



La Route des Grandes Alpes Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean



7 day cycling tour with Alpine Cols
23-31 July 2022

La Route des Grandes Alpes



A cycling trip you will never forget

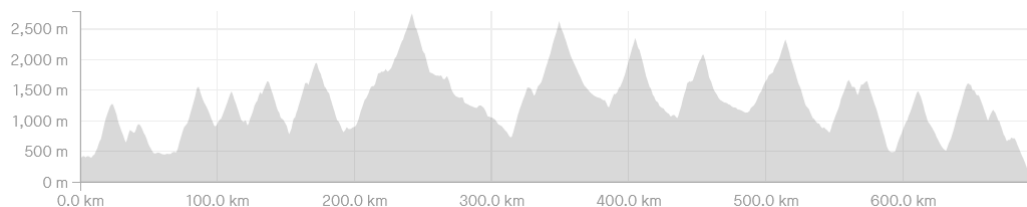
Perhaps the most iconic long-distance ride in cycling, the Route des Grandes Alpes takes you from the shores of lake Geneva to the Mediterranean beaches.

On the way you will cycle over many of the great iconic climbs of the Alps, including:

- The col de la Colombière
- The Cormet de Roselend
- The col de l'Iséran
- The col de Galibier
- The col d'Izoard (and many more).

During the 7-day trip you can expect to ride an average of 100km and climb 2,500m per day. For those who want to do more, every day includes an optional Challenge, adding typically another 12-15 km and 600-800m of climbing.

You will be guided every kilometre of the way by the Alpine Cols team riding with you. All experienced coaches, they are always ready to share their knowledge and offer tips to help you succeed. As well as transporting your luggage, our support staff organises the feed stations and provides mechanical and any other support you may need during the day.



Is this trip for you?

This not a trip for beginner cyclists, but you do not need to be either fast or young. Similar trips have been completed by many men and women in their sixties and even seventies.

The main quality required is endurance and the ability to ride for 4 to 7 hours per day for 6 days. We will have our own masseurs to help with recovery.

Nor is this a low budget trip. We stay in the best available hotels (4* or 3*), eat excellent meals and provide a high level of service. Our clients demand nothing less!

The rides are fully supported and at your own pace. All our guides are qualified cycling coaches. Their primary role is to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience.

You can of course ask the coaches for tips and feedback on your cycling, with suggestions for pacing, descending, nutrition and recovery. Equally, you are free to ride as you wish (so long as you do not endanger others).

There will be 3 coaches for no more than 10 guests, so small groups will form and you will be able to ride with people of a similar speed.

The support vehicles are nearby if you need support, and you are welcome to jump aboard if you are too tired to complete the day's ride.

The trip is absolutely non-competitive. There will be plenty of time to take photographs or to stop for a coffee, if you so wish.



Coaching Staff



Marvin (MA, MBA, BC L3)



Olivier (PhD, BPJEPS)



Silas (BSc, DBS)

Alpine Cols does not employ guides or Ride Captains.
We believe you deserve a higher level of service.

Emmanuelle, 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 10th 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 and Emmanuelle are often on the podium in their age categories.

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



Emmanuelle (MA, MBA, BC L2)



Stéphane (BEESAC)



Yannick (MSc, BPJEPS)



