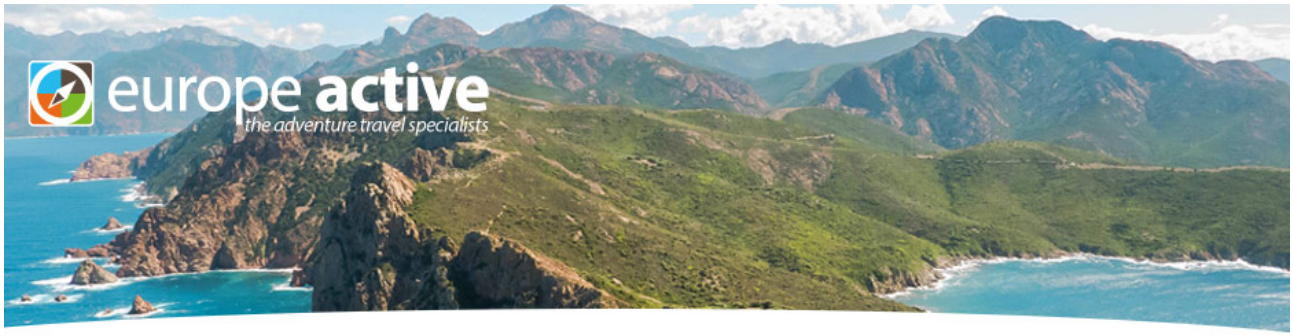

On the trail of the GR20 North

9 days / 8 nights

From Balagne to the mountains of central Corsica, this trek takes you through some of the most iconic landscapes of the northern GR20. Mountain forests, wild valleys, high-altitude lakes, rocky ridges and spectacular viewpoints unfold along the way.

A challenging and varied route, perfect for discovering the diversity of Corsica's landscapes and experiencing the island's mountains at their most authentic.

YOUR PROGRAMME

Day 1 - Calenzana to Bonifatu

Your GR20 adventure begins in Calenzana, a small Balagne village surrounded by olive groves and the traditional starting point of Corsica's famous long-distance hiking trail. This morning, your taxi driver will meet you in Calvi and transfer you to the trailhead in Calenzana.

From the village, the trail gradually gains altitude as you make your way towards the Bonifatu Forest. The route takes you through the rugged landscapes of northern Corsica, with beautiful views over the surrounding Balagne villages along the way. This first stage is a great introduction to the GR20, allowing you to gradually immerse yourself in the spectacular scenery and mountain atmosphere of Corsica.

On reaching Bonifatu, settle into your mountain lodge and enjoy a peaceful evening surrounded by the forest.

Approx. 11 km – 4 hours of hiking
Elevation gain: +700 m / descent: -450 m

Dinner and overnight stay at the Bonifatu mountain lodge. Breakfast and a packed lunch are provided for the following day.

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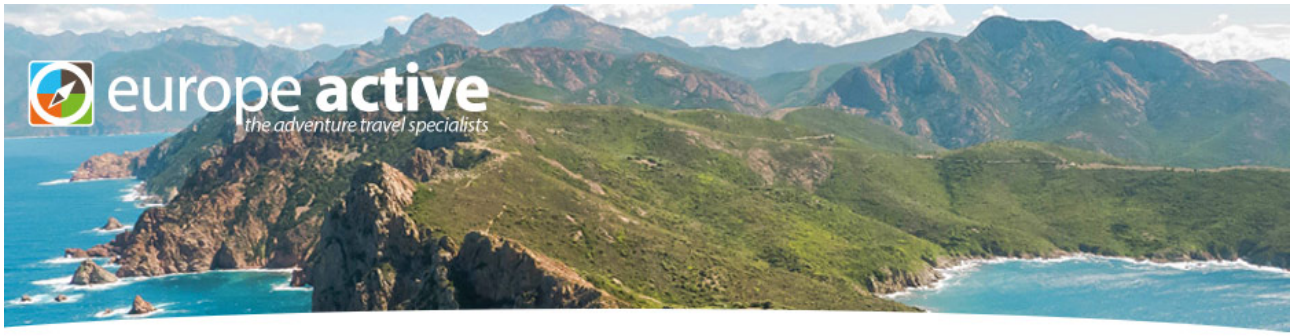

Day 2 - Bonifatu to Haut Asco

Leaving the Bonifatu Forest behind, you embark on one of the most demanding and spectacular stages of the GR20. The trail quickly gains altitude, leading through a rugged mountain environment with several river crossings along the way.

