

## FRANCE – VÉZÈRE VALLEY & DORDOGNE

8-days / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking holiday from Les Eyzies de Tayac to Sarlat



This 8-day self-guided walk begins in the Périgord Noir region of the Dordogne in the village of Les Eyzies on the banks of the Vézère River. The village is surrounded by prehistoric rock dwellings; the caves include some of the most significant archaeological finds from the Palaeolithic time period, extensive wall paintings and engravings. See the National Museum of Prehistory at Les Eyzies and explore the sites where Cro-Magnon man once lived.

This moderate walk follows paths through fortified villages, limestone cliffs, rivers and ancient forest climbing to the strongholds of Beynac and Castelnaud and 'bastide' village Domme. Visit the medieval town of Sarlat-le-Canéda with its twisting streets and passages and honey-coloured buildings. The market here nearby is the region's largest and boasts local delicacies such as foie gras, walnuts and cheese. The region is a gastronomic delight, with duck and goose always on the menu of the rich local cuisine with foie gras (fatted liver of either duck or goose, with a rich buttery taste) or magrets, juicy duck breast often accompanied by truffle sauce.

**Departs:** Daily on demand – from mid-April to the end of October

**Grade:** Moderate walking in a rolling countryside. Walks of 4 - 6 hours a day of 14 - 20km

**Cost from:** \$1845 per person twin share    Single room supplement \$525    Solo Traveller supplement \$820

**Includes:** 7 nights' accommodation in 2 or 3-star hotels, 7 breakfasts, 5 dinners, inn-to-inn luggage transfers, detailed route notes (in English), maps and local support.

**Not included:** Meals not mentioned, drinks with dinners, personal expenses, entrance fees, other transport. Extra nights can be arranged in Les Eyzies or Sarlat at extra cost, please ask when booking.

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations**

## Suggested itinerary:

### Day 1: Arrive Les Eyzies de Tayac

Arrive in Les Eyzies early, to allow for time to explore the village before dinner at your hotel. Les Eyzies is nestled under limestone cliffs on the banks of the Vézère River. The lush green Vézère valley has over 140 prehistoric sites including rock dwellings, caves with engravings or drawings, and burial sites. Ask to stay an additional night if you want more time to explore this fascinating area. Les Eyzies can be reached by train from Paris via Limoges, from Bordeaux via Périgueux, or from Toulouse via Agen.

### Day 2: Les Eyzies circuit

**Walk distance @ 12km**

An easy circular walk with lovely views of the cliffs and grottos above the Vézère River. Take a short detour to visit the Grotte de Cirq also known as the Grotte de Sorcier beside a small house built into the rock. This cave uniquely has a depiction of a human. The short walk should leave you time to visit the National Museum of Prehistory for an introduction to the paleolithic era, particularly Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon history. Dinner tonight is at your own arrangements so you can choose from one of the many restaurants in town.

### Day 3: Les Eyzies to Boyer

**Walk distance @ 18km**

After leaving Les Eyzies you pass through woodland and valleys to the Chateau de Commarque, on a rocky outcrop in the Beune valley. The chateau was hidden beneath undergrowth for centuries before being discovered in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and is undergoing restoration. You can climb to the top of the tower for amazing views.

### Day 4: Boyer to Beynac

**Walk distance @ 18km**

Walk across undulating terrain, through shady woods and fields to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century Chateau de Beynac, perched high on a crag above the river, overlooking the feudal village. Beynac is a well-preserved medieval village, one of the 'most beautiful villages of France'. Your hotel tonight is just a bit further down the road in the hamlet of Saint-Vincente-de-Cosse, where you stay in a chateau or its outbuildings.

### Day 5: Beynac to Vitrac

**Walk distance @ 17km**

A visit to the stunning overhanging gardens at the Jardins de Marqueyssac is a highlight of the walk today. The gardens offer an unusual twist on the formal French garden, with the box hedges clipped into fantastical round, swirling shapes. High above the river, there are wonderful views across the valley from the gardens. Afterwards, you cross the Dordogne river to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Chateau de Castelnaud, originally built to face its rival at Beynac. Castelnaud houses a fine collection of medieval war machines. After a pleasant walk you arrive in the fortified hilltop village of Domme, which retains portions of its original 13<sup>th</sup> Century fortifications and three of its *portes* (gateways). A few more kilometres down the path brings you to Vitrac where you will spend the night.

### Day 6: Vitrac to Sarlat

**Walk distance @ 20km**

The route passes the privately owned 'Chateau de Montfort' high on a rocky ledge overhanging the village of Montfort. Chateau Montfort has had a turbulent history, and has undergone a great deal of change during its 800 years of existence. You then pass through fields and woodlands before arriving in the medieval city of Sarlat with its ancient facades, which are now protected by law.

### Day 7: Explore Sarlat

**free day or optional circular walking route**

A free day to discover Sarlat. The glass lift in Sainte-Marie's bell tower offers a unique experience and wonderful views. On Wednesdays and Saturdays there is a produce market in the centre. Sarlat is just a few kilometres from the world renowned Lascaux neolithic caves and the new Lascaux 4 Museum – perhaps take a taxi to visit this amazing new complex opened late in 2016. Make your own arrangements for dinner tonight with many restaurants to choose from and a host of gastronomic foods and local wines and liqueurs to enjoy.

### Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast in Sarlat. Onwards travel by train to Bordeaux or Paris with connections in Libourne.

**Outdoor Travel** offer a wide range of self-guided inn-to-inn or guided, centre-based walking holidays in most regions in Europe. Other walks available in France include **Provence, Burgundy, the Alps, Riviera Coast, Canal du Midi, the Pyrenees, the Auvergne** and following in the footsteps of R.L. Stevenson in the **Cevennes**. In France, Spain and Portugal we offer the **Camino de Santiago** pilgrimage route and in Italy the **Via Francigena** – the pilgrim's *Road to Rome*, **Tuscany, Umbria, Lake Como, the Alps or Dolomites, the Amalfi Coast** or the **Cinque Terre** coast. Ask about walks in Croatia, Austria, the Alps or Bernese Oberland in Switzerland, in Bavaria, Germany or in England where the **Coast-to-Coast** is a popular challenging walk.

### Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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