



CREATING SENSATIONS

PRESS PACK

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4 QUESTIONS FOR THE GTMC TEAM

What is the GTMC?

The Grande Traversée du Massif Central (the "Big Massif Central Crossing") - or GTMC to fans - is an **XXL mountain-bike trail (1380 km) from Morvan to the Mediterranean**. For muscle-powered or electric bikes, gravel bikes or travel bikes: the GTMC is designed for all shapes and sizes! The whole trail is a "must do" for experienced mountain bikers, but you can also explore the GTMC in sections. For a weekend or a week, this is a chance to recharge your batteries and get away from it all in some of the best-preserved regions in France.

What is the difference between the GTMC and other mountain-bike trails?

Apart from its length, unmatched in France, the GTMC stands out through **its history**. It was created in the mid-1990s, when the French were still getting to know mountain biking. A community of fans soon grew up around the trail, so that sharing became the central value of the GTMC. This value inspired the trail's relaunch in 2018. It was extended from 680 to 1380 km and recreated to make it totally accessible to electric mountain bikes. More than ever, the GTMC deserves its reputation as the "trail to share".

The GTMC also stands out through **the diversity of its landscapes and the sites on the way**. The big Morvan lakes, the Loire Valley and the Allier Valley, the Puys mountain chain and volcanic plateaus, Mont-Aigoual, Causses, Cirque de Navacelles and Lac du Salagou, all the way to the Mediterranean beaches... Each day there is a new panorama, prompting many mountain bikers to come back year after year to continue their journey where they had left off.

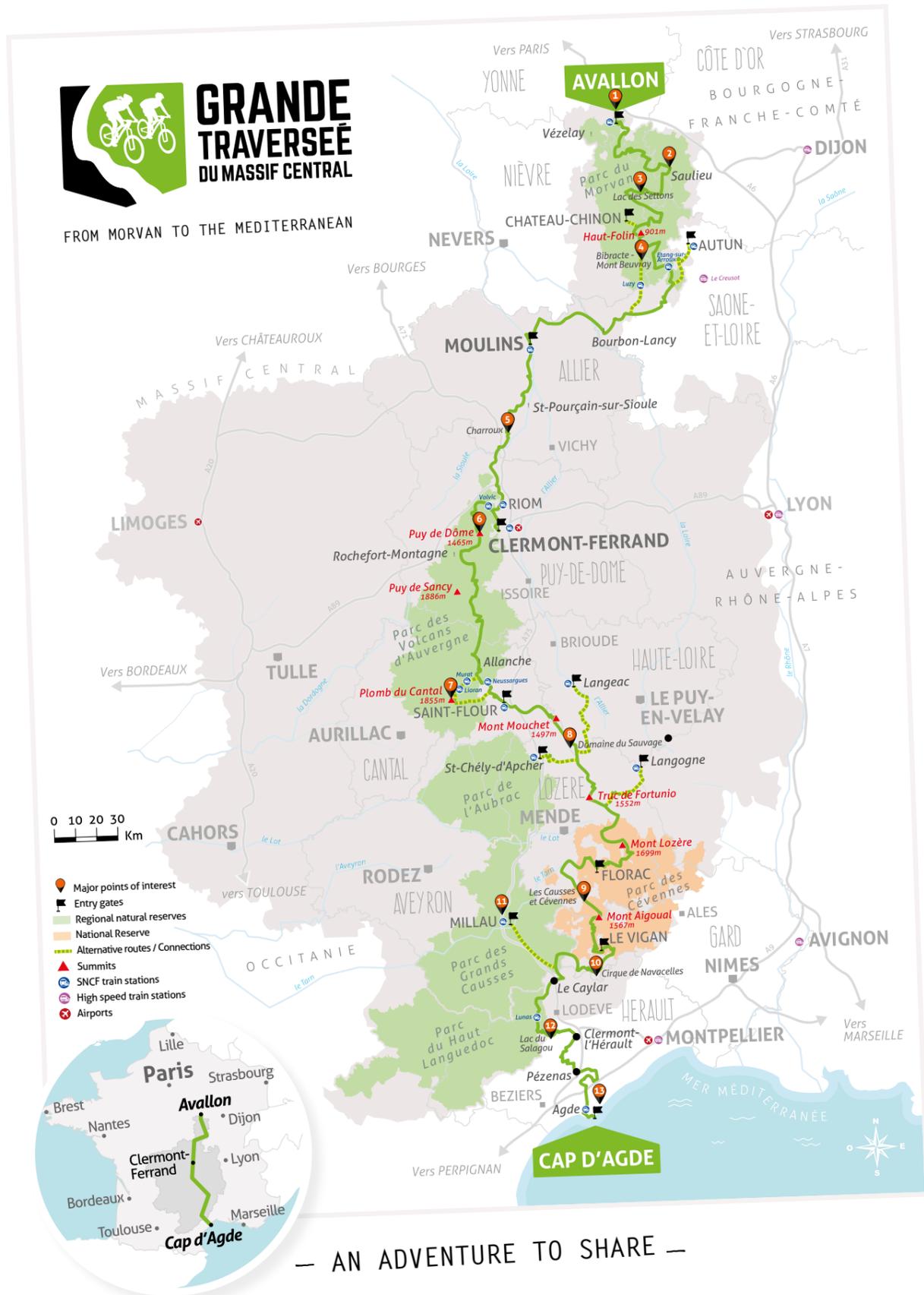
What does the GTMC bring to the regions it goes through?

