

CULTURE + WALKING

# DORDOGNE VALLEY

Bordeaux & Southwestern France



*Classic*  
JOURNEYS



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

— *Travel + Leisure*

## Castles, Vineyards & Cave Paintings

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

## DAY 1

**BORDEAUX / ST. EMILION**

- Walk scenic vineyard paths and visit to caves
- Enjoy a wine tasting
- Tour the historic town of St. Emilion
- Visit a local bakery to taste the local specialty, macarons

We meet this morning in the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage City of Bordeaux. From here, it's only a 30-minute drive to St. Emilion. This picturesque town, also a World Heritage site, is a charming tangle of narrow streets, exactly what you'd imagine an ancient wine-making center to look like.

Many of the vineyards here sit on steep hillsides of limestone or crowd up against the small villages that dot the countryside. We'll take time to wander through the vineyards, taking in the picturesque views and learning about local wine-making traditions. The region also has some of the finest wine caves and we'll enter these cool, musky depths, and sample some of the region's best at a tasting.

Then we're off to roam through the historic and scenic town on a guided afternoon walk. As you know from this morning, St. Emilion is one of the most renowned centers for red Bordeaux wines. (The Romans first planted vines here in the 2nd century.) But it's not all wine; St. Emilion is equally famous for its macaron cookies, and we'll visit a fragrant bakery to see how they're made and taste the wares. Later, we continue on to our home for the next three nights in Les Eyzies.

**OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES**  
**MEALS: D**

## DAY 2

**DOMME / CASTELNAUD**

- Visit Château de Marqueyssac's gardens
- Compare a ruined castle and a bastide (fortified village)
- Scenic riverside walk to Castelnaud
- Tour the Hundred Years War English headquarters
- Enjoy a cinematic setting for dinner this evening in picturesque Sarlat

Following breakfast, we journey into the Dordogne region, where we pay an eye-popping visit to the gardens of Château de Marqueyssac. From its prominent position on a cliff overlooking the Dordogne River, we can see four of the famed castles of the area, including Castelnaud, Beynac and Fayrac. Once the country house of the pope in the 18th century, it is said that the pontiff sat in a seat carved out of stone for him at Marqueyssac and surveyed the river valley. Seeing an opening in the landscape without a church, he commissioned one to be built in St. Julien, where it still stands.

In time for lunch, we arrive amid the honey colored stone of the houses and fortifications of Domme, the most famous and well-preserved of the bastides. From here, we walk right out of town on a lovely footpath that leads down to the Dordogne River. From St. Julien, we follow the river—first through open countryside past walnut, poplar and wild plum trees, then around a bend downhill with incredible views past fields of crops to Castelnaud village and its fortified castle.

This evening, we head into Sarlat for dinner. The photogenic village is often used as the setting for motion pictures set in the Middle Ages because of its well-preserved center. Our festive dinner tonight is at the former Court of Justice.

**OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES**  
**MEALS: B, D**

## DAY 3

**LES EYZIES**

- Accompany an expert truffle hunter and his dogs in search of the prized local specialty
- Meet with a local artist
- Enjoy a cinematic setting for dinner this evening in picturesque Sarlat

This morning we take a break from history and concentrate on our stomachs. To start, we meet with an amazing local friend, Eduard. He is one of the world's foremost experts on truffles, and he welcomes us for a truffle hunt. You'll be amazed at how his dogs are able to source the prized truffles from under the oak trees. We'll also enjoy a memorable tasting of the local specialty.

For a leisurely start to the afternoon, we visit a local friend—a highly regarded artist—at her studio where she shares with us insights into her etching and printing techniques.

**OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES**  
**MEALS: B, L**

## DAY 4

**COMMARQUE CASTLE**

- Examine cave etchings that are 27,000 years old
- Explore the banks of La Beune River along an ancient cobble-stoned Roman road

We begin our walk along a riverside path upstream to the Gorge d'Enfer. (If your French is good, you may be wondering about the "Canyon of Hell"; in fact, the reference is not to beautiful scenery, but rather to an ancient story about a priest's opinion of where some of the artifacts found nearby had originated!)

