



# Treasures of Southwest France

September 4 - 13, 2014

**Thursday, September 4th.** This afternoon we gather at the Community School parking lot in Barrington for the coach journey to Boston, Logan Airport, where we board our transatlantic flight. **Overnight: Plane**

**Friday, September 5th.** Your arrival in Toulouse will be met by your Discover Europe Tour Director and your coach, for the transfer to your city-center hotel. After time to unpack, rest, and settle in, your host, Sandi Tynyk, will introduce the week ahead. The day will conclude with a welcome dinner. **(D) Overnight: Toulouse**

**Saturday, September 6th.** This morning you'll visit the premier fortified city in Europe, Carcassonne, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This spectacular medieval stronghold, replete with towers and turreted walls, first became a fortress under the Celts in 6th century BC. You'll then return to Toulouse for a free afternoon—perhaps visit St Sernin, one of the most influential Romanesque abbeys in Europe—in this vibrant, Mediterranean-influenced city. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant. **(B) Overnight: Toulouse**

**Sunday, September 7th.** Leaving Toulouse, your first stop today will be Albi, a classic red brick-and-tile Languedoc town where Cathars, 12th-century heretics, were infamously burned at the stake. You'll visit the Musee Toulouse-Lautrec and one of the most startlingly original cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Afterwards you'll stop in Rodez for lunch and visit to the Musee Fenaille, with its fabulous, utterly unique collection of figurative menhirs. Dinner is included this evening at the hotel in Figeac. **(B, D) Overnight: Figeac**



Rocamadour in the Dordogne

**Monday, September 8th.** Today you'll take to "The Road," as The Way of St James is known (all pilgrimage routes in France together constitute a UNESCO World Heritage site). In particular The Road will lead you to Ste. Foy, a stunning, 11th-century Romanesque Abbey—one of the best-loved pilgrimage churches in France—in the tiny village of Conques, hidden in an exquisite valley. The evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Figeac**

**Tuesday, September 9th.** Today you'll travel to Sarlat-le-Caneda, in the heart of the Dordogne, and even further back in time, to the Stone Age itself, when you visit the Grotte de Font de Gaume, a cave that was inhabited in 14,000 BC, complete with original cave paintings. You'll also visit the Musee National de Prehistoire in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac and (time permitting) the reproduction cave of Lascaux II. It was in caves just above the museum that remains of Cro-Magnon man and some of France's most famous cave paintings were discovered in the 1860s. After lunch, we'll break the return trip with stops in Rocamadour and the elegant city of Cahors, famous for its "black wine," made from Malbec grapes. This evening is free. **(B, L) Overnight: Figeac**



Carcassonne

**Wednesday, September 10th.** This morning you'll visit St Pierre de Moissac, a Romanesque abbey completed in 1100 that shelters the finest, oldest, and largest cloister with carved capitals on earth. It's a place of rare artistic and historic beauty, and a perennial stop on the St. James pilgrimage. Afterwards you'll travel to Bordeaux through lush river valleys—the fertile farm and orchard land of southwest France—where you'll settle into your elegant hotel in the center of Bordeaux. Dinner tonight will be in the hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Bordeaux**

**Thursday, September 11th.** Today you'll explore beautiful, sophisticated Bordeaux, one of the leading wine cities in the world and another important way station on the pilgrimage to Compostela. In the morning you'll view the city in the company of a local guide on a walking tour of the city center, after which you'll have free time to explore. The evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Bordeaux**

**Friday, September 12th.** Today you'll visit Arcachon, a stunning seaside town with a great swath of white-sand beach, and the largest dune in Europe. After an exploration of town and beach, you'll stop at a local vineyard on the way back to Bordeaux. This evening we gather for a farewell dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Bordeaux**

**Saturday, September 13th.** Morning transfer to Bordeaux Airport for the return flights to Boston, where our private coach will be waiting to take us back to Barrington. **(B) Overnight: Home**

Key to included meals:  
**B** - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **D** - dinner

