

Pyrenees Freedom Trail



Duration: 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 CO₂ 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 Giron, 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](#)



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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 15 Jul 2025, and the challenge is subject to change.