

LIFECYCLE ADVENTURES' GUIDE TO THE LOIRE VALLEY



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– see inside cover



**LIFECYCLE
ADVENTURES**

PLANNING | ABOUT THE AREA | OVERNIGHT TOWNS | ON TOUR FAQ

Guidebook this book

Planning Your Tour

Where to stay before tour

Getting there

Things to book

What to pack

About the Area

Routes & highlights

Geography & history

Food & drink

Essentials

Overnight Towns

Overviews

Restaurants & bars

Sights & activities

Town plans

On Tour

Using the On-Tour App

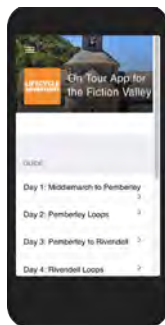
Navigating the routes

Our services

Safety & enjoyment

On-Tour App for smartphones

You will be sent a link to **download your On-Tour App a few weeks before the start of your tour.**



The app includes everything you need to explore each day during your tour including:

- > Ride options
- > Places for lunch
- > Points of interest
- > Directions to accommodations
- > End of tour logistics
- > Contacts
- > FAQs

See the *Using the On-Tour App* section of this guidebook for more details about this app.



LIFECYCLE ADVENTURES' GUIDE TO **THE LOIRE VALLEY**

Written and Researched by
Victoria Craig & Gregory Craig



A Warning and a Request

We make great efforts to ensure the accuracy of our guides. However, things do change, and errors can creep in. If you have corrections for this guidebook or discover new things along the way, please drop us an email and we will incorporate your suggestions in our next edition. You can reach us at info@lifecycleadventures.com.

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Image by Jeanne Hervé-Maley

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Orléans: Rue Jeanne d'Arc and Cathedral

GETTING THERE

Getting to Paris, France

Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) is the main airport serving Paris and has flights from all major European cities as well as from many U.S. cities. The simplest way to get from the airport to central Paris is by taxi (approx. €65). There is also a suburban train (RER B line) that goes to the Gare du Nord in 25 minutes (€12 pp). From the Gare du Nord you can connect to the extensive Metro system. Uber also operates at CDG airport and throughout Paris.

Getting to the Start of Your Tour

Tours typically start in Orléans, 130 kilometers south of Paris. We are also able to collect you from Tours as an optional extra. The Orléans train station has direct trains from Paris (Gare Austerlitz) that take between one and two hours depending on which train you take. From the train station you can either take a taxi or walk to your hotel.

The following sites are helpful when booking travel within France:

- Rome to Rio: <https://www.rome2rio.com/>
- The Train Line: <https://www.thetrainline.com/en-us>
- Local train company: <https://www.groupe-sncf.com/en>

WHERE TO STAY BEFORE YOUR TOUR

Guests typically stay in Orléans before their tour and in Tours after their tour. We have had good feedback for the following hotels and B&Bs.

In Orléans

Empreinte Hotel

 80 Quai du Châtelet, 45000 Orléans, France

 +33 02 38 75 1052

 <https://empreinte-hotel.com/en/>

Hôtel de l'Abeille

 64 Rue d'Alsace Lorraine, 45000 Orléans, France

 +33 02 38 53 5487

 <https://hotel-abeille.com/>

Hôtel d'Orléans

 6 Rue Adolphe Crespín, 45000 Orléans, France

 +33 02 38 53 3534

 <https://www.hoteldorleans.com/>

In Tours

Les Trésorières

 2 Pl. Jean Meunier, 37000 Tours, France

 +33 02 46 99 1010

 <https://www.les-tresorieres.com/>

Hotel & Spa Oceania

 5 Bd Heurteloup, 37000 Tours, France

 +33 02 47 05 3712

 <https://www.oceaniahotels.com/oceania-l-univers-tours>

Ferdinand Hôtel Tours

 20 Rue du Maréchal Foch, 37000 Tours, France

 +33 02 47 05 7059

 <https://ferdinandhotel.fr/>

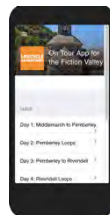
DOWNLOADS FOR YOUR PHONE

We recommend you download the following to your phone before you travel:

- On-Tour App (**essential**)
- eBook of this guidebook
- Google Maps for the area
- WhatsApp
- eSIM data plan

Downloading the On-Tour App

A few weeks before the start of your tour, we will send you an email with a link to download your On-Tour App. We recommend you download the app and familiarize yourself with its contents before you leave home. See the On Tour section of this guidebook for more details about this app.



Download an eBook of this Guidebook

We recommend downloading the eBook version of this guidebook. This will allow you to reference the guidebook from your phone or tablet as well as giving you the ability to zoom in on maps and click on website links and telephone numbers.

Scan this QR code with your phone/tablet's camera. Then follow the instructions below, depending on your device.



On an iPhone or an iPad

- Open the PDF using the above QR code (this can take more than a minute depending on your WiFi)
- Tap Share (there can be a few seconds delay after tapping share)
- Tap Books

The PDF then opens automatically and saves into the Books app. Access it via the Library section of the Books app.

On Google Smartphones or Tablets

Set Settings

- On your device, open Google Play Books
- At the top right, tap your profile picture
- Tap Play Books settings
- Check the box next to Enable PDF uploading

Download the Book

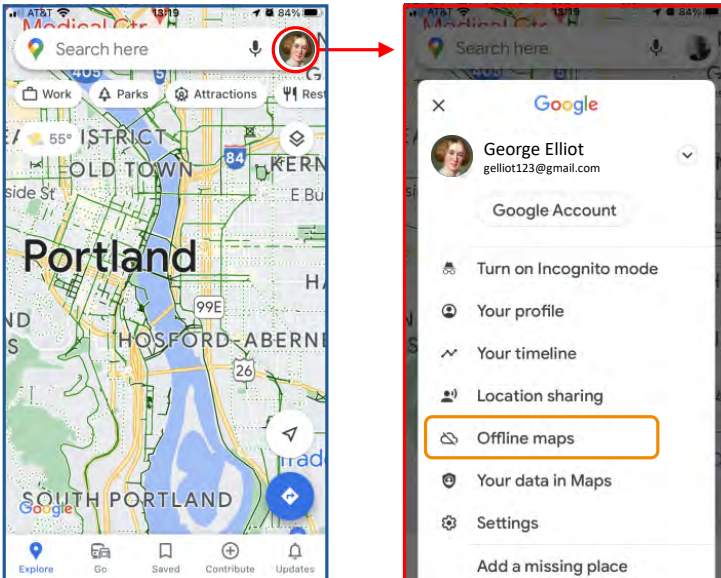
- Download the PDF file to your device using the above QR code
- Open your Downloads or Files app
- Find the file
- Tap More and then Open With and then Play Books or Upload to Play Books.
- To find uploaded files in the Play Books app, tap Library and then Uploads.

Downloading Google Maps

The On-Tour App includes many links to Google Maps. We recommend downloading the maps for this area in Google Maps before leaving home. You will need to be signed into your Google account to use this feature. Instructions are as follows.

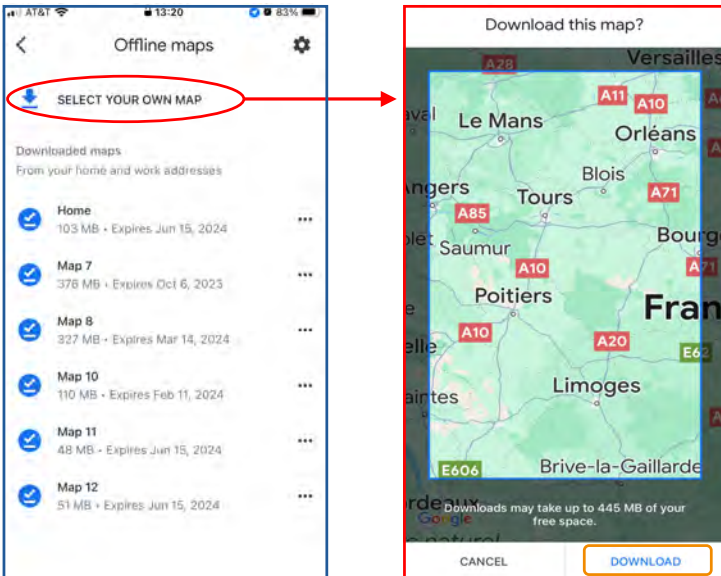
Instructions

In the Google Maps app, tap on your profile picture and then select Offline Maps



Selecting Offline Maps

Then zoom the map on France to include Orléans, Tours and Saumur – click download



Select an area that includes Orléans, Tours and Saumur

WhatsApp

Most of our guides like to use WhatsApp for staying in contact with you during your tour. If you have downloaded the app and set up an account, that would be helpful. If not, don't worry, we can also use texts and phone calls.

Phone Plans

Having access to cellular data while on tour will make it easier to navigate your routes and access information via our On-Tour App (though with a little forethought you can manage without).

If travelling abroad, you may need to inform your cell phone company that you are traveling and request them to activate your account for use abroad. There are typically packages available to pre-purchase that reduce the cost of using your phone abroad.

Many of our guests choose to activate an eSIM card for travelling. This will give you access to cheap data plans (e.g. \$5 for 1 GB of data for a week) and do not require you to swap out your existing SIM card. Companies providing eSIMs include Airalo and Nomad. Plans can be purchased online and downloaded onto your phone. If you plan to use an eSIM, we strongly recommend you buy and set up the plan in advance of your trip. You can then activate it when you arrive at your destination. Note that not all devices support eSIM technology so it is best to check before leaving home.

THINGS TO BOOK BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Transfers on Tour

Leisure Route from Blois to Amboise

If you plan to ride the Leisure route from Blois to Amboise, let your guide know at the start of the tour. This will allow them to organize your van transfer to Candé-sur-Beuvron for that day.

Leisure Route from Montbazon to Chinon

If you plan to ride the Leisure route from Montbazon to Chinon, let your guide know at the start of the tour. This will allow them to organize your van transfer to Château d'Azay-le-Rideau for that day.

Restaurants

In high season, you may want to book your dinners in advance – especially if you plan to eat at the higher-end establishments. You can find restaurant recommendations in the *Overnight Towns* section of this guidebook.

Restaurants that typically require reservations include the following:

In Blois

- Christophe Hay - Fleur de Loire
- Brut Maison de cuisine

In Amboise

- Les Arpents
- Restaurant Le Château de Pray
- L'Écluse

In Montbazon

- L'Évidence

- Restaurant Le Moulin Fleuri
- Domaine de la Tortinière

In Chinon

- Les Années 30
- L'Océanic

Wineries

Reservations for tasting can often be made while on tour and walk-ins are usually (though not always) welcome. However, if you would like to eat at a winery or take a winery tour, we would recommend that you book in advance. You can find a list of wineries on this tour, with details of what route they are on, in the *About the Area – Wineries on Your Route* section of this guidebook.

Castles

It is *not* typically necessary to purchase tickets in advance to visit the Loire Valley châteaux. However, purchasing tickets in advance can save time queueing, can save money, and gets you access to guided tours and special events. For this reason, we recommend booking in advance for châteaux that you know you want to visit.

Tickets purchased for castle visits are not typically date or time specific: usually they must be used within the year of purchase. The exception to this is Château du Clos Lucé in Amboise but they have never been known to sell-out.

You can find a list of castles on this tour, with details of what route they are on, in the *About the Area – Castles on Your Route* section of this guidebook.

Other Activities

If you want to add any of the following activities to your tour, we recommend booking them in advance. This is especially true during high season: July to mid-September.

Hot Air Balloon Flights

Loire Montgolfières offer hot air balloon flights over the Loire Valley. Flights are twice-daily at 6:00 AM and at 7:00 PM (times vary slightly depending on the hour of sunrise and sunset). The experience includes a 1-hour flight over the Loire, a glass of champagne and a wine tasting at Domaine des Pierrettes.

The launch site is in Rilly-sur-Loire, 20 minutes from both Amboise and Blois. The operator can organize a transfer from/to your hotel for an additional cost of approximately €60 (cash, to be paid on the day).

Cost is from €240 per adult. Please note that flights are weather dependent. If you purchase a ticket through us and the flight cannot take place due to weather, we will refund you the ticket price. If you choose to purchase a flight directly, tickets are non-refundable unless you pay €40 extra for “Option Liberté.”

☎ +33 07 44 99 19 27

🌐 <https://www.loiremontgolfieres.fr/>

WHAT TO PACK

What We Provide ... so you don't need to

We provide the following equipment:

- ☐ Two LifeCycle Adventures water bottles
- ☐ Floor pump that travels with your luggage
- ☐ Phone mount to attach your phone to your handlebars
- ☐ Energy bars for each day

For guests renting one of our bikes, we also provide:

- ☐ Helmets (though we recommend you bring your own due to fit and knowledge of previous use)
- ☐ A hand pump, a spare tube, and equipment to change a flat tire
- ☐ A lightweight combination bike lock
- ☐ Rack bags or panniers are available on request¹. NOTE: some bikes, including those with carbon seat posts, cannot be fitted with rack bags or panniers. If they are not available, we recommend bringing a small backpack
- ☐ Rear lights are available on request¹
- ☐ Battery bank to recharge your phone en route are available on request¹ (subject to availability)

What You Should Bring

To help you prepare for the trip, below is a list of gear to consider bringing in addition to the usual clothes you would pack for any trip.

Gear For on the Bike

- ☐ Breathable brightly colored cycle jerseys or tops
- ☐ Hi-vis rain jacket and waterproof pants/trousers
- ☐ Cycling gloves. Consider long-fingered gloves for colder temperatures.
- ☐ Cycling shoes or stiff-soled, closed-toed shoes
- ☐ Helmet (see *What We Provide*, above)
- ☐ Fleece or warm sweater
- ☐ Padded cycling shorts (and possibly some chamois cream)
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Bandana (optional but good for protecting head or back of neck from the sun)
- ☐ Leg warmers and arm warmers (handy for changing temperatures)

Other Essentials

- ☐ Emergency contact details and first aid kit
- ☐ Cell phone and charger
- ☐ Battery bank to recharge your phone en route (if you have one)

¹ Items available "on request" should be requested via email or the Booking Form at least two weeks before the start of your tour.

- ☐ Favorite or needed medication
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Medical & travel insurance

Good Things to Have

- ☐ Sandals or flip flops to pack in your day bag if wearing cycling shoes
- ☐ Rear light for daytime use
- ☐ Small backpack (see *What We Provide*, above)

If You are Renting One of Our Bikes

If you are renting one of our bikes, we would strongly suggest you consider bringing the following.

- ☐ Your own pedals if you typically ride with clipless pedals
- ☐ Your own saddle. The rental bikes have generic saddles, and many riders prefer to use a saddle with which they are familiar. This is even more true if you normally ride with a female specific saddle

If You are Bringing Your Own Bike

- ☐ Bar bag or seat-post bag
- ☐ Bike lock
- ☐ Spare inner tube and puncture repair key
- ☐ Hand pump
- ☐ Tools & spares for your make of bike
- ☐ Lubricant & solvent for maintaining chain

If you are bringing your own bike, we would also recommend that you have your bike tuned by a bike store before you travel. If something about your bike's set-up has been bothering you, your trip is a great excuse for sorting it out.

If shipping your bike to us before your tour, please be sure the bike is cleaned before being packed.



Image by Jeanne Hervé-Maley

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Château de Chambord, near Blois

INTRODUCTION

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Loire Valley is an outstanding cultural landscape decorated with vineyards, historic towns, and castles (châteaux). These castles are some of the most extravagant in France, each telling a tale of regal grandeur and architectural opulence.

The region is a great expression of *la douceur de vivre* (the sweetness of life) with its leisurely lifestyle, mild climate, and mellow wines. The area is also known as the Garden of France for its rich agricultural lands and vineyards.

The Loire Valley is relatively flat and much of the riding is along dedicated bike paths. These combine to make this a great destination for intermediate, leisure, and family cycling.

ROUTES & HIGHLIGHTS

The map on the following page shows the *intermediate* routes between the overnight towns (marked ). Easier and harder routes are also available. The map also shows some of the highlights in the area.

Each tour is customized to you and may not include all these routes and overnight towns. Typically, Chinon is only included on longer tours. Your customized routes are provided in the *On-Tour App* that accompanies this guidebook. The app includes:

- Detailed maps
- Leisure, Intermediate, and Challenge route options¹
- Places to have lunch along the routes
- Points of interest along the routes, including castles
- Wineries along the routes²

¹ Not all days have all levels of riding. Some days also have “Road” options as an alternative to gravel bike paths.

² Where applicable





1 **Château de Chambord**

With its distinctive French Renaissance architecture and remarkable double helix staircase designed by Leonardo da Vinci, Chambord stands as an unparalleled symbol of opulence and architectural ingenuity. This is typically one of the first of many châteaux you see on your tour.



2 **Blois**

Blois sits on a rocky outcrop on the northern bank of the Loire River. It is a captivating city rich in history and architectural splendor, including the majestic Château de Blois. The city suffered heavy damage during WWII but still exudes charm with its cobblestone streets, medieval timbered houses, and vibrant culture.



3 **Amboise**

A harmonious blend of Medieval and Renaissance charm on the southern bank of the Loire River. The skyline is dominated by the Château d'Amboise, the residence of Charles VIII, and there are breathtaking views of the Loire River from the hillside. The town is also the final resting place of Leonardo da Vinci.



4 **Château de Chenonceau**

Spanning the tranquil waters of the River Cher with its graceful arches, this castle embodies a blend of Renaissance elegance and captivating history. It is known as the "Ladies' Castle" for the remarkable women who influenced its destiny.



5 **Château de Villandry**

Château de Villandry is one of the most famous castles of the Loire Valley with stunning geometric gardens. Nearby Domaine de Cande is also famous as the location for the marriage of the Duke of Windsor (formerly King Edward VIII of England) and Mrs. Wallis Simpson, in 1937.



6 **La Loire à Vélo (bike path along the Loire River)**

La Loire à Vélo is an 800 KM cycling route that travels alongside the tranquil Loire River from the town of Nevers in central France to the Atlantic. The stretch from Sully-sur-Loire to Chalonnes-sur-Loire is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. At 1,200 kilometers, the Loire River is the longest river in France and meanders gracefully past enchanting landscapes, historic towns, and many impressive châteaux.



7 **Wineries**

Splendid scenery and densely packed vineyards make the Loire Valley a classic wine touring destination, with a range of excellent red, white, and crémant (sparkling) wines. You will have the opportunity to visit wineries most days of the tour on our routes.



8 **Chinon**

On the banks of the Vienne River, Chinon is renowned for its medieval fortress, Château de Chinon, where Joan of Arc first encountered Charles VII in 1429. Quaint boutiques line the streets and there are excellent restaurants. There are also numerous wine cellars and wineries in the town.



9 **Montsoreau and Candes-Saint-Martin**

Both Montsoreau and Candes-Saint-Martin are designated Plus Beaux Villages de France (the most beautiful villages in France). They feature on one of our Chinon loops – for longer itineraries only.

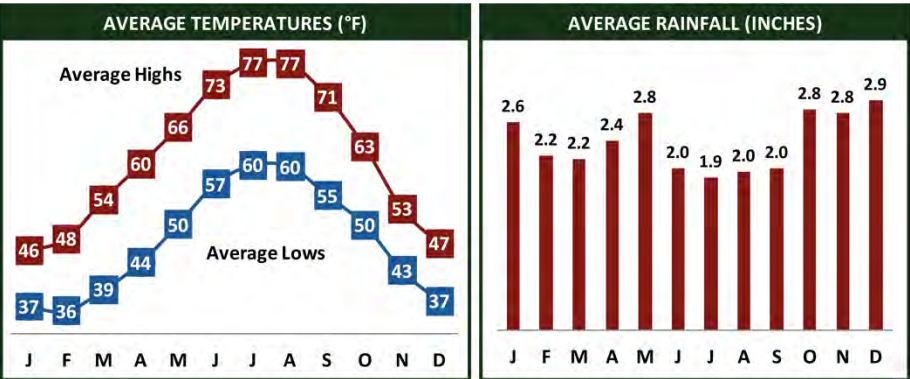


CLIMATE & GEOGRAPHY

Sitting in the middle of France, the Loire Valley enjoys a mixed (oceanic-continental) climate with warm summers and cool winters. The area is known as the “Garden of France,” partly for its fertile soils and partly due to its temperate climate and can have rain throughout the year.

The best months for a cycling vacation are from June through September when the temperatures are pleasantly warm and the risk of rainfall a little lower. In spring and fall there are fewer tourists, but you need to be prepared for cooler temperatures and a little more rain. We do not recommend touring here in winter.

The charts below show the monthly average temperatures (in Fahrenheit) and rainfall (in inches) for Tours, a town at the center of our routes.

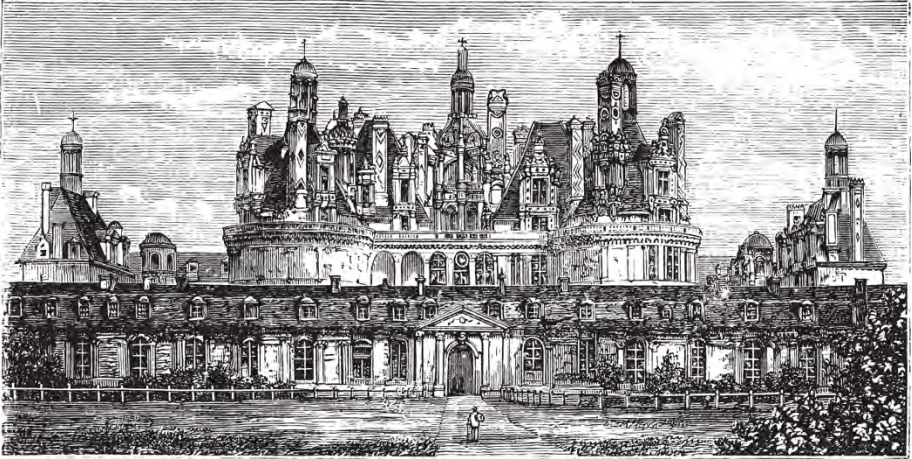


Data Source: www.intellicast.com

HISTORY

In Two Sentences

The Loire Valley region flourished during the Renaissance¹, fostering intellectual and artistic innovation amidst its picturesque landscapes. It has been a crucial stronghold throughout history, where royalty and noblemen erected their formidable fortresses, elegant country seats, and lavish retreats along the banks of the Loire River.



19th Century Engraving of Chateau de Chambord, Loire Valley

Key Dates

Pre-history	Before its recorded history, the Loire Valley, was inhabited by ancient peoples who left behind enigmatic megalithic structures, cave art, and archaeological artifacts, offering glimpses into their early civilizations and connection to the land.
52 BCE	The formation of the region as we know it today began after its conquest by Julius Caesar. Emperor Augustus is credited with bringing peace and stability to the Loire Valley.
4th century	Spread of Christianity by the first bishops of Tours (St. Gatien, St. Litorius, and St. Martin). The ancient Celtic towns at Angers, Bourges, Chartres, Orléans, and Tours became well known as centers of learning.
451	Huns repelled at Orleans
507	Frankish King Clovis conquers the region.
Middle Ages	Development of political and religious centers in the region under the influence of both the Plantagenet and Bourbon dynasties.

¹ A period of history and a European cultural movement covering the 15th and 16th centuries. The Renaissance marked the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity and was characterized by an effort to revive and surpass the ideas and achievements of classical antiquity.

9th to 12th centuries	A long period of territorial conflict: first among local warlords and later between France and England, after Henry Plantagenet (Henry II) inherited the English crown in 1154 and inherited/conquered much of western France.
1348 – 49	One-third of the population died in the epidemic of the Black Death.
1337 – 1453	Major battles between France and England during the Hundred Years' War. Joan of Arc led French forces and spurred them on to many victories. Her martyrdom in 1431 helped to inspire a French recovery.
1494 – 1525	Italian wars of Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francois I. Incidentally, this gave all three kings a taste for Italian art and architecture that can still be seen throughout the region including the castles in Blois and Amboise.
16th century	Many of the French nobility relocate to the Loire Valley, building grand châteaux. Wars of Religion between Catholics and Protestant Huguenots.
17th century	France's central political role and focus shifted to Paris, but the Loire River remained a key transportation route until the arrival of the railway.
1789 – 1799	French Revolution brings significant change. Not a great time to be a royal or a noble.
1793	The Vendée Uprising was a counter-revolution that took place in the Vendée department of France (close to where the Loire flows into the Atlantic Ocean). This was the most serious civil threat to the French republic after the 1789 Revolution.
1870 – 1871	Franco-Prussian War sees military engagements such as the Battle of Beaugency (where many of our tours start). This war set the stage for WWI by bolstering German confidence and power.
1940s	In World War II, the Loire's larger cities were occupied by the Germans (in 1940) and many were bombed by the Allies in 1944.
Late 20th – 21st centuries	The architectural evidence of the Loire's rich history led to the growth of the region's tourist industry. This, alongside its well-established industrial base and thriving agriculture, marked the Loire Valley one of the most economically stable regions of France.

FOOD & DRINK

Loire Food

Overview

Cuisine is immensely significant to the French: think bustling markets, casual bistros, warm croissants, and the village *boulangerie*. Each region has its specialties alongside iconic national dishes.

The food scene of the Loire Valley is a tantalizing fusion of tradition and innovation, reflecting the region's rich agricultural heritage and proximity to fertile lands. The area is renowned for its cheeses, such as the creamy Crottin de Chavignol and the tangy Sainte-Maure de Touraine. The Loire Valley also boasts succulent freshwater fish such as pikeperch and crayfish. Locally grown fruits include cherries, apples, and strawberries. Finally, the valley's vineyards produce world-class wines, from crisp sauvignon blancs to elegant cabernet francs, providing the perfect accompaniment to the region's culinary delights.



Asparagus

This region is renowned for its asparagus, particularly the white variety. Grown in the region's sandy soil, Loire Valley asparagus is celebrated for its tender texture and delicate flavor. This prized vegetable is a staple in local cooking.



Button mushrooms

The Loire Valley is a major hub for the cultivation of button mushrooms, known as "champignons de Paris." These mushrooms are primarily grown in the area's limestone caves which offer ideal growing conditions. Renowned for their delicate flavor and smooth texture, they are a key ingredient in many traditional Loire Valley dishes.



Goats cheese

Goat cheeses from the Loire Valley, such as Crottin de Chavignol, Valençay, and Selles-sur-Cher, are celebrated for their rich flavors and creamy textures. These cheeses are crafted using traditional methods and local goat milk, resulting in distinctive tastes that reflect the region's terroir. They are a staple in the local cuisine, often enjoyed with Loire Valley wines.



Rillettes

A traditional pork spread or pâté, slow-cooked until tender and finely shredded. Often enjoyed with crusty bread and cornichons (little green pickles), this delicacy has rich, savory flavors and a smooth texture.

Tarte Tatin

An iconic upside-down caramelized apple tart, tarte tatin is a beloved French dessert. A popular myth claims it was accidentally created in the 1880s at Hôtel Tatin in Lamotte-Beuvron (just south of Orléans) by sisters Stéphanie and Caroline Tatin. The delicious mistake resulted in a caramelized, buttery, and flaky tart.

Wines of the Loire Valley

Overview

The Loire Valley is the third largest wine producing area by volume in France and offers a wide range of wine styles. The major wine regions are Anjou, Saumur, Touraine, Sancerre, and Pouilly Fumé.

Dominant white wine grapes are Melon de Bourgogne, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc as well as Chardonnay (typically used for blending). Red wine varieties include Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Gamay, and Malbec (known locally as Côt). Sparkling wines here are produced with Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc grapes. Most sparkling wine is produced with the méthode champenoise (double fermentation) but some is produced using the méthode ancestrale (single fermentation) for a lighter wine. About a quarter of wine in the region is rosé, typically made from a blend of local red and white grapes. Some predominant local wines are described below.

Sancerre

Renowned for its crisp and aromatic qualities, primarily made from Sauvignon Blanc grapes. This white wine boasts vibrant acidity and flavors of citrus, green apple, and flint. The region's terroir, characterized by limestone and flint soils, imparts a distinctive minerality. Sancerre is a favorite for pairing with seafood, goat cheese, and salads.

Pouilly-Fumé

One of the Loire Valley's most revered wines. It is a distinguished Sauvignon Blanc wine known for its smoky, flinty character, derived from the region's silex (flint) soil. This wine offers bright acidity with flavors of grapefruit, green apple, and subtle



herbaceous notes. The terroir gives Pouilly-Fumé its signature minerality, making it an excellent match for seafood, goat cheese, and light poultry dishes.

Vouvray

Vouvray wines, made from Chenin Blanc grapes in the Loire Valley, are known for their versatility. They can be still or sparkling, and range from dry to sweet, influenced by the residual sugar levels at harvest. Renowned for their vibrant acidity and complex flavors, Vouvray wines reflect the region's terroir, offering a refined balance and elegance suitable for various pairings.

Chinon

Chinon wines, produced in the Loire Valley, are primarily made from Cabernet Franc grapes, specifically planted on each side of the Vienne River. These red wines are noted for their medium body, vibrant acidity, and flavors of red berries, herbs, and earthy undertones. The region's varied terroir, including limestone, clay, and gravel soils, imparts distinctive mineral characteristics. Chinon wines are versatile, pairing well with meats, cheeses, and hearty dishes.

Saumur

Saumur is renowned for its sparkling wines, made primarily from Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc, and Chardonnay grapes. The region's chalky tuffeau soils contribute to the wines' distinctive minerality and freshness. Saumur sparkling wines, produced using the traditional method, offer crisp acidity and flavors of green apple, citrus, and brioche, making them elegant and versatile.

