

Niveau
**TRÈS
DIFICILE**

Col du Pourtalet (29 km) "the long, "staircase" col"



The 'staircase' col: a very irregular climb consisting of 3 successive 7% slopes alternating with numerous false flats. You will cross beautiful gorges and typical villages, you will skirt a beautiful lake and you will have some remarkable views over the mountain for an arrival in Spain!

Getting to the start:

● from the A64 Toulouse-Bayonne motorway, take exit n° 10 for Pau centre, head towards Oloron by the D817 then the D100 and the N134 until the diversion at Gan. Turn left after Gan towards Laruns-Gourette by the D934. Keep going straight on past Rébénacq then Louvie-Juzon until you reach the town centre of Laruns: parking on the square near the tourist office (all services, drinking fountain in the square).

D From the car park near the mairie, take the road indicated "toutes directions", turn left twice, then turn right at the stop sign. There is a small descent until the bridge (Lauguière); afterwards you climb back up to the fork in the road: Aubisque-Pourtalet (km 1.8). Turn right towards the Pourtalet and Spain by climbing at about 5% then a false flat crosses the gorges of Hourat until you reach the bridge at Crabé (km 3).

① The gentle slope (3 to 4%) takes you to the resort of Eaux Chaudes then to the 'bridge of hell' (km 6). The next 4km are foothills: a succession of little hills and descents that goes on until just after the centre of Miégebat (km 10).

② This is the first step of the 'staircase': 2km at 7.5% with two 2 beautiful forest bends, and you reach a false flat with a view of the pic du midi d'Ossau.

③ You can almost freewheel here before a short rise, then ride through the hamlet of Gabas (km 14).

④ The second 'step' is longer: 3.5 km with an average of 6% and

one section at 7%. Continue on the main road to the left at the crossroads of Bious-Artigues. After two bends under the dam, you reach a flat by the lake at Fabrèges.

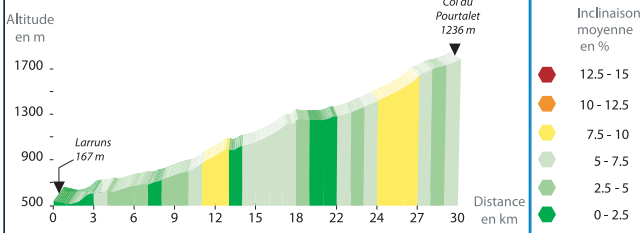
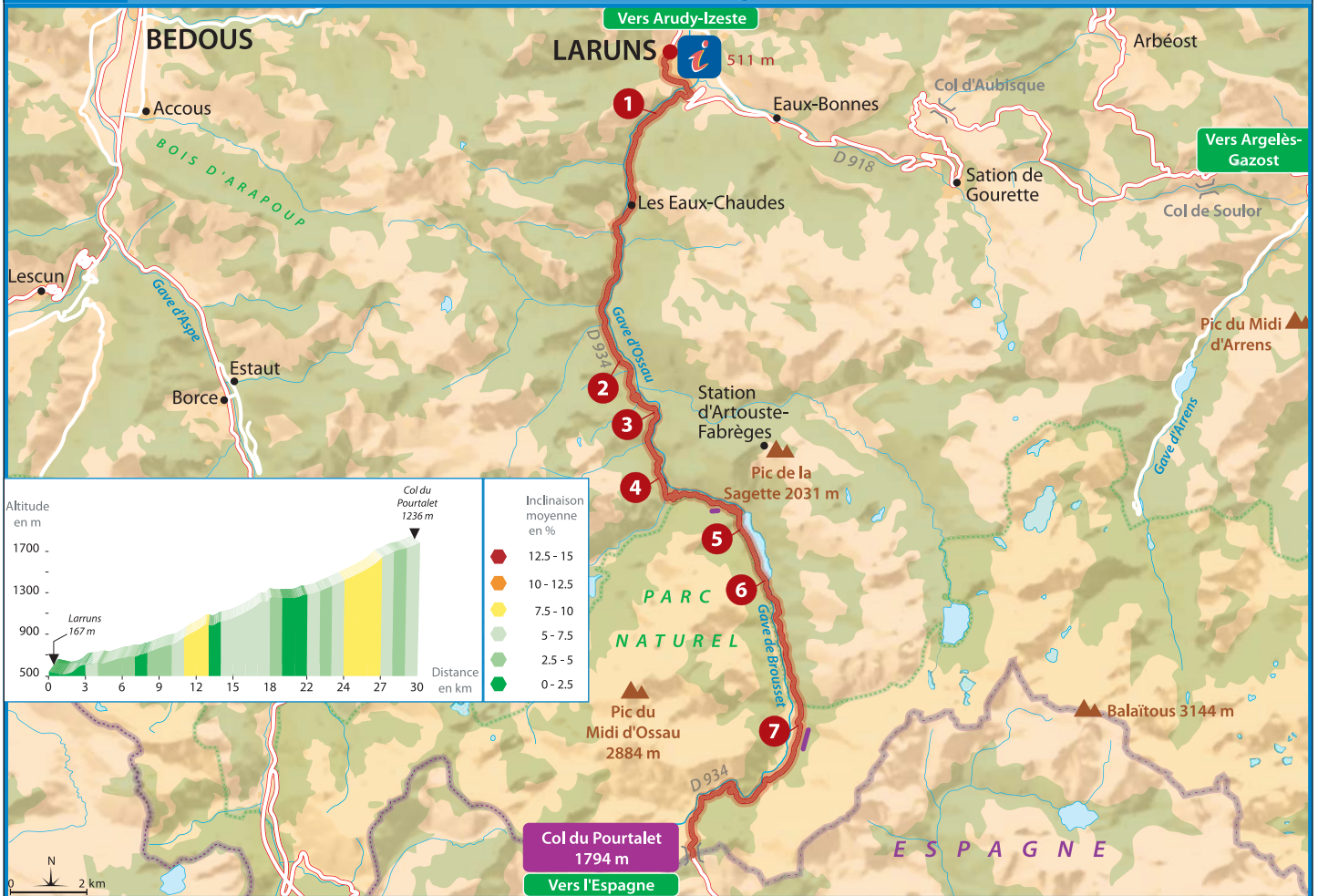
⑤ Make the most of the gentle slope, then there is a descent by the edge of the lake (lovely, bucolic mountain atmosphere) which takes you to the crossroads with the ski resort of Fabrèges (km 19).

