

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

Walking From Mount Canigou To The Med



A journey from the magnificent Mount Canigou to the Mediterranean, then along an unspoilt coastline to the homeland of Dali staying mostly in 3 and 4 star hotels. An enjoyable melange of culture and nature, comfort and cuisine!

7 nights, 6 walking days

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

Code :
FP2PUVM



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The plus points

- **A superb itinerary and an unforgettable experience**
- **The joys of walking mountains and coast**
- **Excellent cuisine and hospitality**
- **The chance to walk up to the summit of Mount Canigou**



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

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

Beginning with a 1,000 year old abbey and ending at the home of Salvador Dali, you travel through centuries of human history, art and culture, but also experience natural wonders including a wonderful range of landscapes from mountains and unspoilt plains to the ruggedly beautiful Mediterranean coast. You can also contrast French hospitality and cuisine with that of Spain - or, as many prefer to call it, Catalonia. A truly excellent itinerary, even if we say so ourselves.

This itinerary includes daily private transfers, which add considerably to the cost, so the price of this holiday cannot be compared to any apparently similar holidays.

■ THE PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Arrival at Molitg

We pick you up at Perpignan airport or railway station and take you to Molitg les Bains. If you arrive by car, there is reasonably priced secure public parking in Perpignan, and we will arrange to pick you up there. *Pick-ups also available from Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, Girona or Barcelona (please consult us for prices).*

We transfer you up into the Mediterranean Pyrenees for a magnificent first walk - just 2 hours, assuming your arrival time permits it. The 1,000 year old abbey (monastery really) of Saint-Martin-du-Canigou (founded 1009) perches precipitously on a rocky promontory above the huge cliffs of Mount Canigou. It is a most memorable place to begin your journey to the Mediterranean.

That you stay for your first night at the three star Grand Hotel in Molitg Les Bains (The Baths) tells you the heritage of this once prestige resort that still offers much of interest to today's visitors, including the many French who still take what they call "the cure". The hotel has been expensively restyled and modernised with very comfortable rooms, a thermal spa (book treatments on arrival), and a very good restaurant specialising in regional cuisine.

Walking time : 2h or 3h30. Distance : 4km or 5,5km. Elevation : + 300m or + 600m / - 300m or - 600m. Transfer time : 1h30.

DAY 2

Moligt - Mount Canigou - Cortalets refuge

Today starts with an absolutely unforgettable experience. We transfer you (as we often do to ensure you enjoy only the best "bits") to the mountain refuge of Les Cortalets (6,500 feet) from where you walk steadily, and as slowly as you like, up 2,000 feet to the top of Mount Canigou. The panorama from 8,500 feet features the reds, greens and golds of the surrounding mountains; the plains way, way below of Cathar Country; the foothills from Roussillon in France round to Emporda in Spain, and in the far distance the blues of the Mediterranean. Particularly as you descend, this view is ever present, but also ever changing until you arrive back at Les Cortalets, where you have the pleasure of staying tonight.

This is a holiday where all nights except this one are spent in four and three star hotels, but the refuge provides a unique opportunity to experience a night right up in these mountains with no light pollution, so the stars themselves might well be the star of your stay. The refuge is a sturdy, stone building that offers simple, but comfortable accommodation (private rooms, but not en suite) and good, filling food. As you will realise, it is all about where you are not where you stay. People really enjoy their night here, and reckon it to be one of the highlights of the journey.

Walking time : 3h. Distance : 8km. Elevation : + 700m / - 700m. Transfer time : 1h15.

DAY 3

Cortalets - Batère - Amélie les Bains

The mythical GR10 beckons today as you walk, mainly downhill, from the refuge along the famous - but more or less deserted - footpath through some delightful and unspoilt mountain scenery looking out for wild horses, brebis, marmottes and large birds of prey. You are generally heading east towards the Mediterranean, but only as far as the characterful Batère mountain auberge. A marvellous place with superb views to enjoy a well deserved beer and snack. We collect you from here when you are ready, and take you to another mountain spa resort, Amélie les Bains.

It's all change for tonight as Amélie les Bains is an elegant, lower altitude town with a truly Mediterranean climate (210 sunshine days a year), and the three star Hôtel de la Reine Amélie is sophisticated and charming with a swimming pool and terrace where you can dine (very well) looking up at the mountains and star filled skies. And your room is, of course, en suite.

Walking time : 4h30. Distance : 15km. Elevation : + 400m / - 1100m. Transfer time : 35 minutes.

