

Itinerary #10

Village Drive

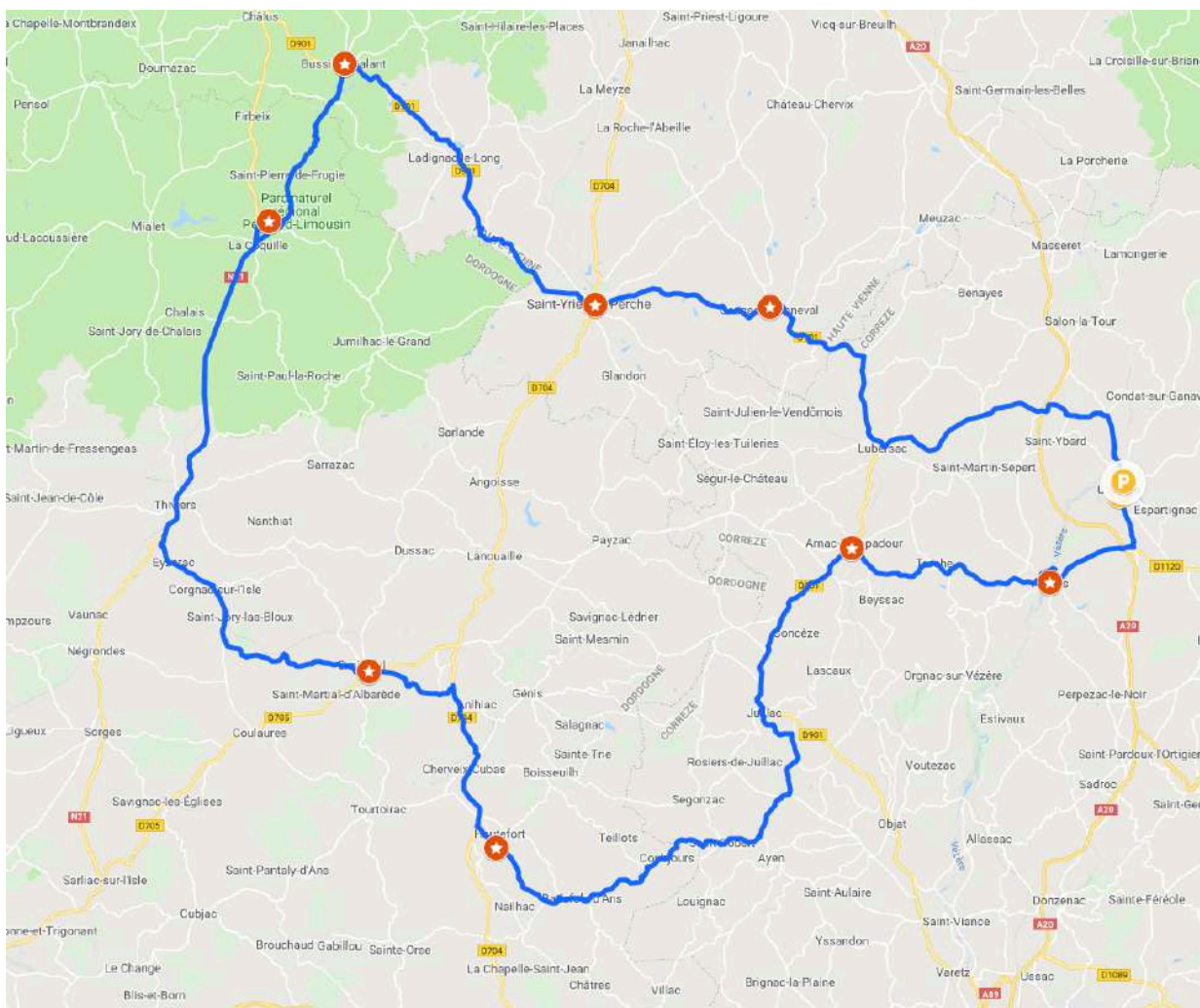


Trip Time: 3 hours *

Distance: 194 km

0:35 to Excideuil	(36 km)
0:50 to Arnac Pompadour	(57 km)
0:15 to Vigeois	(15 km)
0:10 to Uzerche	(10 km)
0:25 to Coussac Bonneval	(30 km)
0:10 to Saint Yrieix la Perche	(10 km)
0:20 to Bussière Galant	(22 km)
0:15 to Bonnes Routes	(14 km)