At a time when more and more French and overseas visitors dream of open-air holidays, the GTMC is a real asset and selling point for providers of services along the trail. **The trail is practicable most of the year**, making it possible to extend the holiday season, from the enchanting presages of spring to the flamboyant days of autumn. **The GTMC is also helping to give an overall structure to the Massif Central**, because everyone involved is going beyond the administrative borders and working together to develop the trail. Lastly, **the deployment of the "GTMC recommended services" label** leads to continuous improvements in facilities... while guaranteeing a top-quality welcome to mountain bikers!

Who can set off on the GTMC?

Everyone! If you choose your route and your bike carefully, you are sure to find what you are looking for on the GTMC, provided you like the great outdoors and travelling by bike. **Some variations are a chance for people who are more technically and physically at ease to have fun** on the descents or to feel their legs burning on the climbs, while lovers of good food can enjoy a wide range of local specialities in the different regions on the trail. Born adventurers will love the ride through the Morvan National Park in complete independence. Families will probably prefer investigating the story of the Beast of Gévaudan, alternating cycling and fun visits. Seasoned cyclists can tackle the Auvergne volcanoes, while food-lovers can test out the French saying "après l'effort, le réconfort" ("after the effort comes the reward") in the Burgundy vineyards or Mediterranean beaches."

OVERVIEW: THE GTMC IN ONE MAP



KEY FIGURES

1380 KM
in 31 stages

2 DIFFERENT ROUTES
6 LINK POINTS

- Links possible with other mountain-bike trails
- Links with SNCF train stations

30 000 M
of elevation gain



1 500 TO 2000
cyclists in 2019

100% of the trail is marked out



3 REGIONS

Bourgogne-Franche-Comté,
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
& Occitanie



12 FRENCH DEPARTMENTS

Yonne • Côte-d'Or • Nièvre • Saône-et-Loire • Allier
Puy-de-Dôme • Cantal • Haute-Loire • Lozère • Gard
Aveyron • Hérault

5 NATURE PARKS

the regional nature parks in Morvan • the Auvergne
Volcanoes • Les Grands Causses • Haut-Languedoc
the Cévennes national park

2 SITES LISTED

as part of World Heritage by UNESCO:
the Puy's mountain chain / Limagne plain
and the Causses & Cévennes

175 "GTMC Recommended"
PLACES TO STAY



10 GOOD REASONS TO TRY THE GTMC

This is the longest mountain-bike trail in France

Since it was revamped in 2018, the GTMC has almost 1,400 km of mountain-bike trails, with a chance to see the little-known landscapes of the Massif Central.

It is accessible to everyone, whether experienced or occasional mountain bikers

Seasoned mountain bikers see the whole trail as an attractive challenge, but you can also enjoy the GTMC in sections for one day or several days. A portage-free trail, electric charging stations... Since the GTMC was revamped in 2018, it has been an electric bike-friendly trail with climbs within everyone's reach! A great way for beginners to try a mountain-bike trail or to enjoy a family holiday!

A unique natural setting

The GTMC crosses all the Massif Central, 5 nature parks and 2 UNESCO-listed sites. It goes through rugged and well-preserved environments, taking in famous sites such as the lakes of Morvan, Allier, the Auvergne volcanoes, Cévennes and Les Causses... A real treat for the eyes!

See little-known landscapes you couldn't get to by car

There's no need to go to the ends of the earth to enjoy a change of scene! The GTMC covers almost 1400 km, crossing all the Massif Central and giving access to sites that cannot be reached by car, such as the "Signal des Laubies" (1657 m), at the heart of Mont-Lozère in Occitanie.

Opt for sustainable tourism and reduce your carbon footprint

A cycling trail close to nature, a way to reduce your carbon footprint on holiday. One more step towards a more environmentally friendly way of life!

Make the most of your holiday to give body and mind a breath of fresh air

As it makes its way through the Massif Central, the GTMC is a chance to breathe the fresh air and get in shape. Cycling is the ideal way to improve your endurance, boost heart health and gently get all your joints working.

Take the time to explore

A cycling trail where you can choose your own pace, opening the way to the unexpected. You can stop whenever you want to admire the landscape, enjoy a picnic or continue an interesting conversation. Plenty of great discoveries and encounters in prospect!

Rise to the challenge

France's longest mountain-biking trail features varying levels of elevation gain. The GTMC is a real challenge to complete from start to finish for the most daring riders or in several sections for less regular mountain bikers!

