

south west france with mary moody



trip highlights

Exploring the lesser known areas of South West France in the company of Mary Moody who has an incredible passion for this region

Discovering historic towns and villages on foot

Enjoying the wonderful regional food and wine

Soaking up the hospitality of delightful family run hotels

Exploring the famous pilgrimage township of Rocamadour

Visiting the Chateau of Biron, one of the most spectacular of the Dordogne chateaux

Wandering around the famous and beautiful gardens of Eyrygnac and Marqueyssac

Discovering the ancient town of Sarlat



Trip Duration	15 days
Grade	Adventure touring level
Activities	Adventure touring, day walks
Accommodation	15 day trip

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our South West France with Mary Moody trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about off the beaten track experiences as it provides our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are also committed to making sure that our range of unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of our small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. The itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!

why travel with World Expeditions?

Mary Moody has been leading walking tours in this region of France for many years. Mary has chosen World Expeditions as her travel partner to organise this trip with the assistance of Dany Chouet and Trish Hobbs (formerly of the famous Cleopatra Guesthouse in the Blue Mountains), who now live fulltime in France.

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trip dates

2010 06 Sep - 20 Sep

**LAND COST (joining Gourdon) -
\$6990.00AUD**

Single Supplement - \$995.00AUD

**Above cost is based on a minimum
of 10 people in twin share
accommodation**

**For Competitive airfares to
Paris/Toulouse, travel to Gourdon
and stopover ideas please contact
our expert staff today to receive a
detailed quote.**

the trip

This unique tour of South West France includes some gentle walking in the mornings followed by delightful picnics and restaurant lunches in which the local food and wines can be enjoyed. While walking and talking, we delve into regional history, architecture, cultural traditions and agriculture. Along the way we visit historic towns, villages, cloisters and chateaux as well as gardens, a vineyard and some rustic farms. The evenings are for a variety of dining experiences; from family run cafes to haute cuisine.

about your leader

The tour is led by Mary Moody, a former presenter on the ABC's Gardening Australia and the author of four best selling travel memoirs - Au Revoir, Last Tango in Toulouse, The Long Hot Summer and Sweet Surrender. Mary has owned a small village house in Frayssinet-le-Gelat for ten years and has explored the tiny villages and towns that make up France's "best kept secret". She adores this region and will be ably assisted on the tour by Trish Hobbs and Dany Chouet formerly of the famous Cleopatra Guest House in the Blue Mountains.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE GOURDON
DAY 2	TOUR GOURDON. WALK TO PREHISTORIC CAVES
DAY 3	VISIT ANCIENT PILGRIMAGE TOWN OF ROCAMADOUR
DAY 4	WALK GOUJOUNAC TO MARY'S VILLAGE FRAYSSINET-LE-GELAT
DAY 5	INTO THE DORDOGNE TO VISIT CHATEAU MARQUEYSSAC
DAY 6	VISIT CHATEAU BIRON AND VILLEREAL
DAY 7	VISIT GARDENS OF EYRIGNAC AND TRANSFER TO MONPAZIER
DAY 8	VISIT BELVES AND LUNCH AT FERME AUBERGE
DAY 9	TO PUY L'EVEQUE AND WALK TO BELAYE FOR PICNIC
DAY 10	TO ANCIENT SARLAT
DAY 11	EXPLORE ST CIRQ LAPOPIE AND WALK TO BOUZIERS
DAY 12	VISIT MOISSAC CLOISTERS AND ABBEY
DAY 13	SATURDAY MARKET IN CAHORS AND PICNIC
DAY 14	VISIT PICTURESQUE CONQUES
DAY 15	TRIP CONCLUDES CAHORS

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fast facts

Countries Visited:
France

Visas:
Please check visa requirements
with your reservations consultant*

Vaccinations:
Please consult a travel vaccination
specialist for up to date
information

Private Groups:
Private group options are not
available for this trip

Singles:
Single travellers who are unable to
be matched with another single
traveller of the same gender, must
pay a single supplement on this
trip.

