

GUIDED HIKING

Throughout the year, local guides and mountain guides in the valley offer outings adapted to all levels and with very varied themes: the discovery and observation of flora and fauna; night outings under the stars; walks that take you off the beaten track; high-mountain walks and climbs up to mythical peaks...

Find the list of professionals on valleesdegavarnie.com.
A program of guided hikes is available at Tourist Information Points.

ADVICE & PRECAUTIONS

PERIODS OF ACCESSIBILITY

The routes presented in this document can be undertaken in summer conditions, that is to say in the absence of snow or ice. Some routes located at high altitude or on shady slopes may retain late snowfalls (until late spring, or even late summer for some routes). Before planning an itinerary, always check with the Tourist Information Points as to whether the walking routes are operational.

WEATHER AND EQUIPMENT

Bad weather conditions (fog, rain, wind, cold storm, etc) can also turn an easy course into a real ordeal. It is essential to check the weather forecast before departure and to adapt your outings to the daily conditions. Essential equipment: suitable shoes, warm clothes, windbreaker, headwear, sunglasses, sunscreen, water, a snack or a picnic.

RESPECT FOR OUTDOOR AREAS AND THEIR USERS

- Keep your dog on a lead.
- Stay away from herds.
- Park in dedicated spaces.
- Leave nothing behind (picnic leftovers; toilet paper; stone balancing, etc).

REGULATIONS IN PROTECTED ZONES

IN THE PIBESTE-AOULHET REGIONAL NATURE RESERVE

- Dogs must be on a lead.
- Gathering and collecting (minerals, animals) is prohibited.
- Noise and disturbances are prohibited.
- Fires are prohibited.
- Bivouacs are allowed at regulated times and dates.



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- ACCESS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR LARGE VEHICLES

USEFUL NUMBERS

- MAISON DE LA RÉSERVE NATURELLE (THE NATURAL RESERVE)
+33 (0) 5 62 97 15 55
- FRANCE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES WEATHER
0 899 71 02 65 (PAYABLE NUMBER)
- EMERGENCY
112
- MOUNTAIN RESCUE
+33 (0) 5 62 92 41 41

REFERENCE MAPS & TOPOGUIDES

This map does not replace a topographic map or a topographical guide. You will find opposite the references of the maps and topoguides covering this geographical area. On sale in shops and Tourist Information Points in the Gavarnie Valleys.

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:

- IGN 1/25000 1647 ET Lourdes [Argelès-Gazost / Le Lavedan]
- Rando Editions 1/50 000 n°4 Bigorre [Cauterets / Gavarnie / Saint-Lary]

TOPOGRAPHIC GUIDE REFERENCES:

- Vallée d'Argelès-Gazost – Hautacam, Editions Glénat
- Argelès-Gazost et ses environs, Julien Deffarge
- De bois en estives, Réserve du Pibeste-Aoulhet

PATRIMOINE EN BALADE (THE HERITAGE WALK):

Via a free downloadable application, discover 15 easy audio-guided walks throughout the valleys. Each walk has a theme, related to an historical event or to a specific place. Self -guided.



THE FLORAL WALK

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 1.30 HR
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 M

1

Take a pleasant stroll through the streets of the village of Argelès-Gazost. From ancient stones to the scent of roses, Argelès-Gazost awaits you... Walk through the streets, squares, fountains, parks and natural spaces and discover a thousand and one natural wonders mixed with ancient heritage.

STARTING POINT : ARGELÈS-GAZOST. Place de l'Église.

ROUTE MARKERS: SMALL YELLOW SIGNS. Signs with red flowers and the title "Balade fleurie".



THE ARRIEULAT WALK

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 1 HR
ELEVATION GAIN: 30 M

2

This is a short family walk through the Gave d'Azun gorges. In summer, you will enjoy the shade afforded by the tall trees and the cool waters of the stream. On the way, you will discover flora and fauna typical to the shady and humid areas along the valley floor. The more seasoned hiker can carry on past the wooden footbridge and follow the loop up towards the village of Arcizans-Avant and the chapel of Saint-Castère. Then count on 2 hours and 200 m of ascent. Medium difficulty.

STARTING POINT: ARGELÈS-GAZOST. Rue de l'Arrieulat.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS & YELLOW MARKERS. Follow signs for "Arrieulat".



THE BALANDRAU STONES

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 1.15 HR
ELEVATION GAIN: 60 M

3

From the Vieuzac district, the path will lead you to the Balandrau stones viewing point: a place filled with legends and an unusual panorama over the valley. The route is very pleasant and skirts the edge of the forest, bordered by pretty stone walls. It alternates between gentle slopes and flats. You will pass alongside the perimeters of the "Parc Animalier des Pyrénées", and with a little luck will see some of its guests... Further on, in the forest, the chestnut tree is king and the old trees with their enigmatic shapes are everywhere in this once exploited chestnut grove.

