

**The Bibbulmun Track Foundation's
The Camino & the Pyrenees - June 2016.
Escorted by Steve Sertis.**



Come and join the Bibbulmun Track Foundation's head guide, Steve Sertis, on this superb combination of two spectacular treks in Spain. Walk through the rolling countryside on the Camino de Santiago then trek the Catalan Pyrenees through beautiful mountainous country and charming villages. Our itinerary combines both options but if time is not on your side then you can choose one or the other.

Our journey will start in Barcelona, Spain where we will arrive after our flight from Australia. Here we will have 2 nights to explore this gorgeous city famous for Gaudi's architecture, before flying north to Santiago and transferring to Sarria where we start walking the Camino de Santiago. After 6 days of walking through beautiful rolling Spanish countryside you will reach Santiago de Compostela and receive your Compostela certificate. You will then rest your legs for a couple of days in Santiago before flying to Barcelona, from here you will be transferred by coach to Setcases a small mountain village located on the Ter River where our Pyrenees Mountains to Mediterranean trek begins. After 7 days of walking through the beautiful Spanish country side you will reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean where the trek finishes in Banyuls sur Mer. On the last day you will be transferred to Barcelona airport in time for international flights back to Perth.

Camino de Santiago:

For over a thousand years, pilgrims have been walking the Camino de Santiago, also known as the Way of St James. The way is marked by the symbol of the scallop shell, typically found on the Galician shores, and a great tradition of the route is to obtain the 'Compostela', a certificate of accomplishment given to pilgrims upon completing the way, gained by walking at least 100km of the route, which we will do on this trip. Here's your chance to follow the trails of medieval pilgrims bound for Santiago de Compostela and have all the details taken care of – all you need to do is pack your bags! You'll need to be in good health and able to walk for a few hours, with some up-and-down, and on varied terrain, from well-defined paths to rocky trails.

Accommodation: The accommodation is largely Casa Rural - Spanish home stays and/or smaller hotels, with the exception of the larger towns. Typically, mama will be in the kitchen preparing a three course hearty meal known as the pilgrim's staple which comes complete with a bottle of wine, (which can be returned to the kitchen if you wish, or if you are under age). The language is Spanish, English is difficult to find, which adds an exciting dimension, a great reminder that you are travelling in a foreign land.

Inclusions:

- Luggage transfer service
- 10 nights' accommodation as indicated in the itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (Breakfast daily, 6 dinners)
- Return flight from Barcelona to Santiago.
- Transfer Santiago to Sarria by private bus

Pyrenees- Mountains to Mediterranean:

The Catalan Pyrenees boasts some of the most beautiful walking country you could ever imagine. On this exhilarating, seven-day hike you will encounter dramatic and diverse landscapes, from unspoiled and rugged mountains to lush green valleys. Finally you will be greeted with spectacular vistas of the sparkling azure waters of the Costa Brava as you descend to the Mediterranean Sea on the Cote Vermeille.

Our route primarily follows the GR11 walking trail and is dotted with ancient villages each with their own charm. Setting out from the tiny village of Setcases you will wander through wild chestnut woods and beech-groves. Along the way you will discover Prats de Mollo with its dominating hilltop fort; the old Roman spa town of Amelie les Bain; the cherry town of Ceret, once a magnet for artists like Picasso, Chagall and Matisse, before walking through the hillside vineyards of the Albères foothills down to the pretty seaside town of Banyuls sur Mer.

This is the heart of Catalonia, where the red and yellow Catalan flag is proudly displayed throughout the region and the warm and welcoming hospitality, as well as the delicious Catalan food and wine all contribute to an experience of a lifetime.

Inclusions:

- Luggage transfer service
- 6 nights accommodation on the trek (5 nights comfortable hotel accommodation with private facilities; 1 night basic hotel with private facilities)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (6 breakfast & 6 dinners)
- Transfer to Setcases and return transfer from Banyuls sur Mer to Barcelona airport.

NOT INCLUDED: International flights; visas; travel insurance; optional tours; tips and any items of a personal nature.

Price:

Price for both treks (not including international flights) is **\$5250**.

If you wish to have your own room throughout the single supplement is \$1120.

If you are short on time and you can choose to do just one walk, enquire with Jenelle from Peregrine on jenelle@peregrinewa.com.au for more details and prices.



Come and join us!!

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Camino & Pyrenees June 2016

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1, 9th June: Barcelona

Fly from Perth to Barcelona. Arrive into Barcelona early afternoon and transfer to the joining hotel.

