

THE ALPES-PROVENCE



1. COL DE LARCHE - MEYRONNES

V3+

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

D+/D- **440 M / 900 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3+ / BLUE**

Starting at 1991 m at the mountain pass bordering France and Italy - Col de Larche (as called in France) or Colle della Maddalena (as called in Italy), this first section takes you through very wild countryside, across the sunny adrets. Predominately riding at more than 2000 m altitude, enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of the valley, alpine meadows and discover military fortifications along this border zone. For keen-eyed riders, keep on the look-out for marmots, vultures, chamois and other alpine animals.

Section

(1991 m) From the Col de Larche, take the D900 road on the French side descending towards Barcelonnette. After 900 metres, leave the D900 and go to the hikers' parking area on the right. Follow the track taking two long switchbacks on a steady climb. At the aerial tower, the itinerary continues on a flat track, then a slight descent and crosses the avalanche barriers.

(1: 7,3 km – 2229 m) The track stops and now continues on a lower path. Once the path is no longer evident follow the red (MTB) markers leading to the Riou Rouchoise at a cabin called the Ausse Blanche. Rejoin a path heading downwards on the mountainside.

(2: 9,2 km – 2054 m) Cross an old, abandoned military post. Please note that at the beginning of the season, it might be hard to follow the itinerary due to overgrown vegetation so just keep following the red MTB markers. The crossing ends when you rejoin a clearly marked path with a short, straight climb. 50 metres higher, take left fork and begin a slight descent crossing the plateau of Mallemort. Cross a ravine and continue until the Mallemort Fort.

(3: 11,5 km – 2060 m) Continue down through the woods, rejoin a better track and cross the Riou du Pinet. Continue the descent until the centre of the village of Saint-Ours leaving the trail heading towards the fort on your right. Take a right onto the main road. At the end of the village, turn left.

(4: 15 km – 1767 m) 100 metres further on, continue the descent on a left-hand track in the direction of Meyronnes. Just before the holiday centre, take the left fork to reach the village, cross it and go to the church.



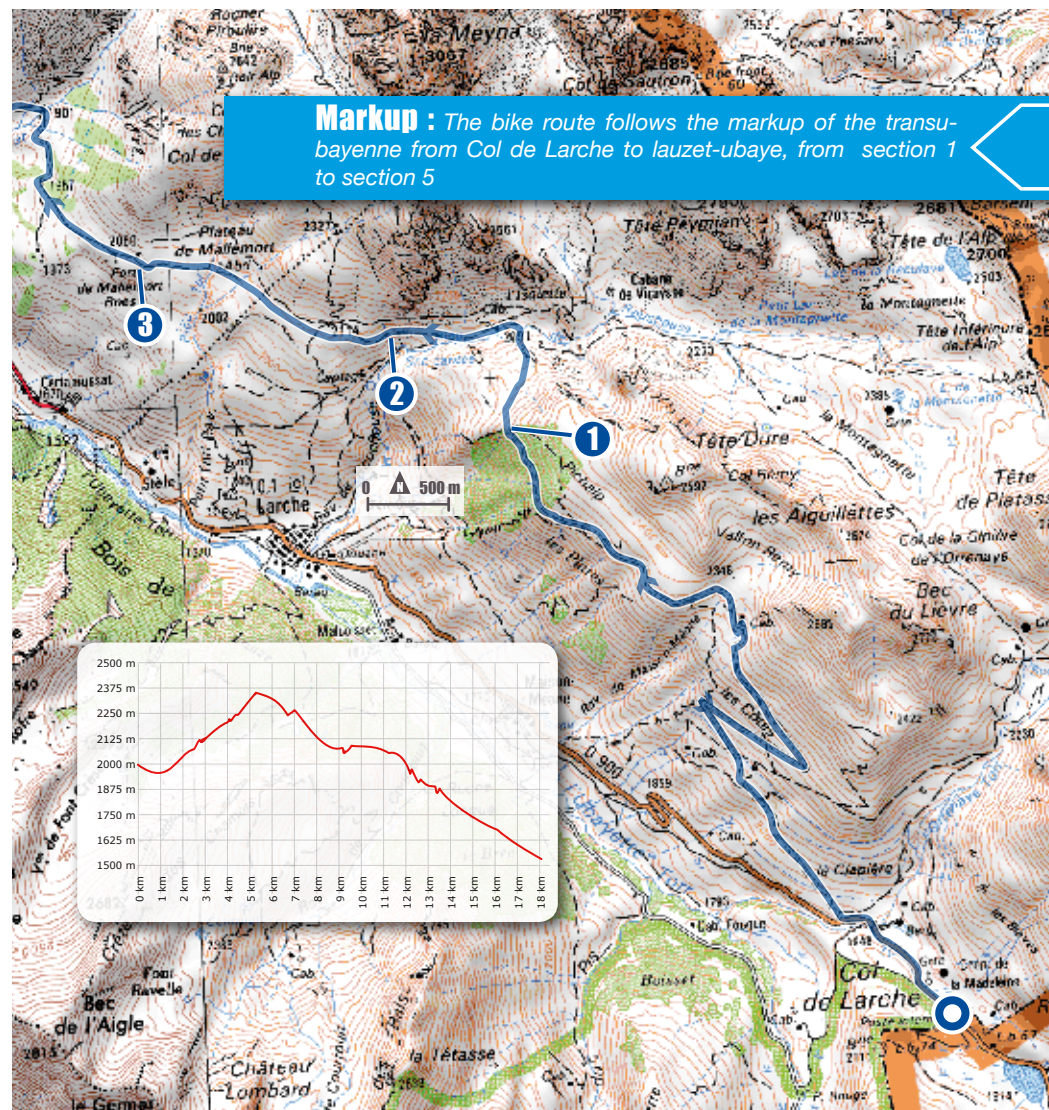
POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Col de Larche, Italian frontier
- ✓ The Mercantour National Park
- ✓ Military Battery of Virayesse
- ✓ Fort of Mallemort
- ✓ Fort of St Ours
- ✓ Hamlet of st ours and via ferrata village of Meyronnes

