FRANCE

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

RATED 5 STARS BY HUNDREDS OF HAPPY TOUR GUESTS

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Join us for more than just a tour; our 6-day Loire Valley Castles and Gourmet Tour is a living story you step into, guided by hands that know the region and call it home. Like a favorite book, we have written an ever-evolving story over the past 32 years that features immersive experiences with our local friends combined with storytelling that brings the magic of this historically rich region and its castles to life.

Picture this: a small, intimate group winding along quiet back roads and floating on the Loire River where castles and medieval towns decorate the countryside, their stories waiting to be told. For years, we've walked these paths first, not as tourists, but as friends who were welcomed into the heart of the Loire. Our long-standing presence here has opened doors—doors to Michelin-starred kitchens, to master winemakers, to artisan studios—where our friends become your friends, and greet you like family and invite you to stand beside them in their wine cellars, homes, and kitchens.

You'll travel with guides who treat history not as dates and monuments, but as living drama. They spin tales of obsession and romance, of courtly intrigue and daring deceptions, turning fact into a pageant you can almost taste. You'll walk where kings and queens moved, and you'll hear the gossip, the bravado, and the blunt truths behind the lacquer of royal life. Imagine flipping through the chapters of a storybook—only you're the protagonist.

This is the Loire Valley as you've always imagined: 6 days, a small group, and a pace that invites immersion rather than rushing. You'll rise to the earliest light over chateaux spired with history, linger in the glow of a sunset over vineyards, and spend afternoons in the intimate spaces where magic happens—inside professional kitchens, in the caves of master winemakers, and at the dining tables at their homes; where conversations float like the aroma of sautéed herbs and aged wine.

Our connections—built over years of shared meals, collaborations, and friendship—give you access you won't find in any guidebook. We don't just tell stories; we open doors to the people who author them. You'll meet Michelin-starred chefs who welcome you into their kitchens, winemakers who pour their heart into the very essence of the terroir, and artisans who reveal the craft behind every bite and sip. It's a privileged lens on the Loire, seen through the eyes of locals who love the region as profoundly as you will by the end of the week.

What to expect on this 6-day journey:

* Behind-the-scenes tastings and workshops in real kitchens and wine cellars,
* Private moments in the homes of our friends, where history feels personal
* Rich storytelling: legends, scandals, and the everyday human drama that shaped centuries of French life
* Immersive visits to castles, with time to wander, reflect, and imagine
* An active pace that blends leisure walking, exploring, and hands-on experiences, suitable for curious travelers of all ages

By week's end, you won't simply have seen the Loire—you'll have felt it. You'll carry a fresh reverence for the people who tended these lands, a palate refined by intimate tastings, and a sense of having shared confidences with a circle of new friends who feel like old ones.

We invite you to experience the Loire Valley "through our eyes"—a warmly human, utterly memorable blend of culture, cuisine, and storytelling. If you're ready to be welcomed into a story you'll want to tell again and again, join us. The pages await.

Experience: Inspiring Itineraries - Exceptional Quality - Excellent Value!

Off the Beaten Path France Tours are Recommended by Best Selling Author PJ Adams as her Tour of Choice to Discover the Loire Valley Region!! AND Off the Beaten Path Owner, Christy Destremau, is the contributor, content specialist, and photographer to PJ Adams' Intoxicating France travel guide series!



FRANCE OFF THE BEATEN PATH is partnered with TRUSTPILOT, an independent review website to collect "independent" traveler reviews about our tours of Provence, Loire Valley, Bordeaux, Champagne, Specialty, and Limited Edition Tours! Read candid reviews! TRUSTPILOT TOUR REVIEWS

- Our focus and specialty is and always has been dedicated to small group travel in France – we know FRANCE Best!
- In 2027, we celebrate 33 years experience leading tours exclusively in France.
- Our exclusive relationships with every one of our vendors in France makes these tours truly the trip of a lifetime!
- The most popular small group tours in France, we include "insider" experiences that other tour companies cannot offer.
- Our tours sell out year after year thanks to our exclusive benefits, exceptional quality, and excellent value.
- We are proud to be named travelers #1 choice for group travel for decades!

Book one of our small group tours today to discover for yourself why our exclusive France tours have been named travelers #1 choice for group travel for two decades!

Who is this tour designed for?

No experience necessary... Off the Beaten Path Loire Valley Tours are designed for travelers interested in a small group tour that includes a variety of engaging activities (cooking classes, castle tours, wine and cheese tasting), cultural discovery, leisure time, light walking, professional and knowledgeable tour guides, deluxe castle accommodations and sumptuous gourmet Michelin-star meals. It's vacation and Off the Beaten Path tours are all about having fun, enjoying new experiences and being active!

Guest testimonial:

★★★★★

Mike and Jen Williams, Atlanta, GA (Loire Valley Tour)

"Thank you for a wonderful and memorable first experience in France. We loved the Chefs, especially Christophe and Angelique and Damien's cheese tasting! Next time, we're looking forward to joining you in Provence!"

★★★★★

Bill & Laurie Crimando, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI (Have been on 3 OTBP Tours)

"Just a short note to say thanks for everything you did on the tour, we really enjoyed ourselves again. We feel very fortunate to have "discovered" your tours, they are definitely the best group tours we have ever been on. We had a great time, it was especially neat to spend so much time with Christophe & Angelique."

Loire Valley tour price includes:

• Fully Guided sightseeing, excursions, and cultural visits throughout the tour by the owner Christy Destremau and her team of professional Off the Beaten Path, LLC (OTBP) Company Tour Guides. OTBP Guides are UNESCO award winners, contributors to Loire Valley Travel Guidebooks, and are accomplished authors. OTBP Tour guides are professional France history and Loire Valley-specific history specialists who make learning the tidbits, gossip, anecdotes and stories of France fun and memorable throughout the tour.

• 5 nights — NO HOTEL HOPPING! — at 4-Star boutique Hotel Le Pavilion des Lys or Le Clos D'Amboise in historical Amboise – Both owned and operated by our local friends.

• 10 Meals Included – 5 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 foodie aperitif dinatoire, 3 dinners.

• All premium wines and non-alcoholic beverages at group meals!

• All entry/participation fees for all castle tours, activities, and excursions detailed in the itinerary.

• Roundtrip transfers on Day 1 and Day 6 of the tour: Day 1 – Transfer provided from St. Pierre des Corps TGV rail station at 2 pm. Day 6 – 9:30 am Transfer provided to St. Pierre des Corps TGV rail station (10 am arrival at rail station).

• Bottled water provided daily.

• All ground transportation throughout the tour.

–COMFORT ZONE– Designed for the interests of and to appeal to BOTH WALKERS & NON-WALKERS alike — this is a leisure walking tour.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE – International airfare to/from France, roundtrip train fare to/from the starting/ending point for the tour, 3 lunches, 1 dinner, gratuities to guides, driver, hotel staff, personal purchases.

AUTHENTIC LOIRE VALLEY EXPERIENCES! Spend 6 days experiencing the Loire Valley like family friends going beyond tourist hotspots to meet and spend time with some of France's best loved and highly recognized artisans, chefs, and winery owners who are our family friends, and welcome you to their workshops, kitchens, and family homes for authentic and fun French experiences unlike any other!

Loire Valley Itinerary:

Day 1 – Welcome to the Loire Valley

AMBOISE · LOIRE RIVER FLOAT · PRIVATE-ISLAND WELCOME DINNER
Meals included: Dinner

Arrival in Amboise: Our Loire Valley tour begins at 2:00 p.m. at the Saint-Pierre-des-Corps TGV station, where we meet for our scheduled group transfer to the hotel in Amboise.

We'll check into one of two charming 4-star boutique hotels owned by our local friends—either Guillaume and Julia's hotel or Grégoire's hotel. Both are ideally located in the heart of historic Amboise village. There's **NO hotel hopping**. **Unpack once and settle in for 5 nights.**

Evening on the Loire River
Later this afternoon, we'll travel along the Loire River heading to the port of Chaumont-sur-Loire, where we'll meet up with local friend Aurelien along the banks of the Loire River. Aurelien and his team welcome us aboard their traditional wooden, flat-bottom boat, called a "toue," a uniquely designed boat adapted to the river that has been used for transportation on the Loire River since the Middle Ages.

These flat-bottomed boats have navigated the shallow waters of the Loire for centuries. As we float peacefully downriver, we'll enjoy a welcome cocktail and introduction to the week while taking in the surrounding landscapes, wildlife, and château views.

DINNER: Our boat ride leads us to a private island in the middle of the river, where one of our favorite regional chefs prepares a privately hosted welcome dinner exclusively for our group. Think of it as an elegant Loire Valley interpretation of an African bush dinner—intimate, atmospheric, and wonderfully unexpected.

After dinner, we'll continue downriver toward Amboise, where the Royal Château appears above the village—especially magical when illuminated by the colors of sunset.

Day 2 — The Women of Chenonceau Castle, Cooking Class, Wine & Cheese, and Dinner at Damien and Keaw's Family Home

CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAU: GUIDED TOUR & SPICY STORIES · COOKING AT HOME WITH OUR CHEF FRIENDS DAMIEN AND KEAW IN THEIR FAMILY HOME, FOLLOWED BY A FRENCH WINE & CHEESE DISCOVERY IN THEIR WINE CELLAR · DINNER TOGETHER AROUND THE FAMILY TABLE

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

BREAKFAST.

Morning at Château de Chenonceau
This morning, we visit the magnificent Château de Chenonceau, one of the Loire Valley's most beautiful and historically fascinating castles. A castle brought to life by women, this castle represents the most significant accomplishments of royal women during the French Renaissance. Enjoy little-known stories of the most powerful and influential women at the French court, spicy stories of queens and their love affairs, royal seduction, secret world of favorites and mistresses, the first-ever fireworks display in France, extravagant parties and deception, and how royal debt led to the negotiation of a marriage to save the castle from being confiscated by the French state.

LUNCH: Enjoy an independent lunch at a local restaurant in Amboise, known for its charming streets and delicious cuisine.

A Culinary Afternoon at Chef Friends Damien and Keaw's Historic Family Home
This afternoon, our friends Damien and Keaw welcome us into their beautiful family home, built during the period of the French Revolution, for an intimate and wonderfully personal culinary experience. We'll gather in their kitchen for a relaxed, hands-on cooking class with Chef Damien, whose culinary career has taken him around the world before bringing him home to his native Loire Valley. Together, we'll prepare dishes for our evening meal, learn new techniques, and enjoy plenty of conversation and laughter along the way.
No previous cooking experience is necessary—just bring your appetite and enthusiasm!

Wine and Cheese "Tour de France"
Following our cooking class, we'll head into the family wine cellar for a delicious "Tour de France" through French wines and cheeses. Damien and Keaw will introduce us to a carefully selected variety of regional cheeses, sharing their origins, traditions, and distinctive flavors, each paired with complementary French wines.

APERITIF & DINNER: We'll finish this memorable experience with an aperitif before gathering around the family table to enjoy the wonderful dinner we prepared together—an evening of delicious food, excellent wine, and warm Loire Valley hospitality.

Day 3 – Chambord, Leonardo da Vinci in Amboise and Village Life

CHÂTEAU DE CHAMBORD · AMBOISE VILLAGE · CLOS LUCE & LEONARDO DA VINCI · FRENCH APÉRITIF DÎNATOIRE

Meals included: Breakfast and apéritif dînatoire

BREAKFAST.

Morning into Early Afternoon at Château de Chambord

Today we travel to Château de Chambord, an extraordinary Renaissance masterpiece created during the reign of King Francis I. Its soaring towers, monumental architecture, and celebrated double-helix staircase are impressive—but Chambord's greatest intrigue lies in the people who inhabited its royal world.

You will be introduced to the fascinating past of Chambord Castle and the region as it existed during the reign and presence in the Loire of the House of Valois and early Bourbon kings. We share stories about two of France's most influential Kings, Francis I and Louis XIV, their royal lifestyles, contributions, and personal guests at the castle, as well as steamy stories of what went on in the personal lives of the kings, queens, and the French court behind closed doors at the castle.

LUNCH: Independently at Chambord Castle.

Late Afternoon Arrival Back to Amboise - Clos Lucé

Upon returning to Amboise, enjoy some time to explore the village at your own pace. Browse artisan boutiques for French-made scarves, jewelry, handbags, and regional specialties.

You may also visit Clos Lucé, the final home of Leonardo da Vinci. Explore the home where he lived and worked, discover full-scale models inspired by his inventions, and wander through gardens celebrating his extraordinary imagination.

A French Apéritif Dînatoire

This evening, we'll gather at one of our favorite local spots in Amboise for a hosted apéritif dînatoire. More generous than a cocktail hour but more relaxed than a formal dinner, an apéritif dînatoire brings friends together over drinks and an abundant selection of savory bites. It's a fun, convivial French tradition—and one of our favorite ways to spend an evening together.

Day 4 — Fine Wines, Old Friends & Royal Castle of Amboise

WELCOME TO OUR FRIENDS FRED & LOUISA'S HOME & WINERY (MAKING WINE SINCE 1508) · VISIT AND WINE TASTING · LUNCH AT OUR FRIENDS' FAMILY HOME · GUIDED TOUR OF CHÂTEAU D'AMBOISE

Meals included: Breakfast and apéritif dînatoire

BREAKFAST.

A Private Wine Experience with Friends at their Family Winery
This morning, our friends Fred and Louisa welcome us to their family winery and historic home for one of the tour's personal experiences. Fred's family has been making wine in the Loire Valley since 1508. Having grown up in the family business, he learned every aspect of winemaking. This is a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes and witness the labor of love this couple has poured into their passion for wine-making.

Lunch at the Family Château
To top off this exclusive experience, we'll continue with a traditional French apéritif in the sitting room of their 18th century château home before gathering around the family dining table for a privately hosted wine-pairing lunch.

Your Choice This Afternoon – Mid-afternoon return to Amboise, choose the experience that best suits you:

OPTION 1 — Guided Visit of Amboise Royal Castle & Gardens
Conclude the day with a guided visit of the fairy tale Royal Castle of Amboise. Join us for stories of love, heartbreak, vengeance, gore, and power struggles that echo through its walls. The castle, a spectacular masterpiece, reflects all of the refinements of Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Amboise holds a special place in history. As we journey through its past, accompanied by intimate stories of the lives of the French Kings, Queens, and their courts, we discover that there was much more to royal life than military campaigns and political allegiances.

OPTION 2 — Remainder of the Afternoon at Leisure in Amboise
Enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at your own pace. Browse the boutiques, relax at a café, stroll beside the Loire, or simply savor the atmosphere of this charming historic village.

DINNER: Independent this evening. Enjoy a sunset stroll along the Loire River, a cocktail overlooking the Amboise Royal Castle (we'll share the spot for it), and indulge in a delightful dinner at one of the many favorite places in Amboise.

Day 5 — The Gardens of Villandry and Dinner at Home with Friends

CHÂTEAU DE VILLANDRY · LEISURE TIME · HANDS-ON COOKING · FAREWELL DINNER

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

BREAKFAST.

Morning at Château de Villandry
This morning, discover the timeless beauty of Château de Villandry, one of the Loire Valley's most captivating destinations. While its elegant Renaissance château is a delight to explore, it is the extraordinary gardens that leave a lasting impression.

Wander through exquisitely designed ornamental gardens, vibrant kitchen gardens, tranquil water features, and fragrant pathways, where every season unveils a new masterpiece of color and texture. A visit to Villandry is more than a tour of a château—it's an invitation to slow down, savor the beauty of the French countryside, and experience one of France's most breathtaking gardens.

LUNCH: Enjoy an independent lunch at one of the charming local eateries on return to Amboise.

A Leisurely Afternoon in Amboise
After an independent lunch in Amboise, enjoy free time to shop, relax at a café, or continue exploring the village. Guests who have not already visited Clos Lucé earlier in the week may choose to spend the afternoon discovering Leonardo da Vinci’s final home and gardens.

Dinner at Home with Our Lifelong Friends – This evening embodies everything we mean by France with Friends.
Our lifelong friends, acclaimed chefs Christophe and Angélique, will welcome us into their family home for a relaxed, hands-on culinary experience and farewell dinner. Christophe holds the prestigious title of Meilleur Ouvrier de France and has worked alongside his friend, celebrated chef Alain Ducasse. Angélique is an accomplished chef and culinary professor in the Loire Valley. Together, they share a genuine passion for French cooking and hospitality. Over a glass of wine, we’ll help prepare a gourmet apéritif and dinner inspired by regional Loire Valley recipes, including the beloved Tarte Tatin.

No cooking experience is necessary, and everyone may participate as much or as little as they like. If cooking is not your thing, simply enjoy the wine, conversation, and pleasure of spending an evening at home with our French friends.

DINNER: We’ll gather around the family table for cocktails, dinner, and a final toast to our time together. It is a warm and wonderfully personal way to celebrate an unforgettable week in the Loire Valley.

Day 6 – Farewell to the Loire Valley

TOUR CONCLUSION

Meals included: Breakfast

After breakfast, it is time to say au revoir to Amboise and the friends we've made along the way.

Our scheduled group transfer departs the hotel at 9:30 a.m. and arrives at the Saint-Pierre-des-Corps TGV station at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Earlier or later private transfers may be arranged separately. Please contact us for additional information.

Have a group your own group of friends or family, and want to make this tour a private departure? Email us at christy@travelofftthebeatenpath.com for details.





WALKING & MOBILITY

Our Loire Valley tour combines sightseeing, cultural activities, culinary experiences, and leisurely exploration. Although the itinerary is not strenuous, guests should be comfortable with a moderate amount of walking and standing throughout each day.

Activities include:

- Walking through villages, château interiors, and gardens
- Navigating stairs, cobblestones, and occasional uneven surfaces
- Standing for short periods during historical presentations
- Walking between our vehicles and the sites we visit

Elevators and escalators are generally unavailable at the historic châteaux. Guests who are comfortable with these everyday mobility requirements should be able to participate in and enjoy the tour.

OUR “FRANCE WITH FRIENDS” TRAVEL PHILOSOPHY!

Immerse yourself in local culture spending time with our local French friends in combination with visiting castles, learning the crazy, creepy, and salacious stories of French history, and savoring local wines and exquisite cuisine while staying in one exceptional hotel for our 6 days together in Loire Valley, France...







Guest testimonial:

★★★★★

Natalie Spiro, San Diego, CA (Loire Valley Tour)

I had a taste of every piece of heaven that I wanted and expected in the Loire Valley! Loved it all! Great variety, great fun!! Can't wait for the next adventure with you!!"

★★★★★

Lisa Jarrold, Brisbane, Australia (Loire Valley Tour)

"I really enjoyed the hot air ballooning, loved the history and all the chateaux were great and interesting. I liked the combination of history, food and wine that this trip offered and the good value of the trip itself."

★★★★★

Odette Pagan, Brisbane, Australia (Loire Valley Tour)

"My favorites were Angelique's cooking class, Damien's wine and extensive cheese tasting and the hot air ballooning. Don't change a thing, it was all wonderful, loved it! I had a memorable week, thanks for everything!"

Oui... what we do – what we guarantee our guests...

we guarantee some very specific services that we believe you, as our guest, deserve.

• WE ENSURE A “SMALL GROUP” REMAINS JUST THAT - A “SMALL GROUP”!

The group size on our Loire Valley tours is a maximum 10-12 guests per tour date. Many of our trips sell out completely meaning group size is 12 guests. Our experience has been that limiting our group size to 10-12 guests per Loire Valley tour creates the ideal ambiance for guests to easily mingle and get to know each other, yet still maintain their independence. We also limit our group size in order to preserve each guest’s personalized experience, and ensure our “France with Friends” travel philosophy and quality customer service.

• WE INCLUDE ALL BEVERAGES (BOTH ALCOHOLIC & NON-ALCOHOLIC) IN OUR TOUR PRICES!

We always include a welcome cocktail on day 1 of each tour, plus some additional group meals may include a pre-dinner cocktail in addition to the premium, classified and “Grand Cru” wines included at all group meals during each of our tours. Of course, guests are always free to opt out of any included group meal to try a restaurant, cafe or other dining option on their own or simply to enjoy a private dining experience.

• WE ALWAYS PROVIDE GUESTS THE BEST ROOMS AT EVERY HOTEL!

We always reserve the VERY BEST for our guests! Plus there is NEVER any hotel hopping on our tours. We select one exclusive, luxurious, historical establishment for the entire 5 nights of each tour (3 nights on Champagne Tours, 4 nights on Normandy Tours).

• OUR SCHEDULED WALKS ARE ALWAYS GUIDED!

We always guide our walks!! Our guides are experienced, and have walked our trails repeatedly each season - even in the off season. They are knowledgeable about what each trail has to offer. Our guides accompany every walk on every tour where optional and scheduled walks are included. And our guides remain with the group during the entirety of each walk. We believe your walks with us should always be fun, interesting and a time to sit back and enjoy the views along the trail while someone else takes charge and shows you the way! We have specially designed all of our trails exclusively to share with our guests.

• WE PROVIDE VAN SUPPORT FOR OUR WALKS!

In addition to providing guides who accompany each walk on our tours, we always provide a support van whose driver's sole responsibility is to meet the group at designated points throughout each walk to provide more refreshments and provide a ride to any guest who needs a break.

Walking Ratings for Loire Valley Tours...

Always enjoyable walking on Off the Beaten Path Tours - Nomatter which of our active, small group tours you join, you can expect to know, in advance, the type of walking for each tour.

LOIRE VALLEY TOURS ARE RATED AS FOLLOWS:

• ALL TOUR GUESTS – There is extensive leisure walking daily on this tour. Guests need to be able to walk from our drop off points to castles, through castles during visits, as well as manage standing for short periods of time during story telling at the castles. Guests need to also be able to manage steps and uneven sidewalk terrain throughout the tour at castles and in villages. There are no elevators or escalators available to our groups at the chateaux (castles). This tour is not suitable for anyone with mobility issues that would impair his/her enjoyment of this experience.

• TOUR RATING - Tour Rating = EASY. Tour involves only daily leisure walking at castles and in villages.

Additional Loire Valley tour information...

• UNRIVALED EXPERTISE WITHIN FRANCE AND THE BEST TOUR GUIDES:
All Off the Beaten Path guides are Americans with dual nationality (American-French citizenship), are multi-lingual and reside in France. They also bring a wealth of local information and history to enrich each guest's experience and have been selected for their comprehensive understanding of French culture. You will find that Off the Beaten Path guides are wonderful traveling companions, whose knowledge and sense of fun and positive attitude make each day a wonderful experience.

• WHERE DO WE RENDEZVOUS ON DAY 1 OF THE LOIRE VALLEY TOUR?
Your OTBP Guide(s) will meet you at the St. Pierre des Corps TGV rail station Tours, France at 2 pm. Complete meeting time and location information is detailed in your tour information package that we send you 30 days prior to the start date of your tour.

