

DORDOGNE

Valley

PRESS KIT - 2024



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PRESS

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Birthplace of humanity, conquered by Romans, coveted by the English through the Middle-Ages, loved by the Brits who first moved here in the 1980's... So what is the big attraction? The Dordogne Valley has it all: the climate, the food, the natural beauty, the architecture. But the attraction goes beyond all of this. The traveller today can discover an authentic region, respectful of the environment and of its traditions: unspoilt, modern, genuine, welcoming. Far from being stuck in the past, the Dordogne Valley has embraced the dawn of a new era, from organic farming to the search for well-being.

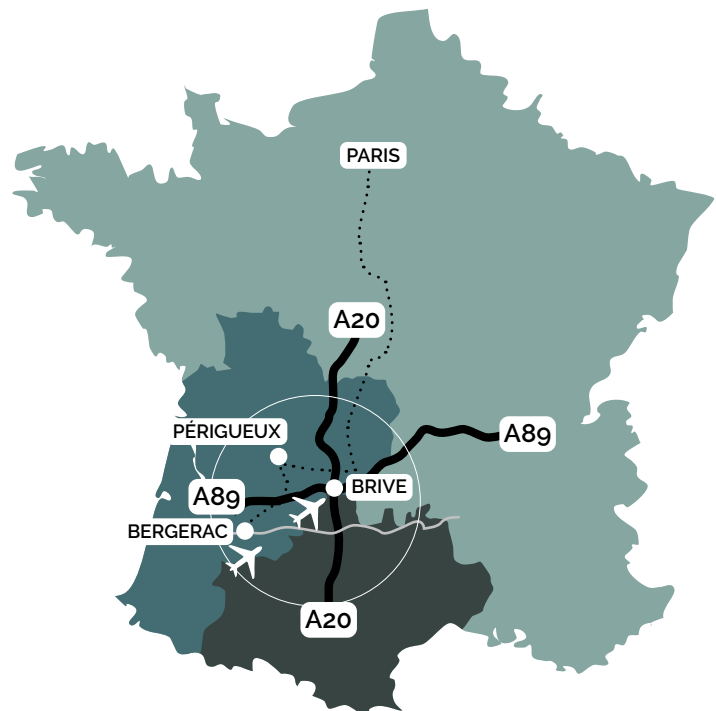
The region owes its name to the famous river that traverses it: the Dordogne. Easily reachable, the Dordogne Valley is situated in the South-West of France over two regions - Nouvelle-Aquitaine and Occitanie - and three départements: Dordogne, Lot and Corrèze (formerly part of the Limousin region). It is also often referred to by its older names: Périgord for the Dordogne and Quercy for the Lot.



MOTORWAY

TRAIN

RIVER



Photos:

ADRT, Agence Urope, Air Châteaux, Barrage Bort, Beauty Garden, Marq Bastion, Bergerac Tourisme, Philippe Bouthe, Cabanes du Breuil, Château de Hautefort, Château de Milandes, Château de Monbazillac, Château de la Treyne, Château de Val, Centre d'Étude Colette, Les Coflocs, Les Conteurs, Dan Courtice, Annael Dang, Marina Darriet, Déclic Décolle, Yves Desbuquois, Dordogne Libre, L'Espace du Sixième Sens les Conteurs, Luc Fauret, C Gerigk, Golf de Montal, Grotte de Tourtoirac, Gouffre de Padirac, Les Insolites du Périgord, Instapades, Jardins d'Eyrignac, Romain Laffitte / Eva Emmanuélidis, Lou Cocal, Emi Makarof, Tim Mannakee, Marche de Brive, Eric Martin, Marq Drone VF, Miel des Muses, L. Nespoulous, Office de Tourisme du Pays de Fénelon, OTI Grand Périgueux, Cochise Ory, OTVD, Mélanie Petit, Gregory Rohart, Semitour, Sutter Taillandier, Terres de Corrèze, P Thebault, Tourisme Corrèze, Malika Turin, Vent d'Autan, Teddy Verneuil, Dominique Viet, Ville Terrasson, Gérald Vincent, Wabi Sabi, Yud Pourdieu Le Coz.

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REGIONS
Occitanie and
Nouvelle-Aquitaine



3

DEPARTMENTS
Dordogne, Lot and Corrèze



**2 INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORTS**



BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE

2 flights per day to Paris
2 flights a week from London
Stansted from early April to
late October
2 flights a week to Seville from
June to September
aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.fr

BERGERAC

Several flights a week to
the UK:
London City, London
Stansted, Bournemouth,
Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester,
Birmingham, Leeds.
Belgium: Charleroi
bergerac.aeroport.fr

19

**OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
VILLAGES IN FRANCE**



1001+
castles to visit

The River Dordogne
has been listed on the
UNESCO World Network
of Biosphere Reserves
since 2012



**3 Regional
Nature
Parks**

**For an experience at
the heart of protected
nature**



WHAT'S NEW

La Truffe Noire 3* in Brive

An iconic institution. Renovated at the end of 2023, Camille and her team wanted to infuse this 27-room establishment with a new lease of life, restoring it to its former glory with simplicity and elegance.

www.la-truffe-noire.com

Le Château de Lacan 4* in Brive

15 rooms in a haven of peace just 5 minutes' drive from the historic centre. This imposing 17th-century building features exceptional historic architecture, panoramic views and 1 hectare of parkland with century-old trees.

www.hotelchateaulacan.fr

Restaurant Moon in Brive

Moon is the nickname of the maternal grandmother of chef Nicolas, who trained at the Ferrandi school. The restaurant has a modern, streamlined yet warm atmosphere, with a lovely terrace shaded by a vine, just a stone's throw from Brive town centre. The chef creates a contemporary cuisine with surprising combinations of flavours and textures.

Le Safran de la Vézère

The story of a reconversion. Emmanuelle and Laurent's passion for growing saffron is reflected in their traditionally home-made products. Made in small batches on the farm from seasonal and local ingredients, they are carefully selected for their flavours. Some saffron products have been awarded the "Origine Corrèze" label!

www.safrandelavezere.fr

La Maison Balmelle à Gramat

In the heart of Gramat, close to Rocamadour, this guest house is a fully-renovated 18th-century historic mansion surrounded by a charming tree-lined park.

www.maisonbalmelle.com

Les Hauts de Bagadou in Martel

On the heights of Martel, Cédric and Nadège Castandet welcome you to their guest house with XXL architectural features. A suite with jacuzzi and terrace on one side and a loft with heated indoor pool and sauna on the other.

www.leshautsdebadagou.fr

Murder Party in Périgord Noir

Murder Party in Périgord Noir: The adventures of Arthur Villac. Guillaume de Villac, Lord of Pazayac and a member of the Templar Order, is found dead in the 14th century... Will you be able to piece together the clues and analyse everyone's version of events to find out what really happened? An adventure that takes you on a journey through time and space, off the beaten track, through six Périgord villages.

www.vezere-perigord.fr/fr/qui-a-tue-guillaume-de-villac

Hôtel de L'Abbaye 4* in Saint-Cyprien

Just a short walk from the village centre, in a completely renovated 18th century building, this 13-room family hotel opened its doors in June 2023. The Lecomte family designed it as a calm retreat in a bucolic setting, with an outdoor swimming pool, garden and "table d'hôtes" restaurant with an added bonus: a reception room and private lounges for organising events.

www.hotel-labbaye.com

Hôtel Hideauts by Urbanauts, côté campagne in Monpazier

One of the hotel chain's cosy nests perfectly suited to their "relaxing weekend in the countryside" concept. Architect Enrico REALACCI has renovated this historic building (dating from the 12th century) to turn it into an ultra-modern hotel for urban travellers. As well as rooms of different sizes, it has an outdoor swimming pool, sauna and bar, in the heart of the bastide, close to the Place des Cornières.



CANOE BIVOUAC

Getting back to nature while drifting down the **Dordogne River** has to be one of the **highlights** of the region. Just perfect for **swimming and canoeing**, this pristine river is the only river in France labelled as a **UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve**. From the water, travellers can admire the ever changing landscape, from the **wilderness** of the high valley to the majestic limestone **cliffs** and pebble **beaches** further downstream. History slowly passes by, be it fortified villages, medieval fortresses or quaint hamlets. There is no better feeling though than paddling down any part of this **130km** long stretch of river from Argentat to Beynac, renting a canoe from just a few hours to a whole five days. Some canoe companies provide **tailor-made package options**, sometimes with a tent, mattress and cooking equipment included for the descent. The essentials are covered to kick back and enjoy **roaming free** in unspoilt nature. When night comes, the spectacle of the purest night sky in France is out of this world.

ROAMING FREE

HIKING THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES

The legendary walking trek of the **Way of Saint James** or Camino de Santiago de Compostela passes through the Dordogne Valley. A **multi-day hike** in the footsteps of history is an unsurpassed way to rediscover oneself in the **heart of nature**, amidst the stunning cultural riches of the region. The Vézelay Way, an important route in the legendary pilgrimage, has a variation going through Bergerac from Périgueux. **Three routes** go through the UNESCO World Heritage site of Rocamadour. La Via Arverna, La Voie de Rocamadour and La Voie du Puy en Velay converge on this historic city to form part of the **Santiago de Compostela** trail. These ancient **Christian pilgrimage routes** have been walked by Kings, Queens and paupers alike for centuries, seeking penitence and spiritual healing. The lengths (some are 10 - 12 days) and difficulty vary but all lead through stunning natural landscapes, crossing deep gorges, rolling hills and enjoying the rich tapestry of medieval towns such as Collonges-la-Rouge, Figeac and Cahors.
www.voie-rocamadour-limousin-haut-quercy.fr



THE AMADOUR WAY In the footsteps of the legend

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Causses du Quercy, the old pilgrimage trail linked to the legend of the hermit, Amadour, has been fully signposted since spring 2023.

At the heart of the legend between Soulac-sur-Mer and Rocamadour

The 500 km pedestrian trail is based on the legend of Saint Amadour. It goes through four departments (Gironde, Lot-et-Garonne, Dordogne and Lot). The saint is said to have taken the same way from Soulac-sur-Mer to Rocamadour, where he settled as a hermit.

On the 21 trail stages, from 11 to 32 km a day, you can learn about oral traditions, stories and legends in the villages you pass through. You can also travel just a few stages, since there are train stations where you can join the trail at different spots.

www.chemin-amadour.fr



WATERFALLS

Plunging from a height, fast moving, cascading water is a **mesmerising sight**. In the Dordogne Valley there are four beautiful waterfall visits to marvel at or put your feet in.

Near Tulle the village of **Gimel** is the starting point to explore **three successive waterfalls** tumbling down the mountain at a total height of **143 metres**. A panoramic trail leads visitors to the impressive waterfall.

The waterfall above **Autoire** plunges 30 metres before turning into a stream that runs through the village, classified as one of the 'Most Beautiful Villages in France'.

The falls of **Murel** are a striking series of **three interconnected waterfalls** cut against deep wooded gorges in a listed 'Natural Zone of Ecological Interest'.

In the forest near **Vieyres**, hidden away from view, a beautiful **hike in the forest** leads to these impressive falls. Nicknamed by the locals as Tahiti for their **exotic feel**.

www.vallee-dordogne.com/la-vallee-de-la-dordogne/activites/21-plages/cascades





THE TUILIÈRES DAM IN SAINT CAPRAISE DE LALINDE

The Tuilières dam was built in 1909, it is one of the oldest hydroelectric dams in the Dordogne Valley. It is an experimental site for fish migration and is equipped with exceptional facilities. In the EDF space close by the dam, you can find out about the energy issues of tomorrow, the history of electricity, the ways it is produced... A visit to the "fish lift" is a chance to see the migrating fish and to understand the route they take.

www.pays-bergerac-tourisme.com/fr

FROM VILLAGES TO DAMS

A spectacular **200km trek** follows the route of **five hydroelectric dams** along the Dordogne River, with 8,000m of elevation difference over the course of the trail from start to finish. Beginning at Bort-les-Orgues and ending in Argentat, this unique walking track is geared for both **mountain bikers and hikers**. Along the way, stunning views and charming villages dot the route while hikers can rest up for the night in **wooden huts or pods**. A unique and breathtaking way to take in the grandeur of nature and the genius of the engineers who devised these spectacular means of producing **clean energy**.

www.ladordognedevillagesenbarrages.com



BORT-LES-ORGUES DAM

Enter one of the biggest dams in France in upper Dordogne. The Bort-les-Orgues dam is the 4th biggest dam in France. You can now discover its most secret gateways. During the tour inside the plant, with the command room, machine room and tunnel, you can go to the heart of the structure.
www.tourisme-hautecorreze.fr/patrimoine-bati/barrage-de-bort-les-orgues-espace-edf-odyseelec-et-visites-usine/



GABARE BOAT TRIP ON THE DORDOGNE....

