

FRANCE THE PYRENEES



overview

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP

- The stunning mountain scenery
- The exhilarating water based activities
- A thrilling mountain bike descent into Spain
- One of the prettiest canyons in Europe
- The challenge of the activities
- The chance to extend your stay and explore the fascinating city of Barcelona



MAP

WHERE YOU ARE GOING

The Pyrenees Orientales sits between Andorra and the Mediterranean coast and has the best sunshine record in France - 300 days a year. Its situation also provides a vibrant combination of French, Spanish and Catalan culture which adds to the appeal of this area.



TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

8 DAYS, 7 NIGHTS

AGENDA

SATURDAY: FLIGHTS, ARRIVALS AND TRANSFERS

Your group will be met at the airport by a guide for the private transfer to Font Romeu. This evening, the group will have a welcome meal and your guide will discuss the itinerary for the week.

SUNDAY: GORGE WALKING AND THERMAL BATHS (APPROX DURATION: 2.5HRS GORGE WALK AND 1HR BATHS)

This 5km trek is set in a fantastic location – cut into the side of a gorge. It offers beautiful views across the mountain scenery and is a lovely introduction to the local area. This afternoon the group will enjoy a well deserved visit to the hot springs at Saint Thomas. With three outdoor pools at a constant temperature of approximately 37°C with jacuzzi and massage jets and several steam rooms this a fantastic place to relax.

Suggested Kit: T shirt, shorts/light trousers, sun cream, sun hat/cap, sunglasses, walking boots or walking shoes with a good sole – no sandals. Sack containing water and fleeces for all family. Camera, swimming trunks - NOT shorts and a towel.

MONDAY: AM RAFTING PM HYDROSPEEDING (APPROX DURATION: 2HRS FOR EACH ACTIVITY)

Today you will have the chance to explore the exciting River Aude. This morning will begin with white water rafting with a guide to help you navigate this grade 4 river. This team building experience is always a favourite for families during the week. After lunch you get even closer to the water by hydrospeeding. From our experience, this awesome activity will leave you adrenaline fuelled, breathless and desperate to go again!

Suggested Kit: Swimsuit or shorts (to be worn under normal clothes in the morning) and trainers - not sandals. Waterproof camera, sun cream, towel and dry underwear.

TUESDAY: MOUNTAIN BIKING INTO SPAIN (APPROX DURATION: 3HRS)

You will be transferred to the start point for this mountain biking adventure which really means we do all the hard 'uphill work' for you, leaving you with a 17km descent across the border back into Spain. You ride to the traditional Spanish town of Livia set on the river Segre.

Suggested Kit: Long sleeved shirt, light weight trousers or tracksuit bottoms, sunglasses with plastic lenses and retaining strap, gloves if you wish. Walking boots or shoes with a good sole – no sandals. Sack containing water, sun cream, snack and fleeces or waterproof jackets for all the family, money and a camera.

TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY: ADVENTURE PARK (APPROX DURATION: 3HRS AND 3HRS LAKE)

After breakfast you will visit a high ropes course near Font Romeu. There are several different levels of difficulty available and the whole family will try out a high ropes obstacle course, zip line and Tyrolean crossing. With several zip lines of up to 100m you get some great views as you traverse through the tree tops. This afternoon the group will have free time at the beautiful Lake Matemale.

Suggested Kit: Long sleeved shirt, light weight trousers or tracksuit bottoms, sunglasses with plastic lenses and retaining strap. Trainers or walking boots with a good sole – no sandals. Sack containing water and fleeces for all family. Camera, swimming suits or shorts, towel and money.

THURSDAY: FREE DAY

The choice is yours today and you can either relax by the indoor swimming pool or consult your guide about any additional activities which can be arranged locally.

FRIDAY: CANYONING (APPROX DURATION: 5HRS)

A truly memorable way to end your week here in the Pyrenees with a fantastic canyon. Led by your guide your family will jump, slide, abseil and float your way downstream against the beautiful backdrop of the Pyrenees. This canyon rounds off with a real challenge - an 11 meter jump for those who are brave enough. This evening the group will enjoy one final farewell meal together to reflect on your adventures.

