



LITTLE HOLIDAYS IN

Alsace

FRANCE

CONTENTS

PLAN

Quick facts	3
Top recommendations	5
When to go	6
Events and activities	7
Sample itineraries	8
Typical costs	10

BOOK

Getting there	11
Where to stay	12
Renting a car	13
Transportation options	17
Tours and activities	18
Wi-Fi and SIM cards	19

EXPLORE

Map	20
Where to go	22
What to eat and where	32
Day trips	34
Where to go next	35

Quick facts

Essential information

- [General visa information for travel to France](#)
- [Health information](#)

Emergency numbers

European emergency number	112
Police	17
Medical emergency	15
Fire department	18

Language

Languages: French, German, English

Helpful phrases

- Hello / Good day – Bonjour
- Please – S’il vous plait
- Thank you – Merci
- Yes / No – Oui / Non
- Excuse me – Excusez-moi
- Sorry – Pardon
- Cheers! – À votre santé
- Bye – Au revoir

Money matters

Currency: Euro (1 EUR ~ 1.18 USD)

Credit cards (Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in most stores and restaurants, but make sure to have cash with you as some restaurants will only take cash. Always choose to pay in EUR (the local currency) when prompted by the payment terminal.

Carry a bit of cash for some restaurants, smaller stores, and markets. If you have a borderless card like [Revolut](#) or [TransferWise](#), you can withdraw from the French banks’ ATMs for free. Convert your currency to EUR on your app first, then withdraw easily and hassle-free.

Top recommendations

WHERE TO STAY

Colmar

James Boutique Hotel	Luxurious hotel located in the historic city center	Book here
Suites Residences Spa	Apartments good for families and groups	Book here

Strasbourg

Le Bouclier D'or	Beautiful hotel in the Petite France district, near to all the historic sights	Book here
Le Moon	Apartments and family rooms; near the Christmas market and museums	Book here

WHAT TO DO

Alsace Highlights Tour	Explore Colmar, Eguisheim, and Riquewihr and see storybook towns and medieval castles	Book here
Alsace Wine Tour	Follow the historic wine trail and sample the best wines of the region	Book here
Strasbourg Bike Tours	Explore Strasbourg and surroundings by bike	Book here

WHERE TO EAT

Colmar

Wistub Brenner	Traditional wine stub serving hearty regional food. Reservation highly recommended.	Make a reservation
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Strasbourg

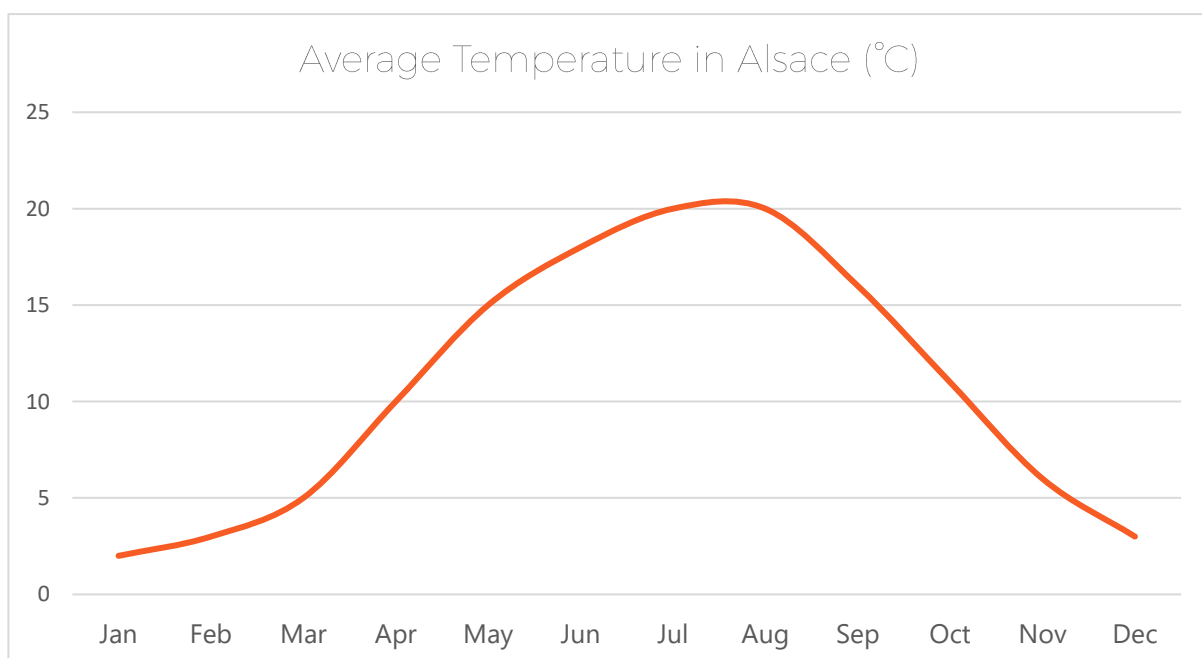
Maison des Tanneurs	Historic restaurant serving traditional Alsatian dishes	Contact details
La Corde a Linge	Laidback restaurant near the canal	Make a reservation

When to go

Alsace is gorgeous during the summer months (July, August) with flowers in full bloom and the perfect weather for walking and biking around.

