

- Base VTT FFCT « Val de Durance » - www.vtt-valdedurance.org
- Espace VTT FFC « Buëch – Sisteronais » - www.buech-rando.com
- Espace VTT FFC « Verdon - Provence » - www.vttverdon.com

Six mountain resorts open their ski-lifts during the summer to allow you to take advantage of their « bike parks » and downhill or endurance tracks:

- PraLoup : www.praloup.com
- Val d'Allos : www.valdallos.com
- Sauze : www.sauze.com
- Chabanon : www.chabanon-selonnet.com
- Montclar : www.montclar.com
- Le Grand Puy : www.valleedelablancche.com

Find all the latest mountain biking news for Alpes de Haute-Provence, along with videos and information on these itineraries on the website : www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr

You can also find mountain biking route maps of the département on the website: www.alpes-haute-provence.com

Or discover a selection of 111 mountain bike routes in the VTOPO guidebook « Les Alpes de Haute-Provence » : www.vtopo.fr

TAILOR-MADE BREAKS

Travel agencies or mountain bike guides can organise:

- All inclusive trips or tailor-made breaks,
- Transport of luggage
- Reservation of accommodation
- Whether or not the guide accompanies your party, a local mountain bike guide can advise you on the best variants and adapt the itinerary to match your group's needs exactly.

To find out about tailor-made trips or for details of local guides and businesses consult the website www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr or the site of the Alpes de Haute-Provence Tourism Development Agency : www.alpes-haute-provence.com

There are numerous establishments on the itinerary offering overnight stays (hotels, gîtes, bed and breakfasts, campsites...) Prior reservation is strongly recommended.

Listed below are the stopover gîtes situated on each itinerary. For details of other accommodation contact the local tourist office (details in the next chapter).

Environmentally Friendly lodgings

A number of establishments situated en route are engaged in the development of eco-tourism that is respectful to the environment. To find out which businesses are accredited with an "écolabel", visit the Alpes de Haute-Provence Tourism Development Agency website : www.alpes-haute-provence.com

THE ALPES-PROVENCE

Location	Name	Telephone	Website
Hameau de St Ours (Meyronnes)	Gîte d'étape de St Ours	04 92 84 37 03	www.ubaye.com
La Condamine Châtelard	Gîte d'étape Champs Féleze	04 92 84 30 30	
Jausiers	Gîte d'étape des Bartavelles	04 92 84 69 86	www.gite-des-bartavelles.fr
Jausiers	Gîte d'étape l'Ardoisière	04 92 32 03 82	http://gitelardoisiere.monsite-orange.fr
Faucon de Barcelonnette	Gîte d'étape l'Eterlou	04 92 36 15 78	www.gite-auberge-eterlou.com
Méolans-Revel	Gîte d'étape les Terres Blanches	04 92 81 94 37	www.les-terres-blanches.com
Méolans-Revel	Gîte d'étape La Fourandève	04 92 81 97 94	www.location-gite-fourandeve.fr
Verdaches	Gîte d'étape de Flagustelle	06 62 16 19 47	www.gite-flagustelle.com
Digne les Bains	Gîte d'étape des 3 Vallées	04 92 32 08 73	



Digne les Bains	Gîte d'étape du Château des Sièyes	04 92 31 20 30	
Peyruis Montfort	Gîte d'étape des Grandes Molières	04 92 68 11 41	www.lesgrandesmollieres.com
St Etienne les Orgues	Gîte d'étape Les Vignaux	04 92 73 02 43	www.gite-les-vignaux.fr
Forcalquier	Gîte d'étape de La Parise	04 92 75 01 50	
Forcalquier	Gîte d'étape Les Roches	04 92 75 13 74	http://chevauchees.com/

LA TRANSVERDON

Location	Name	Telephone	Website
Allos	Refuge du Col d'Allos	04 92 83 85 14	
Colmars les Alpes	Gîte d'étape le Gassendi	04 92 83 42 25	
La Colle Saint Michel	Gîte d'étape de la Colle St Michel	04 92 83 30 78	www.gite-haut-verdon.com
Saint André les Alpes	Gîte d'étape Les Cougnas	04 92 89 18 78	www.verdon-provence.com/les-cougnas.htm
Saint André les Alpes	Gîte d'étape Le Clair Logis	04 92 89 04 05	www.gites-etape-provence.fr
Hameau de la Baume (Castellane)	Gîte d'étape de la Baume	04 92 83 70 82	www.gite-de-la-baume.com
Castellane	Gîte d'étape l'Oustaou	04 92 83 77 27	www.oustaoucastellane04.fr
Rougou	Gîte d'étape le Mur d'Abeilles	04 92 83 76 33	www.rougon.fr
La Palud sur Verdon	Gîte d'étape L'Arc en Ciel	04 92 77 32 28	www.verdon-arcenciel-gite.com
La Palud sur Verdon	Gîte de l'Escales	04 92 77 30 02	www.gite-escales.com
Chauvets / Les Bondils (La Palud)	Gîte d'étape Chalet Le Refuge	04 92 83 68 45	www.verdon-chalet.com
Vénasclé (Moustiers Ste Marie)	Gîte d'étape de Vénasclé	04 92 74 62 18	www.gite-moustiers.com
Moustiers Ste Marie	Gîte d'étape du Petit Ségries	04 92 74 68 83	www.gite-segries.fr
Quinson	Gîte d'étape l'Escargot	04 92 74 09 73	www.giteescargot.com
St Martin de Brômes	Gîte d'étape du Payanet	04 92 78 07 45	www.lepayanet.com
Gréoux-les-Bains	Gîte d'étape Pavillon d'Aurabelle	04 92 78 99 53	www.lepavillon.fr

- Agence de Développement Touristique - Tel : 04 92 31 57 29 - www.alpes-haute-provence.com

