

EXPLORE!



Self-Guided Walking Through Catalonia

8 days

Spain - Trip code WSCA

Self-Guided Walking Through Catalonia

Experience authentic Catalonia's rich cultural and natural beauty walking from the foothills of the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean. Walk through extinct volcanoes, beech woods and ancient farmlands to medieval villages and towns. Take the stunning coastal walk from L'Estartit to L'Escala and visit the impressive Greek and Roman archaeological site of Empuries. En route discover the famed Catalanian hospitality and cuisine.

Trip highlights

- ★ **La Garrotxa Natural Park** - Extinct volcanoes, fascinating basalt rock formations and beech woodlands
- ★ **Medieval town and villages** - Including Santa Pau and Besalu
- ★ **Classic Catalanian countryside** - Walk through rolling hills and ancient farmlands
- ★ **Empuries** - Stunning Roman and Greek archaeological site
- ★ **Coastal walk** - Hike along the cliffs and coves from L'Estartit and L'Escala

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Olot

Your walking holiday starts in Olot, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, and an ancient volcanic land called La Garrotxa. This region has over thirty extinct volcanoes, now covered in woodland and vegetation. Olot itself is an historic town, with colourful old buildings in the streets around the centre and a selection of cafes and bars. Our hotel of choice here is a family run hotel with a private garden area and swimming pool, on the outskirts of the town.



Accommodation: Hotel Mas Can Blanc (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - La Garrotxa Natural Park

Your first walk is in La Garrotxa Natural Park, a great introduction to this area. You will be taken by taxi to the visitors centre at Fageda d'en Jorda. From here you follow a trail through protected beech woodland, past long extinct volcanoes including the striking crater of El Croscat, back to your hotel in Olot.

Your first walk covers 16 kilometres and takes approximately five and a half hours. The total ascent and descent is +365m / -500m.

Note - The La Garrotxa Natural Park Information Centre and Museu dels Volcans are not open on Mondays



Accommodation: Hotel Mas Can Blanc (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Medieval towns: From Santa Pau to Besalu

Today begins with a taxi ride (included) to the medieval town of Santa Pau. The town centre has some interesting buildings including a castle first mentioned in documents dating back to the 10th century. From Santa Pau you follow the GR-2 long distance path through the Ser River valley and across rolling hills before finally descending to the beautifully preserved medieval town of Besalu via the famous 12th century bridge over the Fluvia River. The town's historic centre features arcaded streets and squares, a church consecrated in 1003, a restored Jewish bathhouse (kimveh) dating back to the 11th - 12th century, and a medieval synagogue down near the river. Our hotel of choice here is a centrally located, small, historic hotel.

Today's walk is 19 kilometres and takes approximately six hours. Total ascent and descent is +275m / -625m

Hotel Casa Marcial

Located in the historic town centre, this hotel is only a few minutes walk to the medieval Bridge of Besalu and the Sant Pere Monastery. The hotel offers large rooms with balconies or terraces, with great views of the town or surrounding gardens. There's also a pool that overlooks the town, as well as a bar and outdoor terrace.



Accommodation: Hotel Casa Marcial (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Hike beside River Fluvia to the rural village of Esponella

The walk today is shorter than previously. The trail first passes through fields then follows the River Fluvia where there are numerous swimming spots, and restaurants where you can stop for lunch. After a taxi ride back to Besalu (included) you will have time to further explore this interesting town.

The walk today is either 11 or 14 kilometres depending on route and takes approximately three or three and a half hours. The total ascent and descent is +175m / 160m.



Accommodation: Hotel Casa Marcial (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Walk through rural Catalanian farmland to Pins

This morning you take a short taxi ride (20 minutes, included) to the hamlet of Vilavenut, where you pick up another long distance footpath known as 'The Historic Way' (GR-1). Following mainly dirt tracks you traverse typical Catalanian landscapes with

beautiful old farms, small agricultural plots and dairy herds. Tonight you will stay in a local farmhouse. Our preferred choice of farm is also a horse riding centre and has several apartments, as well as rooms in the main house.

Today's walk covers 18km and takes approximately five and a half hours. Total ascent and descent is +200m / -300m.



Accommodation: Casa Muni (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Views to the Mediterranean: Pins to Sant Marti d'Empuries (L'Escala)

Today's walk is again through the ancient farmland of Catalonia, although with quite a different feel as the last hills give way to impressive views over the Mediterranean - offering the enticing promise of an afternoon at the beach. You also pass the ancient Greek and Roman town of Empuries, a fascinating archaeological site that is well worth visiting. Our hotel of choice is situated by the beach on the outskirts of nearby L'Escala, and has a spa.

Your walk today is sixteen kilometres and takes approximately four and a half hours. The total ascent and descent is +125m / -200m.

Hotel LEscala Centre

This modern style family run hotel is located right on the coast, so there's only a 4 minute walk to the beach and also very close by to Sant Martí d'Empúries. The hotel offers a rooftop terrace and a communal lounge area, and most of the rooms have a stunning view out to sea.



Accommodation: Hotel L'Escala Centre (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Mediterranean coastal walk: L'Estartit to L'Escala

Today starts with taxi journey (included) along the coast to L'Estartit. Your last walk takes an adventurous route following historic fishermen's trails, passing cliffs and coves along the Mediterranean coast then via the port, beach and town centre back to L'Escala - with plenty of opportunities to swim. If you don't wish to make the full walk it is possible to take lunch on Montgo beach (after eleven and a half kilometres) and then spend time on the beach before taking a taxi back to your hotel (not included). Equally you could opt for a day on the beach or an easy there and back walk along the coast.

