

SPAIN

Catalonia & the Costa Brava

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—with no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

Autonomous and diverse, Catalonia offers a wealth of contrasts in its location in the northeast of Spain. Sea and mountains—*mar y muntana*—describe both the local cuisine and the varied landscapes you explore on this self-guided walking adventure. You walk the ancient volcanic region of La Garrotxa, a tranquil place where low rounded hills covered in lush forest and fields are interconnected by trails between ancient villages, chapels, and *mas* (stone farmhouses). The sea at the Cap de Creus peninsula—Spain’s easternmost tip—is an incredibly azure Mediterranean. Just a few miles south of France, windswept hillsides drop down to enticing coastal coves and the fishing village of Cadaqués, inspiration to Dalí and Picasso. In between is the city of Girona, walkable and compact, with ancient monuments and tempting shops and restaurants. Charming restored farmhouses, a boutique city hotel, and an intimate inn distill the essence of the region, as does its masterful Mediterranean cuisine of fresh seafood and local products paired with sparkling cava and its many other fine wines.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Girona. Transfer to Sant Feliu de Pallerols

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.

El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols

A recently renovated traditional farmhouse on a mountaintop with panoramic views which, on a clear day, extend all the way to the sea, El Ventós is a rambling country home. Spacious guest rooms blend modern and rustic, with terracotta tile floors, white walls, large windows, and antiques. In addition to the main fireside lounge with exposed beams and cozy seating looking out onto a large terrace, there are other terraces, hammocks, a “cyber corner,” a reading room, and an outdoor swimming pool set in extensive grounds with gardens and trails. On almost 1,000 acres, the hotel raises its own cattle on surrounding pasture. The excellent on-site restaurant features the property’s own or very local products—such as an appetizer of figs, duck ham, and goat cheese, followed by a main course of local slow-cooked lamb, finished with a fig crumble topped with homemade ice cream. Please note that this family-owned hotel has a friendly dog and cats on the property.

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, a collection of 30 conical volcanoes saw their last eruption only 11,000 years ago and, while dormant, they are not completely 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, and 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, enjoy the hotel’s pool. A hot air balloon ride is a very early morning option (requires advance planning and is payable locally) that is also weather-dependent—the region’s topography makes it a favorite location in Spain for this activity.



El Ventós, Sant Feliu de Pallerols

DAY 3

San Miquel to Mas Can Batlle via Santa Pau; 9.1 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and 1,300-ft. elevation loss or 10.4 miles, easy to moderate, 1,300-ft. elevation gain and 1,650-ft. elevation loss

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 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 especially for its protected heirloom crop: the Santa Pau *fesols* are 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, an easy walk through open landscape takes you to the almost tropical-looking Batlle waterfall and natural pool, just a few hundred feet from your hotel.

Mas Can Batlle, Santa Pau

Family-owned and operated, the Mas Can Batlle is a restored farmhouse compound on a site continuously occupied for almost a thousand years. Intimate and welcoming with just five individually decorated suites, the eclectic guesthouse incorporates hand-restored antiques and furnishings, Moroccan arts and crafts, as well as rustic and modern touches. Terracotta floors, arched doorways, high ceilings, large windows, and a very small chapel with original frescoes add to the unique character of the place. Guests may relax on one of the terraces or by the outdoor swimming pool. The main floor is composed of a small library, a self-serve bar, game room, and fireside dining room.

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 its Romanesque and Gothic cathedral with its striking approach of 86 steps. Heading down from the cathedral, you find the Jewish museum and neighborhood, one of the few places in Spain with traces of its flourishing medieval Jewish culture before the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. The narrow streets wind down to the river Onyar that separates the old and new cities and is lined with vibrant painted “hanging houses” and crossed by pedestrian bridges. A walk along the entire length of

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*.



