

The Natural Park Network

The Network ensures a territorial and environmental balance for the hundred municipalities in the geographical area.

The Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network contains a dozen protected natural areas of great scenic, ecological and cultural value.

It covers 102,587 hectares and 100 municipalities. The municipalities represent 22% of the Barcelona region and 70% of Catalonia's population.

The Network plans and manages natural and agricultural areas through special schemes devised with the participation of everyone involved.

It protects every park's natural, agricultural, forest, cultural and scenic values.

It seeks to strike a balance between the parks' preservation and the economic development of the local population.

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

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Water between vineyards and castles

El Foix Park is the southernmost area of the twelve that comprise The Natural Park Network.

Its most characteristic elements are the diversity of natural environments surrounding the Foix reservoir and its rich architectural and historical heritage.

English

El Foix Park is located in Alt Penedès, almost right on the boundary between the regions of Garraf, Alt Penedès and Baix Penedès, at the geometric and equidistant centre of the triangle formed by Vilanova i la Geltrú, Vilafranca del Penedès and El Vendrell, their respective capitals.

It covers an area of 3,157 hectares and is an extension of the Garraf massif. The location of the reservoir—one of the few wet areas in Alt Penedès—is determined by the basin of the river Foix, as the reservoir is found on the final stretch of the river.

In addition to the array of ecosystems, El Foix Park also boasts a rich architectural and historical heritage that is centred on the Penyafort and Castellet castles, which had great strategic importance during the Middle Ages.

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This paper comes from environmentally responsible sources



<http://parcs.diba.cat/web/foix>



parcelfoix



Network App

Parks of Catalonia

The Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network

Castell de Montesquiu Park, Les Guilleries-Savassona Natural Area, El Montseny Natural Park, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac Natural Park, El Montnegre i el Corredor Park, Serralada Litoral Park, Serralada de Marina Park, Serra de Collserola Natural Park, El Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park, El Garraf Park, Olèrdola Park, El Foix Park.



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Diputació
Barcelona

Xarxa de Parcs Naturals

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A variety of ecosystems around the Foix reservoir

El Foix Park stands out for being one of the few wet areas in the Penedès region.

It is home to woodlands, shrublands, riparian areas and a range of aquatic environments.

The River Foix supplies the Foix reservoir. Around this area you will find riparian ecosystems, which is quite exceptional in a region known for its dryness.

Alders, ashes, white poplars, elms, black poplars and willows all grow around the banks of the reservoir and the river, as well as beside the numerous tributary streams. Particularly noteworthy is the presence of the myrtle thicket, a highly valuable plant formation made up of species including myrtle, European fan palm, mastic trees, common smilax and diss grass.

The reservoir's fauna is equally interesting. It is a refuge for aquatic species such as the Spanish pond turtle, the mallard, the common moorhen, the little egret and the cattle egret, among others.

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Crossroads of Medieval civilisations

A unique and valuable historical and architectural heritage.

El Foix had great strategic importance during the Middle Ages. This can be seen in the architectural legacy of its castles.

In Ibero-Roman times it intersected the road between Tarraco and Barcino, and during the Medieval period was on the frontier between Christians and Muslims. The Castellet castle (10th c.) and the Penyafort castle (12th c.) both date back to this era and were of considerable strategic importance. Among the rich heritage of Romanesque hermitages and churches, the church of Sant Pere and the hermitages of Penyafel, Sanabra and Sant Llorenç are particularly noteworthy.

As for civil heritage, the Molí del Foix, an old flour mill dating back to the 13th century, stands out.

Numerous ancient farmhouses ('masies') are also vestiges of a time when the Mediterranean trio of olive oil, wheat and wine dominated the agriculture of the country. The drove roads, or old routes for the seasonal migration of farm animals, bear witness to how important livestock farming was in these parts.

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The environment and life

The fertility and exuberance of the lowlands.

A balance between human activity and nature.

Those who live within the Park boundaries mostly work in the industrial and service sectors in Vilafranca del Penedès and Vilanova i la Geltrú. Only a handful of the inhabitants of Torrelletes and Clariana work in the agricultural sector.

The white pine forests are not exploited for commercial purposes. Nevertheless, the Park carries out some conservation work that would not be profitable for owners. Despite only a small portion of the local population working in the vineyards, these are an integral element within the Park and shape its landscape. This cultivation has increased over the last few years, as a result of the growing success of the Penedès denomination of origin, and it has become a key element of the area's economy. There is a significant industrial presence around the Park, especially towards the urban areas of La Gornal, L'Arboç and Els Monjos.

