



SARLAT
PÉRIGORD
NOIR
TOURISME

LE VOYAGE DES SENS

PRESS KIT




sarlat-tourisme.com


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SARLAT THROUGH THE CENTURIES

THE CAPITAL OF THE PÉRIGORD NOIR IS A JEWEL OF MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE WHICH COMBINES THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST WITH MODERN TIMES. IT IS WITH PRIDE THAT THE CITY TREASURES ALL THE ATTRACTIVE FEATURES OF ITS ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TO TELL A REMARKABLE STORY...THE STORY OF SARLAT!



Both the greatness of the past and the present are valued in Sarlat. Rich in tradition but also in innovation, Sarlat is there to be explored and understood in all its facets. Architecture, arts, activities, commerce, history, gastronomy, culture, art de vivre...The combination of these elements creates an incontestable charm. As each day unfolds throughout the year, a new chapter of possibilities opens for the local Sarlat people and their visitors from afar who are welcomed in a spirit of conviviality and friendliness.

I. ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS

SARLAT

1. Myth or Reality? Legend has it that monks belonging to the order of Saint Benedict found refuge in the Middle Ages in the valley of the Cuze in order to found an abbey. It is also said that this was bestowed on the town by Clovis in the 5th Century... Written evidence makes it certain that an abbey with Carolingian origins existed in the 9th century and it is thought to be the only one in the Périgord to have been spared the Viking invasions.

2. A Prosperous Town. Sarlat developed around the monastery and three centuries later was an important centre of pilgrimage. The town's abbey first had a seigneur and then in 1318 it became head of a diocese and its reputation as a prosperous merchant town quickly grew. Under the administration of the consuls, superb buildings sprang up – first in the Romanesque and then in the Gothic style: the architectural transformation was almost finished by the end of the 17th century. During that time the frontiers of the Dordogne Valley between the French and the English kingdoms were constantly changing, due to the battles of the Hundred Years War. For most of that time Sarlat remained faithful to the French Kings, and once peace was restored continued its expansion.

3. The Renaissance. The decades which followed brought with them new wealth. In particular, the mansions within the town walls flourished. Now that the Wars of Religion (during which the town resisted valiantly against the Huguenot influence) and the Fronde civil wars of 1648 to 1653 were over, Sarlat experienced a new golden age. More than ever established as the capital of the Périgord Noir, Sarlat was in a dominant position at the heart of the local economy: its markets were renowned and several religious orders settled here to revive links with the past.

The spirit of La Boétie

Born in 1530 in Peyrou Square opposite the bishop's palace, in the house which is today named after him, Etienne de La Boétie has marked the city with his humanism. When he was 18 he wrote the "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude", an avant-gardist introduction to modern democracy. The Sarlat philosopher was the lifelong friend of Michel de Montaigne. In 1560 he was sent as an emissary to keep the peace between Protestants and Catholics during the Wars of Religion. He died aged 33, well before the end of the conflict.



II. TOWN OF ART AND HISTORY

1. A new era. In 1837 the medieval town saw a new period in its development and the Traverse, which is now the main street, opened up the town. Happily there was no irreversible damage to the town's architecture. The historic centre kept its soul and its beautiful homes. This magnificent, ancestral decor was little adapted, however to the social demands of the 20th century, but was attractive as the background for one of the first theatre festivals in France. From the start the event attracted visitors and brought Sarlat into the limelight.

2. Magnificent Sarlat. At the beginning of the sixties, the centre of Sarlat benefited from the lifesaving principals of the Malraux Law which introduced the concept of conservation in towns. Little by little the 80 or so classified monuments were restored to their former glory, the inhabitants reclaimed their heritage and there was new life inside the ochre stone walls and in the alleyways and the squares, which continue to be animated in all seasons ... Sarlat became a "Town of Art and History" and at the beginning of the 3rd millennium welcomes more than 2 million visitors a year.

Conservation Area: pilot town

In 1964 the capital of the Périgord Noir became a pilot town for the application of the Malraux Law, thought to have been inspired by Henry de Ségogne, a lover of Sarlat. The conservation area



covers 11 hectares. In this area there is said to be the highest density of classified, historical buildings in Europe. The law sought to restore them and make them safe and create a harmonious environment for the buildings, which up to that time had benefited from no protection whatsoever. The Law achieved miracles – and its ambitious work continues today.

Sarlat on the Big Screen.

