

Golfer | Gourmet &



10 reasons
to golf, wine & dine
in Southwest France

Welcome to Bordeaux and South-west France

As local specialists, we get lots of questions about golf, wine and gastronomy holidays in the Bordeaux area.

So we decided to put together this guide for golfing gourmets. We hope it will give you an insight into what our wonderful region has to offer, and inspire you to come and visit us.

Even on a weekend break it's possible to enjoy some of the best golf courses in France and still have enough time to experience our beautiful culture, to go wine-tasting and to enjoy menus unique to south-west France.

Of course it helps if you have local experts on hand to take the hassle out of your planning and to devise an itinerary that's perfect for you. That's where we come in at Greens & Grapes! You can find our contact details on the back page.

Sylvie and Lucius McPhilemy
Co-founders of Greens & Grapes

1. golf

the best-kept secret

Looking for the perfect golf holiday? We've taken golf holidays all over the world and South-west France is pretty hard to beat. From Bordeaux to Biarritz and across the border into Spain, the region has all the ingredients for the perfect golfing holiday: great courses at affordable prices, great weather, great food, world-class wine, and great transport links.

Like wine, golf is putting Bordeaux and south-west France on the map. And that means golf tourism is taking off in a big way! There are more than 50 courses along the coast and among the vineyards of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region. This is hardly surprising given the rich golfing tradition in south-west France. Did you know that the oldest golf course in the world outside Scotland was established in Pau in 1856? It's this heritage that continues, with South-west France home to some of the best courses in Europe. At Greens and Grapes we are the local golf holiday specialists and members of the **Global Golf Tourism Organisation IAGTO**. Co-owner Lucius has played all the best courses in the region – many times.

"I'm keen to share with golfers from around the world the secrets of the region's exceptional courses," says Lucius, who plays off a 12 handicap.

golf talk

Grand Saint-Emilionnais Golf Club

with Andrew Mourgue d'Algue, golf club owner.

Why do golf and wine combine so well for a holiday in Bordeaux?

Golf and wine share a very similar tradition. Creating a good golf course is like creating a great vineyard – it takes a lot of time to make them really good. They are both also a way of life – you can spend all day talking about golf and you can spend all day talking about wine.

Why is Saint-Émilion such a special place to play?

It's a very calm area and you're surrounded by vineyards, oak trees and heather, so it's a wonderful experience. People who come to Bordeaux and Saint-Émilion want to find a special experience. Our course at Saint-Émilion is a very interesting course for all types of golf players thanks to the Tom Doak design. It is like having a great winemaker designing the course. He has looked beyond golf to the views and the history to make a golf course that blends into its surrounds. **Continue**



hints & tips

Golf du Medoc, Bordeaux

Just 40 minutes north of Bordeaux, Golf du Medoc is one of the top 15 golf courses in continental Europe. It's also one of France's best. It has two superb 18-hole courses. The more challenging Les Chateaux is often likened to a links course, while Les Vignes is set among the beautiful pine trees, where accuracy is required to score well.

Grand Saint-Émilionnais Golf Club, Saint-Émilion

One of France's newest courses, the five-star Saint-Émilion course is a Tom Doak-designed treat. It is a truly exceptional course, unfolding in a valley fringed by centenary oak trees, framed by vineyards and located just six miles from the UNESCO-listed wine village of Saint-Émilion. There are stunning panoramic views from the clubhouse you can enjoy over a post-round drink.

Seignosse, Les Landes

A beautiful and challenging course designed by American Robert von Hagge, Seignosse is the practice course of choice for Jose Maria Olazabal ahead of the Masters at Augusta. And the numbers stack up: it's ranked the ninth-best course in France and 31st in Europe by Top 100 Golf Courses. Accuracy is the key – the fairways are narrow and demand straight drives. The landscape is hilly and water comes into play on several holes. Watch out for France's first Par 6 – known locally as “the hole of the devil”.

We also love ...

Golf de Moliets, Les Landes

Golf d'Hossegor, Les Landes

Golf de Biarritz, Basque Country, France

Golf de Neguri, Basque Country, Spain

Golf de Lacanau, 1 hour from Bordeaux on the Atlantic shores



Contact Lucius so he can help you plan the perfect golfing itinerary.