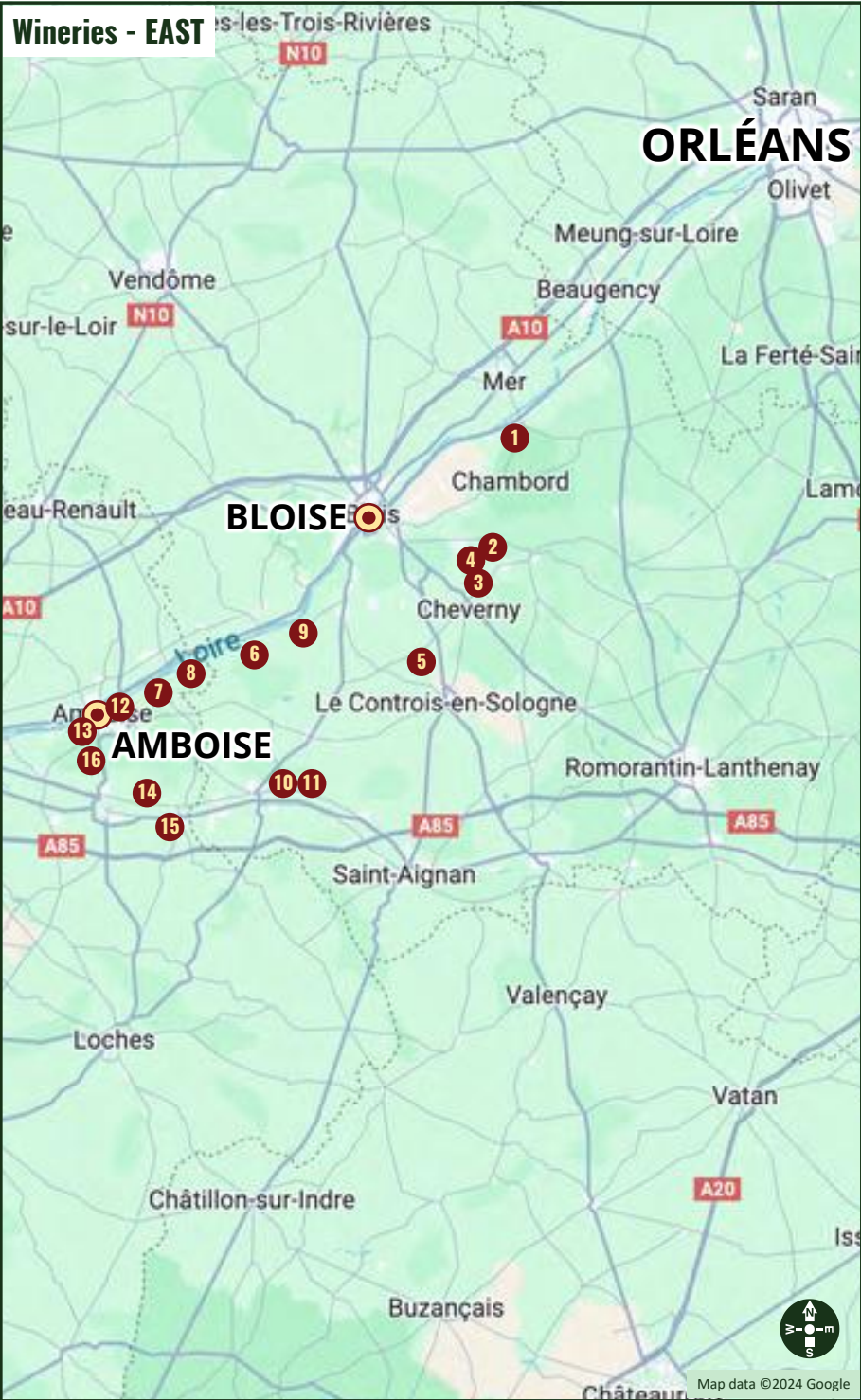
WINERIES ON YOUR ROUTES

Wineries are found throughout the Loire Valley although the areas around Chinon and Amboise have the greatest density of wineries. The maps on the following pages show the main wineries in the area that are also close to our cycling routes.

The table that follows the map shows which wineries are accessible to which rides. Use this table and your itinerary to see which wineries you will pass on your customized tour. This will allow you to decide where it is practical to visit and where you might want to make reservations.

Detailed maps and directions to the wineries are provided in the On-Tour App that accompanies this guidebook.





The following table shows which wineries are on which routes and which level of ride – Leisure (L), Intermediate (I), Challenge (C), or Road (R).

Route	Winery		Level			
			L	I	C	R
Beaugency to Blois	1	Domaine Du Croc Du Merle	√	√	√	√
Blois Loop	2	Les Vignerons de Mont-Près-Chambord	√	√	√	√
	3	Domaine Daridan		√		√
	4	Domaine des Huards		√		√
	5	Domaine Le Portail				√
Blois to Amboise	6	Domaine des Pierrettes	√	√		√
	7	Guillaume and Mathieu Plou & Fils	√	√	√	
	8	Xavier Frissant	√	√		
	9	Vignoble Tévenot		√	√	
	10	Caves Monmousseau			√	
	11	Trogló Degusto			√	
In or near Amboise	12	Caves Ambacia	-	-	-	-
	13	Cave SD	-	-	-	-
Amboise Loop A	14	Caves du Père Auguste	√	√		√
	15	La Gourmandière		√	√	√
	16	Closerie de Chanteloup		√	√	√
Amboise Loop B	36	Caves Cathelineau	√			-
	17	Domaine Sylvain Gaudron	√			-
	18	Cave des Producteurs de Vouvray		√	√	-
	19	Caveau du Château Moncontour - Vignobles Feray		√	√	-
Amboise to Montbazou	20	Château de Nitray	√	√	√	-
	21	Alain Joulin et Fils	√	√	√	-

Route	Winery		Level			
			L	I	C	R
Montbazon to Chinon	22	Château de l'Aulée	✓	✓	✓	-
	23	Château de la Grille	✓	✓	✓	-
	24	Clos de l'Echo - Domaine Couly-Dutheil	✓	✓	✓	-
In or near Chinon	25	Cave Monplaisir	-	-	-	-
	26	Domaine de Noiré / Jean-Max Manceau	-	-	-	-
	27	Pierre and Bertrand COULY	-	-	-	-
	28	Caves M Plouzeau	-	-	-	-
	24	Clos de l'Echo - Domaine Couly-Dutheil	-	-	-	-
Chinon Loop A	29	Domaine Wilfrid Rousse	✓	✓	✓	-
	30	Château du Petit Thouars		✓	✓	-
	31	Domaine Godefroy Jérôme			✓	-
	32	Clos des Quarterons - Domaine Amirault			✓	-
Chinon Loop B	33	Domaine de la Noblaie	✓	✓	✓	✓
	34	Domaine Brocourt	✓	✓	✓	✓
	35	Vignobles du Paradis			✓	

The *Winery Listings* in the Appendices provide the following information about each winery:

- History and background
- Wines produced
- Food availability
- Tours and tastings available
- Reservations requirements
- Opening hours
- Contact details

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CHÂTEAUX (CASTLES) ON YOUR ROUTES

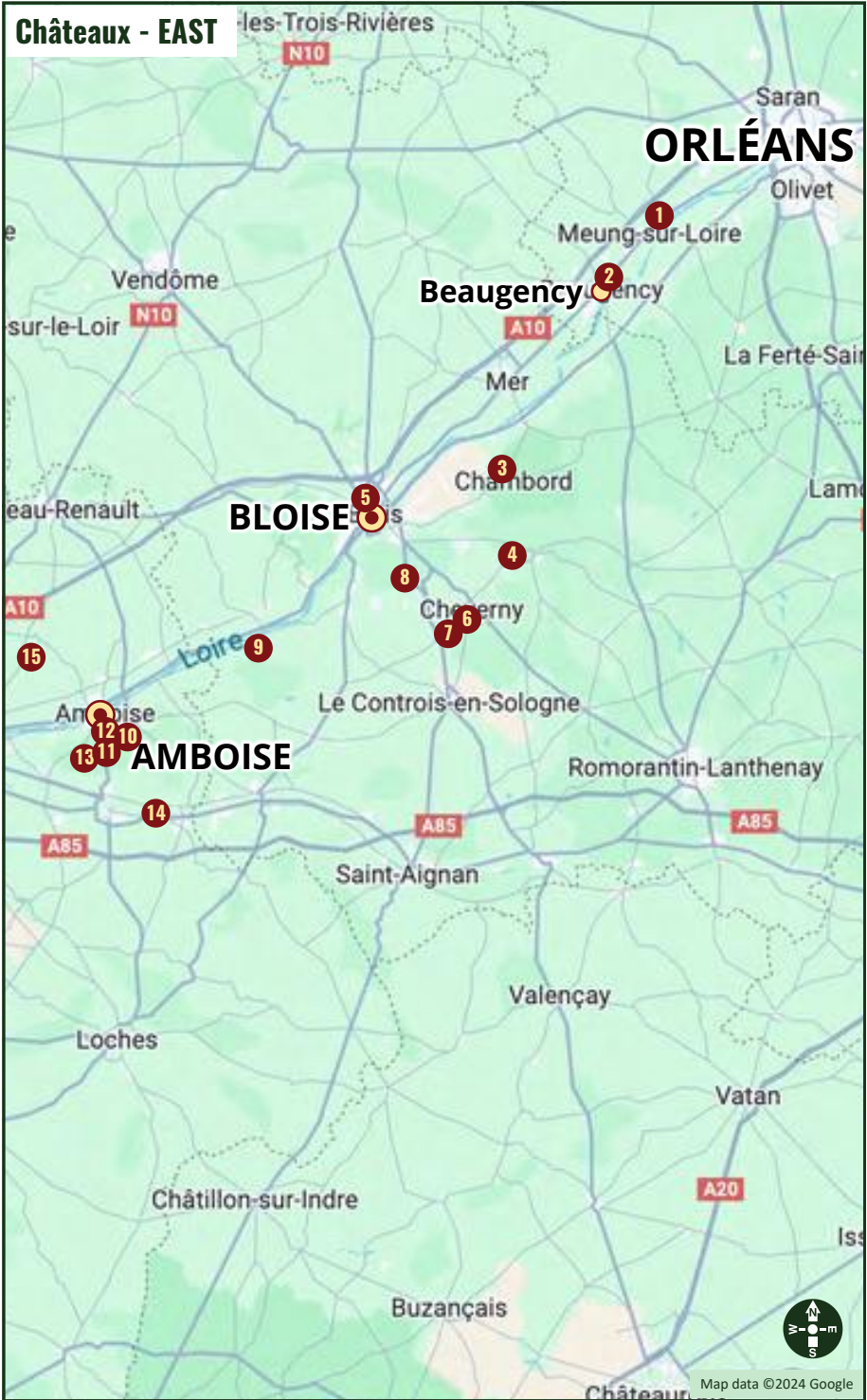
The majestic chateaux of the Loire Valley stand as timeless witnesses to France's rich history and architectural brilliance – from Medieval potency to Renaissance opulence. By the 16th century, the development of more effective artillery ended the need for medieval fortifications, shifting focus from feudal castles built for defense to elegant pleasure palaces for displaying luxury, status, and architectural beauty.

Extravagant châteaux are found throughout the Loire Valley. The maps on the following pages show the main châteaux in the area that are also close to our cycling routes.

The table that follows the map shows which châteaux are accessible to which rides. Use this table and your itinerary to see which châteaux you will pass on your customized tour. This will allow you to decide where it is practical to visit.

Even when not strictly necessary, purchasing tickets ahead of time can save you time and money on the day. Detailed maps and directions to the châteaux are provided in the On-Tour App that accompanies this guidebook.





The following table shows which châteaux are on which routes and which level of ride – Leisure (L), Intermediate (I), Challenge (C), or Road (R).

Route	Châteaux		Level			
			L	I	C	R
Beaugency to Blois	1	Château de Meung-sur-Loire			✓	
	2	Château de Beaugency		✓	✓	✓
	3	Château de Chambord	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4	Château de Villesavin				✓
In or near Blois	5	Château Royal de Blois	-	-	-	-
Blois Loop	3	Château de Villesavin			✓	
	6	Château de Cheverny	✓	✓	✓	✓
	7	Château de Troussay			✓	✓
	8	Château de Beauregard	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blois to Amboise	9	Château de Chaumont	✓	✓	✓	✓
	10	Château Gaillard	✓	✓	✓	✓
	11	Château du Clos Lucé	✓	✓	✓	
In or near Amboise	12	Château Royal d'Amboise	-	-	-	-
	11	Château du Clos Lucé	-	-	-	-
	10	Château Gaillard	-	-	-	-
	13	The Chanteloup Pagoda	-	-	-	-
Amboise Loop A	14	Château de Chenonceau	✓	✓	✓	✓
	13	The Chanteloup Pagoda		✓	✓	✓
Amboise Loop B	15	Château de Valmer		✓		-
Amboise to Montbazon	16	Château de Nitray	✓	✓	✓	-
In or near Montbazon	17	Montbazon Castle	-	-	-	-
Montbazon Loop	25	Domaine de Cande	✓	✓	✓	-
	26	Château de Villandry		✓	✓	-
Montbazon to Chinon	18	Château de Saché			✓	-
	19	Château d'Azay-le-Rideau	✓	✓	✓	-
	20	Château de l'Islette	✓	✓	✓	-
	21	Château d'Ussé	✓	✓	✓	-

Route	Châteaux		Level			
			L	I	C	R
In or near Chinon	22	Forteresse Royale de Chinon	-	-	-	-
Chinon Loop A	23	Château de Montsoreau		√	√	-
Chinon Loop B	24	Château du Rivau	√	√	√	√

The *Castle Listings* in the Appendices provide the following information about each castle:

- History and background
- Tours available
- Reservations requirements
- Opening hours
- Contact details

FUN FACTS (AND OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST)

Denis Papin

Denis Papin, a 17th-century inventor and physicist from Blois, is famous for inventing the steam digester, a precursor to the modern pressure cooker. Using steam pressure, it could quickly cook food and soften bones. His research also laid the groundwork for steam engines, significantly impacting steam technology and the Industrial Revolution. The Escalier Denis-Papin in Blois commemorates this pioneering inventor and offers panoramic views of the Loire River.



Bridges of the Loire

Bridges have spanned the River Loire for centuries, with one at Orléans dating back to 52 AD, later destroyed by Julius Caesar's army. Today, numerous crossings make it hard to imagine the Middle Ages, when there were only five bridges, or the 15th century, with just 13. Modern bridges reflect not only the evolution of bridge-building but also the rich history and relationships of the region.



Public Holidays

France is well known for its public holidays or "fêtes" or "jours fériés". They include national celebrations like Bastille Day (July 14) marking the French Revolution, and Armistice Day (November 11), commemorating the end of World War I. Religious holidays like Easter, Ascension Day, and Christmas are also widely observed. Bastille Day in particular sees huge celebrations, parties, and spectacular firework displays.



Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc: 1412 –1431) is intimately connected with the Loire Valley. For example, Charles VII met Joan for the first time at the Royal Court in Chinon; Joan set out from Blois as part of an army carrying supplies for the relief of Orléans; and Joan's army took control of Meung-sur-Loire from the English. For her exploits, Joan is the patron saint of France and honored as a defender of the French. As a military leader she transcended gender roles.



Tuffeau Stone

Tuffeau stone is a chalky, sandy, fine-grained limestone that has been extracted from numerous quarries in the Loire Valley. The rock was formed some 90 million years ago when the region was covered by a vast sea. Over the millennia, sediment from the sea floor, comprising fossilized living organisms and sand particles, became compressed to form what is now known as Tuffeau stone. Numerous buildings in the Loire Valley, from the most modest to the most grandiose, have been built from blocks of tuffeau stone, including many of the famous castles.



Guinguettes

Originally, a guinguette was a 17th Century tavern in the suburbs of Paris and of other French cities. The term comes from *guinguet*, a type of cheap green wine served there. In this region, the term refers to charming, riverside eateries along the Loire River with a festive atmosphere. Locals and tourists gather to enjoy a glass of wine and regional specialties in relaxed surroundings. In summer, they are also popular spaces for live music events.



ESSENTIALS

Hotel Services

Will hotels do laundry?

Yes, some hotels will do your laundry. Generally, it is better if you can put your clothes in on a day when you are spending two nights at an accommodation.

Please ask us if there is a question you have about a particular place you are staying.

Internet Access

Wi-Fi is common in hotels and restaurants (you might need to ask for the code) and is often free in tourist offices and other public places.

Can I use my charger and hair dryer in the Loire?

Standard sockets in France, as in the rest of Europe, supply electricity at 220 volts alternating at a 50 cycles per second (vs. North America where 110 volts, alternating at 60 cycles per second is standard).

The sockets are also different from the North American sockets: Type F (also known as *Schuko*). This socket also works with Plugs C and E.

To use your North American appliances in France, you will need to check they are rated for use with 220 volts and you will need a plug adapter.

Many phone chargers and PC chargers are rated for use at 220 volts however most North American hairdryers are not.



Money

The currency of France is the Euro (€).

Are credit cards widely accepted?

Yes, Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted in restaurants and hotels in the Loire Valley. However, credit cards tend not to be used for small payments (unlike the United States). American Express is not as widely accepted outside of the big hotels and car rental agencies.

Stores generally accept credit cards though some of the smaller food stores may not.

Ask your credit card company about foreign transaction fees before you travel. These can vary from zero to over 3%. NOTE: Credit card companies may decline your card if you have not notified them that you are travelling abroad.

Are there ATMs in all the overnight towns?

Yes, there is a good network of ATMs in the region, usually called “cash machines”. The coverage is similar to the United States and Canada with several ATM machine in each of the overnight towns we use as well as in many of the towns en route.

Typically, your bank will charge a fixed fee per transaction (around \$2) plus a variable fee of around 3%.

How many Euros should I bring/carry?

Cash is commonly used for everyday purchases throughout France. You will want to keep €100 to €200 on hand for cafés, smaller food stores, and taxis.

Communications

Is English widely spoken?

English is spoken, to some degree, in most hotels and restaurants and (much less so) in general stores. The further you get from the tourist centers; the less English is spoken. However, even in the remoter parts of France, people are used to dealing with people who do not speak French and are generally friendly and keen to help.

Will my cell phone work in France?

You may need to inform your cell phone company that you are traveling and request them to activate your account for use abroad. There are typically packages available to pre-purchase that reduce the cost of using your phone abroad.

Should I buy a French SIM card?

For longer trips – or if you need to make a lot of calls while abroad – this can be worthwhile. For shorter trips, where you will not be using the phone very much, it makes less sense – just go with an international package offered by your operator. If you are planning to buy a French SIM card, make sure your phone is unlocked before you travel, or you will also need to purchase a local phone (around \$30 for a basic model).

Many of our guests choose to activate an eSIM card for travelling. This will give you access to cheap data plans (e.g. \$5 for 1 GB of data for a week) and do not require you to swap out your existing SIM card. Companies providing eSIMs include Airalo and Nomad. Plans can be purchased online and downloaded onto your phone. If you plan to use an eSIM, we strongly recommend you buy and set up the plan in advance of your trip. You can then activate it when you arrive at your destination. Note that not all devices support eSIM technology so it is best to check before leaving home.

How will you communicate with me during my trip?

At the start of your trip, your guide will ask you how you want us to keep in touch. For most people this is by phone. Due to inconsistent coverage in the countryside and smaller towns, SMS texts or WhatsApp messages are often the most secure way for guide and guest to stay in touch. For this reason, we strongly recommend you have a cellphone plan that allows you to communicate via phone. See *Will My cellphone work in France*, above.

Exploring

How is the traffic on the roads in the Loire Valley?

On all our routes, we do our best to keep you on cycle routes or on low-traffic roads but at times it is necessary to ride on busier roads. The good news is that there are

plenty of other riders on the roads, so drivers are typically used to navigating around cyclists.

The French are, generally, very respectful of cyclists. The roads going in and out of towns can be quite busy, but the good news is you'll almost always be on a designated bike path and the traffic that you'll be dealing with most often is other cyclists!

Which routes can I ride with an eBike?

Typically, you can ride the Leisure and Intermediate routes on an eBike but your eBike range may be insufficient for some harder routes. A lot depends on your riding style, the model of bike, and the topography of the route. Your guide will help you calibrate which routes are practical for you to ride on your eBike.

Should I ride with lights?

We recommend riding with lights in low light or in poor weather. Please note that as of 2025, French law mandates that the rear light must emit a steady red beam – flashing rear lights are not permitted. If you are not bringing your own lights, you can request them from us via email or the booking form.

Is the guidebook in miles or kilometers?

Our guidebooks use kilometers. Kilometers are what the locals use and what are on the road signs. If you are bringing your own bike, we strongly recommend that you set your computer to measure in kilometers.

The good news is that there are 1.6 kilometers to the mile so what would be a 30-mile ride in the United States is a much more impressive 50-kilometer ride in France!

What general guidebook would you recommend?

This guidebook (with accompanying On-Tour App) is designed to help you navigate and enjoy your tour. Our objective is to tell you what you will see en route and help you understand your route options. As such, our guide does not have a detailed description of every potential sight you might visit en route – though we do try to list the major ones.

For a more general guidebook to the area, we would suggest either the *DK Eyewitness Loire Valley* or the *Lonely Planet Guide to France*. For more on architecture, history, and culture, we would suggest the *Michelin Green Guide to Châteaux de la Loire*.

What map would you recommend?

If you would like to have a large, fold-out map of the area, we would suggest Map 518 in the Michelin Regional series: Central France Michelin Regional Map. The scale is 1:200,000 and it is available from Amazon.

Local Customs

What are local dress codes?

French people tend to be relaxed and dress relatively casually. They are also used to having tourists from all parts of the world visit their towns and cities. It is quite acceptable and common to ride in Lycra or sportswear in the Loire. Obviously, if you

stop for lunch, this is what you will be wearing and restaurants will have no issue with it.

In the more upscale restaurants, people tend to dress a little more formally for dinner. This does not need to mean a jacket and tie but you will probably feel more comfortable if you avoid shorts and T-shirts at the dinner table.

During the day, you will see plenty of people in shorts, T-shirts, and summery tops. However, it is considered respectful to be a little more modest if visiting a church, for example, by covering shoulders and men removing hats.

What are typical opening hours?

As a very general rule, you can expect to see the following opening times:

- Museums, & monuments: 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Churches: 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Shops: 9:00 or 10:00 AM to 12:00 and 2:00 or 3:00 PM to 6:30 or 7:00 PM
- Restaurants for lunch: 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM
- Restaurants for dinner: 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM
- Other businesses: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Many restaurants have at least one day a week when they are closed. This is noted, where relevant, in this guidebook.

Some tourist attractions are only open from Easter through to September or October.

When should I leave a tip?

Tipping in France is far less pervasive than some other parts of the world like the United States; the French do tip, but modestly. Typically, a service charge is included in the price of the meal so a significant tip is not required – though a few Euros would be appreciated.

In the larger hotels, if someone has helped you with your bags it is common to tip a couple of Euros. In restaurants round up, or 5% to 10%. Taxi drivers are usually tipped 5% or 10%.

Safety and Annoyances

What number do I call in an emergency?

If you need emergency assistance, call 112. The operator will speak English.

The operator can often detect the location of the caller, but you should also be prepared to use your Ride with GPS app to help identify where you are.

Do we need to worry about theft or other crimes?

Petty theft from luggage, pockets, and launderettes is common in Tours and the larger cities. However, the countryside in the Loire is relatively safe. That said, it is good practice to be discreet with your valuables – leave them in the hotel safe where possible – and always lock up your bike if you cannot see it.

Medical Services and Pharmacies

Your hotel's front desk is the best source of information about medical services and pharmacies. However, please call us if we can be of any help. There are pharmacies in all the overnight towns.

How do I contact my embassy?

Embassy of the United States of America

 2 Avenue Gabriel, 75008 Paris, France

 Telephone: +33 (0)1 43 12 22 22

 <https://fr.usembassy.gov/>

Embassy of Canada

 130 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, 75008 Paris

 Telephone: +33 (0)1 44 43 29 00

 <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/france/>



Image by Jeanne Hervé-Maley

OVERNIGHT TOWNS

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Bridge Jacques-Gabriel, Blois

BLOIS

Overview

Blois is a picturesque, culturally rich, and historic city nestled on the Loire River. At the heart of the town stands the magnificent Château de Blois, a symbol of the city's royal heritage and a testament to its storied past. This castle served as the residence of several French kings and queens, witnessing pivotal moments in history, including the infamous assassination of the Duke of Guise in 1588. Blois's medieval streets are lined with quaint, half-timbered houses and bustling markets. Blois also has a vibrant cultural scene with a wealth of attractions to explore.

You can delve into the world of illusion and magic at the Maison de la Magie Robert-Houdin. This museum is dedicated to the city's famed illusionist, Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin. Art enthusiasts can enjoy contemporary exhibitions and performances, while food lovers can indulge in the region's gastronomic delights at charming bistros and high-end eateries.

For our tours, Blois serves as the gateway town to the picturesque Loire Valley, inviting travelers to embark on scenic adventures along the Loire River.

Restaurants and Bars

The beautiful city of Blois offers many dining options. Wild boar and venison are often on the menu with fish, another favorite. "Fresh" is of utmost importance here with much use of local produce, the most common being strawberries, asparagus, and sweet potatoes.

Christophe Hay - Fleur de Loire

This is a rare two Michelin star and a one Michelin Green star restaurant – meaning outstanding food with sustainable practices. Chef Christopher Hays takes pride in showcasing the finest products sourced from the Loire Valley in his culinary creations.

He exclusively uses fish caught in the Loire River by his trusted fishermen, while vegetables are harvested from his own garden and sourced from local market gardeners. The meat he serves comes from his own Wagyu breeding program. Such attention to detail makes a meal here a magical experience. Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch from 12:15 PM – 1:30 PM and dinner from 7:15 PM – 9:30 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations essential and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual.

 26 Quai Villebois Mareuil, Blois

 +33 24 668 0120

 <https://fleurdeloire.com/fr/restaurant-christophe-hay.html>

Les Banquettes Rouges

A lovely French bistro with good quality food and reasonably priced. Dishes are well presented, and service is friendly. Open Tuesday to Saturday lunch from 12:15 PM – 1:30 PM for dinner from 7:15 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations strongly advised, can be made by phone or email. Dress code is casual.

 16 Rue des Trois Marchands, Blois

 +33 25 478 7492

 <http://www.lesbanquettesrouges.com/>

Le Petit Honfleur

French food with a modern twist and beautifully presented. The menu is regularly changed as they only serve local, in season produce. Vegetarian options available. Wonderful desserts not to be missed! Open Tuesday to Saturday for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:15 PM and lunch from 12:00 PM – 2:15 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations advised. Dress code is casual.

 18 Rue Beauvoir, Blois

 +33 97 234 0648

 <http://www.lepetithonfleur.fr/>

Bro's

This is a Michelin recommended brasserie/tapas bar with great quality ingredients and good service. Portions are not large, so make sure to order enough. They have excellent wines, and it is worth saving space for dessert, particularly the chocolate mousse and lemon tart. Open Thursday to Monday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM and for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Reservations advised and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 36 Rue de la Foulterie, Rue Vauvert, Blois

 +33 02 54 70 4318

 <http://brosrestaurant.fr/>

Restaurant les Burgers d'Annie

Beautifully decorated restaurant with a warm welcome. Excellent burgers (with their unusual specialty bread) as well as great traditional cuisine. Good portion sizes and

quality ingredients. Another place offering great desserts! Open Wednesday to Friday for lunch from 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM and for dinner from 6:30 PM – 11:00 PM. Open Saturday and Sunday from 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM. Closed on Tuesday. Reservations advised. Dress code is casual.

 2 Rue Saint-Martin, Blois

 +33 97 911 8372

 <http://lesburgersdannie.com/>

Brut Maison de Cuisine

This is a Michelin recommended, small restaurant with a small menu, but everything that is served is of high quality. The menu is innovative and exciting with only the freshest of local produce used. If you can find a table, it is worth stopping for a meal here. Open Tuesday to Saturday for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM and lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 14 Quai Villebois Mareuil, Blois

 +33 25 456 8158

 <http://www.brutmaisondecuisine.com/>

Sights and Activities

Château Royal de Blois

Once the illustrious abode of French monarchs, this opulent palace now enchants visitors with its ornate royal chambers, gilded ceilings, intricate tapestries, and opulent furnishings. Château Royal de Blois makes an excellent introduction to the châteaux of the Loire Valley as its four grand wings showcase elements of 13th century Gothic, Flamboyant Gothic (1498-1503), early Renaissance (1515-24) and 1630s classical architecture.

Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €15. Guided tours and audio guides are extra. It is also possible to buy combined tickets (at a discounted rate) for Château Royal de Blois and/or the House of Magic and/or Sound and Light Show.

The Sound and Light Show is an evening show of light projections onto the interior castle walls, “bringing the castle to life”. Show at 10:00 PM or 10:30 PM depending on the time of year. Duration 45 minutes.

Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:30 PM, and 7:00 PM in July and August.

 6 Pl. du Château, Blois

 +33 02 54 90 3333

 <https://www.chateaudeblois.fr/>

Eglise St-Nicolas

In the 9th century, monks established an abbey devoted to St. Laumer's relics. In the 12th century, they embarked on building a new church that bridged Romanesque and Gothic styles. The chancel features early ribbed and pointed vaulting, while the 13th-century nave is a fine example of Gothic design as seen in Chartres. After the monks

departed in 1791, the abbey was renamed St. Nicholas in memory of a nearby demolished church. Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Free entrance.

 Rue Saint-Laumer, Blois

 +33 02 54 781 790

 No website

Cathédrale St-Louis

This simple yet elegant Gothic-style cathedral was constructed in the 12th century. The cathedral was later rebuilt and expanded after significant hurricane damage in the 17th century. The interior features graceful stained-glass windows (most of which were installed by Dutch artist Jan Diberts in 2000), and its grand tower offers sweeping views of the historic town and the Loire River and Valley. The multistoried bell tower is dramatically lit after dark. Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Free entrance.

 J je, 7B Pl. Saint-Louis, Blois

 +33 02 54 74 5042

 No website

Maison de la Magie (Magician Museum)

Located near the Château Royal de Blois this 'Maison' is a museum dedicated to the art of magic and pays homage to magician Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin. Visitors are entertained with displays of magic, illusions, and performances while exploring the fascinating history of magic. Booking in advance is advised but not required. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €13 per person. There is also the option to buy combined tickets for the castle and/or Sound and Light Show. Open daily from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM.

 1 Pl. du Château, Blois

 +33 02 54 90 3333

 <https://en.maisondelamagie.fr/>

Hôtel d'Alluye

Built in the early 16th century, this house is an exceptional Renaissance mansion. Commissioned by Florimond Robertet, a close adviser to King Louis XII, it has distinctive features including an elegant courtyard and finely carved decorations. The architecture was strongly influenced by the Italian Renaissance.

 8 Rue Saint-Honoré, Blois

 No website

Maison des Acrobates

A medieval timber-framed house known for its intricate carvings depicting acrobats. Built in the 15th century, this architectural gem showcases the craftsmanship of its era and offers a glimpse into medieval French urban life.

 3 Pl. Saint-Louis, Blois

 No website

Fondation du Doute

A contemporary art center showcasing an eclectic collection of multimedia works in a vibrant space. There is also a café. Open Wednesday to Sunday from 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Closed on Monday and Tuesday.

 14 Rue de la Paix, Blois

 +33 02 54 55 3748

 <https://www.fondationdudoute.fr/>

Escalier Denis-Papin

A grand staircase named after the local inventor Denis Papin. Situated near the Château de Blois, it offers a panoramic view of the Loire River and serves as an urban canvas for artistic displays, often adorned with creative murals that celebrate the city's culture.

 17 Rue Haute, Blois

 No website

Quartier Vieux Blois

The Quartier Vieux Blois, or Old Town of Blois, is a historic district that reflects the town's medieval and Renaissance heritage and is situated around the Château de Blois. Its winding streets are lined with half-timbered houses and charming courtyards as well as the Château Royal de Blois. The neighborhood exudes an old-world charm, offering visitors a glimpse into Blois' rich architectural and cultural past.

