



# The Pyrenees of Catalonia

Press kit

# Index

- |           |   |           |   |           |  |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>01</b> | <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>07</b> | <b>The pyrenees of Catalonia are snow</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>Business tourism, conventions and incentive trips</b> |
| <b>02</b> | <b>Highlights: The essence of the Pyrenees of Catalonia</b> | <b>08</b> | <b>Hiking: the mountains step by step</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>Accessible tourism</b>                                |
| <b>03</b> | <b>How to get there</b>                                     | <b>09</b> | <b>Pedalling</b>                          | <b>15</b> | <b>Accommodation</b>                                     |
| <b>04</b> | <b>Protected natural spaces</b>                             | <b>10</b> | <b>Adventure sports</b>                   | <b>16</b> | <b>Tourist companies of the Pyrenees of Catalonia</b>    |
| <b>05</b> | <b>Heritage, culture and tradition</b>                      | <b>11</b> | <b>Family holidays</b>                    |           |  |
| <b>06</b> | <b>Food and wine: the landscape on your plate</b>           | <b>12</b> | <b>Health and wellness</b>                |           |  |

# 01

## Introduction



The Pyrenees, running through Spain, France, and Andorra, are the main geographical feature in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. The range stretches over 425 km from the Mediterranean Sea (Cap de Creus) in the east to the Cantabrian Sea (Bay of Biscay) in the west. Within this long range, the Catalan Pyrenees take the eastern stretch along 250 km from Cap de Creus to Val d'Aran.

The Pyrenees range is dominated by peaks around 3,000 metres, deep valleys and rivers that have played a major role in carving out the shape of the landscape and enabling human activity to evolve over the centuries.

The rivers have always been the driving force behind economic development, firstly agriculture and livestock raising, followed by industry from the 18th century onwards, and finally tourism, the main economic activity of the present day. Tourism comes in many forms, with visitors attracted to the protected natural spaces of exceptional landscape value and rich ecological biodiversity, and to the towns and cities sharing the history and culture that define the character of their people.

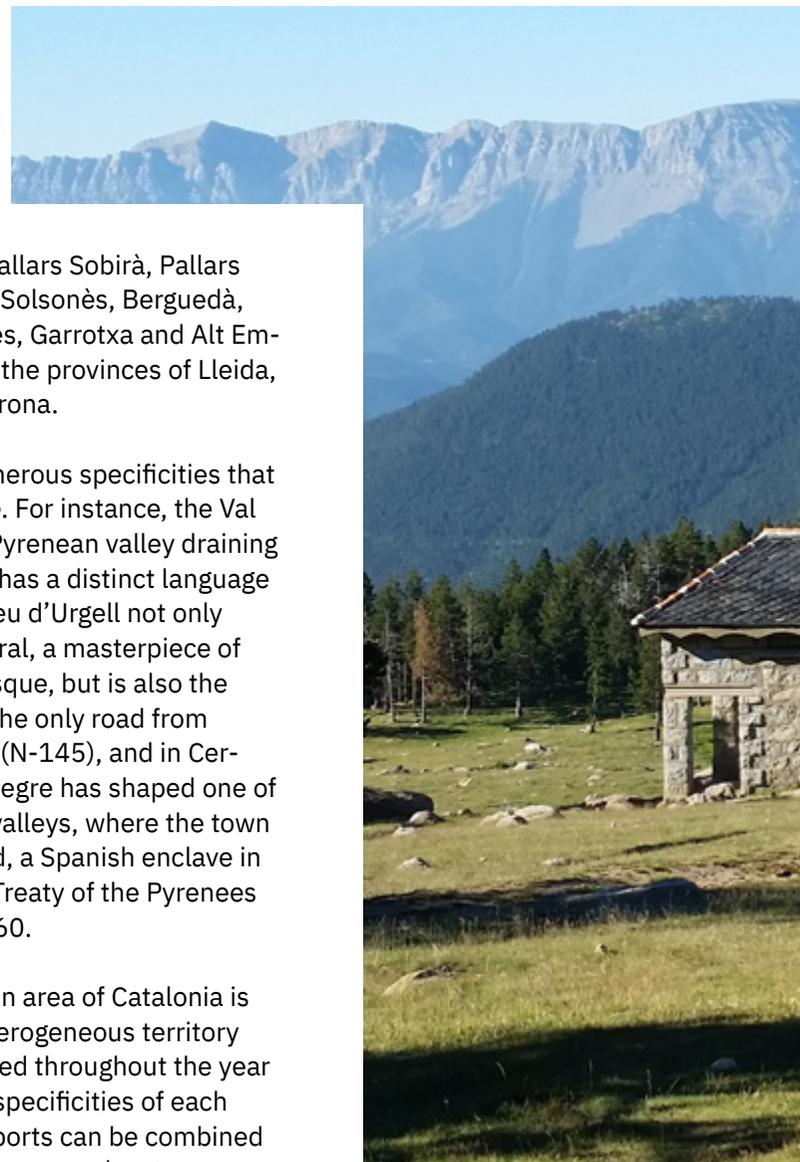
The main features of the river network include the Garonne, unusual in that it rises in Catalonia and flows out into the Atlantic Ocean; the rivers Noguera Pallaresa and Noguera Ribagorçana, rising in Val d'Aran and draining into the river Segre, one of the main tributaries of the Ebro. The rivers Llobregat and Ter are two main Catalan waterways rising in the Pyrenees and flowing out into the Mediterranean Sea.

The Catalan Pyrenees are divided into the following eleven administrative counties (from west to east): Val d'Aran,

Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, Pallars Jussà, Alt Urgell, Solsonès, Berguedà, Cerdanya, Ripollès, Garrotxa and Alt Empordà, located in the provinces of Lleida, Barcelona and Girona.

The land has numerous specificities that make it attractive. For instance, the Val d'Aran, the only Pyrenean valley draining into the Atlantic, has a distinct language and culture. La Seu d'Urgell not only boasts its cathedral, a masterpiece of Catalan Romanesque, but is also the starting point of the only road from Spain to Andorra (N-145), and in Cerdanya, the river Segre has shaped one of Europe's widest valleys, where the town of Llívia is located, a Spanish enclave in France after the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed in 1660.

The high mountain area of Catalonia is an attractive, heterogeneous territory that can be enjoyed throughout the year according to the specificities of each season. Winter sports can be combined with visits to museums; adventure activities in rivers in spring and mountain bike routes in summer find their



# Pyrenees, a legendary name

There are many legends on the origin of the Pyrenees. One story goes that Hercules, being in love with Pyrene, tried to save her from the giant Geryon. After finding her dead, he built an altar to her honour and buried her with large rocks, which form what is nowadays known as the Pyrenees.

According to another tale, when God created the world, the sack with rocks he was carrying on his back tore when he passed by the place where the Pyrenees rise today. No matter the story, all legends tell about a land with high peaks and deep valleys, joined by a beautiful landscape.

counterpart in both classical and traditional music festivals; when the autumn comes, hiking takes us to the magic of the iridescent colours of the forest, together with mushrooms as the main protagonists of different food events.

Tourism in the Pyrenees of Catalonia is based on the environmental and historic heritage of the area, as well as the wide range of high-end tourist products and services enabling visitors to enjoy the natural surroundings, together with a specific food offer, which allow for indulging into endless experiences.

## The Pirineus brand

In 2003, the Catalan Tourist Board from the Government of Catalonia set up the Pirineus programme to enhance the value of the wide range of the region's tourist attractions.

The Pirineus programme is based on a collaboration agreement between different public agencies: the Catalan Tourist Board, the Department of Territory and Sustainability of the Government of Catalonia through the Institute for the Development of the High Pyrenees

and Aran, the Diputació de Lleida Tourist Board, the Costa Brava Girona Tourist Board, the Val d'Aran General Council, the Diputació de Barcelona and Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya.

The aim is to consolidate quality tourism in the Pyrenees of Catalonia by concentrating on strategic outbound markets, and emphasizing the global, transversal concept of the Pyrenees for Catalonia by means of its tourist products. A specific strategic plan (following the guidelines of the strategic and tourist marketing plans of Catalonia) has been designed to achieve this aim, with an action plan to put it into practice.

The Catalan Tourist Board has declared 2020 the Year of Sports Tourism, as the Olympic Games are to take place in Tokyo and the Pyrenees-Barcelona 2030 Olympic bid is being envisaged. This theme year is viewed as an opportunity to position Catalonia as an international hotspot for sports tourism. The quality of its tourist offer and its excellent sports facilities, together with its climate and nature, make Catalonia an ideal destination for practising different sports.

[Back to index](#)



## The voices from the land

*"Being authentic is sharing with the others what I know from our environment, being in contact with nature and enjoying all it yields. If you are integrated with the forest, you can always find some treasure there!"*

**Joan Cano**, guide in Vall de Núria



02

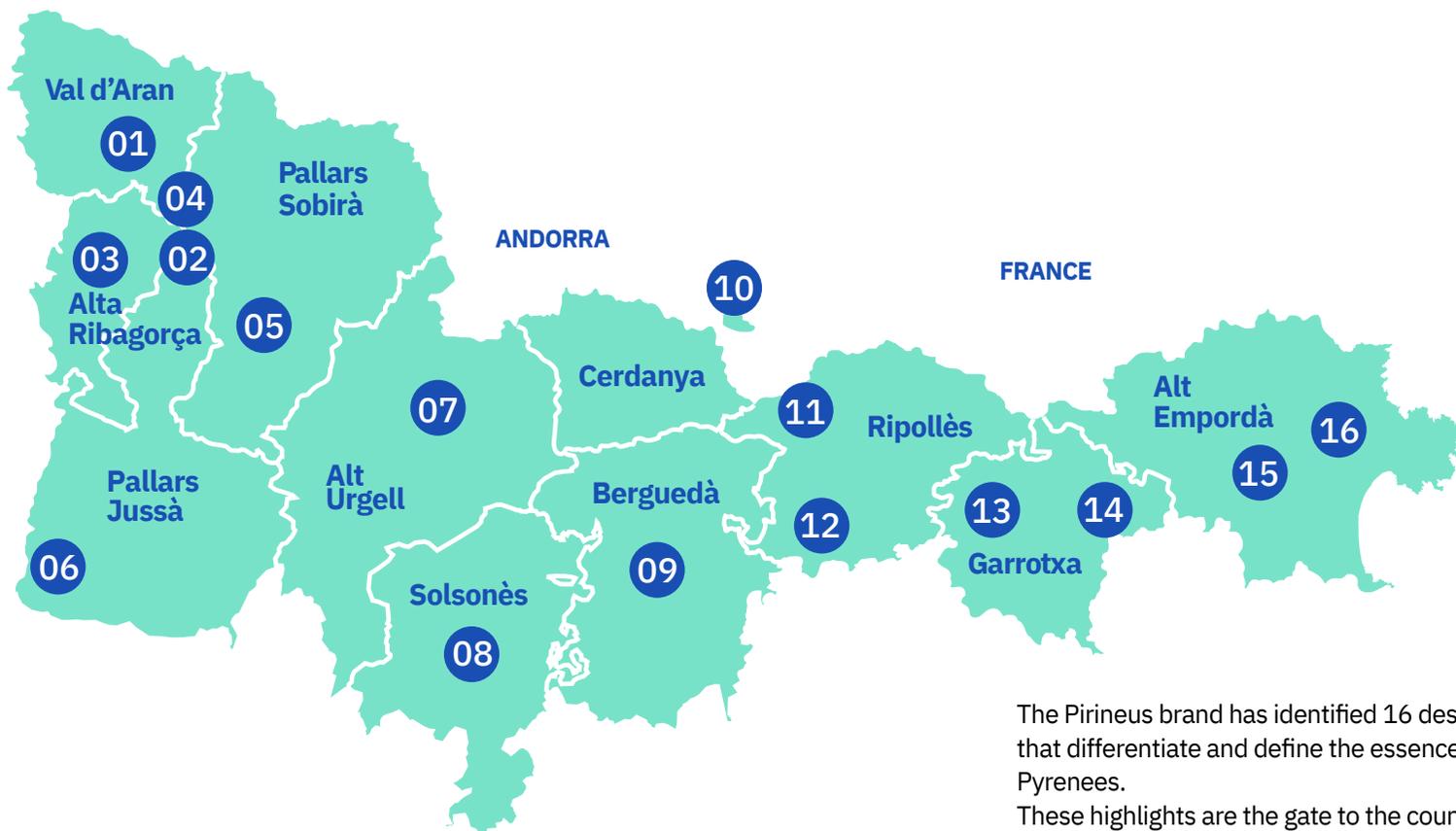
# Highlights

The essence of  
the Pyrenees of Catalonia



# Highlights

## The essence of the Pyrenees of Catalonia



The Pirineus brand has identified 16 destination highlights that differentiate and define the essence of the Catalan Pyrenees. These highlights are the gate to the countless natural and cultural resources the destination has to offer.

