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Essential things to do
*Castles of
the Loire
Valley*



The famous, fairy-tale Castles of the Loire Valley!

With so many castles to choose from, you may be wondering which ones are must-sees and which ones you can bypass in favor of wine tasting for the afternoon at one of the many vineyards in the Loire Valley or picnicking along the banks of the river. Here's some information on the best castles to visit in the Loire Valley.

Chambord

Chambord is one of France's most recognizable castles known for its distinct French Renaissance architecture, which blends late French Gothic and newer Italian Renaissance motifs. Chambord is also the largest castle in the Loire Valley, putting it at the top of any list.

Chenonceau

Often thought of as one of the most beautiful castles in the Loire, Chenonceau has always been a favorite castle. It is renowned for its recognizable arched bridge spanning the river, as well as the extensive flower and vegetable gardens set in buttressed stone terraces on the grounds.

Amboise

Perched up on a strategic point along the Loire River, Amboise started as a fort. What is most notable about Amboise, however, is its unique blend of Gothic and Renaissance architecture and large formal garden.

Cheverny

This castle is renowned for its beautiful interiors and collection of furniture, tapestries and rare art. There is also a pack of about 70 dogs that are kept on the grounds and taken out for hunts twice weekly.

Blois

Blois was always a favorite getaway town for French kings and its castle is best known as the birthplace of King Louis XII. In fact, the castle was the main resort for the French court during the 16th century.

Azay-Le-Rideau

The Château d'Azay-le-Rideau was built on an island in the Indre River under the patronage of King Francis the First. A subtle blend of French tradition and innovative Italian decor, it is an icon of the new art of building in the Loire Valley in the 16th century.

Chinon

The Château de Chinon lies near the Vienne River and was founded by Theobald I. The medieval fortress was also visited by Joan of Arc. This UNESCO castle is filled with a plethora of medieval-era artifacts, including knights' armor and shields.

Saumur

This 10th-century castle is located in the small town of Saumur and was built by Theobald I to help protect against possible Norman invasions. This structure is packed with collections of various decorative arts, tapestries, and furniture.



CHAMBORD



AMBOISE



CHENONCEAU



CHEVERNY



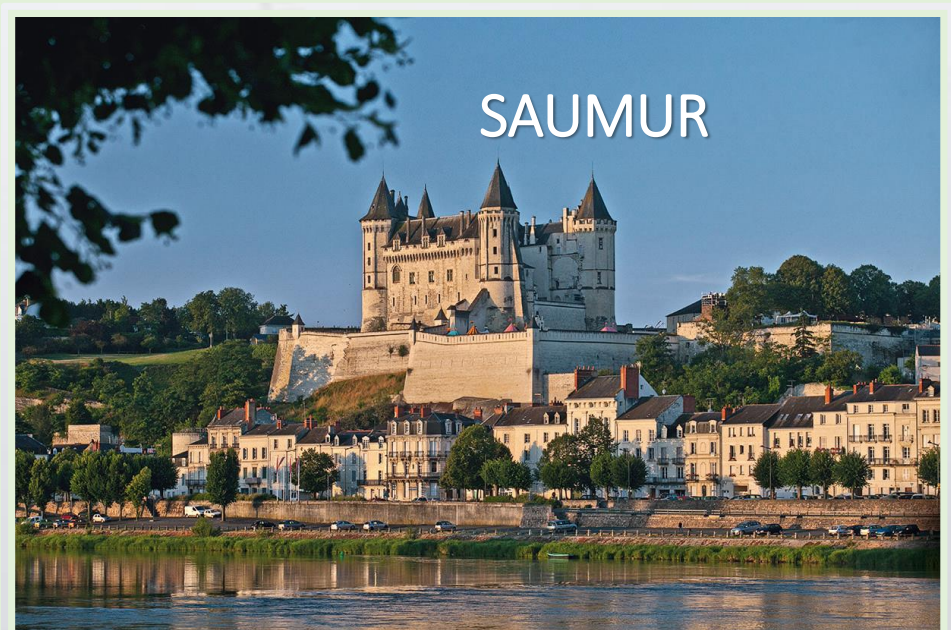
BLOIS



AZAY-LE-RIDEAU



CHINON



SAUMUR



IDEA !

Bike Tour

Loire à Vélo is a unique, 850km bicycle route that is ideal for bike lovers to enjoy while exploring the scenic Loire Valley.

IDEA !

Hot Air Balloon

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 balloon ride base, where we take off near the Chateau de Chenonceau and the Château d'Amboise.



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