

Family Travel Blog

ciaobambino.com/loire-valley-with-kids

Kate Loweth

January 15, 2026



Thanks to its mild climate, fertile river plains and aristocratic horticultural traditions, the Loire Valley is rich in gorgeous gardens like this one at Château de Cheverny. Photo by Dorian Mongel on Unsplash

France's Loire Valley with Kids: Countryside Idylls & Castle Dreams

[Loire Valley](#) [France](#) [Europe](#) [Family Vacation Ideas](#)

The [Loire Valley](#) is [France](#) at its most laid-back and enchanting, a place where fairytale castles rise above rolling vineyards and medieval towns glow in golden light. It's easy to fall in love with this stretch of countryside southwest of Paris, especially for families. Children are welcome pretty

much everywhere, yet nothing feels overly kid-focused, giving parents the rare gift of culture and sophistication without the restrictions that sometimes accompany classic European sightseeing.

What makes the Loire so magical is how simple it is to settle into its rhythm. Days stretch out unhurriedly, shaped by picnics in château gardens, slow bike rides along the region's namesake river and strolls through weekly markets where tables overflow with strawberries and just-baked baguettes. There's a sense of discovery around every corner, with maze-like castle grounds to explore and small towns where children can run freely while parents linger at a local café. The Loire invites you to slow down, indulge your senses and truly savor time together.



Thanks to its mild climate, fertile river plains and aristocratic horticultural traditions, the Loire Valley is rich in gorgeous gardens like this one at Château de Cheverny. Photo by Dorian Mongel on Unsplash

Where to Go in the Loire Valley with Kids

Getting around the Loire Valley is best done by car, as there are many small towns worth exploring. You can drive to the Loire in about three hours from Paris, or take the train to Tours (the main TGV hub) or Blois and pick up a rental car when you arrive.



The ornate Hotel de Ville houses the city offices in Tours. Photo by Jordi Vich Navarro on Unsplash

Tours

Cobbled streets and half-timbered townhouses give the city of Tours its historic charm. Spend some time exploring on foot, or rent bikes to pedal along the riverside paths and beyond. Adventure seekers will enjoy a stop at Gadawi Park North, where you can climb trees and glide along ziplines. When you're ready for a bite to eat, Place Plumereau has plenty to offer those looking to linger and enjoy the company (alfresco in nice weather).

The Gothic facade of the Cathédrale Saint-Gatien will draw you in, but it's the cathedral's innumerable stained-glass windows that will mesmerize you. Families looking to learn about the natural world will enjoy a stop at the city's natural history museum or a visit to the Musée du Compagnonnage, a crafts museum exhibiting a sugar violin and a massive pair of wooden shoes.

Learn more about how we help families plan their dream trips.

Get info and read FAQs about how our custom travel planning service works, from boutique hotel bookings to hand-designed itineraries. [Click for details!](#)

Amboise

You can't visit the Loire Valley without checking out a château or two. A good place to get acquainted with some of the standout options is Parc Mini-Châteaux in Amboise, where 1/25th-size replicas of more than 40 castles are on display.

Amboise is also home to Clos Lucé, the estate where inventor Leonardo da Vinci spent the last three years of his life. Explore his restored living quarters, then walk through the surrounding gardens, where you can try out life-size working models of some of his inventions.



Original half-timbered houses still line a number of streets in Angers. Photo by Snap Wander on Unsplash

Angers

Angers blends culture with kid-friendly fun — this university town has a youthful energy paired with medieval architecture and green spaces. The town's trams make getting around simple, even with strollers. Start at Château d'Angers, a fortress with massive striped stone towers and the famed Apocalypse Tapestry. Then head to Terra Botanica, a botanical theme park with boat rides, treetop trails and giant walnut shell cars you pedal yourself.



A view over Blois from the town's namesake château. Photo by Dorian Mongel on Unsplash

Blois

Start your exploration of Blois by water with a ride on a *fûtreau*, a traditional flat-bottomed Loire boat, with a guide who can share the city's royal history along the way. Next, head to the Robert-Houdin house of magic, where live performances and visual illusions trick the mind. Comic strip fans will want to spend some time exploring the Maison de la BD (House of Comics), where original French comics like *The Adventures of Tintin* are on display. Don't miss a visit to the Château Royal de Blois at nightfall when audio-visual effects take over.



The medieval Château de Saumur presides over the town and the Loire. Photo by Snap Wander on Unsplash

Saumur

Dominated by the fanciful Château de Saumur, which sits above the town and surrounding vineyards, this town welcomes visitors seeking a slower pace and a relaxed day of exploration. The Cadre Noir, France's national riding school, is a highlight for animal-loving families. Saumur is also the best base for exploring the troglodyte caves nearby, where you can wander through underground chapels and dwellings carved out of soft tuffeau limestone.



