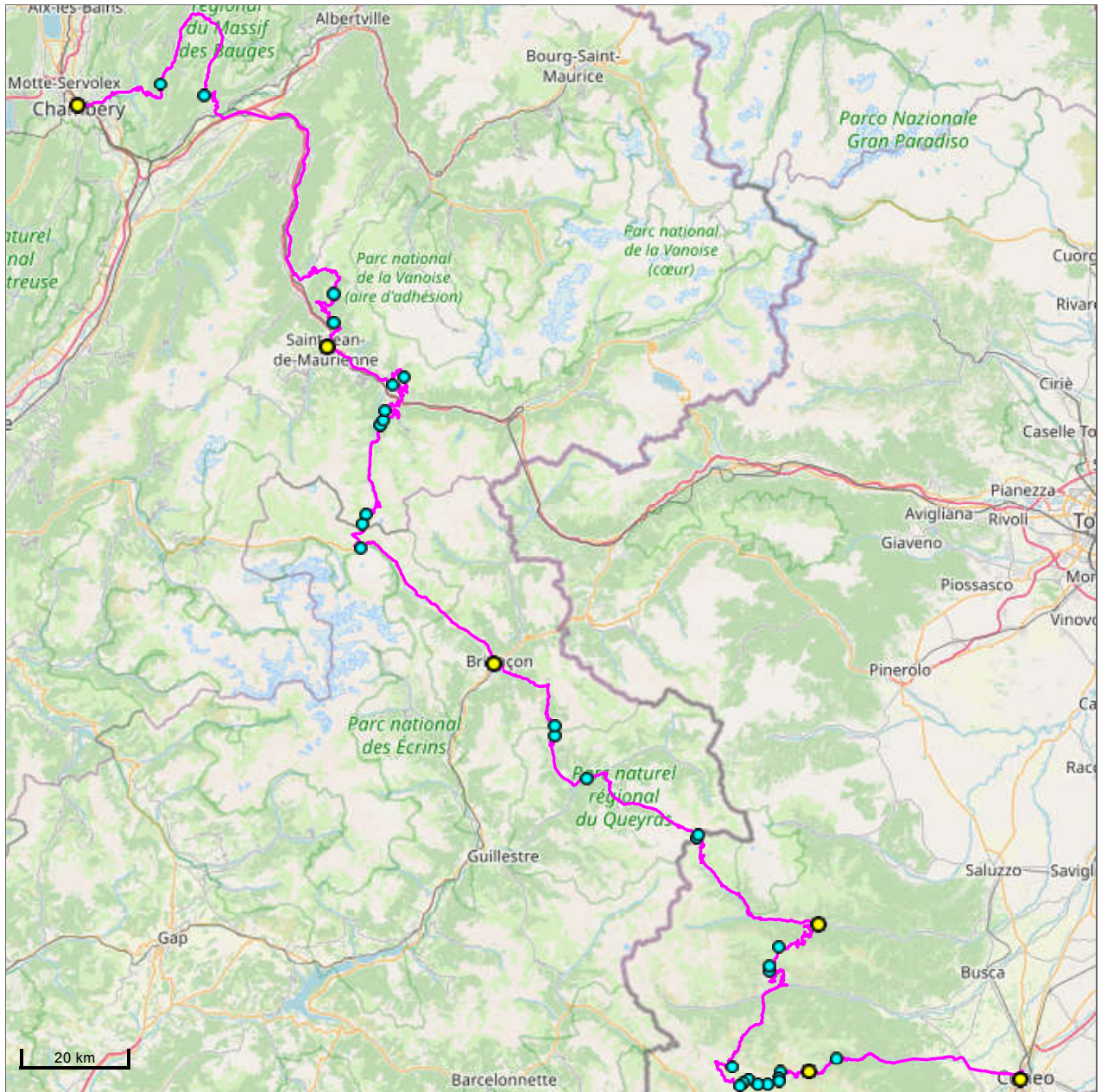
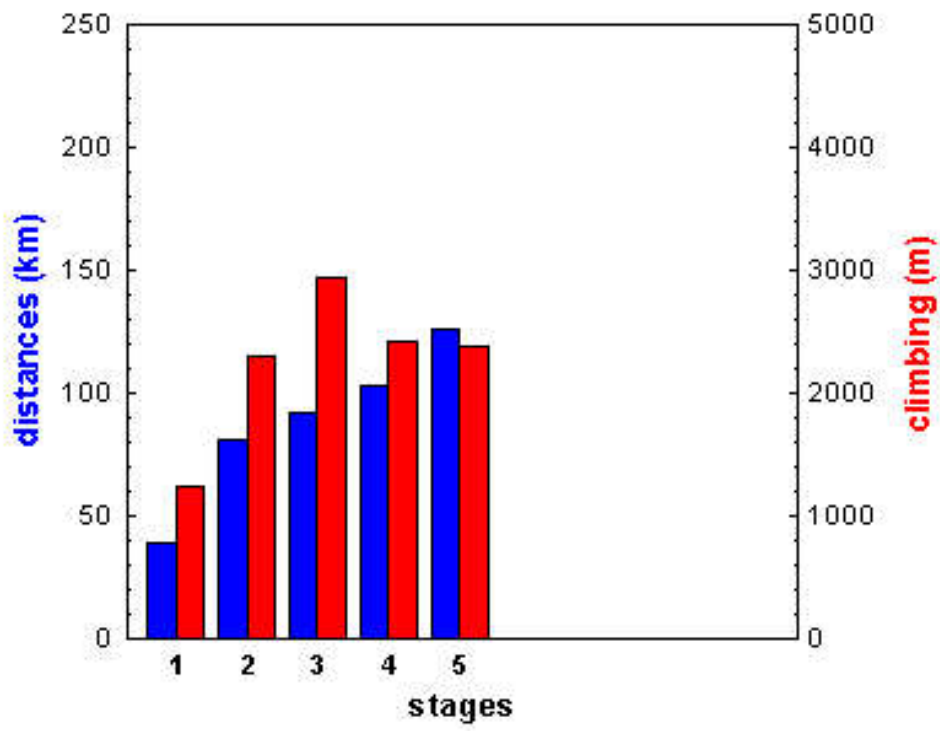