**Further information**

[Highlights - visitpirineus.com](https://www.visitpirineus.com)

# The essence of the Pyrenees of Catalonia



**Val d'Aran**



**Falles, the fire festival**



**Vall de Boí  
Romanesque  
ensemble**



**Aigüestortes i Estany  
de Sant Maurici  
National Park**



**White-water  
rafting on the river  
Noguera Pallaresa**



**Mont-rebei Canyon**



**La Seu d'Urgell  
cathedral**



**Solsona Carnival**



**09**

**La Patum festival  
in Berga**



**10**

**Pharmacy of  
Llivia**



**11**

**Vall de Núria**



**12**

**Land of Counts  
and Abbots**



**13**

**Besalú medieval  
town**



**14**

**Garrotxa  
volcanoes**



**15**

**Dalí Theatre-  
Museum**



**16**

**Sant Pere de  
Rodes monastery**

# 03

## How to get there



## By air

Catalonia has four regularly operating commercial airports located relatively near the Pyrenees: Andorra-La Seu d'Urgell, Lleida-Alguaire, Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat and Girona-Costa Brava. Andorra-La Seu d'Urgell is a public commercial airport that caters for planes of up to 40 persons, as well as corporate flights, air taxis and charters.

Several private airports (Cerdanya, Alp and Empuriabrava) and heliports (Vielha-Betren, Vilaller, Tremp and Tírvia) also serve the Pyrenees. International visitors may consider using the French airports at Toulouse-Blagnac and Perpignan-Rivesaltes, given their proximity to the Pyrenees.

### Further information

[AENA](#)

[Andorra-La Seu d'Urgell Airport](#)

[Lleida-Alguaire Airport](#)

[Girona-Costa Brava Airport](#)

[Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat Airport](#)

[Toulouse-Blagnac Airport](#)

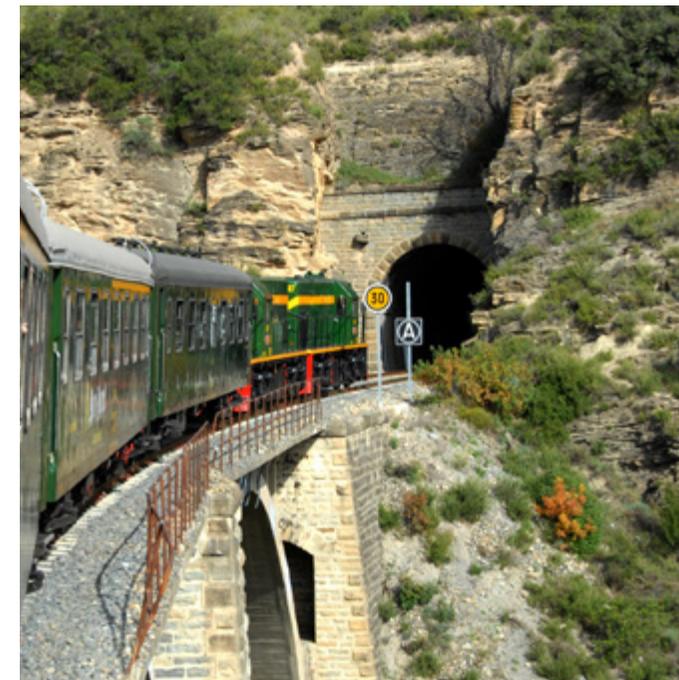
[Perpignan-Rivesaltes Airport](#)

## By Train

It is also possible, but not so easy, to access the Pyrenees by train. Travellers choosing this mode of transport will have to go part of the way by road to reach their destination. It is recommended to start out from Lleida, Barcelona or Girona, where the public transport service is more varied and frequent.

Renfe has two lines serving several Pyrenean destinations: Barcelona - Puigcerdà (stopping at Ripoll, Ribes de Freser and La Molina) and Barcelona - Portbou (stopping at Figueres and Llançà). Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya runs a service from Lleida to La Pobla de Segur (stopping at Cellers, Llimiana, Guàrdia de Tremp, Palau de Noguera, Tremp and Salàs de Pallars). Since 2013, a high-speed train provides a service linking the four provincial capitals of Catalonia (Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona and Lleida) with other major cities in Spain and France.

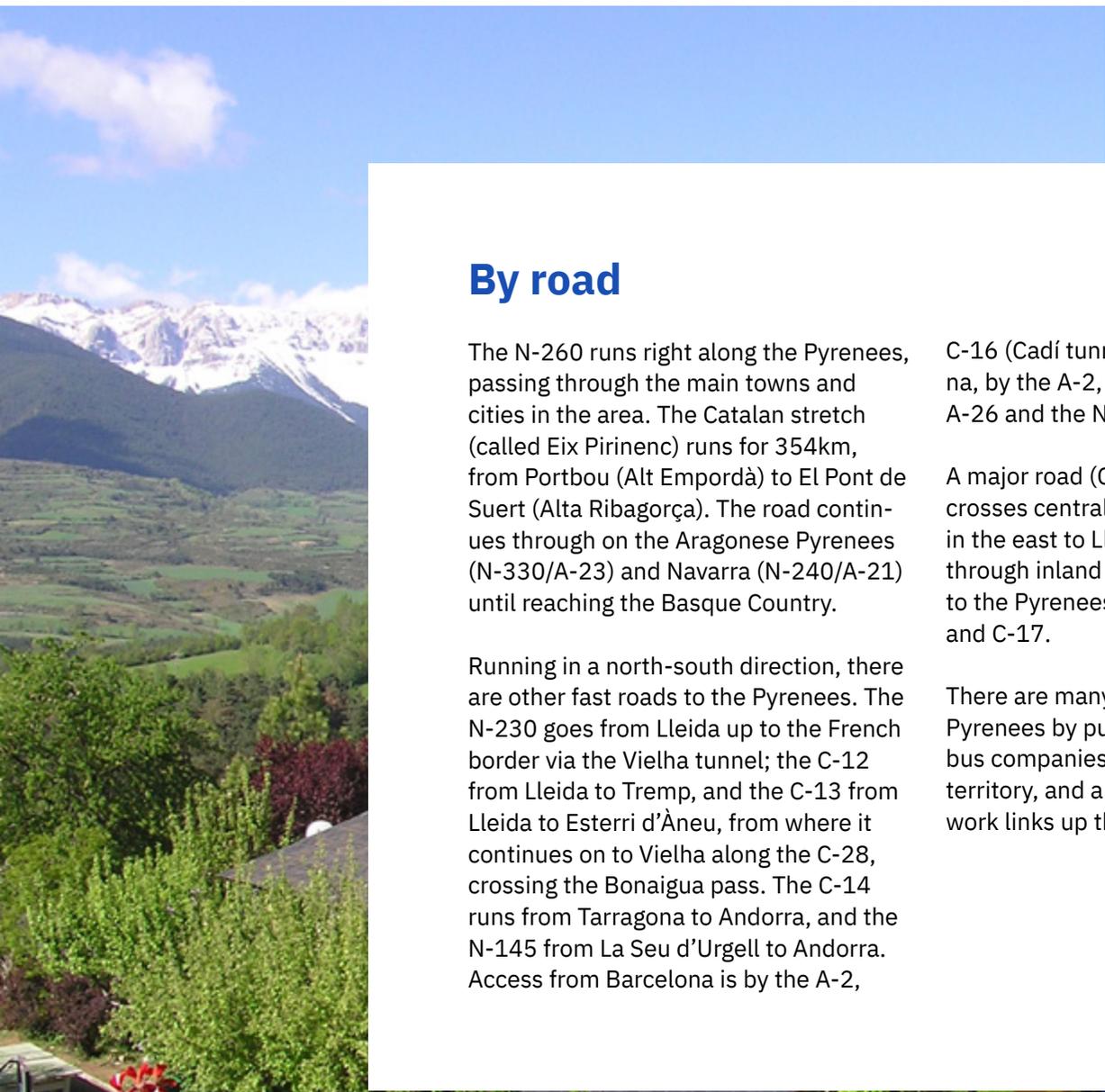
*Tren dels Llacs, historical train.*



### Further information

[Renfe](#)

[Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya](#)



## By road

The N-260 runs right along the Pyrenees, passing through the main towns and cities in the area. The Catalan stretch (called Eix Pirinenc) runs for 354km, from Portbou (Alt Empordà) to El Pont de Suert (Alta Ribagorça). The road continues through on the Aragonese Pyrenees (N-330/A-23) and Navarra (N-240/A-21) until reaching the Basque Country.

Running in a north-south direction, there are other fast roads to the Pyrenees. The N-230 goes from Lleida up to the French border via the Vielha tunnel; the C-12 from Lleida to Tremp, and the C-13 from Lleida to Esterrri d'Àneu, from where it continues on to Vielha along the C-28, crossing the Bonaigua pass. The C-14 runs from Tarragona to Andorra, and the N-145 from La Seu d'Urgell to Andorra. Access from Barcelona is by the A-2,

C-16 (Cadí tunnel) and C-17; from Girona, by the A-2, AP-7, joining up with the A-26 and the N-260.

A major road (C-25, Transversal Axis) crosses central Catalonia from Girona in the east to Lleida in the west, passing through inland towns with roads leading to the Pyrenees, such as the C-14, C-16 and C-17.

There are many ways of reaching the Pyrenees by public transport. Several bus companies operate throughout the territory, and a large intercity bus network links up the different counties.

The Pyrenees are very well connected with Catalonia's main cities through a network of fast, safe roads. The area is covered by a wide local road network, which also allows enjoying the landscape.



# Catalonia map of roads



# Isochrons

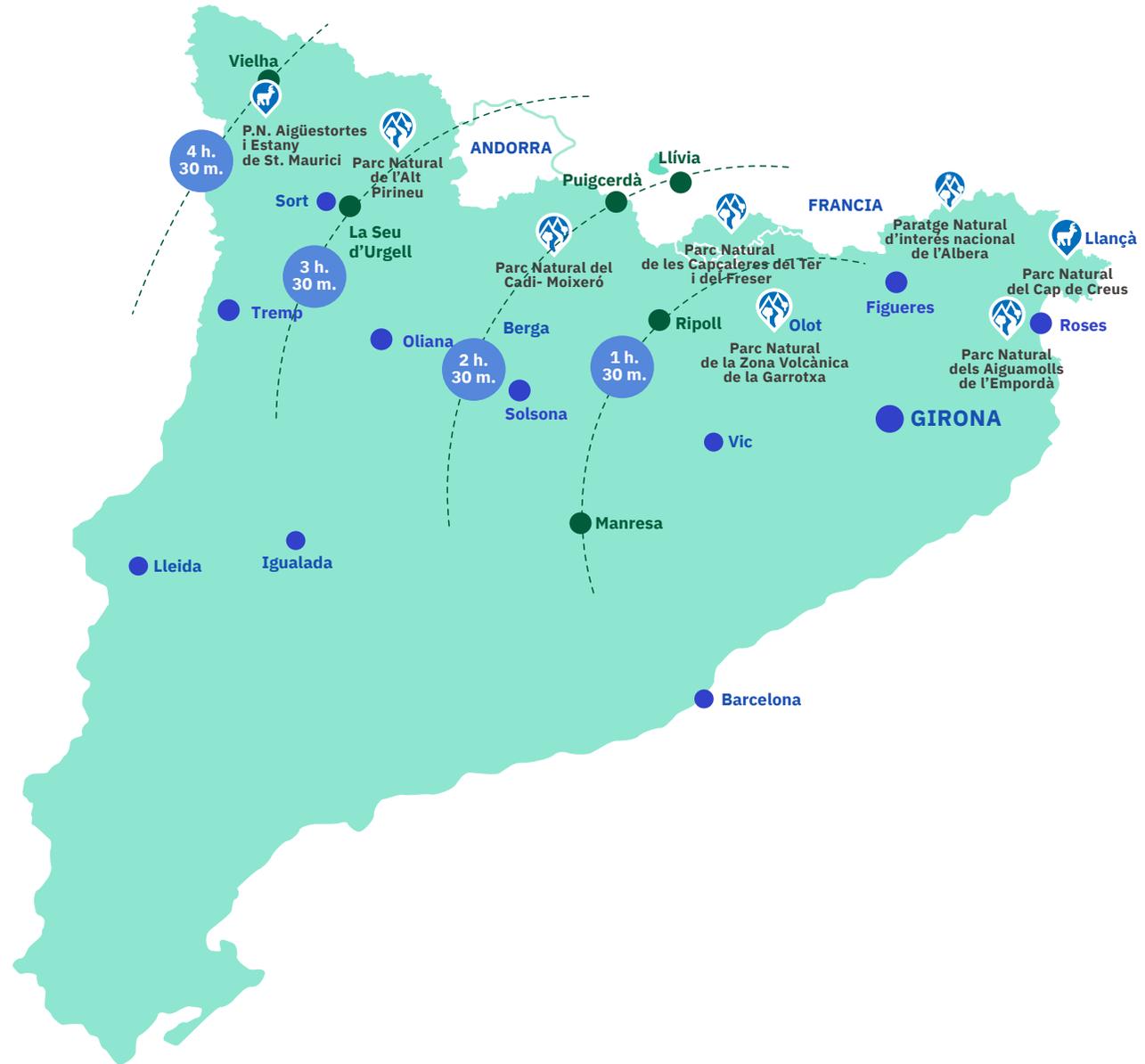
## Road access to the Pyrenees of Catalonia from Lleida



## Road access to the Pyrenees of Catalonia from Barcelona



## Road access to the Pyrenees of Catalonia from Girona



# 04

## Protected natural spaces



The Pyrenees offer an amazing spectacle of colour, fragrance and natural life in every season of the year. The transformation of the landscape is especially striking in the mountains, where the changing flora and fauna attract visitors interested in observing nature, partaking in leisure and sports activities, seeking peace and quiet, and experiencing new emotions.

