

Lannemezan / Saint-Gaudens

The Vélosud



Départ
Lannemezan

Arrivée
Saint-Gaudens

Durée
4 h 09 min

Distance
62,50 Km

Niveau
I cycle often

Thématique
Mountains, Canals &
intimate rivers

On this stage of the Vélosud cycle route, you ride into the valley of the Neste, a river that has raced down from the mountains above the Aure and Louron Valleys. The Vélosud takes you on an undulating path through wooded foothills. The reward for some quite demanding climbs is to be able to visit a series of peaceful villages. The Neste and the cycle route end up by joining the Garonne, the iconic major river fed by the northern Pyrenees, at the border of the département (French county) of Haute-Garonne. After passing very close to the Grotte des Gargas, natural caves revealing traces of human occupation in prehistoric times, you can also explore the Roman ruins and the majestic cathedral at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges. In these parts so marked by constructions recalling the layers of civilization in the Pyrenees, it's interesting to note that you're pretty much at the halfway point along the V81 cycle route, equidistant between Atlantic and Mediterranean. All told, this is a stage to lift the spirits, and you finish the day on the north bank of the Garonne, going up to the promontory on which the town of Saint-Gaudens stands out.

The route

This stage is entirely on roads shared with motorized vehicles, but traffic is usually light. There are just a few stretches dedicated to cyclists in the département of Haute-Garonne, in order to make crossroads or junctions safer. Always take care, especially on the stretch from Aventignan to Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, which does get busy in the summer tourist season.

The route is signposted as the V81 up to Aventignan, but after that it's signposted as the "parcours cyclable de la Garonne", as you ride from Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges to Saint-Gaudens.

Points at which to take care:

- At Lannemezan, crossing the D929 road, which is straight and fast, so take care.
- At Aventignan, the cycle route leads you along the D26 road for 6.5km (without any special provisions for cyclists) and this road is busy in the summer season, cars sometimes going quite fast.
- At Labroquère, along the D825 road, you enter the village via a left turn to approach with care.
- At Saint-Gaudens, you have to ride along the D921 road for a stretch of 200m (taking the southern bypass), then take care turning left to branch onto Boulevard Gambetta.

Links to further cycle routes

At Valcabrère (Km 37.8), it's possible to carry straight on along the *Trans-Garona*, the cycle trail along the Garonne, towards Cierp-Gaup, Saint-Béat and Le Val d'Aran, and eventually to connect up with the *Route des Cols* at Saint-Béat, to take on the high Pyrenean passes.

Practical information

- [Office de Tourisme de Lannemezan](#)
- [Point info tourisme de Saint-Bertrand-de-](#)

Comminges

- [Office de Tourisme de Saint-Gaudens](#)

Transports

SNCF French National Railways train stations

- Gare SNCF de Lannemezan railway station: regional TER Occitanie trains (you can take your bike on board for free), on the Toulouse-Tarbes line.
- Gare SNCF de Gourdan-Polignan (Montréjeau) railway station: regional TER Occitanie trains (you can take your bike on board for free), on the Toulouse-Tarbes line, and close to Kilometre 49.3 on this stage (parish of Huos).
- Gare SNCF de Saint-Gaudens railway station: Intercités trains; and regional TER Occitanie trains (on the latter, you can take your bike on board for free) on the Toulouse-Tarbes line, and directly giving onto the V81 cycle route.

BUS services

- LiO regional bus network, linking Valcabrère and Saint-Gaudens via line 394.
<https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

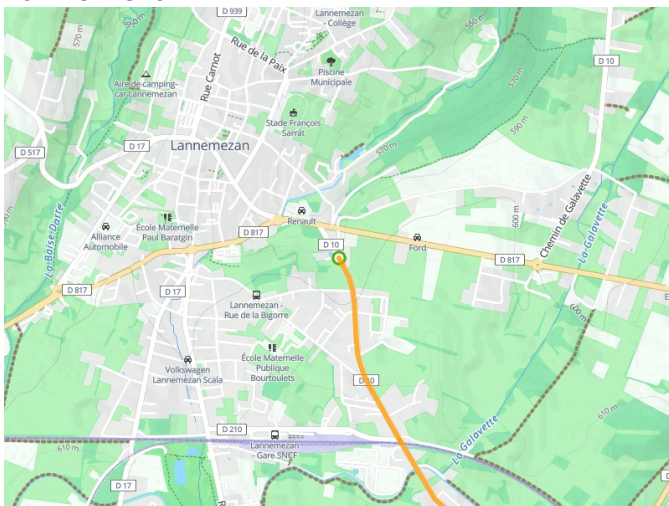
Don't miss

- **Canal de la Neste:** within a 200m stretch, the cycle route twice passes over the Canal de la Neste, a bold engineering project undertaken in the mid-19th century, serving to regulate the flow of a series of rivers in Gascony (along the right / north bank of the Garonne).
- **Gargas:** Grottes de Gargas, with cave paintings and engravings dating back to the Upper Paleolithic, plus the Centre Numérique et Préhistorique Nestplori@, a visitor centre that focuses on prehistoric culture in these parts.
- **Avantignan:** the nearest town on the Vélosud to the Grottes de Gargas and the Centre Numérique et Préhistorique Nestplori@, taking you such a long way back into humanity's past.
- **Saint-Bertrand de Comminges:** the cathedral; Roman vestiges of Saint-Bertrand, with, just left of a crossroads, the ruins of a Roman villa dating as far back as 72BC, as Roman general Pompey, returning from victorious campaigning in Spain, gathered many of the Convenes tribe in this spot, founding the town of Lugdunum Convenae.
- **Saint-Just de Valcabrère:** at a bit of a distance from the village, at a junction of major routes, the Romanesque Basilica of Saint-Just de Valcabrère offers an interesting counterpoint to the nearby great church at Saint-Bertrand de Comminges.
- **Saint-Gaudens:** standing between the lively square, Place du Marché, and the many central restaurant terraces, the 11th-century church of Saint-Pierre is another masterpiece of Romanesque architecture, here in the very heart town, with fine arches and carved capitals to admire, while on the outside, spot an ancient Christian symbol on the north porch, plus the impressive tower boasting 36 bells. There's a viewing point nearby from which you can enjoy splendid vistas of the Pyrenees.

Cyclists' special address: L'Estapa, in Saint-Gaudens, opposite the station, with cyclists' café, shop and workshop.



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