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20 best foodie hotels in France

From a hotel with a Michelin-starred restaurant in the Dordogne to a château with gourmet food in Normandy, Carolyn Boyd picks the best getaways

1 Maison Pic Valence, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

Three Michelin-star chef Anne-Sophie Pic may have been making waves with her new restaurant in London, but a visit to Pic HQ in Valence is worth the journey. The decor in Maison Pic's two restaurants and luxury hotel tells the story of the Pic family's three generations of legendary chefs. The restaurant is an intimate affair and her perfectly paced menus include seafood from the Med and desserts featuring Valrhona chocolate, while the buzzing bistro, André (named after Anne-Sophie's grandfather), offers hearty and traditional dishes. The 15 rooms are ultra-modern, with bright white decor and accents of purple and silver.

Details Double rooms cost from €280

Details Double rooms cost from €280 (£251), breakfast €33; set menus cost from €110, mains from €19 in the bistro (00 33 4 75 44 15 32, anne-sophie-pic.com)

2 Hostellerie Bérard Var. Provence

For those seeking a taste of real Provence, look no farther than this family-run hotel in the sleepy village of La Cadière d'Azur.

Chef Jean-François Bérard's menus embrace the sunshine and flavours of vegetables grown in the hotel's garden, along with fresh fish from the Med. The view from the restaurant over the surrounding hills is breathtaking, especially at sunset. Jean-François' father (and the hotel's Counder) is the charming octogenarian René Bérard who leads the hotel's cookery school in a wonderfully rustic Provençal farmhouse near by Details Double rooms cost from €124 (00 33 4 94 90 11 43, hotel-berard.com)

3 Manoir du Lys Bagnoles de l'Orne

If you go down to the woods today, you'll find a bounteous hoard of mushrooms that end up on the plates of this discreet little restaurant in the Andaine Forest. Inspired by the huge variety of fabulous fungi on offer all year round, chef Franck Quinton's menus have earned him a Michelin star, while those who are keen to learn more about foraging and cooking themselves can take part in one of the many mushrooming weekends on offer during the autumn. The hotel has 30 modern rooms, a swimming pool and tennis courts.

Details Double rooms cost from €145, breakfast €18, set menus cost from €47 (00 33 2 33 37 80 69, manoir-du-lys.com) ▶

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4 Abbaye de la Bussière Burgundy

Step through the gate of this former Cistercian abbey and you're immediately at ease, such is the tranquillity of the gardens, which feature weeping willows, lily ponds and Paul Day sculptures of Charolais cows. Inside, the stone-pillared staircase is drenched in coloured light from the many stained glass windows, while the 20 opulent rooms look out over the gardens. The Michelin-star restaurant is led by local chef Guillaume Royer, whose home-reared crayfish make it to the menu with other local produce. His signature dessert is made with honey from hives on the premises. Details Double rooms cost from €225, breakfast €25; set menus cost from €29 (00 33 3 80 49 02 29, abbayedelabussiere.fr)

5 Le Montrachet Puligny-Montrachet, Burgundy

Surrounded by some of Burgundy's most respected vineyards, Le Montrachet's large restaurant draws locals and visitors to enjoy chef Luc Filoé's Michelin-star food. Tuck into classics such as snails with parsley and garlic butter, as well as sophisticated dishes featuring succulent Bresse chicken and Charolais beef. Between each course, his amuses-bouches are fresh and often alcoholic, complementing the world-class wines The hotel is set in a former coaching inn, and has 31 comfortable rooms. ills Double rooms cost from €157, breakfast €21; set menus cost from €32 (00 33 3 80 21 30 06, www.chateauxhotels.co.uk)

6 Château de la Bourdaisière Tours, Loire Valley

Nothing beats the taste of a sun-ripened tomato plucked fresh from the garden, and the tomatoes at Château de la Bourdaisière must be seen — and tasted — to be believed. In a beautiful walled garden 650 different varieties grow in all sizes, shapes and colours. The small Bar à Tomates serves simple lunchtime recipes such as gazpacho and tomato salad, while the hotel's gourmet restaurant serves other fresh produce grown on site. The 29-room château hotel has a colonial air, with furniture and objets d'arts collected from abroad by its aristocratic owner. Details Double rooms cost from €110, breakfast €16; set menus cost from €33 at the château restaurant, €17 at

the Bar à Tomates (00 33 2 47 45 16 31, labourdaisiere.com)

7 Hotel Brittany Roscoff

Few views can rival the one from the stone-arched windows of the Hotel Brittany restaurant. Gaze out over the blue bay as fishing boats pootle across and the sun sets behind the islands on the horizon... and eat. Michelin-star chef Loïc Le Bail's clever menus blend the best of Roscoff's produce; the town is famous for its pink onions, artichokes and cauliflowers, while the seashore provides a variety of seaweeds and loca fishermen bring in the catch of the day. The hotel added II modern seaview rooms last year, while other rooms offer a more classic style of decor. There's an indoor pool and a spa offering seaweed-infused treatments.

