

Let's go and discover

Salies du Salat

A little history

The spa town of Salies-du-Salat is located at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the south of the Haute-Garonne department, about 70 km from Toulouse.

The town of Salies enjoyed a period of prosperity thanks to the salt industry, trade and agriculture. Its geographical location in the Salat valley, at the crossroads of numerous communication routes, gave it a strategic position.

The origins of the town probably go back to prehistoric times. In the Middle Ages, the Counts of Comminges, and later the Counts of Foix, lived in the castle of Salies. In the 15th century, Salies became part of the French crown and the noble families of Sirgant, De Gallard and Anouilh ruled the town. In 1789, Salies joined the Revolution and the noble families lost their rights and titles. In the 19th century, the railway and the industrial exploitation of salt allowed the town to develop and prosper. Nevertheless, it is only at the beginning of the 20th century that the thermal and tourist vocation of the town really asserts itself.

The name Salies-du-Salat comes from the name of the ancient city "salinea". It then became the capital of the first châtelainie of the County of Comminges and was called "Salies en Comminges" until the Revolution. On 5 September 1847, the central administration, not wanting to confuse the two Pyrenean "Salies", gave it the name of "Salies d'Arbas", and then on opposition from the municipality, the name "Salies du Salat".



Where does Salies salt come from ?

Under the town, deep in the earth, there has been rock salt for over 200 million years. It is the result of the evaporation of a sea that was here, in Salies, caused by geological faults during the formation of the Pyrenees. The salt from the sea then remained in the earth.

It is impossible to say today whether people in prehistoric times already used salt water to produce salt. What is certain, however, is that from a certain point in history, people tried to develop techniques for extracting salt. During excavations at the site of the first spa, remains were found that prove that people produced salt by different methods of evaporation. There is also evidence that the Romans also used salt water for various medical purposes.

Today, different wells bring up the brine from a depth of 300 m, for the thermal activity, then clarified and mixed with water. With a salt content of 322 gr/L, Salies thermal water is the richest in minerals in Europe!



1

Elementary School

Under the Ancien Régime, education was provided only to boys, by both lay teachers and religious. Education took place in private premises. The commune did not have a school building. In 1886, the local council decided to build a public school. The building was constructed of red limestone from Furne (a quarry not far from Salies). The statue of the "Republic", which overlooks the school, underlines its secular character.

2

General Compans

Jean Dominique Compans was born on 26 June 1769 in Salies. In 1789, he joined the French Revolution and chose a military career. He took part in the Italian and Spanish campaigns alongside Napoleon Bonaparte. He faithfully served the Empire and distinguished himself in the campaigns in Austria, Prussia, Russia and Germany. In 1813, the emperor appointed him divisional commander, grand officer of the Legion of Honour and count of the Empire. General Compans died on 10 November 1845 in Blagnac. His body was taken to Salies and buried in the local cemetery.

His white marble statue now stands in the centre of the town.

Continue along the alleys, through the Allée des Marronniers, then the Allée des Tilleuls



3

Casino

The original building dates from the 1930s. It was first used as a village hall and then as a cinema. Today, the building has been completely renovated and houses a casino. 150 slot machines, roulette, black jack, poker and much more await you!

4

Thermal baths

The current spa, the "New Spa", was built in 1925 in the Egyptian Revival style. The spa and its salt waters treat rheumatic diseases, gynaecological diseases and developmental disorders in the context of a doctor's cure.

In 2013, Salinea Spa opened its doors. A multitude of cosmetic treatments, massages, a swimming pool with jacuzzi, a sauna, a hammam and much more guarantee relaxation.





Take Boulevard du Sel, then Boulevard des Salins.

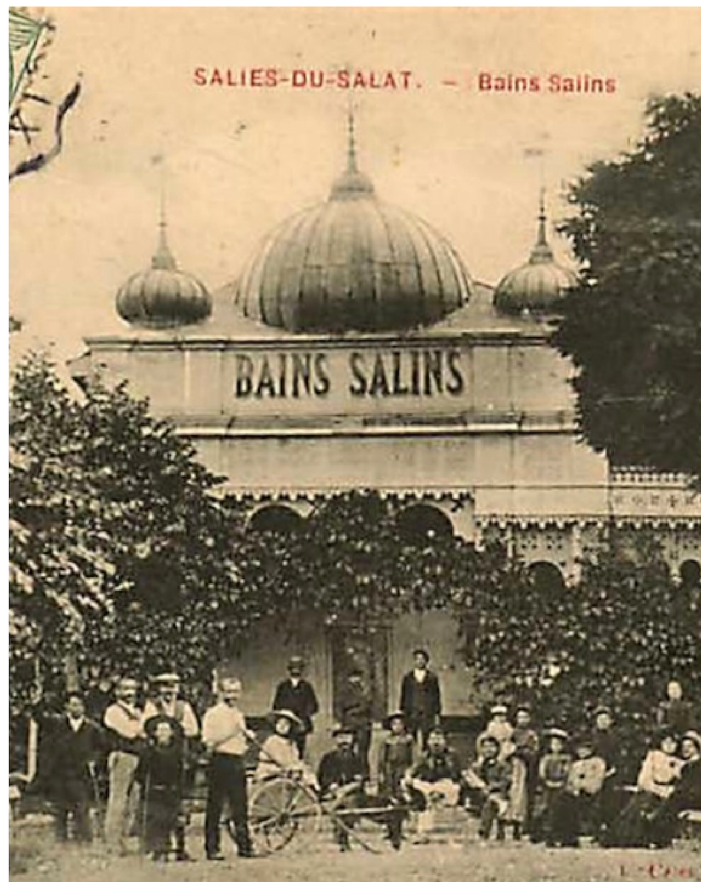
At the southern end of the Boulevard des Salins, you will notice a building with a small "tower". It houses the first salt water extraction well. This well fed the salt factory, built in 1886 on the right bank of the Salat. It produced and marketed domestic and industrial salt. The factory ceased its activity in the 1970s.

