HIKING IN ANDORRA
The Pyrenean lakes and valleys of Andorra

Tour Code: 11800
Grade 6 and 8

Holiday Duration: 8 days

HOLIDAY DATES

An exhilarating and enjoyable higher-graded walking holiday in Andorra. The scenery is beautiful and the upper mountain slopes and ridges are a rambler’s paradise.

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Find and photograph some of Europe’s rarest and most colourful mountain flora.

Ramble amongst the beautiful meadows in Sorteny.

Walk into the glorious unspoiled Val Madriu, now a World Heritage Site.
HIKING IN ANDORRA

Lush green valleys painted with wild flowers and pointed, jagged, rounded, rolling, in fact every type of mountain you can imagine! The faint sound of cow bells ringing in the distance and cozy wooden chalets dotted on the mountainside. Walkers with smiles on their faces can only mean you have arrived in Andorra.

The magnificent peaks reach 3000m into the sky all along the French/Spanish border providing a photogenic backdrop as we explore the remote quiet valleys and lonely mountain lakes.

The gentle Val de Incles offers a range of quiet rambles in Alpine scenery, where we can trek up rough paths from the head of lovely flower strewn Val Incles to admire the many stunningly situated mountain lakes. Reaching the grand, unspoiled Val Madriu, a World Heritage Site, will require more, well rewarded, effort! The gondola lift from Encamp and high mountain roads allow easy access to high terrain at over 2000m with moderate effort which allows time to bask in the wide mountain views. A number of historic Romanesque churches with unique frescos can also be visited. On rest days it is possible to visit the Spanish town of Seu de Urgell. We walk within quiet valleys to the loveliest and loneliest mountain lakes of the Pyrenees. There is much more to be discovered in the 'Country of the Pyrenees' than the shoppers or skiers ever imagined.

Our hotel features views from its veranda and restaurant that entice your eyes down through the valley below and over the town, with mountains framing your view, gently calling to you for exploration.

The week of 3 June will be at a more leisurely pace to allow time to appreciate the flowers and plants. From 10 June onwards, you can enjoy our two walks, two leaders, two grades option where you can choose to walk at either grade 6 or 8. Also see our NEW Andorra Mountain Trek holiday.

WHATS INCLUDED

- Return flights from Heathrow to Toulouse (British Airways)
- Airport transfers
- Full board en suite accommodation with breakfasts and dinner in hotel and packed lunches
- Two walks, two leaders, two grades on some dates
- All local transport costs.

HOLIDAY GRADE

This is a Grade 6 moderate holiday which includes full day walks with appreciable amounts of ascent and descent with walks in some remote areas. Paths are mostly good, but there may be some steep and rough ground. Walks will last up to 6 hours and could involve as much as 750m of ascent and descent and are likely to be at the upper level of ascent, descent, walking time and distance. See the Walks & Excursions section for more information.

This is a Grade 8 challenging holiday. It will include hard mountain walking every day with long ascents and descents and scrambling. Stamina and a good head for heights is essential. Distances will probably not exceed 12 miles, but ascents and descents will normally be between 1,000 and 1,500m. Expect long and exhilarating days. See the Walks & Excursions section for more information.
Proposed Itinerary

Whilst every effort will be made to adhere to the outlined itinerary and advertised programme, local conditions can change due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. This may mean that routes and timings need to be amended or the order of days may change, sometimes at short notice.

Key to Meals:
B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner.
In flight meals, if appropriate, will be advised in your final travel documents

Day: 1 - Encamp (D) After clearing our arrival airport we transfer to Encamp.

Day: 2 - Encamp (B,L,D) Both groups will take transport to the top of the beautiful Val d’Incles, then walk together for the first hour. We follow a stony path beside a stream then climb to the Cabana Sorda lake and unmanned refuge. From here we continue on a contouring path to the Salamandres lakes for lunch and a possible swim. Our descent from Estany de Querol (the largest of these lakes) goes through woods and arrives at El Tarter from where we take transport home.

