

Classic Cols Of The Alps



Duration: 5 days

KING OF THE MOUNTAINS CYCLES

This short but intensely demanding cycle challenge takes us through the heart of the French Alps, tackling a series of classic mountain climbs made famous by the Tour de France.

Spectacular views of mountain peaks, alpine valleys and hanging glaciers make the long twisting climbs worthwhile! Our challenge ends with two of the toughest and most renowned ascents in the region: the demanding Col du Galibier and the steep hair-pin bends of Alpe d'Huez.

Conquering these mountains will earn you a life-long sense of achievement and give you something in common with the most elite cyclists in the past 100 years!

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Geneva/Meet Annecy*

Annecy is a beautiful lakeside town in the French Alps, approx 1½ hours from Geneva. Depending on your flight times, you can either take the group transfer from Geneva* or meet at our hotel. After assembling and checking your bike, you can explore the picturesque narrow streets of Annecy. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

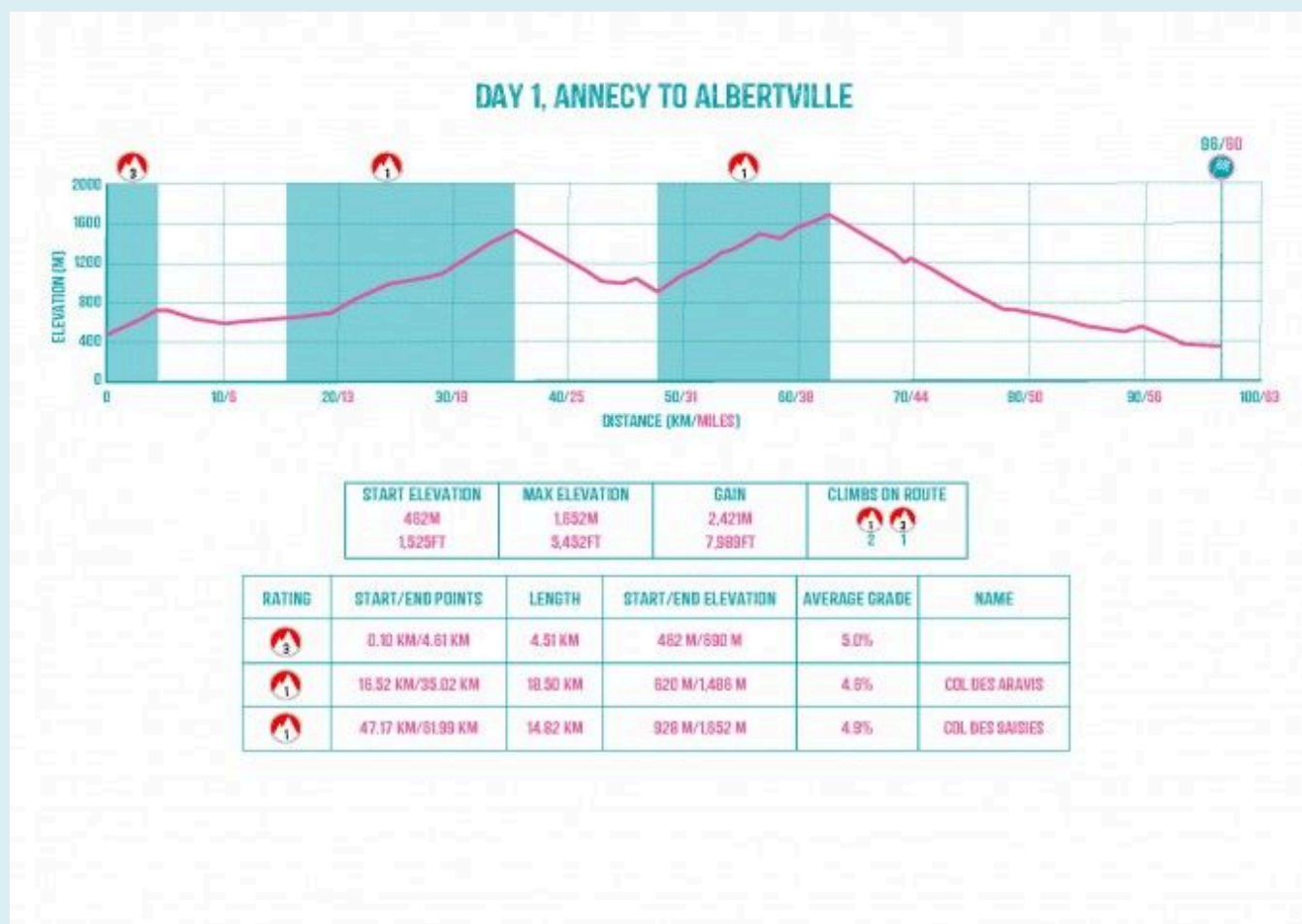
**One airport transfer from Geneva to Annecy will be provided at a pre-arranged time. To guarantee that you're included in this transfer, please ensure you provide us with your flight details a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the trip departure.*

