

Castles and historic cities

You can visit many castles and historical cities in the Lot department. Cities such as Cahors and Figeac are not only characterized by a rich history, they do offer as well the possibility for a days' shopping or to take it easy enjoying a cold drink at one of the many terraces.

Cahors

Cahors is nicely located, near the Lot river which can be crossed by means of the reinforced bridge Pont Valentré, the breathtaking city symbol. Local legend has it that the bridge build's foreman made a deal with the devil to be able to complete the bridge, but was able to retain his eternal soul using a ruse.

The city is known for its truffles, the market on Saturday mornings and the dark, intoxicating Cahors wine. The main street, Boulevard Gambetta, looks inviting with its platanus trees, bars, restaurants and shops. To the east of the Boulevard Gambette lies the old neighborhood, with houses that remind one of a glorious past and the Roman Cathédrale St.-Etienne. The cathedral is one of the most original dome-churches in southwestern France. The best part of the cathedral is the 16th century tympanum above the northern door, on which the ascension of Christ, carried by angels, is shown. At [the office de tourisme](#) you will find (usually free) information and walking routes to discover the city, including using an unusual walking route past 30 different gardens hidden in the various corners of the city's old neighborhoods. Furthermore a tour (by car or bike) of the Cahors wineries makes a decent activity



Figeac



Besides its warm ambiance, Figeac offers an exceptionally well preserved heritage consisting of medieval houses and palaces, which were built between the 12th and 14th centuries by rich Figeac merchants. Also located in Figeac is the Champollion Museum, which is dedicated to Egyptian art. Extensive information is gladly offered by the city's [office de tourisme](#). On Saturday mornings Figeac rises to the bustle and activity of the colourful market which brings

back memories of the medieval times, when noblemen and international merchants exchanged with local farmers. Today's products are still sold underneath the buildings that saw history unfold.

Rocamadour

Rocamadour is without doubt deserving of the accolade 'dazzling city'. At one side, this city hangs from an overhanging rock face, at the other on the Alzou canyon. Here large numbers of people gathered to worship the Black Virgin. The draw of this holy place, which looks out over meandering brown roofs, solid doors, churches and shrines hasn't lost any of its splendor. Rocamadour is naturally home to the production of the world-famous and delicious Rocamadour cheese. Nearby you'll find 'Rocher des Aigles', a bird-life park where vultures, eagles, falcons, owls are to be admired together with for example parrots in a extraordinary show.



Saint Cirq Lapopie

Located 15 km from Saint Jean de Laur is the famous village of Saint-Cirq-Lapopie. Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is a medieval village which was built at a height of 390 meters against a steep rock wall. Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is located exceptionally well, at the Lot river. Here a beach has been created, where one can swim and enjoy recreation. Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is a sight to behold, consisting of small timber-framed houses, a Roman church and ruins located at the highest point.



Along the Lot river lies Chemin d'halage, which be visited with a beautiful hike along the trail following the river.

Castles

Chateau Larroque Toirac

The castle (Château de Larroque-Toirac) was built in the 12th century and improved over the following 300 years. It is built against a steep rock wall and overlooks the village of Larroque Toirac, which lies halfway between Figeac and Cajarc in the valley of the Lot river.

The castle has been disputed several times during the Hundred Years' War and was – after many attempts – finally occupied by the English. Hidden in the caves behind the castle one has found prehistoric murals that indicates early habitation.



Chateau Cenevieres

The castle of Cenevieres dominates the village of Cenevieres and it dates from the 13th century. It has been significantly altered over the years, notably in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.



According to tradition, the castle belonged to Waïffe or Waifer, Duke of Aquitaine, and played a role in his war against Pepin the Short. The castle stands on a rock and appears as a collection of irregular buildings, flanked by towers and terraces. A wall which was used formerly as a rampart, connects the stables to the Gourdon Tower, which was, perhaps, the keep.

In front of the entrance is a square building called the guard tower or postern, built in 1585. The Gothic openings have been replaced by large Renaissance windows. The defensive walls have been pierced with dormers. A columned gallery circles the outside of the grand salon. An

apartment has preserved traces of a painted fresco mural representing the flight of Icarus and the chariot of the sun, the legend of Astyanax and the burning of Troy, and the kidnap of Helen. The Château de Cénevières is privately owned.

The castle is open to visitors between April and early November, the guided tours are often given by the highly aged owner.

Chateau de Montal

Standing on the heights above the Dordogne Valley, this castle was built between 1519 and 1534 by Jeanne de Balsac, Lady of Montal. Never completely finished, this Renaissance masterpiece is distinguished by the exceptional wealth and quality of its sculptures, which stand comparison with those in royal palaces. Monumental staircase. Tapestries and furniture from the 16th and 17th centuries.

During the French revolution the owner is forced to leave the castle, and until 1908 a great part of the furniture and other contents of the castle are sold. In 1908 the industrialist Maurice Fenaille becomes the new owner of the castle. He succeeds in bringing back a large part of the lost contents from all over the world, and he makes an effort to restore the castle.

In case Fenaille did not succeed in bringing back the original pieces, exact copies of them are made by craftsmen. On September 13th 1913 donates the fully restored castle to the French government. In the year 1943 the Mona Lisa was hidden in the castle, just until it was brought to the Louvre in June



Le Labyrinthe des Roses

At the bottom of the 'Château de Saint Dau' you'll find a wonderful labyrinth, consisting of about 1000 rambler roses in 50 varieties, combined with irises and clematises. A particular attraction.

