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Circular walk from Capileira, Spain's second highest village

The Mountains of Spain 17 August to 14 September 2020

Minimum 5, maximum 8 guests

6 - 7 €5800 per person / twin share

(single supplement € 865)



This is what some walkers from our 2015 trip had to say:

Betty: *I have had an amazing time, and thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of the trip... This was my first multi days hiking trip and first time I had to carry a backpack but with the wonderful advice from my fellow hikers, it soon became manageable. Your packing list was very useful...I am getting tempted with your Patagonia trip in November this year .*

Ric: *I would just like to thank you for your organising and encouraging me to join the Mountains of Spain trek. Although I am not a "group" walker I thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The main reasons for this are that I was lucky to join a small group...who were each interesting, friendly and mature characters, and of course the "Ultimate Guide", Richard Cash... but I got far more from the guided wanderings with Richard through Spain than that.....language, culture, history, geology, botany and wildlife...*

Jos: *I also wanted to pass on my thanks for accommodating my last minute inclusion. It was seriously the best trip I have ever done...I think Spain is highly under- rated by Australians. It is a fantastic destination. We were very well looked after by Richard and the combination of fellow hikers worked really well (could it be because we are all from this wonderful country?)*

Included meals marked each day. B = Breakfast, L = Picnic Lunch, D = Dinner



Day 1. Arrive Madrid. Transfer to hostel Don Juan in city centre.

The Don Juan is a pleasant, comfortable but simple hotel. A perfect, central, base for exploring the city and not an impersonal business hotel. Every nook and cranny is filled with antiques and artworks.

Day 2. Sightseeing in Madrid. Transfer to Hecho in the Pyrenees **(D)**

Leave Madrid at 19.05 on high speed train for Huesca. 2 hrs 15. Transfer to our hotel in Hecho 1hr15.

Day 3. Free Day in Hecho. (B,D)

Hecho is a beautiful place. Relax, organise your gear for the trek and enjoy this authentic very friendly Pyrenean village, or go for a pleasant walk around Hecho.

The village of Hecho

Chemin de la Libertée Trek

This wonderful four-day trek over the high France/Spain border follows the paths trodden by the resistance with allied airmen and other fugitives from the Nazis as they escaped from occupied France during World War II. It's a beautiful trek in our favourite part of the Pyrenees with grand limestone mountains, green valleys, wonderful vistas and the gorgeous Lescún Valley and Cirque. We stay in two mountain huts and an auberge.

Day 4. Refuge d'Arlet (B,L,D)

We walk from the Hecho Valley into France, along a beautiful hanging valley and through mixed Atlantic forest before reaching the idyllic alpine meadows of Espelunguere with their flocks and shepherds' huts. Then you'll climb up to the border ridge where an easy walk through high meadows brings us to the Arlet hut set in a mountain bowl next to a jewel of a lake. One of the best days out in the Pyrenees.

Day 5. Auberge Lauzart, Lescun (B,L,D)

Still in France, you follow the border ridge west to the Col de Pau from where you follow a mountain stream downhill towards Lescun. The Lescun Valley is a jewel with hay meadows, traditional farms and a picture book perfect village framed by jagged peaks all around.



On the way to Col de Anso, Day 6

Day 6. Refugio de Linza (B,L,D)

First through fields and beech forest in the valley, then once past the last shepherds' hut, you'll climb steeply up to the Col de Ansó dominated by the magnificent Agujas (needles) de Ansabere. Once at the col we head downhill on a beautiful path to the Linza hut.

Day 7. Hecho (B,L,D)

We head back towards the trek starting point over the Puerto de Anzotiello which brings us to the Acherito Valley – one of the most beautiful in the area. This stage gives an intense sensation of wilderness and utter peace in the mountains. We descend to Oza where we started the trek and then drive down to the village of Hecho.

Day 8. Morning in Hecho. Transfer to Bujaruelo pm (B,D)

A day to relax and enjoy Hecho after the trek. In the afternoon we'll drive 1hr 15 mins (visiting the historic town of Jaca on the way), to Bujaruelo, an auberge once a pilgrim's hostel nestled below the French border and dominated by high limestone peaks. This is the starting point for our Pyrenean High Route three-day trek.



