

## Coastal Freedom Trail Trek



Duration: 6 days

This beautiful trek along the Vermillion coast of the Costa Brava follows in part the Coastal Freedom Trail or 'Chemin de la Liberté', one of the WW2 escape routes from Nazi-occupied France into Spain. Local people risked their lives to help the thousands of allied servicemen and Jewish refugees fleeing to safety on tiny paths to the border crossing, and from there into Spain or Portugal, or via the British ships and submarines that would wait offshore.

The trek offers a huge variety of scenery as we follow the coast initially, before heading inland to cross the border via the Col de Rimplissa, where we see our route in full winding its way along the beautiful, remote coastline to the stunning Cap de Creus, where we finish at the spectacularly-situated lighthouse. This is an incredible trek with a poignant undertone – a personal challenge which commemorates the bravery of others.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Fly London to Perpignan

We fly to Perpignan and transfer to the beautiful coastal town of Collioure. Time permitting you'll have a chance to explore the town before gathering for an evening meal and trek briefing. Night hotel.

*(Lunch not included)*

### Day 2: Collioure – Banyuls-Sur-Mer

We begin walking to Port-Vendres, where Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin began his escape journey in 1940. He was helped by resistance members Lisa and Hans Fittko, who went on to help hundreds of refugees escape into Spain. We start the day trekking to Fort Sant Elme and head out past the ruins of Batterie Mally to the Cap de Bear. We continue around the coast along rough cliff-top trails and beaches alongside the Mediterranean coast to Banyuls-Sur-Mer. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 15km; 5-6 hours**

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### Day 3: Banyuls-Sur-Mer – Portbou

We head inland into the hills, climbing through vineyards overlooking the smuggling town of Banyuls. This section is named for Walter Benjamin, and we pass plaques commemorating his escape route over the steep Col de Rumplissa (600m), which marks the border with Spain. There is an option to climb up to the castle of Querroig, which offers views of our entire route, before beginning our descent to Portbou. We walk down through woods to the river; it is steep in places and you'll need to watch out for the prickly pear cacti that line the path. We then walk through a tunnel and arrive in the sleepy town of Portbou. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 13km; 6-7 hours**

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### Day 4: Portbou – Port de la Selva

We start the day with a visit to the poignant, impressive Walter Benjamin memorial, which marks the end of the escape route into Spain. We then climb out of Portbou, following a ridge with views of the Mediterranean far below us. From the ridge we descend on good trails down to the small town of Colera, passing the beautiful beach of Garbet, onto the remote Cap Ras, where we'll enjoy the shade of the pine trees next to the water. After lunch our path changes to a coastal promenade, making our afternoon more easy-going. We head towards the distant lighthouse and enjoy impressive views of the St Pere de Rodes monastery high in the hills above us. We finish the day in the fishing town of Port de la Selva. Night hotel.

**Trek approx 18km; 6-7 hours**

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### Day 5: Port de la Selva – Cap de Creus Lighthouse – Barcelona

Our final day's walk heads through the Cap de Creus National Park. It is easy to see why this area is renowned for its natural beauty and wildlife status! Dusty trails wind through a mix of woodland and open landscapes with the backdrop of crystal-clear Mediterranean waters, overlooked by the mountains – it's simply stunning. The trails are relatively easy underfoot, and although there are no significant hills, the terrain is constantly undulating. After lunch you'll begin to glimpse the lighthouse that marks the end of the peninsula, and the surroundings become much more barren as we ascend to our finishing point. There should be time for a celebratory drink in the wonderfully-located bar, before we jump into the waiting vehicles for our transfer to Barcelona. Here we'll celebrate our achievement in the famous Catalan capital. Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 15km / 5-6 hours; drive approx. 3-4 hours**

## Day 6: Fly Barcelona to London

Depending on flight schedules, there should be time to explore Barcelona before transferring to the airport for our flight home.

*(Lunch not included)*

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Perpignan / Barcelona return
- All meals except where specified
- Hotel / guesthouse accommodation
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides & drivers
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary
- Airline taxes

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

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

## GRADE | YELLOW

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** 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 (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

## BUY YOUR KITBAG

**Only £45 (inc p&p)** - designed to deal with the rigours of your challenge.

Easier for accessing gear than a rucksack (especially when camping) this is probably the most cost-effective way to take your luggage on a Discover Adventure challenge!



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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 20 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.