Sarlat is one of the favourite settings for directors of historical films and it is now the third mostpopular city to be used as a film set in France, after Paris and Nice. From 1928 onwards the Sarlat cobblestones have been the background for, amongst others, the film Captain Fracasse, D'Artagnan, Robert Hossein's film of Les Misérables, Jacquou le Croquant, Cartouche, Luc Besson's Joan of Arc, French tv detective Nicolas Le Floch...and even Cinderella.



III. A TIMELESS HERITAGE

1. **A story without end.** Exploring Sarlat on your own – with or without an audio guide – can be great fun and an adventure of discovery. You can totally immerse yourself in the essence of Sarlat. The workshops and galleries of artists and craftsmen adorn the streets with their colourful boutiques.... Market stalls infuse the town with the same aromas and tastes that pervaded the town in the 12th century.... Festivals, the Ringueta, culinary events and fairs add to the authenticity Street entertainers animate summer evenings with their spontaneous performances The subjects discussed with passion and enthusiasm by the locals on the restaurant and café terraces link the past with the present: rugby, mushroom gathering, wild boar hunting, medieval archaeology, historic battles, and the quality of this year’s truffles, the weather, ordinary and extraordinary events The daily news pages turn without end.

2. **Guided Visits.** Porches, walls, cobblestones and archways in the local ochre coloured stone make the visitor curious. What lies behind those facades? What tales of intrigue, love and drama could they tell? To find out the countless stories which make up the history of the medieval town you can join in a classic guided tour or a theatrical costumed tour or visit Sarlat with a local story teller. At each step, at each turn of the road, down an obscure alleyway, your guide will divulge all – or nearly all – the secrets and mysteries of Sarlat with great frankness and openness.

Sarlat Seen From Above

The world famous architect, Jean Nouvel, who spent his childhood in the capital of the Périgord Noir, has transformed the ancient church of Sainte Marie into a covered market with monumental doors and in the tower there is a glass lift with panoramic views which was inaugurated in 2013. From way above the roof tops, the town reveals the passing of the centuries: you can make out the line of the ancient ramparts, get views of the old justice house and Sainte-Claire Abbey, see from the Lantern of the Dead to the historic Plamon mansion, from the Saint Sacros cathedral to the Maison de la Boétie, from the Town Hall to the Place de la Grand Rigaudie...



THE DORDOGNE VALLEY : A VALLEY OF WONDERS

From Montfort to Saint-Vincent-de-Cosse, the River Dordogne passes through enchanting landscapes. Welcome to the land of castles and some of the most beautiful villages in France.



In July 2012 UNESCO placed the Dordogne Valley at the heart of the biggest “Man and the Biosphere Reserve” in France blessed as it is with some of the major sites in the Aquitaine, breathtaking landscapes, some of the most beautiful villages in France and very high quality river water.... In the Périgord Noir, medieval fortresses and majestic castles line the valley from Vitrac to Envaux. With its broad fertile plain, vertiginous chalk cliffs, wooded hillsides and preserved natural spaces for flora and fauna ... it's not far from paradise.

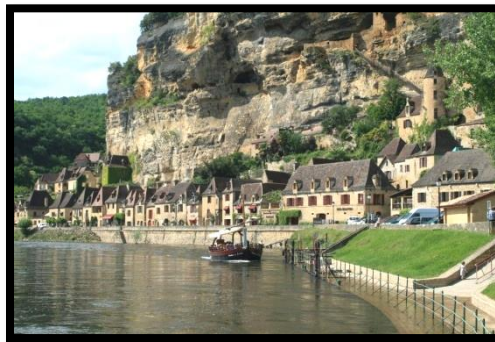
I. ON THE RIVER OF HOPE

1. **A State of Harmony.** After the great geological movements which formed it, the River Dordogne linked its destiny with the people who have inhabited its valley since the beginning of time. The Dordogne River has many treasures – pretty streams flowing into the main river, backwaters where fish can reproduce in the still waters, heronries in the trees along its banks, flocks of ducks which dabble here and there. It has always played an important part in the lives of the local population who have learnt to appreciate its generosity.

2. **A Trading River.** From ancient times up to the arrival of the train, there was a great deal of river traffic which assured the prosperity of the villages along its banks. Wood, wine, walnut oil and other riches from the hinterland were taken down river on flat bottomed boats which followed the current to Bordeaux and on to destinations in the known world. The adventures of the “Gabarriers”, the captains of the freshwater boats, have been immortalized in Christian Signol’s novel and the television series which followed, “The River of Hope” which records an important part of the valley’s history.

