



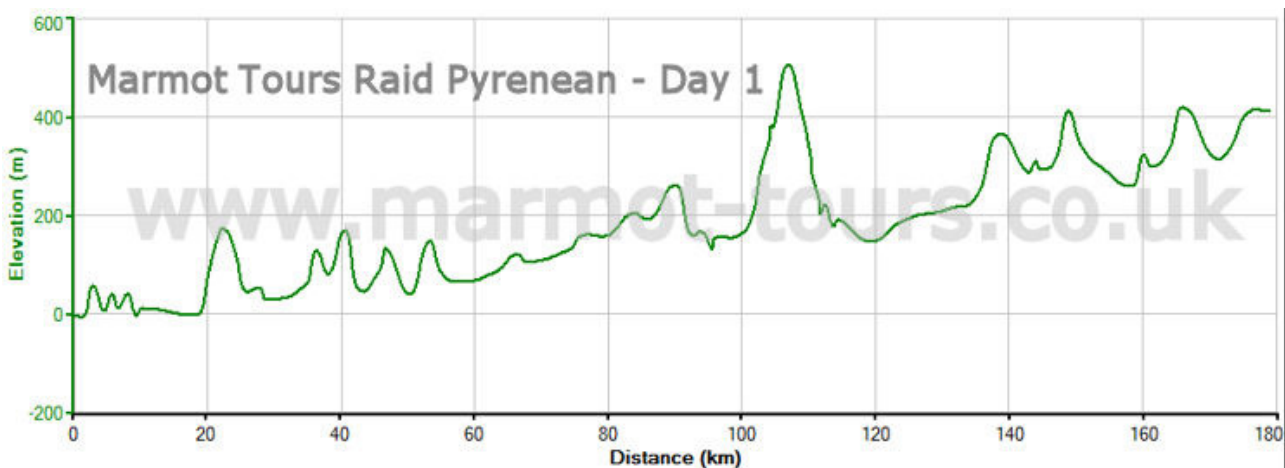
## Raid Pyrenean

### **Day 1: (Transfer Day)**

Meet with your leaders at Biarritz Airport for a 30 minute transfer to the Hotel Campanile in Hendaye. Here you have plenty of time to assemble your bikes, or try out the hire bikes before we have a briefing at 6pm followed by a good dinner with a Basque influence. Hendaye is an attractive seaside town with plenty of charm if you arrive early and wish to explore. It is also just on the border with Spain so you can always nip over there to warm up your legs.

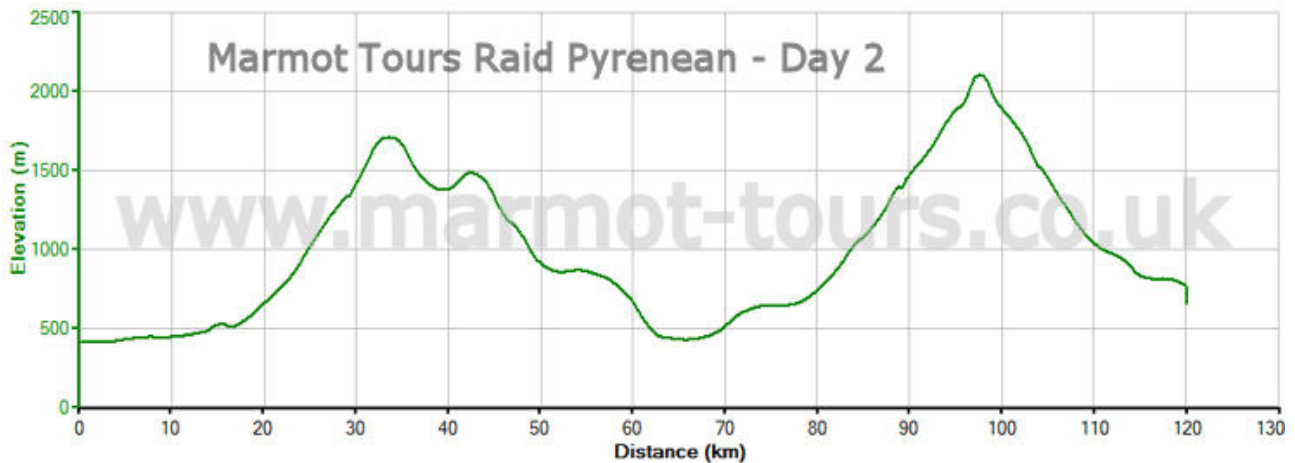
### **Day 2: Hendaye to Arudy (183km with 1900m of ascent)**

After a group dipping of our toes in the Atlantic, we depart at 09.00am and head up the coast road for a while before turning inland on a selection of beautifully quiet roads. Today we pass through the Basque heartland with distinctive burgundy and white buildings, bullrings and pelot courts. Unfortunately we will not have much time for sightseeing as we undulate our way over the *Col De St Ignace (169m)* and the *Col De Pinodieta (176m)* before lunch. The walled town of St Jean Pied de Port offers a perfect lunch stop, and then we cycle on to our first proper climb over the *Col D' Osquich (500m)*. The sign of the small town of Arudy will no doubt be very welcome at the end of this 180km monster day! We get our Raid carnet stamped twice today – we are well on our way!



