

Loire Valley Walking Tours | Small Group Tours of France

Reading List

Loire Valley A World Heritage Site: Travel Guide Loire Valley - 2017

by Jérôme Sabatier

The Loire Valley is the largest site ever registered in France as World Heritage site by UNESCO. The site crosses a multitude of historic towns and villages, rich with architectural heritage and ancient history. It reveals religious buildings and castles, each more sumptuous than the last, cultivated land and wild landscapes exploding with biodiversity. This ensemble, which witnessed thousands of years of interactions between man and nature, is a cultural landscape of exception. The Loire River is at the heart of this landscape. Indeed, without it, none of this would exist. The largest river in France, and the wildest, it is nicknamed "the Royal River." The Loire Valley was chosen as a royal residence in the 15th and 16th century. Several days are needed to explore the natural and cultural heritage of these landscapes. Take the time to soak up the history, culture and landscapes, and your stay in the Loire Valley will be unforgettable ...

Here you'll find all the information necessary to prepare your trip and your stay in Loire Valley in order to discover this exceptional site of indisputable universal value. You will find the following under the sections: the reasons for its selection for the World Heritage list, the history of the site, many practical informations (Tourist Offices, suggested tours, museums, events, transports), and a selection of accommodation and restaurants. Informations, prices and opening hours shown are for 2017.

But most importantly, this "Loire Valley, a World Heritage Site" travel guide also offers a suggested itinerary for visiting each site and monument. You'll also find tips (transport, pricing, activities ...), anecdotes and all the possibilities for family-friendly visits to encourage children and families in their discovery. The area and city maps included on all pages show all the sites and monuments discussed.

The Roman Remains of Brittany, Normandy and the Loire Valley: A Guidebook

by James Stephen Bromwich

The Roman Remains of Brittany, Normandy and the Loire Valley is the third in a series of companion guides. The only specialist guidebook to the region, it provides context to many sites that deserve to be better known, some only recently conserved for the public. There are plenty of places to chose

from: fifty-four treated at length plus fourteen shorter entries. There is an extended chapter dealing with the historical background and two feature sections. The book is easy to use as there are a large number of maps, plans and photographs in colour. To ensure accuracy, the author personally followed aqueduct routes, visited hidden temples, admired ramparts and visited all the museums. Through his writing a visit is transformed into an experience.

THE LOIRE VALLEY: French Impressions

by George W East

THE LOIRE VALLEY is the latest in a series of distinctive travel books. It takes our reader on a journey of discovery, looking at the culture and cuisine of a region, and how its history, landscape and location contributed to its difference from the rest of the country.

THE LOIRE VALLEY is the result of a year-long stay in a beautiful area variously known as The Valley of the Kings and The Garden of France. The journey of discovery takes us on a four-hundred-mile trip alongside and on the biggest river in France. There are more than three hundred grand chateaux in the Valley, though the focus of the authors attention is on the last home and work place of Leonardo da Vinci, walks on the battlements of Richard the Lionhearts favourite castle and an underground search of modern troglodytes. And we also discover how and why frogs legs first became a delicacy in this part of France.

Together with reviews of more than a hundred Loire-side towns and villages, THE LOIRE VALLEY contains dozens of recipes for well and little-known regional dishes. As the author says, the purpose and intention of the book and series was to entertain and inform readers about a particular region of a diverse and fascinating country.

Vintner's Daughter: A Novel

by Kristen Harnisch

Loire Valley, 1895. When seventeen-year-old Sara Thibault's father is killed in a mudslide, her mother sells their vineyard to a rival family whose eldest son marries Sara's sister, Lydia. But a violent tragedy compels Sara and her sister to flee to New York, forcing Sara to put aside her dream to follow in her father's footsteps as a master winemaker.

Meanwhile, Philippe Lemieux has arrived in California with the ambition of owning the largest vineyard in Napa by 1900. When he receives word of his brother's death in France, he resolves to bring the killer to justice. Sara has travelled to California in hopes of making her own way in the winemaking world. When she encounters Philippe in a Napa vineyard, they are instantly drawn to one another, but Sara knows he is the one man who could return her family's vineyard to her, or

send her straight to the guillotine.

This riveting tale of betrayal, retribution, love, and redemption, Kristen Harnisch's debut novel immerses readers in the rich vineyard culture of both the Old and New Worlds, the burgeoning cities of late nineteenth-century America and a spirited heroine's fight to determine her destiny.

Deep in the Heart of France: A Guide to the Loire Valley's Contemporary Caves

by Robert Bonnell

It is not common knowledge, even elsewhere in France, that the Loire Valley, that natural dividing line between the north and the south of France, is honeycombed with thousands of caves, a number of which are open to the public. This is your guide to nearly 200 cave lodgings, cave restaurants, cave art galleries, cave museums and many other "troglodyte" attractions. Also includes 22 walks in cave country.

Almost all of the caves of the region are human creations, cavities hollowed out of the earth in the course of the last two millennia or more. Originally some caves were excavated to serve as refuges from marauders, others as stone quarries, others as mines. Once created, a variety of uses could be found for a cave, not least of which was as habitation.

In earlier times, a broad cross-section of social classes lived in cave habitations, but by the 19th century living in this sort of digs had been relegated to the poor. By the mid-20th century only a handful of cave dwellers hung on underground, and to live in a cave was considered something of a disgrace.

There were other uses for the caves, though, once the extraction of the stone had ceased. Wineries quickly come to mind. Caves were used to make and age still wines, of course, but the sparkling wine industry, established in the Loire Valley in the early 19th century, put large sections of abandoned caves to use for the aging of its product. Mushroom cultivation, also brought to the Loire Valley in the 19th century, was a major industry in the region until fairly recently. A once-thriving silk industry often used caves to raise silkworms.

At the beginning of the 21st century the wineries are still going strong, but most of the other cave-based industries have either died out or have been reduced considerably. Loire Valley caves are now much more likely to be reborn as tourist sites (restaurants, lodgings, museums) or once again, habitation. New technologies and a newfound respect for caves' ecological qualities have led to a renaissance of cave living. The troglodyte lifestyle appears to have a bright future.

France: A History: from Gaul to de Gaulle

by John Julius Norwich

I can still feel, as if it were yesterday, the excitement of my first Channel crossing (as a child of nearly 7) in September 1936; the regiment of porters, smelling asphyxiatingly of garlic in their blue-green blousons; the raucous sound all around me of spoken French; the immense fields of Normandy strangely devoid of hedges; then the Gare du Nord at twilight, the policemen with their képis and their little snow-white batons; and my first sight of the Eiffel Tower... This book is written in the belief that the average English-speaking man or woman has remarkably little knowledge of French history. We may know a bit about Napoleon or Joan of Arc or Louis XIV, but for most of us that's about it. In my own three schools we were taught only about the battles we won: Crécy and Poitiers, Agincourt and Waterloo. The rest was silence. So here is my attempt to fill in the blanks...

John Julius Norwich (at 88) has finally written the book he always wanted to write, the extremely colourful story of the country he loves best.

From frowning Roman generals and belligerent Gallic chieftains, to Charlemagne (hated by generations of French children taught that he invented schools) through Marie Antoinette and the storming of the Bastille to Vichy, the Resistance and beyond, FRANCE is packed with heroes and villains, adventures and battles, romance and revolution. Full of memorable stories and racy anecdotes, this is the perfect introduction to the country that has inspired the rest of the world to live, dress, eat -- and love better.
