

Costa Brava – the Catalonian coast (self-guided tour)



Guaranteed departure dates for 2010: 01 March - 30 November

Ref. number: -

Last edited by: VK, 06/11/09

(Anytime if the requirement for the minimum group size is fulfilled)

Introduction:

Like a canvas where nature has intended to combine with exquisite delicacy the intense green of the pine groves, the massive steadfastness of the rocks, the softness of the golden sands and the deep, dazzling blue of the sea - that is the Costa Brava. This hiking tour is perfect for beginners. The route follows the famous GR-92 path for a short time – starting in Italy it follows the Mediterranean coast until it reaches Spain. It crosses the enchanting Empordà-region, which offers everything Catalonia is famous for: picturesque villages from the middle ages, mountains covered with pine forests, little hills and wide beaches... After the day tours there is a lot of opportunities to relax at the beach or have a great dinner at one of the local restaurants. Indeed, Empordà is very famous for its cuisine and especially for the fish dishes. Other highlights include the coves along the Begur Coast, known as the most beautiful of the whole Costa Brava, the excellent beach of Calella de Palafrugell, Palamos resort set around a harbour full of yachts, Cap Roig botanic garden, the medieval town of Pals etc.

Special highlights:

- **Begur** - The coves along the Begur Coast, between Aiguablava and Sa Riera, are said to be the most beautiful of the whole Costa Brava.
- **Calella de Palafrugell** - This is the first of the three excellent beaches - the others are Llafranc and Tamariu. Its surroundings are considered to be among the finest scenery of Baix Empordà. As a cork production centre, it has two very different parts: the old one with the Gothic church and buildings of the 17C and 18C, and El

Ensanche with modernist constructions from the beginning of the 20C.

- **Palamos** - Palamos is a modern-looking resort set around a harbour full of yachts, and last stop on the cruceros boat run. The town was originally founded in 1277, and the old part is set apart from the new, on a promontory at the eastern end of the bay. Palamos still retains its fishing industry, the day's catch being auctioned off on the busy quayside in the late afternoon.

- **Cap Roig botanic garden** was created by Madame de Woevodsky in 1924, they planted 40ha with pines, built a castle and laid out the garden. The achievement of the garden is the skillful weaving of exquisitely-designed terraces and exotic planting into the woodland framework.

- **Montgrí Mountains** - Three mountains form the Montgrí range, which lends character to the town of Torroella de Montgrí and can be considered to lie at the epicentre of the two Empordà counties

- **Pals** - Well signposted from the Torroella de Montgrí-Palafrugell road, the old quarter of Pals sits atop a hill 6km north-west of Begur. The medieval town was destroyed and abandoned during the Civil War, and then painstakingly restored after 1948 by a local fellow.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival at Girona Airport (which is some 95km to the northeast of Barcelona). Public transportation (bus schedules at http://www.sarfa.com/paginas/aeroporto_CENTRO.html) or private transfer to La Fosca in Palamos (distance: 45km). Overnight in a hotel. /dinner/

Day 2: Palamos – Calella de Palafrugell

After breakfast, you leave your luggage at the reception of the hotel and start walking along the GR92 path up to Calella de Palafrugell, with lovely natural views like the Castell beach, the Iberic Settlement of Castell or the “Formigues” islands. Diner will be in the hotel restaurant from where you have fantastic views over the fishing village of Calella de Palafrugell.

Walking distance: 10 km, walking time: 2,30 hours

/breakfast, dinner/

Day 3: Calella de Palafrugell – Calella de Palafrugell

Today's circular track of about 18km allows you to enjoy the coastline and inland, some ancient remains at the Iberic town of Castell. You will be crossing the interesting natural spot of Cap Roig and visit the botanic garden. Dinner is in the hotel restaurant.

Walking distance: 18 km, walking time: 4 hours

/breakfast, dinner/

Day 4: Calella de Palafrugell – Begur

In the morning leave your luggage at the hotel reception. Walking continues along the GR-92 to Begur. This is a wonderful small village with some «indianos» houses from those local Catalan people who came back from “the Americas” in the early 19th Century with good fortunes. This path has unevenness of 200m and has picturesque sights like the lighthouse

of Sant Sebastià and Cala Pedrosa.

