

Loire Valley Classic



Fairytale castles and unspoilt countryside

THE LOIRE VALLEY is one of the most visited parts of France for good reason. At the height of the Renaissance period the French Royal Court spent its summers here, and everyone else built grand chateaux in an attempt to show off their wealth and influence. Today, this legacy of fairytale castles, together with the mighty river Loire after which the region is named, the vineyards of Chinon and Saumur, and the fields of sunflowers and corn, all combine to make this a beautiful area perfect for cycling.

Our tour shows you the famous chateaux but also takes you to lesser known parts away from the tourist hotspots, where you can ride your bike in peace along quiet lanes, far away from the crowds.

The local wines are well known and complement the fish from the river and other fine local foods. Carefully formulated to offer a great balance of riding and leisure, this tour is one of our favourites, and is what cycling in France should be all about.

At a glance.....

- 6 days' riding
- 252 miles (407 km)
- Daily distances from 36 to 58 miles (58 to 93 km)
- 7 nights in comfortable 3*** family run 'character' hotels.
- 6 dinners
- 1 dinner not included
 - 2 picnic lunches
- Coffee & cake stops
- Fully supported with vehicle back-up and luggage transfer



The Loire Valley could have been invented for a cycling holiday as it has all the important ingredients; lots to see, fantastic countryside and a good climate. The topography is sympathetic to riding a bike and whilst there are a couple of longer days these are not hard riding - this trip has been enjoyed by many people with no previous cycling experience.

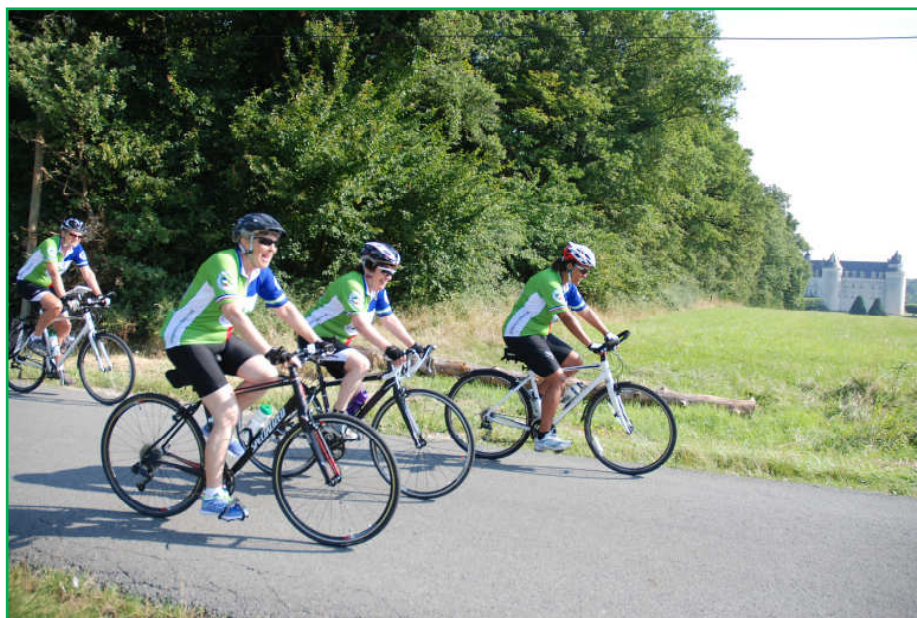
As well as the famous chateaux we aim to show you other aspects of this lovely region often by-passed by the coach loads of tourists on fixed timetables to get to the next chateaux and cross it off on the list; the vineyards, the troglodyte caves and the forests and the pretty small villages are just some of those attractions off the beaten track.

Day 1: Meet at Amboise for overnight stay and evening meal below the castle walls.