- Parc naturel régional du Verdon – Tel : 04 92 74 68 00 – www.parcduverdon.fr
- Parc naturel régional du Luberon – Tel : 04 90 04 42 00 – www.parcduluberon.com
- Réserve géologique de Haute-Provence – Tel : 04 92 36 70 70 – www.resgeol04.org
- Parc national du Mercantour – Tel : 04 93 16 78 88 – www.mercantour.eu

THE « ALPES-PROVENCE » ITINERARY :

- Vallée de l'Ubaye - Tel : 04 92 81 04 04 - www.ubaye.com
- Larche – Tel : 04 92 84 33 58 – www.haute-ubaye.com
- Jausiers – Tel : 04 92 81 21 45 - www.jausiers.com
- Barcelonnette – Tel : 04 92 81 04 71 - www.barcelonnette.com
- Montclar – Tel : 04 92 30 92 01 - www.montclar.com
- Vallée de la Blanche – Tel : 04 92 35 11 00 - www.valleedelablanche.com
- Digne les Bains – Tel : 04 92 36 62 62 - www.ot-dignelesbains.fr
- Val de Durance – Tel : 04 92 64 02 64 - www.valdedurance-tourisme.com
- Saint Etienne les Orgues – Tel : 04 92 73 02 57
- Forcalquier – Tel : 04 92 75 10 02 - www.forcalquier.com
- St Michel l'Observatoire – Tel : 04 92 75 64 43 - www.saintmichellobservatoire.com
- Manosque – Tel : 04 92 72 16 00 - www.manosque-tourisme.com

THE « TRANSVERDON » ITINERARY :

- Val d'Allos – Tel : 04 92 83 02 81 - www.valdallos.com
- Colmars les Alpes - Tel : 04 92 83 41 92 - www.colmars-les-alpes.fr
- Saint André les Alpes – Tel : 04 92 89 02 39 - www.ot-st-andre-les-alpes.fr
- Castellane – Tel : 04 92 83 61 14 - www.castellane.org
- La Palud sur Verdon – Tel : 04 92 77 32 02 - www.lapaludsurverdon.com
- Moustiers Sainte Marie – Tel : 04 92 74 67 84 - www.moustiers.eu
- Quinson – Tel : 04 92 74 01 12 - www.quinson.fr/ot
- Esparron de Verdon – Tel : 04 92 77 15 97 - www.esparrondeverdon.com
- Gréoux-les-Bains – Tel : 04 92 78 01 08 - www.greoux-les-bains.com

IN CASE OF DAMAGE TO YOUR BIKE

Before embarking on these itineraries it is vital to give your bike a full service. There isn't a bike shop in every village, so it is important to be prepared and to carry the necessities with you for the tour. The following villages have bike shops or potential bike repair services :

THE « ALPES-PROVENCE » ITINERARY :

- Jausiers
- Barcelonnette
- Montclar
- Digne les Bains (plusieurs magasins de vélo)
- Château-Arnoux
- Forcalquier
- Manosque (plusieurs magasins de vélo)

THE « TRANSVERDON » ITINERARY :

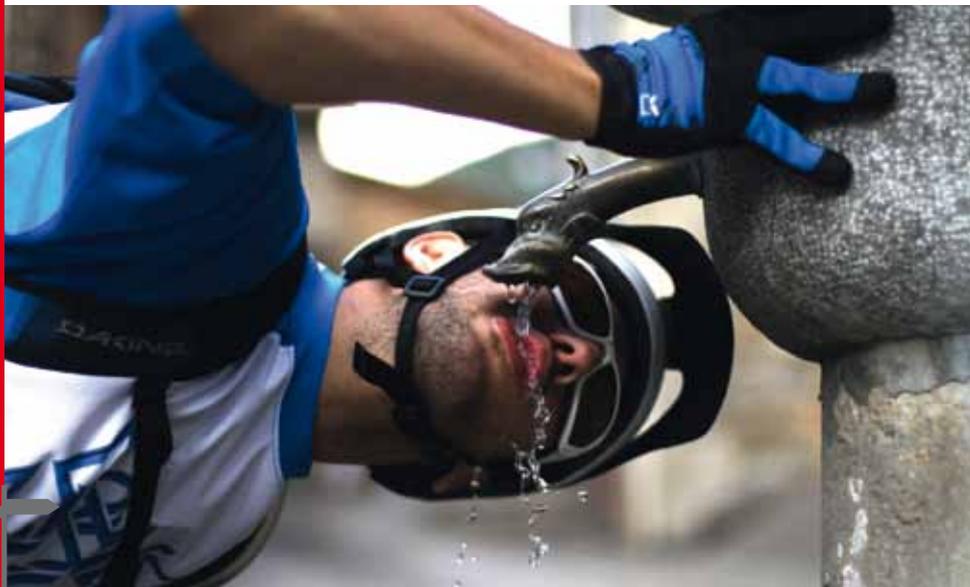
- Val d'Allos
- Castellane

RECOMMENDED CONDUCT

In an area used by different groups of the population, it is important to have respect for each other and a sense of sharing the space. Chronologically speaking, mountain bikers are the most recent arrivals on the trails. Tomorrow's mountain biking depends on your attitude today. Take great care when descending, on each path you may encounter hikers or horse-riders. Slow down and allow other users to pass. On the road, respect the highway code and ride in single-file if you are in a group. In the mountains, water erosion is a significant factor. It is strongly recommended not to skid your rear wheel, nor leave the path, nor cut the corners of zigzag bends. In pastoral zones, grass and crops are precious as they feed the cattle in winter. In order to live in harmony with the farmers it is vital to stay on the path and to not cut across fields, to close gates and not frighten the flocks. Respect the wildlife and don't try to approach them too closely. Don't forget that you are guests in the countryside and these mountains. In rural areas, hunting is still widely practised by many people. During the hunting season, choose brightly coloured clothes that allow you to be easily seen. Be extra prudent and adhere to any signs and oral warnings that you may be given by the hunters.