** This trip is more about the drive than the destination. We've included key villages as stopping points, but just stop along the route wherever the mood takes you, and take as long as you want.*



Map data © 2019 GeoBasis-KE/BKG (©2009), Google, Inst. Geogr. Nacional

Main Sites (* recommended)

Excideuil



Excideuil has an attractive town square built around a 10th century monastery. The roman Church of Saint-Thomas is all that remains - the carved stone doorways date from the 15th century. Surrounding the church there are lots of impressive 16th - 18th century buildings. Highlights include the 13th century castle (not open to the public) set high on a rocky promontory, the hospital dating back to the 12th century (one of the oldest buildings in the region), the stone market hall and the Bugeaud fountain.

Arnac Pompadour *



Home of the national stud built around the Chateau, Arnac Pompadour is known as the 'City of Horses'. The town comes alive when there are summer concerts, events and one of the 160+ days of horse shows a year. Many events are free or have a very low entry fee.

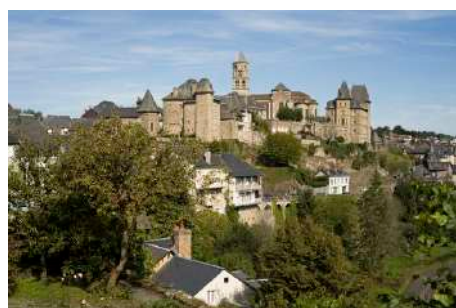
Entry to the chateau and orangerie stables is 9,50 € enabling you to explore the 11 open rooms, the gardens, the stables and garage.

Vigeois **



The village built on a hillside overlooking the Vézère valley, founded around the 6th century, is one of the oldest sites in Lower Limousin. The slate roof houses surround a 12th century Romanesque abbey. Excavations in 1993 discovered remains of Merovingian kings of the 5th-8th century who helped reshape the map of Europe to create France. Some of the remains are visible in the church. The 12th-century Old Bridge (the Bridge of English) is built in crazy paving, with almond shaped buttresses deflecting the water around the bridge. To find the bridge follow the road that descends opposite the church, turn left at the bottom of the hill, then cross the bridge over the train track. Prepare yourself for the hike back to the village square!

Uzerche **



This famous medieval town is spread out along a rocky outcrop, encircled by a meander in the Vézère River. The medieval centre is quite extensive, with a row of impressive buildings spread out along the fortifications and looking down on the Vézère River. Information placards explain the historical origins of some buildings. There are good views from the higher parts of Uzerche around Saint Eulalie above the fortifications. There are plenty of options to stop for lunch in high season.

Coussac Bonneval



Built around a Gallo-Roman villa this was the seat of important financial institutions from the 7th - 13th centuries and a key point in the Franco-English battles. Chateau de Bonneval flanked by four large round towers and surrounded by ditches, has belonged to the Bonneval family since 1055. Guided tours in French and English from June to September (14.30, 15.30 and 16.30) cost 10 €. Access to the gardens is free. In the village see the 12th century church of Saint Saturnin, and lantern of the dead: one of the seven remaining in the Haute-Vienne (outside the town hall). These lanterns protected the soul of the dead from evil spirits by its ever-renewed light.

Saint Yrieix la Perche *



The town and its medieval city are classified among the "Plus Beaux Détours de France" and are a stage on "The Route Richard Cœur de Lion". It has been an economic crossroads since antiquity thanks to the gold deposits and kaolin (white clay) discovered on site in the 18th century which made it the cradle of Limoges porcelain.

The 12th -13th century collegiate church built by ambitious canons stands next to the 13th century Tower of the Plô (meaning "place on a high point) which is a twenty metre high stone dungeon. Follow a heritage trail using a map from the Tourist Office. There is a great porcelain shop in the town centre.

Bussière Galant



This small village is mainly appreciated for its natural heritage and surrounding forests. It was formerly dependent on a royal medieval fortress destroyed in the 16th century because it had become a den of brigands. In the old village you can discover several fountains known for their benefits against toothache, rheumatism, saints and animal diseases. The church built in the 12th century and largely rebuilt in the 15th is listed as a historical monument; and the 17th century two-storey bell tower is one of the few in the department.

Nearby Espace Hermeline (turn left) offers the chance to ride the old railway line on a bicycle (Velo Rail) in the summer, as well as swimming and tree adventures.