

Thonon-les-Bains / Cluses

Route des Grandes Alpes by bike



Départ
Thonon-les-Bains

Arrivée
Cluses

Durée
3 h 49 min

Distance
57,75 Km

Niveau
Difficult

This, the first or last stage on the Route des Grandes Alpes®, depending on the direction in which you tackle the route, leaves from or ends at Thonon-les-Bains, a resort on the south bank of Lake Geneva, one of Europe's largest natural lakes, with its French Riviera feel. This stage takes you via gorges, wooded slopes, Alpine pasturelands and extremely beautiful villages, offering a stunning way through the north of the county of Haute-Savoie, between the Chablais Range and the Arve Valley. Note that Thonon-les-Bains is the starting point for several major Alpine routes, as well as for the second stage of the ViaRhôna cycle route linking Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean.

From Lake Geneva to Cluses via Morzine and the Col des Gets Pass

Route North / South

↗ 1072m ↘ 1012m

From Thonon-les-Bains, you enter the Chablais Range and climb up the Dranse Gorges, the views opening out, the first Alpine meadows appearing. After Saint-Jean-d'Aulps, Montriond Lake (a short detour away, worth making) and Morzine, you cross the Col des Gets pass (1163m), perfect for warming up your calf muscles! Cross the village of Les Gets, then descend towards Taninges. There's a final rise at Châtillon-sur-Cluses before you ride down to Cluses and the Arve Valley.

