

# Walking Tours in the South West of France 2020

**MY NAME IS PATRICK ARRIEULA. I was born in south-west France in a little village at the foot of the French Pyrénées in the Béarn region near the Spanish and Basque borders.**

Since 1996, my wife Robbie and I have escorted unique tours in the Pyrenees Atlantic region of south-west France during spring and autumn. We would like to share with you our passion for this beautiful part of France. Our tours are based in the countryside, giving you the rare opportunity to meet the locals, taste the regional produce, admire the beautiful landscapes and experience the culture. The walking tours are suitable for all those who enjoy walking as well as delicious traditional dining. **During our tours we settle in at the one hotel for the 9 days avoiding the inconvenience of repacking and changing hotels.** On the Camino (St James Way) tour it is necessary to change hotels during the tour as we are following the trail, but we do try to keep this to a minimum. The small family-run hotels have been chosen for their comfort and authentic regional table. **The price of the tours includes all the activities stated, all meals and wine.** All the rooms offer private ensuite facilities and shops and banks are all within walking distance of the hotels. All singles will have their own room and facilities unless sharing with a friend. During the tours, participants have the choice of joining daily activities or relaxing in the village for the day. A coach will ensure a comfortable journey along the French country roads and enable us to drive to different destinations every day and admire spectacular scenery.

**Included in your trip:** All transport, accommodation, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and activities as stated in the brochure. Wine is included with all sit-down meals.

The tours are limited to a maximum of 20 and a minimum of 10 participants. Your booking will be secured upon payment of a deposit of \$400 AUD per person. See the back of the brochure for more details.



## Testimonials



I had a fabulous time, your humour, knowledge of the area, love of people shown in a million small and large ways, your ability to keep the group moving into the next stage without having us feel rushed, have all made this a time for me to treasure. You are both amazing for your genuine interest of people and your ability to engage with the locals which brought so many extra fun moments. Well done Patrick & Robbie. P Blackwell

Patrick's knowledge & love of the area was a huge asset. Patrick's & Robbie's happy, positive, generous personalities contributed to the overall experience. What a privilege to be able to spend a day in your village meeting your family and joining in with the locals. M Baldwin.

A truly wonderful trip with variation on walks and visits to places of interest. Patrick's & Robbie's laid-back but very professional attitude, made the trip a memorable experience. Many thanks to you both for a great holiday. I & L Hanan

## Get-together in Bowral

A get-together for participants coming on our 2020 tours will be held in Bowral NSW Australia, to fine-tune details. The get-together will be held on Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for the April/May tours and on Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for the Sept/Oct tours. An information booklet about the tours will be provided on the day.

## Attention walkers

**The walking tours with challenging walks are suitable for regular, experienced walkers.** We will be walking over mountains and the grades of the walks will range from easy to challenging. **The distance of the walks will vary from 5kms to 18kms and the ascents from 100 to 700 meters.** Uphill and downhill training is most important.

We suggest that, for your greatest enjoyment and appreciation of the walking tours, you try to arrive in Europe a few days prior to the tour starting, so you will be rested beforehand.

## Private tours

All our tours can be organised for private groups. These tours are for groups of friends who like to share holidays together. We can design itineraries to suit individual groups, combining walking, food, culture and lots more. A minimum of 12 participants is required. Please give us a call for more information.

## “Pistoulet” Our place in France available for holiday rental

This 19<sup>th</sup> century country cottage is situated in the village of Lagor in the Béarn region. It is located within a stone’s throw of the mountains, the sea, Spain and the Basque country - so much to do and discover! It has three bedrooms, will sleep six people very comfortably and offers a view of the Pyrénées.

**Downstairs:** Fully equipped kitchen, dining and living area, glassed verandah, separate toilet, bathroom and one bedroom.

**Upstairs:** Two bedrooms with a bathroom and toilet. **Outdoors:** Small garden at the rear and parking inside the front courtyard.

**Where is Lagor?** The village of Lagor is situated between Moux and Maslacq, 20 minutes from Pau and Orthez railway stations. Pau airport is accessible from Paris. Shopping facilities are just minutes from Lagor.



