

FRANCE – DORDOGNE GASTRONOMY, WINE AND EASY WALKING

8-day / 7-night small group relaxing holidays for the discerning.....

Departs: 6th – 13th October, 13th – 20th October, 20th – 27th October 2012
Cost: AU\$2960 per person twin share Single room supplement \$610
Distance: Walking: easy afternoons

This is not a cooking course. It is just an opportunity for you to have fun in the week cooking with three or four different French chefs and with our local English-speaking hosts and guides, Diana and James. There is much hands on cooking to do with the freshest of vegetables and farmyard meats and all taking place in the gastronomic heart of France and lots of recipes to bring home with you. You will touch on *haute cuisine* and *nouvelle cuisine* and learn how to work with simple base food like crême brulée and mousse and turn them into totally different and exotic dishes by the simplest of ways.

This is not a walking holiday. There is a little walking to do but the walks are designed for you to enjoy the autumn colours, to breathe in the fresh country air, to relax after lunch and to work up an appetite for dinner.

Our guides, James and Diana moved to an 18th Century farmhouse in the Lot Valley, South West France almost 20-years ago, enthused by the romance and beauty of the area. James' love of the flora and fauna, their combined fascination for food, wine and local traditions and personal contacts make these special holiday experiences offering considerably more than you could find as an individual traveller.

Over several years we have developed a wonderful selection of small group fully guided tours, mostly walking tours, but food and wine plays an important role in each itinerary in the Lot and Dordogne Valleys, in the Pyrenees region in France bordering Spain, in Umbria in Italy or in rural Suffolk in southeast England. Cooking weeks or short breaks focusing on truffles are available in spring or autumn in France.

These small group bespoke parties take place in ideal settings where you stay in the most charming small quality auberges. The Manor House of Le Vert for instance is the auberge used for a part of most walks in France. Beds and bathrooms are spacious and extremely comfortable with lovely views over the surrounding rural countryside. The hospitality of all those running the Manor House could not be better but what guests love is that the host, Bernard, is one of the great cooks of the region. He specialises in *Nouvelle Cuisine*, delightful cooking of sophistication and contrasts of delicate flavours.



Our Small Group Guided Walking Holidays include:

- Twin share in comfortable, quality hotels, inns and private homes - single rooms are on request.
- All meals and wine with most meals (pre and post meal drinks except if staying at inns / hotels)
- Fully guided walking, with mule/donkey support, support staff and vehicle, luggage transfers
- All local transport for the walks with knowledgeable English speaking guides.
- Maximum group size of 16.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

"The French Cooking Week was great fun, Diana and James were wonderful hosts and everything they organised for the week was interesting and enjoyable. There was enough walking to offset the over-indulgence of the rich food and the accommodation was charming. I would recommend it to anyone interested in sampling a slice of French life." **Andrea**

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Meet at Toulouse airport to be met at a pre-arranged time by our local hosts James and Diana. There is a drive to the Dordogne stopping for lunch beside the beautiful abbey of Moissac. Sir Kenneth Clark was here for his ground breaking television series *Civilisation* and he eulogised the doorway that we will look at after lunch. It is a stone masterpiece of asymmetry and beauty. We continue for afternoon tea at the remarkable bastide of Villereal. From here we continue to our hotel in the heart of the Dordogne region. We stay at a beautiful 18th Century chateau sitting nestled within its own walled parkland surrounded by lofty sweet chestnut trees. Diana and James will be the hosts here and we will spend the next three nights in the comfort of French chateau life. All bedrooms have good showers and toilets en suite.

Day 2 We visit the wonderful market at the medieval village of Issigeac where we buy ingredients for the lunch and dinner. Then we return to La Leotardie to the most lovely of kitchens made available to us here. Madame La Cuisine will come and show us just why French cuisine is one of the best in the world. Chopping, slicing, sewing, wrapping and using her very best savoir faire with the fresh local produce, she will prepare the evening's dinner with us. In the afternoon a small walk to build up an appetite for the evening's meal. *Walk 5km*

Day 3 Today we show you how to make a *fête champêtre* picnic with both sweet and savoury sides dishes with wine suggestions that will complement these flavours. Then a walk down to the pretty village of Saint Georges du Monclard before returning to the kitchen to work together on lunch which is served on the terrace of the chateau. In the afternoon we visit one of our favourite wineries of the area: Château Tiregand. The De Saint Exupery family owns chateau Tiregand and Xavier de Saint Exupery will show us in his lucid way how Pécharmant wine is made. Dinner will be in Bergerac at 'L'Imparfait', a delightful old style restaurant with a wonderful maitre d'hôte and a great reputation in the area for its excellent fish. *Walk 6.5km*

For wine lovers / non-cooks: a free morning after the walk before visiting Château Tiregand.



Day 4 We leave the Dordogne for the tranquil beauty of the Quercy Blanc and drive to Lario, to talk about the versatility of the *magret* - the breast of the fatted duck - an excellent and tender 'cut' of meat. We show the different ways it is enjoyed in South West France. Lunch will be on the terrace at James and Diana's home with the magret and assorted salads and wines. In the afternoon we will walk to a small local lavender distillery and see how this ancient culture still exists here. We then drive to Le Vert, a beautifully restored Quercy Manor House for four nights.

