

Best cycling routes in Nice

30-75 km, max 800m+
Roadbike



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Lifesparkz Bike Tours

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BEST CYCLING ROUTES IN NICE

ONE AFTERNOON IN JUNE 2018 I WAS GUIDING A LADY, WHO WAS VISITING THE CÔTE D'AZUR FOR A FEW DAYS AND HAD DECIDED TO EXPLORE THE REGION BY BIKE FOR A DAY.

WE CYCLED TO THE COL DE LA MADONE FROM MONACO, ENJOYING THE VIEWS AND THE BEAUTY OF THE MOUNTAIN. WE DID NOT GO QUICKLY AS WE CLIMBED, SO BUTTERFLIES BUZZING AROUND OUR HEADS COULD LEAD THE WAY.

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHERE YOU MEET A STRANGER, WHO IN A FEW HOURS TURNS INTO A FRIEND AS YOU SHARE YOUR PASSION FOR DISCOVERING NATURE AND PEOPLE THROUGH CYCLING.

JYLL TOLD ME HOW SHE HAD TAKEN UP CYCLING SOME YEARS BACK AND NOW CYCLED AROUND HER REGION IN UTAH. SHE WAS FOLLOWING ROUTES THAT WERE DESCRIBED IN A BOOK CALLED "50 CLIMBS IN UTAH". NOW IN HER LATE 50S, SHE WANTED TO DO THEM ALL BEFORE SHE TURNED 60.

THIS CONVERSATION SPARKED AN IDEA TO CREATE STORIES IN ENGLISH ABOUT ROUTES IN THE ALPES-MARITIMES WITH A STARTING POINT IN NICE.

LIFESPARKZ BIKE TOURS E-BOOK IS BASED ON ARTICLES THAT I POST ON LIFESPARKZ.NET.

I WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE THIS FIRST VOLUME OF BEST CYCLING ROUTES IN NICE TO JYLL AND ALL OF YOU FELLOW CYCLISTS, WHO TRUST ME TO GUIDE YOU. THANKS TO ALICE FOR YOUR HELP IN EDITING MY "DANGLISH" INTO ENGLISH.

VOLUME I: 30-75 KM AND UP TO 800M+ (APRIL 2021)

VOLUME II: 50-120 KM AND UP TO 1200M+ (WORK IN PROGRESS)

VOLUME III: 80-180 KM AND MORE THAN 1200M+ (WORK IN PROGRESS)

TINA, APRIL 2021



TINA BALTZER, LIFESPARKZ BIKE TOURS



I

COL D'EZE

Distance: 13 km from Nice to Col d'Eze

Altitude: 507 m

Gradient: average 5%. Sections of 7-8%.

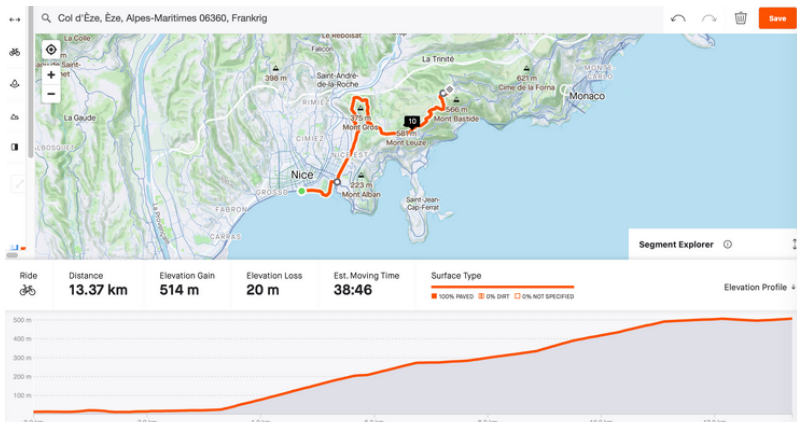
Main routes: The classic starting point is from Nice via the Grande Corniche. You can climb via roads from more towns such as Villefranche-sur-Mer and Eze (from the Moyenne Corniche).

Close to: Nice, Nice Observatory, Reserve de la Revère, La Turbie, Eze, Monaco

Level of difficulty: Easy-medium

Season: All year

Tip: Try to climb from Nice first via the Moyenne Corniche to Villefranche-sur-Mer and make a left turn to continue climbing via the M33 road. It is a climb with less traffic and spectacular views to the coast. If you continue to climb from Col d'Eze to Fort de la Revère, you get an amazing view towards Nice along the coast.



