

FRANCE – THE DORDOGNE QUERCY

7-day / 6-night **QUALITY** guided small group tour



Over several years we have developed a wonderful selection of small group fully guided walking tours, in the Lot or Dordogne Valleys of southwest France. Food and wine play an important role in each itinerary, as do the seasons and seasonal foods and flowers especially in spring or autumn.

The Dordogne is known for its spectacular caves, quintessential French country scenery and its gastronomy. The region known as the 'Quercy' is less well-known but all the more beautiful with its calm limestone pastures and lofty Lombardy poplar valleys. It was given by Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henri d'Anjou in 1152, two years before he became Henry II of England, and its beauty and timelessness has changed little since.

Our English-speaking host and guide has lived in the southwest of France for many years, enthused by the romance and beauty of the area. His love of the flora and fauna, fascination for food, wine and local traditions and his personal contacts make these very special holiday experiences.

These bespoke walking parties stay in the most charming, small, quality auberges. Beds and bathrooms are usually spacious and extremely comfortable with lovely views often over the Dordogne River and the surrounding countryside. The hospitality and service is top-notch. We can sit and drink a glass of Saussignac or Clairnet in the garden or courtyard, in settings that epitomise the charm and delight of the Dordogne Quercy.

Cost from: **\$4640** per person twin share Single room supplement from \$745 (limited availability)

Departs: Ask for details

Tour includes: 6 nights in comfortable, quality hotels, inns and private homes with ensuite bathroom; All meals and wine (and pre meal evening drinks); Fully guided walking, support staff and vehicle, luggage transfers, All local transport for the walks and knowledgeable guides; Maximum group size of 14.

Not included: Transport to and from the walk and personal expenses



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary: *Please note that the itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of the guides.*

Day 1: Arrive Domme

Meet at Toulouse airport for the transfer to the Dordogne. We stop for lunch near the beautiful abbey of Moissac then continue to move on to the towering bastide village of Domme overlooking the Dordogne River. We stay three nights in a charming traditional guesthouse in the very heart of the Quercy region.

Day 2: Marqueyssac & La Roque Gageac

walking @ 13km

The table is laden with a typical French breakfast this morning: croissants, fruit and hot coffee. After breakfast we set off on foot for the 17th Century Chateau of Marqueyssac, through exceptionally picturesque countryside dotted with chateaux and forests of Lombardy poplars and walnut trees. The gardens of Marqueyssac, on a ridge above the river Dordogne, are filled with extraordinary asymmetrical topiary.

We have lunch at the chateau before continuing on foot to the enchanting village of La Roque Gageac nestled into the cliffs on the river. In the afternoon we drive back to Domme for dinner.

Day 3: Lascaux & Sarlat

walking @ 13km

Our first stop is Lascaux II, the most important pre-historic cave site in Europe, sometimes called the Sistine Chapel of the Stone Age. We walk from the cave towards a beautiful chateau for a picnic lunch. After lunch we drive to Sarlat, one of the most beautiful villages in the Dordogne and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its *lauzes* (stone) roofed Renaissance merchants' houses dominate.

In the afternoon we visit an ancient, but still active, walnut mill to see how the cogs turn to produce oil. From here we walk across the valley back to Domme well in time for dinner.

Day 4: Monpazier, Chateau Biron & the Quercy Blanc

walking @ 9km

After breakfast a short transfer to the start of our walk. We walk through chestnut woods and pastures to one of the most beautiful bastides, Monpazier, founded by the English King Edward I in 1284. We lunch in the large open square. In the afternoon we continue through oak woods towards another historical masterpiece, Chateau Biron, used as a location for many films. We transfer to a village in the Quercy Blanc region and our accommodation in a charming country manor house for three nights.

Dinner is French cuisine refined and beautifully presented at the hotel.

Day 5: Chateau Chambert & Bonaguil

walking @ 9km

We drive to Chateau Chambert then set off by foot through the valleys of Jurassic limestone. We pass vineyards and tiny villages before arriving at the very popular local café in the village of Saint Matré. After lunch we visit the beautiful honey-coloured 16th Century castle of Bonaguil, then return to our hotel for dinner.

Day 6: Lavender & the Quercy countryside

walking @ 12km

Back to Saint Matré this morning after breakfast for our walk through undulating pastures to a lavender distillery. We can talk about the making of lavender oil and its sad fate in the Quercy as this one is now extinct. We continue on up a small hill to a long and lazy lunch at a private house with fine views over the Quercy countryside and in clear weather all the way to the Pyrenees. In the afternoon we drive back, visiting a small 15th Century fresco-painted church along the way, to our hotel where we have dinner this evening.

Day 7: Departure day

The tour ends after breakfast. We offer a transfer to Toulouse Airport for those meeting ongoing flights.



Other walking holidays in this style included gastronomic walks in rural **Suffolk** in England in summer and **The Best of the St James Way**, taking in the best of the *Chemin St Jacques* or *Camino de Santiago* from Le Puy en Velay to Conques in France. If you are interested in good food and cooking **Outdoor Travel** also offers French cooking, wine and gentle walking itineraries in autumn and truffle hunting in winter – ask for details.

Outdoor Travel's walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided inn-to-inn, are available in many parts of Europe. Consider **Tuscany**, **Umbria**, **Piedmont**, the **Amalfi Coast**, the **Cinque Terre**, or the **Dolomites** in Italy. In Spain we offer walks in **Andalucia** or in the **Alpajurras Mountains**; in France choose **Provence** or **Burgundy**, the **Vermillion Coast**, **Corsica**, **Burgundy**, **Alsace**, the **Loire** or **Auvergne**. For long-distance walks consider the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrims' *road to Rome*, or England's **Coast to Coast**.

Contact OUTDOOR TRAVEL for more details, brochures and reservations

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