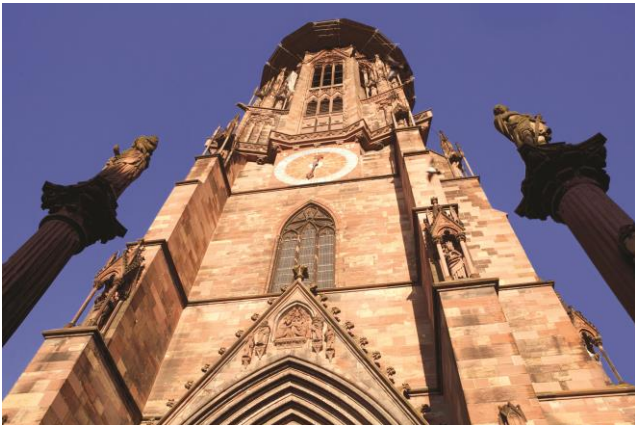




# Tour Information



## Alsace and the Black Forest by Rail





## Travel

### Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. **Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel.**

EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel. For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

### Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to France. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

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 by the tour manager at St Pancras.**

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.

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/SNCF train 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 Lille, 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 **thebaggageman**, 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.

Visit: <http://www.thebaggageman.com>

### Border Control

At border control, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket.
- show you have enough money for your stay.
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

### Taking food into EU countries

Please note you are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries

### Transfers

On arrival in Strasbourg, transfer by coach to Obernai (approx. 20-30 minutes) and Le Gouverneur Hotel.

### 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

### Le Gouverneur Hotel, Obernai

Located just inside the ramparts in the centre of the pretty town of Obernai about 30km southwest of Strasbourg, Le Gouverneur belies its 3-star status and is a stylish and comfortable hotel, completely renovated from an historic coaching inn dating back to 1550, with rooms arranged around a lovely courtyard. Facilities in the refurbished bedrooms include private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, and wi-fi. Unfortunately, rooms at Le Gouverneur do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we recommend you bring a travel kettle if required. Please note that there is no lift but 5 rooms are located on the ground floor.

As well as its historic setting, the hotel's other great asset is the lovely town of Obernai with its host of bars and restaurants within 3- or 4-minutes' walk. For gourmets, Obernai is blessed with not one but two Michelin-starred restaurants, one less than 50m from the hotel but there are a range of restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:  
<http://www.hotellegouverneur.com/index.php>



## Food

If you are a gourmet, this tour is made for you. Alsace offers more Michelin star restaurants than any other region of France, and the Black Forest area is home to a third of Germany's! 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.

Don't miss the Black Forest specialities - Schwarzwälder Schinken (smoked ham) and the famous Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte.

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. Alsace 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. 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. 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.

As well as producing fantastic wines, Alsace is also France's main beer brewing 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





## 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. Its beauty is all timber-clad houses, medieval cobbled streets, picturesque flower decked wine villages, vast stretches of green vineyards and forest cloaked mountains. The fascinating and turbulent history of border wars has only added to the region's charms, leaving a unique and quirky blend of French and German culture in which to immerse yourself.

### Obernai

Set amongst the vineyards on the eastern slopes of the Vosges Mountains, Obernai is the birthplace of Alsace's patron saint Odile. With its crumbling walls and ancient, narrow streets lined with timber-framed houses, Obernai is the epitome of the Alsace wine village. In the Place du Marché stand the 15<sup>th</sup> century *town hall*, 16<sup>th</sup> century *corn hall* and *Tour de la Chapelle*. A stroll around the medieval ramparts offers an excellent overview of the town.

For more information about Obernai, please visit:  
<http://www.tourisme-obernai.fr/en/>

### Colmar

Colmar is the town that quintessentially captures the character of Alsace with its immaculately preserved town centre that boasts charming streets, squares and small canals lined with crooked and colourful half-timbered houses – a wanderer's paradise. Outstanding are the galleried *Old Customs House*, the *Maison Pfister* adorned with frescos and medallions and Colmar's own "Little Venice", the picturesque *Krutenau district*. Other highlights include the *Musée d'Unterlinden* that houses Grünewald's masterpiece, the 500-year-old Issenheim Altarpiece; the *Dominican Church* and *Collegiate Church of St. Martin*.

