

6. Saumur to Villandry (6 nights), France

This is the detailed itinerary for the ride from Saumur to Villandry. For general information on our Cheval & Châteaux rides please see the main information sheet.

Itinerary

Set off from Saumur and journey through a landscape of vineyards, troglodyte caves and castles. Meet charismatic French aristocrats along the way and wind your way through forests, orchards and alongside rivers. The six night ride finishes at Château de Villandry, with the chance to visit its famous gardens.

Day 1

Arrive at Saumur station in the afternoon and be transferred to Hotel Saint Pierre.

The norm is for guests to make their own way to Saumur station and from Tours Saint Pierre des Corps station. A pre-booked taxi is arranged to transfer you to and from your accommodation (payable locally). Alternatively, you could make your own way by car. Check-in at Hôtel Saint Pierre is from 17:30 and the ride briefing usually takes place at 19:00.

On arrival you will be shown to your room and have the chance to relax before dinner.

This evening there will be a ride briefing. Learn more about the week ahead and the area you will be riding through.

Dinner and overnight at Hôtel Saint Pierre.



Hôtel Saint Pierre

The following is the planned itinerary. Please note that changes to the accommodation or route may be made due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

Any changes are made with your best interests in mind.

Day 2

Today, you ride for approximately two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

The route takes you along rural paths and past vineyards. Along the way you will see a magnificent view of Château de Saumur.



Château de Saumur

Arrive on horseback at the Champigny troglodyte cellar. There may be the chance of some wine tasting, before a gourmet lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon's ride takes you past the Champigny vineyards and along the Loire River to Château de Montsoreau.

Montsoreau gave inspiration to French writer Alexandre Dumas for his book "La Dame de Montsoreau". www.chateau-montsoreau.com



Château de Montsoreau

Dinner and overnight at Hotel Saint Pierre for a second night.

Day 3

This morning ride through beautiful countryside in the direction of Château de Brézé, (c. 2 hours in the saddle). www.chateaubreze.com



Château de Brézé

Have lunch in the old stables of the chateau.

Afterwards there should be time to visit the chateau itself.

In the afternoon, ride again for about 2 hours. Journey past vineyards and woods to Abbaye de Fontevraud.



Abbaye de Fontevraud



Interior of the Abbaye

It is a very special experience to arrive here on horseback and you will also have the chance to visit Abbaye de Fontevraud on foot.

www.abbayedefontevraud.com

Dinner and overnight at Domaine de Mestré at Fontevraud (the old farm belonging to the Abbaye).

Day 4

This morning's ride (c. 2 hours) takes you to Château de la Roche Martel, a private and historical Château. Meet the owners, have a picnic lunch and explore your surroundings. www.larochemartel.com



Château de la Roche Martel

Afternoon ride (c. 2 hours) to Château de Ternay. If they are in residence, you will have a cordial welcome by the Count and Countess of Ternay.

Dinner and overnight at Château de Ternay.



Château de Ternay

Day 5

After breakfast, set off on a 2 hour morning ride.



View of Château d'Ussé

The riding route takes you through Chinon Forest in the direction of Château d'Ussé, which is known as 'the Sleeping Beauty Château.' www.chateaudusse.fr



The gardens at Château d'Ussé

Have lunch in Ussé.

In the afternoon, ride in the direction of Château de la Chatonnière at Azay le Rideau. There may be opportunities for longer canter along the Indre River, through woodland and orchards (c. 2 hours of riding).

At the end of the ride, be transferred to Azay le Rideau. There should be time to explore the town at your leisure.

Dinner and overnight at Hotel le Grand Monarque in Azay le Rideau.

Day 6

Ride for approximately 2.5 hours through pretty countryside, vineyards and woods to Château de Villandry.



Château de Villandry

Have lunch and an afternoon visit to the château and gardens at Château de Villandry.

www.chateauvillandry.fr

Later in the afternoon, transfer to Château de Gizeux.

Dinner and overnight at Château de Gizeux:



Château de Gizeux

Day 7

After breakfast (depart between 8am and 11am), say goodbye to your hosts and transfer to Tours Saint Pierre des Corps station or Saumur station for your rail journey home or continue your travel plans.

For more information contact in the saddle. Tel: 01299 272 997 Fax: 01299 272 935, Email: rides@inthesaddle.com, Internet: www.inthesaddle.com

Accommodation

Accommodation is elegant small hotels, often converted from châteaux and other ancestral homes. Sometimes you will stay in guest rooms in the grounds, rather than in the main château itself.

Stay two nights at Hôtel Saint Pierre, and one night each at Domaine de Mestré at Fontevraud, Château de Ternay, Hôtel le Grand Monarque and Château de Gizeux.

Your first two nights are spent at Hôtel Saint Pierre, a comfortable hotel in the heart of Saumur. There are 15 individually styled guest. There is also a bar, lounge and terrace on site. www.saintpierresaumur.com/en/



Hôtel Saint Pierre – guest room

Night three is at Domaine de Mestré, a charming house in the heart of the Pays de la Loire. It was the main farm of Abbaye de Fontevraud and parts of it date back to the 12th Century.



Domaine de Mestré – guest room

The guestrooms are spacious and some have lovely views of the courtyard or surrounding countryside.

Breakfast is often served in the orangery. <https://domaine-de-mestre.com/>



Domaine de Mestré – breakfast

Your fourth night is spent at Château de Ternay. This château dates back to the 15th Century and is renowned for the preserved state of its sculptural decoration.



Château de Ternay

There are guest rooms in the château itself, as well as cottages within the grounds. www.chateau-de-ternay.com



Château de Ternay – guest room

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On your fifth night, stay at Hôtel le Grand Monarque in Azay le Rideau. This 18th Century former coaching inn is now a lovely boutique hotel. The hotel is in the centre of the town, only a few hundred metres from the château. <https://legrandmonarque.com/?lang=en>



Hôtel Grand Monarque – guest room.

Your final night is spent at Château de Gizeux, the largest private inhabited home in the Anjou-Touraine region.

Discover the castle and its architectural heritage, which is protected as a historical monument.



Château de Gizeux

You are guests of the de Laffon family and will stay in one of the five guest rooms. Don't expect a porter, a polished reception desk, a lift, or a restaurant with a full waiter service. At Gizeux, the family will welcome you. www.chateaudegizeux.com



Château de Gizeux – guest room

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