

# Alsace and the Vosges



## ***...an undiscovered cyclists' paradise***

The Alsace and Vosges regions are a well kept secret that only come into the public eye when the Tour de France visits. Fought over for centuries by France and Germany, the region has a distinct character with half timbered houses bedecked with flowers, and ever so pretty villages, all set amidst the beautiful vineyards for which the region is noted. The capital, Strasbourg, is a vibrant city of many canals and welcoming restaurants which reflect the area's status as a gastronomic centre.

The cycling is superb with a huge variety of terrain, from the Rhine river plain to the mountains of the Vosges. Our tour is equally balanced between flatter and hilly stages making it ideal for those who want a moderate challenge but do not wish to spend a week climbing every col in the Alps. We do ride some of the well known mountains in the Vosges such as the Col de la Schlucht and the Grand Ballon. There is generally a complete lack of any traffic, allowing you to savour the views and enjoy the riding unhindered. Our cosy hotels reflect the character of the region, with hearty meals and a hearty welcome from our family run hotels.

### ***At a glance.....***

- 7 days' riding
- 325 miles (520 km)
- Daily distances from 36 to 60 miles (56 to 96 km)
- 8 nights in comfortable 3\*\*\* family run 'character' hotels.
- 7 dinners
- 1 night dinner not included
- Very pretty and unspoilt landscape
- Ride through vineyards
- Fully supported with vehicle back-up and luggage transfer



It's such a shame—but to our benefit! - that so many people drive past the region on their way south but do not stop. There is so much to recommend it, from the alpine meadows and chocolate-box chalets of the Vosges, to the impeccably maintained rows of vines of the famous vineyards. There are wonderful views to enjoy and virtually no traffic sharing the brilliant road surfaces.

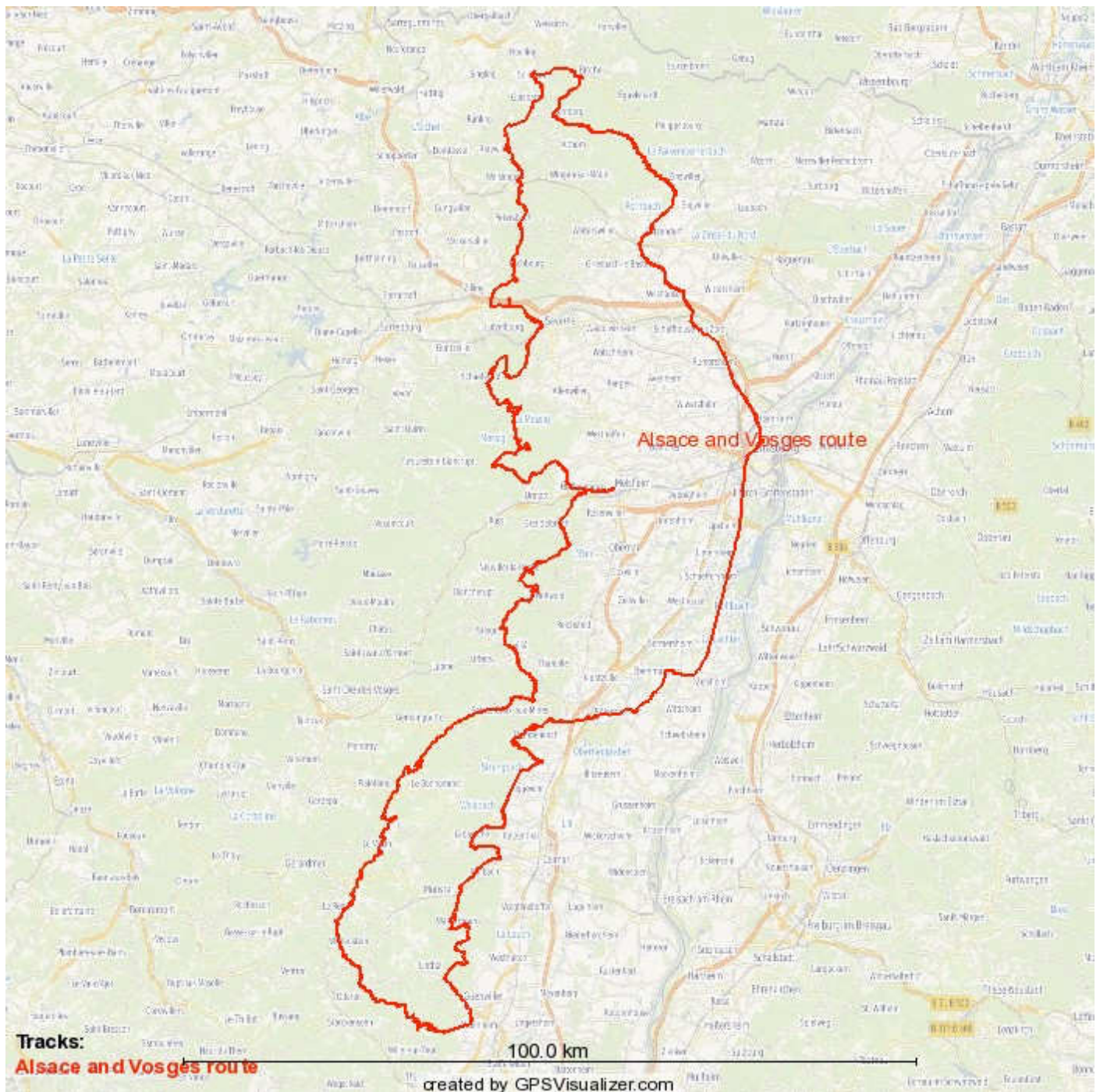
Our itinerary is as follows:

**Day 1:** Arrive Strasbourg and transfer to our hotel for the night. Pre-dinner briefing and bike checks.

**Day 2:** Leaving Strasbourg by the canal-side cycle path, we head north through Schiltigheim (home of French tour favourite Tommy Voekler) into unspoilt countryside and it's not long before we are on singletrack lanes with fines views. Passing through Zinswiller the scene is set as this is the first of many unspoilt villages we will pass through during the week. Entering the Vosges Regional Park, our first overnight stop is at Bitche in a friendly hotel in a lovely setting. (81 km / 51 miles).

*This is to thank you and the resources of Green Jersey for a really excellent holiday in Alsace. I completely relaxed and really enjoyed myself all the way through both on and off the bike. The weather that you had arranged (!) was of course exceptional and much appreciated, but on top of that you had put together a wonderful route through a very picturesque and attractive part of France. From the punters' point of view here is nothing like a trip being run in such a responsive hands-on way, with you able to make decisions as they were needed: we all were very favourably impressed with the ethos of Green Jersey.*





**Our route starts and finishes in Strasbourg and makes an anti-clockwise loop around the region.**

**Day 3:** Just outside Bitche is one of the best preserved forts of the Maginot Line, the French defensive line built between the wars. We thoroughly recommend taking a tour of the Simserhof fortifications. Once again our itinerary strikes out along quiet lanes, to the historic town of La Petite Pierre with its 12th century castle, and on to Saverne / Lutzelbourg / Haselbourg for the night. (59 km / 37 miles).



**Day 4:** Today we strike out into the high country. Visiting the chateau du Haut-Barr, there are views of the Black Forest off to the left. Neither as high nor with passes as long as the Alps or Pyrennes, this is nevertheless a mountain environment with alpine views and long descents through ancient forests to reward the work coming up. Our overnight hotel is a charming auberge in Mutzig. Typically Alsatian, a real gem of a hotel. (82 km / 52 miles).

**Day 5:** A classic day's cycling through ancient forests with plenty of ups and as many downs. Interspersed in here are some lovely unspoilt villages and alpine pastures. Our hotel is in a rural location off the beaten track. (62 km / 39 miles).

**Day 6:** This is the big one with some tough climbs; three in total and the best known of the region; Col du Bonhomme (the pass which links Alsace to Lorraine), Col de la Schlucht and the Grand Ballon. The climbing is worth it for the unparalleled views; from the top of the Grand Ballon you can see the Black Forest, the Jura mountains and the Alps on a clear day. Guebwiller is a pretty town for our overnight stop. As well as the advertised mileage there is an optional 13 mile decent down to our hotel for the night - no-one has refused it yet! (96 km / 60 miles).



**Day 7:** The mountains are behind us now but it is still undulating as we cross into prime wine country. Some of the finest white wines in the world are produced in Alsace from the Reisling, Gewurtztraminer, Sylvaner and Pinot Gris grapes grown here. The villages we pass through are familiar names to wine-lovers as we make our way to Ribeauville. Some of these villages are too pretty for picture postcards. A shorter day today as there is much to see and plenty of photo opportunities and cafe breaks (56 km / 36 miles).



