

DORDOGNE  
VALLEY



Press kit



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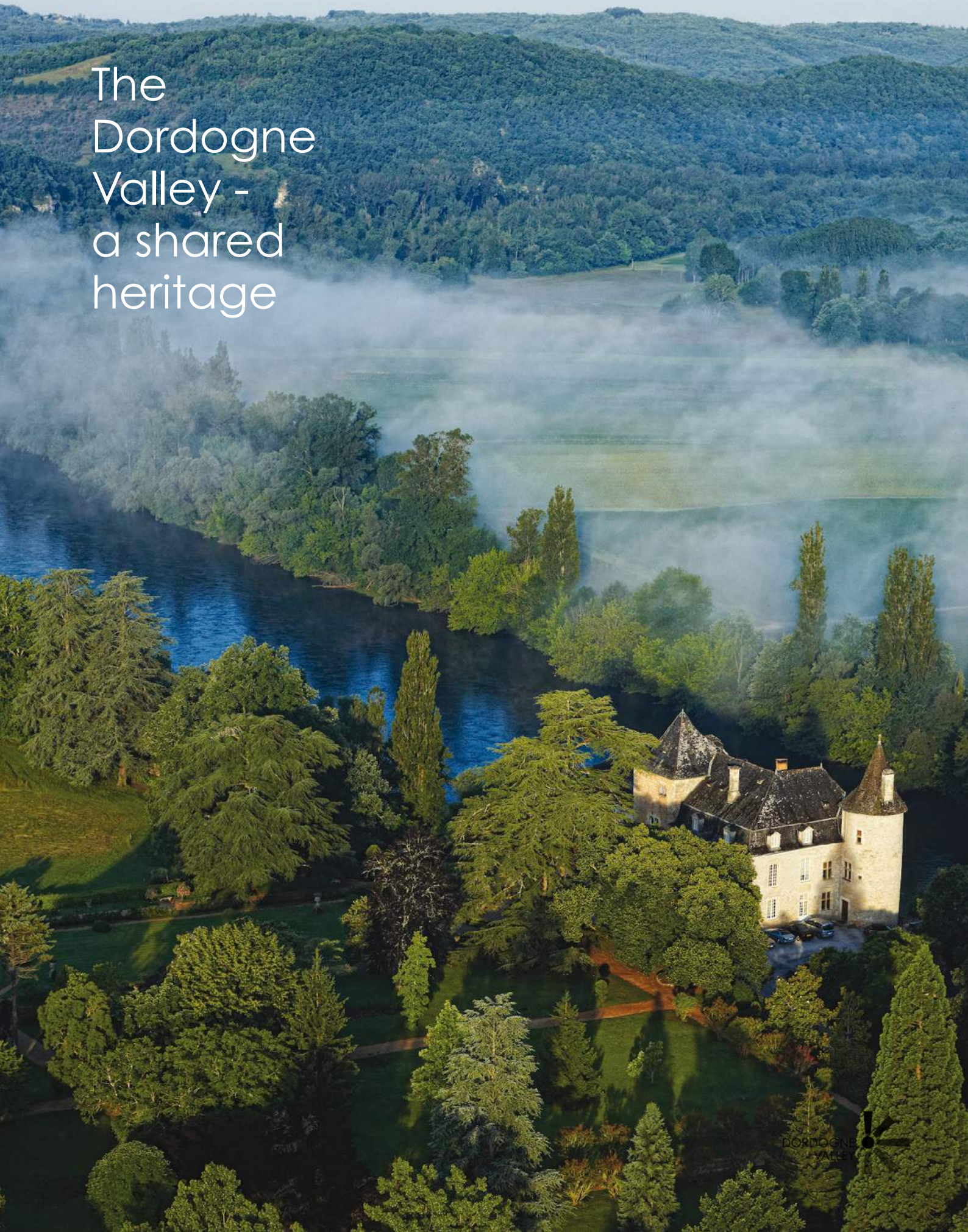
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# The Dordogne Valley - a shared heritage





As you step out of the new **Brive Dordogne Valley** airport, you are on the threshold of an area to which Time has been kind: its rich traditions and heritage accumulated over millennia - scenic, architectural, historic, cultural and gastronomic - are still very much present and alive. Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon Man, the first to leave us his paintings, both occupied this land.

The airport lies on the boundary between two of France's twelve regions, namely **Occitanie and Nouvelle-Aquitaine**, and more specifically, between three départements, **Corrèze, Lot and Dordogne**. Despite these apparent divisions, they have a great deal in common, notably the **river Dordogne** which flows between and through them, like a blue-green ribbon binding them together in its loops on its way down to the Gironde estuary. This waterway, from earliest times until the 19th C., was a vital trade artery, as were all navigable rivers, and the busy river traffic brought prosperity to many a settlement established on the banks.

The rich historical and architectural heritage of places such as Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, Souillac and Beynac bears this out.

Geographically speaking, this area, tilted down from east to west, effects the transition from the Massif Central, the highlands formed of ancient rocks constituting the heart of France, to the lower-lying regions leading to the ocean. This means that there is a wide variety of landscapes, from the steep, narrow valleys of the granite uplands, through limestone plateaux with their wide, flat horizons gashed by deep valleys lined with tall cliffs, to fertile, verdant river plains.

The Lot, Corrèze and Dordogne have more in common than just geography: they share a great deal of their history and traditions - linguistic, cultural and culinary - too. Naturally, there are also many differences, such as architectural ones governed by the materials available locally; but, after all, variety is the spice of life, is it not?

**The Dordogne Valley : UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**

In 2012, the Dordogne basin (24 000 km<sup>2</sup> spread over 6 départements and 3 regions) was designated a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. This recognises not only the natural wealth of biodiversity within the area and the primordial role played in this by the Dordogne river and its tributaries, but also the efforts made by local communities to preserve it and to promote sustainable development. The Dordogne Valley now being a part of a world-wide network of Biosphere Reserves, it is hoped that this international recognition will stimulate awareness of the natural environment, inspiring imaginative, environmentally-friendly solutions to the problems of territorial management, development and energy needs.





This area has never been heavily industrialised, which explains why it boasts so much unspoilt countryside, and so many beautifully-preserved towns and villages including several of the *Most Beautiful Villages in France*.

Another excellent reason for visiting this part of the country is the **delicious food and wine** available everywhere: there is a very strong tradition of producing (and enjoying!) all kinds of delightful things to eat and drink. Lively local markets, food fairs and festivals, restaurants ranging from Farm or Village inns to Michelin-starred establishments all contribute to the vigour of this tradition, for the greater pleasure of locals and guests alike.

Not everything that is grown here is intended as food, however: there are some beautiful and fascinating **gardens** to visit, such as the **Jardins de l'imaginaire** in **Terrasson**. Gardens are just one of the various attractions that can be enjoyed by all the family: there are also wildlife parks, unusual museums, boat trips and canoeing ... and a whole lot more!

**Culture, the arts in all their variety and crafts** ancient and modern are also very much on the menu: guided tours, museums and galleries, handicraft fairs and workshops open to the public are to be found all over the area. The performance arts are well catered for by a host of lively, friendly festivals which feature high quality artistes and provide something for everyone, with the emphasis always on excellence.

Here, you have a marvellous opportunity to recharge your batteries, whether this involves **walking, riding, cycling, fishing, climbing, caving** and other strenuous activities, or whether your ideal break consists of sitting on a shady hotel terrace overlooking a lovely landscape with a glass of something cool and delicious to hand (or both!). People here are very conscious of the benefits of their unhurried local lifestyle, and enjoy sharing it with visitors, who are considered as welcome guests.

*And that's an invitation you can't possibly refuse!*



Places  
you really  
shouldn't  
miss



This part of France has retained a very strong identity, and many people here, whilst enjoying all the benefits of modernity, nevertheless have a lifestyle which takes account of the changing seasons and the cycles of Nature. This sense of continuity, of being in touch with the essentials of life, exerts a powerful charm over visitors, many of whom return again and again. The places mentioned here are all particularly attractive; but the list is by no means exhaustive: come and decide on your own favourite!

Let's begin with the little town of **Argentat-sur-Dordogne** in an idyllic setting on the Dordogne, where the river forms a wider flood plain than in its higher reaches. There were Iron Age settlements nearby, but Argentat really got 'on the map' in the 10th C., when it was recorded as a walled town centred on a priory. Prosperity came from the river trade, which developed particularly in the 18th and 19th C., with the transport of wood destined for wine barrels and vine stakes in the Bordeaux vineyards, and the evidence of former wealth is still visible. A replica *courpet*, the traditional flat-bottomed cargo boat, can be seen tied up at one of the quaysides.

Following the Dordogne downstream, you come to **Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**, which owes its existence to an abbey founded in the 9th C. by one of the Turenne family, rulers of much of this area for centuries. Beaulieu means 'beautiful place', and it is certainly aptly named. Charming old houses encircle the former abbey precincts: all that now remains is the church itself and the chapter room, but it's certainly worth stopping to see. The 12th C. Romanesque church has an exquisitely carved tympanum, depicting the Last Judgement, over the south doorway, considered a masterpiece of its time. If you turn up at the right time of year, you may find yourself in the middle of a strawberry festival, adding extra savour to your visit.

Further south, on the other side of the Dordogne, lies the iconic **Gouffre de Padirac**, a truly spectacular natural chasm which forms a gaping 75m deep hole in the ground. Open to the public since 1899, the visit includes a short trip on a punt along the underground river which formed the whole system, and a walking tour of the vast internal caverns (the second largest open to the public in Europe), which are geologically interesting, with beautiful, unusual concretions.

[www.gouffre-de-padirac.com](http://www.gouffre-de-padirac.com)

#### **LE BEAULIEU in Beaulieu/Dordogne**

Ideally located in a peaceful, rustic setting, the hotel "Le Beaulieu" features bright, spacious, personalised rooms and suites brimming with charm, elegance and modern comforts with free WiFi. The gourmet restaurant La Table de Catherine finds inspiration in the outstanding products that Périgord has to offer. The Chef, Charly Boyon, serves up bountiful fare that is both traditional and original, crafted from fresh seasonal vegetables.

[www.hotelbeaulieudordogne.com](http://www.hotelbeaulieudordogne.com)

#### **LES FLOTS BLEUS in Beaulieu/Dordogne**

In an absolutely idyllic setting on the banks of the Dordogne, this *Logis de France Nature Silence* hotel offers snug and comfortable 'nests' with terraces providing lovely views. Foie gras, cepes, strawberries and local wines figure on the menu.

[www.hotel-flotsbleus.com](http://www.hotel-flotsbleus.com)



A short drive from Padirac, modern-day visitors, like the countless hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who came this way in the past, find themselves looking over the edge of a narrow canyon that suddenly opens up in the Causse to reveal the little village of **Rocamadour**, clinging by its fingertips to the side of a sheer cliff. It has been a magnet for devotees of the *Black Virgin* and *St. Amadour* since the 12th C., when it began to grow into one of the major pilgrim destinations in France. Many en route for Santiago de Compostela in Spain passed this way, and although most people now come for the beauty and interest of the site itself (designated a "Grand Site", one of the major attractions in the Occitanie region), the pilgrimage still draws the faithful. Once seen, never forgotten sums this place up perfectly.

**LE BEAU SITE in Rocamadour**

Set in the heart of the mediaeval village, this hotel enjoys unrivalled views of the shrines and of the Alzou valley.  
[www.bestwestern-beausite.com](http://www.bestwestern-beausite.com)

Going back northwards across the river Dordogne, the charming small town of **Martel**, once an important market town and administrative centre, awaits you. The mediaeval heart of Martel, with vestiges of the 12th C. town wall, a large fortified church rebuilt in the 14th C. and the covered market place with its set of old grain measures, is very well preserved.

A busy, bustling market is still held here on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, bursting with delicious local produce, including in wintertime that highly prized commodity, the black truffle.