FFC (FRENCH CYCLING FEDERATION) MOUNTAIN BIKING CODE:

- For your safety follow waymarked trails and respect the direction of the itineraries.
- Don't overestimate your abilities and stay in control of your speed.
- Be careful and courteous when you pass hikers, as pedestrians have priority.
- Check your bike before leaving and remember to take food rations and a repair kit.
- If you are riding alone, leave your detailed itinerary with a friend.
- It is strongly advised that you wear a helmet.
- Respect private property and crops.
- Pay attention to agricultural and forestry machinery. Close gates behind you.
- Avoid picking wild flowers, fruit and fungi. Do not disturb wild animals.
- Take your rubbish home with you, be unobtrusive and respectful of the environment.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

DISTANCE

The distances have been measured in the field using GPS, as such they offer a reasonable level of accuracy.

HEIGHT CHANGE

Alt+ : sum of all the height gained

Alt - : sum of all the height lost

DURATION

The timing for the sections has been determined by function of :

- Objective characteristics of the terrain : distances, height changes and technical difficulty
- Subjective criteria linked to a rider and a riding style which doesn't necessarily correspond to each and everyone of us. This 'rider' is a regular rider (at least one ride a week), rested and in good health with good technical skills (at ease on V3 level terrain) who keeps hydrated and regularly fed, riding a well-adapted, quality bike (minimum forward suspension and weighing less than 14kg) who rides in semi-autonomy (overnight stays in a gîte, not carrying baggage, 5kg rucksack)
- Clement weather (time for additional problems posed by rain is not included nor for the tiredness caused by very hot or very cold temperatures...)
- The timing does not include stops.

Consequently the timing for a section should be considered in accordance with your current situation and the group with whom you ride.

DIFFICULTY

The difficulty of each section is expressed using two indicators. The VTOPO technical grading scale and the FFC general classification. The difficulties indicated are for one section, joining several sections together requires that they are considered as a whole when planning your rides. It is very rare that you will have to carry your bike. Depending on your level you will end up pushing your bike for shorter or longer periods in certain parts. Keep in mind the expression "No pain, no gain" a bit of pushing often precedes a descent through breathtaking countryside.

THE FFC CLASSIFICATION

The rating system for the French Cycling Federation (FFC) is based on 5 criteria: technicality, distance, height gain, need to carry the bike and danger.

Knowing this, it is understandable that two itineraries can have different ratings for different reasons.

Green : Easy, family-friendly trail of a short distance and with little height change.

Blue : Not very difficult, suitable for occasional mountain bikers.

Red : Difficult, suitable for regular mountain bikers, good riding skills are necessary

Black : Very difficult because of the considerable height change and/or the technical difficulty. May contain sections where it is necessary to carry the bike as well as exposed paths.

THE VTOPO SCALE

Divided into six categories from V1 to V6, the scale shows uniquely the difficulty of staying on the bike on the flat and during the descent. Thus a rider who gets off the bike during the hardest part of a V4 route can not claim a technical level of V4.

To understand the VTOPO scale the following words need to be defined :

- Track : A wide carriageway (>3 m) suitable for all types of forestry vehicles including the very large.
- Trail : A narrower route (between 2 and 3 metres), in places steeper than a track and negotiable only in a light 4x4 vehicle.
- Path : A very narrow way, suitable for pedestrians who would generally need to walk in single-file.

Échelle VTOPO	Difficultés techniques rencontrées
V1	Descents only on rolling tracks with low to moderate gradients (max 10%). The surface is usually well-stabilised. Ideal for children and beginners.
V2	Rolling descents on steeper and stonier tracks and trails (max 25%) Easy paths (uniquely those covered in earth and with a shallow gradient)
V3	Descents on stonier paths (possibility of steep sections) demanding regular mountain bike training. Chance of encountering steps (30 to 40 cm max) Steep and stony tracks and trails (above 25%, generally requires adoption of a position behind the saddle)
V4	Technical paths and trails including numerous steps, sometimes high (> 40 cm), steep to very steep sections, hairpins, slabs, simple 'trial' biking. Generally speaking the descents in this category are sustained.
V5	Descents containing numerous steep and involved sections. Jumps required over certain obstacles, gaps, high steps (1 m), demanding 'trial' biking. Technical zones on exposed aerial paths. At this level 'Downhill' protective gear is strongly advised.
V6	Very involved descents with unavoidable jumps, road gaps, very demanding 'trial' biking... V6 category is reserved for the mountain biking elite. Undertaking a V6 descent involves accepting a significant risk that could have dramatic consequences in the case of a fall.

ITINERARY

The description of the itinerary is based on observations visible in the field, but may also contain elements shown on the IGN maps, for example altitude.

All indicators of direction are given relative to the direction of travel. When the « Grandes Traversées » route coincides with another waymarked itinerary, its waymarkers may also be mentioned. It is important to note the difference between a PR, « Petites Randonnées » (local hiking path) which has yellow waymarkers and a GR, « Grandes Randonnées » (national hiking trail) which has red and white waymarkers.

One may also find local waymarkers, VTT (MTB) waymarkers and even signposts.

The names GR, GR de Pays, PR are registered trademarks of the French hiking association, the Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre.

