

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

A Guided Pyrenean Lakeland Journey



For a good walker this is a magnificent itinerary using the paths we know that take you into the wilds, along unspoilt valleys full of wild flowers, wildlife and lakes. Within the natural beauty of the national park. You stay some nights in refuges in some of the most beautiful and isolated places in Europe.

8 days - 7 nights - 5 walking days

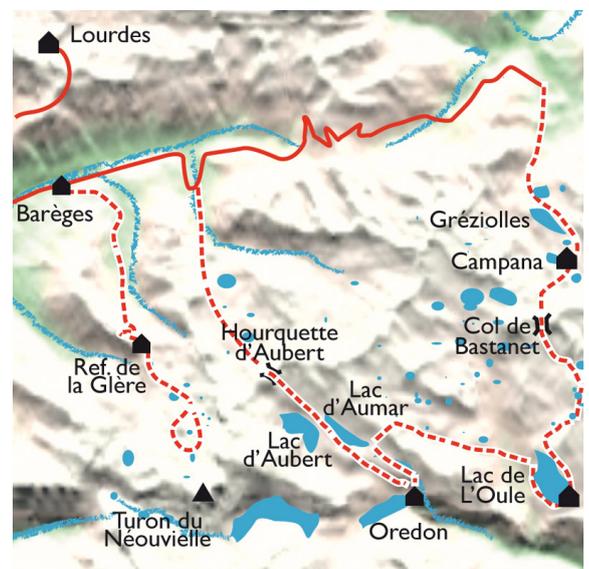
- Minimum required 5
- From point to point
- With luggage transportation
- Guided

Code :
FP1PUNO



The plus points

- **Walking and staying in the heart of the high mountains**
- **Challenging, but rewarding walking with an expert bi-lingual guide**
- **Magnificent lakes, 10,000 feet snowy peaks, tumbling streams, Alpine meadows**



Before departure, please check that you have an updated fact sheet.

The Italian Lakes has five major lakes. Britain's Lake District has less than 30 lakes, tarns and reservoirs. The Pyrenees Lakeland has over 300, but it's not just about the numbers. In spectacular locations in the high mountains (most well above the height of Helvellyn) with blues skies and 10,000 feet snowy peaks reflecting in their glacial waters, yet bordered by a wealth of wildflower Alpine meadows and proud conifers, many of these lakes are "picture perfect". Your guide knows the best - and often least frequented - paths as well as the geology, the flora and fauna (including wild boar, ermine, chamois, marmottes, grouse, vultures and eagles) the local history of walking and climbing, the traditional farming methods, the typical dishes and drinks. (S)he, therefore, adds to the wealth of your experience, and deepens your understanding and appreciation of our beloved Pyrenees. You also stay high up in the mountains, so can truly immerse yourself in this unique environment.

■ THE PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Lourdes: We meet you at Lourdes airport (daily flights from London Stansted) or rail station (express trains from Paris and Toulouse), and take you to your Lourdes hotel.

The three star Hotel Beausejour delivers what its name promises: a beautiful stay. It is a fairly grand building with spacious terraces and gardens, a heated swimming pool, and an innovative restaurant. A frequent shuttle whooshes you into the historic centre, so all in all, a good start.

Transfer time: 10 minutes from the airport.

DAY 2

Lourdes - Bareges: You have the day to explore Lourdes, and walk in the surrounding area as you wish before a late afternoon short drive up into the Pyrenees proper gets you to the scenic mountain village of Barèges where you will check into your hotel, and meet your travelling companions (minimum 5 including you, maximum 15) as well as your bi-lingual qualified mountain guide, who also knows the region exceptionally well. (S)he will give a presentation about the Neouvielle nature reserve, Pyrenean lakeland, and your walking journeys over the next few days.

The Hotel Grand Bivouac is a one star centrally located hotel.

Transfer time: 45 minutes.

DAY 3

Bareges - Glere: Here we go walking uphill out of Bareges to soon join ancient tracks used for the transhumance (taking cattle and/or sheep up to, and down from, their high summer pastures) passing abandoned farms, barns and shepherd huts, walking alongside tumbling streams punctuated with waterfalls, all the time gaining altitude and solitude. We walk up to 7,200 feet from where we not only get to enjoy magnificent views all around, we, hopefully, get to meet Denis, a shepherd and cheese maker, and taste his superb cheeses in quite stunning surroundings. We then descen a little to our night's stop at the Glere refuge.