Autumn (October, November) is also a lovely time to visit – you can enjoy the beautiful fall colors, milder weather, and wine festivals and tastings throughout the countryside.

During the Christmas season (December), Strasbourg dresses up as the “Capitale de Noël” with festive Christmas markets spread throughout the city and in the smaller towns.



Events and activities

[Here's a complete list of events in Alsace.](#)

APRIL

[Colmar Easter
Markets](#)

JUNE

[SlowUp Alsace](#)

JULY

[Wine festivals](#)

[Colmar
International
Festival](#)

AUGUST

[Corso Fleuri Flower
Parade](#)

SEPTEMBER

[Pfifferdaj Fiddlers'
Festival](#)

DECEMBER

[Strasbourg
Christmas Markets](#)

Sample itineraries

▶ 5 days

Day 1 – Begin your adventures in the southern parts of Alsace. Head out to Eguisheim, the cradle of Alsatian wine and one of the region's prettiest villages. Walk around the village's winding cobbled streets, then hike to the Les Trois Chateaux. Afterward, drive to the Lac du Ballon and the Grand Ballon for easy afternoon hikes around the beautiful Vosges national park.

Day 2 – Explore two more medieval towns near Colmar: Kaysersberg and Riquewihr. Walk along Kaysersberg's canals and hike up to the ruins of the chateau, then continue your hike through the forest to Riquewihr. Visit one of the many wine cellars in the village and make sure to try the local cuisine.

Day 3 – Spend the morning exploring Colmar – walk around the picture-perfect "Little Venice," peek into several architectural landmarks, and visit the markets to buy wine, chocolates, and cheese. Have lunch at one of the traditional wine stubs serving traditional Alsatian food. On your drive north to Strasbourg, stop by the Haut-Koenigsbourg, a medieval castle on a mountain.

Day 4 – Drive to the towns north of Strasbourg: La Petite-Pierre, Saverne, and Bouxwiller. Hike around the northern Vosges national park from the Petite-Pierre Chateau to see impressive rock formations along easy-to-moderate trails.

Day 5 – Explore the beautiful city of Strasbourg. Walk around the picturesque Petite France district, get the best views from the Barrage Vauban, then make your way to the Krutenau district. Take some time to visit the museums and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Strasbourg. Enjoy the rest of the day at Place Kleber. If you have more time or another day to spend in Strasbourg, visit the gardens or go biking around the city.



Typical costs



BUDGET

EUR 70/night

[Studio Proche
Gare Et Petite
France](#)

COMFORT

EUR 120/night

[BOMA](#)

SPLURGE

EUR 240/night

[Cour de
Corbeau](#)



EUR 10

[L'Épicerie](#)

EUR 40

[La Corde à
Linge](#)

EUR 180

[1741](#)



EUR 1.80

[Bus/tram ride
within the city](#)

EUR 20/day

[Bike rental](#)

EUR 80/day

[Car rental](#)



**FREE
ACTIVITIES**

EUR 35

[Guided bike
tours](#)

EUR 130

[Alsace wine
tour](#)

Getting there

The gateway to Alsace is the region's capital, Strasbourg. You can get to Strasbourg via several means:

By air – Strasbourg has an international airport in Entzheim, just 16 KM from the Strasbourg city center – [check for flights to Strasbourg here](#). From the airport, you can ride a shuttle train into the city. Other nearby international airports are in Stuttgart and Paris.

By land – If you're coming from nearby cities and countries, you can reach Strasbourg by train or bus. If you're on a multi-country trip, getting a [Eurail Global Pass](#) can be more convenient and economical for you. Otherwise, you can check [SNCF](#) for train connections to Strasbourg, or [RegioJet](#) and [Flixbus](#) for bus travel.

Where to stay

If you're planning to explore Alsace for 5 days or more, I'd recommend splitting your time between Colmar and Strasbourg. Both are beautiful and laidback cities with lots of restaurants, shops, and historical sites.

Colmar

Colmar is the heart of the historic wine route in Alsace, and a pretty town that's straight out of a fairytale. It's the perfect base for a holiday in the southern parts of Alsace and home to amazing gastronomy, charming architecture, and an overall great holiday vibe.

