

Factsheet | Self-guided walk | Level 3/5 | 6-7 walking days

GR10 from Mérens to Vernet les Bains : Catalan Pyrenees Natural Park

Your route in brief

- Self-guided walk without guide
- Walk with family, friends or as a couple
- Possibility of a comfort version with 4 nights in room
- Transport of your luggage between each stage (depending on the option chosen) except for 2 nights in mountain refuges
- Duration 7 days / 6 nights

Highlines

- The high plateau of Capcir
- Numerous large lakes that look like inland sea: Lanoux, Bouillouse
- Catalan Pyrenees Natural Park
- The Cerdanya plateau and its mountain villages
- The natural reserves of Mantet and Py
- Sunny weather on this section of the Pyrenees



From Mérens, the high mountains open up and offer a wonderful section of the GR10, with a walk that leads to the Refuge of Bésines, altitude 2104m. Another highlight is the part of the trail that takes you past the Bouillouses lake, famous for its natural beauty, it's situated at 2020m altitude in the Carlit Massif, it is an absolute gem to discover. Crossing the high plateau of the Capcir towards the Pays de Conflent you will enjoy a feast of wonderful views. You will discover some lovely mountain villages, the gorge of Caranca and the natural reserve called Mantet and Py before arriving at Vernet-les-Bains.

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•PROGRAM

Day 1: Arrival at Mérens les Vals

Installation in your accommodation according to your arrival time. Depending on your arrival time, you can visit the village or go hiking.

The Col de Joux

A loop hike that starts on open ground and then enters the forest to reach the Col de Joux between the Ariège and Orgeix valleys. The ridge passages offer beautiful views of the surrounding peaks, including the Dent d'Orlu.

The Etang de Comte

Walk along the Mourguilhou stream, through pastures strewn with gentians and rhododendrons, to the pretty and bucolic Comte pond.

- Distance: 11.5km, duration : about 4h30, altitude gain : + 700m, descent : - 700m.
- Distance: 12km, duration : about 4h50, altitude gain : + 760m, descent : - 760m.

Day 2 : From Mérens to Bésines refuge

From Mérens, the GR10 leaves the Haute-Ariège to approach the Capcir region. This is a classic Pyrenean walk of deep valleys and passes. A long ascent along the valley and the torrent of the Nâbre will lead you to the Porteille des Bésines, at 2333m. Then you will descend to the Etang des Bésines and its guarded refuge. From the terrace of the refuge, the view towards the Etang des Besines and the nearby Pic Pédros is superb.

- Distance : 9km, duration : about 4h45, altitude gain : +1305m, descent : -260m.

Day 3 : From Bésines refuge to Bouillouses lake

From the Bésines refuge, the itinerary crosses the Coume d'Anyell pass at an altitude of 2391m, before descending to the Lanoux lake, at the base of the Carlit mountains. This pond, or rather Lake Lanoux, is the largest in the French Pyrenees, with its surface area of 1.71 km². During your descent to the Lac des Bouillouses, through the Porteille de La Grave, take the time to observe the surroundings, which are favourable for encounters with isards and mouflons.

- Distance : 16km, duration : about 5h45, altitude gain : +695m, descent : -750m.

Day 4 : From Les Bouillouses to Planès

Starting from Les Bouillouses, a walker's paradise and a small Canada of the Pyrenees, the GR10 goes through plateaus, mountain lakes and forests. After reaching Bolquère, close to the famous resort of Font Romeu, you will cross the vast high plateau of Cerdagne, a landscape found nowhere else in the Pyrenees. Then you will reach Planès, a magnificent village with its Romanesque church, unique in Europe with its trefoil plan.

- Distance : 19km, duration : about 6h00, altitude gain : +230m, descent : -745m.

Day 5 : From Planès to the Carança refuge

The profile of the walk is reminiscent of a rollercoaster, with a descent often corresponding to a pass or a high plateau to be crossed. Today, the Pla de Cédeilles (1911m), and the Mitja pass (2367m), a remarkable lookout point towards the nearby Capcir and the emblematic Pic du Carlit, are on the programme, with landscapes that become Mediterranean.