Roughly 30% of the Catalan territory is under some degree of protection. These protected natural spaces are clearly identified, managed and regulated in such a way as to enable respectful, sustainable human activity, in recognition of their value as a basic resource for economic and tourism development in the area.

All the natural spaces in the network have visitor information services, providing advice for enjoying and interacting with nature and the environment; there is a wide choice of nature routes, marked itineraries, activity programmes and

cultural visits, as well as accommodation and restaurant services.

## Seven natural treasures of the Catalan Pyrenees

The natural heritage of the Pyrenees of Catalonia includes a national park (the only one in Catalonia), six natural parks, more than 60 sites of natural interest, ten special protection reserves and a huge variety of natural landscapes.

Moving from west to east, Lleida province boasts **Aigüestortes i estany de Sant Maurici National Park**. This high mountain landscape includes the largest lake area in the Pyrenees, with some 200 lakes and countless creeks, valleys such as Boí, Espot and Vall Fosca, numerous pools such as those at Colomers Cirque, and a wealth of flora and fauna. The park covers an area of more than 14,000 hectares, plus 26,733 ha of peripheral zone,

*Autumn at the foot of Pedraforca. Arxiu ACT*



stretching over several municipalities in Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, Pallars Jussà and Val d'Aran counties. The park has obtained the Tourist Quality Q award, which adds to other environmental certifications such as Starlight Reserve.

**Alt Pirineu Natural Park** near the national park, includes Alt Àneu and Noguera Pallaresa-Bonaigua nature reserves, as well as the highest peak in Catalonia, Pica d'Estats (3,143 m). This protected space, the largest in Catalonia, covers more than 79,000 hectares in Pallars Sobirà and Alt Urgell counties.

**Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park** covering 41,060 hectares, includes the Pedraforca Massif and the Cadí and Moixeró mountain ranges (meeting at Tancalaporta Mountain Pass). The park runs 30 km from west to east and spans the provinces of Lleida, Barcelona and Girona, between the counties of Alt Urgell, Berguedà and Cerdanya, and is part of the Natura 2000 Network. **Pedraforca Massif Natural Site of National Interest** is outstanding as one of the most emblematic Catalan natural areas, and a symbol of hiking in Catalonia.

The **Capçaleres del Ter i del Freser** which covers an area of 14,548 hectares distributed among the municipalities of Planoles, Queralbs, Ribes de Freser, Pardines, Vilallonga de Ter, Setcases and Molló, is Catalonia's most recent natural park. Located at an altitude between 1,280 and 3,000 m, it is noteworthy for the excellent conservation of natural alpine and subalpine systems. It boasts relevant sites for hiking and family tourism, specifically at Núria and Vallter mountain and ski resorts, welcoming more than 300,000 visitors each year.

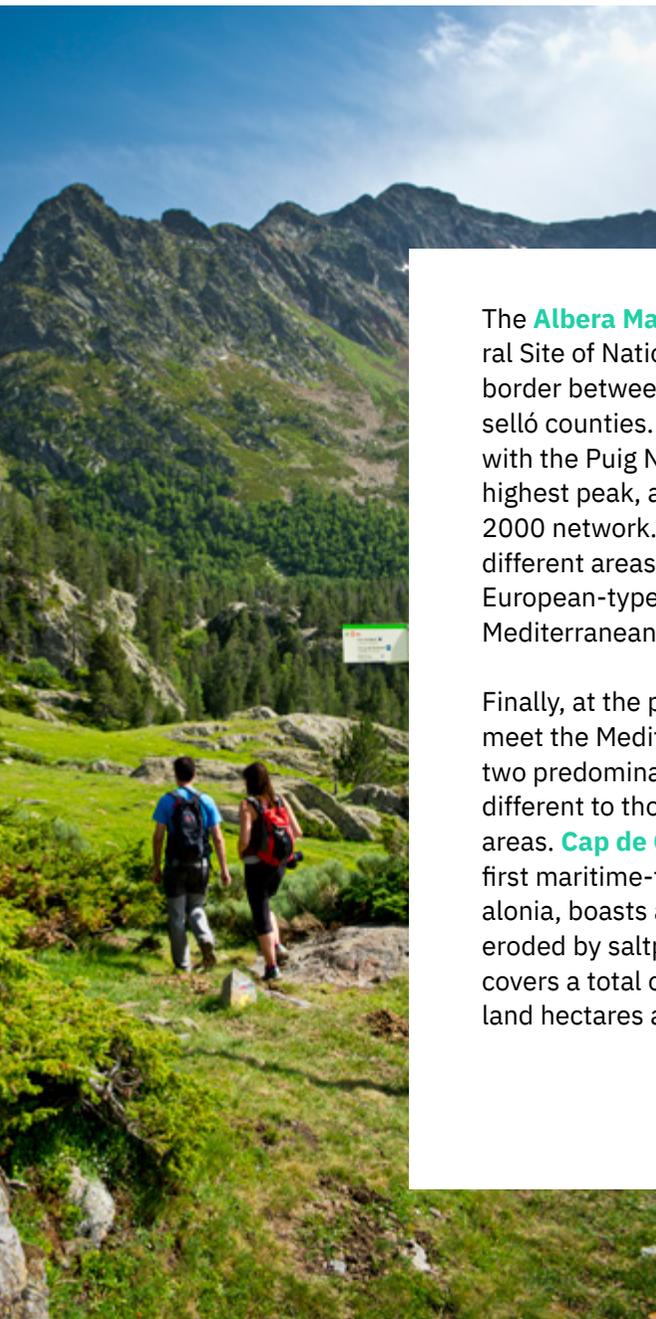
Moving east, **Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park**, covering 15,309 hectares with some 40 volcano cones and over 20 basalt lava flows, is considered the best example of volcanic landscape in the Iberian Peninsula. The park uses quality systems such as the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) in order to preserve and make sustainable use of the protected space.

Still in Girona province, the relief becomes lower and gentler until reaching the Empordà plain, boasting three protected spaces of a very dissimilar nature.

The European Charter of Sustainable Tourism (ECST) is an initiative of the EUROPARC Federation, an organisation gathering protected natural areas from 38 European countries. It looks after a true commitment for applying the principles of sustainable tourism in the applicant natural area.

There are seven natural parks in Catalonia having joined the ECST, of which the Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park is in the Pyrenees, while two more are in the process of obtaining the certification: Cap de Creus Natural Park and Capçaleres del Ter i del Freser Natural Park.

Furthermore, Val d'Aran has been holding the Biosphere distinction since 2014, the world's first mountain destination in doing so.



The **Albera Massif**, declared a Natural Site of National Interest, forms the border between Alt Empordà and Rosselló counties. It covers 4,207 hectares, with the Puig Neulós (1,257 m) as its highest peak, and is part of the Natura 2000 network. It is divided into two very different areas: the vegetation is Central European-type in the western part, and Mediterranean in the eastern part.

Finally, at the place where the Pyrenees meet the Mediterranean Sea, we find two predominantly maritime parks, quite different to those in the high mountain areas. **Cap de Creus Natural Park**, the first maritime-terrestrial park in Catalonia, boasts a landscape with rocks eroded by saltpetre and northerly winds, covers a total of 13,885 hectares (10,781 land hectares and 3,074 sea hectares).

The **Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park**, covering 4,721.55 hectares, is one of the main wetland areas in Catalonia, together with the deltas of the rivers Ebro and Llobregat. Thanks to public pressure, an urban development project to build a large residential marina in the wetlands was stopped in 1976.

Different areas in the Pyrenees are currently undergoing a process of preserving their territory, as is the case of Mont-rebei canyon, an impressive area with a path carved into the rock at 500 m height. It is part of the Noguera Ribagorçana-Mont-rebei Partial Natural Reserve.



#### Further information

[Natural Parks - visitpirineus.com](https://www.visitpirineus.com)

[Natural Parks - catalunya.com](https://www.naturalparks.catalunya.com)

[Experiences - visitpirineus.com](https://www.visitpirineus.com)

[Back to index](#)



## The voices from the land

*“Working at my office while seeing the mountains of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park is a luxury to me. I am from Barcelona, but my origin are the mountains: I live in Tornafort.”*

**Núria Garcia Quera**, writer and editor  
Tornafort, Pallars Sobirà

# 05

## Heritage, culture and tradition



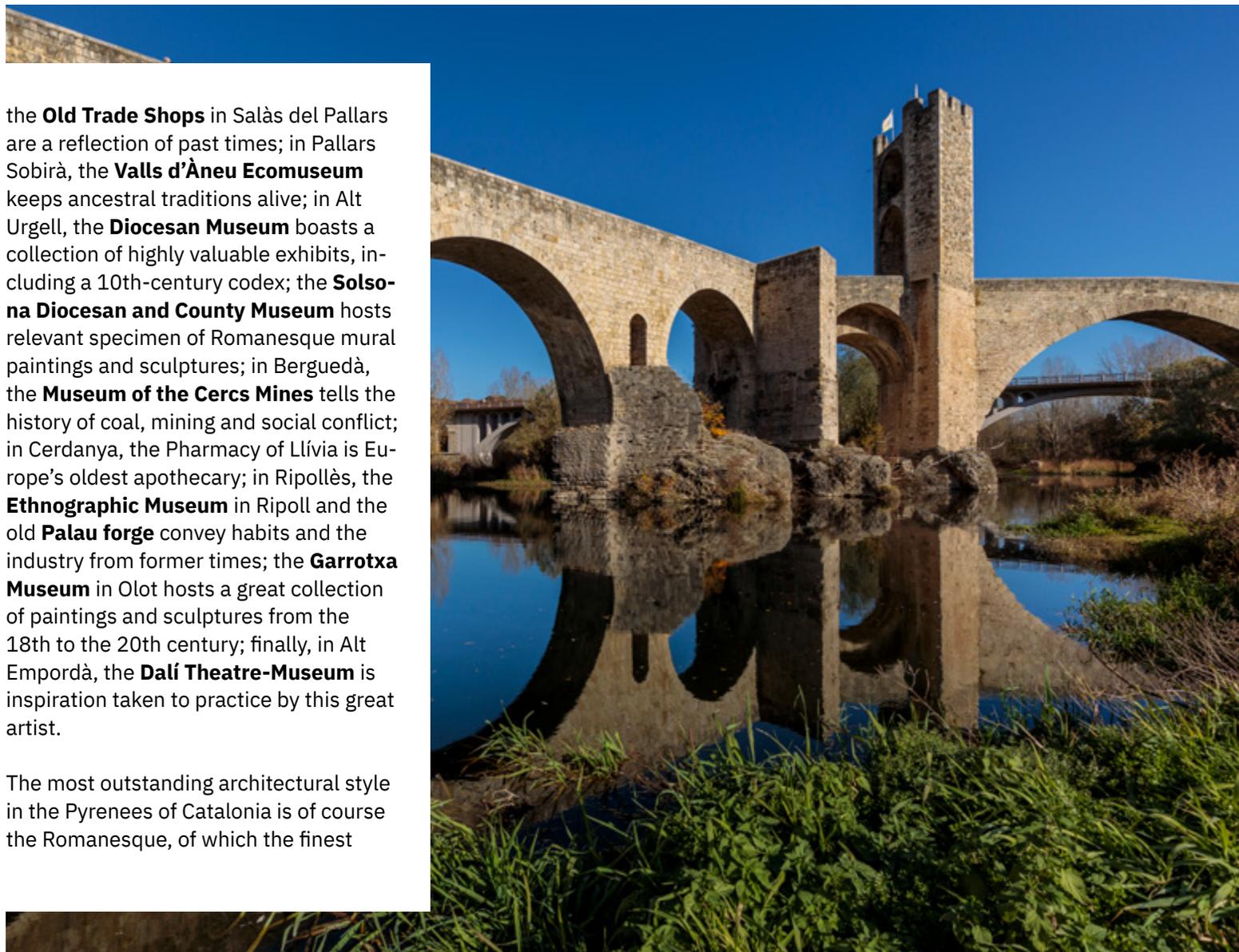
Romanesque bridge of Besalú

The Pyrenees of Catalonia have a much-appreciated cultural heritage, ranging from archaeological sites containing the vestiges of early civilizations, numerous remains from Roman times and a vast, well-conserved Romanesque legacy of churches, castles, abbeys, monasteries and towns. Art Nouveau and contemporary art are also omnipresent in inland Catalonia, a place of peace and quiet where Antoni Gaudí, Pablo Picasso, Domènech i Montaner, Salvador Dalí, Joan Maragall and others found a source of inspiration for their architectural, artistic and literary masterpieces.

