

The Natural Parks Network

Ensuring the territorial and environmental balance of the 100 municipalities within its geographical scope.

Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Parks Network consists of 12 protected natural areas of significant scenic, ecological and cultural value.

It is comprised of 102,587 ha, spread out across 100 municipalities. These municipalities represent 22% of Barcelona province's territory and are home to 70% of the population of Catalonia.

The planning and management of the natural and agricultural areas is conducted through special plans drawn up with the participation of all the parties involved.

The Network protects the natural, agricultural, forestry, cultural and scenic values of each park.

It works towards achieving a balance between the preservation of the parks and the economic development of the area.

It also promotes environmental education and the public use of natural and cultural heritage.

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The kingdom of limestone rock

The parks of El Garraf and Olèrdola fascinate visitors with their unique and exotic landscapes, rich in karstic shapes.

The arid landscapes of El Garraf and Olèrdola are characterised by their low reliefs, rounded peaks and deep valleys of steep slopes.

The parks of El Garraf and Olèrdola, so close to each other, comprise the south-west buttress of the Catalan coastal mountain range. Spread across the districts of El Baix Llobregat, L'Alt Penedès and El Garraf, together they comprise 12,984 hectares (of which El Garraf represents 12,376 and Olèrdola 608).

Limestone rock covers almost the whole of the two parks. In El Garraf Park we find a large number of Karstic formations such as caves, sinkholes and limestone pavement. Limestone is also seen in the vineyard buildings and the old farmhouses. Olèrdola mountain represents a natural watchtower crowned by the monumental complex, fruit of passing Iberians, Romans and Medieval peoples.

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Network app



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Diputació
Barcelona

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Diputació
Barcelona

Xarxa de Parcs Naturals

Press and Communications Office. DL B 11123-2020

Parcs del Garraf i d'Olèrdola

English

Life on the rocks in the land without water

El Garraf and Olèrdola are home to dwarf palm trees, Mediterranean tortoises and the Bonelli's eagle.

Harsh environmental conditions (strong sun exposure, lack of water, sparse vegetation and abrupt relief) have determined both the landscape and the flora and fauna in the two parks.

In the parks you will find, amongst other things, the green snake, the horseshoe whip snake, the black wheatear, the black-eared wheatear, the blue rock thrush, the beech marten and the badger. There is also cave-dwelling fauna such as the lesser horseshoe bat, and the Mediterranean tortoise has recently been introduced. We cannot forget the Bonelli's eagle, whose nesting we can follow thanks to a camera installed in one of its nests.

The dense scrubland with its kermes oak, mastic trees, Mauritania grass and dwarf palm trees (Europe's only native palm tree), characterise the vegetation in the parks, which is shaped by the summer droughts and the low water retention of the limestone ground.

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Signs of the times

The Olèrdola monumental complex represents the most important human milestone in the area.

The two parks cover prehistoric graves, medieval castles and forts and modernist buildings paid for by people who had made their fortunes in the West Indies.

A Borderland, the remains of the castles of Eramprunyà and Olivella represent the period of wars against the Saracens, even if the architecture of the modest farmhouse connected to the vineyards (Can Marcer, Mas Quadrell or Can Grau) or to goat herding (Mas Maiol, El Carxol o Vallgrassa) is the most representative of El Garraf. Other characteristic elements are the numerous walls of dry rock, the plots and the vineyard shacks.

Four buildings stand out in this architectural heritage: the Güell wine cellar and the Pleta cistern, Modernist works by Francesc Berenguer; the hospital of Olesa de Bonesvalls, a very well preserved example of hospital architecture, and the complex of the Plana Novella palace in the middle of El Garraf.

Settled in Iberian, Roman and Medieval times, Olèrdola, the town centre and its surroundings have been inhabited from the Bronze age until they were definitively abandoned between the XIIIth and XIVth centuries.



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The environment and life

A landscape of modest farmhouses, vineyards, cereal crops and goat herds.

Over the years, El Garraf and Olèrdola have been used by humans in a variety of ways.

