

Cycling Europe

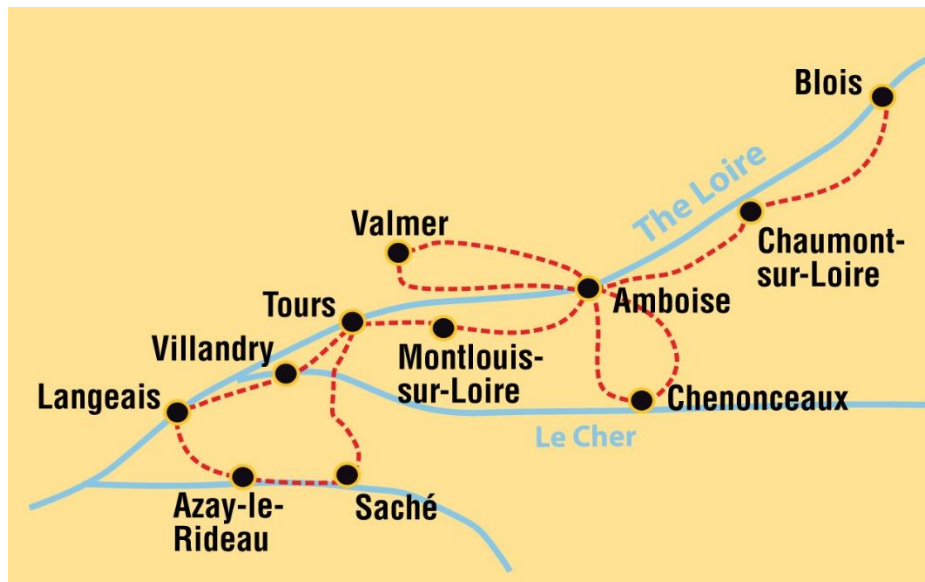
FRANCE 2020

CHATEAUX AND GARDENS OF THE LOIRE

Self-Guided Cycle Tour - 8 days/7 nights



The dreamy chateaux and well laid-out gardens of the Loire Valley have seduced royalty and inspired writers and poets for centuries. Discover their charm and elegance on this bike tour that visits some of the most famous chateaux in the Loire Valley. There is a choice of 2 grades of accommodation on this tour. The cycling grade is easy to moderate, with some rolling hills. Electric bikes can be requested.



ITINERARY:

Day 1: Tour starts in Blois

Discover the charming town of Blois, as you stroll along its paved streets lined with staircases. The Château is a perfect illustration of how French architecture evolved between the Middle Ages and the 17th century.

Stay Overnight in Blois:

Day 2: Blois – Chateau de Chaumont – Amboise - 42 km

Follow small countryside routes to the Chateau of Chaumont overlooking the Loire River.

This wonderful garden hosts a Garden Festival from April to October where contemporary garden designers display their work in an English-style garden. After this visit, your route continues towards Amboise, a royal city where Leonardo Da Vinci's last home, Clos Lucé, is located. Today, the Clos Lucé is a museum that reflects the prestigious history of the region and includes forty models of the various machines designed by Leonardo. The museum also includes a copy of the Mona Lisa, painted in 1654 by Ambroise Dubois.

Stay Overnight in Amboise:

Chateau de Blois



Amboise



Chateau de Chaumont 'Garden Festival'

Day 3: Excursion from Amboise to Chateau Chenonceau - 41 km + optional 8 km

After crossing the Amboise forest, reach the famous Chateau of Chenonceau straddling the Cher River, which was the scene of the famous historic French rivalry; that of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. Enjoy a walk in the heart of each ladies' landscaped garden, and marvel at the castle's inspiring architecture.

Stay overnight in Amboise:



Amboise Forest



Chateau de Chenonceau

Day 4: Excursion to Chateau de Valmer and Vouvray Vineyards - 40 km

Through vineyards and fields, reach the Valmer Gardens of Italian inspiration where fountains, statues and terraces resemble an Italian Renaissance Villa garden.

