



The Tour de France is Won in the Mountains!

Here is all the information you'll need regarding the big mountains of the 2012 Tour de France. In this handout I provide you with links to the actual elevation profiles of each of the 2012 major climbs, the profile from the Tour de France website, and the details on the system of categorizing the climbs and assigning King of the Mountain points for the KOM jersey competition.

Profiles of the major climbs of the 2012 Tour de France

Two websites make it very easy and fun to get a close glimpse of the actual route on Google Earth and a detailed profile of each of the categorized climbs.

The first one is www.cyclingthealps.com which has links to all of the stages and many of the best climbs in the Alps. They provide the profile, a direct link for a 3D tour in Google earth, a direct link for Streetview (oh so cool!!) and the code to embed them if you have a blog or website (he gives permission to do so). <http://sites.cyclingthealps.com/worldtour/2012/tour-de-france-2012>

The other is www.Climbbybike.com. You must register (it's free) but you can search over 33,000 climbs around the world. Click on Tour de France 2012 on the left and you'll see each of the routes and the profiles of each climb.

On the following pages, I've done all of the work for you for the most important climbs and mountain stages and the links to the information on Climbbybike.com, from the proper side of each climb (also confusing to know and time consuming to determine on some of the climbs). Use the information and profiles in the flyers for your classes.

The Vosges mountains

Stage 8: Tomblaine to La Planche des Belles Filles

Link to stage <http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-7>

Col de Grosse Pierre – Cat 3, 8.7km, 3.4%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-la-Grosse-Pierre&qryMountainID=6142>

Col du Mont Fourche – Cat 3, 4km, average grade 4.9%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Mont-de-Fourche&qryMountainID=5796>

La Planche des Belles Filles – Cat 1, 5.5km, 8.2%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Planche-des-Belles-Filles&qryMountainID=7050>



The Alps

Stage 10: Macon to Bellegarde sur Valserine

with one of the toughest climbs in France, the Grand Colombier, being used for the very first time in this year's Tour. Why hasn't it been used before? Parts of it were considered too steep!

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-10>

<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-11.html>

Cote du Corlier Cat 2, 14.26 km, 5.5%

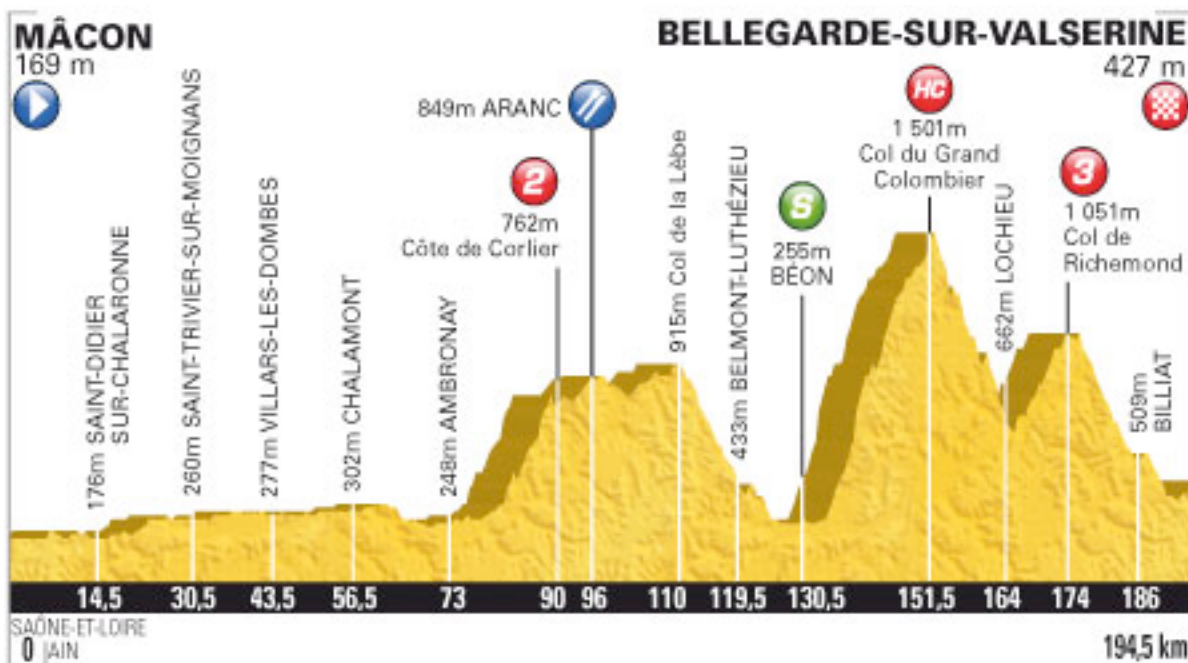
<http://www.climbbybike.com/profile.asp?Climbprofile=C%F4te-de-Corlier&MountainID=13020>

Col du Grand Colombier: Cat HC, 17.4km, 7.1%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Grand-Colombier&qryMountainID=6623>

Col de Richemond – Cat 3, 7.2km, 5%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-Richemond&qryMountainID=12330>



Stage 11: Albertville to La Toussuire

This stage may be one of the shortest of this year's Tour, but it's a tough one, with several very long climbs.

