



The Black Périgord Circuit Tour

Tour Overview

Tour Dates: You may begin this tour on any day. See [Schedule](#) for blackout dates and additional tour scheduling considerations.

Location: The region of France known as Black Périgord, black for the darkness created by its large tracks of thick forests. Its long history is everywhere in evidence -- from its medieval villages with their looming castles, largely unchanged after 500 years, to the prehistoric cave dwellings with their 55,000 year old murals. The Dordogne River, long the embattled border between France and England, continues to separate the castles of the once rival nations. But you won't find hostilities now. Instead you'll enjoy tranquil cycling along the quiet, scenic roads that connect the splendidly preserved 15th century villages.

The train trip from Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport to Sarlat requires 6.5 - 7.5 hours. Because of the time required to make the return trip to Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport from Sarlat, you should plan to layover at least 1 night in Paris on the back-end of your tour.

Tour Type: Circuit tour

Terrain: Easy to moderately challenging. Most cycling is flat or gently rolling in the river valleys, with just a few long, though not terribly steep climbs. This is the easiest of our Southwestern France circuit tours.

Length: 5 days / 6 nights

Distance: Total: 105 miles / 170 km. Average per day: 26 miles / 42 km.

Highlights:

- Sarlat, perhaps the most extraordinarily restored medieval village in Europe.
- Magnificent medieval castles set along the scenic shores of the Dordogne River.
- The Troglodytic cliff dwellings and subtropical vegetation of La Roque-Gageac.
- Phenomenal sites of prehistory including the Grotte du Font de Gaume and Lascaux II caves, home of some of the world's finest prehistoric cave paintings; and Les Eyzies with its much-renowned museum, cave, and cliff-dwellings.
- Visits to seven villages officially classified as among the most beautiful in France.
- The unspoiled beauty of the Valley of the Vézère.
- Delight over some of France's finest wines and tastiest cheeses and *fois gras*!

Daily Itinerary

Arrive in Sarlat. Spend 1 night.

Your Diverse Directions representative will meet you at the Sarlat train station upon your arrival, will drive you to your hotel, and will deliver your rental bikes. Once you've received your bikes you're free to relax and enjoy all the sights of Sarlat.

Sarlat is practically a living museum of the 15th century, Sarlat's Golden Age. In fact, its entire medieval center has been granted protected status to preserve its historical grandeur. Sarlat's tiny medieval streets are lined with a vast array of wonderful restaurants offering cuisines from around the world, laid back sidewalk cafés, lively bars and exciting galleries, boutiques and shops. Located in a valley amidst the splendor of the rolling hills of the Périgord countryside, a more appealing setting could be hardly imagined. The Tourist Information Office will provide you materials needed to do a self-guided walking tour of the old town as well as hillside walks, in English.

Day 1: Cycle from Sarlat to the Dordogne Valley. Visit castles and some of France's most beautiful Villages - 50 km / 31 miles. Spend 1 night.

Today's ride begins in the thickly wooded region known as *Périgord Noir* (Black Dordogne) so named for the shadows cast by all those trees. You'll cycle your first 10 kilometers through this dense forest on a shaded, paved bike path that steadily descends to the Dordogne River, the course of which you'll follow for much of the remainder of the day.

Shortly after passing your first castle -- the Chateau de Montfort -- you'll begin a long, but not terribly steep climb to the spectacular bastide of Domme, one of France's most formidably positioned, fortified medieval towns, and classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France. We'll take you up the back way to avoid an even more severe climb, but the views from the top are definitely worth the effort.

Shortly after your amazingly fast descent from Domme you'll reach another of France's most beautiful villages, La Roque-Gageac, which enjoys a subtropical microclimate due to its unique setting wedged between towering cliffs and the Dordogne River. La Roque-Gageac is also known for its Troglodytic cave dwellings; with a short climb past subtropical vegetation (even banana trees!) you can view caves that were used for centuries as homes. And these homes have some of the best views in the world!

Continuing your cycling, you'll pass the following castles: Château la Malartrie, Castelnaud, and Château de Beynac, You'll definitely want to tour Castelnaud and Beynac, both of which are open to the public and are tremendously worthwhile. And both the villages of Castelnaud and Beynac are also classified as among France's most beautiful.

On the ride back to your hotel or B&B you'll have one more opportunity to stop in La Roque-Gageac. If you need to rest awhile, you can hire a boat there for more relaxed touring along the river. You'll spend this evening in the charming riverfront village of your choice -- Montfort, Vitrac, Domme, Cénac, or La Roque-Gageac.

Day 2: Cycle from the Dordogne Valley to Limeuil - 39 km / 24 miles. Spend 1 night.

After yesterday's whirlwind of sights, today's ride is (mostly) all about enjoying the natural beauty of the Dordogne. Before leaving the dense concentration of castles, you'll have the opportunity to visit one more, the Château des Milandes, the interior and gardens of which can be toured. This castle was made famous by Josephine Baker, who made it the home for her "Rainbow Tribe," twelve adopted children of all races. Ms. Baker was an African-American entertainer who dazzled French audiences after emigrating from the US to escape Jim Crow discrimination and share her talents with those who didn't judge her by the color of her skin.

