

Cycling Europe

France: GASGONY TO THE DORDOGNE : AGEN TO SARLAT BY BIKE 2020

From Lot & Garonne to the Black Périgord –
Self-Guided Cycling Tour, 7 days/6 nights



Immerse yourself in the South West of France between the Lot-et-Garonne and the Dordogne ; - two regions which offer a mosaic of enchanting and diverse, timeless landscapes. Start your cycling holiday from Agen, a friendly and lively town, easily reached from the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bordeaux (1 - 1 hour 30 minutes by train). Agen is known for the second longest canal bridge in France and its prunes.

Cycle through medieval bastide towns, past fortified castles and pretty villages such as Monpazier and La Roque Gageac, classified as « most beautiful villages of France ».

Your route will take you over gentle rolling hills, through fertile valleys and wild forests. You will be constantly rewarded with superb views : a hill top château ; a turreted manor house surrounded by walnut trees ; quaint villages ; until you reach the charming medieval town of Sarlat, a few kilometres from the Dordogne River.

The gastronomy and local food are inherent to both region's identity. Don't miss a taste of typical dishes such as the prized black truffles, mushrooms, foie gras and duck confit...





GRADE: Moderate. Cycling on cycle ways and small roads through rolling countryside with some steep hills. A good level of fitness required.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Agen

Make your way to your hotel in Agen, where you will find the road book and bikes waiting for you. This beautiful city, capital of the prune, is half way between Bordeaux and Toulouse has 2000 years of history, and reveals its heritage throughout medieval streets and elegant boulevards from 19th Century and the Museum of Beaux-Arts (fine arts) featuring five Goya paintings (including the self-portrait), among other Spanish works of the 18th and 19th centuries. Farmers' markets showcase local products: foie gras, fruit and vegetables, and of course, plums and prunes.



Day 2: Around the Lot Valley: Agen to Villeneuve sur Lot, 45 kms



Follow beautiful countryside roads as you leave Agen. Cycle via Penne d'Agenais and reach the charming medieval bastide of Villeneuve-sur-Lot. Take time to visit the Foie Gras Museum and discover the secrets of producing this regional speciality. Many farms in the area open their doors to visitors. Stop for a coffee in the lovely town square, surrounded by history on all sides.

Villeneuve-sur-Lot was built on the two banks of the Lot River between 1251 and 1264, by a feudal treaty between "Alphonse de

Poitiers", representing the king of France and the powerful Benedictine Abbey of Eysse. Notable sights include: the main square, the towers of Pujols and Paris, half-timbered houses from 17th and 18th centuries and the Cieutat bridge.

Dinner & breakfast

Day 3: Lot valley & Dordogne: Villeneuve sur Lot to Monpazier - 50 kms

Cycle towards the bastide town of Monflanquin, classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France. Continue through woods and forest on quiet roads to reach the fortress of Gavaudun on the border between the Lot and Périgord regions. After visiting the fortress, cycle on to Biron, known for its fortified castle. Your route will take you through a typical Périgord landscape of oak and chestnut forest and old stone walls to reach the beautiful and remarkable medieval bastide of Monpazier.



This is the best preserved bastide of the Périgord with its 32 monuments classified. It is considered as the most beautiful and as the bastide "model" among the 300 bastides of the South West. It was built in 1284, under the reign of King Edward 1er of England and is an authentic jewel of medieval architecture classified Grand National site since 1991.

Dinner & breakfast

Day 4: Bastide towns of Périgord: Monpazier to Siorac - 45 kms

Follow the 'Route des bastide's from Monpazier to discover thirteenth century English bastides and interesting religious monuments. Take time to admire the cloister of Cadouin, a UNESCO World Heritage site. You will end your day in the Black Périgord, the most famous tourist area of the Dordogne.

The name **Périgord Noir** refers to the high density of green oaks whose foliage is dense, dark and persistent. It is the oldest appellation among the Perigord "green, white, black and purple" It is known for its castles, prehistoric sites, medieval villages and its landscapes.

Dinner & breakfast

Day 5: Chateaux & beautiful villages: Siorac to Sarlat - 50 kms

Immerse yourself in the heart of the Black Périgord and discover beautiful castles – Les Milandes, Castelnaud and Beynac sited on top of a crag. Cycle alongside the Dordogne River and enjoy the lovely medieval villages of France. An ancient river harbour carved in the cliff, the Roque Gageac will amaze you. Then you cycle in the direction of the gastronomic capital of the Black Périgord where you can enjoy the regional cuisine, foie gras, truffles, duck... Sarlat is one of the jewels of the Black Périgord which preserved the footprints of its history. This town of cobbled streets, and old stone walls was built during the ninth century around a large Benedictine abbey; Sarlat's rich architectural heritage deserves its excellent reputation. Its narrow streets, its vaulted passage, its cathedral and its mansions of golden stone, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth century will surprise you.

Breakfast



Day 6: Loop ride in the heart of pre-history: Sarlat- Les Eyzies – Sarlat - 45 kms

Today take the opportunity to cycle in the heart of the Vezere valley: capital of prehistory. Take your pick from caves, rock shelters or the excellent museum in Les Eyzies.

Les Eyzies village, built on a cliff, has numerous pre-historic rock dwellings dating back 460,000 years! Prehistory was born here, in Les Eyzies, where the Cro-Magnon man was discovered. Here you can discover the marvels of prehistoric cave art and numerous prehistoric sites, many of them on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

It is also possible to arrange a tour to Montignac to visit the cave of Lascaux - and the famous prehistoric paintings that line the walls; nicknamed "the Sistine Chapel of prehistory ». This replica of the original cave (now closed to the public due to damage caused by carbon dioxide) is beautifully done and well worth an excursion to get there. (Tickets must be booked locally in advance as the number of visitors per day is restricted).

Breakfast

Day 7: Sarlat

Arrangements end in Sarlat after breakfast.

2020 TOUR DEPARTURE DATES:



Start any day from April to October (subject to hotel availability).

Minimum 2 people (up to 8 people)

2020 TOUR COST – PER PERSON IN EUROS

Double / Twin Share (min 2 people)	€ 973
Single Supplement	€ 260

EXTRA NIGHTS, INCLUDING BREAKFAST

Agen	€ 67 per person share twin/double
	€ 45 single room supplement

Sarlat	€78 per person share twin/double
	€34 single room supplement

Canoeing down the Dordogne River (3 – 4 hours canoeing) € 30 including transfer from/to hotel in Sarlat

2020 BIKE COSTS

Bike Rental (Hybrid bike - men's or ladies) € 135

Electric Bike Rental - surcharge € 90

Bikes are equipped with pannier or handlebar bag, lock, helmet, pump and repair kit

TOUR COST INCLUDES:

- 6 night's accommodation: 5 nights in 3* hotels and 1 night in a 4* hotel
- Breakfast daily
- 3 dinners
- Luggage transfer
- Detailed route maps and directions, tourist brochures
- 7 day service hotline

NOT INCLUDED

- Travel or transfer to Agen or from Sarlat
- Entrance fees for museums and visits
- Meals other than listed or drinks

GETTING TO AGEN:

Trains operate from Paris Montparnasse Railway Station to Bordeaux St Jean Railway Station. There are trains almost hourly from Bordeaux St Jean station to Agen and the travel time is 1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes.

Return to Paris from Sarlat via Bordeaux. More regular trains operate from nearby Souillac (via Brive) back to Paris.

Book through:

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