

# Prehistoric Caves and Great Cuisine of France

FROM BORDEAUX TO PROVENCE



## TRIP DATES

2024

May 28-June 8, 2024  
September 10-21, 2024  
October 8-19, 2024

2025

May 6-17, 2025  
June 3-14, 2025  
September 9-20, 2025  
September 23-Oct 4, 2025



Wilderness Travel



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# Prehistoric Caves and Great Cuisine of France

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Trace an arc across southern France, from the green Dordogne Valley, famed as the world's treasury of prehistoric art, to the wild uplands of the Massif Central, la France Profonde ("deep France") of traditional ways and quiet farm villages. In the Dordogne, we'll be joined by a celebrated expert in Paleolithic art as we view cathedral-like galleries of mystical paintings created by extraordinary artists 30,000 years ago (and see some special caves that few travelers ever discover). On our culinary explorations, we'll sample all the regional delights (jambons crus, saucissons, wild boar, peppery Le Puy lentils, luscious bleu d'auvergne, and cantal cheeses), and savor two special dinners at Michelin-starred restaurants. Our walks bring us to hilltop villages and hidden realms scented with herbs and wildflowers, and we'll spend a magical market day in medieval Sarlat, with its ancient honey-colored stone houses along the Dordogne River. One overnight in the Massif Central will be at the extraordinary inn of Michel Bras, one of France's most famous chefs, and we finish our adventure admiring the wild beauty of the Ardèche Gorge. This unique journey will bring us into the heart of France. Allons-y!



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# Itinerary

## DAY 1

### MEDIEVAL SAINT-ÉMILION / WONDERFUL WINES

We meet in the world's capital of great wine, Bordeaux, and head to the medieval town of Saint-Émilion, a center of viticulture since the Middle Ages. Saint-Émilion's entire surrounding landscape has earned a UNESCO World Heritage designation. We explore this enchanting village, with its jumble of cobbled lanes and houses built of local stone, and visit the town's massive Eglise Monolithe, a subterranean warren carved out of solid rock. The hermit Saint-Émilion, a Benedictine monk, is said to have lived here in the 8th century.

We're in celebrated wine country, so we have a tasting at Château Guadet, where we are welcomed by Guy-Pétrus Lignac, the proprietor and a descendent of the winemaker at Château Pétrus, one of Bordeaux's most legendary wineries. We're treated to an exclusive visit to his personal wine cellar, carved from the rock beneath his house, where we sample wines from the unique limestone and clay terroir of Saint-Émilion. Tonight we gather for our Welcome Dinner in a Michelin-starred restaurant, with an overnight at Hôtel Au Logis des Remparts, a beautifully restored stone building with a tranquil terrace, outdoor pool, and charming gardens...LD

Walking Details: 3 miles, 2 hours

Driving Time: 1 hour

Note: We recommend you arrive at least a day early to explore Bordeaux's grand 18th century architecture along the Garonne River and discover the neighborhoods of this vibrant city. Please contact us for hotel recommendations.

## DAY 2

### CHATEAU DE LA GRAND FILOLIE / FOREST WALK TO LASCAUX

A morning drive brings us to our lunch in a restaurant along the Vézère River in lovely Montignac, then we're off to the 14th century Château de la Grand Filolie, where we begin our walk through a mossy forest and scattered hamlets to the ridge where Lascaux is located. En route we'll have extensive views of the unspoiled Black Périgord, one of France's most picturesque regions.