Enjoy services and special signposted extras

With specific markings all along the way, routes available for download free of charge, two special topographical guides and 175 "GTMC recommended" places to stay, crossing the Massif Central by bike has never been so easy!!

Share an unforgettable experience with family and friends

A mountain-bike trail means adventures and new discoveries, with special moments to enjoy with your family or friends, as they help each other out or gaze in wonder at the beauty of the landscapes they pass by.

YOU'LL SEE THEM ON THE WAY... AN ENCOUNTER WITH 3 PEOPLE BRINGING THE TRAIL TO LIFE



Flavien Fuchey

Flavien Fuchey, owner of Romani wagons at Le Clos d'Aventure, with the Cyclists Welcome label, in Toulon-sur-Arroux - BOURGOGNE-FRANCHE-COMTÉ

What do you have to offer? "At the heart of a landscaped enclosure, close by the GTMC trail, we provide a whole range of original and fun accommodation with a view over the Morvan valleys. Comfortable, family-friendly Romani wagons, eco-pod cabins, an ecolodge cow and even a spaceship... The hardest thing is to choose!"

What are your little extras? "Since 2019, we've had the Cyclists Welcome label. More generally, we are located at the tip of Diverti Parc, a nature leisure park with activities for families, such as plant mazes, wooden games and an obstacle course in the forest. We also host a herd of 25 breeds of cows from the 4 corners of the earth!"

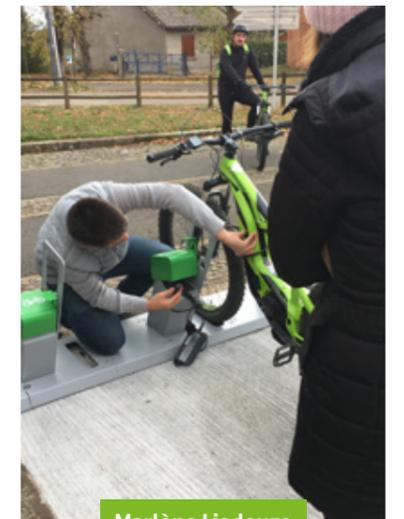
What changed with the Cyclists Welcome label? "It means that we go out of our way to make life easier for people on the cycling trail by offering a certain number of dedicated services, such as access to a locked bike shed, a bike wash to clean bikes or equipment and tips for repairing bikes."

Marlène Liadouze, development coordinator at Hautes Terres Tourisme, who has set up recharging and washing facilities for electric mountain bikes in Chalinargues et Allanche - AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES

What kind of service do you offer? "On behalf of the community and with the support of the GTMC, in 2019, we set up two Altinnova cycling stations in Chalinargues and Allanche, two villages on the GTMC trail. Cyclists can clean, pump up and recharge their electric bikes. The facilities are shown by a sign at both ends of the villages."

Why is it worthwhile for mountain bikers? "There was a real interest and a need in the region, where mountain-biking is very popular. When the GTMC reopened, it seemed crucial to set up this type of facility, both for regular and electric mountain-biking, and for the development of tourism in the region!"

How many mountain bikers do you welcome each season? "We installed a bike counter at the washing and recharging stations in autumn 2019. So that is only a short space of time, but we are really looking forward to the end of summer."



Marlène Liadouze

Sylvia Jacquot, manager of Ozone VTT, bike rental company in Clermont-l'Hérault - OCCITANIE

What do you have to offer? "For 30 years now in Clermont-l'Hérault, our shop has been renting and selling regular and electric mountain bikes, road bikes, touring bikes and electric bikes each year. We also have a seasonal outlet at Lac du Salagou where we rent out bikes just at the start of the GTMC."

What are your little extras? "We rent out regular and electric mountain bikes. In the shop, we also have bicycle repair workshops, including for people travelling along the trail, with more and more visitors each year."

What is the riders' favourite equipment? Regular and electric mountain bikes are equally popular, and I think that regular mountain biking still has a great future, since it attracts large numbers of riders on the trail!"

What kind of visitors do you mainly have? "All kinds of people! Experienced cyclists, as well as families or groups. Mountain-biking is for everyone!"



Sylvia Jacquot

13 ESSENTIAL SITES & PANORAMAS TO SEE ON THE GTMC



Avallon

The old town of Avallon is built on a granite headland, looking down on the Cousin valley. Its outstanding natural heritage (European freshwater crayfish, Peregrine falcons, eagle owls, etc.) has today made it a focus of great environmental interest: Natura 2000 sites, restoration of ecological continuity, educational facilities...



Saulieu

Saulieu is on the Roman "Via Agrippa" road, which was renamed down the ages as the "Great Way", "Royal Road", "Imperial Road" and finally the "Nationale 6". It has always been a major route for travellers. Its gastronomic reputation is more recent, with 4 master chefs making the town a capital of French gastronomy.



Lac des Settons

Amid the pine trees and larches and at an altitude of 600 metres, the Lac des Settons is one of the biggest Morvan lakes. The lake has a surface area of 360 hectares behind a stone dyke that is unique in France. It has facilities for yachting, sailing and other water sports.



