



**Self-Guided French Pyrenees Hiking and Historic Tour de France Adventure:
July 18 – 28, 2010**

Overview

This special 10 night/11 day self-guided departure melds the best of our two existing French Pyrenees self-guided hiking itineraries with an opportunity to view two legs of the Tour de France as it passes through the Pyrenees. During this anniversary year of the Tour de France you'll have an opportunity to see history in the making as the Tour celebrates its 100th year in the Pyrenees. This trip is rated moderate to strenuous. See specific hike descriptions, including alternative hikes for most dates, below. ***In order to secure accommodations for this special event, deposits for this trip are due by December 1, 2009.***





Itinerary

Sunday July 18: Arrive at Tarbes railway station. Taxi to hotel at Asté. Night at Asté hotel.

Monday July 19: Circular day walk from Asté – Casque de Lheris (1595m) descent via Campan village. Night at Asté. Today you'll have a choice of two hikes:

Moderate: Initially following the river to the village of Beaudean, the route then wends its way into the hills overlooking the Adour valley and leads to the summit of Le Petit Monné (1170m) where the views are magnificent. The return route passes close to Bagnères de Bigorre that could be visited as an extension to the main itinerary.

Approx. 18 kilometers, 700 meters ascent, 700 meters descent, 5 ½ hours walking.

Strenuous: Passing through the village of Asté then ascending through beech forest in a limestone gorge to reach open grazing land above from where the final ascent leads to the summit of the Casque du Lhéris (1595 m) above limestone cliffs falling away 200 meters. Return via the attractive village of Campan.

Approx. 20 kilometers, 1000 meters ascent, 1000 meters descent, 6 hours walking time.

Tuesday July 20: Taxi to start of walk which will include La Mongie/Col de Tourmalet to see the **Tour de France** passing through. Return to Asté for third and final night in this initial base location. Details of walk to be finalized when time of the Tour de France passing through is known. Today's hike will likely be a moderate one similar to yesterday's moderate option.

Wednesday July 21: Taxi to Pont de la Gaubie for the excellent high altitude hike, which finishes at Barèges. Night at Barèges hotel.

Moderate: Using the same taxi that will take the baggage to the next hotel at Barèges, get a lift to the Col du Tourmalet (2115m), one of the most famous Tour de France mountain passes, and then on to the drop off point at the Pont de la Gaubie (1540m). From here the route follows the GR10 up the magnificent Aygues-Cluses valley to a shepherd's hut by the Coueyla Gran Lake. The route then returns to the Pont de la Gaubie before continuing on the GR10 to Barèges. Approx. 16 kilometers, 690 meters ascent, 1000 meters descent, 5 hours walking time.



Strenuous: Using the same taxi that will take the baggage to Barèges, get a lift over the Col du Tourmalet to the Pont de la Gaubie (1540m). From here the route follows the GR10 up the magnificent Aygues-Cluses valley to a series of lakes set in a granite landscape. At the Lac de Madamettes (2300m) the route returns to the Pont de la Gaubie before continuing on the GR10 to Barèges.

Approx. 19 kilometers, 750 meters ascent, 1050 meters descent, 6 ½ hours walking - with option of extra hour above the Lac de Madamettes.

Thursday July 22: Circular walk from Bareges to include seeing the **Tour de France** going up to the Col de Tourmalet. Second night at Barèges.

Moderate: A gentle walk to explore the pastureland and beech forest above the Bastan valley with a section on the famous long distance path the GR10.

Approx. 14 kilometers, 400 meters ascent, 400 meters descent, 4 hours walking.

Strenuous: Explore the *Montagne Fleurie* high above the village of Barèges with a circular walk.

Approx. 15 kilometers, 800 meters ascent, 800 meters descent, 5 hours walking.

Friday July 23: Follow GR10 down to Luz St Sauveur and night at hotel there.

Moderate: The route down the valley starts with a traverse out to a promontory with stunning views and then wends down through a series of charming villages and then past a castle into the town of Luz.

Approx. 12 kilometers, 250 meters ascent, 770 meters descent, 3 ½ hours.

Strenuous: From Barèges the walk passes through a beech forest above the Bastan valley and then picks up the famous long distance path the GR10 for the descent to Luz.

Approx. 15 kilometers, 450 meters ascent, 970 meters descent and 5 hours of walking

Saturday July 24: Day off: visit to Lourdes or self-guided circular walk. Second night at Luz.

Moderate: A chance to visit some of the charming mountain villages of the area known as the *Pays Toy*. The walk passes through the villages of Vizos, Saligos and Sazos before returning via the impressive Pont Napoléon.

Approx. 15 kilometers, 700 meters ascent, 700 meters descent, 4 ½ hours walking.

Strenuous: A similar walk to the Moderate but including two viewpoints.

Approx. 17 kilometers, 860m ascent, 860m descent, 5 hours.



Sunday July 25: Taxi to Gedre or Granges de Bué for excellent walk into Gavarnie via the Plateau de Saugé. Night at hotel at Gavarnie.

Moderate / Strenuous :Heading south from the village we can approach Gavarnie via footpaths over grazing land. In case of bad weather or snow on the ground we can use an alternative route, which although it is half on tarmac it is not a through road so has very little traffic and has spectacular views. Approx. 15 kilometers, 800 meters and 5 hours walking.

Monday July 26: Circular walk at Gavarnie including the famous Cirque. Second night at Gavarnie.

Moderate: The route takes in the slopes on both sides of the valley and goes right up to the Cirque de Gavarnie.

Approx. 13 kilometers, 590 meters ascent, 590 meters descent, 4 ½ hours or 14 kilometers, 760 meter ascent, 760 meters descent, 5 hours.

Strenuous: A similar walk to the moderate route but with some extra climb up to the Cabane d'Alans in the afternoon to linger longer in the magnificent scenery.

Approx. 18 kilometers, 930 meters ascent, 930 meters descent, 5 ½ hours.

Tuesday July 27: Taxi to Col de Tentes and hike to Brèche de Roland and then back to Gavarnie for third night there. **Strenuous** (but an easier option exists): Approx. 16 kilometers, 660 meter ascent, 1400 meter descent, 6 hours walking time

Wednesday July 28: After breakfast taxi back to railway station at Lourdes.

Summary

- Ten nights, half board (breakfast and dinner)
- Minimum two star hotels and likely one three star, all with private bath; friendly, traditional accommodations in beautiful settings with very good food
- Local transport and baggage shuttle included
- Price: \$2,300 USD per person double occupancy. Minimum 2 people. No single rooms available. Price reductions available for more than two people.
- Deposit of \$500/person by December 1 in order to secure hotels



How to Sign Up

Please email or call Deborah Lewis (dlewis@bredeson.com or 1-866-533-4361). ***In order to secure accommodations for this special event, deposits for this trip are due by December 1, 2009.***

We hope that you will join us on this historic adventure!

