

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

2



*The domains
of Querol and
the tower of Pinyana*



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NB: Any established written accounts are limited in terms of concrete time and space. The natural evolution of the landscape and human activity can mean that some accounts may become less reliable over time.

2. The domains of Querol and the tower of Pinyana

This hike takes us, via the Montagut slopes, from Querol to the banks of the river Gaià and on to the Coll de Montagut at 844 metres above sea level. We will have the chance to make the summit which, at around the thousand metre mark, is an undisputed point of reference in these parts.

On leaving Querol we take the Camí Nou de Montagut which zig zags its way up to the crags of Coster del Moneu, the sides of the Lloreda gorge. As we gradually gain height the panoramic views open up before us and suddenly, on the other side of the gorge and on top of the crag, we spot the Pinyana castle tower, which will appear to be watching our every step along the entire route, almost as if it were a game of hide and seek. Once having reached the Coll de Montagut we will then walk through the plains which spread before the mountain peak, filled with the vineyards of the D.O. Penedes, which produces excellent wines. If we wish, we can climb up to the summit of Montagut and take the opportunity to visit the Sant Jaume church or alternatively continue along the track, which skirts round the top of the Lloreda gorge, as far as Cal Boada, formerly an important *masia* or Catalan farmhouse, now abandoned as are the majority we see in these parts. We will continue by the shady slopes of Puig de les Basses, on the opposite side of the gorge and start to make our way down. From a watchtower next to the track, we will have a bird's eye view of Pinyana castle, an incomparable sight which goes back to the time when these castles guarded the Marca Hispànica. From this watchtower we will also be able to see other castles in the surrounding area. We continue to make our way down until we come to the Querol road which we will follow for a while. That as it may be, we will still continue to be surrounded by extremely beautiful dense woodland and forest.

We highly recommend you take the time to fully appreciate these landscapes as you become acquainted with this region which is steeped in history.



Masia de cal Boada

2. The domains of Querol and the tower of Pinyana

Time

Distance

0:00
Partial



0:00
Total

0,000
Partial



0,000
Total

Querol. A municipality in the Alt Camp region (565m), in the northeast of the county and presided over by the ruins of Querol castle which gives this place a distinctive outline. This is actually part of the mountainous region of Bloc del Gaià which includes the villages of Querol and Esblada, the unpopulated Bonany and Montagut, the old stables and church at Valldossera, the neighbourhood of Albereda, the ancient castles of Saburella and Pinyana and the modern urbanisations of Cal Llenes and Bonany. Amenities here include accommodation, bar, restaurant and a grocery store.

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We take our departure from the village from the Font de Querol. Opposite the font is a picnic area, from where will take the track to the right, in a south westerly direction and which still preserves some of the original stone paving. We pass right by the fence to cal Pijoan and our path becomes increasingly narrowed by the bordering vegetation. Shortly we pass by an access road to a house on our left.

0:03 🕒 0:03

0,200 🚶 0,200

Camí Nou de Montagut. From here we take the road to the left which climbs a little and then levels off until finally reaching the Lloreda gorge. After passing by some vineyards we enter the dense woodland of white pines, some being of considerable height. As we approach the gorge itself, we will see the remains of a hayloft to our right.

The Camí Vell de Montagut, or the one from Querol to Valldossera pass further north, along the slopes of the valley of Torrent Roig. Nowadays this road is asphalted from Querol to Coll de la Torreta, where it joins the TV-2441, the road from Santes Creus to Pontons and from which another road branches off, also asphalted, which leaves from Coll de Montagut and finishes at the Sant Jaume de Montagut church. This track provides access to this monument.

0:07 🕒 0:10

0,500 🚶 0,700

Lloreda gorge. Here the track turns 90° towards the east and begins its steep rise up the right side of the gorge known as the Coster de Moneu. The bottom of the gorge lies much further below buried beneath the thick vegetation.

