

The loveliest French château hotels you can reach by train

There are railway stations close to all these fabulous castle stays, from the Côte d'Azur to Burgundy, making them ideal for a no-fly, no-drive break



Château de Mercuès was built in the 13th century

Rhiannon Batten | Friday April 10 2026, 5.00am BST, The Times

Renaissance showstoppers in the Loire Valley. Vineyard-swaddled citadels in Burgundy. The great medieval fortresses of the Dordogne. So many of [France's](#) 45,000 châteaux have been turned into wonderful hotels and make for a magical getaway.

It's a doddle to plan a mini-break of right royal hospitality across the Channel. Some fly, many drive, but there are plenty you can travel to by rail – my preferred method of transport.

It isn't always straightforward getting right to their gated façades, but hop on a TGV in [Paris](#) or Lille and you can be enjoying a city skyline at the other end of the country faster than you can say "let them eat brioche". The country's regional rail system can take you most of the rest of the way, although it is not only slower but also gappier.

Since many château hotels have defensive or viticultural origins they tend to be tucked far from large conurbations; reaching them by rail is still often possible but may mean changing trains several times. Happily there are those that hit the sweet spot where turrets meet trains with relative ease. I've whittled them down to find ten that you can get to from the UK with one change.

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5. Château Capitoul, Aude, Occitania



Château Capitoul was built in a neogothic style

PATRICK BRUNET

Part of a châteaux hotel scene taking root among Languedoc's wine estates, Château Capitoul is a 15-minute cycle from the beaches of the Côte du Midi. The neogothic castle was built around the turn of the 20th century and provides refined respite to guests who like their castles free of tassels, tapestries and fireplaces big enough to swing a Tyrannosaurus in. Its eight bedrooms are bright and light, the pale walls offset by a smattering of statement antiques; 44 privately owned villas on the estate can often be rented too. Cool off in the panoramic pool, wallow in the spa, take a vineyard tour or enjoy the long-range views that roll away to the Med from the chateau's 245 acres of sun-baked grounds. Two restaurants — one more formal, one grilling steaks, burgers and baby squid over fire — add to a clubby vibe, and it's family friendly too. This year a new woodland playground has been added. Get the Eurostar to Lille, then it's a 6 hour and 20-minute rail journey to Narbonne before a last 15 minutes by taxi. **Details** B&B doubles from £230

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