10.5km. +600m/-700m. 5 hours.

From the Cabana Sorda the grade 8 walk begins to climb steeply on the GRP to the col at 2600m and from there along a fine ridge to our peak on the French border. Returning to the col for lunch, we then continue along the ridge before making an easy descent to the Salamandres lakes. The rest of the walk down to El Tarter follows the Grade 6 route.

12 km; +1100m/-1200m; 6 ½ hours.

Day: 3 - Encamp (B,L,D) Both groups will be walking in this World Heritage protected area of outstanding beauty. From the Engolasters lake the grade 6 walk follows the GR11 path along the route of an old tramway as it contours above the main valley, with excellent views of the bustle far below. We then climb on a stony path to the Col de Javell and get our first glimpse into the Val de Madriu.

The path now descends gently into this valley with its beautiful alpine meadows. Some may like to continue further into the valley, but return to this point. Then we have a long descent on a stony mule-track to Escaldes in the main valley.

15km. +500m/-1000m. 6 hours.

The grade 8 walk is the same as far as the unmanned refuge. Just beyond here we take a steep path, passing a refuge, to reach the Collada de Maina. The Pic de Maina (2519m) is an easy optional extra from the col. The descent is similar to the grade 6 option, but longer.

19km; +870m/-1370m; 7 hours.

Day: 4 - Encamp (B,L,D) We start our walk from Arcalis on the unspoiled side of the valley with an easy climb to the beautiful Tristiana Lakes. You may walk to one, two or all three of these before we make our way down, following the line of the stream. The valley opens out into meadows then a quiet path takes us to the village of El Serrat and a chance of a drink at a bar before travelling home.

11km. +400m/-800m. 5 ½ hours.

The grade 8 walk ascends Pic de l’Estanyo (2915m) which involves scrambling along a narrow, rocky ridge and can only be done safely in good weather - light wind and no lying snow. We start in a nature reserve surrounded by high ridges, with an easy path along and beside a jeep-track, reaching a refuge before crossing the stream. We begin to climb through woods and then meadows to the glacial lake. This is followed by a steep ascent to Pic de l’Estanyo.

After admiring the views, an hour and a half of scrambling follows, with occasional stops to enjoy the breath-taking vista. This ridge is similar in character to Striding Edge or Crib Goch. When we reach the end of the ridge, we descend from a col over a scree/boulder field, back to the lake and then retrace our outward path to the car park.

16km; +1000m/-1000m; 6 hours
Day: 5 - Encamp (B,L,D) Free Day. Excursions are possible to La Seu d’Urgell, the cathedral city in Spain whose bishop traditionally co-administers Andorra. There are many historic buildings, shops and restaurants and also the white-water sports complex built for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. The leader will also be able to advise you on optional walks not normally included in the programme.

Day: 6 - Encamp (B,L,D) Pic de Casamanya. Although the full ascent of 750m is at the top of grade 6, this is a very attractive walk and allows for people to stop before the summit whilst still achieving an excellent viewpoint of all the surrounding peaks. From the Col d’Ordino we climb up through woods and then onto open hillside. After 500m of ascent the path becomes stony and there is some loose scree.

The summit, 2739m, is a fantastic point from which to see virtually the whole of Andorra. Our descent takes us back on the outward path initially, but we can take an easy contouring path into the valley to the east and then walk through pleasant meadows to the road and the minibus.

5km. Max. +750m/-800m. 5 hours

The grade 8 walk follows the same route as the grade 6 walk to the first peak. From here we take the Serra de Sauvata ridge before coming down a grassy slope to the valley between us and our outward route. Crossing the Col d’Ordino we continue down through fields and farms to the main valley near Meritxell.

9km; +850m/-1500m; 6 hours

Day: 7 - Encamp (B,L,D) This beautiful walk to the Pessons lakes has an ‘out and back’ section, which allows you to shorten it if you want. From Grau Roig we walk up through woods to the first of the Pessons Lakes. The GR7 then leads us over stony ground through a ribbon of delightful lakes surrounded by high peaks. We can go as far as we choose before settling for lunch and a swim opportunity. We retrace our steps to the first lake and the bar before continuing on the GRP path through meadows and some ski installations. Marmots are always heard and usually seen here. Our walk ends at Bordes d’Envalira.