Col d'Eze is one of my favourite climbs in the Côte d'Azur and I have ridden it more than 100 times in the few years that I have lived here. When you live in Nice, you basically live at the foot of it. When I just want to go out for a few hours on the bike, this climb is in my backyard and often a first choice. Why?

It offers stunning views to the coast as well as to the mountains of the Alpes-Maritimes when you reach the top. It offers climbs that challenge you, yet are doable and roads that are in good condition. It is a gateway to so many more amazing routes in the backcountry of Nice, Monaco and Menton.

The classic way to climb Col d'Eze starts from the North-Eastern part of Nice, from the neighbourhoods of Riquier and Saint-Roch. Find Boulevard Bischoffsheim (M2564) and follow this road up and out of the city, which is known as the 'Grande Corniche'. The first few km are some of the hardest and you will find some of the most steep sections of the total climb here.

After approximately 4 km, you get a chance to relax and take a sip of water as the road evens out a bit before the second 3rd of the climb. This offers a slightly easier, steady climb before you hit a few km of more aggressive gradients again on the last section (at km 6-9).

However, on this part of the climb you get breathtaking views towards Eze, Cap Ferrat and across the stunning blue Mediterranean sea.

The last km is nearly flat, so just sit back and enjoy the ride!

2

EZE VILLAGE AND LA TURBIE



Distance: Nice - Eze - La Turbie: 30 km return ride (Nice-Eze/return 20 km)

Altitude: 500 m

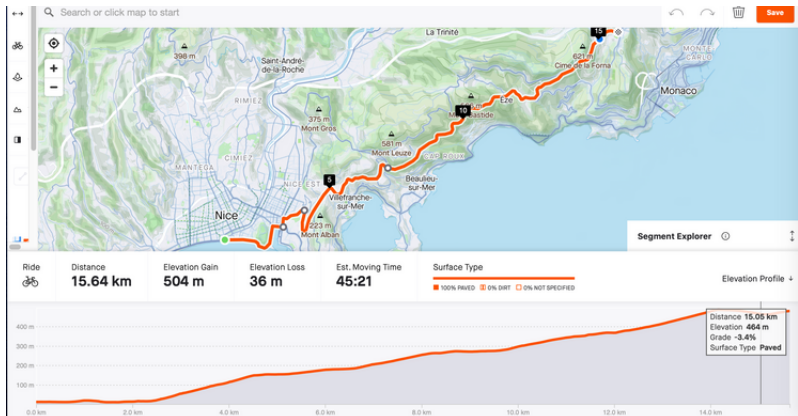
Main routes: From Nice join the Corniche André de Joly (aka the Moyenne Corniche M6007) that will take you to Eze Village. In Eze make a left turn at Route de la Turbie (M45) at the second crossing (you pass the entrance to the village).

Close to: Col d'Eze, Monaco, Peille, Col de la Madone, Menton

Level of difficulty: Easy-Moderate

Season: All year

Tip: The fountain at La Turbie must be one of the most popular fountains for refilling water bottles in the area. You often see professional riders pass by in La Turbie on their way from Monaco (where a lot of the professional riders live) to mountain routes in the Alpes-Maritimes. The fountain is nearly 200 years old, but still young in architectural terms compared to the town's iconic Roman ruin, the "Trophy of Augustus", dating back to 6 B.C.



Cycling the mountains around Nice can feel like travelling back in time. Classic shorter rides from Nice are cycling to Eze Village and/or to La Turbie. People have lived in these areas for thousands of years. Eze Village itself is a medieval village built on a mountain top facing the Mediterranean Sea and some of the buildings date back to the 12th century.

When you pass through Eze and climb a bit more, you reach the town of La Turbie, where you can find the remains of a Roman Trophy that was built in honour of Octavius, Caesar's nephew and later Emperor Augustus after the Roman's victory over the Alpine tribes. The Trophy was part of a sanctuary devoted to the god Hercules Monoikos, which later gave rise to the name Monaco. The world famous principality of Monaco is at the foot of the hills that lead up to La Turbie.

Enough of the history lesson!

Eze Village

The Moyenne Corniche offers a more or less continuous climb along one of the main roads out of Nice. The gradients are moderate (3-5 %), the road is wide and the views are amazing! You will pass Villefranche-sur-Mer bay and get a spectacular view to the Cap Ferrat peninsula. Make sure to look down to Beaulieu-sur-Mer harbour and the azur water in Eze-sur-Mer when you pass them shortly after.

