

Self-Guided Cycling in the Loire Valley

Trip Code: SGLV

Version: SGLV Self-Guided Cycling in the Loire Valley



CYCLE



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle the Loire a Velo through vineyards and historic towns
- Enjoy a wine tasting in Chinon, a favourite resort of French nobility
- Discover Chateau d'Usse, the inspiration for Sleeping Beauty
- Explore the attractive town of Saumur nestled at the confluence of the Loire and Thouet Rivers
- Stay in charming 3* & 4* hotels and immerse yourself into the history of the region

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- Bike hire included
- 5 days cycling and sightseeing
- Chateaux pass included
- Daily departures available
- GPS Travel App
- Join at Blois / End in Saumur

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 6 Breakfasts
- 6 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

In the heart of France lies a quintessentially French region of the Loire Valley, famous for its picturesque villages, wineries and captivating chateaux. The countryside is awash with fruit orchids, fields of artichokes and asparagus, and the all-important vineyards which line the banks of the river; a beautiful backdrop for the historic towns and magnificent chateaux which are waiting to be explored. We have specially designed this self-guided cycling holiday to showcase this spectacular region allowing you the chance to pedal through its fertile landscape and discover its rich heritage.

Each day you will cycle 30-50km on easy cycle paths giving you plenty of time to enjoy the area both on and off your bike. Plus with our special chateaux pass included in the cost of your trip you can truly submerge yourself in the culture of the Loire Valley without any hidden costs. Your rides will take you to sample the region's liquid gold with an included wine tasting in Chinon, to enjoy the sweet smelling gardens of Villandry, to discover Sleeping Beauty's Chateau d'Usse and the love triangle which influenced the design of Chenonceau (the most photographed chateau of Loire). At the end of all that exploring you will stay in a fantastic selection of charming hotels, each chosen for their character and warm hospitality. Staying on a B&B basis you will have plenty of opportunity to sample the many inviting restaurants that line the streets of the historic towns of Blois, Amboise, Tours, Chinon and Saumur.

Is this holiday for you?

This self-guided cycling holiday makes for the perfect introduction to cycling holidays. The route is mostly on designated cycle paths and is almost all flat terrain, making it perfect for the whole family. Cycling distances of approximately 30-50km per day you will have plenty of time to explore the pretty villages and towns. We have also included a chateau pass in the cost of your holiday providing you access to many of the chateaus along your route so you can delve into the heritage of this historic region and relax in the pristine gardens. Plus if you would prefer an extra boost to your pedal power we can arrange e-bike upgrades too, simply ask our sales team for more details.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive in Blois with time to explore the charming town.

Arrive in Blois and check into your hotel. Blois' architecture is a reminder of its heyday as a royal town in the 16th century. Many of the buildings built in the style of the period, as well as its many late Gothic and Renaissance palaces and the Cathedral of Saint Louis. Depending on when you arrive you may have time to explore the narrow paved streets, punctuated by staircases leading up to the chateau.

SOUND & LIGHT: If you are traveling between April and mid-September we recommend paying an evening visit to Blois castle. The castle hosts a sound and light show each evening at 10pm and it is a lovely way to see the castle lit up and a great start to your holiday.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Chateau hopping from Chambord to Cheverny.

Today you are bound for Cheverny, visiting the imposing Chateau de Chambord along the way. You'll spend the first part of your ride along the Loire a Velo cycling path, a long distance network of surfaced trails along the banks of the Loire river. Eventually turning off the path you head through the stunning mature forests that surround the chateau, filled with wild deer and boar. The chateau at Chambord is considered a masterpiece of the French renaissance style and boasts some 440 rooms. Take the time to marvel at the extensively restored formal gardens that capture the majesty of this imposing structure, and wander through some of the many public rooms housing over 4000 artworks. Continue on to the Chateau de Cheverny where in contrast to the chateau at Chambord the modern gardens and expansive park grounds allow you to get lost in the landscape just minutes away from the grand entrance. Inside you'll find an incredible display of period furniture and rare tapestries.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Distance
42KM

DAY 3
Enjoy a day visiting Chaumont sur Loire and Amboise.

