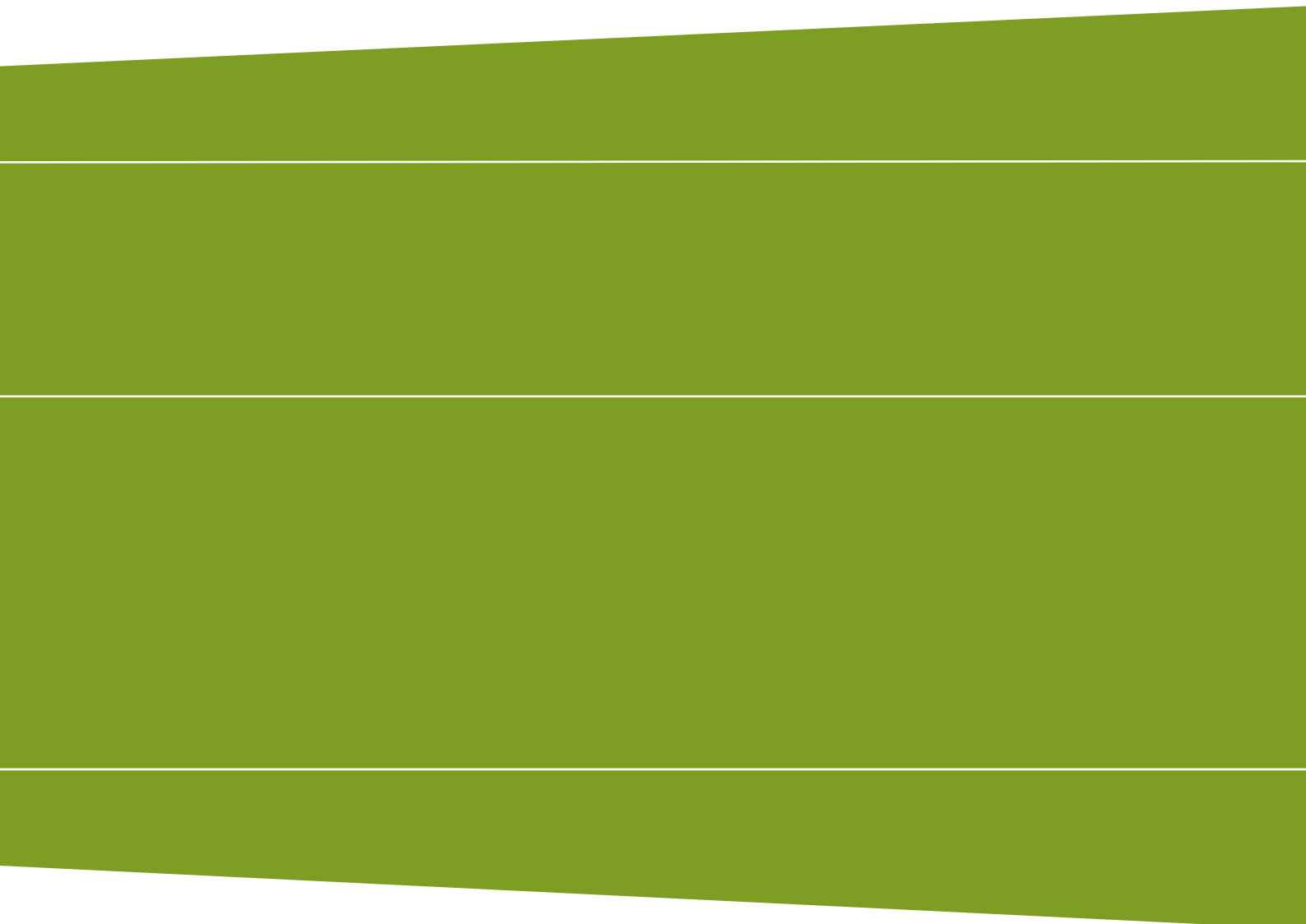


Catalonia **is** Activity & Nature Holidays





ACTIU-NATURA

ACTIVITY&NATURE HOLIDAYS



Bathed by the Mediterranean, Catalonia lies in southern Europe, in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula. The attractions for visitors to this tiny country, with a surface area of less than 32,000 square kilometres and a population of just seven million, but with a history and culture going back a thousand years or more and its own language – factors which have helped to shape its distinctive personality – are many and varied. These attractions include splendid natural heritage, excellent communications, superb climate and top-quality active and nature holiday facilities, all combined with a huge and varied range of outstanding restaurants and accommodation, and much more.

Catalonia offers a great number of ideal active and nature tourism spaces for people who will enjoy the diversity of its landscape, which stretch from the highest peaks of the Pyrenees to the most tucked-away coves of the Mediterranean, embracing the hinterland plains of Catalonia, the natural spaces of the River Ebro Delta and the lands of the province of Lleida.

This catalogue brings together an inventory of proposals that have been selected on the basis of the offer of companies and institutions that are members of Catalan Tourist Board Activity & Nature Holidays. Whether they are companies and enterprises providing services, or tourism promotion bodies, the members of the Club work together to promote and market leisure activities that may be enjoyed in a way that respects the natural environment.



Catala



l o n i a

is Activity & Nature Holidays

Table of contents

Hiking: Nature's trails	6
Cycle tourism and mountain biking (BTT): Enjoying the country on two wheels	10
White waters: The appeal of the turbulent river	14
Rowing and sailing: A host of sea and river activities	16
Underwater activities: Beauty beneath the water's surface	18
Nature: In touch with the natural environment	20
Rock climbing: Hugging mountains	22
Snow: The splendour of the Catalan winter	24
Horseback tourism: Discover the country full rein	26
Air: Bird's-eye Catalonia	28
Accessible multi-activity tourism: Fun for everyone	30



Catalonia is a country that offers all the necessary conditions for enjoyable hiking, with a network of some five thousand kilometres of long-distance tracks and some four thousand kilometres in short walks and local paths.

Most of the paths you will be covering have been opened up and marked with signs since time immemorial by shepherds, military men and traders. The task of signposting these tracks has been continued in recent decades by hiking clubs and public bodies that have popularised the network of Catalan walking tracks that cross, among other areas of Catalonia, twelve natural parks and 144 protected natural spaces, all of them with special biological features or remarkable landscapes.

The Natural Parks of the Pyrenees

At the edge of the Catalan Pyrenees and bordering France and Aragon, Val d'Aran is a high mountain region surrounded by very high peaks and major cirques. Between this region and those of Pallars Sobirà and Alta Ribagorça lies Catalonia's only national park, **Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici**, with its impressive topography and great richness of fauna and vegetation, as well as its concentration of over two hundred lakes where we can organise different routes along which there are surprises in the form of waterfalls and the sources of different streams.

The western Pyrenees is home to the routes of two long-distance paths, the **GR-211**, which runs through the interior of Val d'Aran, and the **GR-11**, which crosses the whole country from west to east until finally reaching the Mediterranean by way of Cap de Creus. The section passing through Boí Valley in Alta Ribagorça, offers a visit to the monumental set of nine **Romanesque churches** that have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. One very popular route in Aigüestortes National Park is that known as **Carros de Foc** (Chariots of Fire), which includes nine refuges in the park and their natural settings.

Another walk that gives the hiker close knowledge of different parts of the western Pyrenees is the **Porta del Cel** (Gate of Heaven) route, which includes a climb to the peak known as the Pica d'Estats (3,143 m), the highest in Catalonia, and also the Certascan peak (2,853 m). The path runs through **Alt Pirineu Natural Park**, the largest in Catalonia, lying between Pallars Sobirà and Alt Urgell, with departure and arrival points in the village of Tavascan. Further to the south, in the uninhabited village of El Pont d'Orrit, in the Pallars Jussà region, is the start of the **Vulture Valley (Vall dels Voltors) Route**, which crosses the richly endowed landscape of La Terreta Valley and is notable for the presence of the vultures that have given their name to the walk. Again, in the same area of the Pyrenees, that of the Alt Urgell region and the zone of Boí, are the starting points of routes that combine hiking and **thermal springs**.

Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park, one of the spaces of richest biological diversity in Catalonia and located between the Berguedà, Cerdanya and Alt Urgell regions, offers a wide

The Way of Saint James in Catalonia

Since the Middle Ages, the Way of Saint James has led pilgrims from all over Europe to the tomb of the apostle in Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. On its way through Catalonia, it constitutes a network of trails that may be covered on foot, by bicycle or on horseback, affording its many walkers the opportunity to set out on their pilgrimage from Catalonia, which acts as the point of access for pilgrims in the Mediterranean basin. Catalonia's stretch of the Way of Saint James runs across the inland until it reaches Alfarràs, Alcarràs and Batea, where it joins up with the corresponding routes in Aragon that bring the French Way through Montsó and Jaca, to Saragossa through Fraga or along the Ebro Way, respectively. Noteworthy landmarks along the Catalan Way include the Monastery of Sant Pere de Rodes, the Monastery of Montserrat and the Seu Vella (Old Cathedral) in Lleida, as well as sites and monuments of great interest such as the historic centres of the towns of Igualada, Tortosa, Tarragona and Cervera. It also passes alongside a number of Romanesque churches, among other sites featuring notable monuments, such as the monasteries of Poblet, Santes Creus and Vallbona de les Monges, not to mention spots rich in flora and fauna such as Ivars Lake, which has an interesting bird observatory. The signposting along this route is characterised by a blue pennant featuring the scallop shell as its emblem. Some of these sections are accessible and the Way of Saint James passes through various accessible tourist destinations.

Further information:

www.act.cat/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/TheWayofSaintJamesMap.pdf



The different types of paths – long distance (GR), short distance (PR) and local paths (SL) – make it possible to organise hikes with family and friends.

Above left: Walking in Matagalls, Montseny (Catalunya Central). Right: Port de la Bonaigua (Pirineus)

Suggestions

Excursions to the Pallars region and the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park

Map A1/A2.

Way of the Good Men

Map A3, B3.

Hiking routes in the Berguedà region

Map B2/B3.

Discovering the network of paths of Priorat and the Montsant range

Map C2.

Hiking routes through the natural park of Montseny

Map B3.

Els 3 Monts: Hiking routes through the natural parks of Montseny, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac and Montserrat

Map B3, C3.

Hiking routes through Cerdanya

Map A3.

Costa Brava shoreline trails

Map A4/B4.

Cavalls del Vent (Horses of Wind)

Map A2/A3.

On foot among the volcanoes

Map A3/B3.

Hiking in Val d'Aran and the Pyrenees

Map A1, A2.

Routes in Camprodon Valley

Map A3.

Walks in Osona and along the River Ter. The River Ter Route

Map B3/B4.

range of different types of excursions, amongst which is climbing **Pedraforca**, one of the iconic places of Catalan rambling.

One of the most popular crossings in Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park, and one that is suitable for everyone, is the **Way of the Good Men**, which runs from the Queralt sanctuary through to Montségur castle, in the Ariège region of France. This covers the migratory routes taken by the Cathars (the “Good Men”) as they fled the persecution of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. The itinerary, marked as **GR-107**, has several variants, but the best-known among them is the route that connects Queralt, Gósol, Bagà, Belver de Cerdanya and the French border, at which point one may finish the itinerary or continue through to Montségur castle. The Way of the Good Men can also be covered on horseback and, in many sections, by bicycle.

In recent years, the *Cavalls del Vent* (Horses of Wind) trail has also become very popular, this being a circular route that links eight alpine refuges between Berguedà and Cerdanya.

Between Volcanoes and the Costa Brava

Always bearing in mind the walker's interest in the natural environment, the eastern Catalan Pyrenees and the Costa Brava offer different kinds of routes. Hence, one might discover the **Girona Pyrenees** or walk the **Romanesque Route** in **Vall de Ribes** in a beautiful setting with a rich architectural and artistic heritage.

Other routes combine the attractions of Romanesque art with those of the natural spaces of Ripollès or **Camprodon Valley**, with more than 900 kilometres of marked paths. The zone of Garrotxa offers a number of paths going from one volcano to another. There are more than forty volcanoes to see as well as twenty basaltic lava outflows over which have appeared places such as the **Fageda d'en Jordà**, a beechwood in the extensive **Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park**, of which is the best example of volcanic landscape in the Iberian Peninsula. At this point, it is possible to set out on a route of some 72 kilometres running between escarpments and volcanoes to cross the region of Garrotxa until entering **Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park**, a wetlands zone and start of the **Blunderbuss Route**, which is associated with muleteers and bandits (*trabucaires*), the ancestral users of these tracks. After the publication of Javier Cercas' novel *Soldiers of Salamis*, it is now possible to take the **Salamis Route** that goes through different historic sites of the Spanish Civil War in the Pla d'Estany region. We also suggest a walk along the **Costa Brava** on the **GR-92**, which runs the whole length of the Mediterranean coastline of Catalonia.

Using **Itinerànnia**, a network of more than 2,500 kilometres of marked paths, it is possible to walk the Ripollès, la Garrotxa and Alt Empordà regions and thereby cover the distance from the Pyrenees through to the Mediterranean.



Hikers on the Estany del Diable path (Pirineus)

Cistercians, Els Ports and Montsant

In the south of Catalonia, the GR-175, the **Cistercian Route**, traces a circular route that links the monasteries of Santes Creus, Vallbona and Poblet. The Monastery of Poblet, founded in the 12th century, is notable for its royal pantheon in which are entombed the remains of a considerable number of members of the royal families of Catalonia and Aragon, for example King James I (1208–1276). Poblet is a monumental set of buildings that has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which makes this a very appealing route for history lovers, while the natural setting is also of unquestionable appeal thanks to its landscape, which has been declared a **Natural Site of National Interest**.

In the southernmost end of the country, bordering Aragon and the Valencia Region, **Els Ports Natural Park**, located to the south of the lower course of the River Ebro, offers routes of particular interest to observers of flora and fauna, for example the **Stars of the South (*Estels del Sud*) Route**, a walk around the foot of the mountains linking five refuges in the natural park. The route can be done in five days for the complete crossing or less than one day as a set walk.

Still in the south of Catalonia, in the Ebro region (Terres de l'Ebre), one may also enjoy a number of routes in **Serra del Montsant Natural Park** and the protected space of the **Serra de Llaberia**, or opt for tracks around the Priorat zone, taking old bridle paths or, if preferred the route through the cellars of the top-quality Designation of Origin (DO) wines of Montsant and Priorat (Qualified Designation of Origin – DOQ).

The Three Mountains, Montserrat and the Ter

The **Three Mountains Route** is a good way to discover the pre-littoral country. The route links the natural parks of Montseny, Sant Llorenç del Munt i Serra de l'Obac, and Montserrat with a path of one hundred and six kilometres divided into six stages. Montserrat is at once a natural park unlike any other in the world, one of the country's most important museums and also sanctuary of the patroness of Catalonia, the Black Virgin of Montserrat. The abruptly rising **Montserrat** massif, one of the highest groups of mountains in Catalonia's pre-littoral range, is crowned by a Benedictine monastery at a height of 725 metres above sea level, while the summit of Sant Jeroni is 1,236 metres above sea level. The course of the one-day Matagalls-Montserrat race, which boasts the highest number of participants in Catalonia, covers this zone.

Still in central Catalonia, but now in the Osona region, we recommend the GR-210 path, the **River Ter Route (*Camí Vora el Ter*)**, which runs from Castell de Montesquiú Park to the Sau reservoir, and also a network of complementary tracks such as the GR-151 **Paths of the Bishop and Abbot Oliba**, which enable the walker to select the most suitable combinations from the peaks of the Milany and Bellmunt ranges down to the tail end of the Sau reservoir.

The Cistercian Route

Map C2.

Routes through the Empordà region and the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà Natural Park

Map A4/B4.

Routes in the Ripollès region

Map A3/B3.

No-luggage walking in the Costa Brava

Map B4.

Vulture Valley Route (Vall dels Voltors)

Map B1.

From the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean

Map A3/B3/B4.

Guided walks in the Gironès region

Map B4.

