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OneLife Adventure

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Peaks and Plains Explorer

9th July to 15th July 2006



The Spanish Western Pyrenees are the least visited part of the dramatic Pyrenean Mountains guarding the border between France and Spain. The whole region is immensely beautiful - thickly forested foothills, secret plunging valleys and soaring snow capped mountains make for some of the best mountain driving in Europe. Home to Western Europe's last bears and wolves, it is the forgotten corner of Spain - some villages still speak their own dialects, an ancient mixture of Spanish and Catalan. We spend our first 4 days driving in the best scenery the Western Pyrenees offer, with the peaks still mantled in snow and making for challenging driving on steep tracks and tight hairpins bends alongside vertigo inducing drops. We climb into the High Pyrenees, twisting through steep gorges carved by torrential snow fed streams as they rush south to the Spanish Plains, leaving behind the remote, peaceful valleys of Anso and Hecho.



Like the streams we also leave the mountains behind us as a backdrop as we descend onto the great Aragon plains around Pamplona, the traditional home of the hardy black fighting bulls and the great Spanish wines of Navarra and Rioja. The ancient kingdom of Aragon is steeped in history - great armies and civilisations have ebbed and flowed across its timeless plains and the remnants are seen today in its walled hilltop towns and castles like Olite. We then spend 3 days off road in the arid Navarra Bardenas Reales - an eroded desert landscape where the sand and rock has been stripped away in layers to leave high plateaus, towering cliffs, isolated pinnacles and deep gullies for us to explore.



If you are coming to Spain for the first time this expedition will show you a side of Spain far from any preconceptions you may have - a wild, remote and timeless Spain.





Summary

Start point	French/Spanish border near Biarritz (via ferry from Dover to Calais).
Finish point	French/Spanish border near Biarritz (via ferry from Dover to Calais).
Number of days	7 days, 6 nights.
Approx. distance	600 kilometres (not including travelling between ferry ports and start point for the expedition).
Road conditions	Mixture of gravel, rock and sand tracks and local roads.
No' of vehicles	Maximum of 6 guest vehicles plus support vehicles.
Accommodation used	Accommodation will be in campsites with toilet/shower facilities where available. Some sites will be wild sites set in the incomparable wild Spanish countryside.
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	Either roof or ground tents are suitable. A stove is required for your cooking, along with chairs, table, cutlery and utensils. 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 EHIC – European Health Entitlement Certificate (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

Peaks and Plains itinerary (may vary in accordance with local road conditions)

Day	Highlights	Overnight
1 Sunday	After meeting in San Sabastian we enter the Pyrennes, skirting La Rune, passing through the Coto Nacional de Kintoa to our first camp site.	Camping at Elizondo.
2 Monday	Across the Sierra de Abodi and enter the Valle de Salazar, home to eagles and griffon vultures. Overnight at the beautiful stone built Pyrenean village of Otsagi-Ochagavia.	Camping at Ochagavia.
3 Tuesday	Today we climb into the High Pyrenees to skirt 2000 metre mountains, passing through isolated villages like Roncal and Isaba before entering the remote Anso and Hecho valleys.	Camping at Anso.
4 Wednesday	We head down the valley towards Pamplona and the fortified village of Olite and visit a wine bodegas.	Camping at Ovito.
5 Thursday	We enter the northern Bardenas to explore off road this desert and its pinnacles, cliffs and canyons.	Wild camp in the Bardenas.
6 Friday	Another full day off road in the Bardenas, climbing to the high plateau in the south for panoramic views across Aragon.	Camping near the Bardenas.
7 Saturday	After a further morning of off road driving we head out of the Bardenas to conclude the expedition at Pamplona.	

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 campsite 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 San Sebastian 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

- £750 per person based on 2 sharing, self catered.

The expedition price includes flexible return ferry crossing from Dover to Calais, all campsite/accommodation costs, 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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