Bicycle tour 2017, 22 - 26 June

Patrick Schleppe

stage	distance (km)	climbing (m)
Cuneo - Valgrana - Castelmagno	39	1230
Castelmagno - Fauniera - Preit - Stroppio - Sampéyre	81	2310
Sampéyre - Agnel - Izoard - Briançon	92	2930
Briançon - Galibier - Télégraphe - St-Jean-de-Maurienne	103	2420
St-Jean-de-Maurienne - Chaussy - Frêne - Chambéry	126	2390
total	441	11280





The upper part of Val Grana



View to the west from Valcavera pass, with Bandia to the left and Becco Grande to the right



View from Agnello pass to its Italian side

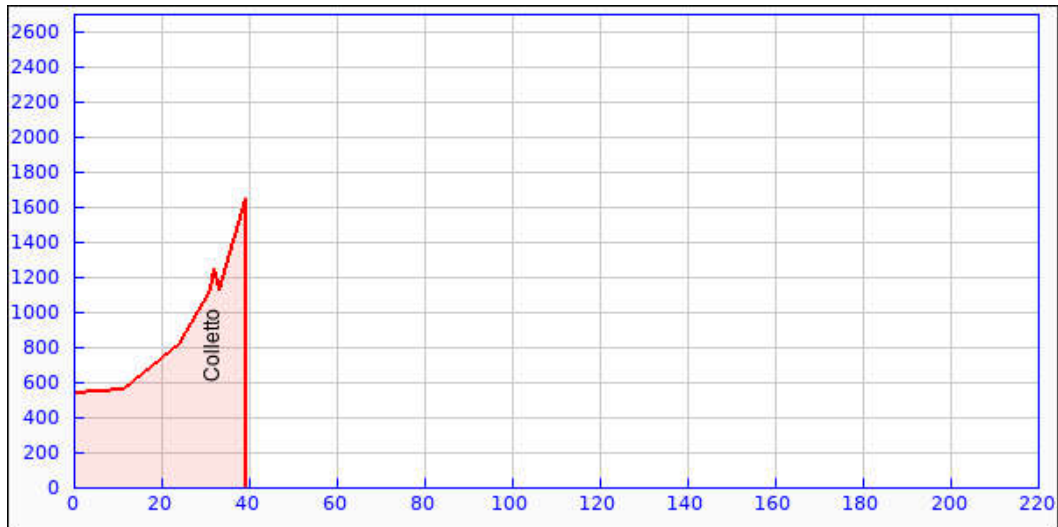


Lautaret pass and Meije massif

Stage 1 (22 June 2017): Cuneo - Valgrana - Castelmagno

The city of Cuneo had been the arrival of my [tour 2012](#), so why not be the start in 2017? To get there by train worked much better than the [return journey](#) five years earlier. It was the first time that i was travelling through the new Gotthard tunnel. Amazing how fast it goes now to cross the Alps! Further, the Italian trains were on time, but at some point between Torino and Cuneo the air conditioning stopped working. Well, this had an advantage: the heat wave was less a shock when getting off the train. 35°. Against the heat, there were two things to do: drink enough, and then climb to a cooler place. Fortunately, the mountains were not far. I took the road into the Grana valley, which started to climb really after the village of Pradleves. There was less and less traffic, but the heat was still with me. Short before reaching Castelmagno, i took a small steep road to the right, which brought me to [Colletto](#). After taking a few pictures of this nice hamlet, i went down the same way, then continued to climb to Castelmagno and further up to Chiappi. The road was partly very steep, but the temperature was more bearable. Finally, a thunderstorm broke out barely half an hour i reached the hotel where i had a reservation.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Cuneo	0	540	
Caraglio	11	560	20
Pradleves	24	820	260
Campomolino	31	1130	310
Colletto	32	1250	120
Campomolino	33	1130	
Chiappi (Castelmagno)	39	1650	520
total	39		1230

