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**May 1st 2020**

## La Douce France

This week are dreaming of France – and what a dream destination! A perennial Wayfarers’ favorite and no wonder. The history of Europe writ large; wonderful architecture, an amazing variety of land and seascape and of course that food! Those wines!

Take a look at our top picks for viewing and reading about France from our own homes – all choices are available to buy, rent or stream.

We are so pleased that so many of you are enjoying our suggestions to “***Dream now; visit later***” for our Walk destinations – we would love to hear if you have any favorites that we have missed!

France is home to some of the most iconic scenery, sites and monuments in the world, it’s little wonder that France has inspired cinematographers for decades. We’ve been thinking about the movies, TV shows and books that make us fall more in love with France every time we watch them. Dream now... visit later.

### Provence

The warm climate, clifftop villages and undulating hills and mountains of Provence make for the perfect backdrop to many atmospheric movies and evocative novels.



**A Good Year** is the sun-dappled story of a London banker who inherits a rundown Provencal vineyard. It has stunning shots of the Luberon – our favorite territory for our Provence Walk.

Château la Canorgue, just outside the village of Bonnieux, was used as the vineyard in the film. Gordes is where Max (Russell Crowe) meets his love interest Fanny (played by Marion Cotillard) in the bar Le Renaissance in the main square and the small lake in the center of Cucuron is the setting for their first date.

A modern classic, **Jean de Florette** (and the sequel **Manon des Sources**) adapted from a

novel by **Marcel Pagnol**, is a hugely successful French historical drama concerning a bizarre battle royal over a valuable natural spring in a remote French farming community. City dweller Jean Cadoret (Gérard Depardieu) assumes ownership of the spring when the original owner is accidentally killed by covetous farmer Cesar Soubeyran (Yves Montand).



In **Love Actually**, the famous Christmas film features Colin Firth (Jamie) who heads to the south of France to write his new book. Some scenes feature Aix-en-Provence and lovely Bouches-du-Rhône scenery. The exterior shots of his house were shot in the Var while one of the final scenes was shot in the Old Port of Marseille.

The troubled life of famed painter Vincent Van Gogh is the subject of Vincent Minnelli's 1956 adaptation of Irving Stone's fictionalized biography **Lust for Life**. Kirk Douglas stars as the Dutch painter, who endured a life of squalor and hardship for the sake of his art, which went virtually unnoticed in his own time. Shooting on location, the actual landscapes where Van Gogh worked and lived are brought to life in extraordinarily evocative color.



**Cézanne et moi** (Cézanne and I) traces the parallel paths and passionate friendship of post-impressionist painter Paul Cezanne, who was inspired by the lush landscapes around Aix-en-Provence, and novelist Emile Zola.

### For readers

**A Year in Provence** and **Toujours Provence** by **Peter Mayle**. Memoirs include humorous anecdotes about restoring and living in a 200-year-old farmhouse in a remote area of the Luberon.

**Insight Guide - Provence. Edited by Cathy Muscat** This regional guide in the popular series, noteworthy for its color photographs and maps, includes a section of practical information and a pull-out color map. Perfect for planning that trip.

**My Life in France** by **Julia Child**. Child's characteristically ebullient record of Paris and Provence, her many friends, family and memorable meals, in the years after WWII, turned into a movie (Julie & Julia) starring Meryl Streep

## Alsace

Part European parliamentary base, part idyllic old town, Strasbourg, the capital of Alsace is a fusion of two very disparate worlds.



It was a prominent backdrop in **Guy Ritchie's Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows**, albeit briefly, when an anarchist's bomb explodes outside the Place de la Cathédrale.



Along different lines, the city was also used in **Julia**, starring Vanessa Redgrave as the ill-fated eponymous character and Jane Fonda as her friend Lillian. The story revisits the Nazi period and Strasbourg's proximity to Germany made it a logical set choice.

### **For readers:**

**The Vineyard in Alsace** by **Julie Stock**. Fran applies for her dream job on a vineyard in Alsace, in France, not far from her family home, determined to concentrate on her work. A romantic read set against the enticing backdrop of the vineyard harvest in France.