Overnight in a hotel in Begur.

Walking distance: 13 km, walking time: 3 hours

/breakfast, dinner/

Day 5: Begur – Sant Feliu de Boada

After breakfast, leave your luggage at the hotel reception and start walking along GR92 to the small inland village of Sant Feliu de Boada. You will pass through vineyards and rice fields leaving the Mediterranean coastline behind.

You will be visiting charming medieval villages like Pals, an obligatory stop for its characteristic architecture and fantastic views over the Medes islands, Montgrí Mountains and the typical «Empordà» farm landscape. A few more kilometres and you reach the small town Sant Feliu de Boada where your luggage will wait for you in the peaceful agro tourism house. Accommodation will be in this enchanting house. Dinner is not included; there are restaurants available in the town.

Walking distance: 10 km, walking time: 2,30 hours

/breakfast/

Day 6: Sant Feliu de Boada – Sant Feliu de Boada

Today you make a circular flat tour to visit the Plain of the Empordà with the medieval villages of Palau-Sator and Peratallada. Again dinner is not included; there are restaurants available in the town.

Walking distance: 19 km, walking time: 5,30 hours

/breakfast/

Day 7: After breakfast check out.

Departure to Girona/Barcelona (individually with public transportation or private transfer).

/breakfast/

DETAILED ROAD BOOK AND MAP WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ARRIVAL

Accommodation & luggage

transportation:

4 nights in 3*** hotels, and 2 nights in agro tourism guesthouses with en-suite facilities on 4 HB (breakfast and dinner included) and 2 BB (bed & breakfast).

There is organized transport of the luggage for each of the days with changes in the overnight places.

Tour type: IT

Difficulty grade: B

Best period: March-June and September-November.

Weather:

The principal attraction for the Costa Brava is the warm Mediterranean climate which is welcoming pretty much all year round. July and August are extremely hot with temperatures in the 30s. August is also the main holiday month for the Spaniards so you may prefer to visit in Spring or Autumn when the crowds are thinner and the temperatures are less fierce.

October/November can be rather wet while December/January can be surprisingly chilly although they can still average around four hours of sunshine a day. Costa Brava is also considerably wetter with average rainfall at around 1,000mm per annum.

General remarks:

- Trekking of 10-19km per day with an unevenness of 200m maximum above the sea level.
- The track is sign-posted with red and white marks (GR92) + direction posts.

Equipment and clothing:

Nothing compulsory. For the full list with recommended items see "General".

Group size: Min. 2 persons

The price includes: accommodation and boarding as per program; map and roadbook in English; luggage transfers throughout the tour; VAT and all local taxes.

The price does not include: transfers from and to the airport, other meals, entrance fees, tips, alcohol drinks, cigarettes and other personal expenses.

Optional services:

Private transfers from and to the airport –

Prices upon request:

Barcelona Airport – Palamos

Girona Airport – Palamos

Sant Feliu de Boada – Barcelona Airport

Sant Feliu de Boada – Girona Airport

GENERAL

TOUR TYPES & GRADES

We provide different varieties of tours as regards to their types and difficulty grades! Whether you will choose individual and group tours with a guide or combined tours with a guide for some part of the trip depends on you. We emphasize on using local experienced guides with knowledge of the local language, culture, history, art, etc. The tours are conducted in the English language. Guides in other languages are available upon request.

Tour types

Our tours are divided in different tour types, regardless of being guided or not or if someone travels alone or in a group. We have prepared your vacation so that you can concentrate on new impressions and experiences, awaiting you all the time. Here is a description of the various tours:

IT: Individual tours

There is no guide on this tour. You travel individually and we are responsible for the hotel overnights and /some/ transfers. Sometimes you will travel together with other people. If you wish a guide can be arranged, if ordered. We take it for granted that you can read maps, provided by us upon arrival.

