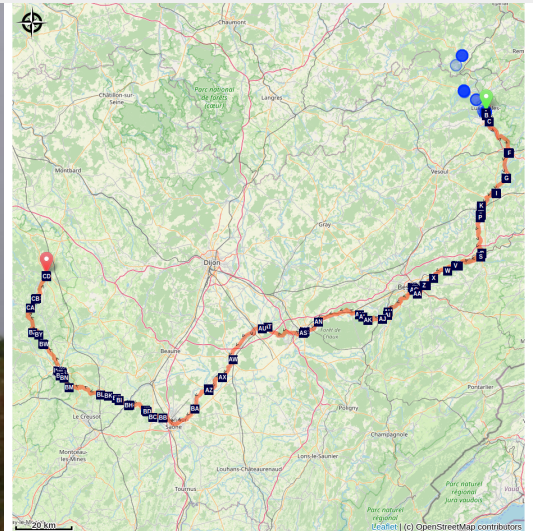


## 06. 610 France (1/8)

France



(Amis saint Colomban)



Covering 2720km in France, the route of Colomban's exile in 610 is divided into 8 parts, which can be followed successively or indiscriminately. Starting in Luxeuil-les-Bains, this first part of a particularly winding route leads to Saulieu through the Burgundy Franche-Comté region.

Around 610, expelled from Luxeuil, Saint Colomban and the Irish monks were taken to Nantes under the guard of armed soldiers who were in charge of taking them on a ship to Ireland. But, barely on board, they managed to escape and, fearing that they would be caught, began an incredible journey through many countries. Most of the journey into exile takes place in France from East to West and then back again after Nantes. The itinerary mainly follows the great rivers and the vineyards often planted

### Useful information

Practice : Pedestrian

Duration : 0 min

Length : 367.8 km

Trek ascent : 6882 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Multi-day trek

on their banks while crossing the historic cities that mark them out.

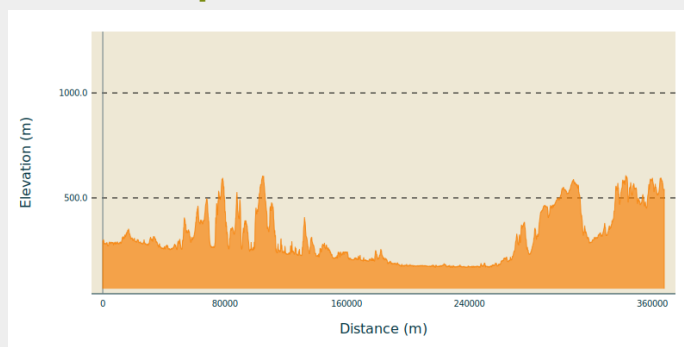
## Trek

**Departure** : 70300 Luxeuil-les-Bains

**Arrival** : 5444 Schengen (Luxembourg)

**Cities** : 1. Bourgogne-Franche-Comté

### Altimetric profile



Min elevation 168 m Max elevation 606 m

These two successive crossings of France are not the most direct way to reach the Swiss border to the east of Luxeuil, only 110km away. But they do reflect the strong image of a strong-willed Columban who had left Ireland for good, with no desire to return.

