

TRAIL RUNNING IN CARROS DE FUEGO

Pyrenees



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1. Introduction

“For me it is a very special challenge because I was born in the Pyrenees and it is where I live. Here, my parents taught me to love the mountains. I don’t want to set any record. What I am looking for is to discover the Pyrenees, where I was born and where I learnt to love the mountains, and get to know the people...” These are the words of Kilian Jornet, probably the most famous trail runner in the world, just minutes before the start of the challenge to beat the Transpirenaica record, the route that covers the mountain range in full from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean.

But we are going to focus in what we believe is one of the most spectacular areas for a trail running trip: Aigüestortes and Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, in the Catalan Pyrenees, which is the setting of the famous high level route Carros de Fuego connecting its nine mountain refuges.

Carros de Fuego is a 55km route with a total elevation gain of 9.200 metres and its highest altitude being 2.775 metres. The itinerary goes along landscapes of great beauty like the lake of Sant Maurici, Els Encantats, the spires of Amitges, the cirque of Colomers, the Monestero valley, Besiberris... and an endless list of lakes and summits. The mountain refuges where we will be spending the nights and

restocking on energy are located in inspiring settings, and the keepers will make us feel at home. The usual length of time necessary to complete the route walking is 5 days and it can be done any time of the year as long as the weather allows it.

Carros de Fuego is the missing link between walking and running in the mountains. Walk fast and run slowly. Great news for runners that love a challenge in beautiful and true technical mountain routes. It is essential to be in a very good physical condition and to have previous experience. Are you ready?

2. The destination

The National Park of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici is one of the fourteen national parks of Spain. Located in the Catalan Pyrenees is, together with the **National Park of Ordesa and Monteperdido** (in the Aragonese Pyrenees) and the **Parc National des Pyrénées** (in the French departments of Pyrénées-Atlantiques and Hautes-Pyrénées), an excellent representation of the main ecosystems of the Pyrenees.

Its main hallmark is water, which runs through rivers, canyons and waterfalls and stagnates in lakes and peat lands. All this is located between mountains of more than three thousand meters altitude and leafy forests of black pine, spruce, scot pine, birch and beech.

In the park there is an extensive network of sheltered mountain huts that allow mountain lovers to discover all corners with all comfort and at any time of the year. In winter, when the park is covered in white and its more than 200 lakes freeze, it becomes a perfect and beautiful stage for crossings with mountain skis or snowshoes.

Following the trail left in the Middle Ages by **Romanesque** art in the **Boí Valley** is another way of approaching this place. The church of **Sant Climent de Taüll** with its slender square-shaped bell tower is the most well-known image of the eight churches built in the valley under the influence of the Lombard Romanesque and they are declared a **World Heritage Site** by **UNESCO**.



3. Basic information

Destination: Aigüestortes and Sant Maurici National Park. Pyrenees. Spain

Activity: Trail running.

Difficulty: ***/**.*

Length: 3 days.

Season: From June to October.

Minimum-maximum group: 3-10 people.

3.1 Required physical condition and type of terrain

Physical level	Total elevation	Kms
*	Up to 600 m	Up to 16 km
**	Up to 1200 m	Up to 23 km
***	Up to 1400 m	Over. 23 km

Physical level category does not have to correspond exactly with given ascent and kilometers at the same time.

Type of terrain

*	Good conditioned forest tracks and trails
**	Good conditioned trails. Presence of stones and roots on the way requiring attentive hike.
***	Bumpy, stone loose tracks, including off trails

4. Programme

4.1 Programme outline

*Optional. We can manage the accommodation in the valley for the night prior to the start of the trail.

Day 1. Estany de Cavallers (1.800 m)-Refugio Ventosa y Calvell (2.200 m)-Refugio Colomers (2.135 m).

Distance 12 km Ascent +750 m -550 m

Day 2. Refugio Colomers (2.135 m)-Refugio Saboredó(2.299 m)-Refugio d'Amitges (2.378 m)- Refugio J.M.Blanc (2.326 m).

Distance 26,8 km Ascent +1.770 m -1.320 m

Day 3. Refugio J.M.Blanc (2.326 m).Refugio Colomina (2420 m.)- Refugio Estany Llong (1.985 m)- Estany de Cavallers (1.800 m).

Distance 23km Ascent +1.390 m -1.370 m

OPTIONAL: Day 4. Possibility of extending the trip for one day for a **cultural visit of the Romanesque Boi Valley**

4.2 Detailed programme

*Optional. We can manage the accommodation in the valley for the night prior to the start of the trail.

Day 1. Estany de Cavallers (1.800 m)-Refugio Ventosa y Calvell (2.200 m)-Refugio Colomers (2.135 m).

