

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

The Glorious Spanish Pyrenees



Discover the joys of the Spanish Pyrenees in one of its most iconic regions surrounded by the largest collection of high mountains in the Pyrenees with rewarding (if pleasantly challenging) winter walking, while staying in a marvellously characterful hotel in a traditional mountain village.

8 days - 7 nights - 5 walking days

- Minimum required 5
- Center based
- With luggage transportation
- Guided

Code :
FP6PUBE



The plus points

- The most magnificent and highest Pyrenean peaks all around
- Beautiful valleys with excellent walking right from the hotel door
- Characterful hotel with well equipped rooms, really good food and a spa
- Nights in Lourdes and Tarbes so you get a broad exposure to the Pyrenees in winter



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

<https://www.purelypyrenees.com/glorious-spanish-pyrenees.html>

This winter walking with snow-shoes holiday takes you to the Aragonese heart of the Spanish Pyrenees. You stay in a highly scenic and unspoilt valley in an excellent hotel that offers just what you want from this inspiring mountains-in-winter environment. The walking is a more challenging than other of our holidays partly because you are surrounded by some of the highest Pyrenean peaks - including the very highest, Aneto. If you want to explore the Spanish Pyrenees in winter, then this holiday offers you the best possible experience of it.

■ PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Saturdays: we meet you at Lourdes airport to take you to our hotel in Lourdes for this first night, or if you arrive by train (fast services), you can simply walk the 50 metres to the hotel. You are then free to explore the historic city of Lourdes. Alternatively, you can meet up at 09.00 the next day, Sunday, in Tarbes with the price adjusted accordingly.

The comfortable three star Hotel Beauséjour is right in the city centre, and in easy walking distance of all places of interest.

Transfer time: 20 minutes

DAY 2

An early breakfast because your guide will pick you up at the hotel around 08.15 (or 09.00 in Tarbes) to first take you up into the Pyrenean heights for your snow-shoe lesson, then first walk. In truth - and unlike both downhill and cross-country skiing - it requires minimum equipment, little tutoring, negligible stress, and is easily picked up by simply doing it! You will find that it is far less physically demanding, and, therefore, far more enjoyable (spoiler alert; it is walking!). The walk is often beside frozen streams, waterfalls and small lakes in the wonderful Mulleres valley. yet high above you are the teeth-like summits of numerous mountains, not least the 11,000+ feet Aneto - the highest mountain in the French and Spanish Pyrenees. A truly memorable start to this winter walking experience lasting 4 hours with a cumulative ascent of 1,000 feet. You then continue through the Viella tunnel into Spain, or, as many would have it, into Aragon, and the Benasque valley.

Benasque is at the heart of the spectacularly stunning landscape of the Posets-Maladeta Natural Park, which has the highest concentration of peaks of more than 3,000 metres in the Pyrenees, 13 glaciers, 95 lakes, and innumerable waterfalls, many of great beauty, plus rivers, streams, meadows and traditional Aragonese villages. The wonderful 3 star Hotel Hospital de Benasque in French is the Llanos del Hospital in Spanish, and is everything you would want and expect in terms of location, views, surrounding village, stone built character, warm and comfortable mountain styled interior, good quality rooms and excellent regional cuisine. That's why we love it so much! We're sure you'll be pleased that you are staying here for 5 nights.

Walking time: 4 hours. Elevation: + 300m / - 300m. Transfer time: 3 hours

DAY 3

Today you put your snow-shoes on at the hotel door to discover just how beautiful your "home" valley is, and what a paradise it is for winter walking. You walk along the valley floor through small forests, over what in summer are wildflower meadows, across footbridges, alongside frozen streams, beside frozen waterfalls, and across frozen lakes as well as a series of plateaux with exceptional views at almost every step. The sheer magnificent majesty of the Pyrenees is high above you all the time with Aneto almost always dominant, yet as you return the pyramidal Tuc de Literole will undoubtedly demand at least one photograph, but probably several.

On your return, you may find the hotel's Turkish baths and jacuzzis as welcome as the fine dinner that awaits you afterwards - and the damn good night's sleep after that!

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 500m / - 500m.

DAY 4

You also start today from the hotel door, but go in another direction to discover the delights of the lakes of Remune - justly renowned throughout Spain and beyond, but only safely explored in winter with a highly experienced guide like yours. You initially walk through pine woods, but as you gradually get higher you walk on paths climbing the sides of the dramatic and forbidding Pic de Remuñe, which is in sharp contrast to the gently idyllic valley landscapes below, the lakes you see and visit, and in competition with the many peaks all around - some austere, some almost architectural, some simply beautiful. Walking among them in the snow enhanced tranquillity really is an immense privilege, and, perhaps, also the perfect antidote to our crush-and-rush daily lives.

The Turkish baths and jacuzzis might well be beckoning again.

