

BIKE TRIPS FROM SCL

SCL-Cajarc (via Lot valley) -- 19.5 km. Summary: A pleasant ride above the Lot River with manageable elevation gain.

From the village descend to the River and cross the bridge to Tour-de-Faure. Enter the roundabout and head east on D662. There's a nice old cathedral on the right in St. Martin, and another on the slope on the opposite side of the valley. Don't miss the Chateau de Cenevieres on the slope on the opposite side of the valley. For a short detour, cross the river to the village of Cenevieres. The road from the bridge to the village is lined with old Plain trees. Riding through them is a classic experience of riding in France.

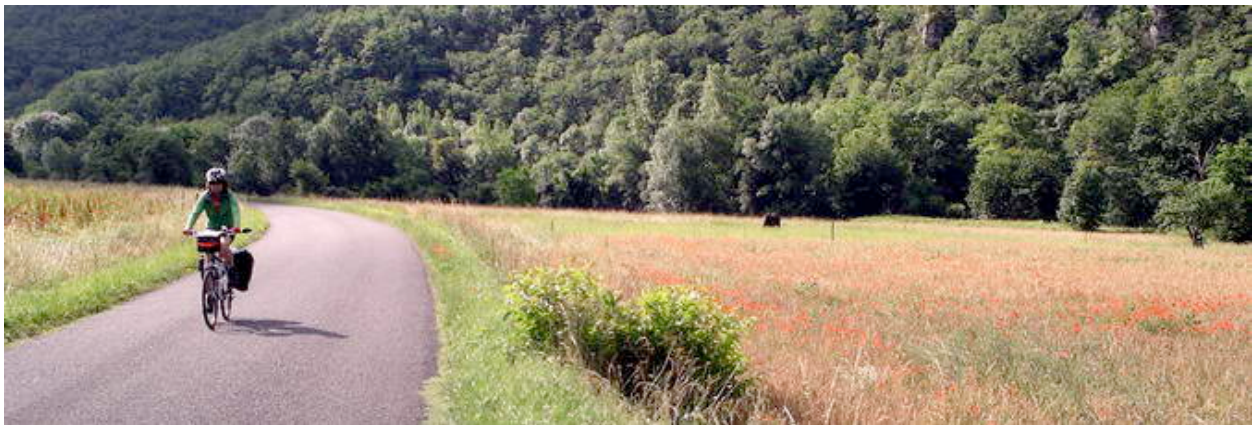
Continue on D662. There is some traffic, but it generally is courteous. At the intersection with D19, take a left and follow the road down the hill into the Cajarc Centre Ville. Return the same way, or if you want some climbing, return via the Cele Valley.



Cajarc is a stopping place on the *Via podensis*, the medieval pilgrimage route from Le Puy to Santiago de Compostela, but also attracts tourists on account of its medieval town centre, its *plan d'eau*, a 4 km-long dammed section of the Lot River, and its beautiful setting in the Lot valley and the surrounding limestone plains (*le causse*). Its major cultural event is *Africajarc*, a four-day festival of contemporary African music and culture which runs in the last week of July each year; in 2008 it celebrated its tenth anniversary.

Return Via Cele Valley. – 40k w/long climb.

From the Cajarc Centre Ville, find D17. Ascend the hill until you think it can't go on any longer, and you're almost there. Ride across the ridge, and avoid taking the minor roads that branch off. Stay on D17 down the hill into the Cele valley. Cross the Cele River into Marcilhac-sur-Cele. Take a left on D41 and head toward Sauliac. Go through Sauliac and Cabrerets, and the road ends in Conduche. Take a left on to D662 and follow it through the tunnels and along the river to Tour-du-Faure. Take a right at the roundabout and cross the river and continue up to the village.



It's a ride through history. Old mills dot the landscape and some of them still grind local wheat to make flour. The pastries made from the fresh flour in the town of Marcilhac-sur-Cele are to die for. And when you're cycling you can eat them without guilt! Everywhere there is evidence of prehistoric life. Early settlers built their homes into the rock in places seemingly impossible to reach. In Pêche Merle, there are impressive cave paintings rivalling those in the more famous Lascaux region of the Dordogne. It is a moderate climb to get to the entrances of Pêche Merle caves, but the ride is pleasant, and is definitely worth the visit.

SCL-Figeac (via hill outside Cajarc) – 45 km.

Figeac is a wonderful old city with a number of tourist attractions. Either ride into Figeac is superb. For more hills, follow the route to Cajarc via D662. From the Cajarc Centre Ville, find D19 northeast toward Grealou. D19 ascends for some time, reaching a 10% grade in parts. Note the shepherd's bouree just outside Grealou. Continue down the hill until it merges with D662. Follow D662 into Figeac.



