Puy-Guillaume / Pont-du-Château

Via Allier

Départ
Puy-Guillaume

Arrivée
Pont-du-Château

Durée
2 h 06 min

Distance
32,16 Km

Niveau
I cycle often

Thématique
Canals & intimate rivers

Along this Via Allier stage, you'll become aware of the upcoming transition from the fertile Limagne Plain to the steeper ancient volcanic area extending out from the Chaîne des Puys, the extinct volcanic range towering above the Auvergne's capital city, Clermont-Ferrand. The Allier River, so much wilder downstream, with its shifting banks, is constricted by narrow rocky sides further upstream. This stage is dotted with dovecotes. Close by, the Maringues tanneries make a picturesque architectural scene, while the Musée de la Céramique in Lezoux relates how this town's renown spread far and wide back in Antiquity, thanks to its production of sigillated pottery. Pont-du-Château, the historic port of the Clermont area, is the stopover point for this stage.

The Via Allier cycle route from Puy-Guillaume to Pont-du-Château

This Via Allier cycle route stage makes for fairly easy riding, taking you exclusively along quiet country roads. Leave Puy-Guillaume via the D4 road in the direction of Crevant-Laveine, then Culhat. At Culhat, the trail switches bank, taking you to Joze and on to Pont-du-Château via the D1093 road. Take care along this road, even if there are stretches along it that have been widened. At the roundabout, bypass the sand quarry by following the D1093B road in the direction of Pont-du-Château and rejoin the banks of the Allier River.

Links

Connection for Lezoux (Musée de la Céramique)

- Coming from the north, at Culhat, take the D20 road in the direction of Lezoux (be careful, do not take the direction of Lezoux via the D332, the latter road often being far too busy with traffic). To return to the Via Allier, make use of the D85 road up to Lempty, then the D327 in the direction of Joze.
- Coming from the south, after Joze, follow the D327 up to Lempty, then take the D85 up to Lezoux. To return to the Via Allier, make use of the D20 road at the level of Culhat.
- Link towards the cyclosporting circuit Le circuit de la Limagne, villages et châteaux leading to the Domaine Royal de Randan, leaving Joze via the D 1093 road.

Don't miss

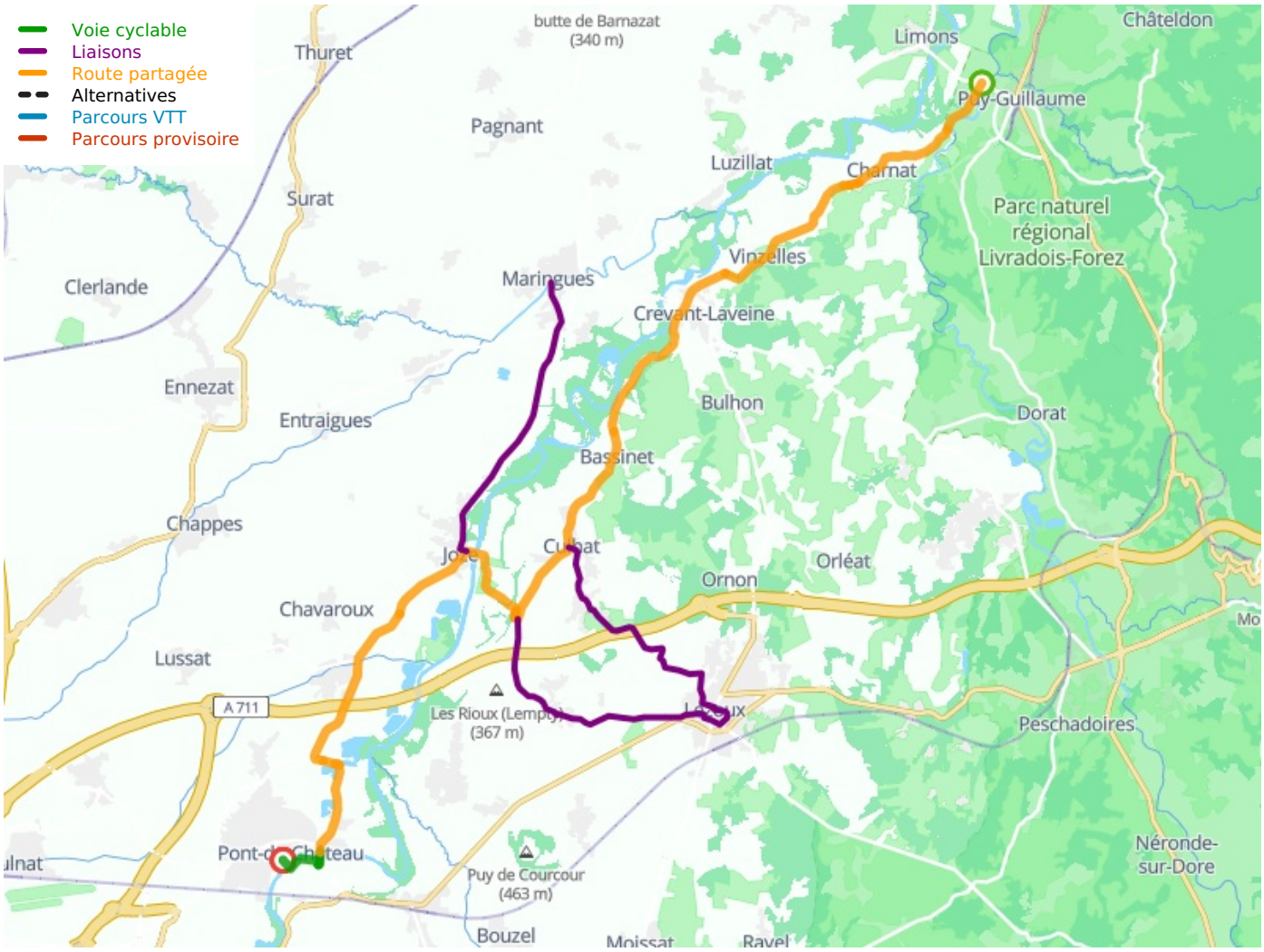
- **Maringues :** originally dating back to Gallo-Roman times, Maringues is an historic village that was built in a defensive site, its lanes concentrated on a hill long topped by a church, part of an 11th-century priory linked to the great Auvergne abbey of La Chaise-Dieu.
- **Saint-Laure :** for its dovecote on pillars, listed as an historic building, but just one of some dozen dovecotes dotted around the parish.
- **Lezoux :** Musée de la Céramique (MIN) – in Gallo-Roman times, Lezoux became the largest

