

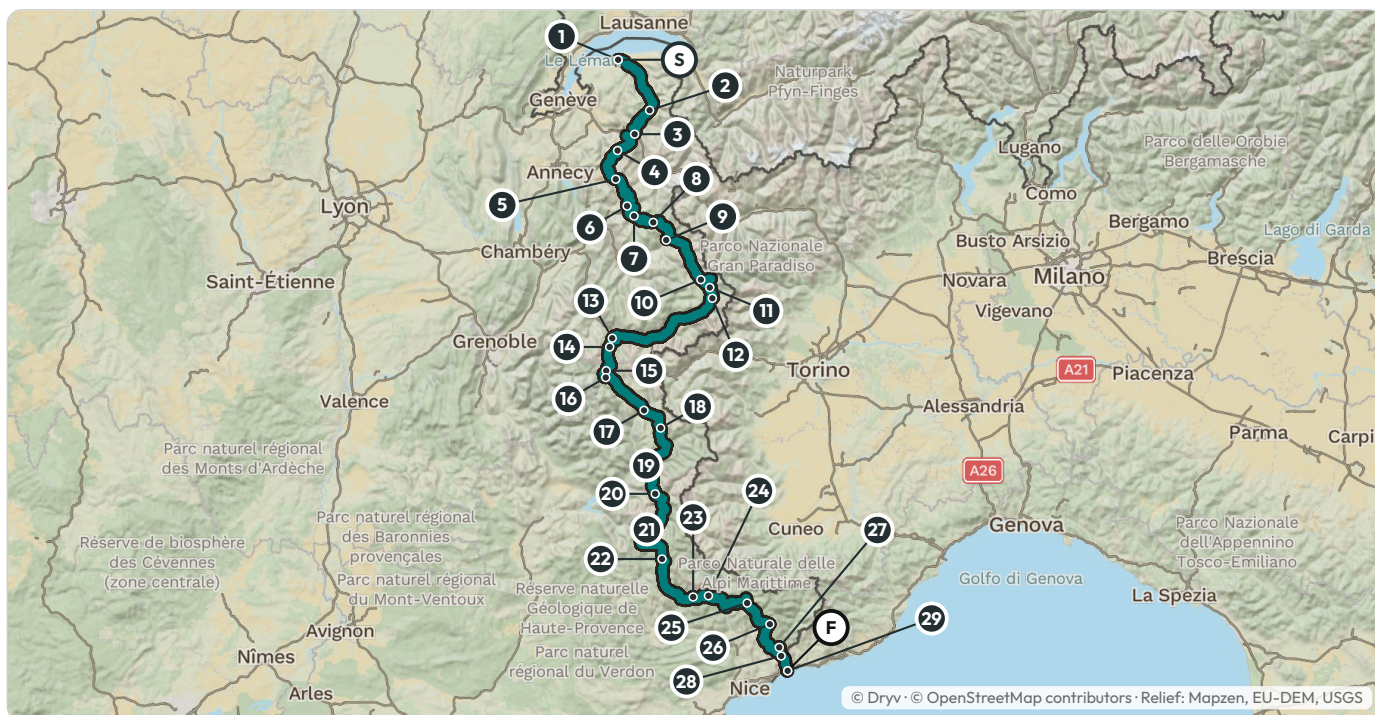
The Route des Grandes Alpes

From Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean over the passes, Thonon-les-Bains to Menton

DISTANCE
702.2 km

DRIVING TIME
15 h 07 min

HIGHEST POINT
2,764 m



On 26 April 1909 Léon Auscher, of the Touring Club de France, presented plans for an Alpine road from Évian to Nice: “the finest mountain road in the world”. All but complete in July 1937 with the Col de l’Iseran, it took the name Route des Grandes Alpes in 1950 and was finished by the Cornet de Roselend in 1970.

This roadbook follows the 1995 route to Menton via Valberg and Saint-Martin-Vésubie (the official route has ended in Nice since 2012); where the 1995 route goes down from the Col de Turini through Moulinet, this roadbook reaches Sospel via Peïra-Cava and the Col de Braus. The whole road is open only from June to September, depending on snow: check before you set off, and allow several days.

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes · Map: full sources on page 2

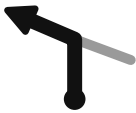
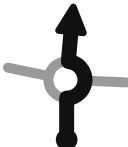
PLACES ALONG THE ROUTE

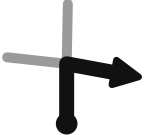
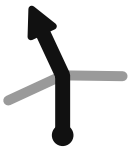
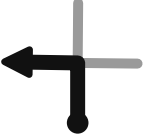
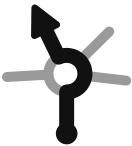
1 Thonon-les-Bains	km 0.0	9 Bourg-Saint-Maurice	km 186.7	17 Briançon	km 380.1	25 Saint-Martin-Vésubie	km 615.8
2 Col des Gets	km 36.8	10 Val-d’Isère	km 217.9	18 Col d’Izoard	km 399.7	26 Col de Turini	km 643.3
3 Cluses	km 58.5	11 Col de l’Iseran	km 234.7	19 Guillestre	km 430.2	27 Sospel	km 679.9
4 Col de la Colombière	km 77.4	12 Bonneval-sur-Arc	km 248.2	20 Col de Vars	km 450.0	28 Col de Castillon	km 687.1
5 Col des Aravis	km 102.0	13 Col du Télégraphe	km 319.7	21 Barcelonnette	km 480.4	29 Menton	km 702.2
6 Col des Saïsis	km 129.3	14 Valloire	km 325.5	22 Col de la Cayolle	km 510.7		
7 Beaufort	km 147.0	15 Col du Galibier	km 343.6	23 Valberg	km 556.8		
8 Cornet de Roselend	km 167.4	16 Col du Lautaret	km 352.2	24 Col de la Couillole	km 570.2		

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
1	0 m total 0.0 km	—		Start: Thonon-les-Bains (place 1). Head south-west on Avenue des Allobroges
2	40 m total 0.0 km	Avenue des Allobroges		Turn left onto Place Jules Mercier, which becomes Rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu
3	250 m total 0.3 km	Rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 2005
4	440 m total 0.7 km	D 2005		Bear right to stay on D 2005, which becomes D 902
5	720 m total 1.4 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
6	970 m total 2.4 km	D 902 Avenue de la Dranse		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
7	9.00 km total 11.4 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
8	16.88 km total 28.3 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
9	990 m total 29.3 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902

Cover map: © Dryv; data © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL); relief from Mapzen Terrain Tiles, produced using Copernicus data and information funded by the European Union (EU-DEM layers) and SRTM and GMTED2010 data courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Photo and text licences: CC BY 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/) · CC BY 2.5 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/) · CC BY 3.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/) · CC BY 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) · CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) · CC BY-SA 2.5 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/) · CC BY-SA 3.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) · CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
10	1.48 km total 30.8 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
11	1.59 km total 32.4 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
12	4.20 km total 36.6 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
13	250 m total 36.8 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		 2. Col des Gets At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
14	840 m total 37.7 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
15	800 m total 38.5 km	D 902 Route des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
16	9.70 km total 48.2 km	D 902		Turn left onto Rue des Corsins
17	290 m total 48.5 km	Rue des Corsins		Turn left onto D 902
18	3.32 km total 51.8 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
19	5.15 km total 56.9 km	D 902 Avenue de Châtillon		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Avenue de Châtillon

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
20	360 m total 57.3 km	Avenue de Châtillon		Keep left to stay on Avenue de Châtillon, which becomes Avenue Charles Poncet
21	440 m total 57.7 km	Avenue Charles Poncet		Turn right onto Rue du Général Ferrié, which becomes Rue Geneviève-Anthonioz de Gaulle
22	270 m total 58.0 km	Rue Geneviève-Anthonioz de Gaulle		Bear left onto Rue Émile Favre
23	310 m total 58.3 km	Rue Émile Favre		Turn left onto Rue Émile Chautemps
24	210 m total 58.5 km	Rue Marcellin Berthelot		Stop: Cluses (place 3). Setting off, turn right onto Avenue de la Libération
25	250 m total 58.8 km	Avenue de la Libération		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 4
26	290 m total 59.1 km	D 4 Avenue du Mont Blanc		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 4
27	720 m total 59.8 km	D 4		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 4
28	280 m total 60.1 km	D 4 Avenue du Mont Blanc		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 4
29	3.16 km total 63.2 km	D 4		Bear left to stay on D 4

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
30	14.17 km total 77.4 km	D 4		4. Col de la Colombière
31	11.39 km total 88.8 km	D 4 Route du Chinaillon		Bear right onto Rue de l'Orée du Bois
32	440 m total 89.2 km	Rue de l'Orée du Bois		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto D 4
33	2.47 km total 91.7 km	D 4 Route du Grand Bornand		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 909
34	140 m total 91.8 km	D 909 Route de la Clusaz		Keep right to stay on D 909
35	2.47 km total 94.3 km	D 909		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 909
36	410 m total 94.7 km	D 909		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 909
37	310 m total 95.0 km	D 909 Route du Col des Aravis		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 909
38	7.00 km total 102.0 km	D 909		5. Col des Aravis
39	4.87 km total 106.9 km	D 909 Route du Col des Aravis		Turn right to stay on D 909

