Nature Trails

Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail









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GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

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Guide to the
NATURE TRAILS
of Spain

Nature Trails

Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

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INTRODUCTION

Stretching over than 185 kilometres along 20 stages, the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail is the best way to get to know and discover the island of Menorca. This trail is a coastal path that crosses island's eight municipal districts (Maó, Es Mercadal, Ferreries, Ciutadella de Menorca, Es Migjorn Gran, Alaior, Sant Lluís and Es Castell) and its two main towns, Maó and Ciutadella.

The name of this Nature Trail, Camí de Cavalls, means the Horses' Path in Catalan and takes its name the significance of Menorca's native horses, not very tall and slender black breed, which are frequently seen grazing by the sides of the road.

The path runs across beautiful landscapes and spots of high natural value, such as the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park and a good number of areas included in the Natura 2000 Network as SCIs (Sites of Community Importance) or SPAs (Special Protection Areas for Birds), which is a proof the great environmental value of the area. The entire island of Menorca was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1993 for a reason.

However, Menorca has much more to offer than its landscapes and natural wealth. Its strategic location as a gateway to the Mediterranean has meant that many cultures arrived and settled on the island: Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians (who founded Jamma, which became today's Ciutadelle, and Magon, present Maó), Romans (who created Sanicera in the port of Sanitja) and Vandals. Many toponyms are proof that the island was an Arab enclave for centuries, until its conquest by Christian King Alfonso III of Aragon. It was even under British rule in the 18th century. All these different cultures have left their mark on the island.

But if there is an aspect for which Menorca stands out, it is its rich prehistoric heritage, specifically the that from the Talaiotic culture which is exclusive to Menorca and Mallorca, and boast certain structures, such as the T-shaped taulas or the inverted-boat-shaped navetas, that can only be seen here. In 2023, some of the island's most characteristic prehistoric sites were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, under the name of "Prehistoric Sites of Talaiotic Menorca".

This route originally had defensive functions, serving to watch over and protect the island from the many people who wanted to conquer it, as well as to communicate the different defensive constructions that can still be found today along the Menorcan coastline.

Today, hikers, cyclists and horse riders enjoy this eminently coastal route, which allows them to visit the spectacular coves and beaches of Menorca, as well many other natural landscapes and sites of cultural heritage that will make long-lasting memories for those who visit.

MIDE

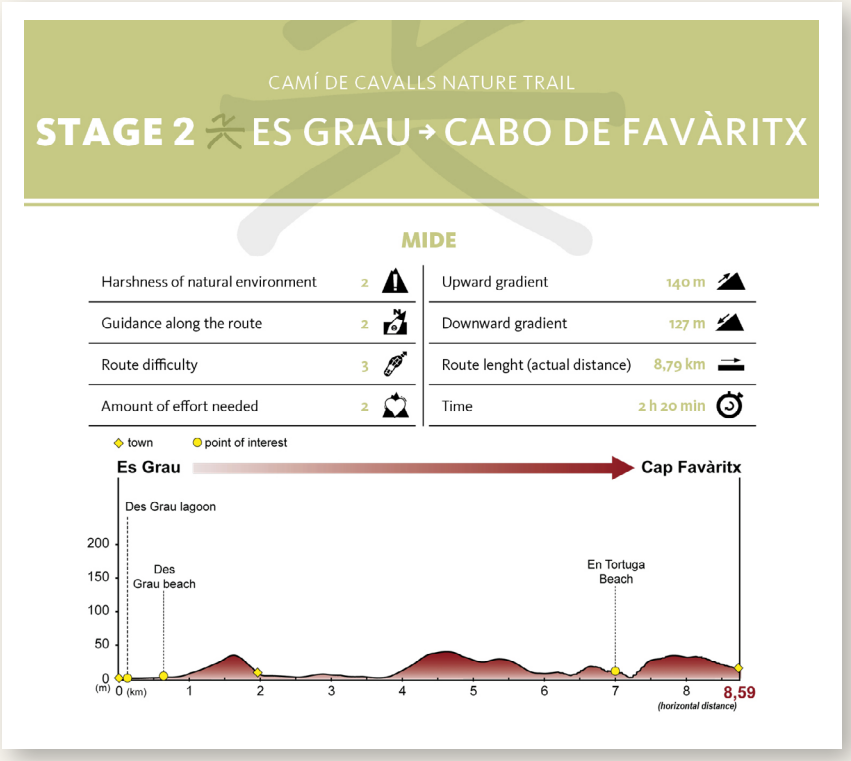
EXCURSION INFORMATION METHOD

MIDE is an information system that evaluates and quantifies the technical and physical demands of different excursion routes. The aim is to unify the assessment of the difficulties offered by the different routes in order to allow cyclists, walkers and hikers to make the most informed decisions.

The **MIDE** system is composed of two blocks of information:

Assessment of four different aspects of difficulty: severity of the natural environment, orientation on the route, difficulty of the journey and the amount of effort required. These ratings, from 1 to 5 points and from low to high, are based on different concepts which are interpreted in the table on the following page.

Basic information on each route: timetable, cumulative positive difference in altitude, cumulative negative difference in altitude, horizontal distance covered, annual season in which the assessment is carried out and type of route (outward, return, circular and crossing).



Example of MIDE application

Environment
Severity of the natural environment



1. The environment is not risk-free
2. There is more than one risk factor
3. Various risk factors
4. Substantial risk factors
5. Many risk factors

Route
Orientation on the route



1. Well-marked trails and crossings
2. Pathways or signage indicating continuity
3. Requires the identification of geographic features and cardinal points
4. Requires off-path navigation
5. The route is interrupted by obstacles that must be overcome

Terrain
Difficulty of terrain



1. Flat surface
2. Bridleways
3. Stepped paths or irregular terrain
4. Necessary to use hands or jump to maintain balance
5. Necessary to use hands to progress

Efforts
Degree of effort required



1. Up to 1 hour of total walking
2. Between 2 and 3 hours total walking
3. Between 3 and 6 hours total walking
4. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking
5. Between 6 and 10 hours total walking

Calculated according to the MIDE criteria for an average hiker with a light load

The **MIDE** method is recommended by the Spanish Federation of Mountain Sports and Climbing (FEDME).

More information at **www.euromide.info**

MIDE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do not bury rubbish or litter in nature. Keep it until it can be deposited at a collection and recycling site.
- Never light fires or throw away lit cigarettes.
- Remember to always close gates, fences and gates behind you to prevent livestock from escaping.
- Never walk on crops. Use the footpaths.
- Respect the marked trails. Shortcuts only lead to serious erosion that can lead to the disappearance of the traditional path.
- Keep your dog on a lead at all times. This way you avoid disturbing domestic animals and mean you can see more wildlife.
- Respect and care for water sources and streams. Water is life.
- Do not camp outside the designated campsites.
- Defend nature and remember that the extinction of a plant or animal species is irreversible.

HELPING TO CONSERVE THESE NATURE TRAILS IS TO KEEP OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE ALIVE

The stages of the nature trail proposed in this Guide are independent of each other, with the only common link being that they constitute an approach to the habitat they pass

Colour indicative of the Geographical Sector in which it is located

Name of the Nature Trail

Name of the stage of the Nature Trail

MIDE profile of the Nature Trail indicating different degrees of difficulty, slopes of the route, time required to complete the route, highlights of the route and total distance

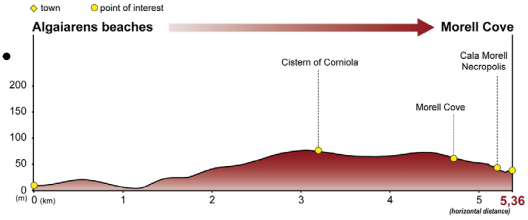
Introductory text

CAMÍ DE CAVALLS NATURE TRAIL

STAGE 8 ALGAIARENS → CALA MORELL

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	148 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	148 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	5,38 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	1 h 25 min



THE TRANSITION BETWEEN A LANDSCAPE SHAPED BY THE TRAMONTANE AND ANOTHER SHAPED BY DROUGHT

This short stage begins in a pine grove over sandy areas and then climbs up to the cliffs of Curniola. On the way you will pass from a landscape shaped by the tramontane to a landsape shaped by drought, with the consequent change in the vegetation. The entire stage runs through Natura Network areas, and the La Vall SCI and SPA.



Signposting near Biniatram

through and therefore offer an approach to the nature, history, culture and traditions of our country, while at the same time attempting to promote a call for conservation.

THE USE OF WATER IN THE MENORCAN COUNTRYSIDE: CISTERNS

Traditionally, water was supplied to agricultural and livestock farms mainly by three methods: wells, usually tapping aquifers; rainwater collectors, which collect rainwater from the roofs of buildings; and cisterns.

These structures consist of a large open-air platform with a slope that channels water into a well built or cut into the rock. The wells were covered with an ashlar hut called es coll, from where water was drawn by means of a pulley and a rope with a well. If the function of the cistern was as a watering place for livestock, as in the case of the Corniola cistern, water was poured into a channel that filled the different basins. Water from the cisterns could also be used for human consumption, an example of this being the Es Mercadal cistern, which is still in use today.

Nowadays, towns such as Maó have implemented plans to recover these traditional methods of water use.

Table with historical or anecdotal information on some aspect of the Nature Trail

The route continues between a stone wall on the left and shrubby vegetation made up of gorse, laburnum, heather and mastic trees on the right. As you go on, the pines grow denser until you end up walking through a real pine forest. In the middle of the forest, attached to the stone wall, the path comes across the Corniola cistern, a traditional construction for collecting rainwater.



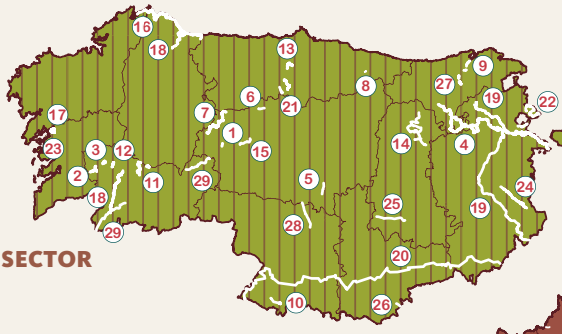
The Corniola cistern, a traditional way of collecting of rain water

Photograph of the route, layout, monuments or natural highlights, with respective informative caption

NATURE TRAILS

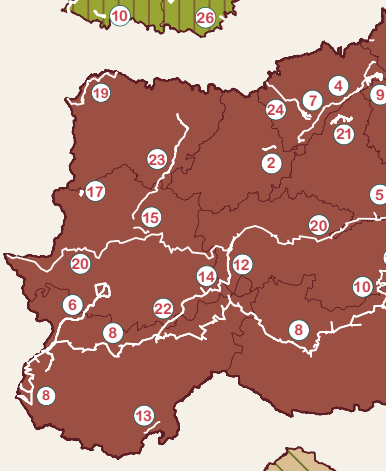
I. NORTHWEST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Cacabelos - Quilós (1)
- Carballeda de Avia (2)
- Dos Arrieiros (3)
- Ebro (4)
- Esla (5)
- Laciana. Villablino to Villaseca section (6)
- Mirada Circular: Ancares Leoneses from Guímara to Balboa (7)
- Muñigo - Covadonga (8)
- Pas (9)
- Sayagués Agricultural Landscape (10)
- La Ribeira Sacra (11)
- River Barbantiño (12)
- River Nalón (Fuso to Tuñón) (13)
- Románico palentino (14)
- Ruta de la Conquista (15)
- Cantabrian Sea Route (16)
- The ecological routes of the Catoira River (17)
- San Rosendo (18)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (19)
- Senda del Duero (20)
- Senda del Oso (21)
- Senda del Pastoreo (22)
- Sendas en Abalo (23)
- Sierra de la Demanda Greenway (24)
- Tren Secundario de Castilla (25)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (26)
- Toranzo Valley (27)
- Vía de la Plata (28)
- Via Nova (29)

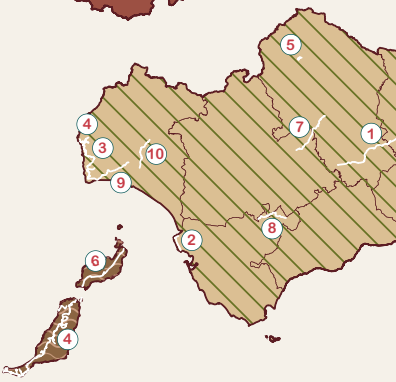


VI. CENTRAL PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Campo Azálvaro (2)
- Mª Cristina canal and branches (3)
- Cañada Real Soriana Occidental (4)
- Cañada Real Soriana Oriental (5)
- Corredor Cáceres-Badajoz (6)
- Eresma (7)
- Guadiana (8)
- Beech and Oak Forests of Riaza (9)
- Wetlands of La Mancha (10)
- Júcar (11)
- La Jara (12)
- La Jayona (13)
- Las Villuercas (14)
- Monfragüe (15)
- Renacimiento (16)
- Rivera de Acebo (17)
- Santander-Mediterráneo (18)
- Senda del Duero (19)
- Tajo (20)
- Lozoya Valley (21)
- Vegas del Guadiana (22)
- Vía de la Plata (23)
- Eresma Valley Greenway (24)
- Villacañas to Quintanar de la Orden or El Trenillo (25)





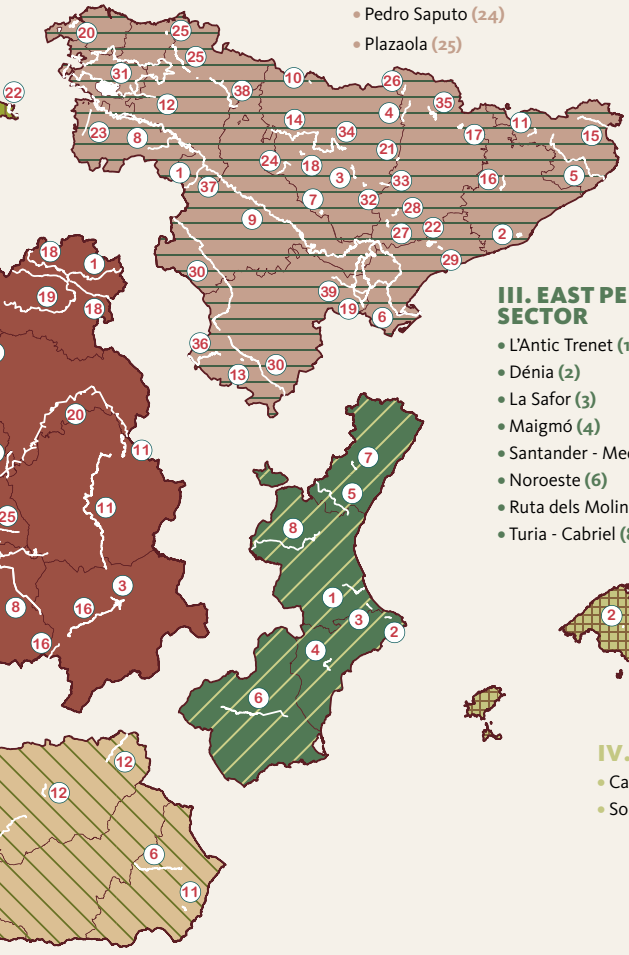


VII. CANARY SECTOR

- Anaga-Chasna (1)
- La Gomera Coasts (2)
- La Gomera Peaks (3)
- Fuerteventura (4)
- La Palma (5)
- Lanzarote (6)
- Traditional Trails of El Hierro (7)

II. NORTHEAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Agua Soriano. Antonino Route (1)
- Anell Verd (2)
- Camí de l'Aigua (4)
- Carrilet (5)
- Carrilet de la Cava (6)
- Castejón de Monegros (7)
- Cidacos (8)
- Ebro (9)
- Embalse de Lanuza (10)
- Ferro i el Carbó Greenway (11)
- Basque Navarre Railway Greenway (12)
- Guadalaviar (13)
- Hoya de Huesca (14)
- La Muga (15)
- La Séquia (16)
- Les Mines (17)
- Loreto y el Canfranero (18)
- Matarraña - Algars (19)
- Montes de Hierro Greenway (20)
- Montfalcó al Congost de Mont-rebei (21)
- Muntanyes de Prades (22)
- Oja (23)
- Pedro Saputo (24)
- Plazaola (25)
- Port de Vielha (26)
- River Segre and Utxesa reservoir (27)
- Riu (28)
- Ruta del Glorieta (29)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (30)
- Senda del Pastoreo (31)
- Sierra de San Quílez (32)
- Sifón de Albelda (33)
- Somontano de Barbastro (34)
- Sort i la Vall d'Àssua (35)
- Tajo (36)
- Tarazonica Greenway (37)
- Val de Zafán (39)



III. EAST PENINSULAR SECTOR

- L'Antic Trenet (1)
- Dénia (2)
- La Safor (3)
- Maigmó (4)
- Santander - Mediterráneo (5)
- Noroeste (6)
- Ruta dels Molins d'Aigua (7)
- Turia - Cabriel (8)



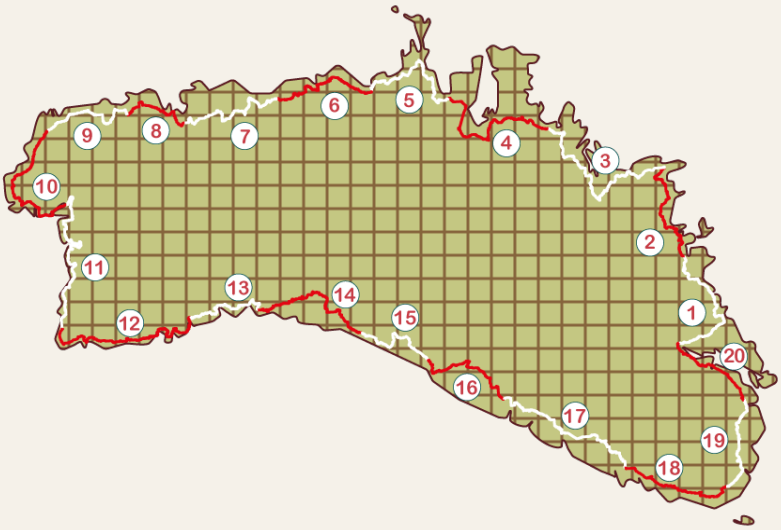
IV. BALEARIC SECTOR

- Camí de Cavalls (1)
- Son Juny (2)

V. SOUTHERN PENINSULAR SECTOR

- Aceite (1)
- Entre Ríos (2)
- Guadiana (Natural Path) (3)
- Guadiana Greenway (4)
- Guadiato (5)
- Guadix-Almendricos (6)
- La Campiña (7)
- La Sierra (8)
- Litoral (9)
- Los Molinos del Agua (10)
- Lucainena de las Torres to Agua Amarga (11)
- Renacimiento (12)

CAMÍ DE CAVALLS NATURE TRAIL



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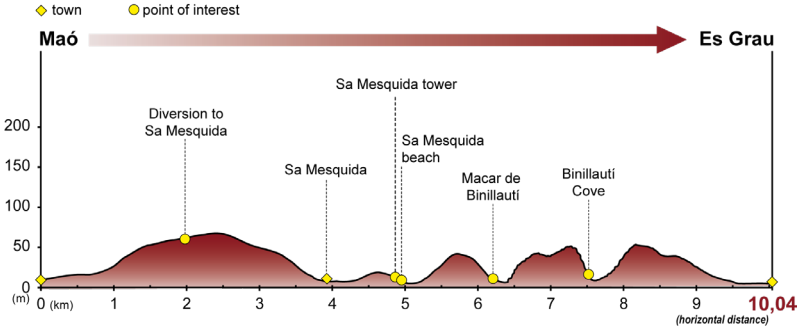
The characteristic Menorcan barriers continually accompany the user of the Camí de Cavalls

STAGE 1 MAÓ → ES GRAU

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	335 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	333 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,06 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 12 min



THIS FIRST STAGE RUNS ACROSS THE NORTH-EAST OF MENORCA IN A ROUTE THAT COMBINES TRADITION AND NATURE

The stage begins at the crossroads between the road to Sant Antoni and the Me-3 road, following the latter road towards the coastal village of Sa Mesquida. In this area, the tramontane and sea winds have carved the road, creating the coves of Sa Rinconada and Sa Mesquida, which stand under the guard of a 18th century watchtower. From here, the path continues along the cliffs that make up the natural space of El Macar de Binillautí, included in the Natura 2000 Network. The route turns inland again and runs between crop fields and tree patches, crossing the Natural Park of S'Albufera des Grau until it reaches the Gola des Grau marshes.


Port of Maó



Views of Sa Mesquida

The beginning of the Camí de Cavalls is located to the east of the island of Menorca, in the municipal district of Maó. The information board indicating the start of stage 1 is located 1.80 km east of the port of Maó, next to the intersection at the first kilometre of the Me-3 road and the access road to the Sant Antoni neighbourhood. From here, the stage continues along the hard shoulder of the Me-3 for one kilometre, leaving the island's capital behind until it joins the road that leads to the coastal village of Sa Mesquida.

The landscape following the Me-3 consists of heath and scrubland. Private agricultural plots are bounded by traditional dry masonry walls and surrounded by Mediterranean scrub, including mastic trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*) and wild olive trees (*Olea europaea sylvestris*). These plots are accessed through the traditional Menorcan gates, which get their gnarly shapes from being built in wild olive tree wood.

Following the road to Sa Mesquida, the path rises, leaving behind the crop fields and gradually entering the northeast of the island, from which the coastline can be seen more clearly and the change in the landscape towards a more humid and saline one can be appreciated. The change in landscape is caused the strong Tramuntana winds that sweep over the northern part of the island and carve its rugged landscape: plants are generally smaller here, and other species are present, such as junipers or Menorcan-native herbaceous plants such as sand couch-grass or reeds, and species specially adapted to the extreme weather of the island's northern coast, such as the thorny and compact socarrells (*Anthyllis hystrix*).

The trail continues down from the junction with the Es Murtar road until it enters the coastal village of Sa Mesquida, where the sea, geological formation, vegeta-

tion, salinity and human activity blend together to create a landscape that is both traditional and wild. The trail continues along the access road to the coves of Sa Rinconada and Sa Mesquida, with its rocky outcrops that emerge from the sea. At this spot stands the magnificent Sa Mesquida tower, built as a watchtower during the British occupation in the 18th century.

