



CHÂTEAUX OF THE LOIRE

TOUR ITINERARY



CYCLING
for SOFTIES



CHÂTEAUX OF THE LOIRE OVERVIEW

In the heart of fairy-tale France lies the Loire Valley, an enchanting region of elegant châteaux and blooming gardens. On this tour you'll have the chance to visit these fabulous sights as you cycle from castle to café to boutique hotel. As you pedal peacefully along the Loire à Vélo, enjoy the gentle sounds of songbirds and the smell of fresh flowers. Along the way, stop off at vineyards for a tasting before visiting one of the many châteaux. On this tour, you'll visit the Château du Rivau, Château d'Ussé, Château de Brézé, Château d'Azay-le-Rideau as well as many more. Each have their own distinct story and tale to discover, thanks to a history that stretches back a thousand years.

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"Brimming with châteaux as far as the eye can see, the Loire Valley is famous

for its aristocratic estates and rolling vineyards. Boasting outstanding wines and top-quality local cuisine, the Loire is a must-visit destination for your cycling holiday."

GEORGE, CYCLE EXPERT



FRANCE

ITINERARY

DURATION: 8 DAYS

EASE: 

Easy: almost exclusively flat, with no significant ascents



DAY 1

Arrive at Tours, Poitiers or Renne

Your first hotel is in the beautiful medieval town of Chinon, set on the banks of the majestic Vienne River. Steeped in history, the town was once King Henry II's preferred place of residence. You can still explore the impressive 12th century Plantagenet fortress, which was also home to Richard the Lionheart.

We love

Visiting Château de Chinon which served as the administrative centre of the Angevin empire



View of Chinon from the Castle



Château du Rivau

DAY 2

Château du Rivau and Rigny-Ussé

Distance 14 miles (23km)

Once you're ready to explore beyond Chinon, we suggest a round trip route to the Château du Rivau, a fairy-tale castle with beautiful gardens, botanical art and sculptures. The small village of Rigny-Ussé boasts another ancient dwelling - the magnificent Château d'Ussé - as well as amazing views of the Loire from its location on the edge of the Chinon forest.

We love

The Château du Rivau, where Joan of Arc once visited

DAY 3

Chinon to Montsoreau

Distance 13 miles (21km)

Today you will follow the Loire à Vélo cycle route which meanders along the river to the charming old riverside town of Montsoreau, often referred to as the 'most beautiful village in France'. Along the way we recommend stopping at Fontevraud Abbey: a prison in Napoleon's day, and now a historical site, music and exhibition venue.

We love

The Fontevraud Abbey where Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine are buried



La Loire à Vélo



Château de Saumur

DAY 4

Saumur and Brézé

Distance 18 miles (30km)

Today we suggest a day trip to Saumur, a beautiful town with a typically imposing château overlooking the river. Explore its wondrous wine cellars, wander down medieval streets, and enjoy feeling spoilt for choice when it comes to choosing where to dine. Alternatively, cycle to Château de Brézé, another classic French castle in the wine region, complete with underground tunnels and wine presses still in use today.

We love

Tasting the unique red wines produced in Saumur

DAY 5

Montsoreau to Azay-le-Rideau

Distance 23 miles (36km)

Cycling along the Loire to the River Indre, you'll come to a beautiful medieval village; home to Château d'Azay-le-Rideau, built on an island on the river. A lovely place to stay, with great cafés and restaurants to peruse too.

We love

Exploring the Château d'Azay-le-Rideau and its beautiful gardens



Château d'Azay-le-Rideau



Château Villedary

DAY 6

Château Villedary

Distance 10 miles (16km)

After relaxing in Azay-le-Rideau for a while, you might like to visit the amazing terraced gardens at the Renaissance Château Villedary. It's a great spot for a picnic lunch.

We love

The gardens at Château Villedary are a dream for budding gardeners, with plenty of inspiration for your own flower beds

DAY 7

Azay-le-Rideau to Chinon

Distance 18 miles (30km)

Your final day in the saddle will take you back to Chinon, where you can pick up some souvenirs, wander the banks of the river, and enjoy a glass of the finest local wine in the dappled sun.

We love

Enjoying a crepe in the centre of town at the Grand Carroi crêperie



Chinon Fortress



Cycling Through Town

DAY 8

One final al fresco breakfast before we say "au revoir".



Hotel Diderot

OUR FAVOURITE HOTELS ON THE ROUTE

HOTEL DIDEROT

Hotel Diderot is a simple family run 17th century town house built around a very pretty flowered courtyard. Much enjoyed and appreciated by our cycling gardeners, this is also a lovely place for breakfast. The hotel has a traditional, old fashioned interior with great oak beams in many of the rooms. The delicious breakfast jams are all home-made.



