

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

The Art Of Walking : A Cultural Journey To The Mediterranean



You will start with gentle walking around the magnificent Mount Canigou, before finishing in the Mediterranean artists' village of Collioure. You will stay in lovely 3-star hotels and visit well-preserved monasteries, churches packed with Romanesque art, unspoilt villages and natural spas.

4 nights & 3 gentle walking days with fascinating visits

■ Minimum required 2

■ Center based

■ With luggage transportation

■ Self-guided

Code :
FP2PUCA



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The plus points

- **Gentle walks featuring places of historical and artistic interest**
- **High quality, authentic hotels with dinner included**
- **24/7 customer service**



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

http://www.purelypyrenees.com/art_walking_gentle_cultural_journey_medite.html

A gentle, more Mediterranean climate with superb walking, and shorter or longer options most days. Transfers to ensure you only walk the best "bits". Almost daily visits to places of historic, cultural and artistic interest that range from 1,000 year old monasteries to one of Picasso's favourite fishing villages. High quality hotels, several with natural spa facilities, all with good quality regional cuisine. Use your own car to reduce the cost.

■ THE PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Arrival at the spa town of Molitg les Bains

Standard option: You make your own way to Molitg les Bains. You use your own car for transfers on days 2, 3 and 4, reducing the price considerably.

With extra airport pick-up: We pick you up at Perpignan airport or railway station and take you to Molitg les Bains. *Pick-ups also available from Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, Girona or Barcelona (please consult us for prices).*

Molitg Les Bains was once a pretigious resort that still offers much of interest to today's visitors, including the many French who take what they call "the cure".

You stay at the Grand Hotel, expensively styled and modernised with very comfortable rooms, a thermal spa (book treatments on arrival), and a very good restaurant specialising in regional cuisine.

DAY 2

Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa

Today we again start with a short transfer, so you get the best of the most peaceful and pleasurable walk beside canals to visit the most acclaimed site of Catalan Romanesque art and architecture, the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa with its beautiful tower and 12th century cloister - one of the largest in the Pyrenees and, indeed, France. You can choose a there-and-back route, or make it a little more challenging - and rewarding - with a more circuitous route. See how you feel on the day.

You stay a second night in Molitg les Bains at the three star Grand Hôtel.

Walking time : 3h or 5h30. Distance : 8km or 15km. Elevation : + 300m or + 400m / - 300m or - 400m. Transfer time : 20 minutes.

DAY 3

Saint-Martin du Canigou

Another Benedictine abbey renowned for its Romanesque art - yet it could not be more different. The 1,000 year old abbey (monastery really) of Saint-Martin-du-Canigou (founded 1009) is perched precipitously on a rocky promontory above huge cliffs, and clings vertiginously to Mount Canigou. It brings together themes of religion and nature, cultural history and agricultural survival, the ancient and the modern, faith and an absence of faith. It's a most memorable place to visit, especially as the culmination of a superb walk - or walks because again there are shorter and longer routes for you to choose from, and we provide transfers to ensure you enjoy walking the best parts of the routes.

You spend a final night in Molitg les Bains at the three star Grand Hotel.

Walking time : 2h or 3h30. Distance : 4km or 5,5km. Elevation : + 300m or + 600m / - 300m or - 300m. Transfer time : 40 minutes.

DAY 4

Molitg - Collioure

While staying at Molitg, you will have felt yourselves to be deep in the Pyrenees. Indeed you were, yet you were also only an hour from the Mediterranean coast, so for your final day we whisk you (or you whisk yourselves in your own car) to the vineyards and coves above the Mediterranean so you can walk to the delightful village of Collioure, much favoured by artists including Braque, Matisse, Picasso and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. You can hike along the coast to Banyuls, from where a short transfer will bring you back to Collioure. This will give you a superb opportunity to compare and contrast medieval and modern art. The fishing village contrasts sharply with its castle walls lapped by the Mediterranean and the Pyrenean grandeur of Mount Canigou high above you (which you will be most familiar with by now). A fittingly artistic end to a holiday promoting the joys of the art of walking.

You stay at the excellent 3 star Hôtel Les Princes de Catalogne well located in the heart of the village just a few metres from the sea, and dine at a nearby favourite restaurant offering a range of interesting local dishes with contemporary twists.

Walking time : 3h. Distance : 8km. Elevation : + 450m / - 450m. Transfer time : 1 hour.

DAY 5

End of stay

Standard option: Your holiday ends after breakfast. You should already have your car with you in Collioure, having used it for the rest of the week.