Once past the coves, visitors enter a protected dune ecosystem that is currently under restoration, which is why the walkways and gates that have been set up must be respected. At the same time, the road enters military territory under control of the San Isidro military base. This are is home to animal and plant species characteristic of the Mediterranean climate in general, as well as Menorcan native species in particular, as the Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*), the sea poppy (*Glaucium flavum*) or the Lilford's wall lizard (*Podarcis lilfordi*), which lives on the islets around Menorca.

From this point, this first stage of the trail continues for 3.5 km along the northeast coast of Menorca, which is characterised by gentle cliffs that do not exceed 60 m above sea level, interspersed with small coves and nooks that are part of the SCI and SPA of S'Albufera a la Molatí, which is included in the Natura 2000 Network. In this area, extreme caution must be taken as it is a bird nesting area under a special protection regime. In addition, coves do not have lifeguard services, first-aid stations and toilets, as they are isolated and difficult to access.

Once you reach Binillautí cove, the trial goes up and inland for approximately one kilometre from the coastline, entering a rugged landscape marked by undergrowth and Mediterranean scrubland, which is included in the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park. This Natural Park constitutes the core area of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve. The vegetation of this stretch consist of typical Mediterranean shrub, such as mastic trees, wild olive trees and evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*).



Signage in Caleta de Binillautí

PORT OF MAÓ

The geographical and geological characteristics of Menorca creates sea inlets all along its coastline, which may take the form of beaches, coves, bays and gulfs. These geographical characteristics have favoured the development of various activities on the island. However, the inlet around which Maó, in the east of the island, was built remains the largest in the island, followed by that of the second most important city, Ciutadella. The port of Maó is built on a sea inlet that reaches six kilometres inland, making it one of the longest natural ports in Europe.

The access to the port is located between the Mola Peninsula to the north and Cape Sant Felip to the south. It should be noted that, along the six kilometres that make up the port, there are other geographical features that have been used in the past and in the present for military purposes, such as the Figuera, Llonga, Rata and Teulera coves, where the towns of Maó and Es Castell were built.



Views of the port of Maó

The sea inlet that makes the port even has several islands on it with descriptive names: from the outer part to the inner part of the bay, stand Island of Llatzeret, in which a lazaretto, or a hospital for infectious diseases, stood; Island of Cuarentena, which literally means Quarantine Island; Isla del Rey, meaning Island of the King; and Isla d'en Pinto.

Given its characteristics and geographical location in the centre of the western Mediterranean, the port of Maó has been and continues to be one a major commercial port and military vantage point 3rd century BC. So much so, that the archaeological remains found all along its coastline range from an early Christian basilica, through the 15th century lazaretto still standing on Llatzeret Island, to the 18th- and 19th-century military fortresses from the British rule and subsequent Spanish defence, such as the Sant Felip Castle, Fort Marlborough and the Isabella II Fortress.

The port of Maó is currently used for commercial, tourism and industrial purposes, and even houses a thermal power station.



The stage continues through this hilly area for 1.6 km, spotted with crop fields delimited by natural elements. Then, the trail goes down again to the Me-5 road that links Maó with Es Grau. Once the trail reaches the Me-5, the path follows the last 760 m along the shoulder of the Me-5 to reach the end of this first stage at S'Albufera des Grau.

SA MESQUIDA

Sa Mesquida is a village in the municipal district of Maó, 4.5 km northeast of the capital. This small seaside village has few residents, although many return during the summer season.

During the last years of the 18th century, this town was the setting of the conflict between the British troops, who had occupied the island in 1708, and the Spanish army of Charles III, who fought to re-conquer the island. For this reason, one of the key architectural highlights of the town is the Sa Mesquida tower, which was built in 1799 between the beaches of Sa Rinconada and Sa Mesquida. Besides this one, 10 other watchtowers were built along the shore as part of a defensive network of the coast.

These buildings present several common architectural features: they all are stone and lime and sand plaster building with a circular ground plan and are three storeys tall with a very large and reinforced western parapet, higher than that of the terrace, built to repel land attacks. In addition, the machicolation along the parapet allows defendants to fire attackers. The distinguishing feature of the Sa Mesquida tower is its upper platform, where a rotating cannon was located.

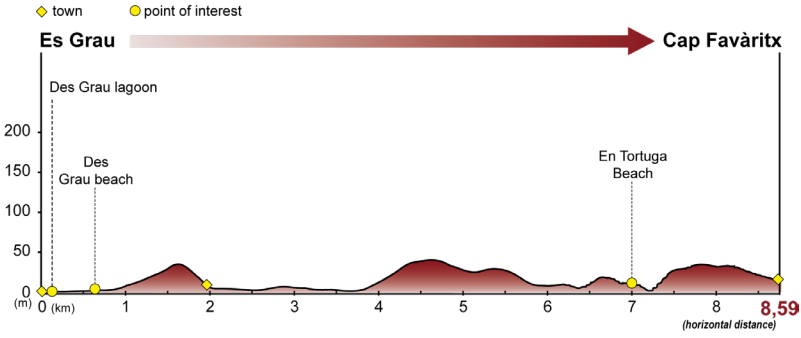


Tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides* L.) Plant native to the Balearic Islands

STAGE 2 ES GRAU → CABO DE FAVÀRITX

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	140 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	127 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	8,79 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 20 min



ALBUFERA DES GRAU AND THE COVES OF NORTHEASTERN MENORCA

This stage runs entirely through the Natural Park of S'Albufera d'Es Grau. It begins at the edge of the *albufera*, or lagoon, from which the park takes its name, but then moves away along the coast of the island, with its cliffs and coves, until it reaches Cape Favàritx.



Views of Es Grau from the beach



Old well and watering trough attached to the wall of a farm

The second stage of the Camí de Cavalls starts about 400 m south of the village of Es Grau, next to the access gate to the Albufera d'es Grau, one of the most important natural habitats in Menorca. After crossing the gate (friendly reminder: whenever you need to open a gate along the trail, please leave it properly closed after you), you will continue across a footbridge over the branch of water that connects the lagoon and the sea. The Nature Trail turns off to the right after about 100 m, but it is worth taking a walk around the Albufera d'Es Grau, using the walkways that surround the water and stopping at the viewpoints to do some birdwatching: you can spot ducks, coots, cormorants, sea hawks...

The route enters a small Aleppo pine patch (*Pinus halepensis*) and mastic trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*) along a sandy track and, after 500 m, next to a good example of the island's traditional farming practices, an old well with a cattle trough attached to the wall of a farm. Next to this wall the trail continues until it reaches the beach of Es Grau.

Southeast to the beach there is a picturesque view of the village of Es Grau. However, the trail leaves the beach and continues northwards along a pebble path between sand couch-grass and mastic trees, although, due to the strong winds, specimens here do not grow as tall as the ones found in the pine groves.

For 500 metres, the route goes back into another patch of pines and mastic trees, on which Mediterranean smilax (*Smilax aspera*) climb. After this patch, the trail returns to a scrubland area, towards the shore once again, and arrives at the coves in Tamarells. Although a rather primitive stairs have been carved in the ground to ease the climb down, please be careful as in this stretch the terrain is steep and uneven. To the northwest, at the tip of the Cape Rambla you can see one of the old defensive towers built during the time under the British rules.

S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU NATURAL PARK

It is an area of high social value that was declared in 1995 after a long process carried out on the initiative and mobilisation of citizens. It has a total area of 5,067 ha located in the north-eastern sector of the island, following the coastline that goes from Caleta de Binillautí to Port d'Addaia.

This are has very diverse habitats that support the island's rich biodiversity, so much so that the core of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve and many of its spaces are included in the Natura 2000 Network.

In this natural park there are wetlands and temporary ponds where aquatic plant species such as Potamogeton pectinatus thrive, favouring the development of other species such as fish, arthropods, reptiles and molluscs and the birds and mammals that feed on them. Sea hawks (*Pandion haliaetus*), coots (*Fulica altra*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) or grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*), as well as the Mediterranean tree frog (*Hyla meridionalis*) or the Balearic-native suvpecies of the Algerian hedgehog (*Atelerix algirus vagans*) are especially noteworthy.

Along the coastline you can see dune systems, islets where numerous coastal birds nest and the underwater meadows of species that are becoming increasingly scarce on the Mediterranean seabed, such as Posidonia oceanica or Zoostera. These species regulate the temperature and oxygen levels of the sea water, serve as a shelter and food source for numerous species of fish, molluscs and crustaceans, and help to fix dune systems and beaches. The inland areas of the park include wild olive forests combined with agroforestry mosaics made up of pasture and cultivated areas with patches of trees that showcase the rich agricultural and cultural heritage of the rural areas of Menorca.



S'Albufera des Grau



Camí de Cavalls signaling cairn

From the cove of Tamarells des Sud you can still see the Rambla tower and, to the east, the Island of Colom. Just 200 m off from the island of Menorca, this island was used as a provisional lazaretto in the 18th century and has some archaeological remains such as an early Christian basilica. This island is home to population of the endemic Lilford's wall lizard (*Podarcis lilfordi*).

Their trail leaves the cove taking a sandy path that soon connects with a firmer dirt track. The trail continues along the scrubland landscape within view of the Cape Rambla and the Rambla tower towards the Cove of Tamarells des Nord, but without actually entering it. Very close to this cove is the starting point of the path that leads to the foot of the Rambla tower. After a little over 270 m, you will leave the trail on a path that starts on the right. Although the path is quite easy to spot, it is advisable to pay attention to the signposting. This diversion will allow you to visit the Sa Torreta cove (be careful, as like the climb down to Tamarells, the descent is somewhat steep) and continue along the beach until reaching the main trail that you had left behind.

Shortly after leaving Tamarells, you will pass by a picturesque fisherman's house with good views over the cove of Sa Torreta. Before descending towards it the path takes a small detour, going through a patch of trees, mostly pine trees with the occasional small mastic tree, for a few hundred metres

As soon as you leave behind this tree patch, you will reach the cove of Sa Torreta. It is strictly forbidden to leave the marked path along the cove since, as the information signs explain, this is a natural area undergoing regeneration. Before leaving the cove, a path on the left leads to the Talaiotic settlement of Sa Torreta de Tramuntana, one kilometre away.

TALAIOTIC SETTLEMENT OF SA TORRETA DE TRAMUNTANA

Located in the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park, it is one of the few and most emblematic Talaiotic settlements that have been identified in the Tramuntana region. The origin of this prehistoric settlement date back 1600 B.C., and was occupied until thee Roman times and then re-occupied in the medieval Moorish period.

In 1930, Margaret Murray, a British archaeologist and researcher specialized in Menorcan prehistory, documented the discovery of this settlement, as well as the elements related to the rituals that took place there.

Today, the *talaiot*, the *taula* enclosure and a few scattered dwellings have been preserved. The talaiot is located in the highest part of the village. It is a stepped structure with an oval ground plan from which, thanks to its privileged location, the entire area can be controlled.

Below *talaiot* stands the *taula*, located in a small enclosure that remains intact and from which some of the pilasters that are still standing, as well as part of the façade in good condition. Finally, the ensemble is completed with the remains of four spaces for domestic use.

Also, near the village and in the direction of Rambles cove, you can see the base of a naveta intended for use as a burial chamber, built in Cyclopean masonry following a in what is known as a three-walled tomb, which dates back to between 1600 and 1300 BC.

Very close to the tomb there is a large evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*), which is between six and seven hundred years old and is catalogued by the Balearic Government as a singular tree of the Balearic Islands.

Leaving the cove behind, the trail crosses a gate and enters an entirely agricultural landscape of cereal crops and pasture, dotted by patches of mastic trees and green olive tree (*Phillyrea latifolia*). This landscape remains the same for just over 2 km, until you reach the access to the cove at Cavaller.

Without entering the cove, the trail turns to the left and once again enters a tree patch, against dominated by pine and mastic trees, before entering scrubland after a few metres. At this point, the trail is lined by scorpion broom and Labiatae herbs, with some wide-spaced trees.

The next cove, Morella Nou, is also left to the side without entering it, and 600 m further on, the trail reaches the Morella sandy area, popularly known as the En Tortuga cove. Before descending to this sandy area, you can enjoy a beautiful view of the entire Cape of Favàritx, with the lighthouse clearly visible at its eastern end.

The trail skirts the beach and then climbs up a rocky path, among cushion-shaped and composed bushes such as Mediterranean strawflower (*Helichrysum stoechas*) which are protected on their left side by a fence. The path leads to a wooden footbridge that allows you to walk along a sandy area. On the left hand side, you can see the Bassa de Morella, a shallow coastal lagoon that was declared a nature reserve in 2003. Surrounded by tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), this lagoon is an important wintering and nesting site for many water birds. It also stands out for its population of sea turtles, which has given it its popular name: En Tortuga cove.

The wooden footbridge gives way to a wide dirt track. It is lined by cushion-shaped bushes, again, as well as some specimens of the largest Euphorbiaceae to be found in Menorca, the tree spurge (*Euphorbia dendroides*). Here the trail connects to another track; you just have to take the right path.

After half a kilometre, and after passing the access to the Presili cove, the vegetation becomes sparser and the track becomes rockier; this is a sign that you are reaching the cape of Favàritx. The end of the stage is reached after another half kilometre, at the point where the track you have been following meets the access road to the lighthouse.

Although the second stage of the Nature Trail ends here, and the next stage begins by following the road to the west, it is well worth walking the short distance of just 1 km to the cape of Favàritx. Besides the stunning views from the end of the cape, the trail passes by El Cós del Síndic, a temporary lagoon flooded between autumn and spring that is home to two rather rare aquatic plants (*Ruppia maritima* and *Althenia orientalis*) and populations of waders.

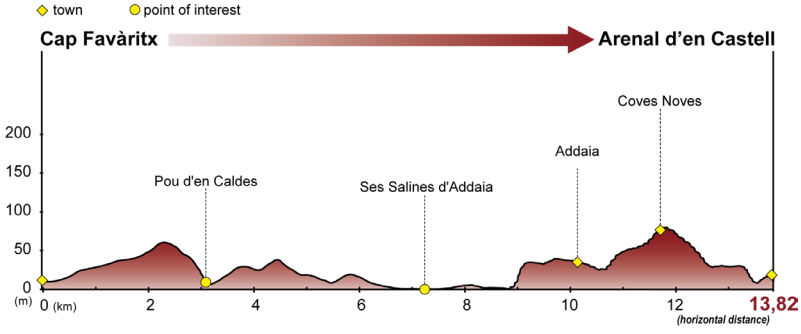


Cyclists arriving at the end of the stage, next to the access road to the Favàritx lighthouse

STAGE 3 CABO DE FAVÁRITX → ARENAL D'EN CASTELL

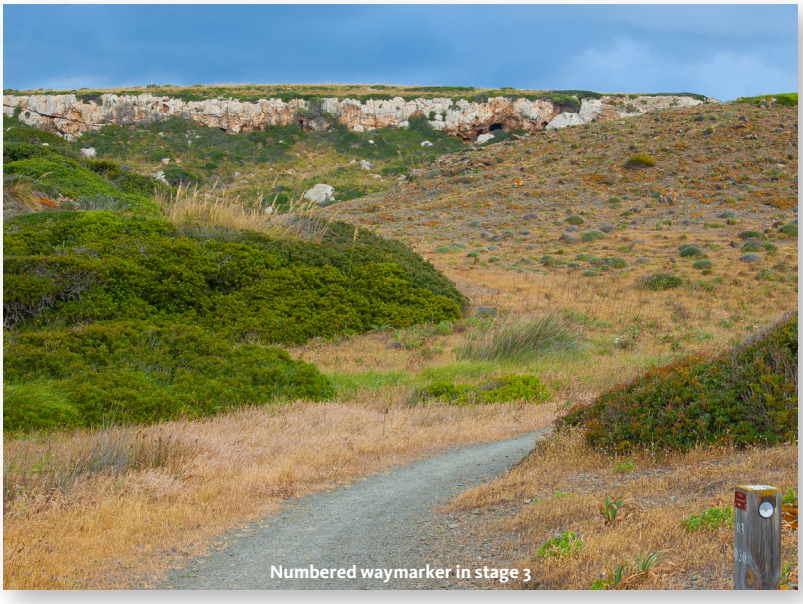
MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	217 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	207 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	13,87 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	4 h 20 min



CROSSING THE HEART OF S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU NATURAL PARK

The lighthouse of Cabo Favàritx illuminates this spectacular stretch that visits different spots within the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park, including places of great beauty as the Pou d'en Caldes beach and of high environmental value as Ses Salines d'Addaia and its surroundings. The final point of this stage the S'Arenal d'en Castell beach.



Numbered waymarker in stage 3

The third stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins at the typical information board, where you can find out about the new adventure you is about to embark on. This point is less than a kilometre away from Cap de Favàritx and its lighthouse, taking to the asphalt route to the right (CF-1).

The characteristic landscape with its dark hues is caused by the materials it is composed of, dominated by slate. The Favàritx lighthouse sits on the highest point. Built between 1917 and 1922, the lighthouse tower is 28m tall, currently painted white, with a black spiral running up and down which gives it personality.

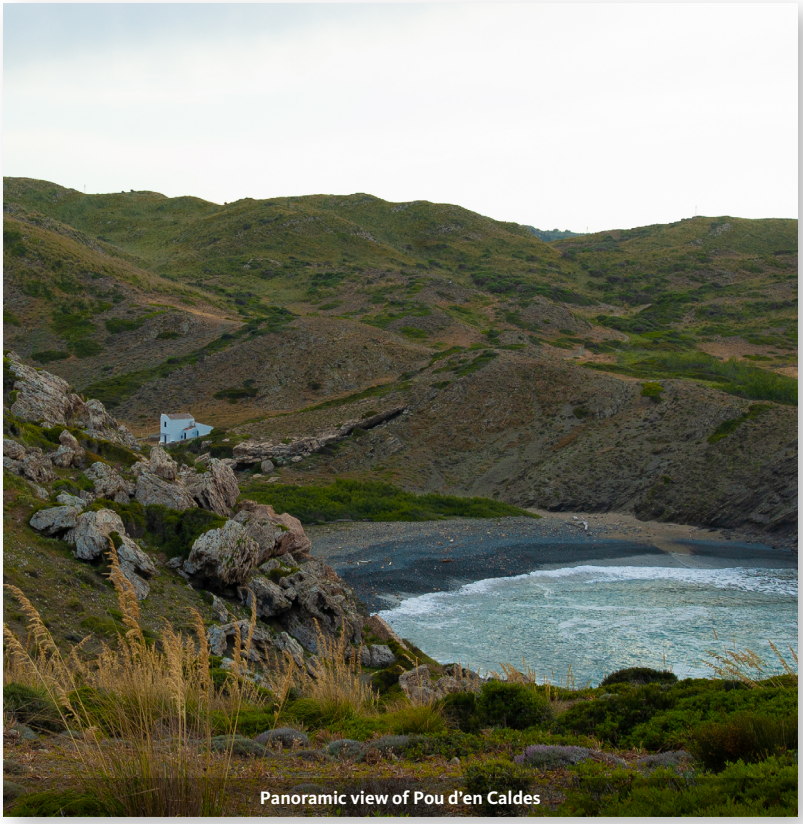
FAVÀRITX LIGHTHOUSE

Lighthouse built between 1917 and 1922 on the cape of the same name, on a slate terrain that gives this environment its characteristic dark hues. The main purpose of this infrastructure was to prevent further shipwrecks after the tragedies that occurred in the first decade of the 20th century.

With a 28 m high concrete tower (the first to be built in this way in the Balearic Islands), it was electrified in 1971. Its original optical instruments are preserved the permanent exhibition of the lighthouse of Portopí, in Mallorca. This exhibition can be visited by arranging an appointment by telephone.



Favàritx lighthouse



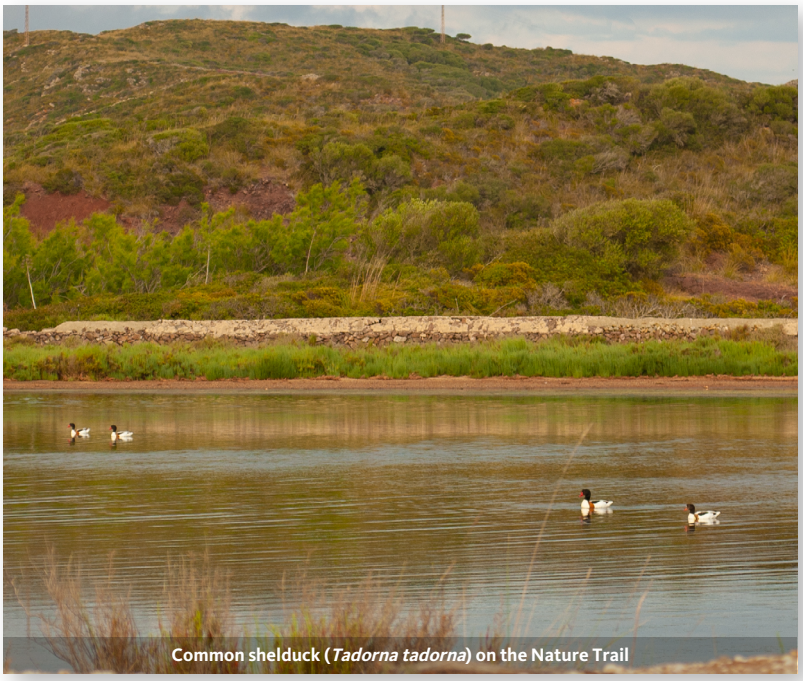
Panoramic view of Pou d'en Caldes

Visiting the lighthouse is a must if you are in the area. Afterwards, the stage itself starts at the information board, then turns left onto the asphalted track, entering the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park where, after walking a few metres, you will reach a car park within the natural park where you can park your car if you're driving and fully enjoy this environment and this Nature Trail.

After a cattle grid, which prevents livestock from roaming freely between neighbouring farms, you will continue along the asphalt road for a few metres before turning right, and crossing a typical Menorcan gate made of wild olive wood, which is one of the most important symbols of Menorca.

Then, you will find yourself on a dirt road surrounded by the great biodiversity of the Mediterranean scrubland, which slowly become dominant over crop fields and pastures. In this part of the route you will meet surfers carrying their boards to the beach of Pou d'en Caldes, which is a very popular surfing destination.

