

TdF trip (updated earlier post)

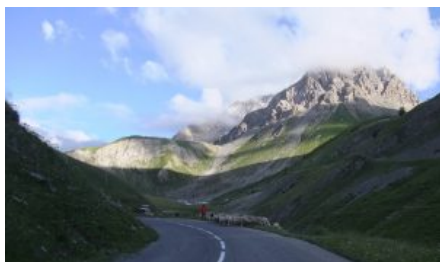
The "traditional" TdF trip of the past 8 years (2007-2016) has included my son. Not this time. He's got some school obligations to take care of, and it's not likely the bike shop can spare us both. That "traditional" trip has typically been 11 days, leaving on a Thursday and arriving home two Mondays later. So for example, last year Kevin and I left on July 6th (ok, that was a Wednesday) and returned on Monday, July 18th. We actually squeezed in an extra day last year. Not this trip. just 8 days total, leaving on Sunday, July 16th, and returning Monday, July 24th. Fast & furious!

Originally thought about flying into and out of Lyon, keeping things super-simple, and possibly avoiding Paris altogether. That didn't work out; air fare was cheap out of CDG (Paris) at \$1130, vs \$1700+ out of Lyon. Too bad; Lyon airport has a one-hour direct connection to Grenoble, via TGV. So here's how it plays out-

Sunday, July 16th, fly from SFO to Paris (CDG) arriving Monday about 9:30am. Yes, you lose a whole day flying east. Hate that! Catch a train from the airport at 11:57am that goes straight to Lyon (about 2.5 hours) then a regional train from Lyon to Grenoble (about an hour). Arrive Grenoble about 4pm.

Walk a VERY short distance to the fantastic Appartements Residilaverde Gare. 85 euros (about \$90)/night for a very large apartment just 100 meters from the train station. Incredibly, not just a full kitchen (not that I'd be cooking though) but also a washer/dryer combo. No need to bring more than 3 days worth of clothes. How great is that? Monday evening build the Bike Friday, eat dinner, SLEEP!

Tuesday, July 18th, is a "local riding" day. No option to catch the "Tour, which is too far away to be practical. There is some AWESOME local riding in the Grenoble area though.



Climbing the Galibier during an epic loop several years ago. I'd be passing through here again if I go this year.

Wednesday, July 19th, take a train at 6:37am (but who knows what time it would actually feel like) to Saint Michel de Maurienne, arriving 8:37am. This puts you right at the base of the Galibier, on the long side... the side the "Tour" will be climbing about 6 hours later! [Stage details here](#). Climb to the top, see the stage on one of its most-iconic mountains, then head back down the way I came up, catching the 7:42pm train that arrives back in Grenoble at 9:27pm. Arriving "home" this late might require having dinner at the apartment rather than eating out, although it's quite likely there would be enough time prior to the train's departure to catch dinner in Maurienne.



Local and regional trains are a great way to get around France with your bike.

Thursday, July 20th. This is where it gets interesting. For me, the most-important stage is the one going over the Izoard. Doing this without a rental car is tough. The best plan I can come up with is a two-day bike "tour" where I'd take the 8:10am train to Montdauphin, at the base of the Izoard, and ride to the summit to see the race. [The route is shown here](#). Trouble is, there is no train available to get me back to Grenoble afterward! So, if it's possible, I'd carry an extra day's worth of clothing and, after seeing the stage, ride down the "other" side of the Izoard and spend the night in Briancon. This leads to-

Friday, July 21st. Leave Briancon and ride back to Grenoble via the Col du Lauteret. [Route shown here](#). 72 miles, 7200ft of climbing. This would be a tough ride without carrying overnight stuff. With it... could be a long haul! The Tour de France would be doing a pretty flat ride that day, so not missing much there. After dinner, time to put the Bike Friday back into its suitcase; it won't be needed anymore.

Alternative- Thursday morning, rent a car and drive to Briancon. Get the bike out and [then ride south from Briancon to the base of the Izoard, up & over the pass and back to Briancon](#). Drive back to Grenoble. This is workable only if I'm going with someone else; I'm not a fan of long solo drives in a car.

Saturday, July 22nd. Take the 9:05am direct TGV train to Marseille to watch the time trial. Arrive 11:16. See Time Trial, return on 6:14pm train, transfer in Lyon, arriving back in Grenoble at 9:42pm. Since these are TGV, it's likely not practical to bring the Bike Friday, which would have made it easy to ride around the course to get pictures.

Sunday, July 23rd, leave Grenoble on the 6:21am train to Lyon, xfer to TGV train that goes direct to CDG (Paris Airport). Check in at hotel, then take local train back into Paris to see the race. Later that evening, take local train back to CDG, spend the night there.

Monday morning, already at the airport so the 11:15am flight home doesn't require an early wake-up!