2. wine

the world's wine capital

There aren't many names in wine bigger than Bordeaux, voted **World's Best City in 2017**. The city is the world's wine capital – and for good reason.

There are around 8000 chateaux in the region – many owned by winemakers, or vigneron, who are throwing open their doors so that you can experience the magic of Old World wine.

Whether you're a wine connoisseur who can tell a Pomerol from a Pauillac, or someone who just likes to enjoy a nice glass with their dinner, Bordeaux is for you.

The last 20 years have seen a new energy in Bordeaux, with the region now welcoming more than 6 million visitors a year and investing heavily in wine tourism – showcased so magnificently by the opening of the world's finest wine museum, **La Cité du Vin**.

Increasingly, world-class restaurants, hotels and B&Bs are also popping up on wine estates to provide a complete one-stop wine experience. Golf is at the heart of this tourism boom, with interesting and challenging courses tucked among the vines of Saint-Emilion and the Medoc and helping to make **golf Bordeaux's the Next Big Thing**.

To the south, even the vineyards of Rioja in Spain are within reach, as are famous Cognac distilleries like Hennessy, Martell and Rémy Martin to the north.

There really is a wine trail for everyone, from bio-dynamic organic producers to an **Irish Geese** châteaux trail showcasing the region's rich Franco-Irish history. There are wine classes and wine talks, wine festivals and wine art exhibitions. And that's all before we even get to the magnificent the Cité du Vin – a wonderful sensory overload that mixes a museum with wine magic on the banks of the Garonne River.

Green & Grapes is recognised as a '**Vignobles & Découvertes**' tour operator by the Gironde tourist board, so we are perfectly placed to ensure you make the most of your visit to the vineyards.



wine map

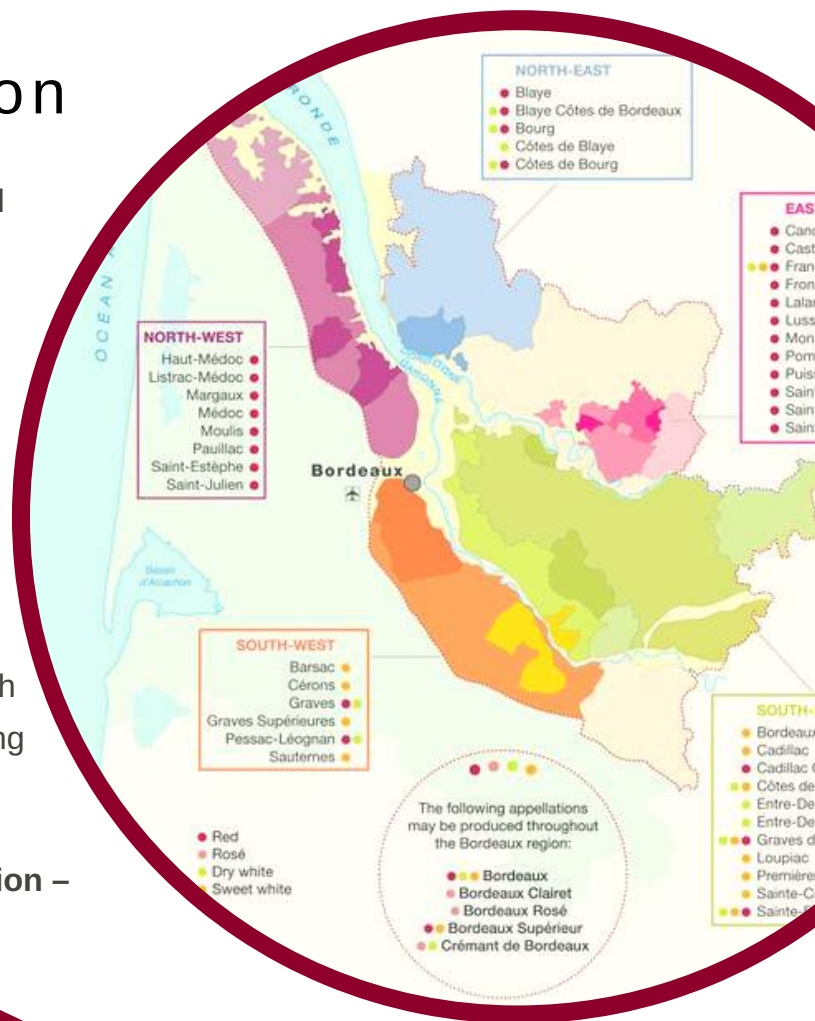
discovering the region

All the **leading chateaux** offer wine-tastings and tours – some have open-doors policies, while others require reservations.

