

Touring holidays of France

Expressions



Dordogne, Basque Country and Tarn fly-drive holiday



Dordogne, Basque Country and Tarn fly-drive holiday

9 NIGHTS / 10 DAYS

St Jean de Luz

Tarn

Dordogne



This 9-night fly-drive touring holiday of the south-west of France including the Basque Country, the Tarn and the Dordogne combines the Atlantic coast and the Pyrenees with the mighty rivers of the Tarn and the Dordogne and culture that dates from prehistoric times through the Middle Ages. There is a wealth of scenery, flavours and local languages to experience. You start at Bordeaux and collect your hire-car for a drive south-west through the Landes, characterised by its sweet-smelling pine forests and long stretches of uninterrupted beaches along the Côte d'Argent. You pass Biarritz and Bayonne and reach your first stop, the picturesque fishing port and seaside resort of St Jean de Luz. You have three nights here to explore both the coastline and the countryside, perhaps venturing into nearby San Sebastian in Spain. You then cross the cosy countryside of Gascony, home of Armagnac and the Three Musketeers to reach your next base for three nights in the village of Cahuzac-sur-Vère near Gaillac, where your hotel occupies an idyllic rural setting with views over vine-clad hills. Here, you're but 15 minutes from dramatic Cordes-sur-Ciel and just half an hour from Albi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of Toulouse-Lautrec. Again, time for rest in the countryside or sightseeing nearby before continuing this touring holiday into the Dordogne. Your base for the final three nights of the holiday is in a village on the banks of the River Dordogne, ideally placed for the major sites to visit, including the Dordogne valley itself with its charming villages and ruined castles, the prehistoric sites of Lascaux and Les Eyzies and the market town of Sarlat. Plenty of time too to sample the local delicacies for which this area is renowned. You return to Bordeaux for a flight back to London.

PRICES

From £2,370 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

DATES

This fly-drive holiday can be arranged for any departure date of your choice.

TOUR CODE

FRFD05

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flight with British Airways London to Bordeaux return
- Hire of a Group B car for the duration of the holiday
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Classic double room at Parc Victoria in Saint-Jean-de-Luz
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Grand Confort double room at the Château des Salettes in Cahuzac-sur-Vère, near Gaillac
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Superior double room at Le Vieux Logis in Trémolat
- 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

Day one Bordeaux to St Jean de Luz

Arrive at Bordeaux and collect your hire-car. The drive of about 2 hours and 30 minutes to St Jean de Luz in the French Basque country and near the border with Spain takes you across the flat, pine-forested Les Landes and almost parallel to the Cote d'Argent, a long stretch of sandy beach that borders the Atlantic Ocean. You reach the pretty fishing port and seaside resort of St Jean de Luz where you spend three nights.

Days two and three in the French Basque Country

Saint-Jean-de-Luz sits on the Pyrenean border between France and Spain and is renowned for its pretty architecture, sandy beach, gastronomy and light. The coastline here is a mixture of cliffs and sandy beaches, creating interesting scenery, and there are the foothills of the Pyrenees in the distance. This fishing port has a charming town centre, lined with picturesque 17th century shipowners' houses. Many of the buildings are in the distinctive Basque half-timbered style, often with the beams painted a dark red or green, with matching shutters at the windows. The Church of Saint Jean Baptiste was the site of the marriage of Louis XIV in 1660. Its interior makes it a unique religious building, split onto three levels, and adorned with extravagant gold decoration, while in the centre of the main room hangs a model ship, harking back to the nautical history of the town. To the north is the sophisticated and larger resort of Biarritz and inland is the historic town of Bayonne. Just across the rocky Pyrenean border in Spain is San Sebastián - an essential day-trip. As well as its reputation for excellent cuisine, San Sebastián boasts of an impressive heritage and royal connection. The La Perla spa building on the waterfront was built for the Queen María Cristina and is still believed to be one of the most beautiful in the world. St Jean de Luz hosts numerous festivals including a Sardine festival at the end of July and beginning of August, a classical music festival in September and an International Basque Choral Singing Festival at Halloween.

