



BEST OF BORDEAUX GRANDS CRUS & THE DORDOGNE VALLEY

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

This tour has been designed so that you may discover 2 of the most beautiful regions of south western France. The Bordeaux wine region first, a world-renowned destination for all wine lovers. Here, not only will you discover some of the most renowned appellations, but you will also have the opportunity to visit prestigious Classified Growth wineries and taste some of the most famous blends that this area has to offer. Your semi private English-speaking wine guide will also be happy to share all his knowledge so that your Bordeaux experience is as enriching as possible.

Then move on to the enchanting Dordogne region. Small traditional villages classified among the “most beautiful of France”, breathtaking Medieval castles that line up along the River, refined and exhilarating Art that goes back to the origins of Man and incredible food, all these aspects concur in making the Dordogne so special. Departing from the beautiful town of Sarlat, your daily excursions will lead you to the most significant attractions in what is without a doubt one of the fascinating provinces of France.

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DAY 1 - ARRIVAL TRANSFER IN BORDEAUX

Pick up in Bordeaux (Airport/Train Station). Transfer to your centrally located hotel and check in.

Enjoy some free time to discover the lively city of Bordeaux!

Bordeaux is classified "City of Art and History" and has been inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List as "an outstanding urban and architectural ensemble". It is home to one of Europe's biggest 18th century architectural urban areas and stands out as one of the first French cities to have entered an era of urbanism and metropolitan big scale projects, with the team Gabriel father and son, architects for King Louis XV, under the supervision of two Governors, first Nicolas-François Dupré de Saint-Maur then the Marquis de Tourny.

Night at your hotel 4*.

DAY 2 – A FULL DAY TRIP BORDEAUX WINE TOUR TO THE MEDOC

Breakfast at your hotel.

9.30am Pick up at the Tourist Office of Bordeaux

Morning - Drive along the Chateau Road, visit a first Winery

On this highly recommended full day small group tour in the Medoc, you'll discover one of France's most admired wine-growing regions. Beginners and seasoned wine connoisseurs alike will find plenty to love on this guided wine tasting tour of Medoc led by local expert wine guides. Drawing on local knowledge and a real love of wine, our tour guides will fill you in on this unique and beautiful region, and you'll discover what make Medoc wines so special.

Your first stop will be at a winery located along the Castle Road. This small winding road, also known as the D2, is lined with some of the most prestigious wineries of the Medoc including Chateau Palmer, Chateau Margaux, Chateau Latour and many others. It crosses through the different appellations that make up the Medoc such as Margaux, Saint Julien, Pauillac and Saint Estephe.

Upon arrival at the winery, start your tour with a visit of the property. Then, you will be taken to the technical installations so that you may understand the whole wine making process. After the visit, it will be time to experience your first commented wine tasting session. This will be a chance to gain an excellent understanding of the wines produced here, whether as an introduction to wines or to expand on your existing knowledge.

Unlike other wine tasting sessions that you might have followed around the world, the tastings in Bordeaux are very refined. The amount of wine poured is not what many would expect but here it is all about elegance, fruit, quality, aromas and flavors rather than quantity. If you want to further your wine experience, it is always possible to buy some bottles at the winery.

Reach the town of Pauillac for a lunch on your own.

After your first visit, your drive will continue and if time permits your driver/guide will probably stop along the way for great photo opportunities. The number of Wine Estates that can be seen along the famous wine route is also a perfect element of commentary for your guide who will explain the historic facts behind the building of some many estates in this area.

As you arrive in Pauillac, it will be time for lunch on your own. Your guide will point out the different options but please note that due to strict timing for the winery visits, we suggest that you opt for a light lunch that will not be time consuming.



Afternoon - Visit & Wine Tasting sessions in 2 Wineries

After lunch, it will be time to slowly make our way back towards Bordeaux. Along the way, we will stop in two different carefully selected wineries so that your full day wine tour from Bordeaux to the Medoc is complete. On a typical day, we will include different appellations. This is an important aspect of the tour as the wines in France are based on the importance of the terroir (a combination of the soil, the climate and the expertise of the winemaker).

Another interesting aspect that can be approached during your winery visits is the way Bordeaux wines are traded. There are 300 trading houses (or maison de négoce) which, for several centuries, have been a major financial and economic force known by the name of "Place de Bordeaux".

Wine trading began in Bordeaux around the 11th century with the development of business between Bordeaux and England. At the time, practically all of the wines were bought in bulk at the estate then aged in the cellars owned by the négociants who were then in charge of selling them.

