

## Möllans matmarknad (Mmm) 1906-2026

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*Möllans matmarknad* turns 120 in 2026. Since 1906 the market at Möllevångstorget has been a living part of Malmö's everyday life. A place for food, culture, and encounters. But the future might not look so bright.

Read more at [mmm.korax.se](http://mmm.korax.se)



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Four women selling vegetables at a stand at Mmm in 1906.

Why was Mmm created? «

The market at Möllevångstorget emerged in the early 1900s as Malmö rapidly expanded beyond its historic city center. Industrialisation and population growth created an urgent need for accessible, affordable food close to where people lived and worked. It was established as a practical solution: a regulated public space where farmers and small-scale traders could sell fresh produce directly to residents. The square became part of the city's everyday infrastructure, a place shaped by necessity rather than spectacle. »

# 1) Foundations & Everyday Life

**1906-1930** Between 1906 and 1930, the market at Möllevångstorget took shape as a direct response to a rapidly changing city. Malmö was expanding quickly at the turn of the century, driven by industrialisation, new housing developments, and a growing working population. As the city stretched beyond its historic core, access to affordable, fresh food became a practical concern rather than a luxury.

The establishment of torghandel on the square was rooted in necessity. It provided a regulated public space where farmers and small-scale traders could sell produce directly to residents, shortening the distance between production and consumption. For many households, the market was not an occasional destination but part of everyday life; a place where food was bought in small quantities, prices were negotiated, and relationships formed over time. In a city that felt like it was ever expanding, having something the reminded the people about Malmö still being a community was welcome.

During these early decades, the market developed alongside the surrounding neighbourhood. Möllevången was shaped by dense housing, limited private space, and a strong reliance on shared urban infrastructure. The square functioned as an extension of domestic life: a place to provision the household, exchange news, and maintain social ties. The rhythms of the market followed the rhythms of the city itself, seasonal harvests, work schedules, and shifting economic conditions.

At the same time, torghandel was never without challenges. Hygiene, food safety, and order were growing concerns in early twentieth-century cities, and markets were subject to increasing regulation. Authorities introduced rules governing what could be sold, where stalls could be placed, and how goods were handled. While these measures aimed to improve public health and fairness, they also placed new demands on vendors, who had to adapt to stricter oversight and changing expectations.

Economic fluctuations during the period also left their mark. Although the years before the First World War brought growth and optimism, the war and its aftermath created uncertainty. Supply shortages, rising prices, and shifting trade conditions affected both sellers and buyers. Yet the market persisted, precisely because it offered flexibility. Small-scale trade allowed vendors to adjust quickly, and direct sales helped maintain access to food even in unstable times.

By 1930, torghandel at Möllevångstorget was firmly embedded in Malmö's urban fabric. It had evolved from a functional solution into a social institution; shaped by regulation, challenged by economic change, but sustained by everyday use. The foundations laid during these early decades would continue to define the market's role in the city for generations to come.

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A young boy is seen looking at the camera, which captures the market in 1929.

## 2) Endurance & Care

**1930-1960** Between 1930 and 1960, torghandel at Möllevångstorget was shaped less by expansion than by endurance. These decades were marked by global instability, economic strain, and war, all of which left clear traces in everyday urban life. For the market, this was a period defined by continuity under pressure rather than growth.

The economic depression of the 1930s reduced purchasing power for many households, increasing reliance on affordable, local food. Small-scale trade became essential, and the market continued to function as a place where necessities could be accessed in modest quantities. Torghandel offered a degree of flexibility that larger commercial structures could not, allowing both vendors and customers to adapt to changing circumstances.

During the Second World War, Sweden's neutrality did not shield everyday life from disruption. Rationing, supply shortages, and strict regulation affected what could be sold and in what quantities. Markets were closely monitored, and traders operated within tight constraints. Despite these limitations, the square remained active. Direct exchange and local sourcing made torghandel a resilient part of the city's food system during a time when imports were uncertain and resources scarce.

After the war, Malmö entered a period of reconstruction and gradual modernization. Living standards improved, but habits formed during years of restraint did not disappear overnight. The market continued to serve as a reliable point of access to fresh produce, particularly for working-class households. At the same time, public expectations around hygiene, order, and regulation increased, leading to further formalization of market practices.

Throughout these decades, the social role of the square remained strong. The market was not only a place of trade but a stable presence in a changing world. A familiar routine amid uncertainty.

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When the statue *Arbetets ära* by Axel Ebbe is finished in 1930, Malmö begins to take the shape that we know today.

1906

1930

1960

2026





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Even with all the new commodities of 1973, Mmm is still sprawling with life.

How did  
Mmm keep  
prospering?

« Despite growing competition from supermarkets, chain stores, and new forms of retail, torghandel at Möllevångstorget remained a popular and relevant part of everyday life throughout much of the twentieth century. While food shopping became increasingly standardized and centralized, the market continued to offer something different: direct exchange, flexibility, and personal relationships. Its appeal was simply not based on convenience alone »

### 3) Movement & Exchange

**1960-1980** Between 1960 and 1980, torghandel at Möllevångstorget entered a period of significant transition. These decades were marked by rapid social change, economic growth, and increased mobility, both within Sweden and across its borders. The market remained active, but its role within the city began to shift as new patterns of consumption and urban life emerged.

