

Signposted itineraries

These are circular routes that return to the starting point, except routes marked with an asterisk (*). The routes are designed to reveal the richness of the natural and cultural heritage of different places within the park and are usually adapted for families.

- 1** 2 hrs 7.8 km
From castle to castle: from Penyafort to Castellet*
- 2** 1 hr 4 km
SL-C91 Horta spring
- 3** 30 min 1.4 km
Along the riverbank from El Foix to Penyafort

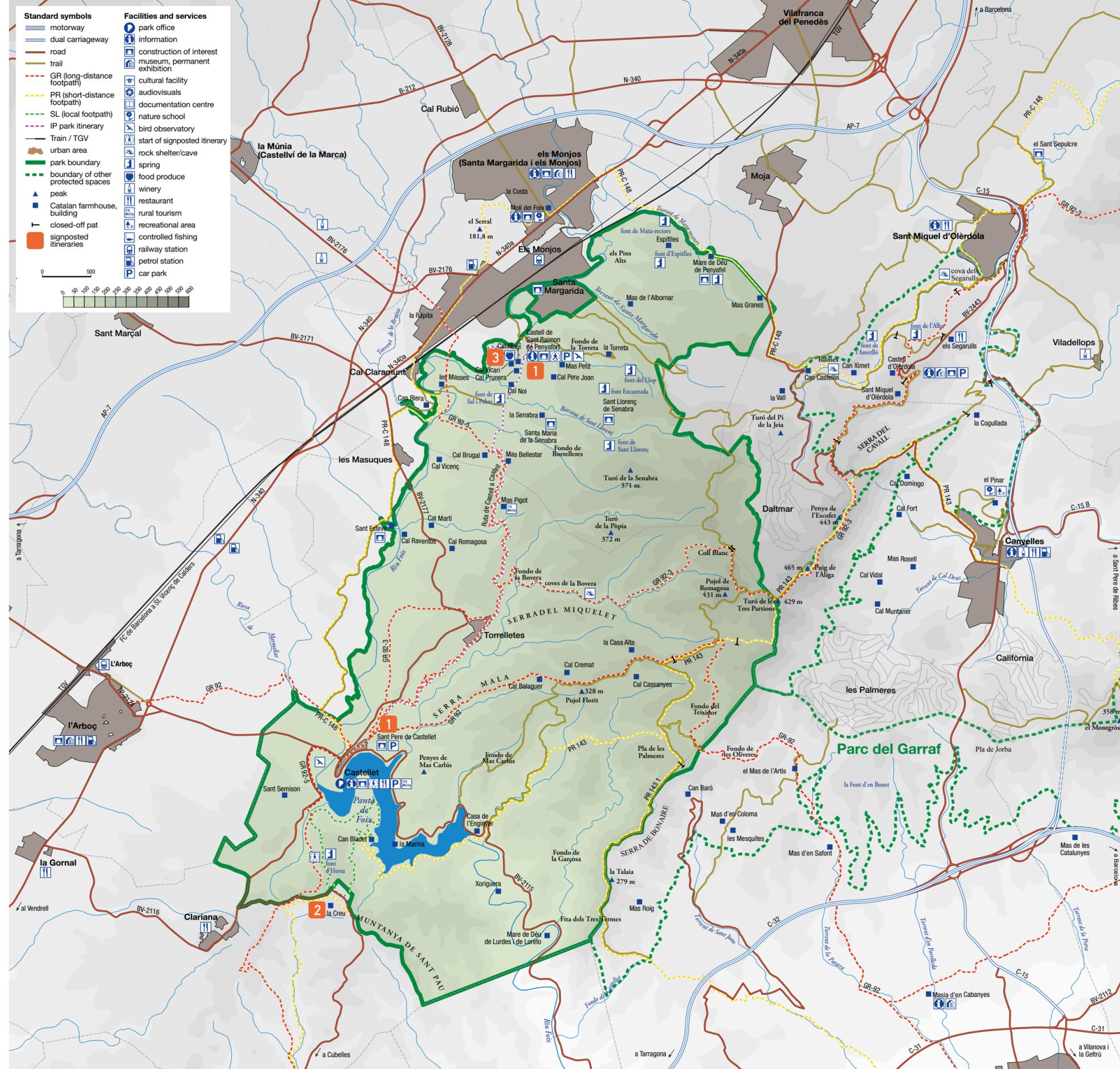
Information points and centres

- PARK OFFICE**
Carrer del Castell, 31
08729 Castellet i La Gornal
Tel.: (+34) 977 670 169
Email: p.foix@diba.cat
- INFORMATION POINTS**
Castellet Information Point
Carrer del Castell, 31
08729 Castellet i La Gornal
Opening hours: every day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; closed on 25 December
Tel.: (+34) 977 670 169
- Moli del Foix Information Point - Historical and Cultural Visitors' Centre**
Carrer de la Farigola, 2-6
Santa Margarida i Els Monjos
Opening hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Tel.: (+34) 938 186 928
- El Castell de Penyafort Information Centre**
Penyafort castle
Santa Margarida i Els Monjos
Opening hours: Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Closed from Christmas to 6 January
Tel.: (+34) 938 186 128
- DOCUMENTATION CENTRE**
Santa Margarida i Els Monjos Library
Carrer del Cadí, 2
08730 Santa Margarida i Els Monjos
Tel.: (+34) 938 186 705
- See opening hours at**
<http://parcs.diba.cat/web/foix>

The distances of the itineraries have been calculated with the GooTracking platform and may vary significantly if other measuring systems are used.

GR: a long-distance trail of over 50 km, waymarked with white and red markings
PR: a short-distance trail of between 10 and 50 km, waymarked with white and yellow markings
SL: a local trail of less than 10 km, waymarked with white and green markings

- Itinerary
- Approximate duration
- Low difficulty
- Total distance
- Moderate difficulty
- Leaflet available
- High difficulty



El Foix park



