

THE TRANSVERDON



8. ST-ANDRÉ-LES-ALPES - CASTELLANE

V4-

Distance **24 KM**
Duration **2H30**

D+/D- **820 M / 990 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V4- / ROUGE**

The end of the larches and the start of the lakes! Between Saint-André-les-Alpes and Castellane you will be up above Castillon lake (bathing possible - lake beach situated 500 m from the col du Cheiron). During this section you'll have the opportunity to discover the isolated hamlet of Courchons, a pretty hillside path, and a descent which is simultaneously stunning and technically challenging. The end of the section, towards Castellane, is a beautiful path descent leading into the village centre.



Section

(895 m) Leave the town centre of Saint-André-les-Alpes heading in the direction of Nice, at the roundabout take the second right towards Les Cougnas. Cross the housing estate and continue straight on along the dirt track. A little further ahead the route joins a wide track, turn left to come out on the Sentier des Subis path. At the foot of this beautiful descent, take the main dirt track uphill for just over six kilometres to the hamlet of Courchons.

(1 : 9.7 km - 1300 m) At the houses, turn right then continue straight on. Leave the ruins of the hamlet on the left. A technically demanding path follows, which leads downhill towards Castillon lake. Before Blaron, after the shaly section and having joined the trail

through the meadows, take the right-hand trail to reach the road. Follow the road (D402) for a few kilometres as far as La Baume.

(2 : 16.4 km - 1140 m) From the hamlet of La Baume, descend via the left-hand path towards Castellane. At the wayside-cross of Saint Anne at the col de la Baume, cross the road and continue the path descent. Rejoin the D402 and follow it to the col de Cheiron.

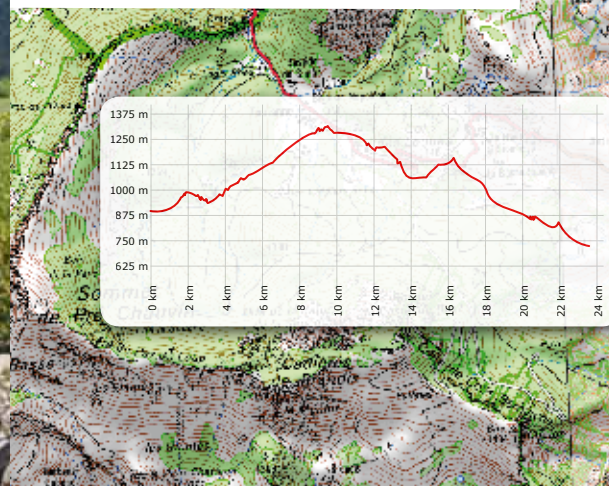
(3 : 19.7 km - 887 m) From the col, take the road to the right for 50 metres, then take the path on the left that continues downhill. Down below join a road and follow it for 100 metres. Take the path that climbs on the left (Slow down to ensure you don't miss the intersection). Having rejoined the road, head into Castellane by descending to your left. At the roundabout in the village centre turn left towards La Garde and continue in the direction of the bridge.

POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Hamlet of Courchons
- ✓ Castillon lake
- ✓ chapel of Notre Dame du Roc

SERVICES

- ✓ Saint-André-les-Alpes : shops and services, tourism office, train station "Train des Pignes"
- ✓ La Baume : « stop-over gite »
- ✓ Castellane : shops and services, tourism office



9. CASTELLANE - ROUGON

V3

Distance **18 KM**
Duration **3H00**

D+/D- **800 M / 560 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3 / ROUGE**

