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CELEBRATING OUR 40TH SEASON!

Est. 1988

Adventureline
WALKING HOLIDAYS

PICOS DE EUROPA

2 week, 3 base discovery of The Picos de Europa mountains
September 8th–22nd 2027

Bespoke walking tours Melding
***Nature, History* and *Story Telling* into an art**

To view our 2027 Picos tour dates, please go to the *'Holiday Availability'* page on our website to see the latest availability.
Space is limited, early booking is recommended.

"Cantabria Infinita!"
(Infinite Cantabria)

The region's slogan!

2 week, 3 base Discovery of The Picos de Europa Mountains

The Picos de Europa are an *outlier* of The Cantabrian Mountains which run for about 500 miles right across the north of Spain. They range in height up to 2,660 meters (8,645 feet) and are composed mostly of white/pink Carboniferous limestone, surrounded by various metamorphic and volcanic rocks and unusual conglomerates. These are wonderful mountains and valleys in which to take breathtaking hikes and enjoy a pristine environment - with many wonderful contrasts to absorb.

These mountains became known as ***The Peaks of Europe*** simply because they were the very first *landfall* seen by returning Spanish fishermen, after their long voyages to the Newfoundland Grand Banks. In winter, the snow covered peaks stand up above the visible horizon when seen from nearly 100 miles out to sea, in the adjacent Bay of Biscay.

The highest parts of the range have 'limestone pavements' and jagged peaks and are home to many truly wild creatures such as **Rebeccos** (the endemic Chamois), **Lammergeier** (Bearded vultures); **Griffon Vultures, Golden Eagles, Choughs** and **Wall Creepers**, to name but a few. **Brown Bears** and **Wolves** also inhabit these mountains - although we'd be quite lucky to see them.

The Picos are situated about 100 km south west of **Santander**. The main ranges are very abrupt - somewhat similar to *The Dolomites* in Italy. Piercingly high peaks are interspersed with deep beech, oak and chestnut forested valleys, where centuries old farming methods are still practiced. Together, we'll take daily walks together in the valleys and forests, along the ridges and high up above the tree line. You'll also walk the truly magnificent **Cares Gorge**, a breathtakingly deep gorge with an astonishing, yet easy, footpath hewn from the rocky sides.

Breakfast, picnic lunch and evening meals are provided on the whole tour. We will walk about 10 reasonably steep miles per day, though we may not always walk quite that far (or so steeply!). Mike, Pete and Martin will reveal the hidden wildlife and explain the basics of many concepts for you in an interesting and light-hearted way, so that this beautiful Spanish region, its history, landforms and wildlife really come alive.

The climate here in September is normally very pleasant - with warm sunshine by day, up to 23C (75F) in the valleys, but refreshingly cooler higher up. Most rain falls in the winter and early spring, leaving summer and fall relatively dry. Rain is always possible of course, although walking in shorts and tee shirts should be comfortable. The nights may be a little cooler and you may require a fleece and long trousers.

The Picos ranges are divided into three separate massifs and each one is divided by deep valleys and gorges. In places, forests of beech, oak and chestnut thrive. During our tour, we will explore parts of all three massifs - and parts of the equally magnificent adjacent **Cantabrian Mountain** range. We will hike in different geologically constructed ranges and see Limestones, Breccias & Conglomerates, Metamorphic and Igneous rocks - all in one quite small area. The geology is really quite astonishing.

The Central massif can be accessed by way of the famous **Fuente De cable car**, which rises straight up for about 2,370 feet (735 M). It sure saves on a lot of steep climbing just to get up to the higher peaks – which then require several hours of upward walk to reach the very tops. There are several great hikes coming down too. Once high above the valleys, the walking can be rugged, steep and tiring at times - or not too hard, depending on whether we are going up or coming down!

Continued on page 4



A glorious morning walking from Valdeón to Caín



Pete in The Picos!

Your host*

Pete Isaac

Over 39 years ago, Martin spearheaded his unique discovery walking holidays in Cornwall and founded what became the very first walking tour operator in Cornwall in 1988 - Adventureline, now often mimicked, but never equalled. Back in the mid to late 90's, Martin began to broaden his horizons and has since run tours in many countries for the past 28 years or so. Consequently, he has become popular with nature lovers and adventurers of all ages, nationalities - and of many different backgrounds.

