FRENCH BIKE TOURS

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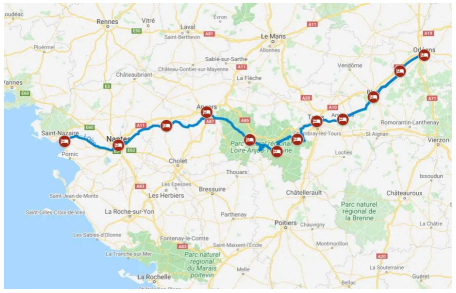
CULTURE , COAST , WINE , RIVERSIDE , GASTRONOMY

type :	**Electric bike option Self-guided Linear cycle routes Family Cycling Easy cycling Classic Cycle Routes of France**
hybrid :	●●○○○
e-bike :	●◐○○○
duration :	**13 days**
comfort :	●●◐○○
period:	**Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct**
code:	**FRSB495**

Loire Valley - from Orléans to the Atlantic Coast

13 days, ***€ 1250***

Introduction



Cycling along a part of the famous **"Loire à Velo"** route through the world famous "Pays des Châteaux", the most splendid cultural part of the **Loire Valley**. Along magnificent castles : Blois, Amboise, Villandry.... Crossing the Anjou-Touraine natural reserve with its beautiful wild river landscapes and nice stops during the day to taste some of the excellent wines of the region. Then experiencing the immense changes in nature when approaching the ocean!

Highlights :

- Cycle historic town to town with their prestigious castles
- Enjoy the varied lanscapes form the wild riverbanks and the final Atlantic coast destination
- Pass through most beautiful towns along the Loire: Orléans,Tours...
- Discover natural sites: caves/troglodytes, mushroom houses, gardens
- Try different regional dishes accompanied by delicious local wines

The total 'Loire à Vélo' route runs from Nevers to 'l'Océan', let's say from 'source' to mouth. The route can be divided into 3 various stages which can also be booked separately. You can add additional detours during this trip.

Day to Day

Day 1 **Arrival in Orléans**

You individually travel to Orléans, the entrance/gateway to the heart of the famous Loire valley. Once it was a capital in the early French Middle Ages, but nowadays it's a lively, modern town with a beautiful historic centre. An ideal place to start this route along Europe's last wild river: the Loire.

Day 2 **Orléans - Beaugency**

Once you have left the city noise behind, you soon reach the confluence of the Loiret and the Loire. A part of the day you follow the high banks with beautiful views of the surrounding undulating countryside. Don't miss the charming and historic town Meung-sur-Loire. Finally arrive at historic Beaugency where you can admire the beautiful old Loire bridge. In 1429 Jeanne d'Arc's army was crossing this bridge to liberate the small town. You will find her statue here on a prominent spot.

Challenge : 28.2 km, 39 m ascent, 51 m descent

Day 3 **Beaugency - Blois**

Today you will leave Beaugency along the river banks, passing the prestigious château of Chambord, the largest château in the Loire Valley and a Renaissance masterpiece. Continue cycling towards Blois, known for its light facades and blue roofs, its pedestrian streets gracefully preserving the flavour of lost centuries, and its serene atmosphere. The château in Blois offers an excellent illustration of the evolution of French architecture from the Middle Ages to the 17th century.

Challenge : 46.7 km, 105 m ascent, 124 m descent

Day 4 **Blois - Amboise**

From Blois you follow the southern bank of the Loire. Between rolling hills with vineyards, you cycle to Cande-sur-Beuvron. Continue cycling along the Beuvron river to the majestic Loire river. High on the bank is the elegant castle of Chaumont-sur-Loire surrounded by beautiful gardens. You are in the historic region Touraine. Visit a wine grower and taste a local 'sauvignon blanc'. Enjoy the grandeur of the Château Amboise and Clos-Lucé where Leonardo da Vinci once stayed. There are some short climbs on the way.

Challenge : 42.5 km, 203 m ascent, 209 m descent

Day 5 **Amboise - Tours**

Leave the medieval atmosphere of Amboise behind you and cycle into the region of the prestigious Montlouis' wines. The ideal microclimate, close to where the Loire and Cher unite, produces grapes of a unique quality. Discover this yourself during a visit to a wine cellar or a lunchbreak. A fine track leads to Tours, the friendly capital of what is called the garden of France'. Here great experiences are awaiting you like the magnificent cathedral and basilica, the Olivier Debré Art Centre, the Botanical Garden, the flavors of the markets...

Challenge : 55.4 km, 212 m ascent, 226 m descent

Day 6 **Tours - Azay-le-Rideau**

Touraine is known as "Le Jardin de la France" and Tours is a perfect central gateway for exploring it. This Loire à Vélo stage leads you along the south bank of the Cher River to the Château de Villandry, a major stop, with its world-famous gardens, before reaching Azay-le-Rideau and its castle. Many people believe this château to be the most beautiful in the whole Loire region, even though technically it sits by the Indre river, and not the Loire. Its elegant silhouette is reflected in the water of its huge moat, looming up like a huge stone ship. This stage proves extremely enjoyable.

