

GU A D E L O U P E

NATACHA 201



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You, cyclists who like to climb, discover in these few pages what makes the list of the national challenge in Guadeloupe so rich.

GEOGRAPHY

MEDIA

TOURISM

SPORT

Guadeloupe

Geography

Overseas

Overseas France includes the territories of the French Republic far from mainland France, located on the European continent.



The 11 inhabited “DOM-TOM” are spread across 3 continents.

In America

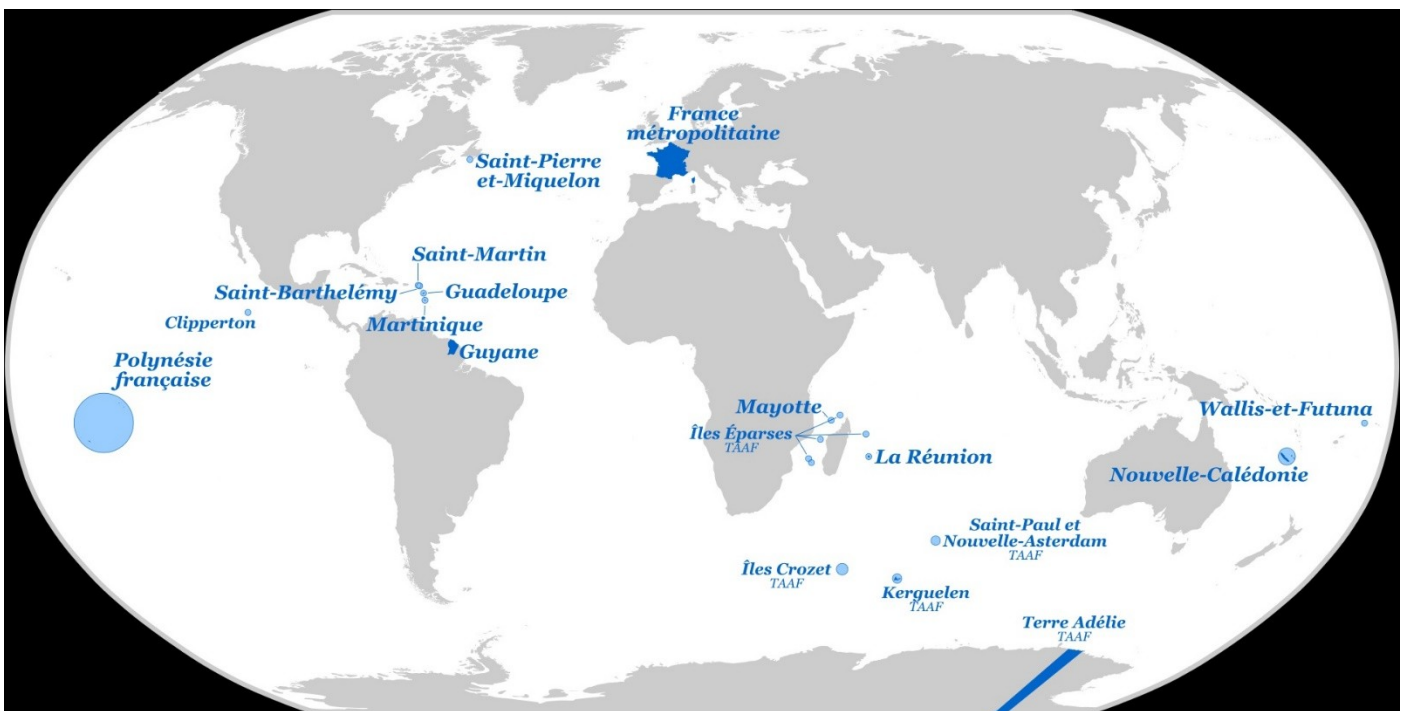
Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, Saint-Martin, Saint-Barthélemy, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyana.

In Africa

Mayotte, Reunion

In Oceania

New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia.



CARIBBEAN and WEST INDIES

The Caribbean is a region of America that includes the Caribbean Sea, its islands and surrounding coasts.