9.5km. +500m/-700m. 6 hours walking

The grade 8 walk follows the same route as the Grade 6 through the ribbon of lakes, but extends to climb the ‘back-wall’ of the coma (cirque) to the fantastic viewpoint of the Pic dels Pessons (2864m).

18km; +840m/-960m; 7 hours walking

Day: 8 - - (B) It is time to bid farewell to this charming country as we transfer back to the airport and onwards to home.

Walks & Excursions

Grade 6 Walks
During Grade 6 walks we will spend typically 6 hours walking each day, which will average about 8-10 miles in distance with climbs of between 300m and 600m. The walking is nearly all on tracks and paths, occasionally steep and/or rough underfoot with large boulder fields with some moderate climbs and scrambling is necessary on many walks at both grades. Many of the principality’s glorious side valleys will be explored and many walks will take us to fine mountain lakes and beautifully situated mountain shelters. Some walks will be quite demanding at times, occasionally over quite rough and steep terrain, in order to reach the most beautiful valleys.

Grade 8 Walks
The peaks around Encamp are high and spectacular, and are easily attainable at the Grade 8 of walking, and will make for spectacular photos and challenging walks. Distances should not exceed 15 miles and the typical climbs will be 700m to 1500m. Some of the more challenging walks including the Pic de la Coma Pedrosa, the highest mountain in Andorra, will involve an 1800m descent.

2x Walks, 2x Leaders, 2x Grades
On ‘2x Walks, 2x Leaders, 2x Grades’ departures, where we provide two tour leaders and offer a choice of easier or harder walks each day, we hope to be able to accommodate your choice of walk. However safety considerations do govern the sizes of groups in each walking grade; the minimum number of participants for a guided walk at a given grade and the maximum group size will be as indicated for the walk grade.

On most departures we are able to accommodate most clients’ first choice of walk most of the time, however some flexibility and co-operation may be required. In unusual circumstances where a disproportionately high number of clients wish to walk at one grade, for safety reasons, we may not be able to provide you with your choice of walk each day. Although we will endeavour to accommodate as many clients’ choices as possible, it may be necessary for you to switch between higher and lower grade walks during the holiday. Any decision regarding group sizes and the participants in the day’s walking programme rests with our tour leader(s).

For safety reasons the minimum number of participants on a walk will be 4 plus the leader.

Maximum Altitude
The Hotel Coray in Encamp is at a height of roughly 1240m. On the grade 6 holiday the highest point
normally reached is 2775m at the summit of the Pic d’Envalira. Some grade 6 groups might reach the Pic de Caterperdis at 2806m. Most of the walks at this grade go above 2000m with a couple exceeding 2500m. On the grade 8 holiday we may reach 2915m at the Pic de l’EstanyÓ or even the Pic de Coma Pedrosa at 2943m, the highest peak in Andorra.

Optional Excursions
A range of local excursions and activities may be available to book in your destination through a local operator. We have no involvement in such activities or excursions which are not run, supervised or controlled in any way by us. Your contract will be with the local activity supplier and we accept no responsibility for their actions or omissions.

Leaders Evening Briefing
Each evening, your tour leader will discuss with you the programme for the following day. If you do not wish to join the organised group programme, please let the leader know.

Local Transport Costs
All local transport costs, in conjunction with the advertised activity programme, are included in the holiday cost.

Personal Expenditure
You will need to consider drinks, any meals not included in the holiday price, possible non-included entrance fees, any optional excursions you may choose to participate in locally as well as any souvenirs or additional services such as laundry when budgeting for your holiday.

Small Groups
Group Size
Coming from all walks of life your fellow travelling companions will share your desire to discover great things and have a wonderful holiday. Enjoy their infectious enthusiasm, cameraderie and great dinner conversation.

