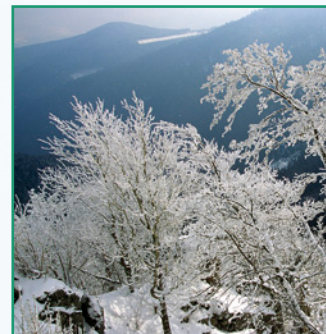


The village of Aubure

Aubure, the highest village in Alsace, lies 800 m above sea level on a bowl-shaped plateau overlooking the Alsace plain at the junction of the high points of three valleys: Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines to the north, Lapoutroie and Kaysersberg to the south and Ribeauvillé to the east. Sheltered by the Brézouard massif from the prevailing west winds, the village consequently benefits from a unique microclimate.



The territory of Aubure includes a broad expanse of communal forest that serves as a primary income source for the village. Some farms in the area feature old homesteads typical of those at these medium elevations in the form of monoblock structures housing both the living areas (facing south for maximum sun exposure) and outbuildings (facing north and including space for the livestock).

Thanks to its microclimate and mountain location, Aubure became famous as a resort area for its fresh-air cures beginning in the late 19th century, with guest houses, hotels, sanatoria and secondary residences springing up alongside traditional

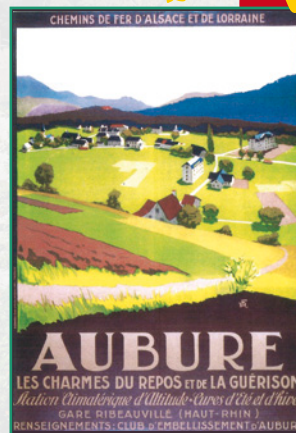
homes. Today, Aubure remains a popular vacation destination and starting point for a variety of easy hikes in summer or winter with a view to appreciating its natural riches.

A little history...

First mentioned in 1217, Aubure was at that time part of the seigneurie of Riquewihr and county of Horbourg. In 1324, the county of Horbourg-Riquewihr was sold to Count Ulrich of Württemberg, a cousin of the counts of Horbourg, who had by then run out of male heirs. In 1397, the seigneurie of Riquewihr was integrated with the county of Montbéliard. From 1534 to 1536, the dukes of Württemberg-Montbéliard (the county of Württemberg having been made a duchy in 1495) introduced the Reform in Aubure. The first (Protestant) church in Aubure was built in 1556; having no church of their own in Aubure, Catholics went to the church of the abbey of Saint-Nicolas de Sylo not far from the Château de Bilstein (today in ruins).

During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), a large part of the village was destroyed, and Aubure's Protestant population declined dramatically; many Welches, Catholic inhabitants of nearby valleys who spoke a French patois, moved into Aubure over the same period.

In 19th century Aubure's economy was based on farming, forestry and home-based weaving for large enterprises in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines. By the second half of the 19th century, Romanticism began drawing members of high society toward the mountains and especially to Aubure which was renowned for the quality of its air. In the 1880s, tuberculosis patents began coming to Aubure, staying first in private guest houses and later in the sanatoria built between the two world wars. By the late 1970s, having outlived their usefulness with the control of tuberculosis, these sanatoria were turned into hospitals. Meanwhile, a successful tourism industry has also developed in Aubure over the past century.



ALSACEZ-VOUS!

Aubure



View over the village and the Alsace plain.



The Protestant church next to a meadow.



Fresh air and rest-cure at the sanatorium.

Office de Tourisme du
PAYS DE RIBEAUVILLE ET RIQUEWIHR

Ribeauvillé : 1 Grand'rue • Riquewihr : 2 rue de la 1^{ère} Armée

www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com

☎ 03 89 73 23 23

To round off your visit:

- **Explore the numerous walking trails** starting out from Aubure (including the trail leading to the ruins of the castle Bilstein [Château du Bilstein] 6 km away).
- **Take part in the guided tours:** in July and August: guided tour of the village and on the walking trail of Aubure hosted by a local resident (for more information contact the Tourist Office).
- **Please ask the Tourist Office for the following brochure:** 'Aubure, sentier de découverte dans le plus haut village d'Alsace' (brochure published by the Parc naturel régional des Ballons des Vosges).

• Aubure, rest-cure centre, renowned for the recuperative properties of its air...

