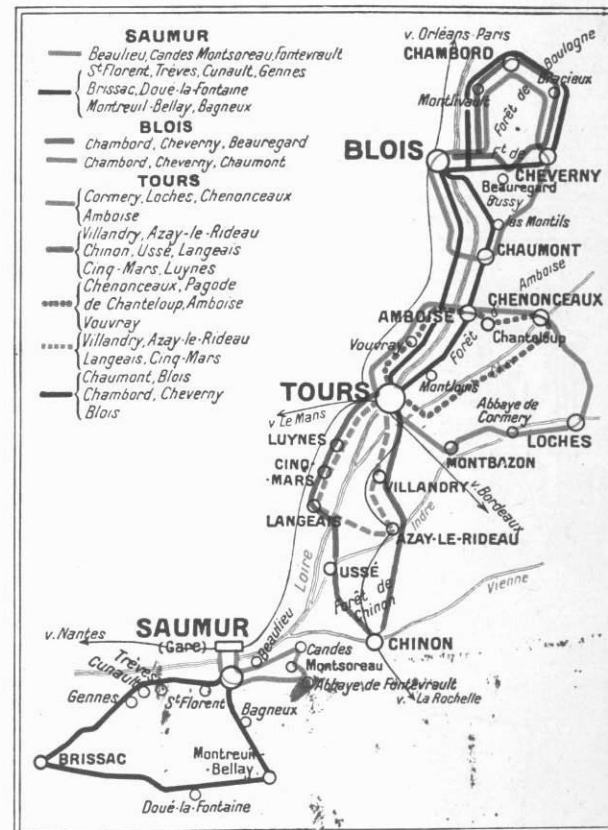


Visit the  
**CHATEAUX OF THE LOIRE**  
by means of the  
**FRENCH RAILWAYS' AUTOCAR TOURS**  
from **BLOIS, TOURS** and **SAUMUR**  
railway stations



**FROM BLOIS**  
Tour ——— Daily from April 1 to October 1.  
Departure 1 p. m. Return 5 p. m.  
Tour ——— Daily from April 1 to October 1.  
Departure 1 p. m. Return 6.30 p. m.

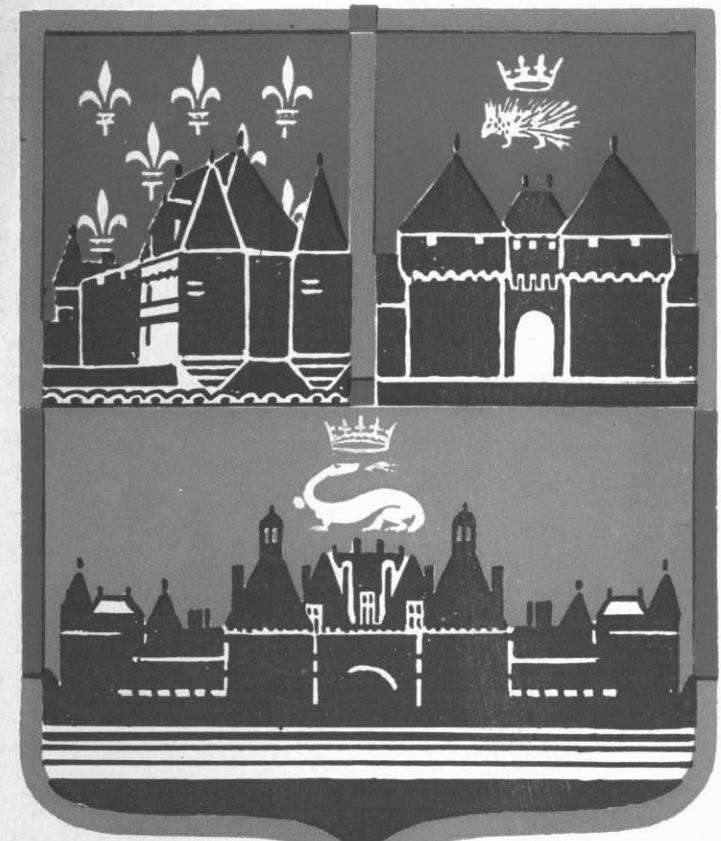
**FROM SAUMUR**  
Tour ——— Every Wednesday from July 5 to September 13.  
Departure 1.15 p. m. Return 6 p. m.  
Tour ——— Every Thursday from July 6 to September 14.  
Departure 1.15 p. m. Return 6.30 p. m.

**FROM TOURS**  
Tour ——— Daily from April 1 to October 1.  
Departure 9 a. m. Return 6.15 p. m.  
Tour ——— Daily, except Mondays and Fridays, from April 2 to September 30.  
Departure 9 a. m. Return 6.15 p. m.  
Tour ——— Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays from April 2 to October 1.  
Departure 1.15 p. m. Return 6 p. m.  
Tour ——— Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from April 2 to October 1.  
Departure 1.15 p. m. Return 6 p. m.  
Tour ——— Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from April 1 to September 30.  
Departure 8.45 a. m. Return 7 p. m.