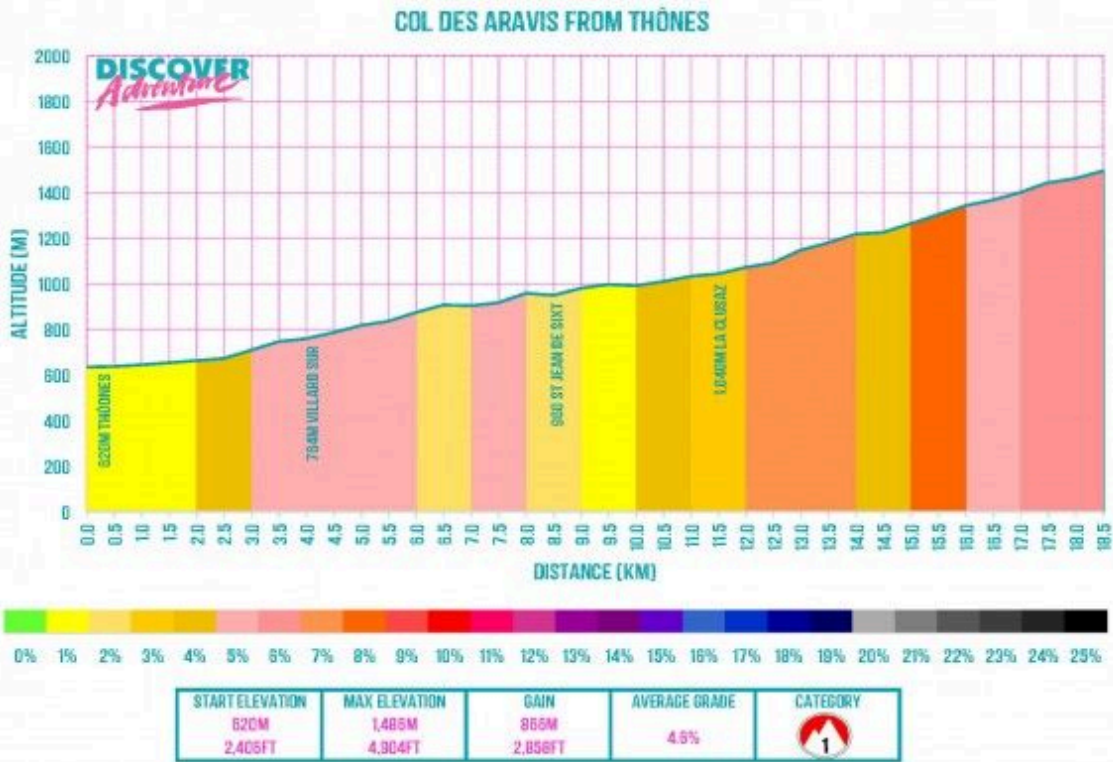
Day 2: Annecy – Col des Aravis – Col des Saisies – Albertville

