



THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO SEE

BLAYE :

The "Citadel de Blaye" was built during the reign of Louis XIV by Sébastien Vauban to protect Bordeaux against invasion from the sea. There are 3 forts to block the Estuary: Blaye, Fort Paté (on an island in the middle of the estuary) and Fort Medoc on the other side. These 3 fortifications were supposed to block any unwanted maritime traffic. They are registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site called "The bolt of the Estuary". You can enter the Citadelle de Blaye from the town (entrance near the market place opposite the bar-restaurant Le Petit Port) via the small gate and the bridge or you can enter from the main entrance called Porte Royale. Once inside, you can just walk in the streets or do a complete tour of the fortifications and admire the view of the estuary at the north tower. There are also guided visits of the underground passages. Information can be had at the tourist office in the Citadelle.

At the tourist office, you can also book one of the several afternoon or day cruises available on the estuary (to visit the estuary islands or the other fortifications of "The bolt of the Estuary").



In Blaye, on the market place below the Citadelle, there is a market every Wednesday and Saturday morning. The market on Saturday is much bigger and far more interesting. You can go there just to walk and see or you can also use this opportunity to buy your vegetables, fresh fish, oysters and meat. You can also find some local produce (honey, cheese, wine...) as well as clothing, coffee and many other things....is worth a visit.



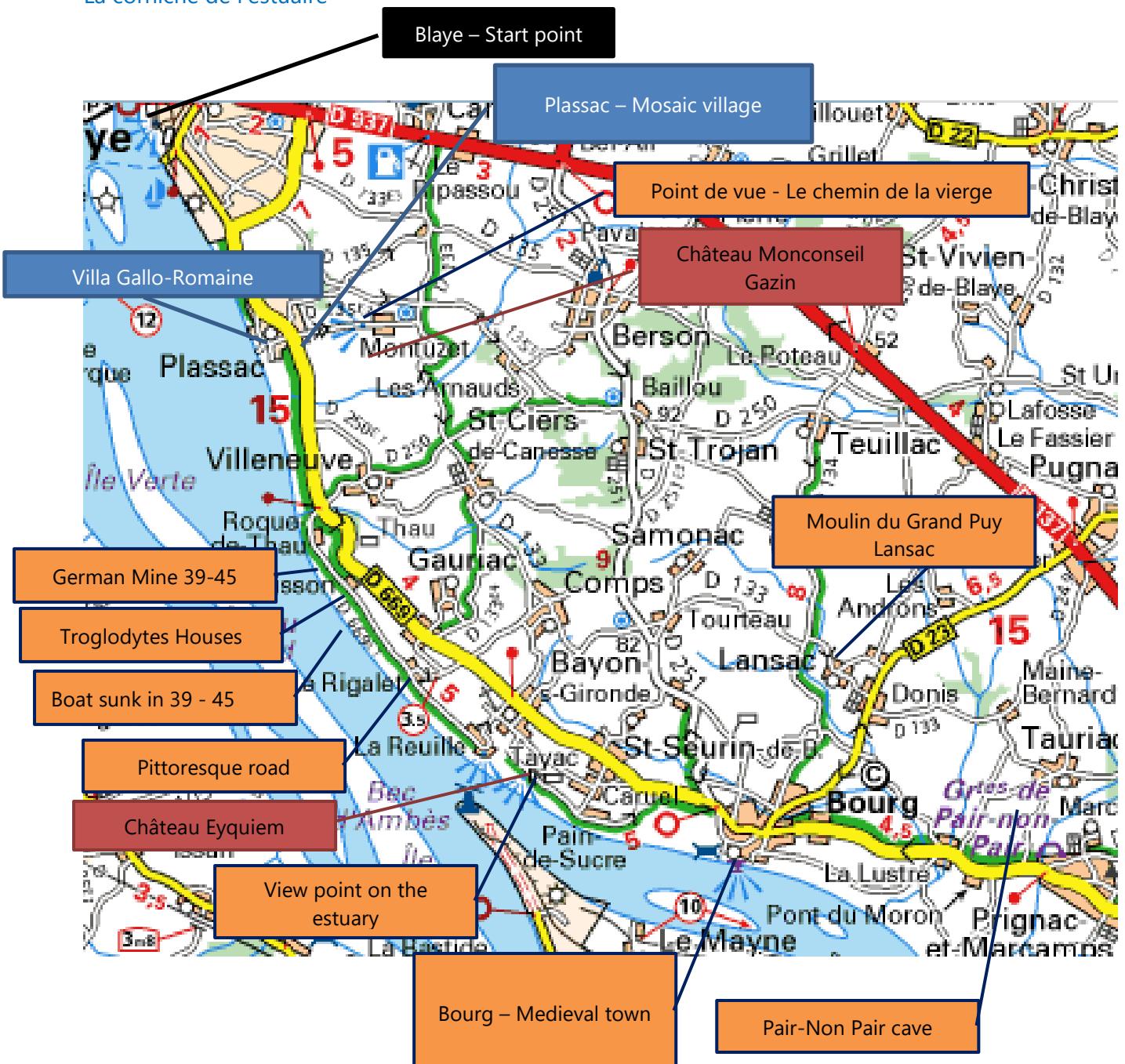
AROUND BLAYE:

