

THE TORINO-NICE RALLY

POWERED BY |  komoot



CAFÉ DU CYCLISTE™
Côte d'Azur

THE TORINO-NICE RALLY



TORINO

BRIANCON

Cervières

C. D'IZOARD

Château-Ville-Vieille

C. AGNEL/AGNELLO

C. SAMPEYRE

Ponte Marmora

STR. D. CANNONI

THE ORIGINAL
ROUGH STUFF
INSPIRED "LETS SEE WHERE IT GOES" ROUTE

ROCCA D.L. MEJA

"Little Peru"

BORGO S. DALMAZZO

LIMONE PIEMONTE

C. Tende/Tenda

VIA D. SALE

FORT D.L. FORCA

C. Turini

MT. SACCARELLO

SCR 4

C. BRAUS

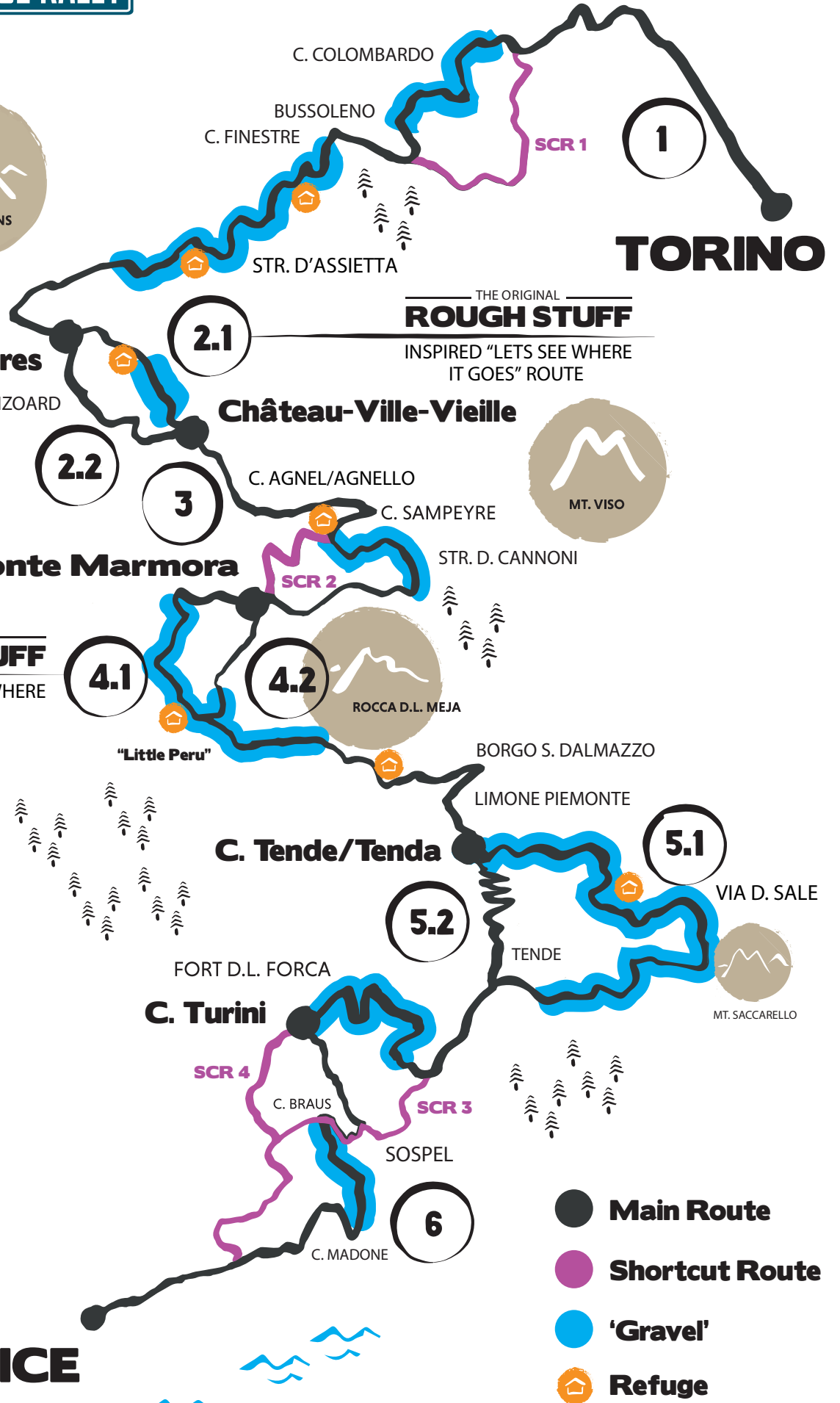
SCR 3

SOSPEL

C. MADONE

NICE

- Main Route**
- Shortcut Route**
- 'Gravel'**
- Refuge**



The Komoot Torino-Nice Rally is a non-profit, all good bike ride. Only one rule – *you know the one.*

Along the way you might want to call in at the following places we've enjoyed before (*call in advance if you need a room*). **In route order :**

Piazza Giambattista Bodoni. 10123 Torino - our traditional pre-ride dinner spot in Turin - it's where the route starts and an ideal meeting place.