The Pyrenean High Route

This three-day trek takes us through magnificent, rugged high mountain country as we walk from Spain to France and then over the famous Breche de Roland back to Spain into the Ordesa National Park with its amazing canyon dominated by Monte Perdido 3375m – the highest limestone peak in Europe. The final stage takes us on a stunning balcony path along the canyon rim and down to the Arazas valley.

Day 9. Pyrenean High Route (B,L,D)

Bujaruelo to Refugio Sarradets. We climb the old pilgrim's path up to the French border and then, once in France, head up to the Refuge de Sarradets which is perched below a glacier in the stunning Cirque de Gavarnie with the Breche de Roland and the Spanish border above.

Day 10. Pyrenean High Route (B,L,D)

Up a steep path over the glacier (it's rocky at this time of year) to La Breche de Roland – a cleft in the border ridge leading us into Spain. We'll then follow the border ridge to Pico Taillon(3144 m) the highest point we'll reach in the Pyrenees. From Taillon we traverse a wild mountain landscape to reach Refugio de Góriz which is perched above the Ordesa Canyon. A tough but rewarding, spectacular day. 8 hrs.

Day 11. Pyrenean High Route (B,L,D)

From Góriz hut we drop down to a path which follows the Ordesa Canyon 600 m above the base of the canyon. The views are spectacular. The final stage is down a steep path to a meadow where we get a bus down to Torla village.

Day 12. Transfer by bus towards the Picos de Europa (B)

Overnight in Bilbao (5 hours from Torla) – the city is well worth a visit with the Guggenheim Museum, nice old quarter, great tapas.

Day 13. Sightseeing Bilbao in the morning (B)

In the afternoon we continue to our hotel in Arenas de Cabrales on the North side of the Picos de Europa. Arenas is famous for it's extremely potent blue Cabrales cheese – like an atomic Stilton!

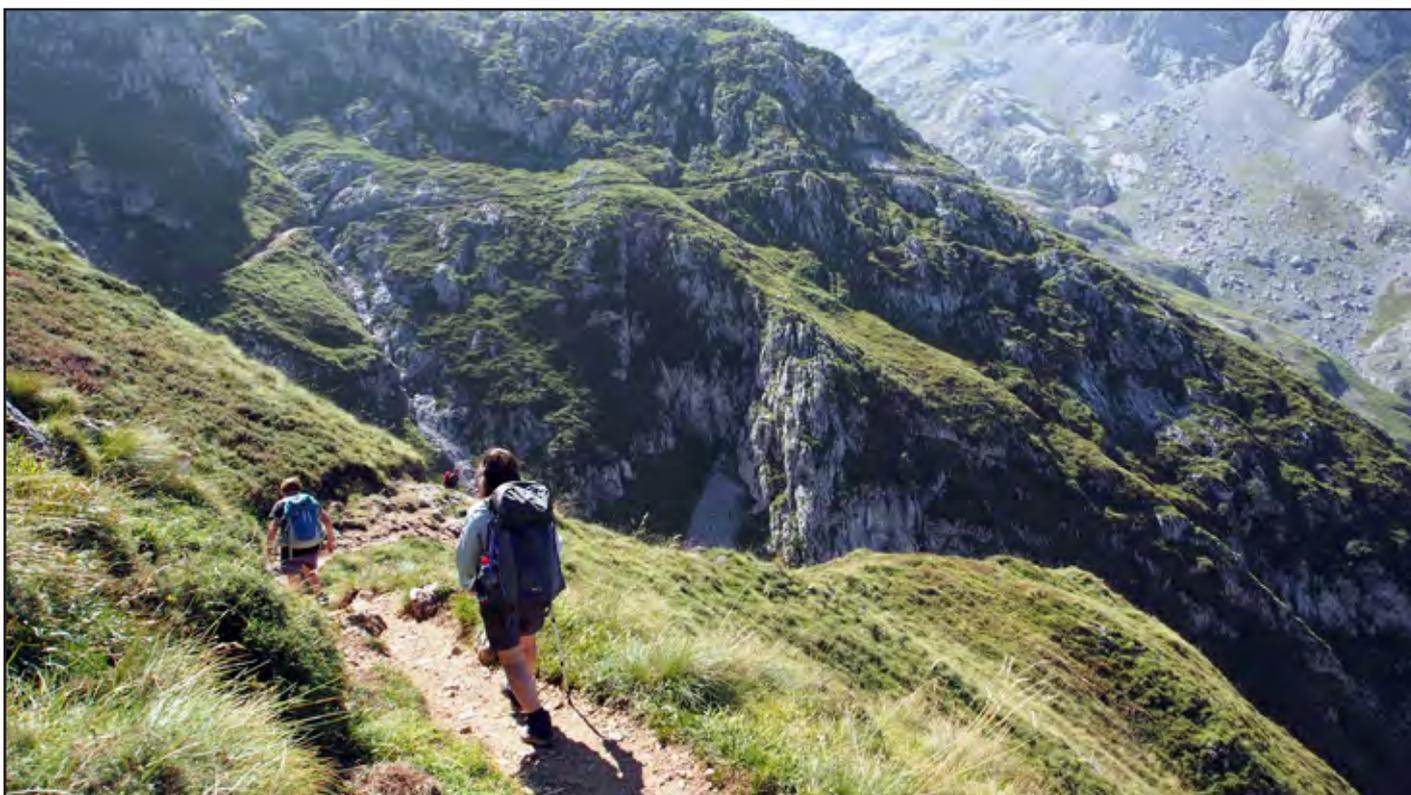
Day 14. Circular walk from Arenas de Cabrales 5 hrs (B,L)