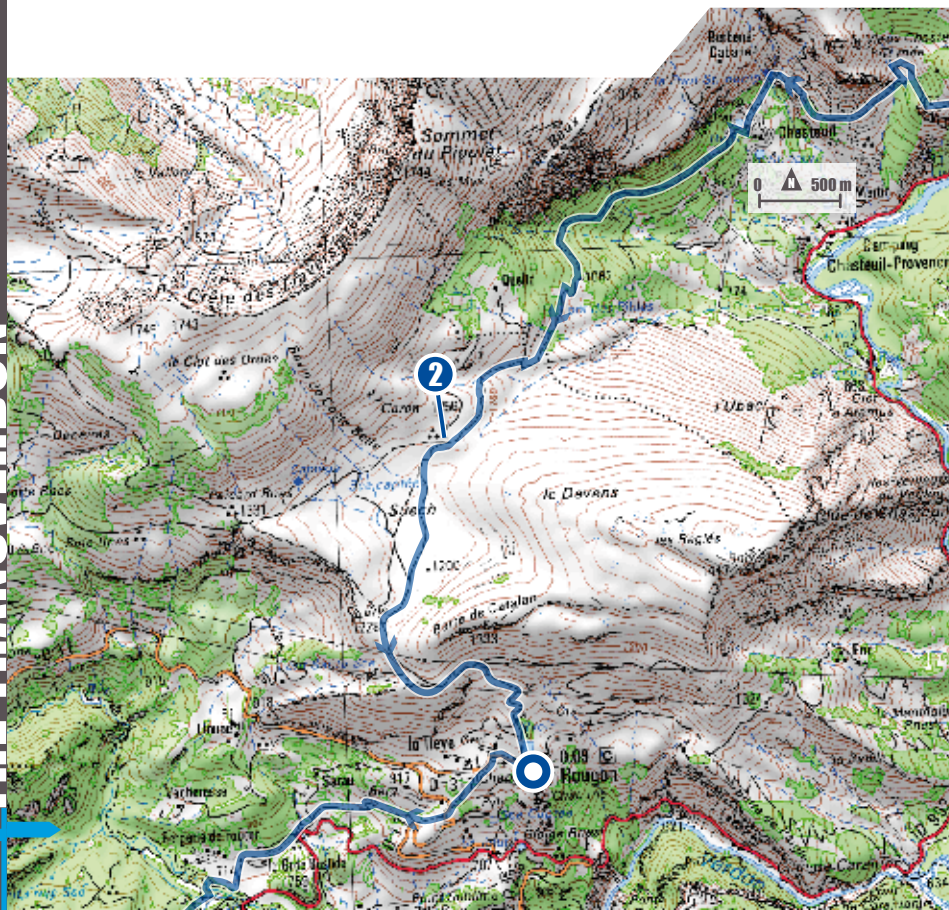
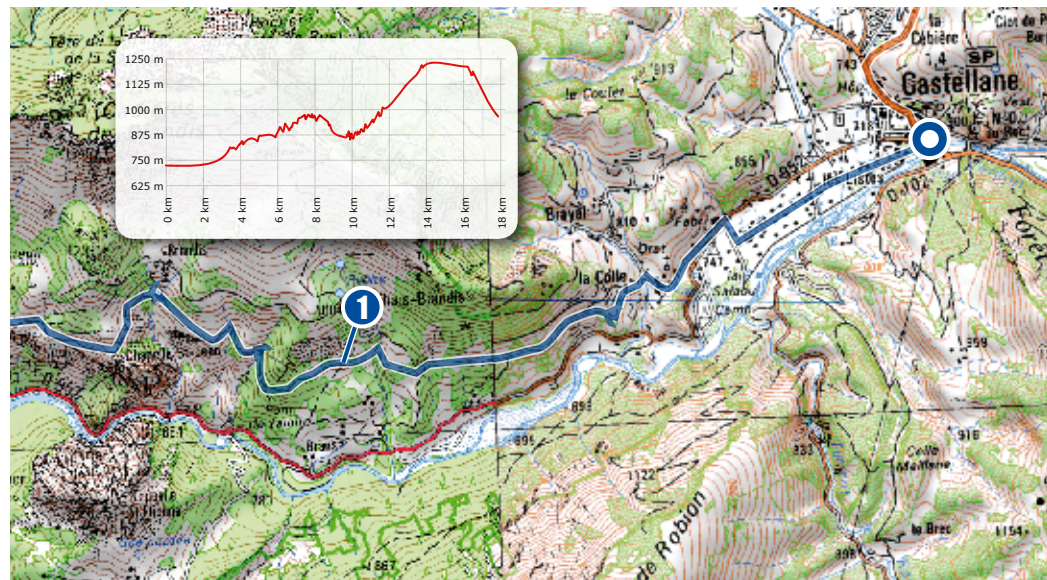
With this section the TransVerdon heads towards the Verdon gorge. Here the route uses the ancient Roman road that linked Castellane to Moustiers via the mountains. Rather than take the canyon road, the route gains height and passes via the hamlet of Chasteuil and the wild Suech plateau. As you descend towards Rougon, look upwards, you might see one of the Verdon's vultures.

