

Walk Spain

Picos Small Group Walking Holiday



Picos de Europa mountains – beautiful coastline – rugged mountains – green valleys – steep gorges – sandy beaches charming small hotels – delicious food – fully guided

Fully guided small group walking holiday in the Picos mountains.

Sleep in charming rural inns specially chosen for their setting, comfort and service.

Walks take you to high mountains, rugged coastlines, small villages, deep gorges, quiet forests and meadows.

Explore in the company of your expert guide as part of a group of just eight.

Designed for anyone who enjoys great walking, good food and a comfortable bed at the end of the day.

This is a Pura *handmade* holiday with an activity level of *medium* and a comfort rating of *first*.



Beautiful and peaceful high mountain walks.



"Unforgettable holiday in beautiful countryside with first class accommodation and food." William M.

Holiday Itinerary

Summary

On this holiday, walks are medium grade so suitable for anyone who likes hill walking in the UK (or similar).

Although the dramatic mountain scenery makes it look challenging, in fact the routes you walk are comfortable for our clients who are generally in their 40s – 60s.

For walkers, it is a perfect environment because of the sheer variety of scenery and walks.

The group size is very small at just eight people.

Travelling as part of such a small group enables us to take you to interesting and unusual places.

This might be going to visit the brothers who are bringing life back to their village by making traditional food and cider, getting to a more remote trailhead because of the smaller van or just being less intrusive in the variety of restaurants you visit.

The pace is relaxed and the atmosphere informal.

This holiday is ideal if you appreciate a good stretch of the legs through beautiful scenery followed by a good meal and a comfortable bed.

Day 01 | Vinon | arrive in the Picos

Your guide will meet you in Asturias airport to drive you to your peaceful small hotel in the Liebana Valley of the Picos de Europa mountains.

Before dinner you will sit down with your guide to discuss the week ahead over a glass of wine. (d)



Expert local guides and private transport throughout.

Questions? Ready to book? Call us on **01273 676 712**

info@pura-aventura.com | www.pura-aventura.com | Pura Aventura, 18 Bond Street, Brighton, BN1 1RD. UK.

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Take time to relax and enjoy the views.



The spectacular Cares Gorge path.



High mountain picnic lunch

Day 02 | Vinon | *walk through meadows*

The order and even selection of walks is not set in stone, the great value of your guide is that they will be able to identify the best walk each day.

What we do ensure is that you walk the full variety of the Picos over the course of your stay.

Set off walking on ancient trails across the meadows that join the nearby villages.

The Liebana Valley has many red-roofed villages perched on green valley walls where the way of life has changed little in many years.

Walk to a small shrine, site of a popular annual pilgrimage, set on a natural balcony with views over the valley and mountains beyond.

Once you reach the shrine you can drink from the spring and enjoy a picnic with gorgeous views across the valley to the limestone uplands of the Picos.

Return to the village walking down through woods and across pretty meadows.

Walk 12km, 5hrs, \triangle 650m, ∇ 650m (b,l,d)

Day 03 | Vinon | *hike to a high peak*

The cable-car at Fuente Dé provides a spectacular 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.

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.

Loop around the back of the first set of these peaks and you find a reasonably steady climb up to the peak of Horcados Rojos, one of the highest peaks in the Picos.

At the very end of the walk there is a short section which is not good for anyone with vertigo but otherwise this is a walk and not a climb.

Walk described 12km, 5hrs, \triangle 700m, ∇ 700m

After a picnic lunch in the spectacular highlands return down the cable car and to the medieval town of Potes, capital of the Liebana Valley.

Spend time exploring this pretty town before returning to your hotel. (b,l,d)

Day 04 | Pandiellu | *walk through a gorge*

Change hotels today as you move from the Liebana Valley to the crest of the coastal, Cuera hills.

From your small inn you have wonderful panoramic views across to the central massif of the Picos.

Enjoy a mid-morning coffee in the town of Arenas de Cabrales as your guide heads off to drop your bags.

Reunite to tackle the Cares Gorge, the most famous walk in the Picos, perhaps Spain.

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

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

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Views from Pandiellu village



Walking towards the Covadonga Lakes



The wonderful walk from Tielve to Arenas.



The beautiful coastline of the Picos

Towards the end of the gorge you pass through a series of short tunnels and over bridges as the path criss-crosses the river below.

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.

Walk up to 22km, 6hrs, \uparrow 250m, \downarrow 250m (b,l,d)

Day 05 | Pandiellu | **cross a mountain pass**

One of the most stunning walks is to a viewpoint from where you can see all three massifs of the Picos range.

Walking up a steep initial section, you make it up to the top of a ridge from where you have views of the highest peaks to the south and the sea to your north.

