



## *The Best of France's Loire Valley and Normandy*

Here's a look at what we have planned, day-by-day, for our tour adventures:



***“With crenellated towers, soaring cupolas and glittering banquet halls, the châteaux, and the villages and vineyards that surround them, attest to a thousand years of rich architectural, artistic and agrarian creativity. The Loire Valley – an enormous Unesco World Heritage Site – is also known for its outstanding wines and lively, sophisticated cities, including...Saumur.”*** - Lonely Planet Guide Book to the Loire Valley



*"From the Norman invasion of England in 1066 to the D-Day landings of 1944, Normandy has long played an outsized role in European history. This rich and often brutal past is brought vividly to life by the spectacular ...Bayeux Tapestry, world-famous for its cartoon scenes of 11th-century life; and the cemeteries and memorials along the D-Day beaches, places of solemn pilgrimage. Lower-profile charms include a variety of dramatic coastal landscapes, ...quiet pastoral villages and architectural gems including the maritime charms of Honfleur ... apples, cider, cream-rich cuisine and the very freshest fish and seafood provide further reasons to visit this beautiful region of France."*

- Lonely Planet Guide Book to Normandy



## DAY ONE

Meet Pam Mercer of Tuscany Tours and your France guide, Cid Quadros, in central Paris to depart for the Loire Valley! We'll arrive in the historic city of **Saumur**. Perched on the banks of the Loire river, the Chateau de Saumur was built in the 10th century to protect the Loire river crossing from Norman attacks. It's surrounded by vineyards and home to a famous national school of horsemanship.

After checking into our charming hotel, we'll head over to the one star Michelin restaurant, La Gambetta to enjoy the first of many fabulous gastronomic meals.



## DAY TWO

The ancient, limestone quarries surrounding Saumur turned out to be a perfect environment for making and storing sparkling wine made in the "méthode traditionnelle" (think 'Champagne' but by another name). We begin our day with a visit to an underground cellar full of sparkling wine and an eccentric collection of art!



We'll travel to the small village of Bourgueil for lunch in a small bistro owned and run by a local family and with a wine cellar under the bistro!



After lunch we'll visit the **Castel of Villandry**, famous for its exquisite gardens. After touring the gardens and the castle, we'll return to Saumur for an evening on your own.



## DAY THREE

Today we'll pack our bags and head to the village of **Chenonceaux**. On our way we'll stop in the town of Chinon. The castle in Chinon is famous for being the place that Joan of Arc met with the future Charles VII of France. Chinon is also home to the appellation wine called Chinon made with tannic, leafy, berry-scented Cabernet Franc. We'll have lunch in Chinon and then head to a small, organic winery producing some of the best Chinon in the region. We'll end the day in our lodge in Chenonceaux.



## DAY FOUR

Today, we'll visit the fairytale castle of **Chambord**, taking in its parks and small village before we board a boat and go sailing out on the Loire river. We'll finish the day with a visit to the **Chateau de Chenonceau** and then have a gourmet farewell-to-the-Loire-Valley dinner.

## DAY FIVE

Today we begin our travels north and on our way, we'll stop in **Chartres** to tour the soaring Gothic cathedral there. Constructed between 1194 and 1220, it has been named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. After our tour and some free time, we'll travel on to the charming port village of Honfleur. We'll check into our cozy, boutique hotel and then we'll be off to our first dinner in Normandy.



## DAY SIX

Honfleur is a charming seaside town full of quaint streets and shops. This morning, sleep in and then spend time poking about the town. Lunch on your own and then we'll go to the village of **Bayeux** to tour the town and to see the Bayeux tapestry.

*"The Bayeux tapestry is one of the supreme achievements of the Norman Romanesque.... Its survival almost intact over nine centuries is little short of miraculous ... Its exceptional length, the harmony and freshness of its colors, its exquisite workmanship, and the genius of its guiding spirit combine to make it endlessly fascinating."*

-Sylvette Lemagnen, conservator

We'll finish our day with fine dining in Bayeux before heading back to Honfleur.



## DAY SEVEN

This morning we will be visiting the famous village of **Étretat** on Normandy's north coast, one of the favorite haunts of the Impressionists. The rest of the day is devoted to Calvados and cheese, two of Normandy's greatest artisanal food products. We'll have lunch in **Pont-l'Évêque** and cheese and calvados tastings at the site of the local producers.





