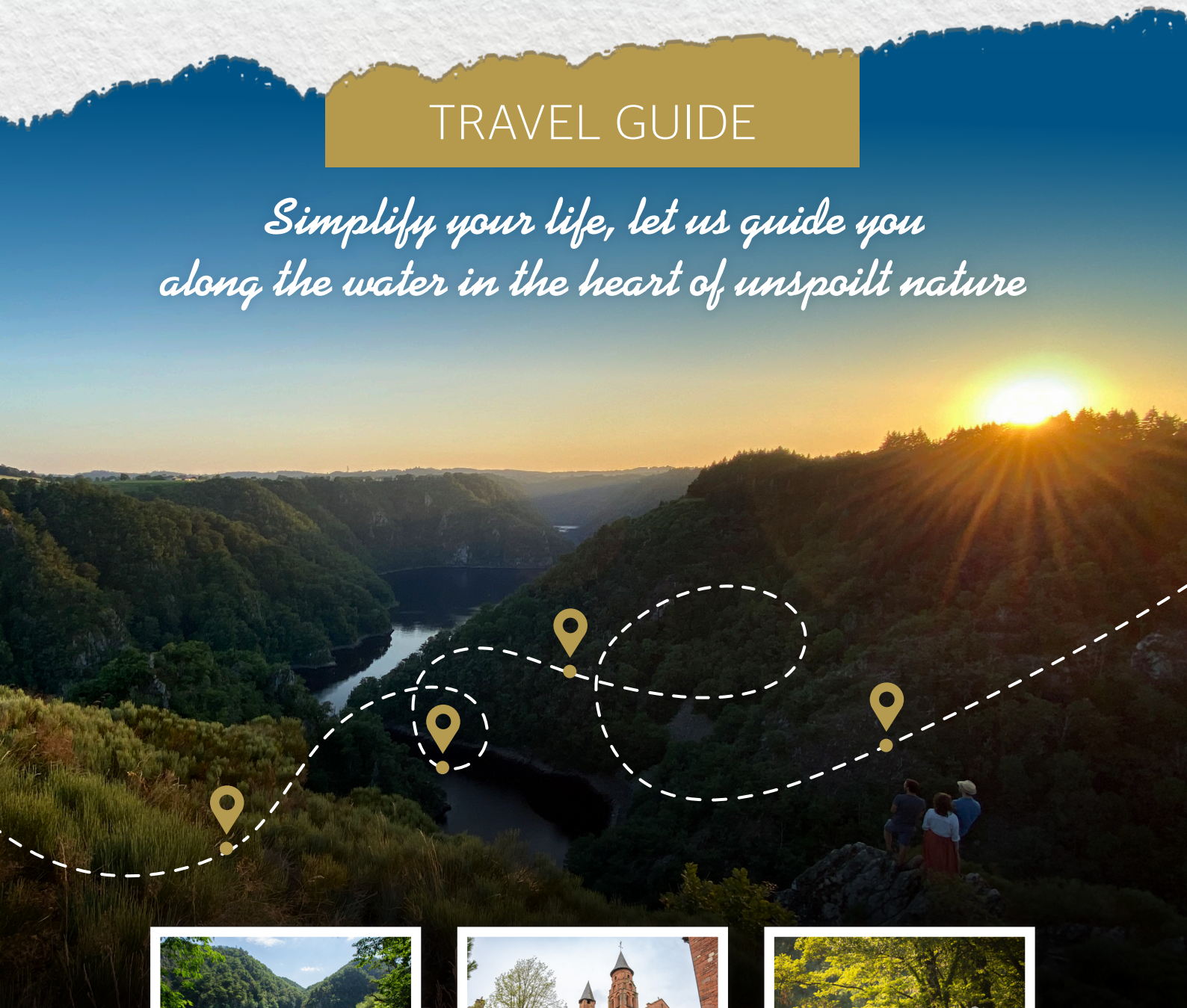


Journey in Corrèze

{ TURNKEY TOUR 1 TO 4 DAYS }

TRAVEL GUIDE

*Simplify your life, let us guide you
along the water in the heart of unspoilt nature*



DORDOGNE
Valley

2023/2024 Edition



Corrèze,

discover our secret spots in stunning sceneries



Take time out...