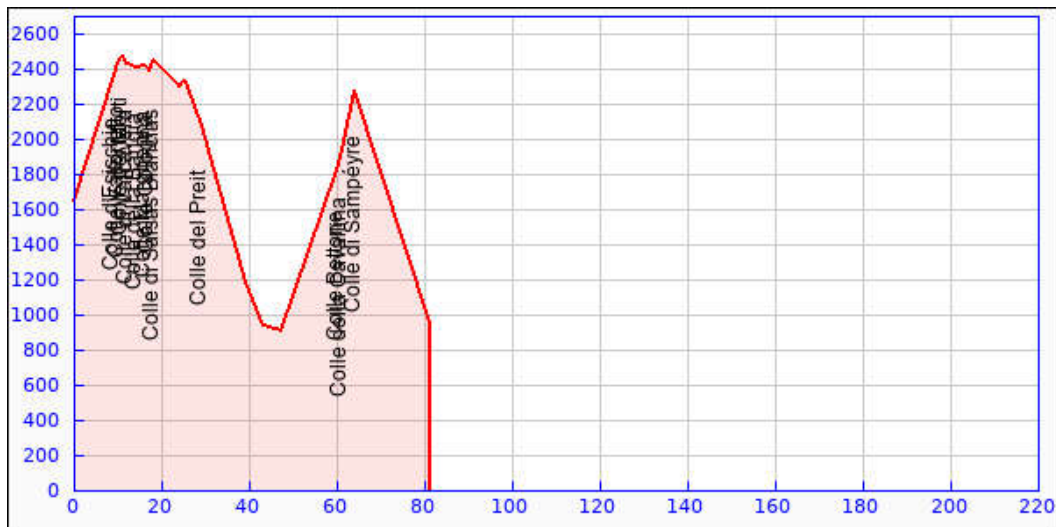


Stage 2 (23 June 2017): Castelmagno - Fauniera - Preit - Stroppo - Sampéyre

I left Chiappi at a quarter past eight, after a good sleep and a good breakfast. Being already half way in the climb, it was not hard to ride up to the first pass of the day, [Colle d'Esischie](#), even if the small road was partly quite steep. From there, i was able to go over seven further passes, all like pearls on a necklace. [Colle Vallonetto](#), [Colle dei Morti](#) and [Colle di Valcavera](#) were all accessible by the paved road, but further it was a gravel road. That's why i had mounted my wheels with 28-mm tires for gravel. The slopes were gentle and it was first quite easy to ride and reach the [Bandia](#), [Margherina](#) and [Cologna](#) passes. The weather was fine and the landscape wonderful. For the next pass, [Salsas Blancias](#), it was necessary to leave the road and push the bicycle for about 100 m to reach the pass. After this small detour, the road became rougher and did not go over further passes until i reached [Colle del Preit](#). From there, the descent was all on macadam, but there were holes, cracks and gravel, requiring the attention of every second. This brought me to the Maira valley, which i followed for a few kilometres before climbing on the opposite slope towards Stroppo. As expected, it was then, on a south slope around noon, that the heat made the ride harder. Even if i went into the climb with full bottles, i was running quite low on water as i finally reached [Colle Bettone](#) and then the hut of Sousto dal Col, where i could order a drink and refill my water bottles. Just after this short break, i reached [Colle della Cavallina](#)... which is hard to find out why it is called a pass. Anyway, there was still some effort to provide in order to reach the last pass of the day, [Colle di Sampéyre](#). There were