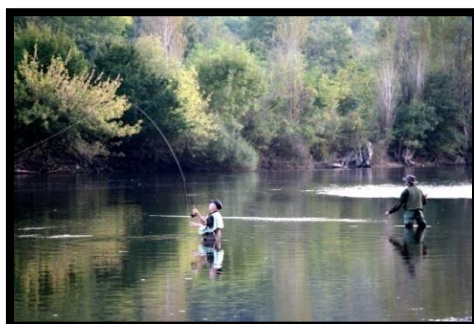
River Cruises

Occasional sailors can travel in the wake of the Dordogne river captains by boarding one of the perfect replicas of the old boats for a trip on the river. Boarding at the quaysides of La Roque-Gageac or Beynac, passengers depart for a discovery which reveals the history and beautiful scenery of the waterway with its lapping waves and living banks.



Fishing Traditions.

A good way to further your understanding of the ways of the river is to meet up with a professional fisherman. Along the meanders – called in this part of France “cingles”, nets are thrown from barques to catch migratory fish and smaller fish in the way it has been done for centuries. The resulting plate of fried fish delights lovers of good food.

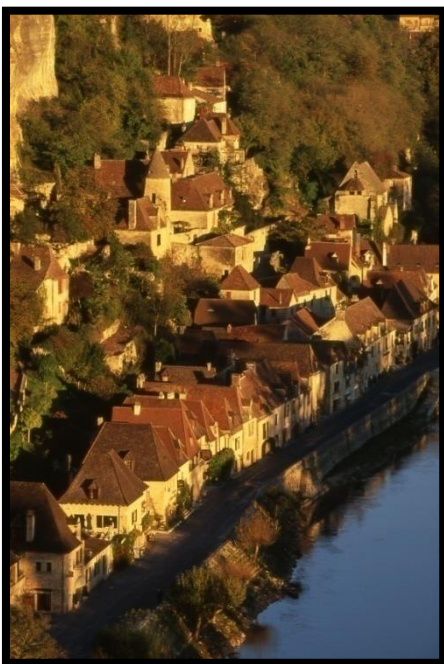


II. THE VALLEY, ITS CASTLES AND VILLAGES

1. **The Guardians of the Valley.** On each promontory on each side of the river, they are there. The silhouettes of their keeps, of their walls and of their machicolations in the Périgord sky give the impression that the fortresses are watching over the peace that reigns in the valley. A peace that in times gone by was fragile ... These imposing historical edifices witness the long episodes of war, without which they would not have been built. Those who came here to claim and settle land all those years ago have given this part of Périgord the name “The Valley of the Castles”.

2. **An Architectural Paradise.** There are an extraordinary number of castles, situated one after the other in close proximity from the furthest point downstream to the highest point upstream as well as numerous other less imposing but nonetheless historic buildings. The first is **Montfort** at Vitrac. Fiefdom of the Cathar, Lord Bernard de Cazenac, the castle was one of the targets of the Albigensian Crusade, but nevertheless still remains proud on its promontory inviting passersby to admire it.

3. Then there is the **troglodytic medieval fort** of La Roque-Gageac, the astonishing neoclassicism of the **Malartrie Castle** towards Vézac and the stone lauze rooftops of the castle in the **Marqueyssac Gardens**, which set the scene for one of the most beautiful sights in the valley. On its rocky spur, **Beynac** – the oldest castle in the Périgord, which resisted many attacks and only surrendered to Richard the Lionheart, dominates the river along with the 12th century church. You can also admire the port of **Envaux** on the left bank and the castles in the most western part of the itinerary at **Saint-Vincent-de-Cosse**.



Most Beautiful Villages in France

Beautiful ochre coloured stone houses line the river at La Roque-Gageac against a background of palm trees and bougainvillea's which thrive in the micro-climate produced by the south facing cliffs. The troglodytic fort and the manor house, Tarde enhance an architectural choreography which seems to have been sculpted out of the rock. Another picture postcard setting upstream is Beynac-et-Cazenac whose tiny, medieval streets seem to cascade down towards the River Dordogne. These two villages are listed among the prestigious “Most Beautiful Villages in France”.



