

Alsace Half-Day Driving Tour

This is a somewhat off the beaten path half day driving tour of Alsace. Focusing on the Vosges Mountains and Alsace's military history.

The total driving time is 2 hour and 30 minutes.

The *Signal de Grendelbruch* offers you panoramic views of the Bruche Valley and the Plane of Alsace; the hike to the top only takes ten minutes. The area around the *Signal de Grendelbruch* was the scene of heavy fighting during WWI when Alsace was apart of Germany.

The drive along the, *Route de Souvenir Français* offers a wonderful view of the village of Grendelbruch with an 'almost on top' feel, see Photo 1 below. The *Signal de Grendelbruch* is a hikers paradise with manly different hikes to choose from. The Grendelbruch military cemetery also offers a splendid view of the village and the valley.

Strasbourg to Signal de Grendelbruch (45min) - Leave Strasbourg on the *Autoroute* (A 35) direction 'Colmar', when the A 35 splits off with the A 352 take the A 352 direction 'St-Dié par Col'. Keep going straight direction 'St-Dié', as the A352 becomes the N420, passing exits 11.

At the first roundabout, just after the lumber mill on the left, take the D704 direction 'Grendelbruch'. When D704 meets the D207, take the D207 again direction 'Grendelbruch.' Any villages on the D704 that you pass through follow the signs 'Tout Directions,' see Photo 2 below.

Once in the Village of Grendelbruch look out for the town church on the left. Pass the church in the town square and stay on the D207 direction 'Schirmeck'. The road veers right in the town square. 100 meters after leaving the village of Grendelbruch take the left, 'Route de Souvenir Français' road.

Stay on the 'Route de Souvenir Français' passing an intersection with *rue du Hohbuhl*. Once you see the military cemetery stay to the left and after about a kilometer park in the parking lot on the right or along the road.

Natzwiller-Struthof Concentration Camp, locally referred to as '*Le Struthof*,' was the only Concentration Camp in France it was operational from 1940 to 1945. Except for some bungalows most of the camp is still intact, including guard towers, crematorium and barbwire fencing. The first bungalow after you inter the camp is a museum that house prisoners clothing and other objects of daily camp life along with a map of all other concentration camps created by the Nazis.

Natzwiller-Struthof's gas chamber was only used a few times and it is not a part of the camp but about a kilometer away. Camp prisoners where mostly killed through the harsh labor they had to perform.

Next to the camp is a cemetery and memorial to those who died there. There is an entrance fee for the camp but not for the gas chamber.

Guided tours in French only.

Signal de Grendelbruch to Natzwiller-Struthof Concentration Camp (30 min) – Turn around and take the 'Route de Souvenir Français' back to the D207 and go left. Stay on

the D207 following signs direction 'Schirmeck' and pass through the village of Ross. Once in Schirmeck go left at the light follow signs for 'Center Ville,' you are back on the N422. Drive through the village, you will start to see signs for 'Le Struthof'. Leave Schirmeck and pass through the village of la Broque. Once you reach the village of Rothau, take the D130 direction 'Le Struthof.' Follow the D130 to Le Struthof Concentration Camp, look for signs marked *Camp du Struthof*. The gas chamber is just before you reach the Natzwiller-Struthof, on the D930 direction 'Chambre à Gaz,' see Photo 3 below.

Natzwiller-Struthof to Strasbourg (1 hr) – Head back the way you came to Schirmeck passing through Rothau. Once on the N422 or the A352 follow the signs mark 'Strasbourg'.



Photo 1
View of the village of Grendelbruch



Photo 2
'Tout Directions'



Photo 3
D130 and D930 intersection.

By: www.americansinfrance.net

Resource for Americans and other native English speakers
that would like to travel or live in France.