Today, their principal role is selling selected crus and producing wine: négociants blend, age and sell wines under their own brand names, providing consumers with a guarantee of know-how, and retailers with a guarantee of regular supply.

After the visit and wine tasting session in the two wineries of the afternoon, it will be time to return to Bordeaux and that will be the end of our services.

6.00pm return to Bordeaux



DAY 3 - A FULL DAY TRIP BORDEAUX WINE TOUR TO SAINT EMILION

Breakfast at your hotel.

9.30am Pick up at the Tourist Office of Bordeaux

Morning - Visit and commented wine tastings in 2 wineries

Depart for your small group St Emilion wine tour. It covers a full day of visits starting in the morning with a scenic drive from Bordeaux through the vineyards and rolling hills of the St Emilion wine producing region located on the right bank. Before visiting the UNESCO world heritage site of Saint Emilion village, the wine tour kicks off in the surrounding countryside with a visit and wine tasting session in 2 Classified Growth Chateaus of the right bank.

Not included in the 1855 Classification of Bordeaux wines, saint émilion wines have their own system that included top rated Premier Grand Cru Classé wines such as Château Cheval Blanc, Chateau Ausone, Chateau Pavie or Chateau Angelus. Petrus is not classified as it is a winery located in the Pomerol appellation and the wines there do not have a classification. All wineries visited during our tours are at least Grand Cru classified.

After a short driver of about an hour, reach your first stop at a selected Grand Cru Winery. All winery tours in Bordeaux include the visit of the technical installations first. This is where a local guide of the winery will go through all the wine making process so that you can better understand how from a complex blending of different grape varieties and storage in oak barrels the local wineries obtain one of the world's most delicious wines.

A second Chateau is on your program this morning. Again, after the visit of the property and the installations, you will participate in a commented tasting of the Chateau wines. All our Bordeaux wine tastings are commented by the local guide of the winery. However, your driver/guide who will be with you throughout the day is also there to answer any questions that you might have.

All our driver/guides have great knowledge about wines and they will be happy to share any basic or more technical information concerning French or Bordeaux Wines. Whether you have questions about history, technique, flavors, aromas, food & wine pairings don't hesitate to ask them anything that relates to wine to make this day a very special one.

Then arrive in the village of Saint Emilion

After the morning guided visits and wine tastings at Classified Growth Château, move on with your English-speaking driver tour guide to the gorgeous village of Saint Emilion itself. The village of Saint Emilion is named after a monk who left his region of origin and settled down in the area hundreds of years ago. The village is a rare example of a largely intact medieval town whose geography has not been modified over the centuries.

Here, you will enjoy a short walking tour taking in important historical sites like the Romanesque cloister and the monolithic church carved into the limestone cliffs (also known as the underground monuments – not included in the tour). Following the village tour, enjoy some free time to explore on your own.

This is also the time for a relaxing lunch in the village. Saint Emilion offers a very large selection of restaurants and snacks. Depending on your budget, your guide will be able to suggest the best possible option for your meal. Please note however that due to strict timing for the winery visits, we suggest that you opt for a light lunch that will not be time consuming. This is also a great option if you really want to take some time to stroll through the narrow streets and discover the village on your own.



Afternoon - After the village, experience a final Winery visit

Leave Saint Emilion village to visit and wine taste in another Classified Growth Chateau. Again, it will be time to discover another property of the right bank. Since our goal is to have you discover the different types of wineries that are present in Saint Emilion, we usually select very different Chateaus during the day. Our winery selection includes some very progressive ones that have decided to invest in the latest technology to help them craft the best possible Bordeaux wines.

Other wineries are family owned and have kept their wine making process as traditional as possible, using techniques that have been passed on from generation to generation. Some wineries are quite large, while others produce wine on no more than 12 acres. This final visit can also be a great opportunity for you to find out about the unique way in which most of the Bordeaux wines are sold and the secret world of the 'Negociants'. After the visit, experience a commented wine tasting session of the Chateau wines and then it will be time to return to Bordeaux.

More information on the 'Right Bank' Wine Region of Bordeaux

Located on a hill set along the Dordogne Valley and surrounded by beautiful countryside, it's not hard to see why the medieval village of Saint Emilion was the first wine region to be given World Heritage status in 1999. The first to plant vineyards were the Romans, who brought grapes here in the 2nd century.

