

Loire Gastronomic Cycling



This gentle gastronomic cycling holiday follows a triangular route through the heart of the Loire Valley. You'll pass majestic châteaux, vineyards and pretty, sleepy villages, before pedalling gently along shady riverbanks and out through open countryside. On each cycling day, you'll have the opportunity to taste dozens of different wines in a wine region more varied and diverse than any other in the world.

Why We Love It

Cycle at your leisure through one of the most diverse wine regions in the world - stopping at vineyards along the way! Visit France's finest châteaux including the majestic Amboise, Chambard and the Renaissance splendour of Chenonceau. Enjoy specially created gastronomic menus all washed down with a glass or two of the many fine local wines.

Day 1 Chissay

Make your own way from Blois station to Chissay where your fabulous château hotel awaits. Take some time to enjoy a swim before dinner.

Day 2 Chissay – St Ouen-les-Vignes

Gentle pedalling along the banks of the Cher will bring you first to the superb Château de Chenonceau with its famous arches majestically spanning the river. Described by Flaubert as floating “on air and water”, it's arguably the most beautiful of all the Loire landmarks. Lunch here perhaps on the terrace of the Orangerie restaurant before heading off through the shady Amboise forest and on to Amboise. Don't worry if you don't have time to explore properly today as you can easily come back tomorrow. Your final stretch leads to the elegant village of St Ouen-les-Vignes and Jacques and Odile Arrayet's bijou hotel beside the river. Odile is a professional sommelier, and Jacques artistic chef de cuisine, so you're in for some treats here!

Day 3 St Ouen-les-Vignes

It's just a 5km cycle south to the narrow bustling streets of Amboise. Visit the flamboyant Royal Palace and the elegant Clos Lucé, a 15th century manor house where Leonardo da Vinci lived and worked for the last few years of his life. His workshops house 40 giant models of some of his most spectacular creations, the first plane, helicopter and tank, and the beautifully landscaped gardens bring life to his botanical drawings and geographical designs. Alternatively it's an easy 15km return cycle along the river Cisse to wine capital, Vouvray. Here you'll find wine tasting possibilities and the option to visit Château de Valmer where King Charles VII once stayed.

Day 4 St Ouen-les-Vignes – Chitenay

Lovely peaceful cycling today with a choice of routes depending on how energetic you're feeling! The shorter option takes you via the sleepy village of Limeray (lovely white church with impressive collection of statues) or you can head

north through open countryside to Autreche – masses of wildlife so keep the binoculars handy! All cyclists then go on to Chaumont – the château here once belonged to Catherine de Medici and is quite spectacular. Between May and October, it hosts the International Garden Festival with a different theme each year. A final shady riverside stretch takes you via the pretty villages of Les Montils and Seur and on to Chitenay where you'll spend the next two nights.

Day 5 Chitenay

The 17th century château at nearby Cheverny, with its wonderful white stone facade, is a popular day trip. The richness of its furnishings and antiques is incredible, and the gardens are superb. This château was used as a model for Moulinsart by the author of Tintin and a permanent exhibition is open for viewing. Alternatively keen cyclists can head for the magnificent château de Chambord - it's a 50km round trip! Set in the heart of the huge Forêt de Boulogne, this 16th century masterpiece appears straight from a fairytale, and reflects the lavish tastes of its original owner, King François I. Today, the surrounding park has been declared a national nature reserve, protecting all sorts of wildlife including deer, boar and eagles.

Day 6 Chitenay – Chissay

Head south past well-tended vines and sleepy hamlets surrounded by fields of sunflowers. Lunch perhaps on the terrace beside the fortified château of Fougères-sur-Bièvre, before free-wheeling downhill to the River Cher where the charming old quarter of mediaeval Montrichard is huddled beneath the 11th century keep. Lots of open air cafés and splendid half-timbered houses. A final flat cycle follows the Cher back to Château de Chissay for a well earned dip in the pool!

Day 7 Chissay

Make your way to Chissay rail station.

Includes

six nights accommodation, continental breakfast and six evening meals, transportation by air-conditioned vehicle, services of local Headwater representative, high-quality bikes, route notes and maps and luggage transfers between hotels

Departs

Alternate Days

Experience

Cycling

Contact us for 2016 – 17 prices

Enquiries and bookings:

MonikaTravel

63B Broadway, Glenelg South SA 5045

Phone 08 8295 8884 or 0488 062 788

monika.allotey@monikatravel.com.au

Office hours: Tue – Fri 09am-4pm, Sat 09am-01pm or by appointment