The Dordogne River used to be a major trade route, with up to 300 river barges in operation. These flat-bottomed boats were used to transport goods along the Dordogne until the 19th century, when they were gradually replaced by rail transport. There are still a few visible reminders of these historic ports, such as the cobbled quay at Argentat-sur-Dordogne where the boats were once tied up. Today, tours on the gabares allow you to experience the epic tale of the gabarriers. A local storyteller takes passengers on a journey through the lives of the men who once plied a turbulent river. Two departure points: Argentat-sur-Dordogne and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. Tours last 45 minutes, from spring to autumn.

...AND ON THE VEZERE

The "Vézère" gabare: discover the history of the gabarriers and Terrasson during a 40-minute river trip.

A trail opened on the left bank of the River Dordogne now shows the river in a new light and gives visitors the option of tackling the complete 420 km circuit. The numerous links between the two banks helps to create a whole host of different trails.

INTO THE WILD

GREAT HIKES

The outstanding natural beauty, pristine rivers and rich cultural heritage of the Dordogne Valley make walking and hiking a major draw for visitors looking to be at one with nature. Famed for hundreds of marked walking trails, all grades of hiking and levels of rambling are catered for, from family walks to hard core hiking. The choice of circuits and tracks is only matched by the variety of the outstanding landscape on offer. Renowned for its dramatic cliffs, medieval villages and deep oak forests it is a treasure trove of breathtaking sights. The tracks and trails that criss-cross the Dordogne Valley divide into short circular walks, day walks and extensive hikes that are spread over days. All of them offer varying levels of difficulty so hikers can construct their own personalised itinerary, creating the perfect hiking holiday.



NATURE JOURNEY: CYCLING TRIPS

This is a cycling paradise... along the paths and on the roads, the Dordogne Valley is a feast for the eyes for cyclists.

You might not find mountain passes here, but our region is definitely not flat... It is a fun place to ride, with hills and valleys, and perfectly adapted to cycling and mountain biking! There are country paths and lanes, of course, but also the departmental roads with little traffic, providing a wide range of trails of varying degrees of difficulty.

From the Tuilières dam to Bergerac, enjoy a cycling trip along the River Dordogne in perfect safety on the Vg1 "Green Way", filled with lovely villages and along a shaded trail. The route is perfect for families and takes you from the Tuilières to the home of Cyrano de Bergerac.
www.pays-bergerac-tourisme.com/fr/a-voir-a-faire/veloroute-voie-verte-vg1

Another section of the Vg1 route continues in the Périgord Noir region. Located between Cazoulès and Sarlat, this **cycle path** follows the route of an 18th century railway line that linked the two towns. The tarmac, shady and almost entirely flat route crosses fields and typical villages to reach the **medieval town of Sarlat**. Along the way, stop off at the former **Carlux station**, a place now dedicated to the photographer **Robert Doisneau**. Doisneau, a world-famous photographer, fell in love with the Dordogne Valley and often came back during holidays to photograph it.
www.lagare-robertdoisneau.com



La Bicicleta Ravito in Souillac: Céline and Samuel have opened an unusual venue based around the world of cycling, with bike hire, a guest house and overnight tours, as well as weekly outings for beginners and experienced cyclists to discover the most beautiful tracks in the Dordogne Valley.

THE FLOW VÉLO® CYCLING TRAIL IS NOW LONGER IN DORDOGNE!

Le Lardin-Saint-Lazare is now the first town on this refreshing countryside trail. Totalling 350 km and eventually including over 80 % of independent cycling trails ("Green Ways", fully dedicated to non-motor transport), the new route will delight bike tourists seeking to make the experience last a bit longer! The Flow Vélo® is still an adventure rich in new discoveries to be enjoyed both by gourmet tourists and lovers of history and nature. A new extension of the route to Sarlat is scheduled very soon!
www.laflowvelo.com/carte/le-lardin-saint-lazare-excideuil

LA VAGABONDE®

Discover La Vagabonde®, a cycling adventure over 500 kilometres long. Leaving from Montluçon in Allier, the trail will take you as far as Montech in Tarn-et-Garonne via Creuse, Corrèze and Lot. Set off to see the varied landscapes of Lake Vassivière and all the way to the Tarn plain, via the Millevaches Plateau, the Dordogne Valley and the Causses du Quercy Regional Nature Park.
www.la-vagabonde.com



NATURAL CAVES AND CHASMS

CAVING

World famous for its spectacular **natural beauty** and centuries old heritage, there is a flipside to the Dordogne Valley. For thrill-seekers and adrenalin junkies it is **underground**. Water filtering through the limestone floor has created a huge number of **caves and chasms** throughout the area, some of which are still being discovered today. The extensive cave systems, with tens of kilometres of galleries cutting through limestone rock cater to **all levels**. Families and first-time cavers can join in the fun. For the experienced or true believer, there is rope-dangling, abseiling, climbing and squeezing thrills to be had. Professional guides take beginners and pros through **dry or partially submerged caves**. Caves and chasms are dotted throughout the Dordogne Valley and several companies take thrill-seekers down under.

THE GOUFFRE DE PADIRAC

One of the **largest chasms** in Europe, the Gouffre de Padirac is the most visited and significant in France. First discovered by the French cave explorer **Edouard-Alfred Martel**, it was opened to the public in 1899. It's a sight to behold, an enormous 75 metre hole into the earth, 35 metres wide. This natural wonder then leads to a **stunning cave system** thousands of years old.

Visitors descend into the enormous sink hole by **lift** or the impressive **metal staircase** dating back to 1897. Designed by the architect Mr. Lequeutre, it was inspired by the work of **Gustave Eiffel** (of Eiffel Tower fame). Arriving at the bottom of the chasm, the small circle of sky is all that remains of life above ground. From there, visitors take a unique boat ride on an emerald green river, journeying into the depths of the earth **103 metres underground**. Impressively lit, the galleries have been carved out of the limestone rock by thousands of years of **water erosion**. As the water has passed through the rock, calcite mineral deposits have been left behind growing into a diverse array of other worldly shapes. These enormous galleries, some 94m high feature underground pools and **gigantic stalagmites and stalactites** which tower to stunning heights, the largest 60m.

An **audio guide** is on hand in English to accompany and explain all of the finer points of the visit. It includes fascinating details on how Edouard-Alfred Martel first made his way through these caves by candlelight in the 19th century. Open every day from March to November, schedules vary according to the months of the season and the total visit time is approximately **1h30**. The cave is at a constant temperature of **13 degrees** and for those with reduced mobility it should be noted that there are around 200 steps in the visit, even when taking the lifts !

www.gouffre-de-padirac.com



GOUFFRE DE PROUMEYSSAC

Before opening for visitors in 1907, this chasm started off with a more dubious history. Located next to the road between Sarlat and Bergerac, the strategically placed sink hole was used as a place to dump **murdered stagecoach passengers** frequently robbed en route in the 1700's. Today it is better known as the '**Crystal Cathedral**', an enormous underground gallery with a multitude of stalactites hanging from the ceiling. Accompanied by a **spectacular sound and light show**, it is also possible to descend into the chasm in a unique and exciting way. Like the original explorers, up to 11 people can descend into the depths below in an iron **basket** for a bird's eye view. A **sound and light show** also enhances the visit.

www.gouffre-proumeyssac.com



LANTERN TOURS

A unique experience! The **Explorers Tours** allow you to discover the Gouffre de Padirac the same way as Édouard-Alfred Martel did over 130 years ago... with lanterns as the only source of light. To be reserved ahead of time, since only a few descents are organised each year, from April to October.

www.gouffre-de-padirac.com





GOUFFRE DE LA FAGE

Less famous than Padirac, the **chasm of La Fage** is an impressive cave system well worth a visit. After descending into the chasm surrounded by green ferns and dense vegetation, the cave itself is full of **stalactites and stalagmites** of all shapes and sizes, beautifully lit. With guided tours in English, the cave is also the home of a **bat colony**. 100s of bats nest in the ceilings and accompany visitors through it - an interesting bonus!

www.gouffre-de-la-fage.com/en



TOURTOIRAC CAVE

As you follow the underground river, you will be immersed in a shadow-and-light show featuring columns and draperies, helictites and soda straws. An unforgettable journey in Tourtoirac that will lead you to explore a village with traces first left by prehistoric times and then by a millennium-old abbey.

www.grotte-de-tourtoirac.fr



GROTTES DE LACAVE

Opened in 1905, this popular cave is 15km from Rocamadour, with visiting periods from February until November. Unusually, the trip begins with a ride on an **underground electric train** that actually travels **upwards** in order to access the start point. **12 galleries** (1.6km long) include impressive stalagmites and stalactites and natural rock pools throughout. One gallery features a perfectly lit mirror reflection of the cave in water. Another highlight is a gallery lit entirely by **ultra-violet light** so that the cave is made phosphorescent and glows spectacularly.

www.vert-marine.info/grottesdelacave

They are the scene of many unusual events: photographic tours for amateurs, romantic picnics, musical siestas and concerts.

www.vert-marine.info/grottesdelacave

THE MAXANGE CAVES

In Le Buisson-de-Cadouin between Bergerac and Sarlat, the Maxange Caves are a natural masterpiece, providing a magic spectacle of internationally unique cave deposits.

"The starry cave": A new sound-and-light visit was officially inaugurated in June 2023, and part of the 30-metre gallery, discovered last winter, is now open to the public, showing off the cave's iconic shapes: the helictites, rare and mysterious limestone deposits. They are the backdrop for a wide range of original activities: visits for photography fans, romantic picnics, musical siestas and concerts.

www.lesgrottesdemaxange.com

LASCAUX IV – THE SISTINE CHAPEL OF PREHISTORY

The UNESCO Heritage Site of Lascaux is world famous for **Palaeolithic art**, home to some of the **oldest cave paintings** on the planet. In 1940 a group of young boys walking in the countryside accidentally stumbled upon the cave of Lascaux near Montignac in the Vézère Valley. This was to lead to one of the world's most important archaeological discoveries, unearthing a wealth of prehistoric cave paintings that has since been dubbed the **Sistine Chapel of Prehistory**.

After having been opened to the viewing public, in 1963 the original Lascaux cave was hurriedly closed. Human foot traffic had begun to **damage** the atmospheric balance of the cave and in turn the fine pigments of the cave art. After its closure, the painstaking work of recreating the original cave and its paintings with an **exact replica** began. The first replica was named Lascaux II and opened in 1983, followed by Lascaux III, a travelling exhibition of the paintings. 2016 saw the opening of the complete replica of the cave: **Lascaux IV**.

Both reproductions are an **exact copy** of the original although the latter is the only one to replicate 100% of the cave paintings. In order to achieve this perfect carbon copy, a team of **50 expert artists** used digital photography and laser imaging to reproduce the paintings stroke-for-stroke. 20,000 years ago, our primitive ancestors dabbled with their creative sides and the results are extraordinary to the modern eye. They are remarkable in their lifelike detail, which depict **animals and even hunting scenes rich in colour and relief**. It's fair to say that no other cave paintings can compete with those of Lascaux's in terms of colour, size, quality and quantity.

Lascaux IV is housed in a stunning building designed by Norwegian architect **Kjetil Traedal Thorsen** whose company also designed the 9/11 memorial museum in New York. The centre, with a gigantic glass frontage, contains not only an entire replica of the original cave but also an **international centre of Palaeolithic cave art** dedicated to the pre-art history of Lascaux. Open all year round, visits to Lascaux IV can be booked in English. The tour of the cave is followed by interactive **3D digital exhibits** and video documentaries, all linked to a personalised digital tablet that visitors use, bringing a 21st century experience to this very modern museum of ancient prehistory.

www.lascaux.fr



SPELEOLOGY

Speleology as a leisure activity is a fun experience. It is the opportunity to spend a few hours beneath the earth and to savour the world of silence and to encounter some underground wonders. With the experts from Couleurs Périgord, based in Vézac, for 3 hours you can get away from it all and explore the horizontal cavities. You can even spend a night under the earth in a bivouac in the company of Claude Antoine, a professional and qualified instructor in Salignac-Eyvigues!