This is where a local know-how from Greens & Grapes comes in handy. With us to open doors for you, it's possible to meet chateaux owners and to chat directly with top winemakers. At some estates, you can even blend your own wine or buy your own row of grapes.

Bordeaux cheers the **Ryder Cup 2018** on French soil for the first time ever. And it's altogether fitting that the official French wine is from Bordeaux

We love our region's wine and golf combination – we know you will too!



hints & tips

When is the best time to visit Bordeaux and La Rioja?

Any time of year! Spring is nice, with temperatures not too hot. In Bordeaux it's also **en primeur** season when winemakers showcase their wine from the previous year before bottling. Summer brings sunshine and a holiday feel. Autumn sees the vines change from greens to yellows and reds. It's also harvest time!

Can I visit during harvest?

Yes, but it's a busy time. At Greens & Grapes we can include **harvest activities** on your itinerary.

Are the chateaux or bodegas always open?

Some have set opening hours, while others open on reservation. With a bit of notice, we can usually get you into the winery of your choice.

Can I ship my wine home?

Yes, most chateaux we work with can arrange for your wine to be shipped for you.

Find out more about Bordeaux's chateaux in the Ultimate Guide on our website.

There is also a frequently asked questions section.

3. gastronomy

the ultimate foodie spot

The gastronomic scene in Bordeaux and South-west France is hotter than ever with some of the country's most exciting cuisine coming out of the region. World-class chefs are making their marks in this foodie heaven.

There are now two dozen **Michelin-starred restaurant** in south-west France and a similar number over the border in northern Spain.

From Bordeaux to Biarritz, chefs are producing wonderful food based on **fresh local produce**. Local produce really is at the heart of cuisine in our region. The south-west is rich in farmers' markets, fromageries and seafood sourced daily straight from the Atlantic Ocean. What's not to like?



tickle your taste buds

There's something for foodies each and every week of the year – from food festivals and oyster fairs to cheese and wine-tasting nights. Just as you can easily visit a wine chateau in Bordeaux, you can take a gourmet food tour, drop by an oyster farm, or watch the apple harvest.

If food is your thing, then Bordeaux, south-west France and the Basque Country is your region. From canelés and foie gras to Arcachon oysters and cèpes, there's something to amaze even the best-travelled tastebuds. Explore the amazing food from the south west in more detail on our website.

From bijoux bistros to dazzling dining at eateries run by famous chefs, Bordeaux is fast becoming one of the Epicurean centres of the world.

It would be so difficult to list our best picks, but we have plenty of ideas, so please get in contact, as we would be delighted to share our personal favourites. However, take a look at **our list of the top 10 restaurants** in the city.

Arcachon Bay is only one hour away from Bordeaux. Known for its delicious oysters and "La Dune du Pilat", the highest dune in Europe, only a few know that it is the place where the finest **caviar** is produced in the world. We can recommend a few local farms to visit including Perlita caviar farm where you will enjoy an educational visit and unique tasting.



the basque cuisine

character and tradition

There's nothing in the world quite like Basque cuisine, born from the unique and mountainous region straddling the Pyrénées. It's a healthy and robust combination of an ancient cooking techniques mixed with abundance of modern creativity. Recipes like piperade, ttoro (a kind of fish soup) with chipirons, basque chicken, and kaskarote tuna (tuna à la Basquaise) are delicious and homely, while desserts such as pettanmamia, Basque cake, muxuk (similar to macaroons) or etxebizkotxa feature on restaurant menus both sides of the Spanish border.



hints & tips

There are many ways to get a truly local foodie experience. They include:

- **Visit local food markets.** The new Halle Bacalan near the Cité du Vin in Bordeaux is a feast for the senses. **Halle les Biarritz** and the market in St Jean de Luz are also worth a visit, especially for tapas. Greens & Grapes can include visits to local markets in your itinerary.
- **Take a cooking course.** The 4-star **Le Saint-James hotel** in Bordeaux has a dedicated cooking school to let you in on the secrets of French cuisine. There are also local courses for making **caneles**, the iconic cylinder-shaped cakes with a soft vanilla-flavoured dough, and other French specialties. Courses can be great value for money and you'll be learning directly from local experts
- **Eat at your golf course.** Golf club menus offer great value for money and are usually based on local specialties and produce.
- **Book a meal at a chateau.** Who better to match food and wine than a winemaker? More and more wine estates are opening restaurants or cafes to provide the complete gastronomic experience. We can reserve these meals for you, and also arrange picnics in the vineyards.
- **Go direct to the source.** Visiting local producers is a great way to understand food and find out how it makes it to your table. Take a look at our **yearly diary of what to do in Bordeaux**, or our blog on excuses to visit **La Rioja and Northern Spain**.



4. climate

perfect and mild

One of the best reasons to visit France is the weather. Long summer nights and pleasant springs and autumns make it possible to dine al fresco – soak up the atmosphere at a terrace restaurant, stop for a coffee in an 18th century square, or choose a cheeky dessert and sweet white wine for a night cap in your hotel bar.

And, then, of course, there's the golf. You can play golf in France pretty much year-round, with the season lasting longer the further south you go. We play locally from the end of February through until early November, depending on the year.

The average maximum temperature in Bordeaux is 27°C in July and August, though it can move into the mid- to late-30s during hot spells. Generally you can expect warm summer days and pleasant evenings. Thermometers start to drop in October and November, but, even so, it's not uncommon to enjoy temperatures as high as 20°C in autumn. In winter it can reach 10°C or 12°C before falling sharply at night.

Across the border in northern Spain it's the same story, making south-west France and the Basque Country the ideal golfing destination.



hints & tips

- You can play throughout the day and not end up with sunstroke, but we still advise taking precautions with hats and sunscreen.
- Book early tee times in July and August to beat the heat on hot days, and take water with you.
- To maximise your enjoyment, we'd recommend using a golf cart on many courses, especially in summer. Carts are relatively affordable in France and can make longer fairways easier to navigate so you can conserve your energy for your game. At Greens & Grapes we can **book your tee times**, and advise which courses are best suited to carts.



5. swish lodgings

find a sleeping beauty

It's not just the culture and history, or the golf courses that are interesting and diverse in the south-west.

The region also boasts a plethora of accommodation options to suit every style and every budget. From intimate boutique hotels and chambres d'hotes (B&Bs) to luxury 5-star hotels and traditional chateau accommodation set among the vines, you can be sure to find a room you'll love.

For a truly local experience, we even have our own fully furnished apartments, **La Villa Verte**, that offer a home-away-from-home.

Some of our golf course partners, including Golf du Médoc, the Grand Saint-Emilionnais Golf Club, Golf Château Les Vigiers and Golf de Chiberta, offer accommodation on or near their courses, meaning you can benefit from the close proximity at tee time.

For visitors looking for some extra luxury during their stay, we can recommend the 5-star L'Hôtel du Palais in Biarritz, the Grand Hotel in Bordeaux – and home to a Gordon Ramsay restaurant – and Les Sources de Caudalie, set among the Château Smith Haut Lafitte Grand Cru Classé vines of the Graves appellation. These hotels combine elegance and luxury with fine food and wonderful wine.

But there are so many stylish and chic options. The Hôtel de Sèze and the Radisson Bordeaux are new 4-star hotels but they couldn't be more different. The first is a small and quaint city centre hotel set in an atmospheric old building, while the second is an ultra-slick modern hotel with a rooftop putting green. (It's also perfectly located for the magnificent Cité du Vin).

Or, for a full chateau experience, why not try the guest rooms at Château Le Tertre in the Médoc or Château Troplong-Mondot in Saint-Emilion?



hints & tips

When you join Greens & Grapes for a holiday, you benefit from our local knowledge and experience. We know every accommodation owner, and we have inspected every hotel and apartment. We also offer our guests the most competitive prices – negotiated locally with our partners – and all our packages include breakfast.