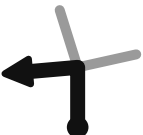
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
40	510 m total 107.4 km	D 909 Route du Col des Aravis		Turn right onto Montée de l'Oratoire, then after 70 m bear left to stay on Montée de l'Oratoire
41	180 m total 107.6 km	Montée de l'Oratoire		Bear right onto Rue de la Douane, then after 80 m left onto D 909
42	6.23 km total 113.8 km	D 909		Turn left onto D 1212
43	1.59 km total 115.4 km	D 1212		Turn right onto Route de Bellecombe
44	10 m total 115.4 km	Route de Bellecombe		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto D 218B
45	13.46 km total 128.9 km	D 218B		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 218B
46	440 m total 129.3 km	D 218B		6. Col des Saisies
47	60 m total 129.4 km	D 218B Avenue des Jeux Olympiques		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 218B
48	490 m total 129.9 km	D 218B Avenue des Jeux Olympiques		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 218B
49	150 m total 130.0 km	D 218B Avenue des Jeux Olympiques		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 218B

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
50	660 m total 130.7 km	D 218B Avenue des Jeux Olympiques		Bear left to stay on D 218B
51	5.34 km total 136.0 km	D 218B		Bear right to stay on D 218B
52	8.32 km total 144.3 km	D 218B		Keep left to stay on D 218B, which becomes D 925
53	2.31 km total 146.6 km	D 925		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 925
54	190 m total 146.8 km	D 925		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit
55	170 m total 147.0 km	—		Stop: Beaufort (place 7). Head south-east on D 925, which becomes D 902
56	20.35 km total 167.4 km	D 925		8. Cormet de Roselend
57	19.29 km total 186.7 km	D 902 Avenue Antoine Borrel		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit
58	90 m total 186.7 km	—		Stop: Bourg-Saint-Maurice, Place du Lieutenant Castex (place 9). Head north-east on Place du Lieutenant Castex
59	30 m total 186.8 km	Place du Lieutenant Castex		Turn left onto Montée des Capucins, then immediately left onto D 1090

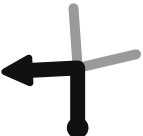
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
60	80 m total 186.9 km	D 1090 Place de la Gare		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 1090
61	660 m total 187.5 km	D 1090		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1090
62	1.50 km total 189.0 km	D 1090		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 1090
63	690 m total 189.7 km	D 1090 Rue Célestin Freppaz		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto D 902
64	26.30 km total 216.0 km	D 902 Route des Gorges		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
65	390 m total 216.4 km	D 902 Route de la Plaine de la Daille		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
66	1.40 km total 217.8 km	D 902 Avenue Olympique		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit
67	110 m total 217.9 km	—		Stop: Val-d'Isère (place 10). Head south on Rue du Parc des Sports
68	130 m total 218.0 km	Rue du Parc des Sports		Turn right onto Rue du Coin
69	220 m total 218.3 km	Rue du Coin		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 902

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
70	250 m total 218.5 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
71	700 m total 219.2 km	D 902 Avenue du Prariond		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
72	15.52 km total 234.7 km	D 902		11. Col de l'Iseran
73	12.83 km total 247.6 km	D 902 Route du Col de l'Iseran		Turn right onto Rue du Pré du Vas, which becomes Route de l'Arc
74	530 m total 248.1 km	Route de l'Arc		Turn right onto Rue Notre-Dame-des-Grâces
75	100 m total 248.2 km	Rue Notre-Dame- des-Grâces		Stop: Bonneval-sur-Arc (place 12). Head south on Rue Notre-Dame-des-Grâces
76	70 m total 248.2 km	Rue Notre-Dame- des-Grâces		Turn right onto Route de l'Arc, then after 100 m right onto D 902
77	16.33 km total 264.6 km	D 902		Bear right to stay on D 902
78	880 m total 265.5 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 902
79	1.51 km total 267.0 km	D 902 Route de l'Iseran		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 1006

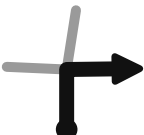
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
80	940 m total 267.9 km	D 1006 Rue du Mont-Cenis		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 1006
81	19.77 km total 287.7 km	D 1006		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 1006
82	1.98 km total 289.7 km	D 1006		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 1006
83	970 m total 290.6 km	D 1006 Cours Aristide Briand		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1006
84	350 m total 291.0 km	D 1006 Cours Aristide Briand		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 1006
85	2.01 km total 293.0 km	D 1006		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1006
86	1.53 km total 294.5 km	D 1006		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1006
87	680 m total 295.2 km	D 1006		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on D 1006
88	5.88 km total 301.1 km	D 1006 Route de Modane		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1006
89	6.43 km total 307.5 km	D 1006		Turn left onto D 902

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
90	12.11 km total 319.6 km	D 902		Turn sharp left to stay on D 902
91	110 m total 319.7 km	D 902		13. Col du Télégraphe
92	4.69 km total 324.4 km	D 902 Route du Télégraphe		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
93	200 m total 324.6 km	D 902		Bear left to stay on D 902
94	450 m total 325.1 km	D 902 Rue des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
95	310 m total 325.4 km	D 902		Turn left onto Rue de la Traverse
96	130 m total 325.5 km	Rue de la Traverse		Stop: Valloire (place 14). Head north-west on D 902
97	410 m total 325.9 km	D 902 Rue des Grandes Alpes		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 902
98	600 m total 326.5 km	D 902		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 902
99	15.98 km total 342.5 km	D 902		Turn left onto D 902B, which becomes D 902

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
100	1.06 km total 343.6 km	D 902B		15. Col du Galibier
101	8.62 km total 352.2 km	D 902 Route du Galibier		Turn right onto D 1091
102	40 m total 352.2 km	D 1091		16. Col du Lautaret
103	14.19 km total 366.4 km	D 1091		Keep right to stay on D 1091
104	4.63 km total 371.0 km	D 1091 Route de Briançon		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1091
105	3.12 km total 374.2 km	D 1091		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 1091
106	1.74 km total 375.9 km	D 1091		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 1091
107	2.45 km total 378.4 km	D 1091		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto N 94
108	350 m total 378.7 km	N 94		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on N 94
109	100 m total 378.8 km	N 94 Avenue du Dauphiné		Bear left onto Rue du Général Barbot

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
110	520 m total 379.3 km	Rue du Général Barbot		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto Avenue du 159 ^e RIA
111	250 m total 379.6 km	Avenue du 159 ^e RIA		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Avenue Maurice Petsche
112	160 m total 379.7 km	Avenue Maurice Petsche		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 136
113	100 m total 379.8 km	D 136 Avenue Général de Gaulle		Turn left onto Rue Alphan
114	160 m total 380.0 km	Rue Alphan		Turn left onto Rue Évariste Chancel
115	70 m total 380.1 km	Rue Évariste Chancel		Stop: Briançon (place 17). Head east on Avenue Maurice Petsche
116	90 m total 380.2 km	Avenue Maurice Petsche		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Rue Centrale
117	270 m total 380.4 km	Rue Centrale		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 902
118	19.24 km total 399.7 km	D 902		18. Col d'Izoard
119	14.20 km total 413.9 km	D 902 Route de l'Izoard		Turn right to stay on D 902

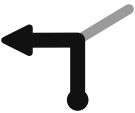
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
120	11.58 km total 425.5 km	D 902		Bear right to stay on D 902
121	3.57 km total 429.0 km	D 902		Turn right onto Avenue du Champ Chevalier, which becomes Chemin du Queyron
122	840 m total 429.9 km	Chemin du Queyron		Bear left to stay on Chemin du Queyron
123	160 m total 430.0 km	Chemin du Queyron		Turn right onto Rue des Champs Élysées, then after 50 m left onto Avenue du Docteur Julien Guillaume
124	190 m total 430.2 km	Avenue du Docteur Julien Guillaume		Stop: Guillestre (place 19). Head south-east on Avenue du Docteur Julien Guillaume
125	70 m total 430.3 km	Avenue du Docteur Julien Guillaume		Turn left onto Rue Maurice Petsche, then after 70 m right onto Place du Portail
126	210 m total 430.5 km	Place du Portail		Turn right onto D 902
127	330 m total 430.8 km	D 902 Rue de Fontloubé		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 902A
128	260 m total 431.1 km	D 902A		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 902
129	18.87 km total 450.0 km	D 902		20. Col de Vars

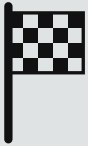
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
130	14.63 km total 464.6 km	D 902 Cours Fontarossa		Bear right onto D 900
131	15.31 km total 479.9 km	D 900		Turn right onto Avenue Porfirio Diaz, which becomes Place Aimé Gassier
132	410 m total 480.3 km	Place Aimé Gassier		Turn left onto Allée Paul Geay
133	90 m total 480.4 km	Allée Paul Geay		Stop: Barcelonnette (place 21). Head south-east on Allée des Dames
134	210 m total 480.6 km	Allée des Dames		Turn right onto Avenue Émile Grasset, which becomes Allée du Champ de Foire
135	290 m total 480.9 km	Allée du Champ de Foire		Turn right onto Rue du 19 Mars 1962
136	180 m total 481.1 km	Rue du 19 Mars 1962		Turn left onto Place Aimé Gassier, which becomes Avenue de Nice
137	280 m total 481.4 km	Avenue de Nice		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 902
138	2.27 km total 483.6 km	D 902		Turn left to stay on D 902, which becomes D 2202
139	27.10 km total 510.7 km	D 902		22. Col de la Cayolle