**LE RELAIS SAINTEANNE in Martel**

This luxurious, elegant 3 stars hotel and restaurant "with charm" is hidden in surprisingly large, mature grounds right in the well-preserved mediaeval town of Martel. Food - sourced from the market only a few minutes' walk away - is available all day, served on the terrace, in your room, or by the pool; and evening dinner can be enjoyed beside a log fire or out on the terrace. Go on: spoil yourself.  
[www.relais-sainte-anne.com](http://www.relais-sainte-anne.com)

A short distance away to the west on the banks of the river Dordogne, the town of **Souillac** provides plenty of interest, including a beautiful 12th C. Romanesque abbey church, the old quarter containing some lovely mediaeval houses, and a *Museum of Automata*, which possesses a fascinating collection of mechanical toys and automata from the 18th and 19th C., many of which can be seen working.

**LE PAVILLON ST MARTIN in Souillac**

A hotel? No, more of a superior guest-house where a warm, sincere welcome awaits you just a short walk from the market and lovely old abbey church.  
[www.hotel-saint-martin-souillac.com](http://www.hotel-saint-martin-souillac.com)

**LA DEVINIE in Martel**

Character house beautifully decorated built on the ancient walls of the city of Martel with 17th and 19th C. architecture, parquet floor and stone staircase.  
[www.la-devinie.com](http://www.la-devinie.com)





Further downriver, set a few kilometres north of the Dordogne itself, you'll find **Sarlat**, known as the *Pearl of Perigord Noir*. It is indeed a little gem: the essentially 13th to 16th C. old quarters are a concentrate of beautifully-restored buildings from that era. Indeed, nowhere else in Europe has so many old houses to the square metre. It's a lively place, with a renowned twice-weekly market that draws visitors from far and wide, to browse around the stalls laden with local produce and to enjoy the street entertainment on offer. You can't beat it - so join them!

North of Sarlat lies **Terrasson**, a charming old town whose origins are very ancient, although what we see now began to develop after a Benedictine abbey was founded in the 6th C. on the impressive cliffs above the Vézère valley. Destroyed and rebuilt several times, all that remains of the monastery is the church, reconstructed in the 19th C. There are some lovely, very old houses in the narrow streets, plus a 12th C. bridge, which was built on the monks' initiative. You can still cross it today, although you no longer have to pay!

Following the route used since time immemorial from the Atlantic eastwards to central France, you come to **Brive-la-Gaillarde** on the river Corrèze. The old centre, which originally developed around St Martin's church, is now largely pedestrianised, providing a very pleasant environment. There are plenty of interesting old buildings to see, including the *Labenche Renaissance* town house, now a museum; shops to dawdle past and an excellent market, where all our many local specialities have pride of place.

**LE PLAZA MADELEINE in Sarlat**

This luxurious hôtel (4 stars), in an elegant building just outside the line of the old town wall, offers a relaxed atmosphere and many facilities - heated pool, jacuzzi, sauna, hammam - to cosset you and make your stay even more enjoyable.  
[www.plaza-madeleine.com](http://www.plaza-madeleine.com)

**CHÂTEAU DE LISSAC**

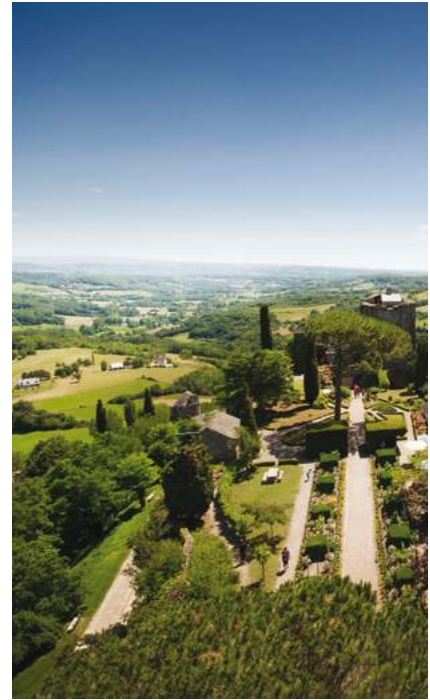
Overlooking the Causse lake, this château with its historic architecture is a harmonious marriage of ancient and modern set in beautiful grounds. The 5 guest rooms, of an extreme refinement, are imbued with an atmosphere of quiet serenity. They are an invitation to relax completely and enjoy the feeling of being a very special guest in a very special place ...  
[www.chateaulissac.com](http://www.chateaulissac.com)

**L'HOTELLERIE DE L'IMAGINAIRE in Terrasson - 4 stars**

This hotel and restaurant on the hills above Terrasson is in a fine 17th C. residence located right next to the Jardins de l'Imaginaire. Very comfortable bedrooms await you after a meal in the Michelin-starred restaurant, where refined, contemporary cuisine, based on the very best that the region has to offer, is served.  
[www.les-imaginaires.fr](http://www.les-imaginaires.fr)

**LA TABLE D'OLIVIER in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

In the historical centre of Brive, "La Table d'Olivier", the Michelin-starred restaurant of Brive has become the gastronomic 'place to be'. With a privileged choice of fresh ingredients and the local farmers, the Chef Pierre NEVEU offers you a refined kitchen, audacious and creative from starter to dessert with flowery notes.



### THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES IN FRANCE

Other must-sees in this area include several villages belonging to the select group known as *Les Plus Beaux Villages de France*. This association was founded in 1982 by *Charles Ceyrac*, who was then Mayor of Collonges-la-Rouge in the Corrèze. The purpose of the group is to preserve and enhance the heritage of member villages in order to make them better known, so that they can attract more visitors and develop their local economy, thus helping to keep them alive and viable. There are currently 157 villages, located all over France, belonging to the Association. Membership is not granted lightly: candidates must satisfy very strict criteria relating to their population, the quality and state of conservation of their heritage, and the efforts made by the village council to ensure that it is appreciated and cared for:

The most beautiful villages in the area: *Collonges-la-Rouge, Turenne, Curemonte, Saint-Robert, Autoire, Carennac, Loubressac, Beynac, La Roque-Gageac, Castelnaud-la-Chapelle, Domme, Limeuil, Monpazier, Belvès, Saint-Amand de Coly, Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère*

**Collonges-la-Rouge** in the Corrèze has impeccable credentials: in the past, it became the favourite place for nobles and officers from the nearby court of the Viscounts of Turenne to build their fine residences, which resemble small châteaux. Add to this the local dark red sandstone of which all the buildings are constructed and you have a village which really stands out from the crowd. Fine local craftwork and local products are available in the little shops around the village.

**Turenne** isn't far from Collonges, but they could hardly look more different. *Turenne* is built on a conical hill crowned by mediaeval towers, vestiges of the mighty castle of the Viscounts of Turenne, who ruled this area for nearly ten centuries. Steep lanes lead down to the village houses built, like the castle, from grey-white limestone. Their quality reflects the social status of the original owners. There are wonderful views from the hilltop: you can see why feudal lords chose this spot.

**Saint Robert** This charming medieval village is built on a ridge on the border between the Corrèze and the Dordogne. 12C fortified Romanesque church. Fine aristocratic houses, superb views of the Yssandonnais hills.

### CHÂTEAU DE MARSAC in Meyssac

A red sandstone building, situated on a hillside 4km from Collonges-la-Rouge, the Château de Marsac is surrounded by 11 hectares of woodland, meadows and orchards with breath-taking views over the villages of the Dordogne Valley. The four extremely spacious bedrooms are decorated in contemporary style. Reiki and Reflexology are on offer for the well-being of visitors and there are relaxing areas around the swimming pool and orchard where the owner grows her own organic herbs, vegetables and fruit.

[www.chateaudemarsac.com](http://www.chateaudemarsac.com)

### LE CLOS MARNIS in Turenne

A fine group of buildings erected in 1771 by the Guild of White Penitents (so called for the white cloaks and hoods they wore when doing charitable works). The 5 cosy bedrooms have a view of either the castle or the village. Table d'hôte meals available on reservation.

[closmarnis.online.fr](http://closmarnis.online.fr)



**Curemonte**, built on a ridge between two watercourses, really began to develop during the 11th C. when it came into the possession of the Viscounts of Turenne. This lovely village boasts three châteaux, tightly grouped around the attractive covered market place and 12th C. church, with other fine old noble residences encircling the central hub. Two other churches stand outside the main village: the 11th C. Romanesque *La Combe* (one of the oldest in the Limousin) and the 12th C. *St. Genest*, now a museum of sacred art.

South of the Dordogne river, in the Lot, lies **Autoire**, tucked into a deep gorge carved out by the Autoire stream. In the 15th and 16th C., this sheltered situation attracted wealthy residents who had the fine houses built which now make the reputation of the village. There is also an impressive fountain. The church, 11th C. Romanesque in origin with later alterations, has been beautifully restored.

**Loubressac**, just downriver, is perched high on the edge of the plateau where it falls away to the valley. In the past, the village was fortified - remains of one of the gates still exist - clustering for protection beside a small castle (now a private house) which served as a look-out post for the nearby fortress of *Castelnaud-Bretenoux*. You can see why, when you stand at the magnificent viewpoint overlooking the countryside for miles around. The stone-built village houses are decked out with lovely flower displays in summer.

Places you really should't miss

**Limeuil** is situated where the Rivers Dordogne and Vézère meet. It lived through the horrors of Viking invasions and the Hundred Years' War but today only three fortified gates are left to bear witness to those times. A bustling river port of old, the medieval village with its stone-built, dark-tiled houses so typical of Périgord Noir is now a charming, refreshing place in which to stop.

Far from about 20 kilometres of Sarlat, close to Lascaux, **Saint-Amand-de-Coly** stands comfortably between two small wooded valleys. Its 12C abbey is considered as the most beautiful fortified church of Périgord and keeps a watchful eye on the typical houses made of Sarlat's stones and "lauze" tiled roofs in a well-matched contrast of ochre and grey colours.

Halfway between Lascaux and Les Eyzies, **Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère**, a former flourishing port on the River Vézère is situated in countryside that is typical of the Périgord. The village is well guarded by its castles - the *Manoir de la Salle* at the entrance to the village, *Château de Clérans* above the river and *Château de Chabans*, jewel of the Côte de Jor - and is proud to host the Music Festival of the Périgord Noir in its beautiful 12C Romanesque church.

**LA BRUYLE**  
in **Saint-Michel-de-Bannières**

A warm welcome in a B&B full of character with interiors beautifully blending the charm of the past and modern comfort.  
[www.labruyle.com](http://www.labruyle.com)

**Monpazier** is labelled a "Grand site national", it has no less than 32 listed buildings and is regarded as the prime example of a "bastide" among the 300 in South-western France. Monpazier has had countless awards to salute, but also to protect, the outstanding heritage of this fortified village that was founded by Edward I of England in 1284.

**Belvès** is a medieval town perched on a rocky spur above the Nauze Valley in Périgord Noir. It boasts 7 bell towers and although it endured invasions and wars, it has miraculously managed to preserve superb relics of its built heritage.



**Carennac**, in a perfect setting further down on the Dordogne, has its origins in a Benedictine foundation, and the old priory gate still opens on to the riverside road. Within the enclosure lie the 11th-12th C. church with its beautifully-carved tympanum, the cloister and the Dean's residence, an elegant Renaissance building now an exhibition space. Stone-built traditional style houses line the quiet lanes around this complex - ideal for a leisurely stroll.

To the west, in the Dordogne département, **La Roque Gageac** is built spectacularly into the ochre-coloured cliffs above the river. During the Hundred Years' War, the Bishops of Sarlat had a residence and maintained a troglodytic fortress here, whose vestiges can still be seen. In more peaceful times, the village was a thriving centre of river trade, and nowadays you can take a trip on a 'gabarre', a replica of the flat-bottomed cargo boats of those days. The favourable micro-climate enables exotic plants (palms, oleander, citrus..) to grow outside along one of the old lanes part way up the cliff.

High above the valley a little way downriver, the majestic mediaeval fortress of **Beynac** stands guard proudly, looking almost as though it grew out of the cliffs themselves. Once in the possession of Richard the Lionheart (in whose time some of it was built), visitors are now assured of a friendly welcome! The narrow lanes of this charming old village climb steeply up from the riverside to the castle and church, turning into flights of steps as they go.

Within 10 kilometers from Sarlat, **Castelnaud-la-Chapelle** overhangs the confluence between Dordogne and Céou rivers in an exceptional landscape opposite the beautiful villages of Beynac-et-Cazenac and La Roque-Gageac. Well known for its two castles - the medieval castle superbly restored with its Museum of War in Middle Age and the Milandes castle, former property of Joséphine Baker -, the village itself and its typical Périgord architecture is also worth discovering.

