

Cycling holidays in Loire valley

B02-ST chateaus from Chambord to Tours

Self-guided cycling tour (8 days & 7 nights or 7d/6n) with accommodation in 2 or 3-star hotels – no dinner

B027N-ST tour - 8 days & 7 nights

Day 1 – Arrival at Blois –

Discovery tour of the city- You will visit the imposing chateau that reunites around a same courtyard four buildings from different centuries, four high points of the French Architecture and houses the Beaux-Arts and Archeological museums. You will tour the Saint Louis cathedral, numerous churches and gardens that make the city more attractive. Bicycles delivery and adjustment at the hotel at 6:00 pm or in the next morning - *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star in Blois.*



Day 2 – chateau of Chambord

Loop ride of 35 km (21 miles) - You cycle along Loire river or on the hillsides covered with vines. You will cross some picturesque villages before reaching Saint Dyé sur Loire, a former river port where passed all building materials for the erection of Chambord château. You will tour this village, its narrow lanes, its wells and remains of walls. Then you will go to Chambord, 6km away, through fields and forests. True Mecca of the French Renaissance, embodiment of the royal power of François I before Louis XIV, the Chambord castle never ceased fascinating its hosts and visitors, today as much as five centuries ago... 440 rooms, 365 fireplaces, 83 staircases! Amazing madness required by a King who wanted to affirm his power to the powerful ones of Europe! Chambord is the most palatial and the most dazzling castle of the Loire Valley. Back to Blois via the green and shady Cosson valley - *Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel in Blois*

Day 3 –Beaugard and Cheverny chateaux

44 km/22 miles ride – You leave Blois crossing the Loire river and you head to Cellettes and chateau of Beaugard through forest. The interest of this Renaissance style castle, modified though out the centuries, lies in its splendid



Galerie des Illustres (Gallery of the Celebrated Ones). This gallery hosts over 300 Kings, Queens and Greats of European Courts' portraits of the era. Do not miss the Cabinet des Grelots (Bells Cabinet), quaint little work cabinet. After a nice walk in the magnificent park, you continue to cycle through countryside to discover the refined elegance of the Cheverny castle with its classical white stone façade, seigniorial mansion built in the mid 1600's. The castle, kept its furniture and decoration from the XVII century. It is surrounded by a magnificent English style park harboring the orangery and a kennel hosting a pack of 70 dogs that only await for the sound of the horn to thrust. In the adjacent trophy room, over 2 000 antlers are exposed. You

keep on this ride through fields, vineyards and forests, crossing some villages like Chitenay and Les Montils. Then you will cycle along the Beuvron, lovely river, to Candès sur Beuvron and Chaumont sur Loire - *Lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel in Chaumont.*



Day 4 - Château of Chaumont and Montrichard

28 km/17 miles ride – Start your day by visiting Chaumont chateau. Demolished by Louis XI in 1465, it was then replaced by a more modern castle built by the Amboise family, who gained fame during the Italian wars. It was modified again during the XVIII century and lost its defensive look with the disappearing of the building closing the courtyard on the valley side. The castle of Chaumont is richly furnished and decorated. At the end of the XIX century, Prince Amédée of Broglie had luxurious stables installed as well as an English style landscaped park at the same time the castle was being restored. You will cross forest and vineyard and come across the Cher riverbank and Montrichard. You will go up alleys bordered by vintage houses and reach the square donjon,

the ultimate testimony of a fortress, which used to protect the bridge over the Cher River. From atop that hill, you will get a breathtaking view of the town and the valley. You may want to visit the town's beautiful churches along with some interesting fountains. You will cross over the bridge and take a last look at the magnificent view of the town before continuing on to Chenonceaux and its renowned castle, one of the most beautiful and most elegant of the Loire valley.

Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel in Chenonceaux village.