Keeping his groups fairly small, he manages to maintain an intimacy and cohesion (with humour!), which is warmly appreciated by all. Martin and Pete are always interested in others, so you will be appreciated and enjoyed too, for whoever you are and wherever you come from. Martin's groups often turn out to be an eclectic international mix too.

Martin and Pete (Martin's son) are passionate about enabling their guests to have fun learning about wherever they might happen to be, by stopping for an informal lecture/talk, taking a closer look at the natural flora and fauna geology and and history, enjoying an exploratory scramble, taking a swim - or perhaps (in The Picos) exploring some of the awesome limestone escarpments that frequent these regions. Not to mention exploring some of the region's delectable regional dishes and wines!

Please note
Depending on numbers, the group will be either led by Martin, Pete and Mike, or Pete and Mike.

Inset pic: Martin and Pete



In the meadows above Bejes

There are several spectacular high peaks that are reachable from the top of the cable car in a day's return walk (5 - 7 hrs). This will mean that we are able to appreciate the more remote and higher parts of this magnificent central range of mountains. It's like being *on the roof of the world* and on a clear day, we may see The Bay of Biscay coastline from up there.

There are lovely old villages in the valleys where the local inhabitants still practice centuries old techniques of *transhumance* and general farming, where it seems as though the 20th and 21st centuries have passed them by. The higher hay meadows are still often cut by hand scythe and manured laboriously by hand too. These beautiful hay meadows are absolutely carpeted with wild flowers in the early summer and above them we find forests of beech, chestnut and oak. The area is famous for its rather unusual Tudanca cattle, charming architecture, forests, flora and butterflies, its timeless farming practices and its delicious local cheeses and wine. The architectural vernacular of the region is very pleasing and you will see much evidence of lovely old oak timberwork in the construction of old houses and barns and also the numerous ancient grain stores (locally known as **Hórreos**), cleverly built to keep rates and mice out.

There are huge Karstic cave systems nearby, with evidence of prehistoric man, up to 250,000 years old and we will visit one of them. There are also gentler coastal trails and perhaps we'll enjoy a beach visit with swimming if appropriate. It all depends on the group and the weather – we try to be as flexible as possible.

**Martin, Pete and Mike will, in consideration with the groups wishes, be perfectly willing to modify the programme to allow for changes to the proposed hikes or to add/subtract certain hikes and activities. We can never be sure just how any group are able to deal with extensive ascents, etc.*



A typical old wooden balcony on many mountain houses



Tudanca cow



Adventureline's Picos guiding crew, (L-R) Mike, Pete, and Martin

NOTE

A word of caution

We have learned over the years to not set an itinerary in stone. For example, weather could mean it is dangerous to continue with a scheduled plan. This happened in 2025 with a summit hike high above Sotres, the wind was so strong there was a real risk of being blown over an edge! And in 2024, thick mist on one day meant climbing **Pico Coriscao** (2,500M) was decidedly unwise.

Rest assured, with 3 decades of experience in the Picos, we can make it up as we go along and you will not be left wanting for a challenge! Our local guide Mike knows the Picos intimately...in fact there aren't many trails throughout the mountains he doesn't know.

Remember, some of the best experiences in life are the ones you weren't expecting!

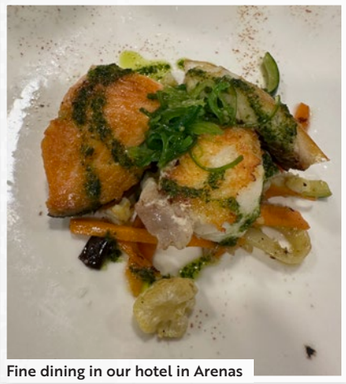


Hiking above The Cares Gorge

Example Itinerary

Please take this itinerary with a pinch of salt, we may substitute various hikes with other options, depending on daily circumstances and weather, or start in Tama and end in Arenas, but this programme worked well in 2025.

Day 1
Date Here. Transfer from Santander Airport to our comfortable country hotel in **Arenas de Cabrales** in Asturias, which will be the first base for your hiking tour, on the northern edge of the Picos. https://www.hoteljuansabeli.com/picos-europa We will stay here in twin rooms for the first 4 nights. Their food is outstanding!



Fine dining in our hotel in Arenas

Day 2
We drive up to Sotres, the highest village in Asturias. From here we walk through beautiful high mountain pastures to **Bulnes**, the last remaining village in the Picos de Europa without any road access.

