

The Dordogne and the Lot by bike



What's included?

7 nights accommodation, 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches

Refreshment stops from our famous brew van.

Mechanical support including spare bikes and equipment

Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night.

Two back up vans and guide that cycles at the back of the group

GPX files and route notes

Luggage transfer each day

Pick ups from Bordeaux or Bergerac airport at the start of the tour and transfer to the airport at the end of the tour.

Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate

Lots of fun!

Highlights

Visit the famous Lascaux International Centre for Cave Art - the site of cave paintings and engravings thought to be from 17-18,000 years ago

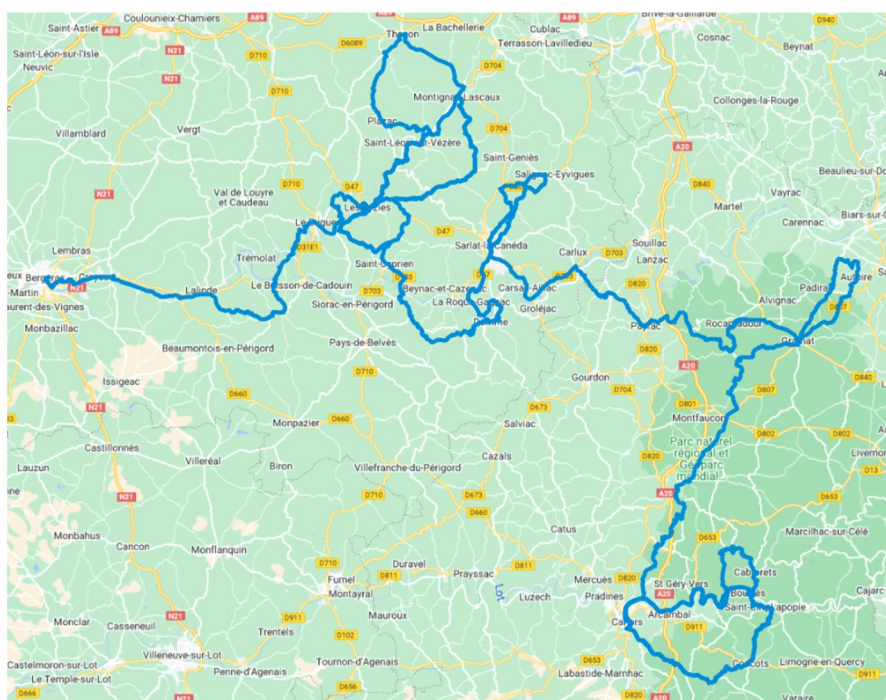
See some fantastic towns built into hillsides - Rocamadour and St Cirq Lapopie will take your breath away!

Enjoy quiet cycleways and roads, with beautiful views

Stay in the historic centres of Bergerac, Sarlat-la-Caneda and Cahors

Welcome to Peak Tours' Dordogne and Lot Valley tour. Covering a total of 240 miles / 390km - 327 miles / 526km (depending on which options you choose), a most beautiful week of cycling awaits with idyllic scenery in this stunning region of France.

We begin from Bergerac and cycle east to Les Eyzies. From here we will cycle through the stunning Vézère valley, also known as the Valley of Man, where you will find a huge range of prehistoric sites, from the troglodytic dwellings of La Roque St Christophe to the cave paintings of the Grotte de Font-de-Gaume. The following day sees us moving on to Sarlat la Caneda and Gramat before finishing in Cahors. We will stay in both Les Eyzies and Cahors for 2 nights each, so we will not be moving on every day.



Itinerary

Saturday: Non-riding day

Arrival day – welcome to the tour!

Our guides will set off from our base in Glos-sop on Thursday with all the bikes and stop a couple of times en route to Dover to pick up bikes.

A coach will depart from Bordeaux airport at 16:30 to arrive in Bergerac for 18:30 to allow time to settle in before the first evening meal.

For those arriving into Bergerac by train or plane, the city is just a short taxi ride away from the airport so you can arrive and have time to explore the winding streets and the history that Bergerac is famous for.

