

# The Chemin de la Liberté

The great escape across the Pyrenees



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# The Chemin de la Liberté

## The great escape across the Pyrenees

The Chemin de la Liberté starts from the nearby town of Saint-Girons. During the Second World War more than 33,000 civilians and 6000 allied servicemen climbed over the peaks of the Pyrenees from France to escape Nazi occupation and regain their liberty in neutral Spain.

Spectacular scenery makes for an inspirational experience along this famous Freedom Trail route including seeing the memorial to the Halifax pilot and his crew and wreckage of their bomber at a height of 2200m which crashed in July 1945. A sense of sadness is felt to see the gleaming metal of the plane 80km off it's intended course.





# Detailed itinerary

## Day 1: Depart London – Toulouse, France

Arrive Toulouse and transfer to St Girons. Free afternoon to visit the Chemin de la Liberté museum to understand more about the route that the refugees and allied soldiers took. Dinner will be followed by a detailed trek briefing about the challenge ahead.

## Day 2: Aunac (900m) to Subera Hut (1,499m) - 6-7hrs trekking

Our trek begins from Aunac. An undulating and exhilarating day lies ahead. We begin by dropping down to the river floor and then gradually climbing to the Col de la Core for lunch. Now the hard part of the day is done, our path heads round the hillside on an undulating trail to the Refuge de Subera at 1499m where we camp. Highlights include spectacular scenery, wild horses and fantastic company.



## Day 3: Subera Hut (1,499m) to Estagnous Refuge (2,245m)

### 7-9hrs trekking

A tough and demanding day. We cross two high cols of over 2,300m with over 1,500m of ascent to reach our next refuge de Estagnous at 2,241m. After pausing for thought at the Halifax bomber we cross the Col de Craberous before dropping down to R Espugues for lunch. We then descend further to an etang before scrambling up a few boulders and then climbing up once more over a beautiful granite pavement to the final col of the day at 2,462m. From here, we descend for around 45 minutes to our overnight refuge.



## Day 4: Estagnous Refuge (2,245m) to Borde de Perosa (1,100m)

### 6-7hrs trekking

An early start, we begin trekking downhill to the tranquil Lac Rond (1,929m). Lac Long lies 200m above us, and the path to it is extremely steep. In places there is a via ferrata style cableway to assist us for around 150m on the path. No technical experience is needed – just fit bodies and determination! Once at Lac Long (2,125m) the border at the Col de la Clauère is almost within sight. Our path crosses a deep gully, usually filled with snow, which provides an arduous slog to the top (2,522m) where we gaze into Spain. It's hard to imagine how the escapees from France would have felt at this moment, having reached the border. After descending we meet our vehicles to transfer to our hotel in Spain and a well deserved celebration dinner.

## Day 5: Depart Toulouse

After breakfast we transfer to Toulouse for the onward flight to London.

*© Ultimate Challenges Itinerary complex and subject to change*

# Breakdown of Costs – The Chemin de la Liberté

## Included

- Scheduled international return flights
- Transfers upon arrival and departure
- Local guides
- All accommodation/tents
- Full board (unless stated)
- UK Expedition Leader / UK Expedition Doctor (based on 15 trekkers)
- Airport taxes and fuel surcharges

## Excluded

- Single supplement
- Gratuities
- Personal expenses
- Personal travel insurance
- Lunch on day 5 (depending on the time of the flight)