

Section 1: Start to foot of Telegraphe

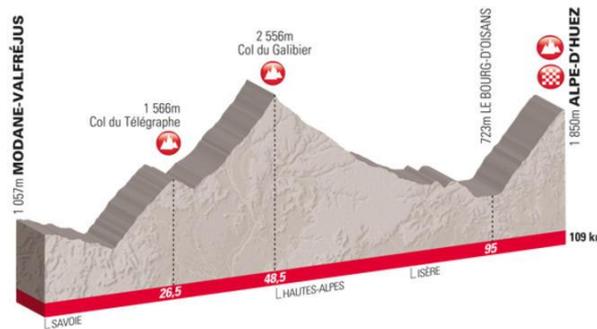
Nervous energy, adrenaline and a down hill start are sure to result in a very fast opening few kms. Try to avoid getting caught up in the early racing. Settle in at your own pace and try to hide from the wind on the wheels of other riders.

Section 2: Col du Telegraphe

After only 15km you reach the base of the first climb. The Telegraphe rises up for 11.8km at an average gradient of 7.3%, with the steepest pitch hitting close to 10% near the summit. Coming so early in the event, this climb is unlikely to prove too problematic, the big danger is riding too hard – **DO NOT** push on when climbing the Telegraphe! Settle in to your own rhythm early on the climb and resist the temptation to match the pace of others. Let them ride away from you now, you can be sure to see many of them parked up on the later slopes 😊

Section 3: Transition from Telegraphe to Galibier

A very short descent of only 5km takes you to the foot of the Galibier. Try to keep your legs spinning here – the temptation is to freewheel and give yourself as much rest as possible but this often makes it very difficult to get going again once you hit the next climb. This is a great opportunity to take on some more substantial nutrition – half an energy bar and some big gulps of energy drink should be much easier to consume at this point with your heart rate and breathing much reduced.



Section 4: Col du Galibier

Climbing for 18.1km at an average of 6.9% makes the Galibier a beast! For more details on this section of the route see the following page.

Section 5: Descent to foot of 'The Alpe'

On paper perhaps the easiest section of the route but certainly a section where plenty of things can go wrong. In all around 50km to the base of Alpe d'Huez and nearly all down hill. The immediate descent off the top of the Galibier is slightly technical so take great care – remember you (and other riders around you) are likely very tired after the climb so be extra careful. Perhaps even consider pausing at the top of the climb to grab some nutrition, to compose yourself and possibly add an extra layer of clothing for the descent depending on the weather. Following that the road opens up into more sweeping bends. The speed is likely to be quite high here so remember the tips from the section on bike handling and stay safe. Also remember to keep feeding where you can. Finally a slightly flatter section (even a few small climbs!) – time to fuel up and prepare yourself for the final push.