Difficulty grades

To prepare yourself for the best of your vacation we recommend that you start planning it in an advance. Good physical condition is required. In order to achieve it we advise you to start walking, jogging or cycling everyday. Swimming a couple of times a week is also highly recommended. You do not need much to get yourself in shape. And don't forget that the most important tip for an unforgettable active holiday is to choose a trip which corresponds to your physical condition!

B: Moderate

Most of you, who are used to walking during a long weekend, will be in condition to cope with a tour of this level. You should be in good health condition and not too bad physical condition. We have successive days of longer and more difficult walking and days of lighter walking. Some parts of the day routes are done at a higher altitude. The paths are in good condition. We walk for 5-7h a day. You are free to skip some walks and have a rest.

Equipment and clothing:

You should always remember that you must try to keep the weight of your clothing equipment down to a minimum. Your packed rucksack should weigh no more than 10-15 kilograms.

Recommended items: waterproof rucksack (60 l) & daypack (35 l); walking

waterproof boots with suitable ankle support; light casual shoes for walking and/or for travelling; gaiters; loose, casual trousers for trekking; waterproof trousers; fleece windstopper jacket; windproof, waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); hat for sun protection; sunglasses with UV protection; sunscreen lotion and lip balm; torch (headlamp), water bottle, trekking sticks.

Vaccination

Immunisation against Hepatitis A is recommended two weeks prior departure. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure.

Money and personal expenses:

You will need some extra money to cover meals, drinks and extra trips not included in the tour price. The Euro is Spain's official currency. Money can be changed in any bank, and at most travel agencies, major hotels and airports. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted. ATMs are widely available. International traveller's cheques are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in Euros or Pounds Sterling. Traveller's cheques should be changed at banks or exchange bureaux.

Below are some examples of costs in Spain (NB: prices in mid-range restaurants!):

- Coffee – 1.5 €
- Tea – 1.5 €
- Beer - 1 €
- Soft drink – 1€
- Bottle of water - 0.6 €
- Bottle of good quality local red wine (0,75 l) – 8-10 €
- Three-course lunch – 10-15 €
- Lunch pack – 5 €

Cell phone coverage:

Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good throughout most of the country.

Electricity

The standard current in Spain is 220 volts but it is common in older places to find the old 115 volt supply. Both systems use plugs with two round pins. Travel adaptors can be purchased to convert plugs from other countries. Many appliances in Spain are not

earthed and it is common to find electric sockets in bathrooms, near water supplies so extreme care should be exercised. In rural areas supply is often interrupted during storms. You can bring your electrical goods to Spain from the UK but not 110V appliances from the USA.

Brief about Spain:

Territory – 504 782 sq km

Borders: North – Atlantic ocean, North East: France (623), Andorra (63.7 km), East & South – Mediterranean sea, Gibraltar (1.2 km), West: Portugal (1,214 km)

Coastline: 4,964 km

Terrain: large, flat to dissected plateau surrounded by rugged hills; Pyrenees in north

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:*

Atlantic Ocean 0 m, *highest point:* Pico de Teide (Tenerife) on Canary Islands 3,718 m, longest river: Tagus (part) – 1 010 km

Population – 40,448,191 (July 2007 est.)

Capital city - Madrid (5 603 292)

Largest metropolitan areas – Madrid (5 603 292), Barcelona (5 328 395), Valencia (1 465 081), Sevilla (1 294 081), Malaga (1 019 292) etc.

Ethnic composition – Spanish – 72,3 %, Catalan – 16,3 %, Galician 8,1 %, Basque – 2,3 %, others – 1 %

Religion - Roman Catholic 94%, other 6%

Major resources – fruit and vegetable crops, coal, iron ore, mercury, uranium, fisheries, tourism

Languages: Castilian Spanish (official) 74%, Catalan 17%, Galician 7%, Basque 2%, are official regionally

Protected areas: 13 National Parks, and hundreds of Natural parks, reserves and other protected areas

Weather:

The well-known Costa Brava, Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol coasts enjoy the warmer Mediterranean waters (over 20C in summer) and have miles of superb beaches that make these areas the most appealing to both visitors and expats alike.

