



Chateau Chenonceau

Loire Chateaux Walks

The Best of UNESCO'S Loire with complementary accommodation

Tour Highlights

- ☞ Explore the jewels of the finest section of France's largest river.
- ☞ Choose from two comfort-led accommodation formats to suit your tastes and preferences.
- ☞ Visit six chateaux, the magical 16th Century gardens of Villandry, the Abbey at Fontevraud [resting place of Richard the Lion Heart] and Tours, the region's most important city.
- ☞ Hike three tributaries of the Loire and marvel at their troglodyte dwellings
- ☞ Immerse yourself in the 'Garden of France' and a renowned wine-growing region - let us be your guide!

Fact File

- ✓ 7-night, self-guided, inn-to-inn walking tour across three departments of the central Loire Valley.
- ✓ Graded as a light challenge, averaging 10 miles/ 16 kms a day.
- ✓ Convenient access by train from Paris in approx. 2 hrs.
- ✓ Tour starts in Amboise and finishes in Saumur. You start any day from 15th April to 4th October.
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout, plus three morning transfers to shorten the day's walking.



Theme

Loire Chateaux Walks is the perfect mix of light walking and cultural immersion in UNESCO's world heritage central Loire Valley. You will enjoy ten days of gentle walking, along a varied mix of trails, that facilitates your experiencing at first hand the many splendours of life along the most-blessed section of France's longest river.



Loire Chateaux Walks starts in Amboise, with its fine Renaissance Chateau and last home of Leonardo da Vinci. Both are must-do visits. Twelve days later you bid au revoir to La Loire in splendid Saumur, 80 miles to the west, with its imposing medieval castle or 'chateau fort' originally constructed in the 10th century by Theobald I, Count of Blois.



The magnificent chateau and gardens of Villandry

In between, you have the opportunity to... visit numerous chateaux [Renaissance and Medieval - see map below] as well as Europe's largest monastic complex, burial place of none other than Richard the Lion Heart; appreciate the visual splendour of Villandry's renowned and unique 16th century gardens; feast on some of the region's distinctive troglodyte dwellings carved out of the local 'Tuffeau' limestone; hike three other tributaries of La Loire and spend a half-day exploring its largest city, Tours, where the French pronunciation is considered neutral and the wine superlative.

The aim of this tour is two-fold: half-day fun walks that enable you to visit the castles and other manifestations of cultural heritage at a leisurely pace - rather than 'full day walks plus rushed visits before closing time'. The castles are state managed so, in the land of the 35-hour-week, don't expect them to be open before 9am or after 6.30 pm! In a sense, the walking is functional - a means to getting you into position for the day's main activity and, to that effect, we include three short morning transfers to help you on your way.

Finally, it would be remiss not to discuss our Central Loire Valley tour without referencing some of France's finest wines: you get to appreciate the wines from the AOCs of Touraine and Saumur - Chinon, Cheverny, Vouvray and the Rosés de Loire, so distinctive from the bland and over-acidic Loire offerings that find their way onto the shelves of world's supermarkets and wine stores. And whilst responsible walking means wine drinking is not to be encouraged during the day, our tour dossier provides you with ample insight on the region's appellations that will enable you to make an informed choice as to what will best complement your evening meals.

Loire Chateaux Walks facilitates a unique experience that few others get to enjoy - i.e., without the hindrance of driving or cycling. Forget the inflated parking fees and congestion, or the concerns over bike theft, punctures and oil stains, and take complete control of your Loire Chateaux experience. You know it makes sense.

Loire Chateaux Walks

LOIR-ET-CHER



Loire Chateaux Walks: Seven-night tour itinerary

[All distances, times and elevation figures are approximate] ¹

Day 1 Arrive in Amboise by train.

Early arrival recommended so as to maximize time in the Chateau Royal and enjoy a walk around the adjacent gardens - followed by a saunter around town and your first look at La Loire river.

Night in Amboise.

Day 2 Amboise to Chenonceau. [8 miles-13 kms, 4 hours]

A charming, bucolic hike through the Amboise forest en route to arguably the quaintest chateau and gardens of the whole week - with access secured via walking a series of the symmetrical allées, so common in these walking-oriented parts.

Night in Chenonceau.

Day 3 Tours to Villandry. [12 miles-19½ kms, approx. 4 hrs]

Transfer to Tours after breakfast. You can spend two or three hours in the historic centre of Tours before striding out. You walk beside the Petit Cher and the Cher on route to Savonnières, where the traditional flat-bottomed river boats abound. Then climb the 100 steps [we make it 110] to a fine ridge and passageway to the ancient village of Villandry, with its magnificent castle and ornate 16th century gardens.

Night in Villandry.



Day 4 Villandry to Azay-le-Rideau. [8½ miles-13½ kms, approx. 3½ hrs walking].

If you didn't visit the chateau and gardens yesterday, get there at opening time and have it all to yourselves. Then it's an easy-going half day's walk through the Vallee du Vau to Menhir Pierre aux Joncs, on route to the quaint village of Azay with its Renaissance chateau lapped by the waters of the river Inde.

Night in Azay-le-Rideau.