In the 19th century, Aubure became well-known for the quality of its air (the ozone present at high altitudes kills the tuberculosis bacillus after long-term exposure to fresh air), with the first recorded visits of patients to Aubure dating back to 1887.

Rest-cure stays in the mountains, usually at private guest houses or rest-cure hotels, were at first a privilege reserved for the upper classes. By the late 19th century, however, members of the working class – such as railway workers – were gaining access to these costly, long-term treatments through health insurance funds established in Germany. With the opening of the sanatoria – Salem in 1891, Leopoldinenheim (the former Hôtel Le Muesberg) in 1903, Les Pins in 1925 and Les Bruyères in 1927 – rest-cure stays in the mountains took on a medical dimension as these establishments started to bring in medical staff. Although guest houses and hotels did not follow the same practice, members of high society continued to give preference to the smaller private operations in avoidance of the sanatoria, which were frequented mainly by workers. The development of antibiotics for treating tuberculosis in 1921 and adoption of mandatory vaccination programs beginning in 1950 led eventually to the control of the disease, and by 1967 treatment establishments were being converted again for other purposes (Le Muesberg becoming a functional rehabilitation centre, Salem a medical centre), as were guest houses and rest-cure hotels (into strictly tourism operations or restaurants).

• Treatment of patients

Treatment was offered in Aubure all year round regardless of the season. Air and rest cures were typically 8 to 26 weeks in duration (extending occasionally up to 52 weeks) and required reclining in lounge chairs placed out on sheltered open-air verandas. To occupy the patients and help in keeping up their spirits during their long, isolated stays, establishments also provided a variety of distractions, such as short excursions, evening activities or cinema showings.



Aubure

The highest village in Alsace



AUBURE

BEBLENHEIM

BENNWIHR

BERGHEIM

GUEMAR

HUNAWIHR

ILLHAEUSERN

MITTELWIHR

OSTHEIM

RIBEAUVILLE

RIQUEWIHR

RODERN

RORSCHWIHR

SAINT-HIPPOLYTE

THANNENKIRCH

ZELLENBERG

Pays de
Ribeauvillé et Riquewihr

A village, its history,
a voyage of discovery.

A voyage of discovery

Tourism

The Romantic movement, which developed amongst the intellectual classes in the 19th century and was stimulated by the construction of railways facilitating travel, led people to rediscover nature, including the mountains – and thus tourism was born! As early as 1836, Aubure had four ‘auberges’ (restaurants) and the villagers were not long behind in turning their farms into guest houses to receive tourists. Word spread rapidly of the invigorating air in Aubure and its properties in regards to treating tuberculosis. In 1870, the tourism appeal of Alsace (known then as ‘Midi de l’Allemagne’) amongst Germans was enhanced with Germany’s annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, which also heightened the fascination of the French bourgeoisie in their lost province.

1 Establishment Arc-en-ciel (1 rue de la Poste)

This inn and bakery (Wirtschaft zur Heimat) dating from the 19th century was expanded in 1903, when another floor was also added to the building. Known successively as Hôtel de la Marne and Hôtel le Grand Tétras, it is today a centre for the handicapped called the Arc-en-ciel.

2 Catholic presbytery (4 chemin de l’École)

Built in 1864, the presbytery was a relatively large structure that also served as the summer residence of the bishop of Strasbourg.

3 Former Pension Pfeiffer (6 route de Fréland)

In the 1890s, this farm and restaurant was transformed into a ‘rest-cure hotel’ that remained in operation until after World War II.

4 Traditional Farm (12 route de Fréland)

This farm is typical of others in the Vosges of the 18th century with one exception: the layout of the interior is reversed, that is, the living areas face north and the outbuildings used for farming face south. On the left porch of the house is marked the date 1767 along with ‘LCMD’, the builder’s initials.

5 Former sanatoria of Dr Heitzmann: Les Pins and Les Bruyères (chemin du Combattant)

In 1925 and 1927, Dr Etienne Heitzmann, then head physician at the Salem Centre (see point C of the itinerary), founded 2 private sanatoria in Aubure that he owned and operated: Les Pins 5a (for male patients) and Les Bruyères 5b (for female patients). The terrace of this building, which today remains completely closed up, was where guests of the establishment sat outside.

6 Farm located 7 rue de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines

Built in 1792, this property has many of the features typically observed in a traditional farming community, including living areas and outbuildings under the same roof, an open yard, masonry walls with offset cornerstones and a streetside gable wall covered with wooden shingles to protect the farm from inclement weather.

