

# Pau / Lourdes

## The Vélosud



**Départ**  
Pau

**Arrivée**  
Lourdes

**Durée**  
3 h 20 min

**Distance**  
49,85 Km

**Niveau**  
I cycle often

**Thématique**  
Canals & intimate rivers

Guiding you from Pau to Lourdes, and from the old province of Béarn to that of Bigorre, the Vélosud cycle route sticks to the banks of the Gave de Pau River, as you'll have noted, a major mountain torrent that starts up in the high mountains around Gavarnie. The way out of Pau offers some 10km of refreshing cycling, following the river's trail. Riding on through fertile plains, you soon arrive at Nay, a charming medieval grid-plan little bastide town that's been designated a Cité de Caractère for its attractions... which include a midday pause for cyclists! You then cross from one département (French county) to another, from the Pyrénées-Atlantiques to the Hautes-Pyrénées, spotting the typical Béarn architecture at Lestelle, then the Bigorre style evident at Saint-Pé. Plus, there are the subterranean treasures of the Grottes de Bétharram to explore. Finally, you'll feel the pull of some minor slopes as you approach Lourdes, a magnet for visitors from around the globe.

### The route

To exit the sprawling town of Pau, you ride along a dedicated, easy, gentle cycle path, following the Gave de Pau River. Then it's a mix of secondary roads and cycle paths, taking you across a fertile plain to the little grid-plan bastide town of Nay. Next, entering the county of Hautes-Pyrénées, you continue from one village to the next on roads shared with motorized traffic, with a few short stretches laid out for bikes beside the Gave. A final section of undulating road guides you through forests at the foot of the mountains. You enter Lourdes via the Quartier des Sanctuaires to head into the streets of the town centre.

### Points at which to take care:

- At Pont d'Assat: take care crossing the D437 road, then riding alongside the D37 road for 1.6km, up to Baliros.
- At Igon: crossing the D35, remain alert as some traffic takes the bend here fast.
- In Lourdes: you use roads shared with motorized traffic from the Quartier des Sanctuaires, but also take care as pedestrian crowds can be considerable. The stage finishes in the streets of the town centre (some are indicated as forming part of a one-way system for cars, but cyclists are exempt), without any cycle lanes specifically for bikes.

### Link to a further cycle route

In Lourdes, in the upper part of town, the Haute Ville, as the road opens out onto Avenue Maréchal Foch, you come to a junction with the Voie Verte des Gaves, a greenway that guides riders south towards Argelès-Gazost (12km from Lourdes), as well as the valleys of Gavarnie. This offers a good way to reach the famed Pyrenean Route des Cols, to take on a whole series of renowned Pyrenean passes, including Soulor, Hautacam, Luz-Ardiden and Tourmalet.

### Practical information

- [Office de Tourisme de Pau Pyrénées](#)
- [Office de Tourisme du Pays de Nay](#)

- [Office de Tourisme de Lourdes](#)

