

[SCRIPT FOR A YOUTUBE TRAVEL CHANNEL ON PERIGORD REGION, FRANCE]

(This script revolves around the idea of Exploration and Travlogging. It is best suited for people willing to explore the nooks and corners of the region for the best of experience! It also focuses on the type of audience who want to have a once-in-a-lifetime-experience of Raw French Tourism!)

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're embarking on an incredible journey through one of France's hidden gems—the breathtaking Périgord region in the Dordogne department of Aquitaine. Nestled in the heart of southwestern France, the Périgord is divided into four distinct regions, each offering its unique charm and character. First, we have the Périgord Noir, or Black Périgord, known for its dense forests and rich historical heritage. Next is the Périgord Blanc, or White Périgord, characterized by its limestone plateaus and bright, reflective landscapes. Then there's the Périgord Vert, or Green Périgord, famous for its lush greenery and rolling hills. Finally, the Périgord Pourpre, or Purple Périgord, is celebrated for its vineyards and exquisite wines.

The Dordogne is a region often overlooked by American tourists, who may first think of Provence or Normandy. However, the Dordogne should not be skipped. It's a land of rich history, grand landscapes, and endless activities. After visiting Bordeaux, the nearest major city, a trip to Dordogne is an absolute must. For me, this region is quintessential France. It has everything—stunning scenery, historic sites, and mouthwatering cuisine. You could easily spend a week or more road-tripping through the Périgord, soaking up all it has to offer. Join us as we delve into the rich history, natural beauty, and gastronomic treasures of the Dordogne. From its charming villages to its celebrated vineyards, the Périgord promises an immersive French experience like no other. Buckle up and get ready for an unforgettable adventure!

WHY IS DORDOGNE FAMOUS?

The Dordogne region in France is renowned for its captivating blend of prehistoric heritage, medieval charm, and culinary excellence. Travelers flock to the area to explore the renowned Lascaux Caves, which offer a fascinating glimpse into prehistoric art and culture. The region is dotted with picturesque villages, with Sarlat-la-Canéda being a standout destination. Sarlat, the capital of the area, attracts over a million visitors every summer, drawn by its dramatic beauty, vibrant markets, and numerous events. One of the highlights is the open-air theater festival held in August, which transforms the medieval streets and ancient buildings into a lively cultural stage.

In addition to its historical and cultural attractions, the Dordogne is celebrated for its iconic cuisine. Visitors can savor regional specialties such as foie gras, truffles, and fine wines. The combination of its rich history, stunning landscapes, and gastronomic delights makes the Dordogne a must-visit destination. Whether you're wandering through medieval streets, attending a festival, or enjoying the local markets, the Dordogne offers an immersive experience that captures the essence of French heritage and hospitality.

WHEN TO VISIT?

The best time to visit the Périgord region of France is during spring and early autumn. From April to June and September to October, the weather is pleasant with mild temperatures, perfect for outdoor activities. These months also offer a more relaxed experience with fewer tourists compared to the busy summer season. However, if you prefer warmer weather and don't mind larger crowds, July and August are also popular times to explore the Dordogne. Whether you seek tranquility or vibrant summer energy, the Périgord region offers a delightful experience year-round.

THE BEST VILLAGES OF DORDOGNE:

While visiting Périgord, exploring its charming villages is a must. The Dordogne boasts dozens of picturesque villages, many of which are designated as Les Plus Beaux Villages de France, meaning "the most beautiful villages of France." Here are the top three favorites from this enchanting region, each offering a unique glimpse into the area's rich history and stunning beauty.

1. DOMME:

Domme, a picturesque village perched atop a hill overlooking the Dordogne River, is a must-visit destination in the Périgord region. Renowned for its breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, Domme offers visitors a chance to experience some of the best vistas over the Dordogne Valley. The village is famous for its well-preserved medieval architecture, cobblestone streets, and charming shops that line the main street. Exploring Domme, you'll find great restaurants serving local delicacies and numerous boutiques offering unique crafts and souvenirs. Whether you're savoring the view or wandering through its historic streets, Domme captures the essence of Périgord's beauty and charm.

