



Why book this trip?

Explore the magnificent chateaux of the Loire Valley. Cycle through pleasant towns and villages and visit medieval Amboise and elegant Azay-le-Rideau along the way.

- **Montrichard** - Bustling market town with a rich medieval heritage
- **Chateau of Chenonceau** - Spanning the Cher river and is among the most photographed of the Loire
- **Food and Wine** - Experience fine local cuisine and optional wine tasting.



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 6



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader / Driver



TRANSPORT
Bicycle
Taxi



ACCOMMODATION
7 nights
comfortable hotel



CYCLING GRADE:
Easy



GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport

Our trip begins at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Terminal 2E (CDG) at 12pm. If you would like to join the complimentary airport transfer today, the latest your flight can arrive is 11.30am. We then travel together by train (approx. 5hrs) to historic Chenonceaux, home to one of the most famous and beautiful chateau in France. There will be an introductory briefing and bike fitting this afternoon. If time allows there will be a short optional 10km cycle ride along the Cher River, for those who wish.

If your flight arrives into Paris earlier in the day, you may have time to wait ahead of our group transfer to Chenonceaux. If you wish to drive to the start of the trip, please ask us for parking details. If you plan to make your own way to Chenonceaux please inform us so that we are not waiting for you at the airport.

Our group meeting point will be landside in Terminal 2E at the exit from baggage reclaim and customs controls.

If you have booked an optional e-bike, you will be required to pay the €250 or £250 cash deposit and sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Le Relais de Chenonceaux (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Circular ride to Montrichard for wine tasting or chateau visit

We start by exploring the area around Chenonceaux. We ride east to the town of Montrichard where we can taste the food and wine of the Cher valley, view the 17th century Château of Gué Péan, this is a gentle introductory ride. Following the local back roads through small, quiet villages, this afternoon gives time for an optional tour of the large Monmousseau wine caves.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (Total 166 metres ascent and 166 meters descent)



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Le Relais de Chenonceaux (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Cycle along forest paths to Amboise

After the morning optional visit to the Château of Chenonceaux, we pedal through the village of Chissay into the countryside. We cycle through the tranquil Royal Hunting Forest and several pretty villages towards our overnight stop in Amboise. On arrival you may choose to visit Clos Lucé, the house where Leonardo da Vinci spent his last 3 years and now a museum dedicated to his life and work, or the Royal Château of Amboise on the banks of the Loire River.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres (Total 263 metres ascent and 263 meters descent)



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Chaptal (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Pedal a cross country route to Azay-le-Rideau

A longer days' cycling on cross country routes via St Martin-le-Beau and Nitray to Cormery, a town famous for its macaroons, and then along the River Indre, with stops at Veigné and Artennes-sur-Indre.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres (Total 387 metres ascent and 387 meters descent)



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel de Biencourt (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Spend the day exploring Azay

We spend the day in Azay, where we can visit the château and walk in its gardens along the banks of the River Indre. For those wanting to explore further, south-east of Azay is the troglodyte village of Villaines-les-Rochers, now famous for its willow basketweaving. Or north of Azay is Villandry, with its beautifully recreated Renaissance garden, one of the finest in the whole of France.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 38 kilometres (Total 214 metres ascent and 214 meters descent)



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel de Biencourt (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Cycle to Chinon through the fairy tale scenery

South-west of Azay, en-route to Chinon and situated between the banks of the Loire and the Forest of Chinon, is the Château d'Ussé - a truly romantic château and reputedly the setting for the fairy tale 'Sleeping Beauty'. On the north bank of the river are the vineyards of Bourgeuil, famous for their velvety red wines. A variety of routes to Chinon are possible, depending on your preferences.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (Total 349 metres ascent and 349 meters descent)



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Le Lion D'Or (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Cycle the 'Wine Route' of Chinon or explore the town

Today we suggest that you walk through the cobbled streets of the old town of Chinon and up to the Fortress, where Joan of Arc identified the Dauphin, or ride the circular cycle route to the southeast along the River Vienne through the famous Chinon vineyards. Alternatively, you can take a westerly direction with the option to visit Fontevraud Abbey, which houses the tombs of the Plantagenet Kings including Henry II and Richard the Lionheart.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 43 kilometres (Total 272 metres ascent and 272 meters descent).



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Le Lion D'Or (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport

Departing Chinon early this morning, we travel up to 5 hours by train to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Terminal 2E (CDG) where we will arrive at about 2pm and this is where our trip ends. The earliest your flight can depart is 4pm.



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

Trip information

Climate and country information

France

Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	2 Pin Round	Catholic	French

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Montrichard - Entrance to Keep Euros 5 mornings.

Montrichard - Entrance to Château of Gue Pean Euros 5.

Chenonceaux - Château of Chenonceau Euros 9.

Château of Azay-le-Rideau €10,50

Amboise - Entrance to château Euros 8 and to Clos Luce Euros 12.

Villandry - Entrance to château and gardens Euros 7.50, to gardens only Euros 5.

Usse - Entrance to château Euros 11.