FROM BLAYE to SAINT ANDRE DE CUBZAC (1 day)

PLASSAC:

In Plassac, a village beside BLAYE on the road to BOURG sur GIRONDE, there is a roman villa and a gallo-roman museum to be visited.

[La corniche de l'estuaire](#)





Between BLAYE and BOURG sur GIRONDE, 3km after PLASSAC, at Roque de Thau, there is a T junction with the main road going straight ahead and a road going right towards the Corniche. Take this road and then drive very slowly along the estuary. If you like to ride a bicycle, this is the perfect place to do it. If you like to walk through troglodyte houses, stop on the parking place on your right just after la Roque de Thau and before the village of Marmisson and you walk in direction of Marmisson, just before the first house of Marmisson (on the left), there is a path going up with stairs. At the end of the stairs, there are troglodyte houses on your right, the path goes through the houses (which are private) and continues along the caves built in the cliffs. The path then meets another path going up to some caves (on your left) and goes back down (on your right) to the village of Marmisson. Back on the road, further on (the estuary is on your right), there is a boat sinking on the estuary. This boat has been bombed during the WW2 and is remaining there since then. When you continue the road, after crossing villages of Le Rigalet, at the end the road goes back up. There are 2 hair pin bends going up the hill back to the plateau. Then, there is another T-Junction with the road at the right going through the village of Bayon. Take this road and go through the village, pass the church and the road will then go down again along the river. Stop further on on the viewing point near the Chateau Eyquiem. At this point, you will see the 2 rivers La Garonne and La Dordogne which meet in the estuary at a place called the Bec d'Ambes. Then the road goes back down near the river. Pass the village Pain de Sucre and go back to the main road until Bourg sur Gironde.



BOURG sur GIRONDE is a very small medieval town with a very pretty market place. You can visit the old wash house (near the harbour) and view the Dordogne river. Then by going up to the upper part of the town, you can admire the oriental house built by a passionate from oriental architecture. Passing through the medieval gate, you will arrive at the market place, where you can find the Tourist Office and also a very famous tea shop "L'esprit des Lieux" with a friendly staff. They also sell food items (honey, jam, biscuits...) and decorative objects. You can then continue your walk up to the citadel and its beautiful park where a lot of events are taking place. Going down through the park, and going around the citadel on a lower level, you will reach back the harbour.



Near BOURG SUR GIRONDE, few kilometres inland, you can go to visit the windmill of the Grand Puy in LANSAC. This fully operational windmill has been rebuilt following the original plans and can be visited while in operation. You can also buy your flour there directly from the mill and you can use your time to visit the artists exhibitions shown in the windmill house.





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After BOURG sur GIRONDE, going towards SAINT ANDRE DE CUBZAC, and after a village called LE PONT DU MORON, there is a road sign for Grotte PAIR NON PAIR. You must not miss this cave. The cave is very old with engravings from prehistoric times. This cave predates LASCAUX. There are visits in French and English. To be booked in advance.