Day 15. To Vega de Uriellu (B,L,D)

Walk from Sotres to the Vega de Uriellu Hut 5 hours. The hut is at the foot of the Naranjo de Bulnés – the most famous peak in the Picos.

Day 16. Vega de Uriellu (B,L)

Return to Arenas via the hamlet of Bulnés. 4 hours.



On the way to Naranjo de Bulnes

Day 17. Walk the Cares Gorge from Poncebos to Caín (B,L)

This is the best known route in the Picos de Europa 3.5 hours. Transfer by bus to Avila.– around 4.5 hrs. Stay in a historic hotel in the centre of Avila.

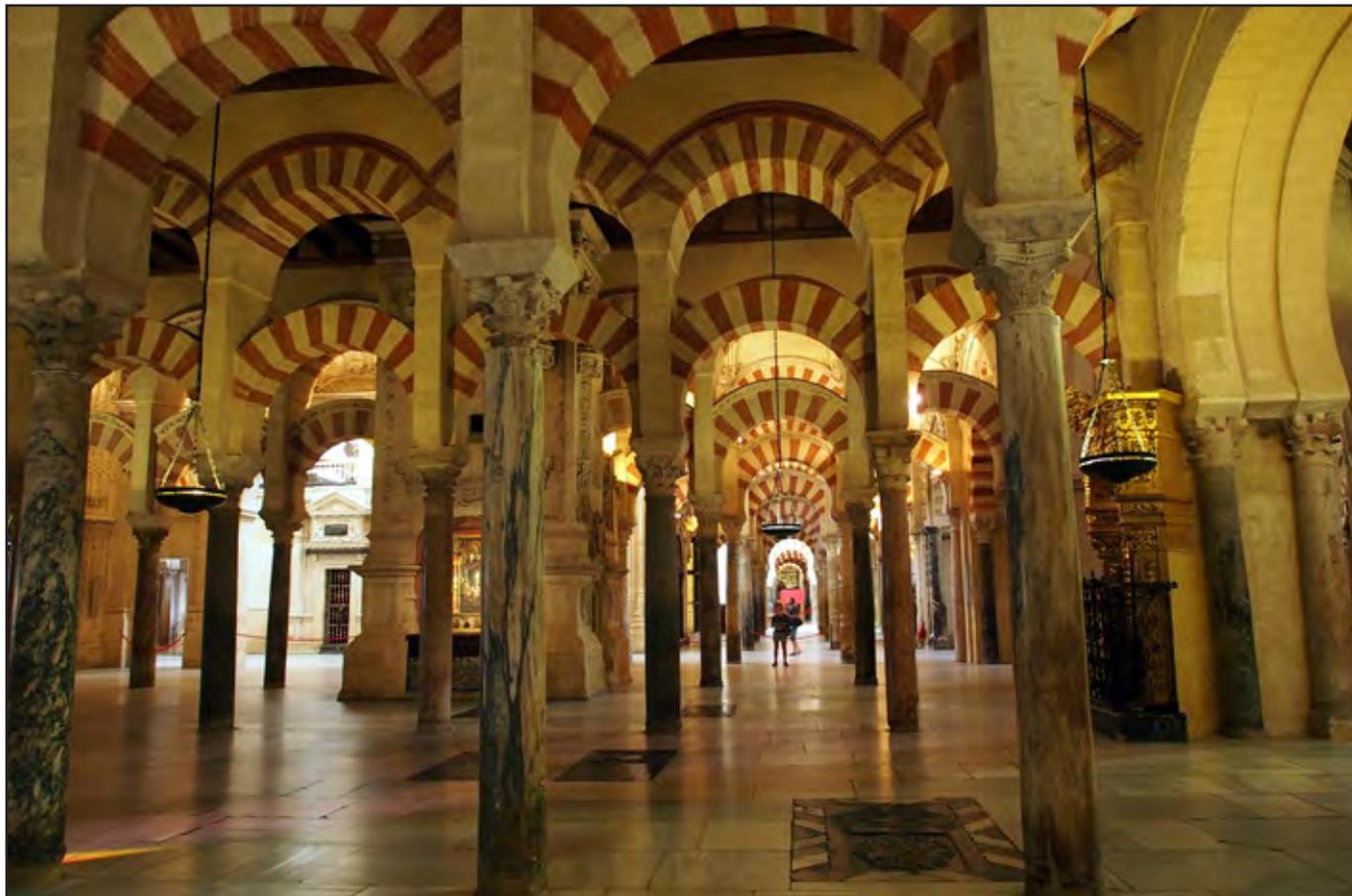
Day 18. Sightseeing in Avila (B)

