



France - Atlantic Diagonal

8 days / 7 nights / 8 stages / 1 950 km

From the wine-growing region of Alsace to the Basque Country, the Atlantic Diagonal Trek crosses some of the steepest massifs (Vosges, Jura, the Mâconnais mountains, Bois Noirs, Forez, the Madeleine mountains, the Margeride mountains, Aubrac, the Pyrenees). It's logical then that the trail is a tad trickier than that of its cousin, the Mediterranean Diagonal.

The route follows the path over the Mille Étangs plateau, rising over Aubrac, ducking under the cherry trees, clambering spiritedly through the constantly changing landscape of hidden places, bounding over the Pyrenees, to wind up just a stone's throw away from the beaches of the Atlantic...

On the road to discovering France and all its hidden treasures, swept along by the wind and counting down the miles, beautiful images pass by...

From surprises to encounters, off we go again on a new and fascinating journey!

TrailRando at its BEST

No less than nine mountain ranges to cross!

YOUR PROGRAM

Day 1 - Day 1 / Stage 1 - Obberschaffolsheim - Villersexel : 270 km

Houses painted in poppy red, apple green, violet and plenty of other colours brighten up the Alsace wine-growing region. Carved into the red sandstone, the trail soon dives into the resinous trees to begin its lengthy crossing of the Vosges from North to South. From one dyke to the next, among the ferns, larches and birches, the trail clears the way over the Milles Étangs plateau. This protected region of Finnish tundra-like landscape has something of an otherworldly charm about it. This Diagonal Trek truly starts with a flourish!

Day 2 - Day 2 / Stage 2 - Villersexel - Arbois : 180 km

After plummeting down the precipitous Cusancin Valley, the route crosses the Cusancin and follows a track carved into the rock to head on to the alpine pasture.

We soon arrive in Doubs and follow the banks for several miles. The route then strays into the bushy pine forests and flower-strewn meadows.



Day 3 - Day 3 / Stage 3 - Arbois - Les Salles : 360 km

This is a fantastic stretch. Ancient villages typical of the Jura wine-growing region appear one after the next. Château-Chalon is perched on a cliff top, with a commanding position overlooking its vineyards. The panoramic viewpoint of Ladoye-sur-Seille towers over the distant Baume-les-Messieurs. The route ventures right into the Comté countryside.

The panorama over Lake Chalain set against the deep, abrupt cliffs is just fabulous.

After crossing the Saône, the scenery changes dramatically.

Our route now grips the Mâconnais mountains before heading on to Beaujolais. One of the longest trails of the expedition sends the team deep into the Bois Noirs forest...

Day 4 - Day 4 / Stage 4 - Les Salles - Aumont Aubrac : 240 km

Bounding over the Forez mountains, the trail constantly changes as it reaches an altitude of more than 1000 m. It climbs further still as it joins up with the Margeride (with Mont Mouchet at 1400 m). It is in this region that the dreaded Beast of Gévaudan was said to strike.

Day 5 - Day 5 / Stage 5 - Aumont Aubrac - Cranssac : 230 km

The path stretches out over the never-ending peaks, surveying another majestic region, Aubrac. Here, Lozère slowly vanishes, making way for Aveyron.

This large department also offers us plenty of incredible landscapes. The Causses limestone plateaux come into view.

The route suddenly runs down into the coolness of the undergrowth. A tiny track dives beneath a canopy of sweet chestnuts.

Ending the stage with a splash, a jaunty path bounds through eleven fords one after the other.

Day 6 - Day 6 / Stage 6 - Cranssac - Lectoure : 230 km

All at once, an incredible network of paths engulfs the Causse du Quercy. In this region steeped in history, the trail darts between age-old farms and châteaux.

The route settles down after the long mountainous stretches of the preceding stages. Orchards now cover the small tranquil valleys...

Day 7 - Day 7 / Stage 7 - Lectoure - Lestelle Betharam : 220 km

Our journey takes us past little mountain dairies amid the ringing of goat bells.

Coming back over the plateaux, a few small lanes steer us around maize fields and fruit trees. We need to watch out here as some tricky ruts lie in wait, hidden in the grass.

Long stretches through dense, bushy, sometimes humid forests punctuate this day, split up by a few trips into the vineyards.