The expansion of tertiary activities, linked to the service sector and the public use of the Park, has led to the emergence of a series of educational and leisure facilities, as well as various culinary establishments. Some of these are a part of the "Parc a taula" (From park to table) programme.

Get the most out of your visit

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

The Park offers a large network of facilities and programmes to help you get to know the place better and enjoy everything on offer.

El Foix Park has a number of information points and a documentation centre that are all strategically located, as well as a series of signposted trails, guided walks, a viewpoint, two bird observatories (one of which is wheelchair friendly), exhibitions and publications.

Workshops and environmental education activities are also organised, as well as recreational and cultural programmes such as "Viu el parc" (Experience the park) and "Poesia als parcs. Lletres i paisatges" (Poetry in the park. Letters and landscapes). A wide range of options which allow visitors to discover and enjoy nature in a respectful way.

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1 Sant Esteve de Castellet Castle

With an imposing presence, it overlooks the Foix reservoir.



NOTES:
The Castellet castle is currently privately owned and houses the UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves.

Linked to several Catalan families of nobility, the castle boasts Romanesque elements from the 11th and 12th centuries, Gothic features, as well as additions from the 20th century. It still conserves Romanesque and Gothic windows, as well as battlements. The oldest feature is the master tower, which was built in the 12th century. To its rear you will find the Sant Pere hermitage.

5 Foix Reservoir

Alongside the Castellet castle, it is one of the park's most distinctive features.



NOTES:
Make the most of your visit to the reservoir by doing some birdwatching, from one of the two specially created bird observatories.

Commissioned in the year 1901 to cover agricultural needs, it is one of the most important natural spaces of the Penedès region. A halfway point between Europe and Africa, over 250 species of resident and migratory birds have been seen. Officially inaugurated in 1928, it was possible to use water from the reservoir for irrigation from 1937 onwards.

7 Penyafort Castle

This architectural monument, declared a Cultural Asset of National Interest, has recently been restored.



NOTES:
By following the signs "De castell a castell", you can enjoy a pleasant hike along paths and trails.

With Medieval, Baroque and Neoclassical elements, everything began with a defensive tower with a series of annexed outbuildings in which Saint Raymond of Penyafort was born in 1285. In the 17th century, the Dominican Order founded a convent there. It also served as a prison during the Civil War.

9 Font de Sant Llorenç

A shady spot that is close to various points of interest in the Park.



NOTES:
If we continue along the trail we will reach an old restored lime kiln and, if we go up a narrow path, the Sant Llorenç hermitage.

A cool and shady corner with two picnic tables. To get there, visitors should walk from the chain on the track from Cal Vicari. There are a few springs in the same area, namely the Font de Sant Joan and the Font del Cagalló, which are both amphibian breeding grounds.

2 Wheelchair-friendly Wildlife Observatory

Wheelchair friendly Park.



NOTES:
To discover the programmes, materials, routes and specially adapted facilities, please visit the parcs.diba.cat/web/accessibilitat website.

Made from wood and overlooking the reservoir, the observatory is an ideal place for birdwatching and is wheelchair friendly. It can be reached in an adapted vehicle, providing the El Foix Park Office is notified in advance so that they can open the access road.

3 Sant Esteve Hermitage

Close to the village of Les Masuques, this ancient parish church can be traced back to the 10th century.

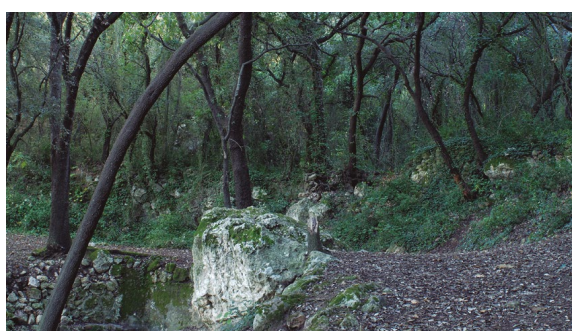


NOTES:
A remarkable feature of the main façade is an arched doorway with stone voussoirs.

