



## FRANCE

**BEST OF SARLAT AND DORDOGNE VALLEY** (TOUR CODE: 11979)

## STARTS AND ENDS

in Sarlat

## TRAVEL PERIODS

01 Apr 25 - 31 Oct 25

## EXPERIENCE

Cultural

## TRAVEL STYLE

Independent Holiday Packages

Discover the Dordogne River amidst cliffside villages and glimpse the 17,000-year-old cave paintings.

### Highlights

- Visit the most important landmarks of Sarlat with your guide including: **Lantern of the Dead, Saint Sacros Cathedral, Saint Mary Church & covered market** and many more!
- Admire the **village of Beynac and its Castle**. This Middle Age construction, with its austere appearance, is perched on top of a limestone cliff, dominating the town and the north bank of the Dordogne River.
- Board an electric train and descend almost 2 kilometres to admire the artwork located inside the **Cave Paintings from 15,000 BC**
- Traverse the beautiful town of **Rocamadour and visit the Notre Dame Chapel**, boasting the exquisite frescoes that depict the Annunciation and Visitation

Discover the essentials of this interesting French province on this private guided tour based in Sarlat, in the heart of the Dordogne. You will follow your guide to one of the best-preserved 17th-century towns during its bustling market day.

Experience a one-of-a-kind excursion to the Lascaux IV Cave, which will plunge you back to the dawn of Art. The tour also includes a visit to some of the area's most picturesque villages, as well as a boat ride along the River Dordogne to see the gorgeous scenery and mighty medieval strongholds that line the river.



- ✓ ENTIRE Cooling-Off Period
- ✓ ENTIRE Change of Mind
- ✓ ENTIRE On Ground Support
- ✓ ENTIRE AUD Prices
- ✓ ENTIRE Industry Accredited
- ✓ ENTIRE Australian Owned

## INCLUSIONS

- 4 nights in Sarlat at Hotel Plaza Madeleine - 4\* or similar
- Daily breakfasts
- Sarlat Gourmet walking tour with private guide
- Half day tour of the villages of the Dordogne Valley
- Full day Paleolithic Art of The Caves private tour
- Full day Rocamadour and Padirac Chasm private tour

## ITINERARY

Day 1

### Sarlat

Make your own way to the charming small town of Sarlat and settle into your hotel.

**Sarlat** has remained preserved and is one of France's most typical cities from the 14th century. The town, which is located in the heart of the Perigord Noir, has an exceptional amount of structures and homes ranging from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Take a stroll through the small narrow alleys and streets for some personal exploration.

Overnight stay in Sarlat at **Hotel Plaza Madeleine**.



Day 2

Sarlat Domme La Roque Gageac Beynac Sarlat

After breakfast, experience the best of historic Sarlat with a 2 hour **walking tour**.

With your guide, tour the city's most notable landmarks like the **Lantern of the Dead**, a small stone tower located behind the Cathedral. Lanterns were once used to mark the location of a cemetery. The little apertures at the top of the structure where the light was shown at night gave them the name Lanterns. According to folklore, the Lantern of Sarlat was constructed to commemorate Bernard de Clairvaux's trip through the city in 1147. Another theory is that the Lantern is a representation of the dome of *the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem* as it has been depicted from the 4th century: a circular tower with an entrance on the first level and a second level covered by a canopy with 12 columns.

Continue with a visit to **Saint Sacerdos Cathedral**. The Cathedral is mainly Gothique or northern influence. The bell tower dates back to the 12th century and is the oldest part of the building with the bulbed belfry at the top being more recent as it was added in the 19th century.

Then, discover the **Old Sainte-Marie Church**, the construction of the Church dates back to the middle of the 14th century and was consecrated in 1507. By 1794 the church was abandoned and transformed into a bakery, a post office and finally sold in 1805. In 1834 the town of Sarlat bought back the land and the church was renovated. In 2001 the Church was again transformed, into the covered market you see today.

Visit **the House of La Boétie**, built in the Italian Renaissance style in 1525 and it is the birthplace of Étienne de La Boétie, a magistrate, writer, jurist, and philosopher. The façade of this Private Mansion's principal architectural characteristics are wide mullion windows flanked by pilasters carved with big medallions. In 1899, the house was designated as a historical landmark.

In the afternoon, jaunt through the breathtaking **landscape and traditional medieval villages of Dordogne Valley**.

Begin with the **Bastide Village of Domme**. The village is classified as one of the Plus Beaux Villages de France or "The Most Beautiful Villages of France". Drive to La Roque-Gageac and enjoy a peaceful cruise on the Dordogne River on board an authentic Gabarre to admire the mighty castles that line the river. The boat ride lasts about one hour (tickets not included) and comes highly recommended. The Gabarres are traditional flat-bottomed boats that have been used for transporting goods along the Dordogne since the Middle Ages.

Finally, **arrive at Beynac** to take in the sights of the hamlet and castle. This Middle Age structure, with its austere aspect, sits on a limestone cliff, commanding the town and the Dordogne River's north bank. The Lords of Beynac (one of Périgord's four baronies) erected the fortress to seal the valley in the 12th century. See architectural phenomenon, aided by nature, and discover more about the history of this unusual city on this half-day tour!

Return to your accomodation in Sarlat at 5:30 pm.