7 Les Brimbelles, former hotel Le Brézouard (9 route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines)

When the Hôtel du Brézouard opened in 1876, this upper-crust establishment turned away tuberculosis patients for fear of their contagion, as stated in one advertisement: ‘Lungenkranken finden keine Aufnahme’ or ‘Those with lung diseases are not welcome’. The hotel remained in operation until about 1959, when it was bought by the bishopric of Strasbourg, which sold it again in 1970.

8 View on the former sanatorium Bethel (opposite the chemin des Jardins)

In 1922, the Bethel sanatorium (until then an ordinary farm) was founded by the Free Evangelical Church and approved as a sanatorium for women in an effort to meet the increasing need for accommodation of patients seeking the fresh air of Aubure. From 1945 to 1965, the sanatorium served as a rest-cure hotel for visitors with non-bacillary (non-contagious) tuberculosis. The establishment closed its doors in 1994.

9 Cross / site of the former protestant church (opposite the 19 route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines)

In 1556 at the site of this cross was erected the first Protestant church/school (surrounded by the Protestant cemetery), which was destroyed – along with much of the rest of the village – in 1635 during the Thirty Years’ War (1618 -1648).

10 House located 29 route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines

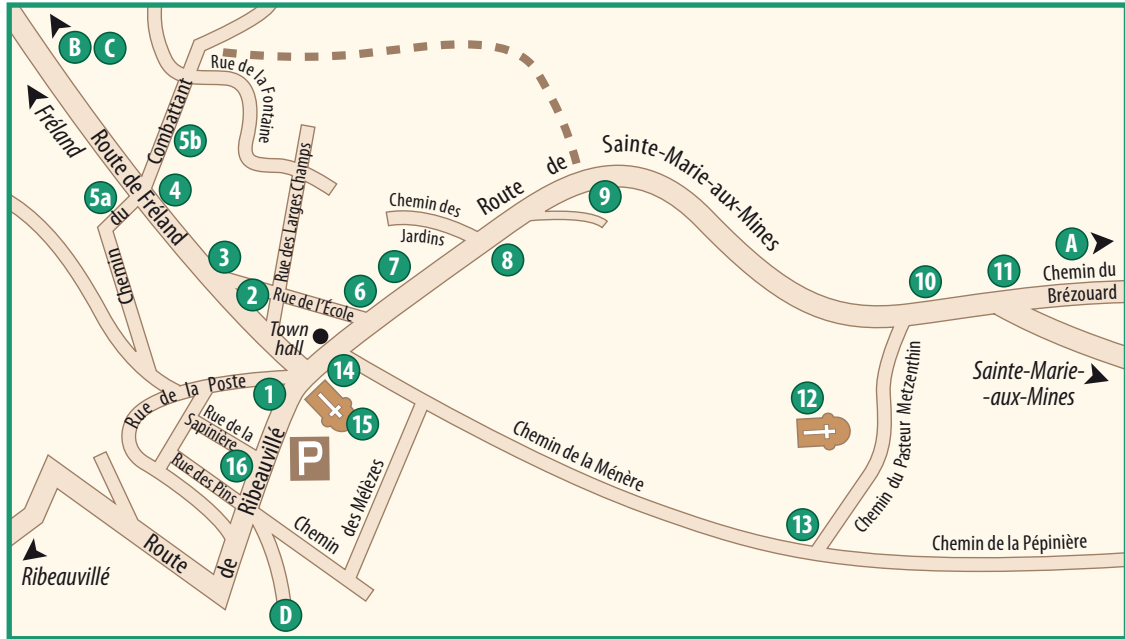
Dating back to 1600, this house, the oldest in Aubure, features on its backside a small window with a Renaissance casing whose main column has been removed.

11 Former boarding house Kletty (35 route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines)

Pension Kletty was the first rest-cure establishment in Aubure. Already open in 1887, it closed its door in 1945.

12 The Protestant church (chemin du Pasteur Metzenthin)

The first Protestant church/school was destroyed in 1635 (see point 9 of the itinerary) but it was not until 1827 that the Lutherans and Reformists (Calvinists and Zwinglians) agreed on the conduct of worship (following the Reform) and decided to acquire a farm dating from 1731 to transform into a school and presbytery, also adding a church on the property. Due to its setting, the end product resembled a civil building rather than a religious site, looking more like one of numerous farms in the area with the exception of its bell turret.