Agriturismo Fattoria Pian dell'Alpe & Località Pian dell'Alpe. Between Colle delle Finestre & Strada dell'Assietta start (Route 1) - Food + Lodgings

Refuge Casa Assietta. 14km past Colle delle Finestre (1) - F + L

Hotel D'Izoard, Cervieres. Before the Col d'Izoard (2.1 or 2.2) - F + L

Le Relais de Château-Clément. Col Agnel (3) - F

Camping Val Varaita, Sampeyre. Owned by family of TNR rider and friend, a nice campsite at the base of the Colle di Sampeyre (3) - L

Rifugio Escursionistico "La Sousto dal Col". Top of the Colle Sampeyre, off route (3) -3km downhill from Col on SP335 - F + L

Camping Park Valle Maira. Before the climb up Colle del Preit (4.2) or the roughstuff option (4.1) - F + L

Rifugio di Viviere and Casa di Pian Cassin, Viviere. Both on the road to the hike up to the Gardetta (4.1) - F + L

Viviere. Also on the hike-a-bike option to the Gardetta (4.1) - F + L

Rifugio Gardetta, in 'Little Peru'/Altipiano della Gardetta. Among the most enjoyable stops, highly recommended highlight (4.1 & 4.2) - F + L

Rifugio Carbonetta. On the descent from the Gardetta (4.1 & 4.2) - F + L

2x Bike shops in Dorgo San Dalmazzo - Probike SNC and Giordano Cicli
Chalet 1400, Panice Soprana. Lower part Col Tende climb (4.1 & 4.2) - F + L

Ristorante con camere Gentil Locanda, Ponte Marmora. At left turn off SP422 towards Colle del Preit (4.1 & 4.2) - F+L

Camping Lou Dahu. On the road to Priet (4.2) - F + L

Pensione Ceaglio, Marmora. On the road to Colle del Priet (4.2) - F + L

Locanda Degli Elfi, Preit. On the road to Colle del Priet (4.2) - F + L

Rifugio Locanda Lou Lindal, Preit. Another option in this area (4.2) - F + L

Rifugio Don Barbera, ½ way along the Via del Sale. A great location and a true highlight of the route (5.1) - F + L

There are food and hotel options in **La Brigue** and **Breil Sur Roya**, and **Sospel** is a good town for food and lodgings as you get close to Nice – or stock up for that last night bivi after the Col Braus, perhaps.

Since the 1st TNR our 'finish line' in Nice has been at **Cafe du Cycliste**. Meet up there for a coffee and a photo!



The Komoot Torino-Nice Rally Route Collection

Use the QR code to access the route collection on komoot:



A donation to SSF (see last page) gives you one year of komoot premium membership, courtesy of komoot. Go to www.komoot.com/g and enter your voucher code.

Multi-Day Tour Planner / On-Tour Weather /
Sport-specific maps / Create your own route collections

Find, plan and share your adventures with komoot.

Rules of the TNR

1) Obey 'rule #1'. 2) Leave No Trace.

Risk Management

The TNR route information cannot account for the route conditions that you may find and no responsibility is accepted for route accuracy or conditions and 'rideability' of the terrain. The route information is maintained and updated to the best of our knowledge and intended as a guide rather than a definitive fixed route. Riders must proceed with caution as conditions of roads and tracks can change at any time due to natural events, weather or roadworks. If in doubt, take a low road detour.

This isn't a simple 'follow the line' route. There are choices to be made from the options supplied as well as scope for further variations, short-cuts or finding supplies and lodging etc that may be of use. The route files don't list all of them. If you study the route in advance you'll be better prepared. It's recommended you bring a map of the area to assist with any diversions or re-routes required.

The Torino-Nice Rally is a journey through the mountains. You will be over 2000m altitude most days and when you go to the mountains you should expect mountain weather. The weather can change fast, things can get serious very quickly and tired, cold riders can make dangerous mistakes. It can be a hard place to learn how inadequate cycling clothing can be against bad weather. Bring good waterproofs (preferably with a hood), warm gloves and insulated layers that are warm when wet. Pack appropriately.

The route uses some dangerous roads. Many sections of road and track have unprotected drops to the side that could easily be fatal - this is not uncommon in the Alps but may be new to some riders from other areas. The roads and tracks can be very exposed in places. Descents can be steep with loose and uneven surfaces. Traffic may be around any corner, on or off-road. Check your brakes.. Ride safe!

There are sections of the route where unstable ground above the road or track creates a threat of rockfall that is a risk to traffic. A bike helmet offers almost no protection from falling rocks either. Sections with steep ground alongside the road are where the risk is greatest. Rockfall or landslide risk is highest during and after periods of heavy rain - if riding in bad weather perhaps take a sheltered rest if you can.

Ensure you understand and comply with the rules of the road for cyclists in both France and Italy. This includes visibility at night when lights and reflective items are a legal requirement. You must also have valid insurance to ride on the roads in France and Italy.

This is a self-supported ride for us all, a tour where you or your group are on your own. Keep a phone power pack charged and know the number for emergency services (112) and your location at all times.

Impact Reduction and Rider Responsibilities

There are many areas on this route that can be very dry in late summer. Wild fires are a very real risk and starting camp fires is not part of riding the rally. Do not light fires in the hills - if you want a warm, sociable evening around a fire, find a camp site that has the facilities. Be very careful where you use stoves too, in some places stoves and fires are banned by the authorities with fines for offenders.

