is a city that reflects the image of the Games: popular, festive, warm and multi-cultural. In spring 2024, it’s not just the flame that will arrive in Marseille: the Games themselves will be returning to France, 100 years after the last summer edition!”*

Benoît Payan, Mayor of Marseille: *“It is a joy for the city of Marseille to be the first phase of the prologue of the Olympic flame and to celebrate with the world its arrival in France. Welcoming this big celebration will be the opportunity for the people of Marseille to gather, to vibrate, and to share a big popular event on the Vieux Port. This global event will be allowing everyone to share a joyful moment of conviviality and solidarity.”*

Renaud Muselier, President of the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Deputy President of the Regions of France: *“Something historic is taking place here in our region. We will show the whole world that Southern France is a fitting stage for the Games. Let us proudly welcome the Olympic flame, which will light up the iconic landmarks of our region before the sailing and football begin. This is what Southern France is all about!”*

Martine Vassal President of the Bouches-du-Rhône Departmental Council and President of the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis: *“I am particularly proud and happy to welcome the Olympic flame, which will travel throughout the Bouches-du-Rhône region after Marseille. The Department decided in early 2022 to be part of the Torch Relay, because it is an amazing opportunity to highlight the assets of our beautiful Provence and to organise, along its route, a great popular celebration for all inhabitants around the values of sport! The Bouches-du-Rhône department and the Aix-Marseille-Provence metropolis have already attracted numerous French and international athletes who have come to train for the 2024 Olympic Games.”*

Claire Revenu, General Director for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Coca-Cola France: *“We are delighted to be supporting the city of Marseille as official sponsor of the Olympic Torch Relay. This event is a wonderful symbol of solidarity, inclusion and teamwork, values that are found in Coca-Cola’s DNA. Coca-Cola shares Paris 2024’s spirit of openness and works practically with its partner charity, Sport dans la Ville, to help thousands of young people to access the sporting, social and professional opportunities they need to reach their full potential and to enjoy the unique experience of the Olympic Torch Relay.”*

Benoît Gausseron, Olympic and Paralympic Games Director, BPCE group: *“The BPCE group and its two main networks, Banque Populaire and Caisse d’Epargne, are proud to sponsor the Olympic Torch Relay, which will spread the excitement of the Olympic Games in all parts of France. This Torch Relay will provide a chance to celebrate the richness and diversity of our regions. Banque Populaire Méditerranée and Caisse d’Epargne CEPAC will, together with their customers, shareholders, employees and members of the public, make every possible effort to contribute to the success of this exceptional event in Marseille.”*

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