

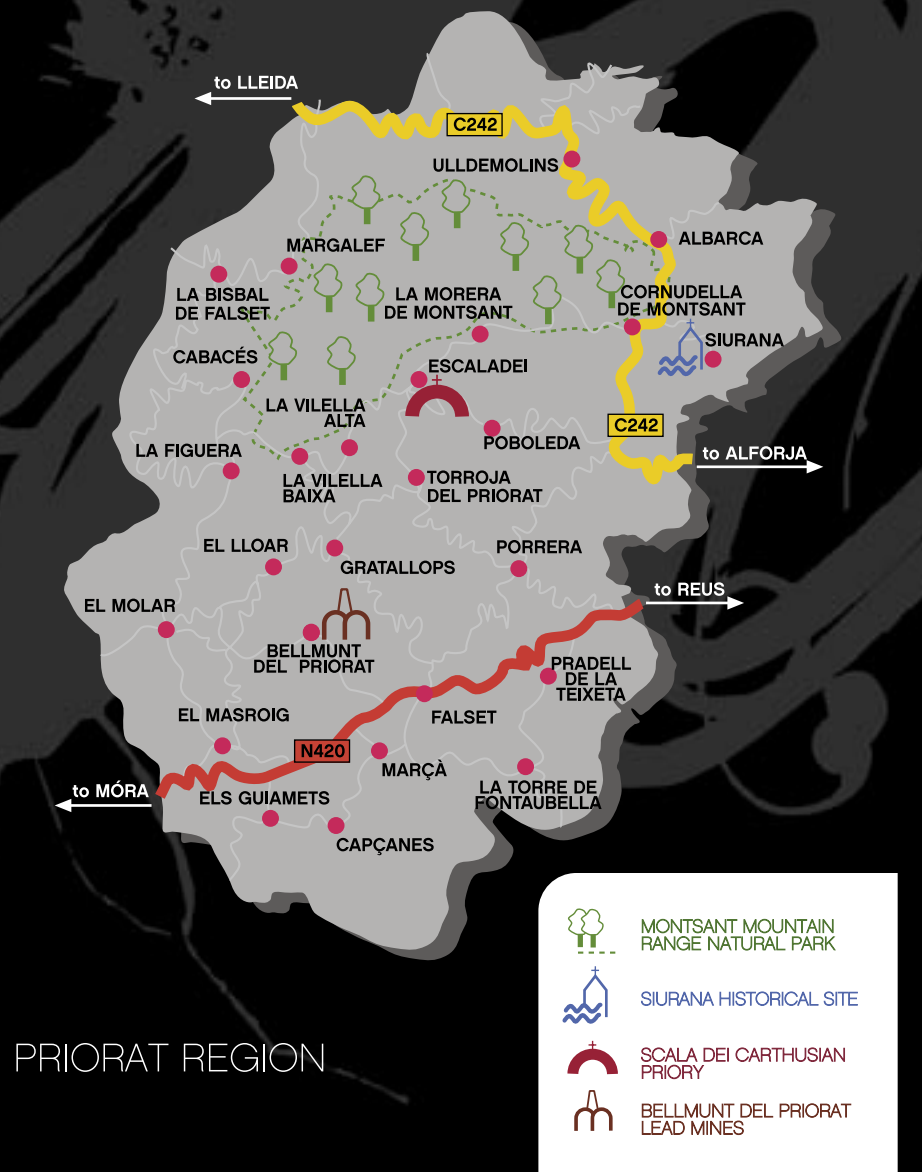
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EUROPE



CATALONIA



PRIORAT REGION



AN ANCIENT LAND

Why not take a peek at a little land whose people can be traced back to ancient times? From its hideaway far from the ever-changing bustle of the outside world, this land has watched history unfold.

It is a land of steep vineyards, harsh cliffs and imposing rock-faces, hidden valleys and cool ravines. It is a place of flatlands and mountains, crystal-clear streams, sunny and ordered cultivated areas.

