

Active Spain

Picos Family Adventure



Picos de Europa – Cantabrian *Costa Verde* – accessible mountains – walks to suit families – fun adventure sports – quiet sandy beaches – magnificent environment – fully guided – premium small hotel

PURA HANDMADE	
Active	Medium
Comfort	First

A relaxed and fun family holiday in the spectacular Picos de Europa.

Enjoy a unique variety of scenery and activity within a few short miles.

Experience beautiful beaches, high mountains and peaceful valleys.

Fun activities to suit all ages with walking, canoeing, mountain biking.

Fully guided with comfortable private transport.



Spectacular and accessible mountain peaks within sight of the coast.

"We just want to thank you for a really fantastic holiday in the Picos with Pura and two really great guides Alex and Jesus. They really made the holiday for us and looked after us so well, taking us to local places we would never have found and spending so much time with us." Nina M.

Suggested Holiday Itinerary

Preface

Pura's family adventures are essentially the same as our normal adventure holidays, we just 'chop' the activities up into shorter sections.

We do not compromise on the quality of the accommodation, guiding, food, activities or transport.

You can expect a holiday that is active, comfortable and responsible in a beautiful mountain environment.

The activities on this holiday are ideal for families with children aged around 9 – 14.

As well as the magnificent natural beauty of the Picos de Europa region itself, it makes a perfect environment for a family holiday with a difference.

There's a huge variety packed into a small area...

- Quiet sandy beaches set in rugged bays perfect for relaxing and exploring;
- High mountains for walking, exploring and sightseeing. Depending on how energetic you feel, you can walk or take the cable car up.
- Valleys, gorges and rivers for walking, cycling, and water-based activities from gentle canoeing to canyoning.
- Charming towns and villages rich in history, culture and cuisine.

All in all, we think that the Picos make a wonderful setting for an active and comfortable family holiday with plenty of variety to offer something for everybody.

Day 1 | Picos | arrive and settle in

Your guide will be at the airport to welcome you and drive you along the coast to your small hotel on the edge of the coastal town/village of Llanes.

Rooms are all en suite and we assume that parents and children each have their own rooms.

The hotel has a large garden with a swimming pool. To one side are other buildings but the back of the hotel looks out over lovely scenery.

Groups are of up to sixteen people guided by two Pura guides with two vehicles so groups are small and flexible. Enjoy dinner at your hotel tonight. (d)



A short walk to almost-hidden beaches

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Day 2 | Picos | meadows, picnic and beach

Start today with a walk through the high meadows of the coastal range with superb views south towards the Picos de Europa mountains and north over the sea.

Enjoy a picnic on the top of the hill prepared for you by your guides.

Spend the afternoon on one of the lovely beaches nearby.

Return to the hotel this afternoon.

Dinners are included on three nights.

On other days you can either arrange to eat at the hotel or walk into the centre of Llanes.

A riverside path has just been opened which will take you from the hotel to the harbourside of Llanes in about 15 minutes. Or you can take a taxi.

Guides are on hand with advice as needed. (b,l)



Day 3 | Picos | cycle and beach

Pick up bikes for a pleasant ride on small tracks along the rolling hills of the coast as they break off into the sea to reveal hidden sandy coves and beaches.

What makes this stretch of coastline so unusual and special is that you can see the high mountain peaks, some up to 2,600m, whilst standing on the sand.

Today is taken at a leisurely pace with breaks throughout the day to enjoy the beach.

Lunch is a picnic on the beach.

Typical bike ride 27km, 4hrs, \uparrow 250m, \downarrow 250m.

Return to your hotel to relax or stay out to enjoy dinner together. (b,l)



Ride bikes along the beautiful stretch of coastline with views of the Picos.

Day 4 | Picos | get active or relax

Today you can choose to take it easy at leisure on the beach or head off for activities nearby such as walking, mountain biking or surfing.

Your guides are with you all day and you have one guide plus one vehicle for eight of you so there is flexibility to allow the group to split and do different things.

Normally at least some of the group head off to try their hand at canyoning.

Nb this activity is not included and extra is payable locally.