We distinguish 5 sets:

- Central America made up of 7 states (Guatemala, Belize, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama);
- Northern South America made up of 4 states (Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname) and French Guiana;
- the Lucayes archipelago made up of 1 state (Bahamas) and the Turks and Caicos Islands which are British;
- the Greater Antilles made up of 4 states (Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Dominican Republic) and American (Puerto Rico, American Virgin Islands) and English (Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands) possessions;
- the Lesser Antilles made up of 8 states (Saint Christopher and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and British possessions (Anguilla, Montserrat), French (Saint Martin, Saint Barthélemy, Guadeloupe, Martinique) and Dutch (Sint Maarten, Aruba, Curaçao).



The French territories are therefore:

- in the Lesser Antilles: Saint Martin, Saint Barthélemy, **Guadeloupe**, Martinique;
- on the South American continent: Guyana

Guadeloupe

Guadeloupe (in Guadeloupean Creole: Gwadloup) is an archipelago in the Lesser Antilles made up of six islands and several islets.

The main part of Guadeloupe has a butterfly shape and is in fact made up of the 2 largest islands of the archipelago which are separated by an arm of the sea, called “the Salt River”. These are:

- Basse-Terre (16 communes, 847 km²) in the West, mountainous island culminating at the La Soufrière volcano (1467m);
- Grande-Terre (10 municipalities, 639 km²) in the east, which has a much more modest relief.

The other inhabited islands of the archipelago are:

- Marie-Galante (3 municipalities, 158 km²) in the south of Grande-Terre;
- La Désirade (1 commune, 21km²) to the east of Grande-Terre;
- Les Saintes (2 communes, 14 km²), south of Basse-Terre, which contains 2 inhabited islands which are also the 2 communes: Terre-de-Bas and Terre-de-Haut.

All the other islands of the Guadeloupe archipelago are uninhabited and without roads.

Note that the northern part of the island of Saint-Martin and the island of Saint-Barthélemy (2 islands in the Lesser Antilles a little further north) were formerly included in the department of Guadeloupe.

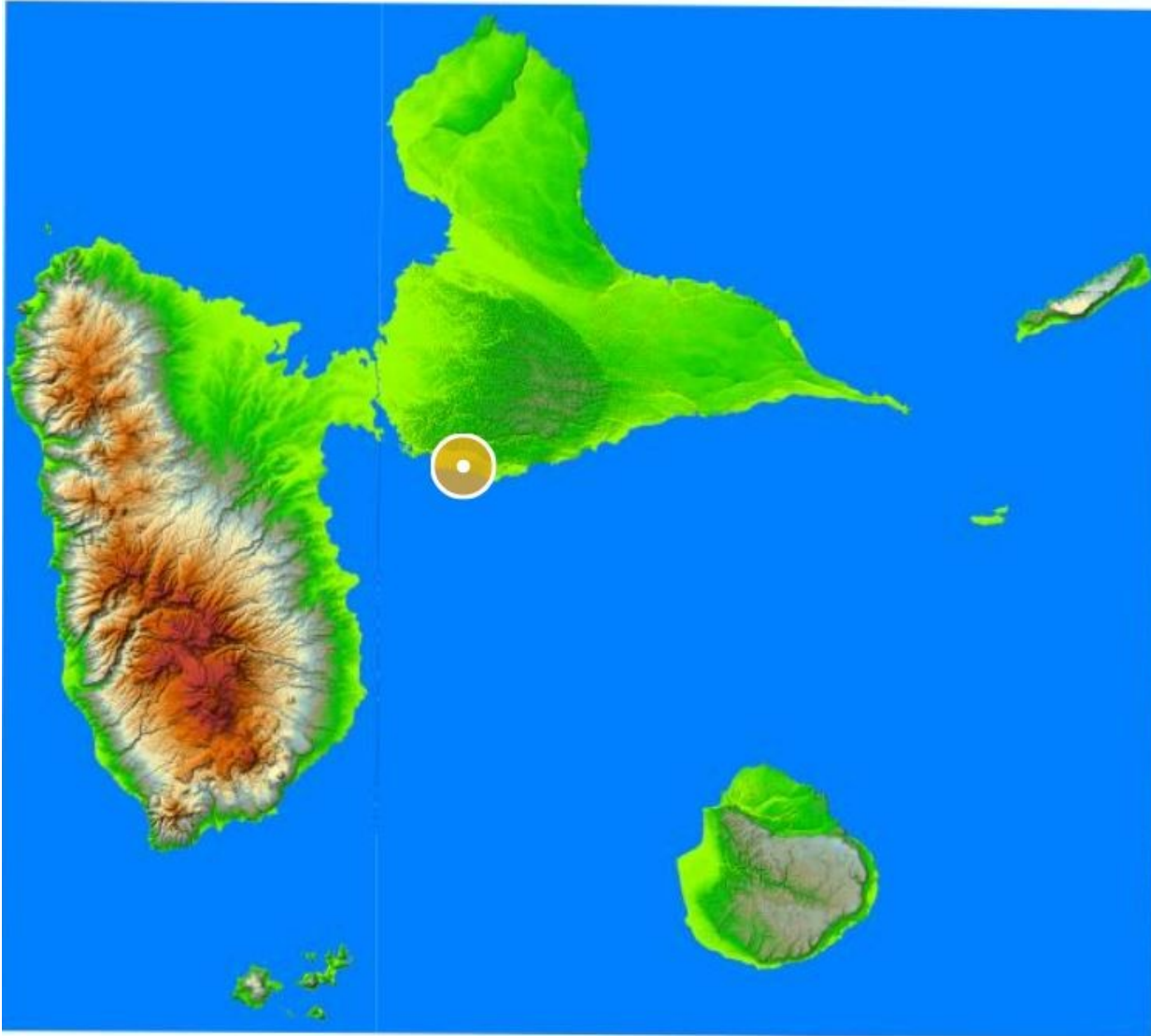
This is no longer the case today: since July 15, 2007, these two territories have been French overseas communities (and therefore are no longer administered by Guadeloupe).



