

High Pastures of the Picos

Trip Code: SPP

Version: SPP High Pastures of the Picos de Europa



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Follow the spectacular man-made cliff-side path through the 1500m deep Cares Gorge
- Ride the Fuente De Cable car over the Pico's dominating limestone pinnacles
- Walks hand picked by our local expert to showcase the Pico's flora and geology
- Hike to the base of Naranjo de Bulnes, the most iconic limestone peak in the Picos
- Comfortable hotel bases in Cangas de Onis, Fuente De and Arenas de Cabrales

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days walking
- Max altitude - 1900 metres
- Join at Bilbao

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

The Picos de Europa, in northern Spain, is one of the most stunning mountain areas in Europe, with its dominating limestone pinnacles, verdant green valleys, crystal clear rivers, beautiful meadowlands and vibrant forests, it is a paradise for lovers of the outdoors. Created by our expert local guides, and Picos aficionados, this holiday is designed to not only showcase the region's best walks, but its natural wonders, geology, abundant flora, and its traditional mountain culture. Beginning near Cangas de Onis, our series of guided day walks will see us exploring for 5 - 7hrs each day and will include a traverse of the spectacular man-made cliff-side path cut through the 1500m deep Cares Gorge, a hike over the Las Horcadinas Pass following an exhilarating ride on the Fuente De cable car, a circuit of the stunning Covadonga Lakes, and a hike up to the base of Naranjo de Bulnes (Pico Urriellu) one of the most iconic sights in the Picos.

By using 3 different comfortable hotels bases in the pretty mountain areas of Cangas de Onis, Arenas de Cabrales and Fuente De, we will be able to cover as much of this magnificent National Park as possible within a week's holiday. If you choose to travel on our spring departures you'll witness the high pastures explode with spring flowers and rare orchids. Those travelling later in the year will see autumn transform the forests into an opulent tapestry of gold, red, russet and yellow. Whichever time of year you choose to travel our guide will be on hand to talk to you about the flora, fauna and geology you'll encounter (and advise the best places to sample delicious local cheese!). This is a showcase of some of the finest walking country in the world.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is a series of guided day walks, any of which can be considered as optional, and we will average 5 to 7 hours walking each day. The amount of ascent and descent is varying, but averages out at around 700 metres per day, though on some days it is as little as 250m and on others up to 1000m. The underfoot conditions are good, following tracks and trails and long sections of well-maintained pathway. However, we will also encounter some sections of scree, rocky terrain and meadow with no discernable track. You will only be required to walk with a day pack each day and we will sleep in comfortable, well appointed, hotels each night. This is a really enjoyable walking holiday and suitable for weekend walkers, especially those with an interest in geology and botany

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel just outside Cangas de Onis. A single timed transfer from Bilbao Airport is provided.

Meet at the group hotel just 4km from Cangas de Onis. The farming town of Cangas de Onis is our gateway to the Picos de Europa. Tonight over dinner with our Tour Leader we can ask questions about the coming week. Drive time: 2.5hrs.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

A classic circular walk from Covadonga Lakes through the pastures and forests surrounding the Western massif.

A nice gentle walk to ease us in to our week's holiday. After taking breakfast at our hotel, a transfer takes us to the beautifully located Covadonga Lakes, in the north west of the Picos de Europa National Park. From here we begin our classic circular walk, which takes us through high altitude pastures and beautiful beech forests. We'll pass many abandoned stone huts, which once served as summer homes to farming families when they headed into the mountains to tend their livestock; this will also be our first introduction to the regions old traditions. Returning to our vehicle we transfer on to our next accommodation in Arenas de Cabrales, which will be our base for the next three nights. This small town marks the entrance to the Central Massif of the Picos de Europa. Drive time: 1hr.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
400M



Descent
400M



Time
5 - 6 hrs walking



Distance
15KM

DAY 3

From Arenas de Cabrales to the village of Tielve or Sotres. Views of the Central Massif.