Keep going and before you know it, you will see a bridge ahead of you and Eze Village on the other side of it.

On a summer's day you can find a coffee and snack van at a look-out spot just before you reach Eze Village. It is a really lovely spot to stop and enjoy the stunning coastal views.



You then pass the bridge and enter Eze Village which lies on the hillside to the right. The village itself is closed off from traffic and not really accessible by bike. So if you want to visit the village, I recommend you to bring a lock and secure the bike as well as some shoes for walking the narrow paved streets. There are quite a few galleries, some great restaurants and different small shops. In Eze Village you can also find a unique exotic garden.

La Turbie

Shortly after you have passed the entrance to Eze Village, you will find a road going uphill on your left. This is a nice few km of extra climb before you hit the Grand Corniche road and spin along the final stretch to La Turbie.

In La Turbie there are a few good cafés and restaurants that welcome cyclists. The fountain is a legendary water stop for cyclists in the area. You are very close to the roads to/from the classic climb Col de la Madone and you often meet a lot of passing cyclists.

If you turn down the road left of the Roman Trophy and the historic old town, you come to a look-out spot with a beautiful view towards Monaco.

You can also cycle through the town to a fantastic look-out spot called La Tête de Chien. Take a few minutes to take in the scenery before heading back to Nice either the same way or via the Grande Corniche and Col d'Eze.

La Turbie is an excellent gateway to some of the other great cycling routes nearby which take you to Menton, Italy, Col de la Madone, Peille or even further to l'Escarène and the mountains in the Mercantour National Park.



3

MONACO AND MENTON



Distance: Nice - Menton: 30 km one way by the coast road / 60 km return.

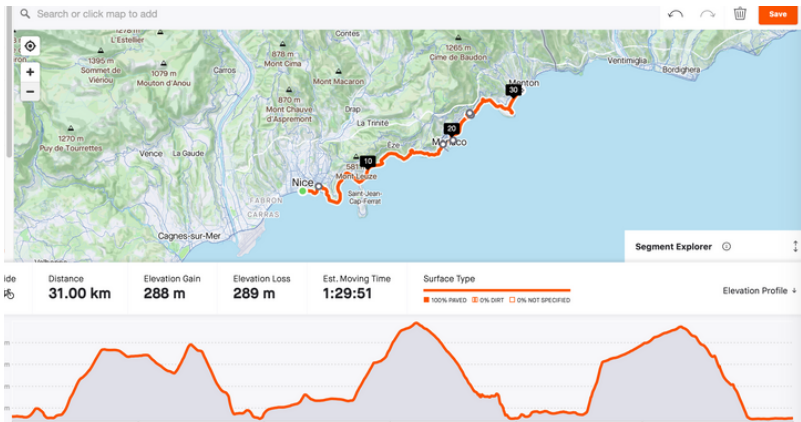
Climb: 300 m climb one way by the coast road / 600 m return.

Main routes: The coast road (Basse Corniche - M6098) from Nice that passes through the coastal towns of Villefranche-sur-Mer, Beaulieu-sur-Mer, Eze-sur-Mer, Cap d'Ail, Monaco and Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Another option is to follow the roads along the mountainsides of the Alpes-Maritimes (Moyenne Corniche M6007 or Grande Corniche M2564). These roads offer more climbing and take you through either Eze and La Turbie (Moyenne Corniche) or Col d'Eze and La Turbie (Grande Corniche).

Close to: Monaco, La Turbie, Col de la Madone, Sospel and Italy - Ventimiglia, Dolce Aqua, San Remo

Level of difficulty: Easy-Moderate (roads with traffic)

Season: spring, autumn, winter



What more could you wish for than a ride along the beautiful azure blue French Riviera with a stop-off lunch at one of the Italian-style eateries in Menton, the last town in France before you reach Italy?

Cycling from Nice to Menton is a lovely option if you are in Nice in the winter season and are looking for a good distance ride. While temperatures can fall quite a bit in the mountains from November-March you often find pleasant, quite mild days along the coast. On a sunny day, it feels like spring already in January! It is great to cruise these roads at times of the year when they are free of the heavy tourist traffic that jams them up in summer. It also makes the perfect early morning ride, if you are here in the summer season and fancy one of the more flat routes in the area.

I will now describe the route that follows the coast through Monaco.

