

Picos de Europa

Spring in the Cantabrian Mountains

June 17 - 23, 2024

25 Anniversary!
itinerary

Day 1 / June 17: Bilbao airport - La Hermida - Potes

Meet and welcome at Bilbao airport before heading to the picturesque town of Potes via the impressive La Hermida gorges. Depending on flight schedules we may do some birding in a near our hotel which still has excellent old oaks and Chesnut trees. In the holes of these ancient trees a few pairs of Common Redstart breed while Yellowhammer, Tree Pipit, Wryneck and European Serin are also well present. Dinner and accommodation near Potes.

Day 2 / June 18: Potes - San Glorio

Today we will visit the San Glorio mountain pass. There are several interesting sites to enjoy birds and butterflies on the journey up, so we will certainly make a few stops before reaching the top. Here Tree Pipit, Citril Finch, Northern Wheatear and Common Linnet are all present. This area is still good for the elusive Grey Partridge, a hard-to-find species which behaves very like a mountain bird in Northern Spain. This is as well a great location to look for the scarce and endemic Chapman's Ringlet, the largest of all the ringlet butterflies present in Europe. Dinner and accommodation near Potes.

Day 3 / June 19: Potes - Fuente De (Cable Car Day)

This is definitely the most exciting day for all tours to the Picos de Europa. Taking the cable car from Fuente Dé to the top of the mountain and so accessing mountain habitat of over 1,800 m.a.s.l will provide us with excellent opportunities for seeing some of the special birds present in this corner of Spain. Wallcreeper, White-winged Snowfinch , Alpine Accentor, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush and Alpine Chough will be our main targets while we should also find Northern Wheatear, Water Pipit and Egyptian Vulture. There is no better place in the country which gives the chance to see all these birds without strenuous hiking being involved! We will explore the rocky cliffs and glacial pools, where we hope to find the rare Alpine Newt. Lammergeiers are also here thanks to a succesful reintroduction plan which is taking place in these mountains. Before returning to our hotel in Potes we will walk into the woods next to a charming mountain village where Middle-spotted Woodpeckers breed and where we have previously seen Black Woodpecker. Dinner and accommodation near Potes.

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Day 4 / June 20: Potes - local birding near our hotel

There are plenty roads and hiking itineraries starting near Potes. On our fourth day of tour we will spend part of the day exploring some woods under a more Mediterranean influence. We will try to find Firecrest, Cirl Bunting, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Middle Spotted Woodpecker, Wryneck, European Honey Buzzard and Red-backed Shrike. Amongst the butterflies we should also see the showy Cleopatra, Brimstone and Spanish Swallowtail. Orchids, with particularly abundant Pink Butterfly and Lizards are specially attractive due to its variety.

Day 5 / June 21: Potes - Piedrasluengas - San Salvador (Romanesque Church)

The popular Piedrasluengas mountain pass is one of the best sites for Black Woodpecker (although still very tough!) but there are also other interesting birds that might be seen here like Marsh Tit, Goldcrest, Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Golden Eagle and Yellow-billed Cough. Anyway the views of the impressive mountain chain of Picos is just breathtaking! Not far from there and crossing the border into the Castilla y León region there are a couple of sites where Brown Bears are being occasionally reported. These are also good places for Rock Bunting and Eurasian Bullfinch. A quick visit to the beautiful Romanesque church of San Salvador de Cantamuda and its surrounding fields will make all a very special day.

Day 6 / June 22: Potes - Vega de Liebana and surroundings

The little villages in the area known as the Valle de Liébana all provide good chances to see Common Redstarts breeding in the old buildings and tree holes. Various common birds are also present in their surrounding orchards as well as these being good places to look for Wryneck and Great Spotted Woodpecker. However, our main target today will be the very localized Middle Spotted Woodpecker. Western Bonelli's Warbler, Firecrest, Short-toed Tree-creeper and Red-backed Shrikes should be also seen today.

Day 7 / June 23: Potes - Bilbao Airport

If time allows we will make a couple of stops along the coastline to look for a few new species for our tour including waders and gulls. Transfer to Bibao airport where the trip ends.

This itinerary might change according weather conditions or at discretion of our guide

PRICES:

Per person sharing in twin / doubled-room with private facillies: **€ 1,575**
Single Supplement: **€ 325**

Group size: Min. 4 – Max. 7 travelers plus our guide

The price includes:

- * Ground transport from Bilbao airport in modern, fully seat-belted, air condiioned 9-seat vehicle
- * 6 Nights accomodaion with en suite bathroom (all 6 nights near Potes)
- * All meals inc breakfast, fantasic “tapas-rationes” lunches and evening meals + red wine in a moderate consumption
- * Services of professional birding guide
- * Cable cara return tickets
- * Basic travel insurance
- * Bird checklist
- * All taxes

The price doesn't include:

- * Air fare (Easyjet, Ryanair & other companies operate daily flights from several UK airports)
- * Extra drinks and other items of a personal nature

Number of travelers:

The minimum number of travellers on each trip is 4 and the usual maximum number is 7 plus the guide or 14 with two guides.

