

Romantic Southwest France

Destination Photo Workshop with Harold Davis

Saturday, April 27, 2024 to
Sunday, May 5, 2024



Albi Cathedral

© Harold Davis

Day 1: Saturday, April 27	Welcome to Toulouse: Meet at Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole at 4 p.m. After exploring the local highlights with Harold and a local guide, we'll enjoy a Welcome Dinner at Au Gascon. (D) Page 2
Day 2: Sunday, April 28	Transfer to Mas de Garrigue: We'll travel by private coach with a stop along the way to visit Albi and for lunch on the way to the Mas de Garrigue in Calvignac. (B, D) Page 3
Day 3: Monday, April 29	Saint-Cirq Lapopie, Chemin de Halage, and Pont Valentre: Nearby Saint-Cirq Lapopie is thought to be the most scenic village in France. (B, D) Page 4
Day 4: Tuesday, April 30	Conques and Millau Viaduct: We will visit the historic scenic village of Conques followed by an excursion to the spectacular Millau Viaduct, the world's longest suspended bridge. (B) Page 5
Day 5: Wednesday, May 1	Exploring the Area: Today we will photograph the farm and gardens at the Mas de Garrigue, the hilltop village of Calvignac, and wander on foot to the banks of the Lot River. (B, L, D) Page 6
Day 6: Thursday, May 2	Dordogne Valley: Today we will explore some of the famous villages and chateaus of the Dordogne Valley, such as Sarlat and Chateau de Beynac. (B) Page 7
Day 7: Friday, May 3	Local Villages and the Mas de Garrigue: In the morning we will relax close to home, and in the afternoon explore local villages, such as Larnagol and Bouziès. Dinner at the fabulous Maison Noubar. (B, L, D) Page 8
Day 8: Saturday, May 4	Marcilac-sur-Céle and Rocamadour: With a box lunch provided by our host Sarah, we will set out with our private coach for a day of photographic exploration. (B, L, D) Page 9
Day 9: Sunday, May 5	Transfer to Toulouse: After breakfast, we will bid farewell to the Mas de Garrigue and travel back to Toulouse for transfer to the airport or train station. (B) Page 10
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Terms and Conditions	Be sure to read the important terms and conditions Pages 13–14

Day 1: Saturday, April 27

Check-in and Group Meeting

Included meals: Welcome Dinner at Au Gascon (or similar)

Hotel: [Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole](#) or similar
2 Rue du Taur
31000, Toulouse, France
+33 05 61 21 17 54

Welcome Dinner: [Au Gascon](#)
9 rue de Jacobins
31000, Toulouse, France
Tel: +33 05 61 21 67 16

Check in at the hotel: 3:00 pm
Group meeting in lobby: 4:00 pm

Planned Activities:

The [Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole](#) is a refurbished historic and luxurious hotel located in the heart of historic Toulouse, sometimes called “the Pink City.” Your adventure to the Southwest of France includes pre-paid, first night accommodations at Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole. Please note at check-in that you are with the Harold Davis group. The hotel has each of your names with the reservation.

At 4:00 pm we will meet at the lobby of the Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole, and then explore fabulous local highlights of Toulouse with a local guide and Harold on foot. We will end our jaunt with a Welcome Dinner hosted by Harold at Au Gascon at 7:30 pm, which is a few minutes walk from the hotel.

From Harold's blog: Pont Neuf, Toulouse

On a sunny and warm early spring day I explored Toulouse in southwestern France. Heading down to the Garonne River, I found the banks occupied by... [click here to read more...](#)



Pont Neuf, Toulouse

Day 2: Sunday, April 28

Transfer to Mas de Garrigue in Calvignac

Included meals: Breakfast at the hotel in Toulouse and a Welcome Dinner hosted by Harold at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

10:30 am morning transfer from Toulouse by private coach to [Mas de Garrigue](#), Calvignac, France. We will take a side trip to stop along the way in the World Heritage city of Albi. The sites to visit in central Albi include the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum (this artist was born near Albi), the famous fortress-cathedral in Albi from the Albigensian Wars, and Pont Vieux over the River Tarn. We will also have lunch on your own in Albi, and then proceed to the Mas de Garrigue.

