

What is an ideal week in the village?

It is hard to design an 'ideal week' in and around Saint Cirq Lapopie because there are so many options and adventures to be had. And room for serendipity might mean driving through the countryside and pulling into, perhaps, a pottery maker, a goat farm, or the wonderfully eccentric [Musee de L'insolite](#) (link).

Here is one version of what we do. (And remember, these are only the things I have familiarity with—if you read the reviews section --here's the link: [Reviews](#)--you'll find some of the many other things our guests have discovered.)

Day 1 (Saturday): Arriving Saturday afternoon/evening, we either have Penni deliver one of her excellent meals, stroll up into the village to see if L'Oustal or Le Cantou has an available table or snack on bread, cheese, and fruit that we've picked up at the Carrefour in Lalbenque on our drive to the village, or at any small market or boulangerie on the way (if you arrive before 5:30 you can stop at the little Proxi market in Tour de Faure). You should find a bottle of Malbec wine awaiting you at the house. Once we settle in, and if there is still some light, we venture down to our terrace and enjoy the view, the wine, and the beautiful skies.

Always bring bags with you whenever you go out, not only because shops do not provide them, but also because it is better for the environment.

Day 2 (Sunday): An early riser walks or bikes or drives to the little boulangerie in Tour de Faure to bring back some croissants and chocolaines which we devour with coffee at the house or eat in the car as we stop off at Maxime's bicycle operation to pick up the bicycles we rented in advance for a 1 hour morning bike ride to the wonderful Limogne outdoor market. We like to be on the road by 9:00 since the market closes around noon. Here we buy all the things we'll need and want to eat for the next couple days (until we get to the large Wednesday morning market in Cahors). Household items that we need we pick up at the supermarket just on the edge of Limogne and/or at the wonderful little convenience store in Tour de Faure (or the larger one, next to a fantastic bakery, in St. Gery). But these close by 12:30. There is also a fantastic butcher shop just off the square in Limogne. After shopping, we usually sit for an espresso (and croissant) or grand crema at an outside table at the small café on the square.

Now, having arrived back at the village, we put our food away and either go for a walk or play some petanque on our upper terrace. Later we prepare a meal from the goods we bought in Limogne. (Take a recipe list from one of our cookbooks when you go.)

Every day for us usually begins with coffee and bread of some sort (croissants from the Tour de Faure boulangerie or toast from the baguettes we bought the day before), usually with butter and one of the delicious jams we picked up at the market. Usually there are plenty of fruits available for the picking: grapes, apples, bananas, strawberries, figs, dates, etc., depending in part on the season.

Day 3 and 4 (Monday and Tuesday): Depending what has been pre-planned and what the weather promises, we may go on a bicycle ride, go kayaking down the Cele, or take a long walk along the river and under the limestone outcroppings (the Chemin de Halage) or up into the hills. We may grab a french-pizza-like lunch at the excellent Saint Cirq Gourmand (along the upper road, turn left at the 'intersection' at Le Cantou and walk to, and cross, the main road.) If we've arranged an English-language tour of the Pech Merle prehistoric caves, we'll be sure to have lunch at La Roue restaurant on the way (plan your tour for before or after lunch—remember most places only serve lunch from about 12 to 2). Also get to the caves a half hour early to watch the fascinating 20 minute video.

We will certainly spend some hours exploring the village, visiting the galleries (please stop in, there is some excellent work to view and purchase), the small shops (many excellent creations, aside from some of the more touristic items), perhaps lunching at La Table de Producteur (advance reservation required) or at Auber Sombrial (which only serves lunch) or L'Oustal or Le Cantou (although we usually dine at those places). There is much to see and enjoy in the village—be sure to spend your time exploring—commerce keeps the village lively.

On any given night, because it is easy and delicious, we may have Penni provide an another evening meal.

Day 5 (Wednesday): We usually head into Cahors for the morning market, a wonderful extravaganza. We buy all the delicious goods we want to eat and cook for the rest of the week (or until Thursday, if we want to go to yet another wonderful market, the one Villefranche de Rouergue). The indoor market in Cahors also has an excellent butchery and a wine shop. We bring our usual bags but also our refrigerator bag, and we park in the shade of the underground Amphitheater lot in the Centre Ville. That way we can leave our food in the car, make or grab sandwiches along the Rue Gambetta, and walk the 20 minutes to the amazing Pont Valentre, where we picnic on the grass or bench (if available). There are also lots of lovely shops to visit in the Centre Ville, and it is a short drive to the Cahors Saveur gourmet store, with its fantastic selection of wines and foods.

In the evening, if we are in a cooking mood, we prepare a dinner which we bring in the picnic baskets down to the terrace and feast at the table (mainly mid-summer when the sky stays light late). Or we venture up into the village for a meal at one of the restaurants.

Day 6 (Thursday): If we are in the mood for yet another morning market (of course, first grabbing croissants and chocolatines from Isabel at the Tour de Faure boulangerie), the one in Villefranche de Rouergue, a lovely 45 minute drive, is quite fantastic. And there are various lovely routes to take, so it can also be a fun car drive through the countryside.

In addition, or otherwise, we may venture for a late lunch to Haute Serre, or decide to dine there or at one of the excellent gourmet restaurants (including Michelin-starred) restaurants in the region. We usually have at least one fancy restaurant evening out.

If you are in mid-summer and hit one of what were once infrequent heat waves, we recommend spending an hour each day down at the refreshing, sandy river beach.

Day 6 (Friday): Of course this may be the day you try to squeeze in all the many other things you'd hoped to do. We sometimes do that, but mostly we resist and instead spend our time in the village—at galleries and shops, at an outdoor café, up on the castle ruins. Lunching in the village, perhaps followed by a walk along the river (especially if you haven't done that yet), perhaps followed by wine, bread, fruit and cheese in the late afternoon on the terrace. We spend a couple hours cleaning the house (per instructions, as there will be no time to do it in the morning) and getting all our empty bottles to the lower-parking recycling bin. Perhaps we dine at home, enjoying our leftovers, or return to a favorite restaurant in the village. We may go for a last evening walk around the village, or sky-gazing on the terrace, all with a certain melancholy knowing we'll be leaving soon, but still entranced by the beauty of this amazing village and region and thrilled by all the memories (and gifts) we'll take home.

Day 7 (Saturday): Happy that we did all our cleaning and recycling the day before, we munch on the leftover bread we've toasted, we have a final cup of coffee, we gather our suitcases at the door, wash up the last of the dishes, wipe down the counters, then stroll with our luggage (and any garbage and recycling bags) down through the Ancient Gate, perhaps snapping one or two more photos before we descend to the owner's parking lot and drive back to Toulouse, then home where we will look at our photos many times since we may have some disbelief that we actually just finished such an amazing, magical week.

I write this all with some trepidation, knowing that I've had to leave out so many other alternative paths and adventures, many of which you'll find listed on the website, and some of which you will discover on your own. Some of our weeks have been filled with daily bicycle rides, some with trying out all the new restaurants around, some with visiting more distant villages and cities (like touristy but beautiful Rocamadour or the amazing metropolis Albi), some with preparing almost all our meals at home, and some with visiting all the galleries, restaurants, and shops within the village itself. After many years of these adventures, we still haven't done half the things that are still on our list.

Links, phone numbers, and/or directions to everything from Maxime's bicycle rental shop, to Kalapca's kayak rental business, to Penni's gourmet meals, to many of the restaurants, galleries, and sites mentioned above, will be found on the website under the Your Journey tab.