Day 5 Azay to Chinon. [7½ miles-12 kms, approx. 3 hrs walking].

A short transfer after breakfast gets you to the start of the Route forestiere de Rabelais followed by the Allee Louis XI. The ledge walk from the outskirts of Chinon is worth savouring, which drops you conveniently at the front gates of Chinon's magnificent medieval castle overlooking La Vienne river. This bijou village is also blessed with its fine red wine.

Night in Chinon

Day 6 Chinon to Fontevraud-l'Abbaye [8 miles/12½ kms, approx. 4½ hrs]

Hug the river Vienne for the first half of the trail to La Chaussee. Then kick out across the Vallee des Veaux and through the Fontevraud forest. Enter Maine-et-Loire, pass the Chapelle de Notre Dame de Pitie before arriving in sacré Fontevraud, resting place of two Plantagenet kings and queens of England, including Richard The Lionheart. Both Abbey and hotel are a treat.

Night in Fontevraud

Day 7 Fontevraud-l'Abbaye to Saumur [12 miles-19½ kms, approx. 4½ to 5 hrs]

A short transfer after breakfast takes you to the confluence of the Loire and Vienne rivers. You can visit the Chateau de Montsoreau [made famous by Alexandre Dumas] and a troglodyte wine estate before striding out across AOC Saumur-Champigny country. Plenty of fine belvederes await along the balcony route to Saumur, with its 'chateau d'amour' perched on a tuffeau slope.

Night in Saumur - please ask us about the best option for your over-night stay in Saumur, especially relevant if you have an early train.

Day 8 End of Loire Chateaux Walks tour.

Breakfast followed by check out and onward journey by train. Bonne continuation and we hope to see you next year.



Chateau fort at Chinon



Vineyard walks

What's Included

- ☑ 7 nights in comfort: Option A with six 3-star hotels and one 4-star¹; or Option B featuring 3-star hotels and one guest house² - **see below.**
- ☑ 7 breakfasts
- ☑ 4 evening meals [Option A only] or choose Option B and either dine in the hotel or explore the local options according to your tastes and preferences.
- ☑ Hiking Insight Notes that empower & make orientation easy plus 1: 50,000 maps. The paths are very well way marked and we consider this scale map as entirely adequate for this uncomplicated trail
- ☑ Luggage transfers throughout plus three morning people transfers²
- ☑ Comprehensive and themed dossier, featuring the chateaux and wines of La Loire.
- ☑ Telephone help-line service with 7/7 Native English support from 8 'till 8.

¹ We book standard rooms in the 4-star hotel. Where they are fully booked, you will be given the option to either pay for an upgrade or opt for the nearby 2-star hotel at a reduced rate.

² Where the chambre d'hotes du charme is unavailable, it will be replaced with a 2-star hotel.

Not included

- ⊗ Remaining meals and all drinks and extras - lunch and dinner options are listed in your dossier and walking notes.
- ⊗ 1: 25,000 scale maps: ten of these would be required to cover the tour, which we are happy to supply at a supplement. Please enquire.
- ⊗ Personal expenses
- ⊗ Entrances into any optional cultural visits and Venues, incl. the chateaux, Abbey, gardens and any wine-related visits.
- ⊗ Hiking, personal and travel insurances
- ⊗ Single rooms - unless booked at the single-person rate
- ⊗ Travel to and from the tour start and finish points.



**Comfort
hotels
and
charming
guest
houses -
chambres
d'hotes
du
charme**

“Carefully-selected accommodation based on knowing our partners well.”

We have visited and/or stayed in all the accommodation along the trail in order to select and offer you the best accommodation that this Loire holiday can offer at every step of the way . We are also delighted to bring you two options below based on your personal tastes and preferences:

A. 3-star hotels plus one 4-star hotel with four dinners included.

All hotels are on the trail and offer high levels of comfort indeed.
Bedrooms are all en suite.

We book standard rooms in the 4-star hotel. Where they are fully booked, you will be given the option to either pay for an upgrade or opt for the nearby 2-star hotel at a reduced rate.



B. 3-star hotels on a Bed and Breakfast/B&B basis with one charming guest house.

Hotels and guest houses are on the trail and offer high levels of comfort. Bedrooms are all en suite.

Where the chambre d'hotes du charme is unavailable, it will be replaced with a 2-star hotel.

This option leaves you free to manage your evening meals according to your own tastes, preferences and budget. You can chose to eat in your hotel or local options exist.

The guest house does not offer dinner, but there are plenty of options from which to choose and your hostess will be able to advise.

This is a very popular tourist area, attracting visitors from all over the world and throughout the season. Early booking is thus advised.