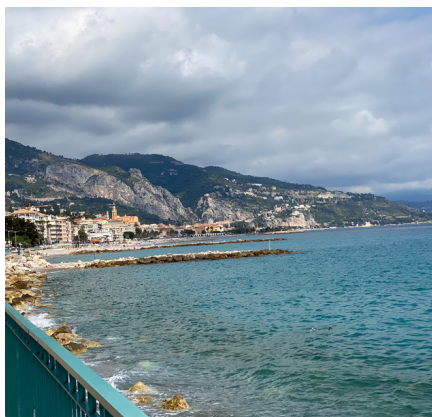
When you leave Nice, you can do a warm-up climb by following the scenic route along the Port and La Réserve up to Mont Boron. It gives you a head start with gradients around 10%, but is very short. Alternatively you can start on the less steep main road of Boulevard Carnot/Basse Corniche.

You will soon pass the bay of Villefranche-sur-Mer with its iconic views towards Cap Ferrat. Follow the road down through Beaulieu-sur-Mer, where you ride by the beach, a casino, a small harbour and some of the Riviera's sumptuous villas. Soon you are in Eze-sur-Mer where you follow the rail-tracks. When you reach a tunnel, stay on the road to the right hand side of the tunnel. Enjoy the view!

On the other side you start a section with a short climb before you reach a nice descent to Cap d'Ail. During rush hours this section can be quite busy from traffic to/from Monaco. So take it easy along here.

Right after Cap d'Ail you reach a few bigger roundabouts. Welcome to Monaco! Follow the road straight and soon after the roundabouts follow the road and the tunnel on your right. As you reach central Monaco it can be a bit tricky, but all you have to do is find your way to the road that passes the harbour front first. On the Eastern side of the harbour, follow the street signs towards Menton.

On the Eastern side of the harbour, you can follow the road on the right and cycle through the famous tunnel you'll perhaps recognize from the Formula 1 Grand Prix and continues towards the beach side. Another option is to climb the steep road on the left of the East harbour and pass the famous Casino at Monte Carlo.



Soon you are back in France and arrive at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Follow the road and it is not long before you reach Menton. You can find a scenic route by taking the road on your right around Cap Martin.

In Menton there are a lot of restaurants at the beautiful beach side that stretches all the way to the border of Italy. Here there are plenty of options for a coffee or lunch before your return.

As you go back through Monaco you need to pass through a few tunnels. Follow the signs towards Cap d'Ail. Don't be scared of cycling through the tunnels, but always make sure you have your lights on and that you ride carefully and pay close attention to the traffic.

You often find you actually go faster on the bike than the Ferraris as you pedal through the tunnels in Monaco! And of course, you look a lot cooler!

4

ANTIBES



Distance: Nice - Antibes 50 km return ride including Cap d'Antibes.

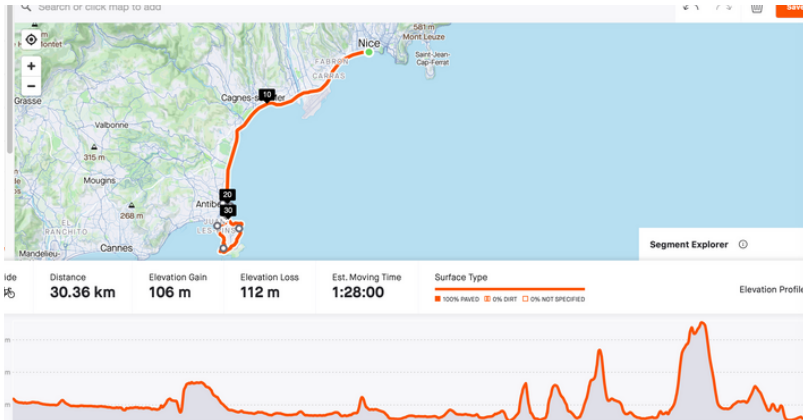
Main routes: The road along the coast. There are cycle paths from Nice-Antibes. It is flat most of the way with a few hills at Cap d'Antibes.

Close to: Cannes, Biot, Valbonne, Vence, Tourettes-sur-Loup

Level of difficulty: Easy

Season: All year

Tip: You can cycle to Antibes and back by following the cycle path along the coast road without doing the tour around Cap d'Antibes. However, the Cap offers a unique landscape and is definitely worth the extra effort.



