

# Old Hall Walking Club

## Pyrenees Itinerary

### 12-19 September 2021

We've been contacted by some members of Old Hall Walking Club who would like to do a hut to hut trip in the Pyrenees next September. They have also asked us to put together an itinerary for people who'd prefer gentler hikes and to be based at a hotel for the week. We've therefore put together the following three options for members of the club to choose from (full details of each itinerary overleaf):

#### **Option A: Hotel based holiday**

Gentler day hikes in the Valle de Tena and Ordesa National Park. You'll be based in the lovely 4\* **Hotel Tierra de Biescas** for the week, with meals taken at local restaurants in the village.

#### **Option B: Hut to hut itinerary**

Strenuous hiking between mountain huts with the route visiting both the Valle de Tena and Ordesa National Park and including an ascent of Monte Perdido - at 3355 metres the third highest peak in the Pyrenees. When not in huts you'll be staying at Hotel Tierra de Biescas with the rest of the group.

#### **Option C: Huts then Hotel itinerary**

For people who'd like to do a few nights in huts but not the whole week. This itinerary will comprise of the first half of the hut to hut trip in the Valle de Tena and then spend the second half of the week at Hotel Tierra de Biescas doing the gentler hikes with option A.

All the itineraries are 7 nights with fully guided hiking. The hikes will explore both the Valle de Tena and Ordesa National Park. The Valle de Tena is in the Ordesa-Vignemale Biosphere Reserve and has a wealth of alpine meadows surrounded by high peaks. Ordesa was one of the first National Parks in Spain and has several kilometre deep canyons. It's also a UNESCO world heritage site (for the biodiversity of flora and fauna). Both areas have wonderful hiking with a huge choice of routes of all levels.

All hikes will be guided by qualified English speaking guides (alpine guides for the hut to hut trip). We have a small team of local guides that all know the area like the back of their hand. They not only know the routes but also the wonderful wild flowers and wildlife you'll see during your hikes.

The guides will talk through the routes each morning. Below we've put a likely schedule but we keeps things flexible and if the routes are too long or too short for the group we'll adjust accordingly and select routes that suit the group and the weather conditions that day - I know that some people didn't come on the last Pyrenees trip as they were worried about the hikes being too strenuous. Don't worry we'll adapt the hikes on option A to match the fitness of the group!



# Itinerary A: Hotel based itinerary

The itinerary is based in the lovely mountain village of Biescas and you'll stay at the 4\* **Hotel Tierra de Biescas** which has excellent facilities with gardens, outdoor and indoor pool and a sauna. It has an excellent restaurant which serves good buffet style breakfasts. Evening meals will be taken at various excellent restaurants in the village giving you a great opportunity to try the local dishes. The village of Biescas is based around two medieval churches and has a population of around 800 people. The hotel has double, twin and single rooms.

## Sunday: Arrive

Group arrives - see notes regarding travel options at the end of the PDF. We'll be picking the group up from either Zaragoza airport or train station for the transfer to Biescas (1 ½ hrs).

On arrival there will be a briefing about the trip ahead, the hikes, kit required, etc. followed by the evening meal at a restaurant in the village.

## Monday: Hike in Valle de Tena

### Ibon de Piedrafita

The route starts with a gentle climb through woodlands. We come into alpine meadows with wonderful wild flowers and views across the Valle de Tena. Ibon de Piedrafita is a mountain lake nestled under the kilometre high cliffs of the Sierra de Partacua. It's a circular route and we first hike in the meadows under the cliffs before descending via a different path.

Distance: 10 km

Ascent: 345 m



On the Punta del Pacino hike



Views over the Valle de Tena



On the way to Ibon de Piedrafita

## Tuesday: Hike in Valle de Tena along the Rio Aguas Limpias

Starting at the pretty village of Sallent de Gallego we follow the Rio de Aguas Limpias - the river of clean water - up through a wonderful valley past meadows, woods and waterfalls. Excellent for flowers and butterflies.

