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Catalonia: A Destination for Active Tourism and Nature

At just over 32,000km² in area, Catalonia may seem a small region, but it is huge in terms of natural wealth and diversity. From the peaks of the Catalan Pyrenees, over 3,000 metres high, to the Costa Brava’s most secluded, unexplored beaches, a myriad of unique landscapes beckon, where you can enjoy the great outdoors in an active way. Whether in the mountains, by the sea or inland, there is space for everyone to appreciate this privileged array of nature, in the open air and 365 days per year.

Amongst the most low-key options, hiking is an excellent way to contemplate Catalonia’s landscapes, with unlimited possibilities for all levels of expertise. You can cross the region from North to South or East to West along the 9,000 kilometres of routes and trails available to walkers. Cycling is another fantastic option: anything from a gentle family ride to high-speed mountain biking. There is a vast network of cycle lanes and vies verdes—or rail trails—in place for cycle-touring, whilst mountain-bike lovers will find numerous sign-posted routes, classified by level of difficulty.

Adrenaline rushes are guaranteed for the most adventurous visitors. You can paraglide over beautiful valleys, abseil down ravines, climb up icy walls or raft down river rapids. Mountain lovers will love the ski resorts in the Pyrenees, offering all the services needed for taking part in winter sports, from classic skiing to walking through an unspoilt natural setting wearing snowshoes.

Over 500 kilometres of Mediterranean coastline showcase dramatically-changing landscapes, from the rugged Costa Brava, with its secluded coves, to the Ebro Delta, with its extraordinary variety of bird species. Undiscovered coves await on the coast: the essence of the Mediterranean, where you can swim, kayak, or explore rich seabeds.

In a region made up of 30% conservation areas, Catalonia has endless natural treasures where visitors can discover flora and fauna in its natural habitat. Amongst the most spectacular is the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, home to 5,000 species of fauna which live by almost 200 lakes, abundant streams, and impressive cliffs. Catalonia is also home to a wealth of wonderful bird species, for example in the Ebro Delta.

However you look at it, this region is more than ready to welcome visitors who value contact and interaction with nature, appreciating it with the utmost respect. Welcome to Catalonia.
WHAT DOES THIS PUBLICATION CONTAIN?

This publication contains suggestions for an unforgettable weekend, or for spending a whole lifetime in Catalonia, experiencing the region and its landscapes through a huge range of activities.

Activities like riding the whitewater of the Noguera Pallaresa river, or rowing across the tranquil waters of Banyoles lake. Taking advantage of the sea with nautical activities ranging from sailing in different types of boats to open-water swimming. Taking to the Catalan skies on a group hot air balloon ride, or jumping off Àger or Organyà in a double paraglider. Venturing into caves, orienteering through the mountains, and climbing walls. Enjoying the winter at our ski resorts or, for the most daring, discovering snowy landscapes led by a guide. Crossing the whole region on foot along the sign-posted routes and trails, or cycling across it, kilometre by kilometre, from the Catalan Pyrenees to the shores of the beaches on the Costa Daurada. And all whilst deeply respecting your surroundings, through specific ecotourism ideas.

This publication also contains contact details for businesses, giving you access to even more ways to enjoy Catalonia, interesting facts about our landscapes, history and people, and tips for making your visit as fulfilling an experience as possible. Catalonia is an adventure waiting to be discovered. Don’t just read about it.

CATALONIA: A SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION

Catalonia was the first comprehensive tourist destination in the world to be awarded the Biosphere Responsible Tourism certification. This seal guarantees travellers a sustainable experience, which protects culture, boosts the local economy, and reduces impact on the environment.

Other areas across Catalonia, such as Sitges, Barcelona, and the Val d’Aran, also hold this recognition. Recently, Paisatges Barcelona, Pirineus Barcelona, Costa Barcelona (see map below) and the municipality of Vilafranca del Penedès have also been awarded the certification. We should add that these areas are not the only ones to commit to the principles of responsible tourism, as others are also in the process of obtaining this seal.

Catalonia closely identifies with respect for diversity and an interest in cultural exchange and social integration, to drive a responsible tourism model which is environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and universally accessible. This tourist activity model provides visitors with added-value propositions, allowing them, at the same time, to contribute to sustaining and conserving the region for the future. Choosing Catalonia means choosing quality.
Catalonia is located in the southwestern part of the European continent, and to the far northeast of the Iberian peninsula, on the shores of the Mediterranean.

CLIMATE
Catalonia’s climate is Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters. The region’s varied geography gives the Catalan Pyrenees a cooler average temperature, whilst it is hotter in July and August in the inland districts of the Terres de Lleida. Rain mainly falls between May and June.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average Temperature (°C)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>11 12 14 17 20 24 26 24 20 16 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girona</td>
<td>9 10 13 15 19 23 26 25 23 18 13 10</td>
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<td>Lleida</td>
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<td>Tarragona</td>
<td>11 12 14 16 19 22 25 26 23 20 15 12</td>
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POPULATION
7,516,254 inhabitants

SURFACE AREA
32,107 km²

COAST LENGTH
580 km, of which:
- 208 km are cliffs
- 280 km are beaches
- 40 km are ports

THE REGION’S HIGHEST PEAK IS IN THE EASTERN RANGE OF THE CATALAN PYRENEES: PICA D’ESTATS.

TERRAIN
The highest peak in Catalonia is the Pica d’Estats, in the Pyrenees, standing at 3,143 metres. The Catalan Pyrenees also boast another three peaks, each over 3,000 metres high: Pico Verdaguer (3,129 metres), Punta Gabarró (3,105 metres) and Besiberri (3,029 metres).

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
Catalan and Spanish. Occitan or Aranese is also an official language in the Val d’Aran.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION
The region’s surface area encompasses 64% forests and diverse vegetation. 26% of its land is arable, and urban areas and structures account for 6.4%.
Catalonia is divided into nine distinct tourist ‘brands’. They are distributed across the region as shown on the map: Barcelona, Costa Barcelona, Costa Brava, Costa Daurada, Paisatges Barcelona, Pirineus, Terres de l’Ebre, Terres de Lleida, and Val d’Aran.

**TOURIST BRANDS**

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<th>Distance Between Capital Cities</th>
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<td>Girona</td>
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<td>Lleida</td>
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<td>Tarragona</td>
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In Catalonia, a two-hour car ride makes it possible to ski first thing in the morning and swim at the beach in the afternoon. Depending on the time of year, you won’t even need a neoprene suit. This is one of the area’s highlights, especially for those who enjoy an active lifestyle in the outdoors. Cyclists have the opportunity to pedal down country lanes or get covered in mud as they explore inviting forests. Adrenaline junkies won’t be disappointed either, as ravines, rapids in crystalline rivers, mountain canyons, icy walls to climb, magical mountains to leap from with a paraglider and a thousand more adventures await them.
Feel the energy of water and the thrill of riding rapids. Slide down natural water-slides and plunge into pools of crystal-clear water before swimming under stunning waterfalls.

At the heart of the Pyrenees, Noguera Pallaresa is considered one of Europe’s best rivers for whitewater sports. From Llavorsí to La Pobla de Segur, this river passes through unique natural settings, such as the impressive Collegats gorge, offering over 40 kilometres of descents, with exciting rapids for reaching dizzying speeds. Noguera Pallaresa’s rich basin makes its whitewater season particularly long, beginning in March and lasting until October. Although its optimal months are around the time of thawing, in May and June, when the river’s flow is at its greatest, the existence of dams, in addition to excellent water management, guarantee descents in the summer and beyond. All of this makes it an ideal destination for aficionados of all levels, from the most experienced, seeking out the truly intense sensations of spring, to those who prefer a more low-key adventure for the whole family.

AN OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE
In La Seu d’Urgell, the Segre Olympic Park’s facilities include a man-made channel with an adjustable flow, designed especially for whitewater canoeing, for both competitions and entertainment and leisure. In that same channel, which hosts international competitions, you can try rafting, hydrospeed and open kayaking with your friends and family.

www.raftingparc.cat

ATLANTIC BASIN
Another Catalan river to provide the backdrop for whitewater sports is located on the other side of the mountains, on the Northern slope of the Pyrenees. In the Val d’Aran, the Garonne, which flows into the Atlantic, boasts over 20 kilometres of rushing rapids which are perfect for rafting and hydrospeed, and for beginners and experts alike.

VERTICAL WATERS
Thanks to the abrupt, rugged geography of a significant proportion of Catalonia, canyoning lovers have a thousand and one possibilities for fun in the wealth of water canyons throughout the area’s mountain ranges, from the Els Ports massif to the Catalan Pyrenees, around Girona.
RAFTING
Rafting is the best way to experience whitewater in a group, whether with family or friends, riding the waves in an inflatable boat steered by an expert guide, who is responsible for the fun and safety of everyone on board. No experience required. You only need to know how to swim and to want to have a good time!

HYDROSPEED
Hydrospeed is a type of water sledding which ensures a greater level of contact with the river. A special wetsuit is used for this activity, since participants’ legs are underwater at all times and are used to steer the boat. Fins are used for thrust in the right direction. An instructor will guide the group throughout the whole descent.

OPEN KAYAKING
Open kayaking is a discipline involving an open, unsinkable vessel designed to introduce kayaking novices to the incredible sensations of individual kayaking on a whitewater river. The feeling of steering your own kayak makes adrenaline flow at all times, even in the easiest rapids.

A WHITEWATER GLOSSARY

CANOE RAFTING
Inflatable two- or three-person canoes guarantee a heightened sense of adventure, independence, and commitment when on the river. Just like with hydrospeed and open kayaking, after giving basic instructions on the equipment used and on safety, the instructor leads the activity from his/her own kayak, accompanying the group at all times.

BUS-BOB
Unlike rafting, where falling into the water is virtually impossible, in bus-bob there are no foot anchors, meaning that excitement and dips are unavoidable from the first rapid onwards! This boat, inspired by nautical activities, is recommended for anyone with previous whitewater experience.

CANYONING
Canyoning involves wading into the course of a river, between walls, and then moving forward using several different techniques: swimming, descents, jumping into pools, abseiling... This activity is strenuous and requires both specific equipment and a guide who knows the surroundings inside out.
DOWNSTREAM

We will discover the very best waterways: from exploring the most exciting aquatic canyons to riding the indomitable waves of the Noguera Pallaresa and Garonne rivers or the Segre Olympic Park.

THE VAL D’ARAN

1 ATLANTIC RAFTING
www.aranexperience.com
Between Es Bordes and Bossòst, the Garonne river offers 9 kilometres of thrilling whitewater. Eight kilometres separate Les and Pont de Rei, where the rapids are gentler. Neither of these descents require previous experience. Age 6 and up. Duration: half a day. The same descent is available for hydrospeed, from age 14 and up.

PIRINEUS

2 RAFTING IN THE PALLARS
www.raftinglavorsi.cat
The speciality activity in the Pallars area involves no less than 42 kilometres of exciting descents in the turbulent waters of the Noguera Pallaresa river, between Llavorsí and La Pobla de Segur. This route alternates between sections of thrilling rapids and gentler stretches, allowing for contemplation of the landscape. It includes a break for lunch.

3 WATERWAYS
www.outdooradventour.com
The extraordinary Pyrenees Adventure Challenge is an invigorating experience which combines hiking, mountain biking, rafting, and canyoning to travel along natural water-
ways, from the highest peaks of the Pyrenees to the Collegats gorge and the Barranc de l’Infern ravine: one of the area’s most beautiful spots. Duration: 4 days. Difficulty level: medium.

4 INTRODUCTION TO WHITEWATER KAYAKING
www.paddleinspain.com
The waters of the Noguera Pallaresa river are the perfect setting for an introductory course to the whitewater discipline par excellence: kayaking. Duration: 6 hours spread across two days. From March to October. From age 16 up (in spring) and age 8 up (in summer).

5 OLYMPIC RAFTING
www.paddleinspain.com
Rafting down the whitewater rapids of the Olympic canal in La Seu d’Urgell. Maximum safety and comfort, only 200 metres away from the town centre. Difficulty level: medium. Duration: 1 hour (4 descents). Best time of year: from May to September.

6 KAYAKING ‘INTERNSHIP’
www.epsort.com
The Alberg de Sort canoeing school is the perfect place for an introductory ‘internship’—whether for starting out, improving, or training—for anyone taking part in a whitewater sport in the Noguera Pallaresa river. Duration: 5 days. Minimum participants: 3 students. Best time of year: from May to September.

7 RIVERS OF THE ALT PIRINEU
www.sortturisme.com
www.kayaksort.cat
On a global scale, the town of Sort is very well-renowned for whitewater activities and regularly holds international championships, such as the Noguera Pallaresa International Rally, since 1964, the World Whitewater Rafting Championship, which took place in 2010, or the World Championship planned for 2019. Despite the unquestionable starring role played by river activities, rafting, hydrospeed, and canyoning are just some of the outdoor leisure activities on offer around this town. On dry land, there is a full network of hiking routes, which allow you to discover natural landscapes and sample excellent food.

8 CANYONING IN ELS PORTS
www.camping-elsports.com
The ravine belonging to the Canaletes river is suitable for beginners, with jumps, natural water-slides and turquoise-coloured pools. Duration: 4 hours. Age 8 and up.

9 DID YOU KNOW...?
‘RAIERS’: CAPTAINS OF THE RIVER
Rafting down Noguera Pallaresa’s rapids was not invented in the ‘80s, which saw the arrival of the first inflatable rafts full of sports-lovers dressed in wetsuits. For centuries, the force of this river’s current has been used to transport wood in the form of rafts named rais—from the Latin word ratis—made using large tree trunks. Fir and mountain pine trees were felled in the mountains and then masterfully and professionally tied to one another by skillful raiers (raftmen), to be taken to Lleida, Tortosa or even to the sea. Since 1979, on the first Sunday of July in La Pobla de Segur, a festive descent is celebrated in the most traditional way possible, with boats made from tree trunks, period costumes and open-air dancing, and dinner.