Day 2: Heading east from Amboise you will visit the chateau at Chaumont

'Wow! Mike and I have had such a fab week with our wonderful friends... Deborah and Pete, Neil and Chris in the Loire Valley with Charlie from Green Jersey. Brilliant organisation from arriving back after a long days cycling to find your bags already in your room, home-made cakes and snacks from the van at various point en route, a 'nothing too much trouble' attitude from Charlie. I could go on but I suggest you get yourself booked on one of these cycling holidays and find out for yourselves. Thank you so much Charlie. Xx'

before reaching the Royal City of Blois, built on the hillside adjoining the Loire, before continuing to Chambord for the night where we can see the floodlit chateau from our hotel. (58 km / 36 miles).



Day 3: From Chambord we ride to the chateau of Cheverny, the model for Captain Haddock's Marlinspike Hall in the Tintin books. This chateau is still in private hands (unlike many which are state owned) and so has an intimate feel to it. Cutting across country the jewel in the crown awaits, as Chenonceau, perhaps the best known of all, sits astride the river Cher. (74 km / 46 miles).

Day 4: After the Renaissance delights of yesterday we head away from the river valleys to see some of the other fine sights the area has to offer. The ancient abbey town of Montresor lies on the route to Loches, a superbly preserved old town. The cornfields on either side and wide open vistas are a real feature of today's ride as you discover that the area extends beyond the river itself. (60 km / 37 miles).

Day 5: From Loches another gem awaits in the form of Richelieu. Planned and built by Louis XIV's cardinal of the same name on a grid pattern, the white stone and intricate carvings make this walled town with its central square a real pleasure. From here we head north back to the Vienne river where Chinon awaits, one of the major Loire Valley towns with its impressive fortress where Joan of Arc met the Dauphin and convinced him to take on the English during the Hundred Years' War. A longer day, but the terrain is made for cycling. (93 km / 58 miles).



Day 6: Our route from Chinon to Saumur cuts inland again away from the river, through quiet villages with ancient houses and still a great many chateaux. We ride through Montreuil Bellay before descending back to the river at Saumur, one of the most pleasing of

Loire Valley towns. (60 km / 37 miles).

Day 7: Our last full day is an orgy of beauty, as we ride first through the vineyards of Saumur and Champigny to arrive at Fontevraud, burial place of Richard the Lionheart, and then ride back to the river through what must be one of the prettiest villages in France at Candes sur Martin. Then it's to Usse - whose flamboyant turrets inspired *The Sleeping Beauty* - and to our final destination of small but perfect Azay le Rideau. As always we have an end of tour dinner to reminisce with new friends about the sights you've seen and to compare notes. (62 km / 38 miles).



Day 8: Depart.