Lascaux II, created in 1983, is an exact replica of the stunning original Lascaux cave, which was closed to the public in 1963. We have an exclusive visit here by torchlight and in English (and for our group alone) so that we experience the paintings in flickering light, as the original inhabitants would have. The cave contains nearly 6,000 images of animals, humans, and abstract symbols; walking through the space is an intense experience, as the huge beasts gallop along cave walls, crowding the cavern and towering overhead. Our day concludes in the enchanting town of Les Eyzies, set beneath towering limestone cliffs along the river. Here in this famous cradle of prehistory, we'll sample the Dordogne's rich culinary specialties, including truffles, magret de canard (duck breast), and wines from the nearby Bergerac vineyards. Dinner and overnight at the 4-star Hotel Les Glycines, which dates from 1862 and is the accommodation used by



### TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Length:</b>	12 days
<b>Arrive:</b>	Bordeaux, France
<b>Depart:</b>	Avignon, France
<b>Lodging:</b>	11 nights charming inns and hotels
<b>Meals:</b>	All meals included except 1 lunch and 2 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
<b>Activity:</b>	Culinary, Cultural Adventures, Walking
<b>Trip Level:</b>	1 2+ 3 4 5 6 Easy to moderate walks and hikes, 2-4 hours a day, van support

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Trace an arc across southern France's lush and historic landscape
- Visit fantastic galleries of Paleolithic cave art, both famous and little known, with expert local guides
- Enjoy lovely walks between villages, several dinners in Michelin-starred restaurants
- Experience market day in medieval Sarlat, with its Old Town of honey-colored 16th century buildings



# Itinerary (cont'd)

the area's first eminent pre-historians and explorers. The hotel restaurant has a Michelin star and there are wonderful gardens with a swimming pool...BLD  
Walking Details: 3.5 miles, 1.5 hours, 600 feet ascent, 100 feet descent  
Driving Time: 1.75 hours (morning); 35 minutes (afternoon)



## DAY 3

### SPECIAL SITE VISIT WITH AN EXPERT IN PREHISTORIC ART

A morning walk leads us to the National Museum of Prehistory, a striking piece of architecture set into a sheer cliff. Dr. Christine Desdemaines-Hugon, an archaeologist and author specializing in the art of the Paleolithic Era, will give us a fascinating introduction and tour of the museum, which will be essential to our appreciation of the caves we'll be visiting on this journey. After lunch in Les Eyzies, a short drive brings us to the troglodyte village of Madeleine near the village of Tursac. This natural rock shelter has been home to humans since pre-historic times and even gave its name to a whole period of prehistoric history—the Magdalenian period, a time of semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes dating to around 17,000 years ago. Christine will be our special private guide at the La Madeleine site. We have dinner and overnight at Hotel Les Glycines...BLD

Walking Details: 2.5 miles, 1 hour, 300 feet ascent, 100 feet descent

## DAY 4

### IN THE REALM OF ANCIENT ARTISTS

In the morning, we visit one of the unique caves in the area replete with engravings depicting horses, bison, deer, and mammoths. After lunch, we explore the magnificent Grotte de Font-de-Gaume, one of the finest Paleolithic sanctuaries in the world—and the original cave is still open to the public. The galleries are long and twisting, and the images are startling in their lifelike immediacy; some include subtle details of anatomy and fur. The artists demonstrated skill and finesse in the use of line and tone, and the curves of hip, horn, and tail. One image was painted so that the horse's tail, leg, and thigh are artfully formed by stalactites. Stockpiles of artists' materials were found in the cave, including prepared pigments, wooden painting sticks, and grinding stones. Dinner is on your own tonight. The Trip Leader is happy to make recommendations, depending on how fancy or local you want to go. Overnight at Hotel Les Glycines...BL

## DAY 5

### MARKET DAY IN SARLAT / DORDOGNE RIVER HIKE / CHÂTEAU DE BEYNAC

We head to Sarlat, a bustling town in the heart of the Perigord Noir set in a hollow between gentle hills. The Old Town has some of the best-preserved medieval buildings in all France, luminous when the sunlight reflects on their honey-colored limestone. The morning you'll experience the open-air market day at Sarlat, a must for food lovers. Here a seasonal bounty of cèpes de Bordeaux mushrooms, truffles, juicy berries, stone fruits, and countless

other Dordogne specialties are beautifully displayed in picturesque stalls. In the afternoon, we gather for a hike from the beautiful village of La Roque along a meandering path beside the Dordogne River. We'll visit the Château de Beynac, the best preserved medieval castle on the Dordogne River (it is a private castle). Lunch and dinner are on your own today. Overnight at hotel...B

