



Bicycling the Vineyards of Alsace Plus! the Black Forest August 16st – 28th, 2015

Day 1: Meet in Strasbourg

Highlights: Strasbourg, Capital of Alsace

We gather at our starting hotel this afternoon and fit bicycles. As host to many of the European Union's institutions, this town is alive with activity and has a UNESCO classified historic city center as well. A crossroads between Germany and France, we encourage you to arrive early to visit this historic and politically vibrant town. The Notre Dame de Strasbourg Cathedral was started in 1015 AD and now stands as one of France's most famous architectural masterpieces. The glowing pink stone comes from the nearby Vosges Mountains and it was the world's tallest building until 1874. Strasbourg is full of architectural gems as well as quaint quarters such as the La Petite France, often called the little Venice of the north with its canals, revolving bridges, and typical Alsatian-style buildings. We'll suggest a warm up ride this afternoon after we fit bicycles and before we meet for introductions and a welcome dinner.

This evening's hotel:

Hotel Maison Rouge
4 rue des Francs-Bourgeois
67000 Strasbourg

Tel: 03 88 32 08 60
Fax: 03 88 22 43 73

Tour leader phone numbers:

Loïc: +33 7 81 63 38 36
Jessica: +33 7 86 07 20 29

Philipp: +33 7 86 57 37 82

In an emergency call 112

Lunch and Dinner: There are plenty of delicious cafés and restaurants for lunch in Strasbourg. We'll enjoy a special welcome dinner this evening at one of our favorite restaurants in town.

Fit Bicycles: We will meet this afternoon for brief introductions and a safety talk at 2 p.m. After that, we'll fit bikes and have a warm-up ride for you.

You Might Like to Know: Charlemagne's empire was divided among his heirs at the Treaty of Verdun in 843 A.D. To avoid fights between the German and French parts of the Empire, Lotharingia was created and included the cultural and linguistic borderlands that we know today as The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Alsace, Lorraine, and Switzerland. To this day, these countries straddle linguistic and cultural boundaries in Central Europe, include a variety of languages, and have come to represent many of the cultural and political entities of the European Union.

Strasbourg emerged as one of three "capitals of Europe (along with Brussels and Luxembourg) because of its "neutral" position between the two major powers of Europe (France and Germany). Today, Strasbourg is home to the European Parliament (founded in 1979) and the European Council (1949) while Luxembourg houses the European Courts of Justice and Brussels hosts the administrative offices of the European Union.

You'll certainly want to visit the Cathedral of Notre Dame, built of famous red sandstone from the Vosges Mountains over three centuries beginning in the early 11th century. The cathedral was never completely finished so you'll have to try to imagine the missing Gothic spire. The one spire that was completed was finished in 1439, four hundred thirty years after the Cathedral was begun.



West of the Cathedral, on the edge of Old Strasbourg is "Petite France" astride the Ill River, a tributary of the Rhine. "Petite France" retains a medieval character complete with timber-frame houses. This area was once home to fishermen, mills, and the tanning industry.

Bicycle Safety Note: Helmets

Age of Helmet: The Styrofoam in helmets deteriorates after about 5 years and won't absorb an impact properly. There should be a sticker inside the helmet telling you the date of manufacture. Replace an older helmet to be safer. Replace a helmet that has ever been in a crash or shows cracks in the Styrofoam.

Fitting your helmet: Your helmet should sit level on your head and be about two finger widths above your eyebrows. The sliders on the straps should meet just under your ears. The buckle under your chin should be tight but not uncomfortable. If you can slip two fingers under the strap and open your mouth comfortably you have a good fit. The helmet should be snug on your head so you can't shake it off even with the buckle unbuckled.

Test for fit: With your helmet on press your thumb upward against your helmet near your forehead. If the helmet slides up more than an inch (revealing 4 or more fingers of forehead) you need to tighten the front straps only on the helmet. (Some helmets can slide all the way off the head with this test).

French Lesson of the Day: Let's start with some general terms.

Good day = *Bonjour* Goodbye = *Au revoir*

Can you help me, please? = *Pouvez vous m'aider s'il vous plaît?*

Mrs. = *Madame* Mr. = *Monsieur* A group of people with both = *messieurs dames*

Have a nice day = *bonne journée* Have a nice evening (after 5pm) = *bonsoir*

Thank you = *merci* You're welcome = *de rien* OR *je vous en prie* Please = *s'il vous plait*

How are you? (to someone you don't know) - *Comment allez-vous?*

How are you? (to a friend) - *Çava?*

Good thanks – *Bien, merci* Not good – *Pas bien* So-so: *Comme ci, comme ça*

The basic French greeting is *bonjour*, which can mean hello, good morning, or good afternoon. When greeting someone in the evening (beginning around 5pm), say *bonsoir*. To greet someone informally at any time of day, you can say, *salut* meaning hi. And informally *ciao* works for goodbye.



Day 2: Ride to Saverne

Highlights: Alsatian Countryside, bike paths

We leave Strasbourg today via side streets, bike paths, and the serene Canal de la Marne au Rhin - part of the vast network of canals that crisscross Europe north of the Alps. Pedaling west over rolling hills, you pass through several beautiful villages including Bouxwiller where you can stop for some pictures and perhaps an Alsatian lunch. Our route then leads us to the charming town of Saverne, laced by canals and the Zorn River. Saverne boasts an impressive Neo-Classical chateau formerly a fortress and now the residence of the bishops of Strasbourg. After admiring the quaint streets and half-timbered architecture, we enjoy a special Alsatian dinner together tonight. Daily Mileage: 64km (40 miles).

