



## Trip description

### Cycling the Velo Francette route from Saumur to La Rochelle

From the Loire Valley to the Atlantic Coast, discover an authentic itinerary off the beaten track, riding along the Vélo Francette route.

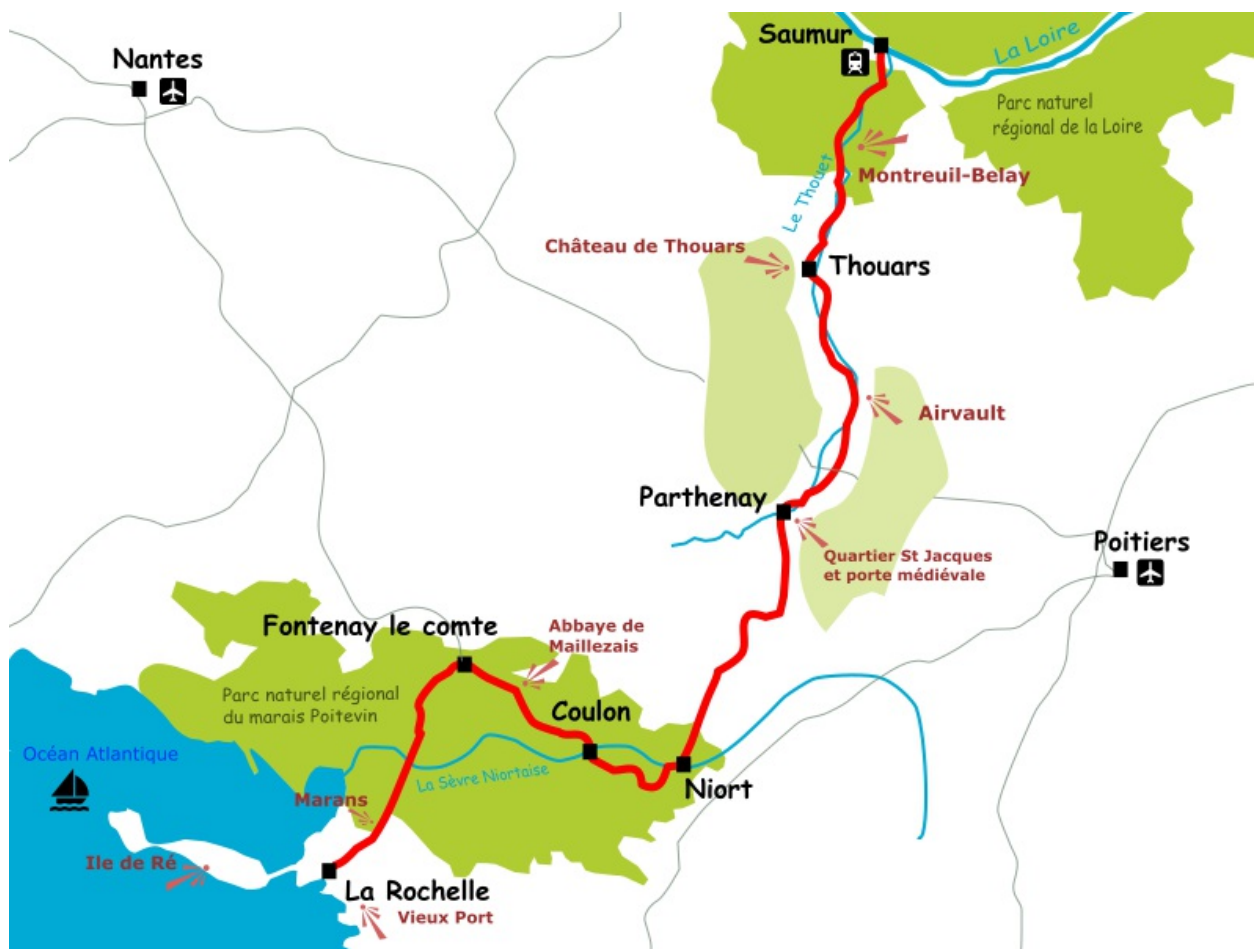


Destination	France
Location	Charente-Maritime
Duration	8 days
Difficulty Level	Moderate
Validity	April to October
Minimum age	14 years old
Reference	VF0801

Type of stay  
itinerant trip



### Itinerary



Discover one of the most varied portions of the Vélo Francette itinerary, between Saumur and La Rochelle, your cycling trip offers you, through a

mosaic of landscapes, the possibility to appreciate an authentic and calm bike itinerary.

