



GranFondo & Sportive  
Coaching Camp, Pyrenees  
August 2021





# Welcome!

*The Alpine Cols difference:*

- *A real expertise and focus on one-on-one coaching for performance.*
- *Decades of experience competing in sportives and GranFondos.*
- *Excellent hotels, fantastic food and 5\* service!*

**Marvin, Emmanuelle, Olivier, Stéphane and Yannick** are looking forward to a wonderful week's cycling with you, experiencing the best of the Pyrenees. During the week we tackle many of the most iconic climbs in the Pyrenees, such as the **Tourmalet**, the **Aubisque**, the **Soulor**, the **Aspin**, the **Hourquette d'Ancizan**...

The camp includes rides, workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions. The rides always have a technical focus, such as descending or pacing for GranFondos or multi-stage events like the Haute Route. Each day has an extended ride option for more distance and climbing.

The off-the-bike activities give you key points to focus on the following day as well as during your training for future events. There will also be daily massages available to help recovery during the camp.

From convivial buffet breakfasts to relaxed dinners in the cosy dining room, French gastronomy takes pride of place and the meals are a real highlight of the day.

Our goal is that you have a wonderful time and leave us fitter, but also more efficient, with better technique and with a clear picture of what you need to work on in the coming months. More than that, we hope you become friends who will come back again and again - as is already the case for many of you!

Safe rides,  
Marvin & Emmanuelle



**Marvin**

MA, MBA, British Cycling coach



**Olivier**

PhD, BPJEPS



**Silas**

BSc, DBS

## CYCLING COACHES

Marvin, Olivier, Silas, Stéphane and Yannick are not only highly qualified, experienced cycling coaches but also strong (or very strong!) competitors in their own right.

Olivier is a past winner of the Tour de l'Ain and has placed 10<sup>th</sup> at the Marmotte; Silas was vice-champion of New Zealand and an international triathlete; Stéphane has placed well at countless Alpine sportives, Yannick has gained several podium places at Elite level and Marvin is often on the podium in his age category.

They love sharing their experience and will work with you to help you reach your potential as a cyclist.



**Stéphane**

BEESAC



**Yannick**

MSc, BPJEPS



## Is this coaching camp for you?

**YES:** if you want to **learn to cycle faster**, especially for tough events like the **Marmotte** or the **Haute Route**.

**YES:** if you want to **cycle the iconic climbs of the Pyrenees**.

**YES:** if you want to **make friends** and **have fun** with **other like-minded people**.

**NO:** *if you are essentially a leisure rider with no particular interest in riding faster.*

**NO:** *if you prefer the lifestyle associated with large tourist hotels and easy access to bars, nightclubs etc.*

## Coaching Camp Highlights

### On the bike

- The goal of this camp is to help you become a faster and more skilful cyclist.
- The coach to rider ratio is 1:5 or better, ensuring that you will have plenty of one-on-one coaching.
- There is a strong focus on technique with plentiful use of video for analysis and feedback.
- During the week we suggest limiting the intensity. The normal pace is Zone 2 (Endurance). You may however ride harder if you wish, and the coaches will help you define your own training camp objectives and daily pace.
- Different groups will form so that you ride with people at your own level.

### Off the bike

- Recovery is the first priority, with a post-ride buffet lunch back at the hotel followed by optional stretching sessions, massage and/or use of electro-stimulation.
- Daily debrief with a coach looking at your ride file and power data.
- Evening sessions on:
  - Climbing powerfully and efficiently
  - Descending fast and safely
  - Using power meter data to improve your performance
  - Training for your target event
  - Eating and drinking for performance
  - Competing in sportives and GranFondos
- Time to relax in an authentic Pyrenean town. Enjoy a coffee and pastry in one of the numerous local cafés.





*“The experience with Alpine Cols was excellent. I have done several cycling camps, and I must say this one was close to perfection.”*