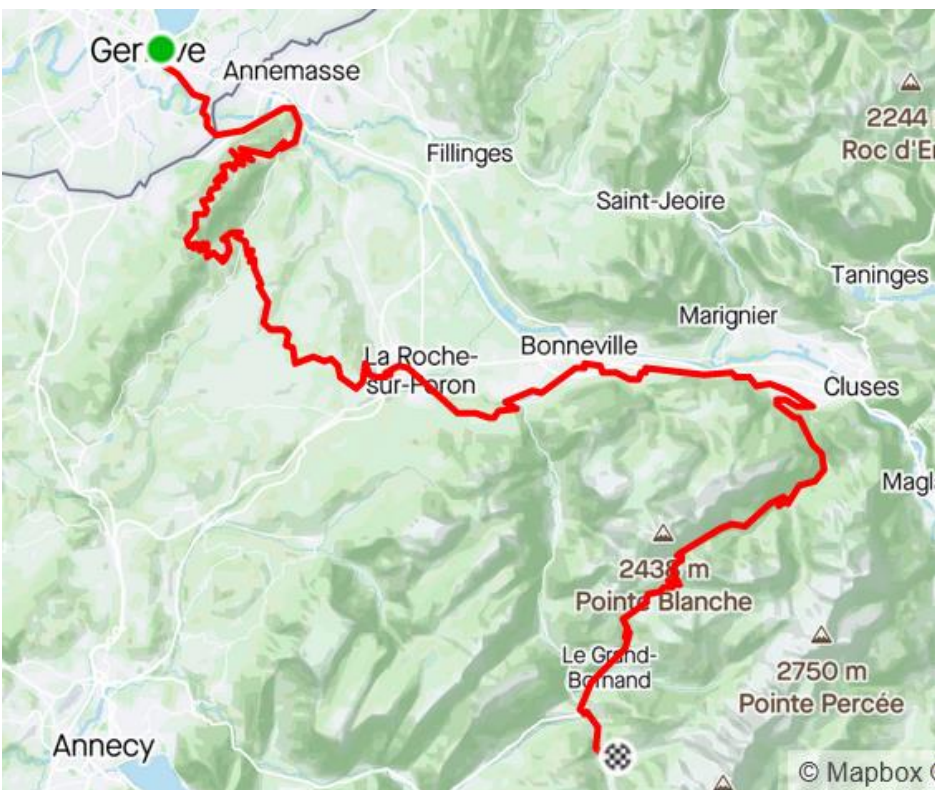
Olivier with Christophe and Mark
Col des Saïsiès

ROUTE DES GRANDES ALPES: DAY BY DAY

DAY	RIDE	KM	M+	CLIMBS	OPTIONAL CHALLENGE
Sat July 23	Arrival (nearest airport Geneva)	-	-	-	
Sun July 24	Geneva to La Clusaz	109	2,900	Salève Col de la Colombière	<i>Add the Mont Saxonnex and col de Romme for 122 km and 3,700m</i>
Mon July 25	La Clusaz to Sainte Foy	100	2,800	Col des Aravis Col des Saisies Cornet de Roselend	<i>Add Crest-Voland and the col du Pré for 110 km and 3,200m</i>
Tues July 26	Sainte Foy to Valloire	128	3,000	Col de l'Iseran Col du Télégraphe	<i>Add Tignes and Aussois for 139 km and 3,600m</i>
Wed July 27	Valloire to Serre Chevalier	59	1,250	Col de Galibier	<i>Add the col du Granon for 77 km and 2,350m</i>
Thu July 28	Serre Chevalier to Le Sauze	111	2,780	Col d'Izoard Col de Vars	<i>Add the climb to Pra-Loup for 135 km and 3,350m</i>
Fri July 29	Le Sauze to Valberg	81	2,200	Col de la Cayolle Valberg	<i>Add the climb to Les Tourres for 107 km and 3,150m</i>
Sat July 30	Valberg to Menton	137	3,000	Col de St Martin Col de Turini Col du Castillon	<i>Add the col de la Madone for 148 km and 3,400m</i>
Sun July 31	Departure (nearest airport Nice)	725	17,950	-	<i>Optional: 838 km and 22,750m</i>

N.B. With the exception of the airport, there are NO minibus transfers planned during your stay.
However, the option to jump in the bus is always there if you are too tired!
See next pages for details of each stage.

Stage 1: Geneva to La Clusaz



The Route des Grandes Alpes begins on the shores of Lake Geneva, so after a comfortable night in La Clusaz we will take you to the start point near the famous water jet in the centre of Geneva.

The first climb takes us up the Mont Salève, from where there are stunning views across the lake and the Jura mountains to the north, and across the Alps to the south.

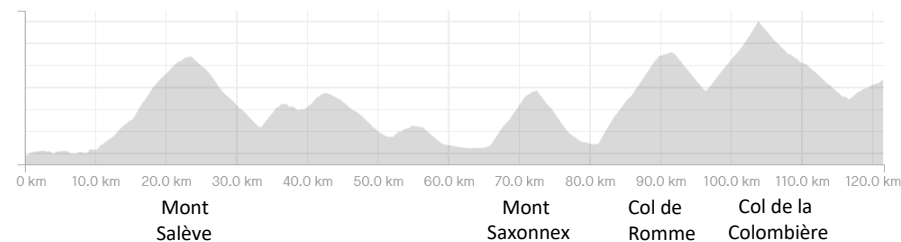
We then take quiet back roads cross-country to the Arve valley and Scionzier, the start of climb the col de la Colombière. This is a classic of the northern Alps, often used in the Tour de France. Beware, the last 3km are the hardest!