These small-group guided holidays usually have a group size of 10 - 18 people.

Our maximum group size for guided walks between grade 5 and grade 8 is 18 persons.

Tour Leaders
Your tour leader makes the world of difference to your holiday and ours are as passionate about discovering the world on foot as you are. They’re resourceful, organised and widely travelled. They will handle all the local administration and other needs that might arise to ensure that you don’t have to worry about planning your days and you can enjoy your holiday. Although leading group holidays, they won’t forget that every group is made up of individuals. Each tour leader has their own individual style, talents and professional backgrounds and all are trained, qualified, experienced and dedicated to making your holiday as enjoyable, interesting and inspiring as possible.

On most holidays of 7 nights and over, the tour leader will have one day's break a week, enabling you to have a 'free' day too!
Travel Details
Irrespective of arrival and departure airport, Toulouse or Barcelona (the two closest airports to Andorra) transfers to Encamp are by road and the journey takes approximately three hours. Something if making your own way to Andorra you may wish to consider.

For all those booking a flight or rail inclusive holiday, details of your travel arrangements and baggage allowance will be confirmed in your travel documents, sent to you approximately 10 days prior to departure.

Personal Details Check
When confirming your booking, we provide you with a Personal Details Check form. This is to ensure that we have an accurate record of the information you have provided us such as your passport details (if relevant), date of birth and any other important detail necessary for us to properly manage your holiday arrangements. When you receive this, please check the details, complete any missing or pertinent information and return it to us as soon as possible.

Land Only
If you are joining and leaving at your holiday overseas we assume, unless you advise us otherwise, that you will join and leave the holiday from your hotel.

Although airport transfers are not included for those making their own independent travel arrangements, if you wish to join the group at the overseas airport, depending on your flight arrival time, you may be able to be included on the group's transfer. Please contact us at least 5 weeks before departure for more details.

Please note that your flight must arrive within 30 minutes of the group flight to be able to join the group transfer. We also need your flight number, arrival time and departure point so that the group leader is able to meet up with you.

If you wish to organise your own flights from a non-UK or provincial airport or travel by rail or car to your holiday destination, 'no-travel' reductions are often available. Please contact us for details.

Before finalising any independent travel arrangements, please check with us first - especially if doing so 12 weeks or more before your intended date of travel.

If you do intend to join your holiday locally please do tell us at least 14 weeks in advance.

Passports and Visas
You will need a passport to travel to Andorra, which must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay in Andorra. A visa is not required for UK citizens.

General Passport & Visa Advice
It is a good idea to carry photocopies of the personal details pages of your passport. Should you lose your passport, this may assist with the issue of replacement documents and your return to your home country.

Passport and visa requirements can change at any time. It is your own responsibility to ensure that you inform yourself from a professionally qualified source on, and comply with, such requirements.


Travelling with under 18s.
Please note that some countries require evidence of parental consent when travelling with those under the age of 18. Please check if there are any applicable requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of your holiday.
Accommodation

Hotel Evenia Coray, Encamp
Carrer dels Caballers, 38
Encamp
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Phone: 0037 683 1513
Web: www.eveniahotels.com/hotel-evenia-coray
Email: hotelcoray@andorra.ad

This cozy hotel with its relaxing atmosphere is located in the equally relaxed town of Encamp. This quiet hidden away town has all the amenities you would need to keep yourself supplied during your stay.

Our rooms are either a twin, double or single basis with the hotel having a bar, restaurant, and garden overlooking the town of Encamp and into the valley beyond.

Room facilities include:
- Ensuite Bathroom
- Television
- Safe
- Telephone
- Hairdryer
- Wifi

All meals are included in the holiday charge; both breakfasts and dinners will be at the hotel and are of the buffet variety, there is a good range of dishes on offer including a couple of vegetarian options in the evening with a salad buffet. Lunch is a 'picnic' meal provided by the hotel.
Footwear
Lightweight waterproof walking boots with a good moulded rubber sole (such as Vibram or similar) and a deep tread which provide ankle support are strongly recommended and may be essential for some walks. Good quality waterproof walking boots with a moulded sole and deep tread and which provide good ankle support are essential. We recommend that you either wear your walking boots or shoes or pack them and some waterproofs in your hand luggage as in the unlikely event that your hold luggage is delayed, you will still be able to participate in the holiday programme.