Some ten kilometres south of Sarlat, **Domme** is perched on a breathtakingly high cliff that allows it to enjoy an exceptional view of the Dordogne valley and the neighbouring Most Beautiful Villages of La Roque-Gageac and Beynac-et-Cazenac. This creamy-stoned "bastide" or fortified village boasts a successful combination of architectural, natural and gastronomic heritage typical of Périgord Noir.

#### **LA TERRASSE in Meyronne**

Overlooking the river Dordogne, this beautifully-restored château (3 stars) offers comfortable rooms in total harmony with the noble spirit of the place.

[www.hotel-la-terrasse.com](http://www.hotel-la-terrasse.com)

#### **LA BELLE ETOILE in La Roque Gageac**

This 3 stars hotel at the foot of the cliffs that rise above the village possesses all the charm of an old residence and has been run by the same family for three generations. A comfortable, restful place, it forms an ideal base from which to explore the beauties of the area.

[www.hotel-belle-etoile-dordogne.fr](http://www.hotel-belle-etoile-dordogne.fr)

#### **BALCON EN FORÊT in Beynac**

Bed and breakfast in a superb group of buildings typical of Périgord with 2 hectares of grounds in a lovely setting above the Dordogne, and standing on a lane leading to the centre of Beynac. Very spacious suites, with fireplaces in the local style.

[www.guests.ladordogne.info](http://www.guests.ladordogne.info)

# Town and city sketches





# Brive-la-Gaillarde

Brive, a lively, forward-looking town of some 50,000 inhabitants is by far the largest in the Corrèze. Set between two ridges providing great views over the closely-packed slate roofs of the old town, Brive is renowned for its excellent **regional cuisine**, and **rugby fans** will certainly have heard of the local team's prowess. A vital crossroads and river-crossing since ancient times, the town has always been a centre of trade and exchange, a role reinforced by the arrival of the railway in the 19th C.

Located where four different rock types meet, a wide variety of produce is available thanks to the varying soils and **Brive's markets** are renowned for the variety and quality of produce on offer. In recent times, as well as the **shops and boutiques in the well-restored mediaeval and Renaissance quarters** constructed around St. Martin's church, rebuilt in the 13th C., modern out-of-town shopping centres have developed, serving a wide area. Brive has a relaxed, **pleasant atmosphere**, and as well as its **historical and architectural heritage**, has much to offer the visitor, including various **festivals and events**.

Town and city sketches

## LE COLLONGES

### in Brive-la-Gaillarde

The Hotel Le Collonges offers 26 contemporary and large rooms. It is located in the heart of the gaillarde city between the Georges Brassens market and the shopping streets. This stone building, bordered by plane trees, has a terrace, a bar, a reception area, a breakfast room and a showroom meeting room.

[www.hotel-collonges.com](http://www.hotel-collonges.com)

## CHEZ FRANCIS

### in Brive-la-Gaillarde

Only two steps away from the Brassens Market, this is a special restaurant where the walls are decorated with signatures from famous writers and comedians who were present at the famous book fair "Foire du Livre" in autumn. Tasting the flavours of the market in a bistro atmosphere.

[www.chezfrancis.fr](http://www.chezfrancis.fr)

## EN CUISINE

### in Brive-la-Gaillarde

(Michelin Bib gourmand)

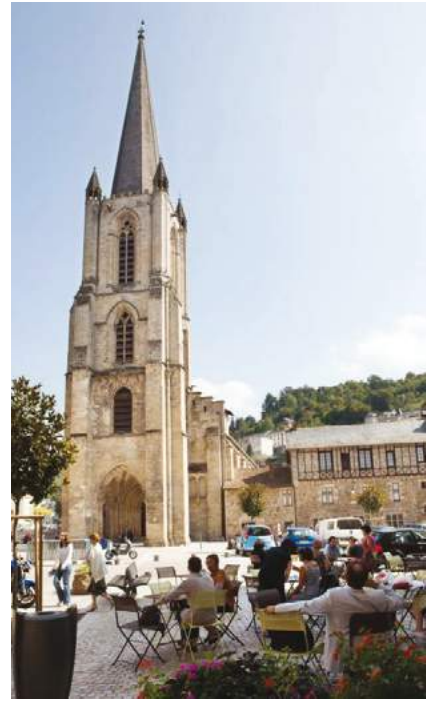
Refined cooking with bold flavours and mouthwatering presentation for this passionate, hardworking young chef, Nicolas Eche. Dining room "style bistrot". Bon appétit!

[www.encuisine.net](http://www.encuisine.net)

## L'ATELIER DU MOUTIER

### 16 rue Maillard - Brive-la-Gaillarde

New establishment in the heart of the city Gaillarde. Nicolas Serres will satisfy your straws, with its market cuisine, products from the market, and this, in a clean, chic and contemporary.



## Tulle

*Tulle*, the administrative capital of the Corrèze, grew up around an abbey recorded in the 7th C. Elevated to the status of cathedral in the 14th C., its 12th C. church was transformed as the town rapidly developed, and the 75m high bell-tower still stands sentinel above it. The city is confined in the deep, narrow valley of the Corrèze river; with the result that the **fascinating old quarters**, rising steeply up the slopes, are threaded with many flights of steps giving access to the different levels. They give the city its **distinctive character, along with the old wooden balconies still seen on some houses**. It has long been famous for the **manufacture of lace and accordions**; and there was also an important **arms factory** here.

The *Musée des Armes* provides an overview of the history of armaments in France and elsewhere, recalling this part of our local heritage. A small city (fewer than 17,000 inhabitants), Tulle has an attractive, unspoilt atmosphere, which invites you to stroll through the old streets (a bit of effort required for the steps) and explore to your heart's content.

### LES 7 in Tulle

Excellent cuisine right in the city center: The young chef Cyril Auboiron cooks seasonal and locally-sourced food, in a design dining room, authentic cuisine.  
[www.restaurant-les7.fr](http://www.restaurant-les7.fr)

### LE BOUCHE A OREILLE in Tulle

In the old quarter of Trech, the talented chef Stéphane Houdayer performs tasty and refined cuisine in a sober and elegant setting.  
[www.leboucheaoreille-tulle.com](http://www.leboucheaoreille-tulle.com)



## Cahors

From the **superb Mont St. Cyr viewpoint**, **Cahors** appears like a 3D map of itself, enfolded in a meander of **the river Lot**. Founded in Roman times, the mediaeval city was much smaller than the original, only occupying the area around the cathedral on the eastern side of the meander. Completely rebuilt in the 12th-14th C, the old quarters still have their ancient street plan, and about 350 houses remain intact from that period, which helps to explain why it's a 'City of Art and History', and has been designated as a "**Grand Site**": one of the major attractions in the Occitanie Region.

Another reason for this spans the river on the western side of the city: **the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Pont Valentré**, a beautiful, perfectly-preserved 14th C. fortified bridge. Add in the **colourful twice-weekly market**, one of the finest in the region, the charm of the main boulevard with its **shops and boutiques**, the flower displays, and you'll begin to get the picture of the county town of the Lot, with its friendly atmosphere and sunny Southern joie de vivre.

### LETERMINUS in Cahors

This hotel with its beautifully executed décor in keeping with its period (c.1911) has always belonged to the same family. They have handed down the tradition of hospitality through the generations, along with their passion for quality.

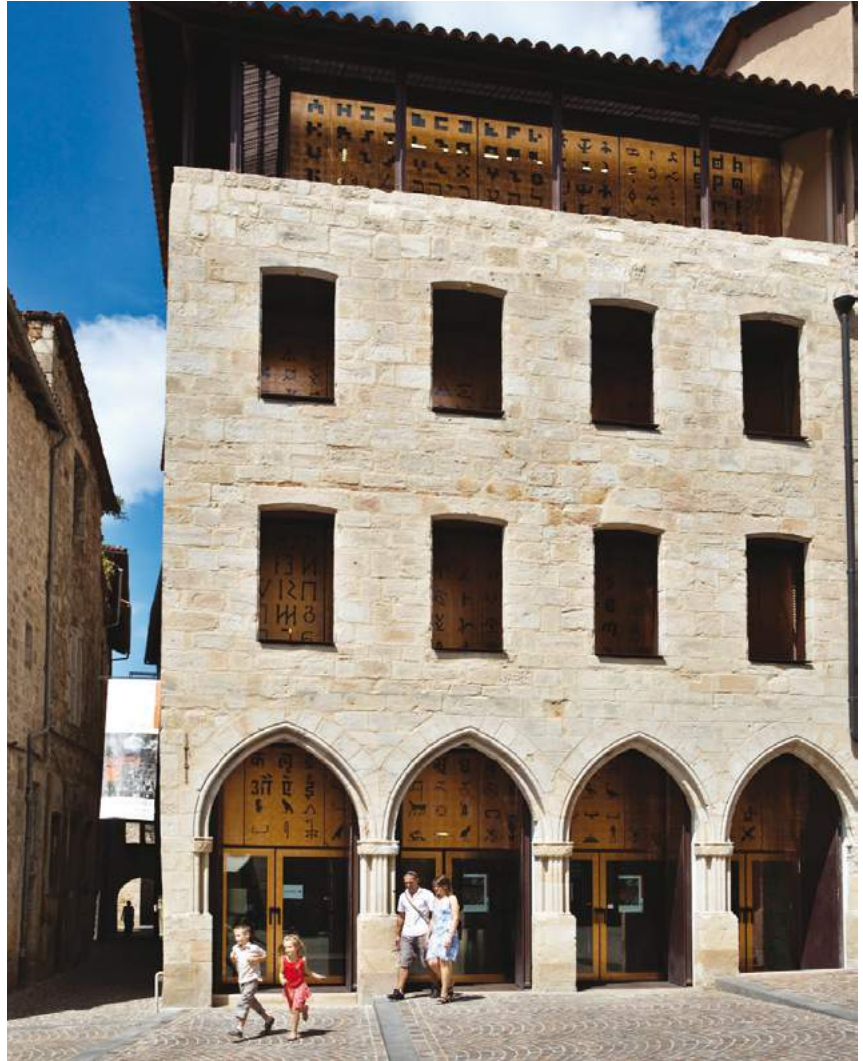
[www.balandre.com](http://www.balandre.com)

### LE MAS D'AZEMAR in Mercures

Just outside the city, the rooms in this lovely house set in a sweet-scented rose garden are decorated with objects that the proprietors have hunted out at antique and second-hand fairs.

[www.lemasazemar.com](http://www.lemasazemar.com)





## Figeac

*Figeac*, also a ‘Town of Art and History’ and ‘Grand Site Occitanie’, owes its existence to the foundation of a Benedictine abbey on the banks of the river Célé. Now the Lot’s second largest town, it grew rapidly as the abbey prospered, and in the 13th and 14th C. was home to rich merchants whose business took them throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Their wealth built some very fine town houses, and explains the lovely mediaeval aspect of Figeac’s well conserved, semi-pedestrianised town centre.

The town was also home to *Champollion*, who cracked the code of hieroglyphics, and there is now a museum dedicated to him and to the writing systems of the world. Figeac is an invitation to stroll through a living history book which has adopted - and adapted - modernity without losing its delightful personality.

### LE RELAIS DE LA TOUR In Capdenac-le-Haut

A charming hotel in one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France.

[www.lerelaisdelatour.fr](http://www.lerelaisdelatour.fr)

### HÔTEL “LE 14” in Figeac

In the heart of the médiéval city, a new hotel - 3 stars - with spacious rooms, a lovely terrasse for your breakfast... calm and authentic.

[www.le-quatorze.fr](http://www.le-quatorze.fr)



## Sarlat la Canéda



Set in the Cuze valley and surrounded by green hills (or pechs), the beautiful town of **Sarlat**, another worthy '**Town of Art and History**', also grew up beside a Benedictine monastery probably founded in the 9th C. The settlement developed next to the monastic enclosure, and by the 13th C. was a thriving, bustling town peopled by merchants, shopkeepers and craftsmen. Naturally, the well-off members of the bourgeoisie wanted their houses to reflect their wealth and status, and these **elegant buildings in honey-coloured stone** - many of which received a Renaissance 'makeover' in the 16th C. - still line the narrow, winding streets.

