

Natural landscape

A trail among the vineyards of Scala Dei, protected by the imposing cliffs of Montserrat. The predominant vegetation is scrubland and brush, accompanied by pines and isolated specimens of holm oak and other types of oak. **Coves Roges [10.5]:** A large crag of red clay, showing signs of alveolar erosion.

Cultural heritage

La Conreria d'Scala Dei is a modern population nucleus located in the former offices of the Father Procurator of the Carthusian monastery. It was created after the disentanglement of monastic property. It marks the viticultural heart of El Priorat region. It is the location of the **church of La Mercè**, the **house of the procurator** and various different wine cellars which are open to the public.

Cartoixa d'Scala Dei [10.1]: Created in the year 1194, this was the first Carthusian monastery in the Iberian Peninsula. A centre of culture, art and spirituality, it was notable for its prosperity and riches. Finally, however, it felt the consequences of the disentanglement acts passed by the liberal governments of the 19th Century and the popular antiderical movements that led to the exclausturation of the monks and the dispersal and, in part, the disappearance of the artistic and cultural heritage, and the destruction of the monastery. **La Pietat [10.2]:** This was a large estate built in the 17th Century by order of the prior as a place of rest for the bishops of Catalonia. **Mas de Sant Antoni [10.3]:** Situated where the settlement of Montalt used to be. Abandoned in 1285 as a result of the incentives offered by the Carthusian monks to its inhabitants. The church was converted into what is today the chapel, now in ruins. **Font Pregona [10.4]:** According to tradition, this spring never runs out. Today it supplies the village of Scala Dei with water.



Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*). Roger Pascual.



TRIAL 10 SCALA DEI

Cartoixa d'Scala Dei
La Pietat
Mas de Sant Antoni
Camí dels Cartoixans
Font Pregona

Imatge: Parc Natural de Montserrat. Contens: Casa d'Oficis Senders de Montserrat / Carniua. Writing, coordination and control: *Pedrenca Pedagogia Ambiental*



A trail on the southern side of the Serra de Montsant, recommended for those who want to enjoy the area's historical and cultural heritage in a beautiful natural setting. The climb up follows a gentle path that leaves from the ruined Cartoixa d'Scala Dei (Carthusian monastery of Scala Dei) and meets the old route of the Carthusians, passing La Pietat. During the second part of the walk, under the watchful eye of the Cingle Major (Large Cliff), the trail takes us to the Mas de Sant Antoni and the Font Pregona spring, where there is fresh water. Finally, a path leads back to the departure point. The descent offers an impressive aerial view of the ruins of Scala Dei. The impressive nature of these even today makes it easy to imagine the historical and architectural importance of the monastery in its heyday. This walk complements a visit to the area's monuments. Many of the stretches of the walk are marked with GR (long hike) indicators (red and white). This is a route that is suitable for all the family and can be done at any time of year. In the summer, avoid walking in the hottest part of the day.

Technical description

TOTAL DISTANCE:
6.3 km

TOTAL TIME:
2 h (rest stops not included)