DAY 4

Amélie les Bains - Montalba - Las Illas

This is a long walking day, but the previous days will have prepared you for it, and it is a most rewarding route along the well signposted GR10 (plus you have our comprehensive walking notes!). We take you up to Montalba to save a lot of hard walking, so you can enjoy the tranquil mountain meadows (look out for marmottes), woods, higher cols, tumbling streams, and magnificent panoramic views, not least from the Roc de France over the frontier between France and Spain. The final section is a memorable descent between the impressive Salines peaks down to the mountain village of Las Illas.

The so-called Hôstal des Trabucayres is not at all a hostel, but an authentic, comfortable, family run mountain auberge where you will receive a warm welcome, enjoy traditional mountain cuisine, and wonderful views. What being in the mountains is all about! The village is a delight, and its waterfall worth strolling to, but beware the crayfish! Despite German soldiers being stationed here, villagers repeatedly helped Allied soldiers and airmen escape into Spain just as you will make your way into Spain tomorrow.

Walking time : 6h30. Distance : 16km. Elevation : + 1000m / - 1000m. Transfer time : 20 minutes.

DAY 5

Las Illas - Col de Perthus - Cantallops

This is a comfortable day's walking amid wonderful scenery that almost step by step becomes warmer, drier and more Mediterranean. You walk among the frontier peaks, but don't climb or descend that much yourselves even though your walking destination is the scenic Col du Perthus, made legendary by being the place where Hannibal, his army and elephants crossed into France en route for Rome. From here, there is a short transfer to a wonderfully luxurious hotel at Cantallops in Spain.

The four star Hôtel Can Xiquet is Catalan in spirit and international in ambition, offering the very best contemporary styling for the rooms, all with balconies and great views across the Emporda plateau. There is a large swimming pool, gym, sauna, paddle tennis court, extensive gardens, and even a helipad. Then there is the superbly designed restaurant (with views) serving Mediterranean cuisine that rivals the very best. In every sense, it is a world away from Les Cortalets refuge, but that is what we have worked hard to develop for you: an experience of the Pyrenees that is as varied and pleasurable as the mountains themselves.

Walking time : 4h. Distance : 14km. Elevation : + 350m / - 600m. Transfer time : 20 minutes.

DAY 6

Cantallops - Palau Saverdera - Port de la Selva

Today, the Mediterranean ! You walk on good paths and lanes across the plateau with its typically Mediterranean "scrubland" and olive trees to the lovely little chapel of San Onofre, then along a natural "balcony" to the imposing monastery of San Père de Rodes, which you can visit or just enjoy the unforgettable views down to the coast dominated by the wild Cape of Creus with its white villages. If you are feeling energetic, then you can either walk to your destination for a swim in the sea, or take the path upto the ruined château de San Salvador, located there because of the incomparable views to the coast, including the perfectly shaped Rosas bay, across the Emporda plain, over the Alberes range of hills, and, above all, literally, Mount Canigou. The descent to the sea is further enhanced by pre-historic and quite remarkable dolmens. At the end there is a short transfer to avoid having to walk the "boring bits".

You stay in the fishing port of Port de la Selva, which is a typical Costa Brava (Wild Coast) village, and protected by being within the Cape Creus natural park. The four star Hôtel Porto Cristo is a few metres from the waters edge. Some rooms have sea views and "hot tub" baths as well as guaranteed elegance. The hotel has been created from an historic warehouse, and the restaurant with its triple height and stone walls is a great place to eat.

Walking time : 3h or 5h. Distance : 9,5km or 11,5km. Elevation : + 400m or + 500m / - 500m or - 600m. Transfer time : 35 minutes.

DAY 7

Port de la Selva - Cadaqués

Your last day is mainly a coastal walk, but you have the option of a fairly long, fairly flat, but eminently rewarding walk, or a much shorter one. You can choose that morning which you wish to take, but whichever you choose you will find the coast here is truly wild with long stretches without human habitation, and favoured with dozens and dozens of small and tiny coves and creeks, many with sandy beaches, and just begging you to swim! Their names are evocative too, and trip off the tongue: Cala Culip, Cala Jugadora, Cala Bona. One of the route options includes the lighthouse right out on unspoilt Cape Creus, the most easterly place in Spain. There are also great little seaside villages like Port-Lligat, which was home for decades to Salvador Dali, and you can visit his own, very quirky house with his wardrobe and studio left as they were. Advance booking essential - we tell you how.

Cadaqués is many people's favourite along this coastline, and you stay at the excellent 4 star Hôtel Playa Sol, a modern hotel right on the waterside, but with extensive private gardens with tennis court, swimming pool and plenty of places to quietly relax after your journey. You dine a short stroll away at one of our two favourite restaurants here.