One of the highlights of the day is the famous Spasimata footbridge, followed by the route towards the Muvrella Valley, named after the Corsican mouflon. A small mountain lake lies at the heart of this impressive landscape, surrounded by rocky peaks and unspoilt wilderness. Magnificent views unfold throughout the hike as you make your way deeper into Corsica's high mountains.

The trail then continues through this dramatic mountain scenery before reaching Haut Asco, a former ski resort nestled in the Cinto mountain range. This long and challenging stage is a true immersion into the wild landscapes of the northern GR20.

Approx. 9.5 km – 8 hours of hiking
Elevation gain: +1,300 m / descent: -598 m

Dinner and overnight stay at the Haut Asco mountain lodge. Breakfast and a packed lunch are provided for the following day.

Day 3 - Haut Ascu to Vallone

Leaving Haut Asco behind, you continue your journey through the high mountains of Corsica towards Vallone. To bypass the currently closed Cirque de la Solitude, the route crosses the slopes of Monte Cinto before reaching the Pointe des Éboulis at 2,607 metres, the highest point on the GR20.

This challenging ascent is rewarded with breathtaking views across Corsica's rugged peaks and valleys. You then begin the descent towards the small Mélarie Valley, a remote and peaceful area where you may be lucky enough to spot Corsican mouflon in their natural habitat.

At the end of the stage, you reach Vallone and its traditional shepherd's hut, set beside a mountain stream in an unspoilt natural setting. Spend the evening surrounded by the tranquillity of the mountains and, weather permitting, enjoy an unforgettable view of the Corsican night sky.

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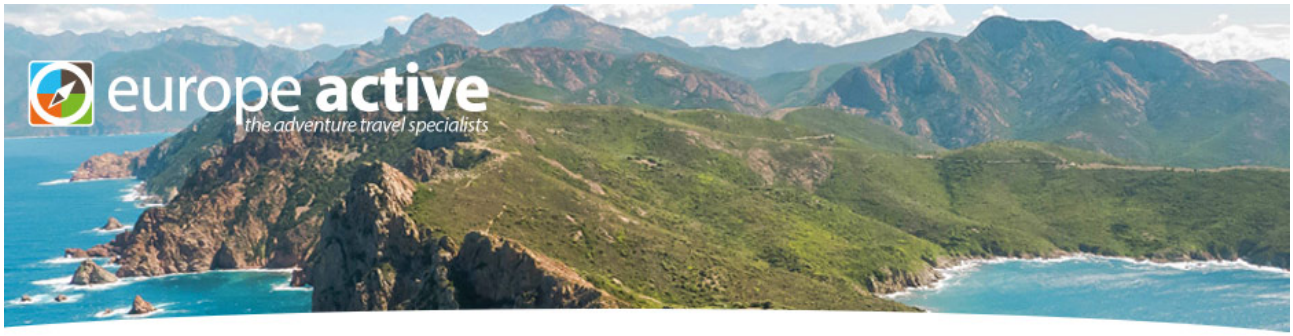

Approx. 9 km – 8 hours of hiking
Elevation gain: +1,200 m / descent: -800 m

Dinner and overnight stay in a tent at Vallone. Breakfast and a packed lunch are provided for the following day.

Day 4 - Vallone to Vergio

Today, your GR20 journey takes you through the Niolu, a spectacular mountain region in the heart of Corsica known for its rugged landscapes and authentic character.

The trail passes beneath the imposing peaks of Paglia Orba and Capu Tafunatu, two of the most recognisable landmarks in this section of the GR20. In clear weather, the high points of the route reveal breathtaking views stretching as far as the Gulf of Porto. You then descend towards the Golo Valley, following a remote and wonderfully unspoilt section of the Corsican mountains.

Along the way, a series of natural rock pools offers the perfect opportunity for a refreshing break before you continue towards Vergio and your mountain accommodation.

Approx. 14 km – 6 hours 15 minutes of hiking
Elevation gain: +975 m / descent: -1,020 m

Dinner and overnight stay at the Vergio mountain lodge. Breakfast and a packed lunch are provided for the following day.