Walking Details: 3 miles, 2 hours, 600 feet descent, 300 feet ascent

Driving Time: 30 minutes (morning); 35 minutes (afternoon)

## DAY 6

### THE ANCIENT LOT VALLEY AND THE GROTTES DE COGNAC

In the Lot Valley, we have a special private tour of the off-the-beaten-path gem of the Grottes de Cognac. Cognac is two separate caves, one of which has beautiful stalagmite pinnacles, and the second of which has prehistoric art dating back 25,000 to 30,000 years, with depictions of megaloceros (giant deer, now extinct), mammoths, ibex, and human figures. The original cave entrance was accessible by crawling through a long and narrow passage; inside, prehistoric people cleared some of the stalagmites in order to enter the cave for rituals. Scholars believe they performed dances and used the stalagmites to make music. Cognac is an amazing site that still transmits a sense of sacredness. We continue to our welcoming countryside accommodation, the Château de la Treyne, a 14th century château with a magical setting overlooking the Dordogne River, surrounded by a formal French garden lined by century-old cedars, and set within nearly 300 acres of private forest. We'll enjoy lunch on the terrace here, then take a walk along the forested bluff above the river to enjoy the spectacular scenery. The château's restaurant has earned a Michelin star, and we enjoy a memorable dinner here tonight, with views over the river. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Walking Details (Optional): 3.5 miles, 2 hours, 450 feet ascent/descent

Driving Time: 1 hour

## DAY 7

### THE MEDIEVAL CLIFFTOP VILLAGE OF ROCAMADOUR

We start today's walk at a scenic 13th century mill along the emerald waters of the Ouyse River, a tributary of the Dordogne that flows mostly underground. Our wooded trail follows the medieval pilgrimage path up to the tiny clifftop village of Rocamadour, one of the most picturesque perched villages in France. After lunch in the village, we enjoy an exploration around town, a pilgrimage destination since 1166, when the body of an early Christian hermit, St. Amadour, was discovered here in a miraculous state of preservation. Many miracles have been credited to this town, and St. Amadour's tomb rests in the Basilica of St. Sauveur, a World Heritage Site. Later we'll head back to our hotel, with time to enjoy the grounds. The hotel features a wonderful outdoor heated swimming pool...BLD

Walking Details: 4 miles, 4 hours, 400 feet ascent/descent

Driving Time: 20 minutes (morning); 20 minutes (afternoon)



# Itinerary (cont'd)

## DAY 8

### THE AUBRAC PLATEAU / THE FAMOUS LAGUIOLE KNIVES

Heading across the rolling grasslands and wild moors of the Aubrac Plateau, the southernmost corner of the Massif Central, we discover a wonderfully remote region of France. We walk from the hamlet of St. Austremoine, with its beautiful Romanesque church, to Salles La Source, passing vineyards and charming villages. Lunch is in a cafe where we can sample the local cheese, Tome de Laguiole, and other products of the local terroir. In the town of Laguiole, built around the church of Saint-Mathieu, handmade knives have been created since the 19th century. We'll tour the forge and see the craftsmanship that goes into these beautiful utensils. Dinner and overnight at Le Relais de Laguiole...BLD