SERVICES

- ✓ St Ours : accomodation, catering
- ✓ Meyronnes : accomodation, catering, little shop

Variant : Between the Mallemort Fort and Saint Ours Fort (points 3-4) you could turn right onto the mountain bike tour n°14 that climbs up to the Batterie de Virayesse topping out at 2772 m! The itinerary rejoins the tour on a pretty sweet technical mountain path just after point 2. (additional length and elevation gain: 13 km – 800 m)



2. MEYRONNES - JAUSIERS

V3-

Distance **16 KM**
Duration **2H45**

D+/D- **650 M / 950 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3- / BLEU**

At the village of Meyronnes, you leave the sunny adret side for the shady ubac, from alpine meadows to forests in this valley dotted with numerous forts from the Maginot Line. The first climb in the woods rides well on a steady forest track climbing until the fort of Roche La Croix. While descending, you'll see an impressive fort (Tournoux Fort) before reaching the village of Condamine-Châtelard. The second climb starts on a path and is a bit more challenging. The descent is on a small road then continues on a nice path through the woods as far as Jausiers.

Section

(1531 m) Go to the east exit of the village, in the direction of the col de Larche, then cross the D900 and cross the Ubaye river below. Start the first climb on a dirt track.

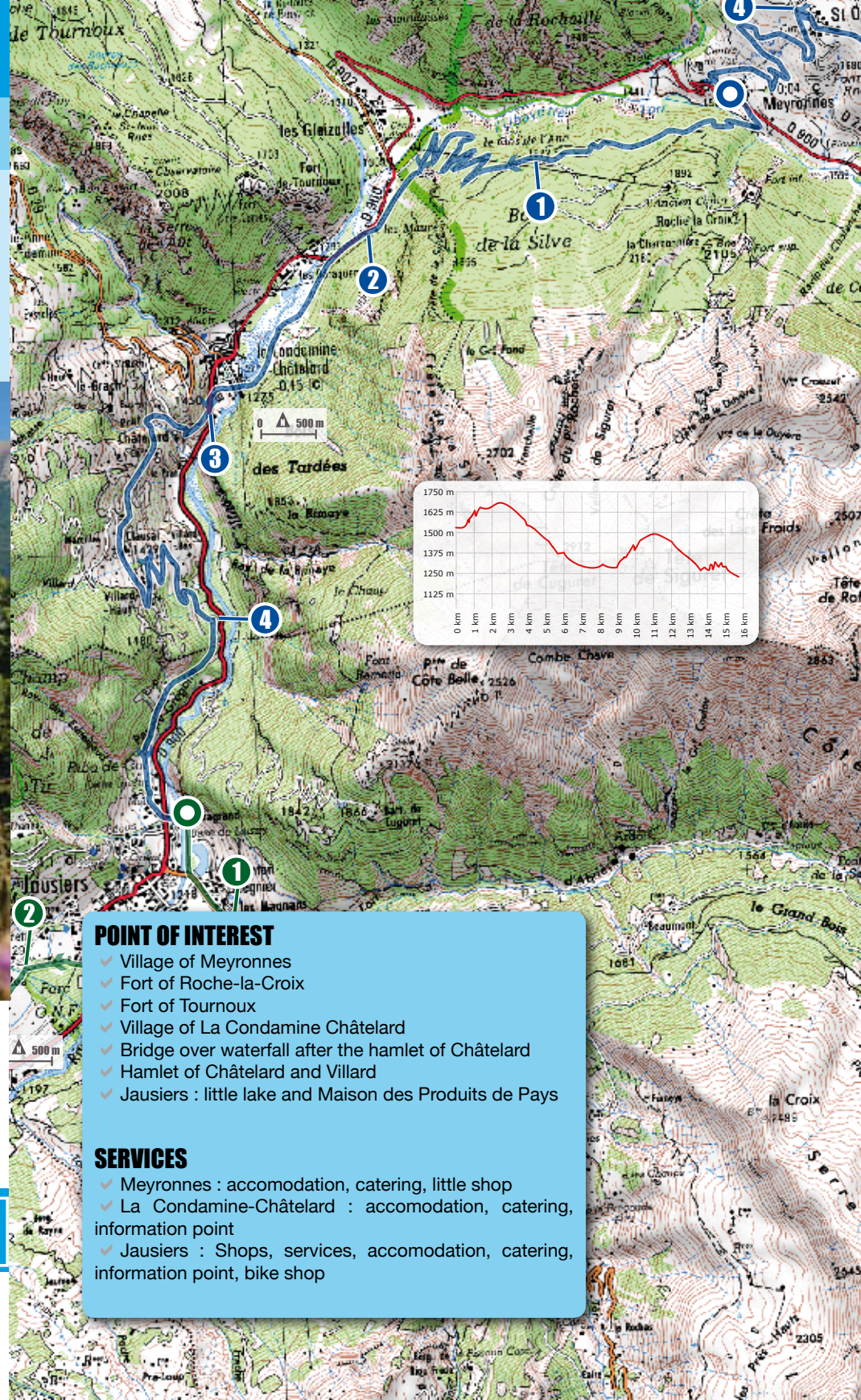
(1: 2,7 km – 1681 m) At the Clos de l'Ane, it's the end of the climb! Take the right-hand track downhill until the bottom of the valley.

(2: 6,6 km – 1305 m) Rejoin the D900 for about 500 m. Leave the road after the straight section before the bridge and continue to follow the Ubaye river on a track for 1 km. Ignore the steep inclining trail to the left, arrive at a small bridge, cross the Ubaye river and head up the next straight street, take the left fork to a second small bridge. Staying to the left, rejoin the D900 for several metres in the direction of Jausiers.

