



GR 108 From Gabas to Col du Somport

 **Gabas**



Difficult - Level 3

An emblematic stage of the Chemin d'Ossau, the link between France and Spain involves crossing the Col des Moines. No real difficulty if the weather is good, just a long climb that should be started early. Above all, pleasant hiking in landscapes marked by active pastoralism, under the watch of the majestic Pic du Midi d'Ossau.



 Start : GABAS Arrival : ASTUN	 Distance : 17.4km	 Elevation gain: 1070m	 Duration : 6hrs
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 **Emergency**
call : 112



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Stages

1- Plateau de Bious

From the chapel of Gabas, cross the hamlet by the D934. After the bridge over the Gave de Bious (signposted exit from Gabas), of the two paths, take the one on the right (signposted GR108 and "Bious-Artigues"). It climbs for a few minutes on the rocks and then joins the road to the Bious-Artigues dam. Follow it to the right for 3 km, in the forest. As you leave the forest, the road leads to the Bious-Oumettes plateau (1302 m). Take a few more steps on the tar-sealed road and then, at a right-hand bend, take the path opposite which cuts a bend in the road by going diagonally up to the right. When you get back onto the tar-sealed road higher up, follow it to the left to reach the eastern shore of the Bious-Artigues lake (4.3 km / 1h30 / 708 435 - 4749 400). Walk past the barrier on the path along the lake. Leaving the lake to the south, keep to the path opposite beyond a fence (bivouacs permitted in a clearing on the right), to climb into the forest on the concrete track. It changes banks at the Ayous bridge and then climbs steeply to a path intersection at the entrance to the Plateau de Bious.

2- Lake of Castérau

Leave the Sentier des Lacs (lakes) d'Ayous path on the right to follow the wide horizontal path (GR108 sign) on the left, which passes a bridge and then crosses the Bious pastoral plateau. As you enter the National Park, there are fewer markers. On the opposite side of the plateau the track climbs up a grassy ridge; leave the first path on the left (towards the Col de Peyreget). 200 m further on, at the crossing of a stream, leave the track for the path in the grass on the left (signposted "vente de fromage"). It winds its way through mountain pines and then climbs to the base of limestone cliffs. At the cattle pen at the Cabane de Cap de Pount (cheese sales), go down slightly to the right to a plateau, then follow a path along the left side of the stream. Take a footbridge over the Gave de Bious and climb up the opposite bank by two large zig-zags in the grass. Get onto the pastoral track, follow it to the left for 30 m then, from the first Cabane de la Hosse (1710 m - water point at the lower hut), follow the signposted path to the right. It gains altitude above the hut (beautiful view of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau), soon steeply into rocky outcrops, beneath the cliffs of the Pic Castérau. In the upper part, a final turn to the left brings you closer to a grassy promontory overlooking Lake Castérau (1943 m). The path runs along the left side of the lake; on the west side of the lake, past a ruin and a paddock, the path goes past a cubic rock, then reaches a double Y-shaped intersection with a large central boulder (1990 m).

3- Col des Moines

Go left, twice (access to the Ayous refuge on the right). The path continues in the same general direction (south-west) to climb a steep slope, then crosses over the Plaa de las Baques pond. After crossing over a false pass, there is only a horizontal traverse to reach the Col des Moines, a border pass at 2168 m (stone marker).

4- Col du somport

Cross into Spain via the well-formed path that runs along the right bank of a steep stream. Cross the stream at the bottom of the gully (at around 2120 m), to go around the Escalar lake on the left. On the opposite side, descend a fairly steep rocky spur on the left bank of the lake spillway. The slope becomes gentler; go down the grassy slopes still on the path on the left side of the stream. Once you have reached a water catchment (1880 m), take the access track to the left and then a track that cuts through the zig-zags until you reach the buildings of the Astún ski resort. Pass through the southern terraces and down the stairs into a large car park. At the end (chairlift), go down a gravel track along a conveyor belt. At the bottom, continue towards a red stone building and look for a ford to cross the Río Aragon. Once on its right bank, go slightly off-path, from one grassy terrace to another, towards the access road to the resort (look for a blue sign). Follow the road to the left (wide roadside) to the Col du Somport.