

Spain: Catalonia & the Costa Brava

Tour-Only Itinerary

Bougainvillea petals litter the cobblestones, and the sun casts warm shadows on Cadaqués's whitewashed houses. With light this gorgeous, no wonder Picasso and Dalí settled here! Touring Dalí's former home this afternoon, with its giant eggs and eccentric taxidermy, has enhanced your appreciation of the artist's genius. At the same time, as you stroll through landscapes of unspeakable beauty on this walking tour in Spain, it's easy to feel like anyone could have the eye of an artist here: from the fanciful rocks of Cap de Creus to Santa Margarida's Romanesque chapel, nestled in a lush volcanic crater. A pleasant buzz fills the streets as tapas bars open their sidewalk tables. After exploring the Costa Brava's rugged coves and sapphire waters, you're ready. Let the evening ritual begin: a glass of Empordà, a plate of paella, and sunset over the Mediterranean.



Highlights

- Stay in the seaside village of Cadaqués, enjoying the same serene views of the Costa Brava that inspired artists like Salvador Dalí and Picasso.
- Explore the dormant volcanoes of the Garrotxa region, a secluded stretch of woodland in the foothills of the Pyrenees.
- Wander a hidden gem of a hotel – transformed from a historic farmhouse – with its charming, vintage décor including terracotta floors, hand-restored furnishings, and Moroccan antiques.
- Take in commanding views of the country and sea from the Benedictine Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes, built on the crest of a mountain.

On all Self-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



A local representative available 24/7.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Detailed maps & route notes featuring turn-by-turn directions and places of interest.



Experts to handle all the details, including moving your luggage between hotels while you're out exploring.



Scheduled taxi transfers to bring you to and from each day's walks.



Access to a Self-Guided Flight Concierge—ask our knowledgeable team to find flights that sync with your planned trip.



Delicious meals—many are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 5 to 8 miles per day and limited options. There are daily ascents and descents with elevation gains up to 1,300 feet and losses up to 1,800 feet. The walks are on a combination of packed dirt roads, forest paths, and coastal trails (offering very little shade), including some uneven rocky sections with loose stones. The unique scenery of Catalonia's interior includes low rounded hills in lush vegetation, the ancient volcanoes of the Garrotxa, punctuated with farms, small villages, and Romanesque chapels. The coastal portion of the tour in the Cap de Creus Natural Park offers classic Mediterranean scenery of fishing villages and hidden coves, and windswept limestone hillsides cultivating vines and olive trees. The small city of Girona

is a transition between the two, with an easy-to-navigate pedestrian center, old quarter, cathedral, and walkable ancient city walls. Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

DAY 1

Arrival in Girona. Transfer to Sant Feliu de Pallerols. Orientation meeting upon arrival at your hotel

You are met in the city of Girona, north of Barcelona, and transferred (approximately one hour) to your hotel, a peaceful rural retreat in the heart of the Garrotxa Natural Park, a protected area of ancient volcanoes transformed over millennia into a landscape of rolling low mountains, gorges, and lush forest.

Accommodation: Finca El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

El Ventós viewpoint

3.4 miles, easy to moderate, no significant elevation gain or loss or 5 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and loss

After a relaxed breakfast, you can leave directly from your hotel for a warm-up walk that provides a perfect introduction to the Garrotxa region. Unique in Europe, the collection of 30 conical volcanoes in the area saw their last eruption only 11,000 years ago and, while dormant, they are not entirely extinct. This underlying geology has resulted in soils of ochre and black lava, contrasting with beech forest and verdant meadows. An easy and well-marked path—entirely within the hotel's estate—leads up through the forest to a lookout that provides stunning views of the rolling landscape. The lookout also provides an overview of the week ahead—below you is the volcanic valley of tomorrow's walk, in front of you the bulk of the Pyrenees, and turning to the east, the Cape of Creus, nudging into the Mediterranean just below the French border. You enjoy a delightful picnic lunch from your hotel's kitchen, either on the trail or on the hotel grounds. And, weather permitting, go for a dip in the hotel's pool. The region's topography makes it a favorite location for ballooning. A hot air balloon ride is a very early morning option that is weather-dependent, requires advance planning, and is payable locally.

Accommodation: Finca El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

San Miquel to Mas Can Batlle via Santa Pau

6.2 or 9.1* miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and 1,300-ft. elevation loss or 7.5 or 10.4* miles, easy to moderate, 1,300-ft. elevation gain and 1,650-ft. elevation loss (* mileage depends on hotel location)

A transfer takes you to the bottom of the valley, where you begin the day's walk. Skirting below high volcanic cliffs, you traverse fields belonging to small stone farmhouses before entering the thick beech forest of Jordá. After about an hour, you emerge near a small café where you can pause for a morning coffee before making a detour to the Santa Margarida volcano—at the center of the grassy crater lies a unique Romanesque chapel. The path continues through lush vegetation to arrive at the picturesque medieval village of Santa Pau. It is highly recommended that you stop for lunch in one of the restaurants under the arcades facing the castle. The *Vila Vella* (Old Town) of Santa Pau has been declared to be of "Cultural Interest," and more than 80 percent of the town has been conserved, including the Plaça de la Arqueria Square, the castle, and Santa María Church. It is also a destination known for its protected heirloom crop – the Santa Pau *fesols* – indigenous beans gaining distinction from their cultivation in the volcanic soil. Other delicious local specialties include cured meats, honey, yogurt, and the *farinetes de fajol* dessert. After lunch, continue to your hotel where dinner is later served on site.