(3: 8,8 km – 1289 m) The second climb of the day starts on the right on a dirt track just before a dwelling, bear right onto a path leading to the hamlet of Châtelard. Cross the hamlet and at the exit continue the climb on the left-hand track, crossing the Riou du Prat. The next hamlet marks the summit, descend via the road.

(4 : 13,7 km – 1271 m) Shortly before the D900, take an inconspicuous path on the right. Climb in the woods before the final descent to Jausiers.

Variant : At point 1, possibility of following the MTB itinerary n°4 to the left which leads to the battery of Roche la Croix (6 km round-trip, 230 m of elevation gain)



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Village of Meyronnes
- ✓ Fort of Roche-la-Croix
- ✓ Fort of Tournoux
- ✓ Village of La Condamine Châtelard
- ✓ Bridge over waterfall after the hamlet of Châtelard
- ✓ Hamlet of Châtelard and Villard
- ✓ Jausiers : little lake and Maison des Produits de Pays

SERVICES

- ✓ Meyronnes : accomodation, catering, little shop
- ✓ La Condamine-Châtelard : accomodation, catering, information point
- ✓ Jausiers : Shops, services, accomodation, catering, information point, bike shop

3. JAUSIERS - BARCELONNETTE

V2

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

D+/D-
VTOPC

210 M / 300 M
V2 / GREEN

This section runs along the valley floor on small roads linking different hamlets of the Ubaye valley and arrives at Barcelonnette. Before leaving Jausiers, you could stop at the Maison des Produits du Pays to taste some gastronomical specialties made in the Ubaye valley.

