

Circuit around the Grand Ballon

In 3 Days:

Day 1 of 3: Going up the Grand Ballon

Get into the swing of things by going up the Grand Ballon, perfect for those who are up for a challenge!

From Guebwiller, the first day of this touring hike will lead you to the Grand Ballon, the highest summit of the Vosges Mountains, at an altitude of 1,424 metres. The climb up to this mountain pass is consequently pretty challenging and requires you to be in good physical shape. On your way, you can make the most of the different types of landscapes, the flora and fauna of Vosges, and upon arrival, an exceptional panoramic view over the entire Alsace plain, the Black Forest and even the Bernese Alps, on a clear day.

When leaving GUEBWILLER Tourist Office, turn onto "Rue de la République". At the crossroads with traffic lights, take "Rue du Maréchal Joffre" towards the fire station. At the first roundabout (fire station - Crédit Mutuel), continue opposite on "rue du Vieil Armand", towards the high school - military cemetery - Auberge du Vallon. At the second roundabout, continue straight uphill. 100 metres ahead, the tarmac road splits. Here, aim for the little wooden footbridge which crosses a stream. This is the entrance of the "Promenade Paul Déroulède" (various benches, tables, impressive trees). Follow the route of this promenade (oak leaf markings). On the left, you'll see the tombs of the military cemetery and on the right, the canine society training ground. When leaving "Promenade Paul Déroulède", take the little carriage way called "chemin du Vallon" (don't take the forest path marked by a yellow circle, which leads to the Ax forest house). Go past the Auberge du Vallon (on your right: very welcoming and good traditional cuisine). Above the Ax fountain, the path bends to the right and ends up on Sandgrube car park (starting point of the fitness trail).

Take the wide forest pathway, marked with a yellow circle, towards the Bildstoeckle mountain pass. A few metres before the mountain pass, turn right onto the forest pathway marked with a blue triangle, towards Rehbrunnenkopf. Around 1 km ahead, leave the forest pathway and take the track which goes up to the left, still marked with a blue triangle. After a bend and a little hill, the track ends at the summit of Rehbrunnenkopf (altitude: 632 metres. Bench and viewpoint over the entrance of the Florival valley and the "croix de mission"). The descent begins with the Simbert Krenger

track (former president of the Club Vosgien de Guebwiller). Steep at first, it gets easier and leads to the Péternit mountain pass (altitude: 566 metres. Benches and table).

Continue towards Rimbach for a few metres, then take the little path marked with a red rectangle with a white stripe, which goes off to the right towards the Munsteraeckerle mountain pass. This little path, which in places turns into a track, gently leads to the mountain pass via Geisskopf's south slope (altitude: 655 metres. Cute little open wooden shelter, tables and benches).

Leave the mountain pass via a forest path going slightly uphill, marked with a red rectangle with a white stripe, towards Judenhut. Around 800 metres ahead, this path takes a sharp turn to the left and goes past two cave entrances. Shortly afterwards, leave the path and take a little track on your left marked with a blue triangle, towards the Saint Pirmin rock and Judenhut. The track climbs, with several bends, the north slope of Ebeneck. After a very steep last bend, the slope becomes more gentle, allowing you to get your breath back a bit. 150 metres ahead, leave the marked track to the left, enter the pastures via a passageway and go towards the left, going slightly uphill (follow the visible prints in the grass) up to the summit of Ebeneck (altitude: 859 metres. Bench. Beautiful view over the Alsace plain, the Black Forest, the top of Guebwiller, Hartmannswillerkopf and the Grand Ballon). Retrace your steps and go up the track marked with a blue triangle. Shortly afterwards, this ends on the rocky ridge of Saint Pirmin rock (altitude: 908 metres. Viewpoint over the small valley of Murbach). The track crosses the rocky ledge and joins, around 200 metres ahead, another path from the left, marked with a red rectangle with a white stripe. Follow this beautiful track, which leads to the Judenhut mountain pass via a few bumps (altitude: 979 metres. Large clearing, with numerous benches, tables, unguarded refuge-shelter of Judenhut. Drinking water at the Schlumberger Fountain).