BIG THRILLS

VIA FERRATA

From the Italian, a Via Ferrata ('iron path') is a cross between **rock climbing and hiking**. An iron cable is fixed to the rock face and harnesses clipped onto this wire allow participants to move across it. Essentially it's rock climbing for amateurs, with all the **thrills of high altitude** but with much greater safety and **accessibility** to all. There are **three main sites** to enjoy this activity in the Dordogne Valley. The Argentat Via Ferrata, overlooking the River Dordogne, and the Marqueyssac Via Ferrata, where climbers make their way up the dizzying cliffs for 200 metres. The La Roche Via Ferrata in Allasac, just after the Vézère Gorges, is open to adults and children aged 11 and over. You can opt to call on the services of a professional guide.
www.escapadenatureargentat.com
www.viaferrata-marqueyssac.com
www.base-vezere.com/fr

CANYONING IN THE GORGES

For the uninitiated, **canyoning** is all about throwing yourself into, abseiling and swimming down a **fast moving stream**. Preferably the most vertical one possible. Here, the outstanding canyoning in the *Chal Gorges* will create lasting memories long after the adrenalin rush fades. Enjoying amazing scenery otherwise inaccessible, participants will experience the **raw power of nature** as they slide down **natural waterslides**, jump into rock pools and abseil through waterfalls down the fast moving rivers. **Trained professionals** will guide and instruct debutants with all **canyoning gear** provided for a safe and **action-packed experience**. www.escapadenatureargentat.com



CAVE DIVING

The Dordogne Valley is famed as one of the **top three cave diving destinations** in the world. This extreme sport combines two thrilling activities in one. It's adrenalin junkie heaven. With depths of up to **80 metres**, divers in full scuba gear can explore the kilometres of submerged cave systems. The crisp and clear water with great visibility has made diving here **internationally recognised**. The passages are not too tight and dives can last several hours. The start points are accessible and easily reached. **The extreme dives require a level 2 minimum diving certificate**.
www.compagnie-sports-nature.com/speleologie-lot

LIKE A FISH TO WATER

MAKING A SPLASH

In the summer, temperatures in the Dordogne Valley average around **28 degrees**. Blessed not just with one of the **cleanest rivers** in France but also **wild streams and natural lakes**, water enthusiasts have a wealth of options for taking a dip. These include supervised natural swimming **beaches** such as the one in *Montfort* but also **wild pebbled beaches** dotted along the Dordogne River. There's always a quiet spot to be found - to lounge around, have a splash or simply read a good book. Many of the region's lakes are also family friendly with playgrounds, picnic areas, snack bars or restaurants and **water sports available**. There are also outdoor swimming pools and **water parks** for those who just need the rush of a hydro slide or two.

FISHING

The Dordogne River is the only French river awarded **UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve** status. 486km in length, this 2nd category river is a fisherman's dream, world renowned as a **top fishing destination**. With stunning natural scenery, it is home to a number of UNESCO protected species and plant life. Fishing here is bountiful with healthy and quality brown and rainbow trout, pike, zander and black-bass in abundance. The 1st category streams that form the tributaries leading into the Dordogne River are mostly populated by **salmonids and trout**. These wild virgin streams offer a different fishing experience altogether and with an amazing array of idyllic spots. Whether near Sarlat or further north in the wild upper valley, **expert fishing guides** can be hired in order to learn the secrets of where to fish and how to improve technique. www.tourismecorreze.com/fr/la_correze_passion_peche.html

Absolute beginners can also learn the ropes on fly fishing and other techniques and stay in accommodation with all the gear on site at Fish and Gites. www.fishandgites.com



“THE FISHERMAN’S GETAWAY” TRIP

A 1 hour 15-minute trip in a flat-bottomed boat to explore the history of the Cingle de Trémolat, the River Dordogne and its boatmen with Patrick Cecchetto as your guide, one of the last professional fishermen on the river. In his enthusiastic company, you can also enjoy some homemade fish rillettes and a glass of white wine. www.lechappedupecheur.fr



MORE THAN A RIVER

It’s easy to highlight the Dordogne River and overlook the many lakes, smaller **wild streams** and other excellent rivers that make up swimming options here. **Lakes** in the area are often accompanied by picnicking tables for families, snack bars and water sports and perhaps a minigolf course if fate smiles upon you. The *Lac du Causse*, *Lac de Tamniès* and *Lac de Tolermé* have large **sandy beaches** and many **sports activities** on site. For the wilder at heart, smaller streams allow a complete detachment from the travails of the modern world set right in the heart of nature.

FLY FISHING

The Dordogne River is a **fly fishing** mecca where fishermen can put their technique to the test in trying to lure the ever evasive but plentiful brown trout. The river is part of a hydroelectric scheme and many dams such as Bort les Orgues in the Corrèze (the fourth largest in France) slow the flow of the current making it an **ideal spot** for wading. There are many places to fly fish but one of **the most popular is between Argentat and Monceaux-sur-Dordogne**. Be sure to check out the bistro/bar in the village of Monceaux called ‘**Chez Maryse**’- an institution for local and visiting fly fishing enthusiasts where the talk is of lures and technique over a beer or two.

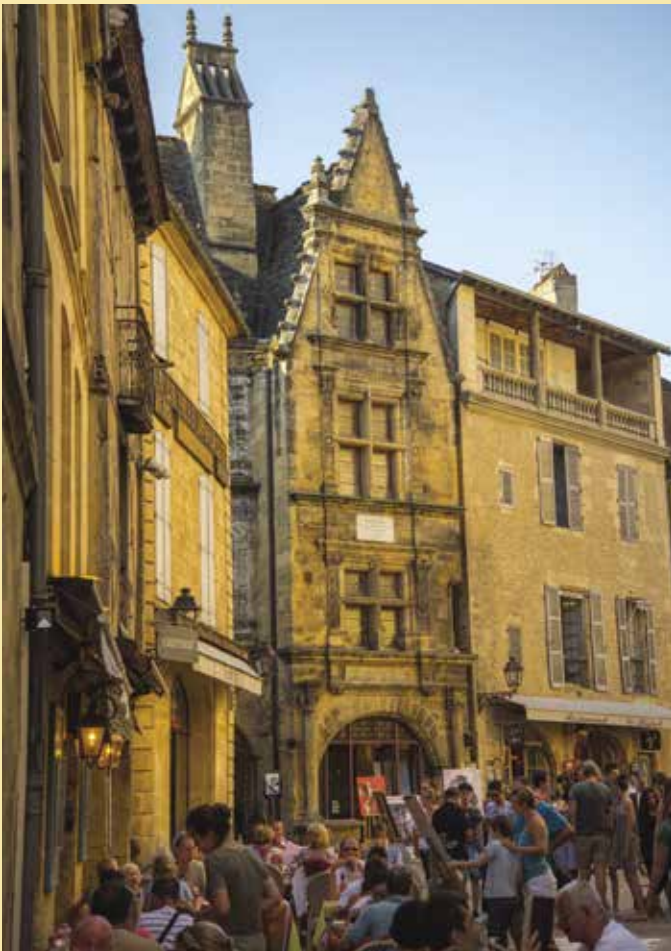


TRADITIONAL GINGUETTES RESTAURANTS

All that aquatic fun is thirsty work. For those in need of a stamina reboot, there is an array of *Guinguettes* by the water. These unpretentious popular restaurants on the waterfront offer everything from a cool beer or ice-cream for the kids to a hearty traditional dinner. Food comes with dancing and live music, including a bit of accordion.

To make the most of this festive atmosphere, you are spoiled for choice: the **Guinguette du Vieux Chêne** near Montvalent, the **Guinguette de Copeyre** near Martel or the **Guinguette du Causse** (Sunday evenings in July and August) on Lake Causse near Brive. There are plenty of other possibilities on offer: at the troglodyte village of La Madeleine in summer, at the **Guinguette de l’Etang** in Thenon, the **Guinguette de Barnabé** in Boulazac Isle Manoire or the **Guinguette de Joséphine Baker** in Castelnaud-La-Chapelle.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE



SARLAT

Sarlat has the highest concentration of **medieval buildings** in Europe and is one of the best preserved examples of a 14th century Renaissance town in the country. From its medieval beginnings around the Benedictine Abbey, it developed in the 15th century into an important geo-political hub and Renaissance architecture flourished with it. The entire town centre shows off the perfectly preserved roots of its medieval past. Untouched and homogenous, Sarlat is awash with **honey-coloured limestone manors**, medieval townhouses and a skyline of steep pitched *lauze* roofs and turrets. If you go to Sarlat, make sure you take an evening walk, since this is the last town with streets lit by gas. The flickering light gives the town a unique medieval atmosphere.

TV and film production shoots occur regularly and the town has been turned into a **film set** on many occasions. Films such as 'Chocolat', with Juliette Binoche and 'Ever After: A Cinderella Story' starring Drew Barrymore to name just two, have made Sarlat the third most often used location in France. Some of the town's architectural highlights include the **Cathédrale Saint-Sacerdos** and nearby Abbey, the 13th century **Manoir de Gisson** with its castle like features and the birthplace of renowned writer/philosopher Étienne de La Boétie - the **Maison de la Boétie**.

Glorious architecture and medieval cobbled streets are only part of the draw of this historic place though. It is also a hot spot for **gastronomy and cultural events** year round. Unquestionably Sarlat is synonymous with the food and wine and every other imaginable dish this region of culinary delights serves up. The largest market in the region sees the entire historic centre of Sarlat turned over to market stands on Saturdays throughout the year. Mouth-watering Foie Gras, delectable truffles, fresh magret duck breasts, a smorgasbord of food sellers, artisanal products and the shops of the town combine into the largest and **most visited market in the entire Dordogne Valley**.
www.en.sarlat-tourisme.com

LES CABANES DU BREUIL

Located halfway between Sarlat and Les Eyzies, this architecturally unique ancient hamlet boasts mysteriously shaped **stone roofed** houses, formerly home to the 15th century Benedictine monks of Sarlat.
www.cabanes-du-breuil.com



SARLAT CHRISTMAS MARKET

Attracting over 200,000 visitors each year this yuletide treat is famous throughout the region. When the weather turns Christmassy the centre of Sarlat is trimmed and decorated into a Christmas village and market. Full of boutique Christmas gifts, mulled wine, local beer and great food it's an excellent way to get enthused with the Christmas spirit. Each year sees the market adopt a different theme. In the year when England was given the honours, even Queen Elizabeth II turned up in a Mini Cooper to do a spot of last minute shopping.



ROCAMADOUR

The **1,000 year old city of Rocamadour** is one of the most visited sites in France. It is a stunningly beautiful multi-layered stack of stone houses, churches, chapels and monastic buildings topped with a castle. Built into a towering 120m high cliff face, it runs from the valley below to the skies above. It is one of the **spiritual homes of European Christianity and a UNESCO World Heritage site**. For centuries, the basilica Saint Saviour and the crypt Saint Amador lay at the heart of medieval Christendom. **216 steps** lead here, where kings, queens and peasants climbed on their knees as they sought penitence through pilgrimage. The centuries old weight of history and grandeur of the ages pervades every nook and cranny.

The famed **Black Virgin statue** was discovered alongside the corpse of Saint Amador in the 12th century and now sits regally in the Notre Dame chapel. Carved in wood, this Madonna statue is said to have performed many **miracles**, including saving sailors lost at sea.

Secret visits to Rocamadour Castle

"Together, let's bring Rocamadour Castle back to life": this is the slogan for the big sponsorship and restoration project launched by the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Rocamadour to save its famous castle. As part of the project, secret and unusual visits have been organised since summer 2022. The programme includes a tour led by Father Florent Millet through places that had previously been closed to the public: the castle, the garden, the ramparts and the secret staircase leading down the cliff face. Online reservation required from mid-June to the end of August, and on request. www.jaimerocamadour.com



COCO CHANEL

Coco Chanel, the world renowned **French designer** is synonymous with chic. Ruling the Paris fashion world for decades, she introduced her **pre-feminist** avant-garde sensibilities to the catwalk. Predominantly working in clean lines with **black and white** colours, her influence was global. What is lesser known is that she spent **six years** of her childhood, raised by nuns in the hilltop town of **Aubazine**.

Abandoned by her father after the death of her mother, aged 11, she was brought to the abbey **orphanage**. Coco Chanel's experience of living there had a profound influence on her later work. This is where she learnt to sew and the pious sobriety of the abbey environment influenced her choice of colour (the black and white garb of the nuns for example). It led her to famously proclaim that the sober clean lines she created for women were infinitely more chic than the frilly clothes of the time. The **stained glass windows** of the Abbey were the inspiration for the world famous **Chanel logo** itself. They clearly contain the design elements that make up the interlocking 'C's of the brand.

www.abbaye.aubazine.com



BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE

Brive-la-Gaillarde is the **commercial hub** of the Dordogne Valley. It is a **modern, dynamic** and active town with a long history dating back to the medieval ages. In a period of seemingly constant commercial growth, it is the place to visit for travellers wishing to go on a shopping spree. In the **medieval heart of the town** are numerous boutique shops, cafés, restaurants and well-known French clothing stores. With the centre almost entirely **pedestrianised**, fanning out from the church at its centre, the streets in all directions offer shopping temptations. There are also many **historical visits** to be had including the 16th century **Labenche Museum of Art and History**, the highlight of which is the collection of magnificent tapestries. The **Museum of Resistance and Deportation** also makes for a fascinating visit detailing the story of one of Brive's most famous sons - the former government minister and Resistance fighter - **Edmond Michelet**. The people of Brive are also big **rugby** fans. The Brive rugby team, the CABCL, is an elite club with a whole host of proud supporters.

