



Pyrénées : GR 10 - 1st Section from Hendaye to St Jean Pied de Port

Who wouldn't be tempted to traverse from end to end the entire Pyrenean chain of mountains on foot. The mythic GR10 starts at the Atlantic ocean and crosses over more than 258 miles of dazzling mountains to arrive at the Mediterranean coast. You amble through stunning scenery that varies enormously, from flower filled meadows, sparkling lakes, cirques and high summits. You'll get a taste of many different cultures, from the Basque country through to Catalonia. Each valley you pass through has its own distinct flavour. It is a great way to explore local life and to absorb the differences, the Pyrenees is a unique blend of many different people.

The first section, from Hendaye to Saint Jean Pied de Port, covers a variety of landscapes typical of the Pays Basque region, set in the heart of the Atlantic Pyrenees.

The scenery has a charm and regional originality that you won't find elsewhere. Rolling hills, magical villages, such as Sare, Ainhoa and Dancharia that are steeped in Basque tradition, and a rich pyrenean flora and fauna are all waiting to be discovered. At the end of the walk you will reach the villages of Bidarray and Saint Etienne de Baigorry with the sumptuous Iparla mountain ridge in the background.

Tour Aventure Trekking

Agence de voyages LI 02A.06 0002 - Garantie Financière de 137204€ : APS - Contrat RC : n°86 410 716 Gan Eurocourtage IARD

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Program

D1 - Start of holiday in Hendaye

Depending on your arrival time, after checking into your hotel, you may choose to walk in the region of Domaine d'Abbadia. A fantastic natural site of 65 hectares situated right on the coast. You will find a great mix of landscapes, moors, prairies, heather and high cliffs. You can also visit the famous néo gothic chateau, the Domaine d'Abbadie. Distance : 5km, duration : 3h00, altitude gain : +60m, descent : -60m.

D2 - Hendaye to Ibardin

Hendaye lies on the estuary of the River Bidassoa, which forms the border with Spain. The GR10 walking route begins its course on Hendaye Plage. Rising rapidly above the Atlantic, this first stage of the walk is pleasant. The landscape, scattered with villages, is peaceful and harmonious with the rolling hillsides. The ambience is very basque but there is no sign yet of the high dramatic mountains to come.

Distance : 12km, duration : 4h15, altitude gain : +610m, descent : -293m.

D3 - Olhette to Dancharia

The first outlines of the distant mountains can be spotted on the horizon. You have the chance to reach the summit of La Rhune. At an altitude of 980m it is considered the first peak in the Pyrenean chain. You pass picturesque villages, Sare and d'Ainhoa are scarcely more than single streets lined with large houses. The houses (mostly dating from the 17th century) have stone lintels carved with the dates of their construction and details of their family's history. Once in the village of Dancharia you are situated at just 3km from the Spanish border.

Distance : 16km, duration : 6h45, altitude gain : +535m, descent : -580m.

D4 - Dancharia to the Col des Veaux

Today the GR10 passes a series of summits, crossing over high mountain passes, it winds its way around l'Erebi alt 583m, and then further on l'Axulegi alt 617m. You will see the col Zuccuta, the high mountain pass that is a superb belvedere. From the col, weather permitting, you can take the track route to the Col des Veaux or if it's fine you might choose to stay on the ridge, this is not part of the GR10 but the variant is worth it for the views. The ridge leads all the way to the Pic Gorospil at 691m you can get some superb panoramas.

Distance : 11km, duration : 4h00, altitude gain : +525m, descent : -113m.

D5 - Col des Veaux to Bidarray

The GR10 continues to alternate between the Pyrenean summits and mountain villages that have a strong Basque identity. The trail heads in the direction of the Col de Méhatché situated at an altitude of 716m. You pass into a rocky landscape that is home to the griffin vultures that circle high above. You descend to Bidarray village, an emblematic nightstop that is vibrant with the characteristic Basque culture and lifestyle.

Distance : 11km, duration : 3h30, altitude gain : +195m, descent : -615m.

D6 - Bidarray to Saint Etienne de Baigorry

Today is a challenging walk and will lead you from Saint Etienne de Baigorry across some breathtaking scenery, such as extraordinary sandstone cliff faces along the classic ridge walk of the Cresta d'Iparla and the culminating peak of

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1044m. Saint Etienne de Baïgorry is made up of a huddle of small hamlets and is prosperous, strongly turned towards agriculture and has the Pays Basque's only vineyards that produce a good strong red wine. It has an exceptional location in the mountain cirque that encompasses the valley of Nive. The town has an interesting patrimoine and Basque culture .

Distance : 17km, duration : 6h45, altitude gain : +1230m, descent : -1220m.

D7 - Saint Etienne de Baïgorry to Saint Jean Pied de Port

This is the last section of the first weeks walking on the GR10 trail leading into Saint Jean Pied de Port, in the very heart of the Basque country. There are about six hours challenging walking with 800m ascension and descent before arriving at Saint Jean Pied de Port. Its situation is picturesque, on the banks of the river Nive, it is considered the historical pass way into Spain. Enclosed by walls of pinky red sandstone, the old town is interesting with a single cobbled street, many of the old houses bear inscriptions on the lintels from the 16 and 17th centuries.