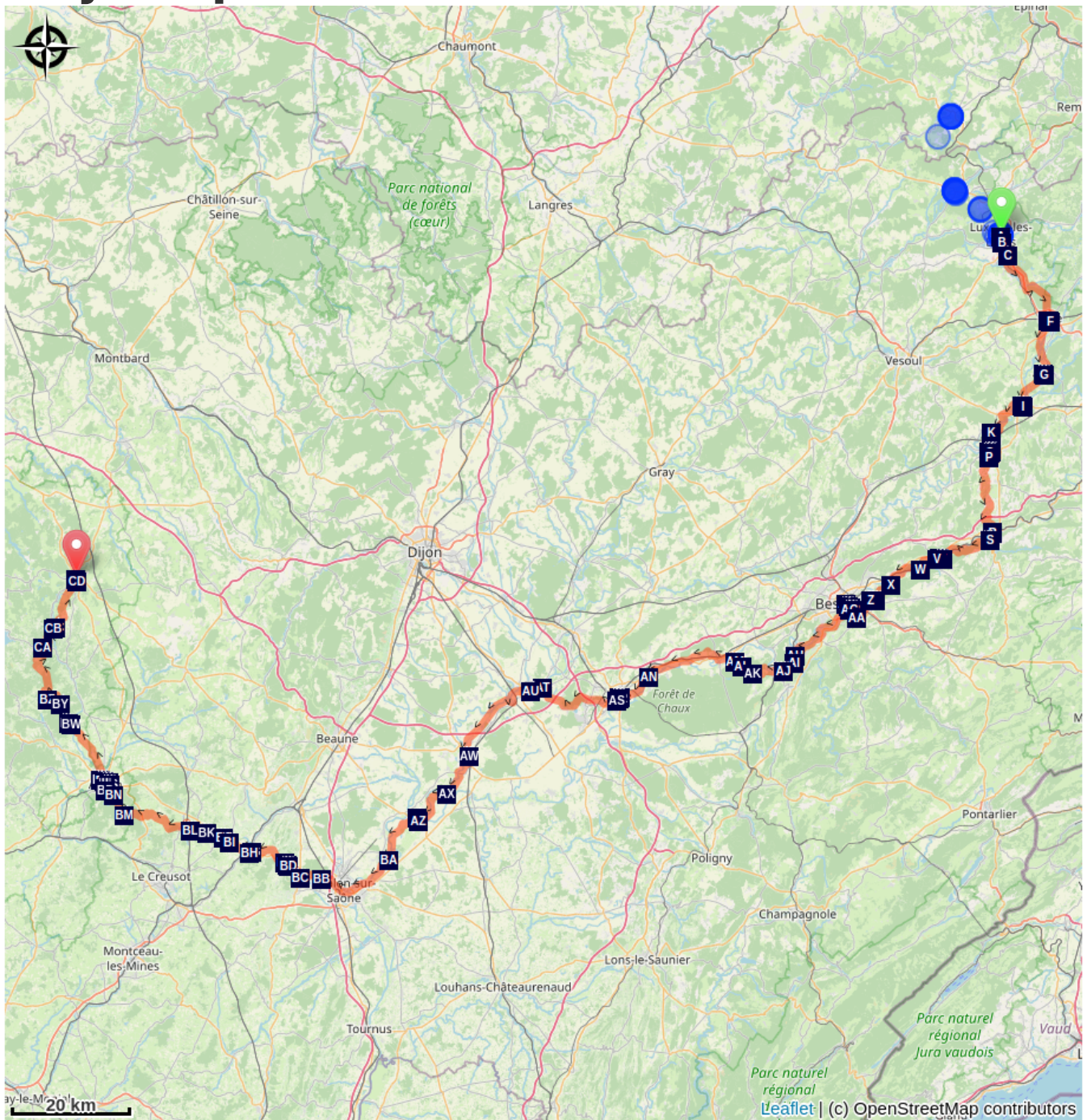
The first part (1/8) consists of 14 stages averaging 24km a day:

1. Luxeuil-les-Bains - Lure
2. Lure - Bonnal
3. Bonnal - Baumes-les-Dames
4. Baumes-les-Dames - Vaires-le-Grand
5. Vaires-le-Grand - Besançon
6. Besançon - Villars-St-Georges
7. Villars-St-Georges - Dôle
8. Dôle - Saint-Jean-de-Losne
9. Saint-Jean-de-Losne - Verdun-sur-le-Doubs
10. Verdun-sur-le-Doubs - Chalon-sur-Saône
11. Chalon-sur-Saône - Couches
12. Couches - Autun
13. Autun - Cussy-en-Morvan
14. Cussy-en-Morvan - Saulieu

