

Purely PYRENEES

walking and cycling holidays

Wonderful Winter Walking Around Spain's Lost Mountain



Spain's Ordesa National Park has it all: magnificent mountains, beautiful villages, dramatic valleys, glorious forests, and wonderful winter walking around it all. If you have never been, go!

7 nights - 5 walking days

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

Code :
FP6PUOR



The plus points

- **The best of the Spanish Pyrenees in all their winter time glory**
- **Excellent winter walking with lots of variety of walking and scenery**
- **One of our favourite hotels that is magical in winter**
- **Great example of our commitment to providing many highlights in one holiday**



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

<https://www.purelypyrenees.com/wonderful-winter-walking-around-spain-s-lost-mountain.html>

You may never have heard of the extraordinary Ordesa National Park, the traditional mountain village of Torla, or the Lost Mountain (Monte Perdido in Spanish, Mont Perdu in French) and all the dramatic mountains in the region, but we can assure you that they are very well worth considering if you want a truly memorable winter walking holiday on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees. Please note: you can take the London-Lourdes Saturday flight to begin this holiday, but you won't be back in Lourdes in time to catch the flight back, but there are daily flights from Toulouse (direct train from Lourdes).

■ 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. If you arrive at Toulouse, then you can choose to arrive in Lourdes on Saturday, or by early Sunday afternoon (with the price lowered accordingly).

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

Transfer: 40 minutes

DAY 2

Until early Sunday afternoon, you are free to explore the city, or walk in the surrounding hills (we supply detailed route instructions, and usually they are snow-free). You then meet together with your English speaking guide and the other group members (minimum 5; maximum 15) for the transfer via the scenic Ossau and Aspe valleys, and "over the top" into the *époustouflant* (a much better word for breathtaking!) Ordesa National Park, and your hotel for the next 6 nights. A truly memorable journey in itself, we think you'll find. This afternoon, or tomorrow morning, your expert winter walking guide will give you a snow-shoe winter walking lesson (as required). 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! Perhaps surprisingly, though, you'll find it is far less physically demanding than any form of skiing.

You stay in the upper Ara valley near the mountain village of Fiscal in a completely but sensitively restored 18th century stone built hotel called Casa Cadena. It is an authentic mountain hotel that provides all hospitality and bedroom comforts you would expect as well as an attractive lounge and bar, and a good local reputation for its regional cuisine that almost exclusively uses locally sourced produce. As you can imagine, we know dozens of hotels in this region, and this is our favourite. That's why you are staying here!

Transfer: 3 hours

DAY 3

We drive you to the heart of the Ordesa National Park, and the remarkable Arrazas canyon, which rises gently through lovely beech woods beneath the impressive (to say the least) cliffs and peaks of the Fraucata mountain range. In total, the ascent today is only 650 feet, but all the same you will be very well rewarded when you arrive at today's destination, the magnificent Estrecho waterfalls. They are tumultuous in summer, terrifying in spring, but a wonderful natural sculptural spectacle in winter. There is a great sense of satisfaction reaching such a natural wonder in the middle of winter - especially as so few do so because this, like many other places you will be visiting, could not be visited without an experienced guide. A great start to a superb week of winter walking that today culminates in time to explore the attractive and traditional village of Torla.

Walking time: 3 hours 30 minutes. Elevation: + 200m / - 200m. Transfer time: 1 hour 30 minutes

DAY 4

Today you are taken through wonderfully scenic landscapes to the mountain village of Bielsa, which is the gateway to the immense Pineta canyon. Then you are driven several kilometres up the canyon before beginning your winter walk through pine forests up to the almost 5,000 feet Larri plateau where there is an indisputably isolated mountain refuge. All around are stunning panoramic views dominated by the Lost Mountain itself: Mont Perdu in French, Monte Perdido in Spanish. At almost 11,000 feet, it is more than twice as high as the plateau you had believed was pretty high up! What makes it all the more visually dramatic is that from the summit there are 6,500 feet (yes, 6,500 feet!) of sheer cliffs that descend to form the magnificent *Cirque de Pineta*. You will enjoy the privilege of walking through the *Cirque* before arriving back at your vehicle, which will stop to give you time to wonder round the pretty village of Ainsa with its grand Plaza Mayor. A memorable day for sure.

