

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

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

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

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](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure crew - selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones and/or radios where appropriate, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary.

The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, ensuring your route is clear, making you lunch and sorting out any mechanical problems. Support vehicles are with the group all of the time, and carry all luggage and spares.

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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), 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 usually in well-located, comfortable 2-3* hotel(s); standards are generally very good though there may be some variation.

Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels convenient to our route. Please tell us if you know somebody

else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

There may be a limited number of single rooms subject to request, on a first-come first-served basis, after you have booked. Extra charges will apply.

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.

Food & Dietary Requirements

We like to support local businesses and will source food locally wherever we can. Lunches will be a mix of restaurants along the route or supplies will be purchased from local shops; dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. For larger sized groups we may opt to cater the lunches ourselves with a buffet style provision. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Having said that, despite working very hard with the hotels, it doesn't always translate into what we'd like for you. If this is the case on your trip, please chat to the crew at the time and they will do their best to find a solution. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

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.

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 with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

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.

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 post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees 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.

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