- Distance : 15km, duration : about 6h30, altitude gain : +1190m, descent : -890m.

Day 6 : From Carança refuge to Py

Today, you will walk from the refuge of the Caranca to the hamlet of Py. The GR10 crosses the reserve natural of Mantet and then the reserve of Py. There is a passage across the Col del Pal (2294m), with a wonderful panorama. If the weather is good, a short round trip (+1h30) to the easy Serre Gallinière peak will broaden your horizon even more. And after the Alemany valley and reserve, you will join the village of Py, where you spend the night.

- Distance : 16km, duration : about 6h45, altitude gain : +860m, descent : -1665m.

Day 7 : From Py to Vernet les Bains

From the village of Py, the Mediterranean atmosphere becomes more and more pronounced, especially with regard to the vegetation. Thus, a balcony route over the Rotja valley leads to the Goa tower located on a small natural platform offering a beautiful panorama of the Canigou peak and the Haut Conflent. Then a ridge path followed by a forest descent leads to Vernet-les Bains.

- Distance : 9,5km, duration : about 4h00, altitude gain : +510m, descent : -870m.

This programme is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be necessary, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified.

• DATES AND PRICES

Departures

Every days from the middle of June to the end of September.

Booking from 2 people (solitary traveller: consult us).

From 15/06/2022 to 30/09/2022 :

Prices with luggage transfer :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	595€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	585€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	580€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	575€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	570€

Prices without luggage transfer :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	450€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	445€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	440€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	435€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	430€

Extras :

- Extra for a single room: 90€
- Comfort version (4 nights in rooms) : 65 €/pers.
- Transfer back from Vernet-les-Bains to Mérrens les Vals on a week day: 205€/transfer
- Transfer back from Vernet-les-Bains to Mérrens les Vals on Sundays and public holidays: 245€/transfer
- Extra night in Mérrens/Vernet les Bains : Consult us

The price includes :

- Half-board accommodation
- Luggage transport depending on the option chosen except for 2 nights in refuges on days 2 and 5
- Dossier containing maps, route notes (1 for 4 persons, given in 1st accommodation)
- GPS tracks if you ask us + access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application

The price does not include :

- Holiday and travel insurance
- 15€ booking fees
- Showers in the mountain huts
- Additional transfers
- Entrance fees, additional activities
- Drinks and picnics

• TAILOR MADE HOLIDAYS

We can put together a suitable holiday for you taking into account all your specific requests and budget. Many individuals and trekking companies have relied on us for years. With our tailor-made holidays we always aim to provide you with the best quality at the fairest price.

If you want to :

- increase the comfort of your accommodations,
- change the duration of your trip,
- organize additional activities or visits,
- get a transfer from/to an airport,
- organize an extra night,

Contact Gaëtan

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• ORGANIZATION

We propose a self-guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest between the initial meeting time through to the leaving point. We transport your bags between the accommodations (depending on the option chosen) except 2 nights in refuges days 2 and 5. We provide you with the maps and good walking route notes sent to the first accommodation as well as an access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday. Moreover, our team will answer all your questions, and will provide all useful advice in order to make this holiday a success.

• TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Nature of the walk

Walks on mostly waymarked paths, but some technical difficulties are possible. The walks are on good footpaths and trails, the terrain is varied but often rocky.

Level 3

For walkers in good physical condition with previous experience of mountain walking. The walking times mentioned are given as an indication, they are average times which only take into account the duration of the walk without counting the stops. Depending on the weather conditions, the walking pace may also vary, ranging from +300m to +500m of climb per hour.

Guide

Self-guided walking, without guide.

Carrying

You will need to carry a day sack only. Our bag-moving service means you can travel light during your walks, except for the nights in refuges, D2 and D5, where you have to carry your personal belongings necessary for the night (eg. lightweight sleeping bag or liner, change of clothes, toiletries). Your main luggage (that should please be easily transportable) will be transported by vehicle between the different night stops, unless you have chosen the version without luggage transport.

