

Saint-Girons / Foix

The Vélosud



Départ
Saint-Girons

Arrivée
Foix

Durée
3 h 02 min

Distance
45,55 Km

Niveau
I cycle often

Thématique
Old railway, Mountains,
Nature & small heritage

Between Saint-Girons and Foix, the Vélosud escapes the Salat Valley and then dawdles happily through the Parc Naturel Régional des Pyrénées Ariégeoises, guiding you via country parts, making use of the converted old railway line leading to the diminutive administrative capital of the Ariège département, Foix. Enjoy taking your time, riding along from the Baup Valley to the Arize Valley, shaded by trees, meadows to either side often covered with hay bales, with the odd heritage stop or charming village at which to halt in this, the Séronnais area. After La Bastide-de-Sérou, the route climbs gently into wooded Pyrenean foothills concealing a remarkable curiosity that you should try to visit - the underground river of Labouiche. Return up to the sunlight to enjoy the descent to the characterful little county capital of Foix. You enter the place via the gentle banks of the Ariège River and can then explore the narrow lanes of the old town, dominated by the imposing Château de Foix.

The route

After you've left Saint-Girons, this stage is almost entirely along a dedicated cycle way, in the form of a converted old railway line, the surface at times smooth, at times rough. It's only as you arrive at Foix that you need to join roads shared with motorized traffic, but with provisions in place for cyclists, to ensure they can ride safely into town.

Points at which to take care

- At Saint-Girons: leaving town, take care crossing the D117 road in order to join a secondary road 100m further on.
- In Foix: entering Foix, before and after the Quartier de la Gare (around the railway station), make sure that you keep to the laid-out cycle lanes running along the pavements beside the D919 road.

Link to a further cycle route

At Saint-Girons, you can join the famed Pyrenean *Route des Cols* by heading to Castillon-en-Couserans, 14km away via the D618 road (you share the way with motorized traffic and note that there are no specific cycling facilities in place).

Practical information

- [Office de Tourisme de Saint-Girons](#)
- [Office de Tourisme de Foix](#)

Transports

SNCF French National Railways train stations

- Gare SNCF de Boussens (31), on the Tarbes-Toulouse line, to reach Saint-Girons and the V81 (stage 08) or then use a LiO regional bus (line 452).
- Gare SNCF de Foix: regional TER Occitanie trains (you can transport your bike for free on these), a stop on the Toulouse-Latour de Carol line.

