

An interesting day on the Col d'Iseran



Kevin found a great place for getting race shots, but had to squeeze himself into the rock wall to keep from getting run into. First off, let me tell you, the Col d'Iseran is a beast of a climb. It just goes and goes and then goes some more. Getting to it required use of a rental car; the trains that allow bikes don't get too close to it. We chose a spot about 25 miles from the summit to park, and hoped it would be far enough away that we wouldn't get caught up in a post-race traffic jam. Thankfully, we didn't.

Temps were moderate (not insanely hot like the past week has been here). Looks like a high of 93, and the low was 62 when descending the first part. This is likely a 3-bottle climb, which is a problem when there are no places to refill once the major climb starts. Not a big issue for us, since I have a rack and a multi-purpose rack top bag with fold-out panniers which can carry a LOT. Normally that includes Caravan stuff, but since the top of the Iseran is some kind of highly-protected park, they don't allow stuff to be thrown out onto the road.

One of the most interesting things about this crazy climb is how few spectators you see. Could be that some were scared off by weather reports, could be it's not a car-friendly climb (very few places to park) and could be that it's just plain remote. Probably all three of the above. Hard to believe it could be from a lack of interest in this year's Tour de France though, with everything still pretty wide open (except perhaps for 1st place which Bernal may have claimed today).

This was a long day, since it included 2 hours driving each way, plus quite a bit of time both getting up the hill and down. Up the hill... it wasn't all on bike. It's been years since we've had to walk so much of a climb. Probably did 3 or 4 miles of walking because the Gendarmes wouldn't allow you to ride.

Still a great adventure. Unfortunately, tomorrow's adventure has been scrubbed. Weather report is for rain all day long, and that just doesn't seem like a fun final ride here. So we'll use it for packing and cleaning up and getting ready for the train to Paris on Sunday for the finale. And watch all the crazy people out there in the rain on the TV coverage. For once we won't be those crazy people. Hope that's not a bad sign.