



Places to go and things to see– updated July 2017

Day trips

You almost can't go wrong as the area is generally very beautiful, packed full of pretty villages. To give you a head start though, Dave went out exploring and this is what he found out:

Rocamadour

A bit touristy and essentially a massive religious icon so there are numerous vendors of artefacts. Still spectacular though, not just the buildings but the sheer immensity of the task of construction. Probably best to park at the bottom and walk up rather than the other way around as the upper car parks get very full rapidly. Rocamadour is about 1 hour away – you can have lunch at Grammat on the way which is likely to offer better value and a far better choice than the tourist options (chicken and chips) at Rocamadour .

Sarlat

For my money this is well worth the two hours or so it takes to get there - it's possible to get there much faster but the route along the edge of the Dordogne and through Martel and Souillac is worth the time. It's a large town that has managed to avoid having a very extensive medieval section destroyed by developers. The stone is beautiful and still shows how the town grew and changed over the last few hundred years. It's possibly worth arranging your visit to coincide with market day which is on Saturday although it will be a bit more crowded then. There is a smaller evening organic market on Thursdays which I have never visited.

Figeac

Is only about 40 minutes away if you take the back roads and it's a lovely town, perfect for browsing and having coffee or lunch. The buildings are pretty and there's lots of shops, cafes and restaurants plus on Saturdays it has a large and really interesting street market in the town square. There are loads of local farmers selling their produce - if you like dried sausage then the prices are good and the tastes are, well, interestingly variable. Cheese, olives and dried fruit abound as well as an excellent spice shop and stall.

Collonges la Rouge (via Beaulieu sur Dordogne)

Collonges la Rouge is a small and perfectly preserved red sandstone village that is unusual and beautiful. It may be self-consciously arranged for tourists but is not excessively twee. It's worth the trip because you can spend an hour or so wandering round the village having had a good lunch just outside Beaulieu on the way and then come back via Turenne.

Parking can be difficult and it is impossible to park actually in the village which makes it a great place to walk around. If you are coming from the Beaulieu direction you will pass a turning right just after the village marker towards the cemetery and there is often parking there. Failing that turn round and head back towards Beaulieu and, after a hundred yards or so, turn right down a minor road and right again into a forest car park. The village is a beautiful 10 minutes walk away from here.

Smaller excursions

Any of the following are worth a visit or a detour - there's a lot of quiet roads and simple tracks next or near to them all so take some water and your walking shoes.

Autoire

Really beautiful, the houses are great and there is a walk up a valley to a waterfall which is quite impressive. You can walk over the top of the headland as well if you have more time and make a round trip.

Carennac

Is by the Dordogne and has a nest of canoe vendors. They will point you downstream and tell you where to get out to be transported back to their car park. You can start early and have a packed lunch on the way down which is probably the best way to get value for money and enjoy the scenery in a more leisurely fashion. The town is a well preserved middle ages survival which may be just a tiny bit too overdone but the river makes up for it.

Curemont

I found Curemont very attractive not least because of the scale of the buildings - how many people did one need to keep 7 floors of stone built building clean without a Hoover? The town is in a beautiful area of countryside and not far from Beaulieu and Collonges

Loubressac

Loubressac is about 10 km west of St Cere and not far from some of the local cave systems - Padirac and Lacave. It is one of the 'most beautiful villages in France'.

Beaulieu sur Dordogne

Is very attractive and geared up for tourists but this means that it has a large concentration of 'Poulet / Frites' restaurants. You can also get pizza and there are sports bars and a hotel.

If you visit during the strawberry festival, the town goes strawberry mad with all sorts of gateaux and other concoctions for the red fruit connoisseur.

The older part of the town is nice and worth exploring as is the area by the river. (NB: Canoes from here) If you want to eat, lunchtime or (more expansively) in the evening there is a restaurant about 5 minutes out of the town on the left on the road to Collonges / A20. It's called the Old Mill / Vielle Moulin I think and does a lunchtime menu for €13 and evening for €27 (or more). The proprietor is Irish.

Martel

Martel has some lovely cafes and restaurants and is also good for more upmarket gifts. It takes some time getting there but the countryside along the way is interesting. There is a truly delightful section of steam railway here if that sort of thing sounds like fun. It runs along the edge of the valley and sometimes is actually the edge of the valley so you will get excellent views. The town is small and pretty but it's easy to miss the really nice bits because they are south of the main route through the town and not so obvious.

Walking

Almost anywhere you walk off the major roads there is beautiful scenery and peace and quiet. I've just noted a few suggestions here for places that are beyond the average delight.

The closest

From the house walk on past the farm on the left and take the road off to the left. This will turn into a track and then an unmade track heading down towards a stream and mill at the bottom of the valley. If you cross the stream by the mill bridge and follow the track up towards the left you will end up at Molières - the church that you can see from the terrace on the opposite hillside. There was a bar there last time I went but this needs to be checked. The round trip there and back will take about 1 to 2 hours depending on the bar.

St Paul de Vern

You'll see a signpost to St Paul de Vern off to the right on the road to St Céré just after you didn't turn right to Terrou for the morning croissants. Drive up to the village which is small and very unassuming and park by the bus stop / recycling bins. (Nobody has ever, ever seen a bus in the village). Walk along the road in the Serenity direction and turn left signposted Malvy. There are several walks along the roads here, all with super views of the countryside in almost all directions. If you check the map there are longer or shorter circular walks taking anything from 1 to 4 hours.