## Stages :

- 1.** Luxeuil-les-Bains to Lure  
21.2 km / 210 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 2.** Lure to Bonnal  
27.2 km / 229 m D+ / 7 h
- 3.** Bonnal to Baume-les-Dames  
21.5 km / 610 m D+ / 5 h
- 4.** Baume-les-Dames to Vaire-le-Grand  
26.2 km / 1177 m D+ / 7 h
- 5.** Vaire-le-Grand to Besançon  
19.0 km / 765 m D+ / 5 h
- 6.** Besançon to Villars-Saint-Georges  
29.1 km / 745 m D+ / 7 h 30
- 7.** Villars-Saint-Georges to Dole  
32.4 km / 323 m D+ / 8 h
- 8.** Dole to Saint-Jean-de-Losne  
22.8 km / 207 m D+ / 5 h
- 9.** Saint-Jean-de-Losne to Verdun-sur-le-Doubs  
35.6 km / 190 m D+ / 9 h
- 10.** Verdun-sur-le-Doubs to Chalon-sur-Saône  
21.8 km / 129 m D+ / 6 h
- 11.** Chalon-sur-Saône to Couches  
30.2 km / 590 m D+ / 7 h 30
- 12.** Couches to Autun  
30.7 km / 501 m D+ / 7 h 30
- 13.** Autun to Cussy-en-Morvan  
23.4 km / 503 m D+ / 5 h
- 14.** Cussy-en-Morvan to Saulieu  
29.2 km / 756 m D+ / 7 h 30

# On your path...



Luxeuil Abbey (A)

The abandonment of Saint Desle,  
companion of Saint Colomban (C)

Notre-Dame de Lure Abbey (E)

The Gouhenans collieries and salt  
mines (G)

Church of St. Nicholas of Villersexel  
(I)

Church of the Holy Trinity at Saint-  
Sauveur (B)

The Font Lake in Lure (D)

Georges Columb Sapper  
Camenbert (F)

The old railway line from Lure to  
Besançon " Voie Verte " (H)

Villersexel Castle (J)

Bonnal Water Park (K)

The Gate of the Old Mill in  
Rougemont (M)

Town hall and former grain market  
in Rougemont (L)

The Church of the Nativité de  
Notre-Dame in Rougemont (N)

# All useful information

## How to come ?

### Access

Luxeuil can be reached by rail (Belfort) or by air (Basel) by contacting the association of the Friends of Saint Colomban de Luxeuil. Saulieu is accessible by bus.

### Advised parking

Luxeuil

# On your path...

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## Luxeuil Abbey (A)

Around 593, Columban and his companions obtained permission from King Childebert to found a new monastery in the castrum of Luxovium.

It is likely that the first monastic buildings were located on the site of today's abbey. The various reconstruction works carried out on the abbey have erased all traces of the original monastery buildings.

The current monastic complex was built in the 17th and 18th centuries as part of a restructuring of the monastic movement initiated by the reform of Saint-Vanne and Saint-Hydulphe.

After having housed a minor seminary and then a private college until 2024, Luxeuil Abbey is now privately owned and will soon be hosting European congresses, conferences and other events, as well as pilgrims on the Via Columbani.

The architecture of the Abbey and its past, steeped in prayer and manual and intellectual work, provide an ideal setting for reflection, silence and rejuvenation. Tours are organised by the Vosges du Sud Tourist Office.

