



CLASSIC
EDELWEISS TOURS

SWEEPERS HEAVEN EIFEL MOUNTAINS

“ Looking for something unusual? This tour is about history, scenery, winery – and ridery! ”

RIDING DAY 1 : BAD KREUZNACH - NÜRBURGRING

Standard Route (223 km / 139 miles)

Bingen lies at the entrance of the most beautiful part of the Rhine valley. Pretty little towns, vineyards, and castles line the mighty stream, the road follows it in long, sweeping curves, giving you a chance to catch a glimpse of the surroundings. In Koblenz the Mosel river drowns itself in the mighty Rhine in a location that is named "German corner". A colossal statue of Emperor Wilhelm I adorns the spot and beautiful views open up, most notably of the imposing Prussian fortress Ehrenbreitstein on the other side of the Rhine. You can - and should - ride a funicular up to the fortress to enjoy some even more impressive views.

From Koblenz we follow the Mosel upstream for a while, catch some twisty roads, and arrive in Cochem, an old wine town that offers the most picturesque views you can possibly imagine. A great spot for a coffee break!

The famous Nürburgring is not far from here; you can almost smell the gasoline, rubber, and adrenaline from the Green Hell...

Highlights:

#1: Upper central Rhine valley



The valley of the Rhine upstream of Koblenz is one of the most visited areas in Germany. A quote from the UNESCO World Heritage website: "The 65 km-stretch of the Middle Rhine Valley, with its castles, historic towns and vineyards, graphically illustrates the long history of human involvement with a dramatic and varied natural landscape. It is intimately associated with history and legend and for centuries has exercised a powerful influence on writers, artists and composers." Nothing more to say, just see for yourself!

#2: Koblenz



Having celebrated its 2000 anniversary in 1992, Koblenz is one of the oldest towns in Germany. Its name is derived from Latin “Confluentes” meaning “joining of flows”, as the two major rivers Rhine and Mosel meet here. Controlling this important crossroads was a castle high up on the eastern bank. Over time it has been converted into one of the mightiest fortresses in Germany, “Ehrenbreitstein”.

Recently renovated and incorporated into a park it is now easily accessible by a cable car spanning the Rhine.

#3: Moselle Valley



Like the Maas, we have seen the Mosel earlier on this trip, leaving Nancy. The part we will see today and tomorrow is famous for its beauty and its wine. Deeply incised into the surrounding landscape, the river flows in wide meanders. Steep slopes make wine growing hard work, but the soil and the climate make it worth the effort.

#4: Cochem



Cochem is one of the main tourist destinations on the Mosel and our hotel is ideally situated to explore the small alleys of this town. If you feel like walking after a long riding day, you should take the time to visit the Reichsburg above town. First mentioned in official documents in 1130A.D., it was destroyed in 1689. Bought in 1868 by the Berlin trader Louis Frédéric Jacques Ravené for the sum of 300 gold marks and rebuilt in the new gothic style. Bought by the city council in 1978 the fortress is now open to the public and attracts many visitors each year.

#5: Nürburgring



The Nürburgring is probably the most famous racetrack in Germany. Also known as the "green hell", it was built in 1927 as a „mountain-, race, and test track" and has since been used for all sorts of racing and testing. Initially, the track was 28 km long. After various modifications, mainly to improve safety, it is nowadays divided into a short (4.5 km) GP- track and the 20.8 km long „Nordschleife", or northern

loop.

RIDING DAY 2 : NÜRBURGRING - AACHEN

Standard Route (176 km / 109 miles)

Today we cross the Eifel from east to west. The Eifel forms a part of the Rhenish Massif, an ancient mountain range that also encompasses the Ardennes in Belgium. With around 60 people per square kilometer, the Eifel region is quite sparsely populated, especially compared to North Rhine-Westphalia (525/km²) and even to Germany as a whole (237/km²). That means there is a lot of nature and open spaces - for German standards anyways.

