



The yoga that improves your memory
Can Kundalini help prevent Alzheimer's disease?

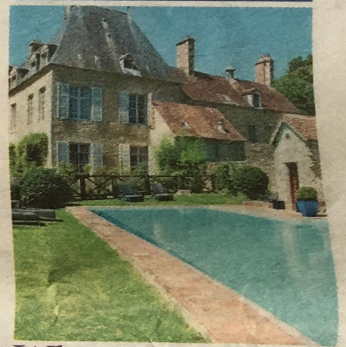
Weekend

Travel
Starts on
page 23



**Rows, moods, kids
and marriage guidance**
How we stayed together

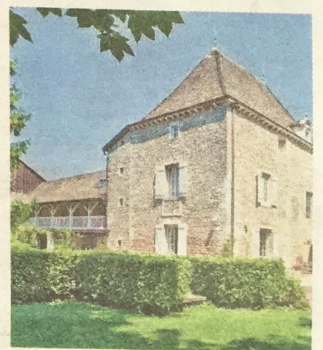
20 best pitstops
in France



Where to stay on
the drive south



Chic hotels with
great food



The châteaux near
the ferry ports



ite 3 ry ports to Provence/ nguedoc

se the most of this spectacular
ney through the Massif Central by
pping at least twice, either in
mandy or the Loire Valley, as well
Millau for its jaw-dropping viaduct.
ou want to plough on, Clermont-
rand is a good halfway point.

anoir de Surville rville, Manche, Normandy

er a long ferry crossing, check into
s *chambre d'hôte* before you head
th. In a five-acre garden, the timber-
med manor has been beautifully
tored, its 11 bedrooms decorated in
sh whites and greys. Gastronomes will
e Jordan Fouchet's chef's table (every
ght except Tuesday in July and
gust) at which you'll be treated to one
enu created from local produce. There
also a spa with Cinq Mondes products.
Details Doubles are from €180 a night,
reakfast €17, or included when booking
rect. Dinner is from €39 (00 33 2 32 50
9 89, manoirdesurville.com)

Hôtel Tatin Lamotte- Beuvron, Loire valley

The tarte tatin is one of France's classic
desserts and it was here, early last
century, that the sisters Stéphanie and
Caroline Tatin are said to have created
the tart by accident. The hotel continues
the tradition, serving the upside-down
apple pie either to eat in or take away.
Those booking into the restaurant will
be treated to traditional, hearty meals.
The hotel has 14 pleasant rooms.
Details Doubles are from €72 a night,
breakfast from €9.50. Menus are from
€27 (00 33 2 54 88 00 03, hotel-tatin.fr)

Domaine de la Trolière Orval, Loire valley

Just five minutes from the motorway, 30
miles south of Bourges, Marie-Claude
Dussert goes to great lengths to make
her guests welcome in the house that



Manoir de Surville, Normandy



Château du Clos de la Ribaudière

has belonged to her family for more than
200 years. A delicious home-cooked
evening meal is served before guests
retire to one of four double rooms, each
decorated with an individual character
and style. Cat lovers will delight in Mme
Dussert's many feline friends.
Details B&B doubles are from €53 a
night. Dinner with wine is €27 (00 33 2
48 96 47 45, sawdays.co.uk)

Hôtel Radio Clermont- Ferrand, Puy-de-Dôme

This fabulous art deco hotel was
established in 1930 and has many
original features, such as floor mosaics,
wrought-iron doors and period furniture.
The restaurant is the pride and joy of
chef Wilfrid Chaplain, who brings
together elements of different regional
cuisines from across France.
Details Doubles are from €105 a night,
breakfast €14.50. Menus are from €59
(00 33 4 73 30 87 83, hotel-radio.fr)

Château de Creissels Millau, Aveyron

The highlight of any road trip through
France has to be the magnificent Millau
Viaduct, the tallest bridge in the world,
designed by Norman Foster. For a perfect
pitstop within sight of the bridge, stay at
this 12th-century chateau, with 26 rooms
within its walls. The restaurant is in the
castle's guard room, which as a stone
vaulted ceiling, where guests can enjoy
menus that bring together specialities
from the area, such as lamb from the
Grands Causses plateaux.
Details Doubles are from €84 a night,
breakfast €11.50. Menus are from €19
(00 33 5 65 60 16 59, chateau-de-
creissels.com)

Route 4 Brittany/Normandy to Aquitaine

After a long day crossing on the ferry,
you'll need two stops on this route,
starting either in Brittany or Normandy.
With a night crossing, you can push on
to a stop at Clisson or Bordeaux.