The old quarter is **extraordinarily well-preserved**, thanks to a law passed in 1962 under De Gaulle which led to the creation of **France's first Conservation Sector** here, paving the way for extensive restoration. It's easy to imagine yourself back in the past, especially after dusk, as you wander along in the *modern* gas lamplight...

### LES JARDINS D'HARMONIE in Sarlat

Right in the center of the old town, the chef Marc Bidoyet cooks only fresh local produce, plus fish and seafood with the world flavour. It's a dream.  
[www.lesjardinsdharmonie.com](http://www.lesjardinsdharmonie.com)

### LE PRÉSIDENTIAL in Sarlat

The building, in an idyllic setting in the old town, was once the Law Courts, but there's no argument about the quality of the food: the chef, Adrien Verissimo, serves the classics of the Périgord area, such as fresh ceps or black truffles in season, but with his own individual touch.  
[www.lepresidial.fr](http://www.lepresidial.fr)



## Terrasson Lavilledieu

This little town, whose origins go back beyond the Gallo-Roman period, is set in the **Vézère valley** (one of the major tributaries of the Dordogne) not far from Brive. It has always been an important river crossing, where north-south and east-west routes meet, and **the Pont Vieux**, which has spanned the river since the 12th C., bears witness to this long history of travel and exchanges. If you climb up to the top of the Malpas cliff, you get a wonderful view over the river; the roofs and old streets of the town and the 15th C. St. Sour church.

**Les cluseaux** are a real curiosity: they are underground shelters, whose history is shrouded in mystery, but the fact that most are equipped with a source of water suggests that they might have been used as refuges in troubled times. Enjoy a stroll through the gardens inspired by 17th and 18th C. styles, and the contrasting **Jardins de l'Imaginaire**, which are a modern garden must-see.

### LE MOULIN ROUGE in Terrasson

A short way outside the town centre, this smart, modern complex with two single storey hotels - 3 stars -, two large restaurants and conference facilities is ideal for both leisure and business purposes.

[www.hotel-dordogne-perigord.com](http://www.hotel-dordogne-perigord.com)

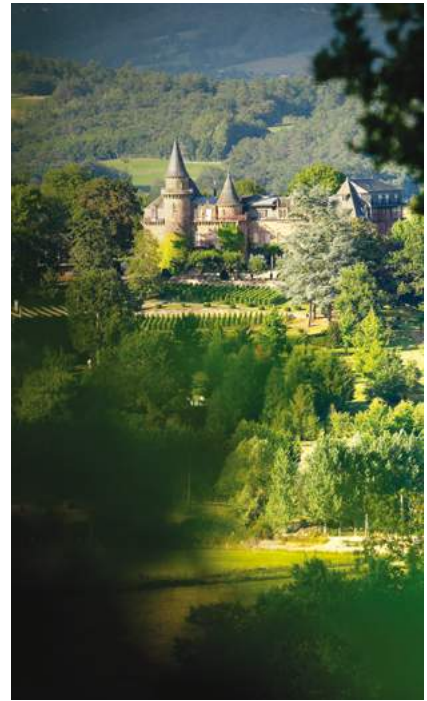
### LES AGAPES in Terrasson

Set in the old quarter of the town, close to the church, this restaurant with its ancient stone walls and shady terrace provides refined, delicious cuisine prepared from seasonal produce.

[www.lesagapesterrasson.fr](http://www.lesagapesterrasson.fr)

# A taste of the Dordogne Valley





Few aspects of our local lifestyle are more important to both residents and visitors alike than the really **good food** and **wine** available everywhere here. You can find it in simple country inns or village bistros, brasseries, or establishments with Michelin stars. But we're not just talking about restaurants; it all starts literally at ground level, in fields, orchards and vineyards, where produce of the highest quality begins its life. Many of our products have official quality certification such as **AOP** or **Label Rouge**; and these are not awarded lightly.

They are all to be found on the **numerous markets** which flourish in this area. Towns and many villages have once or twice weekly markets throughout the year; whilst in summer, **Local Farmers' Markets**, at which only producers from the surrounding communities can trade, spring up in many places.

Every Saturday morning, the dynamic town of Brive sees crowds of shoppers in search of the finest seasonal produce flocking to the excellent **Georges Brassens covered market** on the *Place de la Guierle*. There are also traditional open food markets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, so there's plenty of opportunity to see and sample our many and varied specialities at their best.

If you want the **fresh black truffle experience**, you'll have to come here between December and March when they ripen and the **truffle markets in Lalbenque, Martel, Brive, Sarlat and Terrasson** are crowded with producers, dealers, restaurateurs and visitors inhaling the inimitable aroma.

Lush green pastures and the famous chestnut-coloured Limousin cattle combine to produce excellent milk-fed, naturally-raised **veal** (no cages). The tender, delicate pinkish-white meat has **Label Rouge** status; and *Objat's* market is recognised for the consistently high quality of the meat sold here.

Unsurprisingly, **delicious alcoholic drinks** are part of our culinary heritage; and if you'd like to know more (and taste some), you can't do better than to visit the **Denoix Distillery**, installed in the heart of Brive since 1839. Apéritifs and liqueurs based on walnuts and red fruits grown locally, macerated, distilled and blended with fine Armagnac or Cognac are made, along with **La Moutarde Violette de Brive** (a mild, tasty mustard flavoured with grape must). The same equipment, methods, recipes and ingredients as in the 19th C. are still used - and the results are every bit as good as then!

**CASTEL-NOVEL**  
near Brive-la-Gaillarde

Luxury, beauty and refinement are all to be found in this splendid manor house transformed into a 4 stars hotel.  
[www.castelnovel.com](http://www.castelnovel.com)



**VIN PAILLE**

This area is also home to *Vin Paillé*, a sweet wine made by a small number of winemakers who keep this centuries-old tradition alive. The bunches of grapes are hand-picked, laid on trays and allowed to dry naturally before being pressed. This concentrates the sugars and aromas, giving a white and a red wine that can be served chilled as an apéritif, or with foie gras, cheeses and desserts. This wine has been awarded in 2017 by an AOC Corrèze.

**COTEAUX DE GLANES IGP WINES**

This is another small vineyard area close to the Dordogne river where commercial production has only relatively recently begun again after a long period of neglect. One of the smallest recognised vineyard areas in France, its eight growers work as a cooperative, producing easy-drinking reds and rosés with spicy, floral notes.

[www.coteauxdeglanes.fr](http://www.coteauxdeglanes.fr)

A very pleasant way of trying our traditional cuisine is to visit a *Ferme Auberge* or *Farm Inn*, where you can enjoy a meal on a working farm, prepared largely from their own produce. Near Martel, the *Moulin à l'Huile de Noix* run by the Castagné family serves meals in a converted hunting lodge, with a walnut-oil mill installed on the ground floor: Here, their walnuts are lightly toasted and milled to produce a limpid golden oil, excellent for making salad dressing.

[www.moulincastagne.com](http://www.moulincastagne.com)

A taste of the Dordogne Valley

As well as enjoying a good meal, you can visit the mill and find out about their farm products. There is also a walnut oil mill to visit near Terrasson: *Le Moulin de Maneyrol* in *Pazayac*, and, in *Ste. Nathalie* near Sarlat, there's a 16th C. working water mill, both of which produce high-quality, flavoursome oil in the time-honoured way. Tastes good... and it's healthy, too!

**AOP PERIGORD WALNUTS**

These walnuts are produced in the Corrèze, the Lot and the Dordogne (Perigord is the old name of the Dordogne département). This nut originally came to the area with the Romans, but has made itself thoroughly at home here, and walnut groves are to be seen almost everywhere. Apart from being sold in shell, walnuts are transformed into all kinds of delicious cakes, biscuits, confectionery (chocolate walnuts are seriously good) and oil. They are also distilled into liqueurs and spirits, or macerated to make walnut wine, a pleasant apéritif. They garnish salads, accompany cheeses, and are very good for you into the bargain.

[www.noixduperigord.com](http://www.noixduperigord.com)

**CHATEAU CANTECOR near Rocamadour**

The perfect hideaway. This 12th C. château with its lovely view over the Dordogne valley was once a residence of the Marquise de Pompadour. Nowadays, its watch tower is a *gîte* 'with charm' for 2 or 3 people, and in the grounds, perched four metres up in the oak trees, there is the ultimate dream cabin complete with pigeon-tower and private terrace. There's plenty to do here, with 5 hectares of woods and meadows, 2 swimming pools and a former bread-oven made into a barbecue. Your dream come true from 50€ per night per person.

[www.chateau-cantecor.com](http://www.chateau-cantecor.com)

**AU HASARD BALTHAZAR in Martel**

In the mediaeval heart of the town, this restaurant serves high-quality local specialities - confit, cassoulet, foie gras - prepared in their own conservation unit and also available to buy in the associated shop. "Acabatz d'intrar" written on the door (don't stand out there, come in!) sums up the generous, welcoming philosophy that informs the food.

[www.lesbouriettes.fr](http://www.lesbouriettes.fr)



The Dordogne Valley itself is very fertile, with earth enriched by flood deposits over the millennia. Delicate white and green asparagus spears appear in spring, while sweet, succulent, sun-ripened **strawberries** perfume our markets in their turn. Indeed, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne holds the **Strawberry Festival** every May, with a market, food stalls, a giant strawberry tart and various activities to entertain visitors. And the Dordogne département is **France's biggest producer of strawberries**, so there are plenty to go round.

When it comes to the crunch... you can always console yourself with a delicious biscuit or cake from **Lou Cocal artisan biscuit and cake bakers in Sarlat**. Their traditional recipes use walnuts and chestnuts, and are as good as ever they were.

Just north of Rocamadour, you'll find the **Borie d'Imbert, a goat farm and dairy**. You can visit the goats in their large, bright, airy stable (they're very friendly!) and watch the production of cheese from their milk through special windows in the dairy walls. [www.laboriedimbert.com](http://www.laboriedimbert.com)

**AOP ROCAMADOUR GOAT'S CHEESE**

First mentioned in the 15th C., this small, flat disc of cheese is very mild and creamy when young, stronger and drier when allowed to mature. Delicious just with bread, it can be enjoyed warmed, toasted, served with salads, walnuts... however you like.

[www.aop-rocamadour.com](http://www.aop-rocamadour.com)

**LE CHATEAU DE LA GREZE close to Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**

This 18th C. residence dedicated to the horse, the great passion of the France family, has everything you need to keep you happy: grounds with ancient trees, a swimming pool overlooking the countryside... and 5 guest rooms "with charm". Table d'hôte meals on request, prepared from fresh farm produce.

[www.chateaudelagreze.com](http://www.chateaudelagreze.com)

**LE ROC DU BERGER just outside Rocamadour**

In this beautiful modern structure in wood, set amongst truffle oaks, the kitchen team provides authentic local cuisine using truly local produce sourced from nearby farms and businesses: lamb, duck, wine, beer, bread, vegetables...

Meat is grilled before your eyes in the dining room on a huge barbecue, and you can also enjoy your meal outside on the terrace if you wish.

[www.rocduberger.fr](http://www.rocduberger.fr)



Many of the hillsides in the vicinity of the river Dordogne are planted with orchards, their trees laden with pink and white blossom in spring and the glowing colours of **plums, cherries and apples** in late summer. Easy on the eye...and the palate.

If you happen to be in the little town of Souillac on a Friday morning, you'll have no trouble finding the market, as the stalls occupy every available space in the old streets around the lovely Romanesque abbey church. All our local specialities and seasonal produce are to be seen there, and the old quarter resounds to lively conversation and banter, as it must have done in days gone by.

**THE LOUIS ROQUE DISTILLERY**  
- a plum job

Set up in Souillac in the 19th C., this distillery has an unbroken tradition of producing fine fruit and nut spirits, liqueurs and aperitif wines based on local produce. They're open for visits: the tour includes the cellars and production area, and an interesting collection of old stills and other distilling equipment, followed by a tasting. Their flagship product is **La Vieille Prune**: a fine, smooth plum brandy with the unmistakable taste of the fruit.  
[www.lavieilleprune.com](http://www.lavieilleprune.com)

Sarlat also has a very lively open market, with centuries of tradition behind it. Every Wednesday and Saturday morning, the old market place and streets leading from it are crowded with stalls piled high with seasonal produce and local specialities (duck and goose products well to the fore), and customers with loaded baskets flock to buy the best. On Thursday evenings, 17.00 place du 14 juillet, there's an organic produce market: there are plenty of local certified organic farmers to keep it well supplied.