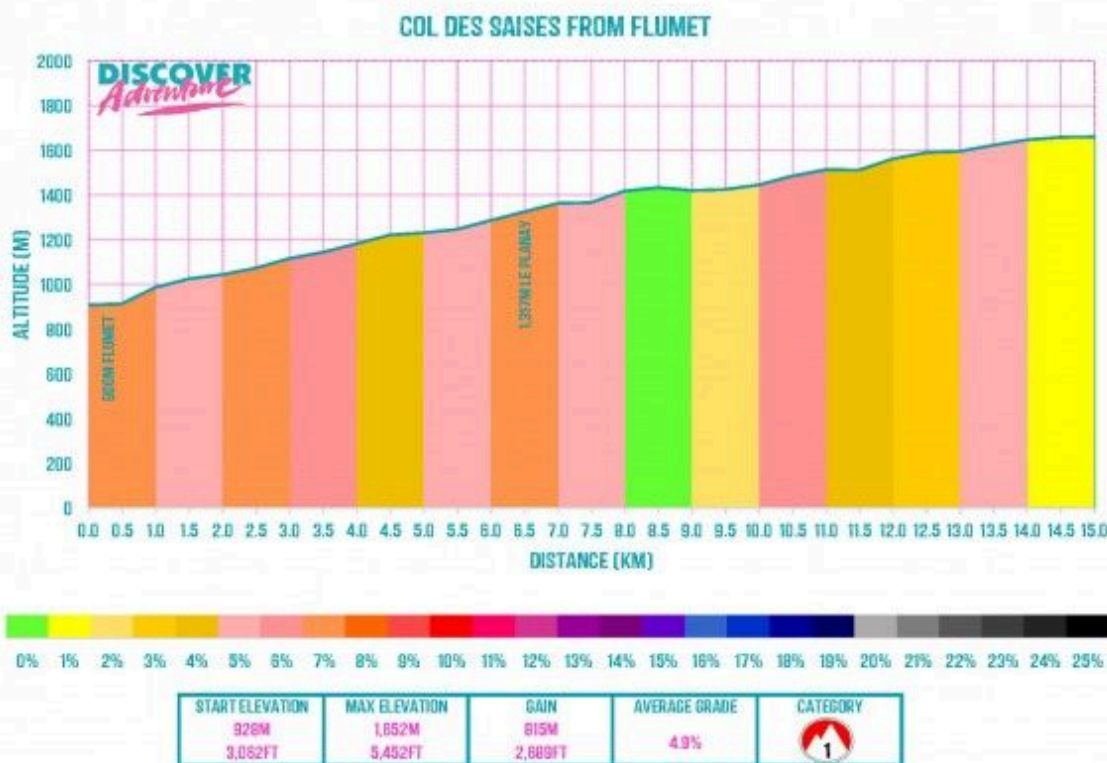
Up early for our first day in the saddle! Heading out of Annecy, the valley terrain provides a perfect warm-up as we head towards the ski-resort town of La Clusaz. The road undulates on rolling valley roads through pretty towns and villages with plenty of roadside cafés! Passing through St George du Sixt, the anticipation builds as we see signs for the Col des Aravis. We head up steadily, reaching the summit at 1487m: a relatively short and gentle climb but still our first col and a significant achievement! Once we have reached the top we enjoy a fabulous descent. It's over too soon; once through Flumet, we start to climb again. The Col des Saisies is a longer climb but you should be fully warmed up by now and should find your rhythm again quickly, despite resting your legs on the descent. It's important not to over-do it – just climb at your own pace, resting when you need to. More cafés await us at the summit (1652m) and we stop for a quick celebratory coffee before relishing the long sweeping descent down to Albertville. Night hotel. *(Lunch not included)*

