Nature Occitane
VOYAGES SPORTS & NATURE
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HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY

Explore the Pyrenees with your family in a unique way alongside a faithful companion: the donkey. Take to the trails winding through the mountains, discovering the lush green valleys and spectacular scenery of the Cathar Pyrenees. The donkey, your quiet companion, will carry your luggage, adding an authentic touch to your adventure. A family getaway where the majesty of the mountains meets the simplicity of outdoor life.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY : ARRIVAL AT COMUS

Welcome to Comus

Arrival in Comus, a picturesque village nestling in the heart of the Cathar Pyrenees at an altitude of 1200 meters. Settle into your charming guest house, before getting your feet wet with a tour of the village. Its cobbled streets, stone houses and views of the surrounding peaks offer a first glimpse into the tranquillity of the region.

Dinner and overnight at the guest house in Comus.

DAY 2: HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY : FROM PRADES TO COMUS

9.3 km, 150 m ascent, 3h00

Your day begins with a transfer by car to Prades. On arrival, the adventure begins: you meet your faithful companion for the next few days, the donkey. A picturesque walk takes you to the village of Montaillou, where a visit to the ruins of the Cathar castle reveals a stunning panoramic view of the Hers valley. After a hike through the forest, reach the refreshing lake at Belcaire for a swim, before returning to the comfort of the guest house in Comus at the end of the day.

Dinner and overnight stay at the guest house in Comus.

DAY 3: HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY : WALK AROUND COMUS

2 walks to choose from: 11 km, 600 m ascent, 4h00

On this third day, you'll explore the area around Comus on a hike accompanied by your trusty donkey. You'll follow a path leading up to the Pla du Boum, passing through pine forests and vast expanses of countryside typical of the region. Once you reach the plateau, marvel at the exceptional panorama, offering breathtaking views of the famous Cathar castle of Montségur and the majestic Gorges de la Frau. If you're lucky, you'll be able to see some birds of prey in flight.

Dinner and overnight at your B&B in Comus.

DAY 4: HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY : FROM COMUS TO THE CHIOULA REFUGE

1st level: 11km, 500m ascent, 4h. 2nd level: 15km, 845m ascent, 5hrs 30mins

Embark on a day's hiking with your donkey to reach the Chioula refuge. For those opting for the first level, you follow the famous GR Cathare, one of the most emblematic hiking routes in the Pyrenees. You skirt round the mountain on a path winding through undergrowth to reach Prades again. For the more athletic, you'll walk through the Bois de Font Frède on the second level. After a steep ascent, you'll enjoy breathtaking views of the peaks, adding a spectacular dimension to this mountain adventure. Arrive at the Chioula refuge, perched at an altitude of 1600 metres. Enjoy the tranquillity of this mountain haven and share unique moments with the other hikers.

Dinner and overnight at the Chioula refuge.

DAY 5: HIKING IN THE PYRENEES WITH A DONKEY : THE CHIOULA REFUGE IN PRADES

10 km, 150 m ascent, 3h30 . Start

The last day of your trek in the Pyrenees with your trusty donkey: set off from the Chioula refuge to reach Prades and bring your adventure to a close. Follow the Chemins des Bonshommes route to the summit of the Col de Balaguès, perched at 1669 m, offering an exceptional panorama of the majestic mountains of the Haute Ariège. Then head down to Prades along a narrow path, ending this escapade with memories etched in the heart of these breathtaking landscapes. Arrive in Prades: bid farewell to your tour companion and collect your vehicle. End of our services.

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Disclaimer

N.B.: the accommodation described above is given for information only and may be subject to change depending on availability at the time of final booking.

DATES & PRICES

Package	**Double room** *2 pers.*	**Single room** *1 pers.*	**4-person room** *4 pers.*
Hiking in the Pyrenees with a donkey *5 days / 4 nights*	€515	€560	€475

NB: prices shown are per person.

Possible trips from 15/06 to 15/09/2024 at the above price.

OUR PRICE INCLUDES :

- 4 nights in full board accommodation (breakfast, packed lunch, evening meal)
- Accommodation in B+B, and mountain refuge hut
- Detailed road book and route-marked maps on the application GPS tracks
- Logistical and technical assistance

OUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE :

- The donkey rental
- Personal expenses, drinks
- Transfers from your home to the meeting point and dispersion
- Cancellation / Assistance / Repatriation Insurance (7.5% of the total cost of your trip – must be taken out at the time of booking)
- In general, everything that is not mentioned in "Our price includes".