Only the wildlife can freely 'go' in the hills and leave it there. If you must go, pack it out or use correct methods of site management - dig 6" deep at least, don't bury waste on ground that drains into streams.

Do not camp on private or fenced-off land. Remember that locals might not understand a group of people sleeping outside within view of their homes. 'Out of sight is out of mind'.

Lastly, please consider the impact of how you travel to Turin or from Nice. The scenery these routes promise creates inspiration to travel in us all, but flying there comes with a high environmental cost.



The Torino-Nice Rally GPS route file notes (updated autumn 2023)

Notes on how the route is divided up into sections and numbered/named -

Numbered route GPX route files are the main route sections, 1; 2.1; 2.2; 3; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1; 5.2; 6. 'SCR' GPX files are Short Cut Routes - SCR.1; SCR.2; SCR.3 & SCR.4

Route sections numbered 2.1 or 2.2 signify there's an option for the 2nd section, a decision to be taken at the start of section 2, or 5.1 and 5.2 means a choice for the 5th section. These 'x.1' and 'x.2' options have the same start and end points. They share the same route along some of their lengths.

The cue notes (XL sheet) refer to the next option or route at the end of each route section. There are warning POI/waypoints in the GPS files that are also noted in the cues, plus the cues include safety notes and tips for some of the water, food and shelter locations to be found.

Where there are options, 'x.1' is the original 'explorer' route, 'x.2' is the easier / faster / shorter route. E.g. 2.1 is considered harder or needing more time than 2.2.

Please note, file start/end points or sections are not recommended as daily distances, stages or the best stopping places. They're simply the locations of route option choices.

SCRs are all good rides. Only the time required or the challenge varies from the main sections. SCR routes are physically easier and faster than the main route in all cases, to save time if needed.

SCR routes are not always at the end of a main route section - it's worth noting in advance where they are if you think you might use them.

All elevation profiles shown are from the TNR route collection on komoot.

A note on the hike-a-bike sections - our original ride from Turin to Nice was inspired by the all-road explorers of the early French randonneuring days and the work of the late Fred Wright. Fred was an adventurous touring cyclist who would ride up to where a road ended, then push or carry his loaded bike until he came to the track or road on the other side. In the days before mountain biking his rides took him to places few cyclists saw. His rides and the routes of others were documented in his self-published book, 'Rough Stuff Cycling in the Alps', which is now available from Isola Press in the form of a celebratory reprint.

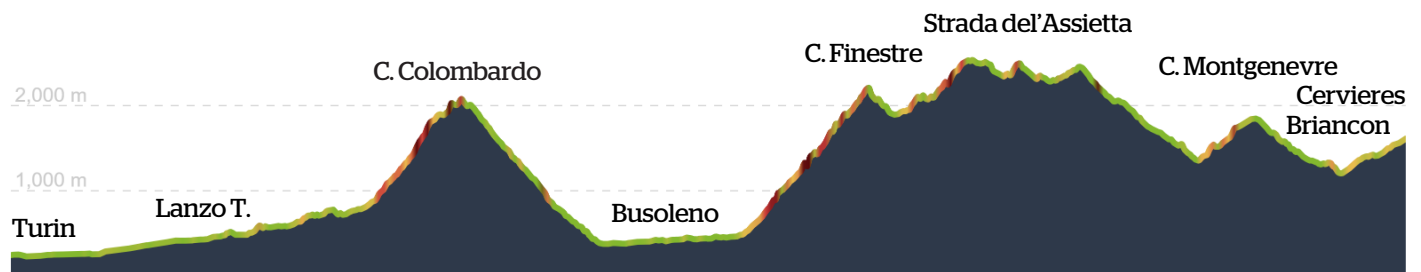
Route file descriptions, in order of starting points -

1 TNR 23 Turin-Cervieres. Turin to Cervieres, 210km, via Colle del Colombardo 1st climb

The route out of Turin to get to the original introduction climb, the Colle del Colombardo. This climb has a reputation though it's arguably not as bad as they say if your gears are low enough. It's the equivalent of the first few bars of a great metal track that grab you by the scruff of the neck and that's it, you're head down and rocking all the way to the end.

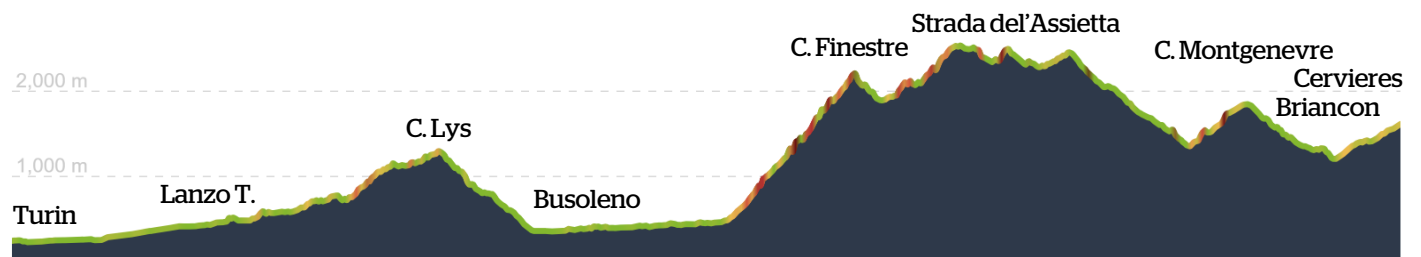
After the Colombardo it's onto the famed Colle del Finestre and the Strada dell'Assietta, the awesome road descent from Sestriere (a recent addition after we rode it a few times), then the Montgenevre tunnel before arriving at Briancon's fortified old town. A few km out of Briancon it's time to decide on the next section - the wild Col de Peas rough stuff route or the classic Col d'Izoard?

