



CLASSIC COLS OF THE ALPS

FRANCE, SWITZERLAND • CYCLE • RED 1

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

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!

CLASSIC COLS OF THE ALPS • 5 DAYS

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.*

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 (1650m) 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

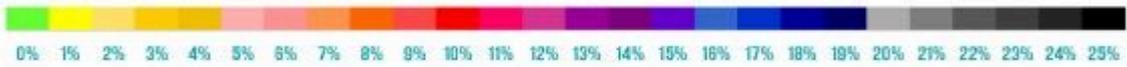
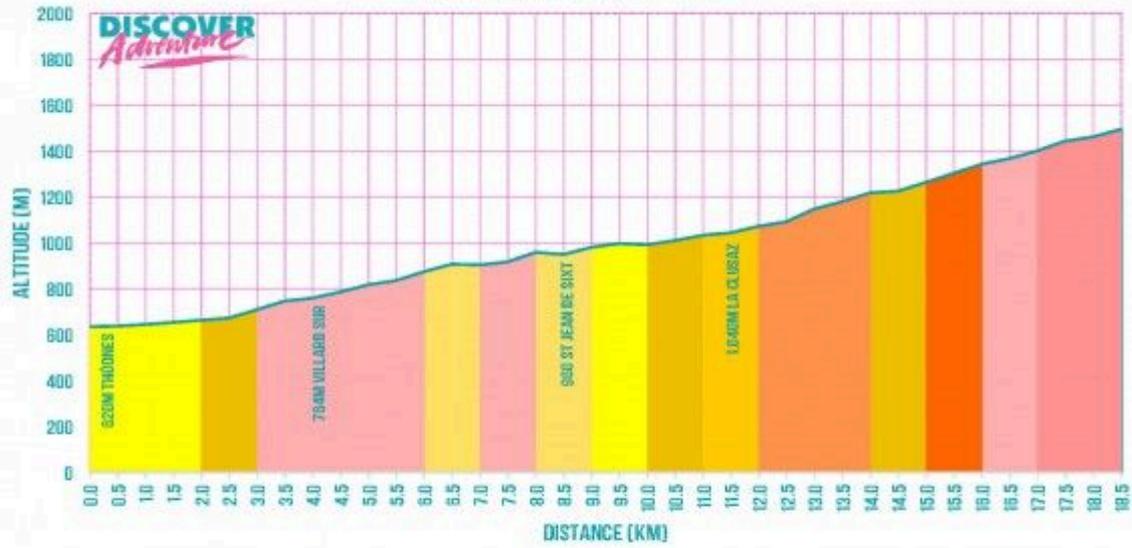
DAY 1, ANNECY TO ALBERTVILLE



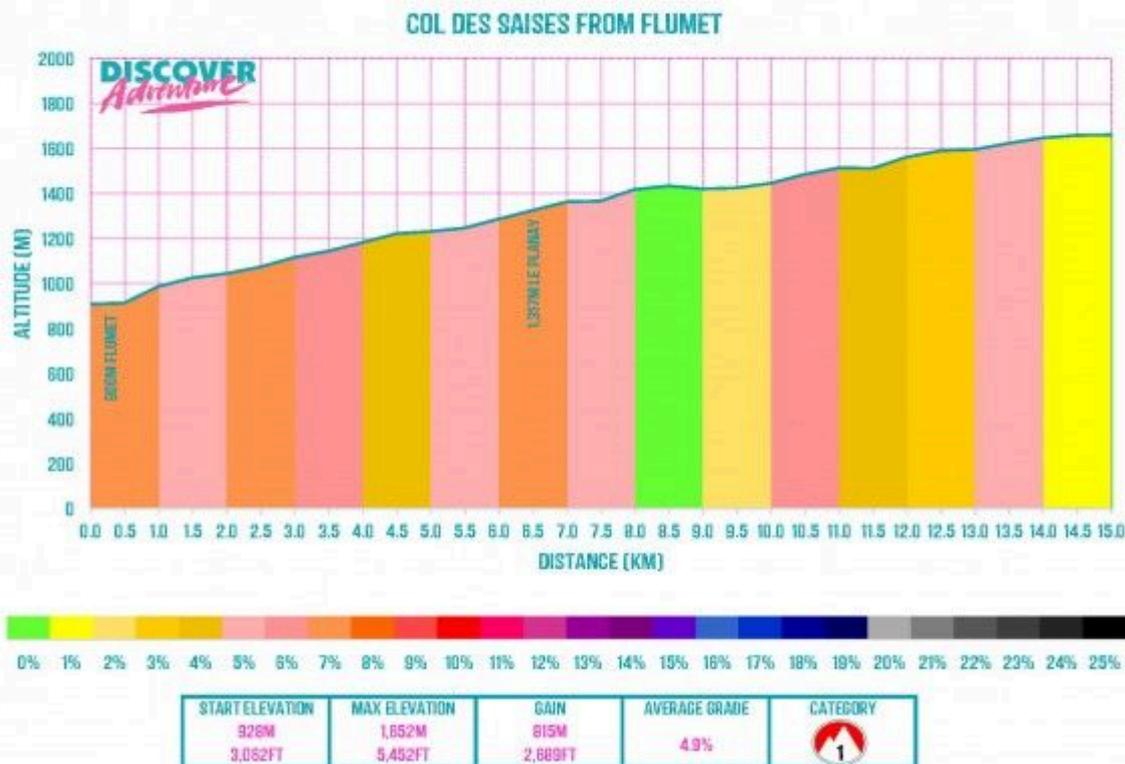
START ELEVATION 482M 1,583FT	MAX ELEVATION 1,652M 5,422FT	GAIN 2,421M 7,989FT	CLIMBS ON ROUTE 3 2 1
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RATING	START/END POINTS	LENGTH	START/END ELEVATION	AVERAGE GRADE	NAME
3	0.10 KM/4.61 KM	4.51 KM	482 M/590 M	5.0%	
1	16.52 KM/35.02 KM	18.50 KM	620 M/1,486 M	4.6%	COL DES ARAVIS
1	47.17 KM/61.99 KM	14.82 KM	928 M/1,652 M	4.9%	COL DES SAISIES

