



France- Cycling Adventure in the Heart of the Southwest (2025)

10 Days/ 9 Nights

Individual Self-Guided



Immerse yourself in the heart of south-western France on a cycling tour that promises an experience far removed from the hustle and bustle of the metropolis and surrounded by enchanting nature. Visit this major touristic region also renowned for its gastronomy, which marvelously combines flavors and quality, and relax at the end of the day in charming hotels or bed & breakfasts, some with swimming pools.

You'll discover the landscape of hillsides that structure the **Entre-deux-Mers** region, a land of winegrowing tradition that is also distinguished by the preservation of a large number of bastides and medieval towns. Recharge your batteries in the midst of nature as you cycle through lush green valleys, woods, bastides and castles, each offering a different view of the region. Pass through many of France's most beautiful villages, and stop off to discover some of the most famous towns on the Pilgrim's Way to Santiago de Compostela.

Cross the world-famous **Saint-Emilion** vineyards and pedal to the village of **Castillon-la-Bataille**, an emblematic site in the history of the region. Along the **Dordogne Valley**, discover the Pays Foyen, a calm and peaceful region of historical heritage and wine-growing châteaux, until you reach **Périgord Noir**, a land of prehistoric sites and archaeological findings, where Cro-Magnon man was even discovered. Then follow the La Vagabonde cycle route, which will leave you in awe of the vast panorama of the surrounding countryside, and arrive at **Saint-Cirq Lapopie**, voted France's favorite village.

Then drive along the **Lot Valley**, where you'll pass through natural landscapes that have been a source of inspiration for many, including the famous painter Claude Monet and the writer and philosopher

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Montesquieu. Don't miss **Martillac**, where you'll find the Pessac-Léognan Appellation, ranked among the world's finest vineyards, before a final night in **Bordeaux's** historic center.

Day by Day

Day 1 : Arrival in Bordeaux

Check-in at your hotel in the heart of Bordeaux, a UNESCO World Heritage city voted best European destination of 2015. You'll receive your bike, documentation on the region and a road book indicating your itinerary.



Day 2 : From Bordeaux to Saint-Emilion 52km 272m elevation

Your cycling itinerary begins at Place des Quinconces, one of Europe's largest squares, and continues along the quays of Bordeaux to discover the Garonne River. You'll cross the Pont de Pierre before joining the Roger Lapébie cycle path.

You'll then be quickly immersed in the **Entre-deux-Mers** region, on a green path that will take you through this territory brimming with natural landscapes, rivers, wild flora and vineyards. Discover magnificent little villages such as **Créon** and **Branne**, emblematic of the region.

Finally, on the other side of the **Dordogne**, you'll have access to the magnificent town of Saint-Emilion, world-famous for its many châteaux producing some of the world's most prestigious wines, such as Château Cheval Blanc and Château Angelus.

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Day 3 : From Saint-Emilion to Bergerac 72 km 200m elevation

As the first vineyard to be classified by UNESCO as *cultural landscape*, **Saint-Emilion** invites you to discover its thousands of hectares of prestigious vines.

Then join us at **Castillon-la-Bataille**, famous for the battle between the French and English that ended the 100 Years' War in 1453. For centuries, Castillon-la-Bataille has been used as a strategic location to watch over the Pas de Rauzan ford, the only compulsory crossing point on the Dordogne, 2 km to the east. Today, thanks to its history, the town boasts a rich architectural and natural heritage.

Follow the **Dordogne River** to the bastide town of **Sainte-Foy-la-Grande**, the oldest bastide town in the Gironde, founded in 1255 at the gateway to Périgord. Thriving thanks to the wine trade, it still boasts a remarkable heritage that can be seen in its narrow streets, the remains of fortified walls, arcades typical of bastides, the central square and its many 15th-century timber-frame houses.

As you continue your itinerary, the little roads of the Pays Foyen will take you to **Gardonne**, a commune that combines historic charm with natural beauty. Winegrowing remains a mainstay of the local economy, but is now accompanied by a strong interest in tourism and environmental preservation. Perched on a pretty hill, **Monbazillac** and its listed 16th-century château proudly dominate the Dordogne valley. It lies at the heart of the prestigious vineyard that bears its name, and is a veritable jewel of a wine village. Indeed, Monbazillac is the world's best-known sweet wine appellation, seductive in its elegance and intriguingly nuanced bouquet.

