

Across The Picos de Europa

Level:	MEDIUM – 4–8hours Medium/Hard Walking
Distance:	11 km – 24km
Duration:	7 nights, 5 days walking, 1 free day
Accommodation:	Posada Sobre Villa III, Hotel Casa Cipriano or Hotel Pena Castil, Hotel Picos De Europa
Transfers	Airport transfer from Santander
Route:	2 Nights Espinama – 2 Nights in Sotres – 3 Night Arenas De Cabrales –
Cost:	765 Euro (145 Euro single room supplement) + 50 Euro per person Airport transfer
Dates Available:	05/07/2023

The Picos de Europa are a range of dramatic mountains inland from the northern coast of Spain. They straddle the 3 regions of Asturias, Cantabria, Leon and Castille. The name derives from ships arriving from America and these were the first landmark “The Peaks Of Europe”

The Picos de Europa consists of three massifs Central, Eastern and Western. The Picos are mainly limestone and thousands of years of weather and glacial action has sculpted the peaks into some awesome landscapes.

The central and western massifs are separated by the breathtaking Cares Gorge(Garganta del Cares), a 1.5km deep gorge with a stunning path running along the water canal that feeds two hydro-electric stations. The highest peak is Torre de Ceredo at 2650m but the most recognisable peak is Naranjo de Bulnes or Picu Urriellu at 2529m.

The Picos De Europa, has Cantabrian brown bears (*Ursus arctos pyrenaicus*) and wolves (*Canis lupus signatus*) live in the more remote regions. There are about 150 bears in the massifs and they are timid. There are roughly 2000 grey wolf in Spain with only a fraction of the population existing in the Picos. The main mammal you will encounter is the Rebecos(Cantabrian Chamois), there were reportedly 8000 sightings in 2008

We have designed this walking holiday to walk some of the best bits of the Picos de Europa. We walk through the Eastern and Central massifs and utilise the El Cable (cable car) at Fuente De to gain 850m and to make the walking easier for some. We walk to the beautiful village of Sotres straight over the Eastern massif below the foot of the peak of Naranjo de Bulnes. We also walk to Bulnes which until 2001 was not connected by any transport but now the Funicular train connects the village to main road. Then we walk the Cares Gorge. The walking holiday stays for 2 nights in each hotel with only 1 night at Bilbao, your luggage is moved onwards for you to the next hotel.

We have chosen family run hotels that are good quality, comfortable and cook quality local traditional food. All the rooms are en-suite. We use local taxi drivers and we keep your transport to a minimum.

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Itinerary 7 nights Picos De Europa

Day 1 05/07/2023

Meet at Bilbao or Santander airport and transfer to Espinama

Hotel Posada Sobrevilla III – Dinner in hotel and go through the week.

Day 2 06/07/2023

Transfer to Fuente De (5mins) Catch El Cable(cable car 10 Euro one way Adult, 4 Euro one way Child)

Refugio Veronica Circular 12km - 5-6 hrs 600m Ascent/Descent 600m

Catching the Cable Car at Fuente De up to El Cable, where we start the circular walk to Refugio Veronica taking in some vast views of the Picos De Europa.

Transfer back to Espinama

Or

Refugio Veronica Circular – Fuente De – Espinama – 17km 6- 8 hrs – Ascent 800m Descent 1000m

Catching the Cable Car at Fuente De up to El Cable, where we start the circular walk to Refugio Veronica taking in some vast views of the Picos De Europa.

Walking back from Fuente de to Espinama using the the little used track that takes us up on the Eastern side of the valley.

Dinner in Espinama restaurant

Day 3 07/07/2023

Espinama – Sotres - GR202 Walk 17km – 5-6hrs Ascent 900m Descent 700m

Walking from the hotel up the car track that takes you high over the Picos via the Gr202 walk. Easy to navigate and good track to follow. Fabulous views of the Picos peaks.

Check in Hotel Casa Cipriano or Hotel Pena Castil

Evening meal in hotel

Day 4 08/07/2023

Sotres – Tielve – Sotres – 14km 4 -6 hrs Ascent/Descent 700m (can be shortened with a taxi from Tielve 9km)

Another great walk rising out of Sotres you will walk over grazing land with some stunning views down the Rio Duje Valley. Walk through disused farmsteads along a track before the final descent to Tielve. From here you need to walk along little used road for 2km before taking an ancient mule trail back into Sotres. Lunch can be had at the Hostal Duje just a little down the road towards Sotres.