Section Tip - take a bit more food and water than you might think you'll need for that first climb and get started on it in good time. There's a water tap at the end of the steep tarmac section at the bottom. A lack of acclimatisation makes it challenging and it can take longer than you expect, many riders don't reach the valley on the other side and food in Busoleno until late afternoon or early evening.



SCR.1 TNR 23 Turin-Cervieres. Turin to Cervieres, 206km, via Col del Lys 1st climb

An far easier first day via the tarmac Colle del Lys (alt. 1311m). You're missing the classic, legendary, Colle del Colombardo though. After the Col del Lys it's the same route as 1.1 all the way to Cervieres. Riders who want an easier start can load this route and get all the way to the start of section 2.1 or 2.2 before reloading their GPS, as it's the same route as main route 1 from the valley at Busoleno to Cervieres.

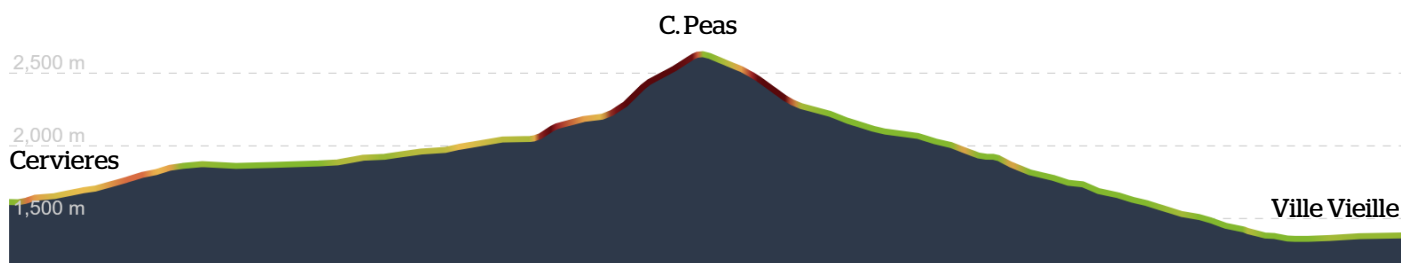


2.1 TNR 23 Cerv-CdP-VV. Cervières to Château-Ville-Vieille via Col des Peas, 31km.

The original 'Fred Wright tribute' route that we explored during the route recce in 2015. We didn't do any more than look at the map and see a path marked on it, linking the valleys. We found a beautiful, quiet road up an open valley that leads to a small village with food and lodging possibilities, then there's a push and a carry up to the silence and long views of the Col des Peas. It's followed by a descent that starts as singletrack before becoming a stone and gravel track to Chateau Ville Vieille with a wonderful view of Fort Queyras. Every good ride includes some hike-a-bike and the change of pace it brings is something special. This isn't an easy section, but on the true scale of hike-a-bike it's nothing major. If you've packed fairly light and are wearing good shoes you have few excuses really. After all, "What would Fred do?"

Section Tip - there's a small refuge with water taps in Les Fonds, at the end of the road. Imagine how good a sunrise view from the col could be, after an 'Alpine start' - it's over 2600m and the views are quite special.

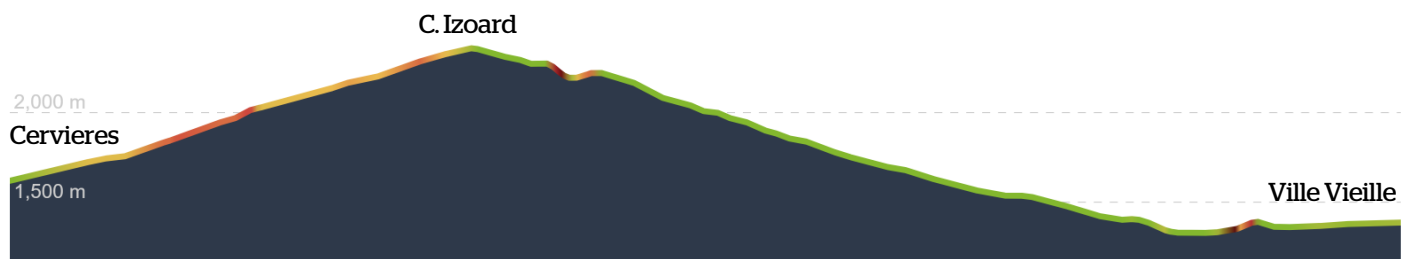
Note - in summer 2023 some significant logging work blocked the lower areas of this descent. Check online for updates before taking this route in 2024. There are ways through but they're unmapped and unclear.