Sunday: Day 1 – Bergerac to Les Eyzies

Distance: 47 miles / 76 km

Elevation: 2350 ft / 950 m

A lovely bike path along the river takes us out of Bergerac and into the heart of the Dordogne region. We make our way to the amazing Cadouin Abbey, which was once a major pilgrimage site, before passing by Limeuil, classified as “one of the most beautiful villages in France.” With its winding streets built on a hillside over the river, it’s easy to see why! The final part of the day sees us finishing in Les Eyzies, a village dominated by the amazing once-inhabited caves which sit above the village.

Monday: Day 2 Les Eyzies ‘Valley of Man’ loops

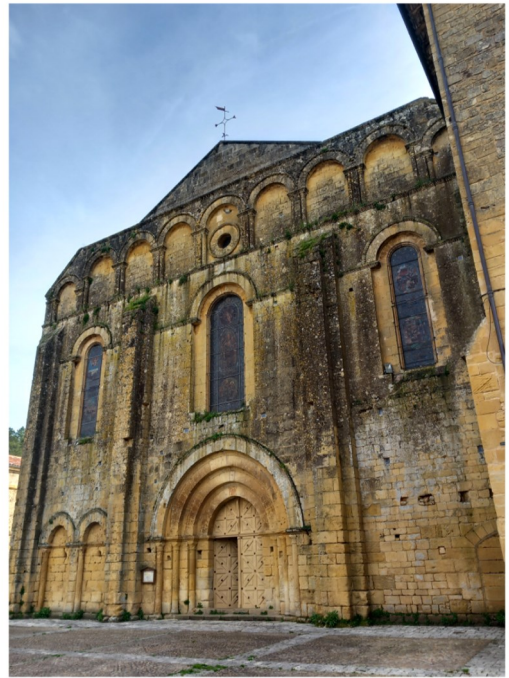
Short loop: 34 miles/ 55km Elevation: 1740ft / 650m

Medium loop: 52 miles / 83km Elevation: 3600ft / 1100m ascent

Long loop: 63 miles / 101km Elevation: 4300ft / 1300m

Today’s loops, all pass by some famous sites in the ‘Valley of Man’ – so named because of the volume of pre-historic sites found here.

Whichever route you choose, we pass by the famous Troglodytic Fort and City of La Roque Saint Christophe, before arriving into Montignac-Lascaux, which sits pretty on the Vezere river. For those who wish to stop at the Lascaux International Center for Cave Art for a tour of the replica caves and the museum, there is an opportunity to do so (2hr visit – this is to be booked before you arrived). On the return to Les Eyzies there is the Grotte de Font-de-Gaume, another site of Paleolithic era cave paintings, which this time offers tours of the caves themselves.



Itinerary

Tuesday: Day 3 Les Eyzies to Sarlat-la-Caneda

Short route: Distance: 41 miles/ 65 km, Elevation: 3200 ft / 950 m, Long route: Distance: 62 miles/ 100km, Elevation: 5500 ft /1700 m

Our journey continues along the Dordogne river, crossing it a few times as we pass by the impressive Chateau de Castelnaud-la-Chapelle, and through the fortified town of Domme, sometimes known as the 'Acropolis of the Périgord.' Finally we pass by the stunning village of La Roque Gageac, a town built into the rock, perched above the Dordogne. For those who wish to extend their ride the long route splits off from here for around 20 more lovely miles, and we end our day in Sarlat-la-Caneda, a medieval town with an abundance of cobbled streets to explore.

Wednesday: Day 4 Sarlat-la-Caneda to Gramat

Short route: Distance: 43 miles / 72 km Elevation: 3600ft / 1100 m, Long route: Distance: 61 miles / 94km, Elevation: 5300ft / 1600m

Leaving Sarlat, we take a traffic-free 'Voie Verte,' which winds its way through lovely quiet farmland before we cross the river and make our way towards hillier terrain. The hills are worth it as we find ourselves cycling towards Rocamadour, a famous cliff-side pilgrimage town, also known for its goats cheese. We finish the day in Gramat, which is again on the 'Pilgrim's Trail.' Again, there is a longer route which takes in the beautiful Autaire gorge road.



Thursday: Day 5 Gramat to Cahors

Distance: 41 miles/ 66 km Elevation: 3000ft / 900m

The scenery changes as the cave dwellings and cliffs become more sparse, and we take in more pastoral France. Quiet roads lead us through small rural villages, as we head towards the river Lot. We end with a stunning cycle along the river to see the Pont Valentré, a bridge built in the 14th century, which has now become the symbol of Cahors.

