

Season

From end of April to mid-October.

We recommend you to book this tour 3 or 4 months before the departure date if you plan to walk it in summer time. Great demand and few rooms!

Difficulty: grade 4

You walk more than 8 hours a day in mountains. Total ascent a day could be more than 1,000 m. It's quite challenging and you must have a high level of fitness. The trail is well marked with red and white GR signs except on some summits where there is no waymarking and no track in spring. But it is easy to follow the line of crests towards the next pass and quickly you will see the path again!



Itinerary

7-day and 6-night self-guided walking holidays

Day 1 : Arrival at SAINT JEAN PIED DE PORT. The chief town of Basse Navarre is located at the base of the Roncevaux pass in a charming and lush pocket. The upper part of the city, encircled by fortified walls and the citadel – a fortification which had been built to prevent the Spanish invasions – were developed on the two banks of the Nive River. The city holds a rich patrimony which includes la prison des Evêques (Bishops' Jail), la maison des états de Navarre, and the Romanesque bridge...that you shall not want to miss.

Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 2 : SAINT JEAN PIED DE PORT - ST ETIENNE DE BAÏGORRY (7 hour walk – Ascent : 900 meters). You will leave the city for the small village of Lasse before attempting the first ascent to the Manhoa Summit (1021 m). You will walk through grazing lands down to the Urdanzia Pass and will continue making your way through large, green areas covered with high ferns until you reach the Ahara Pass. You will make your way on the flank of the valley, walking on stony paths through vast grazing fields, and will slowly descend to Saint Etienne de Baïgorry, a Basque village with white houses that stretches out in the valley along the river (lovely, shady square near old plane trees next to the fronton). The church next to the hotel is worth a visit - Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.



Day 3 : SAINT ETIENNE DE BAÏGORRY - BIDARRAY (8.30 hour walk – Ascent : 1400 meters). This is a long and gorgeous walk. After crossing the river and admiring the Romanesque bridge, you will start climbing up to the Buztanzelhay Pass. Walking in turn across summits and passes, you will follow the border between France and Spain and will cross l'Astate and the Pics (peaks) de Toutalia and Iparla. Then the path along the crests distances itself from Spain and progressively descends to the Nive Valley and Bidarray - Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 4 : BIDARRAY - AINHOA (7.30 hour walk – Ascent : 800 meters). You will meet with the Bastan Torrent at Le Pont d'Enfer (Hell's bridge) and will walk back up the deep valley until you reach the hamlet of Arouchia at the end of the little road. You will continue climbing to the crests' line which marks the border between France and Spain. Along the passes, you will reach the Mehatché Pass, located between the Artzamendi and Iguzki peaks. The path continues along the border and then runs along the flank of the slope under the crest of Mont Bizkayluze. You will pass round the Mont Atxulegi before joining the Troix Croix Pass and walking down to Ainhoa, seeing the Aubépine Chapel on the way - Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 5 : AINHOA - ASCAIN (8 hour walk – Ascent : 1050 meters). You will leave the village of Ainhoa, walking down the picturesque main street lined with white half-timbered houses with coloured window shutters. You will visit the

picturesque church, with its wood ceiling and double gallery. You will arrive at and follow the Nivelle River before climbing to the Franco-Spanish border, passing through forests. You will walk along the border and down to Sare, a nice village characteristic of the Basque country. Sare holds a lovely church with a three-floor gallery. You will then begin your ascent of la Rhune, a famous summit of the Basque Country. You will be rewarded for your efforts by a wonderful view of the ocean, the forest of the Landes region and the Basque Pyrenees. You will finally walk down to Ascain, a charming little Basque village - Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 6 : ASCAIN - HENDAYE (7.30 hour walk – Ascent : 650 meters). You will head to Montobaïta gîte. From here, you will pass around the Cibourne Mountain, cross through a forest to the Ibardin Pass (tourist area) and then descend progressively to Biriadou, a picturesque little village nestling on the flank of the mountain and overlooking la Bidassoa. You will make your way through the green countryside until you reach the seaside and Hendaye, the last stage of this walk. Lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel.

Day 7 : HENDAYE. Tour ends after breakfast

Access to and from

Outward journey to St Jean Pied de Port

By train: The Paris-Hendaye train will bring you to Bayonne where you will take a connection to Saint Jean Pied de Port (3 trains per day).

By car : go to Bordeaux along A10 motorway to Bordeaux and continue the A63 to Bayonne. Then follow the route D932 to Cambo-les-Bains. There you will change for the route D918 which will bring you to Saint Jean Pied de Port. From Toulouse, drive A64 motorway (La Pyrénéenne) to exit 7 towards Salies de Béarn and continue to Saint Jean Pied de Port along D933 road.

Where to park : several free unguarded car parks in St Jean pied de port

Inward journey from Hendaye

By train: many trains from Hendaye to Paris (via Bordeaux).

Getting back your car: To return to Saint Jean Pied de Port, trains run from Hendaye with a connection in Bayonne.

Accommodation

5 nights with accommodation in a 2-star hotel on half-board basis

1 night with accommodation in a 2-star hotel on lodging and breakfast basis

Accommodation is normally in large bed or twin-bedded rooms, with en-suite facilities (at least shower, washbasin and toilet) when available, which is 95% of the time. However, you can stay in remote spots or small villages where there is little or no choice of accommodations and where facilities may be limited. In this case, you will share a bathroom or shower room and toilets with some other people on the same storey.

Picnic lunches are not included in the tour but are available from the hotel on request the previous evening, alternatively picnic materials can be bought at the stop village or at each of the towns and villages along the route. We indicate in the route notes where there are suitable restaurants or cafés for lunch stops. We recommend you to carry food and drinks if there are none convenient to the trail.

Included

- Twin share accommodation with private facilities
- Baggage transfer between hotels (except for STD option)
- Route notes and maps
- 5 dinners
- Emergency phone number (8:00am to 7:00pm every day)

Not included

- Visa fees, transportation fees to and from the walk area
- Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips)
- Transfers except those mentioned above
- Drinks
- Additional meals
- Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls...



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