

# Leisurely Loire Valley – 4 or 7 nights

*‘Magnificent châteaux, relaxed cycling, and time to enjoy the unique French style of a region favoured by kings’*



Chateau Azay-le-Rideau



Hotel welcome at Azay



Maze at Villandry

- Visit some of the finest châteaux in the ‘Valley of the Kings’
- Enjoy superb regional French cuisine
- Famous wines of the Loire – stop for samples in ‘Caves du Vin’
- Magnificent ornamental gardens at Villandry
- Easy-paced, relaxed cycling away from the main tourist trails

Enjoy a peaceful tranquillity often undiscovered by visitors to the Loire. Our gentle cycling holidays ensure you see some of the most splendid châteaux whilst travelling along country lanes and riverside paths away from the well-beaten tourist trail. The route wends its way through verdant valleys, past flower-filled cottage gardens, acres of vineyards, and charming rustic villages.

Bypass the traffic but not France’s ‘Valley of the Kings’ – see the elegant pinnacles of the Château d’Ussé, graceful Azay-le-Rideau, and the Château de Villandry, surrounded by some of the finest formal gardens in France ; admire the magnificent



Caves de Monplaisir, Chinon

castles where Henry II, King John and Richard the Lionheart held court ; explore historic Chinon, the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud and the pretty villages of Huismes and Candes St.Martin.

## ITINERARY

**7 nights:** Noyant to Villandry | Arr ✈ Tours

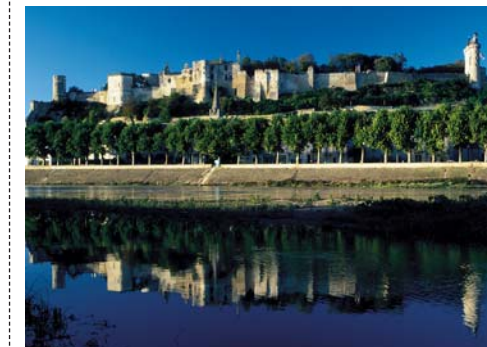
- Day 1 Noyant de Touraine**  
Arrive in Tours. Transfer with your host to your first hotel, the splendid Château de Brou. Dinner is taken this evening in the château.
- Day 2 Noyant de Touraine to Chinon • Cycling day**  
23m; 37km  
A gentle ride through the Val de Courteveau through sleepy villages, and then following tracks through Touraine vineyards, sampling the produce if you must. The charm of rural France is all yours today. Chinon is your base for three nights.
- Day 3 Chinon • Rest day**  
A full day in Chinon with its many attractions. Enjoy the view from the Tour de Boissy, part of the Château de Chinon; explore the mediaeval castle, and stroll along the cobbled streets of the old town.
- Day 4 Chinon Loop Tour • Cycling day** 23m; 36km  
Our suggested ride today takes you along a quiet river towpath and then through a forest to the Royal Abbey of Fontevraud, the largest complex of monastic buildings in France. Continue along a scenic route to Candes St.Martin and the nearby Château de Montsoreau, before pedalling back to Chinon
- Day 5 Chinon to Azay-le-Rideau • Cycling day**  
21m; 33km  
Leave Chinon through fields and vineyards and along the River Indre to the magnificent Château d’Ussé, the model for the castle in the tale of ‘Sleeping Beauty’. Continue to Azay-le-Rideau your base for the next two nights.
- Day 6 Azay-le-Rideau • Rest day**  
The village centres around the 16th century château, one of the most elegant in the Loire area, set in woodland and surrounded by a moat. You can view the interior and there are *son-et-lumière* displays in the evening. The village itself is very attractive and boasts some excellent restaurants.
- Day 7 Azay-le-Rideau to Villandry • Cycling day**  
15m; 24km  
Cycle along the river to the superb Château de Villandry with its remarkable gardens restored to their 16th century splendour, and said to be the finest in France. The Château is open to the public.
- Day 8 Return Home**  
Transfer with your host back to Tours for your flight or rail journey home.

**4 nights:** Chinon to Villandry | Arr ✈ Tours

- Day 1 Chinon**  
Transfer with your host from Tours to your hotel in Chinon for two nights.
- Day 2 Chinon Loop Tour • Cycling day** 23m; 36km  
See day 4 of 7 night itinerary.
- Day 3 Chinon to Azay-le-Rideau • Cycling day**  
21m; 33km  
See day 5 of 7 night itinerary. 1 night in Azay-le-Rideau.
- Day 4 Azay-le-Rideau to Villandry • Cycling day**  
15m; 24km  
See day 7 of 7 night itinerary. 1 night in Villandry.
- Day 5 Return Home**  
Transfer with your host back to Tours for your flight or rail journey home.



Chateau Villandry



Chinon Castle



Rigny-Ussé

## TOUR & TRAVEL INFORMATION

**Terrain**  
Cycle on country roads and river towpaths. On the approach to Azay-le-Rideau on day 5 (day 3 of 4 night tour) there is a 2 mile ride on a main road. Route is generally flat or downhill, except on day 4 (day 2 of 4 night tour) when there are short ascents to Fontevraud and Candes St.Martin.

**Daily Mileage**  
15-23 miles (24-37 km)

**Climate**  
Average maximum daytime temperatures in the period May to September range from 20-27°C (68-80°F). Rainfall averages just 2" per month.

**Travel Information**  
Flights from the UK to Tours are available with Ryanair from Stansted.

By rail : Eurostar from St.Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford to Lille, then TGV to Tours St.Pierre des Corps.

**Transfer Information**  
Tours Airport or Tours St.Pierre des Corps railway station to Noyant de Touraine – approx 1 hour.

Return from Villandry to Tours – approx 45 mins.

## PRICES

Prices are per person and exclude flights. Board basis is bed & breakfast with one evening meal on the first night (7 nt tour only). Adult prices are based on two people sharing a room.

	MAY / JUNE	JULY / AUG	SEPT
<b>ADULT</b>			
<b>4 nights</b>	£ 369	£ 379	£ 369
<b>7 nights</b>	£ 649	£ 699	£ 649
<b>CHILD (2-12 YEARS)</b> (sharing a room with 2 adults)			
<b>4 nights</b>	£ 299	£ 299	£ 299
<b>7 nights</b>	£ 499	£ 499	£ 499

Single room supplement: £20 per night

## DEPARTURE DATES 2010

**Any day 1 May 2010 to 30 September 2010**  
4 nights: Chinon (2), Azay-le-Rideau (1), Villandry (1)  
7 nights: Noyant-de-Touraine (1), Chinon (3), Azay-le-Rideau (2), Villandry (1)



Café by the Loire