To help the rider follow the route, the itinerary is marked on a SCAN 50 map of variable scale, the scale being given with the legend. The principal landmarks are also shown on the map.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

EMERGENCY SERVICES

In France : 112 or 18

FRENCH WEATHER FORECAST

www.meteofrance.com or by telephone 08 99 71 02 04

TRANSPORT OF LUGGAGE

Several solutions are available :

- Use a local business: Travel agencies and taxi companies can often offer this service. Your accommodation may also offer this service depending on their availability.
- Organise it yourself. The most flexible option is to do it yourself using a group member. It's not always easy but you can organise your group to take turns driving the vehicle. This solution could actually suit tired members of the group.
- Carry your own gear? Instead of overloading yourselves, travel light. It's the best option from an environmental point of view and from a practical view-point, staying full-board (dinner, bed and breakfast at the lodgings plus picnic lunch provided for the following day), one can get by with very few clothes. Modern textiles are light, easy to wash and dry quickly. Lodgings offer washing facilities (albeit by hand) and drying in a heated drying room ensures that they'll be ready at the moment of departure. Shared equipment can be spread amongst the group (pump, chain, spare parts, toothpaste!) the more of you there are the less you'll carry ! It's possible to travel in group with 30 L rucksacks weighing 5 to 6 kg. Caution - two-wheeled trailers are not suitable for this itinerary, one-wheeled trailers would be better adapted but still not ideal for this type of route.

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

- On you :
Helmet, gloves, cycling shorts, cycling jersey, socks, appropriate footwear.
A recently serviced, comfortable bike.
- In your rucksack, 30 to 35 l (the rucksack shouldn't rise too high behind the neck) :
 - plastic bags to protect your belongings from the rain.
 - 1.5 l of water (to be refilled as often as possible !),
 - a windproof jacket and cycling tights (or arm and leg warmers)
 - a change of cycling clothes (useful if the previous day's clothes haven't dried out),
 - energy bars,
 - a knife,
 - money and identity papers.
- For the evening :
Lightweight trousers, a t shirt, a light fleece, sandals, a sleeping bag liner, a multi-purpose body wash, a towel (very lightweight and compact ones are available), a toothbrush.
- Repairs :
Inner tubes, specific parts for your own bike : dérailleur hanger, brake pads....
Save some space for your picnic unless you're going to lunch at a restaurant !
- Equipment to share among the group (You can avoid unpacking all the bags if everyone knows what they are carrying):
2 multi-tools with chain tool, (Torx keys if necessary), 2 pumps, 2 tubes of glue, 50 puncture repair patches, tyre levers (give a full puncture repair kit to the last rider),

lubricant and a cloth, brake cables, dérailleur cables, brake sheath tips, spare chain, a few quick links, spare screws/bolts, a dérailleur, appropriate brake bleed kit, a light spare tyre, a saddle, a few spokes, tubeless valve stems, mini cutting-pliers, an adjustable spanner, a spoke key (sometimes specific like Mavic), cable ties, tape, wire...

Toilet paper, toothpaste, sun-cream, first-aid kit.

Cell phone, cameras, VTOPO guidebook, maps of the itinerary, GPS with relevant data or a map case and compass.

ROUTE UPDATES AND OTHER INFORMATION :

www.vtoto.fr
www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr
www.alpes-haute-provence.com
www.cheminsdusoleil.com

AVERTISSEMENTS

CAUTION

In the VTOPO guidebook, as well as in the field you will be warned to take extra care in certain areas. In order not to trivialise this advice and considering the wide ranging technical skills of mountain bikers these warnings are not given when there is a risk of a fall but rather where a fall could cause an injury.

THE VTOPO GUIDEBOOK

Despite attentive proof-reading, certain errors will doubtlessly have slipped through. If you come across a contradiction between the guidebook and your experience in the field, go with your interpretation of the situation on the ground. Don't forget that the maps in the guidebook (1:50000) can not replace IGN maps (1:25000) with regards to precision.

FELLOW VISITORS

It can never be said too many times that mountain biking can be dangerous in the case of a collision with another person. Be extremely cautious on narrow paths where visibility is limited. Always control your speed and let others pass. Be careful also when descending on tracks, High speeds can result in stones and pebbles being thrown to considerable heights which can cause serious injuries to those that you pass. Once again, slow down.

Respect hunting areas and game beats.

Finally, be careful when you cross a road and cycle in single-file if you are in a group.

Under no circumstances is the commissioner of the work, nor the author nor the editor, responsible for any problems or accidents encountered whilst, or as a result of, following the itineraries in this guidebook.

THANKS

The Alpes-Provence and the TransVerdon are two week-long mountain bike itineraries. Developed within the framework of the « Plan Intégré Transfrontalier « Nouveau Territoire d'itinérance » » agreed between the département of Alpes de Haute-Provence and the province of Cuneo, supported by the European programme Interreg ALCOTRA.

These itineraries are classed as « Grandes Traversées » by the Fédération Française de Cyclisme, FFC (French Cycling Federation) and are registered under the name « les Grandes Traversées VTT des Alpes de Haute-Provence ».

They have been produced by the Conseil Général of the département in collaboration with local authorities, the tourism development agency, tourist offices, régional natural parks and accredited mountain biking sites of Alpes de Haute-Provence (FFC sites and FFCT bases).

These « Grandes Traversées », in combination with the one known as the « Chemins du Soleil » (which links Sisteron to Castellane) make Alpes de Haute-Provence, which boasts three such itineraries, the number one département for mountain biking tours!

Find all the latest mountain biking news for Alpes de Haute-Provence on the website : www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr

Discover the complete collection of VTOPO guides on the official website :



The names « THE ALPES-PROVENCE » and « TransVerdon » are registered with the INPI

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Tempted by the thought of several days mountain biking between the Alps, Provence and the Verdon?

Tempted by high altitude lakes, by challenging, fun paths, by mountain cols and forgotten hamlets, by the discovery of unspoiled valleys, typical villages, fields of lavender, by the thought of riding through exceptional scenery in protected areas, all under the sunny skies of the south of France?

Make your choice between two exceptional itineraries and tackle one of the « Grandes Traversées VTT des Alpes de Haute-Provence » !

The « Alpes-Provence » (300 km) and the « TransVerdon » (260 km) are two itineraries that take about a week to ride, both are fully checked and waymarked. They cross Alpes de Haute-Provence from east to west and link the Alpine regions of the département to the valleys of Haute-Provence and the Verdon.