- [James Boutique Hotel](#)
- [Suites Residences Spa](#)
- [B&B Hotel Colmar Expo](#)

Strasbourg

Strasbourg is a great destination for a laidback city break. You can explore the historic old town and most of the essential sights on foot or by bike. It's also a great base for adventures in the northern parts of Alsace.

- [Le Bouclier d'Or](#)
- [Le Moon](#)
- [La Residence de l'Orangerie](#)

Renting a car

Requirements

- **Age** – To rent a car in France, you must be at least 21 years old and have held your local license for 1 year. If you're under 25, rental car companies may add a young driver surcharge.
- **License** – If you're staying in France for less than 90 days, you can use a valid European Union or United States driver's license. If your driving license is from a country outside the EU or the US, getting an International Driving Permit (IDP) is recommended. Take note that the IDP is only valid when used with your local license, so make sure to bring both.
- **Other documents** – Have your passport and a credit card under your name when picking up the rental car. The rental car company might authorize a deposit on your credit card to cover for any damages.

Renting a car

- **Reserve online** - Make sure to [reserve your car](#) online in advance.

Rental cars in France

- **Get a comprehensive car hire insurance** – For total peace of mind, get a [comprehensive personal car hire insurance](#) that will cover for damages and theft.
- **Add-ons** – A GPS unit and child seats can be added to your reservation if needed.
- **One-way rentals** – Many rental car companies in France allow domestic one-way rentals. This means you can pick up your car from one city and drop it off in another.

Costs – 3-day road trip (2021 prices and estimates)

- **Rental car** – A 5-seat sedan ranges from EUR 130-180 for 3 days.
- **Gas** – Estimating 600 kilometers over 3 days, gasoline could cost you up to EUR 40.
- **Tolls** – Tolls in France are more expensive than other European countries at about EUR 9 / 100 KM. You can check for [specific toll costs in France here](#). If you're not in much of a rush, you can set Waze (or your navigation app of choice) to avoid toll roads.
- **Parking** – Parking rates vary EUR 0.30-3/hr or EUR 10-20 for 24 hours. Some cities have free parking schemes after hours or during the weekends.

Road rules and safety

Emergency numbers

- 112 – General European emergency number
- 17 – Police
- 15 – Medical emergency

France drives on the right side of the road.

Usual speed limits

- Motorways – 130 km/hr (80 miles/hr); automatically drops to 110 km/hr (68 miles/hr) when raining
- Open roads – 80 km/hr (50 miles/hr)
- Towns and cities, urban areas – 50 km/hr (30 miles/hr)

Follow posted speed limit signs in motorways and villages.

Things to watch out for

- Priority roads are indicated with a yellow on white diamond, but where there is no sign always give way to the right unless otherwise indicated.
- On roundabouts, vehicles inside the circle have the right of way.
- Give way to public transport, emergency vehicles, and pedestrians.
- Always drive with headlights on.
- Don't use mobile devices while driving.

- Always wear a seatbelt.
- The alcohol limit while driving is 0.05 percent.

Navigating

Useful apps

- [Google Maps](#)
- [Waze](#)
- [Maps.me](#)

Connectivity

- [Wi-Fi device](#)

Resources

- [**A guide to driving in France for tourists**](#)
- [**RentalCars**](#) – Online rental car booking platform
- [**Comprehensive car hire insurance**](#)

Transportation options

By bike

In Strasbourg, you can [rent a bike for a day](#) to explore the city. It is one of the [most bike-friendly cities in the world](#), so it's definitely an ideal way to see the city.

Local transportation

Strasbourg has a great network of trams and buses. You can [get your tickets from a mobile app](#), a vending machine at major tram and bus stops (like the Gare Centrale and the Etoile Bourse, if you're arriving by bus), or onboard from the driver (it will be slightly more expensive).

You can find more information about [ticket types and prices here](#).

Tours and activities

[Bike tours in and around Strasbourg](#)

Strasbourg is one of the most biking-friendly cities in the world and one that both recreational and avid bikers should experience! Bike paths will bring you to Strasbourg's key landmarks as well as to the city outskirts – and even cross the bridge to Germany.

[Alsace highlights tour](#)

If you only have one extra day to explore the rest of Alsace, this fantastic day tour will bring you to three of the most beautiful Alsatian towns: Colmar, Eguisheim, and Riquewihr. It's a full day of storybook towns, medieval castles, and stunning sceneries across the historic Alsace wine route.



Alsace wine tour

If you prefer a more wine-focused tour of Alsace, this is the day trip for you. Follow the historic Alsace wine trail and sample the best Rieslings, Pinot Blancs, and Gewürztraminers of the region. It's perfect if you're planning to drive to the other towns in Alsace – spend a day with a wine tour group so you can enjoy drinking as someone else does the driving.