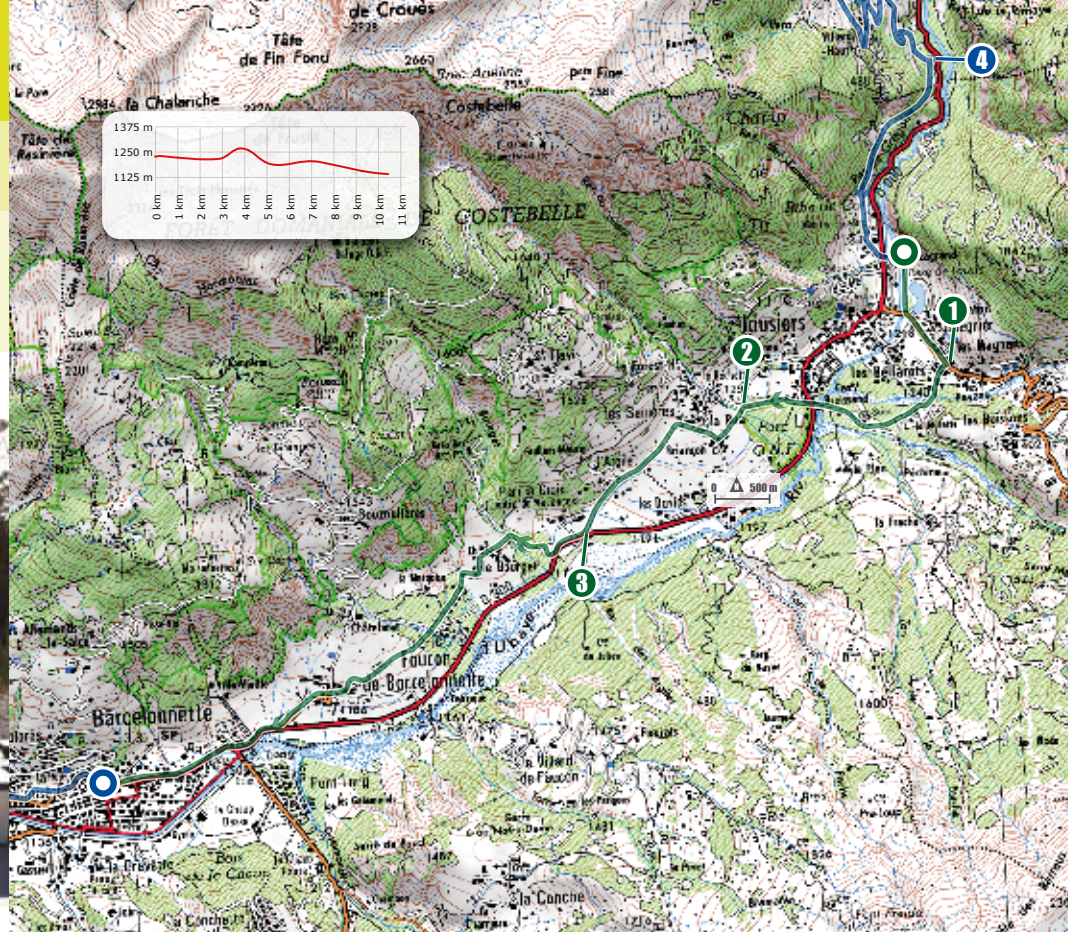
Section

(1226 m) Go to the Ubaye river bed, climb several metres and cross the Pont des Chèvres bridge (Chèvre means “goat” in French). Follow the river until the next bridge. Turn left and follow the road for the Col de la Bonette-Restefond for 500 metres (the highest paved road in Europe at 2802 m).

(1: 1,3 km – 1239 m) Take the right fork after some houses, cross the wide bed of the Abriès mountain torrent, continue on the right-hand road until a small bridge. Make a 90° right turn to bypass the bridge and descend on the same river bank as far as the Ubaye river. Cross it, go across the D900, go straight up on the other side.

(2: 3,4 km – 1260 m) Turn left, cross the Sanières mountain torrent then at the hamlet of Briançon, climb to the right until you're just below the cemetery and then turn left. After 100 m the road descends to join the D900.

(3 : 5,4 km – 1181 m) Go along the D900 and at the next bend, take a trail that goes to a ford. Ride through different neighbouring hamlets, such as Faucon de Barcelonnette, and rejoin the D900 at the entrance of Barcelonnette. Go straight on to reach the town centre.