Section

(724 m) Just prior to the bridge, turn right and follow the road that runs alongside the river. 350 metres further on turn left, following the Verdon river along the dyke. At the end, turn right onto the D952, the road to the Verdon gorge. Turn left, then immediately right onto the minor road that climbs to the hamlet of La Colle. At the next intersection go straight ahead, on the GR4 walking trail, in the direction of Villars-Brandis.

(1 : 5.3 km - 863 m). Don't climb as far as Villars-Brandis, stay on the GR4 path which stays on the level. Follow this wide path, with panoramic views, as far as the village of Chasteuil. From here the ascent begins, starting at the bridge (900 m) the climb lasts 3.5 kilometres. Initially the path is wide and easy but it becomes steeper as you approach the Suech plateau.

(2 : 14.4 km - 1245 m) Follow the GR4 path across the Suech plateau. Turn left at the end to descend to Rougon.



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Castellane
- ✓ Chapelle Notre Dame du Roc
- ✓ Chapelle Saint-Jean, view on the clue
- ✓ Hamlet of Chasteuil
- ✓ Village of rougon
- ✓ view on the Gorges du verdon

SERVICES

- ✓ Castellane : shops and servcies, tourism office
- ✓ Rougon: accommodation, catering and little shop

10. ROUGON - LES CHAUVETS

V3

Distance **18 KM**
Duration **2H30**

D+/D- **750 M / 470 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3 / ROUGE**

Passing through La Palud-sur-Verdon the itinerary comes within a stone's throw of the heart of the Verdon Gorge. Why not take the time to make a detour via the Route des Crêtes and take in the famous viewpoints of the right bank? Afterwards you can rejoin the wilder, less well-known trails in the direction of the mountain, the abandoned village of Châteauneuf-les-Moustiers, the Roman road and the hamlet of Chauvets.

Section

(966 m) Leave Rougon, after the chapel, turn left near a religious oratory and head downhill. Lower down the path joins the D17. Follow it for a few dozen metres, then head straight on at the end of the straight section, to come out at a hairpin bend. Follow the path on the left which descends to the road leading to La Palud. Immediately take the track on the right (in the direction of Bergerie de Faucon) and follow it for 400 metres, before heading left, steeply downhill, after the farm, La Grande Bastide. Follow the edge of the field and head into the wood on the right to reach the Baou river. Cross the river, turn left, then right to climb up to the village of La Palud-sur-Verdon.

(1 : 6.6 km - 933 m) At the village centre, take the D123 on the right. Climb up to the Col de la croix de Châteauneuf. Follow the trail, then the waymarked path to cut the s-bend. Cross the plain and at the far side turn left and climb to the ruined village of Châteauneuf-les-Moustiers. On the opposite slope take the ancient Roman road. When the route starts to climb once again, in a place known as Les Brochiers, turn right and join the road to Les Chauvets. Follow this road to the left, as far as the chapel.



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Village of rougon
- ✓ Point Sublime (view on the Gorges du verdon ; out routes, at the crossroads of D17 and D942)
- ✓ Village of La-Palud-sur-Verdon
- ✓ abandoned village of Châteauneuf-les-Moustiers
- ✓ Roman road
- ✓ Chapel Notre-Dame built in a cave above the Roman road

SERVICES

- ✓ Rougon: accommodation, catering and little shop
- ✓ La-Palud-sur-Verdon: shops and services, information point
- ✓ Les Chauvets: "stop-over gite"



11. LES CHAUVETS - MOUSTIERS-STE-M.

V4+

Distance **18 KM**
Duration **2H15**

D+/D- **350 M / 970 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V4+ / ROUGE**

The last mountainous section, crossing the ridge of Le Montdenier below Le Pavillon is all the more easily appreciated thanks to its relatively easy ascent. The panorama is breathtaking. That said, it's important to stay focused for the punishing descent down to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie.

Section

(1251 m) Follow the D17 to the left, still tarred for a few hundred metres, in the direction of Saint-Jurs. After a short descent, the road climbs up to the col des Abbesses, at 1286 metres.