At this point the trail becomes a path from which you can see the beach. After (carefully) climbing down, you will reach a wooden footbridge suitable for pedestrians and bicycles, and then a new Menorcan gate. Once past it, the beach of Pou d'en Caldes awaits the traveller on the right and on the left the continuation of this fascinating stage 3.



Common shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) on the Nature Trail

Turn again, this time to the right, to take new wooden footbridge, which marks the beginning of a stretch that crosses a patch of Mediterranean scrubland. If you are walking this stretch in spring, you will be able to see a lot of plants blooming, such as the blackberry bush (*Rubus ulmifolius*).

After passing waymarker 50 of this stage 3, which stands by a Menorcan gate followed by a descending stone ramp built in stone, the Mediterranean scrubland that has been predominant until now gives way to cereal fields.

You will walk through a small patch of Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) you will reach a small stretch of a well-maintained wide road by which motor vehicles also pass. A few metres further on, there is a new Menorcan gate where this section ends. Next to it are boards with information on the environmental value of the area through you are about to walk, which constitutes the core of the Natural Park of s'Albufera des Grau.

A few metres ahead, the smell of salty air anticipates that the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail is approaching Ses Salines d'Addaia, the evaporation ponds using for salt harvesting in Menorca. They were created in 1845 and remained in operation until 1990, maintaining the artisanal salt harvesting method throughout their useful life. The remains of the different elements that made up these salt evaporation ponds can still be seen today, and it is also an ideal birdwatching spot, as many aquatic birds find that this is ideal place for breeding and nesting. A little further along the way, a information board on the natural park reminds you that this is a very fragile environment that needs to be protected, most especially its birdlife.

SES SALINES D'ADDAIA

These salt evaporation ponds were built in 1845 and, despite production was modest, they had a great economic relevance in the past. They were active for almost a century and a half, until 1990.

The chosen location was at the end of the conveniently shallow end of the bay, below which the 16,000 m2 of this former salt evaporation ponds stretched out. These facilities have operated using the traditional salt harvesting process throughout its life.

Today you can enjoy its ethnographic value and its revitalised environmental value, being one of the most important nesting and breeding areas for many of bird species in the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park.



Ses Salines d'Addaia

Surrounding the bay of Port d'Addaia, a series Menorcan gates follow one after the other, until you finally leave the S'Albufera des Grau Natural Park at the point at which the bay ends. Pastures dotted with livestock farms and grazing cattle and sheep flank the road. After a new succession of Menorcan gates, you will reach the town of Addaia.

In the urban section, simply follow the existing signposting and there is also a small information board detailing the route. This residential area has all necessary services, if you happen to need something. Afterwards, you will leave it using a road that is shared with cars and other vehicles for 750 m but can be completed almost entirely along the pedestrian cycle lane on the right of the Me-11 road.

Immediately afterwards, the route crosses the Me-9 road. As indicated in the corresponding signs, pedestrians should cross on foot, and, in any case, please be extremely careful when crossing the road. Afterwards, go up the well-asphalted Carrer ses Savines until reaching the first houses in Coves Noves. At the roundabout, the ascent ends and the descent begins, leading you to S'Arenal d'en Castell.

Going up the avenue of S'Arenal you can see the spectacular beach of S'Arenal d'en Castell. A signpost turns indicates you to turn right, and you will have to down a succession of ramps and stairs that descend practically to the beach. After enjoying this beach and its gastronomic and leisure offer, you will climbs up the Vía de Ronda, although you will probably want to glance back one last time at the beautiful bay with its crystal clear waters. Then, turn right along a dirt track leads that will lead you to board where this third stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail comes to an end.

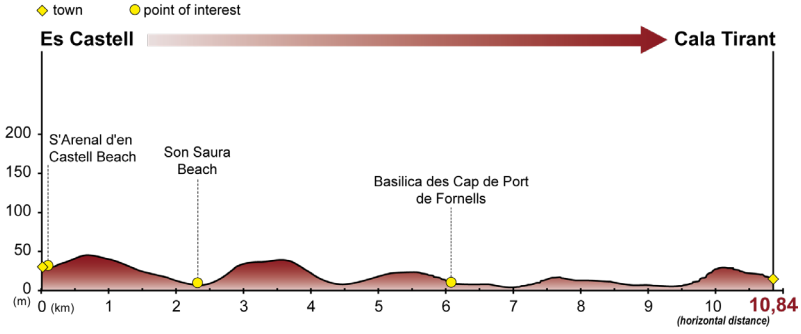


Addaia Bay

STAGE 4 ARENAL D'EN CASTELL → CALA TIRANT

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	222 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	205 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,86 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 36 min



COVES AND PINE FORESTS

Stage 4 of the Camí de Cavalls runs along the north coast of Menorca, along the municipal district of Es Mercadal, from S'Arenal d'en Castell beach to Tirant Cove. In this stage, you will be able to visit some of the most characteristic ecosystems of the Mediterranean climate: cliffs, marshes, beaches, forests, agroforestry mosaics and the Bay of Foretells. The relationship between the island's inhabitants and the environment is evidenced in several of the enclaves through which you will pass in this stage, such as archaeological sites or tourist and leisure areas, as well as traditional cereal and salt harvesting and livestock farms, all which tell the story of the historical and cultural evolution of the island.


S'Arenal d'en Castell Cliffs



Addaia Bay

The information board marks the start of this stage is located between a group of holiday housing estates on the Vía de Ronda streets , on the cliffs over the western end of the S'Arenal d'en Castell beach. From here, the first kilometre of the route follows the path that connects S'Arenal d'en Castell with the Son Parc housing estate. It runs parallel to the cliff, so the ground is mainly rocky.

The area is an idyllic place carved by the northern tramontane winds and the action of the sea, and characterised by the presence of seabirds and the low Mediterranean scrubland. This plants such as the trèvol femella (*Lotus cytisoides*) or the sea fennel (*Crithmum maritimun*) cover the cliffs in a yellow hue. Scrubland is usually strongly conditioned by the winds, which prevent bushes to grow tall or carve them in an specific shape, as it is the case of creeping Juniperus turbinata.



Remains of the early Christian Basilica des Cap des Port

EARLY CHRISTIAN BASILICA OF CAP D'ES PORT DE FORNELLS

It is an early Christian building dating from the end of the 5th century AD or the beginning of the 6th century AD, which may have been in use during the 7th century AD.

The basilica was discovered in 1958, in the area furthest from the mouth of Fornells Bay, between Son Parc and Ses Salines. The remains evidence that this church was organised around a central nave with a rectangular floor plan facing east, around which were attached several rooms that underwent structural changes over time.

This central nave had a low apse in which a crypt was built in the shape of a Greek cross, which was unusual for the time and used the uneven terrain. This crypt was connected to the sanctuary by the stairs on the west side. At this point, the entrance door to the basilica and the choir, covered with a vaulted ceiling, were found collapsed inside the nave.

In a separate hall at the northeast end of the building is a baptismal font in the shape of a four-pointed star. The floor of the church is covered by opus *signinum*, a cement mass used in Roman times, and has plastered and painted walls.

The Museum of Menorca in Maó conserves some of the elements recovered from this basilica, including several decorated walls with inscriptions in Latin and Greek, as well as columns, pilasters, column capitals and bases, as well as a Roman stone sarcophagus and two marble fragments that seem to have been part of an altar. In addition, other more everyday objects were found, including a stone cross, a bronze cross and glass paste jewellery.





Arenal de Son Saura

After leaving the cliffs behind, this stage of the trail enters the tree-lined Son Parc residential complex, where you will walk mainly across asphalt roads or pavements. This development includes various services mainly related to the tourist sector. Following the trail along the streets of Son Parc, the route descends to the Prat de Son Saura marshland, a 40-hectare area protected and included in the Natura 2000 network.

From there, you can access the Arenal de Son Saura beach, which is surrounded by patches of pine trees (*Pinus* sp.) and African tamarisk (*Tamarix africana*) and has a recovered dune system with important plant formations, such as common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and spiny rush (*Juncus acutus*), which have contributed to fixing the beach sands and improving their environmental quality.

The Camí de Cavalls leads from the car park of the Arenal de Son Saura beach, crossing a Menorcan gate, onto a path that surrounds the marches of the same name, and gradually widens and enters the wooded area of S'Albufera des Comte.

This section of the trail runs along 3.8 km of forest track with gentle slopes and goes through a typical Mediterranean coastal forest dominated by Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*), strawberry trees (*Arbustus unedo*) and lentisk (*Pistacia lentiscus*) along with some evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and squat shrubs such as Montpellier cistus (*Cistus monspeliensis*) or green heather (*Erica scoparia*). In this area you may spot small mammals such as hedgehogs and different birds such as woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), booted eagles (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) and common kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*).

After 4 km from Arenal de Son Saura the path leaves the forest and heads west into an agroforestry mosaic. In this section, after crossing a small stream surrounded by riverside bushes, the path runs along a kilometre of a gravel track low slope

lined by the dry stone walls that divide the agricultural plots. A few metres from the beginning of this section there, you will find an access that that will allow you to approach the remains of the early Christian Basilica of Cap d'es Port de Fornells, from where the entire Bay of Fornells can be seen to the west, including the town of Ses Salines, some of its coves and islands and the Salinas de la Concepció salt evaporation ponds.

At the end of the track, the trail continues along the hard shoulder of the Me-7 road that connects Maó with Fornells; please be extremely careful and watch out for traffic. Continue for approximately 900 metres until you reach a roundabout; the trail takes the first exit and continues for a kilometre and a half in the direction of Fornells also along the hard shoulder of a road, in this case that of the Me-15. From this point onwards the route approaches the coast, bordering the western part of the Bay of Fornells, to reach the town of Ses Salines, where there a crossroads leads to the Playas de Fornells residential complex, where Tirant Cove is located.

The last kilometre and a half of this stage runs along a cycle and pedestrian lane that runs along Carrer E or Camí de Cala Tirant, in the direction of Playas de Fornells. There is a roundabout, where you must take the second exit leading to a leisure and restaurant area. After barely 300 m, the route turns left to reach the access to Tirant Cove, the end point of the stage.



Hiker in the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail

FORNELLS

Fornells is a coastal town with a seafaring and salt-harvesting tradition, located at the western mouth of the Bay of Fornells, on the north coast of Menorca. Nowadays, it belongs to the municipality of Es Mercadal, and has become a must if you love fine food or water sports.

Originally, Fornells was only the Castle of Sant Antoni, and which was used to defend the 5 km natural port that is the Bay of Fornells and of which only the foundations remain. The castle was active for over than a century, from its construction in 1637 until the end of the 18th century. More precisely, until 1782 when Charles III of Spain ordered the soldiers who guarded it to withdraw.

However, other inhabitants settled near the castle as it offered protection from attacks by Barbary pirates, decided not to abandon the settlement after the castle was left vacant, and the town has survived to the present day.

To the north of the town, at the top of the cliff, is the Fornells Tower, built at the end of the 18th century, possibly between 1801 and 1802, during the third British occupation of Menorca. This watchtower was part of a surveillance network built by British troops for defensive-military purposes. Most of these towers had the same architectural structure: a circular ground plan, three or four storeys high, each intended for a specific use, from bottom to top: storage, lodging and manoeuvring.

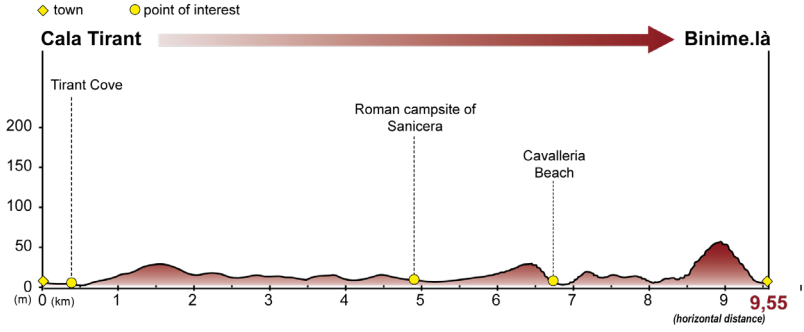


British-built Fornells Tower

STAGE 5 CALA TIRANT → BINIMEL.LÀ

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	148 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	148 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	9,60 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 35 min



ROMAN HERITAGE IN THE NORTH OF MENORCA

Starting from the Playas de Fornells housing development, this stage runs along some of the most popular beaches and coves on the north coast of Menorca, one of the best preserved areas of the coast, which as been declared the "Dels Alocs a Fornells" SCI and SPA. During the route you will reach the northernmost point of the entire Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail, in the vicinity of the ancient Roman settlement of Sanicera.



View back before leaving Cala Tirant, with views over the Platja de Fornells residential complex



Punta de sa Talaiteta

The fifth stage of the Nature Trail begins right at the entrance of Tirant Cove, in the residential complex of Playas de Fornells. The trail moves away to the beach to overcome a small headland that cuts in half the sandy area by using a wooden walkway that rises some 10 m above sea level, offering beautiful views of the natural harbour formed by this cove.

On the way back, the path skirts the beach without reaching the other end, as shortly before it leaves the beach, turns left and takes a footbridge built over the Lluriac Nou wadi. The trail continues parallel to this stream for a little less than 100 m, between tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.) and sand couch-grass (*Stipa* sp.), until you reach the end of the creek. At this point, the trail begins a climb along a concrete path that leads to the access road to a housing estate.

The trail continues along this dirt track to the south, before taking a track to the right shortly afterwards. This other track is left after half a kilometre and the route continues along a path that starts on the right. Please be careful treading and crossing these paths, as they are access roads to residential complexes and are therefore they are used by cars.

The Nature Trail heads back towards the coast, among pastures, sand couch-grass and some cushion-like scrubs, and reaches the Macar de sa Talaieta (macar is the Menorcan word for small rocky beaches). From this point onwards, the path runs almost parallel to the coastline and, even it is protected by wooden guards when it gets too close to the cliffs, you have to be careful because it runs along a dirt path with rocky outcrops.

The surrounding landscape does not change much: pasture slopes; sand couch-grass; scrubland, especially lentisk trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*), green olive tree (*Phillyrea latifolia*), scorpion broom (*Genista scorpius*) and especially socarrells (*Launaea cervicornis*), endemic shrubs adapted to the environmental conditions of the north of the island, with some sparse trees; and to the right of the path you will see the natural port of Tirant Cove to the right of the path, and enjoy beautiful views of the residential complex of Playa de Fornells.

The trial continues passing by different coves and capes, but without actually reaching any of them: Punta de sa Talaieta, Macar Petit, Punta Negra, Macar Gran, Macar de Binidonaire, Sa Mitjana, Punta d'en Patet and, finally, the D'en Patet beach.

The path then heads inland again, leaving the beach along a track that leads to a private estate. After walking along this track for about 200 m, the trail leaves it to take a path to the right. Among good-sized lentisk trees, in the first stretch, and Aleppo pines, later on, the trail goes around the aforementioned farm until you are near the ancient Roman settlement of Sanicera.

Just before reaching the access road to the Cavallería lighthouse, information boards have been installed in the esplanade in which you can learn about this Roman enclave, located at the northernmost point of the entire route of the Camí de Cavalls. This enclave consisted on a campsite built during the Sertorian War (82 BC to 72 BC) to house soldiers. The actual settlement of Sanicera, a late Imperial Roman port, was located further north on the west side of the port of Sanitja.

A small path that reaches off from the road about 200 m to the west of the information boards leads to Sanicera, which is just over half a kilometre away. On your way there you will walk past other archaeological landmarks such as a church complex dating from the 5th and 6th centuries.

Another interesting heritage element is the Sanitja tower, a coastal defence tower built by the British in the 18th century and standing at the end of Punta de sa Torre. Finally, from here you can reach the cape and lighthouse of Cavallería, 2.5 km away, located at the northernmost tip of the island of Menorca.



After a crossroads, the Nature Trail enters a more densely wooded area

SANICERA AND ROMAN MENORCA

The Balearic Islands were conquered by consul Quintus Caecilius Metellus between 123 and 121 BC with the purpose to be used as an enclave to fight against Mediterranean pirates. He called Menorca *Balearis Minor* or *Minorica*. According to Pliny the Elder, in Roman times Menorca had three cities: *Mago*, present-day Maó; *Iamo*, present-day Ciutadella; and *Sanisera*, in the port of Sanitja.

Originally, the town of Sanisera was built to take advantage of the natural port. This site was located on the western shore of the port of Sanitja, which at that time was further out to sea and had a deeper draught, allowing the anchoring of larger vessels. Near the port, during the civil conflict known as the Sertorian War (82 BC. - 72 BC), a small military campsite defended by a moat was built.

Although its heyday was from 123 BC to the 2nd century AD, this enclave was used until late antiquity, as evidenced the various archaeological finds in the area. Apart from the port itself and the aforementioned camp, there is an industrial zone from the Late Roman Empire (284-476); a church complex from the Vandal and Byzantine periods; six necropolises from different periods of late antiquity and even a 13th century mosque built with reused Roman ashlars.

In more recent times, the port has continued to be of strategic importance, with the construction of a defensive tower in the early 19th century, during the British rule of the island.



Ruins of the Roman campsite of Sanicera, with the tower of Sanitja on the horizon



Footbridge leading down to Cavalleria beach

The route continues along the road leading to the lighthouse, heading west for 1.3 km until the car park at Cavallería beach. Again, please be extremely careful when walking along the road, especially when arriving at the car park, especially in the summer season when there is large number of cars.

After leaving the car park, the path heads towards a small headland, Punta Roja, which separates Roja Cove, to the north, from Cavallería beach, to the south. Shortly before going down to the beach, at the foot of a rocky outcrop, a resting area has been installed which also serves as a viewpoint towards Cavallería beach. The reddish soil explains the name of the area, Punta Roja, literally "Red Point" in Spanish, which makes a stark contrast with the yellow-white colour of the sands of Cavalleria. After going around the rocks, a wooden walkway with some steps will allow you to go down to the beach where, attached to the rocky wall, a bunker from the Spanish Civil war is preserved.

CAVALLERIA LIGHTHOUSE

This building is located at the northernmost point of the island, overlooking the impressive, almost vertical cliffs of Cape Cavalleria. Its white tower is 15 m high and the lighthouse ran on oil until the end of the 20th century.

It was inaugurated in 1857 and was the first lighthouse to be built on the north coast of Menorca. The Cavalleria lighthouse was built to reduce the number of shipwrecks along this stretch of the coastline, since more than 700 shipwrecks were recorded in the area since the 14th century. Although the lighthouse was successful in reducing its number, shipwrecks continued to occur. This led to the construction of the Punta Nati and Favàritx lighthouses at the beginning of the 20th century.

The lighthouse is open to the public from May to October and houses the Cape Cavalleria Interpretation Centre.

The trail crosses the beach of Cavallería all the way to the end, leaving it just at the point where the beach of Ferragut begins. The path climbs upwards, running along the top of the walls that enclose the beach. The uneven surface, first sand and then loose pebbles, together with the height above the beach, requires a certain amount of caution, but it is worth the effort when you look back just before crossing a Menorcan gate: a beautiful view of the beaches of Ferragut and Cavallería, the unmistakable Punta Roja and Punta des Vernís in the background.

The route continues running close to the cliff, through a fairly rugged terrain between rocks, where the vegetation is reduced to some almost creeping bushes, and to other species endemic to the Balearic Islands, the Menorca's wild chamomile (Santonina chamaecyparissus subs. magonica). After passing by some fishermen's houses, the path then descends towards Mica Cove, although you will hardly have time to step on the sand as you will leave the cove immediately after crossing a gate next to another Spanish Civil War bunker.

Here the vegetation starts to become more abundant, with the slopes on the sides of the path covered with sand couch-grass and balloons and the return of the company of mastic trees. The route continues along the coastline for another half kilometre before doing a 90-degree turn next to a Menorcan gate. The path goes around a small hill and connects with a fairly wide track that continues for about 200 m and leads to some rural lodgings, so you may come across some motor vehicles.

The trail then descends along a path, a little hard to identify at times, which leads back to the coast. Once parallel to the coastline, you will pass a small cove of fine sand and soon reach the end of the route, just at the entrance to the popular Binimel·là beach.

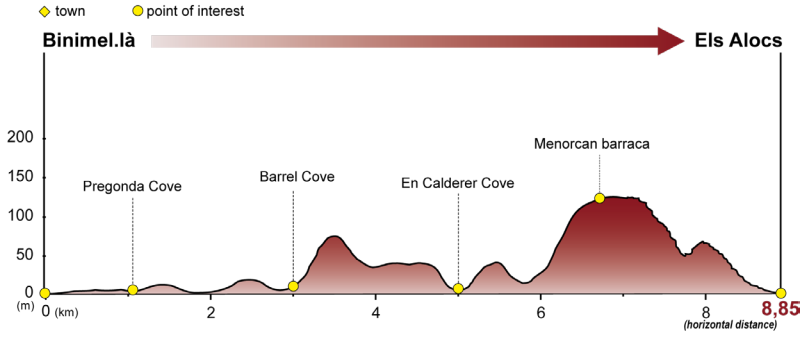


Waves crashing on the rocks surrounding a cove

STAGE 6 BINIMEL.LÀ → ELS ALOCS

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	275 m
Guidance along the route	3	Downward gradient	274 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	8,95 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 10 min



MENORCA'S WILDEST COASTLINE, THE ISLAND'S MOST VIRGIN BEACHES

Despite its short length, this is a challenging stage since it goes through one of the most rugged areas of the island of Menorca, but at the same time, it is one of the most rewarding, since you will be able to visit spectacularly beautiful virgin coves such as Pregonda Cove, Barril Cove and En Calderer Cove. The starting point of the stage on the beach of Binimel.là and the end on the hidden beach of Els Alocs are also impressive.


Binime·là Beach

The Nature Trail information board located at the eastern end of Binimel·là beach marks the beginning of this new stage, one of the most challenging of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail. The traveller begins his adventure by crossing this beautiful sandy area and its dune system full of biodiversity. Shortly afterwards, take the path that leaves from the western end of the aforementioned beach, following the now familiar markers and overcoming one of the ever-present Menorcan gates.

After a short walk you reach another small cove. Just opposite, on the other side of the route, you can see the Calasmorts temporary pond. The water of this small lagoon have a low salt content. Together with its small size and highly seasonal nature, is one of the most fragile ecosystems on the island of Menorca.