Along the way, our guide shares with us a very private visit that we know of no one else (tourist, traveler or tour company) making—to see a Paleolithic engraving that dates back 27,000 years. We'll make a hushed visit that we think you'll really enjoy. Our walk ends at Laugerie Basse, a prehistoric rock shelter embedded in the cliffs overlooking the Vezere Valley. Our walk this afternoon encapsulates all of the Dordogne and Vezere valleys into one beautiful compact stroll. We follow the banks of La Beune River and even a portion of an ancient cobble-stoned Roman road.

Along the way, our guide shares with us stories and anecdotes about the nature, pre-history, modern history, troglodytic ruins, fortified and leisure castles. Our destination is Commarque Castle.

Later, we'll join our guide for a walk in and around Les Eyzies, before heading towards Lascaux, our home for the next two nights.

**OVERNIGHT: MONTIGNAC-LASCAUX**  
**MEALS: B, D**

## DAILY ITINERARY

DORDOGNE VALLEY | BORDEAUX & SOUTHWESTERN FRANCE | CULTURE + WALKING

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### DAY 5

## LA ROQUE ST. CHRISTOPHE / LASCAUX II CAVES

- Visit a troglodyte village and fortress
- Accept an invitation to a private artifact collection
- Lascaux II caves

This morning our destination is La Roque St. Christophe, a fascinating troglodyte village that has been continuously inhabited, first by the Neanderthals, for more than 50,000 years. After a visit to the fortress and a chance to enjoy the wonderfully scenic views over the Vezere, we follow the Vezere River south on foot a few miles to St. Leon-sur-Vezere, a tiny and charming riverside village with a beautiful Romanesque church and renaissance château. Arriving mid-day we stop for a picnic lunch along the river.

Continuing along the river on foot, in the village of Sergeac we are guests of a local friend, who welcomes us to explore his private collection containing prehistoric tools, jewels and other artifacts found in the area. This is both a privilege and an opportunity to see the finest collection in France in a private setting.

The Dordogne region is noted for an incredible concentration of over 130 Paleolithic sites, the most renowned of which is Lascaux. On our final exploration of

the week, we pay a visit to the Lascaux II caves with perfect replicas of the 17,000-year-old paintings found in Lascaux. The artfully crafted caves illustrate an important part of the prehistory of the area with paintings of bulls, bison and stags. Later we return to our hotel in the late afternoon to relax or shop before a festive farewell dinner.

**OVERNIGHT: MONTIGNAC-LASCAUX**

**MEALS: B, L, D**

### DAY 6

## MONTIGNAC / BRIVE

- Market day at Montignac
- Part company in Brive

This morning we'll have time to meander through market day in Montignac, and later stroll through Saint Amand de Coly, a lovely village nestled in the Dordogne countryside with what is reputed to be the most beautiful fortified 12th-century church in the Perigord.

Late morning, we part company in Brive for return trains to Paris or transfers to Bordeaux and the southwest.

**MEALS: B**

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## Tour Hotels



### Hotel Les Glycines

Overlooking the Vezere river, this four star property features a gourmet restaurant, spa, and six acres of wooded park land.

**OVERNIGHT: LES EYZIES-DE-TAYAC-SIREUIL | NIGHTS: 3**



### Hotel de Bouilhac

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

**OVERNIGHT: MONTIGNAC-LASCAUX | NIGHTS: 2**

## Tour Dates & Prices

Tour Dates	Price per Person	Price per Person
	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy
May 4-9, 2020	\$4,995	\$5,590
September 14-19, 2020	\$5,095	\$5,690
Sep 28-Oct 3, 2020	\$4,995	\$5,590
October 9-14, 2020	\$4,995	\$5,590
May 3-8, 2021	\$4,995	\$5,590
June 14-19, 2021	\$5,095	\$5,690
September 13-18, 2021	\$5,095	\$5,690
October 4-9, 2021	\$4,995	\$5,590

Want a different date? Or your own date? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about private journeys.

