



TOUJOURS FRANCE FRENCH TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

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SAMPLE TRAVEL ITINERARY – CUSTOMISED TOUR OF LOIRE VALLEY

Day One

Please meet at the restaurant “Le Train Bleu” at 3 pm. “Le Train Bleu” is a station icon – you can’t miss it! It’s in the main hall and up a flight of stairs on the mezzanine level. We will meet at the bottom of the stairs to get our luggage organised before heading up to the restaurant for a drink before departure.

A three hour drive takes us to the Loire Valley and the village of Saumur, which will be our home for the next 7 days, in a beautiful chateau booked exclusively for our group.

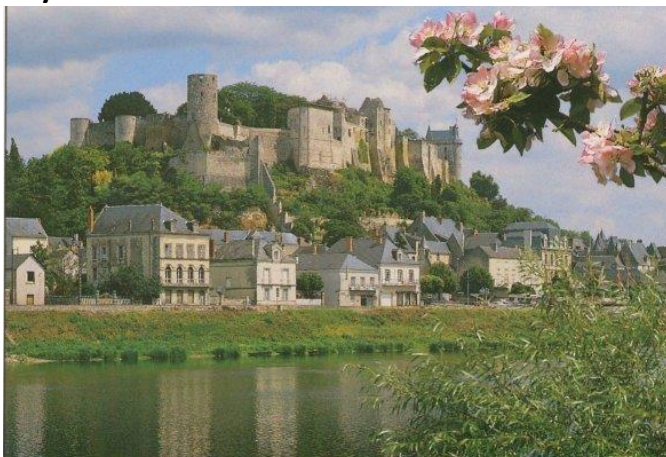
Day Two

One of the most stunning chateaux of the Loire Valley is Chenonceau, the chateau with her “feet in the river”. A masterpiece of 16th century Renaissance architecture, the castle spans the Cher River and while there we will learn of the scandalous history of a king, his queen and his true love – their trials and tribulations, deceptions and betrayals – as well as the fascinating role of the castle in World War 2.

One of the many delights of Chenonceau is to enjoy lunch in the beautiful *orangerie* in the grounds of the castle.



Day Three



Chinon is an extraordinary town with an extraordinary history. Recognised as one of the most beautiful towns of the Loire, Chinon has everything – charming cobblestoned streets, an ancient ruined castle, a riverside setting, several great little boutiques, exceptional restaurants, a colourful country market... Today we will begin with a visit to the chateau (a brooding medieval ruin, very different to the Renaissance beauties we have seen), where Joan of Arc came to meet the French King Charles and tell him of the miracle that inspired her to deliver France from the English; and then continue on to the Chapelle of St Ragenonde where you will see an incredible mural from the 12th century with the only

known likeness of the amazing Eleanor of Aquitaine. Dinner this evening at a charming local restaurant.

Day Four

Today we will visit some of the “Plus Beaux Villages” near Saumur – Candes-Saint-Martin and Montsoreau. Also nearby is the unique village of Turquant, where we visit the village of “arts et metiers”, a unique group of artists’ studios set in the ancient troglodyte cliff-face dwellings. Lunch today is a delicious picnic on the banks of the beautiful Loire River.

Day Five

Today is market day in Chinon and what better way to enjoy the ancient streets of this beautiful town than to wander among the mouth-watering market stalls! After a relaxing morning and lunch, enjoying Chinon at your own pace, we will continue on to Fontevraud, once one of the greatest monastic cities of Europe, and the necropolis of the Plantagenet Dynasty. Here in the Abbey, which was run by a unique order of nuns for 700 years, we can see the recumbent forms of Henri II of England, his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine (whose incredible life story as the most powerful woman of her time, we will discover!) and their son Richard the Lionheart; and learn how Napoleon turned the Abbey into a prison, saving it from destruction. A captivating history and one of the most truly magnificent sites you will ever visit.



Day Six



Today we'll visit Amboise, one of the prettiest towns of the Loire and the spot where Francois I, the famous Renaissance King, spent his childhood and held court after he came to the throne. It was here that Francois held frequent balls, feasts and tournaments and where in 1516, he invited his friend Leonardo da Vinci to spend his last years, with the only proviso being that he spend some time in conversation and companionship with Francois.

The Clos Luce, a short walk from the chateau, is the most fascinating visit! Leonardo da Vinci lived here at the end of his life and you can see the most amazing exhibition of his inventions and enjoy the fabulous gardens.

Day Seven

You will already have discovered parts of Saumur in your wanderings, but this morning you will enjoy some time free at leisure to either sleep in and relax, or enjoy the weekly market held throughout the town!

Today we can also add an optional excursion to Villandry. One of the most beautiful of the Loire chateaux, Villandry's Renaissance gardens are famous throughout the world.

Late this afternoon, at a cellar in town, a really special visit to finish off our tour – with a unique wine tasting, “testing of the senses” and personal sommelier, followed by a private dinner in the beautiful underground cellars, which are 1000 years old.



Day Eight

This morning we will return to Paris, where we will drop you at nominated drop off points.

CHATEAU DE VERRIERES – SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATION ONLY



Chateau de Verrieres is situated in Saumur, "The Pearl" of Anjou. It is one of the most beautiful, quiet and historical towns located in the Loire Valley, between Tours and Angers. Chateau de Verrieres is an in-town chateau. It combines the experience of an open and green space together with town facilities, being located in the centre of Saumur. The Chateau offers sumptuous original decorative features, old stables, swimming pool and four acre park "à l'anglaise".