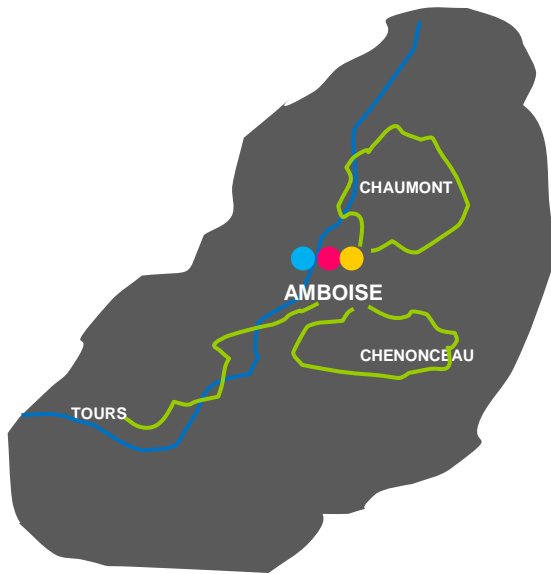




COLOURS OF FRANCE
LOIRE VALLEY BIKING

4 NIGHTS / 5 DAYS
AMBOISE STAR TRIP



EXPLORE

LOIRE VALLEY AT YOUR OWN PACE

Day 1 : Arrival in Amboise

We will transfer you to your hotel upon your arrival at Tours St. Pierre de Corps train station. There you will meet our Trip Manager to receive your trip package, maps and route notes, and have your bike adjusted, before leaving you to explore Amboise before your first dinner, included tonight at one of our favourite restaurants. Famous not only for its chateau, but for the "Clos de Lucé" which was Leonardo Da Vinci's residence whilst he was in the service of the French King... It is worth some wandering!

Day 2 : Chateau de Chenonceau Loop ride 46 km

Today's route takes you southward, away from the Loire River along quiet, un-trafficked roads through forests and fields, and eventually descending to another river, the Cher, and the Château de Chenonceau, a wall of elegance spanning it. Renaissance Chenonceau is one of the most popular chateaux in France. It was completed in the 16th century, when it was given as a gift by King Henry II to his beloved mistress, Diane de Poitiers. Diane has the stunning arched corridor across the river constructed and oversees the planting of extensive gardens. She was the unquestioned mistress of the castle, but after King Henry II died in 1559, his strong-willed widow and regent Catherine de' Medici forced Diane to exchange it for the Château Chaumont, and triumphantly makes Chenonceau her own residence. After visiting the tranquil scene of such feminine battling, and finding some lunch in the neighbouring village, your route takes you back through the pretty countryside along the Indre River and a great bike path to Amboise for your second evening.



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Day 3 : Amboise to Tours 30 km

Your ride today is not very long, allowing you some exploration time in Tours once you get there. The route partially follows tiny un-trafficked roads, and partly a dedicated bike path, above and parallel to the Loire River. You pass through small villages and pretty vineyards before spotting the steeple of Tours Cathedral in the distance. During the Middle Ages, Tours consisted of two juxtaposed and competing centres: The "City" in the east, built on the Roman 'castrum', was composed of religious powers (the cathedral and palace of the archbishops) and of the castle of Tours, seat of authority of the Counts and of the King of France. In the west, the "New City" structured around the Abbey of Saint Martin was freed from the control of the City during the 10th century. This became the economic centre of Tours. The two centres were linked during the 14th century, but you still sense the two halves today. We provide a self-guided walking tour to help your explorations of the Medieval centre (Vieux Tours), with the half-timbered houses, the many parks, and Place Plumereau, a lively square with many restaurants and pubs. After your explorations, hop on the local train with your bikes back to Amboise.

Day 4 : Loop to Chateau de Chaumont 45 km

Your ride takes you across to the northern banks of the Loire river, and once you have left Amboise, along easygoing, small roads through fields, vineyards and farm villages to Onzain. Once in Onzain, cross over the bridge spanning the Loire again, this time with great views of the town of Chaumont and its castle on the other side. Descend into Chaumont-sur-Loire on the banks of the river in time for lunch. After perhaps finding some lunch, visit the Chateau de Chaumont. This castle, acquired by the powerful Catherine de Medici in 1560 (remember, this is where she exiled Diane de Poitiers after her husband, the King died!), is today renowned for its English-style Garden Festival where contemporary garden designers display their work. Your route continues back towards Amboise, this time parallel to the river on its southern bank. You have a little bit of rolling terrain as you climb up into the vineyards above the river, with opportunities to do some tasting along the way. Once back in Amboise, take some time to finish your explorations there if you haven't already, or sit in a café and watch French life roll by, before enjoying your final dinner, included tonight.

Day 5 : Departure - Bon Voyage!

After a final breakfast, say goodbye to Loire Valley until next time! We transfer you to Tours or St Pierre de Corps train station in time for your further travels