The Nürburgring is already located within the Eifel region and we start out from here, heading north until we reach the Ahr valley. "The Rhine's wildest daughter" is one of the northernmost wine-growing regions in Europe and is famous for its Pinot Noir. The steep hillsides are covered in vineyards, castles and castle ruins crown many of the hills, and the towns and villages are overflowing with half-timbered buildings and cobblestones. The flood disaster of July 2021 left deep scars here that will probably be visible for a long time to come.

Then it's time for lunch and what better place could we find than one of those ultra-picturesque half-timbered towns, restored to perfection and overflowing with cozy little cafes and restaurants. Bad Münstereifel is one of those towns that can make you feel like you're walking right through a fairy tale.

In the afternoon we're heading for some riding fun in and around Eifel National Park. Did you expect switchbacks around here?

Our destination today is Aachen, Germany's westernmost city and also one of its oldest and most history-laden. Aachen Cathedral, burial place of Charlemagne, was Germany's first entry to the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Highlights:

#1: Nürburgring



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loop.

#2: Ahr Valley



The river Ahr meanders its way through the valley over 89 km (55 miles). With its mild climate, more than 1300 hours of sunshine during the year and its very low rainfall it attracts many nature lovers, wine lovers, gourmets, health and wellbeing enthusiasts as well as those energetic people who love trying new trendy sports. Romantics once called the Ahr valley „the wildest daughter of the Rhine“, which is

little wonder when you look at the scenery, with the romantic course of the river, wonderful rock formations, ruins, idyllic castles, and picturesque terraced vineyards. (www.ahrtaal.de)

In July 2021 heavy rainfall caused catastrophic flooding along the Ahr. Many building, bridges and roads were destroyed. Numerous people died. Reconstruction will take a long time.

#3: Bad Münstereifel



Bad Münstereifel is a spa town in Germany's Eifel region that oozes historic charm. The picturesque town is circled by beautifully preserved fortifications dating back to the 13th century, while the River Erft ribbons through its center. Bad Münstereifel is small enough to be explored by foot.

Much of the town's ancient city walls, dating back to the 13th century, have been preserved in their original condition, and the walls almost completely surround the city. The city walls are punctuated by several gates. A monastery chapel from the year 830 used to stand where St. Chrysanthus and Daria Church exists today, the latter having been rebuilt in the site of the former edifice in 1100. This makes the church the oldest structure in town. (www.theculturetrip.com)

#4: Eifel National Park



Eifel National Park is North Rhine-Westphalia's only national park and one of the youngest in the country. In 2004, 107 km² (26,000 acres) of land was set aside with the aim of returning it to its natural state in accordance with IUCN standards. Over 7,000 plant and animal species can be found in the park which features only a few roads, but over 240 km of hiking, cycling, and riding trails. The dense

forests, countless creeks, and beautiful reservoirs attract numerous visitors, so it can get busy during summer and on weekends.

#5: Aachen



Charlemagne chose Aachen as his imperial residence at the start of the 9th century. As the first emperor of Holy Roman Empire his dream was to turn the city into a new Rome. For the next 600 years or so, every Emperor of the "Holy Roman Empire of German Nation" was crowned in the city. And today, five hundred years after the last coronation, Aachen still glows with the regalia of those ceremonies.

There are brilliant golden shrines in the Cathedral, like the reliquary holding Charlemagne's bones, while the cathedral treasury is a breathtaking trove of Medieval riches.