Observatoire Loire

A tour agency that offers an immersive experience into the natural and cultural heritage of the Loire River. They provide boat rides along the river: options are 1 hour for €11 per person, 90 minutes for €16 per person, or 2 hours for €23 per person. They require 4 people minimum to depart. Open Tuesday to Friday from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Monday. Located 2.5 km north of Blois on the north bank of the river.

 La, Parc des Mées, Levée de la Loire, La Chaussée-Saint-Victor

 +33 0254 56 09 24

 <https://www.observatoireloire.fr/>

Market Days

Blois has a superb weekly outdoor market on Saturdays from 8:30 AM – 12:45 PM. Located on Place Louis XII next to the castle.

They also have a Thursday night market in the summer (usually from mid-June to the end of August). Located on Rue des Jacobins and Saint-Lubin.

Festivals

In July and August, Blois hosts *Des Lyres d'Été*, a popular summer festival. The program is an exciting variety of theatre and music. The Tourist Information Office (see below) will have more details.

Other Useful Information

Tourist Information

Blois-Chambord Information Center (Tourist Information Office). Open daily from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM (closed on Sunday afternoon).

 5 Rue de la Voûte du Château, Blois

 +33 02 54 90 4141

 <https://www.bloischambord.com/>

Taxi

Blois has multiple taxi services which can be useful to get to places slightly further afield. One of them is called AYA Taxi. Book by phone or email. We recommend getting a quote on booking.

 +33 06 99 82 0224

 No website

Grocery Stores

There are several supermarkets including the following.

Carrefour Express

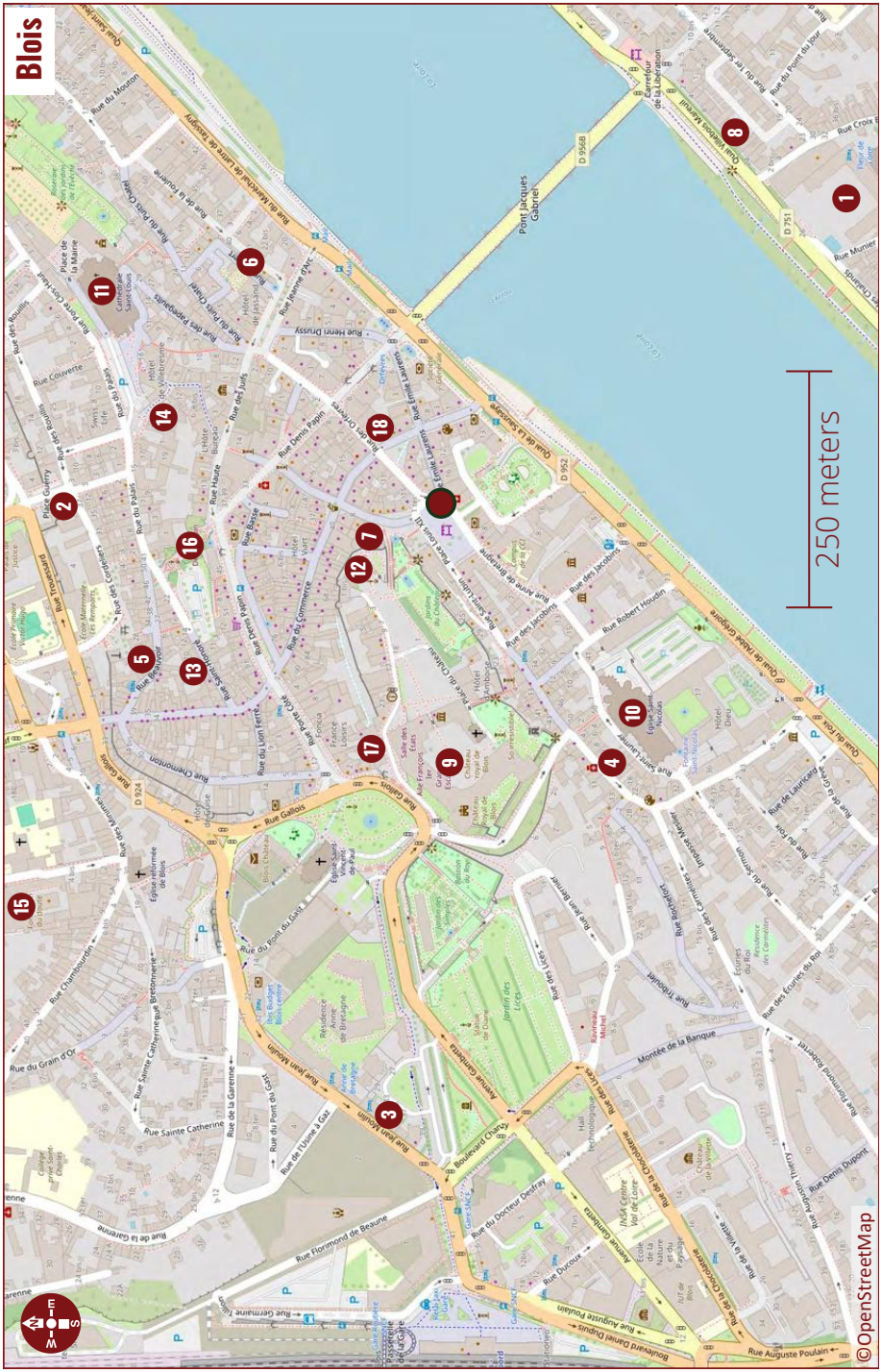
Open Monday to Saturday from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM and on Sunday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (closed on Sunday afternoon).

 11 Rue du Commerce, Blois

 +33 02 54 58 8925

 No website

Town Plan



Key**Hotels**

1. Fleur de Loire
2. Demeure des Cordeliers
3. Anne de Bretagne

Restaurants & Bars

1. Christophe Hay - Fleur de Loire
4. Les Banquettes Rouges
5. Le Petit Honfleur
6. Bro's
7. Restaurant les Burgers d'Annie
8. Brut Maison de Cuisine



Route Start / End

Points of Interest

9. Château Royal de Blois
10. Eglise St-Nicolas
11. Cathédrale St-Louis
12. Maison de la Magie (Magician Museum)
13. Hôtel d'Alluye
14. Maison des Acrobates
15. Fondation du Doute
16. Escalier Denis-Papin

Other Locations

17. Tourist Office
18. Carrefour Express



Amboise Chateau, Amboise

AMBOISE

Overview

Perched on the banks of the Loire River, Amboise was a favored retreat for French royalty. This charming town is steeped in history, with Château d'Amboise as its centerpiece. The château dominates the town with its elegant architecture, sweeping views, and lush gardens.

In addition to its regal past, Amboise has a cultural vibrancy, and its cobblestone streets are lined with quaint cafés, artisanal boutiques, and street markets.

Amboise was also the final resting place of Leonardo da Vinci. The Clos Lucé, the residence of Leonardo da Vinci, holds immersive exhibitions and meticulously reconstructed workshops, offering a fascinating glimpse into the mind of this Renaissance polymath.

Restaurants and Bars

Amboise has a range of excellent restaurants showcasing the region's culinary heritage; from traditional and gourmet establishments to cozy brasseries and pizzerias.

Les Arpents

This Bib Gourmand restaurant serves original and modern cuisine in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Run by two friends, one in charge of the front of house, and the other the chef, they aim to “put magic on a plate”. Has both vegan and gluten free options. Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM and dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual.

 5 Rue d'Orange, Amboise

+33 23 620 9244

<https://restaurant-lesarpents.fr/>

Restaurant Le Château de Pray

This excellent restaurant has been awarded one star by the Gault & Millau guide (a rival to the Michelin Guide). The restaurant serves creative cuisine and uses the best quality ingredients. The setting is beautiful and the restaurant interior elegant. Vegetarian friendly and gluten free options. The restaurant is 3 km outside of the town of Amboise. Open Wednesday to Sunday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday lunchtime, and Sunday evening. Reservations essential and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual.

 Rue du Cèdre, Chargé

+33 24 757 2367

<https://www.chateau-de-pray.fr/>

L'Écluse

This friendly, Michelin-recommended restaurant has a beautiful terrace and serves authentic cuisine a stone's throw from the royal castle and Clos Lucé. The restaurant serves food that is interesting and elegantly prepared. Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations recommended and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 Rue Racine, Amboise

+33 247 799 491

<http://www.ecluse-amboise.fr/>

Le Maître d'Art

A lovely little restaurant with a warm welcome serving tasty dishes of local produce. The seasonal menu changes according to what ingredients are available. Situated opposite the gate to Clos Lucé, it tends to be popular and is very small but good value for money. Vegetarian friendly. Open Friday to Wednesday from 11:30 AM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Thursday. Reservations advised. Dress code is casual.

 1 Rue de la Malonnière, Amboise

+33 623 302 565

<https://lemaitredart37.wixsite.com/lemaitredart>

La Breche Restaurant

Located in the Logis Hotel on the north side of the river, this tastefully decorated restaurant is expertly managed by a family team. Both the food and the wines are regional and both are excellent. Vegetarian friendly, gluten free options. Open Wednesday to Saturday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Also open for Sunday lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and Tuesday dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Reservations advised. Dress code is casual.

 26 Rue Jules Ferry Rive Droite, Amboise

 +33 24 757 0079

 <https://www.logishotels.com/fr/hotel/logis-hotel-la-breche-3421?partid=1535>

Bistrot l'Amboisie

This restaurant offers good food, with a wide choice on the menu ranging from regional food to burgers, tagines, and couscous. The fusion of French, North African, and Asian flavors is eclectic but well-orchestrated. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM and for dinner from 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM. Also open on Sunday from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Closed on Monday. Reservations recommended. Dress code is casual.

 68 Rue nationale, Amboise

 +33 24 757 6398

 <https://bistrotamboisie.fr/>

Mamie Bigoude

A casual and popular French crêperie. Decorated in bright colors, each section of the restaurant represents a different room in the house. Both savory galettes and sweet crêpes available. Open daily from 11:30 AM – 9:30 PM. Reservations not necessary. Dress code is casual.

 2 Avenue du Général de Gaulle, Amboise

 +33 24 757 1703

 <http://www.comptoirmamiebigoude.com/>

Sights and Activities

Château d'Amboise

The 15th-century Château d'Amboise, perched above the Loire River, is a symbol of French Renaissance architecture. Overlooking the town, this highly defensible castle posed a daunting challenge to potential attackers but experienced little military action. Once a royal residence, it was favored by kings such as, and François I and Charles VIII, who was born and raised here. Leonardo da Vinci, invited by François I, spent his final years in the town and is buried in the castle chapel. There is also rumored to be an underground passage connecting the château to Clos Lucé (Leonardo da Vinci's nearby residence).

Visitors can now explore its ornate interiors, landscaped gardens, and stunning river views. The château is open year-round, offering guided tours and exhibitions. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €16 per person. Guided tours and audio guides are extra. It is possible to purchase combined tickets (at a discounted rate) to Château d'Amboise and/or Clos Lucé and/or Château de Chenonceau. The Château d'Amboise is open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:30 PM.

 Mnt de l'Emir Abd el Kader, Amboise

 +33 02 47 57 0098

 <https://www.chateau-amboise.com/>

Château du Clos Lucé

Clos Lucé is a charming manor house that was Leonardo da Vinci's final residence, where he lived from 1516 until his death in 1519. Now a museum, visitors can explore Da Vinci's workshops, models of his inventions, and Renaissance-era gardens.

The castle has been restored to the spirit and atmosphere of the Renaissance period. You can visit Leonardo da Vinci's bed chamber where he died, his workshop and the basement which is now home to 40 models of his inventions. The Leonardo da Vinci Park is home to around forty translucent canvases and some twenty giant interactive models built according to Leonardo da Vinci's sketches. Models include his propeller (which prefigured the helicopter), a swing bridge, and a flying machine. The garden showcases his botanical and geological research.

The estate is open year-round with guided tours available. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €19 per person. Exhibitions are extra. It is possible to purchase combined tickets (at a discounted rate) to Château d'Amboise and/or Clos Lucé and/or Château de Chenonceau. The Château du Clos Lucé is open daily from 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM, and 8:00 PM in July and August.

 2 Rue du Clos Lucé, Amboise

 +33 02 47 57 0073

 <https://vinci-closluce.com/en>

Château Gaillard

A meticulously restored Italianate castle adorned with period furniture. The estate features "the cabinet of 100 curiosities", the King's Gardens, the gardens of Dom Pacello, the Royal Orangery, the olfactory cave, the stained-glass collections, illustrated mouth-blown polychromes, and a giant model of the Domaine in 1500.

Visitors can explore these elegant grounds and experience a slice of Renaissance opulence. Located 1.5 km to the east of Amboise. Entrance fee of €16 per person for a guided tour and visit. Tickets can be purchased online. Open daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

 29 All. du Pont Moulin, Amboise

 +33 02 47 30 3329

 <https://chateau-gaillard-amboise.fr/>

The Chanteloup Pagoda

A striking monument, built between 1775 and 1778 when blending French classical architecture with Chinese motifs was fashionable. At 44 meters, this seven-story pagoda, originally part of a larger castle, was constructed as a symbol of enlightenment and leisure by Louis XV's minister, the Duc de Choiseul. Always a drama, the duke was later exiled from Versailles when he fell out with the king's mistress, and he retreated to the château and rebuilt it. After his death the castle was abandoned and demolished, leaving just the pagoda.

Today, visitors can climb the 149 steps to the top of the pagoda for panoramic views of Amboise Castle, the forest, and the Loire Valley. Visitors can also a walk around the half-moon 'pond' set in the tranquil gardens and there are boat rides (additional to the entrance fee). Located 3 km to the southwest of Amboise in a 35-acre park. Some recent feedback is that the monument has become a little drab and rundown. Entrance fee of €12 per person. Open daily from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

 La Pagode de Chanteloup, Route de Bléré, Amboise

 +33 02 47 57 2097

 <https://www.pagode-chanteloup.com/>

Conservatoire de la Confiserie

A charming museum dedicated to the history and art of candy making. Established to preserve traditional confectionery techniques, it offers visitors an educational journey through exhibits and live demonstrations. Highlights include the production of the famous "Berlingots de Tours" and other regional sweets. Visitors can enjoy tastings and purchase handcrafted candies. The museum also has a display of antique candy-making equipment.

Located in Amboise, over the river to the north. The self-guided tour is €4 per person, every morning from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM. They offer interactive tours, €6 per person. Times differ depending on whether it's school holidays or not, hours can be checked on their website. Reservation by phone only. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:30 PM – 7:00 PM, Sundays from 2:30 PM – 7:00 PM. Closed on Monday.

 22 Rue Germain Chauveau, Amboise

 +33 02 47 30 0853

 <https://www.confiserie-amboise.com/en/>

Parc des Mini-Châteaux

Located 3 km south of Amboise, this is a fascinating park featuring 41 meticulously crafted miniature replicas of the most beautiful Loire Valley châteaux including their flower gardens. Opened in 1997, it offers visitors a unique way to explore the region's rich architectural heritage in one place. The park spans over five acres and provides educational information about each château. It includes interactive exhibits and a miniature train ride for children. The park is open from April to November, making it an interesting destination for visitors and history enthusiasts looking to explore the Loire Valley's grandeur in a compact form. Entrance price is €16 per person and tickets can be purchased on their website.

 22 Rue Germain Chauveau, Amboise

 +33 0247 23 44 57

 <https://www.parcminichateaux.com/>

Market Days

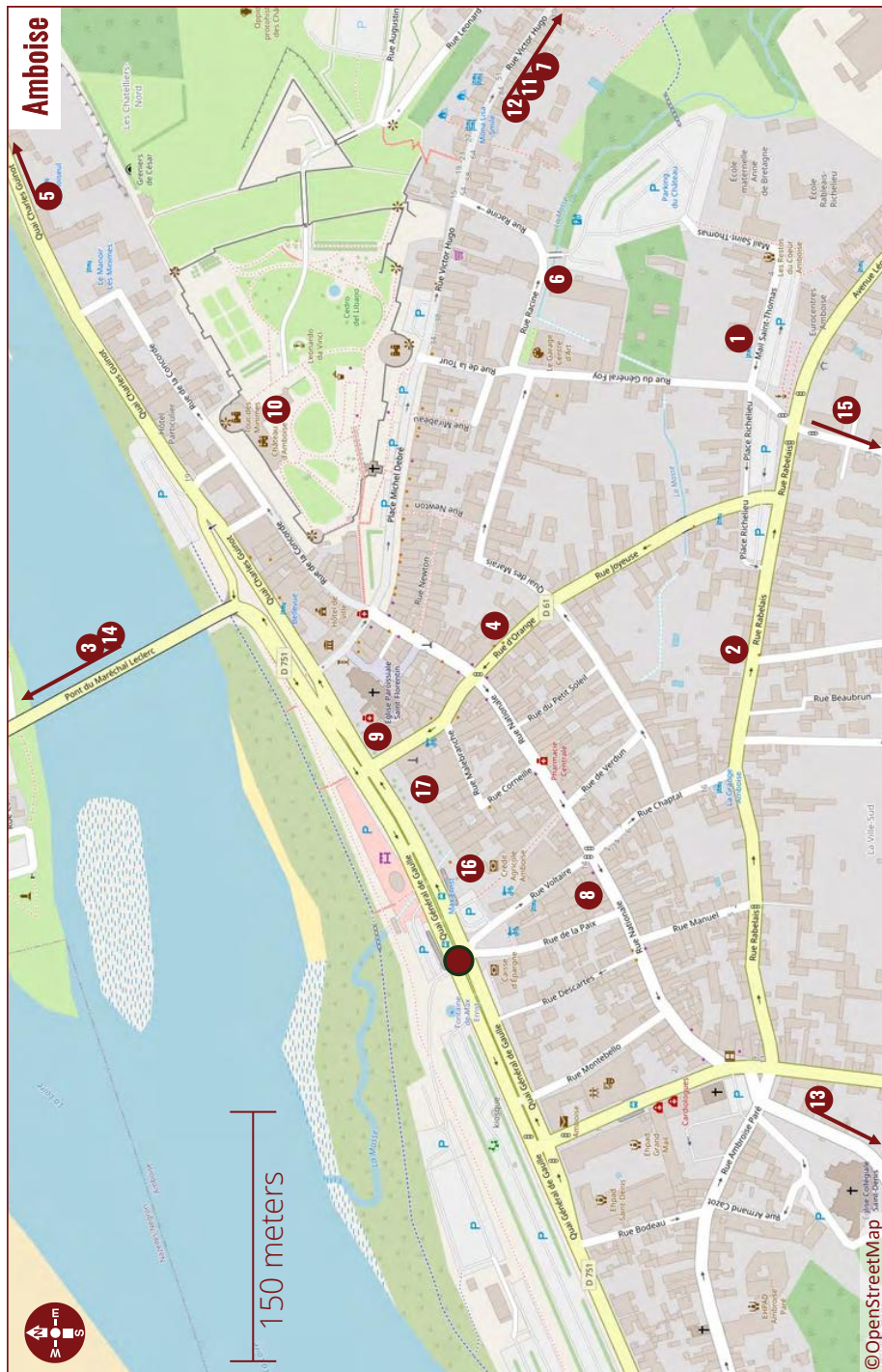
Amboise has two weekly outdoor markets: Fridays and Sundays from 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM. The Sunday market is more substantial and one of the biggest in the area. Located along the riverbank west of the tourist office.

Festivals

Avanti la Musica takes place from mid-June through to mid-August and celebrates links between Amboise and Italy via activities such as music, theatre, cinema, and more. Schedule of performances available from the Tourist Office (see below).

Festival Européen de Musique Renaissance takes place on the last weekend of September in Amboise. It is a three-day festival, held in the Château du Clos Lucé and it features musicians who specialize in Renaissance music.

Town Plan



Key

Hotels

1. Manoir Saint Thomas
2. Le Clos d'Amboise
3. Hôtel la Brèche

Restaurants & Bars

4. Les Arpents
5. Restaurant Le Château de Pray
6. L'Écluse
7. Le Maître d'Art
8. La Breche Restaurant
8. Bistrot l'Amboisie
9. Mamie Bigoude

Points of Interest

10. Château d'Amboise
11. Château du Clos Lucé
12. Château Gaillard
13. The Chanteloup Pagoda
14. Conservatoire de la Confiserie
15. Parc des Mini-Châteaux

Other Locations

16. Tourist Information
17. Carrefour Express



Route Start / End

Other Useful Information

Tourist Information

Office de Tourisme Amboise Val de Loire (Tourist Information Office). Open daily from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM (closes at 17:00 PM on Sunday afternoon).

 Quai du Général de Gaulle, Amboise

 +33 02 47 57 0928

 <https://amboise-valdeloire.com/>

Taxi

Amboise has multiple taxi services which can be useful to get to places slightly further afield. Book by phone or email. We recommend getting a quote on booking. One of them is called Taxi Amboise - Taxi Val De Loire.

 +33 06 52 35 0466

 [https://www.taxis-amboise.fr/taxi/votre-chauffeur-taxi-pro/accueil-taxi-amboise /](https://www.taxis-amboise.fr/taxi/votre-chauffeur-taxi-pro/accueil-taxi-amboise/)
taxi.amboise@gmail.com

Grocery Stores

There are several supermarkets including the following.

Carrefour Express

Open Monday to Saturday from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM and on Sunday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (closed on Sunday afternoon).

 5 Quai du Général de Gaulle, Amboise

 +33 02 47 57 2090



Chateau d'Artigny, Montbazon

MONTBAZON

Overview

South of the Loire River, directly below the city of Tours, Montbazon is a small, quiet community. It is situated along the Indre River and is surrounded by verdant landscapes. The town's iconic fortress, Château de Montbazon, rises dramatically from the town and has panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.

Note that Montbazon is more a stop on a journey than a major destination and will not feature in many tourist guides. But sometimes, following the route less travelled is one of the pleasures of touring by bike. With that in mind, the town of Montbazon has a quiet charm, an interesting ruin of a fort, and some good restaurants. The town also has a small selection of interesting shops selling handcrafted goods, local produce, and souvenirs.

Restaurants and Bars

In Montbazon there are a variety of restaurants available, from fine dining to French bistros. Local produce is key and price points vary according to your choice.

L'Évidence

This one-star Michelin restaurant offers a fabulous dining experience. Wine pairings available with all dishes. On the more expensive side, but worth it if you are looking for a treat. Open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM and from 6:00 PM – 11:00 PM. Closed Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual.

📍 1 Pl. des Marronniers, Montbazon

☎ +33 24 738 6736

 <http://www.restaurant-levidence.com/>

Guinguette de Montbazon

Beautifully situated on the river, this casual restaurant offers good food at a reasonable price, with a lot of options available. Open daily from 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM and from 7:00 PM – 10:30 PM. Reservations recommended. Dress code is casual.

 La grange Rouge, Montbazon

 +33 24 726 2917

 <http://www.guinguette-montbazon.fr/>

Le Grand Méchant Loup

A great pizza restaurant if you're looking for something casual. They also do pasta and plate-of-the-day options. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM and from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM (10:30 PM on Saturday and Sunday). Closed Monday and Sunday lunchtime. Reservations recommended and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 15 Rue Principale, Veigné

 +33 23 438 1547

 No website

Restaurant Le Moulin Fleuri

A beautifully situated restaurant in a converted mill, on the bank of the river. Classic French and creative cuisine, along with great wines. For sunny evenings, they have a beautiful terrace. Vegetarian friendly with vegan options. Please note, this restaurant is 5 km west of the town. Open Friday to Tuesday from 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM and from 7:15 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Wednesday and Thursday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 Lieu-dit le Moulin Fleuri, Veigné

 +33 24 726 0112

 <http://www.moulin-fleuri.fr/>

Domaine de la Tortinière

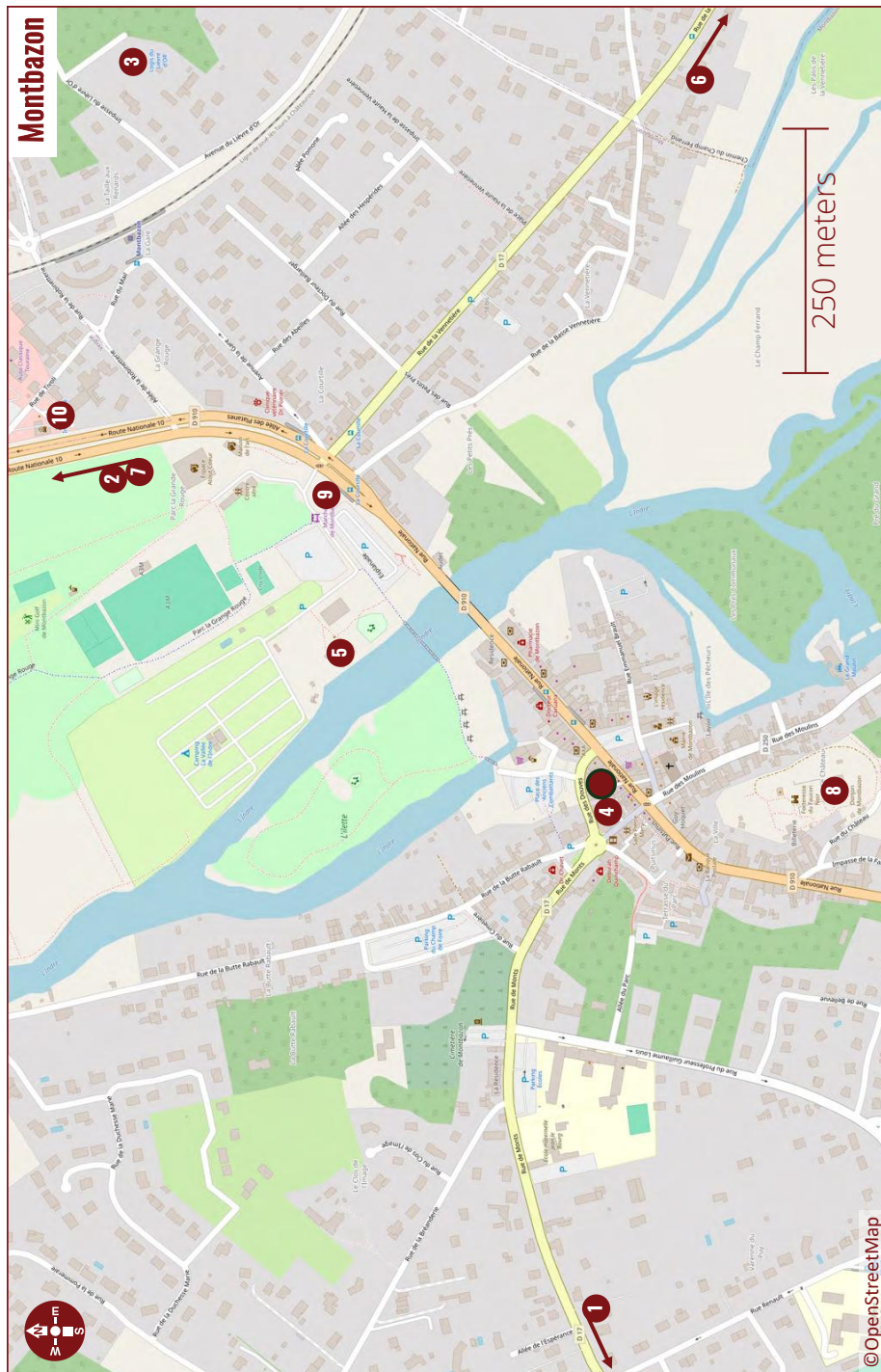
This Michelin recommended restaurant is in the beautiful boutique château-hotel of the same name, 2 km north of town. There is a “gastronomic” menu for those wanting to indulge and a “bistronomic” menu for those wanting simpler choices. Vegetarian friendly, vegan options, gluten free options. Open daily for lunch from 12:15 PM – 1:30 PM and for dinner from 7:15 PM – 8:45 PM. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual. Please note, while some guests have enjoyed dining here, others have reported that they thought the food did not justify the cost and reputation.

 10 Rte de Ballan, Veigné

 +33 24 734 3500

 <https://www.tortiniere.com/fr/>

Town Plan



Key

Hotels

1. Château d'Artigny
2. Domaine de la Tortinière
3. Logis du Lièvre d'Or

Restaurants & Bars

4. L'Évidence
5. Guinguette de Montbazon
6. Le Grand Méchant Loup
7. Restaurant Le Moulin Fleuri
2. Domaine de la Tortinière

Points of Interest

8. Château de Montbazon

Other Locations

9. Tourist Information Office
10. Intermarché SUPER



Route Start / End

Sights and Activities

Château de Montbazon

This formidable fortress stands majestically above the town of Montbazon. It was built in the early 11th century by Fulk Nerra, the Count of Anjou. This ancient castle offers a vivid glimpse into medieval France with its towering keep, which is among the oldest in the country. Visitors can explore the dungeon, walk the ramparts for panoramic views of the Indre River valley, and observe demonstrations of medieval crafts in the blacksmith's workshop. The fortress also hosts historical reenactments, including archery and sword fighting. The interactive exhibits, such as La Forteresse du Faucon Noir, enhance the experience, making history accessible and exciting for all ages. A rich, educational, and immersive visit that transports guests back to the Middle Ages.

Open April, May, June and September, weekends only from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Open daily in July and August. Adult ticket price €12 per person and tickets can be purchased in advance online. Guided tours available.



12-14 Rue du Château, Montbazon



+33 02 47 34 3410



<https://en.forteressedemontbazon.com/>

Montbazon Park

In the center of Montbazon, a verdant park offers serenity along the banks of the Indre River. This beautifully maintained area features well-kept pathways ideal for strolling or jogging, with picturesque views of Château de Montbazon. Montbazon is a popular walking destination, and the tourist office can provide details of different routes. A good choice is a 7 km anti-clockwise loop that follows the Indre River. Details can be found at: <https://www.komoot.com/smarttour/21218961?ref=wsd>

Market Days

Montbazon has a small (very small) weekly outdoor market on Tuesdays from 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM. Located near the tourist office.

Other Useful Information

Tourist Information

Azay-Chinon Val De Loire Tourisme (Tourist Information Office). Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 5:30 PM. Closed on Sunday and Monday.

 Rd 910, Montbazon

 +33 02 47 26 9787

 <https://www.azay-chinon-valdeloire.com/>

Taxi

Montbazon has a taxi service (Taxi Paul) which can be useful to get to restaurants outside of town. Book by phone or text. We recommend getting a quote on booking.

 +33 07 863 02428

Grocery Stores

There are several supermarkets including the following.

Intermarché Super

Open Monday to Saturday from 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM and Sunday from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM.