With extra airport pick-up: After breakfast, we will take you back to Perpignan airport or railway station. *Transfers also available to Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, Girona or Barcelona (please consult us for prices).*

Transfer time : 1h.

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 systematically be our priority.

This is an independent, self-guided holiday.

■ USEFUL 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!

So breathe fresh air and smile!

PROGRAMME OF DEPARTURES

1 June to 30 October.

MEETING POINT

Standard option: You make your own way to Molitg les Bains. You use your own car for transfers on days 2, 3 and 4, reducing the price considerably.

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END OF STAY

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TO GET TO THE MEETING POINT

SNCF runs overnight sleeper trains from Paris to Perpignan, and daytime trains go to Perpignan. There are flights to Perpignan from London and Paris, to Barcelona, Girona and Montpellier from several European cities, to Toulouse from numerous British cities as well as European cities, and to Carcassonne from London. Some of these flights only fly (or only fly frequently) in the height of summer. From Perpignan you can get a train to Prades and then take a taxi for the final 10km to Molitg.

CAR SHARING

To reduce your travel costs as well as carbon emissions, think about car sharing, whether you are a driver or passenger. Connect to [Blablacar](#) it's simple and practical.

We recommend that you compare the cost of various different means of accessing your circuit start point by using the website [Comparabus](#). Contrary to what the name suggests, this site proposes several different means of completing a journey, including, flights, trains, buses or car sharing.

PARKING

There is reasonably priced, secure public parking in Molitg.

IF YOU WANT TO ARRIVE THE NIGHT BEFORE OR STAY AFTER THE TRIP

You can book extra nights before, during or after the holiday. Just contact us.

GUARANTEED DEPARTURE FROM (PERS)

2

LEVEL

This holiday features comfortable, gentle walking, and is suitable for anybody who enjoys "a good walk". On most days there are choices of itineraries so that you can decide for yourselves each day. It can get hot in July and August, as well as more crowded, but the temperatures are moderated by the mountains and sea breezes. We would recommend May, June and September as the best months.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORTATION

We will transfer your luggage between each hotel (unless you have opted for the self-drive option), so all you need to carry when walking is a daysack with whatever you regard as essentials.

SUPERVISION

This is an independent, self-guided holiday.

ACCOMODATION

You stay in double or twin rooms for 4 nights in three star hotels. There is the option (for a supplement) of replacing the last night's three star hotel with a four star hotel with a one Michelin star restaurant.

MEALS

You will eat well. Dinners are based on set menus featuring regional specialities usually with 3 or 4 choices for each of three courses, but you can pay locally for upgraded choices. Breakfast is included every morning, but picnics are not as there are shops or cafes/restaurants to take or make the lunch of your choice - and, anyway, you can always ask the hotel the night before to make a picnic, which you can pay for locally.

TRANSFERS

Usually transfers are in people carriers, mini-buses, cars or taxis. Often they will be exclusively for you.

CLIMATE

While the climate is generally Mediterranean and benign, there are "micro-climates", and in spring and autumn there can be showers and cool days just as there can be days that are hotter than usual. Your clothing and weather protection needs to take this into account.

THE PRICE INCLUDES

4 nights dinner, bed and breakfast; people transfers; luggage transfers; detailed walking instructions; 1:25,000 IGN map; 24/7 customer phone service.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

The journey to the start point, and from the finish point; lunches or picnics; drinks with meals; non-standard menu items; entry fees; personal and travel insurance.

FORMALITIES

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.

CONTENTS OF YOUR TRAVEL FOLDER

When we have received your balance of payment for your holiday, and in the month before departure, we send you all the documentation you need: detailed itinerary showing dates, times, contact details etc; a detailed guide to your walking route (with options) and lots of cultural, historical and nature background information; formal documents (invoices, contracts etc); luggage labels etc. If you book at the last minute, we can send this information to your first night hotel.

■ EQUIPMENT

Do pack everything into one suitcase (preferably soft form) and bring a weatherproof daysack (small rucksack) each. We transport your luggage, and large rucksacks are difficult for flights and cars.

Do invest in "tech" clothing - light, waterproof, breathable, quick drying etc - and good walking boots with ankle protection (trainers will not be good enough).

Do simplify your "tech" equipment if you can: for example, can you get communications, internet access, entertainment, music and books all on your smartphone ? There's plenty of space in your luggage for a Kindle, so do you need to take books as well ?

Do choose comfortable clothing for evenings too - usually people dress casual, or at most smart casual, but remember you are usually staying and dining in quality hotels.