Soak up an unspoilt land between the Dordogne riverbanks and the Millevaches plateau

Rivers that rise up from the plateau, race down leafy slopes, carve out deep gorges, delve into the belly of the earth then reappear in the valleys upstream...

The Most Beautiful Villages in France... the ones that dazzle, the ones that stand proud and the ones that are mirrored by the Espérance River.

Mysterious forests, belvederes gazing out at the horizon, slate cliffs, floral heaths, forgotten fortresses and protected sites...

And the people who have inherited this unspoilt and generous nature that they protect by founding the Millevaches Regional Nature Park, among others. People who have put their stamp on the milestone moments in this adventure: from rugby and literature in Brive and biodiversity at the Park's Visitor Centre, to the red sandstone in Collonges-la-Rouge, pastels in Turenne and the barge ports in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne and Argentat-sur-Dordogne.

One land but many landscapes that unfurl around the Dordogne Valley and the river's tributaries, whose basin is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Corrèze is your ticket to adventure in amongst this abundance of heritage.

This 4-day journey is just a suggestion. There are countless crossroads and each one takes you on a new adventure. But wherever you go, you'll find the same values of a land true to its natural setting and history: unspoilt, carefree and friendly.



Day 1

Pays Gaillard



**BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE - AUBAZINE -
PANS DE TRAVASSAC - LE SAILLANT -
JARDIN DE COLETTE - TURENNE**

1 Zoom



Brive-la-Gaillarde - Hit the road!

It makes sense: for practical reasons, it's easier to start this adventure in Brive-la-Gaillarde. Take the D1089 to Aubazine before you head back to Malemort and take the D44 to Donzenac. Continue north through Allasac to reach Voutezac (D25). This is the furthest we'll go here, so go down towards the Vézère and Varetz then skirt around Brive to reach (the drive is more on minor roads through Chasteaux for a more leisurely outing) the south and Turenne, within the Lot area.

2 Glance 

An abbey and its canal

Aubazine is a prime monastery site in Corrèze and expanded around its Cistercian abbey which Saint Etienne founded in the 12th century. Secular life flourished around the nearby square in the shade of the abbey's western façade. Did you know? Coco Chanel spent some of her teenage years at the abbey's orphanage. Aubazine is also home to a feat of engineering: the «monks' canal» was built on a 1500m strip winding around the Coyroux Valley's sheer cliffs to supply water to the abbey, its reservoirs and mills.



A land of shimmering slate

Have you ever felt like you've landed on another planet or travelled through another universe? It's the first thing you'll think when you set eyes on the unexpectedly spectacular Pans de Travassac. The setting has been sculpted by the Earth's movements and slate quarries since the 17th century. This open-air quarry still has a working site and sets the scene for vertical walls of quartzite that create dizzying sheer cliffs that shrubs and ferns cling onto. The slate extracted from the site is renowned for its strength and shimmer. It is used to restore historical landmarks such as Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey. A gift from geology and a unique trade for you to see for yourself after reconnecting with the Earth.

3



4

Zoom

Stained glass by Chagall

The setting is stark in its simplicity... You can only really see one side of the unassuming red sandstone and schist Saillant Chapel in Voutezac (Château de Saillant's former chapel) as it slots into a row of buildings. This is the only chapel in France to be entirely decorated with stained glass by Marc Chagall. The building is open to visitors and you won't be able to take your eyes off the master's blue and pastel ochre shades. The artist decided to depict heaven on Earth in a very personal take on the Bible... Simply staggering!