now a few other cyclists, some motorcycles and a few cars on that way. In spite of being a bit tired, i could enjoy the climb. For the descent, unfortunately, the road was not in good condition. Again, caution was required. As i finally reached the town of Sampéyre (which means St. Peter), i went to the first hotel that i found.

Note for those readers who think that 12 passes in one day is a crazy thing... Yes, but actually with a mountain bike it would be possible to do even more, either in the Fauniera or in the Sampéyre area!

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Chiappi (Castelmagno)	0	1650	
Colle d'Esischie	9	2370	720
Colle Vallonetto	10	2440	70
Colle dei Morti	11	2480	40
Colle di Valcavera	12	2430	
Colle della Bandia	14	2410	
Colle Margherina	16	2420	10
Colle Cologna	17	2390	
Colle di Salsas Blancias	18	2450	60
Pianezza	24	2300	
Rifugio Gardetta	25	2340	40
Pianezza	26	2300	
Colle del Preit	29	2080	
Marmora	39	1190	
Ponte Marmora	43	940	
Bassura	47	910	
Colle Bettone	60	1830	920
Colle della Cavallina	61	1940	110
Colle di Sampéyre	64	2280	340
Sampéyre	81	960	
total	81		2310



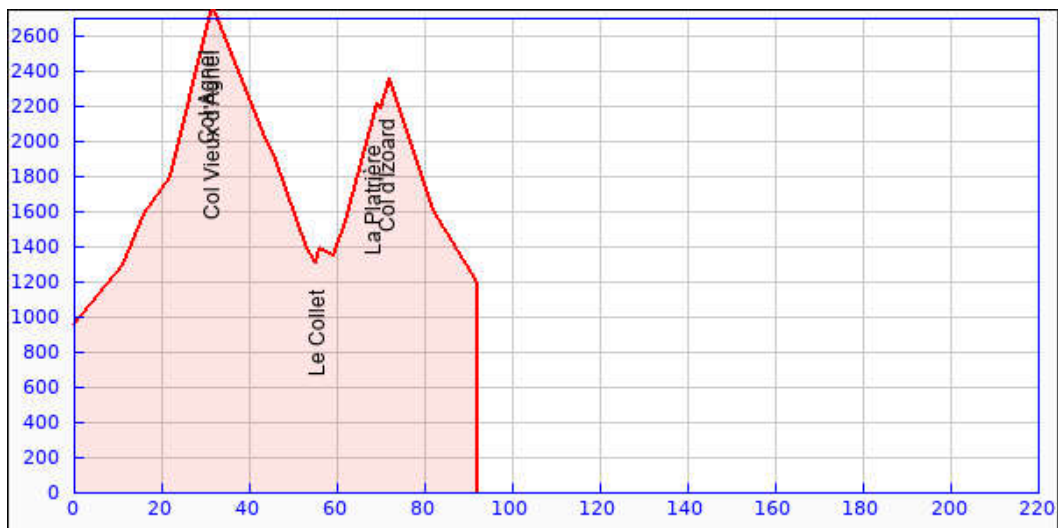
Stage 3 (24 June 2017): Sampéyre - Agnel - Izoard - Briançon

From Sampéyre, my goal was my last pass of the Alps above 2000 m elevation that i could ride across on a paved road allowed for bicycles: col Agnel. It was quite a long climb, first rather gentle up to Chianale. Further, it was all around 10% of slope. Gaining more and more elevation, i was pedalling in a pleasantly fresh air. Since it was Saturday, there were numerous other cyclists and also motorcyclists on the way. After reaching the [Agnel pass](#) and taking a few pictures, i decided to push my bicycle for barely 200 m to reach the [old Agnel pass](#) behind a small summit on the same crest, also on the border between France and Italy. One more pass for not much effort.