This walled city is quintessential Castille with many medieval buildings. It's easy to spend a day here. Overnight in Avila.

Day 19. Transfer to Cordoba (B)

Morning transfer to Córdoba. This city is a real gem with it's amazing mosque/cathedral, lovely old town and Medina Azara – the ruins of the Moorish capital.

Cordoba's Mosque / Cathedral



Day 20. Transfer by bus to Capilleira in the Alpujarras 3 hours 30 (B,D)

Afternoon transfer to Capilleira, a beautiful area on the south side of the Sierra Nevada. This was the last area lived in by the Moors after the reconquest (they were here until the 1580s.) This lovely village with a quaint hotel and makes a perfect walking base. At 1432 m it is the second highest village in Spain.

Day 21. Circular walk from Capileira (B,L,D)

5 hours around the Poqueira river valley. The route follows old footpaths through terraced orchards and farms watered by irrigation systems built by the Moors 1000 years ago. A beautiful day-walk.

Day 22.

Mulhacen (3479m) – the highest peak on the Spanish mainland (B,L,D)

Fabulous walk! Stunning views!

Day 23. Easy valley walk (B,L,D)

Day 24. Transfer to Granada (B,L,D)

We stay at a wonderful hotel built in 1503 (bathrooms more up to date!), which has views of the Alhambra which is a definite must see as is the rest of the city.

On the summit of Mulhacen





Day 25. Sightseeing/relaxing in Granada (B)

Visit the *Alhambra* and explore the city – the capital of the last Moorish kingdom of Spain until 1492. It's a fascinating city with some great monuments and excellent bars and restaurants.

Day 26. Sightseeing/relaxing in Granada (B)

Day 27. Transfer to Madrid (B)

Expect to arrive in Madrid around 4.00pm.

Day 28. Trip ends

What's included:

- Local, Spanish / English speaking trekking guide/s
- All private ground transport
- Meals mentioned (B,L,D)
- All accommodation as detailed on a twin share basis
- All parks entrance fees

What's not included

- All personal trekking equipment
- Tickets to the Guggenheim Museum, Cordoba Mosque / Cathedral, Alhambra
- National Park bus to start of Mulhacen walk
- Travel and accident insurance
- Cash for extra expenses
- Extra meals not mentioned
- Flights to and from Madrid

Gear List

We will provide a detailed gear list. During the Chemin de la Libertee and the Pyrenean High Route treks, you will be able to leave excess clothing / luggage and collect it at the end of the treks.



