

# THE LOIRE VALLEY: CHATEAUX, VINEYARDS & FORESTS OF FRANCE

02-06 May 2019

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The Loire Valley is an enchanted land of vineyards, flowers and rolling green hills dotted with more than a thousand chateaux. It is perhaps the charm of its gentle pace of life that has for centuries made it a sought-after location for poets and writers. It is also a step back through the history of some of France's finest works of art.

This will be our 3rd visit to this area, feedback from other trips has been very good and is a must see location for those of you that want to combine countryside walks, amazing scenery, good food and wine and immerse yourself in French culture & history

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Walk around lakes and the forests within the Chateaux
- Visit some of France's most famous Chateaux
- Evening sound & light show
- Indulge in a week-end of French food and wine

## **Day 1: [May 2<sup>nd</sup>](#), Thursday**

### **⇒ Leave London**

Leave London St Pancras by Eurostar. Arrive in Paris. Take the TGV from Paris to Tours. Or fly to Tours Loire Valley Airport direct from Stansted. We then go on an evening walk & dinner in Tours

## **Day 2: [May 3<sup>rd</sup>](#), Friday**

Walk around the Cher valley starting at the world famous Chateau of Chenonceaux, which we will visit.



An architectural masterpiece, property of the Crown and then a royal residence, Château de Chenonceau is a truly exceptional site by its original design, but also its history: loved, managed and protected by women, including Diane of Poitiers and Catherine de Medicis, it is also known as the 'Château des Dames'. The feminine touch is everywhere; it has protected the Château from the ravages of war and made it a peaceful place.

We will stroll around the Chateau and surrounding countryside.

### Day 3: May 4<sup>th</sup>, Saturday

Walk around the forests of Chambord (still a hunting ground for French presidents) and visit Chateau Chambord.



We then subject to the schedule have the possibility of enjoying some jousting shows or strolling in a boat on the beuvron river.

The Château de Chambord is one of the most recognisable châteaux in the world because of its very distinctive French Renaissance architecture which blends traditional French medieval forms with classical Renaissance structures. The building, which was never completed, was constructed by King Francis I of France.

<https://www.chambord.org/en>





## Day 4: [May 5<sup>th</sup>](#), Sunday

We start our leisurely day by visiting the Unesco world heritage gardens of Villandry, then move on to visit the unique Chateau d'Azay le Rideau.

The Chateau of Villandry is the last of the great chateaux of the Loire built during the Renaissance in the Loire Valley. The sober elegance of its architecture combined with the charm of its outstanding gardens make this one of the jewels of world heritage.



The Château d'Azay-le-Rideau was built on an island in the Indre River under the patronage of King Francis the First. A subtle blend of French tradition and innovative Italian decor, it is an icon of the new art of building in the Loire Valley in the 16th century. Its successive owners have helped to make it the most architecturally harmonious treasure in the Loire Valley. In 1905, the Château d'Azay-le-Rideau came under State ownership.



We will end our week-end on the Loire valley by a wine tasting in the Vouvray troglodyte cellar one of the most famous wines of the Loire Valley.



<http://www.chateauvillandry.fr/en/>

<http://www.azay-le-rideau.fr/en/>

<http://www.cavedevouvray.com/en/editorial/8/21/guided-tours>

**Day 5:** May 6<sup>th</sup>, Monday (*bank holiday in the UK*)

Return to London





## **Travel recommendations**

### **Train**

From London take the Eurostar into Paris Gard du Nord. From there go to Gare Montparnasse and take the TGV to Tours Central (1 hour). Then a taxi to the IBIS Hotel which is situated near the airport (about 3-4 miles from the station)

### **Flights**

2nd May, Ryanair FR8868, 14:40 - 17:00, STN London Stansted - TUF Tours

6th May, Ryanair FR8869, 10:50 - 11:15, TUF Tours - STN London Stansted

**Price:** £525

### **What's included:**

- 4 nights accommodation (twin share, IBIS hotel)
- 4 Breakfasts
- All transportation during trips (Minibus / private car)
- Entry fees to all Chateaux
- Wine cellar visit & wine tasting

### **What's excluded:**

- Flights
- Airport transfer
- Lunch & Dinner

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