The activity is great fun in a rough and tumble sort of way, but it is expertly supervised and no experience is needed.

Don wetsuits (provided) and hike up a steep path into a narrow canyon. Once you get to the top, you complete your outfit with a harness and helmet.

Drop down into the stream and make your way back down to the bottom by negotiating the riverbed.

This can include abseiling down a waterfall, jumping into pools, sliding down slippery rocks and swimming.

This activity has been likened to a log flume without the log and that's pretty much it.

To get down the canyon will take anywhere from two to four hours depending on water levels and group size. (b)



Enjoy fun activities, some of which involve suspending your dignity

Day 5 | Picos | walk the Cares Gorge

The most famous walk in the Picos, probably in all of Spain, is the Cares Gorge.

The walk starts you uphill on a winding, gravelly path before levelling out and leading into the gorge proper.

The path runs along the wall of the gorge, cut into the rock, narrowing to just two metres in places.

The path is fairly level, so the river starts off far below you at the bottom of the gorge. As you head further into the gorge the river rises to meet you.

Towards the end of the gorge, pass through a series of short tunnels and over bridges as you cross the river time and again.

The far end of the gorge is a great place to have your picnic lunch on the banks of the river just before it heads downstream into the gorge.

You can choose how far you walk: the Cares Gorge is a real spectacle no matter how far in you go.

It looks scary but it's a very well-maintained path and even those nervous of heights appreciate the experience. Walk up to 22km, 6hrs, \uparrow 250m, \downarrow 250m.

Head back to the hotel for supper. (b,l,d)

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Cares Gorge path cut through the rock

Day 6 | Picos | **canoe along a mountain river**

Today you paddle along a quiet river in two-person canoes.

The course of the river is hemmed in by overhanging trees with the valley spread out around you.

The water is generally smooth but with a couple of short, easy rapids. Enjoy stops for snacks and swimming along the way.

After three hours in the water you reach the end of the journey.

Continue to the coast where you have a free afternoon to explore the fishing village of Llanes or to relax on the beach.

As ever, your guides are on hand to help with ideas and to get you around. (b,l)

Day 7 | Picos | **hike to a high peak**

Today is a long day of driving but well worth it as you make your way through the spectacular Hermida Gorge into the lush Liebana Valley.

At the far end of the valley (about 1½ hours from your hotel) is the dramatic mountain amphitheatre of Fuente Dé.

Enjoy a spectacular three minute ride up 1,000m to the upper reaches of the mountains in the heart of the National Park.

The contrast with the green valley floor is striking as you step out into a moon-like landscape of splintered rocks, jagged peaks and deep ravines.



Paddling down the Deva river in the spring.

You will usually see chamois goats

perched on the cliffs and vultures circling below.

Enjoy stunning views back down the forested Liebana Valley and ahead to the high limestone cliffs ahead of you.

From the top, you can enjoy different walks but the star is the walk up to the Horcados Rojos saddle, a six-mile walk with 500m ascent involved.

If you make it, you are standing on top of the mountains at 2,300m!

From here you have wonderful views all around, including the famous sheer rock-face of the Naranjo de Bulnes peak.

Spend time exploring the pretty medieval town of Potes on the way back to your hotel. (b,l)

Day 8 | Picos | **get active or relax**

Choose how you want to spend the day.

Walk across meadows from village to village along the coast or indulge in one of the alternative activities.

Active options for today include horse riding for the day or a day in an adventure park (with ropes and ladders from tree to tree, like a canopy tour), or head for a walk through another canyon if you loved the Cares Gorge.

As often as not, today is spent walking to one of the hidden beaches along the coast. Even in high season, there are lots of beautiful sandy bays with hardly anyone around.

Your guide is available to help you with suggestions and arrangements.

Meet back at suppertime to swap stories. (b,d)



Day 9 | Home | **travel back**

It's an early start (8am) this morning to get back to the airport for your flight home.

Alternatively, extend your holiday to take in more of this lovely part of Spain.