0:11 🕒 0:21

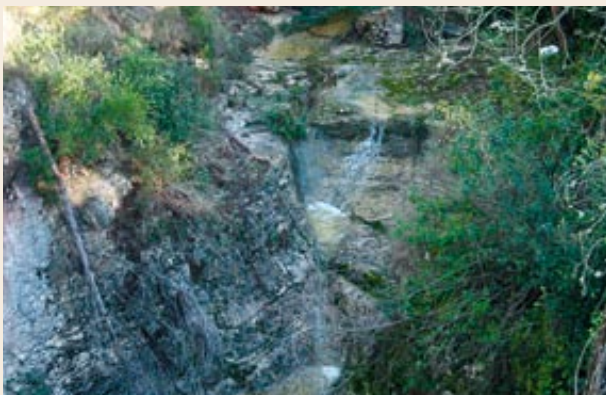
0,700 🚶 1,400

180° turn (632m). Here the track turns 180° towards the northwest and passes beneath the Coster de Moneu crag. We continue our upward climb and eventually come across a magni-

View of Querol



2. Querol and the tower of Pinyana



Lloreda gorge

ficient panoramic view of the Serra de Miramar and a good part of the Alt Camp region, with the valley of Gaià literally at our feet and, above, Mas de cal Regalat, which dominates this widening valley. Also impressive is the view of the tower from Pinyana castle, which we will pass by on our return to Querol.

0:04  0:25

0,300  1,700

Once over the crag, our path levels out slightly but it soon begins to climb steeply again. That said, from time to time we do come across a level section which allows us to get our breath back.

0:16  0:41

1,000  2,700

Where the path forks (763m). Coming to a flat clearing where the path divides, we take the path to the right which heads south and immediately set foot on rocky terrain. The left branch of the path (northeast) leads to cal Castellà and joins the road which goes from Querol to Montagut, approximately one and a half kilometres from this point.

Behind us we have a spectacular view over the valley of Gaià. From the edge of this clearing and looking in the direction of the valley, if we look to the left and up above the Comadevaques gorge, we will see the conglomerates of Sant Miquel de Montclar. Opposite, between the crest of Serrat del Conillera (826m) and the precipitous crag over the Gaià, the Cateco plain stretches out, dominated by Mas Baldric, one of the region's few inhabited *masies*, which also still works these lands. Further to the right, towards the north, the winding valley of Gaià and, to the right, Seguer, and behind, the Serra de la Brufaganya.

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

0:01 🕒 0:42

0,100 🚶 2,800

Access road to Masia de l'Esteve. This emerges from the left and is almost imperceptible. We continue moving ahead skirting the sunny side of the Puig d'en Rovira. Another 300 metres on and the track veers towards the east-southeast, once again approaching the edge of the gorge. The state of the track is now much the worse for wear, full of potholes and tracks on account of the rainwater draining just where it wants. We will however come across the vestiges of a dry stone bank which serves to remind us that, not so long ago this woodland was cultivated land.

0:10 🕒 0:52

0,700 🚶 3,500

Mas de cal Carrillo (798m). To the left of the track and set on slightly higher ground, we see the remains of what was once a *masia*. We continue on our way in the direction of the gorge.

The vegetation progressively changes as we gain height with more oaks, Holm oaks, junipers and the like, to the detriment of the pine groves.

0:17 🕒 1:09

1,100 🚶 4,600

Vineyards. We come to a land where the vines are trained over frames which appear as if they want to block our way. We have to follow car tracks towards the northeast and make a de-



Coll de Montagut. In the background, cal Rovira

2. Querol and the tower of Pinyana



Time



3 h 33'

Difficulty



14,400 km



Distance



2. Querol and the tower of Pinyana

tour of almost 70 metres around the vines to later cross between the rows of vines, until we finally come to the road which leads from Querol to cal Rovira which is visible, slightly higher up and to our right. From here we head off in search of the road.

0:02  1:11

0,200  4,800

Coll de Montagut (844m) where the road passes which goes from Querol to Coll de la Torreta. Here we will join the asphalted road, on the right hand side. To our left we see the intersecting road, also asphalted, leading to the church of Sant Jaume de Montagut. If you wish to see the church, we can take this route, which is actually more level, or alternatively take the one which climbs up to the summit of Montagut and afterwards descend down to the church, and which we can take from the intersection, a little further on.