## April / May 2020 St James Way (The Pilgrim Walking Trail)

During this tour, we would like to share with you our passion for walking as well as giving you a little insight into what this mysterious trail named ‘Santiago de Compostella’ or ‘The St James Way’ has to offer. For hundreds of years now, pilgrims, walkers and travellers have taken this route to Santiago de Compostella to see the tomb of St James. The walks will average about 17 kms per day, crossing the picturesque Gers and Tarn/Garonne regions and finishing in the Béarn region. We will follow the Le Puy trail, said to be the most beautiful. The grade of the walk is moderate. All your luggage, other than your day pack, will be carried for you by bus. The trail includes unsealed roads, forest trails and country roads and if you don’t feel like walking, you have the option of rest days.

**April/ May Walking tour: 27<sup>th</sup> April – 5<sup>th</sup> May Cost: \$3720 per person twin share. Single supplement: \$250**

### Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April:

All participants will be met at Agen railway station at 13.50. This is the arrival time of the TGV 8503 from Paris, Montparnasse. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour. The bus will take us to Auvillar, voted one of France’s most beautiful villages, where we will be spending our first two nights. The afternoon will be free to explore the village, followed by welcome drinks and dinner at the hotel. [Train tickets not included in package].

### Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April:

16.5 km walk from Auvillar to the village of Miradoux, in the Gers region. We will picnic along the way. Dinner at the hotel.

### Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April:

Checkout followed by a bus trip to Miradoux for a 15km walk to the beautiful Gallo-Roman town of Lectoure, one of the oldest villages in the Gers region, where we will be spending our next two nights. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April:

19km walk from Lectoure to La Romieu, in the heart of Gascony. La Romieu is known for its unique collegiate church and its legend of the cats! Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May:

Checkout followed by a bus trip to La Romieu to start a 16km walk to the medieval town of Condom, where we will be spending our next three nights. Picnic lunch. Dinner in a country restaurant

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May: Rest day.

Free morning to explore Condom, its market, churches and museums and to organise your own lunch. In the afternoon we will take you to visit the Chateau de Cassaigne, constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in the heart of the Armagnac region. Here you can taste their succulent prunes in Armagnac, as well as the local wines and liqueurs. We will stop in Larresingle, France’s smallest fortified village, follow by a game of Pétanque. Dinner at the hotel.

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May:

17km walk from Condom to Montreal, Gascony’s first bastide, and voted one of France’s most beautiful villages. Picnic along the way. Dinner at the hotel.

### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May:

Checkout followed by a bus trip to Montreal for our last 18km walk to Eauze, the capital of the Armagnac. After the walk the bus will take us to Monein in the Béarn region (approximately 2-hour drive) to spend our last night. Farewell drinks and dinner at the hotel.

### Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May:

The bus will take all participants to Pau railway station to catch the 11.06 TGV 8581 for Paris. This will be the only transport organised that day. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour.



## May 2020 Itinerary in the Béarn & Basque regions

This tour will cover my region of the Béarn and part of the Basque regions taking us through breath-taking scenery and snow-capped mountains during the spring season. You will be able to share a day with local villagers and play ancient games and of course taste some of the regional food and wine. I am proud to be Béarnais and to share my village life with you!!

**May Walking tour: 9<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May**

**Cost: \$3450 per person twin share.**

**Single supplement: \$180**

### Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May:

All participants will be met at Pau railway station at 14.13. This is the arrival time of the TGV 8572 from Paris, Montparnasse. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour. [Train tickets not included in package]. Participants will be taken to the hotel in Monein. Those who are not using this pick-up service will make their own way to the hotel. Welcome drinks will be served before dinner, with folk-singers performing local traditional songs, followed by dinner in the hotel.

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May:

Journey by bus to the village of Gavarnie for a 3-hour walk to Le Cirque de Gavarnie. Picnic lunch. On the way back, a quick stop to see the twelfth-century fortified church in the village of Luz St Sauveur. Dinner in a nearby restaurant.

### Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May:

Journey by bus to Gamarthe for an easy village-to-village walk retracing part of the ancient St Jacques de Compostella pilgrimage route (14 km), ending in St Jean Pied de Port. Free time to wander through the old fortified village. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May:

Journey by bus to Bious Artigues to the three D'Ayoules lakes for a 5-hour walk. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May:

Relaxing day including a village-to-village walk to give us a chance to experience the local countryside. Light lunch at a local 'gite' with free time in Monein in the afternoon. Dinner in a nearby restaurant.

### Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May:

Journey by bus to walk to Lake D'Estaiens, a 4-hour walk. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May:

Journey by bus to Arette for a 4-hour walk in the surrounding hills. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May:

Quick trip to my village, Abos, for a game of quilles de neuf and quilles de six and a stroll around the village, including an official welcome by the village Mayor. Light lunch followed by a wine tasting and a 3km walk back to Monein for a game of pétanque. Dinner at the hotel.

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May:

The bus will take all participants to Pau railway station to catch the 09.48 TGV 8581 for Paris. This will be the only transport organised that day. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour.



## September 2020 Itinerary in the Midi Pyrénées region

The Hautes Pyrenees region, known because of the Tour de France, has spectacular views, a national park abundant with rare fauna & flora and mountain villages overflowing with character, charm and history.

**September Walking tour: 10<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Sept**

**Cost: \$3990 per person twin share.**

**Single supplement: \$450**

### Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September:

All participants will be met in Lannemezan railway station at 15.43. This is the arrival time of the TER 72708 from Tarbes which connects with the TGV 8573 departing Paris Montparnasse at 08.28. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour. [Train tickets not included in package]. Participants will be met and taken to the hotel in Arreau, approximately 30 minutes away. Those who are not using this pick-up service will make their own way to the hotel. We will meet for welcome drinks followed by dinner at the hotel.

### Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to Gouaux for a 5-hour walk village to village, including a visit to a goat farm, and finish in Arreau. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to the Col D'Azet for a 4-hour walk starting between the Aure and Louron valleys following the trail down to St Lary. Light lunch at a local Auberge. Dinner at the hotel.

### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September:

Start in Arreau for a 17km walk on the Santiago De Compostella trail to Lortet. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to Esparros to visit one of Europe's most amazing abysses, followed by a visit to a working water mill still producing flour. Lunch will include a taste of the south and a wine tasting! Dinner in a nearby restaurant.

### Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to the natural reserve of Néouvielle for a 4.5-hour walk around the lakes. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to Spain for a 5-hour walk in the Pineta Valley. Picnic lunch. Dinner in a nearby restaurant.

### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to the Louron Valley for a 5-hour walk to the refuge of Soula via the gorges of Clarabide. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September:

The bus will take all participants to Lannemezan railway station in the morning to catch the TER 72728 to Tarbes at 11.05 and then the TGV 8514 for Paris, Montparnasse. This will be the only transport organised that day. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour.



## September / October 2020 Itinerary in the Basque region

The Basque country is one of France's most colourful regions offering a long list of unforgettable culture, history, charm and of course – food!!!! A place to remember!

**Dates: Walking tour: 27<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October**

**Cost: \$3995 per person twin share.**

**Single supplement: \$390**

### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September:

All participants will be met at Bayonne railway station at 15.32. This is the arrival time of the TGV 8533 from Paris, Montparnasse. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour. [Train tickets not included in package]. Participants will be met and taken to the hotel in Espelette, approximately 30 minutes away. Those who are not using this pick-up service will make their own way to the hotel. The afternoon will be free to relax and explore the village. Welcome drinks followed by dinner in the hotel.

### Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to St Jean Pied de Port to spend time at the local market and then on to the village of Irouléguay where we will start our 8km country lane walk to the village of St Étienne de Baigorry. Picnic lunch. After lunch we will stroll around the village and later visit a chilli farm. Dinner in a nearby restaurant.

### Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September:

Bus trip to Les Aldudes for a 4-hour walk among the palombières [the wild squab hunting huts] with magical valley views. Picnic lunch. After the walk we will visit a Basque Charcuterie, enjoy a tasting and see the unique breed of Basque pig. Dinner in a nearby restaurant

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September:**

We will cross the border into Spain and walk along the ridge of Mount Jaizkibel to the seaport of Passajes taking in the spectacular views of the Pyrénées and the Atlantic. Light lunch in a restaurant and free time to visit the village. Dinner at the hotel.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October:**

Visit to the chocolate maker and then a tasting of the locally produced foie gras. We will then make our way to the port of Socoa, for Ttoro, a traditional Basque seafood soup, followed by a stroll along the water's edge and free time to experience the history and charm of St Jean de Luz. Dinner at the hotel.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October:**

Bus trip to Urdax in Spain for a 4-hour walk crossing back into France. Picnic lunch. Dinner at the hotel.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October:**

4-hour walk in the hills surrounding the village of Itxassou with a casual lunch in a country restaurant. The afternoon will be spent playing some traditional games. Dinner at the hotel.