Overnight stay in Sarlat at **Hotel Plaza Madeleine**.

Breakfast



After breakfast, **discover the Paleolithic Art of the Dordogne.**

Begin the day in Les Eyzies de Tayac for a **guided visit of the National Museum of Prehistory**. Established in July 2004, the museum houses some 18,000 pieces and a collection of six million artifacts. The museum possesses the largest collection of prehistoric artifacts in the world. Follow your guide and discover the main chapters of the Hominids' development through an anthropological frieze and a brief reminder of Africa's history, starting with the early Australopithecus. Visit the permanent exhibit galleries that will plunge you into the mists of time, revealing seven sequences that cover the entire Paleolithic era through an "ideal historiography".

Enjoy some free time for lunch (at your own expense) in Montignac or a village in the Dordogne region. Ask your guide for recommendations.

**Visit the brand new Lascaux IV Cave** in Montignac – which opened in December 2016. Follow your guide and take some time to visit the exhibitions and the Centre for Prehistoric Cave Art.

Complete your journey with a visit to **Rouffignac Cave**, which has state-of-the-art original cave paintings as well as real etchings and sketches. François de Belleforest first described the Rouffignac Cave in 1575. He mentioned "paintings and animal trails" in his "Cosmographie Universelle". The cave was formerly a popular tourist destination in the 19th century. Famous archaeologists like as Henri Breuil, André Glory, and Martel visited the cave in the early 20th century, but it wasn't until 1956 that two prehistorians from the Pyrenees, Louis-René Nougier and Romain Robert, found and validated the cave art.

As you arrive, **board an electric train and descend almost 2 kilometres** to admire the artwork located inside the cave. The small train makes a few stops in front of spectacular drawings and etchings. Finally, reach the bottom of the cave for a stop of a few minutes. Disembark the train and just a few steps away admire the ceiling of the cave where a large amount of drawings are present. The 66 animal depictions appear to have been arranged in a haphazard manner, swirling around a massive suction funnel that leads to a well that provides access to the cave's second level. Mammoths are everywhere, while the remainder of the bestiary consists of rhinoceros, bison, and horses. More unusually, all of the ibex depictions are concentrated in one area, which is totally isolated from the rest of the cave.

Return to your hotel at 5:30 pm.

Overnight stay in Sarlat at **Hotel Plaza Madeleine**.

Breakfast



## Sarlat Rocamadour Sarlat

After breakfast, meet your English speaking driver-guide at Place Pasteur and depart for the village of **Rocamadour**.

Miraculous rock, collection of tales, legends and beliefs, sanctuary of the Black Virgin, pilgrimage site: the Village of Rocamadour is all of this at the same time. The old medieval houses, the towers and fortifications, the oratories all tumble along the steep cliff that dominates the Alzou Canyon. The whole site is topped off by the castle and its dungeon and the seven sanctuaries. Your guide will certainly stop here for a breathtaking view of the whole site that make for fantastic photo opportunities.

You will follow a guided walking tour of the village and then enjoy some free time for lunch. Rocamadour is without a doubt one of the most beautiful villages of the area. Classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site as it is located on the way to Santiago de Compostela (St James Way), the main attraction of the village lies in its sanctuaries especially that of Notre Dame that bears a statue of the Black Virgin.

The visit of the village can be difficult for those with walking difficulties due to the steep paths and steps, but please note that you may access the sanctuaries by lift (tickets not included in price). For lunch, there are many restaurants & snacks to be found in the village and your guide will make suggestions depending on what type of meal you are looking for.

Overnight stay in Sarlat at **Hotel Plaza Madeleine**.

Breakfast



## Sarlat

After breakfast, prepare for check-out of the hotel, where your tour will end.

Breakfast



## OPTIONAL EXTRAS

1 additional Pre-night in Sarlat

Add 1 extra night at the beginning of your package and extend your stay in Sarlat!



Prices are dynamic based on travel dates. Please proceed to [Book Now](#) or [Contact Us](#) for details.

1 additional Post-night in Sarlat

Add 1 extra night at the end of your package and extend your stay in Sarlat!



Prices are dynamic based on travel dates. Please proceed to [Book Now](#) or [Contact Us](#) for details.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Hotel Plaza Madeleine

#### Sarlat

The hotel is located in the heart of Sarlat with direct access to the medieval city, its market and entertainment. Contemporary, opulent decor, relaxed atmosphere, quality of services, Plaza Madeleine is also recognized in the major national guides. For your enjoyment, it now has a heated pool, a wellness center!



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

French

## LOCAL CURRENCY

EUR

- Order of Tours can be modified depending on availability of the activities.
- We work with a selection of hotels in each location. All bookings are subject to availability, which means our team will confirm your specific hotels upon confirmation and payment of deposit. The package price is based on 4-star accommodation.

## Excluded

- International airfares and taxes
- Domestic airfares and taxes, unless otherwise specified in our holiday package
- Visa expenses, processing and issuance fees
- Meals other than as specified in our holiday package
- Travel Insurance or expenses of a personal nature (mini-bar, phone call, laundry, etc.)
- Tips or gratuities to guides, drivers, porters, hotel, restaurant or boat staff, etc.
- Or any other travel expense that has not been included in our holiday package