

# Blandas / La Couvertoirade

## The Grande Traversée du Massif Central by mountain bike

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**Départ**  
Blandas

**Arrivée**  
La Couvertoirade

**Durée**  
2 h 32 min

**Distance**  
38,67 Km

**Niveau**  
I cycle a lot

**Thématique**  
Nature & small heritage

Linking Blandas, Vissec and Alzon, the Vis Valley was once an important way, in centuries past. Here, where three Causses meet – those of Blandas, Campestre and Le Larzac – take in their typical arid, rocky terrain. You enter the French county of Aveyron via the Col de la Barrière and the village of Sauclières with its cobbled streets known as calades. Following the GTMC, you climb up, via a former railway line, to the Larzac Plateau, at the heart of the Parc Naturel Régional des Grands Causses, the landscapes here part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site covering the Causses and Cévennes. Passing via the height of Le Puech du Bassel (at 916m), enjoy the 360° view on offer. Finally, you arrive at La Couvertoirade, once a Knights Templar, then a Knights Hospitaller stronghold, now a village that is part of the association Les Plus Beaux Villages de France!

### The route

Go down to the Belvédère de Blandas to admire the view of the tremendous Cirque de Navacelles meander. Then follow the Vis Gorges as far as Vissec. Next, prepare for a 2km-climb along a stony path. The view across the Causse de Campestre makes it all worthwhile. Descend via a lightly wooded stretch to the village of Alzon, then make for the Col de la Barrière. It's at this point that you leave behind the county of Gard. The first tracks through the county of Aveyron prove easy. Past the village of Sauclières, following a former railway track with more of a slope than might appear, you reach Le Larzac, with its rocky landscape. There's just a short, steep section that may make you strain. Once on the Larzac Plateau, the broad paths and technical singletracks are a joy for mountain bikers. Take care crossing the cattle grids and 'natural' steps that require good bike control.