Suggested Kit: Swimsuit or shorts (to be worn under normal clothes in the morning) and trainers (these need to be loose as you will be wearing thick neoprene (waterproof) socks) - not sandals. Waterproof camera, towel, dry warm clothing and underwear for afterwards.

SATURDAY: DEPART OR EXTEND YOUR STAY

Today you will transfer back to the airport for your return flights or alternatively we can arrange an extension for you either in the Pyrenees Orientales or the vibrant city of Barcelona. Please contact us for more information and a quotation on 01670 785 072.

Please Note:

These itineraries are subject to change: please confirm your timetable with the activity providers on arrival at the resort.

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IMPORTANT info

GROUP SIZE AND GUIDES

The approximate group size for this programme will range between 8 - 24 people.

Your guides for the week are all thoroughly qualified, highly experienced outdoor enthusiasts who are all always highly knowledgeable about the area in which they live and the activities they instruct. The guides main role is to make sure that everybody enjoys the experience as much as possible but also to ensure the whole groups comfort and safety.

BOOKING YOUR OWN FLIGHTS CANCELLATION DISCLAIMER

If you have chosen to book your own flights we will write to you once your trip is 'guaranteed to run'. In other words, once it has reached the minimum number of bookings necessary for us to operate the holiday. When the trip is 'guaranteed to run' you will be free to make your flight arrangements. Before you book your flights you should check whether airport transfers are included in your trip. If they are then please phone our office for airport transfer times.

Once your flights are booked, please send us a copy of your detailed flight itinerary.

Please be aware that most of the cheaper airline tickets available for sale on the internet or from low cost carriers are non-refundable in the case of cancellation. For this reason we strongly advise you check the rules of the ticket when you make a flight booking and check the limitations of any cancellation insurance policy you have. We cannot be held liable, in the unlikely eventuality that we should be forced to cancel your trip, for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made yourself.

AIRPORT TRANSFER INFORMATION

Our airport transfer time is included in your holiday documents and you must be at the designated meeting point at that time. If you do not arrive on time we can not guarantee that the transfer can be delayed as this means holding up the entire group. If you do miss your transfer then you will need to make your own arrangements to your accommodation. If your flight is delayed, please telephone either your local representative or our UK emergency number. Emergency numbers are provided in your final travel letter.

The transfer from Barcelona Airport to Font Romeu will take approximately 2 and a half hours.

Useful info

LOCAL FOOD – OUR OPINION

There is a wide selection of restaurants in the town of Font Romeu ranging from the traditional cuisine of the area to pizzerias.

TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Useful info

SUGGESTED GENERAL KIT LIST

Your guides will provide you with a suggested kit list per day but you should come prepared for all weather conditions.

The list below is not a comprehensive packing list simply a guide line of suggestions that you might find useful on the trip.

Item check:

Rucksack with plastic bag liner per family, for lunches and spare clothes
Reasonably strong pair of walking boots or trainers
Waterproof jacket and trousers (just in case)
Sweatshirt or fleece top
Comfortable lightweight trousers or shorts for land based activities (not jeans)
Casual clothing for evenings
Swimming gear and beach towels for water based activities
Sunhat, sunglasses with cord attached and sun block
Large water bottle (min. 1 litre) per person
Old clothes and trainers (no open-toed shoes) for getting wet during some of the activities (especially for canoeing and canyoning)
Insect repellent and sting relief cream
Camera – a disposable waterproof type is useful for water based activities
Please note that all safety equipment (helmets, life-jackets, harnesses, wetsuits etc) is provided on this trip.