COL DES ARAVIS FROM THONES



START ELEVATION	MAX ELEVATION	GAIN	AVERAGE GRADE	CATEGORY
620M 2,405FT	1,485M 4,904FT	865M 2,856FT	4.5%	1



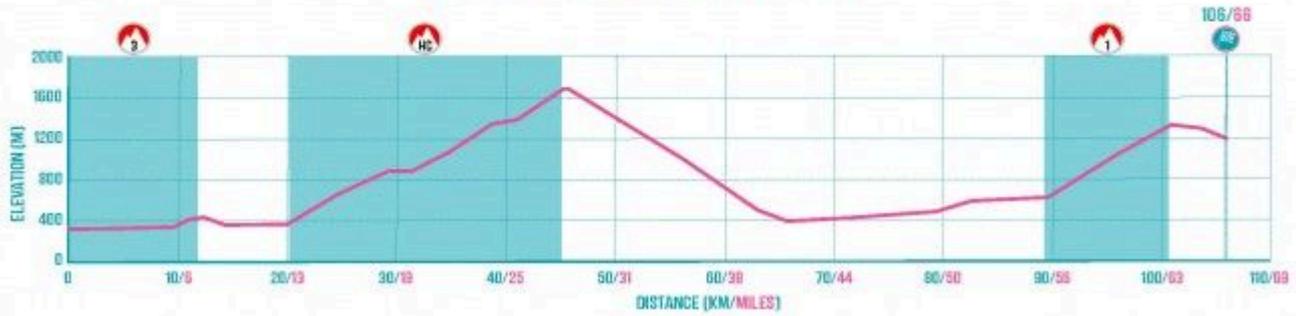
Day 3: Albertville – Col de la Madeleine – Col du Télégraphe – Valloire

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)