 2 Rue de Tivoli, Veigné

 +33 02 4726 9026



Rooftop view of Chinon from Chinon Castle

CHINON

Overview

Nestled along the Vienne River, the charming town of Chinon is steeped in history and culture. The town is best known for its medieval fortress, Château de Chinon. This historic hilltop castle is famous for the meeting between Joan of Arc and Charles VII in 1429, which played a pivotal role in the Hundred Years' War. The town's picturesque streets are lined with quaint boutiques offering local crafts and goods.

Chinon is also celebrated for its wine industry, rooted in a rich viticultural heritage. Visitors can explore numerous wine cellars and wineries where they can taste and learn about the region's acclaimed red, whites, and rosés.

Chinon is also known as the birthplace of author Francois Rabelais (1483 to 1553: a notable author who grew up in Chinon, something of a French Shakespeare), and there are lots of Rabelais-related points of interest around the town.

Restaurants and Bars

The town has much to offer in terms of food and wine. The local culinary scene boasts a diverse and extensive array of dishes: lamb steaks and various pork products are specialties. The proximity to the Vienne River allows for a variety of fish dishes. Saffron, a typical spice in the region, is cultivated extensively near Chinon. One of the most renowned cheeses is Selles-sur-Cher, a goat's milk cheese distinguished by its thin coating of ash and salt.

Les Années 30

This Michelin-recommended, fine-dining restaurant offers refined food paired with local wines. The beautiful presentation, along with impeccable service in a cozy, welcoming atmosphere rarely disappoints. Vegetarian friendly, gluten free options. Open Thursday to Monday for dinner from 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM and lunch from 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is smart/casual.

 78 Rue Haute Saint-Maurice, Chinon

 +33 24 793 3718

 <https://www.lesannees-30.com/>

L'Océanic

Another Michelin recommended establishment; this is a French restaurant offering classic cuisine with a twist of re-invention. Modern and innovative, the menu changes with the season with seafood being a specialty. Good service and well-priced. Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and for dinner from 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations strongly advised. Dress code is casual.

 13 Rue Rabelais, Chinon

 +33 247934455

 <http://www.loceanic-chinon.com/>

Au Local

This restaurant is owned and operated by a young couple who are passionate about gastronomy and creating dishes using fresh and local ingredients. Their restaurant is located in the heart of Chinon, at the foot of the Fortress. Well priced and vegan options available if advised when booking. Open Thursday to Monday from 12:15 PM – 2:00 PM and from 7:15 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Reservations strongly advised and can be made online. Dress code is casual.

 2bis Rue du Château, Chinon

 +33 247939587

 <http://aulocalrestaurant.fr/>

Charbon

An interesting restaurant serving honest, good quality food. Known for its wood-fired cooking and quality meat. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM and from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations strongly advised. Dress code is casual.

 27 Pl. du Général de Gaulle, Chinon

 +33 247582519

 No website

Les Saveurs d'Italie

An Italian restaurant offering fresh pasta and pizzas on the Chinon square with a nice terrace. Excellent value for money, the service is simple and fast. They also have a lovely delicatessen selling Italian products. Vegetarian friendly, vegan options. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM and for dinner from 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday. Reservations recommended. Dress code is casual.



19 Pl. du Général de Gaulle, Chinon

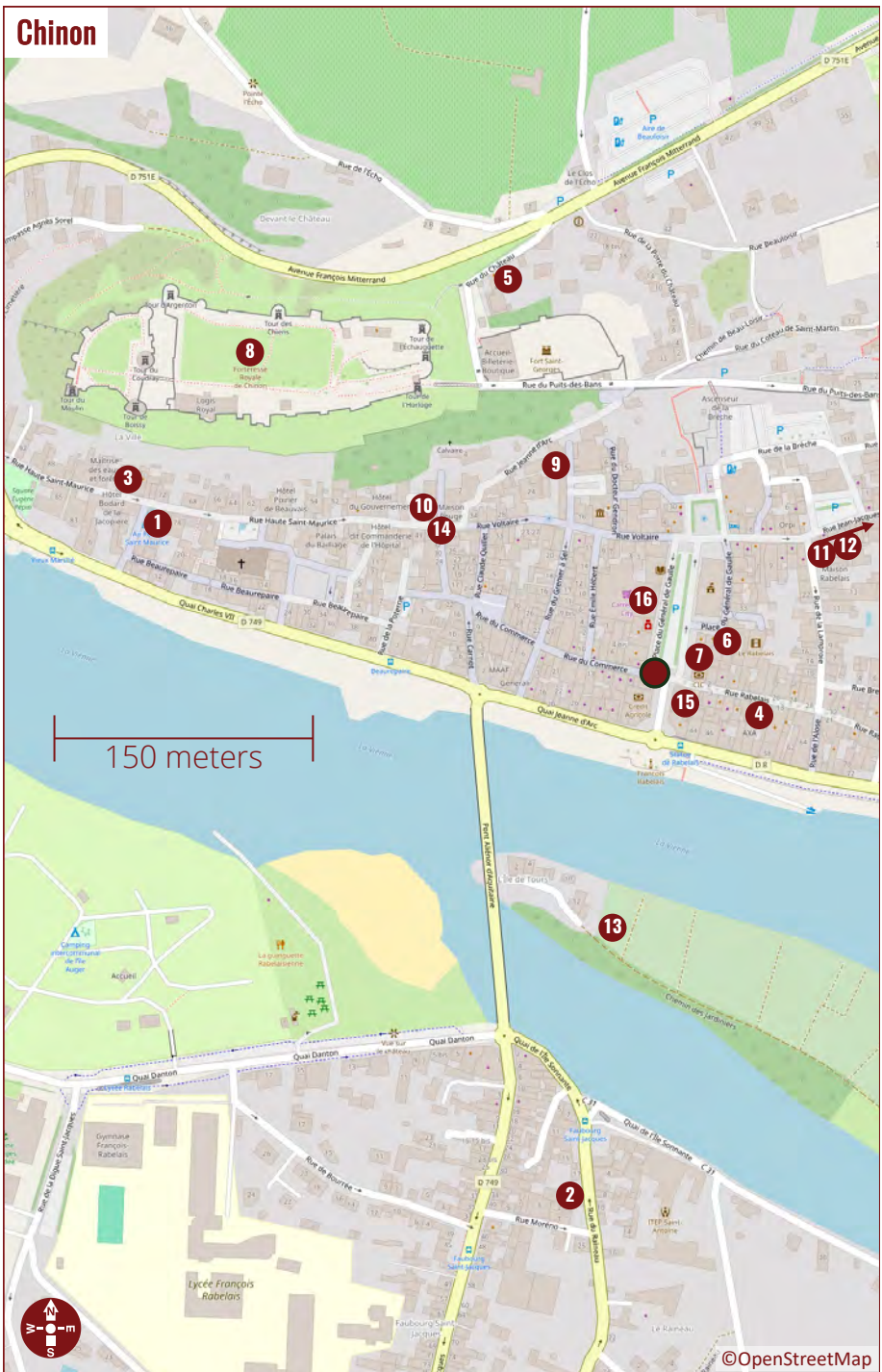


+33 247958250



No website

Town Plan



Key

Hotels

1. Relais Saint Maurice
2. Rive Sud

Restaurants & Bars

3. Les Années 30
4. L'Océanic
5. Au Local
6. Charbon
7. Les Saveurs d'Italie Chinon

Points of Interest

8. Forteresse Royale de Chinon

9. Caves Painctes de Chinon

10. Le Carroi, Musée d'Arts et d'Histoire
11. Chapelle Sainte-Radegonde de Chinon
12. Saint Etienne Church
13. Islet of Tours
14. Chinon Old Town

Other Locations

15. Tourist Information Office
16. Carrefour City



Route Start / End

Sights and Activities

Forteresse Royale de Chinon

Majestically perched on a hilltop, this castle offers breathtaking views over the town and the Vienne River. The only royal Plantagenet (English) fortress of the Loire Valley, this structure is divided into three distinct sections, each separated by dry moats. The earliest section, Fort St-Georges, was built in the 12th century and now houses the entrance, ticket booth, and a shop. Adjacent to it lies the Middle Castle, featuring the Logis Royal (Royal Lodgings) which once accommodated the Plantagenet court of Henry II (of England) and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Further along, the Fort de Coudray crowns the promontory and includes the 13th-century Tour de Coudray, notable both as the temporary residence of Joan of Arc in 1429 and as a prison for the Knights Templar – whose graffiti can still be seen on its walls.

Alongside traditional audio guides there are multimedia booklets available that activate film and audio presentations in your native language. Daily guided tours in English are also available at a set time, at no extra cost. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €11 per person. Opening hours from March to October are daily from 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM (7:00 PM from May through August).



2 Rue du Château, Chinon



+33 02 47 93 1345



<https://forteressechinon.fr/en>

Caves Painctes de Chinon (The Painted Cellars)

This wine cellar nestles beneath the Royal Fortress of Chinon. Originally quarries, these caves sparked the imagination of François Rabelais, leading him to create the temple of Dive Bouteille in his writings. Rabelais' connection to these caves runs deep, as his father once owned a cellar there. Today, the Caves Painctes are owned by

Chinon's winegrowers and the Entonneurs Rabelaisiens, France's second-largest Bacchic (relating to Bacchus, god of wine) brotherhood.

Visits are by guided tour only, €6 per person. Open Monday to Saturday. In summer tours are held at 11:00 AM, 3:00 PM, 4:30 PM, and 6:00 PM.

 Impasse des Caves Painctes, Chinon

 +33 02 47 93 3044

 <https://www.chinon.com/>

Le Carroi, Musée d'Arts et d'Histoire

Le Carroi, Chinon's museum of arts and history, is in the heart of the town. Although small, it offers exhibitions that explore local history, art, and culture, showcasing artifacts that span from ancient times to the modern era. Open Wednesday to Monday from 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM.

 44 Rue Haute Saint-Maurice, Chinon

 +33 02 47 58 0905

 No website

Chapelle Sainte-Radegonde de Chinon

An evocative medieval chapel carved into a cave located 500 meters east of the town center. This partially preserved structure is remarkable for its 12th-century fresco depicting a Royal Hunt. Notably, a staircase within the chapel descends to a subterranean spring, which was important for a pre-Christian cult.

 Pl. de l'Église Saint-Étienne, Chinon

 +33 02 47 93 0797

 <https://www.paroisse-chinon.fr/eglise-saint-etienne-37500-chinon.html>

Saint Etienne Church

Saint Etienne Church, built in the 15th century in a flamboyant Gothic style with a vast, single nave aisle. The church's apse features striking 19th-century stained-glass windows that narrate significant events in Chinon's history. These include the notable moment in 1429 when Joan of Arc recognized and met the future King Charles VII, a pivotal encounter vividly captured in the colorful glass imagery.

 rue du coteau Sainte-Radegonde, Chinon

 +33 02 47 93 1785

 No website

Islet of Tours

Nestled in the middle of the Vienne River, there is a small island whose name derives from the historic water rights held by the Archbishop of Tours. Accessible via a path in the middle of the *Pont routier de Chinon* (bridge), this island offers a tranquil green oasis. Visitors can explore the lush garden, seek shade under its mature trees, and sometimes it is possible to spot wildlife like beavers or wild ducks. From the northern edge, the island provides exceptional views of the Old Town and the castle.

Chinon Old Town

The medieval streets of Chinon are lined with half-timbered houses and Renaissance buildings, making it a picturesque place to stroll. The Old Town also hosts vibrant markets where you can find local produce and crafts.

François Rabelais (1483 to 1553) was a notable author who grew up in Chinon. He is best known for his satirical works in the "Gargantua and Pantagruel" series. Visitors to Chinon will encounter references to Rabelais throughout the old town among an array of medieval architecture. Notable streets such as Rue Haute St-Maurice and Rue Voltaire provide excellent examples of this historic style. For those interested in exploring further, the local tourist office offers a free walking tour leaflet, guiding visitors through the town's sites.

Festivals

Chinon holds a lively celebration at its fortress, The Medieval Festival of Chinon. Usually held the first weekend of August, there are three days of activities and shows such as craftsmen's stalls, medieval cuisine, the work of a goldsmith, juggling performances and oriental music. Tickets required.

 2 Rue du Château, Chinon

 +33 02 47 93 1345

 <https://forteressechinon.fr/en>

Market Days

Chinon has a weekly outdoor market on Thursdays (and every day in summer!) from 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM. Located on Place Jeanne d'Arc.

Other Useful Information

Tourist Information

Azay Chinon Loire Valley - Home Office Chinon (Tourist Information Office). Open Monday to Saturday from 9:30 AM – 7:00 PM and Sunday from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM.

 1 Rue Rabelais, Chinon

 +33 02 47 93 1785

 <https://www.azay-chinon-valdeloire.com/>

Taxi

Chinon has a taxi service (Taxi Val de Vienne) which can be useful to get to restaurants slightly further afield. Book by phone or text. We recommend getting a quote on booking.

 +33 02 47 93 3788

 No website

Grocery Stores

There are a number of supermarkets including the following.

Carrefour City

Open Monday to Saturday from 7:00 AM – 8:15 PM and on Sunday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM (closed on Sunday afternoon).

 20 Pl. du Général de Gaulle, Chinon

 +33 02 47 97 1203

 No website

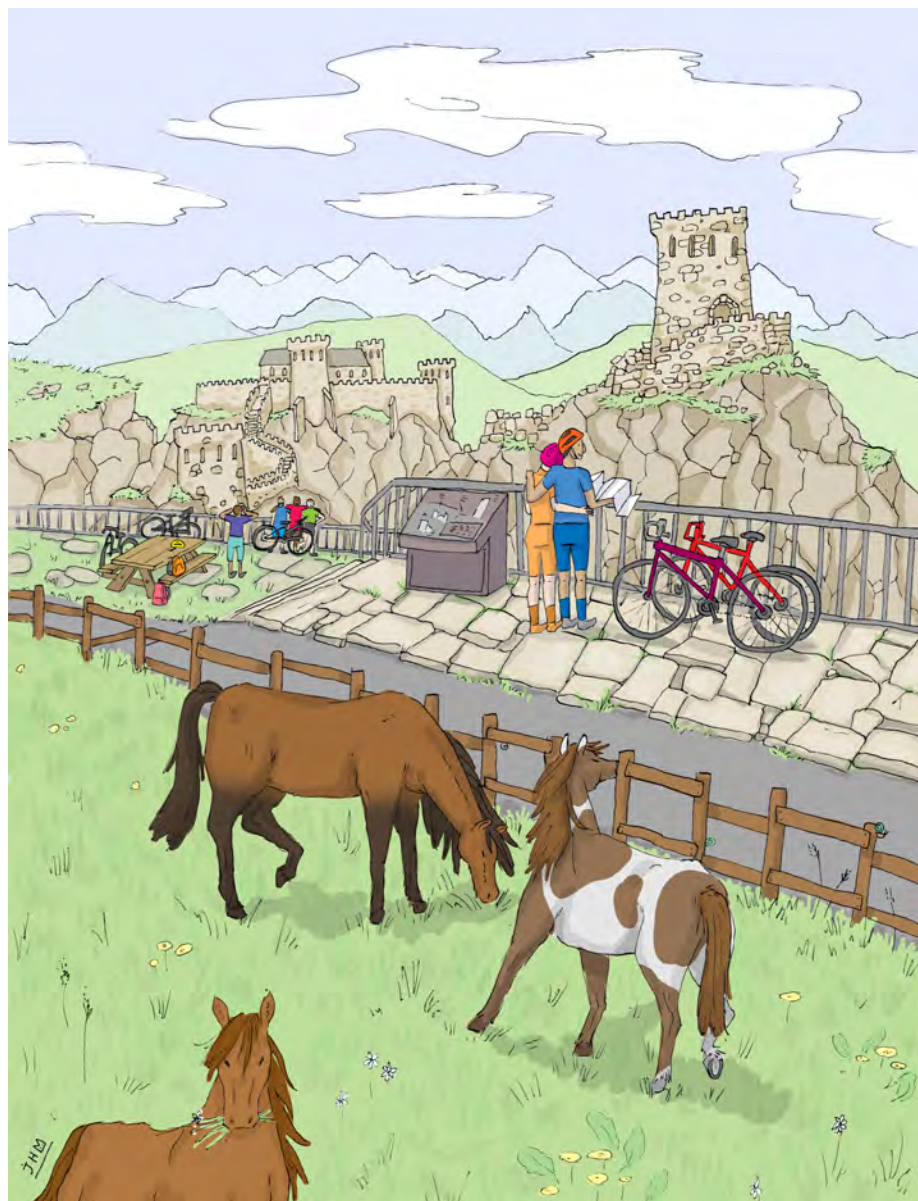


Image by Jeanne Hervé-Maley

ON TOUR

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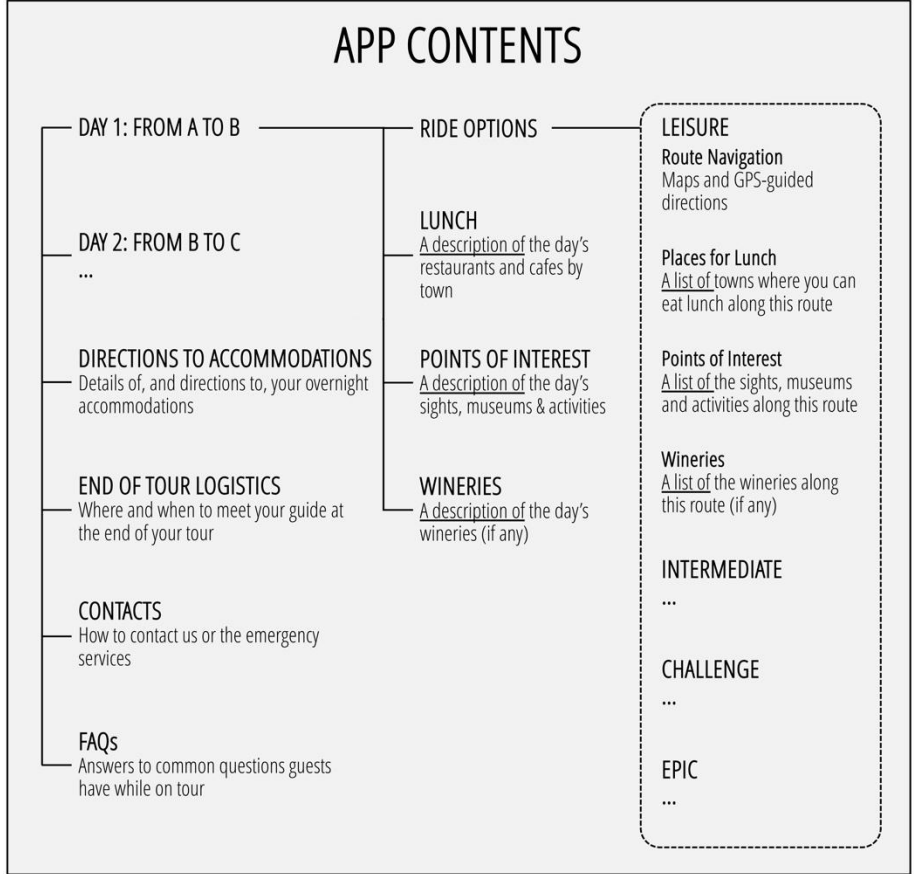
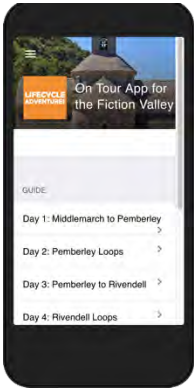
USING THE ON TOUR APP

Overview

We have partnered with Ride with GPS (RWGPS) to create an app that has details about your routes, directions to your accommodations, and other useful information for your tour.

A link to download the app will be sent to you about thirty days before the start of your tour. We would encourage **all people on the tour to download the app before you travel** and familiarize yourself with the contents.

The diagram below is a quick reference for how the app is organized.



The app downloads to your phone and can be used with your data plan turned off.

If you are taking a tablet with you on tour, **download the app to both your phone and your tablet**. The phone is great while out riding and the tablet is easier to use when back at your hotel.

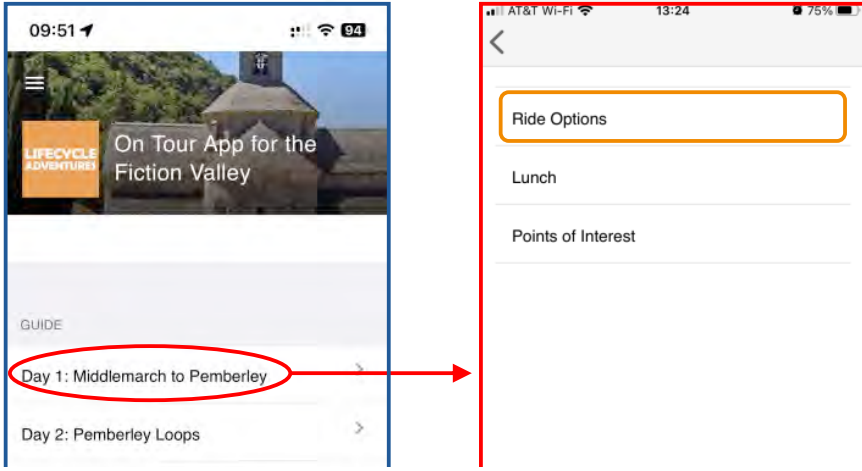
Using the On Tour App

The app helps you answer the following question while on tour.

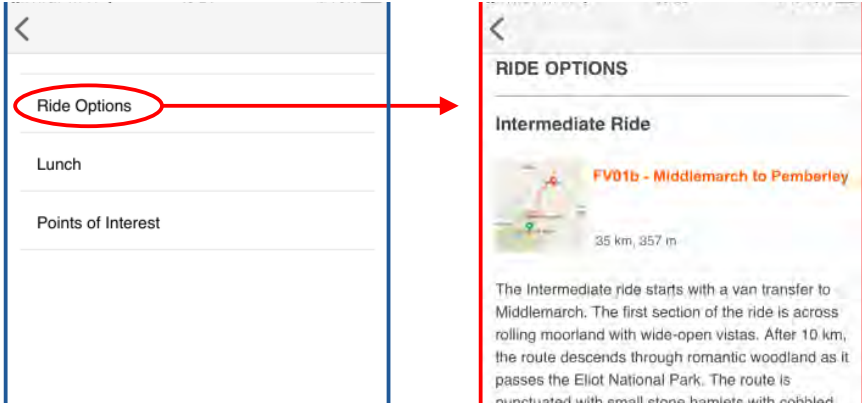
- For each day:
 - o **Which route** is best for me (leisure, intermediate, challenge or epic)?
 - o For my route, where is the **best place for lunch**?
 - o What **points of interest** are there along my chosen route?
 - o How do I **navigate my chosen route**?
- How do I navigate to my **overnight accommodation**?
- Where and when will I meet my guide at the **end of my tour**?
- How do I **contact my guide**, emergency services, and other key support?
- Answers to other **frequently asked questions** while on tour.

The On Tour App is designed to be intuitive to use and requires little learning. However, *as a backup*, the following section explains in detail how to use the app to answer the questions listed above.

For each day, which route is best for me?



Select the relevant day on the main menu and then choose ride options. Clicking on the ride options will bring you to a description for each of the ride options. Typically these are Leisure, Intermediate, Challenge, and Epic.

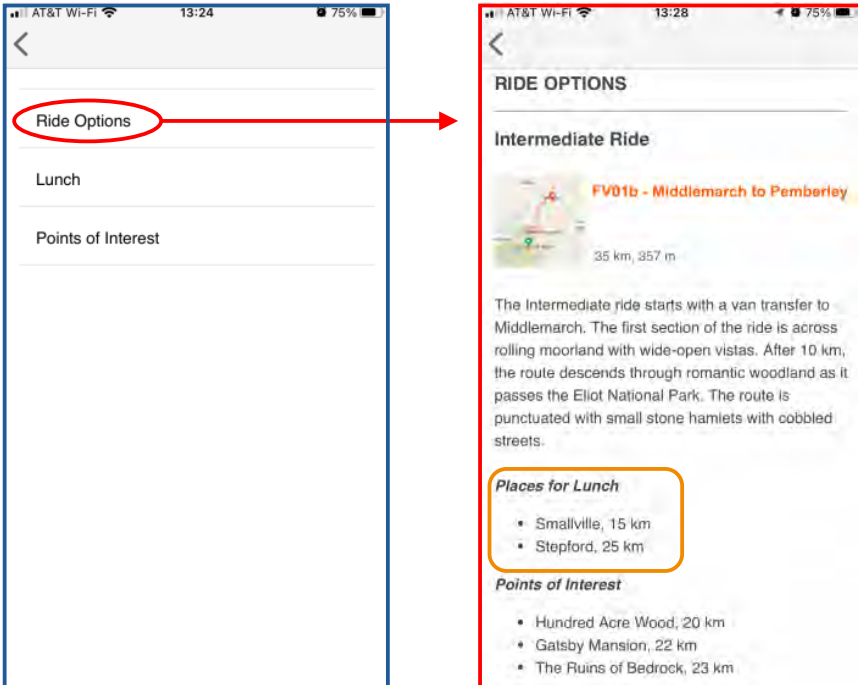


You can then choose your ride based on the description:

- Key stats – distance and climbing
- A brief overview
- A list of towns or villages where you can find lunch
- A list of places of interest along the route
- Wineries along the route (not all areas)

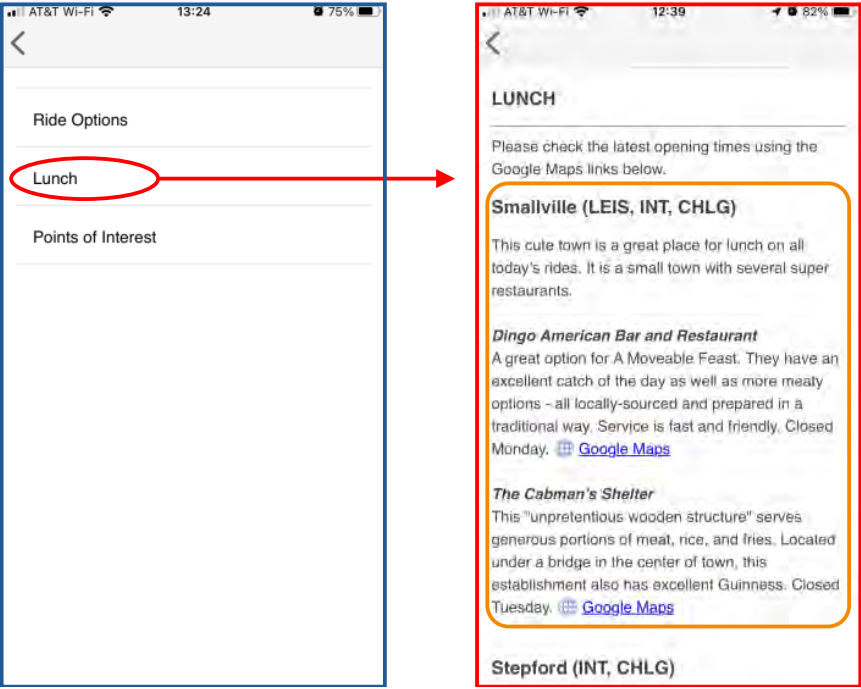
For my route, where is the best place for lunch?

This is a two-step process. First go to Ride Options for the relevant day.



For your chosen ride (here you have chosen the Intermediate ride), choose which town you want to eat in. Here you are going to choose Smallville, which is 15 km into your route.

Then GO BACK to the previous menu and select *Lunch*.



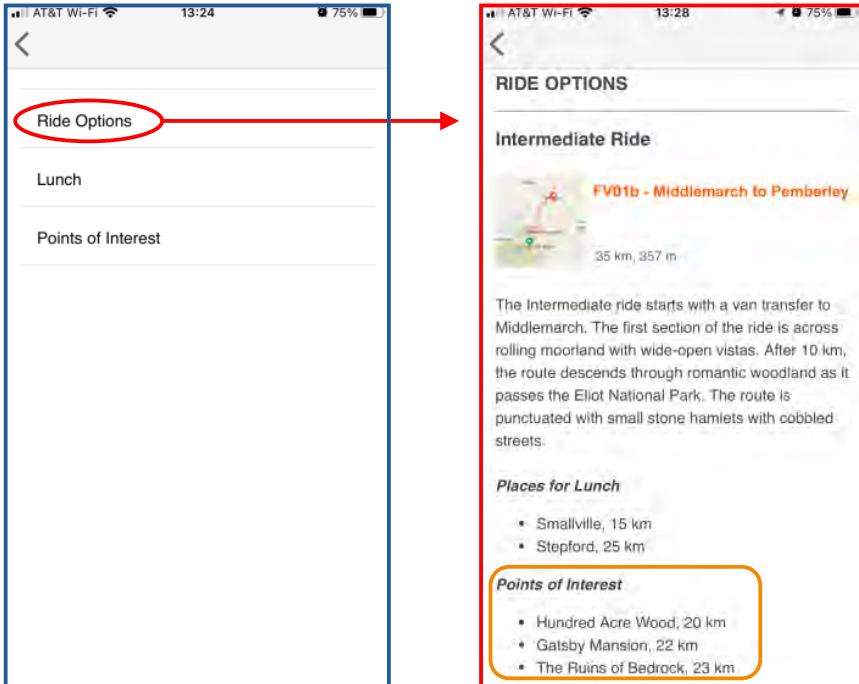
Having selected *Lunch*, you will see a list of all the places on today's routes organized by town. In this example, you are choosing to stop in Smallville and the Cabman's Shelter sounds perfect! (The abbreviations in parentheses tell you that Smallville is on the Leisure, Intermediate and Challenge rides.)

Restaurants are shown as a  icon when you are navigating the routes. See the *Navigating the Routes* section below.

You can use the *Google Maps* link to check opening times and to confirm the location of the restaurant.

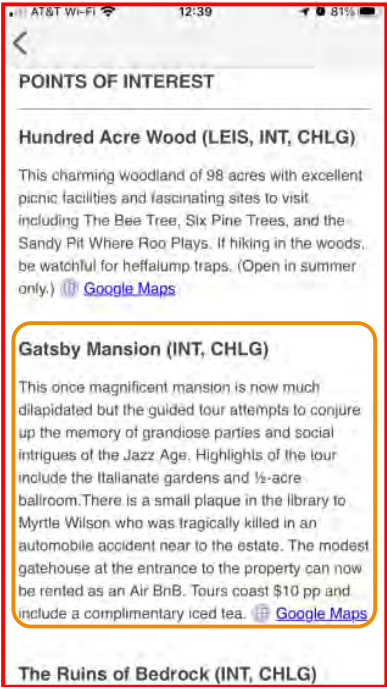
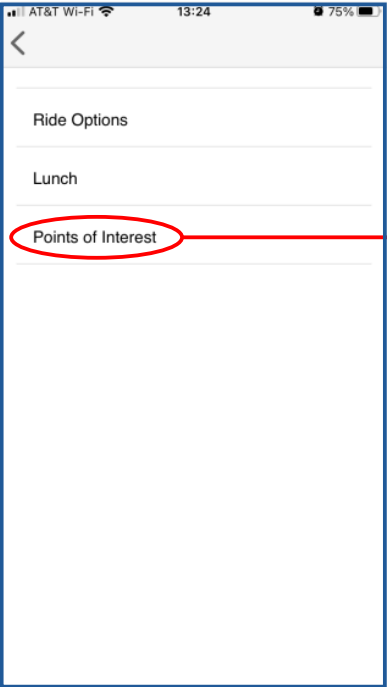
What points of interest are there along my chosen route?

