



**20 The Hall**  
Constructed on the site of the Church of Saint Martin, the Hall is a beautiful example of a metal structure. Completed in 1891, it was restored in 1988. It was during the time of Napoleon III that this type of Hall, called a

“Baltard”, came into being because new technology allowed the mass production of iron and enabled the carrying capacity of this type of structure to be increased.

In the Hall, where space was needed, metal columns replaced walls creating more space for the market. Also, another important advantage of using iron was that it is fire resistant and, as can be observed here, the metal structure allowed for superb arched windows, unknown before this time.

On the ground floor were located the “Docks à fromages”.

**21 The Collegiate Church of Notre-Dame des Oliviers**



In 1926, to create space around the church and to construct a square in front, some old houses were destroyed. One of these had a watchtower, and to preserve this testimony to the past, it was incorporated into the church wall, to the left of the southern entrance. Within the church can be seen statues, some of which are classified as historic monuments. Also, there are five altarpieces from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**22 Place Gandilhon Gens d’Armes**

Formerly the Butcher’s quarter. Extracted from the register of deliberations from the Murat Municipal Council in 1832: “Considering the establishment of a public slaughterhouse would be certainly useful and assist in the cleanliness of the town (...), in Murat, there are 14 beef butchers and 4 pork butchers who in one year slaughter 220 head of cattle, as many pigs, 2170 calves and 4770 sheep or goats. The butchers do not have personal slaughter facilities or scalding pots and slaughter in the street in front of their shops and butcher their meat and burn the pigs.”

**23 16<sup>th</sup> century house, former Baillage (bailiwick)**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the bailiwick was where justice was served in the name of the king. This is where the lieutenant-bailiwick of the mountains of Auvergne resided. Amongst his powers was the ability to judge criminal affairs at first instance. According to local historians, the bailiwick was actually located behind the Maison de la Faune.

The edifice has four floors. Each floor is marked by a cornice. The windows have moulded framework and the sides are finely carved. There is a beautiful moulded door with a central, carved pattern, in the rue de l’Argenterie. During the time of Colbert (17<sup>th</sup> century), this was the gold workers quarter, unequalled in the art of cutting amethysts which, according to legend, “warded off intoxication.”

**24 Former Wheat Place, called “place aux bleds”**

The law allowed the people of Murat to stock up on salt from the Poitou region which, because it was less expensive than salt from the Languedoc region, favoured the installation of butchers who consumed it in large quantities. The town thus affirmed itself as a commercial crossroads.

The salt tax collector also lived in the square.