## Trip Essentials

**TRIP LENGTH:** 6 Days, 5 Nights

**START:** 10:00 AM Hotel Burdigala lobby, Bordeaux, France

**END:** 12:15 PM Rail Station, Brive, France

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

## What's Included

- Memorable accommodations for 5 nights
- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

## Above & Beyond Benefits

- **Invisible Check-In**
- **Privileged Access Events**
- **Wine on Us**

**READY TO BOOK?**  
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

## Or give us a call

**1-833-387-1210**

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

[moreinfo@classicjourneys.com](mailto:moreinfo@classicjourneys.com)



## TRAVEL WORRY-FREE!

It's easy with insurance from Travel Guard. Your policy can cover trip cancellation, travel delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and more. If you are traveling with kids, add them to your policy at no extra cost. [Click here](#) or call 800-826-4919 for details.

## AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to a [whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

## ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

\*\*Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

# THE Classic Journeys Difference

## HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.



At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



## You can expect the highest standards:



### Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



### Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



### Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



### Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



### Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



### Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

## You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Bordeaux and the Dordogne Valley...

- Visiting Grotte de Font-de-Gaume, and other prehistoric cave paintings not open to the public
- Exploring the vineyards and caves of legendary St. Emilion, with plenty of time for tastings of Bordeaux's premier appellation
- Truffle-hunting with a foremost expert and a follow-up tasting of the delicacy
- Luxuriating in perfectly-sited hotels, including one that is a gracious 13th-century inn deep in the French countryside
- Unraveling ancient mysteries with expert local guide Bart, a renowned historian who's as comfortable with 25,000-year-old cave paintings as he is with the search for the perfect crème brûlée

*"Our best trip ever. Food was marvelous. Bart took us one night to a Michelin-starred restaurant that was amazing."*

—Thomas H., Wilmette, IL

Let's Go!

TO RESERVE: 833.493.5038 | CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/RESERVATIONS

You might also enjoy...



## Basque Country

San Sebastián, Bilbao & Pyrénées

Culture + Walking

### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Exploring seaside towns and bucolic villages
- Living in luxury at a seaside Belle Epoque hotel
- Challenging friendly locals to a game of pelota

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/basque/>.



## Loire & Burgundy

Dijon, Chenonceaux & Châteaux

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### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Tasting local wines in Burgundy and Loire
- Wandering twisting lanes of medieval towns
- Following riverside footpaths to stunning chateaux

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/loire/>.



## Napa & Sonoma

California Wine Country

Culture + Walking

### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Savoring private winery tours and tastings
- Rambling redwood groves and rolling hillsides
- Exploring the classic towns of Yountville, Healdsburg and Sonoma

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/napa/>.



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## Normandy & Brittany

### Mont-St.-Michel to D-Day Beaches

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Rambling through farmland and apple orchards
- Retracing history on D-Day beaches
- Crossing a tidal estuary to an island fortress

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/normandy/>.



## Provence

### Vineyards & Villages of the Luberon

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Trailing through vineyards and olive groves
- Shopping colorful markets for pique-nique provisions
- Savoring private tastings and culinary how-to's

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/provence/>.



## Turkey

### Turquoise Coast & Cappadocia

Culture + Walking

#### PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Admiring architectural wonders of the ancient world
- Cruising between islands on a custom yacht
- Witnessing a potter perfecting his art

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/turkey/>.

# “Enthusiasm is Contagious”

AS TRAVEL + LEISURE NAMES CLASSIC JOURNEYS THE WORLD'S BEST TOUR OPERATOR FOR 2019, FOUNDER EDWARD PIEGZA REVEALS HOW IT FEELS. ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



*EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, Travel + Leisure magazine announced that its readers have voted Classic Journeys the World's Best Tour Operator for 2019. It's the second time Classic Journeys has won that recognition and the 14th consecutive year the company has been in the Top 10.*

### **Congratulations! How did you get the news?**

I received a top-secret email and phone call from the editor of *Travel + Leisure* a few weeks ago with orders not to tell ANYONE. Friends and neighbors must have wondered why my smile has been so extra big lately. Now they know.

