

2 bike rides, 3 markets, 4 restaurants, 5 walks, 6 home-cooked meals, 7 great night's sleep

How to spend a lazy week in St. Cirq Lapopie

Before you arrive, you might check out the week's weather forecast, make note of the market days in the various villages, and draw up some rough plans of things you'd like to do. (The Pech Merle prehistoric caves are a great adventure for either very hot or very rainy days.)

You could call or email Maxime at P'tits Velors before or soon after you arrive to arrange for pick up (or delivery) of bicycles.

In the mornings, around nine, you might stroll up to Lou Faoure bakery/restaurant for a coffee and to grab a baguette or two for later. On lazy days, you could bake the delicious butter croissants you bought at Thiriet (in Cahors). On super lazy days, you could just toast the baguettes you never finished from the previous day—the Bonne Maman apricot-mango jam that you bought at Carrefours in Cahors is perfect.

On one bicycle day, you might cruise down the hill to the river, bear right just before the bridge, and travel that road as far as you want. It is mostly flat and lovely. Bring along some water, and a picnic too.

On another bicycle day, you could walk your bikes up to the top of the village and out to the main road, up a bit further, then take the right turn towards Bouzies, which takes you mostly downhill, through gorgeous topography. At the bottom, don't cross the river, but bike along the tow path toward Saint Cirq Lapopie. You'll bike or walk your bikes through the limestone caves and eventually come out near the bottom of the village. You could have pizza and beer at La Plage, the river beach restaurant at the "Campings" area.

Whether or not you missed the Saturday morning market in Cahors, you would still enjoy the Sunday morning market in Limogne (you can bike there too). Load up and bring your goods back to feast at home. At least once or twice this week, pack the picnic basket and hang out at our private picnic terrace just down the street a few paces. Toast the often incredible evening skies.

The Wednesday market in Cahors is fantastic. Park in one of the big municipal lots (signs for “Amphitheater”). There are some nice restaurants in Cahors for lunch. You could also take a picnic to the fabulous Ponte Valentre, and sit by the river, or on the bridge itself.

On Thursday morning, you might like to catch the market in Villefranche de Rouergue—large and wonderful, and if you get there early you can sit for coffee and croissants at one of the cafes. Or you could take a day trip to any of the amazing sights within an hour’s drive.

For any of the markets (and there are other great ones too), always, always bring a few bags (they are in the chest by the front door).

We’ve been rather parochial about restaurants. See our “Things to do” pdf for many recommendations. We mostly sup locally—and drink the house carafe wines. There are many other very fine restaurants in the region (including Michelin-starred restaurants—see our list), so please let us know what you discover and recommend.

Our typical walks include, of course, any number of leisurely strolls through the village (anything less than leisurely will leave you panting), checking out art and architecture, looking for gifts. From behind our house, you can take a path down to the river. There are lots of beautiful walks, and it is nearly impossible to get lost for long.

You can climb upward too, a bit more strenuously, to the small chapel at the top of the hill above the village. And you can walk toward the limestone caves; bring a blanket for a picnic in a meadow. There are also very serious walks for hikers, although we haven’t tackled these. Bring your camera—great vistas everywhere.

When you go to market, you may want to bring a recipe or two and gather ingredients. Our big kitchen makes cooking easy (once you figure out the various knobs on the stove). We’ve tried our hand at everything from rustic to gourmet, and there’s nothing like cooking fresh from the market. Et toujours, le vin.

Eventually it’s time for bed. And after a day like any of these, it’s never very hard to fall asleep. Fais de beaux rêves.