Accommodation: Mas Can Batlle, Santa Pau

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Transfer to Girona. City exploration

This morning you leave the Garrotxa region. A drive of about an hour takes you to Girona, one of Catalonia's major cities, with an intriguing historical center that's easy to explore on foot. Leaving your luggage in your Old Town hotel, you step out onto cobbled streets, leading up to a Romanesque and Gothic cathedral with a striking approach of 86 steps. Heading down from the cathedral, you'll find the Jewish neighborhood and its Jewish museum. This is one of the few places in Spain with traces of its

flourishing medieval Jewish culture, which was nearly extinguished during the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. The narrow streets wind down to the Onyar River, which separates the old and new cities. The river is lined with vibrant painted “hanging houses” and crossed by pedestrian bridges. A walk along the entire length of the city’s ancient defensive walls offers wonderful panoramic views of Girona and the surrounding countryside. Bursting with shops and galleries (closed on Sundays), and cafés, Girona boasts plenty of places to browse and stop for lunch and tapas, and later, dinner. You may choose to make an entire meal of tapas paired with a glass of the region’s crisp sparkling *cava*.

Accommodation: Nord 1901 Hotel, Girona

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5

Transfer to the Costa Brava. Perafita to Cadaqués

6.5 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and 1,200-ft. elevation loss

This morning there is time to stroll down to the shops and bakeries along the river. This is the perfect place to buy a picnic lunch before transferring to the Cape of Creus, about 30 minutes northeast of the city in the easternmost part of Spain. Here, the Pyrenees form the border with France just a few miles to the North, and windswept hills contrast with protected fishing villages and coves, backed by the deep azure of the Mediterranean. Your walk starts at the Perafita winery, located in a 14th-century farmhouse. Martín Faixó’s family has run this enterprise for several generations and currently produces eight different wines, specially adapted to the unique topography and climate. You leave the winery on a winding path dotted with Mediterranean herbs and shrubs with scenic views of the sea in the distance. You stop en route to enjoy a trailside picnic before descending into the seaside village of Cadaqués, the inspiration for, and former home of, Salvador Dalí. After settling into your hotel, you can discover the excellent seafood of the region, perhaps traditional freshly grilled sardines or Catalan “black rice”—squid-ink paella.

Accommodation: Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

Layover day in Cadaqués. Optional walk: Llança to Port de la Selva OR Sant Pere de Rodes to Port de la Selva

5 miles, easy, no significant elevation gain or loss OR 4.3 miles, moderate to challenging, 1,800-ft. elevation loss

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast of home-baked breads and pastries before exploring the port of Cadaqués—one of the Costa Brava’s most picturesque villages. In addition to Dalí, Pablo Picasso also spent some time in this village, attracted by its shifting Mediterranean light. You can choose from several options today, which may be as simple as relaxing on a nearby beach or strolling through the village. Two walking options (both requiring taxis at your own expense) provide a more in-depth exploration of the Cap de Creus. The easier option is a route from the village of Llança along a coastal promenade to the small fishing port of Port de la Selva. Take in views of the sea on one side and the summer villas on the other—and, high above you, the Benedictine Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes. The more moderate option is to take a taxi up to the 11th-century monastery, with magnificent views over the cape and the surrounding sea. After visiting the Romanesque complex with its 12th-century cloisters, you follow an old path that descends steeply through a small mountain village and vineyards on its way to the sea, finishing your walk on the waterfront promenade of Port de la Selva. You can stop for lunch here before catching a return taxi back to Cadaqués. Alternatively, if your knees are not up for the descent, the monastery is well worth the visit via taxi both ways. Yet another alternative is to walk to a nearby cove to visit Dalí’s home, now a museum, and the Surrealist painter’s only permanent residence from 1930 to 1982 (at your own expense, advance reservation required, there may also be time to visit at the end of tomorrow’s walk). For dinner, choose from one of Cadaqués’s many excellent restaurants, perhaps one owned by the Faixó family of the Perafita winery.

Accommodation: Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

Cap de Creus

4.7 miles, easy to moderate, 650-ft. elevation loss

Today’s walk takes you to the tip of the natural area of Cap de Creus, a beautiful landscape of low Mediterranean vegetation with a varied coast of cliffs and hidden coves. This morning, a short drive takes you to the lighthouse at the end of the cape. Surrounded by aquamarine water views, you set off walking along the coast—on your left are small coves accessed by narrow paths, any of them are ideal spots to

enjoy your picnic lunch. As you approach Cadaqués, the trail winds between stone walls and through olive groves, always in sight of the sea. The route passes in front of Dalí's home museum, which you may have visited the day before. You can spend the remainder of the day at your leisure—in town, or by the beach—before celebrating your exploration of Catalonia with a final dinner of excellent regional cuisine.

Accommodation: Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8

Departure from Figueres

You depart Cadaqués today for the larger city of Figueres, to catch a train to your next destination. Here in the hometown of Salvador Dalí, you may choose to visit the Dalí Theatre-Museum—the museum that contains his largest and most diverse body of work. The museum is located a 5–10-minute taxi ride from the train station (at your own expense; advisable to book ahead of time online at salvador-dali.org/en/museums/dali-theatre-museum-in-figueres; luggage can be stored at the museum; closed on Mondays in April, May, June, October, and November; visit taxifigueres.es/en for area taxi information).

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Boutique accommodations	✓
10 meals: 7 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 2 dinners	✓
Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes, maps, and use of a handheld GPS unit	✓
Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative	✓
Local representative available 24/7	✓
Scheduled taxi and luggage transfers (Please note: If unable to walk, it is possible to transfer with your luggage from one accommodation to the next; there may be an additional charge.)	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz Global Assistance	✓
Access to Self-Guided Flight Concierge—Ask our knowledgeable team to find flights that sync perfectly with your planned trip.	✓