

The Dordogne & Lot
April 15-17, 2017, Easter Weekend

This was my second trip to the region, which in my opinion is one of the most beautiful parts of France. Rolling green hills, interesting rock formations and numerous rivers with lush valleys make for a beautiful natural backdrop to the incredible concentration of beautiful medieval villages and a castle at just about every turn. With a bit more time, it would also be a fantastic base for hiking, biking or kayaking. I hope to get back down there again very soon.

See the next page for the itinerary from my first trip to the region. For my first and second trips to the region, we based much of our explorations around villages designated as [Les Plus Beaux Villages de France](#).

You can view my photos from Easter Weekend [here](#).

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Comments								
Saturday, April 15	Train Paris to Bordeaux Visit Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère Visit & dinner in Sarlat-la-Canéda Night in Domme	<p><i>Train:</i></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">PARIS</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">09h23 MONTPARNASSE 1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">ET 2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2953</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">12h40 BORDEAUX SAINT JEAN</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Car:</i> Europcar, St-Jean Gare TGV</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> www.esplanade-perigord.com</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> Hôtel L'ESPLANADE*** 24250 DOMME EN PERIGORD Tél. : (+33) (0) 5 53 28 31 41 Fax : (+33) (0) 5 53 28 49 92 esplanade.domme@wanadoo.fr</p> <p><i>Dinner:</i> Le Grand Bleu, Sarlat https://restaurant.michelin.fr/2d6bc3s/le-grand-bleu-sarlat-la-caneda/ http://www.legrandbleu.eu/ 43 av. de la Gare 24200 Sarlat-la-Canéda</p>	PARIS		09h23 MONTPARNASSE 1		ET 2	2953	12h40 BORDEAUX SAINT JEAN		<p><i>Train:</i> €257 round trip per person (1st class)</p> <p><i>Car</i> \$180.72</p> <p><i>Hotel:</i> €90/night (we got a discount as the wallpaper in the room was a bit damaged)</p>	<p>The train tickets were fairly pricey but Easter weekend is a big travel weekend in France (Monday is a holidays) and we booked less than 3 weeks out. In this case, as is often the case, 1st class tickets were just a few euros more than 2nd class so worth the extra money. Note that starting July 2, 2017, faster trains will make the Paris-Bordeaux route 1 hour shorter—as quick as 2h04.</p> <p>Be sure to factor in extra time for rental car pick-up and drop-off as the rental car offices are a good 15-20 min walk from the station. I believe this is just temporary while the station is under construction.</p> <p>On the way to Domme, we stopped off in the beautiful Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère, one of Les Plus Beaux Villages de France.</p> <p>We could not have picked a better place to base ourselves than Domme. It's also been named one of Les Plus Beaux Villages de France and for good reason. The town is small enough to be charming but big enough to offer a few restaurant, café and shopping options. Hotel L'Esplanade is a wonderful spot. The room was a bit dated but still very comfortable, with a great view of the Dordogne Valley. The breakfast was a bit disappointing but there weren't any other options in town. The main restaurant is excellent for dinner—a real treat. The hotel has a fantastic terrace overlooking the valley—great for a pre-dinner drink.</p> <p>We reserved dinner at the Grand Bleu, a one Michelin-star restaurant, as often these Michelin-star restaurants outside the big cities are a great value for your money. This was no exception. The fixed menus started at €54 and the food and service were impeccable.</p>
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Sunday, April 16	Visit Rocamadour Night in Domme	<p><i>Dinner</i> at Hôtel L'ESPLANADE</p>		<p>We made the hour-long drive to Rocamadour, passing through Calès on the way and Couzou on the way back, to change it up a bit. The landscapes are beautiful; it's worth taking your time and making stops along the way. Perhaps our favorite stop was across the Dordogne River (immediate left after the bridge) from Château de la Treyme (http://www.chateaudelatreyne.com/en/). I'd love to go back and stay/dine there one day when I am not on a budget!</p> <p>Rocamadour can be a bit touristy and crowded but definitely worth visiting for it's incredible setting, clutched to the side of a cliff.</p> <p>We also visited Montfort, just a 10 minutes' drive short of Domme. It's a lovely town with an impressive (yet privately owned) castle and walks along the Dordogne.</p> <p>We did a bit of shopping in Domme then had drinks on the terrace, a wonderful upscale dinner at the hotel restaurant, and a digestif in the hotel parlor to the far side of the restaurant. I would definitely stay and eat there again.</p>								

Monday, April 17	Visit La Roque-Gageac, Castelnaud and Beynac-et-Cazenac Train Bordeaux to Paris	<i>Train:</i> <hr/> 8h21 BORDEAUX SAINT JEAN <hr/> PARIS 2950 <hr/> 21h38 MONTPARNASSE 1 ET 2	<p>We made good use of this last day, visiting three more Plus Beaux Villages. We left the car in La Roque-Gageac and walked through the town, then to Castelnaud and up to the castle. We were tempted to walk to Beynac, then back to the car, but fearing we'd run out of time, we went back to La Roque-Gageac by foot, bought sandwiches for a picnic, then drove to Beynac. We had a picnic along the river then explored the town a bit before driving back to Bordeaux.</p> <p>We had hoped to stop off in Saint-Emilion on the way back to Bordeaux but were running short on time so we went straight back to Bordeaux, returned the car and grabbed a drink at a café by the train station with our extra 30 minutes or so. We also hit up the HEMA store (one of my favorites!) attached to the train station for snacks for the train ride.</p>
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Itinerary from Trip #1:

Take the train to **Bordeaux** (3h) and rent a car. There are so many towns and castles worth visiting in the Dordogne, but here are the ones we visited (and in that order), none of which I would skip (but the asterisks represent my *real* favorites): **Bergerac**, **Monpazier**, the **Château de Byron**, **Domme**, **Sarlat** (a larger town, makes a good place to spend the night. I recommend: [La Villa des Consuls](#)), **Castelnaud**, **La Roque-Gageac***, **Beynac***, **Rocamadour***, **Saint-Cirq Lapopie***. We spent the second night in Bordeaux, which gave us time for wine tasting in **St. Emilion** on the third day before taking the train back to Paris.