Challenge : 41.1 km, 134 m ascent, 137 m descent

Day 7 **Azay-le-Rideau - Chinon**

This is a star-studded Loire à Vélo stage, taking you from the glorious Château d'Azay le Rideau, on via the confluence of Loire river to the Fortress of Chinon via the fairytale Château d'Ussé. On this stage, you cycle along a raised levée beside the Loire, allowing you wonderful views of the great river. Today is marked by atmospheric islands in the Loire colonized by birds. At the Indre River's confluence with the Loire, the setting is unspoilt. Today go and discover the charming medieval town of Chinon on the banks of the Vienne river. An impressive fortress, the historic quarters and small shops provide a really authentic feel.

Challenge : 32.2 km, 148 m ascent, 164 m descent

Day 8 **Chinon - Saumur**

Take some time in the morning to visit the world-famous abbey of Fontevraud. The vast Royal Abbey with its delightful architecture. Then you cycle to Montsoreau: its magnificent castle overlooking the Loire, enjoy a river boat ride in a traditional wooden boat or bargain at the monthly 'brocante' and 'puces' market. The delightful village of Candes St Martin is worth a detour too, walk up to the panorama to look out over the Loire and Vienne rivers. Your destination today is Saumur, with its famous castle and Cadre Noire horse riding school. In summer horse drawn carts and river boats provide alternative ways of transport too. Saumur boasts the biggest tank museum in the world. Don't forget the well-known sparkling wine either!

Challenge: 44.6km, 370m ascent, 337m descent

Day 9 **Saumur - Angers**

Go right along the southern bank of the river. Admire the monuments of local white tuff stone, such as the church in Cunault and St-Maur Abbey. Once in St-Mathurin-sur-Loire you follow the northern bank of the Loire through a former swamp that was drained in the Middle Ages. Some time later you see tracks of the old slate quarries of Trélazé. Then enjoy crossing the Authion River via a little chain ferry. Your destination Angers, situated on both sides of the river Maine, attracts your attention.

Challenge: 58.5km, 407m ascent, 392m descent

Day 10 **Angers - Ingrandes**

In the heart of Anjou, this Loire à Vélo stage goes from opposite Angers's central castle out via the green setting of the Lac de Maine.

This urban stage is startling, avoiding motorized traffic, taking you through parkland and alongside the Maine River. Bouchemaine is great for a stop, for its typical quayside restaurants or a picnic beside the Loire.

Continue to La Pointe, in a tremendous setting in the heart of Anjou, where the Maine River joins the Loire. A bit west, this magical Loire à Vélo stage allows you glimpses of the prestigious vine-covered slopes of Savennières. You follow the wild Loire closely here. Don't miss Béhuard Island before going on to cross Chalonnes's island, one of the largest on the Loire. Nearby, along the south bank, are the celebrated Coteaux du Layon vineyards, then the pretty perched villages of Montjean-sur-Loire and Ingrandes.

Challenge: 42km, 216m ascent, 228m descent

Day 11 **Ingrandes - Nantes**

From Ingrandes, you quickly reach the village of St-Florent-le-Vieil, with its great views of the Loire Valley, this Loire à Vélo stage goes on to Champtoceaux, a historic fortified site with further tremendous river views, standing on Anjou's frontier with the Pays d'Ancenis on the north bank. It's worth conquering the heights of St-Florent and Champtoceaux for the panoramas! The route is along quiet roads and greenways.
Designated European Green Capital in 2013, the city of Nantes comes into view, a shaded towpath offering a gentle way into town.
The new Tabarly Bridge leads over to L'île de Nantes, home to extraordinary outsized machines you can ride on, and to the Malakoff Quarter, being completely renovated. This island makes for a great introduction to the joyous tumult of the largest city along the Loire à Vélo cycle route.

Challenge: 64.4km, 126m ascent, 131m descent

Day 12 **Nantes - Saint-Brévin-les-Pins**

Surprising works of art at unusual places enliven the start of this trip along the mouth of the Loire. After Le Pellerin the Martinière canal acts as your guide. You cycle along small, quiet roads through landscapes belonging to the mouth of a big river: broad marshes and meadows. From Paimboeuf you follow a part of the coastal route 'Velodyssée'. You will notice the strong influence of tides and currents on the Loire. Your trip ends in Saint-Brevin-les-Pins, a lively seaside resort on the Atlantic coast.

Challenge: 58.3km, 91m ascent, 89m descent

Day 13 **Departure from Saint-Brévin-les-Pins**

Breakfast marks the end of the trip. You can travel back to Orléans by train. Some time left? We advise you to extend your stay in order to take the time to visit the beautiful Atlantic Coast.

Prices, Data, Booking

Practical Info

12 Nights included

2/3 Star Hotels or 3/4 Star Hotels (supplement applied)

Breakfast included, Halfboard optional on request

Maps and tourist information on all the places of interest

24/7 Bilingual Emergency hotline

Luggage transport to your next accommodations. Luggage accepted per person: 1 suitcase or travel bag (20 kg maximum)

For time tables and further information check the **website of SNCF** or **rome2rio** for all French National trains (SNCF).
We strongly advise you to **download the sncf mobile app** prior to departure.
If you want to travel on a train with your bike, you can find more information **via this link**.

Parking informations on request

GPS tracks are available on request