**Day 8:** One of the most famous sights awaits as we pass Haut Koenigsborg castle with its views over the Rhine plain and into Germany. Then an easy run back through pretty Selestat with its old centre, and a return to Strasbourg via the canal towpath to avoid the busy roads. (82 km / 51 miles).

**Day 9:** Departure

## BIKES & EQUIPMENT

We recommend a touring or road bike for this tour. All bikes are secure at night. You won't need panniers or bar bags as you will frequently see the van. Garmins / GPS are highly recommended and we send out gpx files about a fortnight before the tour begins; you will also receive a printed route card with turn by turn instructions. We send you out a kit list in advance of your holiday so you know what to pack.



## TRAVEL TO / FROM THE TOUR

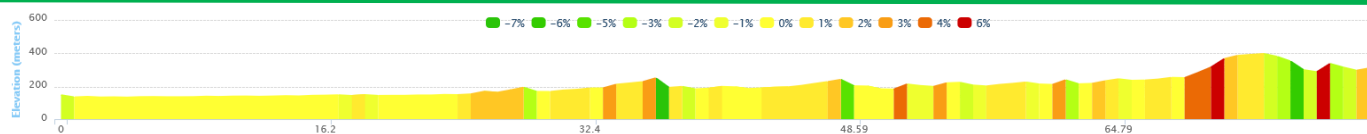
**Air:** Strasbourg is the nearest airport, or Basel / Mulhouse or Stuttgart then a train connection.

**Train:** From London you can either go via Paris, where you must change terminus, or Lille—the latter has only a couple of trains a day direct to Strasbourg but using this option negates the need to cross Paris.

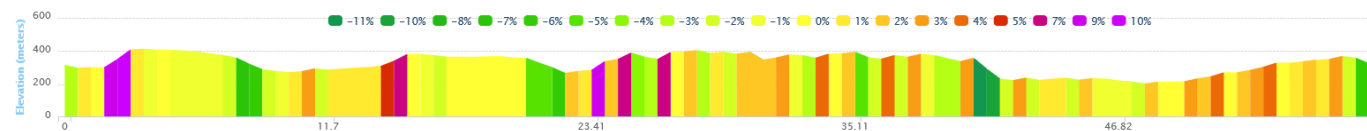
**Car:** From the tunnel / Calais it is about 5 hours to Strasbourg, motorway all the way.



