

Guided JURA ROUTE	Riding Day 6
St. Hippolyte to	Kilometers: 70
Fournet-Luisans	Meters of climbing: 700
DAY 08	

I didn't want to tell you last night. You seemed to be enjoying that concoillote and sausage. Yes, we're going to have to climb out of here. You did look at the profile charts before signing up for this, I hope. You'll be climbing the usual 400 meters in 6 km. Put some extra jam on that croissant before leaving the breakfast table.

Once you get to the top, (just after Courtefontaine), things begin to even out and you'll be passing through pasturelands, forests and small villages. The folks around here do much of the same work as they do on the Swiss side, but for less money. Watch-making, skiing and forestry are all important sectors. That said, the French Jurrasians are a bit more diversified: you'll find villages and towns that specialize in furniture, wooden toys, eyeglasses, pipes, smoked meats and cheese.

Cheese indeed. We should know a bit more.

Any talk about cheese begins with "AOC", this is the French label "Appellation Origine Contrôlé". It's a kind of official guarantee of quality and origin of a product. The label exists so that small producers of regional foods have some kind of protection. For example, a factory in the south of France cannot start producing Roquefort. Roquefort is an AOC cheese and so comes from one region and the producers must respect many rules with regards to its production.

To become an "AOC" product is a long and arduous process and the label has been around since 1919. If you're eating an AOC product, then you can be sure that there is a long history and tradition around the product. There are 46 different AOC cheeses in France and the Jura has quite a few of them. You've noticed all of the cows and grass, right? Taste the cheese and you'll really taste the grass. The AOC cheeses in the Jura are: *Concoillote*, *Comté*, *Bleu de Gex*, *Morbier* and *Vacherin Mont d'or*. You should try them all and if you do (and pay just a bit of attention), you'll be able to easily identify them by sight, taste and texture in a few days.

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You'll also see a lot of signs which say "Fruitière". These are local cooperatives that are jointly owned by different milk producers and the cheese is usually produced on site. The word "fruitère" comes from the fact that this is where the "fruit of one's labor" is harvested. You'll see a lot of fruitières. You can go in, buy as much or as little as you like: a great way to snack. They also usually sell great yogurt, milk, butter and sometimes meats.

The tidy town of Charquemont is at kilometer 35 of today's ride and it's the last real town you'll see for awhile. If you'd like a coffee, this is your last chance. Afterwards, it's just you and the cows for quite some time. Enjoy the peace and quite.

It's best to keep a good pace today. There is a lot of riding and the days are getting shorter and shorter. I rode this section of the route in early October last year and didn't arrive at our hotel until after dark.

Your hotel: although not in the-middle-of-nowhere, it's close. You get the impression that you're staying in someone's house, and that may be the case. The auberge/restaurant is family run. The young mother at the reception, father in the kitchen and the elder son may be waiting your table. The food is excellent, and the family does make a real attempt at buying fresh local products. Of course, we're eating here.

If you get in early enough, (which I doubt), you may make use of the sauna and whirlpool. There is a charge, but if you've ever deserved a treat, it's today.