Walks and urban discovery games in Barcelona

Map C3.

Hiking in the Àneu and Cardós valleys

Map A2.

Hiking in the River Ebro Delta or Terres de l'Ebre region

Map D1.

Routes in Montsec

Map B1.

Excursions through Núria Valley

Map A3.

Hiking and Nordic walking in the regions of Tarragona

Map C1/C2/D1.



Cycle tourism and mountain biking (BTT)

Enjoying the country on two wheels

The variety of landscapes and the mild climate of Catalonia are an enticement to enjoy cycle tourism and mountain biking the whole year round.

Cycle tourism

Catalonia has five greenways built over former railway tracks, which foster sustainable, non-motorised mobility for cyclists and walkers. These trails, which are generally not steep, have markers and are suitable for people with reduced mobility or young children. In the eastern zone of the Pre-Pyrenees, there is a track of 135 kilometres that takes in the **Iron and Coal Route**, which begins in Ripoll and ends in Ogassa after passing through Sant Joan de les Abadesses; and the **Little Railway Route**, following the old railway line, which offers two possible variants, one from Olot to Girona (54 km) and the other from Girona to Sant Feliu de Guíxols (40 km). In the south of Catalonia, the greenways through the Baix Ebre and Terra Alta regions, each one of 27 kilometres, offer magnificent natural settings. The former runs through the **Ebro Delta**, a natural space of abundant bird life and gentle orography close to the sea. The latter runs through **mountain passes and the Pàndols and Cavalls ranges**, where it is still possible to find trenches and other relics of the Spanish Civil War.

From the interior through to the tucked-away coves of the **Costa Brava**, the Empordà region invites the visitor to discover its territory in a gradual and relaxed manner. The best way of doing so is by means of cycle tourism, a well-established pastime in Catalonia and a good way of organising holidays with family and friends. The **Baix Empordà Cycle Tourism Network** covers a zone with 370 kilometres of bicycle tracks. It is also possible to cross the Pla de l'Estany region, cycling along the **Salamis Route**.

In the **Terres de Lleida region**, there is a track in the Segre River basin that takes in asphalted country roads and other local tracks with very little traffic. Hence, on the western plain one can stop and find food and lodging in cities and towns like Lleida, Cervera, Agramunt and Balaguer and admire the architectural and cultural heritage of these municipalities. Along the way, there is a good network of hotels, rural guesthouses, refuges and restaurants where the cyclist can rest and recoup his or her energy.

In the south of Catalonia, in the **Terres de l'Ebre region**, the cyclist may go from Montblanc to the River Ebro, covering a zone that is very rich in terms of its culture and natural beauty and in which one can stop to contemplate and photograph the botanical and ornithological diversity of the area, or visit the Cistercian monasteries.

With most of the cycle tourism routes that we propose, it is possible to combine sporting activity with all kinds of other gastronomic (wineries, restaurants, etc.) and cultural (visiting museums, archaeological remains, monasteries, etc.) pleasures, which the whole family may enjoy. Catalonia has at least **800 kilometres of asphalted roads** with very low levels of vehicular traffic, which are therefore ideal for cycling. **Barcelona**, for example, has a number of signposted tracks in the **Collserola range**, while different parts of the city has lanes for the exclusive use of cyclists.

Cycle tourism suggestions

Cycle tourism and road cycling in the Empordà region

Map A4/B4.

Cycle tourism from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean

Map A3/B3/B4.

The River Ter Route

Map A3/B3/B4.

The Cistercian Route. Cycle tourism and mountain biking

Map C2.

Routes through the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà region

Map A4.

Cycling through Camprodon Valley

Map A3.

Cycle tourism in La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone, Girona and Vic

Map B3/B4.

The Mediterranean coast on wheels

Map B4.

Cycle tourism in the Costa Daurada

Map C2/C3/D2.

Cycle tourism routes in the Ripollès region

Map A3/B3.

Bicycle tracks in the River Ebro Delta, the Terra Alta greenway and Cambrils

Map D1.

Excursions in Val d'Aran

Map A1.

Cycle tourism in Montseny

Map B3.

Cycle tourism in the Pallars region

Map A1/A2.

BTT suggestions

BTT along the Way of the Good Men

Map A2/B2.

BTT routes through the Pyrenees

Map A1/A2/A3.

BTT excursions on the Costa Brava

Map A4/B4.

BTT Centre of Berguedà

Map B2/B3.

BTT Centre of La Seu d'Urgell.

BTT of Alt Urgell

Map A2.

BTT routes through Camprodon Valley

Map A3.

BTT Centres in the Lluçanès- Sau-Collsabra

Map B3.

BTT routes through the Terres de Lleida and Montsec region

Map B1/B2/C1/C2.

BTT routes through Cerdanya

Map A2/A3.

BTT Centre of Baix Empordà

Map B4.

Itineraries through Val d'Aran

Map A1.

BTT routes in the Ripollès region

Map A3/B3.

From the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean

Map A3/B3/B4.

BTT Centre of Mont-roig del Camp

Map D2.

BTT Centre of Àneu Valleys-Pallars Sobirà

Map A2.

Cycle tourism through the Monells zone (Costa Brava)

Mountain biking (BTT)

The network of Mountain Bike Centres in Catalonia, the first in Spain, offers over 6.400 kilometres of signposted itineraries that are classified according to the degree of difficulty so that everybody, from the beginner to the expert, can enjoy mountain biking in a relaxed fashion with the help of any one of the eighteen Mountain Bike Centres of the network. The Mountain Bike Centres are spaces of free access that begin at a reception point where the tourist is offered information, panels with clearly presented details of the itineraries and the services the Centre offers for both bicycle and tourist, for example sanitary facilities, showers and bicycle renting, etc. The Mountain Bike Centre routes are usually circular and they avoid sections with vehicular traffic, and keep asphalted surfaces and two-way roads to a minimum.

By mountain biking one can discover the beauty of Val d'Aran's landscape, do the Cadí-Moixeró ring route along the impressive escarpments of the Cadí range, cover a section of the Way of the Good Men in the Berguedà region or go deep into central Catalonia, into the Sau-Collsabra Valley where, in May, the popular Cabrerès-BTT event is held, this being one of the major European mountain bike events. In the Terres de Lleida region, in Montsec, there are a number of routes through the largest extension of flatwater resources of Catalonia, the Noguera reservoirs.

Closer to the sea, one can go from the Pyrenees to the Costa Brava by mountain bike, covering the last kilometres with the Mediterranean at one's feet; on the Costa del Maresme, not far from Barcelona, there is a route through the hermitages and tracks of the Montnegre range; while in the Costa Daurada there are several mountain bike tracks, some in the mountain zones and others along the beaches.



The Catalan Tourist Board has launched a long-distance circular mountain bike itinerary known as the Transcatalunya. It covers the entire land by means of linking up the different sections joining the Mountain Bike Centres of the network.



Mountain biking in Banyoles (Costa Brava)



Centres BTT



Mountain Bike (BTT) Centres of Catalonia	Levels of difficulty				Total routes	Total km	Reception point
	Easy	Medium	Difficult	Very difficult			
Catalunya Central							
Lluçanès	2	2	3	1	8	219.7	Prats de Lluçanès
Plana de Vic	2	5	3	2	12	299.3	Vic
Vall de Sau - Collsacabra	6	4	3	4	17	258.1	Tàrradellas
Costa Brava							
Baix Empordà - Costa Brava	3	2	8	8	21	358.6	Castell-Platja d'Aro
El Gironès	2	7	2	4	15	228.9	Quart
La Selva	2	7	11	5	25	411.1	Amer
Pla de l'Estany - Banyoles	2	3	5	3	13	284.2	Porqueres
Salines - Bassegoda	8	11	8	6	33	597.1	Maçanet de Cabrenys
Costa de Barcelona-Maresme							
Santa Susanna - Montnegre	3	1	2	2	8	110	Santa Susanna
Costa Daurada							
Mont-roig del Camp - Miami Platja	4	3	2	1	10	144.5	Mont-roig del Camp
Pirineus							
El Berguedà	3	0	5	3	11	226	Avià
El Ripollès	1	2	9	12	24	541.3	St. Joan de les Abadesses
La Seu - Alt Urgell	3	11	6	15	35	1,227.4	La Seu d'Urgell
Pallars Jussà	1	2	3	3	9	265.1	La Pobla de Segur
Solsonès - Vall de Lord	3	2	3	1	9	148.6	Sant Llorenç de Morunys
Valls d'Àneu	3	3	2	3	11	214	Esterrí d'Àneu
Terres de Lleida							
Montsec - La Noguera	4	5	10	7	26	506.6	Àger and Os de Balaguer
Val d'Aran							
Val d'Aran	7	4	7	7	25	419	Betren / Vielha