Walking time : 4h30m or 7h. Distance : 13km or 23km. Elevation : + 450m / - 450m or + 670m / - 670m.

DAY 8

End of stay

After breakfast on the terrace looking out over the Mediterranean, you can choose to be taken to Figueras to visit the Dali Museum (recommended if he interests you at all), or go directly back to Perpignan station or airport (see price list for the additional transfer to the Dali Museum in Figueras). *Transfers also available to Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, Girona or Barcelona (please consult us for prices).*

Sadly, that's it for this memorable holiday!

Transfer time : 1h30m.

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.

■ 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

15 June to 30 September

MEETING POINT

We pick you up at Perpignan airport or railway station and take you to Molitg les Bains. If you arrive by car, there is reasonably priced secure public parking in Perpignan, and we will arrange to pick you up there. *Pick-ups also available from Toulouse, Carcassonne, Montpellier, Girona or Barcelona (please consult us for prices).*

END OF STAY

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TO GET TO THE MEETING POINT

SNCF runs overnight sleeper trains and daytime trains from Paris 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 and other European cities, and to Carcassonne from London. Some of these flights only fly (or only fly frequently) in the height of summer. Or you can drive directly to Perpignan.

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 Perpignan.

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 mostly comfortable walking, but there are a couple of fairly challenging days, so is suitable for anybody who is fairly fit, determined, and enjoys "a good walk". On most days there are choices of itineraries, which 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, 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.

ACCOMMODATION

You stay in double or twin rooms for 3 nights in four star hotels, 2 nights in three star hotels, one night in a particularly good mountain hotel, and one night in a simple mountain refuge.

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. Fewer choices at the mountain refuge. Breakfast is included every morning, and you can shop for your own picnics, or ask the hotel the night before to make a picnic, which you can pay for locally. Three picnics are included in the price (for days 3, 5 and 6).

TRANSFERS

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

THE PRICE INCLUDES

7 nights dinner, bed and breakfast; 3 picnics; 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, except as specified; lunches or picnics unless specified; drinks with meals; non-standard menu items; entry fees; booking fee of 25€ / person, 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 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 boots.

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, but do you need to take 3 or 4 books?

Do choose comfortable clothing for evenings too - usually people dress casual, or at most smart casual, but you are 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!

LUGGAGE

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

CLOTHES

- A waterproof and breathable jacket (Gore-Tex type)
- A fleece or a sweater
- A raincoat (poncho)
- Walking trousers
- 1 pair of gloves
- 1 hat
- Shorts
- A bathing suit + towel
- Several pairs of socks (not too large)
- Underwear
- 1 pair of trainers
- Loose clothing for the evening

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- 1 pair of walking shoes that have been used before
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and lip protection
- 1 bottle (allow 2 to 3 litres per person per day in summer)
- A Tupperware type plastic bowl for the picnic + cutlery

- 1 compass
- Waterproof map cover (advised)
- 1 head torch in your rucksack (for safety)
- 1 survival cover (from a chemist)
- 1 mobile phone (advised)
- Camera and why not a novel, your watercolours or other desires...
- Your identification documents
- **Sleeping bag liner** : your itinerary includes a night in a mountain refuge, then you will need a sleeping bag liner as the refuge will supply sleeping bags and/or blankets. Sleeping bag liners range greatly in size (avoid a "mummy" shape if you are a larger person) and material (from nylon through cotton to silk), so we think it is better for you to buy and bring one that suits you.

FIRST AID KIT

- A small personal kit (gauze, Elastoplast, analgesic, double skin for blisters, earplugs...)

■ 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 second part of the stay 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.

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.

The easternmost point of the Pyrenean range can be found in this region: Cap de Creus, in Spanish Catalonia (a headland that also happens to be the most easterly point of the whole of the Iberian Peninsula). This is a wonderful place to explore on foot to observe some of the incredible rock formations and bizarre landscapes that inspired Salvador Dali in some of his most famous surrealist paintings.

For fans of Dali, it is also possible to visit a museum dedicated to him in Port Lligat near Cadaqués.

There are some gorgeous landscapes in this part of the world, which can also change several times in the same day. The transition between the seaside and the mountains is immediate - you just have to climb up a little and contemplate this tortured coastline with the plains of Roussillon to the North and the Empordà to the South. Not to mention the fantastic sunrises over the Med!

Architecture speaking, the magnificent Romanesque mountain monastery of Sant Pèr de Rodes 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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■ NOTES