OPTIONS

OPTIONS, SUPPLEMENTS AND REDUCTIONS:

REDUCTIONS	
Discount for children aged 2 to 11 included (family room)	-€40
Discount for children aged 2 to 11 included (double room)	-€30
Remise ado de 12 à 17 ans inclus (uniquement en chambre familiale)	-€50
SUPPLEMENTS	
July - August supplement	€20
Supplément chambre individuelle	€45
Accompagnement d'un âne pour tout le séjour	€350

NB: prices are per person.

HOSTS

OUR PARTNERS IN PYRÉNNÉES

The accommodation are simples, cleans and friendly. Daily showers are available. We've chosen them for their authenticity, the charm of the location and the warm welcome you'll receive.



REFUGE AU CHIOULA

Situé en altitude sur le Chioula, ce refuge de montagne constitue une étape emblématique lors d'une randonnée avec un âne dans les Pyrénées. Entouré de vastes paysages d'estives et de forêts, il offre une atmosphère simple et authentique, idéale pour une immersion nature en famille. Après une journée de marche, vous appréciez le calme des hauteurs, la convivialité des lieux et des repas faits maison, parfaits pour reprendre des forces dans un cadre montagnard préservé.



Refuge de la Chioula - Pyrénnées Ariégeoises © Nature Occitane

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**NB: this is our preferred accommodation. Depending on your registration date, we may be able to reserve other accommodation of the same category for you.*

PRACTICAL INFO

LEVEL :

Medium (M)

4 consecutive days of hiking. Itinerant tour, with just one transfer during your programme on the first day.

Between 150 and 600 meters of ascent per day.

CARRYING:

Your luggage is carried by the pack donkeys.

You will meet them at the gîte each evening of the hike. You carry only your day bag.

PUBLIC :
Families, children aged 4 and over.
Practice an endurance activity (walking or cycling) once a week 2 months before departure.

TYPE OF TERRAIN :
Easy hikes accessible to anyone in good physical condition.
You'll find paths, tracks and small shared roads.

WALKING TIMES :
These are given as a guide only.
They are average times and only take into account the actual walking time with children, without taking breaks into account.

ITINERARY :
It may be modified according to the weather conditions at the time, technical criteria or the physical condition of the participants.

MEETING POINT FOR THIS WALK WITH PACK DONKEY
Day 2 at the village of Prades

END OF THE HIKE IN THE PYRENEES
Around 4pm on Day 5 in the village of Prades

EQUIPMENT
On the first day, we beat your assistance baggage onto the donkeys at 9am at the meeting point.
You should therefore arrive "ready to hike" (hiking boots on, water bottle full, full rucksack, closed luggage).

YOUR RUCKSACK
It should be able to hold your personal belongings for the day, around 30 litres.
Choose one with a waist belt (so that your weight rests on your pelvis), padded shoulder straps and a chest strap.
Your rucksack should always contain warm clothing, rain gear, a water bottle, a first-aid kit and your personal belongings.
If you don't have a bag cover, a bin bag and two freezer pockets are essential to protect your belongings from the rain.

YOUR LUGGAGE
This is your 'follower' bag, carried by the donkey and returned to you each evening. As well as the extra change, it contains the extras that you'll be glad to get back
(CAUTION: maximum 10 kg per participant).
You need to bring several small bags (ideally 2 bags of 5kg per person) so that you can distribute the weight in the saddlebags carried by the donkeys.
Donkey panniers are not waterproof, so we recommend that you use waterproof bags (or bring plastic bin liners).
Make sure you limit your equipment and bring only what you need.

SHOES
Choose hiking boots with good ankle support and notched but flexible soles.
Shoes are one of the most important elements of your hike.
Above all, they must be comfortable, lightweight, waterproof and breathable.
Good ankle support is essential.
Don't set off in new shoes.
Use them at least two or three times before hiking.
Similarly, make sure that your "old shoes" don't give way on the first ascent.

CLOTHING
A waterproof GORE TEX windproof jacket (poncho-type k-way jackets are outlawed)
A fleece jacketHiking trousers, shorts, T-shirts (avoid cotton and prefer breathable materials).
A swimming costume and a towel (microfibre towels are preferable, as they are lighter and dry faster).

THE PICNIC
1 individual hermetically sealed box (tuperware type) with a capacity of around 0.6 litres for a salad, cutlery, plate and cup.

SMALL EQUIPMENT
Water bottle (minimum 1.5 litres per person).
Sunglasses and sun creamHat or cap

A small toilet bag and towel
Flashlight or headlamp (for night-time use)
A pair of tennis shoes or sandals (for the evening)
Toilet paper
Earplugs
A camera
A personal first-aid kit