Cycling to Antibes from Nice is for those who want a day cruising the flat roads that boarder the beautiful turquoise waters of the Côte d'Azur. You won't find any mountains to climb on this road!

When you start in Nice, find your way to the Promenade des Anglais and simply join the cycle path in the direction of the airport. It is a two-way cycle path all of the way to Villeneuve-Loubet. Cycling is allowed on the road, but you must be prepared for heavy traffic and quite a few traffic lights.

When you reach Nice airport, the path curves slightly along the airport area. Follow the path, paying particular attention to the intersections that cross the cycle path. Although a lot of drivers in Nice are friendly to cyclists, there are some who do not necessarily stop for cyclists at an intersection. So always be prepared to stop!

Maintain a slower pace as you pass the airport. There are often travellers who cross the cycle path without realizing that there is one and who may walk in front of a cyclist.

You will soon cross the bridge over the Var river and enter Saint-Laurent-du-Var.

Continue along the cycle path. When you have passed through Saint-Laurent-du-Var, you come to Cagnes-sur-Mer with its palm-tree lined cycle path.

On a sunny day there are often a lot of people walking, rollerblading, scooting, unicycling! or having fun on quadricycles. Basically you meet all kinds of traffic here and you do need to pay a lot of attention to everything rolling, gliding or moving along the path.

If you feel like taking a break for a drink, there are plenty of cafés and restaurants along Cagnes-sur-Mer beachfront or in the Villeneuve-Loubet Marina.

The last stretch from Villeneuve-Loubet to Antibes offers a pleasant 5 km flat ride on a cycle path on the right side of the road with only a few traffic lights. It can be quite windy along here, and on days where you have the wind in your back, you can get up a really good pace!

Soak up the sound of crashing waves on your left as you glide along, and before you know of it, you are in Antibes.

Antibes is a very pretty town that has one of the biggest ports in Europe. You often find some of the largest yachts in the world here. Antibes also has a charming walled old town with a great choice of restaurants and shops.

If you want to cruise around Cap d'Antibes, you can follow the road all the way along the coast passing by the old chateau that is now home to the Picasso Museum, which is well worth a visit.

There is approximately 10-15 km cycling around the Cap depending on which way you choose. There are some great views and quite spectacular villas. If you fancy a bit of a climb, there is a short one up to see the view from the lighthouse. You will eventually pass through Juan-les-Pins before returning to Antibes.

To return to Nice, simply find the port in Antibes and follow the same road as you arrived on.



5

ASPREMONT AND TOURETTE-LEVENS



Distance: Nice - Aspremont - Tourette-Levens - Nice 50 km

Climb: 700 m+

Main routes: M714, M14, M719, M19

Close to: Col de Chateauneuf-Vielleville, Saint-Blaise, Levens, Mont Chauve d'Aspremont

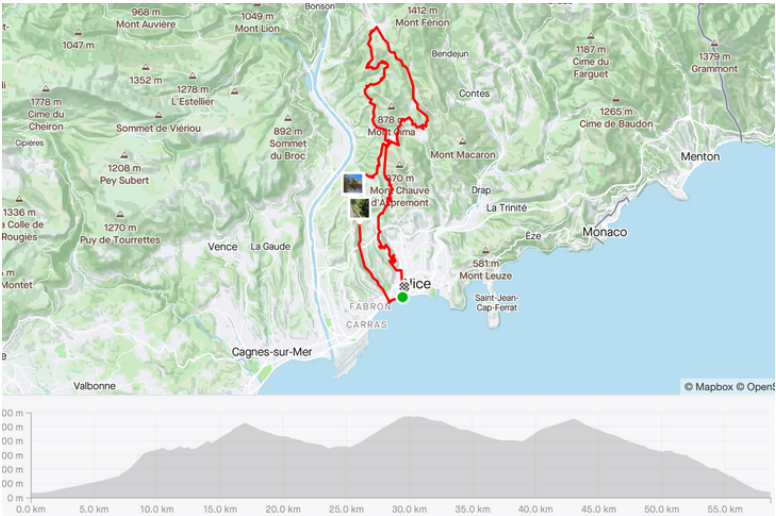
Level of difficulty: Easy-Moderate

Season: spring, summer, autumn

Tip: You can extend the tour and do an app. 70 km loop by following the road further North in Aspremont and cycling through Saint-Blaise/Levens before you hit the M19 road back to Nice. It's a really scenic loop! You can add more climbing by including Col de Chateauneuf-Vielleville or Mont Chauve d'Aspremont. From this area you can also continue to the climbs further into the hinterland of Nice, e.g. Lucéram, Col de la Madone d'Utelle or Col de Turini.