The Glere valley is truly unspoilt - protected and much less visited than other areas nearby - and consequently it's a privilege and a delight to spend a night here. Look out for chamois, grouse and vultures during daylight hours, and "swim" in the night skies free of almost all light pollution. In the morning, lakes in the valley and granite, snow-covered peaks rising upto 10,000 feet all around. As you would expect, accommodation is simple with shared dormitories, but there are private showers, and plenty of satisfying food.

Walking time: 5-6 hours. Elevation: + 900m / - 100m.

DAY 4

Glere - Bareges: From the refuge, our guide takes us on a superb circular walk that features some glorious lakes that reflect blue skies, snowy peaks, granite cliffs, woods and Alpine meadows in the still, clear (and oh so cold) waters. Det Mail, la Mourèle, and Mounicot are some of the favourite lakes we will visit. In early summer you will also find bright colours washing across the valleys as wild flowers and rhododendrons compete to win your attention. When we arrive back at the refuge, there is time for relaxing before setting off down the Glere valley - count its 12 lakes - eventually arriving back at Bareges for the night.

You stay again at the Hotel Grand Bivouac.

Walking time: 4-5 hours. Elevation: + 200m / - 1,000m.

DAY 5

Bareges - Oredon: This is an unforgettable day in the heart of the Pyrenean lakeland. A short transfer avoids the boring bits, and we start walking at the ancient stone bridge - the Pont de la Gaubie - where the Dets Coubous valley begins. The footpath gently zig-zags up to walk beside tarns, ponds, lakes edged with water lilies, and surrounded by meadows of wild flowers, wind sculpted pine trees, and, high above, snowy summits. Lake succeeds lake as we slowly climb to Hourquette d'Aubert col (8,200 feet). Looking back you'll see them ranged below you as well as the rather larger and more magnificent Aubert and Aumar lakes. But we've still got the joys of a gentle valley descent alongside lakes and streams through small woods and across marmotte populated meadows to the welcoming "chalet-hôtellerie" of Orédon overlooking its namesake lake. There's the option of taking a public minibus to save the last 45 minutes or so of walking, if you wish (decide and pay at the time).

The "chalet-hôtellerie" Oredon is wonderfully located overlooking its large lake with trees running right to the waterside. It has a sunny terrace and good cafe/lounge inside, but this is one step up from a refuge (and not to be confused with the refuge of the same name), so still fairly simple albeit with comfortable beds, good showers and plentiful food as well as a welcoming ambiance.

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 1,000m / - 650m (not taking the public minibus). Transfer time (at the beginning): 5 minutes.

DAY 6

Oredon - Oule: We start the day's walking with a gentle climb up to a natural balcony above the magnificent Aumar lake in which we see the huge reflection of the 10,000 feet Néouvielle mountain lit perfectly by the morning light. Then it's on up a little higher to the Aumar col and the glacially formed, suspended valley called Estibère, which has given birth to a large family of lakes and ponds interspersed with pine forests and open high pastures coloured by wild flowers, especially in early summer, and all of it wrapped in a ring of mountain peaks. What's more you get to stay in this wonderland.

The Oule refuge, like the previous night, has its own namesake lake, superb 360 degree views, and an impressive isolation that might leave you feeling both small in comparison to the landscape and privileged to be there. Again, it's the sort of simple hospitality, accommodation and meals that feel right in such a location.

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 520m / - 550m.

DAY 7

Oule - Campane: Talk about saving the best til last...This walk is absolutely packed with highlights and delights. All the time you are deep and high in the heart of the Pyrenees walking along valleys without roads or buildings, and up over cols with barely a visible path. The valleys offer lake after emerald lake, plus pine forests, Alpine meadows strewn with wildflowers, and wild animals spotable at distances near and far. This could be the Pyrenees at its very best, but that's for you to decide. After the beautiful lac de Gréziolles you start the long and beautiful descent into the valley to the woods and fir trees of the Campan valley, arriving at Artigues. Your day ends with a transfer to Lourdes for the last evening, normally with stars in your eyes after this week in the fresh mountain air, surrounded by such grandiose and breathtaking scenery.