After refreshments in Bulnes, we descend through beautiful ancient woods to **Poncebos**, from where we'll be transported back to the hotel. This is quite a long walk and so if anyone is too tired by the time we reach Bulnes, there is the option to take an underground furnicular back down to Poncebos. Cheating yes, but it's a useful option if needed – as it's quite a long way down!

1,250 ft ascent – 3,500 ft descent.

Day 3
We visit the oldest part of the original National Park, **Covadonga Lakes** - where we will enjoy a *5-7 mile walk* amongst the spectacular scenery. *1,000 ft ascent/descent.* On our drive down, we will stop to visit the beautiful **Basílica of Covadonga**, before arriving back at our hotel in Arenas.

Day 4
For a change of scenery, today we visit the lovely fishing port of **Llanes** and, while we're here, we can't miss seeing the extraordinary ***'Bufones de Pria'***. When conditions are right, the sea explodes through blow holes in the limestone rock. These are both pretty flat walks.

Day 5
We return to Poncebos (where you came down from Bulnes on day 2) to walk the amazing **Cares Gorge** to **Caín**, while your luggage is transported to our hotel in **Posada de Valdeón**.

The path follows the canal which was built here to service the hydro-electric power station, constructed between 1916 - 1925. This is one of the most famous walks in Spain and you will meet others along the way, but it's nevertheless truly an amazing hike and it will not feel crowded. Martin will move our luggage to the next hotel while you walk with Pete and Mike (one way) and then Martin will meet you in the village of Cain, at the top end of the gorge. There is a beautiful clear pool in the river you'll meet along the way in the upper gorge, in which you could take a refreshing dip if you wish!

1,000 ft of ascent, then a short descent of about 300 ft – and then mostly flat for the last 5 miles.

As mentioned, you'll be met in Caín, to be taken to join your luggage in Posada de Valdeón, nestled between the western and central massifs of the Picos. The huge valley that separates the two massifs here is most spectacular and in Martin's opinion is one of the 'Jewels in the Crown' of these mountains. While you are walking the final stretch of the gorge up to Cain, you will be looking up vertically 7,000 ft on either side to the high tops of both the Western Massif and the Central Massif – truly breathtaking in it's expansiveness.

**If you wanted to continue walking, Pete will guide you the extra 9km from Caín to our hotel in Posada de Valdeón. A particularly beautiful and spectacular section of trail, it is well worth doing if you have the energy!*

Day 6
Leaving our transport at the **Panderruedas pass**, we have another high mountain walk, through oak woods to **Pico Gildar**. *Around 10 km's. 1,900 ft ascent, 1,330 ft descent.*



The path cut into the limestone cliffs of the Cares Gorge

Continued overleaf


The trails of the northern slopes

Day 7
From the Pandetrave pass, today we walk to the **Mostajal valley** and follow the stream, where there should be abundant butterflies among other wildlife. *2,275 ft ascent/descent.*

Day 8
Leaving Posada de Valdeón today, we head south and east to the **San Glorio pass**, from where we'll hike up to **Pico Coriscao** (2,500M) in the heart of the **Cantabrian mountains** and from where we should have great views of the Central Massif of the Picos de Europa. *2,000 ft ascent.*

This hike is pretty steep in places, but very rewarding. The view from the top (if clear) is superb, as you can see almost the whole Central and Eastern Massifs, just across the intervening deep valleys. You will see a different type of geology on this hike, as we climb up and past several peaks that are composed of conglomerate rock – a rock that boggles the imagination as to how it came to be here, so high up. Unimaginable erosion and deposition, followed by Tectonic collision must have been involved in the distant past.

Rejoining our vehicles at the pass, we drive down into the stunning **Liébana valley** to **Potes** and arrive at our last hotel a few miles beyond in **Tama**, where we spend the next 6 nights. https://elcorcaldeliebana.es/en/

Day 9
Today sees us driving up the scenic **Piedrasluengas pass** to enable us to summit on foot the strange, crew-cut like rock formation of **Peña Labra**. Quite a steep climb, but well worth the effort, as once the top is attained, there are great views in all directions. *2,190 ft ascent/descent.*

Day 10
Either a mountain hike or a rest day in which we can visit the enchanting old market town of Potes with its cobbled streets, bars and shops. We can pick up the odd souvenir or two and we could visit the medieval **Torre del Infantado** and the **Santo Toribio** monastery.