The building has undergone quite a bit of restoration work over the years, especially on the main façade. It has a single nave covered by a barrel vault set on transverse arches, with an octagonal tower, a bell tower and a gable roof. There are three apses and a semicircular arched window in the central part.

4 Font d'Horta

The humid climate is ideal for the breeding of amphibians as well as visits from various nocturnal mammals.

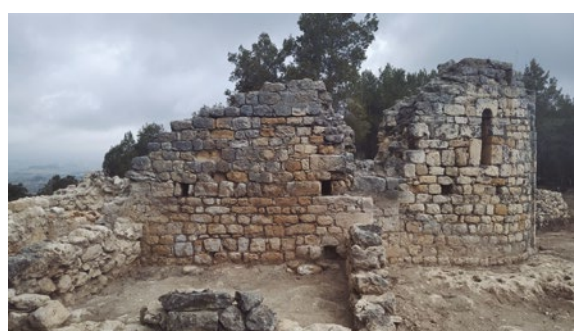


NOTES:
SL-C 91 signposted trail point. Easy route along gently sloping paths and tracks, except for the last stretch where there is a steeper climb.

A spring located in a shady area where the old wash-house and the remains of several other buildings supposedly linked to it once stood. The path that passes through was called the cemetery path and it is still possible to see the wheel marks from the carts on many stones along the path.

6 Ruins of the Sant Llorenç hermitage

Lovely views and archaeological remains from different periods.



NOTES:
In the surrounding area, various tombs of undetermined antiquity have been found dug into the rock, as well as other elements related to the keeping of livestock.

Located in an area with lovely views over the Penedès region, archaeological and restoration work is being carried out on what remains of the old 10th century hermitage. It can be reached on foot from the Sant Llorenç spring along an uphill path, or by passing through Cal Pere Joan and Sanabreta.