Day four Basque country to the Tam

Our recommended route today is one that shows you another region of France and takes you across country. It will take you through a little-known part of the country. You start by heading in the direction of Pau but before Pau you turn north to Aire sur l'Adour and then you are in the region of Gascony, land of Armagnac and the Three Musketeers. The



Basque country houses

countryside is rolling, it is a warm golden yellow with houses of the same colour, often with shutters in light blue, and brown roofs, it produces sunflower fields and vines, and its little towns and villages are strewn with abandoned castles, dating from the Middle Ages when this land was ruled by the English crown. Auch is the capital of Gascony and worth a stop, perhaps at lunchtime. You continue and pass Toulouse, and then head north-east, crossing the river Tarn near Gaillac and on to your stop at Cahuzac-sur-Vère, where you spend three nights.

Days five and six in the Tam

The small commune of Cahuzac-sur-Vère is the quintessential rural French settlement, with its narrow winding streets and blond stone buildings, picturesque central square and war monument. The houses of the Cahuzacois cluster around the Catholic church of the same name as the commune, giving it a very mediaeval appearance. Stretching out on each side, however, is a landscape rich in exciting opportunities to explore. Montauban, less than an hour northwest of Cahuzac-sur-Vère is the second oldest of the bastides of southern France, founded in 1144AD. It was voted a French City of Art and History, with a city centre characterised by its towering castle, impressive bridge, and boulevards. Wine-tasting opportunities are available at the Domaine de Montels and the Mas des Anges, if you would like to sample the wine of the area. Alternatively, Montauban is known for its other culinary specialities, such as sugared almonds and biscuits with jam, not to mention

the fabulous produce of its chocolatiers. Also nearby is Albi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and bursting with the remarkable history of France. The most immediate point of interest in this small town is its red-brick mediaeval cathedral, St. Cecilia's. Witness how its imposing exterior blends into the delicate wood and stone decoration of its interior. Adorning the whole western wall are extensive murals depicting the Last Judgement. Just next door, the Bishop's palace houses the Toulouse Lautrec museum, dedicated to the works of the post-impressionistic iconographer Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. From outside the cathedral, you can make your way west to the square which overlooks the River Tarn or pass the museum to walk across the thousand-year-old Old Bridge. Albi retains the look and feel of its traditional way of life. Other points of interest nearby might include the fortified villages and vineyards of the Gaillac countryside, the tours of the old mining town Carmaux that extend 350 metres underground, or the Viaduc du Viaur, designed by Gustave Eiffel himself, in Rodez.

Day seven from the Tarn to the Dordogne

Journey northwards towards your final hotel, perhaps stopping at the historic city of Cahors, a picturesque city surrounded on three sides by the River Lot. Your base is in the village of Tremolat in the valley of the River Dordogne and within reach today for excursions to capture the essence of this popular region. The position of Tremolat on

the riverside makes it ideal for kayaking and fishing, while the neighbouring hills make for fantastic hiking trails. You spend three nights here.

Days eight and nine in the Dordogne

Whilst in this part of the Dordogne there are all sorts of activities and sightseeing possibilities, of a cultural, historical, gourmet and active nature. Sarlat is a thriving town with numerous shops and food stalls selling local delicacies such as foie-gras and other duck and goose products. There are several excellent restaurants in the town. Take a scenic drive along the river Dordogne, stopping to see the ruined mediaeval castles that dot the cliffs. 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. The prehistoric sites at Les Eyzies and Lascaux should be visited but you should try to book entrances in advance as it does get very busy. If time permits, spend an afternoon in Perigueux, a larger town north of Trémolat. Once an important Roman centre, its history can be read in the Vesone Tower and the Amphithéâtre, the mediaeval Château Barrière, and the Cathédrale Saint Font surrounded by the town's boulevards and mediaeval houses. Have lunch or an afternoon coffee in one of the chic cafés on the Place de Navarre.

Day ten Dordogne to Bordeaux

Depending on the time of your flight from Bordeaux, you could stop at Bergerac or the pretty wine village of St Emilion before returning your hire-car and the flight back to London.



Albi



Gaillac vineyards

GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring 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 tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

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

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.

The logo for Expressions Holidays, featuring the word "Expressions" in a white, elegant script font on a dark blue rectangular background.

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.