It is a world of small but resilient villages which have survived plagues, severe frosts, conquests and floods. This land has been inhabited since men lived in caves; since they started to work the land and build dry-stone walls to support the slopes. They cleared the forests and planted their crops; they constructed bridges, hermitages and castles.

Come and meet the men and women of the Priorat region who have cultivated their love of this land and its countryside. Newcomers are captivated by the magic of this place, where angels climb ladders and wine runs through people's veins.

at your own pace

*"Too much activity of any kind leads to the suffering of the spirit, the loss of intelligence and the dispersion of grace."
St. Bernard*

SMALL PLEASURES, GREAT SENSATIONS

Close to the sky with the whole world at your feet, spectacular viewing points reveal the region's many colours: the blues of the olive groves and of the horizon; the reds of the rusty-coloured rocks; humid clays and autumn maple trees; the greens of the pine trees, willows and poplars; the greys of the bare stone walls and structural boulders; the blacks of slate and grapes; the yellows of the gorse and broom; the sweet whites of the blossoming almond trees.

At nightfall, these colours turn into a thousand glimmers in skies sprinkled with stars. There are no cities or motorways to spoil the magic clarity of the night sky. The constant invitation to contemplate your surroundings is unmarred by any noise or need to hurry.

Take five minutes to look at the world from each vantage point along the way. Enjoy the vastness of it all and the tranquillity of a well-maintained countryside. If you do so, you will have countless opportunities to lose yourself in the moment. There is no need to rush and everything you need is close at hand.

Summers on the river bank with swallows filling the villages with their cries; autumns when the grapes are harvested, with golden light and dreamy sunsets; winters of olives, gathering the harvest and the cosy warmth of the fireplace; springs which are fleeting yet frenzied - all of this is under the influence of the earthly forces of the slate that transmits a strange magnetism reaching out towards infinity.



A TRACE OF LEGENDS

Go up to the oldest resident of the Priorat region and ask him what he has seen. Dating back more than a thousand years, the ancient and strong grandfather of the yews will tell you stories from every corner of this land.

He will tell you about the deer painted on cave walls by men who had just learned how to light a fire; myths from the days when the hills were filled with wolves; tales of earls' daughters, lost while hunting and of Carlists chased by guerrillas; stories of imaginary grottos filled with gold, and caves so large they can hold an entire hospital.

He will tell you about the exploits of the partisan who took refuge in the mountain range of Llaberia and about the hermit friars who miraculously cured the sick. He will speak of the solitary artists who lived in spiritual retreat and were touched by the magic of this exceptional land.

The ancient tree at the heart of the Montsant mountain range will tell you that everywhere, in each rock and twig, you will see traces of legends.



AN IMPREGNABLE BASTION

Upon arriving at Siurana you will discover a small fairytale village that has a deep-rooted memory of endless sieges and improbable conquests.

Perched on a rock in the river, in a location that was thought to be impregnable, Siurana was overpowered by the knights who served four earls. Its castle, on the site of the oldest known mosque in Catalonia, defended an impassable border that stretched from Coll de Balaguer to Tamarit de Gaià.

If you look closely at the surrounding cliffs, you will realise why no one was able to conquer it for three centuries, and why the ending was so tragic.

Before being overwhelmed by the Christians, the Moorish queen, Abdelazia, preferred to cast herself off the summit with her horse. The animal, terrified in its futile resistance, left the permanent imprint of its horseshoe on the rock. In an instant, Catalonia's last Saracen bastion had disappeared.

Today, Siurana has a reservoir with clean and calm waters. Surrounded by mountains and under perfect conditions, you can take part in a variety of water sports in full view of the brave climbers who have managed to make the rocks their own, an achievement that was surely unattainable by medieval knights.





FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

When you take a stroll through Escaladei you will learn that the monks of the Carthusian order came here from Provence in the 12th century. They chose an exceptional spot to build their monastery, protected by the Montsant mountain range, where a shepherd had dreamt of angels climbing to heaven using a ladder resting on the branches of a pine tree. (Escaladei = Scala Dei = God's Ladder)

For a number of centuries, the Carthusian monks made this part of the land their home, building mills, developing wine-making and using the peasants as their servants. The prior gave his name to what is now known as the Priorat region.