Water running through vineyards and castles. The area's appeal lies in both the wide variety of ecological environments that have developed around the Foix reservoir—one of the few wet areas in El Penedès—and the rich historical and architectural heritage formed primarily of Penyafort and Castellet castles, which had major strategic importance in the Middle Ages.

KEY INFORMATION:
Year in which the consortium was created: 1997
Year in which the Special Plan was approved: 1993
Year in which the new Special Plan was approved: 2012
Supervisory body: Parc del Foix Consortium
Institutions that comprise the consortium: Barcelona Provincial Council, Fundación Abertis and the Town Councils of Castellet i La Gornal and Santa Margarida i Els Monjos
Surface area of the park: 3,157 ha

Parks of Catalonia
Xarxa de Parcs Naturals de la Diputació de Barcelona
Parc del Castell de Montsesqui, Espai Natural de les Guillerries-Savassona, Parc Natural del Montseny, Parc Natural de Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac, Parc del Montnegre i el Corredor, Parc de la Serralada Litoral, Parc de la Serralada de Marina, Parc Natural de la Serra de Collserola, Parc Agrari del Baix Llobregat, Parc del Garraf, Parc d'Olerdola, Parc del Foix.



Diputació Barcelona | Xarxa de Parcs Naturals

Gerència de Serveis d'Espais Naturals
Comte d'Urgell, 187 08036 Barcelona
Tel.: (+34) 934 022 428
xarxaparc@diba.cat · parcs.diba.cat

El Foix park



Useful advice for visiting the park

Good practices

The protected natural spaces are places where one can practise outdoor activities and learn about our natural and cultural heritage. Use the network of marked paths and trails.

Use of bicycles

- Respect the priority of pedestrians and avoid causing inconvenience to them.
- Adjust your speed in accordance with the type of path. On trails, the maximum speed permitted is 30 km/h.
- Cycle only on roads, forest trails or paths that are more than three metres wide.
- For justifiable reasons, in certain areas of the park cycling may be restricted temporarily or permanently.
- Follow advice on the use of motor vehicles.