Hotel la Marine de Loire

HOTEL LA MARINE DE LOIRE

La Marine de Loire is a 4* hotel with a bar and garden, in the centre of the village. The delightful rooms have views of either the river or peaceful garden. This hotel also offers treatments in its excellent spa 'CinqMondes' (must be pre-booked before arrival). There is an indoor heated spa pool and unlimited access to the spa is included for all of our guests to enjoy.



Hotel Biencourt

HOTEL BIENCOURT

The Hotel Biencourt, chosen for its warm welcome and service, was originally a schoolhouse with its own private courtyard, tucked away in a pedestrianised street. Wonderfully quiet, the rooms have modern décor and organic bed linen from the fair-trade market. The Chateau d'Azay-le-Rideau is only 100 yards away.

OUR CLIENTS ONTOUR

Here's what some of our Softies clients had to say about their cycling holidays with us - as well as a few happy memories captured on camera...

"Perfect cycling holiday for those who are not "head down and cycle fast" cyclists. A beautiful way to enjoy such stunning scenery."

KELVIN, REVIEWED JULY

"The châteaux visits, the countryside and the varied restaurants. All of it was excellent. Great variation."

CHRISTOPHER, REVIEWED JUNE

"Fantastic trip, brilliantly organised tour treating us to the stunning scenery of the Loire, visiting breathtaking châteaux and sampling delicious French cuisine. Savouring the memories!"

RUTH, REVIEWED OCTOBER

"A blend of cycling and culture. We loved the variety making each day different."

HEATHER, REVIEWED JULY

"The rejuvenating feeling of freedom that cycling through the countryside brings, we loved the continually changing scenery and the confidence that wherever we cycled, stayed or ate, it was all thoughtfully chosen and of a high standard"

JACKIE, REVIEWED AUGUST

Rob



Ruth



Sandra



WHY SOFTIES?

Our luxurious cycling holidays aren't about clocking up the miles, they're about the time in between. Welcome to life in the easy lane...

With a warm summer breeze on your skin and beautiful views in every direction, is there any better way to explore some of Europe's most beautiful countryside than by bicycle? We don't think so. Because there is so much to see and do along the way, our luxury cycling holidays are all about taking it nice and slow. Stop and explore, eat glorious meals, stay in delightful hotels, and relax knowing everything else has been taken care of.

CYCLE LIKE A SOFTIE, SLEEP LIKE A KING

Whether you take it exceptionally easy in the saddle every day or decide to push yourself a bit, everyone deserves a little luxury in the evening, including fabulous cuisine and wonderful wines. We've hand-picked only the loveliest places to stay across some of the most beautiful regions in France, Italy and the UK. From rustic country inns full of charm to elegant townhouses and deluxe château hotels, you'll enjoy a warm welcome and indulgent food and drink wherever you go.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Tailor-made as standard
- Freedom to cycle at your own pace
- Delicious evening meals (as per quote)
- Bed & breakfast in almost exclusively three, four and five star hotels
- Expert on-the-spot support
- Your luggage carried to the next hotel
- Itinerary with maps and notes (including GPS navigation on selected tours), suggested routes and places to see
- Fully serviced touring bikes with water bottles, panniers and puncture repair kits
- E-bikes also available for booking, as well as children's tag-alongs
- Flights, trains and transfers on request



WE'RE KEEPING IT GREEN

SUSTAINABILITY

Cycling for Softies has been committed to providing eco-friendly and sustainable cycling holidays for over 35 years. We keep this environmentally friendly activity at the heart of what we do, offering advice and resources for our clients to ensure a sustainable future for travel.

Where possible, we encourage our guests to travel via train instead of flying, with over 30% choosing to do so. Many tours are easily accessed via rail or even car.



Working with Mossy Earth, we are committed to offsetting all staff travel through planting trees. Every little helps and you can do your bit by planting a tree at one of Mossy Earth's current projects in either Ireland or Romania. They only plant native trees and always in a rewilding or conservation project.



We have partnered with World Bicycle Relief to help provide bikes to farmers, entrepreneurs, healthcare workers and children in developing countries. More than 400,000 specially designed and durable Buffalo bikes have already been delivered, which creates an efficient mode of transport in rural areas. With every Cycling for Softies holiday booking, we donate £5 on your behalf.



**READY
TO MAKE
IT HAPPEN?
GET IN
TOUCH
TODAY TO
SPEAK TO
A CYCLING
EXPERT...**



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