The village takes its name from a Famous Monk

The village however takes its name from Emilian, a monk from Brittany who fled his home town of Vannes. He took refuge in one of the natural caves of Saint Emilion and lived a hermit's life until his fame for performing miracles spread far and wide and drew disciples from around the region and beyond. The village subsequently became an important religious center and pilgrimage site and even after his death his followers reinforced his legacy by naming the village after him.

The town continued to thrive through the Middle Ages, at which time local monks developed wine making in the region elevating it to the status it has today. Although excluded from the famous 1855 Bordeaux rating, Saint Emilion wines were finally classified in 1955.

The best attractions in the village are located underground: beneath the town, a gigantic network of tunnels and galleries. Quarries were carved out of the hill in order to provide fertile soil for the surrounding fields and vineyards, and they have left Saint Emilion with many unique underground attractions.

Chief among them is surely the Monolithic Church an underground church carved from the limestone in the 12th century that reaches above ground up to a 68-meter high bell tower. The ancient Cordeliers cloisters, which sit alongside the monolithic church in the heart of the old town, are another emblematic local landmark.

Today, far away from the local train station, the stoic beige rooftops and medieval stone buildings make Saint Emilion feel like an open-air museum. Everywhere you walk reveals another picturesque scene and the many cafes and restaurants offer some of the best outdoor dining views to be found in France.

5.30pm return to Bordeaux.

DAY 4 – PRIVATE TRANSFER FROM BORDEAUX TO SARLAT

Breakfast at your hotel. Check out.

PICK UP AT BORDEAUX

Today, we will come and pick you up at your accommodation in Bordeaux city centre for a door to door service, from Bordeaux to Sarlat, France.

Our professional, English speaking driver or driver/guide will meet you in your Bordeaux Hotel lobby. Then, board one of our recent & comfortable air-conditioned vehicle. All our vehicles are premium cars or minivans with a lot of space that respect social distancing with your driver.

TRANSFER TO YOUR FINAL DESTINATION

After being picked up by one of our professional drivers, we will take you to your destination in Sarlat la Canéda.

DAY 5 - SARLAT GOURMET WALKING TOUR / VILLAGES OF THE DORDOGNE VALLEY SHARED HALF DAY TRIP FROM SARLAT

Breakfast at your Hotel.

9.20am Meet your guide at the meeting point Place Pasteur

9.30am Begin your Gourmet walking tour

The medieval town of Sarlat hosts one of the biggest and best food markets in the Dordogne. On this 2 hour tour, visit on market day to experience the town at its most atmospheric. Meet your English speaking local guide, expert in Dordogne Culinary specialties.

Start your visit of the Market

Walk towards the Market and begin your discovery of the best produce of the Dordogne region. Then your first stop will be at a family run local delicacies shop. Here, we will stop to taste small toasts spread with patés or foie gras from either duck or goose. Then taste a Top rated Foie Gras from a local producer that has obtained many rewards at the Paris Exhibition.

Finish this tasting stop with a local cheese called Trappe d'Echourgnac. Trappist cheese is pressed, uncooked, fermented by retro-rubbing or by using the “morge” scrubbing technique. Then walnut liqueur is added. How much? And, then what? Well, that’s a secret never to be told! All this will be rinsed with a tasting of a White & Red Bergerac wine.

Continue nibbling as you stroll the medieval streets

Then follow your guide through the medieval streets of Sarlat. This walking tour allows your guide to point out all the local products of the season that arrive from all corners of the Dordogne. If you are lucky, it might be the season of strawberries, of which the Dordogne is famous for, and your guide will make sure that you have the opportunity to sample some.

Another very popular stop is at a local walnut cake producers stall. Walnut is a true specialty of the Dordogne. It is said that there are as many recipes as there are ducks and gees in the Dordogne, and that's a lot! Let your guide take you to his / her preferred producer.

Visit a Church that has become a Market

Your next stop will be inside St Mary's church which houses the covered market. Even though this market is accessible on the other days as well, we stop here as there is a great opportunity to taste very different specialties.

As a starter you will get to taste half-cooked Foie Gras accompanied by a glass of Bergerac white wine. This will be followed by dried magret (duck breast) with pepper.

Finally, listen to your guide as you are introduced to the the king of mushrooms, the black truffle. If you would like to buy some, then this is the place. You can also purchase black truffle oil that makes for a great seasoning.

End with a total walnut experience

Back through the market to make our way to our final stop. On the way there will be a few more stops along the way before reaching your final tasting session. Here it will be all about walnuts!

Taste the local walnut oil, the croquants - a dry and crunchy caramelised sugar biscuit like treat. End the tasting with a shot of walnut liquor to rinse all these delicious treats right down.