An uphill ramp foreshadows what will be the predominant tone throughout the stage. Subsequently, you will arrive to the spectacular cove of Pregonda. This is, without a doubt, an idyllic place, in which the azure colour of its crystalline waters is its main sign of identity.

The trail continues, overcoming a small stretch of wide path at the same time as it leaves Cala Pregonda, at which point the enters an area with larger vegetation that temporarily moves away from the coastline to a an area with larger vegetation to, shortly afterwards, coming closer to it again, in time for you to enjoy the views on Cala Barril: a small virgin cove that invites you to chill for a few minutes.

After Cala Barril there is a challenging uphill stretch, but not without a reward: as after half of this stretch you will be able to enjoy spectacular views. At this point, you have to cross a new Menorcan gate. On the other side, there is a stretch of gentler slopes with another example of Mediterranean scrubland where, with a bit of luck, it is possible to see some Balearic donkeys.



Panoramic view of the Pregonda Cove



Panoramic view in En Calderer Cove

The trail continues climbing towards Punta Cala Calderer. From there, you can see the beach of the same name, the next gem on this stage full of hidden surprises. The route descends all the way down to the Cala en Calderer, crossing it from east to west; please make sure to take as long as you need to enjoy this paradisical beach.

Leaving this beautiful beach behind, and after overcoming a new Menorcan gate next to a couple of old fishermen's houses, a new stretch of ascent begins. In this area, the route advances further away from the coastline, reaching an old circular stone building known as a *barraca*, used for sheltering livestock.

MENORCAN GATES

These have traditionally been the gates used in the agricultural estates of Menorca, and they are locally known as *tanques* (or each of them, a *tanca*). In Menorca, agricultural estates are completely enclosed by dry stone walls, and the gates are placed at the points of entrance (*portells*). They are handmade from wild olive wood (*Olea europea* var. *sylvestris*), a very abundant wild olive tree on the island, which grows slowly and produces very resistant wood. Generally eight crossbeams are required to build a single of these gates.

The truth is that today they are much more than what they were originally used for. Nowadays, they have become one of Menorca's major signs of identity: they are a symbol of its cultural heritage and their use as an enclosure and ornamental element has been extended to all types of homes.

THE TRAMONTANE

The tramontane wind (locally, the *tramuntana*) is the predominant wind on the island of Menorca. It is a cold north-northeast wind associated to dry weather. Due to its distance from Menorca to the mainland and the fact that it is less sheltered, the tramontane is harsher here, and has shaped and carved the northern coast of the island. The strong winds have caused numerous shipwrecks; this is the reason why the north coast has more lighthouses than usual.

A little further on, a signpost states that in 2.1 km you will reach the end of the stage. At this point this trail begins going down, crossing a landscape dominated by Mediterranean scrubland. After crossing new Menorcan gate with its corresponding waymarker, you will arrive at another waymarker that marks the end of the descent; at this point, the path becomes wider for last few metres that separate this point from the beach of Els Alocs.

Here you will be welcomed by the hidden beach of Els Alocs, which is difficult to access and has a special charm and tranquillity, and marks the end of this stage. This pebble beach owes its name to the chasteberry tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*), aloc in Catalan, a deciduous shrub that is very abundant in the area. You have completed this stage; the only thing left to do is to enjoy this beautiful spot, allowing yourself to be overcome by the magic of the place.

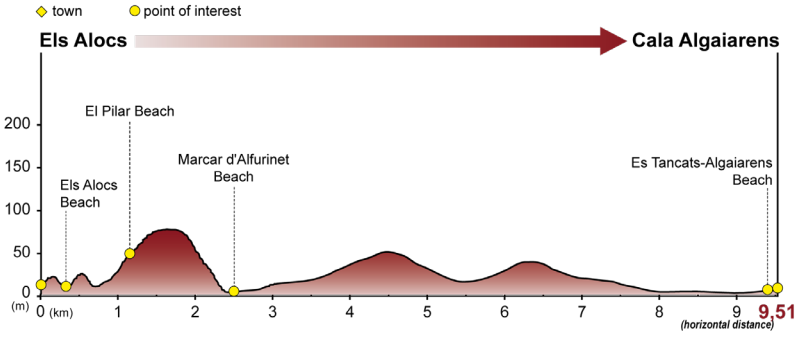


Western view of the Els Alocs beach

STAGE 7 ELS ALOCS→ ALGAIARENS

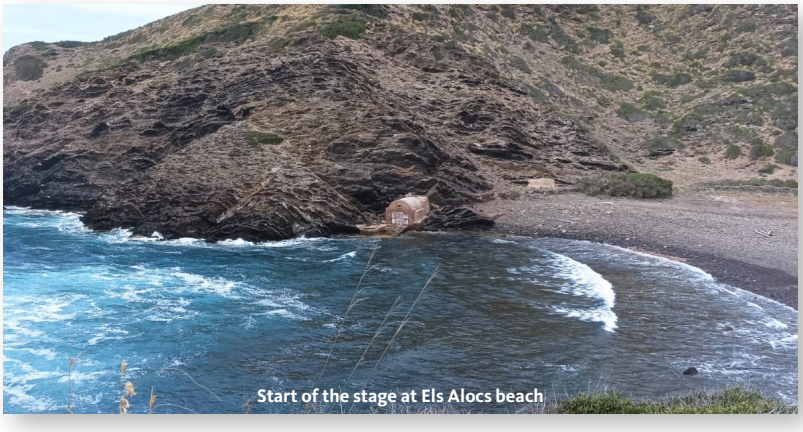
MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	313 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	307 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	9,56 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h



WALKING ALONG THE NORTHERN COAST OF MENORCA BETWEEN DUNES, BEACHES AND PINEWOODS

From the secluded cove of Ets Alocs to the area surrounding Cala d'Algaiarens, stage 7 of the Camí de Cavalls runs for 9 km along the north of the island, passing through some of the most significant enclaves of the Marine Reserve of the North Coast of Menorca, such as El Pilar Cove and its surroundings. Continuing westwards, the route crosses the wild olive, lentisk and pine forest of the Muntanya Mala hill until it enters the agroforestry mosaic of Vall d'Algaiarens. Its last stretch crosses some fields and goes along the edge of a patch of trees over the Platja des Tancat dune, and ends at the car park at Cala d'Algaiarens.



Start of the stage at Els Alocs beach



Access to Cala Pilar

The start of stage 7 can be somewhat complicated as it is located on the secluded beach of Els Alcos, situated to the north of the municipality of Ferreries between Escull des Barco and Punta des Alocs. This point can be reached by following the Camí de Cavalls route from stage 6.

Els Alocs is a small unspoilt cove that is included in the North Coast Marine Reserve. Its name is a reference to the chasteberry trees that grow in the area, locally known as alocs (*Vitex agnus-castus*). This is the starting point of stage 7, which heads west along a signposted path with fences and stairs that climb along the edge of the cliff. The first few metres of the route you will walk over basaltic outcrops, in a dark, stony landscape of small cliffs no higher than 40 m, at the point in which the Mediterranean Sea and the tramontane winds meet. In this stretch, you will sea coastal scrubland such as the labiérnago (*Phillyrea latifolia* var. *rodriguezii*), although tree patches can be seen inland.

After the first kilometre of this stage, there is a major change of scenery that will take to the El Pilar Cove, which is accessed by wooden stairs. The trails ascends to an altitude of 70 m, following the coastline across a landscape that gives Mars more than Menorca. This is due to the intense reddish hue of the sandstone and clay that compose the ground of this area of the island, which were washed away by the rivers that ran across the area 252 million years ago.

The system of sandstones and sands in the are present high salinity levels, on which plant communities that are highly adapted to the environment have grown. Thus, here it is possible to find some of the island's most remarkable endemic species, such as the herba de cotó (*Thymelaea velutina*) or the socarrells (*Launaea cervicornis*) intermingled with the pine tree patches and the centenary evergreen oak grove of Alfurí, separated by a rest area.

EL PILAR COVE

This beach is located on the north coast of Menorca, in the municipality of Ciutadella and is part of the Marine Reserve of the North Coast of Menorca. This is one of the best-preserved unspoilt coves on the island thanks the fact that it is difficult to be accessed, which also makes it an crowd-free place. It is a small shell-shaped bay, located between the cove of Els Alocs and Macar d'Alfurinet.

Its orientation north cause it to be stricken by heavy waves famous Tramontane winds blow, although a small islet acts as a partial parapet.

El Pilar Cove is part of the so-called *The Red Menorca*. This term refers to the clays and sandstones that deposited in the northwestern area of the island during the late Palaeozoic, 252 million years ago, by the large rivers that dominated the island during this period. This phenomenon resulted in a golden sandy beach surrounded by red mountains covered with vegetation.

Around the beach there is a dune system and a forest of white pine and evergreen oaks at the back, located on the Alfurí de Dalt farm, which is home to an important natural and ethnological heritage, as it is used in a sustainable manner for agriculture and livestock farming and charcoal production purposes. It is also the point with the highest concentration of endemic plants in Menorca, which allows it to be registered as a SCI (Site of Community Interest) and NAI (Natural Area of Interest).

Please remember that you must respect all signs and the areas provided for access to the beach, as well as to avoid leaving any waste or debris in the environment.

The stage continues to the west, following a path located on the hill that separates the El Pilar Cove and the beach in Macar d'Alfurinet, also known as Pla de Mar. After 3 km, the route reaches the striking beach of Macar d'Alfurinet with its reddish rocks, and which is also impressive for being a valley wedged between two mountains at an altitude of no more than 100 metres. To reach it, the route descends following the path, which is adapted with low steps to prevent slips and falls. It passes next to a farm and what appears to be a well but in reality hides the access to a copper mine.

Once you have passed the Macar d'Alfurinet, the Camí de Cavalls continues inland along the left side of the valley, going through a striking change of scenery. Behind you are the salty grounds, the wind and the sound of the waves, while ahead, the trail continues by an agricultural area and enters the forest of the Muntanya Mala.

This section runs for approximately 4.5 km through this wooded area and crosses the Muntanya Mala mountain range. Along the route there is a mixture of agricultural plots and specimens of wild olive tree (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*), Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*), evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*), lentisk (*Pistacia lentiscus*), labiérnago and different species of green heather (*Erica* sp.). In addition, if you pay a little attention you will be able to spot several species of birds, both sea birds and birds of prey, along with small birds such nightingales; reptiles, including the Italian wall lizard (*Podarcis sicula*) and small mammals such as the Balearic hedgehog (*Atelerix algirus vagans*), although livestock species are more visible, especially the Minorcan goat.

Once through the forest, the stage enters the Vall de Algaiarens, a mainly agricultural area across which 2 km of track run, passing through a crossroads that indicates that the trail turns northwards and enters a coastal pine forest once again. At this point you will find the turn-off to Platja des Tancant, located 200 m away. From this turn-off, stage 7 of the Camí de Cavalls runs along the last 600 m bordering the evergreen oak and pine forest that develops in the sandy area of Algaiarens to the car park of Cala d'Algaiarens.

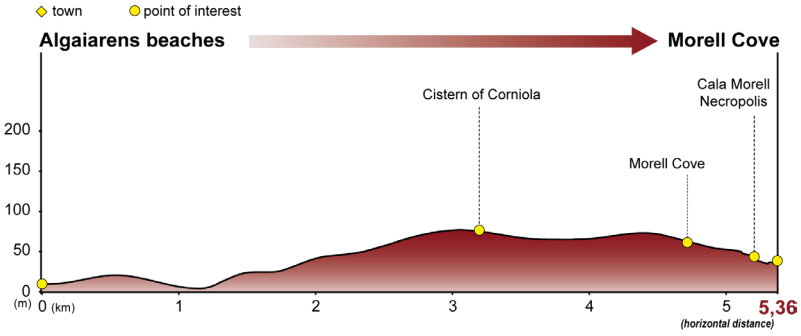


Pine forest on the Algaiarens sandy area

STAGE 8 ALGAIARENS → CALA MORELL

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	148 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	148 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	5,38 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	1 h 25 min



THE TRANSITION BETWEEN A LANDSCAPE SHAPED BY THE TRAMONTANE AND ANOTHER SHAPED BY DROUGHT

This short stage begins in a pine grove over sandy areas and then climbs up to the cliffs of Curniola. On the way you will pass from a landscape shaped by the tramontane to a landsape shaped by drought, with the consequent change in the vegetation. The entire stage runs through Natura Network areas, and the La Vall SCI and SPA.



Signposting near Biniatram



View of the pebble beach (locally known as codolar) of Biniatram and Punta Curniola in the background

The Algaiarens beach car park is the starting point for this new stage. This beach is one of the most visited in this area of the island, so be careful with car traffic. Leaving the car park behind, you will continue along the dirt track, walk on sand and enters a dense pine forest of Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) accompanied by typical Mediterranean vegetation such as green heather (*Erica* sp.) and evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*).

After about 800 m of walking under the pleasant shade of the pine forest, you will leave the sandy track to your left and enter the Fontanelles cove. Unlike other coves in the north of Menorca, which have a more natural appearance, this small cove bears the marks of a heavy human use, with a concrete pier occupying almost half of the cove, a building on the right bank and ruins of other constructions on the left bank.

The trail continues precisely between the remains of these constructions and the rocks of the cliff. It begins to climb up the west wall of the cove, among labiérnagos and scorpion broom, which are soon accompanied by lentisk trees, heather, small pines and bushes of the wild chamomile which is endemic to Menorca. The route then takes a wide left turn, leaving Punta Blanca to one side. Looking straight ahead, you may enjoy beautiful views of Punta de Curniola and the codolars (small pebble beaches) of Curniola and Binatram.

Before arriving there, you will walk along the Binatram codolar. Some black junipers are dotted among the vegetation and, straight ahead, there is a stone wall that marks the enclosure of farm and, further on, a track coming from the right you must ignore, as your trail continues northwards, until it reaches a gate that you must cross.

THE USE OF WATER IN THE MENORCAN COUNTRYSIDE: CISTERNS

Traditionally, water was supplied to agricultural and livestock farms mainly by three methods: wells, usually tapping aquifers; rainwater collectors, which collect rainwater from the roofs of buildings; and cisterns.

These structures consist of a large open-air platform with a slope that channels water into a well built or cut into the rock. The wells were covered with an ashlar hut called es coll, from where water was drawn by means of a pulley and a rope with a well. If the function of the cistern was as a watering place for livestock, as in the case of the Corniola cistern, water was poured into a channel that filled the different basins. Water from the cisterns could also be used for human consumption, an example of this being the Es Mercadal cistern, which is still in use today.

Nowadays, towns such as Maó have implemented plans to recover these traditional methods of water use.

The route continues between a stone wall on the left and shrubby vegetation made up of gorse, laburnum, heather and mastic trees on the right. As you go on, the pines grow denser until you end up walking through a real pine forest. In the middle of the forest, attached to the stone wall, the path comes across the Corniola cistern, a traditional construction for collecting rainwater.



The Corniola cistern, a traditional way of collecting of rain water

NECROPOLIS OF CALA MORELL

The necropolis of Cala Morell constitutes interesting evidence to the type of burial rites that were carried out in Menorca over last centuries of prehistory. The Menorca inhabitants of Menorca at that time buried their dead in large necropolises consisting on a hypogeum or an artificial cave dug into the rock of the cliffs of the ravines and the coast or in the rocky outcrops near the settlements.

The necropolis of Cala Morell dates from the late Talaiotic period (500 - 1st century BC), and is located in the rocks of the ravine that leads to the cove. It remained in operation until centuries after the Roman conquest of the island in 123 BC.

The necropolis is made up of fifteen hypogea, most of which have a circular or complex ground plan, and was designed as a collective tomb for the deceased members of a community, clan or family, with variations in the treatment given to the deceased depending on the customs of each of them.



Necropolis of Cala Morell

One of the most common rituals was to place the body on a wooden bed or in a coffin, accompanied by the grave goods. Sometimes, the deceased was placed on a funeral pyre with the grave goods, limestone was placed on top of it and it was set on fire. While the flames burned the soft parts, the stone turned into quicklime and, once cold and solidified, the remains were collected and deposited in a space in the cave. Some tombs had richer grave goods than others, although it is not possible to confirm with certainty whether there was social differentiation among the deceased.

Several elements stand out in the necropolis. On the one hand, a cave whose entrance door and façade are decorated with sculpted architectural elements. There is also a hypogeum that was reused as a cistern in modern times to water livestock through troughs dug into the rock and, finally, some small oval cavities in one of the crags, popularly known as "*capades de moro*", literally "*Moor headstrokes*", and whose function is unknown.

Special attention should also be paid to two small caves that preserve the remains of an access corridor. The stones in this corridor are the oldest on the necropolis: more than three thousand years old.



After going around the cistern, the pine forest begins to lose its density, giving way to the scrubland landscape already known in other sections, and the houses standing by Cala Morell begin to be seen on the horizon. The path, which continues alongside the stone wall, comes to another wall that encloses the residential complex, and continues northwards until it reaches the gate that allows access to the village.

The route runs along Via Làctia street, passing through the villas of the residential complex. Along this stretch you will pass by a detour that indicates how to reach a Naviform settlement located on the point of Cala Morell. It is important to remember that you are going through a town, so you must respect the rules of the road and take care at road junctions.

You will reach a roundabout just before leaving the village: take the exit on the right, which goes down Calle Lira and leads to the access to the necropolis of Cala Morell. We recommend you to visit this necropolis, which as used from the pre-Talaiotic period until the 2nd century, and before walking the rest of the stage, it is advisable to take a look to the north and enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of the ravine that begins next to the necropolis and ends at the cove from which the residential complex of Cala Morell.

The end of the stage is near. To reach it, you just have to walk about 150 m up the slope of Calle Lira until you reach a gate that allows you to leave the residential complex.

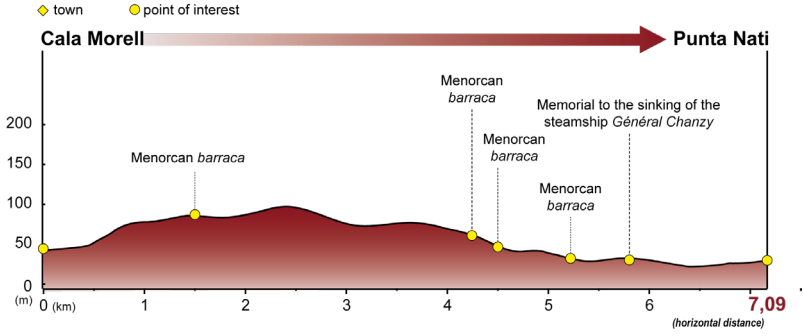


Views of the ravine that leads to Cala Morell beach

STAGE 9 CALA MORELL → PUNTA NATI

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	75 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	87 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	7,10 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 15 min



FROM THE NECROPOLIS OF CALA MORELL TO THE PUNTA NATI LIGHTHOUSE, IN A LANDSCAPE WITH SCATTERED *BARRAQUES*

A short stage of just over 7 km that starts at the prehistoric Cala Morell, with its Talaiotic necropolis as its most outstanding feature. The entire stage passes through agricultural and livestock farms or tanques, with their characteristic Menorcan gates and six livestock huts or barraques adorning the surroundings. Those elements brave the notorious tramontane wind, the strong north wind that blows across Menorca, which is responsible for the scarce vegetation in the area. Finally, you will reach the Punta Nati lighthouse, the scenario of many shipwrecks in the past, where this stage comes to a, certainly happier, end.


Panoramic view of Cala Morell and its coastline



Shapes in the rock moulded by the erosive action of the wind

The ninth stage of the fascinating Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins at the information board located in Lira street, next to the directional sign that indicates you to take the path that, after crossing a Menorcan gate, plunges into the Costa Nord de Ciutadella SCI and SPA.

You will be walking by the walls of the tanques, as the agricultural estates in Menorca are called, until you reach the edge of the cliff. The route continues along the cliff, which allows you to enjoy spectacular views of the coastal cliffs in the direction of the road and saying goodbye to Cala Morell, where a visit to its necropolis is a must.

After a left turn, continue walking parallel to the stone wall, away from the coastline. You will reach one of the famous barraques, a circular stone construction used until the 19th century as a shelter for animals and people in livestock farming.

Shortly after, you leave the entrance to the Ciutadella Aeromodelling Club to the right, where flying enthusiasts can enjoy their hobby in a privileged environment. There is a succession of Menorcan gates that lead to the different estates through which the trail passes, please ensure to leave them properly closed.

The predominant landscape is Mediterranean scrubland that clings to the scarce soil in the area, with the occasional areas with rocky outcrops. Among this Mediterranean scrubland, there is a good representation of Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*) with numerous small and medium-sized bushes that vegetate in perfect condition. These specimens have been able to adapt to the coastal conditions exposed to the frequent tramontane winds.

New barraques can be seen standing as evidence of the past relevance of livestock farming in this area, where today there are still a few heads of cattle being farmed in the traditional way.

The route approaches the coast again, as the presence of plants dwindle, and advances close to the coast for a considerable stretch. This allows you to enjoy the cliffs in all their splendour, with places such as Punta de Son Escudero, Punta des Llosar or Punta Cala es Morts standing out. Near the latter, you will find a cross in memory of the *Général Chanzy* steamship, a French liner that sailed the route between Marseilles and Algiers that sank here in the early hours of 10 February 1910 with 157 people on board, including crew and passengers, of whom only one survived: Marcel Baudez.

SES BARRAQUES

Barraques are traditional dry masonry huts with a circular floor plan and stepped walls, which were use and were used to protect livestock and even farmers from the weather. Due to the harsh and arid conditions in the north of Menorca, which is swept by a strong northern wind, these huts were frequently built at the second half of the 19th century, and most of them are still in a very good state of preservation today.



Detail of *Ses barraques*

After crossing a new Menorcan gate and several other livestock huts, you face the final stretch of this short stage of just over 7 km, which ends next to the Nature Trail information board. This is located on an asphalt track metres away from car park for motor vehicles that facilitates access to this end of the stage. However, if you continue along the aforementioned track towards the coast, you will be able to enjoy the views over the Punta Nati lighthouse.

PUNTA NATI LIGHTHOUSE

The many shipwrecks that occurred in this area, especially the shipwreck of the French steamship *Général Chanzy*, with 156 dead and only one survivor, prompted to build this lighthouse.

Works began in 1912 and opened in September of the following year. The tower is 11.5 metres high, with a single-storey rectangular building attached to each side. Its light can be seen at a distance of 26 miles, consisting of groups of 3 and 1 white flashes every 20 seconds.