Christmas markets in Alsace tour

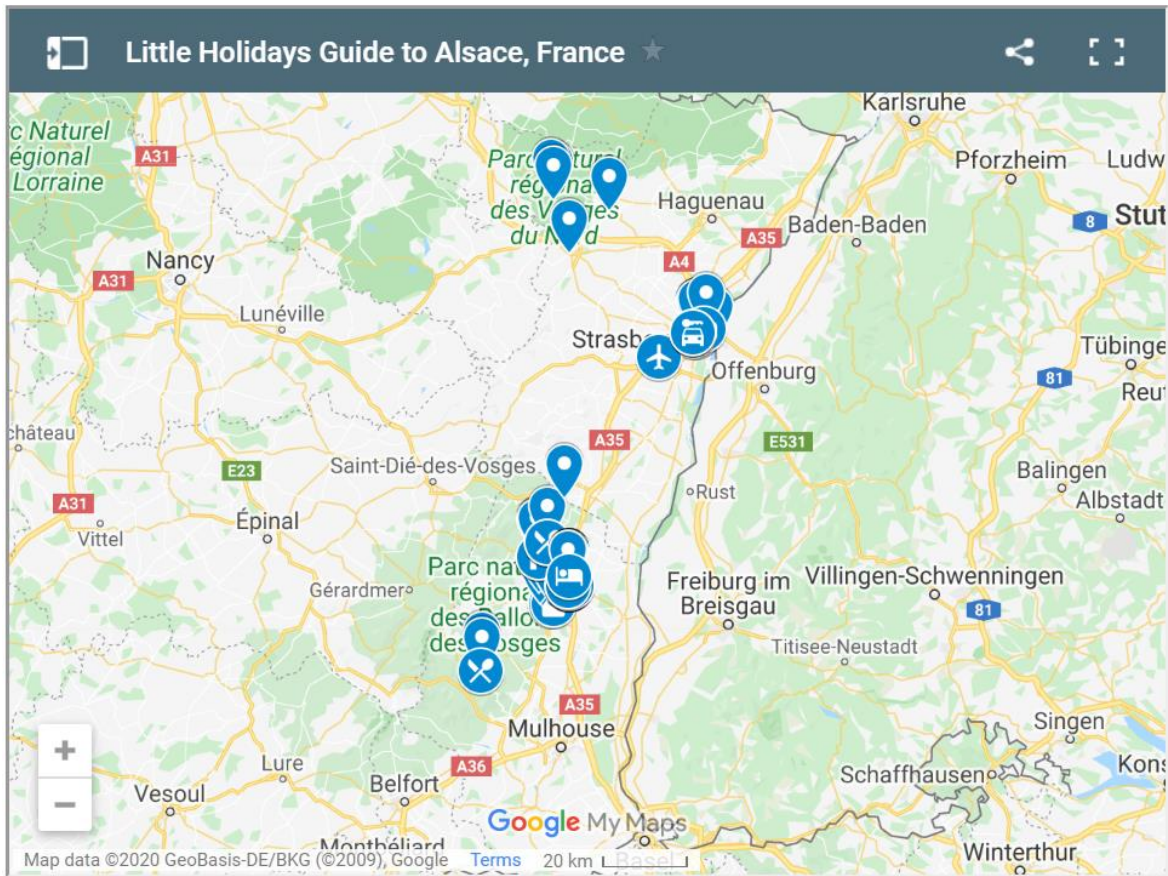
Wine is not the only thing Alsace is known for. It has also earned the title "Capital of Christmas." If you're visiting over the holidays, make sure to check out the Strasbourg Christmas markets then check out how the rest of Alsace joins in on the festivities. You'll get to see the picturesque towns all dressed up for Christmas and sample a wide range of regional treats and products.

Wi-Fi and SIM cards

Wi-Fi device

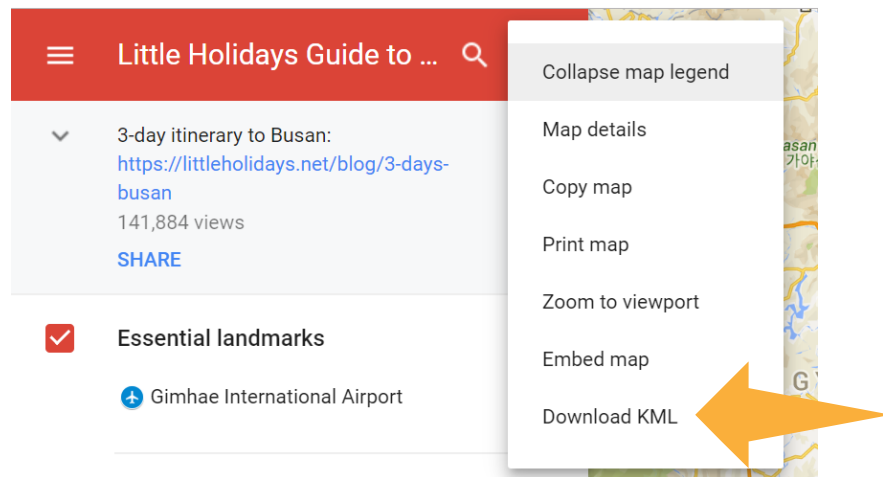
Map

Use this [Google Map](#) to get around and plan your trip.



