

CULTURAL WALKING TOUR

Dordogne Valley

Bordeaux Vineyards & Southwestern France

CLASSIC JOURNEYS
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

Castles, Vineyards & Cave Paintings

Everything we love best about France is abundant in the scenic southwest. Great wine? Bordeaux vintners coax remarkable reds from their limestone hillsides—and we taste our way through their treasures. History? The Vezere River Valley’s cave paintings are some of the earliest signs of modern man. Culture? From the 13th to the 15th centuries, the Dordogne was the border between France and England; the fortifications, châteaux and villages built so close together for defense now make for lovely, compact walks. Along the way, we spend time with artisans, tradesmen and even a truffle hunter. And the lifestyle? Think of yourself at one of the loveliest inns we’ve ever discovered, strolling by your 13th century millpond before dining on foie gras and a country stew by candlelight. If you love to lose yourself in the life of the places you visit, this is the perfect experience for you.

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

What's Included

- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

→ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

→ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

→ WINE ON US

In many regions, we uncork wonderful local wines at every dinner, compliments of Classic Journeys.

Terrain

Easy to moderate on good trails and coastal paths. At your option, up to 2 to 4 hours of walking per day, with a mini-van in support.

DAY 1 »

Bordeaux / Saint-Émilion

From the UNESCO World Heritage City of Bordeaux, make your way to the medieval village of St. Emilion. This picturesque town is a quaint tangle of narrow streets, exactly what you'd imagine an ancient wine-making center to look like. Explore the historic and scenic town on foot and at eye level during a guided walk that leads from its 14th-century monastery to the nearby vineyards.

Nestled in the heart of the famous Bordeaux wine area, it's easy to see why the Romans first planted vines here in the 2nd century. Today, many of these vineyards sit on steep hillsides of limestone or near the small villages that dot the countryside. Approaching the vineyards on foot allows you to experience firsthand the special nature of the *terroir* (how the soil is actually different on the left and right banks of the river, the special climate and sunlight), that makes these wines so highly prized. Then head into the hillsides with the winemaker, where in the cool and musky depths of the caves you'll learn about the renowned varieties grape varieties and enjoy a tasting.

After some downtime at your perfectly-sited hotel in Les Eyzies, take an evening stroll along the Vezere River to dinner.

MEALS: D

OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES

DAY 2 »

Domme / Castelnaud

Following breakfast, a morning walk leads to the honey-colored stone fortifications of Domme, the most famous and well-preserved of the *bastides*... what the locals call the fortified villages that were built in this valley in the Middle Ages. On a footpath along the Dordogne River, you'll get panoramic views of a valley so desirable the French and English fought over it for a century in the Hundred Years War.

In time for lunch, you'll journey deeper into the Dordogne region to the stunning gardens of Château de Marqueyssac. From its prominent position on a cliff overlooking the Dordogne River, you'll see on your countryside walk four of the famed castles of the area, including Castelnaud, Beynac and Fayrac. Once the country house of the pope in the 18th century, it's said that the pontiff sat in a seat carved out of stone for him at Marquessac and surveyed the river valley. Seeing an opening in the landscape without a church, he commissioned one to be built in St. Julien, where it still stands. From St. Julien, you'll follow the river through the countryside and past walnut, poplar and wild plum trees to Castelnaud village and its fortified castle.

This evening, when you venture into Sarlat, be sure to have your camera at the ready. This photogenic village is often used as the setting for motion pictures set in the Middle Ages because of its well-preserved center. Tonight, it's the scenic backdrop for a memorable dinner.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES

DAY 3 »

Commarque Castle

This morning you'll enjoy a walk along a riverside path upstream to the Gorge d'Enfer. (If your French is good, you may be wondering about the "Canyon of Hell"). Your guide will explain how the reference is to an ancient story about a priest's opinion of where some of the artifacts found nearby had originated. Arriving on foot, you'll get exclusive 'only with Classic Journeys' access to a very private visit offered to no one else (tourist, traveler or tour company) — to see a Paleolithic engraving that dates back 27,000 years.