Walking Details: 3 miles, 1.5 hours, 250 feet ascent, 150 feet descent

Driving Time: 2 hours 40 minutes

## DAY 9

### A PILGRIM TRAIL AND A TEMPLE OF FRENCH CUISINE

We visit the charming village of Nasbinals, dominated by a grand 11th century pilgrimage church with an octagonal tower. Then, with the sound of cowbells ringing, we head out for a day's walk on the Aubrac plateau, which rises like a vast, green island in the sky. Nature is in charge here, and the landscape is graced with the scent of wild herbs. Transhumance (the seasonal walking of the herds from their high summer pastures to lower winter pastures) is still part of local life, and we should see herds of the Aubrac's special breed of cattle, the hardy, golden-coated l'Aubrac, grazing near the stone-built shepherds' huts known as burons. Our trail is also part of Le Chemin de St. Jacques pilgrim path so we may pass pilgrim hikers on their way to Santiago de Compostela. This evening we prepare our senses for a special dinner at Le Suquet, a true temple of French cuisine created by the father and son team of Michel and Sebastien Bras. There is a long waitlist for reservations here, but despite its reputation, this restaurant is not pretentious; our evening is gracious and intimate, with a warm personal welcome from the family. Our meal here is guaranteed to be cutting-edge inventive, and may include prime beef or suckling lamb, wild mushrooms, a colorful salad made with perfect produce, or other dishes inspired by the Bras' love of Aubrac's terroir. This will be an evening you will always remember! Overnight at Le Suquet, the Michel Bras hotel, as delightful as the cuisine...BLD

Walking Details: 4.5 miles, 2 hours, 250 feet cumulative ascent and descent

Driving Time: 35 minutes (morning); 30 minutes (afternoon)

## DAY 10

### ACROSS THE MASSIF CENTRAL: FROM THE AUBRAC PLATEAU TO PROVENCE

We savor a lazy breakfast at Bras—a place designed for delicious lingering. Then we head for Vallon Pont d'Arc, driving through the great central mountain range of the Massif Central. Its deep river gorges, fertile valleys, and volcanic domes are bright with tall yellow gentian and martagon lilies in the spring, and we pass through historic villages with stunning Romanesque





churches. Our journey follows the Lot River, skirts Mont Lozère National Park, and climbs to Col des Tribes, which marks the continental divide between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean basins. This area is part of Les Causses and Les Cévennes agropastoral cultural landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Along the way, we'll enjoy a simple lunch in a family-run restaurant, then stretch our legs as we follow an ancient mule trail along the Lot River to the timeless village of St. Julien du Tournel. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* in this area. After the pass, the landscape becomes increasingly Mediterranean and we begin to see silvery olive trees and undulating fields of lavender. Overnight in Vallon Pont d'Arc at the 4-star Le Mas du Terme, ideally located amid vineyards, olive trees, and aromatic lavender fields. Dinner at the hotel features Provençal cuisine and wine from the estate's 100-acre vineyard...BLD

Walking Details: 2 miles, 1 hour, 250 feet cumulative ascent and descent

Driving Time: 1 hour 40 minutes (morning); 1 hour 50 minutes (afternoon)

## DAY 11

### THE CAVERNE DU PONT D'ARC AND THE ARDECHE GORGE

Today we visit the marvelous Caverne du Pont-d'Arc, a perfect replica of the nearby Chauvet Cave and a trip highlight. We'll have an exclusive private tour in English of this cave. The original "Grotte Chauvet," now a World Heritage Site, may be the most extraordinary cave ever discovered and is home to the oldest cave drawings in the world, dating back some 36,000 years. To keep its precious art safe, this extraordinary cave has been closed to the public. With cutting-edge 3D modeling techniques, more than 1,000 works of art from Chauvet have been reproduced in the Caverne du Pont-d'Arc. The result is stunning and awe-inspiring—especially the exquisite draftsmanship of remarkably lifelike horses and bears, three bulls seemingly running in unison, and a hauntingly delicate rhinoceros. We finish the day admiring the wild beauty of the Ardèche Gorge from the Serre du Tour lookout point. Tonight we gather at hotel for our Farewell Dinner. Overnight at Le Mas du Terme...BLD

Driving Time: 30 minutes (morning); 40 minutes (afternoon)

## DAY 12

### DEPART VIA AVIGNON TGV

Morning transfer to the Avignon TGV train station (1.5 hours)...B



# Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

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## TRIP COST

**Prices are per person, valid through 2024**

\$9595 (10-13 members)

\$10195 (5-9 members)

Single supplement: \$1865

*2025 Trip Costs: Please call for pricing*

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

## CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides
- Hotel accommodations
- All meals included except 1 lunch and 2 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- A glass of wine or beer with dinner
- Entrances to museums and sites
- Land transportation, airport transfers for recommended flights as indicated

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, airport departure taxes, transfers other than those provided for group flights, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessary due to airline schedule changes or other factors, travel insurance, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, telephone calls).