**25 La Maison de la Faune, House of Fauna**

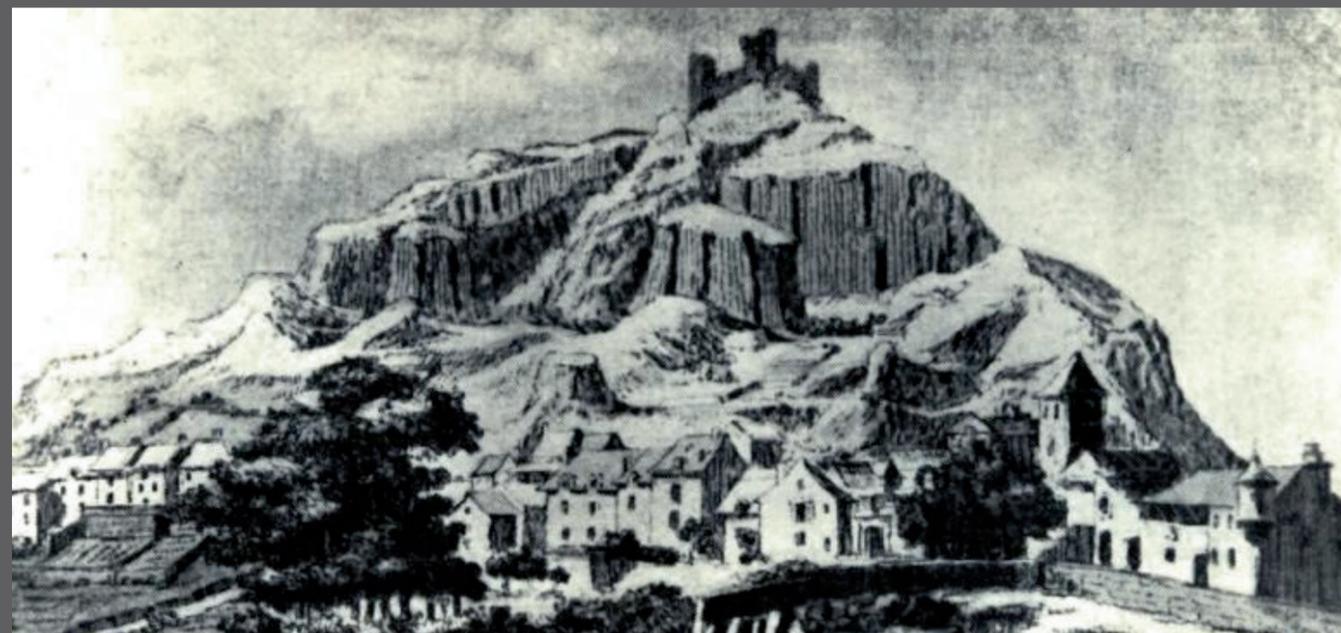
Located in a former 16<sup>th</sup> century private residence which became the sous-préfecture of the Cantal between 1827 and 1926, this museum houses collections of both local and exotic fauna. Three floors of themed rooms present insects, birds, mammals and fish in their different ecosystems.

From the Maison de la Faune, down the stairs, is located the Hôtel de ville where you can admire the roofs and small towers of this beautiful building.

**26 Le cornet de Murat (The “horn” of Murat)**

As long as those with a sweet tooth have been around, Murat has made cornets. These artisanal biscuits are rolled as soon as they come out of the oven and then filled with sweet creams.

On the 3rd Sunday in September, more than 10 000 people come to enjoy the cornets and participate in the festivities which include a market selling pastries, local products, cornets with a huge array of fillings, a cooking contest and children’s activities.



This walking tour will guide you through the town of Murat and unveil its secrets through a series of panels. This guide is a translation of those panels.

To begin, the history of Murat goes back to at least 270 AD when St. Mamet came to evangelise the territory. Murat, in Celtic, means steep or pointed rock.

Murat appears again in the 11<sup>th</sup> century when a viscounty was created. During this era, Murat was fortified several times with three successive fortifications to protect itself from armed bandits, looters and epidemics. The walls include seven doors with towers and a chapel. The centre was preserved during this period while the exterior, or faubourg, was often burnt down and destroyed. The walls were no longer maintained from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Murat also had an imposing castle that was a stronghold for many years. It was destroyed in 1477, then rebuilt and destroyed again in 1633 on Richelieu’s orders. Despite its grandeur, absolutely nothing is left of the castle.

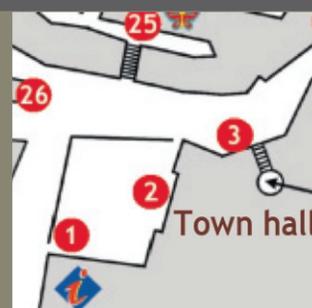
The railway arrived in Murat in 1866. Since WWII, the local economy has developed around tourism, teaching, hospital services, and more recently remote work or “télétravail.”

Murat, is located at the base of the Rocher de Bonnevie between the Rocher de Bredons with its 11<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque church and the Rocher de Chastel sur Murat with its 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque chapel. All three of these “rochers” have spectacular views of the Monts du Cantal. These mountains were once one giant stratovolcano. Today they comprise several summits: le Puy Mary (1 787 m), le Plomb du Cantal (1 855 m), le Puy Griou, (1 690 m), le Puy Violent, (1 592 m), le Puy Chavaroche (1 739 m) and le Puy de Peyre-Arse, (1 806 m).

