

Season

From beginning of April to end of October.

We recommend you to book this tour 3 or 4 months before the departure date if you plan to walk it in summer time. Great demand and few rooms!

Difficulty: grade 2

this tour presents no major difficulty. You walk in an undulating terrain and there are no prolonged ascents or descents and no steep gradients. One stage is 25 km long but is flat. It's easy to follow the path marked with yellow or red and white signs



Itinerary

8-day and 7-night self-guided circular walking holidays

Day 1 : Arrival in CHINON. Visit of the old city dominated by the medieval castle whose some parts dated back to the 17th C. The future king Charles VII has sought refuge in this town in 1418 during the Hundred Years and Joan of Arc came here to acknowledge him as leader. Take time to discover these narrow and twisty lanes, these old houses and the churches - Night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel

Day 2 : L'ILE BOUCHARD - CHINON (21 km). Transfer by taxi from Chinon to l'Ile Bouchard located on the banks of the Vienne river. This ancient harbour held a priory of which only a few remains are still standing on the first hillsides. Don't leave the city without visiting the St Maurice and St Gilles churches. You'll walk along the Vienne River before walking through the vineyards up to the first slopes. Then you'll disappear into the forest before reaching the old little village of Cravant and its old church of which nave was built during the 12th century. You'll continue your journey and will walk through the Chinon forest until you reach Malvaut and then, Chinon, seeing Ste Radegonde chapel on the way. Hollowed in the rock, it holds a Romanesque frontage. This path, fringed with troglodytic houses offers very nice views of the Vienne valley and Chinon. You'll get into the city by Ste Maxime church and its imposing towers – Night and breakfast in the same 2-star hotel



Day 3 : L'ILE BOUCHARD – CHINON (25 km) Transfer by taxi from Chinon to l'Ile Bouchard. Walking along the left bank of the Vienne river you will reach Tavant and the St Nicolas church . You will continue to the vilage of Sazilly before leaving the river to go to Le Rivau that boasts a feudal chateau that you will visit. After the tour, you will walk to the banks of the Vienne River and to Chinon. Strolling through the city, you will discover in turn the chateau, Old Chinon, Le Grand Carroi and the many old homes and churches - Night and breakfast in in the same 2-star hotel

Day 4 : CHINON – LA ROCHE CLERMAULT (14 km) In the morning, you will tour the old city of chinon dominated by the medieval castle whose some parts dated back to the 17th C. The future king Charles VII has sought refuge in this town in 1418 during the Hundred Years and Joan of Arc came here to acknowledge him as leader. Take time to discover these narrow and twisty lanes, these old houses and the churches. Then you will walk to La Roche Clermault through fields and vineyards - Half –board accommodation in a two-star hotel

Day 5 : LA ROCHE CLERMAULT – FONTEVRAUD (16 km) from the hotel you will walk to the Deviniere (house where Rabelais was born. He spent its childhood in Chinon). After the visit of this small farm and the adjacent museum, you'll follow in Gargantua's footsteps. Along the way, you'll admire Le Coudray-Montpensier castle before joining Seully where was located the abbey in which Rabelais grew up and where one of his heros, Frère Jean des Entonneurs, lived. You'll cross the village of which main street is fringed of many troglodytic habitations before joining Lerné, a pleasant village with blond tufa houses. Sordid quarrels between the inhabitants of Seully and Lerné started these burlesque "pichropolines" wars. You'll walk up to the Chavigny castle and will cross Fontevraud forest by the small village of Crouziers until you reach the famous Fontevraud abbey, that you'll visit at the end of the afternoon. It was founded at the very beginning of the 12th century and held different masculine and feminine religious communities which lead self-governing lives under an abbess leadership.

Half –board accommodation in a two-star hotel

Day 6 : FONTEVRAUD – MONTSOREAU (14 km) You will spend the morning visiting the Fontevraud Abbey, one of the largest abbeys in France. Built at the beginning of the 12th century, the abbey has housed a number of religious communities, both masculine and feminine, who led autonomous lives under the direction of an abbess. The religious life of the abbey came to an end during the Revolution with the sacking of many of the buildings by Napoleon I, who then transformed them into prisons in 1804. The abbey was deconsecrated in 1963. You will leave the village and head through the vineyards for the banks of the Loire. The path crosses in front of the old windmill of La Herpinere and descends towards the troglodytic village of Turquant. You will move on to Montsoreau and the chateau which now houses a museum dedicated to the colonial history of France - Night and breakfast in a 2-star-hotel



Day 7 : MONTSOREAU – CHINON (19 km) You will walk along the river to reach Candes-St-Martin, a charming village located at the confluence of the Loire and Vienne rivers. The 12th century church was built on the very spot where Saint Martin died . You'll walk up to the top of the hillside to discover a gorgeous beauty spot and a nice view of the junction of the Loire and the Vienne. You'll then move down and walk through fields and across small hamlets to reach the banks of the Vienne river that you will follow to Chinon - Night and breakfast in a 2-star-hotel.

Day 8 : CHINON - End of the tour after breakfast

Access to and from

Outward journey to Souillac

By train : several trains a day from Paris-Montparnasse rail station to St Pierre des Corps or Tours rail station. Then connection to Chinon by train or bus.

By car: A10 motorway from Paris - Exit Tours Sud and D751 road to chinon

Where to park: unsupervised free car park at Chinon

Accommodation

2 nights with accommodation in 2-star hotels on half-board basis

5 nights with accommodation in 2-star hotel on night and breakfast basis

Accommodation is normally in large bed or twin-bedded rooms, with en-suite facilities (at least shower, washbasin and toilet) when available, which is 95% of the time. However, you can stay in remote spots or small villages where there is little or no choice of accommodations and where facilities may be limited. In this case, you will share a bathroom or shower room and toilets with some other people on the same storey.

Picnic lunches are not included in the tour but are available from the hotel on request the previous evening, alternatively picnic materials can be bought at the stop village or at each of the towns and villages along the route. We indicate in the route notes where there are suitable restaurants or cafés for lunch stops. We recommend you to carry food and drinks if there are none convenient to the trail.

Included

- o Twin share accommodation with private facilities
- o Baggage transfer between hotels (except for STD option)
- o Route notes and maps
- o 2 dinners
- o Emergency phone number (8:00am to 7:00pm every day)

Not included

- o Visa fees, transportation fees to and from the walk area
- o Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips)
- o Transfers except those mentioned above
- o Drinks
- o Additional meals
- o Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls...

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59 bis rue du Mûrier – BP 40226 – 37542 Saint Cyr sur Loire cedex – France
Tel : 00 33 (0)970 445 924 Fax : 00 33 (0)134 292 260 E-mail : contact@randolacaminade.com
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