

Roads? Where we're going, we don't need roads. Um, let's revisit that one maybe?



It was going to be a nice, easy ride out to see a relatively-flat stage of the Tour de France today; starting at our hotel in Lourdes and winding our way through pleasant country roads to either Saint James or Morlaas, about 15 miles from the end of the stage. Why not see the finish in Pau? Been there, done that. Way too crowded and not terribly friendly. There's nothing quite like seeing the 'tour when it comes through a small town.

Technology makes stuff like this easy! You just go to a site like [MapMyRide.com](#), select the start and finish points, let it recommend something and then you easily tweak it to suit your needs. More rural, less hilly, more hilly, whatever. Then you download it to your Garmin or iPhone or whatever GPS device you use and voila (that's a French word, y'know?) you've got your course mapped out for you, with it telling you where to turn etc. Unless, of course, you decide to try and improve what it offers you. That's when you end up riding a mile through an endless cornfield on gravel that starts out not so bad but eventually looks like un-maintained wagon road. We backtracked out and found an alternative (not too tough; if you know the general direction, you just zig-zag around until you're back on course again).



Team Sky leading out race-leader Bradley Wiggins

Surprisingly, despite a late start and our lengthy detour, we made it with plenty of time to spare. Seriously, that was a surprise! Even got to watch the pack navigate through a roundabout, one of those exceptionally-rare roundabouts where they actually let people into the center of it to watch! Still didn't get any great shots, as we misjudged which side of the roundabout they'd be coming through (mainly right, although the breakaway went left). I think I wanted a crane about 300ft up to get an aerial view. Yes, that would have been perfect. I just didn't have the right equipment. :-)