In 1846, the municipality of Aubure reclassified the Protestant school (originally a public school) as a private establishment based on its teaching of German instead of French, as would be expected of a public school. This event illustrates the ages-old rivalry between the village’s two religious communities:

- Catholic French Welches, who settled in Aubure after the Thirty Years’ War (1618 – 1648),
- and Protestant German-speakers, the first inhabitants of the village, who did not like having their children attend the public Catholic school in Aubure, which taught French, a language the parents of these children did not understand.

13 Stone marker (chemin du Pasteur Metzenthin)

This stone marker indicated the limit between the land belonging to the seigneurs of Ribeaupierre (living in Ribeauvillé) and that of the dukes of Württemberg, of which Aubure was part.

14 Guest house Steib (2 route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines)

In the early 1920s, this family-owned guest house belonging to Fritz Steib was also a rest-cure hotel.

15 The Catholic church St-Jacques-le-Majeur (route de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines)

In 1720, the first Catholic church in Aubure was built, its original nave still in place today. The choir, vestry and part of the bell tower date from an expansion undertaken in 1813, whilst the top of the bell tower was built in 1859. On the church’s side is a meridian sundial dating from the 19th century and with which residents synchronized their clocks, which during that era were inaccurate.

The Catholic church houses a remarkable altar from the second quarter of the 18th century which was probably brought from the Cistercian abbey of Pairis, on the commune of Orbey, after the abbey’s dismantling during the French Revolution. The altar’s sculpted decor is of exceptional quality, featuring a relief pietà of Baroque influence (c. 1500) surrounded by 4 cherubs which was based on an engraved work by Hans Collaert, a sculptor active in Antwerp in the 16th century, himself probably inspired by Michelangelo.

16 Former boarding house La Sapinière, former hotel (or Kurhaus) Rübsamen (6 rue de la Sapinière)

A Mr. Rübsamen, himself a tuberculosis survivor after a stay at Pension Kletty in Aubure (see point 11 of the itinerary), opened his own sanatorium Kurhaus Rübsamen around 1893, later operated as a rest-cure hotel (renamed La Sapinière after 1918) approved to accommodate non-contagious patients ; this was the second establishment in Aubure designated officially to receive patients privately on a profit-making basis.

OFF THE MAIN PATH IN AUBURE

A La Renardière Alsacienne (chemin de la Renardière)

Around 1925 the enterprise ‘La Renardière Alsacienne’ started up an operation to raise silver foxes in Aubure, for which it became widely known (by 1927 apprentices were coming from all over Europe for training in fox and mink farming techniques) in an effort to meet demand amongst the wealthy bourgeoisie of the Roaring Twenties, who spent significant sums on stylish furs. In 1933, due to the financial crash of 1929, changes in fashion and increased competition from numerous other operations, the fur trade collapsed and the enterprise ‘La Renardière Alsacienne’ went bankrupt.

B Belvedere (Fréland pass, direction Salem)

This monument, which offers a magnificent view of the ridges of the Vosges, was erected during World War I by German soldiers posted in Aubure; baptised ‘Herzog Albrecht Blick’ (in english ‘Duke Albrecht’s Viewpoint’) after Albrecht, Duke of Württemberg (1865-1939), commander-in-chief of the German 4th Army, it is decorated with the arms of Baden-Württemberg (lions and deer antlers).

C Medical centre Salem (located in the commune of Fréland)

In 1891, Albert Willmann, who recovered from tuberculosis after a stay in the mountains, decided to build a sanatorium (one of the oldest in France) near Aubure. Acquired in 1893 by the deaconesses of Strasbourg for the purpose of housing female patients, the sanatorium was given the biblical name of Salem (the ancient name of Jerusalem).

D The Muesberg Functional Rehabilitation Centre (located in the commune of Ribeauvillé)

The former Hôtel le Muesberg (1896) was sold in 1903 to Landversicherungsanstalt Elsass-Lothringen (a regional social insurance fund in Alsace-Lorraine), which converted it into a sanatorium named ‘Leopoldinenheim’. In 1967 it was renamed Le Muesberg Medical Centre after the name by which the site on which it stood was commonly referred.

Over the course of the 20th century, Aubure owed much of its development to the Muesberg and Salem medical centres although neither of these establishments lay within the official limits of the commune.