

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman



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By Floriane

Sarlat is located in the south-east of the Dordogne or Périgord region, nestled between the **Vézère valley** to the north and the **Dordogne valley** to the south. This is the **Black Perigord**, the sites to visit are numerous in this part of the Dordogne.

The **Vézère Valley**, also known as **the “Valley of Man”**, is sure to ring a bell. It boasts 25 major prehistoric sites, including the famous **Lascaux** cave, and beautiful cliffside villages.

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

The **valley of the Dordogne**, less steep, ideal to explore by canoe or gabarre, offers incredible panoramas on the “**Most Beautiful Villages of France**”, the **Roque Gaugeac** and **Beynac** and on the medieval castles planted at the top of the villages, vestiges of the wars of former days.

For those of you who don't miss any of our articles, I grew up in **Périgueux**, the capital of the Dordogne, located about 1h15 from Sarlat. I have been walking and discovering the **many sites of the department** since I was a child, and I always take as much pleasure in making Matthieu or my friends (not from Périgord) discover them!

In short, we can tell you that there is no shortage of things to see and do in Sarlat and its surroundings. We have prepared a **3-day** itinerary below so you won't miss anything!

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

Sommaire détaillé

- [Where is Sarlat located?](#)
- [Visit Sarlat and the surrounding area](#)
- [Details of our 3-day itinerary](#)
- [Day 1: Sarlat and Lascaux, the must-sees](#)
 - [Morning: Lascaux in Montignac: the origins of man](#)
 - [How to visit Lascaux today?](#)
 - [How to prepare your visit?](#)
 - [Afternoon: Sarlat or how to fall in love with the Dordogne](#)
- [Day 2: Dordogne Valley and its treasures](#)
 - [Morning : The Dordogne along the water](#)
 - [Afternoon: Discovering the “Most Beautiful Villages in France” and its castles](#)
 - [La Roque Gageac](#)
 - [Domme](#)
 - [Castelnaud La Chapelle](#)
 - [Beynac and Cazenac](#)
- [Day 3 Les Eyzies and the wealth of its caves](#)
 - [Morning: Les Eyzies, the origins of man](#)
 - [Afternoon: Go down into the largest equipped cave in the Périgord](#)
- [Where to sleep? In a hotel or camping.](#)
- [Hotel](#)
 - [Camping](#)
- [How to come to Sarlat ?](#)

Where is Sarlat located?

Sarlat is located in the south east of the Dordogne, it is the capital of the **Périgord Noir**. The department is divided into **4 colored areas, white, red, green and black**, each with its own particularities.

Visit Sarlat and the surrounding area

There's no shortage of things to see and do in and around Sarlat. We recommend a **3-day** visit to Sarlat and the surrounding area, to take the time to explore the many sites **within 30 minutes of Sarlat**.

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

We have selected the **villages**, **castles** and **caves** that we believe are essential to understand the history of this incredible region and to fully enjoy the beauty of its landscapes.

During the spring school vacations and in July and August, we advise you to **book** your **accommodation** and activities in advance.

Details of our 3-day itinerary

- Day 1 (pink dots on map) : **Sarlat** and **Lascaux**, the must-sees
 - Morning: Lascaux in Montignac: the origins of man
 - Afternoon: Sarlat or how to fall in love with the Dordogne
 - ☑ Night : [Hôtel Montaigne](#) in Sarlat
- Day 2 (orange dots on map) : **Dordogne Valley** and its treasures
 - Morning : The Dordogne **along** the water
 - Afternoon: Discovering the “Most Beautiful Villages in France” and its castles
 - ☑ Night : [Hôtel Montaigne](#) in Sarlat
- Day 3 (green dots on the map) : Les **Eyzies** and its surroundings
 - Morning: Les **Eyzies**, the origins of man
 - Afternoon: Go down into the largest equipped cave in the Périgord

Day 1: Sarlat and Lascaux, the must-sees

Morning: Lascaux in Montignac: the origins of man

It is in **Montignac**, north of Sarlat, that the cave of **Lascaux** was discovered in 1940. After about fifteen years of intensive exploitation and visits, small green algae started to develop. To compensate for this deterioration, a replica as accurate as possible, **Lascaux II**, was made at 200 meters from the original cave, you can see the entrance in the photo below.

I was lucky enough to visit this extraordinary replica several times, it was a **school** or family **outing** quite common when you grow up in the Dordogne as you can give yourself! My memories are quite precise, the illusion was total, the temperature, the atmosphere... everything let us believe that it was the original and the visit was damn incredible.

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

How to visit Lascaux today?