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Jausiers : little lake and Maison des Produits de Pays
- ✓ The highest road in Europe: Col de la Bonnette (2802 m)
- ✓ Village of Faucon de Barcelonnette (tower, convent, sundial...)
- ✓ Barcelonnette and Mexican villas

SERVICES

- ✓ Jausiers : Shops, services, accommodation, catering, information point, bike shop
- ✓ Faucon de Barcelonnette : accommodation, catering
- ✓ Barcelonnette : shops and services, tourism office, bike shops, bike repair station



4. BARCELONNETTE - MÉOLANS

V3-

Distance **15 KM**
Duration **1H30**

D+/D- **300 M / 360 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3- / VERT**

This itinerary gives the rider two different styles of riding. The first part starts from Barcelonnette and goes as far as Les Thuiles. It takes place on the right bank, mainly in the woods on a fun path. The second part heads to Méolans, this time on the left bank via a rolling forest track giving beautiful views of the Ubaye valley; one of the last damless wild rivers.

Section

(1142 m) Head towards the exit of Barcelonnette, passing in front of the hospital then in the direction of Saint-Pons.

(1: 1,3 km – 1129 m) At the sports field, leave the straight road, go around the buildings follow the side of the road (D900) until the shopping centre carpark. At the roundabout take the first exit then get back on the path.

(2: 2,5 km – 1129 m) Cross a small bridge over the Saint-Pons mountain torrent. Turn right onto a perpendicular track for 150 metres. Take a quick left onto a horse-riding path. 230 metres further on, watch for and take a right fork. After the horse-riding centre, follow the trail that runs into another track and continue heading towards the aerodrome. The path runs along the right-hand side then climbs in order to cross the Riou Bourdoux on the road heading towards La Lauze.

(3 : 5,1 km – 1167 m) Just after the bridge, take the path on the left descending alongside the streambed. After 650 metres, head into the woods for the last section of path. Exit the woods and descend onto the road, ride alongside the D900 on a trail on the right then ride to Les Thuiles.

Variant : At point 3, possibility of following MTB circuit n°3. After a long climb on a track leading to Grimaudés (1720 m), join a path for an awesome technical descent before getting back on the Alpes-Provence tour just before Les Thuiles (additional distance and elevation : 9 km – 500 m).

(4 : 8,5 km – 1105 m) At the entrance of the village, cross the road and go down towards the campground, follow the Ubaye river on the road then on a track on the opposite river bank for 5 km. The itinerary rejoins the road to Méolans near a bridge. From here, go up to the hamlet.

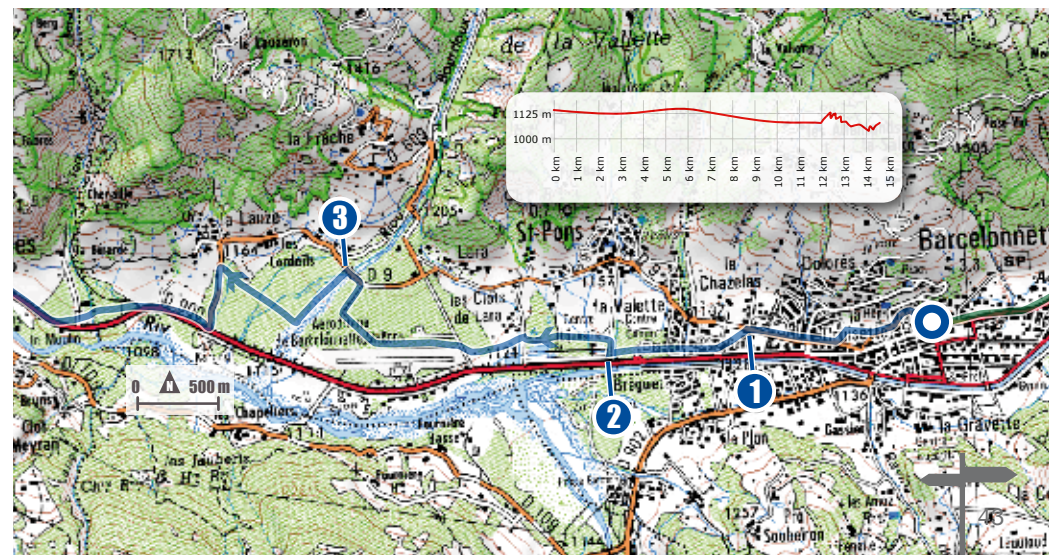


POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Barcelonnette and Mexican villas
- ✓ Tree trail, golf
- ✓ Water sports
- ✓ Méolans-Revel: Maison du Bois

SERVICES

- ✓ Barcelonnette : shops and services, tourism office, bike shops, bike repair station
- ✓ Les Thuiles : accomodation, catering
- ✓ Méolans-Revel : accomodation, catering



5. MÉOLANS - LE LAUZET-UBAYE

V4-

Distance **9 KM**
Duration **1H00**

D+/D- **250 M / 410 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V4- / BLEU**

Whereas the prior two sections were quite easy rides, this last section along the Ubaye river is hardcore. It mainly runs along a “never completed” railway track that was meant to connect Chorges to Barcelonnette. It'll take you twice on a forest path testing your technical and physical capabilities.

