



GRAVEL ESCAPE - 3 days



Discover the Hautes Vosges along forest tracks, high balconies and surprising viewpoints. Clean air, intimate forests and gurgling streams, three irresistible ingredients for a feeling of utter freedom.

- Minimum 45 % gravel tracks, some singletrack and the rest on very small roads.
- Choice of daily rides from around 35 to 70 kms.
- Halfboard in lodgings in quiet locations, possibly at altitude.
- Start and finish possible in Xonrupt-Longemer/Gérardmer and Remiremont TGV station.
- Suitable for gravelbikes, mountain bikes and most e-bikes.

Dates

- Starting is possible on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- From 29/04 until 16/10.

Difficulty

PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY

- The average climbing meters per day :
- The average distance per day :

OPTION 1

800 m
35 km

OPTION 2

1150 m
45 km

OPTION 3

1750 m
70 km

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY



Technical sections have been avoided as much as possible but there are some. There will be some pushing. For those new to gravel riding, make no mistake, gravel is tiring. The roadbook is meant to help you choose a shorter, easier ride if you are finding it too much. Or equally choose a longer ride. If you don't find a suitable alternative in the roadbook, send us a message before 17h and we'll be happy to design a more suitable ride for the next day.

Option 1

Day 1 : 28km – 580m

Day 2 : 37 km – 860m

Day 3 : 37 km – 950m



Option 2

Day 1 : 39 km – 940m

Day 2 : 47 km – 1130m

Day 3 : 46 km – 1410m



Option 3

Day 1 : 75km – 1660m

Day 2 : 68 km – 1290m

Day 3 : 63 km – 1700m



Programme 3 days on the bike, 2 nights

OPTION 1

Day 1 Xonrupt-Longemer – Sapois

Tour start : Meeting up with Sofie between 9:00 and 10:00 in Xonrupt-Longemer at the parking behind the church. Gear-check, GPS, roadbook and tracker briefing.

Welcome to the Vosges ! Mid-morning start at the Lac de Longemer, a dip in the lake is allowed, and an easy ride following the Route Forestière des 17kms. Meet the carved wolf in the middle of the forest around the 10 km mark on your right. The first surprising views will be over the Vallée de Chajoux. At km 17, you'll cross the main road at Col de Grosse Pierre for a glorious descent into the next valley of the Bouchot. A pastoral valley with rock slides, the Bouchot stream and water trickling and falling everywhere.

A small road will be leading you to the Chambres d'hôtes.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 28 km / elevation gain: approx. 580m

Day 2 Sapois – Cornimont

Don't miss the Cascades du Bouchot (waterfalls), just 2,5 kms into the ride. Settle down for a 10 km warm-up ride before connecting with the main treat of the day, a long gentle climb through beautiful non-commercial forests. If you pay attention to the quiet, you may become aware of the energy present in the forest. Once past the Col de Morbieux, it's nearly all the way downhill to Cornimont, tonight's stopover place.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 37 km / elevation gain: approx. 860m

Day 3 Cornimont – Xonrupt-Longemer

The last day sees more than it's fair share of elevation gain. If it's too much, you can choose the direct ride of only 28 km (75% tarmac) and 580m. It's nice to keep plenty of time for a dip in the Lac de Longemer.

Start with a gentle 5 km warm-up before tackling the small tarmac roads winding their way up to the ski slopes above La Bresse, the largest ski resort of the Vosges. From here some 10 kms of forest tracks will take you to the Lac de Blanchemer. The track keeps going up and down for another 4 kms before the Col des Feignes, where you join the main road and a nice last descent to the Lac de Retourner. Finish in style with a gravel track to the Lac de Longemer, where the swimming is gorgeous. The end of the journey is just 2 kms away.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 37 km / elevation gain: approx. 950m

HOW TO READ THE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY for GRAVEL

-  For the occasional cyclist
-  For the confident cyclist prepared to walk because of an occasional difficulty.
-  For the confident cyclist who enjoys picking a line
-  For the confident cyclist who enjoys piloting and challenges
-  For masters of piloting, enjoying a challenging downhill on a bike without suspension



OPTION 2

Day 1 Xonrupt-Longemer – Sapois

Tour start : Meeting up with Sofie between 9:00 and 10:00 in Xonrupt-Longemer at the parking behind the church. Gear-check, GPS, roadbook and tracker briefing.

