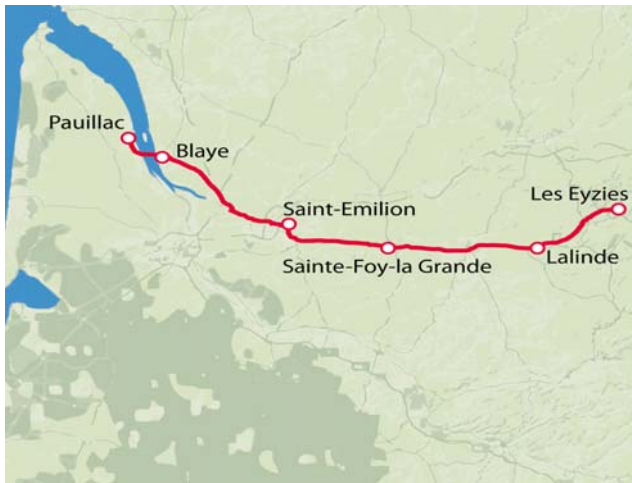


# Cycling Safaris

## BORDEAUX WINETRAIL 2010



This tour explores many famous, as well as less-well-known French wine regions. It is a “wine-themed” cycling adventure round a beautiful and memorable area. On the way we'll meet some of the friendliest Vignerons in the business.

We stop off at many châteaux where the owners show off their traditional skills. We also pass through the extraordinary reclaimed landscape and fishing villages of the Bas Medoc. The Gironde and the Dordogne Rivers dominate the first half of the week. Fifty miles long and up to six miles wide, the Gironde is the waterway that leads from the Atlantic to Bordeaux, and the forts and citadels that overlook the Gironde at Cussac, Bourg and Blaye bear testament to the not-so-friendly history that exists between the French and the English!

The vineyards continue as we follow the Dordogne upstream and, as the scenery changes to beautiful wooded hillsides, we pass through St Emilion and Bergerac. St Emilion, with its medieval streets on a hillside overlooking the Dordogne, is unforgettable. The route following the Dordogne from St Emilion to Les Eyzies on one of the cycling highlights of the week. As we approach Les Eyzies we enter an area rich in prehistory and natural caves such as Grand Roc.

Throughout the week we make regular stops at vignobles. From grand châteaux in haut medoc and St Emilion, to the exquisite sweet wines of Monbazillac, and up-and-coming areas like Castillon and Pécharment, wine provides the backdrop for a memorable week. You will meet some fascinating growers, sample some memorable wines with the owners and discover some hidden secrets about the world's largest Vineyard. If you like good wine, you'll love it. If you don't, perhaps it's time you did!

### TOUR ITINERARY

#### **DAY 1**                      **Saturday**

We start from Les Eyzies in the heart of the Périgord, and meet as a group just prior to dinner at 7.30 p.m. at Le Moulin de la Beune, a wonderful hotel in the region.

**DAY 2      Sunday      Les Eyzies to Lalinde      30 miles / 48 km**

This isn't wine country, but it is beautiful country. Cycling over the 'Cingle de Tremolat' we're treated to fantastic views over the Dordogne valley, and we take a lunch break at the lovely Bastide town of Limeuil where the Dordogne and Vézère rivers meet. We end the day at Lalinde, another Bastide and once an important town where the canal took boat-traffic past the rapids of the Dordogne.

**DAY 3      Monday      Lalinde to Sainte Foy la Grande      30 miles / 48 km**

Today we enter wine country. We're headed for St Foy La Grand, just the other side of the Bergerac appellation, but en route we visit two very special areas within the Bergerac vineyard.

First up is Pécharment, locally styled as 'The St Emilion of Bergerac'. The growers here take great pride in their wines. We'll taste at Ch. Tiregand, courtesy of Le Compte de St Exupéry. The Compte is a great host and one of the most respected winemakers in the region.

In the afternoon we cycle through Monbazillac, home to exquisite sweet wines. The yields are tiny, and as you'll see the vigneron are justly proud of their wines. Dominique Vidal, of Chateau Fonmourges where we'll taste this afternoon, is a specialist with an encyclopedic knowledge of his subject.

We end the day in St Foy, one of the best preserved Bastides in France. En route we pass through Bergerac, with a beautiful 'old town' and a rich history.

**DAY 4      Tuesday      Sainte Foy la Grande to Saint Emillion      30 miles / 48 km**

Today we follow the Dordogne, first passing through the appellation\* of Montravel. Most wine-drinkers would be hard placed to locate Montravel, but actually it's a fascinating appellation. A single estate can produce wines under five separate Appellations d'Origin Contrôlée, and at le Puy Servain we meet one of the finest winemakers in the region; the list of prizes runs to several books – literally.