Do remember that while you are enjoying some of the most unspoilt and magnificent scenery and landscapes in the world, and walking for hours without seeing another soul, you will be staying in villages and towns with shops that have most of the things you might need as replacements, or if you've forgotten stuff. After all, you are in France and Spain, not the middle of nowhere !

LUGGAGE

- A soft travel bag, avoid suitcases, which are more cumbersome and limit the weight of your belongings to 10 kg if possible.
- A small backpack of 30 litres minimum for your daytime requirements.

CLOTHES

- Waterproof and breathable anorak (Gore-Tex type)
- Fleece or a sweater (depending on the location and season)
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Pair of gloves (depending on the location and season)
- Sun hat (with all round brim)
- Shorts
- Swimming costume + packaway towel
- Several pairs of proper walking socks

- Underwear
- Pair of trainers or light evening shoes
- Comfortable clothing for the evening

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- Walking boots (with ankle protection)
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and lip protection
- Water bottle or backpack container (allow 2 litres per person per day)
- Tupperware type container for the picnic + cutlery
- Compass
- Waterproof cover for walking instructions and map
- Head torch
- Survival blanket
- Mobile phone (signal strength is often surprisingly good, but cannot be relied on)
- Your identity documents (including driving licence - you never know when...)

FIRST AID KIT

- Small shared kit (gauze, plasters, analgesic, blister plasters, earplugs, pain killers, indigestion tablets)

■ MORE INFORMATION

THE AREA

The main feature of the first area that you visit is Mount Canigou, the main summit in the area at 2784m. It is a mountain that is not too difficult, accessible to anyone who is reasonably fit. Its geographical location, separated from the main Pyrenean range, means that it can be seen from all directions, including from the coast or out on a boat on the Mediterranean Sea.

The word "canigou" probably derives from an ancient Indo-European language, being modified over time by all the different civilisations passing through the area (Phenicians, Greeks, Romans, etc). It probably means "mountain of mountains" and is a sacred place for many Catalan people.

Nearby, you will find 2 of the most highly reputed Romanesque buildings in the whole of Catalonia: the Benedictine abbeys of Saint Michel de Cuxa and Saint Martin de Canigou. Saint Michel de Cuxa is one of the largest abbeys in France, while Saint Martin de Canigou is perched precipitously on a rocky promontory above huge cliffs, clinging vertiginously to Mount Canigou. It brings together themes of religion and nature, cultural history and agricultural survival, the ancient and the modern, faith and an absence of faith. Both places are truly extraordinary places to visit.

The final walking day takes place at the Mediterranean end of the Pyrenees. The final mountains tumble down directly into the sea, but they are no longer anything like the high alpine pastures of the Central Pyrenees. Here, there are cacti and Mediterranean scrub and the weather is much more reliable. The wonderful smells of lavender, thyme and rosemary are never far away.

The most significant weather feature would be the strong "Tramontana" wind, which can sometimes be quite relentless.

Politically, this part of the Mediterranean is divided between France (department of the Pyrénées Orientales) and Spain (province of Girona). However, both parts form part of Catalonia and recently (2017) the part that is south of the border claimed independence from Spain. This independence has not been officially recognised by any other European nation, but many people will insist that they are now independent. The situation is likely to develop significantly over the coming years, but the subject can be quite a thorny one, so you should be aware that the opinions of local people should be respected whether you happen to agree with them or not.

French is the main language north of the border (with some Catalan spoken), but south of the border you are likely to hear more Catalan spoken than Spanish. Most place names are in Catalan, and both "northerners" and "southerners" are united by a common Catalan culture.

On the French side of the border, the towns of Banyuls and Collioure cannot be missed - Banyuls is famous for its terraced vineyards overlooking the Med (feel free to taste the local wine!), and Collioure for its picturesque harbour and lighthouse, inspiration to great artists from the fauvism movement such as Matisse or Derain.

From the coast, you will notice one mountain standing out from the rest as you look inland - the mighty Canigou (2784m), which you will have already visited earlier in the week.

Architecture speaking, the castle in Collioure (with the sea lapping at its outer walls) is not to be missed.

If eating is your thing, then there is paella, grilled sardines, fresh anchovies, Catalan sausages or crema catalana just to name a few specialities. They also love to eat toasted bread with tomato and olive oil for breakfast. You can also try Cava (the Catalan answer to Champagne) or Cremat, a drink based on burnt rum and coffee.

■ **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

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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.

■ NOTES