• ACCOMMODATION/FOOD

Accommodation

Half board:

2 nights in shared dormitory in mountain refuge on days 2 and 5

3 nights in shared dormitory in gites on days 1, 3, 4 and 6

1 night in shared dormitory in "auberge de montagne" on day 3

COMFORT VERSION (with extra cost) :

2 nights in room in a guesthouse on days 1 and 6
1 night in room in hotel** on day 4
1 night in room in an “auberge de montagne” on day 3
2 nights in shared dormitory in mountain refuges on days 2 and 5

For nights in dormitory, bring a sleeping bag liner (blankets provided).

Please note that according to the Covid-19 regulation which will be in force in the refuges in 2022, **it is possible that blankets will not be provided**. In this case, it will be necessary to bring a sleeping bag for those nights. This will be specified to you as soon as possible before your stay.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, butter, jam)
- Evening meals in gites, often based on local specialities, include a starter, a main course and a dessert.
- Pic-nics and drinks not included.

•PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Starting : at your accommodation in Merens les Vals (09), according to your arrival time.

Ending : in Vernet-les-Bains (66), after your walk.

How to get to Merens les Vals :**- By air :**

Toulouse-Blagnac airport (140km) : tel 0033 (0)561424400, shuttle service to Toulouse Matabiau train station all the 20mn.

- By train :

Many trains from Toulouse Matabiau train station to Latour-de-Carol ; get off the train in Merens les Vals.

- By car :

From Toulouse, 140km, auto route A61 to Pamiers (direction Andorre/Foix).

To go to Merens les Vals from Foix, direction Tarascon sur Ariège, Ax-les-Thermes.

PARKING :

Parking in the village, or train station parking.

How to leave Vernet-les bains :

Shuttle service from Vernet to Villefranche de Conflent. From Villefranche-de-Conflent, train to Perpignan.

To join Merens les Vals from Vernet-les Bains :

Shuttle service from Vernet to Villefranche de Conflent. From Villefranche-de-Conflent, train to Latour-de-Carol. From Latour-de-Carol train station, take a train to Merens les Vals (Latour-de-Carol to Toulouse route).

•WHAT TO BRING AND PACK**Your main luggage:**

For logistical reasons, we ask you not to bring more than one item/person. Its weight should not exceed 12kg - 15kg.

Your day backpack

The size of your bag varies upon the type of activity.

For a walk without portage : 30L minimum

For a walk with partial portage : 50L minimum

For a walk with portage : 60L minimum

Whatever activity you participate in, you should always carry in your rucksack:

- Rainwear, warm clothing, spare T-shirt, sunglasses, sun cream, first aid kit, picnic kit, personal items, etc.)
- Picnic lunch of the day (bring a plastic box)
- Sufficient water (minimum 1.5 litre water bottle)

Walking Boots

The type of boot depends upon the activities you take part in however they are one of your most important items. They should be comfortable, waterproof and breathable. For the best protection we advise ankle boots.

We recommend our young walkers to wear flexible walking boots with a good sole and back.

For mountain walking for more than 4 hours long we recommend a boot with a fairly ridged sole.

If you need to buy a new pair of boots, we advise you wear them in before the start of your holiday. Don't wear boots that are too small because feet have a tendance to swell up. Be careful with your shoes that have been left in the wardrobe for too long. The lifespan of a shoe is 2 to 5 years. After a while the soles will come off and the seams can tear.

Clothes:

- A wind and rainproof jacket
- A thick jumper or a fleece
- Comfortable walking trousers
- Shorts, t shirts as well as breathable base layers
- Spare clothes
- Swimwear and towel
- For the start and end of season, hat and gloves suitable for GR10 walks at altitude.

For Sleeping

- Sleeping bag liner for all nights spent in the gites and mountain shelters (blankets are provided)
- Earplugs

For Picnics

- Sealed plastic box (0.5L) to carry salads
- Cutlery (folding knife and fork)
- A 1,5L minimum flask

Small equipment

- A pair of tennis shoes, or sandals for the evening
- A pair of telescopic poles (optional)
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Hat, cap or bob
- Camera...
- A small toilet bag, with towel
- Torch or headlamp
- Toilet paper
- A mini-pharmacy: personal medication, Compeed for blisters, elastoplast, gauze, disinfectant, arnica granules and aspirin in case of minor injuries, a survival blanket.