The descent into the Queyras valley was on a good road and thus a nice ride. Not for everybody apparently since i crossed an ambulance and police cars with sirens and blue lights on. Further down, i reached Château-Queyras. The spectacular fortress giving its name to the town is on a hill, and the road goes up and down behind this hill. This means that it makes a pass, called simply [Collet](#). Only a few kilometres further, i arrived at a crossing where i had to decide if i would ride over the Izoard pass... or around it. I followed then the same road as for my [2001 tour](#), that's

to say: uphill. By then, it was again quite hot and i had to drink much water to keep going. After the hospitable part of the valley, i reached the [Plâtrière](#) pass. For purists, the pass would be some 50 m below the road, but i decided not to be a purist and continued on the road. Then, beginning with a short descent, there was the almost purely mineral world of Casse Déserte, an area of rocks and scree. As i reached the [Izoard](#) pass, i was by far not the only cyclist there. It was only 2 o'clock and it was the last pass planned for the day, so i took time to enjoy it, taking pictures, having a drink and chatting with some other cyclists. Then there was the long, nice and partly really fast descent to Briançon, where the tourist office would lead me to an hotel in town.

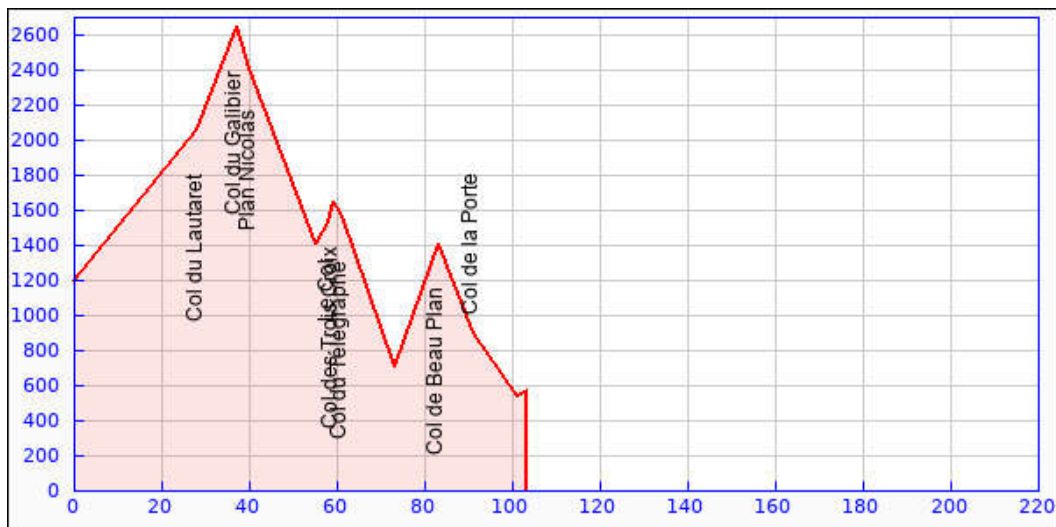
	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Sampéyre	0	960	
Casteldelfino	11	1300	340
Castello	16	1590	290
Chianale	22	1800	210
Col Agnel	31	2740	940
Col Vieux d'Agnel	32	2770	30
Fontgillarde	44	2000	
Pierre Grosse	46	1900	
Ville Vieille	53	1390	
L'Isclé (Château Queyras)	55	1310	
Le Collet	56	1390	80
Champ Rient	59	1350	
Arvieux	62	1550	200
La Platrière	69	2220	670
Casse Déserte	70	2190	
Col d'Izoard	72	2360	170
Cervièrès	82	1610	
Briançon	92	1200	
total	92		2930