Today, you have two options:

- **Lascaux II**, always visited in small groups, from April to September (beware there are really few places)
- The **Centre International de l'art Pariétal**, also known as **Lascaux IV**, can be visited all year round, with the **cave** reproduced in its entirety and a **museum** located away from the original site.

This visit is more complete and interactive, with numerous on-screen animations. A site that will please **young and old alike**, you can book [your tickets](#) with audio guide in advance online (especially in high season). *Entrance fee 6€ per adult - Allow 2-3 hours for the visit.*

For those who follow, we have gone from Lascaux II to Lascaux IV, so for the more mathematically inclined among us, you are probably wondering “What is **Lascaux III**? So it was a travelling exhibition, which was installed for three months at Cap Sciences, in Bordeaux before being exported around the world.

How to prepare your visit?

If you have time beforehand, we advise you to watch the documentary “[C'est pas sorcier](#) au sujet des hommes Préhistoriques”, as always **very complete and simple to understand**, thank you **Jamie**!

At the end of your visit, don't forget to visit **Montignac**, a charming little village along the Vézère river.

→ If you're in the mood for **greenery and freshness**, Les [Jardins d'Eyrignac](#) is subtly designed to leave you feeling as zen as ever. *Located 20 minutes northeast of Sarlat, it's a site to be integrated **between Lascaux and Sarlat**.*

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and
tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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Afternoon: Sarlat or how to fall in love with the Dordogne

Clearly **Sarlat** is the little jewel of the Dordogne and the Périgord. Its **medieval** center will impress you with its uniformity and beauty. The old Sarlat marries the styles of different periods going from the **Middle Ages** to the **XVIth** century with all the same **66 classified monuments**.

In short, this is a city that we love to walk around, explore and show off!

We won't go into detail here, as we have devoted a complete article to Sarlat, with our **top 10** must-see and must-do items, **as** well as our ideal walking **itinerary** and, of course, all our **practical advice** (where to eat? where to sleep?)

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

□ [Where to sleep: *Hôtel Montaigne is located right in the center of Sarlat*](#)

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and
tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

Day 2: Dordogne Valley and its treasures

Morning : The Dordogne along the water

[Explore the Dordogne by canoe](#) or **gabarre**, and with just a few strokes of the paddle, you'll feel immediately at home, and this trip will offer you beautiful views of castles and hilltop villages.

Thanks to our friend Kevin, our canoeing expert in the Dordogne, who has been practicing canoeing in a club for many years and who recommended this canoeing trip to us. According to him, it is the easiest and most beautiful trip in the Dordogne (he has explored all the routes)!

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

Afternoon: Discovering the “Most Beautiful Villages in France” and its castles

We recommend eating at **La Roque Gageac** and then exploring several sites in the vicinity, all of which are classified as “**Les Plus Beaux Villages de France**”, **Domme** and **Beynac**, and then finishing with the village (also classified) and the castle of **Castelnaud**

Organized tour of the Dordogne Valley’s major medieval sites

This [half-day tour of the Dordogne valley](#), **starting from Sarlat**, may be of interest to you. It includes the villages of Domme, La Roque Gageac and Beynac, as well as Beynac castle.

La Roque Gageac

This village, embedded between the **Dordogne** river and the **cliff**, with its houses clinging to the cliffs, is of an incredible beauty.

We advise you to take the small (and unique) **path**, which goes up in the village, to enjoy a **green vegetation** and beautiful views on the village and the river. *10km from Sarlat*

Large parking lot located at the level of the docks.

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and
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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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Domme

Domme, located 10 minutes from La **Roque Gageac**, is a village still surrounded by ramparts, built on the heights of a cliff its belvedere which dominates the meanders of the Dordogne river offers a breathtaking view of the valley. *12km south of Sarlat*

We advise you to park your car in the outside parking lot located below

Castelnaud La Chapelle

It is the castle to visit in Dordogne, dating from the XIIIth century, it was restored during several years, and it offers an exceptional panorama on the castle of **Beynac**, the gardens of **Marqueyssac** and the village of La **Roque-Gageac** - *9km south of Sarlat*

Price high season visit 11,9€ per adult and low season 10,90€ per adult, think to book in July and August - [-20% with the PassVisitPérigord](#)

Its **medieval village** is also classified in “Les Plus beaux villages de France”.

