FRENCH BIKE TOURS

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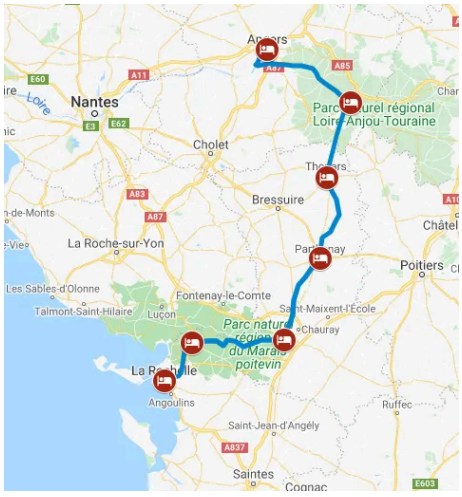
NATURE , CULTURE

type :	Linear cycle routes Classic Cycle Routes of France Electric bike option
hybrid :	●●◐○○
e-bike :	●◐○○○
duration :	8 days
comfort :	●●◐○○
period:	Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	FRSB910

From the Loire Valley to the Atlantic Coast

8 days, *€ 1000*

Introduction



More than 300 km/185 miles, mainly along rivers

The second stage of the 'Vélo Francette': a new, uninterrupted track in West France. The route is completely marked and to a large extent follows rivers and other waterways. Cycling through wonderful towns and picturesque villages in this unspoiled part of France is going to be lovely. You follow no less than 3 different routes. This is 'slow travel' in the literal sense of the word.

Route 1: The Loire valley from Angers to Saumur (58 km/39 miles)

A beautiful part of the Loire Valley is included in this route. Here you will enjoy the clear, natural light shining on the impressive heritage in this exceptionally beautiful region. From the village of Gennes you ride to lively Saumur. You can choose whether you take the north- or south bank of the Loire. Whichever you take, both routes offer lovely views and many cultural surprises on the way.

Route 2: The river Thouet from Saumur to Niort (166km /103 miles)

From Saumur you cycle south and follow the 'Thouet á Vélo' route. The Thouet river is your guide on this trip which passes through the beautiful town of Parthenay. Discover on the way through the valley the fortified towns and admire the rich heritage along the river: old castles, bridges, mills and also a subterranean well...moreover on your way south the climate becomes milder and the rhythm of life calmer and more relaxed.

Route 3: From Niort to La Rochelle – (90 km/56 miles)

On the way to the Atlantic Ocean you cycle through a magnificent maze of green- and blue coloured canals. You cycle along umbrageous waterways through breathtaking marshlands, called La Venise Verte"(Green Venice). After that 'La Belle d'Aunis takes you, via broader and more open canals, to La Rochelle situated on the coast; an appropriate and fantastic end of this new bike tour.

Day to Day

Day 1 **Arrival in Angers**

You independently travel to Angers. Check in at your hotel. Have you arrived early, take a stroll through the town centre of this historic Anjou town, situated on both sides of the river Maine.

Day 2 **Angers - Saumur**

You leave Angers through a park alongside the river Maine. Having arrived at Bouchemaine, with its pleasant restaurants, you follow the Loire eastward. After crossing the river a magnificent route close to the royal river lies ahead of you. After Gennes you stay on the south bank of the Loire. Near Saint-Hillaire-Saint-Florent there is a moderate climb across the system of abandoned tufa stone quarries where 'Champignons de Paris' are now cultivated. After this you enter Saumur, the pearl of Anjou.

Challenge : 67.1km, 313 m ascent, 305m descent

Day 3 **Saumur - Thouars**

From Saumur you follow a pleasant track along the river Thouet. Along quiet country roads you cycle among sloping vineyards to Montreuil-Bellay situated somewhat higher. This charming fortified little town rightly figures on the list of 'most beautiful villages of France'. In a very relaxed way you go via Taizon to Thouars, a 'Ville d'Art' where travellers once had to pay toll to cross the bridge. Nowadays nothing stands in your way to enter the town for free and to look for a good (outdoor) café.

Challenge : 46.4km, 164m ascent, 95m descent

Day 4 **Thouars - Parthenay**

You leave town along the river bank and enjoy the splashing rapids, the closely wooded slopes and the picturesque, monumental buildings. You arrive via quiet tracks at the village of Airvault with its monastery, covered market and subterranean well. Somewhat further on you are surprised by St-Loup-sur-Thouet with its moated castle. At the Lac du Cébron you can relax comfortably before going on along the river. After a railway viaduct you reach, higher up, the medieval fortified town of Parthenay.

Challenge : 66.8km, 588m ascent, 524m descent

Day 5 **Parthenay - Niort**

You travel south west through the somewhat hilly Pays Gatine, after many a bend you are rewarded by beautiful views of the original 'bocage' (hedgerowed countryside). Via quiet roads you go to the surprising Champdeniers-St-Denis with its beautiful heritage and excellent facilities. You then continue on your way and near Ternanteuil you reach again the banks of the Sèvre Niortaise. There is one big bend before Niort comes into sight dominating the horizon with its donjon and two enormous towers.

Challenge : 54.1km, 555m ascent, 704m descent

Day 6 **Niort - Marans**

You stay close to the side of the winding Sèvre Niortaise, following alternatively tracks and country roads. On the way Rousille and La Garette offer excellent possibilities to have a break. You could also take a somewhat

longer break in the Marais Poitevin in the beautiful riverside village Coulon, where you will find several restaurants. After crossing the vast, surrounding wetlands you rejoin, via Irleau, the canalized river near Damvix. It's your guide to the Atlantic Ocean.

Challenge : 63.6km, 424m ascent, 436m descent

Day 7 **Marans - La Rochelle**

Firstly, on the way to the ocean, you follow the canals of Marans and Rompsey. Your destination is La Rochelle, the capital of Charente-Maritime - energetic/vibrant and full of character, well known for its mild climate. This relaxed days ride deserves an appropriate grand finale: a dive into the Atlantic Ocean, and afterwards there is enough time left for a walk to the lively Vieux Port full of outdoor cafés, busy shopping streets and many town monuments.

Challenge : 26.6km, 38m ascent, 41m descent

Day 8 **Departure from La Rochelle**

After breakfast, end of your cycling trip. Some time left? We advise you to extend your stay in order to take the time to visit the beautiful Île de Ré.

Prices, Data, Booking

Practical Info

7 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 (15 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

We will supply the directions of this trip with a personalized code which gives you access to our travel App.