For more information about Colmar, please visit:  
<http://www.ot-colmar.fr/en/>

### Riquewihr

One of "Les Plus Beaux Villages de France", *Riquewihr* owes its considerable prosperity to the wine industry – Riesling in particular is produced here. Full of lovely historical architecture, *Riquewihr* looks much as it did in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the few towns in the area to escape being badly damaged in WWII. Highlights include the *Gothic Church of Our Lady*, the *Dolder Tower* and *Porte Supérieure*.

For more information about Riquewihr, please visit:  
<http://www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com/en/>

### Strasbourg

The city of Strasbourg offers a stark contrast of old and new. At its heart you'll find a medieval town of atmospheric narrow streets, half-timbered houses and the awe-inspiring pink-sandstone Gothic cathedral, known as "the great pink angel" with its 19<sup>th</sup> century astronomical clock that draws the crowds for its midday performance. Surrounding this is a thoroughly modern and progressive city including the headquarters of the European Parliament. A boat ride on the Ill River is an excellent way to see both sides. The charming 'Petite France' district, the oldest part of the city dating from the 1100's, is a must see, as are the baroque *Palais Rohan*, that houses archaeology and fine and decorative arts museums, *the Rhine Palace*, and the *Palais de l'Europe*, seat of the Council of Europe.

For more information about Strasbourg, please visit:  
<http://www.otstrasbourg.fr/en/>

### Freiburg & the Black Forest

Enjoy a wonderful day of scenic and historic beauty as we head into Germany, first of all to quaint and gorgeous Freiburg. One of Germany's most beautiful and historic cities, *Freiburg* is a vibrant university town based around the magnificent Gothic *Münster* (cathedral) built in red sandstone. With its lovely compact historic centre, fanning out from the cathedral, other sights include the *university quarter*, *Rathausplatz* and the old town *market square* and morning market.

Freiburg is a gateway to the Black Forest, and we will spend the afternoon revelling in the stunning natural beauty and traditional air of the area, with

an afternoon stop at Triburg, capital of the cuckoo clock and home to a wonderful cascading series of waterfalls.

For more information about Freiburg, please visit:  
<http://www.freiburg.de/pb/Len/225797.html>

For more information about the Black Forest, please visit:  
<http://www.blackforest-tourism.com/>

## Baden-Baden & Northern Alsace Villages

The elegant spa town of Baden-Baden spent the 19<sup>th</sup> century being Germany's most fashionable resort and this elegance remains in the splendid Belle-Époque architecture including a casino that is lauded as the most beautiful in the world. It is a delightful place that retains the feeling of a more unhurried, leisured age.

Travelling the Black Forest panoramic road, we will pay a visit to *Lake Mummelsee* before returning to Obernai.

For more information about Baden-Baden, please visit:  
<http://www.baden-baden.de/en/tourist-information/>

## 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.

**Schulte-Kellinghaus & Spiegelhalter & Meisen, *Journey through the Black Forest*.**

## 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.

## Grading

This tour has been graded as **Moderate**: Walking between sites, lots of standing for viewing.



# 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** – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges you might get from 1 January 2021. A new law means that you're protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you're abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

**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](http://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.

### Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you've got a valid UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you're travelling to an EU country.

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

For further information about the GHIC please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>

### Taking food and drink into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or products containing them into EU countries.



## 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 7841 023807 or 07831 133079

**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

3 Youngs Buildings, London EC1V 9DB

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: [tours@traveleditions.co.uk](mailto:tours@traveleditions.co.uk) [www.traveleditions.co.uk](http://www.traveleditions.co.uk)

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