

SKI TOURING IN THE ARAN VALLEY



Three days of mountain ascent - 2019

muntania
SPAIN

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1 Introduction

The Aran Valley is a great place for ski touring. We have designed three itineraries to ascend to three summits. Ideal for people who are already initiated in this activity. The itineraries are suitable for people with an average level in this activity. The itineraries will be made at a leisurely pace.

We will carry light luggage as this is not a high route from refuge to refuge. We will sleep in the village of Salardú and every day we will make an ascent.

The Aran Valley offers spectacular conditions for the practice of mountain skiing. The great snowfall and its orography, from smooth hillside to abrupt slopes, makes this region a perfect place for the practice of the ski touring. Even at the beginning of the season and when the conditions are bad in other areas, the valley offers good routes favoured by its snowfall, its forests and its gentle prairie mountains.

2 The destination

The Aran Valley is located on the Atlantic slope of the **central Pyrenees**, a fact that determines its climate, history and relationships with its neighbours. The Garonne River makes its way north by Aquitaine land, in France. In fact and despite being administratively integrated in Spain, it was not until 1948, when the tunnel of Vielha was inaugurated, that the valley was communicated throughout the year by road with the rest of the state. All this has meant that its language and its Occitan culture have been preserved. Another important aspect of the Aran Valley, besides its orientation, is that the 30% of the valley is above the 2.000 meters altitude.

Despite the great urban development that the valley has suffered in recent years, we can still enjoy its **cultural heritage**. Villages, churches, stately homes, churches, public laundries, mills or water troughs have lasted until our days. The village of Arties, with beautiful views of the Montardo Mountain (2.833 m), and its Romanesque church of *Santa María de Arties*, are just one example

This land has natural products used in their **traditional cuisine**, such as garden vegetables, game meat, mushrooms, berries (cranberries, wild strawberries, currants and raspberries) and honey. Some of their typical dishes are the “civet” made with wild pig, “**olla aranesa**” and “**truhada**”.

3 Basic information

Destination: Aran Valley (Spain).

Activity: Ski touring.

Difficulty: **.

Length: 4 days.

Season: From December to April.

Minimum group: 2-7 people.

3.1 Difficulty remarks and observations

	Total elevation	Physical Condition
*	Up to 700 m	Normal: occasional sport practice
**	Up to 1200 m	Good: regular sport practice
***	Up to 1400 m	Very good: strict sport practice

	Relation between Blachere scale and Traynard scale	Ski level
*	EM/S1-S2	None or little experience on backcountry ski; there is parallel skying notion though with difficulties on off piste descents.
**	EB/S2-S3	Initiated skier with good parallel skying command in up to 35 ° slopes descent
***	EB-EMB BAJO/S4	Expert skier in any non-extrem slope conditions (up to 35°-40°) using different technics.
****	EMB/S4-S5	Expert skier with good back skies skidding commend. Slopes up to 45 °

	Blachère scale along with the skier technical level
EM	Medium-level skiers at ease on moderate and wide slopes, up to 25°
EB	Good skier; able to face 30°-35° slopes with difficult snow conditions.
EMB	Very Good skier; in command of 40-45° slopes, with risky turns in any snow condition.
EE	Excellent skier: able to perform any slope up to 50°, with risky compulsory paths with any snow condition.
EX	Extreme skier; able to face slopes over 50°, with very risky necessary paths with all types of snow conditions.

	Traynard scale
S1	Not steep terrain for easy turning. Ideal ground for off piste technic learning
S2	Easy to moderate slopes (up to 25°) with no obstacles and wide turns performance.
S3	Moderated slope (up to 35°). No-difficult show conditions. Accesible slopes for Good or very Good skiers.
S4	Steady slopes up to 45° with no exposure and 35°-40° in exposed, narrow and compulsory terrains
S5	Steep 45°-50° slopes , risky compulsory terrain. Forbidden to fall!
S6	Steady slopes up to 55° in little exposure terrain and over 50° in exposed terrain.
S7	Over 60°, very risky

Remarks. Previous experience in ski touring is required, and also skiing in parallel in any kind of terrain with moderate slopes. The physical level must be appropriate to handle slopes between 800 m and 1.000 m daily at a slow pace.

4 Programme

Day 1. Trip to **Salardú**. Meeting with the rest of the participants to explain the next days' routes.

Day 2. Tuc de Salana (2.483m).

It is a mountain that even with bad climatological conditions can be ascended because there is a beautiful and little dense forest practically to the summit, what facilitates the vision in case of fog and snowfall. The close-up view of Montardo is unique. We will be looking forward to returning to the valley after seeing the amount of peaks that we can climb with our skis.

Elevation gain +800 m. - 800 m descent.

Day 3. Tuc del Rosari (2.594m), Estany of Garrabea and Horqueta d'Arreu or Tuc de Baciver (2.644 m) depending on the conditions.