Stage 4 (25 June 2017): Briançon - Galibier - Télégraphe - St-Jean-de-Maurienne

There had been a thunderstorm during the night and the air had markedly cooled down. Hitting the road at 8 o'clock, i went into the gentle but long climb towards the [Lautaret](#) pass. There was not yet much traffic on this Sunday morning. Things changed a bit as i continued from the Lautaret to the [Galibier](#) pass. First, the slope was more serious. Second, the traffic increased (bicycles, motorcycles, cars). As i reached this big pass, it was really chilly and, for the first and last time for this tour, i put my wind jacket on for the descent. After riding down only 3 km, i arrived at the [Plan Nicolas](#) pass, which is just a few metres up off the road. I did not cheat and really went there. The remaining of the descent to Valloire was long. Often descents appear long to me and then i wonder how i have been able to ride all the way up (which, in this case, was [2001](#)). In Valloire, there was some kind of festival. I did not understand what it was all about, but it was crowded and noisy. I was glad to leave that town again and to climb a bit to the hamlet called [Le Col](#). There, i left the road to take a track climbing (almost parallel to the road) to the [Col des Trois Croix](#), where there were indeed three crosses near a chapel. For a small part, i had to push the bicycle to get up there, but i could then ride all the way down. A small forest road brought me directly to the [Télégraphe](#) pass. From there, there was again a long descent, which led me to St-Michel-de-Maurienne. By then, it was warm, but nothing as hot as the previous days. Thus i did not hesitate to cross St-Michel and to climb on the south-facing slope. There were again 700 m to climb until i reached Col de Beau Plan, which i would not define as a pass, but which has this name on official maps and on a road sign... From there, the road came down to Col de Beaune, which has also its name on maps and on a road sign, but which is not really a pass either. Finally, the lowest pass of this loop on the right-hand side of the valley was a real pass: [Col de la Porte](#). From that point, the remaining of this ride was in the Maurienne valley against a strong (and hot) wind. I went down (and then a bit up) to St-Jean, where i had to search a while till i finally found an hotel for the night.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Briançon	0	1200	
Col du Lautaret	28	2060	860
Col du Galibier	37	2650	590
Plan Nicolas	40	2410	
Valloire	55	1410	
Le Col	58	1530	120
Col des Trois Croix	59	1650	120
Col du Télégraphe	61	1570	
St-Michel-de-Maurienne	73	710	
Col de Beau Plan	83	1410	700
Col de la Porte	91	900	
Les Chaudannes	101	540	
St-Jean-de-Maurienne	103	570	30
total	103		2420



Stage 5 (26 June 2017): St-Jean-de-Maurienne - Chaussy - Frêne - Chambéry

As i had hoped, there was no wind any more in the morning. I went first down to the village of Hermillon, then up again to a small pass not far above the valley ground, [Col du Ventour](#). After a short descent to Montvernier, a longer climb followed. The weather was perfect, the landscape nice and diverse, the traffic limited to a few cyclists, all conditions to enjoy very much this climb that led me to the [Chaussy](#) pass. After this pass, the descent brought me to the road of the Maleleine pass and to La Chambre, back in the Maurienne valley. I followed this valley and then the Isère valley for almost 40 km until i reached St-Pierre-d'Albigny. This was mainly on small roads but, especially in the Isère valley, also on roads with much traffic. After climbing to St-Pierre, i continued up to the [Frêne](#) pass and into the Bauges massif. After a loop to the north, i arrived to the last pass of this tour, [Col des Prés](#). By then, the weather was overcast, and in the descent i had a few rain drops, but nothing serious. I arrived on time in Chambéry to take a train to Switzerland.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
St-Jean-de-Maurienne	0	570	
Longefan	2	520	
Col du Ventour	6	780	260
Le Villaret d'en Bas	7	720	
Col du Chaussy	18	1530	810
Le Merderel (Bonvillard)	21	1350	
Bonvillard	22	1350	
La Chambre	33	470	
L'Aiguillon	39	410	
La Chapelle	41	460	50
Le Rochillon (St-Léger)	43	380	
Le Vernet (St-Pierre)	69	280	
Col du Frêne	79	950	670
Routhennes	81	850	
Leyat	92	660	
La Bottière (Aillon-le-Vieux)	100	930	270
Aillon-le-Jeune	102	900	
Col des Prés	106	1140	240
Pont des Callets	115	520	
Ste-Nicolle	116	610	90
St-Alban-Leyssse	122	310	
Chambéry	126	270	
total	126		2390

