



CARROS DE FUEGO. SKI TOURING HIGH LEVEL ROUTE

Pyrenees



Exploring Spain
TREK CLIMB SKI & BIKE

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1 Introduction

The concept of high routes (or haute routes) was born in the Alps in the late nineteenth century by the Alpine Club (UK) who proposed a summer itinerary between Chamonix (France) and Zermatt (Switzerland) which they called "**The High Level Route**".

It was not until 1911, when the trip was completed on skis for the first time, that both the concept and the High Route (Haute Route) name became popular. Since then, all mountain routes lasting several days from hut to hut are known as high routes.

If there is an area in the Pyrenees that is associated with high routes, then it is the **Parc National d' Aigüestortes and Sant Maurici**, and if there is a route that can be categorized as high route, it is the "**Carros de foc**".

The National Park incorporates all the elements that characterise the high Pyrenees, featuring a dazzling and diverse landscape of snow, rivers, waterfalls and lakes. With a breath-taking geography interested with a chain of mountain huts, this is the ideal setting for a high route trail.

The story of "Carros de foc" began a little over twenty years ago with courtesy visits between mountain huts guards in the park, but since then has become a Pyrenees classic.

2 Destination

The National Park of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici is one of the fourteen national parks in Spain. Located in the Catalan Pyrenees, together with **Ordesa and Monteperdido National Park** (in the Aragon Pyrenees) and the **Pyrenees National Park** (In France), it is an excellent representation of the Pyrenees main ecosystems.

The water is the main sign of identity, which flows in the rivers, canyons, waterfalls and it creates lakes and peat lands. All around more than three thousand meters high mountains, leafy forests of hooked pine, fir, wild pine, birch and beech.

In the park there is a large network of huts that let the mountain lovers to discover all the corners with ease and at any time of the year. In winter, when the park is covered by the snow and their more than **200 lakes freeze**, making it the perfect stage for ski touring or snow shoes walks.

Middle Ages left an important mark in de **Boi Valley** through the Romanesque Art. The church San **Climent de Taüll** with its square base slim bell tower, is the most famous church between the eight ones built under the influence of Lombard Romanesque and declared a world heritage sites by UNESCO.

This land has natural products used in their traditional cuisines, 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 : **Aigüestortes and Estany de Sant Maurici** (Spain). Aigüestortes and Estany de Sant Maurici (Spain).

Activity : Ski touring.

Difficulty : **.

Length : 5 days.

Season : From February to April.

Minimum group : 4-7 people.

3.1 Required physical condition and type of terrain

	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 °

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 1200 m daily at a slow pace.

	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

4 Programme

4.1 Programme outline

Day 1. Campamento **Ressec** (1.400 m) - **Restanca hut** (2010m) - **Güellcrestada's Col** (2.450 m) - Optional **Montardo** (2.833 m) - **Ventosa and Calvell hut** (2.200 m).

Elevation gain + 1350 m - 650 m descent.

Day 2. **Ventosa and Calvell hut** (2.200m) - **Contraix Col** (2.747m) - **Estany Llong hut** (1.985m).

Elevation gain +810 m. - 950 m descent

Day 3. **Estany Llong hut** (1.985m) - **Gavatxos Col** (2.666m) - **Colomina hut** (2.395m)

Elevation gain +850 m. - 500 m descent.

Day 4. **Colomina's hut** (2.395m) - **Saburó's Col** (2.680 m)- **Josep María Blanc hut** (2.300 m)- **Pico Peguera** (2.942 m)- **Mallafré hut** (1.950 m)- **Amitges hut** (2.378 m).

Elevation gain +1.120 m. - 1.140 m descent.

With the ascent to Peguera Summit. Elevation gain +1.370 m. - 1.390 m descent.

Day 5. **Amitges hut** (2.378 m) - **Tuc de Saboredo** (2.833 m) - **Saboredo hut** (2.310 m) - **Coth deth Tuc Gran de Sendrosa** (2.450m) - **Colomers hut** (2.130 m) - **Baños de Tredós** (1800 m).

Elevation gain +1.150 m. - 1.450 m descent.