For further information see: www.btt.catalunya.com

Easy
 Medium
 Difficult
 Very difficult



Sports Tourism Destinations (DTE)

Sports Tourism Destination (DTE) is a rating of specialisation that has been created by the Catalan Tourist Board. It is awarded to destinations that are notable for the high-quality resources and services they offer to top-ranking sportspeople, professionals, amateurs and tourists who wish to engage in such sporting activities as **mountain biking**. They provide installations that meet the needs of every kind of sport, giving special attention to sanitary facilities, sports medicine, along with an appealing tourism (natural parks, beaches, culture, gastronomy, etc.) and commercial offer and an ideal climate for sporting activities all year round. At present, the DTE sites of La Seu d'Urgell, Banyoles and Santa Susanna are mountain bike certified.



White waters

The appeal of the turbulent river

With the coming of the spring thaw, the Noguera Ribagorçana, Noguera Pallaresa, Garonne and Segre rivers become ideal places to experience waters with undercurrents and whirlpools.

The Two Noguera

Travelling down the wild waters of the **Noguera Pallaresa** is an activity that has its origins in the river transport of timber by means of rafts, vessels constructed with oak cross trunks, bound together with birch shoots and with a rudder at either end. Since 1979, each first Sunday of July, La Pobla de Segur celebrates its long-established rafting festival. This begins on the Saturday with the traditional construction of rafts and the next day the rafters, dressed as they did in olden times, cover a six-kilometre stretch of the river after which the great festivities begin. In the professional domain of white water sports, the **International Noguera Pallaresa Rally** is held every summer in Sort.

The Noguera Pallaresa River offers forty kilometres of navigable waters in both winter and summer as its flow can be adjusted. The towns of Sort and Llavorsí are reference points for the activities of **rafting** and “**bus-bob**” – an inflatable, sausage-shaped craft for four or five people seated one behind another – as well as other sports with the **hydro sled, canoe, open (sit-on-top) kayaks** and **standard kayaks**.

Canyoning in the Noguera Ribagorçana and Pallars zone offers a combination of the techniques of mountain climbing and potholing with water rides and also some swimming. The activity consists in climbing down the walls of ravines and crossing small waterfalls through narrow gullies. In the Pallars zone the Berrós, Sant Pere, Estaron, Viu de Llevata, Gurp and the Infern ravines are particularly well known, these being located in La Pobla de Segur. Canyoning is a very widespread sport in Catalonia and the Costa Brava has especially interesting offers as well.

The Segre and Garonne rivers

Inaugurated for the 1992 Olympic Games, **Segre Olympic Park** is a first-rate facility for the sports of **rafting, canoe-kayak** and **canoeing**. The installation, which is five hundred metres long and of adjustable flow, offers group rides in inflatable boats, or hydro sled and the hiring of rowing boats. Canoeing courses are also offered in the park, a discipline in which visitors can also be initiated in the Ponts and Camarasa reservoirs, halfway along the **River Segre**.

The **Garonne River**, with its source in the Pla de Beret, in the middle of Val d’Aran, from whence it flows towards France, offers several white water stretches that are a perfect setting for **canyoning**. **Rafting** is concentrated in white water reaches such as El Caos, L’Era Lòssa and L’Era Tortuga.

In the **Vall de Rialb** zone, rapids passing through steep rocks also offer thrilling **canyoning** in the **gorges** formed by the Rialb River.

Suggestions

River descent by kayak or Canadian canoe on the River Ter

Map B4.

Rafting and canoeing in Segre Olympic Park

Map A2.

Rafting and river activities (kayak, canoe-raft, etc.) on the River Noguera Pallaresa

Map A2/B2.

Rafting, bus-bob, hydro sled, and inflatable canoes in the rivers of the Terres de Lleida region

Map A2/B2.

Riding the rapids of the Garonne River

Map A1.

Rafting, canoeing and hydrospeed in Val d’Aran

Map A1.



Rowing and sailing

A host of sea and river activities

The history of Catalonia is very much linked with its rivers and the sea. This relationship has given rise to its own kinds of boats and first-rate port facilities all along the coast, not to mention a wide range of activities for the whole family to enjoy.

Nowadays, the Catalan coastline attracts visitors from all around the world who come to partake of the many offers the Mediterranean holds out, whether it is taking a **cruise on a skippered vessel** or using the **Costa Brava** port facilities, for example the **L'Estartit-Medes Islands Nautical Resort**, with its fascinating marine-life showcase constituted by the **Medes Islands** and the **Montgrí coast**. Just when it seems that the mountain range is about to die on reaching the shore, it branches out and rises again in the form of an island a few miles off the coast, forming an internationally renowned protected marine reserve.

Nautical resorts are spaces for tourist and recreational activities that foster nautical tourism in the sense of active holidays in contact with the sea, with the opportunity of engaging in all kinds of leisure-time activities related with its waters, this being complemented with a range of types of accommodation, along with enjoying nature and other tourist attractions and leisure activities in the environs. Here it is possible to learn how to water ski, or windsurf and discover the different kinds of rowing sports.

Not far from **Barcelona**, one can enjoy the romantic, ancestral activity of sailing on board a **skippered yacht** while contemplating the shoreline stretching out from the city. Particularly notable are the **Costa del Maresme**, which boast a major concentration of marinas and a nautical resort, or the **Costa del Garraf** with beautiful towns such as Vilanova i la Geltrú and Sitges, the latter of which is home to a very significant heritage of *Modernista* (Catalan Art Nouveau) art.

One of the country's traditional vessels is the Catalan *llagut*, a lateen-rigged skiff, aboard which one may row out to sea from the port of **Tarragona**, an old Roman city with an abundant Roman heritage to discover and admire. The **Costa Daurada** offer consists of a great array of possibilities of things to do in relation with the sea, with many activities organised by the nautical resorts, which have ideal facilities for the practice of any kind of nautical sport in a sea of long beaches, shallow waters, gently rolling landscapes and fine, clean sand.

In the domain of freshwater sports, the **Pre-Pyrenees reservoirs** often represent a quieter and more relaxed alternative for lovers of rowing and kayaking. The peaceful waters of Lake Banyoles, along with the reservoirs of the **River Segre** in the **Terres de Lleida** region, or the **Sau** reservoir in the **Osona** region (Catalunya Central) are very good options. In the south of the country, in the **River Ebro** environment, one can engage in water sports on the **Flix** and **Riba-roja reservoirs**, with a variety of boats with oars or paddles, such as different kinds of canoe and the kayak, landing on the shore, penetrating river reaches, drawing in close to a forest on the bank, and contemplating the diversity of fauna, especially birds, of the delta. It is also possible to go on cruises along the Ebro and to hire **boats for the whole family**. In this regard, the companies that offer guides and canoes for hire also suggest river routes tailored to the preferences of their clients.

International Competitions

Various international competitions are held in Catalonia throughout the year such as the international canoe half marathon in March/April in Lake Banyoles. The Catalan coast has also played host to prestigious events such as the World Championship of Freestyle Windsurfing in Empuriabrava, and the World Cup-Grand Catalonia Prize windsurfing competition in Sant Pere Pescador.

Suggestions

Sailing excursions in the bay of Pals

Map B4.

Sailing and kayaking in the Medes Islands and Costa Brava

Map B4.

Boating and canoeing in Núria Valley

Map A3.

Canoeing-kayaking in Segre Olympic Park

Map A2.

