

DORDOGNE

Magie d'Hiver 2023

Cosy Times

Maison Saint-Blaise

Explore history, nature,
cuisine in comfort

This Winter

Exploring famous
Sarlat-la-Canéda &
the charming village
Villeréal in Lot-et-Garonne

Delights

Enjoy the flavors of
Mont d'Or &
Bûche de Noël 🎄



Maison Saint-Blaise

During summer, Dordogne is a popular place to spend your holiday. But during the colder months, visiting Dordogne can be a magical experience as well.

Hiver Enchanté

Sure, it can be wet and cold here, but just as easily sunny and pleasant.

The region is known for its picturesque landscapes and charming villages. And during the holiday season, Dordogne utilises this historic backdrop to create an ambiance filled with charming markets, enchanting illuminations, and festive events.

As early as end-November, the villages begin preparing for the Christmas season. They are putting up Christmas lights, menu's in restaurants change and first announcements of Christmas markets and other events are made.

The December month also caters to the gourmet in you. The renowned cuisine of the Périgord region holds an even greater allure during this season, with its rich flavors and comforting dishes that are truly satisfying.

Dishes best enjoyed in the cool embrace of winter, rather than the sweltering heat of summer.

Embrace the tranquility of the month and enjoy the festive villages and exquisite flavors that await you. It's time to savor the joy that this season brings.



Mont d'Or, seasonal cheese

One of the neighbours, originating from the Jura region of France, has brought his appreciation for exceptional cheeses with him to share with us.

When it comes to French cheeses, Mont d'Or holds a special place in the hearts of cheese lovers.

This raw milk cheese, traditionally enjoyed with a spoon, is wrapped in a thin wooden box. It is only available outside of the summer months and exclusively produced in the French Jura region.

When Mont d'Or is served warm with some bread, sausage, or boiled potatoes, it adds to the magic of spending colder days in Dordogne. A bit similar to enjoying a cheese fondue together.

Fromages et Plus in Villerséal, only a 15 minute drive from Maison Saint-Blaise, is worth a visit. They offer a wide selection of artisanal cheeses and occasionally host special events, including Mont d'Or evenings where you can enjoy this exceptional cheese. Check for more info [our website](#).





Bûche de Noël

A long, long time ago... in a land of sweet wonders, Belgium to be precise, there lived a dessert aficionado named Sven. Among all the confections in the world, he loved one particular treat: Bûche de Noël.

When Sven moved to The Netherlands, he decided to share his love for Bûche de Noël (aka: Kerststronk) with his family and friends. Every year around Christmas, Sven drove to Belgium just to savor the perfect Bûche de Noël.

Little did Sven know back then, that the origins of his 'Kerststronk' actually traced back to the culinary kingdom of... France!

This dessert, also known as Yule log cake, has been a French tradition for centuries during Christmas feasts. And of course, in Belgium, it has also become a beloved holiday tradition.

Bûche de Noël has its roots in medieval rituals. Families would burn large wooden logs to symbolize the return of longer days and good luck for the coming year. Over time, this tradition evolved into the creation of a cake, shaped like a log.

Although it comes in all shapes and forms, the cake is typically made of a rolled sponge cake filled with cream or buttercream. And frosted to resemble the texture of a log. It is often decorated with chocolate ganache, powdered sugar, meringue mushrooms, and other festive elements. You'll find it at the local Pâtisserie & Boulangerie. Or order in advance at [Mamy Clafouty](#) in Beaumont-du-Périgord at 7km of Maison Saint-Blaise.

So, this holiday season, let's raise a fork to Sven, the dessert explorer. As some desserts are worth the trip.





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1. Villereal's market place
2. Brochures of local events are available - Maison Saint-Blaise
3. Restaurants offer New Year's Eve dinner or brunch, do reserve
4. Stay in and bake - Maison Saint-Blaise
5. Sarlat



Sarlat Chronicles

Sarlat-la-Canéda, is a beautiful medieval town build on several levels. The historic center has been protected from modern development, making it almost car-free. It has the highest amount of historical buildings per square foot in the whole of France.