In the Middle Ages, Figeac became a centre of tanning, which partly accounts for the many houses whose top floors have *solelhos*, or open-sided wooden galleries used for drying skins and other produce. Again, as so often, it was the Wars of Religion that pushed it into eclipse, for Figeac threw in its lot with the nearby Protestant stronghold of Montauban and suffered the same punishing reprisals by the victorious royalists in 1662. In the town centre, is Hôtel de la Monnaie, a splendid building dating to the 13th c. The building now houses the tourist office, as well as a none-too-exciting **museum** of old coins and archeological bits and pieces found in the surrounding area (same hours as tourist office; €2). In the streets radiating off to the north of the square – Caviale, République, Gambetta and their cross-streets – there's a delightful range of houses of the medieval and classical periods, both stone and half-timbered with brick noggings, adorned with carvings and colonnettes, ogees, and interesting bits of ironwork. At the end of these streets are the two small squares of **place Carnot** and **place Champollion**, both of great charm. The former is the site of the old *halles*, under whose awning cafés now spreads their tables.

Jean-François Champollion, who cracked Egyptian hieroglyphics by deciphering the triple text of the Rosetta Stone, was born in a house at 4 impasse Champollion, off the square, and the building now houses a very interesting museum dedicated to his life and work (March–June, Sept & Oct Tues–Sun 10am–noon & 2.30–6.30pm; July & Aug daily same hours; Nov–Feb Tues–Sun 2–6pm; €3). At the end of this alley, a larger-than-life reproduction of the Rosetta Stone forms the floor of the tiny **place des Écritures**, above which is a little garden planted with tufts of papyrus.

Via Lot and Cele Valleys – 51 km.

This route avoids major climbs and follows the river valleys. From SCL, take the road down to the river and cross the bridge to Tour-de-Faure. Circle the roundabout and go east on D662 toward Conduche. Enjoy the tunnels and valley scenery until the junction with D41 near Conduche. Take a right onto D41 and ride up the Cele Valley toward Cabrerets. Follow D41 Sauliac, Marcihac, Saint Sulpice, Corn, and Boussac. Stay on D41 until the junction with D802. Take a right on D802 and follow it into Figeac.



The river was used for transport as early as the 12th century when 11 flash locks were installed between Penne-d'Agenais and Fumel. A reliable route was not provided until the 17th century when Colbert ordered new works. By 1776, the river had 12 locks.^[1] New construction was begun in 1835 for some 297 km and 76 locks, connecting Le Moulin d'Olt at Entraygues to the Garonne at Nicole. Four tunnels were included at this time with lengths from 139m to 364m. Railway competition caused the abandonment of Lot navigation in 1926. Over the next 60 years, there were no repairs or maintenance of the canal. Repairs in the Lower Lot began in the end of the 1990s.

SCL-Sarlat (via Gordon) – 90 km.

Sarlat is a wonderful destination, with its beautiful medieval sandstone buildings. The Saturday market is huge – get there early to beat the traffic heading into town. The route crosses the Dordogne, and gives a sense of the heavier traffic and increased tourist impact in the Dordogne region. It left me thankful for the less-traveled but still beautiful roads of the Lot Valley.

From the village, head downhill to the river and cross the bridge to Tour-de-Faure. At the roundabout go east (left) on D662. Follow D662 through Conduche and Saint Gery in the valley. Enjoy the flat road cut through the cliff, and look up to see the Chateau des Anglais set into the cliff at _____. Take care crossing the angled railroad tracks that go back and forth along the road.

Continue on D662 into Vers. In Vers, go north (right) on D653. Continue north through the _____ Valley for _____



Sarlat is the largest and best known of the towns in this area of the Dordogne. It is one of the largest medieval towns in the world, and its restored central core is a protected area. It has always been known as a market town, and that is no different today. On market day, the streets are filled with stalls selling a bewildering collection of food and articles. Even an old church is converted to an indoor market. You will see spices and herbs, cheeses, strawberries, and of course foie gras. At night the downtown is lit by gaslamp, which provides a unique ambience to the many outdoor restaurants.

Skeleton of ride from SCL-Rocamadour:

Leaving from the Medieval Gate, take D-8 down the hill to the Lot. Cross the river on the one-lane bridge, follow the roundabout on to D662. Head west (left) on D661 toward Saint Gery. Follow through the tunnels, over the tracks (be careful) along the river through St-Gery. The next town is Vers, where Le Vers River flows into the Lot. Head north (right) on D653, through Vers and up the beautiful Vers valley. Stay along the River and go north (left) on D32 toward Saint-Martin-de-Vers. Follow D32 through SMDV and Saint-Saveur-la-Vallee. Stay on D32 all the way to Labastide-Murat. Ride through town and north on D50(?), and enjoy the views as the road winds down the ridge into the forest. Follow the road until you hit D32 (again) just south of Carluet. Go through Carluet and Couzou on D3, and follow it all the way into Rocamadour.



The reason for Rocamadour's popularity since medieval times is the supposed miraculous ability of the cathedral's Black Madonna. Nowadays, pilgrims are outnumbered by tourists, who come here to wonder at the sheer audacity of its location, built almost vertically into its rocky backdrop.

