

# HISTORY OF AURILLAC

Region: Auvergne-Rhône-Alps | Department: Cantal | capital of Cantal

## General Facts:

- population since 2010: 27,924
- 600 meters above sea level
- 558km (347mi) south of Paris
- inhabitants of the commune are known as *Aurillacois* or *Aurillacoises*.
- located in the south-central part of France

## Saint-Gérald Church

It's said that Count Gérald himself shot an arrow from the top of Château Saint-Etienne and it happened to land in Aurillac. In its place lays Saint-Gérald Church. The old town of Aurillac was wrapped around the church and this created the town.

## The Old Fortress

If you look to the right wall of *The Cantal Shop* you will notice a high brick wall. Construction workers discovered this old wall while preparing to tear down an old house. They discovered that the old wall was a piece from an old fortress that once surrounded Aurillac.



## Aurillac Today

Today, Aurillac is one of the most well-known towns in France for having cold weather. But actually it is the most cold only in the mornings compared to the other towns across France, believe it or not. Because of the many acres of farmland and cows that span across the region, there is a special type of cheese made in the department called Cantal cheese. Along with Aurillac's rich history, it is also well-known for the production of umbrellas. Actually, in town you will now find a dance studio, *La Manufacture*, which used to be an old factory for the production of umbrellas. For example, Aurillac produced half the French production of umbrellas, 250,000 units in 1999, and provided hundreds of jobs.



## Important Places:



This is the Palace of Justice. Completed in 1872 it is still used today as a Court House for the town.



This is the Prefecture. A building where many french citizens go to have various forms and important documents checked out. Even to get their driving permit.



This is the Prison. It was constructed in 1860 and later commissioned in 1868.

## *Back in time...*

The history of the city is really only known from 856, the year of the birth of Count Gérald of Aurillac at the castle where his father, also named Gérald, was lord. In 885 he founded a Benedictine monastery which later bore his name. The city was founded in 898 by Gérald shortly after the abbey. The first urban area was circular and built close to the Abbey of Aurillac, or the Saint-Gérald Church . Gérald died around 910 but his influence was such an impact that over the centuries Gérald was always a baptismal name prevalent in the population of Aurillac and the surrounding area.

It was in the 13th century, that municipal conflict began between consuls and abbots. After taking the Chateau of Saint-Étienne in 1255 and two negotiated agreements called the Peace of Aurillac, relations were normalized. In the 13th and 14th centuries Aurillac withstood several sieges by the English and in the 16th century the town continued to suffer from civil and religious wars. The influence of the abbey declined with its secularization and its implementation of orders.

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## Important Places:



View of the town and right in the center is Saint-Gérald Church. Thought to be the start of the town.

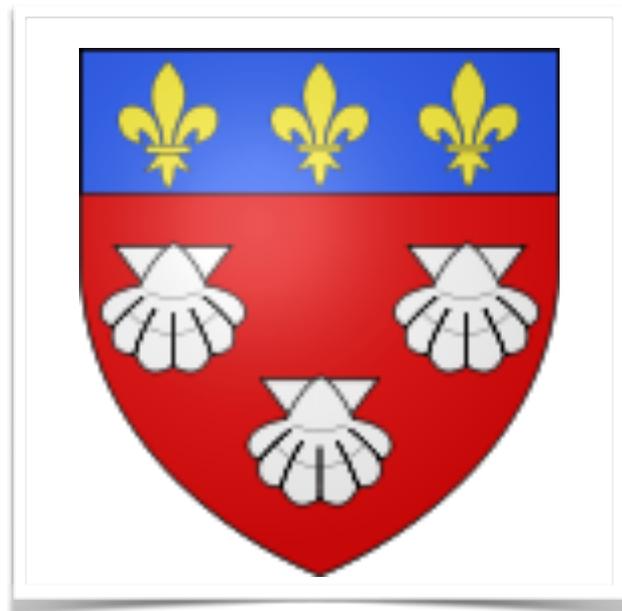


This is the Town Hall, or also known as *Mairie d'Aurillac* in french.



This is a picture of an annual festival celebrated in Aurillac. It is called *Festival du Théâtre du Rue* and is celebrated during August.

implementation of orders. In 1569 the city was delivered by treason to the Protestants: people were tortured and held for ransom and the Abbey was sacked. The library and archives were all burned. Before the French Revolution Aurillac had a Présidial and carried the title of capital of the *Haute-Auvergne*. In 1790 on the creation of departments, after a period of alternating with Saint-Flour, Aurillac definitively became the capital of Cantal. Later in 1866 the development of the railway system in Aurillac heavily influenced the accelerated growth of the city.



The traditional arms of Aurillac. The three silver shells were originally on one line because Aurillac was a stage on the Way of St. James coming from Clermont-Ferrand (currently the *Via Arvernha*). The three fleurs-de-lis gold indicated a *Good Town* at a time when Aurillac provided a body of two hundred picked men to King Charles VII to fight the British.