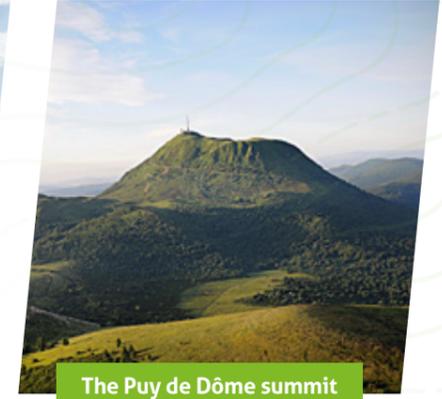
Autun

Autun is listed as a "Town of Art and History". It is built on terraces opening up over the Arroux valley and the Morvan hills. A visit to Autun is a chance to explore 2,000 years of history with monuments dating back two-millennia, including the Roman amphitheatre, the temple of Janus, the gates of Arroux and St André or the Couhard Pyramid.



Charroux

Charroux is on the prestigious list of the "Most Beautiful Villages in France". It combines all the ingredients of a charm-filled town outside time. The little streets form a maze, winding their way between medieval houses and arts and crafts workshops.



The Puy de Dôme summit

At an altitude of 1,465 metres, the Puy de Dôme is the most striking and famous volcano in Auvergne. It is listed as a "Grand Site de France" and fascinates visitors with its power and majesty. From the summit there is a breathtaking view on a clear day over the 80 volcanoes in the Puys Chain, the Limagne plain, Les Combrailles, the Forez and Sancy hills, and even Mont Blanc.



Le Lioran ski resort and the Plomb du Cantal

Nestled in the exceptional setting of the Auvergne volcanoes regional nature park, the Lioran ski resort covers 150 hectares and rises from 1,250 to 1,855 metres at the Plomb du Cantal, the department's highest point. An alternative GTMC route is a chance to admire the Plomb du Cantal from the Col du Pas des Alpains (1,750m), the trail's highest point.



Domaine de Sauvage

Halfway between Le Puy-en-Velay and Aubrac, on the "Via Podensis", the Domaine du Sauvage bears witness to over 700 years of history. Today, two gîtes provide accommodation for around 40 pilgrims and hikers along the Way of St James.



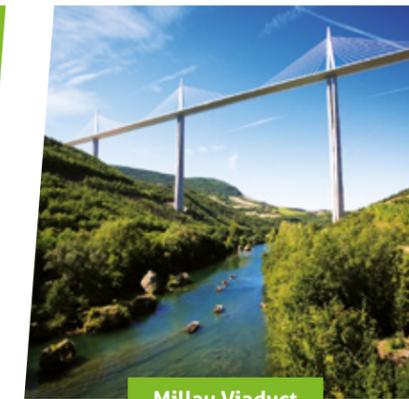
Causses and Cévennes

From Lozère (the only French department with over half of its surface area listed as part of World Heritage by UNESCO) to Aveyron, via Gard and Hérault: the wide-open spaces provide a great diversity of landscapes.



Cirque de Navacelles

The 15th site with the "Grand Site de France" label (2017), the Cirque de Navacelles is a geological curiosity, 300 metres deep. The landscapes are home to rich and varied farmland, where local farmers are always happy to share their specialities, including Pélardon (AOP goat's cheese), honey and trout.



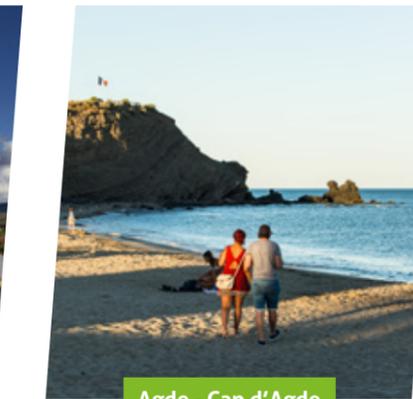
Millau Viaduct

It is an emotional experience to see this exceptional structure, 270 metres high, with its outstanding grace and balance. Whether you see it from one of the many viewpoints set up along the cycling trail or towering above you as you paddle in a canoe along the River Tarn, whether you fly above it in a paraglider or drive across it in your car, the experience is always unique.



Salagou Grand Site

In the highlands of Hérault, the "Grand Site" of Salagou - Cirque de Mourèze offers a mosaic of landscapes: red soils and turquoise waters, stone sculptures and vineyards... An extraordinarily wide range of habitats is home to a large number of plant and animal species.



Agde - Cap d'Agde

At the meeting point of the Canal du Midi and the River Hérault, the town of Agde has the "Town and Professions of Arts" label. You can visit it on foot or by bike in the maze of pedestrian streets and bike lanes winding their way through this typical town of the south of France.



WE ARE...

