

Peaks & Passes Walking in the Pyrenees



Highlights

Experience the Pyrenees in all their wild majesty! This eight-day guided hike takes you into the higher mountains of rugged Valle de Tena, combining raw beauty with challenging but rewarding walking.

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!

From your base in the pretty village of Panticosa, this eight-day guided hiking tour will see you explore some of the wildest landscapes in the Pyrenees. You'll tackle the summits of Pico Anayet (2545m) and Pico Bacias (2760m), which require some basic scrambling but reward you with stunning views. There's also the option to tackle the world-renowned 'Faja de las Flores' in the Ordesa National Park, undoubtedly one of the world's most head-spinningly spectacular trails with its sheer 1000 metre canyon drops! It's not all extreme hiking though; there are flower-filled meadows and cool mountain lakes to explore, and it's worth checking out Panticosa itself. But the true stars are the mountains themselves; the iconic summit of Pic du Midi d'Ossau and the steep granite peak of Pico Palas typify the raw grandeur of the Pyrenees.

Is it for me?

This is a week of reasonably strenuous hiking with some fairly long days and a good level of fitness is required. The Pyrenees are renowned for steep climbs and you should be capable of ascents of over 1000m.

Paths are generally good but there are some exposed sections and some easy scrambling and sure-footedness is required. Group sizes are small, with a maximum of 8 people. You should expect days of between 7 and 10 hours of walking.

Accommodation

Accommodation for this tour is in the family-run Hotel Casa Morlans. The hotel is a friendly, comfortable place in the Valle de Tena looking out at the surrounding mountain range. It has en-suite rooms, a bar and an excellent restaurant.

Cooked and continental breakfasts are included as are evening meals. These include a choice of four starters, four main courses and a range of homemade desserts, and, of course, wine. Packed lunches are provided for walking days. Ingredients are all fresh and locally-sourced, and vegetarians are well catered for. On the rest day you will eat out at a restaurant in the nearby town of Jaca.

Itinerary

Prices from

749 GBP (8 days) per person

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Walks will explore the variety of the Tena Valley and the surrounding area. The route will vary depending on weather conditions and expectations of the group. 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 over Serrano ham, baguettes and wine at Hotel Casa Morlans.

Day Two: Monday - Pico Anayet (2545m)

Set on a high plateau of peaty grasslands is Ibon de Anayet. From here you have several choices – you can either relax with a picnic and take in the magnificent views. Or you can tackle the steep and exciting Pico Anayet or the slightly tamer Vertice de Anayet.

Day Three: Tuesday - Faja de las Flores

You will explore one of the most spectacular paths in Europe - the Faja de las Flores. Here a narrow balcony is cut into the sheer cliffs of the Ordesa valley, offering breathtaking views of Mount Perdido and the valley floor a dizzying kilometre below.

Day Four: Wednesday - Ibones de Arriel

Today will take you to some of the most beautiful lake landscapes in the Pyrenees. At Ibones de Arriel is a collection of four lakes, lying at different heights, surrounded by steep granite peaks, with Pico Palas taking pride of place.

Day Five: Thursday - Panticosa

Today you will spend a relaxing day in Panticosa, perhaps visiting one of the nearby places of interest such as the Parque Faunístico or trying some unguided hiking. This evening you will spend in Jaca.

Day Six: Friday - Pico de Bacias (2760m)

This day takes you to the high, wild land above the spa resort of Baños de Panticosa. You will pass a series of mountain lakes before an easy ridge scramble to the summit of Pico de Bacias. Here you will have magnificent views across to Vignemale and the Ordesa National Park.

Day Seven: Saturday - Garmo Negro (3066m)

Overlooking Panticosa this three thousander makes for an excellent finale to the week. You will experience superb summit views along the Pyrenees chain. An optional side trip could take you on an excellent scramble along a ridge to the summit of Argulas (3046m).

Day Eight: Sunday - Panticosa

Your last day is for you to explore Panticosa and its surroundings. You will leave Panticosa in the 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

Seven nights accommodation at Hotel Casa Morlans; six days full board - three course evening meal 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 £89 applies

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

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.