Hôtel Brittany Roscoff, Brittany

Overlooking the English Channel in the
pretty Breton town of Roscoff, the Hotel
Brittany makes the ideal stop after a long
day on the ferry. The Michelin-starred
chef Loïc Le Bail presides over the
kitchen, and his menus make the most of
the hotel's location to bring together the
best fish and seafood. The hotel, a 17th-
century manor house, has 23 rooms
decorated in classic style with gingham
bedspreads. A new modern villa with 11
sea-view rooms opens this year.
Details Doubles are from €155 a night,
breakfast €23. Menus are from €44 (00
33 2 98 69 70 78, hotel-brittany.com)

Château La Chenevière Port-en-Bessin, Normandy

Not far from the ferry ports of
Cherbourg or Caen, the award-
winning Château de
Chenevière is one of
Normandy's best foodie
hotspots. Its restaurant,
Le Botaniste, prides
itself on sourcing
ingredients from the
best food producers
in the region and chef
Didier Robin brings
them together in dishes
that are inspired by
traditional recipes, pictured
right. For something more laid-
back, take a table in the garden at the
bistro Le Petit Jardin. The 29 rooms in
the luxury hotel are light and elegant.
Details Doubles are from €220 a night,
breakfast is €25. Menus are from €55 at
Le Botaniste, and €16 at Le Petit Jardin
(00 33 2 31 51 25 25, lacheneviere.com)

Villa Saint Antoine Clisson, Loire

Just a short hop from the motorway
south of Nantes, Clisson makes an
interesting detour thanks to its Italianate
architecture. The villa is a former flax
mill with a fantastic vantage point
overlooking the town's medieval castle.
The restaurant makes the most of the

view from its large terrace and offers
good contemporary cuisine. The hotel
has 43 modern, comfortable rooms, as
well as a heated outdoor pool, fitness
centre, sauna and hammam.
Details Doubles are from €69.70 a night,
breakfast €13.50. Main courses are from
€19.50 (00 33 2 40 85 46 46, hotel-villa-
saint-antoine.com)

Le Saint James Bordeaux, Gironde

At this modern hotel just a few minutes
off the motorway outside Bordeaux, food
lovers are in for a treat; the chef's name
translates as "magic", and what Nicolas
Magie does in the kitchen using produce
from his home region of Aquitaine must
come close to it because his Michelin-
starred menus are nothing short of
divine. If that wasn't reward enough, the
restaurant and bar's terrace provides a
spectacular view over Bordeaux,
from which you can admire
the hotel's architecture by
Jean Nouvel. The
modern rooms with
minimalist decor also
offer great views.
Details Doubles are
from €195 a night,
breakfast €25.
Menus are from €70
(00 33 5 57 97 06 00,
saintjames-bouliac.com)



Les Prés d'Eugénie Eugénie-les-Bains, Landes

The revered chef Michel Guérard has
held three Michelin stars for 40 years, so
a meal at his restaurant here should be
on every foodie's bucket list. Those
expecting typically calorific French
cuisine might find his meals a surprise,
for he specialises in "slimming cuisine",
which means you can devour some of
the best meals in France under 600
calories. The magical hotel is set in
seven houses in this former bolt hole of
Empress Eugénie, the spa-loving wife of
Napoleon III — it also has a top-class spa.
Details Doubles are from €170 a night,
breakfast €30. Menus are from €60 (00
33 5 58 05 06 07, michelguerard.com)