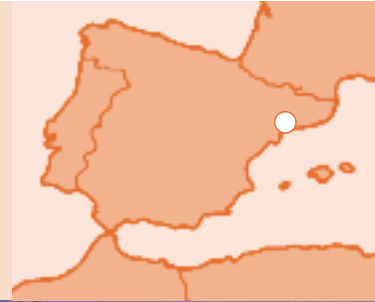


Holiday: Catalan Classic Walk

Rating: Upper  level

Holiday type: Independent Walking

- Pretty coastal paths, lush green valleys, ancient cork and pine forest
- Fabulous hotels – swimming possibilities every day – exceptional cuisine
- Exotic Mediterranean flora: oranges, peaches, lemons, wild strawberries; wonderfully colourful flowers
- Excellent bird-spotting: hoopoes, buzzards, cormorants, white egrets
- Beautiful sandy beaches, traditional fishing ports, sun-drenched villages off the tourist trail



Spain

This 6-night walking holiday has been a firm Headwater favourite since we introduced it into our programme. It provides spectacular (but not too tough!) walking by day, and high standard hotels by night, and is perfect for people wanting to fit as much as possible into a short holiday.

The route first follows the winding, sandy paths of mainland Spain's loveliest coast – frequent glimpses of dazzling aquamarine through the umbrella pines – before heading inland where you'll discover the truly unspoilt landscapes of the Catalan countryside. The final stretch takes you through shady forest paths and back to the sea where extra nights can also be arranged.

This is a wonderful region for bird and plant life. Over a third of the countryside is now protected under a government scheme to



4 Corners Images

preserve natural habitats, which means a staggering variety of rare species: golden orioles, booted eagles, purple-shot copper butterflies and colourful wild flowers. Hidden deep in the forests are stunning natural curiosities too, including the 5000-year old dolmens and sparkling freshwater springs which drew the first settlers to these parts thousands of years ago.

At the end of each day, we have arranged especially nice places to stay. These range from lovely, family-run hotels on the coast to a magnificently restored C14 gothic castle in the hills by Castell d'Emporda. The meals throughout are of a high standard (B+B only in Calella de Palafrugell) and all places have private pools, except for Begur which is close to the beach.



World Pictures

“Generous slices of thick country bread are toasted, smeared with garlic, rubbed with juicy tomatoes, drizzled with olive oil and finally sprinkled with salt. Eaten with local *jamón* or *chorizo*, and accompanied by a glass of chilled *cava*, this is the ubiquitous Catalan lunch.”



Catalan Classic Walk: Day by day

Day 1 Arrive in Calella de Palafrugell

We met you at Flaca railway station and take you to your hotel (35mins) where all Headwater guests are accommodated in rooms with private balcony and sea view. It's less than 5mins walk to the centre of town where you have so many restaurants to choose from that we've left evening meals here up to you.

Day 2 Calella de Palafrugell to Castell d'Empordà 16km/10mi/3.5hr or 21km/13mi/5.5hr

You start with a 15min ride to Llofriu from where you have a choice of routes. The easier and shortest goes via Torrent and the forested Muntanya Seca. Then it's on to the picturesque village of Peratallada, possibly the best preserved village in Spain with beautifully restored arches, arcaded passageways and lovely shaded square for a long lazy lunch. The more strenuous option takes you into Les Gavarres hills to visit three dolmen - fantastic views of the Empordà plain. The hotel at Castell d'Empordà has one of the finest located pools we've come across.

Day 3 At Castell d'Empordà

Laze by the pool or follow our suggested circular walk linking the pretty mediaeval villages of Corca, Monells (pretty square and lovely choices for lunch) and La Bisbal – a lively market town famous for antiques and pottery. Take time to explore the old quarter including the *Carrer de Call*, formerly a Jewish ghetto - its intricate arches are still intact today.

Day 4 Castell d'Empordà to Begur 21km/14mi/5hr

Gentle walking across the Empordà plain, stopping first at the walled village of Ullastret. The vast archaeological site here contains the remains of one of the oldest Iberian villages in Spain. On through fields bright with sunflowers until you reach peach-coloured Pals – lovely old village with Romanesque church affording stunning views. The final stretch takes you through pine forest to Maria and Narcis' family-run hotel in the old town of Begur. The food here is fantastic!

Day 5 At Begur

Begur is a fashionable hilltop town with C11 castle, impressive villas and pretty narrow streets made for exploring! It's just 10 mins by local bus or taxi to the coast where four beautiful sandy coves await: Sa Riera, Aiguafreda, Sa Tuna and, just over the hill, Aiguablava. Each have their own stretch of beach, shops, cafés and restaurants. For people looking for something a touch more challenging, we provide details of a 4-hour circular coastal walk which takes in all our favourite sections.

Day 6 Begur to Calella de Palafrugell 13km/8mi/3hr

Shaded forest paths take you to the lively seaside town of Tamariu (great beach) where you pick up the pretty coastal path, passing rocky headlands and chic, Spanish resorts. Lunch in one of the beachfront bars at Llafranc – you can almost dip your toes in the water as you eat! Back to Calella, perhaps stopping off at the botanical gardens at Cap Roig, in time for a swim in the pool or a couple of hours on the beach before dinner.

Day 7 Leave Calella de Palafrugell

We take you to Flaca after breakfast to catch your train back to Barcelona - a city add on here is a popular option before heading home.



For departure dates, prices and travel options please visit our website at:
www.headwater.com

Walking Details

The walking is fairly gentle on well looked after paths and tracks. There is a short 200m stretch which is not really suited to those who suffer badly from vertigo, although this can be avoided by shortening the walk.