SUGGESTED GENERAL PACKING LIST

Item check:

Passport Glasses/Contact Lenses
Air Tickets
Toiletries
Car Hire Voucher and full driving licence (for driver)
Driving Instructions, Map
Small Sewing Kit
Trip Dossier and Itinerary
Sweets & Snacks for the journey
Insurance Documents
Notebook, Diary, Pen
Money, Travellers Cheques, Credit Card, Guide Book
Money Security Belt
Games, Books, toys for your kids



Useful info

SUN PROTECTION

Please be safe in the sun. Wear protective clothing (ideally tops and trousers made of tightly woven fabrics that you can't see through when held up to light) and a hat that shades the face, neck and ears when out in the sun. Use a high factor sunscreen and remember to reapply after swimming. You should also bear in mind that you are just as likely to get burnt up a mountain as on a beach. **Please also ensure that you carry a minimum of 1 litre of water per person per day.**

CLIMATE / TEMPERATURE

The average daytime temperatures for this region are as follows

May and October 15-35°

June and September 20-35°

July to August 25-35°

TIPPING GUIDELINES

At your discretion you may wish to tip your guides at the end of your stay as a gesture of appreciation for their efforts during your holiday.

PARENTAL SUPERVISION

Our family holidays are designed to be just that, family holidays. During activities, our guides are there to provide advice, tuition and supervision but we must stress that you are responsible for the child or children in your care. We do not employ qualified child minders and you should not put our guides or other group members in a position where they are responsible for the care of your child or children.

BOOKING ACTIVITIES LOCALLY

In almost all of our destinations you can book and pay for additional activities locally. Our guides will normally discuss the options available at your welcome meeting. Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any injury or loss that occurs through any activities that are booked in your destination. If you intend to go hill walking in any part of France you should ensure that you are well prepared and equipped to cope both with the terrain, high temperatures and a lack of shade in summer.

Useful info

HEALTH CARE INFO

You should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as French nationals. It does not cover medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or treatment of a non-urgent nature.

You should seek medical advice before travelling to France and ensure that all appropriate vaccinations are up-to-date. For further information on vaccination requirements, health outbreaks and general disease protection and prevention you should visit the websites of the NaTHNaC and NHS Scotland's Fit for Travel or call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

CARD FRAUD

We recommend that you tell your bank or card issuer where you're going abroad and what dates you will be travelling. This avoids the embarrassment of having your card refused because your bank thinks you could be a fraudster yourself! Give the bank or card issuer your contact details so that they can call you if they spot an unusual transaction.

CURRENCY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE

The local currency is the Euro. You can obtain currency from local Cashpoints in Font Romeu and which accept most Switch/VISA Electron and other standard UK Debit and Credit Cards. It is not possible to cash Travellers Cheques at the local banks.

Legislation on the controls of cash entering or leaving the EU applies in all Member States. Any person entering or leaving the EU will have to declare the cash that they are carrying if this amounts to 10,000 euros or more; this includes cheques, travellers' cheques, money orders, etc. This will not apply to anyone travelling via the EU to a non-EU country, as long as the original journey started outside of the EU nor to those travelling within the EU.

TRAVEL SAFETY

The safety of our clients is of paramount importance at all times in terms of activity participation and destination. We always follow the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and should they advise against travel for any reason you will be contacted with a view to making alternative arrangements. We monitor this advice on a daily basis and you can access the up to date advice at www.fco.gov.uk.

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SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Useful info

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for the activities you want to undertake.

MEDICAL HISTORY AND ADVICE

It is vitally important that you advise us prior to departure of any medical or dietary condition relating to any member of your party so that we may notify our local staff before you arrive. We recommend only drinking bottled water from bottles with unbroken seals and be vigilant about the use of ice in drinks and ice cream.

LOCAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Respect all French laws and customs. Do not become involved with drugs of any kind.

Customs Regulations

There are strict customs regulations in force in France and the European Union, including movement of valuable items and assets. Please see: <http://www.douane.gouv.fr/>

AIRPORT INFORMATION

The nearest airport to The French Pyrnees is Barcelona. Return flights from Gatwick to Bcelona are included in the holiday cost.

