

Caves and Castles of the Dordogne

5 Night Tour - Bed & Breakfast

Your itinerary

The following pages contain general information about your car or motorcycle tour and the locations where you will stay. The order in which they appear may not be the order your hotels have been confirmed for you - for your individual itinerary please refer to your holiday documentation.





Advance planning

To decide on places to see and plan your route it's useful to refer to tourist office and travel websites such as Google maps, viamichelin.com* or theaa.co.uk.

*Motorway tolls, if applicable, are indicated on this site.

Hotel directions With your travel documents is an information sheet for each hotel giving directions together with some further details.

Arrival Unless stated, you will be expected to arrive at each of the hotels pre-booked for you by 6pm each day. This should allow time for a fairly leisurely drive between overnight stops but if you find you will be arriving later than this please ring the hotel so your room is held for you.

This tour is on a bed and breakfast basis.

Superb castles, prehistoric sites, stunning landscapes and a rich history make this one of the most exceptional areas of France and this new tour takes you to the heart of it. There is also a night in the Loire valley near the beautiful city of Tours.

Hautefort, Marquessac, Milandes, Castelnaud and Beynac all have superb châteaux, each with their own story to discover. With Roman origins and an abundance of architectural treasures Périgueux is a City of Art and History, with a vibrant atmosphere. Sarlat is one of the most picturesque Dordogne towns, with medieval golden stone buildings and a famous covered market.



Périgueux

This ancient town is the capital of the Dordogne and its past is reflected through its magnificent architecture. Périgueux hosts the second largest museum of prehistory in France, the Museum of Art and Archaeology, where you will be guided through a fascinating time travelling journey starting from the Stone Age. The city was originally named Vesunna by the Gallo Romans - it was a sumptuous and prosperous town and numerous vestiges remain from this extraordinary period.

The Vesunna tower, built by the Romans during the 1st century, is the most sacred part of a sanctuary built in the heart of the town. The Arena's Gardens, the Normandy Gate and the exclusive collections of the Vesunna museum are all worth a visit too. Périgueux also boasts a charming medieval centre, an imposing cathedral and a colourful Saturday market. The city is famous for its gastronomy so make sure you visit some of the excellent restaurants here.

Château de Hautefort - 40k east of Périgueux, Hautefort is one of the most impressive châteaux in the Dordogne and is a listed historical monument. This style of chateau with two wings each terminating in a round tower is little known in the Dordogne and more like those built in the Loire Valley. It is in a fabulous location overlooking the Auvézère Valley and has beautifully landscaped gardens to stroll around.

Sarlat la Canéda



Sarlat has to be one the most beautiful towns in the Dordogne. Its old quarter, dating from both medieval and Renaissance times is an absolute pleasure to visit. Wander around the covered market where you will find all sorts of local and traditional products including foie gras, truffles, various cheeses and walnuts.

After a tour of Sarlat, take an hour's boat trip along the river in a flat-bottomed 'gabarre'. This is the perfect opportunity to relax and discover the beautiful fauna and flora of the Dordogne.

The world-famous **Lascaux Caves** - 25k north of Sarlat are a must-see for visitors to this region being the finest of all prehistoric painted caves made by Cro-Magnon man.

The original Lascaux cave is closed and under close surveillance in order to preserve this place which is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, Lascaux II was opened in 1983 and is a meticulous replica with the same contours, paintings, techniques and pigments. It enables everybody to discover the prehistoric masterpieces for themselves.

Today, you can visit the amazing International Cave Painting Centre of Montignac-Lascaux known as Lascaux IV. This fairly new complex is centred on the reconstruction of the Lascaux cave with the use of new imaging and virtual reality technology.



Châteaux and gardens near Sarlat:

Castelnaud la Chapelle - this perfect example of a medieval fortress is built on a rocky outcrop and offers a magnificent panoramic view over the Dordogne valley. On the battlements, the most powerful weapons of the Middle Ages have been recreated and placed in attack positions. Its museum also displays a good collection of arms and armour.



Château de Beynac - this castle perched high on a cliff was founded in the 12th century. It is rich in history and culture and served as a powerful fortress through the wars and crusades of the Périgord region. It

was on the border between the French and English kingdoms during the Hundred Years War.



Château des Milandes - built in 1489 by Lord François de Caumont, this enchanting château represents a fine example of Renaissance architecture with beautiful Gothic

features and remained the home of the Caumont family until the French Revolution. The gardens are also stunning and birds of prey displays are held daily here in late Spring onwards.



Les Jardins de Marqueyssac - The Château de Marqueyssac is surrounded by romantic and picturesque gardens which are one of France's listed Jardins

Remarquables'. Designed for walking with clipped box hedges forming a magical maze, the gardens have the most wonderful panoramic view over the Dordogne valley.

Tours



A modern and lively city with a thriving university which celebrates its history in its many museums including the Musée des Beaux-Arts which has a fine art collection and lovely gardens. There is also a magnificent

cathedral to visit and a charming old town with narrow streets, medieval half-timbered houses and lots of pavement bars & cafés. Tours is great for shopping too with an incredible 30 markets and chic boutiques in the city centre. It's also a great base for exploring other places in the Loire Valley such as Azay le Rideau, 20 minutes away.



Approximate driving distances and times to/from ports

Périgueux - Chancelade

Caen - 350 miles/565k. 5 hours 40 mins
Cherbourg - 425 miles/680k. 6 hours 45 mins
Le Havre - 400 miles/640k. 6 hours 20 mins
St Malo - 390 miles/625k. 5 hours 55 mins
Roscoff - 475 miles/765k. 7 hours 5 mins

Tours - Veigné

Caen - 175 miles/230k. 2 hours 45 mins
Cherbourg - 245 miles/395k. 3 hours 50 mins
Le Havre - 200 miles/325k. 3 hours 20 mins
St Malo - 210 miles/335k. 3 hours 20 mins
Roscoff - 295 miles/480k. 4 hours 35 mins

