



Technical sheet | Guided cycling tour | Level 2/5   | 5 cycling days

# Bardenas, Aragon and the Basque Coast with an electric mountain bike : best of the Spanish Pyrenees

## Your cycling tour

- Discovering three territories with very different landscapes
- Nights in comfortable hotels and troglodyte rooms for an outstanding experience
- End of the trip on the beaches of the Basque Coast
- Discovering the legendary Bardenas desert, the magnificent Loarre castle and the Monastery of San Juan de la Pena.

## Highlights

- A heaven for mountain biking
- Comfortable and diversified accommodation
- Great variety of landscapes: desert, mountains and ocean
- An accessible itinerary without any major difficulty
- Discovering the major sites of the Spanish Romanesque Art



[www.gr10-liberte.com](http://www.gr10-liberte.com) / [www.respyrenees.com](http://www.respyrenees.com)

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With this holiday in the southern part of the Pyrenean mountain range, between Navarra and Aragon, you will discover surprising and memorable landscapes. On these lands where the sun rules, paths and tracks seem to be tailor-made for mountain biking. The electric bikes will allow you to discover as many must-sees as possible. From the western movies settings of the incredible Bardenas desert through the Aragonese sierras' paths and the green hills of the Basque coast, you will not be willing to stop! You will also take advantage of these tours to discover iconic cultural sites filled with History : Loarre castle, the monastery of San Juan de la Pena...

Those territories, that are renown on a european level for mountain biking, are above all unique and spectacular settings, where you will be surprised by the colours and the geological formations.

After beautiful biking days in the sun, get some rest in comfortable and atypical accomodations, such as the Bardenas troglodyte houses, or a hotel with a spa and swimming pool facing the magnificent Mallos de Riglos... always enjoying a typically spanish friendly atmosphere.

To end your holiday with a flourish, let's not forget a refreshing swim on the Basque Coast and its tapas bars, where you will enjoy a nice moment.

## • PROGRAM

### Day 1 : Beginning of your holiday in Bayonne

Meeting at 17:15 at Bayonne train station and transfer to the Bardenas (2h30). Check-in at your accomodation, the magnificent Bardenas troglodyte houses. Briefing on the tour.

### Day 2 : Discovering the Bardenas desert

Starting from your accomodation, you will go and discover the Bardenas Reales. Let's slowly enter those fascinating and amazing landscapes. You will cycle on easy paths through this remarkable setting of hoodoos, bare hills and ravines where the aridity's beauty is highlighted by a very special light. You will go past the famous Castil de Tierra and leave the most traveled paths to loose yourself in the southern Bardenas large and wild canyons. From the Pilatos Balcony, you will overlook the whole central part of the Bardenas and realize the vastness of this desert, unique in Europe. The way down follows easy tracks until you go back to your accomodation. This first day is technically easy, which will allow you to improve your mountain bike skills with the help of your guide.

- Distance : 53 km, duration : 5h , ascent : +380m, descent : -380m

### Day 3 : Penaflor castle tower and Barranco grande

Starting from your accomodation, you will go back to the Bardenas and enjoy mountain biking in very diverse landscapes. Surrounded by Aleppo pines, you will cycle round the impressive Penaflor tower, last remain of the human presence and of the strategic importance of this desert in the History of Navarra. You will climb to the El Plano cultivated high plateau before going down and cycling in the bottom of Barranco Grande, where the beauty of the very active erosion will suprise you every time you switch directions. You will cycle on easy tracks and paths to enjoy the best of mountain biking.

- Distance : 49 km, duration : 5h30, ascent : +600m, descent : -600m

### Day 4 : Loarre Castle and Mallos de Riglos

After a transfer (1h30), you will completely switch landscapes to discover the huge aragonese sierras and their impressive conglomerate cliffs. You will start from Loarre castle, one of the most beautiful examples of Romanesque fortifications in Spain, that was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, at the apogee of the Navarra Kingdom. After a short climb, you will overlook the Aragonese Plain, and once you cross the pass and despite a few pushes, a memorable and easy way down through the box trees will put a smile on your face for the rest of the day! After a short downhill part on an abandoned road, you will go up again on a long track through a small and wild valley. You will then overlook the Mallos de Riglos. The view of the vultures flying over the climbers who travelled the world to climb those legendary sunny cliffs is amazing. The way back to the castle follows an easy track.

Possibility to visit the castle, short transfer to your hotel with a SPA and swimming pool.

- Distance : 46 km, duration : 4h30, ascent : 1065m, descent : -1080m

#### **Day 5 : Monastery of San Juan de la Pena**

Let's get closer to the Pyrenean mountain range with a short transfer (40min), for a day full of bird's eye views and memorable landscapes.

After warming up on an easy track, the climb will exceptionnally take place on a road (9km). In the shade of the impressive cliffs overlooking you, you will discover the spectacular monastery of San Juan de la Pena. The monastery, that seems tiny under the overhanging rock, was one of the most influent monasteries of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Christian Spain.

You will keep climbing until the top of the San Salvador sierra and its hermitage (1545m). From there, the way down will start under the eye of the vultures, and if you are lucky you might catch a glimpse of a bearded vulture. You will cross very beautiful sections offering stunning views over the conglomerate cliffs where birds of prey are nesting.

Despite a few short uphill, you will be delighted by the way down through several tracks and paths facing the Pyrenean mountain range.

Transfer to Hendaye and the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean. For the last evening of your holiday, Tapas night in the old fishermen's neighbourhoods of Fontarrabie.