ROAD TRAVEL

Information on road safety and potential traffic black spots (in French only) is available on the French government website.

To drive in France you must be 18 years old and have a valid UK driving licence, insurance and vehicle documents. Failure to comply may lead to a fine and/or your vehicle being impounded. You are not permitted to drive at 17 even if you hold a valid licence. If you do not own the vehicle you are driving, you are advised to obtain written permission from the registered owner. It is obligatory to carry a warning triangle and reflective jacket. The reflective jacket must be stored inside the vehicle itself. Non-compliance is a fineable offence. Driving regulations in France are different from those in the UK. Speeding can result in heavy, on the spot fines and potentially immediate confiscation of your vehicle and licence. Many drivers undertake long journeys in, or through, France. Care should be taken to plan journeys and take regular breaks. In-car radar detectors are illegal in France whether in use or not. If caught with one, you are liable to fines and/or, confiscation of the device and the vehicle.

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Useful info

GENERAL IDEA OF LOCAL COSTS FOR DRINKS ETC

There are several bars, restaurants and cafe's in Font Romeu for you to enjoy. Prices are similar to those in the UK.

TOURIST BOARD DETAILS

For further information on France visit <http://us.franceguide.com/>

LOCAL TIME AND DIFFERENCE

France is one hour ahead of GMT.

BIKE HIRE

Our clients are entitled to 20% off bike hire at inter2s sports shop. Please ask your rep for more details.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES IN NATIVE LANGUAGE

English

Yes
No
Please
Thank you
Hello
Goodbye
How are you?
Fine thanks and you?
Do you speak English?
I would like.....
a bottle of wine
a cup of coffee
a cup of tea
a glass of water
a menu
The bill please
What time is breakfast / dinner?
My key please
Do you have a children's menu?

French

Oui
Non
S'il vous plait
Merci
Bonjour
Au revoir
Comment allez-vous?
Merci et vous?
Parlez-vous anglais?
Je voudrais....
une bouteille du vin
une tasse de café
une tasse de the
un verre d'eau
un menu
L'addition s'il vous plait
Le petit déjeuner / le diner est a quelle heure?
Ma cle, s'il vous plait
Avez vous un menu pour les enfants?

ACCOMMODATION

OUR OPINION

This year we are featuring some fantastic new apartments in Font Romeu, ideal for active families and providing the opportunity to self cater. The three star Pic de L'Ours apartments are situated in the heart of town, close to the shops, bars and restaurants.

Each apartment has one bedroom and two pull out beds in the lounge area. The apartments have a kitchenette (ideal for cooking up some local produce), a ceramic hob, dishwasher and oven. There's a dining and living area with TV. Two bedroom apartments are available on request but are subject to availability.

The piece de resistance at the apartments is the heated indoor pool - the perfect place to unwind.

Reception Opening Hours

Saturday	8:00am - 12:00pm 2:00pm - 8:00pm
Sunday - Friday	8:00am - 12:00pm 4:00pm - 8:00pm



Check in times are from 4:00 - 8:00pm and check out between 8:00 - 10:00am.

If you are going to arrive outside reception opening hours please contact them directly to make arrangements.

PARKING

If you do decide to self drive then covered parking is available at the apartments for £28 per week. This must be booked in advance. Please contact us if you would like this to be booked for you. Alternatively free parking is available near the apartments.

WELCOME PACK

You will receive a welcome pack with some basics on arrival. There will also be a cleaning pack to enable you to carry out the cleaning of the kitchenette at the end of your stay.

accommodation

CLEANING

End of stay cleaning is included in the cost of the holiday however this excludes the kitchenette. The kitchenette should be left in perfect order with plates put away, fridge cleaned, bins emptied etc and the oven and hob cleaned. A cleaning pack is provided. Failure to clean the kitchenette could result in cleaning costs of up to €70.

SECURITY DEPOSIT

A €300 security deposit is payable on arrival at the apartments. A credit card number will be taken and only used in case of breakages or cleaning costs etc.

