

EXPLORE!



Self-Guided the Loire Valley by Bike
8 days

France - Trip code CSFL

Self-Guided the Loire Valley by Bike

Bountiful vineyards, fruit orchards and delightful villages all explain why the Loire Valley is known as 'the garden of France'. Cycle a historic route from Blois to Angers through the Loire Valley. Best explored by bike, the riverbanks reveal a landscape dotted with castles and medieval towns.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Châteaux of the Loire Valley** - Cycle between the magnificent chateaux in the 'Garden of France'
- ★ **Amboise** - Bustling market town with a rich medieval heritage
- ★ **Chateau of Chenonceau** - Spanning the Cher river and is of the Loire
- ★ **Local produce** - Try 'rillettes' (a rough pork paté)
- ★ **Loire Wine** - sample the fresh, fruity and crisp local wines

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, 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.

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Blois

Your cycling holiday starts in the hillside city of Blois. If you arrive early you can walk through the historic cobbled streets, see the impressive late-Gothic Blois Cathedral and pay a visit to the Royal Chateau de Blois for its wonderful architectural overview and history of the Loire castles. If you arrive early you could cycle to the castle of Chambord and come back along the banks of the Loire. Alternatively you could relax with a glass of wine in one of the local bars.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 37km (optional).



Accommodation: Hotel Louise de Savoie (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cycle from Blois to Amboise

Cycling along the Loire Valley uncovers a country rich in history and heritage. Today you will pass Candé sur Beuvron and see the impressive Chateau de Chaumont, perched on a headland with a wonderful panorama over the Loire. The castle is well worth a visit along with its wonderful park. On arrival to Amboise pause on the edge of town to visit the Chateau du Clos Luce, Leonardo Da Vinci's former home and where he lived until his death in 1519. Tonight you stay in the charming town of Amboise with its historical links to the French Royal family, markets and plenty of good restaurants and cafes to relax and sample some of the local wines and produce of the area.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 43km.



Accommodation: Hotel La Blason (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Cycle to Tours via the impressive Chenonceaux castle

If you haven't had the time to visit Amboise and the Clos Lucé you can always do so before leaving for Tours. Your first stop on leaving Amboise will be the tiny village of Chenonceaux, home to one of the most famous and beautiful chateau in France. Spanning the Cher River it was built on the foundations of an old mill. After your visit you follow the local backroads through small, quiet villages to Tours.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 53km.



Accommodation: Hotel du Manoir (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle from Tours to Langeais, optional loop to Azay Le Rideau

Today's ride is one of the most beautiful stages of the Loire, along the banks of the Cher River to the castle of Villandry and its wonderful gardens and water works. After that you'll continue through the levee and cross the Loire to reach Langeais and Louis XI's medieval castle. It is possible to add a cycle loop to visit Azay Le Rideau - a Renaissance castle built on an island in the middle of the Indre during the reign of François I.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 31km with an additional 16km for the optional ride to Azay Le Rideau.



Accommodation: La Fleur de Lys (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Ride from Langeais to Chinon

You leave Langeais and its fortress by a suspended bridge and continue following the Loire downstream. Your route is towards Bréhémont retracing the end of yesterday's ride for a short while. It offers a wonderful panorama over the Loire and the traditional boats. Take the time to visit the castle of Ussé - local tradition maintains that this was the castle Charles Perrault had in mind when writing 'The Sleeping Beauty'. This classic route then follows the Loire on a cycle path for 5km where it reaches the confluence with the Indre; then by Avoine and Savigny en Véron and the shores of the Vienne to Chinon.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 38km.



Accommodation: Hotel Plantagenet (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Cycle from Chinon to Saumur, Optional loop to Fontevraud Abbey

Today's cycling is along another beautiful stage from the Vienne River to Savigny en Véron. The Vienne meets the Loire at the pretty village of Candes St Martin. In Montsoreau you can make a short detour to the Abbey of Fontevraud, one of the most beautiful heritages of the Loire Valley, which houses the tombs of the Plantagenet Kings including Henry II and Richard the Lionheart. From here there are only 18km until Saumur and two routes available. One route has a few steep ascents (including 18% in Parnay!) and travels through the heart of the Saumur Champigny wine region. Alternatively you can cycle to Saumur along the Loire Valley avoiding the vineyards and steep climbs.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 35km with an additional 12km optional round trip to Fontevraud Abbey.