To get an offline version of this map –

1. Download maps.me to your phone
2. Open the [Google Map](https://www.google.com/maps) on your desktop web browser
3. Click on the **⋮** icon on the right side of the map name
4. Select **Download KML**



5. Export as KML
6. Send the file to your mobile via email or messaging app
7. Open the KML file using maps.me
8. Download the France map on maps.me when prompted while you have an internet connection
9. You'll then be able to use maps.me offline – you'll find this map saved in your **Bookmarks**

Where to go

Eguisheim

Eguisheim is about 7 KM south of Colmar, a 15-minute drive through gorgeous vineyards. Most sites within the village are concentrated in the historical center, which you can explore within an hour.

Eguisheim is a medieval village that has been inhabited since the Paleolithic age. It's believed to have been conquered by the Romans, who developed wine cultivation in the area. It was also Pope Leo IX's birthplace in the 11th century, and the chateau at the center of the village is kept as a homage to him.

With typical Alsatian half-timbered houses and a cobbled medieval center, stepping into **Eguisheim** is like stepping into your favorite fairytale.



Narrow and winding cobbled streets lined with half-timbered houses and flowers spilling from everywhere have rightfully earned this little town plenty of national and European awards. In 2013, it was voted as the "Favorite French village."

Take in charming views from the Chateau Saint-Leon, a former castle built in the 13th century and now a chapel dedicated to Saint Leo. Walk along the Rue de Rempart Sud for the village's most photogenic spots. Try to find the L'Authentique Pain d'Epices store here to get some pastries. Afterward, go on a short hike to the ruins of Les Trois Chateaux.

Lac du Ballon and Grand Ballon

It's a bit of a drive to Lac du Ballon (40 KM, 45 minutes) through winding mountain roads, but it's a great spot to enjoy the autumn colors and the mountain air.

From Lac du Ballon, you can hike to the Grand Ballon via signposted trails – plan for a 90-minute hike one way. You can also opt to drive to the Grand Ballon instead.

The Grand Ballon is the highest mountain of the Vosges, and also the highest point of the Grand Est region at 1424 meters, so expect breathtaking views from the summit. It



A trip to the **Grand Ballon**, the region's highest point, will give you breathtaking views of the countryside.

derives its name from *ballon*, a French geographical term for a mountain with a rounded summit. You'll also find the Diables Bleus monument erected as a tribute to the victims of the battalions of mountain infantry who fought in World War I.

