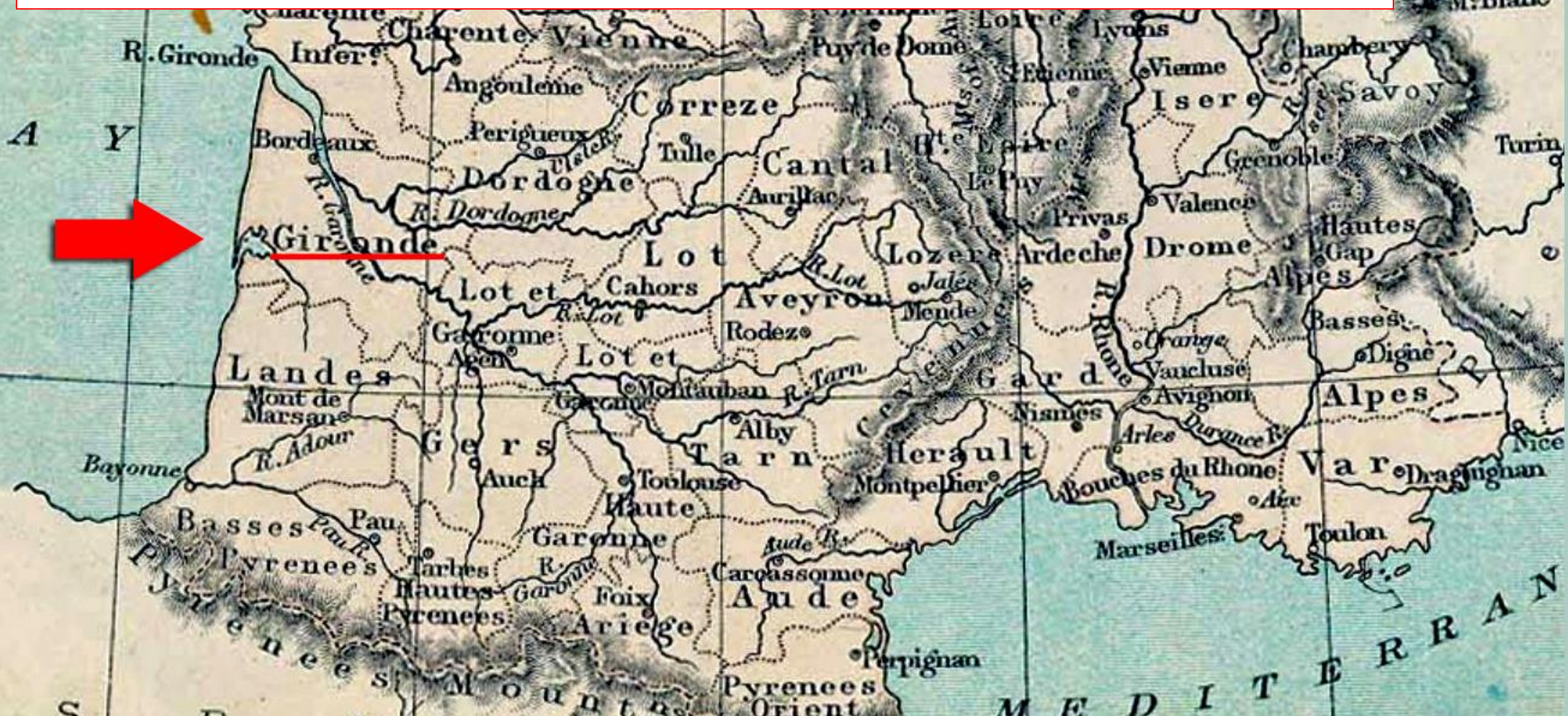


Why I fell in love with Bordeaux



During the seven months I spent working near Bordeaux as an English language assistant, I couldn't help but fall in love with the Gironde region, and here's a short explanation why.



Bordeaux itself

The city of Bordeaux is hands-down the most beautiful city I have ever visited. It is often described as 'le petit Paris' (little Paris) because it seems to be built in the same gorgeous Parisian style. All of the buildings look like something from a painting, from the extraordinary cathedrals and important structures, to even the simple buildings like my corner shop down the road! On my first trip into the city centre, I remember being shocked that even the McDonald's here looked impressive!