Post-war prosperity transformed everyday habits. Supermarkets, refrigerated transport, and centralized distribution made food more readily available in fixed retail environments. For many households, shopping became faster and more standardized. As a result, torghandel gradually lost its position as the primary source of daily provisions, especially among younger generations drawn to the convenience of modern retail.

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At the same time, Möllevångstorget became increasingly shaped by migration. New residents brought different food traditions, products, and ways of trading, subtly altering the character of the market. What it lost in scale, it gained in diversity. The square became a place where different cultures intersected, where goods and languages mixed, and where the market reflected a broader, more international Malmö.

This period also introduced new pressures. Regulations around hygiene, permits, and taxation became more standardized, aligning markets with the expectations placed on other forms of commerce. While these measures aimed to ensure fairness and safety, they also reduced the informal flexibility that had long defined torghandel. For some vendors, adapting to these requirements proved difficult.

Despite these challenges, the market continued to function as a social space. Even as its economic centrality diminished, its cultural importance remained. The square offered encounters that could not be replicated indoors: negotiation, familiarity, and the presence of people rather



Even as the modern Malmö takes it shape, people are still doing their easter shopping at Mmm.

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than systems. Torghandel persisted not because it was the most efficient form of trade, but because it maintained a human scale within an increasingly automated city.

By 1980, torghandel at Möllevångstorget was no longer the backbone of everyday food supply, but it had become something else: a marker of local identity, shaped by movement, exchange, and adaptation. The foundations laid during this period would continue to influence how the market was perceived – not only as a place of trade, but as a living expression of the city itself.

## 4) Pressure & Change

**1980-2000** Between 1980 and 2000, torghandel at Möllevångstorget entered a phase defined by contrast. On one hand, the market became increasingly associated with cultural diversity and local identity; on the other, its economic position grew more fragile within a rapidly changing retail landscape.

These decades saw intensified globalization and the continued expansion of large-scale food retailers. Supermarkets, discount chains, and imported goods reshaped consumer expectations around price, convenience, and availability. For many residents, everyday shopping shifted indoors, reducing the market's role as a primary source of food. Torghandel was no longer central to daily provisioning, but increasingly supplemental.

At the same time, Möllevångstorget gained renewed cultural significance. Migration reshaped the surrounding neighbourhood, and the market reflected this transformation through a broader range of products, languages, and practices. The square became a visible expression of Malmö's growing diversity, where food served as both commodity and cultural marker. For many, the market offered familiarity, continuity, and a sense of belonging in a city undergoing change.

This period also brought increasing formalization. Regulations around permits, taxation, and hygiene became more standardized, aligning torghandel more closely with other commercial forms. While these measures aimed to create fairness and transparency, they also reduced the informal resilience that had previously allowed small-scale traders to adapt easily to shifting conditions.

By the end of the 1990s, torghandel at Möllevångstorget occupied an ambiguous position. It was no longer essential to the city's food supply, yet it remained symbolically important. The market persisted as a social and cultural space ; valued not for efficiency, but for its human scale, its diversity, and its connection to local life.

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As we approach the turn of the millennium, Mmm starts to take the form we know today. Something we all think is important, but rather not fight for.



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Today nothing but a fraction remains of what once was.

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How can Mmm survive?

« Mmm can survive by strengthening what has always made torghandel at Möllevångstorget distinct. Its future does not lie in competing with large-scale retail on price or efficiency, but in reinforcing direct exchange, local production, and human-scale trade. With long-term commitment, basic infrastructure, and conditions that allow vendors to operate sustainably, the market can continue to function as a place where food is not only sold, but shared, negotiated, and embedded in everyday urban life. »

## 5) Loss & What Remains

**2000-2026** Today, torghandel at Möllevångstorget stands at a critical point. What was once a dense and lively market has gradually thinned out, leaving visible gaps where stalls once stood. The decline has not been sudden, but steady. Over the past decade, the number of active vendors has decreased significantly, and the conditions required to sustain small-scale trade have become increasingly difficult to meet.

Contemporary torghandel operates under pressure from multiple directions. Competition from large retailers, rising operational costs, and increasingly complex regulations have shifted much of the risk onto individual vendors. At the same time, inspections and enforcement, while intended to ensure fairness and safety, often disrupt the very trading hours on which the market depends. The result is a fragile balance, where continuity becomes harder to maintain with each passing year.

Yet the market has not disappeared because people stopped valuing food, culture, or local exchange. On the contrary, interest in sustainability, local production, and direct trade has grown. What is lacking is not relevance, but support. For torghandel to remain viable, it requires conditions that recognize its unique role: access to basic infrastructure, protection from weather, long-term planning, and a political commitment to the market as a living part of the city rather than a temporary exception.

The question facing Möllevångstorget today is not whether the market still matters, but whether the city is willing to invest in its future. Can torghandel continue to exist as a place of exchange, diversity, and human-scale commerce or will it be allowed to fade into memory?

The future of Mmm depends on choice. On whether care replaces neglect, and whether the market is seen not as a problem to manage, but as a cultural and social asset worth sustaining. What happens next will determine whether this legacy continues.



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