

Cycling Safaris

DORDOGNE 2010

The Dordogne is one of the most spectacular and fascinating areas you are ever likely to visit. Dominated by one of France's longest rivers which has sculpted stunning river valleys, towering cliffs and gorges. These in turn have shaped the wonderful culture and history of this unforgettable place.

The region boasts some of the world's most dramatic caves, navigable underground rivers and stalactites more than 250 feet in length! Known as '*The Capital of Prehistory*', many of the best examples of early settlement and prehistoric art can be seen here. Everywhere you look there are great castles and fortified towns and villages built into cliff faces.

The cuisine of the Perigord is among the most famous in France, particularly as the home of the truffle and of foie gras, and for a cuisine based entirely on ducks, pigs and geese.

If you are interested in prehistoric forts, cave paintings, medieval castles, huge caves and rural scenery then this tour is for you!

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 Saturday Arrive Les Eyzies

We meet in Les Eyzies on Saturday evening. We stay at Le Moulin de la Beune, one of the highlights of our entire tour programme. This delightful hotel sits on the banks of the river Beune just upstream from where it joins the Vézère. We meet as a group just prior to dinner at 7.30 p.m.

Les Eyzies is a little village of 900 people and is justifiably known as the Capital of Prehistory. As well as the National Museum of Prehistory, Les Eyzies boasts the settlement of Cro Magnon, where the first example of homo sapiens, or thinking man were discovered. Nearby is the oldest sculpture in the world, a 20,000 year-old fish at the Abri de Poisson and the Font de Gaume, site of some of the most important cave-paintings in the world.

The paintings of Bison and Deer at Font de Gaume are the only polychromatic paintings still open to the public anywhere in the world and visits are strictly limited. Thanks to Mme Soulié we can visit if we want to and we recommend that you do. Locals believe they will close these caves soon so it is a special honour to be able to visit.

DAY 2 Sunday Les Eyzies to Beynac 31 miles / 52 km

Time to get on your bike! Today we follow the Vézère to Limeuil where it meets the Dordogne. Limeuil is a beautiful bastide town and where the rivers meet is a great place for a swim. This morning we can visit the Gouffre de Proumeyssac – an incredible underground cave also known as the Crystal Cathedral. The cave lies up a pretty impressive hill but it well worth the effort.

the tour highlights. After lunch we follow tiny backroads from Souillac to Sarlat-la-Caneda entering the town on a cycle path built on a disused railway.

Our hotel is the Hotel Des Recollets right in the heart of 'Vieux Sarlat', hidden away down a cobbled alley that typifies this beautiful medieval town. Sarlat is so well preserved that it also rates 3*** from Michelin. During this week you could be forgiven for imagining that Michelin give 3*** away like confetti, however, if you look at their guidebooks for other regions you can see that there are hardly any sites awarded 3***, it is just that the Dordogne Valley really is that good.

Tonight we enjoy probably the finest food of the week - and certainly the finest puddings - at Les Quatres Saisons. We've cycled about 28 miles today and pretty gentle going.

DAY 7 Friday Sarlat – Les Eyzies 30 miles / 50 km

This is our last day of cycling, so we've put in a couple of hills - including the hardest of the week - just to show you how fit you've become. Once we leave Sarlat we turn onto tiny country roads that lead to the hilltop town of Marquay and beautiful views across the Vézère and Beune valleys. Descending to the Vézère we've arrived back in prehistory territory. We pass the Abri de Cap Blanc with its sculptures on the way to the amazing prehistoric fort at La Roque St Christophe. This village was carved out of overhanging galleries in a 900 metre limestone cliff. This place is arguably the most amazing site we visit all week.

Les Eyzies is another 5 miles, and we have the chance to visit le Font de Gaume to round off a real prehistory day. Sadly, this is the end of the week, and we have definitely earned a beer, or several seated at le Moulin de la Beune on the banks of the Beune.

GROUP TOUR DATE

June 26
July 31
August 28
September 11

TOUR PRICE

€1365.00 per person sharing
€615.00 single occupancy
If you are travelling on your own we will endeavour to find a roommate for you

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights hotel accommodation
- 7 dinners
- Guide cycling with the group
- Luggage transferred locally
- 24 speed hybrid touring bike
- Transfer from Brive la Gaillard to the start of tour (Les Eyzies)
- Transfer to Brive la Gaillard at tour end.

Not included:

- Admission charges to the chateaux.

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.

BIKE / FITNESS

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

Level of difficulty: Dordogne - *** a hilly region, moderate fitness required.
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!

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	Hostel Maleville	Beynac	05 53 29 50 06
MONDAY	Le Petit Relais	Cales	05 65 37 96 09
TUESDAY	Hotel Lou Cantou	Loubressac	05 65 38 20 58
WEDNESDAY	Hotel Les Falaises	Gluge	05 65 27 18 44
THURSDAY	Hotel Compostelle	Sarlat	05 53 59 08 53
FRIDAY	Le Moulin de la Beune	Les Eyzies de Tayac	05 53 06 94 33

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!!

TRAVEL INFORMATION

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 the train station in time for the 08.50 departure to Charles de Gaulle airport and London (via Lille) and the 08.54 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
	Arrival Angouleme	16:55	
Inward Journey	Departure Angouleme	08:50	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
	Arrival Angouleme	16:55	Arrival Angouleme	16:15
Inward Journey	Departure Angouleme	08:50	Departure Angouleme	08:54
	Arrival Ch. De Gaulle Airport	12:09	Arrival Montparnasse	11:35

Transfers are from and to Paris Montparnasse or Paris Charles de Gaulle TGV, and also includes local transfers. Local transfers are to and from Angouleme station.

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 SOULIE, Hotel le Moulin de la Beune (05 53 06 94 33 from within France, 0033 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. €10.00, a cost unfortunately you will have to pay).

All details on trains in France are available through the website <http://www.raileurope.com/us/index.htm>. It is very easy to use and tickets can be booked directly.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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.

Is the water safe to drink?

Yes, it is important to drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluid each day.

Are beverages included with the meals?

No, all beverages are to your own account.

DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT