



Family Attractions Guide

THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND THE LOIRE VALLEY

FAMILY FUN:

Futuroscope: <https://en.futuroscope.com/> Poitiers (less than 1 hour away)

A futuristic theme park offering great attractions for ages 11 and over

Saint Benoit Aventure: <http://www.saintbenoitaventure.com/> Saint-Benoit-La-Foret (less than 1 hour away)

A forest adventure trail with over 100 activities such as trails, zip lines, Tarzan swings, monkey bars, climbing walls, rope bridges etc. (Open April-end of Sept)

Le Puy du Fou : <http://www.puydufou.com/fr/spectacles> (approx 2½ hours away).

Rated the best theme park in the world! Puy du Fou offers a multitude of spectacular shows and adventures for the whole family. (Open April-end of Sept)

Les machines de l'île: <https://www.lesmachines-nantes.fr/> - Nantes (approx. 2 hours away)

Adults and children will be captivated and wowed by this fabulous universe of machines which can be enjoyed by all generations – perfect for family and group outings. (Open all year around (except 1 Jan-3 Feb)

ZOOS :

Zoo parc Beauval <https://www.zoobauval.com> (1 hour away)

Rated one of the best zoos in the world – with white tigers, pandas and the most amazing bird spectacular ever seen. (Feb-Nov)

Bioparc Doué La Fontaine <https://www.bioparc-zoo.fr/en/> (1 hour away)

Wonderful family outing in a fabulous troglodyte cave setting. (Feb-Nov)

Zoo de la Flèche <https://www.zoo-la-fleche.com/> (just under 2 hours away)

Fabulous zoo where it is even possible to book a sleepover in lodges next to polar bears (separated by a huge glass window)! Amazing experience! (Open all year around).

La Vallée des Singes <https://www.la-vallee-des-singes.fr/> (1½ hours away)

Valley of the Monkeys - A great park to visit where children love to be really close to the monkeys. Plenty to see and do with eating areas, play areas and a farm. (February-Nov)



Just a few of the Loire Valley's Chateaux:

Château du Riveau - <https://www.chateaudurivau.com/fr/index.php> (20 minutes away)

Wonderful fairy tale castle for small children. Quirky castle with an amazing fairy tale theme for young children. Delightful gardens also.

Chinon fortress: <https://www.forteressechinon.fr/en/> (20 minutes away)

One of the most prestigious medieval fortresses in the Loire Valley.

Château Villandry – <https://www.chateauvillandry.fr/en/> (1 hour away)

Famed for its beautiful landscaped gardens. Open all year round.

Château de Chenonceau <https://www.chenonceau.com/en> (1 hour away)

One of the prettiest chateaux of the Loire Valley. Built across a river. Beautifully furnished with an exceptional collection of Old Masters paintings as well as an extremely rare collection of Flanders tapestries from the 16th Century.

Royal Château of Amboise <https://www.chateau-amboise.com/en/> (1 hour away)

Offering one of the most remarkable panoramas of the Loire Valley and registered as a Unesco World Heritage site. Leonardo de Vinci, the great Italian Renaissance painter is laid to rest here in the Chapel of Saint-Hubert.

Le Château d'Ussé <https://www.chateaudusse.fr/?lang=en> (under 1 hour away)

From a middle ages fortress to a Renaissance Castle – famed for its magical inspiration for 'Sleeping Beauty'.

A full list of the Loire Chateaux can be found on: <https://www.leschateauxdelaloire.org/en/members/>

Historical sites:

Maillé - <https://www.maisondusouvenir.fr/home/> (10 minutes away)

In August 1944, while Parisians celebrated its liberation, an atrocious massacre took place in the tiny village of Maillé, killing 124 people from 3 months to 89 years.

Musée de Blindies – Saumur <https://www.museedesblindes.fr/en/> (1 hour away)

A museum displaying 800 of the world's largest collection of armoured vehicles, nearly 200 of which are operational.

Oradour-sur-Glane – <http://www.oradour.info/general/introd01.htm> (Approx 2½ hours away).

Oradour-sur-Glane is a preserved village in the Haute-Vienne region of France where the massacre of 642 men, women and children took place. Very moving.

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Canoeing/Kayaking:

Canoeing/kayaking in the Loire Valley: <https://www.touraineloirevalley.co.uk/?s=kayaking>

Canoeing – Marcilly-sur-Vienne (10 minutes away)

Right on our doorstep, excellent canoeing trips along the river Vienne.

Sunset trips in the Loire Valley: <https://www.loirekayak.com/en/trips/daytime/> - rub titre

Other options include stand up paddling; 'cycling & canoeing' expeditions whilst taking in chateaux along the way.

Hot air ballooning:

Discover the Loire Valley by hot air balloon: <https://www.loire-et-montgolfiere.com/en/>

The nearest company offering hot air ballooning is just 20 minutes away. (March/April – October)

Gardens/Parks

Rendez-vous aux Jardins - <https://www.france-voyage.com/evenements/rendez-vous-aux-jardins-201.htm>

Organised by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, this event takes place on the first weekend of June every year, where 2,000 public and private gardens open their doors to the public. Includes lectures, readings, demonstrations and gardening workshops for adults and children.

Journées de la rose / Days of the Rose: <http://www.journeesdelarose.com/> Doue-la-Fontaine (1 hour away) July

Approx 7 million roses are grown at Doue la Fontaine, known as the pink city. This visit is a walk of several hundred meters in a troglodytic gallery.