Mont Salève	14 km, 877m+
Col de la Colombière	16 km, 1108m+

Standard route: 109km | 2,900m



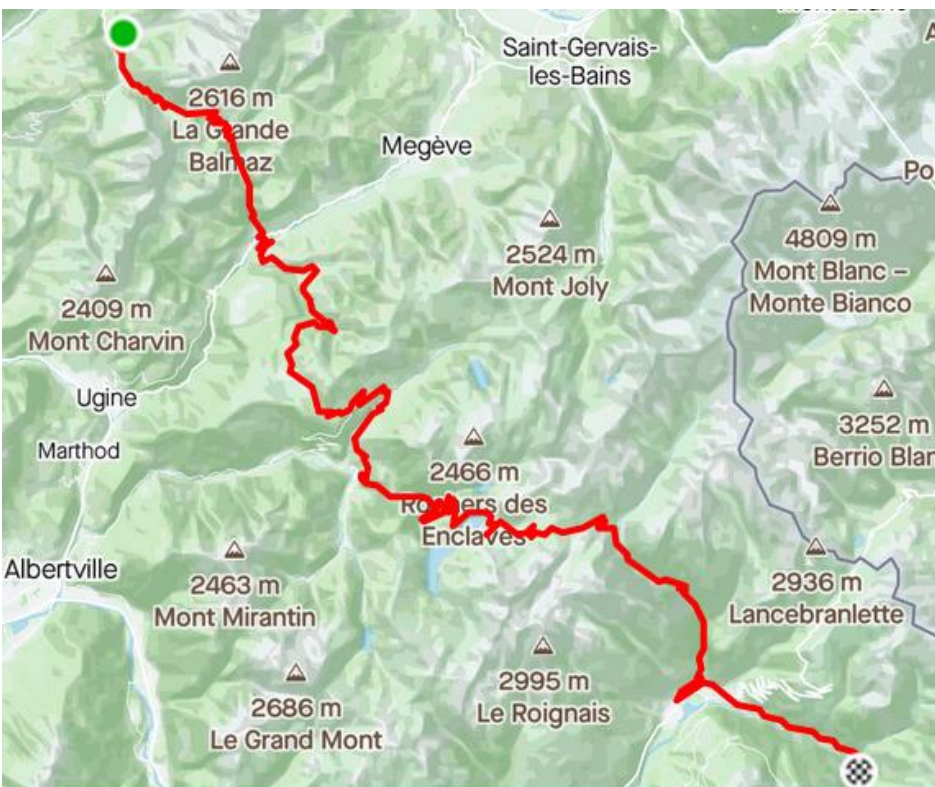
Challenge route: 122km | 3,700m





Stéphane, Amanda and Scott
Col de la Colombière, second part

Stage 2: La Clusaz to Sainte Foy



There are no flats today! The climbs keep coming and keep getting tougher on this challenging ride from La Clusaz to Sainte Foy, in the Tarantaise valley.

The climb to the col des Aravis begins immediately we leave the hotel. Thankfully it has an easy gradient, and is soon followed by a sinuous descent, directly to the start of the climb to the Saisies. This is a longer climb with two short descents on the way.

Again there is no transition from the descent to the final climb to the Cormet de Roselend, famous for the its stunningly beautiful lake two-thirds of the way up. This is the best picnic spot in the Alps!

Col des Aravis	8 km, 446m+
Col des Saisies	15 km, 747m+
Cormet de Roselend	20 km, 1,227m+

Standard route: 100km | 2,800m



Challenge route 110km | 3,200m





Lunch is ready, on the Cormet de Roselend

Stage 3: Sainte Foy to Valloire



There are two big climbs on the menu today, and the first one is huge! At 2,770m the col de l'Iséran, is the highest paved pass in Europe (if not quite the highest road). Close to the Italian border, it is at the head of the Tarantaise valley and connects across to the Maurienne.

We start climbing from the moment we leave the hotel and only stop on the summit, almost 40 km later. The gradient is never too steep. If we are lucky, we will see marmottes near the top.