The destination offers some fifty themed museums and art centres covering the major art periods and styles, with activities designed for all ages and interests that attract an increasing number of visitors. In Val d'Aran, the **Ço de Joanchiquet Ecomuseum** introduces visitors into Aranese life in a traditional house; in Alta Ribagorça, the **Romanesque Interpretive Centre** showcases this pictorial and architectural style; in Pallars Jussà,

the **Old Trade Shops** in Salàs del Pallars are a reflection of past times; in Pallars Sobirà, the **Valls d'Àneu Ecomuseum** keeps ancestral traditions alive; in Alt Urgell, the **Diocesan Museum** boasts a collection of highly valuable exhibits, including a 10th-century codex; the **Solsona Diocesan and County Museum** hosts relevant specimen of Romanesque mural paintings and sculptures; in Berguedà, the **Museum of the Cercs Mines** tells the history of coal, mining and social conflict; in Cerdanya, the Pharmacy of Llívia is Europe's oldest apothecary; in Ripollès, the **Ethnographic Museum** in Ripoll and the old **Palau forge** convey habits and the industry from former times; the **Garrotxa Museum** in Olot hosts a great collection of paintings and sculptures from the 18th to the 20th century; finally, in Alt Empordà, the **Dalí Theatre-Museum** is inspiration taken to practice by this great artist.

The most outstanding architectural style in the Pyrenees of Catalonia is of course the Romanesque, of which the finest



examples are the **Vall de Boí churches**, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the **portal of Santa Maria de Ripoll** monastery, the Benedictine **monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes** and the **cathedral of Santa Maria** in La Seu d'Urgell. Numerous tourist routes and products have been designed for persons interested in history to discover the heritage of the inland. All-year-round tourist attractions include the **Route of the Cathars**, the **Land of Counts and Abbots**, the **Romanesque Way**, the **Way of St James**, **Jewish Catalonia**, including the medieval Jewish Baths in Besalú, **Freedom Trails**, Spanish Civil War memorial sites, as well as various other itineraries linked to the artistic, religious and industrial heritage of the Catalan Pyrenees, such as “**Checkers**”, an initiative of the Valls d'Àneu Ecomuseum.

The whole Catalan Pyrenean territory is studded with architectural treasures of great value. In Val d'Aran we find the Romanesque churches of Bossòst, Vielha, Escunhau, Arties, Salardú, Unha and Tredòs. Alt Urgell also has some spectacular buildings, such as the cathedral of Santa Maria in La Seu d'Urgell. In Pallars Jussà, the castle and

the collegiate church of Santa Maria de Mur are well worth a visit, whereas in Pallars Sobirà, the monastery of Santa Maria in Gerri de la Sal and the monumental complex of Son are both outstanding. In Berguedà, the church of Sant Quirze de Pedret and the monastery of Sant Llorenç in Guardiola de Berguedà are noteworthy. In Ripollès, the monasteries of Santa Maria de Ripoll and Sant Joan de les Abadesses are not to be missed. In Garrotxa lies the shrine of Mare de Déu del Món, where Jacint Verdaguer wrote his famous poem Canigó. Alt Empordà boasts Empúries archaeological site near L'Escala, the monasteries of Sant Quirze de Colera and Sant Pere de Rodes, and the church in Castelló d'Empúries. In Cerdanya, the Ceretània museum area at the Iberian-Roman site of El Castellot is the most significant in the Pyrenees and offers an insight into the evolution of the Cerdanya region over the last 18,000 years.

The Catalan Pyrenees also have a wealth of living culture. Gatherings, traditional festivities, concerts and festivals usually take place during the summer months, such as the Romanic Musicau summer cycle in Val d'Aran, the Early Music

Festival of the Pyrenees held in different venues, Rialp Town Music Festival, the Accordion Players' Gathering in Arsèguel and La Seu d'Urgell, the Llivia Music Festival, the Isaac Albéniz Music Festival in Camprodon, the International Bagpipe Festival in Olot and Castell de Peralada Festival. They all boast a high-quality programme that capture music lovers.

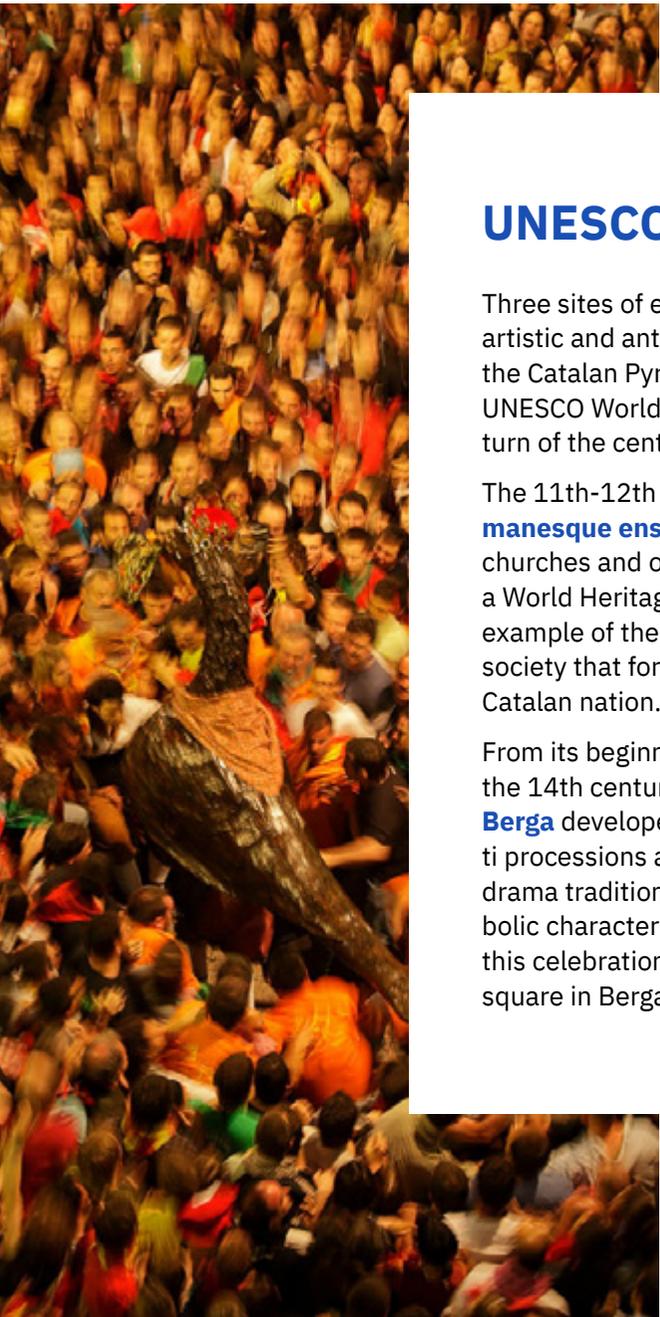
Noteworthy traditional celebrations include the raft descent on the river Noguera Pallaresa to La Pobla de Segur, which takes place on the first Sunday in July, and the river Segre to Coll de Nargó in late August, Solsona Carnival usually in mid-February, the Dance of the Little Horses in Sant Feliu de Pallerols on Pentecost, the Country Wedding festival in Ripoll in mid-May and the Tura Virgin festival in Olot around 8 September. Other relevant events are the sheepdog trials in Llavorsí (mid-August), Ribes de Freser (first September weekend) and Castellar de n'Hug (last Sunday in August) as well as the Tria dels Mulats horse fair at Espinavell on 13 September.



Mur castle. ©Libert Cases



Els gegants, (the giants) hollow festival figures. La Cerdanya. ©Patronat Comarcal de Turisme de la Cerdanya



## UNESCO heritage

Three sites of exceptional historical, artistic and anthropological interest in the Catalan Pyrenees have been listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites since the turn of the century.

The 11th-12th century **Vall de Boí Romanesque ensemble**, composed of eight churches and one chapel, was listed as a World Heritage Site, an exceptional example of the medieval heritage and society that forged the history of the Catalan nation.

From its beginnings in the second half of the 14th century, **La Patum festival of Berga** developed out of the Corpus Christi processions as heir to the medieval drama tradition. Fire, music and symbolic characters are the main features of this celebration held on little Sant Pere square in Berga during the week of Cor-

pus Christi. It was listed as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005.

**Fire festivals.** To celebrate the summer solstice, augur well for the harvest and drive away evil spirits, different villages in the Pyrenees hold ritual celebrations revolving around fire. In the Catalan Pyrenees, and more specifically in the counties of Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà and Val d'Aran, a fire chain descends from the mountain to the villages at dusk around Saint John's Day (24 June). These are the "fallaires", who bode well for the future carrying a lit torch on their back, amidst music and great expectation. On Christmas Eve, some places in Berguedà, such as Bagà and Sant Julià de Cerdanyola, also celebrate the winter solstice with fire. This is the Fia-faia, the main element of which

are the "faies", big torches that are carried through the village. These festivities were declared a **Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity** in 2015.

### Further information

[Vall de Boí Romanesque Centre](#)

[La Patum festival in Berga](#)

[Fire festivals](#)

[Fia-faia](#)

## Further information

Museums and points of interest

Fairs and festivities

## Culture as a value

The brands *Cities and Towns with Character and Charming Villages* promoted by the Catalan Tourist Board aim at showcasing Catalonia's urban heritage and promoting those cities and towns combining different aspects (culture, art, gastronomy, architecture, innovation, etc.) to provide visitors with a unique experience.

This chapter features prominently the town of **Solsona**, boasting not only a remarkable heritage but also several celebrations looking back to a great tradition. **Beget** is a village that boasts a genuine authenticity and its whole rural charm amidst the 21st century, with a Romanesque church hosting one of the most notable pieces of this style. **Castellar de n'Hug** at 1,450 metres above sea level features a remarkable state of conservation and a natural environment that includes the Llobregat source and the Artigues gardens. **Santa Pau**, located in the Garrotxa volcanic area, is a walled town that keeps its medieval

essence, with its cobbled streets and one of Catalonia's best preserved porticoed squares. **Taüll** in Vall de Boí combines its two exquisite Romanesque churches with nearby Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park.

And finally, Arties is a small town in the Val d'Aran, surrounded by large natural spaces. The church of Santa María stands out considered a standard of Romanesque architecture in the Val d'Aran.

The rich tangible and intangible heritage found throughout the Pyrenees of Catalonia makes it an international cultural destination.



[Back to index](#)



## The voices from the land

*"I feel very proud of having recovered this tradition and making cheese again, as my grandparents used to do."*

**Tohno Tarrau**, cheesemaker and ski teacher in Baqueira Beret, Val d'Aran

06

**Food and wine:  
the landscape  
on your plate**



## The landscape on your plate

*Vineyards by the sea. Arxiu ACT Inova*

The rich cuisine of the Pyrenees makes it a pleasure to sit at a table and sample its produce and traditional recipes adapted to present times: local veal, free-range chicken, lamb, river trout, cheese, wild mushrooms, pâtés, “sea and mountain” cuisine, escudella i carn d’olla (broth with pasta followed by boiled meat and vegetables), Aranese stew, girella (a type of haggis), trinxat (mashed vegetables) and of course the much-loved Catalan tomato bread. The Pyrenean cuisine boasts millenary recipes and is made with patience, at low heat and with love, as it draws the maximum from the produce the land yields.

Hence gastronomy is another major aspect of the ethnological heritage that has been revived, mostly in recent years, by chefs, associations and cuisine clusters who have compiled and shared a collection of traditional recipes, updating them to satisfy contemporary tastes.

Apart from several products with the geographic indication and denomination of origin labels, the whole Pyrenees boast a wide restaurant offer covering a great wealth of culinary styles: traditional Catalan, market cuisine, signature cuisine... mainly based on local produce.

To make the journey more pleasant, there are two wine-growing areas with denomination of origin. **DO Costers del Segre**, with seven production areas, expands along the Segre basin. In the Pallars Sobirà, in the Western Pyrenees, vineyards grow as high as 1,100 metres above sea level, yielding powerful, highly appreciated wines of height made in small productions. In the Eastern Pyrenees, the vineyards of the **DO Empordà** are caressed by northerly winds and grow on a sandy soil, the scarcity in organic matter of which makes it ideal for making high-quality wines.





## The stars of the Pyrenees

Nine restaurants were given stars by the Michelin Guide in 2020.

