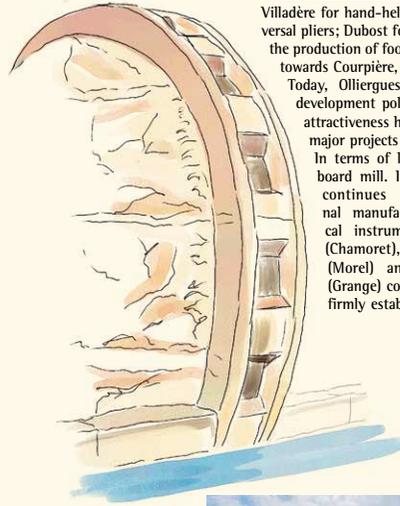




Detours between trade, crafts, industry and tourism

As early as the 11th century, the Dore river played a major role in the economic activity of Olliergues. At that time, the river and its many tributaries already housed several mills. These were used for wheat, hemp, cloth or tan (grinding bark for tanneries), and formed the heart of the work force for several centuries. The weaving of hemp, filled in specialised mills from the 13th century onwards, was extended to include wool and cloth manufacture. This trade gave rise to a large market in the Rue du Pavé where craftsmen from Olliergues and the surrounding countryside used to meet. These skills engendered the town's textile industry (household cloth, navy cloth, military clothing) that endured up to the early 20th century. Another large guild that formed between the 15th and 17th centuries was that of the tanners who used the waters of the Dore to soak and wash hides.



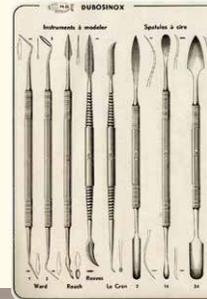
At night, Olliergues takes on yet another dimension. The village lights up, the amphitheatre drapes jewel-like around the mound, a shimmering, sparkling spectacle that shows the site in all its glory. In 2008, Olliergues was awarded 3rd prize for its street lighting at the 20th edition of the Lumières competition organised by SERCE (Syndicat des entreprises de génie électrique et climatique).



This industrial spirit, driven by a skilful and abundant workforce combined with hydraulic power for the production of electricity, led to the establishment of several industries in the early 20th century: Villadère for hand-held lawnmowers, pruning shears and other universal pliers; Dubost for dental surgery instruments, Guillaumont for the production of foot pumps and pneumatic accessories or, moving towards Courpière, the paper and board mills in Giroux.

Today, Olliergues boasts a dynamic economic and tourism development policy. Since 2014, the town's development and attractiveness has been enhanced by the emergence of several major projects serving businesses and the local population.

In terms of local business, Giroux still has its paper and board mill. In the village of Narbonne, Pordont Holliger continues the traditional manufacture of surgical instruments. Transport (Chamoret), knife making (Morel) and locksmithing (Grange) companies are also firmly established.



CHARMING TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN THE LIVRADOIS-FOREZ

The Livradois-Forez Regional Nature Park boasts a rich historical heritage. Its towns and villages form a hierarchical network of communities with complementary activities that include tourism, farming, forestry, crafts and industry. This spatial organisation of functions and activities dates back to the Middle Ages and, since the 14th century, has produced an attractive and even remarkable urban architecture. The Livradois-Forez Regional Nature Park supports communes in their efforts to promote the discovery of these lovely town centres.



USEFUL ADDRESSES

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Bureau d'information touristique
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Place de la mairie
63880 Olliergues
Tel.: +33 (0)4 73 95 56 49

Guided tours in summer for individuals and all year round for groups by reservation.



Bibliography
J.-L. Boithias, "Panorama industriel du canton d'Olliergues du Moyen Âge à nos jours" publications du GRAHLE. M. Boy, "Olliergues, le site et son développement" publications du GRAHLE.

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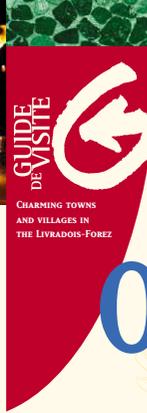
Living differently in town centres

The Ilot Gouttefangeas "Rue Rhin et Danube" Olliergues 2030 is a project to revitalise the town centre. Referred to as a subtraction operation, new spaces have been created by removing existing buildings and replacing them with new ones. This programme has created a market hall with an esplanade. The Ilot Gouttefangeas has been tagged as a key project aimed at improving the living environment in the town centre.



The towers hiding the staircase

Many 16th and 17th century houses in Olliergues have tower staircases which, depending on their configuration, may be built out (in the corner or on the façade) or only partly built-in. Doors opening to the outside occasionally have a worked lintel. At No. 5 Rue des Agneaux, the staircase built in 1563 is typical of this period. It is built around a fir tree shaft into which oak steps are pegged.