YOUNG TRAILBLAZERS

on the GTMC for the first time, looking for adventure and new experiences

BIVOUAC WEEKEND IN MORVAN FROM CHÂTEAU-CHINON TO BOURBON-LANCY

| | |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Level | Beginners |
| Kilometres | 110 km |
| Elevation | Climbs = 2400 m Descents = 2600 m |
| Estimated | 3 days |

LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE AND A CHANGE OF SCENERY?

This short **3-day stay** is a chance to set off in the footsteps of the ancient Gauls through the summits and forests of Morvan, then the meadows and woodland in the Sologne Bourbonnaise region.

On the programme:

3 stages from 30 to 50 km, accessible to occasional mountain bikers aiming to travel on their own along a varied trail, alternating mountain-bike tracks, forest paths and small country roads.

You can bivouac at night in one of the many nature campsites along the way. A route that is sure to attract young trailblazers in search of adventure!

The route's highlights: *the starry sky above the Morvan Regional Nature Park - the view over Mont-Blanc and the Alps on a clear day, Le Haut-Folin, Morvan's highest point, at an altitude of 901 m - the view over the beech forest from Mont Beuvray - a relaxing break at the Bourbon-Lancy thermal baths at the end of your stay.*

Some great places to stay

- **Aux Sources de l'Yonne**, in Glux-en-Glenne, a guest house for 6 people near the Bibracte Museum
- **La Bédure campsite in Luzy**, a cosy destination in the south of the Morvan nature park

Some great places to eat

- **Le Chaudron restaurant**, in Bibracte, serving Gallic and gargantuan meals
- **The Etang du Châtelet and Sources de l'Yonne picnic areas**, on the waterside

Some essential sights to see

- The site of Bibracte, nestled right in the forest, and its museum devoted to Celtic civilisation
- The medieval town of Bourbon-Lancy with its belfry and ramparts
- Issy-L'Évêque and its Anglo-Norman style Château de Montrifaut

THEY'VE DONE IT:

NICOLAS VARANGUIN, 43,
a regular mountain-biker from Morvan

What was the context for your stay?

"We set off on the spur of the moment with a colleague one weekend in late September 2018. We lived nearby, so we could travel light and set up a tent to spend the night in L'Huis Prunelle. The next morning, we set off early, at about 6 o'clock, to see the sun rising over the nature."

What do you most remember about taking the trail with a friend?

"I particularly remember the climb up Le Haut-Folin through the undergrowth in a Scandinavian atmosphere with a little bit of fog and featuring the arrival at Morvan's highest point."

How would you describe the route?

"I think it's a trail that could interest all sorts of people because it's quite accessible, especially when you opt to do short stages. In our case, we had a fairly good level, but without being incredibly well trained, so we chose to skip a stage!"

NOTES

See the stay in video (in French):

www.la-gtmc.com/week-end-prolonge-morvan



WE ARE...

A COUPLE OF FOOD-LOVERS

aiming to discover the region and all its treasures

TOWARDS THE VOLCANOES FROM BOURBONNAIS, FROM MOULIN TO CLERMONT-FERRAND

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Level | Beginners |
| Kilometres | 151 km |
| Elevation | Climbs = 2200 m Descents= 2100 m |
| Estimated duration | 3 days |



FROM THE BOURBONNAIS COUNTRYSIDE TO THE PUY CHAIN VOLCANOES,

This short 3-day stay is ideal for a first experience of mountain-bike touring or for mountain bikers who love good food, fans of slow tourism and anyone preferring the fun of travel rather than more technical aspects. The secret? A gradual rise in the challenges on offer, charming accommodation for a welcome break and a panorama over the impressive Puy Chain all along the way!

On the programme:

3 stages from 43 to 62 km long, on tracks and paths with a wide range of landscapes, from the Bourbonnais woodland to the Faille de la Limagne via the Saint- Pourçain wine region.

The route's strengths: *the rich heritage in the towns and villages along the way - the panorama over the Puy Chain in the background - a wide range of landscapes - tracks that are easy to tackle, including on an electric mountain bike - the baggage transport service - the return to Moulins by train.*

Some great places to stay

- **Le Clos de Bourgogne**, a romantic 4-star hotel in an 18th century residence
- **Le Moulin des Valignards**, a bucolic guesthouse in a converted flour mill

Some great places to eat

- **Les 4 Saisons restaurant** in Saulcet with semi-gastronomic, traditional cuisine
- **La Ferme Saint-Sébastien**, a farm in Charroux d'Allier, serving local and seasonal cuisine

Some essential sights to see

- **Moulins**, a Town of Art and History, and its sound and light show focusing on heritage (from July to October)
- **The bottling plant for the famous Volvic mineral water**, with its source at the heart of the Auvergne volcanoes regional nature park
- **Clermont-Ferrand & surrounding areas:** the Vulcania theme park, the summit of Puy-de-Dôme, etc.

IDEAL ELECTRIC
ASSISTANCE
MOUNTAIN BIKE
OR GRAVEL

THEY'VE DONE IT:

OLIVIER SOILLY, experienced mountain biker from Clermont-Ferrand

How would you describe the route?