← McDonald's on Bordeaux's main high street

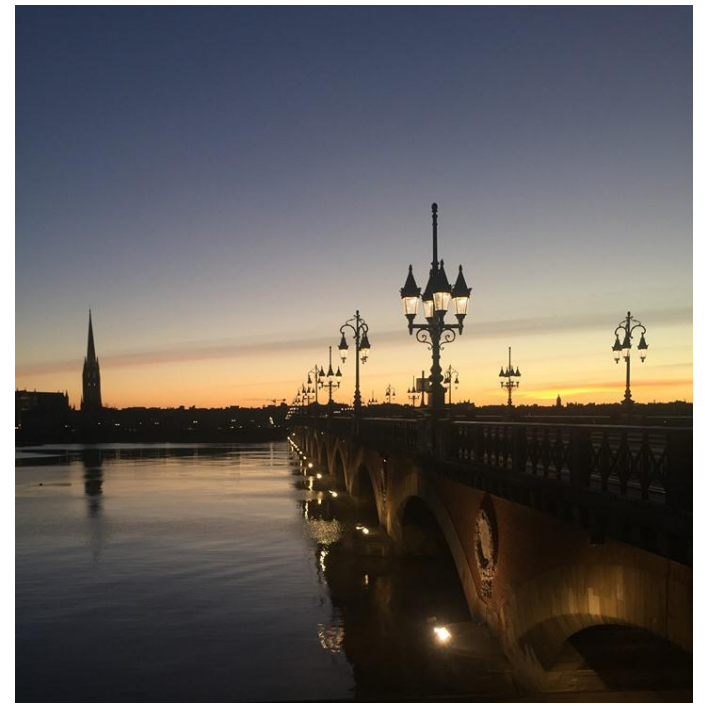
Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre



Place de la Bourse (which you may recognise as “Paris” in Mamma Mia 2!) reflected in the *miroir d'eau* (water mirror)



The Pont de Pierre at sunset – my absolute favourite view!



La Grosse Cloche – I took this photo on a rainy day!



It's not just old buildings

Although I was constantly amazed by Bordeaux's architecture, and kept pinching myself thinking 'I live here!' every time I walked past yet another incredible landmark, there's much more to this city than just old buildings.

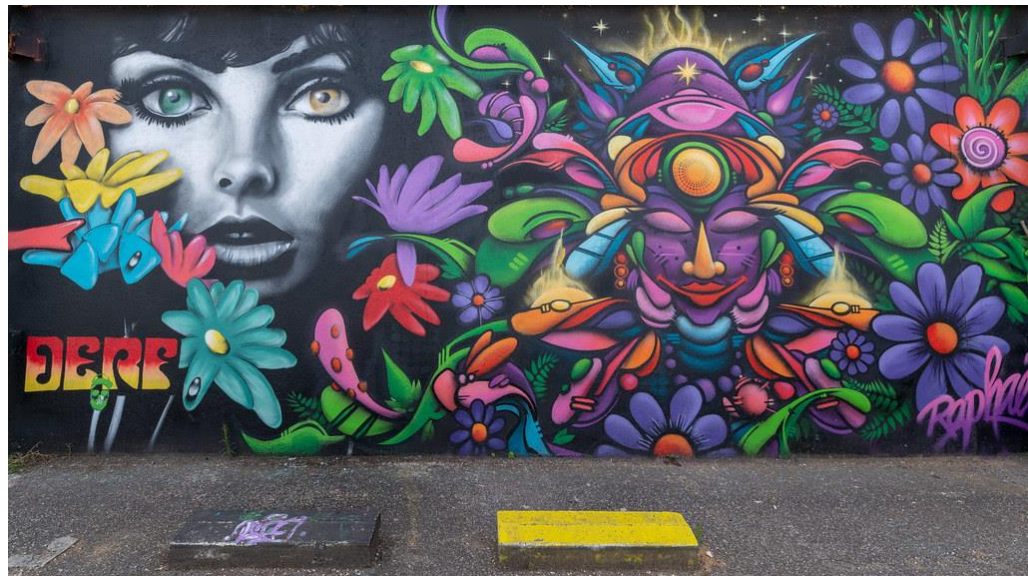
The city is teeming with life; from funfairs to nightclubs, from street art to boat rides, there's so much to do and see!