Never far from the Dordogne River you'll have the opportunity to visit more lovely villages, like Saint Cyprien, Mouzens, Coux, and Bigaroque before reaching the ultimate of France's most

beautiful villages, Limeuil. Located at the confluence of the Dordogne and Vézère Rivers, this gorgeous village rises high above the valley with outstanding views of the two rivers. This evening is all about kicking back and enjoying the joie-de-vivre that is France. You'll not want to leave this peaceful paradise.

Day 3: Cycle from Limeuil to Montignac - 41 km / 25 miles. Spend 1 night.

From Limeuil you'll leave the banks of the Dordogne and begin following the Vézère River. We've kept this day's mileage fairly low to ensure you'll have plenty of time and energy to enjoy the many sights on your way to Montignac. If you're interested in things prehistoric, you'll want to spend some time in Les Ezyies, where you can visit the Museum of Prehistory, a prehistoric cave shelter, and the Grotte de Font-de-Gaume, site of some of France's most famous prehistoric cave paintings.

After leaving Les Ezyies, you'll enjoy particularly dramatic scenery along the cliff-studded banks of the Vézère River. These cliffs are full of caves that have been used as homes for millennia; many of these cave dwellings are open to the public. La-Roque-St-Christophe is particularly magnificent and is set in truly one of the most beautiful spots in all of nature. Just beyond La-Roque-St-Christophe you'll pass through yet another of France's most beautiful villages, Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère. Here you'll want to enjoy a wine and cheese break along the pristine riverfront.

Your cycling day ends in Montignac, home of Lascaux II, the painstakingly created reproduction of France's most important source of cave art. Lascaux II was created when it was discovered that the breath of humans was damaging the paintings of the original. Today, the original cave is open only to scientists, but to continue sharing this awesome human treasure with the public, the French created a world-renowned replica. Montignac is a charming town, beautifully set, and with a wealth of services.

Day 4: Free Day in Montignac.

Visit Lascaux, the Château de Losse, and/or any of the sights you missed yesterday. Or perhaps you'll just want to relax by the river and enjoy being a spectator for a while.

Day 5: Cycle from Montignac to Sarlat - 40 km / 25 miles. Spend 1 night.

Your final cycling day provides yet another day of memorable cycling along quiet roads and among a number of medieval villages including St.-Armand-de-Coly -- yes, also designated as one of France's most beautiful villages -- Coly, and St. Geniès. You'll have the time today to visit each of these in a leisurely way. Beyond St. Geniès, you'll enjoy pastoral riding that becomes increasingly wooded as you near Sarlat.

Your final kilometers into Sarlat are a dramatic descent that is totally thrilling. Back in Sarlat you'll be thankful for one more opportunity to lose yourself in its splendor. Perhaps you didn't have quite enough time to explore on your arrival day; there is indeed much to see and absorb. Sarlat is best explored on foot, as its historic center is very compact and must be taken in slowly. So park those bikes, get back out there, and enjoy a *verre* as the French say. Rental bikes will be picked up at your hotel in the late afternoon.

Tour Price: US \$775.00 per person

- **Children's Price** - Children 16 years or younger traveling with 2 adults: \$350.00 per child.
- **Tour Deposit:** \$250.00 per adult and \$100.00 per child. Deposits are charged when tour materials are sent and hotel availability has been confirmed.
- **Discounts** are available for parties of 5 or more adults.

The tour price includes:

- Tour Documentation: Route instructions, map, Pre-trip Preparation Guide, On-Road Quick Reference Guide, and Sights Guide.
- Bike Rental for 5 Days: Excellent quality 27-speed hybrid or 30-speed road / racing bike with handlebar bag, map carrier, cyclometer, water bottle cage, rear rack, lock, repair kit, and helmet. Optional pedal cages.
- Delivery and Pick-up of your Rental Bike
- Daily Baggage Transfers
- English-Speaking Support Staff
- Reservation of your Accommodations
- Shipping and Handling Charges for US customers, unless expedited shipping is required.
- Basic SAG Support: If you choose not to cycle on one or more days due to weather, illness, etc., AND you notify your Diverse Directions support representative in advance so that you and your bikes can be transported along with your luggage, no additional charges will apply.

The tour price does NOT include:

- Hotels: Because you are free to select from a wide range of hotels -- from charming and basic 2-star to 4-star luxury (where available) -- the cost of your hotel accommodations is not bundled into the tour package price. See our Accommodations Options page for the price ranges of each category of hotel. A list of accommodations options for this tour, with website links, is available upon request.
- Meals: You are free to determine your own budget for meals. A wide variety of options are available -- from creating a picnic from provisions obtained at a boulangerie / patisserie, to dining at bistros and restaurants, or taking meals at your hotel (where available.) Please note that breakfasts are NOT included in France hotel rates. However, hotels with restaurants often offer a demi-pension option, which includes the cost of your room, breakfast, and dinner at a reasonable price.
- Transportation from your home to Sarlat and from Sarlat to your home.
- Personal expenses
- Insurance
- Postage Charges for non-US customers: The postage required to send your tour materials by US Postal Service Priority Mail will be added to tour orders made from outside the US. This charge averages \$20.00 for delivery within 6 - 10 business days.
- Expedited Shipping (all nations): If the shipment of tour materials must be expedited, the express mail charges will be added to the tour package price

For Diverse Directions' payment terms, cancellation policy, and all terms & conditions, please see [Terms & Conditions](#).