OUTREMEUSE
DISCOVERY ROUTE
Located on the other bank of the River Meuse, Outremeuse is one of the working-class neighbourhoods of Liège. Traditions remain alive there, for example the celebrations on August 15th and other events organised throughout the year. The birthplaces of the marionette Tchantchès, André Grétry et Georges Simenon are located there. As well as its folklore, Outremeuse is also notable for its heritage, either modest (signs, potales, etc.), or more imposing (churches, convents, etc.).

Duration : 2 hrs.

1. Footbridge
2. Boulevard Saucy
3. Monument to Tchantchès
4. Tchantchès Museum
5. August 15th
6. The legend of Tchantchès
7. Rue Roture
8. Puits-en-Sock
9. Rue des Récollets and Grétry museum
10. Youth hostel Simenon and the convent of the Recollects
11. Saint-Pholien Church
12. Former Fonck barracks
13. Bavière Hospital
14. Sainte-Barbe hospice
15. Tanneurs and the free commune of Saint-Pholien
16. Pont des Arches

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1. Footbridge

In 1877 the local authority decided to connect the two banks of the River Meuse with a footbridge. The first one was completed in 1880. Spared during the First World War, it was sabotaged at the start of the Second. Rebuilt after the war, the footbridge was re-opened in 1949. In the 1990 it was transformed and equipped with a ramp suitable for cyclists that now overhangs the Meuse.

2. Boulevard Saucy

Until 1872, Boulevard Saucy was occupied by a forebay. In 1873, the new boulevard took the name of the missing forebay. It was lined by new buildings, giving it the appearance we know today. The emblematic building on the boulevard is the Athenaeum, opened in 1883. Over the entrance, a statue represents a metalworker in a reflexive pose. It was sculpted by Guillaume Beaujean. The Athenaeum bears the name of Maurice Destenay, who was formerly Mayor of Liège and a Minister in the national government.

3. Monument to Tchantchès

Tchantchès is the name given to a marionette who appeared in Liège in the 19th century. A popular character, Tchantchès became the archetypal Liégeois over the years. Created by Joseph Zomers, he fully deserved a monument in his name. The statue represents a Hérieuse, the name given to the women who pulled the wagons in the nearby mine, carrying the puppet. Zomers died in 1928, so he did not live to see the inauguration of the monument in 1936. The pedestal is preceded by a basin and a small garden, designed by the architect Bernimalin. Following the creation of a roundabout on the site in 1996, the monument was moved a few metres away.

4. Tchantchès Museum

Created in 1947 by the Free Republic of Outre-Meuse, the museum in honour of Tchantchès was originally located in Rue Grande-Bêche. It was opened in 1959 at no. 56 Rue Surlet. The following year, it became the home of the Théâtre Royal Ancien Impérial, home to a prestigious collection of 129 marionettes. Nowadays, the museum puts on shows and displays an impressive collection of marionettes from Liège. The building is also occupied by the Free Republic of Outre-Meuse. Founded in 1927, it defends the traditions and the folklore of the neighbourhood. It coordinates and organises the great annual event of Outremeuse: the 15th August festival.

5. August 15th

The high point of Liège’s year, the August 15th festival combines religion, folklore and the local people’s liking for pèkèt, a local juniper berry liqueur. Many other events take place alongside the festivities: masses in Walloon, ground fireworks (tirs de campes) or a folkloric procession. The moment when the Vierge noire (Black Virgin, the central figure of the procession) leaves her church and is paraded through the streets is one of the key moments of the festivities. The effigy dates from around 1600, and she owes her name to the patina that has developed on her over the centuries. During the evenings, the neighbourhood becomes a great popular fiesta with music concerts and several stands serving pèkèt. On August 16th, the burial of Matî l’Ohè (a burlesque festivity bone) brings the event to a close.
6. The legend of Tchantchès

The name ‘Roture’ comes from the ancient French rote, which means road, but has no direct link to the word ‘roturier’ (commoner). Rue Roture is one of the popular old streets of Outremeuse, as seen in its numerous buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries. The street has also conserved a potale, the name given to alcoves and chapels that house a statue, often of the Virgin, who watches over the neighbourhood. Outremeuse has many of these. Two grilles installed in the early 20th century stand at the end of the street. Called “the lions’ cage”, they were put there to stop children running out onto Rue Puits-en-Sock, where carts frequently passed.

7. Rue Roture

A plaque at no. 58 Rue Roture recalls the legend that Tchantchès was born there. Even though made of wood, the marionette Tchantchès has his own legend, not without touches of humour... Tchantchès was born in Outremeuse in 760. During his baptism, his head banged on the edge of the baptismal font, which meant that his face was ugly and his nose out of proportion. Having swallowed a piece of horseshoe, he could no longer turn his head or look down. Despite all this misfortune, it did not stop Tchantchès from enjoying a full life. The “Prince” of Outremeuse who entered the court of Charlemagne, he was a formidable soldier thanks to the frightening strength in his head. No armour could resist his head butts. After avenging the death of this companion Roland, he returned to Liège. He dies of Spanish flu at the age of 40... According to the legend, Tchantchès was buried on the site of his statue.