Distance: 12km

Ascent: 400 metres



Cooling the feet in Lac Ayous



Views from Pic Ayous



Lacs Ayous with Midi d'Ossau behind

## Wednesday: Rest, wine tasting and cultural day

We'll take the rest day a day earlier than normal to coincide with the free afternoon for the group doing the hut to hut itinerary. After a more relaxed start to the day we'll visit the Serrablo vally south of Biescas. It's famous for its Romanesque churches dating back to the 10th century.

In the afternoon we'll visit the village Barbenuta (15 mins from Biescas) which has Bodega Bal Minuta with the highest vineyards in Spain. We'll have a tour of the village, watch a short film about the history of the village (which only has one family resident year round), visit the vines and finish with a wine and cheese tasting. Our friends Ernesto and Pilar run the vineyard and run a really interesting tour of the village. We'll return back to Biescas for the evening meal.

Anybody who would prefer to stay at the hotel and rest or swim are welcome to.

## Thursday: Hike in Ordesa National Park

The Ordesa Valley is a kilometre deep canyon and one of the most famous hiking spots for Spanish hikers (despite hardly being known outside of Spain!). Above the valley lies a string of 3000 metre peaks including Monte Perdido the third highest summit in the Pyrenees. There are two trails that we can chose from and we'll select one according to the wishes of the group. All start and end at the same point.

**Low level: The valley floor** (16km, 450m ascent)

A walk along the floor of the Ordesa Valley. We pass through ancient beech and silver pine woods, past several waterfalls, with the sheer cliffs of Ordesa rising above us on both sides. The woodland gives way to give fantastic views of the 3000m Monte Perdido at the head of the valley. Although the distance is quite long, the path is very good and not steep and allows for quick progress. In addition, it's a there and back route so we can always turn back a bit before the valley end to shorten the route.

**Mid level: Faja Racon** (11km, 600m ascent)

Wonderful hike around the base of the cliffs of Ordesa. First we climb into the Circo de Corrieta before contouring around the bottom of the cliffs. One of the best hikes for getting a sense of the scale of the cliffs of the valley. The path is a little narrow in places so this hike best avoided by those with vertigo.



Waterfalls on the valley floor



Views from the Faja de Pelay



On the Faja Racon

## Friday: Lacs Ayous

Today we head to the French side of the Pyrenees to hike in the Pyrenees National Park. The hike takes up alongmng the famous GR10 to the Lacs Ayous - a lovely set of mountain lakes with fantastic views of the iconic peak of Pic du Midi d'Ossau. The full route to the highest lake reaches a refuge where you can buy yourself a hot chocolate, wine or beer! If the distance is a bit much it's easy to do a shorter version of this hike.

Distance: 14km - but possible to do a shorter version

Ascent: 600 metres

## Saturday: Punta del Pacino (1965m)

A beautiful ascent through woodland and meadows to the peak of Punta del Pacino. Its position at the centre of the valley gives fabulous panoramic views of the Valle De Tena and surrounding peaks. A wonderful route and a fitting end to a great weeks hiking!

Distance: 9 km

Ascent: 700 m

## Sunday: Departure - Transfer back to Zaragoza

Leisurely breakfast before your transfer back to Zaragoza train station or airport.

## Option B: Hut to hut itinerary

7 night hut to hut following the GR11 and including an ascent of Monte Perdido. The route will be the same as the [Refugio Week itinerary](#) on our website, below we've put a summary of the itinerary but you can read further details (and view route profiles) on our website.

Please note this is a strenuous itinerary with steep, rocky, high mountain trails. It's not expected that you'll need crampons and ice axes at this time of year but the route does involve some easy scrambling.

You stay 4 nights in mountain huts and the rest of the nights at Hotel Tierra de Biescas where the rest of the group will be based. The huts have dormitory accommodation and serve breakfasts and evening meals. While fairly basic all have hot showers.

## Sunday: Arrive

Group arrives - see notes regarding travel options at the end of the PDF. We'll be picking the group up from either Zaragoza airport or train station for the transfer to Biescas (1 ½ hrs).

On arrival there will be a briefing about the trip ahead, the hikes, kit required, etc. followed by the evening meal at a restaurant in the village.