Welcome to the Vosges ! Mid-morning start at the Lac de Longemer (a dip in the lake is allowed) and an easy ride at first following the Route Forestière des 17km. This stretch serves as a cross-country skiing track in winter. After 7 kms you'll leave the tarmac behind to really plunge into the forest. Meet the carved wolf around km 10 on your right hand side. The first imposing views of the day will be over the Vallée de Chajoux. You'll cross the main road at Col de Grosse Pierre for a glorious descent into the next valley, named La Vallée du Bouchot. A pastoral valley with rock slides, the Bouchot stream and water trickling and falling everywhere. You'll leave this valley to climb to Le Haut du Tô, the highest parish in the Vosges. Don't hesitate to visit the gardens and the shop of Les Jardins de Bernadette. Keep some time to admire the panoramic views on the descent to your lodgings in a quiet remote location in Sapois.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 39 km / elevation gain : approx. 940m

Day 2 Sapois – Cornimont

Don't miss the Cascades du Bouchot (waterfalls), just 2,5 kms into the ride. What follows is a warm-up of around 10 kms before connecting with the main treat of the day, a long gentle climb through beautiful non-commercial forests. If you pay attention to the quiet, you may become aware of the energy present in the forest. The track continues for 14 kms along high balconies above the valley of the Moselle, before arriving at the Col de Morbieux. A long easy descent will take you to Cornimont, the stopover for the night.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 47 km / elevation gain: approx. 1130m

Day 3 Cornimont – Xonrupt-Longemer

The last day starts without warm-up. Small steep tarmac roads wind their way up to the ski slopes above La Bresse, the largest ski resort of the Vosges. From here on a good 10 kms of forest tracks will take you to the Lac de Blanchemer. Climb on to the Lac de la Lande, a reservoir used to make artificial snow in winter. Watch out for some fast downhill MTB's, you are now crossing the Bikepark of La Bresse where several editions of the MTB cross-country World Cup have been held. Keep climbing all the way to the top of the Hohneck, with 1363m the third highest summit of the Massif des Vosges. On a clear day, the Alps and the Mont Blanc are visible. If it's late afternoon, chamois (wild goats) come to graze. Now follows a steep technical descent. It's not too long and not too difficult on foot. The rest of the descent is absolutely gorgeous but again a little technical. Join a stretch of main road for a nice descent to the Lac de Retournemer. Finish with a gravel track to the Lac de Longemer, where a swim is a just reward for the efforts of the last three days. The end of the journey is just 2 kms away.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 46 km / elevation gain: approx. 1410m



OPTION 3

Day 1 Xonrupt-Longemer – Sapois

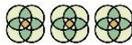
Tour start : Meeting up with Sofie between 9:00 and 10:00 in Xonrupt-Longemer at the parking behind the church. Gear-check, GPS, roadbook and tracker briefing.

Welcome to the Vosges ! Mid-morning start climbing out of Xonrupt and into the forest along the most gentle of graveltracks. The forest tracks gets steeper and starts heading north for 10 kms before leaving the forest just beyond Gerbépal, and abruptly head west for an immersion in the sweetest of pastoral landscapes typically Vosgien. Around km 46, the waterfalls of Tendon are the perfect setting for a break, especially if it's warm. This is a popular place with locals and tourists alike. Two more long climbs need conquering before arriving at Le Haut du Tôt and the highest parish of the Vosges. Les Jardins de Bernadette and the shop are worth a visit for herbal teas and syrups. If you are lucky, there may be a photography exhibition of exceptional quality in the gardens and beyond. A panoramic descent leads to tonight's accommodation.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 75 km / elevation gain : approx. 1660m

