Alternative stage Guillestre / Barcelonnette

Route des Grandes Alpes® by bike

Départ
Guillestre

Arrivée
Barcelonnette

Durée
4 h 58 min

Distance
78,15 Km

Niveau
I cycle a lot

Thématique
Mountains

This alternative stage takes you from the Route des Grandes Alpes® to Serre-Ponçon Lake… a stage leading to the possibility of a swim, as there are numerous beaches dotted around the lake! Further delights include: the pretty historic town of Embrun, famed for its XXL triathlon; the curious geological formations known as the Demoiselles Coiffées, like behatted figures; Serre-Ponçon Dam; the Ubaye Valley’s villages; and the town of Barcelonnette with its Mexican villas. On this friendly stage you don’t have to worry about tackling any significant climbs!

From Guillestre to Barcelonnette via Serre-Ponçon Lake

Route North / South

↗ 861m ↘ 731m

Leaving Guillestre, it’s 17km to Embrun, then descend to Serre-Ponçon Lake. Between Saint-Clément-sur Durance and Embrun, we recommend the route via Saint-André-d'Embrun, which is calmer than the main road. At Savines-le-Lac, leave to your right the big bridge across the lake, continuing in the direction of Barcelonnette. There’s a sizeable rise up to Sauze-du-Lac before you ride alongside the horn-shaped end of Serre Ponçon Lake and enter the Ubaye Valley at Le Lauzet-d’Ubaye. Villages line the way to Barcelonnette, the town at the end of a 75km-long stage that really doesn’t present any major difficulties. There is the option to cut off a corner, going from the pretty village of Pontis, a few km from Savines-le-Lac, across to Église-d’Ubaye, almost at the end of the lake, taking you along a very pretty stretch that includes a bit of a climb to spice up the day’s cycling!

Route South / North

↗ 731m ↘ 861m

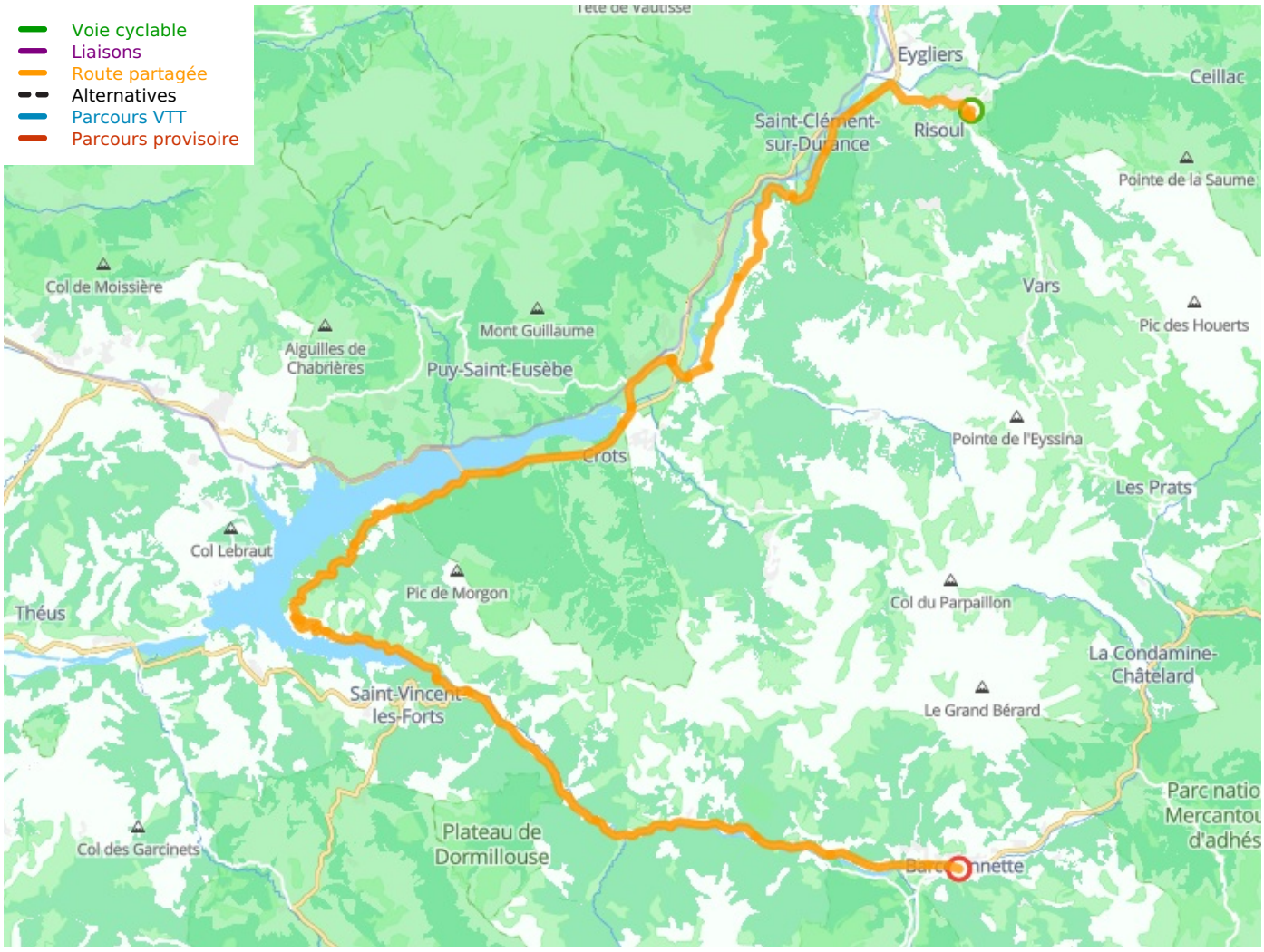
Leaving Barcelonnette, you cross a string of pretty villages, following the Ubaye River to its confluence with Serre-Ponçon Lake, just after Le Lauzet-d’Ubaye. Then follow the lakeside along its horn-shaped end. After a sizeable rise, cross Le Sauze-du-Lac to arrive at Savines-le-Lac, where you leave to your left the big bridge across the lake. There is an alternative stretch via which you can cut off a corner, going from Église-d’Ubaye, nearly at the end of the lake, over to the pretty village of Pontis, a few km from Savines-le-Lac; this is a very pretty stretch, involving a climb to spice up the day’s cycling! Next, head up to the town of Embrun, which you cross to continue on to Guillestre, 17km on, completing a 75km stage that shouldn’t present you with any major difficulties. Between Embrun and Saint-Clément-sur Durance, we do recommend the road via Saint-André-d'Embrun, as it’s quieter than the main road.