Travel:

Because other birding tours normally carry the cost of the airfare and are not necessarily the cheapest, Spainbirds Nature Tours asks the customer to book the flights independently to Madrid, Málaga, Seville, Santander or any other specified airport where the trip starts and ends. This gives you the customer, greater flexibility in terms of choosing the flight and return leg of your journey home (flights and/or other means of transport) specific airport departures, times to suit you, special offers and carrier companies. Spainbirds Nature Tours is a licensed tour operator (CICMA 2517) which is allowed to book flights for our clients, please don't hesitate to letting us know if you prefer that we book your airline tickets for you. The meeting point for customers will be the corresponding local airport depending on the trip selected.

Ground transport:

We always use comfortable, modern air conditioned minibus or people carrier. All our vehicles comply with the current EU safely legislation. *Notice please that we don't charge any fee to transport people, and our incomes are applied as a trip organizer and wildlife guide services but never as professional drivers.*

Accommodation & food:

Accommodation is carefully chosen by Spainbirds Nature Tours to offer the customer a good quality standard of hotel or fully equipped country inn next to the birding areas. We ensure that all rooms are en suite and price includes usually full board (breakfast, picnic lunch and evening meal + red wine & water unless other board conditions are applied). For those who require a single room they will have to pay the corresponding supplement, which will depend on the chosen itinerary shown in the tours section of our web site or current brochure.

Dates:

Since the groups are usually small, the journey dates may occasionally be fine tuned to meet the needs of all interested parties but will never be changed if the flights have been already booked.

Insurance:

It is highly advisable to take out a personal insurance policy before leaving your country. Please let us know the name of your company insurance before travelling. For information of all travellers Spainbirds Nature Tours has its own civil liability insurance through **REALE SEGUROS**, policy number 1331100001899/0, covering damages to third parties to a maximum of 1,800,000 Euros. As travel agency licensed by the Spanish Tourism Board all our clients will be traveling covered by a basic travel insurance, but which might not be enough to cover certain personal or items damages.

In addition to your personal Travel & Medical Insurance, do bring (and carry with you when out and about) your up to date European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) – they only last 5 years! If you still have one of the older forms (E111) then it needs to be changed to this new card.

Note for UK travelers: You do not have to pay for an EHIC, which can be obtained or renewed free of charge by calling 0300 3301350 or applying on-line at www.ehic.org.uk. This is a secure site that diverts to the correct page within the main NHS.UK website. The cards are valid for five years, after which they can be renewed, again, free of charge. Please notice that the new Brexit situation will make to all cards expire after December 31, 2020!!!

How to book a tour to Spain:

To book our services you need to make a written confirmation by letter or email or fill our booking form available on our web site, plus paying **€ 500 as deposit** for all the Spain tours. Deposits for our overseas tours are showed in the literature related to every tour.

The rest shall be paid to Spainbirds Nature Tours by wire transfer or credit card, at the latest 90 days before the journey starts. The price includes guide services, accommodation, all meals, ground transport and fuel. Customers are entitled to cancel their bookings at any moment, but on the following terms:

If the cancellation is made between booking and 90 days before the start of the trip they will forfeit the deposit or, if preferred, it will be kept for future tours run by Spainbirds Nature Tours with an expiration date of ONE year.

If the cancellation is made between 89 and 61 days before the start of the journey they will forfeit 50% (where the deposit would be also included) of the total amount paid to Spainbirds Nature Tours.

If the cancellation is made within 60 days of the start of the journey they will forfeit 100% of the total paid.

Any breach of the above instalments or unjustified delays in paying them will automatically lead to cancellation of the booking, the above mentioned rules then being applied. The post-cancellation sum of money to be reimbursed will be sent by wire transfer. All amounts paid must be done by bank transfer to our account on OPENBANK (details will be sent to you once you confirm booking).

If you agree these booking conditions please then fill and send us your [booking form](#)

**Every of our overseas tours has its own booking conditions since all international and domestic flights are usually included in the price. If you are interested to fly from your home country and not meeting the group in Spain please let the office know this issue to find the most suitable alternative for both sides. You will be able to find our terms and conditions for the overseas tours in the pdf file linked in the literature of every tour.*

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