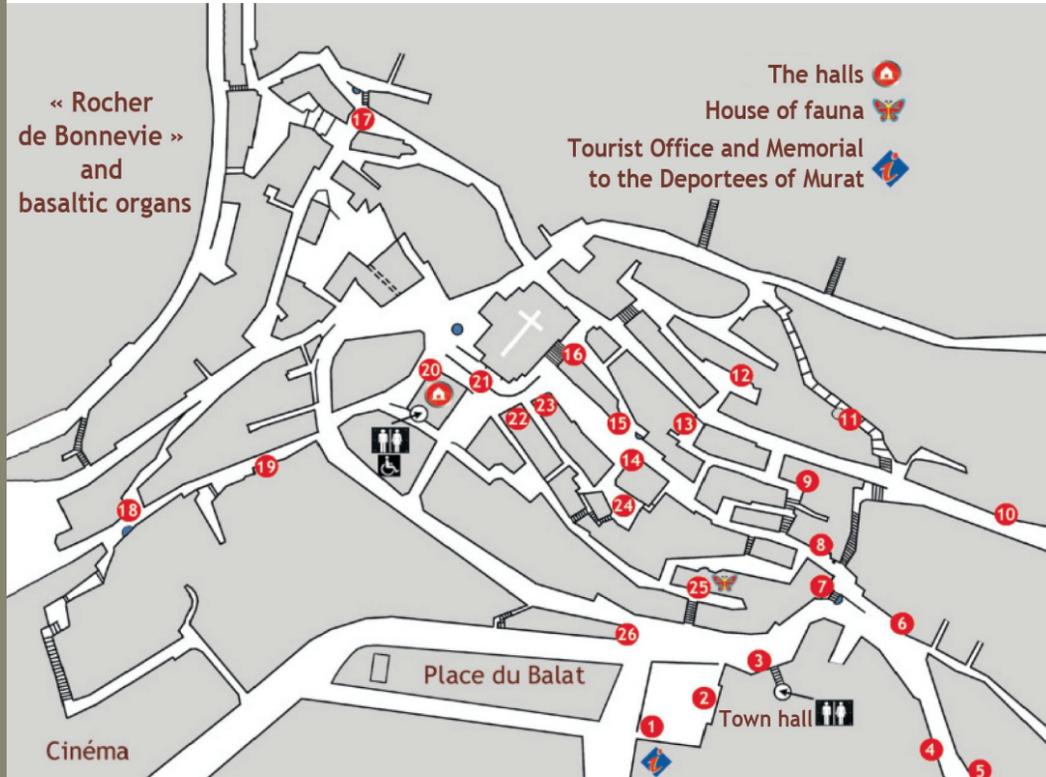
The tour begins outside of the Tourist Office of the Pays de Murat  
Length of the tour : 1h30

**1 Tourist Office**

Place de l’Hôtel de Ville - 15300 MURAT  
+33 4 71 20 09 47  
www.officedetourismepaysdemurat.com



« Rocher de Bonnevie » and basaltic organs



**1** An important intersection in the heart of the glacial valley of the river Alagnon, Murat “the blue”(a reference to its royal past) is still covered with magnificent stone tiled roofs. During the middle ages it was home to a thriving population of artisans, shopkeepers and lawyers protected by the thick city walls. It was renowned for its medieval fairs, cheese, wheat and livestock. Seven buildings, classified or registered in the Supplemental Inventory of Historical Monuments, testify to the architectural richness of Murat. This picturesque visit with 26 stops invites you to discover Murat’s treasures.

## 2 “Rocher de Bonnevie”

The imposing “Rocher de Bonnevie” is the rock towering above the old town. The perfectly aligned basaltic columns, amongst the finest in Europe, supported the fortress of Murat’s viscounts. Property of the royal families of Murat, Cardailiac, Armagnac, and the Bourbons, the fortress was destroyed upon Richelieu’s orders in 1633. The demolition lasted six months and used many tons of explosive powder. On 18 June 1878, Notre Dame de la Consolation (now Notre Dame de Haute Auvergne) was constructed; a metal statue of the Virgin measuring 8 metres high and weighing 13780 kgs.

