

# Walking Holiday in the Lot Valley



## Highlights

Home to some of France's most picturesque chateaux and hamlets, the Lot Valley is the perfect backdrop for a leisurely walking holiday. This seven-day self-guided tour takes you from village to village along forested river valleys, down endless leafy lanes and across rolling croplands, including the AOC Cahors vineyards, source of Lot's famous 'black wine'!

Lot is one of the least populated and least polluted departments in France. It is also one of most picturesque, with gently rolling farmlands, lush river valleys, shady groves and rocky limestone cause. The rustic landscape is scored by mile upon mile of leafy lanes that converge occasionally in a sleepy hamlet; old men sip cassis, boys play pétanque and other idyllic clichés unfold before your eyes! The region is also home to the medieval yellow-stone town of Gourdon, with its impressive hilltop vistas, and the stunning cliff-side citadel of Rocamadour. In recent years Lot has gained critical acclaim from wine critics for its 'black wine' of Cahors, which currently graces many of the world's finest restaurants and dining tables.

This seven-day walking tour covers some of the most spectacular sites of southwest France. Cliff top chateaux, patchwork hillsides of vineyards and sunflowers and achingly beautiful villages are ten a penny in this magical region; little wonder then that it has long drawn artists and photographers from far afield. Among the many highlights on this tour are the absurdly-picturesque cliff-side commune of Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, the 12th century Chateau de Beynac (one-time seat of Richard the Lionheart) that towers above Dordogne River and the ancient village of Rocamadour, carved deep into the cliff-face such that it virtually hangs from the high limestone cause. For a while you'll also follow the Cahors wine trail, giving you a chance to sample some of the famous 'black wine' of the region whilst picnicking among the vines!

## Is it for me?

This is a wonderful, laidback walking holiday, chock-full of history, culture and fantastic scenery. The emphasis here is on discovering the landscape in a relaxed fashion, soaking in the sights, sounds and smells of this quintessentially French region. All the walking is easy-going - between 10 and 16km per day on mostly flat terrain - so those of you who like their hiking action-packed and strenuous may feel a little under-stimulated here. This said, even adrenalin-junkies would be hard pressed not to be won over by Lot's timeless beauty and fairytale charm; combine this with luxurious accommodation and exquisite food and you've alchemised holiday gold!

## Accommodation

Yes, oh yes! You'd be hard pressed to find a holiday with more sensual allure than this one! Besides the excellent wines, you can be assured of some truly awesome food, from fantastic breakfast spreads to aperitifs and four-course dinners on the terrace! You'll even enjoy a picnic lunch among the vines with ingredients bought fresh from the market an hour or two before! Nestled in a wooded countryside between the Dordogne and Lot rivers, the Mas de Flory is a wonderful place to stay, with its charming stone farmhouse and lovingly renovated 18th century barn. The latter contains several elegantly furnished en suite rooms, the perfect compliment to the stunning setting.

## Itinerary

The following is a planned itinerary and may be subject to minor changes:

Prices from

**695** GBP (7 days) per person

## Why book with Tourdust?

- ✓ **The Best Local Operators**  
We handpick the best local operators
- ✓ **Local Price Guarantee**  
Pay what you would locally with our Best Price Guarantee
- ✓ **Secure Online Payments**  
Safe and easy online booking
- ✓ **ABTA Bonding for your protection**  
We even throw in complimentary Supplier Failure Cover

  
ABTA No. L7477

**Day 1:** Arrive at either Bergerac airport or Gourdon rail station where you'll be met and driven to beautiful Mas de Flory - your 'home' for the week. Settle into your spacious and airy room (with luxury en suite shower room), then relax and enjoy a glass of bubbly on the terrace while you meet your fellow holiday guests. Later you'll all share a long, lazy, delicious four-course meal with plenty of wonderful Cahors 'black wine'. Each evening of your holiday will follow a similar pattern and you will enjoy fabulous home prepared food throughout your stay.

**Day 2:** After a substantial continental breakfast you'll be driven to the River Dordogne for your starting point for a walk which follows the pilgrim route to Rocamadour.

Carved dramatically into the limestone cliffs, this ancient village clings precariously to the hillside, presenting a visually magical site. It has been a destination for religious pilgrims for the last thousand years and is now the site for a monastery as well as a point on the pilgrimage to St Jaques de Compostella in northern Spain. You'll have plenty of time to explore before being driven back to Mas de Flory where you can relax before another great meal.

**Day 3:** Visit some of the most popular historic sites of the region today - Sarlat, Domme, Beynac and Roque Gageac. You'll walk the promenade en Bouriane along the old railway cutting in the heart of the Marcillande stream valley and into ancient Sarlat. Here you can visit the old town, dating from both medieval and renaissance times; don't miss the streets around the cathedral and the streets to the north of the old town - you will soon become lost in the maze of narrow lanes, with something new to see around every corner.

After lunch in one of the many cafes and restaurants in Sarlat, you'll be driven back through pretty Domme, a 12th century, perfectly preserved bastide village perched high above the River Dordogne. Then you'll see the spectacular, historic riverside settlement of La Roque Gageac, carved into the rocky hillside, followed by a walk up the narrow cobbled streets to the magnificent Chateau de Beynac (one time seat of Richard the Lionheart), towering high on the cliff top overlooking the river.

**Day 4:** Today you'll follow the Cahors wine trail and visit the vineyards of the wonderful AOC Cahors 'black wine'. Meander your way around the patchwork of vineyards and wine chateaux stopping for a picnic lunch and wine tastings. On this tour you will also see panoramic views across the River Lot as well as from the higher limestone cause as you climb away from the valley floor.

**Day 5:** After going further afield yesterday, today you're staying close to home with two local circular walking routes. Explore the lovely local paths and bridleways which surround Mas de Flory and discover some amazing fauna and flora. There are many varieties of wild orchid in the Lot and part of the route de St Jaques de Compostelle passes by the house! You can enjoy a long ramble before returning for a picnic lunch on the terrace. You then have the option of taking a second route for the afternoon or just relaxing at 'home' if you prefer.

**Day 6:** Today you'll see St Cirq Lapopie and walk alongside the pretty, scenic River Lot, east of Cahors. The route there takes you along the GR 36/46 from St Gery across the river to the pretty village of Bouzies, along paths dramatically hewn from the overhanging rock, and winding its way gradually up hill to the amazing St Cirq Lapopie. Beloved of artists and photographers it is officially one of the most beautiful villages in France. Its main street winds steeply down between ancient houses, past the pinnacle of rock once crowned with a fortress commanding amazing views over the valley.

**Day 7:** Departure day and after a leisurely breakfast you'll be taken to Gourdon rail station or Bergerac airport to meet your homeward connection.

## Details

### Getting there

Transfer from Bergerac Airport (flights from all around UK) or Gourdon Rail Station (trains from Paris Gare du Nord or Toulouse Airport)

### Price includes

Accommodation, all breakfasts and evening meals, detailed walking routes and maps, transfers

### Typical Duration

6 days

### Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

### Experience required

Not relevant