Cycle approx 100km (60 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE







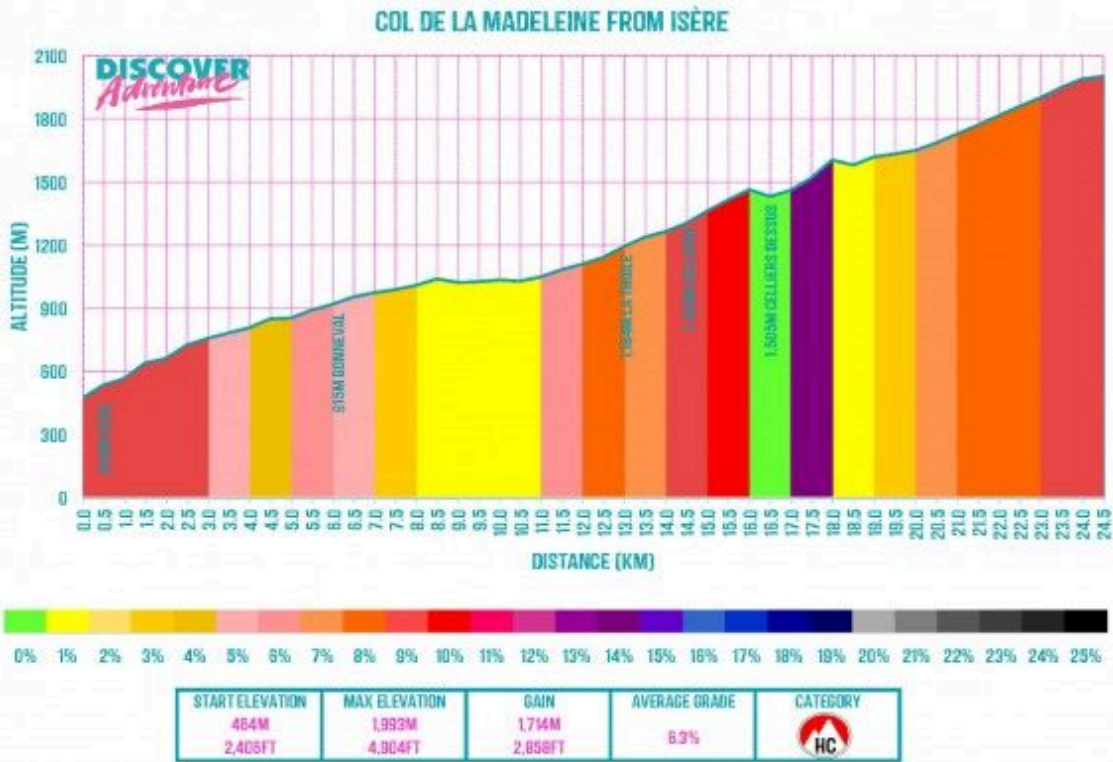
Day 3: Albertville – Col de la Madeleine – Col du Télégraphe – Valloire