Relief of Guadeloupe

The 6 main islands of Guadeloupe have very contrasting relief.

- Basse-Terre is (as its name does not indicate) very mountainous: it peaks at 1467m at the Soufrière Volcano, it is the highest island in all the Lesser Antilles.
- the Saintes are 2 small islands of small mountains peaking at 304m for Terre-de-Haut and 285m for Terre-de-Bas
- Désirade contains a small elongated mountain peaking at 276m
- Marie-Galante contains a plateau peaking at 204m with steep approaches
- Grande-Terre is quite flat since it only rises to 136m, the southwest third of the island is however very hilly and rich in short coastlines.



Attractions of Guadeloupe

Let's summarize the general approach. Guadeloupe has many tourist attractions.

It has 2 famous cycling races: the Tour de Guadeloupe (since 1948) and the Tour de Marie-Galante (since 1975).

For the cycloclimber, it has roads with good elevation changes (in Basse-Terre) and sometimes surprisingly steep slopes (in each of the islands).

The following paragraphs (Tourism, Cycling and Sports) detail these points.

Because of these attractions, a quota of 30 Natacha summits was allocated to Guadeloupe.

They are divided into 3 zones:

GP01 Basse-Terre	20
GP02 Eastern Islands (Grande-Terre + La Désirade)	5
GP03 Southern Islands (Saintes + Marie-Galante)	5

Guadeloupean tourism

Guadeloupe is, like Martinique, a very popular tourist destination, particularly for French people from the “metropolis”.

The beaches, the lush vegetation, the temperate tropical climate (27°C on average, 23 for the coldest months, 32 for the hottest months) and therefore the warm sea, give it the reputation of being a heavenly place for tourists.

This should not make us forget the economic difficulties in several sectors (apart from tourism) and the regular passages of hurricanes, sometimes very dangerous.

The Salée River, measuring 5 km long and 200 m wide, is the strait which separates the island of Basse-Terre to the west from the island of Grande-Terre and which is surrounded by a mangrove.

Basse-Terre

The mountainous terrain of the island of Basse-Terre is dominated by the Soufrière Volcano, also nicknamed the Old Lady and the highest point of the Lesser Antilles. It is covered in tropical rainforest, full of waterfalls, rivers and is lined with golden or black sand beaches.

The Soufrière Volcano (1467m) is accessible on foot from the Bains Jaunes (GLP-016).

The Morne Mazeau Seismological and Geodesic Station (GLP-002) and the Houëlmont Volcanological Observatory (GLP-019) allow scientists to monitor the volcano.

The most famous waterfalls are the 3 Chutes du Garbet (accessible after GLP-015 and GLP-014).

The sulfur baths of Sofaïa (GLP-003) and Bains Jaunes (GLP-016) are also caused by volcanic activity.

The botanical gardens of Deshaïes (GLP-002), Valombreuse (GLP-007) and the Parc de la Source (GLP-008) are worth a detour, as are the coffee plantations (GLP-011 and GLP-013).