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
140	28.43 km total 539.2 km	D 2202		Keep right to stay on D 2202
141	3.92 km total 543.1 km	D 2202		Turn left onto D 28
142	13.63 km total 556.7 km	D 28 Rue de Mont Mounier		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit
143	90 m total 556.8 km	—		Stop: Valberg (place 23). Head south-east on D 28
144	1.05 km total 557.9 km	D 28 Avenue de Valberg		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 28
145	5.10 km total 563.0 km	D 28 Route des Launes		Turn left onto M 30
146	7.23 km total 570.2 km	M 30		24. Col de la Couillole
147	3.37 km total 573.6 km	M 30 Route du Col de la Couillole		Turn left to stay on M 30
148	8.80 km total 582.4 km	M 30		Keep right to stay on M 30
149	3.98 km total 586.3 km	M 30		Bear right onto M 2205

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
150	4.54 km total 590.9 km	M 2205		Turn sharp left onto M 2565
151	8.93 km total 599.8 km	M 2565 Route de la Colmiane		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on M 2565
152	7.83 km total 607.6 km	M 2565		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on M 2565
153	5.30 km total 612.9 km	M 2565 Route de la Colmiane		Bear right to stay on M 2565
154	1.95 km total 614.9 km	M 2565 Route de la Colmiane		Keep left to stay on M 2565
155	710 m total 615.6 km	M 2565 Avenue Charles de Caqueray		Turn left onto Avenue Kellermann, then after 90 m bear right onto Avenue Kellermann Sérurier
156	190 m total 615.8 km	Avenue Kellermann Sérurier		Turn left
157	40 m total 615.8 km	—		Stop: Saint-Martin-Vésubie (place 25). Head south on Avenue Kellermann Sérurier
158	60 m total 615.9 km	Avenue Kellermann Sérurier		Turn sharp left onto M 2565
159	8.26 km total 624.1 km	M 2565		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit to stay on M 2565

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
160	3.74 km total 627.9 km	M 2565		Bear left onto M 70
161	3.45 km total 631.3 km	M 70 Route du Col de Turini		Keep right to stay on M 70
162	290 m total 631.6 km	M 70 Boulevard Philippe Corniglion-Molinier		Keep left to stay on M 70
163	11.62 km total 643.2 km	M 70		Turn left onto D 2566
164	40 m total 643.3 km	D 2566 Route de Turini		 26. Col de Turini Turn left to stay on D 2566
165	9.88 km total 653.2 km	D 2566 Route de l'Authion		Turn left onto D 21
166	5.32 km total 658.5 km	D 21 Route du Col de l'Orme		Turn left onto D 54
167	7.76 km total 666.2 km	D 54		Turn sharp right to stay on D 54
168	880 m total 667.1 km	D 54		Bear left onto D 2204
169	5.88 km total 673.0 km	D 2204		Turn sharp left to stay on D 2204

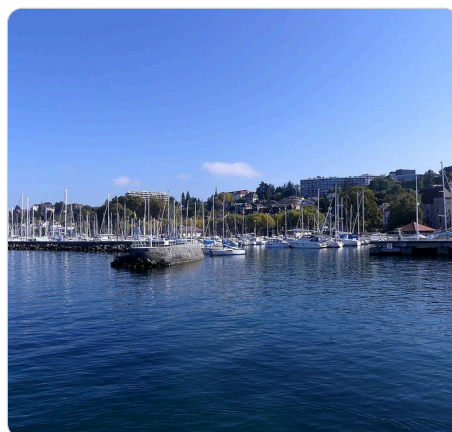
NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
170	5.70 km total 678.7 km	D 2204		Turn right to stay on D 2204
171	620 m total 679.3 km	D 2204 Avenue Jean Médecin		Turn right onto D 2566
172	120 m total 679.5 km	D 2566		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto D 2566A
173	240 m total 679.7 km	D 2566A		Turn right onto Rue du Moulin de Gâtine
174	240 m total 679.9 km	Rue du Moulin de Gâtine		Stop: Sospel (place 27). Head south on Rue du Moulin de Gâtine
175	230 m total 680.2 km	Rue du Moulin de Gâtine		Turn left onto D 2566A
176	240 m total 680.4 km	D 2566A		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto D 2566
177	6.68 km total 687.1 km	D 2566 Route d'Erc		 28. Col de Castillon Turn left to stay on D 2566
178	2.45 km total 689.5 km	D 2566 Route de Sospel		Bear left to stay on D 2566
179	9.03 km total 698.6 km	D 2566 Route de Sospel		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 2566

NO.	DISTANCE	ROAD	DIRECTION	INSTRUCTIONS
180	670 m total 699.2 km	D 2566 Route de Sospel		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 2566
181	170 m total 699.4 km	D 2566		At the roundabout, take the 1st exit to stay on D 2566
182	290 m total 699.7 km	D 2566		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 2566
183	660 m total 700.3 km	D 2566 Route de Sospel		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit to stay on D 2566
184	330 m total 700.7 km	D 2566		At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Rue Pietra Scritta
185	720 m total 701.4 km	Rue Pietra Scritta		Turn right onto Rue du Colonel Herbert
186	130 m total 701.5 km	Rue du Colonel Herbert		At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto D 2566
187	340 m total 701.9 km	D 2566 Avenue de Verdun		Turn left onto Rue Partouneaux, then immediately bear right to stay on Rue Partouneaux
188	280 m total 702.2 km	Rue Partouneaux		Finish: Menton (place 29)

ALONG THE WAY

1 Thonon-les-Bains

Town · km 0.0



The historic capital of the Chablais, Thonon-les-Bains lies 431 m up on the south shore of Lake Geneva, between the upper town with its viewpoints and the port of Rives, the old fishing village. A funicular built in 1888 links them: 230 m long with a rise of 40 m, it is said to be the only one in the world whose cars pass each other on a curve. The town is also a spa; its Versoie spring was declared of public interest in 1864.

On the lakeshore, the Château de Ripaille, a 15th-century pleasure residence, was the home of Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy, who became pope as Felix V without being recognised by most of the Church, and who withdrew here. The Route des Grandes Alpes starts here.

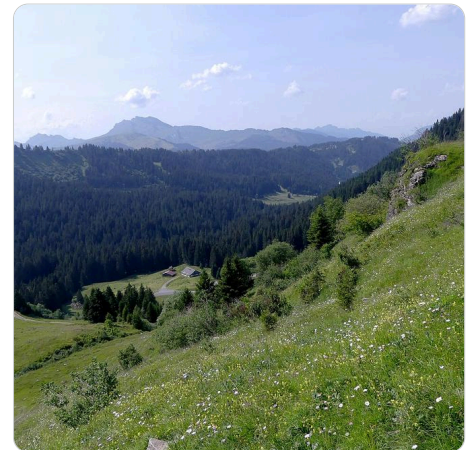
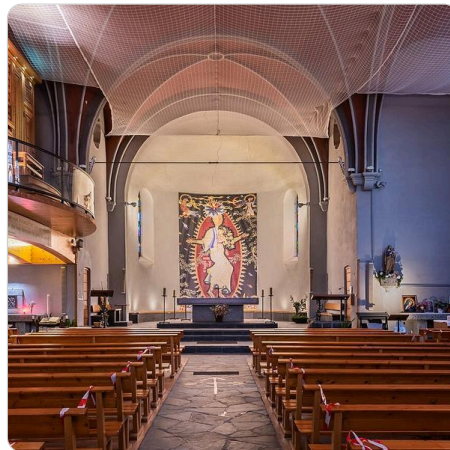
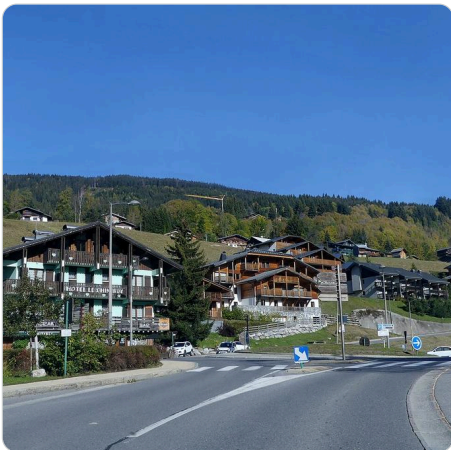
Photos (cropped): (1) Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Pymouss44, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(3) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thonon-les-Bains>

2 Col des Gets

Mountain pass · km 36.8



At 1,170 m, the first pass of the route, the Col des Gets links the Dranse valley to the north with the Giffre valley to the south; the village of Les Gets lies on the pass. It became a ski resort in 1936, when the Boule drag lift was built with wooden poles and bicycle handlebars, and in 1947 it was the first resort in France to install a chairlift. Its ski area is now linked to the Portes du Soleil.

The village is also the home of mechanical music: its museum shows old instruments of the 19th century, and the church holds a listed automatic philharmonic organ of 1,000 pipes, with a carillon and a metallophone. An international festival of mechanical music is held here every other July.

