Factsheet | Guided walking | Level 4/5 | 6 walking days on the GR10

Guided GR10, Part 7 : Mérens les Vals - Vernet les Bains

Your Tour briefly

- Guided hike with a certified mountain leader (BE AMM) specialized in the region
  Itinerant stayVaried accommodations: Hotel, Guesthouse, Stopover Gîte, Mountain Hotel, Mountain Refuge
- Luggage transport between each stage, except for 2 nights in a refuge
- Easy access and return via Mérens and Vernet les Bains
- Duration: 7 days / 6 nights

Highlights

- The GR10 as the main thread
- A section of the route within the Catalan Pyrenees Natural Park
- Crossing the high Cerdan plateau
- Exploring the Bouillouses site and its many lakes
- The Mantet and Py Nature Reserves with their stunning high-altitude plateaus
- A journey under the Catalan sun

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This 7th section of the Pyrenees Crossing, with the famous GR10 as its guiding thread, leaves the Ariège region to enter the Eastern Pyrenees, renowned for its sunny high-altitude plateaus. Starting from Mérens-les-Vals, you will reach the Bésines Refuge before embarking on a beautiful mountain stage with stunning lakes surrounding Puig Carlit, the majestic peak of the area, rising to 2,921 meters.
You will then arrive at the Bouillouses Lake, surrounded by numerous other lakes nestled in breathtaking landscapes of mountain pines and high-altitude meadows. The journey continues across the vast Cerdagne plateau in the heart of the Catalan Pyrenees Natural Park, featuring picturesque mountain villages and the spectacular Yellow Train that crosses the region.
Leaving the Cerdan plateau, the route gradually leads you to the Conflent region, where the landscapes take on an increasingly Mediterranean character. After a stop at the charming Carança Refuge, set in the heart of a beautiful valley, you will explore the Mantet and Py Nature Reserves. Close to Catalonia, Spain, these reserves are marked by high, desert-like plateaus reminiscent of the Andean altiplanos, rising towards the renowned Pic du Canigou. This iconic peak overlooks the spa town of Vernet-les-Bains, the final destination of your journey.

•PROGRAM

Day 1: From Mérens-les-Vals to Bésines Refuge

Meet your guide at 8.30 AM in Mérens-les-Vals at the starting point of the hike. From Mérens, you will gradually leave Haute-Ariège and head towards Capcir, with a classic Pyrenean stage featuring deep valleys and a mountain pass. A long ascent along the Nabre valley and stream will lead you to the Porteille des Bésines at 2,333 meters above sea level. You will then descend towards the Etang des Bésines and its staffed refuge. From the refuge terrace, the view of the lake and the nearby Pic Pédros is stunning.

- **Distance: 9km, duration: 4h45, ascent: +1300m, descent: -300m**

Day 2: From Bésines Refuge to Bouillouses Lake

From Bésines Refuge, the route crosses the Coume d'Anyell pass, leaving Ariège for the Pyrénées-Orientales. Below the pass, you'll see the Lanoux Lake, the largest lake in the French Pyrenees, covering 1.71 km². After skirting the lake, the path rises towards the Porteille de la Grave and descends onto the Cerdagne plateau. Enjoy a lovely descent to the Pla and the Têt River sources at 2,050 meters, flowing into the vast Bouillouses Lake.

- **Distance: 16km, duration: 5h45, ascent: +650m, descent: -700m**

Day 3: From Bouillouses Lake to Planès

Starting from Bouillouses, a paradise for hikers known as the "Little Canada of the Pyrenees," this pleasant transition stage weaves through plateaus, mountain lakes, and state forests. After reaching Bolquère, near the famous Font Romeu resort, you will cross the vast Cerdagne high plateau, a landscape unique within the Pyrenees. Finally, you will arrive at Planès, a beautiful village with its Romanesque church, the only one in Europe with a trefoil plan.

- **Distance: 20km, duration: 6h, ascent: +250m, descent: -750m**

Day 4: From Planès to Carança Refuge

The topographic profile of this stage resembles a roller coaster, with each descent followed by a pass or high plateau to cross. Today, the ascent to Pla de Cédeilles offers a beautiful walk through the Planès forest. The balcony descent towards the Riberola valley is equally stunning. Then, you'll climb to the broad Mitja pass (2,367 m), an exceptional viewpoint towards the Cerdagne plateau, Capcir, and the iconic Pic du Carlit. A final descent will lead you to the Carança Refuge.

- **Distance: 15km, duration: 6h30, ascent: +1200m, descent: -900m**

Day 5: From Carança Refuge to Mantet

From the charming Carança Refuge, a traverse followed by a wooded climb leads to the Col del Pal, offering panoramic views, particularly of the Canigou massif to the east. You then enter the heart of the Mantet Nature Reserve, part of the Catalan Nature Reserves network (7 in total). After descending into the Alemany valley, you will climb again to reach the village of Mantet, with its beautiful stone houses.

- **Distance: 10km, duration: 4h45, ascent: +650m, descent: -950m**

Day 6: From Mantet to Vernet-les-Bains

Today, you will quickly reach the Mantet pass with stunning views of the Py Nature Reserve. The Mediterranean ambiance becomes increasingly pronounced, particularly in the vegetation. A descent along the Campelles stream leads to the village of Py. From there, a balcony path above the Rotja valley takes you to the Goa Tower, perched on a small natural platform offering splendid views of the Canigou peak and the Haut Conflent region. A ridge path followed by a forest descent will bring you to Vernet-les-Bains.

- **Distance: 15km, duration: 6h, ascent: +650m, descent: -1550m**

Day 7: End of the Trip in Vernet les Bains

After breakfast, end of your trip.