There is around one hour left of constantly going uphill up to the Grand Ballon. Go past the Schlumberger fountain by following the forest pathway marked with a blue cross. A few metres ahead, leave this path to take a narrower path, going up to the right, marked with a red rectangle with a white stripe. On the way up, the path becomes narrower, and turns into a track. It ends on another forest path, which you'll need to follow to the left for a hundred or so metres, then head back to the right. Shortly afterwards, it goes along the drinking water catchment areas of the Town of Soultz, crosses the path marked with a red diamond, crosses over a former ski slope twice and, after a final bend, exits the forest at the base of the Self de la Vue des Alpes buildings. Now, you just have to cross the Route des Crêtes. The Grand Ballon Chalet Hôtel is just opposite (altitude: 1343 metres).

Ascent: 1150 metres - Descent: 80 metres - 13 km

En route

Auberge du Vallon 10, chemin du Vallon – 68500 Guebwiller – +33(0) 3 89 74 89 86

Traditional cuisine and homemade specialities, à la carte menus between €7.50 and €36

Groups welcome, closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, and only on Mondays in the summer season (Booking recommended)

Hôtel de l'ange Rue de la gare – 68500 Guebwiller – +33 (0)3 89 76 22 11

info@hotel-ange.fr Warm welcome at the starting point of the hike, Alsatian and Italian specialities. Every Thursday and Friday: live concerts at the bar - free entry. Room prices from €65 to €92 Breakfast: €11

10% off for Circuit around the Grand Ballon hikers

Where to sleep/eat at the Grand Ballon and in the

Chalet Hôtel-Restaurant du Grand Ballon +33 (0)3 8948 77 99

Half-board prices (Meal, night and breakfast) between €47 and €55 per person (booking recommended)

Hiker picnic (book the day before for the next day) for €10 per person

Hôtel - Restaurant à l'Aigle d'Or Rimbach 03 89 76 89 90

15 min walk from the Munsteraeckerlé

Menu du jour (3 dishes) – hiker picnic 9€ - 12€ Restaurant closed on Mondays

Rooms from 55€

Ferme Auberge du Haag +33 (0)3 89 48 95 85

Courses and menu à la carte between €7.50 and €10

Open all year round except from mid-November to mid-December and 2 weeks before Easter/Closed on Wednesdays

Ferme Auberge du Grand Ballon +33 (0)3 89 76 95 79

“Marcaire” meal and dishes à la carte between €9 and €18.50

Open from Easter to November every day except Monday evenings and Tuesdays all day

Ferme Auberge du Güstiberg +33 (0)3 89 74 05 01

“Marcaire” meal and hiker’s menu between €12 and €20

Picnics made with farm produce available.

Open every day, closed from 15th November to 15th January.

Refuge du ski-club du Roedelen +33 (0)3 89 76 04 92

Price per night in dormitory €9.50 per adult and €6.50 for children under 16

Fully-equipped kitchen available

Open only on Saturday nights

Restaurant du Roedelen +33 (0)3 89 76 90 19 / +33 (0)3 89 58 80 15

“Marcaire” meal €15

Open from April to November on weekends and during the week subject to booking

Day 2 of 3 - On the ridges towards the Petit Ballon via the GR5

Take the time to admire the landscapes and the viewpoints, which make this second day of walking unique.

From the Grand Ballon, this second day of walking mostly takes place on the ridges until you reach the Petit Ballon, going past Le Markstein and Le Klintzkopf. Once more, you can fully appreciate the panoramic views over the plains and valleys on both sides of the mountain. This itinerary goes through forests and stubble-fields, enabling you to discover the wealth of local flora.

Leave the Grand Ballon Chalet Hôtel via the hotel's back door. Go around the welcome point in the Ballons des Vosges Park to the right. The little track which leads to the summit of the Grand Ballon is just behind and starts on the right. It is marked with a red rectangle (GR5) and a blue ring (panoramic circuit around the Grand Ballon). On the way, remembrance plaque in memory of Edouard Wolff (1861-1933), bench and view overlooking the Lac du Ballon. The track arrives at the little summit plateau, being used by the civil aviation Radome's facilities. Follow the Radome "train" up to the large white sphere, the peak of the Vosges Mountains (altitude: 1424 metres. Viewpoint indicator - exceptional panoramic view). Go past the Diables Bleus monument, and begin the descent via the track marked with a red rectangle, and also marked with a red ring (another panoramic circuit around the Grand Ballon). A little further down, the red ring circuit goes off to the left, towards the Redslob monument. Stay on the track marked with the red rectangle, which goes down towards the Haag mountain pass (altitude: 1233 metres. Farmhouse inn).