## 3 Remembrance

Murat became the symbol of deportation in the Cantal because of the events that took place here on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 1944. The “Memorial des déportés de Murat” (The Memorial to the deportees of Murat) opened in 2009 to tell their stories. The departmental deportation monument on the Place du Balat, the main square, was inaugurated on 14 November 1948. The War Memorial was given to the town of Murat on 24 June 1951.

Some of Murat’s population took an active part in the protection of persecuted Jewish people. Three of these people have been honoured with the title of “Juste parmi les nations” or “The Just among nations”:

- Alice Ferrières, maths teacher at the girls’ primary school, recognised in 1964,
- Marie Sagnier, Headmistress, 1985
- Marthe Cambon, French teacher, 2003.

## 4 Council Meeting House

This 14<sup>th</sup> century house with its magnificent facade was registered in the Supplemental Historical Monument Inventory in 1927. It has remarkable renaissance windows framed by stacked archways. The wooden door is decorated with engraved panels resembling pleated material. The large semi-circular window on the ground floor likely testifies to a commercial past. For three centuries, it was home to the Chabanon family, seven of whom were councillors.

## 5 Jean-Baptiste Pagès-Allary, 1863-1926; a renowned person

This archaeologist, geologist and character, President of the Pre-historical Society of France, lived here. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he became interested in deposits of diatomite fossils and began the first mining and transformation of what is still called “the white gold of the Cantal”, a product rich in silicon. He also participated strongly in the industrial development of the town. Today, a factory in Murat still transforms and exports the diatomite for the filtration of beer, wine and the insulation for space shuttles, etc.

## 6 16<sup>th</sup> century houses

Typical of the construction of this town, these houses had one room and one window per floor. The ground floor was used for working, the first floor for eating and the second floor for sleeping. The gallery, formed by arches supported by columns, would have run the entire length of the street and been used during bad weather.

## 7 Tribunal de Murat/ The Court of Murat

This former Dominican convent was burnt down in 1771 and reconstructed in Louis XV style. During the Revolution, it became the Court of Murat for three centuries. On the facade, two small niches with spiral columns, characteristic of Louis XIII style, are located above the door to the chapel.

## 8 Tour du Bon Secours or Tour Molinier/ Bon Secours Tower or Molinier Tower



One of the seven town doors was situated here. You are now entering the old town. The house facades are rich in details: decorative doorways (some of the coats of arms were taken down during the Revolution to remove any connection to the nobles and corporations); windows with crosses with carvings of delicate or grotesque faces.

## 9 The Béral family home

This family provided several famous doctors to the kings of France.

- Pierre de Béral, ennobled by Louis XIII, was doctor to Henri IV for 32 years.
- Pierre Hugues de Béral was doctor to Louis XIII. The street, rue Jean de l’Hospital, owes its name to the Constable of Bourbon, father of the chancellor Michel de l’Hospital (1507-1573).

## 10 The Jacquemart of the Gaudron home

A “jacquemart” is an automated piece of art with one or more characters sculpted in wood or metal that tells the time by hitting a bell with a hammer. In 1938, Charles Gaudron had this clock made to immortalise his children in traditional Auvergne dress. The children dance “la bourré”, a traditional Auvergne dance, the clock tells the time and the rooster crows the twelve strokes of noon by way of a three bell chime.



## 11 Tower of Saint Peter

The town protected by three walls and seven doors was described as “a fortress abutted to the rock of Murat- Castrum apud castrum”. This defensive tower formed part of the old walls. In French, a local expression or play on words because all of the words are pronounced the same says “un mur mura Murat et Murat murmura” meaning “a wall walled Murat and Murat murmured.”