4.2 Detailed program

Day 1. Campamento **Ressec** (1.400 m) - **Restanca hut** (2010m) - **Güellcrestada's Col** (2.450 m) - Optional **Montardo** (2.833 m) - **Ventosa and Calvell hut** (2.200 m).

From **Pont de Ressec** we will ascent through the forest to get the **Restanca** hut. After provisioning, we will continue to reach the **Güellcrestada's Col**. If we feel like, we could ascent the **Montardo** summit (2.833 m). We will get the **Ventosa and Calvell hut** making a wide phased descent due to the presence of the numerous "ibones" (Pyrenees lakes).

Required. Elevation gain +1.050 m. - 300 m descent.

Ascending the **Montardo**. Elevation gain + 1350 m - 650 m descent.

Day 2. **Ventosa and Calvell hut** (2.200m) - **Contraix Col** (2.747m) - **Estany Llong hut** (1.985m).

We will start the morning in the best manner, descending to the **Ibones of Colieto**. After placing the sealskins we will ascent until a place where we should carry the skies to reach the **Contraix's Col**. From this point, we will make an amazing and long descent towards the south in order to reach the valley bottom of **Estany Llong**. We

will change the high mountain landscape for forests surrounded by big mountains. The **Estany Llong hut** is located in this valley, far away from the civilization so it's an ideal place to relax.

Potential ascent to **Contraix's Summit**.

Elevation gain +810 m. - 950 m descent

Day 3. Estany Llong hut (1.985m) - Gavatxos Col (2.666m) - Colomina hut (2.395m)

We will be enter to the south part of the **Aigües Tortes and San Mauricio National Park**. It is a less frequented area dotted with "Ibones" where it is possible to reach one of the summits in the area.

Elevation gain +850 m. - 500 m descent.

Day 4. Colomina's hut (2.395m) - Saburó's Col (2.680 m)- Josep María Blanc hut (2.300 m)- Pico Peguera (2.942 m)- Mallafré hut (1.950 m)- Amitges hut (2.378 m).

It is a very beautiful stage thanks to the ascent to **Peguera Summit**, the beauty of the **Sant Maurici Lake** and the area where the **Amitges hut** is located.

It is a hard route with abrupt up and down transitions and we will ski to get to **Sant Maurici Lake**, with the nice views of **Els Encantats**.

Required. Elevation gain +1.120 m. - 1.140 m descent.

With the ascent to Peguera Summit. Elevation gain +1.370 m. - 1.390 m descent.

Day 5. Amitges hut (2.378 m) -Tuc de Saboredo (2.833 m) - Saboredo hut (2.310 m) - Còth deth Tuc Gran de Sendrosa (2.450m) - Colomers hut (2.130 m) - Baños de Tredós (1800 m).

After these skiing days, our first goal in this last day will be the ascent to **Tuc de Saboredo**. From this point we will descend the homonymous valley to get to **Còth deth Tuc Gran de Sendrosa**. This col will be the entrance to the **Aiguamòg Valley**, where after a nice descent, we will find the **Banhs de Tredós**, at the end of our journey.

Elevation gain +1.150 m. - 1.450 m descent.

5 Further information

Price. 510 euros per person.

5.1 Included

- Mountain guide.
- Common safety equipment.
- 4 nights in huts in bed and breakfast regime.
- Rescue and accident insurance
- Reservations management.

5.2 Not included

- Transportation to the start and end points of the trail (please consult to share travel expenses with other participants).
- 1st night in a hostel in bed and breakfast regime in shared room of 4 people. Please consult extra charge for double or individual room. Muntania Spain could make de reservation without charges.
- 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 reasons.
- Any additional nights before/after the trek **at Pont de Suert Guesthouse:**
 - 54 euros p/p in a double room breakfast included.
 - 72 euros in a single room breakfast included.

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
- 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.

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.

Plane tickets (if applicable)

If case you wish us to handle you plane ticket, please contact us with airport arrival and departure details and number of needed luggage. Before issuing any ticket, Price and details Will be send to the client for its approval.

Muntania fee for plane ticket management is 20€ per person.

If, otherwise, you handle your plane tickets, please coordinate with us before hand to check on arrival and departure information.

Please take into consideration getting with you on your carry-on luggage some set of clothing in case of checked luggage lose.