• WHERE DOES THE LOIRE VALLEY TOUR FINISH?
We depart the hotel in the morning in order to arrive by 10 AM at the St. Pierre des Corps TGV rail station in Tours, France. Earlier returns to the station can be arranged.

• WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED ON MY LOIRE VALLEY TOUR?
Airfare to and from France, Train fare to and from St. Pierre des Corps TGV rail station Tours, France, 3 lunches, 1 dinner, gratuities to tour guides and professional driver, and any personal purchases.

• DO I NEED TO BE AN ATHLETE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LOIRE VALLEY TOUR?
No. However, France is a country of walkers. Our Loire Valley Tour is designed for active travelers and includes extensive leisure walking daily. Travelers need to be able to walk and stand for extended periods of time while listening to commentary/history about the castles during visits. This tour is not suitable for travelers with serious back or knee problems. It is not possible to drop-off or pick-up guests at the entry of castles before or after visits, and therefore guests must be able to walk short distances from the vans to the sites, as well as be able to also enjoy exploring historical villages, towns and corresponding markets on foot. We enjoy the "slow road" taking in the beautiful scenery of the castles and local villages daily, and our tours are focused on actively discovering this magnificent region.

• HOW SHOULD I GO ABOUT MAKING MY TRAVEL PLANS?

Off the Beaten Path is a full service tour operator and it is our pleasure to assist you with all aspects of upcoming travel plans. Whether you are looking for a suggestion for a hotel in Paris or assistance with your rail tickets, simply contact us at christy@traveloffthebeatenpath.com or call us at 1.717.683.2827 for assistance.

• IS WINE INCLUDED AT MEALS? WHAT KIND OF WINES ARE INCLUDED AT MEALS?

Yes, wine is included at all scheduled meals together. We expertly match premium wines from the region we're visiting with each dish. Meals offer an excellent opportunity to try wines from appellations not available to guests at home, and to introduce guests to some select wines worth a favorable mention or that are exceptionally appreciated by the locals.

• WHAT IS THE WEATHER GOING TO BE LIKE IN THE LOIRE VALLEY?

April through October, day time temperatures in the Loire Valley range from the 70's to mid-80's Fahrenheit with evenings being slightly cooler. Typically it is sunny, but be prepared with the proper rain gear.

• WHAT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED FOR MY TOUR?

All travelers to France are required to have a valid passport. Please make 2 copies of your passport and personal identification before you depart. Keep one set of copies with you in a separate location from your travel documents, and leave the other set of copies with a contact at home before you depart. If you are not a U.S. citizen, please check with your consulate general for entry requirements.

• WHO ARE THE LOIRE VALLEY TOURS DESIGNED FOR?

OTBP's Loire Valley Tours are designed for discerning travelers of all ages and backgrounds, from the seasoned traveler and independent traveler to the first time traveler to France. Join any one of our tours as a solo traveler, a couple, a small group of friends or family, or bring your entire travel club, affinity group, women's organization or wine society. No culinary, history or other type of experience is necessary. Join us for the vacation of a lifetime to discover the best of the Loire Valley, as an insider, and make new friends along the way.

• ARE ALL OFF THE BEATEN PATH TOURS IN ENGLISH?

Yes. All tours are conducted in English and designed for an English speaking clientele. The majority of OTBP Guests come from the U.S.A., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and England. Guests have also come from the Caribbean, Singapore, the Philippines, South Africa, and Israel.

• DO I NEED TO BE AN EXPERT TO TAKE YOUR LOIRE VALLEY TOUR?

Not at all. The idea is to learn about French culture, traditions, wine, daily life, artisan lives and culinary practices in a fun and relaxing environment. Our tours offer great learning opportunities for everyone. Off the Beaten Path guides are very skilled at adapting their discussions to the general level of knowledge of the group, providing good introductory information for novices, and more advanced discussions for those who have more experience or a specialty interest.

• HOW ARE THE LOIRE VALLEY TOURS STRUCTURED?

Having 30+ years experience in the tour industry, specifically with small group touring, we have found that our guests are generally more interested in active experiences, culture, people to people experiences and guided tours of museums and sites. Our guests like to visit private homes, and pursue their hobbies when they travel. Our guests enjoy being able to shop locally for items, such as, collectibles, art and local products. Our guests tend to do more homework and want a meatier trip, but also want to enjoy down time or leisure time to explore independently. All of our trips are designed based on these factors. Each trip offers organized activities and excursions daily combined with periods of leisure time each day. Our tours encourage individual approach and pursuit of your interests, as well as introducing you to new experiences and people during each trip.

• HOW SHOULD I PACK? HOW SHOULD I EXPECT TO DRESS DURING THE TOUR?