Accommodation: To be advised

Day 2, 10th June: Barcelona

Enjoy a free day in Barcelona soaking up the Spanish culture and exploring all of Gaudi's architecture.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 3, 11th June: Sarria

Today you will transfer to the airport for the group flight to Santiago de Compostela where you will be met and transferred to Sarria. As well as being rich in history, Sarria is a key service centre for the Camino. There are two parts, one being the beautiful historical village which is located in the upper part of town. Here you can visit the Tower of El Batallon and the Convent da Magdalena, once a convent and now a hotel it is definitely worth a visit to appreciate the architecture. Sarria is also renowned for its restoration workshops and antique stores.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 4, 12th June Sarria to Portomarin (23km/5-6 hrs walking)

Leaving Sarria as the sun comes up (between 7am and 8am from May through October) it is worth the early morning wake up call, for the magical walk through the Rua Major, where the street lamps lining the road bid us farewell to Sarria. There are at least 5 villages en route to Portomarin, which is another highlight for history and views. We enter the town of Portomarin, crossing the longest bridge on the Camino, you will notice, every second shop is a bakery, as Portomarin is also well known for its tarts and liqueurs. Owing to the construction of a dam on the River Mino you can see the remains of a few buildings and the old bridge when the water line is low. The Main Square and Church of San Nicolas are a welcoming site and the small Church of San Pedro is worth a visit. In the evening we will join the local families in the square and kick a soccer ball around, this is their national sport, so expect to be shown some impressive local talent!

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner



Day 5, 13th June Portomarin-Palas de Rei (24km/5-6 hours walking)

An easy 23 kilometre walk to Palas de Rei, a town of 3,700 people. Our path takes us through farming regions, fields of sunflowers, and picnic areas. It is a day of fewer villages, so time to soak up the countryside. Palas de Rei is quaint and welcoming.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 6, 14th June Palas de Rei- Melinde (14km/3-4 hours walking)

There are only a couple of kilometres between towns and villages before arriving in Melinde, founded in the 10th century and permitted to build a castle in 1320.

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 7, 15th June Melinde- Arzua (15km/3-4 hours walking)

Much of the day is shaded through the Oak and Eucalyptus forest. An area for farming and more cattle per head than another area in the region of Galicia.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner

Day 8, 16th June Arzua- Rúa (19km/4-5 hours)

This is a thrilling day, the excitement mounts as Santiago, the final stage, feels like it is just up the road and, one sleep away. There are smiles on the faces of the pilgrims and the locals. Today is also a day to sample some mushrooms, known in Spain as setas, mushrooms are in abundance at the right time of year. Take a journey back in time, a rare opportunity to do some old fashioned mushrooming if you wish along the way.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast and dinner



Day 9, 17th June Rua- Santiago (19km/4-5 hours walking)

The last day of the pilgrimage, it will be a day of unexpected events. Arriving in Santiago can be an emotional and bitter sweet experience. Even if your feet and legs are hurting, there is usually a feeling of not wanting the journey to end. Santiago is visible from about 5 kilometres away, and it is worth the early morning start to arrive at the Cathedral for the pilgrims midday mass, making your way past the pied piper (donations welcome), to the final stage at the steps, then to the seats of the congregation. Following the service, it is a trip to the Compostela office to show your stamp book to the team of volunteers, who are eagerly waiting to hear your story and stamp your certificate highlighting your name in Latin.

Tonight in Santiago is to celebrate, where the rewards for all that walking are sampling an endless supply of tapas, chorizo, bocadillos (Spanish sandwiches), tortilla and Iberico jamon (Spanish ham), to name just a few of the specialties. You can reflect on the highlights of your journey, and remember the tales that will stay on the Camino.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 10, 18th June: Santiago

Santiago de Compostela is a special, rare city with a particular magic that can only be enjoyed by walking around its streets. Its historical centre has been designated a World Heritage Site and offers dozens of churches and religious buildings, including the impressive cathedral, which is both Baroque and Romanesque at the same time and contains the sepulchre of the Apostle St James (known in Spanish as Santiago). The plazas of A Quintana, Praterias, Acibecheria and O Obradoiro escort the Cathedral and each one stands as an open-air museum. Plaza de O Obradoiro marks the location of the Hostel dos Reis Católicos, which is today the Parador Hotel, the office of the vice-chancellor of the city's university and the Pazo de Raxoi, which is home to the regional government and the City Hall. The cathedral marks the beginning of Rúa da Raiña and Rúa Franco, which are laden with tapas bars and restaurants where you can enjoy all the specialties of Galicia and, at the end of the street, the beautiful Paseo da Ferradura offers impressive views of the city on one side and the university campus on the other. Another part of the historical centre contains the beautiful marketplace, which is of neo-Romanesque style. It is impossible to summarise the beauty of this great city in only a few lines.

Accommodation: To be advised

Meals included: Breakfast

Pyrenees



Day 11, 19th June: Setcases

Today you will fly to Barcelona, if you are only doing the Camino then the tour will end on arrival at Barcelona Airport. If you are continuing on to the Pyrenees we will be met on arrival in Barcelona and transferred to Setcases. If you are only doing the Pyrenees walk your will need to make your way to Barcelona airport to meet the flight arriving from Santiago de Compostela. Setcases is a small mountain village located on the Ter River, at the confluence of the Vall-llobre stream in the beautiful Ter Valley.

