

First ride in France- I'm good, TSA did a number on bike



Kevin at Lac d'Estaing, our kickoff ride in France. As things go, guess it's better that I'm good than the bike? The damage TSA did to my large chainring became evident today, but more on that later. After all, it could be worse, could be raining. Oh, right, it did a little bit of that too! But just barely enough to mention.

We got off to a bit of a late start, which is never unusual for us, but today it was caused by a bit of overlapping meds due to the time change. If Kevin takes too much carbamazepine (for his epilepsy), he experiences fun things like double vision and instability. This, of course, is worst just after suiting up and getting ready to find breakfast. So Kevin heads back to the room to try and sleep it off, while I get breakfast. Actually, I think everything up to that point is in the earlier diary entry? Geez, sometimes I go days without getting around to things, and now I'm doubling up!

A few hours (and a double espresso) later, Kevin's all good. I mapped out a 38 mile out-and-back that included a reasonably-decent climb at the end, up to a lake we'd never ridden to before. I'll admit it is beginning to get tougher, finding new places to ride around here! Actually, it turns out we'd ridden all but the final 5 miles, just a couple years ago. Part of the Col du Bordes that will be featured in this year's Tour de France, next Friday's stage in fact (the one that finishes in LeRuns, after climbing the Aubisque). Thankfully, the part we'd ridden before didn't seem quite as steep as last time, and in fact I even rode it a bit faster. I'll go further than that even; it didn't seem nearly as steep going up as it did coming down! That's a good thing. A very good thing. Of course, for Kevin, it was even easier and he had to wait for me a few times.

So nothing too challenging, and on the way back we stopped at the Monoprix to pick up some stuff we needed (paper towels, toilet paper, an extra drying towel for the bathroom because they only give you two, shampoo, an electrical extension cord with multiple outlets, think that's it) and then stopped for dinner at the Kebab place. OK, I'll admit, in the past I thought the Lourdes Kebabs were really good but frankly, Grenoble has them beat. Hands down.

Tomorrow we take a train 40 miles out of town and ride back, via the Aspin, from the side we haven't yet climbed, and a new route into Lourdes that I discovered on Strava. 56 miles tomorrow, about 6600ft of climbing, so pretty much our normal Sunday ride! Hopefully I'll have figured a way to get the chainring bent into shape first. It's OK as long as the pressure on the pedals is steady, but on a descent, it won't stay on. Not much fun having to freewheel down the whole way.