## Transports

### SNCF

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

### BUS services

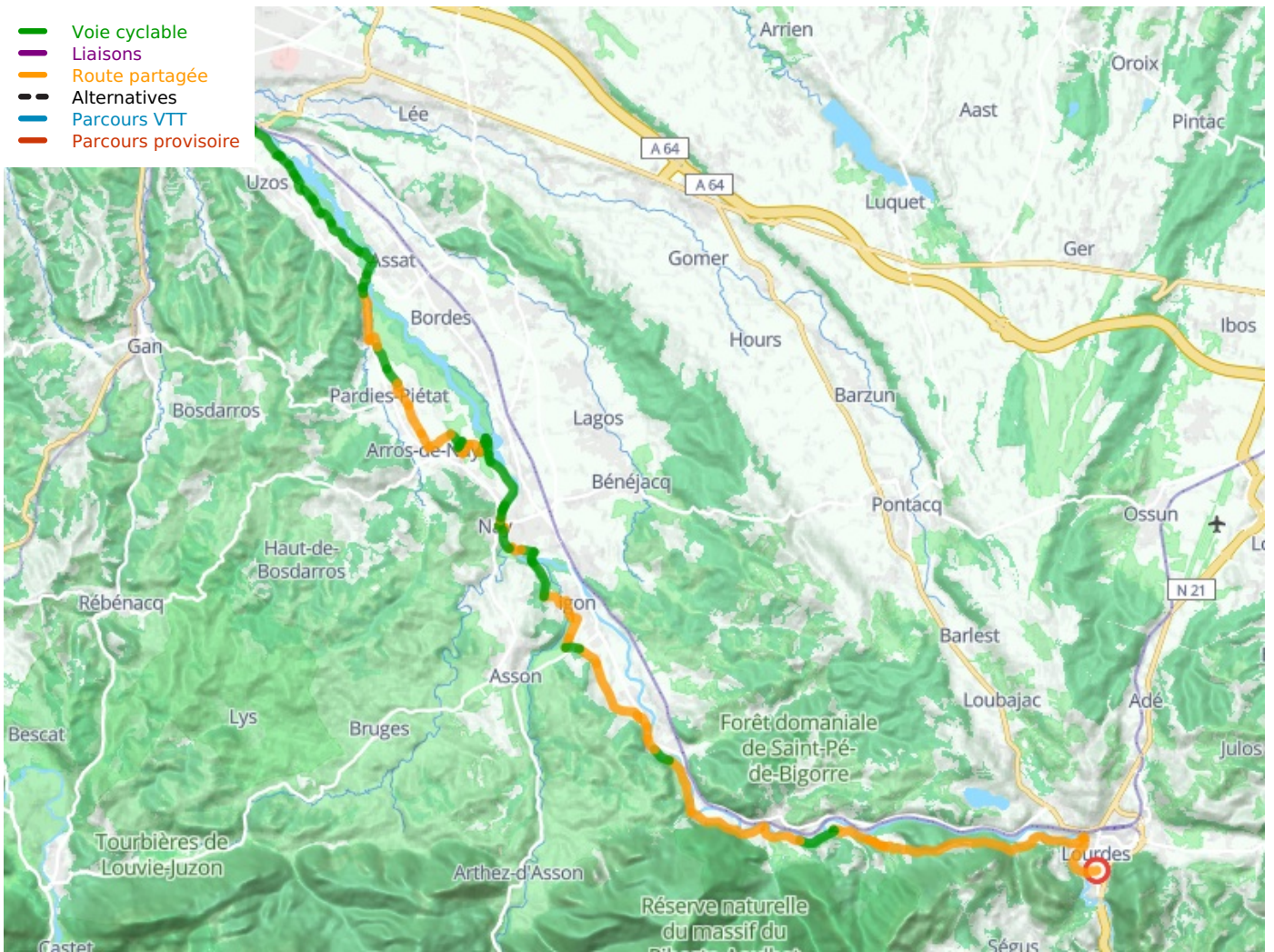
- Nouvelle Aquitaine regional bus network, [line 535](#), from Pau (gare / railway station) to Lourdes (gare / railway station)

## Don't miss

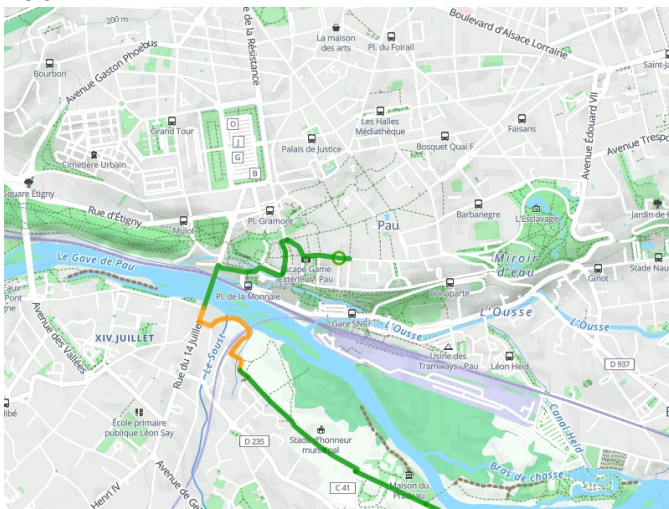
- **Baudreix** : using the footbridge over the Gave de Pau River takes you swiftly over to the outdoor sports centre, the Complexe du Lac de Baudreix, to enjoy a swim, or simply a rest by the water.
- **Nay**: the little town of Nay boasts of being one of the oldest grid-plan bastides in the province of Béarn, built in 1302 as a new town! At its heart stands a rectangular central square with a communal house.
- **Lestelle-Bétharram**: Lestelle is also an historic bastide, created in 1335 for Gaston II de Foix (father of Gaston Fébus), so you come to another town built on a grid plan, set out around a central square.
- **Saint-Pé-de-Bigorre**: you enter the département (French county) of Hautes-Pyrénées via the outskirts of Saint-Pé-de-Bigorre. It's worth leaving the V81 for a short detour, crossing the old stone bridge over the Gave de Pau to reach the heart of the village.
- **Lourdes**: renowned worldwide as a Catholic pilgrimage centre, with a shrine that draws people from every nation, this cosmopolitan town rises above the Gave de Pau. In the upper part of town, the medieval castle stands out, a fortress guarding the exit from this Pyrenean valley for centuries, on a rocky spur also exploited by the Romans and Moors before the counts of Bigorre. For over a century now, the château has been home to the Musée Pyrénéen, worth visiting before the end of the day.

Cyclists' specialist address: Bike & Py, in Lourdes, with a cyclists' café and a specialist shop and workshop.

- Voie cyclable
- Liaisons
- Route partagée
- - - Alternatives
- Parcours VTT
- Parcours provisoire



### Départ Pau



### Arrivée Lourdes

