

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

Lakes and plateaus of Cerdagne



You begin on the Mediterranean influenced Cerdagne plateau - usually plenty of sunshine, but never too hot. Discover traditional villages, unspoilt river valleys and ancient churches before arriving in a region populated with lonely lakes. A most enjoyable and satisfying circular journey.

7 nights, 5 walking days

- Minimum required 2
- From point to point
- With luggage transportation
- Self-guided

Code :
FP2PUCE



The plus points

- Transfers from and to Perpignan available, or use own car
- Luggage transfers everyday so you only carry a daysack
- High quality, original hotels with dinner included 24/7 customer service



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

https://www.purelypyrenees.com/lakes_and_plateaus_cerdagne.html

A gentle, more Mediterranean climate is matched by mainly gentle walking with lots of valleys, lakes and interesting villages to explore - the best of the Med and the best of the mountains. Authentic and high quality accommodation with excellent cuisine too!

■ PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Arrival at La Llagonne

Standard option: You make your own way to the first night's hotel in La Llagonne.

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

Your arrival on the Cerdagne plateau will undoubtedly fill you with anticipation of things to come as you will have wonderful views across the plateau, and of the mountains all around.

While thoroughly contemporary in its facilities, the family run three star Hôtel Corrieu is located in the heart of the village, and still retains much of the character of an authentic Pyrenean mountain hotel, but now offers a sun terrace, a spa zone, and panoramic views from its restaurant that is justly popular with locals. A good first night is assured !

Transfer: 1h30+ (if you choose the private transfer from Perpignan airport).

DAY 2

La Llagonne - Mont-Louis - Llo

You begin your journey with the gentle exploration of the surprising UNESCO World Heritage Site of the citadelle of Mont-Louis, designed by Vauban and with its walls all still in place. Then you can enjoy a delightful stroll across the Cerdagne plateau - Pyrenean for sure, but also with the warmth and flora of the Mediterranean evident all around you. You can choose between shorter and longer itineraries, but either way you be ending your first day visiting the attractive and largely unspoilt valley (forests, waterfalls and alpine wildflower meadows) and village of Eyne before arriving at Llo where you can relax in its naturally warm baths (pay locally). Not a bad first day!

You stay at the wonderfully and sensitively restored ancient stone farmhouse called Cal Miquel in the 4,500 feet village of Llo with its uninterrupted panoramic views all round. All the rooms are full of character as is the dining room where we're confident you'll enjoy dinner and breakfast that seems like it comes from another age - in all the best ways.

Walking time: 4h30 or 6h. Distance: 12km or 20km. Elevation : + 150m or 400m / - 350m or 750m.

DAY 3

Llo - Llivia - Dorres - Brangoly

Another interesting day as you walk generally northwards, crossing the Yellow Train tracks - hopefully you'll see it clanking its way slowly up the mountains - and then crossing the Spanish (Catalan) enclave of Llivia, surrounded by French territory (an charming anomaly of the 1659 Pyrenean Treaty). You'll then walk to delightful Dorres, renowned since prehistoric times for its naturally warm baths, developed by the Romans and still there to be enjoyed today, plus the 12th century church of St Jean with its famous bell tower, Black Virgin statue and memorable views. From there you can walk up to the chapel of Saint Mairie de Belloc for amazing 360° views and then on to the unforgettable Chateau de Brangoly where you'll stay the night in no little comfort and tranquillity.

The 18th century chateau is only the latest in a line of castles and houses on the site that has welcomed (or repelled) Romans and Cathars among many others. It is superbly isolated on its own estate, and has been remarkably well restored with characterful rooms, and a charming restaurant with memorabe food that has a strong local bias in terms of recipes and produce.

Walking time: 6h30 or 9h. Distance: 19km or 25km. Elevation: + 450 or + 900m / - 450 or - 900m

DAY 4

Brangoly - Bouillouses

Today you leave the Cerdagne plateau and walk gradually up the Angoustrine valley beside its rolling and tumbling river as it becomes ever more "sauvage" (wild) as it gains altitude. You walk through alpine meadows, then pine forests to arrive at the lovely Pradelle Lake before the last stretch to the much larger Bouillouses lake - your hotel for the next 2 nights is situated just above it!

You stay at the magnificent and remote mountain hotel called Bones Hores (on a half board and picnic basis) right beside the expansive Bouillouses Lake - look out for wild horses among other animals and birds of prey drinking at the lakeside. The hotel is just what you'd expect a mountain hotel to be, while offering you the comfort and good food you deserve after a rewarding day's walk.