Day 5 –Chenonceau chateau and Amboise

18 km/11 miles ride – this day starts with the visit of Chenonceau castle. Erected on the Cher River, atop an old windmill's foundation, the chateau is a true illustration of the Renaissance era's architecture. A ladies castle according to French history since they supervised its construction embellished it and saved it from the French Revolution's damages. The castle is surrounded by a magnificent park and some beautiful French style gardens. It hosts a marvelous collection of vintage furniture from the Renaissance era, tapestries dating from the XVI and XVII centuries as well as some vintage master pieces. You leave the Cher banks to go to Amboise through forests, vineyards and some lovely small valleys. You will discover the pagoda of Chanteloup on the outskirts of Amboise. This Chinese style construction of a pure Louis XVI style was erected in 1775 and offers atop its 44 meters an imposing view of the Loire valley and the Amboise forest. It is the last testimony of the Duke of Choiseul's famous castle, destroyed in 1823 by a group of estate merchants who sold it away stone by stone! There you will enjoy old-fashioned outdoor activities or will take a romantic stroll by the 3 hectare pond. You reach Amboise and end this day with a discovery tour of the town which hosts several old houses and manors. The Town Hall Museum is housed by an ancient mansion built during late 1500's. There you may view some harmoniously displayed objects and documents, reminders of Amboise's rich past in a Renaissance setting. Virgin of the XIV century tapestries from Aubusson, King Louis Philip's furniture, testimonies from the Duke of Choiseul and few paintings from his castle - *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel in Amboise*



Day 6 – Amboise, Montlouis and Vouvray vineyards

30 km/18 miles ride - the day starts with the discovery of Clos Luce and Amboise chateaux. the Clos Lucé castle, beautiful white and pink stone construction was the last home of Leonardo Da Vinci. Invited to France by François I, the famous Italian artist stayed and worked there until his death. Let yourself be amazed by the genius of this visionary man while discovering the famous machines he drew and which were recreated under the patronage of IBM. Traverse this ancient town and its numerous alleys bordered by vintage houses and you will reach the Loire riverbank and its castle. Erected during the XV and XVI centuries, at the request of Charles VIII and François I, the Amboise Castle was the first regal mansion under the French Renaissance therefore hosting an exceptional furniture collection. Overlooking Amboise, the gardens offer one of the most beautiful landscapes of the Loire River. Then you will cycle through vineyards of Montlouis and Vouvray to reach Tours. Tasting is not forbidden....

Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel in Tours center

Day 7 –Tours and St Côme priory

Tours is a town of art and history. This ancient Gallo-Roman capital became Saint Martin's town during the IV century when the inhabitants begged him to be their bishop. A great builder, Saint Martin covered the Touraine grounds with churches and chapels. He also required the erection of the Marmoutier monastery on the North river bank of the Loire. During the V century, a basilica was erected above Saint Martin's tomb. Today, only two towers remain: the Charlemagne Tower and the Clock Tower. During the XV and XVI centuries, Tours became the capital of the French Kingdom. It enjoyed a true blossoming of art and architecture. It is the perfect place to stroll along alleys and small parks, around the Place Plumereau bordered by beautiful wooden houses, or in the cathedral district, which has begun construction in the XIII century and was not finished before the XVI century. You may visit the cloister Psalette which is located right next to it and the castle whose tower Tour de Guise is the only remains from the XIII century. Tours possesses beautiful museum: the Beaux Arts museum located in the ancient bishop or the archeological museum of Touraine region located in the beautiful Hôtel Gouin – true masterpiece from the Renaissance era. You can leave the city to go to St Come priory, 5 km away, to admire the remains of this stop on the way to Santiago de Compostella where Ronsard poet is buried in the middle of a magnificent rose garden, a contemporary creation inspired by Medieval and Renaissance gardens - Return of cycles at 6:00 pm at the hotel - Lodging and breakfast in the same hotel



Day 8 – Tours – end of the cycling tour after breakfast

Bo26N-ST tour- 7 days & 6 nights

Same itinerary but the tour ends day 7 after breakfast

Season

From beginning of April to End of October. You start the tour the day you want

What's included

- 7 night accommodations in 2 or 3-star hotels with breakfast (Bo27N-ST tour) and 6 for Bo26N-ST tour
- No dinner
- Rental of fully-equipped hybrid bike including helmet, pannier, lock, puncture repair kit, map wallet and a theft/accidental damage insurance
- transfer of luggage between hotels and guest houses
- Road book including cycling itineraries, detailed maps, information about sites to see, wineries and restaurants on route and Green Michelin tourist guide about Loire valley
- Bilingual emergency phone call support 7 days a week

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the cycling tour area – Travel and bike liability insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,... are not included

Tour difficulty

No major difficulty. This tour is for everybody in good health. Rolling countryside with occasional hills or short ascents with low elevation gain (in vineyards for example) you cycle quiet country roads or sometimes gravel tracks that link chateaux and towns.

Getting there and away

By road: Blois is located by A10 motorway (exit 17 – Blois)

By train: Direct trains from Paris-Austerlitz to Blois (about 2 hours journey)

TGV (fast trains) between Tours or Saint Pierre des Corps and Paris Montparnasse

Where park your car: Toll guarded car park in Blois. Back from Tours to Blois by train