The Nati lighthouse, as it is also known by the locals, also has bunkers from the Spanish Civil War and a escape through which enormous columns of water raise on stormy days. All in all, the fantastic location has made it a very famous spot to enjoy a spectacular sunset.

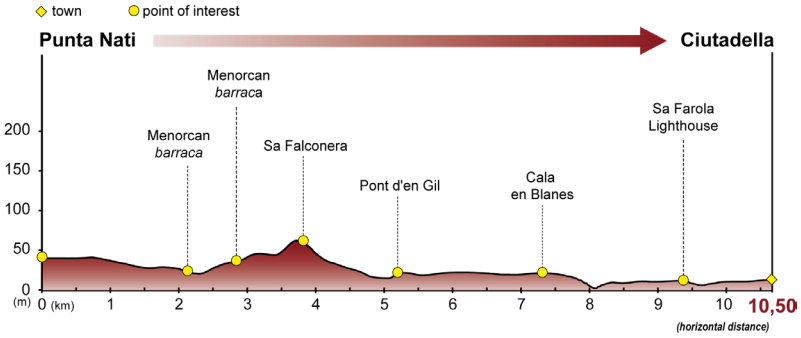


Punta Nati Lighthouse

STAGE 10 PUNTA NATI → CIUTADELLA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	80 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	106 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,66 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 35 min



STROLLING ALONG THE NORTHWEST CLIFFS, WATCHING SEAGULLS FLY BY

From the area around Punta Nati, the road heads towards the town of Ciudadella. The first route runs along the rocky ground of the north-western cliffs. This is a landscape known as Menorca Seca, the dry Menorca. These formations, such as the Costa Nord de Ciutadella SCI and SPA, are included in the Natura 2000 Network. Afterwards, the route continues through the streets of the residential complexes and ends at the old port of the city.



Typical landscape for much of the stage route



Sheep grazing by the road

This tenth stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins next to the access road to the Punta Nati lighthouse, about 900 m from the lighthouse to the north and 300 m from the car park to the south. Your starting point will be one of the famous Menorcan gates, after which the trail leads into the type of landscape that will dominate the first half of this stage.

The route winds along rocky ground, with the cliffs and the sea on the right, surrounded by grassy pastures where it is easy to spot sheep feeding. In addition to grass, the only plants are those specially adapted to brave the salty winds: sea fennel (*Crithmum maritimum*), Provence wormwood (*Artemisia gallica*), Perennial saltwort (*Sarcocornia fruticosa*) or sea-lavender species (*Limonium* spp.), as well as caper bushes (*Capparis spinosa*), which stand out because they are the tallest.

Despite the stony surface of the road and the fact that the path is a little rough at times, this first section is relatively easy, as there are hardly any slopes.

Another of the characteristic elements of this stage, which you will see for a long stretch, are the stone walls to the left of the path, on which the characteristic Menorcan huts or barraques stand out. On the other side is a wide plain covered with llocs, the popular name for agricultural estates in Menorca. Precisely, after the first 2 km, the path comes across one of these huts and, once it has been left behind, begins a descent towards a ravine next to which there is an old livestock enclosure, with a well and water troughs dug out of the rock. It will not be the only one you see: after going up the ravine and covering another half kilometre, you will reach another of these characteristic huts.

The path climbs slightly before reaching Sa Falconera, a spectacular viewpoint overlooking the Mediterranean from where there are magnificent views of the cliffs that have been traversed and the small headlands populated by seagulls. After leaving Sa Falconera, a somewhat steep descent begins, so extreme caution is recommended, which goes around some rocks on which there are the remains of some old military installations: some coastal batteries and the buildings of Es Semáfor, an optical telegraph.

PONT D'EN GIL

The action of sea erosion on the cliffs to the northwest of Ciutadella have carved this unique natural formation in the form of a rock bridge that has become quite a popular destination.

To enjoy the view, the best panoramic views are from the opposite side of the inlet, although it is also possible to walk over the cliff itself and even cross over the bridge.

The dimensions of the arch allow small and medium-sized vessels to pass under it, which has become a popular among the companies that make tourist sea trips in the area.

Pont d'en Gil also attracts numerous divers seeking access to the cave of Sa Cigonya. This cave extends some 300 m below the cliffs and can only be accessed from underwater. This activity should be done with appropriate equipment and an experienced guide.



The rock formation known as Pont de Gil



En Blanes Cove

Shortly after, you reach an asphalted road, which gives access to the Ciutadella Nord WWTP, along which you will continue for 300 m, leaving it on the right to continue again along the path. The trail goes towards the coast again, passing through the ravine that leads to Cigonya Cove and then arriving at one of the most famous sights in this part of the island, the formation known as Pont d'en Gil: a spectacular natural rock arch, carved over the centuries by sea action.

Continuing along the stage, after 300 m you reach Cales en Blanes/Los Delfines, a residential complex belonging to the municipal district of Ciutadella de Menorca. Although an information board indicates the way, keep an eye on the Nature Trail signposting and pay close attention when crossing the road. The route crosses Cala en Blanes along Avinguda des Pont d'En Gil and then along avinguda Calespiques until it reaches a roundabout where it takes avinguda dels Delfines.

This street changes its name when it passes under an arch that marks the end of this residential complex and the beginning of the next one, Torre del Ram, and is now called Avinguda Simón d'Olivar. Continue along this road until you reach the car-free access to the beach of Cala En Blanes.

If you want to know more about Menorcan history, take a momentary detour to visit the Torre del Ram hypogeum, an underground burial site used during the Naviforme period.

Go around this small cove, admiring its fine sand and clear waters, and, leaving it on its western shore, walk along the rocks and then up some steps that lead to the Camí de Sa Farola. It is a sort of promenade on the cliff with a pedestrian pavement and cycle lane, and at some points benches facing the sea have been installed and

TORRE DEL RAM HYPOGEUM

Hypogea (from the Greek *hypógaion*, underground chamber) are artificial underground galleries or rooms used as tombs. In Menorca they are located mainly in the west of the island.

The Torre del Ram, located in the Cala en Blames residential complex, to the east of Ciutadella, is a collective tomb from the Bronze Age (1600-1200 BC). It consists of a rectangular chamber about 9 m long, with a bench running around the perimeter, that is accessed through a stepped corridor.

This underground construction can be accessed though a chimney that leads to a flight of stairs.

Unfortunately, there is not much information about the people who were buried here or the grave goods, as this building was emptied and has even been reused as a livestock shelter by shepherds. However, on the interior walls of the hypogeum, schematic engravings representing various figures were discovered, some of which seem to represent boats. These engravings have not been dated with certainty.

This infrastructure is one of the 32 monuments of Talaiotic Menorca that have been inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage List.



Hypogeum of Torre del Ram

can be used as lookout points. After a little more than 1 km along this street, the path leads to the lighthouse of Ciudadella or Sa Farola, which gives its name to the promenade.

From this point it is already possible to see, on the other side of the inlet, part of the city of Ciutadella. IN the skyline, the Sant Nicolau fort stands out: this is a defensive fortress that guarded the entrance to the southern end of the city's port.

Leaving the lighthouse behind and passing by the chapel of the Assumption of Sa Farola, you will return to the Camí de Sa Farola path, which surrounds the picturesque Des Frares Coves and then foes through a pine patch. The street no longer has pavements so, although there is plenty of space on either side of the road for safe walking, attention should be paid to cars passing by. Now you are squarely on one of the sides of the port of Ciutadella.

The pine grove opens up at Cala en Busquets, a small cove with a very popular pier, where the pavement is once again restored. There are only 400 metres more to go to reach the end of the stage, in a large car park located above the port of Ciutadella. From the edge of the car park there are spectacular views of Ciutadella, the port and the old town, and the skyline formed by the walls, the town hall building and the cathedral stand out from the rest.

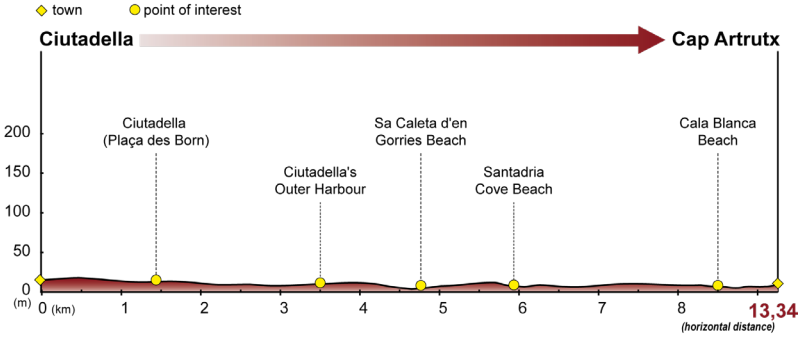


Views of the port of Ciutadella from the car park where this stage ends

STAGE 11 CIUTADELLA → CAP D'ARTRUTX

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	46 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	52 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	13,36 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 45 min



MENORCA'S WEST COAST, DOTTED WITH BEAUTIFUL BEACHES AND COVES WITH SPECTACULAR HIDDEN CORNERS

Just over 13 kilometres separate the beginning and end of this stage, between Ciutadella and Cap d'Artrutx. Along the way you will pass the beach of Sa Caleta d'en Gorries, the Santadria Cove and the Cala Blanca Cove, idyllic seaside spots that rival the natural wealth of the Son Olivaret Public Estate or the cultural heritage of the pre-Talaiotic naveta of Cala Blanca.



Signpost and Ciutadella in the background



Port Vell of Ciutadella

The start of stage 11 of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins, as usual, next to the Nature Trail information board located on this occasion in the Menorca Blava car park next to the spectacular Port de Ciutadella.

The route runs through the city of Ciutadella, the old capital of Menorca, advancing along Carrer de Santa Bàrbara, reaching Plaça la Font, continuing along Carrer de sa Muradeta, which plunges into the heart of Ciutadella. You will arrive at Plaça des Born, with its 22-metre-high obelisk towering over of the square and the town hall. The town hall itself is beautiful building with views over the port and which was formerly the royal fortress which, in turn, was built on the site of an ancient Muslim castle.

At this point of the journey, and before continuing your adventure along the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail, you should visit the Santa Maria Cathedral. It is a Gothic church built by Alfonso III of Aragon after the conquest of Menorca by Christian troops on the site the an old mosque. After living and suffering through the different events that took place in the city, from the Turkish attack in 1558 to the Spanish Civil War in 1939, today the cathedral looks spectacular and rejuvenated after painstaking restoration work.

If you are doing the Camí de Cavalls by bicycle, cycle along the Plaça dels Pins cycle lane, continuing along Carrer de Mallorca, which includes a cycle lane has also been created for cyclists and a pavement for hikers. When you reach a roundabout, continue along Carrer Ciutadella - Sa Caleta, using the same infrastructures mentioned above. Further on, at the next roundabout you must turn right onto Avinguda del Mar, which shortly afterwards will be called Via Mestre Vives, and which will take you out of the city to Ciutadella's Outer Harbour.

CIUTADELLA

It is the most populated city of Menorca and was once the capital of the island. Its name derives from the Latin civitas, which means "city", and more specifically from its diminutive *civitella*. The area has been inhabited for many centuries, and numerous prehistoric remains from the Talaiotic period are still preserved today. The most outstanding of these remains is the Naveta des Tudons, a collective tomb built in a single nave that resembles an upside-down boat.

Little remains of the Muslim period, which ended when the island was passed into the hands of the Crown of Aragon in 1287. The town suffered a great sacking in 1558 by the Turkish fleet, belonged to the British for almost a century, and then stabilised and its population has grown until the present day.

Due to the numerous changes that have taken place throughout its history, the Santa Maria Cathedral is the only medieval cathedral that is still standing today. The old quarter of Ciutadella you to stroll through its streets. Its centre is Plaça des Born, with its obelisk, as a compass needling, towering over the old town, the town hall and the old port (*Port Vell*).

Currently, the new port of Ciutadella, located on the southern outskirts of the town, concentrates the commercial and passenger sea traffic. The patron saint festivities in Ciutadella are held on midsummer in honour of Sant Joan (St. John), and different celebrations take place on the days before and after.



Es Castellar Tower or Santadria Tower



Santadria Cove

The ferries that connect Menorca with the mainland, among other destinations, sail from this port; in 2011 a dyke was built to minimise the abrupt oscillations in sea level known as rissagues.

Moving forward with the coast on the right and the houses of Sa Caleta on the left, follow the signs to leave this urban area and, after leaving behind the Torre des Castellar, also known as Torre Santadria, and an old bunker, the trail will lead you to the paradisiacal beach of Sa Caleta or Sa Caleta d'en Gorries.

After enjoying this small beach or even chilling in it for a little bit, climb up away from the beach continue along a new urban stretch following the Carrer del Signe Lléo. To the right, the path is guarded by the characteristic azure waters, thanks to the good health of the extensive underwater Neptune grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) meadows which surround the island.

Shortly afterwards, after a stroll through the houses, you will go down some stairs that lead to Carrer de sa Platja, which will take you to the beach of Cala Santadria. Once again, the rush is put aside to enjoy this marvellous place with all the services.

Then, you will have to climb again and, after two turns to the right, the route leaves the asphalt road and continues along a dirt track that gradually turns into a path. For a short while you walk through bushes and trees and then turn left and walk parallel to a dry stone wall that reveals a new hidden beach, Es Clot de Sa Cera, where a small staircase leads to the water and entice you to go for a swim.

We return to a new urban section, which forces us to walk through the town of Cala Blanca, mostly along the Avinguda de Cala Blanca. With the Mediterranean Sea always on your right, you finally reach the the famous Cala Blanca beach, where, in addition to enjoying its azure waters and white sands, you can visit the nearby archaeological site known as Naviforme de Cala Blanca. It consists of the remains of a dwelling with an elongated floor plan dating back to the Bronze Age which centuries later it was used as a warehouse, according to the different objects found here, which are currently on display in the Museum of Menorca.

Leaving the cove and the site behind, the trail continues along an urban section. This ends shortly afterwards, at the Mirador des Cap de Sa Pared, enjoying its panoramic views and continuing the journey along a dirt track that crosses two stone walls traditionally used to separate Menorcan estates.

From this point onwards, the urban landscape becomes a natural and wild landscapes in which bushes strive to grow, although the grow gradually smaller as they come close to the coast. A succession of Menorcan gates lead to a quiet and tranquil environment. After crossing one of those gates, an information board informs the walker that he is about to enter the Son Olivaret Public Estate. This area has an important environmental value, as well as a rich flora and wildlife.

A signpost indicates that the final destination of this eleventh stage is just 900 m from here. The remains of a Spanish Civil War bunker are located next to the signpost. A new Menorcan gate indicates that, once you pass it, you leave the Son Olivaret Public Estate at the same time as the Cap Negre Site of Community Importance (SCI). Immediately after this gate, the Nature Trail information board marks the end of this exciting stage.



Remains of a former bunker

NAVETA DES TUDONS

The Naveta des Tudons is one of the most representative symbols of the island of Menorca and undoubtedly one of the best known internationally. These stone constructions date from the Bronze Age (1600 - 850 BC) and was used as a collective burial site. It is one of the best examples of Menorcan Talaiotic culture.

The navetas identified today are concentrated on the east and west ends of the island of Menorca, on fertile land, and many of them are even near the source of one the small river basins that run through the island. The Naveta de Es Tudons is the most iconic construction of this type, in the shape of an inverted boat and with two floors. The bodies were placed inside, wrapped in shrouds of cloth or animal skin and thoroughly tied with braided ropes.

Of course, the Naveta has inspired many legends and tales. The most popular legend. passed down from generation to generation of Menorca, states that two giants fell in love with the same woman and decided to compete for her love, telling her to choose one of them. One of them would build the Naveta and the other built a well. When the second giant finished building the well, shouted from the bottom that he had found water. Hearing this, the first giant threw the last stone he was going to use to complete the Naveta down the well, blocking it and trapping his rival inside forever. This is why the Naveta de Es Tudons is missing a stone.

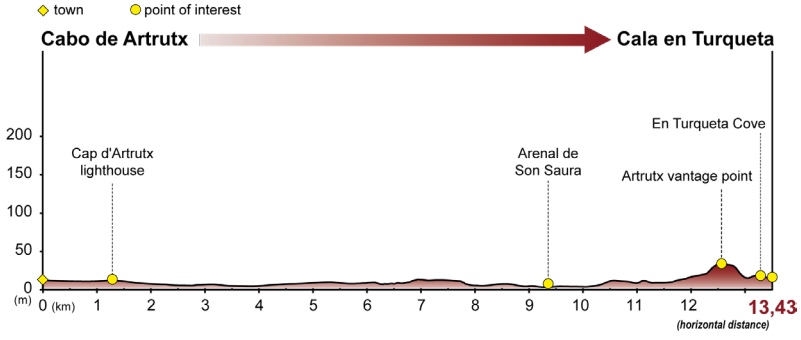


Naveta des Tudons

STAGE 12 CAP D'ARTRUTX → CALA EN TURQUETA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	200 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	213 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	13,44 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 47 min



GOING INTO THE BLUE CLIFFS OF THE SOUTH COAST OF MENORCA

During this stage, the Camí de Cavalls leaves the west coast and enters the south coast of Menorca from Cap d'Artruxt. The stage runs along the Mediterranean Sea on a mostly rocky and eroded path without much elevation gain. After running for 13 kilometres through the unspoilt surroundings of Menorca's southern coast, made up of cliffs, pine forests, coves and sandy beaches of magnificent colours, the stage reaches its end at the famous En Turqueta Cove.



Menorcan goats next to Artruxt lighthouse



Hikers and tourists on Son Xoriguer beach

You will start this stage at the westernmost point of Menorca, specifically on the coastline that leads to the Paseo Marítimo street of the Cap d'Artrutx residential complex, from where, on a clear day, the island of Mallorca can be seen. It runs along the last kilometre of the west coast of the island following the Paseo Marítimo street until it reaches the Artrutx lighthouse. At this point the Camí de Cavalls turns eastwards towards the southern coast of the island.

Following the Paseo Marítimo street, the stage runs through the Son Bosch housing estate where, a few metres after crossing the port bridge, it reaches the Cala en Bosch, the first beach in the southern sector. Once you have left this cove behind, the stage continues towards Platja de Son Xoriguer, beginning to show some of the characteristic features of the route, as it continues along a path next to the sea, on a low limestone cliff with hardly any slope, where you will find the first of the many bunkers that were built along the coast during the Spanish Civil War. After walking for 3.8 kilometres and crossing Platja de Son Xoriguer, the Camí de Cavalls leaves the urbanised area and enters the Red Natura 2000 space, where it is advisable to avoid to walk without leaving the signposted path.

The stage advances along an uneven and rocky path over the cliffs of marés (sandstone) or limestone rock, crossing small pebble or sandy coves, or passing over caves and cavities carved by the action of sea and wind. In this stretch, approximately 5.3 kilometres to Son Saura, the slight altitude of the cliffs and the clarity of the sea make it possible to make out the seabed. Weather permitting, we can see rustic limpets (*Patella rustica*), sea urchins (*Paracentrotus lividus*), snakelocks anemone (*Anemona viridis*) and various crabs. As well as small shoals of fish or underwater algae or plant formations such as Neptune´s grass (*Posidonia oceanica*). Neptune's grass is washed ashore and that is important to retain the sand.

ARTRUTX LIGHTHOUSE

The Artrutx lighthouse is located on the cape of the same name, at the westernmost tip of Menorca, opposite to the Capdepera lighthouse in Mallorca. Together, they mark the so-called Canal de Menorca, that is, the 36-km corridor that separates the two islands.

It is part of the island's catalogue of historical heritage, as it was built in the mid-19th century (1858), with a height of 17 metres. In the 1960s, the height of the tower was doubled and the striking buttresses were added, so that it now has a total height of 45 metres, and the tower itself is 34 metres high.

Initially the lighthouse keepers lived in the lighthouse's solitary installations, and the lighthouse operated by burning first olive oil, then petroleum, until in the 1980s it was automated and tourism development in the area began to increase. This is why the lighthouse keepers' quarters now house a restaurant.

On the other hand, on the surface, there is hardly any vegetation. The only vegetations are the small thorny shrubs known as socarrells, as well as other species such as sea fennel (*Crithmum maritimun*), and formations of Menorcan labiénago (*Phillyrea latifolia* var. *rodriguezii*), lentisk trees (*Pistacia lenticus*) and savin junipers (*Juniperus sabina*). However, once the stage approaches the Platjas de Son Saura del Sur beaches, a slight change of scenery can be seen.



Artruxt lighthouse



Arenal de Son Saura

Son Saura del Sur is a spot made up of two beaches, Banyul and Bellavista, separated by a slight elevation of limestone rock and immersed in an extensive pine forest dotted with evergreen oaks and junipers. Both beaches cover an extensive stretch of sand almost a kilometre long, along which the trail runs. In Bellavista, you will walk along a wooden walkway to protect the dune system and the plant communities, composed, among others, from sea holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) or the European beachgrass (*Ammophila areanaria*). Furthermore, Bellavista beach is located at the mouth of the Ses Abelles Canal, which means that next to it there is a small wetland which is usually home to water birds.

Past Son Saura del Sur, the stage continues for just over a kilometre along a rocky path between pines and scrubland. It does so by skirting the Punta del Governador cliffs, which rise some 20 metres above the sea, until it reaches Des Talaier Cove, a small sandy cove on a sea inlet with an adapted rest area with tables and chairs at the entrance. From here, the stage covers its last 2.2 kilometres until it reaches En Turqueta Cove. This last stretch of the stage is the steepest. Once it ends, you will return once again to an uneven and stony path ascending over a cliff in which low scrubland is interspersed with the odd pine or wild olive tree (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*), which become more lush as the end of the stage approaches.

It is interesting to note that the south coast of Menorca is made of carbonate materials from marine organic deposits that were formed more than 20 million years ago and which subsequently emerged to the surface, creating a progressive slope. This stage of the trail runs over the slope created by these deposits. This slope can be seen in an elevation along the course of the trail, since at the beginning the cliffs

are no more than 10 metres high. However, in this last stretch, barely one kilometre from En Turqueta Cove, in front of the Talaia d'Artrutx watchtower, cliffs are up to 40 metres high.