2. BEYNAC-ET-CAZENAC:

Nestled along the Dordogne River, Beynac-et-Cazenac is a must-visit village in the Périgord region. This charming, petite village sits just below the imposing Château de Beynac, a medieval fortress that dominates the skyline. Beynac-et-Cazenac offers visitors a step back in time with its narrow, winding streets and well-preserved historic buildings. While the village itself is small and lacks many modern services such as restaurants, it more than makes up for it with its

enchanting atmosphere and stunning views. Strolling through Beynac-et-Cazenac, you'll be captivated by its timeless beauty and the sense of history that permeates every corner.

3. LA ROQUE-GAGEAC:

La Roque-Gageac, one of the most iconic villages on the Dordogne River, is a must-visit in the Périgord region. Built into the side of dramatic cliffs, this picturesque village offers a unique and stunning setting. Along the river's edge, you'll find a lively street lined with restaurants and shops, perfect for enjoying a meal or browsing local goods. However, the true charm of La Roque-Gageac lies in the climb up to the quiet village area, where you can explore its tranquil, narrow streets and admire the breathtaking views. With its dramatic scenery and abundance of nearby activities, La Roque-Gageac provides an unforgettable experience.

VISITING THE HISTORIC CASTLES:

While visiting Périgord, exploring its historic castles is an absolute must. The region boasts the highest concentration of castles in France—1001, to be precise. Many of the most striking castles are situated along the River Dordogne, reminiscent of their roles during the Hundred Years' War. These magnificent fortresses stand overlooking each other, as if still guarding their territories, offering a fascinating glimpse into the region's rich medieval history. Here are the top four must-visit castles that offer a glimpse into the region's rich history and breathtaking scenery.

4. CHÂTEAU DE CASTELNAUD:

Located in the heart of Périgord Noir, just 9km from Sarlat, the Château de Castelnaud is a must-visit castle offering a magnificent panorama of the Dordogne Valley. Founded in the 12th century atop a 150-meter-high hill, it serves as a perfect example of medieval fortification. Today, the castle houses the Museum of War in the Middle Ages, featuring an impressive collection of weapons, armor, and life-size reconstructions of powerful siege machines from the era. Exploring Château de Castelnaud allows visitors to immerse themselves in the history of medieval warfare while enjoying breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape. The castle's strategic location and fascinating exhibits make it a highlight of any trip to the Périgord region.

5. CHÂTEAU DE BEYNAC:

Perched dramatically atop a towering cliff, overlooking the quaint village of Beynac-et-Cazenac, Beynac Castle stands as a formidable stone sentinel with a history spanning over nine centuries. Visiting this historic site is like stepping back in time through five centuries of French history, retracing the footsteps of notable figures like Richard the Lionheart, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Simon de Montfort during the Hundred Years' War. The castle's exceptional state of preservation offers a captivating journey into the Middle Ages, from the defensive rigor of its 12th-century dungeon to the Renaissance staircase and the impressive 15th-century Hall of States of the Baronies of Périgord. Ascending to the top of the 14th-century keep rewards visitors with an unforgettable panoramic view of the stunning Dordogne Valley, a vista that's earned a coveted

three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide. A visit to Beynac Castle promises an immersive and authentic exploration of history amidst breathtaking surroundings.

6. CHÂTEAU DE HAUTEFORT:

Perched atop a rocky outcrop, the Château de Hautefort is a captivating medieval fortress transformed into an elegant pleasure residence by the marquis in the 17th century. This historical site in Périgord is unique, blending the splendor of nature with majestic architecture. The château's allure is further enhanced by the addition of a French garden and landscaped park during the 19th century, showcasing a refined cultural heritage passed down through generations. Preserved and restored over a millennium by various owners, the Château de Hautefort remains open to visitors today, reflecting a longstanding commitment to the value of beauty. Exploring this remarkable castle offers a glimpse into its rich history and the enduring legacy of those who cherished and maintained its extraordinary charm.