Walking time: 4 hours 30 minutes. Elevation: + 300m / - 300m. Transfer time: 1 hour 45 minutes

DAY 5

We take you through wonderful landscapes up to the impressive perched hamlet of Nerin then up the unforgettable Anisclo canyon using an ancient drovers' track up to Cuello Arenas. From here it's an easy high altitude walk with superb views all around to Cuello Gordo, a panoramic viewpoint for Mont-Perdu, the "Cylinder", and other peaks all reaching towards 10,000 feet. Our French colleagues call it "un spectacle grandiose", and that's pretty accurate! You return down the Pardina canyon via 4x4. As you can appreciate, this itinerary is dependent on snow conditions, but is usually possible, and there are nearby alternatives.

Walking time: 4 hours 30 minutes. Elevation: + 300m / - 300m. Transfer time: 1 hour 45 minutes

DAY 6

It takes a lot to get us out of the Ordesa National park, but today we do so for the magnificent "Pyrenean Dolomites". The 9,000 foot mountain range features a series of sharp (soemmm say teeth like) peaks dominated by the highest one, Peña Telera - a mountaineers' favourite. Yet what makes them all the more impressive - and we have to say beautiful - is that the made-for-snow-shoeing Tena valley runs for miles beneath it providing endless, but constantly changing, views to complement the satisfying winter walking. It's a wide, usually sunny valley with stream,waterfalls, a lovely lake, and deserted tracks that enable you to have a total ascent/descent of only 800 feet in the 3 or 4 hours walking you will enjoy here. And we think enjoy is the operative word. Please tell us if we were right to take you away from Ordesa.

Walking time: 3 to 4 hours. Elevation: + 250m / - 250m. Transfer time: 2 hours

DAY 7

Why take you out of the Park for this last day? We have a completely 360° top-of-the-world answer that begins in Linas de Broto where every house is stone built, and the church 13th century. Our destination is the 6,500 feet Pic de Pelopìn, and yes you are walking to the top, but your total ascent/descent is actually less than 2,000 feet. Why so special? It's that 360° view that features Mont Perdu itself with its surrounding massif, and the famous Brèche de Roland - the 300 feet high "slash" reputedly taken out of the cliffs that mark the Franco-Spanish frontier by Count Roland's sword after being defeated at the Battle of Roncesvalles in 778. Then there's the Pic de la Tendenera (a knife edge summit with absolutely sheer cliffs dropping thousands of feet), the glorious Aragonese Sierra, and the 10,700 feet Vignemale (Comachibosa in Aragonese) with a huge glacier beneath it. The most challenging walk of the week, but we're sure you will agree it was more than worth it.

Walking time: 5 hours. Elevation: + 600m / - 600m. Transfer time: 1 hour

DAY 8

After breakfast, it's a 3 hour transfer back to Lourdes station, but, as we say elsewhere, it is not possible to catch the London flight. There are direct trains to Toulouse and Bordeaux, which have direct flights to London and other British cities.

Transfer time: 3 hours

Some elements of this itinerary are beyond our control, such as weather, the conditions of roads and footpaths, 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 for English speakers 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.

Sunday arrivals: if you choose to arrive at Toulouse by air or train, we recommend you catch a train to Lourdes, although you could drive your own car or hire a car.

Sunday meeting point: whichever way you travel or day you arrive, the meeting point is early afternoon in front of Lourdes railway station where you will meet your guide, and be taken to the holiday hotel.

END OF STAY

After breakfast, we take you back to Lourdes by 13h. It is not possible to get to Tarbes-Lourdes airport to catch the London flight as this would require the group to leave well before breakfast, and there may be delays due to weather and/or road conditions. There are direct trains to Toulouse and Bordeaux from Lourdes 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 vary between 2 and 5 hours including rests etc. The total daily ascent/descent will range from 200 to 650 metres (600 to 2,000 feet). This is less than a summer walking holiday, and is intended to be comfortable for anyone who can walk for 4 or 5 hours in hills and valleys. On some days, there are shorter and longer options, but this is a marginally more challenging holiday than some others mainly because of the last day.

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 qualified and expert winter walking guide.

ACCOMODATION

The accommodation consists of: one night in a 3 star hotel in Lourdes; 6 nights in the authentic hotel in the Ara valley.

MEALS

Meals: continental style breakfast at the Lourdes hotel, and each morning thereafter. The restaurant offers a menu of local and regional specialities for you to choose from. Hotel supplied picnics for each day, except day 1 and day 2 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 except on walking days, entry charges (none anticipated) 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)

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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