Starting out through the vineyards of Cheverny headed back towards the Loire, you'll first meet the perfectly preserved Chateau de Fougères-sur-Bievre complete with fortifications and keep. You'll then tour through attractive villages to the chateau of Chaumont sur Loire majestically overlooking the Loire River. This 15th Century castle was once home to Catherine de Medici and has beautiful gardens for you to explore before hopping back on your bike to continue on the Loire a Velo path to the city of Amboise. This elegant city, perched proudly upon the hill above the river was the childhood home of Charles VIII and is steeped in Royal history for you to explore, and the royal Chateau d'Amboise is Leonardo Da Vinci's final resting place.

CHAUMONT SUR LOIRE INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL: Each year the chateau hosts the works of 30 or more artists and landscape artists in the gardens. The installations of the festival are on display from June to September.

AMBOISE SON ET LUMIÈRE FESTIVAL: The Sound & Light festival is usually held in July and is performed by over 400 volunteers who bring the city's history to life through dance, processions, flaming torches and acrobatics. The festival focuses on the time of King François I who ruled from 1515 to 1547.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Distance
58KM

DAY 4
Pedal through the vineyards of Montlouis, explore Tours and enjoy the gardens of Villandry.

Today's ride will first take you to the impressive visit Chateau de Chenonceau, perhaps the most photographed of the castles in the Loire Valley. Straddling the Cher River this dramatic castle is often referred to as 'the ladies chateau' in acknowledgement to the women who influenced its design through history. The castle was gifted to Diane de Poitiers, Henri II mistress but when Henri II died Queen Catherine de Medici forced Diane out of the castle to Chateau de Chaumont (which you visit on day 3), although she refused to stay and lived out her days in Anet. You will have time to enjoy the grounds, enjoy a coffee in the orangery café and learn more of the history of the castle before continuing your along the Loire a Velo to Tours, the gateway city to the Loire.

This is a beautiful stretch of the cycle path as you meander through the vines, passing the numerous cellars producing the sweet white and sparkling wines the region is known for. Wine lovers will be pleased to know some of the cellars also offer tastings too. Before long you will arrive in Tours, where you will discover the beautiful old neighbourhood with its typically half-timbered houses, the impressive stone façade of the Saint-Gatien Cathedral and the detailed architecture of the 'Beaux Arts' Museum and Tours castle. With so much to discover in the city we recommend you set off early today and allow plenty of time to enjoy all Tours has to offer and in the evening you may wish to venture to Tours sur

Loire, a popular place for locals to socialise in the bustling restaurants, bars, street food and entertainment.

AMBOISE SUNDAY MARKET: If your visit coincides with the Sunday food market, we highly recommend allowing time to pay a visit. Hosting 200-300 stalls along the riverfront it is great to pick up your picnic supplies or your souvenirs.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Distance
51KM

DAY 5

Discover the sweet smelling gardens of Villandry as you cycle to Chinon.

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast at your hotel before hopping on your bike and saying farewell to Tours. Your route today will lead you to the gardens of Villandry with its French style garden terraces. Here you will have the opportunity to wander through the meticulously tended gardens (entrance included); discover the impressive ornamental garden, relax in the water garden and get lost in the labyrinth before getting back on your bike to pedal on to one of the most influential chateaus of modern culture, Chateau de Usse. Set in a tranquil location between the edge of Chinon forest and the Indre valley it was the castle's 15th century turrets, pinnacles and dormer windows which inspired author Perrault to write his famous fairy tale 'Sleeping Beauty'. The castle embraces the story with its retelling through wax models re-enacting the scene of the novel in its Knights Dungeon.