Photos (cropped): (1) Jérémy Toma, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(3) Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_des_Gets, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Gets

3 Cluses

Town · km 58.5



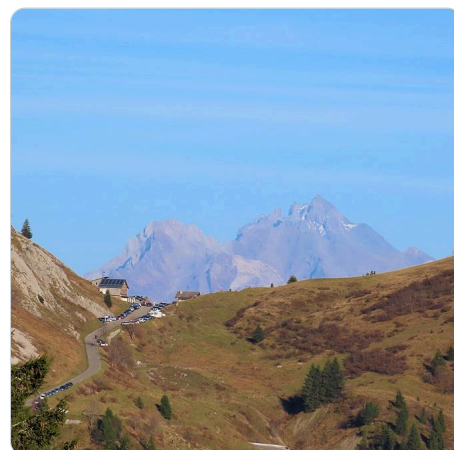
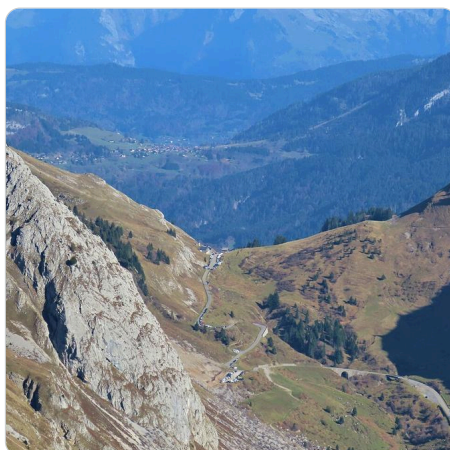
In the Arve plain, at the mouth of the largest transverse valley in the Alps, Cluses is the gateway to Mont Blanc and Italy. In June 1844 fire swept through the town of wooden chalets; it was rebuilt on an orthogonal Sardinian grid, in the Turin style, with wide gaps between the buildings to prevent another blaze.

In 1848 a Royal School of Watchmaking, which became a technical school in 1960, gave a new lift to watchmaking in the Faucigny. From that past in watches and engineering the town keeps its reputation as the French capital of bar turning, the machining of precision parts, and is home to the trade's technical centre and association. The Museum of Watchmaking and Bar Turning tells the story.

Photos (cropped): (1) Tournasol7, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Tournasol7, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Tournasol7, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cluses>

4 Col de la Colombière

Mountain pass · km 77.4



Between the Reposoir and Borne valleys, in the Bornes massif, the Col de la Colombière stands at 1,607, 1,613 or 1,618 m depending on the source; the sign at the pass says 1,613 m. Closed in winter because it is not cleared of snow, it is busy in summer with drivers and cyclists.

From Cluses the north side climbs 1,128 m in 19.5 km, an average of 5.7%, with 10% over the last 1,500 m, in a straight line. After Le Reposoir the view opens onto its charterhouse and the Pointe Percée (2,752 m). Rated first category since 1978, the pass has been climbed 23 times by the Tour de France, notably between the Col des Aravis and the Col de Joux Plane.

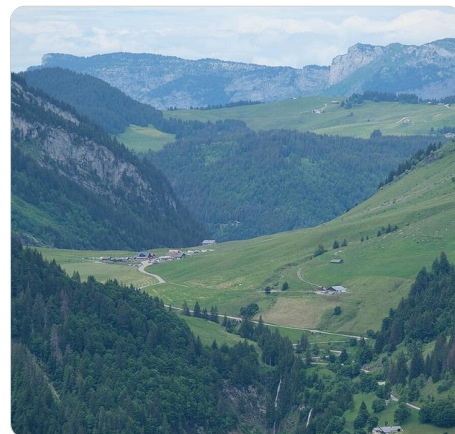
Photos (cropped): (1) Stephan Brunner, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Hyppolyte de Saint-Rambert, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(3) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_la_Colombière

5 Col des Aravis

Mountain pass · km 102.0



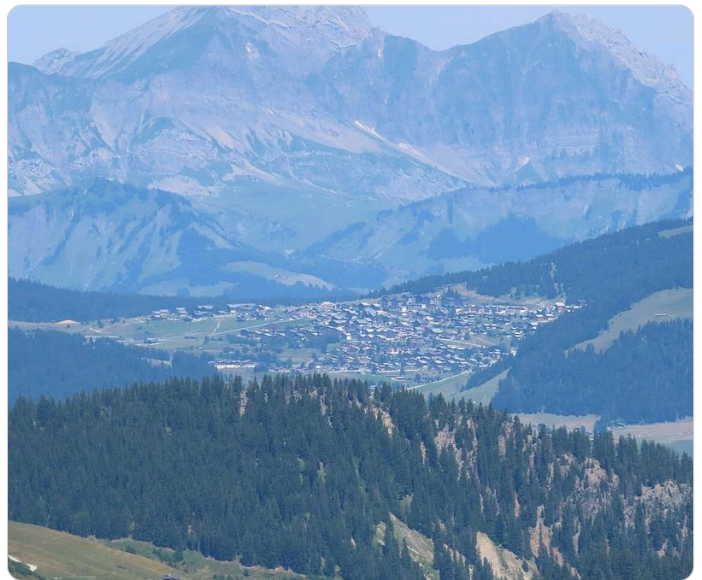
Between La Clusaz in Haute-Savoie and La Giettaz in Savoie, the Col des Aravis is, at 1,486 m, the lowest crossing of the Aravis range. It is approached through Le Grand-Bornand, a village 952 m up in the heart of the massif, then La Clusaz, whose resort was born in 1907 with a first ski competition and grew after 1955 with a cable car. Reblochon cheese is part of life in both: Le Grand-Bornand had its reblochon market hall from 1796, and La Clusaz celebrates the cheese at the end of every August.

Beyond La Clusaz the road climbs in wide hairpins through the summer pastures. The Tour de France, which first came into the massif in 1911, has crossed the pass 42 times. The descent towards La Giettaz is very winding and passes through two short, dark tunnels best taken with care.

Photos (cropped): (1) Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Guilhem Vellut from Annecy, France, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_des_Aravis, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Clusaz, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Grand-Bornand

6 Col des Saisies

Mountain pass · km 129.3



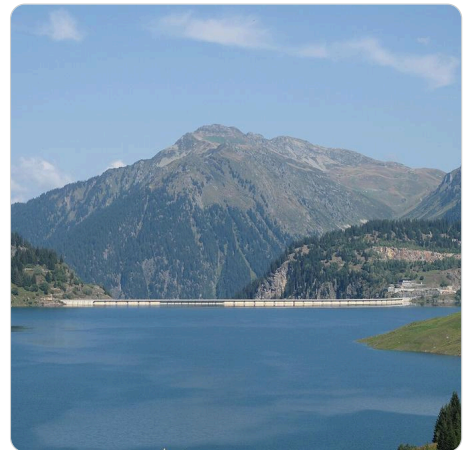
At 1,632 m, in the Beaufortain massif, the Col des Saisies leads from the Val d'Arly into the Beaufortain, below the Signal de Bisanne (1,941 m). This wide summer pasture, recorded from the 13th century, had its pilgrimage chapel and its fair, where people from both valleys met. On 1 August 1944 the pass, held by Captain Bulle's Beaufortain maquis, was the scene of a large drop of weapons by parachute.

The Austrian ski instructor Erwin Eckl settled here in 1935; the first drag lift came in 1956, and in 1961 the four communes sharing the plateau joined to create the resort. Its microclimate, good for cross-country skiing, brought it the cross-country and biathlon events of the 1992 Winter Olympics.

Photos (cropped): (1) Pierre-Jacques DESPA, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) chisloup, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_des_Saisies

7 Beaufort

Village · km 147.0



The main village of the massif that bears its name, Beaufort grew where the Doron, leaving the Entreroches gorge, is joined by the Argentine. The remains of its 11th-century castle stand two kilometres to the north-west, 997 m up, above the meeting of the Doron and the Dorinet. The village lives from tourism and dairy farming, which produces the cheese named after it.

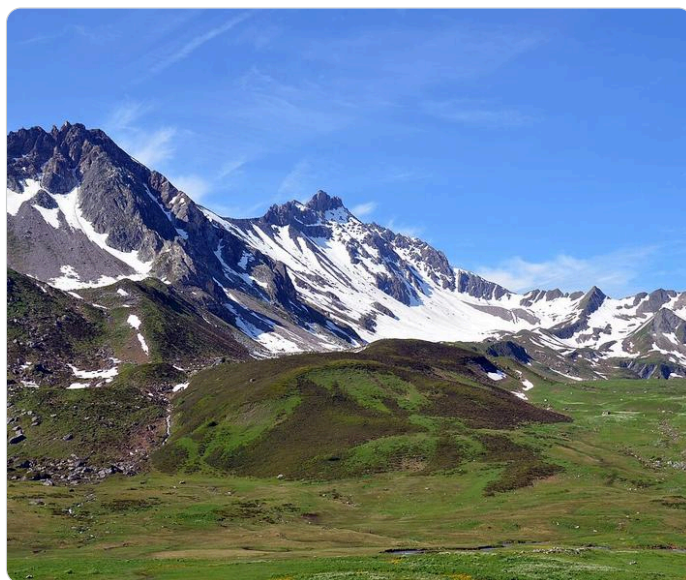
Higher up, the Roselend dam, a double-curvature arch with buttresses, was built from 1955 to 1962; its filling in 1960 drowned the alpine village of Roselend, and a new chapel was built near the dam. The compensation paid by the electricity company EDF indirectly made possible the founding of the Beaufort dairy cooperative.