Day 2 Sapois – Ferdrupt

More waterfalls to start the day. Les Cascades du Bouchot are worth a quick visit on foot. They are less frequented than yesterday's Cascade de Tendon. 12 kms of flat cycle lane before arriving at the first serious climb of the day taking you onto the Plateau des 1000 Etangs, or the plain of a thousand ponds These have been formed over 12 000 years ago when the glacier of La Moselle retreated. The area is full of peat bogs and is part of a NATURA 2000, nature reserve. The Plateau marks the most southern point of the Parc Naturel Régional des Ballons des Vosges. The climbs are steep and can sting. After crossing an picturesque area called "Petit Finlande" the ride will head back down to the valley and today's last climb to a traditional Ferme Auberge.

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 70 km / elevation gain : approx. 1480m

Day 3 Cornimont – Xonrupt-Longemer

Day 3 starts with 3 short climbs in quick succession before easing out into a lovely forest road. Around the 18 km mark, you'll cross the village of Ventron. The ride passes just 500m from the highly recommended Musée de Textile. A visit takes about an hour and a half. Leave the GPX track and follow the signs for Le Musée de Textile.

The long climb out of Ventron crosses La Réserve Naturelle Nationale du Massif du Grand Ventron, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Your efforts will be rewarded with an Auberge and a panoramic viewpoint from the first summit of the tour, Le Grand Ventron at 1204m. From here on the small tarmac roads descend for the next 8 kms to the Col de la Vierge and the Col de Bramont. Next stop is Lac de Blanchemer, sadly no swimming allowed but beautiful spot for a break. The last long climb of the day takes you to the magnificent Route des Crêtes and the summit of the Hohneck. At an altitude of 1363m it is the third highest summit of the Ballons des Vosges, and high enough to see the Alps Bernoises and the Mont Blanc on a clear day. If it's late afternoon, chamois (wild goats) come to graze. The last part of the gravel escape is a fast 15 km downhill to the Lac de Longemer for a well-earned swim !

Technical difficulty :  Distance covered : 66 km / climbing : approx. 1720m



Prices for the gravel escape of 3 days (2 nights)

For a group of 2 adults sharing a room :	270 € per person
For a group of 3 adults sharing 2 rooms :	270 € per person
For a group of 4 adults sharing 2 rooms :	250 € per person
For a solo adult :	330 €
For a group of 3 adults sharing 1 room :	250 € per person - ask for a PROMO CODE

Extra night for groups of 2 or 4 adults :	55 € per person for bed & breakfast (in Gérardmer)
Extra night for a solo adult :	85 € for bed & breakfast (in Gérardmer)

Included

- 2 nights half-board including 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts in auberges, chambre d'hôte or 1 or 2*small hotels.
- 2 lunch packs for day 2 and day 3.
- Bag transport.
- Roadbook : map, paper files and GPS tracks.
- GPS for navigation, support, a spare battery pack and other small kit for your bike.
- GPS tracker for security.
- Daily weather forecast by text message.
- 24/7 telephone support.
- Tourist tax.

Not included

- Transport between your home address and the start.
- Bicycles. We are happy to help you find a rental place with quality (e-)MTB's.
- Guide : the bike tour is self-guided.
- Lunch on day 1. Drinks at the accommodation. Tips.
- Visits to museums, monuments and other sites.
- Travel insurance, assistance.
- Transport of persons. We are happy to help you book a local taxi.
- All personal expenses.
- Everything not mentioned under "included"

Lodgings

- In auberges, chambre d'hôte or small 1, 2 or 3* hotels. They have been selected to avoid towns as much as possible. Not all of them have a restaurant. You may have to walk a couple of kilometers to go for dinner.
- The precise lodging may change due to availability.
- All lodgings have bicycle storage.
- If you have any special requests, please let us know as soon as you make the reservation.