centre for the production of distinctive, popular red pottery known as sigillated ceramics in the Roman Empire, this museum explaining Lezoux's archaeological riches.

- **Joze :** Espace Naturel Sensible de la Vallée de Joze at Maringues, one of the most interesting protected natural areas in the French county, or département, of Puy-de-Dôme, both for the riverside life and wider diversity.
- **Pont-du-Château :**
    - Pont-du-Château's stone bridge, designed by M. de Régemorte between 1765 and 1773, enabled travellers to continue their journey unbroken along royal route 89 linking Lyon to Bordeaux, whereas for centuries before that, it had been necessary to cross the river by little ferry.
    - The château – burnt down in 1580 following an outbreak of the plague, the castle was rebuilt in the mid-17th century, while in the 18th century, the façade was harmoniously reconfigured.
    - Église Sainte-Martine, a Romanesque church renovated in the second half of the 20th century, reviving the warm colours of the original decorations.
    - Musée de la Batellerie de l'Allier, a museum retelling the history of mariners and river trade at Pont-du-Château, the main port serving the Clermont area from the 16th to the 19th centuries, with wood, coal, wine, Volvic stone and hemp the main products transported from here, mostly to Paris, all this trading activity bringing wealth to the town.
    - MARKETS : Maringues – Monday morning, plus wider-ranging market 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month

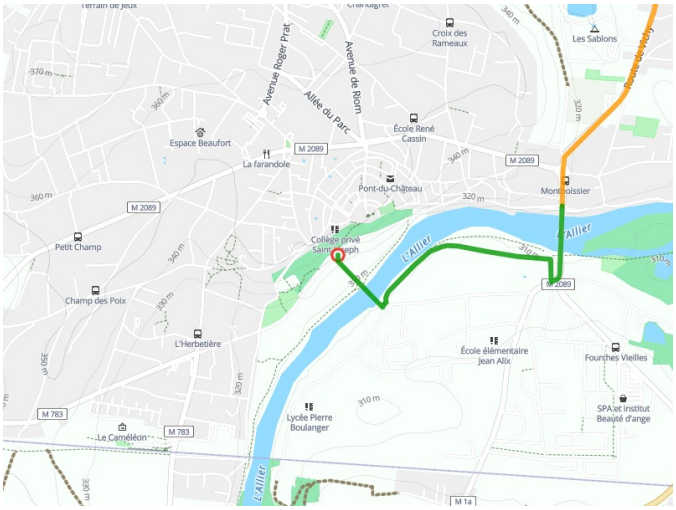
Railway stations

Railway stations at Lezoux and Pont-du-Château :Line TER Thiers <> Clermont-Ferrand



Départ

Puy-Guillaume

Arrivée

Pont-du-Château