5 Old thermal baths today : "Les Salins" nursery

On 7 March 1880 the State authorised the town to use the salt water for medical purposes. The first thermal establishment, "Les Bains Salins", was built on the old salt well in a Moorish style in 1885. At the end of the 19th century, Salies was considered the spa for women and children. The thermal baths had become too small. With the opening of the "new thermal baths" in 1925, the building lost its vocation.

Since 2012, the "old thermal baths" have been shining again. The building has been restored to its original state and now houses the nursery "Les Salins."

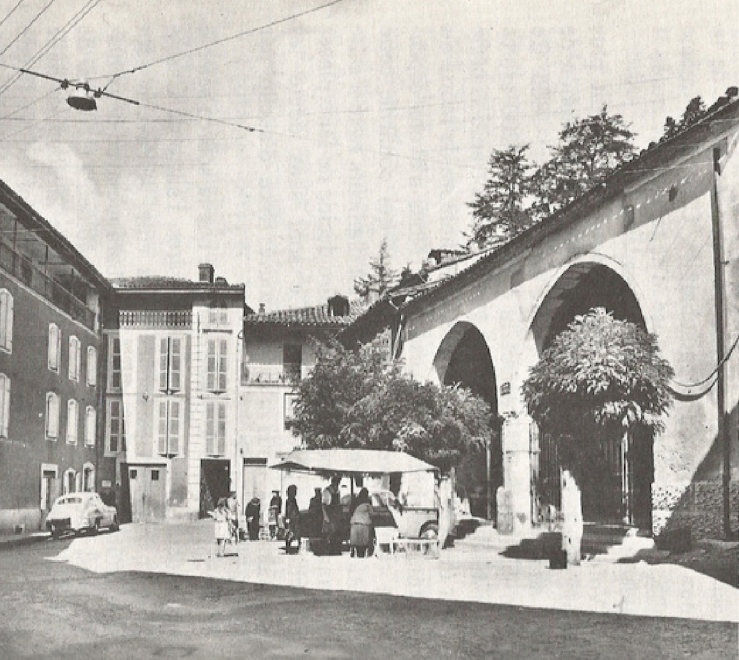
Continue along Avenue du Docteur Froment, then Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville.



6 City Hall

The Hôtel de Ville was originally the mansion of Jean-François Lasvignes. It was built around 1830 in white limestone, in the purest romantic style. On the wrought iron balustrade of the balcony you can see a heart with two initials linked together, an I and an L, to recall the union of the Lasvignes and Irlle families. Today, this building houses the services of the Town Hall.





7

Merchants' Hall today: media library

It was built in the 19th century using 16th century architectural elements, on the edge of a small square. The stone counters used by the market traders still exist today and can be found along the walls inside the hall..

Continue along Rue de la République. Take the small staircase on your left.

8

Half-timbered house & church N. D. de la Pitié

This house dates from the Renaissance period (16th century). The entrance door, the white limestone door frame, a window with a masonry cross window on the upper floor and the right half of the house with half-timbering are remarkable. Next to this house is the former parish church "Notre Dame de la Pitié". It bears witness to the time when the village of Salies was concentrated at the bottom of the hill. This church was the parish church of Salies before the construction of the "new church" in 1964.

Continue through the small passage on your right.



9

Banal oven

This construction dates from the 15th century. At that time, the inhabitants of Salies had to use this public oven to bake their bread or their earthenware. To use it, they had to pay a tax to the owner of the oven.



10

Feudal mound

Built on the hill in the 13th century by the counts, the castle was one of the most important in the county of Comminges due to its strategic position. It was completely rebuilt in the 14th century and renovated in the 15th century. It was surrounded by a powerful protective wall, the remains of which can still be seen at the eastern entrance.

The keep, a square tower with walls 1.43 m thick, dates from the 12th century. Today, this tower, the moat and the remains of the castle walls are the last vestiges of the "first village of Salies en Comminges" of the Middle Ages.

Legend has it that it was in this tower that Countess Marguerite de Comminges was imprisoned for 27 years by her husband Mathieu de Foix. But other castles also claim this sad privilege...

The ruins of the chapel stand not far from the castle. This once imposing building is a witness to the late Romanesque and Gothic architectural style of our region. Even today, various architectural features can be admired: Gothic portal, Romanesque and Gothic window arches, typical bell tower, capitals...

From the ruins of the castle, there is a superb view of the Pyrenees, the town of Salies and the Salat valley.

Then go back the same way to the "Place de la Liberté".



11

The Bascule

This public weight dates back to the middle of the 19th century. It was used to weigh wood, hay, cattle and various other materials. The scale has moved several times since it was built: from the square in front of the primary school to Avenue de la Paix, then from Boulevard Jean Jaurès to its current location. This is what earned it the nickname "bascule baladeuse".





12 Grain Hall today: city hall

This white limestone arcaded building once housed the grain market. The interior is accessed by two staircases that meet on a platform. There are ten tubes cut into the stone, with a trapdoor at the bottom. They were used to measure grain. Since the 1980s, the building has housed the Town Hall.



Continue the walk towards the Lac des Isles or play a round of golf!



Discover Salies while having fun!

Take a pen and go to the Tourist Information Office to collect the documentation for the treasure hunt. With the help of this brochure and the explanatory panels on the route, answer about twenty riddles!



*The Tourist Office
Cagire Garonne Salat
welcomes you, to
Salies du Salat
Jean Jaurès Boulevard*

*Store with local products, advice on
hiking, cycling/ mountain biking,
outdoor activities, heritage,
discoveries!*

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2024*