Luggage

- The only luggage to carry is a daypack !
- Leave your luggage at the reception before 9h30 and it will be delivered by cargo-bike before 17h00 at the next stopover.
- Use a soft bag weighing max 12 kilos. If you want to take more luggage, please let us know beforehand. There may be an extra charge.
- Use the kit list at the end of this document.

How to get here. Meeting arrangements

By train. Two direct TGV's between Paris and Remiremont per day. If you book early, you may be lucky to get one of the official bicycle spots (10 € well spent). You can also come by TER (free bike pass). Please let me know your train journey times. We have tried most connections, feel free to ask for advice.

If you need to stay an extra night at the beginning or the end of the trip, please let us know when making the reservation.

By car. The car parking behind the church at Xonrupt-Longemer is quiet and fairly well hidden from view. You can leave your car here until your return. We cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft to your car, but our own cars are parked here all year around and we've never had problems.

Meeting point for start and finish. We will meet up with you in person.

- by train at Remiremont train station : 11:00 on day 1. TGV and TER connections with Paris and Nancy. Around 16:30 on day 3. The itinerary will be adapted to a start and finish at Remiremont.
- by car at Xonrupt-Longemer: between 9:00 and 10:00 on day 1 at the parking behind the church. Around 17:00 on day 3.

How to book

How to book : please choose a bike tour and fill in the online booking form. At the end of the process you will be transferred to a secure payment platform and you will be asked to pay :

- an account of 30 % if you book more than 30 days before the start of the trip
- the full amount if you book less than 30 days before the start of the trip

Confirmation : self-guided tours are confirmed within 2 working days of booking. Confirmation depends on the availability of the accommodation. It is possible that we need to refuse. We will always try to find an alternative solution with you first. Please check your mailbox regularly.

The outstanding balance of 70% needs to be paid at the latest 30 days before the start. Your travel documents will be sent to you once we have received the balance payment. Road books and maps will be sent to you 3 weeks before departure. For last-minutes bookings, we will hand over the travel documents, road books and maps on your arrival.

Expert advice :

- Unsure which tour to book ?
- Interested in a custom version of one of our tours ?
- Not sure if a particular tour is suitable for your riding style ?

We are available to offer you expert advice from Monday to Friday from 9:00 until 18:00 by phone or by mail. You'll find the details on our website.



Cancellation or changes

In the event that you are obliged to cancel your bike tour, Bike Tours Vosges will reimburse the entire sum paid for the tour so far, minus the following cancellation charges :

- More than 60 days before departure : 5 % of the tour price
- Between 60 and 31 days before departure : 15 % of the tour price
- Between 30 and 21 days before departure : 30 % of the tour price
- Between 20 and 7 days before departure : 50 % of the tour price
- Less than 7 days before departure : 70 % of the tour price

In the event that you wish to change a bike tour there is a standard charge of 25 €. This is to cover the charges of the work involved.

User guide

Active autonomy: what you need to know for our self-guided tours.

In order to achieve the planned tour programme, you must :
guide yourself with the maps, roadbook and GPX tracks

- Choose suitable start times adapted to the lengths of the daily stages as well as your own riding pace, and leave an adequate safety margin of time.
- Consult the daily weather forecast that we send by text message. Take the forecast into account when planning your journey times.
- Arrive at the booked guest houses and hotels listed in the programme on the given dates.
- Bring the necessary personal equipment to carry out the tour. The Bike Tours Vosges kit list constitutes the necessary minimum.
- Carry insurance policies and emergency telephone numbers with you at all times.
- Be familiar with basic first aid steps.
- In the event of problems during your trip, contact Bike Tours Vosges (contact number in your travel documents) Possession of a phone that works in France is strongly recommended. Remember that you can check your exact position on a smartphone.



Responsibilities

Who is responsible for what ?