Sunrise above Posada de Valdeón

Day 11
Using the cable car at **Fuente De**, we're whisked up 2,447 ft into the Central Massif of the Picos, to hike up to **Pico Padiorna (7,500 ft)**. A definite highlight of the trip – one of my personal favourites! The climb is gentle at first, but culminates in much steeper and rocky sections that takes us to the very top, from where the views are absolutely amazing. Not climbed by that many people, so with luck we'll have it all to ourselves. The hike itself climbs about *2,150 ft up and back.*

Day 12
A short drive south takes us to the village of **Bejes**, high above the **Desfiladero de La Hermida gorge**, on the edge of the Eastern Massif. From here, we can walk to the **Sierra** above the village and enjoy yet more wonderful mountain views. This is a spectacular hike that climbs perhaps 1,500 feet to an old cobalt mine and then descends back to the village by a different route.

Day 13
It's our last day in the mountains, and we will drive to the beautiful village of **Mogrovejo** for a circular walk and yet more local culture and spectacular views of limestone peaks and wooded valleys. *1,625 ft ascent/descent.*

Day 14
It's possibly an early start depending on flight times as we transfer back to Santander Airport, ferry port or train station, depending on how you travelled to Spain.

Buen viaje!


Taking the cable car from Fuente De

ACOMMODATION

Accommodation in Arenas

La Casa de Juansabeli close to Las Arenas.
A charming modern hotel, but with character and the most excellent al la carte cuisine, not to mention the very friendly staff!

Accommodation Posada de Valdéon or **Cordinanes**

Either **Hotel Cumbres** or **Hotel Tombo** - both in the scenic and beautiful valley between the two main massifs.

Accommodation in Potes

El Corcal in Tama, near Potes. A Swiss style building with all modern facilities. We dine in their lovely restaurant a few metres away, serving as a local bar and restaurant too.


La Casa de Juansabeli nestled in the valley

Views of the Picos de Europa

Infinitely variable, The Picos hold many secrets. Although the high limestone peaks way up above the valleys are not dissimilar to each other, what lies below hidden away in the valleys is ever changing and remarkable in its variety.

There is literally every kind of landscape - from green pastures surrounded by ancient villages, to mixed forests, to heathland high above the tree line, to barren limestone pavement and finally rugged peaks reaching up dizzyingly over 8,000 ft into the skies above.

Consequently, the hiking is also infinitely variable - some hikes are unremitting in their ascent and decent, while others are more gentle. However, these are considerable mountains and as such demand respect and stamina.

Expect to be moderately challenged on this holiday, but amply rewarded by some of the most incredible scenery and a wonderful sense of achievement.



We sometimes walk down that U shaped valley, having taken the cable car up!



