

# Rail holidays to France

*Expressions*



Bordeaux vineyards  
and Dordogne castles  
by rail and car



## Bordeaux vineyards and Dordogne castles by rail and car

8 NIGHTS / 9 DAYS

Bordeaux

Dordogne



This 8-night rail-drive touring holiday features three centres in south-west France enabling you to experience the delights of the Bordeaux area, both the city of Bordeaux itself with its grand squares and boulevards, surrounding vineyards of the Medoc and St Emilion, and then to move inland to the Dordogne. The region features clear flowing rivers, craggy hillsides, hill-top villages and castles that date from the Middle Ages and were largely abandoned at the end of the Hundred Years War, or built in the Renaissance for pleasure rather than fortification, and is ideal for walking, cycling and canoeing as well as sightseeing. The gastronomy is excellent, with truffles, foie gras and walnuts produced locally. The train journey from London takes you through Paris, where you change trains and reach Bordeaux easily in the late afternoon. You then collect your hire-car which you keep until the last day and we suggest you drop off the car at Libourne and take the TGV from there to Paris, changing on to the Eurostar for the final leg back to London.

### PRICES

**From £1,870 per person**

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room and including standard class rail travel. Supplement for standard premier/first class about £270 per person.

### DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings and the route can vary depending on the month and day of the week

### TOUR CODE

FRBR04

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Standard class Eurostar and second-class TGV from London to Bordeaux, Libourne to London (standard premier can be booked at a supplement)
- Hire of a group B car for 8 days
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Deluxe double room at Le Saint James in Boulliac
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic double room at Chateau des Vigiers in Monestier
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Comfort double room at Le Vieux Logis in Tremolat
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Local tourist tax, usually between Euros 1 and 3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel
- Transfers in Paris

## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

All train times are approximate and may vary depending on travel dates.

Expressions

### Day one London to Bordeaux

Depart London St Pancras on a morning Eurostar service, and after changing stations in Paris continue through the French countryside to Bordeaux. You arrive here around 5.30pm and collect your hire car before driving about 20 minutes to your hotel, where you spend two nights.

### Day two in Bordeaux

The city of Bordeaux is a thriving hub of wine-making in the Aquitaine region. On the bank of the Gironde Estuary, just south of the Médoc Peninsula, and about 40 minutes' drive from world-famous Saint-Emilion, Le Saint-James is the ideal place to be based in order to explore this region. Track down one of the impressive wine châteaux dotted across the region, such as the Château Rauzan Gassies and the Château Mouton Rothschild, to taste the fruity Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and experience the distinctive vanilla and coffee aromas that develop as the wines of the area age. Other grape varieties in the region include Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. Within the port city of Bordeaux, much more than wine-tasting is on offer. Stroll around the city streets to get a feel for the wealth of extensive and interesting architecture. Recommended stop-off points include The Amphithéâtre de Bordeaux dit Palais Gallien, the Cathédrale de Bordeaux, the Opéra National de Bordeaux, and the Basilica of St. Michael.

### Day three Bordeaux to Monestier in the Dordogne

From Bouliac it's about an hour and a quarter to your next hotel stay: the Chateau de Vigiers near Monestier. You have most of the day to explore before reaching Monestier. On the way, we suggest that you stop off to visit the Chateau de Vayres on the banks of the Dordogne. This mediaeval castle once belonged to the kings of Navarre before being inherited by Henri IV. It has been classified as a historical landmark of France and its original gardens, which were recreated in 1938, are listed among the Notable Gardens of France. The next stop could be at the picturesque wine village of Saint Emilion, and then about 25 minutes further on is the Chateau et Tour Michel de Montaigne. The Chateau de Montaigne was a 14th century building in which Michel de Montaigne was born and died. The original chateau burnt down in 1885, but the library tower was spared from the fire. Visitors to the chateau can see Montaigne's rooms which have not been altered since he lived and worked there, as well as his bedroom, the chapel and the library. You stay for three nights at Monestier.



Dordogne valley

### Days four and five in Monestier in the Dordogne

You have two full days to explore Bergerac and the surrounding area. One important castle nearby is the Chateau de Monbazillac, a 16th century chateau from the Renaissance period whose vineyards and wines are well known beyond the borders of the Aquitaine region. The views from the terraces are extraordinarily wide, over the Dordogne river and Bergerac. The castle cellar holds about 6,000 bottles. Wine-tastings are available. Nearby is the historic, 15th century Chateau de Briday at Ribagnac in the heart of the Monbazillac vines. Bergerac also offers wine-tasting opportunities in the Musée du Vin et de la Battellerie. In Bergerac, experience the lively hubbub of conviviality at the weekly (Wednesday and Saturday) market in the centre of town, whilst picking up a few local treasures, be it food, wine, or arts and crafts.

### Day six Monestier to Tremolat in the Dordogne

Drive just over one hour from Chateau des Vigiers to Le Vieux Logis at Tremolat where you spend the next three nights. The hotel is located on a bend in the river Dordogne and is ideally located for visits to local markets and activities such as canoeing on the river.

### Days seven and eight in Tremolat in the Dordogne

You have two days to explore the castles and local area around Trémolat. We suggest a visit to the village of Belves, a lively and attractive bastide town built up the side of a steep rocky outcrop. Belves is known for its seven

bell towers that date from as far back as the 11th century, and the troglodyte dwellings offer a fascinating glimpse of medieval life. The last castle that we recommend for this tour is the Chateau de Biron near Monpazier. This extensive building dates from the 12th century and commands stunning views of the surrounding countryside, however since the last owner sold all the furniture to pay off his debts the rooms and halls are sadly empty. Along the length of the river be sure to see the Chateau des Milandes, the chateau at Beynac-et-Cazenac, and the Chateau de Castelnaud-la-Chapelle with its collection of mediaeval weapons. Nearby are the gardens of Marqueyssac, listed as a National Monument and planted with box through which there are numerous paths, creating a maze-like effect. There are fantastic views from a belvedere. Other gardens nearby include the Clos des Sources at Vitrac and the Jardins d'Eyrignac. Other notable villages in the area are La Roque Gageac, Domme and Beynac. From La Roque Gageac it is also easy to hire a canoe or to take a river trip on one of the gabarres, a boat designed after the old river trading boats.

### Day nine Dordogne to London

You return your hire-car to Libourne this morning and take the TGV from here to Paris. If you leave Libourne just before 11.00 hrs you arrive back in London on the Eurostar just after 16.30 hrs.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

this rail holiday is one of several suggested rail holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.



### OUR TOURS

**Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.**

### FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

### EUROSTAR

A rail holiday to France starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations in the UK to either Paris Gare du Nord or Lille Europe. In summer months there are direct trains on Saturdays from London St Pancras to Avignon with no change required.

Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel from the centre of London to the centre of Paris on the same train in three hours. Not all trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, but parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London.

Check-in is 30 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains themselves have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

### TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

### FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the TGV trains within France, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

### TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi.

### OUR PRICES

**The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.**

### BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

### FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators).

Expressions Holidays

Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL



## HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

**01392 441250**

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process.