Kit List
Outdoor activities are always more enjoyable if you are prepared. The following list is a basic guideline that will enhance your experience. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

A basic kit list is likely to include:
- Waterproof jacket (Goretex or similar) and trousers
- Lightweight, quick drying trousers
- Several polo shirts, T-shirts or specialist walking shirts
- Fleece jacket
- Comfortable walking socks
- Warm hat and gloves (if appropriate)
- Sun hat, sunglasses, lip salve and high SPF sun block
- Swimwear (if appropriate)
- Day sack (25 litre capacity) to comfortably carry the kit you’ll take out on your days activity
- Strong polythene bags to keep the contents of your daypack dry
- Water bottle(s) - at least 1 litre capacity
- Basic first aid kit (plasters, blister treatment, antiseptic etc)
- Insect repellent
- Waterproof bag or container and knife for your lunch
- Walking/trekking poles (if applicable)

Water-to-Go
An alternative to bottled water from single-use sealed water bottles is filtered water from a refillable bottle containing its own water filter such as a Water-to-go bottle available from www.watertogo.eu. Just fill up from any water source and save the environment from disposable plastic bottles.

We have negotiated an exclusive 15% discount with our partners Water-to-Go for you as a thank you for helping the environment. Please go to their website at www.watertogo.eu and enter the code RWH17 when ordering. In addition, Water-to-Go will match the discount with a donation to our charity, Heart & Sole, which will allow us to continue to make a difference in the countries you visit on our holidays.

Trekking Poles
Many of our clients find walking poles hugely beneficial when walking. They can both reduce stress on the knees and aid confidence. If you use them please make sure that you have the rubber tips covering the sharp metal points. There is increasing evidence that the bare metal tips are damaging footpaths both in the UK and abroad.

Survival Bags
On this, as on all grade 7 and above holidays, we strongly recommend that all group members carry a simple orange plastic survival bag. In the event of you being injured it will keep you warm and dry whilst waiting for the emergency services to arrive. It is cheap and lightweight and doubles as a mat to sit on. These are widely available online or from outdoor equipment shops.

Travel Document Checklist
Documents and Information to take with you:
- Your passport (make sure it’s valid and it’s yours)
- Your travel tickets or e-ticket itinerary
- Any visa or electronic travel authorisation (if required)
- Holiday money
- Credit or debit cards (and separate details of who to call if lost)
- Car parking ticket and car park directions (if prebooked)
- Coach or rail travel tickets (if prebooked)
- Your holiday Booking Confirmation document
- Your travel insurance details
- Alternative form of identification (such as a driving licence)
- Photocopy of the personal details pages of your passport
- A valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if relevant
- Details of any medical condition or allergy your holiday leader should know about

Maps, Guidebooks & Advice
Maps and guidebooks relating to your holiday may be obtained before departure from:

The Map Shop (www.themapshop.co.uk)

Maps
A 1:40,000 editorial Alpina map of Andorra may be brought from various outlets in Andorra.

Websites
You may find a visit to the Andorran Delegation website useful: www.andorra.ad

Weather and Climate
Visit the following websites for an idea of the climate in your destination:

Weather2 www.myweather2.com

BBC Weather www.bbc.co.uk/weather
Currency

The currency accepted in Andorra is the euro.

Electricity

Electricity in Andorra is supplied at 220 Volts. If you wish to use electrical equipment you will need a European two pin adaptor with round pins. More information can be found at www.powerplugadapter.uk.

Health

No compulsory immunisations are required for visits to Andorra.

You should be up to date with the usual immunisations recommended in the UK.

Tetanus immunisation is recommended.