Today's full walk covers twenty kilometres and takes approximately seven hours. However it is possible to finish the walk after eleven and a half kilometres (approximately five hours). The maximum total ascent is +545m / -580m.



Accommodation: Hotel L'Escala Centre (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in L'Escala

Your trip ends today in L'Escala, after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE



Optional Walks

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks on six days for an average of five and a quarter hours a day, mainly on well maintained unsurfaced trails and footpaths. Total distance for the standard route covers just under 100 kilometres (although it is possible to walk less on the last day). The maximum daily ascent and descent is +545m / -625m.

Max walking altitude (m)

730



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 2



Transport

Taxi



Accommodation

3 nights standard hotel
4 nights premium hotel

Trip information

Country information

Spain

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a Spanish trip - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The high central plains suffer from fierce extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. Spain's Islands the Canaries and Balaerics experience very mild winters and warm summers making them ideal year round destinations.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

During the day you will mainly need lightweight, breathable shorts and shirts. However light rainwear may be needed at any time of the year, and a warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights early and late in the season. In July and August temperatures can reach 30°. April and May are the months with the most rain.

Footwear

Well worn, sturdy walking boots / shoes with good ankle support are essential for the walks. Sandals and trainers are recommended for relaxing in the evenings.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage during transfers by public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport or on a ferry you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat and sunscreen are all essential and you may wish to bring a small torch. Walking poles are recommended.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

The following maps are recommended:

Mapa comarcal de Catalunya, scale: 1:50000, published by Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya

n° 02 Alt Empordà

n° 19 Garrotxa

n° 28 Pla d'Estany These can be purchased online at <http://ebotiga.icgc.cat/> Go to the e-shop and select "Shire map 1:50,000" ("Mapa comarcal" in Spanish)

Tipping

Local fees

Micromundi Museum, Besalu (01 May to 31 Oct) €4.90

Ruines d'Empuries €5

Taxi from Montgo Beach to hotel approximately €13

NB City Taxes maybe applicable. These are payable locally to the accommodation owner and vary from place to place. Generally this tax is up to €2 per person per night.

Country Information

Spain

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8.00 - 12.00

Dinner price

£16.00 - 20.00

Beer price

£1.50 - 2.50 (depending on the region/area in Spain)

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euros

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend you take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Taxi

Recommended airport

Girona or Barcelona Airport

Flying to your destination

The nearest airports are Girona and Barcelona. Barcelona has more flights and is served by budget (including EasyJet, Ryan Air, Norwegian) and charter / scheduled airlines (including Monarch, British Airways, Vueling). Girona is served by fewer airlines including Ryan Air and Thomson Airways.

Arrival and departure information

For information on travel to / from Girona airport, please go to: <http://www.aena.es/en/girona-costa-brava-airport/index.html>

From Girona airport to Olot By bus

From Girona airport to Girona bus station (city centre):

Line 607 run by the company Sagalés. Departures 01 April to 31 October every hour from 05:30 to 23:30 hrs. There are fewer services from November to March. Travel time is approximately 30 minutes.

www.sagales.com

From Girona bus station to Olot:

Monday to Friday, hourly from 07:15 to 21:30 hrs. Weekends, every two hours from 09:15 to 21:15 hrs. Service run by Teisa. The fastest option is by way of Banyoles. Travel time to Olot is 1 to 1,5 hours.

www.teisa-bus.com

For information on travel to / from Barcelona airport, please go to: <http://www.aena.es/en/barcelona-airport/index.html>

From Barcelona airport (El Prat) to Girona By bus

There is also a bus service from Barcelona airport via Girona airport to Girona city centre: Line 602 run by the company Sagalés. Several departures a day. Travel time is about 2,5 hours. A single ticket is approximately 20 €. To check timetables online, select Origin ' Aeroport de Prat de Llobregat, Destination ' Girona, then choose your arrival terminal (T1 or T2). www.sagales.com

From Barcelona airport (El Prat) to Barcelona city centre By train

You take the Cercanías/Rodalies train line R from the airport to Passeig de Gràcia, just a five- minute walk from the TEISA bus stop. There are trains every 30 minutes from 05:40 to 22:30 hrs, travel time is approximately 30 minutes.

From Barcelona city centre to Olot By bus

From Barcelona city centre to Olot with Teisa Bus. Buses depart from the Teisa stop located at Calle Pau Claris, 117. This is one block east of Passeig de Gracia and half a block south of Carrer Arag\`f2. Metro L4 Passeig de Gracia. Location:

<https://goo.gl/maps/v8fQhcUQsbL2>

Line 102 Barcelona-Olot via Amer with departures Monday to Saturday at 10:00, 15:00 and 20:00. Sundays and holidays at 10:00 and 20:15. Travel time is just over 2 hours. http://www.teisa-bus.com/pdf/pdf_linie.pdf

Other timetables may be available in spring summer. For further details, please go to: www.teisa-bus.com

From the bus stop in Olot, you can take a taxi to your hotel (approximately 2.5 km). <https://goo.gl/maps/FM2qjUb1Mv52>

**Check your departure terminal and make sure your mode of transport will get you to the proper terminal for your departure from

Barcelona Airport**

Alternatively it is possible to book private transfers both ways for both Girona and Barcelona airports. Please ask Explore for details.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Spain: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US, New Zealand, US or Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

730

Spain

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
