



Chef Todd's
Epicurean Adventures

The Thrill of the Hunt 2020!

Ever dream of hunting truffles in France? Now you can!

February 17-23, 2020
Southwest France

Join Chef Todd on an unforgettable culinary journey to a hidden gastronomic paradise in the southwest of France. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to discover the elusive **black truffle** of Perigord. We will be located in the Department of the Lot, part of the historic province of Quercy. Aside from a rich history and dramatic landscapes, the Quercy is world-renowned for its gastronomy--foie gras, breast of duck (magaret), Quercy lamb, small goat cheeses called "cabecous" or "Rocamadours," rhubarb jam, Quercy melons, Cahors red wine, "pastis" apple dessert, walnut oil --and of course, truffles! Why in February? This is when the truffles are at their peak in abundance and flavor!

The weeks itinerary includes: a **traditional truffle hunt** with the local pig **Kiki**, private tours and tastings at **Château Haute-Serre** and **Clos de Gamot**, a stop at the famous truffle market in **Lalbenque** and several multi-course truffle meals including a two star Michelin restaurant, a private tour to the **25,000 year old cave paintings at Pech Merle**, a guided tour of **Cahors** including a peek at the **Roman ruins** found in an underground parking garage, a visit to the **Pont Valentre**, the oldest fortress bridge in Europe still intact and a visit to **St. Cirque Lapopie**, voted one of France's most beautiful medieval villages. We will also visit the three-star Michelin attraction **Rocamadour**, famous for its black Madonna as well as a stop for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

The week is limited to 8 guests. The price is \$3,800 per person based on double occupancy or \$4,300 for a single. The price includes accommodations for six nights and all meals as well as transportation from the train station in Cahors. Make your reservations early as the tour fills up quickly. Airfare is not included. Please contact Todd of Chef Todd's Epicurean Adventures at 707-329-6940 or ktkniess@gmail.com for more information and reservations. We look forward to exploring the back roads of this very special region.



Truffle Hunt Itinerary 2020

February 17-23, 2020

Monday

We will rendezvous at the Cahors Train station between 3:00 & 4:00 p.m. Once we have everyone we will begin our journey to La Grange de Marcillac located in the hamlet of St. Cyprien. The drive is about 40 minutes. We will most likely make a stop at the local grocery store for any last minute items you may need to purchase. I usually purchase some beverages to enjoy before our welcome dinner at 7:30. I have arranged for a speaker to give us some history of the Quercy region.

Each morning will start with breakfast at the Auberge and each evening will end with dinner at the Auberge (except Wednesday). Madame Pinatel is a wonderful cook and uses only seasonal ingredients. I still credit her with the best dish I had ever had in France.

Tuesday

We will leave this morning by 9:00 a.m. to visit **Château Haute-Serre** for a private tour of the property followed by a tasting and then a multi-course **truffle** lunch. After lunch we will depart for the famous truffle market in **Lalbenque**. As we approach the main street you will be smothered by the intoxicating aromas of freshly unearthed truffles. You will have plenty of photo opportunities in the market where there are plenty of “characters”. See if you can spot the Parisians! After the market we will join Kiki the pig to find some of our own truffles in the fields close to **Lalbenque**. It always amazes me to see the relationship between pig and man in the search for black gold! We should arrive back to the Auberge for some downtime before dinner at 8:00.

Wednesday

Today Madame Pinatel will give us an exposition on the famous **tuber melanosporum** followed by a light lunch at the Auberge. The afternoon will consist of a tour and tasting at **Clos de Gamot** which has been in the same family since the late 1600's. This is always a wonderful tour and they give you a true sense of terroir and explain the traditional wine making methods used in Cahors (just don't mention the 34 hour work week). Clos de Gamot was also featured in the book **“Families of the Vine”** by **Michael Sanders**. Michael is an American writer who spent a year in France with his family. He wrote a book describing village life in the Lot. The book is called **“From Here You Can't See Paris”**. Both of these books are

great reads for our trip. Dinner is at the two Michelin starred **Le Gindreau** where we will be enjoying the truffle menu.

Thursday

Today we will be on the road by 8:30 to visit the region's most acclaimed attraction, **Rocamadour**. This medieval village is built on a steep gorge on the Alzou River and is rated a three star attraction by Guide Michelin. We will have a guided tour with "guide extraordinaire" Sue Baxter, followed by lunch at Jehan de Velan. The afternoon will consist of a visit to a goat cheese farm where we will see how the famous AOC goat cheese of Rocamadour is produced. We will take some of this cheese home with us for dinner on Saturday. There should be some free time before dinner.

Friday

Today we will make our way into Cahors, the largest city in the region, to meet up with Sue Baxter again. Sue will lead us on a walking tour where we will learn about the history of Cahors from Roman times up through the present day. The tour will commence at the **Pont Valentré**, which is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of the pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela. Sue has a special way of bringing the past alive and is always ready for any question you might have. Lunch will be at L'O á la Bouche, the best restaurant in Cahors. The afternoon will consist of a "**Pastis**" cooking demonstration with Emmanuel in the village of Pern. The traditional apple dessert is only found in this region. We will be back to the Auberge by 6:00 with a few hours of down time before we enjoy Madame Pinatel's truffle dinner.

Saturday

Morning departure will be 9:00 a.m. to ensure we arrive on time. The **Caves of Pech Merle** are famous for their paintings which are said to be 30,000 years old. We have arranged for a private tour. Next we will drive to St. Cirq Lapopie, one of France's most beautiful villages. Lunch will be at **Gourmet Quercynois** found right in the heart of the village. You will have a little free time to walk the cobblestone streets. After lunch we will make our way back to the Inn where Todd will be in the kitchen preparing the evening's meal. You will have some free time to pack and get ready for our departure the next morning. We will be serving Madame Pinatel and her staff for the last meal. Everyone pitches in to help serve and clean up. This is usually a very casual farewell dinner.

Sunday February 26 & March 5

We will depart at 9:15 and should be at the train station no later than 10:15. Please make your train reservations accordingly.

\$3,800 per person based on double occupancy, \$4,300 for a single. Price includes hotel for 6 nights, all private tours and tastings, all your meals including wine, transportation to and from the train station and during the week, professional English speaking guides as well as all the entrance fees listed on the itinerary. Price does not include airfare or train to Cahors. Arrangements for travel are up to each individual. I do have several contacts who can arrange flights for you.

Miscellaneous:

- Our home for the week is out in the country. The closest town is Montcuq, about a 12 minute drive from our Auberge. It is very peaceful place to stay and the stars are incredible.
- Most of the activities on the itinerary will include a fair amount of walking.
- This is your vacation and I really want you to enjoy it. If for any reason you want to take a day off then by all means you are welcome to do so.
- Our meals have been pre-arranged so it is imperative we know if you have any dietary issues. The region is known for cassoulet, duck, foie gras, saffron, pastis, truffles, prunes and walnuts. You will be eating two full meals a day, lunch and dinner. My advice is to keep breakfast to a minimum and take your time while enjoying the meals. We will experience many different cooking styles and techniques in the places we have chosen for you.
- There is wifi in the Auberge but only in the main house. There is a landline connected to the internet as a back-up.