Today we start out directly from our hotel, ascending on an old cobbled roman road which leads us up into a dense forest of sweet chestnuts, where we can hope to also find some other native species. A long and reasonably challenging ascent takes us up into higher open pastures full of colourful alpine flowers and scattered with boulders and the remains of old mountain hamlets. Weather allowing we will have an incredible view into the valley of the Rio Duje and over to the central massif of the Picos, and its impressive column of tall, jagged, limestone pinnacles that dominate the horizon. Our route takes us into the National Park and down to the pretty little village of Tielve, one of the most traditional mountain towns in the Picos, or on to Sotres where we'll find a local cheese dairy. Our guide will decide the best place to end today's walk based on the prevailing conditions. We have it on very good authority from our local guides that these two villages are some of the best places to acquire the finest local Cabrales blue cheese. Perhaps we'll have a chance to stop and try some! Our vehicle will be waiting to meet us at the end of today's walk and we will transfer back to the hotel.

Meals: **B L D**





 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 1300M	 Descent 800M	 Time 6 hrs walking	 Distance 14KM
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DAY 4

Setting out from Ponchebos we have a day to explore the mighty Cares Gorge.

A short transfer takes us to Ponchebos, where we will begin our walk up the magnificent Cares Gorge or Garganta del Cares. The Cares gorge forms a natural dividing line between the Occidental and Central massifs. In some places the walls of the gorge soar precipitously almost 2000 metres above us and we will be amazed to be able to navigate the gorge on a path hewn out of solid rock, through this outrageously difficult terrain. First built in the 1920's as part of a hydro-electric scheme, this man made path now provides, without doubt, one of the most outstanding walks in the Picos de Europa. During today's walk, as we walk above the deep gullies forged by the clear blue waters of the Rio Cares, we will learn all about the geological history of the of the area and how this has conditioned the vegetation belts and fauna that exists in the gorge. Returning to our vehicle we drive the short distance back to our hotel in Arenas de Cabrales.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 260M	 Descent 260M	 Time 6 hrs walking
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DAY 5

Hike from Pandebano up to the base of the legendary Naranjo de Bulnes (Pico Urriellu).

Today we follow an old shepherd's and mountaineer's trail to reach the base of Naranjo de Bulnes (Pico Urriellu), a huge limestone peak dating from the Paleozoic era. A hike that will take us right into the heart of the Picos. We begin with a short transfer to Pandebano Coll (1218m), from here we wind up towards the peak through open pastures and meadows. This is a great route for spotting flower species unique to this area. We ascend gradually to the Vallejo Pass, where we make a sharp turn and descend briefly amongst the cliffs before a short steep ascent takes us up beneath Naranjo de Bulnes. We will have our lunch at the Vega de Urriello Refuge, where we can have some well-deserved drinks and enjoy the lively atmosphere, as well as the stunning views of the peaks and the coastline. We will return down to Pandebano where we will meet our transfer to our next hotel, near Fuente de.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 740M	 Descent 740M	 Time 6 hrs walking	 Distance 9KM
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DAY 6

Take the cable car to Mirador del Cable and descend over the Las Horcadinass Pass (1900m) down to the valley.

Today we jump out of the hotel and walk the short distance to the cable car station. We'll enjoy a scenic cable car ride, where we will ascend from around 1100m to 1800m in about 7 minutes! Leaving the cable car at the upper station at Mirador del Cable, we find ourselves in a spectacular moon-like landscape, where we can hope to catch sight of some chamois hiding amongst the rocks. We should also keep our eyes peeled for unusual flora species in this high rocky terrain as we hike to Las Horcadinass pass (1900m), from where we will descend all the way back down to the valley floor and into the dense Mediterranean forest, a great contrast to the start of today's walk! We return to our hotel near Fuente De for a second night.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 200M	 Descent 1000M	 Time 5 - 6 hrs walking	 Distance 8KM
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DAY 7

Hike up to the beautiful pastures of Liordes and descent to Fuente De.

For our last day we will do a challenging, but very rewarding, route. We follow an old mining trail that takes us on a steep ascent to the upper pastures of Liordes, a beautiful floral scene awaits for us! It is not uncommon to see vultures soaring overhead and we should have fantastic views of the impressive

central and western massif. We descend back to Fuente Dé, in the early afternoon, allowing enough time to enjoy a relaxed afternoon with the option to add a visit to the medieval town of Potes (additional cost).

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 925M	 Descent 925M	 Time 7 hrs walking
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DAY 8

Departure day.

