

FRANCE & SPAIN: FROM MOUNTAINS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

7-days/ 6-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking holiday



This spectacular walk through the French and Spanish Pyrenees offers the ultimate variety in landscapes and scenery, as it crisscrosses the border of Spain and France and makes its way from the mountains to the sea. Begin your walk high up in the Costabonne Mountains with your head in the clouds and finish with your feet in the warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea on the Cote Vermeille, the Vermillion Coast.

Each day walk through diverse landscapes: through green valleys, wild chestnut woods and beech-groves, and amongst hillside vineyards in the Albères foothills. The path winds past rugged craggy mountains providing splendid scenery and descends into ancient villages, each with their own charm – Prats de Mollo with its dominating hilltop fort; the cherry town of Ceret, a centre for Cubist artists and once a magnet for artists like Picasso, Chagall and Matisse; the old Roman spa town of Amelie les Bains. Finish your walk in the pleasant seaside town of Banyuls sur Mer. Along the way sample some unique Catalan cuisine, finishing with the fresh seafood and crisp white wines for which the French Roussillon region is justifiably famous.

Departs: Daily on demand from April to October.

Difficulty: Moderate – daily distances of 10-15km or between 4 and 6 hours of walking in a day, with an average daily ascent of approximately 475m and average descent 900m

Cost from: **\$1150** per person twin share Single room supplement from \$225
Solo traveller supplement from \$235

Includes: 6 nights' accommodation, 6 breakfasts, 6 dinners, luggage transfers (weight limits apply), route notes, maps, tax and service charges, 2 transfers (on days 4 & 6) and telephone support (if required).

Not included: Lunches, drinks, personal expenses including entrance fees & extra nights of accommodation, arrival/departure transfers (can be arranged at extra cost). Taxi transfer (for 1 to 4 people) from either Banyuls or Perpignan (France) to Setcases: €225. Also possible from Girona Airport to Setcases: (for 2 to 4 people) €245. Or from Ripoll train station to Setcases: (for 1 to 4 people) €65.

Pre-booking required and higher costs apply on Sundays/holidays – please ask when making your booking.

Starts: Setcases. Nearest train station: Ripoll then bus/taxi. Nearest airports: Girona, Barcelona & Perpignan.

Ends: Banyuls sur Mer. Nearest train station: Banyuls. Nearest airport: Perpignan, Girona & Barcelona

Accommodation & Meals: Accommodation is in small 2 & 3-star hotels, with private bathroom facilities, on a half board basis (evening meal and breakfast). Picnic lunches on walking days are not included in the tour cost, but picnic materials can readily be bought in local shops or a packed lunch ordered the night before from your accommodation.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Setcases in Spain

Make your way to the small mountain village of Setcases in the Ter Valley surrounded by picturesque hills and mountains and close to the border between Spain and France. Overnight in a 2-star hotel in Setcases.

Day 2: Setcases to Mollo

walking @ 13km (4-5 hours)

Walk the spectacular GR11 walking trail from Setcases across Pyrenean meadows and pastures to Mollo, a small, historic Spanish town with a charming Romanesque church. Overnight in a 4-star hotel.

Day 3: Mollo to Prats de Mollo

walking @ 14km (5-6 hours)

Today walk the old Smugglers' Path crossing the border from Mollo in Spain, to the medieval city of Prats de Mollo in France. This is a day of excellent views over the impressive Vallespir Valley. Prats de Mollo is a maze of narrow cobble streets and terraces linked by stairways and passages. The 17th Century military fortification, Fort Lagarde, built by Louis XIV's military engineer Vauban over the ruins of an ancient watchtower, is worth visiting. Overnight in a simple 2-star hotel in Prats de Mollo.

Day 4: Prats de Mollo to Amelie les Bains

walking @ 12km (5-6 hours)

Start with a short transfer to St Laurent de Cerdans, where you start the day's walk with an ascent to the Pilon de Belmatx. From here there are 360-degree views across the Costa Brava, the Canigou Mountains and the Côte Vermeille. Then descend to the beautiful spa town of Amelie les Bains. Overnight in a 2-star hotel.

Day 5: Amelie les Bains to Ceret

walking @ 10km (5 hours)

After breakfast walk to the village of Reynes and then on the Col de Bousells to the 'cherry town', Céret, which hosts a Cherry Festival each year in May. Céret's narrow streets, red roofs, golden light and mild climate attracted Cubist and avant-garde artists and this small town is home to a renowned Museum of Modern Art featuring works of Picasso, Chagall, Matisse and many other artists who lived and worked here. Overnight in a 2-star hotel.

Day 6: Ceret to Banyuls sur Mer

walking @ 22km (8 hours)

This morning take a transfer to Pic Néoulous, to begin your final walk of the tour. You leave the Trans Pyrenean way walking along the steep and somewhat rocky Albères from the Pic Sailfort to the Cap Béar, and then through scenic vineyards descend to your final destination, the delightful seaside town of Banyuls sur Mer. For those preferring a shorter walk, transfer to the Col de la Serre and walk from there (10km / 5 hours walk). Spend your last night in a 3-star hotel in Banyuls sur Mer.

Day 7: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. Banyuls has a train station with connections to destinations in France and Spain.

Please note: **Banyuls sur Mer** is a glorious little seaside town, well worth an extra day. Taxi transfers are available from/to Girona or Perpignan airports at extra cost, please ask for details

Other walking holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers & meals are available in many parts of Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including the spectacular **Vermillion Coast** Mediterranean walk, the majestic and historical **Cathar Castles** walk, the **Way of St James** from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostella in Spain or the **Via Francigena**, the pilgrim's Road to Rome in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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