

# SD15 self drive holiday

## Wine route in Alsace

*5-day & 4-night self drive holiday from Strasbourg to Colmar*

### Itinerary

#### Day 1 – Strasbourg and the wine route from Marlenheim to Obernai

We recommend you to visit in the morning the cathedral and the Petite France Quarter. Strasbourg Cathedral is an absolute masterpiece of Gothic art. The 142 m high spire looks incredibly lightweight and made the Cathedral the highest edifice in all Christianity until the 19th century. The astronomical clock built in the Renaissance period and mechanism dating back to 1842 is a masterpiece in itself, where the procession of apostles can be admired every day at 12:30 p.m. “La Petite France” is the



most picturesque district of old Strasbourg. Fishermen, millers and tanners once lived and worked in this part of town where the streets have been built level with the waterways. The magnificent half-timbered houses date from the 16th and 17th centuries. Their sloping roofs open out onto lofts where hides were once dried. In the afternoon, you will discover the wine route from Marlenheim to Obernai. From Strasbourg, you will travel to **Marlenheim**, a renowned centre of winemaking. You will pass through the villages of **Westhoffen**, also known for its cherries, **Molsheim**, **Rosheim**, a charming medieval village at the foot of Mount St. Odile, and Boersch with its fortified gates. Finally you will reach Obernai, a small, but seriously charming, town and the birthplace of St. Odile, patron saint of Alsace.

#### Day 2 – The wine route from Obernai to Ribeauvillé

This day will see you on a tour through vineyards to discover charming, picturesque villages. Your first stop will be **Barr**, a superb village clinging to the hillside, with a magnificently preserved historic centre containing a great number of half-timbered houses. You will wend your way through **Mittelbergheim**'s narrow streets to discover Renaissance houses, the old presses and fountains of this village, listed as one of the most beautiful in France. The town of **Andlau** grew up around an abbey, against a backdrop of vines and forests, and boasts a magnificent architectural heritage. You will pass through **Itterswiller**, where the main street is bordered with beautiful houses decked with abundant floral displays. You will visit **Dambach** and its historic centre, where the ramparts and fortified gates have been preserved, before climbing up to the St. Sébastien chapel where you can make the most of the view across the vineyards and the Alsace plain. In **Scherwiller**, dominated by the ruined **Ortenbourg fortress** built on a rocky spur, you will meander along the Aubach river bordered with beautiful half-timbered houses. **Chatenois** will surprise you with its fortified cemetery, its bell tower with bartizans and its famous Tour des Sorcières (Witches' Tower)! Then you will reach **Ribeauvillé** nestled at the foot of the Taennchel range. This wine-producing town has retained its medieval charm and is a great place to stay. You will walk through the picturesque narrow streets in the old town, discovering the magnificent half-timbered houses and old fountains.

### Day 3 – The wine route from Ribeauvillé to Colmar

You will leave Ribeauvillé for **Hunawihr**, a picturesque village nestled in the hollow of a small valley that houses a 15th and 16th century church in the middle of a fortified cemetery. Via Zellenberg, you will reach **Riquewihr**, the pearl of the vineyards, which, spared by wars, looks today as it did in the 16th century. You will discover several half-timbered houses enclosed inside the ramparts. You will cross the **Mittelwihr** and **Benwihr** vineyards, extremely well known for their Gewurtztraminer and Riesling, to reach **Kuntzheim**. This charming village ringed by ramparts has beautiful houses and an old château that houses a Musée du Vignoble et des Vins d'Alsace (museum of winemaking and Alsace wines). The road will lead you to **Kaysersberg**, dominated by the ruins of the imperial château. The town has kept a medieval feel with its many Renaissance houses, the St. Croix church and the fortified Weiss bridge. Then you will discover **Ammerschwihr** reputed for its famous Kaefferkopf vintage. The village suffered greatly during the 1944 bombings but still has a few beautiful architectural elements and was rebuilt in a purely traditional Alsatian style. The charming village of **Nidermorschwihr** has retained a few beautiful houses with oriel windows and wooden balconies and an original 13th century twisted clock tower. The

road winds through the vineyards to reach **Turckheim** where you will walk through the walled historic centre. This little town has retained an ancestral custom: every evening from May to October, the night watchman does his rounds and sings at the corner of every street! Finally, you will go through **Wintzenheim**, a welcoming winemaking town, before reaching Colmar.

