

Factsheet | Self-guided walk | Level 3/5  | 5-6 walking days

Pyrenees National Park, UNESCO world heritage

Your route in brief

- Self-guided walk without guide
- Family walking, with friends or as a couple
- Two accommodation options: shared dormitory or room
- Access to your main luggage every day
- Access and return possible via Cauterets and Pierrefitte Nestalas
- Duration 7 days/6 nights

Strong points

- Hiking in the heart of the Pyrenees National Park, in protected natural sites
- The valleys of Gaube and Marcadau
- The impressive north face of the Vignemale massif (3298m)
- The Cirque de Gavarnie, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- The villages of Cauterets and Gavarnie : Birthplace of Pyreneism !



The Pyrenees National Park offers the walkers the possibility to cross wonderful sites and discover an exceptional natural heritage. Birthplace of Pyreneism, paradise for the mountaineers and the nature lovers, Cauterets and Gavarnie will tell you the story of famous mountain guides, of high mountains and wild valleys. At the beginning of your stay you will discover two magnificent valleys: the Gaube Valley and the impressive North Face of Vignemale and the Marcadau Valley with its high mountain lakes. Then, after having reached the valley of Luz in "Pays Toy", the Cirque of Estaubé and Gavarnie will offer to the hiker eager for sensations, grandiose panoramas. All along your walk, chamois, marmots, bearded vultures, eagles will follow you in the silence of these wild spaces.

www.gr10-liberte.com / www.respyrenees.com
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•PROGRAM

Day 1 : Start of your holiday in Cauterets

Beginning of your stay in Cauterets. Situated at 950m altitude, Cauterets has an authentic, Pyrenean mountain charm and is well known for its thermal spas. Time to discover and enjoy the town. It is also possible to go hiking.

The Turon des Oules and the plateau du Lisey

Hiking in a forest environment, to Turon des Oules, from where you will overlook the resort of Cauterets, or to the Lisey plateau, a glacial valley with the possibility of continuing to the pass that promises you a magnificent panorama. Night in Cauterets.

- Distance : 8km or 10km, duration : around 3h15 or 4h, altitude gain : +570m or +730m, descent : -570m or -730m.

Day 2 : Gaube Valley and Vignemale Massif (3298m) from the Pont d'Espagne

At 8am short transfer to the Pont d'Espagne. Discover the sumptuous Gaube valley and its mountain lake nestled in the heart of landscapes of great purity. After the Gaube lake, an easy itinerary will lead you to the Oulettes de Gaube site with its guarded refuge, at the foot of the imposing and magnificent north face of Vignemale (3298m). Return by the same itinerary to the Pont d'Espagne : possibility of returning to Cauterets by hiking along the Chemin des Cascades or by public shuttle. Night in Cauterets.

- Distance : 24km, duration : around 7h45, altitude gain : +800m, descent : -1305m (Return to Cauterets by hiking from the Pont d'Espagne).
- Distance : 16,5km, duration : around 5h45, altitude gain : +700m, descent : -700m (Return to Cauterets by public shuttle from the Pont d'Espagne).

Day 3: Marcadau Valley, Embarrat, Pourtet and Nère lakes from the Pont d'Espagne

At 8am short transfer to the Pont d'Espagne. Still in the heart of the Pyrenees National Park, this hike takes you to the neighbouring Gaube valley : the Marcadau valley. A superb loop itinerary will allow you to discover many beautiful turquoise lakes at an altitude of more than 2400m: Embarrat, Pourtet, Nère lakes... Then you will descend towards the Wallon guarded refuge on the banks of the Gave du Marcadau, which you will have to follow until you reach the Pont d'Espagne through forests and waterfalls. At 5pm, return to Cauterets by public shuttle. Night in Cauterets.

- Distance : 20km, duration : around 7h, altitude gain : +985m, descent : -985m.

Day 4 : From Cauterets to Luz Saint Sauveur

From Cauterets, the walk will lead you to Luz-Saint-Sauveur, another well-known thermal spa spot by taking the mythical "GR 10-Transpyrenean" via the Riou pass, which separates the valleys of Cauterets and Luz. From the pass, the panorama is immense : the Barèges valley, the Néouvielle massif, the Cirque de Troumouse and at your feet, the Luz Ardiden ski resort. On the slopes of Cauterets, you can see the Cirque du Lys, the Pic Cabaliros and the nearby peaks of the Marcadau valley. Night in Luz Saint Sauveur.

- Distance : 22km, duration : around 8h15, altitude gain : +1190m, descent : -1410m (room version).
- Distance : 19km, duration : around 7h30, altitude gain : +1100m, descent : -1300m (shared dormitory version).