BOOKING IS MANDATORY Tel : +33 5 57 68 33 40

Open every day except Monday

From 15th June to 15th September, visits at 10h, 11h15, 14h30, 15h30, 16h30, 17h30

From 16th September to 14th June, visits at 10h, 11h15, 14h30, 16h

Number of visitors is limited.

Closed : 1st January, 1st May and 25th December

More information : <http://www.pair-non-pair.fr/>



After SAINT ANDRE de CUBZAC, you can also continue your journey by going to the nice village of ASQUES. If you are lucky you can see "The Mascaret". This can only be seen on days with high tide and at the exact moment when the tide wave is coming from the ocean along the estuary and river Dordogne. Surfers wait for this crucial moment to jump on their surf boards to ride this wave which continues for several kilometres.



BORDEAUX (1 or 2 days -> also for shopping)

The easiest way to go to BORDEAUX by car is to park at one of the P+R car parks (indicated from the circular road La Rocade) and take the tram to the city centre from there. Parking place cost 4 euros but with this you have a free return ticket for tram to each person in the car. You can also take the bus 201 from Blaye or the train from Saint André de Cubzac or Saint Mariens.

BORDEAUX is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site and is very interesting city to visit. A very pleasant walk is along the quay of La Garonne from Pont de Pierre going north to Quai des Marques where you can have an ice cream on the terrace. You can come back using the tram. For shopping, go to RUE SAINTE CATHERINE, where you can shop for several kilometres on the longest pedestrian street in Europe.

If you want to avoid the shopping crowd, it is better to walk along the Garonne on the left bank or also to go on the alternative spot Darwin on the right bank (opposite side of the Place de la Bourse) accessible by crossing the Garonne at Le Pont de Pierre and walking north from there (800 meters approx. from Pont de Pierre and place Stalingrad). There are bars, restaurants and alternative shops there and the atmosphere is cool.





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If you want to know more about the world of wine (worldwide), the "Cité du Vin" is worth a visit. Book the visit in advance. It should take you at least 3 hours to complete the visit and a complementary glass of wine is included.