### Day 4 – The wine route from Colmar to Thann

From Colmar, you will pass through the village of **Wettolsheim**, dominated by the ruins of the **Hageneck château**, to reach **Eguisheim**, one of the most beautiful villages in Alsace, surrounded by vine-covered hills, crowned with the ruins of several châteaux. You will wend your way through the streets bordered by numerous half-timbered houses, all along the ramparts of the old town or in the central square where the Château of Comtes stands proud. From **Husseren Les Châteaux**, you will climb through the forest to discover the ruins of the fortresses that once protected these villages. Then you will rejoin the wine route to reach **Hattstatt**, a very old village that was once fortified. The jewel of **Guebenschwihr**, which looks out over the village's main square with its floral fountains and lime trees, is the 12th century Romanesque clock tower. Through the village of **Pfaffenheim** that dates from the 9th century and still has a beautiful church, you will reach **Rouffach**, a small town created by the Romans that has retained a fascinating historic centre. You will climb back up the Ombachet valley, pass through the picturesque village of Westhalten to reach Soultzmatt, known for its mineral water, the **Château of Wagenburg**... and its grands crus, excellent wines for laying down that are born on the banks of the Zinnkoepfe. Through the forest, you will reach **Guebwiller**, an old rural village that boasts numerous civil and religious buildings that bear testament to its rich history. You will stop in Soultz Haut Rhin, a charming small town that prospered around a salt-water source and that has several old houses and a witches' tower near the ramparts. You can make a detour via the **Notre Dame de Thierenbach**, a Mecca for Christianity in Alsace, to admire its 1723 basilica built in the Baroque Austrian style. Then the route crosses a few villages that suffered greatly during the two great wars, before reaching **Thann**, with the most sumptuous Gothic church in Alsace, the St. Thibaut collegiate and its famous Rangen wine, the southernmost Alsace wine. Back to Colmar.

### Day 5 – visit Colmar

Right to this day, this town has been able to preserve its entire architectural wealth from the 13th century, so there are many typical buildings and districts that have been beautifully maintained. Colmar has interesting museums including the famous **Unterlinden museum**. We can suggest a walking tour during which you can discover the most beautiful houses and churches in the old town (the Maison des Arcades, the former customs house, the Maison Pfister, the Maison des Têtes, the St. Martin collegiate, the St. Mathieu church...). Then you will walk through "Little Venice", the old tanners' district, its proximity to water meant skins could be treated and washed. End of the tour in late afternoon.

## More details and tips

**The car** - You can do this tour with your own car or with a rental car (not included in the price). We can get a rental car for you (Please contact us)

**Hotels** - On this tour, we suggest you stay in hotels of different categories.

**Prestige Self drive tour SD15-P** – 4 & 5-star hotels

**Luxe self drive tour SD15-L** – 4-star hotels

**Comfort self drive tour SD15-C** – 3 & 4-star hotels or chateaus

**Standard Self drive tour SD15-ST** – 2-star hotels

### Price includes

- 4 nights on B&B basis in hotels handpicked by us among the best.
- Parking fees if the hotel has one (only for Prestige and Luxe tours)
- The detailed road book with the GPS waypoints of the main landmarks, villages, attractions and hotels. It also contains maps of cities you will explore. (see below for more details)
- IGN maps of the area (scale 1 cm = 1 km)
- Green Michelin guide (tour guide) of the region
- Emergency phone number available 24/24 and 7/7

### Not including

- trip to the departure city of the self-drive tour
- Lunches and dinners (except if written in the tour description)
- Entrances fees to the different tourist sites
- Personal expenses...

### Starting and ending cities of tours

Tours start and end in cities or airports where you can easily pick up or return a rental car.

Tours start in the morning of the first day, often with a visit to the city. We recommend you to arrive the day before in the afternoon to better recover from your trip from home.

Tours end in the late afternoon in the last city or airport.

### Getting from and away

**By car** – Strasbourg is at the connection of several motorways. Paris-Strasbourg 480 km, about 5 hours by motorway

**By train** – TGV (high speed trains) from Paris-Gare de l'Est and Strasbourg (2.20 hours)

TGV from Paris CDG airport to Strasbourg with a connection at Marne La Vallée. Trains from Colmar to Strasbourg.

**By plane** – International Strasbourg airport. Regular flights from and to Paris–Orly airport. Rail shuttles between the airport and Strasbourg rail station (Every 15minutes)

### Other services

We can book a room for you for the night before or for the last day.

Reservation of rental car

We can offer this tour with accommodation in charming B&B (manors, private chateaux, stylish villas ...)