

## From Vignemale to the "vire aux fleurs"

An itinerary across France and Spain



Crossing the border between France and Spain, we discover one of the most beautiful regions of the Pyrenees. From the magnificent Gavarnie cirque and its waterfall, the highest in France, we climb to the high Spanish plateaux overlooking the Ordesa valley. This region is particularly spectacular for the depth of its various valleys, worthy of the grand canyon in Colorado. Carved out by glaciers, they are a succession of towering cliffs almost 1,000 metres deep.

We cross the high plateaux overlooking these cliffs. The mineral landscape alternates with lush green high altitude meadows. The area is frequented by isards and vultures. There are several summits on the programme, all with breathtaking views.

But the icing on the cake are these incredible "vires", horizontal paths between 2 cliffs, winding along these natural benches created by the sedimentary layers. Stunning as it is easy, one of the most beautiful, the "vire aux fleurs", was featured in the TV programme "les plus beaux treks" (the most beautiful treks).

🕒 7 days

👤 Guided / with a guide

🚚 Without baggage transport

🛏 Accommodation : Classic (dormitory)

🗝 Level : \*\*\*

🏠 From : 990€

### You will like

- Wild, uncrowded landscapes
- 2 worlds between France and Spain
- The "vire aux fleurs", one of the "most beautiful treks".

# The route

## Day 1

Meeting in Cauterets at 9am. Transfer by car to the Puntas plateau.

### **PLATEAU DE PUNTAS - REFUGE OULETTES DE GAUBE**

The journey begins after leaving the vehicles at 1460m. After a climb through the forest, the path arrives at the Lac de Gaube at 1700m. Continuing along the valley floor along the Gave des Oulettes de Gaube to arrive at the Oulettes de Gaube refuge at 2151m. This large stone building is magnificently situated facing the Vignemale, which was the delight of mountaineers in the 19th century. Its steep north face is a real spectacle! Night in dormitory.

5h walk / Elevation: +700m

## Day 2

### **COL DE LA HOURQUETTE D'OSSOUE - REFUGE DE BAYSELLANCE**

Climbing to the Hourquette d'Ossoue pass at 2734m, the north face of the Vignemale is directly in front. For those who wish, optional climb to the Petit Vignemale at 3032m to best admire the impressive North Face. Descent to the Baysellance refuge at 2651m, the highest guarded refuge in the Pyrenees! Overnight in a dormitory.

4h30 walk / Elevation: +900m / -400m

## Day 3

### **GAVARNIE - BARRAGE D'OSSOUE - GRANGE DE HOLLE**

Long descent to Gavarnie. Pass the Ossoue dam at 1834m. From here the trail continues as a paved road to Gavarnie, or alternatively, a wilder route along the GR10 to Les Grange de Holle, where we spend the night. Night in dormitory.

6h walk / Elevation: +200m -1350m / 17km

## Day 4

### **COL DES TENTES - PORT DE BOUCHARO - REFUGE DES SARRADETS**

Short transfer to the Col des Tentes at 2207m. An easy crossing leads to the Spanish border at the Port (pass) de Boucharo at 2273m. Here it is possible to see how different the climate and terrain are from one side to the other. Crossing the stony terrain, the trail passes close to the Sarradets summit. Overnight at the refuge of the same name at 2557m. High mountain atmosphere!

Option to walk all the way up from Gavarnie.

3h walk / Elevation: +400m

5h walk / Elevation: +1200m option without transfer

## Day 5

### **ROLAND - VIRE AUX FLEURS**

Today enters in another world. Crossing the border through Roland's breach, on the other side, everything is different. Relief, sunshine. Leaving the rugged walls of the French Pyrenees for the gentle high plateaux of Spain. Over these gentle slopes lies the famous Vire aux Fleurs. A myth in the world of hiking, this long, technically easy route is so impressive and aesthetically pleasing. Return to the Sarradets refuge for a final night. Night in dormitory.

6 hours' walk / Elevation: +975m -850m

## Day 6

## **GAVARNIE**

A quick return to the Col des Tentes and a transfer to Gavarnie, but there's more to come! Climb to the refuge just above Gavarnie at 2027m. Night in the refuge in a dormitory. Pleasant walks in the surrounding area.

4h30 walk / Elevation: +665m -400m (descent optional)

## **Day 7**

### **SOMMET DE PIMENÉ EN OPTION - GAVARNIE**

Optional climb to the summit of Pimené at 2800m, a magnificent viewpoint offering a magical view of the Gavarnie cirque and its high walls. For those who stay behind, the area around the refuge offers some lovely walks. Descent to Gavarnie and return to Caunteret by minibus.

6h walk / Elevation: +780m -1450m Pimené summit optional

2h walk / Elevation: -665m

**End of the hike in Caunteret.**

# The trip

## LEVEL \*\*\*

Elevation: +/- 700m approximately per day.

Walking time: 4 to 7 hours per day.

Type of trek: mountain hike on marked trails including gravel paths.

You have to be in a general good fitness level. Please practice a cardio sport such as hiking, running, cycling, from 3 to 4 hours a week.

Your physical preparation will enable you to enjoy your trek to the maximum.

Please find the description of the levels by clicking here: [levels of difficulty](#)

## GUIDING

Number in a group between 5 and 14 people supervised by a qualified professional mountain leader.

It is usual to tip your guide at the end of the trek, according to your satisfaction. It is not mandatory but, it is very appreciated.

## ACCOMMODATION

6 nights in dormitory in refuges.

## MEALS

Breakfast and dinner are provided in each accommodation.

Picnics are included and are carefully prepared daily by your mountain leader, comprising a variety of healthy salads and local products.

or they are ordered in the refuges.

