



Randonnée Tours

St. Emilion Short Escape Cycling and Walking 4 days

Summary

Length

4 days/3 nights
longer options available

Dates

Start any date between May 1 and October 31

Level

Both cycling and walking can be enjoyed on this Short Escape

Your route descriptions will provide you with information on distances and terrain and you can choose each day which ride or walk to take

Rides: 22-76 km (14-47 mi)
Terrain ranges from rolling to the east and west, very hilly to the north, and quite flat to the south

Walks: 1.5-4 hours average.
The countryside surrounding St-Émilion is dense with a network of tiny country lanes criss-crossing the vineyards in all directions. Walking here is often done on these little paved ways which are used for vintners to tend their vines, and are virtually devoid of other traffic

Base yourself in a gem of a town that has been described as one of the two best in France that "lives only for wine". (The other is Beaune, in Burgundy). St-Émilion is not just for wine lovers, though. Stroll down the honey-coloured stones of the old lanes and past the well-preserved town walls to the remains of a 14th-century cardinal's palace, and then to the Église Monolithe, Europe's largest subterranean church, a primitive and sombre place, with 8th-century catacombs and a knight's tomb.

Itinerary



Day 1

Arrive in St-Émilion. Take time to explore the town, then hop on your bicycle and head west to some of the best known vineyards in the area -

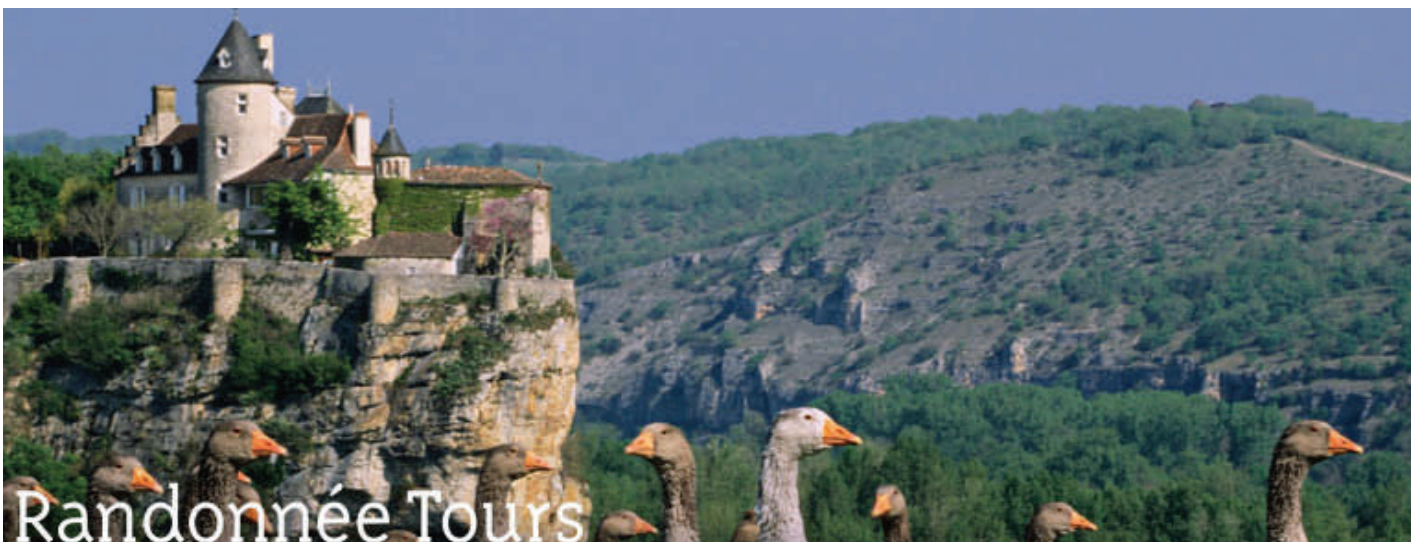
Figeac, Cheval Blanc and Château Petras - Grands Crus Classés producers. Pass through a series of charming towns like Neac, Les-Artigues-de-Lussac and Faise. The 18th-century Château St-Georges is the most beautiful estate in the area with towers and a magnificent staircase. The Romanesque church St-Martin-de-Mazerat has a richly carved south portal. See a 16 ft stone Neolithic menhir, the "Pierrefite", from the New Stone Age.

