

FRANCE – THE TASTE OF TRUFFLES IN DORDOGNE

5-days / 4-nights guided easy walking to enjoy the treasures of winter in rural France



Plutarch believed they were mud cooked by lightning, Juvenal that they were the product of thunder and rain and Pliny that they were nature's greatest miracle. Elizabeth David said they were the most delicious of foods anywhere and Brillat-Savarin that 'without truffles there can be no truly gastronomic meal.' The mystique around the truffle continues, in its nebulous way, to intrigue.

This five day tour is ideal to become acquainted with the mysterious and gastronomically fantastic fungus as perhaps you never have before. We concentrate on three subjects: the hunting of truffles, the cooking and eating of truffles, and the buying of truffles. You may make your own truffled foie gras and share a precious gastronomic moment with friends. We pay a visit the world famous truffle market at Lalbenque after a seven course truffled brunch cooked by a top chef!

The weather in February can be glorious. Cold and crisp with perfect blue skies just the perfect skies to go hunting truffles 'à la mouche'. We do plan to do some easy walking but should we get inclement weather we are well-prepared with ample alternatives – castles, chateaux and wineries to visit!

Departs: 3rd – 7th February, 10th – 14th February, 2018

Cost from: \$1875 per person twin share Single room supplement from \$480

Includes: 4 nights' twin-share accommodation in comfortable, quality hotels or inns (all rooms with own bathroom), all meals, knowledgeable English-speaking guides, all local transport

Not included: Drinks, personal expenses

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 – Saturday

Plan to arrive at Toulouse airport in the late afternoon where you will be collected for the drive to our accommodation, a charming Quercy stone manor house amidst the rolling Dordogne Quercy countryside. We can relax in front of a roaring fire whilst Chef Bernard, the co-owner of the inn, cooks dinner for us.

Day 2 – Sunday

Walk distance @ 11km

Our morning begins with a laden table, groaning under the weight of fruit, croissants, *pain au chocolat*, jams, fresh fruit juice and strong black coffee. After breakfast we drive to the start of our walk. This stroll in the fresh air builds our appetite for lunch! We walk to a charming medieval village where a classic rural French market is held today. We have lunch in a local auberge. Afterwards, there is time for another walk in the pretty Quercy countryside. We stop at a 14th Century church where the frescoes depict the seven deadly sins, and finish the day with an excellent truffle dinner prepared carefully by Chef Bernard. He will also cook crepes Suzette. This is a rare treat as Bernard rarely has time to cook at table but in the off-season we gain this privilege.

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Day 3 – Monday: Cooking the Truffle

Walk distance @ 8km

After another substantial breakfast we drive to our host's home in nearby Lario. Here in the farmhouse's traditional kitchen we all have an opportunity to work with the truffle. There is a huge choice of local specialties we can choose to make, including *poule en demi-deuil*, a wonderful treat with a proper farm chicken and vegetables fresh from the Sunday market, and tiny cabbages stuffed with breadcrumbs, truffle and bacon. We use both fresh and frozen truffle (freezing is the best way to preserve the fungus), so we may see and taste the difference between the fresh and the preserved. We also have the opportunity to make our own truffled foie gras – a true gastronomic delight!

We walk off lunch in the beautiful countryside, before a visit to a family-run Cahors vineyard. The family have been making wine here since 1830 and the selection includes a Black Wine, where the grapes are 'cooked' in prune-drying ovens, and a beautiful sweet white made from Chenin Blanc grapes. We return in the vehicles to the manor house for more delicious French cuisine from the chef. Once again a warm crackling wood fire, once again delicious wine and once again a well-earned, comfortable bed for the night in a cosy room.

Day 4 – Tuesday: Buying and Hunting the Truffle

a stroll to a seven-course truffle brunch

Start the day with coffee and a short walk to a local church before perhaps the highlight of the tour, our seven-course truffle brunch – each course carefully truffled to give you a morning tingle. After brunch we set off for the truffle market at Lalbenque – gloriously rustic, unique and simple, where we meet a characterful group of pure-bred, rustic types, beret-clad and ruddy-faced! Here is a chance to buy some real fresh truffle to take away with you. A decent truffle should cost around €70 depending on the August rains. That would come out at about €1000 per kilo! After the market we leave Lalbenque by car for a truffle hunt with a dear old lady and her friendly pig. It is rare to find a truffle pig these days as most truffle hunters use dogs. Time permitting we may stop at a lovely chateau for afternoon tea before returning to our accommodation for our (un-truffled) farewell dinner.

Day 5 – Wednesday

After breakfast we drive to Cahors for the market that takes place in front of the Gothic cathedral. It is a lovely market and there is time for some last-minute shopping. In Cahors we have lunch in a favourite restaurant before driving to Moissac to look at the fabulous Romanesque abbey that Sir Kenneth Clark eulogised in his great BBC series 'Civilisation'. A quick visit inside the abbey before we drive to Toulouse-Blagnac airport where the tour ends (*ask about extra nights of accommodation if required*).

NOTE: The itinerary is subject to change according to local conditions. All distances are approximate.



Outdoor Travel offer a wide range of guided or self-guided walking holidays in most regions of France, Italy, Spain and in most destinations in Europe. For a selection of similar tours including cooking holidays in Provence or the Dordogne in France see: <http://bit.ly/2gKbBBa>

Outdoor Travel's walking holidays, guided in small groups or self-guided inn-to-inn, are available in many parts of Europe – in France choose **Provence** or the **Loire**, **Corsica**, **Burgundy** or **Alsace** or the **Cote d'Azur**. Consider **Tuscany**, **Umbria**, **Piedmont**, the **Amalfi** or **Cinque Terre** Coasts or the **Dolomites** in Italy. In Spain we offer walks in **Andalucia** or in the **Alpajurras**. In Italy walk the pilgrims 'road to Rome', the **Via Francigena** or in England the challenging **Coast to Coast** walk.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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