Please limit your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase and one carry-on. Try not to over pack; you will not wear all your clothing! A suggested packing list will be enclosed in your tour information package. Pack comfortable light weight, casual clothing. It's vacation and we want our guests to feel and be as comfortable as possible during our daily activities and excursions. Our dinners together include a mix of Michelin star and casual bistro style restaurants. For men we suggest a business casual ensemble (no tie or jacket necessary unless it's your personal preference) and for women we recommend a casual dress for dinners.






Guest testimonial:

★★★★★

Ralph and Stephanie Sorley, Boston, MA (Loire Valley Tour)

“The choice of castles was excellent. Cooking classes, dinners and markets were fun and interesting, and we LOVED the hot air ballooning, it was so much fun. Really enjoyed our guide! THANKS FOR A MEMORABLE TIME!”

★★★★★

Amanda Croker, Brisbane, Australia (Loire Valley Tour)

“Loved ALL of it! The pace, variety, quality, sequence of events. Many thanks, YOU RUN A VERY PROFESSIONAL AND HIGH QUALITY TOUR. You have exceeded all of my expectations. It has been a memorable trip!”

★★★★★

Marti Hyland, Arlington, VA (Loire Valley Tour)

“THE TRIP GETS A 5 OUT OF 5! My favorite thing was the extensive cheese and wine tasting with Damien. Thanks to our guide for making this trip so exceptional!”

One of the most flattering questions that we have ever received, as a tour company, came from our guest Dennis Gelner. Dennis and his wife Pat traveled on 2 back to back tours with us.



Dennis' question one afternoon was:

"WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS?
IT JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER EVERY DAY!"

Thanks Dennis for such a flattering question and Pat's and your ever so flattering trip comments! We love receiving feedback and hearing about how guests have enjoyed their tour(s). Whether joining one of our Provence Tours, Loire Valley Tours or Bordeaux Tours, our dedication and focus to providing the best ever authentic France travel experiences during each of our small group tours is paramount!

WE STRIVE TO EXCEED GUEST EXPECTATIONS EVERY TRIP!!

We've recently joined TRUSTPILOT, an independent review website - Check out candid tour reviews from tour guests! TRUSTPILOT NEWEST REVIEWS

Not just a tour: it's an authentic off the beaten path french experience...

Unrivaled expertise within France sets Off the Beaten Path, LLC apart from non-France based and multi-destination tour companies. Off the Beaten Path, LLC (OTBP) is American owned and operated. In 2027, the company celebrates 33 years delivering small, engaging group, walking, gourmet foodie, wine and cultural tours exclusively in France. OTBP active, small group France tours offer travelers the very BEST, and most inspiring and exclusive itineraries filled with cultural "insider" experiences to discover Provence, Loire Valley, Bordeaux, Champagne, Normandy, and Dordogne, France.

Enjoy exceptional quality and excellent value on an OTBP small group tour today! Travelers and publications rate Off the Beaten Path Tours the BEST active, small group tours in France thanks to the unparalleled "insider" experiences featured in each tour itinerary. The company's renowned "insider" relationships with regional French chefs, artisans, and cultural industry professionals put Off the Beaten Path far ahead of the competition when it comes to creating one-of-a-kind itineraries to experience the very BEST of France! Whether you're a seasoned small group tour traveler, or new to the small group tour scene, Off the Beaten Path tours offer fun, enriching, interactive, local, and authentic French experiences and activities for everyone.

More than just a tour, Off the Beaten Path transforms the entire guest experience into a personalized and exclusive "unparalleled" active, cultural affair that far exceeds guest expectations! We connect guests with lifelong, French friends who rank among France's top-rated chefs, specialty artisans, artists, wine producers, hotel & castle owners, and entertainers! Expert professional English speaking guides who live in France, inspiring itineraries, deluxe historical hotel accommodations, sumptuous French meals, classified regional wines, and comfortable transportation in private, spacious, professionally driven vehicles are immutable standards on every Off the Beaten Path Tour. Each tour itinerary is comprised of a variety of engaging activities and enriching experiences for guests to authentically discover the heart and soul of each region. Participate in cooking classes with our friends who are celebrity Master, Meilleur Ouvrier de France, and Michelin-star chefs who look forward to your arrival, and make you feel welcome in their family homes, professional kitchens, and workshops as a group of friends.

Shop at weekly village markets where OTBP tour guides introduce you to our French friends who are olive oil and wine producers, artists, cheese-makers, herb and spice vendors, craftsmen, perfumery and linen artisans, and designers. Walk the same countryside and vineyard trails that regional French residents do with their families.

Enjoy the slow road scenery that comes with walking local country trails through vineyards, flower fields of lavender, poppies, and sunflowers, olive and fruit orchards, and small historic villages. Tour castles, pre-historic caves, and other historical monuments and sites with our knowledgeable, professional UNESCO award-winning guides. Learn the juicy, fun untold stories of French history! Dine in the same gourmet restaurants and bistros as locals do — where the chefs are our personal friends and set aside a table uniquely to welcome you as their exclusive guests. Built-in leisure time provides guests with opportunities to pursue independent interests and activities or to break away from the group for some quiet or personal time.