III. A PLACE FOR ADVENTURE

1. **Outdoor Activities.** The landscape with its contrasted hills and valleys, natural setting and preserved environment makes it the perfect place for lovers of outdoor activities. Challenging walks or country strolls, daring explorations or gentle discovery ... on or by the water, in the forests, on the cliffs, near to or in the villages ... there are endless possibilities for walking off the beaten track for all age groups.

2. **Circuits To Suit Everyone.** Country strolls and signposted circuits are to be found throughout the Périgord Noir which go up and downhill, and form circuits which meet up and cross each other and make a network of paths to please both occasional walkers and experienced hikers, horse riders and mountain bikers. The paths are full of promise: on foot, by bike or on horseback there is both a sense of adventure and tranquility.

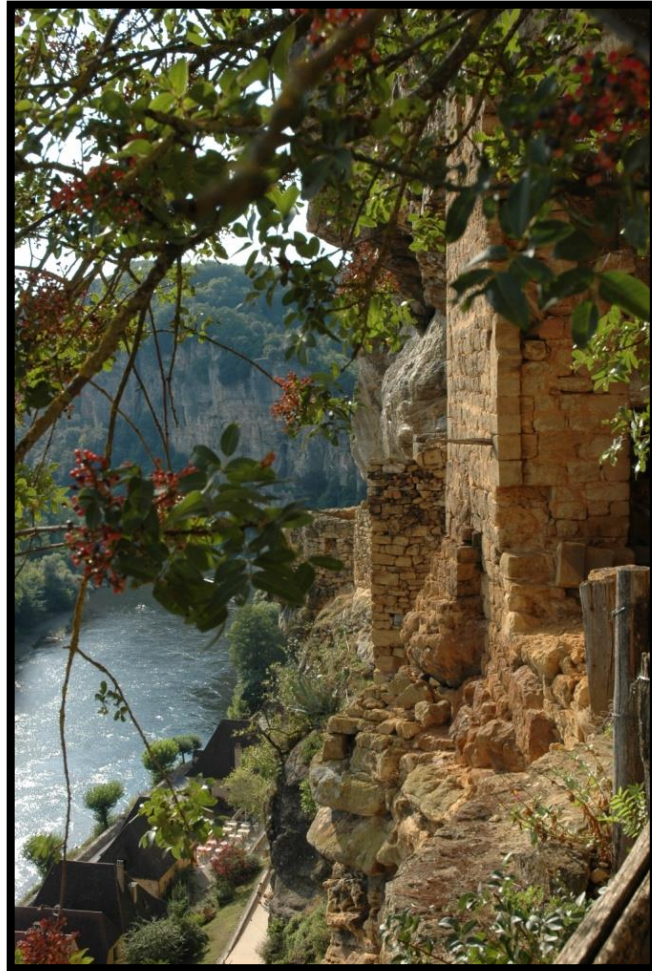
Nautical Expeditions.

Those who enjoy canoeing on calm waters will find everything to satisfy them with several points of embarkation along the river from Vitrac to Saint-Vincent-de-Cosse. It's another way of experiencing the riches of the river's ecosystem and seeing its banks, castles and villages from a completely different viewpoint. Boat along the river, stop for a swim on the pebble or sandy beaches, explore the river banks An unforgettable experience moving in another dimension.



THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE PÉRIGORD NOIR

With its local heritage, famous personalities, secrets and legends, fabulous scenery and protected natural sites, the villages of the Périgord Noir have many secrets to reveal.



At each turn the Périgord Noir reveals new riches away from the beaten track: the sun playing on the stones in the square in front of the church, the villages animated by children's games ... streams which run through valleys and rifts in the cliff above which stand the castles ... the secrets of the morning mist which invade the valleys and dusk which creeps through the woodland ...

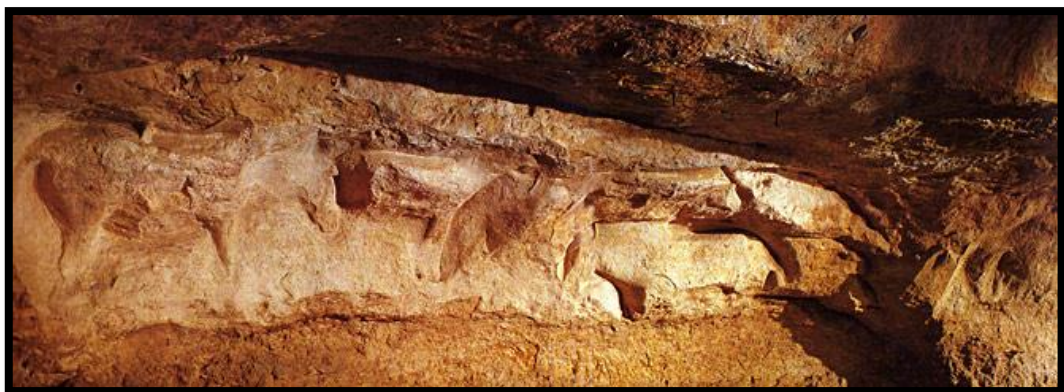
I. HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS

