



## EXPLORE FRANCE AT YOUR OWN PACE

### Day 1: Arrival in Tours

Upon your arrival at Tours train station, we will transfer you to your first hotel, in Azay-le-Rideau. Our trip manager will check the fitting of your bikes with you, and go over your trip package and any questions. Afterwards, you can explore the town and visit the castle - not one of the largest castles of the Loire in size, Azay is one of the prettiest, with the mix of Italian Renaissance style that was so popular, and the charm of a French castle on the water, as it sits on the banks of the Indre River. Your dinner this evening is included, at a gourmet restaurant in the centre of town.



### Day 2: Loop ride to Villandry and Langeais 40 km: 25 Miles

After breakfast at your hotel, your first ride takes you northwards, heading back to the Loire, hopping from the Indre River to the Loire River. Along the way, you pass through the town of Villandry, where we highly recommend you make a stop. The castle in Villandry can be visited, but it is the beautiful Renaissance gardens that are of worldwide renown. You can wander through the vegetable gardens, flower gardens, water garden, and symbolic garden, all beautifully presented in formal patterns, outlined with low box hedges. The route then continues, following a wonderful bike path parallel to the river, which you then cross over on the elegant bridge of the small town of Langeais. Stop there for lunch, or a refreshing cold

drink, and to visit the beautiful medieval fortified castle, a contrast to the region's many Renaissance masterpieces. Back in Azay after you finish your ride, we leave you to explore the restaurants of Azay on your own this evening.

### Day 3: Azay le Rideau to Chinon 35 km / 22 Miles

From Azay you leave the Indre River and ride northwards back to the Loire on easygoing terrain. Once there, you then follow a wonderful bike route next to the River westwards. You soon reach the Château d'Ussé, the enchanting castle that inspired the Sleeping Beauty castle of Disney fame. Your destination is medieval Chinon, a lovely and lively town spanning the banks of the river, but your approach brings you via the renowned vineyards that have made the town's reputation, for the delicious, crisp red wines, with their particular spiced-fruit flavours. Chinon is firmly anchored in





## BIKING IN THE LOIRE VALLEY – 4 NIGHT “WEST”



the region's history; it was here that Joan of Arc arrived to convince the Dauphin King of her destiny to win back lost territories from the English. Imagine her plea to the unbelieving court as you wander the ruins of the castle today. You can spend some time wandering town, including Rue Voltaire with its many medieval houses, its boutiques and cafés, before dinner tonight.

### **Day 4: Chinon to Saumur via Fontevraud** 47 km / 29 Miles

Your final ride is a lovely route through the countryside of the Loire Valley, where famous medieval French author François Rabelais spent his youth. In the small town of Fontevraud, you should take some time to visit the abbey there. Founded in 1099, the Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud is one of the biggest monastic complexes of western Christendom. Eleanor of Aquitaine is buried in a painted stone coffin within the walls of the abbey, with her husband, Henry II, and her son, the famous Richard the Lionheart. You pass several other sites as you approach Saumur, including troglodyte communities, mushroom caves, and an artisanal ‘hammered apple’ maker, as well as the towns of Candes-St-Martin and Montsoreau which are classed as two of France's "Prettiest Villages". The historic centre of Saumur makes for great explorations; many of the monuments are built in the lovely soft local stone known as tuffeau. The Château de Saumur stands high overlooking the town. Saumur is home to the “Cadre Noir”, the National School of Horsemanship, known for its annual horse shows, as well as the Armoured and Cavalry Training School. There is an interesting and unique tank museum, with more than 850 armored vehicles, wheeled or tracked. We include dinner this evening, at one of our favourite restaurants.



### **Day 5: Departure – Bon Voyage!**

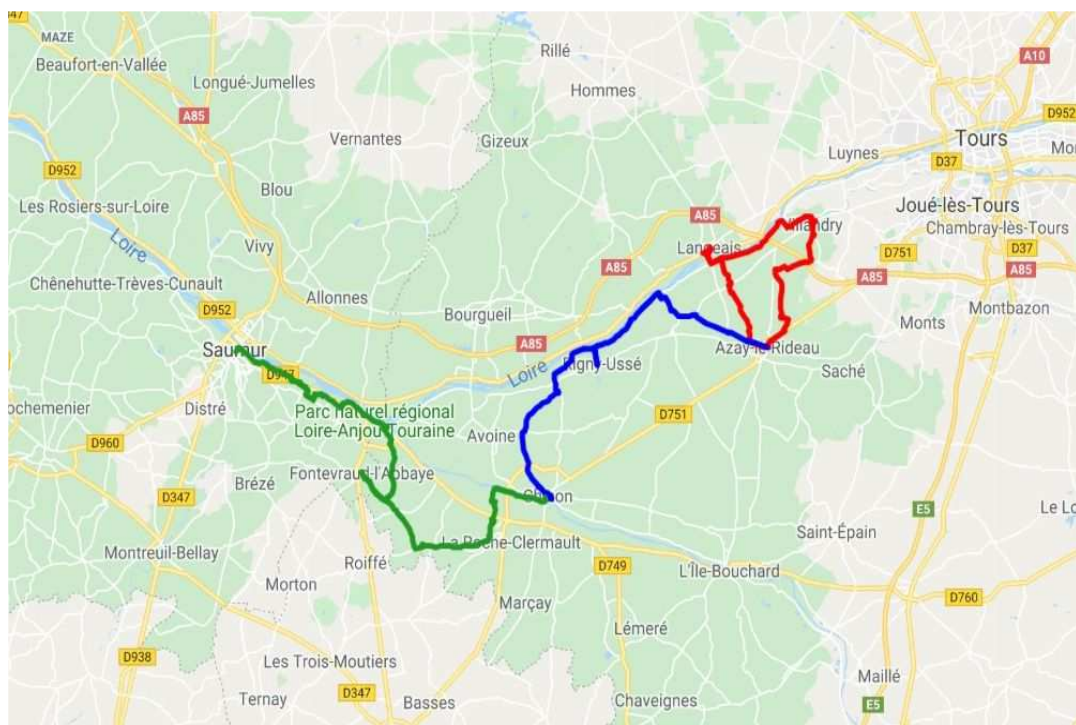
After a final breakfast, we will transfer you to Tours centre train station or St Pierre de Corps train station for your further travels







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### What's included in your Loire Valley Biking Tour

- 4 nights' accommodation of the comfort level of your choice: CLASSIC, CLASSIC + or DELUXE
- Hotel taxes
- All breakfasts, 2 dinners (drinks not included with dinners)
- Orientation with our Trip Manager at the start of the trip
- Fully equipped quality touring bike
  - \* E-bikes and Road bikes are available on request (with a supplement)
- Detailed maps and step-by-step route notes
- Regional information and advice
- Uploadable GPS file of the route to use on a free APP in your smartphone
  - \* Can be used without international internet plan (offline)
- Transfer to the first hotel from Tours train station
- Luggage transfers from hotel to hotel
- Phone call support 7 days a week