Options include spending more time in the heart of the mountains in some charming inns and small hotels; spending more time on the coast to enjoy the beautiful beaches of the Costa Verde; or heading for a few days in Bilbao for the Guggenheim or San Sebastian for its amazing cuisine. (b)

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Holiday Information

Pura Handmade

This holiday is unique to us, built from scratch. We have designed and deliver this holiday using our own people and carefully selected local suppliers to create a *Pura Handmade* holiday.

You are looked after by a Pura team on the ground. The hotels we use are normally hidden away in tiny villages and are exclusive to us.

Activities are chosen to best reflect the beautiful diversity of the Picos.

How active?

The walks, cycle rides and canoeing are reasonably strenuous but fine for active children and adults.

We plan the excursions to allow for plenty of rests and snacks along the way.

There is also plenty of time to just enjoy the beach or relax in the quiet grounds of the comfortable hotel.

Walking in the Picos means rugged, steep limestone mountains. The paths we use are usually well worn and comfortable. In the high Picos there is often shingle.

Canoeing is in two person open canoes. All equipment, wet suits, life jackets, etc are provided. Before entering the water, we have a safety/instruction lesson from our local partners. We generally paddle the Deva River - short sections of rapid, some obstacles mid-river but generally wide.

Cycling For this holiday we take a steady ride along the coast from where you can see the high mountains. The ride is largely on wide trails with some paved sections and some single-track. You should be reasonably confident on a bike to enjoy the ride.

Canyoning (not an included activity but popular) is expertly supervised and no experience is needed. Don wetsuit, harness and helmet (provided) and drop down into the stream and make your way back down to the bottom by negotiating the riverbed.

How comfortable?

Your time in the Picos is spent in a 22 room family run hotel on the edge of Llanes.

It is a very comfortable and fairly new 4* hotel with an outdoor pool, large garden and lots of comfortable sitting areas.

Rooms are all en suite.

A path runs from here along the river into the centre of Llanes. The pretty beach of Playa del Toro is within comfortable walking distance.

Accommodation is in twin/double en suite rooms.

Where possible we place parents in rooms next to their children.

In any case, the hotel is small and only has two storeys so everyone is nearby.

How independent?

This holiday is a guided small group with a guide and vehicle for each eight people. The maximum group size is 16, with two guides and two vehicles.

You will have plenty of options for spending time independently as well as together for the major activities.

Who is it for?

This holiday has been designed for families with children between about 9 and 14 years old.

How responsible?

Pura Aventura is passionate about the places it visits. To help preserve the integrity of these destinations we:

- Work directly with local businesses and organisations to directly benefit local economies. We use small, locally owned hotels and restaurants.

- Work with local guides so that our holidays are more interesting for clients and more beneficial locally.

Pura Aventura actively supports the Spanish mountain conservation charity www.quebrantahuesos.org

How do I get there?

There are several options in addition to flying you have ferries to Santander & Bilbao, trains and driving are also options. For train options go to www.seat61.com

The best flights are to Asturias (1hr from the Picos): Easyjet has direct flights from London Stansted or you can go via Madrid.

Alternatively Ryanair has direct flights to Santander (1.5hrs to the Picos) again from London Stansted,

Several airlines fly direct to Bilbao (2.5hrs to the Picos). If you fly to Bilbao and want us to pick you up then extra transfer fees are likely to apply.

Not Quite Right?

If this holiday's not quite right for you, call us to discuss your ideas or consider:

Active Spain: Pyrenees Family Adventure A great combination of watersports and activities, fully guided, suitable for families with slightly older children.

Active Spain: Picos Family Self-Drive A slightly longer version of this trip but semi-independent rather than fully guided.

Prices & departures

2009	18 Jul 26 Jul 07 Aug £895p
Price includes	Twin/double en suite accommodation in 4* family run hotel; full time Pura Aventura guides; activities as per itinerary; private transport; meals (b,l,d) as per itinerary;
Not included	Flights; personal expenses.
Please note	Whilst we keep this itinerary as up to date as possible, the definitive list of our departure dates & prices can be found at www.pura-aventura.com/departures

Prices are per person. Adults & children are the same as we presume children also stay in twin rooms. Activity and meal costs are the same for adults and children in this part of Spain.

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