Tonight is spent in a traditional family run hotel where you will receive a warm and friendly welcome from the local owners. Dinner this evening is served in the hotel's restaurant, which serves traditional local Catalan fare in a relaxed and homey atmosphere.

Accommodation: Hotel Tiranda or similar

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 12, 20th June: Setcases to Mollo

Walking time: Approx 4 – 5 hours. 13 kms / Level +550m, Level -650m

On today's walk you will hike up and down steep and rugged mountainous terrain and be rewarded with stunning views of the breathtaking landscapes that surround you. Mountain trails will take you through beautiful wooded valleys of beech trees and coniferous forests. As you descend into the small historic town of Mollo, you will encounter the town's charming Romanesque church, Santa Cecilia. This afternoon you can relax in the town and in the evening enjoy a well-deserved dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Calitxo or similar

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner



Day 13, 21st June: Mollo (Spain) TO Prats De Mollo (France)

Walking time: Approx 5 – 6 hours. 14 kms / Level +440m, Level -885m

As you cross the Pyrenees today you will walk from Spain into France - from Mollo (Spain) to Prats de Mollo (France). You leave South Catalonia following an old smugglers' path and en route visit the tower 'Tour de Mir', where you will enjoy sweeping views over the Vallespir Valley. On arrival in the medieval city of Prats de Mollo (France) a wander through the old streets and a visit to Fort Laguarde, is recommended. The impressive castle was built in 1683 to strengthen the town's defences. This evening is spent in a basic, but comfortable hotel in the town centre.

Accommodation: Hotel Ausseil or similar

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 14, 22nd June: Prats Do Mollo To Amelie Les Bains

Walking time: Approx 5 – 6 hours. 12 kms / Level +362m, Level -1018 m

This morning you will be transferred to St Laurent de Cerdans; the starting point for your walk to Amélie les Bains. A short climb will take you to the Pilon de Belmatx (1280m) and from here you'll experience spectacular 360 ° views over the Costa Brava, the Canigou Mountain and to the Côte Vermeille. Beginning your descent, you walk down a long, rocky trail and then follow a path through dense chestnut forests before eventually arriving at the town of Amélie les Bains. Upon arrival in Amélie les Bains there'll be time to explore the lively streets of this pretty town, which is famous for its natural healing sulphur springs that rise from the Gorge do Mondony. Amélie les Bains is today one of the most frequently visited thermal baths in France. This evening you can relax and unwind in the hotel Amélie les Bains, your base for the evening. You may even catch a local game of boules, a popular social pastime for Amélie's residents.

Accommodation: Hotel La Reine or similar

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner



Day 15, 23th June: Amelie Les Bains to Ceret

Walking time: Approx 4.5-5 hours. 10 kms / Level +380m, Level - 320m

Today you can enjoy a more leisurely pace with an easy walk from Amélie les Bains to the lovely town of Céret. You will pass the small village of Reynes at the bottom of a valley and then from the Col de Boussells you will arrive at the outskirts of Céret and the surrounding cherry tree orchards. The area is known for its cherry production, and the mild climate assures early fruit maturity, around mid-April. Tradition states that the first pick of cherries is given to the French President as a gift from Catalonia. You will soon begin to experience the magic of Céret as you follow the small and narrow street into the town centre. An artist's town, the most well-known cubism painters were inspired by Céret and spent a lot of time here. A key centre of Catalan culture, the town is renowned Museum for Modern Art exhibits works by Picasso, Matisse, Chagal, Maillol, Dali and Miro. A visit here is recommended. Your hotel in Céret was frequented by some of these famous artists who donated original works to the hotel owner who proudly exhibits them on the hotel walls.

Accommodation: Hotel les Arcades or similar

Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 16, 24th June: Ceret to Banyuls Sur Mer

Walking time: Approx 7.5-8 hours. 22 kms / Level + 642m, level, Level -1589m

This morning you will be transferred from Céret to Pic Néoulous from where you commence your final and longest walk, down to the charming town of Banyuls sur Mer located at the base of the Pyrenees and on the shores of the sparkling Mediterranean. From Pic Néoulous (1260m) you will experience fantastic views of the Mediterranean Sea, the Roussillon plain and the Pyrenees. Today's trail takes you along the Albères; the colourful foothills of the eastern Pyrenees, then from the Pic Sailfort a steep and rocky descent leads to the Cap Béar. Passing through picturesque hillside vineyards you will reach Elmes's beach before continuing on to Banyuls sur Mer.

Accommodation: Hotel le Catalan or similar

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 17, 25th June: Banyuls Sur Mer

The trip ends this morning after breakfast in Banyuls sur Mer. Transfer to Barcelona airport in time for your flight back to Perth.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 18, 26th June: Arrive in Perth