



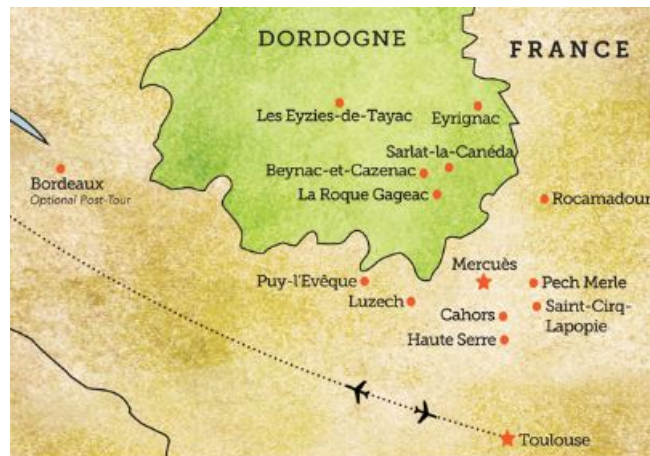
National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Trust Tours

## FLAVORS OF DORDOGNE

October 17-25, 2025

Step into a world where medieval charm meets modern sophistication, where every cobblestone street tells a story, and every vineyard whispers secrets of centuries past. This is Dordogne, a captivating region in the heart of southwest France overflowing with history, architecture and enchanting beauty. This customized itinerary provides an idyllic setting for authentic cultural and culinary experiences, from exploring medieval towns and ancient castles to dining at Michelin-starred restaurants, partaking in vineyard tours and tastings and joining hands-on cooking demonstrations.



### Program Highlights

- With your small group enjoy seven nights accommodations at Château de Mercuès, a luxurious Relais & Châteaux property with phenomenal views over the Lot valley and Cahors vineyards.
- Meet the esteemed vintners at Château de Haute-Serre and Château de Cayx wineries for vineyard tours and tastings.
- Delight in extraordinary French dishes at Michelin-starred Château de La Treyne, Les Glycines and Le Duèze.
- Embrace the region's dynamic history during guided tours of Pech Merle, Rocamadour and Château de Beynac.
- Join an expert chef for an inspirational cooking class to learn recipe secrets, tips and tricks.
- Immerse yourself in the magnificent and seemingly endless beauty of Dordogne.

### Full Itinerary

#### Day 1: En Route from U.S.

#### Day 2: Arrive in Toulouse, France | Mercuès

Upon arrival to Toulouse-Blagnac Airport an Orbridge representative will be waiting to assist with your transfer to the property.

Château de Mercuès, a 13th-century castle and four-star Relais & Châteaux property, is your home base during this week's adventure. The hotel's imposing stone façade and

ornamental turrets reflect the architectural characteristics of a bygone era. Guest rooms are plush and well-appointed, featuring carefully selected furnishings, marble bathrooms and breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside.

Take time to unpack and settle in before joining fellow travel companions for a tasting in the impressive wine cellar and tasting room followed by a lovely welcome dinner.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (D)*

### **Day 3: Haute Serre | Cahors**

After breakfast head south to Château de Haute-Serre for an unforgettable vineyard experience. This generations-old family business strives for wine production excellence through high-density replanting, utilizing eco-friendly vine growing and tending techniques, and aging in oak barrels. During a guided tour of the vineyard and *chai* (wine storeroom) hear about the property's epic history, then be seated for lunch and a tasting of some of the winery's most popular varietals.

Later today stop in Cahors for a brief panoramic tour. Glimpse into the heart of French heritage as you discover Cahors' ancient streets, its stone-arched Pont Valentré and Saint-Etienne Cathedral. Your Travel Director will provide dining recommendations before your return to the property.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,L)*

### **Day 4: Rocamadour**

Today explore the picturesque UNESCO World Heritage Site of Rocamadour, a sanctuary—and notable pilgrimage destination—built against the cliffs above a medieval village. Climb the 216-step *Grand Escalier* staircase from the lower village to reach a small square surrounded by the Chapelle Notre-Dame and the Romanesque Basilica of Saint-Sauveur.

Afterward visit a goat farm for a tasting of AOC-certified Rocamadour cheeses.

A spectacular lunch awaits at Michelin-starred Château de La Treyne, a quintessential French property perched atop limestone cliffs alongside the Dordogne River. Expertly crafted dishes provide a gastronomic journey that celebrates the flavors of the region, showcasing local ingredients and an extensive wine list.

Late afternoon and the evening are at leisure. Embrace time at the property to wander through the manicured gardens where the fragrance of blooming flowers mingles with the earthy scents of the surrounding vineyards. Or unwind on the terrace as the sun sets over the enchanting Dordogne horizon.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,L)*

### **Day 5: Pech Merle | Saint-Cirq-Lapopie**

After breakfast peek into the area's prehistoric past through well-preserved mural paintings at the neolithic caves of Pech Merle, one of the few original caves still open to visitors.

Continue to Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, a quaint medieval village situated atop a cliff with unrivaled views over the Lot River. Recognized as one of the most beautiful villages in France, Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is home to numerous artisans who display their goods in local boutiques.

Later sample one of the region's most prized treasures during a truffle tasting. Truffles are a form of mushroom, an edible fungus that many claim enhances the taste of food. Growing in damp conditions at the base of trees, truffles emit a scent that can be detected by trained goats, sows, and dogs. Learn more about these "black diamonds," and the patience and care required to cultivate them.