Further information

- **It is not cold in the huts.** The **primaloft jacket** will be used during the activity if the weather is very cold.
- Sleeping bag it is not required, but a silk or cotton sheet sleeping bag would be necessary.
- It is recommended to carry just a few provisions so it can be bought in the huts.
- Slippers are available in all huts, so it is not necessary to carry extra shoes.
- There could be any chance in the huts' choice depending on the availability and the booking and cancellation conditions that they require previously. These changes will not affect the intended route (just a little shortening or lengthening of any of the stages).

5.5 Insurance policy

All activities in Spain have an accident insurance included in the price. Yet, if you practise mountain sports regularly and also travel frequently, **we suggest you get a travel insurance**, that as well as covering any accident and rescue it also protect you against many other situations.

If you do not have a travel insurance you can acquire one with our travel agency. Exploring Spain processes all insurances with **Intermundial**. The cost of these insurances is lower if you buy it through Exploring Spain than if you do it directly with Intermundial.

EU RESIDENTS

Ski/Aventure Plus

It is a **travel insurance** and also **covers the practise of many sports and activities**. You can get one for the duration of the trip or for the whole year, being able to choose the starting date. If you get the insurance for a

year, it will not only be valid for the trip with Exploring Spain but also it will be valid for any other trips or activities you may do during that year.

Ski/Aventure Plus with Cancelation

It has the same coverage that the previous insurance but also you will be cover in case of cancelation of the trip and tickets in case of force majeure (sickness, injury...) for yourself and/or a relative.

The travel insurance with cancelation that we offer, allows a refund of the costs already paid for up to 1.000 €. If the cost of the trip and flights is higher, you can extend the amount covered (under request).

Multi-assistance Plus with or without Cancelation

Both Multi-assistance Plus with or without Cancelation are **travel insurances with better coverage** than the Ski/Adventure Plus with or without cancelation but they **do not cover the practise of sports**.

This insurance can be of your interest if you already have an accident and rescue insurance that covers the activity that you will be doing in the trip, but you do not have a travel insurance. It can also be useful if you are interested in a trip without practising any sports.

NON EU RESIDENTS

Incoming Cancelation Plus

This insurance covers the costs of the trip and the tickets if you have to cancel the trip before the departure because of different reasons like for example a sickness (see conditions of the insurance).

This insurance can be useful if you already have a travel insurance but it does not cover the cancelation of the trip or if you already have an insurance covering sports and activities.

Incoming Ski/Aventure Plus with Cancelation

It is a **travel insurance** and also **covers the practise of many sports and activities**. You will also be cover in case of cancelation of the trip and tickets in case of force majeure (sickness, injury...) for yourself and/or a relative. You can get one for the duration of the trip or for the whole year, being able to choose the starting date. If you get the insurance for a year, it will not only be valid for the trip with Exploring Spain but also it will be valid for any other trips or activities you may do during that year.

The travel insurance with cancelation that we offer, allows a refund of the costs already paid for up to 2.000 €. If the cost of the trip and flights is higher, you can extend the amount covered (under request).

*Consult prices and conditions for Intermundial insurances with Exploring Spain following this link: <https://www.exploring-spain.com/insurances>

Included accident and rescue insurance

** Included accident and rescue insurance. Nº POLIZA 4020006195 Muntania Outdoors. Assistance phone number 24h 902 09 15 57 (it is the contact number for the insurance company Prebal, Previsión Balear M.P.S).

*** It is the customer's responsibility to inform the insurance company about the accident as soon as possible. Prior the departure for the trip, we will send you an email with the insurance policy number and the assistance number so you can have it during the trip.

**** Depending on where the accident happens, the customer will have to pay in advance if the insurance company indicates it, being the payment refunded by the insurance company within the policy's limits. In any case Exploring Spain – Muntania Outdoors S.L. is responsible for any advance payment required for the rescue or assistance.

5.6 Links of interest

- www.visitvaldaran.com/en/

5.7 Highlights

- Visiting a famous Spanish **National Park**.
- Ideal landscape for various days' routes.
- Wide network of High Mountain huts.
- Optional choices in case of bad weather.
- Good snow conditions.
- Good traditional gastronomy in the valley.

6 Contact

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