The itineraries have been planned based on the latest available information at the time of writing. Unforeseen circumstances may occur, and situations beyond our control could alter the schedule. On-site, our guides are the best judges and may adjust the route depending on the weather or if group safety requires it.

•MEETING POINT AND END OF TRIP

Meeting Point:
On Day 1 at 8.30 AM in Mérens-les-Vals with your guide: briefing about the trip, distribution of your picnic for the day, and drop-off of your luggage with the carrier. The guide will contact you a few days before the trip to confirm the exact meeting location.

End of Trip:
On Day 7 in Vernet les Bains, after your breakfast.

•DATES AND PRICES

Number of Participants:
Group of 4 to 11 people.

Departure:
Guaranteed departure with a minimum of 4 participants.

From Sunday 01/08/2027 to Saturday 07/08/2027
From Sunday 15/08/2027 to Saturday 21/08/2027
From Sunday 05/09/2027 to Saturday 11/09/2027

Price: €1025 per person

Supplements:
- Return transfer from Vernet-les-Bains to Mérens-les-Vals: €90 per person
- Additional night in Mérens and/or Vernet-les-Bains: Contact us for details

Price Includes:
- Full-board accommodation from the Day 1 picnic to breakfast on Day 7
- Luggage transport between accommodations, except for 2 nights in mountain huts (Days 1 and 4)
- Transfers mentioned in the program
- Supervision by a certified mountain guide (BE AMM) specialized in the region

Price Does Not Include:
- Insurance
- Transfers not included in the program
- Entrance fees for visits
- €15 booking fee
- Beverages

•TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Terrain Type
Hikes on well-marked trails, with varied terrain that is often rocky.

Level 3
For regular hikers in good physical condition with prior mountain hiking experience. Hikes average 6–7 hours per day with elevation gains of 700–1,000 meters, mostly on easy trails with occasional minor technical difficulties.
Note: The walking times provided are for reference only. They are average estimates based solely on active walking time, not including breaks. Depending on weather conditions, the hiking pace may vary, with elevation gains ranging from +300 m to +500 m per hour.

Guiding
The hike is supervised by a certified mountain guide (BE AMM) specialized in the region.

Luggage & Carrying
During the hike, you will carry only your personal day items, including your picnic and sufficient water. However, for overnight stays in mountain huts on Days 1 and 4, you will need to carry your personal items required for the night (sleeping bag liner, change of clothes, toiletries). Please bring an easily transportable duffel bag for luggage transfers (see our equipment recommendations).

Your Luggage Service
Your luggage must be dropped off at the reception of your accommodation no later than 9:00 AM. It will be delivered to your next accommodation before 5:00 PM. Only one piece of luggage per person will be accepted. For logistical reasons, we ask that you limit the weight of your luggage to a maximum of 15 kg and avoid hard-shell suitcases: our logistics team and transport partners handle dozens of bags per day, often on staircases. The transporter may charge an additional fee at the end of the hike if the luggage is too heavy or too numerous.

•ACCOMMODATION/FOOD

Accommodation
Full board (overnight stay + dinner + breakfast + picnic)
1 night in a hotel in a shared room on Day 6
1 night in a mountain inn in a shared dormitory on Day 2
2 nights in a gîte d'étape in a shared dormitory on Days 3 and 5
2 nights in a mountain refuge in a shared dormitory on Days 1 and 4

For nights in rooms: rooms for 2 to 3 people.

Meals
- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam)
- Evening meals often featuring local specialties, including a starter, main course, and dessert
- Picnics included
- Drinks not included

•PRATICAL INFORMATION

How to reach Mérens les Vals by public transport:
Trains from the main towns to Mérens les Vals (with connections) : https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/

How to leave Vernet les Bains by public transport:
Bus from Vernet les Bains to Villefranche de Conflent (Pyrénées Orientales - Ligne 521 - Casteil > Perpignan) : https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/
From Villefranche de Conflent, train to main towns (with connections) : https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/

How to reach Mérens les Vals from Vernet les Bains by public transport:
Bus from Vernet les Bains to Villefranche de Conflent (Pyrénées Orientales - Ligne 521 - Casteil > Perpignan) : https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/horaires-et-plans/
Train from Villefranche de Conflent to Mérens les Vals (with connection at Latour de Carol) : https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/

Nearest airport :
Toulouse-Blagnac airport
Perpignan airport

Parking lot in Mérens les Vals :
Parking lot in the village : at the train station or at the Auberge du Nabre (free and unguarded/supervised)

Parking lot in Vernet-les Bains :
Thermal center parking lot (free and unguarded/guarded)

If you are leaving your vehicle for the duration of your stay, please check with the tourist office to find out if there are any events (festivals, markets, etc.) at your parking location.

We recommend to arrive by train to avoid returns to departure to recover your car, because itineraries can be very long and badly served and very expensive if you take a taxi. If you insist to come with your car, we recommend you to leave your car on the arrival point the first day and to do the run to the departure point because the first day you have plenty of time to do the run and you will not be tired by a week walking.

Option to book a return shuttle to Mérens les Vals : 90€/person

•WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

Your Luggage Service
Your luggage must be dropped off at the reception of your accommodation no later than 9:00 AM. It will be delivered to your next accommodation before 5:00 PM. Only one piece of luggage per person will be accepted. For logistical reasons, we ask that you limit the weight of your luggage to a maximum of 15 kg and avoid hard-shell suitcases: our logistics team and transport partners handle dozens of bags per day, often on staircases. The transporter may charge an additional fee at the end of the hike if the luggage is too heavy or too numerous.

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.