OR

Jito De Escarandi Circular 17km 5-7hrs – Ascent 850m, Descent 850m

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After a short transfer to Jito Escardi 20mins- follow this classic walk into the Western massif passing the disused mineral mines of the area. Chance for a coffee in the refugio. A wild walk in a little walked trail. Rugged scenery and wildlife.

OR

Sotres – Urriellu(Naranjo De Bulnes) – Sotres 6- 8 hrs 23km Ascent/Descent 1600m

Walking from the hotel in Sotres, we descend into the valley Duje before ascending to Pandebanos vega and picking up the main trail to the Refugio at Uriellu. Stunning views on the way up. We can now either retrace our steps or take a harder little walked route back to Sotres.

Dinner in Hotel

Day 5 09/07/2023

Sotres – Bulnes – walk to Poncebos 13km 5 – 7 hrs -Ascent 1200m Descent 700m

A lovely walk out of Sotres and over the Collado Pondebano and then down to the village of Bulnes. Bulnes did not have any means of access till 2001 apart from on foot. Lunch had at Bulnes. Then you can either catch the Funicular train down to Poncebos or walk along a stunning gorge down to Poncebos.

Transfer to Arenas De Cabrales(10mins) and check into Hotel Picos De Europa.

OR

Sotres – Arenas De Cabrales 17km – 6 – 8hrs - 500m Ascent 1300m Descent.

Taking the Pr200 path to the ridge high above the village of Tielve. From here we take the route up to Invernales Del Portuguese before descending into Las Arenas via the roman path.

Dinner In Hotel

Day 6 10/07/2023

Free Day In Arenas De Cabrales

Dinner in Hotel

Day 7 11/07/2023

Transfer to Poncebos(10mins)

Garganta del Cares Walk Up to 24km Ascent 1000m Descent 1000m

The famous Cares Gorge is 1.5km to the valley floor and is 12 km long to the village of Cain. You will pass through tunnels with amazing scenery. A walk well worth doing. This was built to serve the canal that runs parallel to the path.

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This walk is a return walk to Poncebos, it is 24 km return from the village of Cain(12km each way) It is not hard walking but it is vertiginous. You can walk as long as you want on this day we will walk the full gorge to Cain but people can decide when they have walked enough.

Transfer to Arena De Cabrales(10mins)

OR

Transfer from hotel in Arenas to Covadonga (35mins)

Ruta de la Reconquista 17km – 6-8hrs – Ascent 1200m Descent 500m

Transfer to the Covadonga Sanitorium, a large chapel carved out of the rock where the river pours out from. After spending an 1 hour walking around -you start the beautiful climb up to the Lagos de Covadonga. A beautiful walk of the conquistadors.

Transfer back from Lago Ercina (1hr)

Or

High pastures of Nava - Juan Robre - Arenas de Cabrales 14km ; 6- 7 hours; Ascent 750m; Descent- 750m.

Walking from the hotel in Arenas we walk along an ancient Roman path that leads up to the pastures of Nava. Plenty of wildflowers before we start our ascent to Juan Robre, for some great views of Arenas de Cabrales below. We follow a ridge back towards Arenas before our descent into the town for a drink.Free Day

Day 8 12/07/2023

Transfer to airport.

The hotels we use are stayed in by us every year, we eat in the hotels and sleep in them, so we are constantly checking for quality and comfort. They are all family run and have good local food.

Picos De Europa

Posada Sobrevilla III :- A beautiful hotel based in Espinama. Good rooms and breakfast. Eat here on first night only. Good selection of restaurants on Espinama village. Wifi in rooms.

Hotel Pena Castil :- A lovely hotel with great local food. Wifi in rooms

Hotel Casa Cipriano :- A nice hotel with a the local bar attached. Excellent restaurant. Wifi in rooms.

Hotel Picos De Europa :- A large hotel with a large outside area with pool. Good restaurant. Wifi in rooms