

Lafrançaise / Montech

La Vagabonde

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Départ
Lafrançaise**Arrivée**
Montech**Durée**
1 h 17 min**Distance**
32,76 Km**Niveau**
I cycle often**Thématique**
In the vineyards

Leaving behind the medieval bastide town of Lafrançaise on its promontory, La Vagabonde cycle route leads you across the Aveyron River via the submersible ford at Piquecos. You then ride through orchards stretching across the Tarn Plain. Montauban, designated a Ville d'Art et d'Histoire for its cultural riches, is one of the best-preserved, most significant of the grid-plan bastides, or "new towns", built across southwest France in medieval times. It's a great place for cyclists to enjoy a rest. Montauban is known as southwest France's second "ville rose" ("pink city") after the regional capital, Toulouse. Pink to ruddy brick dominates in town, notably around the renowned main square, Place Nationale. Pink dominates too in the rooftiles of the fine merchants' homes built on the back of the long-thriving regional trade in woad, for making blue dye. Also in the distinctive local brick, seek out the Église Saint-Jacques, the historic Collège, and the fine arts museum, the Musée Ingres Bourdelle, as well as admiring the Pont Vieux, the main bridge over the Tarn River. From Montauban, the cycle route proves untaxing, following the Canal de Montech. One curiosity at the end is the Montech Canal's inclined plane, an engineering feat operating on cables, built to transport barges mechanically up and down a 13m drop, replacing the previous system of five locks in a row. A trail dotted with surprises guides you to the Machine, or engine room, for the inclined plane, plus there's a barge turned immersive, playful exhibition space.

The Route

Enjoy the descent from Lafrançaise and the crossing of the Aveyron River via the Piquecos ford – if the river is in spate, an alternative route is proposed! Cross the town of Montauban via the signposted roads (following signposting for the Canal des Deux Mers à Vélo / La Vagabonde cycle routes) and cross the Tarn River via the Pont de Sapiac bridge. On the southern edge of Montauban, you come to the Port-Canal at the eastern end of the Canal de Montech. From here, a greenway beside the canal leads to the southern endpoint of this cycle route, the town of Montech.

Practical information

Tourist offices

[Offices de tourisme du Pays de Lafrançaise](#) 12 Place de la République 82130 Lafrançaise - 05 63 65 91 10

[Office de tourisme du Grand Montauban](#) 4 rue du Collège 82000 Montauban - 05 63 63 60 60