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

Beynac and Cazenac

Beynac celebrates its castle, a setting that served as a backdrop for the film “**Les Visiteurs**”. Once again this **medieval** village is also classified in “Les Plus beaux villages de France”, we can find there the houses in white stones and the roofs in lauze which make the fame of the Périgourdins villages. - *At 11km from Sarlat*

□ [Where to sleep: *Hôtel Montaigne is located right in the center of Sarlat*](#)

Day 3 Les Eyzies and the wealth of its caves

Morning: Les Eyzies, the origins of man

Les **Eyzies de Tayac** is a village nestled in the cliffs, a mecca of the Périgord region and considered the “**little prehistory capital of the world**”, since many of the shelters in the surrounding cliffs served as dwellings for early man. *20 km east of Sarlat. Admission €6 per adult free on 1st Sunday of the month*

We advise you to visit the museum **of the prehistory** which gathers the various elements (tools, jewels, bones, pottery...) found in the caves in the surroundings of which that of Lascaux I. This museum will allow you to learn more about the origins of man in a playful and chronological way. It's an ideal outing to do with the family

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

There is not only Lascaux to visit in Dordogne, many caves a few kilometers from Sarlat are open to the public. We recommend the [Combarelles cave](#), which contains more than **800 engravings** (Horses, Reindeers, Wolves, Bisons...). *Entrance fee 11€ per adult free on the 1st Sunday of the month*

During your stay, it will allow you to see an ornate cave (Lascaux) and a cave with engravings (Combarelles)!

Afternoon: Go down into the largest equipped cave in the Périgord

The Proumeyssac chasm will impress you with its depth and geological riches. You can go down on foot in a tunnel or in a gondola as in the time of its discovery - *At 28km from Sarlat*

For **families**, Santa Claus visits the children in the abyss by descending through the gondola, magic guaranteed, our daughter loved it.

Price of the visit 11€ per adult 45 minutes of commented visit - [-20% with the PassVisitPérigord](#)

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and
tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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tips from a Périgourdine woman

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Where to sleep? In a hotel or camping.

We recommend you to sleep in **Sarlat** to be able to enjoy the numerous **animations and restaurants** in the evening. You can also opt for a **campsite** in the vicinity of Sarlat to be able to radiate and park easily.

Hotel

We recommend that you stay at Hôtel Montaigne, ideally located just 1 minute's walk from Sarlat's medieval center, where you can visit the entire town on foot.

Les chambres sont **spacieuses** et très **propres**, le matelas était hyper confortable. There is **air-conditioning**, which was very appreciated during the hot summer days. Free parking in low season. In short, an excellent quality/price ratio!

We advise you to **book** your accommodation in advance, during the school vacations and in high season, the hotels are quickly full, because Sarlat is a very popular small town in summer!

[Check availability at Hôtel Montaigne](#)

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and
tips from a Périgourdine woman

Périgord noir: 3 days in and around Sarlat, our itinerary and tips from a Périgourdine woman

Camping

You will find your happiness by consulting the different campsites in Dordogne [here](#), you can sort according to the type of accommodation and facilities offered (swimming pools, parking ...)

The residence “Les [Coteaux de Sarlat](#) ” is ideally located at only 2km from the center of Sarlat.

We had a lot of fun sharing all this information about these places in the Dordogne that we love. If you have a little more time, don't hesitate to stop off in Périgueux, the capital of the Dordogne, famous for its historic center, its Gallo-Roman museum and its **Saint Front cathedral**, with its **Byzantine-inspired domes** proudly dominating the city.

[Our article on Périgueux](#)

How to come to Sarlat ?

- **By car:** Most parking spaces in the city center are subject to a fee. Nevertheless, we were pleasantly surprised that, for once, the town hall has devoted a detailed and very clear page to the different parking zones [around Sarlat](#), indicating precisely which periods are paid and which are free.
- **By train:** the train station is located a few minutes walk from the city center. The **B bus** line connects the station to the city center. The train ride from **Paris** is quite long, about 4 hours, with a connection in **Limoges** or a connection in **Bordeaux**. The train from Bordeaux is direct (1h15 minutes).
- **By plane:** this is a faster option. From Paris, **Air France's Hop company** connects Orly airport to Brive airport in 1 hour for very attractive rates.

When you arrive in Brive, renting a car is the best option for getting to Sarlat in just an hour, so you can explore the region at your leisure.

We had a **lot of fun** writing this article about this region that we know (almost) by heart. We would like to thank our families and friends who have given us valuable advice. We also update this article regularly since we come to the Dordogne several times a year.

Feel free to drop us a **line** below to let us know if you're planning this trip, to drop 5 stars, to **ask** any questions you may have here or on [our Instagram](#) we'll get back to you with great pleasure!

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1 avis (5/5)

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