Starting from Saumur, and the famous castles of the Loire Valley, you will ride along small country roads following the Thouet river, stopping in Parthenay, capital of the game and with its medieval atmosphere, then in Niort, with its ancient dungeon and its cathedral.

Immerse yourself to the heart of nature and the softness of the Poitevin marshes with a stop in Coulon, after a detour in Fontenay-le-Comte and the majestic Maillezais abbey, you finish your trip in La Rochelle, gateway to the Atlantic.

Ride through bucolic landscapes, between small shared roads and greenways, small cities of character, this trip is an ode to the sweetness of life, to the beauty of landscapes and to the unique charm of each stage.

A cycling interlude out of time!

## Day 1

### Arrival in Saumur

Discover the charming old town of Saumur and its magnificent castle crowning the city. Saumur is not only the capitale of the equestrian art but also a gastronomy center surrounded by a rich wine area.

## Day 2

### Saumur - Thouars

Bike  
47km

You leave Saumur and its castle resting on its "emerald rock" and start by following the Thouet river through abundant and calm nature. A break is essential in Montreuil-Bellay and its castle with majestic architecture. The building, which overlooks the Thouet, offers you a splendid setting for your lunch.

Continue your route in the afternoon and enjoy the cool shade of the Ballastière lake and the generous flora that surrounds it. After a beautiful climb, you end your day in Thouars and its castle of the Dukes of La Trémoille.

## Day 3

### Thouars - Parthenay

Bike  
68km

You leave Thouars with a magnificent view of the castle of the Dukes of La Trémoille overlooking the Thouet and walk along the river throughout the day. You ride to Saint G n roux where you can admire its old bridge and its pre-Romanesque church. Pedal a few more kilometers to reach Airvault. You will appreciate this small city of character and its abbey church, take the time for a lunch break.

Your route then leads you to Saint-Loup-sur-Thouet with its 17th century castle and its French gardens.

Continue your journey, follow the signs "V lo Francette" to the Lac du C bron, a haven of peace with bucolic landscapes.

Your arrival in Parthenay from the bottom of the city allows you to pass the old gate and the fortifications. You will then be able to walk through cobbled streets and half-timbered houses. Soak up the medieval atmosphere of the city which is transformed every summer into the capital of the game.

## Day 4

### Parthenay - Niort

Bike  
55km

This stage of the Velo Francette itinerary goes west to reach the Vend e. On the horizon this morning takes shape the country of G tine, between authentic villages, country roads and generous nature, the relief becomes more marked.

Visit Mazi res-en-G tine with its Romanesque church and halfway along the route allow yourself a stop at Champdeniers, a village overlooking the valley with its old tannery site and its castle.

You will reach the river banks of the S vre Niortaise at Temanteuil, then ride to the town of Niort. Gateway to the Poitevin marshes, you will appreciate the pleasant and welcoming atmosphere of the city.

Take the time to stroll through the narrow streets of Niort and admire its ancient dungeon and its churches, in particular the church of Saint-Andr  with its bell tower which embellishes the capital of Deux S vres.

## Day 5

### Niort - Coulon

Bike  
46km

You ride along on the bike path along the river to leave Niort and reach the small country roads in the marshes. Through the quiet and lovely small villages, you reach Arçais also called the "Green Venice of the Marais Poitevin". After a lunch on the harbor, you can board small boats and navigate through the narrow canals to discover the rich flora and fauna (coypus, the "angélique" a local plant, etc.).

In the afternoon, your bike tour take you to the picturesque charm of the wild marshes through Saint-Georges-de-Rex before reaching Coulon, a small village with white stone houses. You can visit the interesting museum of the marshes to complete your knowledge of the region.

## Day 6

### Coulon - Fontenay-le-Comte

Bike  
54km

You leave Coulon through the marshes of the Marais Poitevin by riding on the dams. You cross a large part of the wet marshes. Your bike ride leads you to Maillezais where you visit an abbey of the 11th century, one of the starting point of the history of the Marais Poitevin. The bike route takes you then to the city of Fontenay-le-Comte, where you can enjoy a leisurely stroll, visit the many churches and the Renaissance castle of Terre-Neuve.