1. **Stories from the bell tower.** The villages and hamlets of the Périgord Noir have a reputation for their rural values and the quality of their environment and easily seduce nature lovers who seek peace and quiet and what has been termed “green tourism”. The villages, set in wonderful natural surroundings and with remarkable architectural features are well worth the detour. Among others there are the Romanesque style church and the Château du Barry (15th and 17th century) at **Marcillac-Saint-Quentin**, the Château de la Roussie (classified a Historic Monument) at **Proissans**, the church and wall-belfry at **Saint-Vincent-le-Paluel**, and at **Sainte-Nathalène** the Château Latour (15th century) with its stone lauze roof, the Massaud manor house (16th century) and the de la Tour Water Mill where walnut oil is still produced thanks to the waters of the River Enéa.

2. **From cabins to castles.** Throughout the region local builders have combined their talents and imagination with that of their natural surroundings to produce constructions which can't fail to impress. Wash houses, wayside crosses, dried wall stone huts, fountains etc. are to be found wherever your journey takes you. Owners and local associations appreciate their heritage and have worked with passion to restore and maintain it. This respect for the local architecture means that the traditional stone lauze roofs of the large majority of castles have also been looked after and preserved whether open to the public or not.

A prehistoric fresco.

The monumental frieze of horses in high relief at the Abri du Cap Blanc at Marquay was sculpted more than 15,000 years ago by our Paleolithic ancestors and is considered as a masterpiece of prehistoric art. It is one of the sites which make up the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley. It is open to the public under the management of the National Centre of Monuments and has an associated museum area which looks at the way of life of Cro-Magnon man.



Secular architecture.

Dry stone buildings and walls are an intrinsic part of the Périgord landscape and are to be found everywhere in the Sarlat area. In particular the Cabanes du Breuil at Saint-André-Allas present a remarkable architectural grouping. With their corbelled arched roofs tiled in the traditional lauze stones, the huts, which were originally farm outbuildings, were built following secular traditions and were classified as a Historic Monument in 1995.



II. MYTHS, LEGENDS AND TRUE STORIES

1. **Living legends.** There are many local tales which have been passed down from generation to generation by story tellers who entertained people at evening gatherings and at children's bedtimes. There is the **Coulobre** – half sea snake and half dragon who is master of the waters of the River Dordogne. In the forests lurks the **Lébéro** (the Périgord wolf) who can chill the blood of the bravest; there are tales of springs which are known for their healing powers – even solving the heartache of wounded love, and more than one haunted castle. And it is hard not to believe the tale that when an angel was sent from God to distribute castles throughout the world, he tipped out nearly all the contents of his basket in the Périgord Noir as he leant over to gaze at a beautiful girl sleeping under a walnut tree.

The White Lady of Puymartin

The Château du Puymartin, whose crenelated towers dominate the valley of the Beune at Marquay has always been the talk of the town. It has belonged to the same family for more than five centuries and is notable for its mythological Cabinet, unique in the Périgord and also for the mysterious White Lady. Many people, including both visitors and occupants of the house have seen the long evanescent silhouette of a ghost on the ramparts, which is said to be that of Thérèse de Sainte-Clar, who was imprisoned and then died, walled up during the 16th century in the north tower by a jealous husband.



2. Historical encounters. These stories are true ... and remain the pride of those who tell them. The encounters are well known, the people who witnessed them just as famous. The first defies the centuries: in 1911 Jean-Gaston Lalanne, a doctor from Bordeaux who was passionate about prehistory discovered a Paleolithic Venus at the archaeological site of Laussel (Marquay). A nude beauty from the depths of history holding a bison horn in her right hand and sculpted 25,000 years ago.