Canoeing-kayaking in the rivers of the Terres de Lleida region

Map A1/A2/B1/B2.

Rowing club in Empuriabrava

Map A4.

Windsurfing and nautical activities in Alt Empordà and Baix Empordà

Map A4/B4.

River tourism in the northern zone of the Pyrenees

Map A2/A3.

Nautical resorts on the Costa Daurada

Map C2/D2.

Canoeing on the River Ter

Map B4.

Kayaking along the cliffs of Montgrí

Map B4.

Canoeing, kayaking and boat trips on the River Ebro Delta

Map D1.

Rowing and water sports in the Sau reservoir

Map B3.

Windsurfing and kitesurfing in Sant Pere Pescador

Map A4.

Sailing on the River Ebro

Map D4.

Kayaking in the Sau and Camarasa reservoirs

Map B3, B1.



Underwater activities

Beauty beneath the water's surface

Whether you are an experienced diver, or you'd like to be initiated into exploring the sea's flora and fauna, you will find several points along the Catalan coastline where you can discover a whole underwater world.

In the **Medes Islands Marine Reserve**, on the **Costa Brava**, a place of steep crags and crystalline waters, you can make your first dive off the town of L'Estartit and, assisted by experienced monitors, you will learn the basic rules of undersea diving. Just under a kilometre from the L'Estartit coast, this archipelago of seven small islands is a place where you can also do **snorkelling**, and enjoy viewing a range of protected marine flora and fauna. The depth is generally around ten of fifteen metres but it drops to fifty at some points where there are some very beautiful caves.

The fish are not afraid to approach the divers in these warm clear waters so that diving here is a very fine opportunity for lovers of underwater photography. Hence, with the coming of summer each year, the MIMA (Medes, Image and Environment) International Festival is held and it includes an internationally prestigious underwater photography competition. Here, and in other places along the Catalan coast, associations engaged in underwater activities organise group outings to clean the seabed.

Costa del Garraf and Barcelona

Since 1952, when Catalonia's first diving club was founded, the country has been moving ahead in this sport, which is widely enjoyed today. In the centre of the Catalan coastline, the **Costa del Garraf** offer a large number of underwater activities. The numerous beaches and exceptional climate, along with four marinas in Vilanova i la Geltrú, Sitges and Cubelles, are excellent starting points for all kinds of water sports and activities throughout the year. In Barcelona, several sports associations offer diving courses and new underwater habitats are being upgraded in order to favour the natural process of regeneration. These are to be found off the Parc d'Escull (Reef Park), which runs from the Mar Bella beach through to the new entrance of the port.

Costa Daurada and the Terres de l'Ebre

The diversity of the Costa Daurada and the Terres de l'Ebre, with their kilometres-long beaches, offers a wide range of opportunities for underwater activities. Under the waters of the **Ebro coast** is a seabed with rock formations full of cavities in which you can admire the Mediterranean's most significant colonies of **posidonia**. With a view to revealing the secrets of the seabed, several companies and entities offer underwater activities ranging from beginners' courses through to routes for more experienced divers.

Suggestions

Diving and snorkelling in the Medes Islands

Map B4.

Underwater activities off the Costa Brava

Map B4.

Underwater activities off the Costa Daurada

Map D1/C1/C2.



Nature

In touch with the natural environment

In the space of a few kilometres, the geography of the Catalan territory presents a great variety of landscapes, vegetation and fauna.

Catalonia enjoys exceptional geological diversity, with sediment materials such as slate in the northern zone; calcareous rock near the coast in the Pre-Pyrenees area and sand and clay that is used as potters' clay in the hinterland zones. It also has great geographical variety. Catalonia has **five hundred and eighty kilometres of coast**, extending from Cap de Creus to the Costa Brava and through to the Ebro region. This coast is home to natural spaces that are vital for the fauna of southern Europe, for example Ebro Delta Natural Park and Aiguamolls de l'Empordà, or the Medes Islands Marine Reserve, a place of extraordinary natural value owing to its marine resources. This is also a **mountainous land**, from the highest peaks of above three thousand metres in Val d'Aran, through to the cliffs of Cap de Creus. The Catalan Pyrenees constitute an outstanding nature strip of two hundred and thirty kilometres, with **sixty points notable for their qualities as natural spaces and ten reserves designated for special protection**, forming part of the total of 331,661 hectares of protected spaces in the country as a whole.

In the areas of the country's geography where there is intense aquatic activity, special care is taken in maintaining the seabed and the flora and fauna that inhabit it. We suggest you go diving to explore the depths of the sea off the Catalan coast in the **Medes Islands** where, accompanied by biologists, you will be able to see one of the western Mediterranean's major reserves of marine flora and fauna. In the sandy seabed, you will find a great number of caves and see the growth of **red coral** and other endangered species. Also in the Costa Brava, in the waters of the Alt Empordà region, **cetacean-sighting** cruises are offered.

In the interior, in the Berguedà zone, you can participate in organised activities to observe the Pre-Pyrenees flora and fauna while, in Val d'Aran, photographic events are held with a view to immortalising the **autochthonous flowers** of the region, as well as birdwatching and wild animal-spotting excursions.

Birdwatching tourism

Thanks to its geographical situation, Catalonia is a particularly special and attractive destination for **birdwatchers** from all over Europe. In a radius of two hundred kilometres around the city of Barcelona alone, there are several zones of great ornithological interest and exceptional for their biological richness.

One of the country's remarkable birdwatching zones is the delta formed by the River Ebro as it flows into the sea, forming the most extensive of Catalonia's wetlands. This is the habitat of some fifty of the Mediterranean's most important bird species. Other excellent birdwatching areas are Aiguamolls de l'Empordà and Ivars Lake; the Mediterranean landscapes of Els Ports, Cap de Creus and Montserrat; the Llobregat River Delta and four different Pyrenees and Pre-Pyrenees zones: Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, Cadí-Moixeró, Mont-rebei and La Terreta, and Núria Valley.

All of these zones have itineraries with good infrastructure in the form of **observation and lookout points** that offer fine views of the birds, signposted walks, information and interpretation centres, guides for cultural visits as well as hotel and country guesthouse accommodation and restaurants.

The Ornithological Tourist Guide of Catalonia

The Catalan Tourist Board has published a guide detailing the ornithological diversity of the Catalan territory by means of eleven itineraries structured into four groups: wetlands, Pyrenees and Pre-Pyrenees, Mediterranean lands and metropolitan environs. It also contains information about other natural spaces and zones, a birdwatcher's code of ethics and information of interest about entities related with ornithology in Catalonia as well as companies providing services for birdwatching tourism. Furthermore, there is a compendium of all the existing infrastructure to facilitate birdwatching: observation points, hides, signposted itineraries, information and interpretation centres, etc. The guide also indicates the areas that are accessible for people with reduced mobility.

Suggestions

Wildlife and nature workshops in Núria Valley

Map A3.

Guided ornithological circuit on the River Ter

Map B3/B4.

Ornithological guide to the Garraf massif and the Aiguamolls Remolar-Filipines

Map C3.

Ornithological guide to the plains of Lleida and the Boumort mountains

Map B1.

Birdwatching in the Aiguamolls de l'Empordà-Cap de Creus

Map A4.

Ornithological guide to the Cadí range

Map A2/A3.

Birdwatching and nature activities in the River Ebro Delta

Map D1.

Flora photography in Val d'Aran

Map A1.

Natural space of the mouth of the River Foix

Map C2.

Visits to Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park and Val d'Aran

Map A1/A2.

Orientation treasure hunts in Empordà and Montnegre

Map A4/B4.

Observation of high-mountain flora and fauna

Map A3.

Observation of flora and fauna in Tortosa

Map D1.



Rock climbing

Hugging mountains

Catalonia is one of the major international rock climbing destinations. Whether you are a seasoned rock climber or a beginner, you will enjoy the sensation of being body-to-body with the mountain.

The work done over the years by Catalan excursionists has been decisive in opening up many of the now-existing rock-climbing sites in the mountains. In Catalonia, rock climbers can enjoy scaling the highest peaks or rock faces of a multitude of cliffs and other places that are still little-known. In a single day, you can do danger-free guided climbs and learn different rock-scaling techniques.