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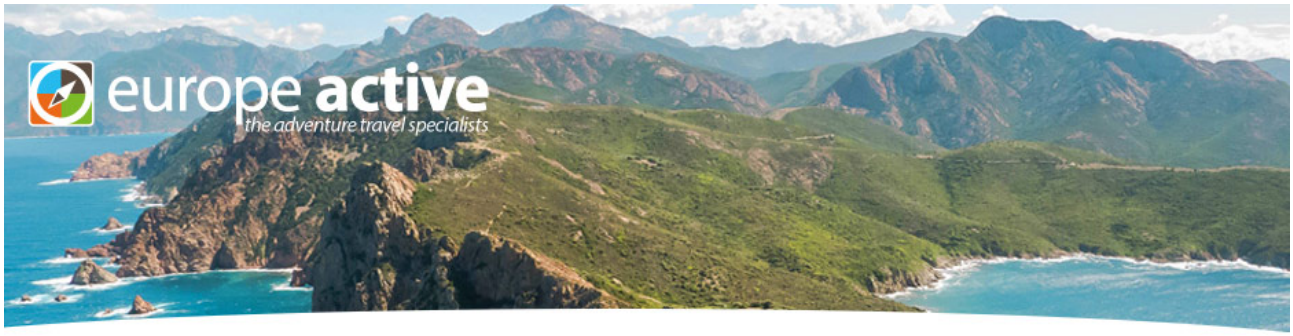

Day 5 - Vergio to Manganu, via Lake Nino

After a relatively gentle start, the GR20 gradually leads you higher into the Corsican mountains. You cross the Bocca San Pedru mountain pass, where the scenery suddenly opens up. On a clear day, the Mediterranean coastline comes into view, stretching across the horizon above the deep blue waters.

On the opposite side of the pass, a remarkable glacial cirque reveals one of the great natural highlights of the Corsican mountains. The trail reaches Lake Nino, one of the most iconic landscapes along the GR20. Surrounded by pozzines – distinctive wet mountain meadows found in Corsica's highlands – the lake creates a peaceful setting where wild horses roam freely. Keep your eyes open and you may be lucky enough to spot them grazing around the lake.

The route then continues across the high mountain landscape towards Manganu Refuge, your accommodation for the night.

Approx. 16 km – 6 hours of hiking
Elevation gain: +870 m / descent: -689 m

Overnight stay at Manganu Refuge. Dinner, breakfast and a packed lunch can be purchased directly at the refuge.

Day 6 - Manganu to Petra Piana

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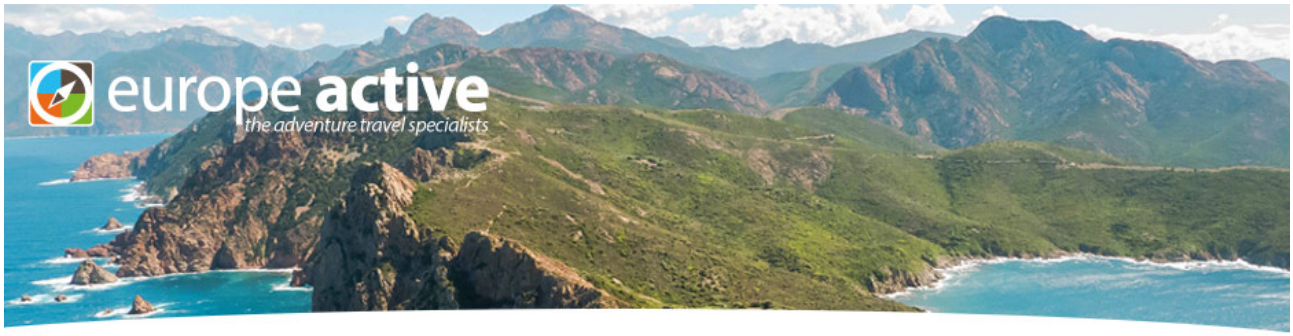

Today's stage begins with a steep and rocky ascent towards the Brèche de Capitellu. As you climb higher, the scenery becomes increasingly dramatic. From the mountain pass, you are rewarded with magnificent views over Lake Melu and Lake Capitellu, set among the rugged peaks of the upper Restonica Valley.

The trail then continues towards Bocca Muzella at an altitude of 2,206 metres. After reaching this high point, you descend towards a small mountain plateau where Petra Piana Refuge comes into view, surrounded by the striking rocky landscapes of this section of the GR20.