"I rode the trail last year on the weekend of 15 August. It's a very enjoyable route with single tracks alongside the River Allier, winding their way through nature. There are also some beautiful towns, like Charroux, Chantelle and Saint-Pourçain."

What do you remember most?

"I'm originally from this region, but I was very surprised by the number of vineyards in Saint-Pourçain which you can't get to by car. I also remember a spot just before Ebreuil, where the work of a stone sculptor really amazed me."

NOTES

See the stay in video (in French):

www.la-gtmc.com/cap-sur-les-volcans-depuis-le-bourbonnais



WE ARE...

EXPERIENCED MOUNTAIN-BIKERS

in search of adrenalin and thrills!

ACROSS THE AUVERGNE VOLCANOES,
FROM CLERMONT-FERRAND TO SAINT-FLOUR

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Level | Experienced |
| Kilometres | 264 km |
| Elevation | Climbs : 5500 m Descents : 5000 m |
| Estimated duration | 5 days |



FROM CLERMONT-FERRAND TO SAINT-FLOUR

A 5-day stay for the physically fit and experienced mountain bikers in search of thrills and a challenge.

On the programme:

50 to 90 km a day at the heart of the Puys Chain with its 80 volcanoes, and where tricky tracks wind their way through well-preserved nature

The route's strong points: *the climb to the top of the Puy de Dôme on the panoramic Dômes train - water sports on Lac Chambon and Lac des Hermines (Super-Besse) - the visit to Notre-Dame-des-Fers Basilica, a symbol of Romanesque Art - the panorama over the Monts du Sancy and Cantal from the Col du Mont Chamaroux - the tricky single track between Chalinargues and Neussargues - the hiking trails leaving from Le Lioran or from the Col de Prat de Bou - the baggage transport service on offer from La Malle Postale.*

Some great places to stay

- **Archipel Volcans**, a quiet and comfortable 3-star hotel at the foot of the Puy de Dôme
- **La Grange des Roches**, a stopover gîte at an altitude of 1392 m on the Col de Prat de Bouc

Some great places to eat

- **Le Relais des Remparts**, a restaurant serving generous regional cuisine in Allanche
- **Le Buron Restaurant** on the Col de Prat de Bouc in an authentic and generous setting

Some essential sights to see

- The medieval town of Besse and its 1600-metre zip-line above the resort
- The start of the GR400 trail for a tour of the Cantal hills
- The trip up the Plomb du Cantal, the department's highest point, by cable car

THEY'VE DONE IT:

PHILIPPE GIGNAC, 46,
experienced mountain biker from Volvic

What was the context for your trip along the GTMC?

"When I was younger, I was a big fan of the Transmassif, a long-distance multi-sports team race across the Massif Central. As soon as I heard they were revamping the GTMC, I thought about riding it in stages and as an orientation trip, that is, only with a map and without using GPS. I set off last June in the section from Volvic to Saint-Flour to make the most of the long summer days."

How would you describe the route?

"It's an athletic trail with some rises and falls since it is at the heart of the Puys Chain. So it's more for experienced mountain bikers. Especially if you want to reduce the number of stages, since the distances are quite long."

Which stage made a particularly strong impression on you?

"I'd say crossing the Cézallier range, before going down towards Allanche, because the fact you are at the same altitude as the Puy-de-Dôme while in the plains gives you the impression you are on the roof of the world and gives you a sense of fullness and exceptional freedom."

NOTES

See the stay in video (in French):

www.la-gtmc.com/la-traversee-des-volcans



WE ARE...

A FAMILY OF MOUNTAIN-BIKERS

who love cycling holidays

THROUGH GÉVAUDAN,
FROM LANGEAC TO BAGNOLS-LES-BAINS

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Level | Intermediate |
| Kilometres | 138 km |
| Elevation | Climbs: 3160 m Descents: 2500 m |
| Estimated duration | 5 days |



FROM THE ALLIER GORGES TO THE RIVER'S SOURCE,

At the gates of Cévennes, a 5-day trip (including the return by train) making its way through Gévaudan, alternating country landscapes, typical villages, pine forest and religious monuments. A 138 km trail along mountain paths, accessible to regular mountain-bikers.

With 4 short stages (28 to 46 km) and accommodation in hostels, stopover gîtes, campsites or guest houses, it will attract families looking to combine mountain biking with sightseeing in the region

The route's highlights: *the wide, untamed areas of Gévaudan - a visit to the Gévaudan Beast Museum - The views over the Allier gorges - the Domaine du Sauvage, on the Way of St James - the well-earned break at the Bagnols-les-Bains thermal baths at the end of the stay - the baggage transport service.*

Some great places to stay

- **The Domaine du Sauvage**, stopover gîte in a historic site at the heart of the Margeride region
- **Les Chemins Francis**, a 2-star family hotel with a swimming pool, spa and sauna, in Bagnols-les-Bains

Some great places to eat

- **Au Gévaudan**, a restaurant with a friendly atmosphere in Saugues
- **La Lozerette restaurant**, in Cocurès, refined cuisine right at the heart of the Cévennes National Park

Some essential sights to see

- The Beast of Gévaudan Museum
- The European bison reserve with its extraordinary prehistoric animals
- Le Vallon du Villaret, a fun theme park right at the heart of nature

THEY'VE DONE IT:

FRÉDÉRIC DELARCE,
a mountain biker who completed the Lozère section in 2016

How is the trail adapted to families?

