

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port / Roncevaux

La Scandibérique

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Départ
Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port

Arrivée
Roncevaux

Durée
1 h 37 min

Distance
20,74 Km

Niveau
It climbs

Thématique
Mountain

Leaving behind the southern fortified gateways of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, you head towards a famous pass into Spain, the Col de Roncevaux, or Roncevalles, known as the Puerto de Ibañeta in Spanish. For cyclists, the challenge is taking on a true mountain pass. From the village of Arnéguy, where you leave France, it's then 18km of climbing to get over this Pyrenean col. Even if the slopes are relatively reasonable (the gradients between 4.5% and 7% on average), you need stamina riding through the beech forest of the Valcarlos Valley, so change gear accordingly. The effort brings to mind the famed medieval French epic, La Chanson de Roland, telling of the Basque attack here, back in the 8th century, on Charlemagne's Frankish army returning from attacking Iberia, including Basque Pamplona. Since the 13th century, Roncevalles collegiate church has, though, been dedicated to welcoming pilgrims and travellers.

The route

From St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, you cycle along the D933 road; from Arnéguy, it's along the N135 road. Take care, as motorized traffic is busy along these roads. On this stage, the total positive change in altitude is 930m, while the highest point you reach stands at 1,057m. Signposted EV3.

Surfacing smooth: asphalt.

Trains

- Saint-Jean Pied de Port train station: link to Bayonne

Don't miss

- **Saint-Jean Pied-de-Port:** Porte Saint-Jacques, or St James Gateway (part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France', awarded in 1998); the citadel and its Gastelumendy Redoubt; the ramparts of the upper town and the Faubourg d'Espagne; the parish church dedicated to the Virgin Mary's Assumption; the so-called Bishops' Prison
- **Luzaide / Valcarlos** (Navarre): the Santiago Apostol church; the monument to pilgrims by sculptor Jorge Oteiza; the battle site of Roncevaux and the medieval French epic, La Chanson de Roland
- **Roncesvalles / Roncevaux** (Navarre): collegiate church of Roncevalles

