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The Pyrenees Adventure

Pyrenees | 2,605m



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The Spanish and French Pyrenees pack an adventurous punch, and this micro-expedition offers an exciting and perfect long weekend for those seeking an all-encompassing experience that delivers an abundance of “WOW”s at every turn.

You will be immersed in both the Spanish and French lifestyles. On our first day, we’ll venture deep into an impressive gorge that will transport you to another world, reminiscent of the Grand Canyon, where we will enjoy a thrilling full day of rafting. It’s impossible to wipe the grin off your face throughout! You’ll experience moments of serene waters and mesmerizing beauty intertwined with exhilarating rapids. The photos will showcase this stunning arena beautifully. It is a simply brilliant day of fun!

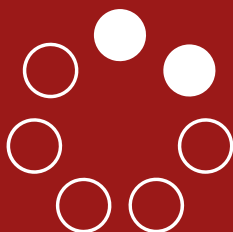
After a day of bonding and laughter, followed by an evening of indulging in an array of Spanish tapas, we’ll embark on a 2-day trek to the 1000 Lakes. We’ll pass by numerous lakes where you can take a wild swim and relish the glistening waters. Our trek will lead us to elevations hovering around the 2500m mark, nestled within the high peaks. You’ll truly connect with the wilderness and experience the escape this stunning area provides. In the evening you’ll get to experience the unique hut life, offering an experience that can only be had after a good days hike.

Next, it’s back to France for the final celebration, where we’ll savour the flavours of French cuisine before boarding our flight back home, having forged new friendships and connections, along with a treasure trove of memories.

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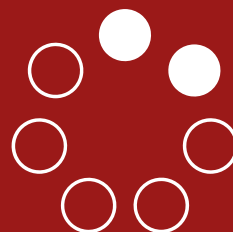
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Physical – P2

This trip is challenging and a good solid fitness level is required. There will be prolonged walking over varied terrain and you should be training to comfortably walk for 6 to 8 hours, over undulating terrain, with a few punchy uphill climbs, carrying a pack up to 6kg in weight.



Technical – T2

Consider this a trek, although there may be occasion to use hands for short sections of easy scrambling. No previous climbing or trekking experience is necessary.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK

You will be scooped up from Toulouse airport and whisked off to the mountain town Bagnères de Luchon. On arrival, we will eat and head to bed readying ourselves for the adventure to come.

(1hr 40mins drive)

(D)

DAY 2 : Rafting*

Today is an exhilarating day spent on the river. We will be rafting 52km through an incredible gorge.

This is the perfect activity for true adventure lovers. You will experience the excitement of white water rafting combined with spectacular sightseeing as you paddle through the most fascinating spots of Pallars area and Noguera Pallaresa river, like Collegats gorge and L'Argenteria (which it is thought to have inspired the architect Antoni Gaudí to build the façade of Sagrada Família church). This activity includes lunch. This is undoubtedly the best rafting experience available in southern Europe. Expect a day full of adrenaline.

Grade III-IV white waters: Rapids with waves and narrow passageways with spectacular views

Distance: 52 km

Length: 6-7 hours

(BL)

*If water levels permit, if need be this may be swapped for something equally epic such as canyoning

DAY 3 : Trekking the 1000 Lakes

Today is the start of our two-day trek in the stunning Pyrenees mountains. We will pass lake after lake after lake!

Tonight, will be spent in a rustic and character-packed mountain hut high in the hills surrounded only by towering peaks.

After an early breakfast, we'll have a short transfer to our start point at Banos de Tredos in Catalonia, Spain, leave the minibus behind and, without further ado, launch into this spectacular trek.

From the Banos (hot springs) we initially trek through native stands of Pyrenean Black Pine, surrounded by lush meadows of Alpine flowers. A steady climb over the Col de Caldes (2200m) brings us past lakes and wild and rocky landscapes until we reach the Ventosa refuge, one of the many spectacular refuges in the Pyrenees. We will while away the evening playing cards and generally soaking up the unique atmosphere before some down time peacefully gazing at the stars in this stunning mountain spot.

Approx. trekking time: 5-6 hours

(BLD)

ITINERARY

DAY 4 : 2nd Day: Trekking the 1000 Lakes

Think trekking, swimming, and picnicking! Today we continue our exploration of this amazing landscape. We are well above the tree-line and before us lays a day of mountain discovery. We bid adieu to the hospitable refuge and begin to try spotting the scurrying marmots between the rocks while relishing the cool breeze bringing the scent of the alpine flowers dotting our path. We trek onwards and upwards to the highest point of our day, the Col de Colomers, at 2,605 metres.

