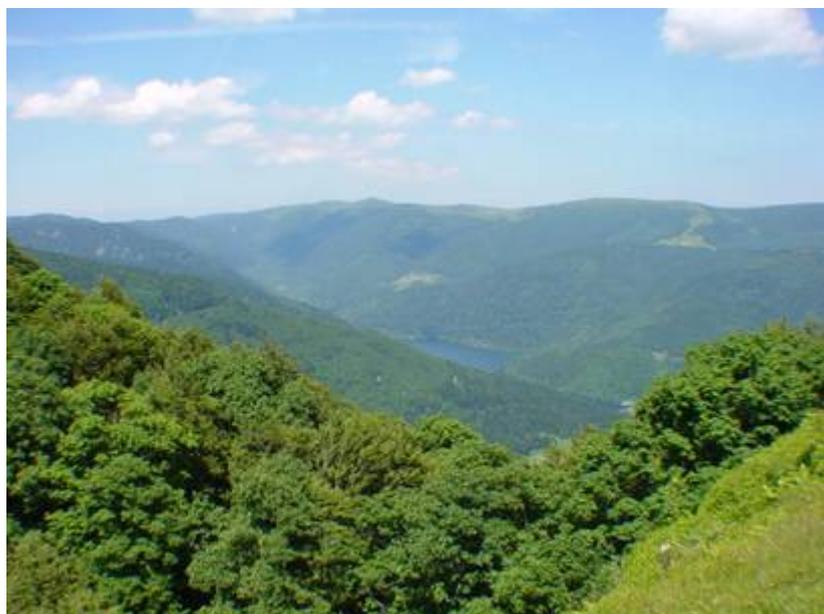# SENTIERS DE FRANCE

C051-ST Vosges mountains

The Vosges Massif is divided into two areas: the Northern Vosges, made of red sandstone, and the Southern Vosges, crystalline rocks with rounded summits called Les Ballons. Higher up, these rounded mountains were once covered by glaciers, which smoothed down the summits and widened the surrounding valleys to give place to wonderful lakes that we can still admire today. The forest grows up from every stretch of land, consisting primarily of beeches or coniferous trees, such as firs, spruces or pines. They give the whole area a dark and mysterious ambience. On the heights, the forest yields to fields, where flocks of animals graze from June to October, and are the base of the region's cheese industry. In winter, the skiers take over the slopes. What a pleasure to admire these undulating crests, rolling on as far as the eye can see!

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at GUEBWILLER near Mulhouse. Located at the beginning of the valley, Guebwiller is described as a long street nestling in the valley and holding on each extremity a square and a nice rose-sandstone church. Enjoy a visit of the city and its monuments: Notre-Dame Church, the 18th century quarter, Saint Léger Church (12th century Romanesque church) and the ancient Dominican Convent with its very nice cloister.
Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel.

Day 2 - GUEBWILLER - THANN (25 km – alt. gain: 1000 meters). Walking through the forest, you will reach the Peternit and the Jadenhut Passes before arriving at le Grand Ballon (1424 m – highest point of the Vosges). From the summit, the panorama is exceptionally beautiful and, on a clear day, you will discover the whole of the Vosges, the Black Forest and the Alps. Walking the path that follows the crest (the famous "Route des Crêtes"), you will descend to the Sudelkopf and then the Amic Passes. You will pass by the ruins of the Château de Freunstein and arrive at the Silbeloch Pass. You will continue to Le Vieil Armand, name given by the French soldiers to the Hermanns-Willerkopf, one of the most devastating battlefields of World War I. From the top, you will have a sprawling view of the Alsacian plain, the Vosges and the Alps. Retracing your steps, you will arrive at the Monkelrain before coming to the forest and continuing

the descent towards Thann, passing the Grumbachkopf, the Grumbach Pass and l'Oeil de la Sorcière (Witch's Eye), remains of a round keep resembling an eye ! From here, you will have a gorgeous view of Thann and its lovely Saint Thiebaut Church - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel.*