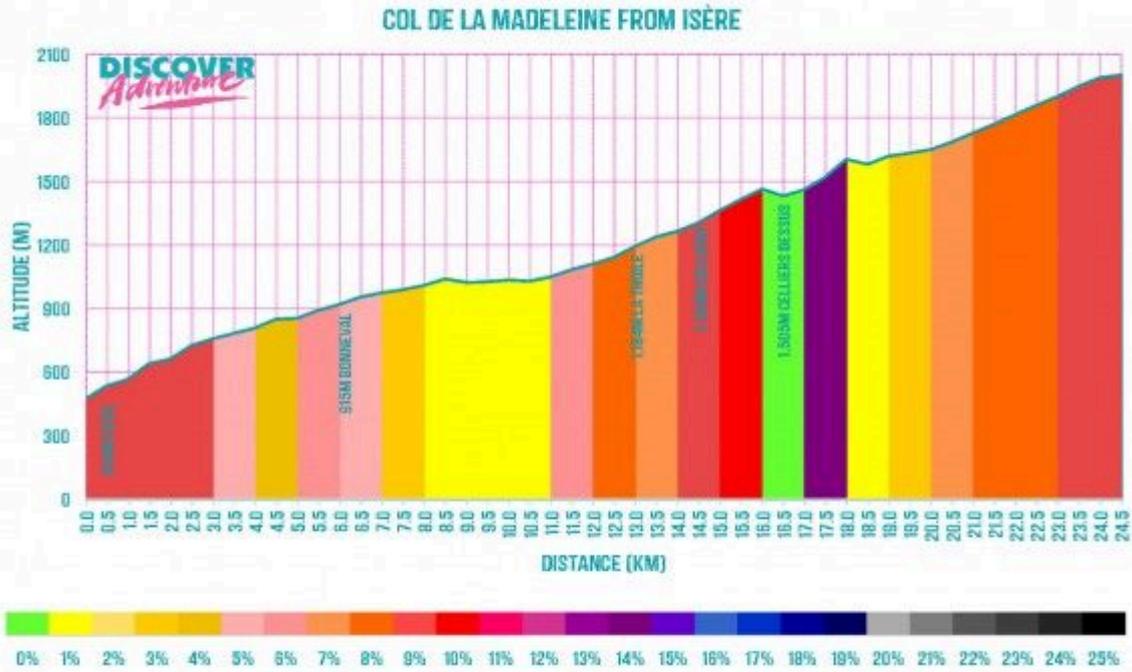
ROUTE PROFILE

DAY 2, ALBERTVILLE TO VALLOIRE

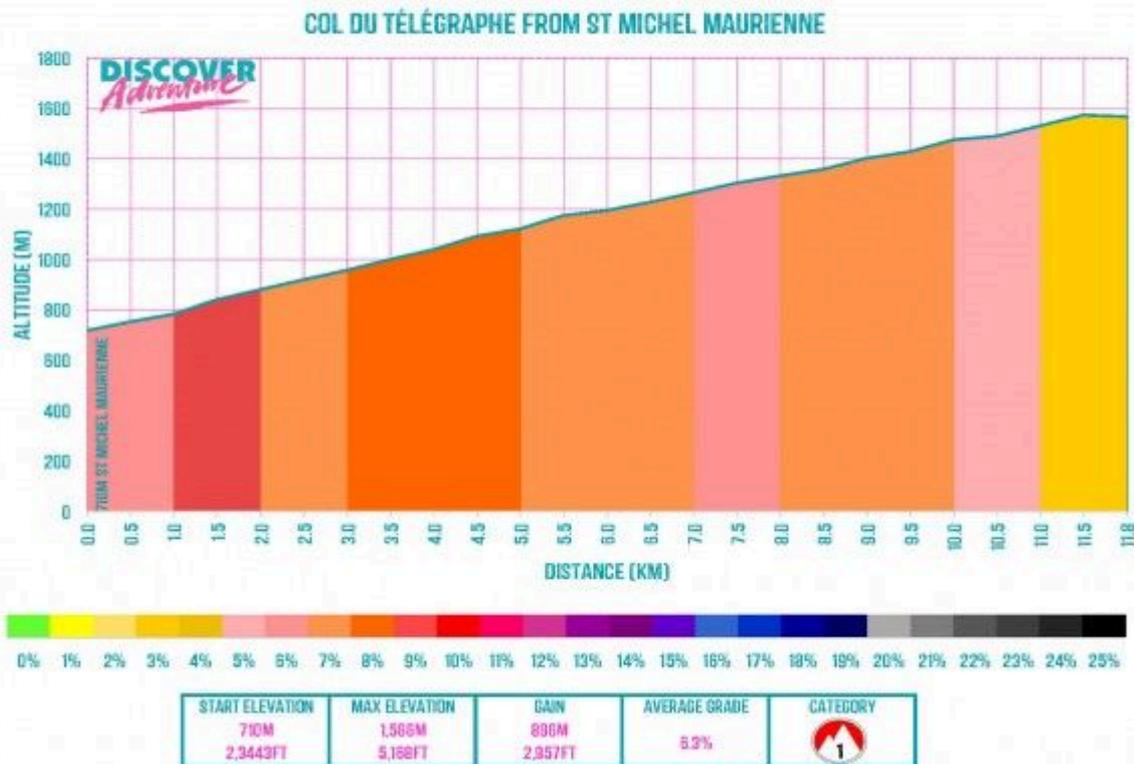


START ELEVATION 333M 1,099FT	MAX ELEVATION 1,993M 6,577FT	GAIN 3,371M 11,244FT	CLIMBS ON ROUTE 1 1 1
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RATING	START/END POINTS	LENGTH	START/END ELEVATION	AVERAGE GRADE	NAME
	0.10 KM/11.72 KM	11.62 KM	332 M/488 M	1.3%	
	20.80 KM/43.30 KM	24.5 KM	484 M/1,993 M	8.3%	COL DE LA MADELEINE
	89.50 KM/101.30 KM	11.80 KM	710M/1,588 M	8.3%	COL DU TELEGRAPHE



