

Rivers and Vineyards

Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Wonderfully varied and off-the-beaten-track cycling: world-famous vineyards, cherry orchards, traffic-free riverside trails
- Rich historic interest: Gothic cathedrals, mediaeval castles, Renaissance squares and cosy winstubs
- Wonderful cuisine - including a Michelin-starred restaurant at Rouffach; superb French and German vintages
- Excellent "stay put" day options include Strasbourg, Colmar and Freiburg
- Easy to take the new high speed TGV from Paris



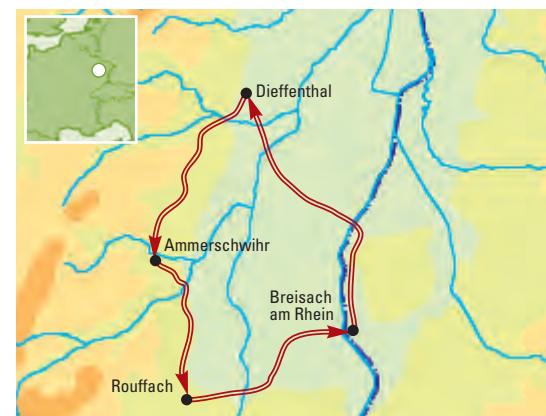
This varied cycling holiday takes you along the wine route that runs north to south between the Vosges mountains and the Alsace plain, bordered on the east by the Rhine, with a foray across the river into Germany for two nights. Pedaling along traffic-free country lanes, through vineyards and orchards, you take in some of Alsace's most beautiful villages. There's Eguisheim, where wine making began, mediaeval Rouffach whose beautifully preserved centre is listed as a historical site, and half-timbered Turckheim where a night watchman still walks the streets. In Germany, vineyard cycling trails are replaced by quiet riverside tracks as you enjoy vistas along the mighty Rhine and discover the medieval walls of Breisach am Rhein, home to one of Germany's finest Gothic cathedrals.

Almost every village has its *cave* and there are wine tasting opportunities every day. Seven types of grape grow in Alsace and some villages have their own vintages that aren't produced anywhere else, like Kaefferkopf from the stork-nesting village of Ammerschwihr. Your two nights in Germany provide even more variety. The "Tuscany of Germany", wines from the Silvaner, Müller Thurgau and Grauburgunder grapes are produced here. Rest days are particularly exciting - Colmar, Strasbourg and Freiburg can all be reached within an hour by train.

The places you stay in are special too. In Rouffach your hotel has a Michelin-starred restaurant (there are incidentally, more Michelin starred restaurants in Alsace than in anywhere else in France) and, in Breisach am Rhein, your hotel is adjacent to the cathedral and commands stunning views over the terraces of the Kaiserstuhl wine hills.

"These holidays are very thoughtfully put together. They give a chance to experience parts of a country one might not see otherwise."

Dr O'Grady



RIVERS AND VINEYARDS | DAY BY DAY



Day 1 Arrive in Ammerschwihr

We meet you at Colmar station and take you to your first hotel (15 minutes) in time for dinner.

Day 2 Ammerschwihr to Rouffach 25km/16mi

A freewheel through the Kaefferkopf vineyards leads to the cobbled streets and geranium-decked, half-timbered houses of Turckheim. Then along country lanes bordered by the Vosges hills, each peak crowned by a ruined castle, to Eguisheim. The birthplace of Alsatian wine (the Romans started it all off), every grape variety grows here so there's lots to try. Then to Rouffach for the next two nights.

Day 3 At Rouffach

You could simply relax in the hotel's indoor pool, sauna and jacuzzi but the town itself merits a visit. Surrounded by oak forest and fruit orchards, its idyllic setting is matched only by its marvellously preserved mediaeval centre. You can also visit its stork sanctuary to see the region's emblem up close. Colmar - the "Venice of Alsace" - a honeycomb of canals and pastel houses, is reachable by bike, bus or local train. Don't miss the Unterlinden museum - a treasure trove of Rhine Renaissance art.

Day 4 Rouffach to Breisach am Rhein 44km/27mi

Oak forest gives way to swaying cornfields as you leave the vineyards behind and cycle to Neuf Brisach. Commissioned by Louis XIV, the "Sun King", this rose colored star-shaped fortress town guarded the border in the 17c. Today it's a fascinating museum. Then it's across the Rhine and into Germany. St Stephan cathedral dominates the horizon as you reach the half-timbered houses of Breisach am Rhein on the riverbank.