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: [www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)



# Arrival & Departure

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Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

## ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Bordeaux, France

**Suggested Airport:** Bordeaux–Mérignac Airport (BOD)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Anytime prior to Day 1

**Meeting Place:** You will meet your Trip Leader in the lobby of Hotel Majestic in Bordeaux at 9:00 am on Day 1.

Trip members are responsible for traveling to Bordeaux on their own. There are several daily non-stop flights from Paris to Bordeaux, and a taxi from Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport to Hotel Majestic is about €40. Given the meeting time and place, you need to arrive in Bordeaux at least one day before the trip begins. We recommend the Hotel Majestic, which can be booked online [www.hotel-majestic.com/en/majestic-hotel-bordeaux](http://www.hotel-majestic.com/en/majestic-hotel-bordeaux).

## DEPARTURE

Avignon, France

**Suggested Airport:** Paris-Charles De Gaulle (CDG)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Day 12 late evening, or anytime Day 13

We will provide a group transfer to the Avignon TGV Train Station. The transfer will leave the hotel around 10:00 am and arrive around 11:30 am at the train station, in time for a train bound for Paris departing around 12:45 pm. If you prefer to arrive to the Avignon TGV station earlier or later than this, a private transfer can be arranged and will cost around €125 (an “on your own” expense).

We strongly recommend booking the above train ticket in advance at [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com). Train schedules are generally available about 3 months ahead of time, which means exact train times may change slightly month to

month. If you have any doubts about which train ticket to purchase, please contact our office. The train takes about 2.5 hours to Paris Center and three hours to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport. Depending on your flight schedule, you may need to overnight in Paris and depart on homeward-bound flights the following day.

## INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from France.

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito’s website at [www.exitotravel.com](http://www.exitotravel.com).

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

**Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip.** Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

## RECOMMENDED HOTELS IN PARIS

**Paris:** The Hotel Sint-Jacques is a charming Parisian-style hotel located in the heart of the Latin Quarter, right next to the Sorbonne. The hotel can be booked directly at [www.hotel-saintjacques.com](http://www.hotel-saintjacques.com).

If you plan on staying right at Charles de Gaulle Airport, we recommend the CitizenM Hotel, located within walking distance of Terminal 3; [www.citizenm.com](http://www.citizenm.com).

# Accommodations

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## HOTEL AU LOGIS DES REMPARTS

*Saint-Emilion, France*

*Day 1 (1 night)*

Set in the center of the medieval city of Saint-Emilion, a World Heritage Site, this cozy hotel is actually built on the defensive walls of the town. Guest rooms are comfortable, and there are lovely gardens and a pool area where you can relax with a drink at the end of the day.

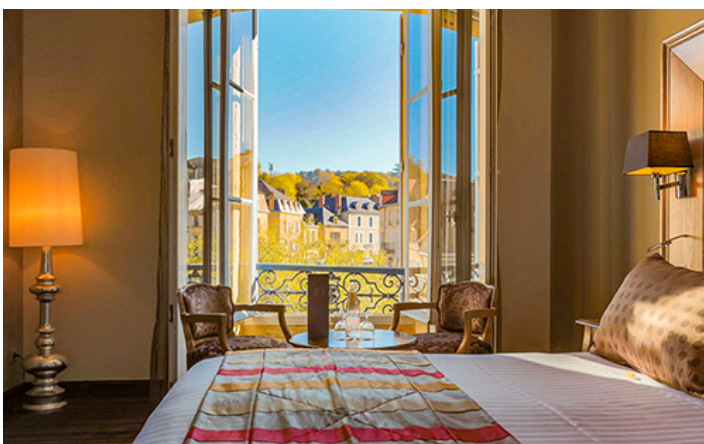


## HOTEL LES GLYCINES

*Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, France*

*Days 2 to 4 (3 nights)*

Just a two-minute walk into the village of Les Eyzies, Les Glycines has large and beautiful, tree-shaded gardens along the river as well as a swimming pool. The guest rooms are comfortable, and evening cocktails can be enjoyed on the terrace overlooking the gardens.