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-11>

<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-11.html>

Col de la Madeleine – Cat HC, 25.3km, 6.2%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-la-Madeleine&qryMountainID=22>

Col de la Croix de Fer – Cat HC, 22.4km, average grade 6.9%

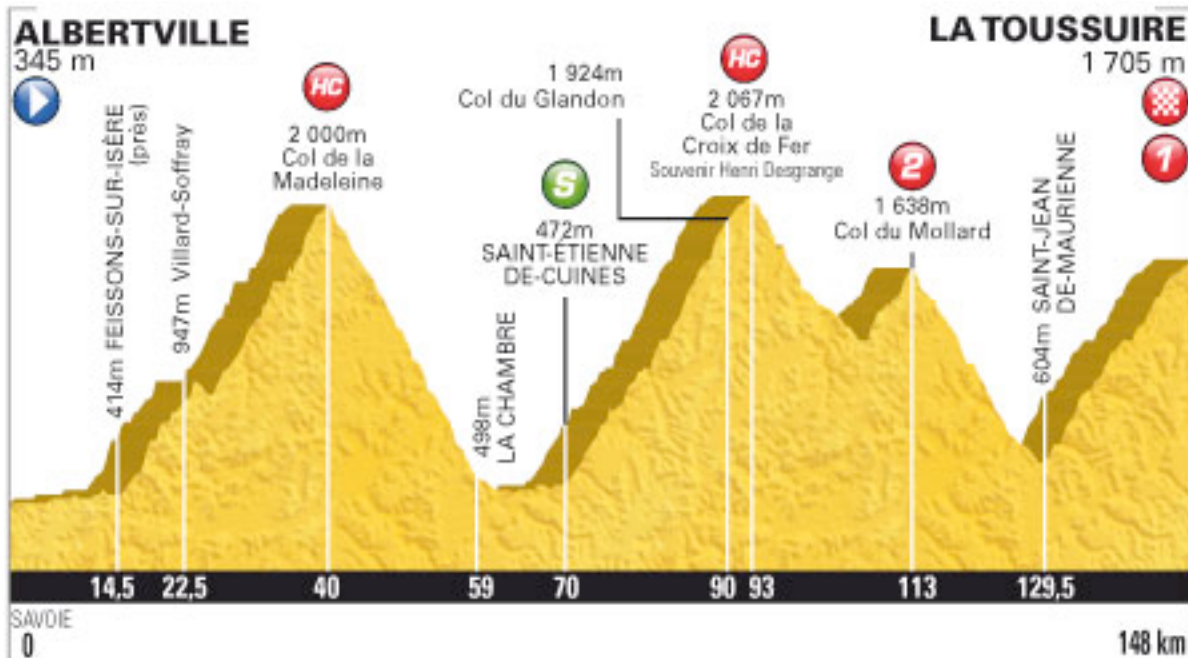
<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-la-Croix-de-Fer&qryMountainID=12332>

Cote du Mollard – Cat 2, 5.7km, 6.8%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Mollard&qryMountainID=13021>

La Toussuire – Cat 1, 18km, 6.1%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=La-Toussuire&qryMountainID=6880>



Stage 12: Saint Jean-de-Maurienne to Annonay Davézieux

There's not doubt about it, the Granier is going to bite.