**The Most Beautiful Villages of France 2019** by **Les Plus Beaux Villages De France Association**. From the half-timbered Alsatian houses of Eguisheim this illustrated guide unveils the beauty of rural France, providing complete visitor's information for exceptionally preserved destinations.

**Wine and War, The French, the Nazis and the Battle for France's Greatest Treasure** by **Donald Kladstrup**. This thrilling account of how the vintners of France saved their crops -- and their bottles -- as the Nazis approached, focuses on the activities of five winemaking families in Burgundy, Alsace, Champagne, Bordeaux and the Loire Valley.

## **Burgundy and Dordogne**

The gorgeous landscapes and the famous cuisine of “la France profonde” have proved irresistible to movie-makers!



**Chocolat**, starring Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp is based on the novel by **Joanne Harris**. It tells the story of a travelling mother and her daughter, who arrive at a starchy French village and turn it upside down. A funny, touching and visually beautiful film that will have you craving dinner parties under the stars, lazy afternoons by the river, French village life and chocolate. Filming took place in the village of Flavigny-sur-Ozerain in Burgundy and on the Dordogne River.

Brimming with cobbled courtyards, ivy-coated walls and tightly winding allées, Flavigny is a deserving owner of its *Les Plus Beaux Villages de France* status. We love to visit on our Burgundy Walk.



In **Back to Burgundy** three siblings are thrown into turmoil when their father dies; the value of the wine estate they inherit is now astronomical. Inheritance tax must be paid, and they cannot possibly afford it. Against a scenic backdrop of Burgundian villages and vineyards, the seasons pass, beautifully shot, and we see the work in the vines, vat-house and cellar. There is a great Paulée (end-of-harvest party) scene.



**Ridley Scott's** directorial debut **The Duellists** is a rare gem, set during the Napoleonic age of France, the film is an adaptation of **Joseph Conrad's** novella "**The Duel**". The film has a rather unusual subject but it works beautifully; especially against the spectacular background of France's countryside. It was largely shot amid the beautiful landscapes of the Dordogne region.



**French Kiss** is a 1995 American romantic comedy film directed by **Lawrence Kasdan** and

starring Meg Ryan and Kevin Kline. Written by Adam Brooks, the film is about a woman who flies to France to confront her straying fiancé and gets into trouble when the charming crook seated next to her uses her to smuggle a stolen diamond necklace. It's a delight to watch as Meg Ryan and Kevin Kline travel through the beautiful French countryside from Paris to the south.



Set a little further to the southwest, **The Hundred-Foot Journey** is a charming fable of an Indian family who unite heritage and history with heart and flavor when they establish an Indian restaurant in a tiny French village – right across the street from a traditional French eatery which has a formidable Helen Mirren as its owner.

### **For readers:**

**Death in Dordogne** by **Louis Sanders**. Members of the Caminade family keep dying in suspicious circumstances, and the doctor knows more about it than he's prepared to reveal. This book, the first in the series, is a perfect accompaniment for anyone thinking about a holiday in France!

**Walnut Wine and Truffle Groves: Culinary Adventures in the Dordogne** by **Kimberley Lovato and Laura Schmalhorst**. Pull up a chair and visit the Dordogne (called Périgord by the locals) the way it should be visited: one bite at a time. A culinary travel book that navigates the back roads—as well as the menus and markets—of the southwestern region of France.

**Three Rivers of France** by **Freda White and Michael Busselle**. This definitive work reveals the delights of the impressive region of south-west France, across which the Dordogne, Lot and Tarn make their meandering way, and imparts much information about the region's wealth of prehistoric remains.

**Charles the Bold, The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy** by **Richard Vaughan**. An accessible study of the last of the great Dukes of Burgundy that considers the ruler's personality, policies and relationships with his subjects and other kingdoms and culminates with France's acquisition of Burgundy.

## **Brittany and Normandy**

The tranquil countryside and stunning coastline of northern France today belies its role in

wartime.