For more information: www.elsraiers.cat

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
From 11th to 15th September, 2019
(La Seu d’Urgell and Sort)
XL WORLD CANOEING CHAMPIONSHIP
Freestyle, slalom, and sprint modes.
Gliding over calm waters in a boat is a pleasure that no one should be denied. That said, before taking part in any activity, however risk-free it may seem, you should always remember to ask local tourism representatives for information, since certain lakes, rivers and reservoirs restrict experiences, in order to protect the environment and tourists.

INACCESSIBLE SPOTS
Rowing over a huge reservoir surrounded by forests and mountains, or letting yourself be carried by the gentle current of a river as you listen to the birds on the shore... In a canoe or paddle surf, adventure means gliding along to the sound of the oars, in search of spots filled with silence and which would, otherwise, be inaccessible.

A THOUSAND AND ONE OPTIONS
At the heart of the Pyrenees, in the Sant Antoni and Terradets reservoirs, kayak and paddle surf routes, in addition to wakeboarding, are on offer. In the Canelles reservoir, these options multiply, with affordable canoeing trips under the impressive rock walls of the Mont-rebei gorge, or guided two-day tours through the secluded waters surrounding the natural walls of Finestres.

The Rialb and Sant Llorenç de Montgai reservoirs, in Terres de Lleida, are excellent sailing and rowing destinations. And you can take a kayak trip from the Camarasa reservoir to the Doll gorge, offering plenty of photo opportunities. In Berguedà, Baells is the perfect reservoir for trying flat water sports, such as paddle surfing, canoeing, and open-water swimming, because of its 1,000-metre long via brava route.

Catalonia is home to a large number of reservoirs and lakes perfect for water sports such as rowing, sailing, and jet skiing. Calm, fresh water can also be an ideal backdrop for fun, leisure, and exploration.
RIVERS AND NATURAL LAKES

Only 20 kilometres away from the city of Girona, Ban- yoles lake is an absolute paradise for sports and the highest level of training. However, you can also row or ride on a colourful Dragon Boat: a fun, spectacular, 11-person vessel with a drummer on board, making it impossible to go unnoticed! On the Costa Brava, the lower reaches of the Ter river provide us with three stretches of gentle descents, ideal for a river adventure for the whole family. In Terres de l’Ebre, south of Tarra- gona, there are endless possibilities: from kayak trips along the Ebro river lasting several days, in true expedition style, to guided walks through the heart of the Ebro Delta National Park.

DID YOU KNOW...?

UNDER THE WATER

In the Sau reservoir, at the foot of the Tavertet cliffs, the tamed waters of the Ter river hide more than one secret. At the heart of the reservoir, the top of an old bell tower peeks out from the water. This is the Romanesque Sant Romà de Sau church, which has been underwater since the dam was built in 1962, and which only emerges during periods of severe drought. You can reach it by canoe, kayak, or paddle surf.

For more information www.osonaturisme.cat / www.aquaterracub.com
Lakes, reservoirs, and canals offer the perfect setting for experiencing nature aboard small rowing or sailing boats, in an environmentally-friendly way.

PIRINEUS

VERTICAL DREAMS IN MONT-REBEI
www.outdooradventour.com
An unforgettable adventure in the form of an expedition combining a kayak ride on calm waters through the spectacular Mont-rebei gorge, along the Noguera Pallaresa river, followed by a via ferrata climbing route, a night camping out under the stars and a scenic walk back to the starting point the next morning.
Difficulty level: medium-high.
Duration: 2 days.

OLYMPIC CANOES www.raftingparc.cat
Leisure and sport suitable for all in the Segre Olympic Park's calm-water canal: an installation which is 800 metres long, located in an unparalleled natural setting and only five minutes’ walk away from the centre of La Seu d’Urgell.
Age 3 and up. Duration: 1 hour.
Activity supervised by instructors.

PAISATGES BARCELONA

SWIMMING IN THE MOUNTAINS
www.viesbraves.com
The network of open-water swimming routes which originated on the Costa Brava also encompasses inland landscapes, such as the Baells reservoir in the Catalonian Pyrenees. Surrounded by mountains, in an enclave which is ideal for open-air sports activities, the Baells via brava route covers a total of 1,000 metres and is perfect for freshwater swimming.
**BARCELONA**

4 **OLYMPIC WAKEPARK**  
www.olimpic-cablepark.com  
The cablepark in Castelldefels’ Olympic Canal, only 20 kilometres from the centre of Barcelona, consists of a 650-metre circuit and eight different obstacles, where up to nine people can jet-ski in unison. Private lessons and courses are available for children aged 6 and up.

**COSTA BRAVA**

5 **CANOEING FOR ALL THE FAMILY**  
www.kayakdelter.com  
The lower reaches of the Ter, between Girona and the mouth of the river opposite the Medes islands, offers four sections of calm waters which are ideal for enjoyable descents, whether in a kayak or a Canadian canoe. Knowing how to swim is essential. An activity suitable for all.  
Duration: between 2 and 6 hours

6 **THE LARGEST LAKE**  
www.turisme.banyoles.cat  
Banyoles lake is the largest in Catalonia. These waters hosted the rowing regattas of the Barcelona ’92 Olympic Games and, on other occasions, the lake has also held world canoeing championships. For recreational kayakers, the lake’s perimeter - measuring almost 4 km - is an invitation for leisurely exploration of this natural ecosystem, which is both sensitive and rich in native flora and fauna.

**TERRES DE L’EBRE**

7 **ROWING ALONG THE EBRO**  
www.hotelalgadirdelta.com  
The final stretch and the mouth of the Ebro river are perfect for boat trips. From the Maquineneza reservoir to the Ebro Delta National Park and Buda island, where the river begins to meet the Mediterranean, there are routes for all levels of expertise and of varied lengths, from one hour to several days. Very stable, easy-to-steer canoes are used, for up to four people and with space for even the very youngest passengers, who will have a wonderful time in this very special natural habitat, discovering its flora and fauna.

**INTERNATIONAL EVENTS**

**MAY 2018**

7TH BANYOLES DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL  
Dragon Boating is a type of canoeing, originating in Chinese culture, which is both fun and good exercise. It features a boat formed of ten canoeers, a cox and a drummer. Coordination, coordination and teamwork are key. This activity is suitable for everyone.  
For more information www.dragonboatemotions.com
NAUTICAL ACTIVITIES

A SEA OF SENSES

With over 500 kilometres of coastline, Catalonia basks in the sunshine almost 300 days per year. Whether sailing, rowing, swimming, on the surface or deep down below, the Mediterranean is wonderful for bringing out our emotions.

The sea offers countless health benefits, both physical and emotional. Just looking at this infinite space, and listening to the rhythmical cadence of its movement, instantly makes us feel at peace. Its power of relaxation makes us happier and more creative, and reveals how wonderful something as simple as strolling along the shore and picking up colourful shells or stones can be, just for the pure pleasure of looking at them, before putting them back in their place. If a short walk is able to produce this level of well-being, it’s easy to imagine how good you would feel after an active holiday on the Catalan coast!

FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

On such a diverse, varied coastline, with large and small beaches, bays, cliffs, lagoons, sandbanks and wild archipelagos, there are a thousand and one places to reactivate all five senses. The rugged Northern coasts, with their remote coves with crystal-clear waters, invite us to kayak along silently, swim in buoyed-off lanes along the coastline or dive straight in with a snorkel to contemplate the underwater fauna. The rich beds of the marine reserves from Portbou to the Ebro Delta are heaven for protected species and a magnet for scuba-divers. Towards the South, along the whole coast, with over 280 kilometers of beaches and a large number of nautical sports resorts, the wind invites us to sail all year round or to experience guided tours on water scooters and a whole host of other active leisure activities.
LIGHT PADDLE AND SAIL BOATS

OPTIMIST
A boat designed for children and teenagers between 6 and 15, which is simple and stable but also competitive. Its rectangular hull, measuring 236 cm, is equipped with two floats to prevent it from sinking.

VAURIEN
A two-person boat, four metres in length and with a high-capacity hull. Fun and easy to steer, quick in high winds but with smooth reactions and few ropes; ideal for beginners.

RAQUERO
A boat that is five metres long but can fit up to six people, intended for use in sailing schools as part of adult beginners courses; noble in its movement and simple to steer.

WINDSURF
A windsurf is a quick, light boat which can sail without a rudder. The user stands on the board and changes direction by tilting and turning the mast, which is joined to the board with a movable foot.

KITESURF
This young, dynamic model features a small board and a power kite, used to take advantage of the force of the wind to glide along the sea.

SEA KAYAK
A light paddle boat for one or two people, with an open or closed hull, allowing for sailing close to the coast and exploration of the marine landscape.

STAND UP PADDLE
Also known as paddle surf or SUP, this simple boat is intended for sailing on seas, lakes or reservoirs to do exercise and gain strength and balance. The user stands and uses an oar for thrust.
AWASH WITH EMOTIONS

Whether you’re swimming or wearing individual diving gear, the Catalan coast is perfect for activity, adventure and contact with nature the whole year round.

COSTA BRAVA

1 GEO-KAYAKING IN CAP DE CREUS
www.kayakcostabrava.com
www.wildsea.eu
Rowing from one cove to another, venturing into caves and stopping to rest on unspoilt beaches: in short, discovering the surreal landscape of the Cap de Creus National Park from the sea. This activity is suitable for all, as it includes an introductory course. **Duration: 1 to 4 days.**

2 SWIMMING IN THE BAY OF CADAQUÉS
www.viesbraves.com
Cadaqués’ via brava route, which is 1,000 metres long, allows us to swim around Punta de Sa Conca and is one of 14 routes buoyed-off especially for safe open-water swimming on the Costa Brava.

3 SAILING IN EL PORT DE LA SELVA
www.cnps.cat
The Club Nàutic Port de la Selva (Port de la Selva Sailing Club) provides introductory and improvers courses for sailing in light boats in the unparalleled setting of the bay of El Port de la Selva. These lessons are intended for all ages (from 6 and up) and are held in spring, summer and autumn.

4 SEAHORSE TOUR
www.wildsea.eu / www.lamfora.com
A very special underwater scuba-diving experience, intended for viewing seahorses in their natural habitat, on the beaches of Tossa de Mar, where there is an usually large population of this striking species.

DID YOU KNOW...?

MONTGRÍ: THE UNSPOILT MASSIF BY THE SEA

Between Cala Montgó cove, in L’Escala, and L’Estartit port, we can find one of the Costa Brava’s most beautiful, wild stretches of coast, in addition to Cap de Creus. The Montgrí massif - sheltered by the national park which also protects the Medes islands and Baix Ter - meets the sea, forming a vertical cliff 100 metres high and almost 10 kilometers long. In this surprising, unique paradise, sculpted by the forces of the sea, we can find remote islets and caves, along with small, unspoilt coves which can only be accessed by water.

For more information: www.parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/illes-medes
COSTA DORADA

5 JET SKI RIDES
www.portcalafat.com
www.libertywingswatersports.es
Jet ski rides are organised from Port Calafat, with or without a guide, as a fun, safe way of discovering the coastline. The boats used are for three people and are large, very easy to steer and very stable. Minimum age: 16 (with parental consent). No previous nautical training is needed to participate. Duration: 15, 30 or 60 minutes. Best time of year: from April to October.

6 DIVING ‘CHRISTENING’
www.ametlladiving.com
Feel weightless underwater and breathe completely normally thanks to your individual diving kit, accompanied at all times by a PADI instructor who, if you wish, can record a video of your first steps into the fascinating world of diving, whilst you observe the Costa Dorada’s marine fauna and flora in l’Ametlla de Mar. This ‘christening’ also acts as a taster lesson for the introductory course. Duration: 2 hours (40 minutes underwater). Difficulty level: low. Best time of year: from June to September.

7 LIGHT SAILING FOR EVERYONE
www.cnametllamar.com
At the Club Nàutic Port de l’Ametlla de Mar (L’Ametlla de Mar Sailing Club), sailing classes are organised incorporating Optimist, Vaurien and Raquero boats opposite one of the Mediterranean coast’s most unspoilt landscapes. Aged 8 and up.

8 GUIDED SNORKELLING COURSE
www.planctondiving.cat
Snorkelling is a simple activity. Expert guidance and instructions allow you to take the greatest possible knowledge and satisfaction away from any diving experience. The course is held on the beautiful coast of L’Ametlla de Mar and can be adapted to each user’s level of experience, whether you are a first-time diver or wish to improve your technique.

COSTA BARCELONA

9 SWIMMING IN SITGES
www.viesbraves.com
Sitges’ via brava route, which is 2,000 metres long, is one of five sign-posted routes created along Barcelona’s coastline for safe sea swimming. It is also used for snorkelling, to explore the seabeds.

TERRES DE L’Ebre

10 DIVING DOWN TO A SHIPWRECK
www.veleroincoming.com
In a shallow area of the Ebro Delta lie the remains of a British military ship which was shipwrecked in 1813. With the right guides, you can visit this site and go right up to the ‘skeleton’ of the old ship.

DID YOU KNOW...?
A SAILBOAT WITH NO LUFF OR RUDDER?
The Catalan sail paddle-boat, or pati català, began to be used purely for leisure at the start of the 20th century on the beaches of Badalona. After being developed, in 1942 its official measurements were defined for regattas. The sail paddle-boat is 5.6 metres long and is driven by a triangular sail. It is steered by a single individual, who controls its direction by moving his/her body as a counterweight from one part of the boat or the other. The boat is formed of two hulls or floats, joined to one another by a deck made up of five independent benches.

For more information www.barcelonaturisme.com
AERIAL ACTIVITIES

ENJOY THE AIR

Observe the landscape from a birds-eye view, with your own eyes rather than through an image on a screen, feeling the wind in your face and excitement at the nothingness below your feet.

Jump from a plane at an altitude of 4,000 metres with a parachute strapped to your back. Rise up in circles, taking advantage of the thermal currents, at the controls of a paraglider. Blend in with the clouds on a peaceful hot air balloon ride and observe the world as if you were looking at a model version of it. The options are as diverse as they are real, and as incredible as it seems, all it takes to achieve your dream of flying is to want it.