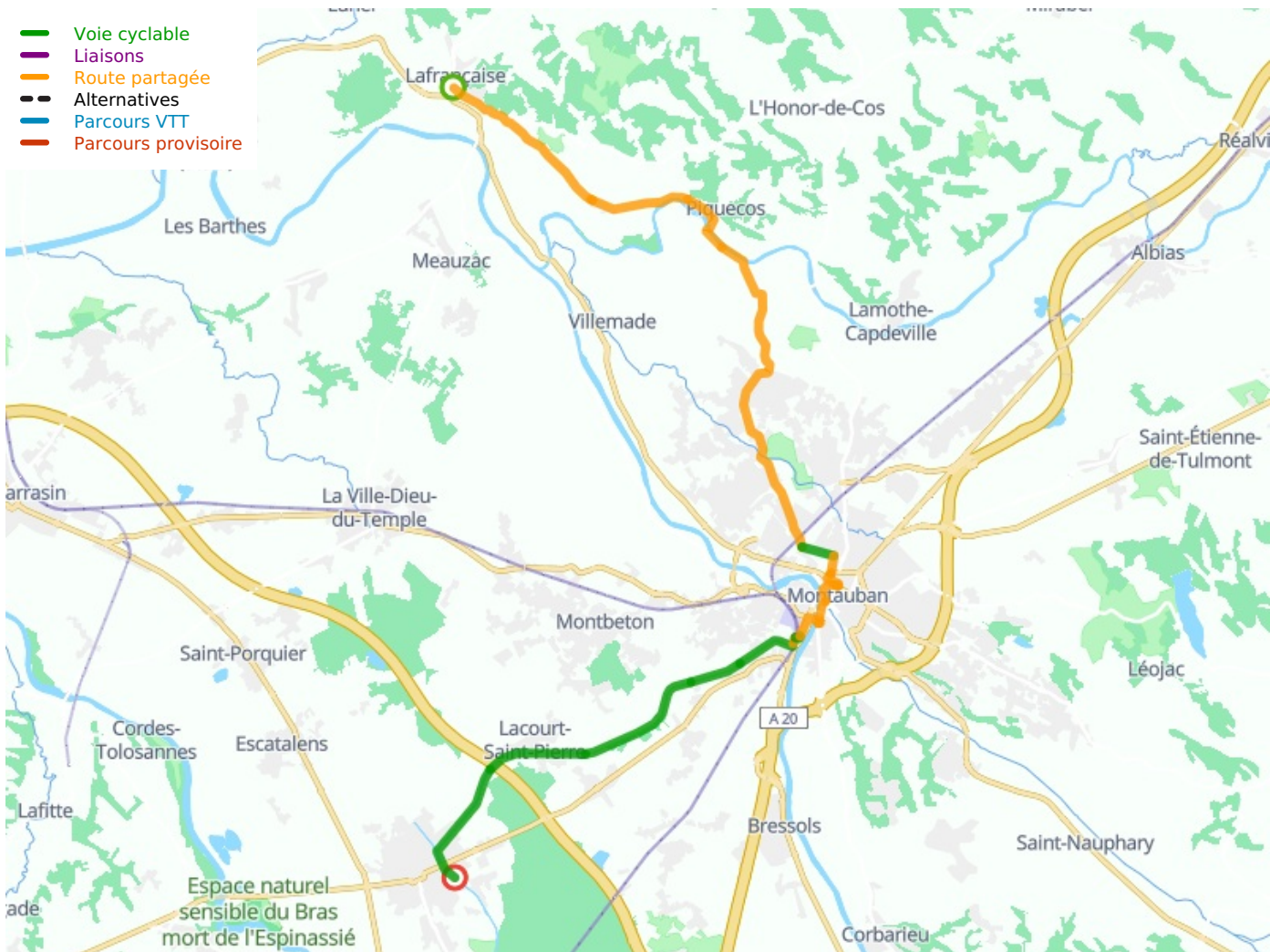
[Office de tourisme Grand Sud Tarn-et-Garonne](#) 21 rue de l'usine 82700 MONTECH - 05 63 64 16 32

Don't miss

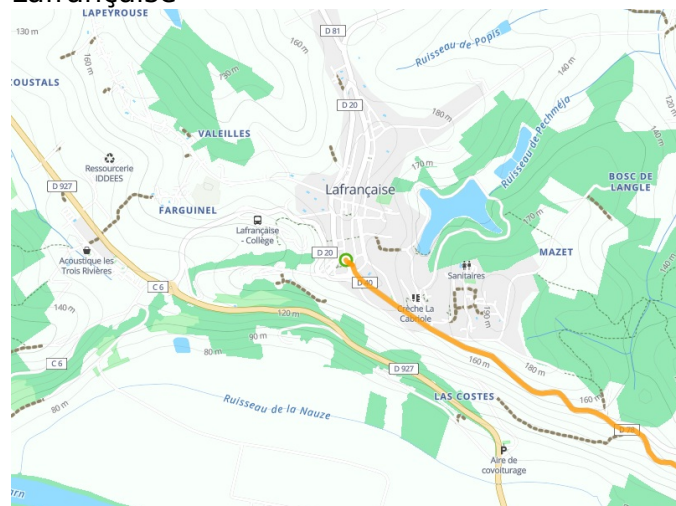
- **Piquecos:** the ford here has been created in a magical natural setting and its submersible path allows you to ride over the Aveyron River without getting wet... most of the time.
- **Montauban, ville d'art et d'histoire:** one of the best preserved of the bastide grid-plan "new towns" built across southwest France in such numbers in medieval times, hence the rich architecture, plus many artists have left their

mark on the town and its museums.

- **Montech:** the canal's inclined plane here is a remarkable piece of engineering, put into service in 1974 to shift barges up and down the slope, but closed to navigation in 2009; however, a museum space has now been opened in an old Freycinet barge, enabling you to learn all about the secrets of this engineering marvel.



Départ Lafrançaise



Arrivée Montech

