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A POSTCARD FROM BORDEAUX

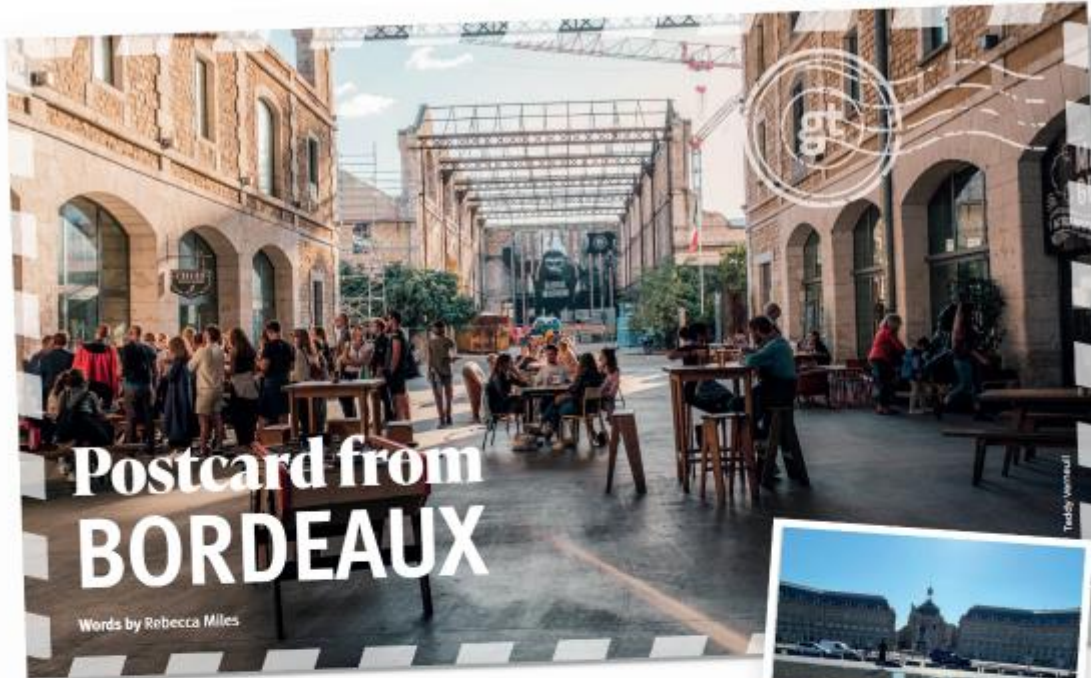


FAMILY-FRIENDLY GREEN TRAVEL



WALKING THE WORLD





# Postcard from BORDEAUX

Words by Rebecca Miles

I'm standing in the middle of Cours de l'Intendance, a grand street in the centre of Bordeaux, as Fred, my guide ([bordeauxwithFred.com](http://bordeauxwithFred.com)), tells me it's unrecognisable from 25 years ago. During much of the 20th century, Bordeaux's beautiful limestone buildings, designed to replicate Paris' elegant boulevards, were filthy with soot, and cars and congestion were rife in the city centre.

Today, the buildings are gleaming – if

they're not clean the owner is charged a hefty fine – and I can wander where I like along the now pedestrianised streets and squares. It's all thanks to Mayor Alain Juppé, who introduced the trams and removed the cars in the mid 90s and is generally credited with bringing the sunshine back to Bordeaux.

And wander I do – this city is compact, and its medieval centre full of independent shops, restaurants and of course wine bars (I even find a few enticing vintage shops,



## Don't miss Darwin – an urban ecosystem, it's home to everything from a skate park and a farm, to a bistro and weekly parties



or *frips*). Visiting over the summer with my husband and daughter, we fit in as many meals as we can. The Romans were first to plant vines in the surrounding fertile countryside, but it's not just the vineyards that remain important, gastronomy in the broadest sense is proudly celebrated here too.

A raft of inventive and independent restaurants serve locally sourced, seasonal food

and every street spoils us for choice. Restaurant le Ganache, Casa Gaña and Darwin's Magasin Général are highlights, and we feast on grilled vegetables, felafels and nutty sauce, lots of shellfish, and sweet cannalés, but it doesn't get fresher than the white shrimp we eat on the Garonne River with Bordeaux's last and only fisherman, Jean-Marie, *Le Pêcheur de Bordeaux*.

While these restaurants and the boat trip happily cater for a seven-year old, my daughter's highlights include the Miroir d'Eau, an architecturally delightful splash pool in the Place de la Bourse, and the giant ferris wheel at the Esplanade des Quinconces.

There's more to Bordeaux than wine and our hotel, Grand Hôtel Français, provides a child-friendly treasure hunt walking trail around the city while Fred fills our heads with tales of revolutionary heroes and historical tussles. Easy to reach by train (it's just over two hours by TGV from Paris), we learn that a short break in Bordeaux is good for the soul. **gt**