

1 Week Walking, Food and Wine Holiday



The best kept secrets of the sensational Priorat and Montsant region

General overview

What- 1 weeks all inclusive holiday, small groups 2 -8 people, self guided circular route from one village to the next taking in wonderful walks, food and wine in and around the historical, stunningly beautiful Priorat and Montsant regions.

Self guided? - Does not mean you will be left to figure things out for yourself, far from it everything will be arranged and clearly explained on a daily basis. When changing hotels luggage will be collected after breakfast and transferred for you to the next hotel.

What to expect - Typical day will start with a good breakfast in the Hotel before setting off for a beautiful hike through a wide variety of truly stunning sceneries, terrains and environments. During the day you will be stopping for a good 3 or 4 course lunch of classic Spanish and Catalan dishes in one of the village restaurants and visiting a local wine cellar for tour and tasting. Evening meals usually back at the Hotel.

Where - The Montsant and Priorat region is approximately 30 minutes from Tarragona and Reus, 120km south of Barcelona.

Getting here - Nearest airport is Reus with budget flights from most European countries, alternatively Barcelona Airport is approximately one and half hours by either car or train.

When - Best times to visit is spring, early summer or autumn, April, May, June, September, October. The



middle of the summer is always too hot, winter is less predictable but there is a chance of rain and occasionally snow.

What to bring - obviously depends on the time of year but generally a small day pack with, water bottle (2), food/snacks, sun screen, hat, light rain jacket, phone, camera, shorts and light long trousers (to avoid scratching from bushes) ski/hiking pole (optional but sometimes the ground under foot is loose broken up slate which on steep slopes or wet can be a bit slippery).

The Region - This is a truly beautiful area of hills, mountains and water covered in a wide variety of fauna and plants. Nature lovers, especially bird watchers should keep their eyes peeled as there are many different birds of prey including 3 types of eagle and vultures, whilst in the wooded areas you may also catch sight of the brightly coloured hoopoe and golden oriole. On the ground many different reptiles, snakes, foxes, ferrets and wild boars are known to inhabit the area. Geologically it is also extremely varied and interesting.

The Priorat itself is an ancient region steeped in history, the municipality was originally formed by Cathusian monks who arrived in the 12th Century and built the now ruined but impressive monastery of Escaladei, whilst the stunning hamlet of Siurana was the last known settlement of the Moors in the area.



Walking - A good level of fitness is needed, expect to walk 8 – 15 km a day, some fairly steep sections but it's walking not climbing so nothing that requires any specialist skills or equipment.



The Food - It is no coincidence that the world famous chef Ferran Adria had his restaurant El Bulli here in Catalonia, a region with a reputation for producing some of Spain's finest cuisine thanks to a wide variety of fresh, high-quality seafood, meat, poultry, game, fruit and vegetables. Grilled meats, stews and locally made sausages such as *butifarra* and *fuet* feature heavily as does seafood dishes often made using locally grown rice from the Delta Ebro or *fideua* a fine thin noodle. Indeed the two can sometimes be combined in a local equivalent of surf 'n' turf known as *mar i muntanya*, sea and mountain.



The Wine - The DOC Priorat lies slightly south and inland from Tarragona and is one of only 2 wine regions in Spain (the other being Rioja) that Qualify as a DOC (Denominació d'Origen Calificada), the highest qualification for a wine region according to Spanish wine regulations, awarded to regions with the potential to make unique and exceptional wines. It primarily produces powerful reds, which came to international attention in the 1990s. The area is characterized by its unusual terroir of black slate and quartz soil, known locally as *llicorella*.



Prices:

795€ per person based on 2 people sharing.

What's included in the price? - Accommodation, breakfast, lunch, dinner, detailed maps and directions, wine cellar tours and tasting, luggage transfer. Pick up and drop off from local train station

What's not included in the price? - Your flights or travel to the meeting point, additional snacks wines and drinks bought in wine cellars, restaurants or bars. Most importantly **INSURANCE** it is your responsibility to make sure you have adequate cover, David will not, in anyway, be held responsible for any injuries, accidents or lost and stolen goods.

Email: Any questions, enquires etc please contact David at davidsimms53@gmail.com

1 Weeks itinerary

Brief outline Breakfast in the hotel/guest house, typically 8 to 15 km walking (3 – 5 hours), stopping for lunch en route and visit to a local wine cellar for tour and tasting, evening meal at the hotel/guest house. Lunches will be in village restaurant serving good menu del dias of 3 or 4 course set meals, with a number of different dishes to choose from for each course.

DAY 1 – Sunday

Arrive Sunday pick up from Reus airport/train station, short drive (approximately 30 mins) to check into the Hotel and drop the luggage off in Porrera a classic, beautiful, little village on the edge of the Priorat famous as one of the key wine producers.

Time permitting we take the short but stunningly beautiful drive to Falset to visit the small, but excellent and modern Priorat wine museum at the ‘castle of wine’ in the regions biggest town, opening times Sundays from 16.00 – 18.00).

Time to relax and stroll around the village, keep your eyes open for the 14 different sundials to be found in various different locations.

20.00 - In the evening we will have food and a brief informal introduction to the wines of the region and a general overview of the coming weeks itinerary and Monday’s schedule.