Day 8 - Day 8 / Stage 8 - Lestelle Betharam - Aïnhua : 220 km

The Pyrenees rise up against the horizon and the expedition will soon be tripping the light fantastic in the alpine pastures. Because of all the fences keeping in the cattle, the afternoon route takes us through the amazing landscape of the Basque



Country on tiny narrow roads that race through the verdant scenery of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

An even narrower path runs along the mountain stream under an incredible alley of banana trees, before shooting up one last dizzying climb (27%) of hairpin bends.

Over the hill is Ainhoa. This ancient picturesque village nestled just a short distance from the Spanish border concludes this astonishing and sensational expedition.

Additional information

TARIFFS

2440 € per pilot, 1830 € per passenger

Single room supplement : 280 €.

INCLUDED

- Lodging
 - o hotels, in twin rooms,
 - o from the evening of the first stage, to the morning of the last stage

Food :

- o Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- o from the morning of the first stage to midday of the last stage,

- The GPS device with the trip's complete track,

- Tour leaders :

- o A tour leader on his motorcycle,
- o Support vehicle for luggage transport

NOT INCLUDED

- Transportation :



- o To and from tour start,

- o Vehicle transportation to and from tour start,

- Beverages

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Who can take part?

The route alternates between minor roads, byways, local roads and small tracks which are all open to public traffic. Good physical fitness, strong determination and some off-road experience are all desirable to be able to embark on the Atlantic Diagonal with complete peace of mind.

The sections of off-road driving are broken up in such a way that will not deter beginners but that experienced riders will enjoy...

TWO UP? It could of course be evaluated, provided that both rider and passenger are fit and have the adequate off-road experience.

GUIDE AND LUGGAGE

A TrailRando guide will supervise the team on board their own vehicle.

At the same time, logistical support on four wheels will transport your luggage between stages every day. They will travel by road with regular meeting points along the route.

They can also pick up a rider and vehicle in the event of breakdown or exhaustion. The team also have a basic first aid kit, tools, some spare parts and are able to lend a hand if required.

ACCOMMODATION

We've sourced wonderfully charming accommodation for when it's time to rest and relax. As is often the case in the world's remotest places, you can be sure to get a very warm welcome!

A few examples of the accommodation we offer:

> www.camillou.com

> www.casteldamandre.com

> www.hotel-de-bastard.com

DEPARTURE

Oberschaeffolsheim (10 km from Strasbourg)



ARRIVAL

Ainhoa (Pyrénées Atlantiques - 30 km from Biarritz)

EQUIPMENT TO TAKE

RIDER'S EQUIPMENT

You should think carefully about saving space and reducing weight.

For riding

In addition to the normal motorcycle gear:

- Helmet
- Goggles (clear and tinted)
- Gloves
- Leather boots
- Motorcycle trousers and jacket
- Any protective equipment required to ride a motorcycle on any type of track

When riding, we advise you to carry a small backpack containing the following:

- Sun cream
- Lip balm
- Baby-wipes
- Scarf
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Waterproofs, to keep up morale during bad weather
- A change of gloves, to set off in a good mood after a rain shower
- A sweet snack tucked into a pocket (a life saver) will give you energy and takes up less room than a tin of spinach
- Water, vital to quench your thirst
- Survival blanket
- Swiss Army knife
- Pocket torch or head torch
- Optional camera
- Mobile phone (and charger!)

When you're dressed for riding, there should only be a few things remaining in your bag (please do not bring suitcases but rather a duffel bag, sports bag or rucksack without a frame).

For the evening

- Tee-shirts
- Socks
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Jumper or sweatshirt
- A change of trousers and shorts



- Swimwear
- Lightweight shoes
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Personal medication

A concentrated miracle: travel light, choose a tube of detergent!

For navigating

- Small notebook and pen to note down the briefing instructions each day
- Batteries for the GPS

Tools and spare parts

Carry basic tools and spare parts in your rucksack (levers, quick-release clips, clamps...) to remain self-sufficient along the route.

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

- Valid driving license
- Insurance policy
- Vehicle registration document

Mandatory !!!

REPATRIATION INSURANCE

If you are already insured, check with your provider to ensure your policy is valid:

- In the country in question
- For the type of activity you will be undertaking

If required, we can provide you with repatriation insurance

ON ROAD CONDUCT

Each participant should act as an ambassador to France's motorcycling community. This trip is a result of many months of scouting, during which we have made many friends. Please be always respectful and courteous to those people you encounter on your way.