BIKES & EQUIPMENT

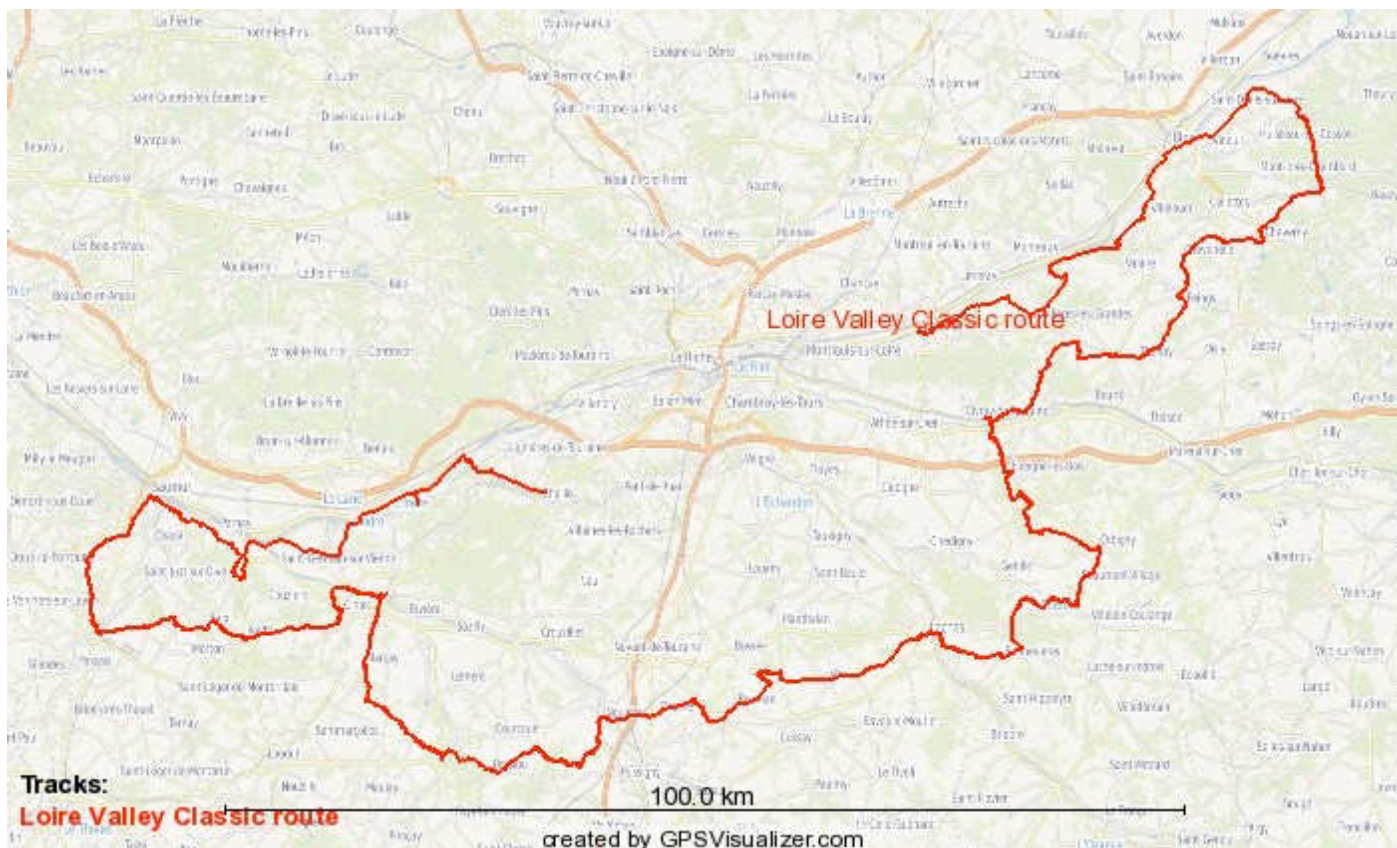


People have ridden this tour on all types of bike. The cycling is not hard and you won't need panniers or bar bags as you will frequently see the van.

Garmins / GPS are highly recommended and we provide gpx files, as well as a printed route book for you to help you find your way.

All bikes are secure at night.

We send you out a kit list in advance of your holiday so you know what to pack.



Our Loire Valley Classic route starts in Amboise, east of Tours, and makes a clockwise loop, finishing in beautiful Azay le Rideau.

TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE TOUR

Tours is on the mainline TGV network connecting with Paris, with some direct services from Charles de Gaulle airport each day.

Ferry is perhaps the best way to arrive from the UK. Caen Ouistreham ferry terminal (Brittany Ferries from Portsmouth) is about 3 hour's easy drive and there is parking available in Tours from where we can collect and return you at the start and end of the tour.

Other than Paris, Nantes is probably the next best bet if you intend to fly and has a good range of flights.



SUPPORT VEHICLES

Our support vehicle caters for all speeds of rider and is there to provide everything you need to make your trip easier, so that all you have to do is pedal. We provide a coffee stop in the morning and snacks throughout the day but you will see us far more frequently than that as we sit by the side of the road to see you all through a tricky junction or to dispense suntan lotion.

Everyone loves our homemade cake (you have to eat it all, because we get in trouble if we take any back at the end of the trip) and we also have a range of spares on board.

You can leave a daybag in the van with waterproofs, gels, your iPad or whatever you may need to get at throughout the day—you will see us every hour on average and we are always only a phone call away.

The van is there for your well-being, support and to keep you filled with water and snacks—the hampers contains a lot of naughty goodies!

GROUP HOLIDAYS

Our group sizes vary from 4 up to 12. Sometimes we go to 14, but we are keen to keep the personal service that our returning customers love. On our feedback form a lot of people have told us that we should stress the benefits of our small groups—so we have!