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY:
LOW

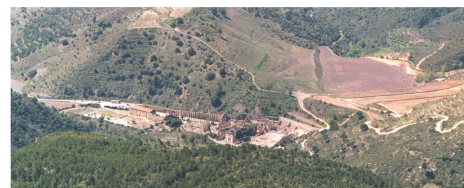
TOTAL ASCENT:
240 m



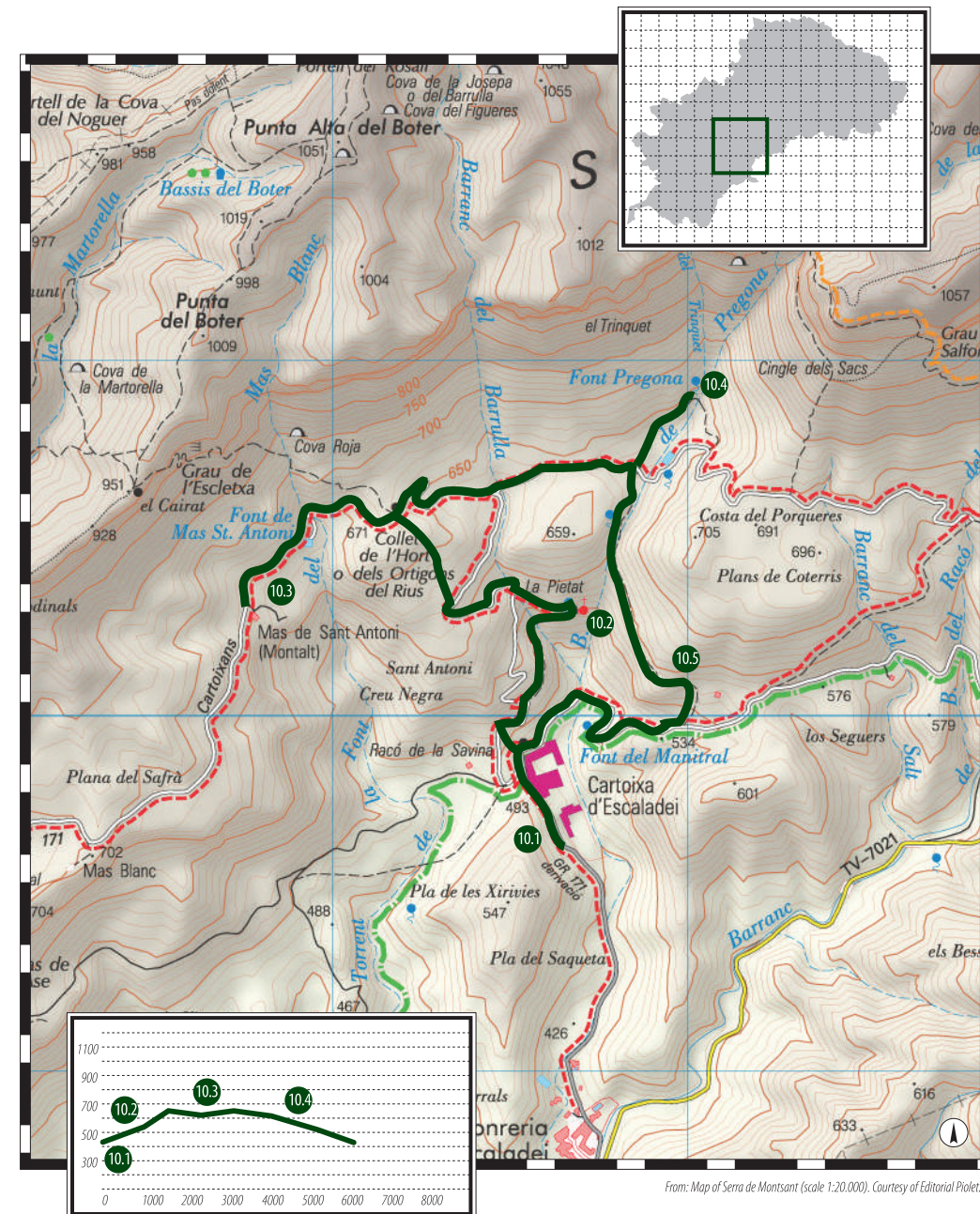
Cliffs of Scala Dei. Eva Civiell.

Trail description

This route leaves from in front of the **Cartoixa d'Scala Dei [10.1]**. The excursion begins along the unsurfaced track that climbs from the left-hand side of the monastery, skirting round it. When you reach a crossroads, take the path just in front, which is simply a shortcut of the path climbing up to the left. When the path returns to the track, continue climbing on this track, until you reach another path leading off to the right, marked with a pile of stones. Following this path, you will soon arrive at **La Pietat [10.2]**. To continue, climb the path which leads off to the left of the building, after skirting round the pond and the graceful cypress tree, cut off to the right on the narrow marked path that again leads to the track. An old chalk oven will appear just in front of you, and to its left, a signpost indicates the path to the Grau de l'Escletxa. Just after this, the path reaches the track again, but this time cross the track and continue along the same well-trodden path. After a while the path crosses the track again, but this time some marking stones indicate where the path continues. When the path again reaches the track, we are at the Collet de l'Hort. Follow the trail along the track, which coincides with the old Camí dels Cartoixans (Route of the Carthusians). First go to the left in order to find the ruins of the **Mas de Sant Antoni [10.3]**. There is a pond nearby which is filled by the spring of the same name. After this, go back along the path a little way and continue in the opposite direction along the track until you come to a fork. To the left, and without losing height, make your way to the **Font Pregona [10.4]** spring. When you reach a vineyard facing a pond, take the path that goes to the left. To return, look for the path that goes off to the right of the pond. After the first cove, the path leads back, tracing a route above the gully. Continue along the flat until you reach the **Coves Roges [10.5]** (Red Caves) where the path descends rapidly to rejoin the GR 171, which brings you back to the starting point.



Aerial view of the Cartoixa. Mireia Vilamala.



From: Map of Serra de Montsant (scale 1:20.000). Courtesy of Editorial Piolet.