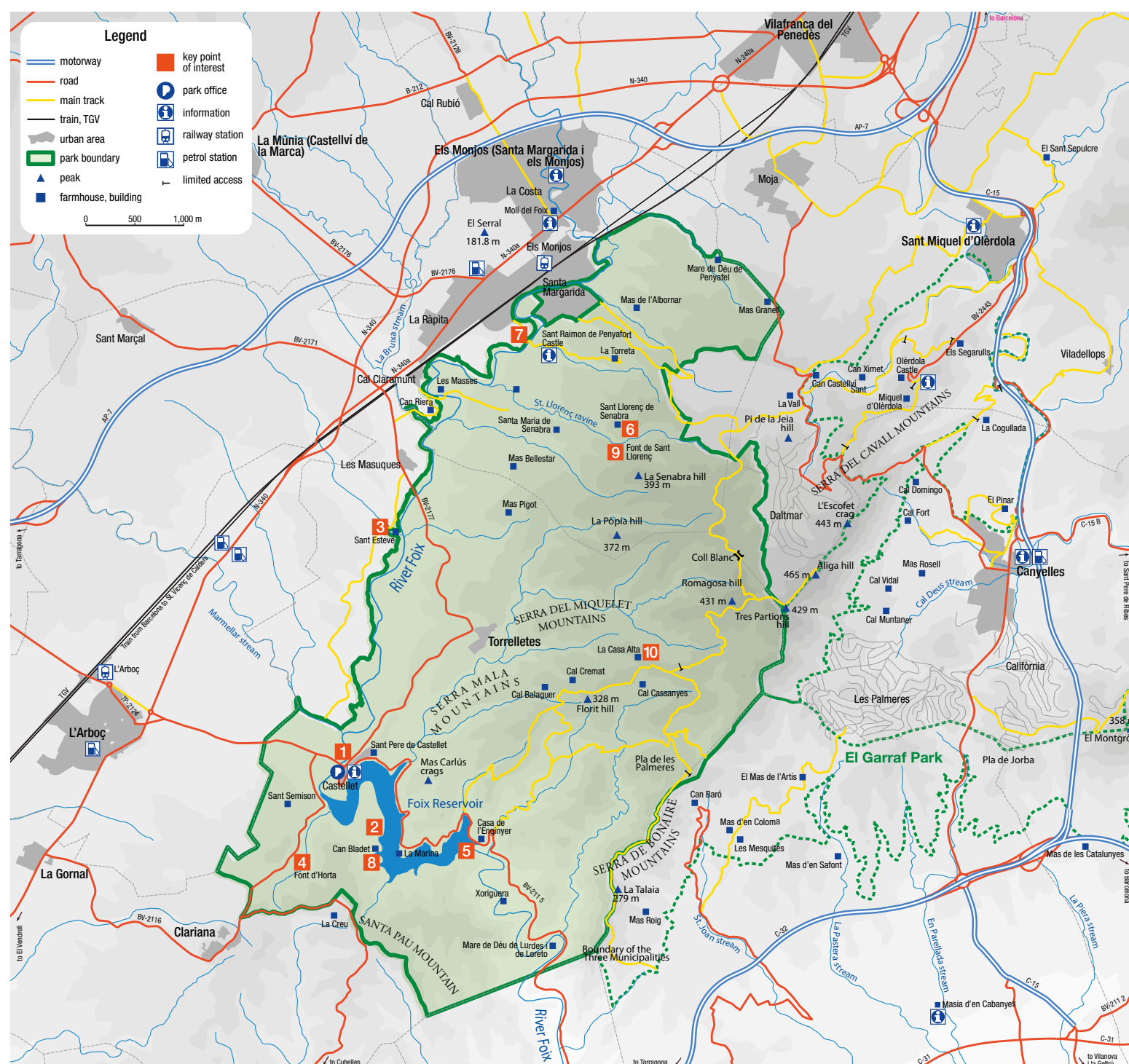
8 Cal Bladet

A traditional Penedès farmhouse, currently used only for residential purposes.



NOTES:
It is an important feature of the landscape surrounding the Foix reservoir. It is on the PR-C 143 and SL-C 91 trails.

An old farmhouse which pre-dates the construction of the reservoir and lends its name to the nearby mountain. This private estate was formerly dedicated to winegrowing and livestock breeding, but at present no activities are being carried out.



10 Casa Alta

Remnants of the former agricultural activity, now unfortunately abandoned.



NOTES:
Farmhouses like this one are part of the history of the Penedès region, having fallen into disuse due to water shortages and changes in human activity. The GR 92 also passes through.

An old abandoned farmhouse with impressive views over the plain of Penedès and El Foix Park. The building's interior is off limits due to structural damage. Like many farmhouses in the Park, the Casa Alta was abandoned due to water shortages and low agricultural productivity.

How to get there

BY CAR
AP-7 (exit 30 Santa Margarida i els Monjos)
N-340 (different exits: Santa Margarida i els Monjos, L'Arboç towards Castellet following the BV 2115, and La Gornal towards Clariana following the BV 2116)
BV-2115 (to reach Castellet from Vilanova and from L'Arboç)
BV-2116 (to reach Clariana and Castellet from La Gornal)
BV-2117 (going through Masuques, Torrelletes and Castellet)

BY TRAIN
Renfe. Tel. +34 902 240 202
R4 Line Manresa - Sant Vicenç de Calders (via Vilafranca del Penedès). Stop: Els Monjos; L'Arboç

BY BUS
Autocars del Penedès. Tel. +34 977 660 821
Autocars Vendrell. Tel. +34 938 922 544
Bus Castellví. Tel. +34 938 918 202
Cintoi Bus. Tel. +34 938 937 511

www.mobilitat.gencat.cat

Facilities

EL FOIX PARK OFFICE
Castell, 31 (Castellet i la Gornal)
Tel. +34 977 670 169
Email: p.foix@diba.cat

INFORMATION POINTS AND CENTRES
Penyafort Castle Information Centre
Penyafort Castle (Santa Margarida i els Monjos)
Tel. +34 938 186 128
Castellet Information Point
Castell, 31 (Castellet i la Gornal)
Tel. +34 977 670 169

Moli del Foix Information Point
Farigola, 2-6 (Santa Margarida i els Monjos)
Tel. +34 938 186 928 | +34 938 174 889

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

El Foix Park Documentation Centre
Santa Margarida i els Monjos Library
Cadi, 2
Tel. +34 938 186 705

Moli del Foix. Historical and Natural Interpretation Centre
Farigola, 2-8 (Santa Margarida i els Monjos)
Tel. +34 938 186 928

Foix reservoir bird observatory

BV-2116 road, km 5.2

Foix reservoir wheelchair-friendly bird observatory
Cal Bladet area

For information on the opening hours and the parks' services and facilities, see: <https://parcs.diba.cat/web/foix>.