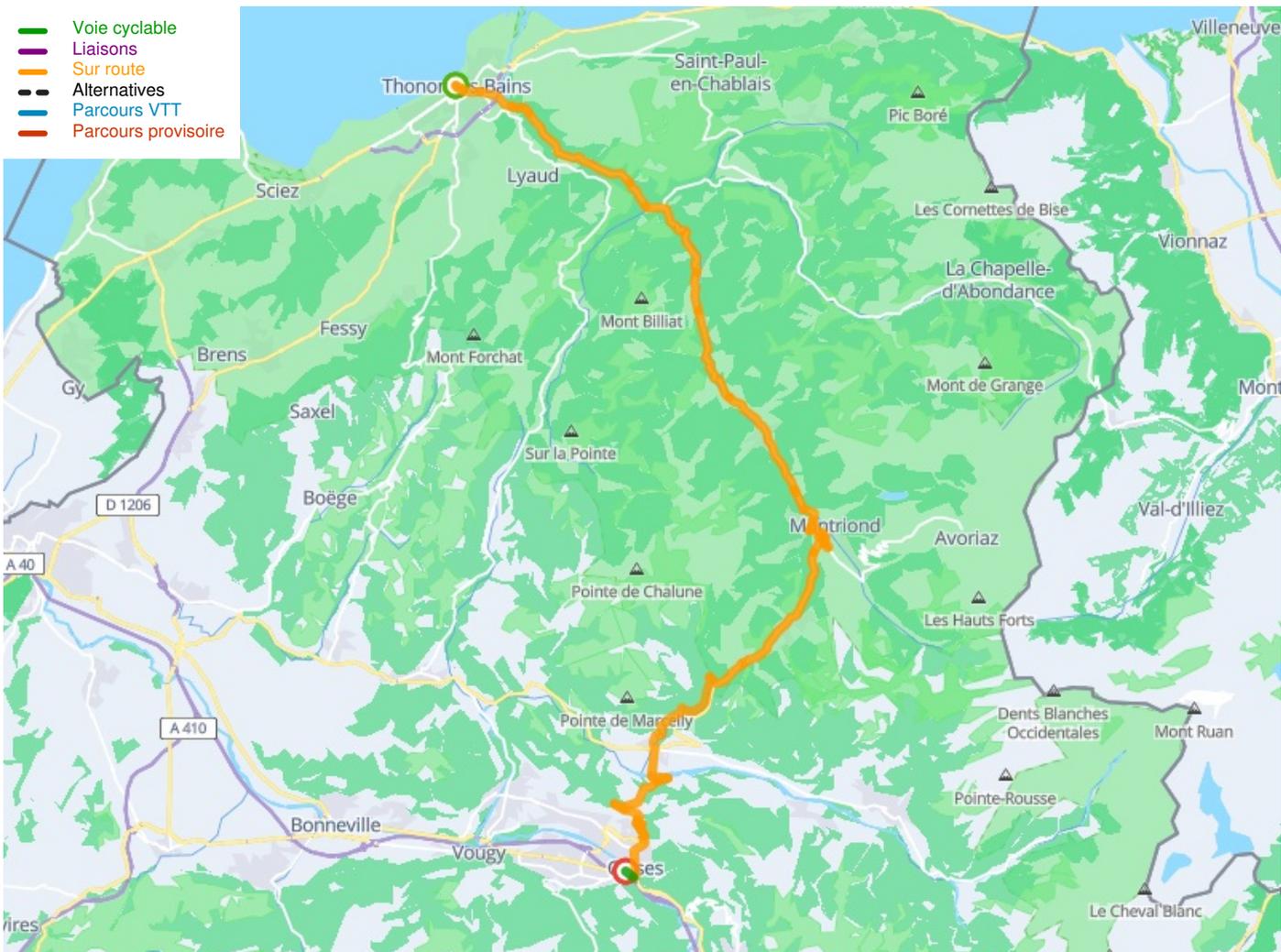
Route South / North

↗ 1012m ↘ 1072m

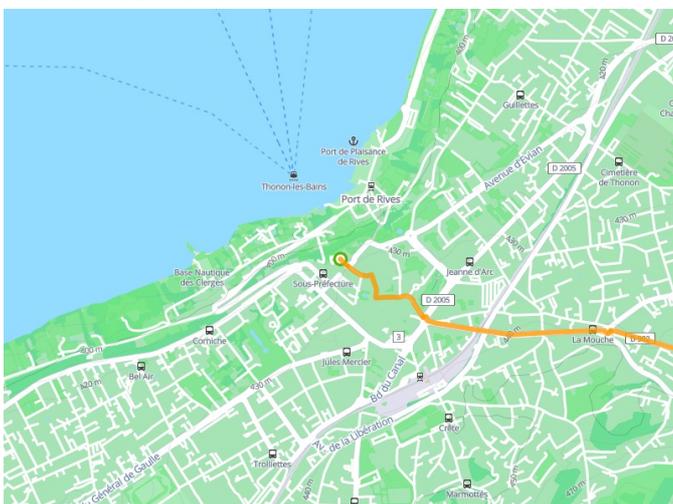
Leaving Cluses and the Arve Valley, the route climbs at first, before redescending briefly to Taninges. After the village of Les Gets, time to tackle the Col des Gets pass (1163m), the last major obstacle along the Route des Grandes Alpes®. The descent towards Thonon-les-Bains and Lake Geneva takes you via Morzine and Saint-Jean d'Aulps. After passing through Alpine meadows, the landscapes narrow as you enter the Dranse Gorges, their sides a mix of great natural walls of rock and wooded slopes. After Morzine, do consider the short detour to Montriond Lake.

Don't miss

- **Thonon-les-Bains:** the Château de Ripaille; the lakeside port; La Visitation cultural centre; the Musée du Chablais; Saint-François-de-Sales Basilica...
- **The Kilometre O marker:** in front of Thonon-les-Bains Tourist Office. This marks the starting point of several major Alpine routes: the Route des Grandes Alpes® (for bikes, motorbikes and cars); the Chemins du Soleil (for mountain bikes); the Petites Routes du Soleil (for bikes); and the Grande Traversée des Alpes via the GR5 (a French national hiking path).
- **The Pont du Diable Gorges:** midway between Thonon-les-Bains and Morzine, in the Chablais Global Geopark, these gorges provide an extraordinary demonstration of the power of erosion, which has carved out the fantastical natural setting here. There's a walking track through them lasting c.40 mins.



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