

The Ossau Valley

NIV
4 GR®108 Voie d'Ossau *De Gabas au Col du Somport par le Col des Moines*



An iconic stage of the Ossau Way, the route between France and Spain is marked by the crossing of the Col des Moines. There are no real difficulties if the weather is favourable, just a long climb that you'll set off on early in the morning. Above all, there's the pleasure of hiking through landscapes bearing the hallmarks of active pastoral life, all under the watchful eye of the majestic Pic du Midi d'Ossau.

D Stage 1: Bious Plateau. From the chapel at Gabas, cross the hamlet via the D934. After the bridge over the Gave de Bious (sign for the exit from Gabas), of the two paths ahead, take the one furthest to the right (signposted GR®108 and 'Bious-Artigues'). It climbs for a few minutes over rocky ground before joining the road to the Bious-Artigues dam further up; follow this to the right for 3 km through the forest. As you emerge from the woods, the road opens out onto the Bious-Oumettes plateau (1,302 m). Walk a few more steps along the tarmac, then, at a right-hand bend, take the path opposite which cuts across a hairpin bend on a diagonal uphill to the right. When you reach the tarmac again further up, follow it to the left to reach the eastern shore of Lake Bious-Artigues (4.3 km / 1 hr 30 min / (708435 – 4749400). Continue past the barrier along the path running alongside the lake. Leaving the lake to the south, keep to the path straight ahead, climbing into the forest along the concrete track. It crosses to the other side at the Ayous bridge and then climbs steeply to a junction of paths at the entrance to the Bious Plateau.

Stage 2: Lake Castérau. Leave the Ayous Lakes trail on your right and follow the wide, level path on your left (GR®108 sign) which crosses a bridge and then traverses the pastoral Bious Plateau. As you enter the National Park, the signposting becomes less frequent.

On the opposite side of the plateau, the track climbs up a grassy ridge; ignore the first path on the left (towards the Col de Peyreget). 200 metres further on, when crossing a stream, leave the track and take the path through the grass on the left-hand side (signposted 'cheese shop'). It winds its way through the mountain pines and then climbs to the base of limestone cliffs. At the cattle enclosure by the Cap de Pount hut (cheese shop), descend slightly to the right towards a plateau, then follow a path along the left bank of the torrent. Cross a footbridge over the Gave de Bious (8.7 km / 2 hrs 45 mins) and climb up the opposite bank via two large hairpin bends through the grass. Join the sheep track again; follow it to the left for 30 metres, then, as soon as you reach the first Hosse hut (1,710 m – water point at the lower hut), continue along the signposted path to the right. The path gains altitude above the hut (beautiful view of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau), soon becoming quite steep as it winds through rocky outcrops, beneath the looming cliffs of the Pic Castérau. In the upper section, a final detour to the left brings you closer to a grassy promontory overlooking Lake Castérau (1,943 m). The path runs along the left-hand side of the lake; on the western side of the lake, after passing a ruin and a pen, the track skirts a cubic rock, then reaches a double Y-junction (11 km / 4 hrs 00 mins) marked by a large central boulder (1,990 m).

Stage 3: Col des Moines. Take the left-hand path twice (the path to the Ayous refuge is on the right). The path continues in the same general direction (south-west) to climb a rocky outcrop, then crosses along a ledge above the Plaa de las Baques pond. Upon reaching a false pass, there is just a horizontal traverse left to reach the Col des Moines (12.4 km / 4 hours 30 minutes), a border pass at 2,168 m (stone marker).

Stage 4: Col du Somport. Cross over onto the Spanish side via the correct path which runs along the right bank of a steep-sided stream. Cross the stream at the lower part of the ravine (around 2,120 m) to complete a full circuit of Lake del Escalar on the left-hand side. On the opposite side, descend the left bank of the lake's spillway, a fairly steep rocky outcrop. The slope levels out; head down the grassy slopes, staying on the path on the left-hand side of the torrent. Once you reach a water intake (1,880 m), take the access track to the left, then a path that cuts across the hairpin bends, until you reach the buildings of the Astún ski resort. Cross the southern terraces and go down the steps to cross a large car park. At the end (chairlift), head down a stony track alongside a conveyor belt. At the bottom, continue towards a red-brick building, where you'll look for a fording point to cross the Río Aragon. Once on its right bank, head slightly off the path, from one grassy terrace to the next, towards the access road to the resort (look out for a blue sign). Follow the road to the left (wide verge) as far as the Col du Somport.