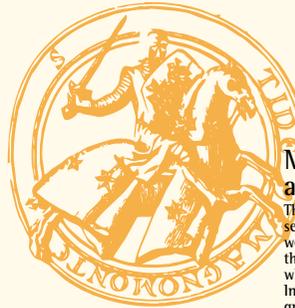
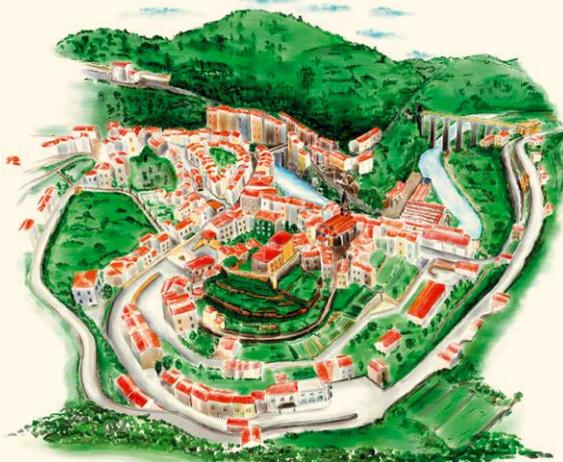
Commune d'Olliergues



OLLIERGUES between mounds & terrasses...

Like a river-polished pebble,

Olliergues, a village shaped slowly over time by the Dore. Forming a natural border between the Livradois and Forez regions, the river has always been reflected in the town's architecture and in the activities of its population. Originally diverted by a rocky spur, it finally pushed its way through and straightened its course, leaving an abandoned meander around the mound which gave way to ponds that have now been filled in. All around are tiered terraces that form a vast natural amphitheatre. Once tamed, the Dore played a key role in the development of Olliergues' industrial and crafts sectors with its mills, tanneries, cloth and paper factories, etc. The many panoramic views offered by the landscape conjure up unique images of this picturesque site, which is at once rural, historical and industrial. To explore all the features that make this town so charming and original, let yourself be guided, just for a moment, through its many twists and turns... between mounds and terraces.



Mound, castles and baronies

The House of Meymont was the first to hold the seigneuries of Meymont and Olliergues. The two castles were not of equal importance, with the first dominating the Dore valley in the present-day hamlet of Meymont, while the second controlled the strategic river crossing. In 1252, Agnon de Meymont, Lord of Olliergues, granted the people of Olliergues a charter that placed local government in the hands of consuls elected by the town's inhabitants. In 1276, he wedded Beatrix, one of his two daughters, to Bertrand de la Tour d'Auvergne, thus bringing the fiefdom of Olliergues into the orbit of this powerful family. During the subsequent interplay of successions and alliances, the Lords of Olliergues became Viscounts of Turenne and Dukes of Bouillon. Henri de Turenne, Marshal of France (1611 - 1675) was almost born in Olliergues.



An upside down coat of arms

Throughout your visit you will notice many inverted signs. Framing a silver tower, crossed by a red gable, this one is found at the entrance to the Rue du Châteaun and represents the coat of arms of the La Tour d'Auvergne family. "An upside down coat of arms" - framed on an azure blue background.



The terraces, the road, the viaduct, and the railroad

Olliergues, a medieval village, first grew up on the mound before spreading out at the foot of the castle walls. A dyke was built to channel the Dore and provide a way of crossing the marshes which, at that time, filled the site of the abandoned meander. This was to become "la chaussée", later Rue de la Chaussée. During the 16th century, the town continued to grow on the slopes of this natural amphitheatre, with the creation of the Pavé district and terracing of the land behind the high houses on the hillside, which was either farmed or used as gardens. A special feature of these houses is their staggered ground floors, giving rise to the expression "going up to the garden". Up till the 19th century, the road from Courpière to Ambert passed through Rue de la Chaussée, as it is known today. In the days of Napoleon III, the Route Impériale was built, which became the Nationale 106, and then the Départementale 906. New modes of transport were developing, first horse-drawn carriages, and then cars, requiring major earthworks, bolstered by retaining walls, to obtain a road with the necessary gradient. In 1860, ongoing work to improve communication routes saw the construction of a second bridge, this time higher and wider. 1885 was marked by the inauguration of the Le Puy - Vichy railway line with numerous tunnels and viaducts. It was at this time that Baron Robert de Nervo, one of the line's promoters and director of the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée (P.L.M.) company, had the Château de la Montmarie built a few kilometres from the town.