You'll end the day in **Bergerac**, a town of art and history on the banks of the Dordogne, where you can stroll along the quays and through the old town, admiring its half-timbered houses and 15th and 16th century mansions, before sampling the famous local produce, an integral part of the Périgord heritage.

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Day 4 : From Bergerac to Sarlat 86 km 711m elevation

As soon as you start pedaling, you'll follow the Lalinde canal along a dedicated track, taking you through charming little villages such as **Lalinde**, the first English bastide in Périgord. Built on the banks of the Dordogne, it has preserved vestiges of its medieval past. Overlooking the confluence of the DordogneVézère rivers, the Jardins Panoramiques are located on the site of an ancient fortified castle, at the summit of **Limeuil**, a medieval village steeped in history. Continue along the **Vézère** valley, immersing yourself in a journey back in time through the Périgord Noir to the world capital of prehistory: **Les Eyzies**. This is where Cro-Magnon Man was discovered, and where you'll find the world's finest examples of cave art. It's also an ideal location for outdoor activities, thanks to its pleasant, unspoilt countryside.

*Alternative route via the Lascaux caves (**Possibility to add an extra night in Les Eyzies**). Adds 25km 209m*

***From Les Eyzies**, follow the Vézère valley. Discover an exceptional **host of prehistoric sites**, most of them UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the Troglodytic Village of La Madeleine, where a sumptuous carved mammoth tusk has been discovered, proving that it has always been a refuge for mankind. Then comes a visit to the famous **Grotte de Lascaux**, where Palaeolithic man created a priceless and unique masterpiece of signs and animal representations. A final stage along small, hilly roads takes you to Sarlat. Finally, you'll reach **Sarlat**, the gastronomic capital of the Périgord Noir region, which has managed to preserve the traces of its history. Classified as a Town of Art and History, it owes its renown to the richness of its built heritage. The medieval city is also reputed to have the highest density of listed or registered historic monuments in the world.*



Day 5 : From Sarlat to Rocamadour 53km 438m elevation

You'll start your day in the famous town of **Sarlat**, which you'll leave via a greenway along the **Dordogne Valley** to **Cazoulès**, just a few kilometers from Souillac. All along the way, you'll see a varied landscape in the shadow of the cliffs, between forests, small villages and the countryside.

Alternative route via Domme and La Roque-Gageac adds 22km 250m

*A detour will then be suggested to allow you to discover **La Roque-Gageac** and **Domme**, unmissable medieval villages of the Périgord Noir along the Dordogne.*

Pass through **Carsac-Aillac**, home to the Pech de la Boissière prehistoric site and the Pech de l'Aze caves. Open in summer, the **Jardins d'Eau de Carsac** is a two-hectare area of water and aquatic plants, an ideal place to stroll through waterfalls, lotuses and flowers from America and Asia.

Once you arrive in Souillac, don't miss the **Abbaye Sainte-Marie**, the city's landmark, a harmonious blend of Romanesque and Byzantine influences. A little further on, you'll find the **Château de Belcastel**, an architectural gem with lush courtyards, medieval chapels, gardens and superb views. It stands alone as an ideal example of the perfect harmony between history, art and architecture.

On the banks of the Dordogne, many of the valley's treasures come together at **Lacave**: underground worlds, pebble beaches, a prehistoric park, castles, Michelin-starred restaurants... you're sure to find something to suit your taste. Discover the richness, diversity and fragility of this natural and historical heritage with a visit to the **Grottes de Lacave** and **Grotte des Carbonnières**.

Finally, join one of France's most beautiful villages, the sacred city of **Rocamadour**. The world-famous medieval town stands 120 metres above the Alziou canyon ! An essential stopover on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, Rocamadour is also famous for its Basilica of Saint-Sauveur and the Crypt of Saint-Amadour, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as well as the Chapel of Notre-Dame, home to the Black Madonna, who has been watching over pilgrims and visitors to the town for over a thousand years.



