

Hike from Hut to Hut in the Pyrenees



Highlights

Spending a night in a refugio (mountain hut) high in the Pyrenees is an unforgettable experience, allowing you to explore areas out of reach of day-hikers. This eight-day guided tour covers the wild upper climes of the Valle de Tena and the canyons of Ordesa National Park – a truly epic adventure!

Cleaving Spain from France, the mighty Pyrenees range is as diverse as it is spectacular. In the west the slopes are densely wooded, with waterfalls, gaves (torrential rivers) and meadows of wild flowers, while to the east the terrain is surprisingly wild and barren, dominated by soaring granite masses. The central Pyrenees are snowy with glaciers on the northern slopes, offering some fine skiing and mountaineering, as well as more obscure pursuits like dog-mushing (canine-powered snow-based activities)! Better still is the walking; three long-distance footpaths run the length of the range: the GR10 across the northern slopes, the GR11 in the south and the high altitude HRP traversing the central peaks – a hiker's paradise!

This eight day tour follows the GR11, stopping off at two of the best-situated refugios in the Pyrenees, perfect for exploring trails less trodden. Refugio Respomuso is set amongst several 3000m peaks in the upper Valle de Tena, from where you can tackle Pico Tebbarai (2916m) and enjoy some incredible vistas. You'll then take a one-day break before heading to Refugio Goriz, sat beneath the mighty Monte Perdido (3355m) in Ordesa National Park. You'll make an ascent of the peak, crossing snowfields and being rewarded with breathtaking views of the Ordesa, Pineta and Anisclo canyons and into France. The final day's walking sees you navigate homewards through the Anisclo Canyon, with its soaring waterfalls and sculpted limestone. The expedition finishes with a slap-up meal back in Panticosa.

Is it for me?

A good level of fitness and hill-walking experience is essential, as you'll be making ascents of between 800 and 1400 metres most days. You may find yourself walking up to 10 hours a day. The routes aren't particularly technical – the snowfields of Monte Perdido may require crampon use - but there are some exposed sections, so confidence and sure-footedness are a must.

The pace of the tour is lively, designed to make the most of your time in the mountains, so expect a few early starts. Rest assured there is ample time to kick back and relax at the end of each day, whether in the hotel bar or a comfy refugio armchair.

Accommodation

Accommodation for this tour is split between mountain huts (refugios) with mixed dormitories and the family-run Hotel Casa Morlans.

The hotel is a friendly, comfortable place with mountain views. It has en-suite rooms, a bar and an excellent restaurant. You'll be served breakfast and dinner (packed lunches are supplied for walking days). Evening meals include a choice of four starters, four main courses and a range of homemade desserts, and, of course, wine. Ingredients are all fresh and locally-sourced, and vegetarians are well catered for.

The two refugios are located high in the mountains, well out of reach of day-hikers, while the hotel is set in the

Prices from

769 GBP (8 days) per person

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centre of Panticosa, so if you're still hungry for adventure after a day or two in the mountains you'll be well-placed to explore the village's many charming (and ancient) streets and squares.

Itinerary

On this tour you'll explore both the Valle de Tena and Ordesa National Park. The highlight of the trek is an ascent of the 'lost mountain' - Monte Perdido. At 3355m this is the third highest peak in the Pyrenees. Exact routes depend on weather and guests' preferences. The following is a sample itinerary:

Day One - Sunday: Panticosa

You will arrive in Panticosa in the late evening. You will have a short briefing and kit check while enjoying some Serrano ham, baguettes and wine.

Day Two - Monday: Sallent de Gallego - Refugio Respomuso

From Sallent de Gallego you'll set off along one of the highlights of the GR11 (the Pyrenean long distance path stretching from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic). Here you'll stay in Refugio Respomuso, beautifully set among several 3000m peaks. On this route you'll have the option of a side trip to the spectacular Ibones de Arriel.

Day Three - Tuesday: Refugio Respomuso - Circo de Piedrafita

After an early breakfast you set off from Refugio Respomuso into the wild landscape of Circo de Piedrafita. Here you can take an optional side trip to the summit of Tebberai (2916m). It's then down past the Ibones Azules to the pick-up point at Banos de Panticosa and a well-deserved three-course meal at the Hotel Casa Morlans.

Day Four - Wednesday: Panticosa

Today you can spend a relaxing day in Panticosa and take a dip in the pool. In the evening you can visit Jaca for tapas and wine.

Day Five - Thursday: The Ordesa Valley

The Faja de Pelay is the start for a three-day hike in the Ordesa National Park. After an initial steep climb you follow a wide ledge in the sheer cliffs of the Ordesa Valley, giving breathtaking views across the valley and of the border peaks. The night is spent at Refugio Goriz beneath Monte Perdido.

Day Six - Friday: Monte Perdido

The objective today is the classic ascent of Monte Perdido (3355m), the third highest peak in the Pyrenees. The summit views overlooking the Ordesa, Pineta and Anisclo canyons and into France are stunning. Steep in places, the route crosses a snow field that often requires the use of crampons. In the evening you'll return to Refugio Goriz for the night.

Day Seven - Saturday: Anisclo Canyon

Your walk out is through the neighbouring Anisclo Canyon, another spectacular valley carved into the limestone plateau. You'll pass thundering waterfalls before reaching your transport back to the Hotel Casa Morlans.

Day Eight - Sunday: Panticosa

This is a free day for you to explore Panticosa and its surroundings. You will leave Panticosa late afternoon to catch the evening flight from Zaragoza.

Details

Getting there

Flying from the UK...

Fly to Zaragoza Airport (ZAZ). The simplest way is to fly to Zaragoza direct from London Stansted. If you are flying from other parts of the UK you will need to arrive at Zaragoza Airport or train station on Day One of the tour.

Transfers to Panticosa are either from Zaragoza Airport - to coincide with the Sunday evening Ryanair flight FR2634 from London Stansted - or from Zaragoza train station.

-From the South West: Ryanair flies from Bristol to Pau and Girona several times per week.

-From Northern Ireland: Aerlingus and easyJet fly several times a week from Belfast to Barcelona.

-From the North West: Flybmi flies from Manchester to Barcelona several times a week. EasyJet flies from Liverpool to Madrid several times per week.

By train to Zaragoza...

If you fly to another airport such as Barcelona or Madrid you need to travel on to Zaragoza. There is a fast train connection with AVE - go to [Rail Europe](#) to book tickets.

Self-drive to Panticosa...

[Brittany Ferries](#) sail twice weekly from Portsmouth to Bilbao. From Bilbao it is 4 hours by car to Panticosa.

Price includes

Three nights accommodation in mountain refugios; four nights accommodation at Hotel Casa Morlans; six days full board with three course evening meals with wine; picnic lunches on walking days; five days guided walking; scheduled transfers to and from Zaragoza. Lunch and dinner on your rest day are not included.

Price details

A single supplement of £59 applies.

When is best

If you like the idea of walking over snow then June's the best time to come as there is usually still snow cover at this time of year. If you'd prefer to keep your feet on more solid ground then September is usually snow free.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

Some previous experience is needed

Travellers should bring

Recommended kit list: lightweight breathable walking clothes; base layers (wear beneath your shirt when the weather is cold); lightweight, waterproof trousers; sun protection - hat, high factor lip balm and sun cream, sun glasses; hydration pack (Camelpack); strong, waterproof walking boots; walking poles (for challenging routes); first aid kit and survival rations.

In addition to your day walking kit you will need an overnight rucksack with sleeping bag and/or liner plus thermal layers, waterproof layers and a head torch. The above is a suggested list of items for your walking holiday. However, a full kit list will be sent to you in advance of your arrival.