The mountain of Montserrat is one of Catalonia's most emblematic places. Symbolic wellspring of many sociocultural, religious and political initiatives, it is also one of the country's most ideal places for rock climbing of all levels, thanks to the two hundred rock spires that crown it. Among the most symbolic high points are the Cavall Bernat which, every autumn, gives its name to an uninterrupted twenty-four-hour festival of rock climbing and exchange of experiences among mountain lovers.

The Pre-Pyrenees zone

From east to west, the Pre-Pyrenees zone offers a huge number of rock faces to scale. In the Pallars Jussà region is the narrow **Collegats passage**, which is formed by the erosion caused by the Noguera River, which also cuts through a number of ranges in the interior of the country, for example the Peracalç range to the west and the Cuberes and Boumort ranges to the east. The Collegats defile has five rock-climbing sectors: the Moles del Pessó, the Roca del Pessó, the Agulla del Gos, the Paret de la Figuereta and the Argenteria where, in winter, the waterfall becomes a cascade of ice dropping down over the rugged rocks and shining like silver (*argent*) in the sun – hence its name.

In the Montsec range, the rock climber will enjoy scaling the exceptional faces of Montrebei, Terradets and Vilanova de Meià. In the north-east of the country, Camprodon Valley is also home to places that are ideal for rock climbing, for example Rocabruna and Ulldeter, source of the River Ter, the main river of the Costa Brava.

Prades and Montsant and Els Ports

The south of the country has rugged landscapes that are greatly appreciated by rock climbers from all over the world. The **Prades** and **Montsant** ranges offer first-class rock faces, notable amongst which are those in the zones of La Mussara and La Riba, in particular Siurana, with hundreds of places for climbing now opened up in the rocks. Located between Catalonia, Aragon and the Valencia region, the massif of **Els Ports** offers climbs in some of the highest points of the hinterland. Outstanding here are the zones of rock channels, valleys and the Benet rocks, with some twenty climbs now open.

Vie Ferrate

These are vertical climbs with gear such as pitons, holds, rails and chains, making them suitable for non-expert climbers. A steel cable is installed to cover the whole climb for safety in case of falls. There are several places in Catalonia where these climbs are offered, for example ranges like Montserrat, Montsant, Oliana, Sant Martí de Sarroca, etc.

Suggestions

Rock climbing and canyoning in the Terres de Lleida region

Map A1/A2/B1/B2.

Rock climbing in Montserrat and Pedraforca

Map A2/B2.

Rock climbing in the Els Ports de Tortosa-Beseit Natural Park, the Prades range and the Montsant range

Map C1/D1.

Speleology in Cerdanya

Map A2/A3.

Rock climbing in Alt Berguedà

Map A2.

Canyoning in the Àneu Valleys

Map A1/A2.

Rock climbing in the environs of the Cavallers Dam

Map A1.



Snow

The splendour of the Catalan winter

With the coming of winter, a good proportion of tourism in Catalonia is concentrated in the zones of snow. The whole Pyrenees area offers a variety of activities and marvellous, spectacular white landscapes.

The network of ski resorts in the north of the country is extensive and a wide variety of activities is arranged through them for all kinds of visitors. In winter, snow activities flourish in places like **Núria Valley**, where many hikers set out on excursions to explore the environs of **Puigmal peak**, either **ski mountaineering** or walking with **snowshoes**. The same activities are also possible in **Camprodon Valley**, which is surrounded by peaks of almost three thousand metres high, for example **Gra de Fajol**, **Puig de Bastiments**, **Geganta pass** and **La Dona peak**.

In the region of **Cerdanya**, the paths used by hikers in the summer can also be taken in winter with snowshoes, or ski mountaineering, or by skimobile. This area also offers a great variety of tracks for Nordic skiing in the different ski resorts located among forests of mountain pine with splendid panoramic views of the **Cadí range**. In **Pallars Sobirà**, overlooked by the peak of **Orri**, in the **Port-Ainé** resort, visitors may enjoy **skiercross** and **boardercross** (a kind of snowboard).

The zone of **Aigüestortes i l'Estany de Sant Maurici National Park**, where everything is white in winter, is a first-class setting for snowshoe excursions. Meteorological effects cause the two hundred lakes of the area to freeze over, and these may be crossed if the temperature is low enough. Other winter snowshoe routes are the **Carros de Foc** (Chariots of Fire) track, with stops and shelter in different mountain refuges, or a weekend route in the environs of the **Espot** ski resort, which is particularly attractive for children. Other activities are also possible, for example going down the mountain by skimobile at night along well-marked tracks, or sleeping in a tepee in the **Espot** campsite, two thousand metres above sea level.

Outdoor snow activities include **snowshoe excursions**, **horseback rides through the snow**, **constructing igloos** and **orientation courses** in high mountain survival and in the use of **ARVA** (apparatus for rescuing avalanche victims) technology. Finally, the month of January is when the **Pirena** is held. One of the main and most newsworthy mushing competitions in the European calendar, it is notable both for the number of spectators and the tourist agencies and businesses involved. Over a period of a fortnight, people and dogs join forces to cross the whole Pyrenees in a competition that counts towards the **International Federation Sled Dog Sports (IFSS)** contest. Moreover, it has been declared an official competition by the Catalan and Spanish winter sports federations.

Suggestions

Snowshoes in Alt Berguedà

Map B3.

Snow sports in the Lleida Pyrenees

Map A2.

Snowshoes, skiing and snowboarding in Cerdanya

Map A3.

Snowshoes, igloo construction, orientation, dog mushing, snowmobiles and horseback rides in the snow in the Pallars region

Map A1/A2.

Alpine skiing and snowboarding in Gran Pallars

Map A1/A2.

Snowmobiles, dog sled rides, snowshoes or cross-country skiing to discover the path leading to the Montgarri sanctuary

Map A1.

Alpine skiing, snowboarding, snowshoes, dog sled rides... in La Molina

Map A3.

Snow-based activities in Camprodon Valley

Map A3.

Cross-country, alpine, Nordic skiing and snowboarding in Tavascan

Map A2.

Snow activities in Vaqueïra-Beret and Val d'Aran

Map A1.

Ski resort, igloo construction, mountain skiing, snowshoes... in Núria Valley

Map A3.

Ice-skating in Val d'Aran

Map A1.

Skiing in the Ripollès region

Map A3.



Horseback tourism

Discover the country full rein

One good option for being in direct contact with nature, crossing valleys, and taking tracks along rivers, cliffs and beaches is discovering Catalonia on horseback.

Very near Barcelona, the **Costa del Garraf** offers a wide variety of tracks through the so-called lunar landscapes of the Garraf massif. Other interesting routes are the different itineraries through **Montseny Natural Park** or the paths in the interior such as those of the **Castellatallat range** in the Bages region, and **Sau-Collsabra Valley** and the **Lluçanès zone**, in Osona. Again, the Maresme region offers several itineraries in contact with nature that may be covered riding a horse or donkey. Further to the north, the old Cathars' route the **Way of the Good Men**, which is marked as GR-107, offers a long itinerary through the mountains, from Berga through to Montségur (Ariège, France). This route of almost two hundred kilometres, crosses Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park, entering the high Pyrenees before crossing the border.

On horseback through the Pyrenees and the Terres de Ponent

In general, the whole Pyrenees zone has a very good offer for tourism on horseback. **Val d'Aran** has a great number of tracks and paths to be discovered on horseback, or with buggies and ponies for children in the company of a monitor, who will guide you through the region, starting from Vielha. One recommended stop is that of the Vilac lookout, from which you can observe the mountain scenery.

In the Ripollès region, there are **wild horses** and a number of equestrian facilities in **Camprodon Valley** and **Ribes Valley**, which have been joined since time immemorial by the **Collada Verda** pass. This zone combines idyllic scenery and a very significant heritage of Romanesque architecture. In Garrotxa, horse and rider may discover beautiful volcanic settings such as the Rocacorba mountain crest, the highest point of the route after which the **volcanoes** are left behind and the descent to the sea begins, passing through settings like Banyoles Lake and the medieval villages of the Pla de l'Estany plain. Following the River Ter, the route ends on the Mediterranean shore, on the Pals beach in the Costa Brava.