- Distance : 48km, duration : 4h30, ascent : +1170m, descent : -1190m

#### **Day 6 : Way of St James and coastal walk**

Starting from the hotel, you will cross the border to reach the old neighbourhoods of the magnificent fortified city of Fontarrabie. You will follow the Way of St James (Camino del Norte) to climb on the sides of the Jaizkibel mountains and discover a magnificent panoramic view over the Bay of Biscay and the beaches of the Basque Coast. As you will be cycling on a very different terrain – grassy meadows and oak forest – you will be literally plunging towards the Atlantic Ocean on a very beautiful downhill section. Finally, before hitting the road again, you will enjoy a “beach stop”.

- Distance :22,6 km, duration : 4h, ascent : +525m, descent : -525m

#### **End of the trip**

After the breakfast and the swimming stop, transfer to Bayonne train station. Arrival at Bayonne at 15:45.

*This program 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. Onsite, our guides are the ones who know best and they may have to adjust the itinerary depending on the weather or should the safety of the group require it.*

### **• DATES AND PRICE**

#### **Departures**

Departure is secured from 4 people. Maximum 8 people per group.

From Sunday 05/04/2020 to Friday 10/04/2020

From Sunday 03/05/2020 to Friday 08/05/2020

From Sunday 31/05/2020 to Friday 05/06/2020

From Sunday 06/09/2020 to Friday 11/09/2020

From Sunday 27/09/2020 to Friday 02/10/2020

From Sunday 25/10/2020 to Friday 30/10/2020

**Price :** From 01/04/2020 to 30/10/2020 :

Price per person	885€
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**Extras/discounts :**

- Extra night in Hendaye in a double room (night and breakfast) : 40€/pers
- Extra night in Hendaye in a single room (night and breakfast) : 65€/pers
- Discount for a trip without bike rental : 160€/pers.

**The price includes :**

- Full board accomodation from the dinner on Day 1 to the breakfast on Day 7
- Transfers
- Guiding by a qualified instructor specialised in the area
- Rental of an electric mountain bike and all the required safety equipment

**The price does not include :**

- Travel insurance
- Additional transfers
- Visits
- Drinks
- Booking fees : 10€

**•TAILOR-MADE HOLIDAYS**

The itineraries are given for information only. They can be adjusted depending on your goals and wishes. Our trips are always designed to offer the best quality for the fairest price.

**Should you want to :**

- upgrade your accomodation,
- adjust the duration of your trip,
- organize additional visits and activities,
- get a transfer to/from the airport,
- organize an extra night



**•MEETING POINT AND END OF THE TRIP**

**Meeting point :**

On Day 1 at 17:15 at Bayonne train station. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU CONTACT RESPYRENEES one week beforehand, texting: + 33 6 10 97 16 54**, to confirm your arrival time.

**WE HAVE CHOSEN BAYONNE TRAIN STATION TO ENSURE THE EASIEST ACCESS TO OUR TRIP AND FOR ECOLOGICAL REASONS, AS MANY TRAINS ARE SERVING IT. CHECK THE SNCF WEBSITE TO BOOK YOUR TRAIN : <https://www.oui.sncf/>**

**End of the trip :**

On Day 6 around 15:45, after the transfer to Bayonne train station.

## • TECHNICAL INFORMATION

### Guide

Mountain guide with the mountain bike certification. Our staff members are experts coming from the Basque Country, with a very good knowledge of the area.

### Carrying

You will need to carry a day pack only (personal equipment needed during the day and your picnic). Your main luggage will be transferred by car between the different accommodations. We kindly ask you to make sure that your main luggage is easily transportable (please see below our recommendations regarding the equipment).

## • ACCOMODATION / FOOD

### Accommodation

Full board accommodation every day, picnics are provided by Respyrénées.

3 nights in the magnificent Bardenas troglodyte houses, in Valtierra : <http://www.lasbardenas.net/cuevas/>

1 night in 4-star spa-hotel in Murillo de Gallego : <http://www.hotelaguasdelosmallos.com/es/inicio>

1 night in a 2-star hotel

Accommodation in rooms with 2 or 3 beds

### Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam)
- Picnics are included, prepared by your guide and suitable for the activity.
- Drinks are not included

## • PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Start** : On Day 1 at 17:15 at Bayonne train station.

**End** : On Day 6 at 15:45 at Bayonne train station.

### How to get to Bayonne:

- By plane:  
Biarritz Parme Airport (25km) : daily flights to Paris, London, Lyon, and Clermont Ferrand Hub.
- By train :  
Many TER trains to Bayonne from the main cities in France.  
Contact SNCF at 36.35 (direct line) or [www.oui.sncf.com](http://www.oui.sncf.com) to confirm the timetable.
- By car :  
From Bordeaux A63 Motorway, 207km. From Toulouse, A64 Motorway, 293km, then Bayonne A63 Motorway, exit "gare SNCF" . If you come by car, we advise you to park at the SNCF train station indoor car park.

## • WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

### **Bags**

A small day pack for your water bottle, camera, picnic and waterproof.

A bag, rucksack or suitcase for your main luggage weighing a maximum of 12kg per person.

### **For the day time**

- Comfortable shoes/trainers
- Walking socks.
- Warm fleece
- Shorts and T shirts.
- Swimming costume or trunks
- Towel
- Water bottle (one litre minimum)
- Personal first aid kit
- Sun and rain protection
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Sun hat
- Wind and waterproof jacket (Gore-Tex style).

### **For your picnics**

- A good cutting knife and some plastic bags
- Relaxing time
- Trainers or open sandals
  - Warm Fleece and casual wear

### **Other little things**

- A pair of trainers or sandals for a night
- Glasses and suncream
- Hats
- Camera
- Small toiletry bag and towel
- Torch or headlight
- A first aid kit with personal medication, blister plasters (compeed), aspirin and survival blanket.