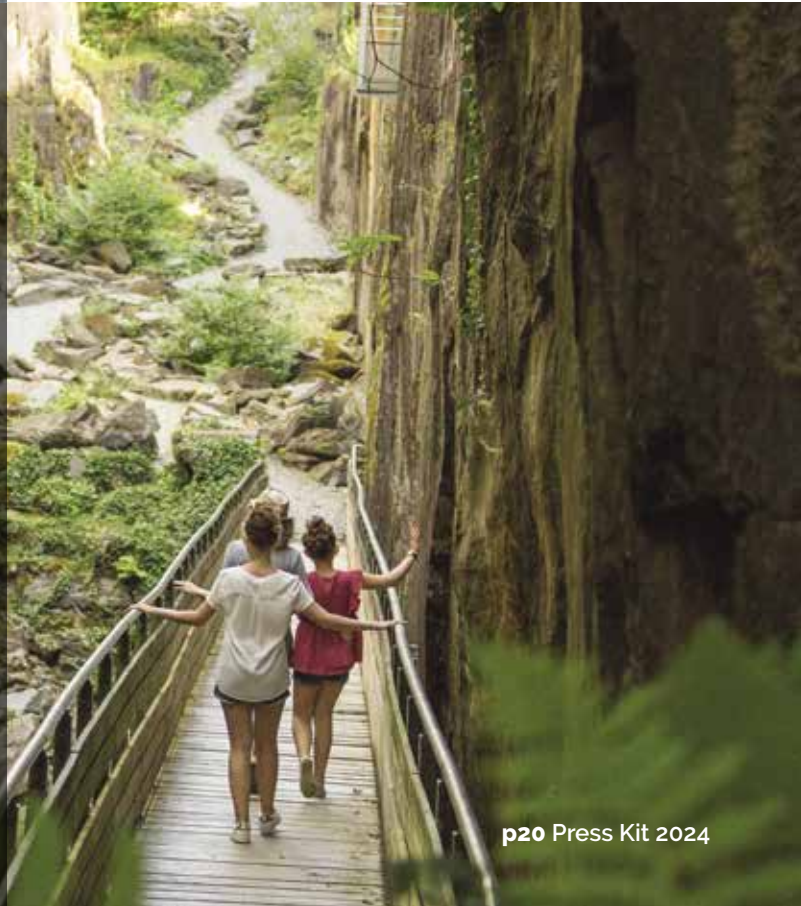
The town also has a long association with the **gastronomy** of the Dordogne Valley with many excellent restaurants to choose from. Every Saturday morning, under the covered market hall (Halle Georges Brassens), top end local fare can be found at numerous stalls overflowing with delicacies. This **market** is hugely popular and thrives with locals buying everything from live chickens to vegetables and fresh meats. Since the 13th century winter fairs called Foires Grasses (fatty fairs) have sold Foie Gras, duck and geese products several times a year. Right next to the market are excellent bars and restaurants with locals and rugby supporters in the CAB jersey preparing for the game later that afternoon with a late morning aperitif.

www.brive-tourisme.com

THE PANS DE TRAVASSAC SLATE QUARRY SITE

An unusual journey to the heart of the slate-making tradition! Since the 17th century, the slate quarries have been working here in a grandiose setting between steep cliffs where a harmonious blend of mineral and plant and plant life. Each slate is made here by hand, an exceptional skill where the ancestral techniques of rebilling of re-burning, cleaving and cutting. Jean-François Bugeat, 4th generation slate quarryman from Donzenac, took over this quarry in 1989, which still employed hundreds of workers at the beginning of the 20th century. Unalterable, waterproof, shock-resistant and a beautiful bluish black, Travassac slate is unrivalled and covers a large number of the buildings (houses, churches, castles, etc.) in the Limousin and Auvergne regions. Demand continues to be strong from private individuals, craftsmen and architects des Bâtiments de France and the restoration of the roof of the Mont Saint-Michel abbey remains a prestigious project for the Correze-based company.

www.lespansdetravassac.com





BERGERAC, CITY OF ART AND HISTORY

The home of Cyrano de Bergerac joined the "Towns of Art and History" in 2014. You will see a whole host of small town squares as you walk along the little streets; in turn you will come across charming houses where ornate doors secretly open onto courtyards straight out of the Garden of Eden. You can also visit Bergerac on the water, in a gabarre boat on the River Dordogne, or stick to dry land for a stroll and an encounter with the boatsmen's houses on Place de la Myrpe. Then you can enjoy the peace and quiet in the Recollects Cloister on your way to the river before tasting some local vintages at Quai Cyrano, facing the river.
www.pays-bergerac-tourisme.com/fr

CHÂTEAU DE MONBAZILLAC

Looking down on the Dordogne Valley, 10 minutes away from Bergerac, the Château de Monbazillac has opened a new tour route. It features the precious wines of Monbazillac and the history of the château in the Périgord context. The château dates from the 16th century and is listed as a Historic Monument. It combines past and present in visits for travellers.

After a tour of the Château, the park is perfect for a stroll in complete freedom. With the sea of vines and an exceptional view over the Bergerac valley, the park is an invitation to contemplation in a quiet and peaceful setting. This is a chance to live in the present moment, to slow down, have a bite to eat under the foliage on the restaurant terrace, to daydream on a deck chair and for photographers to practise their art before an astonishing panorama.

www.chateau-monbazillac.com





TERRASSON-LAVILLEDIEU

"Grand Site de France" network. You are about to being a **journey back in time** in a town combining modernity and a rich history with the poetry of architecture with so much to tell us. On the way, you will go through different periods, from prehistoric times to today. You will also stop off in the period of the foundation of the abbey overlooking the town, as well as the Early Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Around the Jardins de l'Imaginaire, a unique garden in Europe, **all the town interacts with the water**, the gardens and the rich heritage. The old town enhances the visitor's experience with its 12 fountains (with mosses or mascarons, sculpted, colossal or discreet) and the 18th century-style gardens, making this a real "garden town". The land of Terrasson, from the truffle farms on the hills to the PDO Périgord walnut orchards in the valley, forms a **region where farmers foster the excellence of local produce**. It is also a region for food lovers with the **Bovetti Chocolate Museum**. www.vezere-perigord.fr/fr

JARDINS DE L'IMAGINAIRE

Located near Sarlat and Lascaux, the 10 hectares of exquisite *Jardins à la Française* will wow even the most casual garden enthusiast. The manicured perfection of the **boxwood** with over 300 sculptured examples of hedged art makes Eyrynac a **topiary garden masterpiece**. Handed down through **22 generations for 500 years**, the trimming and shaping of plants is in the blood of the family owners. Specialised **classes** in the art of topiary gardening are available for those who wish to learn from the experts about these intricate pruning, trimming and hedging techniques. Amongst ornamental water fountains and ponds, these extensive gardens play host in July and August to the famous '**White Picnics**'. With a dress code of white only, this is a one of a kind **garden party**. Music, cocktails, dancing and illuminated water fountains combined with a spectacular sunset over the Dordogne Valley gives way to **fireworks** later in the evening. www.jardins-imaginaire.com





GRAND PÉRIGUEUX History as heritage

Here in Périgueux and in less than an hour all around, there are so many varied sites and monuments that you can take your time to discover them at your own relaxed pace. Here, **History and Culture can breathe naturally in the fresh air** of ever-changing and well-preserved nature.

At the heart of our region, Périgueux has kept its historic centre around **Saint-Front Cathedral** with a protected sector covering 20 hectares.

The cathedral stands proudly on the hilltop and attracts the eyes with its grandeur and architectural style. You can get an original view of it from the rooftops close to its domes.

A safe, guided tour in a small group will take you up in the world and see the protected sector in a new light.
www.grandperigueux.fr



THE NAPOLEON MUSEUM IN THE CHÂTEAU DE LA POMMERIE

One of the gems of Grand Périgueux can be found in Cendrieux. A surprising place close to a charming village. You are welcomed to the residence of Count Baudoin de Witt, the owner and a descendent of the youngest brother of Napoleon Bonaparte. A fascinating man, and fascinated by the emperor, he brings to life the treasured family objects on display in the galleries.

Over 500 objects, paintings and sculptures, including 150 listed as Historic Monuments, are exhibited. Some of them are very moving, like the ones Napoleon had in his room in St Helena. You can see his watch, stopped at the time of his last breath, as well as a candle that went out at the same moment, while not forgetting the touching lock of hair of his beloved son, Napoléon François Joseph Charles Bonaparte.
www.musee-napoleon.fr



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES IN FRANCE

To the traveller, the Dordogne Valley appears like a never ending stream of quaint hamlets, majestic castles and **picture-perfect villages**. No fewer than **19 villages** in the region have been awarded the "Most Beautiful Village in France" label. This **important award** is given to villages selected for their charm and historical interest. The label was developed here, in **Collonges-la-Rouge**, and the village was the first to be awarded the title in 1982. Today, there are 174 "Most Beautiful Villages in France" all over the country.

3 villages have recently been added to the prestigious list



1/ Rocamadour



2/ Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne



3/ Martel



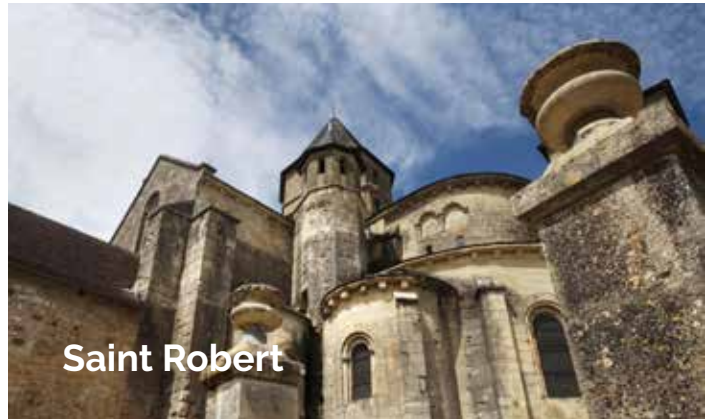
La Roque-Gageac



Castelnaud-la-Chapelle



Coly-Saint Amand



Saint Robert



Collonges-la-Rouge



Turenne



Limeuil



Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère



Beynac-et-Cazenac



Curemonte



Autoire



Loubressac



Monpazier



Carennac



Belvès



Domme

1001+ CASTLES

Impressive, majestic and imposing medieval castles fill the Dordogne Valley and each one has an intriguing history with stories of high drama.

CHÂTEAU DE BEYNAC: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LIONHEART

Built atop a cliff, the 12th century castle of Beynac boasts panoramic views over the Dordogne Valley and river below it. At the heart of the "on again off again" 100 Years War between France and England it remains one of the best preserved fortified castles of the region. Richard the Lionheart, King of England, once occupied this château and its thick defensive walls bore witness to attacking armies crossing the Dordogne River below it. From the vantage point of the castle, the river divided the English forces from the opposing French armies which stood against them in the distance, directly opposite in the Château de Castelnaud.

Famous French film director Luc Besson shot *Joan of Arc* here and it has been used as the set of a multitude of other TV and film productions since, including Ridley Scott's latest medieval movie, *The Last Duel*.

www.chateau-beynac.com

JOSÉPHINE BAKER

The most famous American woman to live in France, Joséphine Baker was born in Missouri but died a decorated French Resistance fighter in 1975. In between she was a world famous singer, actress and cabaret dancer. After moving from the Broadway stage she became lauded throughout Europe and this pioneering black woman was later to adopt French citizenship and France as her home. She was awarded the military French Cross by De Gaulle after her heroic service to the Resistance in the Second World War. In her retirement years she bought the fabulous Milandes Château, near the castle of Castelnaud. Today this château is open to the public with 14 rooms dedicated to her extraordinary life, filled with memorabilia celebrating her pioneering and fascinating story.

www.milandes.com/en



VAL CASTLE

Val Castle in upper Corrèze has a unique setting, encircled by the waters of the River Dordogne. The castle was built on a rocky spur over 30 metres high. It only just escaped the rising water levels from the Bort-les-Orgues dam, which completely transformed the local landscape. A visit to the fortress is an exceptional experience, with the Saint-Blaise Chapel, the large rooms with furniture in Gothic style, the monumental staircase leading to the panoramas from the Rampart Walk and in the framework of the towers... It is worth noting that from April to October, Val Castle hosts prestigious painting exhibitions featuring renowned artists.

www.chateau-de-val.com



LES TOURS DE MERLE

Nestled in beautiful **oak forests** and surrounded by deep gorges, the Tours de Merle overlook the river Maronne, a tributary of the Dordogne River. Named after the blackbirds that live in the area (merle in French), this **majestic medieval ruin** stands testimony to the ravages of war. At the height of the 14th century this feudal castle was once at the heart of a thriving kingdom owned by **seven noblemen**. Coming under attack both during the 100 Years War and thereafter in the Wars of Religion it suffered significant damage and was eventually abandoned. Open from April until October, visitors can still climb the medieval steps right to the top of the towers and admire the views. In the summer months there is also a special programme of **medieval themed shows** and demonstrations full of colourful period costumes.

www.toursdemerle.fr



NEW IN 2024

International Bat Night. Protected species of bats have made their home in Merle, including the greater horseshoe bat and the greater mouse-eared bat. In July, you can see these nocturnal mammals during a surprising visit at nightfall with a specialist in Chiroptera and a Natura 2000 guide at the natural spaces conservatory.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR

Madame de Pompadour wielded enormous **influence** at the court of Versailles and also over her lover - Louis XV, King of France. Born Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, she became the King's **favoured mistress**. So much so that he gifted her the title of **Marquise** and also the *Château de Pompadour* in which she built a private horse stud farm in 1751. Today, Pompadour harbours the national stud farm and remains at the heart of **national French horse racing**.

www.terresdecorreze.com

CHÂTEAU DE MONTAL

This 16th century French Renaissance château is filled with **finesse and elegance**. It was designed by a woman named **Jeanne de Balsac**, and is enhanced by sculptures and ornamental patterns paying homage to her son, Robert de Montal, who was killed in battle in Italy. The château was never finished and fell into ruin over time. It was finally bought in the 19th century by **Maurice Fenaille**, an enthusiastic art collector and rich industrialist. He undertook to restore the remains of the château and restore its past splendour. On his death, he donated it to the nation. Here many treasures housed in the **Louvre** were hidden during the Second World War, including Leonardo da Vinci's **Mona Lisa**.

www.chateau-montal.fr



NEW

A new interpretation space dedicated to this theme will be opening in autumn 2023 in the château's upper room, which was previously closed to the public.