OPEN RUNWAY

In Catalonia, skydiving enthusiasts use aerodromes to make jumps in environments as diverse as Empuriabrava, on the Costa Brava, or Sant Fruítós de Bages, located inland from Barcelona. Both facilities provide first-time participants with the option to make a tandem jump with an instructor. Participants cover 3,000 vertical metres in 50 seconds of free fall, and then spend 1,000 metres drifting smoothly through the air with a parachute. Gliding takes place from the La Cerdanya and Igualada-Òdena aerodromes. In this case, the glider is towed to a height of 500 metres by a motorised plane. Once it has reached this height, the connecting cable is released, and an unforgettable gliding experience begins that can last between 25 and 45 minutes.

TOASTING WITH CAVA IN THE BASKET OF A HOT AIR BALLOON OR SITTING IN THE CABIN OF A GLIDER, THAT LONG-HELD DREAM OF FLYING BECOMES REALITY.

FLIGHT AREAS

In Catalonia, there are more than 50 registered launch areas from which paragliding and hang gliding take place: from the sanctuary of Mare de Déu de Queralt, in Berga, also known as the “Balcony of Catalonia” due to its spectacular views, to the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes, in el Port de la Selva. Thanks to their ideal terrain and weather conditions, the most popular and most highly-recommended places to begin, whether its with a course or in a tandem flight, are located in Àger, in the foothills of the iconic Montsec mountains, and in the Organyà valley, where international paragliding aerobatics competitions are held.
AERIAL ACTIVITIES

MONT-REBEI GORGE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON
www.globuskontiki.com
Fly over mountain peaks, lakes, forests and towns to get a birds-eye view of one of the least accessible and most beautiful places in Catalonia, the Mont-rebei gorge in the Montsec mountains. During this excursion, the balloon reaches a height of 2,500 metres and covers nearly 40 kilometres.

Duration: 2 flight hours. Level of Difficulty: Low. 🧑‍✈️ Accessible activity.

‘TEAM BUILDING’ IN THE AIR
www.globuskontiki.com
Tasks such as creating a plan, distributing roles, taking decisions, cooperating, and leading wisely to reach a goal are at the heart of most team building activities. This time, the game takes place aboard a hot air balloon. Each team is comprised of eight people who have their own hot air balloon and 4x4 vehicle, as well as the constant guidance of a driver and professional pilot.

Duration: 2 flight hours. Level of Difficulty: Medium.

DID YOU KNOW?
ORGANYÀ, A MAGIC MOUNTAIN
The Cabó valley, located in Terres de Lleida, is paradise for paragliders thanks in part to the unique terrain of the mountain which permits flights to take place throughout the year. The terrain allows a constant and smooth wind to pass through, which, when it hits the mountainside, forms a lifting current that helps paragliders gain altitude without having to rely on thermal currents. This small detail has made the Organyà flight zone famous world-wide as The Magic Mountain, and paragliders from across the world flock to this ancient valley to fly, perfect their technique, and make striking pirouettes.
The stunning terrain and the well-maintained trails that run through Catalonia’s forests, valleys, and mountains make it a true garden of Eden for fans of trail running and orienteering races. As with hiking, these mountain races are highly popular.

In perfectly suited environments, such as Vall de Boí, Espot, or Gósol, specific training and practices centres have been developed for these disciplines. The routes are marked and categorised by difficulty, providing routes suitable for athletes of all levels, from those who are only beginning to do physical activity in nature to those looking for an ideal environment in which to develop their potential by doing interval training, improving their abilities in technical areas or even preparing for specific competitions, such as vertical kilometre races.

Charming Roads
Catalonia is home to an extensive network of local country roads that lead to truly unique destinations. A total of 10 motorcycle tourism routes have been created in the demarcation of Lleida for those who like travelling by motorcycle and enjoy both the journey itself and the adventures that await them just off the road.

TRAVELLING IS SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST GOING TO A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT IS FEELING EACH STEP, ENJOYING EACH CURVE AND BECOMING ONE WITH THE LANDSCAPE, TAKING IN THE ESSENCE THAT MAKES IT SO UNIQUE.

PATHS AND TRAILS FOR EVERYONE
Beyond the edge of the asphalt, there is an extensive maze of forest paths and trails that beckon you to go on a hike and get in touch with nature. There are routes designed for people riding all-terrain vehicles, such as quads, buggies, or 4x4 vehicles, to leisurely travel along, observing the landscape and stopping to take photographs, taking in the spirit and peace of the rural environment.

There are also areas with horse riding trails. Whether it’s an hour get-away or a week-long adventure, on the shores of the sea or in the pastures of the Terres de
l’Ebre, horse riding is always an unforgettable experience because it provides riders with an opportunity to get in touch with nature. And don’t forget the outings and carriage rides that are offered in la Fageda d’en Jordà in the Garrotxa in the Pyrenees.

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
Practicing sport in nature is a source of innumerable physical and mental benefits, but the best reward is feeling nature’s embrace. To achieve this, it is vital to learn how to observe, listen to, and experience nature. Responsible hikers know to leave the environment as they found it, minimising their ecological footprint, respecting plants and animals, not making unnecessary noise or bothering other hikers, and taking home their rubbish in addition to the good memories they have made, in the form of photographs, drawings, and smiles.

DID YOU KNOW?

MONTserrat, the Mountain with 1,500 Peaks
Climbing is a long-held tradition in Catalonia, and Montserrat mountain, with more than 1,500 peaks, walls, and spurs of high-quality rock, is a benchmark location for its practice world-wide.

At 7 kilometres long and 2.5 kilometres wide, the mountain offers more than 5,600 open paths, which means that when you visit the area, you will often find strings of climbers working their way up the mountain. To preserve the biodiversity of the area, several limitations have been placed on the opening of new routes, in order to promote repairs and maintenance on the classic routes.

For more information www.muntanyamontserrat.gencat.cat
THROUGH VALLEYS AND MOUNTAINS

There are many different ways to enjoy a territory: hiking, orienteering, climbing, or driving a quad or a motorcycle. Catalonia offers plenty of options.

VAL D’ARAN

1 MULTI-ADVENTURE IN THE VALLEY

www.kabi-travels.com

Exploring Val d’Aran through its canyons and rivers and travelling from its snowy peaks to its valleys is a complete adventure, combining several disciplines such as hiking, orienteering, beginning climbing and via ferratas, as well as rafting and rappelling into canyons.

Duration: 3 days. Best time of year: spring and summer.

PAYSATGES

2 HORSE RIDING TRAILS

www.aranexperience.com

Travel from the Pla de Beret to Vielha, passing through the most picturesque towns of the valley on the back of a docile horse, discovering tranquil paths and enjoying the landscape, the mountains, the forests, and the roaring Garona river. An activity suitable for everyone age 7 and up.

Duration: 1 to 3 hours. Best time of year: spring, summer, and autumn.

PIRINEUS

3 ADVENTURES IN THE DARK

www.discoverpyrenees.com

Taking your first steps in the exploration of the subterranean world is a truly exciting experience. Exploring beginner caves such as Fou de Bor or la Cova d’Anes in Cerdanya accompanied by expert instructors is the best way to begin practicing this discipline, which combines adventure, sport and science. Age 7 up.

4 AN ALL-TERRAIN JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

www.lavalldelord.com

On 4x4 vehicle excursions along paths in the Busa mountains, located in Lleida in the Pre-Pyrenees, discover scenes from dark legends in

DID YOU KNOW?

SIURANA, THE LAST MOORISH CASTLE

The red and grey rocky cliffs that surround Siurana in the Prades mountains are a paradise for climbers. Thanks to its strategic location at the highest point of the massif, the Siurana castle, of Moorish origin, was impenetrable for centuries and became the last Muslim enclave in Catalonia. Today people can visit the castle easily and save their energy to explore the area around the town and the ancient fort. A short but spectacular route is the Pulpit Path (Camí de la Trona), a photogenic and panoramic rock formation that is only 15 minutes away from the parking lot.

For more information www.turismesiurana.org
oak and red pine forests, where a wide variety of fungi species grow, as well as areas where important events in Catalan history took place. Best time of year: spring and summer.

5 VIA FERRATA AT MONTSANT
www.veleroincoming.com
The route established as the via ferrata at La Morera de Montsant runs along the vertical walls of the Montsant mountains, offering climbers unparalleled aerial views from craggy rocks, rope bridges, fantastic panoramic overlooks of Priorat, and more. Guided activity. Difficulty: Medium-high. Duration: 3 hours. Best time of year: all year

6 PAISATGES BARCELONA
QUAD EXCURSIONS
www.paddleinspain.com
Only an hour from the city, the picturesque natural setting of the Barcelona Pre-Pyrenees turns into the scene of an exciting adventure accessible to everyone. Learning to drive these motorised vehicles is truly easy, and expert instructors always accompany participants on excursions. Duration: 1 hour. Best time of year: all year

TERRES DE L'EBRE
7 ORIENTEERING IN THE TIVISSA MOUNTAINS
www.veleroincoming.com
In addition to attaining a useful skill, learning to orienteer in a natural environment with a map and a compass can also be an exciting adventure and a fun game for people of all ages. In the Tivissa mountains, courses for beginners are tailored to the level of the participants. Duration: from 1 to 5 hours. Best time of year: all year.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
FROM 2 TO 8 SEPTEMBER
TRAIL RUNNING IN THE PYRENEES
The Pyrenees Stage Run is a trail race that is run in phases and takes place in the Catalan Pyrenees, following the GR 11 trail from Ribes de Freser to Val d’Aran. Teams are comprised of two or three runners who must complete a route of 240 kilometres and 15,000 metres of cumulative elevation gain, passing through a total of five natural parks.
For more information www.psr.run

DID YOU KNOW?
UNIVERSAL ROMANESQUE STYLE
In the Vall de Boí in the Aiguèstortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, the concentration of Romanesque buildings is extraordinary. There are a total of eight churches and a hermitage which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These buildings were constructed during the 11th and 12th centuries following the Lombard model from the north of Italy, which is characterised by careful stonemasonry and slim bell towers. The Románico con Botas [Romanesque style with Boots] offers routes along old paths that connect the villages of the Vall de Boí, allowing hikers to learn interesting stories from their guide.
For more information www.vallboi.cat
Winter brings with it a change in the landscape that redefines every aspect of the mountain. The trails are covered in a blanket of white, beckoning people to explore them on snowmobile or dogsledding excursions. With snowshoes, you can go even further, exploring the snowy forest, walking past the footprints of a fox, a grouse or a chamois, or travelling to frozen glacial lakes.

**STAY FIT YEAR ROUND**

In Catalonia, there are seven Nordic ski resorts (www.totnordic.com) with trails of all levels, as well as routes specifically for snowshoeing. Both activities allow you to combine the benefits of fitness with a healthy dose of contact with nature and the pure mountain air. In the Catalan mountains, there are also ten modern alpine ski resorts with nearly 500 kilometers of skiable trails of all levels. You can look at features of the trails by visiting www.catalunya.com/que-fer/activitat/esquiar-amb-sol.

**THERE ARE CERTAIN ADVENTURES THAT CAN ONLY BE TAKEN IN THE WINTERTIME, LIKE SKATING ON A FROZEN LAKE, OR LEARNING HOW TO BUILD AN IGLOO...**

**FROM THE PEAKS**

In the winter, the most seasoned hikers and experienced skiers feel the call to the snowy mountain tops. Whether it is with the help of a helicopter or climbing the slope with ski skins, everyone is looking for the best ways to reach the snow-covered peaks, enjoy the views from the highest point, and later, descend into the valley on skis or a snowboard. In this place of unparalleled beauty, knowing the environment is crucial, and so mountain guides play a key role.
**DID YOU KNOW?**

**LA MOLINA, A CENTURY-OLD SKI RESORT**

In 1908, people were already practicing telemarc, the discipline considered the mother of modern skiing, according to the contents of a bulletin from the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya. Thanks to the arrival of the train in 1922, skiing grew in popularity in Catalonia. In 1925, the first lodge was opened, and in 1940, the first medical aid service was established for skiers. The Molina ski resort was a pioneer in the popularisation of skiing at the beginning of the 20th century, and today it continues to be a benchmark in the practice of winter sports.

For more information: [www.lamolina.cat](http://www.lamolina.cat)

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**INTRODUCTION TO SKI TOURING**

[www.nautviajes.es](http://www.nautviajes.es)

There is nothing better than an unforgettable weekend spent learning ski touring. The experience is divided into two activity sessions. The exclusive Bahns de Tredòs spa resort just outside the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park has been chosen as the base station. The hotel can be reached on skis and by snowmobile. The guides are ski touring experts who give theory classes and familiarize their students with the subject area. Difficult: Medium. Best time of year: January to April.

**ON DEMAND HELI-SKIING AND HELI-SNOWSHOEING**

[www.kabi-travels.com](http://www.kabi-travels.com)

Expert guides choose the best slopes based on the snow and their knowledge of the terrain. Participants then take a helicopter ride to the most remote peaks in the Catalan Pyrenees. Once they arrive, the guides lead the group down the mountain, gliding through the virgin snow. For those who don’t ski, there are also snowshoe excursions through areas that would otherwise be inaccessible. Difficult: High. Minimum age: 16 years. Best time of year: January to April.

**SKI BETWEEN LAKES AND GLACIAL CIRQUES**

[www.outdooradventour.com](http://www.outdooradventour.com)

Three days of mountain skiing on a unique, roaming trail, exploring the most beautiful areas on the northern slope of the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, surrounded by frozen lakes and glacial cirques. The group is always under the supervision of an accompanying guide who knows the area well. The group stays in traditional hotels with spas and spends unforgettable nights in the high mountain refuges. Difficult: High. Best time of year: January to April.

