



LIFESTYLE Self-Guided HOLIDAYS - FRANCE

The Loire Valley – 7 days ex Tours



The Loire Valley - pure romance in France, rural charm throughout the region and cultural richness of towns. The Loire Valley is famous mainly due to its castles: kings, dukes, ladies-in-waiting, they were all tempted by the uniquely beautiful countryside of the Loire Valley. Known as the 'Garden of France', it has many hundreds of castles, numerous manor houses and magnificent architectural constructions. Villandry, Langeais, Usse, Chinon, Saumur, Azay-le-Rideau, Chenonceaux, Chaumont, Blois, Chambord, to name only a few. Take the opportunity to explore this fascinating region of France, by bike.

Beautiful accommodation in the 'Garden of France'

Stay in comfortable hotels which are centrally located and all equipped with ensuite bathroom facilities.

Loire Valley is supremely regal

The Loire Valley is an enchanted land of vineyards, flowers and rolling green hills dotted with more than a thousand chateaux. The Loire Valley offers sophisticated cities, a luxuriant landscape and magnificent food and wine - the perfect ingredients for a self-guided cycling tour.

Easy cycling

The cycling route runs on small, quiet roads and side streets which are predominantly flat with a few slightly uneven parts. Several short ascents can be easily handled by pushing your bike. We'll provide all the maps and information you need and transfer your luggage between accommodation.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1. Arrival in Tours

Individual arrival at Tours in the historical centre Touraine, the famous 'Garden of France'. In the afternoon receive your detailed tour information and bike fitting.

Meals: None

No Cycling

Day 2. Tours to Chinon

Ride along the river Cher on your way to Castle Villandry famous for its terrace gardens. Shady walking paths, arbours decorated with flowers, fountains and the artistically planted vegetable garden will impress and are well worth a visit. A few kilometres from here, you will exchange the banks of the Cher for the banks of the Loire. The next castle - Castle Langeais has a great view from the fortified tower, (this castle was used exclusively for military purposes) of the river and the surrounding countryside. The edge of the dark, mysterious forest of Chinon is enthroned by Castle Ussé 'The Sleeping-Beauty-Castle'. Ride through small villages on side roads to Chinon.

Meals: Breakfast

Cycling: approx 60 km



Day 3. Chinon to Fontevraud to Chinon

Your cycle path leads you to Fontevraud l'Abbey – a Middle-Age-monastery which is completely preserved. Onwards to Saumur; you're in the town of the mushrooms which are cultivated here in dark, damp caves. Just in Saumur, these caves have a length of more than 800 km. But not only the mushrooms are of interest, also the magnificent castle is worthy of admiration. After a comfortable break in the castle park, you cycle back to Chinon through beautiful vineyards.

Meals: Breakfast

Cycling: approx 55 km

Day 4. Chinon to Azay-Le-Rideau

Leaving the Middle-Age roads of Chinon behind, you travel on towards the north. The route takes you through ancient vineyards and lovely villages to Crissay, once totally forgotten – now inhabited by numerous artists. This village includes 15th-century-houses and is one of the most beautiful French villages. There is also a castle to view: Azay-le-Rideau – an extra-ordinary Renaissance-castle. Balzac described it as "a diamond with thousand facets, set in the river Indre". Spend the night in the village and take the opportunity to enjoy the magic of the castle with its impressive cultural events.

Meals: Breakfast

Cycling: 45 km

Day 5. Azay-Le-Rideau to Chenonceaux

A scenic highlight of the trip today is the romantic river scenery along the Indre in the small town Montbazou. After a short ascent and a bit of pedalling you'll reach the valley of the river Cher. We cycle on meadow paths along the Cher towards Bléré, along the way an impressive gallery with two floors in the form of a bridge spans over the river, and in front of it you can admire the magnificent castle garden. According to many visitors, Castle Chenonceau is the icing on the cake.

Meals: Breakfast

Cycling: 60 km

Day 6. Chenonceaux to Blois

Today, you have two possibilities: you can choose the shorter trip which takes you through the pretty scenic route of Touraine to Castle Chaumont, and from here further along the romantic route of the Loire to Blois. After the check-in at the hotel, you can explore the surroundings. You can visit Castle Blois with its galleries, balconies, and oriels.

Or the second choice, the longer variant, for all lovers of the Loire Castles: Passing Montrichard, Cheverny, Villesavine towards Castle Chambord. As far as the eye can see, the 'Domaine de Chambord' extends. The walls of the biggest and most magnificent residence in the Loire are visible from far away – the immortal legacy of a disloyal king. Now the choice is up to you.

Meals: Breakfast **Cycling: 45 km / 75 km**

Day 7. Blois - Tours

Today follow the river which flows gently between gold shimmering sandbanks. Characteristic of this region are the rock apartments which were built into the limestone. Cross the Loire to visit the king of all castles – Castle Amboise which hosted five kings and a Roman emperor. Also a genius of the 16th century – Leonardo da Vinci – spent his last years here. Cycle along hidden paths, through vineyards, wine-cellars, via Rochecorbon towards Tours.

Meals: Breakfast **Cycling: 70 km**

Day 8. Departure Day

C'est la vie – today your journey has come to an end. One more substantial breakfast, then it's time to say goodbye to one of the most charming and delightful regions of France.

Meals: Breakfast **No Cycling**

Tour Information



Included in the tour price:

- 7 nights' accommodation in 2-3 star hotels
- 7 French breakfasts
- Daily luggage transport between accommodation
- Maps and Information
- Bike Hire

Not Included In Tour Price:

- International Flights and/or Travel Visas (where applicable) or Travel Insurance
- Drinks & snack bars
- Tips

Tour Grade & Fitness

This tour is graded 1/2 or Easy.
A low level of fitness is required, exercising at least once a week prior to the tour.