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-12>

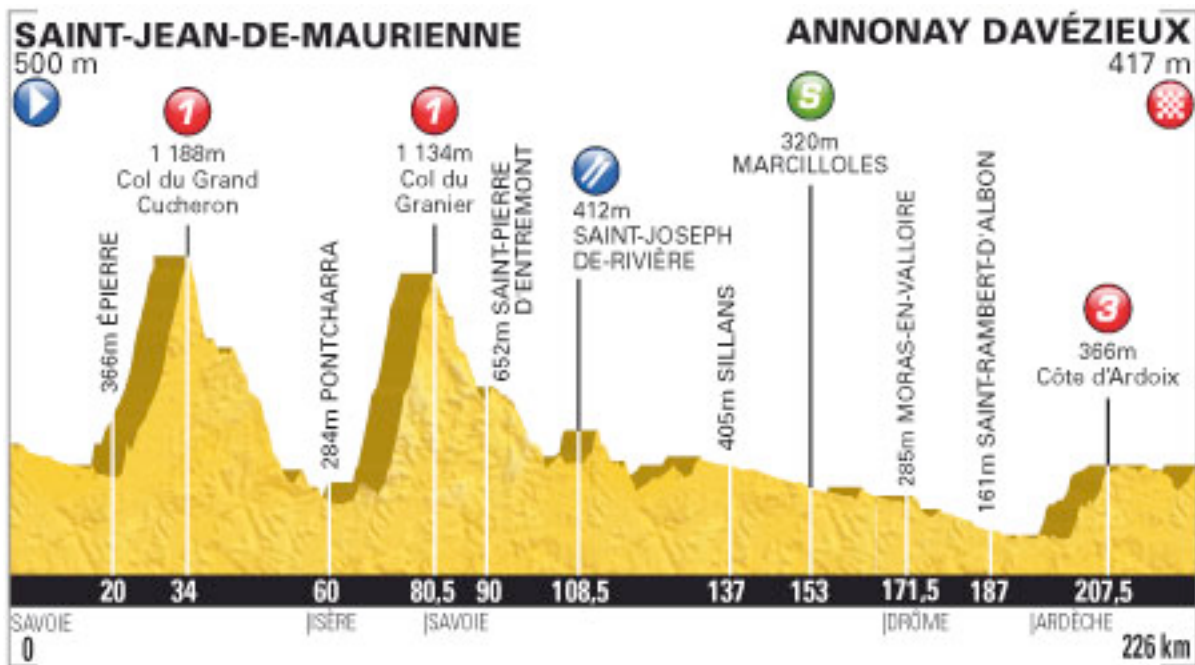
<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-12.html>

Col du Granier – Cat 1, 9.7km, 8.6%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Granier&qryMountainID=6628>

Col du Grand Cucheron – Cat 1, 12.5km, 6.5%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Grand-Cucheron&qryMountainID=6625>



The Pyrénées

Stage 14 – Limoux to Foix

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-14>

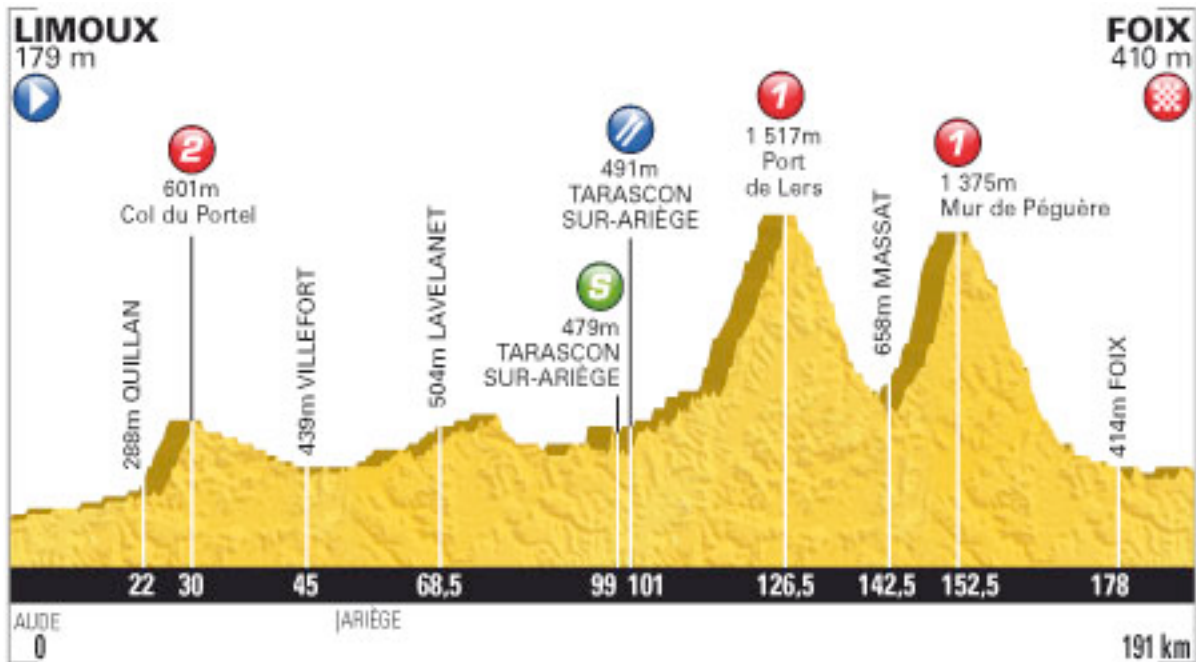
<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-14.html>

Port de Lers – Cat 1, 11.4km, 7%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Port-de-Lers&qryMountainID=7061>

Mur de Péguère – Cat 1, 9.3km @ 7.9%.