Aachen's number one attraction is the huge cathedral. Ordered by Charlemagne as a Palatine chapel at the end of the 8th century, this monument was his burial place in 805. From 936 to 1531 the cathedral also witnessed the coronation of a long line of kings becoming Emperors of the "Holy Roman Empire of German Nation". Charlemagne's throne, a simple stairway leading to an unadorned seat, dates to 796 and was used for every coronation at the cathedral. And a few meters away is the Karlschrein, the golden reliquary crafted in 1215 and containing Charlemagne's exhumed bones. (www.thecrazytourist.com)

RIDING DAY 3 : AACHEN - BOUILLON

Standard Route (265 km / 165 miles)

Right outside of Aachen we cross the border to the Netherlands. The scenery is not that different here, but it is another country and we quickly "collect" it. The next country is Belgium which welcomes us with a nature reserve and a beautiful lake, ideal for a coffee break. The famous racetrack Spa-Francorchamps is around the corner and of course, we visit the impressive museum, which is, for some reason, not where the track is but inside an ancient monastery in Stavelot. The museum features racing cars, a collection of historic motorcycles, documents, photographs of the fascinating history of this renowned circuit. If you're not into racing you could alternatively visit the museum dedicated to the poet Guillaume Apollinaire. We continue to the town of Modave, home to a 13th-century fortress that was turned into a baroque chateau in the 1600s. It's well worth a closer look. A bit further south we reach one of the most scenic parts of Belgium, the valley of the Semois river, a tributary to the Maas. It meanders across the Ardennes in many long, sweeping bends, with picturesque villages, castles and castle ruins lined up along its banks like pearls on a string. We follow the river valley, enjoying the beautiful scenery as we go, until we arrive in Buillon, our home for the night.

Highlights:

#1: Stavelot



Stavelot is one of the oldest towns in Belgium. A monastery was founded as early as 648 A.D. The buildings of the abbey are now the home of three museums; one of them is dedicated to the history of the nearby racing circuit of Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium's equivalent to the German Nürburgring. It is also known as the Rollercoaster of the Ardennes.

#2: Modave



Overlooking the valley of the Hoyoux river the small castle boasts a magnificent garden and interiors. Its foundations date back to the Middle ages. After destruction in the 17th century, it was rebuilt in the style of the time to its current state.

#3: Vallée de la Semois (Semois valley)



The Semois twists and turns like a ribbon: this “Queen of Meanders” leads you to spectacular countryside, picturesque villages of stone houses with slate roofs or the ruined walls of ancient fortresses which are reflected in its waters. The blue mist that rises from the river at dawn has given rise to many legends. The curious rock formations that the river links are called the “Giant’s Tomb”, the “Four Sons of Aymon”, the “Hermitage Rock”, the “Split Rock” and the “Knight’s Tomb”. (www.visitardenne.com). The river is only 210 km (130 miles) long but very beautiful, especially while it makes its way across the hills of the Ardennes. A very enjoyable ride!

RIDING DAY 4 : BOUILLON - DIFFERDANGE

Standard Route (199 km / 124 miles)

Hotel Change "Route" (230 km / 143 miles)

BOUILLON - NOIREMONTAINE - HERBEUMONT - SAINTE-CÉCILE - CHÂTEAU DE SEDAN - CHÉMERY-SUR-BAR - STENAY - MARGUT - ORVAL - BELLEFONTAINE (TINTIGNY) - ETALLE - ATHUS - N830 DIRECTION LUXEMBOURG - ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE - A 13 DIRECTION SAARBRÜCKEN - EXIT 11 ASPELT/ALTWIES, A13 - BAD MONDORF

Three countries are on our list once again today. We start in Belgium, follow the Semois for some time, then turn south towards France. Once across the border we take a break in Sedan, a pretty little town with an impressive castle. There is no shortage of castles around here and there is also a lot of wide-open countryside which guarantees a relaxing ride.

If you are interested in beer we recommend the Musée de la Bière in Stenay and - even more - the world-famous trappist monastery of Orval, one of the monasteries that brew the special Trappist beers. The brewery is off-limits to visitors but the ruins of the old abbey (destroyed in 1793) are very interesting and photogenic. There is also a shop selling Orval beer and the distinctive glass that looks more like a chalice. What a great souvenir!