### Alt Empordà

Llançà

Miramar (2 stars)

Castelló d'Empúries  
l'Empòrium (1 star)

Castell Peralada (1 star)

### Berguedà

Cercs

l'Estany Clar (1 star)

Sagàs

Els Casals (1 star)

### Garrotxa

Olot

Les Cols (2 stars)

Vall de Bianya

Ca l'Enric (1 star)

### Ripollès

Gombrèn

La Fonda del Xesc (1 star)

### Pallars Sobirà

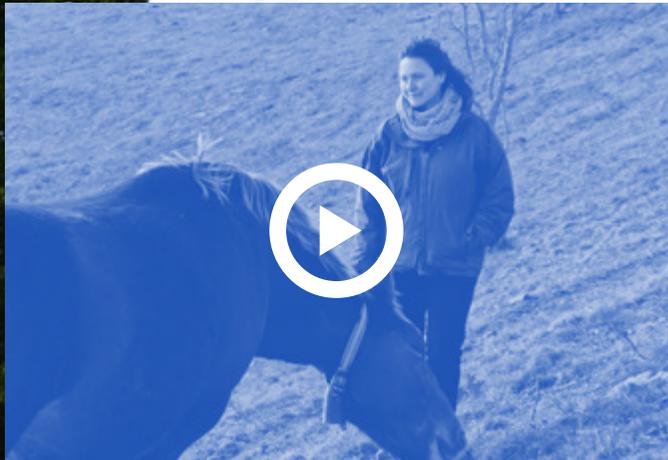
Sort

El Fogony (1 star)

### Further information

[Gastronomy - visitpirineus.com](http://Gastronomy - visitpirineus.com)

[Back to index](#)



## The voices from the land

*“My favourite mountain dish is ‘canamillana’, which is what in Cerdanya is known as ‘trinxat’.”*

**Eva Martínez**, restaurant owner  
Espinavell, Camprodon Valley

07

**The Pyrenees  
of Catalonia  
are snow**



The skiable area in the Pyrenees of Catalonia, including ten Alpine and six cross-country ski resorts, is Spain's largest and one of southern Europe's biggest. At 650 skiable kilometres and with good access by road, seven of these resorts hold the Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan Tourist Board. They are Boí Taüll, Espot, La Molina, Masella, Port Ainé, Vallter 2000 and Vall de Núria, which offer activities for everybody throughout the year, plus accommodation, restaurants and leisure for the youngest.

The resorts are located in places of great natural interest, such as Alt Pirineu Natural Park, or close to Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park and Aiguestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, which allows skiers to observe and come into direct contact with the environment. Snowy peaks, dense pine forests and lakes create the ideal backdrop for skiing.

The Pyrenees boast several unique facts and features that differentiate them

*The village of Uhna with snow-capped mountains in the background. ©ACT*

from other destinations. Boí Taüll has a privileged north-facing orientation, and is the highest resort in the area, with levels ranging from 2,751 to 2,020 m. Tavascan was the first resort in Spain to introduce accessible snowshoe and cross-country circuits. La Molina, the oldest resort in Spain, dates back to the early 20th century and opened the first commercial ski lift in 1943. Masella was the first resort in Catalonia to offer the option of skiing by night. Baqueira-Beret resort has the largest skiable domain in Spain. Vall de Núria ski and mountain resort is only accessible by rack railway, one of the only two in Catalonia.

Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya Group is a leading tourist operator in Catalonia, running and promoting high mountain destinations such as Espot, Boí Taüll, Port Ainé, La Molina, Vall de Núria and Vallter 2000.

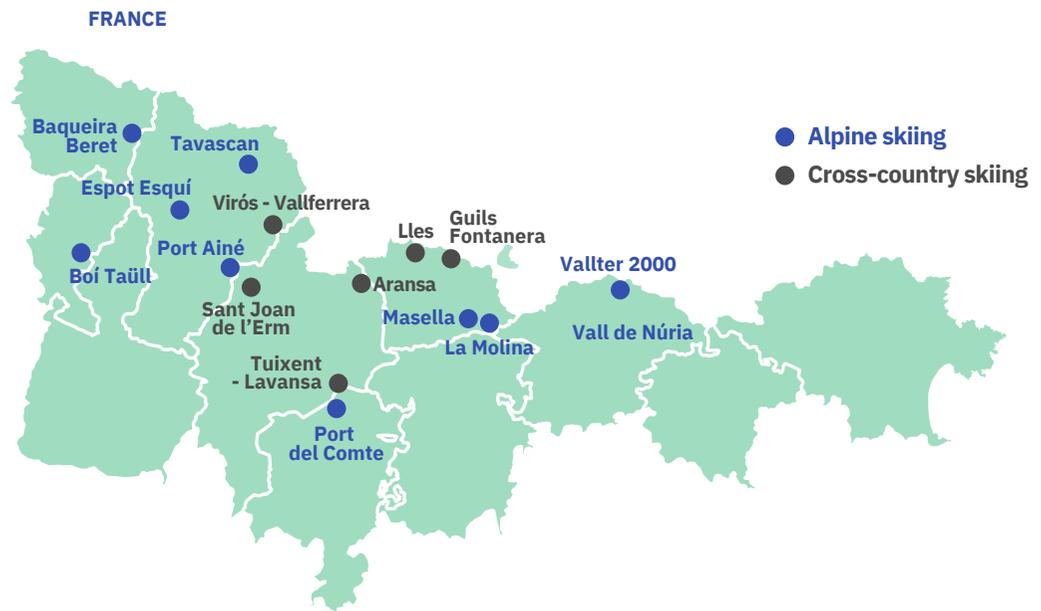
The Pyrenean ski destinations now include many complementary activities, such as dog sledding, ice diving,



igloo building, horse sledding as well as après-ski—cultural routes, food and wine experiences, shopping areas, festive events—to make the visitors' stay more complete and satisfactory.

Tourist accommodation at and near the resorts is varied and abundant, ranging from quality hotels and tourist resorts with restaurants, spa areas and entertainment programmes to apartments of varying sizes located at the foot of the slopes, and nearby rural houses and homestays. There is also the youth hostel network run by the Government of Catalonia and a network of high mountain huts.

## Ski resorts



### Further information

Alpine skiing - [visitpirineus.com](http://visitpirineus.com)

Cross-country skiing - [visitpirineus.com](http://visitpirineus.com)

# Alpine skiing



## Baqueira Beret

 **Skiable domain**  
167 km divided into three well-connected zones (Baqueira, Beret and Bonaigua) covering a wide area of 2,273 ha.

 **Slopes** 112 slopes and a unique free-ride in southern Europe, located in the Beret zone.

 **Lifts**

- 1 cable car
- 19 chairlifts
- 9 ski lifts
- 7 conveyor belts

*Large high-end accommodation and restaurant area very close to the slopes.*



## Boí Taüll

 **Skiable domain**  
45 km

 **Slopes** 43

 **Lifts**

- 6 chairlifts
- 2 ski lifts
- 3 conveyor belts

*Located close to Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, it features a large sports programme that includes free-ride circuits, snowshoe outings and ice climbing, among other activities.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## Espot Esquí

 **Skiable domain**  
25 km

 **Slopes** 22

 **Lifts**

- 2 chairlifts
- 1 ski lift
- 2 conveyor belts

*The village of Espot, very close to the resort, is also the gateway to Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park. It is commercialised together with the ski resorts of Port Ainé and Tavascan under a single ski pass named Skipallars.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## Port Ainé

 **Skiable domain**  
27 km

 **Slopes** 25

 **Lifts**

- 2 chairlifts
- 3 ski lifts
- 2 conveyor belts

*Located in Alt Pirineu Natural Park, it is well known for its snow park, one of the first in the Pyrenees, and for many years has been at the forefront of new trends in freestyle.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## Tavascan

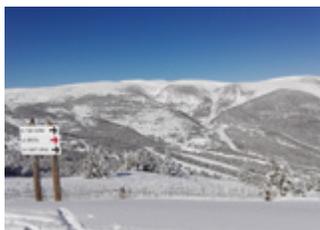
 **Skiable domain:**  
5 km, 14 km of cross-country skiing circuits

 **Pistes**

- 1 chairlift
- 1 ski lift
- 1 conveyor belt

*It offers many activities such as free-ride or extreme skiing, snowshoe outings and mountaineering. Its inclusive "Joining Abilities" snow circuits are unique in Spain and suitable for everyone, whatever their ability or disability.*

# Alpine skiing



## Port del Comte

 **Skiable domain**  
50 km

 **Slopes** 37

 **Lifts**

- 5 chairlifts
- 9 ski lifts
- 4 conveyor belts

*It is the closest ski resort to Barcelona and was the first in Catalonia to operate a snow park at night. It features snowshoe and mushing circuits.*



## Masella

 **Skiable domain**  
74 km

 **Slopes** 65

 **Lifts**

- 5 chairlifts
- 6 ski lifts
- 4 conveyor belts

*It was the first resort in commissioning 13 slopes and 10 skiable kilometres illuminated on the nights of Fridays, Saturdays and public holidays. Masella and La Molina are connected via the Alp 2500 cable car, and with the joint pass, they have become one of the largest skiable domains in the Pyrenees, with 145 km distributed over 133 slopes.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## La Molina

 **Skiable domain**  
71 km

 **Slopes** 68

 **Lifts**

- 1 cable car
- 8 chairlifts
- 3 ski lifts
- 4 conveyor belts

*It features a beginner's and another larger snowpark, with the largest halfpipe in the entire Pyrenees. The technological slalom allows recording the descent using a system of cameras along the slope. The ski resort is accessible for disabled people.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## Vall de Núria

 **Skiable domain**  
7,6 km

 **Slopes** 11

 **Lifts**

- 1 cable car
- 1 chairlifts
- 2 ski lifts
- 1 conveyor belts

*Surrounded by peaks of almost 3,000 m and close to the shrine of the Virgin of Núria, Vall de Núria offers a wide range of activities. It can be accessed by walking or rack railway only.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*



## Vallter 2000

 **Skiable domain**  
20,4 km

 **Slopes** 13

 **Lifts**

- 2 chairlifts
- 5 ski lifts
- 3 conveyor belts

*Its offer includes ski and mountain, with special slopes and snowshoe circuits, among other attractions.*

*Family Tourism label awarded by the Catalan tourist Board*

# Cross-country skiing

The six cross-country ski resorts in the Pyrenees have a total of almost 200 km of skiable circuits running through landscapes of great natural beauty. Depending on weather conditions, the resorts offer reception and information, equipment rental, places to eat and other services.

Gliding over cross-country ski slopes or snowshoeing through beautiful, silent, unspoiled areas gives a feeling of peace and well-being. Most cross-skiing resorts are located in or near protected natural spaces such as Alt Pirineu Natural Park, Pedraforca, Serra del Verd or the Cadí range.

## Further information

**NORDICAT**



### Virós-Vallferrera

-  **Slopes**
- 28 km
  - 25 km of snowshoeing circuits.

*Located in Alt Pirineu Natural Park.*



### Sant Joan de l'Erm

-  **Slopes**
- 40 km
  - 5 km of snowshoeing circuits and mushing area.

*Located in Alt Pirineu Natural Park.*



### Tuixent-La Vansa

-  **Slopes**
- 25 km
  - 11.5 km of snowshoeing circuit.

*Located in the Port del Comte massif, with views on the Pedraforca and the Cadí range.*



### Aransa

-  **Slopes**
- 31 km
  - 19 km of snowshoeing circuits.

*Located in Cerdanya county, close to Andorra.*



### Lles

-  **Slopes**
- 25 km
  - 25 km of snowshoeing circuits.

*Located in Cerdanya county.*



### Guils Fontanera

-  **Slopes**
- 45 km
  - 12 km of snowshoeing circuits.

*Located on the side of Cerdanya county with influence from the Atlantic.*



## The Pyrenees-Barcelona 2030 Olympic bid

The Government of Catalonia is making efforts to have the Catalan Pyrenees host the 2030 Olympic Winter Games. Given the existing structures for sports facilities, the world competitions held at the different ski resorts and the closeness to and good communications with the city of Barcelona, this event is being supported at different instances.

# 08

## Hiking



The Pyrenees offer a never-ending world of trails, itineraries, circuits and marked routes designed to please everybody from occasional walkers to experienced hikers wishing to explore hidden places off the beaten track.

All year round, but particularly from early spring to the middle of autumn, the mountains offer a whole range of options amidst the lush green of leaves in spring or the broad gamut of ochre colours of deciduous trees in autumn, to enjoy the pure air, varying landscapes and native wildlife.

The Pyrenees of Catalonia are criss-crossed by thousands of kilometres of marked trails, which sometimes link up with larger European and Spanish itineraries. **Long-distance hiking trails** (GR) cover distances of over 50 km, **short trails** (PR) run for 10-50 km, and local trails (SL) for under 10 km. Some take just a few hours, whereas others need several days to complete. Hence there are trails suited for any physical shape and even for the disabled.

There are routes related with history, while others take in picturesque villages, lakes and riverbanks, literary or film-themed references along the way, or they are scenic routes crossing woods and offering vantage points. They prominently feature stretches of the *Setau Sagèth* itinerary in Val d'Aran, *Perseguits i salvats* (Persecuted and Saved) in Pallars Sobirà, Val d'Aran, Alt Urgell and la Cerdanya, the *Mont-Rebei Canyon* route in Pallars Jussà, the *Romanesque* route in Cerdanya, the *Via del Nicolau* route in Berguedà and the *Smuggler's Paths* in Ripollès.

Traverses by stages merit separate attention as specially challenging routes due to their length, elevations and changes of terrain. A good level of physical fitness as well as careful planning and preparation are necessary before undertaking any of these itineraries. Traverses, with or without a guide, require information on logistics and services, which can be obtained from various sources, or from



specialist companies offering them as a tourist package including local guide, accommodation and luggage transfer.

