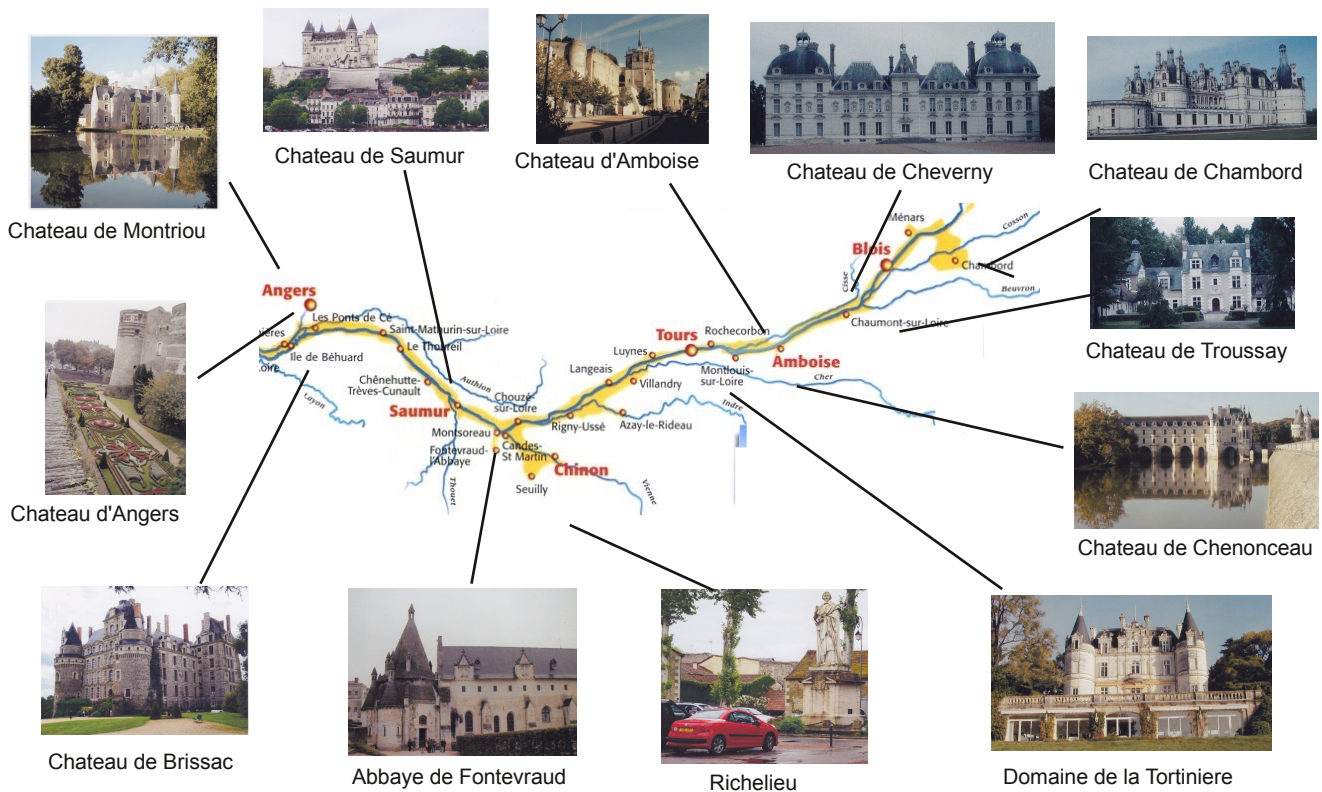


Loire Valley



The diagram above is an amalgamation of many occasions when we have visited the Loire Valley. All the photographs are ours. The following are a few of the most interesting experiences,

Well, the joy of France is that most stops are interesting! But one stop north of Angers stood out for us. And it was unplanned!.

We had identified a logis north of Angers. The 'patron', apparently well fed and well lubricated said: "Désolé - nous sommes complet" – but he kindly telephoned somewhere which might have a room. And it did. He directed us to the Chateau de Montrou. On arrival we were surprised by the activity – people carrying heavily laden bags back to cars. Rounding the corner, we found the Pumpkin Festival in full swing, with pumpkins of every shape and colour on display and for sale. We found the chateau owner among the pumpkins, and he showed us to our room at the top of a turret, up a spiral staircase. Later, we went out for a meal in the village – but we forgot one thing! We returned in darkness, and we had no idea where the light switch was at the foot of the staircase. We groped our way up!

We have stayed in Saumur at the Mercure. This hotel was no great pleasure, but it had the advantages of riverside location, fine view of the chateau (above), and easy parking.



South of Tours we stayed once at the Domaine de Tortiniere. Expensive! But a reduction secured, and a glance at the weather outside overcame our reluctance. And the weather was forgotten as we sat in front of a fire that had been lit just for us.

Not far from here, we have stayed twice at the Chateau de Beaulieu Hotel - converted from a gracious 18th Century house to a hotel.



Leaving the Loire Valley south of Chinon, the town of Richelieu makes an interesting stop. It was the 1641 project of Cardinal Richelieu, 'a marvel of urban planning'.

Entrance gates lead through the 'Grande Rue' to a large square, beyond which are gates to the Park, just preceded by the statue of Richelieu. The Park, once occupied by the chateau has major water-features.



On one visit we found the park busy with a huge outdoor market.