Passing the 'monument of shame' (the Monument Talbot, where the English Admiral Talbot finally lost The Hundred Years War in 1453) we cycle through Castillon to arrive in St Emilion. We have the chance to visit château Belair, one of St Emilion's top wine estates, for a tasting and a tour of their amazing underground caverns, and this evening we eat at the restaurant of Francis Goulée. Of all our French tours, this is perhaps the finest food of all, and in fact St Emilion, with its medieval cobbles, centuries-old wine traditions and ancient monolithic church, is just unforgettable.

\*Appellation refers to the *place* where the grapes are grown. Many appellations have official status, with either a government or trade bureau responsible to strictly delimit and regulate usage in order to assure both quality and authenticity.

An appellation may be as large as an entire region, encompassing hundreds of thousands of acres and many separate vineyards, or as small as a single vineyard of perhaps four acres or less.

Most of the best-known wines from France are appellation wines.

**DAY 5      Wednesday      Saint Emillion to Blaye      38 miles / 60 km**

Today is a long cycle ride – almost 40 miles. We leave the Dordogne behind us at Libourne and begin our acquaintance with the Gironde that will last the rest of the week. We pass through St Andre de Cubzac, birthplace and resting place of Jacques Cousteau, and we cycle through Pomerol, Fronsac and the Côtes de Bourg on our way to the Gironde port of Blaye.

Our hotel tonight is the delightful Auberge de Porches, where the owner has a deserved reputation for her adventurous cooking – with a little encouragement she will pull out articles featuring her hotel and its cuisine! Blaye boasts an absolutely huge Citadelle that once protected the approaches to Bordeaux from the English, who used to own the place! Today we will taste at one of the premier

estates in Fronsac, Château de la Riviere, which has a reputation as the most beautiful estate in the whole of Bordeaux.

**DAY 6      Thursday      Blaye to Pauillac      25 miles / 40 km**

A lazy day, and isn't it about time? We cross the Gironde by ferry to Cussac, and make our way to the Bernard family at Château du Raux in the Haut Médoc. This is exactly the popular image of wine-making in France, a family estate producing quality wines as a family business. The son, Patrick, is a highly qualified wine-maker, and provides a fascinating insight into wine - with luck you'll be able to taste direct from the barrel.

After lunch we'll visit one of the more famous names of the haut médoc at Chateau Lynch-Bages, an opportunity to see one of the finest names in wine-making going about their business. Time and energy permitting, we might also have the opportunity to visit the museum at Mouton Rothschild. Normally we avoid the carefully manicured estates of the Grand Cru Classé in the Haut Médoc, however, an afternoon seeing how the other half of the wine world live is fascinating. Tonight we stay in Pauillac, the world centre of fine wine.

**DAY 7      Friday      Pauillac      32 miles / 50 km**

Today we 'descend' from the Haut Médoc (literally the High Medoc) to the Médoc, a drop of almost 10 metres! The landscape changes. Centuries ago Dutch engineers built causeways between the gravel areas of the médoc and drained the land in between to reclaim the land that we cycle through today, and the gravel deposits are where the vineyards are. Leaving behind the well-known estates of the Haut Médoc we have the chance to visit some fascinating estates. At Le Tour de By they still use huge wooden vats that are almost never seen nowadays, and at Château Loudenne we can see how a superbly organised commercial vineyard works. Our final night together is spent again in Pauillac.

**DAY 8      Saturday**

An early departure for the train in Bordeaux that reaches Paris in the late morning and London by 3.00 pm in the afternoon.

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## GROUP TOUR DATES

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July 24  
August 7  
September 4

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## TOUR PRICE

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- €1,365.00 based on 2 sharing a room
- €1,615.00 for single occupancy

*If you are travelling on your own, we will endeavour to find a room mate for you)*

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## WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

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- 7 nights hotel accommodation with breakfast
- 7 dinners
- Guide cycling with the group
- Luggage transferred locally
- 24 speed hybrid touring bike
- Vineyard fees and wine-tasting
- Transfer from Angouleme train station to the starting point of the tour (Les Eyzies)
- Transfer to Bordeaux at the end of the tour.

Not included:

- Admission charges to the chateaux.

## ACCOMMODATION - Please note that confirmation in these places is subject to availability

Day	Hotel	Town	Telephone
SATURDAY	Le Moulin de la Beune	Les Eyzies de Tayac	05 53 06 94 33
SUNDAY	Hotel le Foret	Lalinde	05 53 27 98 30
MONDAY	Grande Hotel	Sainte Foy la Grande	05 57 46 00 08
TUESDAY	Auberge de la Commanderie	Saint Emillion	05 57 24 70 19
WEDNESDAY	Auberge du Porche	Blaye	05 57 42 22 69
THURSDAY	Hotel France et Angleterre	Pauillac	05 56 59 01 20
FRIDAY	Hotel France et Angleterre	Pauillac	05 56 59 01 20

## WHAT TO BRING

- Comfortable cycling clothing - padded cycling shorts and cycling gloves are invaluable.
- Hat, sunglasses, suntan lotion, swimwear.
- Casual clothes for evening. You may be grateful for something warm with long sleeves.
- Helmets, though not obligatory in France, are highly recommended. To be sure of comfort we suggest you bring your own helmet, however, in the event that you need a helmet, they are provided.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

It is up to you to make your way to and from the tour. To help you in your travel arrangements we will arrange a transfer to the start point. You will be met on Saturday off the mid afternoon train arriving at Angoulême at 16.15 from Paris, or at 16.55 from London (via Lille) and Charles de Gaulle Airport and brought to the starting point at Les Eyzies. At the end of the tour you will be brought back to Bordeaux St Jean train station in time for the 07.50 departure to Charles de Gaulle airport and London (via Lille) and the 08.28 departure to Paris. Both transfers are included in the tour price.