The drama and tragedy of the D-Day beaches of Normandy are played out in **Saving Private Ryan**. The story of one squad's journey into Nazi-occupied France to save one singular soldier, the film is best known for its intense opening sequence which transplants viewers right into the maelstrom of the US Army's charge on Omaha Beach. Horrifying, shocking, and absolutely mesmerizing, it makes you understand precisely the hell Allied soldiers went through in order to take that beach.



Before *Saving Private Ryan*, **The Longest Day** was considered the paramount cinematic retelling of D-Day. The 1962 black and white film featured an all-star cast including John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Sean Connery, Robert Mitchum, Richard Burton, Robert Wagner, and Red Buttons. A colorized version was released 25 years ago.



Made for the small screen, **Inspector Dupin** is a crime series based on the internationally best-selling novels by **Jean-Luc Bannalec**. Brittany is seen by some as the end of the world. Like homicide inspector Georges Dupin, who has been relocated there from Paris.

With his fish allergy and fear of the ocean, he feels like, well, a fish out of water... Fortunately, his charm and warmth help him crack the shell of the most silent Bretons – and win over his new colleagues. The rugged, majestic landscapes of Brittany provide an invigorating backdrop to Dupin's adventures.



By contrast, **Michael Bay's** dramatic science-fiction blockbuster **Armageddon**, featuring an asteroid the size of Texas about to destroy Earth, includes plenty of establishing shots that were filmed in Brittany and northern France. Places include the bay of Mont St Michel, the town of Dinan and surrounding areas.

### **For readers:**

**The Bayeux Tapestry: The Life Story of a Masterpiece Kindle Edition** by **Carola Hicks**. The vivid scenes on the Bayeux Tapestry depict the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It is one of Europe's greatest treasures and its own story is full of drama and surprise. This marvelous book, packed with thrilling stories, shows how we remake history in every age and how a great work of art has a life of its own.

**Coastliners** by **Joanne Harris**. An epic tale of reconciliation set on the small French island of Le Devin. From the bestselling author of *Chocolat*.

**A Traveler's Guide to D-Day and the Battle for Normandy** by **Carl Shilleto and Mike Tolhurst**. A compact guide to Normandy's WWII battlefields, memorials, sites and cemeteries.

**The Oysters of Locmariaquer** by **Eleanor Clark**. Winner of the 1965 National Book Award, this is a paperback edition of Clark's pleasurable portrait of the hardy oystermen and byways of coastal Brittany.

## **Pays Basque**

The Basque Country has most recently received recognition from American television enthusiasts with the last season of **Game of Thrones** being filmed in certain locations around Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa.





Perfect for Wayfarers **The Way** begins in French Basque Country at Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port and follows the French Camino over the Pyrenees and through Pamplona, showing many sights of the region. A bit of a father-son affair: written, directed, and produced by **Emilio Estevez** and starring his father Martin Sheen, the story follows a grieving father along the Camino de Santiago after the death of his son in a storm while attempting the historic pilgrimage.



In the early 70s, Dustin Hoffman and Steve McQueen spent nearly a week in Hondarribia, a Gipuzkoan town near the French border, shooting **Franklin J. Schaffner's** prison drama **Papillon**.

### **For readers:**

**Life and Food in the Basque Country** by **Maria Jose Sevilla**. A portrait of Basque life as seen through the people who practice its culinary traditions. Each chapter profiles the traditions and histories of the Basque butcher, housewife, kaiku-maker (or society cook), with some traditional recipes.

**The Basque History of the World** by **Mark Kurlansky**. Kurlansky's engaging portrait of the seven provinces of Basque lands takes in everything from language to culinary heritage, role in the Spanish Civil War and seafaring traditions.

**Homeland** by **Fernando Aramburu**. In this novel two Basque families are representative of the country at large. The story is set between the 1980s and the present day and looks at the terrorist organization ETA across the years, with flashbacks filling in the blanks. A human story of what it was like to have lived through that time, experienced it and to still have the scars, both physically and mentally.