This funfair often pops up for a few weeks at a time in the Quinconces square. Featuring a giant Ferris wheel to provide breath-taking views of the city, dizzying rollercoasters and rides, and plenty of games and challenges to try your luck (or skill!) to win prizes, this makes for a great day out!

‘Patricia the peluche’ –
a prize I won at the fair!





Another must-see part of Bordeaux is Darwin l'écosystème des casernes. These former military barracks have been transformed from abandoned buildings to Bordeaux's hub for the alternative scene. It now reeks hipster vibes, boasting incredible street art, a skate park, a fantastic café/restaurant, an organic grocery, a thrift shop, and even a mini farm with chickens, to name just a few attractions! This unique place prides itself on its sustainability, and is therefore the place to be for anyone who cares about the environment.

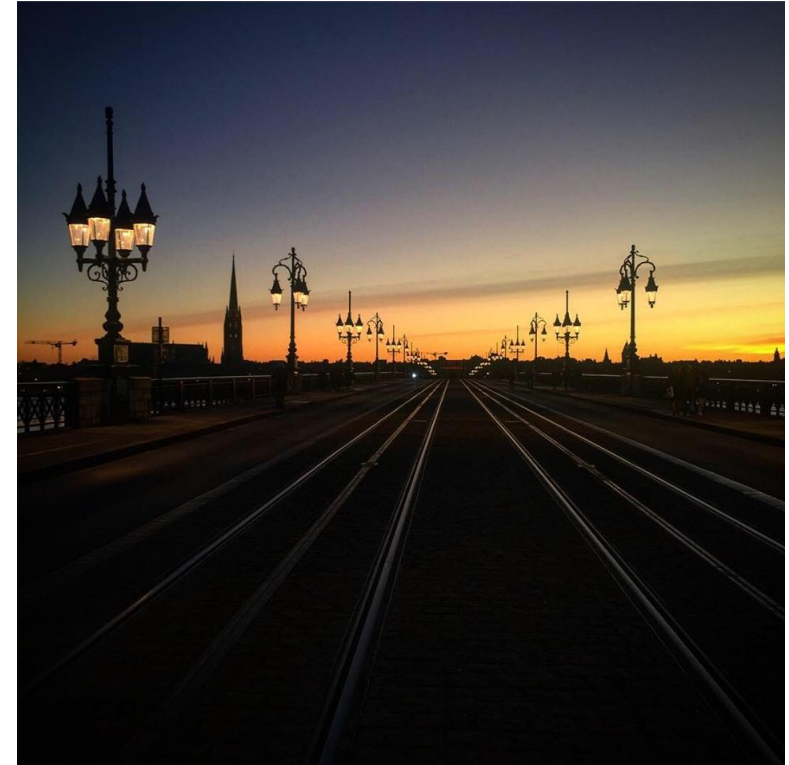
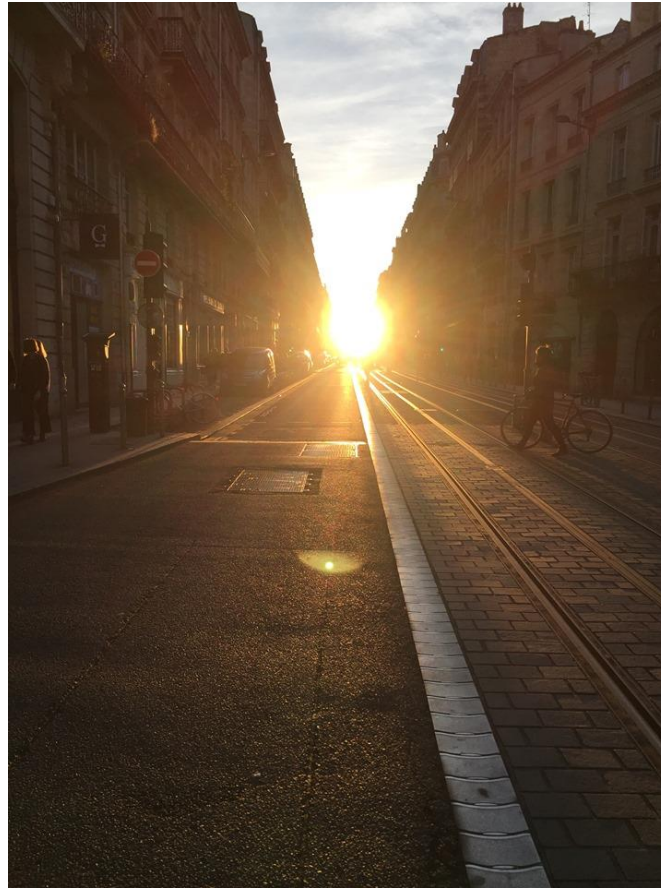
Shopping