The flocks of goats and the vines (almost destroyed by a plague of lice in 1879-1880) were, in the past, the economic staple of the villagers. Here and there visitors can find the ruins of farmhouses and corrals, the remains of this agricultural activity.

In the following decades however, these were gradually replaced by companies dedicated to recreation, nature (Can Grau) or art and culture (Vallgrassa). Gastronomy (with the recent recovery, for example, of El Garraf cabbage) and wine making are major economic forces. Around the protected area you will find a large number of wine cellars, producers and restaurants that are part of the programme *Parc a taula* (From park to table).

The forest, meanwhile, covers a large part of the Olerdola Park's uneven mountainsides, but is not used productively. Likewise, you can also find small family farms dedicated to winemaking and growing fruit trees.

Get the most out of your visit

It's easy to do, whether it's an impromptu stroll or an activity-packed stay.

The two parks offer a network of facilities and programmes for you to get to know the place better and enjoy everything on offer.

The parks of El Garraf and Olèrdola offer various strategically located centres, information points and documentation centres, as well as several signposted routes focused on plant life, the senses and art. Some of these are adapted for the disabled. You can also enjoy guided routes and walks and the services offered at various educational and cultural installations such as El Garraf Park Astronomical Observatory; Vallgrassa. Experimental Arts Centre, and the Can Grau school of nature. In addition you will also find informative booklets, temporary displays and permanent exhibitions about the Bonelli's eagle. Located at La Pleta. El Garraf Park Office is an unmissable stop.

The parks also organise workshops and family activities to introduce caving and environmental education, fun and cultural programmes such as *Viu el parc* (Live the park) and *Poesia als parcs. Lletres i paisatges* (Poetry in the parks. Words and countrysides) and the school programme *Coneguem els nostres parcs* (Discover our parks); a whole range of options to discover and enjoy nature, always respectfully.

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1 Masia La Pleta

Current head office for the parks and information and services centre.



NOTES: Starting point for a botanical route adapted for the disabled, it also houses an audiovisual display about El Garraf Park and a permanent exhibition on the Bonelli's eagle.

Built in 1894 as a hunting lodge for the Güell family, it was the work of the Modernist architect F. Berenguer, a disciple of Gaudí. Later converted into a farmhouse, it has a water cistern crowned by an original conical tower. In 1994, the Barcelona Provincial Council bought and renovated it.

5 Avenc de l'Esquerrà

At 336 metres it is the deepest cave in El Garraf Park.



NOTES: The caves that characterise El Garraf countryside are a top habitat for bats, insects and spiders.

The history of caving in Catalonia begins in El Garraf. In 1908, the priest caver Marià Faura made noteworthy explorations, such as the L'Esquerrà cave, in which he was accompanied by the country's first female caver, Providència Mitjans, from Olesa de Bonesvals.

7 Hermitage de la Trinitat

Iconic Sitges monument and a great coastal lookout point.



NOTES: The chapel, in a typical whitewash style, has a modernist building next to it. It opens on the fourth Sunday of each month.

This pretty seaside chapel is first mentioned in 1375, when it was home to hermits. The saying goes that it was built because a cross was discovered there with the image of the Trinity. In the 18th centuries, the roof collapsed and the hermitage was rebuilt and extended.

9 Puig de la Mola

At the top of this natural outlook is a triangulation station.



NOTES: The route is almost entirely along the GR5 and the starting point is the Olesa hospital square.

It's 534 metres takes visitors through a truly Mediterranean landscape of dwarf palms, kermes oak, Mastic trees, grasses, evergreen oaks, pines, thyme, rosemary, etc. Before or after reaching the summit, don't forget to visit the old Medieval hospital of Olesa de Bonesvals.

2 La Morella

The highest point of the massif has a pretty cross at its peak.