In the last few metres the stage goes down, among pine trees, towards the small gorge where the En Turqueta Cove is located, skirting it slightly access it through the car park, where there is a resting area an the information board that marks the end of the stage.

TALAIA D'ARTRUTX WATCHTOWER

Between the coves of Es Talaier and Turqueta, the Talaia d'Artrutx watchtower can be seen on top of a hill. This is a circular watchtower, built of stone and covered with lime and sand, that has been in existence since the 13th century, although it was not documented until 1550.

Its appearance has varied along with the historical changes happening in the island. The last modification was carried out by the Spanish army in the 17th century, in order to strengthen the surveillance system against pirates, first, and enemy troops, later. It currently belongs to the Sa Marjal Vella private estate.



Des Talaier Cove

EN TURQUETA COVE

En Turqueta Cove is located on the south coast of Menorca within the municipal district of Ciutadella de Menorca, and is one of the best known beaches in Menorca. It owes its fame to the beauty of the outstanding environment in which it is located, which is the result of an interesting succession of physical and geological events.

This is the opening that the mouth of a small stream or torrent of water has created through the erosion of the limestone rock, of which the cliffs surrounding the cove are made, and into which the sea has carved a 400 m inlet.

These limestone rocks, which surround the cove, have undergone a process of karstic erosion by the action of the sea, wind and rain throughout the island's geological history, and this erosion has created galleries and caves. Erosion is how the fine white sand of the cove was created, on which the dune system and its vegetation developed.

The shallow depth, the clear water, the high levels of oxygen provided by the Neptune's grass meadows and the fine white sand sparkling under the sun causes the stunning azure water that this cove is famous for.

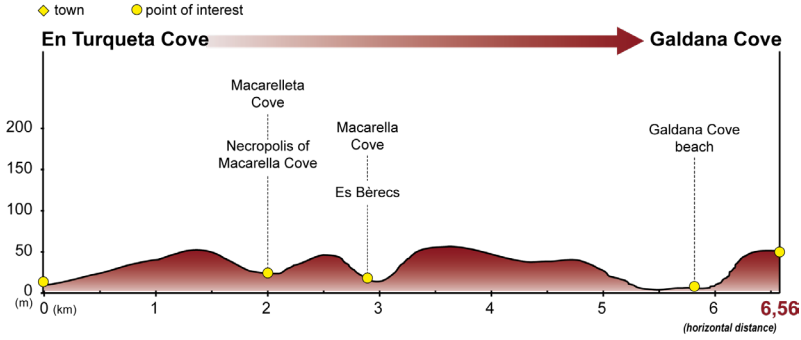


En Turqueta Cove

STAGE 13 CALA EN TURQUETA → CALA GALDANA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	194 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	237 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	6,56 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 4 min



FROM COVE TO COVE AMONG PINE FORESTS AND RAVINES

During this stage, the Camí de Cavalls continues along the southern coast of Menorca, passing through the web of ravines where some of the island's most famous coves are located. During the uphill and downhill 6.5 km that separate En Turqueta Cove from Galdana Cove, the trail passes through the contrasting dry, high areas and the humid environments deep in the ravines.



Views of Galdana Cove



En Turqueta Cove

The southern coast of Menorca is made up of carbonate materials whose origin dates back to 20 million years ago, when the organic marine deposits were formed and later emerged to the surface. This stage, therefore, runs over the enormous limestone platform that makes up the southern sector of the island and across the ravines that cut vertically through it, increasing in depth and width from north to south.

Near the access to the car park and in front of a rest area, there is an information board where a stony path, interspersed with sand and roots, starts. This path goes around En Turqueta Cove and ascends, between evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*) and Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*), in order to climb out of the ravine in which the cove is wedged.

A few metres from the start, the path turns gently to the left to continue ascending towards the east. For a little over a kilometre the path leads away from the coastline, ascending to 55 m along a stony and rooted section with some sandy spots.

The first change in the in vegetation can be seen here, as it becomes more scattered, as it is characteristic of dry environments. Along the route, the low, thorny bushes known as socarrells can be seen. In addition, the surrounding area is dotted with rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), rockrose (*Cistus* sp.), wild thyme (*Thymus mastichina*) and green heather (*Erica* sp.), among which, if you pay attention, you can see rodents, reptiles and sea birds or birds of prey, such as the sea hawk (*Pandion haliaetus*). The keen eye will also be able to distinguish tree formations made up of Menorcan labiénago (*Phillyrea latifolia* var. *rodriguezii*), evergreen oaks and pines.

After the first kilometre and a half, the route changes turns south, beginning the descent of the ravine towards the south-west, where the path to the Macarelleta Cove branches off. In the deepest part of the ravine, sandwiched between the imposing limestone walls, the path is mainly sandy, except for a few scattered rock outcrops. In this sector, a cooler and shadier environment can be appreciated, where the vegetation thickens, and specimens typical of less dry areas such as fig trees (*Ficus carica*) appear.

At this point, at the bottom of the ravine, the route changes direction again, this time to the north-west, before going up again towards the ravine that leads to Macarelleta Cove. A few metres away the Camí de Cavalls passes a small canyon, framed between the imposing limestone rock walls and lush vegetation. Once past the gorge, the uneven path continues ascending along some stairs carved into the rock until it joins a forest track, which is somewhat flatter and more homogeneous, and runs along it for a few metres before beginning the descent towards Macarella Cove.

The descent to Macarella Cove is made along the western side of the limestone ravine in which it is embedded, and involves climbing down 48 metres above sea level to reach 2 metres from the coastline. It is a steep path, with a gradient over 20% at some points, dotted by rocky outcrops and roots, not longer than 400 m.

Once you have crossed the Macarella Cove, you will start to climb up the eastern side of the Santa Ana ravine, where the beach is embedded, very similar to the descent along the western wall. Again, this is a short section, barely 600 metres long, which rises to approximately 58 metres above sea level. It is a challenging climb, since the path is steep and dotted with roots, and the gradient can reach and exceed 20% in some areas.



Signposting to Cala Macarelleta

MACARELLA COVE AND MACARELLETA COVE

Macarella Cove and Macarelleta Cove are located in the southern part of Menorca, in the municipality of Ciutadella de Menorca. These are two of the most popular beaches in this part of the island, given the specificity of the environment that surrounds them.

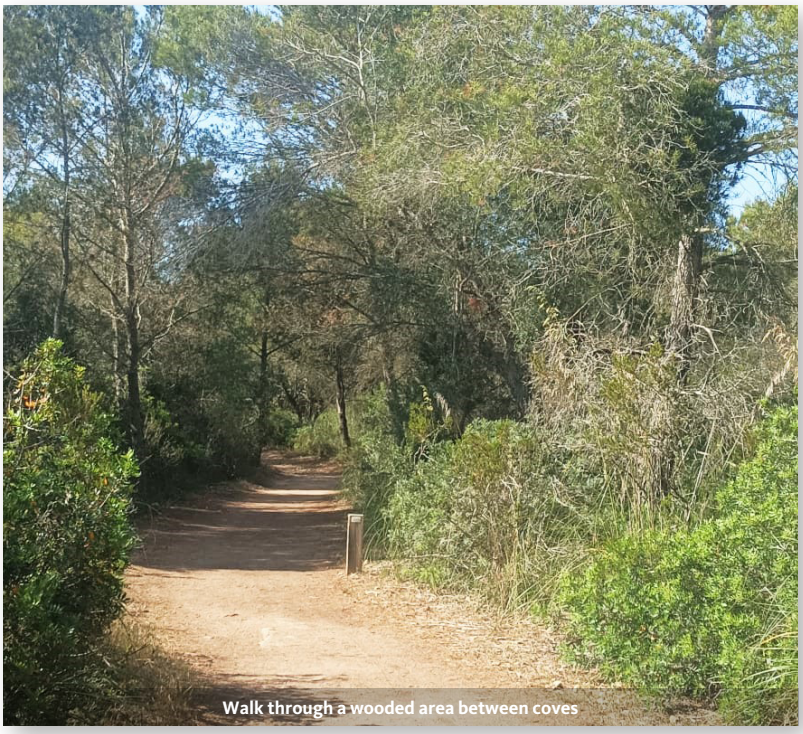
Both beaches are unspoilt, and both are notable for their azure waters and shallow depths. The sea makes an inlet through the opening that the erosion of the sea and the freshwater torrent of the Santa Ana ravine have carved over millions of years. The two beaches are nestled between whitish limestone rock walls, covered with pine trees and with ancient caves.

Although they are somewhat similar, Macarella Cove is larger and has a small sandy area associated with the humid area of the mouth of the ravine and the remains of Neptune's grass, which helps to fix the sand.

The Macarella and Macarelleta Coves are considered to be mother and daughter or big sister and little sister. Macarelleta Cove is located one kilometre to the west and can be reached by following the Camí de Cavalls or along a path that goes around the cliff that separates them. It is small in size and was created also by the action of the water coming down from the Santa Ana ravine.



Macarella Cove



Walk through a wooded area between coves

It is worth remembering that Cala Macarella is one of the most visited beaches by tourists arriving in Menorca and that many of them arrive on foot from the nearby Galdana Cove. For this reason, and to make access to it easier, the Ciutadella Town Council has installed wooden stairs next to the Camí de Cavalls path that will undoubtedly will make this route somewhat easier op top of stunning.

Once you have finished the climb up, the stage covers just over two kilometres over the limestone platform along a path that descends gradually to Galdana Cove. Although the next stretch is not different from the previous ones, it is quite busy, as it crosses a wooded area of pines, evergreen oaks and wild olive trees, with roots and rocks cutting above the surface of the already quite uneven path, which and makes it difficult for less experienced hikers. In any case, your efforts are rewarded with a panoramic view over Galdana Cove as the stage nears its end. Accessing to this small sandy beach is easy; stairs and ramps have been built, and there are several signs and a information board with information about the facilities and the last metres of the stage through the residential complex.

Once in Galdana Cove, the stage runs parallel to the Pasaje del Río until it crosses the first bridge towards the promenade. It continues for a few metres before turning left to climb up one of the ravines to the top of the residential complex. The last stretch of the ascent takes you up some stairs sheltered by pine trees that lead to Avenida de Sa Punta, along which the stage continues for about 300 m before turning left again onto the Camí de Cavalls carrier, where the end of the stage is located.

GALDANA COVE

Galdana Cove was for years one of the most popular unspoilt coves on the island. It is a long beach, which undoubtedly favoured the urban development of the area that has given rise to the current residential complex that has taken place at this point. The village is mostly dedicated to tourism has a wide range of services.

It is located between the limestone cliffs at the mouth of the Algendar ravine, one of the most important on the island as it has a permanent water regime and is channelled for use as a port for small boats. The beach is very similar to the rest of the coves located in the south of the island: the sea water penetrates into the mouth surrounded by pine trees, it has a shallow depth and there are hardly any waves at times of storm. This is a very popular holiday destination for families with young children.

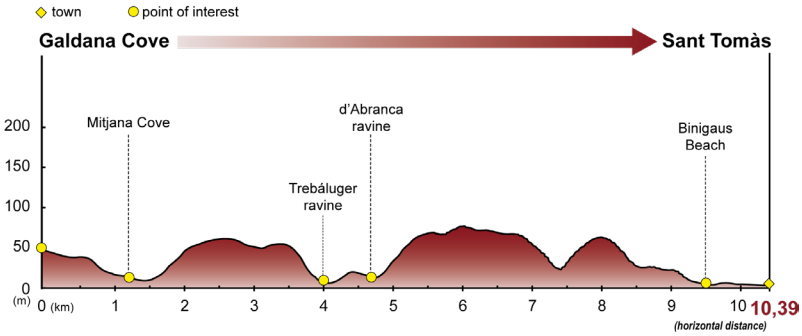


Viewpoint over Galdana Cove

STAGE 14 CALA GALDANA → SANT TOMÁS

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	188 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	232 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	10,41 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 50 min



DENSE WOODS AND SOME OF MENORCA'S MOST IMPORTANT RAVINES

Most of the route of this stage takes place under the shade of a dense wood of Aleppo pines and other Mediterranean species, passing through some of the most important ravines on the island, such as Trebalúger, Sa Cova, Sa Torre and Binigaus. The latter is especially famous for its caves, especially the impressive Cova des Coloms.



The terrain opens up as you reach the Trebalúger ravine



Hikers riding along the Camí de Cavalls on horseback

Morro de Levant is one of the capes flanking Galdana Cove. Stage 14 starts precisely here, on the outskirts of the cove. After crossing a gate, the route immediately enters a forest that will be the landscape that escorts the walker for almost the entire route. Mainly made up of Aleppo pines and evergreen oaks, they are accompanied by other typically Mediterranean shrubs such as labiérnago (*Phillyrea latifolia*), Mediterranean buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*) or strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*), and trees such as lentisk (*Pistacia lentiscus*), butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*), common myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) or Labiatae plants such as rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and creepers such as European ivy (*Hedera hélix*), Mediterranean smilax (*Smilax aspera*) or evergreen honeysuckle (*Lonicera implexa*).

From Galdana Cove, the entire route runs within the boundaries of the Binigaus to Mitjana Cove SCI/ZEPA.

The path stretches over a plain for 500 m, passing by old infrastructures of traditional activities in the area, such as lime kilns, quarries and shepherds' shelters. The route then descends quite steeply, so please be careful, as the soil may not be too firm due to the presence of sand, pebbles and roots. This complicated path will take visitors to one of the most popular destinations in this part of the island: Mitjana Cove. You will get a first peep of this spectacular bay with its azure waters through the trees, and then be able to see it in all its glory when the forest on the way to Mitjaneta Cove, a small "little sister" cove that forms part of the same inlet.

For the next half kilometre you walk with the forest on the left and the views of Mitjana Cove on the right. The access to the beach, located in a rest area with picnic areas and information boards, it is first necessary to make a short detour to go around the Mitjana Cove ravine.

MITJANA COVE

This cove is located in the southern coast of the island, near the holiday home development of Galdana Cove (municipality of Ferreries), is one of the most famous beaches to the south of the island. It is located at the mouth of the ravine of the same name.

This inlet consists on a 192 m wide beach with a white sandy beach and calm waters, flanked by high cliffs covered with mixed Mediterranean forest. Just to the west there is another cove, called Mitjaneta, very similar to Mitjana Cove but smaller.

Apart from its obvious value as tourist attraction, the woods around Mitjana Cove have great ethnological value, with remains of traditional activities such as lime kilns, shepherds' shelters, *barraques* and quarries.

It is part of a *Àrea Natural d'Especial Interès* (Natural Area of Special Interest, a type of protected natural areas under the regional laws of the Balearic Islands) that stretches as far as Binigaus beach.

Without reaching the cove, the path enters the forest again and begins a challenging ascent to go up the valley of the aforementioned ravine. This section, where the remains of a new lime kiln can be found, passes through a more agricultural environment, in which the trail runs along the dry stone walls that enclose the pastures.



Views of Mitjana Cove from the pine forest



The Sa Cova ravine is bridged by a wooden footbridge

Then, the trail goes down towards the Trebalúger creek ravine, with wooden fences as guardrails. The valley associated to this ravine is a fertile plain with fodder and cereal crops, crossed by a shallow watercourse that you will have to ford. On the other side of this creek, the trail enters once again a forest area and goes slightly down towards the Sa Cova creek ravine, a creek that discharges into the Trebalúger creek. As in the case of Trebalúger, the meadow of this stream is also profusely cultivated, although in this case a wooden footbridge has been installed to cross over the watercourse.

The climb up the Sa Cova ravine is much more challenging, both because of the slope and because it is more than a kilometre of constant ascent. Along the way, which crosses a mixed forest, you will cross some access tracks to private estates, so be very careful to follow the signs and close all the gates along the way.

The next ravine that the route passes through is called Sa Torre and has nothing to do with the previous ones, neither in depth nor in appearance, as it only differs from the wooded surroundings by the fact that the vegetation is denser here and by some dams that protect the traveller from the fall. Once this ravine has been crossed, the remaining part of the stage is almost always downhill, towards the Binigaus ravine, which is reached just before reaching the area where it opens out to the sea.

Although it is outside the scope of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail, a signposted route that starts at the Binigaus cove allows you to go upstream along the ravine to discover a series of natural caves of karstic origin used by the island's ancient inhabitants.

One of them, the Cova del Coloms, stands out for its large dimensions. In fact, it is popularly known as The Cathedral due to its impressive dimensions: 24 metres, high, 110 metres long and 15 metres wide. This cave, declared an Asset of Cultural Interest in 1966, was a post-Talaiotic burial site (550-123 BC) although, according to some of the archaeological finds, it may also be used to perform some kind of ritual or pilgrimage. In addition to these caves, other places of archaeological interest can be found on the slopes above the Binigaus ravine, such as the Talaiotic settlement of San Agustí or the Binigaus talaiot.

Continuing along stage 14 of the Nature Trail, you will reach the Binigaus beach, although you will leave it immediately along a sandy path that later becomes more compact earth. This path continues parallel to the coast and becomes into a wooden promenade as it passes from Binigaus beach to Binicodrell beach.

The route reaches the concrete promenade of the Playa de Sant Tomás housing estate, along which it runs for just a few dozen metres before the stage ends next to a lifeguard tower.



The beach of Binicodrell is walked on a wooden platform

ES MIGJORN GRAN

This municipality, also called San Cristóbal in Spanish, is located in the centre-south of the island. It is the youngest municipality in Menorca, as it became independent from Es Mercadal in 1989.

Its name has an interesting story behind, as the term *Migjorn*, "half a day", refers to the time it took to cross half the island to reach one of its ends. Thus, Es Migjorn Gran, "the big half-day" would refer to the main break that travellers took before continuing their journey to the other half of the island, either from Maó to Ciutadella or the other way round.

The nucleus of population that was to become the town was created during the British rule of the island, around the San Cristóbal Chapel, near the Binicodrell area, built in 1769 by Cristóbal Barber.

With the coming into force of the Spanish Constitution of 1812, San Cristóbal tried to obtain its own town hall, which it achieved temporarily between 1821 and 1823, but if went back to be part of Es Mercadal until 1989. The locality kept its Spanish name until a year before becoming independent.

Apart from the main centre, the town Es Migjorn Gran also has another population centre on the south coast, Santo Tomás, a tourist area that began to form in the 60s of the last century.

Throughout this area it is possible to find numerous examples of Menorcan prehistory, such as the settlement of Sant Agustí Vell, probably the largest on the island; the hypostyle room of the Galliner de Madona; the talaiots of Binicodrell, very close to the main town, next to the graveyard; the site of Santa Mónica and caves such as Coloms and Polida.

The most popular festival in the municipality is held in honour of St Christopher, which takes place at the end of July or beginning of August, and horses, fundamental to Menorcan tradition, take the centre stage.

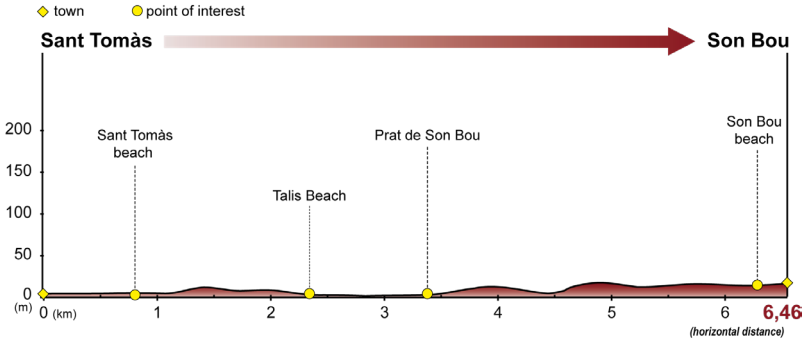
Other important festivals include those in honour of St Anthony, patron saint of Menorca, which take place every 17th January to celebrate the conquest of the island in 1287; the Carnival, with the traditional Black and White dance; and Michaelmas Day, with end-of summer celebrations and in which the Menorcan horse also takes centre stage every five years.

On a curious note, the municipality includes three islets, including Binicodrell, where the Lilford's wall lizard (*Podarcis lilfordi*), endemic to the Gymnesian Islands (Mallorca, Menorca, Cabrera and surrounding islets), is present.

STAGE 15 SANT TOMÁS → SON BOU

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	63 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	63 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	6,47 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	1 h 45 min



DUNE VEGETATION IN THE CENTRE OF THE SOUTH COAST OF MENORCA

This is a short stage through the central area of the south coast of Menorca, which allows you to stroll and enjoy two urbanised beach areas: Sant Tomàs and Son Bou. It also it hides places rich in biodiversity, such as Prat de Son Bou, included in the Son Bou i barranc de sa Vall SIC , and beaches with a very high natural value, such as Talis beach, with a very rich dune vegetation.


Sant Tomàs beach



Talis Beach

Just 6.5 km separate the start and finish of this stage, which begins at the western end of the promenade of the Santo Tomás beach, next to the Nature Trail information board. The beach is on the right and the residential area of Sant Tomàs on the left. This pleasant walk along the central part of the south coast of Menorca allows you to leisurely enjoy the coastal landscape in all its glory, to enjoy its beaches as they deserve, and to admire good examples of dunar vegetation.

After a zigzagging route to the right and left that is perfectly signposted, the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail leaves the residential area of Sant Tomàs for good, and at the same time gets even closer to the beach, advancing through a more rugged area where you will have to overcome different steps carved into the rock.

On crossing a Menorcan gate, the traveller leaves behind a small patch of Aleppo pines (Pinus halepensis), whose specimens are perfectly adapted to coastal conditions, which give way to traditional dryland crops with scattered clumps of natural vegetation. Shortly afterwards, the hiker reaches the western end of Talis beach. This is an obligatory stop: together with the neighbouring beaches of Son Bou, this environment is totally devoid of human constructions and included in the Site of Community Importance (SCI) Son Bou i barranc de sa Vall. This area is home to an enormous diversity of coastal habitats, and is a breeding ground for many species.

Back on the route of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail, the itinerary momentarily moves away from the coast, advancing alongside the wetland known as Prat de Son Bou, which collects the waters of the Torrent de Son Boter at the end of its route through the sa Vall ravine.

Once you have crossed another Menorcan gate, you have to go through the marshes using a passage formed by a series of rectangular-shaped carved stones arranged in a row that allow you to cross the marshes easily while enjoying the views.



After crossing the wetland, turn right following the corresponding Nature Trail signs. The road becomes wider and its surface quality improves: this indicates that you are near your final destination in this stage, Son Bou.