The monks all fled hastily in 1835 when their lands were taken from them by government decree, abandoning their cells and cloisters as well as the church and the monastery hostelry. Within only two years, the majestic Carthusian monastery had become a mere pile of rubble as a result of pillaging by the peasants who were weary of tithes and submission. This was how the first Carthusian monastery in the peninsula disappeared.



GEOLOGICAL PARADISE

The Eugenia mine in Bellmunt will lead you to the heart of the land and will explain how hard it was to work as a miner; how a way of living was created within this mining village that was very different from life in the rest of the Priorat region.



FALSET TALES

The streets of Falset will tell you about the town's medieval past, its ancient walls, streets and porches; leading you to admire the cooperative winery that was designed by Martinell, a beautiful architectural legacy of rural Art Nouveau.

La Quartera* square will invite you to relax under its arcades with views of the palaces. You will listen to stories of the castle that dominates the city, where Leonor de Aragón, the queen of Cyprus and Jerusalem, was born.

(*La Quartera was a measurement used for grain and other food-stuffs. "Quartera" = 50kgs).



A WORLD OF THINGS TO BE DISCOVERED

It is impossible to see everything in the Priorat region in a single visit.

While taking a stroll through Porrera, you will see sundials in every street. In the town of El Masroig you will discover the remains of the prehistoric settlement of Puig Roig del Roget. In La Bisbal de Falset and in La Figuera you will see some of the key locations from the battle of the Ebro in 1938: the cave hospital of Santa Llúcia and the military observatory of Sant Pau.

An impressive number of excursions and treasures will help you to discover the story and vibrancy of a place that has managed to retain its magic and still remains unchanged.

EXUBERANT NATURE

The mountains have kept the Priorat region's heritage in tact . The ranges of Llaberia and La Mola, Pradell and l'Argentera are in the south. The Prades mountains are to the east and the Montsant is in the centre.

The Llaberia mountain range is an area of natural interest and a trekker's paradise, from the river bed of El Torto to La Fou natural spring. The views over the peaks of Els Montals and La Miranda are outstanding, the hiding place of the legendary guerrilla, Carrasclet. This is a refuge for protected species and Mediterranean vegetation specific to the region.

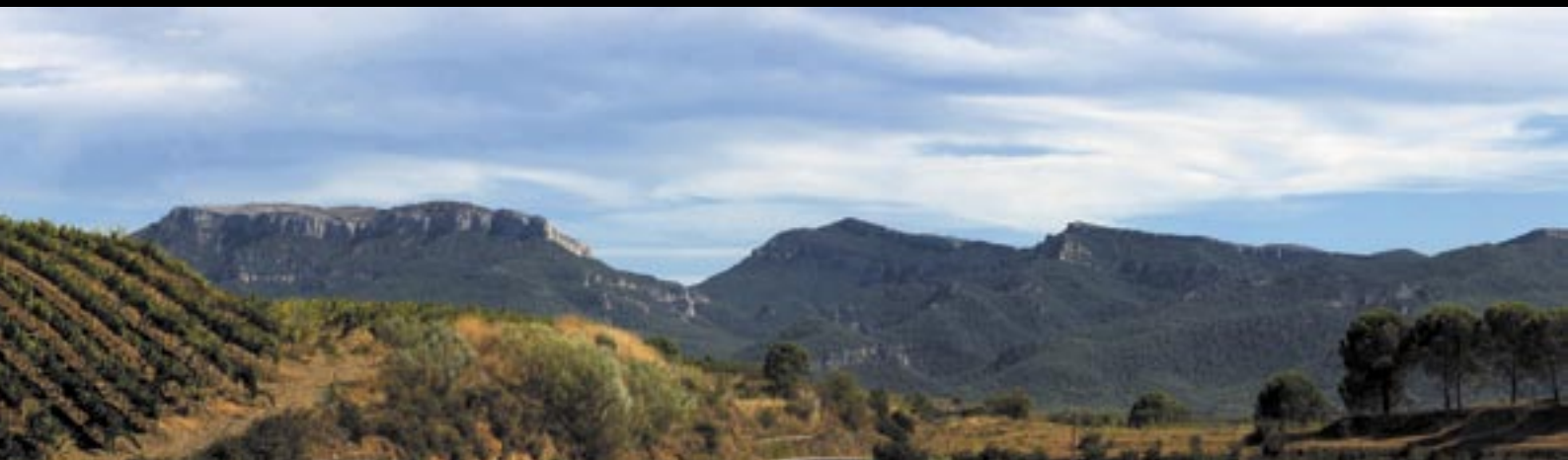
El Montsant was known as the 'blessed mountain' by the Arabs and as 'holy' by the Christians. It was a sanctuary; a place for the gods and a stronghold for contemplative life. It was a kingdom of silence, solitude and austerity; a great rock bastion with nine hermitages, covering an area from the hermitages of La Foia to Sant Salvador, and from the hermitages of Sant Bartomeu to La Mare de Déu de Montsant. This area of unspoiled mountain ranges has more than 9,000 hectares of natural parkland. There are many well-preserved elements such as Cadolles Fondes (naturally occurring rock pools), the Gorge of Fraguerau, the Toll de l'Ou (an egg-shaped natural pool) and the Clot de Cirer (Cherry tree hollow), the peak of Cogulla and the Pi del Cugat (Cugat pine tree).