*- Stephanie, Paris*

## GRANFONDO COACHING CAMP

### ON-THE-BIKE PROGRAMME

Date	Alpine Cols programme	Timings		Major climbs	Distance / vertical Standard (extended)
Sun	<b>Arrive in Toulouse or Lourdes;</b> pick-up and transfer to <b>Pierrefitte-Nestalas.</b>	14h30	Pick-up from Toulouse or Lourdes airport (tbc)	-	-
Mon	<b>Col d'Aubisque</b> OPTION: col de Bordères	9h 14h	Depart Pierrefitte (on the bike) Return to Pierrefitte	Col de Soulor Col d'Aubisque Col des Bordères	70km / 1,900m (73km / 2,250m)
Tue	<b>Col de Couraduke</b> OPTION: Hautacam	9h 13h-15h	Depart Pierrefitte (on the bike) Return to Pierrefitte	Col de Couraduke Col des Bordères Hautacam	52km / 1,500m (88km / 2,900m)
Wed	<b>Col du Tourmalet (W)</b> OPTION: Luz Ardiden	9h 14h-15h	Depart Pierrefitte (on the bike) Return to Pierrefitte	Col du Tourmalet Luz Ardiden	65km / 1,900m (92km / 3,150m)
Thu	<b>Hourquette d'Ancizan, col d'Aspin</b> OPTION: col du Tourmalet (E)	8h30 15h-16h	Depart Pierrefitte (minibus) Return to Pierrefitte (minibus or bike)	Hourquette d'Ancizan Col d'Aspin Col du Tourmalet	53km / 1,600m (100km / 3,060m)
Fri	<b>Col du Soulor via the col de Spandelles</b> OPTION: Soulor from the bottom	9h 13h-14h	Depart Pierrefitte (on the bike) Return to Pierrefitte	Col de Spandelles Col du Soulor	70km / 2,100m (88km / 2,400m)
Sat	<b>Marmotte GranFondo Pyrenees course</b>	8h 18h	Depart Pierrefitte (on the bike) Return to Pierrefitte	Col du Tourmalet Hourquette d'Ancizan Col d'Aspin Luz Ardiden	165km / 5,500m
Sun	<b>DEPART:</b> Transfer to Toulouse or Lourdes airport		Drop-off at Toulouse airport (10am)	-	-

**310 km - 470km | 9,200m – 14,000m | Up to 11 major climbs**

Please note the programme is necessarily subject to change based on road and weather conditions. You can always do less than the planned distance.





## Sunday

Possible ride, depending on arrival times

You will be picked up at Toulouse (or Lourdes) airport and brought to the hotel in Pierrefitte-Nestalas.

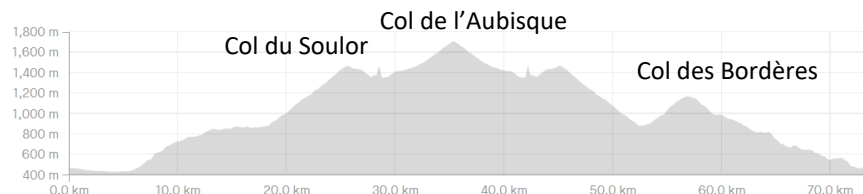
The transfer will take approximately two hours.

There will be only one transfer, but we can organise a taxi if you arrive at a different time.

The camp begins with a welcome drink and briefing at 18:30, followed by dinner with the coaches and other riders.

## Monday

**Distance:** 70 -73km **Elevation:** 1,900 - 2,250m+  
**Ride time:** 5 hours **Focus:** **Core skills**



We begin the week with the climb to the **col d'Aubisque**, via the **col du Soulor** and the stunning **Cirque du Litor**. The road here is cut into the flank of the mountain all the way round the bowl: just magnificent!

We will enjoy a coffee at the summit café before retraining our steps, with an optional extension via the **col des Bordères** for an extra 350m of climbing for those who want more.

Throughout the day, the coaches will observe your **basic bike-handling, cornering and climbing skills**, and pay close attention to your **pacing** to ensure you stay at the right level for a long endurance ride.



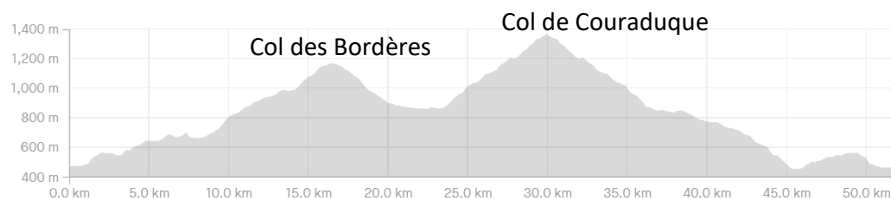






## Tuesday

**Distance:** 52-88 km    **Elevation:** 1,500-2,900m+  
**Ride time:** 5-6 hours    **Focus:** **Descending**



Descending is a crucial skill to master if you are going to ride in the mountains. Our goal today is to help you make a big improvement in your ability to **descend confidently**.