Here, our challenging trek is rewarded with an incredible panoramic vista. Not only can we see our morning's route winding back to the north but, as we gaze across to the south, we see the Cirque de Colomers, surrounded by Pyrenean summits, their sharp peaks jagged against the skyline, sheltering hundreds of sparkling lakes and tarns beneath. After a time to soak up these impressive views and allow them to imprint into our memories, we begin our descent and start to make our way back to Luchon.

Tonight we will enjoy a night of eating fondu and drinking good wine celebrating our action-packed and stunning three days.

Approx. trekking time: 7-8 hours

(BL)

DAY 5 : Back to the UK

An early departure will see you home in time for the afternoon. A perfect relaxing end to your epic adventure. You will be feeling refreshed and energised and ready for the week to come.

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Daysack

Bring a 30-40L rucksack that is comfortable with a good waist belt. A waterproof cover is advisable (remember that these covers are not 100% waterproof but act as a barrier). You will need this to carry all of the kit needed for your two days out in the mountains. You might want to consider bringing a small packable rucksack or larger duffel that your rucksack can fit inside. This bag can be left in the minibus with any kit you don't want to carry for the two mountain days.

Drybags

Rolltop bags that keep fresh clothing and other important items like your passports and electronics dry in the event of a total downpour that could seep into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks! Please note that France has banned plastic bags. In any case, we would always advise buying reusable and sustainable nylon rolltop bags for keeping your kit dry.

Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

Sleeping Gear

Sleeping bag liner

Bedding is provided at the hotels / guest houses but you'll need a sleeping bag liner for your night at the refuge, although blankets are provided.

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head. We'll hope for sun, but it can be chilly in the mountains – and after the watersports you might be cold after getting out of the water.

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Sunglasses

Category 4, wrap around style sunglasses are highly recommended. These sunglasses allow for the highest available protection against harmful UV light found at altitude and from glare from the snow, if there is some at the higher altitudes. It's worth spending money on good UV filters. Julbo is our preferred supplier.

Lip salve

Sun cream does not work on your lips, and they will be susceptible to sun burn without proper protection.

Sunblock

We'd recommend you buy the highest SPF you can find, as UV intensifies with altitude especially when reflecting off the water.

KIT LIST

Upper Body

Base layer x 2

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to wick, or draw, moisture and sweat away from the skin.

Mid layer

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack

T-shirts

A couple of T-shirts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days are reasonably warm, with high temperatures at lower altitudes.

Hard Shell

These jackets are thin, highly waterproof and windproof and worn over all other items of clothing. You'll find these made of Gore-Tex or other proprietary waterproof yet breathable technology. Inexpensive hard shells that aren't breathable will prevent evaporation, making you sweat intensely and, as such, are not recommended.

Soft Shell

Optional. These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. While offering a degree of weather repellence, do note they are usually not waterproof.

Gloves

The weather can change dramatically in the mountains. Being prepared for all eventualities makes for maximum enjoyment.

Lower Body

Shorts

A couple of pairs of shorts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days can be reasonably warm, with high temperatures at lower altitudes.

Trekking trousers

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs as an alternative to shorts.

Underwear

Merino or wicking material, not cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you!

Waterproof trousers

A lightweight pair of Goretex trousers will act as a great windproof too.

KIT LIST

Feet

Walking boots

Well worn in 4 season waterproof boots with mid to high ankle support

Spare laces

Just in case

Comfortable trainers / flip flops / crocks

Trainers – you'll be wearing these in the water so they will get wet and may take some time to dry. Refuges will provide crocs/slippers but you may want a pair of sandals for use in the evening if you're not overnighing in a refuge

Trekking socks x 3

Whether you wear a single layer, or 2 pairs, is a personal choice. Lighter weight merino wool is a good option.

Change of clothing for evenings

Comfortable clothes for the evening

Hydration

Water bottles / bladder

You'll need enough to carry 2 litres, either in a combination of bladder and Nalgene bottles, or just Nalgene bottles.

Water purification

Although generally all water is boiled or brought filtered from the hotel or refuge in the morning, some trekkers prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. Always good to have in your bag.

Toiletries

Wash kit

Keep it simple. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Alcohol gel

A must have for good expedition hygiene.

Toilet paper

Provided at the accommodation, and at public toilet facilities, but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock during the day.