This is a two-step process. First, go the Ride Options for the relevant day.



For your chosen ride (here you have chosen the Intermediate ride), see the list of Points of Interest that are on this route. In this example, The Gatsby Mansion, at 22 km) has caught your attention.

Then GO BACK to the previous menu and select Points of Interest.



Having selected *Points of Interest*, you can then read about the places you might want to visit along this route. In this example, you can learn all about the Gatsby Mansion. (The abbreviations in parentheses tell you that the Gatsby Mansion is on the Intermediate and Challenge rides.)

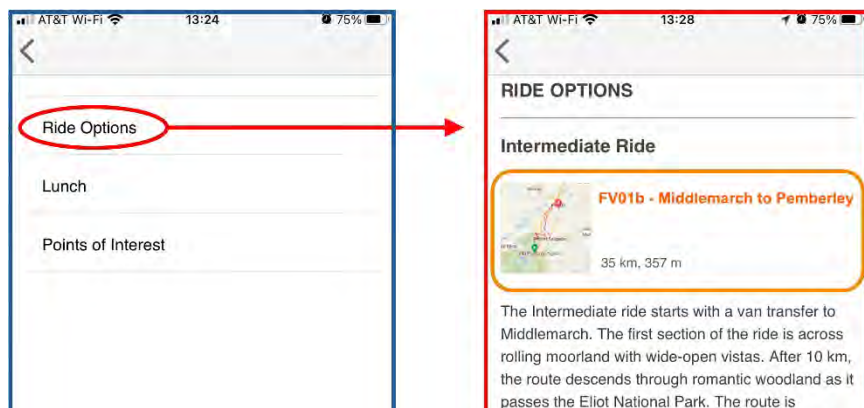
Points of Interest are shown as a  icon when you are navigating the routes. See the *Navigating the Routes* section below. We also list Viewpoints here. Viewpoints are

marked with a  on your routes.

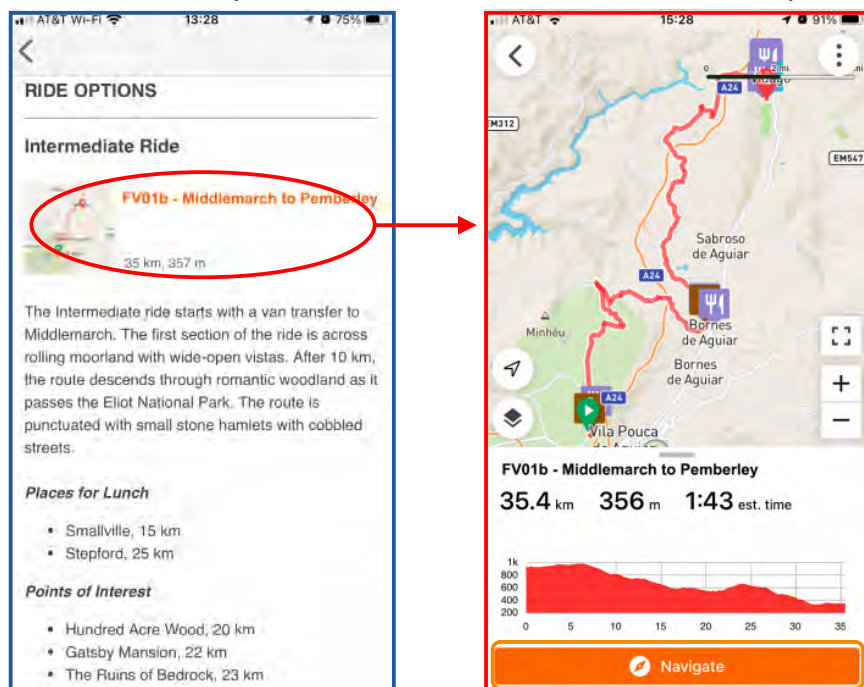
You can use the *Google Maps* link to check opening times and to confirm the location of the sites.

How do I navigate my chosen route?

Within *Ride Options* for your chosen day.



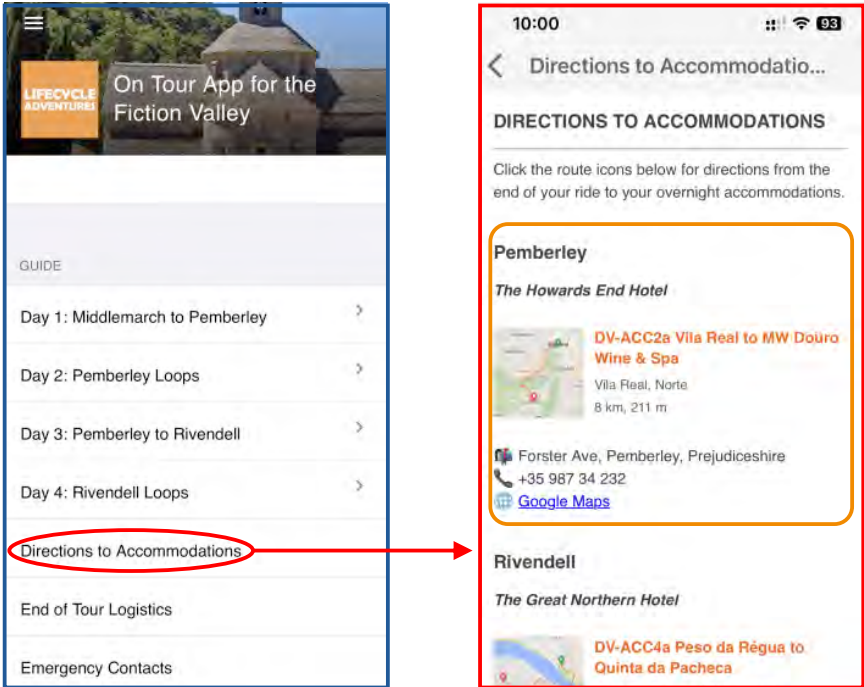
Tap on the map for the ride you have chosen. This takes you to route navigation within Ride with GPS. (Here you have chosen the Intermediate ride to Pemberley.)



Tap on *Navigate* to start directions for the route. See the *Navigating the Routes* section below for more details about the features available when navigating in Ride with GPS.

How do I navigate to my overnight accommodation?

Select *Directions to Accommodations* on the main menu.



For the relevant overnight town (in this case you have just arrived in Pemberley), click on the map and this will take you into RWGPS navigation that will direct you to your hotel.

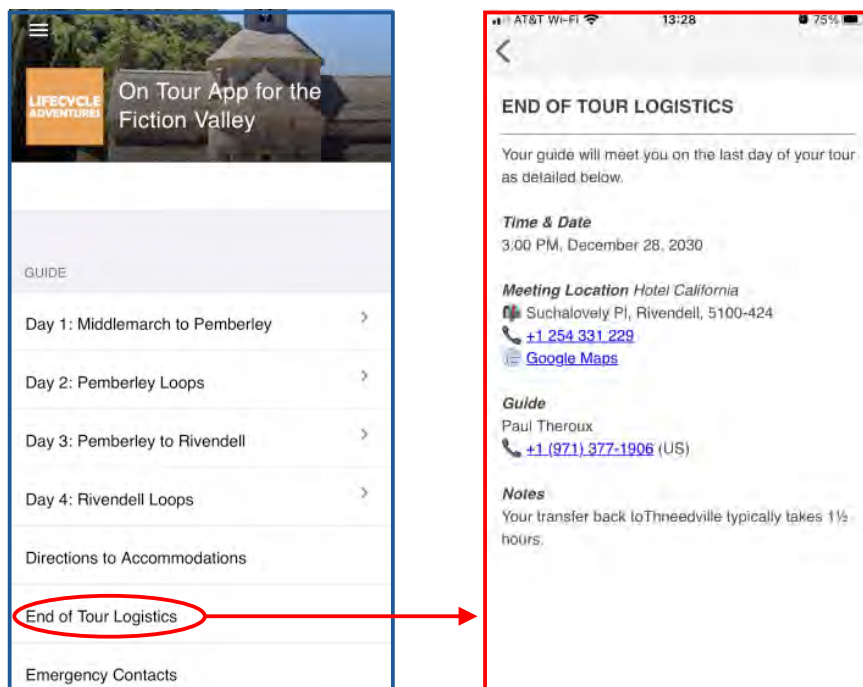
Accommodations are shown on your route with the following icon



You can also find the hotel using the *Google Maps* link.

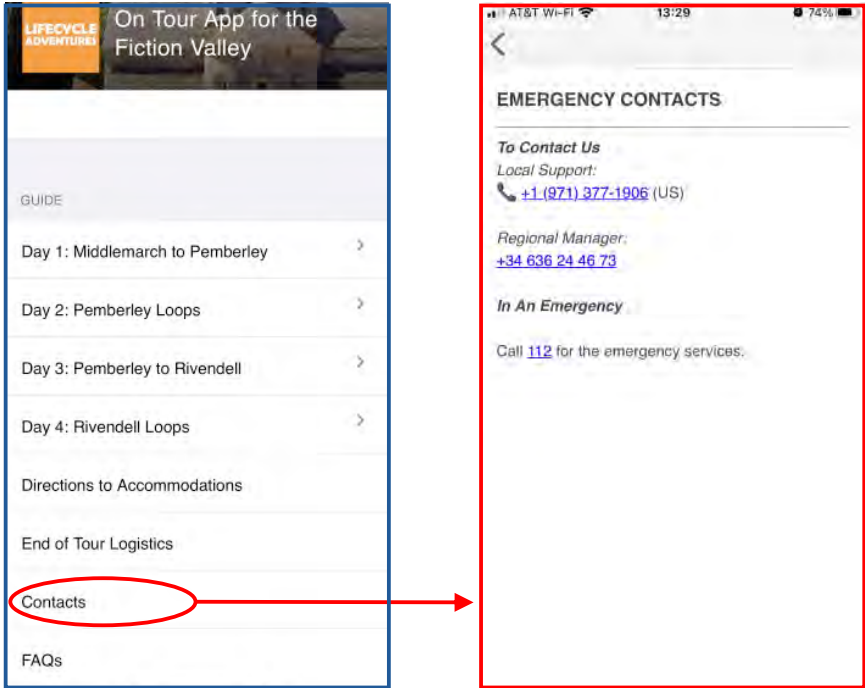
Where and when will I meet my guide at the end of my tour?

Select *End of Tour Logistics* from the main menu.



How do I contact my guide or the emergency services?

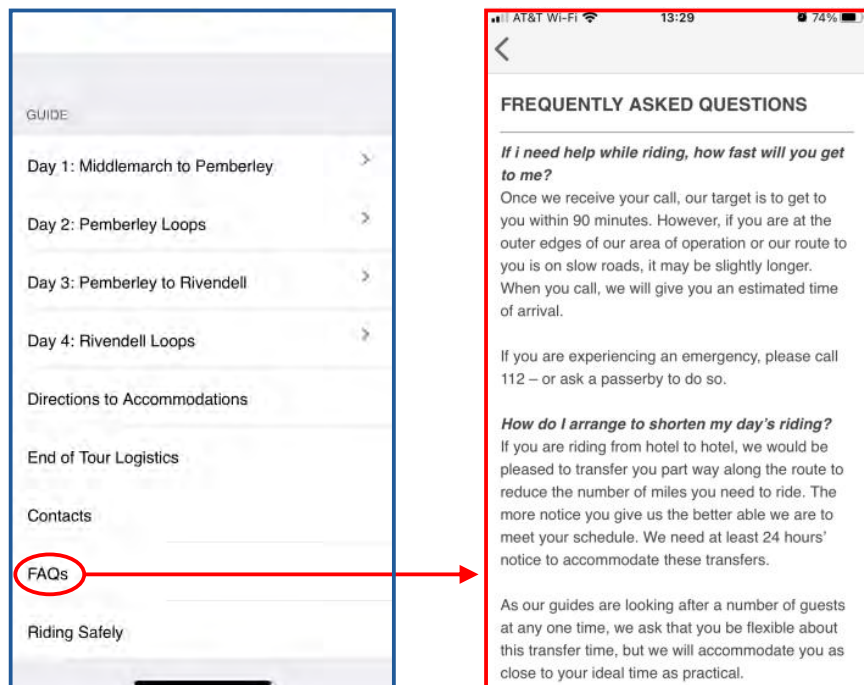
Select *Contacts* on the main menu.



You will see how to contact your guide, our regional manager, and the emergency services.

Answers to other frequently asked questions while on tour

Select *FAQs* on the main menu.

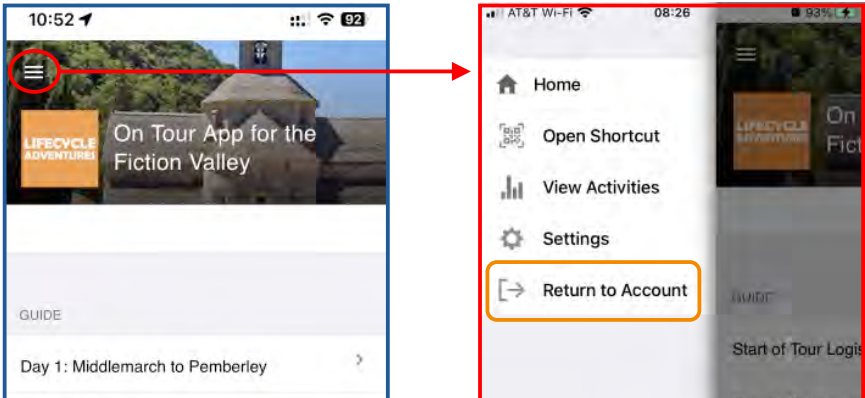


You will then see a list of questions with answers for some of the more common questions guests have while on tour.

There are also tips for *Riding Safely* on the main menu.

How do I get to the main RWGPS menu?

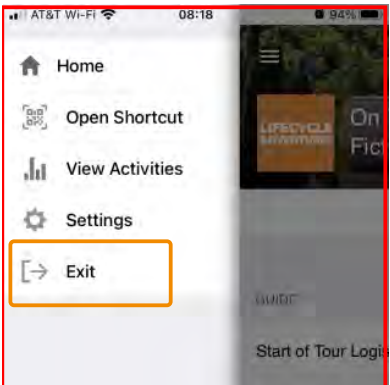
Tap the three horizontal lines at the top left-hand corner of the app.



You will then see options to:

- Open another RWGPS experience (Open Shortcut),
- View your rides (View Activities),
- Change your settings, or
- Exit the On Tour App and go to the main RWGPS page.

Note that if you do not have a RWGPS account, the last option will be to *Exit* to the main RWGPS home page rather than Returning to Account.



We do not recommend selecting *Exit* as you will need to reload the app by rescanning the QR code we sent you.

Troubleshooting the App

The App Will Not Download to My Phone or Tablet

About thirty days before the start of your tour, we will send you a QR code and instructions to download the app. Simply scan that QR code with your camera and follow the instructions.

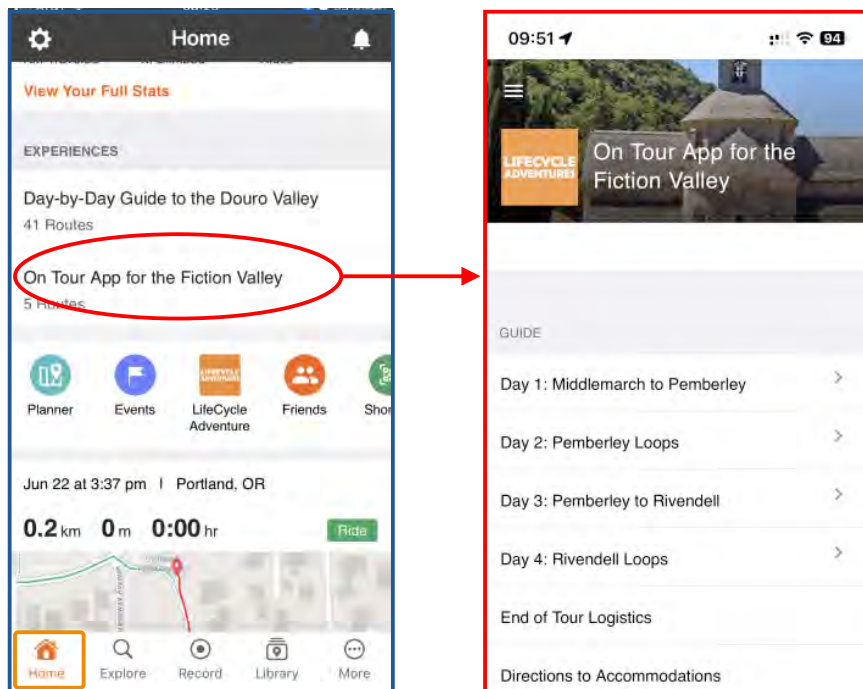
If this does not work, contact us and we can send you a *Use Code* as an alternative way to download the app. This sometimes works better if you are already a RWGPS user.

How do I get to the On Tour App from the main RWGPS menu?

If you have exited the app, and want to get back to the On Tour App.

If you have a RWGPS account

You will see the On Tour App listed under you *Experiences* on your home menu.



If you do not have a RWGPS account

If you select *Exit* after tapping the three menu lines at the top right-hand corner of the app, you will be returned to a generic RWGPS home screen. To get back into the app from here, you will need to tap *Open Shortcut* from the home menu and type in the Shortcut Code we sent you (or scan the QR image we sent you).

The On Tour App is freezing

If the On Tour App has frozen or become unpredictable, try turning your device off and on. If this does not work, reload the app by scanning the QR code we sent you. Note that the On Tour App is relatively large and requires a lot of bandwidth. Ideally, it is best downloaded when you have access to Wi-Fi.

The app is causing me to exceed my data plan (or drain my battery)

The app downloads to your phone and can be used with your data plan turned off.

- If you want to conserve your battery or avoid data roaming charges, set your phone to flight mode before you leave your hotel.
- Adjusting your locked screen time on your phone (settings) to around 5 minutes means that you can have map displayed for tricky sections or towns along the route without it being permanently on and draining your battery.
- Further battery saving tips can be found at <https://ridewithgps.com/help/battery-saving-tips>
- General Ride with GPS mobile application help and advice can be found at <https://ridewithgps.com/help/mobile/>
- We recommend bringing a battery bank with you on your tour so that in the event your phone runs out of battery you are able to charge it and continue using it for navigation.
- For the same reason, if you are riding as a couple, we strongly recommend that both riders have the On Tour App downloaded to their phone. If only one of the phones is used to navigate, and you then have problems with that phone (or you run out of battery), you have a backup phone ready to go.

NAVIGATING THE ROUTES

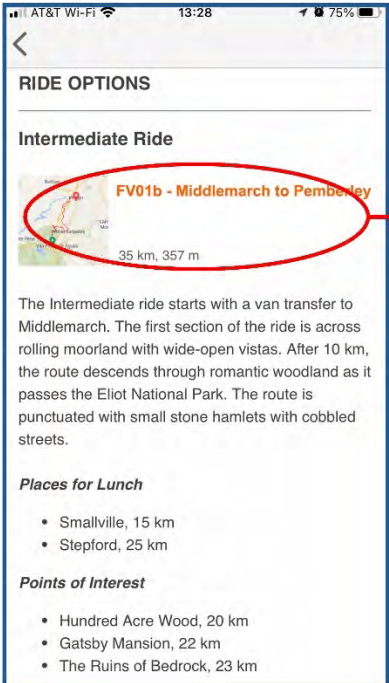
This section describes how to get the most of the RWGPS navigation. Specifically, it answers the questions:

- How do I start directions for my route?
- How do I get to the start of the route?
- How do I find restaurants and points of interest?
- How do I pause my route (e.g. when I go to lunch)?
- What do I do if I go off course?
- What do I do when I get to my destination?
- Where can I see my ride?
- Other top tips
- What settings do you recommend / can I change?

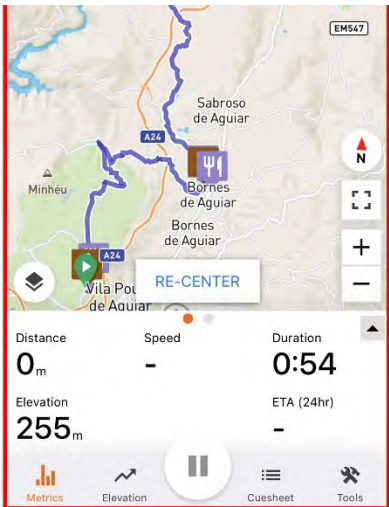
Ride with GPS navigation is intuitive to use and requires little learning. However, *as a backup*, the following section explains in detail how to answer the questions listed above.

How do I start directions for my route?

In *Ride Options* for the relevant day, tap on the route map of your chosen ride (here you have chosen the Intermediate route).



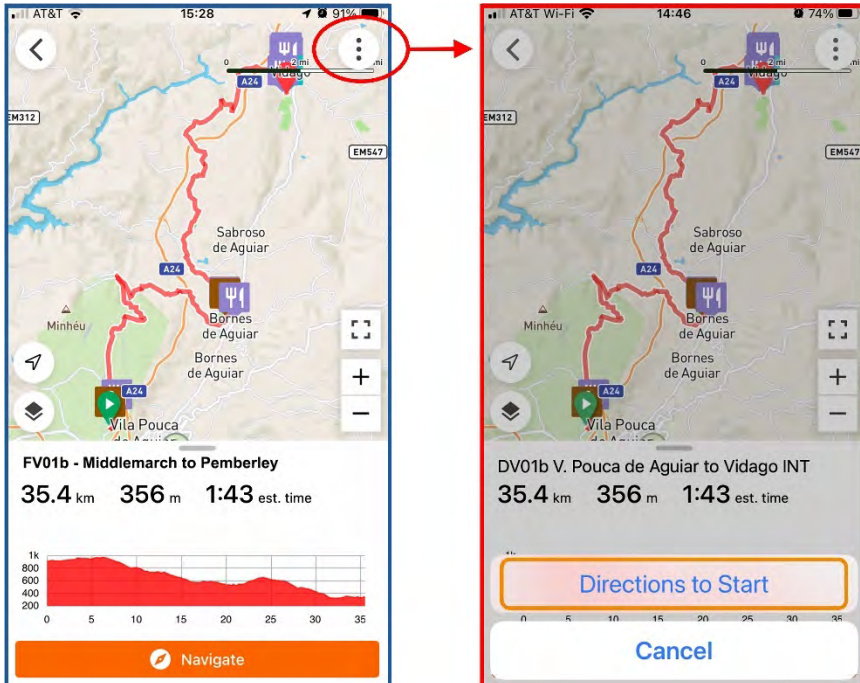
You then tap navigate to start your turn-by-turn directions.



You will get both audible and screen-prompt cues for your ride.

How do I get to the start of the route?

Typically, your route starts close to your hotel (where your ride ended the night before). If you need help navigating to the start of your route, **before tapping *Navigate***, tap the three-dot menu circle and select *Directions to Start*.



Your phone will then launch your mapping app (e.g. Google Maps or Apple Maps) and load a route to the start point. You can typically select *Cycle* as a mode of transport (not available in all areas).

We recommend you load the directions in your hotel while on Wi-Fi if you want to avoid using your phone's data plan.

How do I find restaurants and other things of interest?

Restaurants, points of interest, viewpoints, wineries, and accommodations are shown on your route with the following icons.



... Accommodation



... Restaurant



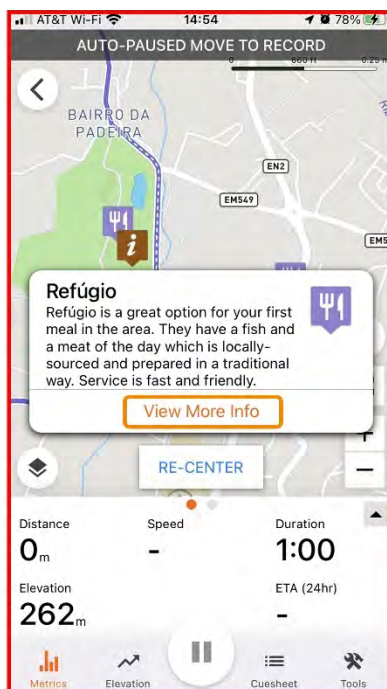
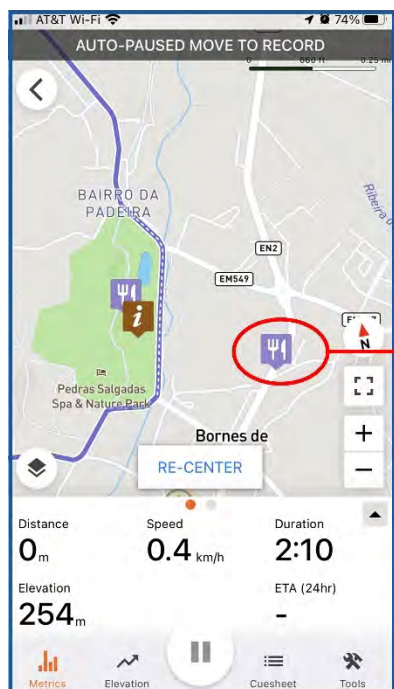
... Point of interest



... Viewpoint



... Winery (not all areas)

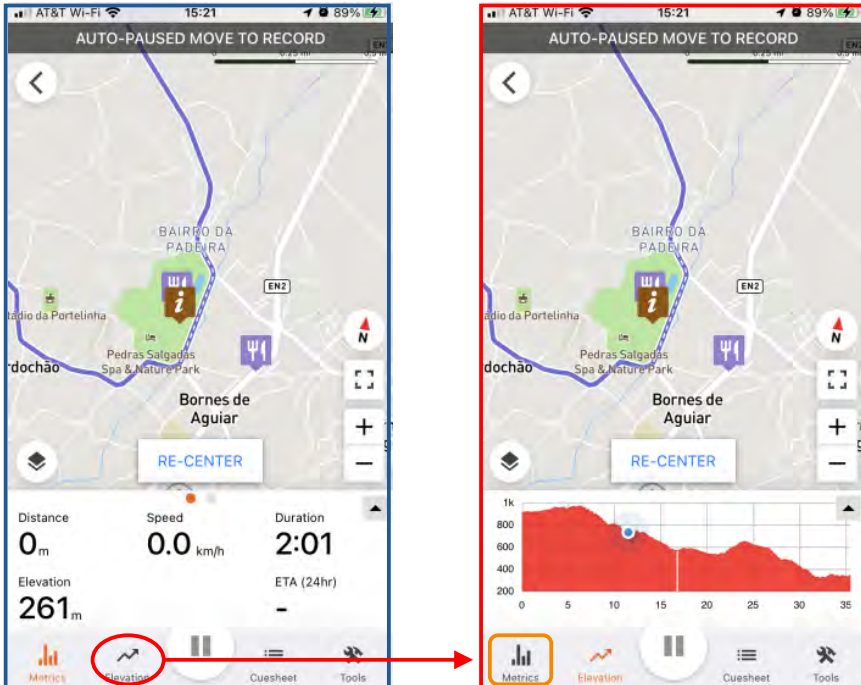


To learn more, tap the icon. This will bring up a short description. Tapping *View More Info* will expand the text and show a link to Google Maps.

You can also learn more about these places in the main On Tour App under the Lunch, Points of Interest, and Wineries sections for each day.

How do I see how much I have left to climb?

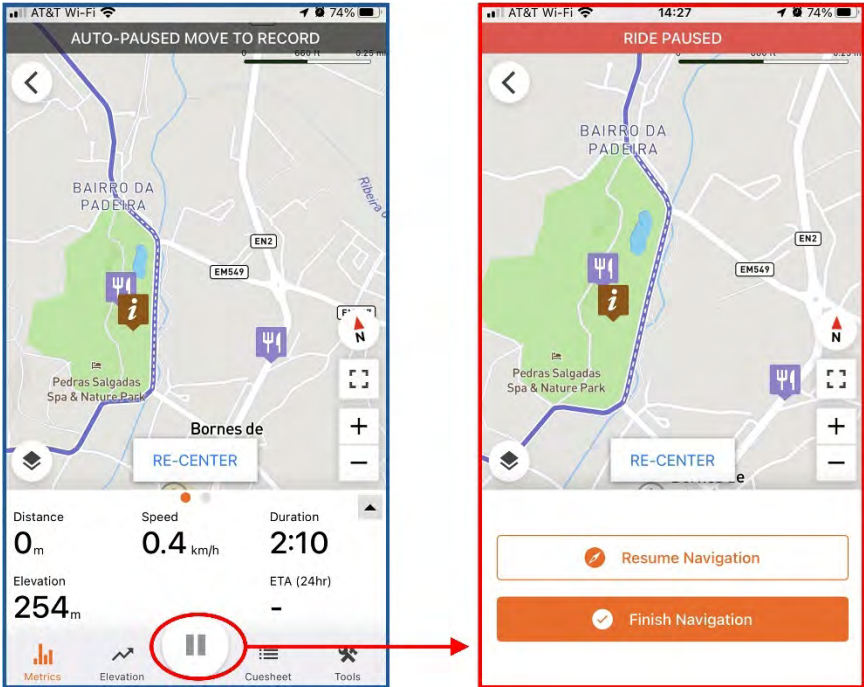
To see where you are on a hill, tap the *Elevation* icon.



To return to the key statistics view, tap the *Metrics* icon.

How do I pause my route (e.g., when I go to lunch)?

Press and hold the *Pause* button.

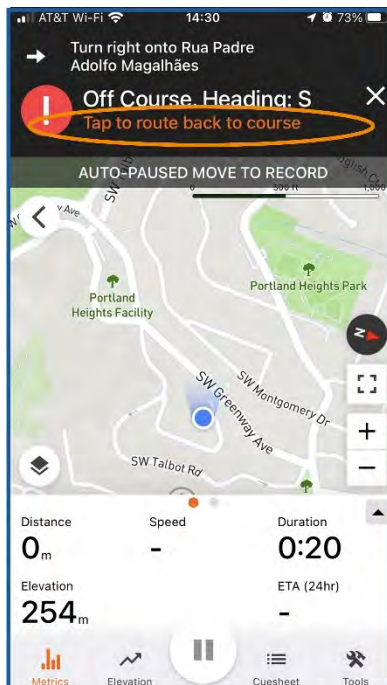


When you are ready to restart your ride, just return to the app and press *Resume Navigation*.

What do I do if I go off course?