Day 5 At Breisach am Rhein

After admiring Breisach's Gothic cathedral and mediaeval walls, why not follow one of the waymarked cycling trails to the wine terraces of Kaiserstuhl, just behind the town. Known as the "Tuscany of Germany" for its mild climate, you'll find terraces of vines and a wealth of wild flowers - 33 different orchids flower in June. Or take the train (25 mins) to Freiburg, capital of the Black Forest, to see one of Germany's finest Gothic cathedrals. Some guests last summer opted for a cruise on the River Rhine - lots to choose from.

Day 6 Breisach am Rhein to Dieffenthal 47km/29mi or 56km/35mi

Through pine forest to Burkheim - half-timbered houses crowned with a mediaeval castle - then an easy freewheel along the mighty Rhine. Past long boats and stone bridges before crossing back into France at Markolsheim, one of the towns on the Maginot Line (WW2 defences). Then along quiet lanes through tobacco and corn fields to pretty Dieffenthal in the vines and our hotel on the edge of the village.

Day 7 At Dieffenthal

Why not cycle to Dambach la Ville, one of the prettiest villages in Alsace, and leave your bike to follow the *sentier viticole* (path) through the vineyards. A possible cycling circuit takes in flower-decked Itterswiller and Andlau with its Romanesque church. Plenty of wine tasting en route. Or you could take the train (50 mins) to Strasbourg: pink stone Gothic cathedral, medieval streets, canals and Renaissance squares.

Day 8 Dieffenthal to Ammerschwihr 30km/19mi

Today's route retraces in part a Roman wine road. Cycling through vineyards and cherry orchards past Scherwiller with its *Javours* on the River Aubach, and Châtenois's curious Witches' Tower, you reach Ribeauvillé in time for lunch. Its cobbled streets hide tempting *winstubs* and a wine museum! But save time to explore flower-decked Riquewihr - Pearl of the Vineyards - before cycling back to Ammerschwihr.

Day 9 Return home

We take you to Colmar station in time for your return flight.



"Another great experience - probably our best yet!"

Mr R Milton

Dates and Prices

Departs every two days **Tour Only**

2012 departures	
May 13-25, Sep 12-24	\$2,794
May 27-31, Jun 8-12	\$2,833
Sep 2-10	\$2,833
Jun 2-6, Jun 14-Jul 8	\$2,833
Aug 29-31	\$2,833
Jul 10-Aug 27	\$2,849
Child (any dates, see notes)	\$1,899

Singles: Add \$40 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Child: Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$6 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

Holiday type: Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

Departs: Every two days from May 13 to Sep 24.

Duration: 9 days (8 nights).

Meals: Continental breakfast and evening meals.

Other details: For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Strasbourg Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Colmar train station at 15:03, (transfer to hotel, 15 mins, provided). **Return:** Colmar train station by 13:30 (transfer provided).

Rail options: Strasbourg to Colmar, 13:51/14:27 (will need to wait until 15:03 for pick up). Return: Colmar to Strasbourg 13:57:14:33 (drop off is for a 13:30 train, will need to wait 20 min).

Second Class French Rail: Add \$53 per person, round trip.

First Class French Rail: Add \$75 per person, round trip.

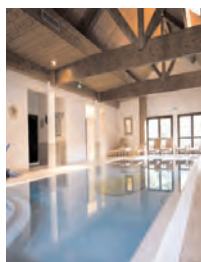
Tour only: Transfers included from Colmar train station at 15:03 and back to Colmar departing hotel at 13:00.

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RIVERS AND VINEYARDS | WHERE YOU STAY



Aux Armes de France
★★
Ammerschwihr
Days 1+8



Hostellerie à La Ville de Lyon
★★
Rouffach
Days 2+3



Hotel Kapuzinegarten
●●
Breisach am Rhein
Days 4+5



Hotellerie Le Verger des Châteaux
★★★
Dieffenthal
Days 6+7

For extra nights we recommend Ammerschwihr and Rouffach, and city add-ons can be arranged in Strasbourg.