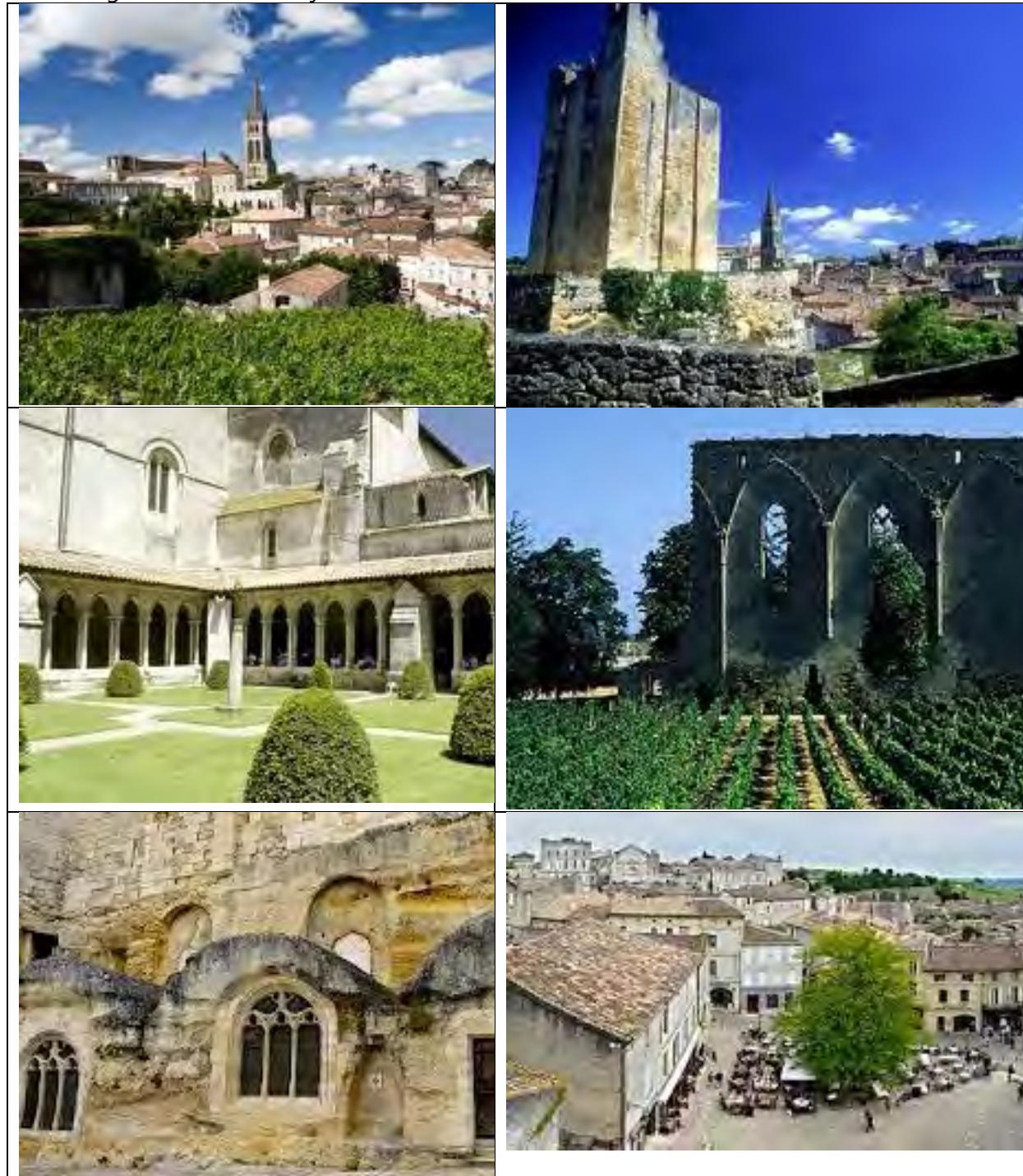
 Centre France

[La cité du vin de Bordeaux](#)



SAINT EMILION (1 full day)

The village of Saint Emilion just after LIBOURNE should not be missed.



You can book a visit of the troglodyte church (very impressive) at the office de tourisme
<http://www.saint-emilion-tourisme.com/>.

You can also buy wine in many places (Saint Emilion is one of the most famous wine of Bordeaux region).



BASTIDES FROM ENTRE DEUX MERS (1 full day or 2 days)

You can do a circuit including Sainte Foy la Grande, Pellegrue, Saint Ferme, Monségur, La Réole, Castelmoron d'Albret, Sauveterre de Guyenne, L'Abbaye de la Sauve Majeure, and Crémont. There is also to visit Cadillac, Genzac, Rauzan, Balsimon, Rions but you will need another day. You can by pass one or two of these towns but don't miss La Reole, Castelmoron d'Albret and l'Abbaye de la Sauve Majeure.

Starting at Saint Foy La Grande, the most remote spot from our place (with La Reole). Beautiful town along the Dordogne river with town walls, main square with arcades and beautiful cover market.





From Sainte Foy La Grande, go to Pellegrue. Pellegrue has a nice halle and a nice church but there is not so much to see there. From Pellegrue go to Monsegur. In between, there is an imposing abbaye at Sainte Ferme but if you want to visit only one Abbaye, concentrate on the Abbaye of La Sauve Majeure. In Monsegur, you can walk along the town walls or just visit the main square with the cover market and the arcades.



The Pellegrue's cover market (top left) and the cover market of Monségur (top right)

From Monségur, go to La Réole and visit the medieval town.





From Monségur or La Réole, do not miss Castelmoron d'Albret. Very pretty medieval village.



Sauveterre en Guyenne is also a nice bastide with nice main square and beautiful wall gates (see underneath)



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By approaching Bordeaux, don't miss the Abbaye La Sauve Majeure, classed at the world heritage of Unesco.





From Abbaye de La Sauve Majeure, Crémieu is the last bastide before Bordeaux. But if the day has been long, you can by-pass this one.