START ELEVATION	MAX ELEVATION	GAIN	AVERAGE GRADE	CATEGORY
464M 2,405FT	1,993M 4,904FT	1,714M 2,858FT	6.3%	



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

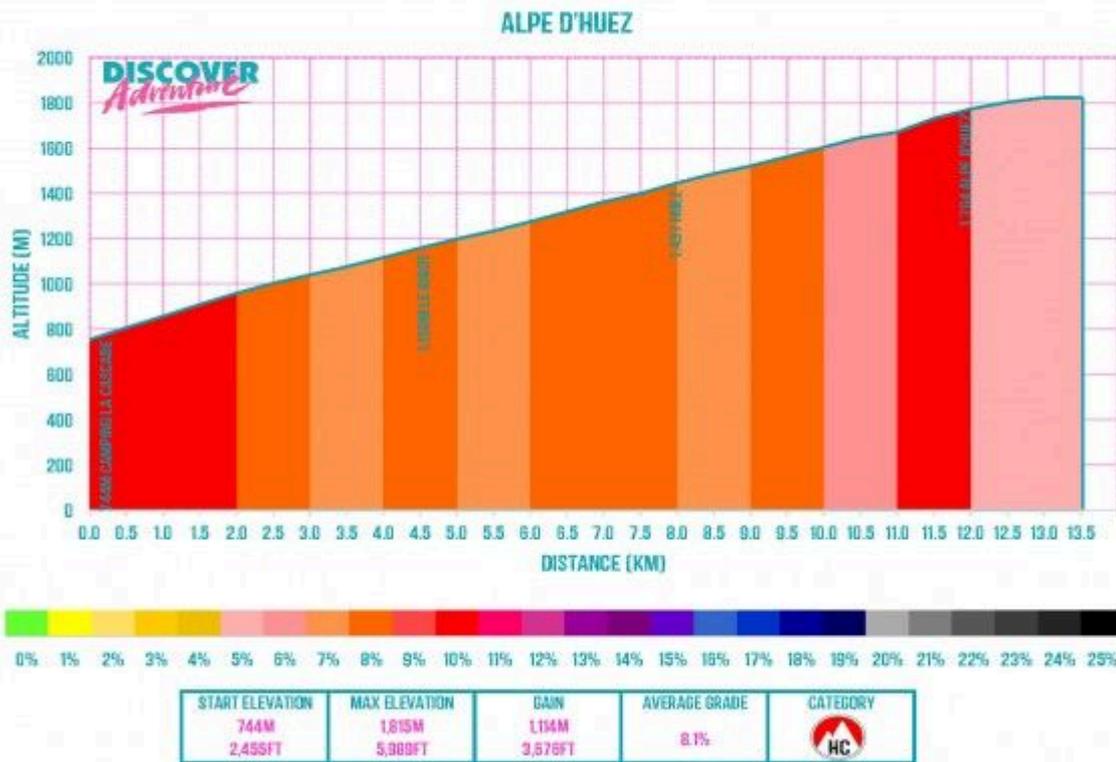
Upon leaving Valloire, we can immediately appreciate that we have not lost much of the height gained on yesterday’s Col du Télégraphe. In real terms, we are part-way up the feared Galibier already – which psychologically is a real boon. However, there is still a long haul, and the climbing starts almost 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!