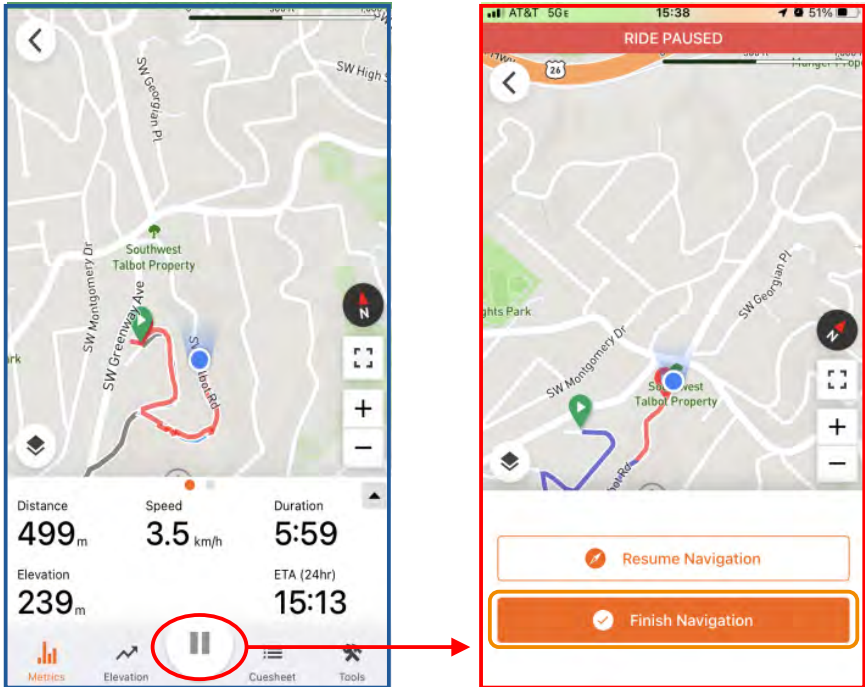
If you find yourself off the main route (e.g. if you have taken a wrong turn or visited a restaurant for lunch), the app will alert you with an audible alert and a cue card stating that you are *Off Course*. To get back to the course, press *Tap to route back to course*. RWGPS will then direct you back to the route. Note that this feature can have complications:

- This feature does not work reliably without cellular data (i.e.. does not always work if you are in Airplane Mode). In these circumstances, use the map to guide yourself back to the route.
- Typically, you are directed to the closest point of your route. If you are a long way off course, the app may direct you to backtrack the way that you went off course rather than further along the route. We suggest you zoom out on the map to check you are being guided along a route you want to follow.
- If you are on an in-and-out ride, double check that you are being directed in the direction you want along the route.
- If you choose not to receive directions back to your route, the app will continue to notify you every two minutes that you are off course. If you intentionally go off course and no longer want these alerts, you can stop them by tapping the X in the corner of the cue card. You could also tap and hold the pause button to temporarily pause your ride.

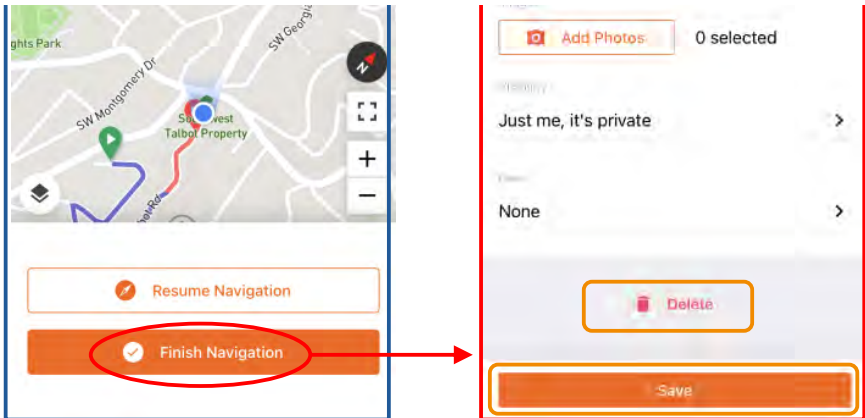


What do I do when I get to my destination?

When you finish a route, you'll get one final chime notification and you will see on the map that you have reached the end of the ride (shown by a red icon). Then tap-and-hold the pause button.

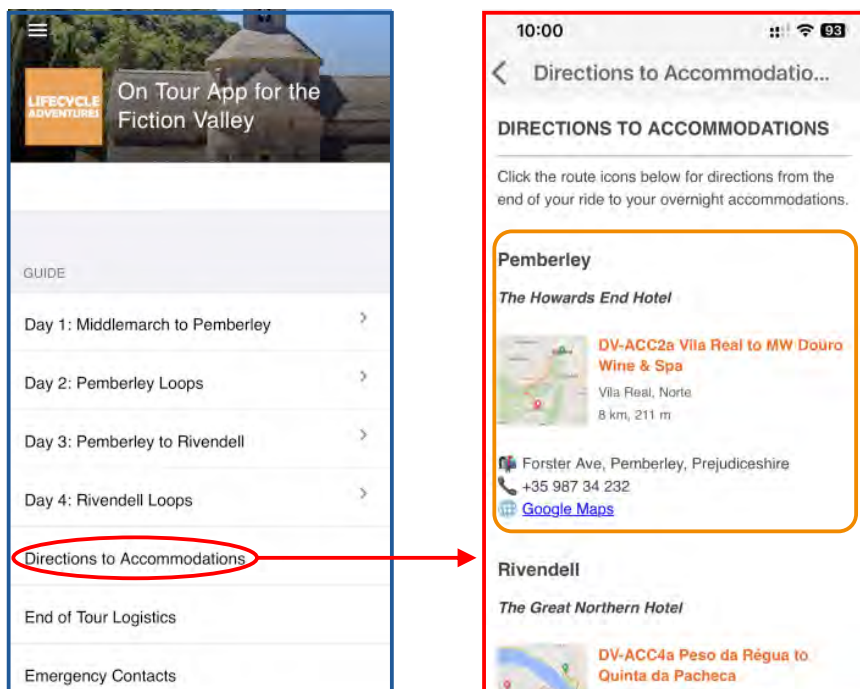


Follow the prompt to either save or delete the ride.



Tap *Save* if you want to be able to review your statistics for the ride at a later date. Tap *Delete* (and then OK) if you do not want to save your ride. Note that you may need to scroll down to find the *Delete* button.

After saving (or deleting) the ride, you will be returned to the main menu of the app. Scroll down and tap *Directions to Accommodations*.



Select the map under the hotel for the town you are in (in this case you have just arrived in Pemberley and are staying in the Howards End Hotel). You will then be taken to RWGPS directions to get you from the end of the ride to your hotel.

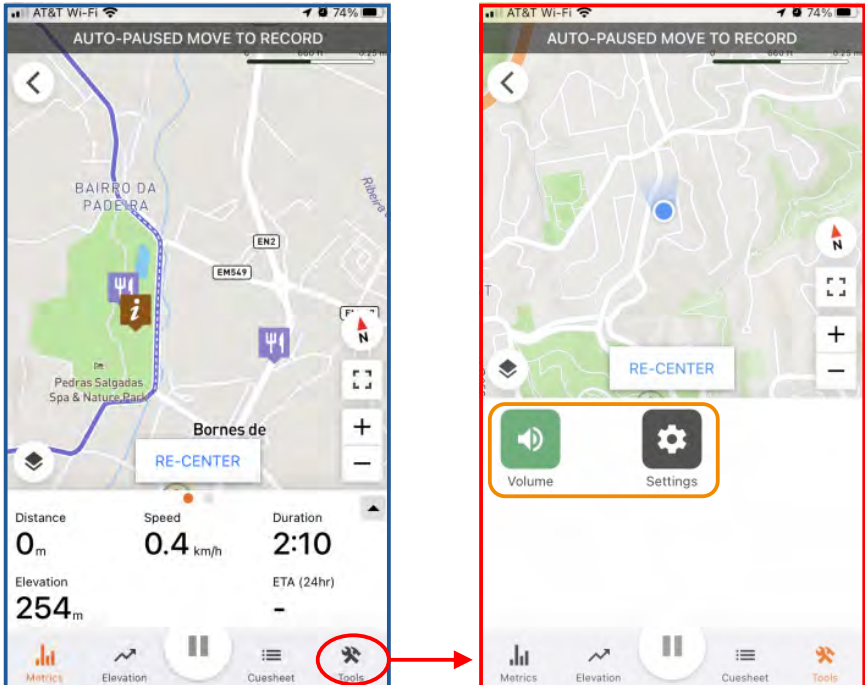
Accommodations are shown on your route with the following icon



You can also find the hotel using the *Google Maps* link.

Tools when navigating

Tapping the Tools when navigating will allow you to select Volume or Settings.



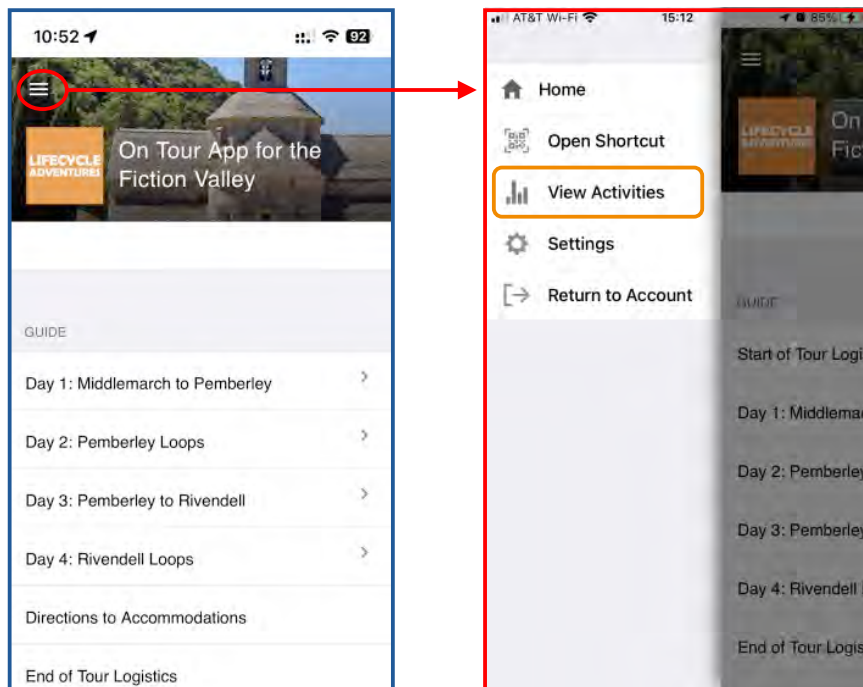
Volume allows you to turn off audible alerts or adjust the volume.

Settings allows you to change various settings. Examples of what can be changed includes:

- Get alerts earlier.
- Under Handlebar Mode: keep the screen on while navigating. Note, this will rundown your battery faster.
- Under Handlebar Mode: lock the navigation view in your preferred orientation.

Where can I see my rides?

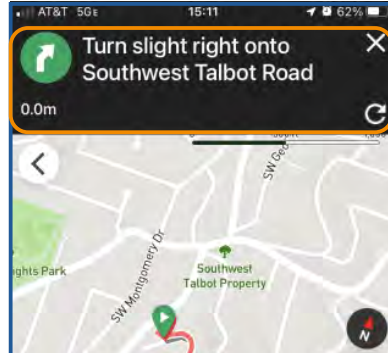
Select menu (three lines in top lefthand corner) then *View Activities* to see your saved rides.



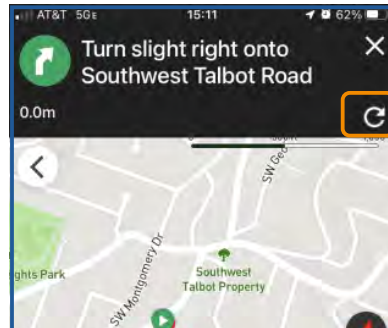
You can select a ride and review the route you took as well as the ride data such as ride time and average speed.

Other top tips

- You must be recording a ride to use navigation. After you are finished riding you may opt to delete the ride or save it.
- The app may take a moment to find your exact position. Once your location is found, your location will show on the map as a blue dot, and navigation will begin.
- When you are within 10-15 seconds from your first turn, you'll get your first turn notification at the top of your screen.



- If you missed the voice announcement, you can replay it by pressing the replay icon in the bottom right corner of the notification.



- The cue can be dismissed by swiping it, or it will go away automatically after you have passed the cue.
- While navigating a route with the screen locked, the app can flash the cues over the lock screen with text and voice for upcoming cue. For this function to work, you need to allow Ride with GPS to send push notifications to your phone. This means that for the most part you can ride with your phone screen locked (preserving battery life). You will still have voice and on-screen navigation prompts.



- Adjusting your locked screen time on your phone (settings) to around 5 minutes means that you can have map displayed for tricky sections or towns along the route without it being permanently on.
- If you want to conserve your battery or avoid data roaming charges, set your phone to flight mode before you leave your hotel.
- Further battery saving tips can be found at <https://ridewithgps.com/help/battery-saving-tips>
- Ride with GPS mobile application help and advice can be found at <https://ridewithgps.com/help/mobile/>
- We strongly recommend bringing a battery bank with you on your tour so that in the event your phone runs out of battery you are able to charge it and continue using it for navigation.
- For the same reason, if you are riding as a couple, we strongly recommend that both riders have the On Tour App downloaded to their phone.

SAFETY & ENJOYMENT

Riding Safely

Rules of the Road

We have a few simple rules we ask you to follow:

1. Always wear a cycle helmet fastened securely while cycling.
2. Wear highly-visibility clothing and/or a florescent safety triangle.
3. Do not ride at night or in the dim light of dawn or dusk.
4. Ride in single file and with the direction of traffic.
5. When riding, stay as close as is safe to the right-hand side (left in Ireland) of the road while avoiding grit or broken pavement.
6. Carry identification, emergency contact, and your medical/travel insurance.

Daily Bike Checks

Your rental bikes are checked and tuned before every trip. However, it is useful to do some regular checks just to keep things running smoothly. If you're in any doubt or have any concerns, give us a call and we'll have a guide come out to you.

1. Brakes. Do both brake levers engage the brakes smoothly?
2. Handlebars & stem. Check alignment. If there is lateral movement or rocking when the front brake is engaged, the headset may need adjusting.
3. Gear changing. Do all gears engage/change smoothly?
4. Chain. If you've been riding in rain or on wet roads, you may want to wipe off your chain and apply a little lube the night before. In the morning, run a clean rag over the chain to remove any excess oil.
5. Wheels & tires. Inflate front & back tires to the correct tire pressure (written on the side of the tire). Check wheels for wobbles, spokes for breakages and tires for wear. Ensure the quick-release mechanisms are secure.
6. Frame. Check for cracks and alignment in the frame especially if you accidentally dropped the bike.

Riding Efficiently

Tips for When Riding

As well as having a safe tour, we are keen for you to enjoy cycling and leave with a real sense of accomplishment. This is likely to include riding within your limits and not exhausting yourself before lunch. Here are some thoughts on how to stay happy on your bike.

1. *Eat before you are hungry.* Even moderate cycling burns around 300 calories per hour so eat snacks such as power bars as needed – giving your body enough time to process the food before the fuel gauge reaches empty.
2. *Drink before you are thirsty.* As you sweat, you will lose both water and essential salts. You will not notice the effects until it is too late. Drink plenty

of water before you start to ride and then take regular sips while riding. A good target is to drink either water or sports drink every 30 minutes.

3. *Ride at a pace that feels comfortable.* Even when climbing hills, ride at a pace that allows you to keep a conversation going without being out of breath. This means changing down to a low gear, keeping your cadence high and taking things easy.
4. The sun can get very intense, especially in the middle of the day so *keep your shirt on and use a high factor sunscreen.* Be aware of being burned through the gaps in your cycle helmet. A bandana under the helmet can make all the difference.
5. *Relax and change your hand position regularly.* This helps avoid shoulder cricks or back aches. Drop handlebars are better for being able to do this than straight handlebars.
6. *Check your bike.* A sticking brake or skipping gear stops you relaxing and can be dangerous. If you are unsure, talk to your guide, who will be happy to help you check things out if you have a concern.
7. *Smile, you are on vacation!*

Seat Height Adjustment

Seat height adjustment is more craft than science. The most important thing is that you feel safe and confident on the bike. However, getting your saddle to the right height will also help you stay comfortable on longer rides, avoid saddle sores, and conserve your energy while you pedal.

Bike fitters can spend hours getting your fit just right, but here are some simple rules of thumb.

- While seated on your bike, prop yourself up against a wall.
- Position the pedals so the pedal cranks are vertical (one pedal at 12 o'clock and one pedal at 6 o'clock).
- Place your feet on the pedals and move your foot so that your heel is on the pedal at 6 o'clock.
- When your seat is at the correct height, your leg (of the foot at 6 o'clock) should be straight but your knee shouldn't be locked.

If your seat is too low, it will make it harder to pedal and you may get knee pain at the front of the knee. Too high and your hips will go from side to side which will make you tend to ride in too high a gear and you may develop pain at the back of your knees.

Avoiding Saddle Sores

Saddle sores are the great unmentioned subject of cycling. However, if you have not been riding much recently and start doing a lot of miles on a bike, you may well become just a little too familiar with them.

To prevent sores, it's helpful to know what they are. A saddle sore is a skin ailment on the buttocks due to, or exacerbated by, riding on a bicycle saddle. It often develops in three stages: skin abrasion, folliculitis (inflammation of the hair follicles) and, finally,

abscess. If it's not obvious from the definition, it is better to stop the sores in the early stages than try and treat it in the final stage.

The best cure of all is to not get them in the first place. Gradually build up your riding mileage and get used to your bike seat. Some training rides before you go on tour will help. Other good preventative measures include:

- Reducing the friction due to bobbing or swinging motion while pedaling, by setting the appropriate saddle height – see above.
- If you have a favorite saddle, bring it along and we will fit it to your rental bike.
- Wear good-quality cycling shorts, with a high-quality chamois insert.
- Use petroleum jelly, chamois cream, or lubricating gel on the chamois to further reduce friction.
- Do not sit around in damp bike shorts after your ride and thoroughly wash and dry the affected area.

There are pharmacies in all the main towns you'll stay in if you need medical treatment. Our primary message would be, if you think you have them, don't ignore them.

FIXING A FLAT

To make this basic repair, you will need tire levers, a pump (or CO₂ canister), and a spare tube (or patch kit). If you have a thru axle (see below) you will also need a hex wrench (Allen key). Before working on your bike, ensure you are well away from the road and in no danger from the traffic.

There are five basic steps to fixing a flat.

1. Remove the wheel
2. Deflate and remove the tube
3. Remove what caused the flat
4. Replace tube and inflate
5. Refit the wheel

Remove the Wheel

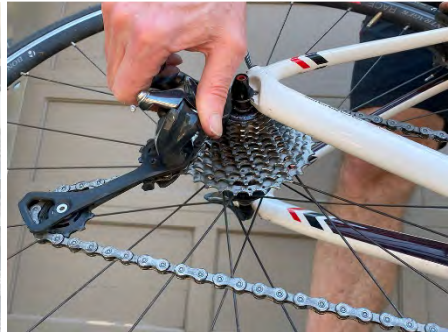
If you have rim brakes, release the brakes. How you do this depends on the type of brakes. Two examples are shown below.



If you are **removing the front wheel**, open the quick-release lever and unscrew the nut on the other side of the skewer. The wheel should then drop out of the fork.



If you are **removing the rear wheel**, put the chain on the smallest cog of the rear cassette. Open the quick release lever. You will then need to push the derailleur back to allow space for the wheel to get past the chain as you pull the wheel out.



If you have **disc brakes**, avoid touching the rotors or the disc pads. The rotors can be hot and grease or other contaminants on these parts will make the brakes ineffective. Also avoid squeezing the brake levers when the wheel is removed as this will close the pads and make it very difficult to reinsert the disk when refitting the wheel.



If you have a **thru axle** (pictured above on RHS) on either a front or rear wheel, you will need to unscrew and remove the axle using a hex wrench before you can remove the wheel. Avoid getting any dirt on the axle after it is removed.

Deflate and Remove the Tube

Having removed the wheel, fully deflate the tube. If you have a thick Schrader valve, press down on the small pin at the center of the valve. If you have a thin Presta valve, loosen the small valve at the top of the valve stem and press down.



Unseat the tire from the rim. Place a tire lever under the bead of the tire and lever it over the edge of the wheel (avoid doing this near to the valve). Repeat this procedure with a second tire lever. Slide the second tire lever around the rim to free the tire. Pull the valve stem out of the wheel and remove the rest of the tube.



Remove What Caused the Flat

Inspect the tire for the cause of the puncture. Remove any thorns or pieces of glass that could puncture the new tube. *Carefully*, run your fingers around the inside of the tire to check for sharp debris.



Replace and Inflate the Tube

Put a little air into the replacement tube – just enough to give it some shape – and insert the valve into the wheel.



Carefully put the rest of the tube inside the tire. Beginning at the valve, push the tire bead back inside the rim of the wheel. Continue around the rim in both directions.

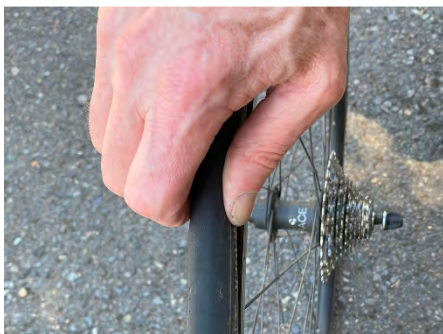


If the tire is tight, pinch both sides of the tire bead into the center of the rim – this will make it easier for the tire to clear the rim. If necessary, use tire levers to force the final part of the tire bead over the wheel rim – being careful not to pinch the tube and cause another flat.



Inflate the tube. As you inflate the tube, check regularly that the tube isn't caught in the rim and that there is no bulging. When the tube is a little inflated, go around the

wheel pinching the tire to the center of the rim to help release where the tube might be trapped. Inflate the tube to the recommended pressure printed on the tire.



If you don't have a pump with a pressure gauge, inflate until the tire is hard to depress with your fingers and check your tire pressure as soon as you have access to a pump with a gauge.

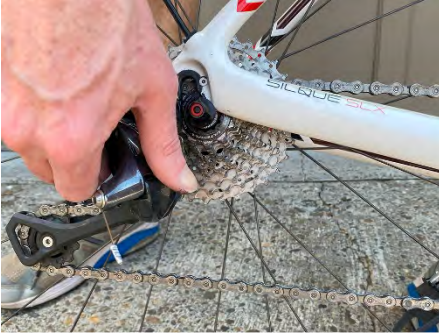
Refit the Wheel

Refitting the wheel is the reverse of removing it.

If you are **refitting the front wheel**, open the quick-release lever and place the wheel in the dropouts. Tighten the nut opposite the lever and close the lever to tighten onto the frame. If you have overtightened the nut, it will not be possible to close the lever. If the lever closes too easily, tighten the nut more and try again.



If you are **refitting the rear wheel**, align the wheel so the chain is on the smallest cog of the cassette. Pull back the derailleur to allow space for the wheel to drop into the dropouts. Close the lever and check it is tight and not touching the frame. If the lever closes too easily, tighten the nut and try again.



If you have a **thru axle** (pictured above on RHS) on either a front or a rear wheel, place the wheel in the dropouts, as described above. Then reinsert the axle. If you cannot insert the axle or it fails to engage on the thread smoothly as you turn it clockwise, remove the wheel and reinsert it, checking the alignment. Tighten the axle using a hex wrench.

If you have **rim brakes**, reconnect the brakes and check they are functioning OK.



Video

For a more dynamic description of fixing a flat, check out the following video:
https://youtu.be/qLO_H00kEjs.

LIFECYCLE ADVENTURES SERVICES

If I need help, how fast will you get to me?

Once we receive your call, our target is to get to you within 90 minutes. However, if our route to you is on slow roads or our guides are completing another job it may take us longer to reach you. When you call, we will give you an estimated time of arrival.

If you are experiencing an emergency, please call 112 – or ask a passerby to do so.

How do I arrange to shorten my day's riding?

If you are riding from hotel to hotel, we would be pleased to transfer you partway along the route to reduce the number of miles you need to travel. The more notice you give us the better able we are to meet your schedule. We need at least 24 hours' notice to accommodate these transfers.

As our guides are supporting a number of guests at any one time, we ask that you be flexible about this transfer time, but we will accommodate you as close to your ideal time as practical.

What time do I need to leave my luggage on transfer days?

We ask that you leave your luggage with the front desk by 9:30 AM; making sure that a LifeCycle Adventures luggage label is attached to each bag. If this is not going to be possible, please let us know.

What time will my luggage arrive at the next hotel?

We plan to have your luggage at the next hotel by 4:00 PM. We will alert you if this will not be the case.

When can I check in to my room?

As a rule, check-in time at hotels is between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM. If you expect to arrive outside of these hours, please call ahead to the hotel, or call us, to make special arrangements. You will find contact details for your accommodation in the *Directions to Accommodations* section of the On Tour App.

What are the arrangements for the final day?

If you are riding on your final day, please leave your luggage with the front desk of your hotel. We will collect your bags before meeting you at the end of your ride (or at your hotel depending on your route choice).

Your guide will be waiting for you with your luggage as detailed in the *End of Tour Logistics* section of the On Tour App.

Please talk to your guide 24 hours in advance if you wish to make changes to these arrangements. Note that your guide is balancing multiple commitments in any one day so it is typically not possible to change your pickup location or collection time on the final day.

Can you help us with reservations?

This Guidebook has activity and eating suggestions for your overnight towns. The On Tour App has lunch suggestions and points of interest along your route. See these listings for details as to how to make reservations.

In non-English-speaking areas, we are very happy to help with restaurant or activity reservations – both before you arrive and while you are on your tour. Any reservations we have made on your behalf will be detailed in the *Meal & Activity Reservations* section of the On Tour App under the relevant day.

Where we make activity or meal reservations on your behalf, you will be responsible for payment for those services and any cancellation fees that may be incurred should you choose not to use those services. See the *Terms and Conditions* in your Itinerary for further details of these charges.

What do you suggest by way of gratuities?

Your guides take pride in going the extra mile to ensure you have an exceptional experience. Should you wish to recognize their above-and-beyond efforts, a gratuity to your guide would be most welcome. €15 to €30 per person per day is common in the industry.

Intentionally Blank

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1 – WINERY LISTINGS

The following listings provide details about each winery along the routes. The numbers cross reference with the maps and tables in the *About the Area – Wineries on Your Route* section of this guidebook.

1 Domaine Du Croc Du Merle

A family-owned estate; part dairy farm, part winery. Renowned for its Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc wines. The estate offers guided tours, wine tastings, and a range of homemade products such as cheeses and jams. Blending tradition with modern techniques, it provides an authentic Loire Valley experience in its picturesque setting.

Wines	Cheverny Blanc, Cheverny Rosé, Cheverny Rouge, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Crémant de Loire (sparkling), Méthode Traditionnelle Rosé.
Food	Guided tours end with a tasting of their wines, cheeses and blackcurrant jellies.
Tours & Tastings	Guided tours every Tuesday and Wednesday at 5:00 PM.
Reservations	Not required for the scheduled guided tours or for a tasting.
Hours	Daily from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Closed on Sunday afternoon.
Contact	 38 Rue de la Chaumette, Muides-sur-Loire  +33 02 54 87 5865  https://www.domaineducrocdumerle.fr/

2 Les Vignerons de Mont-Près-Chambord

Established in 1931, this winery is a cooperative at the center of a prestigious historical triangle (Blois, Chambord and Cheverny). They produce Cheverny and Cour-Cheverny wines, including red, white, rosé, and Crémant de Loire. The cooperative includes 20 member winegrowers cultivating 380 acres.

Wines	Cheverny Blanc, Cheverny Rosé, Cheverny Rouge, Crémant de Loire (sparkling)
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available, they do not offer tours.
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed Monday morning and all-day Sunday
Contact	 816 La Petite Rue, Mont-près-Chambord  +33 02 54 70 7115  https://vigneronsdemontpreschambord.com/

3 Domaine Daridan

Located in Cour-Cheverny, this winery spans 50 acres and has been managed by Benoît Daridan since 2001. The estate produces Cheverny and Cour-Cheverny wines,

including red, white, and rosé varieties, as well as sparkling wines. The estate produces the *Romorantin* grape: a rare grape first introduced by Francois I of France.

Wines	Cheverny Blanc, Cheverny Rosé, Cheverny Rouge, Crémant de Loire (sparkling), Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Méthode Traditionnelle Brut and Rosé.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available. Tours available by prior reservation.
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings, required for tours.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 16 VC de la Marigonnerie, Cour-Cheverny  +33 02 54 79 9453  https://domainedaridan.com/ang-domaine1/

4 Domaine des Huards

The Gendrier family has been crafting wines at Domaine des Huards since 1846. Embracing organic and biodynamic farming since 1998, the estate is in Cour-Cheverny, just 4 km from Cheverny Castle. They produce wines under the AOC Cheverny and AOC Cour-Cheverny appellations, focusing on the rare Romorantin grape since 1922. All their wines are exclusively made from grapes grown in their biodynamic vineyards, highlighting the family's dedication to sustainable viticulture and high-quality winemaking.

Wines	Cheverny Pinot-Noir & Cheverny Gamay, Cheverny Sauvignon & Cheverny Chardonnay, Cour-Cheverny – 100 % Romorantin, Cheverny Rosé, Crémant de Loire (sparkling)
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available. Tours available by prior reservation.
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings, required for tours.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 30 VC des Huards, Cour-Cheverny  +33 02 54 79 9790  https://www.domainedeshuards.com/

5 Domaine Le Portail

Located in Cheverny, this family-owned estate was established in a former monastery, just 600 meters from the Château de Cheverny. The vineyard spans 85 acres and emphasizes sustainability and biodiversity. The estate produces a range of wines including Cheverny and Cour-Cheverny.

Wines	Cheverny Blanc, Cheverny Rosé, Cheverny Rouge, Crémant de Loire (sparkling)
Food	Not available

Tours & Tastings	Scheduled tours only
Reservations	Required, at least 48 hours in advance by phone or email.
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Closes at 12:30 PM on Sunday. Usually open from early May
Contact	 Le Portail, Cheverny  +33 02 54 79 9125  https://www.cadoux.fr/en-fr/

6 Domaine des Pierrettes

Located in Rilly-sur-Loire, this winery produces a variety of wines under the Touraine appellation, including red, white, rosé, and sparkling wines. The vineyard spans 60 acres and practices sustainable, organic agriculture. Visitors can enjoy guided and independent tours of the winemaking cellar and vineyards, as well as wine tastings paired with local products. The estate is situated along the Loire à Vélo cycle route.