Every OTBP tour offers daily options with varying levels of activeness. You always have the flexibility of deciding how each day unfolds. OTBP tour guides sit down with the group every day to discuss the activities, excursions, walks, local events, and options of the day. With so many options available during each tour, we ensure you the flexibility to be as active as you choose (more walking, less walking, shopping time, cultural discovery, people watching, photography, etc.), and to also enjoy leisure time to pursue independent interests, all while enjoying the perks of traveling in a small group.

Our tour guides take care and manage the daily logistics and details while you, our guest, spend your time on the critical stuff — having fun, relaxing and enjoying your vacation your way!

The idea behind each OTBP tour is to appeal to the discerning traveler of all ages and backgrounds who seeks something new and different, and who wants to reach out and discover something inspiring.





For additional information, visit our website:

TRAVELOFFTHEBEATENPATH.COM

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

• Off the Beaten Path, LLC is an American owned and operated company licensed and bonded to protect your vacation investment.

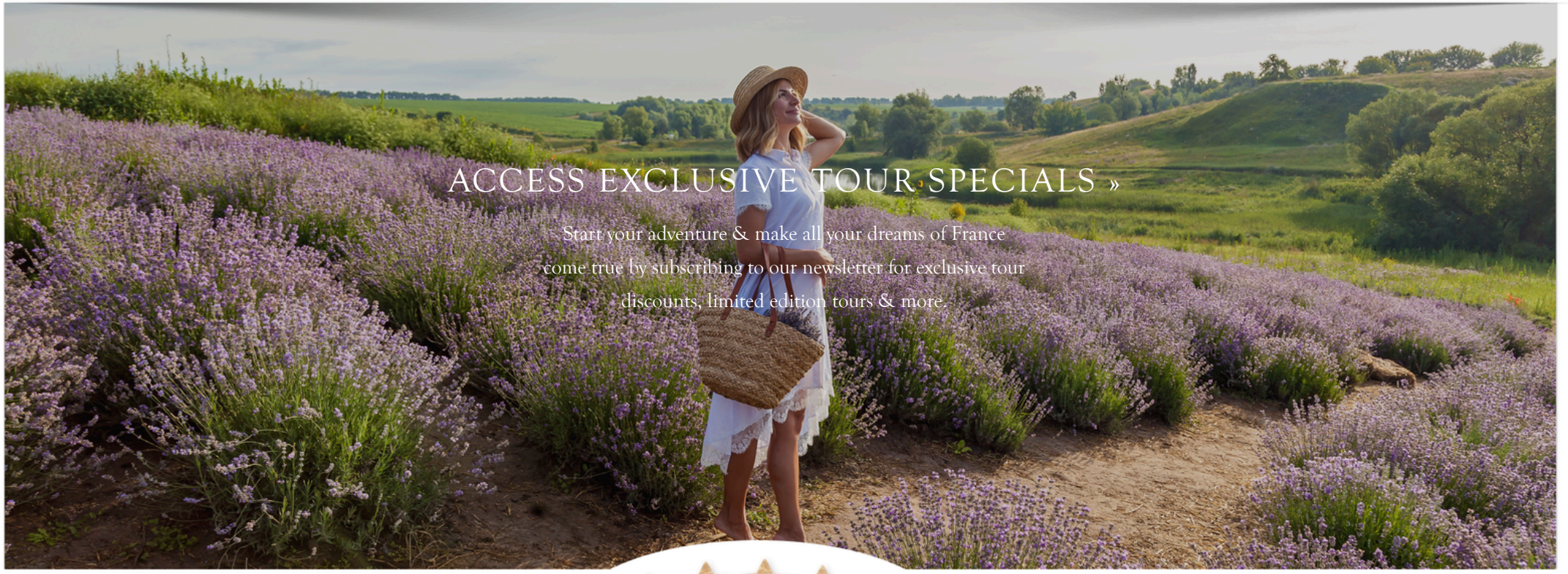
• Off the Beaten Path, LLC holds a website identity assurance warranty of $100,000. Travelers are insured for up to $100,000 per tour reservation booking when relying on the information provided by GeoTrust IdAuthority (Equifax Secure Certificate Authority) on our website.

Off the Beaten Path, LLC
EMAIL: christy@travelofffthebeatenpath.com
Telephone: 1.717.683.2827
Reservation Office & Mailing Address: 749 Grandview Rd., York, PA 17403, USA
Branch Offices in Bordeaux & Saint Remy-de-Provence









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