



## The Magical Lot Tour

### Tour Overview

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

**Location:** France's Quercy region. Overnight destinations include Sarlat, Creysse, St. Céré, Rocamadour, and Figeac. The train trip from Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport to Sarlat requires about 7.5 hours. Because of the time required to make the return trip to Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport from Figeac, you should plan to layover at least 1 night in Paris on the back-end of your tour. The train trip from Figeac to downtown Paris is 5.5 - 6 hours.

**Tour Type:** Circuit tour

**Terrain:** Variable. Long, relatively flat stretches as well as 2 to 3 long climbs on most days.

**Length:** 8 days / 8 nights

**Distance:** Total: 112 miles / 181 km. Average per day: 28 miles / 45 km.

### Highlights:

- **Rocamadour**, the beautiful cliff-hanging village that has hosted pilgrims for one thousand years, and continues to do so.
- **A boat ride** on the underground river in the *Gouffre de Padirac*.
- **The gorgeous town** of St. Céré, set amidst mountains and canals.
- **The wonderfully preserved** medieval quarters of Sarlat & Figeac.

### About the Region

France's Quercy region is known for the ancient pilgrimage site of Rocamadour, prehistoric cave dwellings, medieval castles and villages, vineyards, forests and geese farms. Immediately east of Périgord, the ancient and proud land of Quercy continues to have a wild, untamed feel. Though adjacent to Périgord, this region has a completely different feel.

Dominated by *causses* (limestone plateaus), this region has very little surface water. Where surface water does exist -- in the form of rivers -- it continues to carve deep canyons into the porous limestone. The result of this geography: strange forests of deep-digging trees, white cliffs, mighty canyons watched over by perched medieval villages, caves (many having hosted

prehistoric settlements), underground rivers, and vineyards and orchards planted in every available river valley.

## **Daily Itinerary**

### **Day 1: Arrival in Sarlat. Spend 2 nights.**

Your Diverse Directions representative will meet you at the Sarlat train station upon your arrival, will drive you to your hotel, and will delivery your rental bikes.

### **Day 2: Free Day in Sarlat with Optional Cycling**

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 or wonderful base location could be hardly imagined.

The castles are numerous in this area and there is no better way to see them than to do our 46 km / 28.5 mile castle circuit on bike. Your circuit includes visits to the following castles: Château la Malartrie, Castelnaud, Château de Beynac, and Château de Marqueyssac. Don't worry about touring all the castles you'll pass. Some are closed to the public altogether and thus can be only appreciated from afar; others only open their extraordinary gardens to the public.

Along your route you will also pass through the riverside village of la Roque-Gageac which, due to its unique setting, enjoys a subtropical microclimate. If you need to rest a while, you can hire a boat in la Roque-Gageac for more relaxed touring along the river.

### **Day 3: Sarlat to Creysse - 57 km / 35 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. After an enchanting ride through the dark forest you'll reach the Dordogne River, the course of which you'll follow the remainder of the day. Before crossing into the department of the Lot, you'll have the opportunity to visit at least two castles that continue to keep watch over the river. Beyond Souillac -- with its 12<sup>th</sup> century abbey dominating its medieval core -- the landscape changes rather dramatically, as the hills of the *Causse de Gramat* become drier and more rugged. And then for miles you'll cycle a road that is narrowly wedged between the towering cliffs and the lazy river. You'll spend the evening in the tiny medieval village of Creysse, in the heart of this splendid scenery.

### **Day 4: Creysse to St. Céré - 35 km / 22 miles. Spend 1 night.**

Today's ride is shorter in distance, but offers so much in sights that you'll want to savor the ride as you follow the Dordogne the entire day to St. Céré. You will pass through the lovely medieval villages of Floirac and Carennac before reaching Castelnaud, the largest fortified medieval castle in France. From Castelnaud, it's just a short ride to St. Céré, one of France's most beautiful villages.

Stop into the St. Céré Tourist Information Office for a copy of the English self-guided walking tour with explanations of the historical sights and then, enjoy strolling the canal-lined streets. If you have the time and are so inclined, climb to the castle of St. Laurent les Tours to see the work of artist Jean Lurcat in this most unusual setting. Or make a visit to the Château de Montal, another beautiful castle just a few kilometers from your hotel. You will fall in love with St. Céré's setting, on the border of Cantal, a mountainous, thinly populated and little visited corner of France.

**Day 5: St. Céré to Rocamadour - 34 km / 21 miles. Spend 2 nights.**

Today's ride is short, but try to get an early start as there is much to see on this gorgeous ride atop the *causee*. Early in your ride you'll pass through the beautiful village of Autoire, which is nestled in the last valley you'll see for a while. From Autoire, you'll climb to the top of the *causee* as you follow a cascading stream and enjoy stupendous views of the region. Not far beyond the end of your climb, you'll reach the village of Padirac and then, the *Gouffre de Padirac*.

A visit to this natural wonder is highly recommended; after all, how often do you have the opportunity to take a boat ride on a subterranean river? Following your visit, you'll continue your ride along the *causee*, with several ups-and-downs to Rocamadour, a holy pilgrimage sight for ten centuries. The beauty of Rocamadour simply cannot be conveyed by words. Upon your arrival, there'll be no need to worry about having spent so much time at the *Gouffre* because you'll have tomorrow to enjoy Rocamadour's sights, including the *Forêt des Singes* (the Forest of Monkeys). While in Rocamadour you must treat yourself to *cabécou*, a locally produced goat cheese; it's awesome.

**Day 6: Free Day in Rocamadour.**

**Day 7: Rocamadour to Figeac - 54 km / 34 miles. Spend 2 nights.**

Today's route takes you across the lonely *Causse de Gramat* through tiny villages and past lots of meadows of grazing sheep to the lovely town of Figeac. Amidst the solitude of your day's ride, you'll have the opportunity to visit the *Parc Animalier*, a "cageless" zoo sheltering only animals native to the region, as well as the 16<sup>th</sup> century Château d'Assier.

Figeac is the largest town in this part of the Lot region. With a beautifully restored medieval core and a pretty location on the Célé River, you will have lots to explore. All of Figeac's historic sites are described in a detail, easy-to-follow self-guided walking tour of the old city available from the Tourist Information Office. Published in English, this publication provides a great introduction to the city.

Rental bikes will be picked up at your hotel in the late afternoon.

**Day 8: Free Day in Figeac.**

## **Tour Price: US \$995.00 per person**

**Children's Price - Children 16 years or younger traveling with 2 adults: \$375.00 per child.**

**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 7 Days: Excellent quality hybrid or mountain 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
- 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 Figeac to your home.
- Personal expenses
- Insurance
- Shipping and Handling Charges for non-US customers. A shipping & handling charge of US \$15.00 will be added to tour package orders outside the US.

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