



Decouvertes
Exclusive cultural tours
Luxury independent Travel



The dreams of the Loire Valley's Castles...

Full day in the Loire Valley including Amboise & Chenonceaux

After a two-hour drive, you will visit the most famous chateau of the Loire Valley: the chateau de Chambord and its famous spiralling staircases, the chateau d'Amboise, Leonard da Vinci's burial place and the Chateau de Chenonceau reflected by the water.

Make it by Balloon!

DECOUVERTES ADVICE for a special optional venue: you will fly over the Loire valley landscapes and chateaux aboard a hot air balloon

Please see the last page for more information

Make it by Foot!

DECOUVERTES ADVICE for an optional venue: Follow your guide on a walking tour of the Old Tours

Please see the last page for more information



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From Paris to the Loire Valley

7:00 am: Meet your driver-guide in the lobby of your hotel in Paris.

Drive towards the Loire Valley. Your day begins with a visit of the **Château de Chambord**, the largest and most dramatic châteaux of the Loire valley. Take the twin, **spiralling staircases**, which are intertwined, double-helix style, those people ascending do not encounter those descending.

It stands in a vast park enclosed by a 20-mile wall. **Leonardo de Vinci may have helped with the plans for this fabulous edifice of more than 400 rooms.** The archives gives us no information as to the name of the architect but an analysis of the structure reveals a profound influence of Leonardo's thought and an extremely close ties to some of the projects by Domenico da Cortona, and Italian architect.

During King François 1er's reign, the castle was rarely inhabited. In fact, the King spent barely 7 weeks there in total, comprised of short hunting visits. As the castle had been constructed for short visits, it was actually not practical to live there on a long term basis.

King Louis XIV added stables which could hold up to 300 horses, enabling him to use the castle as a hunting lodge and a place to entertain such notables as Molière for a few weeks each year. Nonetheless, Louis XIV abandoned the castle in 1685.

Continue with a **visit of Amboise** to visit the **castle where Leonardo Da Vinci is buried.** Amboise was the first royal castle built in the Loire Valley during the Renaissance. Built in the 15th and 16th centuries, it was located in a strategic position looking over one of the few bridges which allowed people to cross the Loire river.

Amboise first belonged to the Counts of Anjou and then to the famous house of Amboise. From 1431 onwards the castle belonged to the Crown. The Château d'Amboise was no longer a fortress but a royal residence and **Amboise became the residence of the queen and her children. Catherine de Medicis loved Amboise and lived there.**

Relive the warmth of the past in this historical place thanks to the presence of an **exceptional collection of Gothic and Renaissance period furniture.**





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Continue towards Chenonceaux. For lunch, we suggest a **local restaurant “Le Bon Laboureur”**. Since 1786, this restaurant has been a reputed, **not-to-be-missed table for visitors to the Chateau of Chenonceau.**

The restaurant favours genuine traditional French cuisine that has been updated. Top quality seasonal products and **produce from the Inn's vegetable garden** contribute to the authenticity of the preparations and aromas. Simple, tasty dishes are fundamental.

This afternoon, you may wish to visit the **Château de Chenonceau**: built on the banks of the Cher River, with the unique beauty of its renaissance architecture reflected by the water, **the Château de Chenonceau is the masterpiece of the Loire Valley.**

Known as **“The castle of six ladies”** because of the succession of powerful French noblewomen of Chenonceau: King Henri II offered the chateau as a gift to his mistress, **Diane de Poitiers** who became fervently attached to the château and the view over the river.

After King Henri died, his widow, the strong-willed **Catherine de Medici**, had **Diane de Poitiers sent to the Château Chaumont**. Queen Catherine made it her own favorite residence, adding a series of gardens as well. As Regent of France, **Catherine would spend a fortune on the château and on spectacular parties.**

In 1560, **the first ever fireworks display seen in France took place during the celebrations of Catherine's son, François II, ascension to the throne.**

When Catherine's died the château was left to her daughter-in-law, **Louise de Lorraine**, the wife of King Henri III. At Chenonceau Louise was told of her husband's assassination and she fell into a state of depression, spending the remainder of her days wandering aimlessly along the château's vast corridors dressed in mourning clothes amidst somber black tapestries stitched with skull and crossbones.

This enchanting castle may be smaller in comparison to others, but what it lacks in size it makes up in charm. **It is certainly one of the most romantic Châteaux in the Loire Valley.**

Come back to your hotel in Paris at the end of the afternoon.





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*NB: Please note that some sites mentioned in the itinerary might not be available every day or all year long.
We suggest you to check with our Production Managers*

This package includes

- Deluxe Sedan or Minivan which can carry up to 6 passengers
- Services of a professional English speaking licensed guide-driver who is licensed to guide and accompany you on walking tours, as well as into museums and monuments
- Découvertes fees
- Emergency 24 hour assistance available during your stay
- All taxes

This package does not include

- Entrance fees
- Tips
- Lunch or dinner

Découvertes can also suggest:

- Pre-payment of all entrance fees to museums and other sites.
- Lunch reservations



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Make it Optional

Make it by Balloon!

DECOUVERTES ADVICE for an exclusive optional venue

Can you imagine drifting slowly over these architectural masterpieces in a hot air balloon guided by the winds? The Loire Valley has become our most popular ballooning base, where we take off from the Chateaux of Chenonceaux, Blois or Chaumont to name but a few. You will have the unique opportunity to fly over the Loire Valley for one hour and weather permitting, see the most famous chateaux of the Loire Valley.

Please contact us for more information and price. Upon request and availability.



Make it by Foot!

DECOUVERTES ADVICE for an optional venue

Follow your guide in the "Old Tours" neighborhood (ancient village of Chateauneuf), which has one of the city's prime locations with its narrow, often pedestrian streets, numerous 15th and 16th c. timber framed façade houses. Stroll along the picturesque medieval streets, where you will find a wealth of arts and crafts. Admire the famous place Plumereau which displays a fine group of timber frame dwellings, the Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier garden (Gallo-Roman ruins), façade of the Pierre Dupuy Mansion (15thc.), stair towers in the rue de la Rôtisserie, Charlemagne Tower, and end your visit with the Saint-Martin Basilica, a beautiful 19th c. building which contains Saint Martin's tomb in its crypt

Please contact us for more information and price. Visit available everyday. Upon request and availability.