**LA SALAMANDRE DISTILLERY**  
- taste that fruit!

In *Temniac*, 4 kms from Sarlat, this traditional family distillery produces fruit spirits, liqueurs and aperitifs, plus jars of fruit in alcohol, from the finest crops grown in the region and picked at just the right moment. The recipes and methods used have been handed down in the family for years, and the results prove that the old-timers certainly knew a thing or two...  
[www.distillerie-salamandre.com](http://www.distillerie-salamandre.com)





This part of the country has long been famous for raising **ducks and geese**. The fattened birds (not force-fed, as such: the food goes into a storage pouch, the crop, and they digest it as and when they want) give liver for *foie gras*, and meat for *confit*, *magret*, etc. The birds aren't made ill by the fattening process: they're naturally able to store fat in their liver as well as under the skin in preparation for long migrations. **Confit** is an ancient method of preserving: the meat is salted, rinsed, and cooked very gently in its own fat, nothing else, until tender. It used to be stored tightly packed in earthenware jars with the clarified fat poured over it, now it's most often found in tins. The traditional accompaniment to grilled or oven-browned confit is a dish of **pommes Sarladaises**: potatoes sautéed in the fat from the confit tin, with chopped garlic and parsley.

If you're wondering why people round here don't all have terrible cholesterol problems, you have to take into account the walnuts and red wine regularly consumed (in moderation!), both of which have anti-aging and anti harmful cholesterol properties. It's *le French Paradox*...

#### The Black Truffle

Sometimes called the **'black diamond'** because of its high value, the tuber *melanosporum* is a mushroom which grows underground on the rootlets of trees - usually oak trees, but not always. It likes alkaline soil, and the limestone rock of this area is its ideal terrain. As it isn't visible, pigs were once used to hunt them out, as they have a very acute sense of smell, and naturally root for them; but as pigs aren't always the most amenable of creatures (given half a chance, they'll snaffle the mushroom themselves), trained truffle hounds now usually do the job.

#### LE GRAND BLEU in Sarlat

This restaurant, about 10 minutes walk from the old town centre, offers high-class food based on seasonal locally sourced produce. The chef, Maxime Lebrun, takes as his inspiration the traditional cuisine of the area, whilst giving it his own personal touch. The atmosphere in the dining room is simple, pleasant and convivial.  
[www.legrandbleu.eu](http://www.legrandbleu.eu)

# Fairs, markets and food festivals



## Foires grasses in Brive-la-Gaillarde From November to March

Markets specialising in the sale of foie gras, truffles, goose and duck products

## Truffle market in Terrasson Thursday mornings November to February

## Truffle markets in Sarlat Every Saturday December to March, rue Tourny

Specialised retail market, all truffles checked and calibrated.

Every Wednesday December to February, 14.30 place de la Mairie.

Wholesale truffle market

## Truffle Festival and Foie Gras and Truffle Academy in Sarlat

The 3rd weekend of January sees renowned chefs from Sarlat and from Michelin-starred restaurants in the area come together to give demonstrations of and lessons in the preparation of these iconic specialities. The Academy gives young chefs the chance to be creative with these delicacies.

[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Fest'Oie Goose Festival in Sarlat 1st weekend of March each year

The goose comes to town in a big way. Find out everything there is to know from egg to feather... fun workshops for children, gigantic meal based on specialities this generous bird provides.

[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

## Strawberry Festival in Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne 12th May 2019

Strawberry market, giant tart, food stalls, hot-air ballooning etc.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

## Cheese Festival in Rocamadour 9th June 2019

The local AOC Rocamadour goat's cheese is obviously to the fore, but there are many other fine cheeses of all kinds from the region to be sampled, along with wines from the area and other products.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

## Festival of regional cattle breeding in Brive-la-Gaillarde August 2019

Presentation of cattle, goats, pigs, sheep, draught horses, poultry and birds. A real farm in the middle of the town with different animations. Horse drawn carriages and pony riding. Sale and tasting of regional products, kitchen demonstrations.

Processions of confraternities.

[www.brive.net](http://www.brive.net)

## Chestnut Festival in Beynat October 2019

Market selling chestnuts in various forms and products based on them. Traditional presentation and tasting of *The Giant Chestnut* on Sunday afternoon.

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

## Fête de la Noix in Thegra 27th October 2019

Festival with the walnut in the starring rôle: fresh, dried, in cakes, sweets and biscuits, as oil, distilled... it's crunch time!

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

## Fête du Safran du Quercy in Cajarc October 2019

Two days dedicated to the precious red-gold spice obtained from the saffron crocus, cultivated and used here for centuries.

Market (foods and craftwork), saffron meal prepared by some of the Lot's best chefs, entertainment.

## Truffle Fair in Cuzance 14th December 2019

Make the acquaintance of the renowned *Tuber Melanosporum* or black truffle, one of the most valuable fungi on the planet. Its scent is like no other....

[www.foiretruffles.fr](http://www.foiretruffles.fr)

### LOCAL FARMERS' MARKETS

In summer, these markets are a great opportunity to meet local farmers and find out about the rich and diverse produce of the Dordogne valley, from fruit and vegetables to preserves, pâtés and jams. Only producers from the surrounding area are allowed to have stalls, and there is usually a festive atmosphere, with the opportunity to stay and make a meal from the products you have bought.

### SUMMER MARKETS

Ayen, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, Beynat, Chartrier-Ferrière, Monceaux-sur-Dordogne, Saillac, Sainte-Féréole, Carennac, Lacave, Miers, Souillac, La Roque Gageac, Lachapelle-Auzac, Saint Genies, Voutezac le Saillant.

# Arts and crafts



Not far north of Brive, near the mediaeval village of Donzenac, *Les Pans de Travassac* provides a fascinating insight into the extraction and preparation of roofing slate, large deposits of which are found locally. Exploited since the 16th C., this quarry was the only one to survive the collapse of the industry in the 20th C. and is now thriving, thanks to high demand linked to the renovation of old buildings and for new builds as well. Over the centuries, towering 100m cliffs have been carved out, forming a spectacular backdrop to the visit, during which you can find out all about the highly skilled craft of the slate workers.  
[www.lespansdetravassac.com](http://www.lespansdetravassac.com)

In the village of Collonges-la-Rouge, *Le Couteau de Corrèze*, a handcrafted knife in the traditional local style, first reflected the light of day in 1995 when Eric Peyronnaud set up his workshop here. The Corrèze knife has its own registered trademark, and has an unusual design as regards both its shape and its spring, formed like a sweet chestnut leaf. Short guided tours of the workshop are provided free, so that you can appreciate the craft of the knife-maker.  
[www.atelier-couteaux.com](http://www.atelier-couteaux.com)

**RESTAURANT LE PERIGORD in Donzenac**

The young chef Johnny Thevenin uses the best local products in his own style (foie gras, traditionally-raised milk-fed veal...) and serves some dishes on the slate!  
 Tel: 00 33 5 55 85 72 34

**LE CANTOU in Collonges-la-Rouge**

A village inn where you can eat outdoors beneath a trellis surrounded by the lovely red sandstone buildings of Collonges. On the menu: omelettes with chanterelles (a real local treat), beefsteaks and a choice of desserts (*flognardes* - fruit tarts with fruit in season), walnut cakes and home-made jams containing unusual combinations of fruits.  
 Tel: 00 33 5 55 84 25 15  
[www.lecantou.fr](http://www.lecantou.fr)



It's a pleasure to watch clay taking shape and life beneath the nimble fingers of *Laetitia Robert* whose *Meyssac* workshop is open to the public. This young artist creates everyday **objects, linked to the art of setting a table beautifully, plus a whole range of vases, lamps, mirrors, chandeliers... and even more unusual...** Laetitia also produces to order *épis de fâmage* or finials, which traditionally crown the roofs of the fine residences and typical local houses in this area.  
[www.poterie-meyssac.com](http://www.poterie-meyssac.com)

In the little town of *Bretenoux* on the Cère, not far from its confluence with the Dordogne, is **the glass-blowing workshop of Olivier Mallemouche**. Here, from air, earth and fire he conjures up art pieces whose jewel colours would grace Ali Baba's cavern. His speciality is the insertion of drawings, faces, calligraphy or abstract graffiti on a brilliantly coloured background in between layers of clear glass. Clearly brilliant.  
[www.mallemouche.com](http://www.mallemouche.com)

**LES REMPARTS DE CASTELNAU in Prudhomat**

Just below the castle of Castelnaud, a lovely restaurant with a shady terrace and beautiful views over the Dordogne Valley.  
 Tel: 00 33 5 65 38 52 88  
[www.restaurantlesremparts.jimdo.com](http://www.restaurantlesremparts.jimdo.com)

**LA BASTIDIE in Noailhac**

Restaurant and little charming hotel set in the medieval village of Noailhac. Chef Arnaud Sosta offers inventive cuisine and gourmet cooking based on fresh seasonal. Enjoy rt in the elegant and cosy dining room.  
[www.la-bastidie.fr](http://www.la-bastidie.fr)

**L'AUBERGE DE LA FONTAINE in Autoire**

This village inn, close to the old fountain from which it takes its name, is an 18th C. building in the heart of one of the *Most Beautiful Villages in France*, deep in a limestone gorge. Enjoy local cuisine with a deft, delicate touch of innovation in the dining-room or out on the terrace in fine weather.  
[www.auberge-de-la-fontaine.com](http://www.auberge-de-la-fontaine.com)



**STAINED GLASS STUDIO  
in Rocavitraux**

The stained glass creation and restoration studio founded by Chantal Jean in 1994 is in the «Maison de la Pommette», a 13th C. mediaeval house in Rocamadour. The studio is open to the public in the form of didactic visits from April to October. Chantal Jean also offers holiday leisure courses in stained glass making for beginners in the studio for adults and adolescents, adapted to your needs.

**Tel: 00 33 5 65 33 73 10**  
**rocavitraux@wanadoo.fr**  
**www.rocavitraux.pagesperso-orange.fr**

**L'HOSTELLERIE BELLE RIVE  
in Gagnac-sur-Cère**

On the banks of one of the Dordogne's loveliest tributaries, this restaurant serves the best of our local produce prepared and served with all the inspiration and inventiveness of a young and passionate chef. Enjoy it in the elegant yet cosy dining room, or on the shady terrace when it's fine.

**www.bellerive-dordogne-lot.com**

**FERME DES ALIX**

Lavender has been growing on the cause plateau around Rocamadour for centuries. La Ferme des Alix is an organic farm and essential oils distillery offering produce from the farm or from local producer: honey, chocolate, beauty products... Guided tours on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5.30.

**46500 ROCAMADOUR - Les Alix**  
**09 64 33 72 57 - 06 47 07 69 94**  
**www.fermedesalix.fr**

**THE FARM INN AT THE WALNUT  
OIL MILL in Martel**

This walnut oil mill is run by the Castagné family, farmers and walnut-growers. This former hunting lodge has been turned into a walnut oil mill which functions in walnut season and when there are demonstrations for the public. A grindstone crushes the kernels and a hydraulic press extracts the oil. This site is designated 'site du goût' (site of taste). For sale on site : walnut oil, a delicious hazelnut oil and the traditional walnut wine of Quercy.

**Tel: 00 33 5 65 37 40 69**  
**www.moulincastagne.com**



Go with  
the flow



Imagine yourself floating gently down a river in whose fresh, quiet waters are reflected the blue of the sky, the green of the vegetation on the banks and the balconies of old houses overhanging the waterside.... This is the start of a **canoeing trip** which takes you **down the river Dordogne from Argentat-sur-Dordogne to La Roque Gageac and Beynac**, with overnight stops on the way. Higher up the valley, the river runs fast and wild through steep gorges, but on this section it is much more calm and mature, and suitable for those who have no previous canoeing experience.