The Cistercian Route

Horseback riding in the **Alt Urgell** region makes it possible to enjoy the scenic variety of every valley, each one different from the rest. Further to the south, on the **Vulture Valley (Vall dels Voltors) Route**, the excursion on horseback goes through the natural environment of La Terreta Valley, where one can observe the local birdlife.

In the natural setting of the Cistercian Monastery of **Poblet**, which has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one can discover one of the major gems of Catalan religious art. This monastery, along with those of **Santes Creus** in the Costa Daurada, and **Vallbona de les Monges** in the Terres de Lleida region, constitute the **Cistercian Route**, one that is overflowing with culture, tradition and Catalan heritage and that can be covered on horseback through a territory abounding in forests, vineyards and mountains.

Suggestions

Horseback routes along the **Way of the Good Men**

Map A2/A3.

Horse rides in the **Pallars region**

Map A2.

Horseback routes through **Camprodon Valley**

Map A3.

Horseback tourism in **Les Gavarres**

Map B4.

Horseback and buggy rides in the **Fageda d'en Jordà (beechwood forest)**

Map B4.

Horse riding in **Prullans**

Map A2/A3.

Horseback routes through **Cerdanya**

Map A2/A3.

Equestrian circuit through **Les Venedes Valley**

Map A2.

Horse riding in **La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone**

Map A3/B3.

Horseback tourism in **Les Gavarres**

Map B4.

Itineraries on horses and ponies in **Núria Valley**

Map A3.

Horseback excursions in **Montseny**

Map B3.

Horseback tourism in the **Pallars Jussà region**

Map B1.

Horse riding in the **Àneu Valleys**

Map A1.



Air

Bird's-eye Catalonia

Discovering Catalonia from the air is a fascinating journey in which you can admire both the peaks of the Pyrenees and idyllic seaside scenes, crossing plains, valleys and areas of dense vegetation.

One of the most spectacular sensations a human being can experience is that of the free fall. In Catalonia, you can enjoy **parachuting** and **skydiving** in the Castelló d'Empúries-Empuriabrava zone of the Costa Brava, one of Europe's most prestigious venues for these activities. In July the Beach Swoop Challenge parachuting contest is held here. For newcomers to the sport, professional monitors are on hand to help with the first jump from a height of four thousand metres, guiding the two-minute descent. This is a very powerful, unforgettable charge of adrenalin. Back in Empuriabrava – which, one should recall, is a **Sports Tourism Destination (DTE)** – there is a parachuting centre in which you can experience the sensation of the parachute jump without needing to go up in a plane. This is achieved by means of a modern wind tunnel, the world's biggest skydive simulator, with a vertical air current of 180-250 kilometres per hour to give the sensation of free falling.

Enjoying the landscape

If you prefer calmer sensations and having a bird's-eye view of the landscape, you can start your itinerary of the interior of Catalonia by **crossing reservoirs** by aerostat balloon, starting from the Sau reservoir in the Osona region and following the course of the River Ter to its mouth in the Costa Brava.

Flights in Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park offer views of volcano territory that is worth covering from one end to the other in order to enjoy an incalculable number of natural and scenic mutations on the ground.

Cerdanya, one of Catalonia's biggest valleys, has a climate that favours **balloon** and **ultralight** flights and **paragliding**. Borne aloft by the wind, travelling from the mountain to the wide valleys, you can take daylight photos or fly on full-moon nights.

Further to the south, in the Berguedà region, you can also enjoy **balloon** flights over **Cadí Natural Park** or view Pedraforca, Collsacabra, or Sau Valley in the neighbouring Osona region.

The natural and climatic conditions of **Àger Valley** have made it one of Europe's major **paragliding** and **delta wing** venues. There are also several companies that offer flights by helicopter or twin-engined aircraft in which you can make your air debut at the side of a specialist monitor knowing that the companies that offer these courses guarantee all aspects of security. Located at the foot of Montsec, a range oriented from east to west, thereby facilitating the formation of the thermal currents that are essential for skydiving, this valley is a virgin zone far from the urban setting and ideal for many adventure sports and activities in contact with nature.

Flights by helicopter or twin-engined aircraft

Apart from the range of balloon flights, paragliding and delta wing flights, there are also several companies that offer helicopter or twin-engined aircraft flights to discover some of the country's tourist attractions. You can also fly over Barcelona and go to Montserrat, while other flights offer a tour of discovery of the Costa Brava, with the added attraction of being able to take extraordinary photographs.

Suggestions

Paragliding in the Alt Berguedà region

Map A2/A3.

Delta wing, paragliding, aerostat balloons and helicopter flights in the Terres de Lleida region

Map B1/B2/C1.

Balloon flights in Cerdanya

Map A3.

Paragliding in Montsec

Map B1.

Balloon flights over La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone

Map A3/B3.

Parachuting in the Bay of Roses

Map A4.

Paragliding flights in Vall de Boí

Map A1.



Accessible multi-activity tourism

Fun for everyone

The rising popularity of adventure sports has revealed a clear preference for a series of activities that combine contact with nature and a spirit of endurance. There are many Catalan companies and destinations that have tailored their products and services so that everyone can enjoy them.

The Catalan tourist sector has worked to improve the accessibility of its services so that disabled people can enjoy their cultural, leisure and sports offer in equal conditions. This kind of **accessible tourism** is a key factor in any pluralistic, respectful and caring society.

To begin with, are the **greenways**, the former railway tracks that have been adapted for walkers and cycle tourism so that they are accessible to everyone. They may be found, among other places, in the Garrotxa region, a volcanic zone where it is also possible to take **balloon flights with adapted baskets**. In the Costa Brava, between mountains and sea, there is a section of the greenway that runs along a number of **accessible beaches** and this is suitable for **adapted bicycles**. In Camprodon, it is also possible to find routes for adapted bicycles, while in Garraf Natural Park and also in Cambrils there are **natural itineraries** that are especially **adapted** for people with limited vision.

If aquatic activities are preferred, Segre Olympic Park incorporates the most advanced technology for **adapted canoeing** in flatwater. In the Costa Brava-Alt Empordà region, some companies have adapted **kayaking** facilities, while the sailing school in the L'Escala Yacht Club has adapted its sailing facilities for disabled people. Besides courses for beginners and in technical aspects of sailing, this entity also organises the **L'Escala Open Regatta of Accessible Sailing**, which was held for the first time in 2009. For those who prefer the depths of the sea, especially **adapted diving** is offered in the Medes Islands.

For **snow sport lovers**, the majority of the Pyrenees resorts have adapted their installations so that everyone can enjoy his or her favourite sport in the ski season. Among these resorts are those of Boí Taüll, in the Terres de Lleida Pyrenees near Aigüestortes National Park; Vaquèira Beret, in Val d'Aran, and La Molina, in Cerdanya, where the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) World Cup was held in 2009 with the participation with the best disabled skiers from around the world.

Horseback riding, too, is becoming an especially prominent activity, thanks to the efforts of centres that have made it accessible for everyone. For birdwatchers, Ebro Delta Natural Park has **accessible observation points**.

Further information about accessible active tourism and downloadable catalogue:
www.turismeperathom.com

Suggestions

High-up adventure circuits, quad excursions, strategy games and orientation

Map B4.

La Molina Parc Aventura

Map A3.

Leisure centre in Collsacabra

Map B3.

Adventure sports, 4x4 and quad excursions in Montseny

Map B3.

El Bosc Animat de Catalunya en Miniatura (treetop forest park). Zip-line 150 metres long

Map C3.

Rural Tourism and Agrotourism

Rural tourism and agrotourism establishments are the ideal option for enjoying nature-based activities. The sector offers a broad spectrum of activities distributed across the length and breadth of Catalonia and which cater for every budget. The new star-type classification system for these establishments facilitates their selection based on their features and the services offered.



Further information:
<http://establimentsturistics.gencat.cat>

Adventure and discovery activities in Barcelona: Fòrum, Montjuïc, etc.