Lunch on the track

Meet our Spanish Guides



Richard

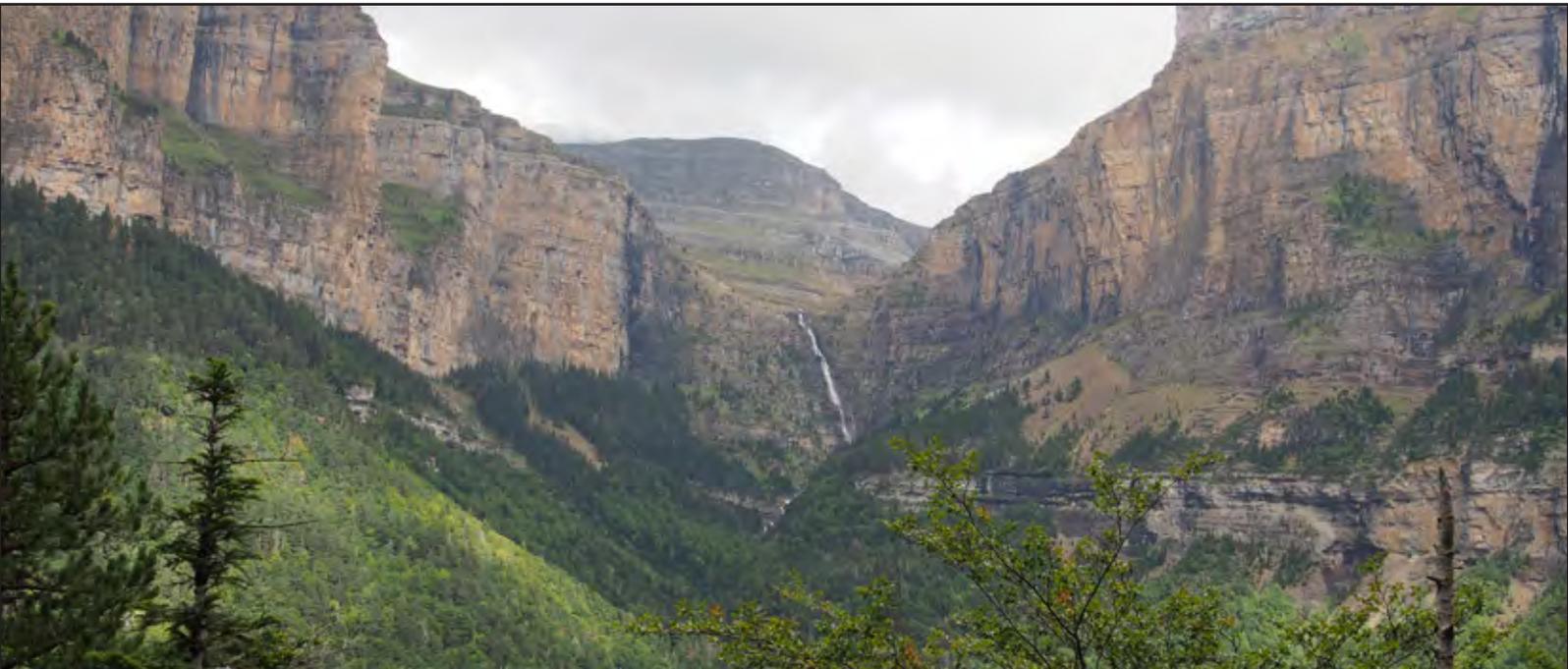
Born a Brit, Richard, his partner Nikki and their two children have made the Basque country of Spain their home. With a history major and an in-depth knowledge of plants, birds, and other creatures, Richard has been guiding hiking, botanical and cross country skiing trips for over 20 years. This genuinely caring guy is not a bad hand with the camera, and also cooks a mean Spanish omelette.

Paco

A Pyrenean local, Paco completed a major in fungi as part of his botanical studies. As well as letting you know what mushrooms are edible, and what will probably kill you, he can spot the elusive edellweiss along the track. Paco is Richard's right-hand man and lives with his wife Anna and their son in a village just over the border in France. Apart from speaking Spanish and French, he has excellent English.



Ordesa Canyon



Please feel free to contact us if you need any further information, John and Lyn

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