Health requirements can change at any time. It is your own responsibility to ensure that you inform yourself from a professionally qualified source on, and comply with, such requirements at least 6 to 8 weeks before departure. Advice on vaccinations is available from your GP.

Further Travel Health Advice

For further advice please visit:

- The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) travel health website at www.travelhealthpro.org.uk
- The NHS 'Fit for travel' website at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
- The Foreign Office Office Travel Advice Website at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.
- Or a local travel health clinic.

You might wish to take a small bottle of antibacterial hand gel with you for times when you're unable to wash your hands.

Language

The official language in Andorra is Catalan.

Insurance

Travel Insurance

You must be adequately insured to join our holidays. We do not insist that you insure with us but we require that you are adequately insured for the nature of your holiday. You will be unable to participate in our local walking and other activity programmes without being able to demonstrate that you have valid travel insurance.

Please ensure that as a minimum your travel insurance policy covers you for medical expenses, mountain rescue and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury, and that your policy provides adequate cover for the activities, included and optional, you are likely to participate in during your holiday. See our brochure or website for further advice regarding holiday insurance.

Whoever you insure with, please ensure that you take full details, and ideally the policy itself, with you on holiday and provide our tour leader with your insurer's name, the policy number and emergency assistance contact numbers.

Please note that it is very difficult to obtain travel insurance once your holiday arrangements have started.

EHIC Card

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), does not provide health cover in Andorra.

Personal Safety

The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office provides up to date information on security and local laws for travellers, together with current passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/travelaware. Please take a few minutes to look at the current advice on your planned destination.

Please be aware of what's going on around you, take sensible precautions with your credit cards and passport and avoid displays of wealth such as...
wearing expensive jewellery or watches. Do not carry more cash on you than you will need for each day, and we recommend that a money belt is used.

**Cultural Awareness**

**Responsible Travel**

We're committed to ethical tourism in all our destinations. Our holidays are designed for you to discover the essence of the country you are visiting. Travelling in small groups not only gives you an up close and personal experience of your destination, but minimises your impact on the immediate environment. We feel that the most important starting point to protect the environment is to be out in it. For more details visit our website.

**Heart & Sole**

We appreciate that we are in a fortunate position to be able to use our profits to help make a difference to people's lives. Heart & Sole is a venture managed by our office staff, whose aim is to reach the heart of the communities in the countries we visit. Through Heart & Sole, we hope to make more of a long term, direct impact to these communities, particularly in less developed countries where even a small amount goes a long way. See our website for more information and details of some of the projects we support.

**Communication**

**Mobile Phones**

Please do provide us with a mobile phone contact number. We will only use this to contact you with important information relating to your holiday arrangements.

Please do keep your mobile phones switched on and readily available when travelling to the airport or if delayed in transit so that we can contact you with any last minute information relating to your travel arrangements.

As a matter of courtesy, please switch off your mobile phone during walks, or endeavour to minimise its use. Please also try to minimise the use of mobile devices during group meals.

**Feedback**

We welcome all comments about our holidays and value ideas for the future. If you have provided us with an email address we will invite you to complete an online questionnaire or to add feedback to our page on independent review site 'Feefo'.

**Important Information**

Please note that this Holiday Information sheet may be periodically updated and reissued.

In most cases the revisions will be minor and the overall nature of the holiday will remain unchanged. Should we make a major change to your holiday arrangements between you booking your holiday and your date of travel we will notify you to specifically draw your attention to any significant change.

You may wish to review the latest version of this Holiday Information Sheet online prior to travel.

Please note that any advertised offers, benefits or initiatives may be discontinued at any time.

**Contact Us**

Ramblers Walking Holidays
- Tel: UK +44 (0)1707 331133
- Email: info@ramblersholidays.co.uk
- Web: www.ramblersholidays.co.uk

Our office is open and our Sales & Reservations team available to speak to you from:
- 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday
- 9.15am to Midday on Saturdays
- 9.15am to 3pm on Saturdays in January & February only

Please quote your Booking Reference number and Tour Code whenever contacting us.

We wish you an enjoyable holiday!