



EXPLORE FRANCE AT YOUR OWN PACE

Day 1: Arrival in Tours

There are easy connections from Paris to Tours train station. Your Trip Package will be waiting for you at the hotel and our Trip Manager will call you to go over the tour and answer any questions you may have. Once settled, take some time to explore this lovely small city: During the Middle Ages, Tours consisted of two juxtaposed and competing centres: The "City" in the east, successor of the late Roman 'castrum', and in the west, the "New City" structured around the Abbey of Saint Martin and the economic centre of Tours. The two centres were linked during the 14th century, but you still sense the two halves today. We provide a self-guided walking tour to explore the Medieval centre (Vieux Tours), with the half-timbered houses, the many parks, and Place Plumereau, a lively square with many restaurants and pubs.

Day 2: Villandry to Azay le Rideau 13 km / 8 Miles

We drop you in the village of Villandry to start your day today, where you will likely decide to stop for a visit before you start walking. 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 southwards, through forest and pretty fields of wheat and flowers, and wonderful vineyards, descending eventually to yet another River, the Indre, and the town of Azay le Rideau. You will want to take some time to explore the town and visit the castle - not one of the largest chateaux of the Loire in size, the 16th century castle of 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. Dinner included tonight.

Day 3: Loop around Fontevraud 13 km / 8 Miles

We take you right to your final destination this morning, in the beautiful village of Fontevraud. From there, you have a loop walk, starting with a descent through vineyards to the banks of the Loire. Your route passes through the villages of Candès sur Loire, and Montsoreau, both listed in the official Prettiest Villages of France. You'll definitely want to spend some time exploring the tiny cobblestoned streets, their churches and panoramas over the river, and restaurants, where you can find some lunch. Once fortified, you'll be ready to attack the climb back away from the river, and heading back up onto the rich forested land around Fontevraud. You'll want to arrive back in time to visit the Royal Abbey, a spectacular site, both beautiful, and entrenched in a thousand of





WALKING IN THE LOIRE VALLEY: 4 NIGHT "Taste Of"

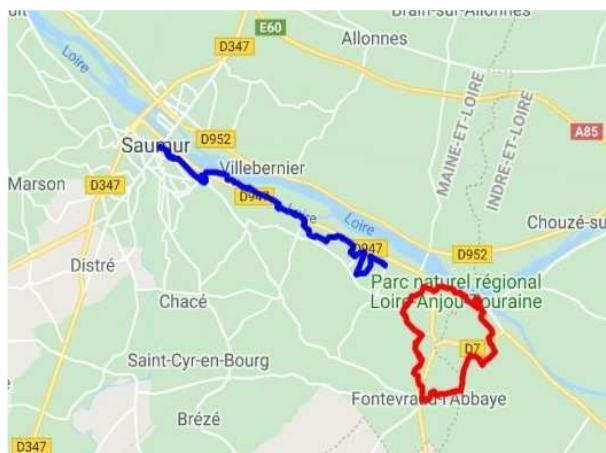
years of history. Take a moment as you explore this UNESCO Heritage site to feel moved by the site of the burial tombs of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and her son, Richard the Lionhearted, both at rest at the abbey with the Plantagenet King.

Day 4: Turquant to Saumur 15 km / 9 Miles

Your final day's walk has you following the banks of the Loire all the way in to medieval Saumur. We drop you off in the pretty village of Turquant, with its Tufa stone quarries and troglodyte homes. Meander close to the river, or up in the vineyards just above all day, passing through the remains of a whole troglodyte village in Souzay-Champigny, and a fun "pommes-tapées" (literally, smashed apples) producer along the way. You'll arrive in Saumur with a view of its impressive chateau overlooking the river and town below. We provide a self-guided walking tour to help you explore its many and varied sites: the medieval squares in the heart of town, several beautiful churches, the chateau itself, a great tank museum, and also several sites dedicated to horses, as one of France's great cavalry schools is based in Saumur. Your final dinner tonight is included at one of our favourite restaurants.

Day 5: Departure

After a final breakfast, you can get connections out of Saumur train station for your further travels.



What's included in your Loire Valley Walking Tour

- 4 nights' accommodation of the comfort level of your choice: CLASSIC, CLASSIC + or DELUXE
- All breakfasts and 2 dinners (drinks not included with the dinners)
- Orientation with our Trip Manager at the start of the trip by phone
- Luggage transfers from hotel to hotel
- Taxi transfers to the start of the walks
- Detailed maps and step-by-step route instructions
- Uploadable GPS file of the route to use on a free APP in your smartphone (Can be used without international internet plan offline)
- Regional information and advice
- Phone call support 7 days a week