From Usse it is a short pedal to Chinon, your final destination of the day. Resting on the banks of the splendid Vienne river, a tributary to the Loire itself, the town is steeped in history and charm with a rich culture. It was here in Chinon that Richard the Lionheart was born and is now interred just a few kilometers away next to his mother in the beautiful abbey of Fontevraud. The town is exceptionally quaint with its many streetside cafes to relax in after a day on your bike while the castle sits proudly high above the town. Here you can discover the numerous cellars which hold the region's liquid gold - Chinon red wines - and enjoy an included wine tasting.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Distance
57KM

DAY 6

Explore the royal past of Fontevraud abbey. Cycle through vineyards and relax in Saumur, your final goal of the week.

Your final ride of the week will take you through the pretty landscape towards the abbey of Fontevraud. Situated at the meeting point of the three regions of Poitou, Anjou and Touraine, the abbey is the largest monastic complex in Europe and homes the tombs of the Plantagenet Kings, a remainder of the abbey's royal past. You don't need to know the history of the abbey to soon appreciate the importance of this stunning complex. As you wander through the cloister, visit the chapter house and kitchens you will soon begin to understand the life of those who inhabited the abbey. The setting makes for a great picnic stop too.

When you have finished exploring you can hop back on your bike to your final goal of the week, the lovely town of Saumur. Nestled at the confluence of the Thouet and Loire Rivers the town dates back as early as 4BC. Today it is a bustling town with its history shown in its magnificent half-timber architecture, stained glass windows and the inviting Place Saint Pierre square with its imposing church of Saint Pierre. The town is also home to a highly accredited horse riding school- le Cadre Noir. The school specialises in the art of traditional French riding and is open to the public from February to November. Checking in to your hotel you will have plenty of time to enjoy this historic town and a final dinner in one of the restaurants to toast a great week of cycling.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Distance
48KM

DAY 7

Enjoy breakfast in your hotel before your onward journey.

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast in your hotel and perhaps take a final stroll through the inviting streets of Saumur before making your onward journey.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- 21-gear bike hire
- Entrance to Domaine de Chambord chateau and gardens
- Entrance to Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire chateau and gardens
- Entrance to Chateau de Chenonceaux
- Entrance to Villandry Gardens
- Entrance to Fontevraud Abbey
- A wine tasting in Chinon
- Self-Guided Travel App
- Self-guided information pack containing your tour booklet and travel documents
- Luggage transfers
- City Taxes

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Blois
- Travel from Saumur
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

GPS Travel App

This holiday is led by a self-guided travel app, which contains the personalised details of your complete holiday itinerary. This includes the GPS-led routes for you to follow on your self-guided cycling and walking tours, as well as attractions, coffee stops and points of interest in the towns and cities along the way. The app does not need to have Wi-Fi connection to work, you simply follow the instructions we provide you to download the app to your phone before you leave home and you are ready to go.

Each mobile comes with a different expected battery life so we suggest you pack a spare battery pack with you just in case you require it.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your tour booklet and all your relevant holiday documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

This trip starts at your accommodation in Blois. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a land only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Tours Airport, however Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport offers many more options from regional UK airports.

If you are flying into Tours Airport you can travel via train to Blois. The train takes less than 1 hour in total with trains running frequently. For more information please visit www.sncf.com

If you are flying into Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport you can travel via train to Blois. The journey takes approximately 2-3 hours in total and requires one change along your way. For more information please visit www.sncf.com

We also offer private transfers from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport please ask our sales team for a quotation.

Your trip ends in Saumur from where you can take the train to either Tours Airport or Paris CDG Airport. Alternatively, we can provide private transfers to Paris CDG Airport, please ask our sales team for a quotation.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

French cuisine is ingrained in French culture and is one of the country's greatest contributions to the world. It is filled with passion; a celebration of the rich natural flavours of basic ingredients, to be enjoyed with one of the countries fine wines. Meal times are leisurely, a time to be enjoyed with good company and are an experience to be savoured.

Known as the 'garden of France' thanks to the regions rich soils and mild climate you can expect to find a plethora of fresh, tasty produce as you cycle through the Loire Valley. Agriculture thrives here with asparagus featuring in souffles and omelettes but the real stars of the farmlands are the apples and pears with the region supplying 20% of Frances apples. We recommend you try the famous tarte tatin which originated in nearby Solgne back in the 1880's.