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 500m / - 500m

DAY 5

For a change, there is a 30 minute transfer to discover the pretty amazing Estos valley. The route follows the bottom of the valley with the imposing summits of Perdiguère on one side, and Gourg Blancs on the other, and the 11,000 feet Posets in front of you. If time, weather and energy permit, you will all walk up to the 6,000 feet Estos mountain refuge, and return along the southern side of La Coma mountain before visiting Benasque village on the way back to your hotel. An excellent day of winter walking and Pyrenean appreciation!

The natural rhythm of life may have asserted itself by now: good breakfast, fantastic walk, welcome snooze, well-earned spa experience, interesting aperitif, satisfying dinner, deep sleep. Just what holidays are all about.

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 600m / - 600m. Transfer time: 30 minutes

DAY 6

Your last walk will leave from the hotel door, and take you up high up into the mountains towards the refuge of La Rencluse under the peaks of Maladeta and the ever-present Aneto. This magnificent environment wraps itself all around you, so there are superb and very rewarding walks in almost every direction. You may go to the lovely Paderna valley and lake in the metaphorical shadow of the Pic d'Alba, but this will depend on weather and snow conditions as well as the group's preferences. What we are sure of is that this will be a memorable last day among a collection of memorable days.

Sorry last night at "the Hospital", but, like your last walk, we are sure it will be a truly memorable, happy and sad one.

Walking time: 5 to 6 hours. Elevation: + 600 à 800m / - 600 à 800m

DAY 7

After breakfast, it's time to return to France, and spend your last night (with dinner) at our preferred hotel in Tarbes - an interesting and historic town with the magnificent national stud and stables, park and adjacent Massey gardens founded in 1806 by Napoleon undoubtedly a highlight (whether you are interested in horses or not).

The chic, contemporary and very French 4 star le Rex is located perfectly in Place Verdun in the centre of town with shops and historic streets all around. Dinner and breakfast are included. However, if you are not taking the Saturday flight back to London, you can choose not to stay the night with the price lowered accordingly.

Transfer time: 3 hours

DAY 8

After breakfast, the hotel can arrange for a taxi to take you on the short trip to Tarbes train station, or Tarbes-Lourdes airport in time for the London flight, or you can make your own arrangements.

Some elements of this itinerary are beyond our control, such as weather, the conditions of roads and paths, and the abilities of some group members, so that very occasionally we may have to modify the programme. While your satisfaction is our priority, so must your safety and health, and that of other participants.

■ PRACTICAL INFORMATION

MEETING POINT

This holiday has a fluent English speaking guide as well as being for French speakers. It starts on Saturdays to coincide with the weekly flight from London Stansted to Lourdes - by far the lowest cost, fastest and most direct journey from the UK.

Saturday arrivals: we will meet the London flight, and take you to the hotel in Lourdes, then leave you free to explore the city.

You will almost certainly need to be in Lourdes over night as the group leaves at 08.15 on Sunday morning from the hotel, or at 09.00 be at Tarbes station.

END OF STAY

On the Saturday morning after breakfast at the hotel in Tarbes, or if you chose to finish your trip on the Friday, we leave you at Tarbes railway station at 13h.

PARKING

If you are driving, then there is parking near Tarbes station.

GUARANTEED DEPARTURE FROM (PERS)

5

GROUP LIMITED TO ABOUT (PERS)

15

LEVEL

Each day the time spent on your snow-shoe walking journey will be around 5 hours including rests etc. The cumulative daily ascent/descent will range from 300 to 880 metres (1,000 to almost 3,000 feet). This is the equivalent to fairly challenging summer walking, and is intended for people who are reasonably fit and used to extended periods of activity. On some days, there are shorter and longer options, sometimes dependent on weather and snow conditions.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORTATION

You only need carry a small rucksack for any personal items, extra clothing, camera etc. The hotel provides a picnic each walking day, which you will be expected to carry.

SUPERVISION

We have found that our customers really enjoy being in a small group that includes both English and French speakers. The minimum group size is 5, and the maximum is 15. There is no minimum/maximum for English speakers. The guide will speak at least good conversational English, and usually speak fluent English, or be bi-lingual. He or she will also be a highly experienced winter walking guide.

ACCOMODATION

The accommodation consists of: one night in a 3 star hotel in Lourdes; 5 nights in an exceptional 3 star hotel in Benasque; one night in a 4 star hotel in Tarbes.

MEALS

Meals: continental style breakfast at the Lourdes hotel, and each morning thereafter. The restaurants offer a menu of local gastronomic specialities for you to choose from. Hotel supplied picnics for each walking day are also included. Wine and other drinks are not included in the holiday price.

TRANSFERS

Transfers are by minibus or taxi.

ALL INCLUDED EXCEPT

Drinks, lunches on day 1 and day 7, entries to the spa, other entry charges (none anticipated except in Tarbes) and insurance are not included.