APARTMENT INVENTORY

Upon arrival on Saturday, you will be given an inventory form and should check that the apartment is clean and that it corresponds to the inventory. If necessary you should go to the reception with the form that same evening to rectify any problem. No later complaint will be accepted. On departure you must advise the representative of any damage or breakage occurring during your stay. You have full responsibility for your apartment and for the objects listed on the inventory and will be charged for the replacement or repair of any object broken or damaged.

SWIMMING POOL

Please note that swimming pools are unsupervised, and that swimming trunks must be worn in pools (swimming shorts are not permitted). Swimming pool opening hours generally operate in time with reception opening hours.

WIFI

Internet is available in the reception area and the costs for this are payable locally.

ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINTS

Any complaint about accommodation or any other service provided must be reported immediately to the Residence Manager or receptionist and LAGRANGE who will try to rectify the problem, in order to avoid disruption to the entire stay. If you are not satisfied, you must request written proof of services not provided or of low standards from the Residence Manager or receptionist. This written proof must be endorsed by the supplier for the refund of any services not supplied. Without this written proof, we cannot guarantee that any complaint will result in a successful outcome. Any complaint must be submitted in writing within 28 days of the end of the holiday. You must enclose all relevant documents. LAGRANGE will acknowledge written complaints within 14 days, and attempt to provide a full response within 28 days. However, in certain cases, it may take longer.

Useful info

ATOL PROTECTION

If you book a flight inclusive holiday with us then everything on your invoice from flights to accommodation, activities to meals is fully covered under our ATOL Licence No 6865.

In the highly unlikely event of our financial failure (please be assured that we are very happy with our current position and forward bookings are strong) then all elements of your holiday are covered. If you are abroad, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will arrange for your repatriation and if you are yet to travel you will be fully reimbursed, again by the CAA.

Two of our staff have previously worked for the CAA's ATOL Licencing so are pretty knowledgeable in this area. If you do have any questions then please contact either Alistair McLean or Kate McLean (yes, they met while working for ATOL and subsequently fell in love and married) on 01670 789 991.

responsible travel

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY IN THE FRENCH PYRENEES

Our holidays are based in the newly formed Parc Natural which is made up of thousands of acres of existing conservation area. It is home to a number of rare and endangered fauna species including Lynx, Brown bears and the tiny Desman.

To promote responsible tourism we try to keep to small sized groups, as we believe that the growth of adventure tourism can lead to the over commercialism and overcrowding of these sensitive areas. With small groups participating in carefully chosen locations, or walking on established marked out trails, we can introduce our clients to this spectacular area without compromising the environment and the finely balanced eco system.

When out on a walk we will always discuss the impact that the increased footpath traffic is having on the environment, and our guides will lead by example in collecting litter left by less well informed parties along the way, and our clients are encouraged to do the same. We also try, wherever possible, to avoid tourist bottlenecks at peak times and a trip with us gets you away from the main GR hordes.

During the holiday all clients are briefed fully on the correct procedures for taking their ablutions whilst in the wilderness, and are educated in the devastating implications of the incorrect disposal of waste.

Our hotel is privately owned with as much purchasing as possible from local suppliers and where possible local agricultural produce and local market stall holders rather than supermarket chains. The majority of cheese used comes from the excellent local fromagerie. All house hold waste that can be re-cycled, is, through the local commune scheme.

TRIP DOSSIER

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

In introducing this area to the UK market we can help local economies that normally would not have a chance to benefit from this sector, in what has traditionally been a subsistence level farming community. This has allowed for greater opportunities and increased wages for younger people who now do not need to leave the mountains to search for careers, which means that the population of the villages is now actually increasing for the first time in over 100 years and the future of local schools and medical services are safe guarded.



Please Note:

The information given in this trip dossier covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please refer to the foreign office website for more up to date information on your chosen destination. Abnormal conditions or events beyond our control can prevail at any time, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes. In order to enjoy and be safe in all activities you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.