Then there is the perfect friendship personified in the 16th century by Etienne de la Boétie from Sarlat and Michel de Montaigne from Bergerac ... In 1614 Jean Tarde, a historian, geographer, astronomer, theologian and philosopher from Roque-Gageac met Galileo who gave him a telescope which is today one of the most treasured objects in Sarlat. More recently, two writers fell in love with the Périgord Noir – one was the American Arthur Miller, Marilyn Monroe's husband, who described it as "the most beautiful region in the world" and the other the author of the book , Malevil, Robert Merle.

To end – but without being exhaustive – we cannot forget the cinematic adventures of Jean Gabin and Louis de Funès who starred in the French film *Le Tatoué* based around the Château de Saint-Vincent-le-Paluel.

III. NATURE IN ALL ITS GLORY

1. **Protected sites.** There are many different types of protected sites in the Périgord Noir owing to the variety of riches in the region. Many buildings come under the **Historic Monuments** label and there are other classifications which help preserve without being over protective. For example the valley of the River Enéa is classed as an Ecological, Fauna and Flora Special Interest Natural Zone (**ZNIEFF**), and other classifications are **Major Sites of Aquitaine**, **Natura 2000**, the **Unesco Reserve for Man and the Biosphere** (the whole of the Dordogne Valley) plus a project to integrate the Valley des Beaunes as one of the **Grands Sites de France**... all is in place to safeguard this earthly paradise

Tamnies beach

Perched high on a hill, the Romanesque church in the village of Tamnies stands over the stone, lauze tiled village rooftops and the Valley des Beaunes, where there is a lake which is popular with swimmers in the summer. A fine, sandy beach and clean water makes it ideal for swimming and aquatic activities, particularly as it has been awarded the Pavillon Bleu label for its environmental quality.



2. **The natural landscape.** The vegetation of the Périgord Noir is a rich source of interest for botanists and nature lovers and is influenced by varying climatic and geological factors. There are a great many indigenous varieties. The Holm Oaks and Chestnut trees are the most typical of the region but there are many other species to be found in the vast forests and on the river banks. The hills of the Périgord Noir are clothed in green in summer and towards the south there are varieties which are unusual at this latitude. Landscape gardeners have been inspired by the centuries old vegetation. Around the most humble dwellings as well as castles the gardens merge with the surrounding countryside. Private gardens are luxuriant. The parks which are open to the public are full of surprises. The **Clos des Sources** is a garden inspired by water, alternating cascades and foliage and set in the woods at Vitrac. At Saint-André-Allas the **Jardins de Haute Terre** follow the four seasons with special reference to the five senses and the **Tropical Garden** at Roque-Gageac benefits from a microclimate on the right bank of the River Dordogne so that the cliff is covered in palm trees, banana, orange and pomegranate trees, bougainvillea's and a profusion of oleanders.

The Hanging Gardens

Inspired by Italy the 22 hectares of the Jardins de Marqueyssac overlook the Dordogne Valley at Vézac with breathtaking, panoramic views. Alleyways, green meadows and mazes play with the relief of the landscape and create contrast and interest. Enhanced by the cypresses, brightened by cyclamen, and with its incredible array of pruned box the site has a romantic Toscan air whose popularity is evident by the fact that it is the most visited garden in the Aquitaine.



A GASTRONOMIC TRADITION

Sarlat's worldwide reputation for its gastronomy tempts the taste buds and titillates the senses. Farms, markets, restaurants and gourmet tables: In Sarlat and the Périgord Noir there are plenty of opportunities to benefit from the best of the local food.



Food lovers know the great dishes of the high table often have humble origins and country fare here has always conquered the hearts of the aristocracy. Since prehistory the Périgord Noir has cultivated an “art de vivre” that privileges the local food and satisfies both refined and hearty appetites. A culture, an art ... a religion!

I.A BOUNTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE

1. **Gifts from earth and sky.** Thousands of years ago the Périgord Noir was a paradise for the hunter gatherers of the Paleolithic age. And it still is. When the climatic conditions are right – hunting for mushrooms – above all for the “cèpe”- is still of primordial importance – as is the search for the Périgord Black Truffle after the first frosts. Included in these bountiful periods are hunting for wild game in the forests and shooting migrating doves: the locals know exactly when and how to get the most from a land with multiple resources.

Périgord’s Black Diamond.

