Switzerland, Germany & France: The Black Forest & the Alsace Wine Route

Bike Vacation Only

Journey across three countries with diverse landscapes. Start your bike routes in France with a reel through quaint Alsatian towns and—on the same day—reel into Germany's legendary Black Forest, where you’ll stay in pedestrian-friendly spa town renowned for its ancient thermal baths. As you continue your journey, you’ll encounter charming traditions in half-timbered villages, panoramic mountain views, and Roman spa ruins. Traverse vineyard roads open only to farmers and cyclists, pausing every so often for a wine tasting and hearty fusion cuisine. Celebrate the best that these three countries have to offer, crisscrossing borders to new lands and pretty villages.

Cultural Highlights

- Explore three countries on a single journey—and even in a single day!
Marvel at stunning views of the Vosges Mountains.
Stroll quaint villages of half-timbered houses and cobbled streets.
Enjoy a guided tour of 2,000-year-old Roman ruins in the spa town of Badenweiler.
Immerse yourself in the dual French and German culture of Alsace.
Behold Eguisheim, acclaimed as one of the most beautiful villages in France.
Embark on a “floating tour” of Colmar’s old town aboard a small boat.
Cycle some of the most scenic stretches of the Route des Vins—the Wine Route.
Bite into the famous Black Forest cake of a skilled pastry chef.
Tour charming Strasbourg with a local guide.

What to Expect

This tour features easy to moderate terrain, with options for longer rides. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available for those who need assistance. This tour is ideal for both enthusiastic beginners and experienced cyclists.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days
**Average Daily Mileage:** 12 - 40
**Average Cycling Time:** 01:00 - 02:45
**Group size:** 20 max

Climate Information

**Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**
Apr 60°/40°, May 69°/46°, Jun 74°/51°, Jul 78°/55°, Aug 77°/55°, Sep 71°/50°, Oct 59°/43°

**Average Rainfall (in.)**
Apr 1.7, May 2.2, Jun 2.6, Jul 2.6, Aug 2.8, Sep 2.4, Oct 1.8

**DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins**
At 12:30 p.m., meet your VBT representative and the rest of the group in the lobby of the Hotel Basel (Muenzgasse 12, 4001 Basel, Switzerland, telephone +41 (0) 61 264 6800). Our VBT representative will be holding a VBT sign and will be easy to recognize. Please come dressed for cycling (with your pedals or saddle if you use your own), as there will be no place to change into cycling clothes before beginning the warm-up ride. Please plan to have lunch or bring a packed lunch; quick options can be found in Barfüsserplatz, which is within walking distance (10 minutes) of the hotel.
If your arrival at the hotel is scheduled for later than 12:30 p.m., or if you are delayed, you must travel to our Badenweiler hotel, Hotel zur Sonne (Moltkestrasse 4, 79410 Badenweiler, Germany, telephone +49 (0) 7632 75080), at your own expense. A taxi from Basel to Badenweiler costs about $150-$200 U.S. per taxi and takes approximately 45 minutes. Please contact the Hotel zur Sonne to advise of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders.

From your hotel, you’ll shuttle across the Swiss border and into France, where you’ll meet our trip leaders and enjoy an orientation, safety briefing and bike-fitting session. Your first day begins with a warm-up ride, cycling along the flat Grand Canal d’Alsace bike path. End your ride in the small Alsatian town of Ottmarsheim. From here, you’ll take a short 15-minute transfer across the border to Badenweiler in Germany’s Black Forest, your home for the next two nights.

You’ll arrive at the Hotel zur Sonne in the afternoon. The hotel is centrally located in this pedestrian-friendly town. Badenweiler, or Spa-Hamlet, has been a popular destination since Roman times for travelers looking to relax in its natural hot springs. Our hosts and owners of the hotel, Mr. and Mrs. Esposito, await your arrival and have planned a special welcome dinner featuring local specialties. You’ll dine al fresco on the hotel’s terrace, weather permitting. As a special treat to end the evening, Mr. Esposito, a skilled pastry chef, will share some of his famous Black Forest cake with us.

Hotel: Romantik Hotel zur Sonne
Meals: Dinner

Today’s Ride Choice:
Warm-Up: 22 km (14 miles)

What to Expect: Follow the VV13 bike route on a mix of paths and small country roads and along waterways through a 2,000-acre nature preserve: La Petite Camargue Alsacienne, a popular recreation sanctuary on the former Rhine River floodplain. You will visit three countries today: Switzerland for breakfast, France for lunch and Germany for dinner!