Accommodation: Hotel Le Londre (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Ride from Saumur via Genes to Angers

You may wish to visit the 10th century castle of Saumur before heading off on your bike. Cycling today is quite easy, except the last few kilometres that will bring you to Hauts d'Angers. Cross Genes, cycling along the Loire to Cunault (home to one of the most beautiful Romanesque churches in Anjou) and climb to the pond of Joreau. After passing the dolmen of Madeleine and descend to Genes. Arrive in the historical and cultural region of Anjou along the Loire and you'll pass by the abbey of St Maur, the Benedictine priory of St Rémy. Cross the Loire to reach St Mathurin sur Loire (former port between Saumur and Angers), La Daguinière and Angers. You will arrive in Angers where the castle is surrounded by a fortress built by St Louis and houses a huge hanging of the Apocalypse. Don't miss the visit of the old town.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 61km



Accommodation: Hotel de Europe (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

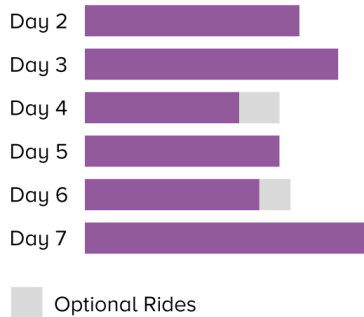
DAY 8 - Trip ends Angers

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCES



CSFL Distance Chart

General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 261km over six days (an average of 43.5 km per day). 70% of this route is on cycle paths and the rest on quiet tarmac country roads with little or no traffic. The route is mainly flat with a few short steep hills (some of which can be avoided). We have graded the route as easy to moderate.

Bike included

18 gear Archade Cambridge hybrid bike.

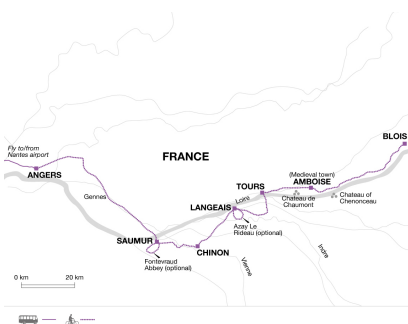
Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is an 18 gear Archade Cambridge hybrid bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. A handlebar bag, rear pannier bag and water bottle holder is provided as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

EasyToModerate



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 pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bicycle



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

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

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

French

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

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 tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

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, insects, pollen, sun etc) , cycle gloves (padded for more comfort) and a water bottle or water delivery system (eg camelback or platypus). 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. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

Country Information

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

£11

Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

Beer price

£4

Water price

£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

Recommended airport

Tours or Nantes Airports.

Flying to your destination

We'd recommend return flights to Nantes or Tours Airports which are served by both budget (including Easyjet, Ryanair) and non-budget airlines (including Air France) from multiple airports in the UK. You can book the Eurostar and regional trains with Rail Europe as an alternative to flying to any of these locations.

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - 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.

Arrival and departure information

At the start of your trip you can fly into Tours or Nantes Airports.

Transfer to Blois from Tours airport

- You can take a taxi from the airport to Saint Pierre des Corps train station (15 minutes) then a train from St Pierre des Corps to Blois (30 minutes).
- You can pre book a private transfer

Transfer from Angers to Tours airport

- You can take a train (1h 15 minutes) several trains per day then a taxi from Tours station to Tours airport (15 minutes).

Transfer to Blois from Nantes airport

- Bus or Taxi to Nantes train station (10 km), then train from Nantes to Blois, (2h 5 minutes). Several trains per day operate between Nantes and Blois.

Transfer from Anger to Nantes airport by:

- You can take a train (37 minutes), several trains per day
- Bus or taxi from Nantes station to Nantes airport, 10 km.

Alternatively you may wish to travel by train

For details of train table tables see this website <http://uk.voyages-sncf.com/en/>

Paris Gare d'Austerlitz to Blois: 1h 40 minutes

Paris Gare Montparnasse - Tours: 1h 15 minutes

Tours - Blois : 20 min

Anger - Blois : 1h 23 minutes, several trains per day

Essential Information

FCO 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 and Commonwealth 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 consider applying 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 now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. 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.