Leader:
Expert English speaking guide

what's included

- 14 nights accommodation in 3-4 star hotels on a twin share basis
- 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 picnics, 3 hotel dinners and one welcome aperitif. These meals will include wine and have been planned to include a tremendous variety of traditional local ingredients
- All transfers and coach touring as listed in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to gardens, caves, chateaux as outlined in the itinerary
- Trip escorted by Mary Moody who will meet you in Gourdon

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Gourdon

The train will arrive at the Gourdon station, where Mary Trish and Dany will be waiting to welcome everyone and the bus will take us (and luggage) to the traditional local family hotel, the Hotel Bouriane, where we will be staying for the next six nights. After settling into the rooms, there will be a get-together over aperitifs with hors d'oeuvres, a chance to get to know each other, and Mary will outline the plans for the trip. Dinner is not included as often guests need to get to sleep early and recover from jet lag, but the hotel is very accommodating and everything from a bowl of soup to a full dinner can be ordered from them.

Meals: NIL

DAY 2 Tour Gourdon. Walk to prehistoric caves

After the breakfast, Mary will guide the group on a walk through the local Tuesday morning marché and then on down from the town to the pre-historic Grottes de Cougnac with natural rock formations and Palaeolithic rock paintings. Then Mary will lead the way on a great walk over to the lake where Trish and Dany will be waiting with the first of the picnics, spread out under the trees. This is a leisurely affair, and later in the afternoon Mary will guide the group back through the woods and up to the town of Gourdon. The evening is free, to explore the town which has many bistros and small restaurants and bars, or to remain in the hotel.

Meals: B, L

DAY 3 Visit ancient pilgrimage town of Rocamadour

After breakfast, the bus will take everyone on a beautiful drive to the famous pilgrimage township of Rocamadour. Perched dramatically on a cliff edge, the town is one of the most visited ancient sites of France, with dramatic architecture and a church that contains the Chapel of the Black Virgin, a fascinating religious cult over many centuries. Mary will guide the group from the top of the escarpment to explore the town and the beautiful church. Everyone is free to find a café for a light lunch and then continue exploring until later in the afternoon when the bus will return us to our hotel via another scenic route. A very special dinner is included tonight at the hotel, featuring local specialities from the Lot.

Meals: B, D

DAY 4 Walk Goujounac to Mary's village Frayssinet-le-Gelat

After breakfast, the bus will take everyone to the charmingly restored village of Goujounac where Mary will be waiting, and will guide the group on a pretty woodland walk back to her own village of Frayssinet-le-Gelat, with a chance to visit her house for a morning coffee and discover the history of

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responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence.

World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook.

This detailed guide to responsible & sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book.

Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website

www.worldexpeditions.com

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price.

the village which is located on ancient Roman crossroads. Then the group will visit the home of some French friends for a traditional aperitif before going to lunch at Madame Murat's. This is quite an experience. Mary has written a book and produced an SBS documentary about this family and their restaurant, who have been catering to the locals for generations, serving traditional food with charm and generosity. The bus will return everyone to the hotel and there is no dinner included (not after lunch at Madame Murat's!)

Meals: B, L

DAY 5 Into the Dordogne to visit Chateau Marqueyssac

After breakfast the bus will take everyone to the beautiful gardens of the Chateau Marqueyssac, created in the 18th century and consisting almost entirely of sculptured boxwood. The views are spectacular, over the valley of the Dordogne, and the guided tour is really interesting. Then the bus will take the group to the picnic spot where Trish & Dany will be waiting with the lunch and chilled rosé. After a leisurely lunch there will be a trip on a local traditional boat, a gabarre, a slow sail along the Dordogne River past chateaux and glorious landscape. Then there is time to explore the picturesque village of Roque Gageac before the bus heads off to Domme, another famous and beautiful village. Time for an ice cream or a pastis in one of the charming local cafés before the bus goes back through spectacular countryside to the Hotel Bouriane in Gourdon. The evening is free.

