

Adventure Travel
4x4 Expeditions
Consultancy
Training



OneLife Adventure

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Picos de Europa Explorer

1st to 7th May 2005

Picos de Europa - the unknown mountains of Europe. They have been described as a miniature masterpiece, appropriate as they are only 40 km across in any direction, but rising to over 2600 metres they command respect, being snow capped for much of the year, fissured with steep sided gorges and ravines. The abundant wildlife ranges from griffon vultures to black redstarts, red deer, wild goats, wolves and occasionally bears. It's a mecca for adventure, with most types of adventure sports being found within the mountains as well as superb off road driving on rugged stony tracks. We use picturesque Potes as our base, staying in a comfortable, small hotel run by a former Spanish off road champion and an expert on these mountains. He will guide us to beautiful isolated villages in the heart of the Picos, accessible only by goats and 4x4's, all nestling at the foot of towering snow capped peaks. Life has not changed too much in this forgotten corner of Spain - experience the oldest culture within Europe, the Basque are an independent but warm people and their complex language predates Celtic and Latin.

There will be the opportunity to try a wide range of adventure activities during the week - choose from caving, climbing, trekking, mountain biking, kayaking, horse trekking, quad biking, paragliding, canyoning to name a few. This is an ideal expedition for those who want to combine other adventure activities with off road expedition driving. While the distance driven is not great, the tracks are narrow, steep and technically challenging - all set in the simply stunning scenery of the Picos de Europa.





Summary

Start point	Castro-Urdiales, Northern Spain (via ferry from Dover to Calais).
Finish point	Bilbao, Northern Spain (via ferry from Dover to Calais).
Number of days	7 days, 6 nights.
Approx. distance	400 kilometres (not including travelling between ferry ports and start point for the expedition).
Road conditions	Mixture of gravel and rock tracks, some local roads.
No' of vehicles	Maximum of 6 guest vehicles plus support vehicles.
Accommodation used	Accommodation will be in a comfortable small hotel in the heart of the Picos.
Specialist equipment - vehicle	A well maintained and serviced 4x4 vehicle fitted with underbody protection. A CB radio must be fitted. Tyres of All Terrain or Mud Terrain tread patterns are most suitable. A full set of recovery equipment (strops and shackles) is essential along with a spade. A winch is not essential and additional fuel cans are not needed.
Specialist equipment - camping	Accommodation is in a traditional hotel and therefore no camping equipment is needed. A small stove and a Thermos flask is useful for preparing your own hot drinks and you should bring your own chairs, table, cutlery and utensils for impromptu lunchtime picnics. Clothing can be light as the days will be warm in the sheltered valleys. However you should bring some warm and windproof outer wear, as there will still be snow on the peaks.
Passport	Required.
Visa	Not needed for citizens of the EEU.
Health	No special requirements beyond small first aid kit and E111 - Certificate of Entitlement (available from UK Post Offices).
Cost of living	Comparable or slightly less than the UK. You will be able to withdraw Euros from ATM's and credit cards are widely accepted.

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Weather

Warm and sheltered in the valleys but it can be cool up on the mountains, snow will still be present on the high peaks. Occasional storms in the Bay of Biscay can bring cloud and rain.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average daily temp												
Max °C	2	3	8	12	17	20	25	18	14	7	4	2
Min °C	-2	-2	4	5	10	14	15	12	8	5	1	-2
Rainfall mm	89	64	62	56	42	42	50	56	67	94	78	79

Picos de Europa itinerary

Day	Highlights	Overnight
1 Sunday	Meet in Castro-Urdiales and then west to enter the Picos via the Desfiladero de La Hermida, a gorge with sides so steep that the village of La Hermida is denied sunlight from November to April.	Hotel in Potes.
2 Monday	Leave Potes for Sotres and Espinama on the famous "Jeep Track", via Beges, crossing the Andara and circumnavigating 2000m peaks.	Hotel in Potes.
3 Tuesday	Another day of driving the high mountain tracks and passes. Leave Potes for Espinama and the source of the Rio Deva river. Climb out of the valley and then a steep descent to Posade de Valdeon.	Hotel in Potes.
4 Wednesday	Adventure sport day – choose from caving, climbing, guided trekking, kayaking, horse trekking, mountain biking, quad bikes, paragliding, canyoning or white water rafting - all accompanied by experienced instructors. You will be briefed earlier in the week on the available activities.	Hotel in Potes.
5 Thursday	Today we spend much of the day at high altitude, leave Potes and climbing to the col at Portilla de Reina via Posade de Valdeon.	Hotel in Potes.
6 Friday	Multi activity day – your opportunity to re-visit favourite routes in your vehicle, walk the Garganta del Cares gorge or visit the snowfields via the cable car.	Hotel in Potes.
7 Saturday	Return to Bilbao, via Parque Natural Saja-Besaya and some more off road tracks.	

The route and timings are not fixed, we will be free to break journey, stop and explore, as you desire. I aim to be in the hotel by 16.00 on most days to allow us to relax and enjoy the experiences of the day. The daily distances driven vary due to the terrain and ground conditions but a typical day will be 2-3 hours driving in the morning, 1 hour for lunch and then a further 2-3 hours driving.

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Outbound shipping

The crossing from Dover to Calais is made by ferry and is included in the expedition price. You are free to specify your own preferred dates and times. The drive from Calais to Castro-Urdiales will take about 12-14 hours, mainly on the French autoroutes. You may choose to take 2 days for the journey, if so then I am able to advise on accommodation options and alternative routes to avoid the autoroute and enjoy France on the way down.

Note – This section of the expedition is unsupported by OneLife Adventure, the above information is to aid you plan your arrivals and departures. The booking is made on your behalf and cost of the ferry is included in the expedition price. Accommodation, meals and refreshments you take during this transit stage are not included.

Inbound Shipping

The return crossing from Calais to Dover is made by ferry and is included in the expedition price. Again you are free to break the return journey and specify the ferry dates and times allowing you to extend your holiday as you choose.

Note – This section of the expedition is unsupported by OneLife Adventure, the above information is to aid you plan your arrivals and departures. The booking is made on your behalf and cost of the ferry is included in the expedition price. Accommodation, meals and refreshments you take during this transit stage are not included.

Cost

Cost is £950 per person based on 2 sharing.

For each additional person up to a maximum of 4 per vehicle add £ 750.

Included in the price - return ferry crossing from Dover to Calais. In the Picos de Europe all hotel accommodation costs are included along with hot/cold breakfast, buffet lunch, evening meal and full backup and guiding from the support team. Your fuel, snacks, alcoholic drinks and personal spending are not included.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON THIS EXPEDITION
PLEASE CONTACT ME – NUMBERS ARE LIMITED!**



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