Only located 1 hour from our holiday home, this city lends itself perfectly for a day trip. Even more outside the busy summer season: you will have the opportunity to meander through the cobble-stone streets in your own pace.

Sarlat's film-worthy beauty has attracted numerous filmmakers. One of the more recent movies was 'The Last Duel' featuring Hollywood stars Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, and Adam Driver. Film is important to Sarlat and every year in November The Sarlat Film Festival is being held.

Sarlat is hosts to many markets, where locals also do their shopping. You will for sure notice the Sainte-Marie Church at place de la Liberté, Sarlat's lively main square. Or actually, you can't miss its huge door weighing over 2 tons. Behind the large door you'll find an indoor market and a cultural space. Truffle markets take place from December to February. The Truffle Festival is being held in mid-January, sales stands, exhibitions, cooking demonstrations, and workshops. And there is a large Christmas Village during the month of December.

But even without these markets, Sarlat is worth your time.

Guest Favorite

Near Sarlat and close to Montignac, lies **Lascaux**; a network of caves. It houses the most impressive and well-known artworks of the Paleolithic era. Lascaux 4, a perfect replica of a cave with remarkable artwork, shows the paintings of animals and figures created over 20,000 years ago.

The original cave, discovered in 1940, is closed off to preserve the delicate art, whereas Lascaux 4 is not 'only' a replica, as it offers a whole audio-tour experience, including a modern experience with interactive displays, voice-over in several languages, explaining short movies and a comprehensive understanding of the arts significance. A visit typically takes up to 3-4 hours.

It is a bit further afield (1h15 drive), but great for a family trip and you might want to combine it with a visit to Sarlat. See for more information [this](#) blogpost on our holiday home website.



Marché de Noël

Against a backdrop of medieval architecture, Christmas Markets offer local crafts, delectable treats and festive entertainment. Here are some recommendations for your Christmas markets itinerary.

Villereal: The village market and surrounding buildings and shops are decorated well, thanks to the efforts of its local merchants and the amazing florist, Maryflor. From December 22nd to 24th, the central Marketplace comes alive with markets and events. Prior to these dates, starting half of November, you can already enjoy the village's festive atmosphere in the making and of course explore the local establishments for a drink or bite to eat.

Sarlat-la-Canéda: A Christmas village, with wooden chalets offering local crafts and regional delicacies. The market starts on December 4th and continues until December 31st. Situated at the Place de la Grande-Rigaudie and Place du 14 juillet, where you'll find an ice skating rink, magic shows, and games.

Monpazier: On December 15th, Monpazier invites you to experience its charming Christmas market. With a variety of stalls, music, and the presence of Père Noël (Santa Claus). Take in the historic market square as you browse through the stalls, offering gifts and local delights.

Bergerac: Offers a broad program between the 9th of December till end of the year. A gourmet village, an artisanal village, a children's village, workshops, enough to see and do.

For us it was a pleasant surprise that during the weeks before Christmas, several villages are really making an effort in decorating and putting up Christmas lights. Experience the enchanting backdrop of this beautiful region. Do visit the linked (tourist office) websites and socials for event agenda's and details.



Image: Amicale des commerçants de Villereal

La Mixerie

Réveillons du Nouvel An

New Years Eve is typically celebrated with friends, champagne and fireworks. A 'réveillon' is a luxurious and festive diner, and comes from 'reveiller', meaning 'to awaken, arouse'. Several restaurants in the area offer a festive diner at the 31st of December or brunch at the 1st of January. Please find [here](#) a small overview, do make sure to reserve up front.

Perhaps you prefer to stay in and enjoy spending time together in a cosy atmosphere, cooking up winter dishes in a well-equipped kitchen. Set a large table for a memorable evening filled with good company. Or unwind with a movie or challenge each other to a board game.

During the day, enjoy leisurely walks in the crisp air or stocking up on treats for later enjoyment at the spacious dining table, illuminated by candlelight. Bonne année!





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