

# Gentle Pyrenees Walking Holiday



## Highlights

Enjoy the breathtaking beauty of the Pyrenees with a minimum of fuss! This leisurely eight-day Pyrenees walking holiday focuses on the mountain lakes and secluded valleys of this awesome region.

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!

Starting from the charming villages of Panticosa and Biescas, this eight-day guided Pyrenees walking holiday takes you through some of the most stunning scenery the region has to offer. You'll see the sheer faces of the Sierra de Partacua and the Valle de Ordesa, passing waterfalls and rock pools as you proceed through the forest, the 3000m peak of Mount Perdido all the while towering over you. The cliffs around San Juan de la Pena are home to colonies of griffon vultures as well as an ancient monastery complex, both of which you'll get to see up-close, while the peak of Punta del Pacino is approached through meadows and lush woodland – a definite highlight. You'll also get a chance to experience the culture of this mountain region, with a day's walk between the medieval (often semi-abandoned) villages of the Serrablo, with their characteristic 11th century Romanesque churches.

## Is it for me?

If you're a fit and active person these walks will be perfect for you. The itinerary is designed for those that like more relaxed days in the mountains enjoying the flora and fauna. You will do 5 to 7 hours of walking each day on good paths with 350m to 600m of ascent. There are 5 days of guided walking, with maximum group sizes of 8 people.

## Accommodation

Accommodation varies depending on the time of year you decide to visit. If you choose the July or August trip you will stay in the four-star Hotel Tierra de Biescas. If you choose the May to June or September to October dates you will stay in the two-star Hotel Casa Morlans. Prices change to reflect this.

The Tierra de Biescas is a stylishly furnished hotel with en-suite rooms, indoor and outdoor pools, bar, restaurant, spa and sauna. Casa Morlans is a comfortable, family-run place with en-suite rooms, bar and an excellent restaurant. Both hotels are located in the centre of Panticosa, so you'll be well-placed to explore the village's many ancient streets and squares.

You'll be served cooked and continental breakfasts and three-course evening meals. Casa Morlans includes wine with dinner for no extra charge. Packed lunches are provided on walking days. Ingredients are all fresh and locally-sourced, and vegetarians are well catered for.

## Itinerary

Prices from

**749** GBP (8 days) per person

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Your walks will start from either Panticosa or Biescas which are both situated in the Valle de Tena. Walks are adapted according to the weather conditions. The following is a sample itinerary:

#### Day One: Sunday - Biescas

You will arrive in Biescas in the late evening for a short briefing over sandwiches and cold meats at Hotel Casa Morlans.

#### Day Two: Monday - Ibon de Piedrafita

Nestled in the meadows under the cliffs of the Sierra de Partacua lies the Ibon de Piedrafita. A gentle climb will take you out of the woodland for superb views across the Valle de Tena.

#### Day Three: Tuesday - San Juan de la Peña

The cliffs around San Juan de la Peña are home to colonies of griffon vultures. A beautiful ridge walk above the cliffs gives you a great opportunity to see these huge birds up close and enjoy superb vistas across the Pyrenees. This walk can be combined with a visit to the fascinating medieval monastery complex of San Juan de la Peña.

#### Day Four: Wednesday - Valle de Ordesa

The sheer cliffs of the Valle de Ordesa are an undisputable highlight of the Pyrenees. As you follow the Río Arazas you'll pass waterfalls and rock pools before the woodland gives way to spectacular views of the surrounding cliffs and the 3000m peak of Monte Perdido towering above you.

#### Day Five: Thursday - Panticosa or Biescas

You will spend a relaxing day in Panticosa or Biescas, or visit one of the nearby attractions such as the Parque Faunístico and the wolves, lynx and bison that inhabit it. In the evening you'll visit the local town of Jaca for vino and tapas.

#### Day Six: Friday - Villages of the Serrablo

Today you will follow a route linking the medieval villages of the Serrablo. These pretty villages are famous for their 11th century romanesque churches. You will walk through gentle woodland with views up the Valle de Tena and enjoy a picnic lunch at the semi abandoned village of Susín which has just one remaining inhabitant!

#### Day Seven: Saturday - Punta del Pacino

Today you will climb a beautiful ascent through woodland and meadows to the peak of Punta del Pacino. Its position at the centre of the valley gives fabulous panoramic views of the Valle De Tena and surrounding peaks.

#### Day Eight: Saturday - Biescas

Enjoy a free morning in Biescas before leaving mid-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 and Biescas 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; six days full board - three course evening meal (wine included at Hotel Casa Morlans); picnic lunches on walking days; five days guided walking; scheduled transfers to and from Zaragoza.

### Comfort level

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

### Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that 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 (Camelback); strong, waterproof walking boots; walking poles (for challenging routes); first aid kit and survival rations.