Details Double rooms cost from €140. breakfast €24; set menus cost from €58 (00 33 2 98 69 70 78, hotel-brittany.com)

8 Château des **Briottières**

Anjou, western Loire

This family-run château just north of Angers offers a peaceful retreat from the world. Set in huge parkland, with the word. Set in luge parkand, with rambling walled gardens, this country pile is a great place to enjoy French hospitality at its best. Owner and affable host François de Valbray serves aperitifs on the sunny terrace, while his wife, Hedwige, presides over the table d'hôtes (the host's table), serving home-cooked Loire specialities such as perch with beurre blanc, and the creamy dessert *crémets* d'Anjou. Afterwards, enjoy digestifs from the honesty bar in the opulent salon, before retiring to one of the elegant, classically decorated bedrooms.

Details Double rooms cost from €180 breakfast €20: set evening meal costs €49 (00 33 2 41 42 00 02, briottieres.com)

9 Le Saint James Bordeaux

If there's something in a name, Nicolas Magie's brand of magic comes in his sublime menus, which include dishes such as red mullet with asparagus and traditional Bordeaux sweetbreads with vodka-sautéed onions. The hotel, high on a hill overlooking Bordeaux, was designed by the iconic French architect Jean Nouvel and has sensational views from every one of its 18 rooms There's also a cookery school should you wish to create your own culinary magic. Details Double rooms cost from £195

breakfast €25; set menus cost from €45 (00 33 5 57 97 06 00, saintjames-bouliac.com





10 Les Prés d'Eugénie Landes, Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Legendary chef Michel Guérard is celebrating 40 years of holding three Michelin stars, an accolade achieved by only three other chefs. His colonial-style estate, Les Près d'Eugénie, is set in the tiny spa resort Eugénie-les-Bains in the Landes countryside, where the local speciality is poultry. Prepare to indulge in homemade foie gras, tender guinea fowl and plump pigeons. Guérard is known for his *minceur*, or slimming, cuisine, so weight-watchers will love his mouthwatering set menu, which comes in at 600 calories for three courses.

Details Double rooms cost from €232, breakfast €30; minceur menus cost from €60 (00 33 5 58 05 06 07, michelguerard.com)

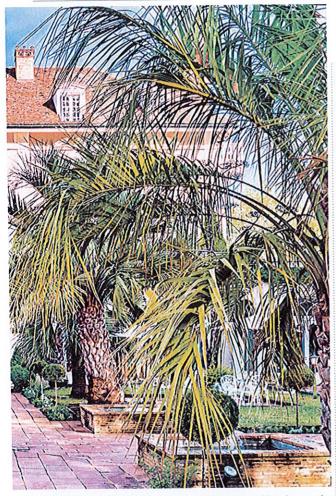
11 Le Vieux Logis Trémolat, Dordogne

This cosy l6th-century priory set in a meander of the River Dordogne has been welcoming guests since the 1950s and, although it is now a luxury hotel, it still exudes the atmosphere of an old relais inn. Its refined restaurant is set in the former tobacco-drying barn, which has cosy alcoves and wooden beams. Chef Vincent Arnould is passionate about using Dordogne's famous flavours, such as truffles, foie gras, duck and walnuts, in his Michelin-star menus. For more traditional dishes, the hotel's Bistrot de la

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Place is set in the village's central square Detalls Double rooms cost from €160, breakfast €25: set menus cost from €53 (00 33 5 53 22 80 06, vieux-logis.com)

12 Château de la Treyne Dordogne valley

Perched on a cliff overlooking the River Dordogne, this fairytale château makes a relaxing bolt hole for gourmet travellers. In the tiny centuries-old kitchen, Michelin star chef Stéphane Andrieux and his team create decadent dishes that are served in the romantic tapestry-walled dining room or on a serene terrace that overlooks the river. His menus feature the succulent Quercy lamb and walnuts from the groves that pepper the banks of the river. The hotel has I7 exquisitely decorated back beautiful gardens, an outdoor pool and tennis courts.

Details Doubles cost from €300,

breakfast €28; set menus cost from €50 (00 33 5 65 27 60 60 www.chateaudelatrevne.com

13 Château de Saint Paterne Normandy

Once the romantic hideaway for King Henry IV of France, this welcoming family-run château is now a popular overnight stop for those heading south on the A28 motorway, as it is 15 minutes away from the junction at Alençon. Chef-owner Charles-Henry de Valbray and his wife, Ségolène, are welcoming hosts to their family home. With ten lavishly decorated rooms, as well as a wooden dacha in the gardens, there are two elegant salons in which pink champagne is served before dinner. With

candelabras and twinkling glassware, the cosy dining room is the ideal place to enjoy Charles-Henry's dishes, which use Normandy's rich dairy produce.