Chapelle du Saillant

Sites

- **Aubazine Abbey**
<https://abbaye.aubazine.com>
- **Monks' Canal in Aubazine**
www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk/discover/cultural-heritage/dordogne-s-top-10-attractions
- **Pans de Travassac in Donzenac**
<https://lespansdetravassac.com>
- **Colette's Gardens in Varetz**
www.lesjardinsdecolette.com
- **Saillant Chapel in Voutezac**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/chapelle_du_saillant_avec_vitraux_de_marc_chagall.html
- **Château de Turenne**
www.chateaudeturenne.com

Where to eat and sleep

- **Les Jardins Sothys in Auriac**
www.lesjardinssothys.fr
- **La Table d'Olivier in Brive**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/la_table_d_olivier.html
- **En Cuisine in Brive**
www.encuisine.net
- **Hôtel Le Miel des Muses in Brive**
www.lemieldesmuses.fr
- **Grand Hôtel in Brive**
<https://grandhotelbrive.com>
- **Château de Lissac gîtes in Lissac-sur-Couze**
www.chateaudelissac.com
- **Château de Castel Novel in Varetz**
www.castelnovel.com/en/home
- **Spalazen Nature lodges in Palazinges**
www.spalazen-nature.com



Jardin de Colette

Colette's Gardens

The French novelist lived in Varetz for a decade near Château de Castel Novel. It's home to six gardens telling the story of Colette's life in flowers, puzzles and words, from her childhood in Burgundy to her later years at the Palais Royal. A one-of-a-kind botanical world whose giant games and 5000m² maze children love.



Turenne

The ancient fiefdom of a powerful viscounty

Turenne is one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France and named after a viscounty that ruled the Bas-Limousin, Quercy and Périgord areas for almost 1000 years. Ancient ruins bring the past to life: Tour César and Tour du Trésor towers overlook the 12th century castle ruins built by the Turenne rulers. The «heritage trail» and its ten highly detailed stages tell you all about how it evolved and the architectural features of former manors (15th-17th century) joined by towers and bartizans covered in stone and slate.

Now it's time to head east between the D38 (on the D150) and D19 (on the D8) to visit a famous fiery village: Collonges-la-Rouge.

Day 2

From villages
to rivers

≈ 105 km



1 Glance



TURENNE - COLLONGES-LA-ROUGE - BEAULIEU-SUR-DORDOGNE - TOURS DE MERLE - ARGENTAT-SUR-DORDOGNE

Turenne

Watch out! Yesterday you visited Turenne and today your route takes you through three of the six Most Beautiful Villages in France that call Corrèze home. Starting with Collonges-la-Rouge, the label's birthplace, followed by (on the D38 and D15) Curemonte before you get back on the D153 to Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. Then it's time to head back up north and switch to the left bank along the D41 (or if you want a more scenic route: take the D14 - via D940 and D116E - and D13 alongside the Cère to reach the Rocher du Peintre belvedere). End the adventure with a deeper dive into Xaintrie to explore the mysterious Merle Towers before continuing on the road you want, cross the Dordogne again in Argentat and carrying on to Albussac on the D1120.

2

The first of the Most Beautiful Villages in France

Collonges-la-Rouge lies within Quercy and Limousin and the red town burnishes against the green surrounding valley. You won't believe your eyes as you gaze at the town on the Meysac fault. The rolling horizon is at its peak at dawn and dusk, so take a walk to soak up the architecture and history of a village that's had many lives. Red sandstone buildings, ochre stone slates or blue grey slates: the buildings come together in harmony. Saint-Pierre Church, Renaissance castles, the old grain and wine market hall and Pénitents Chapel capture centuries gone by: a stage for pilgrims on the Way of St James in the Middle Ages, a castellany for the Turenne viscount from the 13th century, a thriving trade town from the 16th century and headquarters for the Black Penitents until the late 19th century... A traditional village where you'll love wandering around its shops and restaurant terraces. It's no wonder the «Most Beautiful Villages in France» accolade began here!



