

Volta a la moleta de Binifaldó

Serra de Tramuntana Nature Area



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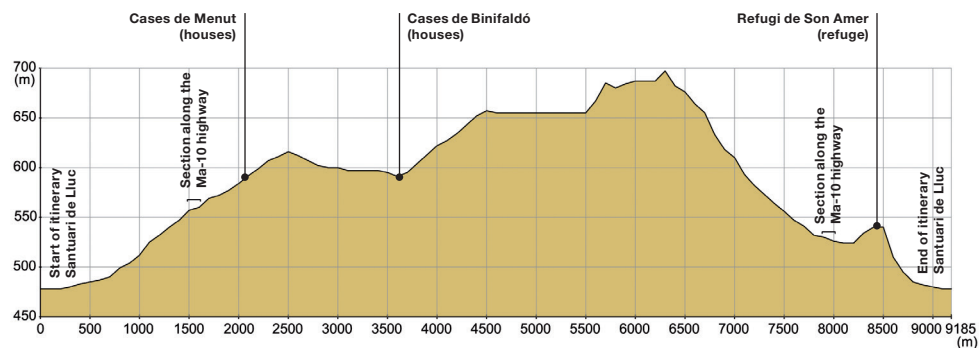
The circuit around the Moleta de Binifaldó is signposted as “Volta a sa Moleta de Binifaldó”. Here, you will walk along an age-old Camí Reial or Roman highway, enjoy striking karstic landscapes, relive the traditional life of past generations in the forests alongside lime kilns, charcoal kilns and wood colliers’ sheds, and take in the beauty of a lush pine and holm oak forest.

Difficulty: Low

Distance: 9,1 Km (circuit itinerary)

Duration: 3 hours

This itinerary must be followed on foot.



Holm oaks over the karstic landscape (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

1. Walking along a Roman highway

Once you have passed beneath the Porxets, (pilgrims' cells) of the Lluç Sanctuary, you will take an asphalted road alongside the stream. A few metres down the road turn off to the left until you come to a football field. Passing by a wooden bridge that will be on your left, you will continue along the old Roman highway that once connected Lluç with Pollença.

Camí del Rei or Camí Reial were the terms used to refer to the main thoroughfares during the medieval period. The earliest documented reference to this particular road, between Lluç and Pollença, dates from 1337, appearing in the records of the Knights Templar Military Order. In 1914, the former bridle path was replaced by a carriage road.

That said, you may be wondering exactly what the difference is between a bridle path and a carriage road. Bridle paths are also locally known as *camins de tres pams* (three-hand-width paths), alluding to the narrow width of the roads, which measured approximately 60 cm. These paths admitted the passage of people and draught animals carrying loads on their backs. Carriage roads, on the other hand, were wider, with a minimum width of 2.5-3 metres. And, as their name indicates, they allowed the passage of carriages.



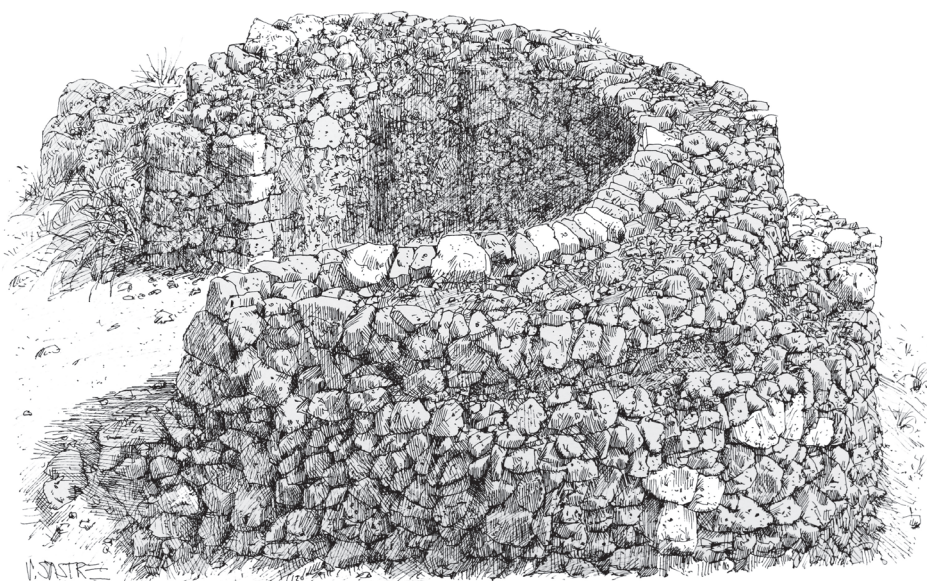
Camí Vell de Lluç a Pollença, "Old Lluç-Pollença road" (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

2. The Menut lime kiln

You will come out at the Andratx-Pollença highway and turn left until you reach an asphalted road with welcome signs to the public estates of Menut and Bini-faldó. On the left-hand side of the road, just before you arrive at the houses of Menut, you will see an old lime kiln that was restored recently.