Although relatively short, this is a demanding stage with some of the most impressive mountain scenery of your GR20 trek.

Approx. 8.5 km – 6 hours of hiking
Elevation gain: +670 m / descent: -465 m

Overnight stay at Petra Piana Refuge. Dinner, breakfast and a packed lunch can be purchased directly at the refuge.

Day 7 - Petra Piana to l'Onda

Today's shorter stage offers a spectacular high-altitude traverse between the Monte Rotondo and Monte d'Oro mountain ranges. The trail follows an airy and panoramic route, with wide views across the surrounding valleys and rugged Corsican peaks.

A few sections can become more challenging in strong winds, although an alternative route is available if conditions require it. On a clear day, the views extend all the way to the Gulf of Ajaccio, creating a striking contrast between the dramatic mountain scenery and the Mediterranean Sea.

After this scenic mountain walk, you reach Onda Refuge, where you spend the night surrounded by the peaceful landscapes of Corsica's interior.

Approx. 7 km – 4 hours 30 minutes of hiking
Elevation gain: +560 m / descent: -965 m

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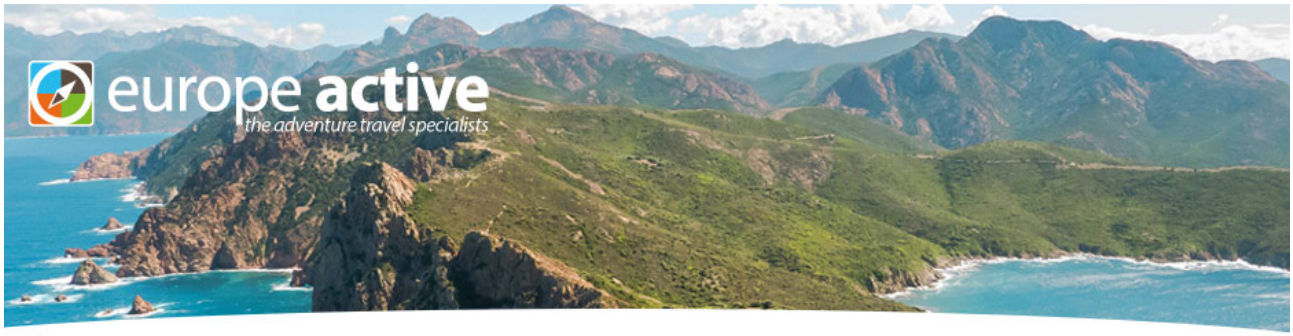

Overnight stay in a tent at Onda Refuge. Dinner is provided. Breakfast and a packed lunch can be purchased directly at the refuge.

Day 8 - L'Onda to Vizzavona

Your final stage in the northern section of the GR20 takes you through a beautiful combination of rugged mountain scenery and Corsica's lush forests. Leaving Onda Refuge, you enter the magnificent Agnone Valley, overlooked by the slopes of Monte d'Oro.

The trail follows a wild and unspoilt landscape towards the Turtettu footbridge. Further on, you reach the famous English Cascades, a series of waterfalls and natural pools flowing through the forest of Vizzavona. From here, the route continues to Vizzavona, a key point on the GR20 marking the transition between the northern and southern sections of the trail.

A memorable way to complete this amazing week.

Approx. 10 km – 5 hours 30 minutes of hiking
Elevation gain: +630 m / descent: -1,140 m

Dinner and overnight stay at the Vizzavona mountain lodge. Breakfast is provided for the following day.

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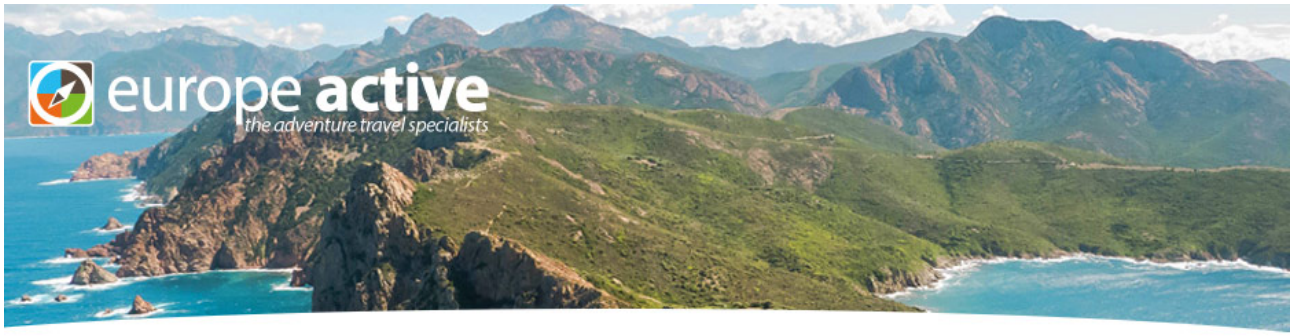