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.

■ EQUIPMENT

For the upper body : whatever the region or the season, the principle of having 3 breathable layers (T-shirt - sweater or warm jacket - waterproof / windproof overwrap) is perfect in most situations.

Opt for clothes that dry quickly - synthetic fibres - and do not wear cotton (it dries too slowly => uncomfortable). Wool is a natural fibre that also has excellent qualities and, thanks to new manufacturing processes, is experiencing a strong comeback in the manufacture of outdoor clothing.

Remember to cover yourself before you get cold, and especially to take layers off before you get too hot: sweat is the enemy of the hiker-especially in winter-because it moistens clothes that then quickly become chilled. Avoid anoraks, which can turn a pleasant hike into a real ordeal!

For the lower body: do not wear ski suits. Opt for windproof and waterproof mountain trousers or possibly mountain trousers + over trousers such as « Gore-tex » . A pair of thermal under trousers can be useful according to the weather.

Pay particular attention to your choice of socks: take warm socks, which are reinforced and have flat seams (to avoid blisters). In this area too, no cotton!

For your footwear, ideally, try them out before the trip; In any case, protect the areas of your feet that are liable to blister from the beginning.

LUGGAGE

- 1 travel bag per person (or wheeled suitcase). Do not take too much luggage to avoid logistical issues for the transporter. On itinerant or semi-itinerant trips, also limit the weight of your travel bag to 10-12 kgs, as where there is difficult access to certain accommodation too much weight could jeopardize the delivery of your luggage. Do not leave fragile or valuable objects in your luggage.
- 1 rucksack of about 35-40 litres, with ventral waistband, wide shoulder straps and a well-ventilated back for your comfort. You must also be able to fix the skis to your rucksack.

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CLOTHES

- 1 hat, or cap, scarf, or fleece choker
- 1 warm, light fleece
- 1 ski mask, useful in case of bad weather
- 1 pair of warm and waterproof gloves "Gore-tex" type
- 1 pair of thin gloves
- 1 pair of spare warm mittens (or gloves) to put in the bottom of your bag
- T-shirts made of breathable material (micro fleece type) with long sleeves (1 every 2-3 days) and 1 or 2 with short sleeves

- 1 thin fleece (optional)
- 1 warm fleece jacket (even water-repellent type "softshell") or type "primaloft" (warm and compressible)
- 1 waterproof and breathable jacket "Gore-tex" type with hood
- 1 solid and waterproof mountain trousers + over trousers ("Gore-tex" type)
- 1 pair of gaiters (only if your trousers are not equipped)
- 1 pair of thermal under trousers
- Underwear
- Warm socks (at least 1 pair every 2 days) synthetic and / or wool ("Coolmax" type)
- Comfortable clothes and shoes for the evening

EQUIP_PYR_6PPRQ

EQUIPMENT TO BRING

- 1 large plastic bag to slip into your backpack to protect your belongings from the weather and / or rucksack cover.
- 1 waterproof pouch with: your identity papers, details of your insurance and any other document mentioned in the formalities section
- 1 pair of good quality wrap around sunglasses (level 3 protection) + sunscreen with good protection and lip balm (all to be carried in your rucksack)
- 1 insulated gourd or 1.5 litre aluminium bottle (avoid backpack water carriers, risk of freezing)
- 1 small thermos 50 cl (optional, useful if you want to bring tea, coffee...)
- 1 plastic or aluminium cup with insulated handle 1 folding pocketknife
- For your picnic: cutlery and 1 plastic box of 0,5 litres minimum type Tupperware
- Toiletries
- Ear plugs (in case your neighbours snore)
- Tissues
- Toilet paper (burn, do not leave on the ground)
- 1 lighter
- 1 head torch or flashlight + survival blanket: to always put in your rucksack, an unforeseen delay following an incident can take place even during an easy hike
- Spare glasses (if you wear glasses)
- Camera, binoculars, drawing equipment ... (optional)

EQUIP_PYR_6PPRQ

FIRST AID KIT

- Tell the guide if you are suffering from any condition, following any treatment, or have any allergy that could complicate a medical problem in the event of an incident, or cause any possible discomfort during the hike.
- Your usual medication
- Pain medication:
- Drugs against digestive disorders
- Lozenges for a sore throat
- Elastoplast 5 or 8 cm wide x 2.5 m.
- Plasters
- Adhesive bandage + sterile compresses
- Double skin
- Tweezers
- Small scissors

- Vitamin C
- Disinfectant gel useful for washing / disinfecting hands
- Hand warmers

EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY PURELY PYRENEES

The guide is equipped with a first aid kit but is not intended to provide for all of your needs for small issues

Security equipment (Avalanche victim detector, shovels, probes), mandatory each day

OTHER DETAILS

Do not forget your sense of humour or your curiosity!

■ NOTES