2.2 TNR 23 Cerv-Izoard-VV. Cervières to Château-Ville-Vieille via Col d'Izoard, 28km.

The classic road climb over the Col d'Izoard to the Fort Queyras / Chateau Ville Vieille area. A beautiful climb and one that doesn't usually feel as hard as its height and fame may suggest - it's a different matter on a hot day though. Look out for the memorial to Louison Bobet and Fausto Coppi within the rock on the right hand side of the road, at the top among incredible scenery of the Casse Deserte.

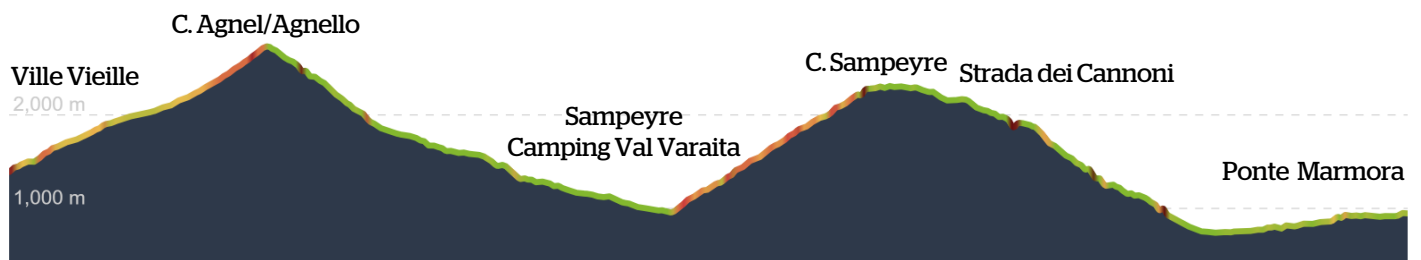
Section Tip - pick up a Col d'Izoard patch from the gift shop at the col perhaps, or plan a cold but potentially stunningly starry bivi on the top with some supplies from a shop in Briancon - the night sky views at that height can be incredible (and that's true of the entire route since light pollution is so low).



3 TNR 23 VV-PtMarmora. Château-Ville-Vieille to Ponte Marmora, 110km.

Including the highest point of the ride, the 2744m Col Agnel / Colle dell'Agnello which is also a high border crossing, and including the stunning Strada dei Cannoni along the Varaita-Maria ridge. The Strada dei Cannoni features the biggest 'gravel' on the route, also known as 'rocks'. It's a challenge, it's been done on 35mm tyres in the past, just, but bigger tyres are recommended. Don't get caught without spare inner tubes here. The descent takes you onto a relaxing valley road, the Val Vairita, a welcome breather. It's really nice especially if you go all the way to the Gardetta hike-a-bike turn-off, with a few good campsites in the area.

Section Tip - If the weather isn't great in the Sampeyre area (it can be misty and damp on that side of the hill), Camping Val Vairita in Sampeyre town centre is a good base for the night, a TNR-friendly campsite that's very close to the shops and restaurants in Sampeyre town.



SCR.2 TNR 23 SP335 - the quicker route off the Colle Sampeyre, 22km.

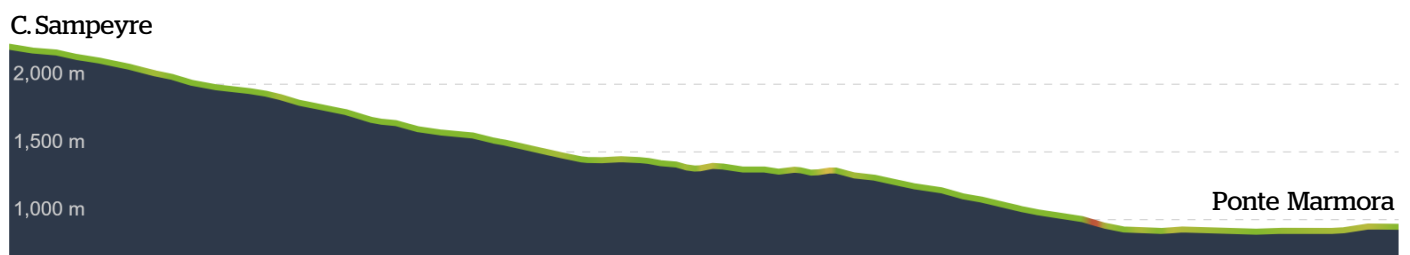
This is a safe and easy downhill road shortcut to avoid the quite rocky descent of the Strada Cannoni in section 3. It reduces the route by 20 miles / 33km approx.

Taking this shortcut means the middle of the TNR is a long section that's all on tarmac but the roads are beautiful and there's plenty of off-road still to come.

At the end of section 3 it's time to decide whether you're up for some 'Rough Stuff in the Alps' a.k.a hike-a-bike, or a tough but beautiful climb on a small road.

This shortcut replaces a previous SCR that we're now considering off limits and no longer part of the TNR after recommendations from friends in Italy and recent rockfall blocking the road entirely. The road isn't passable at all at the time of writing and the Italian Police may fine you if you're seen there.

Section Tip - Towards the end of either route (3 or SCR.2) and particularly SCR.2 there aren't many options for supply if it's late in the day. Route 3 passes more options on the valley road towards the end than SCR.2. Restaurants and bars may be your only option so try to carry something in reserve.

