



The Pyrenees

POP 480,000

Includes ➔

Pau	672
Lourdes	676
Parc National des Pyrénées	679
Vallée d'Aspe	680
Vallée d'Ossau	683
Cauterets	685
Vallée des Gaves & Around	687
Vallée de Garonne ..	688
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Best Mountain Views

- ➔ Pic du Midi (p687)
- ➔ Cirque de Gavarnie and
Cirque de Troumouse (p687)
- ➔ Lac de Gaube (p685)
- ➔ Cirque de Lescun (p681)
- ➔ Château de Foix (p690)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hôtel du Lion d'Or (p686)
- ➔ Le Castel de la Pique
(p688)
- ➔ Hôtel des Rochers (p677)
- ➔ Auberge les Myrtilles
(p691)
- ➔ L'Abbaye de Camon (p691)

Why Go?

Spiking the skyline for 430km along the Franco-Spanish border, the snow-dusted Pyrenees offer a glimpse of France's wilder side. This serrated chain of peaks contains some of France's most pristine landscapes and rarest wildlife, including endangered species such as the griffon vulture, izard (a type of mountain goat) and brown bear. Since 1967, 457 sq km has been protected as the Parc National des Pyrénées, ensuring its valleys, tarns and mountain pastures are preserved for future generations.

Rural and deeply traditional, the Pyrenees' wild landscapes now provide a paradise for skiers, climbers, hikers and bikers. But there's more to the mountains than just outdoor thrills: there are mountain villages to wander, hill-top castles to admire and ancient caves to investigate. They might not be on quite the same scale as the Alps, but the Pyrenees are every bit as stunning. Strap on your boots – it's time to explore.

When to Go

Pau

°C/°F Temp

40/104 —

30/86 —

20/68 —

10/50 —

0/32 —

-10/14 —

Rainfall inches/mm

— 6/150

— 5/125

— 4/100

— 3/75

— 2/50

— 1/25

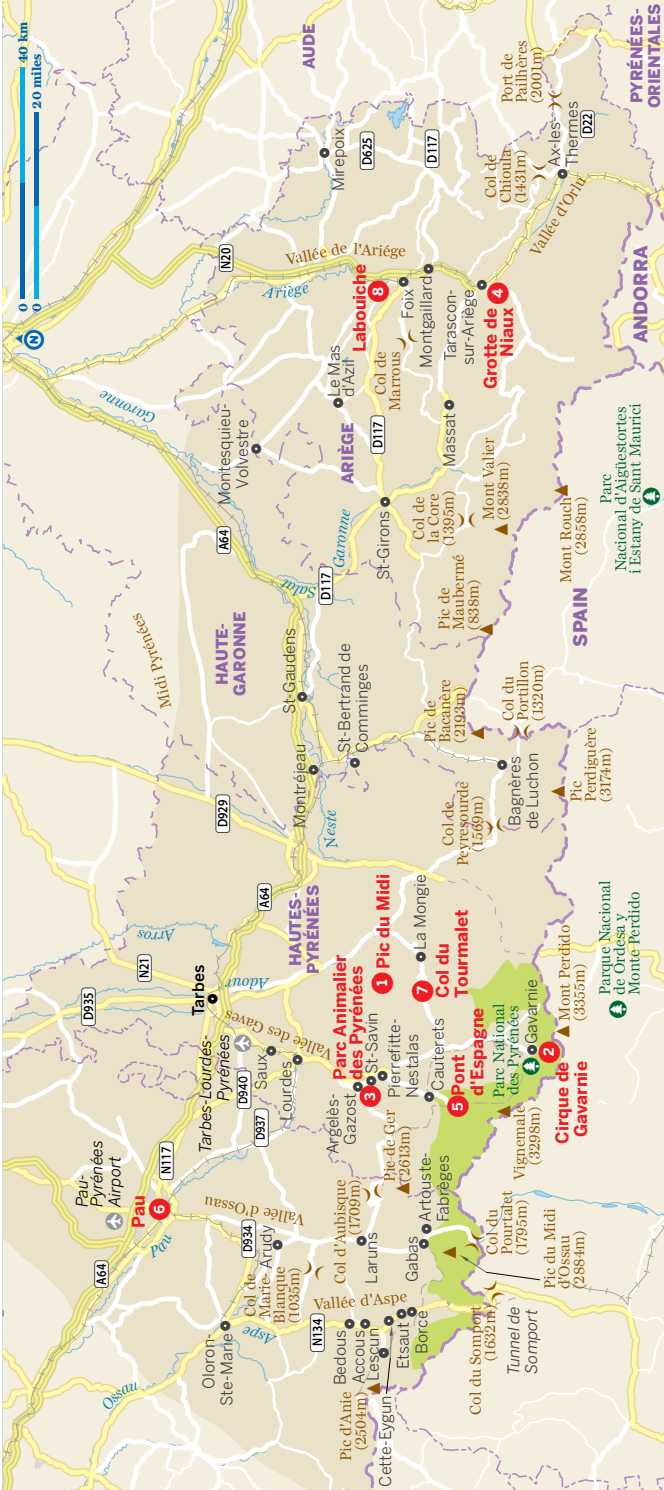
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Feb Pau's spring carnival takes over the capital's streets.

Jul Shepherds move their flocks in the Transhumance, and the Tour de France races through.

Nov–Mar Peak skiing season – book hotels well ahead.



The Pyrenees Highlights

- 1 Admiring the views from the sky-top observatory on the **Pic du Midi** (p687)
- 2 Trekking to the mountain amphitheatre of the **Cirque de Gavarnie** (p687)
- 3 Seeing endangered Pyrenean wildlife at the **Parc Animalier des Pyrénées** (p681)
- 4 Marvelling at the prehistoric cave-paintings
- 5 Tackling the trails around Cauterets from the **Pont d'Espagne** (p685)
- 6 Exploring shady lanes and chocolate shops in **Pau's old town** (p672)
- 7 Driving over the Pyrenees' highest road pass, **Col du Tourmalet** (p684)
- 8 Floating through the underworld on the subterranean river of **Labouiche** (p690)