The technique of making lime by cooking calcareous stone is an age-old custom. In fact, the Romans were known to use lime kilns following the same process. Traditionally, the resulting quicklime was used as a paint to whitewash the walls of houses and as a construction material, as well as for therapeutic and hygienic purposes.

The site of the lime kiln largely depended on the nearby availability of the raw materials necessary for the process, namely calcareous stone and lumber. After ten to twelve days cooking process, the stones would finally turn to lime. The work of the wood collier was tough, arduous and dangerous.



Lime kiln (Drawing: Vicenç Sastre)

3. From the Cases de Menut to the Cases de Binifaldó

A few metres further down the road, you will turn off of the asphalted road to see the Cases de Menut. These houses were built around a central courtyard and defence tower, which has been officially listed as an Item of Cultural Interest. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the fear of pirate attacks led to the construction of defence towers as a means of protection at different country estates. This tower, which probably dates from 1599, is characterised by an almost perfectly square layout (6.40 m x 6.30 m) and a sloped base.

Today, one of the buildings of the houses serves as an indigenous plant seed bank. There is also a forest nursery that produces plants as part of an initiative to repopulate the forest.

Having seen the houses of Menut, you will turn back to the road and head towards the houses of Binifaldó. From this point on, the path will gradually climb uphill amid a karstic landscape with holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*). Growing beneath these trees are mastics (*Pistacia lentiscus*) and particularly the rock rose (*Cistus monspeliensis*), which is easy to identify, given its elongated leaves with characteristically sticky aromatic glands.

Continue along the road until you come to a group of very tall white poplars (*Populus alba*) that mark the entrance to the houses of the Binifaldó estate.



The Cases de Menut (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

4. From Beni Haldun to Binifaldó



The Cases de Binifaldó (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Located at the foot of the towering Puig Tomir and nestled between the lush vegetation of old holm oaks on one side and the sown agricultural fields on the other side, the Binifaldó estate is today an environmental education centre.

The prefix “bini-” in the name of Binifaldó clearly evokes the existence of a very old Islamic farmstead, as it etymologically stems from the Arabic name Beni Haldun, or “sons of Haldun”. According to the distribution of the island of Mallorca following the conquest of the Catalan King Jaume I, the estate belonged to the Templar Order. As of the 15th century, the property would change hands several times, until 1682, when it was donated to the Sanctuary of Lluç. Like the Menut estate, Binifaldó was expropriated by the state, becoming state property in 1897. Today it is managed by the Balearic Ministry of the Environment.

Continue along the asphalted road until you come to the pass known as the Coll des Pedregaret, where you will see a short dry stone border wall that delimits the land of different estates. Go over the wall and continue to the right on a narrow path with signposting indicating the way to Lluç.

5. The life of the wood collier

At this point and for a considerable stretch, you will follow a narrow path known as the Camí des Porxo, which crosses through the Bosc Gran, a large pine and holm oak forest. Here you will see different sheds and traditional charcoal production floors. Perhaps the words of a wood collier best describe the arduous nature of this work:

"We have never been rich, nor have we ever owned land. The small piece of forest where we worked did not belong to us. In selecting the spot, we would talk with the owner, agree to three or four "quarterades" [21,000-28,500 square metres] and we would find the best place to set up the rotle de sitja or charcoal production floor. I should say that a sitja is a pile of lumber that burns little by little, until it is converted into charcoal. We seldom went down into town. The mule drivers would bring us supplies when they came to pick up charcoal [...]."

*Cooking the wood usually took seven to ten days. During that time, we had to watch over the fire very carefully. The slightest oversight, and all the wood could burn up. So, we had to remain at the worksite at all times. We would start around Easter, in the spring, and we'd work throughout the summer, and finish around Sant Mateu (around 21 September). This way, we took advantage of the good weather, as it didn't rain much and it was not cold."**

*Terrassa B, de Diago J: Sitges i Carboners. Conselleria d'Educació i Cultura



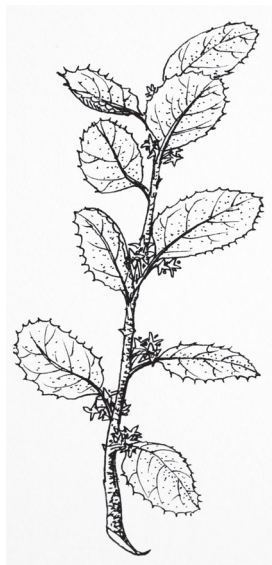
Charcoal production floor and wood collier's shed (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

6. Can you identify some of the Mediterranean shrubs along the road back?

As you continue along the narrow path, you will pass by the remains of a porch structure that was once used as a shelter for the pigs that roamed through the area. Soon you will come to a wide road, where you will turn right, heading uphill to the pass known as the Coll des Bosc Gran, where you will enjoy a breathtaking view of the mountain, Puig Tomir.

Look out for a shrub with prickly leaves that come in threes. Known as the prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus* subsp. *oxycedrus*), this shrub is highly valued for its medicinal properties. For proof, we need only recall the traditional saying, “pren en dejú ginebrons i et fugiran molts trastorns”, which roughly reads as “take prickly juniper to break your fast and many of your ailments will not last”.