You spend your last night at the friendly and simple ** Hotel Lutetia near the railway station in Lourdes.

Walking time : 6 hours. Elevation : + 700m / - 1100m. Transfer time : 55 minutes

DAY 8

Your trip ends after your breakfast when you can either walk to the railway station or we will transfer you to the airport at Lourdes.

Elements beyond our control (the weather, level of the group, logistical risks, other miscellaneous reasons) may lead our team to modify the programme. We aim to please, but your safety will always be our priority.

At certain times of the year, this itinerary might be changed somewhat by weather and on-the-ground conditions.

■ PRACTICAL INFORMATION

DISPOSITIONS COVID-19

Because of the added health precautions relating to COVID, you must be equipped from the start of your trip with:

- * a sufficient quantity of masks (at a rate of 2 per day minimum). Wearing a mask will be compulsory during any transport, in certain accommodation, crowded places etc.
- * zipped pockets for masks and other items such as used tissues
- * hydro-alcoholic gel
- * a thermometer to take your temperature in case of symptoms appearing during your stay
- * a pen (sometimes necessary to sign an agreement in certain accommodation).

The hosts who will welcome you (hoteliers, refuge guards, restaurateurs, transporters, local teams ...) are the people who will help to guarantee the smooth running of your stay and will ask you to conform with certain health related protocols. Out of respect for them and other people who frequent the same places, we ask you to commit to respecting the instructions given to you. Be reassured and optimistic, because as you know, hiking is an activity that will allow you long and enjoyable periods of time during which the wearing of a mask is not mandatory!

On our guided trips we do not insist that you take a single room if you are travelling alone. If you book a shared "twin" room with 2 beds you agree to assume responsibility for the possible consequences related to sharing the room (and therefore the bathroom and toilet) with another person from the group. If you do not wish to do this you should take the single room option, subject to availability

MEETING POINT

We collect you from, and take you back to, Lourdes airport or rail station.

PARKING

If you drive, then there is reasonably secure and fairly priced parking near the Lourdes hotel.

AT THE END OF YOUR TRIP

After breakfast on the last day we take you to Lourdes airport, or rail station.

SI VOUS DESIREZ ARRIVER LA VEILLE OU RESTER APRES LE SEJOUR :

DEPARTURE GUARANTEED FROM (NO. PERS)

5

GROUP LIMIT (PERS.)

15

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

This holiday features challenging walking with some long and arduous slopes, usually 5 hours or so a day, so is only suitable for people who are reasonably fit, and well used to all-day hill and mountain walking. We offer many other holidays that are based on much more comfortable walking than this one. It can get fairly hot in July and August (but nothing like as hot as the Mediterranean) We would recommend from mid May through June, and from mid August through September as the most agreeable months.

LUGGAGE TRANSFERS

We transport your luggage for you, so all you need to carry when walking is a daysack with whatever you regard as essentials, and your picnic, except on the nights of days 3 and 7 when vehicles can't get to the refuges, so you will need to take an overnight change of clothing (or not bother!).

GUIDE

This holiday is led by an experienced, bi-lingual guide with mountain walking qualifications and a wide knowledge of the region. You need only speak English if you so choose.

ACCOMMODATION

One night in a 3 star hotel with swimming pool; 1 night in a two star hotel, 2 nights in a one star hotel; 3 nights in high mountain refuges with simple dormitory accommodation. There are private showers available in the refuges, but you may have to pay a small fee locally.

MEALS

You will eat simply with an emphasis on naturally produced, local sourced products, and family style cooking. In the refuges you will often be served at the same time, and sit on communal tables. Breakfasts are usually buffet style, and you will receive a picnic every walking day.

TRANSFERS

Journeys by road are by bus, minibus, or taxi.

THE PRICE INCLUDES

7 nights dinner, bed and breakfast; picnics on days 3,4,5,6 and 7; people transfers as specified; daily luggage transfers when possible; the daily services of the bi-lingual guide; 24/7 customer phone service if additional support is required.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

Transfers at the start and end of the holiday except from and to Lourdes airport or station; drinks with meals; lunches of day 1 and 2, non-standard menu items; entry fees; booking fee of 20€ / person, personal and travel insurance.