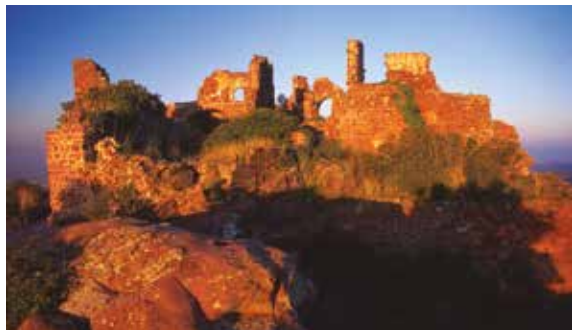


NOTES: Crowned by the distinctive cross, it offers magnificent panoramic views. Don't forget your binoculars!

An unmissable landmark for hikers, at 594 metres La Morella is the park's rooftop. Leaving La Pleta, you can follow a stretch of the GR 92 to the top of la Morella i el Rascler (572 metres) and see characteristic features of the karstic landscape: limestone pavement, sinkholes and caves.

3 Eramprunyà Castle

The Barcelona Provincial Council is working on restoring it.



NOTES: Highlights include the well preserved church of Sant Miquel and the old cemetery with tombs dating back to the Xth Century excavated from the rock.

Eramprunyà is a typical example of a rock castle. Strategically located on an escarpment of red rock, it was used as a look-out post and defensive point in the middle ages. Mentioned as far back as 957, it was at its most splendid in the XIVth century under the Marcs.

4 Palau Novella

Old period house that is the stuff of legends.



NOTES: Included on the List of Catalonia's Architectural Heritage, in 1996 a Sakya Tashi Ling Buddhist Community moved in.

In 1875, Pere Domènech, an *american* who made a fortune in Cuba, bought the former farmhouse and converted it into an agricultural housing development. Rebuilt with excessive luxury and a strange mix of styles, the exterior resembles a small fort. In 1896, with the owners bankrupted, it was publicly auctioned.

6 Castell Vell d'Olivella

Next to it lie the remains of the church of Sant Pere (Saint Peter).



NOTES: You can enjoy great views of Puig de la Mola, Olerdola Castle and Montmell and, on clear days, Montserrat or even the peaks of the Pyrenees.

This old fortress was built in the year 992 at the top of Puig Moli and was part of the defence system during the Reconquista. Route SL-C 100 takes us to the castle from the town of Olivella, passing by other landmarks such as the laundrette and Muntaner Cave.