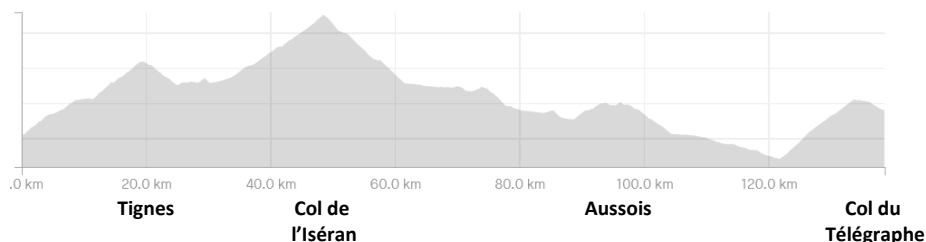
After the Iséran we enjoy an even longer descent down the valley of the river Arc before the final climb of the day, the col du Télégraphe, which brings us to Valloire and our hotel for the night.

Col de l'Iséran	48km, 1,955m+
Col du Télégraphe	12 km, 856m+

Standard route: 128 km | 3,000m



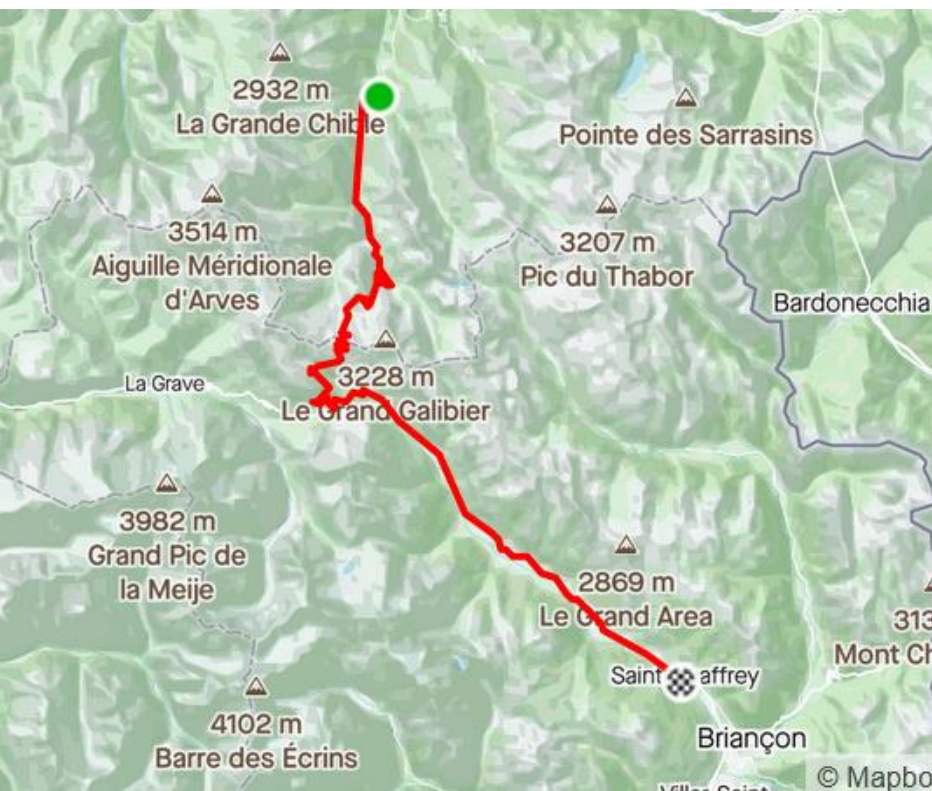
Challenge route: 139 km | 3,600m





Marvin & Jonathan, on the Col de l'Iséran

Stage 4: Valloire to Serre Chevalier



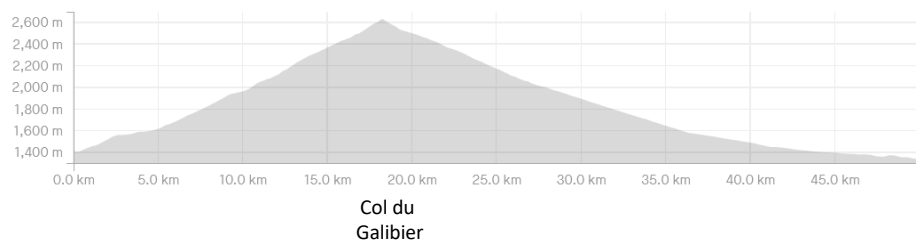
Short but steep, this stage takes us over perhaps the most iconic of all the high Alpine passes, the col du Galibier (2,645m). Right up there with the Tourmalet and Mont Ventoux, the Galibier has a well-deserved reputation and is certainly one of the climbs the most feared by cyclists.