Wind and rain have sculpted the rocks into outstandingly beautiful forms. The ravines and cliffs have spectacular views: Els Pélecs, La Falconera (Falcon's Rock), Les Crestes de la Llena (Llena's Crests) and La Serra dels Solans (Sunny Side of the Mountains). Mountain summits reach over a thousand metres and then plunge into deep ravines.

Rivers and streams fill ponds and pools where the egrets fish and the barbels swim. There are dark holm oak forests and fresh willows in the shade. There are ash and box trees; oak bushes where the marten hides, poplars where the blackbird sings and skies where the eagle rules supreme.

A vast variety of excursions will give you the chance to check out every nook and cranny of the mountain range. This is a paradise that is a million miles away from noise, traffic and problems.

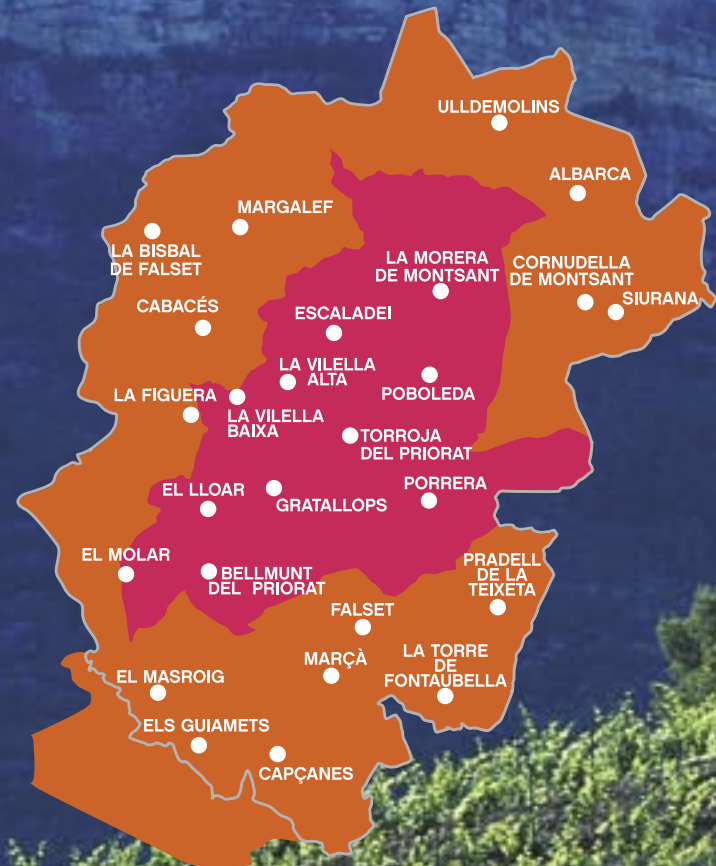


WINE: THE BEST KEPT SECRET

This is a region to awaken your senses with scents of the forest, walks and tranquillity. You'll notice the salty taste of a nearby sea, whilst listening to the heartbeat of a dark land that gently breathes under the caresses of seemingly endless sunny hours.

This is a region which is there to be enjoyed, with the fruit of century-old vines intrinsic to the mountainsides. With the patience of those who wish to engrave a permanent memory, they incorporate the story of the land, passing it on to the seeds of every grape, permeating each sip and taste from a wineglass.

These vines brought us this sacred Carthusian wine. They knew far off lands and travelled overseas; they unleashed gold fever and turned houses into palaces; they knew the sorrows of the plagues that affected everything so that life had to start anew.



 D.O. MONTSANT
 D.O.Q. PRIORAT

A WINE REGION WITH TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE

Two individual souls are intimately joined together. Wines from the D.O. Montsant are of growing fame and with a promising future. Wines from the D.O.Q. Priorat are excellent and are renowned throughout the world. They embrace and touch each other, close yet diverse. Fruit of the same land yet original in their diversity and unique in their essence. Discover the two wine routes that enable you to feel two worlds within the same universe.