A pilgrimage to Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne

Collonges-la-Rouge lies within Quercy and Limousin and the red Let's visit another of the «Most Beautiful Villages in France» on the banks of the Espérance: Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne. The little fishing and farming village was part of the great river trade era and has been a prime location since the Early Middle Ages, when the archbishop of Bourges, Rodolphe de Turenne, founded a Benedictine Abbey (856-858). The building demands respect... The Limousin romanesque monastery in pale ochre sandstone was based on plans for a sprawling pilgrimage church with a keep-bell tower. Before you go in... Look up! The tympanum in the porch was sculpted by Toulouse masons in the early 12th century and is a sight for sore eyes.



3

Breathtaking...

Now it's time to delve deeper into Xaintrie, a unique area nestled between Bas-Limousin, Auvergne and Quercy. The granite plateau is carved out by deep gorges formed by three rivers: the Dordogne, Maronne and Cère. The region is the perfect place for hiking and drinking in breathtaking views from the belvederes, including Rocher du Peintre in Camps. The vista overlooks the Cère Valley among leafy hills and treats you to views far into the distance.



4



A spectacular castrum

We're still going upstream: forests, dizzying peaks and a rocky headland overlooking the Maronne. Stones in the rocks... A feudal city emerges from the greenery to create a surreal image deep in the landscape. A castle ruins? Not at all... This is one of medieval Limousin's crowning glories: the Merle Towers. Or rather: the Seven Merle Towers. They were built between the 12th and 15th century, owned by different lords and still overlook a feudal castrum with what's left of an entire village. The collective lordship was strategically positioned on the border between the Aquitaine duchy, Auvergne county and Toulouse county and held its position until the Wars of Religion. Prepare for a mind-blowing history lesson, a setting where any legend rings true and 10 hectares of grounds. Why not try a bit of role play and experience one of the «naturally medieval» events here?



5

Worth a look

Little streams turn into big rivers... and waterfalls. Head to Albussac, in the north of the Dordogne Valley, for a trip to the Murel waterfalls with a surprising and refreshing outing. However you get there, after a 5 minute walk from the car park or a hike on one of the two footpaths, the site is protected so everyone can soak up its natural untamed beauty. A series of three waterfalls in the leafy Gorges de la Franche-Valeine make a splash among the rocks and form little lakes with a blend of precipitation and still water... Reinvigorating!

Sites

- **Château de Vassinhac in Collonges-la-Rouge**
www.chateaudevassinhac.com
- **Saint-Pierre Abbey in Beaulieu**
www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk/discover/cultural-heritage/villages-to-visit/beaulieu-sur-dordogne
- **Rocher du Peintre in Camps-Saint-Mathurin**
www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk/discover/natural-heritage/viewpoints
- **Merle Towers in Saint-Geniez-ô-Merle**
www.toursdemerle.fr
- **Merle Towers in Saint-Geniez-ô-Merle**
www.toursdemerle.fr

Where to eat and sleep

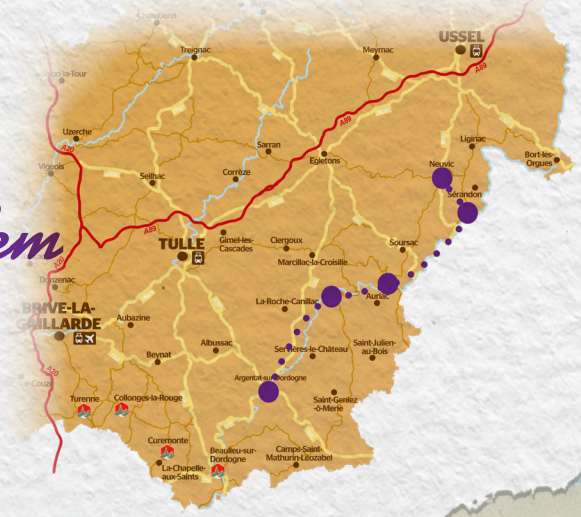
- **Château de Vassinhac in Collonges-la-Rouge**
www.chateaudevassinhac.com
- **Le Maraicher Restaurant in Collonges-la-Rouge**
<https://lemaraicher.fr/>
- **Le Cantou Restaurant in Collonges-la-Rouge**
<http://www.lecantou.fr/>
- **Hôtel Le Beaulieu in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**
www.hotelbeaulieudordogne.com
- **Hôtel les Flots Bleus in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**
www.hotel-flotsbleus.com
- **Hôtel le Turenne in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**
www.leturenne.com
- **Auberge de la Xaintrie in Saint-Privat**
<https://aubergedelaxaintrie.fr>
- **Le Sablier du Temps in Argentat**
www.lesablierdutemps.fr