Photos (cropped): (1) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) versgui, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Tangopaso, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_\(Savoie\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_(Savoie)), https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrage_de_Roselend

8 Cormet de Roselend

Mountain pass · km 167.4



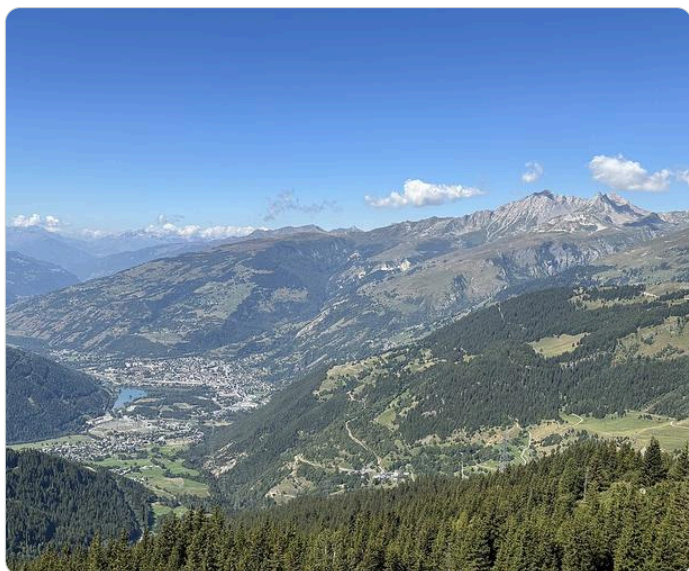
At 1,968 m, between the Beaufortain to the south and the Mont Blanc massif to the north, close to Italy, the Cormet de Roselend links Beaufort, past Lake Roselend, with Bourg-Saint-Maurice, through the Chapieux valley. “Cormet” means “pass” in the Beaufortain dialect of Savoyard, probably from the Latin *culmen*, summit.

On the Beaufortain side the road was built in the late 1950s, when the dam was filled; on the Tarentaise side, the opening of its last section in 1970 completed the Route des Grandes Alpes. Both sides are closed from mid-October to mid-May because of snow. The Tour de France has crossed the Cormet de Roselend 15 times, usually as a first-category climb.

Photos (cropped): (1) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Wompratze, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Henk Monster, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cormet_de_Roselend, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes

9 Bourg-Saint-Maurice

Town · km 186.7



At 840 m, on the Isère, Bourg-Saint-Maurice is the town of the upper Tarentaise, 30 km from the Little St Bernard Pass and the Italian border. It is identified with *Bergintrum*, a Gallo-Roman stop on the road from Milan to Vienne, on the Rhône, over the Little St Bernard; at the end of the Roman period it took the name of Saint Maurice, and the word “Bourg” appears only in the 15th century.

Its ski resort, Les Arcs, created in the 1960s, has four resort villages, from Arc 1600 to Arc 2000, and a ski area rising to 3,226 m at the Aiguille Rouge; a funicular links the town with Arc 1600 in winter and summer. In the 1950s the Malgovert power station at Séez called for a compensating reservoir, and the Montrigon dam was built on the Isère.

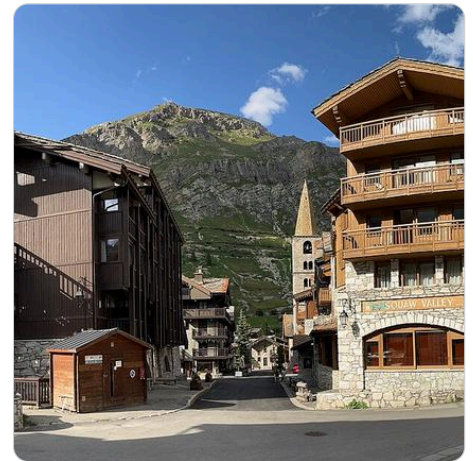
Photos (cropped): (1) Marek Ślusarczyk (Tupungato), CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Mathieu BROSSAIS, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(3) Florian Pèpelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourg-Saint-Maurice>

10 Val-d'Isère

Village · km 217.9



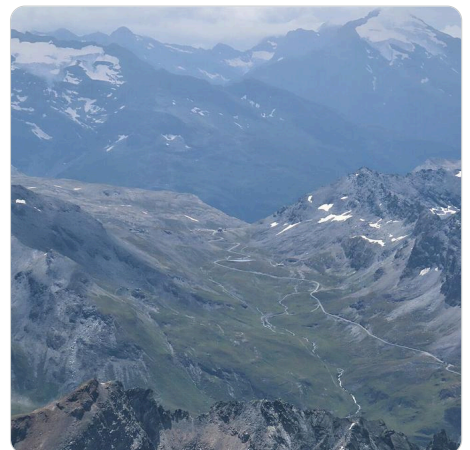
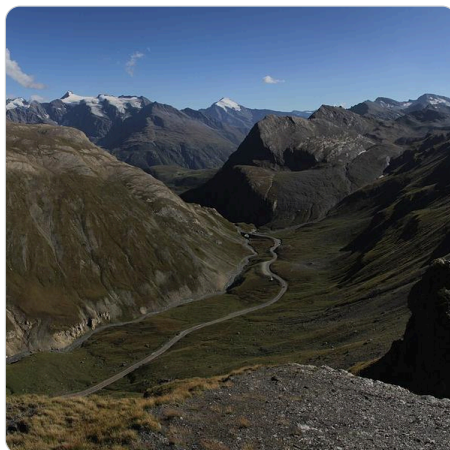
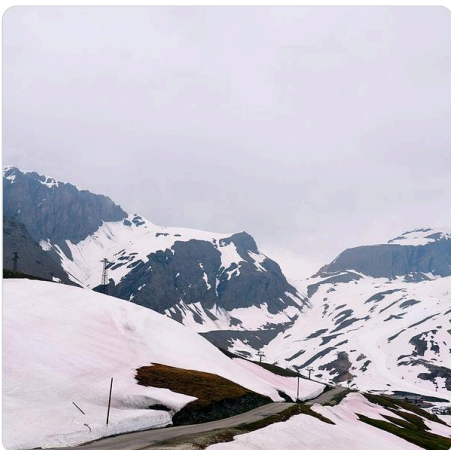
A small high-mountain village of the Vanoise massif, long cut off by snow, Val-d'Isère became one of the world capitals of skiing with the rise of leisure skiing from the 1930s. The Isère rises in the commune, at the Sources de l'Isère glacier. Its ski area, linked with that of Tignes, was long called the Espace Killy, after Jean-Claude Killy, the resort's champion. Since 1955 the resort has held the Critérium de la Première Neige, part of the Alpine Ski World Cup since 1968 and raced every December. In February 1992 it hosted four of the men's alpine skiing events of the Albertville Olympics, the downhill, giant slalom, super-G and combined, and then the 2009 Alpine World Ski Championships.

Photos (cropped): (1) chisloup, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Rundvald, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Tiia Monto, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Tiia Monto, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Val-d'Isère>

11 Col de l'Iseran

Mountain pass · km 234.7



Signposted at 2,770 m but marked at 2,764 m on maps, the Col de l'Iseran is the highest road pass in the Alps; it links the Tarentaise with the Maurienne, at the edge of the Vanoise National Park. In the 17th century a mule track carried Beaufortain cheeses over it to the markets of Piedmont.

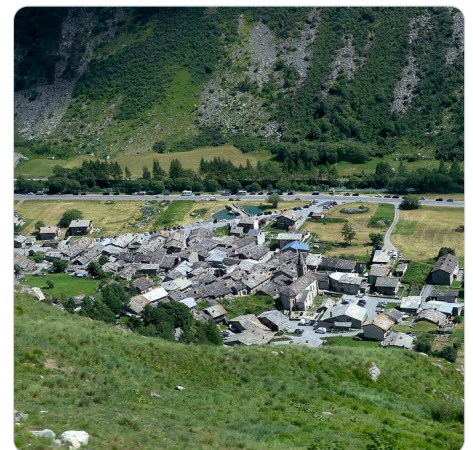
Included in the plans for the Alpine road in 1912, the 29 km road was built from 1929 by 600 workers. After a first crossing by car in September 1934, it was opened on 10 July 1937 by President Albert Lebrun; some snowdrifts were still so deep that the highways department chose to dig a tunnel through them rather than clear them away. The chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Prudence, by the architect Maurice Novarina, dates from 1939.

Photos (cropped): (1) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Henk Monster, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Björn S., CC BY-SA 2.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_l'Iseran, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes

12 Bonneval-sur-Arc

Historic village · km 248.2



At the head of the Maurienne, below the Col de l'Iseran and inside the Vanoise National Park, Bonneval-sur-Arc is listed among the Most Beautiful Villages of France. Its squat houses, of dressed stone bound with lime, with narrow windows and no shutters, have two-sided roofs of stone slabs on larch frames; electricity and telephone lines run underground, so that no cable or pylon is in sight.

Tradition has it that shepherds from Piedmont or the Rhêmes valley settled here all year round in the 5th or 6th century, at Faudan and L'Écot. L'Écot, empty in winter, keeps its 12th-century chapel of Sainte-Marguerite; twelve monuments in the village are listed, among them the bell tower of the church of Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption.