6. location

gateway to South-west France

Bordeaux, the gateway to the vineyards, is also close to beaches and, of course, to some of the best golf courses in **France and Northern Spain**.

The close proximity between Paris, Bordeaux, Biarritz and Spanish Basque towns like Bilbao and San Sebastian make it possible to combine more than one of these great destinations into the one holiday.

The good news is that it's easier than ever to get to south-west France or northern Spain to enjoy a golf and gourmet holiday.



Getting to Bordeaux – the golf and gourmet capital

Bordeaux's airport is one of the best connected in Europe, with links to 126 airports in 96 cities worldwide. If you're coming via Paris, Bordeaux is linked to Paris Montparnasse station via a high-speed railway line that takes just 2 hours. This is a great option for our excellent Ryder Cup package.

Getting to Biarritz – easy airport access

Biarritz airport is small and accessible, but still links to more than a dozen cities across Europe. The city is also linked by local train services to Bordeaux and to the Spanish border.

Getting to Rioja in northern Spain

International airlines fly to Bilbao from all over Europe, including from the UK and Ireland. There are also connections to Bilbao and San Sebastian to Madrid. Train services link northern Spain to France.

hints & tips

- Don't forget to check your airline's baggage and sporting equipment policy if you plan on bringing your clubs. If you prefer to hire, Greens & Grapes can arrange top-quality clubs for you.
 - All our key destinations, including Bordeaux, Biarritz and Bilbao, are easy to explore on foot. We recommend walking so you can soak up the local atmosphere and explore city centres. Bordeaux also has a great tram and river taxi network linking all key tourist sites, including **the Cité du Vin**.
 - We can advise the best way of getting to your golf and gourmet holiday. We can also arrange local connections between Paris, Bordeaux, Biarritz and northern Spain. Why not contact us today?
- On our website we have a helpful guide with more information on getting to our region.

7. culture

a tapestry of new & old

The south-west is a treasure trove of ancient and modern, a melting pot of languages and cultures. The region has always attracted travellers, thanks largely to the wine trade. While the famous Bordeaux Grand Cru wine classification dates back to 1855, vines were first planted here in Roman times. This history can still be found from the Palais Gallien amphitheatre in central Bordeaux to the **cobbled streets of Saint-Emilion**, where France's first wine exports were prepared for shipment. In later years, the region found itself on the road to Santiago de Compostela as pilgrims made the journey along what is now a UNESCO-listed route. And along those very roads, the people of the Basque country were forging a cultural identity that can still be experienced in cities such as Bayonne, **Biarritz** and Bilbao. Today, grand chateaux, historic war sites, unique bastide towns and elegant architecture remain throughout the region and maintain cultural ties to a fascinating history. You can also visit our website to read about the region's strong cultural ties with Ireland.



hints & tips

Our region boasts a great variety of cultural places to visit:

La Cité du vin in Bordeaux: everything you'd want in a wine museum in a beautiful modern building visited by 1 million visitors in September 2018 just over 2 years after opening.

Musée Prieuré in Les Landes: visit a medieval church with the most beautiful sculpted doorways in south western France.

Asiatica museum in Biarritz: an art gallery hosts an incredible array of artifacts and artwork from countries such as India, China and Tibet.

The Guggenheim museum in Bilbao: this modern building made of titanium, glass and limestone is the museum for modern art with international fame since its opening in 1997.

La Rioja Museum in Logroño: This museum houses archaeological, artistic and ethnographic objects from La Rioja, as well as important temporary exhibitions



8. the atlantic picturesque sunny shores

There's something truly magical about holidays near the coast. Fresh air, sun, sand, and surf; getting back to nature, with walks along the beach and bike rides through pine forests. And, of course, golf! The south west of France and northern Spain offer all of these things – and more.

All the **golf course we play at Greens & Grapes** are never too far from the coast. Even the wonderful, five-star Saint-Emilion course – our most inland course – is little more than an hour from the beach. That makes it easy to combine the coast with the course.