Walking time: 6h. Distance: 15km. Elevation: + 800m / - 250m.

DAY 5

Bouillouses - Carlit lakes - Bouillouses

Today's walk is a circular one that takes you near or right alongside many of the dozens of lakes, large, small and tiny, around Mount Carlit. You are walking on a plateau, so there are no steep ascents or descents, and can enjoy the wildflower meadows that characterise the plateau, particularly in spring and early summer, as well as the tumbling stream that connect the lakes. It often feels like a privilege to be up there surrounded by nature at its finest. If you are feeling fit and the weather is good, we also provide you with a route description for the ascent of Pic Carlit.

You stay again at the Bones Hores right beside the lake.

Walking time: 3h or 5h30. Distance: 10 or 14.5km. Elevation: + 350 or + 900m / - 350 or -900m.

DAY 6

Les Bouillouses - La Llagonne

You follow a track up through pine forests to reach Aude Lake, which is the origin of the 139 mile long river than runs through Carcassonne, and enters the Mediterranean near Narbonne. You don't walk that far as you stroll through forests and alpine meadows enjoying occasional panoramic views as you make your way back to your starting point at La Llagonne. A most satisfying circular journey, we're sure you'll agree.

You stay again at the Hôtel Corrieu where you may feel you now fully deserve the pleasures of the sun terrace, spa zone, and panoramic views. As good a last night as first night is assured!

Walking time: 4h. Distance: 12km. Elevation: + 300m / - 650m.

DAY 7

End of stay

Standard option: Your holiday ends after breakfast.

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

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.

WARNING : This winter (2017/18) has given us a lot of snow in the Pyrenees and the spring season is also giving us unusually low temperatures. The amount of snow still lying is therefore exceptional for the time of year. Depending on the speed at which the remaining snow cover continues to melt, we may be forced to move your holiday to a later date (in spite of the theoretical possible departure dates) or modify the proposed itineraries. Thank-you for your comprehension.

■ **USEFUL INFORMATION**

PROGRAMME OF DEPARTURES

1 June to 30 September.

MEETING POINT

Standard option: You make your own way to the first night's hotel in La Llagonne.

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

END OF STAY

Standard option: Your holiday ends after breakfast.

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

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.

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 a car park where you can leave your car at your first hotel. The circuit finishes back in the same place.

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 mainly comfortable, but some challenging walking, so is suitable for people who are reasonably fit, and used to walking (albeit "gently") for much of a day. It can get hot in July and August, as well as more crowded. We would recommend June and from mid August through September as the best months.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORTATION

We will transfer your luggage between each hotel, 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 2 nights in three star hotel, and 2 nights in a particularly good mountain hotel, 1 night in an isolated rustic hotel that used to be a farm (truly exceptional atmosphere), and one night in a beautiful guest house.

MEALS

You will eat well. Dinners are based regional specialities. Breakfast is included every morning. Picnics are included for days 4, 5 and 6. When not provided, there are shops or cafés/restaurants nearby so you can buy or make up your own lunch as required. You can also consider speaking to your hotel on the previous evening for them to provide you with a picnic. This should be paid for directly.

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

6 nights dinner, bed and breakfast; 3 pic-nics; 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, except as specified; lunches or picnics (except for days 4, 5 and 6); 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

Cerdagne is a flattish plateau straddling the French-Spanish border and its high altitude and gentle topography make it the ideal location to come and go cross-country skiing in the winter. In the summer, there is fantastic hiking around the region's many idyllic lakes.

The climate is generally sunny but not too hot in summer due to the high altitude.

As there is no clear natural dividing line between France and Spain, the towns here passed from one country to another over the course of many centuries. In the 17th Century, the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed between France and Spain, defining the majority of the border between the two nations (although many places were still argued over and remained inexact until the 19th Century!).

According to the new deal, all the villages in the area to the north of Puigcerdà passed into French hands.

However, after the contract was signed the Spanish cleverly pointed out that Llívia had a castle and was therefore a town and not a village. The French allowed Llívia to remain as a Spanish enclave (like an island completely surrounded by French territory) on the condition that no further fortifications could be built there. This special deal is still in place to this day.

The Catalan language is a uniting force between villages and towns on both sides of the official border.

Typical products from the region include geese, lamb, duck, pork and pears from Puigcerdà.

This region is one of the most sparsely populated in the whole of Europe.

■ 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 repatriation 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](http://www.tourisme-responsable.org)

■ CONTACT US

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■ NOTES