Expedition towel

Towels from the likes of Lifesystems are perfect and microfibre material usually wins.

KIT LIST

Medications

Personal first aid kit

The 360 medical kits are designed to be used in emergencies and are akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy, so please come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and Paracetamol) plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Make sure you keep this handy in your daysack if necessary.

Miscellaneous

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards. A power pack is handy for keeping things charged in the case of no charging points in the refuges (we recommend PowerTraveller).

Head torch

Bring spare batteries or a spare head torch

Snacks

Although you will be fed well, we do advise bringing a small selection of energy bars or your favourite snacks. Have a couple per day.

Ear plugs

Optional, of course, but for protection against the inevitable snorers!

Penknife (optional)

Swimsuit

You'll want to pack your swimmers to make the most of the lakes on the trek for a spot of refreshing wild swimming and to wear underneath your wetsuit when rafting.

Trekking poles

Optional, but they can be useful on the trekking sections. These tend to be a personal preference, but can help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming down hill.

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity: ie. your passport expiry date needs to be at least six months after the final day of travel. Make sure you also have at least two blank pages.

Copy of passport

Just in case

Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap

KIT LIST

Travel insurance

Bring a copy of your own travel insurance details and relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip, to include at a minimum medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude and for the relevant activities included on this trip.

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FAQ'S

The Activities

How fit do I need to be?

This is a fun few days of adventure combined with two days of trekking.

Although we're not at altitude, or somewhere like the Himalayas, don't underestimate this trek! The days are relatively long with reasonable altitude gains (and losses) each day. If you make an effort with fitness before coming out you'll enjoy it far more than if you are struggling up every hill barely able to notice the spectacular views.

I can see you rate this trip as T2 – is there much scrambling?

Good question, and no although our general description mentions scrambling this trek is a trek only and we are following quite defined paths. There are a few boulders that we have navigate on some of the trails but there is no scrambling involved to get around them.

Can we swim in the lakes?

That's the idea! They'll be cold, but wild swimming is exhilarating. It's optional, of course (chat to us for weekend adventures that just include trekking, if you'd rather), but it's great fun!

Are your instructors qualified?

Yes, all our instructors have the appropriate qualifications.

What experience do I need to take part in the rafting?

No previous technical experience is required for rafting. Your 360 guide will be joined by a specialist rafting guide for this day, and they will assure your safety throughout.

How long are we rafting for?

It generally takes the whole day to comfortably make our way through the route though part of this is a picnic lunch in a picturesque spot en route. We choose to operate outside of the main, busier holiday periods and as such there are generally very few other teams in the water with us.

Am I OK to wear my contact lens whilst rafting?

Absolutely. We want you to see your gorgeous surroundings as clearly as possible and whilst rafting is susceptible to splashing, they are unlikely to get knocked off in the same way glasses would and don't require adjustments to keep them in place.

FAQ'S

Accommodation

What is the accommodation like?

You'll be staying in comfortable, centrally located hotels in Luchon.

While out on the trek, we stay in the mountain refuges. The refuges are basic, these are inaccessible mountain huts – albeit large. They all have running water, so flush toilets are standard and most will have hot showers, but on a busy day that hot water will be in high demand and may run out.

Accommodation is in dormitories, so earplugs are recommended if snorers keep you awake! Food will be good with ample carbohydrate content – think pasta, rice, potatoes etc, but don't expect a la carte, food often has to be flown in by helicopter! Given we are all carrying our own kit we don't want to be weighed down by tents and cooking equipment, and as the refuges have beds and washing facilities they are considered the sensible and more comfortable option on these routes.

Food and Water

Where do we get drinking water from?

Bottled or filtered drinking water will be provided during the trip. We'd advise bringing your own bottle, to reduce plastic waste where possible. During the trekking day we also pass streams in various places that you can top up from if you should run out, so take purification tablets with you, should you wish to fill up.

What is the food like during the trip?

The food is plentiful and of very good quality, often using locally sourced ingredients. Breakfasts consist of pastries, fresh bread and jams and you can expect hearty meals in the evenings. Packed lunches will be simple, but filling.

Do you provide snacks during this expedition?

360 provides some snacks for your days on the mountain, however do bring some of your favourite snacks from home. Flapjacks, shortbread, sweets, nuts and chocolate are great, snacks that you're going to really look forward to eating as well as give you energy!

FAQ'S

Kit

Do I carry my own gear?

