

Barcelonnette / Valberg

Route des Grandes Alpes by bike



Départ
Barcelonnette

Arrivée
Valberg

Durée
5 h 00 min

Distance
76,19 Km

A lovely 77km-long stage that includes taking on the Col de la Cayolle pass (2326m), one of the wildest along the Route des Grandes Alpes®, on the border between the counties of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Alpes Maritimes. If cycling south, there's also the Col de Valberg pass (1671m) to climb, leading to Valberg itself, set in the Haut-Pays Niçois (part of Nice Métropole's soaring hinterland), a mountain resort that has kept its village feel and been awarded Flocon Vert status for its commitment to sustainable tourism. The landscapes are vast and unspoilt as you cross a portion of the Mercantour National Park; cyclists may be surprised by their austere openness and be tempted to dismount for a little walk. Going down the Val d'Entraunes following the Var River to Guillaumes is a pure delight.

Route North / South

↗ 2396m ↘ 1881m

From Barcelonnette, cycling for 30km, you climb 1283m, leading to the Col de la Cayolle pass, gateway to the Mercantour National Park. At the pass, you start descending southwards along a narrow road. You cross Entraunes and Saint-Martin-d'Entraunes before reaching Guillaumes, some 33km below the pass. Then comes the second difficult portion of this stage, tackling the Col de Valberg, along 13km on smooth surfaces, but involving a 882m shift in altitude, with gradients of 6.5% on average. Reaching the mountain resort of Valberg feels all the sweeter for the effort.

Route South / North

↗ 1881m ↘ 2396m

Enjoy the downhill thrill from the mountain resort of Valberg to Guillaumes. Then it's a 33km climb up the Val d'Entraunes to the Col de la Cayolle pass (2326m). The real challenge begins at Saint-Martin-d'Entraunes; in the ensuing 20km, you have to deal with a 1202m shift in altitude up to the pass. Say your goodbyes to Mercantour National Park as you enter the county of Alpes de Haute-Provence, starting your 30km descent to Barcelonnette.

Don't miss

- **Ubaye Valley:** Barcelonnette is the main settlement along a magnificent valley that's dotted with a dozen villages.
- **Val d'Entraunes:** beneath the Col de la Cayolle pass, a gateway to Mercantour National Park, remote from the rest of the world. This is the wildest valley in the county of Alpes Maritimes, with exceptional landscapes and four beautiful traditional villages: Entraunes, Saint-Martin-d'Entraunes, Villeneuve-d'Entraunes and the larger Guillaumes.
- **Mercantour National Park:** one of 11 French national parks and one of the most unspoilt – since 1992, wolves have crossed from Italy and settled in these parts. The park straddles the French counties of Alpes-Maritimes and Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and presents a very wide variety of landscapes, including Alpine mountains and Mediterranean touches.
- **Valberg:** a mountain resort on the edge of the Mercantour National Park offering many activities as well as glimpses of the Mediterranean. That's quite a mix!
- **Le Cians and Daluis Gorges:** nicknamed Nice's Colorado because of their red rocks. These two impressive canyons hold the Cians and Haut-Var Rivers, whose sources spring up in the Mercantour.