After celebrating on the summit, the long descent from the Galibier brings us to Serre Chevalier, a charming and sun-blessed ski village near Briançon.

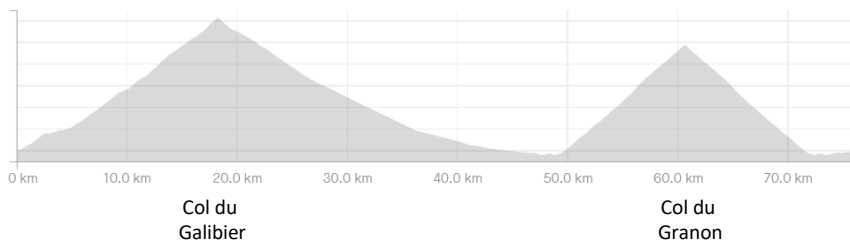
Stage 4 is easier than the other six stages, so that those in need of recovery may do so. If you are feeling strong you should carry on to the col du Granon, which returns to the Tour de France in 2022 for the first time since 1986.

Col du Galibier	18 km, 1,240m+
Col du Granon	12 km, 1,050m+

Standard route 50 km | 1,250m



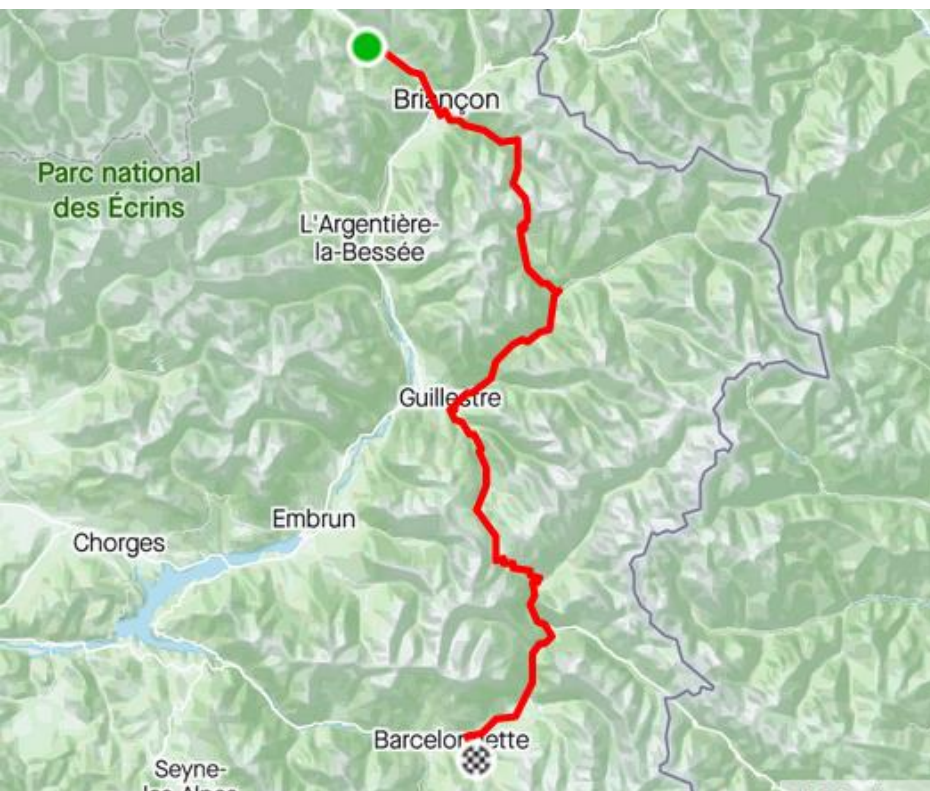
Challenge route 77 km | 2,350m





Eric on the Col du Galibier (2,645m)

Stage 5: Serre Chevalier to Le Sauze



The vegetation changes as we continue our journey south, becoming drier and more Mediterranean. We can expect the temperature in the valleys to be noticeably warmer.