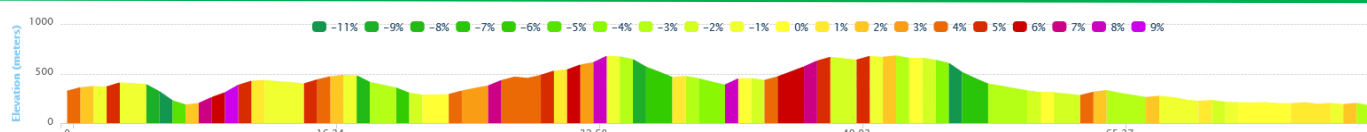
# ELEVATION CHARTS



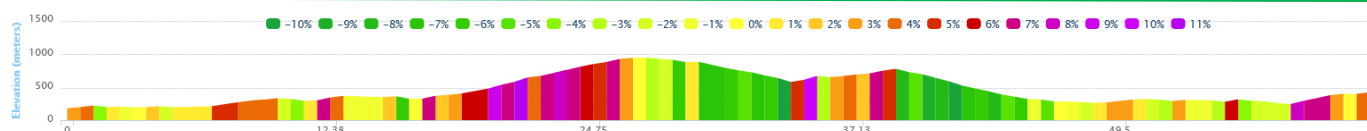
Day 1: 51 miles / 81 km. 1010m ascent



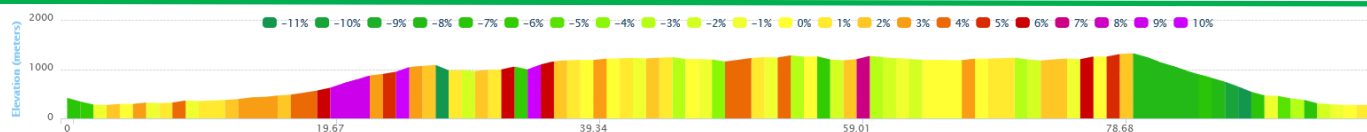
Day 2: 37 miles / 59 km. 1078m ascent



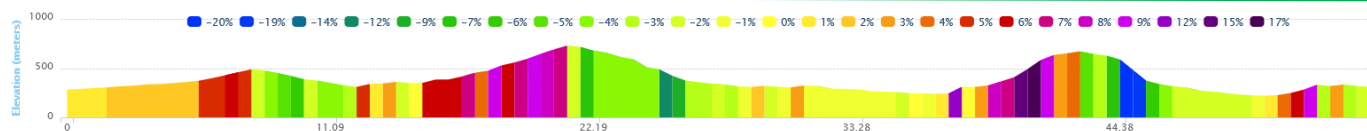
Day 3: 52 miles / 82 km. 1673m ascent



Day 4: 39 miles / 62 km. 1550m ascent



Day 5: 60 miles / 96 km. 2379m ascent



Day 6: 36 miles / 56 km. 724m ascent



Day 7: 51 miles / 82 km. 777m ascent

***We had a brilliant time and have enthused about it to our friends.  
Keep up the good work.***

*For guidance only. Note different scales each day. Distances in km.. Ascent calculated by MapMyRide which tends to be significantly higher than a garmin.*





## SUPPORT VEHICLES

**O**UR **SUPPORT** vehicle caters for all speeds of rider and is there to provide everything you need to make your trip easier, so that all you have to do is pedal. We provide a coffee stop in the morning and snacks throughout the day but you will see us far more frequently than that as we sit by the side of the road to see you all through a tricky junction or to dispense suntan lotion. Everyone loves our homemade cake (you have to eat it all, because we get in trouble if we take any back at the end of the trip) and we also have a range of spares on board. You can leave a daybag in the van with waterproofs, gels, your iPad or whatever you may need to get at throughout the day—you will see us every hour on average and we are always only a phone call away. The Fortnum & Mason hamper does contain a lot of other edible goodies!

## GROUP RIDING

Our group sizes vary from 4 up to 12. Sometimes we go to 14, but we are keen to keep the personal service that our returning customers love. On our feedback form a lot of people have told us that we should stress the benefits of our small groups—so we have!

You do not need to ride as a group as our support caters for everyone's speed. You will usually find someone else who rides at a pace that you are comfortable with, even if you did not know them before the holiday began. If you find yourself riding in a large group and are not familiar with group riding, ask us, or oth-

***'Of 6 companies that we have used for this format of holiday you are far and away the best.'***

er riders, to explain about warning signals and how to pass information about hazards on the road between yourselves.

## ABOUT US



We are a specialist family company and we care deeply that you have a good time. It's more than likely that one of the business owners will be leading your trip. This isn't just a livelihood for us, it's a vocation, so we'll do whatever we can to look after you and make sure you have fun! We're mad keen cyclists and want to pass on the joys of riding in France. This means is that if you want to ring us at 9pm on a Sunday with some questions, please do. If we can't come to the phone we will get back to you surprisingly



## HOTELS & MEALS

We use small family-run hotels wherever possible where a generous breakfast is offered. All have en suite facilities. The average rating is 3-star. Final confirmation of actual hotels is decided in January / February each year. Accommodation is on a half board basis. If a hotel does not have a restaurant for dinner then we eat out (see 'At a glance' on page 1 for details of how many dinners are included on this tour). We arrange tables together for the evening meals although you are of course free to come and go as you please. If you have any dietary requirements please let us know in advance. On one night (your guides' night off) dinner is not included and you are free to make your own choice.



*Beautiful lanes and villages abound in Alsace*

Breakfast and dinner is included in the cost of your holiday and we also include your first drink (beer, soft drink or glass of wine) for your evening meal. Pre-dinner drinks, extra wine and coffee afterwards are not included and you should pay for these yourself at the time.

For lunch, we will tell you where you will find places to eat / buy food. On several days on this tour we provide a picnic lunch (included in the cost of the holiday) where facilities are scarce due to the rural nature of our route.

## DATES AND PRICES 2020/2021

Please see our website.

Arrival is on a Saturday afternoon and riders depart on the Sunday morning.

## BESPOKE DATES

If you can rustle up a group of 8 or more we can put on a bespoke date just for your group.

**TO BOOK:** <https://www.greenjerseycycling.co.uk/bookings.php>

Green Jersey French Cycling Tours, March 2020.