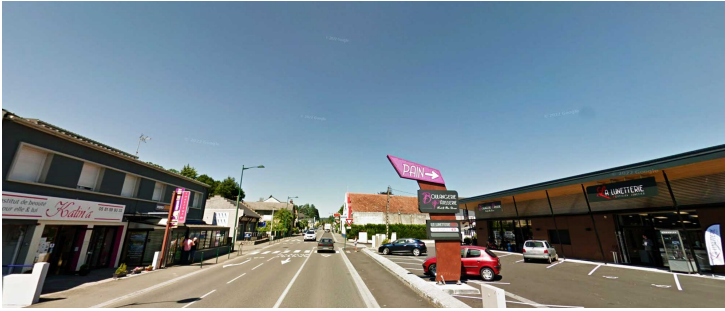


## What is it about me and France?



First things first; my wife's operation to remove a tumor from her lung last Friday was successful, although she had to spend two nights there instead of one, because the lung operated on didn't reinflate as quickly as hoped. But Sunday I got to take her home and she's doing pretty well. A bit sore on that side, but in her own view, better than expected. We'll be meeting with her Oncologist a month from now after another PET scan to see what the future looks like.

Now the France thing. How can you not like a place where one of the best places in town to eat is all about PAIN? You'll sometimes see a Maison du Pain, which a half-translation comes out to House of Pain. The truth is that pain, in French, means bread, so when you see "pain" you can generally think of awesome pastries and sandwiches at reasonable prices.

The place in the photo is in Lourdes, in the Pyrenees foothills. You can [view it in Google Maps here](#). I travel with my son Kevin pretty much every single July to see the Tour de France and ride up the toughest mountains on offer. For fun. Wouldn't be nearly as much fun if not for the great food though.

We have two places we normally stay, one in Lourdes (adjacent to the train station) and the other in Grenoble (again, close to a train station). Why close to train stations? Because we get around either by bike or bike & train, using local trains to extend our reach. I try very hard to avoid having to rent a car and deal with all the hassles that entails. This past July was unusual in choosing Annecy as our base. We've visited Annecy previously but never stayed. It worked out surprisingly well this year. Next year could be tough though; the route will actually be announced today, with rumors that there really won't be any central point you can see many stages from. Lots and lots of travel between each stage, which might require using a car.

More shortly; getting pretty late (12:46am). --Mike--