Motor vehicles

- The use of motor vehicles is limited to public trails; travelling cross-country, across firebreaks or over streams and riverbeds is not permitted.
- Remember that the maximum speed permitted on paths is 30 km/h.
- Moderate your speed in order to avoid collisions with people or wildlife.
- The noise caused by some vehicles is harmful to certain sensitive species, such as birds of prey, which may abandon their nesting areas.
- Erosion caused by skidding causes potholes and ditches to appear on the road network. Drive with moderation and restraint, particularly on slopes and when the ground is wet.
- Do not park in front of chains that cut off access to paths or on road verges.

Visit the park safely

- Plan your route and always bring a map to guide you.
- Try to always walk on trails or paths that are clearly marked or signposted.
- Bring water and food supplies and wear appropriate footwear, comfortable clothing and a coat, as well as a cap, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- If you are in a group, do not lose sight of your companions. Do not ever abandon or leave anybody behind.

- The risk of accidents may be greater on peaks and crests. Avoid open spaces during high wind conditions. Strong wind can cause branches and other elements to fall.
- When it is foggy it is easy to become disoriented; do not stray from the main path.
- In the event of downpours or thunderstorms, stay away from peaks, isolated trees and cave entrances. A dense and leafy forest may provide suitable refuge.

What to do with litter

- It is the responsibility of visitors to take the waste that they have created away with them and to recycle it.

How to help prevent fires

- It is prohibited to light fires or barbecues outside authorised areas.
- Exercise caution with anything that could cause fires, such as cigarettes, driving/motorcycling or dropping litter.
- Raise the alarm if you detect any suspicious smoke. Call 112.

Pets

- Pet owners are responsible for their behaviour not disturbing the activity or inhabitants of the park or other visitors.
- Keep your dog on a lead. You must take special care with regard to the behaviour of your dog or other pets, particularly when close to people, country houses or flocks.
- Clean up animal excrement, particularly in areas with a high number of visitors.
- Never abandon pets; such negligence is classified as an offence. Animals can become aggressive, as well as being harmful to natural ecosystems.
- In addition to being kept on a lead, dangerous dogs must also wear a muzzle. By dangerous dog we mean that which is classified as such in law, but also any dog that behaves aggressively.

Fishing regulations

- For health and environmental reasons, fishing anywhere in the reservoir is prohibited, except in the case of official, duly authorised competitions. Fishing in Alzina reservoir is permitted for associated competitions.

Other recommendations

-  If there is a risk of snow or if it has snowed, check road and trail conditions on the park's website. Drive with caution, respect the signals and signs of guards and wardens.
-  Free camping is not permitted in any of its forms, including motorhomes.
-  Human presence and activity have left behind a host of architecture and art over the years. This rich cultural heritage must be respected.
-  Respect the nature and the peacefulness of the environment; avoid making unnecessary noise.
-  Respect agricultural and stockbreeding activities, since they provide the livelihood of many of the park's inhabitants.
-  Logging is a traditional activity in most of the parks. Tree felling is regulated by the Forestry Act of Catalonia and park regulations.
-  To protect native wildlife populations, it is prohibited to release pets or non-native animals that could displace them from their habitat.
-  Hunting is regulated by law and is only allowed in existing hunting grounds. If you encounter a wild boar drive, you must respect the signs and do not stray from the paths.
-  Horse riding must be restricted to public paths; cross-country riding and riding on firebreaks or streams and riverbeds is not permitted.
-  If picking mushrooms, do not damage the forest by using tools or digging into the earth.
-  Holly is a rare tree that provides food and shelter for many species of animals. It is protected by law and collecting any part of the tree or its flowers is an offence.
-  European fan palms are a species protected by law and harvesting them is illegal.

Features

Vegetation

Climate and geological substrate determine the plant life of any area. In the case of El Foix park, it boasts soil rich in lime and a Mediterranean climate. This means that the vegetation has adapted to the dry summers that characterise the Mediterranean climate and to the porous soil that quickly soaks up rainwater. Said water contributes more to shaping the landscape than to facilitating the existence of plants. The area's natural vegetation therefore forms what are known as xerophilous and calcicolous communities, that is to say, plants that can survive in dry, limestone environments. Rocky substrate with very little soil is tolerated by shrub communities such as maquis or low forests consisting of mastic trees and European fan palms. The forest community in the inner part of the area comprises holm-oak woods together with laurustinus. Similarly, holm-oak woods are only found in the shadiest areas. In the rest of the park, they have been replaced by thinned-out pine forests with shrub undergrowth and by oak groves. Owing to stockbreeding activity and logging, many parts of the forest have been replaced by rosemary and heather scrub and, in shady areas, juncus and Mediterranean false brome pastures.