The Soufrière volcano



And its observatory in Houëlmont



Garbet Waterfalls



The Yellow Baths

Grande-Terre

The island of Grande-Terre is made up of a plain bordered by mangroves from Le Gosier to Port-Louis (to the west), the Grands Fonds (in the center) and an arid plateau, jagged with rocky coasts. and wild (from north to east).

Pointe de la Grande Vigie (GLP-021) in the far north shows these wild coasts.

The southern coast of Grande-Terre, dotted with white sand beaches sheltered by coral reefs, concentrates the large seaside resorts from Le Gosier to Saint-François.

See the Etang de la Saline on this coastline (foot of GLP-024).



Pointe de la Grande Vigie



The seaside resort of Gosier

Marie-Galante

The island of Marie-Galante is characterized by a limestone cliff to the north, a plateau which becomes “bleak” to the east and south and which slopes steeply towards a coastal plain.

To the west of the island, facing Basse-Terre, beaches and mangroves extend along the Caribbean Sea and a natural coastal wetland environment extends into the bay of Folle-Anse.

See in particular Moustique Beach (foot of GLP-028).

Désirade

La Désirade, an elongated limestone island, appears as a vast limestone plateau inclined towards the northwest.

La Grande-Montagne, which reaches an altitude of 275 meters, is its highest point, accessible by gravel (GLP-025).

Saintes

The Saintes islands, separated from “mainland Guadeloupe” by the Saintes canal, are made up of nine islands and islets, two of which are inhabited: Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas.

The archipelago appears as a small string of arid and steep islets (see GLP-026 and GLP-027). To see: the Exotic Garden and Fort Napoléon near GLP-027.



Moustique beach in Marie-Galante



The Great Mountain of Désirade

The sporting side of Guadeloupean climbs

Guadeloupe culminates at the Soufrière Volcano (1467m) which can be approached by the road to Bains Jaunes (GLP-016) which is, at 959m above sea level, the highest road point of the archipelago.

We could therefore expect small mountain terrain of moderate difficulty.

But certain very steep, even hallucinatory, slopes will contradict this a priori.



A summit



And its access slopes



Original panels on the feet



And very clear signs on the way up

The cyclo-climber will have to arm himself with very modest gears and courage to ride in Guadeloupe. Of the 52 selected climbs from Guadeloupe, 30 have passages of at least 15%, 14 of at least 20% and 5 of at least 25%.

For comparison, mainland France and its 800 natchas have 1605 climbs, of which 170 have passages of at least 15%, 19 of at least 20% and 5 of at least 25%.

We therefore see that incredible slopes of at least 20% are almost as numerous in Guadeloupe as in all of mainland France.

Bomb Points

This gives very high scores on bomb point calculations.

Of the 52 climbs in Guadeloupe, there are 28 > 25 bmb, 23 > 30 bmb, 9 > 35 bmb and 5 > 40 bmb.

Just as remarkable, the 6 inhabited islands of Guadeloupe each have at least one raidard > 30 bmb.

Grande-Terre to Dubisquet (GLP-022, 31 bmb).

La Désirade has La Grande Montagne (GLP-025, 31 bmb).

Marie-Galante to Joséphine (GLP-028, 33 bmb).

The Saintes have Le Chameau (Terre-de-Bas, GLP-027, 35bmb) and Morne Abymes (Terre-de-Haut, GLP-026, 38 bmb).

Basse-Terre obviously has the largest share with a quartet exceeding 40 points: Morne Davi (GLP-010, 41 bmb), Morne Michot (GLP-008, 42 bmb), Morne Mazeau (GLP-002) with 2 slopes at 41 and 44 bmb.

The must is Morne Surelle (3.8 km at 15%, max 25%) with 49 bmb.



Contour lines of Morne Davi

Slopes of La Grande Montagne

Europoints

Taking into account the differences in altitude, the europoints are more modest.

Grande-Terre, of low altitude, has Dubisquet (GLP-022, 69 pts) as its best ascent.

Marie-Galante reaches 222 pts on the NW slope of Joséphine (GLP-028).

La Grande Montagne de La Désirade is a mule driver (GLP-025) reaching 352 pts.

Les Saintes are 2 very successful islands: Morne Abymes (GLP-026) on Terre-de-Bas reached 352 pts and Le Chameau (GLP-027) on Terre-de-Haut reached 361 pts.