These two itineraries are an opportunity for travel and new experiences, on routes chosen especially for regular mountain bikers, along the most beautiful paths of the département. Along the length of these routes you will find appropriate accommodation which will allow you to organise your stopovers to suit your needs. Although it is necessary to allow a week for each itinerary, it is equally possible to tackle just a portion of the route during a shorter stay. Some sections are also suitable for more occasional mountain bikers who wish to undertake a tour of two or three days.

The « Alpes-Provence » starts at the Col de Larche (1991 m), situated at the gateway to the Mercantour national park at the French-Italian border. After crossing the alpine meadows at over 2000 m altitude, the route follows the Ubaye river and the waymarkers for the TransUbayenne as far as the village of Le Lauzet-Ubaye, a stone's throw from the famous Serre-Ponçon lake. This section is perfectly adapted to leisure mountain bikers, coming before the ascent to Col Bas, culminating at 2113 m. Having discovered the high altitude lakes, the route heads into the Blanche valley and the area around Seyne les Alpes. Next comes the crossing of Europe's largest geological reserve with its villages and isolated hamlets and the legendary site of the Terres Noires, then on towards Digne les Bains and the valleys of the Bléone and the Durance rivers. More single-track paths lead to the Lure mountain (the summit of Haute-Provence), the countryside around Forcalquier and the Luberon régional natural park. The tour finishes in Provence, at Manosque, the end of 300 km of pure pleasure.

The « TransVerdon » starts at the source of the Verdon river, at 2247 m, at the Col d'Allos, also situated in the Mercantour national park. It is a 260 km well-balanced, but technical, voyage from the Alpine mountains to Gréoux-les-Bains, punctuated by well-earned bathing opportunities. Allos and the Haut-Verdon valleys provide a challenging ride, where the effort required is rewarded by varied, fun paths and spectacular scenery. You'll also have the chance to visit high altitude lakes at over 2400 m. After this Alpine step, the route heads into the Verdon régional natural park. New marvels await, in the form of the mountains, lakes and gorges of the Verdon. The tour finishes with easier rolling paths across the Valensole plateau and the Provençal lavender fields to arrive at the spa town of Gréoux-les-Bains.

A third 300 km itinerary also crosses Alpes de Haute-Provence (from Sisteron to Castellane). Known as the « Chemins du Soleil », this route joins the Northern Alps with the Mediterranean and is described in its own VTOPO guidebook « Chemins du Soleil ».

Additional information and route details are available at www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr

THE ALPES-PROVENCE

N°	Section	Km	Alt+ / Alt-	Duration	VTOPO	Page
1	Col de Larche - Meyronnes	19	440/900	2h15	V3+	34
2	Meyronnes - Jausiers	16	650/950	2h45	V3-	36
3	Jausiers - Barcelonnette	11	210/300	1h00	V2	40
4	Barcelonnette - Méolans	15	300/360	1h30	V3-	42
5	Méolans - Le Lauzet Ubaye	9	250/410	1h00	V4-	46
6	Le Lauzet Ubaye - Montclar	26	1300/890	5h00	V3+	48
7	Montclar - Seyne les Alpes	14	330/470	1h45	V4	52
8	Seyne les Alpes - Verdaches	12	310/370	1h30	V3	54
9	Verdaches - La Javie	15	430/750	2h15	V3+	58
10	La Javie - Digne les Bains	22	610/820	4h15	V4+	60
11	Digne les Bains - Mallemoisson	14	200/270	1h45	V2+	64
12	Mallemoisson - Volonne	18	400/480	1h45	V2	66
13	Volonne - Chapelle St Donat	16	390/370	2h45	V3	70
14	Chapelle St Donat - Cruis	26	800/540	4h15	V3	72
15	Cruis - St Etienne les Orgues	12	440/460	1h30	V3-	76
16	St Etienne les Orgues - Forcalquier	20	500/640	2h45	V4-	78
17	Forcalquier - St Michel l'Observatoire	15	620/600	2h15	V3	82
18	St Michel l'Observatoire - Manosque	21	320/580	2h00	V2	84
Var	Sisteron - Châteauneuf Val St Donat	19	750/660	2h45	V2	88

THE TRANSVERDON

N°	Section	Km	Alt+ / Alt-	Duration	VTOPO	Page
1	Col d'Allos - Val d'Allos	12	150/950	1h15	V4-	92
2	Val d'Allos - Colmars les Alpes	12	350/560	1h15	V3+	94
3	Colmars les Alpes - Lacs de Lignin	21	1400/400	3h30	V4-	98
3b	Colmars les Alpes - Thorame Haute	14	280/450	2h45	V3-	100
4	Lacs de Lignin - La Colle St Michel	20	400/1250	2h30	V4	102
5	La Colle St Michel - Thorame Basse	22	630/910	2h30	V4	106
6	Thorame Basse - Montagne de Maurel	17	870/240	1h30	V1	108
7	Montagne de Maurel - St André les Alpes	12	110/980	1h00	V3	112
8	St André les Alpes - Castellane	24	820/990	2h30	V4-	114
9	Castellane - Rougon	18	800/560	3h00	V3	118
10	Rougon - Les Chauvets	18	750/470	2h30	V3	120
11	Les Chauvets - Moustiers Ste Marie	18	350/970	2h15	V4+	124
12	Moustiers Ste Marie - Ste Croix du Verdon	19	300/250	2h15	V2	126
13	Ste Croix du Verdon - Quinson	21	300/550	2h15	V2-	130
14	Quinson - Esparron de Verdon	11	170/170	1h00	V3	132
15	Esparron de Verdon - Gréoux-les-Bains	20	450/500	1h45	V3+	136
Var 1	Barcelonnette - Col d'Allos (par la RD908)	20	1120/10	2h30	V1	140
Var 2	Gréoux-les-Bains - Manosque	14	250/255	1h30	V2	142