Also known as the Château des Dames for the powerful women who shaped it, Chenonceau has one of the most picturesque settings of any Loire Valley estate. Photo by Marius Girard on Unsplash

Best Châteaux to Visit

With more than 300 châteaux in the Loire Valley, travelers are spoiled for choice. Here are our picks for the highlights not to miss:

Château de Chenonceau

This stunning château that spans the River Cher is quite popular with visitors, so booking tickets in advance is recommended. The interior is meticulously restored and immaculate, yet authentic, and the castle is small enough that you can tour all the rooms in 45 minutes or so. Kids will enjoy visiting the flower garden, winding their way through the garden maze and checking out the animals at the farm. In addition, the adjacent town of Chenonceau is adorable and a good place for a lunch stop or to buy supplies for a picnic in the area.

Château de Cheverny

Dog lovers, here's the château for you! Visit the kennels that house more than a hundred hunting dogs. Like Chenonceau, Cheverny is one of the few in the Loire Valley with fully furnished rooms open for tours, making it easier for children to imagine what life was like there in years past. Head

outdoors to visit the tulip garden that comes alive with color in April, and then try your luck navigating the labyrinth maze. During peak season, you can tour the grounds by electric car and boat.



The largest chateau in the Loire Valley, Chambord was built as a hunting lodge for King Francis I. Photo by Dorian Mongel on Unsplash

Château de Chambord

Much of the architecture at this fairytale castle is said to be inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, including the double-helix staircase that will be sure to mesmerize the little ones in your group. In the kids' discovery area, children can explore interactive stations and even dress up as royalty. Outdoors, you'll find plenty of areas for a family picnic.

Château d'Ussé

This chateau is often linked to Charles Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*, and kids will enjoy seeing life-size scenes from the story inside one of the towers. Although not all of the estate is open to the public, the rooms you can tour feature period furnishings and costumed mannequins. While exploring the grounds, stop by the stable to view the property's collection of horse-drawn vehicles.

Too busy to plan? We've got you covered.

Send us a quick inquiry, and we'll pair you with an expert Travel Advisor who can handle all your trip details: a custom-designed itinerary, private guides and experiences, and vetted accommodations, often with valuable perks to pass along. [Click to get started!](#)



The gardens and hedge maze at Château de Villandry are best admired from a high vantage point. Photo by Hannes Klöpfer on Unsplash

Château de Villandry

Known for its beautiful and elaborate gardens, this château also includes a maze that's a hit with children in the summer months. The gardens are vast but divided into distinct, symmetrical sections that make them easy to explore. (Tip: The best view of them is from the higher vantage points inside and outside the castle, where you can look down and appreciate the complete designs.) Interactive displays teach you about the flora grown onsite. If the kids need to burn off steam, head to the Sun Garden, where you'll find a small playground.



Antiques from local markets imbue Les Sources des Cheverny with a sense of place and history. Photo courtesy of Les Sources de Cheverny

Where to Stay in the Loire Valley with Kids

From luxury castle hotels to historic manors tucked among vineyards, the Loire Valley offers a wide range of stays that work beautifully for families. Properties here understand the pace of family travel while still delivering refined service and the region's signature sense of calm ... slow mornings, outdoor space to roam and rooms configured for togetherness.

Nestled between Chenonceau and Chambord, [Les Sources de Cheverny](#) delivers quiet luxury in one of the Loire's most convenient locations. The property feels like a countryside retreat wrapped in forest and vineyards, an easy place to unwind after a day of sightseeing. Forty-nine rooms and suites offer everything from cozy couples' retreats to multi-room configurations where families can spread out. Spend some time exploring the property's wooded path or relax by the outdoor pool and hot tub. Adults looking for a moment of zen can book a treatment at Spa Caudalie, where vinotherapy massages and grapeseed extract facials are favorites.



Elegant accommodations at Les Hauts de Loire bear decidedly French accents such as classic toile de Jouy prints. Photo © Romain Ricard/Courtesy of Les Hauts de Loire

For families who want fine dining built into their stay, [Les Hauts de Loire](#) is a dreamy option. Accommodations in the 18th-century hunting lodge are spread across the main château, the carriage house and the pavilion, with two-bedroom suites that give families the breathing room they need. Parents will appreciate the two-Michelin-star restaurant, where the tasting menu feels like a special-occasion night out without leaving the property. Meanwhile, kids can spend a happy stretch of the afternoon at the onsite kids' club, freeing parents to enjoy the steam room, sauna and treatments at the Spa by Clarins. When everyone reconvenes, the surrounding woods are perfect for pre-dinner strolls and wildlife spotting.

