

Cycling in and around the Loire Cottages

Our village is ideally situated for excellent cycling of all standards.

Within a couple of kilometers from La Touraine a vast network of very safe and delightful bike paths can be accessed.

Generally these follow the Vienne, Indre and Loire Rivers. This ensures that the paths are relatively flat. The paths marked along the route with a cycling symbol are relatively easy to follow but you must keep a constant watch out for them. In most cases they are also well sealed (although there are a couple of short sections that are not completely satisfactory). The paths pass through some pretty villages and lovely scenery through vineyards, fields of sunflowers, barley and wheat depending on the season. Perhaps our favourite segment is where the paths approach the village of Cande-St-Martin at the confluence of the Vienne and Loire Rivers. Suggested routes are included in a number of brochures covering various areas, titled Loire a Velo, available at the Tourism Centre. Depending on preferences and expertise the trips can be short, 10 to 20 km or much longer.

Our favourite longer trip is to go to Tours, a trip of approximately 75 klm with the option for side trips to various Chateaux. You initially ride along the Vienne River then the Loire, passing the confluences of the Loire and Cher Rivers and finally following the Cher River into Tours and finishing at the railway station. One can then face a daunting 75klm return trip or more likely take the bike in to the Rail Station and travel by fast train to either Loire cottage, a short distance from the station.

Bicycle hire is available in a number of locations although we decided to bring our own in the plane in bikebags.

Cycling in and around the Dordogne

Cycling in the Dordogne can be a delight, but we believe that you really need to be an experienced cyclist. By Experienced cyclist we mean someone who gets their lycra on and rides more than 150kms per week. The terrain around about is very pleasant, in that it involves a spider web of well sealed narrow roads, but these are quite hilly and not for the purely recreational cyclist who does not own their own road or mountain bike. There is a bike shop in town but it only rents and sells very basic bikes and certainly not road or mountain bikes as we know them. Therefore, we would thoroughly recommend that you should bring your own road or mountain bike.

For those who want to get up early and believe that hills are your friend we would recommend a ride to Belvès and return, about 40 km.

Cycling in and around Provence

Similar to the Loire, the region around the village provides cycling that suits all standards. There are marked cycle tracks to Pont du Gard that we would recommend. The ride to Pont du Gard is around 36 kms for the round trip. Although the roads are generally quite safe (essentially sealed cart tracks) there are some hills and in some the sealed surface becomes unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, cyclists of all standards would enjoy this ride as it of course can include a visit to the magnificent Pont du Gard.

Apart from this, there are many rides in the area some of which can be verbally recommended by the owners of a very good bike shop run by an English couple in the adjoining village of St Quentin la Poterie. This shop caters for cyclists of all levels and is developing a business of taking tourists on guided rides around the area as well as providing several services including sale and rental of good quality road bikes and mountain bikes.

They are hesitant to provide brochures and other written information about the best rides around the area as they believe that this is part of their intellectual property.

However do not be put off by this as they are willing to offer advice verbally and lend you maps.

A favourite ride of ours that they recommend is a ride to Mont Bouquet. This involves a total round trip of around 65klms with about 10 kms up and down the very steep Mont Bouquet. Keen climbing riders only on this ride. However there are many other rides that can be envisaged by reading maps of the area, as there are many quiet country roads that are sealed and scenic and pass through many pretty villages.

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