### **And how does it feel to be the World's Best Tour Operator again?**

Awesome. Humbling. So, so satisfying. Deeply gratifying to learn that we have achieved what we set out to do which is to handcraft trips of a lifetime for every guest who travels with us. I'm known as long-winded, so I could probably come up with 10 or 15 more ways to describe it if you want me to keep going.

### **Why do you think *Travel + Leisure* gave you this recognition?**

Actually, it isn't the *T+L* editors who make the decision. That's the best part. Their readers cast the votes. So the people who do the traveling, the guests who explore the world with us and our competitors — they are the ones who raised their hands to tell *T+L* that Classic Journeys is the World's Best Tour Operator based on their own experiences. Let me say it right here: "To all of you who voted for us, you are the World's Best Guests!"

### **What do you think makes your guests the World's Best Guests?**

That's easy. They are curious. They care about connecting with people of different cultures and immersing themselves in the world. They treasure experiences more than things. Like the old ad slogan went, they go for the gusto and crave the chance to have one-of-a-kind moments. They are incredibly interesting and interested people, and all of us at Classic Journeys count it as a real privilege to share in their passion for travel. And we feel that way on the

other 364 days of the year when we're not celebrating recognition like this.

### **I guess this is what you meant when you told me that "Enthusiasm is contagious."**

Absolutely. That's not our official motto, but it could be. We love what we do. We enjoy helping guests figure out how to invest their precious time and budget. I can honestly say that all of us feel that way — the Guest Services folks who interact with you while you're planning your trip, the Tour Operations team members who plan all of the logistics, the local guides who lead each one of our trips full time. There's just a huge amount of positive energy in what we do, and I think it truly is hard to resist. We'd climb into every one of our guest's suitcases and go along with them if we could. Because we can't, we call each guest while they're on tour just to be sure they are having a trip of a lifetime.

### **Has anyone ever called Classic Journeys obsessive?**

I hope so, because we are. Everything is in the details. For instance, we've created a special tour for the total eclipse of the sun which is going to pass over parts of South America in 2020. We've already analyzed likely traffic patterns in the most remote areas and figured out how to structure our itinerary so that our guests will be in place in the path of totality while the people who don't plan ahead will be stuck in jams on remote dirt roads. We enjoy obsessing about details like that so that our guests never have to.



### **How can you top this?**

Oh, we never let ourselves think of it that way. We just continue to approach every single guest on each and every departure like the most important guest we've ever had. It seems to be working! Of course, we keep looking for new ways to win more converts. For 2019, we've launched a new series of Classic Journeys that are based from

## **"I voted for you!"**

We've heard that expression so many times lately from guests who registered their votes with *Travel + Leisure*. Given the results, we know it's true ... and you know that your votes really count!

### **STAFF AND GUIDES**

"I always feel like I'm traveling with a best friend. I prefer your local guides to the ones that other companies fly in."

### **ITINERARIES AND DESTINATIONS**

"If it's on my bucket list, you always seem to go there. Of course, with so many options you always seem to make my list longer and longer!"

### **ACTIVITIES**

"On your trips, I've cooked with Michelin chefs, sung songs with Quechua schoolchildren, and walked on glaciers with the descendants of Vikings. Fun doesn't begin to describe it."

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

"How you manage so many 5-star properties on these trips shocks me. But please, please, please keep it up!"

### **FOOD**

"I have never eaten so well so often so happily. When you people claim that you are foodies, you aren't kidding."

### **OVERALL VALUE**

"We have never had a better vacation at any price."

river cruise boats. On a different note, seeing how many travelers can't always find as much vacation time as they really want, we have developed a series of 6-day or shorter quick trips that go as far afield as Iceland, the Galápagos and Morocco.

### **Final thoughts?**

It's always an honor to win recognition. But, for all of us at Classic Journeys, the biggest privilege is to share the dreams of our guests and make those dreams come true. That connection is the best feeling of all.