

Dordogne Gastronomic Cycling

Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Dramatic river valleys, medieval towns, fairytale châteaux, prehistoric sites
- Cycle along the banks of the Vézère, Dordogne, Beaune and Borreze rivers
- Excellent hotels - swimming pools at all - lots of "stay put" day options
- Special gastronomic menus; world-famous wine discoveries
- Lovely temperate climate, ideal for cycling



This holiday explores one of the most fascinating corners of the Dordogne, and includes some of the nicest hotels - all with private swimming pools - in the region.

The cycling is varied, packed with interest, and takes you along the banks of the Dordogne and Vézère rivers, through ancient woodlands and past pretty farmsteads and, as this part of France is famous for its cooking and the excellence of the ingredients, we've arranged specially good evening meals.

You visit the best sights in the region too. The Valley of Pre-History shows how homosapiens lived around 20,000 years ago, and Sarlat's mediaeval magic will hold you spellbound. The towering strongholds of Beynac, Castelnaud, Domme and Montfort, built during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) have breathtaking views and your route also takes you to little-known châteaux hidden deep in the woods.

You're never far from the Dordogne and Vézère rivers, so you often get the chance to swim and you can go fishing or canoeing too.



Day 1 Arrive Souillac

Souillac is a bustling town, with an impressive Benedictine abbey, good shops and an excellent mechanical toy museum. Our hotel, with swimming pool, is right in the centre if you fancy a wander and pre-dinner *apéritif*.

Day 2 Souillac to Sarlat 35km/22mi or 37km/23mi

The easier of today's choices takes you west along the Dordogne Valley, with the possibility of a lunch stop at the fabulous Château de Fenelon - there's a fine collection of armour, arms and *objets d'art* dating from C15 to C18. The more challenging route takes you across the river via Carlux, and on through lovely wooded countryside to the little village of Ste Nathalie. Either way, you'll arrive at our *** hotel which is set in 3 acres of pine woods overlooking the Sarlat Valley.

Day 3 At Sarlat

This was the old regional capital. The *Vieux Quartier* is an astonishingly beautiful jumble of widely varying architectural styles, and virtually all pre-17C. A self-guided historical audio walk is available from the tourist office, and there's a lively market on a Wednesday and Saturday. You could also cycle to Domme or La Roque-Gageac - we provide you with route notes.

Day 4 Sarlat to Les Eyzies 28km/17mi or 43km/27mi

You have a choice of routes again today. You either head west cross country through the rich green rolling countryside of the Périgord Nord to the village of Meyrals (traditional Périgourdine houses), or head down to the Dordogne taking in Beynac with its impressive fortified castle. Then along the banks of the river to lively St Cyprien - good lunch stop. Your final stretch takes you up through wooded glades and past the Roc de Cazelle troglodyte cave village and on to the prehistoric capital, Les Eyzies. Our hotel here is set in lovely tranquil gardens and has a private swimming pool.

Day 5 At Les Eyzies

The steep limestone cliffs surrounding the village are honeycombed with shelters and caves where prehistoric man once lived and practised magic. Our circular cycling route takes you through the magnificent Vézère Gorges and back via the Abri du Cap Blanc where you'll find the only remaining frieze of prehistoric sculptures in the world open to the public. Or spend the day canoeing or kayaking down the gentle Vézère River.

Day 6 Les Eyzies to Montignac 24km/15mi or 30km/19mi

A fabulous freewheel down to the Vézère river and on to visit La Roque St Christophe - the oldest and largest cave site in western Europe - and the pretty village of St Léon with its charming C12 church and lovely riverside picnic spots. An easy afternoon cycle to Montignac where Isabelle and Vincent Nourrisson offer a warm welcome, wonderful food, lovely pool and walled rose garden. A true hidden gem!

Day 7 At Montignac

Explore the pretty mediaeval village, perhaps wandering up to the ruined château, before heading off to the nearby Lascaux II caves, ranked as the number one prehistoric site in Europe. Discovered in 1940 by four children looking for their dog, the caves offer an amazing collection of paintings and are well worth a visit. Back at the hotel, the gardens, shaded verandas, swimming pool and sun terrace are perfect for relaxing and soaking up the summer sun.

Day 8 Montignac to Souillac 48km/30mi or 55km/34mi

Starting out, you head first via the tiny farming village of St-Amand-de-Coly (impressive abbey) and on through wooded glades to Salignac. From here, we'd recommend a short detour to the Manoir d'Eyrignac whose impressive C18 gardens are rated the best in France. Then lovely flat cycling through open country passing chestnut groves, maize fields and masses of sunflowers, perhaps stopping off at charming St Geniès with its C14 chapel. Roll through traditional Périgord villages such as Eyvignes and Eybènes (church and manor worth a stop), before heading down into the Borrèze valley. Back in Souillac, if time, perhaps visit the Vieille Prune Distillery.

Day 9 Leave Souillac

You leave the hotel after breakfast.



Dates and Prices

Departs every two days **Tour Only**

2012 departures	Tour Only
May 11-25, Sep 12-24	\$3,139
May 27-31, Jun 8-12	\$3,156
Sep 2-10	\$3,156
Jun 2-6, Jun 14-Jul 8	\$3,244
Aug 29-31	\$3,244
Jul 10-Aug 27	\$3,244
Child (any dates, see notes)	\$2,099

Singles: Add \$57 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Child: Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$28 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

Holiday type: Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

Departs: Every two days from May 11 to Sep 24.

Duration: 9 days (8 nights).

Meals: Continental breakfast and evening meals.

Other details: Shuttle Bus from Toulouse Blagnac Airport to Toulouse Matabiau Station payable locally cost approximately 5 Euro/\$7 per person per one way journey. For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Toulouse Blagnac Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Souillac train station at 15:08 Mon-Sat, 15:32 Sun (transfer to hotel, 10 mins, provided). **Return:** Souillac train station by 11:31 Mon-Fri, 12:27 Sun, (Brive to Toulouse 11:59 Sat - Transfer to Brive 40 mins, provided). Rail options: Toulouse Matabiau to Souillac 13:22/15:08 Mon-Sat, 13:46/15:32 Sun. Return: Souillac to Toulouse 11:31/13:20 Mon-Fri, 12:27/14:16 Sun, (Brive to Toulouse 11:59/14:08 Sat).

Second Class French Rail: Add \$97 per person, round trip.

First Class French Rail: Please phone for details and prices.

Tour only: Transfers included from Souillac train station at 15:08 Mon-Sat, 15:32 Sun and back to Souillac train station at 11:15 Mon-Fri, 12:15 Sun and back to Brive departing hotel at 11:00 Sat.

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DORDOGNE GASTRONOMIC CYCLING | WHERE YOU STAY



Hotel le Quercy
★★
Souillac
Days 1+8



Hostellerie de Meysset
★★★★
Sarlat
Days 2+3



Hotel les Glycines
★★★★
Les Eyzies
Days 4+5



Hotel La Roseaie
★★★★
Montignac
Days 6+7

For extra nights we recommend Souillac, Sarlat and Montignac, and city add-ons can be arranged in Toulouse.