⑥ The road mounts gradually above the stream of Brousset at an average of 4-5% until the refuge at Soques (a typical large block on the left, km 23).

⑦ The third and final 'step': the longest, 6 km at an average of 6.5% with frequent sections at 7.5%. Go under the avalanche protectors and notice the pretty Tourmont defile (km 26, limestone gorges) before a short false flat. The last 1.5 km at 7% brings beautiful views over the pastoral arena of Anéou dominated by the magnificent Midi d'Ossau. One last effort (because here, the wind is often against you) before Spain and its "Ventas".

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The town of Laruns.
Parking: near the tourist office.



Record time: 1h00
author's time: 1h22



Distance: 29km



Min/max altitude: 511m - 1794m

Cumulative ascent: 1306m

Average percentage: 4.5%; over 10km: 6.95%;
over 7km: 7.3%; over 4km: 7.5%

Maximum slope: 9% over 300m

Recommended gear ratio: 42X22
corresponding to a climbing time of 1h45

Motor traffic: average

Road surface: good

IGN map at 1/25000: 1546 ET and 1547 OT

Strong points:

● the variety of landscapes; climbing a mountainous but very accessible col; the views of the **pic du Midi d'Ossau** and the **lake at Fabrèges**; arriving in Spain.

Nearby:

● the col d'Aubisque, the lake at **Bioux-Artigues**, the train of **Artouste** reachable by ski-lift; the vultures' cliffs at **Aste-Béon**.

Other side:

● only one, via Spain, and it is easier but still with the 'steps' that make it like a staircase from the **town of Biescas** (home to Fernando Escartin; 32km and about 950m in cumulative ascent).

Difficulties/tips:

● reliable water point at Gabas; numerous shops and restaurants at the summit. The col is long and somewhat treacherous: you make fairly quick progress, and think you're doing fine, but the hardest part is the end (the final 7km): keep something in reserve, and watch out for hypoglycemia!!!

Renseignements complémentaires auprès de l'office de tourisme de :



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