Without further ado, you reach the town of Son Bou, where a lectern-type information board of Nature Trails indicates the tracing of the urban section of the trail to the end of this fifteenth stage. Whether you are a hiker or a cycler, please be sure to respect the traffic signs applying to you. Follow the town streets until you reach the car park at the eastern end of the Passeig Maritim, and shortly after passing it and being on the road leading out of Son Bou, you will see the information board that marks the end of the fifteenth stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail.



Pigs on the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail

EARLY CHRISTIAN BASILICA OF SON BOU

The remains of this early Christian basilica, built during the 5th century, are located at the eastern end of Son Bou beach.

It faces south-east and consists of a rectangular plan with three naves separated by pillars, a tripartite chevet and a small vestibule, the narthex, a place from which the unbaptised could participate in the liturgies. The baptismal font, carved in the form of a cylindrical monolith on the outside and in the shape of a cross on the inside - an unusual design in Menorcan basilicas - must originally have been at the foot, but it is currently preserved in the left compartment of the chevet, on the north side.

The basilica's pavement is made in mortar. The enclosure, delimited by a trapezoidal wall, is completed by some very simple tombs and other constructions related to religious use.

There is evidence of the presence of development of Christian communities on the island since 5th century, thanks to the letter of Bishop Severus and the correspondence of Conscenci. The intense religious activity in Menorca, at least since the 6th century, is evidenced by the discovery of a total of six early Christian basilicas: Son Bou; Fornás de Torelló, Illa del Rei and Illa d'en Colom in Maó; Sanitja, in Es Mercadal; and Cap des Port, in Fornells.

In the 18th century, a fire destroyed the complex, but the site can still be visited today.

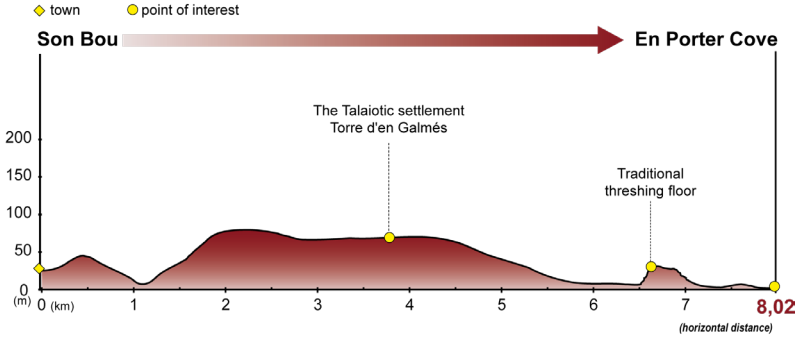


Early Christian Basilica of Son Bou

STAGE 16 SON BOU → CALA EN PORTER

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	130 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	154 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	8,03 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 5 min



CENTURIES-OLD ORCHARDS PLANTED ON RAVINES

This stage has two distinct sections. At the beginning it runs through a rustic landscape between woods, rocky outcrops and cliffs flanking wild coves. Later, through an environment that bears many marks of human occupation for centuries, including farms and rural tourism establishments, orchards planted the bottom of the ravines and ending in the tourist resort of En Porter Cove. During the route you can access one of the most important Talaiotic settlements on the island via a detour: Torre d'en Galmés.



The road leaves Son Bou, turning off onto a path



Descent towards Llucalari cove

This stage starts in a car park on the outskirts of Son Bou, and you will walk a few metres along the road that links this town with Alaior and then cross it when it comes near a park. Although you then walk along one of the streets of the residential complex, you soon leave it to take a path that enters a mixed forest of Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*), lentisk trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*), wild olive trees (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*) and evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*).

At this point, the trail begins to go up, sometimes along a path of compacted earth and in others directly on rock, which aims to go around the northern side of the Penyes d'Alaior, one of the highest cliffs on the southern coast of Menorca. During the ascent, when the vegetation allows it, there are good views of Son Bou beach, and you can even see the site of the early Christian basilica. You will have to go up for only 300 m before reaching the Llucalari ravine. From here, you will go down the western slope of the valley, between high rock walls, until you reach the Llucalari cove, dry an almost wild pebble beach, flanked by high cliffs.

To leave this spot you have to go up the eastern slope of another of the ravines that lead to the cove. The surroundings are again similar to those at the start of Son Bou, a mixed forest on a somewhat uneven path. After almost a kilometre of somewhat challenging ascent, a major change of scenery becomes apparent, with the forest opening up more and more until it is just scattered trees in extensive pastures divided by stone walls. Leaving the ravine also means leaving the Son Bou i barranc de sa Vall SIC/SPA behind.

For the next kilometre, the path along follows one of those characteristic stone walls and crosses some Menorcan gates which, as recommended throughout this guide, should be left properly closed. The area is almost flat and crosses strips of pasture and crops dotted with pine and wild olive trees. The route then turns right to go along an asphalted road that leads to Alaior.

You will have to walk about 700 m along this road, heading east, so although you should not expect a lot of traffic, you should be very careful, especially as just at the point where the trail joins the asphalt road there is a bend with poor visibility. After a while, you will leave the road for a narrower path on the right that leads to a footbridge over the Torre Vella ravine and then to a wide track between stone walls.

If you rake this track to the north-east, it will lead you to one of the most important Talaiotic sites in Menorca, Torre d'en Gamés, whose entrance is reached after a kilometre of comfortable walking. This Talaiotic settlement is astonishing for its size and location, dominating the whole area. It has an interpretation centre and is converted into a museum, with marked routes and information boards on the use and occupation of the different structures that make up the complex.

But before reaching Torre d'en Gamés, after walking about 250 m from the crossroads with the Nature Trail, you can continue discovering Menorca's prehistory in two other sites that are located next to each other. On the one hand, there is the megalithic tomb of Ses Roques Lises, a communal burial chamber in the shape of a box built with large stone slabs and covered with earth and stones, giving it a tomb-like appearance. Just 50 m southwest of the tomb is the megalithic monument of Na Comerma de sa Garita, a large enclosure with several rooms that is unique in Menorcan archaeology, but whose exact function or dating is unknown because it has not been excavated.



Turnoff towards the Torre d'en Galmés archaeological site next to a Menorcan barrier



The valley of the Cala en Porter ravine is extensively cultivated

Returning to the Camí de Cavalls, you continue along the track that leads to Torre d'en Galmés walking towards the southwest, along the stone walls. Here we can see, attached to the wall on the left, one of the traditional cisterns traditionally used for rainwater collection. A little further on, the trail leaves this track and crosses Menorcan gate on the left hand side, opening up a view of an esplanade with cereal crops.

This panoramic view can be enjoyed only for a short time, as the path goes back between stone walls, accompanied by increasingly dense trees as it enters a western branch of the En Porter Cove ravine. Pine trees become more scarce in favour of dicot trees, especially wild olive trees, of which large specimens can be found. As you go into the ravine, you will also enter a new area included in the Natura 2000 Network, the Des Canutells a Llucalari SIC/SPA.

When you reach the intersection with the main valley of the En Porter Cove ravine, the landscape changes substantially, as the bottom of the ravine is covered with crops, mainly vegetable gardens and fruit orchards, with the orange hues of ripe loquat fruits (*Eriobotrya japonica*) standing out among the green leaves. The appearance of water from the ravine is also manifest in the presence of species such as reeds (*Phragmites australis*), southern cattails (*Typha domingensis*) and rushes (*Juncus* sp.).

The route, which now uses a stretch of asphalted track, goes around some houses and crosses the ravine to continue along its left side, heading downstream. Just before crossing the ravine, two large trees will welcome on your left side. These are two specimens of pecan tree (*Carya illinoinensis*), a species native to Mexico that must have been planted by a retuning immigrant. Together with two other trees next to the watercourse, they are the only specimens of pecan trees on the island; they are locally known as the pacaners de s'Hort Squella and have been awarded the status of singular trees.

TRADITIONAL USES OF THE LANDSCAPE: THE RAVINE OF EN PORTER COVE

At twelve kilometres long, the En Porter Cove ravine is the longest of the ravines in the south of the island and the second longest in the whole of Menorca after the Algendar ravine.

The presence of a constant watercourse and the protection offered by the high walls of the ravine, promoted the use of the ravine by humans since ancient times, as attested by the orchards and fruit crops located in the bed of the ravine and on the terraces. This activity still determines the landscape of the En Porter Cove ravine today.

A new gate, this time a double gate, marks the end of the asphalt road and the start of a dirt road. After half a kilometre, the trail begins to go up between crops to the right and the ravine cliff on the left. The slope is quite steep, so wooden stairs have been installed to make it easier for hikers to climb. This challenging climb of about 150 m is rewarded by the magnificent views of the surroundings, both of the bottom of the ravine and its mosaic of crops, and of the walls that flank it, with many caves and hollows that are used as a refuge for Egyptian vultures (*Neophron percnopterus*).

Here you can also learn more about Menorca's agricultural traditions, including an ancient threshing floor. These circular, cobbled infrastructures were used for threshing the crops to separate the wheat from the chaff, and were placed high up to make use of the wind in the work being carried out.



Ancient era

TALAIOTIC SETTLEMENT TORRE D'EN GALMÉS

This is the best-preserved Talaiotic settlement in Menorca and one of the largest in the Balearic Islands. This settlement belongs to the late Talaiotic period, between the 5th and the 1st centuries BC. It includes a wall that, according to the studies carried out, surrounded and protected the settlement.

The iconic construction of these settlements and the one that gives its name to this culture are the *talaiots*, constructions in the shape of a primitive tower, normally with a circular ground-plan, used as watchtower for defensive powers, although it is not certain that this was its only function. Torre d'en Galmés has three *talaiots*.



Talaiotic settlement of Torre d'en Galmés

From this location, the central area of the south coast of the island can be seen, so the location of the settlement was not accidental. Agriculture and livestock farming activities where carried out in the immediate surroundings of the settlement, and we know that its inhabitants also had some astronomical knowledge, as shown by the fact that all doors and dwelling are south-facing to avoid the north wind, and that they held ceremonies and celebrations worshipping different gods.

The most outstanding feature of the settlement is the taula enclosure, where the characteristic T-shaped construction formed by two large stone slabs (which due to their enormous weight, were very difficult to handle using the techniques available at the time) stand.



A few metres further on, the path goes down again towards the ravine, where the bare rock and its shelters and hollows sometimes appearing on the left hand side. This winding section of the trail requires to place guardrails to the right to protect against potential falling. After a few twists and turns down, you reach a track next to the buildings of a farm and a well with a traditional cattle trough.

Continue south along the track for one kilometre, crossing the same landscape of agricultural fields on one side and wild dicot trees on the other, including a large lentisk tree which has also been declared a singular tree.

The track ends on the outskirts of the residential complex of En Porter Cove, near the beach car park, where this stage of the Nature Trail comes to an end. The beach, with clear water and fine sand, is only 250 m away.

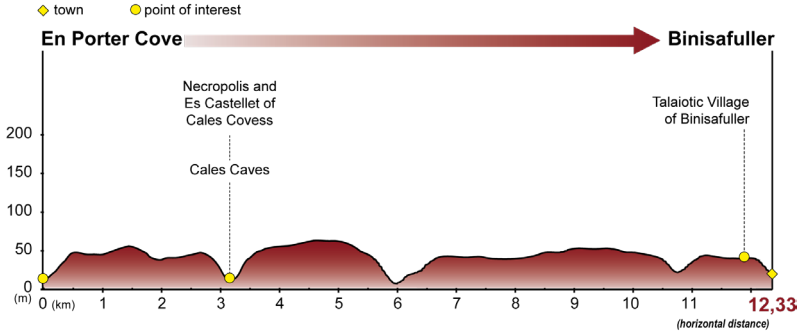


Views of the beach and the ravine of En Porter Cove

STAGE 17 CALA EN PORTER → BINISAFÚLLER

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	2	Upward gradient	317 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	315 m
Route difficulty	3	Route lenght (actual distance)	12,36 km
Amount of effort needed	3	Time	3 h 7 min



DISCOVERING MENORCA'S AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND HIDDEN COVES

Over the course of this route, the Camí de Cavalls path passes through two sharply contrasting environments; from the uneven layout of the ravines in the western part of the island to the flat, less rugged area in the east. Starting from En Porter Cove, one of the most important ravines on the island, the trail transitions from forest to an agroforestry mosaic before arriving at Cala des Canutells. From here the trail descends in altitude, passing through other ravines such as Binidalí and Biniparratx, which, although smaller in size, lend a great deal of charm to the landscape. As you reach the end of the route, you leave behind the humid environments of the ravines and enter the Menorcan agroforestry mosaic of pastureland, farmland and scrubland.



Signposting of stage 17 in the higher areas of the route



Stage 17 descent through the Son Domingo ravine

The panel indicating the start of the stage is located in the deepest spot of En Porter Cove. This is located in the western side of the island, wedged between the imposing limestone cliffs of the ravine with which it shares its name and which is one of the most important on the island, thanks to a permanent flow of water that allows wetland vegetation to flourish, making it one of the protected areas of the Natura 2000 Network. Here you can find wild blackberry bush (*Rubus ulmifolius*), reeds (*Phragmites australis*), bay laurel bush (*Laurus nobilis*) and leafy wild olive trees (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*). There are also small frogs, some colubrid snakes and birds such as Eurasian blackcaps (*Sylvia* sp.), Cetti's warblers (*Cettia cetti*) and herons (*Ardea cinerea*).

From the information panel, the trail climbs up the Carrer Platja de Cala en Porter, leaving the ravine behind and entering a residential complex on the left cliff of the ravine, skirting it along the Paseo Marítimo. From here, there is a beautiful panoramic view of the Mediterranean as it sneaks in land between the cliffs with the houses of the residential complex perched above, the beach and the course of the ravine towards the interior of the island. After about 800 metres, the stage turns into the Travessia de L'Avinguada Central, which crosses Cala en Porter to the sports centre. Here the path enters the Carrer Art, turning northwards, until it reaches its end, where a traditional Menorcan gate in front of the houses indicates the start of the route through the mountains.

From this point, the stage begins its route along a well-marked path between traditional Menorcan gates and stone walls that separate the forest of evergreen oaks (*Quercus ilex*), Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) and wild olive trees from the agricultural plots cultivated with cereals and pastures. During the first section of the path, approximately one kilometre long, the stage crosses the Son Domingo ravine and

CALES COVES BEACH

Cales Coves is a small, unspoilt double cove situated a short distance east of En Porter Cove. What's so special about this cove, with its sandy beach less than 20 m long, is that it is home to an important prehistoric necropolis excavated in the cliff walls flanking it on either side.

This is a group of artificial caves and hypogeum, excavated in the rock of the cliffs and the coast, where some 90 burials have been counted. The necropolis was used for about 1000 years, from the 11th century BC to late antiquity.

In Roman times, although it lost its use as a necropolis, it seems that it continued to be a place of worship or pilgrimage, as attested by a series of rupestral inscriptions in the Cova dels Jurats.

Apart from the necropolis, this cove, which is well protected from the winds and tides, was an important dock between the 4th century BC and the 6th century AD, as can be seen from the ceramic remains found at the bottom of the cove. There are also remains of a fortified coastal settlement, of which part of a wall survives.

continues its descent to the deep into the ravine where you'll find the Coles Coves beach. During this stretch, the surface is practically homogeneous, except at certain points, especially on the steepest descent, where roots and rocks protrude from the striking reddish earth.

At the bottom of the ravine the air is cool and damp, as the trail towards the east wall, where you can see some shelters, caves and rocky outcrops, with a prolifera-



Panoramic view prior to the descent to Barranco de Ses Penyes


Es Canutells beach

tion of a fairly leafy forest of wild olive and laurel trees. At this point you may even find the pampalonia (*Paeonia cambessedesii*), a plant with lilac flowers that is endangered and endemic to Mallorca and Menorca. There is also a rich avifauna, with birds of prey such as the sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), the kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) and the kite (*Milvus milvus*), as well as Egyptian vultures (*Neophron pernocterus*) bats, lizards or geckos in the rocky areas, and even hedgehogs (*Athelerix algirus*), shrews (*Crocidura suaervolens balearica*) and dormice (*Eliomis quercinus*), among the scrubland.

Continuing along the path next to the limestone wall, the trail gradually ascends, from a cool and humid environment to a drier and warmer one that develops in the higher areas. This new section continues for approximately two kilometres, in an easterly direction, as the agroforestry mosaic emerges above the limestone plateau. This stage of the trail runs between agricultural estates delimited by walls and traditional Menorcan gates, through areas of forest and Mediterranean scrubland, along a route with little or no gradient and a homogeneous surface from which limestone rocks or roots occasionally protrude.

About 4.5 km from the start, the route turns south and begins to descend, leaving the elevated area of the limestone plateau and entering the Es Canutells ravine, where you will find the beach of the same name and in the deepest part of which you will find one of the few elm tree formations on the island. Continuing southeast, the trail leaves the ravine and ascends along a somewhat steep path until it reaches the top of the left cliff where the Es Canutells residential complex is located. Upon completing the ascent, the stage comes to a rest area under a pine grove that also serves as a viewpoint of Cala Es Canutells.

Once past the rest area, continue through the residential complex following Carrer de Sa Cala heading south and turn east at the intersection with Avinguda des Canutells.

ES CASTELLÀS DES CAPARROT DE FORM

Es Castellàs des Caparrot de Forma is a prehistoric archaeological site located on the south coast of Menorca. What's so unique about is the fact that within it there are two sites with different chronologies and functionalities.

One is a coastal fortification and a necropolis consisting of several hypogeum can thus be distinguished. On the promontory closest to the coast, remains have been found of what may have been a settlement from the late Bronze Age, including a wall of considerable proportions that closes off access to this area from the mainland. It was formed by a wall of large stones that served as a bastion to isolate the *caparrot* or headland.

Within these walls, two circular constructions were built using small stones. The excavations carried out in this area have uncovered the remains of vases used in the daily life of the ancient inhabitants, as well as various tools, such as two hand mills for crushing grain.

On the other hand, there is a necropolis in the cliff area consisting of a total of 23 caves or hypogeum dating from the Iron Age.

This complex, located near the Des Canutells residential complex, has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest (BIC).

Continuing straight on, the avenue becomes a cobbled promenade along which the stage advances, leaving the developed area and entering the verge of the island road that gives access to Es Canutells, running alongside the road traffic for 1.75 km. During this section, extreme caution is recommended. At the end of this road



The stage passes through an agricultural area enclosed by walls

section, the trail turns eastwards again, taking an easily navigated path between agricultural holdings delimited by walls, wild olive and mastic trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*) before giving way to a dirt track framed by walls.

After passing the tower of S'Argossam, the trail crosses the Binidalí road, continuing between scattered houses before turning east again and crossing the Biniparratx ravine, which is much shallower and lusher in comparison to the others. Past the ravine, the stage crosses the Biniparratx Petit path and runs along its last stretch for a little over a kilometre along an uneven and stony path, surrounded by scrubland and descending in a southerly direction until you reach the panel that indicates the end of the stage in Binisafúller, at the beginning of Avinguda Platja Binisafúller, opposite the Caló Blanc carpark.

TALAYOTIC SETTLEMENT OF BINISSAFÚLLER

This was a small settlement. According to the excavations carried out, it was in use from the 10th century BC, especially between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, and it is likely that this continued until the Muslim period.

It is known for the great variety of remains it contains, including those characteristic of this type of settlement, such as the taula, or T-shaped monument enclosure, the talaiots, the hipostyle hall and some dwellings.

One of the main elements of this site is a circular talaiot located in the centre of the settlement, with the rest of the structures found around it. It consists a tower in the shape of a trunk with a diameter of 15 m and a height of 2.8 m, standing on a low artificial mound.

On the eastern side there is a well-preserved hypostyle hall, which has survived to the present day with part of its roof still intact. Three enormous pilasters support large slabs laid horizontally and intertwined with each other.

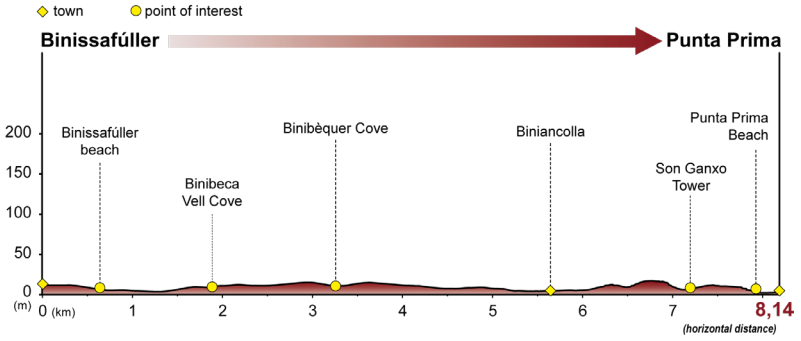
To the south is the taula of the settlement. It is somewhat different from the rest of those found in Menorca as it has a square floor plan, but with rounded corners, which can be explained by the use of an existing wall for its construction. This enclosure is quite small, less than 5 metres, and thanks to a restoration carried out in 1992 it has been restored to its original position.

Excavations in this part of the complex have shed great deal of light on the type of activities that took place there. Many Punic amphorae were recovered and, in addition, bones of various animals were found near a hearth, suggesting that some kind of ritual related to fertility, animals and the countryside took place during the 4th-3rd century BC.

STAGE 18 BINISAFÚLLER → PUNTA PRIMA

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	45 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	54 m
Route difficulty	1	Route lenght (actual distance)	8,15 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	2 h 5 min



COLOURFUL STAGE WITH A MULTITUDE OF NUANCES TO ENJOY

In a little more than 8 km and in an area that is, a priori, largely urbanised, you will discover a stage full of colours and shapes, with coves such as Binibèquer and Binissafúller, extensive beaches such as Punta Prima, the defensive tower of Son Ganxo, places to get lost in such as the fishing village of Binibèquer Vell and lights that illuminate the path such as the Far de L'illa de l'Aire.