Section

(1079 m) Take the track towards Martinet. Exiting this hamlet, after the bridge crossing over the Riou de la Blanche, take the road on the far left that seems to be nothing more than an access road for an old house of railway style architecture. Go under a bridge; continue on the railway track.

(1: 3 km – 990 m) After a steep, but thankfully short-lived climb that leads above the disused tunnel, take a more rideable path that starts on the right. At the far end of the tunnel continue the descent as far as Champanastais.

(2: 5,3 km – 947 m) Enter the hamlet and after the bend, take a steep path on the right. Several technical passages until you reach Le Lauzet.

(3: 8,1 km – 905 m) Go around the hotel and the sport grounds and get back on the railway track overlooking the lake. After the second bridge, leave the track and go up on the left heading towards the houses alongside the RD900.

Variant : opportunity to continue the route to The Lac de Serre-Ponçon along the path of transubayenne (5 passages in tunnels, flashlight mandatory!). Length 15 km



POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Méolans-Revel: Maison du Bois
- ✓ Water sports
- ✓ Lauzet-Ubaye: little lake, Museum
- ✓ Serre-Ponçon: lake

SERVICES

- ✓ Méolans : accomodation, catering
- ✓ Lauzet Ubaye : accomodation, catering, little shops, information point



6. LE LAUZET-UBAYE - MONTCLAR

V3+

Distance **24 KM**
Duration **5H00**

D+/D- **1300 M / 890 M**
VTOPO/FFC **V3+ / NOIR**

Here's the hardest section of the Provence Alps "La Grande Traversée". It starts very low in the Ubaye valley on a path that'll put your heart rate right in the red! It continues with a long climb on both road and forest track then a last difficult climb until some high altitude lakes and the mountain pass Col Bas at 2113 m. Take in the amazing views of the beautiful countryside and reward yourself with the sweet track descent on a ski trail down to the ski resort at Montclar. A total downhill adrenaline rush!

Section

(921 m) Ride between the houses and start a steep climb on a path. Ignore the signed path on the right; the climb becomes easier before reaching a road. A bit further on, bear right, the tarred road ends at the old hamlet of Seuil. Continue the climb on the left. Ignore the track that appears on the right. Keep climbing for 3 km (going up 3 switchbacks) and go straight at the next junction.

(1: 10,4 km – 1735 m) The forest track ends, now the trail leading to an alpine pasture steeply climbs to the back of a small valley. At the exit of the forest from where you can see the ski lifts, turn before descending and follow the ridge ("portage" – you'll have to carry your bike). Back on the bike, just below the first lake of the upper Provence valley, rejoin the mountain pass Col Bas. Make sure you follow the waymarkers to avoid any danger zones.

(2: 14,7 km – 2113 m) At Col Bas, start the descent on a rocky track. Ignore an inclining trail shortly after the first hairpin bend. Above a huge parking area, continue the crossing straight towards the Plateau de la Chau. The track climbs with stunning views, then descends to the left towards the ski lifts on the Plateau de la Chau.

(3 : 19 km – 1944 m) Go to the Chau chairlift hangar and take the MTB blue downhill track arriving at the centre of the Montclar resort.

Variant : After the Col Bas, you could take the military track (MTB circuit n°7) and climb until the battery of Dormillouse, peaking at 2505 m (a high altitude restaurant is open in summer; exceptional panoramic views of the Alps and the Serre-Ponçon lake. (additional length and elevation gain: 5 km - 500 m)

POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ PLauzet-Ubaye: little lake, Museum
- ✓ Serre-Ponçon: lake
- ✓ Altitude lake of Col Bas
- ✓ Military Battery of Dormillouse
- ✓ paragliding
- ✓ downhill mountain biking of Montclar
- ✓ tree trail

SERVICES

- ✓ Lauzet-Ubaye : accommodation, catering, information point, little shops
- ✓ Montclar : shops, tourism office, bike shops, bike repair station

