

Holiday: Jura Vineyards Walk

Rating: Upper  level

Holiday type: Independent Walking

- Waymarked GR walking trails through vineyards, valleys, apple and cherry orchards
- Beautiful unspoilt scenery: limestone caves, thundering waterfalls, dramatic gorges, panoramic picnic spots
- Great bird-spotting: kestrels, hawks, falcons and buzzards
- Delicious local wines and cheeses – tastings galore!
- Charming family-run hotels, all with pools: mouthwatering cuisine



This varied walking holiday explores the Jura wine region, a network of mediaeval towns set against the dramatic backdrop of the Jura mountain range. This is *France Profonde*, as you imagine all the country must have must been 50 years ago with charming village squares decked with pavement cafés, geranium-decked balconies and pretty country lanes.

Following the waymarked *Grande Randonnée* (GR) trails for the most part, your walk takes you along undulating wine terraces, through ancient oak and beech forest and across high meadows carpeted with harebells and narcissi to discover thundering waterfalls, impressive limestone caves and dramatic gorges. Look out for kestrels and buzzards cruising on thermals.

There's plenty of historical as well as scenic interest along the way. Your route takes you through two of France's officially most beautiful villages – Baume les Messieurs and Château Chalon which boast mediaeval ramparts, feudal castles and ancient abbeys. You'll also get the chance for some wine tasting in the string of postcard-pretty villages that you'll pass through including Arbois (with its fascinating Wine Museum in the town castle) and the flower-decked village of Pupillin.

And the hotels that you'll stay in serve to only enhance the region's charm. Run by some of the most friendly hoteliers that we've come across, we're sure you'll return home feeling that you have experienced day to day life in one of France's most authentic regions. Each of our hotels has its own particular charm. Our favourites include our restored watermill at Arbois, and Mme Lombard's quaint wooden little hotel with its panoramic swimming pool.

“The local cuisine leans heavily towards *charcuterie* – look out for farmhouses with wooden chimneys for smoking mountain hams and sausages.”



Jura Vineyards Walk: Day by day



Day 1 Arrive at Les Planches près Arbois

We meet you and take you to your hotel (15 mins) - a restored water mill that enjoys a picturesque location by a limestone waterfall.

Day 2 Les Planches to Poligny 18km/11mi/5hr

Why not visit the Les Planches caves with their stunning limestone rock formations before heading out towards Arbois? The lazy riverbank route takes you into the town for a spot of wine tasting or, following the higher path, you may spot falcons swooping over limestone cliffs as you breathe in views over Arbois and the entire valley. Either way, the geranium-decked wine village Pupillin is THE lunch spot today. From here it's a pleasant walk through sun dappled oak forest into Poligny in time for a refreshing dip in the hotel pool before dinner.

Day 3 At Poligny

You could laze by the pool, but it's a shame not to walk into the fortified town of Poligny to explore its the mediaeval ramparts, 12C churches and flower-decked fountains that make up the pastel coloured old quarter. There are also a number tempting tasting places for the town's famous *Comté* cheese and several excellent local wines. Afterwards, you could walk up to Monts de Vaux a great view over the town, before enjoying another excellent dinner *chez M Masson* and family.

Day 4 Poligny to Passenans 14km/8mi/3.5hr

Gently ascending, you reach the summit of the dramatic limestone Croix du Dan promontory for breathtaking views back over Poligny and its vineyards. Your path then winds through lush meadows alive to the tinkling of cowbells to the delightful hamlet of Miery with its four pretty flower covered fountains. Then, the wooden hamlet of Les Bordes makes a panoramic picnic spot before you descend through oak and beech forest bright with cyclamen to the Schmit family hotel, nestling in the vines at Passenans.

Day 5 At Passenans

Why not follow a circular route that leads through woodland to the 14C *Château de Frontenay*. From here, an avenue of lime trees continue to the picture postcard village of Vau, with its traditional wine growers houses, characterised by their pointed slate lauze roofs, returning to Passenans through apple and cherry orchards. Then maybe enjoy some wine tasting at *Grand Frères Cave*, before returning in time for a dip in the pool before dinner.

Day 6 Passenans to Baume les Messieurs / Les Planches 19km/12mi/4.5hr

Following an old Roman road you ascend through vineyards to Château Chalon, officially one of France's most beautiful villages. Perched high on a limestone cliff, the view from its feudal castle is breathtaking! And its cobbled streets reveal a number of tempting lunch stops. Descending along the River Seille to Baume les Messieurs nestling between dramatic limestone cliffs. There's time to visit its beautiful 6C abbey and limestone caves before we meet you and take you to Les Planches for your farewell dinner.

Day 7 Leave Les Planches

We take you to the station after breakfast.

For people wanting to have bikes available for all 'rest-days' these can be pre-booked for you (£50 per adult and £30 per child per week) and will be waiting at each hotel for you.



For departure dates, prices and travel options, please visit our website at:
www.headwater.com

Walking Details

Fairly easy walking, mainly through vineyards, along forest paths and following well marked GR routes. Some paths are stoney so protective footwear is advised.

