



Down - To - Earth - Wine - Vacations

# Loire Valley Wine Tours

## *Sample Daily Itinerary*

Immerse yourselves in rich history and fabulous cuisine on this captivating **Loire Valley Wine Tour**. In a weeklong adventure, you will enjoy a perfect balance of cultural and culinary visits in France's Valley of the Kings.

Start at Paris' exquisite Hotel Regina, which you may know from a number of movies that were filmed there. You will then enjoy three luxurious nights in Amboise, resting place of Leonardo de Vinci and surrounded by **fantastic wines and fairytale castles**. Explore the red wines of **Joan of Arc's Chinon**, and the exceptional Fontevraud Abbey.

This tour is a particularly good fit for couples or friends where one person is more interested in wine, and the other more intrigued by the beautiful castles and exciting history. The Loire Valley offers great variety in its wines and **you will love every minute of your vacation** there.

### Day 1 - Champagne Dinner in Paris

#### Highlights:

- **Elegant 4-star Hotel in the Heart of Paris**
- **Exceptional Champagne Dinner**



Paris is beautiful in June. The weather is delightful for strolling through the streets, people watching from a sidewalk café, window shopping, and exploring museums. The smell of warm baguettes and fresh pastries coming from the bakeries gets you in the mood for another culinary treat. **You are staying in the heart of Paris**, a short walk to the city's rich culinary and historical monuments. We will gather this evening for a superb multiple-course dinner with a festive array of Champagnes, all selected by Alfio Moriconi.

## Day 2 – Chambord Castle and the Spectrum of Loire Wines

### Highlights:

- **Chambord Castle:** Guided Tour
- **Lunch & Wine Tasting at:** *Domaine de Lusqueneau*
- **Elegant Lodging** in the center of Amboise
- **Spectrum of Loire Wines Private Tasting**
- **Dinner:** at a critically acclaimed restaurant



Built as an extravagant hunting lodge by François I, Chambord is the Loire's largest castle. Its gingerbread cake roof reminds you of the skyline of a great city. Inside, the famous double-helix staircase was perhaps designed by **Leonardo de Vinci**; it is incredible how people going up never cross those coming down. A guided tour this morning will work up your appetite for our first wine tasting tour of your vacation, and a hearty lunch at Domaine de Lusqueneau. Your luxurious hotel in Amboise is a short stroll to the castle,

shopping, cafés... You will get a lot out of a special wine tasting of fantastic Loire wines at dinner together tonight. Our guest of honor is Wine Maker, Vineyard Owner, and Wine Broker, Noël Bougrier.

## Day 3 – Chenonceau Castle and Vouvray

### Highlights:

- **Loire Wine Tasting Tour:** *Domaine Toussaint*
- **Lunch & Wine Tasting Tour:** *Domaine Gaudron*
- **Chenonceau Castle:** Guided Tour



The elegant Chenonceau castle straddles the Cher River, and is a short jaunt from Amboise. Built in the early 1500s, it is graced with **beautiful gardens and a rich history**. We will discover it together this afternoon. This morning, your first stop is **leading Vouvray producer** Domaine Toussaint in Chançay. Lunch is with another great master of the Chenin Blanc grape at Domaine Gaudron. Back in Amboise, kick back and relax, or hit a great wine bar before dinner on your own.

## Day 4 – Leonardo da Vinci's Amboise

### Highlights:

- *Bigot Chocolaterie*
- **Leonardo da Vinci's Clos Lucé**
- **Free time to relax, shop, and explore historic Amboise**



Discover the mysteries of Amboise today. Dark chocolate truffles and a myriad of local pastries and candies are waiting for you at **Bigot, a 95-year-old establishment dedicated to your sweet tooth**. You will enjoy seeing how the chocolates are made, and taste the results. It is a short walk to the fascinating Clos Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci spent the final years of his life. You will marvel at his genius as you visit his home and explore the estate, filled with his inventions. This afternoon you are free for more wine tasting, simple relaxing, or shopping in town. We will be back together for dinner this evening.

## Day 5 – Villandry Castle & Joan of Arc's Chinon

### Highlights:

- **Lunch & Wine Tasting Tour:** *Domaine de la Semellerie*
- **Castle and gardens of Villandry**
- **Joan of Arc's Chinon**



Many people consider the **gardens of Villandry** to be the most beautiful anywhere. The castle dates from the 16th century and has been lovingly restored over the past 100 years. Next stop on your wine tour of the Loire Valley is Fabrice Delalande's *Domaine de la Semellerie*. **You will see some of the oldest vines in the Loire Valley**. The high quality shines through in these sumptuous Cabernet Franc-based wines. We will have a spectacular lunch with Fabrice at his estate in the hills near the Vienne River. Back in town, there is plenty more wine tasting, or head to the historic castle overlooking the river. This is where Joan of Arc convinced the King of France to give her an army to defeat the English in the Hundred Years War.

## Day 6 – Fontevraud Abbey & Saumur

### Highlights:

- **Fontevraud Abbey:** Guided Tour
- **Lunch:** Near the Abbey
- **Loire Wine Tasting Tours:** *Domaine des Clos Maurice; Bouvet Ladubay*
- **Dinner:** Special celebration of our week together



This morning we will head west for a guided tour of the captivating **Fontevraud Abbey**, resting place of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Richard the Lionheart. Your afternoon is devoted to the intriguing wines of Saumur-Champigny and Chinon. After lunch together, you are with Maurice Hardouin's *Domaine du Clos Maurice*. Top things off with the **spectacular sparkling wines** at Bouvet Ladubay in Saumur. You are celebrating your fabulous Loire Wine Tour this evening at a superb restaurant – a local favorite.

## Day 7 – Shuttle to Paris



Return to Paris today. Take advantage of our shuttle to the Charles de Gaulle airport for your flight home, or head back into town to make some more delicious memories.

Note: On this **Loire Wine Tour**, you will taste a great variety of wines. You will visit many of the vineyards yourself, and the more distant regions such as Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé, Savennières, Quarts de Chaume, Bonnezeaux, Coteaux du Layon, Muscadet, and all the rest will come to you. You will enjoy Alfio Moriconi's selection of these sumptuous wines throughout the tour.

## Includes:

- Round trip transportation from Paris
- 6 nights hotel (1 in Paris, 3 in Amboise, 2 in Chinon)
- 6 continental breakfasts
- 4 lunches with wine
- 4 dinners with wine
- Overview wine tasting of Loire wines
- All wine tasting visits
- 4 guided visits (Chambord, Chenonceau, Villandry, Fontevraud Abbey)
- Leonardo da Vinci's Clos Lucé
- Daily wine tastings, led by local experts
- Daily educational components (wine tasting, vineyard decisions, the harvest, wine making, distribution, vineyard tours)

## Price:

\$3995 based on double occupancy. Single supplements \$495

## Dates:

August 7<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Reserve Your Spot:

For more information, please give us a call at 1-800-449-7147 or send us an email at [Info@InsiderWineTours.com](mailto:Info@InsiderWineTours.com)