Bordeaux is also a great place to hit the shops every once in a while and put that Erasmus grant to good use (please spend responsibly). 1.2km long, Rue Sainte Catherine is the longest commercial street in Europe and is a great place to pad out your wardrobe with some French style *à la mode*, ready to impress all your friends back home!



Trams

A simple pleasure, Bordeaux's tram system is another reason why I enjoyed the city so much. Trams are environmentally-friendly and much more fun than taking a bus or a train! They make the city so easy to explore and they're really uncomplicated, so even I could understand how to navigate them! Tramways also make for a beautiful photo:



It's delicious

Not only is Bordeaux celebrated for its architecture and attractions, but its culinary scene is fantastic too! It's packed with great restaurants where you can taste some of the famous French cuisine – and tucking into a steak-frites or a quiche lorraine is so much better when you're people-watching along the *quai* or in a hidden corner of one of Bordeaux's many quaint squares.



For me, the bakeries will always be the best part! You could try one of Bordeaux's famous *canelés*, but there's nothing like a freshly-baked *pain-au-chocolat* (but be careful to call it a *chocolatine* in this region) and coffee to put a spring in your step in the morning.



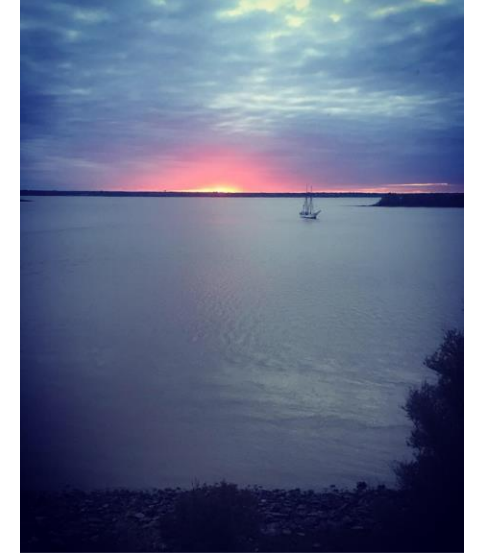
And of course we mustn't forget what this region is most famous for – its wine! You never have to look far to find some of the famous red wine that comes from various châteaux throughout the surrounding countryside.



The countryside

The appeal of this region isn't limited to the city itself; the countryside of the Gironde department is arguably even better than Bordeaux's urban charm. If you dare to venture outside of the city, you'll be blown away by views of green vineyards as far as the eye can see, and the picturesque tiny villages dotted along the Gironde estuary will almost make you think you've travelled back in time. When making the commute to the village Blaye where I worked, getting the 6.25am bus was almost enjoyable when I got to watch the sunrise across the vineyards.

Sunsets across the Gironde estuary



Vineyards



Blaye's citadelle



Bourg-sur-Gironde, a village on the estuary

And if, after all that, you're still not satisfied with Bordeaux, it's so well connected that you can easily venture further afield!

Less than an hour on the train and you can be at the beach in Arcachon, from where you can get to the breath-taking Dune du Pilat:



Incredibly cheap Flixbuses will take you all over the place from Bordeaux – you can be in Spain within 3 hours if you take the bus to San Sebastián!



And if that's STILL not enough for you, Bordeaux is connected by France's super-speedy TGV trains to Paris, so you can get to France's vibrant capital in just a couple of hours!

However, I don't think there's any better place
to be!

