



Gavarnie - Le Plateau de Bellevue

Dedicated to the Cirque de Gavarnie, this circuit offers you, from the plateau, wonderful views of a UNESCO world heritage site !



Duration: 3h30 Ascent : 345 m Difficulty: average

- > Location: Gavarnie, at 20 km from the south of Luz-Saint-Sauveur by the road D921
- > Car Park: At the entrance of the village (parking ticket required)
- > Pyrenees' national park regulations: dogs are NOT allowed, even on a leash.

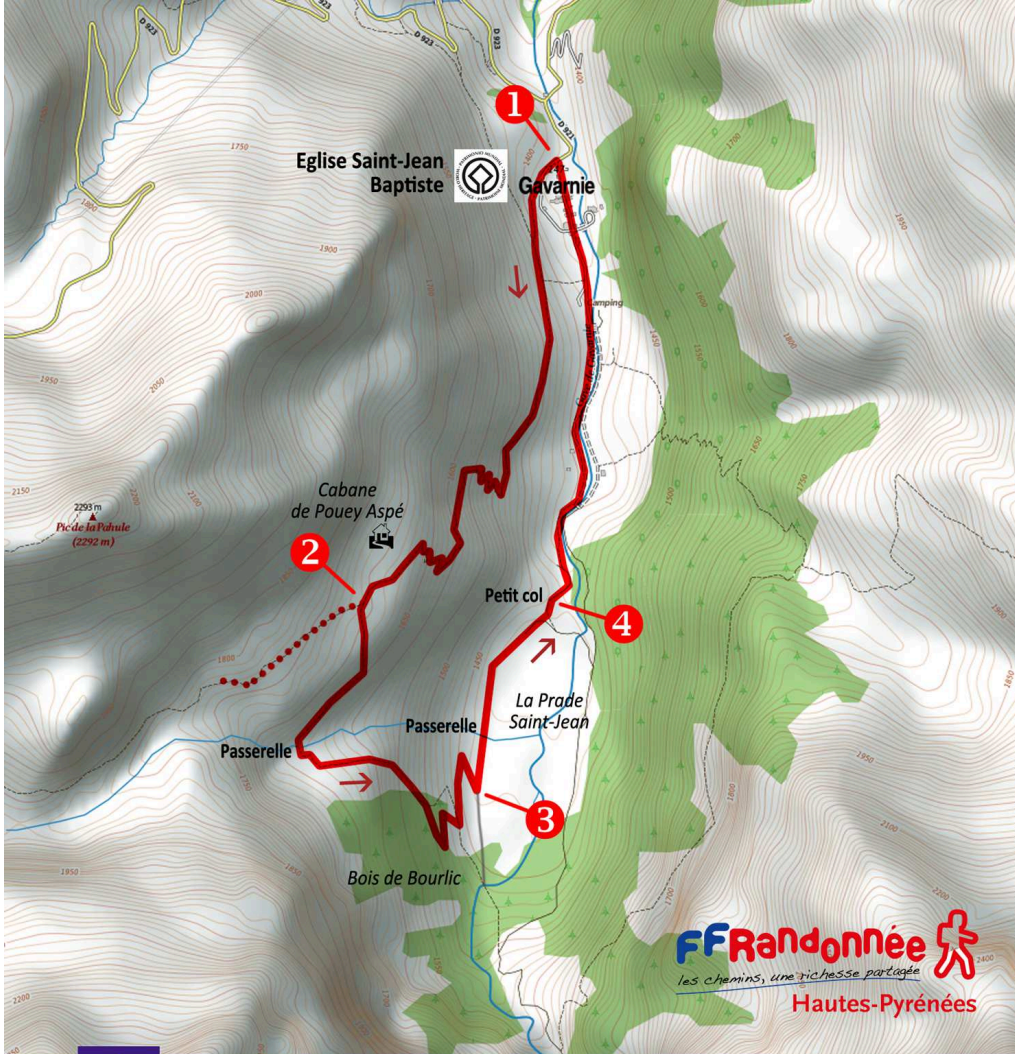
1 - Go to the church at Gavarnie, walk the length of the cemetery and at the first junction, go straight on. At the second junction, take the righthand fork and follow upwards along the edge of the forest. The slope intensifies, and the path winds more and more to arrive at a crossroad between the "plateau de Bellevue" and an intersection of paths.

> *Going to the right, you have the possibility to continue a little through the small valley of Aspé Pouey and enjoy the beautiful view.*

2- Go to the left and descend towards the "Gave des Tourettes". Cross it on the footbridge and immediately, follow the path on the left. This way goes down towards a winding path through the woods of "Bourlic" and arrives at a junction.

3- Take the lefthand fork, leaving the path that goes towards the bottom of the Cirque. Pass the Gave des Tourettes on the footbridge and follow the lawns of the "Prade St-Jean". The path joins a larger path: do not follow it but continue opposite and climb toward a small pass.

4- Cross it, go down and take the passable path that goes along the left bank of the Gave back to the village of Gavarnie.



Church « St Jean-Baptiste de Gavarnie » – Registered on the list of the properties of « the way of Saint James »

Former chapel of a hospice established there, in the XIIth century, by the knights of Saint John of Jerusalem, the monks soldiers' double function was to house and take care of travellers, and also to control the roads and the passage towards Spain. Many pilgrims and merchants used to follow this road that went to Aragon by the Col de Boucharo at 2270 meters altitude.

The present church was reworked several times due to collapses. It is composed of a unique nave and a transept's arm in the north. The nave was rebuilt and repaired. Only the transept's chapel dates to the Romane Age. It occupies the lower part of a square bell tower whose summit part dates to the XIXth century.

The Roman period north chapel houses the statue of Notre-Dame du Bon port, still a very big devotion object. Made of multicoloured wood of the XIVth century, it represents the Virgin holding the Christ on her left knee and raising her right hand in benediction, carrying the pilgrim's flask. She is surrounded by two pilgrims' statuettes of the XVIIth century. All of these inserted in a Baroque retable with wreathed columns and punctuated with shells and acanthus leaves.

Although recomposed with decorations elements of different styles and origins, this small altarpiece is a very strong place of evocation for the pilgrims.



The Gavarnie's church, located on this backdrop of the Cirque de Gavarnie, is a place of convergence of great human adventures from medieval times to the present day. Thousands of walkers have passed here, seeking adventures, discoveries, exchanges, spirituality, like the St-Jacques 's pilgrims or the Pyreneists (term used for person who like doing mountain ascents but practiced only in the Pyrenees).