Morne de la Mémoire at the top of the Abymes

The Camel Road

Basse-Terre is the most mountainous island (in altitude) of the Lesser Antilles, which is confirmed with 8 peaks and 15 slopes exceeding the 500 pt mark (which would be 1st category level in the Tour de France).

The spectacular Carbet Falls (GLP-015) reaches 535 pts.

La Regrettée (GLP-018) reaches 571 pts on its SE slope.

Le Morne Davi (GLP-010) has 576 pts.

The 3 slopes of Morne Claire Fontaine (GLP-012) are 677, 640 and 633 pts.

The 4 slopes of Morne Louis (GLP-006) are 737, 681, 647 and 647 pts.

The 3 best summits exceed 800 pts on their 5 slopes.

The Morne Mazeau Seismological and Geodesic Station (GLP-002) has its 2 slopes at 900 and 829 pts.

The extremely steep Morne Surelle (GLP-009) reaches 985 pts in just 3.8 km (hence its 49 bmb).

The Soufrière Volcano, through its access to the Bains Jaunes (GLP-016) is the best ascent in Guadeloupe with 1011 pts by its direct SW side and 1215 pts by its W side.



Village slopes in Morne Surelle



The Regretted, you regret?



Arrival at Carbet Falls



...at the end of its hairpins

Guadeloupean cycling

Some Guadeloupean cyclists have left their mark on professional cycling.

Yohan Gène won his first professional victory during the last stage of the Tour de Langkawi 2009 then numerous stages of the Tropicale Amissa Bongo and the Tour of South Africa, as well as the Tour of Gabon. In Europe, he won the 2nd stage of the Route du Sud in 2014 and the 3rd stage of the Boucles de la Mayenne. Interest in cycling sport is increasing as demonstrated by the young *Dawel Palène*.



Yohan Gène at the Tour de France



Dawel Palène wins the Guadeloupe cadet championship after the Dubisquet hill

The International Cycling Tour of Guadeloupe is the main cycling race in the archipelago. This race was created in 1948 and consisted of 2 stages at the time. It is currently being contested in 10 stages at the beginning of August.



The icon of the 2023 edition



Invitation designed in 2016

The **Tour de Guadeloupe** became international in 1979, was registered with the UCI in 2005, and has been classified UCI Europe Tour 2.2 since 2014. This means it is contested by professional and amateur teams from national, regional or club selections.



*Cycling tour of Guadeloupe 2022
A ninth mountainous stage*



Guaranteed atmosphere on the climbs

The Colombians Daniel Pernal and Flober Pena are co-record holders of the event with 4 victories each.

Running 10 stages in a relatively small territory (1/3 of an average French department) leads the race to use certain roads and certain GPMs several times, which therefore quickly become classic climbs.

The ascent of St-Claude (included in GLP-016) in Basse-Terre regularly serves as a time trial uphill. Sofaïa (GLP-003), Bas-Village (included in GLP-009), Grand'Croix (included in GLP-012), Plateau du Palmiste (GLP-017) and La Regrettée (GLP-018) are arrivals at summit, all in Basse-Terre. The Col des Mamelles (included in GLP-006) is a very classic GPM in Basse-Terre. Other GPMs in Basse-Terre include: Coque (included in GLP-002), Baille-Argent and Gommier (both included in GLP-004), Malendure (included in GLP-006), Pigeon and Falaise (all 2 included in GLP-008), Salé, Sapotille and L'Hermitage (all 3 included in GLP-018).

The island of Grande Terre contains other GPMs, the most classic of which is Saline (GLP-024). Dubisquet (GLP-022) and Masselas (GLP-023) are 2 other GPMs in Grande-Terre.



Saint-Claude and its wall in a time trial



The Col des Mamelles dominates the altimetry

The **Tour de Marie-Galante** is an amateur cycling race which takes place on the island of the same name. Created in 1975, the race currently takes place in 5 stages and is contested by around fifteen clubs.

Guadeloupean Boris Carrière is, to date, the only triple winner of the event.

He also won the Tour de Guadeloupe 3 times and the Tour de la Martinique once, which gives him 7 victories in the Tours of the French Antilles, a record.

Morne des Pères (side of GLP-030), Morne Piton and Morne Rosy (2 sides of GLP-029) are classic GPMs of the Tour de Marie-Galante.



The 2024 edition



Boris Carène on arrival

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