(1 : 4.1 km - 1286 m) Leave the main track, heading left in the direction of Le Montdenier ridge and its summit, Le Pavillon - the last real mountain of the itinerary. After a short, steep section the trail arrives at an enclosure and turns into a narrow path on which it is very challenging to stay in the saddle! On arrival in the meadow, bear right to reach a wide track.

(2 : 6.9 km - 1537 m) The track crosses the ridge, look out for a gateway with steps to enter the enclosure. The start of the path leading downhill is not well traced, follow the sheep trails and the yellow paint marks. It starts between two piles of stones and begins its descent with pleasant, wide hairpin bends. The path soon arrives in a small hollow. Cut across the track, the descent now becomes technically demanding as it drops into the valley of La Cine. In a typical prealpine terrain, notably very stony, the steep gradient demands caution - pass on foot if need be. The path becomes much more reasonable one kilometre further on, near the hairpins. Finally, there is a long, easier section where the path follows the contours of the track, stay roughly parallel with it, to eventually come out on the Font Rout trail.

(3 : 11.4 km - 970 m) Head right towards Vincel farm, after the campsite take a right-angled left turn to immediately join the trail to Moustiers. The itinerary arrives at a little plateau and descends on the right to reach the Riou ravine. Cross over and climb up (Carrying your bike if need be!). Take the clear trail, head right and after 100 metres take the left-hand fork.

(4 : 16.2 km - 789 m) After several challenging bends, continue straight ahead. Cross a path to continue, a little on the left, the descent towards Moustiers. Lower down, turn right and join a steep street that leads to the road below the village.



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Top of the Pavillon
- ✓ Plateau of Vénasclé: area paragliding
- ✓ Lake and Plateau of Valensole
- ✓ Village of Moustiers-Ste-Marie

SERVICES

- ✓ Les Chauvets: "stop-over gite"
- ✓ Moustiers-Ste-Marie: shops and services, tourism office



12. MOUSTIERS-STE-M. - STE-CROIX

V2

Distance **19 KM** D+/D- **300 M / 250 M**
Duration **2H15** VTOPO/FFC **V2 / BLUE**

On leaving Moustiers-Sainte-Marie the route descends to the Sainte-Croix lake, an opportunity for a well-deserved dip before the climb up to the Valensole plateau. The crossing passes through the lavender fields to the viewpoint, with toposcope, that overlooks the lake and the village of Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon.

Section

(579 m) Drop down to the little roundabout on the D952 and turn right towards Riez. At the edge of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie take the left fork towards Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon. Take the first left. About 800 metres further on, just after an intersection, the route leaves the road, taking a trail to the right. The trail arrives at a small lake and then runs alongside two campsites. Near the entrance to the second campsite cross the bridge on the right and continue on the track as far as the pumping station. The track runs alongside the lake beaches and then climbs briskly.

(1 : 6.5 km - 548 m) Take the right-hand track at an inconspicuous intersection. A steep climb on stony ground leads to the edge of the Valensole plateau. Descend through the fields.