Clothing

In general pack for warm weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential. Also, a pair of long trousers or tracksuit bottoms are useful for cycling along hedgerow-lined footpaths. There are some opportunities to swim in the rivers or local swimming pools. Please note that French health regulations require men to wear \ proper\ Lycra trunks rather than shorts in the pool.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to trips that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage in a soft rucksack or holdall (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. We are unable to carry excess luggage above this allowance. Any excess luggage should either be left in storage or forwarded by you to the hotel in Chinon. Suitcases are not recommended. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where

a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £20 of local currency for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

France

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£11	£16.00 - 18.00	£4	£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bicycle, Taxi

Accommodation notes

Comfortable - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the

entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

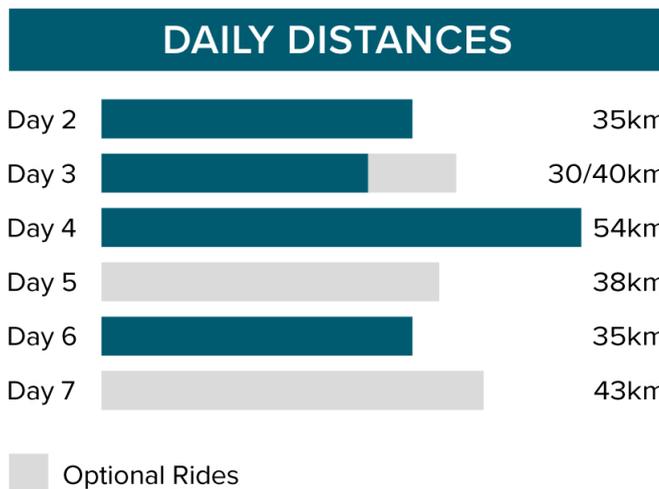
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

France

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Cycling information



General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 245 km over six days (an average of 41 km per day) with further optional rides available. Three of the cycling days are circular routes and therefore optional. We cycle mainly on tarmac country lanes and gravel tracks. Maps are provided to cycle individually or in groups while the Explore Leader drives the support vehicle, except on circular routes when the Explore Leader will cycle with the group. We have graded the route as easy. GPX files are available for this holiday.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike included

21 gear RTE 520 hybrid bikes with front suspension. Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost.

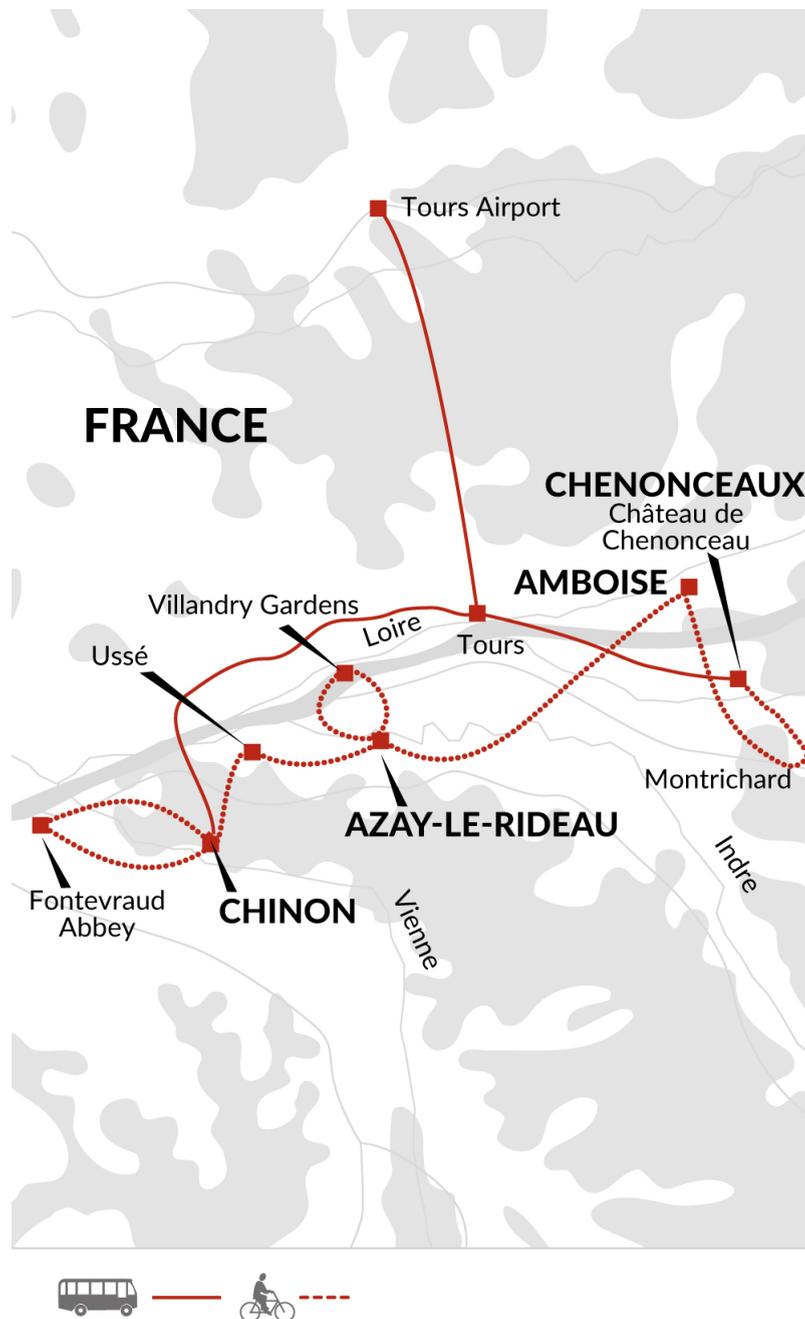
Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear RTE 520 hybrid and will be the correct frame size for your height. These are unisex step-through frames, but women's step through frames are available, but are limited in number and size and may vary in bike type - please request at time of booking. A 15-litre pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point and is driven by the Explore Leader. Maps are provided to cycle individually or as a group. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet and water bottle.

Electric bikes (available for an additional cost) will be RTE 700 unisex step-through frame bikes with front and rear suspension fitted with a 250watt Geonaute 8FUN motor. You will be required to pay a refundable cash 250 Euro or GBP deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Cycling grade

Additional Information



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**