Wines	Gamay (red, white, rosé), Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon, Côt
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available. Tours available by prior reservation.
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings, required for tours.
Hours	Monday to Friday from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM and Saturday from 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday. Open daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM from June 1 to September 30.
Contact	 9 Meunet, Rilly-sur-Loire  +33 02 54 20 9844  https://www.domainedespierrettes.fr/

7 Guillaume and Mathieu Plou & Fils

Located in Chargé, near Amboise, this vineyard has a winemaking legacy dating back to 1508. They cultivate 185 acres of vineyards, producing wines under the Touraine, Touraine Amboise, and Crémant de Loire appellations.

Wines	Red Wines: Le Champ Martin, François 1er, Les Ménigottes, Les Cailloux Blancs, Elixir, Heritage Malbec, Equilibre, Les Grandes Peines, Terra Nova. White Wines: La Croix du Pin, Heritage Chenin. Rosé Wines: Rosé Sec, Milady. Sparkling Wines: Crémant de Loire, Méthode - Blanc, Méthode - Rosé, Heritage - Méthode Ancestrale.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	90-minute self-guided tour of the vineyard – free of charge 20-minute guided tour of the cellars – free of charge Free tasting
Reservations	Not necessary
Hours	Daily from 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 26 Rue du Général de Gaulle, Chargé

+33 02 47 30 5517

<https://www.plouetfils.com/en/>

8 Xavier Frissant

Located in Mosnes near Amboise, this winery manages a 185-acres estate producing wines like Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin, Côt, and Gamay under the Touraine, Touraine Amboise, and Crémant de Loire appellations. The vineyard, operational for eight generations, practices sustainable agriculture.

Wines	White - Sauvignon Blanc, Red (Côt), Rosé (Côt and Gamay)
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available, they do not offer tours.
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings
Hours	Monday au Saturday: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 1 Rue du Chemin Neuf, Mosnes  +33 02 47 57 2318  http://xavierfrissant.com/winery/

9 Vignoble Tévenot

Situated in Madon near Candé-sur-Beuvron, spans 55 acres and produces Cheverny and Crémant de Loire wines. This family vineyard, rich in history, offers guided tours and tastings year-round.

Wines	Cheverny Blanc, a blend of Sauvignon and Chardonnay; Cheverny Rosé, made from Pinot Noir, Gamay, and Cabernet; and Cheverny Rouge, combining Pinot Noir, Gamay, and Côt.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Free guided tour of the estate
Reservations	Not required for tastings. Recommended for tours.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Sunday from 10:00 – 12:00 PM.
Contact	 4 Rue du Moulin À Vent, Candé-sur-Beuvron  +33 02 54 79 4424  http://vignobletevenot.com/

10 Caves Monmousseau

Established in 1886 and located in Montrichard, this winery is renowned for its fine sparkling wines from the Touraine region. They produce Crémant de Loire, Touraine Brut, and Vouvray using traditional methods. The cellars span 15 km of tuffeau galleries. Tours combine art, history, and the winemaking process using light projections.

Wines	Anjou Rouge, Sancerre Rouge, Saumur Champigny, Anjou Blanc, Muscadet Sèvre, Sancerre Blanc, Saumur Blanc, Cabernet d'Anjou, Rosé,
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Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Self-guided tour, 60-90 minutes, €6, materials in English and French. Guided tour (in French), 60-90 minutes, €8 Guided tours can be arranged in English by contacting in advance.
Reservations	Recommended, can be made online
Hours	Daily in April, May, June, September, October from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Daily in July and August daily from 10:00 AM – 6:30 PM.
Contact	 75 Rue de Vierzon, Montrichard Val de Cher  +33 02 54 32 3515  https://www.monmousseau.com/en/

11 Troglo Degusto

Located in Bourré within the Domaine des Tabourelles vineyard, this is an interesting wine tourism experience. More of an 'experience' than a winery visit, visitors can explore 35 km of historic underground galleries carved into tuffeau stone, used as quarries, mushroom farms, and wine cellars. The guided tours, conducted by flashlight, are a blend of history, culture, and wine tasting.

Wines	Sauvignon, Gamay, Cabernet, Côt, Pineau d'Aunis, Chenin, and Chardonnay
Food	Small 'bites' of local products to accompany the wine tasting.
Tours & Tastings	1h 15minutes guided walk in the underground passages followed by a tasting of 4 wines from the Domaine, paired with local products.
Reservations	Not required
Hours	Open from late March until early November. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM. Monday from 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM. Wednesday from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Sunday from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM.
Contact	 59 Rte des Vallées, Montrichard Val de Cher  +33 06 08 11 7140  https://www.troglodegusto.fr/

12 Caves Ambacia

A popular thing to do in Amboise, this winery offers an immersive wine tasting experience. Established in 1874, the winery is set in 16th-century troglodyte caves. They produce a variety of Loire Valley wines, including Vouvray, Chinon, and Bourgueil. Visitors can enjoy guided tours, a sensory experience, and tastings led by knowledgeable sommeliers, exploring 150 years of winemaking.

Wines	Vouvray, Bourgueil, Chinon
Food	Delicatessen selling local products. Not a restaurant
Tours & Tastings	Simple tastings available. Tours in English, usually twice a day, €18 per person.
Reservations	Recommended for tours, can be made on their website.
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 6:30 PM. Closes at 5:30 PM on Sunday
Contact	 56 Rue du Rocher des Violettes, Amboise

+33 02 47 57 2077

https://caves-ambacia.fr/index.php?id_lang=2

13 Cave SD – Cave à Vin par Sébastien Durance

Specializes in natural and biodynamic wines. Owned by Sébastien Durance, this wine shop offers a curated selection of local and regional wines, including varieties like Chinon and Touraine-Amboise. The shop focuses on sustainable and organic producers. Visitors can enjoy personalized wine tastings and learn about the region's terroir. The shop is known for its welcoming atmosphere and expert guidance in wine selection.

Wines	Red, white, rosé, sparkling
Food	There is a menu of charcuterie and cheese
Tours & Tastings	Tasting per glass, starting around €7.
Reservations	Not required.
Hours	Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Sunday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Closed on Monday and Wednesday.
Contact	 11 All. du Sergent Turpin, Amboise  +33 02 47 23 2151  No website

14 Caves du Père Auguste

Located in Civray-de-Touraine near the Château de Chenonceau, this winery has been a family-run since 1875. The Godeau family manages 80 acres of vineyards, producing wines under the Touraine and Touraine-Chenonceaux appellations. They offer guided tours, wine tastings, and educational visits in their historic 19th-century troglodyte cellars.

Wines	Sauvignon, Touraine Chenonceaux White, Chenin Dry, Rosé, Cabernet Franc, Gamay, Touraine Chenonceaux Red, Fines bulles Blanc and Rosé
Food	Available with some tours / tastings
Tours & Tastings	General tasting: €4 per person or free with a €12 purchase of wine. The Gourmet Plate: 45-60 minutes. €20 per couple. Requires a reservation 24hrs in advance. Discovery of the Vineyard: 2h – 2h 15. A 2km walk around the vineyard, a visit to the cellar, and a tasting. €70 total for a group up to 5 adults. Requires a reservation. Tours are usually at 9:30 AM or 2:30 PM. The All Thing (vineyard, cellar, tasting, charcuterie board): 2h 15 – 2h 30. €90 total for a group up to 5 adults. Requires a reservation. Tours are usually at 9:30 AM or 2:30 PM.
Reservations	Not required for up to 4 people for the general tasting. Required for other tasting / tour options.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM. Sunday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Contact

 14 Rue des Caves, Civray-de-Touraine
 +33 02 47 23 9304
 <https://www.pereauguste.com/en/>

15 La Gourmandière

Located in Francueil near the Château de Chenonceau, this winery is renowned for its diverse range of wines produced under the Touraine appellation. The winery specializes in varieties such as Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, and Gamay.

Wines	Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Gamay
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Simple tasting on a price per glass basis
Reservations	Required
Hours	Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday and Monday.
Contact	 24 Rue de Chenonceaux, Francueil  +33 02 47 23 9122  https://vins-gourmandiere.com/

16 Closerie de Chanteloup

Founded in 2003 and located southwest of Amboise, this winery spans 55 acres of organically cultivated vineyards. They produce a diverse range of wines including reds, whites, rosés, and sparkling wines under the Touraine, Montlouis, and Touraine-Amboise appellations.

Wines	Red: Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Gamay, Côt. White: Chenin, Sauvignon Blanc. Rosé: dry and sparkling. Beer: White, Blonde, Amber, and Black.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available Guided tour to see the entire process of creating wine and beer. €10 per adult, deductible from purchases
Reservations	Not needed for tastings. Required for tours.
Hours	Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM and from 1:30 PM – 6:30 PM. Saturday from 10:00 AM – 6:30 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 460 route de saint Marti le beau Chanteloup, 460 Rte de Saint-Martin le Beau, Amboise  +33 09 65 03 3831  https://www.closeriedechanteloup.com/index-en.html

17 Domaine Sylvain Gaudron

Established in 1890, this winery is in Vernou-sur-Brenne, near Vouvray. This family-run estate spans 62 acres and produces a range of Vouvray wines, all from Chenin Blanc grapes. Visitors can explore their historic 13th-century troglodyte cellars and enjoy

guided tastings of their award-winning wines. The estate is known for its high-quality production and warm hospitality.

Wines	Vouvray wines, including dry, semi-dry, sweet, and sparkling varieties, all from Chenin Blanc grapes.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available. Tour of the 13th century troglodyte cellar with explanation on how the wines are made. 90 minutes and includes a tasting of 7 wines. €6 per adult. Departures at 10:30 AM / 2:00 PM / 4:00 PM
Reservations	Not necessary for tastings. Required for tours, can be made by phone or by contact form on website.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday and the last two weeks of August.
Contact	 59 Rue Neuve, Vernou-sur-Brenne  +33 02 47 52 1227  https://www.vouvray-gaudron.com/en/

18 Cave des Producteurs de Vouvray

A cooperative winery established in 1953 specializing in Vouvray wines. They produce a variety of wines, including sparkling and still wines made from Chenin Blanc. Visitors can explore their extensive troglodytic cellars spanning three kilometers, and have guided tastings to learn about their winemaking process. The winery offers a blend of history and modern winemaking techniques.

Wines	Vouvray: Brut, Dry, Semi-Dry, Sparkling
Food	2 aperitif platter options made from local products: 2-person €19, or 4-person €42
Tours & Tastings	Discovering Tour & Tasting (in English), 60 minutes, €5 per person. Guided tour of the troglodytic cellars learning the 'traditional method' of wine making. Tasting included. Tours in English are at 11:30 AM and 4:00 PM.
Reservations	Recommended, can be made online.
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Contact	 38 Rue de la Vall. Coquette, Vouvray  +33 02 47 52 7503  https://cavedevouvray.com/?lang=en

19 Caveau du Château Moncontour - Vignobles Feray

Located in Vouvray, this is known as one of the oldest and most prestigious estates in the Loire Valley. The Feray family has managed it since 1994, producing Vouvray, Touraine, Crémant de Loire, Cheverny, and Chinon wines. Visitors can explore the historic château, enjoy guided tastings, and visit the on-site wine museum. The estate is renowned for its Chenin Blanc wines, particularly the Vouvray appellation, which includes sparkling and still varieties.

Wines	Vouvray, Touraine, Crémant de Loire, Cheverny, and Chinon
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Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Self-guided visit of the winery and museum: €5 per person. Includes a tasting. Guided visit of the winery and museum: €20 per person. Includes a tasting.
Reservations	Not required for self-guided visits. Recommended for guided visits.
Hours	Monday to Friday from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM and from 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM (Saturday and Sunday from 2:30 PM)
Contact	 Rue de Moncontour, Vouvray  +33 02 47 52 6077  https://www.vouvray.com/

20 Château de Nitrav

Located in Athée-sur-Cher, this winery dates to the 15th century. This historic estate spans 25 acres of vineyards, producing a variety of wines including Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, and Cabernet Franc. Visitors can explore the castle, wine cellars, and dovecote, enjoy wine tastings, and watch historical films on cooperage. The château offers guided and self-guided tours.

Wines	Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, and Cabernet Franc
Food	Available with some tastings.
Tours & Tastings	Tour & Tasting: €7 per person With regional food products: €10 per person Initiation to oenology, wine-pairing, games and prize-giving: €18 per person.
Reservations	Recommended but not necessary.
Hours	Daily from June 1 st – October 31 st . Daily from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed Sunday morning.
Contact	 69 Rue du Château, Athée-sur-Cher  +33 02 47 50 2974  http://www.chateau-nitrav.fr/en/accueil-en

21 Alain Joulin et Fils

A 30-acres vineyard located in Saint-Martin-le-Beau produces a variety of Montlouis-sur-Loire AOC wines, including dry, semi-dry, sweet, and sparkling wines from Chenin Blanc grapes. The estate offers guided tours and tastings, welcoming both individual visitors and groups up to 30 people. Visitors can explore the wine cellars and enjoy the estate's rich history and exceptional wines.

Wines	Montlouis-sur-Loire AOC wines, including dry, semi-dry, sweet, and sparkling wines from Chenin Blanc grapes
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Simple tastings by the glass.
Reservations	Not required
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Sunday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Contact

 13 Rue de Chenonceaux, Saint-Martin-le-Beau
 +33 02 47 50 2849
 No website

22 Château de l'Aulée

Located near Azay-le-Rideau, this winery was established in 1856 by the Cordier family. The estate spans 90 acres and is known for producing Crémant de Loire, Touraine, and Chinon wines, with a focus on sparkling varieties. The vineyard practices sustainable agriculture. Visitors can enjoy guided tours, wine tastings, and picnics, exploring the cellars and beautiful surroundings. The château combines traditional and modern techniques to ensure high-quality wine production.

Wines	Crémant de Loire, Touraine, and Chinon
Food	Available with two of the tour options.
Tours & Tastings	Simple tour and tasting: winery visit and tasting of 3 wines. €8 per person. 60 minutes. Wine and Cheeses: winery visit, tasting of five wines and five cheeses. €20 per person, 2 people minimum. 90 minutes. Wines Upon a Time: a guided tour of the estate and winery. Five wines and local specialties to eat. €28 per person, 2 people minimum. 2 hours 30 minutes.
Reservations	Required minimum two days in advance
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Contact	 1132 Rte de Tours, Azay-le-Rideau  +33 02 47 45 4424  https://laulee.com/?lang=en

23 Château de la Grille

This winery is just north of Chinon, dates to the 15th century and is surrounded by 85 acres of vineyards. The winery, managed by Maison Baudry-Dutour, specializes in red, rosé, and sparkling Chinon wines, predominantly using Cabernet Franc grapes. Visitors can enjoy guided tours of the vineyard and cellars, wine tastings, and strolls through the estate.

Wines	Chinon: white, red, rosé, sparkling
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Simple tasting (free) Guided tour of the park, the vineyard and the wine cellar, then tasting €7 per person.
Reservations	Not necessary for a tasting, required for visits and guided tours.
Hours	Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM.
Contact	 Rte de Huismes, Chinon  +33 02 47 93 0195  https://www.chateau-de-la-grille.fr/en/

24 Clos de l'Écho - Domaine Couly-Dutheil

Clos de l'Écho, part of Domaine Couly-Dutheil in Chinon, is renowned for its exceptional Cabernet Franc wines. Established in 1921, this historic vineyard produces rich, complex reds with a distinctive terroir expression. Visitors can enjoy guided tours of the vineyard and state-of-the-art winery, as well as wine. The estate also offers a scenic path for leisurely strolls through the grounds.

Wines	Chinon - Cabernet Franc. Red, white, rosé, sparkling
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Tasting and explanation: 30-60 minutes. €9 per person.
Reservations	Not required
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM and from 1:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Contact	 Parking Forteresse, Av. François Mitterrand, Chinon  +33 02 47 81 2086  https://www.coulydutheil-chinon.com/

25 Cave Monplaisir

A historic wine cellar in Chinon, set in a former underground quarry. Established as an ageing storage cellar in the early 20th century, it now houses the Chinon wines of Domaine Jean-Maurice Raffault, Domaine de l'Abbaye, and Domaine du Raifault, a total of 260 acres of vineyards. Visitors can explore the expansive 2500m² caves, enjoy guided tours, and taste wine. The cellar also offers a variety of local products such as jams, spirits, and cider.

Wines	Chinon: white, red, rosé, sparkling
Food	Local products available to purchase
Tours & Tastings	Tastings and guided tours Warm clothing recommended
Reservations	Recommended for tours
Hours	Thursday to Tuesday from 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Wednesday. Open daily from 10:30 AM – 7:00 PM in July and August.
Contact	 50 Quai Pasteur, 37500 Chinon  +33 02 47 93 2075  https://cavemonplaisir.fr

26 Domaine de Noiré / Jean-Max Manceau

Managed by Odile and Jean-Max Manceau since 2001, this winery is situated in Chinon. This esteemed winery is renowned for its organic production, crafting Chinon wines from Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc. The vineyard spans various soil types, including sandy-clay, gravelly, and limestone, contributing to the wines' complexity and character. The estate, certified organic since 2014, offers a warm welcome and a deep dive into the world of Loire Valley wines.

Wines	Chinon: red, white, rosé, and sparkling.
Food	Not available

Tours & Tastings	Simple tasting with the option to walk through the estate to Chinon fortress: 2 hours 30 minutes, free. Wine tasting and tour of the estate: 60 minutes, €12 per person.
Reservations	Not required for tastings, recommended for the guided tour.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 1:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 160 Rue de l'olive, Lieu dit Noiré, Chinon  +33 02 47 93 4489  https://domainedenoire.fr/?lang=en

27 Pierre and Bertrand COULY

Located in Chinon, Domaine Pierre et Bertrand Couly spans 50 acres of vineyards, producing a variety of Chinon wines, including red, rosé, and dry white. With a winemaking legacy dating back to the 15th century, the estate focuses on sustainable viticulture. Visitors can enjoy guided tours, wine tastings, and experiences such as vineyard walks and escape games.

Wines	Chinon: red, white, rosé, and sparkling
Food	Provided with some tastings
Tours & Tastings	Tours available on reservation at 11:00 AM or 2:00 PM Discovery Visit: Guided tour of the wine cellar and explanation, tasting of 6 wines (1 rosé, 1 white and 4 reds), Rillons, rillettes and goat cheese, 75 minutes, €12 per person.
Reservations	Not required for tasting, required for guided tour.
Hours	Daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Contact	 Route de Tours Rond Point des, Chinon  +33 02 47 93 6419  https://www.pb-couly.com/en-GB/

28 Caves M Plouzeau

Situated in Chinon, this winery is renowned for its organic wines, particularly those crafted from Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc grapes. In 1976, Pierre Plouzeau bought this family property, renovated the Château and replanted the disappeared vineyard. The winery now boasts historic underground cellars where visitors can enjoy guided tours and tastings, exploring the rich heritage and exceptional wines.

Wines	Chinon, red, white, rosé, and sparkling.
Food	Available with certain tasting options
Tours & Tastings	Free tastings and tours (expectation to purchase a bottle). 2 other tour options which include a selection of regional specialties.
Reservations	Not required for a tasting.
Hours	April to September: Tuesday to Saturday from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM and from 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Closed Sunday and Monday.
Contact	 94 Rue Haute Saint-Maurice, Chinon  +33 02 47 93 3211  https://www.plouzeau.com/en/home-chinon-rive-gauche/

29 Domaine Wilfrid Rousse

Established in 1987, located in Savigny-en-Véron near Chinon, the estate spans 50 acres, primarily cultivating Cabernet Franc and a small parcel of Chenin Blanc. The winery produces organic Chinon wines, including reds, rosé, and white wine. Visitors can enjoy guided tours and tastings by appointment, exploring the historic tuffeau cellars and learning about the organic viticulture practices that define the domaine's approach.

Wines	Chinon wines: reds, rosé, white.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Simple tastings available on a price per glass basis
Reservations	Not required for tastings
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Sunday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.
Contact	 21 Rte de Candes, Savigny-en-Véron  +33 02 47 58 8402  https://www.chinonrousse.fr/

30 Château du Petit Thouars

Located in Saint-Germain-sur-Vienne, this winery has been in the Petit Thouars family since 1636. The estate spans 35 acres and produces Chinon and Touraine wines, focusing on Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc. Visitors can enjoy guided tours, tastings, and activities like vineyard picnics and river walks. The winery, managed by Sébastien and D'Arcy du Petit Thouars, is known for its commitment to organic viticulture.

Wines	Chenin: white, red, rosé, sparkling
Food	Available with certain tours.
Tours & Tastings	Cellar Tour: Vineyard tour, cellar tour, and wine tasting. 60 minutes, €15 per person. Epicurean Discovery Tour: Vineyard tour, cellar tour, and wine tasting with local food products. 60 minutes, €25 per person. Picnic in the vines: Vineyard tour, cellar tour, wine tasting, finally a picnic of local produce and paired with their best wines. 2 hours, €50 per person.
Reservations	Recommended, can book online
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 1 Château du Petit Thouars, 37500 Saint-Germain-sur-Vienne  +33 09 79 20 6721  http://www.chateaudptwines.com/

31 Domaine Godefroy Jérôme

Located in Chouzé-sur-Loire, this small, family-run winery has a rich history of producing Bourgueil and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil wines for five generations, since 1908. The estate primarily cultivates Cabernet Franc grapes. In 2004 they built a new

winery next to their family home in order to modernize the equipment and gain workspace.

Wines	Bourgueil and Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil: red and rosé
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Simple tastings available.
Reservations	Not required for tastings.
Hours	Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Saturday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 p.m. Sunday morning by appointment only.
Contact	 19 Le Plessis, Chouzé-sur-Loire  +33 02 47 95 1656  http://www.domainegodefroy.fr/

32 Clos des Quarterons - Domaine Amirault

Operated by Domaine Amirault, this winery is in Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil. Run by Xavier and Agnès Amirault, this estate spans 90 acres and has been family-owned for over 180 years. They produce biodynamic wines, including Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil reds, rosé, white "Quarterons," and Crémant de Loire. It's known for its commitment to organic and biodynamic practices, emphasizing sustainability and respect for the environment.

Wines	Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil reds, rosé, white "Quarterons," and Crémant de Loire
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Visit to the cellar and tasting: 90 minutes, 8 wines, €13 per person.
Reservations	Recommended, can be made online
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday
Contact	 46 Av. Saint-Vincent, Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil  +33 02 47 97 7525  https://www.domaineamirault.com/en/home/

33 Domaine de la Noblaie

Located in Ligre near Chinon, spans 60 acres of organically cultivated vineyards. The estate, run by Jérôme and Elodie Billard, produces acclaimed wines from Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc under the Chinon and Touraine appellations. Established in the 15th century, visitors can enjoy the scenic views of the Vienne Valley and the Château de Chinon.

Wines	Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc under the Chinon and Touraine appellations
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Free tasting offered with all wine purchases.

Reservations	Strongly recommended, especially during holidays and on Saturdays.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sundays.
Contact	 21 Rue des Hautes Cours, Ligré  +33 02 47 93 1096  https://lanoblaie.fr/en/

34 Domaine Brocourt

Located in the heart of the Chinon appellation in Rivière, this winery spans 80 acres across five communes: Rivière, Chinon, Ligré, La Roche-Clermault, and Beaumont-en-Véron. They produce a variety of Chinon wines from Cabernet Franc, known for their depth and aging potential, as well as some Chenin Blanc. The estate offers guided tours and tastings by appointment, allowing visitors to explore the cellars, vineyards, and wine storehouse. They also produce local products such as jams.

Wines	Chinon: red, white, rosé, sparkling
Food	Local products available to purchase
Tours & Tastings	Tastings available Tours of the winery available by appointment only
Reservations	Not required for tastings
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Sunday morning by appointment only.
Contact	 46 Rue René Cassin, Rivière  +33 02 47 93 1482  https://domainebrocourt.blogspot.com/

35 Vignobles du Paradis

Located in La Roche-Clermault near Chinon, this winery spans 60 acres and produces Chinon wines, including red, rosé, and white varieties. Founded in 1989, the winery is committed to integrating disabled workers through the ESAT "Les Chevaux Blancs" initiative. Visitors can enjoy wine tastings, cellar tours, and food pairings in modern surroundings. The estate is accessible and open year-round, with reservations recommended for a personalized experience.

Wines	Chinon wines: red, rosé, and white.
Food	Not available
Tours & Tastings	Free tasting, 30 minutes, 6 wines From wine to glass: 60-90 minutes, guided tour of cellars and vineyard, 6 wines,
Reservations	Not necessary for a free tasting, required for the tour.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Closed on Sunday.
Contact	 1 Allée du grand Bréviande, 1 Imp. de Bréviande, La Roche-Clermault  +33 02 47 95 8157  https://www.vignoblesduparadis.com/

36 Caves Cathelineau

This winery has been family-run since the early 18th century. Specializing in Vouvray, they produce exceptional still and sparkling wines from Chenin Blanc. The estate offers educational tours and tastings, featuring a museum dedicated to vine-growing and cooperage. Visitors can explore the historic limestone caves and learn about traditional winemaking methods. Tours are available year-round.

Wines	Vouvray AOC – Chenin Blanc, Rosé, Sparkling
Food	Not available.
Tours & Tastings	Visiting the museum is free. Tours and wine tasting in English are Monday to Saturday at 11:00 AM, 2:00 PM, and 5:00 PM. Guided visits of the caves and vineyards, not specifically in English, €5 per person. Every Tuesday from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM. Harvest tour and tasting, €5 per person. Every Wednesday from mid-September to mid-October, from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM.
Reservations	Required, reservations can be made online.
Hours	Monday to Saturday from 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM and from 2:00 PM – 7:30 PM. Sunday morning by appointment only.
Contact	 24 Rue des Violettes, Chançay  +33 02 47 52 2061  https://vin-vouvray-cathelineau.com/

APPENDIX 2 – CASTLE (CHÂTEAUX) LISTINGS

The following listings provide details about each château (castle) along the routes. The numbers cross reference with the maps and tables in the *About the Area – Castles on Your Route* section of this guidebook.

1 Château de Meung-sur-Loire

In the 12th century, Bishop Manassès de Garlande, Seigneur de Meung, built a residential tower with twin turrets next to the Romanesque steeple of Saint Liphard's collegiate church. In the early 13th century, Bishop Manassès de Seignelay constructed a nearby château with a symmetrical plan and four towers, forming the nucleus of today's château. Altered between the 15th and 18th centuries, it hosted Joan of Arc (who broke the siege of the town), Louis XI, and François I. In 1768, Bishop Louis Sextius de Jarente de La Bruyère, exiled in Meung, likely commissioned Versailles architect Louis François Trouard to design the neo-classical chapel and its vestibule. Visitors can explore its diverse rooms, dungeons, and beautiful gardens.



Tours	Self-guided tours only, €12 per person. Tickets can be purchased online.
Reservations	Not required for self-guided tours.
Hours	Daily in July and August 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM May, June, September Wednesday to Sunday, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM (closed Monday and Tuesday).
Contact	 16 Pl. du Martroi, 45130 Meung-sur-Loire  +33 02 38 44 3647  https://chateau-de-meung.com/en/

2 Château de Beaugency

Coveted for controlling the only bridge between Blois and Orléans, Beaugency was frequently attacked, especially by the English. Fortunately, the château survived the centuries without major upheaval or turmoil. The town's 11th-century prosperity led to the construction of the Tour de César, a keep for the barons of Beaugency, later extended and enhanced with mullioned windows under King Philip the Fair. In 1429, Jean de Dunois, the "Bastard of Orléans" renovated the Romanesque hall, transforming it into a manor within the feudal enclosure.



Tours	Self-guided tours only, €11 per person. Tickets can be purchased online.
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Reservations	Not required for self-guided tours.
Hours	Mid July to late August open Tuesday to Sunday 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Closed on Monday. Opening hours are very variable. We recommend checking their website: https://www.chateau-beaugency.com/en/practical-information/
Contact	 2 Pl. Dunois, 45190 Beaugency  +33 02 34 59 7473  https://www.chateau-beaugency.com/en/

3 Château de Chambord

In the words of the courtier Brantôme, Chambord is “one of the world’s miracles”. Château de Chambord owes its existence to the visionary monarch François I and the genius of Leonardo da Vinci. Seeking a grand royal residence near a game-rich forest for hunting, François I chose the manor of Chambord, nestled in a 16,000-acre estate. The château retains its original central keep with four towers and a fortified enclosure but abandons feudal defenses for Renaissance grandeur. It boasts nearly 440 rooms and 356 fireplaces, with façades stretching 43 meters. The square layout centers around an immense cross, with each arm leading to an entranceway. Originally planned to feature a straight staircase by da Vinci, the king opted for a grand spiral stairway instead. This stairwell houses a double helix of steps that never meet, separated by an openwork central shaft, offering stunning views of each spiral.



Tours	Entrance fee for the castle €16 per person. Self-guided and guided tours available. Guided tours in English every day from early July to late August at 11:15 AM. €6 per person in addition to the entrance fee.
Reservations	Not necessary for self-guided tours.
Hours	Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM.
Contact	 41250 Chambord, located in the National Estate of Chambord  +33 02 54 50 4000  https://www.chambord.org/en

4 Château de Villesavin

Built in 1536 for Jean le Breton, François I's Finance Secretary and Lord of Villandry, this castle showcases innovative architecture. The château features a square courtyard with a main structure flanked by independent pavilions, a design first seen at Fontainebleau. The central structure is notable for its modern layout, consisting solely of a ground floor



directly beneath a high-pitched roof adorned with Renaissance dormers, reflecting advanced architectural concepts for its time.

Tours	Self-guided tours of park and museum, €7 per person. Guided tours of castle, park, and museum, €10 per person. At regular intervals throughout the day in summer. Tickets can be purchased online.
Reservations	Reservations not necessary.
Hours	From April 1 to May 31, open 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM. From June 1 to September 30, open 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 Château de, Villesavin, Tour-en-Sologne  +33 02 54 46 4288  https://www.chateau-de-villesavin.fr/

5 Château Royal de Blois

A former palace with ornate royal chambers, along with paintings and sculptures from the 16th to the 19th centuries. In 1498, the Count of Blois, Louis d'Orléans, was crowned king of France under the name Louis XII. He decided to make Blois, his birthplace, a royal town and to remodel its medieval castle.

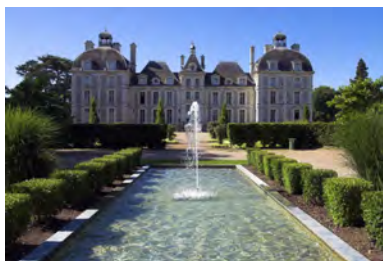


Once the illustrious abode of French monarchs, this opulent palace now welcomes visitors with its ornate royal chambers, gilded ceilings, intricate tapestries, and opulent furnishings. Château Royal de Blois makes an excellent introduction to the châteaux of the Loire Valley as its four grand wings showcase elements of Gothic (1400s), Flamboyant Gothic (1498-1503), early Renaissance (1515-24), and 1630s classical architecture.