One of the things that I love about living in the Nice area is that you only have to cycle for a relatively short distance, before you reach picturesque provencale-style villages and hamlets which date back centuries. Aspremont and Tourette-Levens are two of these. In just a few hours, you can visit both of them in this 50 km loop from Nice.

They say all roads lead to Rome, well there are also a few that go to Aspremont! There are 4 entry points to Aspremont, which lies at the heart of a web of connecting smaller mountain roads. If you followed the Tour de France in 2020 Aspremont was the scene for the first dramatic stage, as the riders passed through it 3 times.



An easy route to go to Aspremont from central Nice is to follow the Promenade des Anglais towards the West until you reach the neighbourhood of Magnan. Turn right and follow the main road, Boulevard de la Madeleine and you will start cycling towards the mountains through a residential area. In no time, you will forget you are in one of the biggest cities in France.

You will reach a creek, which you follow for a while until you join the road going uphill towards a hill-top area called Saint-Pancrace. You then reach the route d'Aspremont and make a left turn at M14*. There will be signs that direct you to Aspremont at this point. Follow the smooth road and enjoy the views stretching towards the Var valley.


**Tip for climbing fans: nearby you can try out one of the local challenges, Mont Chauve d'Aspremont (834 m) by making a right turn at the same intersection and cycle towards Falicon.*

You will soon see Aspremont rise from the hills, a lovely village that has reached towards the sky since medieval times. Be sure to make a stop at the village square. The fountain in Aspremont is a popular meeting spot for cyclists, who are happy to chat with fellow cycle lovers. You can also grab a coffee at one of the small cafés.

To go directly to Tourette-Levens from Aspremont, find the road that goes slightly uphill from the parking area in the middle of the village. You do not have to climb much before you enter a valley and then wheel down to the next village.

The landscape here is stunning with rolling green hilltops and views all the way to the sea!

As you reach the main road in Tourette-Levens, make a right turn. You will follow this road all of the way back to Nice, enjoying a long, easier descent. Along the way, you will pass through some outer areas of Nice - Falicon and Saint-André-de-la-Roche - before you hug the Western river bank of the Paillon river and head towards Nice city centre.

Et Voilà! - Two villages in a few hours' ride, C'est magnifique. 

6

GATTIÈRES AND CARROS



Distance: Nice - Gattières - Carros - St. Jeannet - Nice 55 km

Climb: 500 m+

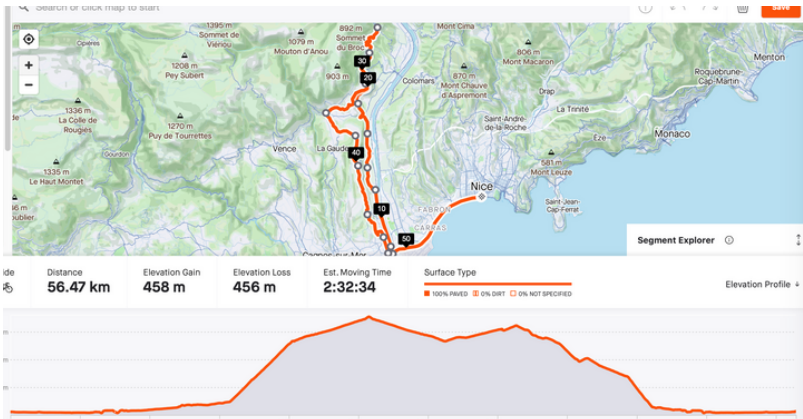
Main routes: M2209 from Saint-Laurent du Var, M2210, M18

Close to: Col de Vence, Vence, Broc, Gillette

Level of difficulty: Easy-Moderate

Season: spring, summer, autumn

Tip: If you continue through Carros to Broc and join a small road going down to the riverside, you can cycle back through the flat valley along a cycle path that follows the Var river back to Saint-Laurent-du-Var. Another option for a longer round trip is to follow the M1 and D8 through Bouyon and Coursegoules to Vence by passing Col de Vence.



Gattières and Carros are villages on the Western side of the Var valley that you can cycle to via some gentle hills not far from Nice. This is a great route for those of you who are starting to become familiar with cycling in the mountains. There are gentle climbs and descents where you can challenge yourself with a bit of uphill and downhill on good roads and (for the area) short sections.