This evening's hotel:

Chez Jean
3, rue de la Gare
67700 Saverne

Tel: 03 88 91 10 19
Fax: 03 88 91 27 45

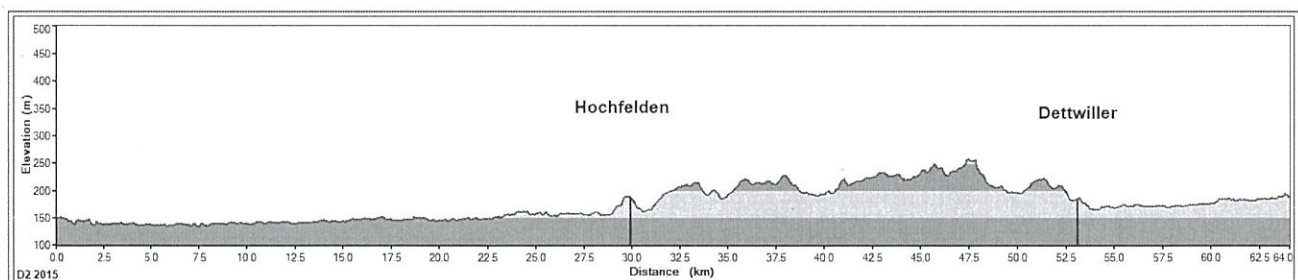
Tour leader phone numbers:

Philipp: +33 7 86 57 37 82
Jessica: +33 7 86 07 20 29

Loïc: +33 7 81 63 38 36

In an emergency call 112

Today's Ride: The terrain is mostly flat today. Leaving Strasbourg, we join up with the Marne-Rhine Canal and follow the bike path to Saverne. However, we will leave it for a moment between Hochfelden and Dettwiller to explore the rural countryside and its small beautiful half-timbered villages.



Lunch and Dinner: You can stop in one of the villages along the way to buy picnic supplies at a bakery in Hochfelden or have lunch at a restaurant in Dettwiller. For those of you who are faster riders, you might be able to make it to Saverne for lunch, but be careful: most places in France stop serving lunch around 2 p.m. Dinner is together tonight.

You Might Like to Know: Every region of France is unique. You wouldn't confuse the lavender fields of Provence with the apple orchards of Normandy. Dining on Foie Gras and Duck *Confit* in southwest France is a world removed from a gooey cheese *fondue* in a chalet high in the Alps. But Alsace may be France's most distinctive region. It has changed hands between the Germans and French six times since the 17th Century, resulting in a blend of the two cultures.





Germans dominated this slice of land (smallest region of France) well into the 17th Century. They lost it to the French at the end of the 30 Years War which left Alsace with half its population gone. In 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia gave Alsace to France, but it would have to fight several times again for its French identity in the Franco-Prussian War and the two World Wars. However, the region's roots are of Germanic origin. At the end of the Roman Empire, Alsace was the first region to choose German as its official language. A distinct Alsatian identity grew from this dichotomy: while reaffirming its attachment to France the Alsations fought for the right to speak German and eventually developed their own dialect which is close to the High German used in the texts of Martin Luther.

The uniqueness of Alsace pervades many aspects of its culture. It is a place where wine and beer coexist; plains, hills and mountains lie side by side; and wood and stone intertwine as you see in the picturesque architecture of the "maisons à colombages". We discover more of its uniqueness as the week unfolds!

Bike Safety Tip: First days

1) Be aware of things going on around you (situational awareness)

65% of crashes among our customers over the last 3-4 years might have been avoided with better situational awareness:

Expect the unexpected: 35% of crashes happened when a dog, cat or car came onto the road from the side

Give yourself space: 30% of crashes happened when cyclists were too close to one another and failed to communicate properly

French Lesson of the Day:

Directions: "*Tournez à gauche/droite*" (turn right/left) and "*Tout droit*" (*straight ahead*). You'll notice that if you ask for directions people will use landmarks to give directions more than mileage. For example, you take a left at the tree and then a right at the church, etc. If you want to ask where something (a city, town or street) is, you can ask: "*Où est...?*". Remember, if you want to ask for a town down the road, ask for the next little town on the map.

Some other language for your rides:

The view is spectacular from here! = *La vue est magnifique d'ici !*

This is steep! = *Ca grimpe!*

Nice bike! = *Joli vélo!*

This is a fast downhill ! = *Ca descend très vite !*

Let's go! = *Allons-y!*



Cycling the Vineyards of Alsace
1:100.000

Day 2: Ride to Saverne Part One

Towns for navigation: Vendenheim (12 km), Waltenheim (24 km), Wentzenau (30 km), Hochfelden (30 km), Gries (27 km), Bouxwiller (44 km), Printzheim (49 km), Dettwiller (53 km), Saverne (64 km).



Cycling the Vineyards of Alsace
1:100.000

Day 2: Ride to Saverne Part Two

Towns for navigation: Vendenheim (12 km), Wendenheim (24 km), Wentzenau (13 km), Hochfelden (30 km), Gries (27 km), Bouxwiller (44 km), Printzheim (49 km), Dettwiller (53 km), Saverne (64 km).