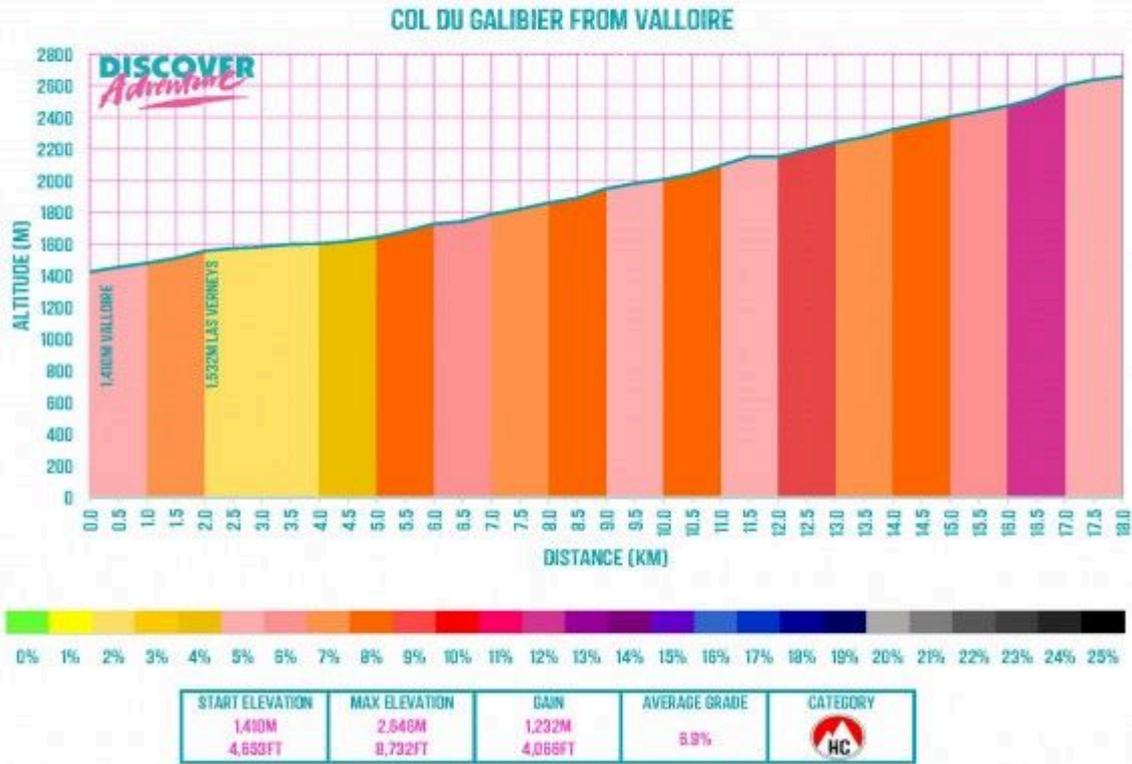
We don’t stop for long! Heading downhill towards lunch in the valley, we enjoy the amazing landscape of this region – a whole new set of views! After we have rested and refuelled, we head off towards the lovely town of Bourg d’Oisans and the start of the most famous climb of them all, Alpe d’Huez. At ‘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)*

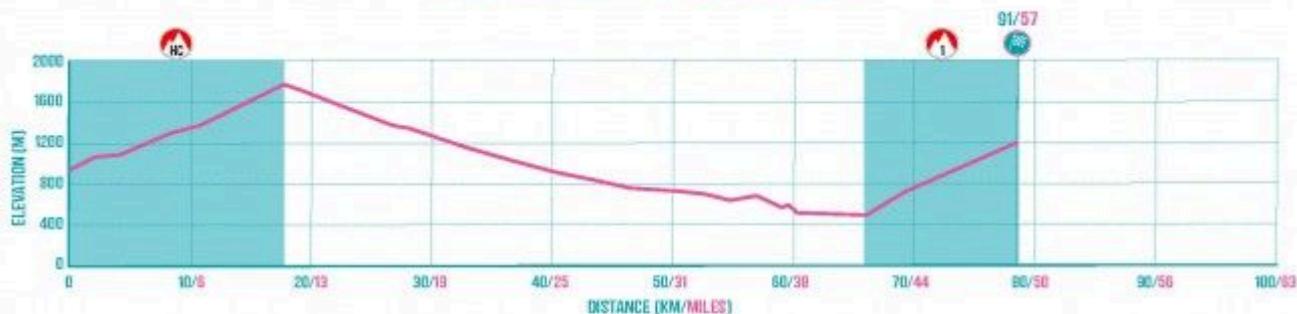
Cycle approx 105km (62 miles)

ROUTE PROFILE





DAY 3, VALLOIRE TO ALPE D'HUEZ



START ELEVATION	MAX ELEVATION	GAIN	CLIMBS ON ROUTE
1,410M 4,630FT	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 GALIBIER
	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.

A group airport transfer is available, please note this will be chargeable and needs to be requested 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
- Discover Adventure leader and roving crew member for mechanical support/ coaching and support vehicle
- Mapping, GPX files and route information

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
- A return group airport transfer is available, please note this will be chargeable and needs to be requested prior to the trip departure
- Bicycle
- 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](#)



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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 27 Mar 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.