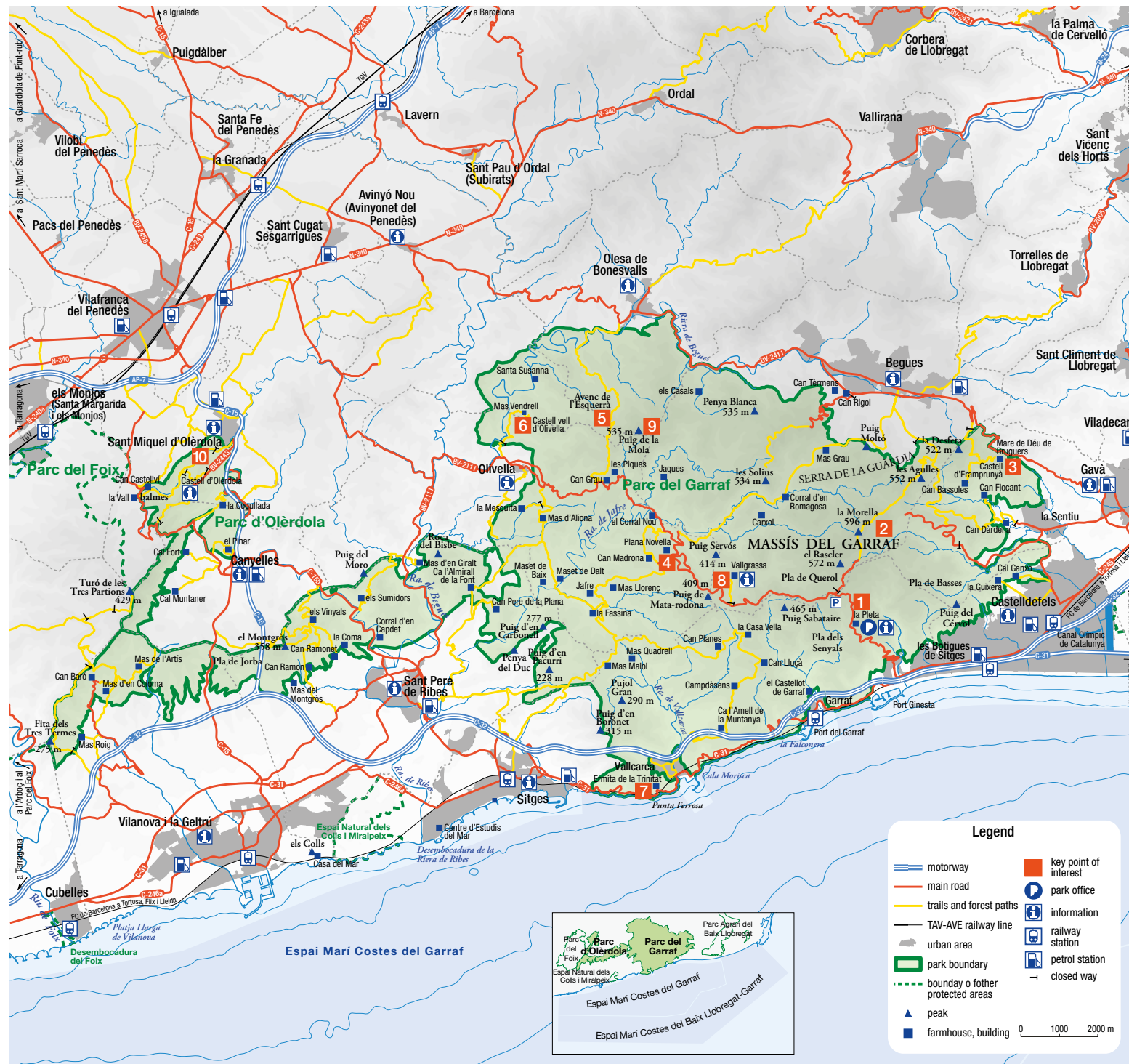
8 Vallgrassa

Old wine farmhouse converted into an Experimental Arts Centre.



NOTES: Vallgrassa. The Experimental Arts Centre is a meeting point for artists and visitors; an open and multidisciplinary project.

In this restored farmhouse in the heart of El Garraf Park, close to the Plana Novella cultural activities, exhibitions and workshops are held... It also offers an artistic route, with more than a dozen works of art displayed throughout the centre.



10 Olerdola monumental complex

Exceptional crucible of prehistoric, Iberian, Roman and Medieval remains.



NOTES: Outside the walled enclosure there is Albat's plain, with a necropolis comprising around one hundred human tombs excavated from the rock.

We can admire the Roman church of Sant Miquel, the spectacular Roman cistern, the remains of the Medieval Castle and the remains of Iberian people and the walls from different times. It houses a performance centre run by the Catalan Arqueology Museum.

How to get there

EL GARRAF PARK

BY CAR
AP-7 (exits 28, 29 and 30)
C-32 (exits 21 to 48)
C-31 (exits Gavà to Vilanova i la Geltrú)
C-15 (exits Vilanova i la Geltrú to Vilafranca del Penedès)
N-340 (exits from Avinyonet del Penedès to Vilafranca del Penedès)
BV-2041 (from Gavà to Begues)
BV-2111 (from Sant Pere de Ribes to Olivella)
BV-2411 (from Begues to Avinyó Nou)
BV-2415 (from Sant Pere Molanta (Olerdola) to the BV-2111)
BY TRAIN
Renfe. Tel. +34 902 240 202
R4 Line (Sant Vicenç de Calders - Manresa via Vilafranca del Penedès). Stop in Vilafranca del Penedès and connect with the bus line that goes to Olerdola and Canyelles
BY BUS
Autobusos Plana. Tel. +34 938 145 848
Line 902 (Barcelona-Gavà-Begues-Olesa de Bonesvals)