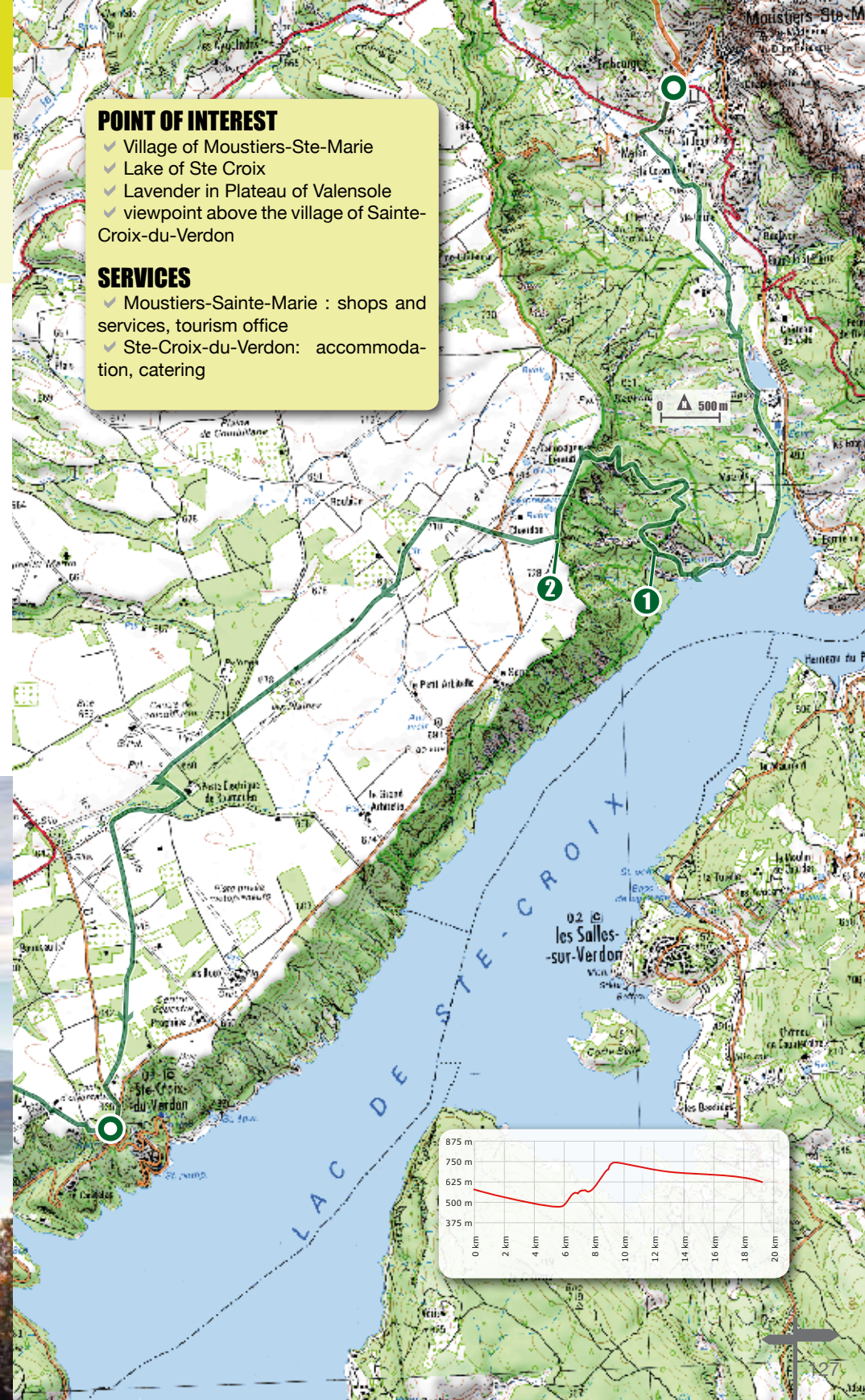
(2 : 10.2 km - 735 m) Turn right, descending slightly past the Chaudon farm to pick up a small road. 500 metres further on, take the left fork on to a wide track which runs in a straight line for around four kilometres. Turn left at the electricity post. The itinerary bears right and heads off to rejoin the edge of the Valensole plateau above Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon and comes out at the first hairpin above the village.

POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Village of Moustiers-Ste-Marie
- ✓ Lake of Ste Croix
- ✓ Lavender in Plateau of Valensole
- ✓ viewpoint above the village of Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon

SERVICES

- ✓ Moustiers-Sainte-Marie : shops and services, tourism office
- ✓ Ste-Croix-du-Verdon: accommodation, catering



13. STE-CROIX-DU-VERDON - QUINSON

V2-

Distance **21 KM**
Duration **2H15**

D+/D- **300 M / 550 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V2- / BLUE**

The itinerary takes advantage of the altitude gained during the previous section to start with a beautiful descent as far as the mouth of the Beaudinard gorge. A fantastic place with few tourists. Next, the route runs along the length of three lakes before crossing the village of Saint-Laurent-du-Verdon and climbing up to the plateau. After another descent you arrive at the charming village of Quinson, home to one of Europe's largest museums dedicated to prehistory.

Section

(626 m) It is possible to drop down to the left to visit the village of Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon and the lake (not way-marked). Take the right-hand road on the plateau and cross several farms. Shortly after passing under the electricity lines, the track plunges into the Saint-Pierre ravine which it follows as far as the Verdon. Climb up to Montpezat.

(1 : 6.5 km - 448 m) Turn left at the entrance to the campsite and descend immediately right to pass below the village of Montpezat. Fork left on a trail which descends to another lake. The route now follows the road along the lake-side. When the road heads up to the village of Saint-Laurent-du-Verdon continue straight ahead, below the campsite and then climb up just after. Take the left fork at the edge of the field to drop down to the Saint-Laurent-du-Verdon lake. Follow a short section of track. Follow the D411 to the right for around a hundred metres and then take the trail on the right into the village and pass through.