Tuber melanosporum: the latin name for a fungus which has an incomparable taste and aroma and which is treasured by Michelin starred chefs and food lovers worldwide.... There is a special protocol surrounding the Périgord Black Truffle – it has to be closely inspected before it is bought – its smell savoured before it is tasted. The magic of the truffle market can be witnessed from November to March in Sarlat which has a prime truffle market where sales are controlled and supervised both for individual and wholesale purchases by professionals. There is a similar experience in warmer weather when markets offer tastings of the tuber aestivum, the summer truffle.



2. **Cultivated riches.** If the people of the Périgord Noir began to be gourmets and food lovers in Prehistoric times – they have since learnt to get the best out of nature. Over the centuries, this region has seen the growth of crops which have increased its reputation without spoiling its natural riches. Walnut groves, chestnut orchards, fields of strawberries and asparagus as well as truffle oak plantations are perfectly integrated into the countryside. Together with the “wild” products these cultivated crops add variety and flavour to traditional dishes throughout the year.

Walnuts to Savour

Walnuts have been present in the area since the Paleolithic era but now benefit from the label “appellation d’origine contrôlée”. The nut itself is included in several local recipes – and you can also discover its oil which is released after pressing and an aperitif known as “vin de noix”...



3. **Origin: 100% Périgord.** Many of the Périgord's leading products are recognized by labels which indicate their quality, among them- *appellation d'origine contrôlée* (the origins and the name are controlled) *igp- indication géographique protégée* (European logo where the product comes from a specific geographical area related to the food), *Label Rouge* (quality product of France). The local riches are combined with expertise and "*savoir-faire*" so that each part of the duck and goose, emblematic of Sarlat and raised for foie gras, becomes a delicacy – and goat's milk is transformed into the small tasty local cheeses known as cabecous.

II. AN ANCIENT TRADITION

1. **From generation to generation.** Gastronomy is a precious legacy passed from father to daughter, from grandmother to granddaughter... The art of cooking is a family affair in the Périgord Noir. In day to day cooking and in the kitchens of the Michelin starred restaurants the traditions and secrets are kept alive in ancient recipes – but also with the innovation that keeps the local products in the forefront of modern cuisine.

2. **Authentic flavours.** Raising duck and geese, preparing foie gras, cooking magret, mushrooms, preserves, conserves The gastronomy of the Périgord is a timeless heritage which can be shared at any place and at any moment. There are numerous opportunities: gourmet markets, farmers markets, farmhouse inns, restaurants, gourmet festivals with plenty of tastings as well as village festivals where there is always a great feast where the local food is shared by all in a spirit of conviviality.

Direct from the farm

Whether behind their market stalls or at their farms, the local producers are keen to share their enthusiasm for their produce with you. The farms in the Périgord Noir know how to cultivate the land and their sense of welcome with gourmet visits on the itinerary.



3. **Bon Appetit!** On the menu or à la carte, in a snack or at a banquet, food from the Périgord offers a whole range of flavours. Just the names of the dishes reflect their authenticity and appeal to the most modest of appetites. Tourains (a special onion soup), salade de gésiers (made with duck or goose gizzards), enchaud (a pot roast pork loin) foie gras (fried, mi-cuit or with truffles), smoked or rarely cooked magrets, confits, cous ou ailes farcies (stuffed necks or wings – with foie gras of course!), pommes de terres sarladais aux cèpes, (potatoes fried in goose or duck fat with cep mushrooms).....Welcome to the Périgord table!

III. GOURMET FESTIVALS

All year round. Because it is a region where it is important to eat well and live well throughout the year, culinary art and food production has pride of place in the cultural and festive calendar. These festivals are popular with local people as well as with visitors from all over France and overseas who have made Sarlat their gastronomic capital.

Truffle treats



The season starts in mid-January with a real treat: the Truffle Festival and Cooking Academy of Foie Gras and the Truffle. It includes a big market, a truffle hunting demonstration by trained dogs, truffle “croustous” (Périgord tapas), cooking courses with well-known chefs and a cooking competition for young cooks who come from all over France to be judged by a jury of 11 top chefs, who demonstrate their talents in a big show.

Sarlat Fest’oie

The month of February follows with another traditional festival, based around the goose – the emblem of Sarlat and whose image was already being represented 20,000 years ago in cave paintings. There are gaggles of geese in the town centre, numerous opportunities for tastings, a legendary carcass soup on offer and workshops celebrating the goose that is the star of the weekend...and a great feast where there is, of course, plenty of foie gras on the menu.