We begin by warming up on the climb to the **col des Bordères**, where we organise a **descending clinic**. Each rider has the opportunity to descend multiple times with a coach and to be videoed multiple times. We thus provide **immediate feedback**, and the video allows you to **observe your own technique**.

We then continue to the **col de Couraduque**, where you can enjoy a well-earned coffee at the summit café.

From there, it is an easy descent home for lunch!

The extended ride option is up to **Hautacam**, one of the toughest summit finishes at the Tour de France. Expect an additional 36km and almost 1400m of climbing!

## Wednesday

**Distance:** 65-92 km    **Elevation:** 1,900-3,000m+  
**Ride time:** 5-6 hours    **Focus:** **Climbing**



Today we tackle the iconic **col du Tourmalet**, the climb that has been the most used by the Tour de France. The longest and most alpine of the Pyrenean climbs, you will soon see why it merits its mythical status!

The Tourmalet is the first climb on the Marmotte, so this is a useful reconnaissance for Saturday.

The coaching focus is on climbing technique and pacing. We look at your **seated pedalling technique** and how it varies between the moderate and steep pitches, and we look at your **standing technique** to help you “dance” on the pedals like a pro.

There's an option to extend the ride to **Luz Ardiden**, where the Marmotte finishes. This adds an additional 30km and 1,150m of climbing.





Early morning mist on the col du Soulor

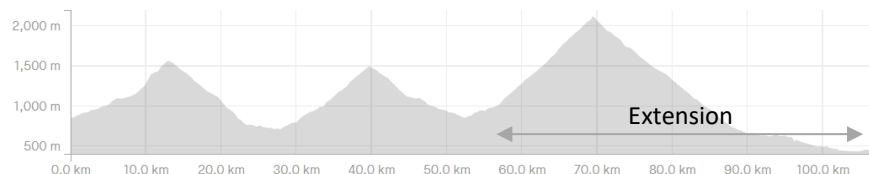




Hourquette d'Ancizan

## Thursday

**Distance:** 53-100 km    **Elevation:** 1,600-3,060m+  
**Ride time:** 5-6 hours    **Focus:** **Pacing**



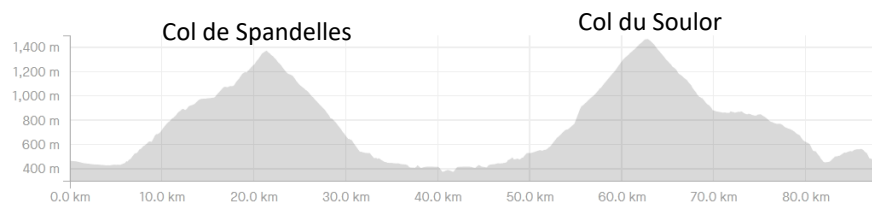
Thursday's ride is a reconnaissance of the mid-section of the Marmotte. We begin with a minibus ride to Ste Marie de Campan on the other side of the Tourmalet. Once on the bikes, we head directly up the 13 km climb to the **Hourquette d'Ancizan**, the second of the five climbs at the Marmotte.

We will descend the other side and follow the Marmotte route along the valley and back over the **col d'Aspin**, finishing the standard route back in Ste Marie de Campan.

For those who want to ride more the option is to continue the Marmotte route and climb the **Tourmalet** from the west, descending through Luz Saint Sauveur all the way back to Pierrefitte.

## Friday

**Distance:** 70 - 88 km    **Elevation:** 2,100 - 2,400m+  
**Ride time:** 4-5 hours    **Focus:** **Endurance**



Another stunning ride, Friday will see us climb the quiet, little-known road to the **col de Spandelles**, a perennial favourite of the Haute Route. The climb starts as soon as we leave the town and winds up through farmland and forest.

Down the other side, we finish the ride by coming back over the **col du Soulor** from half-way up the northern side, to close the loop back through Argelès-Gazost to Pierrefitte.

The extended ride option is to complete the descent of the Soulor before turning around, adding another 19km and 250m of climbing.







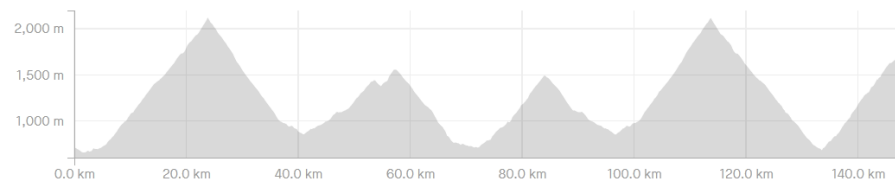


## Saturday

Distance: 165 km      Elevation: 5,500m+  
 Ride time: 9-12 hours      Focus: **Endurance**

## Sunday

Departure day



### MARMOTTE GRANFONDO PYRENEES COURSE

The event will sadly not be run in 2021. Nevertheless we will ride the course, providing a great opportunity to **put into practice all that you have worked on during the week.**

As usual, the Alpine Cols coaches will be there to support you through the ride.