Day 2 – Monday (approximately 14 km)

8.00 – 9.30 Breakfast

10.00 – 12.00 approximately **7 km** hike, setting off on what is probably the hardest morning's walk, the trail climbs steeply up through the classic slate vineyards of the Priorat up to the top of the hill, as you come round the hill you have fantastic views looking back. Follow the track down through a wooded area, the track leads us straight to the first vineyard we visit (right) a fascinating and unusual small organic producer. The owner is a charismatic and cheerful character who takes you for a stroll around his vineyard, drink water from his natural spring and of course try his wines.

13.00 – 15.00 We will also be taking lunch here with a local chef coming to the vineyard so we can enjoy the food and wine in situ, there is no finer way to do it!

15.30 – 18.00 approximately **7 km** 2 - 3 hours walk to a small magical little hamlet with fantastic views looking back over the landscape you've just covered.

18.30 – Check into the hotel where we will be staying for 2 nights (your luggage has been moved for you), put your feet up, relax with a well deserved drink. Monday is probably the hardest day.

20.00 – Dinner will be served in the Hotel.



DAY 3 - Tuesday (approximately 12 km)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast in the hotel

10.00 Approximately **5 km** Beautiful easy morning hike mostly flat and down to the famous hamlet and ruined monastery Escaladei, the birth place of the Priorat municipality. Many interesting plants and trees, some of which are marked with information boards.



12.00 Stroll around the impressive ruins before heading off for lunch in the Hamlet square, **1 km** away.



13.30 – 15.00 Lunch in the picturesque square.

15.30 – 16.30 Visit to the historical and famous wine cellar originally built and run by the Carthusian monks who arrived in the 12th Century and are believed to have introduced the first vines to the area. Also in the little square between the wine cellar and the restaurant you will find the old mill and shop **Moli d'oli**, well worth popping in for a look round and to try some of the fantastic locally made olive oil.



16.30 – 18.30 Approximately **6 km** some up but mostly flat (ish) walk back to the hotel.

20.00 – Dinner back at the hotel.



Day 4 Wednesday (approximately 8 km)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast

9.30 – 12.00 Approximately **8 km** lovely easy walk under the impressive Montsant mountain mostly flat or down hill through fields with an exceptional variety of wild flowers, particularly in spring. The trail runs through wooded areas and vineyards taking you down to the next bigger village, Cornudella which comes under the DO Montsant.

13.30 – 15.30 Big lunch in a typical unfussy but great local restaurant in this charming village square, famous as a base for Catalan rock and mountain climbers.

16.00 – 17.30 Visit to one of the top producers of the Montsant region, the tour includes driving out to the vineyard in a 4x4 before returning back to visit the cellar and tasting.

Free time

20.00 Dinner in the bar in the village square and will be tapas and wine, you won't want much, lunch is huge!



Day 5 Thursday (approximately **12 km**)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast

9.30 – 13.00 Approximately **7 km** Beautiful hike, leaving the town takes you to the edge and round the reservoir followed by a steep, but breathtaking climb to the magical Hamlet of Siurana perched on the top of the mountain with stunning views overlooking the reservoir and entire region. This is one of the highlights of the weeks so you have plenty of time to relax here and take in the atmosphere.

13.00 – 15.00 Lunch is a generous feast of a picnic sourced from a number of great local delicatessens, bakers and restaurants in a very special location.

16.00 – 18.00 Coffee in a lovely little bar with wonderful views, plenty of time to relax and explore

18.00 – 19.00 Approximately **5 km** direct, at times steep walk back down to the town.

20.00 – Back to the village square for tapas and drinks



Day 6 Friday (approximately 13 km)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast

9.30 – 12.30 Approximately **7 km**, today's walk is probably the longest in terms of distance but the morning part of the walk is mostly flat and takes us back to the village close to where we had lunch on Monday, but along a different trail through wooded areas and vineyards.



13.00 – 15.00 Good typical lunch in the village restaurant which is around the half way point of the days hike.



15.30 – 17.30 **6 km** hike up to a pass between 2 mountains and drop down into the lovely village of Torroja de Priorat very close to what is undoubtedly the most famous vineyard in the Priorat, L'ermita home to Alvaro Palacio world famous wine.

18.30 – 19.30 Bodega visit to one of the many local producers in this famous Priorat village.



20.00 – Restaurant in the centre of the village in what used to be the old village theatre, which also has nice gardens. We'll also break with tradition and have pizza but with a difference, everything is home made, including the dough and practically all of the toppings are grown locally.



Day 7 Saturday (approximately 0 - 13 km)

8.30 – 9.30 Breakfast in the Hotel

9.30 – 12.00 We take a 5 minute drive to the lovely little village of Torroja del Priorat from where we can walk down to Gratallops, home to some of the most famous Priorat wines. Warning! you will have to cross the Siurana stream, if it has been raining hard (very unlikely) then this could prove a little challenging.

12.00 – 14.00 on arrival to Gratallops you visit one of the classic and famous little bodega Clos Figueras owned by Christopher Cannan one of the key figures associated with the renaissance of the Priorat region. The bodega sits on the edge of the village and includes a lovely restaurant with gardens, the perfect place for our last lunch!

14.00 – 16.00 The last walk down from Gratallops to the regional capital of Falset a truly beautiful and classic ancient trail, which takes you straight through René Barbier's vineyard of the world famous Clos Mogador. At one point you will have to cross the Siurana stream again.

16.00 Arrival in Falset, the biggest town in the area and worth looking around if you have the time.

