

## BORDEAUX

**Bordeaux** is a port city on the **Garonne River** in southwest **France**. It is the capital of the **Aquitaine** region, as well as the prefecture of the **Gironde** department. Its inhabitants are called Bordelais. The city is among the world's major wine industry centres. Bordeaux wine has been produced in the region since the 8th century. The historic part of the city is on the UNESCO World Heritage List as "an outstanding urban and architectural ensemble" of the 18th century. Bordeaux is a flat city, built on the banks of the Garonne River. Because it is a flat city, bicycles make excellent modes of transport, especially as the city has more than 580 km of cycle tracks. It is also the largest French city in area and geographically one of the largest in Europe. The Garonne merges a dozen kilometers below the city with another river, the Dordogne River to form the Gironde Estuary, which is biggest estuary in France.



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**Bordeaux Cathedral (Cathédrale Saint-André de Bordeaux)** is a Catholic cathedral, seat of the Archbishop of Bordeaux-Bazas. The cathedral was consecrated by Pope Urban II in 1096. Of the original Romanesque edifice only a wall in the nave remains. The Royal Gate is from the early 13th century, while the rest of the construction is mostly from the 14th-15th centuries. The building is a national monument of France. In this church in 1137 the 15 year old **Eleanor of Aquitaine** married the future Louis VII a few



months before he became king.

**Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux** was inaugurated on 17 April 1780. It was in this theatre that the ballet *La Fille Mal Gardée* premiered in 1789, and where a young Marius Petipa staged some of his first ballets. The Theatre was designed by the architect Victor Louis (1731-1800), who was selected for the task by winning the famous Grand Prix de Rome. The Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux was conceived as a temple of the Arts and Light, with a neo-classical facade endowed with a portico of 12 Corinthian style colossal

columns which support an entablature on which stand 12 statues that represent the nine muses and three goddesses (Juno, Venus, and Minerva).

**Tour Pey-Berland**, named for architect Pey Berland, is located at the **Place Pey-Berland** next to Cathédrale Saint-André. Its construction was from 1440 to 1500 at the initiative of the archbishop of the same name. Crowned a steeple, it has remained isolated from the rest of the Cathedral.

**The Église Sainte-Croix** ("Church of the Holy Cross") is annexed to a **Benedictine abbey** founded in the 7th century, and was built in the late 11th-early 12th centuries. The façade is in Romanesque style. The church has a nave and four aisles, a transept with apses on each arm, and a polygonal apse. The nave is 39 m long, while the apse is 15.30 m high. The notable organ is from the 18th century. The church was restored by Paul Abadie in the 19th century. The former Benedictine abbey is now home to the **École des beaux-arts de Bordeaux**.

**The Jardin botanique de Bordeaux** (0.5 hectares) is a municipal botanical garden located at Place Bardineau; it is open daily without charge. This historic garden has been recently supplemented by the **Jardin botanique de la Bastide**, located across the river. Although the garden's origins extend back to 1629 AD, with the creation of Bordeaux's first medicinal garden, today's botanical garden dates to 1858. It currently contains more than 3000 plant species, both those indigenous to **Aquitaine** and exotic plants from North America, China and Japan. It is organized as a systematic collection. The garden's seed collection contains 2,000 taxa, and its herbarium contains about 85,000 specimens.

## DO

- Les Quais— Great for going for a nice walk on the shores of the Garonne, enjoying a ride on a ferry boat, viewing a stunning landscape over the bridges of Bordeaux.
- La Victoire— Historical monuments meet student life and bars.
- The Pedestrian Center— If you plan on shopping, or are looking for cultural activities, Bordeaux has a lot to offer - and it starts right here.
- Gambetta Square— The rich districts of Bordeaux start north - this part of the town is nicknamed "Little Paris".
- Quinconces Square— Be sure to check out the fountain monument to the Girondins, a group of moderate, bourgeois National Assembly deputies during the French Revolution..
- Meriadec— The administrative center of Bordeaux, with one of the biggest libraries in France.

## INFORMATION

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