

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Walking in the Andorran Pyrenees (PAW 2017)



TRIPDURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Trek Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: PAW

Trip Highlights - Walking in the Andorran Pyrenees

- ✓ Soldeu - Stay in the heart of the Andorran Pyrenees
- ✓ Sorteny Nature Reserve - A botanical haven with over 700 species of flora
- ✓ Incles Valley - Walk through beautiful glacial landscapes to Cabana Sorda Lake
- ✓ The Andorran Valleys - Explore the scenic majesty of the Vall de Riu and the Sorteny Valley
- ✓ The Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley - A UNESCO World Heritage glacial valley

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point: Join trip: Barcelona Airport
End Point: Trip ends: Barcelona Airport
Transport: Bus, Taxi
Countries: Spain, Andorra

Walking In The Andorran Pyrenees

Hidden deep in the Pyrenees, Andorra is one of the smallest countries in Europe and it offers superb summer walking. We base ourselves in the village of Soldeu and enjoy some of the area's most beautiful walks including: the UNESCO-protected valley of Madriu-Perafita-Claror, the glacial landscapes of Incles Valley, and Sorteny Valley, home to more than 700 species of flowers and plants.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Trek Grade: Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Barcelona. Drive to Soldeu

Joining the tour at Barcelona's international airport today we then depart the city by bus, heading towards the small alpine village of Soldeu, deep in the heart of the Andorran Pyrenees. The three hour journey should hopefully get us into Soldeu in time to enjoy a short orientation walk around the village before dinner. A popular ski resort, lying some 1,710 metres above sea level, Soldeu is an engaging mix of traditional rural inns, converted farmhouses and lively bars, providing us with an ideal base for our Pyrenean adventure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Walking in the Vall de Riu

After a short taxi ride to the neighbouring village of Ransol this morning, we begin our walk into the Vall de Riu, another of Andorra's scenic gems. Encircled by a ring of glacial-formed mountains, the valley provides us with a beautiful backdrop to today's walk up to the small mountain village of Canillo. Home to Andorra's tallest church tower, and one of its finest Romanesque chapels, Canillo will be our final destination today, before returning to Soldeu by public bus. Today's 11km walk is expected to take around 5hrs with 450m ascent and 750m descent.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Hiking in the Andorra valleys; visit Sorteny Valley and Estanyó Lake

This morning we drive a short distance to the Sorteny Nature Reserve, set amongst the fertile valleys of north-eastern Andorra. Renowned for its abundance of plant species, the valley is a botanical haven for over 700 species of flora, some of it unique to the Pyrenees region. The trail that we take today leads us up to Estanyó Lake (2,350 metres) and passes through an alpine landscape that is home to wild boar, martens, chamois and ptarmigan. Driving back to Soldeu later we may also have time to stop for a drink in the pretty mountain village of Ordino. Walking time: Five hours. Ascent/descent +/- 600 metres. Today's 10km walk is expected to take around 4.5hrs with an ascent and descent of 720m.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Free day to explore Andorra la Vella

Some free time today affords us a chance to pay a visit to Andorra's bustling capital, Andorra la Vella. Home to the smallest parliament in Europe and the oldest Romanesque church in the principality, the city is also a great place for shopping. Alternatively you may wish to remain in Soldeu and enjoy some more walks around the area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Walk in the Incles Valley

Our first walk takes us into the beautiful glacial landscapes of the Incles Valley, home to Scots pine, Pyrenean chamois and one of the largest alpine lakes in Andorra. We begin the day gently, before following the course of the river up to the Siscaro Lakes. Nestling within a glacial cirque at some 2,350 metres, the lake provides us with a beautiful spot to stop and enjoy a picnic lunch. There may even be an opportunity for us to walk a little further, towards the Incles Pass, before we head back down to the hotel. Today's 14km walk is expected to take around 4.5hrs with 900m ascent and 1350m descent.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Walking in the Madriu and Perafita Valleys

Today we explore the untouched wilderness of Andorra's only UNESCO World Heritage Site, the beautiful and remote Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley. Covering nearly 50 square kilometres this pristine setting is the country's spiritual and cultural heart, as well as being a haven for wildlife that includes marmot, bearded vulture and ptarmigan. Driving to the small hamlet of Saint Miquel d'Engolasters, we then hike up to the refuge at Fontverd, where we stop to enjoy a picnic lunch before heading back to Soldeu by bus. Walking time: Four and a half hours. Ascent/descent +800/- 500 metres. Today's 12km walk is expected to take around 4.5hrs with 900m ascent and 400m descent.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Free day: optional white water rafting or 4WD excursions

There is an option today to take a drive across the Spanish border, travelling by 4WD vehicles through the medieval hamlet of Tor and on to the village of Llavorsi. From here we then have a chance to raft down the Noguera River, along 14 kilometres of exhilarating white water rapids, before making the journey back across the border to Soldeu. Alternatively you can just relax around the village, or take a trip back into the capital for a spa and maybe some last minute shopping.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Tour ends Barcelona Airport

Driving back to Barcelona this morning our journey ends back at the city's international airport.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Set against a backdrop of tree covered mountains, the Soldieu-Maistre Hotel enjoys a central yet quiet location in the village of Soldeu, northern Andorra. Open year round this modern family-run hotel offers 48 rooms over 3 floors. Built in mountain lodge style with a stone and wood panelled exterior the hotel is in keeping with its surroundings.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Spain

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

Andorra

Lunch £: 7

Dinner £: 15

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Spain

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water £: 1.40

Andorra

Bottle of Beer £: 3.50

Water £: 1.50

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Noguera River - Rafting 55€ plus 45€ for 4x4 return transfer (minimum group of 5)

Other walks - approximately 10-15€ for transfer

Visit to Andorra capital - Public bus fare 5€

Visit to Caldea spa - From 40€

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow €10 for tipping drivers and site guides. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Foreign Exchange

Spain

ATM Availability: In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Euros

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Andorra

ATM Availability: It is also convenient to use a Visa/Mastercard at cashpoint machines.

Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants only.

Travellers Cheques: Not recommended.

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you bring Euros.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spain

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Andorra

The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	11km	5hrs
Day 3	10km	5hrs
Day 4		
Day 5	14km	5hrs
Day 6	12km	4.5hrs

Trekking Details

We walk on four days for between 5 and 6 hours each day. We have graded this trek as moderate.

Climate

Spain

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Andorra

The Andorran climate is of Mediterranean mountainous type, with warm summers and cold winters. Temperatures can dip below freezing in the winter while summer temperature remain warm.

Clothing

Waterproofs for showers are recommended as the weather can change with little notice as in all mountainous areas. Lightweight cotton clothing is advised from June to September with a fleece for higher walks.

Equipment

During the summer months we recommend you bring a sunhat and sunscreen as temperatures can be high. A water bottle and a torch is essential. Walking poles may be useful.

Footwear

Well broken in walking or trail boots are essential, plus comfortable trainers. Sandals are useful in summer.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance: 44lb/20kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spain

Population: 46,030,109

Size of Country: 504,782 sq km

Major Language: Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Andorra

Population: 84,082

Size of Country: 467,63 sq km

Major Language: Catalan

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spain

2 Pin Round

Andorra

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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