Tours	Self-guided and Guided tours available. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €15. It is also possible to buy combined tickets (at a discounted rate) for Château Royal de Blois and/or the House of Magic and/or Sound and Light Show.
Reservations	Reservations not necessary for self-guided tours.
Hours	Open daily 9.00 AM – 6:30 PM (7:00 PM in July and August).
Contact	 6 Pl. du Château, 41000 Blois  +33 02 54 90 3333  https://en.chateaudeblois.fr/

6 Château de Cheverny

Originally owned by the Hurault family from Blois, this castle saw its first structure demolished around 1625. A new château was built in the Louis XIII style, consisting of five buildings with separate roofs, crafted from white limestone. Renowned artisans, including master mason Jacques Bougier, who trained under Salomon de Brosse at Château de Blois, and Germanic joiner Hevras Hammerber, contributed to its construction. The celebrated painter Jean Mosnier, recommended by Marie de Medici, adorned the walls with murals depicting Don Quixote's adventures on 34 panels. Famous for stag hunting in its surrounding forests, Cheverny inspired Captain Haddock's Marlinspike Hall (Château de Moulinsart) in the Tintin comics. Visitors can explore this architectural gem and its rich heritage.



Tours	Self-guided and guided tours (in French only). The Château and the Gardens: €14.50 per person, 1½ hours. The Château and the Gardens + The secrets of Marlinspike Hall: €19 per person, two hours.
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	Open daily from 9.15 AM – 6:00 PM.
Contact	 Av. du Château, Cheverny  +33 02 54 79 9629  https://www.chateau-cheverny.fr/en/

7 Château de Troussay

One of the smallest châteaux in the Loire Valley, this castle was built in the 15th century and later expanded in the Renaissance style. It was acquired in the 19th century by Louis de La Saussaye, a noted historian, who enriched it with period furniture, artwork, and architectural details salvaged from other Loire châteaux. The château features ornate woodwork, stained glass windows, and a charming chapel. The picturesque gardens have ancient trees and rare plants.



Tours	Guided tours only as the castle is lived in. Classic tour: weekdays at 11:00 AM, and weekends / holidays at 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM, €9 per person. Tour with tasting: daily at 4:30 PM, €14 per person
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	Only open for guided tours (see above) as the castle is lived in.
Contact	 12 Rte de Troussay, Cheverny  +33 02 54 44 2907  https://chateaudetroussay.com/?page_id=1225&lang=en

8 Château de Beauregard

This castle began as a medieval manor before its transformation in the 16th century by Jean du Thier, Secretary of State to King Henri II. Renowned for its Galerie des Illustres, the château features 327 portraits depicting European history from the 14th to the 17th century, created by renowned artists including Paul Ardier. The estate's Renaissance architecture is complemented by its beautifully landscaped gardens, designed by Gilles Clément.



Tours	Self-guided and guided tours (in French only) available. Guided tour of the Château: daily at 3:30 PM, 4:30 PM, and 5:30 PM. Guided tour of the Château and the Gardens: daily at 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM. All entrances fees are €14 per person.
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	April to June and September and October: open daily from 10:30 AM – 6:30 PM. July to August: open daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 12 Chem. de la Fontaine, Cellettes  +33 02 54 70 4165  https://beauregard-loire.com/en/

9 Château de Chaumont

Perched above the Loire River, this castle was built in the early 11th century to protect the town of Blois from attacks by the Count of Anjou. By the end of that century Chaumont was in the hands of the Amboise family. In 1465, Louis XI had it destroyed to punish Pierre d'Amboise for rebelling against the monarchy. Four years later Amboise was given permission to rebuild it which he proceeded to do with the help of the king, combining medieval defensive architecture with Renaissance elegance.



It was later owned by Catherine de Medici who, on the death of King Henry II, forced Diane de Poitiers to exchange Chaumont for Chenonceau, adding to its storied past. The château features luxurious interiors with tapestries, period furniture, and artworks. Renowned for its majestic stables (Europe's most luxurious) built by Henri Amédée de Broglie and for its annual International Garden Festival, Château de Chaumont showcases innovative garden designs in its expansive and scenic grounds which are on 80 acres and house 55 contemporary art installations and 30 different gardens.

Tours	Entrance fee (for a self-guided visit) €20
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Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	Open daily from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire, Chaumont-sur-Loire  +33 02 54 20 9922  https://domaine-chaumont.fr/en/chateau-historic-grounds-and-stables

10 Château Gaillard

Located close to Amboise, this castle was built in 1496 on orders of King Charles VIII. It is renowned for its early Renaissance architecture and the introduction of Italian influences to France (the King had recently returned from his first Italian war). The château's stunning gardens, known as the "Royal Gardens," were designed by Dom Pacello da Mercogliano, a modest Italian monk passionate about botany who was brought to France by the king. These gardens were among the first in France to feature orange trees. The interiors boast exquisite frescoes, period furniture and art, reflecting its rich historical significance and the luxurious lifestyle of its royal inhabitants.



Tours	Entrance fee (for a self-guided visit) €16. Tickets can be bought online. Guided visits available, call for times in advance.
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	Open daily from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM.
Contact	 29 All. du Pont Moulin, Amboise  +33 02 47 30 3329  https://chateau-gaillard-amboise.fr/

11 Château du Clos Lucé

Located just south of Amboise, the castle was built in 1471 by King Francis I. It is famous for being Leonardo da Vinci's residence from 1516 until his death in 1519. Despite the difference in their ages – 42 years! – Francis and Leonardo had a high regard for each other. One of Da Vinci's roles was organizing entertainment for the Court, notably inventing machines designed to inspire dreams. Reproductions of his models and his drawings can still be seen.

The château's beautiful garden, known as Leonardo's Garden, is inspired by his botanical sketches and scientific studies. Visitors can explore rooms adorned with period furniture, frescoes, and artworks, experiencing the environment where Leonardo spent his final years.

Tours	Self-guided tour of Castle, Park and Galleries €19 per person. Self-guided tour of Castle, Park, Galleries, and Exhibitions €24 per person. Tickets can be bought online.
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.

Hours	Open daily from 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM (closes at 8:00 PM in July and August)
Contact	 2 Rue du Clos Lucé, Amboise  +33 02 47 57 0073  https://vinci-closluce.com/en

12 **Château Royal d'Amboise**

Perched above the Loire River, this castle has a turbulent history. Originally a fortress belonging to Fulk III Nerra, Count of Anjou, it was erected before the year 1000. In 1437, after Louis I of Amboise, one of the kingdom's wealthiest lords, was found guilty of plotting against King Charles VII and stripped of his possessions, Amboise was transferred to the royal domain. Louis XI installed his queen and her son the dauphin Charles at Amboise. On the king's death in 1483, Charles succeeded him at the age of 13, under the name Charles VIII. He married Anne, the Young Duchess of Brittany, in 1491. Soon thereafter, his fondness for opulence came to the fore. In 1489 on, he had the so-called "Hall of the Seven Virtues" built for the queen. The king returned from the first Italian War in 1495. Unfortunately, three years later, the king struck his head against a low lintel and was mortally wounded.



His cousin, Louis XII, succeeded him and Blois became the royal castle. The king installed his wife and their son François, the heir to the throne, in Amboise. Crowned king in 1515, François I felt such a strong attachment for the home of his adolescence that he had the wing begun under his father's reign completed. He housed Leonardo da Vinci in the nearby manor of Clos-Lucé; the Italian master died there in 1519.

Regrettably, the kingdom was soon plunged into the dismal period of the Wars of Religion. In 1560, the Huguenot conspiracy aimed at snatching away the young King François II from the influence of the De Guise faction ended in a bloodbath before the assembled court. Marked by this horrifying tragedy, the château was abandoned. Eventually it was confiscated in the French Revolution and partly demolished under the First Empire.

The château is renowned for its stunning gardens and the Chapel of Saint-Hubert, where Leonardo da Vinci is buried. The interiors feature ornate fireplaces, period furniture, and exquisite tapestries. It offers panoramic views of the Loire Valley and insights into royal life during the Renaissance.

Tours	Self-guided tour €17 per person includes a 'Histopad' in 12 languages. Tickets can be bought online. Guided tours are available in French only at 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 2:30 PM, 3:30 PM, and 4:30 PM (5:30 PM in July and August).
Reservations	Not necessary for individuals or small groups.
Hours	Open daily 9:00 AM – 6:30 PM (7:00 PM in July and August).
Contact	 Mnt de l'Emir Abd el Kader, Amboise

+33 02 47 57 0098

<https://www.chateau-amboise.com/en/>

13 The Chanteloup Pagoda

A striking monument, built between 1775 and 1778 when blending French classical architecture with Chinese motifs was fashionable. Towering at nearly 44 meters, this seven-story pagoda, originally part of a larger castle, was constructed as a symbol of enlightenment and leisure by Louis XV's minister, the Duc de Choiseul. The duke was later exiled from Versailles when he fell out with the king's mistress, and he retreated to the château and rebuilt it. After his death the castle was abandoned and demolished, leaving just the pagoda. Today, visitors can climb the 149 steps to the top for panoramic views of Amboise Castle, the forest, and the Loire Valley. Visitors can also a walk around the half-moon 'pond' set in the tranquil gardens and there are boat rides (additional to the entrance fee). Located 3 km to the southwest of Amboise in a 35-acre park. Some recent feedback is that the monument is becoming a little rundown.



Tours	Entrance fee of €12 per person.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
Contact	The Chanteloup Pagoda, 37400 Amboise +33 02 47 57 2097 https://www.pagode-chanteloup.com/?lang=en

14 Château de Chenonceau

This unusual castle spans the River Cher and is an architectural masterpiece of the French Renaissance. The original owners of the castle, the Marques family, were in financial difficulty and forced to sell the fief in the early 1500s to Thomas Bohier. Bohier appointed his wife, Catherine to oversee the demolishing (with the exception of the 15th-century keep and the foundations of an old mill) and re-building of the castle. Bohier died in Italy in 1524, and Catherine died two years later. Their son, greatly in debt to the crown, ceded Chenonceau to François I. In 1547, Henri II ascended the French throne and presented the château to his favorite, Diane de Poitiers, who straightaway laid out a splendid garden. At her behest, in 1556 bridge was designed connecting the château to the opposite bank of the Cher.



After becoming Regent, Catherine de Medici sought to get Chenonceau transferred back to the crown. Diane de Poitiers was forced to exchange it for the Château de Chaumont (refusing was out of the question). De Medici enjoyed Chenonceau for most

of the next 15 years. She gave lavish open air celebrations for her sons that were extremely popular. She also laid out a park in her name. She even revisited Diane's project and had the foremost architect Jean Bullant erect a two-story gallery over Philibert de l'Orme's bridge.

Due to the many women who inspired and designed the castle, Chenonceau is known as the "Ladies' Château." The château features intricate stonework, lavish interiors with period furniture, and an impressive art collection, including works by Rubens and Van Dyck. Its beautifully landscaped gardens enhance its elegance. The château's grand gallery, stretching over the river, has nice views. This castle is now France's most visited historical monument in private hands.

Tours	Entrance fee of €17 per person, Entrance fee with an audio guide, €22 per person. Tickets can be bought online.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM (7:00 PM in July and August)
Contact	 37150 Chenonceaux  +33 02 47 23 9007  https://www.chenonceau.com/en/

15 Château de Valmer

This castle dates to the 16th century. The château is renowned for its terraced Renaissance gardens, meticulously restored to their original splendor. Although the main building was destroyed by fire in 1948, the exquisite gardens and the small surviving chapel from 1646 remain intact. Visitors can explore the Italian-style gardens, with rare plant species, ornamental ponds, and a historic vegetable garden. The estate also produces acclaimed Vouvray wines.



Tours	Entrance fee of €12 per person (self-guided only)
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open Wednesday to Sunday (and public holidays) from 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 37210 Chançay  +33 02 47 52 9312  https://www.chateaudevalmer.com/

16 Château de Nitray

Dates to the 16th century and is a fine example of Renaissance architecture. Built for Aimery Lopin, lord mayor of Tours in 1516-17, it features charming stonework, a grand dovecote, and a chapel. It has been a vineyard since the 18th century. The château is surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens and vineyards that produce acclaimed Touraine wines. Inside, visitors can admire period furniture and artwork, including tapestries and paintings. The estate offers self-guided tours and wine tastings, providing a rich historical and cultural experience.



Tours	Entrance fee of €7 per person (self-guided only). Option of a free wine tasting after the visit.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	From 1st of June to the 30th of September, daily from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM. Closed on Sunday morning.
Contact	 69 Rue du Château, Athée-sur-Cher  +33 02 47 50 2974  http://www.chateau-nitray.fr/en/accueil-en

17 Montbazon Castle

This formidable fortress stands majestically above the town of Montbazon. It was built in the early 11th century by Fulk Nerra, the Count of Anjou. This ancient castle offers a vivid glimpse into medieval France with its towering keep, which is among the oldest in the country. The castle's history includes significant events like the Angevin and Plantagenet conflicts.

Visitors can explore the dungeon, walk the ramparts for panoramic views of the Indre River valley, and observe demonstrations of medieval crafts in the blacksmith's workshop. The fortress also hosts engaging historical reenactments, including archery and sword fighting. The interactive exhibits, such as La Forteresse du Faucon Noir, enhance the experience, making history accessible and exciting for all ages. A rich, educational, and immersive visit that transports guests back to the Middle Ages.



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Tours	Entrance price €12 per person and tickets can be purchased in advance online. Guided tours available.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open April, May, June and September, weekends only from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Open daily in July and August.
Contact	 12-14 Rue du Château, Montbazon

+33 02 47 34 3410

<https://en.forteressedemontbazon.com/>

18 Château de Saché

Renowned as the residence of French writer Honoré de Balzac, this castle dates to the 16th century. The château, with its picturesque gardens and tranquil setting, provided Balzac with inspiration and a retreat from Paris. Visitors can explore Balzac's study, filled with period furniture and personal artifacts, and view exhibits of his manuscripts and letters.



Tours	Entrance price €6 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Guided tours in English.
Reservations	Required for guided visits.
Hours	Open April to June and September to October, daily from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Open daily in July and August from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 Rue du Château, Saché  +33 02 47 26 8650  https://www.musee-balzac.fr/en/

19 Château d' Azay-le-Rideau

Situated on an island in the Indre River, this is a jewel of the French Renaissance. Constructed between 1518 and 1527 by Gilles Berthelot, a wealthy financier, it blends French medieval and Italian Renaissance styles. Water played an important part in the choice of the site. The medieval defenses were ornamental: sturdy towers turned into elegant turrets, the covered walkway served to create pleasing visual effects with the contrasting dormers, the moat was made into a reflecting pool. Berthelot's wife kept a close eye on the construction work, which explains the refined interior. Berthelot was accused of embezzling funds destined for the army of the King's Italian expedition, and fled to Cambrai in 1527 where he died two years later. François I confiscated the château and, in 1533, presented it to one of his military companions Antoine Raffin. The castle passed into various other hands before being sold to the French state in 1905.



The château is renowned for its elegant façade, ornate stonework, and the grand central staircase. Inside, visitors can explore richly decorated rooms featuring period furniture, tapestries, and artworks. The château's gardens, redesigned in the 19th century, offer a picturesque landscape with English-style lawns and winding paths. Highlights include the Hall of Honor and the King's Bedroom, reflecting the opulent lifestyle of the French nobility.

Tours	Entrance price €13 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Audio guides are available in English for €3.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM (7:00 PM in July and August)
Contact	 19 Rue Balzac, Azay-le-Rideau  +33 02 47 45 4204  https://www.azay-le-rideau.fr/en

20 Château de l'Islette

Another castle constructed during the 16th century in the Renaissance style. This enchanting château, set on the banks of the Indre River and only a few kilometers from the d'Azay-le-Rideau château, features elegant stonework, grand arched windows, and picturesque turrets. Later it hosted the famous sculptors Auguste Rodin and Camille Claudel, whose passionate affair unfolded here. Visitors can explore beautifully furnished rooms adorned with period furniture, artwork, and tapestries. The lush gardens, complete with water features and a charming stone bridge, offer a serene setting for picnics and leisurely strolls.



Tours	Entrance price €11 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Guided tours available in French only, multiple times a day. See website for options: https://www.chateaudelislette.fr/en/visite-horaires-et-tarifs
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from March to April from 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM and from May to September from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 9 Rte de Langeais, Azay-le-Rideau  +33 02 47 45 4010  https://www.chateaudelislette.fr/en/

21 Château d'Ussé

This castle, built between 1465-80 on the edge of the forest of Chinon for the de Bueil family, is a quintessential fairy tale castle that inspired Charles Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty." Originally a medieval fortress, it was transformed into a Renaissance château in the 15th and 16th centuries. The château features stunning turrets, towers, and a grand staircase. Inside, visitors can admire period furnishings, tapestries, and an impressive collection of 17th- and 18th-century art. The gardens, designed by André Le Nôtre, creator of the gardens at Versailles, are equally enchanting with manicured lawns, flower beds, and fountains.



Highlights include the King's Chamber, the Chapel, and the museum showcasing period costumes and historical artifacts.

Tours	Entrance price €14.50 per person.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from April to September from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	 338 Château d'Usse, Rigny-Ussé  +33 02 47 95 5405  https://www.chateaudusse.fr/?lang=en

22 Forteresse Royale de Chinon

Majestically perched on a hilltop, this castle offers excellent views over the town and the Vienne River. The only royal Plantagenet fortress of the Loire Valley, this fortress is divided into three distinct sections, each separated by dry moats. The earliest section, Fort St-Georges, built in the 12th century, now houses the entrance, ticket booth, and a shop. Adjacent to it lies the Middle Castle, featuring the Logis Royal (Royal Lodgings), which once accommodated the Plantagenet court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Further along, the Fort de Coudray crowns the promontory and includes the 13th-century Tour de Coudray, notable both as the temporary residence of Joan of Arc in 1429 and as a prison for the Knights Templar – whose graffiti can still be seen on its walls.



Upon entering the Middle Castle, visitors pass the 14th-century Tour de l'Horloge to reach the Logis Royal. Today, only the South wing of the Logis remains, housing multimedia exhibits that include Joan of Arc memorabilia and local archaeological discoveries.

Tours	Alongside traditional audio guides there are multimedia booklets available that activate film and audio presentations in your native language. Daily guided tours in English are also available at a set time, at no extra cost. Tickets can be bought in advance online; an adult ticket is €11 per person.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open from March to October, daily from 9:30 AM – 6:00 PM (7:00 PM from May through August).
Contact	 2 Rue du Château, Chinon  +33 02 47 93 1345  https://forteressechinon.fr/en

23 Château de Montsoreau

Located at the confluence of the Loire and Vienne rivers, is a stunning example of Renaissance architecture built directly in the riverbed. Constructed in 1455 by Jean II de Chambes, counsellor and chamberlain to King Charles VII and Louis XI and, above all, one of the wealthiest men in the kingdom. The castle features elegant stonework, large, mullioned windows, and decorative chimneys. The château is renowned for its literary connection to Alexandre Dumas' novel "La Dame de Monsoreau." Inside, visitors can explore contemporary art installations (it has the world's largest collection of works by the Art & Language movement) and historical exhibits detailing the château's past. The beautifully restored rooms showcase period furniture, tapestries, and artworks. The château's terraces offer excellent views of the Loire River and surrounding vineyards.



Tours	Entrance price €12 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Guided tours are available on request (in French only)
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from May to September, from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	📍 Passage du Marquis de, Pass. de Geoffre, Montsoreau ☎ +33 02 41 67 1260 🌐 https://www.chateau-montsoreau.com/wordpress/en/

24 Château du Rivau

The oldest foundations of this stronghold date back to the 13th century and it is renowned for its fairy tale ambiance and stunning gardens. Initially a medieval fortress, it was transformed into a Renaissance residence by Charles VII's chamberlain Pierre de Beauveau. In 1697, Louis XIV's field marshal Jacques de Beauvau was obliged to sell the château after frittering away his fortune at Versailles. The family left the area and for several centuries the castle fell into neglect. In 1918, its new owner, the sculptor Alphonse Emmanuel de Moncel de Perrin, succeeded in having it listed as a national monument and undertook to restore it.



The château boasts a grand Gothic entrance, a drawbridge, and a fortified keep. Inside, visitors can explore beautifully restored rooms adorned with period furniture, tapestries, and contemporary art installations. The 14 themed gardens are a highlight, featuring whimsical sculptures, rare plants, and vibrant flowers. Château du Rivau's rich history includes ties to Joan of Arc and King Charles VII, enhancing its cultural and historical significance.

Tours	Entrance price €13 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Audio-guide is an additional €3,50.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	Open daily from May to September from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	📍 9 Rue du Château, Lémeré ☎ +33 02 47 95 7747 🌐 https://www.chateaudurivau.com/en/

25 Domaine de Candé

Located in Monts, Domaine de Candé is a captivating château with a rich history dating back to the 16th century. Originally a medieval fortress, it was transformed into a luxurious residence in the 19th and early 20th centuries by the English heiress Charlotte Trafford. The château is renowned for its Art Deco interiors, exquisite woodwork, and modern amenities for its time, including a state-of-the-art bathroom and an early electrical system. The estate's gardens, designed in the English landscape style, offer picturesque views and pleasant walking paths. Notably, Candé hosted the wedding of the Duke of Windsor and Wallis Simpson in 1937, referred to at the time as the “Wedding of the Century”, adding to its historical allure. Visitors can explore the well-preserved rooms, historical artifacts, and beautifully landscaped grounds.



Tours	Entrance price €7 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance. Guided tours in French only, contact the reception for times.
Reservations	Not necessary.
Hours	April to June and September to October: Wednesday to Sunday. The Castle and Store from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 1:30 OM – 6:00 PM. The Park is open from 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM. July and August: open daily. The Castle and Store from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM and from 1:30 OM – 7:00 PM. The Park is open from 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
Contact	📍 Route du Ripault, Monts, France ☎ +33 02 47 34 0370 🌐 https://domainecande.fr/en/useful-information

26 Château de Villandry

Renowned for its exquisite Renaissance gardens, which are among the most beautiful in France. Built in the 16th century by Jean le Breton, François I's Finance Minister, the château boasts elegant architecture with a blend of medieval and Renaissance styles. The château was enriched as early as the 16th century with vast, remarkable, terraced gardens. However, time took its toll and by the early 20th century the gardens had all but vanished. A patron of the arts, Dr J. Carvalho, undertook to restore them to their original brilliance. Years of effort went into this work, as they did for the restoration of the château itself.



The interior features richly decorated rooms with period furniture, paintings, and intricate woodwork. Highlights include the ornamental kitchen garden, water garden, and sun garden, meticulously designed with geometric patterns and vibrant colors. The Love Garden, representing different aspects of love, is particularly noteworthy. Visitors can also explore the château's museum, showcasing historical artifacts and art collections.

Tours

Entrance price: €13 per person and tickets can be purchased online in advance.

Entrance price for the gardens only: €8 per person.

Audio guides are available in English for an additional €4.

Daily guided tours (in French only), regular departures, at no extra cost.

Reservations

Not necessary.

Hours

Open daily from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM (6:30 PM in July and August)

Contact

3 Rue Principale, Villandry

+33 0247 50 02 09

<https://www.chateauvillandry.fr/?lang=en>

APPENDIX 3 – QUIZ QUESTIONS

For a little fun, here is a quiz to test what you have learned in this guidebook. For those who just want to relax on vacation or who want to test their riding partners, skip ahead to the answers at the end of the section.

Planning Your Tour

1. **What is the most useful tool to help you navigate your tour?**
 - ☐ A piece of string and a loadstone
 - ☐ LifeCycle Adventures On-Tour App
 - ☐ Garmin GMR xHD2 Open Array Radar
 - ☐ All of the above
2. **The LifeCycle Adventures On-Tour App can be downloaded to:**
 - ☐ Your smartphone
 - ☐ Your tablet
 - ☐ All of the above
3. **It can be helpful to download Google Maps for the area for use offline:**
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
4. **Companies that provide cheap data plans via eSIMs are:**
 - ☐ Snowman and Pharoh
 - ☐ Nomad and Airalo
 - ☐ Roman and Hairglo
 - ☐ None of the above
5. **Things to consider booking before you travel include:**
 - ☐ Visits to the chateaux (castles)
 - ☐ Airport transfers
 - ☐ Hard-to-book restaurants
 - ☐ Hot air balloon flights
 - ☐ Wine tours
 - ☐ All of the above
6. **Useful things to pack include:**
 - ☐ Floor pump
 - ☐ Your bike helmet
 - ☐ Kitchen sink
 - ☐ DeWalt 20V brushless cordless 2-inch magnetic drill press
 - ☐ All of the above
7. **We provide the following equipment:**
 - ☐ Two LifeCycle Adventures water bottles
 - ☐ Floor pump that travels with your luggage
 - ☐ Phone mount for your phone
 - ☐ All of the above

About the Area

8. The Loire Valley is known as:

- ☐ The Heart of France
- ☐ The Bedroom of France
- ☐ The Garden of France
- ☐ The Cellar of France
- ☐ The Café of France

9. The Loire Valley has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site:

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

10. Château de Chambord has:

- ☐ A pair of cufflinks worn by the Duke of Windsor at his wedding
- ☐ A double helix staircase designed by Leonardo da Vinci
- ☐ A preserved slice of cake donated by Marie Antoinette to the poor of Paris
- ☐ An 800-kilometer bike path

11. La Loire à Vélo is:

- ☐ An 800 KM cycling route that travels alongside the Loire River
- ☐ An annual stage race from Paris to Tours
- ☐ A 200-seat velodrome for bike racing in Amboise
- ☐ A 50-foot-long bike made of planted sunflowers for the Tour de France

12. Joan of Arc first encountered Charles VII in:

- ☐ 1492
- ☐ The produce isle of the local Carrefour
- ☐ Château de Chinon
- ☐ Paris
- ☐ Flagrante delicto

13. The Hundred years War was between:

- ☐ France and Germany
- ☐ Paris Saint-Germain and Real Madrid
- ☐ 1393 and 1492
- ☐ France and England
- ☐ None of the above

14. Rillettes is:

- ☐ A game of chance with a rotating wheel commonly seen in French casinos
- ☐ A goat cheese from the Loire Valley
- ☐ A Loire Valley wine made from Chenin Blanc grapes
- ☐ A traditional pork spread
- ☐ A French brand of safety razors with the slogan "La meilleure qu'un homme puisse obtenir"

15. Denis Papin was the inventor of the Grime Digester a precursor to the modern pressure washer:

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Overnight Towns

16. Maison de la Magie, in Blois, is dedicated to the city's famed illusionist:

- ☐ Harry Houdini
- ☐ Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin
- ☐ David Copperfield
- ☐ David Blaine
- ☐ Uri Geller
- ☐ All of the above

17. Blois's medieval streets are lined with:

- ☐ Palm trees
- ☐ Smiling schoolchildren who cheer on the cyclists as they enter the town
- ☐ Gold
- ☐ Quaint, half-timbered houses and bustling markets
- ☐ Graffiti

18. Amboise was the final resting place of:

- ☐ Marie Antoinette
- ☐ Louis XVI
- ☐ Tsar Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov
- ☐ Leonardo da Vinci
- ☐ Michelangelo

19. The Chinon cheese Selles-sur-Cher is distinguished by its coating of what?

- ☐ Dust and pepper
- ☐ Ash and salt
- ☐ Sooty and Sweep
- ☐ Sprinkles

20. Christophe Hay's Fleur de Loire restaurant serves only fish from:

- ☐ The Loire River
- ☐ Iceland
- ☐ The local Carrefour
- ☐ 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

21. The famous staircase in Blois is named for:

- ☐ Dennis Bergkamp
- ☐ Dennis Keith Rodman
- ☐ Denise Lee Richards
- ☐ Denis Papin

22. When visiting Château de Montbazou you are likely to see:

- ☐ Dennis Keith Rodman
- ☐ Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI
- ☐ Historical reenactments, including archery and sword fighting
- ☐ A double helix staircase designed by Leonardo da Vinci
- ☐ All of the above

On Tour

23. List all the works of fiction mentioned or alluded to in the section *Using the On-Tour App*

APPENDIX 4 – QUIZ ANSWERS

Planning Your Tour

1. LifeCycle Adventures On-Tour App
2. All of the above
3. True
4. Nomad and Airalo
5. All of the above
6. Your bike helmet (we provide a floor pump, so you can leave that at home with the kitchen sink and the magnetic drill press)
7. All of the above

About the Area

8. The Garden of France
9. True
10. A double helix staircase designed by Leonardo da Vinci
11. An 800 KM cycling route that travels alongside the Loire River
12. Château de Chinon
13. France and England (a series of intermittent conflicts between 1337 and 1453)
14. A traditional pork spread
15. False, Denis Papin was the inventor of the *steam* digester, a precursor to the modern pressure cooker

Overnight Towns

16. Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin
17. Quaint, half-timbered houses and bustling markets
18. Leonardo da Vinci
19. Ash and salt
20. The Loire River
21. Denis Papin
22. Historical reenactments, including archery and sword fighting

On Tour (Qu. 23)

- Middlemarch by George Eliot
- Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (Pemberley)
- Smallville (Superman), TV series
- Stepford Wives, movie
- Winnie-the-Pooh, by A.A. Milne (Hundred Acre Wood)
- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Gatsby Mansion)
- The Flintstones, TV series (The Ruins of Bedrock)
- A Moveable Feast, by Ernest Hemingway (Dingo American Bar)
- Ulysses by James Joyce (the Cabman's Shelter)
- Hotel California by The Eagles
- Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien (Rivendell)
- Twin Peaks, TV series (The Great Northern Hotel)

Your Score

There were 23 questions in total. How did you do?

- 10 well done.
- 15 brilliant!
- 20 genius!!
- 23 really!?

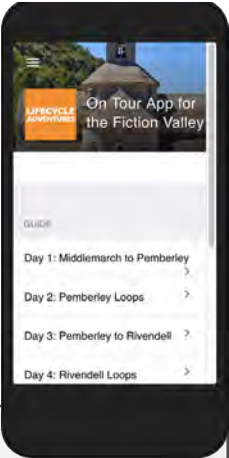
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On-Tour App

We have partnered with *Ride with GPS* to create an app that has all the details you need to explore each day.

You will receive a link to the app a few weeks before the start of your tour. Please download the app before you travel and familiarize yourself with the contents.

Here is a quick overview of how the app is organized.





Explore the world by bike, on your own terms

NORTH AMERICA

Big Island, Hawaii
Mount Hood, Oregon
San Juan Islands,
Washington
Willamette Valley, Oregon



SCAN

TO DOWNLOAD THE eBook
VERSION OF THIS GUIDEBOOK
see page 7 for details

EUROPE

Catalonia, Spain
Douro Valley, Portugal
Holland
Loire Valley, France
Provence, France
Puglia, Italy
Istrian Peninsula, Croatia
Pyrenees, France
Southwest Ireland
Tuscany, Italy