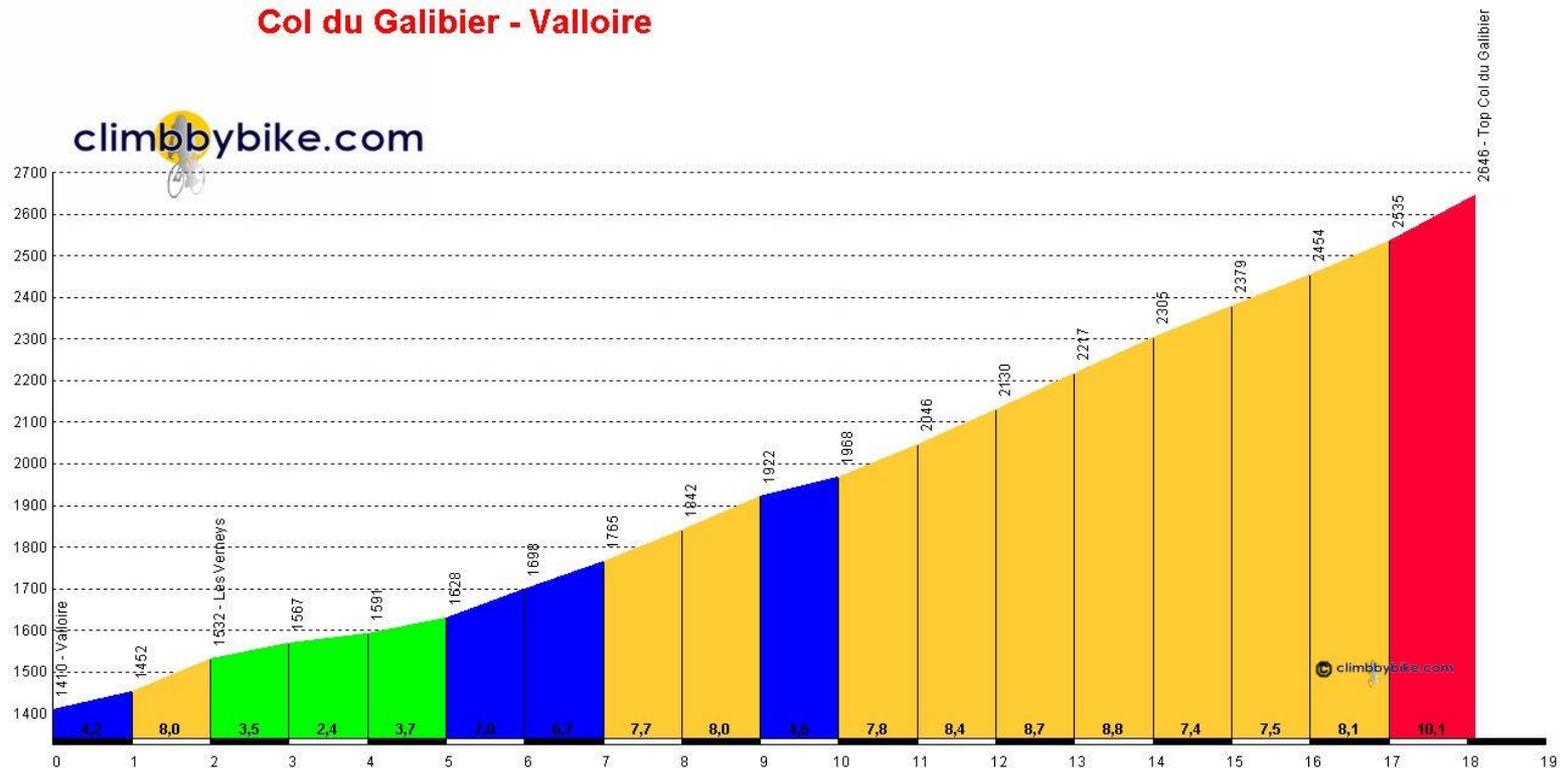
Section 6: Alpe d'Huez

The 21 hairpins of Alpe d'Huez are afforded almost mythical status among cyclists and rightly so. Your final challenge in the Act 1 Etape route is to climb the 13.8km of 'The Alpe' at an average gradient of 8.1%. Again, more details on the following page!

Col du Galibier

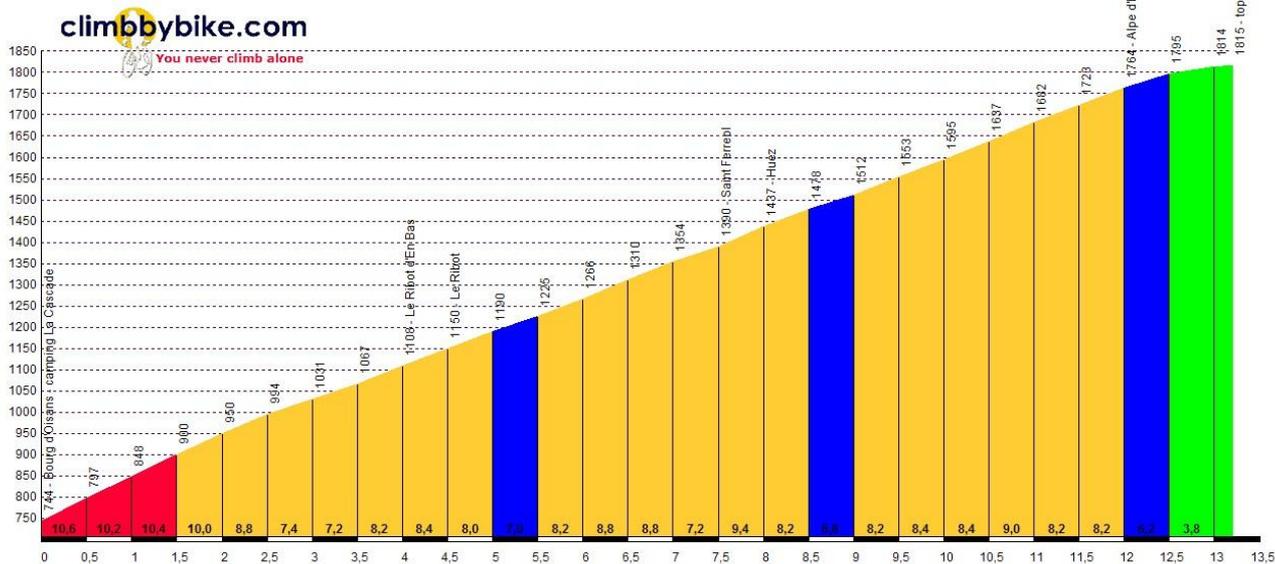
The Col du Galibier comes hot on the heels of the Telegraphe so you are likely to be carrying a little fatigue into the base of this climb. It is perhaps good news then that the Galibier starts at a fairly easy gradient to begin with before steepening as you approach the summit. The first tip for climbing the Galibier is DON'T RIDE TOO HARD ON THE TELEGRAPHE! As mentioned earlier the temptation will be to fly up the first climb but this is likely to lead to a big struggle on the latter slope of the Galibier. It may even help to consider the Telegraphe and Galibier as one climb – hopefully the prospect of a 30km climb will help you ease in to the first part of the climb. It is also worth pointing out that there will still be a good drafting effect to be had on the lower slopes of the Galibier, especially for faster riders. Try to take shelter behind other riders but with the big proviso that you should only do so if it does not require you to up your own intensity. However, a little bit of shelter at the bottom could help you save some energy for the steeper top slopes.

Col du Galibier - Valloire



Alpe d'Huez

Alpe d'Huez



Some of you may have access to a power meter or have some knowledge of their sustainable power output from lab testing. The following table gives a rough idea of the expected time to climb Alpe d'Huez based on individual power to weight ratios.

Watts/kg	Time (mins)
2.0	115
2.5	91
3.0	76
3.5	65
4.0	57
4.5	51
5.0	46

Alpe d'Huez is the final test of the event so any energy you have left will go into it. That's not to say pacing is not an issue, the climb is long enough that riding too hard, too early will leave you suffering by the top. The first 2km of the climb as you leave Bourg d'Oisans are the hardest at an average gradient of over 10%. Take it easy here and take heart that after this steeper pitch the gradient eases off and you should be able to find a steady rhythm. Consider breaking the climb down into sections, using the hairpins as milestones on your way to the top. With nearly 100km and 2 mountain passes in your legs by this point, the prospect of the climb in it's entirety is very daunting so break it down into bite size chunks by working one hairpin at a time.