(2 : 15.5 km - 480 m) On the left-hand bend, at the edge of the village of Saint-Laurent-du-Verdon, climb up the track that leaves to the right into the Caillades ravine (70 m height

POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Verdon lakes
- ✓ Villages of Quinson, Montpezat and St-Laurent-du-Verdon
- ✓ The museum of prehistory at Quinson

SERVICES

- ✓ Sainte-Croix-du-Verdon : accommodation, catering
- ✓ St-Laurent-du-Verdon : accommodation
- ✓ Quinson : accommodation, catering, little shops and tourism office



gain). Cross the D11 and on the other side follow a minor road which is on the flat. Just before La Vudèle (farm and water-tower) take the left-hand fork to follow a path that descends. Not too challenging, but pleasant, it rejoins the D11. Cross over the road to cut the hairpin bend, then head to the right, to reach Quinson.



14. QUINSON - ESPARRON-DE-VERDON

V3

Distance **11 KM**
Duration **1H00**

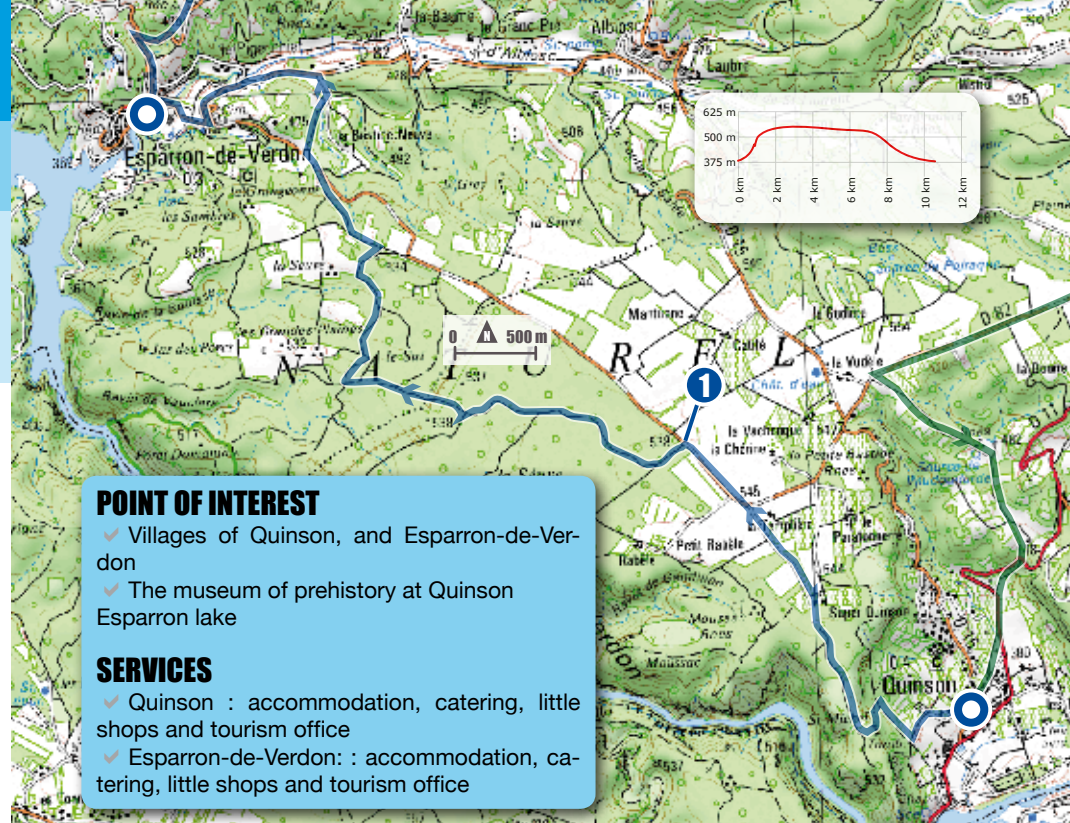
D+/D- **170 M / 170 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3 / BLUE**

Esparron-de-Verdon is well-known for its nautical centre and more widely for all the leisure activities which centre around the lake. Here is a great stopover village where you can relax and recharge. The portion in the woods of La Séouve is very pleasant as the path is rolling and far from straight which avoids the classic monotony of some of the big plateaux.