Hiking in the beautiful valley below Posada de Valdeón

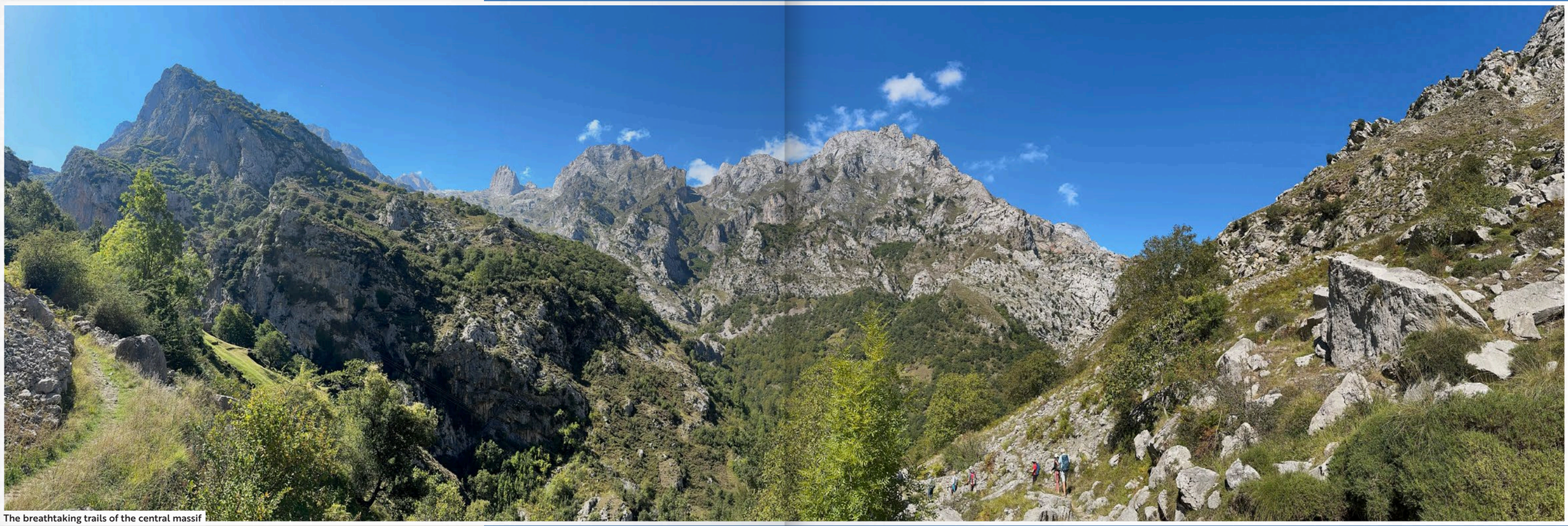


Abundant Cornish Heath (Erica vegans)

The September 2024 group, much fun was had and many miles walked, they were hardcore hikers!



Above the top of the Cable Car at Fuente de



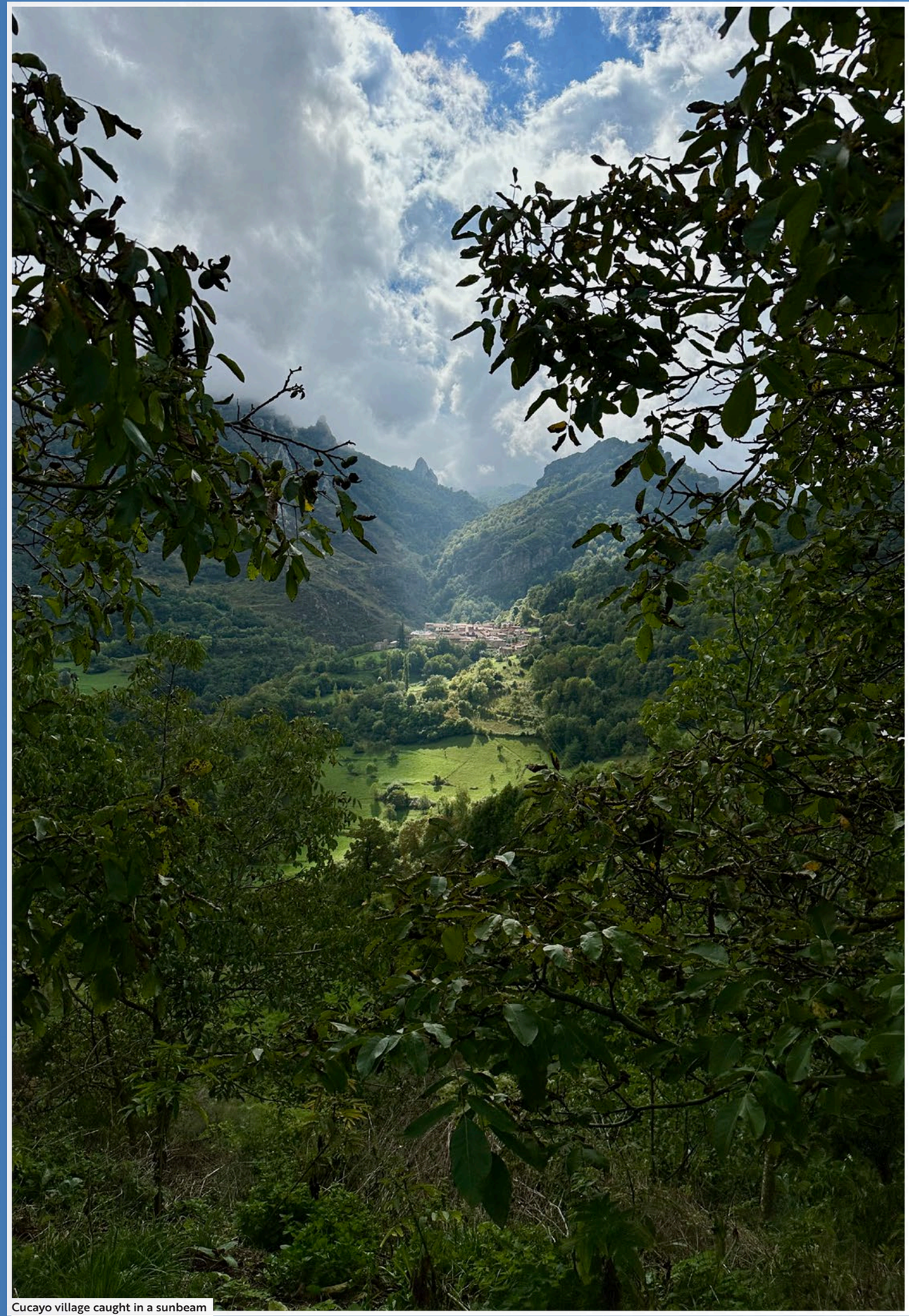
The breathtaking trails of the central massif



