

Tour
Information



Walking in Alsace





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

You will be issued with return train tickets.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Paris, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggage**man, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggage.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Strasbourg you will be met by your guide and transferred to the beautiful wine village of Guebenschwihr for a 3 night stay.

You will then be transferred to Riquewhir, where you will spend a further 3 nights.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Relais du Vignoble, Gueberrschwihr

A friendly family-run two-star hotel set in the heart of the Alsace vineyards on the edge of the medieval village of Gueberrschwihr, the Relais du Vignoble offers excellent views. Facilities here include restaurant, garden with terrace, wine cellar, and comfortable bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, and telephone. Ask at the reception to use the safe and wi-fi (extra cost).

Unfortunately, rooms at the Relais du Vignoble do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we recommend you bring a travel kettle if required.

For more information please visit their website:
<http://lerelaisduvignoble.free.fr/index.php>

La Couronne, Riquewhir

Set in the heart of the lovely village of Riquewhir, this family run hotel built in 1550 offers traditional Alsatian hospitality, a stone spiral staircase and a labyrinth of corridors. Facilities in the comfortable bedrooms include private bath/shower, TV, telephone and wi-fi.

Unfortunately, rooms at La Couronne do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we recommend you bring a travel kettle if required.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:
<http://hoteldelacouronne.com/en/index.php>



Food

At the end of each full day we can relax and enjoy the excellent Alsatian wines and cuisine. Alsace is a wonderful place for gourmets as it offers more Michelin star restaurants than any other region of France! Marked by its use of pork in various forms, Alsatian cuisine is strongly influenced by neighbouring Germany. Traditional dishes include *baeckeoffe* (casserole with potatoes, onions, mutton, beef and pork which have been marinated in Alsatian white wine and juniper berries), *flammekueche* (thin bread dough garnished with crème fraîche, lardons and onions), *choucroute* (sauerkraut) served with Strasbourg sausage, frankfurter, or smoked pork, *fleischnacka* (cooked meat, egg and onion stuffing, rolled in a fresh egg pasta), and *coq au Riesling*.

Kugelhopf (Bundt cake made with soft yeast dough containing raisins, almonds and Kirschwasser), *Kaeskueche* (fromage blanc tart) and *Gâteau au vin* (white or red wine cake) are popular sweets.

Coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *café au lait* (or *crème*) is requested.

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *à la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price). The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. Forget any preconceived ideas about Rieslings being sweet and nasty (perhaps you recall Black Tower or Blue Nun), as Alsace produces an excellent range of sophisticated white wines and some great champagne styles (*Crémant*) too. Some of these wines are so good that they never get the chance to leave Alsace and, of course, we will do all we can to maintain this tradition by tasting one or two...(or three or four!). Don't miss the delicious sweet dessert wine made with, *Gewürtztraminer* grapes.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

Alsace is also France's main beer-producing region, thanks primarily to breweries in and near Strasbourg, which include the international *Fischer*, *Karlsbräu Kroenenbourg* and *Heineken*, as well as plenty of artisanal microbreweries.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily; **Lunch** – one gourmet picnic;
Dinner – included on four nights



Destination

Nestled on the borders of Switzerland and Germany and separated from the rest of France by the Vosges Mountains, Alsace is one of France's best kept secrets. It has a fascinating and complex history; since 1870 Alsace has changed nationality five times. This has influenced everyday life – for example, even today, Alsatian newspapers have a German edition and many of the older generation speak Alsatian.

It is a world-renowned wine region and its famous "Route du Vin" (wine road) encompasses more than 100 wine producing villages between Strasbourg and Thann. As well as producing fantastic wines, Alsace is also France's best beer brewing region and a centre of culinary excellence, so you know that your efforts will be well rewarded!

Our tour will lead us through Grand Cru vineyards and flower decked wine villages with cobbled streets and half-timbered houses, straight from the pages of a Brothers Grimm' fairy tale book.

The forests and hills of the Vosges Mountains of Alsace are celebrated for their unspoilt beauty and numerous castle ruins. We will learn about some of their myths and legends that surround these as we proceed on our leisurely way.

The walks

Walking Conditions: The paths and tracks are mainly undulating with some gentle hills.

There is an average of 5 hours walking per day.

Day 1: 3km

After a tour introduction we will take a short walk around our base for three nights, medieval **Guebenschwihr**, a beautiful wine village with half-timbered houses, cobbled streets and the stunning Romanesque *church of St Pantaleon*. This will be followed by a *crémant* and wine tasting with our sommelier.

Day 2: 18km

Walk through vines and forest to the **Chapel of Notre-Dame du Schauenberg** built on prehistoric "Ley Lines" just like Stonehenge.