SCL-Limogne-Cajarc-SCL

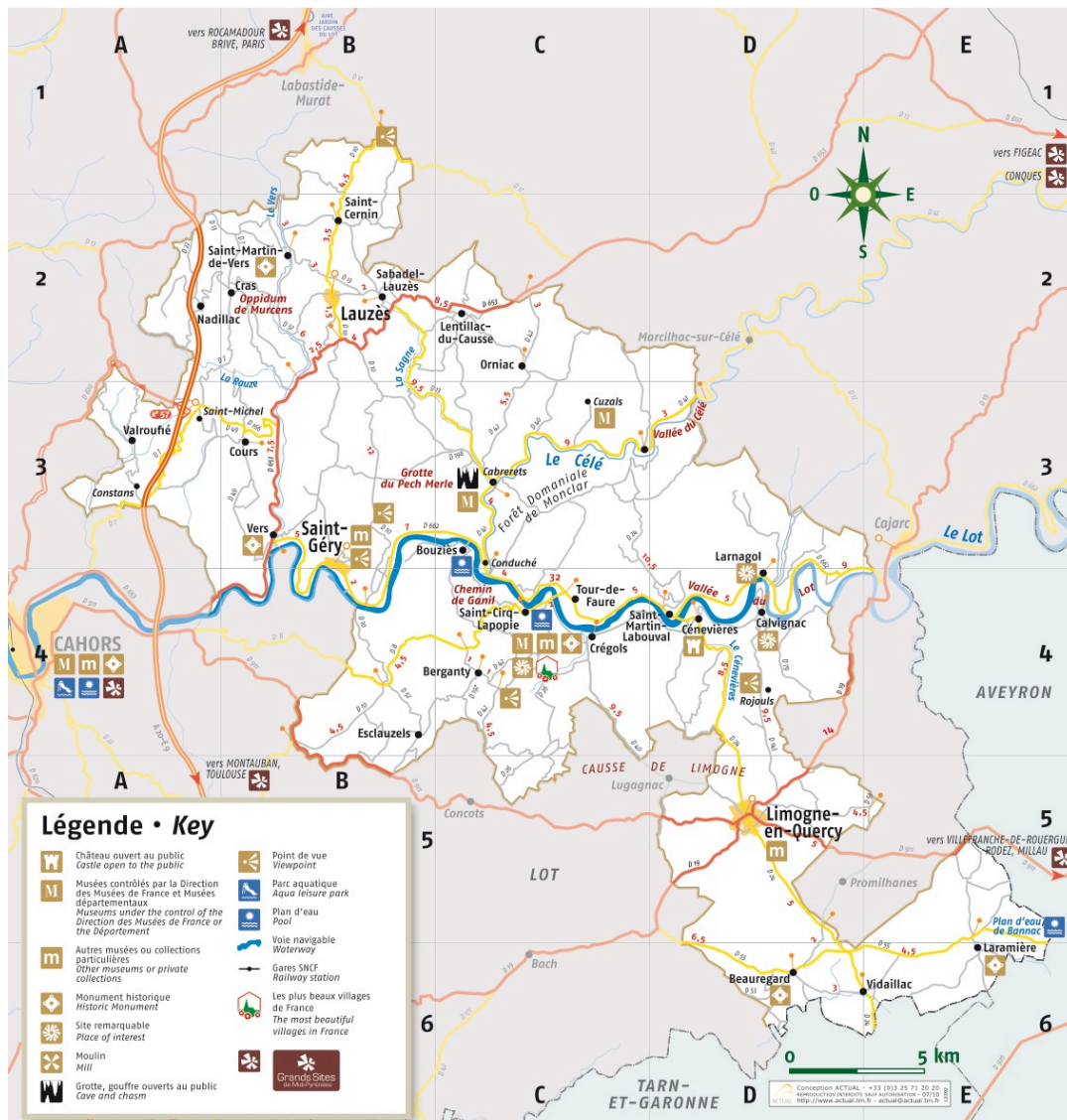
Take D8 down the hill from the village, turn right just before crossing river and ride toward Cregols. Just before Cregols, R on D40. Follow up long sustained climb toward Lugagnac. From Lugagnac follow D40 to Limogne. From Limogne, L on D19. Follow D19 down hill almost to Cajarc. L on D662 and follow back to TDF and head up hill to SCL



SCL-Limogne -- 13.3 km.

SUMMARY: A short ride, mostly uphill on the ride out and a delightful downhill cruise on the way back. The slope is long but never too steep. Limogne has a nice market on Sunday morning to noon.

From the village, head downhill toward the River. Just before crossing the bridge over the river, take a right on D8 toward Cregols. Enjoy the meandering flat ride below the cliff through the leafy winding little-used road. Follow D8 to the T at D40. Take a right at D40 and follow it up the hill for almost 10k, through Lugagnac into the center of Limogne. Some nice views of the valley once you reach the ridge, near Limogne. Return by the same route, or take D19 down the hill toward Cajarc. Just before Cajarc, take a left at D662. Follow D662 back to Tour-de-Faure, and enjoy the views of the tobacco fields of the Lot Valley and across the valley to Cenevierres. At TdF, follow the roundabout and cross the little bridge over the Lot River and back to the village.



SCL to Villefranche de Rouergue

Market in VFR

