



# The Pyrenees

POP 480,000

## Includes ➔

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Pau .....                        | 666 |
| Lourdes .....                    | 670 |
| Parc National des Pyrénées ..... | 674 |
| Vallée d'Ossau .....             | 677 |
| Cauterets .....                  | 679 |
| Vallée de l'Ariège ...           | 683 |

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Le Viscos (p673)
- ➔ L'Héptaméron des Gourmets (p683)
- ➔ Le Poulet à Trois Pattes (p668)
- ➔ Les Papilles Insolites (p668)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Le Castel de la Pique (p682)
- ➔ Hôtel des Rochers (p673)
- ➔ Auberge les Myrtilles (p685)
- ➔ L'Abbaye de Camon (p686)
- ➔ Le Balcon de l'Ossau (p679)

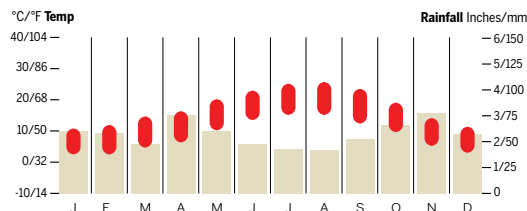
## Why Go?

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 the country'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

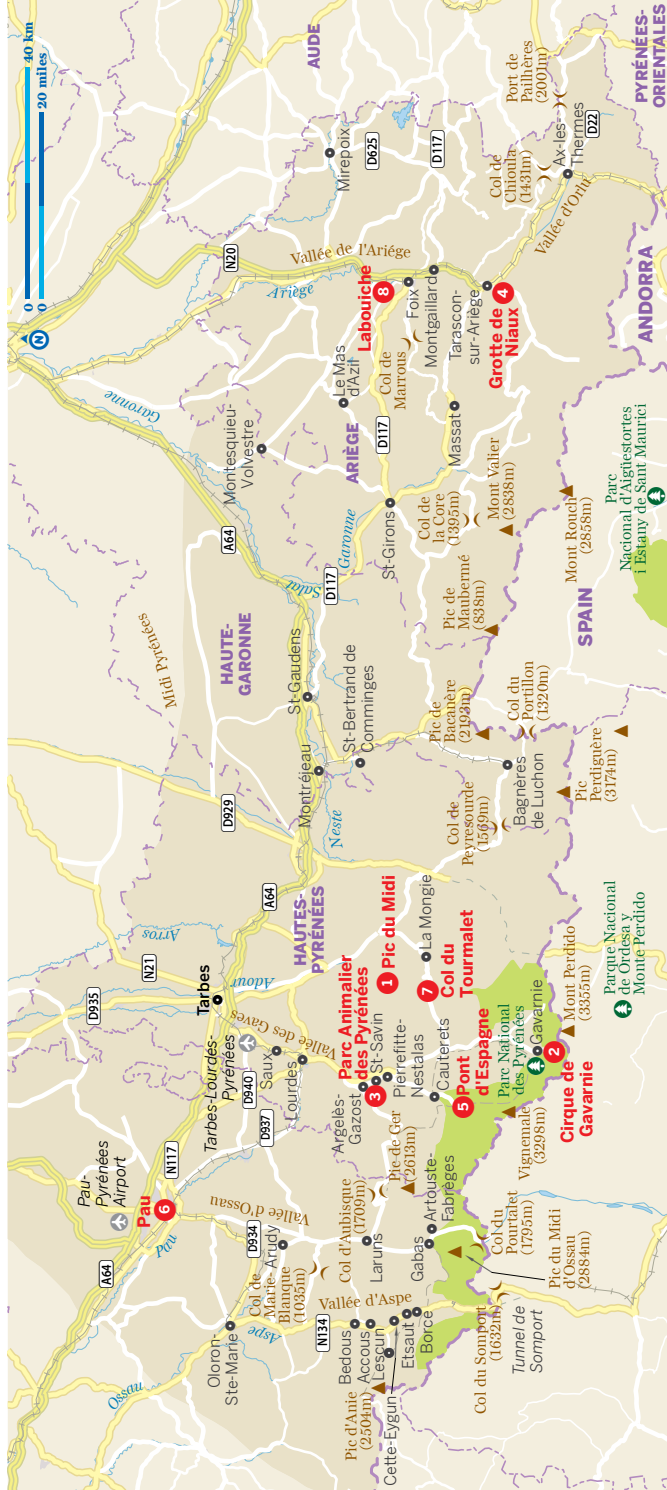
### Pau



**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 Pic du Midi** (p681)  
Admiring the views from the sky-top observatory.
- 2 Cirque de Gavarnie** (p676)  
Trekking to the mountain amphitheatre.
- 3 Parc Animalier des Pyrénées** (p674)  
Seeing endangered Pyrenean wildlife.
- 4 Grotte de Niaux** (p685)  
Marvelling at the prehistoric cave-paintings.
- 5 Pont d'Espagne** (p679)  
Tackling the trails around Cautelets.
- 6 Pau's old town** (p666)  
Exploring winding lanes and chocolate shops.
- 7 Col du Tourmalet** (p681)  
Driving over the Pyrenees' highest road pass.
- 8 Labouiche** (p684)  
Floating through the underworld on a subterranean river.