At the Haag mountain pass, take the little forest route to the left coming from the village of GEISHOUSE. 100 metres ahead, on the first bend in the road, continue straight on onto a forest path, still marked with red rectangle. This path, also known as "Kapitaenstressla", bypasses Storckenkopf, via its south slopes, and leads to the Moorfeld stubble-field. At the end of the stubble field, join the Route des Crêtes, cross it (with care) to join a track marked with a yellow rectangle coming from the Haag mountain pass via the Storckenkopf's north slope. Take this track towards Le Markstein, still following the GR5 markings (red rectangle, shared route with the yellow rectangle for the first 700m). Shortly before the Hundsrucken mountain pass, it's possible to get to the Saint Amarin Ski Club's Edelweisse chalet. Open on weekends (sign). At the Hundsrucken mountain pass, continue to follow the GR5 (red rectangle), which ends up on one of the Markstein Ski Resort car parks (altitude: 1184 metres. Farmhouse inn, brasseries, restaurants, hotel).

Cross and go along the road, towards the Schlucht mountain pass – Munster – La Bresse, before reaching the resort's main buildings. After going past the Markstein welcome

point on the right (opposite the restaurant “Chez SPECK”), leave the main road and take a little tarmac road going slightly downhill, leading towards Notre Dame des Neiges chapel. Here, take the little track towards the right. This track goes past the chapel entrance and joins a forest pathway. After going downhill for a few metres, this pathway ends up on a perpendicular path, marked with a red triangle, to be followed to the left, towards Steinlebach – Oberlauchen. Go past the pretty Vosgien de Mulhouse Ski Club’s Nansen chalet, crossed by a series of Fédérale ski runs, before finally arriving at the Auberge du Steinlebach (restaurant). Go past the inn and go towards Oberlauchen via a straight path going slightly uphill, still marked with a red triangle. At first exposed, it then enters the forest. After the crossing with a stream, in a right hairpin bend, the pathway splits. Leave the red triangle markings, and follow the path on the left which goes slightly uphill (cross-country skiing and mountain bike markings). This almost horizontal slope, on the mountain side and with a beautiful beech forest, leads to the Oberlauchen mountain pass (altitude: 1211 metres. Beautiful view over the Munster valley, the villages of Sondernach and Metzeral, Hohrodberg, and the cirque du Gazon du Faing. In the distance, the Taennchel plateau and Haut Koenigsbourg. From the other side of the mountain pass, a splendid view over the Markstein ridge, Storckenkopf and the Grand Ballon).

From this mountain pass, you’ll find the yellow rectangle markings (GR 532) arriving from the La Lauch lake from the right. Don’t leave these markings until Rothenbrunnen, the end of this second day. The pedestrian itinerary successively goes past the Lauchen mountain pass (altitude: 1195 m. Open National Forests Office shelter), bypasses the Langenfeldkopf natural reserve, joins the Hilsenfirst mountain pass (altitude: 1130 metres. Great view over the Florival valley), crosses the Steinmauer’s first scree, goes over to the other side of the mountain (beautiful view over the villages of Sondernach and Metzeral), goes past the Vosges Trotters de Strasbourg refuge, and arrives at the Amis de la Nature refuge, Section Guebwiller (dormitory accommodation) at the foot of the Petit Ballon. Turn right while staying on the (GR 532) to go down through the stubble-fields towards **the Dynamo youth hostel “la Schellimatt”**. *Another accommodation possibility at the Rothenbrunnen inn (“Marcaire” meal, bedrooms and dormitories, open all year round), below the refuge (follow the track marked with a blue diamond, which goes down directly towards the farmhouse inn, after crossing the Cheese Route).*

Warning: Regulated traffic between the Oberlauchen mountain pass and the Lauchen mountain pass, due to a biotope protection decree. Crossing on the track via the Klintzkopf summit (altitude: 1330 metres. Wonderful panoramic view) is only authorised between 15th July and 15th December. For the rest of the year, follow the passable track. Yellow rectangle markings for both options.