Return to the property with time to refresh before rejoining the group for a delectable three-course dinner.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,L,D)*

### **Day 6: Sarlat-la-Canéda | Les Eyzies-de-Tayac | Eyrignac**

Today's first highlight includes a journey to Sarlat-la-Canéda, a small village rich in history, architecture and cuisine. Stroll through the town's famous weekly market and learn about the region's gourmet ingredients during a tasting. A sensorial delight itself, the market features vendors offering fresh produce, homemade breads, oddly shaped sausages, heaps of olives, wheels of cheese, cans of artisanal foie gras, vibrant flowers, sweet confections and so much more.

Travel to Les Eyzies-de-Tayac for lunch at Les Glycines, a Michelin-starred restaurant committed to sustainable, tantalizing cuisine, an elevated ambiance and impeccable service.

This afternoon visit the impressive Gardens of Eyrignac, designated a historic monument. Handed down through 22 generations over a period of 500 years, this absolute must-see highlight is reknowned for its intricate topiary art, magnificently sculptured hedges, and recently added rose garden—where more than 5,500 bulbs are planted annually.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,L)*

### **Day 7: Beynac | La Roque-Gageac**

This morning join an expert chef for a hands-on cooking class and lunch at Le Chèvrefeuille, a traditional gîte, or country home. Learn culinary tips and secrets creating traditional recipes with local ingredients.

In the afternoon take a guided tour of Château de Beynac, the most authentic and best-preserved fortress of the Périgord. This magnificent medieval structure sits high above the Dordogne River. Despite its fortifications, Richard the Lionheart conquered the castle by scaling the cliff from below—though his occupation of the castle was admittedly short-lived. Out on the grounds admire breathtaking views over the river. Passing a church and stables enter the castle to find interesting dungeons, kitchens and living quarters. History emerges from every corner of this impressive château, including rare 15th-century frescoes

that are in incredibly good condition and a Renaissance staircase dating back to the 17th-century.

Before returning to the property stop at the photogenic village of La Roque-Gageac. Stroll the labyrinth of cobbled streets to capture a glimpse of a troglodyte fort, a Romanesque church and panoramic views of the Dordogne River.

Dinner tonight is at leisure.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,L)*

### **Day 8: Luzech | Puy l'Evêque**

Set out for Château de Cayx winery—a majestic property owned by the Danish royal family since 1974—for a tour and tasting. Learn how grapes are harvested from separate plots under strict temperature controls and produced into sophisticated varietals—a testament to wine being made in the area since ancient times.

Continue to Puy l'Evêque, a medieval town built on a rocky slope overlooking the Lot River. Its strategic location made the village one of the busiest and most important in the region, a shipping hub where wine was transported on river barges to Bordeaux. Admire the 14th century Château de Lychairie, the Convent des Capucins and the Gothic church of Saint-Sauveur.

Tonight gather with fellow travel companions for a convivial three-course farewell dinner at Michelin-starred Le Duèze to celebrate a memorable week in France.

*Overnight: Château de Mercuès (B,D)*

### **Day 9: Mercuès | Toulouse | Depart for U.S.**

After breakfast guests departing during the suggested times will take a complimentary transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### **Activity Level – Moderate**

Activities are generally not very strenuous, however, we expect that guests can enjoy two hours or more of walking each day, are sure-footed on cobbled and unpaved surfaces, and can walk up and down stairs without assistance.

The Château de Mercuès was constructed in the 13th century. While it has been updated to modern standards, its original structure means guests will find stone floors and steps that may not have railings. There is an elevator, but it does not access every floor.

Historic city centers are usually more accessible by foot than by vehicle, and sometimes it is not possible for your motor coach to drop you off at site entrances. Due to the structure of some buildings, facilities for the disabled may be limited. Also, dexterity to use kitchen tools and participate in lessons is not necessary but adds to the enjoyment of this program.

## What's Included

- 7 nights accommodations
- 7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 3 dinners served with wine
- All lessons, private tours and tastings, and unique small-group excursions noted in the 9-day itinerary
- Full guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director and expert local guides
- Private motor coach transportation
- Luggage portage
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, and wait staff for included meals
- Airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times

## Accommodations - Château de Mercuès

Nestled amidst the rolling hills and vineyards of the Dordogne region, Château de Mercuès—a Relais & Châteaux property—stands as a majestic testament to the grandeur of the 13th century. The château's history is evident in every weathered stone and ageless vine that graces its surroundings. Each guest room is a sanctuary of tranquility, featuring warm décor and uniquely selected furnishings that complement the original stone walls.

The Château not only invites guests to indulge in the opulence of its accommodations but also in the culinary delights that grace its dining options. Its Michelin-starred Le Duèze Restaurant serves gourmet creations that pay homage to the region's rich gastronomic heritage. Savory flavors and carefully selected wines from the château's own vineyards make each dining experience a journey through the senses.

Rooms differ in size and décor, but each offers views over the valley, vineyards or the garden.

**Classic Double:** 279-301 sq ft

**Deluxe Double:** 301-441 sq ft

**Prestige Double:** 344-592 sq ft

**Signature Suite:** 538-850 sq ft

*Room Amenities: King or two twin beds, flat-screen TV, writing desk, phone, minibar, safe, and en suite bathroom with combined bathtub/shower, sundries, and hair dryer.*

*NOTE: Château de Mercuès was constructed in the 13th century. While it has been updated to modern standards, its original structure includes stone floors and stairways that may not have railings. The property has an elevator, but it does not access every floor.*

**Call 866-639-0079 for more information or to reserve this tour today!**