We will start at 8:00am and you should finish by 5-6pm.

We will spend one final night in Argelès-Gazost and drink a few well-earned beers before departure on Sunday morning.

You will be taken back to Toulouse (or Lourdes) airport.

The transfer will take approximately two hours.

Under current planning the transport will depart at 8am, to arrive at Toulouse airport around 10am.

There will be only one transfer, but we can organise a taxi if you wish to depart at a different time.

## GRANFONDO COACHING CAMP

### OFF-THE-BIKE PROGRAMME

Date	Time	Coach's Corner evening sessions
Sun	18h30	Intro, core skills and pacing
Mon	18h30	Descending: fast and safe!
Tue	18h30	Climbing, pedalling technique
Wed	18h30	Training for your target event
Thu	18h30	Nutrition for performance
Fri	18h30	Mental strategies
Sat	18h30	Tips for sportives and GranFondos.



Note:

Massages are available by appointment only (expect €30-€40 for 30 minutes).

Complex electrostimulation devices are available on loan (25 minute sessions)



# Recovery

In addition to your usual recovery routines (such as drinking lots of fluids and eating appropriately, stretching gently and getting lots of rest, preferably with your legs raised), we provide\* the following aids to recovery:

- **Compression socks and compression shorts.** These work by compressing the large, superficial veins and thus forcing the blood to return through the veins which are much deeper in the muscle. This has a positive impact on the rate of recovery by accelerating the metabolism of the by-products of exercise, the elimination of toxins and the replacement of glycogen in the muscles.
- **Compex Electrostimulation.** This is a medical device that has been adapted for use in sports. It works by stimulating the muscles to contract in a specific pattern, thus enhancing the blood flow. It is effective alone but even more so when combined with compression socks. The 25' session should take place before any massage.
- **Massage and Osteopathy.** These interventions by qualified practitioners can be effective in accelerating blood flow, reducing inflammation, eliminating toxins in muscles and removing adhesions. Osteopathy can also help prevent injuries, correct imbalances and re-establish proper posture.

## \*Availability

- Compression socks and shorts can be purchased from our shop.
- We have 2 Compex electrostimulation devices available for you to try, as well as others which may be purchased.
- Massage and Osteopathy are available each afternoon on request, at a cost of **€30 per 30min** session. The sessions must be pre-booked.
- Rollers and mats for stretching are available any time.







# Coaching

Why would you need a coach? You know how to ride a bike, right?

Put simply, cycling at speed in the mountains is highly technical and we have yet to meet someone who couldn't learn and improve! Besides, if Chris Froome, Mark Cavendish & Co. have coaches, why wouldn't you benefit too?

Here's what you can expect from us:

- **Fully qualified, experienced coaches.** Alpine Cols coaches are all fully qualified and have between 10 and 15 years of active coaching experience. In addition, they are excellent competitors in their own right.
- **Coaching focus.** The key skills for all mountain sportives are **climbing, pacing, descending, nutrition** and **recovery** (for multi-day events). We use a mix of observation, oral feedback on the bike, evening technical sessions, video feedback and written feedback at the end of the camp.
- **Riding with power.** All Alpine Cols coaches ride with power meters and use power in their coaching practice and for their own benefit. We have partnered with **Infocranks®**, the official power meter of the UCI and British Cycling, chosen for its superior accuracy, stability and reliability under all conditions.
- **Up to date.** We constantly update our knowledge and coaching practice in line with new research. For 2020, we have in added new material in the areas of Climbing, Pacing, Sub-threshold Endurance, Long Term Performance Improvement, Adaptation, and Mental Skills, any one of which could make a significant difference to your performance!





Coach Silas, showing how it is done





## The Grand Hôtel de France 3\*, Pierrefitte-Nestalas

The Grand Hôtel de France is a great find. Built in 1903, it has kept its historic charm and ambiance of relaxed luxury from the golden age at the beginning of the last century.

The hotel is ideally placed between the Tourmalet and the Aubisque with easy access to such climbs as Hautacam, Luz Ardiden, the col de Couraduque and the col de Spandelles.