We have two more climbs over 2,000m today, beginning with the long climb to the iconic col d'Izoard (2,360m). We will stop to admire the amazing lunar landscape of the *Casse Desserte* before another long descent.

The climb to the col de Vars (2,108m) which follows is in two steps, with a nice break in the middle. Once down, there's a short climb above the valley floor to reach our hotel in Le Sauze.

Col d'Izoard	20 km, 1,141m+
Col de Vars	19 km, 1,111m+

Standard route: 111 km | 2,780m



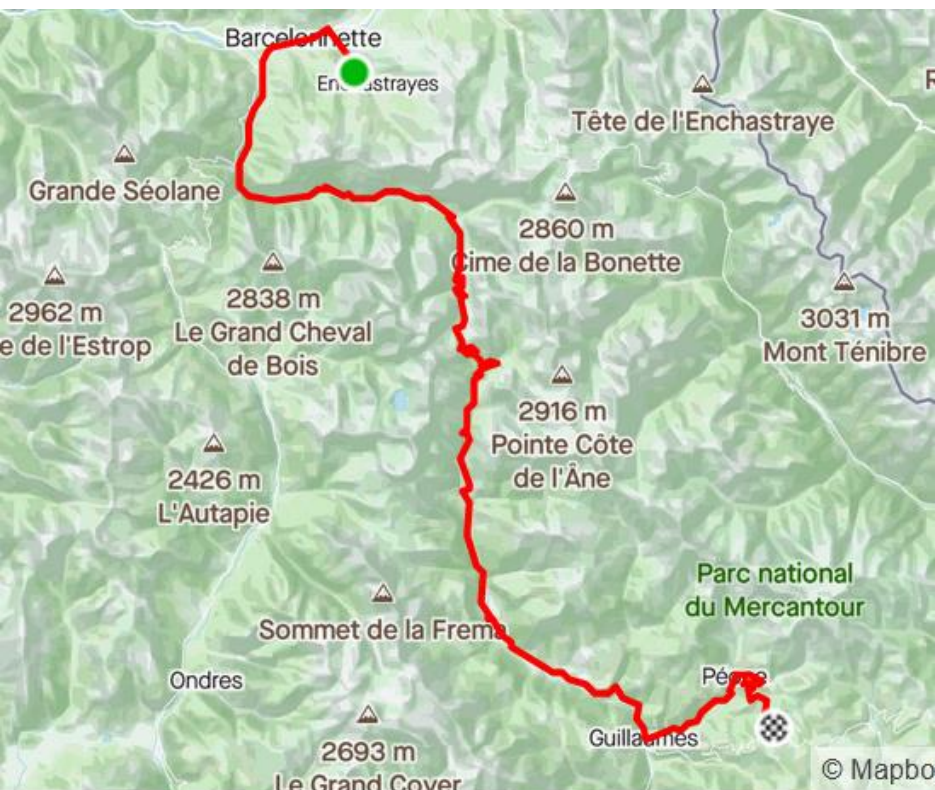
Challenge route: 135 km | 3,350m





Marvin climbs the col d'Izoard (2,360m)

Stage 6: Le Sauze to Valberg



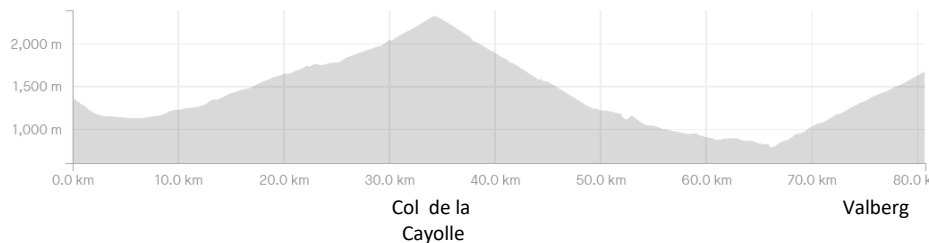
On the penultimate stage we reach the maritime Alps and tackle the last of the 2,000m+ passes, the col de la Cayolle (2,326m).

