

Blandas / La Couvertoirade

Grande Traversée du Massif Central Gravel



Départ Blandas	Arrivée La Couvertoirade
Durée 3 h 30 min	Distance 40,85 Km
Niveau Hard	Thématique Panoramic view, Natural parc, Cultural heritage

Linking Blandas, Vissec and Alzon, the Vis Valley was once an important way, in centuries past. Here, where three Causses meet – those of Blandas, Campestre and Le Larzac – take in their typical arid, rocky terrain. You enter the French county of Aveyron via the Col de la Barrière and the village of Sauclières with its cobbled streets known as calades. Following the GTMC, you climb up, via a former railway line, to the Larzac Plateau, at the heart of the Parc Naturel Régional des Grands Causses, the landscapes here part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site covering the Causses and Cévennes. Passing via the height of Le Puech du Bassel (at 916m), enjoy the 360° view on offer. Finally, you arrive at La Couvertoirade, once a Knights Templar, then a Knights Hospitaller stronghold, now a village that is part of the association Les Plus Beaux Villages de France!

From Blandas, forest tracks and minor roads through the Vis Gorges lead to the village of Vissec. Past Vissec, the GTMC Gravel separates from the GTMC VTT mountain-biking route to take you to the village of Alzon via a stretch of road, as the mountain-biking paths here are much too stony for a gravel bike. You continue all the way along the Vis Gorges. From Alzon, forests predominate. You ride through them via a mix of broad tracks and stretches on road, up to the Col de la Barrière pass.

It's at this point that you leave the département, or county, of Gard for the Aveyron. Entering this county, the cycling is easy at first. From the village of Sauclières, follow a former railway track, with more of a slope than might at first appear, to reach Le Larzac, a rocky plateau. There's just one short, steep portion that may test you. Once on the Larzac Plateau, the broad paths and singletracks are a joy to ride across on your gravel bike.

Do take care, though, crossing the cattle grids and some 'natural' steps that require good control of your bike. Before arriving at La Couvertoirade, you do bypass a difficult stretch by taking a less challenging detour for gravel users.

Link n°1 Millau / La Couvertoirade (purple line on the map - see GPX below)

For a good warm-up, leave Millau for Creissels, cycling along beside the Tarn River. Then it's time to take on a challenging climb, first on tarmacked road, then on a broad track, leading up to the Larzac Plateau, and the hamlet of Bouissan, where you rejoin the main GTMC route.

Do take care on the 3.5km stretch before arriving at La Cavalerie, which is tricky for inexperienced gravel users; if you feel unsure on the difficult terrain, then opt to remain on the départementale D809 road. Once on the Larzac Plateau, enjoy the wide tracks across it as you cross the villages of La Cavalerie and L'Hospitalet-du-Larzac to reach a portion of converted railway line. Then you ride along paths well suited to gravel bikes to reach the village of La Couvertoirade.

- Voie cyclable
- Liaisons
- Sur route
- Alternatives
- Parcours VTT
- Parcours provisoire

Départ

Brandas

Arrivée

La Couvertoirade