In terms of riparian and freshwater vegetation, the sporadic presence of unevenly distributed ash trees, white poplars and tamarisks, among others, is found. Close to the reservoir, the area is characterised by a ring-shaped body formed of reed swamps and riparian forest, which the pine trees that encircle the reservoir blend into. Upstream and in the shadiest areas, the riparian forest has significant presence.

Over the last few years the water quality of the river Foix has improved. The water level of the reservoir has also been kept high, allowing vegetation typical of wetlands and riverbanks (bulrush, common reed, poplar, etc.) to grow and a wide variety of fauna to gradually establish itself.

Wildlife

The presence of water, both in the river Foix and in the reservoir, is key to the development of wildlife communities, those of which undoubtedly represent one of the park's most singular features. The diverse range of biotopes found within and around the reservoir act as a refuge for an extensive and varied assortment of species. However, the waters of the Foix have been heavily affected by agricultural, industrial and residential use, which occurs on land higher than the reservoir conditioning the quality of its water. The eutrophication or over-enrichment of organic matter in the reservoir's water repeatedly causes a decline in water quality. Nevertheless, we can find a great variety of wildlife, of which birds are the most prominent.

Water quality is essential for the lives of the plants and animals that, at a later stage, serve as food for many bird species. Mallards, common teals, moor hens and other birds may feed on algae, seeds and aquatic plants. The diets of grey herons, little egrets and kingfishers are based on the capture of fish, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. A number of insectivorous birds can also be found, such as plovers, great reed warblers and nightingales, which capture larva, mosquitoes, worms and other invertebrates.

Aquatic wildlife is therefore perhaps the most important type of wildlife in El Foix park. In terms of fish species, the most abundant is the common carp, but there is also no shortage of eel and chub. Other wildlife species linked to the aquatic environment include reptiles such as turtles and viperine snakes and amphibians such as frogs, toads and fire salamanders.

As far as birds are concerned, there are over 150 catalogued species in the park. Aquatic birds that can be seen throughout the whole year include the grey heron, the little egret, ducks, the little grebe, coots and moor hens. For some years now, during nesting season, little grebes, coots, great reed warblers and many other birds typically reproduce in the surrounding reed swamps. In winter many species from the north of Europe come together, including, among others, cattle egrets, ducks and cormorants. Other birds such as the black-crowned night-heron, the green sandpiper and the osprey make a stopover in the area for a few days to rest from their long migratory journeys. The reservoir is also used during migration seasons. In the last 50 years a total of 210 bird species have been sighted during the migration season.

Architectural heritage

El Foix park is particularly notable for the presence of Castellet and Penyafort castles. The former is a medieval castle dating from the 10th century with links to various Catalan lineages. These days it is the headquarters of Fundació Abertis.

The origins of Penyafort castle date back to the 12th century when it originally served as a medieval defence tower. It was the birthplace of the distinguished Saint Raymond of Penyafort.

Sant Pere church and the hermitages of Penyafel, Senabra and Sant Llorenç particularly stand out among the rich heritage comprising Romanesque churches and hermitages.

Another noteworthy feature of the park is the Molí del Foix, a flour mill dating from the 13th century, which now serves as the Historical and Cultural Visitors' Centre of Santa Margarida i Els Monjos Town Council.

Cuisine linked to the park



Parc a Taula is an economic development programme promoted by Barcelona Provincial Council aimed at private agents who, through their activity, assist in the conservation, enhancement and promotion of protected natural areas. You can find and download more information at parcs.diba.cat/web/parc-a-taula and on the following app



Your opinion helps us to improve

You can fill out the questionnaire by scanning the QR code