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**WINTER ACTIVITIES**

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**ALPINE SKIING IN PORT AINE, PYRENEES.**

© Oriol Clavera

© Daniel Julián
Travelling on foot is experiencing life at a butterfly’s pace. It’s letting your body and spirit soak in the landscape using all five senses. It’s enjoying the sunrise, water from the springs, the shade of the trees, a mid-hike picnic, artisan cheese, fruits from the forest... Walking is the simplest and healthiest way to travel, but it is also the best way to focus on the details that can transform a simple stroll into a magnificent adventure. It doesn’t matter if the journey is an hour or a month long; the walker’s outlook is what determines the precious mark that the trail leaves on his or her heart.
ravelling on foot is much more than simply accumulating kilometres or altitude. The twenty-first century hiker is an explorer infatuated with the landscape that they can enjoy while simultaneously practicing the healthiest sport that exists: walking in harmony with one’s surroundings, contemplating the native flora and fauna, meeting new people, discovering traditions, festivals, and popular dances, resting in small villages, visiting curious museums, going into mediæval churches, savouring local recipes, and shopping in artisanal markets.

365 DAYS A YEAR
The varied, mountainous terrain that covers a large portion of Catalonia, as well as its rich landscape and culture, invite hikers to forget the clock, put on their boots, and enjoy the mild, temperate climate that turns this small area full of contrast into a true paradise for hikers.
INFINITE ROUTES
A hiking trail network of long- and short-distance trails, called GR (Gran Recorrido) and PR (Pequeño Recorrido) routes, covers the entire territory, guaranteeing that hikers of all levels will enjoy the experience. This network offers long journeys, such as crossing the Pyrenees on the GR-11 or travelling through the Mediterranean littoral on the GR-92. There are also routes that take several days at a minimum, like the GR-107, known as The Path of Good Men (Camí dels Bons Homes), or the GR-175, which allows hikers to discover Catalonia’s most important Cistercian monasteries. The possibilities are practically endless. As the map is unfolded, revealing a section at a time, new routes appear that lead to worlds left to discover.

THE ROUTES OF THE HIKING EUROPE PROJECT ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT FOUR regions OF CROATIA, ITALY, IRELAND, AND CATALONIA.

DID YOU KNOW?
HIKING EUROPE, THE RURAL WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS
The Hiking Europe project was created with the purpose of creating a network of routes that would help tourists explore little-known rural areas of high natural and cultural interest by hiking through them. There are a total of 1,170 kilometres of routes that are divided between Emilia Romagna, Dubrovnik-Derevna, Donegal, and Catalonia. In Catalonia, in the Pyrenees, The Fifth Lake Route (la ruta el Cinqué Llac) (www.elcinquellac.com) is a circular trail. In Priorat, hiking is combined with tasting the best wines, which come from DO Montsant and DOQ Priorat (www.prioratenoturisme.com).

For more information www.hikingeurope.net
PATHS AND TRAILS FOR EVERYONE

In addition to the extensive network of marked trails in Catalonia, a wide variety of themed excursions allow hikers to discover interesting facts about the country’s history, wildlife, and culture.

PYRENEES

1. THE DOOR TO HEAVEN
   Touching the sky

The Door to Heaven (La Porta del Cel) is a high mountain journey that takes place in sections that run through the Alt Pirineu Natural Park, the largest protected space in Catalonia. The route runs through a vast territory of rugged nature, lush forests, mountain lakes and peaks over 3,000 metres in altitude, such as the Pica d’Estats, which, at 3,143 metres, is the highest peak in Catalonia.

2. AIGÜESTORTES
   The secrets of the national park

Surprising marmots at the entrance of their dens, walking along a river where otters live...

3. FANTASHISTORY
   Play while you walk

Fantasy, history, reality, and technology come together in Fantashistory, a game created to discover the legends of Cerdanya. The route can be followed with a GPS and an iPad. When each waypoint is reached, a character addresses the participants on a screen, explaining their story and the steps to follow in order to continue the adventure. The Legends of Fantastic Cerdanya and Prehistory in Prullans games are available in Catalan, Spanish, English, and French.

DID YOU KNOW?

MUSIC AT SANT PERE DE RODES

Walking from the monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes to the ruins of the castle of Sant Salvador is a 30-minute hike that features an unforgettable panoramic view of the sea, el Cap de Creus, the grounds of the ancient monastery, the peak of Canigó, the Pyrenees, and more. In the summer, the monastery organises its own festival, with piano and chamber music concerts.

For families, there are guided tours on the origins and history of the monastery, the journey of pilgrims in the Middle Ages, pirate attacks, and more.

For more information:
www.patrimoni.gencat.cat/es/coleccion/monasterio-de-sant-pere-de-rodes
4. IN THE STEPS OF THE LAST CATHAR
The alternative to The Path of Good Men

This is a route where hikers travel along old paths and trails that have connected the villages of the Vall de Boí since time immemorial. Accompanied by a guide, hikers discover and learn interesting stories and anecdotes about the most important jewels of Catalan Romanesque style as they visit the churches of Sant Climent de Taüll, Sant Joan de Boí, Santa Eulàlia d’Erill, etc.

5. ROMANESQUE STYLE WITH BOOTS
Fascination with rural art

A walk through the Pyrenees of Catalonia, from Guardiola de Berguedà to Bellver de Cerdanya, following the route used by Pablo Picasso himself in 1906, when he abandoned the city of Barcelona and discovered the beauty and colors of these mountains on the way to Paris. The route is divided into easy sections, stopping in towns such as Saldes and Gósol, located at the foot of the Pedraforca mountain, where the artist painted during his two month stay.

6. THE PABLO PICASSO PATH
Pictorial footprints

A border-crossing traverse through the Pyrenees between Bagà (Berguedà), and Tarascó (Ariège), recreating the journey of Guilhem Bélibaste, the last known Cathar elder or prefect. The route explores captivating and rugged Pyrenean landscapes, crossing through the Cadí-Moixeró and Alt Pirineu Natural Parks. The route is parallel to The Path of Good Men.

7. THE FIFTH LAKE
Secrets of the Terres de Lleida

The Fifth Lake is a circular trail that passes through the Pyrenees in the Lleida area, where, over the course of several sessions, visitors can enjoy marvellous landscapes and the tranquil, solitary rural environment. This is a route of territorial discovery. There are a total of five sections which, on the last day, lead to the enigmatic “fifth lake”.

8. MONASTERY OF NÚRIA

© JOSEP LUIS RODRÍGUEZ
DID YOU KNOW?
DALÍ, SURREALISM, AND CAP DE CREUS
In the Cap de Creus Natural Park, the landscape is an enormous work of art that drives geology enthusiasts hopelessly crazy. In this setting of mythological relics, it is easy to find similarities between the scenery and the unusual figures painted by Max Ernst after passing through this earthly Elysium, guided by his friend Salvador Dalí. At the easternmost part of the Peninsula, beyond the lighthouse, the maze of sharp rocks of various colors and textures create a fabulous setting that Luis Buñuel, another universal surrealist, used as the backdrop for his controversial film *La Edad de Oro* [The Golden Age], which was released in 1930.

For more information www.parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/es/cap-creus
11. THE POBLET FOREST ROUTE
Ora et camina

More than 700 species of wild mushrooms grow among the pines, oaks, linden trees, hazelnut trees, and firs of the Castellfollit Forest, at the Poblet Natural Site. Along the way, walkers will find mushrooms painted on the trees which are only visible from a certain angle. Finding them is a game that the entire family can enjoy. Join this route via the Cistercian route. Find more information at www.larutadelcister.info

13. THE IGNIATIAN WAY
The Route of Conversion

The pilgrimage route between Azpeitia (Guipúzcoa) and the holy cave of Manresa (Barcelona) in which Saint Ignatius of Loyola had the profound spiritual experience that would define his life, coincides in large part with the Way of Saint James, but goes in the opposite direction. In the Catalan section of the route, pilgrims visit churches, hermitages and monasteries, crossing through the countryside and villages that led the saint to his “Spiritual Exercises.”

DID YOU KNOW...?
A SPIRITUAL DIET

It has not been easy to determine what the Cathars, the men and women that fled through the Pyrenees in the Middle Ages, ate. But experts in gastronomy and history have examined numerous documents, recipe books, and even the acts of Inquisition against the last Cathars in order to determine what the persecuted Prefects ate—and what they didn’t eat. These people sought spiritual purity and denied their bodies all types of flesh, in both a figurative and a literal sense. Today, on The Path of Good Men, people can enjoy delicious recipes inspired by Cathar and mediaeval healthy cuisine.

For more information www.camidelsbonshomes.com
CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE.
EXPERT ADVICE

The variety of hiking trails in Catalonia is truly staggering. Good route selection and proper planning can transform a trip into an absolutely unforgettable experience.

PERSONALISED EXCURSIONS
In Catalonia, there are a seemingly infinite number of routes, of all distances and levels of difficulty—based on levels of both physical exertion and technicality—that lead to a variety of attractions. In order to ensure that your trip is a success, it’s best to plan based upon the abilities of the least prepared member of the group, rather than the most prepared.

THE SEA, OR THE MOUNTAINS?
The Mediterranean littoral and the mid-mountain areas can be enjoyed year-round. In the high mountains, summer is the perfect season to explore the hiking trails. In the winter, the snowy landscapes are enjoyed by snowshoeing enthusiasts.

STUDY THE ROUTE
Before beginning a hike, it’s extremely important to analyse the map and familiarise oneself with the cartography and markers that indicate the route. It is important to keep in mind the estimated time from start to finish, the mileage, cumulative change in altitude, and any possible shortcuts that can be taken if the excursion needs to be cut short.

GPS AND MOBILE PHONE
The batteries in your mobile phone and GPS should be fully charged. If the excursion is long, airplane mode may help save your battery. An external battery may be useful on multiple-day journeys.

WEATHER
The weather forecast is extremely important to take into consideration when planning any kind of outdoor activity. Hikers should be very aware of the risk of storms, precipitation, and sudden changes in temperature when planning their trip.

SHARE YOUR PLANS
Whether you are travelling alone or in a group, it is important to inform other people—such as hotel employees, family members, etc.—of your plans, providing them with the greatest accuracy possible. The most prudent course of action is to keep to the planned route.

ALL OF THE ROUTES
IN FULL DETAIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>THE ROUTE</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Elevation change</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Time of year</th>
<th>Place of Interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE DOOR TO HEAVEN</td>
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<td>🌿</td>
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<tr>
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<td>IN THE STEPS OF THE LAST CATHAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ROMANESQUE STYLE WITH BOOTS</td>
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<td>7 km</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4/5</td>
<td>☀️</td>
<td>🌿</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This way, if problems arise, emergency units will know where to start looking for you.

**THE PERFECT BACKPACK**

Even if there are clear skies and it is hot at the beginning of your trip, don’t forget to bring a rain jacket or an extra coat in case the weather changes. Among other things, a hat, sunglasses with UV protection, sun cream, a map of the area, water, food, money, documentation, a watch, and a mobile phone will also be useful.

**IDEAL FOOTWEAR**

It is very important to wear hiking boots or sport shoes designed for mountain hiking. The sole of the shoe should provide traction and protect the bottom of your foot from irregularities in the terrain.

There are specific models for different seasons, temperatures, kinds of terrain, etc. Always choose a shoe that is one or two sizes larger than the shoes you wear normally.

**WALKING STICKS**

Walking on uneven ground at an incline with a pack on your back requires more energy than walking on flat paths. Walking sticks save your legs 15% of their normal exertion and help you to keep your balance in irregular or slippery areas.

**BE PREPARED**

Bring food and drinks such as water, a small sandwich, dried fruit, nuts, etc. During the hike, your body will need more energy than usual. It’s best to take brief stops to hydrate. On the trail, you should drink small sips of water every 15 to 20 minutes, and refuel every hour with light foods that are also rich in natural sugars.

**RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

Exploring nature is the first step to feeling like a part of it, and in doing so, loving and respecting it. Walking on the established trails, avoiding making unnecessary noise, and leaving your surroundings how you found them is the best way to send a positive message to future generations, the true inheritors of our planet’s natural richness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Interest</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Elevation change</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Time of year</th>
<th>Place of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. THE FIFTH LAKE</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>▲ 6,300 m</td>
<td>150 km</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>🌵</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. REFUGIS DEL TORB</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>▲ 4,500 m ▼ 4,500 m</td>
<td>71 km</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>🌵 🍃</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. THE PATROL PATH</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>▲ 3,900 m ▼ 3,900 m</td>
<td>140 km</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>🌵 🍃 🌝</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. THE CISTERCIAN ROUTE</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>▲ 3,181 m ▼ 3,181 m</td>
<td>105 km</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>🌵 🍃 🌅</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. THE POBLET FOREST ROUTE</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>▲ 6,200 m ▼ 5,900 m</td>
<td>6,5 km</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>🌵 🍃</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>▲ 6,200 m ▼ 5,900 m</td>
<td>388 km</td>
<td>15/18</td>
<td>🌵 🍃</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. THE IGNATIAN WAY</td>
<td>★</td>
<td>▲ 3,200 m ▼ 3,200 m</td>
<td>183 km</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>🌵 🍃</td>
<td>🍃</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sun, the breeze, the sounds of the forest, the fresh mountain air, the unmistakable smell of the sea... On a bicycle, your journey is transformed and enriched with each turn of the pedals. Travelling at a leisurely pace of 15 kilometres per hour, the world is different. It’s an altogether unique experience. Suddenly, the most precious, flavourful and fun things are all within reach. The bicycle is a clean, quiet, and familiar vehicle that helps us get in touch with nature and other people. It’s the perfect saddle on which to visit sites, admire landscapes and truly experience our precious environment.
Catalonia is a paradise for cycle-touring. There is a route for every visitor, from the most gentle circuits to the most challenging tracks, and trails designed to be accessible for all.

Cycling allows you to combine sport, culture and good times. To help the youngest cyclists get started, or if this is your first cycle-touring experience, Catalonia offers flat routes away from the flow of traffic, which make use of disused train tracks. These are the vies verdes rail trails in Girona, between the Catalan Pyrenees and the Costa Brava, in Terra Alta (adapted to be accessible for all) and in Baix Ebre, Tarragona.