**Access &
Departure**

How to get to Amboise

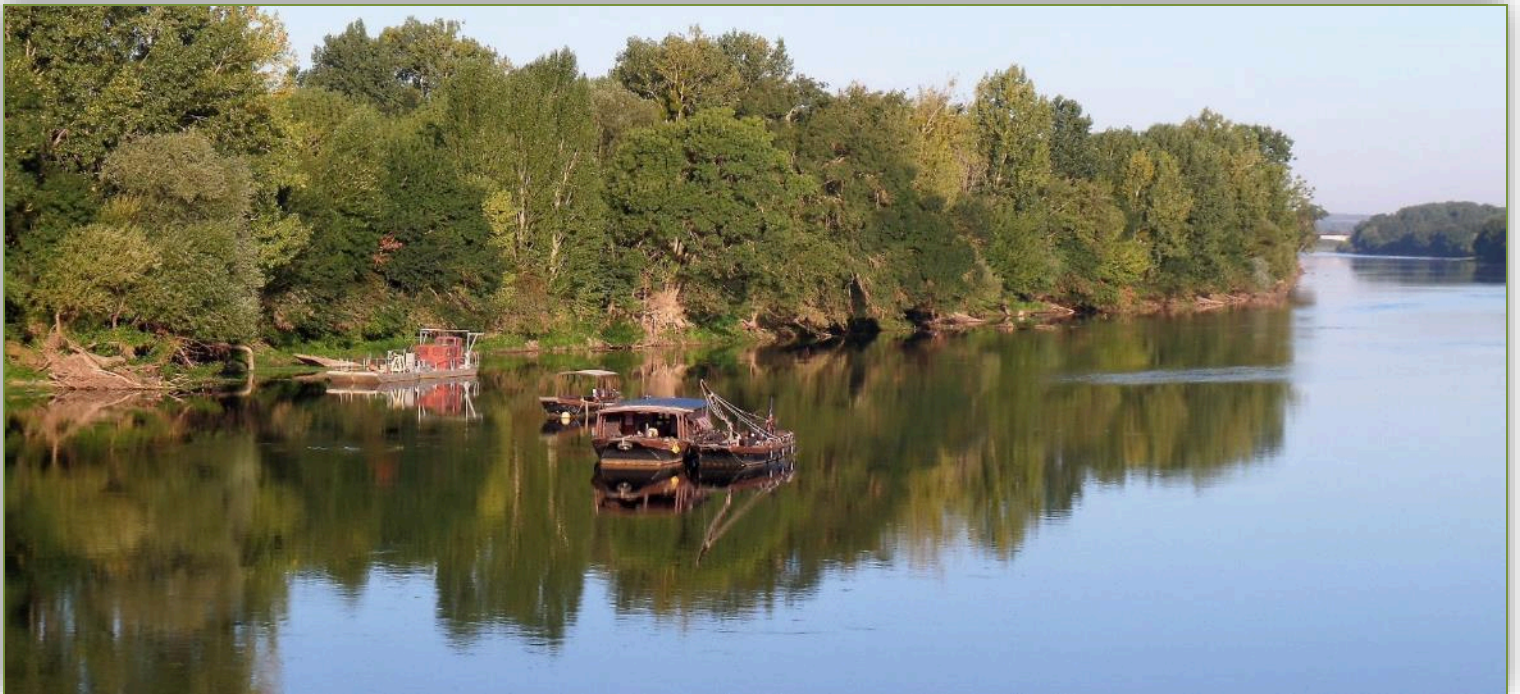
Arrival:

- By rail: from Paris in approx. 2 hours.

How to leave Saumur

- By rail: to Paris in approx. 2½ hours.
Please see:<https://www.sncf.com/en>
or
<https://www.rome2rio.com/>





Traditional Loire craft

Ten reasons to book with The Enlightened Traveller®



- ❶ Best accommodation, better service
- ❷ Benefit from French-based expertise and our total focus on France
- ❸ Buy direct from us, the tour provider, and get great value for money
- ❹ Personalise your tour to suit your own requirements
- ❺ Industry-leading walking notes make orientation easy - we've never lost anyone in eleven years!
- ❻ 1:50 000 scale maps & a comprehensive and insightful dossier whets your appetite for what's to follow
- ❼ 7/7 telephone support in native English and from 8 till 8
- ❽ We transport your luggage from hotel to hotel - you are 'enlightened' in more ways than one!
- ❾ Peace of mind: your money is safe when booking with us - all passengers are fully insured for the initial deposit and balance, irrespective of the means of payment, in the unlikely event of insolvency.
- ❿ Anglo-French family business that tries harder: it's business as usual!



The Loire at Amboise

2023 prices:

Per person rate in double or twin-bedded room:
Loire Chateaux Walks [Option A: with 4 dinners and a 4-star hotel]
£1035.00 Pounds Sterling³ or €1195.00 Euros

Loire Chateaux Walks [Option B: no dinners and one guest house]
£885.00 Pounds Sterling³ or €1035.00 Euros

- **Extra nights: On request**
- **Want to split the last day's walking and visit Montsoreau chateau? Ask us for details.**

Booking

Email, phone or Skype us and we will email you everything you need to reserve your tour. And we are available to LiveChat on our website!

Notes

¹ We reserve the right to alter parts of the above programme for the benefit of safety and the quality of the overall experience.

² This covers one piece of luggage per person up to 20 kgs in weight. Supplements apply for overweight luggage and we accept no responsibility for lost valuables. We advise you not to bring computers and business-related equipment.

³ You are travelling to the Eurozone. Please contact us to check for the latest Sterling prices. Sterling prices are confirmed at the time of booking.

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Peace of Mind

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