Journées du Terroir

Spring comes and with it the return of the Local Produce Days during the Thursday and Friday of Ascension when Sarlat is transformed into a giant farm. It is the ideal occasion for meeting producers and enjoying the riches and the diversity of recipes from the Périgord. Tastings and demonstrations.



Fête de la Gastronomie

In September the gastronomic values of sharing, generosity and quality of products are seen at a great autumnal meeting. People sit round a meal table together and with a fanfare, the sheep arrive from the hillsides for the transhumance – when they are brought down into the valleys for the winter ... and the Périgord Noir reveals its gastronomic heart once again.



FESTIVALS: DON'T FORGET TO PICK UP A PROGRAMME!

Famous festivals, exhibitions of all kinds, traditional and out of the ordinary animations : there are a multitude of cultural, artistic and festive events in Sarlat and the Périgord Noir all year long – which give rise to extraordinary encounters which are always convivial.



The charms of the capital of the Périgord Noir shine under the spotlight with a long list of cultural events including cinema, theatre, traditional Occitan culture, Christmas celebrations and impromptu events.

I. SETTING THE SCENE: CULTURAL EVENTS

The architecture of the medieval town and the surrounding countryside provide a wonderfully attractive background for artists of all types ... The scene is set, the actors walk on stage, the cameras turn Sarlat rolls out the red carpet, draws back the curtains, sets the scene and plays a leading part in its list of spectacular events.

Sarlat Theatre Festival

The “Festival des Jeux du Théâtre” was founded in 1952 and is the oldest festival of its type after Avignon and one of the most reputed in France attracting nearly 7,000 spectators each summer. Classics, modern works and new creations are played out in the historic sites of the town and are followed by open debates where the public can meet and talk to famous actors and producers as well as up and coming new talent.



Roll out the Red Carpet for The Big Screen

The Festival du Film is an important annual event in French cinema and for one week in November Sarlat is not unlike Cannes – except that this festival is much more accessible to the public. In the last 20 years some of the greatest French directors and actors have been in town and the public has been invited to previews of films that often go on to become box office hits. There is also the opportunity to meet the teams from the films who are competing in the Festival and every year, 600 lycée students who are studying cinema at school, attend the Festival from all over France.



Local Heritage Under The Stars

Sarlat is the perfect example of an intelligent and dynamic conservation programme which is highlighted in September on European Heritage Day. Various festivities are organized and in the evening the town is given a new look as its streets and alleyways are lit by the stars and by thousands of candles giving it a magical glow.



Art in Sarlat

There is room for artistic expression in Sarlat. Workshops and galleries are to be found round every corner to satisfy art lovers. And there is a programme of events throughout the year. In the winter Les Hivernales is an exhibition for local artists, in May, Arts en Folie is for the young, there is a National Photographic Art Salon and a Summer Exhibition, which each year is dedicated to an internationally known artist.



II. PARTY TIME! FESTIVITIES

The Sarlat locals certainly know how to throw a party. They will seize on any occasion to bring people together in an atmosphere of celebration whilst conferring on these special moments the traditions and cultures of their heritage.

Celebrating Days Gone By

The Ringueta is a festival celebrating the traditional games of the past which takes place every other year at Whitsun. Visitors can join in by playing “Rampeau”, a kind of skittles, have a go on the Barrel Rodeo, climb the Greasy Pole, race on stilts and participate in a tug-of-war. In the evening there is a traditional Périgord meal where everyone chats and laughs over the exploits of the day.



Christmas Magic

Christmas lights shine out and thousands of tiny bulbs shimmer in the trees to decorate the Christmas market with more than 40 wooden chalets selling arts and crafts in the Place de la Rigaudie where there is also a skating rink..... The magic of the market lasts three weeks. Craftsmen, entertainments, story tellers, gastronomic stalls, an inn, mulled wine, hot chestnuts, Christmas beer And each year there is a different theme to delight the children and all those who still believe in Father Christmas.



The Spirit of the South West.

Celebration and laughter are important in the local traditions of the Périgord Noir. So it is not uncommon to witness a spontaneous scene of joviality and conviviality following a victorious match or a birthday or some other event ... This outside the official calendar which also includes the Carnival, Fête de la Musique, village festivals . The legend that people in the South West are friendly, welcoming and convivial lives on!



UNFORGETTABLE
SARLAT PERIGORD NOIR
AN OUTSTANDING DESTINATION