Kaysersberg

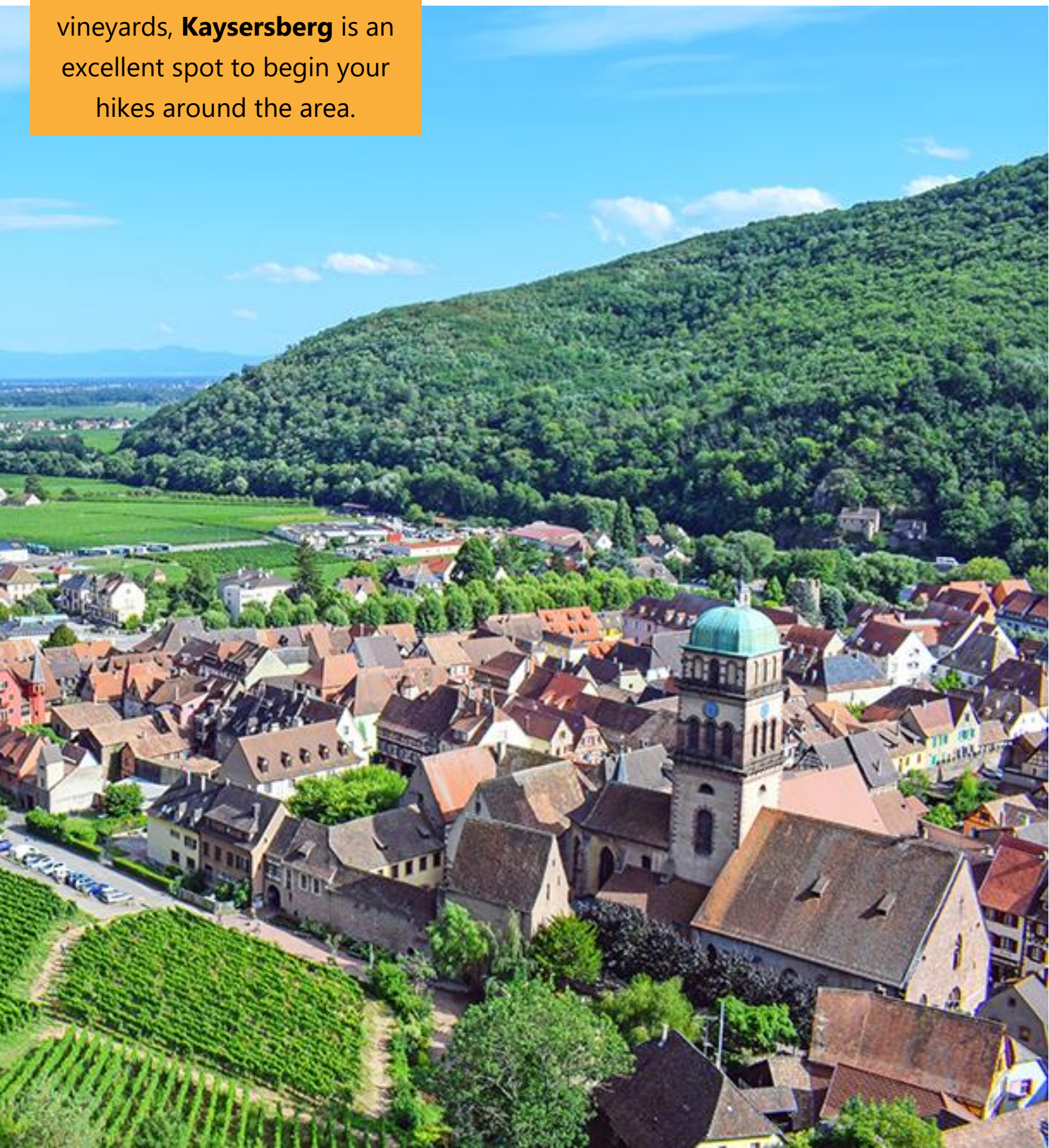
Kaysersberg is another well-preserved medieval town with more of the Alsatian half-timbered houses, plus several impressive structures like the Church Sainte Croix and the 16th century stone bridge crossing the Weiss River. In 2017, it was Kaysersberg's turn to be chosen as the "Favorite French village."

The ruins of Chateau de Kaysersberg on a hill above the town is a reminder of its strategic importance during wartimes in the past. It's about a 15-30-minute hike to the

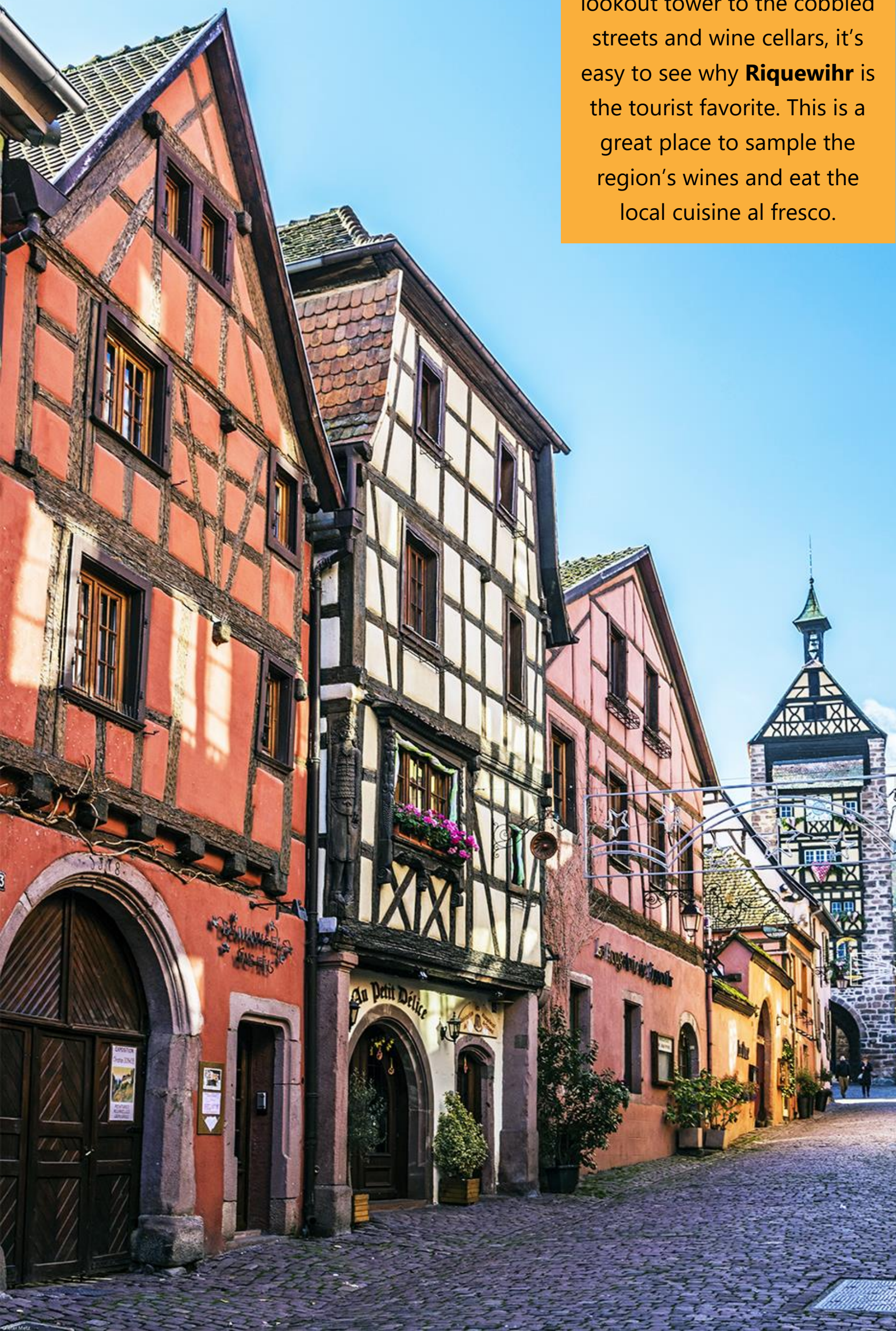
Chateau, from where you can continue following the trails to Riquewihr.