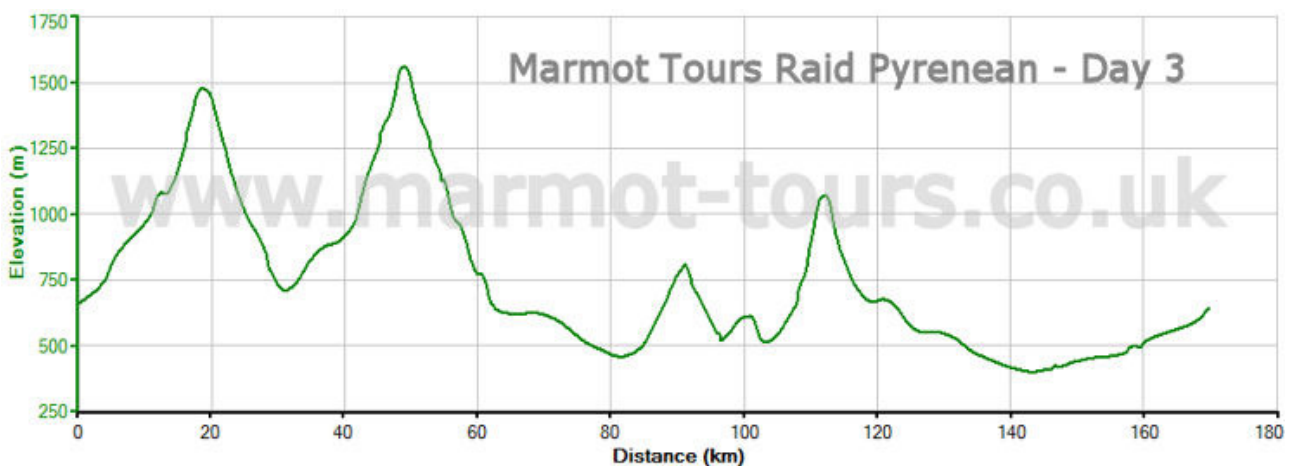
### **Day 3: Arudy to St Marie de Campan (113km with 3075m ascent)**

This second day of riding is a big day that travels over the most feared cols in the Pyrenees, but it is also some of the most spectacular riding. Firstly we have a nice gentle warm up to Laruns, base camp to the stunningly beautiful *Col D'Aubisque (1709m)*. The cafe on the top provides a perfect place for a deserved rest before dropping down and back up the *Col de Soulor (1464m)*, which you will honestly hardly notice! The swoopy descent to Argeles-Gazost is great and the pretty town provides a good opportunity to stop for some lunch. Unfortunately from here we meet our first busy road which takes us up the gorge to Luz-St Sauveur. Next up is the *Col De Tourmalet (2115m)*, a mountain climb which needs no introduction. After a bit of souvenir shopping at the top (where there is also a great café with some interesting Tour de France artefacts), we descend to St Marie De Campan, and from here to our hotel in Campan.



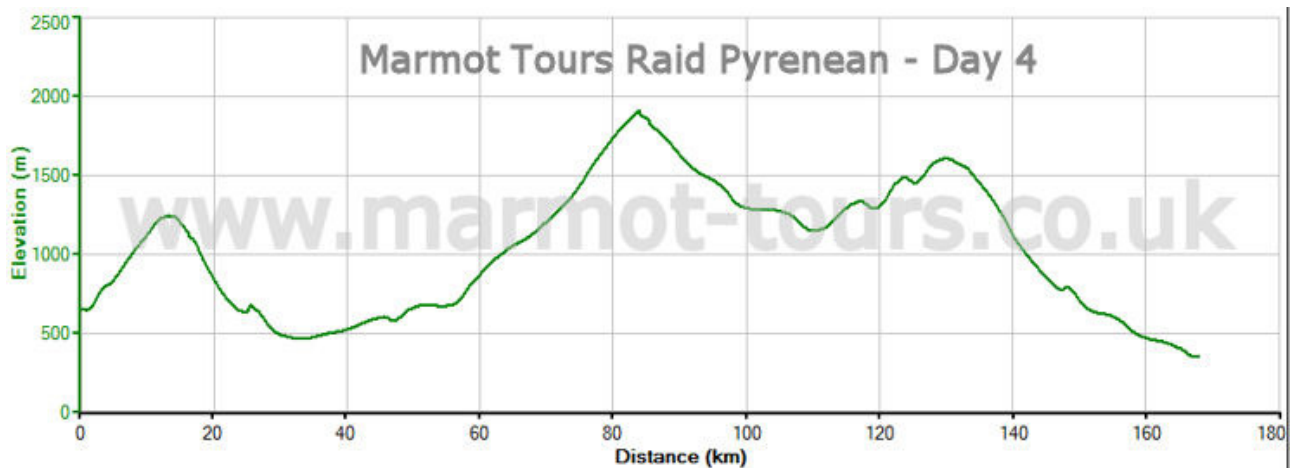
#### Day 4: St Marie de Campan to Massat (165km with 2137m ascent)

