

Guided JURA ROUTE	Riding Day 4
Saignlegier	Kilometers: 96
to Basel	Meters of climbing: 750
DAY 05	

Make sure you pack a jacket this morning. You've got 20km and then a long, long descent into the little medieval village of St. Ursanne and those mountain descents can be quite cool.

I love St. Ursanne. Park your bikes and have a walk-about. This little medieval town is perfectly preserved: you'll find churches, a cloister, a castle and a hermitage. If you come in July, you'll even find knights and long-haired princesses, (they've got a medieval carnival going on).

This is also your first look at *Le Doubs* river , (pronounced "le-do"). This is a famous river (for tourism) and creates the border between France and Switzerland for perhaps 100km. It's slow moving, very shallow in places and a nice bit of water to have by your side as you coast along on your bike. It's also a source for much of the local cuisine: frog legs, snails and "petite friture", (fried fish).

Remember that descent ? I'm sure you were thinking, "This is fun, but I know I'm going to pay for it.". Indeed. Not quite as long as the descent, but you've got to get out of this hole and that means 400 meters to climb over 8 km. So, get that piece of pie before leaving town.

Once up that hill, things stay relatively flat for awhile. You'll be following a route that takes you right up against the French border and you'll be crossing over and back several times, but probably never even notice. You will, however, notice a change in scenery: more agriculture, more fruit trees and houses that look more like Alsatian homes than Swiss Chalets. The linguistic border is rather fluid, but at some point after *Lucelle*, you can expect to see less "tarte aux pommes" and more "apfel strudel".

You've got one more hard climb beginning at Kleinllutzel, (a bit less challenging than the last, but with your tired legs, you probably won't notice).

Now it's all downhill to Basel/Bale. Enjoy it. I love this part of the ride: you're in the woods, then pasture, then fields, then villages and they turn into suburbs which lead to the wide tree-lined streets of Basel. If you simply arrived at the Basel train station, you might be a bit intimidated by Basel's bulky architecture, but the ride into town introduces you to the neighborhoods: people, children, pets, butchers, bakers, bars. Basel is beautiful.

FYI: LSD was invented in Basel. Back in the 1930s, Albert Hoffman inadvertently synthesized the drug at Sandoz laboratory, ingested a small amount and then discovered its powerful effects while riding home on his bicycle. May our bicycle trip into Basel be as beautiful, albeit safer.

Your hotel is in the city center right across from the train station. We'll be eating out together this evening at a nearby restaurant.