## Monday: Ibon de Arrieles and Refugio Respomuso

Short drive to the village of Sallent de Gallego, from where we set off along one of the region's highlights: the GR11, we follow the Pyrenean long-distance path to Refugio Respomuso, situated among 3000-metre peaks. On the way we'll make a side trip to the spectacular Ibones de Arriel - a set of lakes lying in a high glacial cirque and some of the prettiest in the Pyrenees.

Distance: 14.5 km / Ascent: 900 m

## Tuesday: Pico Tebbarai (2916m) and Refugio Bachimaña

Continuing along the Gr11, we head into the wild landscape of Circo de Piedrafita. Our route takes us past mountain lakes and we have the option to climb Tebarrai (2916m). We head down past the Ibones Azules and to Refugio Bachimaña to stay another night in the mountains with fantastic views.

Distance: 11.2 km / Ascent: 1000 m



Refugio Respomuso



Views of the high summits



At Ibon de Arriel



Descending on Tuesday's hike



Views from the summit of Tebbarai



Ascending Pico Tebbarai

## Wednesday: Balneario de Panticosa

Easy descent from Refugio Bachimaña taking a couple of hours and passing meadows and waterfalls. Short transfer to Hotel Tierra de Biescas. In the afternoon you'll join the rest of the group for the vineyard tour and wine tasting in Barbenuta (see option A for more details) before your evening meal.

Distance: 3.2 km / Descent: 550 m

## Thursday: Ordesa Valley and Refugio Goriz

The Faja de Pelay is the start of our three-day hike in the Ordesa National Park. After an initial steep climb we follow a wide ledge in the sheer cliffs of the Ordesa valley giving breathtaking views across the valley and of all the three thousand metre border peaks. Spend the night at Refugio Goriz beneath Monte Perdido.

Distance: 12.5 km / Ascent: 900 m

## Friday: Monte Perdido (3355m)

Our objective today is the classic ascent of Monte Perdido (3335m), the highest peak in the area. The summit views overlooking the Ordesa, Pineta and Anisclo canyons and into France are simply stunning. The route isn't technical but is very steep and involves some scrambling. Return to Refugio Goriz for the night.

Distance: 7.7 km / Ascent: 1554 m

## Saturday: Añisclo Canyon

Our walk out is through the neighbouring Añisclo Canyon, another spectacular canyon carved into the limestone plateau. We pass thundering waterfalls before reaching our transport back to the 4\* Hotel Tierra de Biescas with a sauna and a pool for a final night of luxury and evening meal with the rest of the group.

Distance: 17 km / Ascent: 300 m / Descent: 1000 m

## Sunday: Depart

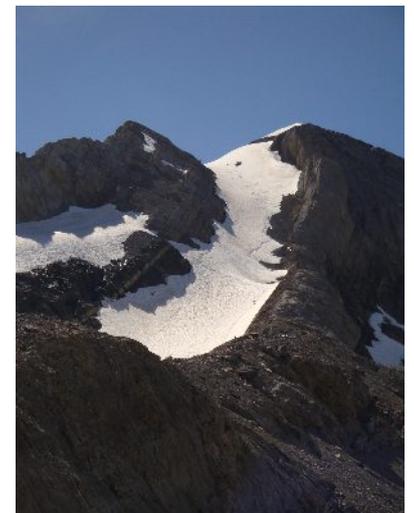
Breakfast and then transfer to Zaragoza for your onward travel.



Crossing the Collado de Goriz



High above the Ordesa Valley



The final ascent of Perdido (less snow in Sep!)

# Option C: Hut then hotel itinerary

On this itinerary you do the first three days hiking of the hut to hut trip and then the second half of the week based at Hotel Tierra de Biescas doing the hikes with the option A group. A brief description of the itinerary is as follows and full details can be found on the preceding pages.

## Sunday: Arrival

Transfer from Zaragoza airport or train station to Hotel Tierra de Biescas. Briefing about the week ahead followed by evening meal in a village restaurant.

## Monday: Ibones de Arriel and Refugio Respomuso

Join the hut to hut group and hike to the Ibones de Arriel and onto Refugio Respomuso where you spend the night.

