

Great Explorations



Trip Dates

2012

May 28-June 3
June 16-22
June 24-30
August 20-26
September 3-9

2013

May 27-June 2
June 15-21
June 23-29
August 19-25
September 2-8

Self-guided and custom trips also available and can start any day. Call or email for details.

Trip Size

8-16 participants

Total Days:

7 days/ 6 nights

Arrive/Depart:

Tours / Chinon

Activity Level:

Moderate
30-55 km daily
(20-40 miles)
van supported

Terrain:

3 days are flat, 3 days are gently rolling

Loire Valley, Biking Chateaux of the Loire

Only 1 hour south of Paris lies a region that since the Renaissance has been a favorite of kings and the aristocracy; the Loire River valley is dotted with fine chateaux, vineyards, and some of the most beautiful (and gentle) cycling routes in France. Our tour visits the most magnificent chateaux, the extraordinary gardens of Villandry, but also leaves time to explore the subtler aspects of a region that has much to offer

Only Great Explorations:

- Small groups, extraordinary guides, and authentic experiences.
- A ride you will never forget: our bike path along the Loire River.
- A surprise picnic on the grounds of one of a grand chateau.
- Order off the menu at restaurants you won't find in guidebooks.
- Distinctive, charming hotels too small for larger groups.
- We design and operate our own trips so there are only good surprises.

Itinerary

Getting there :

Tours: Most participants will arrive from Paris by train the evening before our departure.

DAY 1:

Your hotel is included on arrival day on this tour; we have a walking tour of the historical district planned at 4:00 and then dinner at a favourite bistrot at 7:00.

DAYS 2+3:

Amboise - Starting from Tours, we'll ride east along a little-used road winding through vineyards to Amboise, with its impressive castle and charming village. Leonardo da Vinci lived here and we'll visit the museum in his former home. On our second day we'll cycle to Chenonceaux where we'll enjoy a guided visit of one of the most magnificent chateau in France.



DAY 4:

Montbazou - Riding west we'll stop for lunch at a curious castle whose owner has a passion for growing tomatoes (his garden has 500 varieties); we'll enjoy lunch here before continuing on through forests and sun-flower fields, making our way to Montbazou.

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Cost

Land Cost (current year):

US \$2250

Includes 6B/2L/5D

Single Supplement:

US \$400

Bike Rental:

US \$140



If you have extra energy, there is an additional optional loop to the gardens of Villandry. We'll stay at a former mill that has been turned into a charming hotel, with a restaurant that is outstanding.

DAYS 5+6:

Chinon - Following one of the tributaries of the Loire, we'll enjoy some of the best riding in the region, stopping to visit Chateau de Saxe, where the writer Blauzac resided. In Azay-le-Rideau we'll visit the impressive chateaux that is the 'jewel of the Loire Val-

ley'. On our last day of cycling we'll explore the Chinon region which boasts vineyards.

DAY 7: Depart at your leisure from Chinon train station.



What's Included in the Cost of Your Trip?

- services of one or more experienced Great Explorations guides and support vehicle
- 6 nights lodging
- all breakfasts, 2 lunches, and all dinners but 1
- entrance fees for selected historical sites and museums
- detailed map and route instructions
- all baggage transportation
- all transportation from initial meeting point to final drop-off (see arrive/depart cities)

Please note: Final itinerary is subject to revision; any changes made are done so in an attempt to provide the best possible trip given route conditions and available services. Due to the nature of our business and exchange rates, prices are subject to change. All prices quoted are U.S. dollars but we gladly accept payment in Canadian dollars also. Due to cancellations and waiting lists, trip availability fluctuates daily. If you have any questions or would like to confirm space on this trip before making your reservation, please contact us at info@great-explorations.com or by telephone at **604.730.1247**

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Accommodations



Le Clos d'Amboise, Amboise

This 16th century manor house is situated in a large French-style landscaped park with a pool and fountain, enclosed by ancient stone walls in the heart of the old town. The spacious rooms offer the highest standards in comfort and ambience with original wood flooring, fireplaces and ancient paneling. Enjoy breakfast in the Rabelais room boasting period woodwork and a unique 18th century Versailles wood floor.



Le Moulin Fleuri, Veigne

Stay in a sixteenth century mill, situated in the centre of a large park, on the Indre River. Each room has exposed beams, rustic furnishings and boasts river and garden views. The restaurant here is one of the best in the entire region, using fresh produce from the market in traditional ways..



Hotel Diderot, Chinon

This comfortable hotel is a property from the 15th century and is situated in the center of medieval Chinon. Each room is individually decorated and the welcome is friendly. Superb restaurants and cafes are all within walking distance of this hotel.