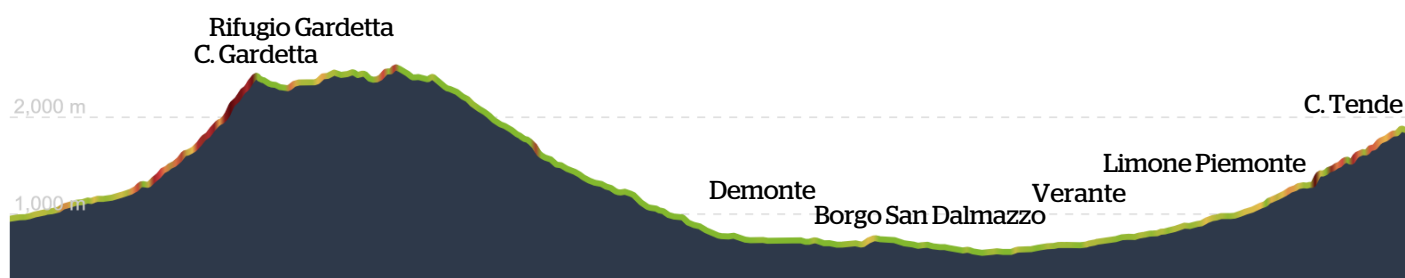


4.1 TNR 23 PtMarmora-Chialv-Tende. Ponte Marmora to Col Tende via Gardetta hike-a-bike, 111km.

Our original rough stuff route into 'Little Peru', the Altopiano della Gardetta. A hike/push on footpaths in the beautiful surroundings beyond Chialvetta rewards with some #bunkerresearch and the unveiling of the altopiano from the Passo della Gardetta. If you rode the Col d'Izoard rather than the Col des Peas hike and still want to earn your Rough Stuff in the Alps points, then this is the route to take. There's places to rest in Chialvetta and Viviere before the hike begins.

The Rifugio Gardetta is a highlight place to stay in this area. The route then continues on a long descent to Demonte, a bike path road to Borgo San Dalmazzo and more resupplies at Limone Piemonte. It follows the same route as 4.2 after the Gardetta, using a flat route between Demonte and Limone Piemonte. There's two bike shops in Borgo San Dalmazzo - probably the best place for spares and servicing since Briancon.

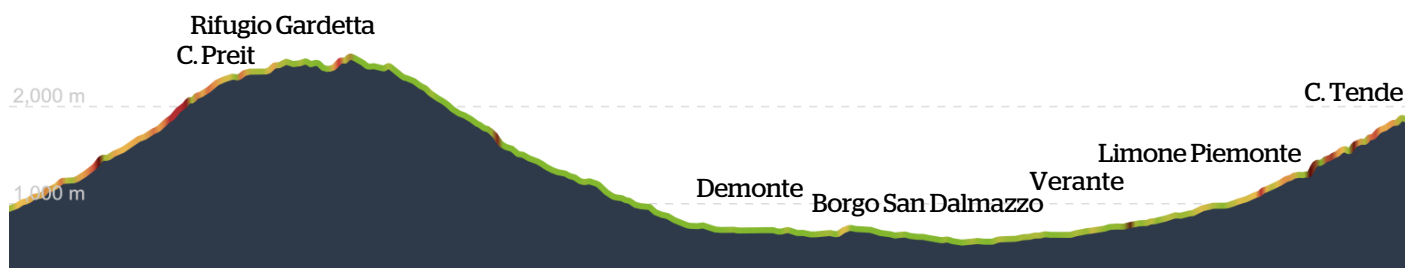
Section Tip - Get food and drinks in the small villages just to the left of the road you're on and if it's getting late you might be best to stay there rather than start the hike. Take your time in this beautiful valley and look behind you from time to time, the views are stunning. And check out the bunkers towards the top!



4.2 TNR 23 Pte Marmora-Preit-Tende. Road climb to Little Peru then onto Col Tende, 107km.

The road climb through Preit to reach Little Peru. A quiet, picturesque and at times quite tough road climb leads to the Col Preit and then continues into the Altopiano della Gardetta area. The Gardetta is a relatively long section of rougher track at altitude with dramatic scenery. There is a refuge in the area, the Rifugio Gardetta, and it's a good one - just 200m off-route if you take this route option. The route continues on a long descent to Demonte, Borgo San Dalmazzo and Tende on same course as 4.1 after the Gardetta area including passing very close to the bike shops in Borgo San Dalmazzo.