ALPES DE HAUTE-PROVENCE

Les grandes traversées VTT



L'ALPES-PROVENCE, 300 KM

LA TRANSVERDON, 260 KM



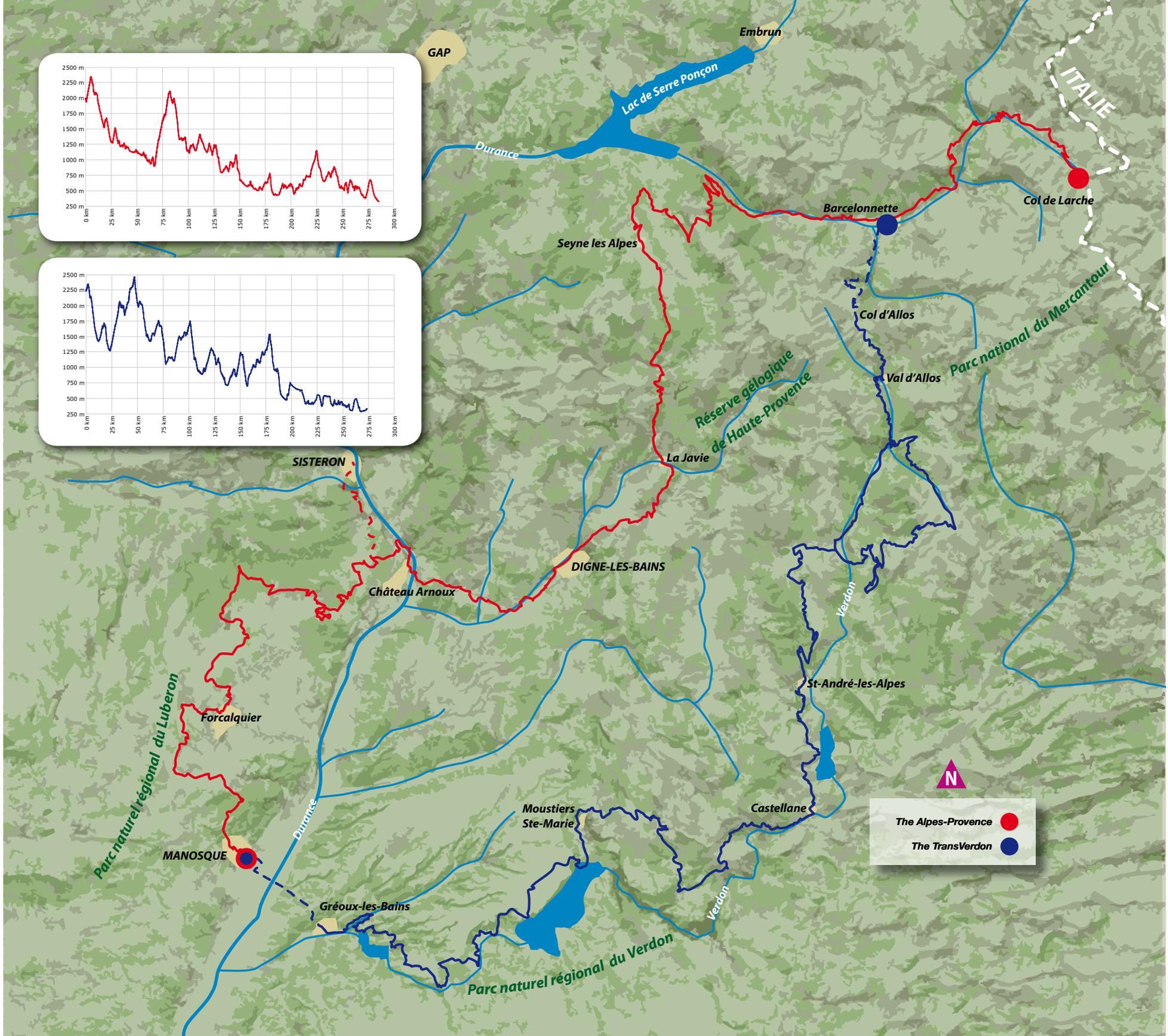
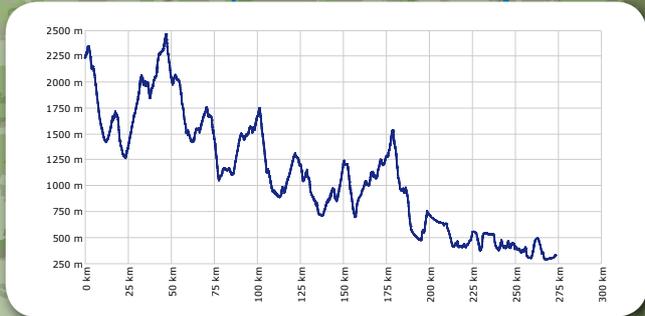
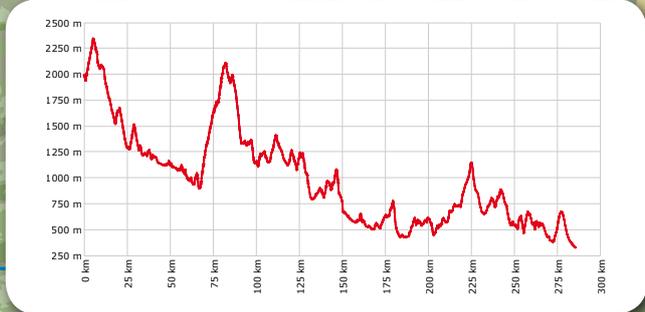
Partagez vos émotions et retrouvez les itinéraires sur :



www.vtt.alpes-haute-provence.fr **Blogs**

www.facebook.com/vttez04 **facebook**

Photo ©Michel Dell



Summary box containing the distance, height change, time, and the general technical difficulty

Number and name of section

Color indicating the VTOPO difficulty (see p25)

Presentation of the section

Intermediate points on the map that are noted in the text (2 :5.3 km - 947 m), for example
2: indicates the number of the intermediate point
5.3 km : gives the distance of the point from the starting point.
947 m : gives the altitude of the point.