Day 5 : From Lac des Gloriettes to Gavarnie

At 8am, transfer from Luz St Sauveur to Lac des Gloriettes. Starting from the great lake of Les Gloriettes and its dam, you go up the Estaubé valley to its Cirque, in the heart of high altitude lawns inhabited by marmots and numerous herds. By the superb belvedere of the Hourquette d'Alans (2430m), descend into the Gavarnie valley without tiring of admiring landscapes of incomparable mineral purity. In good weather, it is possible to climb the Piméné (2801m) from La Hourquette d'Alans. One of the most beautiful views of the Pyrenees from the summit ! Night in Gavarnie. *In bad weather or at the beginning of the season (if late snow on the route), a variant is possible.*

- Distance : 14,5km, duration : around 5h30, altitude gain : +760m, descent : -1055m.
- Distance : 19,5km, duration : around 7h30, altitude gain : +1210m, descent : -1500m (Piméné variant).
- Distance : 13km, duration : around 4h30, altitude gain : +400m, descent : -700m (bad weather/late snow variant)

Day 6 : Pic des Tentes, Gavarnie and its great waterfall

At 8am, short transfer from Gavarnie to the Col des Tentes. From the Col des Tentes, you have the possibility to climb two fantastic belvederes on the Gavarnie Cirque (in a round trip) : Le Pic des Tentes (2322m) and Le Pic de Pahule (2292m). Back to the Col, the route descends towards the heart of the circus via the Port of Boucharo on the French-Spanish border, the Pouey Aspé valley and the Bellevue plateau, allowing you to admire the wall of the Gavarnie Cirque in all its mineral immensity, an amazing and impressive limestone amphitheatre known worldwide. Finally, a short round trip to the foot of the Gavarnie waterfall, one of the highest in Europe (423m), will magnificently conclude your hike. Night in Gavarnie.

- Distance : 19,5km, duration : around 7h, altitude gain : +645m, descent : -1475m

Day 7: From Gavarnie to Pierrefitte-Nestalas (or Cauterets)

Enjoy your last moments in this high place of Pyreneism, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

At 11:30 am, transfer back from Gavarnie to Pierrefitte-Nestalas station and end of your stay. From Pierrefitte-Nestalas, SNCF bus to Lourdes station. It is also possible to arrange a return transfer to Cauterets (without supplement), especially if you have left your car there.

This programme is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be necessary, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified.

• DATES AND PRICES

Departures

Every day from mid-June to the end of September (according to availabilities and snow covering).

Booking from 2 people (solitary traveller: consult us).

From 15/06/2023 to 30/09/2023 :

Prices price in shared dormitory :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	615€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	560€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	535€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	520€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	510€

Prices in private room :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	705€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	650€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	625€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	610€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	600€

Extras :

- Extra for a single room : 120€/pers
- Extra night in Cauterets half board shared dormitory : 50€/pers
- Extra night in Cauterets half board double room : 55€/pers
- Extra night in Cauterets half board single room : 65€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board shared dormitory : 50€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board double room : 75€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board single room : 90€/pers

The price includes :

- Half-board accommodation
- Transfers days 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7
- Luggage transfers
- Dossier containing maps, route notes (1 for 4 persons, given in 1st accommodation)
- GPS tracks if you ask us + access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application

The price does not include :

- Holiday and travel insurance
- 15€ for booking fees
- Additional transfers
- Drinks and picnics
- Other activities not included in the program

•TAILOR MADE HOLIDAYS

We can put together a suitable holiday for you taking into account all your specific requests and budget. Many individuals and trekking companies have relied on us for years. With our tailor-made holidays we always aim to provide you with the best quality at the fairest price.

If you want to :

- increase the comfort of your accommodations,
- change the duration of your trip,
- organize additional activities or visits,
- get a transfer from/to an airport,
- organize an extra night,

Contact Gaëtan
Tél : 0033 5 34 14 51 50
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•ORGANIZATION

We propose a self-guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest, from the initial meeting time through to the dispersion point. We transport your bags between the accommodations and we organize your transfers on days 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 comfort We provide you with the maps and good walking route notes sent to the first accommodation, as well as an access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday. Moreover, our team will answer all your questions, and will provide all useful advice in order to make this holiday a success.

Your transfers during the walk :**Day 2:**

At 8:00 am, short transfer (15min) from Cauterets to the Pont d'Espagne by public shuttle in July and August (excluding July and August, transfer by taxi from the accommodation).

Possible return from the Pont d'Espagne to Cauterets by public shuttle in July and August at the following times : 12:30 pm, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:00 pm (excluding July and August : 12:30 pm, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm). Return not included in the price (4,5€/pers).

Day 3:

At 8:00 am, short transfer (15min) from Cauterets to the Pont d'Espagne by public shuttle in July and August (excluding July and August, transfer by taxi from the accommodation).

Return from the Pont d'Espagne to Cauterets by public shuttle in July and August at the following times : 12:30 pm, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:00 pm (excluding July and August : 12:30 pm, 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm). Included in the price.

