



ROUSSILLON CONFLENT
TOURIST OFFICE

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Not-to-be-missed



Les Orgues d'Ille sur Têt

INFO & CONTACTS

Les Orgues d'Ille
sur Têt site

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PHOTO CREDITS

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In the Têt valley, the Orgues site is a series of astonishing natural formations known as “fairy chimneys”. This is a unique mineral landscape with colourful contours, sculpted by water into the clay and sand carried down from the Pyrenean mountains over the past five million years.

FROM THE MAKING OF A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE...

Five million years ago, Roussillon was... under water. Gradually, as the climate changed, the sea withdrew, leaving layers of sediment that accumulated over the centuries. Erosion then sculpted the sand and clay, giving rise to geological formations that continue to evolve today under the effects of wind, sun, and rain.

These distinctive formations are known as “fairy chimneys” or “Hoodooos” in the United States and Canada. The ones at Ille sur Têt **have been listed since 1981** under the law safeguarding “natural monuments and sites of artistic, historical, scientific, legendary or picturesque significance”.

... TO THE BIRTH OF AN EXCEPTIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTION

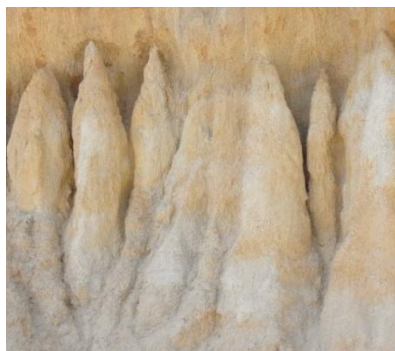
Before it was classified, the site was called *Els terrers* by the Catalans. This term refers to arid and poor land. It was also known as the “scarred bank”, in reference to the many ravines cutting through the band of sediment along the Têt in this area.

The remains of *feixes* (stone walls) and terraces on the site bear witness to relatively recent agricultural activity. In fact, when the site was classified in 1981, it was still a peach orchard that continued to be cultivated for another ten years after that. It was only in 1992 that the town of Ille sur Têt purchased the site to develop it as a tourist attraction. Today, over 100,000 visitors a year come to visit the Orgues d'Ille.

AN INVITATION TO UNLEASH THE IMAGINATION

Facing the *Canigó*, the Orgues offer above-all a stunning view. To make the most of it, a viewpoint and an orientation table have been set up along the Route de Montalba.

Then, when you enter the site, it feels as if you are stepping onto another planet. The sculpted stone and the colours that shift throughout the day invite contemplation and spark the imagination. It is not uncommon, in fact, to hear stories of elves and fairies associated with the Orgues.



Find out more at tourisme-roussillon-confient.fr