Hit the beach: Beaches run almost uninterrupted down the Atlantic coast of France – the 250 kilometres making up the longest uninterrupted stretch of beach in Europe. Discover the beautiful surfing beaches of our coasts both sides of the Pyrenees.

Relax around lakes and bays: The coastal area boasts many inland lakes that are perfect for families. There's also the wonderful Bay of Arcachon, famous for its oyster.

Climb a sand dune: At 100m tall and 2.7km long, **Dune du Pilat is Europe's largest sand dune.** Accessible from Arcachon, you can climb it for great views over the Atlantic Ocean.

Follow a river: Bordeaux is located on the Garonne River, but there are also the nearby Dordogne and Vézère river valleys to explore.



hints & tips

The water fun isn't limited to the French side of the border.

The northern coast of Spain has some wonderful beaches, the most famous being around San Sebastian and Santander, with its perfect mix of seaside vibes and nightlife. More remote are the beaches of Galicia, Cantabria, and Asturias. These areas are famous for sandy beaches and rocky coves that provide peaceful places for rest and relaxation. This area is also famous for producing a certain golfing legend by the name of Seve Ballesteros!

And, of course, this area is close to the wonderful Rioja region as well.



9. art de vivre

à la française

The pace of life in South-west France is a little slower than you may be used to at home. Our approach to day-to-day living is also a little different.

This 'art-de-vivre à la française' – the French way of life – influences everything we do. Here, we work to live rather than live to work. We take time out for leisurely lunches and almost never drink our coffee on the run. We prioritise our food – we pick up and feel our apples, we smell melons for their freshness, we talk to the fishmonger and ask the fromager if we can try before we buy.

This respect for nature extends to our vines and the terroir that feeds our harvests and produces so much great wine.

We preserve our patrimony – our historic sites – and we share it with the world. At Greens & Grapes we understand all this, and we can share it with you. Experience our culture and our way of life complete with the service and smiles you'd expect at home.



Sylvie and Lucius McPhilemy
Co-founders of Greens&Grapes

hints & tips

You don't need to speak French to enjoy a visit to our region. The area receives many visitors each year, and the region is also home to large expat communities from Britain, Ireland, the US, and the Netherlands in particular.

In conversations with locals, don't mistake French shyness for rudeness; you'll find that a friendly 'bonjour' will do wonders when it comes to making new friends. Even so, at Greens & Grapes we speak French, English and Spanish, so we're well-placed to provide all the support you need. We'll take care of your reservations, and ensure you make the most of your time here.



10. side trips

beyond bordeaux & biarritz

Bordeaux and Biarritz are great launch pads for exploring.

The Dordogne: Just east of Bordeaux – beyond the vines of Saint-Emilion – the Dordogne and Vézère rivers flow through ancient gorges, alongside vineyards and past hill-top chateaux, with the market town of Sarlat and the prehistoric caves of Lascaux particular draws. It's possible to catch a river boat from Bordeaux to the confluence of the Garonne and Dordogne rivers at Libourne, or we can arrange a day of canoeing for you through the stunning Vézère Valley.

Cognac: To the north of Bordeaux are the vines of Cognac and their famous cellars and distilleries. In particular, Chai Monnet, a new 5-star hotel, is a wonderful stopping off point. A side trip to Cognac also opens up the Charente Maritime coast, the fishing port of La Rochelle and idyllic Ile de Ré.

The Pyrenees: France's most epic mountain range is a haven for outdoors lovers. Deep in Basque country, these mountains are as stunning as they are surprising. Wildlife, wild rivers and peaceful walks await.

hints & tips

Wine-throwing festivals, summer jazz, traditional Basque cuisine, and wonderful golf courses. What's not to like in northern Spain? The Rioja region is also a short hop from south-west France, making it ideal for a two-centre holiday. You can experience the best of France AND Spain.

Northern Spain is a delight for both golfers and foodies. The beautiful courses of the Basque region combined with the food and wine of Rioja make it a wonderful place for a gourmet and golf holiday.



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CONTACT US:

Sylvie and Lucius McPHILEMY
lucius@greensandgrapes.com

Tel.: 00 33 6 72 84 66 60

www.greensandgrapes.com



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