Hotel Nord 1901, Girona

A four-star boutique hotel perfectly located in Girona's historical center provides easy walking access to all of the city's sites—the Cathedral, the medieval city walls, and the Jewish Museum and neighborhood. Located on a quiet cobblestone street in the Old Town, this fully renovated building offers spacious and comfortable guest rooms with contemporary furnishings and neutral tones. Centered in its interior courtyard is a patio and outdoor swimming pool providing a peaceful retreat from the bustling town center. Breakfast is buffet-style, featuring a fine selection of local delicacies such as artisan cheeses and cured meats, or freshly baked breads and pastries.

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 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. The Pyrenees form the border with France just a few miles north of this protected area of windswept hills contrasting 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 produce eight different wines especially 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 to and former home of Salvador Dalí. After settling into your intimate inn, you can



discover the excellent seafood of the region, perhaps traditional fresh grilled sardines or Catalan “black rice”—squid-ink paella.

Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

An intimate boutique hotel just a two-minute walk from the sea in the small fishing village made famous by Dalí and Picasso. In contemporary coastal style,

guest rooms are light-filled and decorated in tones of white, with hardwood floors. Several public lounges and a terrace are perfect spaces for relaxation, either indoors or outdoors. With a large selection of restaurants nearby, the hotel serves only breakfast—an ample selection of homemade baked goods, fruit, and local dishes.

DAY 6

Layover day in Cadaqués. Optional walk: Llança to Port de la Selva, 5 miles, easy, no significant elevation gain or loss or Sant Pere de Rodes to Port de la Selva, 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 most picturesque villages of the Costa Brava. In addition to Dalí, Pablo Picasso also spent some time in this village and was 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 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, providing 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 its 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, which was the Surrealist painter's only permanent home 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.



Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

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—with its beautiful landscape of low Mediterranean vegetation and 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 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 enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure—in town, or by the beach—before enjoying a final dinner celebrating your exploration of Catalonia with its excellent cuisine.

Hotel Tramuntana, Cadaqués

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 museum that contains his largest and most diverse body of work (at your own expense; luggage can be stored at the museum, closed on Mondays in April, May, October, and November).

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Itinerary Overview

PLEASE NOTE: your detailed Route Notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these Route Notes may list a number of accommodation options, **your specific accommodations are listed below.** Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

STARTING POINT

Girona, Spain, based upon individual arrival times

NIGHTS 1 & 2

El Ventós

Carretera de Sant Iscle Colltort
17174 Sant Feliu de Pallerols
Spain
Tel 011 34 972 107 962
Cell 011 34 685 876 095
Email hotel@elventos.com
elventos.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service not available.

NIGHT 3

Mas Can Batlle

Carretera Gi-524, Km 12,7
17811 Santa Pau
Spain
Tel 011 34 972 680 348
Cell 011 34 676 233 830
Email hola@mascanbatlle.com
mascanbatlle.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service not available.

NIGHT 4

Hotel Nord 1901

Carrer Nord, 7-9
17001 Girona
Spain
Tel 011 34 972 411 522
Email info@nord1901.com
nord1901.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 5, 6 & 7

Hotel Tramuntana

Carrer de la Torre, 9

17488 Cadaqués

Spain

Tel 011 34 972 259 270

Email info@tramunanahotel.com

hotel-tramuntana-cadaques.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service not available.

ENDING POINT

Figueres, Spain, based upon individual departure times

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 20 through October 31, 2017. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Girona to the first hotel in Sant Feliu de Pallerols on Day 1 of the tour and one departure transfer from Cadaqués to Figueres on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival or departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

TOUR PRICE

2017 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3–5 guests	Per person 6+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 20– October 31	\$2,798	\$2,698	\$2,598	\$805	\$655

STARTING POINT

Girona, Spain

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Figueres, Spain

Based upon individual departure times

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.