**Exploring at 15 Kilometres Per Hour**

For those who already have biking experience, there are cycle-touring routes down quiet roads and disused rural tracks, inviting you to pedal along at a leisurely pace, to visit small medieval towns — such as in Empordà — and to sample delicious local cuisine, like the rice from the Ebro Delta.

**There Are as Many Ways to Cycle-Tour as There Are Cycle-Tourists. Each Rider Can Choose How to Experience Freedom.**

**Passion for Two Wheels**

Cycling’s widespread popularity, together with a long-standing hiking and mountaineering tradition, have led to the creation of a seemingly endless network of routes designed especially to be explored on mountain bikes. In total, there are over 6,456 kilometres of tracks, of varied difficulty levels and durations and distributed across 18 official Mountain Biking Centres, in addition to a wealth of self-guided routes, allowing you to discover all of Catalonia’s natural scenery.
The renowned writer Josep Pla, considered to have produced the best prose in Catalan of the 20th century, compared the carriages of this old train to “matchboxes.” In reality, it was a toy train on a narrow track, which, according to the area’s oldest residents, struggled to climb hills when it was heavily loaded. The line was in use between 1887 and 1956, transporting both people and goods, including cork and a variety of local products. Today, part of its former track is used as a cycle path, allowing the whole family to pedal along whilst contemplating Empordà’s scenery.

For more information www.viesverdes.cat

In Girona, riders can contemplate the iconic beauty of the Costa Brava on routes along the coastline. In the Costa de Barcelona area, you can travel from the beaches in Maresme to the Montserrat or Montseny mountains. On the Costa Dorada, vineyards reveal the secrets of the wonderful wines that they produce. And the majestic mountains of the Catalan Pyrenees welcome the most daring travelers.

The Terres de Lleida area offers different pleasures and challenges to those found up high: long distances and vast landscapes, for example. The accessible mountains of Paisatges Barcelonins await adventurers. Barcelona is the ideal city for starting or ending your trip.
ACTIVITIES FOR CYCLE-TOURISTS

Anything is possible: pedal peacefully around Banyoles lake, loop around the huge Cadi mountain range on a challenging ride through the Pyrenees, explore a vía verde rail trail with the whole family, or rest in accommodations offering specialised services for cycling aficionados.

PIRINEUS

PEDALLING ALONG THE TER RIVER

Setcases and L’Estartit

- Distance: 230 km
- Number of stages: 6/7
- www.cyclingnolimittravel.com

A 230-kilometre guided journey, distributed across five stages, which runs from the source of the Ter river, in the Catalan Pyrenees, to its mouth at Gola del Ter, in the Mediterranean. Special interest: a route down mainly unpaved paths, as an authentic introduction to rural Catalonia.

PICTURESOUE VILLAGES

Cerdanya

- Difficulty level: Low
- Distance: 1,255 m - 1,838 m
- Number of stages: 40+62
- www.discoverypyrenees.com

Visit the most charming villages, such as Lies and Travessers, with views of Cadi-Moixeró National Park. Different roadbooks are on offer, containing self-guided routes with detailed descriptions. Special interest: the scenery of Cadi-Moixeró National Park.

EVERYTHING FOR CYCLISTS

Cerdanya Ecoresort

- www.cerdanyaecoresort.com

Information point with maps, guides and advice from professional guides. Tools and cleaning kit, garage, supplies shop, early breakfast option, picnic, set menus, special massages and spa. Special interest: service intended both for professional and family cycling.

TERRES DE LLEIDA

INTERCATALUNYA CYCLE-TOURING ROUTE

Lleida

- Difficulty level: Medium
- Distance: 293 m
- Number of stages: 1
- www.catalunya.com

Offering wonderful landscapes, this trail is compatible with the Way of St James. It connects the towns of Cervera and Lleida, passing through Talladell, Tarrag, Anglesola, Castellnou de Se-ana, Villa-Sana, Palau d’Anglesola, Bell-lloc d’Urgell and Alcoletge. Special interest: discovering the Terres de Lleida area.

COSTA BRAVA

TEAM WELCOME

Girona

- Hotel Carlemany Girona
- www.hotelcarlemanygirona.com

With an enclosed space, monitored by security cameras, for storing up to 40 bikes and two equipment cars. Experience in hosting professional teams. Flexible meal times. Picnics specifically for sports activities. Sports information available for customers. Special interest: geared towards professional guests. All year round.

RELAX IN THE SPA AFTER A DAY’S CYCLING

Lloret de Mar, Costa Brava

- Hotel Anabel
- www.hotelanabel.com

Particularly geared towards cycling professionals. It offers an area equipped for cleaning, maintaining, repairing and parking bikes. Information provided on a large variety of routes and tracks for coastal, mountain, ro- leur and technical training. Further information at cycling.lloretdemar.org/ca. Special interest: amateur and professional cyclists, depending on the chosen route.

1. THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF TRAVESSERES
2. LLORET DE MAR
Evenia Travel is an agency specialised in technical stages, intensive cycling training, etc. Riders have access to every possible service: hotels, transfers, bike stations (enclosed and monitored), an optional mechanics service, spa, gym, swimming pool, a high-quality sports catering service... Special interest: for all ages and levels of expertise. Services offered throughout the year.

**Ideal for Stages**

**Costa Brava**

Evenia travel services

Evenia.travel

**Grand Medieval Route**

**Costa Brava**

This ride begins in the small village of Madremanya and, from there, links up the villages of La Pera, Púbol, Corçà, Casavells, Ullastret, Palau-sator, Peratallada, Castell d’Empordà and Monells, amongst others, along minor roads and rural paths. Special interest: picturesque villages and the cultural and historical heritage.

**Riding Around Lloret de Mar**

**Lloret de Mar, Costa Brava**

You will have the chance to ride around Lloret de Mar right from the hotel. 40 bikes can be stored, there is a space for washing them, an area and tools for repairs, an indoor trainer, energy bars and gels, special picnics and links for downloading routes on your mobile phone or via GPS. Special interest: mainly the landscapes.

**Coastal Route**

**Costa Brava**

Starting from the hotel, this route connects Tossa de Mar and Sant Feliu de Guixols along the coastal road: one of the most spectacular on the entire Mediterranean coast. Special interest: mainly the scenery.

**One Route, Limitless Possibilities**

**Costa Brava**

Pirinexus offers 353 kilometres of routes, passing through 53 towns and villages and combining via verda rail trails with rural paths or roads with little traffic and a guided tour of a winery where you can enjoy the region’s excellent wines and its finest cuisine. Advance reservation. Special interest: cultivation of respect for the environment.

**Peak of Montgròs**

**Costa Brava**

A short route with a climb up to the peak of Montgròs. The first kilometres are flat, followed by a steep ascent for around five kilometres up to the top of Montgròs (314 metres). Special interest: the landscape. Marvelous panoramic views with the Mediterranean sea as a backdrop.

**Authentic Costa Brava Route**

**Costa Brava**

Starting from the Fenals Garden Hotel in Lloret de Mar, the route ascends to Calonge. The return route passes through the towns of Romanyà and Llagostera. Special interest: a ride which allows us to enjoy the authentic Costa Brava, the cliffs on the old road between Tossa and Sant Feliu and Romanyà’s ancestral houses.

**Costa Brava Route**

**Vilar Sanctuary**

**Blanes**

A short route which gives access to points not included on the trail but which are very close by (the cross of Sant Pere del Bosc and the Angel monument). Long downhill sections, meaning that you should exercise caution. Special interest: the chapel in the Vilar sanctuary and its short distance from Blanes.
The Hotel Delamar offers the area’s most outstanding route, along the beautiful road which links Tossa de Mar with Sant Feliu de Guíxols. You can pedal along in the company of the almost-silver greens of oak trees and the turquoise colour of the coves found on the authentic Costa Brava, with the Mediterranean sea behind. But that’s not all: three mountain passes complete this iconic, challenging route. Special interest: the scenery, since you can take in spectacular views of the coast between Tossa and Sant Feliu de Guixols.

This establishment adapts to cyclists’ needs, offering general and specific services for each speciality, alongside flexible meal times. Where cycling types are concerned, several specialised companies offer flexibility and customised routes, and additional services such as transfers and bike maintenance. Special interest: for professionals, beginners and families. Service all year round.

Every cycle-touring aficionado will love the hotel’s facilities — a bike station (bike store, tool bench and power showers) — and the service of the staff who manage them. To round it all off, this hotel also offers a picnic service, for both breakfast and lunch. Special interest: aimed at all cycle-tourists, whether professional or amateur.

WATER RUSH

In the mid 19th century, whilst the Gold Rush was in full flow in the Western USA, Catalonia was dreaming of transforming the fields of Lleida into the national breadbasket. And so, the Urgell Canal was born, an ambitious hydraulic project which distributed water across a region which, in half a century, saw its population grow quite literally; its inhabitants’ average height increased by no less than 6 centimetres, according to data from 1875 and 1936. Nowadays, the Urgell Canal continues to carry out its important original function, but also invites visitors to discover the five districts which it irrigates along cycle-tourism routes for the whole family, such as Pedals del Canal d’Urgell.

For more information www.pedalsdelcanaldurgell.com
An option for road-bike exploration of the area where many professional cyclists — belonging to different international teams — live and train. Right from the hotel entrance, you can begin to pedal along quiet roads and enjoy the famous Els Àngels, Rocacorba, Sant Grau and Sant Hilari climbs. **Special interest:** discovering the city’s cycling feel and the cycling atmosphere of its bars. Enjoying the charm and beauty of a city like Girona, wandering down the streets of its Jewish Quarter and eating good food in one of its many renowned restaurants.

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**GIRONA CLASSIC CLIMB**

Girona

- 700 m
- 1,300 m
- 70-100 km
- 2
- www.cicloturisme.com

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**CIRCULAR ROUTES AND WELLNESS**

Girona

- Hotel Ciutat de Girona
- 18-37 km
- www.hotelciutatdegirona.com

The hotel offers a short tour of Girona and the Llémena valley, or a route along the Carrilet de Sant Feliu via verda rail trail. And, once back in the hotel, you can experience a whole array of sensations in the treatment area. These treatments will transport you to a place of natural, healing relaxation using a blend of different therapies. **Special interest:** suitable for any age and fitness level, including individuals with limited mobility.

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**SPECIALISTS IN CYCLING**

Costa Brava

- GHT Hotels
- 63 km
- www.ghthotels.cat

Installations for facilitating different sporting activities, focusing most specifically on cycling and mountain biking. Cycle-tourists have access to facilities and services to meet their specific needs, such as safe spaces to store bikes, a cleaning service, tools for repairs, special menus, massages, etc. **Special interest:** a service aimed at both amateur and professional cyclists.

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**COSTA BARCELONA**

**CALELLA, EL CORREDOR, A CLASSIC ROUTE.**

Calella

- GHT Hotels
- 63 km
- www.ghthotels.cat

A challenging 63-kilometre circular ride with an accumulated gradient of 2,820 metres. It begins and ends in Calella, passing through Pineda de Mar, Can Pallofa, Sant Cebrià de Vallalta, Vallgorguina and the sanctuary of El Corredor, amongst other points of interest. **Special interest:** the massif of El Corredor is part of the Serralada Litoral National Park and is positioned parallel to the coast. Aside from natural heritage, prehistoric remains and Iberian sites are also found here.

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"**LA VOLTA**: OVER A CENTURY OF CYCLING**

On 6th January 1911, the first Volta a Catalunya — or Tour de Catalonia — took place: one of the oldest cycling challenges in the world. A total of 34 cyclists took part in the first stage (97 km), pedalling from Barcelona to Tarragona, and passing through Sitges. The second stage (111 km), linked up the cities of Tarragona and Lleida. The third (157 km) led them back to the Sants velodrome in Barcelona. The winner was Sebastián Masdeu, averaging at 23 km/h for a total of 363 kilometres. Given the state of the roads at the time, this was more a cross-country cycling challenge than road cycling as we know it today.

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For more information: www.voltacatalunya.cat
MONTNEGRE
Calella

Hotel Neptuno
- 25.5 km
- www.hotelneptuno.com

A trip that allows you to discover the Maresme coast and the Montnegre National Park, with circular and self-guided tours of varying levels of difficulty. The Hotel Neptuno offers fitness, a sauna, a bike garage, tools and a cleaning area, in addition to bike hire for training and then resting and relaxing afterwards. Special interest: the landscape.

ROUTE FROM CALELLA TO TOSSA DE MAR
The Maresme coast - Costa Brava

Hotel Bernat offers a route on tarmac, with numerous climbs, descents and bends which showcase beautiful scenery. It passes through the towns and villages of Calella, Pineda de Mar, Santa Susanna, Malgrat de Mar, Palafrugell, Blanes, Lloret de Mar and Tossa de Mar. Special interest: fantastic beaches and coves on the Costa Brava and the coast of Barcelona province.

FROM CALELLA TO TORDERA
Calella

Iberia Sports
- www.calellabarcelona.com

A route by the sea, which gives access to Montnegre’s forests along wide tracks. Descent down to the Tordera wetlands and their bird-watching point. Special interest: a visit to Sant Pere de Riu and Vallmoina, the Tordera wetlands, the seafront promenades and beaches in the Alt Maresme area.

BOTER FOUNTAIN ON TWO WHEELS
Santa Susanna, Maresme

Iberia Sports
- www.iberiasports.com

Discover Santa Susanna’s village centre, with its parks and squares, and reach the Boter fountain in the nearby forest. Here, aside from the fountain, you will find picnic tables and shade in the summer. Special interest: a recreational and picnic area. Absolute tranquility in pretty surroundings.

BARCELONA CYCLING STAGES
Barcelona

Iberia Sports
- www.iberiasports.com

Iberia Sports provides stages for professional cycling teams, with a whole range of specialised services: support en route with food and drink, transfers, mechanics services on the road, laundry service, spa and gym. Special interest: a service aimed at cycling professionals.