After marveling at these ancient etchings, continue on a walk to the Laugerie Basse, a prehistoric rock shelter embedded in the cliffs overlooking the Vezere Valley. Your walk this afternoon encapsulates all of the best of the Dordogne and Vezere valleys into one beautiful footpath. On foot, you follow a portion of an ancient cobble-stoned Roman road. Your views follow the sweep in the banks of La Beune River. And along the way, your guide shares stories and anecdotes about the nature, prehistory, modern history, troglodytic ruins, and fortified castles that make this corner of the world so special. Your destination is Commarque Castle, where you'll explore the grounds of this 12th-century hillside castle.

A day of fascinating discoveries concludes at Abri Cap Blanc, a prehistoric frieze depicting sculpted bison, horses and mammoths that are intricately etched into the limestone walls.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES

DAY 4 »

Les Eyzies

The Dordogne Valley is justifiably famous for its history, but it's also well known for its culinary treasures, as you'll find out today. To start, you'll be introduced to an amazing local friend, Edouard. He is one of the world's foremost experts on truffles, and you'll get opportunity to join him on what is likely to be one of the most interesting and uncommon country walks of your life: to find truffles in the wild with professional truffle hunting dogs as your guides. You'll be amazed at how these trained hounds are able to sniff out the prized truffles from under the oak trees as you search the forest together. This 'only with Classic Journeys' experience combines a scenic walk with the thrill of the search and the region's rich culinary tradition. As a reward for your efforts, you'll enjoy a memorable tasting of this local specialty.

Continue on a scenic countryside walk to a goat farm to sample the freshly made cheeses, before arriving midday for a picnic riverside in Les Eyzies. Refreshed, make your way to Grotte de Font-de-Gaume to explore its prehistoric polychrome paintings and engravings. This ornate cave houses vibrant colors and intricate details, allowing you to experience the magic of the prehistoric past firsthand.

From the prehistoric to the present, your day ends with a visit to a local friend—a highly regarded artist—at her studio where she shares insights into her etching and printing techniques.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: MONTIGNAC-LASCAUX

DAY 5 »

La Roque St. Christophe / Lascaux IV Caves

This morning begins in La Roque St. Christophe, a fascinating troglodyte village that has been continuously inhabited for more than 50,000 years, dating back to Neanderthals. After a visit to the fortress, follow a footpath along the Vezere River to St. Leon-sur-Vezere. You'll feel like you're traveling back in time as you explore this tiny and charming riverside village with a beautiful Romanesque church and Renaissance château. The perfect way to soak in the scenery is with a riverside picnic of local specialties.

The Dordogne region is noted for an incredible concentration of over 130 Paleolithic sites, the most renowned of which is Lascaux. In the company of your expert local guide, you'll visit the Lascaux II caves where you'll likely marvel at the perfect replicas of the 17,000-year-old paintings found in Lascaux. The artfully crafted caves illustrate an important part of the prehistory of the area with paintings of bulls, bison and stags.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: MONTIGNAC-LASCAUX

DAY 6 »

Montignac / Brive

Montignac has an excellent local market, as you'll see this morning as you meander through the village, soaking in the lively atmosphere and mingling with local vendors. Late morning, part company in Brive at the rail station for regularly returning trains to Paris and onward travel.

MEALS: B

Tour Hotels



[Hotel Les Glycines](#)

Nestled in the beautiful Vezere Valley, this upscale property features a gourmet restaurant, spa, and six acres of wooded landscape. Soak in the views while relaxing in nature and enjoying your French retreat.

NIGHTS: 3 nights



[Hotel de Bouilhac](#)

Steps from the sacred hill of Lascaux, Hotel de Bouilhac is a 17th century hotel whose elegant architecture is typical of the Perigord Noir and is registered with the Historic Monuments of the region.

NIGHTS: 2 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Hotel Burdigala lobby**
START CITY: **Bordeaux**
START TIME: **10:00 AM**

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Rail Station**
END CITY: **Brive**
END TIME: **12:50 PM**