After we arrive at Mas de Garrigue, there will be time to explore the area immediately around the Mas de Garrigue on foot and get to know our new home for the week.

Welcome Dinner at the Mas de Garrigue hosted by Harold.



The Mas de Garrigue is a restored 15th-century hunting lodge and fortified farm. Photo courtesy of Sarah Lloyd.

Day 3: Monday, April 29

Saint-Cirq Lapopie, Chemin de Halage, and Pont Valentre

Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

Private local transportation will pick us up at the Mas de Garrigue mid-morning and take us the short distance to the medieval village of Saint-Cirq Lapopie. Saint-Cirq Lapopie is nestled on a mountain crag with stunning views of the Lot River valley. It is thought to be the most scenic small villages in France according to a number of different sources.

After visiting Saint-Cirq Lapopie, we will proceed via a scenic route to the nearby Chemin de Halage an ancient trail beside the Lot River that is part of the Way of Saint James. There are endless possibilities

for photographing reflections along the banks of the Lot River.

From there, we will proceed to Pont Valentre, famous for never being captured during the Hundred Years' War in the city of Cahors. Time permitting, we will explore some of the old-town areas of Cahors.



From Harold's blog: Saint-Cirq-Lapopie

Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is an ancient village perched high on the cliffs high above the Lot River about thirty miles from Cahors. In France, Saint-Cirq-Lapopie is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful—if not the most beautiful—preserved medieval villages...[click here to read more...](#)

Saint-Cirq Lapopie

Day 4: Tuesday, April 30

Conques and Millau Viaduct

Included meals: Breakfast at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

Coach and guide will meet us in the morning at the Mas de Garrigue for a long excursion to the Millau Viaduct. Along the way we will stop in the extraordinary village of Conques, and pick up lunch and dinner en route.

Conques, one of the most beautiful villages in France, is an ancient pilgrimage town on the Way of Saint James. The Abbaye Sainte-Foy dates from the 8th century, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This is a wonderful village to wander in with one's camera.

Millau Viaduct is the tallest bridge in the world and the longest suspended bridge. The architect was Lord Norman Foster. There are several photographic vantage points. If we are lucky with the weather, fog will be drifting in and out among the various spans of the bridge.



Photo courtesy Tourisme Aveyron

Day 5: Wednesday, May 1

A Day at Home at the Mas de Garrigue

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

We will photograph the farm and gardens at the Mas de Garrigue, explore the village of Calvignac, and wander on foot to the banks of the Lot River. This will be a day to settle in, meditate, and enjoy contemplative photography.

Lunch and dinner at the Mas de Garrigue.

From Harold's blog:
Morning on the Lot River

Meandering by slow roads, I crossed and recrossed the Lot River in the southwest of France. Parking by the river, a trail led me back along cliffs for about a mile. There were ancient steps carved in the rock down to the water, and I descended...[click here to read more...](#)



Morning on the Lot River

Day 6: Thursday, May 2

Exploring the Dordogne Valley

Included meals: Breakfast at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

After a leisurely morning, we will be met by the coach and guide for an excursion to the famous Dordogne Valley. The Dordogne features a spectacular landscape, as well as picturesque villages, castles, and chateaus. Stops may include the restored village of Sarlat-la-Canéda, a medieval village and one of the most representative of 14th-century France. The excellent state of preservation of Sarlat is due to the efforts of writer, resistance fighter, and politician André Malraux who, as Minister of Culture in the 1960s, restored the town and many other historical sites throughout France. The center of old-town Sarlat consists of impeccably restored stone buildings and is largely car free.

Other destinations in the Dordogne are TBD but may include Château de Beynac, and many other castles. The ancient monastery village of Cadouin is another possible photographic destination.