Enter the wineries and take a stroll through the vineyards in exceptional countryside, cultivated to perfection despite the difficulties of the land. Try to discover the differences between Priorats and Montsants. Select young or aged wines, the produce of valley vineyards, or those cultivated by mules on the steep mountain slopes. Decide between signature wines or local village wines, those from the co-operatives or from private wineries, each one centred on the mineral-worth of the land and dedicated to the taste of the fruit. Discover Ranci wines (using the Solera method), wine vinegars and mistelas (sweet dessert wines).



SACRED TREES, THE FRUIT OF DIVINITY

The olive groves will tell you of another Priorat, consisting of the dry-stone terraces, ponds, caves and woods that lie between the cultivated areas and the Montsant mountain range. This is a Mediterranean landscape full of blue-tinted trees that gave shade to the gods, growing slowly and stubbornly. If destroyed by frost, plague or a fire, the tree will sprout anew from the stump.

The ancient olive groves with their firm, broad and twisted trunks, are painstakingly picked by hand each autumn to ensure that the fruit is not damaged. The multi-coloured olives fall: arbequina, farga and rojal varieties. When pressed they become sweet extra virgin olive oils (D.O.P. Siurana) with an intense fruity aroma.*

** (D.O.P. Siurana- the name that guarantees the place of origin of the product)*

These oils add flavour to the most typical dishes: Salted herring with peas, brosses soup (a stew made with bread and meat), festa major potatoes (a lasagne made with potatoes instead of pasta), empanadillas (small cottage pies) and orelletes (fried sweet pastries). Above all, the oil gives a special touch to the Priorat region's greatest delicacy - spinach and white bean omelette in its own sauce, a dish which has a unique taste but is never exactly the same twice.



TOURIST OFFICES AND INFORMATION POINTS

PRIORAT REGIONAL TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE
C/ Sant Marcel, 2
Falset
Tel. 977 83 10 23
www.turismepriorat.org

**CORNUDELLA DE MONTSANT TOURIST
INFORMATION OFFICE**
C/ Comte de Rius (no number)
Cornudella de Montsant
Tel. 977 82 10 00
www.cornudella.altanet.org

ULLDEMOLINS TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE
Plaça de l'Església (Church Square)
Ulldemolins
Tel. 977 56 18 66
www.ulldemolins.oasi.org

**TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE MONTSANT
MOUNTAIN RANGE NATURAL PARK**
C/ Major, 4
La Morera de Montsant
Tel. 977 82 73 10
www.parcscatalunya.net