Enjoy some free time for personal discovery and lunch (at own expense)

In the afternoon, visit the village of Domme

Drive to the beautiful village of Domme. With its trapezoid city plan, Domme is a bastide, or a fortified medieval town, adapted to the surrounding terrain, and thus falling short of the rectangular city plan characteristic to bastides. The village is classified as one of the "Plus Beaux Villages de France" ("The Most Beautiful Villages of France").

In 1307, Knight Templars were imprisoned in Domme while during the Hundred Years' War, the bastide was coveted by the English who first took the town in 1347 and repeatedly changed rulers throughout the war until 1437 when it finally fell under French rule again.



Enjoy a peaceful Boat Ride

Then drive to La Roque Gageac and enjoy a peaceful cruise on the the Dordogne River on board an authentic Gabarre to admire mighty castles that loom over the riverside. The Gabarres are traditional flat-bottomed boats that have been used for transporting goods along the Dordogne since the Middle Ages.

A trip on one of the Gabarres offers a relaxing way to enjoy the sight of some of the many Dordogne chateaux and villages from the perspective of the river. Various sights and wildlife are pointed out to you as you meander slowly down the river as well as the history of the Gabarres.



Visit the village of Beynac

Finally, reach Beynac to admire the village and the Castle. This Middle Ages construction, with its austere appearance, is perched on top of a limestone cliff, dominating the town and the north bank of the Dordogne River. The castle was built in the 12th century by the barons of Beynac (one of the four baronies of Périgord) to close the valley.

The sheer cliff face being sufficient to discourage any assault from that side, the defenses were built up on the plateau: double crenelated walls, double moats, one of which was a deepened natural ravine, double barbican. See architectural phenomenon, aided by nature, and discover more about the history of this unusual city on this half-day tour!

6.00pm drop off in Sarlat and night at your hotel.

DAY 6 – CAVE ART OF THE DORDOGNE SHARED FULL DAY TRIP FROM SARLAT

Breakfast at your hotel.

8.50am Meet your guide at the meeting point Place Pasteur

9.00am Depart from Sarlat

Depart for the Unesco World Heritage Site of the Vézère Valley

Some 15,000 years B.C. unknown artists created breathtaking paintings, drawings and etchings inside caves of which the most extraordinary examples are found in the Dordogne area. During this day you will be introduced to this fascinating art and to the people who created it.

Guided visit of the National Prehistory Museum

Established in July 2004, the museum houses some 18,000 pieces and a collection of six million artifacts. The museum's collections were established as early as 1913, when indefatigable researcher Denis Peyrony convinced the French state to acquire the Château des Eyzies, built at the end of the 16th century, and to transform it into an excavation warehouse that could double up as a museum.

Follow your guide and discover the main chapters of the Hominids' development through an anthropological frieze and a brief reminder of Africa's history, starting with the early Australopithecines. Many themes are explored, including the legendary "Lucy", the small 3.5-million-year-old woman discovered in Ethiopia in 1974. You will then visit the permanent exhibit galleries that will plunge you into the mists of time, revealing seven sequences that cover the entire Paleolithic era through an "ideal historiography".

Enjoy some free time for lunch in Montignac or a village of the Dordogne region. Ask your guide for recommendations.

Visit Rouffignac Cave

Continue to Rouffignac Cave. This cave possesses original and authentic etchings and drawings. The Rouffignac cave was already mentioned in 1575 by François de Belleforest. In his "Cosmographie universelle" he cites "paintings and animal traces". In the 19th century, the cave was known as a tourist attraction. Famous archaeologists like Henry Breuil, André Glory and Martel had visited the cave in the early 20th century, but it was only in 1956 when Louis-René Nougier and Romain Robert, two prehistorians from the Pyrenees, rediscovered and confirmed the cave art.

Visit the International Center of Parietal Art - Lascaux IV

Finally, end the tour with the visit of brand new Lascaux IV cave – open since December 2016. For the first time, all of Lascaux is revealed. A completely new replica retraces the discovery of the famous decorated cave. But that's not the end of the adventure: the entire site inquires into the position that Lascaux occupies in cave art and its relation to contemporary creation. The opening of the International Center for Cave Art marks the beginning of a new adventure combining the emotion of ancestral art and an important technological achievement.

6.00pm drop off in Sarlat and night at your hotel.