Stay overnight in Amboise:

Valmer Gardens



Chateau de Valmer



Day 5: Amboise – Tours - 27 or 35 km

Cross the vineyards of Montlouis and discover the numerous Caves producing the sweet white and sparkling wines famous to the region. Continue in direction of Gabrielle d'Estrée manor house who was King Henri IV 's favourite mistress. The Chateau de La Bourdaisière will charm you with its as 'prince gardener' who will enjoy guiding you through the amazing tomato and medicinal plant conservatory. Finish this stage by reaching the city of Tours to discover the old quarter with its typical half-timbered houses.

Stay overnight in Tours:



Chateau de la Bourdaisière



Caves and cellars along the Montlouis vineyards

Day 6: Tours – Chateau Villandry – Azay Le Rideau - 38 kms

Follow 'Loire à vélo' cycling path and reach Villandry and its famous 'French style' Renaissance gardens. Enjoy the 'Ornamental Kitchen Garden', the 'Garden of Love', the 'Water Garden' and the 'Sun Garden'. Continue to Azay Le Rideau and its Chateau.

Stay overnight in Azay Le Rideau:



Tours



Gardens of Villandry

Day 7: Azay Le Rideau – Tours - 33 km

Ride to Chateau of Saché, with its lovely garden of Lis and peonies. Continue towards Tours. Along the way, you stop at Prieuré St Cosme, which was a priory built in 1092 to receive pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. You will have the chance to enjoy the sweet fragrance of roses, and admire collections of peonies, lavenders, lilies, and a variety of shrubs.

Stay overnight in Tours:

Day 8: Tour ends after breakfast in Tours.

From Tours you can catch a direct train to Paris Montparnasse (1h14 – 1hr22), or take a train via St-Pierre-des-Corps. Train ticket is not included.

GRADE: East to moderate, with some rolling hills – 27-48 kms per day.



2020 SCHEDULE:

Start any day from 01 March to October 2020 (subject to hotel availability)

2020 COST PER PERSON IN EURO

	2* & 3* Hotels	3/4* Hotels
Double/Twin room with ensuite, including 7 breakfasts and 7 dinners	€1118	€1399
Single room Supplement	€ 267	€ 410
Add Single room Solo	€ 90	€ 90

Option to upgrade to a 4 star Chateau style hotel for 3 nights in Amboise.

Surcharge for the 3 nights € 160 per person Twin/double

Surcharge for the 3 nights € 105 single supplement

Extra night in Blois

Double room with breakfast

€ 55

€ 78

Single supplement

€ 33

€ 44

Extra night in Tours

Double room with breakfast

€ 62

€ 78

Single supplement

€ 39

€ 44

€ 95

Bike Rental (21 speed)

€ 125

Scott Sub Sport 27-speed bike

€ 200

Electric Bike

Equipped with two saddlebags, a high visibility jacket, an anti-theft device, a map holder, a helmet and a repair kit.

Chateaux Package

€ 80

Includes entry fees to Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire (Chateau & Garden Festival), Chateau de Chenonceaux, Villandry Gardens, Azay le Rideau Chateau, Park Leonardo Da Vinci in Amboise and a 3 glass wine tasting in Amboise.

2020 COST INCLUDES:

- 7 nights accommodation
- 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners
- Transfer of luggage between tour hotels
- 1 set of Maps, itineraries and tourist information per room
- City Taxes
- 7 Day Service Hotline

2019 COST EXCLUDES:

- Lunch
- Entrance fees to Chateaux (suggest purchase package above)
- Transfers

GETTING THERE:

Train from Paris (Gare d'Austerlitz) to Blois (about 1½ - 2 hour trip, regular daily services).

The Blois train station has frequent services to towns along the Loire's right bank, including Amboise, Orléans and Tours

Train from Tours: Direct trains run to Paris Austerlitz & Paris Montparnasse (from 1¼ – 2½ hours)

Vehicle Transfer : Tours to Blois €140 (up to 4 persons). Paris CDG to Blois €300 (up to 4 persons). Tours to Paris CDG €340 (up to 4 persons).



Château de Chenonceau

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