After lunch near Orval we continue across the south-easternmost corner of Belgium until we reach the border to Luxemburg. Almost unnoticed we cross it and enter the fifth country on this tour. Luxemburg, the rich little country that is also a tax haven. Can you smell the irresistible scent of money in the air...?

Highlights:

#1: Château de Sedan



The fortress of Sedan is one of the largest medieval fortifications in Europe. Originally built in the 15th century it was continuously enlarged and modified until the 19th century to cope with the changes in military technology. Today the fortress includes a museum and a hotel. The town and its surroundings were the site of a battle in the French-Prussian war, during which the French Emperor Napoleon III was captured with 100,000 of his troops on

September 2nd, 1870. This day became a national holiday in Germany known as Sedanstag until the end of WW1.

#2: Orval Abbey



None of Belgium's famous beer abbeys is more photogenic than Notre Dame, its sandstone glowing in the soft afternoon light. A Cistercian monastery since 1132, the complex had barely finished a total rebuild when, in 1793, it was wrecked by antireligious French Revolutionary soldiers. Rebuilding only restarted in the 1920s. The evocative ancient ruins were left to one side and can be visited. (L.P.)

The little souvenir shop sells not only souvenirs, but also the monastery-made cheese and - most importantly - the famous Orval beer!

RIDING DAY 5 : DIFFERDANGE

Standard Route (248 km / 154 miles)

Hotel Change "Route" (232 km / 144 miles)

BAD MONDORF - REMICH - EHNEN - GOSTINGEN - BETHDORF - BECH - CONSDORF - MULLERTHAL - WALLENDORF - BETTENDORF - VIANDEN - GROESTEEN - HOLZTHUM - KAUTENBACH - KONERHAFF - MERKHOLTZ - WILTZ - NOTHUM - ESCH-SAUER (ESCH-SUR-SÛRE) - ARSDORF - KÖTSCHIED (KOETSCHETTE) - REICHLANGE - SAEUL - NOSPELT - CAPELLEN - DIPPACH - RECKANGE-SUR-MESS - BERGEM - A 13 DIRECTION SAARBRÜCKEN - EXIT 11 ASPELT/ALTWIES, A13 - BAD MONDORF

At 2,586 square kilometers (998 sq mi), Luxemburg is one of the world's smallest countries. Its border is only 356 km (222 mi) long, so you could circle around the entire country in only one day. On this rest day ride, we shortcut a little here and there in order to find some curvy roads and interesting sights.

Our day starts with a quick stint on the motorway, we head to the Mosel river, follow it for a while and then hop from village to village on small side roads. The Mullerthal is a popular outdoor area, it looks wild and untouched. Vianden, a bit further north, is not untouched but crowned with one of the most impressive castles in Luxemburg. It is quite a sight, and of course, we have to go for some coffee and take the time to really appreciate the atmosphere.

From Vianden, we change back to the western side of the country. The Obersauer Nature Park features twisty roads, lovely scenery, a beautiful lake, and enough infrastructure to secure us some good lunch. From here you can return to Differdange or head to Luxemburg City for some sightseeing. You can also head back to the hotel, park your bike and take the train (for free!) to the city in order to enjoy the nightlife there to the fullest. Just bring enough money...

Highlights:

#1: Mullerthal



Cut into sandstone layers, the Mullerthal offers spectacular scenery combined with a beautiful, curvy road. Shaded by the trees of the forest, you can swing your bike along the smooth turns. Take your time to enjoy!

#2: Vianden



This castle was built between the 11th and 14th centuries on the foundations of a Roman citadel and a Carolingian refugium. Sold for scrap in 1820 and almost completely dismantled thereafter, ongoing rebuilding since 1977 has returned it to its former glory. Heavily influenced by the Hohenstaufen family, this fortified palace is one of the largest and most beautiful feudal residences of the Gothic

and Romanic periods.