If it is a hot day the climb may feel long, but it's on a delightful quiet road with a good chance of seeing wildlife. We can expect to be rewarded by a cool breeze and stunning views from the summit.

The descent follows the course of the river Var through beautiful scenery and a few small villages. We finally turn off in Guillaumes for the final climb of the day, to the ski village of Valberg.

Col de la Cayolle	29 km, 1,190m+
Climb to Valberg	12 km, 870m+

Standard route: 81 km | 2,300m



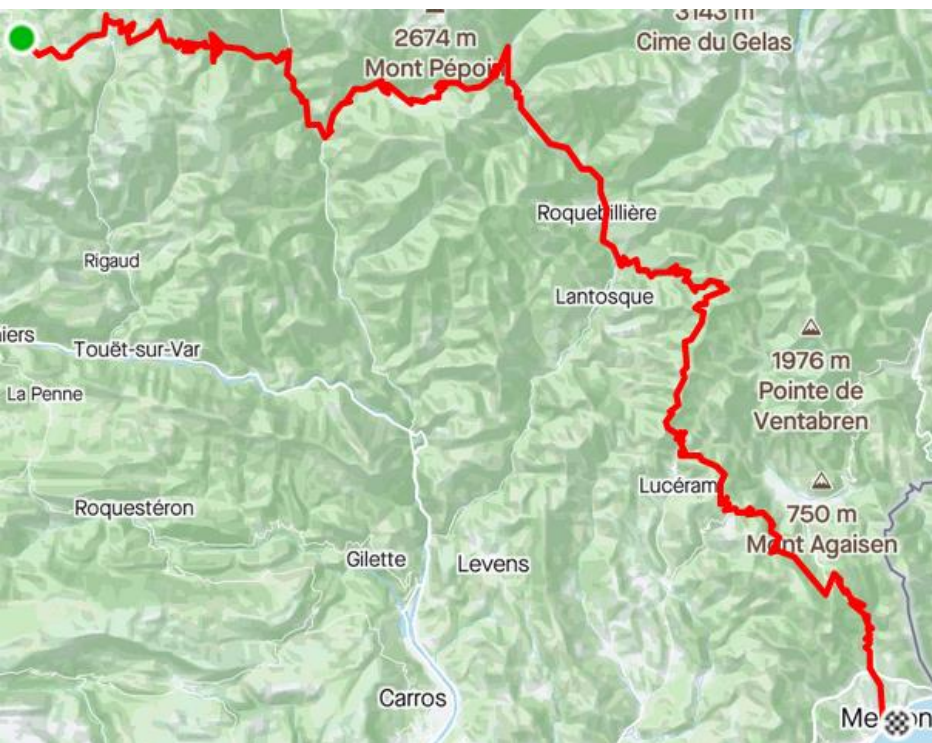
Challenge route: 107 km | 3,150m





Climbing the col de la Cayolle

Stage 7: Valberg to Menton

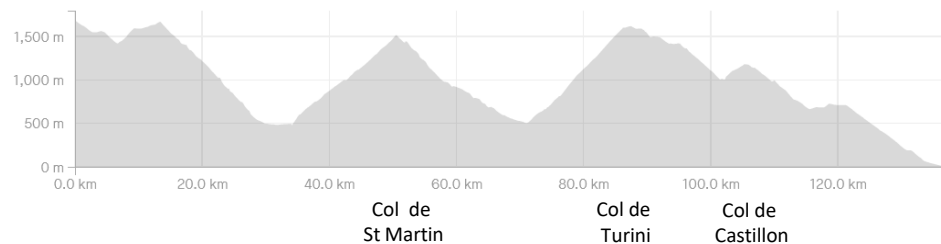


There are always mixed feelings on the final day: elation mixed with sadness that our epic ride is almost over. For the first time since Geneva, we will descend more than we climb! We have a total of 4,500m to descend on this final day, including innumerable hairpins on delightful, quiet roads.

There's no lack of climbing, however, beginning with the col de St Martin. We pass through the pretty village of St Martin de Vésubie before the col de Turini, famous from the Monte Carlo rally. After these two, the col de Castillon is a formality before the final descent to Menton and the sea.