Setting off from Argentat-sur-Dordogne, with all its long history linked to the river, the first stage of your trip takes you down to **Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne**, through a gentle, bucolic landscape. The valley here is quite open, with a fertile flood plain rising gently towards green, wooded hills. There are plenty of places where you can pull your canoe out on to a little beach, to enjoy a picnic, just relax or have a swim.

Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne is another place whose rich history and heritage is closely allied to the river, including an old Penitents' Chapel on the riverside where the 'gabariers' or boatmen who once plied their trade on the Dordogne used to pray for a safe voyage.

Continuing on towards **Carennac**, the Dordogne winds its way peacefully between well-tended fields where you may find strawberries or asparagus, according to season. Tributaries such as the Cère and the Bave flow in on the left bank, and the river splits into channels embracing verdant islands.

The next stage of the journey takes you down to **Saint-Sozy**. On the way, the scenery changes, as the river begins to carve its way through the limestone plateau, creating spectacular cliffs on either side and meandering past proud rocky promontories. Don't be surprised if you see a steam train puffing its way slowly along about 80m up on the cliffs on the right bank: it's a tourist train that runs on the old line from **Martel to St. Denis-les-Martel**.

Then float gently on down to **Souillac**, past more impressive cliffs. On the way, you pass the riverside village of **Lacave**, where the entrance to an enormous cave (open to the public) opens in the hillside. Soon after this, a small tributary, the Ousse, flows in on the left, and where the waters meet, **Belcastel** castle stands sentinel atop the narrow promontory, as it has for centuries. After the next meander, you glide beneath the white-walled **Château de la Treyne** on its bluff, guarding the river passage.

The little mediaeval town of **Souillac** awaits you, whose old quarter and modern **Museum of Automata** provide plenty of interest to tempt you to stop off for a while here.

Beyond this point, as you make your way down to **La Roque Gageac**, some subtle differences begin to creep into the landscape: the hillsides clothed with oak trees are interspersed with cliffs of a honey-gold hue. These are crowned with a succession of castles, including **Montfort**, overlooking the enormous meander (known as a *cingle*) of the same name, which has more walnut trees growing in it than in a squirrel's wildest dreams....

In La Roque Gageac and also in the village of **Beynac**, a little further downstream, you can take a rest from paddling but still stay on the water, by taking a round trip in a gabarre; a replica of the cargo boats that once took goods down as far as Bordeaux.





You can also follow the course of the river on foot or by bike, and there is ample opportunity for fishing en route:

**A reel experience**

**Fishing** has long been one of France's favourite pastimes, and there's no better place to indulge in it than along the Dordogne and its tributaries. The fact that the area has been designated as a **Biosphere Reserve by Unesco** is an indication of the quality of the environment, and the variety of wildlife, including fish, bears this out. Indeed, the waters of the Dordogne are now so clean that wild salmon have been successfully reintroduced - but you're not allowed to fish for those!

However, there are plenty of species which you can take, including shad, bleak, carp, barbel, pike, zander, perch... and many more. **Fly-fishing** is a very popular sport here, and enthusiasts even breed special *coqs de pêche* (fishing cocks), whose feathers are used as lures for trout and grayling. Holiday fishing licences are easily obtained: details - and much other information - given in a guide to angling available from all local Tourist Offices. You'll soon be hooked!

Go with the flow

**USEFUL ADDRESSES**

Professional service-providers offer one or several day canoe trips:

**SAFARAID DORDOGNE CANOË NATURE**

in Monceaux-sur-Dordogne, Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne, Vayrac and Saint-Sozy  
[www.safaraid.com](http://www.safaraid.com)

**ESCAPADE NATURE PAYS D'ARGENTAT**

in Argentat-sur-Dordogne  
[www.escapadenatureargentat.com](http://www.escapadenatureargentat.com)

**PORT LOISIRS**

in Martel, Gluges/Creyse  
[www.compagnie-sports-nature.com](http://www.compagnie-sports-nature.com)

**COPEYRE CANOË**

in Souillac  
[www.copeyre.com](http://www.copeyre.com)

**PÉRIGORD AVENTURE LOISIRS**

in Vitrac  
[www.perigordaventureloisirs.com](http://www.perigordaventureloisirs.com)

**SAGA TEAM**

in Carennac  
[www.canoe-dordogne-lot.com](http://www.canoe-dordogne-lot.com)

**GABARE BOAT TRIPS ON THE DORDOGNE**

From Spontour/Soursac  
 These excursions by traditional, flat-bottomed boats provide a unique opportunity to explore the Dordogne Valley and its magnificent gorges by retracing the lives of local "gabariers" - intrepid boatmen who carried wood downstream to Bordeaux for use in the wine and barrel-making industries.

**Tourist Office Gorges de la Haute Dordogne**  
[www.cc-gorges-haute-dordogne.fr/gabare](http://www.cc-gorges-haute-dordogne.fr/gabare)

From Argentat-sur-Dordogne and Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne.

**GABARE LA SPONTOURNOISE III AND ADELE ET CLARISSE**

**Dordogne Valley Tourist Office**  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)  
 05 55 91 09 94

[gabares@vallee-dordogne.com](mailto:gabares@vallee-dordogne.com)

Further downstream, there are excursions in similar boats from La Roque Gageac and Beynac, taking you past some of the most impressive of the many castles dotted along the river valley, and often giving you excellent glimpses of the local wildlife - herons, kingfishers, black kites amongst others.

From La Roque Gageac  
**GABARRES LES CAMINADES**  
[gabarrescaminade@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gabarrescaminade@wanadoo.fr)  
**LES GABARRES NORBERT**  
[www.norbert.fr](http://www.norbert.fr)

From Beynac  
**LES GABARRES DE BEYNAC**  
[www.gabarre-beynac.com](http://www.gabarre-beynac.com)

Come  
into the  
garden...



Much has been said elsewhere about the natural beauty of this area, but there are also places where people have literally taken matters into their own hands to enhance it even further. All the great civilisations, from time immemorial, have created gardens as part of their artistic and cultural expression, indeed as part of their daily lives, and that tradition continues unabated.

**In Terrasson, *Les Jardins de l'Imaginaire***, created by the Franco-American landscape architect *Kathryn Gustafson* and her partner, *Philippe Marchand*, are a contemporary evocation of fragments of the long history of this partnership between Man and Nature, and make allusions to universal myths about the natural world. As the name implies, the 13 garden rooms stimulate the imagination as well as the physical senses. There are water gardens, a rose garden, a fine display of fuchsias, literally thousands of trees and shrubs...no wonder that these gardens have received several official accolades, and the site itself, above the old town, is worth an accolade of its own. A unique and special place to visit.  
[www.jardins-imaginaire.com](http://www.jardins-imaginaire.com)

Come into the garden

On the cliffs overlooking the Dordogne Valley about 10 kms from Sarlat lie the **gardens of Marqueyssac**. This were once the grounds of a small chateau, now seen in its 18th C. form, and were laid out in the 19th C. There are three main paths, all leading towards the *belvédère*, a magnificent viewpoint overlooking the river; and on certain evenings in summer; the gardens are illuminated by thousands of candles, with musical entertainment provided. Children are well catered for: amongst other things, they can get safely lost in the boxwood labyrinth trimmed to look like the undulating hills of the area, and there's an on-site restaurant, shop, etc. A good way of getting some gentle exercise to work off all that good food you've been eating...  
[www.marqueyssac.com](http://www.marqueyssac.com)

**Eastwards up the valley, just beyond Souillac**, the 14th and 17th C. *Château de la Treyne* still watches over the river. It is now a 4 star hotel with a Michelin restaurant, and stands in a vast park planted with beautiful old ornamental trees of many different species. Pleasant paths wind in and out amongst the trees, making for some delightful walks. There is also a **formal French-style garden**, and both the garden and grounds are open to the public, even if you're not staying or eating at the hotel. Mind you, it's not a bad place to do either... or why not both?  
[www.chateaudelatreyne.com](http://www.chateaudelatreyne.com)





Should you visit the city of Cahors, don't miss the **Secret Gardens: a series of 25 small gardens**, often tucked away in a courtyard or in a corner; hence the name, **all linked by a mediaeval theme, which corresponds to the city's rich heritage from that period.** There's *le courtil*, a mediaeval kitchen garden, *l'herbularius*, Brother Cadfael territory, with medicinal plants commonly used at that time, vines representing the Black Wine of Cahors... A leaflet is available (in English!) from the Tourist Office, showing the location of all the gardens, and the suggested itinerary is marked on the ground by bronze plaques showing an acanthus leaf.

A particularly good time to visit is in **June**, when the **Cahors Juin Jardins** festival takes place: gardens not normally accessible to the public are open, there are installations and decorations all over the place; and there is also a national garden festival at that time, *Rendez-vous Aux Jardins*  
[www.cahorsjuinjardins.blogspot.fr](http://www.cahorsjuinjardins.blogspot.fr)

Touring around this part of the country is one thing, but if you go to **Lostanges, about 12 kms east of Collonges-la-Rouge**, you can do a world tour just by walking round the *Parc Botanique*. These **botanical gardens** occupy 2 hectares, and as you follow the marked path, you go past various beds, each representing a climatic region within the world's temperate zones. Wander botanically from Canada to Patagonia, Siberia to New Zealand, from the jungles of Asia to the deserts of America, all in the space of one afternoon (David Attenborough would be proud of you). There are some rather cute goats and sheep to keep the children interested.  
[www.jardin-de-lostanges.com](http://www.jardin-de-lostanges.com)

At **Sothys Contemporary Botanical Garden in Auriac** you step into an elegant and harmonious garden created by local cosmetics company Sothys, in 2007. Its 4 hectares are divided into themed gardens and areas inspired by beauty and cosmetics. There are beautiful classic, French, Japanese and Rose gardens and a White, Egyptian, Perfume and Sun area.  
[www.lesjardinssothys.com](http://www.lesjardinssothys.com)

In Varetz, just north west of Brive, stands the **Château de Castel Novel** (now a four-star hotel) where the famous French author, **Colette** (1873-1954), stayed on many occasions between 1912-23. She grew up with a great love of animals and plants, writing about them very observantly and affectionately. **Les Jardins de Colette**, close to the château, are a **contemporary** evocation through plants of **six different landscapes she knew and loved during her life.** There is an intricate labyrinth (lose the little dears for half an hour) in the shape of a butterfly, named *Bel Gazou* for her only daughter. There are guided tours, or you can walk around as you please with an audio-guide available in English. Be literary and botanical all at once.  
[www.lesjardinsdecolette.com](http://www.lesjardinsdecolette.com)

# Airs above...





If you'd like to see the Dordogne Valley's cliffs, wooded slopes and hilltop villages from a very different angle, you could opt for a pleasure flight in a **hot-air balloon**. Gliding silently above the countryside gives you a real sense of the geography and layout of the landscape, and the bird's eye view reveals hidden gems that you'd never see from the ground.

#### **MONTGOLFIADES**

##### **Rocamadour**

**29th and 30th September 2018**

Hot-air balloon festivals: the amazing sight of dozens of balloons filling the air and taking part in races.

##### **ROCAMADOUR AÉROSTAT**

[www.rocamadour.aerostat.free.fr](http://www.rocamadour.aerostat.free.fr)

##### **MONTGOLFIÈRE DU PÉRIGORD**

Flights from Beynac and La Roque Gageac

[www.montgolfiere-du-perigord.com](http://www.montgolfiere-du-perigord.com)

##### **CORRÈZE MONTGOLFIÈRE**

To get yourself aloft, contact Frédéric (Two flight zones: Collonges-la-Rouge/ Curemonte/Turenne/Auriac/Brive/ Pompadour). Every day on reservation 1st April to early November.

[www.correze.montgolfiere.fr](http://www.correze.montgolfiere.fr)



## ....and on the ground

If you prefer to remain firmly in contact with Mother Earth, and particularly if you are partial to a round of golf, this can also be arranged with no trouble at all. The **Coiroux course near Aubazine** takes you over a gently undulating course, through varied types of woodland, from beech and chestnut to birch and larch. **Brive golf course in the Planchetorte valley** has a tree-lined watercourse running through it, which provides a very interesting natural hazard. **Souillac Golf and Country Club** in verdant, undulating countryside, is the Lot's only 18 hole course, providing challenges for experienced golfers, but still giving beginners a chance!. **The Montal course near St. Céré** has a beautiful 16th C. château as a backdrop on the hill above it - what more could you ask for?

