FRANCE, SPAIN

Pyrenees Freedom Trail







ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Trek	Communal	Terrain	6 days	

This beautiful and demanding trek in the Pyrenees follows the Freedom Trail, or 'Chemin de la Liberté', one of the toughest WW2 escape routes from Nazi-occupied France into Spain. Local people risked their lives to help thousands of allied servicemen and Jewish refugees fleeing to safety, and we pass plaques and memorials dedicated to their bravery.

The trek is arduous and steep, taking us through spectacular scenery on remote trails reaching approx. 2500m. Whenever the going gets tough, we have only to think of those who undertook the same paths in fear of their lives to find the determination to continue. This is an incredible trek with a poignant undertone – a personal challenge which commemorates the bravery of others.

This trip generates around **52 kg of CO_2 per person.** Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly London to Toulouse

We fly to Toulouse and transfer to Seix, where you are free to explore this lovely small village in the Ariège. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 2: Seix – Aunac

In the morning, we make time for the excellent Chemin de la Liberté museum in nearby St Girons, which brings vividly to life some of the stories connected with our route. This small town is where many escapees would have met their first *passeur*, the local guide who would take them over his section of the network. If the museum is not open, we can look around the old chateau at Seix. We then set off on a winding road for the trailhead, and start walking through woodland on a good path. This is only a half-day walk to save our energy for the strenuous days ahead, but it's not an easy stroll! We don't reach any high elevations, but there are plenty of steep gradients as we head deeper into the mountains – there's very little flat on today's terrain. The path climbs steeply up again towards the end, taking us to Aunac, where there's a memorial to the Évadés de France (escapees of France). Night refuge / camp (760m).

Trek approx. 4 hours

Day 3: Aunac – Subera Hut

After a hearty breakfast with wonderful views, we head off through forest on another long day of trekking. Our path takes us steeply up to the Col de le Core (1395m) – this is a fairly demanding ascent but the views around us are spectacular as we gain height. We pause here and admire the mountain scenery, taking a moment to pay our respects at the col's memorial to passeurs. We also meet our vehicles and collect our kit for tonight, which we must carry to the hut as there's no access by vehicle. From now on we'll be carrying our own gear (though we travel lighter after tonight's camp); despite that, the hardest terrain is behind us. Our path leads us gradually uphill through shady forest, gaining height steadily as we contour around the mountain-side, getting a glimpse for the first time of the terrain that awaits us. It should take us 2-3 hours to reach Subera Hut, set in open pasture meadows at the foot of towering mountain cliffs. There are often cows grazing here, and we can hear the welcoming sound of their cow-bells from quite a distance. Night camp (1449m).

Trek approx. 7 - 8 hours

Day 4: Subera Hut – Estagnous Refuge

A challenging day lies ahead of us today, as our trek takes us into serious mountain terrain. We climb and descend – much of it steep – through fields of boulders and around rocky crags. We're likely to see wild horses and flocks of sheep guarded by *patous*, the famous Pyrenean Mountain dogs, in this area. As we near the snow-line, the scenery becomes more impressive; jagged peaks and towering cliffs, with patches of snow lying in isolated dips between the rocks. It's spectacular, but not a hospitable landscape, especially in bad weather; it's hard to imagine how those escaping France would have felt, making this journey in the dark and in fear of betrayal and capture. After our last steep climb, we descend over boulder-strewn slopes to our refuge. Night refuge (2245m).

Trek approx. 7-8 hours

Day 5: Estagnous – Spanish Border – Vielha

We set off from our hospitable refuge, and trek downhill to the lovely Lac Rond (1929m), stretching out any aching muscles in anticipation of the next challenge. Lac Long lies only about half an hour away, but is 200m above us, and the path to it is extremely steep; in places there's a fixed cable to assist us. Once at Lac Long (2125m) the border at the Col de la Clauère is almost within sight. Our path crosses a deep gully, usually filled with snow,

which provides an arduous slog to the top (2522m), where we gaze into Spain. It's hard to imagine how the escapees from France would have felt at this moment, having survived the mountain crossing. We are likely to feel a mix of relief and elation, as all that remains of our very challenging trek now is a relatively gentle descent over grassy slopes to the end of the trailhead above the village of Esterri de Aneu. We get into our waiting transport and drive to the small mountain town of Vielha, where we celebrate our many achievements this week.

Trek approx. 6 hours; drive approx. 1 hour

Day 6: Vielha – Toulouse; Depart

Time to wander and explore this historic town; depending on flight schedule times; we then transfer to Toulouse Airport for our flight home.

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Toulouse
- Transport and transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotels (twinshare), refuges & camps
- Camping equipment
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependent on group size)
- Local mountain guides, cooks & drivers
- Local support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites included in itinerary
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag and sleeping mat
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Personal spending money, souvenirs & drinks. Tips for the local support crew
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities (eg. museum or spa)
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | RED

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **RED** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any medical incidents. They help the crew to ensure the trip runs smoothly, and encourage you when things get tough. The total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. In some destinations we work together as a team with local guides to help set up or break camp, or prepare meals. Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to

donate something!

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

Accommodation is in a mix of family-run hotels, mountain refuges, and camping. Mountain huts are clean and comfortable considering their remote location; sleeping arrangements are dormitory-style. We endeavour to use smaller rooms and keep them single-sex, but please be aware this may not always be possible, especially at busy times. Camping facilities are basic, but with incredible views!

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis. Some nights are usually twin-share. On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal rooms such as dormitories, huts, local homestays, etc., depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.
You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that each person completes the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.
If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before

booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option.

When it comes to tent sharing, we do not offer a single option unless there are exceptional circumstances, for logistical and safety reasons.

We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

At the start of the challenge, your luggage will be transported by vehicle as you trek; however halfway through Day 3 you will meet the vehicles and collect your kit for the night, which you must be able to carry to the hut as there's no access by vehicle. You will need to continue carrying your own gear for the rest of the trek, until you are met once again by the vehicles in Spain.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

GRADE | RED

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Trip grading explained

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

Walking terrain is varied, through valleys, forest, and mountain pastures, as well as over steep rocky ascents and descents. It can be muddy and slippery after rain. Some sections are very exposed, and there is likely to be some walking over snow and boulders. After the second day, we are in a very remote area with no vehicle access; trekkers continuing past this point must be fully prepared and determined, as you will be carrying your kit too. This trek must not be underestimated, and we strongly recommend you gain ample experience of mountain walking in the UK/overseas before your trip, if you do not walk this kind of terrain regularly.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a

minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.

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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 19 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.