CHÂTEAU DE HAUTEFORT

Experience beauty! Visit a château from the century of Louis XIV, unique in Dordogne, and overlooking a charming village and a green valley. Experience an immersion in the 17th century, with its harmonious and balanced classical architecture, furnished apartments, remarkable French-style gardens (3 hectares), as well as the chapel and the open gallery. Then go down to see the bread oven, which is still working... and go up to see the framework and the view from the Brittany Tower... The château's history will also surprise you. It is a real phoenix that has been reborn three times... Set aside about 2 hours, before enjoying a stroll in the English-style garden and a picnic with your family or lunch in the restaurant in the Château courtyard. Treat yourself to the good and the beautiful in the Château de Hautefort!

www.chateau-hautefort.com



CHÂTEAU DE FÉNELON

Proudly looking down on the Dordogne Valley, the Château de Fénelon never goes unnoticed. On the road from Sarlat to Souillac, its distinctive outline can be seen from afar. It is a uniquely well-preserved fortress with the "Historic Monument" and "House of Illustrious People" labels. The château is a wonder to visit: for its ramparts and stone-slate roofs, as well as the many rooms with period furniture and illustrating centuries of the history of the decorative arts and aristocratic life.

www.chateau-fenelon.fr



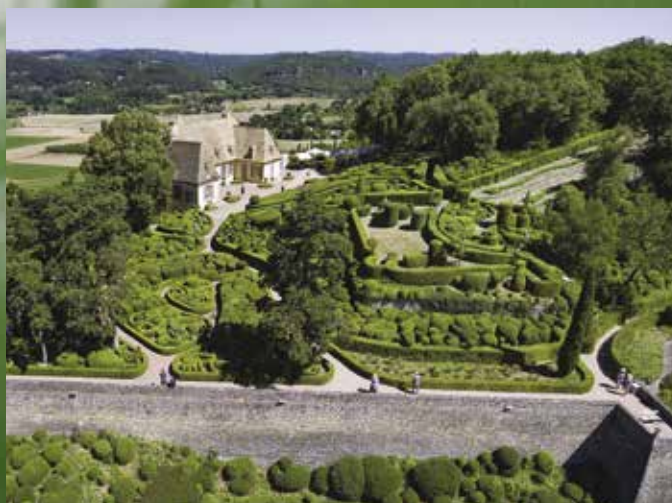
CULTIVATED BEAUTY

For garden lovers and green fingered enthusiasts, the Dordogne Valley showcases a whole **range of gardens**, from intricately trimmed boxwood to floral extravaganzas. Botanic, rose and exotic gardens thrive in the temperate climate, the smells of which are a treat for the senses.

THE GARDENS OF MARQUEYSSAC

Spread atop cliffs with sumptuous views over the Dordogne River below, the gardens of Marqueyssac are the most visited in the Périgord. The extensive boxwood, originally planted in the 19th century, are trimmed, manicured and contoured along meandering paths that lead to the 17th century château. Listed as a **National Historical Monument**, les Jardins de Marqueyssac are laid out along three paths and inspired by formal Italian-style gardens with symmetrical lines. The gentle stroll offers quite staggering cliff top views of the medieval castles of Castelnaud and Beynac as well as the village of La Roque-Gageac by the river. Visitors in July and August are afforded a rare treat each Thursday evening, when 2000 candles are lit to create the most romantic of garden visits.

www.marqueyssac.com





EYRIGNAC AND THE GARDENS

Located near Sarlat and Lascaux, the 10 hectares of exquisite *Jardins à la Française* will wow even the most casual garden enthusiast. The manicured perfection of the **boxwood** with over 300 sculptured examples of hedged art makes Eyrignac a **topiary garden masterpiece**. Handed down through **22 generations for 500 years**, the trimming and shaping of plants is in the blood of the family owners. Specialised **classes** in the art of topiary gardening are available for those who wish to learn from the experts about these intricate pruning, trimming and hedging techniques. Amongst ornamental water fountains and ponds, these extensive gardens play host in July and August to the famous '**White Picnics**'. With a dress code of white only, this is a one of a kind **garden party**. Music, cocktails, dancing and illuminated water fountains combined with a spectacular sunset over the Dordogne Valley gives way to **fireworks** later in the evening.
www.eyrignac.com



JARDINS SOTHYS

The Sothys gardens are part of the sophisticated high-end range of **beauty products** which share the same name. The plants for the **organic** cosmetic line of Sothys, the *Beauty Garden* range, are grown here exclusively, alongside the plants for their organic **herbal teas**. Recognised by the '*Jardin Remarquable*' label for its botanical importance, the Jardins Sothys are also exquisite gardens to venture in and a **wonderful spot for lunch** with an excellent on-site restaurant.
www.lesjardinssothys.fr

A wellness break at the heart of gardens
Since summer 2023, a wellness practitioner has been providing relaxing experiences in a cocoon nestled in a natural setting.



BEAUTY GARDENS: ORGANIC HERBAL TEAS AND COSMETICS MADE 100% IN THE CORRÈZE

Since 2014, Beauty Gardens' herbalists have been making **organic** herbal teas and cosmetics from their own vegetable patch. The plants and vegetables used in the product range are grown, pampered and harvested in Auriac, a village where Bernard Mas, the founder of the **Sothys** brand, grew up. Beauty Garden is also committed to **eco-design**, with eco-friendly wooden packaging made in France.
www.beautygarden.com

THE CARSAC-AILLAC WATER GARDENS

The gardens with the “Remarkable Garden” label are dedicated to water plants, lotuses, exotic and tropical water lilies, and papyrus. This is a real “**aquatic arboretum**”, where you can see a collection from all over the world, with ponds, streams and waterfalls, a water maze covering over 300 square metres that is unique in Europe and a “touch tank aquarium” for children.
www.jardinsdeau.com



THE PANORAMIC LIMEUIL GARDENS

The gardens are located on the site of a castle above the village of Limeuil. They overlook the confluence of the Dordogne and Vézère rivers, and the rooftops of the medieval village. All along the way, you can enjoy the **educational, fun and interactive gardens, the themed educational trails, the observation hives and a 360° view over the surrounding landscapes.**
www.jardins-panoramiques-limeuil.com



PLANBUISSON BAMBOO GARDEN IN LE BUISSON-DE-CADOUIN

Come and explore this **lush, unusual garden** that will take your breath away with its beauty and unique, exotic atmosphere. You can give yourself up to contemplation in the shade of the giant bamboo reaching 20 metres high, and all far from the madding crowd in a poetic and harmonious green space. On the walnut-shell paths, an abundant world is unveiled at each step...
www.planbuisson.com

THE YZORCHE GARDENS IN ARGENTAT-SUR-DORDOGNE

Javette Boutiller is artist bringing varied elements together. With her partner Stéphane Dhur she grows aromatic and medicinal plants in a **garden designed like the sun and radiating fragrances and colours.** Here she makes herbal teas, aromatic herbs, floral waters and massage oils based on a sensitive, traditional and ecological approach to plants. The couple organise **sensorial courses and stays with vegetarian meals in a cabin or a yurt.** We love this chance to treat yourself to a break in nature and to refocus, while savouring the subtle art of plants.
www.lesjardinsdyzorce.fr

CEPS AND TRUFFLES

a match made in heaven

TRUFFLES

In the Dordogne Valley, **truffles** have been cultivated and harvested for **centuries**. The best in the truffle kingdom is the variety known as the *truffe noire* ('black truffle'), the most **prized and sought after** of all truffle varieties and one of the most **expensive** in the world.

Part of the wider mushroom family, truffles grow amongst the **roots of trees**, particularly oak and hazelnut which dominate many of the forests here. Outside the confines of truffle farms, they also grow in the wild. Truffle hunters use **dogs**, and more bizarrely, some locals can even follow the flight patterns of **flies** in order to find them. Needless to say truffle hunting is performed by those with only a **specialist knowledge and skill** in unearthing this highly sought after culinary delight. For the rest of us, they can be bought at **truffle markets** during harvest time from December to February each year. This rare delicacy can sell for eye watering prices. The curious can sit back and enjoy the spectacle as the ritualised trading takes place. In markets such as the ones in Sarlat (twice a week in season, wednesdays and saturdays), Cuzance and Martel, growers arrive in the morning with **covered baskets** of truffles which are then tested for weight and quality. Unveiled to buyers when the bell tolls, some haggling occurs, money changes hands and quick as a flash it's over. Afterwards **gourmet meals** with multiple courses of truffle dishes are served. This mouth-watering delicacy can also be found on the menus of **restaurants** throughout the Dordogne Valley.

CEPS, BOLETUS, YELLOW BOLETUS...

The cep or Porcini mushroom is a member of the bolete fungus family, but not all boletes are ceps... Do you follow our drift?

In fact, only four types of boletus are varieties of cep, and they are the "Rolls Royce" of boletus. These are: the pine mushroom, the bronze mushroom, the summer mushroom and the Bordeaux mushroom. Everyone wants them, everyone looks for them... and with good reason! Their taste is truly delicious, and you're in luck because you can find them on our soil from June to September, or at any of our local markets.

Truffles markets (mornings) from December to February

Wednesday: Sarlat
Thursday: Under the covered market of the Vitrine du Périgord in Terrasson-Lavilledieu
Saturday: Brive, Sarlat and Périgueux
Monday: Saint Alvére
Sunday: Bergerac and Saint Geniès

Another festival not to be missed

Truffle Festival in Sorges

Every year, on the last weekend of January.
www.tourisme-grandperigueux.fr/blog/fete-de-la-truffe-sorges-et-ligueux-en-perigord



TRUFFLE HUNTING

Patience is key when buying truffle trees. The roots (oaks are generally used) have been specially treated in order to encourage truffle growth. Once the trees have been planted, they take around **10 years** to start producing truffles. Even after this long wait, there are no guarantees that this mysterious delicacy will arrive as their temperamental growth requires the **perfect soil and climatic conditions**. In the wild they need to be hunted down and unearthed, usually by **trained dogs**. For those curious in finding more about the mysterious art of cavage (truffle hunting) you can visit farms where expert truffle hunters explain this art of foraging.

Where to go truffle hunting

La Truffière de Vielcroze
www.domaine-vielcroze.com

Cavage à l'écomusée de la Truffe à Sorges-et-Ligueux
www.ecomuseedelatruffe.com

La ferme de la truffe à Cuzance
www.lafermedelatruffe.fr

LA FERME DES SENTIERS DU DIAMANT NOIR

In Saint-Laurent-les-Tours

The truffle in summer, from 15 June to 15 September

La Ferme des Sentiers du Diamant Noir in Saint-Laurent les-Tours, between Causse and Ségala, invites visitors to come and listen to tales and local stories told by Patric & Raymond Boris. This a poetic and delicious break in the old truffle terraces, rounded off by a dinner beneath the stars around a 13th century cabin with a view over the château lit up in the darkness.

www.vallee-dordogne.com/blog/escapade-gourmande-sentiers-diamant-noir

EXPERIENCE

Tiny House

At the truffle farm

This Quercy family farm was already famous for its guided tours to learn about the 'black diamond' and its famous restaurant run by Delphine and Jérôme. But now it's also a place to stay with new accommodation featuring a bedroom, a family suite and now a brand new, comfortable and contemporary wooden 'tiny house'. You'll love splashing around in the tiny house's jacuzzi after a tasting of local black truffle products.