Day 3

The land of the dams

≈ 92 km

**ARGENTAT-SUR-DORDOGNE -
ROC DU BUSATIER - SPONTOUR -
GRATTE-BRUYÈRE - NEUVIC**



1

How about delving into the Gorges de la Dordogne and venturing upstream from villages to dams to reach the edge of Haute-Corrèze? Start in Argentaat-sur-Dordogne and soak up its river's history before taking the D18 then the D146 and D16. A detour on the D166 takes you back to the Dordogne River to set sail on a barge. Venture further along the border with Cantal (D982) for incredible views and a trip to Neuvic on the D168 and D20.



Argentaat-sur-Dordogne

2



Réserve départementale de Biodiversité

A new world

It's all about reconnecting with nature: the departmental Argentaat-sur-Dordogne biodiversity reserve on a former gravel pits is now listed as an environmentally sensitive area and subject to exemplary protection and regeneration as part of a Corrèze Council campaign. You can watch the restoration of the 40ha site (over the course of several years) with a guided tour that you can download on a free app. The idea is to encourage flora and fauna to reclaim the habitat. In a setting where the plants are gradually regaining their rightful place, sharing the project with the public helps to introduce rare species. Have you heard of the blackcap, whiskered tern or sand martin? Well, it's time you met them!

3

A boat trip back in time

This is the best way to explore the Gorges de la Haute-Dordogne on the Chastang reservoir upstream from Argentaat. Sailors for the day can hop on board the Spontournoise IV at the former bargemen's village of Spontour, go with the flow and soak up the natural surroundings. This silent adventure gets you up close and personal with the flora and fauna in this unique setting. As well as introducing you to the local nature, you'll learn all about the Dordogne bargemen's glory days and everyday life in the village during the Resistance. All aboard?



Gabare Spontour

Bird's eye views of the valleys

Soaring high as the river runs upstream, the Gorges de la Dordogne are the place for mind-blowing views. Most of them are easy to reach by car or on hiking trails and have picnic tables, viewfinders, appropriate signage etc. There are two go-to sites for bird's eye views: Roc du Busatier overlooking the Chastang dam reservoir in Marcillac-la-Croisille and the Gratte-Bruyère belvedere between the Marèges and Bort-les-Orgues dams. The latter is a sight for sore eyes with views of the junction between the Dordogne and Sumène! This is also the place for the most discreet (and most patient) hikers to spot booted eagles, red kites and even short-toed snake eagles.



Barrage du Chastang



Roc du Busatier

5

From dams to villages

Let's head to Neuvic, its dam and Lac de la Triouzoune. The 410ha reservoir is home to a leisure area. It's always a naturally fabulous site, but it turns into a sea resort in summer with fantastic water sports: «Pavillon Bleu» beach with lifeguards, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, pedalo, jet-skiing and waterskiing. On top of that there's golfing, hiking, fishing and more.



Belvédère de Gratte-Bruyère

Sites

- **Biodiversity reserve in Argentat**
www.correze.fr/reserve-biodiversite
- **Les Gabares de Haute-Dordogne in Spontour**
www.gabares-correze.fr
- **Lac de Triouzoune in Neuvic**
www.neuvic-correze.net