Map C3.

Segway routes, buggies, mini zip wire, orientation courses... in Empordà

Map A4.

Paintball, quads and adventure activities in the Albera Range and Cap de Creus

Map A4.

Paintball and adventure in the Pre-Pyrenees and the Terres de Lleida region

Map B1/B2.

Quad excursions in Cerdanya

Map A3.

Adventure activities in Empordà

Map A4/B4.

Adventure journeys by car, motorbike or jeep through the Pyrenees and the South of France

Map A1/A2/A3.

Thrilling walks through the Llémena Valley

Map B4.

Borredà Parc Aventura and La Molina Parc Aventura

Map A3/B3.

Adventure activities in the River Ebro Delta and the Montsant range

Map D1.

Orientation circuit and recreational park in Núria Valley

Map A3.

La Selva Adventure Park

Map B3.

Paintball and adventure circuits in the region of Girona

Map A4/B3/B4.

Nordic walking in Cerdanya

Map A2/A3.

Nordic walking in Lloret

Map B4.

Nordic walking and Nordic fitness in Calafell

Map C2.

Nordic walking

Nordic walking, or ski walking, which originated in Finland, is the exercise of walking with poles that are especially designed for this sporting and leisure activity. Among other advantages, it offers the body improved physical fitness in a mild but effective way by stimulating the cardiovascular system and enhancing coordination and mobility. It is beneficial for everyone who wishes to improve his or her fitness regardless of age.

Enjoying lakes and rivers

In the natural setting of Poblet, one can have fun with the flying fox, or zip-line, climbing in a rockodrome or learning the meticulous techniques of archery. In the Costa Brava, one can engage in adventure activities such as rappelling or abseiling, crossing Tibetan-style bridges and rope climbing. In a setting located in Sant Miquel de Campmajor, there are thousands of square kilometres for fun activities such as paintball or raiding a 18th-century fortress.

In the environs of Banyoles Lake, the adventure offer is complete, with the chance of doing archery or a course in mountain orientation. In Cerdanya you can enjoy potholing and different activities high in the air. The Collegats zone offers a large number of outdoor or open-air activities for groups and people of all ages so that everyone can enjoy themselves and discover what pure-state adventure is.

The Noguera Pallaresa zone offers canyoning, while Boí Valley concentrates a number of exceptional river spaces for canoeing and hydrospeed.

Tree walking

Catalonia has trees that are high enough to engage in activities that simulate the experience of an adventure film in some remote part of the world. For example, the offer includes the flying fox or zip-line, Tibetan bridges, lianas and other activities provided by a range of adventure parks scattered throughout the country. Based on age-old methods that have been used in many parts of the world to cross abysses and flooded rivers, all these activities offer the sensation of flying among trees, or they test balancing skills with walks on cables and ropes at some height above the ground. These circuits are suitable for everyone, and are monitored by professional guides who observe all the legally-required security measures.

Another Pyrenees reference point is the Port-Ainé ski resort, from which one can set out on numerous excursions with 4x4 quads, or go rafting on the Noguera River, or enjoy the maximum pleasures of canyoning in the Sant Pere ravine. The centre also offers archery facilities and a rockodrome for climbers.

Núria Valley in the Ripollès region is located in a zone that is ideal for multi-adventure activities, sailing and canoeing, and also horseback riding for small children. Another possibility is to plan your activities to go from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, or from the high mountain down to the sea. This offer includes several aquatic sports such as canyoning, flatwater canoeing, kayaking in the sea and, after an orientation course, taking routes from the interior to the shore on horseback or mountain bike.

At Pals beach, on the Costa Brava, you can hire a catamaran or sea kayak and explore the Girona coastline.

Moreover, at different points of the country there are spaces that are planned for fun, being together and, of course, respect for the environment, with a wide choice of activities, for example touchball (war game in the forest), in which participants practice and experience skills, movements, decisions and excitement that do not come along very often.

Catalonia offers a number of itineraries in all the zones around the country for Nordic walking, an exercise with poles similar to ski poles, which can be enjoyed on the beaches of Calafell and others in the Costa Daurada, or forests in the Lleida region and central Catalonia, as well as in sea and mountain settings of the Costa Brava and La Garrotxa Volcanic Zone.



Sports, nature and adventure test the endurance and skills of participants while also offering a wide range of options for groups of friends and schoolchildren, as well as family and company groups.





A
B
C
D

1 2 3

F R A N C E

ANDORRA

10 VAL D'ARAN

7 PIRINEUS

9 TERRES DE LLEIDA

2 CATALUNYA CENTRAL

1 BARCELONA

5 COSTA DEL GARRAF

8 TERRES DE L'EBRE

4 COSTA DAURADA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Cap de Tortosa
Parc Natural del Delta de l'Ebre



Tourist brands

- 1 Barcelona
- 2 Catalunya Central
- 3 Costa Brava
- 4 Costa Daurada
- 5 Costa del Garraf
- 6 Costa de Barcelona-Maresme
- 7 Pirineus
- 8 Terres de l'Ebre
- 9 Terres de Lleida
- 10 Val d'Aran

Proposed Hiking Routes

- 1 Carros de foc (Chariots of Fire)
- 2 La Porta del Cel (Gate of Heaven)
- 3 Camí dels Bons Homes (Way of the Good Men)
- 4 Cavalls del Vent (Horses of Wind)
- 5 From Sant Pau de Segúries to Lladó
- 6 Estels del Sud (Stars of the South)
- 7 Ruta del Ter (River Ter Route)
- 8 Els 3 Monts (Three Mountains Route)

Proposed Cycle Tourism Routes

- 1 From Montblanc to the River Ebro by bicycle
- 2 A trip around the Plana de Ponent
- 3 From the Catalan Pyrenees to the sea by bicycle
- 4 The River Ter Route

The Way of Saint James



TransCatalunya

- Central Catalonia – Pyrenees Itinerary
- Mediterranean Itinerary
- Ponent Itinerary (West)

Symbol legend

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | Hiking | | Multi-activity tourism |
| | Cycle tourism and mountain biking | | Mountain bike (BTT) Centre of Catalonia |
| | White water activities | | Rock climbing |
| | Rowing and sailing | | Snow |
| | Underwater activities | | Horseback tourism |
| | Nature | | Air |
| | Birdwatching itinerary | | Peak |
| | Boundary of autonomously-governed community | | Town |
| | River, torrent | | Monastery |
| | Reservoir | | Airport |
| | Greenway | | Aerodrome |
| | Long-distance track (GR) | | |



Paragliding in the Berguedà region (Pirineus)

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

CATALAN TOURIST BOARD

Pg. de Gràcia, 105 3r
08008 Barcelona
Tel. +34 934 849 900
www.catalunya.com

LINKS

Meteorological Service of Catalonia

www.meteocat.com

Mobility and transport facilities

www.gencat.cat/mobilitat

Parks of Catalonia

www.parcscatalunya.net

Hiking

www.feec.cat

Accessible Tourism

www.turismeperatothom.com

Pyrenees

www.visitpirineus.com

Catalan Tourist Board would like to thank all the companies and organisms that provided information and photographs for the publication of this catalogue.

© Generalitat de Catalunya
Catalan Ministry of Enterprise and Labour

Published by
Catalan Tourist Board
Passeig de Gràcia, 105, 3a planta
08008 Barcelona

The full or partial reproduction of this work by any means, including reprography, digitalisation and public distribution via rental or loan, is strictly prohibited without the written authorisation of the copyright holders, and is punishable by law.

Text
Mònica Huguet (coordination) and Carles Claret

Photographs:

Arxiu Manel Royo Mayoral (18)
Cristian Jensen (20)
Daniel Julian (10, 13, 22, 24, 33)
Jordi Bastart (9)
Jordi Play (12, 14)
Marc Ripol (16)
Marc Sixto (cover, 3, 6, 8, 26, 28, 30, 79)
Marc Vila (8)
Patronat Municipal de Turisme de Calafell (33)
Catalan Tourist Board (33, 78)
Turisme de Sitges (38)