We stayed here in November 2019 and found the rooms to be excellent, well-appointed, spacious and comfortable. They are all equipped with air-conditioning and the bathrooms are fully renovated.

The restaurant provides great food, sourced locally, with plenty of variety and everything a hungry cyclist could ask for.



The shady terrace is a wonderfully calm place to relax after a hard ride. Last but not least, there's a nice bar, a secure room for the bikes and a seminar room for massages and evening briefings.





## PACKAGE PRICES

From **Sun to Sun (7 nights)**

- Twin-share (superior): **€2,300**
- Single supplement (standard): **€140**
- Single supplement (superior): **€250**

**BOOK  
NOW**

5% “welcome back” discount for returnees

10% discount off second package booked the same year

## ADDITIONAL NIGHTS

Please contact us for your personal quote if you would like to stay additional nights in the region.

## WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR PACKAGE

- Airport transfers (to and from Toulouse, at a fixed time only)
- Accommodation and all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- On-the-bike coaching
- On-the-road support vehicle with free energy drinks and snacks
- Mechanical assistance
- Coach’s Corner evening sessions on cycling performance
- Photographs taken during the week (digital copies)

## WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Travel to/from Toulouse
- Hotels in Toulouse
- Bicycle hire
- Minibar or drinks at the hotel bar
- Coffee or snacks during café stops
- Massage (optional extra)



## Practical matters

- **Airport transfers**
  - You will be met at the airport and taken to the hotel. Please make sure we have your flight details and let us know of any changes or delays.
  - We will send you precise details for the pick-up by email. If you don't receive this please call Marvin on +33 6 61 19 11 72.
- **Weather**
  - The normal weather at this time of year is 20°-25°C and mostly sunny.
  - HOWEVER, rain is possible and it may be cooler.
  - It will often be cooler on the summits where the maximum day temperatures are usually between 10° and 15°C.
  - Bring cycling clothes appropriate for temperatures between 5° and 30°C.
- **Shops, currency and language**
  - Pierrefitte-Nestalas is a small village, 6km from Argelès-Gazost which is a delightful small town with plenty of character, cafés, restaurants and small shops.
  - The currency is the Euro and the language is French.
  - Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted or can be used to withdraw Euros from a bank machine.

## Tips before travel

### Preparing your bike

- Please get your bike serviced by a qualified mechanic. Tell the mechanic that you will be riding 600km through the mountains so the bike needs a thorough check, including the bottom bracket, the head tube and the wheels as well as the obvious brakes, gears, cables and chain.
- Ride the bike for at least 50km after the service to make sure any stretch in the cables or other kinks are ironed out.
- Make sure you have appropriate gears. We recommend a compact chainset (50/34) and a cassette suitable for steep climbs (e.g. 11/32).
- The bike should have new tyres.

### Travelling with your bike

- If you are new to travelling with your bike, give yourself plenty of time to pack it, preferably the day before travel.
- Follow the instructions of the bike box manufacturer carefully.
- Leave the CO2 cylinders at home (the airline won't accept them).
- Include any special tools required to re-assemble your bike.
- If you need help setting up your bike on arrival we will be happy to assist.



## Training in the final weeks before the camp

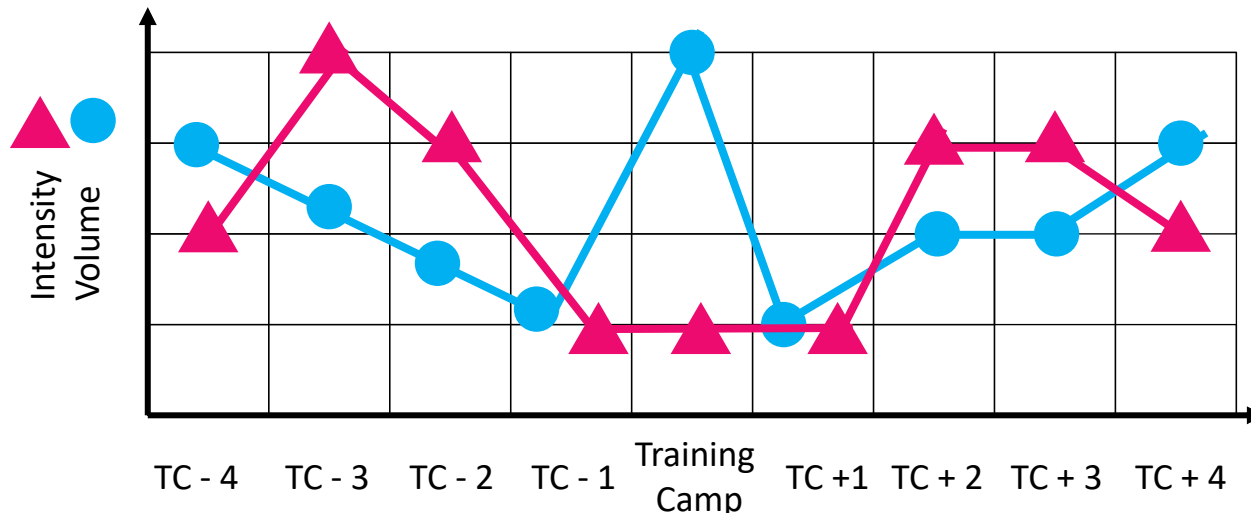
During the training camp you will ride up to 650km and climb up to 17,500m+, over about 30 hours of cycling. For most amateur cyclists this represents a very significant increase in volume over a normal training week. In order to survive the week, the intensity will have to be relatively low: you will be climbing in Zones 2 (Endurance) and 3 (Tempo), very little, if any in Zone 4 (Threshold).