Day 9 - End of trip in Vizzavona

End of your GR20 adventure in Vizzavona, Corsica, you can reach Calvi, Ajaccio and Bastia by train.

Additional information

TARIFFS

Price from 790 euros per person.

OPTIONS

4 nights in double room (per person) : 250 euros per person.
Luggage transfer supplement (4 days out of 9). To be shared between participants. : 1060 euros per person.

INCLUDED

Accommodation in privates gîtes (dormitories) and in tents.
5 Dinners
5 Breakfasts
4 Picnics
Taxi transfer from Calvi to Calenzana on day 1.
Local hotline
Route notes and maps on our app (a smartphone is necessary with an extra charger).

NOT INCLUDED

Transfers not included in this itinerary (including for example transfers due to bad weather or injury)
Transfer from Calvi onwards
Luggage transfers (see options)
Beverages and meals at Park Refuges (available locally)
Everything not mentioned on the "included" section

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Terrain: well-marked paths but very technical terrain (rocky and uneven). You need to be sure-footed and have plenty of relevant mountain experience.
Walking: from 4h30 to 8h15 per day.

LUGGAGE

Luggage transfers available 4 days out of 9 (see prices on options)

ACCOMMODATION

In gîtes d'étape (dormitory style), 4 nights in tent.
4 nights can be in rooms of two (upon availability).

SIZE OF GROUP

Minimum two.

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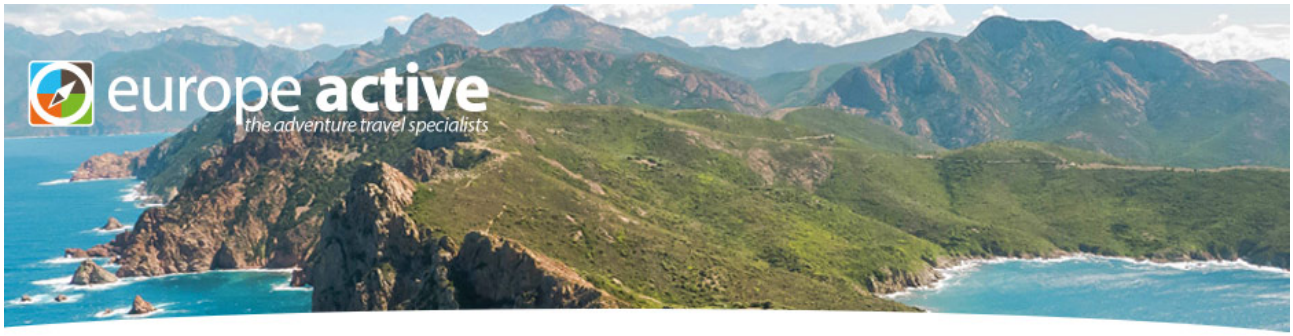

DEPARTURES
Every day from mid-June to mid-September.

DEPARTURE
Calvi.

DISPERSION
Vizzavona.

HOW TO GET THERE
Calvi is easily accessible by train (from Ajaccio, Corte and Bastia). There is also an airport "aéroport Sainte Catherine" and an important harbour.

