

C101-ST Black Perigord & Prehistory




This limestone plateau, lined at the West by the Vezere Valley and at the South by the Dordogne Valley, is covered by forests of chestnut trees, pines and Holm oaks, which give it a dark colour and its name : Black Perigord. History tells us that life has always been pleasant along the banks of these two rivers and in the valleys sheltering magnificent old villages, which have kept their uniqueness throughout time. These two rivers have carved impressive sites in the plateau, which men have exploited by erecting castles and villages on top of rock pinnacles and thus enhancing the natural beauty of the site. You will return to prehistoric times as you visit the

troglodyte caverns in the cliffs of the Vezere valley, then advance through the middle ages and progress to present day as you traverse the valley of the Dordogne.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at MONTIGNAC, a lovely small town alongside the Vezere River. The river splits the town in two and on each side of its banks have sprung fountains, washing places, houses and half timbered buildings. On looking up, you will see the castle, former haunt of the Counts of Perigord, perched on its rocky spur and overlooking the town nestling below. Montignac is home to a masterpiece of renown, the Cave of Lascaux, whose facsimile opened in 1983. Don't miss it! - *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel*

Day 2 - MONTIGNAC –ST AMAND de COLY via the prehistoric Lascaux cave (16 km). After leaving this small town you will walk to the well-known prehistoric Lascaux cave to visit it. The research carried out during the past decades has placed the iconography of Lascaux at the beginning of the Magdalenian Age, that is, 17,000 years before today. After this journey in Prehistory you'll continue your walk by the château de la Grande Filolie, crossing some hamlets before reaching the small village of St Amand de Coly, where you will find a lovely fortified Romanesque church. You will return to Montignac by taxi - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.*



Day 3 - ST LEON DE VEZERE – LES EYZIES DE TAYAC (21 km). Transfer by taxi to Saint Leon, which boasts of one of the most beautiful Romanesque churches in Perigord and two châteaux ! You will walk through the Vezere Valley or along the heights of the village of Peyzac le Moustier and La Roque Saint Christophe, an imposing cliff dominating the river whose caves were inhabited as a troglodyte fortress since the earliest traces of man! You will continue your walk through the villages of Moustier and Tursac, with its steepled church, before reaching Les Eyzies de Tayac, where you will pass the evening in an ancient windmill along the banks of the Beune - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel*

Day 4 - LES EYZIES DE TAYAC. The morning is open and you may choose to spend it visiting the Musée de la Préhistoire or one of the many prehistoric grottos located in the area. FINSAC – BEYNAC and CAZENAC (15 km). A taxi will drop you off at the beginning of the afternoon near the little hamlet of Finsac. You will cross through the forest of oaks, chestnuts and pines and arrive at the small chapel of Redon-Espic, sitting quietly in the middle of woods. Passing through the village of Cazenac, you will come to the waters of the Dordogne, which you will follow until you reach Beynac. This cliff-side village houses an intimidating square and chateau overlooking the Dordogne. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.*



Day 5 - BEYNAC - VITRAC (19 km). Following the “Caminal del Penieraires”, a paved, sloped street lined with beautiful, small old houses, you will reach the château overlooking the valley. You will then walk down to the banks of the Dordogne and follow the river towards Castelnaud and its château, a rival to that of Beynac. You will cross the river to visit La Roque Gageac, a beautiful village built against the cliff, and then again to climb up to La Bastide de Domme, a lovely fortified city built on the top of a steep cliff. After visiting the town and the cavern, you will walk down to the Dordogne banks and the peaceful village of Vitrac - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

Day 6 - VITRAC - SARLAT (17 km). From Vitrac, you will walk to the village of Montfort and its fortified castle standing in a grandiose setting, highly-coveted for centuries. You will go up to the Cingle de Montfort (a bend in the Dordogne), which gives a lovely view onto the

Tursac Peninsula and the Montfort Château. You will leave the Dordogne Valley to cross through the countryside to Sarlat, passing the very typical village of Malevergne and the château of Hermier - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

Day 7 - SARLAT LA CANEDA. We invite you to discover this medieval town, with its narrow streets, restored Gothic and Renaissance town houses, the Saint Sacerdos Cathedral and its famous open-air market (open Saturdays). Here you will find paté, foie gras, pork and poultry preserves, and in autumn, truffles! You will understand why Henri Miller, the well-known American author, said, “This is the Frenchmen’s paradise !” - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel.*

Day 8 - SARLAT. Tour ends after breakfast.

Season

From April to end of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 7 nights’ accommodations in selected 2-star hotels
- 7 breakfasts – 4 dinners
- hotel to hotel luggage transfer along the trail.
- Taxi transfers
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes describing the trail.
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks – entrance fees - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls... are not include

Getting there and away

By plane: Bergerac is the nearest international airport. Links from London Stansted, Bristol, Southampton, Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham East Midlands, Exeter, Leeds Bradford. Taxi from airport to Montignac

By train: The Montignac nearest rail station is Brive la Gaillarde. Transfer by taxi from Brive to Montignac. From Sarlat trains to Bordeaux.

By car: Go to Brive-La-Gaillarde along motorway A20. Take the N89 road towards Perigueux. At Lardin, turn left onto D706 road towards Montignac.

Where to park: unsupervised free parkings at Montignac. Return by taxi from Sarlat to Montignac

Walk difficulty

Grade 2 - walks of 4 to 6 hours a day. Some stages could be more 20 km (13/15 miles) and rolling uplands, ascents mainly gradual than steep of up to 500 m. An average level of fitness or some experience with walking is recommended.