Don’t miss

- **Guillestre and the Queyras:** the lovely little

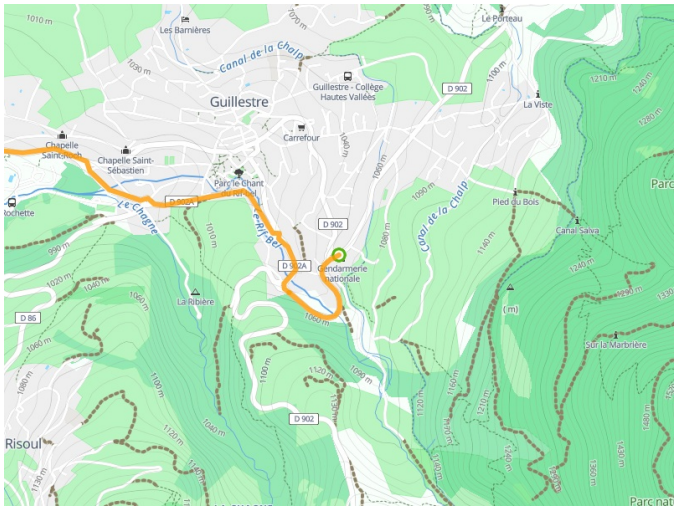
town of Guillestre acts as the gateway to the Queyras's traditional villages, the great mountain of Monte Viso a dominating presence just on the Italian side of the border.

- **Serre-Ponçon Lake and Dam:** this is the second-largest artificial dam in Europe, one of the great post-war dams built to hold back the waters of the mighty Durance River. Its construction inspired Jean Giono's novel, Hortense ou l'Eau vive, followed by a film (entitled The Girl and the River in English), plus a famous song by French singer-composer Guy Béart (father of actress Emanuelle Béart).
- **The Demoiselles Coiffées:** geological curiosities, a distinguishing feature of the Durance Valley, sometimes nicknamed ''fairies' chimneys'', the natural stone monoliths topped by what look like stone hats.
- **Ubaye:** discover the town of Barcelonnette, plus a dozen villages including Jausiers, Enchastrayes and Saint-Paul-sur-Ubaye, close to the lively waters of the Ubaye River.



Départ

Guillestre



Arrivée

Barcelonnette