We begin the journey by accessing the National Park from Cavallers Valley. Skirting the Estany de Cavallers to gain height we will reach the Ventosa hut. We will continue North towards Montardo to then turn to the East. We will cross a landscape dotted with mountain lakes (lakes of glacial origin) and reach the Port de Caldes. We will descent to the glacier cirque of Colomers where we will reach the mountain hut where we will spend the first night.

Distance 12 km Ascent +750 m -550 m

*Optional: There is the option to summit **Montardo Peak (2.837 m)** from where there are excellent views of the adjacent valleys and summits.

Distance 1.5 km Ascent +362 m -362 m

Day 2. Refugio Colomers (2.135 m)-Refugio Saboredo(2.299 m)-Refugio d'Amitges (2.378 m)- Refugio J.M.Blanc (2.326 m).

We will leave the hut running East passing by **Saboredo Hut** and visiting another beautiful "U shaped" valley created by the typical glacial erosion of these mountains. We will continue towards the **mountain pass of Ratera** and then descend to the **Amitges mountain hut** located in a beautiful spot dominated by the spires of d'Amitges and Els Encantats in the background.

We will descend to the famous **Estany de Sant Maurici** with impressive views of Els Encantats. We have to ascent now to the **Monestero Col (2,877 m)** and finally we will only have to go down to **Estany Negre** and reach the **J.M.Blanc mountain hut (2.326 m)**.

Distance 26,8 km Ascent +1.770 m -1.320 m

Day 3. Refugio J.M.Blanc (2.326 m).Refugio Colomina (2420 m.)- Refugio Estany Llong (1.985 m)- Estany de Cavallers (1.800 m).

From the **Col of Saburó** we will run towards the **Colomina hut**, going along a section of "**carrilet**", an old construction that takes advantage of the relatively flat orography of this stretch full of lakes.

From the Colomina Hut, we will face the climb to **Dellui Col**. Then, we will descent towards the valley where the **Estany Llong Hut** is located. We can reach the hut or we can take a shortcut to follow down the valley of Riu de Sant Nicolau.

We will take the National Park Bus service to complete the last kilometres of the valley.

Distance 23km Ascent +1.390 m -1.370 m

OPTIONAL: Day 4. Possibility of extending the trip for one day for a cultural visit of the Romanesque Boi Valley

We cannot leave the Pyrenees without making a cultural visit to the Romanesque Valley of Boí. Excellent architecture of the time in a beautiful landscape.

5. More information

Price. Consult

5.1 Included

- Professional Mountain guide and trail runner for the whole trip.
- 2 nights of half-board accommodation in the mountain huts (breakfast and dinner)
- Accident insurance.
- Trip management.

5.2 Not included

- Flights (Muntania offers this service for an additional cost of 20€)
- Transport to the starting point. (Transfers from/to airport can be arranged under request)
- Accommodation for the previous night and any additional nights. (It can be managed and arranged by Muntania under request)
- Lunches.
- Any drinks not included in the menus (dinner and breakfast).
- Any changes that may occur during the trip due to any incidents (meteorology, etc.) and that involve a higher expenditure than the budget of the client and the guide.
- Extra day at Boi Valley

5.3 Packing list

It is important to carry a light backpack, so it is recommended to carry just the essential clothes and equipment. If you do not have all the equipment you can rent it, please consult us.

- Trail running backpack.
- Trail running shoes.
- Technical clothes:
 - Performance socks.
 - Shorts or tights.
 - Thermal t-shirt (base layer). A spare one.
 - Fleece jacket or similar (second layer).
 - Waterproof jacket (third layer).
 - Light gloves.
 - Sun cap.
- Sunglasses.
- Trail running poles (optional).
- Head lamp
- Sheet-sleeping bag
- Water flask or camelback
- 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 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 inform about the meeting point and time along with the guide contact details. At this point any information considered essential to the trip organization will be shared.

Plane tickets (if applicable)

In case you wish us to handle your plane tickets, 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 there is any problem with the checked luggage.

Backpack

It is very important to bring just the essential material and clothing to run at ease. You would not need to take food supplies and clothing can be hand-wash daily.

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.

5.5 Links of interest

- www.amitges.com
- <https://www.refugicolomers.com>
- <http://www.jmblanc.com/es/>
- <http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/es/aiguestortes>

5.6 Highlights

- Perhaps the most classic and famous routes in the Pyrenees.
- Alpine landscape with spectacular views.
- Wide network of mountain huts.

6. Contact

Exploring Spain - Muntania Outdoors, S.L. CICMA: 2608

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