

Orthez / Pau

The Vélosud



Départ
Orthez

Arrivée
Pau

Durée
3 h 38 min

Distance
55,00 Km

Niveau
I cycle often

Thématique
Canals & intimate rivers

You spend this entire day's cycling along the Valley of the Gave de Pau (the way involving some of this river's tributaries too), going from one capital of the old province of Béarn to another, so from Orthez, the historic capital, to Pau, the modern one, the latter capital of the département (French county) of Pyrénées-Atlantiques. This part of the cycle route brings to mind historic knightly cavalcades led by the powerful viscounts of Béarn in medieval times. First, you cross a rural section, riding to the little town of Mourenx via Biron's lacs des barthes (polder lakes) and the tranquil Geu Valley. Next, you cycle peacefully along the banks of the Gave de Pau. This stretch of the cycle route offers a mix of greenway beside the river and detours via the villages of Tarsacq, Arbus and Artiguelouve, leading you closer to Pau without any particular difficulty. Then, thanks to an unbroken, segregated cycle way following the river's banks and going through public gardens, your arrival in the county's headquarters proves surprisingly serene. Reaching the faubourgs de Jurançon, in the outskirts, you're suddenly afforded a splendid view of the Château de Pau - the town's historic, once royal, centre is within easy reach from here.

The route

Between Orthez and Lagor, the first 20km are mainly along roads shared with motorized traffic, but using a secondary network of roads with little to very little traffic. Crossing the small town of Mourenx requires more concentration, for some 4km, as you ride along a county road and along urban streets (although these are provided with cycle lanes). The second half of this stage is once again along minor roads, allowing you to cross the industrial zone at Marsillon-Pardies quite easily before coming to the villages dotted along the Gave de Pau Valley. The stage does end with a dedicated greenway running beside the river, its surface in parts smooth, in parts rough, but you'll find the path into Pau really comfortable, keeping you well away from any busy traffic.

Points at which to take care:

- At Orthez, leaving town, you need to keep to the edge of the round-about on the D9 road to then continue along the cycle lane.
Between Lagor and Mourenx: expect heavy traffic along the D9 road from Lagor to Mourenx. Take care on the rapid descent into the centre of Mourenx. At Mourenx, on the D281 road, note the left-hand turn to be approached with caution (to cross the D281) to then continue riding along Rue de Lannes.
- At Os-Marsillon: crossing the D33 road, you may need to be patient at times, as traffic can be very busy on this road.
Along the D281 road, make sure you stick closely to the lay-out for cyclists to follow this road along the left-hand side for a stretch, before crossing it.
- At Laroin-Billère, bridge over the Gave de Pau River: make sure you stay on the pavement as you cross the bridge, so to the side of the D834 road, to get to the other riverbank.
- At Jurançon: take care crossing the Rue du 14

Juillet, to get onto the bridge on the left-hand side to use the cycle lane leading into central Pau (or then continue to the right on the V81 cycle route heading towards Gelos).

Practical information

- [Office de Tourisme de Orthez](#)
- [Office de Tourisme de Pau](#)

Transports

SNCF

- Gare SNCF de Orthez railway station: high-speed TGV trains (line Bordeaux- Lourdes-Tarbes); Intercités trains; and regional TER Nouvelle-Aquitaine trains (on these last you can take your bike onboard for free).
- Gare SNCF de Pau railway station: high-speed TGV trains (line Bordeaux-Lourdes-Tarbes); Intercités trains; and regional TER Nouvelle-Aquitaine trains (on these last you can take your bike onboard for free).

Bus

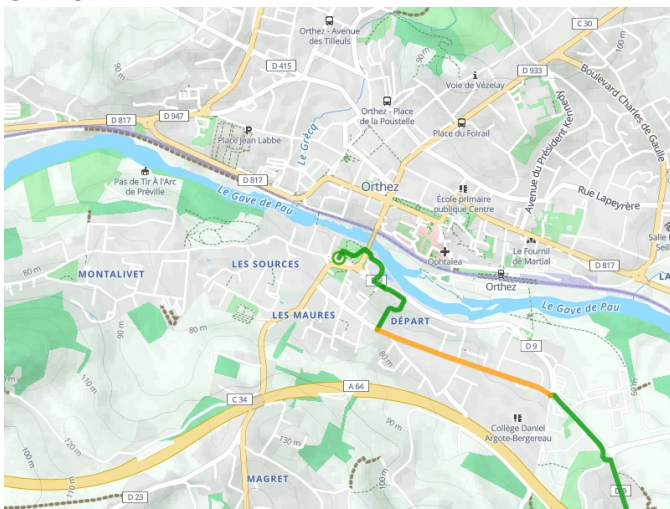
- Nouvelle Aquitaine regional bus network, [line 520](#), from Orthez (gare / railway station) to Pau (gare / railway station).

Don't miss

- **Orthez:** la Maison Jeanne d'Albret, a 15th-century wealthy merchant's house.
- **Biron:** the Barthes de Biron, local polders, dominated by the silhouette of the Château de Brassalay, while the Plans d'eau des Barthes de Biron (a series of lakes) spread across a former gravel quarry and are fed from the water table below.
- **Mourenx:** a new town that was developed from the 1960s to meet the demands of new industry, notably gas extraction around Lacq.
- **Gave de Pau River:** the source of this river is up at the sensational cliff-lined Cirque de Gavarnie in the heights of the county of Hautes-Pyrénées, while the river itself crosses the whole département (French county) of Pyrénées-Atlantiques, after 193km throwing itself into the Adour, of which it's a major tributary, close to French Basque Country.
- **Artiguelouve and the Jurançon terroir:** the historic village of Artiguelouve became a defensive stronghold for the viscounts of Béarn, as evidenced by the ruins of a former castle. It also stands at the junction between the Vélosud cycle route and the GR653 national hiking trail (on the Santiago de Compostela trail - or Chemin de Saint-Jacques - connecting Arles to the Col du Somport pass, this specific pilgrimage route also known as the Via Tolosana). Here, you also enter the area where renowned AOC de Jurançon wines are produced.



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