



Gastronomic Loire Valley

From the Atlantic coast to Saumur

26 October–1 November 2026

(MM 227)

7 days

Speaker: Victoria Daskal

Journey inland from Nantes to Saumur via vineyards, châteaux and beautiful scenery, savouring superb local produce and wine.

A range of gastronomic experiences from country inns and humble crêperies to Michelin-starred dining.

Celebrate the region's excellent wines, including Muscadet, Crémant de Loire and Chenin Blanc.

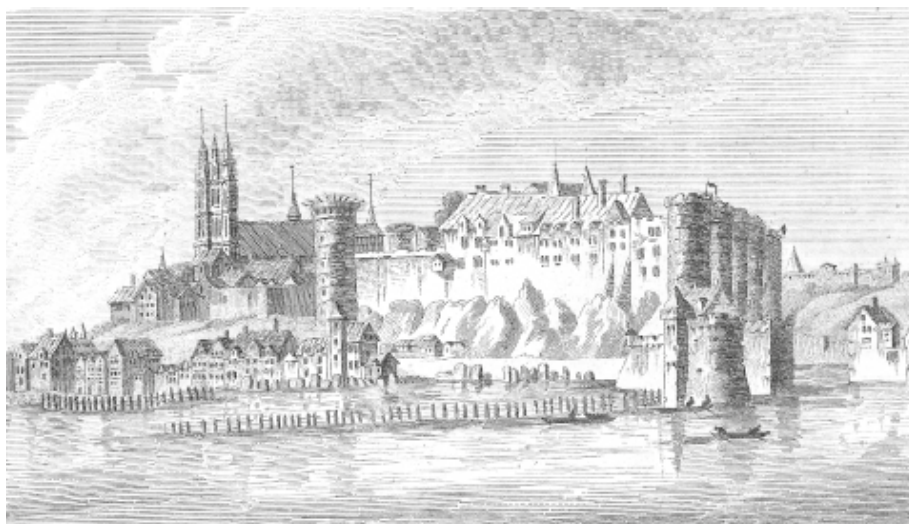
October brings spectacular colour and a bounty of autumnal produce.

The Loire Valley is one of Europe's most picturesque cultural landscapes. Vineyards, riverside towns and resplendent châteaux are inseparably entwined. Once the favoured domain of French royalty, it is now celebrated equally for its wines and gastronomy.

To explore the Loire is to encounter gastronomic variety of the most rewarding kind. Every style of wine is produced here: saline Muscadet from the Atlantic coast, mineral Sauvignon from the central vineyards, noble Chenin Blanc in sparkling, dry and sweet forms, supple Cabernet Franc, and Crémant with a finesse that rivals Champagne. Paired with a cuisine rooted in local produce: cave-grown mushrooms, artisanal pâtés and rillettes, fresh fish, and the finest selection of cheeses – these wines achieve their fullest expression.

But this is no mere indulgence. The region's heritage is among the richest in Europe, from the working salt marshes of Guérande which reveal centuries-old methods of harvesting Fleur de Sel, to the medieval Apocalypse Tapestry at Angers, to the Renaissance façades of Saumur and the serene grandeur of Fontevraud Abbey, resting place of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The landscape itself, with its fertile soils and luminous tuffeau stone, has shaped both its architecture and its viticulture.

In the company of expert guides, with private wine tastings and memorable meals, this journey explores the Loire as both a cultural heartland and a gastronomic paradise.



Angers, 18th-century engraving.

Itinerary

Day 1: Nantes. Fly at c. 10.45am from London Gatwick to Nantes (EasyJet). Guided introduction to Loire wine tasting, followed by dinner at the celebrated La Cigale, whose exuberant art nouveau interior evokes Nantes's fin-de-siècle grandeur. First of three nights in Nice.

Day 2: Guérande & the Atlantic coast. Excursion to Guérande to explore the intricate salt marshes with expert guides and a tasting of Fleur de Sel. Lunch on coastal specialities in a family-run bistro. Afternoon in the fortified medieval town, with the option of a walk along its ramparts.

Day 3: Muscadet vineyards, Château-Thébaud. Journey south to Château-Thébaud for a vineyard walk and tasting with the Lieubeau family, pioneering Muscadet producers for six generations. Lunch at a countryside inn among the vines, with all locally grown ingredients. Return to Nantes and some free time for visiting museums or the Château of the Dukes of Brittany. Dinner at Michelin-starred L'Atlantide 1874, overlooking the Loire.

Day 4: Angers, Saumur. Travel to Angers for a morning visit to the château, home to the remarkable Apocalypse Tapestry, the earliest and perhaps the greatest of medieval tapestry series. Then to the Jean-Lurçat Museum of Contemporary Tapestries, before lunch beside the Maine River with a comparative tasting of

Chenin Blanc from local villages. Continue to Saumur for the first of three nights.

Day 5: Saumur. Morning visit to the Château de Saumur with its notable faïence collection. Lunch is in the medieval square with wines of Saumur AOC. Afternoon visit to the troglodyte caves of the Musée du Champignon. Dinner at Les Caves de Marson: wood-fired *fouées* with local delicacies, accompanied by Saumur wines in an atmospheric cave setting.

Day 6: Saumur, Fontevraud. Stroll through Saumur's lively Saturday farmer's market before visiting a sparkling wine producer for a tasting of Crémant de Loire. Afternoon at Fontevraud Abbey, resting place of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II and Richard the Lionheart. Dinner in the abbey's Michelin-starred restaurant, with an innovative menu rooted in organic and biodynamic produce.

Day 7. Drive north to Rennes (c. 2 hours) for an afternoon flight to London Gatwick (EasyJet), arriving c. 4.30pm.

Gastronomic Loire Valley continued

Lecturer

Victoria Daskal. Victoria is a wine writer, educator and consultant with over 15 years of international experience. Formerly Managing Editor of *The World of Fine Wine*, Victoria now lectures around the world and at the WSET School in London, and judges wine competitions. She is published widely, including in *The Financial Times* and *Decanter*. Born in Moldova and raised in Boston, she studied Economics and Psychology at McGill University before earning her MSc in International Wine Management through the OIV program, visiting 45 wine regions across 23 countries. She is the founder of Victoria Daskal Wine, an award-winning wine club, and is currently developing the educational programme for the Old Vine Conference, advancing global awareness and appreciation of heritage vineyards.

Practicalities

Included: travel by private coach for airport transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 5 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all wine and food tastings; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. **Radisson Blu Hotel, Nantes** (radissonhotels.com): 4-star hotel occupying the old neoclassical courthouse, a short walk from the centre of Nantes. **Hôtel Anne d'Anjou, Saumur** (hotel-anneanjou.com): centrally-located 4-star hotel on the banks of the Loire. *Single occupancy rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking and standing around on this tour in museums and vineyards (some of it over steep or uneven ground), and it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Coach access is restricted in historical centres. Some days involve a lot of driving; average distance by coach per day: 56 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.