

# LOIRE VALLEY VINEYARD TRAILS

FRANCE

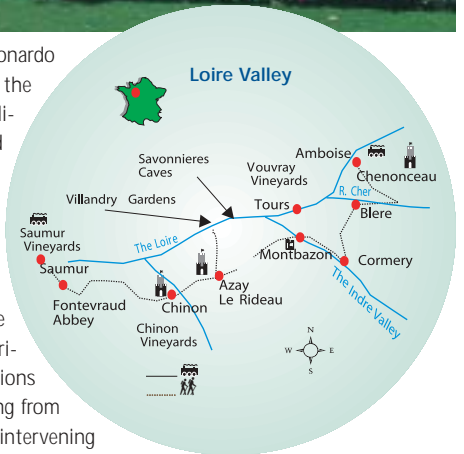
## Walk Through History and the French Valley of the Kings!

- *Rolling French Walking Through Famous Loire Wine Estates*
- *Contrasting Ambiance of the Loire, Vienne, Cher and Indre Rivers and their Chateaux*
- *Interesting Range of Accommodation*

The Loire, France's longest river, glides peacefully between the grand chateaux and vineyards that line its banks. This is the historic heart of France, its Valley of the Kings. There are so many chateaux and historic sites to visit, so many wines and fine meals to enjoy, that, of necessity, the pace of our walks is leisurely, like the gentle undulating terrain that is as easy on the legs as on the eyes. The novelist Balzac said he loved Touraine as an artist loves art, and we are sure that you'll adore it too.



Our route takes in the chateau at Amboise, where Leonardo da Vinci spent his twilight years, Chenonceau where the castle spans the River Cher, and Azay le Rideau, so delicate it was surely not built for war. At Fontevraud Abbey you can visit the tomb of Richard the Lionheart. On the way is the fortress of Chinon and the medieval town beneath it. As a break from visiting Chateaux you can pass troglodyte caves, explore the vineyards and taste the wines of Touraine, Chinon and Saumur or visit the Gardens of Love at Villandry. The walks in the valleys of the Indre, the Cher and the Vienne are as gloriously peaceful and rewarding as the man-made attractions of the Loire valley. The terrain is gentle, altitude ranging from 150 feet in the river valleys to 400 feet on the intervening plateaus. This is one of the more northerly wine producing areas in France so the best vineyards are on south facing slopes. Elsewhere the soft chalky rock has been excavated for wine caves or troglodyte dwellings. Along the river banks there are water meadows shaded with willows and poplars, while away from the rivers glorious old forests abound.



**Inn to Inn 8 days** TOUR CODE **JLV**

**Grade** Easy - Moderate. **Day Stages** Min 15km, max 27km.

**Waymarking** Several well-waymarked long distance trails (GR3, GR41, GR46) make route finding straight forward.

**Accommodation and Meals** Dinner, bed and breakfast 5 nights, bed and breakfast 2 nights in 2\* and 3\* hotels. 1 night is spent in the annexe of the Chateau d'Artigny.

**Start and End of Tour** The nearest airport is Paris, then RER/metro to Gare d'Austerlitz and train to Amboise. On return train from Saumur to Paris.

**Self-Guided Dates and Prices 2008**  
March - October

For prices please see insert.

► For more details request dossier JLV



### Accommodation

**7 nights/8 days** - A fine provincial 2\* Logis de France hotel in Amboise, just a short walk from Clos de Luce, Leonardo da Vinci's last residence. A comfortable 2\* Logis de France hotel in Chenonceaux with wonderful exposed beams and a magnificent fire place in the dining room. The cuisine here is famed for its quality. A well appointed riverside annexe of the Chateau d'Artigny in Montbazou, one of the famous 'Relais et Chateaux' group of hotels. You can even upgrade to a champagne breakfast! The meals are outstanding. A 2\* hotel set in a semi pedestrian street in the heart of the charming village of Azay le Rideau and just 50m from the elegant chateau. A 2\* hotel with the charm of a traditional house is where we stay just a few hundred

metres from the centre of Chinon. Whilst in Fontevraud we stay at a guesthouse built from the white limestone of the Loire Valley. The property has been owned by the same family since the beginning of the 18th century. We end at a small lively 2\* hotel on the banks of the Loire, close to the old town and the chateau in Saumur. An upgrade to a rather special 3\* hotel is possible in Chenonceaux at a supplement of \$70 per person/per night (half board in a double room). The hotel is 150m from the chateau and has been patronised by the rich and the great; Churchill, Rockefeller and Eleanor Roosevelt to name just a few. Facilities include a swimming pool, a peaceful garden and a superb restaurant.

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