From here we cross the **Strangenberg hill**, home of many protected rare species of flowers as well as an ancient pagan chapel.

Then on to the market town of **Rouffach**, with its *stork park* (the stork is Alsace's emblem), *Witches' Tower* and only half built *Cathedral*.

Challenging Option: The "Druid's Table" Challenge. Clamber up to these enchanted rocks where "Midnight Masses" may still take place! (+2 km)

Day 3: 15km

Walk through **Grand Cru vineyards** with splendid views of the Vosges Mountains, the Plain of Alsace and the Black Forest Mountains before strolling through the gardens of the ancient **Abbey of Marbach**.

It is then downhill through the vines to one of Alsace's closely guarded secrets, the magnificent village of **Eguisheim**, birthplace of winegrowing in Alsace and home to Pope Leon IX in the 11th century.

At Glen's home village of **Voegtlinshoffen** you can test for yourself if they really do produce the best white wines in the world.

Challenging Option: The "Trois Châteaux" loop. It is well worth the effort to climb up to these castle ruins if you can. They are great fun, have fantastic views and a fascinating history, and there is usually no one else there. (+2 km)

Day 4: 12km

Along the **River Lauch** into the centre of Colmar, a small city full of beauty, culture and history. The maze of cobbled streets gives the impression that one is walking in a bygone age. Perfect picture postcard spots such as *Petite Venise* (Little Venice) and Grunwald's 15th century masterpiece at the *Unterlinden Museum* are must-see sights.

Day 5: 12km

Take a delightful walk through the narrow cobblestone streets and half-timbered buildings of **Riquewihr**, justifiably classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France.

Exiting by the **Dolder tower**, vineyard and forest paths lead us by "**Crow's Rock**" to the grand castle overlooking the medieval town of **Kaysersberg**, home of Albert Schweitzer.

After exploring the town we stroll through vineyards to the picturesque village of **Kientzheim**,

with its wine museum, before arriving back at Riquewihr. Here you may enjoy a wine tasting or a beer tasting at a local microbrewery.

Challenging Option: Kaysersberg Castle Challenge. Run up the 113 steps to the top of the castle that dominates the town for some great views. (+1 km)

Day 6: 16km

Walk up through the famous **Schoenenbourg Grand Cru vineyards** for superlative views of Riquewihr. Then continue through forest and vineyards to **Hunawihr** with its unique fortified church dating from the 8th century. Walking on to the medieval town of **Ribeauvillé** you may like to visit the factory outlet of Beauvillé, renowned for its high class printed fabrics.

Your walking guide

Glenn Ford

Walking guide and resident Glenn knows and loves Alsace. He has been organising walking tours in the area for many years and the average age of his regular customers is 60+ so the walks are designed to be informative and entertaining rather than a strenuous challenge.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

Clothing & Equipment

We recommend you bring the following items:

- 1 good size day sack
- 1 water bottle (1 litre)
- A personal first aid kit, sun/rain hat, sun cream and insect repellent (which may not be necessary)
- Fleeces and/or warm layers for cold weather and chilly evenings
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Plenty of T-shirts/layers so you can adjust to weather conditions
- A walking stick or ski sticks can be very useful for uneven terrain

It is essential when walking in rural terrain to have comfortable, well-fitting and protective **footwear**. It is advisable that boots are ankle high to provide good ankle support. Vibram soles tend to have better grip. It is always advisable to break in your boots before your holiday. Try two pairs of socks, one thin pair close to the skin, and a thicker outer sock.

Harden your feet with alcohol before you come walking. Bring a foot care kit, with the especially useful moleskin and second skin, and compeed for blisters.

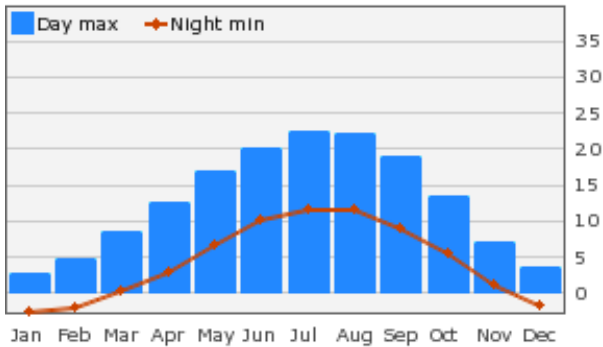
Reading Suggestions

Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

The Basics

Climate – The weather in Alsace at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the

country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. It is advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times, as restaurants and shops in small villages may not accept credit cards.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday.

Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 20 7431 8201 or

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

Consular services Paris

16 rue d'Anjou

75008 Paris

France

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00

Fax: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 27

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00.

Travel Editions

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