Picnic atop Torre de los Horcados Rojos!



Mike and Pete - your mountain guides



Cucayo village caught in a sunbeam



Mike Stuart with the Bay of Biscay in the distance

MEET YOUR GUIDE

Mike Stuart

Meet Mike, your local mountain guide, raised in Derbyshire, and honed in the Picos de Europa!

Martin first met Mike about 28 years ago and they soon became great friends, sharing a passion for the wild places of the world and particularly, their chosen abodes. Mike has shown Martin many of The Picos' magnificent hikes and trails over the intervening years, and they have led many hiking tours together since those early days.

Mike is British in origin (with a wicked sense of Northern humour!), but moved to Potes in the Picos de Europa almost 30 years ago and has raised his family here. He was given his first grounding in mountaincraft by his mountaineer father Ian who has been on various expeditions around the world, including to the Himalaya with Chris Bonnington, among others. Mike has inherited his love of mountains and for 8 years Mike lived in the Swiss Alps, working as a ski guide. He then moved to live permanently in Spain in 1991 and is trained as a **fully-qualified Mountain Leader**.

Originally a rock climbing downhill skier, Mike has gradually turned towards hiking as his main passion. However, he does still get out on his skis in the winter and loves to climb up high using skins and then enjoys a short but sweet downhill sweep! He is very well respected in the area and his knowledge and experience of The Picos is vast in its coverage and he is probably one of the most experienced high mountain guides you can find hereabouts. There can't be many paths and trails in the Picos he hasn't walked, so you are in great hands, whatever the weather!

He always puts safety in front of daring and risk and so you will feel safe in his hands. However, if you are high spirited, together with Pete, he will lead you up on some slightly more daring and wonderful high hikes - while Martin (now in his 70's) will always be available to lead those with less challenging ambition to do something somewhat easier!



One of the many wooded gorges

Our Philosophy...

...is to enrich our guests lives and enjoy our work on a daily basis, providing impeccable customer service and promoting long-term sustainability of ecology, economy and community.

See what our many satisfied clients say about us - you'll be surprised!
https://adventureline.co.uk/testimonials/

Read more reviews: **Trip Advisor** | **Google Reviews**

Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/AdventurelineUK**



Lago de la Ercina, one of the Covadonga lakes

Booking

Tour cost
£2,750 pp / £394 single room supplemment

Our great fully inclusive package includes:

- All internal transport.
- Martin and Pete's dedicated services.
- Mike, our English speaking local guide's services.
- All accommodations and all meals + local wines.

Adventureline's unique formula for a relaxing yet stimulating holiday (in good company) is well rounded and is good value for money too. Early booking is recommended as we have limited capacity per trip.

Not included:

- Your travel to and from Spain. Any cable car rides (number unknown until the event), any cave visits, personal shopping or entries to any other places you may visit whilst exploring in towns and villages in The Picos de Europa Mountains and surrounding areas.

Booking and cost:

1. All prices are as stated in the booking request.

2. We will hold any provisional reservation for you, provided you confirm your travel arrangements with us within a month.

3. We will require a £250 non refundable deposit.
Final balances are due 3 months before tour commences.

Please feel free to contact us by phone or email for further information, or for details of any of our other holidays around the world, our terms and conditions, or to make a reservation. Phone: +44 (0)1209 820847 | adventureline@btinternet.com

We look forward to hearing from you and hope to have the pleasure of your company in Spain in 2027.

Martin Hunt & Pete Isaac

Martin Hunt & Pete Isaac



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