Col de St Martin	16 km, 1,020m+
Col de Turini	15 km, 1,107m+
Col de Castillon	7 km, 359m+

Standard route: 137 km | 3,000m



Challenge route: 148 km | 3,400m





Photo © Alpine Cols

PACKAGE PRICES

From **Sat July 23** to **Sun July 31**

- Twin-share: **€3,400**
- Non-cyclist **€1,500**
- Single supplement: **€525**

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NOW](#)

ADDITIONAL NIGHTS

Please contact us for your personal quote if you would like to stay additional nights in either La Clusaz (before departure) or Menton.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR PACKAGE

- Airport transfers (from Geneva and to Nice, at a fixed time only)
- Accommodation and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner, including drinks with the meals)
- On-the-bike guiding, and coaching if desired
- Two on-the-road support vehicles with free energy drinks and snacks
- Mechanical assistance
- Photographs taken during the week (digital copies)

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

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

Practical matters

- **Airport transfers**
 - The closest airport to La Clusaz is Geneva. There will be one pick-up from Geneva on Saturday July 23, in principle at midday (exact time to be confirmed).
 - The closest airport to Menton is Nice. There will be one drop-off in Nice on Sunday July 31, in principle at 11am, (exact time to be confirmed).
- **Weather**
 - The normal weather at this time of year is 19°-25°C, and mostly sunny.
 - HOWEVER, rain is possible and it may be cooler, or even quite cold near the summits.
 - Bring cycling clothes appropriate for both wet and dry conditions and for temperatures between 0° and 30°C.
- **Shops, currency and language**
 - We have chosen the hotels carefully for their quality, their character and their location. There are usually local cafés, pastry shops and supermarkets close by, and in Menton there is a wide range of international-standard shops.
 - The currency in France is the Euro. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted or can be used to withdraw Euros from a bank machine.
 - English is reasonably well understood, but not by everybody!
- **Staying over**
 - It would be a pity to arrive at the last minute and leave at the first opportunity: there is so much to see and do in this beautiful part of the world! If you would like to extend your trip, please let us know and we will suggest some options.

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	
Lights (front and back)	
Charger for electronic gears	
Heart rate chest strap	
Cycling computer & charger	
Mobile phone & charger, adaptor	
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	
Personal pharmacy	
Insurance	
Medical certificate	
Day bag (for the van)	

Additional kit recommendations

Day bag

Your day bag should contain anything you might need during the day's ride but don't want to carry from the start. Bear in mind that the van may NOT be close to you later in the day when you need it, so you need to think ahead and be able to carry what you need on your bike. Autonomy is less risky than dependence!

- Overshoes
- Arm & leg warmers
- Gloves (at least two: waterproof and thermal)
- Neck warmer and riding cap/thermal bonnet
- Jackets & gilets: at least three: thermal, waterproof, lightweight.
- Spare parts: cleats, tyre, inner tubes, brake pads
- Bike lights, front & back (required for tunnels)
- Sunscreen and chamois cream.

The key to riding in the high mountains in variable weather is layering. Several options of light, compact layers are much better than one heavy jacket.

Personal pharmacy

- Magnesium (may help with recovery)
- Multi-vitamins (may help with recovery)
- Skin-wound dressings (vital for dressing minor cuts, burns or road-rash)
- Anti-inflammatory pills (may help with soft-tissue injuries)
- Any other tried-and-tested personal items

Tips before travel

Preparing your bike

- Make sure you have appropriate gears. We recommend a **compact chainset (50/34)** and a **cassette suitable for steep climbs (preferably 11/32)**.
- The bike should have new puncture-resistant tyres. Many of the roads have a rough, granular surface and sharp flints are common, especially if it has rained recently.
- Please get your bike serviced by a qualified mechanic. Tell the mechanic that you will be riding 700 km or so 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.

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.
- Remember to reduce the pressure in your tyres and leave the CO2 cylinders at home.
- 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.

Insurance

Accident & illness

Please note that you 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.

Please make sure that your cover specifically includes Austria, Italy and Switzerland.

Cancellation

You should also take out cancellation insurance to cover the cost of your cycling holiday should you be forced to cancel for any reason. Cancellation charges will be applied on the following scale:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| – More than 8 weeks prior to your holiday start date: | Deposit only |
| – 4-8 Weeks prior to your holiday start date: | 50% of the total amount invoiced |
| – Less than 4 weeks prior to your holiday start date: | 100% of the total amount invoiced |



Safely arrived in Menton, September 2018