[More information](#) : Wikipedia

Attribution : Amis de saint Colomban

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## Church of the Holy Trinity at Saint-Sauveur (B)

During the Middle Ages the monks of the monastery of Luxeuil did not want a parish church within the walls of the town of Luxeuil. The parishioners of the town had to go to the church of Saint-Sauveur. The date of construction of this first church is unknown. The present church was rebuilt in the 19th century. Inside there is a baptismal font dating from the 14th century. The church is closed to visitors.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## The abandonment of Saint Desle, companion of Saint Colomban (C)

In 610 Colomban and his brothers Scots are driven out of the monastery of Luxeuil and accompanied by the soldiers of King Thierry II to Nantes. Near Luxeuil in front of the Vay de Brest stream, probably at the height of the Roman road from Mandeure (Doubs) to Corre (Haute-Saône) which crossed this forest, the monk Desle abandons his companions to head into the woods towards an oratory dedicated to Saint Martin. The hermit Desle will be buried there, his tomb became the place of pilgrimage then a monastery will be founded nearby, these are the beginnings of the abbey of Lure.

The brook can become a small river during heavy rains and you cross the brook which disappears in the vegetation of the forest when you leave the roundabout of the RN57 at the place called the Vaudot bridge.

Attribution : a

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## The Font Lake in Lure (D)

Lac de la Font is a resurgence of the Ognon, the river that waters Lure and that you will discover in the following stages. Very full of fish, it was perfectly suited to the monks of the abbey. Initially the lake did not have this regular shape: larger and with arms, it participated in the defence of the abbey by surrounding it with an arc of a circle. It was also used as a reservoir to fill the ditches protecting Lure. It took on its current shape when the abbey was destroyed during the Revolution and the surrounding marshes were cleaned up.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Notre-Dame de Lure Abbey (E)

If the separation of the monk Desle from his fellow scotsmen is attested in the Vita Columbani, the date and the reasons for the foundation of the abbey of Lure remain to be determined.

The settlement on a mound near a natural resurgence, La Font, is confirmed by medieval treatises.

The Abbot, prince of the Holy Roman Empire, was an independent ruler, supported by the Emperor and the German princes. Over the centuries, successively plundered, burnt and ruined by the Counts of Montbéliard, the Dukes of Burgundy and the kings of France and Spain, the land of Lure suffered harsh assaults.

Over the centuries land was exchanged between the abbeys of Lure and Luxeuil.

In 1796, the beautiful abbey church adjoining the abbey was sold stone by stone. The residence of the Provost Marshal became the Hôtel de la Sous-Préfecture.

At the time of the Concordat, canons built the beautiful chapter houses almost adjoining the Abbey and which are the current buildings on rue Kléber. The Prévot's residence, occupied by the Sub-Prefecture, is the only vestige of the illustrious abbey.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## Georges Columb Sapper Camenbert (F)

At the end of the 19th century, Georges Colomb made his hometown famous by making the comic strip Sapeur Camenbert de Lure, published in Le Petit Français illustrated in the form of a serial.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## The Gouhenans collieries and salt mines (G)

The Gouhenans factories mined and processed rock salt and pyrite ore from 1831 to 1945, as well as coal from 1828 to 1921, resources present at the same geological level. Coal was discovered in the 18th century and salt was discovered during coal mining, which reduced the cost of processing brine into salt.

A glassworks will be created at the beginning of the 20th century. Gouhenans will be an important industrial centre until the middle of the 20th century and after a political scandal the factories will close in 1955.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## The old railway line from Lure to Besançon " Voie Verte " (H)

At the end of the 19th century rail transport was booming. The department of Haute-Saône was crossed by the Paris-Basel line, "tacots" were used to export crops from remote rural areas. A passenger line between Besançon and the centre of the department was built, it was also used to transport manufactured goods within the department but also the army. The majority of your stage takes place on this old railway line which has become a cycle track. This walk will be embellished by old stations, depots, gatekeeper's houses, stone platforms, some buildings are reused as in the Val de Gouhenans and others await a new destiny as the station of Villersexel. Bridges are redesigned to span rivers and marshy areas with their fauna and flora.

Attention pedestrians: long straight lines allow cyclists some excesses.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## Church of St. Nicholas of Villersexel (I)

The church, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, was rebuilt between 1755 and 1758. It is surmounted by a Comtois bell tower "à l'impériale" with glazed tiles dating from 1780 and houses a pulpit and two 18th century altarpieces.