Motivated by the knowledge that the toughest day is behind us, we climb the picturesque *Col d'Aspin (1489m)* and the *Col de Pereyresourde (1569m)*, where our efforts are rewarded by a cafe selling the best (and best value!) crêpes in the Pyrenees. A quick detour into Luchon is worthwhile for some lunch before a welcome flat section. The *Col Des Ares (797m)* and the *Col De Buret (602m)* are delightful, especially when compared to the 14% inclines of approaching the *Col de Portet D'Aspet (1069m)*. However, once you have that in the bag, the next 70km involve a gentle down and gentle ascent to the small town of Massat.



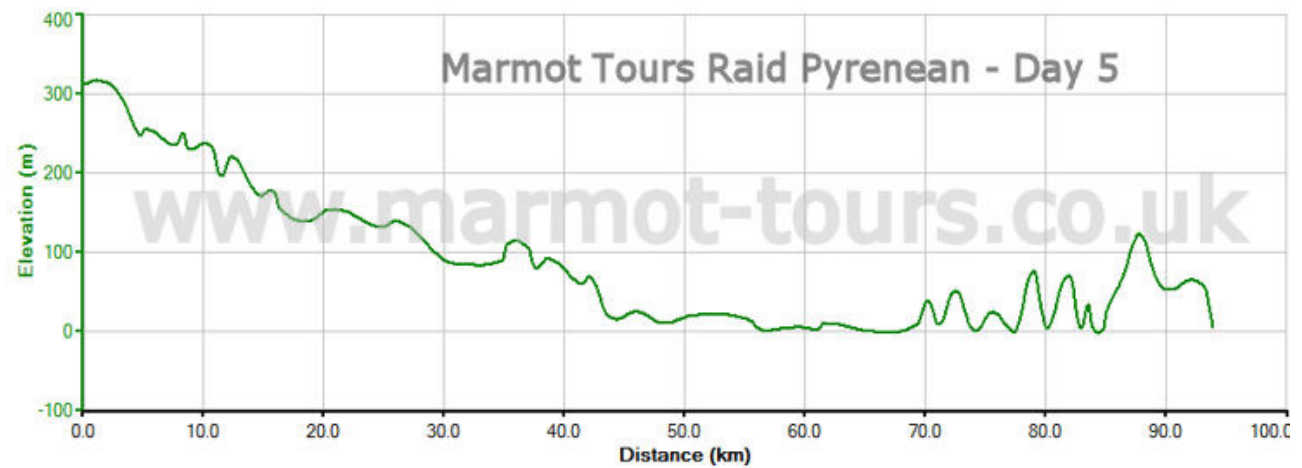
#### Day 5: Massat to Prades (168km with 2495m ascent)

The *Col de Port (1249m)* is a beautiful climb and has a great descent to Tarascon. Unfortunately the rest of the days route is on fairly major roads filled with cars heading for Andorra to do some tax free shopping. Soaking your feet in thermal waters in Ax is highly recommended, before taking on the seemingly endless *Col de Puymorens (1915m)*. We are now over the watershed and we drop into the Spanish frontier town of Bourg Madame. We continue east across a wide plane undulating over the *Col De Llous (1345m)* and the *Col De la Perche (1570m)*. From here a unbelievably long descent takes us nearly all the way to our hotel. Prades has a reassuringly Mediterranean feel about it, with lots of courtyard cafe's and clay tiled roofs.



**Day 6: Prades to Cerbere (91km with 300m ascent) followed by airport transfer.**

Although there are no major climbs, don't be fooled into thinking the ride will be flat! We head through Thuir and hit the Mediterranean at Argeles—Sur—Mer. From here we undulate (some fairly large undulations!) along the coast road through the fortified town of Collioure, to our final destination of Cerbere. Cerbere is a pretty fishing village with a beech and seafront restaurants serving a fine range of seafood.



For those heading home straight away there will be time to box up your bikes, shower and change before lunch - we have made arrangements with a local hotel to use their facilities. Refuelled and probably feeling sleepy we will transfer to Perpignian airport (1hr) in time for the 1715 flight back to Stansted.

Our basic package ends here but for 2009 and 2010 there is the option of staying an extra night in the seaside town of Cerbere and transferring to Carcassonne Airport the next day. In this an afternoon on the beach and a few celebratory beers are in order (please note there are a limited number of places for the extra night)

**Optional extra Day 7: Transfer to Carcassonne**