Please inform us about your food allergies and special diets **at the time of booking**.

*We do our best to accommodate special diets (gluten-free, vegetarian, etc.). However, we encourage you to bring some additional products for your own picnics.*

# Practical information

## ACCESS TO DEPARTURE POINT

**Meeting at 9am in Cauterets.**

BY TRAIN / BUS

Cauterets TER station. Main line to Lourdes then TER or bus to Cauterets.  
*Times should be verified at a train station or on the [SNCF](#) website.*

BY CAR

Toulouse - Lourdes - Cauterets <https://www.viamichelin.fr/>

**End of the hike in the afternoon in Cauterets.**

## ACCOMMODATION BEFORE AND AFTER

Tourist office [Cauterets](#)

## INSURANCE

In accordance with regulations, we are covered by Professional Liability Insurance. Under no circumstances, we can replace your personal civil liability.  
The repatriation insurance EUROP ASSISTANCE that we offer is dedicated to French speaking people living in Europe. If it is not your case, we advise you to subscribe to another travel insurance which will cover you in case of injury and repatriation during your trek.

If you chose to take out repatriation insurance with EUROP ASSISTANCE whom we propose, Altitude Mont Blanc will only serve as an intermediary between the client and the insurer. We cannot influence either party. We adhere to strict conditions of sale. You are responsible for compliance with the reporting procedures of any incident.

**Before making any decision, contact EUROP ASSISTANCE.**

## CONTACT US

If you are late please contact the agency as soon as possible: **+33 (0)4 50 79 09 16** or **+33 (0)6 42 49 76 07**

# Dates & prices

Departure guaranteed from 5 people.

From 14/09/24 to 20/09/24 **Open departure** **990 €**

## THE PRICE

### The price includes:

- Organisation and booking fees, guiding by a qualified and insured mountain leader;
- All meals including picnic lunches and simple snacks during the day;
- Accommodation in refuges, including the tourist tax;
- Transfers as outlined in the description.

### The price does not include:

- The luggage transfers ;
- Personal expenses (drinks, etc.), touristic visits,...;
- Travel cancellation insurance;
- Your return journey from home to the point of departure/end point.

**The price is all inclusive from departure to end point.**

# Equipment and baggage

## EQUIPMENT LIST

### Clothing

- Walking trousers
- Shorts (Bikini/swimsuit, just in case!)
- Breathable or merino wool t-shirts
- Breathable or merino wool leggings
- Fleece or jumper
- Wind stopper or Gore-Tex jacket
- Waterproof poncho + gaiters or Gore-Tex trousers + waterproof rucksack cover
- Pair of gloves and a warm hat
- Sun hat or baseball cap
- Walking socks (1 pair per day)
- Sturdy walking boots with a good sole, already broken in
- 1 change of clothes for the evening
- A pair of comfortable shoes for the evening

### Other Equipment

- Toilet bag
- Quick drying towel
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle or Camelback (1.5 litre minimum)
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Plastic lunch box/plate for your picnic lunches
- Plastic cup for coffee
- Small First Aid kit (antihistamine, ibuprofen, Compeed type blister pads...)
- Survival blanket
- Head torch or hand torch
- Sleeping bag liner sheet and pillowcase (blankets provided at accommodation)
- Two adjustable walking poles (highly recommended)
- Identity card or passport

## BACKPACK

Pack a comfortable 40-50 litre rucksack for your personal belongings for the week (including warm clothing, rain cape, water bottle, picnic box and cutlery, sun protection and identity papers) and a little room for a picnic and snacks.

In the 'weight is the enemy' section, here are some tips on how to save a few hundred grams. For example, for your toiletries: a simple plastic zip bag or a small plastic box to avoid accidental crushing.

- Hotel-size soap is generally enough for a week.
- A tube of toothpaste 3/4 full will do the trick
- Shaving foam: a small sample can
- A small microfibre towel
- A small bottle of shampoo
- A travel toothbrush

Pharmacy: in addition to your personal medicines, bring :

- Elastoplast or hook-and-loop tape
- "second skin" tape to protect against blisters, such as Compeed
- A small pair of scissors, thread and needle
- A small tube of sun cream and lip balm

Now all you have to do is apply this recipe to your entire bag!

# Details

## HOW TO REGISTER

- Online: [www.altitude-montblanc.com](http://www.altitude-montblanc.com)
- By phone: +33 (0)4 50 79 09 16
- By post: Please provide your contact details
  - Surname, First Name, Date of birth
  - Address
  - Email
  - Telephone
  - Mobile phone

If you wish to register by post, please complete the form below and return it to:

Altitude Mont-Blanc  
180, route du lac  
74110 MONTRIOND  
FRANCE

Please specify whether you wish to take out an optional cancellation insurance (4.2% of the tour price).

On receipt of your registration we will email an invoice (per couple) with a request for a deposit of 30% in association with your account details at Altitude Mont-Blanc ('My Account'). Payment can be made by credit card, bank transfer or by cheque. On receipt of your deposit you will receive a registration confirmation.  
The balance must be paid one month prior departure without a reminder from us.  
For self-guided tours, we will then send your tour pack (includes maps, descriptive book, etc.).

Our terms and conditions of sale can be found on our website.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.



## Registration by mail form

Last name:

PRENOM:

Date of birth:

Address:

Phone number:

Mobile phone number:

Email address:

SEJOUR DEMANDE:

Number of days:

Insurance:

Price:

x 30% =

Deposit

Locality where signed:

Date

Signature:

Return with your deposit to:  
Altitude Mont-Blanc, 62 Passage du Nant Devant, 74110 Montriond, FRANCE