We will pick up a picnic lunch on the fly and stop for dinner on the way back to the Mas de Garrigue.

From Harold's blog:

Overlooking the Dordogne River

I got to talking about photography with the couple who ran the B & B where I was staying in the ancient monastery town of Cadouin, and they suggest that I check out a spot overlooking the Dordogne River, a little way above the old riverside village of Tremolat. There was a little path...[click here to read more...](#)



Bend in the River—Dordogne

Day 7: Friday, May 3

Local Villages and the Mas de Garrigue

Included meals: Breakfast and Lunch at the Mas de Garrigue; Dinner at Maison Noubar

Planned Activities:

We will spend the morning close to home at the Mas de Garrigue, enjoying the wonderful photographic possibilities that are near at hand. After lunch, we will travel by bus to a number of local villages, such as Larnagol and Bouziès. Both villages are picturesque along the banks of the Lot River, and not visited very much by tourists.

For dinner, we have a special treat at Maison Noubar, which is known for its hospitality and celebrity chef Noubar Yessayan presides over a fabulous kitchen.

From Harold's blog: Lot River Valley

Today we walked to the small town of Calvignac, France perched on a rocky crag, and about 3 kilometers from the Mas de Garrigue. The weather threatened rain, and was misting when we set out. But along the way...[click here to read more...](#)



Lot River Valley

Day 8: Saturday, May 4

Marcilhac-sur-Célé and Rocamadour

Included meals: Breakfast, Box Lunch, and Farewell Dinner at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

After breakfast at the Mas de Garrigue, private transportation will be at our disposal for touring as we travel within the Parc naturel régional de Causses du Quercy. (The Parc naturel régional de Causses du Quercy is the national park surrounding the Mas de Garrigue.) Our stops will include Marcilhac-sur-Célé with its ruins of the 9th century Abbey of Saint Peter, and the famous pilgrimage citadel of Rocamadour.

Sarah will provide us with a tasty box lunch for our travels and we will return to a festive Farewell Dinner hosted by Harold at the Mas de Garrigue.

From Harold's blog: Pilgrimage to Rocamadour

High above a tributary of the Lot River in the Dordogne Department in southwestern France, Rocamadour has attracted pilgrims for centuries. The town sits below an ecclesiastical complex of monastic buildings and pilgrimage churches...[click here to read more...](#)



Sanctuary Rocamadour

Day 9: Sunday, May 5

Group Transfer to Toulouse

Included meals: Breakfast at the Mas de Garrigue.

Planned Activities:

After breakfast, our coach will meet us for our return transfer to Toulouse with stops at the airport, train station, and, if desired, the City Center.

From Harold's blog: Chemin de Halage

Under the cliffs beside the Lot River, and below the picturesque medieval village of Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, the Chemin de Halage makes for spectacular walking, and...[click here to read more...](#)



© Harold Davis

Fishing on the Lot River

About the Trip

When and Where to Meet

We will meet at the [Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole](#) (or similar), a hotel located in the heart of historic Toulouse, France, sometimes called “the Pink City.” Your adventure to the Southwest of France includes pre-paid, first night accommodations. Please note at check-in that you are with the Harold Davis group. The hotel will have each of your names with the reservation.

We will meet in the lobby of the Ibis Styles Toulouse Capitole, at 4PM on Saturday, April 27, 2024. From there, we will proceed on a walking tour with local guide of historic downtown Toulouse, and a Welcome Dinner hosted by Harold. Please be checked into the hotel before we meet. (See page 2 of the Itinerary for details.)

Subject to Change

Weather, lighting, and conditions often vary in the field, and the specific excursions outlined in this itinerary are therefore subject to change.

