Disputed for centuries by French kings and the princes of the Holy Roman Empire, and subsequently embroiled in a bloody tug-of-war between France and Germany, France’s easternmost provinces, **Alsace and Lorraine**, share a tumultuous history. It’s no surprise then that almost everything, from the architecture to the cuisine and the language, is an enticing mixture of French and German – so much so that you might begin to wonder which country you’re actually in. Cute Hansel-and-Gretel-type houses – higgledy-piggledy creations with oriel windows, carved timberwork, toy-town gables and geranium-filled window boxes – are a common feature in Alsace, especially along the winding [**Route des Vins**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/route-des-vins/), which traces the eastern margin of the forests of the Vosges mountains. This road also represents the region’s chief tourist raison d’être – wine – best accompanied with a regional cuisine that’s more Germanic than French, although you’ll find plenty of creativity in modern Alsatian cooking. Ruined medieval castles are scattered about, while outstanding churches and museums are concentrated in the handsome regional capital of [**Strasbourg**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/strasbourg/) and in smaller, quirkier [**Colmar**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/route-des-vins/colmar/). Bustling [**Mulhouse**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/mulhouse/) stands out for its industrial heritage and entertaining nightlife. A noticeably wealthy province, Alsace has historically churned out cars and textiles, not to mention half the beer in France. Alsace’s less prosperous and less scenic neighbour, Lorraine, shares borders with Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium. The graceful former capital, [**Nancy**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/nancy/), is home to a major school of Art Nouveau and is well worth a visit, as is leafy [**Metz**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/metz/), with its sparkling new contemporary art gallery. The bloody World War I battlefields around [**Verdun**](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/verdun/) attract a large number of visitors, as does the zoo in **[Amnéville](https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/france/alsace-lorraine/amneville/" \o "Amnéville)**, one of the largest in France. Gastronomically no less renowned than other French provinces, Lorraine has bequeathed to the world one of its favourite savoury pies, the quiche lorraine, and an alcoholic sorbet, the coupe lorraine.