You do not need to ride as a group as our support caters for everyone's speed. You will usually find someone else who rides at a pace that you are comfortable with, even if you did not know them before the holiday began. If you find yourself riding in a large group and are not familiar with group riding, ask us, or other riders, to explain about warning signals and how to pass information about haz-

'Of 6 companies that we have used for this format of holiday you are far and away the best.'

ards on the road between yourselves.

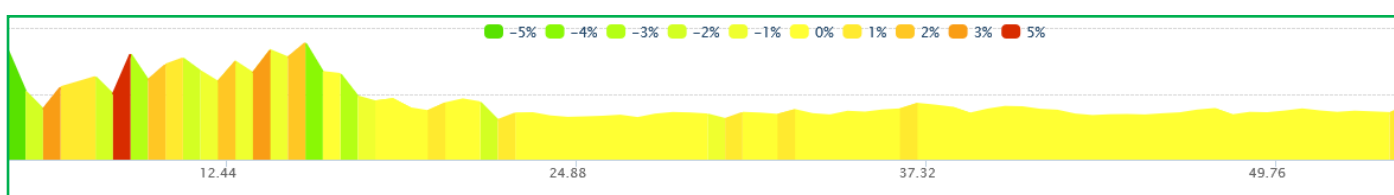
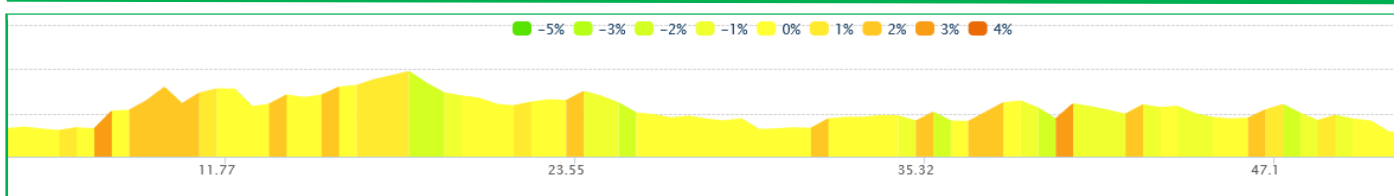
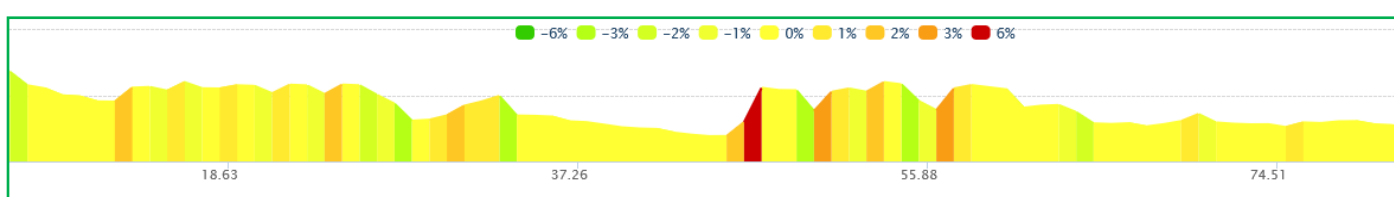
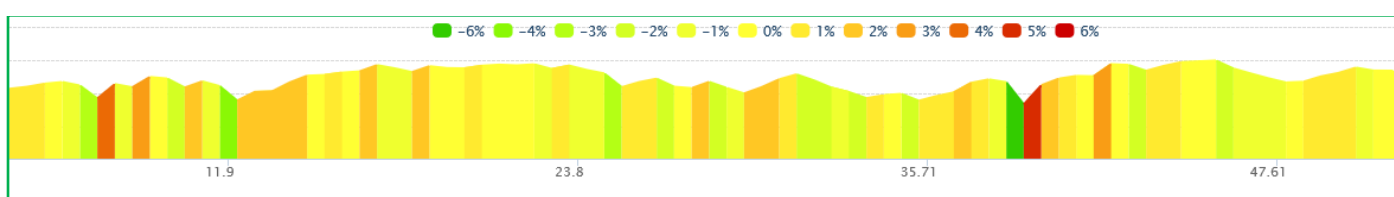
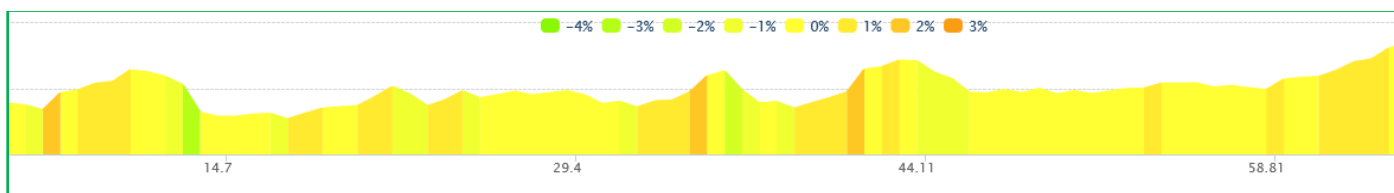
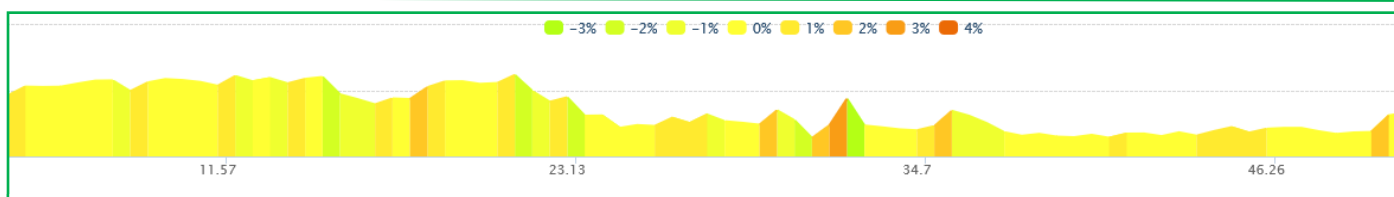
ABOUT US