The indigenous evergreen shrub (*Rhamnus ludovici-salvatoris*) known locally as the llampúdol bord owes its name to Archduke Ludwig Salvatore of Austria. This shrub is easily identified



***Rhamnus
ludovici-salvatoris***
(Drawing:
Vicenç Sastre)



St John's wort (Photo: Gràcia Salas)



Myrtle (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

by its serrated leaves, which are dark green on one side and light green on the other.

Another endemic species typical of these mountains is the St John's wort (*Hypericum balearicum*), which can be distinguished by the wrinkled edges of its dark green leaves. This shrub blooms in the spring, giving rise to bright yellow flowers.



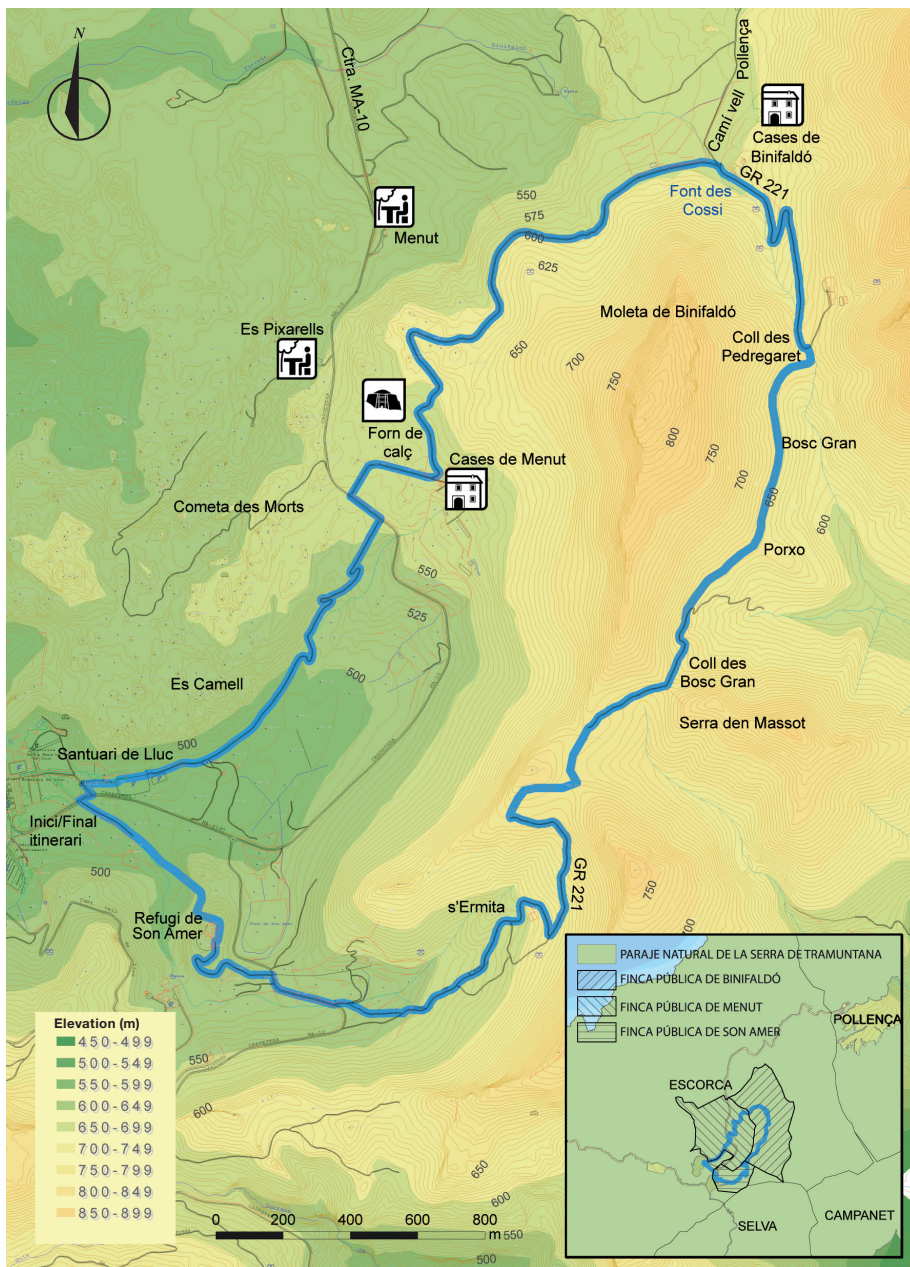
Prickly juniper (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

And if you are passing through the area in early summer, you will surely be drawn to the beautiful white flowers of the myrtle (*Myrtus communis*). Associated with many traditions and customs, this shrub has shiny leaves that come in pairs, and its berries are edible.

Be sure to follow the signs of the path marked GR-221 ("Long Route"), which will take you past the hermitage and the Son Amer refuge, to bring you back to Lluç.



View of Puig Tomir from the Coll des Bosc Gran (Photo: Gràcia Salas)



Serra de Tramuntana Nature Area

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