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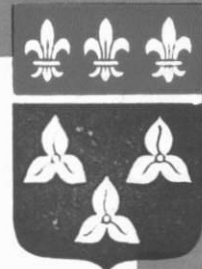
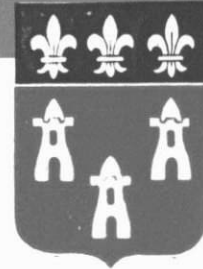
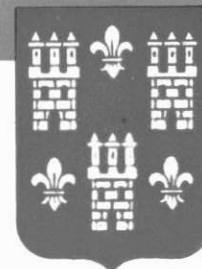
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**THE  
CHATEAUX  
OF THE  
LOIRE**



● Art and nature have combined to make the valley of the Loire one of the most beautiful districts in all France. The countryside is open, the atmosphere clear and the climate agreeably pleasant. Its people have an innate courtesy reflected in the soft and gentle tones of their Touraine dialect. The soil is rich and since time immemorial has provided the inhabitants with plenty and given them a taste for the good things in life. It is a land of art and history for it abounds in monuments, castles and manor-houses which are in complete harmony with their lovely setting. These delightful characteristics make the valley of the Loire one of the loveliest and happiest of regions, and it is therefore not surprising that it is a place where travellers delight to linger, attracted by the charm of so much contentment and beauty.

● It was a great political event which completed the work of nature and endowed this part of France with much of its present attractiveness, for one of its consequences was that at a time when art had attained a pinnacle of magnificence in France, the centre of French culture was suddenly transported to the valley of the Loire, the garden of France, which thus became the cradle of French Renaissance art. It was just before the end of the Hundred Years' War that the French King, forced to retire before the invader, sought refuge beyond the Loire. This was in 1418 when the Dauphin Charles VII had to flee hurriedly from Paris before the advance of the Burgundian invaders. When he eventually returned to his capital, the King still retained pleasant memories of that friendly country which had received him in his distress, and his successors lingered there until the end of the 16th century. Joan of Arc, in order to rejoin the fugitive King Charles VII, had to advance as far as Chinon. Louis XI, after spending his youth at Loches, ended his reign at his famous manorhouse of Plessis-les-Tours. Charles VIII was another King attracted by the charm of the valley of the Loire and it was at Amboise where he was directing building operations that he succumbed as the result of striking his head against the vaulting. His successor, Louis XII, came to reside at Blois, and one of the wings of the chateau there preserves the same aspect as it did during his reign. François I also added much to the Chateau of Blois, of which the two famous facades bearing his monogram and the famous salamander are most beautiful examples of Renaissance art. Not far from Blois, he built that incomparable jewel, the Chateau of Chambord. From that time onwards, the Crown renewed its time-honoured associations with its former capital, but its ties with the valley of the Loire were not entirely severed, for the last of the Valois stayed at Amboise and Blois.

● These pages of history reveal the evolution of the chateau from the original fortress, stern and forbidding, to the gay luxurious palace. The oldest of them Angers, Chinon, Loches, Luynes and even Nantes, have preserved the massive austerity typical of that period in history when violence and fear were rife. Before these mighty and imperishable ruins, the visitor marvels at such a display of power. The thickness of the walls and the depth of the galleries conjure up in the mind scenes of terrible captivity, and the sinister happenings of mediæval times. But from the top of these forbidding piles, on the terraces, what beauty meets the eye! The lovely

plain and valley spread out as far as the eye can see and from the high walls of the fortresses, their inmates could survey the beauty of an incomparable countryside. In the Dark Ages, they were more concerned, however, in keeping a vigilant watch for the approach of their enemies, but with the advent of the 16th century, they no longer patrolled the battlements except for the pleasant task of admiring the landscape. After having closed itself to the outside world for reasons of defence, the chateau was now thrown open to light and to nature so as to add to the pleasures of a lovely dwelling, the charm of the seasons and of the hours. In a century, the feudal fortress gave way to the enchanted palace. This was one of the marvels wrought by the Renaissance, that period of art which transports us to the wonderful land of fairy tales.

● The Chateaux of Langeais and Ussé are still to this day beautiful palaces within strong walls, but light and air now penetrate into their deepest recesses through large windows let into their many towers and curtain-walls where in the Middle Ages forbidding darkness reigned. Amboise, Blois and Chambord show how the ingenuity of the architect has been able to embellish these beautiful facades. An old feudal practice has been retained in the arrangement of stone ornamentations, chimneys and dormer-windows around the roofing, to which a staircase gives access. In the case of the Chateau of Blois, it takes the form of an openwork tower which is the most delightful feature of the courtyard. In the same way at Chambord, the entire chateau is commanded by a unique double staircase, the central axis of this enormous pile, which leads to the roof. At Chaumont, the main building of the Chateau of Chaumont lines only three sides of the square, the fourth wing having been demolished to form a terrace overlooking the valley. Towers, battlements and machicolations, now that they were no longer of practical use, became merely ornamentations, survivals of an age long since passed but still the sign of noble descent, just as the sword worn with court dress signifies the nobility of the profession of arms. For similar reasons, chateaux were no longer erected on lofty heights from whence they scanned the horizon and defied attack. It was more pleasant on the peaceful plain by the banks of some slowly flowing stream. Peaceful rivers and lakes replaced to advantage the moats of the old fortresses. Azay-le-Rideau and Chenonceaux owe their picturesque charm to this combination of beautiful architecture and mirror-like waters. Chateaux such as Cheverny, which typify the transitional period from the Renaissance to the classic, preserve intact their natural setting of foliage and flowers and their interior decoration of tapestries and paintings.

● As the heavy stonework of the Middle Ages gave way to light, refined and charming structures with the blossoming of the Renaissance, so did the poets of that period find delight in singing the praises of the joy and beauty of life. The valley of the Loire, by the bounty of nature and the art of man, seems to radiate an atmosphere of eternal springtime.

Louis HOUTICQ,  
Of the Institut Français.