## DAY EIGHT

This day will be dedicated to honoring the memory of those who fought and those who died in the D-Day landing on the Normandy shores on June 6, 1944. Our guide will share the full details of the landing plans, and of all the events that failed to go according to plan. When one understands the layout of the beaches, and the German fortifications that were in place to defend them, the courage and achievements of the Allied soldiers are almost beyond belief. After touring the beaches we will conclude with a visit the American military cemetery where the dead have been laid to rest. It's a remarkable monument and an eloquent tribute to the supreme sacrifice of those who are buried here.

Tonight for dinner we'll have some hearty Norman fare to restore body and soul after a long day. And we'll drink some Calvados, Normandy's famous apple brandy, to chase away the shadows of the afternoon.



## DAY NINE

After breakfast, a group shuttle will be provided to transfer the group to the center of Paris or to an airport hotel. Until we meet again:

***Au Revoir!***



## Tour Specifics:

- **Cost:** The land cost of the tour is **\$4,690.** per person, based on double occupancy. Cash discount cost is **\$4,600.** per person for payment by check or wire transfer. You may make your registration deposit using PayPal and/or your credit card and still be eligible for the cash discount cost if your final balance is paid by check or wire transfer. Single rooms are available for a supplementary charge of **\$875.** Airfare is not included.
- **Accommodations:** 8 nights lodging in elegant, historic hotels (2 nights Saumur, 2 nights Chenonceaux, and 4 nights Honfleur).  
*Historic properties often do not have the same room size as they are former residences made into guest lodging. The hotel in Honfleur does not have air-conditioning but every time we have stayed there, we've needed an extra blanket just the same. The average lows are in the 50s.*
- **Meals:** All breakfasts, one full-course meal daily (either lunch or dinner), additional meals as scheduled. All meals -after breakfast! - include regional wines. We carefully choose the restaurants based on ambiance and quality of cuisine.
- **Wine Tastings:** of various French varieties (including small local producers and larger well-known wineries).
- **Transfers:** All ground transportation during the tour subsequent to your arrival at the designated meeting point in Central Paris on June 14. For the departure day, there will be a group shuttle departing Honfleur at 10:30 AM going first to Central Paris and then to Paris-Charles deGaulle Airport.
- **Admissions:** Entrance fees for all planned visits to monuments, galleries and museums are included.
- **Guided Tours with local authorized expert guides:** Saumur, Villandry, Chinon, Chambord, Chenonceaux, Chartres, Honfleur, Bayeaux, Calvados and cheese tastings, D-Day sites.
- **Small, Intimate Group:** We limit the number of participants to a maximum of 16 guests.
- **Arrival and Departure:** The tour begins at 8:00 AM on June 14. The group will meet at a designated meeting point in Central Paris to take a bus to Saumur (about 4 hours). On the final morning of the tour, there will be a group shuttle departing Honfleur at 10:30 AM going first to Central Paris and then to Paris-Charles deGaulle Airport. If flying out on June 22, we recommend departing flights be no earlier than 5:00 PM.

## Tour Specifics:

- **Early Arrival/ Late Stay Options:** For those interested in extending their stay, we are offering a **4-night post-trip to Paris from June 22-26**. Let us know if you'd like to know more!

If you wish to make other add-on arrangements, we'd be happy to help you! For trip extensions of 2 nights or less, we provide planning assistance on a **complimentary** basis. For extensions of 3-5 nights, there is a nominal fee of \$150 to assist with trip planning including booking hotels, guides, drivers, etc.

- **Luggage:** Please be sure to have a luggage tag attached to the top handle of your luggage with your name printed clearly on each piece of luggage. This helps the porters deliver your luggage directly to your room.
- **Tour Exclusions:** Airfare; arrival airport transfer; hotel city taxes.
- **Experienced Tour Leaders:** Tuscany Tours has been leading small-group tours in Europe since 1997. Your Tour Leaders for this tour will be Pam Mercer and Cid Quadros. Pam has been leading small group tours in Italy and France since 1997. Cid Quadros is a licensed France guide who brings a sense of humor and a depth of history to all his travelers.



## Registration:

To reserve your place and register for this tour, please click the button to jump to the Registration Page.



There is a non-refundable deposit due of \$350 per person at time of registration to secure your spot on the tour.

Please feel free to contact us via email or call us at (800) 634-3460 with any questions you may have about the tour or about traveling to Italy.

Note: Tuscany Tours reserves the right to make changes to tour venues and guides as circumstances may require.