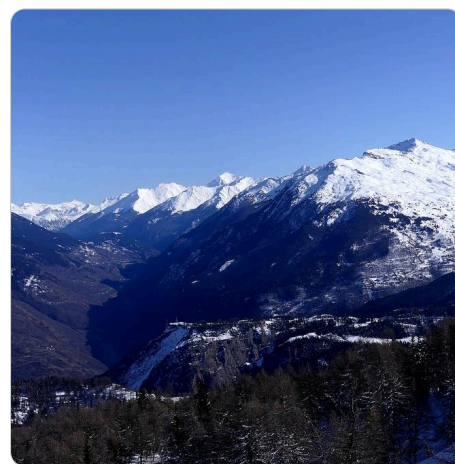
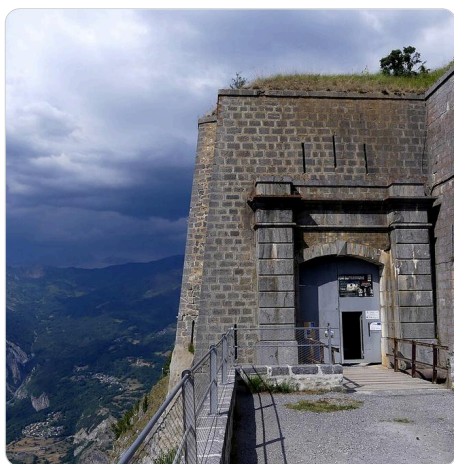
Photos (cropped): (1) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(3) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonneval-sur-Arc>

13 Col du Télégraphe

Mountain pass · km 319.7



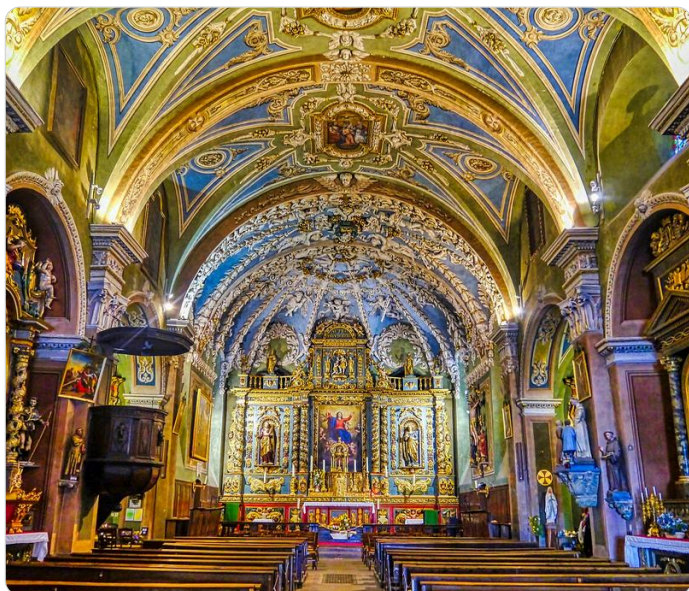
At 1,566 m, in the Cerces massif, the Col du Télégraphe links Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne with Valloire and serves as the approach to the north side of the Galibier. It is named after a Chappe semaphore tower with jointed arms, built in 1807 at the cliff's edge; the nearby Fort du Télégraphe made the most of its position above the Maurienne valley.

From Saint-Michel the climb runs 12.1 km at 7%, first through hamlets, then through forest in a long series of hairpins. Until 1944 a tunnel linked the two sides: on 23 August 1944 four French people were murdered there by the German army, which blew it up as it retreated. The Tour de France has rated it 31 times for the King of the Mountains.

Photos (cropped): (1) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Jesper Bøtger Mortensen, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_du_Télégraphe

14 Valloire

Village · km 325.5



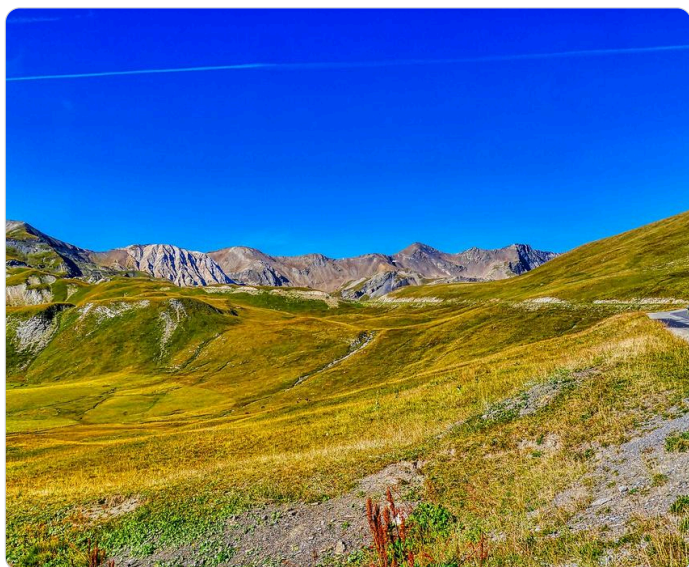
Made up of 17 mountain villages, Valloire spreads over the Valloirette basin between the Col du Télégraphe and the Galibier; it is the southernmost commune in Savoie, and its main village lies at 1,405 m. Its church of Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption, in the 17th-century Savoyard Baroque style and a listed monument, is among the most lavish in Savoie; a Baroque music festival is held there in early August.

A winter and summer resort, Valloire shares the Galibier-Thabor ski area, from 1,430 to 2,750 m, with Valmeinier. Every year, around 18 January, it hosts an international ice and snow sculpture competition.

Photos (cropped): (1) Zairon, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Zairon, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Florian Pépelin, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valloire>

15 Col du Galibier

Mountain pass · km 343.6



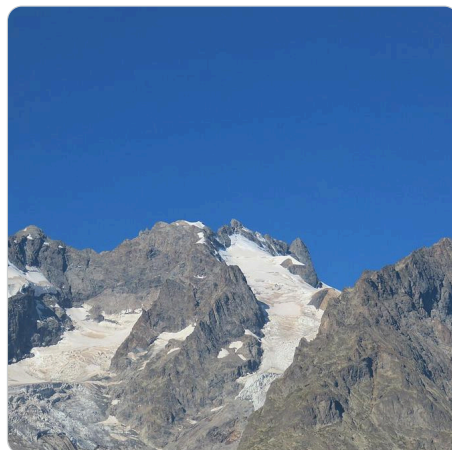
At 2,642 m, between Savoie and the Hautes-Alpes, the Col du Galibier traditionally marks the boundary between the Northern and Southern French Alps; closed in winter, it usually opens at the end of May or in early June. The road, begun in 1880, was completed in 1891 by a tunnel bored at the top: about a hundred metres below the pass, it was the only way across until 1976, when the road over the pass itself was laid out.

The Tour de France first climbed it on 10 July 1911: Émile Georget was the only rider to get over without putting a foot down, in the snow. Since 1949 a monument at the south end of the tunnel has honoured Henri Desgrange, who founded the Tour in 1903; the Souvenir Henri-Desgrange goes to the first rider over the highest point of the Tour, often this pass.

Photos (cropped): (1) MOSSOT, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Zairon, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Zairon, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_du_Galibier

16 Col du Lautaret

Mountain pass · km 352.2



At 2,057 m, the Col du Lautaret leads from the Romanche valley in the Oisans to the Guisane valley in the Briançonnais; it is the second-highest pass in France kept open in winter. Already used in Roman times, it carried the road from *Gratianopolis*, Grenoble, to *Brigantium*, Briançon. From the pass you see the Meije range to the south-west, the Grand Galibier to the north and several summits of the Écrins.

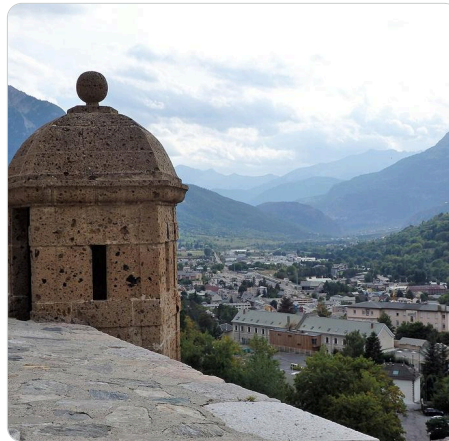
The pass is famous for its flora and its alpine botanical garden, a protected site; in 1913, after Scott died on his way back from the South Pole, Charcot had a cairn raised there in his memory. The national hospice where travellers and early mountaineers stopped, enlarged from 1893, gradually became a hotel.

Photos (cropped): (1) Mathieu BROSSAIS, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Calips, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Rémi, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Thbz, CC BY-SA 2.5, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_du_Lautaret

17 Briançon

Heritage town · km 380.1



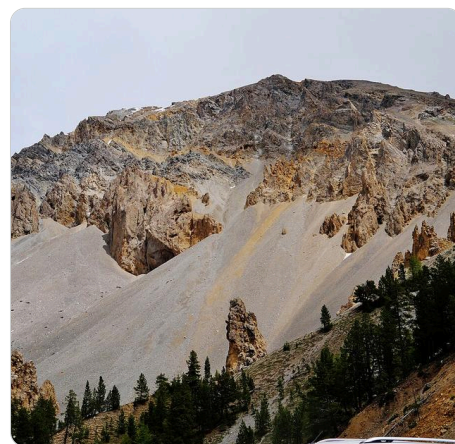
At 1,326 m, Briançon is regarded as the highest town in France and the European Union; it was built where the Durance is joined by the Clarée, the Guisane and the Cerveyrette. After the barbarian invasions, Roman *Brigantium* withdrew under the protection of the rock that overlooks the narrow Durance valley.

Once a frontier town, it had its fortifications strengthened by Vauban on his tour of 1700, then was ringed with forts by the Marquis d'Asfeld from 1721 to 1734. Six of these works have been a World Heritage Site since 2008: the town walls, the Salettes redoubt, the forts of Les Trois-Têtes and Le Randouillet, the Communication Y, a covered way linking the Trois-Têtes fort to the Randouillet fort, and the Asfeld bridge. In the old town, the collegiate church of Notre-Dame was built from 1705 to 1718.

Photos (cropped): (1) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) CHABERT Louis, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) CHABERT Louis, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Briançon>

18 Col d'Izoard

Mountain pass · km 399.7



At 2,362 m, in the north-west of the Queyras, the Col d'Izoard links Briançon with Château-Ville-Vieille; the road is closed from November to May or June between Le Laus and Brunissard. It was built from 1893 to 1897 by General Baron Berge, to whom a memorial was raised at the pass in 1934; a museum run by the Queyras regional nature park has been open there since 1989.