Long-distance routes (GR) enable hikers to cross Catalonia in stages, from north to south and from east to west. The most Pyrenean are the **Transversal Trail (GR1)**, with many cultural references along the way, and the highly challenging **Pyrenean Trail (G11)**. Other routes such as the **Cathar Trail (GR107)**, the **Val d'Aran Circular Trail (GR211)**, and the **Mediterranean Trail (GR92)** are all well-marked itineraries that are very popular among hikers.

Other hiking options in the Pyrenees are the trail networks, notably the **Berguedà path network**, the **Cerdanya trail network** and, in particular, the **Itinerànnia** network of 2,500 km of marked trails running through Ripollès, Garrotxa and Alt Empordà counties. A feature of the latter is that it is an infrastructure with tour-

ist products specifically created for the network.

Hiking and mountaineering are time-honoured activities in Catalonia that have produced renowned athletes and climbers such as Kilian Jornet and Núria Picas. The particular geographical relief of the Pyrenees and the wide range of tourist services have given rise to internationally recognised mountain races such as BUFF® Èpic Trail Vall de Boí, UTMB Val d'Aran, Salomon Ultrapirineu in Berguedà and Cerdanya, Rialp de Matxicots in Pallars Sobirà, the Ultra-Endurance Cerdanya Tour, Cap de Creus Trail and the Pyrenees Stage Run across the Catalan Pyrenees, all of which attract athletes from all over the world.

Hiking in mountain areas is a highly rewarding outdoor activity, but it must be carried out responsibly, with the correct equipment, information on the itinerary, and knowledge about the weather.



© Camí Bons Homes



©JLROD

## Some of the most popular theme routes are:

### Carros de Foc and Pass'Aran in Val d'Aran

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

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

### El Cinquè Llac in Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà and Alta Ribagorça

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

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

### La Porta del Cel in Alt Pirineu Natural Park

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

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

### Ramat de Camins in Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, Val d'Aran and Alta Ribagorça

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

[www.ramatdecamins.cat](http://www.ramatdecamins.cat)

### Cavalls del Vent in Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

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

### Picasso Trail in Alt Berguedà

[www.elbergueda.cat](http://www.elbergueda.cat)

### Els refugis del Torb in Ripollès

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

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

### Serra de Monestirs, a circular trail linking three monasteries of historical relevance

[visitpirineus.com route](https://www.visitpirineus.com/route)

[Further information](#)

[visitpirineus.com](https://www.visitpirineus.com)

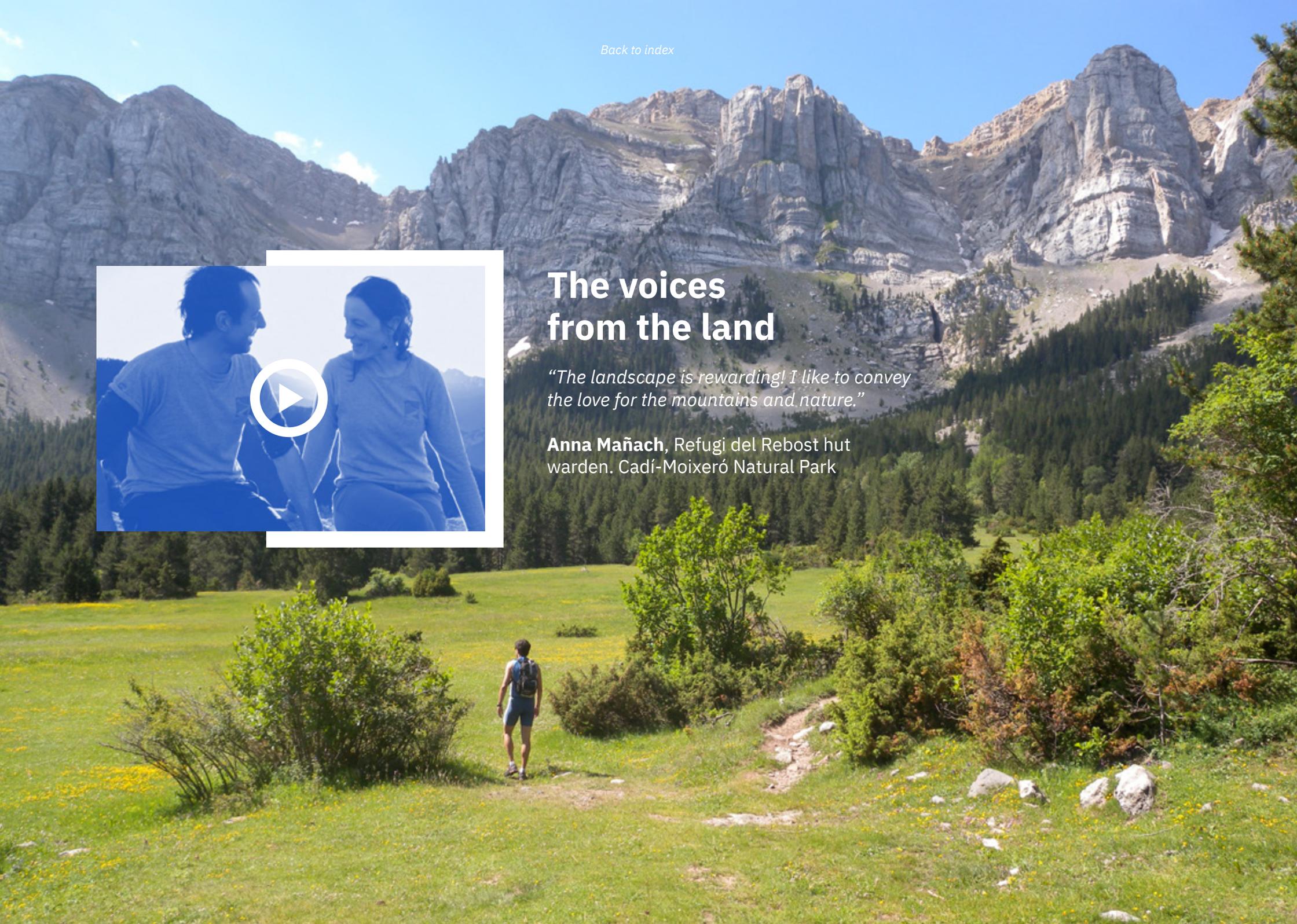
[Back to index](#)



## The voices from the land

*“The landscape is rewarding! I like to convey the love for the mountains and nature.”*

**Anna Mañach**, Refugi del Rebost hut warden. Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park



09

# Pedalling



The Pyrenean landscapes, climate and geography make this area a cycle tourism paradise for mountain bike (ATB) and road bike lovers alike. Rural tracks, forest trails, greenways, ATB routes and back roads with low traffic provide an endless range of possibilities for cyclists and nature lovers.

Cycle tourism in the Catalan Pyrenees enables visitors to combine exercise with exploring the cultural, natural and gastronomic features of the area. The bike routes can all be adapted to the time available—from one to several days by stages—and the degree of fitness of each cyclist. Tourist products and packages await visitors who wish to enjoy a carefree cycling holiday in the Pyrenees.

The inland areas offer many cycling routes, among which the outstanding greenways along disused narrow-gauge railway lines are safe, sustainable trails used only by walkers and cyclists, with

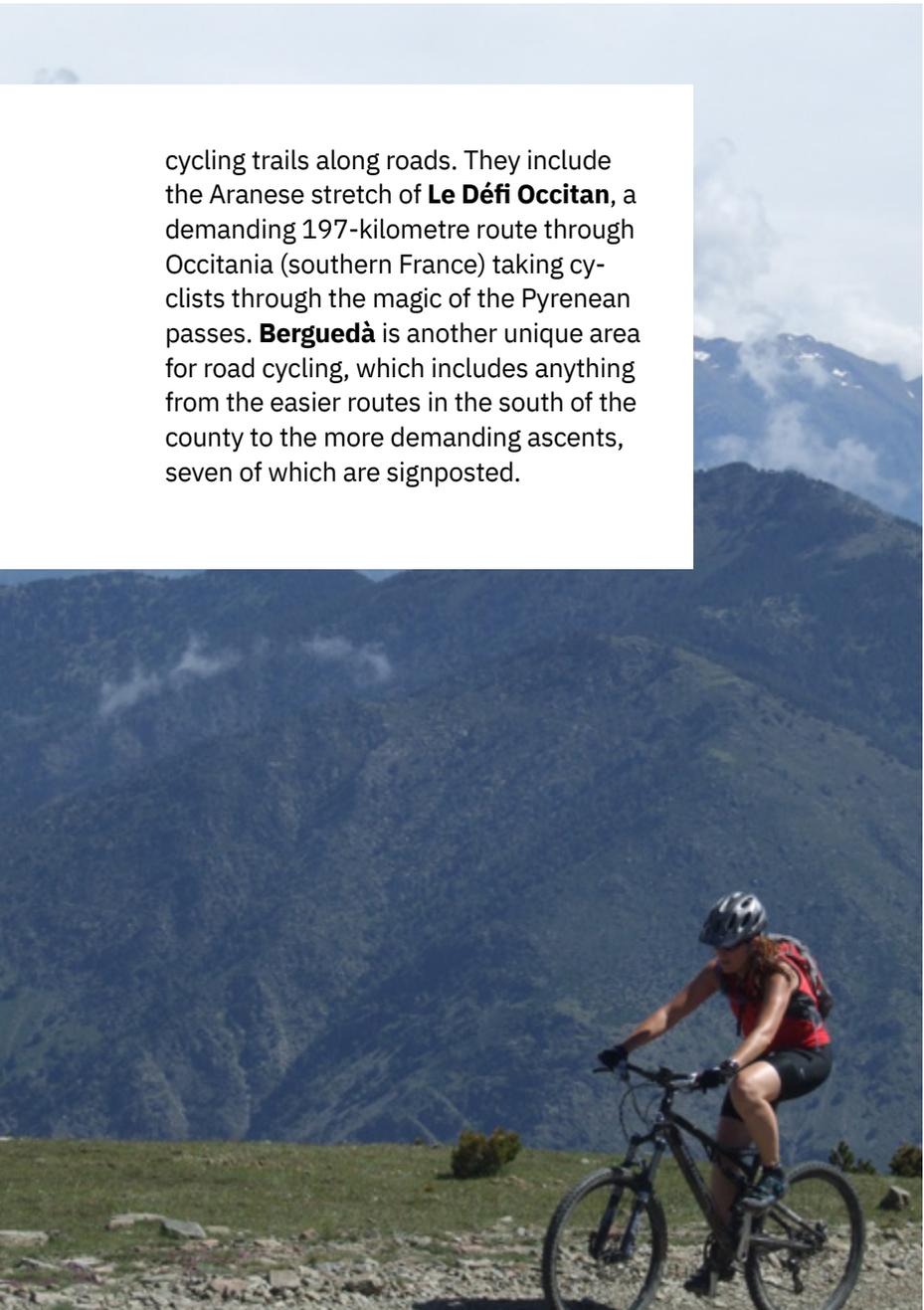
*Cyclist pedalling in la Garrotxa.*

services such as information centres, bike repair shops, accommodation, restaurants, etc.

The Lleida Pyrenees are home to the unique **Vall Fosca route** between Gento Lake and Espui that adds a bit of adventure to cycling; recommendable in the central Pyrenees is the stretch from **Pedret to Cal Rosal**, linking up with the **Llobregat Industrial Colonies** route (PRC 144); the eastern part meanwhile boasts the **Iron and Coal Route** from Ripoll to Ogassa, the **Narrow-Gauge Route** along 57 km from Olot to Girona and the **Campdevàrol Cattle Way**.

**Pirinexus** is a 353-km cross-border cycling route passing through eight different counties, which combines stretches of greenways with other cycling routes such as rural tracks and quiet back roads. The roads in the Pyrenees cross several mountain passes, an outright challenge for cyclists. Val d'Aran boasts different



A cyclist wearing a red jersey and a black helmet is riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail. The background shows a vast mountain range under a clear blue sky. The cyclist is in the lower foreground, leaning forward in a riding posture. The trail is rocky and uneven. The mountains in the background are layered, with some peaks appearing hazy due to atmospheric perspective.

cycling trails along roads. They include the Aranese stretch of **Le Défi Occitan**, a demanding 197-kilometre route through Occitania (southern France) taking cyclists through the magic of the Pyrenean passes. **Berguedà** is another unique area for road cycling, which includes anything from the easier routes in the south of the county to the more demanding ascents, seven of which are signposted.

## MTB Centres

Catalonia has a network of 18 MTB Centres with over 6,000 kilometres of marked itineraries classified by difficulty level. Six of these centres are located in the Pyrenees. Each centre offers at least 100 km of marked itineraries that avoid stretches with motorised vehicles and minimise the use of asphalted surfaces and two-way lanes. They also offer bike maintenance, local information and sometimes accommodation.