FROM BLAYE TO ROYAN (1 day)

The best road from BLAYE to ROYAN (or from SAINT GENES DE BLAYE to ROYAN) is to take the estuary road. From the house, go right, there is a STOP at the School crossroad, continue straight to the next STOP (after Chateau LA SALLE), turn right and continue this road. You will drive on the road through the marshes to a town called BRAUD & SAINT LOUIS and then straight ahead to a town called SAINT CIERS SUR GIRONDE. At SAINT CIERS SUR GIRONDE follow road signs for BONNET SUR GIRONDE. Continue this road until you arrive at SAINT DIZANT DU GUA. At SAINT DIZAN DU GUA don't forget to visit the beautiful garden of Château Beaulon with the blue fountains. You can buy some Pinot des Charentes there, as it is one of the most famous places for the Pinot. There is a very good Cognac too. You can then continue until the next village SAINT FONT where there is a remarkable church and then try to reach the estuary following the road for PORT MAUBERT and then MORTAGNE sur GIRONDE.

MORTAGNE is a pretty port. At MORTAGNE there is also a troglodyte cave you can visit if you have time.

Then continue until a village called TALMONT sur GIRONDE. This village is classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France.





Then continue the road to MERCERS sur GIRONDE where you can visit the caves of Regulus and Matata.



Then you can stop at SAINT GEORGES DE DIDONNE to go to its nice sandy beaches which are nicer than the beaches at ROYAN.

In ROYAN, there is a very good fish restaurant called LES FLOTS BLEUS.

ZOO DE LA PALMYRE (1 day)

After ROYAN (1h1/2 drive from home), there is a big zoo, which is very interesting and worth a visit, ZOO de LA PALMYRE. The visit takes 4 hours so don't leave the house too late.





ARCACHON & DUNE DU PYLA (1 day)

At a 2 hour drive away, there is a very nice place to visit, the basin d'Arcachon and the dune du Pyla (the highest sand dune in Europe).



**SINTONGE** (1 day or more)

Saintonge is the region around the town of Saintes with a lot of tourist spots which are worth discovering.

SAINTES (1h drive from here)

Saintes was a roman town and is full of historic sites such as the amphi-theater, the aquaduc or some thermal baths...

	
Amphi-theater	Roman thermal baths
	
Arc of Germanicus (Saintes)	Roman walls (Saintes)



SINTONGE CASTLES

There are a lot of castles around Saintes. If you have a limited time and you want to visit only one castle, go to the Château de la Roche Courbon in Saint Porchaire.

This castle was a fortress built in 1475 and transformed in 1603 to the renaissance style. The castle is still inhabited. It is open for visits every day of the year except Christmas and New Year day. Apart from the remarkable interior dating from the 16th century, you can also visit the gardens which have been built on stilts (the only example in the world). Also, in the property, the paleolithic caves worth a visit (45 minutes' walk to visit the caves and be back to the castle). You need at least 3 hours to visit the complete castle site. If you have children, there are a lot of theme-based activities such as knights and princesses...





Another remarkable castle is the medieval castle of Saint Jean d'Angle. This castle has been built in the middle of the salt marshes to protect the salt production. Here also, there are a lot of activities proposed for the children.



Other castles are the castles of Crazannes, Nieul Les Saintes or Panloy and all the other I forgot to list.

Apart from the castles visits, you can do a cruise on the Charente river or just drive along the river between Saintes and Cognac and to stop over in the beautiful villages on river side.



COGNAC

If you want to visit the cellars of Cognac (Hennessy, Martel, Remy Martin...) it is better to book in advance. Hennessy is a huge cellar with a train inside but it is booked long time in advance. Less crowded but interesting in term of history is to visit the Castle of Cognac which is also the cellar of Baron Otard cognac. The first part of the visit is to visit the castle from François 1st era finishing the visit going through the cognac cellars with the cognac degustation at the end of the visit.





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ILE D'OLERON (1h30 drive from home)

Very nice place to visit by car, bicycle or just walking with beautiful sandy beaches.





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LA ROCHELLE (1 Day)

Very nice town to visit at 2 hour drive away.



Aquarium of La Rochelle





LA DORDOGNE

PERIGUEUX (2h drive)

Perigueux is the capital of Périgord blanc and worth a 1 day visit (accessible by car or train). Places to see are the medieval town and the roman center situated in a new building created by the well-known architect Jean Novel, a must of architecture.





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BERGERAC (1h30 drive)

Another medieval town (in centre of Périgord Pourpre). And you can use some of your time there to taste the Bergerac wine.