Ascent: 380 metres + 120 metres (via the Klintzkopf summit) - Descent: 570 metres + 135 metres (via the Klintzkopf summit) - 23 km

En Route (Le Markstein)

Restaurant Le Tremplin +33 (0)3 89 38 25 92

Dishes à la carte between €6 and €17

Open every lunchtime all year round and in the evening in July and August

Hôtel Wolf +33 (0)3 89 38 25 92

On the Route des Crêtes at the foot of the Markstein slopes. La Bulle café and terrace, concerts. Room prices from €71.

Half-board from €68; breakfast €11.50

10% off for Circuit around the Grand Ballon hikers

Ferme-auberge du Treh +33 (0)3 89 39 16 79

"Marcaire" meal and dishes à la carte between €11 and €20

Farm produce and bread for sale. (Picnics available)

Auberge du Markstein +33 (0)3 89 82 61 84

Prices of set menus and dishes à la carte between €6.50 and €18-19

Closed on Mondays

Auberge Le Steinlebach +33 (0)3 89 82 61 87 (booking recommended)

Prices of dishes à la carte between €10 and €13

Picnic (cold meal) at €7.50

5% off for half-board (excluding drinks) for Circuit hikers

Where to sleep/eat in the Petit Ballon area?

Refuge des Amis de la Nature +33 (0)3 89 77 39 77

Bedrooms and dormitories from €6 to €10 Fully-equipped kitchen available (no breakfast)

Ferme Auberge du Rothenbrunnen +33 (0)3 89 77 33 08

Half-board price (meal, night, and breakfast) between €34 and €41 (booking recommended)

Picnic: Sandwich + fruit for €4

(Closed on Mondays and in January)

Ferme Auberge du Kahlenwasen +33 (0)3 89 77 32 49

Half-board price (meal, night, and breakfast) €40 (booking recommended)

Picnic with homemade produce €6.50

(Open from Easter to November)

Youth Hostel / Refuge Dynamo +33 (0)7 68 25 53 96

dynamolaschellimatt@yahoo.fr

Dormitory price €9 per adult and €5 for children between 4-12 years old

Possible to camp near the inn for €5

Equipped and shared kitchen available

Open all year round, only at the weekend and during school holidays.

Day 3 of 3: Back into the Guebwiller valley

Downhill and back into the valley amongst the woods, clearings and vineyards to finish on a high note.

From the Petit Ballon, the third day of this hike is the last stage of this itinerary, and you'll make your way back to Guebwiller. You'll cross several types of landscape, from forests to clearings, as well as pasture meadows, whilst overlooking the towns and villages on both sides of the mountain, creating a link between the Florival valley and the Noble valley. This great hike will come to an end by taking you along the pathways overlooking the Guebwiller vineyards, providing you with some exceptional panoramic views over the Florival valley, and the Grand Ballon and Petit Ballon. You can also admire the paths you have taken over the past couple of days.

Go back the way you came by going back up the GR 532 up to the crossing with the blue diamond. Take the track to the right marked with a blue diamond, which climbs up in a straight line towards the Virgin located at the summit of the Petit Ballon (Altitude: 1268 metres. 360° panoramic view over the Guebwiller valleys, Munster, the Hohneck range, the Grand Ballon, the Black Forest mountain range, and the Bernese Highlands on a clear day). Follow the summit ridge (marked with a yellow triangle and red diagonal cross). At the end of the ridge, the track begins to go downhill by veering off to the left. It overlooks the steep slopes on the north side (view over the Petit Ballon *cirque glacier* and the Strohhberg farmhouse inn), then enters the forest, before coming out onto a very wide passable track. Follow the path on the right, going downhill. In a few minutes, it will lead you to Strohhberg farmhouse inn (altitude: 1083 metres. "Marcaire" meal. Booking recommended). Continue going down the passable track, now marked with a red circle, until you get to the Boenlesgrab mountain pass (altitude: 885 metres. Inn).