## Day 7

### Fontenay-le-Comte - La Rochelle

Bike  
58km

You follow the Vendée river to Marans and enjoy the charm of the marsh Marais Poitevin. In the afternoon, you ride through La Rochelle countryside following a canal before reaching the old port of La Rochelle. The city prosperous past can be easily noticed thanks to its nice architecture from which the old fortified harbor is remarkable.

La Rochelle offers a wide range of cultural and touristic activities. Do not miss La Rochelle aquarium. The city is very well equipped with cycling paths, which makes it perfect for discovering it on a bicycle.

## Day 8

### Departure from La Rochelle

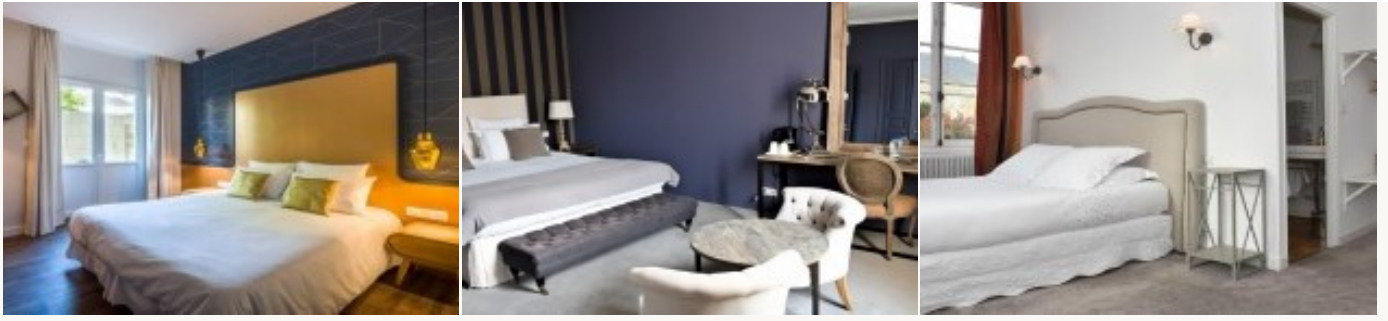
After breakfast, you leave for your next destination or extend your stay as you wish.

## Accommodation

### Category B

You will be accommodated in 3-Star hotels or Bed and Breakfasts. We have selected the accommodations for their charm, and their quality. Breakfast is included.





\* Example of the type of accommodation

## Practical information

### To get to departure point:

**By plane:** flight to Paris or Nantes and then train to Saumur.

**By train:** Train from Paris Montparnasse station. The estimated duration of the trip is 2h30. To plan your trip, [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com).

### Parking

If you drive to Saumur, you can park your car in a secured car park located in the city center, close to your accommodation and the train station. The daily rate is and decreases depending on the duration. The location and contact details of the car park will be given in your travel documents.

### To get back to starting point:

Regional trains take you back to your starting point if you wish. They are accessible with booking in advance and bicycles are free (subject to availability).

We can also organise a transfer in a private vehicle on demand.

### Meeting time:

The first day is an arrival day without cycling. You arrive whenever you want depending on from where you come. Please note that rooms are usually available in the middle of the afternoon depending on your accommodation. We thank you to advise us if you plan to arrive late.

## Price description

Package not available from the 12th to the 23rd of July 2023 (*International games festival in Parthenay*)

### Category B

Double room fare

1045 €/pers

7 nights in \*\*\* charming hotels or bed & breakfast

7 breakfasts

6-day rental of a fully-equipped bike (saddle bags, locks, toolkit)

luggage transport from one lodging to the other

the access to our mobile app including the roadbook and the practical and tourist information

the return of the bikes

7d/7hotline

Extra for a single room

On request

Extra night in Saumur

60 €/pers

Extra night in La Rochelle

85 €/pers

### Options

Extra for the rental of an electric bike (6 days)

120 €/pers

Low season(\*) extra charge

90 €/pers

**The package doesn't include:**

the journey to the tour location  
the drinks  
local visitors' taxes  
the meals which are not included  
the entrance fee to sites  
insurances (optional)

**(\*) Low season :**

**From the 1st of April until the 15th of June and from the 15th of September to the 31st of October**

**Children discount** (in the same room as 2 full rate participants)

0-4 year : -70%  
5-11 year : -50%  
12-17 year : -30%

For more information or booking : [www.levelovoyageur.com](http://www.levelovoyageur.com)  
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