

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

# Cauterets Valleys and Great Cirques : in the heart of the Pyrenees National Park

## 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 Gavarnie
- 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)
- Three great cirques listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Gavarnie, Troumouse and Estaubé
- 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 "Pays Toy", the Cirque of Troumouse, 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](http://www.gr10-liberte.com) / [www.respyrenees.com](http://www.respyrenees.com)

[www.maison-iptuxainia.com](http://www.maison-iptuxainia.com)

Tél : (33) 5.34.14.51.50 ou (33) 6.10.97.16.54

[info@respyrenees.com](mailto:info@respyrenees.com)

## •PROGRAM

### Day 1 : Start of your tour 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.

#### Le chemin des Cascades

A beautiful hike enlivened by the bubbling waterfalls of the Gave du Jéret, on a pleasant trail that takes you from Cauterets to the Pont d'Espagne. You'll discover 6 magnificent waterfalls along the way. Overnight in Cauterets.

- Distance : 7.5km, duration : around 3h, altitude gain : +750m, descent : -200m

### Day 2 : Pont d'Espagne - Gaube Valley and Vignemale Massif

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. At 5pm, return to Cauterets by public shuttle. Night in Cauterets.

- Distance : 16,5km, duration : around 5h45, altitude gain : +700m, descent : -700m

### Day 3: Pont d'Espagne - Marcadau Valley

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. Possibility of an easier round trip in the valley. At 5pm, return to Cauterets by public shuttle. Night in Cauterets.

- Distance : 20km, duration : around 7h, altitude gain : +1000m, descent : -1000m.
- Distance : 15,5km, duration : around 5h, altitude gain : +450, descent : -450m (round trip itinerary).

### Day 4 : Troumouse Cirque

At 8am, transfer from Cauterets to Plateau du Maillet. This day's hike is devoted to crossing the cirque de Troumouse. From the Maillet plateau, you climb up to a large plateau in the heart of this vast and magnificent cirque, with its high walls culminating at over 3000m. Then, along a path above the valley, you descend to the charming hamlet of Heas, before climbing back up to your accommodation. Night in Plateau du Maillet.

- Distance : 13.5km, duration : around 5h30, altitude gain : +750m, descent : -750m.

### Day 5 : From Plateau du Maillet to Gavarnie via Estaubé Cirque

From the cirque de Troumouse, the route first reaches the Lac des Gloriettes. Then, in the heart of high-altitude meadows inhabited by marmots and numerous herds, you'll reach the heights of the cirque d'Estaubé up to the superb Hourquette d'Alans lookout (2430m) with a beautiful view of the Gavarnie cirque, the Vignemale and the Ossoue glacier. The descent to the village of Gavarnie is then made via the Espuguettes refuge, again with superb views of the Gavarnie cirque. *In bad weather or at the beginning of the season (if late snow on the route), or simply if you find the main route too difficult, a variant is possible.*

- Distance : 18.5km, duration : about 7h, altitude gain : +850m, descent : -1300m.
- Distance : 17.5km, duration : about 6h, altitude gain : +500m, descent : -950m (variant)

### Day 6 : Gavarnie Cirque

Discovery of the Gavarnie cirque first of all by the Bellevue plateau, allowing to admire the walls of the cirque in all its mineral immensity, astonishing and impressive natural limestone amphitheater, world famous. You will then reach the heart of the cirque and make a short round trip to the foot of the Gavarnie waterfall, one of the highest waterfalls in Europe (423m). From the latter, return quietly to the village by the path of the cirque. Night in Gavarnie.

- Distance : 12km, duration : around 5h, altitude gain : +750m, descent : -750m

### Day 7 : End of your tour

End of your stay in Gavarnie, after breakfast. Return to Caunterets or Lourdes train station by bus (see "Practical information" section) or taxi (see extra prices).

Possibility of a final short loop hike to the Tési belvedere, to enjoy your last moments in this UNESCO World Heritage site.

- Distance : 7km, duration : around 3h, altitude gain : +450m, descent : -450m

*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 15/06/2025 to 30/09/2025 :

### Prices price in shared dormitory :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	<b>645€</b>
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	<b>610€</b>
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	<b>590€</b>
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	<b>580€</b>
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	<b>575€</b>

### Prices in private room :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	<b>745€</b>
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	<b>710€</b>
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	<b>690€</b>
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	<b>680€</b>
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	<b>675€</b>

### Extras :

- Extra for a single room (if private room version) : 175€/pers
- Extra 5 picnics : 70€/Pers
- Transfer from Lourdes to Caunterets on a week day start of the tour : 105€/transfer
- Transfer from Lourdes to Caunterets on Sundays and public holidays start of the tour : 130€/transfer
- Transfer from Gavarnie to Caunterets on a week day end of the tour : 105€/transfer
- Transfer from Gavarnie to Caunterets on Sundays and public holidays end of the tour : 130€/transfer
- Transfer from Gavarnie to Lourdes train station on a week day end of the tour : 130€/transfer
- Transfer from Gavarnie to Lourdes train station on Sundays and public holidays end of the tour : 155€/transfer
- Extra night in Caunterets half board shared dormitory : 55€/pers
- Extra night in Caunterets half board double room : 70€/pers
- Extra night in Caunterets half board single room : 80€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board shared dormitory : 55€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board double room : 85€/pers
- Extra night in Gavarnie half board single room : 120€/pers

### The price includes :

- Half-board accommodation
- Transfers mentioned in the program

- 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
- Drinks and picnics

## •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  
[gaetan@respyrenees.com](mailto:gaetan@respyrenees.com)

## •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 book your accommodations, we transport your bags between the accommodations and we organize your transfers mentioned in the program. 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).

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 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 4 :

At 8:00 am, transfer (1h) from your accommodation in Cauterets to Plateau du Maillet by taxi.

## •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.

2 nights in room in hotel\*\* on days 5 and 6.

1 night in room in mountain lodge on day 4.

### 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.

- They can be reserved in advance (with extra). Or you can buy them directly at your accommodation or at the grocery stores, mini-markets and bakeries listed in the roadbook.

- Drinks not included.

## •PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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

**Ending** : Day 7 in Gavarnie, after your breakfast.

### How to reach Cauterets by public transport:

Trains from the main towns to Lourdes (sometimes with connections) : <https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/>

Bus from Lourdes to Cauterets (Hautes Pyrénées - Ligne 965 - Axe Lourdes > Cauterets) : <https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

### How to leave Gavarnie by public transport:

Bus from Gavarnie to Lourdes (Hautes Pyrénées - Ligne 965 – Axe Lourdes > Gavarnie): <https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

From Lourdes, train to main towns (with connections): <https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/>

### How to reach Cauterets from Gavarnie by public transport:

Bus from Gavarnie to Pierrefitte Nestalas (Hautes Pyrénées - Ligne 965 – Axe Lourdes > Gavarnie): <https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

Bus from Pierrefitte Nestalas to Cauterets (Hautes Pyrénées - Ligne 965 - Axe Lourdes > Cauterets) : <https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/>

### Nearest airport :

Tarbes-Lourdes airport

Toulouse-Blagnac airport

Pau airport

### Parking lot in Cauterets :

All paid and free parking lots visible on this page : [https://www.cauterets.com/blog/stationnement-a-cauterets/?to\\_lang=en](https://www.cauterets.com/blog/stationnement-a-cauterets/?to_lang=en)

If you're leaving your car for the duration of your stay, please check with the tourist office to find out if there are any events (festivals, markets, etc.) taking place in your parking area.

## •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.