You'll spend two days on a hut-supported trek. We love this style of expedition – slightly less to carry than when we're fully self supported (so there is no need for us to carry tents, fuel stoves etc.), but we still get the freedom of trekking to our own route during the days, and when we arrive at our refuge / hut, we will get breakfast, packed lunch and dinner each day.

You will be carrying your own bag for these two days, with clothes, toiletries etc. so go careful with your packing – you won't need to carry more than you need for the two days and can leave all other kit and clothing in the minibus.

What bag do I need?

A rucksack of around 30–40L should do you just fine – it's better to have a bigger bag with space, than a smaller one with everything crammed in!

Your day sack should contain only the essential items you will need for the day and activities and your aim should be to keep it as light as possible. We'd recommend you carry at least: a warm layer, waterproof jacket, your packed lunch and snacks, spending money, water, camera, sun cream and personal medication.

If you are borrowing or buying a rucksack, ask someone to help you adjust it to fit your back. And ensure you are making these adjustments with weight inside it, not empty. Generally, it should sit reasonably high on your back so that the weight is acting vertically downwards, not forcing your shoulders back or drooping past your backside. Again, it's about how you feel comfortable wearing it and important to get right.

Make sure too that it is either waterproof or you have a waterproof cover for your rucksack. It's not a bad idea to pack your gear into waterproof stuffs sacs, in case of a deluge.

FAQ'S

Do we need any technical gear for this? Is equipment provided?

No, the hiking part of this adventure is a trek, so standard walking gear outlined in the kit list should suffice. For the adventure activities, all equipment necessary will be provided.

For the rafting, all equipment necessary for your safety and comfort is provided for this day. You will also be given a waterproof barrel to keep your belongings dry for the day.

Do I need a sleeping bag?

No, you'll be spending one night in a refuge/mountain hut but blankets are provided. We would recommend packing a sleeping bag liner for extra warmth, comfort and hygiene (silk or cotton).

The Weather

What's the weather like up there?

It's likely to be lovely and sunny, and reasonably warm (pretty hot lower down). However, we're in the mountains, and not very far from the Atlantic, so there is every risk of rain, thunderstorms and wind. Night time temperatures can be chilly.

The climate of the Pyrenees is generally better than the UK, but there is still the risk of inclement weather, so we advise in the kit list to pack accordingly. And, just like any other holiday, having a quick last minute look at the forecast before you come out can be a useful pointer of what's in store.

FAQ'S

Travel

Flights aren't included - what time should I arrive and depart to Toulouse?

We haven't included flights as this gives you options from the UK. There are many flights that come to Toulouse daily from many different airports.

The Bristol Hikers Girl group will aim to hop on the same flight over and we will be sharing details of this flight far in advance to give plenty of time for planning.

It's important that we check flight schedules before confirming a pickup time with you, as we want to make sure you can actually make it to Toulouse on time. We will confirm what time you should aim to arrive in Toulouse as we draw closer to your departure date.

We will also check flight schedules before deciding what time we do an airport drop off.

Once you know our transfer times, please find flights that work for these timings, or plan to have the night before and/or night after in Toulouse.

If there are any issues with booking your flights, please let us know and we will try and help however it might mean getting a hire car/train or taxi to your start / finish point.

Bagnères de Luchon is a 1h 40 mins drive away.

What happens if I miss the pickup time?

We suggest that you get an early flight as possible from the UK to Toulouse so if your flight is delayed this gives you options in being able to get to the starting point of your expedition.

At the point of sign up, 360 will have given you a pickup and drop of time. If you are wildly out of the time slot due to flight delays, 360 will always do what they can to arrange an alternative with you and have on occasions personally done the pick up. Thereafter the options will be to hire a car or jump on a train.

FAQ'S

Insurance

Do I need special insurance for this trip?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition, we cannot take you on the expedition without proof of insurance.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however, this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

We have a partnership with [True Traveller](#) and recommend them as an option when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. Many other insurance providers are of course available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip, to include, at a minimum, medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip and for the adventure activities included.

Electronics

Will my mobile work?

In the cities, yes, out in the countryside, likely on and off! Most UK providers will provide coverage as part of your plan in France and Spain, but do check before you travel.

Will there be somewhere to charge my phone and camera?

There will be plug sockets in the rooms in your hotel, but the charging points in the refuge can't always be relied upon. We'd advise bringing a powerpack (we recommend [PowerTraveller](#)) to ensure your phones / cameras / other electronics are charged throughout!

TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.