As you move from the coast to the hinterland, feast your eyes on views towards some of the higher, majestic mountain tops of the Alpes-Maritimes.

When you start from Nice you cycle out to the coastal town of Saint-Laurent-du-Var via the Promenade des Anglais. It is just a few km after Nice airport. In Saint-Laurent-du-Var, the quickest way to reach the more quiet roads is via the main road M95.

There is often dense traffic, so pay attention and always give way when crossing the roundabouts. Another option is to follow the main road through the town of Saint-Laurent-du-Var. However, there are quite a few traffic lights and it can be very busy.

Follow the M2209 and after approximately 5 km follow the road on the left towards Gattières. You now have a climb up to the first village of Gattières.

Here you will find a bakery where you can buy some lovely patisseries and a coffee. The local bar close by is also more than happy to serve passing cyclists! :-)

Continue on the same road to Carros village. Carros is in a very beautiful location and like other medieval villages in the area it has charming winding streets which are beautiful but not always very road bike friendly!

You can now return to Nice the same way as you came. Or you can follow a pretty road from Gattières close to St. Jeannet, another very picturesque village. At the roundabout at the foot of St. Jeannet, take the direction of La Gaude and follow the M118 down to Saint-Laurent-du-Var again.

And you are now on your way back to Nice!

7

VENCE, TOURETTES-SUR-LOUP AND THE LOUP RIVER



Distance: Loop of Nice - Vence - La Colle sur Loup - Cagnes-sur-Mer
- Nice / 72 km

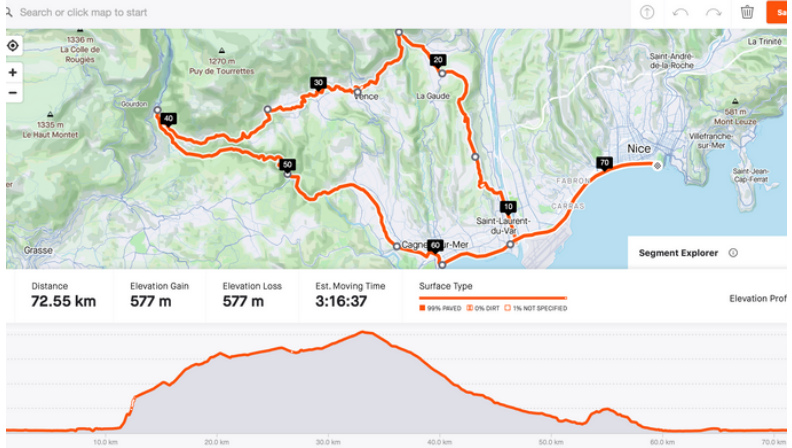
Climb: 800 m+

Main roads: M118, M/D2210 and D6

Close to: Col de Vence, Gourdon, Gattières

Level of difficulty: Easy - Moderate

Season: All year



This loop that will take you through charming villages, wide curving roads in good condition and offer magnificent views to the Alps and the sea.

As soon as you have passed Nice airport and crossed the Var, you ride in to St-Laurent-du-Var and start a shorter climb from the sea level and up to 300m. You can cycle through St-Laurent-du-Var town and find the road towards La Gaude, which offers a steady climb with average gradients of 2-6%.

At the roundabout at St.-Jeannet, follow the road towards Vence. The majestic rock formation North of Vence rises above you as you cruise the main road that curls through the lower mountainside.

The hills remain green, even in winter and the sea view is always a feast for the eyes.

You then pass through Vence, and if you are up for a challenge, you can take a trip up to Col de Vence at 900m. However, you can also simply cycle through Vence and continue on the road section to Tourettes-sur-Loup, which is another wonderfully picturesque village of the Côte d'Azur.

When you come to the other side, there are some great photo ops!

You now have a long and enjoyable, easy descent ahead of you. It is easy to speed on this downhill section, so be careful of traffic!

At an intersection where you see the road towards Gourdon and the Caussols Plateau, make a left turn to Nice. You will soon ride on the left side of the Loup river. In summer, it is pleasantly cool on this road, but in winter, you can get a chilly wind in your face. There always seems to be more wind in this valley than on the other roads.

Make your way towards La Colle-sur-Loup and continue through Cagnes-sur-Mer.

Before you know of it you are at the seafront and making your way back to Nizza la Bella!