What to Expect in Weather

This is a spring photo trip, exploring Toulouse and Southwest France. Generally, the weather at this time of year in France is very nice and temperate. However, spring rain showers are likely, so you should come prepared to protect both yourself and your camera from rain. As Ansel Adams put it, *If you don't go out in the rain, you can't photograph a clearing storm.* Spring days are

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Pont Valentre Tower

About the Trip, continued

long, but it can also mean that nights in April and May can be chilly. Please plan to bring a warm layer, as well as a wind/rain shell. The Mas de Garrigue has a nice swimming pool that Harold has greatly enjoyed, but others have found a bit on the cold side at this time of year.

General Items to Bring with You

As noted above, we recommend layered clothing. By all means, bring good walking shoes and socks that will pad your feet to keep them from blisters. Do make sure your shoes are broken in before the trip to avoid rub spots on your feet.

Please keep in mind that French power plugs are shaped differently than American plugs, so you will need to bring a converter for the plugs for your chargers.

On the topic of credit cards, it is advisable to let your credit card company know about your travel plans, e.g., let them know that you will be in France.

Photographic Items to Bring with You

Please bring a camera, tripod, wide-angle and telephoto lenses, and a remote release. You may want a head lamp in case we do evening and night photography. Bring plenty of memory cards, your charger, and extra batteries for anything that takes batteries.

Harold travels with his laptop, processes his images on-the-fly when he can, and presents on various photographic topics of interest to the group. You are welcome to bring your own computer if you would like to process your images and to experiment with the techniques that Harold shows. Bringing a laptop is not, however, required. If you do bring a computer, please be sure to include a card reader.

Contacting Harold and Phyllis

If you have any questions at all, please contact Harold by email at harold@photoblog2.com or Phyllis at phyllis@bearhome.com. Harold's mobile phone when he is on the road in Europe or the US is +1.510.295.3982.

Travel Arrangements and Questions

We are happy to assist with advice about travel arrangements upon request. Please be sure to ask us if you have any questions. We will do our best to help with any concerns you may have. Thanks!

Terms and Conditions

Subject to Change

All itinerary details are subject to change depending upon conditions before and during the workshop.

Refunds

We will refund your trip deposit at your request until December 31, 2023, less a \$100 service fee.

Due to the nature of this destination workshop, after December 31, 2023, a refund is not available.

You should purchase travel insurance as we will not be able to offer refunds or credits under any circumstances, other than refunding your deposit less a service fee until December 31, 2023.

It is the participant's responsibility to protect their investment in the Destination Travel Workshop.

Travel Insurance

You should purchase Travel Insurance (sometimes called Trip Insurance) for this Destination Travel Workshop in case of any unforeseen emergency or situation that requires you to cancel, or should there be a reason that you cannot attend. This includes, but is not limited to, natural disasters, health safety, outbreaks, epidemics, illness, acts of God, or closures that prevent the workshop from taking place on schedule. ***It is your responsibility to protect your investment in this Destination Travel Workshop.***

Since we will not be able to offer refunds or credits after December 31, 2023, please do purchase Travel Insurance. You should check to make sure that the insurance policy you purchase covers potential medical expenses and medical evacuation, as well as the cost of the Destination Travel Workshop, and airfare. There are advantages to purchasing insurance within 14 days of sending your registration and deposit (typically, pre-existing health limitations do not apply; check the policy for details).

In addition, please be aware that you may not be protected without purchasing Cancel For Any Reason (CFR) Insurance. Please do check the details of the insurance to make sure that it provides the coverage that you really want; for example, an unexpected event, such as a pandemic, should be covered.

There are many highly-regarded travel insurance companies, and you should probably price compare. Be sure to read all terms and conditions carefully. Some reputable travel insurance companies are [Travel Insurance International](#), and [World Nomads](#).

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Terms and Conditions, *continued*

Travel Insurance, continued

We must emphasize to travel comes with risk. We are not responsible for global pandemics, acts of God, terror, accidents, thefts, delays, weather, or any unforeseen event or catastrophe. Please be sure to protect your investment in the Destination Travel Workshop by purchasing travel insurance when you send in your registration.