Given the number of rivers that run through the area it is no surprise that fish features heavily on menus with popular dishes including stuffed bream, matelote - a stew of locally caught eels softened in red wine or fish such as sander served with a traditional beurre blanc- a butter sauce flavoured with shallots and vinegar. Meat dishes tend to be filled with rich flavours from locally sourced game such as venison, guinea fowl or pheasant.

You will find many appealing cafes along your route for lunch or you may be swayed by the delicious scents of the local boulangerie to enjoy a picnic of fresh bread and delicious local goat's cheeses- they are superb in this part of France. Needless to say cycling in the Loire is not just a journey but a treat for your taste buds!

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

This trip has been designed with tradition in mind. You will stay in a carefully chosen selection of 3* & 4* hotels, each hand-picked for their warm hospitality, fantastic locations and clever mix of modern amenities and French style, enhancing the features of the traditional buildings. All of the hotels offer something different such as lovely garden terraces or cosy communal areas, and some also have pools, ideal for relaxing after a day on your bike.

All of the hotels offer a typically French continental breakfast of delicious fresh breads and pastries served with your morning coffee. Some hotels also offer additional hot items.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation if you would like to extend your time in Blois or Saumur. Please speak to one of our sales team for further information.

Bike Hire

Bikes come with 21 gears. All bikes come equipped with 2 panniers for your daily essentials plus a milometer, a bike lock, pump and repair kit. We strongly recommend you bring your own helmet with you for the best comfort.

We also recommend packing a gel seat for extra comfort or a pair of padded cycling shorts, whilst the cycling is leisurely and there are plenty of opportunities to stop and explore it is always nice to have some padding for a comfortable ride.

You also have the option of upgrading to bike plus hire on this trip for an additional supplement of £ 45. The bike plus option provides a slightly sportier sitting posture and comes with upgraded items such as 27 gears, hydraulic brakes and a front suspension fork. This is a great option for those looking for a slightly comfier ride without upgrading to an e-bike.

E-bikes are also available at an additional supplement of £ 175. We are also able to arrange children's bikes, children's follow-me tandems, trailers and child seats. Please ask our sales team for details.

Baggage Allowance

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your bike. We ask that you please ensure your luggage is restricted to one piece under 20KG per person and that your luggage is ready for collection each morning.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided cycling holiday is that you decide the pace. This trip is designed for leisure cyclists and does not require you to be in peak fitness. Having said this it is always sensible to get some additional exercise before going on an active holiday. After all, the fitter you are the more enjoyable your cycling will be. You should be comfortable with cycling 30-50 km a day on easy cycle paths or quiet roads and we advise you to dust off your bike and head out on a few rides before your holiday.

Climate

The climate in the Loire Valley is favourable most of the year round with the rivers helping to keep the summers cool and the winters mild, ideal for cycling.

Summer temperatures reach highs of around 23 degrees with July being the hottest month. Summers can be hot although winds coming over from the Atlantic Ocean help keep hot temperatures tempered by moderate, cool breezes. This temperate summer climate provides a fantastic week of cycling in the sun.

Spring and autumn offer cooler temperatures of 10-19 degrees with some rainfall. Spring is the perfect time to visit if you are a keen gardener as the chateaux gardens are in full bloom and autumn sees the festivities of the grape harvest and hunting season in the region.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Lonely Planet – Chateaux of the Loire Valley

DK Eyewitness Travel Guide – Loire Valley

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

SelfGuided Cycling Equipment List

- Cycling shorts
- Cycle helmet
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Scarf
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Rain protection
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)

- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Handlebar mount that is compatible with your smartphone
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

We offer some transfers to your hotel from the nearest airports, please refer to the 'joining arrangements and transfers' for further details for this trip.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

We have selected our favourite places within this romantic region and compiled them to make this great week of cycling, allowing you to make the most of your holiday in this fantastic region. Plus a chateau pass is included in the cost of your trip so many of your entrance fees are included, as well as a wine tasting. Bike hire is included in the cost of your trip, and e-bike upgrades are available.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change