

## I already want to go back. Unfinished business, in so many ways



Is it any wonder I want to go back? That picture, taken from the train as we were leaving Lourdes, says it all. Look at those mountains in the background. They go on, and on, and on. You ride 12.5 miles down a beautiful separated bike path (runs along a former rail line) and you have mountains to ride in front of you, mountains to ride to the right of you, mountains to ride to the left.

You think it's nice in the Bay Area that we don't have to worry about rain from May through October, but we also have to deal with air that's not nearly so clean and a lack of running water everywhere. You know how we look forward to Tunitas Creek actually having running water in it? If it were in the Pyrenees, it would be gushing during the summer.

And all the little roads going anywhere and everywhere. You can visit 10 times and still find new places to ride.

Unfortunately my plans got cut short this year when I broke my ribs with 3 solid riding days still to go, including our own "Queen" stage that had been planned for the day following, heading from Lourdes (by bike, no train shortcut this time) all the way to the Col de Portet, two big climbs, 80+ miles, and I felt like I was ready for it.

Will I go back? Heck yes. If for no other reason than to try and get a similar, better photo of Lourdes, not taken through a dirty window on a moving train.

Nevertheless this trip did have a lot of high points, even after breaking my ribs. Kevin getting to do the Luz Ardiden day/stage on his own was definitely up there. That final night dinner in Paris was great. And this was the first trip where Kevin thought it would be nice to stay longer; he's usually ready to leave before the end. There would have been some real benefits to staying longer too; when Kevin and I got back, we came down with some weird flu variant that knocked him flat first, then me. Didn't even get to ride today because I'm still recovering from dehydration. And before that I had to do the regular Tuesday & Thursday-morning rides on Kevin's e-bike, to keep from causing too much trouble with my broken ribs.

And about those ribs. When I got back from France I had Kaiser get some new x-rays to see how things were doing. I think it was Wednesday, two days after we got back, and I hand the x-ray tech the originals from France and he tells me, no, we don't need to see them. OK... no biggie I guess. And the next day I get a report back from a doctor who reviewed the x-rays, saying there were no acute fractures. Despite the x-rays from France showing two highly-visible breaks. Still waiting to hear back on that one; the Kaiser doc who reviewed the x-rays had checked a box that didn't allow me to reply. More on that soon.