We are a specialist family company and we care deeply that you have a good time. It's more than likely that one of the business owners will be leading your trip. This isn't just a livelihood for us, it's a vocation, so we'll do whatever we can to look after you and make sure you have fun!



We're mad keen cyclists and want to pass on the joys of riding in France. This means is that if you want to ring us at 9pm on a Sunday with some questions, please do. If we can't come to the phone we will get back to you surprisingly quickly. You'll probably be speaking to the person who planned the route and has actually ridden it, or chose the hotels. If you have any questions at all, or wish to book, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

ELEVATION CHARTS



We had a brilliant time and have enthused about it to our friends. Keep up the good work!

For guidance only. Note different scales each day. Distances in km.

HOTELS & MEALS

We use small family-run hotels wherever possible where a generous breakfast is offered. All have en suite facilities. The average rating is 3-star. Final confirmation of actual hotels is decided in January / February each year. Accommodation is on a half board basis. If a hotel does not have a restaurant for dinner then we eat out (cost included in tour). We arrange tables together for the evening meals although you are of course free to come and go as you please. If you have any dietary requirements please let us know in advance. When dinner is not included (see 'At a Glance' on page 1) you are free to make your own choice but we and our friendly hoteliers will of course offer advice.



Breakfast and dinner is included in the cost of your holiday and we also include your first drink (beer, soft drink or glass of wine) for your evening meal. Pre-dinner drinks, extra wine and coffee afterwards are not included and you should pay for these yourself at the time.

For lunch, we will tell you where you will find places to eat / buy food. On one day on this tour we provide a picnic lunch on two days (included in the cost of the holiday) where facilities are scarce due to the rural nature of our route.

DATES AND PRICES 2020 / 2021

Please see our website for our latest dates and prices.

BESPOKE DATES

If you can rustle up a group of 8 or more we can put on a bespoke date just for your group.

TO BOOK: [Our booking pages can be found at http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact](http://greenjerseycycling.co.uk/contact)

Green Jersey French Cycling Tours, April 2020