Text and description: ADT64



Martagon lily

D Gabas

GPS WGS 84 UTM 30T
709987 E – 4751881 N



6h



17,2km



1280m



White and red markers

★ Don't miss:

- Lake Castérau. Mountain lakes are prized for the sense of wonder they evoke when first discovered and the feeling of tranquillity they exude. From the promontory next to the lake, on a clear day, you can enjoy a remarkable view of the imposing Pic du Midi d'Ossau, a volcanic peak that has become the valley's emblem; one of the most striking peaks in the entire Pyrenean range.
- The Hosse shepherds' huts. As at Cap de Pount (the previous hut), the huts at La Hosse provide shelter for shepherds and flocks of sheep during the summer months. The valley's pastoral tradition is entirely dedicated to the production of an excellent cheese. This requires the herder's daily presence, milking in the morning and evening, and ancestral expertise in cheese-making. An absolute must-try.
- Bious Plateau. Leaving the forest behind for good, the route now leads onto the pastoral Bious Plateau, much loved by the flocks. This large, flat expanse also marks the entrance to the Core Zone of the Pyrenees National Park, where the tasks of protecting and monitoring the natural environment necessitate stricter rules (see information boards). The signposting will therefore be less prominent from here onwards.



Made by:

Communauté de Communes de la Vallée d'Ossau
1 avenue des Pyrénées – 64260 Arudy +33 (0)5 59 05 66 77

Information :

Ossau Valley Tourist Office, Pyrenees - Headquarters in Laruns - +33 (0)5 59 05 31 41
www.valleedossau.com

All outdoor sports activities are available on the Vallée d'Ossau Pyrénées mobile app...
and on the website terredaventures.valleedossau.com



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Choose your hike

For each route, you will find technical and practical information to help you choose your hike

Levels of difficulty

The hikes are classified by order of difficulty defined by a colour code following the recommendations of the French Hiking Federation:

- NIV 1** Very easy, less than 2 hours walking. Ideal for families, on well-marked tracks
- NIV 2** Easy, less than 3 hours walking. Suitable for families, on tracks with sometimes more difficult passages.
- NIV 3** Difficult, less than 4 hours walking. For hikers used to walking, with some quite intense sections or steep slopes.
- NIV 4** Very difficult, more than 4 hours of walking. For experienced and fit hikers. The itinerary can be long and technical (strong elevation gain, tricky passages).

GPS Coordinates

 30T 710703O - 4776694N

D Start

 Walking time, given in hours. This estimated time takes into account the length of the hike, the elevation gain and the possible difficulties.

 Elevation gain, expressed in metres. For each circuit, the value corresponds to the cumulative elevation gain.

 Distance, the value expressed in kilometres corresponds to the total length of the route.

Markers

Direction	Local routes and PR®	GRP®	GR®
Right way			
Turn left			
Turn right			
Wrong way			



GR®, GRP® and PR® are registered trademarks of the French Hiking Federation. Some routes have been selected by the French Hiking Federation according to quality criteria. They are PR® certified.

Recommendations

Before you leave

Check your equipment, the difficulty of the circuit and the weather conditions
If you are going alone, communicate your itinerary to friends and family
See the map of controlled fires

In the mountains / pastoral areas

Follow the marked paths and close gates after passing through
Respect nature and bring waste back
If accompanied by a dog, make sure that it is allowed on the chosen route and keep it on a lead
During the hunting season, avoid hunting areas or turn back
Go around herds and do not approach farm dogs (do not feed them or pet them)

National Park

The heart of the National Park is a natural territory and is open to all, but is subject to a code of conduct. Dogs are not allowed, even on a lead. No fires, no mountain bikes, no wild camping, only bivouacs are allowed - a small tent can be set up for the night from 7 pm and taken down in the morning before 9 am. It must be set up more than an hour's walk from any motorised access.

European emergency call : 112

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and on the website terredaventures.valleedossau.com