Day 6 : From Rocamadour to Saint-Cirq Lapopie 65km 940m Or From Rocamadour to Cahors Direct access 66km 880m or via Saint-Cirq-Lapopie 95km 1070m

This transition stage follows the “La Vagabonde” cycle road. Ride through the Dordogne Valley until you reach the magnificent **Parc naturel Régional des Causses du Quercy**, designated a UNESCO World Geopark for its geological wealth. A land of contrasts, the park is made up of limestone plateaus and lush green valleys. A true paradise for nature lovers, you'll find a wealth of rare flora and fauna. Walk along the **Vers Valley**, a tributary stream of the Lot, home to some remarkable and protected plant and animal species.

From there, you have two options :

1/ Stopover in Saint-Cirq Lapopie

Follow the river Lot and take the astonishing **Ganil towpath**, partly carved out of the cliff. From the road, you can see the **Château des Anglais**, an 11th- and 12th-century fortification anchored in the limestone rock, which served as a refuge to protect the population in the event of attack.

You'll end the day in the vicinity of **Saint-Cirq Lapopie**, one of France's most beautiful villages. A masterpiece of the medieval era, with no fewer than 13 historic monuments, it is perched on a cliff and offers breathtaking views. Take a trip back in time with a visit to the village's charming old center, where you'll feel the nobility of its architecture.

2/ Stopover in Cahors : You can reach Cahors directly or via Saint-Cirq-Lapopie.

Your day will then end in **Cahors**, City of Art and History, where you'll find many exceptional historic monuments, such as the emblematic Pont Valentré, whose construction began in 1308 and lasted almost 70 years. A remarkable example of medieval architecture, it is part of UNESCO's World Heritage List as part of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrimage Route.



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Day 7 : From Saint-Cirq Lapopie to Fumel 95km 670m Or From Cahors to Villeneuve-sur-Lot 103km 540m

From Saint-Cirq Lapopie, you'll reach Cahors on a pretty road through the woods high above the Lot valley.

From Cahors, start the day by crossing the magnificent and imposing Pont Valentré.

Pass through the Luzech region, where you'll find **Château de Cayx**, owned by the Royal Family of Denmark since 1974, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful sites in the Lot Valley.

In addition to the port, the village of **Albas**, also known as *Albas la jolie*, is well worth a visit, with its ancient houses, 16th-century mansions and magnificent Tuscan garden overlooking the river.

On this day, you'll see some of the region's castles, architectural treasures from medieval times. You'll see the **Château de la Coste** in the commune of Grezels, originally built in the 14th century as a simple watchtower, it wasn't until the 17th century that it became the majestic château it is today.

Continuing your journey, you'll discover **Puy l'Evêque**, a labyrinth of narrow streets lined with beautiful houses that lead down to the slipway where barges headed for Bordeaux once anchored. It was one of the Lot Valley's busiest ports until the end of the 19th century.

A short detour will take you to **Château de Bonaguil**, a legendary regional fortress listed as a Historic Monument in 1862.

You'll also pass through **Fumel**, previously inhabited by high and mighty barons in the 11th century. The village boasts a medieval château bearing its name, now the seat of the town hall. Visitors are welcome

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to enjoy the château's gardens and terraces, with their breathtaking views over the Lot and the spectacular natural landscape.

Initiated by **Richard the Lionheart**, **Penne d'Agenais** is a medieval village set at an altitude of 200 meters, offering exceptional views for no less than 60km around. At the top of the village, you'll discover the magnificent Notre-Dame-de-Peyragude, built at the end of the 19th century over a period of more than 50 years.

Finally, you'll arrive in **Villeneuve-sur-Lot**, the largest river bastide in the South-West. Let yourself be charmed by its narrow streets, where the medieval era can still be seen on the facades of the houses.



Day 8 : From Fumel to Marmande / Meilhan 100km 225m Or From Villeneuve-sur-Lot to Marmande / Meilhan 75km 220m

Leaving Villeneuve-sur-Lot, you'll pass through **Sainte-Livrade-sur-Lot**, a town in a fertile valley on the route of a Roman road, and **Le Temple-sur-Lot**, where you'll find the magnificent Jardin des Nénuphars, the oldest water lily nursery in the world. This national collection boasts over 260 varieties of flora and fauna, classifying the garden as a *Jardin Remarquable* by the French Ministry of Culture. It inspired the great artist **Claude Monet** to create his famous paintings.

Further along the road, you'll come to **Clairac**, where **Montesquieu** loved the local atmosphere and found inspiration for his *Lettres persanes*. Here you'll find a pleasant historic center with old 15th century houses, as well as the remains of an abbey dating back to 782.