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October:**

Trip to the Col Ignasse for a ride on the petit train to the top of La Rhune. A 2 ½ hour walk will take us back down the mountain. Picnic lunch. We will stop in Ainhoa for time to explore this beautiful village. Farewell dinner at the hotel.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October:**

The bus will take all participants to Bayonne railway station in the morning to catch the 10.25 TGV 8540 for Paris, Montparnasse. This will be the only transport organised that day. Details will be confirmed a few months before the start of the tour.

**Tour conditions**

**Included in your trip**

All transport, accommodation, breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and activities as stated in the brochure. Menus will be organised by us to offer you a taste of the many specialties of the regional gastronomy. Wine is included with all sit-down meals but if the wines are not to your liking, you are free to purchase your own. The quantity of the wine served will be sufficient to accompany the meals.

**Conditions for bookings and cancellations**

Everyone participating in the tour must complete and sign a booking form and pay a **non-refundable** deposit of 400 Australian dollars per person. Your booking will be secured upon payment of the deposit. If you would like to join us on a tour you can send your deposit cheque, made out to - Pyrenees Tours - including the booking form and a recent photo to the following address: Pyrenees Tours, PO Box 469 Bowral NSW 2576 Australia. **Credit card surcharges: Visa - 1.8%, Amex - 2.8%** All participants must have travel insurance. **We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance as soon as you have paid any deposit on any of your travel arrangements. Make sure your travel insurance covers you against loss of deposit or final payment, in case of unavoidable cancellations.** A signed accident waiver and release of liability form which we will provide will need to be included with your doctor's certificate. The balance of the tour cost is due no less than 60 days before departure of the tour. Prices are based on cost and exchange of the Euro at the time of printing. We reserve the right to adjust the tour price should there be significant change rates.

Due to our financial commitments to our various suppliers, your deposit will be forfeited if you cancel. Cancellations within 59 to 29 days before the start of the tour = 30% refund of tour price, less than 30 days, no refund will be given.

**Not included in your trip**

Tips, insurance (i.e. travel, health, loss or damage to personal property) phone calls, extra expenses which are not included in the itinerary.

**Tour cancellation**

Should it be necessary to cancel the tour, due to failure to reach minimum numbers, 40-days' notice will be given and a full refund of the tour cost if paid will be refunded.

**Our responsibility as tour organisers**

It is our responsibility to ensure that tour activities have been organised as stated in the program. It is also our right to alter the itinerary, if necessary, in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Any extra costs resulting from these alterations will not be our responsibility.

No responsibility will be accepted for any delays occurring during the tour. It is at our discretion to stop any persons from participating in any of the activities should they not have the required level of fitness on any particular day.

**Responsibility of tour participants**

It is the responsibility of the participant to organise and pay for all travel documents, i.e. passports, visas, tickets, insurance, departure tax. All participants need travel insurance. The participants will be responsible for any injury, sickness, loss, or damage that might occur.

If any participant wishes to alter the itinerary in any way, all resulting costs and organisation will be his/her responsibility. It is the responsibility of the participant to be at the point of pick-up as specified and at the time specified. If this is not possible it is the participant's responsibility to rejoin the tour at his/her own expense.

**Awareness**

Participants should be aware of the risks and dangers involved in walking activities such as weather extremes due to unexpected and sudden changes, rocky and uneven terrain on which the activities may take place, physical exertion and lack of immediate medical assistance due to remoteness of the activities. Participants will need adequate fitness to undertake the walking activities.

**Booking form (this form can be photocopied)**

**A photo and \$400 deposit per person must be included with the booking form.**

Names.....

Address.....

Town..... State..... Postcode .....

Phone..... Mobile.....

Email.....

Single  Double  Twin share  Triple share  Name of the person/s you will be sharing with.....

Walking Tour  Other tour  Date of the tour: From.....To.....

I / we have read, accept and understand the booking conditions in the brochure and will provide proof of travel insurance and doctor's certificate with the final payment.

Signed.....Date..... Signed.....Date.....

**For more information**

<p style="text-align: center;">Patrick &amp; Robbie Arrieula Pyrenees Tours P.O. Box 469 Bowral NSW 2576 Australia Ph:0248625711 Email: <a href="mailto:pyrenees@acenet.com.au">pyrenees@acenet.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.pyreneestours.com.au">http://www.pyreneestours.com.au</a></p>	
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