La ferme de la Truffe - Cuzance 06 89 97 84 39

www.lafermedelatruffe.fr

Rates: from €160/night for 2 people

FOIE GRAS

ANCESTRAL KNOW-HOW

In the Dordogne Valley, foie gras is generally a family affair, with know-how handed down from generation to generation. Its production actually dates back to ancient Egypt, some 4,500 years ago. The Egyptians observed the behaviour of migratory birds, particularly geese and ducks, on the banks of the Nile. To prepare for the long migratory journey, these birds naturally gorged themselves by eating much more than usual. In this way, they accumulated fat in their livers, creating a surplus of energy for their long journey.

The technique was then perpetuated, with each people using the resources available locally. It developed particularly in France from the 18th century onwards with the arrival of maize in the South-west region.

Geese and ducks reared in the Dordogne Valley spend most of their lives in nature, with a very short force-feeding period.

www.foiegras-perigord.com/fr/route-du-foie-gras

THE SARLAT DUCK FESTIVAL - FEST'OIE

The annual *Fest'Oie* takes place in the first weekend of **March in Sarlat**. The town comes alive to the sound of music as bands playing traditional French tunes wander the ancient cobbled streets. All around the enticing **aromas of cooking stands** fill the air and on Saturday night it is *La soirée Bodégoie*. Held in the medieval heart of Sarlat, diners sit in heated marquees and sample the feast, prepared by the leading restaurateurs of the town, all from **100% local produce**. The dish named after Sarlat itself - Sarladaise potatoes (delicious sautéed potatoes cooked in duck fat) is served accompanied by goose sausages and of course - Foie Gras. The next day, on Sunday, a **gigantic lunch** is staged, seating 1,000 or so in the middle of Sarlat. On the menu - a buffet style of some **15 dishes** including the famous Foie Gras which is served on an all you can eat basis! www.sarlat-tourisme.com/je-decouvre-sarlat-et-le-perigord/les-grands-evenements-de-sarlat-des-animations-toute-lannee/sarlat-festoie-fete-loie-comme-il-se-doit



Among other local productions, L'Agneau du Quercy AOP also holder of the **Label Rouge**, grew up on the sets arid regions of the Causses du Quercy Regional Natural Park.

The **breed of pig** known as "Cul Noir" for obvious reasons has been reared here for centuries. Only about **forty or so farmers** specialise in rearing this tasty regional product.

"Label Rouge" Limousin beef is distinguished by a beautiful red colour: this is top-of-the-range meat, with little fat, renowned for its flavour. Its exceptional texture gives it its tenderness, remarkable marbling, smoothness and juiciness.

Farm Veal reared under the mother. It's a real festival of sensations for the taste buds with an exquisite flavor, sought after by the finest gourmets who find in this white to light pink meat, with very fine, a subtle nutty taste, juiciness and a remarkable fondant.

BRIVE MARKET TIME

Every **Saturday morning**, under the covered market hall of Brive-la-Gaillarde (Halle Georges Brassens), the **bustling market** hums to the sound of locals buying all manner of locally grown fresh vegetables and meats. Top end local fare can be found at numerous stalls overflowing with all kinds of delicacies, which can also be found on the menus of the excellent restaurants nearby.

Not to be missed, **winter fairs** have existed in Brive since the 13th century. Called *Foires Grasses* (fatty fairs) they feature duck and goose products and everything in between, five times a year **between November and March**. www.brive-tourisme.com



FESTIVE AND EVENING MARKETS A whole way of life

Markets with a great atmosphere take place in July and August in several villages, generally from 5 pm. The idea is to put farmers and artisans in direct contact with consumers. Some have the "Local Producers Markets" label, issued by the Chambers of Agriculture, a guarantee of high quality. Equally festive markets are organised by local associations.

But that is not all! Not only can you buy some excellent products, which are made or grown in our region, but you can taste some of them on site.



RED FRUITS

BERRY TASTIC

The **climate** of the Dordogne Valley makes for perfect fruit growing conditions. Cultivated throughout, the main crops are raspberries, apples and strawberries. 60 percent of France's **strawberry production** is grown right here. First imported from Chile in the 18th century, strawberry farming flourished in the 19th century. No fewer than **300 tons** are produced in 30 hectares each year in and around Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, where farmers and producers have been given the prestigious "**Remarkable Site for Taste**" label.

To find out more, Céline Roche welcomes visitors to her farm at Les Comballes in Queyssac-les-Vignes.
www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com

STRAWBERRY FIELDS

Every second Sunday in May, as the spring sunshine returns, the annual **Strawberry Festival** takes place in **Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**. The whole place is transformed into a celebration of the strawberry as the fruits of the harvest are sold in every street.

Sunday 12th of May 2024: Strawberry Festival. Here the star of spring is celebrated and the famous giant tart is served.

AND RASPBERRIES TOO

Raspberries were first grown in 1956, initially on a small scale in the town of Concèze. It has grown into a significant crop with **800 tonnes** produced each year by **220 producers**, mainly small family growers. At the orchards of *Leycuras*, raspberries and other fruit can be bought directly from the family business.
www.giteferme.fr



WALNUTS

WALNUTS FOR IT

The Dordogne Valley is the **largest producer** of walnuts in France and the cultivation of this tasty delight is an integral part of the region's cultural and farming history. Four main varieties (Marbot, Corne, Granjean and Franquette) are grown here, protected by an AOP (Protected Designation of Origin) label that guarantees high quality standards. They are also very **healthy**, rich in fibre, Omega 3 and Omega 6, vitamins, magnesium, iron, phosphorus and manganese. Accompanying many a dish and delicious in every way – **walnut oil** drizzled on a salad, kernels roasted or caramelised, dipped in sugar or chocolate, made into ice-cream or even as an aperitif called *Vin de Noix*...

www.noixduperigord.com

Curious walnut amateurs are invited to meet the producers and visit **mills, distilleries, restaurants** as well as farm-inns involved in its cultivation by following *La Route de la Noix*. This route also leads to the walnut museum *Les 4 Demoiselles in Saillac*, presenting a complete history of the walnut since its introduction by the Romans.

www.4demoiselles.fr

MILLS AROUND

Near Terrasson and the famous Jardins de l'Imaginaire, the **Moulin de Maneyrol** specialises in the pressing of walnuts to extract the oil.

www.maneyrol.com

In Vézac the **Moulin de Trel** offers guided tours of the walnut oil production process.

www.perigordnoir.com

Don't miss the traditional **Martel Walnut Oil Mill**. Here they use ancestral methods to make walnut oil, which is then served on dining tables in their farmhouse restaurant and elsewhere. For six generations, the Castagné family has been producing authentic and fragrant oil in their mill built in 1870.

www.moulincastagne.com



Moulin de la Vie Contée

The Moulin de la Vie Contée in Ligneyrac is a family farm, open to the public, with a view over the Château de Turenne. From the walnut grove to the tasting, Anne et Cyrille, walnut farmers and millers, will share their varied oil flavours, adapted to each visitor's tastes. The much-loved, golden brown kernels and other treats are to be found in their shop.

www.laviecontee.fr

The Domaine de Vielcroze in Castelnaud-la-Chapelle

The ecological museum is located just below the Château de Castelnaud, in an 18th century farm building. It is carrying on traditional skills in making walnut oil in a 7-hectare organic walnut grove.

www.domaine-vielcroze.com

Bocerno walnut oil factory in Plazac

This walnut oil mill opened in June 2023 to share the "walnut odyssey", a staged experience retracing the history of walnuts in Dordogne. This is a virgin walnut oil plant opened in 2018 by Charlotte Castel. The oils are made from superior quality walnut kernels, and organic methods are currently being adopted. It is a member of the "Collège Culinaire de France" association.

www.bocerno.com

The Lander Walnut Grove in Sarlat

The Moulin de la Veyssière has acquired the Lander Walnut Grove, a family walnut farm in Sarlat. Since June 2023, the walnut grove is open to visitors. Free guided tours lasting 30 minutes are a chance to see the different stages in preparing the walnuts, from the tree to the plate. Each tour is rounded off with a tasting. The aim of the concept is to reaffirm traditional common sense in farming.

www.noyeraiesdulander.fr



Cosmetics made from walnut oil

Ollioz Workshop & Shop in Liorac-sur-Louyre

Muriel Ollivier-Ozbir makes natural cosmetic products, mainly from walnut oils, wild plants and other treasures from her family estate. Walnuts are used in a range of different ways: kernels, flour, oil... and why not soap and body oil?

www.pays-bergerac-tourisme.com/fr/blog/atelier-ollioz-rencontre-avec-muriel-ollivier-ozbir

A new brand in Sarlat

Mylène and Léa, two friends fascinated by natural cosmetics, have launched an environmentally friendly brand using plant ingredients close to home, especially Périgord walnut oil.

www.lacosmetiquedici.fr/une-histoire

Terre de Noyers

Terre de Noyers is a mixed farm of Limousin cattle and walnut trees, established at Le Verdier, in Nailhac, Dordogne, in 1932. The rich soil of this region is ideal for growing walnuts. Julien plants, prunes and harvests his entire orchard. The whole process is managed from start to finish on the premises. They are also on the walnut route with the AOP/AOC label. By working in compliance with integrated farming standards, they have also been awarded HVE (High Environmental Value) status.

ORIGINAL

Accommodation in a walnut grove in Banne

"Only in Banne"... will you find 2 cabins nestling in the oak trees, alongside the walnut grove on Séverine and Sébastien Corjon's family estate. They are now adopting organic methods in the walnut grove, but that is not all! They will be delighted to introduce you to their farm (walnuts & honey) and their region.

www.inyaqab.fr

THE DENOIX DISTILLERY

Based in Brive, this internationally recognised **craft distillery** has been producing **quality liqueurs and aperitifs** since 1839. Employing the same 19th century distilling techniques today, this **fourth generation family run business** continues to create some of the most famous brands from the area. Producing over 20 lines of aperitifs, digestifs and liqueurs, the most popular are arguably their walnut liqueurs **Quinquinoix** followed closely by the **Suprême Denoix**. A visit to the distillery, with guided tour, is only surpassed by the beautiful on-site shop that sells their entire and extensive range. The distillery is also renowned for their international export the 'Moutarde Violette', a distinctive **violet coloured mustard**, made with grapes. www.denoix.com



BOVETTI CHOCOLATES

This thriving boutique chocolatier in **Terrasson** combines **100% cocoa** with 100% locally sourced ingredients including spices, Périgord walnuts and hazelnuts. The results are an extensive range of **sophisticated handmade chocolates** which also includes a fully **organic** variety. **Valter Bovetti**, the artisan chocolate maker is based in Terrasson where his gourmet shop and kitchens also house a **chocolate museum**. Guided tours explaining the techniques involved are followed by tasting and the opportunity to purchase the delicious products from the Bovetti range. www.bovetti.com



MAISON LOU COCAL

This **artisanal biscuit maker** is famed for scrumptious products made in Sarlat since 1996. The name *Lou Cocal* means **walnuts** in the local dialect. This and other nuts including chestnuts and hazelnuts, locally grown, are key ingredients in the production of their extensive biscuit range. Using techniques and recipes passed down through the generations, the **handmade biscuits** along with their **chocolates and sweets** are tempting beyond measure. www.biscuiterie-lou-cocal.com



CHEESES

ROCAMADOUR VS CABÉCOU DU PÉRIGORD

"Cabécou" means "little goat" in Occitan. It is a small round cheese made from whole goat's milk, which was known in the past as cream cheese. Since 1992, Périgord Cabécou has been protected as a brand and a logo. Whether it is made on the farm or in a dairy, the production process is strictly regulated. It must be **made in Périgord with milk coming only from Périgord**, helping to make it an exceptional cheese. The goat's cheese is well adapted to the seasons and consumer trends. It is **creamy and melts in the mouth**, with aromas recalling freshly cut hay.

COW'S AND SHEEP'S MILK CHEESES

Farmers and cheesemakers in Corrèze have perfected **traditional skills** to produce high-quality products. **Feuille du Limousin**, a farmhouse raw-milk goat's cheese...**Fôte des Bergères**, a sheep's cheese made from raw milk (a forgotten recipe)... while not forgetting our traditional cow's milk cheeses: Caillade, Pavé Corrèzien and Tomme des Ardoisiers.

ROCAMADOUR CHEESE FESTIVAL

The annual cheese festival of Rocamadour takes place every spring on **Pentecost Sunday**. At centre stage are the goats and the **Rocamadour AOP cheese** but artisanal cheesemongers from other parts of France sell a huge variety of cheeses here too. Starting early with the **blessing of the flock**, the festival carries on with all sorts of family friendly **activities**, a countryside lunch and a charming celebration of one of France's quintessential delicacies. www.vallee-dordogne.com



WINES AND WINE REGIONS

MADE IN THE DORDOGNE VALLEY

With its rich soil and perfect grape growing conditions, The Dordogne Valley has historically been full of vineyards, and wine production was a major activity for centuries. Then in the 1850s The Great French Wine Blight arrived causing absolute carnage to wine production as the phylloxera disease decimated vines throughout France. In the Dordogne Valley it was largely abandoned and wine growers turned instead to truffle farming and walnut production.

