

# Loire Valley

12 – 16 May



*Based in the lovely little riverside town of Chinon, in a timeless tranquil setting overlooked by impressive castle ruins, our tour gives a chance to explore the gently winding Loire Valley, where the mild climate brings beautiful flowers and an abundant harvest of fine fruit and superb wines. World renowned for its fine wines, the region was a popular choice for many of France's aristocratic families who chose to live along its river valley. This resulted in fabulous châteaux being built. Picturesque scenery is in abundance, cameras at the ready!*

**SATURDAY 12 MAY** Departing Oxted early morning we journey to Dover for the ferry to Calais and thereafter make our way to the Loire Valley.

**SUNDAY 13 MAY** Today we visit the châteaux of Chenonceau and Villandry. Property of the Crown, then a royal residence, Château de Chenonceau is an exceptional site not only because of its original design, the richness of its collections, its furniture and its decorations, but also because of its destiny, since it was loved, administrated and protected by women, who were all extraordinary and who, for the most

part have marked history. The "Château des Dames" was built in 1513 by Katherine Briçonnet, and successively embellished by Diane de Poitiers then Catherine de Medici. Chenonceau was protected from the hardship of the revolution by Madame Dupin. The château's most characteristic feature is the set of arches spanning the River Cher. The two renowned and magnificent gardens of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici have a myriad of shrubs, hundreds of climbing and stemmed roses. The Château de Villandry was completed around 1536

and was the last of the large châteaux built on the banks of the Loire during the Renaissance. The French-style gardens at Villandry have been recreated as they were in the 16th century, and consist of three terraces on different levels: a water garden, an ornamental garden and, some say, the world's most elegant vegetable garden.

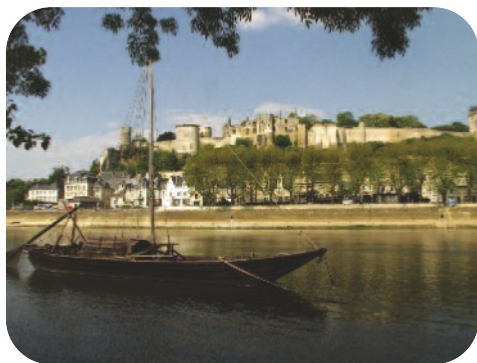
**MONDAY 14 MAY** After breakfast we make our way to Tours, a city of captivating charm, rich with history and well preserved heritage. The old town has many interesting buildings including the Hotel Gouin, an Italian style mansion built around 1510. The cathedral, completed in the 16th century, has beautiful stained glass windows. Here we shall be at leisure to explore and find lunch before continuing on



to Rochecorbon for a leisurely cruise on the best naturally preserved section of the river Loire, uncovering its limestone banks dotted with caves and the local wildlife. Following our cruise we return to Chinon for a wine tasting at Château de la Grille Chinon.

**TUESDAY 15 MAY** This morning we journey to Amboise, considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in the Loire Valley. Here we shall be at leisure to explore. Maybe visit the Château d'Amboise, which dominates the town from its lofty setting and provides spectacular views over the town and surrounding countryside; Clos Lucé, once the house of the great artist, scientist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci, now housing a museum dedicated to his ahead of time inventions; or simply stroll through the picturesque streets and soak up the atmosphere of a French provincial market town.

**WEDNESDAY 16 MAY** This morning we take our leave of the beautiful Loire Valley and make our way back to Calais. Arriving in Oxted mid evening.



## What's included

### ALL SEASONS HOTEL

#### Chinon

All bedrooms are en suite with TV & telephone.

The hotel has a swimming pool

4 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast.

Entry to Château de Chenonceau & Gardens

Entry to Château de Villandry & Gardens

Time to explore Tours and Amboise

Boat trip on the River Loire

Wine tasting

**£585.00 PER PERSON**

*Single Room Supp: £120.00*