Profile of the section

Scale and orientation of the map

Starting point of the ride shown as a circle

Additional info : Points of interest/Services

5. MÉOLANS - LE LAUZET-UBAYE

V4- Distance **9 KM** D+/D- **250 M / 410 M**
Durée **1H00** VTOPO/FFC **V4- / BLEU**

Ce dernier tronçon le long de l'Ubaye, n'est pas à négliger car contrairement aux deux précédents, il n'est pas de tout repos. Si le tracé est majoritairement sur l'emprise du projet, inachevé, de voie de chemin de fer qui devait relier Charges à Barcelonnette, par deux fois l'itinéraire emprunte un sentier en forêt, plus technique et physique.

Itinéraire

(1079 m) Suivre la direction du Martinet par la piste. A la sortie de ce hameau, après le pont sur le riu de la Blanche, prendre la route la plus à gauche, qui semble n'être que l'accès à une ancienne maison d'architecture ferroviaire. Passer sous un pont pour continuer sur le tracé du projet de voie de chemin de fer.

(1 : 3 km - 990 m) Monter raide au-dessus du tunnel condamné. Heureusement, ça ne dure pas très longtemps, un sentier plus agréable débute sur la droite. On redescend ensuite à l'autre bout de l'ouvrage d'art, poursuivre jusqu'à Champanstais.

(2 : 5,3 km - 947 m) Entrer dans le hameau, prendre le sentier raide à droite après le virage. Quelques passages techniques jusqu'à l'entrée du Lauzet.

(3 : 8,1 km - 905 m) Contourner l'hôtel et les terrains de sport pour retrouver le tracé du projet de chemin de fer surplombant le lac. Le quitter après le deuxième pont, remonter à gauche vers les maisons au niveau de la RD900.

Variante : Possibilité de continuer l'itinéraire jusqu'au Lac de Serre-Ponçon en suivant l'itinéraire de la Transubayenne (passages dans 5 tunnels, lampe de poche obligatoire). Longueur 15 km aller/retour.



- A VOIR**
- ✓ Villages de Méolans et du Lauzet-Ubaye
 - ✓ Maison du Bois à Méolans-Revest
 - ✓ Sports d'eau vive sur l'Ubaye
 - ✓ Musée de la vallée au Lauzet-Ubaye
 - ✓ Plan d'eau au Lauzet-Ubaye
 - ✓ Lac de Serre-Ponçon
- SERVICES**
- ✓ Méolans : Hébergement, restauration
 - ✓ Lauzet Ubaye : Hébergement, restauration, petits commerces, point d'information

Reminder of the technical difficulty

Detailed description of the section

Variants

Name of the itinerary

L'ALPES-PROVENCE

HOW TO GET THERE

The « TransVerdon » starts at the source of the Verdon river, situated at the Col d'Allos (2247 m), between the Haut-Verdon and Allos valley and the Ubaye valley. Access to the Col d'Allos is via the RD 908 minor road. Allos valley and Barcelonnette both have bus services. Please don't leave your car at the Col d'Allos, which has just a short stay parking area in the Mercantour national park. At the Col d'Allos, it is possible to sleep at the refuge du Col d'Allos (tel : 04 92 83 85 14).

The « Alpes-Provence » starts at the Col de Larche (1991 m) situated at the Italian border. Access to the Col de Larche is via the RD 900 road. Please don't leave your car at the Col de Larche, which has just a short stay parking area in the Mercantour national park. Public transport (bus) is available as far as Barcelonnette. In summer, a shuttle bus links Barcelonnette with the village of Larche. There are no lodgings at the Col de Larche, but there is accommodation in the village, 5 km downhill from the col.

BY TRAIN

Travel by train as far as Marseille, Aix en Provence, Manosque or Gap, from where connections are possible by bus. From Nice, it is possible to use the « Train des Pignes » to get to the Haut-Verdon valley, alight at Thorame-Haute. Check beforehand regarding the transportation of bikes.

TGV trains that aren't equipped with a special wagon do not currently allow bikes to be carried aboard. (In equipped TGV trains bike transport can be reserved for 10€) Note: Bikes that are completely wrapped are transported free of charge on TGVs. Local trains (TER) are equipped to carry bikes but check in advance that any connections allow bicycles.

Information :
www.voyages-sncf.com
www.ter-sncf.com/paca

For the « Train des Pignes », the coaches are gradually being equipped to carry bikes
 Information :
www.trainprovence.com
 Tel : 04 97 03 80 80

BY BUS

Scheduled bus services from towns and train stations serve the Ubaye valley and Haut-Verdon valley. The number of bicycles per bus is limited.
 Information on bus services :
www.info-ler.fr
www.cg04.fr

OTHERS

In the Ubaye valley and the Haut-Verdon and Allos valleys there are a number of private businesses who offer transport services to the cols of Allos and Larche for mountain bikers and their bikes.
www.ubaye.com - Tel : 04 92 81 04 04
www.valdallos.com - Tel : 04 92 83 02 81

The département of Alpes de Haute-Provence is an immense and varied land. It was known as Basses-Alpes until 1970, a name that then was considered to be too disparaging given the diversity of the landscape, the number of valleys and the high peaks of over 3000 m in the east of the region.

"The land where Provence melts into the mountains" is a good résumé for the fabulous region which is the département of Alpes de Haute-Provence.

With almost 7000 km² for 159000 inhabitants, according to the 2009 census, the département counts 23 inhabitants / km², which makes it one of the least densely populated départements in France. For the mountain biker this translates to huge spaces to discover and a network of exceptional footpaths to explore.