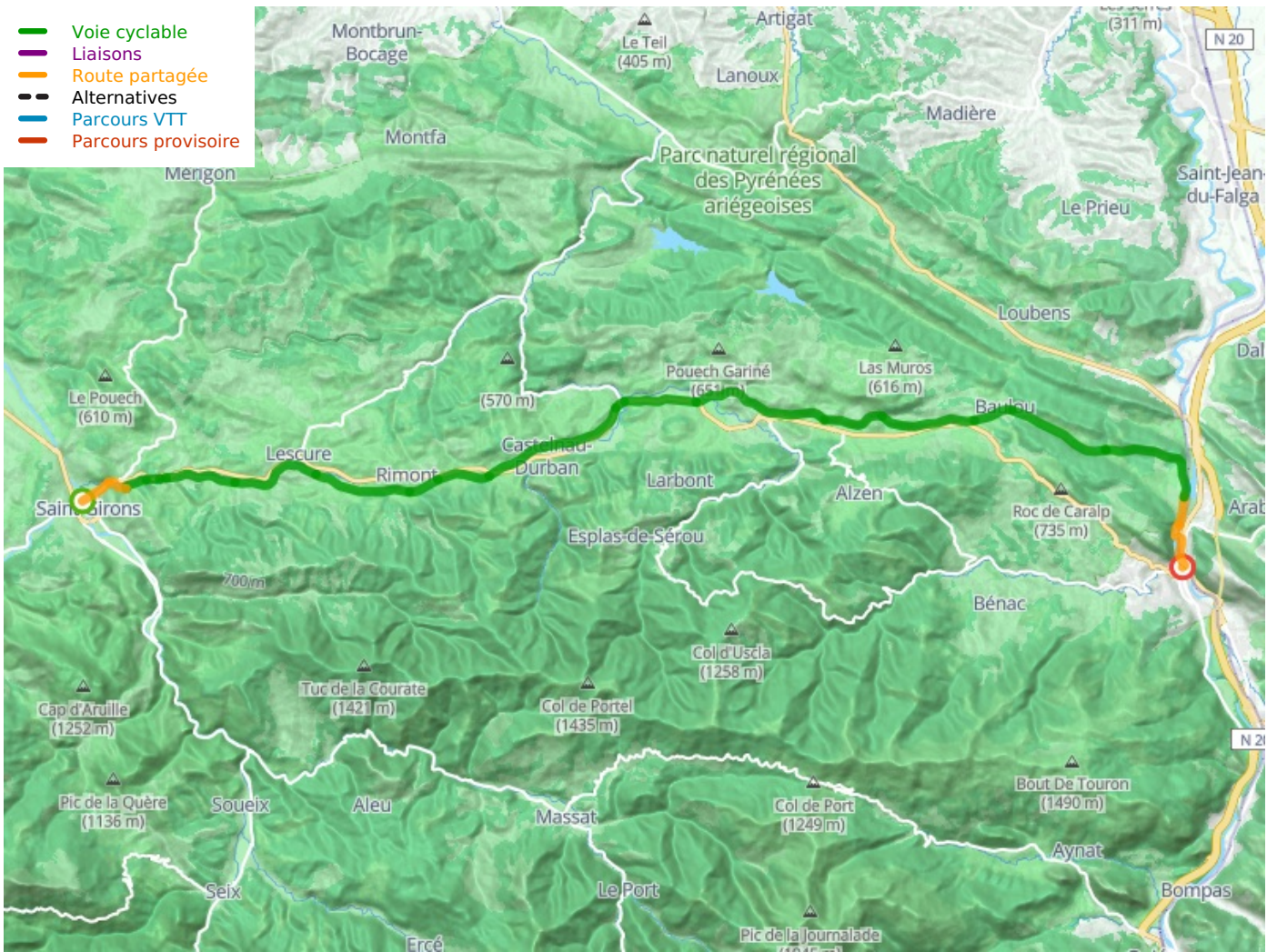
BUS services

- LiO regional bus network, to reach Saint-Girons via [line 452](#) from BousSENS.
- LiO regional bus network, [line 454](#) connects Saint-Girons and Foix.
<https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

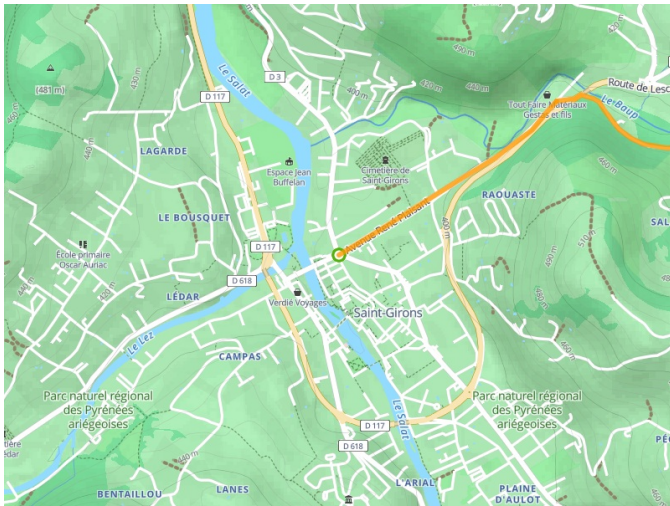
Don't miss

- **The Voie Verte des Pyrénées Ariégeoises**, a greenway: comfortable, shaded, straight stretches along which to ride with ease, metal bridges taking you across streams, well-built sections smoothing out any rises... soon even with well-lit tunnels too - you'll see here how the Vélosud cycle route makes the most of the former railway line built to connect Saint-Girons to Foix!
 - **Rimont**: at the level of the former train station at Rimont, you can leave the greenway to visit, just a short way off, 12th-century Combelongue Abbey, built entirely out of brick, in the typical early Romanesque style, even including some mudejar forms, reflecting the influence of Arabic architecture.
 - **Castelnau-Durban**: should it be time for a pause on your route, do branch right, via Rue de la Gare, to visit the village of Castelnau-Durban very close by. As well as admiring its long alley of plane trees that provide shade for the weekly Tuesday morning market, you'll find a grocer's, a café, regional produce on sale at the shop l'Échoppe, plus a reputed gastronomic restaurant, Chez Victor!
 - **La-Bastide-de-Sérou**: one of the historic 13th-century grid-plan bastide towns built on the territories of the powerful regional lords, the Comtes de Foix, this one became reputed for its flour mills and forges. Today, note that there's a bike rental and repair shop here, Arize 2 roues.
 - **Baulou**: just after passing under a bridge, a little track to the left enables you to arrive rapidly at the visitor centre to head down to the underground river of Labouiche. Tours last 1hr 15mins, taking you 60m underground, and you board little boats that transport you 1,500m (almost one mile) along this rivière souterraine, offering the longest cave-river journey in Europe!
- Vernajoul: built to enable trains to travel with ease along the Ariège Valley, the Viaduc de Vernajoul was considered a technical feat of engineering when it went up at the very end of the 19th century. Rising 35m above the valley, its 230m-long curve of masonry is supported by 14 rounded arches.

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



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