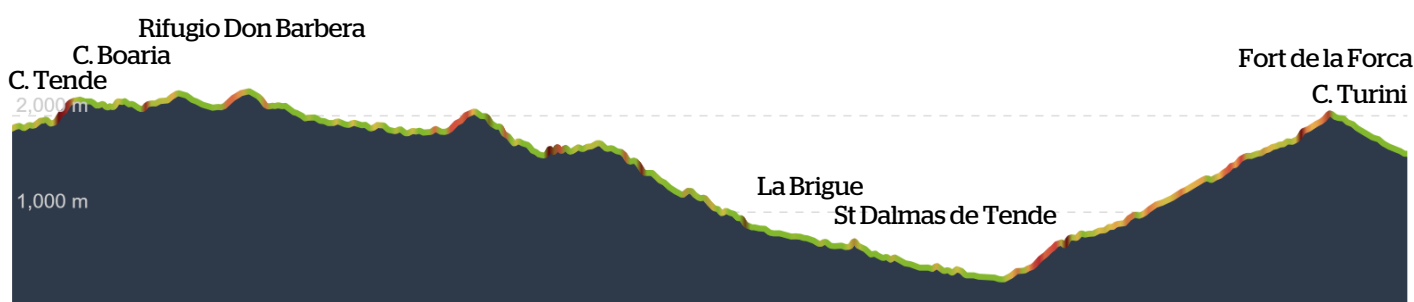
Section Tip - Camping Val Maira, Camping Lou Dahou or the refuge and gite in Preit are all good places to stay. After that there is a long climb to the Gardetta Refuge at the top. The refuge is amazing but you'll need to be there before about 7pm to secure food and maybe a bed (if there's no room to sleep there, it's a great area place to bivi and they might still offer you breakfast!)



5.1 TNR 23 Tend-VdS-Turini. Col Tende to Col Turini along Via del Sale, 113km.

A long, wild route off the Tende onto the incredible Via del Sale (VdS). The Rifugio Don Barbera isn't too far from the Col Tende itself, a couple of hours ride on a good day. The descent off the Pas du Tanarel in the Monte Saccarello area is very rough for a couple of kms - it's rocky, MTB terrain, easier on >50mm tyres - and there's a long descent to La Brigue with rolling terrain in the woods. It's easy to underestimate this bit. After La Brigue you ride down the Roya valley. There may be minor delays here due to ongoing repairs from Storm Alex in 2020. The repairs cover a section of approximately 15km along the damaged valley. The next climb is a big one, +1700m on tarmac then gravel up to the Fort de la Forca and the Col de Turini, via the tunnelled and balconied La Maglia road (see SCR.3 if you're short of time). There's a good bivouac shelter partway up this climb. From the top near to the Fort de la Forca you can see the sea on a clear day.

Section Tip - Don't underestimate the time needed and the need for water. The section begins with 60km of tracks with only the Rifugio Don Barbera for food and water along the way. The climb to the fort is long and can be hot - fill up and drink whenever you can here too.



5.2 TNR 23 Tende descent-Roya-Turini The quicker route off the Col Tende, 68km.

Note, this IS the famed switchback descent of the Col Turini, it's back to the original 5.2 option for the TNR! The switchbacks have now been repaired since Storm Alex and are open again thanks to the hard work of the road repair teams there. There's more tarmac than gravel there now but it's still a great road. After the descent to Tende itself this option then follows the same route as 5.1 from the Roya valley up to the Fort de la Forca and the Col Turini.

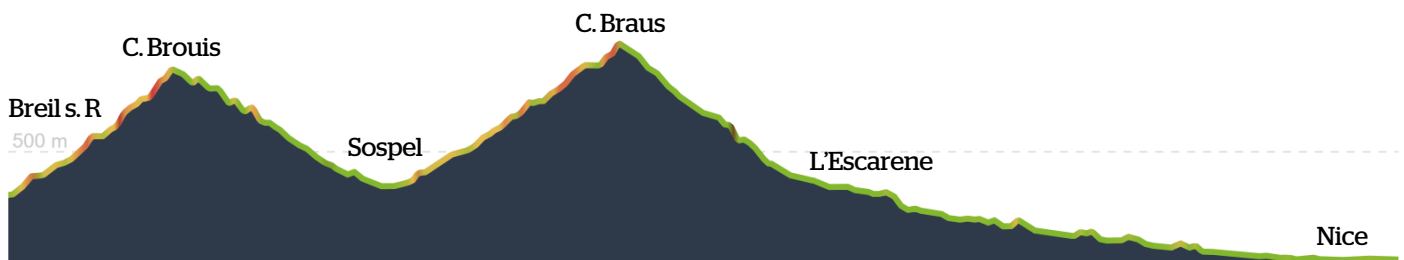
Section Tip - take plenty of water on the big climb to the Fort de la Forca, fill up when you can.



SCR.3 TNR 23 Breil Sur Roya to Nice Alternative / faster route to Nice, all tarmac, 74km.

If you don't feel up for the big climb to the Fort de la Forca, this route is the easiest way to Nice from here. The route takes you to Café du Cycliste and along the seafront promenade (the airport's at the far end). The route goes over the Cols Brouis and Braus - two pretty, lower elevation climbs on more mellow gradients, all on tarmac. SCR.3 joins the other shortcut route (SCR.4) that starts from the Col Turini at L'Escarene so you may find yourself racing to the airport with other riders or heading to a beach-front bar.

Section Tip - The town of Sospel is after the first climb on this route and has two good supermarkets and restaurants. L'Escarene is 43km into this section and may be your best bet for food and drinks after Sospel.