Binissafúller Cove



Streets of Binibeca Vell

The eighteenth stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins at the southeastern end of a *tanca*, a typical Menorcan agricultural and livestock farm, where the Nature Trails interpretive panel is located. You leave the estate by crossing a traditional Menorcan gate and turning left at Binisafua. The route then embarks on a shared section for cyclists and walkers of about 523 m, with a pavement running alongside the cycle track. At the end of this shared section, turn right onto the street that leads downhill to Platja Binissafúller. This small cove boasts the clearest, most azure waters, thanks to the good health of the surrounding meadows of Neptune's grass

You can also find paradise-like Cala Binissafúller while aviation enthusiasts can enjoy the commercial planes passing overhead as they take off and land at Menorca Airport (MAH).

Leaving the cove, along a gentle ascent of course, after a few metres along a dirt track you return to the asphalted road and a gentle climb along the Passeig de la Mar. The small fishing port of Binissafúller will delight the traveller with its rows of old fishing huts, each adjoined to the other with their whitewashed walls and sky blue doors, linked by the Latin phrases inscribed on the upper part of their façades.

Shortly after, a signpost suggests a right turn which, after a short descent, immerses you into a cinematic landscape that will flood the senses take your imagination to dreamlike places. This place is none other than the fishing village of Binibeca Vell, with its narrow, labyrinthine streets and whitewashed houses, with the dark-coloured wooden elements standing out. Allow yourself to lose track of time and truly enjoy this small, spectacular village as it deserves.

NEPTUNE'S GRASS MEADOWS

Neptune's grass (*Posidonia oceanica*) is the most important aquatic plant in the Mediterranean Sea. Contrary to what many people think, it is not a seaweed but a species of seagrass, a phanerogamous plant that has adapted to the marine environment, with roots, rhizomatous stems, leaves, flowers and fruits. It grows in clean water and is a bioindicator of good water quality. It forms large meadows, forming an ecosystem important to for the many animal species that inhabit it, such as the noble pen shell (*Pina nobilis*), a large and highly endangered species of Mediterranean clam that finds the perfect home among the Posidonia meadows.

Neptune's grass is highly seasonal: it loses most of its leaves in autumn, with new foliations beginning at the end of this season, slowing down in winter and accelerating and culminating in spring, when fruiting also takes place. In summer, a large number of organisms living on the leaves of Neptune's grass, known as epibionts, attach themselves to the leaves, which will be washed along with them by the waves in autumn after the leaves become detached from the stem. This leaf, laden with epibiont organisms, ends its journey on the beaches where it protects against erosion, nourishes organic matter and plays an important role in coastal dynamics.

Neptune's grass meadows must be protected and conserved for their fundamental role in the conservation of the Mediterranean Sea and for their innumerable functions, such as increasing dissolved oxygen in seawater and the resulting improvement of water quality.

After passing the metal gate to stop motor vehicles from entering Binibeca Vell, turn right along the Passeig Maritim Binibèquer Vell, an urban section of the trail. Don't forget the rules of the road!



Binibèquer cove with Neptune's grass leaves

Following the signs you'll reach two carparks, telling you you're close to Cala de Binibèquer, which is not to be missed. Another cove with azure waters and fine white sand, the area of vegetation before the beach makes this something of an oasis in what is a largely residential area.

The route continues along Carrer de s'Anfos Blau where it leaves Binibèquer Nou, with a red asphalt cycle lane from a small roundabout where you turn right. The journey continues, now without a cycle lane, along Carrer de s'Oronella. Cylists should take great care in this section as the road is shared with traffic. The residential areas of Binibèquer stretch almost as far as Biniancolla, where a Nature Trails information panel displays the route for this final part of the stage.

The route takes you through the streets of the town, mainly along the Passeig de sa Marina, leaving the asphalt with a turn to the right, to travel a little over than 600 metres along the coastline. You'll later return to the asphalt at the nearby Torre de Son Ganxo, requiring a slight detour from the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail to visit this three-storey defensive tower built in 1786.

Returning to the route, you can't miss the Far de L'illa de l'Aire. This lighthouse sits on a small 34-hectare islet located off Punta Prima. At 38 metres high and built between 1857 and 1860, it is the tallest lighthouse in Menorca, and since 1995 has operated using a solar photovoltaic system.

The familiar Nature Trail sign will guide you as you wander through the streets until as far as Punta Prima beach. A place to take a break to enjoy and taste its gastronomy before going along the Passeig de s'Arenal to finally pass a traditional Menorcan gate before the interpretative panel marking the end of this eighteenth stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail.

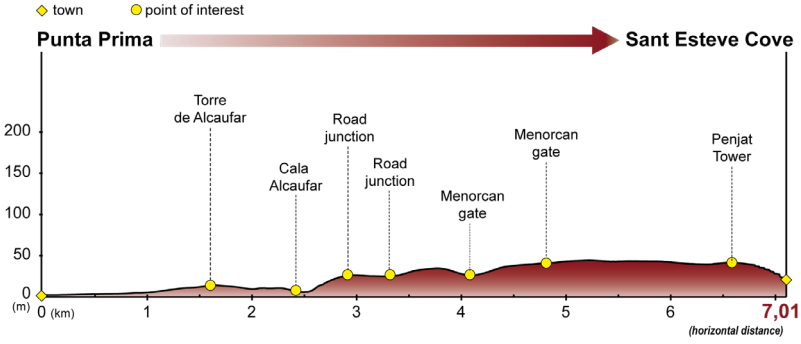


L'illa de l'Aire lighthouse

STAGE 19 PUNTA PRIMA → CALA SANT ESTEVE

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	65 m
Guidance along the route	2	Downward gradient	49 m
Route difficulty	2	Route lenght (actual distance)	7,02 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	1 h 50 min



FORTS AND TOWERS TO REPEL PIRATE ATTACKS

There are only two stages left in this great adventure! The 19th stage starts Punta Prima and stretches a little over 7 kilometres before ending in Sant Esteve Cove. The Alcaufar Cove and the beauty of the town of Alcaufar are especially noteworthy. Also outstanding are the old military constructions of a defensive nature that are located in this area, such as the Alcaufar Tower and Fort Marlborough. The spectacular beaches and coves of Punta Prima and Sant Esteve, at the beginning and the end of the cove, are also a must.


Alcaufar Shore



Alcaufar Tower

The penultimate stage of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail begins at the eastern end of Punta Prima, next to what is undoubtedly one of the most characteristic elements of this trail: a typical Menorcan gate, located, of course, next to a Nature Trails information board.

The Far de L'Illa de l'Aire is a constant reference point to admire the azure strait of water that separates the lighthouse from the Menorca mainland and, at the same time, a great point to watch the many bird species that live in L'Illa de l'Aire.

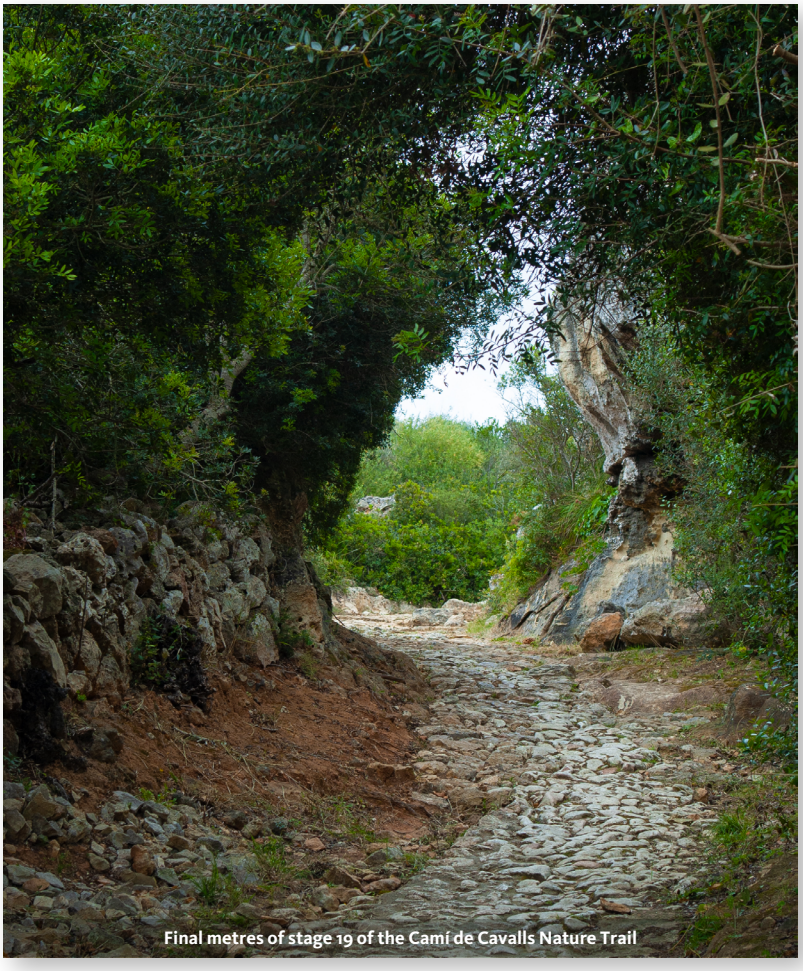
You will go on with the coast on your right and bushy area, with a diverse vegetation, on the left. When you reach the south-eastern tip of the island, you pass by the Alcaufar Tower, a defensive tower built in 1787 and restored in 1994. This infrastructure has three floors, as does the nearby Torre de So Ganxo, also in the defensive Martello Tower style. Originally the tower was accessed from the central floor by a retractable staircase, but nowadays it is accessed from the ground floor to facilitate access.

The itinerary continues in a northerly direction with the clear intention of visiting the town of Alcaufar, but not before enjoying its spectacular cove, which can be reached after leaving a typical Menorcan gate properly closed. Words fail to describe this place, with the houses and a small pier on one side and the mountains covered in Mediterranean vegetation on the other, culminating in a central beach of fine sand which is a stunning spot to go for a swim.

It is time to move away from the coast and, walking uphill, you reach a shared stretch of just under 500 metres, which continues to gain height. Shortly after, cross the Me-8 road and a few metres ahead also the road that leads to S'Algar, taking extreme precautions in both cases. The route continues along the Camí de Rafalet through an urban area that gradually dissolves into a Mediterranean scrubland with many of the species typical of this landscape.

After overcoming several Menorca gates, the trail goes on guarded by dry masonry walls used throughout the island to separate agricultural and livestock farms, known as tanques. This has the unfortunate consequence of blocking the view, but, in exchange, you can enjoy in detail the different species of Mediterranean scrub that can be seen along this stretch.

Finally, we have to face a short descent among the dense vegetation that prevents you from seeing the information board that marks the end of the nineteenth stage, until you are almost on top of it. At this point, the landscape opens up to the spectacular Sant Esteve Cove with Fort Marlborough as its guardian.



Final metres of stage 19 of the Camí de Cavalls Nature Trail

FORT MARLBOROUGH

This fort was built during the first British rule of Menorca (1710-1726) and was named after the most prominent British general of the time: John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough.

The sole purpose of the construction was to defend the coveted port of Maó, which was however seized by French troops in 1756 and by Spanish troops in 1781. Peace would not arrive until 1802, when Britain definitively returned Menorca to Spain through the Treaty of Amiens.

The fort has a series of underground galleries with different rooms and halls, defensive galleries and a moat to protect the central heptagonal enclosure equipped with several cannons to protect the port of Maó from the enemy.

Nowadays, the fort is a museum that can be visited, equipped with the latest technology that realistically takes the traveller back to a truly convulsive period in which the island was the scenario of many wars and conflicts and helps to understand Menorca's past and present.

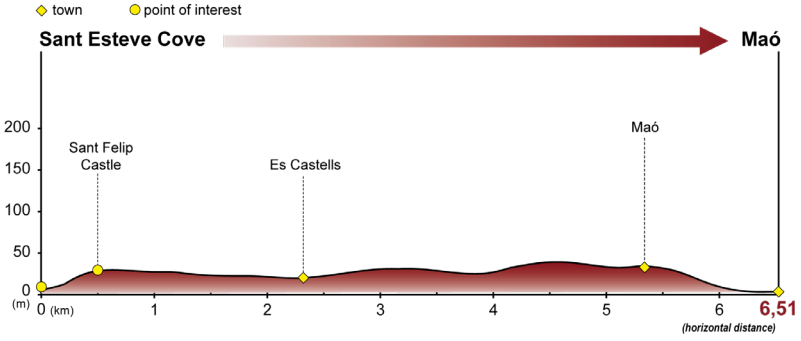


Fort Marlborough outer enclosure

STAGE 20 CALA SANT ESTEVE → MAÓ

MIDE

Harshness of natural environment	1	Upward gradient	106 m
Guidance along the route	1	Downward gradient	97 m
Route difficulty	1	Route lenght (actual distance)	6,52 km
Amount of effort needed	2	Time	1 h 30 min



TRAVELLING THROUGH THE ISLAND'S HISTORICAL HERITAGE

The last stage of the Camí de Cavalls runs from the cove of Sant Esteve and goes up a small slope and continues along an urban road that offers magnificent views over the entrance to the Port of Maó. Once you leave behind the castle of Sant Felip and the village of Es Castell, the route continues until reaching Maó, the capital of Menorca. The history city of Maó goes back millennia, as prove in the different architectural styles and monuments of the city. The final stretch of the path crosses the city and goes down to the end of the port of Maó which, being 5 km long, is considered the second largest natural port in Europe.


Figuera Cove



Sant Esteve Cove

The start of the last stage of the Camí de Cavalls is in front of the bend formed by the Cala de Sant Esteve cove, where the bottleneck ramp is located, close to the access to Fort Marlborough. From here, the path goes forward to the bottom of the cove where, sheltered among wild olive trees (*Olea europaea* var. *sylvestris*) and lentisk trees (*Pistacia lentiscus*), the Camí Romá de sa Cala (Roman Road to the Cove) begins, a pedestrian access to the cove that also connects with the Camí de sa Cala Sant Esteve (the road to the Sant Esteve Cove).

From this point onwards, the trail runs parallel to asphalted roads with pavements for most of the route. It is for this reason that extreme caution is recommended on stretches shared with road traffic.

The route runs along 500 m of the Camí de Sa Cala Sant Esteve until it reaches the turn-off to the Sant Felip Castle, turning left and entering the Sant Felip road in the direction of Es Castell. The place offers a panoramic view from where you can see some elements of the Sant Felip Castle complex, the mouth of the port of Maó, the Mola Peninsula and its fortress, and the Llatzeret Island.

Continuing 300 m along the hard shoulder of the Sant Felip road, the route passes in front of the Es Castell cemetery, turns to the right, safely crosses the intersection of the Me-6 road and begins the route through the urban area, leaving behind the views of the port and the walled agricultural plots. The Me-6 road serves as a guide, as it runs parallel to the tracing of this stage for at least another kilometre, passing to the right, next to the es Clot de ses Ànimes Park and entering Es Castell.

The trail covers a 1.9 km stretch of the Camí de Cavalls along the Me-2 heading north towards Maó, it passes next to the town of Es Castell, passing, on the left side, a traditional grain mill now used as a tourist office, while on the right side you can see the town's church.

SANT FELIP CASTLE

The castle of Sant Felip is located at the southern mouth of the port of Maó. It was built in 1555, during the reign of Charles, Holy Roman Emperor (to defend the island from the continuous attacks by Turkish ships. The work was carried out under the supervision of the Italian engineer Juan Bautista Calvi, who designed a castle with four bastions linked by curtain walls, surrounded by a narrow, deep moat dug into the stone. During the 17th century, it was enlarged by covering the curtain walls with ravelins on the other side of the moat, and the entire complex was surrounded by a walkway, stakes and a glacis.

In 1708, under British rule, the castle was renovated and rebuilt with its characteristic 8-pointed star shape, making it one of the greatest fortresses of the time. In 1802, the Spanish crown recovered the island and, in 1807, Charles IV ordered the castle to be demolished, leaving only the batteries for defending the port.

Today the remains of the complex have been restored and its underground galleries can be visited, thanks to the work of the Consortium of the Military Museum of Menorca.

It is worth mentioning that Es Castell was originally built as a suburb, close to the fishing town of Cales Fonts, where the merchants and relatives of the castle of Sant Felip lived. It was razed to the ground during the first British occupation in the early decades of the 18th century and rebuilt around 1720 further away from the castle. The current local church dates from this period, built using elements from the previous church in honour of Our Lady of the Rosary.



Windmill and current information point in Es Castells

LA MOLA FORTRESS

Also known as the fortress of Isabel II, as it was built under her mandate, it is located at the northern mouth of the port of Maó, on the peninsula of La Mola.

The history of this military complex began with the demolition of the Sant Felip Castle in 1850, leaving the island unprotected in the face of the international tensions that began in the Western Mediterranean when France invaded Algeria, leading the British army to consider occupying the island as a strategic point to cut off French communications that interfered with their commercial route through the Mediterranean. Amid this situation, in 1852 work s on the defensive castle began.

The fortress was to be a base of operations for the army on the island and to defend the harbour. However, by the time the works were finally completed in 1875, international arms development, the precursor to the military era of the 20th century, had advanced to such an extent that the facilities were outdated, which led to the need to continue the works by installing new batteries.

The fortress was never used for the defensive purposes for which it was built, but throughout its history it has been used as a military training centre and even a prison. Since 2007 the Balearic Government acquired the infrastructure as a tourist facility.

A few metres before entering the town of Maó, the Camí de Cavalls makes a slight descent, crossing the Cala Figuera slope and climbing again to leave the Me-2. To do so, it passes next to a service station and finally enters Maó along the Camí des Castell. A walk through the urban fabric of Maó reveals the historical legacy of the capital of Menorca.



La Mola Fortress



Views of the port of Maó

Along the Camí des Castell, most of the houses and buildings that the traveller will find along the way have elements reminiscent of Georgian architecture, which was trending in the United Kingdom between the 18th and 19th centuries, which can be distinguished by the use of rectangular sash windows with external wooden shutters painted in green, blue or black.

Shortly after, the stage reaches the Plaça del Príncep, located on a slope, where the church of Nuestra Señora del Carmen is located, built as a monastic complex at the end of the 18th century and whose cloister currently houses Maó's food market. A few metres from this place, the route reaches the lowest point of the slope between Plaça d'Espanya and the Fish Market, to go up Carrer Portal del Mar to Plaça de la Constitució. You can make a stop in this square to admire both the both the Church of Santa Maria de Maó, built in the mid-18th century on top of a previous building from the 14th century, and the town's town hall.

Once you have left the Plaça de la Constitució behind, the Camí de Cavalls continues along Carrer d'Isabel II, passing by the palace of the same name in the direction of the Museum of Menorca. The museum itself is at the end of the street, currently housed in the cloister of the Sant Fransesc d'Assís church, the oldest surviving part of this ancient convent built between the 15th and 16th centuries.

From here, the stage descends towards the port, surrounding the museum, along the Costa de Ses Piques, which runs parallel to the limestone rock walls that once was used as part of the defensive system to the city. Here you can make a short stop at a small square that serves as a lookout point, where there is a small information board and from where you have a beautiful view of the bottom of the port. At the end of the slope, the Camí de Cavalls crosses towards the port promenade and runs along its last 800 m next to the boats moored there. After crossing the bridge over the torrent of Santa Sirga, located at the bottom of the port, this stage is completed, and the Camí de Cavalls Natural Way comes to an end.

MAÓ

The history of the capital of Menorca goes back millennia and is marked by settlements by peoples such as the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Turks, as well as numerous incursions from other peoples. Despite the Talaiotic remains, the origins of the towns go back to the arrival of the Carthaginians on the island, and it was the brother of the famous Hannibal, Mago, who founded the city and named it after himself. The Romans came later, and then the Vandals and Byzantines took over.

Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, it was coveted by many peoples, such as the Normans and Muslims, who managed to rule the island for many years. Other peoples' came to trade, as was the case with the Greeks and Phoenicians or the Carthaginians, who recruited the skilled Menorcan slingers for their armies.

The present-day city of Maó was born around the castle that King Alfonso III ordered to be built after the Muslim conquest. Strolling through its streets you can appreciate the rich historical legacy accumulated over the centuries, as well as the different architecture and monuments that enrich the town.

From 1708, the island was under British rule, and the port of Maó became a British naval base that would maintain its hegemony for seventy years. Proof of all this are some of the most emblematic buildings in the capital of Menorca, such as the Sant Roc bastion, the main gate in the city walls; the Santa María Church; the Museum of Menorca, in Sant Francesc or the Claustro del Carmen Market.



Plaça del Príncep

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **ALAIOR COUNCIL** 971 37 10 02
www.aj-alaior.org
- **CIUTADELLA DE MENORCA COUNCIL** 971 38 10 50
www.ajciutadella.org/Portal.aspx?IDIOMA=3&MENU=CIU
- **ES CASTELL COUNCIL** 971 36 51 93
www.aj-escastell.org
- **ES MERCADAL COUNCIL** 971 37 50 02
www.aj-esmercadal.org/portal.aspx?IDIOMA=3
- **ES MIGJORN GRAN COUNCIL** 971 37 01 10
www.ajmigjorngran.org/en/
- **FERRERIES COUNCIL** 971 37 30 03
www.ajferreries.org
- **MAÓ COUNCIL** 971 36 98 00
www.ajmao.org
- **SANT LLUÍS COUNCIL** 971 15 09 50
www.ajsantlluis.org
- **CONSELL INSULAR DE MENORCA** 971 35 60 50
www.cime.es
- **CAMÍ DE CAVALLS**
www.camidecavalls.com/en/
- **MENORCA BIOSPHERE RESERVE** 971 35 62 51
www.menorcabiosfera.org/portal.aspx?IDIOMA=3
- **MENORCA TOURISM**
www.menorca.es/portal.aspx?IDIOMA=3
- **S'ALBUFERA DES GRAU NATURAL PARK**
www.es.balearsnatura.com/parque_natural/parque-natural-de-salbufera-des-grau
- **TALAYOTIC MENORCA**
www.menorcatalayotica.info/en/Home
- **MOLA FORTRESS** 971 36 40 40
www.fortalesalamola.com/en/home
- **MUSEUM OF MENORCA** 971 35 09 55
www.museudemenorca.com/en/home
- **MENORCA MILITARY CONSORTIUM** 971 35 57 60
www.consorciomilitarmenorca.com/en/

Nature Trails









Since 1993, the Nature Trails Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has the main objective of re-conditioning old unused infrastructure (railway lines, livestock trail or traditional paths), to give them new life as spaces for citizens to use and enjoy.

This guide offers detailed texts and accompanying maps for the nature trails completed to date, which are one of the best ways of getting close to nature and discovering the culture and traditions of our territory.