Day 2

Enjoy a full day's ride east to the Dordogne Valley through rolling countryside to the little wine villages of St-Christophe-des-Bardes and St-Genes-de-Castillon. Extend this loop to Lamote-Montravel on the north bank of the Dordogne, known for its fine AOC wine. The last battle of the Hundred Years' War was fought near here in 1453 and the remains of a Roman villa have been found at Moncaret. Cross the Dordogne at Pessac, and return to St-Émilion. You'll pass Château Pavie, one of 13 Grands Crus Classés producers. On a longer extension, follow the Dordogne on tiny roads to bustling Ste-Foy-la-Grande,

founded as a defensible bastide in 1255. If you'd like something shorter, head to the less hilly country south of St-Émilion, passing through St-Pey-d'Armens and Ste-Terre, on the north bank of the Dordogne River. Extend your ride to the attractive town of Branne, and, closely following the Dordogne over a series of tiny roads and through small towns and ports, reach the busy and grand town of Libourne before returning to St-Émilion.





How to get there?

St-Émilion is located just east of Bordeaux.

The nearest train station is at Libourne, which is located on the main, high-speed TGV train line between Paris and Bordeaux.

Your confirmation package will provide detailed information about getting to the tour start.

The Price includes:

- 3 nights hotels
- All breakfasts
- Use of a top quality 21-speed hybrid bike complete with handlebar bag, pump, and all the necessary accessories for changing flats. We recommend that you bring your own helmet for safety and hygiene reasons
- Detailed route instructions and map

Itinerary

Day 3

There are still many options to choose from. Consider a walk to Château Ausone. You'll pass literally half of the top rated vineyards of St-Émilion and walk entirely on the tiny lanes just west and south of St-Émilion. Just south of the town walls at Château Belair, you can still see where vines once grew in ancient "flower pot" rows gouged into rock centuries ago and filled with soil. Adjacent to Château Belair are the ruins of a Roman villa owned by the Roman governor Ausonius who gave his name to the greatest St-Émilion estate, Château Ausone, one of only two group "A" Premiers Grands Crus Classés, which you'll pass as well. Or Walk to Château Laroque, heading south to the Dordogne River valley. From the top of the Massif of St-Hippolyte, you'll see some of the best scenery in the area - long, long views to the Dordogne and beyond. The imposing Château Laroque is set around a large, formal courtyard. On a small side trip, visit the Union des Producteurs de St-Émilion, one of the best wine co-ops in France.

Day 4

Today do more biking into château country northeast of St-Émilion, pass several impressive châteaux and many Romanesque churches, beautiful with their solid simplicity. This scenic but somewhat hillier countryside shelters many charming towns like St-Cibard, Villefranche-de-Lonchat and Francs, and the wine villages of the Puisseguin-St-Émilion. But you can also enjoy a walk to the little town of St-Christophe-des-Bardes, considered one of the best St-Émilion satellite wine producing communities. Return on an elevated ridge, the Massif of St-Hippolyte, entering St-Émilion through the only surviving gate in the original walls of the town, the Porte Bourgeoise. Then head off on your next adventure.

Accommodation

Classic



Hotel des Remparts

St Emilion

This enchanting hotel is built into the fortified ramparts of the medieval city of St. Emilion. The hotel boasts magnificent wooded grounds and a beautiful swimming pool.

Luxe



Hostellerie de Plaisance

St Emilion

This Relais & Chateau property is in a beautiful 200 years old stone building, set on 14th century foundations. The terrace boasts a wonderful view of the village and the prestigious vineyards of Saint Emilion. The restaurant is one of the best in the region.