STARTING POINT: ARGELÈS-GAZOST. Vieuzac Car Park.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS & YELLOW MARKERS.



THE COL D'ANDORRE

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 3 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 420 M

4

* Dogs must be on a lead (Nature reserve).

This pass dominates the discreet Bergons valley. The trail climbs gradually in a landscape alternating between meadows and fern moorland. Beautiful views over the valley come thick and fast. Once you arrive at the mountain pastures, you are not far from the pass, nestled between the rock faces of Soum de Leiz and Soum d'Andorre. At the pass, the view to the south stretches for miles. To the north, you can see the beautiful forests of the Pibeste-Aoulhet Regional Nature Reserve.

STARTING POINT: BERGONS Car Park.

From the village of Salles, follow the "Route du Bergons" road; at the end of it, follow the track for 1 km and park in the Car Park signposted "départ".

ROUTE MARKERS: Yellow signs. Follow signs for "Col d'Andorre".



THE DISCOVERY TRAIL

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 3.30 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 350 M

5

* Dogs must be on a lead (Nature reserve).

This Agos-Vidalos discovery trail is a lovely walking loop at the foot of the Pibeste massif, amongst vegetation with Mediterranean scents. On this dry and arid slope, the path climbs steeply through a beautiful oak grove dotted with boxwood hedges. When you arrive at the "crêtes de la serre" ridges, you will come face to face with the spectacular "Trou" cliffs, the realm of many birds of prey. The path is dotted with numerous information boards about the Pibeste-Aoulhet Nature Reserve and its rich fauna.

STARTING POINT: AGOS-VIDALOS. Maison de la Réserve Naturelle Car Park. The path starts at "Rue des Vignes" above the Car Park.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS. Follow signs for "Sentier de découverte".



THE PIBESTE PEAK

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: DIFFICULT
TOTAL DURATION: 5.30 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 850 M

6

* Dogs must be on a lead (Nature reserve).

The Pic du Pibeste (1 348 m) is one of the first peaks you see as you enter the valley from the plains. Its location, at the gateway to the Pyrenees range, makes it an extraordinary viewing point. The climb starts at the beautiful village of Ouzous, on the sunny side of the mountain. The slope is merciless. The landscapes change one after another. At the beginning it is Mediterranean, but changes radically when you reach the "col des Portes", where you unexpectedly come upon the Ayzi plateau, with its green summer pastures. The trail starts its final ascent through a beautiful and mysterious beech forest before reaching the Pic du Pibeste and its old funicular arrival station.

STARTING POINT: OUZOUS VILLAGE Car Park, at the exit of the village towards Salles.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS & YELLOW MARKERS. Follow signs for "Pic du Pibeste" and yellow paint markers.



THE CHAPEL TRAIL


ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 2.45 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 450 M

7

The route begins in the heart of the pretty village of Saint-Savin known for its 12th century abbey and its houses with their traditional Bigourdan architecture. You will start at the Piétat chapel, located on a rocky outcrop with a magnificent panorama across the valley. The trail then climbs steeply through the undergrowth, until it reaches the beautiful little village of Uz and its chapel, clinging to the mountainside. As you continue, the vegetation changes with the gain in altitude: the path now passes under hazelnut trees then between heathers and ferns. Finally, the small Pouyaspé chapel reveals itself, perched at an altitude of 956 m and hikers can enjoy a spectacular view of the narrow, steep valleys facing it.

STARTING POINT: SAINT-SAVIN. Central Village Square.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS. Follow signs for "Chapelle de Piétat" then "Chapelle de Pouyaspé".



THE POSTMAN'S PATH

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 2 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 220 M

8

Discover the forests that line the slopes of Cabaliros. These hillside forests, filled with old trees, have an enigmatic ambiance and are a real refuge for wildlife. At the highest point of the walk, an impressive panorama awaits you: a view over the gorges of the Gave de Cauterets river. The route then plunges back into the valley along the sunny side. You can then return to the village, thanks to the "Voie Verte", that follows the original old railway line!

STARTING POINT: PIERREFITTE-NESTALAS. Take the "Voie Verte" path towards Cauterets.

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS. Follow the "Voie Verte" towards Cauterets for 700 m. Then leave the "Voie Verte" and follow signs towards "Chapelle de Pouyaspé / Coutres". After a series of switchbacks, at an intersection, take the flat path to the left until you reach the belvedere. Then head back down into the valley until you reach the "Voie Verte" and follow it back to Pierrefitte.



THE GAVES LAKE


ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 1.45 HR
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 M

9

An easy and bucolic walk between streams and hay meadows... The route begins at the pleasant site of Saillet, following the Gabarret stream. It joins the "Voie Verte des Gaves" for a short part (watch out for cyclists), before leading onto pleasant paths beside the hay meadows. The path finally joins the banks of the Gave de Pau to bring you back to the starting point via the former "Lac des Gaves", now filled due to successive floods.