**COIROUX GOLF COURSE** in Aubazine  
 Parc du Coiroux - AUBAZINE  
 Tel: 00 33 5 55 27 25 66  
[accueil@golf-coiroux.com](mailto:accueil@golf-coiroux.com)  
 18 hole course.  
 Restaurant, terrace, 1 seminar room.  
[www.golf-coiroux.com](http://www.golf-coiroux.com)

Accommodation nearby: Hotel "de charme" Château de Castel Novel Very well situated just 10 minutes drive from Brive-la-Gaillarde, Castel Novel - originally a feudal castle - is a magnificent hotel set in 40 hectares of grounds. Once the residence of a famous French authoress, Colette, it has become a 27 room hotel 'with charm', where luxury and refinement are the key words. To cap it all, the restaurant now boasts one Michelin star; thanks to the Chef Nicolas Soulié.  
[www.castelnovel.com](http://www.castelnovel.com)

**BRIVE-PLANCHETORTE GOLF COURSE**  
 in Brive-la-Gaillarde  
 Vallée de Planchetorte - 19100 BRIVE  
 Tel: 00 33 5 55 87 57 57  
 Fax: 00 33 5 55 87 48 28  
[golf.brive@orange.fr](mailto:golf.brive@orange.fr)  
 18 hole municipal course.  
 Club house, bar/restaurant, pro shop.  
[www.golfdebrive.com](http://www.golfdebrive.com)

Accommodation nearby: Château de Lissac 5 wheatears Luxury B&B. Overlooking the Causse lake, this château with its historic architecture is a harmonious marriage of ancient and modern set in beautiful grounds. The 5 guest rooms, of an extreme refinement, are imbued with an atmosphere of quiet serenity.  
[www.chateaudelissac.com](http://www.chateaudelissac.com)

**SOUILLAC GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**  
 in Lachapelle-Auzac  
 Le Mas del Teil - 46200 LACHAPELLE AUZAC  
 Tel: 00 33 5 65 27 56 00  
 18 hole golf course  
 Bar/brasserie/restaurant, seminar room  
 High standard holiday rental homes of various capacities set around the perimeter of the course. On the first tee straight after breakfast.  
[www.souillacountryclub.com](http://www.souillacountryclub.com)

**MONTAL GOLF COURSE**  
 in Saint-Jean-Lespinasse  
 Marot Bas - 46400 SAINT JEAN LESPINASSE  
 Tel: 00 33 5 65 10 83 09  
 Fax: 00 33 5 65 38 07 16  
 9 hole course.  
 Clubhouse (bar/restaurant) with pro shop.  
[www.golf-montal.fr](http://www.golf-montal.fr)

3 star hotel and restaurant Les Trois Soleils de Montal beside course. In a beautiful setting near the magnificent Renaissance Château de Montal, this very comfortable hotel has another ace up its sleeve, or rather its chef's toque: a gourmet restaurant with one Michelin star. Feast your eyes and your palate all at the same time.  
[www.3soleils.fr](http://www.3soleils.fr)  
 Tel: 00 33 5 65 10 16 16

# Family matters





The vast stretches of unspoiled countryside in this region are the perfect playground for children and adults alike, with opportunities for all kinds of outdoor activities - walking, swimming, cycling, boating, riding, etc. that can be enjoyed by the whole family - and there are also man-made attractions, such as theme or wildlife parks. Don't expect Disneyland! - many of the attractions here are linked to the natural world, and often literally an integral part of it. Here's a selection to give you a few ideas.

**Just south of Gramat, not far from Rocamadour, you'll find the Parc Animalier de Gramat.** This large wildlife park on the Causse, with its vast enclosures, is home to many European mammalian and bird species, most of which once lived in this area but were hunted to extinction. The vegetation is left entirely in its natural state, and the animals live outdoors in herds or family groups as in the wild. There is also a conservatory of endangered domestic species, and you can get close up and personal with the (adorable) animals.  
[www.gramat-parc-animalier.com](http://www.gramat-parc-animalier.com)

**Prehisto-Dino Parc in Lacave** - discover the fascinating world of dinosaurs and the evolution of mankind with life-size models and scenes of prehistorical life.  
[www.prehistodino.com](http://www.prehistodino.com)

**Durandal in Rocamadour** - the legend of the mythical sword Durandal lives on in this wonderful equestrian show.  
[www.parcdurandal.com](http://www.parcdurandal.com)

Changing track, **Le Truffadou tourist train** takes you on a return trip from Martel to St. Denis-lès-Martel and back via several short tunnels and a section of line cut into the cliffs high above the Dordogne Valley: the views are superb. The train's name comes from the fact that the line was once used to transport truffles from this area to be marketed far and wide. Some departures have a steam locomotive pulling the old-fashioned carriages (covered but open to the air); at other times it's a diesel. Fascinating both for train buffs and for general interest.  
[www.trainduhautquercy.info](http://www.trainduhautquercy.info)

**In Rocamadour itself, the Rocher des Aigles** is a bird sanctuary largely dedicated to birds of prey from around the world, although there are a few other species as well. There are demonstrations each day when they allow birds to fly free before returning to their handlers. After the demonstration, you can see the spacious aviaries which obviously suit the birds, as most of the species reproduce regularly; and when possible, young ones are released back into the wild. A really interesting visit.  
[www.rocherdesaigles.com](http://www.rocherdesaigles.com)

**La Forêt des Singes**  
Also in Rocamadour, be ready for a unique encounter: 130 monkeys (Barbary macaques) are roaming free in 50 acres of beautiful forest.  
[www.la-foret-des-singes.com](http://www.la-foret-des-singes.com)

Not far away in Souillac, and still on a mechanical theme, there is the **Musée de l'Automate**, which has a large collection of working automata, from the first type of mechanical toy made in the eighteenth century to the sophisticated, electrically-controlled displays that used to grace the windows of large department stores at Christmas time. The models are seen working, the sequence of displays controlled by an electronic brain. Unusual and amusing.  
[www.musee-automate.fr](http://www.musee-automate.fr)

Further up the valley, just outside Neuville near Argentat, you can take a walk with the **Three Little Pigs**. A shady, flat 2km long path takes you past all sorts of structures on the 'little pigs' theme, including the houses of the Three Little Pigs, a giant money box, and others. A lively and amusing way of bringing the nursery rhyme to life.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)



The Dordogne Valley Tourist Office in Rocamadour, Martel, Souillac and Saint-Céré offers English treasure hunt to discover the city. It's free and the game is designed by age group for children from 4 to 12 years.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)



Also in Meyssac (as well as Collonges-la-Rouge, Curemonte, Turenne, Souillac and Martel), on several occasions in July and August there are **Balades aux Flambeaux**: evening walks through the mediaeval streets with participants carrying flaming torches or luminous batons, and characters from fairy tales and legends appearing and disappearing. These old villages are quite magical seen by torchlight.  
[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)  
[www.brive-tourisme.com](http://www.brive-tourisme.com)

Near Brive-la-Gaillarde, the **la Fage chasm** offers a cave visit with a difference for children of 6 and over; the *Escapade Souterraine*. The galleries 25m below ground are full of beautiful formations (stalactites, stalagmites, etc.); there is a caving circuit for beginners, and a workshop on fossils. Plus one of the largest bat colonies to be seen in Europe... what price Dracula?  
[www.gouffre-de-la-fage.com](http://www.gouffre-de-la-fage.com)

Also near Brive, in Ussac, there's the ideal place for the kids (age 3 and over) to work off any surplus energy they have the **Parc Wizz'titi**. This offers five different 'adventure circuits', a 100m long zip-wire, an aerial circuit and a 'barefoot path' with various types of surface to provide a range of sensations. Should keep them happy for hours.  
[www.wizztiti.fr](http://www.wizztiti.fr)

Family matters

**In July and August, in the streets and in the little squares of old Sarlat**, there's a lot going on. Not just the usual markets or other regular activities, but **street entertainment**. Performers of all kinds - jugglers, jesters, dancers, actors, musicians - pop up all over the place. Very reminiscent of the Middle Ages, when Sarlat was a rich town with a prosperous population, for whom such entertainers would have been happy to perform.

Another very interesting and unusual place to visit is the **Chocolaterie Bovetti in Terrasson**, whose patron, or boss, Monsieur Bovetti, is a Master Chocolatier. As well as producing excellent chocolates (including a range of organic products) from the finest cocoa beans, as you would expect, he has also set up a **Museum of Chocolate**. Here, you can learn everything about chocolate, from the production of cocoa beans to the finished article. At the end of the visit, during which you see chocolate being made, children are invited to make a chocolate shape from a mould, and, of course, there is an (irresistible) opportunity to do some tasting...  
[www.bovetti.com](http://www.bovetti.com)

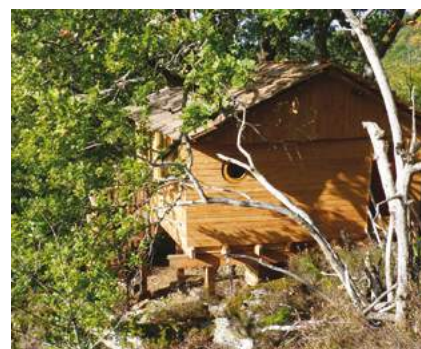
Fortified by this, in summer you may well find yourself being entertained in the streets of the old town by itinerant performers, rather as in Sarlat. Don't let the delicious chocolate you've bought melt, though... take it with you to enjoy on a boat trip on the Vézère. **The Terra sunt provides a delightful, relaxing 40 minutes river cruise, giving lovely views of the old town** and the surrounding countryside, plus information about local history and the once all-important river trade. Tickets are sold at the Tourist Office, a mere 20m from the embarkation point.  
[www.ot-terrasson.com](http://www.ot-terrasson.com)

As previously mentioned, **cycling** is an activity that families can share, and a very good place to do it is on the **'voie verte'** (green road) between Sarlat and Cazoulès. This is a disused railway line running along the Dordogne Valley, a section of which has been converted into a very safe, well-shaded track with a good, smooth surface, ideal for anyone who is walking, riding a cycle or MBK, on roller skates, or for wheelchairs. It provides views of the valley and its villages, and there aren't any steep gradients, so it's suitable for everyone. On your bike...  
[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)





Sweet  
dreams



Whether you're on a long holiday, or just taking a short break, a good night's sleep in comfortable accommodation is an essential part of the experience. There is no shortage of hotels, bed and breakfast or other establishments in this area which fit the bill; but if you're in search of something just that little bit different, out of the ordinary, or very, very special... here's a few ideas to get you tucked up in the bed that's perfect for you...

#### **HOTELS AND B & B 'DE CHARME'**

Some hotels and B & B have a special charm all of their own, recognised by the award of 'hôtel/Chambre d'hôte de Charme' status. Charming Hotels/B & B are judged on various criteria, whether they are established in a château, a fine old town house, a manor or a country cottage: they will be in a particularly attractive setting, and especial care will have been taken to use authentic, high-quality materials such as wood and stone in their construction and decoration.

The accommodation should appeal to all your senses: sight by the harmonious use of colours, and lovely views; hearing by the absence of intrusive noise, replaced by the sounds of Nature; touch by the texture of furnishing materials used; taste by the home made produce and local specialities served; smell by the aroma of your hot coffee or chocolate at breakfast, or the flowers in the vase on your table... Last, but certainly not least, your hosts are also sure to be charming themselves!

#### **CHATEAU DE LA GREZE**

Close to Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne in the Dordogne Valley, this 18th C. manor house in a wooded setting providing lovely views has been transformed into a guest house with a real difference, in terms of the comfort provided and the spaciousness of the accommodation. 5 individually-decorated guest rooms with private facilities. The owners, Anne and Philippe France, are equally devoted to horses and to local cuisine, which you can enjoy at their table d'hôte.

[www.chateaudelagreze.com](http://www.chateaudelagreze.com)

#### **NESTS FOR NATURE LOVERS**

Get really close to Nature in the Dordogne Gorges. Set in beautiful oak and chestnut woods, 5 tree-houses await you, each with a terrace and lovely views over the Dordogne. Ideal for families, friends or couples wanting to be together; they are built in locally sourced wood, and provide all the comfort of a modern structure, including bathroom facilities in every cabin. Towels and organic hygiene products provided. Breakfast is delivered to the foot of your tree, to be pulled up by the earliest riser! You can also order food baskets for other meals: gourmet vegetarian, gourmet local food, or a special young person's basket. Everything in this exceptional environment invites you to relax and dream sweet dreams...