7. CHÂTEAU DES MILANDES:

Château de Milandes, a historic castle in the Périgord region, is famed for its association with Josephine Baker, the renowned American-born French dancer who once owned and resided in the property. Visitors can immerse themselves in the château's elegant interiors and wander through its lush gardens, experiencing the splendor that captivated Josephine Baker. To fully appreciate the castle and avoid crowds, it's advisable to arrive early, allowing for a leisurely exploration of the grounds and a deeper connection to its storied past. Château de Milandes offers a unique glimpse into both the region's history and the fascinating life of Josephine Baker, making it a must-visit destination for history enthusiasts and admirers of cultural heritage alike.

EXPLORING THE UNDERGROUND CAVES & PREHISTORIC SITES:

When visiting Périgord, exploring the region's underground caves and prehistoric sites is an essential experience. The Dordogne area is renowned for its network of caves and grottoes, many of which house remarkable prehistoric art and geological formations. One of the most famous sites is the Lascaux caves near Montignac, where you can visit Lascaux II, a replica of the original cave just 200 meters away. This replica showcases art from the original site, offering insights into the history of the grotto and the artistic techniques used nearly 17,000 years ago. Nearby, the prehistoric site of Régourdou, discovered in 1954, overlooks Montignac and is considered one of the most significant Neanderthal sites in France. These underground wonders provide a fascinating glimpse into the ancient history and cultural heritage of the Périgord region.

8. LASCAUX CAVES IN MONTIGNAC:

The Lascaux caves in Montignac are a must-visit destination in the Périgord region, renowned for their extraordinary prehistoric representations. While the original decorated cave has been closed to the public since 1963 to preserve its exceptionally rare works, the International Center for Cave Art, known as Lascaux IV, offers an immersive and faithful reproduction of the site. Visitors to Lascaux IV can marvel at the impressive "bull room," featuring an array of prehistoric paintings, engravings, and rare representations, including 357 horses and a single human figure—a remarkable rarity in prehistoric art. The experience at Lascaux IV is captivating for visitors of all ages, providing a unique opportunity to delve into the ancient world and artistic expressions of early humans in a beautifully recreated setting.

9. FONT-DE-GAUME:

Font-de-Gaume, situated in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac, is a must-visit cave in the Périgord region, renowned for its original prehistoric paintings dating back over 17,000 years. As one of the last caves in France with accessible original paintings, Font-de-Gaume offers a rare and captivating glimpse into ancient human artistry. The cave's intricate drawings, depicting animals and symbols from the Paleolithic era, are exceptionally well-preserved and provide invaluable insights into prehistoric life. Given the abundance of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Périgord Noir, Font-de-Gaume stands out as a significant cultural treasure worth prioritizing during your visit. Immerse yourself in the rich history and artistic achievements of our distant ancestors at this remarkable cave site.

10. GETTING OUTDOOR IN DORDOGNE:

To truly experience the serene and raw beauty of the Périgord region, dedicate a day to immersing yourself in the outdoors. Start by paddling along the tranquil waters of the Dordogne River, where picturesque views of charming villages and dramatic cliffs unfold around every bend. Rent a kayak from one of the many providers along the river and embark on a self-guided journey, allowing the gentle rhythm of your paddle strokes to harmonize with the soothing flow of the river. Alternatively, lace up your hiking boots or hop on a bicycle to explore the region's scenic trails and paths. Whether you choose to glide silently along the water or traverse the lush countryside on foot or bike, the Périgord's outdoor offerings promise a day of calmness, serenity, and connection with nature that will leave you refreshed and rejuvenated.

11. CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF LES JARDINS DE MARQUEYSSAC:

One of the most enchanting experiences in Dordogne is the candlelight tour of Les Jardins de Marqueyssac. While the gardens are stunning year-round, visiting during the summer months for this unique event is truly magical. As the sun sets, the gardens come alive with the soft glow of two thousand flickering candles, illuminating the winding paths, and highlighting the beauty of the landscape. It's an unforgettable sight and atmosphere, creating a romantic and ethereal ambiance that transports visitors to another world. Due to its popularity, it's recommended to

book tickets in advance to ensure you don't miss out on this exceptional and enchanting experience amidst the man-made natural beauty of the Périgord region.