Kaysersberg is also the birthplace of Albert Schweitzer, a winner of the Nobel Peace prize who worked to establish a hospital and leper colony in Africa, among many other achievements. You'll find his encouraging words of wisdom peppering the trails to the chateau.

Nestled between forests and vineyards, **Kaysersberg** is an excellent spot to begin your hikes around the area.



From the pretty flower-decked lookout tower to the cobbled streets and wine cellars, it's easy to see why **Riquewihr** is the tourist favorite. This is a great place to sample the region's wines and eat the local cuisine al fresco.



Riquewihr

Along with Eguisheim and Hunawihr, Riquewihr belongs to the list of the most beautiful villages in France. From the pretty flower-decked lookout tower to the cobbled streets and wine cellars, it's easy to see why Riquewihr is the tourist favorite. This is a great place to sample the region's wines and eat the local cuisine al fresco.

Colmar

Colmar is the center of the arrondissement of Colmar-Ribeauvillé and considered the capital of Alsatian wine. It's a well-preserved medieval town founded in the 9th century with numerous architectural landmarks and museums.

Like the rest of Alsace, Colmar was passed from France to Germany and back several times during the last centuries. You will see this in the architecture, food, language, and culture.

The town also enjoys a sunny microclimate and is one of the driest cities in France, thanks to the Vosges mountains that shield it from precipitation. This makes for an ideal terroir to grow the world-class Alsatian wines, and of course, a setting for the perfect holiday.

Colmar was mostly spared from the destructions during the French Revolution, so you'll be able to enjoy the old townscape in Colmar. The centerpiece of the town is la Petite Venise or "Little Venice," a district filled with flower-decked canals lined by half-timbered houses and specialty shops. You'll also find lots of great restaurants in this area.

Other architectural landmarks to visit are St. Martin's Church, which is made with Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque elements, and well-preserved medieval buildings like the Maison Adolph, Maison Pfister, and Maison des Têtes. If you want to learn more about the history of Colmar, visit the [Unterlinden Museum](#).

For chocolates and macarons, stop by the [Jacques Bockel chocolaterie](#). For cheese, particularly the local munster cheese, and sausages, get them from Chez Thierry.

The best base for a road trip in Alsace is **Colmar**. Perfect weather + amazing restaurants + beautiful cityscape makes for a great holiday indeed.



Haut-Koenigsbourg

The [Haut-Koenigsbourg](#) is a castle-fortress built in the Middle Ages. Strategically located on a rocky ridge overlooking a plain, the chateau was used by royal families, robber barons, and invading troops from the Middle Ages until it was abandoned in the 17th century. Now, it is a popular tourist attraction and a historical monument.

There are several trails to various landmarks from the chateau, like the Montagne des Singes (Monkey Mountain) and the Volerie des Aigles (Eagle Park).

La Petite-Pierre

La Petite-Pierre is a commune 60 KM (60-90-minute drive) northwest of Strasbourg and the gateway to the northern Vosges natural park. Make your way to the Chateau de la Petite-Pierre, where a lot of trails around the natural park take off from.

