

COOKERY IN AQUITAINE AT LE SAINT-JAMES NEAR BORDEAUX

This is a 3 or 4 night holiday with two different cookery classes included held at Le Saint James, a Relais & Chateaux hotel with Michelin starred restaurant, on the outskirts of Bordeaux with its own vineyard. This holiday operates without a minimum number of participants and you join in with classes that the hotel's cookery school is running on a weekly basis. Ideal for single travellers too.

About the cookery

The Côté Cours is an established cookery school at Le Saint James run by Celia Girard, the sous-chef to Michelin-starred chef Nicolas Magie. What makes this so special is that there is a self-contained kitchen, very bright and spacious, with Poggenpohl units and Miele ovens and equipment. Lessons are hands-on with all participants having their own work stations. The lessons vary in duration and include themed classes and world cooking. We have put together a short break and include two cookery lessons: one St James Style and the other a themed class. We have scheduled this to run from a Friday to a Monday or Tuesday, but your stay can be extended to incorporate another themed session on a Wednesday, or just to explore the nearby area.

Where you stay

Le Saint James is a unique 4 star Relais & Châteaux hotel on a hillside perch on the borders of the village of Bouliac, just outside Bordeaux. The airport is about 25 minutes away by car. Le Saint-James' unusual architecture was designed by Jean Nouvel to resemble the tobacco-drying barns of the region, where the original 18th Century farmhouse buildings contrast to industrial-style pavilions, home to the guestrooms. From here the views are spectacular, sloping through orderly vineyards across the fields to Bordeaux. The property produces its own house wine, the Vin du Jardin. The 15 rooms and 3 suites are minimally decorated with white walls and bed linens allowing the colours of the landscape to stand out. A marvellous feature of the rooms is that the beds stand elevated to the level of panoramic windows, allowing sunrise views to greet you when you wake. In the restaurant, floor-to-ceiling windows take advantage of the hotel's westward-facing aspect, and sunlight and rural beauty becomes the backdrop for fine dining from Michelin-starred Chef Nicolas Magie. Unusually for a hotel of this sort, there is also a bistro-style café too. The hotel has four hectares of grounds, an outdoor swimming pool, sauna and can arrange in-room massage on request.



Kitchen for the cookery courses



The bistro



Supervision by the Chef



The restaurant



Le Saint-James

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Depart on a Friday.

Day one: London to Bordeaux

There is a flight at 06.50 from London to Bordeaux with British Airways, arriving at 09.25 hrs. The flight times do vary according to the season and sometimes there is an evening flight out too. You are collected by car from the airport or you may choose to have a hire-car for the duration of the holiday, returning it to the airport at the end. The rest of the day is at leisure to settle in to the hotel, explore the region, go for a walk in the grounds, swim or perhaps do some shopping or sightseeing in nearby Bordeaux. On the first evening we include a 5 course menu for dinner, accompanied by 2 glasses of wine, mineral water and coffee.

Day two: First cookery session

After a leisurely breakfast, prepare for your first hands-on cookery lesson, The Saint-James Style. This is for up to 12 people and takes place from 09.30 until 1.30. After an initial presentation about the world of gastronomy you learn the ropes of gourmet cuisine with the Chef as you prepare a three course meal, with chosen recipes from the Saint-James gourmet restaurant. The service includes a hands-on course and an on-site tasting session along with a glass of wine and coffee. The afternoon is then at leisure to rest and relax or to explore. Or, on a Saturday you can take an optional class in World Cooking, discovering various traditional meals from around the world, from 6 to 9pm which includes a starter and a main course and on-site tasting of those dishes plus dessert, a glass of wine and coffee. Own arrangements for dinner.

Day three: Second cookery session

Again after a leisurely breakfast, you join the group for your second cookery lesson, a Themed class that takes place from 11 am to 2.30 pm. The Themed class is for up to 12 people and it focuses on a specific product or ingredient. You are able to practise professional techniques that make it possible for you to reproduce these dishes at home. There will be the preparation of a starter, a main course, on-site tasting of the two dishes, a dessert, a glass of wine and a coffee. Themes may include ingredients such as wild salmon, scallops, lamb, duck and sea bass. The rest of the afternoon is then free to explore or relax.

Day four: At leisure in Aquitaine or departure for London

If you are on the 3 night break you leave the hotel this morning after an early breakfast as the flight with British Airways from Bordeaux to London Gatwick departs at 10.10 hrs, arriving at 10.40 hrs or 23.20 hrs arriving at 23.50 hrs. (It is only 25 minutes from the hotel to the airport). If you are staying for 4 nights or more perhaps, then this day is at leisure and worth having a hire-car to make the most of the region, perhaps by visiting nearby Saint-Emilion, or the splendid vineyards of the Médoc. Le Saint-James can also arrange for a wine tasting for you. Own arrangements for dinner.

Day five: Bordeaux to London

On Tuesdays the flight leaves only at 10.10.

Dates and prices

This holiday operates with departures on Fridays for 3 and 4 night holidays so that it ties in with the days the Saint James Style and themed cooking classes take place. We can tailor it though to include other classes mentioned above.

Price per person:

From 28 January to 5 April and from 19 October to 26 December

£1,350 when sharing a deluxe double for 3 nights
£1,470 when sharing a deluxe double for 4 nights

From 6 April to 2 June, and from 29 September to 18 October

£1,595 when sharing a deluxe double for 3 or 4 nights (4 nights for the price of 3, so no reduction if you only stay for 3 nights)

From 13 to 16 May, from 3 June to 28 September

£1,660 when sharing a deluxe double for 3 nights
£1,840 when sharing a deluxe double for 4 nights

Supplements per person for single use of double room:

From 28 January to 5 April and from 19 October to 26 December: £345 for 3 nights, £595 for 4 nights

From 6 April to 2 June, and from 29 September to 18 October: £470 for 3 or 4 nights

From 3 to 16 May, from 3 June to 28 September: £650 for 3 nights, £840 for 4 nights

Supplements per night:

Hauterive suite £130 30 Jun-2 Sep, £108 all other dates
Harley Davidson suite £190
Jacuzzi suite £210

Car hire No supplement for stays of 3 nights. Add £40 per day for each additional day if you want a hire-car and not a transfer.

Deposit payment required £400 per person

What's included

- Flights in Euro Traveller with British Airways London to Bordeaux return
- Private car transfer from Bordeaux airport to the hotel and back (car-hire optional on request)
- 3 or 4 nights in a deluxe double room with breakfast
- 5-course dinner with two glasses of wine on the first evening
- Two cookery classes (one St James Style on a Saturday and a Themed class on a Sunday).

Alternative travel arrangements

If you want us to arrange flights from other UK airports or with other airlines, please let us know and we can incorporate these into the holiday price for you. Bordeaux can also be reached from Paris by TGV in between 3 and 4 hours. You can leave London just after 9am and reach Bordeaux by about 5.30pm with a change in Paris.