Recently wine making has enjoyed a renaissance and some excellent boutique wineries have emerged. These dynamic vineyards have punched above their weight and gained a reputation for quality.

Les Coteaux de la Vézère

The Coteaux de la Vézère vineyard only extends across the villages of Allasac, Donzenac and Voutezac, twenty or so minutes from Brive-la-Gaillarde. The heritage and landscape of Pays de Brive have been shaped by viticulture through the centuries. All the vines planted since 2013 are organic, and since 2018 the vineyard is entire converted. The first organic wines were produced in 2018.

www.coteaux-vezere.fr

www.lesterrassesdelabontat.fr/la-grange

Coteaux de Glanes & Roc-Amadour

A cooperative of wine making families have pooled their talents to create the **Coteaux de Glanes** winery. It is one of the smallest wineries in France, made up of a mere 40 hectares near the Gouffre de Padirac chasm. They produce small but excellent batches of rosés, whites and reds. Success has come for their main varieties of Merlot and the award-winning Merlot-Gamay blend in particular. Another boutique winery with a growing reputation for fruity reds and rosés is the **Roc-Amadour winery** which has only recently rekindled a history of cultivation that first stemmed back to Roman times.

www.coteauxdeglanes.fr

www.vallee-dordogne.com

The "1001 Pierres" vineyard

After winning the bronze medal at the 1878 Universal Exhibition, the wine of Branceilles, a village in the southern Corrèze region, fell into oblivion, a consequence of the blight epidemic. A few tenacious farmers brought it back to life in 1987, naming it "1001 Pierres". The vineyard was the first to be replanted in the Corrèze and covers 75 hectares, 50% of which is farmed organically on clay-limestone soil (45% Cabernet Franc, 30% Gamay, 25% Merlot).

www.1001-pierres.com



Straw wine or "Honey of the Muses"

For over 3 decades, winegrowers in the southern Corrèze region have been rediscovering the art and flavour of straw wine, produced from red grape varieties (Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon), or white grape varieties (Chardonnay, Sauvignon). The best grapes are harvested by hand and placed on racks before being left to dry. As Christmas approaches, the grapes are pressed and the wine aged for a minimum of 2 years before bottling. The "Miel des Muses" is served as an aperitif, but also accompanies foie gras, cheese or desserts.

Domaine de Chirac – Domaine du Bas-Queyssac

The Coteaux de la Vézère

The Gorges de Vézère, on the slopes of schist and sandstone around Le Saillant, are perfect for growing grapes. Once the wine of Le Saillant was even served at the table of the monks of the Abbey of Cluny! Unfortunately, the vineyard was decimated by blight in the past, but today a handful of enthusiasts share the 23 hectares of organic vines on the estate, where the Chenin grape thrives in the slate soil.

www.coteaux-vezere.fr

Vins de Bergerac au Quai Cyrano

New Culture, Wine and Tourism space in Bergerac. Shop, wine bar, tasting workshops.



Corrèze wines awarded AOP status in 2023

After being awarded the AOC label in 2017, the Corrèze winegrowers' perseverance and expertise have now been rewarded with the PDO label, a European label of recognition. The history of this vineyard has not always been a straightforward one: it covered 17,000 hectares in the Middle Ages, only to virtually disappear in the second half of the 19th century following the blight epidemic. But thanks to passionate efforts, recognition came in the 1980s, and today around thirty winegrowers cultivate 75 hectares under the "Vins de Corrèze" PDO.

Meymac-près-Bordeaux

Although the town on the Millevaches Plateau is 300 kilometres away from Bordeaux, its inhabitants still managed to make their fortune with the help of this 19th century wine designation. A native of Meymac, Jean Gaye-Bordas, had the idea of selling wines door to door in Belgium and in northern France with the imaginary label "Meymac-près-Bordeaux" ("Meymac-near-Bordeaux"). Jean Gaye-Bordas became a rich man overnight. He bought vineyards and châteaux in the Libourne area, among others. Many wine merchants from upper Corrèze also took up the lucrative trade. From 1900 and for the next 50 years, a few hundred inhabitants of the Meymac region gave "Meymac-près-Bordeaux" as their address to their Belgian customers.

www.tourismecorreze.com/fr/meymac-pres-bordeaux.html

Chez Françoise

In Meymac, Françoise Bleu's restaurant is not to be missed for food lovers. Her cuisine is based on carefully selected local ingredients. Françoise combines prestigious vintages from the finest wines of Bordeaux, since we are in Meymac-près-Bordeaux, after all.

L'Ort Distillery:

Gin Mania takes hold of the region

Young, traditional spirits distillers have opened their "Distillerie d'Ort" in Montignac, in what was once their grandparents' farm. Out of ecological conviction, they heat their still using solar energy. The still was made to measure by a local brass worker. Loïs makes blends based on grain alcohol, spring water and organic, aromatic plants. Nolwenn takes care of the garden around the farm and keeping track of orders. The result of the alchemy is the "Gin from Our Gardens", an organic-certified drink with a fresh, herbal taste. And coming soon... a 100% local Pastis!

www.distilleriedelort.com



TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

Alto Duo Design:

A new brand with a winemaking inspiration

If you are a fan of environmentally friendly design, don't forget this name! The duo Paloma and Mayeul Morand Monteil design furniture using wood from their family wine estate, along with textile accessories and household linen in resolutely modern styles rooted in a quest for tradition and sustainability. For their prototypes, they use different types of wood from the "Château Terre Vieille" wine estate in Saint-Sauveur de Bergerac, in the Pécharmant wine area, which is today a shop window for their creations.

www.altoduo.com

MICHELIN

A sky full of stars

TOP NOTCH RESTAURANTS

From gourmet cuisine to simple family cooking, the Dordogne Valley is renowned around the world for its gastronomy. Mixing local produce, traditional recipes, creativity and a real flair in the kitchen, the chefs here don't just cook; they invite you to experience what the Dordogne Valley is all about.

MICHELIN STARS IN THEIR EYES

Le Château de la Treyne *

A fairy-tale like castle suspended above the Dordogne River and a candlelit terrace to die for. Refined and elegant, this is a real treat for the eyes as well as the palate.

La Table d'Olivier *

In the historical centre of Brive, audacious and creative cuisine from starters through to desserts.

Le 1862 aux Eyzies au sein de l'hôtel et spa *

The 1 Michelin star gourmet restaurant, is an epicurean hymn to the art of entertaining. Here you can sample local produce from the Périgord region and its surrounding area.

Le Pont de l'Ouisse *

A magical place on the banks of a stream under the castle of Belcastel - a passion for local cuisine handed down through the generations.

Vieux logis in Trémolat *

This traditional restaurant is full of charm. The chef, Vincent Arnould, with the "Meilleur Ouvrier de France" title, takes a new look at Périgord specialities.

Les Fresques at Château des Vigiers *

This gastronomic restaurant is in the right-hand wing of the Château. Here you will find dishes made with fresh and regional ingredients, respecting the seasons and quality.

La Tour des Vents in Monbazillac *

Damien Fagette, the chef, brings you complex and tasty cuisine. Something extra: a panoramic view over the Bergerac vineyards from the restaurant.

L'Essentiel in Périgueux *

Inventive cuisine, cooked to perfection, in a family restaurant at the heart of the town centre. Éric Vidal, the chef, takes care selecting his ultra-fresh ingredients.

Cueillette in Altillac *

In "La Raufie" manor house, Oscar Garcia, a Michelin-starred chef, composes his dishes. Although the site has its own orchard and vegetable garden, all the ingredients are carefully selected from local suppliers.



EATING IN TOWN

Chez Francis in Brive-la-Gaillarde

This lively restaurant in the centre of Brive is owned by Francis, a local institution, who peddles to market on his three wheeled cycle in order to choose the freshest produce. A chef for 30 years, Chez Francis is an unmissable gourmet stop-over for anyone searching for good food and great atmosphere.

Le Grand Bleu in Sarlat

Local chef Maxime Lebrun revisits traditional cuisine from the Périgord, creating Michelin starred finesse for discerning diners.

Inspiration in Brive

In a cosy setting, this restaurant has a local and environmental approach, where the "made in France" is not just an option. A committed chef who cares about the environment.

NO FUSS - TRADITIONAL COOKING

Not for the calorie-counting folks, this is hearty, generous cuisine with lashings of cream and the best of local produce.

La Bonne Famille in Sarrazac

Traditional recipes passed on through generations of the same family including pan-fried Foie Gras, chestnut pâté and Rocamadour goats cheese samosa.

Chez Janine in Hautefage

Janine peels, cuts and simmers like she would at home: hearty vegetable soups, stuffed cabbage and potatoes and the best apple "flognarde" in the Valley.

Ferme-Auberge du Grand Coderc in Saint-Rabier

A must-do culinary experience for anyone who loves good food. Authentic and traditional dishes, just like the décor: big fireplace, creaky floorboards, flowery curtains and even family photos on the walls.

La Ferme de Berle in Collonges-la-Rouge

Traditional farm inn run by the same family since 1720. Farm produce is cooked in front of guests in the wood oven: bread, veal, garden fruit and vegetables....all raised and grown with great respect for the environment.

TABLES WITH A VIEW

The Moulin de l'Imaginaire in Terrasson

Situated close to the old town, at the entrance of the Vézère valley, you'll have the pleasure to discover the Moulin de l'Imaginaire restaurant with its terrace and uninterrupted view of the 12th century "Pont Vieux" bridge.

Le Manoir de Hautegeante in Coly

A 13th century building by the river with a lovely outside space to enjoy scrumptious food under the pergola or on the lawn. Extensive local wine list.

La Belle Etoile in La Roque-Gageac

Gourmet traditional restaurant overlooking the Dordogne in La Roque-Gageac, the perfect place to lounge on the shady terrace and watch the gabare barges drift by.

La Mandragore in Terrasson

Magnificent views over the Vézère River in Terrasson combine with traditional cooking. Aromatic herbs and tomatoes grown in a medieval garden and garnishes including edible flowers add a local twist.

Restaurant des Jardins Sothys in Auriac

A beautifully refurbished barn overlooking the lake at the Gardens of Sothys. Passionate chef Jean-Michel Salcedo brings to life local cuisine with exotic touches gathered from his travels.

Le Bistro d'en Face in Bergerac

Gastropub-style food and a terrace with a breathtaking view over the old town, the River Dordogne and the local boats.

Le Bistrot de Malfourat in Monbazillac

A former ballroom has been reborn as a bistro with a gourmet inspiration and an appetising and affordable menu.

Restaurant at Les Balcons de l'Espérance Hotel in Limeuil

This is a place not to be missed if you are in search of simple, authentic and seasonal cuisine with a view over the Limeuil river bend.

Le Maraîcher Restaurant in Collonges-la-Rouge

A market-garden restaurant serving its own produce in a "zero-mile" approach. On sunny days, we love having lunch or dinner on the terrace with a view over the vegetable garden.

Table d'hôtes meals at Hôtel de L'Abbaye in Saint Cyprien

The magnificent residence had been unoccupied for ten years and was in need of new owners. It has recently had the chance to find a new role and come to life again! Discover the Sunday brunch, summer and winter.

Ô Moulin Restaurant in Carsac-Aillac

The charm and magnificent setting provided by the converted mill at the heart of Périgord Noir, is a chance to bring diners a relaxing atmosphere with inventive and refined dishes for generous and tasty cuisine.



Guinguette de Barnabé in Boulazac Isle Manoire

The Art Deco building dates from 1935 and is listed as part of 20th century heritage. It has been renovated in the same spirit but with extra comfort. The main period structures have been preserved inside and out, particularly the terrace, which has been superbly renovated to look out on the island – ideal when musicians are invited to play (and in winter in the conservatory). There is a simple lunch menu, and in the evening there is more "gastropub" spirit. The regulars should soon be back again.

STAR STRUCK: UNUSUAL PLACES TO STAY

STARRY EYED

Under a pristine **night sky**, star gazers, nature enthusiasts and those wishing to reconnect with their inner selves can enjoy sleeping under the night sky of the Dordogne Valley in some truly unique accommodation. One of the regions in France with very low light pollution, it brings out the full grandeur of the Milky Way and a myriad of shooting stars.

La Domastella : Noilhac

A night under the stars in a glass dome, waking up in the middle of nature with first light and the dawn song of the birds.

www.lamaisondesetoiles.fr

Hêtre sous le charme - Saint-Martial-Entraygues

Cut yourself off from the world in the most romantic of ways, suspended in the trees in wooden huts with stunning views. Breakfasts or dinners can be delivered to the bottom of your tree house in a basket. With water and solar electricity.