STARTING POINT: LAU-BALAGNAS - SAILLET Car Park (next to the Lau Folies swimming pool).

ROUTE MARKERS: Follow the signposts "parcours VTT n°6" (mountain bike route no. 6 - orange triangle with 2 circles).



THE DAVANTAYGUES PASTORAL PATHS

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 3.45 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 340 M

10

Discover the old pastoral paths which linked the villages and the barn districts. Leaving Beaucens, the forest path climbs steeply alongside barns and meadows. After passing the ruins of Bédouret chapel you reach the village of Artalens. You then return via a pleasant path which takes you to the "Croix d'Arry" cross, then via the cattle track which joins the path you took on the way out. At the "Croix d'Arry", you can head up to the "Cap du Mourquey" viewing point (allow 40 minutes and an additional 120 m of elevation).

STARTING POINT: BEAUCENS. Picnic area, "Rue du château".

ROUTE MARKERS: YELLOW SIGNS AND YELLOW MARKERS. Follow signs for "Chapelle du Bédouret"; then after the chapel ruins, signs for "Artalens"; at Artalens, follow signs for "Croix d'Arry". Once you are there, go down the track and follow the path to Beaucens.



THE HAUTACAM RIDGES

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 1 HR
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 M

11

This is a nice route along the grassy and rounded ridges of the Hautacam. There is a pleasant path that runs along this ridge, in the middle of the many herds of cows, sheep or horses that enjoy the summer pastures. The panorama is fabulous, and you are afforded views of many peaks and valleys.

STARTING POINT: HAUTACAM. Car Park at the "Refuge de Tramassel" restaurant.

ROUTE MARKERS: NOT MARKED. Follow the wide path that starts behind the Tramassel restaurant and stay on the upper part of the ridge until you reach a cattle park. Return via the track to the starting point.



THE ISABY LAKE

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
TOTAL DURATION: 2.30 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 200 M

12

This pretty mountain lake is easy to get to. Odd as it may seem, the outward journey is downhill, and the return journey is uphill. The route winds gently down the sunny side of the mountain, through heather and blueberry moors. In the background, the summer pastures, and summits of the Lévisse massif. The shores of the lake are perfect for whiling away the hours.

STARTING POINT: HAUTACAM. Tramassel Car Park. Parking available higher up at the Moulata pass; at the end of the track (allow for 1 hour and 70 m less vertical drop).

ROUTE MARKERS: NOT MARKED. From Tramassel, follow the wide track which climbs between the two ski lifts.



THE OURREC LAKE

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
TOTAL DURATION: 4 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 470 M

13

From the Moulata pass, the trail follows the mountainside for a long time, across the open moors. The route overlooks the valley and Lake Isaby, against a backdrop of the stunning peaks of the Lévisse massif. We quickly reach the Hourquette d'Houscouaou, a wide mountain pass from where it is easy to get to the pretty Ourrec lake, which is shaped like a heart! Its turquoise colour, the shepherd's hut and the many herds grazing on this pretty grassy plateau make for a most bucolic picture.

STARTING POINT: HAUTACAM. Tramassel Car Park. Parking available higher up at the Moulata pass; at the end of the track (allow for 1 hour and 70 m less vertical drop).

ROUTE MARKERS: UNMARKED.



THE "VOIE VERTE DES GAVES"

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY

14

* Dogs must be on lead

The "Voie Verte des Gaves" follows the route of the old railway line which linked Lourdes to Soulem and had been disused since 1992. Transformed in 2000, this is now a dedicated route for walkers, cyclists and rollerbladers. It is also accessible to people with reduced mobility and strollers. 18 km in length, it is perfect for both a quiet family walk, as well as a long walk from village to village through the open and green landscapes of the valley. From Pierrefitte-Nestalas you are able to continue on the "Voie Verte" to Cauterets (unpaved track on this section).

STARTING POINT: ENTRY POINTS. Access to the "Voie Verte" in many villages. Main entry points, with car parking availability: Boô-Silhen, Argelès-Gazost, Pierrefitte-Nestalas.

ROUTE MARKERS: "VOIE VERTE" SIGNPOSTS. White signs with a green bicycle pictogram.



"PATRIMOINE EN BALADE" APP

ROUTE N°
DIFFICULTY: EASY
DURATION: 1 HR - 2.30 HRS
ELEVATION GAIN: 20 - 130 M

15

Heritage Walk is a free downloadable mobile app. It offers you several audio-guided walks. Each walk has a theme, related to a historical event or to a specific place. Routes in the Argelès-Gazost valley: "In the footsteps of the miners" and "Industrial development in the 20th century" in Pierrefitte-Nestalas; "Arras, village of Artitude" - in Arras en Lavedan; "Hautacam under the stars" in Hautacam.

ROUTE MARKERS: SMARTPHONE DIGITAL GUIDEBOOKS.



ARGELÈS-GAZOST VALLEY

IDEAS FOR WALKS FOR ALL LEVELS

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