"It's a very easy route for everyone, including families, since the daily distances are short (between 30 and 40 km) and made up of big tracks or small, easy-riding paths. This is especially the case with the many variations compatible with e-mountain bikes introduced when the GTMC was revamped in 2018."

What was your most memorable experience on the trail?

"I remember in particular three breathtaking views: the first was between La Baraque des Bouviers and Le Giraldès, with a clear view over Ardèche and the Margeride region. I can also remember the wonderful view over the plain and Lake Charpal from the summit of Fortunio, and lastly, the panorama over Cévennes to be seen from the track between the village of Larzalier and the Château du Tournel."

NOTES

See the stay in video (in French):
www.la-gtmc.com/traversee-gevaudan-vtt



WE ARE...

A GROUP OF FOOD-LOVERS

and fans of slow tourism

THROUGH LARZAC,
FROM MILLAU TO LE CAP D'AGDE

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Level | Intermediate |
| Kilometres | 260 km |
| Elevation | Climbs: 4000 m Descents: 4800 m |
| Estimated duration | 4 days |
| Best period | early spring or late autumn |



FROM THE MILLAU VIADUCT TO THE FAMOUS CAP D'AGDE,

A 6-day trip through the south of France with a wide range of landscapes and flavours, accessible to all regular mountain bikers. Plenty to delight food-lovers and fans of slow tourism!

On the programme:

260 km in 5 stages of 45 to 65 km on tracks and paths, recommended for fans of mountain-bike touring who prefer the pleasure of new discoveries to more technical aspects

The route's highlights: *this is a trail in the south of France, ideal for early spring or late autumn - the diversity of the landscapes - crossing the Causses and Cévennes, listed as part of World Heritage by UNESCO - a swim in Lac du Salagou - the charm of the villages of Languedoc - riding through the wine estates - arriving at the Mediterranean coast - the comfort of a stay in hotels, stopover gîtes or guest houses - the fun variations on offer.*

Some great places to stay

- **L'Auberge du Chat Perché**, a warm and authentic restaurant below the ramparts of La Couvertoirade
- **The stopover gîte Co'Gîte** in Le Caylar, a warm and friendly place to stay

Some great places to eat

- **The restaurant and wine bar Au Jeu de Paume**, at the heart of Millau old town with a tree-lined patio
- **Le Café de la Place** in Octon, a traditional Mediterranean restaurant

Some essential sights to see

- The majestic Millau Viaduct
- The Templar and Knights Hospitaller sites in Larzac
- The ancient Greek town of Agde and the Musée de l'Éphèbe et d'Archéologie Sous-Marine

THEY'VE DONE IT:

JULES GRZYB, 27,
for his first time on a mountain bike trail, he completed the Clermont-Ferrand > Cap d'Agde section in 2019

What was the context for your trip along the GTMC?

"I set off alone in summer 2019. I took the train from Paris to Clermont-Ferrand with my bike, then went all the way to Le Cap d'Agde by mountain bike. Which is about 800 km in 8 days. I'm a cycling fan, but this was my first mountain-bike trail."

How would you describe the trail from Millau to Le Cap d'Agde?

"This is an accessible route, even for beginners in good physical condition, because the climbs get easier as you leave the Massif Central and come closer to the coast. This is even more the case if you treat yourself to regular breaks and choose to do short stages."

What was your most memorable experience on the trail?

"The section near Salagou, with the red sand and the contrasting waters of the lake. The view is not to be missed, it's unique and really very impressive. The arrival at the coast is another highlight, because it is a bit like your reward after a week in the mountains! "

NOTES

See the stay in video (in French):