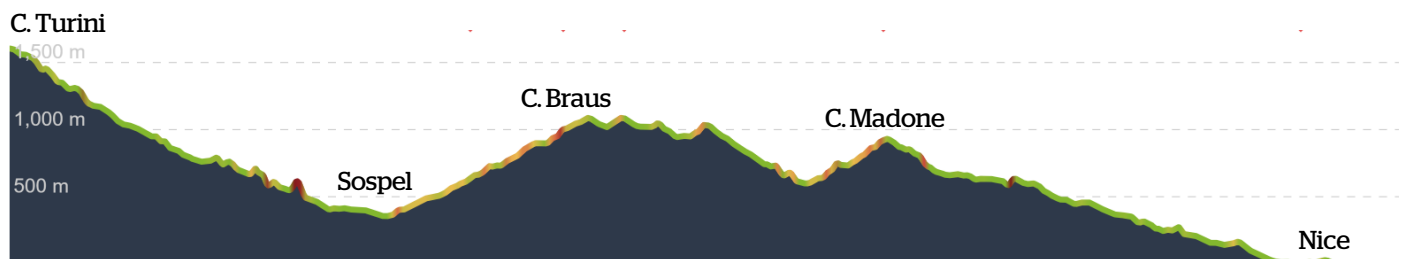


6 TNR 23 Turini-Nice. Col Turini to Nice / Café du Cycliste, 90km.

Descend towards Sospel, climb the Col Braus then there's a small climb to the last col, the Col de la Madone. From there it's just a high road with tunnels and great views of the Med descending to the coast, Café du Cycliste in Nice, then the old town area and the Promenade des Anglais.

If the timing works for you, stock up in Sospel and meet up at the bivouac spot (marked as a POI in the GPS file) just after Col Braus - Leave No Trace / Rule #1. Top marks to anyone carrying supplies to share up here! Stopping at Café du Cycliste is traditional. For hungry riders there's a supermarket just behind the Café and an Intermarche nearby. The rail station is near the bus station (airport transfers at bus station). Nice is expensive and busy, it can come as a shock to the system but it's a great city and the old town area is lovely - you've earned a good meal and refreshments, treat yourself and enjoy it!

Section Tips - There are showers on the beaches in Nice. If Nice is a busier place than you want to be you could consider finishing in Menton - descend from the Col Turini to there. Menton is smaller and it's slower in pace. If riding to Nice from Menton timing is important, the coast road has tunnels and can be busy.



SCR.4 TNR 23 Turini descent to Nice - Fast route to Nice from Col Turini, all tarmac, 58km / 1800m descent.

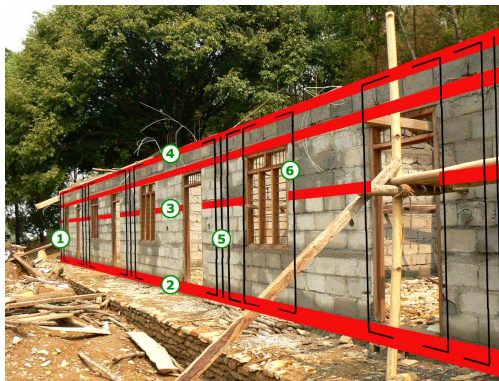
Some busier roads but nothing hectic. No elevation profile required - it's downhill all the way to Nice!



BECAUSE RIDING OUR BIKES ISN'T ALL IT'S ABOUT.

Camping out during a long ride is liberating, for me it's one of the best situations that cycle touring can offer. It can remind those of us lucky enough to be able to make these journeys how free and alive we can feel. Sometimes it's not all smooth, it may rain all night or you might run out of food. Minor discomforts, temporary things, all part of the mix and adding to our perspective. Rarely anything serious. But anyone who sleeps under a tarp or shelters under the side of a derelict building in the rain may just begin to understand some of the hardships endured by people living in areas affected by natural disasters.

This is why we support Smart Shelter Foundation, an organisation that has been helping people in this situation for over a decade. Smart Shelter Foundation is a non-profit organisation founded by a Dutch architect who gave up his full-time job to apply his ideas for earthquake-resistant construction methods on the ground in building projects in Asia. Using local materials and local labour he developed more cost-effective and safer construction methods for homes, schools and hostels in Nepal, Indonesia and India. His theories work. All of the resilient buildings that Smart Shelter has built in Nepal survived the 2015 earthquakes without significant damage. After ten years of direct experience he now leads international research projects with a team of experts to develop and further improve these techniques. They offer free workshops for students around the world to raise awareness and promote these safe and eco-friendly solutions that improve construction in disaster-prone areas and address global environmental challenges.



Local builders working with Smart Shelter on a stone and rubble school in Nepal. Horizontal bands are used to tie the structure together in a way that resists collapse. The methods are indicated on completed building. Images: Martijn Schildkamp / Smart Shelter Foundation



A Torino-Nice Rally patch and full komoot premium membership voucher are available to any rider making a donation direct to Smart Shelter Foundation. If this page has raised interest in their work, if you can, please donate to Smart Shelter and they'll be in contact to send you a patch and komoot voucher code in return. Every penny from the patches goes directly to them (the cost of patches is covered by the TNR co).

www.smartshelterfoundation.org

Thank you to everyone who has supported SSF so far. And thanks too to komoot and Cafe du Cycliste for their ongoing direct support of SSF - it means so much and is so valuable to their work.

From

James Olsen of the Torino-Nice Rally and Martijn Schildkamp and Tessa van Weelie of Smart Shelter Foundation.