0:07  1:18

0,500  5,300

Diversion to the summit of Montagut. This fairly steep road sets off from the left, some of its sections having been surfaced to access the antennas. From this point on, a footpath leads to the nearby summit where we find the few remains of the castle of Montagut. However, it is well worth making the effort to go up, there being formidable views to be had in all directions from this 964 metre summit. To make our way down, we take the footpath on the slope opposite down towards the Sant Jaume church. In all it will take us around 30 minutes.

After visiting the church, there's no need to retrace our steps, indeed we can just continue by the GR 172 towards Santes Creus, which skirts the top of Montagut by the eastern slope and joins up with the route for Coll de la Torre de Querol. If we wish to climb up to Montagut and visit the church we will have to add another 45 minutes to the hike.

0:06  1:24

0,600  5,900

Coll de la Torre de Querol (828m). Leaving the asphalted road which continues on towards the Coll de la Torreta, where it meets up with the TV-2441 from Santes Creus to Pontons, we turn right (southwest) on a very wide track. Here we come across the red and white signs which will accompany us for a while, indicating us to be on the GR 172. If we have been to visit the church at Montagut, this is the point where we pick up the route again.

We will pass between a vineyard of trained vines and a young pine grove in which the undergrowth is rich in mushrooms.

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

0:03 ⌚ 1:27

0,200 🚶 6,100

The road to cal Ramonet. Leaving a secondary road on our right in the direction of cal Ramonet, but which doesn't actually arrive there. We continue straight on. At the entrance we are met by a poster from the Department of the Environment which informs of forestry treatments and the improvements which have been made in this stretch of forest to control erosion at the head of the gorges. Seventy metres before we will have by-passed another, less visible track, on the same side.

0:04 ⌚ 1:31

0,300 🚶 6,400

Radio-telephone repeaters to the right of the track. On the opposite side there is a concrete store shed where the equipment and machinery is stored which is used to cultivate these great expanses of land which come under the D.O. Penedes.

0:01 ⌚ 1:32

0,100 🚶 6,500

Mini-island junction. Here we take the path to the right, heading northwest and leaving behind us the GR 172 signs which lead to Santes Creus by the road to the left.

0:06 ⌚ 1:38

0,400 🚶 6,900

Chain. At the sides of the track we come across two green coloured iron posts which support a chain. Despite the fact that it is almost never closed, for those on bikes, it might be well to take



The Gaià valley

2. Querol and the tower of Pinyana

the precaution to avoid any surprises. The Ajuntament of Querol (town council) installed the barrier to control vehicular access to the Pinyana track. Take care also if going by car as this chain might be open but, not necessarily the one at the other end, where the track joins up with the C-37 and having taken the track, will be obliged to return, despite being within 50 metres of the road.

0:03  1:41

0,200  7,100

Diverging paths in front of Mas de cal Boada (810m). Continuing by the path on the right we pass between the walls of the semi-ruined *masia* and a high dry stone bank. The storage sheds are still in use. The track on the left leads to the recently restored Mas de cal Ratat and the Pont d'Armentera. In addition to the resplendent *masia*, also striking are the views of the Camp de Tarragona plains and the Mediterranean sea.

From this junction, if we face towards the east of the embankment we can make our way to the castle of Ramonet, after crossing through a vineyard and woodland. Leaving cal Boada behind us we continue to make our way accompanied by vines to one side and woodland on the other, the woodland covering the Puig de les Basses which we will go round. We begin to descend and become closer to the Lloreda gorge. On the opposite side we can see the Obaga del Carrillo and the crags of Coster de Maneu, which we addressed on our way up, also the *masies* of cal Rovira, next to the Coll de Montagut, and cal Carillo, halfway up the Puig d'en Rovira.

0:21  2:02

1,400  8,500

Intersection. Here we continue straight ahead. The track to the left flanks Puig de les Basses on its way to cal Ratat. We leave the dense woodland of Obaga del Boada behind us to make our way between the undergrowth (gorse, thyme, heather, etc.), which allows us to have a very clear view of: the Serra de Miramar and, behind, the Muntanyes de Prades, the Coll de Cabra, the Torrent de Rupit, the Voltorera, the Serra de Selmella, the Comaverd, the Clot de Vallespinosa and the Torrent de Comadevaques, with Sant Miquel de Montclar, in the background, Plana del Cateco and Serrat del Conillera, the course of the Gaià and in the background the plateau of Santa Coloma de Queralt, Serra de la Brufaganya, Seguer and finally the Coll de la Rovira Seca.

Our descent by the sunny side of the Pinyana now begins to be considerably steeper. Clearly visible, on the shady side, is the track which leads to Pont d'Armentera. A sharp bend in the track gives us a bird's eye view of Pinyana castle.



Tower with lintelled door

0:14 🕒 2:16

0,900 🧑‍🌿 9,400

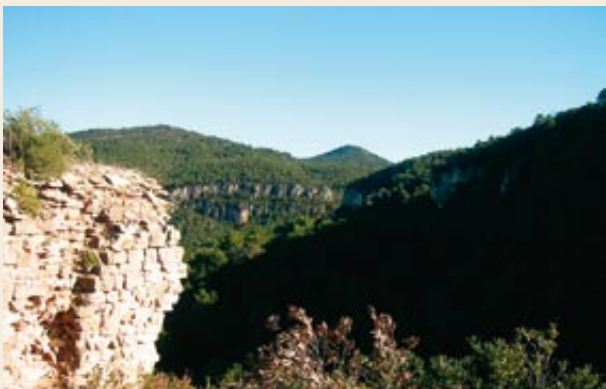
A 90° turn to Pinyana castle (713m). We take a 90° turn towards the northwest and immediately visible is Pinyana castle. Twenty five metres on, we come across a footpath to the left which, in five minutes, allows us to climb up to the castle remains on top of the rock. The footpath descends a little into the scrub and then climbs via a crack in the rock. The circular tower and the Sant Salvador church are impressive (more information in the guide *Els castells del Gaià*, IEV, 1999). Returning from the castle, we take the path down next to the rock. Here we enter the dense forest filled with Holm oaks, oaks and pine trees.

0:27 🕒 2:45

1,800 🧑‍🌿 11,200

Pinyana (544m). We come to a small grass covered clearing, with a metal tank which stores water to be used to extinguish fires. To the right of the track, partly hidden by the ivy, we can make out the ruins of the houses in Pinyana. In front, on the opposite side of the valley of Gaià, the towers of Saburella castle catch our eye, rising out of the pointed hill, the top of which is crowned by the castle of Saburella itself.

2. Querol and the tower of Pinyana



The cone of Montagut as seen from the Sant Salvador hermitage

0:10 🕒 2:55

0,700 🚶 11,900

Chain to prevent the passage of vehicular traffic. Those on bikes should be warned, unlike the one we came across at cal Boada, this chain is usually closed and possibly we might not even see it.

0:01 🕒 2:56

0,050 🚶 11,950

C-37 Road (490m) between Pont d'Armentera and Querol. We follow this road to the right in the direction of Querol for two and a half kilometres, this being the only way to reach Querol without making a big detour. Close by, on the left, is the Font de Pinyana, the presence of which is demonstrated by the surrounding very tall poplars.



Abandoned quarry

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

The road passes through the particularly beautiful forest of Mandil. A kilometre on and we will take the bridge over the Lloreda gorge and a little further on we will pass by an old gypsum quarry. Despite this being a fairly quiet road, it is essential to keep a look out due to the narrow lanes and blind bends which make visibility difficult for approaching cars.

0:37 🕒 3:33

2,450 🏃 14,400

Querol (565m). Leaving the main road at the start of the village, we take the street on the right which leads to the public wash place. We can continue on the right towards the Font de Querol recreation park or alternatively take carrer Andorra on the left. We come out at the Sant Sebastià square, from where we will be able to make our way to the highest part of the village where we will find the remains of Querol castle and the Santa Maria church. The latter being a small building constructed over different periods, with a single nave and a Gothic arched roof with a square bell tower with rounded windows, topped by a pyramid shaped cap.



Querol castle



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