Distance : 18km, duration : 6h00, altitude gain : +860m, descent : -865m.

End of holiday in Saint Jean Pied de Port

Your holiday comes to an end in Saint Jean Pied de Port, after your walk. Opportunity to visit le bourg, the historical capital of Basse-Navarre.

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

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Details

Level of difficulty

The walks are on good footpaths and trails, the terrain is varied but often rocky. You need to be used to walking and take regular exercise to enjoy this holiday.

Price

- From 15/05/2010 to 30/09/2010 : Price per person 545 €

Price includes :

4 nights in gites and 2 night in hotels, 5 evening meals, 6 breakfasts, luggage transfers, the dossier containing your maps, route notes and all necessary details needed for your holiday.

Price does not include :

Entrance fees, additional transfers, drinks, evening meal day 1, picnics, additional activities, holiday insurance and travel.

Encadrement

Self-guided walking.

Carrying

You will need to carry a day sack only, with your water bottle, camera, picnic and gortex jacket.

Our bag-moving service means you can travel light during your walks.

Your main luggage - will be transported by vehicle between the different night stops. We ask you to please limit your main luggage to between 10-15kg to facilitate the transportation and carrying for the taxis. It is also important to consider that it may be necessary to carry your bags short distances at the start or end of your holiday. (Consult with us for left luggage facilities)

Accommodation/food

Accommodation

4 nights in hotel (base on 2 people), BB formula on day 1 and 2 nights in gites (communal dormitories).

Bring a light-weight sleeping bag or a liner.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam).
- evening meals, often based on local specialities. Evening meal in Hendaye, restaurants available.
- Pic-nics not included. Can be bought there.
- Drinks not included.

Starting point/end

Starting point : Day 1 at your hotel in Hendaye, according to your time of arrival.

End : Day 7, in Saint Jean Pied de Port, after your walk.

If you are continuing to do the 2nd section of the GR10, the night in St Jean Pied de Port is offered, BB in gite.

Organisation

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We propose a self guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest between the initial rendez-vous time through to the dispersion point. We transport your bags between the hotels, provide the maps and good walking route notes. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday.

Transfers during the walk

Day 3 : At 7.30am, short transfer from your accomodation in Col d'Ibardin, to the hamlet of Olhette.

Day 7: At 8.30am, short transfer from your accomodation to St Etienne de Baïgorry town center.

Dates

Every day from mid-May to the end of September.

(for a departure on a different date, consult us).

Number of participants

From 2 people

Access

Biarritz-Parme airport. From Bordeaux autoroute, trains TER in direction Hendaye.

Bibliography

Rough Guide the Pyrenees - Marc Dubin 2004

Practical information

- Hendaye tourist office - 1, rue des Aubépines, BP18, 64700 Hendaye - tel : 0033 559200034 - Fax : 0033 559207917

- Site : www.hendaye.com - E-mail : tourisme@hendaye.com

- Saint Jean Pied de Port/St Etienne de Baïgorry tourist office: 14 Place de Gaulle, 64220 St Jean Pied de Port - tel 0033 559370357 - Fax : 0033 559373491 - E-mail : saint.jean.pied.de.port@wanadoo.fr - www.terre-basque.com

- SNCF : www.ter-sncf.com

- Local weather : 0033 892680264

- Mountain rescue :

0559207820 (Hendaye) - (St Etienne de Baïgorry) - 0559370036 (St Jean Pied de Port)

ACCES:

How to get to Hendaye :

- By air :

Biarritz Parme airport(25km) : daily flights via Paris, Londres, Lyon, and the Clermont Ferrand.

- By train:

Many TER trains in direction Hendaye, departures from main cities.

www.ter-sncf.com to confirm timetable.

- By car :

Bordeaux autoroute A63, 207km.

From Toulouse and Bayonne, autoroute A64, 293km, then Bayonne to Hendaye, autoroute A63, 32km.

Si you come by car, we advise you to park in Hendaye, at the start of your walk.

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PARKING :

Parking in Hendaye

Free : in the town centre and harbours (Gazteluzahar pediment)

To pay: Under the médiathèque (contact Mairie, tel 0559482323)

How to leave Saint Jean Pied de Port :

Departure from Saint Jean Pied de Port, bus or train SNCF, direction Bayonne.

From Bayonne, possible connections to Hendaye or Biarritz.

What to bring and pack

- Bags

A small day pack for your water bottle, camera, picnic and waterproof.

A bag, rucksack or suitcase for your main luggage 10kg maximum per person.

- For Walking

Good walking shoes or boots with a good grip sole

Walking socks.

Warm fleece

Shorts and T shirts.

Swimming costume or trunks

Towel

2 Walking poles (optional)

Water bottle (one litre minimum)

Personal first aid kit with good blister protection

- For your picnics

A good cutting knife, fork, spoon, plastic cup and plate

some plastic bags

- Sun and rain protection

Sunglasses and sun cream

Sun hat

Wind and waterproof jacket (Gore-tex stlye)

- Relaxing time

Trainers or open sandals

Warm Fleece and casual wear

Tour Aventure Backup

The Tour Aventure team is present and always at hand to ensure the smooth running of your holiday. We are on the ground and ready to assist in any eventuality.

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