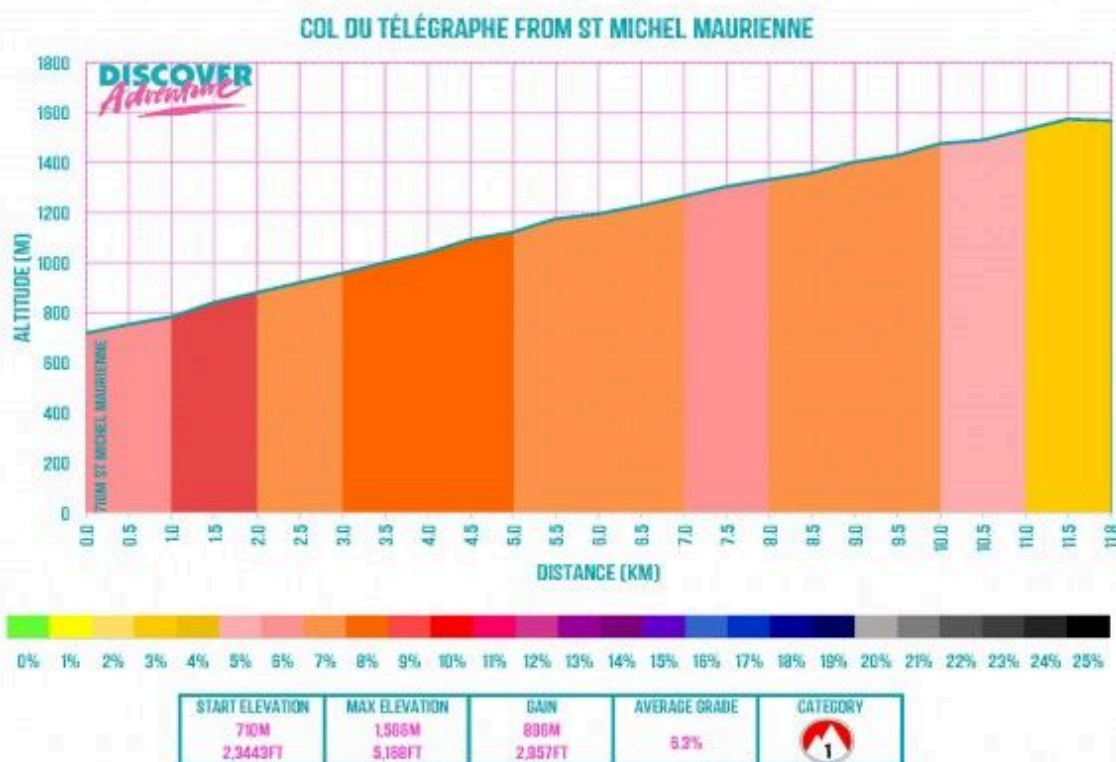
After a good night's rest, we head out of Albertville along the valley, stretching our legs on the gently undulating roads. It won't seem long before we reach our first climb of the day, the Col de la Madeleine (1993m). Steeper than yesterday's cols, this is a good transition day! It's important to pace yourself as this is a long climb at almost 25km. Fabulous views open up at every twist of the road, and will distract your mind from your suffering legs! Reaching the top, you'll be greeted by fellow cyclists and can stop for a drink and to appreciate the views. A long, welcome descent takes us to the lovely town of La Chambre and a welcome lunch-stop. We cycle along flatter roads towards St Michel, warming up our legs again before tackling the second climb of the day, the Col du Télégraphe. This is a tough climb, shorter than this morning's effort but considerably steeper, and you have really earned a celebration when you reach the top of the pass (1566m). We enjoy the views and rest our legs for a little before a short descent, heading for our hotel in the valley town of Valloire and a chance to rest thoroughly before tomorrow: the biggest day of our challenge. Night hotel. *(Lunch not included)*

Cycle approx 110km (64 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE







Day 4: Valloire – Col du Galibier – Alpe d'Huez – Bourg d'Oisans

Upon leaving Valloire, we can immediately appreciate that we have not lost much of the height gained on yesterday's Col du Télégraphe. In real terms, we are part-way up the feared Galibier already – which psychologically is a real boon. However, there is still a long haul, and the climbing starts almost straightaway, so it's important to pace yourself gently and get your body used to the bike again! After 8km our legs will be feeling nicely warmed up and we are greeted with a short, flattish section and absolutely stunning scenery before starting the 'real' climb of the Col du Galibier. Weather permitting, we avoid the mountain tunnel and ride on smaller roads with plenty of hair-pin bends through this stunning mountain range. The last section is particularly steep, with a gradient of 10% over the last kilometre. You will need all your mental determination to keep the pedals turning, but the sense of achievement on reaching the top will be one to remember forever! At the top you are greeted by a monument to Henri des Granges, the founder of the Tour de France – a perfect group photo stop!