The holiday ends after breakfast. A single timed transfer to Bilbao Airport is provided.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed group airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- All land transport required by the itinerary
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What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers (other than group transfers)
- Miscellaneous personal expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

The group will meet at the group hotel in Soto de Cangas.

A single timed transfer from Bilbao Airport to the group hotel is provided on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. This transfer will usually leave the airport in the late morning..

On the last day of the itinerary, there will be a single transfer back to Bilbao Airport timed for the check in of flights leaving at 1000 at the earliest.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If your flight schedules do not fit with these airport transfers, you will need to make your own way to the group hotel/back to the airport. A one-way taxi from Santander airport to Soto de Cangas will take around 1.5hrs and cost about €160. A taxi from Bilbao Airport will take around 2.5hrs and will cost around €260.

Hotel contact details and a contact number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

Breakfasts are continental in style with coffee, tea, cereals, cheese, bread or toast and jam with fruit or yogurt. Dinners are usually a home cooked three course meal, which will usually consist of a first course of soup, pasta/rice or a vegetable dish, a main course of meat or fish, and a homemade desert. Packed lunches are usually picnic in style and you will be asked to carry your own picnic bag each day. This could be a selection of meats/cheeses, pasta salad, fruit, cereal bars and bread. You may want to supplement the lunches with some favourite snacks of your own to keep you going along the way.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

During this walking holiday we will use 3 different comfortable hotel bases, spending 1 night in Cangas de Onis, 3 nights in Arenas de Cabrales and 3 nights in Fuente De. All rooms are en suite.

All accommodation is twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. A limited number of single hotel rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

We estimate that €100-€150 should be sufficient to cover miscellaneous expenses, including bar bills and snack items, chocolate bars etc. This will also allow you to pay reasonable tips to the local guide and driver. Money can be withdrawn from ATMs in Santander and Cangas. If you prefer to bring all your travel money with you, we recommend that you carry this in the form of euros cash. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect).

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking up to 6 hours a day for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

This region is known for its changeable weather associated with its mountains and its coastal location. Although most of the region's precipitation occurs between November and February, it can rain at any time of the year. From late May until early October the weather is generally good for walking, with clear and sunny days predominating. We can expect daytime valley temperatures of between 15-25°C in May/June/October, dropping to around 10°C overnight. Temperatures will be rather cooler than this at altitude, with daytime temperatures of between 10°C and 15°C above 1500 metres. At night the temperature could fall as low as 5°C. In May/June/Oct we may encounter some snow on some of the higher sections of the walks. As with any mountain area there is the risk of some poor weather, with rain and even fog.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Walks and Climbs in Picos de Europa. Cicerone.
- Northern Spain - Picos de Europa. Sunflower Books.

Maps

Picos de Europa 1:25,000. Adrados (2 sheets)

The Picos on two detailed maps, each available either on paper or in a waterproof and tear-resistant edition. Contour interval is 10m (50m for cliff faces), and bold shading and graphic relief, provide an excellent representation of the terrain. Overlay shows hiking routes, mountain huts and refuges. The map legend is in Spanish and English. Further information on the reverse is in Spanish only.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You **SHOULD** bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Walking socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Shorts
- Thermal baselayer shirts
- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (including for lips)
- Antibacterial hand wash
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Daypack c.20-30 litres
- Washbag and toiletries

- Warm hat
- Gloves
- Sunhat
- Dry bags
 - Basic First Aid Kit including: headache tablets, treatment for upset stomach (e.g. Imodium or Pepto Bismol), antiseptic cream, plasters (Band aids) and blister treatment.

The following items are optional:

- Spare laces
- Trainers/sandals for use in refuges (crocs are provided in most)
- Swimwear
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Small towel (for swimming)
- Camera
- Penknife (remember to pack all sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Trekking poles
- Insect repellent
- Travel clothes
- Small padlock (to lock luggage)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts at the hotel near Cangas de Onis and ends in Fuente De. Single timed transfers to/from Bilbao Airport are provided at the start/end of the holiday.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Hand Picked Picos at Outstanding Value Our 6 walks have been specially selected by our expert local guides to showcase the iconic sites, fascinating geology, and wonderful flora and fauna of this stunning national park. With guided walks everyday and all meals included this holiday is fantastic value for money.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 29/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change