We spend two evenings in Cahors, really being able to enjoy the town which is something of the 'capital' of the region.

Friday: Day 6 Cahors Loop: St-Cirq-Lapopie and the Lot river

Short loop distance: 41 miles/ 66 km Elevation: 2500ft / 750m
Long loop distance: 52 miles / 83km, Elevation: 3600ft / 1100m

The final day of riding of our tour finishes with a visit to one of the highlights of the Dordogne and Lot regions: St-Cirq-Lapopie. A town built unto a sheer cliff, it seems an improbable place to build a town, but the maze of streets and impressive church giving some insight into the historic significance of the town.

The two loops allow for some flexibility, as the routes split after lunch, so if you're feeling like you have some energy left for the end of the tour you could tackle some extra climbing on quiet roads into hidden valleys, before descending to rejoin the short loop.

Saturday: Departure Day

Transfers will be arranged to the transport hubs of the region (Bordeaux or Bergerac) for your trains or flights home. Meanwhile your bikes will start their journey back home in our back up van.



Tour Logistics

The start of the tour

The tour starts in Bergerac on the first Saturday. Train or plane are two main options for arriving into Bergerac, with the airport being just 3 miles from the arrival day hotel. Alternatively, you could get the train to Bordeaux Airport, and take advantage of our transfer service from there:

Train: Bergerac is directly accessible by train and has good rail links to Paris. London St Pancras to Bergerac usually takes around 7-8 hrs, with a change in Paris, and then Bordeaux.

Plane: There are direct flights to Bergerac and Bordeaux from various different UK airports. However, from some airports you will need to fly via other hubs such as Amsterdam, so the train may be a quicker option.

Some customers choose to arrive in Bergerac a day before the tour starts, and then stay in Cahors for an extra day at the end of the tour. This can be a great way to extend your holiday at either end to combine tourism with your cycling.

Whether you arrive at Bordeaux Airport by train or by plane, we will have a guide to meet you and a coach booked for 16:30, Bordeaux to Bergerac which takes around 1hr30 mins by road. If you arrive after 16:30 then you will need to arrange your own transport from the airport to your accommodation in Bergerac. There is a taxi rank immediately outside the airport should you need to use this option.

We have a group meal on Saturday night and then the cycling starts on Sunday.



The end of the tour

The final day of riding is on Friday and a coach will arrive on Saturday morning at 8:00 to take you back to Bergerac airport for approximately 10:00 or Bordeaux for 11:45 for your trains or flight home.

One of the guides will drive a van with all of your bikes in back to England and you can either meet them on Sunday as they are driving north, pick up your bike from us in Glossop at some point (no charge) or alternatively we can box your bike and post it back to you - The price for this courier service is available on request.

Support

Usually each tour has 3 guides:

- 1 driving the 'brew van' - each day will usually have a morning and afternoon 'brew stop,' with a table full of snacks and drinks. You will also bring a small bag/rucksack to the morning brief and leave this in the 'brew van' which can be accessed throughout the day.
- 1 driving the 'luggage / lunch van' - transporting your luggage from hotel to hotel, as well as setting up your lunches.
- 1 riding at the back of the group - you will have detailed route notes so that you can go slower or faster than the leader if you prefer or you can cycle with the tour guide at the back so that you don't have to navigate at all.
- Mechanical support: we carry a range of spare parts so that repairs can be made en route and we also have spare bikes available in the event that your bike has a serious breakdown. If we can't fix your bike then we will get it to the nearest bike shop.
- Each guide will be contactable by phone during the day so if you have any issues you can get straight in touch with them.
- For smaller groups you might only have one guide that cycles with the group and one back up driver or for groups of 12 or less just one tour leader will provide back-up for you.

What's Included?

- 7 nights accommodation, 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches
- Snacks from the back up van, tea, coffee & hot chocolate etc.
- Mechanical support including spare bikes should anything drastic happen
- GPX files and route notes
- A Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate
- Luggage transfer each day
- Transfers at the beginning and end of the tour
- Lots of fun!

What's not included?