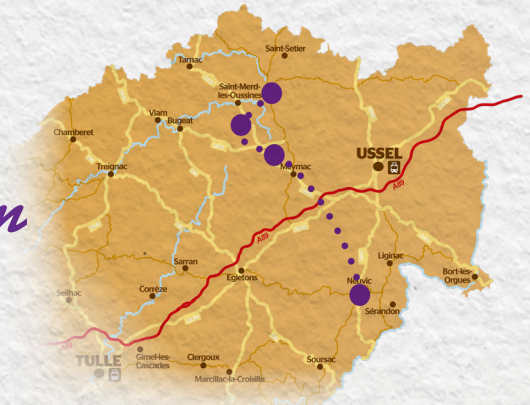
Where to eat and sleep

- **Auberge des gabariers in Argentat**
<https://aub-des-gabariers-argentat.fr>
- **Jardins de sothys esfqerfeqrfg**
www.lesjardinssothys.fr
- **Hôtel du Lac in Neuvic**
www.hotel-du-lac-neuvic.fr
- **Les maisons de Coline In Sérandon**
www.les-maisons-de-coline.fr

Day 4

Exploring Haute-Corrèze

≈ 54 km



1

NEUVIC - MONT BESSOU - TOURBIÈRE DU LONGEYROUX - LES CARS - MILLEVACHES



Landes de Bruyères

We are now officially in the heart of the Millevaches Regional Nature Park in Limousin, stretching from Creuse in the north east to Haute-Vienne in the north west. The RD171 then the RD979 from Saint-Angel take us on a climb up to the plateau and its highest point of altitude, just after Meymac on the D36. As you near the source of the Vézère on the RD109, the history of Millevaches has a few surprises in store when it comes to geology and archaeology! Last but not least, we end on a high at the park's Visitor Centre on the RD164... And sleep in the great outdoors to feast your eyes on the constellations in a stunning starry sky.

2 Glance



The highest point in Corrèze

At an altitude of 977m, it's the highest point of the Millevaches, Corrèze AND Limousin plateaus: Mont-Bessou stands above Meymac and has been home to a panoramic tower with unobstructed views since 2005. After climbing up 148 steps, covering 7 floors and getting your breath back, visitors can use the information boards to get to know the Millevaches plateau, the town of Ussel and the Auvergne peaks including: Mont-Dore, Puy-de-Sancy, Banne d'Ordanche plus the Cézallier and Cantal mountains.



Mont Bessou

Mont de la Luzège



Tourbière du Longeyroux

3

The source of the Vézère...

Further north... The 255ha Longeyroux peatland lies in a basin (at a cool altitude of 850m) that fills with rainwater from the surrounding peaks. This is where the Dordogne's most iconic river springs from: the Vézère. Wait... what's a peatland? It's a strange world where unique flora and fauna have been living and evolving for thousands of years in a damp, cold climate and acidic granite soil. The sensitive ecosystem is protected and detailed throughout a short educational trail. It's heaven for the kind of dragonflies and butterflies you'd expect of a peatland and is a breeding ground for river trout that are a favourite among... otters!

A trip back in time

Les Cars is an archaeological site just off the road between Saint-Merd-les-Oussines and Pérols-sur-Vézère and listed as one of «Corrèze's 15 most remarkable sites». It's also one of the most outstanding ancient sites in Limousin, open to visitors all year with free guided tours in summer. In a land of heaths and forests, exploring the relics of a villa and two temple tombs from almost 2000 years ago is an endless source of wonder among visitors. If you want to find out more about the site, its study and history, visit Meymac where the Marius Vazeilles Archaeology and Heritage Museum plays host to items unearthed during excavations plus a 3D depiction of what the lofty buildings may have looked like.

4 Zoom



Site gallo-romain les Cars

5

A park beneath the stars

Welcome to heaven on earth... The visitor centre at Millevaches Regional Nature Park is an all-encompassing facility to explore the area. It provides different forms of expression and presentation that are both fun and relevant, so children and adults can learn all about the plateau past and present: its history, evolution, challenges etc. Aside from educating the public, the Park also hosts cultural events, activities and games as part of a vibrant schedule that explores all its subjects.

The Park's visitor centre has also ventured into a social bivouac concept which you can experience for yourself and enjoy some stargazing: autumn 2021 saw the Millevaches Regional Nature Park become the 4th «international dark sky reserve» in France, the 19th in the world. The label guarantees that light pollution here is as low as possible so visitors can get the most from gazing at the glittering constellations.