At the crossroads between sea and mountains, you'll discover **Tonneins**, whose history is closely linked to that of tobacco. In fact, it was monks who brought back the first seeds from Brazil in the middle of the 16th century, and the town was so successful that in 1726 the Manufacture Royale du Tabac was created.



Pass by the **Etang de Mazière** nature reserve, an interface between the terrestrial and aquatic environments, providing refuge and breeding grounds for numerous birds. Over 220 species have been counted here. Continue your journey through the ancient Roman town of Le Mas d'Agenais, before arriving at **Meilhan**, a peaceful village perched high above the river with an impressive view of the entire plain and river loop. Indeed, until the early 20th century, the village was an important stopover for the boat that carried travellers between Bordeaux and Agen.



Day 9 : From Marmande / Meilhan to Bordeaux 90-100km 250m

Leaving Meilhan, pass through remarkable sites such as Castets-en-Dorthe and **Langon**, at the crossroads of the great Bordeaux crus, where every winegrower is committed to producing the very best wines.

From the **Sauternes** vineyards, you'll cross the "Graves" appellation and pass through several small villages such as Saint-Michel de Rieufret, with its church on the Pilgrimage Route to Santiago de Compostela, and La Brède, whose château was the birthplace of the famous writer and thinker Montesquieu in 1689.

Further along the road you'll come to **Martillac**, where you'll find Château Smith Haut Lafitte, Appellation Pessac-Léognan, ranked among the world's top 10 vineyards. Right in the middle of town, you'll find the Romanesque church of Sainte Quitterie, built around the 11th century on the foundations of a Roman temple dedicated to Mars, the god of war who was venerated as a protector during Julius Caesar's wars of conquest of Gaul.

Finally, back in **Bordeaux**, the starting point of your adventure, you'll pass the city's oldest bridge, the Pont de Pierre, which links the city's right and left banks. The first bridge over the Garonne, it was built

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by order of Napoleon I between 1810 and 1822. On the sides, each brick pier is embellished with a white medallion in honor of the emperor.

Walk past the world's largest water mirror, a central feature of the city's quays. Directly opposite, you'll find it impossible not to notice the marvellous Place de la Bourse, one of the most representative works of 18th-century French classical architecture.



Day 10 : Departure

Departure or extra nights in Bordeaux.

Accommodation : Mostly 3* hotels (and 4*)

From 2 to 8 people

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Route

Option 1 : Day 6 with night in Saint-Cirq Lapopie



Option 2 : Day 6 with night in Cahors



Difficulty : Difficult 613km or more. E-bikes are available

Tour start dates : From April to October

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Price 2025 per person in Euros -all prices subject to confirmation on booking

<u>10 days – 9 nights</u>	April-June14 & Sept16- Oct 30	June 15 – September 15
Package based on 2 people per room	1760 €	1870 €
Single room extra charge	585 €	630 €
“Solo” extra charge (person travelling alone)	540 €	540 €

<u>Bike option</u>		Extra day
Touring bike	200 €	17 €
E-bike	375 €	40 €
Gravel	345€	33 €

<u>Extra nights</u>		
Bordeaux Double or Twin room	100 €	100 €
Single room	160 €	160 €
Les Eyzies Double or Twin room	95 €	105 €
Single room	160 €	170 €

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Included / not included :

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 9 nights with breakfast✓ 1 dinner in Meilhan/ Marmande✓ Travel book with the traces on maps 1:50000✓ 1 GPS App✓ Luggage transfer at each step✓ 7/7 hotline assistance (7:30am – 8pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Cancellation insurance✓ Drinks

BIKE EQUIPMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 1 lock✓ 1 repair kit✓ 1 rear bag✓ 1 handle-bar bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Smartphone support (1 per group)✓ Assistance for bike (for big problems other than punctures)✓ Helmet (on request)

Bikes :

Touring bike : Arcade Escape or Trek Fx series -Extra charge + 30 €

E-bike 500 W : Breezer Powertrip Evo 3.2+ S or Cube Touring one

Gravel : Fuji Jari 1.3 or Cube Nuroad Extra charge + 20 €

Note for the electric bikes: For certain stages, we recommend using the power of the electric bike in a **measured and adapted way** to the current terrain.

This is a Partner Tour

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