On the south side, which this roadbook descends towards Guillestre, the road crosses the Casse Déserte, an almost lunar bowl of pinnacles of cargneule, rock crushed as the Alps were formed, rising from long screes. A little lower, a stone honours Louison Bobet and Fausto Coppi: in 1953 Coppi, watching there, saw Bobet ride by and exclaimed "Il est beau Louison". The Tour de France has crossed the pass 36 times.

Photos (cropped): (1) Pline, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Pmau, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Pline, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_d'Izoard

19 Guillestre

Village · km 430.2



At 1,000 m, Guillestre overlooks the left bank of the Guil gorge, just before the river joins the Durance opposite Mont-Dauphin. The gateway to the Queyras, it is its only way in during winter, when the Agnel and Izoard passes are closed. The south side of the Izoard, 31.6 km long and considered the most famous, starts here.

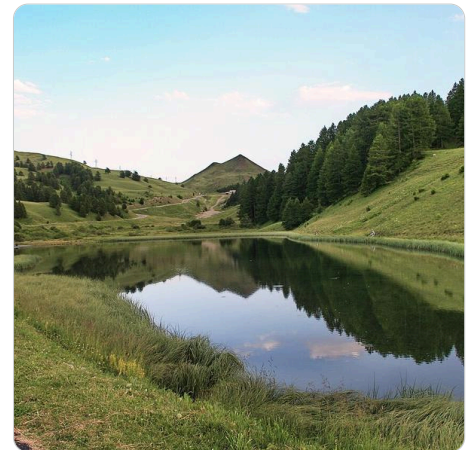
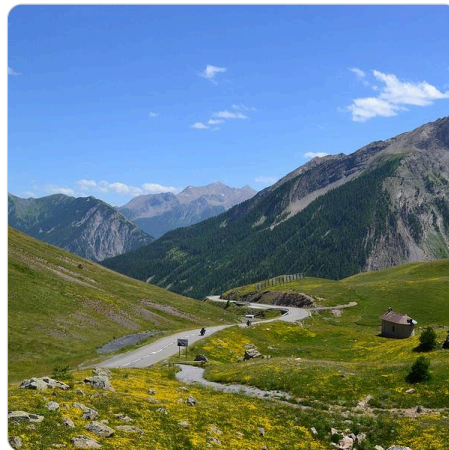
Its church of Notre-Dame-d'Aquilon was built from 1507 to 1532; its porch, modelled on the Réal at Embrun, dates from 1545. The Eyglies tower survives from the medieval ramparts, and the town gave its name to Guillestre marble.

Photos (cropped): (1) Pmk58, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) MOSSOT, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Swanzack, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillestre>, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_d'Izoard

20 Col de Vars

Mountain pass · km 450.0



At 2,108 m, between the Parpaillon and Escreins massifs, the Col de Vars links the Embrunais with the Ubaye valley, on the border between the Hautes-Alpes and the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. It is the highest road pass in France open all winter, barring exceptional conditions.

The road was built by the army, at the instigation of General Berge, commander of the 14th Corps in Lyon; to make it less vulnerable, the Parpaillon tunnel offers a second way through further west. A Napoleon refuge was built in 1855 two kilometres north of the pass. The Tour de France has crossed it 36 times, and the final scene of the film *Les Fugitifs*, with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard, was shot here against the Brec de Chambeyron.

Photos (cropped): (1) Mathieu BROSSAIS, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) MOSSOT, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) MartinD, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) patano, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_Vars

21 Barcelonnette

Town · km 480.4



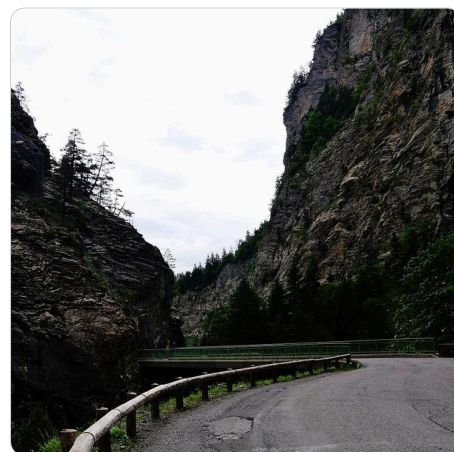
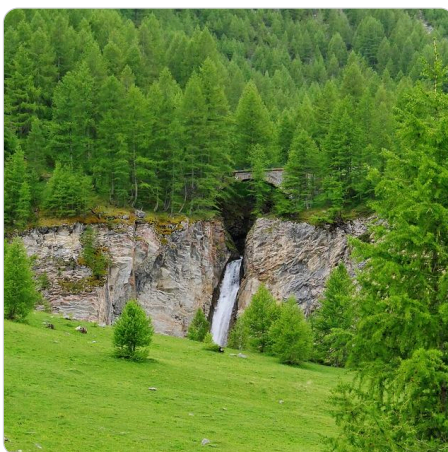
At 1,135 m, near the meeting of the Ubaye and the Bachelard, Barcelonnette is the main town of the Ubaye valley and its administrative and business centre. It was founded in 1231 by the Count of Provence Raymond Berengar IV; its Tour Cardinalis, or clock tower, 42 m high, is among the finest bell towers in the département.

From 1850 to 1950 the valley saw heavy emigration to Mexico, where its emigrants ran the trade and the textile industry, especially under Porfirio Díaz. Some, returning rich between 1870 and 1930, built villas in a “colonial style” around the town; since 1978 the sub-prefecture has occupied one of them, the Villa l’Ubayette, built from 1901 to 1903.

Photos (cropped): (1) Celeda, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Twice25 & Rinina25, CC BY 2.5, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Édouard Hue (User:EdouardHue), CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Olgierd Rudak, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelonnette>

22 Col de la Cayolle

Mountain pass · km 510.7



At 2,324 m, east of Mont Pelat (3,051 m), the Col de la Cayolle separates the Ubaye valley, through the Bachelard valley, from the upper Var valley; it is not cleared of snow from December to May. Its name means stony ground. From Barcelonnette the road climbs the Bachelard gorge, a striking stretch that the Touring Club de France helped to build. The 15 km section from Entraunes to the pass was mostly built from 1907 to 1914; Raymond Poincaré was to open it on 10 August 1914, but the outbreak of war kept him in Paris. The road moved the pass 300 m, and a marker there shows the boundary between the Alpes-Maritimes and the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. To the south the view drops to the seasonal Cayolle lake and the Val d'Entraunes.

Photos (cropped): (1) SchiDD, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Lulucmy, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(4) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_la_Cayolle, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes

23 Valberg

Village · km 556.8



A ski resort in the hills behind Nice, opened in 1936, Valberg stretches for two kilometres along a sunny slope at 1,700 m, between the upper Var and upper Cians valleys, in the communes of Guillaumes and Péone. Its ski area, linked with that of Beuil-Les Launes, rises to 2,027 m at the Cime du Faux-Raton; around the Place Charles-Ginésy and its pedestrian main street, the “village” gathers shops and services, near the chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges.

The route through Valberg is one of the 1995 changes: the Route des Grandes Alpes now leaves the Var valley at Guillaumes and avoids the Daluis gorge, cut through the red rocks of the Dôme de Barrot.

Photos (cropped): (1) Zil, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Ameilland, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) sebcotedazur, CC BY 2.5, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valberg>, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes

24 Col de la Couillole

Mountain pass · km 570.2



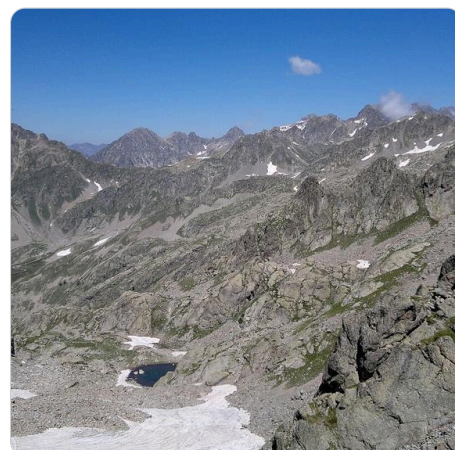
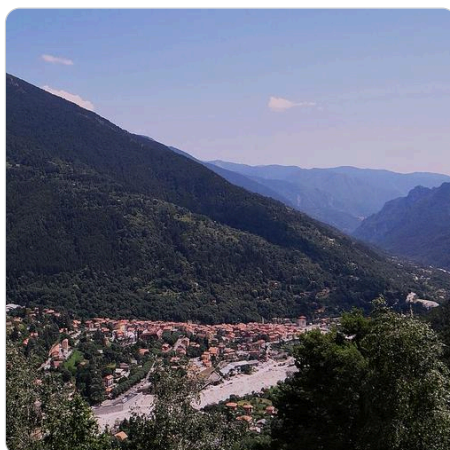
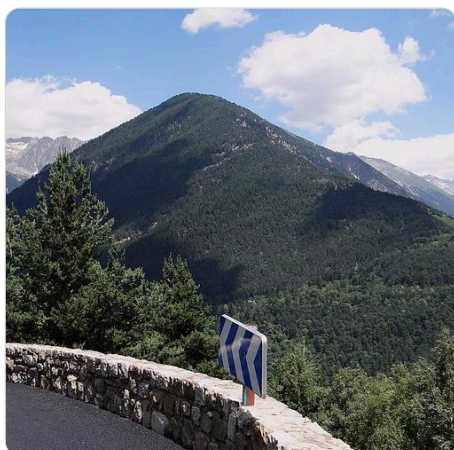
At 1,678 m, the Col de la Couillole links the Cians gorge to the west with the Tinée valley to the east; the road over it is open only six to seven months a year. Its name is thought to be a form of cayolle, Provençal for stony ground. The descent reaches the Tinée at Saint-Sauveur-sur-Tinée, from where the road climbs again towards Valdeblore and Saint-Martin-Vésubie.