Section

(383 m) In the village, before dropping down to the museum, turn right into a small street that leads in the direction of the tourist information centre. Pass in front of the tourist information centre and turn left to reach the cemetery. Follow the path below the oak trees. After 200 metres turn right and climb up to the plateau (you may need to carry your bike). At the top, take the track on the right, La piste de St-Pierre, which joins the road to Esparron-de-Verdon ahead. Follow the road for 600 metres.

(1 : 3.5 km - 541m) At the start of the woods, take the track on the left then the first right. The track passes through the wood before coming out on the same road, which you cross to reach the D82. Head left, pass the chapel of Sainte-Magdelaine and the château and head into Esparron-de-Verdon.



15. ESPARRON - GRÉOUX-LES-BAINS

V3+

Distance **20 KM**
Duration **1H45**

D+/D- **450 M / 500 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3+ / BLUE**

Here is the final section of the TransVerdon. After the mountains and the aerial paths of the Verdon, here is a pretty section with a Provençal ambiance, to enjoy before arriving at Gréoux-les-Bains. For those who are keen for more MTB - it's possible to continue as far as Manosque (see Option 2).

Section

(380 m) Leave Esparron-de-Verdon on the road to Saint-Martin-de-Brômes. After one kilometre, at the intersection turn right in the direction of Allemagne-en-Provence, follow the road uphill for 3 bends and then leave the road via a steep path on the left which leads to the top of the hill (it is equally possible to stay on the road and join the same path higher up). After a short descent which leads down to the floor of the Bellieux ravine, turn left to rejoin the road to Saint-Martin. Cross the road and follow the track which passes at the foot of the northern slope of the ravine until it appears overlooking the Esparron lake. The route climbs up, crosses a track along the ridge and descends. Don't miss the path that leads off on the left near the start. Although it only lasts 600 metres, the steep climb that follows is sure to result in a bit of pushing.

POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Lac Esparron lake
- ✓ Villages of Esparron-de-Verdon, St-Martin de Brôme and Gréoux-les-Bains
- ✓ Thermal spa of Gréoux-les-Bains

SERVICES

- ✓ Esparron-de-Verdon : accommodation, catering, little shops and tourism office
- ✓ St-Martin-de-Brôme: accommodation, catering, little shops
- ✓ Gréoux-les-Bains: shops and services, tourism office

(1 : 6.5 km - 403 m) Once at the top, cross the road once again to drop down on the other side. At the fork turn left and head down to the bottom of the ravine and join the road just above. Follow the road to the left for 1.7 kilometres. Leave the road via a track on the right which skirts alongside the hill and passes the oppidum (ruined, fortified settlement). Ignore the two downhill paths on the left, and take the path on the right through the woods to come out at the Payanet equestrian centre and then on to Saint-Martin-de-Brômes

(2 : 12.5 km - 363 m) Cross through the heart of the village, following the GR4 hikers' trail. The route climbs steeply. Take the left fork level with the school. Descend again and turn right. After passing the last few houses the route becomes a dirt-track which passes parallel to, and just above, the road. At the ridge, head left for a short, but fairly steep, descent which comes back out on the road. Turn right in the direction of Gréoux-les-Bains and after 500 metres turn left on to a wide dirt-track which descends pleasantly to the Verdon river. Turn right and follow the flat path into Gréoux-les-Bains. Use caution - This path is very popular with families and there is a children's playground a little further along the path. Just before the bridge, turn right and head up the street towards the charming village centre with its pedestrianised streets.