Meals: B, L

DAY 6 Visit Chateau Biron and Villereal

After breakfast, the bus will go to the Chateau Biron, one of the most spectacular of the Dordogne chateaux, dominating the surrounding countryside with marvellous views and often used as a film location. (The basement medieval kitchens are fabulous), then the bus will drop us at the nearby town of Villereal for the Saturday morning marché with local produce, as well as jewellery and clothes and tablecloths! Then, after we collect the bread from the boulangerie, we will go to the nearby home of Trish & Dany where they invite us to a great French lunch in their lovely home. On the terrace overlooking the countryside if it is warm, if not, inside in the 13th century dining room. If it is hot, there is a swimming pool to cool off. After a lazy afternoon the bus winds its way back to Gourdon and the hotel.

Meals: B, L

DAY 7 Visit Gardens of Eyrygnac and transfer to Monpazier

After breakfast, we check out of the Gourdon hotel and the bus takes us to the famous and beautiful gardens of Eyrygnac, where we are guided around the immaculate garden 'rooms', and white rose garden by a knowledgeable bi-lingual French guide. These are amongst the most famous gardens of France. Then the bus takes us –again by the prettiest route– to the ancient little village of Cadouin, with its wonderful church and cloisters and pretty honey-coloured stone houses. Sunday Lunch is in the local auberge, known for its food and atmosphere. After lunch there is the town, church and cloisters to visit. The bus will take us via other pretty villages, each one so different, towards the next hotel, the Edward 1er in the beautiful town of Monpazier, which is another of the 'Most Beautiful Villages of France'. We check into the hotel, which has recently been renovated and is now a really charming place right in the town, so that walking around and exploring is easy. It is full of interesting buildings, has a wonderful central square, lovely church buildings and lots of cafés and local restaurants. Dinner at the hotel is not included after our special 'Sunday lunch'.

Meals: B, L

DAY 8 Visit Belves and lunch at Ferme Auberge

After breakfast the bus will collect us to go and visit the town of Belvès, and the surrounding countryside and farms producing truffles, duck products and walnuts, a picture of the rural life of South Western France that has not changed much for centuries. The French are rightly proud of their agricultural traditions and we will learn about truffles and foie gras before Lunch at an authentic

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ferme-auberge. Here everything is produced from the farm, and we will be welcomed into the dining room of the old farmhouse itself. After lunch the bus will take us to visit other nearby villages, each more picturesque than the last, before returning to Monpazier. Dinner not included but there is certainly plenty of choice in this charming town.

Meals: B, L

DAY 9 To Puy L'Eveque and walk to Belaye for picnic

After Breakfast the bus will take the group to Puy L'Eveque, another historic pilgrimage town on the Lot River, and then to Grezels from where Mary will guide the walk through the forest to Belaye, on top of the hill with a panoramic view over the Lot. Dany & Trish will be waiting with another of the famous picnics as a reward for the climb. In the afternoon the bus will take everyone to lovely Albas then to Prayssac for a visit to that pretty Lotoise town, with delightful shops and buildings and then back to Monpazier. No dinner included but plenty of choice.

Meals: B, L

DAY 10 To ancient Sarlat

After breakfast the bus will take the group to the famous town of Sarlat, where the Wednesday marchè will be in full swing. Sarlat has a rich history and extraordinary architecture – there is so much to look at and lots of attractive shops, whole streets of medieval and renaissance houses, and plenty of cafès for a light lunch or a coffee, later in the afternoon the bus will return to Monpazier. Dinner is included in the lovely dining room of the hotel, well known locally for their fresh and modern food.