COSTA DAURADA
Right on the waterfront
Costa Dorada

Hotel Best Maritim
- www.besthotels.es

Located right on the waterfront, this hotel has a room for storing bikes, a spa complete with a sauna and Turkish baths, massage cubicles and a gym. A restaurant with different types of show-cooking and international cuisine. Special interest: a seasonal hotel, open from Easter Week to 15th October.

ON THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORE
Cambrils, Costa Dorada

Iberia Sports
- www.cambrils.cat

A circular route which is ideal for beginners, beginning in Cambrils and continuing through different towns and villages of the Baix Camp area. Special interest: riding across the Roman aqueduct, known as the Devil’s Bridge and declared a World Heritage Site.

FROM SALOU TO CAMBRILS ALONG THE COAST
Salou, Cambrils, Costa Dorada

Hotel Best Maritim
- www.besthotels.es

From your accommodation, you can easily access this route along a cycle path in both directions, along the beach and passing through Salou, Miramar, Vilafortuny, Cambrils and La Dorada seafront promenades, via Cambrils Port. Special interest: enjoying a cycling trip for all the family.
BIKEHOTEL
Cambrils

Estival El Dorado Resort
www.doradoplaya.com

Essential facilities for cyclists, both cycle-tourism aficionados and (amateur and professional) triathlon participants. Packages involving routes for all levels of expertise, hire bikes for all ages and needs, a cycling station with a mechanics workshop, parking and holding space. Picnics and menus for sports diets. Special interest: open all year round.

BAIX CAMP AND PRIORAT ROUTE
Costa Dorada

Starting from Salou, the hotel offers a circular route visiting a variety of towns and villages and two mountain passes, where you can enjoy beautiful views as you travel downhill. A very popular route for road cyclists because of its excellent tarmac conditions and the lack of traffic in the area. Special interest: discovering the areas of Baix Camp and Priorat.

BIKING & TAPAS
IN CAMBRILS
Cambrils, Costa Dorada

Human stories to make this route even more pleasant, in addition to the town’s history and to sampling the finest tapas. You can visit the Cambrils History Museum, the Roman Villa of la Llosa, the Cambrils Agricultural Museum, the Tower Chapel and the Port Tower. Special interest: the cuisine.

WINE CATHEDRALS
Costa Dorada, Terres de l’Ebre

César Martinell (a disciple of Antoni Gaudí) was the main architect to design this Modernist cooperative vineyard between 1910 and 1920. This route passes through five of its spectacular vineyards. Special interest: a ride by the sea with architectural appeal and great food and wine.
COMPETITIVE CYCLING
Cambrils
Cambrils Park Resort
sportvillage.cambrilspark.com

A resting spot, in a privileged location as a starting point for cyclist training. We cover every rider’s main needs: space for holding bikes and menus for specific diets. Special interest: high season for groups from September to May.

MONTSANT ROUTE
Cambrils

Montsant National Park covers 9,000 hectares, including the Montsant mountain range. Its incredible roads with unparalleled views appeal to cyclists. Starting at the beach, it then heads inland. Special interest: a refuge area for wild fauna and plant life. It encompasses six mountain passes and 21 towns and villages, where you can savour Catalan mountain cuisine and Priorat wines.

EVERYTHING FOR CYCLISTS
Salou
H10 Vintage Salou
www.h10hotels.com

This hotel provides cycling routes for all levels of expertise, a bike holding space with video cameras, a repair workshop, cleaning space, a gym, specialised guides, massage service, special sports menus, picnics, a meeting room and laundry service, amongst other things. Special interest: high season from April to mid-October.

CYCLING WEEKEND
Cambrils and Priorat

Hotel Olimar
www.olimar2.com

Two nights’ full board accommodation and a circular route through Priorat. A garage for bikes with a cleaning and repair area, GPS, provisions service, technical maintenance service en route, laundry service, physiotherapy, massages and route maps. Special interest: discovering the wine-making region of Priorat.

11. CYCLE PATH IN TERRES DE L’EBRE.

12. AMONGST VINEYARDS.
During the months of July and August, you can experience electric bike routes and different wine and tapas tastings from Monday to Sunday. A guide is included, and routes are available in Catalan, Spanish, English and French. You can also hire city and road bikes. Special interest: the cuisine.

**CYCLING, FOOD AND WINE**

Cambrils

- [www.rodabikecambrils.com](http://www.rodabikecambrils.com)

**COSTA DORADA CYCLING TOUR**

Priorat

- [www.cyclingnolimittravel.com](http://www.cyclingnolimittravel.com)

A self-guided, circular road route for exploring the Costa Dorada’s inland area. It combines scenery, nature, culture, cuisine and heritage, allowing you to enjoy cycling along quiet roads, with no traffic and on impeccable tarmac. Includes carefully-selected family accommodation. Special interest: the scenery, culture and cuisine.

**FROM THE SEA TO THE SAILORS’ LIGHTHOUSE**

Mont-roig del Camp

- [www.mont-roigmiami.cat](http://www.mont-roigmiami.cat)

The towns of Mont-roig del Camp and Miami Platja have a network of excellent roads for cycling, in addition to an unparalleled climate. Special interest: the landscape, nature and heritage.

**TERRES DEL’EBRE**

For cyclists wanting high quality

Poble Nou del Delta

- [Hotel l’Algadir del Delta](http://hotelalgadirdelta.com)

This establishment has an enclosed space for storing bikes, a cleaning area, showers, outdoor parking, a repair workshop, a mini-shop, bike hire, sports menus and a pick-up service at the train/coach station or airport. Special interest: professional and family cycling, from April to Keep together.
**MTB CENTRES: ROUTES FOR EVERYONE**

Catalonia’s Mountain Biking Centres offer a wide range of signposted routes, designed especially for mountain biking.

From pedalling peacefully around Banyoles lake — on a two-hour, completely flat route which is suitable for all — to looping around the huge Cadi mountain range, on a challenging three-day bike trail through the Catalan Pyrenees... Catalonia’s MTB Centres provide a wide range of mountain biking routes.

**A NETWORK COVERING THE WHOLE REGION**

From the creation of Catalonia’s first Mountain Biking Centre in 1999, the network has grown so much that it now covers most of the region, revealing the best areas for taking part in this activity, from the wild mountain ranges of the Mediterranean coast to the deep Pyrenean valleys of the Aran valley. Varied scenery is guaranteed, and these circuits allow you to explore some of the most beautiful places in Catalonia. Many of the MTB Centres in Catalonia have routes open 365 days per year, although you should consult their customer service timetable in advance.

The network offers a total of 311 routes and over 6,000 kilometres of beaconed-off paths, spread across a total of 18 official centres.

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** ROUTES STARTING FROM MTB CENTRES**

Choosing a destination for a mountain biking holiday has never been so easy! Catalonia’s Mountain Biking Centre network includes such a huge number of routes, and the variety of their landscapes is so incomparable, that any of these suggestions will delight even the most discerning aficionados.

Whether on the coast, inland or in the Pyrenean valleys, each MTB Centre offers a totally different experience. This small selection is just an example, showing that the possibilities really are endless.

**ROMANESQUE BETWEEN EMPORDÀ AND THE EASTERN PYRENEES**

[centre-btt.salinesbassegoda.org/rutes-btt/](centre-btt.salinesbassegoda.org/rutes-btt/)

The Salines Bassegoda - Alt Empordà Mountain Biking Centre offers a total of 34 routes for all levels of expertise. Track 26 runs along the south side of the l’Estela mountain range and is geared towards experienced cyclists who like the idea of spending a morning pedalling through conifer forests, stopping to rest in medieval villages and discovering Romanesque chapels and the Santa Maria de Lladó monastery, inhabited since the 11th century. An activity supervised by instructors.

**BEACHES AND FIELDS OF THE COSTA DORADA**


Between the white sandy beaches of the Costa Dorada, in Tarragona, and the gentle slopes of the l’Areny mountain range, the Mont-roig del Camp - Miami Platja MTB Centre offers ten routes suitable for everyone. Easy to link up, they allow you to pedal amongst olive and hazelnut trees, from the inviting Salat lake (route 5), formed alongside the coastal sands, to the chapel of la Mare de Déu de la Roca (route 3), where legend has it that you can hear the angels sing.

**MEDITERRANEAN FORESTS OF BARCELONA**

[stasusanna-barcelona.com/activitats/esports/ciclisme/rutes-btt/](stasusanna-barcelona.com/activitats/esports/ciclisme/rutes-btt/)

From the village of Santa Susanna, on the Maresme coast, a total of 18 routes explore the mountains on Barcelona’s coastline, taking in small villages, isolated country houses and Mediterranean forests. Number 18, named the “Paths of 6,000 KILOMETRES OF BEACONED-OFF ROUTES ARE OFFERED BY CATALONIA’S MTB CENTRES
Montnegre*, is one of the most representative routes, delving into the heart of the Montnegre i el Corredor Park to visit the tiny village of Hortsavinyà.

**PYRENEES WITH AN ATLANTIC FLAVOR**

*www.visitvaldaran.com/btt-aran-total-bike/centro-btt/*

The Aran Valley — the only valley in Catalonia with waters which flow into the Atlantic Ocean — becomes a paradise for mountain biking in summer. The Aran Valley Mountain Biking Centre offers over 400 km of routes, some more challenging and difficult than others. These rides take in everything from paths along the shores of the Garonne to the highest mountain passes. Route number 5 covers 24 km and includes a 950-metre climb, starting and ending in the picturesque village of Bossòst, to then reach conifer forests and the former mines of Margalida and Victòria, before returning to the bottom of the valley.

**DISCOVER MONTSEC**

*www.lleidatur.com/pic/pdf/mapa-btt-noguera_cat.pdf*

Montsec is the southernmost mountain range in the Catalan Pyrenees. Here, we can find the impressive Mont-rebei, Terradets and Mu gorges, the Àger and Meió valleys and the Moncúls, Sant Mamet, Sant Miquel, Mont-roig and Carbonera intermediate mountain ranges. Montsec - La Noguera MTB Centre provides routes for discovering the local area, such as one which passes through the Privà forest and has three variations. The first incorporates tracks through the forest and past Privà castle. The second variation consists of a tough climb to the peak where Montalegre chapel stands, with spectacular views throughout the whole ride. The third reaches the Camarasa reservoir, via the salt mines of the village of Vilanova de la Sal.

Other highlights include routes through the Àger valley, reaching the highest points of the mountain range which inspired the Centre’s name and separates the Catalan Pyrenees from the plains of Lleida. One of the most challenging is number 47, which also climbs up to the sanctuary of La Pertusa and offers spectacular panoramic views of the Mont-rebei gorge and the Canelles reservoir.

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**DOWNLOADABLE ROUTES, MAPS AND TRACKS**

**SANTA SUSANNA - MONTNEGRE MTB CENTRE**
*http://stasusanna-barcelona.com/activitats/esports/ciclisme/rutes-btt/*

**BAIX EMPORDÀ - COSTA BRAVA MTB CENTRE**
*https://visitemporda.com/turisme/333*

**VALL DE SAU - COLLASACabra MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.osonaturisme.cat/seccio/centre_btt_sau_collsacabra*

**GIRONÈS MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.girones.cat/2012/01/centre-btt-el-girones_3.html
http://www.Cataluña.com/centre-btt-el-girones-16-15003-10*

**PLA DE L’ESTANY MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.plaestany.cat/web/index.php/es-ES*

**RIPOLLÈS MTB CENTRE**
*http://es.elripolles.com/que-quieres-hacer/pedalea-por-el-ripolles/11.html*

**SALINES - BASSEGOBDA MTB CENTRE**
*http://centrebtt.salinesbassegoda.org/index-btt/*

**SOLOSONÈS - VALL DE LORD MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.lavalldelord.com/ca/que-fer/turisme-actiu/rutes-senderisme-btt/rutes-de-btt/*

**PALLARS JUS gà MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.lleidatur.com/pic/pdf/mapa-btt-noguera_cat.pdf*

**MONT-ROIG DEL CAMP MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.mont-rajonnami.cat/activitats/centre-btt*

**LLUÇANÈS MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.pratsdellucanes.cat/web/index.php/centre-btt*

**BERGUÈDA MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.parapentespais.com/CA/btt.shm*

**VALLS D’ÀNEU MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.lleidatur.com/pic/pdf/mapa-btt-noguera_cat.pdf*

**ARAN VALLEY MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.visitvaldaran.com/btt-aran-total-bike/centro-btt/*

**LA SEU - ALT URGEll MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.lleidatur.com/pic/pdf/mapa-btt-noguera_cat.pdf*

**PLANA DE VIC MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.osonaturisme.cat/seccio/centre_btt_vic*

**LA SELVA MTB CENTRE**
*http://www.lleidatur.com/pic/pdf/mapa-btt-noguera_cat.pdf*
Ecotourism is now a well-established activity in Catalonia. Thanks to the contributions of all, we are able to participate in activities in nature whilst also helping to preserve our cultural and natural heritage, improve the quality of life in local towns and villages, minimise negative impacts on the natural environment and show respect for local traditions and cultures. Visitors can do all these things and also receive information, education, and an enhanced awareness of the need to conserve nature, biodiversity and the cultural heritage that goes along with them.
Catalonia is home to a comprehensive network of natural parks and protected areas that offer great ecological diversity and varied landscapes, providing visitors with innumerable ecotourism activities to discover them.

Catalonia is a country with exceptional natural heritage and biodiversity, which is evident in its natural areas. Sixty per cent of the Catalan territory is covered in forest, giving the map of this part of the world a distinctly green hue. Protected natural areas cover more than 30% of the land area and a little over 10% of the marine area in Catalonia. On these pages, we will mention only a few of them. We invite tourists to discover the hidden gems of this territory. All of the Catalan protected natural ar-
areas have become ideal destinations for ecotourism. Dunes, cliffs, high mountains and steppe plains, marshland, lakes and rivers, Continental and Mediterranean forests, and marine habitats make up Catalonia’s extraordinary variety of ecosystems and landscapes. Without needing to travel far, anyone can enjoy the fauna, the flora, the rich and unique geological landscape, and the area’s natural environments that are brimming with surprising diversity and richness.