Parc Naturel Régional du plateau de Millevaches

Sites

- **Mont-Bessou panoramic tower in Meymac**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/tour_panoramique_du_mont_bessou.html
- **Longeyroux peatland in Meymac**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/tourbiere_du_longeyroux.html
- **Les Cars Gallo-Roman site in Saint-Merd-les-Oussines**
<https://site-gallo-romain-les-cars.com>
- **Millevaches Regional Nature Park visitor centre**
www.pnr-millevaches.fr

Where to eat and sleep

- **Chez Françoise in Meymac**
www.tourismecorreze.com/fr/tourisme_detail/restaurant_chez_francoise.html
- **Hôtel-restaurant des Voyageurs in Tarnac**
www.hotelcorreze.com
- **Chez Nanou in Millevaches**
www.tourismecorreze.com/fr/tourisme_detail/restaurant_chez_nanou_-_gerard_laliron.html

Parc Naturel Régional du plateau de Millevaches



Good adresses :

Tourist Offices

- **Brive-la-Gaillarde Tourist office**

www.brive-tourisme.com/fr

- **Dordogne Valley Tourist office**

www.vallee-dordogne.com

- **Ventadour-Egletons-Monédières Tourist office**

www.tourisme-egletons.com

- **Haute-Corrèze Tourist office**

www.tourisme-hautecorreze.fr

Market days

- **Brive-la-Gaillarde** : Tuesday mornings, Thursday mornings and Saturday mornings
- **Meysac** : Tuesday mornings, Thursday mornings and Saturday mornings
- **Argentat-sur-Dordogne** : Thursday mornings, Saturday mornings and Sunday mornings
- **Meymac** : Friday mornings

Bike rental

- **Base Sports Loisirs Causse** at Lissac-sur-Couze
www.base-vezere.com/fr/location-de-materiels-brive/location-vtt-assistance-electrique-causse/
- **Corrèze Sports Animations** at Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne
<https://correze-sports-animations.fr>
- **Association la Dordogne de Villages en Barrages** at Gros-Chastang
<https://ladordognedevillagesenbarrages.com>
- **Station Sport Nature Haute Dordogne** at Neuvic
www.station-sports-nature-haute-dordogne.com

Restaurant suggestions

- **Chez Paolo** in Brive-la-Gaillarde
- **Amédélys** in Brive-la-Gaillarde
- **Inpyration** in Brive-la-Gaillarde
- **Côté Dordogne** in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne
- **Le Millésime** in Meymac
- **Auberge du Mont-Chauvet** in Saint-Merd-les-Oussines

Water sports and swimming

- **Lac du Causse Corrèzien**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/lac_du_causse_correzien.html
- **Smile Kayak**
www.smilekayak.com
- **Lac de la Triouzoune**
www.tourismecorreze.com/en/tourisme_detail/lac_de_la_triouzoune_-_cote_neuvic.html



What to bring back ?

- **Nut products**
- **Chestnut products**
- **Local beers**
- **Apple products**
- **Bracelets «Alphonse Corrèze»**
- **And why not an accordion ?**



My best memories

Waouh !

My crush



I can paste my souvenir photos here...

My favorite sites



1

2

3

*To be seen
in my next visit!*

* The sites and accommodations mentioned in this roadbook are suggestions and do not constitute the whole of the offers of the zone - To have the complete list of the sites and accommodations of the various zones consult the site: www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk

DORDOGNE Valley

Photos : Malika Turin ; CRT Nouvelle-Aquitaine ; Elsa & Cyril ; Romann Ramshorn ; Michel Blot ; Grégory Rohart ; Régine Rosenthal ; Vent d'Autan ; Luc Olivier ; Franck Corider ; Gilles Bergeal ; Josselin Mathiaud ; Djsupertramp & ParisTUParis ; Association du Bac des Cars

For more information, go to
www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk