

Palau Robert

Counties: Baix Ebre || **Difficulty:** Difficult || **Media Locomotion:** On Foot || **Distance:** 11.42 km ||
Ascent: 650.0 m || **Gradient Descent:** 650.0 m || **Signaling:** Yes || **Duration:** 4 h 20 min

From the col of Carrasqueta to the cave of Les Avellanes

This route on foot shows us the eastern slopes of Els Ports Natural Park, with panoramic views of the Ebro valley, the delta and the Mediterranean. We then cross over to the western slopes through the shady Scots pine woods, with panoramic views of the interior of the massif and the lands of El Matarranya (Teruel).

The itinerary goes through one of the finest natural settings in Catalonia, in terms of conservation and unusual hills, of flora and fauna, and finest natural settings in Catalonia (declared a Natural Park in June 2001).

ACCESS BY CAR: Total route 44 km, there and back (the itinerary starts in Roquetes which can be reached along the T-341 from Tortosa).

Km 0 Main road from Roquetes to Regues, T-342.

Km 4 Take a Turnoff to the left to climb up to Mont Caro.

Km 14 Font del Caragol and monument to the Wild Goat, magnificent panoramas of the Ebro valley.

Km 19 Turnoff to the right. On the left we come to the main road to the summit of Caro (1447 m). We continue to the right, pass the housing estate in Els Ports, and, on the right, the Restaurant Pous de la Neu, the Refugi de Caro (U.E.C.) and, on the left, the Restaurant de l'Esquirol.

Km 21.8 Turnoff to the left where we come to the junction with the Fredes-Beseit forestry track, which we take.

Km 22 Coll de la Carrasqueta (1100 m). We leave the car on the level ground and begin the itinerary on foot.

ITINERARY ON FOOT

0h 00m Coll de la Carrasqueta (1100 m). We take the marked GR-7 path, towards Fredes, south-east.

0h 25m We climb gently through the woods of Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, with holm oak, *Quercus ilex*, and the occasional Italian maple, *Acer opalus*, as far as Coll del Pallers. The path provides splendid views of the Ebro delta, Montsià, Vinaròs and Penyíscola to the south-east. We follow GR-7, south, as far as Cova del Vidre. Along the way we can see the steep ravines of La Cova Pintada, Orió and Barretes. The path twists and turns but, if we seek out the best spots, we can see hazels, *Corylus avellana*, and yews, *Taxus baccata*, which are signs that the climate was once different from what it is today (colder).

1h 35m Cova del Vidre (1060 m). We continue towards Cova del Vidre, observing the ravines on the right, Orió and Barretes among others, which fall steeply to the Ebro depression. We come to Cova del Vidre and to the south we can see Les Faixes Tancades, La Joca, Mola Conills (1,351 m), as well as the remains of the most southerly beech wood, *Fagus sylvatica*, in the Catalan countries. The Cova del Vidre is at the head of the Barretes ravine, with large geological folds. It is a natural refuge where archaeological remains and tools dating from the Neolithic have been found. Inside the cave crag martins, *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*, and swifts, *Apus pallidus*, make their nests. To the south-west we follow GR-7. This time it takes us along a forestry track to Font de la Llagosta.

1h 55m Font de la Llagosta (1020 m). On the way to Font de la Llagosta, we find springs on a ground consisting mostly of impermeable marl, with large amounts of ferrous oxide. Copious spring. Various ponds have been built to collect the water. We find Font de la Llagosta at the end of the last pond. About 70 m on, we leave GR-7 and take another path on the right, marked in red, which takes us to a pass between La Mola del Boix (1340 m) and El Marturi (1348 m). On the left, we pass the path that goes to Tres Pins, to the south-west. We have to look carefully for the turning to the north-west.

2h 30m Coll de l'Embarronat (1217 m), to the north-east we see El Marturi (1348 m); to the south La Mola del Boix (1340 m); to the north La Mola de Cati (1325 m) and to the north-west Les Gubies del Regatxol, the Ulldemó river and El Matarranya. In addition to the panoramic views from the pass, we can see the Scots pines which seem to have been shaped by the force of the main meteorological elements of the region: the winds, such as El Cercs (north-west) and the Vent de Dalt or Tramuntana (north).

To the south-west, we continue along the same path as far as a crossroads, where we take the path to the right, to the north-east, signposted to Cova Avellanes. We go down the path.

2h 37m On the right, to the north-east, we take the path marked in red as far as Cova Avellanes. We climb gently parallel to El Marturi on the north-west slope. Along the way we can see the creature which is the symbol of Els Ports, the wild mountain goat, *Capra pyrenaica hispanica*, a majestic herbivore, especially the males with their horns that can grow up to 90 cm.

In the woods we find birds such as crested tits and warblers, jays, and, in the air and on the cliffs, rooks, crows, vultures and a great variety of birds of prey. The golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*, stands out for its great size.

The mammals are more difficult to spot. There are wild boar, genets, wildcats and ferrets among others. In summer we can see the adder, *Vipera latasti*, the scorpion, *Buthus occitanus*, both poisonous.

3h 12m We come to a pass (1200 m, approx). The path turns east along some terraces. We stay on the level and then begin to descend to some pools or Font del Marturi (1170 m approx.).

3h 20m Font del Marturi. In summer there is little water. We leave the pools on the right (we do not take the path that climbs to the north-east, which would take us to Marturi), and take the path to the north and down to Cova Avellanes (1000 m, approx.). Steep descent. At Cova de les Avellanes, where there is a trickle of water, we can see *Pinguicula grandiflora dertosensis*, an insectivorous plant that grows in the cracks in the limestone rock, since it needs a supply of nitrogen which it does not find in the rocks. April, May and June are the ideal months for seeing the great variety of plants and flowers that grow on Els Ports massif.

3h 40m Cova Avellanes to Coll de la Carrasqueta along the Fredes-Beseit-Caro forestry track, to the north-east, 2 km approx.

4h 20m Coll de la Carrasqueta. End of the itinerary.

Practical information

Climb: 250 m. You need to be in good shape, since although there are no steep climbs, the whole route runs between 1000 and 1250 m, rising and falling constantly.

Difficulty: The only difficulty may be the junctions. Do not hurry and pay attention to the signs and the map.

For this route you need a rucksack, climbing boots, water, map, compass and warm clothing.

Directions

Punt d'informació turística del Baix Ebre

C/ Barcelona, 152

43500 Tortosa

977 445 308

www.baixebre.cat/turisme/

Centre d'Informació del Parc Natural dels Ports

Av. Val de Zafán, s/n. Apartat de Correus, 70

43520 Roquetes

977 504 012

www.gencat.cat/parcs/els_ports

Refugi de Caro

Partida de Caro

43528 Alfara de Carles

617 808 816

www.refugicaro.com

Source

Ajuntament de Roquetes