Day 5 :

At 8:00 am, transfer (30min) from your accommodation in Luz-St-Sauveur to Lac des Gloriettes by taxi.

Day 6 :

At 8:00 am, short transfer (20min) from your accommodation in Gavarnie to the Col des Tentres by taxi.

Day 7 :

At 11:30 am, transfer back (45min) from Gavarnie to Pierrefitte-Nestalas station by taxi. From Pierrefitte-Nestalas, SNCF bus to Lourdes station. Possibility also to organize a return transfer (1 hour) from Gavarnie to Cauterets (without supplement), especially if you have left your car there.

• TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Level 3/5

Regular walker, in good physical condition with experience of mountain hiking. Hiking 6h-7h per day on average, altitude difference 700m-1000m on average, on fairly easy trails, with some small technical difficulties. The walking times mentioned are given as an indication, they are average times that only take into account the duration of the actual walking without counting the break times. Depending on the weather conditions, the walking pace can also vary, ranging from +300m to +500m of climb per hour.

Guide

Self-guided walking, without guide.

Carrying

You will need to carry a day backpack only. Our bag-moving service means you can travel light during your walks. Your main luggage (that should please be easily transportable) will be transported by vehicle between the different night stops, unless you have chosen the version without luggage transport.

• ACCOMMODATION/FOOD

Accommodation

Half board accommodation with 2 versions: dormitories or rooms

- Dormitory version :

6 nights in a gîte, in small dormitories with a maximum of 8 persons. Bring a sleeping bag liner (blankets are provided).

- Room version :

3 nights in room in gîte on days 1, 2 and 3.

3 nights in room in hotel** on days 4, 5 and 6.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, butter, jam)

- Evening meals in accommodations, often based on local specialities, include a starter, a main course and a dessert.

- Picnics and drinks are not included. Picnics can be provided by all accommodations.

• PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Starting : Day 1 at your accommodation in Cauterets (65), according to your time of arrival.

Ending : Day 7, around 12:15 pm at Pierrefitte-Nestalas bus station (65) or around 12:30 pm in Cauterets (65).

How to get to Cauterets :

- **By air** : Lourdes-Tarbes Airport; Pau-Pyrénées Airport; Toulouse-Blagnac Airport
- **By train and bus** : Numerous TER trains from the main cities towards Lourdes (<https://www.oui.sncf>) then bus from Lourdes to Cauterets.
- **By car** : From Tarbes follow Lourdes- Argeles- Gazost, then Cauterets.

PARKING :

Parking in Cauterets :

- Free : Bus station, Place de la gare, Thermes César (town centre).

- Parking : Parking Municipal souterrain, Rue de Belfort

•WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

Your main luggage:

For logistical reasons, we ask you not to bring more than one item/person. Its weight should not exceed 12kg - 15kg.

Your day backpack

The size of your bag varies upon the type of activity.

For a walk without portage : 30L minimum

For a walk with partial portage : 50L minimum

For a walk with portage : 60L minimum

Whatever activity you participate in, you should always carry in your rucksack:

- Rainwear, warm clothing, spare T-shirt, sunglasses, sun cream, first aid kit, picnic kit, personal items, etc.
- Picnic lunch of the day (bring a plastic box)
- Sufficient water (minimum 1.5 litre water bottle)

Walking Boots

The type of boot depends upon the activities you take part in, however they are one of your most important items. They should be comfortable, waterproof and breathable. For the best protection we advise ankle boots.

We recommend our young walkers to wear flexible walking boots with a good sole and back.

For mountain walking for more than 4 hours long we recommend a boot with a fairly ridged sole.

If you need to buy a new pair of boots, we advise you wear them in before the start of your holiday. Don't wear boots that are too small because feet have a tendency to swell up. Be careful with your shoes that have been left in the wardrobe for too long. The lifespan of a shoe is 2 to 5 years. After a while the soles will come off and the seams can tear.

Clothes:

- A wind and rainproof jacket
- A thick jumper or a fleece
- Comfortable walking trousers
- Shorts, t shirts as well as breathable base layers
- Spare clothes
- Swimwear and towel
- For the start and end of season, hat and gloves suitable for GR10 walks at altitude.

For Sleeping

- Sleeping bag liner for all nights spent in the gites and mountain shelters (blankets are provided)
- Earplugs

For Picnics

- Sealed plastic box (0.5L) to carry salads
- Cutlery (folding knife and fork)
- A 1,5L minimum flask

Small equipment

- A pair of tennis shoes, or sandals for the evening
- A pair of telescopic poles (optional)
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Hat, cap or bob
- Camera...
- A small toilet bag, with towel
- Torch or headlamp
- Toilet paper
- A mini-pharmacy: personal medication, Compeed for blisters, elastoplast, gauze, disinfectant, arnica granules and aspirin in case of minor injuries, a survival blanket.