In an ideal world, you will have prepared for this by building both volume and intensity during the three to six months before the camp. These are our suggestions for the final month:

- Reduce the volume and increase the intensity for the first three weeks. In practical terms, this means replacing long rides at tempo/threshold pace by shorter rides including intervals in Z4 (Threshold) and Z5 (Vo2Max).
- Reduce both volume and intensity for the final week, in order to taper and arrive at the camp well rested.
- Make sure you maintain your core strength and flexibility with appropriate off-the-bike exercises.

Once you return home:

- Reduce volume and keep the intensity low for the first week
- Increase the intensity significantly and the volume a little for the next two weeks
- Thereafter, return to your normal training regime.



**Suggested interval sessions for TC-3, TC-2:**

**Zone 4 (Threshold)**

2 sets of 4 x [5'Z4 – 2'Z1], 10' between each set

**Zone 5 (VO2Max)**

3 sets of 5 x [2'Z5 – 3'Z1], 10' between each set

# Insurance

Please note that all our clients must have insurance in place in order to cover the cost of assistance and repatriation in the event of accident or illness.

The insurance must provide specific cover for cycling and should cover the following risks:

- medical expenses,
- personal accident,
- personal liability,
- emergency rescue,
- repatriation if you become too ill to travel,
- cancellation or curtailment of your holiday,
- travel delay,
- loss or delay to your baggage,
- loss or theft of personal effects and legal expenses.

If you are based in the UK, we suggest you contact one of the specialist cycling insurance firms.

In addition to this, we strongly advise that all Europeans carry **European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC)**. Your EHIC lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return.

In the United Kingdom, the EHIC is available free of charge.

Please note that the EHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance as it will not cover mountain rescue, repatriation costs, or losses due to crime or natural disasters.



## Suggested Kit List

ITEM	CHECK
Bike (unless hiring)	
Spare tyres & inner tubes (2 each)	
Spare brake pads	
Spare derailleur hanger	
Any special tools or spare parts	
Spare power meter batteries	
Charger for electronic gears	
Heart rate chest strap	
Cycling computer and charger	
Mobile phone and charger	
Cycling helmet	
Water bottles (2)	
Base layer short sleeve	
Base layer long sleeve	
Cycling jerseys short sleeve	
Cycling jerseys long sleeve	
Cycling shorts	
Cycling tights ¾ or long	

ITEM	CHECK
Cycling socks	
Cycling Cap or balaclava	
Cycling Gloves (summer)	
Cycling Gloves (long, waterproof)	
Arm warmers	
Leg warmers	
Warm waterproof jacket	
Lightweight rain jacket	
Windproof jacket	
Cycling sun glasses	
Cycling shoes (with spare cleats)	
Waterproof overshoes	
Chamois cream	
Sun cream	
Swimming costume	
Gym shorts and tee-shirt	
Medical certificate	
Insurance and EHIC Card (E111)	



Col de Tourmalet

**Alpine Cols**  
CRANK UP THE POWER



### **Alpine Cols SAS**

631 chemin du Recredez

01220 Divonne-les-Bains, France

Tel (FR): +33 (0)450 200 772

Tel: (UK): +44 (0)1227 647 015

[www.alpinecols.com](http://www.alpinecols.com)