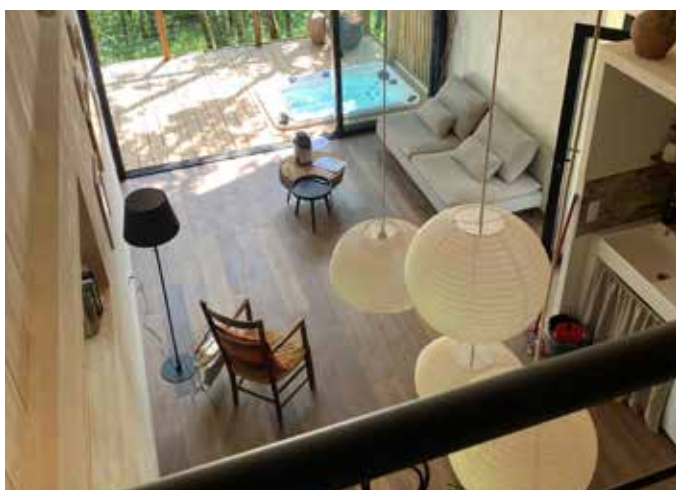
www.hetresouslecharme.com



FAIRY TALE STYLE

There are some other truly **unique places** to stay for a night or more where things are higgledy piggledy and out of the ordinary. For a quirky experience straight out of a fairy tale, try *La Ferme des Histoires Mélangées*. Here, nothing is straight, there is no electricity and lighting is strictly by candle. www.lafermedeshistoiresmelangees.com

Guests are pampered like kings and queens at the *Château de la Treyne*. Overlooking the Dordogne River, the **white fairy-tale like castle** also boasts a Michelin-starred restaurant. www.chateaudelatreyne.com/en



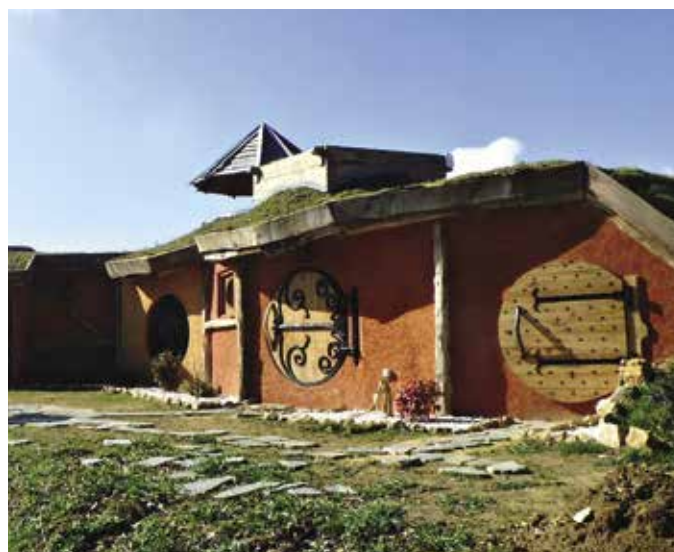
JAPANESE INSPIRATION

Wabi Sabi Lodge & Spa is an upmarket accommodation concept located in Turenne. Inspired by the character and the Japanese philosophy of Wabi Sabi - the art of giving thanks to nature - you'll enjoy a timeless stay. <https://wabisabi-lodge.com>



KOZI DÔME - LAND OF STARS

Nestling on the hills of the Périgord countryside, in a rolling landscape with numerous walnut groves, meadows and forests, the accommodation offers the unique experience of a night beneath a clear, starry sky. www.kozidome.fr



HOBBIT LIFE

Inspired by the film adaptations of J.R.R. Tolkien, this superfan experience allows **hobbit lovers** to live like one for a night or two. Located near Salignac, a touch of luxury for the halfling includes air-conditioning, a hot tub, private spa and breakfast delivered in a hobbit basket. www.lesinsolitesduperigord.com

GEOCACHING, HIGH-TECH TREASURE HUNTING

Bringing the family together with mobile phones, Geocaching has taken off the world over. 100% free, it's an outdoor high-tech combination of clue hunting and orienteering with a bit of help from GPS! It has become very popular in the Dordogne Valley and there are around twenty 'caches' in English available for download from the free App 'Terra Aventura'. Anyone with a smartphone can play. Adventure seekers just need to follow the GPS trail to unveil the clues that lead ultimately to the geocache treasure - which contains a log book and trinkets such as collectable badges. While visiting an ancient medieval town it's a fun way to get children involved in exploring it too. There are a number of great caches to play in English, scattered throughout the Dordogne Valley and many at key historic sites such as Sarlat, Brive, Terrasson, Domme, Beynac, Rocamadour, Pompadour Hautefort and Tourtoirac. While caching, it's impossible not to learn something about the destination! The puzzles in Martel for instance even impart some fascinating history on the English occupation of this part of France while seeking out the treasure. www.terra-aventura.fr/?langcode=en

KID FRIENDLY

With kid friendly activities galore, the Dordogne Valley is a one stop shop for anything from canoeing to discovering wildlife, introductory cave dives or rock climbing. Here are some other great ideas to keep them active and busy:





DORDOGNE WITH YOUR FAMILY

Have fun, explore, try something new, go climbing and look for things, everything is possible in our region. Discover over 150 activities specially adapted to families. Give in to the temptation of a calligraphy workshop in a château, a chance to stroke the animals on an educational farm, go-karting on a race track and even to become a gold digger.

www.dordogne-perigord-tourisme.fr

Plus: family visits to the Château de Bridoire in Ribagnac; a real historic theme park for all ages.

www.chateaubridoire.com

PARC ANIMALIER DE GRAMAT

With an emphasis on European animals, but not exclusively, this sprawling park has extensive **large enclosures** throughout. Over **1,000 animals** including wolves and some very big bears, and a conservation programme for endangered domestic species.

www.gramat-parc-animalier.com

CALVIAC ANIMAL RESERVE

The Calviac animal reserve is near Sarlat. It is home to some 200 animals from four geographic zones - Europe, Madagascar, South America and Oceania. It is a member of a network of reserves committed to protecting endangered species and rescuing mistreated animals. Visitors can see the animals in large enclosures on the tree-filled site.

www.reserve-calviac.org

TO THE ASSAULT!

The Dordogne Valley stages impressive medieval spectacles for all the little princes and great warriors who love adventure!

Tours de Merle

Included with the entry fee during the summer months is a medieval show aimed at children with demonstrations, games, sword play and horse stunts. In French, but still enjoyable and funny even with no understanding of the language.

www.toursdemerle.fr

Parc Durandal

The French version of the Excalibur myth, the show is loosely based around the miraculous sword 'Durandal'. A light hearted and amusing medieval tale, with lots of sword play, jokes and spectacular horse stunts.

www.parcdurandal.com

Château de Commarque

As if from nowhere, this medieval fortress reveals itself through a wide range of activities to complement the visit to the site: vibrant games of yesteryear, exciting themed workshops, a thrilling investigation, stimulating archery, captivating medieval shows... Adventure is everywhere! Even on the walls of the building which you can abseil down.

www.commarque.com

COLETTE'S GARDENS

One of the most famous international novelists of French literature, **Colette** was nominated for the 1948 **Nobel Prize for Literature** and was the first woman in France to receive a state funeral. She spent several years living in the Dordogne Valley in the Corrèze area in the villages of **Varetz** and later in **Curemonte** during the Second World War. The Jardins de Colette near Brive pays homage to this literary genius with a five hectare garden themed in her honour. Dedicated to her love of nature that infused both her writing and her life (she was an avid gardener), it is open for visits from April to October.

www.lesjardinsdecolette.com

NOUVEAUTÉ

'Les enquêtes d'Arthur Villac', a murder party in 6 villages. A current investigation into a murder from the time of the Knights Templar.

ROCAMADOUR SACRED MUSIC FESTIVAL

Every August, thousands of spectators flock to this international event. Major classical music artists perform in some of the area's most beautiful villages: the Basilica of Saint-Sauveur in Rocamadour, the Abbey Church in Souillac, the Alzou Valley, the Chapel of the Grand-Couvent in Gramat, and the Château de la Treyne... Organ recitals, concerts, soloists, Gregorian chant, chamber music, orchestras. Two weeks of exceptional programming bring medieval villages, churches and castles of the Dordogne Valley to life. 2023 was a record-breaking year for the Festival, with 12,000 spectators and 400 artists taking part with 46 concerts in 13 different venues. The highlight: two evenings of outdoor concerts at the foot of the thousand-year-old town of Rocamadour.

Rocamadour Festival -
Sacred Music in the Dordogne Valley
From 15 to 26 August 2024
www.rocamadourfestival.com

MAIN EVENTS

The annual Dordogne Valley calendar is packed full of unmissable shows, music and fun. Village fetes and impressive fireworks run through summer and festivals, concerts and shows can be caught all year round even in winter with the magical Sarlat Christmas market attracting 100,000 visitors a year.

THE SOUILLAC JAZZ FESTIVAL

A week-long celebration to the rhythms of jazz, this annual festival held every third week in July sees the town of Souillac-sur-Dordogne taken over by street bands, with the sound of jazz never far away. The festival has been staging big names in the French and International jazz scene for over 40 years including Art Blakely, Memphis Slim, Archie Shepp and Avishai Cohen to name but a few... On concert nights in the central square of Souillac (Place Pierre Betz), the outdoor stage, constructed in front of the 12th century medieval abbey, is what makes this festival special. Jazz aficionados can get up close to the performers as the dark blue summer sky turns to night and the jazz crescendos under a now starry sky. Lovely acoustics resonate in the medieval abbey square and make for a fabulous outdoor concert in an exceptional setting.

www.souillacenjazz.fr



YOUR DIARY

2-3 March

Fest'oisie

Held in the medieval heart of Sarlat, diners sit in heated marquees and sample the feast, prepared by the leading restaurateurs of the town, all from **100% local produce**. The dish named after Sarlat itself - Sarladaise potatoes (delicious sautéed potatoes cooked in duck fat) is served accompanied by goose sausages and of course - Foie Gras.

18-23 April

Châteaux en fête in the Dordogne Dordogne

This not-to-be-missed event offers a unique opportunity for families and friends to enjoy exclusive, festive, fun, cultural, educational, sporting and gastronomic experiences... Sumptuous châteaux, castles and manor houses host special events with lavish festivities in and around their historic sites!

8-9 May

Journées du Terroir in Sarlat

One of the **biggest events of the year** happens in May when the city of Sarlat hosts two days of delectable **gourmet excess**. Meeting local producers, foodies can indulge in any number of delights including pork, Neuvic caviar, wild mushrooms and fine local wines.

12 May

Fête de la Fraise in Beaulieu

Every 3rd Sunday in May in Vergt: Strawberry Festival. Here the star of spring is celebrated and the famous giant tart is served.

6 July

Tous sur le Pont in Argentat

"Tous sur le Pont" ("Everyone on the Bridge") is a big popular festival taking place on the 1st Saturday of July in Argentat and celebrating a major element in the town, the River Dordogne. For the occasion, over 30 customised rafts will compete on the river to celebrate the era of the famous Gabarier boatmen.

July

Les nuits de l'imaginaire

In summer, fireworks are a feature of village fetes all over the Dordogne Valley. The celebration of **Bastille Day** on the 14th July in Terrasson has made this town famous for its **fireworks display**. Drawing thousands of people to it each year, it's more than a night of pyrotechnics. It's also a **3D sound and light show**, where sophisticated high tech lighting is accompanied by beautiful fireworks exploding over the magnificent backdrop of the old bridge and ancient city. A video projection on the face of Saint Sour church can be viewed each evening

www.ville-terrasson.com

11-14 July

Brive Festival

The **Brive Festival** takes place each year in July and welcomes thousands of fans. Now one of the region's main urban festivals, it hosts four days of music just a step or two away from the town centre. With a wide range of artists in a summer atmosphere and 100% Brive-la-Gaillarde. In 2024, it will be taking place exceptionally from 11 to 14 July.

www.brivefestival.com



26-28 July

Ecaussystème

Also in July, the fields around the tiny village of Gignac turn into a **giant party** with up to 30,000 festival goers joining in the fun of this **eco-conscious** festival. The Offspring, Jimmy Cliff, Franz Ferdinand and Iggy Pop have all performed at the **Ecaussystème Festival**.

www.ecaussysteme.com



15-26 August

Festival de Rocamadour

In homage to these maritime miracles, the organ of the basilica is shaped like a ship's bow. In August, the exceptional acoustics of the medieval basilica resound to a three week Festival of Sacred Music. Attracting upwards of 5,000 concert goers, the ancient city reverberates to the spiritual vibes of some of Europe's internationally renowned classical artists.

28-29 September

Montgolfiades de Rocamadour

Now over 30 years old, this is one of Europe's biggest annual ballooning events, attracting 30,000 spectators each year. Over 30 balloons gracefully hover above the medieval city of Rocamadour. Named after the French engineers who achieved the first ever successful hot air balloon flight in Paris in 1783, the Montgolfiades Festival sees the early morning flights take off around 8am and again late afternoon at around 5pm

From 5-31 December

Marché de Noël in Sarlat

lluminations, decorations, entertainment, shows, market, skating rinks will liven up the city during this period





COME SEE US AT
DORDOGNE
Valley