We will make a nice circular itinerary leaving from the parking of the ski resort of Baqueira, to reach the **Tuc of Rosari** summit. Later we will descend by the Estany of Garrabea valley to ascend to Horqueta d'Arreu and then we will go down again to the parking of the station.

Elevation gain +1.000 m. - 1.000 m descent.

Elevation gain +800 m. - 800 m descent for the **Tuc de Baciver**.

Day 4. Tuc del Port de Vielha (2605 m)

It is a great itinerary to end the trip. We will start by a forest track to face an ascending path in a beautiful forest. Already in open terrain and with a spectacular views over the surrounding mountains, we will reach first the Port and then the summit. Definitely a great classic route in this area that is well worth visiting.

Elevation gain +1.200 m. - 1.200 m descent.

Lunch and return trip.

There is the possibility of extending the trip one more day (please consult).

5 More information

Price. **360€**

5.1 Included in the price

- Professional mountain guide (English speaking).
- Common safety equipment.
- 2 hut/hostel nights in double room on half board basis.
- 1 hotel/hostel night in double room with breakfast (first night)
- Rescue and accident insurance
- Reservations management.

5.2 Not included in the price

- Flights (Muntania could manage this service. Please consult).
- Transportation to the start and end points of the trail (please consult to share travel expenses with other participants).
- 1st night dinner.
- Lunches. They will be in the mountain.
- Any drinks not included in the half board mountain huts (dinner and breakfast).
- Costs generated by unexpected changes for weather conditions.

5.3 Required equipment

It is important to carry a light back pack in order to ski comfortable, so it is recommended to carry just light and indispensable equipment. If you don't have all the equipment you can rent it, please consult us.

- Backpack (between 30 and 35 litres) with ski tapes.
- Ski touring equipment (skis, boots, skins, blades, batons). An extra skin.
- Safety equipment: ARVA (with extra battery), shovel and probe.
- Crampons and ice axes.
- Helmet
- Technical clothes:
 - Socks
 - Ski touring pants
 - Thermal t-shirt (base layer). An extra one for the hut.
 - Extra tights for the hut.
 - Fleece jacket or similar (second layer)
 - Gore-Tex or similar jacket and trousers (third layer)
 - Primaloft jacket or similar.

- Neckie.
- Light and thick gloves.
- Woollen cap.
- Sun cap.
- Goggles and sunglasses.
- Head lamp (extra batteries)
- Sheet-sleeping bad (Only for mountain huts).
- Canteen or camelback (minimum 1 litre). In the case of camel back please consider that it could freeze.
- First aid kit and essential toiletries
- Sunscreen and SPF lip balm
- Camera

5.4 Observations

Date Flexibility

Aside from the regular travel trip dates, we are flexible to reconsider new dates if those are more convenient to the client's leisure plans. Do not hesitate to contact us should you have any different dates in mind.

Itinerary adjustment

According to weather and snow reports, itineraries may be adjusted on a daily basis to ensure security considering group and environment conditions.

Time and meeting point

One week prior to the trip departure date, an email will be sent to each participant to give away the meeting point and time along with the guide contact information. At this point any information considered essential to the trip organization will be shared.

Bed linen and towels

To be provided by the shelter

Equipment and material

In case of equipment or material damage, rental options are available in the area.

Insurance policy

This activity includes a basic insurance policy; however, we highly recommend to add, for wider coverage, an extra specific travel policy. This extra policy can be contracted exclusively for the activity dates or annually (flexible starting coverage date), covering not just Muntania Outdoors trips but any other sport activity you may carry out throughout the year.

Extra insurance coverage with cancellation option, will allow you or a family member, in case of incident, to get back the total paid amount (or a percentage if you are already travelling) either for plane tickets or any trip service you might have hired. Moreover, through this coverage home return expenses will be taken care of.

Intermundial insurance company is our supplier for extra coverage insurances; thanks to the signed agreement between parties, Muntania gets to offer lower prices than handling directly with them. The travel insurance with cancellation option offered by Muntania will be covered up to 900€ for national trips and 2000€ for abroad travel. In case your total trip cost is higher than the given coverage limit, an extension is always possible (please consult).

Pre and post day trip extension are possible.

5.5 Links of interest

- <http://www.visitvaldaran.com/en>

5.6 Highlights

- Ideal landscape ski touring routes.
- Optional choices in case of bad weather.
- Good snow conditions.
- Good traditional gastronomy in the valley.

6 Contact

Muntania Outdoors, S.L. Travel Agency CICMA: 2608

+34 629 379 894 info@muntania.com www.muntania.com
C/Las Cruces, 1 Bloque 2 - 2º C 28491 NAVACERRADA (Spain).

7 Photo Gallery