RIDING DAY 6 : DIFFERDANGE - NANCY

Standard Route (190 km / 118 miles)

Hotel Change "Route" (210 km / 130 miles)

BAD MONDORF - PUTTELANGE-LÈS-THONVILLE - HETTANGE-GRANDE - ANGEVILLERS - AUDUN-LE-ROMAN - LANDRES - FOAMEIX-ORNEL - VAUX-DEVANT-DAMLOUP - BATTLEFIELD OF VERDUN - VERDUN - DUGNY-SUR-MEUSE - VILLERS-SUR-MEUSE - SAINT-MIHIEL - BUTTE DE MONTSEC - SEICHEPREY - BERNÉCOURT - MARBACHE - NANCY

From February to December 1916 the Battle of Verdun raged in the woods and hills just east of the city of Verdun. About 2.4 million troops participated, 320,000 of them died, sometimes as many as 6,000 per day. 50 million artillery shells exploded, during heavy fighting as many as 10,000 per hour. Even today, 50 tons of steel splinters remain scattered on each hectare of the battlefield. But the battle, one of the bloodiest in the history of warfare, was no success: when the smoke cleared the front line was still basically the same.

Our ride today takes us to the site of this very, very dark chapter of history. We pass many memorials and military cemeteries along our route to Verdun and if you like you can take a tour of the battlefields and pay homage to those slain in this senseless war. But stay on the trails, there's still lots of unexploded ordnance.

After Verdun, we take small side roads and make our way towards Nancy. On the hill named Butte Montsec sits an impressive monument, a great photo op, and a good vantage point. Otherwise, there is not much going on around here, the villages are sleepy, life is slow. Nancy, on the other hand, is not sleepy at all!

Highlights:

#1: Battlefield of Verdun



The battle of Verdun lasted from February until December 1916. 170,000 French and 150,000 German troops were killed in this year-long battle. Verdun has become a symbol for the terror of modern warfare and the reduction of man from an individual human being to expendable war material. Today Verdun stands as a memorial against warfare of any kind and serves as a reminder of the French-

German reconciliation.

#2: Nancy



This city of about 100,000 people has an old quarter ("Vieille Ville") from the 14th - 15th century and a "new" town ("Centre Ville") from the 16th - 18th. They are connected by the "Place Stanislaus", a square named after the former Polish King Stanislaus I. Leszczyński who lost his Kingdom during the Polish Inheritance war of 1737. For compensation he was given rule over the duchy of Alsace

and Bar by his son-in-law Ludwig XV. This impressive square is part of the UNESCO World Heritage and an excellent place to people-watch and have an after-dinner drink.

RIDING DAY 7 : NANCY - ROTT

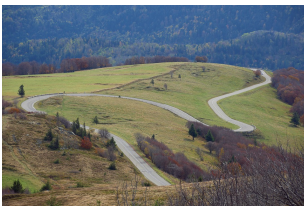
Standard Route (308 km / 191 miles)

East of Nancy the flat land stretches to the horizon. Not very tempting for us so let's take the motorway to cover some ground. Moyenmoutier is a town at the foothills of the Vosges, an ancient mountain range that has been a cultural and linguistic border for centuries. The mountain passes are called 'col' in French, they are not very high but the roads are beautifully twisty. At Champ du Feu we reach over 1,000 meters of elevation, the highest point on this tour.

The southern part of the Vosges is higher and sees more tourism, while the northern part is less popular, but no less beautiful. There are countless castles and castle ruins crowning the many peaks and outcrops, there are picturesque towns and many curvy roads. And there are remnants of the Maginot Line, for example the Ouvrage "Four a Chaux", which happens to be close to our route at the end of the day. The largest Maginot fortification, Fort Schoenenbourg, is not far from our hotel.