In 1283, a charter was signed giving Murat’s citizens the right to use the walls. In return it was their responsibility to close the doors and windows in case of attack.

## 12 The Teillard Family Home

The Teillards, an old Murat family, played an important administrative, judicial, political and economic role in the city. Marguerite Teillard-Chambon, (1880-1959), obtained a doctorate, was a Director of the Notre Dame des Champs Institute in Paris, a member of the women’s right to vote committee, a writer and the recipient of some prestigious literary prizes. In the tower is a beautiful renaissance door with two unequal nailed panels. Above the door is a carved seal. This type of sign, round or oval often indicated a notary’s or legal office.

## 13 The Doors of Murat

To the left, is a handsome circular tower with beautifully decorated double doors. Many other beautiful doorways can be found throughout Murat.

## 14 A Renaissance House

A magnificent renaissance house rich with decoration: sculpted corning, a projected watchtower supported on a corbel, pillars with Tuscan columns, mullioned windows and a double-vaulted modillion. Above the doors, can be seen carved triangular lintels with coats of arms. The fountain of the place Royale is incorporated in the steps to the house.

In the Middle Ages the term “échaugette” designated a watchtower. On the house opposite is a pigeon loft in a similar form with an oeil de boeuf or bull’s eye.

## 15 Volcanism and construction

Basaltic columns, trachyte and phonolite are the three traditional stones of construction in Murat.

The basaltic columns: when cooling, the lava formed long hexagonal crystals. This very hard, dark grey stone is simply removed and then used in its natural state.

Trachyte: known as Pierre de Murat, comes from the Cunes quarry which is still being worked today. A very resistant, light grey stone, it can be sawed or finely cut and is a cousin of polished stone.

Phonolite: used for stone roofs because it is extracted in large pieces. These pieces can weigh up to 200 kg. Exploited since the Middle Ages, it has the characteristic of producing a “ringing” sound when hit hence its name “phono”lite.

## 16 Gargoyles and Saint Esprit (Holy Spirit)

This is a good spot for admiring the gargoyles of the church, Notre Dame des Oliviers, built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

On the facade of number 28, above the balcony jutting over the house’s lovely front, is an astonishing wooden dove in a niche with a cross above it. Could it be the symbol of the Saint Esprit or Holy Spirit for which the street and the door are named? In 1964, several scenes from Henri-Georges Clouzot’s film, “L’Enfer” (Hell), with Romy Schneider and Serge Reggiani were filmed here.

## 17 An Historical Residence

Acquired by Jean de Traverse in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the house evolved toward a Renaissance architectural style. Guillaume de Traverse, counsellor and doctor to Charles VII was ennobled in 1459. His son, Jean, was also a doctor. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Poncet de Traverse was a lawyer.

On the ground level, is a shop with its characteristic store front and shelf. Above is a window decorated with life-like stone heads and ornate columns.

On the facade to the left, at the base of the tower enclosing a circular staircase, is a magnificent doorway with a double lintel. To the right of the house, is a Chabassou fountain in the Louis XIV style.



## 18 Maison des Templiers/ Templars House

The Templars were a militant religious order whose original responsibility was to protect pilgrims from brigands. The order was created in 1129 and dissolved in 1312.

The Templars observed religious regulations similar to those of the Benedictines however, the fasting was not as severe so as to ensure these warrior monks were not too weak to be called to battle.

Above the door, a stone with the coats of arms of the Templars can still be seen: a cross with 8 points.

## 19 Birth Place of Philippe Marcombes

Politician and doctor, Philippe Marcombes (1877-1935) was deputy mayor of Clermont-Ferrand for more than twenty years. Concerned with public health, he developed dispensaries, ordered the construction of public baths, fought for public hygiene by installing sewer systems and built a velodrome. He died on 13 June 1935, at the opening of a Council of Ministers at the Elysées palace, whilst Minister of Public Instruction.

Beside the 15<sup>th</sup> century door at number 7 in this street, is a nice font. The facade, with the basaltic columns, has small, obstructed monolithic windows.