VAR2. GRÉOUX-LES-BAINS - MANOSQUE

V2

Distance **14 KM**
Duration **1H30**

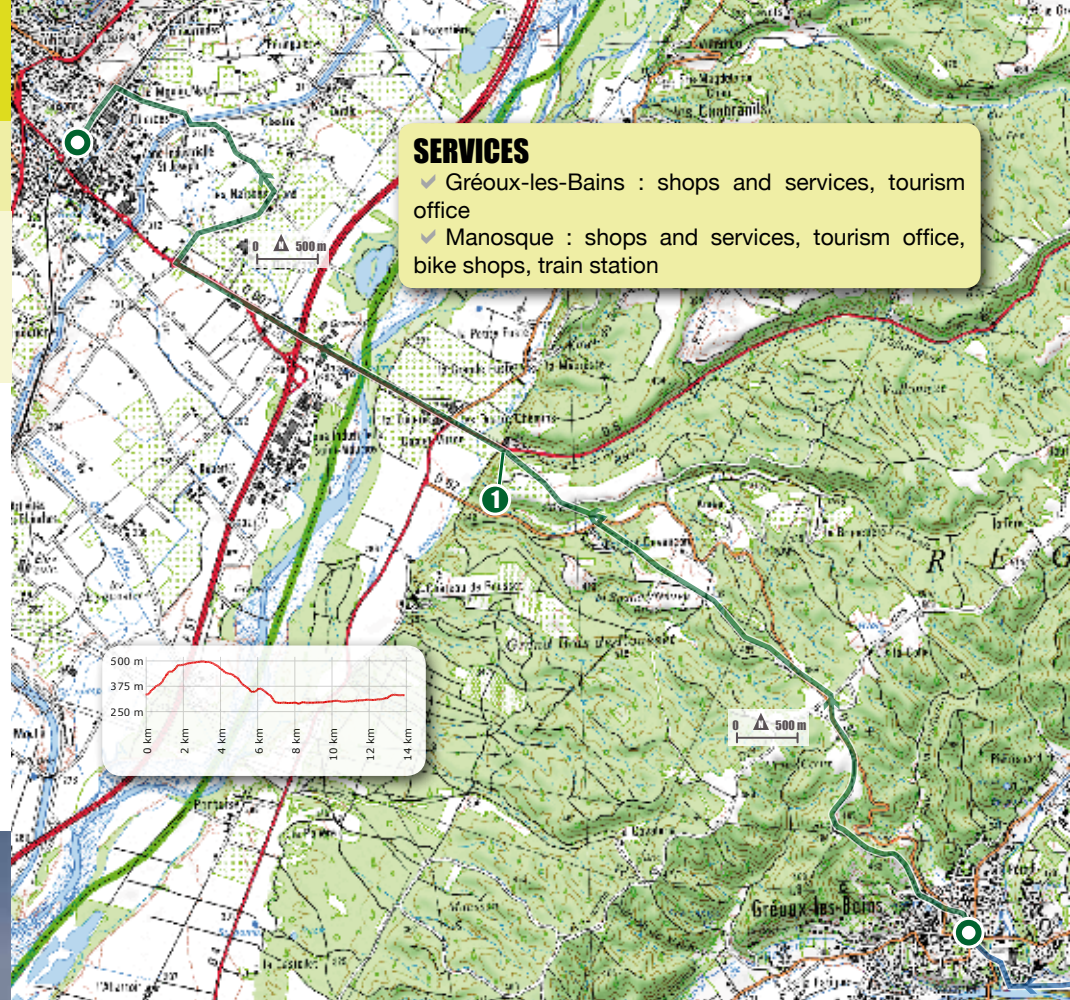
D+/D- **250 M / 255 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V2 / BLUE**

This second option allows the rider to reach Manosque and hence have the additional honour of having crossed the département. After the untamed corners of the Verdon valley we return to civilisation! Having both a railway and bus station, Manosque is a practical town from which to organise your return home. This section is not waymarked as a MTB route, instead follow the waymarkers for the GR4 hiking trail.

Section

(335 m) At the roundabout, climb straight up, following the GR4 hiking itinerary to the château car park. Take the central street which becomes a steep track. Under an electricity line, continue to the right, on the flat, to reach the D82. Turn left and follow the road for about one kilometre. Leave the road, turning left on a wide track, still following the GR4. The track descends, without any difficulties, to recross the road two kilometres further on. A 300 metre steep climb will bring you to the Grand Devançon farm, from where one can finally glimpse the Durance river and Manosque. Still on the GR4 hiking trail, head off for a final descent which is also pleasant and easy.

(1 : 6.9 km - 302 m) Follow the D6, cross the bridge over the Durance river, and then cross the motorway. Taking minor roads, head to Manosque station, 800 metres ahead on the right.



SERVICES

- ✓ Gréoux-les-Bains : shops and services, tourism office
- ✓ Manosque : shops and services, tourism office, bike shops, train station