On 13 July 1975 the Tour de France crossed it on the Nice to Pra-Loup stage, remembered for Eddy Merckx's collapse and Bernard Thévenet's rise to the lead. The pass has hosted two finishes of Paris-Nice, in 2017 and 2023, and a Tour de France finish in 2024, won by Tadej Pogačar.

Photos (cropped): (1) Jpmgir, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) MOSSOT, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Jpmgir, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_la_Couillole, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Route_des_Grandes_Alpes

25 Saint-Martin-Vésubie

Village · km 615.8



The last village at the northern end of the Vésubie valley, Saint-Martin-Vésubie stands on a spur where the Boréon meets the Madone de Fenestre torrent; it is the main gateway to the Mercantour National Park. Called Saint-Martin-Lantosque until 1889, the village was known from 1864 for its setting, its water and its cool summers, far from the heat of the coast, which earned it its nickname, the “Switzerland of Nice”.

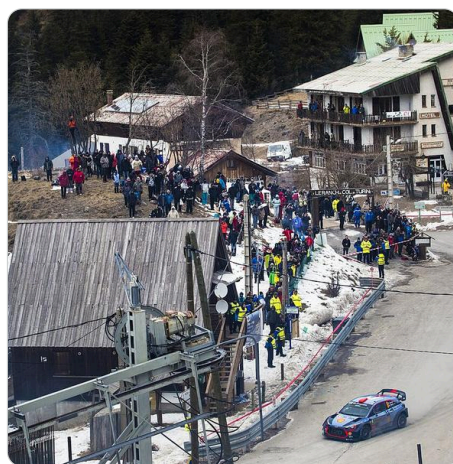
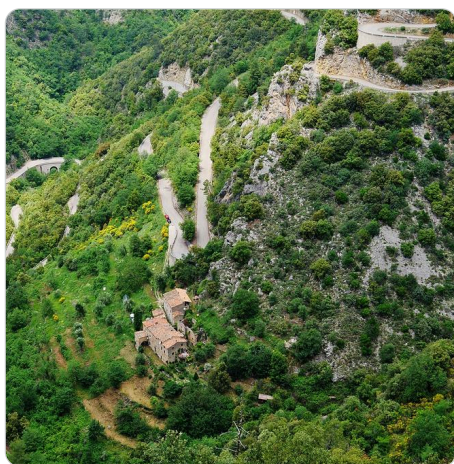
The Rue du Docteur-Cagnoli, narrow and steep, has the peculiarity of a gutter running down its middle. On 2 October 2020, during Storm Alex, the Boréon and the Vésubie rose 7 to 8 m above their usual level: the Maïssa bridge collapsed and the museum was swept away, except for its mills of 1490.

Photos (cropped): (1) Jpchevreau, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) MOSSOT, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) MOSSOT, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (4) Jose nunes barrios, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Martin-Vésubie>

26 Col de Turini

Mountain pass · km 643.3



At 1,604 m, near the top of the Authion massif, the Col de Turini links the Vésubie valley with the Bévéra valley; three main roads meet here, around a hamlet. The Monte-Carlo Rally uses it almost every time: in the race, drivers usually climbed it from Sospel before dropping down to La Bollène-Vésubie, by the side this roadbook climbs.

The Tour de France has crossed it five times, from 1948, when Louison Bobet was first over the top, to 2024, when Richard Carapaz was. The pass was also the setting for the end of Georges Lautner's film *Les Seins de glace* (1974). From the pass, this roadbook reaches Sospel via Peira-Cava and the Col de Braus.

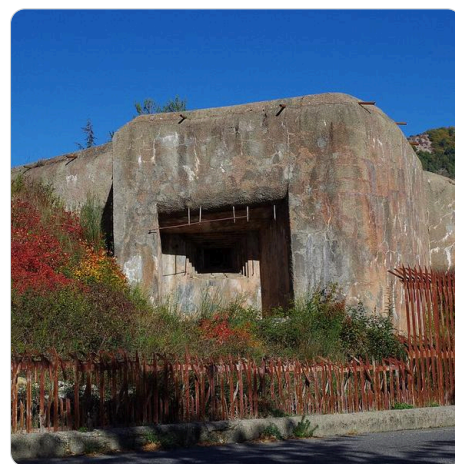
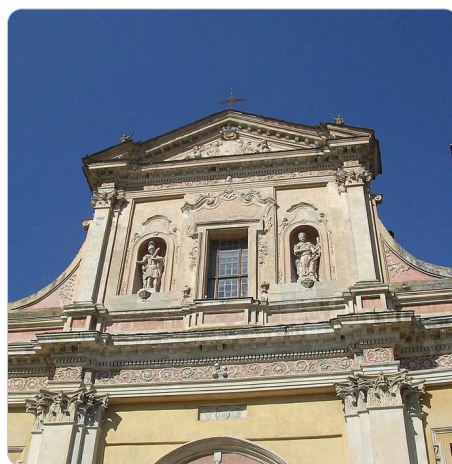
Photos (cropped): (1) Jérémie Forget, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Helena El Mokni, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(4) Anthospace, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_Turini

27 Sospel

Historic village · km 679.9



A medieval village on the Bévéra, Sospel is known for its Pont-Vieux, built in the early 13th century, probably of wood, and rebuilt in stone in 1522; damaged in October 1944 in the fighting of the Liberation, it was fully restored in 1953. Tradition has it that its central tower was a toll post on the royal salt road between Nice and Turin.

The Baroque co-cathedral of Saint-Michel stands on a square lined with arcaded houses; only its bell tower, in the Lombard style, recalls the Romanesque church that preceded it. A kilometre from the centre, on the road to Nice, Fort Saint-Roch, part of the Alpine Maginot Line built in the 1930s, is a true underground town 50 m deep.

Photos (cropped): (1) Broenberr, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Zairon, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Promeneuse7, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(4) Aude Lazaro ArcheOn, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sospel>

28 Col de Castillon

Mountain pass · km 687.1



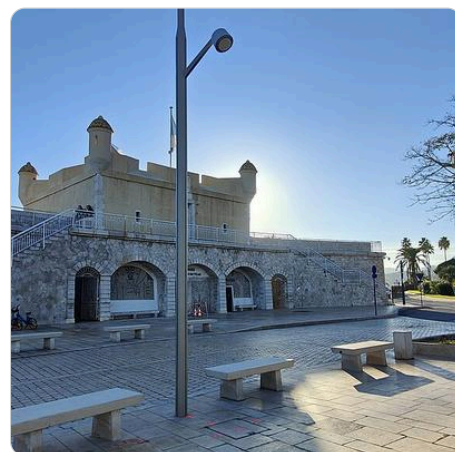
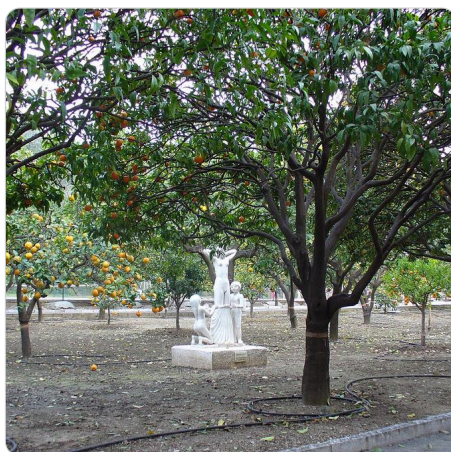
At 728 m, the Col de Castillon links the Bévéra valley to the north with the Careï valley and Menton to the south; the D 2566 crosses it, and the Tour de France has been over it 27 times. The road also serves the village of Castillon, rebuilt several times: after the War of the Austrian Succession, after the earthquake of 1887, and after the bombing of the winter of 1944–1945.

The new village, built halfway up the slope in the Provençal style, has become a village of artists, with workshops and galleries. In the commune, the 125 m Caramel viaduct, built in 1910, is one of the last remains of the tramway that ran from Menton to Sospel.

Photos (cropped): (1) Gilbert Bochenek, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Alistair Cunningham, CC BY 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Shesmax, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons
Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_de_Castillon, [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castillon_\(Alpes-Maritimes\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castillon_(Alpes-Maritimes))

29 Menton

Town · km 702.2



The last town before Italy, 7 km from Monaco, Menton was called the “Pearl of France” by the geographer Élisée Reclus. A free town together with Roquebrune, it became French in 1861, a year after the County of Nice. The resort is known for its Lemon Festival, held every year in the Biovès gardens.

The old town climbs in lanes and colourful façades up to the basilica of Saint-Michel, a jewel of the Baroque in the Menton area, whose forecourt hosts the Music Festival every summer. The Palais de Carnolès, once the home of Prince Antoine I of Monaco and now a fine arts museum, has in its garden the leading collection of citrus trees in France. On the harbour, the 17th-century bastion houses a museum devoted to Jean Cocteau.

Photos (cropped): (1) Piexv, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons · (2) Egaowakaii, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons · (3) Parisette, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons ·

(4) Al* from*Lig, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Text: Dryv, adapted from Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0) – [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menton_\(Alpes-Maritimes\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menton_(Alpes-Maritimes))