Bird watching tourism, sailing among dolphins and whales, observing fascinating butterflies, contemplating monumental trees, swooning over geological features, submerging oneself in a uniquely beautiful seascape, discovering the exceptional night skies, or simply enjoying the explosion of colour in the spring or the beautiful autumn trees. The best way to learn the secrets of these natural spaces is to travel in the company of specialised guides, which will allow visitors to enjoy more of the parks and will improve their experience.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**PROTECTION OF NATURAL AREAS**

The first national park in Europe was established in Sweden in 1908. The first national park in Spain would not appear for another 10 years, when the first two Spanish national parks were established: Covadonga and Ordesa y Monte Perdido. Even at that time, people were trying, and failing, to include Montseny on the list. They would have to wait another ten years for the Patronato de la Montaña del Montseny [Montseny Mountain Trust] to be created, the first effort to protect a natural area in Catalonia, which was followed many years later, in 1972, with the Sant Llorenç del Munt i l’Obac Natural Park, the first area declared a natural park in Spain. Catalonia is home to a unique national park, the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, which was added to the list in 1955.

For more information [www.parcsnaturals.gencat.cat](http://www.parcsnaturals.gencat.cat)
ACTIVITIES IN THE PARKS

In this selection of protected natural areas, visitors can participate in suggested activities and much more. More information is available on the corresponding websites.

1. COASTAL MOUNTAINS
   Close to Barcelona, and only a few kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea, this “green lung” offers various routes for walking and biking, as well as educational activities.
   parcs.diba.cat/web/litoral

2. GUILLERIES-SAVASSONA
   A space of great scenic interest, this park has become a favourite destination for nature photographers.
   parcs.diba.cat/web/guilleries

3. GARRAF-MASSIF AND COASTS
   One of the options for exploring and immersing oneself in this unique natural area on the coast near Sitges is by its horse riding routes, which allow riders to observe their surroundings in a different way.
   catalunya.com/espai-natural-protectit-del-massis-del-garraf-17-17002-16

4. MONTSENY
   This UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is a comprehensive and biodiverse area that is the source of many surprises: trees, mines, caves, castles, farmhouses, prisons, tombs, and more.
   parcs.diba.cat/we/montseny

INCLUSIVE ROUTES
The park organises guided tours that facilitate access and participation for people with different kinds of disabilities. These routes lie between the Font del Frare and the Vall de Santa Fe. Directed by a guide, visitors go to five different stops, experiencing natural stimuli using all five senses. Visitors can take advantage of equipment designed to improve mobility on the trail as well as the option of bringing an interpreter.

Alternative activities: hiking. Recommended season: all year round.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ROUTE
Guided visit to the Iberian Montgròs fort in the municipality of El Brull led by a qualified archaeologist. Visitors begin their journey at the Brull Information Centre, and take special vehicles to the site, which is located 4.5 kilometres away. The visit lasts approximately two hours. Entry is free for children under 6 years of age.

Alternative activities: hiking. Recommended time to visit: Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays year round.
Located to the north of one of the region’s great urban centres, Vallès in Terrassa, this natural park has become an excellent place to discover changes in the Mediterranean ecosystem.

parcs.diba.cat/es/web/santllorenç

**GUIDED EXCURSION**

Each Sunday, a guided hike is organised for park visitors to learn about the core values of this natural area. This hike includes everything from bird watching to discovering modernist heritage, historical artifacts like castles, and the particular geology of the area, as well as learning about traditional activities such as the construction of dry stone buildings. **Alternative activities:** climbing, hiking, and caving. **Recommended season:** all year round.

**THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES**

A visit that starts with an explanation of what visitors will see inside the hive. Afterwards, protective equipment is collected, including gloves, masks, and gaiters, and taken to an area near the hive. There, visitors put on the protective clothing, start the smoke machine, and open the hive to see and learn about different aspects of the hive. **Recommended time to visit:** Saturdays and Sundays from March to October.

**BOTANICAL OUTING**

Despite its appearance as a barren and fundamentally rocky mountain, Montserrat shelters rich and varied Mediterranean vegetation comprised of different herbs, trees, and bushes. Led by an expert, this outing invites us to discover the native vegetation that this natural park has to offer, as well as the traditional uses of several plants and trees, in addition to other interesting facts. **Recommended season:** spring and autumn.

**TOUR AND WORKSHOP**

Each year, to celebrate the European Day of Parks on 24 May, the Montserrat Natural Park organises an activity related to some aspect of its rich natural heritage. This might be a tour through an area of interest or a specific workshop that places value on conservation and awareness of some aspect of the area’s biological and geological heritage. **Alternative activities:** hiking. **Recommended time of year:** all year round, except July and August.

**LLOBREGAT DELTA**

This delta has over twenty natural habitats that are home to a great diversity of flora and fauna. It’s worth mentioning the invertebrate species and orchids that live in the natural area. deltallobregat.cat

**DELTA LANDSCAPES**

At this park, there are two inland routes, one for discovery (3 kilometres) and one to explore nature (5.4 kilometres). Both routes start at the Cal Lluquer overlook. The first trail runs to Aguíat del Sabogal and the second leads to the Ca l’Arana beach (not open for public use) and the Aguíat del Cal Tet. **Alternative activities:** hiking. **Recommended season:** all year round, except July and August.
IMMERSED IN RURAL LIFE
This excursion provides visitors with an opportunity to have innovative and unique experiences with local producers of food, art, and handicrafts who continue to thrive in the Cadi-Moixeró Natural Park. Visitors participate in various activities, from visits to workrooms or farms, to tastings and pairings, hands-on workshops or guided tours, among other activities, to get to know the main economic activities and handicrafts of this natural area.

Alternative activities: hiking, horse riding, and cycle-touring.

THE MARMOT ROUTE (RUTA DE LA MARMOTA)
Marmots are Europe’s largest rodent. Several years ago, they came to this part of the Pyrenees from a French area where they had been reintroduced. Even though they are very elusive, it is easy to detect their presence due to their droppings and burrows. There is a route that allows us to get to know the habitat of this fascinating mammal, and, with a little luck, lets us observe them. Alternative activities: hiking, horse riding, and cycle-touring.

Recommended time of year: all year round, except July and August.

THEMED WALKS
Led by a specialised guide, this activity follows a pleasant, peaceful trail through the area around the information centre and teaches visitors about the values of the Collserola Natural Park. These journeys allow us to discover the thermal springs in the area surrounding the Vallvidrera reservoir and other unique places such as the Budellera spring. It also allows us to enjoy the scents of summer in the Mediterranean, discover the diverse fruits that bring colour to the autumn landscape, and search for hidden mammals in the mountains by following their tracks, among other things. The activity takes place one Saturday a month and lasts for two and a half hours. Check the park’s Activity Agenda.

Recommended season: all year round.

LA FEIXA DELS OCELLS DE CAN COLL
An ancient cultivation terrace belonging to the Can Coll country house, where we can see wintering...
birds, provides us with an opportunity to learn to observe, detect different species, and see how and what these inhabitants of the natural parks eat. Visitors can use binoculars and identification sheets to recognise different species. Alternative activities: hiking. Recommended time of year: November to February.

**ALT EMPORDÀ**

Whale watching, discovering the sea floor, and observing birds—most of which are migratory—are suggested activities to help visitors discover the Cap de Creus, Albera mountains, and Aiguamolls de l’Empordà.

**A UNIQUE SPECIES**
The most highly regarded animal in the Sierra de l’Albera Natural Area is, without a doubt, the Mediterranean tortoise (Testudo hermanni). The Mediterranean tortoise receives special protection. The capture of this animal is completely prohibited. At the Centre de Reproducció de Tortugues de L’Albera (the Albera Tortoise Reproduction Centre) in the town of Garriguella, visitors can observe these reptiles up close. Alternative activities: Mountain biking, climbing, and horse riding. Recommended season: spring and summer.

**THE MEGALITHIC FOOTPRINT**
This natural area in the Albera mountains, home to the lowest mountain passes in the Catalan Pyrenees, has always been a place of passage between the towns and cultures of Europe and the Iberian peninsula, as well as a place of human establishment. One of the most important concentrations of megalithic monuments in Catalonia, such as dolmens and menhirs, is located on the southern slope. Alternative activities: Mountain biking, climbing, and horse riding. Recommended season: spring and summer.

**WHALES ALONG THE COAST**
Cap de Creus Natural Park, the easternmost point of the Iberian peninsula, is an excellent place to observe whales, especially during the spring and summer, when these large mammals travel towards the Ligurian sea in Italy, and forage for food in the waters close to the Catalan coast. Alternative activities: kayaking, hiking, and diving. Recommended season: spring and summer.

**FLORA IN SALINE SOIL**

The specific conditions of the Aigüamolls de l’Empordà Natural Park—with its high salinity, strong winds, and soil that can absorb little to no water—have fostered the growth of very distinct plant life. Because of these characteristics, there is a large amount of halophilic plant growth. In other words, species that grow in soil with high salt content thrive, thanks to the proximity of the sea and the flooding they endure. This activity allows us to learn about the different classes of vegetation that grow in this special ecosystem. Recommended season: spring.

**UNIQUE CONSTRUCTIONS**
Dry stone construction, which is common throughout the Mediterranean, is an important part of the cultural heritage of Cap de Creus. This visit will allow us to learn about these peculiar constructions that served as huts and shelters, as well as storage space for farming equipment and stables for livestock. Alternative activities: kayaking, hiking, and diving. Recommended season: all year round.
13. BUTTERFLY IN THE GARROTXA-PLA DE L’ESTANY NATURAL PARK.

16. CHAMOIS IN THE AIGÜESTORTES I ESTANY DE SANT MAURICI NATIONAL PARK.

12. MONTGRÍ AND THE MEDES ISLANDS

The Medes islands (known as les Illes Medes in Catalan) are home to one of the largest marine reserves in the Mediterranean. This park is also an excellent place to observe birds and dolphins. [parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/illes-medes]

PROTECTIVE DUNES

The coastal dunes are one of the elements of highest ecological value in the park. This walk allows us to explore this unique but fragile ecosystem, which is one of the most extensive and well-conserved dune systems in Catalonia. In addition to the flora and fauna that live there, the dunes play an important role in protecting and regenerating the ecosystem when the stormy season hits the beaches. [parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/aiguamolls-emporda]

Recommended season: end of spring, summer, and beginning of autumn.

Alternative activities: diving, hiking, and cycle-touring. Recommended season: all year round.

11. EMPORDANET

Patrol routes and cork tree forests are two of the main attractions of the inland Gavarres Nature Reserve, as well as the Castell-Cap Roig Natural Area and the Begur mountains on the coast. [visitempordanet.com/ca/escapada-a-la-natura-baix-emporda.html]

FASCINATING FLOWERS

The terrain, the soil composition, and the climate support the growth of a variety of vegetation in this lush natural area. One of the area’s natural treasures are its orchids. Garrotxa is home to more than 50 different species of this exciting and attractive group of plants. Accompanied by an expert botanist, visitors walk from meadow to meadow,
searching for the best specimens of this fascinating flower and learning all of its characteristics. Alternative activities: hiking, horse riding, and hot air balloon rides. Recommended season: spring

AN EXPLOSION OF COLOUR AND MOVEMENT

Garrotxa Volcanic Zone Natural Park is a suitable home for a wide variety of butterfly species due to the richness and diversity of its plant life. This activity helps visitors get to know this group of invertebrates that appears in the spring in an explosion of colour and movement. Alternative activities: hiking, horse riding, and hot air balloon rides. Recommended season: spring and summer.

14 VALL DE NÚRIA-VALLTER -CAPÇALERES DEL TER I EL FRESER

In the winter, visitors can explore this territory with snowshoes and observe the different species of alpine trees that make up the area’s rich biodiversity. The Capçaleres del Ter i el Freser Natural Park also allows visitors to learn about the rich natural heritage of this high and mid-mountain territory.

valldenuria.cat, vallter2000.cat, and parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/ter-freser

15 VAL D’ARAN

For botany enthusiasts, the Val d’Aran is a true paradise where the most beautiful and elusive alpine flowers can be enjoyed. visitvaldaran.com

13 ORCHID IN THE GARROTXA-PLÀ DE L’ESTANY NATURAL PARK

The Garrotxa Volcanoes

With its approximately 40 craters, the Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park is the best example of volcanic landscape in the Iberian peninsula. One of the most well-known volcanoes is Croscat, which last erupted 11,500 years ago. This is practically the same date as the last known activity of one of the most popular volcanoes in the area, the Santa Margarida volcano, which has a crater 2,000 metres wide. A Romanesque hermitage of the same name sits at the bottom of this volcano.

For more information http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/garrotxa

parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/aiguestortes

At this national park, visitors can discover a large number of glacial cirques, hike through the snowy forests in the wintertime, or observe marmots in the wild.

parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/aiguestortes

THE GARROTXA VOLCANOES

For observe wildlife in person

The Aigüestortes National Park is one of the best places to observe wildlife in its natural habitat, especially large mammals such as the chamois, roe deer, red deer, or fallow deer (known as daina in Catalan). This activity can be carried out year round, but the best time to see these animals is at sunrise or sunset. Visitors should use binoculars to see these highly elusive...
17. A BORDA IN THE HIGH PYRENEES.
22. VULTURE IN THE ELS PORTS NATURAL PARK.

Brown bears inhabit the forests of the Catalan Pyrenees. This species was reintroduced in the second half of the nineteen nineties, after having gone extinct. Part of the current population lives in the Alt Pirineu Natural Park. With this activity, we can discover the footprints and other traces of this large animal. This is one of the least observed species due to its elusive nature and given that it frequents hard-to-access natural habitats.

LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS
The bordes are historical structures that are most evident in the natural park, where it's calculated that there are at least 400. This activity allows visitors to discover these structures that served as a refuge for livestock farming and as a warehouse for herbs and hay, as well as a dwelling. In fact, in some cases people lived in the bordes for long periods of time due to the necessities of livestock farming. These architectural jewels, which are private property, deserve protection. Alternative activities: mountaineering, Nordic walking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, downhill skiing, and dog sledding.

IN FULL COLOUR
Aigüestortes has more to offer than just majestic mountains, lakes, valleys, and endless waterways. At the lowest elevations of the park (at approximately 1,800 metres), this natural area holds a splendid blend of deciduous forests, comprised primarily of oak and beech trees. The change in the colour of the leaves in autumn or the burst of colour in the spring are unique natural and visual spectacles that can be enjoyed on a walk or hike. There are a variety of accessible activities listed on the park’s website.

17. VALLS DE L’ALT PIRINEU
Here we can discover the footprints and other signs of the brown bear, observe scavenger birds like vultures, bearded vultures, or Egyptian vultures, two pairs of which live in this area. parcns naturals.gencat.cat/ca/alt-pirineu

18. MONTSEC-CONCA DE TREMP
An excellent destination for astrono- my tourism, this natural area is also known for its areas of great geological importance. catalunya.com/espai-dinteres-natural-serra-del-montsec-17-17001-15

19. PYRENEES MOUNTAINS
In addition to the Boumort National Game Reserve, known for the natural spectacle of red deer rutting season, this area is also home to the Collegats-Queralt Area of Natural Interest, the Vall Alta de Serradell-Terreta-Serra de Sant Gervàs, and the Prada-Castellàs mountains. catalunya.com/reserva-nacional-de-caca-de-boumort-17-17001-1
ajuntamentdetremp.cat/ca/viure-a-tremp/recursos-naturals

20. PYRENEES
The Serres d’Oden-Port del Comte la montanya de Alinyà Area of Natural Interest is one of the few places where visitors can observe the four species of vultures that live in Europe relatively easily: the griffon vulture, the cinereous vulture, the bearded vulture, and the Egyptian vulture. catalunya.com/espai-natural-protegit-de-les-serres-doden-port-del-comte-17-17001-17
STEPPE HABITAT
This natural area in the steppe environment provides visitors with a good opportunity to observe birds that are typical of this ecosystem. In addition to European rollers, this activity allows us to observe interesting birds such as the little bustard, the black-bellied sand grouse, and the pin-tailed sand grouse. Raptors such as the Bonelli’s eagle are also very common.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF BATS**
Despite their appearance and the myths surrounding them, bats are mammals that play an essential role in maintaining the equilibrium of ecosystems. At this natural reserve, there is an abundance of these flying mammals, a sign of the ecological quality of the environment. After a preparatory session, we can observe them up close and detect their presence using ultrasound equipment. **Recommended season: winter, beginning of spring, and the end of autumn.**

ELS PORTS
A refuge for the wild goat, this natural park is home to one of the most southern beech forests in Europe, as well as a high diversity of endemic and protected plant species.

**MONUMENTAL STORIES**
Els Ports is home to one of the country’s most important groups of monumental trees. They are the ancestors of pines, kermes oaks, oaks, beech trees, yews, olive trees, etc. In addition to their enormous size, they hold compelling stories that explain their survival and which have gained them the respect, admiration, and esteem of the people who live in this area. **Alternative activities: hiking and cycle-touring. Recommended season: all year round.**
23. RICE AND SHELLFISH CULTIVATION IN THE EBRO DELTA.

© JOAN PUIG. GZ

THE RAPTORS’ REALM
Large raptors are abundant in Els Ports. We will learn about the habitat and shelters in which the vulture, golden eagle, Bonelli’s eagle, goshawk, peregrine falcon, Eurasian eagle-owl, booted eagle, Egyptian vulture, and, in the future, the bearded vulture—after its reintroduction in 2017 in the southern part of the park—live and make nests.

Recommended season: end of spring, summer, and beginning of autumn.

EBRO DELTA
The Ebro delta is home to a wide variety of habitats that can be explored on foot or on bicycle: lakes, bays, beaches and dunes, salt marshes, saline environments, rivers, plowed fields or rice patties filled with fascinating flora and fauna.

parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/delta-ebre

SWIM AMONG MOLLUSK BEDS
The shellfish from the Ebro delta are considered some of the best in the world. Currently, they are raised in nurseries called mollusk beds. Many businesses offer boat trips to these points, where they have installed establishments to taste these shellfish. This outing also allows guests to take a refreshing dip in the sea and enjoy the impressive landscape of the Fangar bay.

Alternative activities: hiking, cycle-touring, boat or canoe trips, and horse riding.

Recommended time of year: June and July.

ANCESTRAL CULTIVATION
Rice cultivation and the Ebro delta are intimately connected. Each year in June, the rice planting takes place. Visitors can actively participate and learn how the rice fields were sown in the past. In October, with the harvest festival, farmers demonstrate how rice was reaped with a sickle and how the rice sheaves were transported from where they were harvested to the threshing floor, where they were beaten to remove the grains of rice.

Alternative activities: hiking, cycle-touring, boat or canoe trips, and horse riding.

Recommended time of year: June and July.

PRIORAT-MONTSANT
Among its many attractions, one of the most distinct activities offered in this area is the ability to enjoy the silence and the spirituality of these spectacular landscapes.

parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/serra-montsant

A UNIQUE SKY
The Serra de Montsant Natural Park, located in the inland part of the Costa Daurada, is an excellent place to study the night sky, thanks to the absence of light pollution. During this activity, we will learn to recognise different stars, planets, and constellations and the mythology associated with each, as well as some phenomena that are less common, such as meteor showers.

Recommended season: all year round.
WHIMSICAL GEOLOGY
In the Montsant mountains, due to the exceptional landscape conditions determined by the outcrop of rock formations, there are whimsical geological features like ancient caves, chasms, or cliffs with surprising profiles. Located in a beautiful natural setting, discovering these features is a truly surprising experience. 
Recommended season: all year round.

ABUNDANT SPRINGS
The geological characteristics of this natural area have created countless natural springs. This tour teaches us about these natural sources of water. The first group of springs is located in the highest part of the natural area, where the clay rocks and limestone meet. A second group of springs crops up in the lowest part of the natural area, near the falla de Poblet: the slate retains the unfiltered water, along with silt from the plains where the water from the massif is stored. 
Recommended season: all year round.

PRADES-POBLET MOUNTAINS
Discovering the different forests that grow in this area or contemplating the colourful mosaic of the autumn trees is an unforgettable experience.
parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/ca/poblet

TRUFFLE PAIRINGS
This natural area is located close to the Prades mountains. It’s an ideal destination for identifying and studying mushrooms and fungi. Truffles are one of the areas highlights. Accompanied by an expert, we will discover where this exquisite mushroom variety can be found while pairing the truffles with wine, another typical product of this area. Alternative activities: bike trails and mountain routes. Recommended season: winter.

SERRA DE LLABERIA-TIVISSA-VANDELLÓS-CARDÓ
On foot, bicycle, or horseback, visitors can enjoy the spectacular landscape of this mountain range full of crags, chasms, and caves.
catalunya.com/espa-inatural-protectit-de-la-serra-de-llaberia-17-17001-20

VALL DEL GAIÀ
A fluvial area connected to the Gaïà river on the Costa Daurada where visitors can explore the forest on the river banks using various hiking trails and routes.
terresdelgaia.org

ON THE BANKS OF THE EBRO
Boat or canoe trips are the best way to discover the area around the Ebro river. The Sebes i Meandre de Flix Nature Reserve is another of the area’s highlights.
reservanaturalsebes.org

COASTAL AREAS-SOUTH COAST
Travelling by boat along the coast from Torredembarra to Ametlla de Mar allows visitors to enjoy the areas beaches, coves, and seabed.
turismotorredembarra.cat y ametllamar.cat
A GUIDE FOR GOOD ECOTOURISM

In order to enjoy natural spaces and all of the resources they offer, and to contribute to the conservation and sustainability of the territory, visitors must follow some basic steps.

LEARN ABOUT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
Before arriving at your destination, get to know the natural attractions in the area, the routes, the availability of guides, etc. If you are going to observe animals, identify the best places and times to see them.

CHOOSE CERTIFIED COMPANIES
Choose lodging with ecological seals such as El Distintiu de garantia de qualitat ambiental (Guarantee of Environmental Quality), and hire service companies with environmental management systems or which have been certified under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

BRING PROPER EQUIPMENT
Observe animals patiently and with binoculars. Field guides will help you to identify species, and a map and GPS will help you avoid getting lost. Wear proper footwear and comfortable clothing in muted colours. Bring a camera.

TRAVEL MINDFULLY
If you can, opt for public transportation and try to get to your destination by foot, on bicycle, or by horse. It will benefit you and the environment too. If there is no other way to get there, use a car and offset your CO₂ emissions.

BE RESPECTFUL
When you see animals, remain silent. If they are small, don’t touch or bother them. Don’t take flowers or rocks with you; leave them where they are. Be aware of the regulations at each protected area and respect them.

STOP BY THE VISITOR CENTRES
Many protected natural areas have visitor centres. Make sure to go to these centres. There are interesting exhibits and information about activities, guides, routes, and overlooks at the centres that will enhance your experience as a tourist.

SHOP LOCAL
Buy products (food, handicrafts) made in the places you visit and hire services (guides, taxis, etc.) run by local businesses. You will boost the local economy and reduce the impact of goods transportation.

HELP PRESERVE
At your accommodation, ask guides, or at visitors centres, get involved with projects or non-profit organisations that help to preserve natural spaces that you have visited. Contribute in some way, if you can.
Observing animals with binoculars in the Delta de l’Ebre Park.

On horseback at the Serra del Montsant Natural Park.

It is important to wear appropriate gear and rely on a guide.
A list of companies with goods and services specifically tailored to those participating in nature activities.

**Experiences**

- **Bici-Tours**
  - Iberia Sports
  - Lapica Cycling
- **Accommodation**
  - Approved Businesses
  - Htop Caleta Palace
  - Htop Platja Park
  - Vies Bravas
  - Novara Hotels
  - Melia Girona
  - Hotel Ibis Girona
  - Hotel Carlemany Girona
  - Hotel Ciutat de Girona
  - Hotel Gran Ultonia
  - Hotel Anabel
  - Hotel Delamar
  - Hotel Ansabel
  - Hotel Delamar
  - Hotel Fenals Garden
  - Hotel i Apartaments Xaine
  - Hotel Maria del Mar
  - Hotel Rosamar Spa - Rosamar
  - Hotel Samba
  - Htop Royal Star
  - TRAVELTEC
  - Evenia travel services
  - Can Bassa i HappybikesGirona
  - Premier Gran Hotel Reymar & Spa
  - Hotel Terme Montbrió
  - Hotel Best Maritim
  - Estival El Dorado Resort
  - Hotel Tript Port Cambrils
  - Rodabike Cambrils
  - L’Ametlla de Mar
  - Club Nautic L’Ametlla de Mar
  - Plànickname
  - L’Argentera
  - Mediterrania Cycling Tours
  - Montblanc
  - Estival Centurion
  - H10 Cambrils Playa
  - Hotel Terme Montbrió

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**Barcelona**

- **Iberia Sports**
- **Lapica Cycling**
- **Obrint Vía**

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**Costa Brava**

- **AiguaViva**
- **Vies Bravas**
- **Castell-Platja d’Aro**
- **Top Platja Park**
- **Htop Caleta Palace**
- **El Port de la Selva**
- **Club Nàutic Port de la Selva**

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**Girona**

- **www.girona.cat/turisme**
- **www.hotelmariadelmar.net**
- **www.traveltec.info**

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**La Jonquera**

- **Camiignassia a Catalunya**
- **Lloret de Mar**
- **Vies Verdes**
- **Vies Verdes**
- **Vies Verdes**
- **Vies Verdes**
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- **Vies Verdes**

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**La Bisbal d’Empordà**

- **Cami de Ronda®**
- **Cicloturisme**
- **Marina bicicletes**
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**Lloret de Mar**

- **www.viesverdes.cat**
- **www.cicloturisme.com**
- **www.h10hotels.com**
- **www.traveltec.info**

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**Montblanc**

- **La Ruta del Cister**
- **Plàonacci Diving**
- **Mediterrania Cycling Tours**
- **Montblanc**
- **L’Ametlla de Mar**
- **Club Nautic L’Ametlla de Mar**
- **Plàonacci Diving**
- **L’Argentera**
- **Mediterrania Cycling Tours**
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- **L’Argentera**
MORE INFORMATION

Tourism Promotion Organisations

Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Tarragona [Tourist Board for the Diputació de Tarragona]
Patronat de Turisme Costa Brava - Girona [Tourist Board for the Costa Brava - Girona]
www.costabrava.org
Patronat de Turisme de la Diputació de Lleida [Regional Tourist Board of the Diputació de Lleida]
www.alleida.cat
Oficina de Promoció Turística de la Diputació de Barcelona [Tourism Office of the Diputació de Barcelona]
www.barcelonaesmoltmes.cat
Turisme de Barcelona
www.barcelonaturisme.com

For more information on Catalonia

www.catalunya.com

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www.twitter.com/catalunyaexperience @catalunyaexperience

www.instagram.com/catalunyaexperience

www.youtube.com/user/CatalunyaExperience

https://plus.google.com/+Catalunyaexperience1

Ask the office

www.facebook.com/catalunyaexperience/
app._431056236953440

Palau Robert - Centre d’Informació de Turisme de Catalunya [Palau Robert - Catalonia Tourist Information Centre]
Passeig de Gràcia, 107. 08008 Barcelona
+ 34 93 238 80 91 / 92 / 93
Fax + 34 93 292 12 70 / +34 93 238 40 10
www.gencat.cat/palaurobert

Hours of Operation: Monday to Saturday, from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm.
Sundays and public holidays, from 10.00 am to 2.30 pm.

Tourist Information

012 from Catalonia
902 400 012 from outside Catalonia
+34 902 400 012 from outside Spain

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