Highlights:

#1: Northern Vosges



Unlike the Alps and the Pyrenees, the Vosges mountains are synonymous with softness thanks to the rounded shape of their peaks, the "ballons" (rounded summits). The immense forest covers 60% of the mountain range's surface area and features mostly conifers (firs, pines, spruces) and beech. Yet this mountainous mass still offers a variety of landscapes, including glacial lakes, wet and high-altitude meadows, deep valleys, waterfalls, cliffs, and rocks. The Northern Vosges, known as "Vosges gréseuses" (the sandstone Vosges), begin in the north of Donon and are made up mostly of red sandstone. They extend beyond the Franco-German border and into the nature park of the German Palatinate (Naturpark Pfälzerwald). The two parks were given the prestigious title of International Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1991, a title which is only shared by some 320 sites worldwide. (www.frenchmoments.eu)

#2: Ligne Maginot - Fort de Schoenenbourg



After WWI, France was scared of being attacked again by Germany. In the 1930s they fortified their eastern border with a massive and mostly subterranean defense network of reinforced concrete bunkers, minefields, antitank canals, floodable basins, power stations, supply and communications lines, and even retractable artillery emplacements. But the world's second-largest military installation - after the Great Wall of China - failed to deliver when Nazi Germany invaded France in 1940 simply by outflanking it, hereby violating Belgium's neutrality. The Ouvrage de Schoenenbourg is the largest such fortification open to the public in Alsace. It was heavily bombarded during the Battle of France in 1940 and later, in 1945, all but destroyed by retreating German troops. After the war, it was repaired and put back into service, this time with the possibility in mind of a Warsaw Pact advance to Western Europe. Today it is a first-class tourist attraction.

RIDING DAY 8 : ROTT - BAD KREUZNACH

Standard Route (240 km / 149 miles)

Before leaving France for Germany we have a look at one of the many fortresses around here, testimony of a wild and violent past. Fleckenstein is only a ruin, but it's an impressive one and the views from the top are quite impressive, too.

Once across the border the scenery remains unchanged: lots of forest, quaint little towns, numerous fortresses, curvy roads. Heavenly sweepers take us up to the Eschkopf, where a lookout tower grants sweeping views of Germany's largest forest.

A bit further up the road (the German Wine Road actually!) is one of the most emblematic castles in all of Germany, the Hambacher Schloss. Here, in 1832, the population's cry for freedom, democracy, and unification was heard for the first time, while the German colors black, red, and gold were flown, also a first.

After lunch and some sightseeing we head back into the woods, find some more twisties, and slowly make our way north toward the city of Bad Kreuznach.

Highlights:

#1: Château fort de Fleckenstein (Fleckenstein fortress)



Fleckenstein is an imposing castle ruin, proudly crowning a rocky outcrop. Built in the early 12th century it guarded the roads linking Alsace and Lorraine for more than 4 centuries before it was destroyed by French troops in 1689. The square tower and the troglodyte rooms are still in good repair and can be visited. The stunning views from the top of the fortress are well worth the climb! (Photo: Reinhold Möller)

#2: Palatinate Forest



The biosphere reserve straddling the German-French border is marked by diverse mixed forests, towering rocks and romantic castle ruins – and the contrast between miles of forest and the open spaces of the wine-growing country. Home to lynxes, wildcats and peregrine falcons, the forest is the largest single expanse of woodland in Germany. And with nearly 150 castles and ruins, the area is also testimony to Germany's historic past. On the eastern side of the mountains, vineyards lend the reserve a Mediterranean air together with the picturesque wine-growing villages, the fruit and almond trees and the forest borders populated with chestnut trees. Figs, kiwis and even lemons can all be grown here thanks to the temperate climate. (www.germany.travel)

#3: Hambach Castle



This old castle had a big influence on the democracy in Germany. The early 19th century in Central Europe was a time when everybody seemed to be at war with everybody else - the French, the Prussians, the Bavarians and many more. In 1832 a huge gathering at the Hambacher Schloss tried to unify Germany, unfortunately not successful (yet). During this event, the German black-red-gold flag was raised for the first time.



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