## HOTEL PLAZA MADELEINE

*Sarlat, France*

*Day 5 (1 night)*

Located just at the entrance to the medieval city, this hotel has well-appointed rooms and wonderful access to Sarlat's main square. The spa and swimming pool in the courtyard are lovely additions.



## Lodging (cont'd)

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### CHATEAU DE LA TREYNE

*Lacave, France*

*Days 6 to 7 (2 nights)*

Perched above the Dordogne River and surrounded by stately gardens, this Relais & Chateau property is a picture-perfect step into the past. Guest rooms are elegantly furnished with all the modern amenities, and its restaurant serves exquisite cuisine. Go for a stroll on the lovely grounds, take a dip in the swimming pool, or just sit on the terrace and take in the absolute beauty of the area.



### LE RELAIS DE LAGUIOLE

*Laguiole, France*

*Day 8 (1 night)*

This 33-room hotel, set in the middle of town and close to cafes and shops, offers clean and comfortable guest rooms and a friendly and accommodating staff—nothing is too much trouble for them! The spa area includes an indoor swimming pool with hot tub and sauna.



### LE SUQUET HOTEL

*Laguiole, France*

*Day 9 (1 night)*

Set on a hilltop outside of Laguiole, this unique hotel has beautiful guestrooms with private terraces and panoramic views across the Aubrac Plateau. The sleek, modern style of the hotel blends into the surrounding environment and the hotel's cuisine lives up to its 3-star Michelin rating.





## LE MAS DU TERME

*Barjac, France*

*Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)*

Le Mas du Terme is a modern hotel set just outside a charming village and surrounded by vineyards and fields of lavender. The pool area is lovely, and meals are served in a courtyard setting.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Prehistoric Caves and Great Cuisine of France* webpage and click on “Accommodations.”

# Trip Leaders

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Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/france-prehistoric-caves-walking-culinary-tour/](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/france-prehistoric-caves-walking-culinary-tour/)



## PETER HALLEWELL

Peter Hallewell loves to explore the great outdoors: walking, hiking, climbing mountains on skis or on foot, and snowshoeing. His passion for the outdoors first developed on family holidays to the English Lake District, and he has lived part-time for the last 30 years in Les Gets in the French Alps, progressively scaling almost all the peaks in the area. Qualified as an International Mountain Leader, he knows the mountains of Europe well and loves to introduce fellow hikers to the joys of the trail.



## ANNIE HAWKINS

Annie Hawkins, born and raised in a small village in Burgundy, is a passionate world traveler and one of our most enchanting Trip Leaders. After studying art history in Provence, Annie moved to California, where she led adventure tours in the American Southwest and realized that leading adventure trips was her vocation—nothing would keep her inside an office again! She has led exclusively for Wilderness Travel since 1995 and has led journeys for us in France, Spain, Sri Lanka, Morocco, Niger, Oman, and more! She divides her time between Europe and San Francisco, where she lives with her husband.



## LAURENCE FRISON

Traveler, hiker, skier, and guide by passion, and graphic designer by trade, Laurence (“Lolo”) Frison embodies the life of an adventurer. She spent a decade exploring the world from Africa to Australia, including a three-month road trip from Vancouver to Los Angeles, and has specialized in guiding groups in the French Alps, gaining her French national credential in mountain leadership. When not leading hiking adventures with WT, she enjoys biking and beekeeping in Thonon-les-Bains in the French Alps, where she lives.