One of the most challenging mountain and road bike events in the Pyrenees is the **Transpyr**, a 780km traverse in seven stages at maximum difficulty level running from the Mediterranean to the Cantabrian Sea, through Catalonia, Aragon and the Basque Country, sometimes along the French side. The Pedals de Foc and Pedals d'Occitània routes have joined to create **Gran Pedals**, a 450 km traverse with 12,000 metre cumulated elevation gain around Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park in seven to ten stages. It runs through the counties of Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà and Val d'Aran before entering the old county of Comminges in France, crossing the valleys of Luchon, Oueil, Ger and La Barousse, home to one of Europe's largest deer communities.

## Bike parks

Lovers of endless mountain biking modalities, such as BMX, mountain bike cross country, bike trials, downhill or freeride, have two bike parks in the Pyrenees of Catalonia, where they can do these activities in high-quality facilities with a high degree of safety and comfort.

### La Molina Bike Park

13 downhill slopes for high and medium-level riders, a cross-country circuit, wood park and kids bike park. There is also an 11 km cross-country circuit starting in the cable car area. A benchmark site for downhill, enduro, ATB and MTB.

#### Further Information

### Aran bike park

5 Downhill and Freeride tracks and several enduro routes. Courses (including Training Fields) on descent technique. Services lifts (shuttle service and enduro assisted). Open from May to November (except that there is snow).

## Moving from west to east along the Pyrenees of Catalonia, there are well-known mountain bike stage routes:

**L'Era Roda**, 210 km

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

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Pedals d'Occitània**, 227 km

[Ruta.pedalesdelmundo.com](http://Ruta.pedalesdelmundo.com)

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Pedals de Foc**, 215 km

[Ruta.pedalesdelmundo.com](http://Ruta.pedalesdelmundo.com)

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Pedals del Pedraforca**, 97,6 km

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Cerdanya 360°**, 230 km

[www.cerdanya360.com](http://www.cerdanya360.com)

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

#### Further information

**MTB** - [visitpirineus.com](http://visitpirineus.com)

**Bike tourism** - [visitpirineus.com](http://visitpirineus.com)

**Catalunya bike ride** - [catalunya.com](http://catalunya.com)

**Trinxat BTT**, 298 km

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

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

#### Circular routes

**Bi3000**, 108 km - **Bi6000**, 250 km

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Tracks dels Volcans**, 260 km

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

**Raids al Vent**, 274 km

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

**Gran Volta a l'Empordà**, 188 km

[visitpirineus.com route](#)

# 10

## Adventure sports



The Pyrenees of Catalonia is the ideal adventure sports destination, with over two-hundred specialist companies offering land, water and air activities, enabling visitors to experience all the thrills in safety, in natural surroundings of great beauty.

The number and diversity of lakes, fast-flowing rivers and other natural spaces make the Pyrenean range an exciting place full of hidden spots to discover and share with friends and family. The Lleida province is considered Spain's leading destination for adventure sports. Sort, the county seat of Pallars Sobirà, features the Sports Tourism Destination label.

Apart from hiking and cycling, other land activities include horse trekking, rock climbing, abseiling, rafting, kayaking, via ferratas and speleology as interesting options. In Val d'Aran, the Vielha-Montgarri and Vielha-La Renclusa **horse trekking routes** will delight riders of all levels of experience. Also in Lleida province, many riding centres can be found in Pallars Sobirà County and Cerdanya Valley, whereas

©Oriol Llauredó

Girona province offers attractive horse-back itineraries in Vall de Núria and the Garrotxa volcanic area.

**Rock climbing** can be practised on Poi d'Unha and Roca Comú walls in the Val d'Aran mountains, many of which have peaks of over 2,000 m, while Alt Pirineu Natural Park also features challenging climbs including Pica d'Estats (3,143 m), the highest peak in Catalonia, Terradets canyon and Mont-rebei canyon. In Berguedà county there is Pedraforca, the Ferrús climb in the Ensija mountains and the via ferratas of the Espai Actiu Vallcebre, while Montgrony in Ripollès county and Sadernes in Garrotxa county are also very demanding. Chris Sharma gives witness of many of these climbs. Born in California, he settled in the western Pyrenees, where he has opened almost impossible routes near Oliana. To do this type of sports, it is highly advisable to hire the professional services of any local company providing the necessary gear and guidance to enjoy safest climbing.



At the spring snowmelt, the force of the rivers, the numerous lakes and the spectacular high mountain reservoirs attract water sports lovers to the Pyrenees. White-water options include **rafting, riverboarding, kayaking and river hiking, among others**. Visitors preferring calmer waters can try **canoeing, sea scooters, water skiing, windsurfing and underwater diving** in one of the large reservoirs.

Rafting is done in Val d'Aran on the river Garonne, along a 9-km stretch between Cledes power plant close to the village of Les and Pont de Rei reservoir on the French border. The river Noguera Pallaresa is considered one of the best places in Europe for white-water sports, with 52 navigable kilometres between Llavorsí and Collegats canyon. The Noguera Pallaresa International Rally has been held on this river since 1960, and Sort has a regatta camp. The Noguera Ribagorçana is an up- and-coming Pyrenean water sports destination, with many activities taking place on Escales reservoir and in the

tributary canyons, of which Viu de Llevata is considered among the best in Europe. The Rafting Park in La Seu d'Urgell has a white-water course that facilitates canoeing, kayaking and rafting. The park hosted several competitions at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. Canyoning lovers coming to Girona province can enjoy their sport in the gorges of the river Freser, the stream at Queralbs Cave or the river Fluvià basin in the Sadernes-Montagut area. La Baells reservoir, located in the heart of the Catalan Pyrenees, hosts countless water activities in summer and became the first reservoir with a 1-km long open-water swimming lane, known as the Via Brava, a facility that previously only existed in some towns on the Girona and Barcelona coast.

The exceptional air conditions existing in the Pyrenees facilitate a wide range of air sports, such as **paragliding, hang gliding, ultralight and glider flights, panoramic helicopter tours and even balloon flights**, allowing views of the landscape

from the air. The Àger valley and the Organyà valleys offer unbeatable paragliding conditions in the Lleida province. Cerdanya valley, located in the central Pyrenees, has multiple air sports facilities, including a flying club, a skydiving centre and several hot-air balloon companies. A balloon flight over Garrotxa is one of the best options to look at the volcanoes from above, whereas skydiving is offered at the top international Empuriabrava centre in Alt Empordà.

Years of experience in tourist and sports activities, the high added value provided by specialist companies, rigorous safety measures and the major events and championships held in the area all lend prestige to the destination.

#### Further information

[Sport and Adventure - visitpirineus.com](https://www.visitpirineus.com)



Horse riding in Montgarri ©Val d'Aran

11

# Family holidays



The Pyrenees of Catalonia are an ideal holiday destination for families, both for short trips and longer stays, offering a range of tourist products and services adapted to the requirements of visitors travelling with children.

The Catalan Tourist Board promotes family holidays with its Family-friendly adventure holidays specialisation label, awarded to municipalities offering services and amenities adapted to the needs of families. This is a public-private partnership, as the services and amenities in question can be provided by either municipal facilities or tourist companies operating in the destination.

Destinations awarded this label are outstanding for their quality and positioning as regards family tourism, and must fulfil a series of requirements concerning visitor services and establishments.

There are currently six certified Family-friendly adventure holiday destinations in the Pyrenees: Àneu valleys, Berga, Vall de Boí, Camprodon valley, Vall d'en

Bas-Les Preses and Pyrenees-Noguera Pallaresa. Additionally, the ski and mountain resorts of Boí Taüll, Espot, La Molina, Masella, Port Ainé, Vallter 2000 and Vall de Núria also hold this certificate.

**Àneu valleys**, comprising the municipalities of Esterrri d'Àneu, La Guingueta d'Àneu, Alt Àneu and Espot, became the first destination to receive this label thanks to the privileged natural surroundings, featuring prominently Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park and Alt Pirineu Natural Park, together with high-quality tourism attractions headed by Espot Esquí ski resort. In late 2014, **Berga**, comprising the municipalities of Avià, Berga, Capolat, Cercs and Castellar del Riu, became the second Family-friendly adventure holiday destination. The rich landscapes and natural surroundings of the Queralt Mountains enable visitors to enjoy hiking, mountain biking and paragliding, among other activities. In early 2015, **Vall de Boí** was awarded this label, with attractions such as Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici



National Park, Caldes de Boí spa, Boí Taüll ski resort and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Romanesque churches, apart from its wide accommodation and restaurant offer. Certified in 2016, **Vall d'en Bas** is made of several small, picturesque villages and is the family-friendliest destination in Garrotxa. **Camprodon valley** obtained the certificate thanks to its natural heritage, featuring prominently the Headwaters of the Capçaleres del Ter i del Freser. Several valleys are encompassed in the **Pyrenees-Noguera Pallaresa** destination, considered the birthplace of active tourism.

Families can choose from a wide range of activities in the Pyrenees: hiking or cycling trips through natural spaces, beginner skiing activities for children, adventure sports, interpretive centres for nature and local fauna, museums, etc.

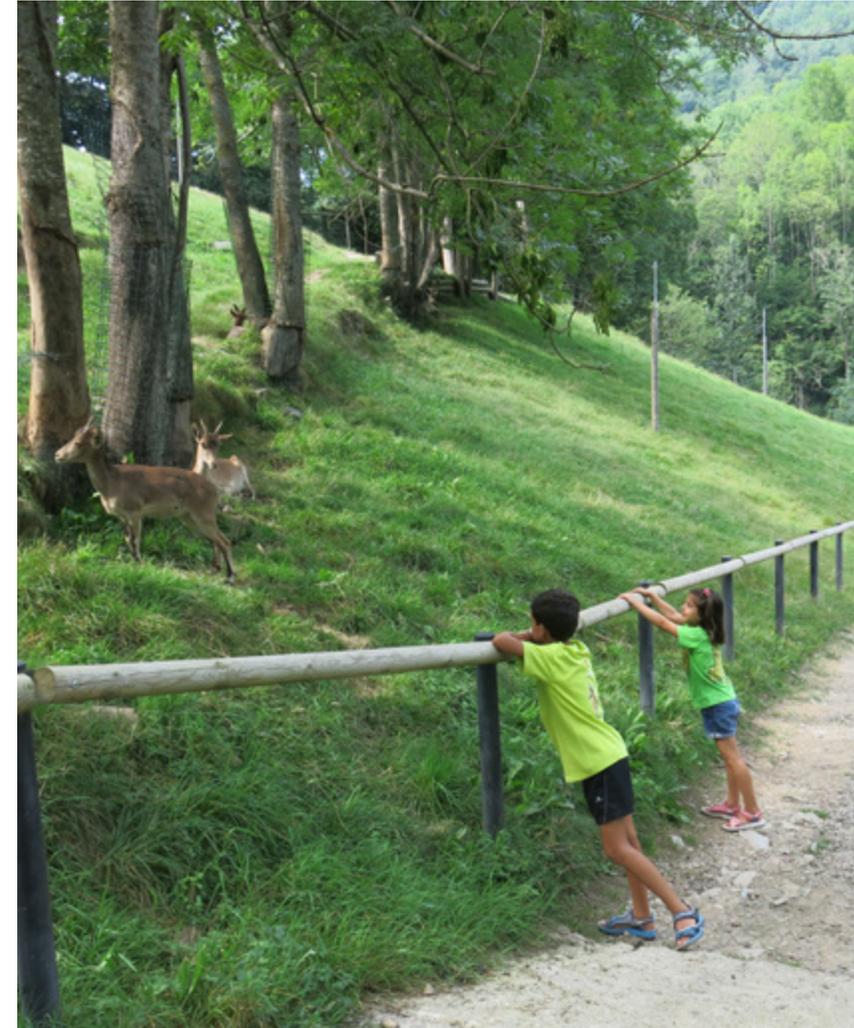
#### Further information

[Family tourism certificate:](#)

[Family holidays destinations](#)

[Family tourism](#)

Molló @Molló



# 12

## Health and wellness



The Pyrenean climate, the quality of the air, the healing and mineral properties of the waters and the tradition of healthy living inherited from Roman times are among the features of the destination, with many spas and health resorts located in impressively beautiful surroundings.

The search for wellness includes relaxation therapies, natural therapies, water circuits, body and beauty treatments, or specific medical treatments: different options for attaining the coveted equilibrium between body and mind.

The whole Pyrenees of Catalonia offer top-quality, internationally prestigious spa facilities. In Val d'Aran, Banhs de Tredòs, located on the periphery of Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, is the highest health centre in Europe at 1,750 m, while Termes Baronia de Les close to the French border is a spa with a wide offer. Other outstanding wellness centres in the area include Caldes de Boí Spa and Sant Vicenç Spa Hotel in Els Banys de Sant Vicenç in Alt Urgell, which boasts some fine sulphurated thermal

#### Caldes de Boí Thermal Resort

waters. Some thirty hotels and rural accommodation establishments in the western Pyrenees offer guests a complementary spa service.

The Pyrenees are full of spa hotels with services specifically designed to take care of the visitor's health and wellness, all year round.