Festival of Roses, Chedigny <https://www.chedigny.fr/festival-des-roses-de-chedigny-article-9-0-94.html> (1 hour away) May

Garden lovers will be thrilled with a visit to pretty village of Chedigny to view the huge array of spectacular roses grown throughout the village. The village hosts more than 60 exhibitors, including rose growers, workshops, painters, sculptors, ceramists, photographers, musicians and street painters.

Wine Tastings/Tours

April – the town of Chinon is filled with approx. 50 wine growers for a dedicated weekend tasting event. (20 minutes away)

May – the caves of Panzoult open for a wonderful wine tasting and festival weekend over the bank holiday 1st May.



Vines, Wines and walks in the Loire Valley: <http://www.france-voyage.com/evenements/vignes-vins-randos-val-loire-218.htm> <https://www.vvr-valdeloire.fr/>

During the first weekend of September, more than 15 wine tours are organised through the vineyards of the Anjou, the Loire Valley and Touraine. Each walk last approx. 3 hours and is accompanied by a local winegrower. These walks are accessible for everyone and include breaks to taste wines and cheeses from the area. This is a unique opportunity to discover some of the fabulous vineyards and landscapes of the Loire Valley.

Antique Markets:

For antique collectors and lovers the French brocante/antique markets are a must! They are large, usually set along the river (Chinon and Monsoreau in particular) and full of furniture, hidden gems and treasures.

1st Sunday of the month: Montreuil Bellay

2nd Sunday of the month: Montsoreau

3rd Sunday of the month: Chinon

4th Sunday of the month: Saumur

5th Sunday of the month: Azay-le-Rideau

Towns and villages to explore:

Chinon - *Vibrant medieval town with lots of shops, restaurants and street cafés. Full of charming side streets and interesting architecture, situated along the river Vienne. The town is famous for its connections with Jean d'Arc (Joan of Arc) and Richard the Lionheart. A majestic fortress commands spectacular views over the town.*

Chinon is also perfect to enjoy a peaceful river outing on a traditional boat.

Wine tastings, music festivals and a medieval festival takes place through the summer months. (20 minutes away)

Loches – *Lovely old medieval town with small cobbled streets and shops to explore. Thriving weekly food and general market held on Wednesday mornings. It also boasts a huge dungeon to explore. (30 minutes away)*

Three villages in particular are members of 'Plus beaux villages de France' (France's most beautiful villages): Montrésor, Candes-Saint-Martin and Crissay-sur-Manse. *(20-45 minutes away)*

Villaines-les-Rochers is also known for its traditional French basketry work with 70 craftsmen located in the village where the ancient craft of wicker work is practiced throughout the year. The co-operative shop has an amazing display of the craft of weaving willow into all manner of saleable goods from shopping baskets to infant cribs. Well worth a visit on a wet day. (20-25 minutes away)



Cathedrals/Churches/Abbeys

Dating back to the XII century, the listed building of Bois-Aubrey is just a *10 minute cycle ride* away from *La Vrilleterie* and where the ashes of the actor *Yul Brynner* is buried.

Fontevraud Abbey – Considered as one of the greatest monastic cities in Europe, the Abbey of Fontevraud is impressive both in its size and originality. Transformed into a prison by Napoleon in 1804, it was saved from destruction and became a penitentiary centre. The last prisoners did not leave until 1985. A fascinating place to visit.

Boat Trips: *Take a relaxing boat ride on the Loire/Vienne. Chinon and Montsoreau*

Cycling:

Vintage Cycle ride: - La Rando Vélo Retro – Samur (1 hour away). 24 & 25 June 2017 – why not take part in a fabulous vintage cycle ride. Wonderful weekend for cyclists, visitors and spectators. Details can be found on: <https://www.anjou-velo-vintage.com/en/>

Enjoy cycling through the peaceful, countryside roads and take in the magnificent scenery. More info on cycling in and around the Loire Valley can be found on <https://loirevalleycycling.com/>

The 'voie verte' cycling route from Richelieu to Chinon has recently been opened passing through lovely woodland and countryside. Ideal for walkers and cyclists alike. *(15 minutes away)*

Horse Riding

Relais de Plessis – 10 minutes away. Brilliant for youngsters and adults. Enjoy trekking through the forest and grooming the horses afterwards.

Equestrian Centre, Pouzay. <https://www.cepouzay.com/> Tel: 02 47 65 32 99 (10 minutes away)

Golf courses:

There are several excellent golf courses within an hour's distance away:

Haut-Poitou: <https://www.golfduhautpoitou.fr/en/> (45 minutes away).

Golf de Touraine: <https://www.golf-larocheposay.fr/> (40 minutes away)

Golf de Saumur: <https://www.golf-saumur.fr/> (1 hour away)

Golf de La Gloriette: www.golfdelagloriette.com (50 minutes away)

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Domaine de Roiffe: <https://www.domainederoiffe.fr/en/> (50 minutes away)

Beaches/Coastal resorts:

St Cyr has a manmade beach/lake in a beautiful setting. Safe for children (with life guards) to play and swim and plenty of pedalos and canoes for hire for a pootle on the lake. There is also a café serving hot food or feel free to take a picnic) - (40 minutes away).

*Our nearest coastal resort is **La Rochelle** which is an easy two hour car journey away. A very popular area for tourists with plenty of shops and pavement cafés.*

*In addition, **Il de Re** is a wonderful island off La Rochelle and well worth a visit.*