[www.hetresouslecharme.com](http://www.hetresouslecharme.com)

#### **LA VILLA ROMAINE**

After the Roman conquest of Gaul, the powerful amongst the invaders acquired large country estates, upon which they had fine villas built, and this hotel is on the site of one of these. The original owner would not feel out of place here today, looking out from the comfort of the hotel over the glorious, unspoiled countryside beside the Dordogne river only 7 kms from Sarlat. No need to be a Roman dignitary: all are welcome to enjoy the amenities and surroundings!

[www.lavillaromaine.com](http://www.lavillaromaine.com)



**BALCON EN FÔRET**

Bed and breakfast in a superb group of buildings typical of Perigord with 2 hectares of grounds in a lovely setting above the Dordogne, and standing on a lane leading to the centre of Beynac. Very spacious suites, with fireplaces in the local style.  
[www.guests.ladordogne.info](http://www.guests.ladordogne.info)

**HÔTEL LE CLOS LA BOËTIE**

In the fascinating town of Sarlat, a short walk from the old quarter, an elegant 19th C. family residence stands ready to transport you to the gracious lifestyle of the past enhanced with every modern amenity. Indulge yourself in some 5 star luxury in this hotel "with charm" and just about everything else as well: heated pool in the garden, suites with four-poster beds, period furniture, fitness and well-being centre, attentive service... what more could you ask for?  
[www.au-grand-hotel-de-sarlat.com](http://www.au-grand-hotel-de-sarlat.com)

**LES HAUTS DE MAGRIÈRES in Martel**

Not far from the village of Martel, beautiful house with very modern design overlooking the Dordogne river. Lovely grounds and swimming pool.  
[www.lesmagrieres.fr](http://www.lesmagrieres.fr)

**CHAMBRES D'HÔTES LES INSTANTS VOLÉS**

Ideally situated between Beaulieu-sur-Dordogne and Collonges-la-Rouge, this charming guesthouse proposes you at the first floor a sleeping area in the enormous renovated barn and on the ground floor a wellness area with spa, sauna, hammam and massage room. A bar corner with billiard, a library lounge and a swimming pool are available for the guests. The original diner is in summer being served on the terrace or in the panoramic conservatory.  
[www.les-instants-voles-spa.fr](http://www.les-instants-voles-spa.fr)

**LE MIEL DES MUSES in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

Close to the historic city center, Le Miel des Muses offers 9 refined, originally-designed, XXL guest rooms with private facilities. Terrace and little swimming-pool only for guests on the second floor.  
[www.lemieldesmuses.fr](http://www.lemieldesmuses.fr)

**CHÂTEAU DE LACAN in Brive-la-Gaillarde**

Château de Lacan is a charming 4-star hotel with 15 comfortable and spacious rooms close to Brive town centre. You can relax in the large garden and the bar/lounge where all your needs are catered for: It is the perfect place for an overnight stay or a leisurely holiday. Come to Château de Lacan for a unique experience.  
[www.hotelchateaulacan.com](http://www.hotelchateaulacan.com)

**MANOIR DE MALAGORSE**

This 19th C. stone-built manor house in verdant countryside between Souillac and Martel has been converted by the owners, Anna (who is English) and her husband Abel, into a luxury guest house with four individually-designed bedrooms and two suites. No detail is neglected, from the elegant interiors to the lovely gardens and pool, all set in 5 hectares of grounds. This isn't just bed and breakfast, more a way of life.  
[www.manoir-de-malagorse.fr](http://www.manoir-de-malagorse.fr)

**LA MAISON D'ANNE FOUQUET**

Imagine a vista of the wooded slopes of the Dordogne Valley reflected in the river as it washes gently at the foot of La Roque Gageac, with canoeists floating by and perhaps a gabarre in the distance... then turn it into reality, by staying in this guest house. The three spacious, south-facing rooms, in a building separate from the owners' home, are tastefully designed and furnished to cosset you with every possible comfort. Take breakfast on the terrace and enjoy the view...  
[www.laroquegageac.com](http://www.laroquegageac.com)





**LES ESCLARGIES**

This hotel 'au naturel' in Rocamadour is about as natural as it could be: built of stone and wood, it was literally constructed around the oak trees already growing in the grounds. Designed to respect the ecological principles of harmony between Man, animals and the land enshrined in the Causses du Quercy Regional Natural Park, comfort and luxury have in no way been neglected. Quite the contrary; and the refined, elegant contemporary decor reflects the tranquillity of the scenery.  
[www.esclargies.com](http://www.esclargies.com)

**PONT DE L'OUYSSSE**

Cradled in a bay of the cliffs beneath Belcastel castle, where the river Ouyssse flows into the Dordogne, the hotel deserves its three stars - as does the setting! - and the restaurant is well worth its Michelin star. The hotel gardens along the Ouyssse riverbank provide not only a pleasant stroll for guests, but also many of the vegetables that deliciously grace the dishes served in the restaurant. A more peaceful, idyllic place would be hard to imagine.  
[www.lepontdelouysse.com](http://www.lepontdelouysse.com)

**CHATEAU DE LA TREYNE**

Feudal lords no longer rule the land, but they have left us a magnificent legacy of castles, many of which are now superb prestige hotels. Such a one is the 4 star La Treyne, solidly anchored on a low cliff right beside the Dordogne not far from Souillac. If that wasn't enough, the grounds cover 120 hectares, and the restaurant has a Michelin star. Why not come and live like a lord for a while...in far greater comfort and luxury than in mediaeval times, of course!  
[www.chateaudelatreyne.com](http://www.chateaudelatreyne.com)

**LES ROULOTTES DU PETIT GOUFFRE**

Unusual accommodation close to the Padirac Chasm, in the Causses du Quercy Regional Natural Park. The 'gypsy' caravans are in a very peaceful setting 10 mins walk from Padirac Chasm, in a valley surrounded by pastures and woodland.  
[www.chambredhote-padirac-rocamadour.com](http://www.chambredhote-padirac-rocamadour.com)

**LA MAISON DE MARQUAY**

This place in a picturesque village 7 kms from Sarlat is neither a hotel nor a bed-and-breakfast: it's a guest house of great charm with a high-class restaurant. Delight your eyes and find repose in the very comfortable bedrooms designed on clean, contemporary lines, refresh yourself in the pool in the garden, and treat your taste buds to a delicious meal, prepared with the utmost care from the finest local ingredients... a dream experience all round.  
[www.maisondemarquay.fr](http://www.maisondemarquay.fr)

# Festivals and fun in the Dordogne Valley area





The historic towns and villages, castles, churches, lovely landscapes and sometimes even the spectacular caves of this area make a perfect backdrop to all kinds of events and festivals, covering every kind of theme imaginable, plus some you might never have thought of. This is the perfect place to enjoy yourself - come and join in the fun!



**VIDEO MAPPING ON SAINT SOUR CHURCH**  
Every evening during summer 2019  
Terrasson

**Street Entertainment Festival LES CHEMINS DE L'IMAGINAIRE**  
July 2019  
Terrasson

For these five days, the streets of the old quarter, the squares, the bridges and the roads beside the river become the stage for street theatre and circus companies and musicians ready to amuse, delight and surprise all passers-by. All performances entirely free.  
[www.ot-terrasson.com](http://www.ot-terrasson.com)

**FESTIVAL DE LA VÉZÈRE**  
9th July to 22th August 2019  
Vézère Valley around Brive-la-Gaillarde  
Internationally renowned artistes and young prodigies rub shoulders at the Festival de la Vézère, where everybody who is anybody in classical music is to be seen. This itinerant festival offers a wide artistic diversity: opera evenings in the setting of a castle, choirs, poetry, concerts, music workshops for children.  
[www.festival-vezere.com](http://www.festival-vezere.com)

**SIM COPANS Jazz Festival**  
13th to 20th July 2019  
Souillac  
Fresh and unconventional, the programme this festival puts on always surprises audiences with the original nature of its concerts. The aim is to bring together jazz musicians from widely differing cultures to facilitate exchanges that can enrich us all. A different approach to jazz for a different public!  
[www.souillacenjazz.fr](http://www.souillacenjazz.fr)

**BRIVE FESTIVAL**  
18th to 21st July 2019  
In 10 years, thanks to a never ending rich and various program, combining various international headliners, French artists, dancing and singing groups of world music and local talent, the event has become the n°1 contemporary music festival in the area, created in the city centre of Brive.  
[www.brivefestival.com](http://www.brivefestival.com)

**SAINT CÉRÉ & HAUT QUERCY FESTIVAL**  
28th July to 11th August 2019  
Saint Céré and elsewhere  
This festival is full of humour and new ideas, putting vocal and instrumental music on stage in some of the Lot's famous monuments (the *Théâtre de l'Usine* in Saint Céré, Souillac abbey church, the *Château de Montal*, Cahors Cathedral, Castelnaud Bretenoux castle).  
[www.scenograph.fr](http://www.scenograph.fr)

**PÉRIGORD NOIR CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
July and August, Périgord Noir area  
The concerts take place in lovely old churches which are listed buildings in villages dotted around in the Terrasson/Sarlat area. Please ask at local Tourist Offices for the full programme (yet to be announced).  
[www.festivalmusiqueperigordnoir.com](http://www.festivalmusiqueperigordnoir.com)





**LES MÉDIÉVALES DE ROCAMADOUR**

7th July 2019

Rocamadour

Medieval festival in the city of Rocamadour with shows and many events taking you back to the Middle-Ages.

[www.rocamadourmedievaes.com](http://www.rocamadourmedievaes.com)

**ECO-FRIENDLY ECAUSSYSTÈME**

26th, 27th and 28th July 2019

Programme to be announced

Gignac

For the 16th year running this small village in the north of the Lot close to the Brive-Dordogne Valley airport will play host to a lively festival with impeccable eco-principles. It features contemporary music by artistes from various backgrounds who share the event's ethos. Everything possible is done to minimise pollution and to avoid waste of energy or resources; there are debates on ecological tapies, and enormous fun is had by all.

[www.ecaussysteme.com](http://www.ecaussysteme.com)

**FESTIVAL DE ROCAMADOUR - SACRED MUSIC**

August 2019 for 3 weeks

Rocamadour

Sublime music in a sublime setting.... what better surroundings could there be for this festival of sacred music than the ancient place of pilgrimage that is Rocamadour? Especially as this year one thousand years of pilgrimage are being celebrated in the sanctuaries. There are concert performances by world-class artistes, and sung Mass is held throughout the week.

[www.rocamadourfestival.com](http://www.rocamadourfestival.com)

**FESTIVAL DES NUITS DE NACRE**

27th - 30th June 2019

Tulle

This old town has a long association with the accordion, which is still manufactured here. Nuits de Nacre brings together in harmony musicians from diverse musical traditions who love the instrument, and on previous occasions has welcomed such stars as *Dee Dee Bridgewater, Johnny Clegg* and *Juliette Greco*.

[www.accordeon.org](http://www.accordeon.org)



## How to get there

### By air

Brive Dordogne Valley Airport flights  
Tel: 00 33 (0)5 55 22 40 00  
[www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com](http://www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com)

Ryanair from London Stansted and Porto  
Hop! Air France from Paris



### By train

From Paris Austerlitz the line serves Limoges, Brive (change for Terrasson), Souillac (bus service to Sarlat), Gourdon and Cahors. SNCF stations in St Denis lès Martel, Rocamadour and Biars sur Cère

### By road

From Paris on the A20 motorway

## Press contacts

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## Websites

[www.tourismecorreze.com/en](http://www.tourismecorreze.com/en)

[www.tourisme-lot.com](http://www.tourisme-lot.com)

[www.ot-terrasson.com](http://www.ot-terrasson.com)

[www.sarlat-tourisme.com](http://www.sarlat-tourisme.com)

[www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk](http://www.visit-dordogne-valley.co.uk)

[www.brive-tourisme.com](http://www.brive-tourisme.com)

[www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com](http://www.aeroport-brive-vallee-dordogne.com)