#### Further information

[Health and wellness - catalunya.com](https://www.catalunya.com)

[Wellness - visitvaldaran.com](https://www.visitvaldaran.com)

[Health - lleidatur.com](https://www.lleidatur.com)

[Health and wellness - costabrava.org](https://www.costabrava.org)

[Health and wellness - elbergueda.cat](https://www.elbergueda.cat)



# 13

## Business tourism, conventions and incentive trips



Far from the crowded cities yet just a few hours away from Barcelona, the Catalan Pyrenees are also an ideal destination for business tourism, small or medium-sized conventions, scientific congresses, product launches and incentive trips, offering interesting ideas for combining business with pleasure.

The current trend for companies organising events is to move away from the urban areas and complement professional encounters with cultural activities, fine dining and active tourism in beautiful natural surroundings. Easier, faster, improved communications and a wider offer of specific products contribute to making the Pyrenees a superlative destination for all kinds of business events and meetings.

Throughout the Pyrenees of Catalonia, modern infrastructures and amenities with state-of-the-art technology welcome congresses and conventions. The area is well endowed with exclusive, singular

venues in natural environments or historic buildings such as castles, monasteries, palaces, traditional farmsteads, theatres, museums, etc.

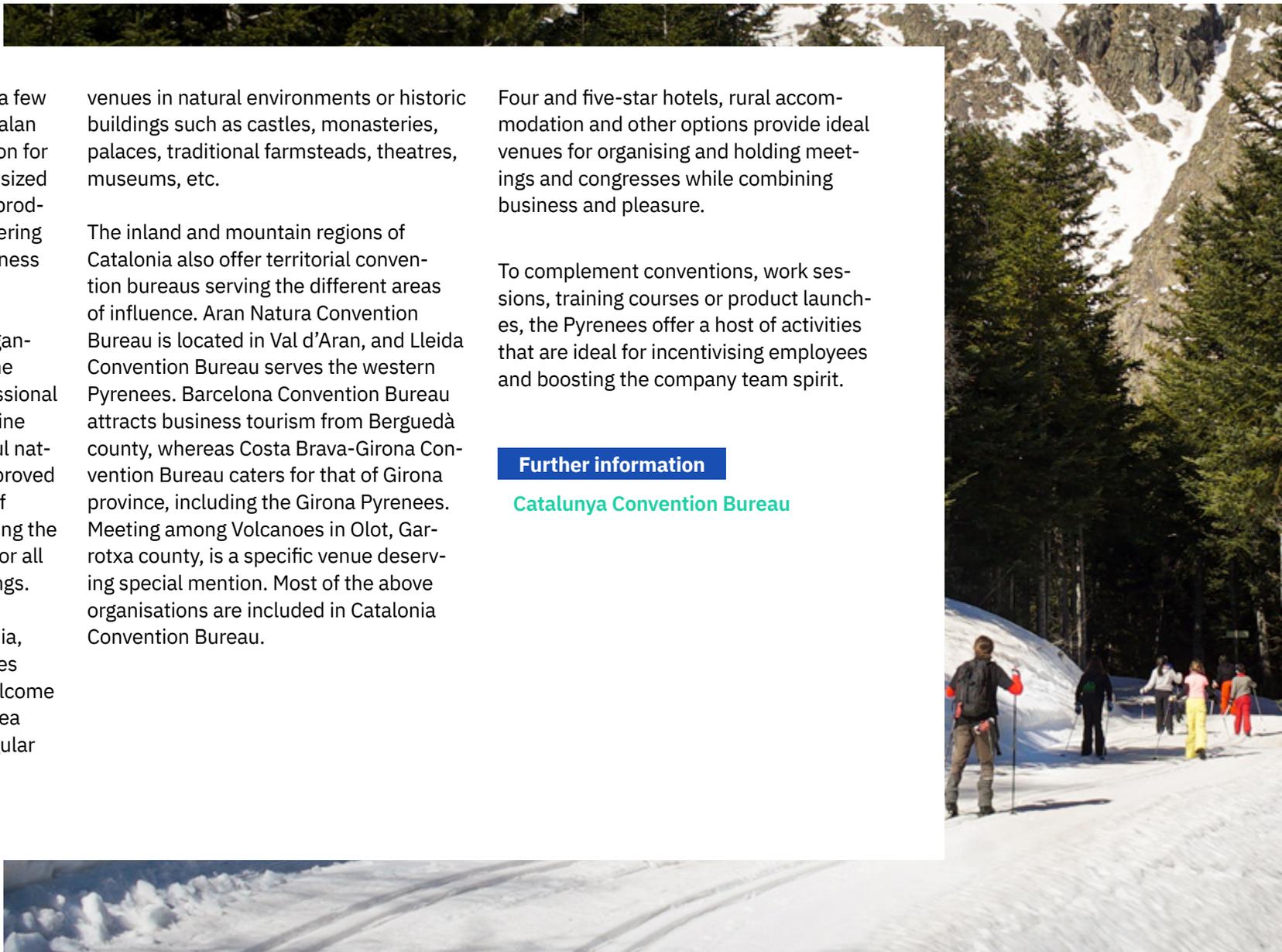
The inland and mountain regions of Catalonia also offer territorial convention bureaus serving the different areas of influence. Aran Natura Convention Bureau is located in Val d'Aran, and Lleida Convention Bureau serves the western Pyrenees. Barcelona Convention Bureau attracts business tourism from Berguedà county, whereas Costa Brava-Girona Convention Bureau caters for that of Girona province, including the Girona Pyrenees. Meeting among Volcanoes in Olot, Garrotxa county, is a specific venue deserving special mention. Most of the above organisations are included in Catalonia Convention Bureau.

Four and five-star hotels, rural accommodation and other options provide ideal venues for organising and holding meetings and congresses while combining business and pleasure.

To complement conventions, work sessions, training courses or product launches, the Pyrenees offer a host of activities that are ideal for incentivising employees and boosting the company team spirit.

#### Further information

[Catalunya Convention Bureau](#)



14

# Accessible tourism



The Catalan Pyrenees destination is committed to accessible and inclusive tourism, offering a comprehensive range of adapted amenities to give everyone the chance to enjoy the cultural heritage, rich gastronomy, high mountain landscapes and many sports activities.

Eight Pyrenean destinations, out of a total of 27 in Catalonia, subscribe to the Accessible tourism for All project, promoted by the Catalan Tourist Board to enable persons with disabilities or reduced mobility to participate in sports, leisure and cultural activities, as stipulated by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The following destinations are members of Accessible Tourism for All: Val d'Aran, Vall de Boí, Pallars Sobirà, La Seu d'Urgell, La Molina-Cerdanya, Garrotxa, the Dalí Route and Costa Brava-Alt Empordà.

The main adapted activities on offer include the following: skiing at Baqueira-Beret,

*Accessible tourism © Oriol Clavera*

Boí Taüll and La Molina resorts; hiking routes through Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park and Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park; cultural routes at places such as La Seu d'Urgell; hot-air balloon trips; handbikes, adapted bikes and riding centres along the greenways; and a wide range of sporting activities. The Catalan section of the Way of St James was also restored with disabled persons in mind. Many of the museums are adapted as they have tactile models in some areas and absence of architectural barriers.

Many tourist accommodation establishments and public transport services are adapted for wheelchair users and persons with reduced mobility.

Catalonia is a pioneering destination in adapted services, natural areas and leisure activities to make tourism accessible for everybody.



**Further information**

[Accessible tourism in Catalonia](#)  
[Accessible tourism in Pirineus](#)

# 15

## Accommodation



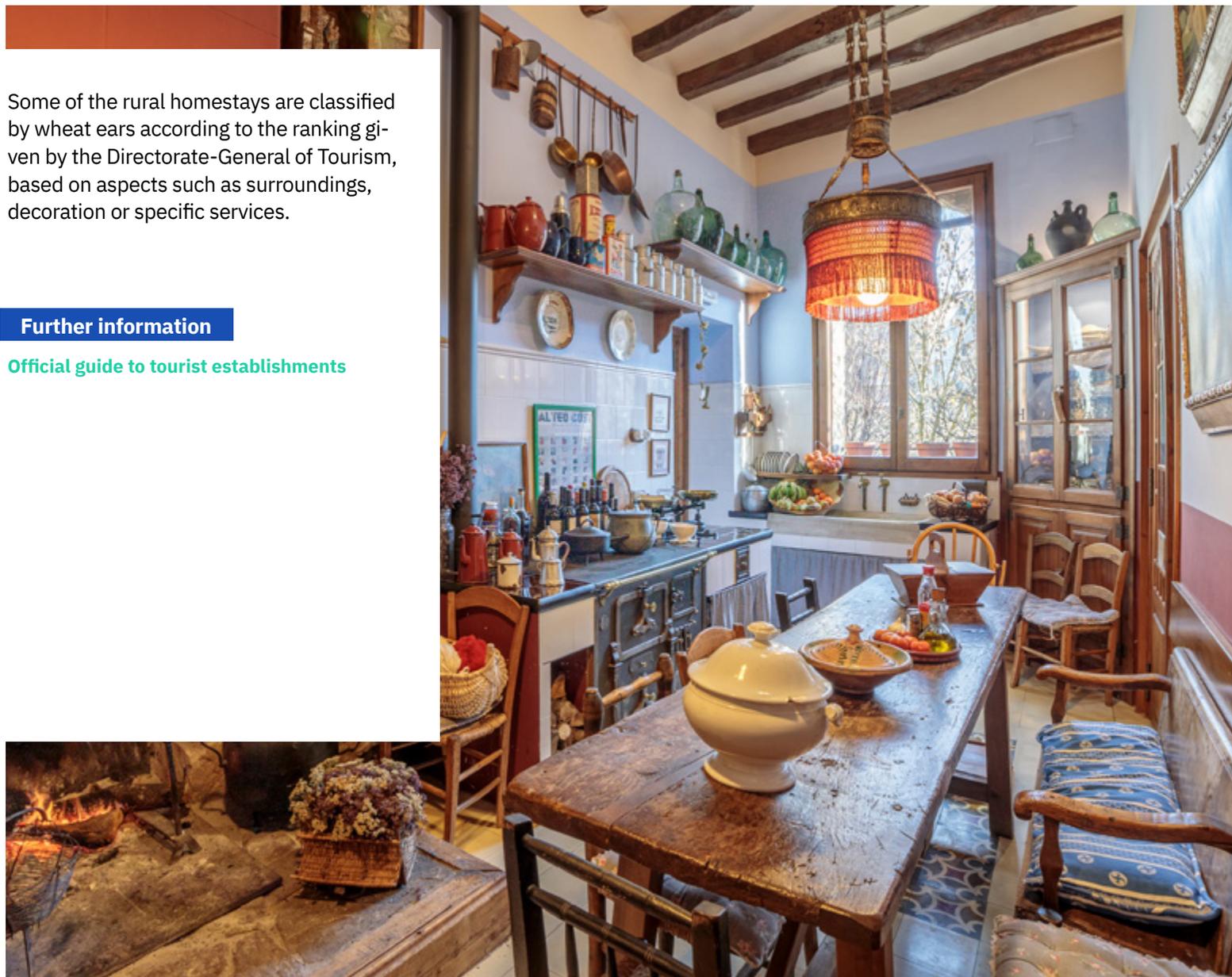
The Pyrenees provide more than 148,000 authorised tourist accommodation places in over 1700 establishments. The wide, varied offer throughout the area includes hotels of all categories, hostels, guesthouses, campsites, apartments, rural accommodation, holiday camps and mountain refuges. Most are small or medium-sized family-run places, characterised by their warm friendly welcome.

In recent years, many traditional Catalan farmhouses in the Pyrenees have been transformed into “charming hotels” and rural establishments. Some rural accommodation is attached to a farming, livestock or forestry business, offering guests the opportunity of experiencing agritourism first-hand, together with the owners and even taking part in farming activities or with the animals.

Some of the rural homestays are classified by wheat ears according to the ranking given by the Directorate-General of Tourism, based on aspects such as surroundings, decoration or specific services.

#### Further information

[Official guide to tourist establishments](#)



# 16

## Tourist companies of the Pyrenees of Catalonia



There is a long list of highly qualified companies and organisations providing services for tourist operators and visitors wishing to commune with nature and the Pyrenean landscape by partaking in cultural, gastronomic, sports and leisure activities.

To allow visitors organising their stay, the full list of companies, grouped by county and by type of activity, can be found on the official Pirineus website [www.visitpirineus.com/en](http://www.visitpirineus.com/en).

The companies offer a wide range of services including water sports, mountain bike, adventure sports, active or multi-adventure tourism, horse-riding and motorised vehicle routes, mountain and nature guides, and much more.

All have professional guides and monitors who advise and accompany users during the activities, as well as the proper equipment needed to ensure the safety of the participants.

*Cadí Moixeró Natural park © CHB*

The companies hope to enable users to gain full value from the activities while enjoying a unique, memorable experience.

The **destination management companies in the Pyrenees of Catalonia** are specialists organised by counties who know the local offer perfectly and can provide advice to both tour operators and end customers to plan the stay according to their needs, be it in family, groups, individually or an incentive trip.

#### Further information

[DMC - visitpirineus.com](http://DMC - visitpirineus.com)



