

Foix / Mirepoix

The Vélosud



Départ
Foix

Arrivée
Mirepoix

Durée
3 h 08 min

Distance
47,21 Km

Niveau
I cycle often

Thématique
Mountains, Canals &
intimate rivers, Nature
& small heritage

This second stage in a row fully within the département (French county) of Ariège guides you from the little county capital of Foix to the historic bastide town of Mirepoix, but avoiding the shifts in altitude involved were you to tackle the famed Cathar strongholds of Roquefixade and Montségur. The Vélosud cycle route, in order to do this, sticks to the banks of the Ariège River and the surrounding plain. You get across the geological barrier presented by the Plantaurel foothills, running parallel to the high Pyrenees in the county of Ariège, with minimal effort and can then ride on through the wide, open spaces of Varilhes and Pamiers, where the Ariège River takes its time, moving languidly in broad meanders. The town of Pamiers offers a lovely place to enjoy a heritage pause, before the cycle route branches off east to lead you on into the next, more rustic valley, the natural corridor of the Hers Valley. A well-laid-out cycle path guides riders from one hamlet or village to the next, with delightful discoveries to unearth along the way. Then you make your grand entrance into the splendid medieval town of Mirepoix, in almost knightly style on your bike!

The route

You have to cross a relatively densely populated, busy zone between Foix and Pamiers, but the cycle route guides you via a fairly relaxing corridor of ways, opting for a mix of thoughtfully chosen stretches, some with provisions for cyclists, others on minor roads shared with motorized traffic, others still on farm tracks, ensuring some tranquillity. Also note that further provisions for cyclists are being put in place as we write.

After the town of Pamiers, you ride along easy earth tracks that form part of the GR®78 national hiking path to then join the converted former railway line linking Pamiers and Mirepoix, now a greenway with a rough surface, taking you virtually the whole way to Mirepoix, except for a final stretch on road shared with motorized traffic to enter this medieval town.

Points at which to take care:

- At Verniolle, the crossing of the round-about on the D12 road should be approached with caution.
- At Pamiers, negotiating the crossroads with the Route de Mirepoix, which can be very busy, take care; also, at a crossroads in an area with shopping outlets, where you may require patience, as well as caution.
- At Mirepoix: you need to go practically all the way around the round-about at the entrance to town, so take this carefully, or then stick to the pavement on the left-hand side of the round-about.

Practical information

- [Office de Tourisme de Foix](#)
- [Office de Tourisme Portes d'Ariège Pyrénées \(Pamiers\)](#)
- [Office de Tourisme de Mirepoix](#)

Transports

SNCF French National Railways train stations

- Gare SNCF de Foix: regional TER Occitanie trains (you can transport your bike for free on these), the stop being on the Toulouse-Latour de Carol line.
- Gare SNCF de Pamiers: stop on the Toulouse-Latour de Carol line, giving access to the V81 cycle route mid-way through the stage (or then you could leave it from here for Toulouse).

BUS services

- LiO regional bus network, connecting Foix to Pamiers via [line 453](#).
- LiO regional bus network, connecting Pamiers to Mirepoix via [line 450](#).
<https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

Don't miss

- **Varilhes:** the Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation en Ariège, recalling the difficulties of life for people in the county of Ariège during World War II.
- **Pamiers:** for a cultural pause in the middle of the day, ride into the centre of town (from the train station, go via Avenue Tournissa, then take a left along Rue Soulié) and get nourishment from the heritage to discover, as well as from the food shops and restaurants, before continuing along the Vélosud.
- **Saint-Amadou:** in order to secure drinking water for the village, in the 19th century, it was decided to capture and, most importantly, store water from a spring on the edge of the Hers Valley, the architect in charge combining form and function, designing a green roof for the reservoir to ensure the water's cleanliness and freshness, thus demonstrating thinking well ahead of his time!
- **Vals:** with a country church for which, to enter, you need to pass through a cleft between two massive rocks, while the crypt was laid out within the rock, making for an extraordinary troglodytic surprise. To reach this church, you need to follow a road indicated to the left for 2km (the place is just a short way from the Vélosud / V81 cycle route).

Cyclists' special address: Velocidade, in Mirepoix, produces bicycle paniers made in Mirepoix, Ariège, France!

These specialist bicycle bags are designed and hand-made at a workshop in Mirepoix (6 Rue Astronome Vidal) and are environmentally friendly.

<https://ateliervelocidade.com/>