www.la-gtmc.com/du-larzac-a-la-mediterranee

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

TO ORGANISE YOUR STAY

The GTMC, a trail for everyone

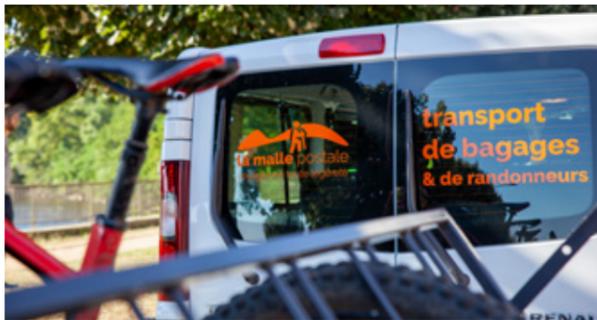
Since it was revamped in 2018, the GTMC has 1,400 km of mountain-bike trails, at the heart of the Massif Central, to share with family, friends or your loved one. Whether you're a beginner, experienced or an expert, you can discover the GTMC in your own way; the whole trail or a few sections, for one day, a few days or a few weeks. All the GTMC is adapted to electric mountain bikes, making the hills easier to climb for all riders. This is the first big mountain-bike trail in France **that is fully compatible with electric mountain bikes**. There is no need to carry bikes between sections, and you will hardly ever have to get off your bike and walk for a while. There are also charging stations all along the way. For fans of gravel bikes, 75% of the GTMC (1,050 km) can be ridden on this kind of sports bike, which is a combination of a road bike, trekking bike and cyclo-cross bike.



Taking your bike on the train

With TER, Intercités, TGV trains or even buses, **public transport can be THE ideal solution to get to your GTMC section** with no worries.

- **On TER regional trains**, bikes are accepted with no reservation required and no need to disassemble them beforehand. An area can even be reserved on some trains so you can travel with peace of mind.
Extra tip: for everyone's comfort, make sure your bike is clean when you board the train.
- **On Intercités trains**, you can take your bike on board if you buy a special ticket, with an extra charge of about €10.
- **On TGV high-speed trains**, the trip is possible, with 2 options available: you can reserve a space for your bike when you buy your ticket (extra charge) or disassemble your bike and carry it on like baggage free of charge.
Extra tip: book well ahead of time to make sure you can travel easily with your bike.
- **On a bus**, you will often need to disassemble your bike and carry it in a cover. Only a few buses are currently equipped with racks (e.g. summer shuttle buses in Lozère).



Baggage transport

To pedal light, a baggage transport service is on offer on a 440 km section of the GTMC. **La Malle Postale can take care of your equipment and bags**.

The perfect service to enjoy a day's cycling to the full and then having your things delivered to your stopover gîte, hotel, guest house or campsite in the evening.

Extra tip:

- A service on quotation depending on the stages
- A service available all along the GTMC from 2021

Signs and information about the GTMC: travelling has never been so simple!

- **The trail's official signage:** from Avallon to Agde, the GTMC route is shown with specific markings all along the way. You just need to follow the French Cycling Federation's red markings, generally to be found on trees or posts.
- **GPX routes along the trail:** the complete GPS routes or sections for the GTMC are available to download for free from the GTMC website. You can then view them on an adapted hiking GPS device or a smartphone using a dedicated app.
- **The 2 dedicated VTOPO topographical guides:** Volume 1 describes the route from Morvan to Clermont Ferrand and Volume 2 the route from Clermont-Ferrand to Cap d'Agde.

5 tips for your first mountain-biking trip

- **Organise your trip and choose the route to suit you**

The main attraction of a cycling holiday is freedom of movement, but beforehand it is always strongly recommended **to plan out your route** and to choose a trail adapted to your level. For families, it is recommended in particular to choose a trail without steep climbs, to set aside just half a day of cycling per day and to set off early in the morning to avoid the hot sun in summer.

- **Choose good-quality equipment adapted to your needs**

Well-adapted and high-quality equipment will guarantee a carefree stay. Before you set off, **it is important to choose your bike carefully** - a regular or electric mountain bike - to check for quality and test out the comfort and size. Depending on your level, the chosen route and the weather forecast, you should also opt for different tyres. A few days before the off, it is strongly recommended to have your bike serviced at a bike shop. Brake pads, cables, fork, drivetrain and frame, in particular, must be in perfect condition. You can take this opportunity to learn about the ABCs of bike repair.



- **Travel light and schedule baggage transfers**

For bags, it is recommended to opt for Bikepacking, waterproof bags that can be directly attached to the saddle, handlebars or bike frame. Trailers adapted to mountain bikes can also be a good solution, even if they are less adapted to single tracks and to the small number of sections when you need to dismount along the way. **La Malle Postale** provides baggage transport over a section of about 400 km between Chalinargues and Blandas. This is a very handy service, especially for families.

- **Revise the safety rules before you start**

While many sections of the GTMC follow tracks and paths reserved for non-motorised vehicles, at times you may have to cross or follow roads with car traffic. So before you set out, families with children should familiarise themselves **with basic safety rules and the highway code**. Adults and children should also wear helmets (mandatory up to age 12) to protect themselves if they fall. It is strongly recommended to have lights on your bike and mandatory at night.

- **Take your time and ride at your own pace**

The epitome of slow tourism, cycling trails are a unique chance to take your time and to go at your own pace. Set off early in the morning to make the most of the day, but also to give yourself some leeway in case of any unforeseen events. Gourmet breaks, sightseeing, new discoveries... this is the chance to see **the large number of sights all along the GTMC route!**

GRANDE TRAVERSÉE DU MASSIF CENTRAL




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- More about the GTMC on: the-gtmc.com
- Share your photos on: **#GTMC**
- See the trail photo library: [here](#)

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