DAY 7 - ROCAMADOUR VILLAGE SHARED HALF DAY TRIP FROM SARLAT

Breakfast at your hotel

8.50am Meet your guide at the meeting point Place Pasteur

9.00am Depart from Sarlat

Rocamadour: A Castle set above a sanctuary set above a village

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



Rocamadour is without a doubt one of the most beautiful villages of the area. Classified as a Unesco World Heritage site as it is located on the way to Santiago de Compostela (St James Way), the main attraction of the village lies in its sanctuaries especially that of Notre Dame that bears a statue of the Black Virgin.

The visit of the village can be painful for those with walking problems but please note that there is a possibility of accessing the sanctuaries by lift (tickets not included in price).

1.00pm drop off in Sarlat and night at your hotel.

DAY 9 - LAST DAY IN SARLAT

Breakfast at your hotel and check out.

Transfer back to Bordeaux available in option.

End of our services.

Accommodations

Bordeaux: Hotel de Sèze Four-Star Hotel Majestic in Bordeaux

The elegance of this hotel proposes 55 rooms including 3 suites that blend harmoniously decorated in the spirit of the 18th century with exclusive furnitures. The color and decoration of bold wallpaper deliver an intimate and cozy ambiance.

This new address at Bordeaux in an elegant house with contemporary notes brings you in card club spirit, relaxed around his restaurant, Le Comptoir de Sèze, a Lounge, a Spa and private golf.

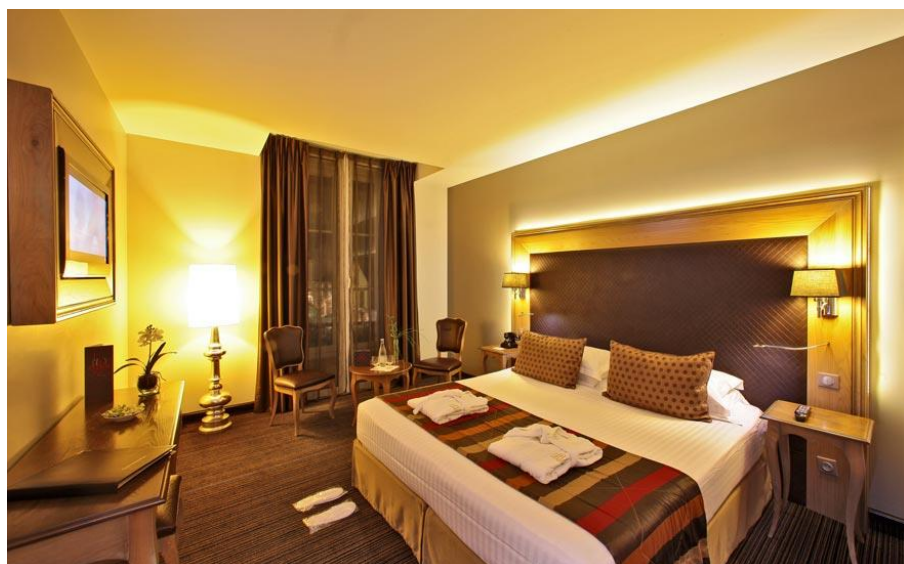
Dordogne: The Four-Star Hotel Plaza Madeleine in Sarlat la Caneda for two nights

PLAZA MADELEINE Hotel & Spa has always been considered the Sarlat hotel of reference, an authentic 4-star establishment situated in the heart of the old town.

The hotel is ideally situated at the entrance of the medieval city with its listed monuments, markets and shops, numerous restaurants, street shows and performances.

Spending time at PLAZA MADELEINE Hotel & Spa is also the privilege of enjoying, right in the heart of the city, a heated pool with a terrace and a sun lounge, a relaxing space with a sauna, steam room, jacuzzi and themed shower ...

The hotel is fully air conditioned and offers access to a complimentary high-speed Wi-fi connection and the best equipment to meet the high expectations of an international clientele.



This package includes

Please note that this package is based on a double occupancy room

- Three nights in a Four-Star hotel in Bordeaux - with breakfasts
- Four nights in a Four-Star hotel in Sarlat la Caneda - with breakfasts
- Private transportation - as mentioned
- Comfortably appointed touring minivan
- A Registered English-speaking Guide
- Entry fees for visits and wine tastings at six wineries
- A walking guided-tour of the city of Saint-Emilion
- Sightseeing of the Chateau road
- A visit of the Padirac Chasm & Rocamadour

This package does not include

- Extra meals and drinks
- Personal expenses
- Other visits not mentioned
- Guide appreciation gratuities