The church can be visited during guided tours at the Tourist Office in summer, or by appointment for groups.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Villersexel Castle (J)

Villersexel has had several castles. A medieval fort whose location is not known was destroyed in the 13th century. The second fortress fell in 1636 during the Ten Years' War. In 1699, the de Grammont family bought the land of Villersexel and its castle, which they had modernised by the architect Robert de Cotte. This large residence was destroyed by fire during a bloody battle that took place on 9 and 10 January 1871, pitting the French troops of General Bourbaki against those of the Prussian General Von Werder. Around 1880, the de Grammont family decided to rebuild a new castle set back from the original site by the architect Eugène Danjoy. It was built in the neo-Louis XIII style with asymmetry of the east and west wings to simulate the age of the castle and mark the difference in function of each part. The interior of the castle has retained its 19th century appearance. One can admire paintings and objets d'art as well as a set of Gobelins tapestries.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Bonnal Water Park (K)

The French Revolution chose the river as the departmental boundary that cut the territory of Bonnal in two: the village of Bonnal in the new department of Doubs and its forge in the department of Haute-Saône. Since then, all the land on the right bank has been under the jurisdiction of the commune of Chassey-lès-Montbozon in Haute-Saône.

The forges are mentioned several times during the 16th century. In 1545, François de Gevigney sold his possessions in Rougemont and his rights to the mills and forges of Bonnal to Jean de Civria. These mills then included a furnace for melting the ore and several forge fires. After a long silence in the seventeenth century, it is the resumption shortly before 1700. The blast furnace was shut down around 1840 and the forge was shut down around 1860. Today the de Moustier family is the owner of this tourist activity.

The Val de Bonnal campsite is in the department of Doubs and the Forge de Bonnal leisure park (commune of Chassey-les-Montbozon) in the department of Haute-Saône, a contiguous tourist complement that combines a traditional campsite with unusual accommodation and a beach in the 150-hectare leisure park.

Over the past centuries, quarries in the alluvial plain of the Ognon have modified the landscape to make way for a leisure base.

An early Christian church was discovered on the site during the extraction of sand. Nearly 150 tombs have been found dating from the 6th and 7th centuries. It is a major site of the early Middle Ages in Franche-Comté with that of the church of Saint-Martin de Luxeuil-les-Bains. In spite of development and enhancement work over the past few years, the site cannot be visited because it is not maintained and is not secure.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban



## Town hall and former grain market in Rougemont (L)

The Town Hall planned to serve as a town hall and boys' school was completed in 1834. It is the work of the architect Convers and was built under the mandate of Mayor Mercier.

Subsequently, the grain hall (now converted into a foyer-club), the adjacent washhouse and the fountain were also built in the same style. These imposing constructions in local ochre stone, due to the presence of iron ore, give a perfect harmony to the centre of the town.

Attribution : Amis de saint Colomban



## The Gate of the Old Mill in Rougemont (M)

Until the 18th century, the village was surrounded by imposing ramparts pierced by four gates, including the Porte du vieux Moulin (Old Mill Gate) which you can admire today.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban

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## The Church of the Nativité de Notre-Dame in Rougemont (N)

The church of Le Crotot, today known as the Nativity of Our Lady, was the chapel of the castle and probably finds its origin at the end of the 11th century or the 10th century since it was the chapel of the Lords of Rougemont. Around 1640 it only became a parish church.

The church is composed of two bodies of buildings of different shape and period: one of ogival style dating from the 15th century, includes a close and two chapels. This is what remains of the former chapel of the feudal castle; the other has three naves at the end of which are two 18th century chapels. In the furniture of the church you can admire a terracotta Christ of the Spanish school, a polychrome wooden statue of St. Anthony (16th century) and two stone statues of the "Virgin and Child" from the 15th century, one of which is from the Burgundian school.

Attribution : Amis saint Colomban