## Tuesday: Pico Tebbarai (2916m) and Refugio Bachimaña

Continuing along the Gr11, we head into the wild landscape of Circo de Piedrafita. Our route takes us past mountain lakes and we have the option to climb Tebbarai (2916m). We head down past the Ibones Azules and to Refugio Bachimaña to stay another night in the mountains with fantastic views.

Distance: 11.2 km / Ascent: 1000 m

## Wednesday: Balneario de Panticosa

Easy descent from Refugio Bachimaña taking a couple of hours and passing meadows and waterfalls. Short transfer to Hotel Tierra de Biescas. In the afternoon you'll join the rest of the group for the vineyard tour and wine tasting in Barbenuta (see option A for more details) before your evening meal.

Distance: 3.2 km / Descent: 550 m

## Thursday: Hike in Ordesa National Park

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Distance: 14km - but possible to do a shorter version, Ascent: 600 metres

## Saturday: Punta del Pacino (1965m)

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Distance: 9 km

Ascent: 700 m

## Sunday: Departure - Transfer back to Zaragoza

Leisurely breakfast before your transfer back to Zaragoza train station or airport.

## Dates: 12-19 September

September is an excellent time for hiking in the Pyrenees with sunny weather without the full heat of the summer.

We've availability for the week of **Sunday 4 - Sunday 11 July 2021**.

## Hikes & guides

All hikes will be led by qualified guides. Day hikes will be led by International Mountain Leaders and the hut to hut trip by alpine guides. For the hotel based itinerary we always keep the hiking itinerary flexible and alter things during the week depending on the groups fitness and the weather. In this itinerary we've put our best guess at which hikes we'll do but as I say we keep things flexible and can always either lengthen or shorten the hikes as required.

The hut to hut trip has a fairly fixed itinerary with no that much room for variations. Unless weather conditions mean it's dangerous to continue (unlikely), we'll be expecting to complete the itinerary as stated.

## Travel & Arrival

Transfer from Zaragoza airport or train station to Biescas - the journey takes 1 ¾ hrs. From the UK, you can take the Ryan Air flight from Stansted to Zaragoza. Alternatively you can fly to Madrid or Barcelona and catch the AVE fast train (1 ½ hr journey) to Zaragoza and we'll pick you up from the train station - the journey is very straightforward. We can buy train tickets for any of the group that would like us to.

Additionally, if any of the group would like to stay a night or two in Zaragoza we can book them into an excellent, central and good value hotel. Zaragoza is a really interesting city with Roman remains, a Goya museum and the wonderful basilica to visit. If there are a number of the group spending some time in Zaragoza we can organise a private history walking tour of the city in English finishing in one of the most typical tapas bars in Zaragoza.

## Prices

### Option A (hotel based)

Group Size	Price per person
5 (min) - 14	1199 €

\* 99 € as single room supplement

\* 95 € supplement per person for upgraded room with small private garden

\* 189 € supplement per person for upgrade to Jr Suite with balcony

### Option B (hut to hut)

Group Size	Price per person
4 (min) - 12	1199 €

\* 49 € as single room supplement  
(only for nights in the hotel)

### Option C (hotel and hut)

Price per person
1199 €

\* 79 € single room supplement (for the nights in hotel)

The price includes:

- 7 nights Hotel Tierra de Biescas
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Picnic lunches for all hiking days
- 2 qualified mountain leader each hiking day
- Transfers to/from Zaragoza and to/from the hikes
- Cultural day - wine tasting at Barbenuta and any other visits we do

Not included:

- Drinks with meals (wine, coffees, beer, etc) - included with some meals but not all
- Lunch on Wednesday (rest day)
- Transport to Zaragoza if arriving from Barcelona or Madrid. Train tickets charged separately

## Covid and cancellation conditions

We totally appreciate the uncertainties of booking any travel in today's uncertain world.

Initially, we will not be asking for any deposit and just a 'show of hands' of people that are interested and we will hold the rooms, guides and dates for you all. In the New Year/spring when hopefully things become clearer we will be asking for a deposit of 125€ per person and for confirmation of numbers.

**If for any covid related reason the trip cannot go ahead, we will refund all deposits and monies paid (excluding train tickets but these are only bought one month in advance)**