Day 3 - HUNDSRUCK PASS - LE BALLON D'ALSACE (25 km – alt. gain : 1100 meters). Escort by taxi to Hundsruck Pass. Walking through the forest you will head to the Refuge de Waldmatt and then, walking on the "chaumes" (grassy aera on the summits) and passing over the Vogelstein and the Belackerkopf Summits you will reach the Belacker Farm and Inn. You will cross through the forest of the Rimbach Pass and pass by Le Mittelrainkopf and Le Rimmbachkopf to the Perches Pass and the Lake Perches. From there, you will have a wonderful view of the lake below. The path passes around it and continues to le Ballon d'Alsace by way of la Tête des Charbonniers, the Charbonniers Pass, the Morteville Pass and la Ronde Tête. You will then start walking up to Le Ballon. After admiring the amazing view from the top, you will continue on to your hotel, located a few hundred meters beyond - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel.*

Day 4 - LE BALLON D'ALSACE - KRUTH (29 km – alt. gain : 600 meters). Though long, this stage is not a difficult one. You return to the Lake Perches and climb up to la Tête des Perches. You are now on the Chaumes, from where stretches a beautiful view of the Vosges. Once beyond la Tête du Rouge Gazon, you will again arrive at the forest and, by way of le Chalet de Saint Hubert, you will attain the Bussang Pass. You will skirt around the Steinkopf and will arrive at the farm-inn near the Drumont's summit, which presents a lovely panorama from the viewpoint indicator on the top. The path runs along the crests, passes through the Hasenkopf and la Tête de Fellering before going down to the Oderen Pass. From there you will arrive at the Felsach Farm and Inn and will finally walk down to the hamlet of Frenz, where your hotel is located - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel.*

Day 5 - KRUTH - LE COLLET (28 km – alt. gain : 1150 meters). From the hotel, you will walk down to the banks of the Kruth Lake, dominated by the Schlossberg and the remains of Château de Wildenstein. You will walk up to the crests by way of the Petit Ventron's summit. You will pass through the "chaumes" to the Grand Ventron summit and the cross through the forest to the Bramont Pass. You will skirt around la Ronde Tête to arrive at the l'Etang Pass and will walk up to the Rainkopf where wonderful views of the Vosges and the Blanchemer Lake await you. Through the "chaumes", you will pass around the Kastelberg and arrive immediately at Le Höhneck, one of the most famous summits of the Vosges. Outstanding panorama of the Vosges Massif. You will walk down to the Falimont Pass and, finally, to Le Collet, where your hotel is located - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel.*

Day 6 - LE COLLET - ORBEY (22 km – alt. gain: 300 meters). From Le Collet, you will arrive at the La Schlucht Pass, and, walking along the path that follows the line of the crests, you will come to the chaumes known as "Gazon". Once passed the Tanet Summit you will discover Le Lac Vert (The Green Lake), which owes its unique colour to the lichens suspended in the water. You will the make your way through Le Gazon de Faîte and Le Gazon de Faing, and will pass above the Truites Lake and the Lac Blanc (White Lake) before arriving at the Calvaire Pass. You will take the Freppet Path, which follows the other bank of the Lac Blanc, walk up to Le Rocher du Château Hans, and will arrive at the wild and isolated Lac Noir (Black Lake), by crossing through La Forêt des Deux Lacs. You will finally walk down to Orbey, consisting of several different hamlets - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel.*

Day 7 - ORBEY. Tour ends after breakfast.

<div align="center">************</div>

Season

From middle of May to middle of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 6 nights' accommodation in selected 2 or 3 star hotels
- 6 breakfasts – 6 dinners
- hotel to hotel luggage transfer along the trail.
- Taxi transfer : Thann-the Hundsruck pass
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes describing the trail.
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Entrance fees - Drinks - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,… are not included

Getting there and away

By train : The nearest station is Mulhouse, well-served from the majority of the larger train stations in France. A taxi will bring you to the hotel. To return, a bus or taxi will bring you from Orbey to Colmar, from where several trains leave daily.
By car : Mulhouse is at the junction of the A35 (Strasbourg-Bâle) and A36 (Beaune-Mulhouse) motorways.
Where to park : Several free, unguarded car parks in Guebwiller. For the return, a train will bring you back to Mulhouse, from where a taxi will escort you to your car.

Walk difficulty

Grade 4: 6 to 9 hours walking a day with long ascents and descents more than 1000 m. You walk high mountains as the Alps or Massif Central, on rough and stony paths. On occasion route-finding may be tricky and request some walking experience. A reasonably high standard of fitness and stamina are essential for enjoyment of this hike