## STEWART WHEELHOUSE

Stewart Wheelhouse, a Welshman by birth, has spent the past 23 years leading adventures and expeditions throughout the world. He has traveled the length of Africa, written guidebooks on cycling through Europe, and led expeditions in Asia and Australia. A wonderful storyteller and traveling companion, Stewart spends his free time between trips exploring the backcountry trails of France and the Alps, and sailing the Mediterranean. When the northern hemisphere gets too cold, he migrates to Tasmania to lead our trips there and spends time sailing and fishing with his mates in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.



## STEPHAN RENARD

Stephan Renard was born in Grenoble in the French Alps and grew up in the wild and remote Vercors region of the Rhône-Alpes, where he gained his passion for hiking, climbing, and skiing. A professional mountain leader and ski instructor since his youth, he loves outdoor pursuits of every kind and also has an affinity for jazz music, French and American literature, and Irish culture (acquired during his years of guiding French tours in Ireland).

# Trip Details

## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated a Level 2+ (Easy to Moderate) according to our trip grading system. While there are a few short hikes, this trip is more focused on cultural exploration. You will need to be comfortable being on your feet for up to 3 hours a day. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

### Average Hiking Day

- 2 miles
- 2-3 hours
- 150 feet gain/loss

### Challenge Day

- Day 9: 6 miles, 3 hours, 300 feet gain, and 250 feet loss

## TERRAIN

We enjoy day walks over variable terrain, including country roads, riverside trails, and cliff-top paths. The trails are generally shaded, and there are some stony sections with uneven surfaces, including a few with loose scree. The chateaus have narrow and steep staircases, and some of the cave walks include uneven surfaces and dark spaces.

## GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercise. Stair climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your

feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in.

## WEATHER

Temperatures are mild, reaching the high 70s°F or low 80s°F during the day. You can expect cooler weather in the massif central, so be sure to be prepared for cooler conditions. The weather can be variable, so bring warm layers and rain gear.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

In an effort to capture the spirit of old Europe, the hotels that we use are often family-run converted chateaux or inns, full of ambiance and colorful local history. Since they are often in historic buildings, the rooms are not always of uniform or international size. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

## CUISINE

We will enjoy a number of exquisite meals on this trip, including a few at Michelin starred restaurants. Most lunches will be at local restaurants and dinners will be at our hotel. For our finer dining at the Michelin starred restaurants, suits and dresses are not necessary, but we recommend bringing casual-smart dinner attire. Please note that in Europe, the dinner hour is considerably later than what it is in the US. We do our best to secure early

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY				DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	HOURS	MILES	ELEV. GAIN/LOSS	HOURS
1	2 hours	3 miles		1 hour
2	1.5 hours	3.5 miles	+ 600'/- 100'	2 hours 10 minutes total
3	1 hour	2.5 miles	+ 300' /-100'	
4				
5	2 hours	3 miles	- 600' /+300'	1 hour total
6	2 hours (optional day)	3.5 miles	+/- 450'	1 hour
7	4 hours	4 miles	+/- 400'	40 minutes total
8	1.5 hours	3 miles	+250' / -150'	2 hours 40 minutes
9	2 hours	4.5 miles	+250' / -250'	1 hour
10	1 hour	2 miles	+250' / -250'	3.5 hours total
11				1 hour total
12				1.5 hours



AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Les Eyzies-de-Tayac	48/35	50/36	58/39	63/42	70/48	75/55	81/57	81/57	75/50	65/47	56/40	49/37
Barjac	50/35	52/36	60/40	65/46	72/52	80/50	88/64	87/63	78/58	70/50	58/42	50/38
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Les Eyzies-de-Tayac	3.4	2.6	2.8	3.3	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.2	3.0	3.2	2.8
Barjac	1.9	1.8	1.5	2.6	2.5	1.7	1.1	2.2	3.8	3.6	2.8	2.0

reservations for our groups, but most often the evening meal will be at 7:30 pm.

### TRANSPORTATION

Our van will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day (rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day).

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Europe Manager or email us at [europa@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:europa@wildernesstravel.com).

### REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

### VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.



## WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Condé Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

May 21, 2024 9:26 AM