FORMALITIES

Further to the general instructions applicable to all trips and in addition to the equipment list you will also need to pack: A light duvet (sleeping bag), a pair of sandals or flip-flops, toilet paper, and a mini-pillow if desired, for the night in a mountain refuge (they will not provide sheets, blankets, or towels.) In certain accommodation you will have to sign and respect certain agreements imposed by the accommodation (charters which will be sent to you by us); otherwise you will not be able to stay.

You need to keep your passport with you at all times, and ideally insurance information. You need to make your own arrangements to claim local healthcare. There are requirements in France and Spain for all vehicles to carry safety equipment.

■ EQUIPMENT

■ INSURANCE

According to the regulation of our profession, Purely Pyrenees is covered by a Civil Professional Liability. However, each client must hold an individual civil liability as well as an individual multi risk guarantee in order to protect themselves from incidents or accidents that may occur before or during their hiking trip.

We remind you that a credit card covers, in general, only assistance in repatriation and not the cancellation of your trip, and this only provided you use the card to pay for the total of the trip.

We offer a choice of three insurance options which you can purchase at the time of booking.

Package 1: simple cancellation insurance at 2.5%

This insurance provides reimbursement of the amount incurred (excluding fees and the cost of insurance) in case of cancellation due to one of the following causes: serious accident, illness or death of insured, spouse or person accompanying them, and certain family members.

Package 2: simple cancellation insurance and assistance / repatriation at 3.7%

This insurance allows, in addition to the benefits described in the plan No. 1; - To benefit from assistance in case of illness or injury during the trip and covers your return home if necessary. - A reimbursement paid on a pro rata basis (excluding transportation costs and with a waiting period) in the case of an interruption of your trip following an accident, the death of a loved one or other specified accidents.

Package 3: Package "super multi-risk": 4.8%

This insurance offers, in addition to the benefits described in the packages No. 1 and No. 2, - A wider cancellation insurance with the repayment of amounts incurred (net of deductible) in case of cancellation for any justifiable reason including an exceptional and unexpected event. - The management of some of the costs incurred at the time in case of return not linked to an exceptional and unexpected event. - Compensation (capped) for loss, theft or destruction of baggage. - Payment of compensation for delayed baggage delivery of more than 48 hours.

The rapatriation is not valid for all countries, please check with us before subscribing the insurance.

You will receive with the confirmation of your booking an extract of the general conditions of contract chosen (in french). Take this document with you on your journey. The validity of all guarantees corresponds with the travel dates indicated on the invoice and applies only to services sold. For departures and returns postponed, please contact us. Warning: If you buy only the contract No. 1 (simple cancellation insurance), this means that you need to have your own insurance, repatriation assistance (related notably to certain credit cards). We advise you to check your contract and cover guaranteed. In this case, we ask you to tell us when you book the name of your insurance company and your policy number. You will assume, therefore, the responsibility of certain risks, especially in the advance payments of certain costs.

Important: If you must use the assistance during the trip, you must obtain the prior consent of Europe Assistance before taking any action or incur any expenditure by telephoning: 33 1 41 85 85 85 and quoting the number of contract: 58662860

■ ACTING FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Purely Pyrenees is a founding member of Action for Responsible Tourism.

The label "Action for Responsible Tourism" was awarded Purely Pyrenees in 2009. It is controlled, every year, by ECOCERT.

Based on common values of respect, solidarity and quality, ATR aims to harmonize professional practices of its members.

To win the confidence of customers, it focuses on four key commitments, which arise from many activities in the field and at home.

- Clear information and awareness of responsible tourism given to the traveller.
- Selection of providers in the spirit of responsible tourism.
- Setting up of a transfer of competencies to the providers.
- Commitment in relation to the tour operator's own structure.

More information on the label ATR on /www.tourisme-responsable.org

■ CONTACT US

Purely Pyrenees
48 Route d'Azun
F-65400 ARRENS-MARSOUS
FRANCE

Tel: 00 33 (0)5 62 97 72 01
Fax: 00 33 (0)5 62 97 43 01
contact@purelypyrenees.com

Purely Pyrenees is a brand created by La Balaguere SAS.

La Balaguere SAS with a capital of 179 775 euros - Registration number: IM065100002 - Siret: 389 350 745 0001 1 - RCP. Allianz contrat n°53.231.046 - No. 7911 NAF Z - Financial Guarantee: Groupama - Head Office at the address listed above.