Keep in mind, however, that Alpes de Haute-Provence is a rural département, where agriculture and pastoralism are very much still present. Respect for this land and the people who work here is an essential element of a peaceful and enriching cohabitation.



The region of Alpes de Haute-Provence, exceptional because of its diverse landscapes, wildlife and flora is home to numerous protected areas - the Mercantour national park, the régional natural parks of the Verdon and the Luberon, the geological reserve of Haute-Provence (The largest in Europe), These cover more than half of the département's surface area. These areas aren't sealed off behind protective barriers, but a level of respect is necessary if they

are going to remain for future generations to enjoy. Be it marmots, chamois or alpine ibex, the mountain wildlife is easy to observe as long as they aren't panic-stricken. You can profit at your leisure from the variety of the limitless footpaths and the diversity of the landscape through which you pass. Here, you can travel from a stony, lavender-scented plateau to the edge of a larch wood and a forest floor that's so soft beneath the wheels through the course of a few dozen kilometres.

In a land of contrasts you can ride at 300 m or more than 2500 m altitude, from olive groves to alpine meadows according to the day's mood. Add to this picture, the fresh air that is often named as France's purest and almost 300 sunny days per year and you are not far from mountain biking heaven!

The département is divided up into three key tourist areas, which correspond to different relief, landscape and tourist activities :

- destination « Haute-Provence Luberon » in the west,
- destination « Verdon » in the south
- destination « Alpes-Mercantour » in the east

The « Alpes-Provence » 300 kilometre itinerary links the Alpine sector, from the Italian border and the Mercantour, to Haute-Provence and the Luberon régional natural park . The « TransVerdon » travels 260 kilometres through the whole of the Verdon region, from its source to its confluence with the Durance River.

DIVISION OF THE ITINERARIES

In this guidebook you will find complete descriptions for two itineraries.

The « Alpes-Provence » is divided into 18 sections of 15 to 20 km each, presenting the whole route from the Col de Larche to Manosque. These sections (from village to village) do not correspond to daily rides. According to the level of your party, the weather, the availability of lodgings etc., mountain bikers can choose to do 1, 2, 3 or 4 sections a day. An option is also described, linking Sisteron with the Durance valley. This section allows a crossing from north to south over the course of a few days.

The « TransVerdon » is divided into 15 sections, by the same principal, from the Col d'Allos to Gréoux-les-Bains. A variant (section 3b) allows riders to avoid the very mountainous section to the Lignin lakes, by instead following the Verdon valley. This technical and demanding high-altitude section is reserved for very experienced mountain bikers and is to be avoided in the case of late snow or poor weather. Two additional optional sections are suggested allowing initial access to the route from the Ubaye valley (Barcelonnette) and the option to finish the ride at Manosque (train and bus stations).

DIFFICULTY

The « Grandes Traversées VTT des Alpes de Haute-Provence » are challenging itineraries, which without being aimed at MTB experts are nevertheless reserved for regular mountain bikers capable of spending a week in the saddle and clocking up a large number of climbs and technical path descents.

On each itinerary there are easier sections which allow more occasional riders to get a taste of mountain bike touring over a couple of days.

On the « Alpes-Provence » itinerary the hardest parts are those in the Alpine sections between Le Lauzet-Ubaye and Digne-les-Bains and from Haute-Provence to Château-Arnoux and Saint-Michel-l'Observatoire. The easiest are those in the Ubaye valley (most notably between Jausiers and Le Lauzet-Ubaye) and between the Bléone and Durance valleys (Digne-les-Bains - Château-Arnoux).

On the « TransVerdon » itinerary, the route is very mountainous and technically challenging from the Col d'Allos to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie. From the Sainte-Croix lake to Gréoux-les-Bains the route is easier with more gently rolling paths.

WHICH SEASON?

The spring and autumn are the best seasons for your mountain bike tour. The weather is often favourable and the accommodation less in demand. In summer, unsuspecting riders can be caught out by temperatures rising above 25°C. In the spring, consider the risk of late snow remaining in the mountains: Ask at the local tourist information centre before setting off.

In winter, a large proportion of the itinerary is impassable due to snow cover above 1000 m altitude.

WAYMARKING OF THE ITINERARIES

These two itineraries are classified and waymarked as «Grandes Traversées» by the Fédération Française de Cyclisme (FFC). They are waymarked in accordance with official mountain biking standards : A triangle and two circles. These shapes are in red (indicating a route of over 80 km) The majority of the time the waymarker will also feature the name of the itinerary (TransVerdon or Alpes-Provence)

When the itinerary passes through a region where there are already local accredited routes (sites VTT FFC or FFCT, see below), the number of said route will appear on the waymarkers.



The orientation of the waymarker indicates the direction to follow.



Turn left Straight on Turn right Caution Wrong direction

OTHER MTB ROUTES

The département of Alpes de Haute-Provence is one of the biggest mountain biking areas in France, boasting three touring itineraries, six bike parks, seven accredited sites, more than 200 shorter itineraries and 4000 km of waymarked rides.

In addition to these two « grandes traversées », the département is crossed by the « Chemins du Soleil » itinerary which links the Alps to the Mediterranean (Nice) via Sisteron, Digne-les-Bains and Castellane.

Information on the website : www.cheminsdusoleil.com

There are seven accredited MTB sites in Alpes de Haute-Provence :

- Espace VTT FFC « Vallée de l'Ubaye » – www.ubaye.com
- Espace VTT FFC « Haut Verdon Val d'Allos » - www.valdallos.com
- Espace VTT FFC « Digne les Bains et le Pays Dignois » - www.ot-dignelesbains.fr
- Base VTT FFCT « Vallée de la Blanche – Bés – Serre Ponçon » - www.valleedela-blanche.com