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-P%E9gu%E8re&qryMountainID=6316>



Stage 16 – Pau to Bagnères de Luchon

To quote the Tour de France site, this classic traverse of the Pyrénées will “turn the thumbscrews of the peleton”!

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-16>

<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-16.html>

Col d’Aubisque - HC, 16.4km @ 7.1%.

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-lAubisque&qryMountainID=6039>

Col du Tourmalet - HC, 19km @ 7.4%.

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-du-Tourmalet&qryMountainID=26>

Col d’Aspin – Cat 1, 12.4km @ 4.8%.

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-lAspin&qryMountainID=6035>

Col de Peyresourde– Cat 1, 29.2km @ 4.2%.

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-Peyresourde&qryMountainID=6328>



Stage 17 – Bagnères de Luchon to Peyragudes

Short, but very tough!

<http://www.letour.com/le-tour/2012/us/stage-17.html>

<http://www.cyclingthealps.com/#tour-de-france-2012-stage-17>

Col de Menté – Cat 1, 14.3km, 4.2%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-de-Ment%E9&qryMountainID=6272>

Col des Ares – Cat 2, 17.5km, 5.1%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Col-des-Ares&qryMountainID=6489>

Port de Balès – Cat HC, 5.9km, 7.2%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Port-de-Bales&qryMountainID=7057>

Peyragudes – Cat 1, 10.2km, 8.1%

<http://www.climbbybike.com/climb.asp?Col=Peyragudes-via-Peyresourde&qryMountainID=13062>



How are the climbs in the Tour de France categorized and how many KOM points are awarded at the top?

For information on how many points are awarded at the top of each categorized climb, read this Wikipedia article:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountains_classification_in_the_Tour_de_France

The following is an article on the Category System, provided by Raquel Schmidt, Master Instructor for Spinning®.

Review of the Category System for climbs used by the World Cycling Federation

The Tour de France (TDF) and World Cycling Federation use a category ranking system to rank the difficulty of climbs in the Tours and other pro races. The two big factors in rating the difficulty of a climb is how long and steep it is, and where it falls in the race profile (meaning what might be a Category 1 climb earlier in the stage could end up as a Hors Category climb if it's the last mountain of the stage. Road surface used to be an important consideration, when in the earlier days of the tour mountain roads were gravel or dirt paths. Some remote mountain climbs in Europe have rougher surfaces (they don't get paved all that often and are subject to extreme weather conditions) so even today it could factor in. Keep in mind that the Tour de France is considered the premier event in cycling, so they tend to rate climbs using tougher criteria than other races.

In general, the 5-tier ranking system looks like this:

- 4th Category - the lowest category, climbs of 200-500 feet (70-150m).
- 3rd Category - climbs of 500-1600 feet (150-500m); in the TDF this would be around a 5 km climb at a 5% grade.
- 2nd Category - climbs of 1600-2700 feet (500-800m); this would be a 5-10 km climb at an 8% grade. Because of the terrain in the United States and methods of road construction, this is usually the toughest climb you'll see the in U.S. Our climbs are usually very short if steep, or long gradually increasing grades. Notable exceptions include the climb from Ouray to the top of Red Mountain Pass in Colorado, Whiteface Mountain in New York, Palomar Mountain in California, Mount Washington in New Hampshire, and Mt. Lemmon in Arizona.
- 1st Category - climbs of 2700-5000 feet (800-1500m); this is usually a longer duration climb (20 km) with a grade of 5-6%.
- Hors Category - the hardest, climbs of 5000 feet+ (1500m+) with grades of 7% and more. "Hors" roughly translates to "beyond", so HC means "beyond categorization! In the TDF what would normally be considered a HC climb could be downgraded to a

Category 1 if there is a flat section—a good example of this in the TDF is the Col de la Madelaine, which has a flat section halfway to the top (sigh, a piece of heaven!) so is usually only ranked as HC if it's closer to the end of the stage. Also, the famed L'Alpe D'Huez is relatively short for an HC climb (3700 feet), but is very steep (average 7.9% grade), and is also usually either a stage finisher or individual time trial

Most people acknowledge that despite the combination of factors necessary to win any pro race (teamwork, weather, luck), races like the TDF are won and lost in the mountains. Climbs also represent the epic struggle of overcoming obstacles and perseverance, humans vs./becoming one with nature, with the bicycle as conduit between the two. Truly something magical.

Information compiled and provided by Jennifer Sage, Master Instructor for the Indoor Cycling Association. Please do not distribute.

www.indoorcyclingassociation.com

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