SARLAT LA CANADA (2h30 drive) is in the centre of the Périgord noir. The region is full of remarkable sites from paleolithic time (such as Lascaux) up to modern time and your visit there is a journey through the history. Sarlat is a beautiful town a good base for visiting the region over several days as there are many things to see. So, why not making a stop on your way back home?



SWIMMING SPOTS

Beaches

- **60 km:** Saint Georges de Didonne beach – The sea is very calm there and it is a good spot for swimming or walking along the beach. Less crowded than Royan.
- **60 km + Ferry:** Lacanau beach – for surf maniacs (waves) – Could be very crowded and not suitable if you are afraid of waves.

Lakes

- **15 km:** Lacs du Moulin Blanc – Saint Christoly de Blaye – Nice place to swim or to walk in the forest, doing water ski, poney riding or even archery. There is a free bus going there from Blaye leaving 1:00pm and back at 6:00pm. Information from Tourist Office. Check first in the Tourist Office if the swimming is allowed or not.
- **22 km:** Lac de Montendre – Montendre
- **30 km:** Les Antilles de Jonzac – Water park with water slides, jacuzzi, hamam... if you like this kind of place (kids...).



WINE TASTING AND VINEYARD VISITS:

On request and depending our availability, we can accompany you and serve as a guide for these visits.

BLAYE:

Visits:

The "Maison du vin" proposes some visits with themes such as dinner in the château with the owner....

PLASSAC:

At Château Monconseil Gazin, Michel et Françoise Baudet will be very pleased to explain the wine making process from the vineyard to the bottle. You can also participate in specific workshops of wine assembly or grape harvesting.

<http://www.vignobles-michel-baudet.com/>

SAINT CHRISTOLY DE BLAYE:

Château Nodot proposes visits of their domain and also to share the experience of a medieval dinner: <http://www.chateaunodot.com/fr/>

FOURS:

During summer, Château Les Chaumes in Mazion open its doors some Friday evening for outdoor festivities. You can eat there or just drink a glass of wine. You can also find some artisanal products on sale. Free entrance.

More information: <http://www.chateauleschaumes.com/>

FRONSAC et CANON FRONSAC:

The very well-known Château La Rivière, is one of the nicest wine cellars of the region and is just as impressive as the wine cellars of Saint-Emilion. The owner of Chinese origin also organises tea testing ceremony: <http://www.chateau-de-la-riviere.com/>

To buy Fronsac and Canon Fronsac wine at an affordable price, it is therefore better to visit the Château-Cassagne at Saint Michel de Fronsac. The Chateau also cultivates truffles and you can visit the "truffière". <http://www.chateau-cassagne.fr/>

SAINT EMILION:

Which domain to visit in Saint Emilion? You have plenty of them and I really don't know which one is the best to visit. The most famous are: Château Angélus or Château du Cheval Blanc for the « Premier Grand Cru Classé ». But if you want to have a reasonable price, it is better to go to the Maison du Vin in Saint Emilion. There are three appellations in Saint Emilion from the most prestigious to the least :

Saint-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé A et B

Saint-Emilion Grand Cru Classé

Saint-Emilion.

The best recent wine years are 1990, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2016.

Then in all the surrounding villages, the appellation is completed with the local area name: Montagne Saint-Emilion, Puisseguin Saint-Emilion, Lusac Saint-Emilion...



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**PESSAC-LEOGNAN:**

This is the appellation for the wines produced around Bordeaux. The most famous is Château Pape Clément. The owner Bernard Magrez is multi-millionaire with several châteaux worldwide and has a cultural centre plus a restaurant at the Grande Maison in Bordeaux.

MEDOC et HAUT MEDOC:

The castles of Haut Médoc between Margaux and Saint-Estèphe going through Pauillac and Saint Julien are very impressive if not somewhat ostentatious. I would recommend you to take the route des châteaux taking the ferry from Blaye going either way north to Saint Julien, Pauillac and Saint Estephe or south to Margaux.

**OTHER APPELLATIONS:**

Bordeaux wine has several other appellations, Entre-deux Mers, Sauternes, Côtes de Bordeaux Castillon... To visit all of them requires time and energy.