From the Chateau de la Petite-Pierre, you can follow the "Circuit des 3 rochers," which goes to three impressive rock formations. It's 10 KM long and takes about 3-4 hours along easy to moderate trails. You can see the directions for this hike as well as [more hiking trails in La Petite-Pierre here](#).



More than the history and architecture of the place, you'll love the life of **Strasbourg** – the exciting cuisine, the cultural openness, and that curious mix of countryside sensibilities in a cosmopolitan city.

Strasbourg

Strasbourg is the capital of the historic region of Alsace and the symbolic capital and formal seat of the European Parliament.

Its most photogenic district is Petite France ("Little France"), a historic quarter that used to be home for the city's tanners, millers, and fishermen. You'll get the best views of the district from the Barrage Vauban, as well as from the many bridges that cross the canals.

From Petite France, make your way to the Krutenau district, where you can visit the [Musée alsacien](#) and the

30

Palais Rohan. You can learn more about Alsatian history in these museums, or simply admire the French Baroque architecture.

From there, make your way to the mother of all architectural gems in Strasbourg: The Cathedral of Our Lady of Strasbourg. It's one of the finest examples of late Gothic architecture and the highest existing structure built in the Middle Ages. Up close, it's much more impressive with its detailed façade and its pinkish hue, thanks to sandstone from the Vosges mountains.

Afterward, enjoy the rest of the day at Place Kleber. If you have more time or another day to spend in Strasbourg, you can visit the Jardin des Deux Rives (Two Shores Garden) and the Parc de l'Orangerie for maximum downtime. You can read more in my detailed [Strasbourg travel guide](#).

Petite France is Strasbourg's most photogenic district. Stroll along the banks of the quiet River Ill past pastel houses and flower-decked bridges and enjoy good food and wine.



What to eat and where

Restaurants serving Alsatian cuisine

Alsatian gastronomy is genial and generous – think taverns lively with the sound of conversation and cutlery, and large plates and bowls filled with scrumptious fare that's somewhere between hearty bar food and stylish comfort food.

- Strasbourg - [Maison des Tanneurs, La Corde a Linge](#)
- Colmar - [Wistub Brenner, La Maison des Têtes](#)



Enjoy hearty Alsatian cuisine as you explore the region.

Pizza and beer

If you're more of a pizza and beer kind of person, you can fill up on beer and tarte flambee (also called flammekueche).

- Strasbourg - [Academie De La Biere](#)
- Riquewihr - Au Vieux Riquewihr

Wine, cheese, and chocolates

These are the best souvenirs to bring home for yourself and your friends!

- Strasbourg - [Terres a vin, Jacques Bockel chocolaterie, Maison Lorho](#)
- Colmar – Chez Thiery

Alsatian food tour

Enjoying the local cuisine is definitely one of the top reasons to visit Alsace. Go on a [self-guided gourmet tour of Strasbourg](#) and indulge in the regional fare as you walk around the city. Or, go for a quick drive just outside Strasbourg and have a [wine-tasting tour and lunch](#) in a family-owned winery.

Day trips

[Alsace highlights tour](#)

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[Christmas markets in Alsace tour](#)

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Where to go next

If Alsace's scenic roads and gorgeous landscapes got you excited for your next holidays in Europe, here are more amazing road trip destinations for you.

[Salzkammergut, Austria](#)

Explore two of Austria's beautiful cities – Salzburg and Vienna – by road tripping across the beautiful Salzkammergut region or Lake District. This is a great road trip itinerary if you love charming villages, gorgeous natural landscapes, and outdoor activities.

[Slovenia](#)

With breathtaking and diverse natural landscapes and smooth and efficient roads that bring you from the Alps to the countryside and the coasts in a few short hours, Slovenia is the perfect destination for a road trip.

[South Moravia, Czech Republic](#)

Here's another destination for lovers of nature, history, and gastronomy – the Czech Republic's South Moravian wine region. You'll find plenty of castle towns, forests, and vineyards to explore.

[Here are more amazing road trips to take in France!](#)



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Thank you for downloading this guide! I wish you exciting adventures in France. If you found it useful, please forward or share it with your friends and travel buddies. Your support and using the links on this guide and on the blog to plan and book your trip (at no extra cost to you) is what keeps the Little Holidays up and running, so thank you so much for that!

This guide was downloaded from the [Little Holidays travel blog](#) and the information is current as of July 2021. Please check the website for updates.

If you have more questions about travel in the area, [send me a message](#), and I'll get back to you ASAP!

Lastly, I'd love to know what you think! Please take 2 minutes to help us make better guides in the future.

How likely are you to recommend this travel guide to a friend?

NOT LIKELY AT ALL

EXTREMELY LIKELY

1

2

3

4

5

Thank you and enjoy your little holidays! ♥