Details Double rooms cost from €145 breakfast €14; evening meal costs €49 (00 33 2 33 27 54 71, chateau-saintpaterne.com)

14 Château de la Chenevière Port-en-Bessin, Normandy

Not far from the D-Day landing beaches the Château de la Chenevière's restaurant, Le Botanist, is perfectly placed for using the superb fish and seafood from the Port-en-Bessin's fish market. Every morning chef Didier Robin picks the best for his daily menu and, using produce grown in the château's garden or sourced locally, he creates dishes such as John Dory perfumed with Normandy saffron. The 18th-century château's 29 bright and spacious rooms are decorated in tasteful florals and some have balconies overlooking the gardens.

Details Double rooms cost from €195, breakfast €25; set menus cost from €55 (00 33 2 31 51 25 25. Jacheneviere.com)

15 Saint James Paris

Not to be confused with the Saint James in Bordeaux, this decadent former manor house in the capital's 16th arrondissement welcomed Jean-Luc Rocha to its restaurant earlier this year. Having earned two Michelin stars at Cordeillan-Bages in the Médoc, he's aiming for three here with dishes such as filleted breast of pigeon marinated with Earl Grey tea, and minestrone of thinly sliced fillets of John Dory with pesto. The hotel's whimsical



interior features a grand black-and-white staircase at its centre, a cosy library bar, and decor that features everything from animal print to hot-air balloons Details Double rooms cost from €390, breakfast €29; set menu costs €140 (00 33 1 44 05 81 81, relaischateaux.com)

16 La Coquillade the Luberon, Provence

Surrounded by vineyards and overlooking the rolling hills of this bucolic part of Provence, La Coquillade is a striking, modern hotel much-loved by cyclists testing their mettle on the surrounding Tour de France routes with state-of-the-art bikes from the on-site BMC cycling centre. The hotel's gourmet restaurant provides reward for weary limbs, with new chef Thierry Enderlin using produce grown in the estate's kitchen garden to create his menus. The 63-room hotel also offers a more casual bistro, as well as a poolside Italian restaurant. Details Double rooms cost from €280, breakfast €24; gourmet set menus cost from €80 (00 33 4 90 74 71 71,

17 Château de Mercuès Cahors, Occitanie

Wine has long been the main attraction at this impressive château on the banks of the River Lot, but with a new Michelin star for its restaurant this year, the food offers as much of a reason to stay as the wine. Chef Julien Poisot creates dishes such as local Quercy lamb with fresh juniper-infused jus, and chocolate mousse with jelly and Malbec reduction, and mulled wine sorbet. The château is owned by Georges Vigouroux, a pioneer of growing the Malbec grape, so spend your days in the vineyard and at the winery, getting to know the intense and deeply flavoured red wines. Details Doubles cost from €193. breakfast €27; set menus cost from €89 (00 33 5 65 20 00 01, chateaudemercues.com)

18 Cours des Loges Lyons

As the French capital of gastronomy, Lyons is a diner's delight, offering an extraordinary choice of restaurants, from its rustic bouchon bistros, to

Paul Bocuse's Michelin-starred empire. Sometimes, though, it is nice just to stumble up to one's hotel room after a sensational meal and, for this, look no farther than the Cours des Loges. The hotel is set in the narrow backstreets of Vieux Lyon and the restaurant is set in a splendid internal courtyard overlooked by stone-arched terraces and a glass roof. Michelin-star chef Anthony Bonnet does the Lyons gourmet heritage proud with a menu using carefully chosen

local produce.

Details Doubles cost from €190, breakfast €29; set menus cost from €105 (00 33 4 72 77 44 44, courdesloges.com)

19 Maison Troisgros Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

In February this year the gastronomic Troisgros dynasty left Roanne, after 86 years, and opened a new hotel and restaurant in nearby Ouches. The new restaurant is a high-concept design surrounding an oak tree, with floor-to-ceiling windows and wooden floors designed for perfect acoustics. The 15 large hotel rooms offer minimalist luxury; there are no mini-bars, nor room service, and decor is understated, with Scandinavian furniture (no, not Ikea) and huge bathrooms. Details Doubles cost from €300, breakfast €30; set menus cost from €140 (00 33 4 77 71 66 97, troisgros.fr)

20 Hôtel les Orangeries Vienne, Nouvelle Aquitaine

This small family-run hotel between Poitiers and Limoges is proof that good food need not require a second good root need not require a section mortgage. The chef, David Royer, is a champion of organic and sustainable produce, sourcing his ingredients from his kitchen garden and producers in the village. As a result, his dishes are fresh, tasty and beautifully presented with edible flowers. The hotel is set in an 18th-century house with Il comfortable rooms featuring exposed stone walls, oak doors and stone floors.

Details Doubles cost from €85,
breakfast €12.50; set menus cost from €29 (00 33 5 49 84 07 07. sawdays.co.uk)

Carolyn Boyd is author of the recipe book, From the Source — France (Lonely Planet, £19.99)

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