

The mysteries of Heidenkirche

Alsace Bossue - Butten



Le début du circuit (PNRVN - A.Serylo)



Immerse yourself in the remains of past eras with this forest walk!

This circuit, in the heart of the Butten forest, will lead you to discover traces from different periods, demonstrating ancestral occupation of the site: burials of the Iron Age, walled enclosure of the Gallo-Roman era, church of the 14th marking an abandoned village at the 15th, 17th and 18th century monuments and cenotaph of the 20th century.

Useful information

Practice : Walking

Duration : 4 h

Length : 16.1 km

Trek ascent : 431 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Histoire & patrimoine

Trek

Departure : Parking de la Heidenkirche, Butten

Arrival : Parking de la Heidenkirche, Butten

Markings :  Club Vosgien

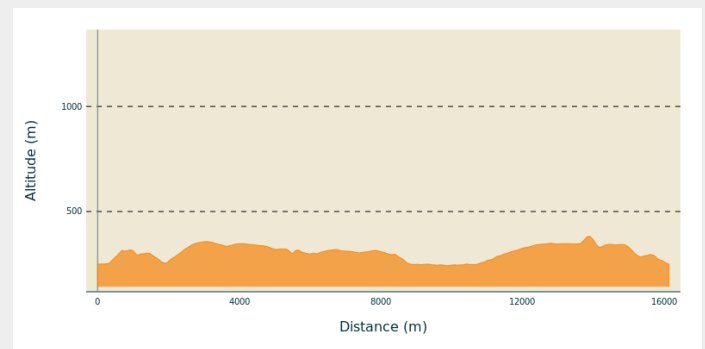
Cities : 1. Butten

2. Ratzwiller

3. Volksberg

4. Soucht

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 242 m Max elevation 382 m

Leave the car park and take the path in the opposite direction to the Heidenkirche following the yellow ring.

At the Heidenkirche, go down the path facing the entrance to the ruin. At the bottom of the stairs, cross the stream on the bridge and climb the path following the blue ring to cross the fir forest. Then make a left onto the forest road of Grosse Nachtweid. At both stadiums, take the forest road on the right (unmarked path) for 100 m to see the Celtic tumulus. Retrace your steps and pass between the two stages before entering the path on the left following the yellow triangle.

Take a right at the intersection following the yellow ring. Go around the Burg then come back to take the yellow triangle road towards the mill Ratzwiller.

At the Ratzwiller mill, follow the blue cross to Diemeringen. It is possible to make a detour to the Nassau Fountain by following the yellow triangle forest path along the Spiellersbach (detour 20 minutes); at the fountain, retrace your steps and climb the Mittelschield forest road. At the 2nd crossing of the green easel, follow this sign.

At the electrical terminals on the right, go up the forest path, on the left side of the bridge, where you can see the fleur de lis lined posts.

Take a left following the green disk. Shortly after the cenotaph, go down the path to the right, then follow the hairpin path to the right. At the road, cross the Pont Neuf to return to the car park.

Variations:







Variant 1: North circuit, connecting points 1 to 6 and return to the starting point directly by the yellow diamond marked path. Distance of 9 km and walking time 2H30.






Variant 2: South circuit 1 - 3 - 6 and following. Distance of 10.9 km and walking time 2H50.

Variant 3: circuit marked yellow ring 1- 2 - 3 - 1. Distance 2.5 km and running time 0H50.

On your path...



-  1757 milestone (A)
-  Spruce-fir Forest (C)
-  Passage of the Oil and Gas Pipelines (E)
-  Cenotaph (G)
-  Pedunculate oak (I)
-  Fleur-de-lis boundary stone (K)

-  The ruins of Heidenkirche (B)
-  Celtic Burial Mound (D)
-  The Burg (F)
-  Ratzwiller Mill (H)
-  Nassau Fountain milestone (J)

All useful information

Advices

Carte IGN : 3613 ET

How to come ?

Transports

- Gare TER de Diemeringen (Ligne Strasbourg Sarreguemines - Sarrebruck)
- Itinéraires en Alsace : www.vialsace.eu

Access

From Soucht, take the D83 to the locality Speckbronn to access the car park of the Heidenkirche.

Advised parking

Parking de la Heidenkirche, Butten

Information desks

Tourist Office of Alsace Bossue

90 rue Principale, 67430 Lorentzen

tourisme@alsace-bossue.net

Tel : +33 (0)3 88 00 40 39

<http://www.tourisme.alsace-bossue.net/>



On your path...



1757 milestone (A)

This 1757 marker is marked with an inverted Z, which represents a wolf trap or "Wolfsangel". This symbol of the county of Nassau-Saarbrücken is confirmed by the initials NS; it is an old boundary of the Birsbach ban.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo

The ruins of Heidenkirche (B)

The Heidenkirche is the last remnant of the extinct village of Birsbach (14th century). Located in the forest, the Heidenkirche overlooks the small valley of Spielersbach. Excavations were undertaken in 1911, as well as in 1999 and the building was consolidated at the beginning of 2000.

At the rear of the ruins is a small rocky chaos (scattered sandstone blocks) of the sandstone conglomerate still called pudding.



Spruce-fir Forest (C)

The acidiphilic beech forest is home to the whitish alfalfa (*Luzula luzuloides*), the tiny oxalis acetosella or the graceful fronds of the female fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*).

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo

Celtic Burial Mound (D)

A tumulus is a mound of earth that the Celts raised above the burials, in about 500 BC. It has a diameter of 22 m and a height of 1.60 m.



Passage of the Oil and Gas Pipelines (E)

View on the Spielersbach valley on one side and on the Alsace Bossue on the other side.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo



The Burg (F)

Vast circular enclosure of 9 to 10 m of width at the base and 1072 m of circumference, dating, it would seem, from the Gallo-Roman time, although no archaeological research proves it. The circular earthen embankment reveals in places blocks of stone from the ancient wall. This fortification may have served as a refuge or dwelling for various populations until the Gallo-Roman period.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo



Cenotaph (G)

This monument, which does not contain a body, was erected in memory of a person who died here in 1926.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo

Ratzwiller Mill (H)

The Ratzwiller mill, dating from 1770, was never actually a grain mill, but a sawmill and brush factory. Nowadays, the building houses a bar. The building is representative of the traditional architecture of Alsace Bossue, with its schopf. At the beginning of the 20th century, the mill actually housed a forestry operation and a trout farm before turning to restoration in the 1950s.



Pedunculate oak (I)

Or Quercus Robur. Classified as a remarkable tree because of its location as a solitary tree near the spring, it is about 28 m high, 80 cm in diameter and about 150 years old.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo



Nassau Fountain milestone (J)

The source is surrounded by a circular basin dating from 1975. It is adjacent to a monument bearing the inscription NASS (for Nassau Saarbrück) and the date 1621 which was part of the demarcation of an enclave of Nassau County, in the middle of the Scheidwald forest, property of the Diemeringen Lordship.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo



Fleur-de-lis boundary stone (K)

This line of emblazoned terminals of 1767 endowed with a fleur de lys indicates the limit between the duchy of Lorraine, under suzerainty of the king of France, and the county of Nassau. They also mark the current boundary between the Bas-Rhin and the Moselle.

Attribution : PNRVN - A.Serylo