12. SARLAT-LA-CANÉDA FARMER'S MARKET:

To truly experience the local lifestyle in the Périgord region, visiting Sarlat-la-Canéda Farmer's Market is a must. Renowned as one of the best markets in all of France, this bustling market draws in visitors from near and far, so it's advisable to arrive early to avoid the crowds. The market takes over the town on market days, especially on Saturday mornings, offering a delightful array of fresh produce, seasonal cuisine, and local specialties. From vibrant fruits and vegetables to regional cheeses, wines, and artisanal crafts, Sarlat's market is a treasure trove of gastronomic delights and unique souvenirs. Strolling through the market amidst the lively atmosphere and mingling with locals is an authentic and enjoyable way to immerse yourself in the vibrant culture and flavors of the Périgord region.

13. VISIT THE MUSEUMS:

Discover the cultural richness of the Périgord region by visiting its captivating museums. Begin at the Musée National de Préhistoire in Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil, known as the "Capital of Prehistory." This museum houses an exceptional collection of artifacts, tools, and artworks from the region's prehistoric periods, offering insight into early human civilization.

Continue your exploration at the Château de Losse near Montignac, where medieval history comes to life. Explore the historic rooms and lush gardens of this charming castle-museum, delving into centuries of Périgord's cultural evolution. Whether you're intrigued by prehistoric mysteries or medieval architecture, these museums provide a fascinating glimpse into the region's rich heritage and historical significance.

14. THE DAY TRIP TO ROCAMADOUR:

Conclude your trip to the Périgord region with a visit to the picturesque village of Rocamadour in the neighboring Lot department. Nestled into the side of a mountain, Rocamadour is a stunning village that epitomizes the charm of rural France. This iconic village is easily accessible within a day's trip and offers a captivating blend of history and natural beauty. Explore the narrow streets lined with medieval buildings, visit the impressive cliffside chapels, and soak in the breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. Rocamadour's unique setting and timeless allure make it a must-visit destination, providing a perfect finale to your journey through the enchanting landscapes of the Périgord region.

TASTING THE LOCAL CUISINE:

Exploring the Dordogne region is a culinary delight, offering a chance to savor the exquisite flavors of Périgord cuisine. Duck and goose take center stage in many traditional dishes, with favorites like duck confit, foie gras, and succulent magret de canard (duck breast) showcasing the region's culinary prowess. Truffles, both black and white, are highly prized seasonal delicacies that elevate dishes with their earthy aroma and flavor.

The region is also renowned for its walnut-based products, including oils, liqueurs, and confections, which can be found in local shops throughout the season. Chestnuts, wild mushrooms, venison, and wild boar are other seasonal ingredients that feature prominently in Périgord's gastronomic offerings. Whether dining at a cozy local café or indulging in a meal at a Michelin-starred restaurant, the Dordogne is a foodie paradise where each bite is a celebration of the region's rich culinary heritage and natural bounty.

CONCLUSION:

The Périgord region is a captivating destination that offers a harmonious blend of gastronomic delights and architectural treasures. Explore picturesque hilltop villages and riverside towns steeped in ancient history, where French country cooking shines at its best. Indulge in culinary experiences centered around duck, goose, truffles, and walnut-based specialties, showcasing the region's rich gastronomic heritage. Discover medieval castles perched atop cliffs, including the iconic Château de Beynac and Château de Castelnaud, each echoing with tales of bygone eras. During the day, immerse yourself in the region's natural beauty, from kayaking along the Dordogne River to strolling through manicured gardens illuminated by candlelight at Les Jardins de Marqueyssac. As night falls, savor the vibrant ambiance of local markets and charming cafés. With its wealth of experiences and timeless allure, the Périgord is a must-visit destination that promises an unforgettable journey through the heart of France.

CTA:

Explore Île de Ré next! Check out our next video to discover this stunning destination after your visit to the Périgord region.