**DAY 2: Cycle the vineyards of the Black Forest / Staufen / Badenweiler**

Enjoy a copious breakfast before embarking on your ride. Given Badenweiler’s hillside location, you’ll start today’s ride with an exhilarating descent out of the village and down into the local vineyards. You’ll ride through the Rhine River Valley along a combination of dedicated bike paths and paved vineyard roads open only to farmers and cyclists. Your route takes you toward the Kaiserstuhl region, renowned as the sunniest corner of Germany and the ideal terrain for growing Sylvaner, Pinot Noir and Riesling grapes.
For lunch, your small group will convene in the traditional Black Forest town of Staufen, whose cobbled pedestrian streets and charming half-timbered facades make it ideal for a stroll. You’ll enjoy a special lunch here in a local restaurant. The afternoon’s ride takes you closer to the mountains and into hillier terrain as you make your way back to Badenweiler. The views down to the Rhine and across to France’s Vosges Mountains give you a taste of what’s to come this week. For those preferring a more leisurely afternoon, a transfer has been arranged to take you back to Badenweiler, where you will have more than enough time to take advantage of everything the spa town has to offer. Don’t miss the Cassiopeia thermal baths with more than 10,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor pools, saunas, baths and relaxation areas.

Join the group for a tour of the Roman spa ruins, largely intact after nearly 2,000 years—or simply choose to experience the spa for yourself!

The evening is yours to eat, explore and relax at your leisure.

Hotel: Romantik Hotel zur Sonne
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 19 – 41 km (12 – 25 miles)

Morning
Badenweiler to Staufen: 22 km (13 miles)

Afternoon
Staufen to Badenweiler Loop: 19 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: Descend from your hilltop town on your morning ride through rolling vineyards on paved bike path and small local roads with little traffic. Your ride culminates in a lunch stop in historic Staufen (Watch for vineyard vehicles!). If you continue your ride on the afternoon option, loop back to Badenweiler through more rolling vineyard roads and bike paths with a final ascent to your hotel.

DAY 3: Cycle into Alsace / Neuf-Brisach / Canal de Colmar

Wake up with the sun at Hotel zur Sonne (which means the “to the Sun Hotel”). Begin with a ride from Badenweiler and the Black Forest. Today’s routes take you through France’s famous Alsace region. For
centuries, this region has been deeply coveted and hotly contested by both France and Germany, and the influence of both cultures gives Alsace its unique fascination. You’ll see many examples of Alsace’s tumultuous and multi-faceted past, and you’ll also enjoy the hybrid cuisine and traditions with both French and German roots.

A well-marked bike route leads north and east to the fortified town of Neuf-Brisach, a UNESCO World Heritage site whose intact fortifications date to 1698, when King Louis XIV commissioned them as a protection against the Habsburg Empire. Enjoy lunch near the historic main square.

This afternoon, a combination of flat bike paths and roads takes you to your final destination, Colmar, the crown jewel of Alsace.

Your historic hotel lies in the heart of Colmar’s old town, near its picturesque canals. Its location is ideal for exploring the historic center. After arriving and taking time to relax and settle in, you’ll meet and walk to a family-run wine cellar and then dinner in a favorite local restaurant.

Hotel: Hotel Le Colombier
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 60 km (10 – 38 miles)

Morning
Badenweiler to Fessenheim: 27 km (17 miles)
Fessenheim to Neuf-Brisach: 16 km (10 miles)

Afternoon
Neuf-Brisach to Colmar: 17 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Ride from Germany to France today, crossing the Rhine along a combination of paved bike paths, little trafficked roads and bike lanes into the bike-friendly city of Colmar. You may choose all three legs of the ride or any combination thereof.

DAY 4: La Route des Vins

Begin cycling the Route des Vins—the Wine Route—on a southbound route out of Colmar. Departing Colmar, you’ll follow a well-marked bike path through famous Alsatian wine towns such as
Gueberschwihr, Obermorsschwihr and Eguisheim.