8. Puits-en-Sock

The name ‘Puits-en-Sock’ consists of two parts, Puits and Sock. While the word Puits (water well) has no mystery to it, people still wonder about the meaning of Sock. An old road, it was the natural route out towards Germany. As ‘Roture’, it has conserved many ancient buildings, some of them decorated with signs from the 18th century. If you raise your eyes, you can see a variety of inscriptions at nos. 22 AU MORaine - 1729, 35 A L’ANNEAU D’OR - 1723, 50 Au gland d’or - 1750 and 56 A LA LANCE D’OR. Another element is seen on a sign in the street: a representation of the castle of Franchimont at no. 29.

9. Rue des Récollets and Grétry museum

As its name indicates, this street leads to the old convent of the Recollects. An ancient street, it was inhabited by drapers, a guild that had a strong presence in this part of the city. At no. 34, the Grétry museum invites you to discover the life of a composer through several objects and documents, some of which belonged to him. Very fashionable in the second half of the 18th century, an inscription indicates the birthday of this great composer in 1741. Although he died in 1813, the museum was formally opened one hundred years later by King Albert I and Queen Elisabeth.

10. Youth hostel Simenon and convent of the Recollects

Up to the Revolution, the church of Saint-Nicolas and the youth hostel Simenon next door made up the convent of the Recollects. A religious order dedicated to St Francis of Assisi, the Recollects set up in Liège at the end of the 15th century. Confiscated during the Revolution, the convent church was converted into a parish church in 1804. Dedicated to St Nicholas since then, the church - which dates from the early 18th century - is home to the statue of the Vierge noire (Black Virgin) mentioned above. The rest of the convent is now occupied by a youth hostel. It bears the name of one of the most famous sons of Outremeuse: Georges Simenon.
11. Saint-Pholien Church

The present church of Saint-Pholien was completed in 1914. In the neo-Gothic style, it was designed by the architect Edmond Jamar. Although the building is recent, a church dedicated to Saint Pholien has been on this site since the Middle Ages. The church of Saint-Pholien was immortalised in a novel by Georges Simenon: *Le pendu de Saint-Pholien* (Maigret and the hundred gibbets). Based on an anecdote, the discovery of a man hanging at the entrance to the church in 1931 led to Simenon creating one of the first appearances of Inspector Maigret.

12. Former Fonck barracks

The Monastery of Val des Écoliers was founded in the 13th century and survived until the Revolution, when it was converted into a military barracks. Considerably modified and redesigned in the 19th century, there are still some remains of the monastery, whose capitular hall dates from the 14th century. Among the buildings constructed in the 19th century, the imposing riding arena from 1837 is now used for festive events. The barracks bear the name of Cavalier Antoine Fonck, the first Belgian soldier killed in the Great War. His regiment, the 2nd Lancers, was stationed in these barracks. The building has housed an art school since 1999.

13. Bavière Hospital

Completed in 1877, the Boulevard de la Constitution occupies the site of an old millrace, now transformed into a straight-line street lined by trees. Every Friday, the Saint-Pholien flea market takes place in the shadow of these trees. An emblematic building on the boulevard, the entrance to the former Bavière hospital was constructed in 1895. Originally located in an ancient property belonging to Prince-Bishop Ernest of Bavaria, the hospital stood on the site of the modern-day Place de l’Yser. It was moved here at the end of the 19th century, with only the chapel being conserved. Disassembled and installed next to the main entrance, it was opened in 1899. In the 1980s the hospital was installed in the Citadel. The declassified building is still waiting, like the site, a new classification.

14. Sainte-Barbe hospice

Founded by Jean-Ernest de Surlet de Chokier in 1698, the Sainte-Barbe hospice was built to house beggars, tramps, wayward women and - later on - women considered mad. After the Revolution, the building was used as an orphanage until it was sold by the Public Centre for Social Welfare of Liège in the 1980s. Purchased by the non-profit organisation La Maison Heureuse, the set of buildings, including a neo-Gothic chapel and others from the 19th and 17th centuries, was renovated by the architect Charles Vandenhove. Inserted in a wall, a cannon reminds us that a bastion stood next to the old Sainte-Barbe hospice.
15. Tanneurs and the free commune of Saint-Pholien

The street and the quai des Tanneurs recall the main activity that took place in the neighbourhood. The tanners, together with the drapers, made up one of the 32 ‘honourable professions’ (guilds) in the city of Liège. The quay still has several old residences, such as the one located at no. 11 AUX 3 COURONES D’OR - 1759 that bears an inscription over the door. Not far from the quay, the building at nos. 16 and 18 of Rue des Écoliers with the sign A LA POMME D’OR is occupied by the ‘Council of the Free Commune of Saint-Pholien-des-Prés’. This body safeguards the folklore of the neighbourhood.

16. Pont des Arches

The Pont des Arches is the oldest bridge in Liège and was the only one to span the Meuse until the 19th century. The first was built in the 11th century. The present bridge was reconstructed in 1947 by the architect Georges Dedoyard. Its piers are decorated by statues that trace the history of Liège. They contain references to The Birth of Liège and the Belgian Revolution of 1830 on one side, and The Middle Ages and The Resistance to the German Occupation on the other. Finally, and marking the entry point to the bridge, the bas-reliefs on the right evoke the Nativity and the legend of the horse called Bayard, while those on the left pay tribute to popular scenes typical of Liège.
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