**INFORMATION POINT OF THE MONTSANT
MOUNTAIN RANGE NATURAL PARK**
(Open during high season)
C/ Puntarré (no number)
Cabacés

**INFORMATION POINT OF THE MONTSANT
MOUNTAIN RANGE NATURAL PARK**
(Open during high season)
Pl. Sant Miquel (no number)
Margalef de Montsant

**INFORMATION POINT OF THE MONTSANT
MOUNTAIN RANGE NATURAL PARK**
(Open during high season)
C/ Catalunya (no number)
La Vilella Baixa
Tel. 659 750 671

**INFORMATION POINT OF THE LLABERIA
MOUNTAIN RANGE**
(Open during high season)
Former Cooperative Building
Països Catalans, 4
La Torre de Fontaubella
Tel. 659 209 541
www.serrallaberia.org

DINE AND REST AND MAKE YOUR TOUR MORE ENJOYABLE

A leisurely visit includes breaks to regain your strength so you can enjoy the pleasures offered by fine cooking and a good rest. The Priorat region has both traditional restaurants with the taste of home-made cooking, and cutting-edge establishments that have emerged from the new wine cuisine. Uninterrupted sleep is guaranteed during peaceful nights spent in the old houses that have been transformed into contemporary rural tourist accommodation, or in the small boutique hotels, traditional hostels or camp sites.

FESTIVALS IN THE PRIORAT

L'ENCAMISADA. Falset. Nearest weekend to 17th January (St. Anthony's Day)
FESTIVAL OF THE "TRUITA AMB SUC" ("Traditional Omelette in its own sauce").
Second Sunday of March in Ulldemolins.
PRIORAT WINE FAIR. Falset. Nearest weekend to 1st May.
FESTIVAL OF THE GRAPE HARVEST Poboleda. Third Saturday of September.

ARTISTIC LEGACY, HISTORICAL PAST

**SCALA DEI CARTHUSIAN PRIORY
FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN**

From 1st October to 31st May:
10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
From 1st June to 30th September:
10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Closed on Mondays (not bank holidays), 25th and
26th December and 1st and 6th January.
Guided tours: weekends and bank holidays at
11.15 a.m., 12.15 p.m. and 4 p.m.
Tel. 977 82 70 06

**BELLMUNT DEL PRIORAT
LEAD MINES
GEOLOGICAL PARADISE**

From September 16 to June 30:
Midweek visits must be pre-arranged by phoning
626 384 706.
Saturdays: from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and at 4.30 p.m.
Sundays and bank holidays: from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
From July 1 to September 15:
From Tuesdays to Saturdays: from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Sundays and bank holidays: from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.
Closed on Mondays (not bank holidays and except
for August)
Tel. 626 384 706 - 977 83 10 23
Closed from December 24 to January 15.

You will find museums in the region that preserve the artists' legacy, created with peace and tranquillity in keeping with the spirit of this land.

**CABACÉS MUSEUM OF
MIQUEL MONTAGUT
DREAMS OF EL GRECO**

c. Major, 72 - Cabacés
Saturdays and Sundays: from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Tel. 977 83 95 18 - 977 83 91 09

**LULA PÉREZ-MARÇÀGINÉ MUSEUM
SYMBIOSIS OF CREATIVITY AND REBELLION**

c. De Dalt, 54 - Marçà
Sundays and bank holidays from 12 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.
Summer opening times: Daily from 12 p.m. to 1.30
p.m. (except Mondays)
Tel. 977 17 80 00

**JOAN PÀMIES PRIVATE WINE MUSEUM
JOURNEY INTO THE PAST**

c. De la Balandra, s/n. - Torroja del Priorat
Visit must be pre-arranged by phoning
606 915 783.



Consell Comarcal del
PRIORAT

PRIORAT REGION TOURIST OFFICE
T 977 831 023

www.turismepriorat.org - oit@priorat.cat



Consorci per al
Desenvolupament
del Priorat