- Evening meals / dinner
- Drinks at lunchtime
- Cycle hire (available for a fee)
- Garmin hire (available for a fee)
- Transport of your bike to / from France (available for a fee)
- Insurance

Food

Breakfast

Breakfast is included in the cost of the tour, and will vary slightly between the various hotels and B&Bs that we use, but you can usually expect a continental, French style breakfast—pastries, toast, cereals, fruit juices, tea, coffee etc. with some places offering cooked breakfast options, usually bacon and eggs.

Lunch

Lunches will be provided each day and will generally be a buffet at a café or a picnic lunch provided by the guides.

Evening meals

Evening meals can be bought at your accommodation or in a nearby restaurant. On the first evening, day 4 and the final evenings of the tour we will have a group meal at the hotel.

Dietary requirements

Please let us know of any dietary requirements you have and we will ensure that all lunch stops and places we eat evening meals are informed.

There will also be snacks on the 'brew van' to suit any and all dietary needs!

Accommodation

You have a choice sharing a double or a twin room. If you would like your own space then you can choose the single room option, or sole occupancy of a double. Most of the rooms are en suite however there maybe a few nights where your room isn't en suite (Sole occupancy of a double room is guaranteed en suite). Generally on the Dordogne tour we stay in hotels.

Kit list

Clothing for all weathers is recommended so waterproofs are essential.

A full recommended kit list is provided and we are always happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Luggage is restricted to a maximum of 18kg per person—we have to look after our guides and their backs as they will be carrying your luggage in and out of the hotels!

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out adequate insurance for your tour which, as an absolute minimum should cover accident & medical expenses if you are travelling outside the UK, cover for your bike and belongings and cancellation cover in the event that you have to cancel your tour for unforeseen circumstances.

You should be aware that if you have an accident or fall ill while on the tour you will lose the money paid for the trip. A travel insurance policy would allow you to reclaim most of the money as well as providing insurance in case you lose your bags or if your bike is stolen, broken etc.

Your policy should also cover cancellation costs if you cancel the tour within 8 weeks of departure. If this happens we will try to fill your space and return your funds to you but if we are unable to fill your place you will lose the funds paid for the tour.

We have partnered with Yellow Jersey who provide Travel and Cycle insurance for UK residents. You can find further details [here](#).

Am I fit enough?

Difficulty

The Dordogne tour is a more gentle route than some of our other tours, full of stunning scenery as you cover this beautiful loop from In-vernness.

The tour is a grade 4 -5 tour (depending on if you take the short or long route options), please see details of our grading system [here](#).

You will be expected to be able to complete an average of 40 miles / 65 km per day (and have the option of a rest on some days.)

Most people on the tour will be active cyclists, and cycling the above distances on consecutive days will not be too challenging for them.

How fast do I need to be?

Generally, most cyclists completing this tour will be capable of cycling at 10-12 miles / 16-19 kmph over the whole day, keeping in mind that some days are more undulating than others, and you will be stopping for breaks and lunches.

Most days start at 8:30/9:00 and we ask that all riders are finished by 18:00 at the latest if possible, to allow you time to relax and explore the places that you stay in the evenings.

Are there any hills on the tour?

The distances on this tour fit with our grade 1-3 rating, however generally there is some climbing on each day so we have given it a rating of [4](#). The climbs are generally steady (between 4-7%) with the odd steeper section, but generally they are the kind of hills that you can get into a good rhythm on. The descents are also quite steady, never too steep and generally on quiet roads with good surface.

Training

The fitter you are and the more training that you do beforehand will add to the enjoyment of your tour and improve your chances of succeeding the challenge.

If you need any advice about fitness please contact us and we will be happy to discuss any questions and concerns that you may have.

We have a training document which has a suggested training programme, which you can access [here](#).

Bikes

The Dordogne tour can be completed by people on all types of bikes: it is important you ride on a bike on which you are most comfortable. Most people choose to ride on road or touring bikes for this tour.

You can transport your bike in the following ways:

- bringing your own - most people using this option will arrive by car, train or place.
- we can transport your bike for you if you can get your bike to us in Glossop in the Peak District

Please ensure that your bike is fully serviced and in good working order before the start of the trip. It is advisable to have your bike service a few weeks before the start of the tour. This will allow time to 'bed in' before you start your ride.

Alternatively you can hire a bike from us, please see [our website](#) for more information.