EQUIPMENT TO TAKE
• A good pair of walking boots (ones that you have used before), with ankle support and non-slip soles.
• Good quality walking socks
• A comfortable rucksack (either for all of your kit or as a day sack) with plenty of plastic bags to keep your kit dry.
• If you are having your luggage transferred, please make sure that you have only one bag for the transfers, with a maximum weight of 15 kilos. It should be an easily transportable soft bag or with wheels.
• T-shirt and shorts (depending upon the likely weather)
• Light trekking trousers (not jeans)
• It is good to be able to 'layer' your clothes – with several light tops (for protection against cold, wind or sun)
• A warm sweater, polar or fleece. Beanie, gloves.
• Waterproofs – such as an anorak (Gore-tex or micro pore for example) or poncho.
• A bathing suit and towel
• Sandals or flip flops for beaches, river wading, or for wearing in the evening (it's important to be able to rest your feet from your walking boots)
• Sun cream plus sunglasses and a hat or cap
• A change of clothes
• For the picnics, you will need a small Tupperware box (for stews or salads), a plastic mug, a knife and fork. A Swiss Army knife or a pen knife is optional but can be very useful.
• Walking poles can be very useful to take the weight off the knees and to steady yourself on uneven terrain.
• A water bottle (at least one). It is preferable that you should be able to carry at least 2 litres of water at any one time.
• Camera and film, or batteries and memory cards for digital ones.
• A light torch (with spare battery)
• A small first aid kit possibly including: Rehydration salts to combat dehydration or fatigue, something for cuts, sprains, blisters, breaks, burns, stings, and pain relief. Please remember any personal medication that you may need.
• Wash bag, including: toothbrush, toothpaste, towel, toilet paper. Preferably a biodegradable soap for washing fruit, washing yourself and for washing clothes (it is possible to buy a multi-purpose biodegradable soap). Earplugs can also be useful if you are sleeping in dormitories.
• Money – make sure you have enough cash on you for your trek (in Euros), as it is unlikely that you will be able to use a card or withdraw money if you are in the mountains.
• A compass – but make sure you are able to read it before starting on your trek
• Mobile phone and charger (it may not always be possible to get a signal or to charge it, but it can be very helpful in many

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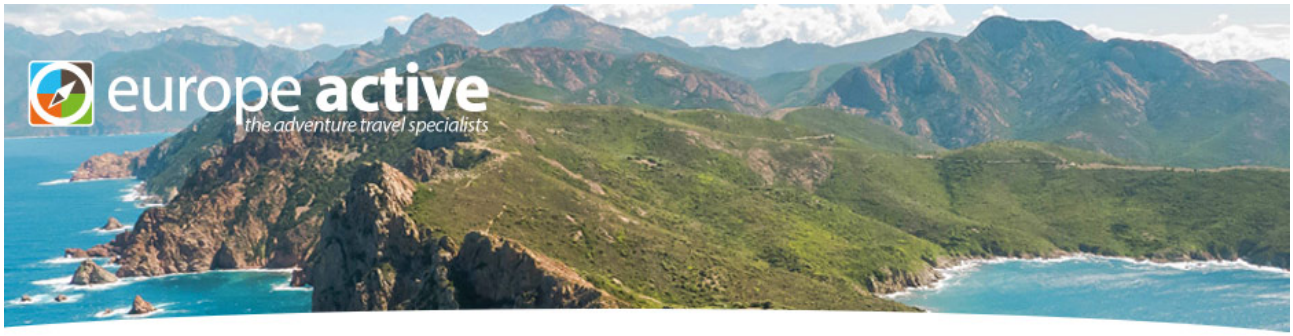

circumstances).
• Snacks (such as energy bars, dried fruit).
• If you are a vegetarian, we suggest you bring a good supply of nuts or other foods containing protein. It is not always possible to get a good balanced meal, particularly in the more remote places in the mountains.
• A waterproof plastic pouch in which to put your trip documents, identity papers and insurance documents.

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

Please remember that self-guided walking requires individuals to use problem-solving skills, to be adaptable and have a keen eye. Our walking specialists also recommended that you have a good knowledge of map reading and that you have good sense of direction. Sometimes, asking, finding and/or losing your way are all part of the adventure. There is also a certain level of unknown when it comes to self-guided walking. However, with a methodical approach and good preparation on your part, you will find that potential problems can soon be averted. If you're a first-time traveller, you will see that you soon get the hang of it as the majority of our first travelers do (as long as you are well-prepared). If you are a solo traveller, using maps and directions can be more difficult as two heads are often better than one when it comes to finding your way. In the event of problems or emergencies, please remember that Europe Active provides a 7/7 hotline service.

Note: these trip notes are the most current information available for this itinerary.
All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes. When necessary, you should be prepared to be flexible. Occasionally, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to a variety of reasons (ie. climatic, political, physical or other). In these circumstances, Europe Active will try to make suitable alternative arrangements.

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