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, one lunch (Day 2), and two dinners (Days 1 and 3); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed Route Notes (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure) and maps (provided at your orientation meeting)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route Notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however, additional tips are always welcomed, especially by your driver(s). Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Girona, Spain, based upon individual arrival times

A tour representative will meet you in Girona (train station or hotel, holding a sign with Country Walkers and/or your name on it) and transfer you approximately one hour to the first hotel in Sant Feliu de Pallerols. He/she will provide an orientation, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

Please note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Girona to the first hotel in Sant Feliu de Pallerols on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN), Barcelona, Spain

aena-aeropuertos.es

Or Madrid Airport Barajas (MAD), Madrid, Spain

aena-aeropuertos.es or madrid-airport.info

Or Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris

aeroportsdeparis.fr or paris-cdg.com

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Direct flights from the U.S. to Barcelona or Madrid are available on several major airlines. From these airports, the most convenient way to travel to the tour starting point is by train.

From Barcelona:

If arriving at Barcelona-El Prat Airport, take the airport shuttle to Terminal 2 (T2) and follow the signs for RENFE. The journey by train to Barcelona Sants station takes approximately 25 minutes. Or you may take a taxi (approximately

25-30 euros and 20-30 minutes; available just outside the arrivals terminal) to Barcelona Sants, where direct trains depart regularly to Girona. The journey to Girona takes 40 minutes and costs approximately 16–38 euros.

If you plan on spending pre-tour time in Barcelona, you may take the Aerobus from Terminal 1 or 2, which departs every 5 minutes for the city center (Plaça Catalunya). The bus stops at the most strategic points in Barcelona: Plaça Espanya, Gran Via-Urgell, Plaça Universidad and runs every day of the year. The journey takes 35 minutes and costs approximately 6 euros. Please visit aerobusbcn.com for more information or to buy tickets online.

From Madrid:

If arriving at Madrid Airport Barajas, you may either take a taxi (approximately 30 euros and 30 minutes) or take the local train (approximately 3 euros and 25 minutes) from Terminal 4 (T4) to Puerta de Atocha train station, where trains to Girona depart several times per day. The journey to Girona takes 3½ to 4 hours and costs 70 euros and upward.

From Paris:

If you are flying into Paris, there are typically two trains to Girona per day. Upon arrival at the airport, follow the directions to the train station (“gare SNCF” or “Paris par train”) located in Terminal 2 of the airport. The journey takes 5¾ hours and costs approximately 150 euros.

RAIL INFORMATION

For further rail information, including reservations, up-to-date schedules, and fares, please visit the website of RENFE (Spanish Rail) at renfe.es or contact Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website at raileurope.com. We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. We suggest comparing the round trip point-to-point fare with that of a Spanish Rail Pass (the pass may be less expensive and have greater value).

PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We suggest arriving in Spain at least one day early in order to recover from jet lag and feel more refreshed by the time the tour starts. You may want to stay in Barcelona and explore this fascinating city. For hotel and restaurant suggestions, please visit the following website: barcelonaturisme.com

ENDING POINT

Figueres, Spain

Based upon individual departure times

There are no walks scheduled for the last day of the tour. We highly recommend a visit to the Salvador Dalí Museum in Figueres before you depart for your next destination (at your own expense; closed on Mondays in April, May, October, and November; luggage can be stored at the museum). A transfer (40 minutes) will be provided from Cadaqués to Figueres (Vilafant train station, museum, or hotel).

In order to arrange your departure transfer to Figueres, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

Please note that the tour price includes one departure transfer from Cadaqués to Figueres on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORTS

Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN), Barcelona, Spain

aena-aeropuertos.es

Or Madrid Airport Barajas (MAD), Madrid, Spain

aena-aeropuertos.es or **madrid-airport.info**

Or Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), Paris

aeroportsdeparis.fr or **paris-cdg.com**

LEAVING THE TOUR

From Figueres Vilafant train station, there are several trains per day to Barcelona Sants (1 hour, from 15 to 36 euros), Madrid Puerta de Atocha (4¼ hours, from 53 to 115 euros) or Paris (5½ hours, 130 euros). For further rail information, refer to the Getting to the Starting Point section.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, self-guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. A \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost.* Please notify us in writing. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per-person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or

bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.