Meals: B, D

DAY 11 Explore St Cirq Lapopie and walk to Bouziers

There is a fabulous market on Thursdays in Monpazier, and those who wish can go early and explore, and then after checking out of the hotel, the bus will take everyone to the top of the renowned village of St. Cirq Lapopie which is an artists colony with a long and fascinating history. Mary will guide the group on a walk down through the medieval village to the riverbank below, and on to the village of Bouziers where Trish & Dany will be waiting with the picnic. After lunch we will board a local ferry boat to explore this part of the river by boat, with wonderful views of the town above. Then the bus will take us to the historic town of Cahors and we will check into the Hotel Terminus, the most famous and traditional hotel of the region. The evening is free to explore the delights of Cahors.

Meals: B, L

DAY 12 Visit Moissac Cloisters and Abbey

After breakfast the bus will take the group to Moissac, famous for its abbey and cloisters (and table grapes!) Mary will guide the group around these fascinating buildings and the museum. There are many charming and pretty cafès to choose from for a light lunch and the town is lovely and different again from those in the Dordogne. The bus will return to the hotel giving everyone enough time to dress for the super gourmet dinner at the hotel's famous Le Ballandre, which is 'the' restaurant for the wealthy local truffle negociants.

Meals: B, D

DAY 13 Saturday market in Cahors and picnic

After breakfast it is the groups' turn to choose the food for our picnic lunch, selecting from the wonderful market stalls set up for the Saturday morning market. Dany and Mary will be on hand to offer advice (and translate when things get difficult) and to guide around the old town and the

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cathedral, and then we will head off to the chosen picnic spot where Trish will be waiting with the ice and wine. The afternoon and evening is free to explore Cahors, a lively town full of shops and people.

Meals: B, L

DAY 14 Visit picturesque Conques

Our last day together, so off to the pilgrimage town of Conques, on the route of St. Jacques de Compostelle, one of the major stopping places and a truly lovely tiny little town hidden in the folds of the hills. Famous for the 'treasure of Sainte Foy' there is a lovely rich and interesting museum, and the church is a magnet for pilgrims today as it was in the past. A timeless village, perfectly preserved. After exploring the village and the buildings and the museum we have a very special 'Sunday lunch' in the famous auberge, lots of swapping addresses and phone numbers and promising to 'stay in touch' Mary, Trish and Dany say goodbye to those who have an early start the next day. The bus takes us all back through beautiful countryside to Cahors. No dinner planned, evening free to explore Cahors for a last time or pack.

Meals: B, L

DAY 15 Trip concludes Cahors

After breakfast and checking out of the hotel, the bus will take those who are going to Toulouse airport to the airport, people taking the train from Cahors to Paris (or elsewhere) will be helped to Cahors rail station nearby.

Meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

a typical day

We have tried to create an itinerary with a balance of walking, sightseeing, shopping, eating and soaking up the glorious atmosphere. We want you to get a real feeling for this place without rushing, without changing hotels constantly and without being 'on the move.'

what you carry

During the day you will need to carry a small daypack with personal extras you require for that day - water bottle, camera, jacket etc

equipment required

No specialist gear is required for this trip. We recommend a comfortable pair of walking shoes and comfortable clothing for village and countryside rambles

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what's not included

- International flights from Australia to Paris/Toulouse - Please talk to our staff about competitive airfares to France
- Items of a personal nature
- Entrance fees not specified
- Train/transfers to start/finish of trip (our staff will assist you with this)

subscribe to our newsletter

Subscribe to our newsletter! To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly newsletter! You can do this online through our website, www.worldexpeditions.com or contact our office.

trip availability

If this trip seems right for you then we encourage you to call us now to check availability as we operate strictly small group adventures. Many of our adventures require us to secure services on your behalf; such as permits, hotels and flights to name but a few. The demand for these services is increasing each year making it difficult to join a trip last minute. To ensure we can assist you onto your trip of a lifetime we ask that you check your trip availability with our team at your earliest convenience.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form which is found at the back of our brochure or can be downloaded from our website www.worldexpeditions.com. On completion, fax or post the form to your nearest World Expeditions office along with your non-refundable deposit. World Expeditions has access to competitive airfares to Europe. Call your nearest World Expeditions office for assistance with your travel arrangements including flights, travel insurance and additional accommodation.