In Roman times, the Picos were inhabited by much feared tribes. As hard as they tried, the Romans could not cope with the guerilla tactics used in the mountains.

In the end they decided to simply drive a road diagonally across the range from north west to south east. With this access, they finally managed to exert a degree of control.

You will walk along sections of this amazingly well preserved Roman road.

It is rare to come across other people walking up here despite the views and the history surrounding you.

There are several of us at Pura Aventura who consider this to be one of the most beautiful walks in Europe.

Walk 12km, 6hrs, \uparrow 950m, \downarrow 450m

Return to your hotel to relax. (b,l,d)

Day 06 | Pandiellu | **walk along the coast**

The coast of northern Spain is defined by rolling hills breaking 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's walk takes you out along the edge of the coastal mountain range and then down to the sea to ride along the undulating cliff tops.

Walk 12km, 4hrs, \uparrow 250m, \downarrow 250m (b,l,d)

Day 07 | Pandiellu | **Covadonga Lakes walk**

Head west today as you walk from the Covadonga Lakes up to the high plateau and grazing lands of the western massif.

As well as spectacular landscapes and views, this is a culturally fascinating area.

For one thing, the traditional lifestyles of seasonal pastures is still much in evidence here.

For another, it was from these lakes that the Christian reconquest of Spain started. The lakes are therefore a key element of Spanish history and culture.

Walk up to 16km, 5hrs, \uparrow 550m, \downarrow 550m (b,l,d)

Day 08 | travel | **return home**

Drive to the airport for flight home. (b)

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Holiday Information

Pura Handmade

This holiday is unique to us.

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 in the Picos. In fact, one of our founders lives there.

The selection of hotels, walks, restaurants, beaches, markets, etc. are unique to us. The hotels we use are often hidden away in tiny villages and are exclusive to Pura Aventura.

Our guides are experienced enough to be able to adjust the running order of this holiday to best suit the group and weather conditions.

In creating this holiday we have been very careful to give you as full an insight as possible into the landscapes, culture, history and gastronomy of this little visited region.

How long?

Seven nights/eight days.

How active?

The walks are reasonably challenging but taken at a relaxed pace.

You can sit out of the walks on any day and many walks are out/back along the same path so you can curtail walks to suit should that prove necessary.

You should enjoy hill walking in the UK or similar to get the most from this holiday.

How comfortable?

Stay in two different hotels. These are typically small inns with 12 rooms or less, locally owned. We mix character and comfort. On the whole, little English is spoken.

Your first hotel is a family run inn in a tiny hamlet. It oozes rustic charm and though some of the choices of pictures on the wall are, shall we say, of questionable quality, it is hard not to warm to the atmosphere.

Rooms are all en suite and comfortable.

The second hotel is really a small inn, very nicely decorated rooms are all en suite. Again you are staying in a tiny hamlet so all you hear is nature around you.

How independent?

This is a fully guided small group holiday with a maximum of eight people plus your guide.

The typical age range of people on this holiday is 50-60s. There is usually a 40:60 split of solos:couples.

How responsible?

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

- Keep groups small to minimise environmental impact.
- 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.

Weather

The Picos mountains are situated on the central north coast of Spain - 'Green Spain'. The warmest & driest months are July-September. You should still be prepared for occasionally cool conditions in the upper park, and the chance of rain at any time. Snow has been known to fall in every month of the year.

May tends to be showery but is also one of the most beautiful months to visit, with snow in the high park and meadows full of spring flowers.

October is changeable but benefits from the beautiful autumnal forests and is often hot and sunny.

In May, June and October you should be prepared for occasional cold, wet mountain conditions.

Altitudes range from sea level to 2,300m. Summer temperatures range between 15° - 28°C.

Where do I fly to?

Asturias: Easyjet has direct flights from London Stansted. It also has indirect flights via Madrid from most places in the UK. 1 hour drive to Picos.

It may also be possible to arrange collections from Santander and/or Bilbao. Usually at extra cost.

Not based in the UK?

We are very happy to discuss your requirements if you are not travelling to and from the UK. Please call us on **+44 1273 676712** between 9am and 7pm weekdays.

Not quite right?

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

Walk Spain: Rioja Walk A premium walking and gastronomic small group holiday to la Rioja.

Walk Spain: Picos Inn to Inn Independent walking from inn to inn through the beautiful Liebana Valley.

Prices & departures

2012	16 Jun 15 Sep £995pp
Price includes	Twin/double en suite accommodation; all transport; full time guide; all meals.
Not included	Flights; drinks with meals; personal expenses.

Prices are per person based on twin share or double accommodation..
Prices may be subject to change: please confirm at booking.

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