- **BAD WEATHER** : we cannot accept bad weather as a reason for cancelling. Luckily it rarely rains all day. We recommend reducing the ride to the direct distance of around 30 kms between 2 stopovers when the weather is really bad. To help you pick the best moment of the day to ride, we send a text message with the forecast. Please bear in mind that Bike Tours Vosges cannot be held responsible for the actual weather conditions being different than the forecast sent by text message. If necessary, we can transport bicycles at a day's notice. We can charge up to 4 bicycles in one transport, the cost is 50 € for the transport. We don't transport persons, but we can help you book a local taxi.
- **MECHANICAL PROBLEMS** : we recommend a bike check-up by a professional bike-mechanic before travelling. Fixing a mechanical problem remains your responsibility. We can however meet you with a toolbox and bike stand. It's free of charge if you give us a day's notice. The charge is 50 euros for an emergency call-out, bike transport included. Replacement rental bikes are entirely at your own charge.
- **TICKS** are very common in the Vosges and can cause Lyme Disease. Please take the following precautions
 - Cover arms and legs whenever possible.
 - Do a thorough check every evening for ticks. They favour certain areas such as armpits or behind the knees. The tick twisters in the set provided by Bike Tours Vosges should make it easy to remove the ticks.
 - Make sure to keep a close eye on the areas where you removed the tick(s) for at least 3 weeks. Consult a doctor if you develop a temperature or a red rash, with or without blisters in the centre.
- **LENDING SERVICE** of small kit, gps and gps trackers.
The aim of the lending service is two-fold :
 - sobriety, in case this is a one-off bike trip
 - testing, if you are planning to buy kit for further adventures

We'll ask to sign a form on your arrival listing the kit you have borrowed, together with your commitment to pay for any lost or seriously damaged items.

- **GPS TRACKERS** : the main reason for us to give you a GPS tracker is security because the tracker allows us to communicate your exact position to emergency services. The tracker is light and small and should be left switched on all the time. It has enough battery power for the trip. Store it in the top of a bag (the signal's not so good when stored in the bottom of a bag). Bike Tours Vosges will not share your position with anyone other than emergency services. If you don't feel happy about carrying a tracker, please let us know. The trackers can also be used to share your trip in real time with family and friends. We'll send you a link that you can share for people to follow your progress on a map.

GPS for NAVIGATION, a GARMIN Edge 530 or equivalent. All the GPX-files are preloaded on the GPS and we provide a simple user's manual. The GPX tracks will be sent by email before your arrival in case you wish to use your own GPS. The tracks are also available on Komoot.

We recommend doubling up with a smartphone. The main benefits of a smartphone are the zoom function and the bigger screen. It also provides back-up if there's a problem with the GPS. Using flight mode will help extending battery life.

Accuracy of the tracks and privacy

When importing the tracks in your own planning software, the system might make changes to adapt to "known paths". Be sure to select the option "not to adapt the track". Real world elevation gain and distances may vary slightly from the data shown in the GPS software applications.

Developing these tracks and the entire roadbook has taken many hours of work. Please don't share or publish them on any website, social media or anywhere else.



TRAVEL FILE :

We'll send the full travel file at least 2 weeks before your arrival, containing:

- A written description of the rides
- Your personal program
- Hotel vouchers
- Luggage tags
- The leave no trace policy

SPECIAL REQUESTS :

Please contact us by mail as early as possible for the following requests :

- Sharing or not sharing rooms
- Vegetarian meals, allergies
- Extra night on arrival or at the end of the trip
- Help with renting a bicycle
- Travel by train : we need to know the train time and number
- Unusual travel arrangements
- Extra bags
- Different daily elevation gain / distances
- If you wish to stay longer than 2 nights please choose Gravel Escape 5 days or ask for a quote

KIT LIST :

Don't worry if you don't have all the equipment, you can borrow a number of essential items. Please check the list below carefully.

Please feel free to contact us for any other questions.

All details on our website.

A detailed travel file will be sent at least 2 weeks before your arrival.

See you soon ... in the Vosges !