**Train Arrival and Departure Times from London.** Note: Check-in no later than 30 minutes before departure.

Please check train times prior to departure

**From/To London:**

Outward Journey	Departure London St Pancras International	08:59	Change of train in Lille Europe
	<b>Arrival Angouleme</b>	<b>16:55</b>	
Inward Journey	Departure Angouleme	07: 50	Change of train in Lille Europe
	Arrival London St Pancras International	14:34	

Transfers are from and to London using Eurostar and TGV trains, and also includes local transfers. Note, there is a change of trains in Lille Europe. Local transfers are to and from Angouleme station and your hotel.

**From/To Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport or Paris Montparnasse Train Station**

Outward Journey	Departure Ch. De Gaulle Airport	13:37	Departure Montparnasse	14:10
	<b>Arrival Angouleme</b>	<b>16:55</b>	<b>Arrival Angouleme</b>	<b>16:15</b>
Inward	Departure Angouleme	07:50	Departure Bordeaux St Jean	08:28

Journey	Arrival Ch. De Gaulle Airport	12:09	Arrival Montparnasse	11:30
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Transfers are from and to Paris Montparnasse or Paris Charles de Gaulle TGV, and also includes local transfers. Local transfers are from Angouleme station to the first hotel, and from the last hotel to Bordeaux St Jean station if you are traveling back to Paris Montparnasse. If however you are travelling back to Paris Charles de Gaulle, the last transfer will be back to Angouleme.

On arrival at Angouleme you will be met by a tour representative and brought by minibus (90 miles/approx. 2 hrs) to the starting point at Les Eyzies de Tayac. These are the only transfers that we arrange, so it is very important that you are on the right train. If you do miss the train, try and arrange to get on the next one. If you have to pay for another ticket you are responsible for the cost (depending on circumstances you may be covered by insurance). Call the owner of the first hotel, Mme SOULIÉ (05 53 06 94 33 from within France, 00 33 553 06 94 33 from outside France) and give her your name and arrival details. The tour guide will help you arrange another transfer to the hotel (approx. €200, a cost we are afraid which you will have to pay).

You can of course make your own way to and from the tour. All details on trains in France are available through the website <http://www.raileurope.com/us/index.htm>. If you drive you can leave your car at the first hotel.

**Local airports:** Both Bergerac and Bordeaux are well placed. Bordeaux means a long transfer at the beginning of the week, Bergerac means a long transfer at the end of the week. Both these options are quite expensive, so our advice would be:

**Bordeaux airport.** Take the train from Bordeaux to Les Eyzies, and we'll arrange collection from the train station. At the end of the week the transfer goes via Bordeaux Merignac, which is on the Pauillac side of Bordeaux.

**Bergerac airport.** Transfer to Les Eyzies. At the end of the week, our bikes are returned to Les Eyzies, via Bergerac airport if necessary.

**For the benefit of those travelling from Luton/Stansted.** Check out [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com) for times of the regular bus shuttle between these 2 airports.

## BIKE / FITNESS

We use Trek 7300 FX Hybrid 24 speed touring bike with aluminium frame and Shimano gear system.

Level of difficulty: Bordeaux - \*\*½ hilly at the beginning, a couple of difficult days and a couple of easy days.

Average daily distance 30 miles

Maximum daily distance 38 miles

\*\*\*\*\* Training camps / sport cyclists. 50 to 80 miles per day, hills an integral part.

\*\*\*\* Distances and / or hills make this a challenging tour suitable for people who exercise regularly.

\*\*\* Moderate level of fitness required. Distances are no more than 40 miles a day, but hilly terrain.

\*\* Distances and terrain are slightly easier, suitable for people who are not strangers to exercise, but don't get out as often as they'd like!

## GROUP, GUIDE AND BACK-UP SERVICE

The maximum group size on these tours is fifteen people and one, sometimes two guides. Each person has their own route details, as well as a guide who cycles with you, while your luggage is locally transferred each day. There is no “sag” wagon as such but we can arrange to collect the weary!!

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### **Food and Drink**

#### *What if I have any special dietary requirements?*

Vegetarians are catered for (please advise if you eat fish). Vegans choice will be limited but they can be accommodated.

#### *Are beverages included with the meals?*

No, all beverages are to your own account.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT!**