Day 5 After breakfast and a short circuitous walk, our chef and host, Bernard Philippe, will show us how, from the simple base of a *crème brûlée* for example, you can have such diversity of presentation and of flavours. This is our chance to see a master chef at work. Local flavourings of lavender and saffron will be used as well as many others to help put his theory into effect. The results of this meeting will be sampled in the evening at dinner. We drive then to Château Figeac, a 15th Century chateau belonging to one of the oldest families of the region where we will enjoy one of Diana's sumptuous picnics. After a long and leisurely lunch we will visit a small-unknown frescoed church and then return to Le Vert. *Walk: 5km*

Non-cooks are free to enjoy a morning stroll or to relax by the pool or terrace, followed by an afternoon walk.

Day 6 Charles de Gaulle said that France had two hundred and forty six different cheeses and how on earth was he expected to govern a country with so many different cheeses. Well we will look this morning at several of these wonders and what wines and breads complement their flavours. Goat, ewe and cow from smelly to mild will all come under scrutiny. Madame Lasfargues will come and help us cook cheese soufflés for lunch on the terrace looking down to the distant hilltop bastide of Lauzerte. In the afternoon we will take a walk to gain an appetite for the evening's dinner and return to Lario for the last demonstration of the week. This is a theatrical affair and Christiane will show how 'Pastis' is made. We return to Le Vert for diner. Walk 8km

Non-cooks enjoy the morning's wine and cheese tasting and the afternoons walk.

Day 7 We drive to the village of Prayssac and the hustle and bustle of the market, a beautiful rural market that circles the church. Free time at the market before we continue to Cahors stopping for lunch at La Terrasse – a well respected restaurant where Monsieur Pignières frowns at you if you ask for water "What use has water when there is wine on the table??" We then drive to Cahors and see the medieval martial masterpiece, le Pont Valentré. Return to Le Vert stopping at Château Lagrezette to see how they make a Robert Parkler classic wine, 'Le Pigeonnier'. Our final and farewell dinner will be prepared and served again by Bernard.

Day 8 Return transfer to Toulouse airport.



"We enjoyed Diana and James' company very much and their organisation was very professional. They both had a lot of knowledge regarding the region, food and wine and also made us very welcome at their home, we also met their children and they were great as well. The accommodation was very good and we also met some very nice people including locals who we would probably not have met if we were travelling by ourselves. I will be recommending this tour to my friends." Diane

See our website or call us for details of the other cooking holidays OUTDOOR TRAVEL offer in Provence or the wide range of quality small group walking holidays in France, Italy, Spain and England.

Contact OUTDOOR TRAVEL for more details, brochures and reservations:

- Call Toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or
- Fax (03) 57501020
- Email info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia
- Travel agent licence number 31102

QUALITY GUIDED WALKING HOLIDAYS IN EUROPE 2012

As at 12/09/2011

All costs are in Australian Dollars - subject to exchange rate fluctuations and booking conditions

Number of Days/Nights	Tour Cost (twin share)	Single Room Supplement
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Quality Small Group Guided Hotel to Hotel Walking Holidays

Escorted Departure Dates 2012

France				
A Taste of Truffles	5 days/4 nights	\$1,645	\$325	14 - 18 Jan, 21 - 25 Jan, 28 Jan - 1 Feb, 4 - 8 Feb, 11 - 15 Feb
The Dordogne Quercy	8 days/7 nights	\$2,960	\$610	14 - 21 Apr, 5 - 12 May, 19 - 26 May, 26 May - 2 Jun
The Dordogne Quercy: Flowers	8 days/7 nights	\$2,960	\$610	12 - 19 May
The Lot Valley: Haut Quercy	8 days/7 nights	\$2,665	\$440	6 - 13 Sep, 13 - 20 Sep
A Taste of The Lot Valley: Haut Quercy	5 days/4 nights	\$1,380	\$325	1 - 5 Sep
French Cooking & Walking	8 days/7 nights	\$2,960	\$610	6 - 13 Oct, 13 - 20 Oct, 20 - 27 Oct
France & Spain				
The Basque Pyrenees	8 days/7 nights	\$3,055	\$610	24 Apr - 1 May, 27 Sep - 4 Oct
The Basque Pyrenees & Guggenheim	9 days/8 nights	\$3,445	\$610	25 Apr - 2 May, 27 Sep - 5 Oct
A Taste of The Basque Pyrenees	5 days/4 nights	\$1,695	\$325	22 - 26 Sep
Spain				
Catalunya	8 days/7 nights	\$2,960	\$610	4 - 11 Mar, 11 - 18 Mar, 18 - 25 Mar
A Taste of Catalunya	5 days/4 nights	\$1,490	\$325	25 - 29 Mar
Italy				
Tuscany	8 days/7 nights	\$3,055	\$610	9 - 16 Jun
Umbria: Flowers	8 days/7 nights	\$3,055	\$610	2 - 9 Jun
Umbria Walking & Food	8 days/7 nights	\$3,055	\$610	16 - 23 Jun
A Taste of Umbria	5 days/4 nights	\$1,490	\$325	23 - 27 Jun
England				
Suffolk Walks & Fine Food	8 days/7 nights	\$2,795	\$690	30 Jun - 7 Jul, 15 - 22 Jul
Suffolk Coast	8 days/7 nights	\$2,795	\$690	8 - 15 Jul
A Taste of Suffolk	5 days/4 nights	\$1,525	\$425	21 - 26 Jul

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL OUTDOOR TRAVEL Pty Ltd on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57501441 or EMAIL info@outdoortravel.com.au