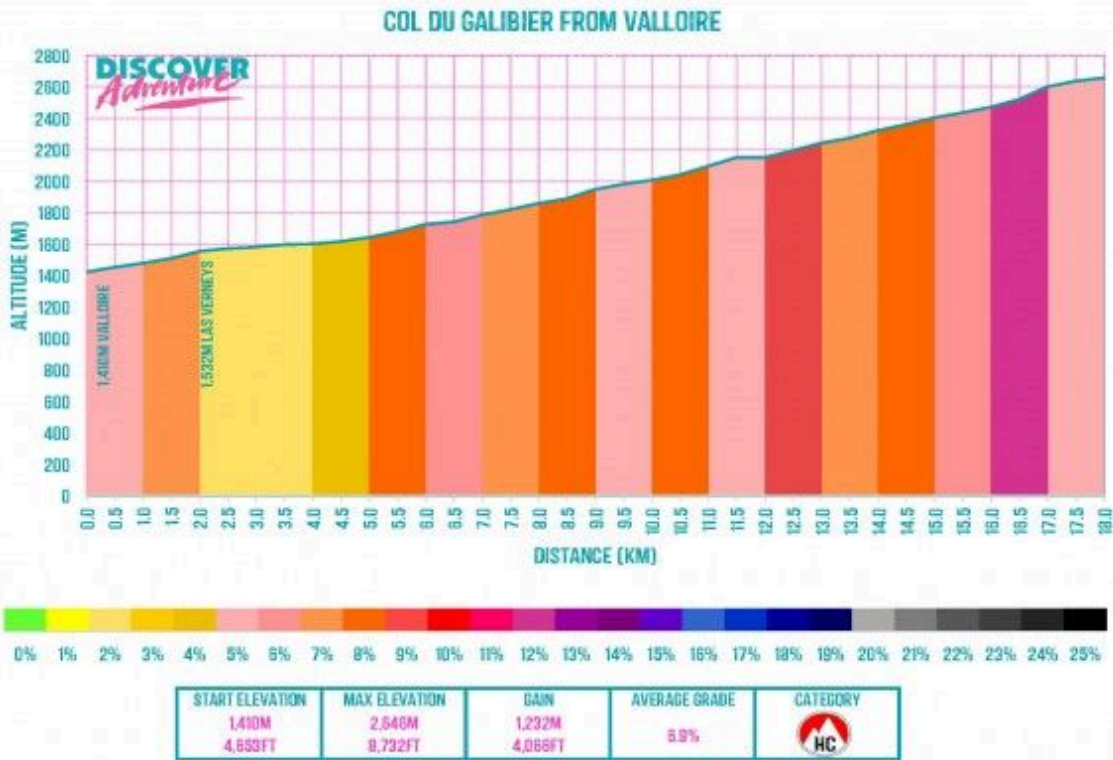
We don't stop for long! Heading downhill towards lunch in the valley, we enjoy the amazing landscape of this region – a whole new set of views! After we have rested and refuelled, we head off towards the lovely town of Bourg d'Oisans and the start of the most famous climb of them all, Alpe d'Huez. At 'only' 14km long, the climb is relatively short but Alpe d'Huez is notorious for many reasons, not least its steep gradients. The distance to the first hair-pin bend has a gradient of over 10%, and it feels a very long way; there's a fabulous view over the valley just from this first landmark! From here you can count down the 21 hair-pin bends or lacets, which are all numbered and dedicated to winners of Tour de France stages. The climb will be hard, especially after your efforts

on the Galibier, but enjoy every minute as this fabulous mountain marks the end of your challenge! We celebrate our incredible achievement at the top of the mountain, where the ski-resort is a thriving town in the summer months with many souvenir shops and cafés. After time to take it all in, we enjoy our last thrilling descent back down the mountain to Bourg d'Oisans, check into our hotel and celebrate in style! Night hotel. *(Lunch not included)*

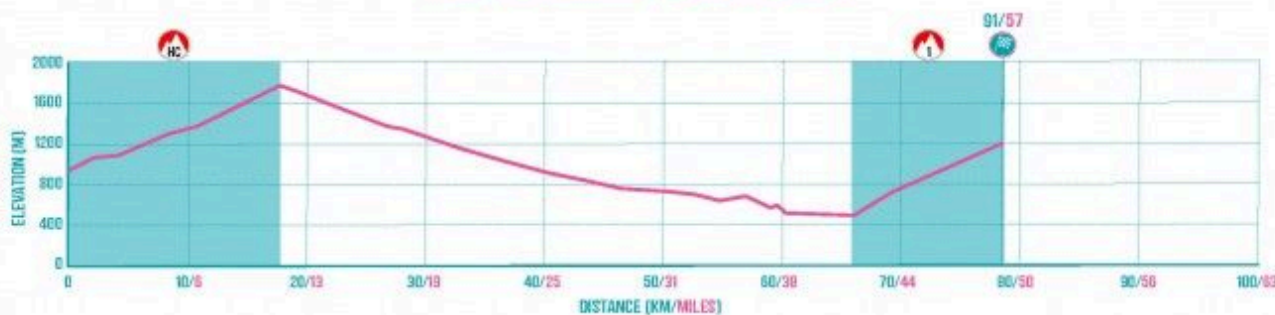
Cycle approx 105km (62 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE





DAY 3, VALLOIRE TO ALPE D'HUEZ



START ELEVATION	MAX ELEVATION	GAIN	CLIMBS ON ROUTE
1,410M 4,626FT	2,846M 9,371FT	2,881M 9,507FT	

RATING	START/END POINTS	LENGTH	START/END ELEVATION	AVERAGE GRADE	NAME
	0.00 KM/18.00 KM	18.00 KM	1,410 M/2,846 M	6.9%	COL DU SALIBIER
	65.50 KM/79.00 KM	13.5 KM	744 M/1,815 M	8.1%	ALPE D'HUEZ

Day 5: Depart Bourg d'Oisans

After breakfast, say your goodbyes and it's homeward bound, depending on your own arrangements.

**One airport transfer from Bourg d'Oisans to Geneva will be provided at a pre-arranged time. To guarantee that you're included in this transfer, please ensure you provide us with your flight details a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the trip departure.*

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meals except where specified (breakfast and dinner will be provided at hotels each day)
- Snacks en-route
- Accommodation on a twin-share basis
- One airport transfer from Geneva to Annecy will be provided at a pre-arranged time*
- One airport transfer from Bourg d'Oisans to Geneva will be provided at a pre-arranged time*
- Discover Adventure leader and roving crew member for mechanical support/ coaching and support vehicle
- Mapping, GPX files and route information

* To guarantee that you're included in this transfer, please ensure you provide us with your flight details a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the trip departure

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Lunch (opportunity to buy lunch to carry with you, or stop in a café en-route) and any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Flights
- Bicycle & bicycle transportation to/from the start/finish line
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | RED

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **RED** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by an experienced Discover Adventure leader and a supporting crew member for groups of over 12 participants. Our leaders are selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones and/or radios where appropriate, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary.

The support vehicle will be with the group all of the time, and will carry all luggage and spares.

The route will be supplied as a GPX file and therefore there will be no route marking by way of orange arrows (helping us to reduce our carbon footprint).

You will also have access to the the route via Google Maps which will show where your position is relative to the route - therefore helping you get back on track if you go off course. This will also show you the location of upcoming climbs and water-stops.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Accommodation

We usually stay in hotels or lodges of a 2-3* standard or equivalent. Standards may vary between the hotels but they are generally comfortable and convenient for our route. Hotels are often on the outskirts of towns to minimise unnecessary extra mileage and avoid traffic.

Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels convenient to our route. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

There may be a limited number of single rooms subject to request, on a first-come first-served basis, after you have booked. Extra charges will apply.

Group Size

This challenge has been designed specifically for small groups. They can run with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15 participants. We have capped the number of participants on this trip to 15 so that our crew can concentrate on client experience and give coaching on route.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful and will give you plenty of energy. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is

not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

All food is included except where specified. Dinners are generally eaten in the hotel. A packed baguette for lunch can be arranged with your crew or you are free to stop en-route and enjoy some of the local fayre. Please let us know of any dietary requirements well in advance.

A roaming vehicle will provide additional water and snacks to boost your energy during the ride - these will replace our standard water-stops which you may have experienced on previous challenges. On climbs, large water barrels may be left en-route.

This system will enable our crew to provide you with greater support and coaching during the ride.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Fitness Levels

Participants who sign on to these trips must meet the following criteria:

- Cycle at least 100miles per day at an average pace of 20km per hour, over an undulating route. Failure to do so may result in receiving significantly less support from the challenge leader
 - Completed previous multi-day cycle trips
 - Confidently and efficiently fix a puncture by replacing the inner tube
 - Confidently navigate whilst riding using a Garmin or mobile phone app
 - Ridden a Category 1 or HC (*Hors catégorie*) climb before and have the right gear set up for this - note, this may mean having a climbing cassette fitted to your bike
 - Must be able to carry adequate clothing to cope with mountainous weather - jacket, arm and leg warmers, gloves and under hat
 - Must be able to confidently descend using drop handlebars or have their bike set up with secondary brakes
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Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.
Please note: This document was downloaded on 20 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.