La Hispano Igualadina SA. Tel. +34 902 447 726
MON-BUS. Tel. +34 938 937 511
Vendrell - Barcelona Line, ronda Universitat. Stops in Vilanova, Sitges and Sant Pere de Ribes

OLÈRDOLA PARK

BY CAR
AP-7 (exit 30 Santa Margarida i els Monjos)
C-15 (exit 11 Castell d'Olerdola/Sant Miquel d'Olerdola)
C-32 (exit 21, address C-15 Vilafranca del Penedès)
N-340 (connection with C-15)
BY TRAIN
Renfe. Tel. +34 902 240 202
R4 Line (Sant Vicenç de Calders - Manresa via Vilafranca del Penedès). Stop in Vilafranca del Penedès and connect with the bus line that goes to Olerdola and Canyelles
BY BUS
Autobusos Plana. Tel. +34 938 145 848
Line 902 (Barcelona-Gavà-Begues-Olesa de Bonesvals)

www.mobilitat.gencat.cat

Facilities

EL GARRAF PARK AND THE OLÈRDOLA PARK OFFICE

La Pleta. Road from Rat Penat to Plana Novella, km 3,5 (Sitges)
Tel. +34 935 971 819. Email: p.garraf@diba.cat

EL GARRAF PARK INFORMATION CENTRES AND POINTS

La Sala d'Olivella Information Centre
Pl. Major, s/n (Olivella). Tel. +34 938 968 465

Petit Casal de Begues Information Centre
Pg. de l'Església, 1 (Begues). Tel. +34936392509

Vilanova Information Point and Municipal Tourism Office
Pg. del Carme, s/n. Ribes Roges Park

Olesa de Bonesvals Information Point
Pl. de l'Ajuntament, s/n

Tel. +34 938 984 375 and +34 938 984 103

Castelldefels Information Point
Pintor Serrasanta, 4. Tel. +34 936 352 727

Sant Pere de Ribes Information Point
Major, 110. Tel. +34 938 962 857

Sitges Inform. Point and Tourism Office
Pl. Eduard Maristany, 2. Tel. +34 938 944 251

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

El Garraf Park Document. Centre. Gavà

City History Centre

Salvador Lluch, 22. Tel. +34 932 639 630

El Garraf Park Documentation Centre. Vilanova i la Geltrú

Joan Oliva i Milà Library

Pl. de la Vila, 13. Tel. +34 938 932 039

Document. and Caving Activities Centre

Pl. de l'Ajuntament, s/n (Olesa de Bonesvals)

Tel. +34 938 984 375, +34 938 984 008 and +34 938 984 103

Cal Ganxo Environmental Activities Centre

Camí de Cal Ganxo, s/n (Castelldefels)
Tel. +34 935 146 151

Centre d'Estudis del Mar (Sea Studies Centre)

Pg. Marítim, 72 (Sitges). Tel. +34 938 945 154

Can Grau School of Nature Masia Can Grau

Paved Forrest Road from Olivella to Plana Novella, km 3.5 (Olivella). Tel. +34 937 432 094

Farm School Can Pere de la Plana

Farmhouse Can Pere de la Plana, s/n (Sant Pere de Ribes). Tel. +34 938 960 827 and +34 636 501 728

El Garraf Park Astronomical Observatory

Road from Olivella to Plana Novella, km 3.5 (Olivella). Tel. +34937 713 154, +34651 426872 and +34685 233 575

Parc Arqueològic Mines de Gavà (Mines Arqueological Park)

Jaume I, 7 (Gavà). Tel. +34 932 639 620

Vallgrassa. Experimental Arts Centre

Road from Rat Penat to Plana Novella, km 7.5 (Sitges). Tel. +34935 970891 and +34 938 462 030

OLÈRDOLA PARK INFORMATION CENTRES AND POINTS

Olerdola monumental complex information centre

Castell d'Olerdola. Tel. +34 938 901 420

Olerdola Information Point

Town Hall, Av. Catalunya, 12. Tel. +34 938 903 502

Canyelles Information Point

Pl. de l'11 de Setembre, s/n. Tel. +34 938 973 011