In 2013, Eguisheim was nominated one of the “most beautiful villages in France” on a nationwide vote, and this pretty town has also won the “village fleurie” award for its overflowing flowerboxes decorating the half-timbered buildings and cobblestone streets. Here in the heart of the Alsatian wine country, you have the possibility of independently visiting wine cellars and then choosing from many lunch options before winding back through the vineyard-covered hills to Colmar.

Tonight, you’ll stroll into the old town of Colmar and through La Petite Venise, or “little Venice,” named for the waterway that meanders through town. You’ll board a small boat for a short floating tour of this neighborhood; then, the evening is yours to explore the many delights of Colmar, the “capital of Alsatian wine.”

Hotel: Hotel Le Colombier
Meals: Breakfast

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 11 – 31 km (7 – 19 miles)

Morning
Colmar to Eguisheim: 15 km (9 miles)
Colmar to Eguisheim (Extra): 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon
Eguisheim to Colmar: 11 km (7 miles)

What to Expect: Ride on a bike path, bike lanes and country roads on your choice of routes to the charming flower-box wine villages south of Colmar this morning. If you choose, cycle back to Colmar in the afternoon.

DAY 5: La Route des Vins / Riquewihr / Ribeauville / Obernai
You’ll bid adieu to Colmar this morning and set out for one of the most scenic sections of the wine route.

Rolling hills reward the adventurous riders with spectacular views and thrilling descents. The route leaves the plain with some hilly sections heading north and west into vineyards and the wine route’s scenic towns such as Riquewihr and Ribeauville. The well-marked European bike route offers spectacular
cycling with the higher Vosges Mountains and medieval villages in the distance, punctuated by picturesque wine towns dotted with half-timbered homes where you can stop at your leisure for lunch. For those on the longest option, the terrain rises gradually before you descend into the charming town of Obernai and your hotel—the perfect stop after an unforgettable day of cycling.

Stroll into Obernai this evening and treat yourself to a sampling of some of the wines from the vineyards you passed today. You may also choose to take advantage of your hotel’s pool and spa facilities.

Hotel: Hôtel A la Cour d’Alsace
Meals: Breakfast

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 65 km (13 – 40 miles)

Morning
Colmar to Ribeauvillé: 21 km (13 miles)

Afternoon
Ribeauvillé to Dambach la Ville: 22 km (14 miles)
Ribeauvillé to Dambach la Ville to Obernai (Extra): 44 km (27 miles)

What to Expect: Cycle north along paved bike lanes, dedicated bike paths and small roads to the rolling wine country and picturesque villages connected by the Alsace Wine Bike Route.

**DAY 6: La Route des Vins / Rhine Canal / Obernai**

Your small group’s final ride together takes you toward the northern end of the Alsace wine route. Here, rolling hills melt into the flat valley as you make your way to the Rhine Canal. This lovely bike path follows the canal toward Strasbourg. In the afternoon, you’ll loop back along another bike path through surrounding villages with views of the Vosges to the west and back to your hotel in Obernai.

Tonight, the Wucher family hosts a farewell dinner at Hotel le Parc in their classic Alsatian winstub (wine tavern).

Hotel: Hôtel A la Cour d’Alsace
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
Today's Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 23 – 54 km (15 – 34 miles)

Morning
Obernai to Entzheim: 31 km (19 miles)

Afternoon
Entzheim to Obernai: 23 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: Riding north of Obernai along bike paths and small roads, meet the bike path that follows the Canal de la Bruche at about 15 km (9.3 miles). You leave the canal after about 10 km (6.2 miles) and loop back through small villages and typical farmland on paved bike paths and roads.

DAY 7: Strasbourg / City Walk / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

Your tour culminates with a hearty breakfast. You’ll say so-long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen and au revoir to our trip leaders and take a short train ride into Strasbourg. A local city guide meets you at the train station for a stroll and orientation through Strasbourg, finishing at your hotel, the Regent Contades.

After the walking tour finishes at the Hotel Regent Contades at approximately 12 p.m., you are free to continue on your own. There are many train connections to other cities in France, Germany and Switzerland. Or you might fly directly from the Strasbourg airport to your next destination. Your transportation from Strasbourg and beyond will be on your own. For travelers departing on Lufthansa from Frankfurt Airport, there are Lufthansa shuttles departing from the Strasbourg train station and from the Hilton Hotel (refer to Lufthansa for details on cost and schedules).

Meals: Breakfast