At the mountain pass, take the tarmac forest route which goes down towards Lautenbach-Zell. After around 300 metres, leave this route and take the forest path, marked with a yellow cross, which starts on the left. Slightly uphill to start with, it flattens out afterwards and bypasses the slopes of Dornsilkopf. After around 2.5 km, leave this forest path via a track on your left hand side, still marked with a yellow cross. Here, you will start going downhill, past the Engelstein and Hochfelsen rocks, before reaching Bannstein mountain pass (altitude: 483 metres. Benches and tables. Car park). Cross the mountain pass route and take the slope, marked with a blue circle and a red ring, which goes down to the right towards Buhl – Saint Gangolphe. After around 700 metres, the forest makes way for a landscape of orchards and scattered houses. The itinerary goes past the Saint Gangolphe pilgrimage (chapel, inn), goes along the fishing lakes and finally joins the cycle path coming from the right from Schweighouse village centre. Carry straight on along the cycle path towards Buhl, still with the blue circle markings. Shortly after the passage near an old pink sandstone quarry on the left (small car park, benches and tables), the path reaches the first houses in the village of Buhl, at

the crossroads between “rue de la carrière” and “chemin du réservoir” (large information sign on the Buhl quarry circuit).

Follow the “chemin du réservoir” uphill, marked with a red ring. After the last houses, it goes through some vineyard plots, past the drinking water reservoir of Buhl (information sign about the village’s past activity. Beautiful view over Buhl and the Grand Ballon summit) and, after two bends, it joins another forest pathway. Follow it to the right, with the same red ring markings. At first, this path provides some beautiful views over the Florival valley, then enters a forest and joins, around 600 metres ahead, another passable track, coming from the left hand side of the Dreibannstein mountain pass and marked with a red circle. Follow this path slightly downhill, which goes past, shortly afterwards, the ex-national police shooting range (on the left), then in front of the start of the Guebwiller quarry track (also on the left), before getting to an intersection. Leave the path marked with a red circle, which goes down to the right towards Guebwiller (Heissenstein). Continue opposite up an unmarked passable track. 100 metres ahead, it flattens out and splits. Take the path to the right. Shortly afterwards, it exits the forest and provides some beautiful views over Guebwiller and the Florival valley. Stay on this beautiful path with its views until you get to the Unterlinger mountain pass, where you’ll find, on your left, the track marked with a yellow circle coming from Oberlinger (benches). Follow this track down, which will lead you to the Croix de la Mission lookout point within a few minutes (altitude: 360 metres. Rest area with benches and table. 50 metres away, in the forest, the Lion’s Club open shelter. Exceptional panoramic view over the Alsace plain, Kaiserstuhl, the Black Forest mountain range, the Jura mountains, the Bernese Alps on a clear day, the entire Florival valley, Hartmannswillerkopf, and the Grand Ballon and Petit Ballon).

Go back the way you came (around 100 metres) and continue down towards GUEBWILLER via the vineyard (marked with a yellow circle) and “Kitterlé” tarmac path. At the crossroads with traffic lights, cross “rue du Général de Gaulle” and the bridge going over the Lauch river. Take “rue de la Gare”, which goes past the Hôtel de l’Ange. After around 150 metres, it joins “rue de la République”, opposite Jeanne d’Arc square, with the Notre Dame church and Théodore Deck museum. You just need to go back up “rue de la République”, the town’s main road, to get back to GUEBWILLER Tourist Office.

Ascent: 270 metres - Descent: 1120 metres - 19 km

En route

[Auberge du Boenlesgrab](#) +33 (0)3 89 71 10 88

Hiker’s menu and dishes à la carte between €10 and €40

Closed on Mondays all day and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening.

Share your experiences and impressions:

By commenting the itinerary at:

www.rando-grandballon.fr

Share your photos/stories on the Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/randograndballon

info@tourisme-guebwiller.fr by email

Or by telephone on +33 (0)3 89 76 10 63

See you soon!



Office de Tourisme
www.tourisme-Guebwiller.fr