

ORÍGENS GEOPARK

ECOTOURISM GUIDEBOOK



Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura



Origins
Geoparque
mundial de
la UNESCO

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Photograph of the cover: Basturs Lakes, a unique spot in the heart of La Conca Dellà.

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DISCOVERING ORÍGENS GEOPARK THROUGH ECOTOURISM

Some trips are inspired by unique landscapes and other go even further. Orígens Geopark in the Catalan Pyrenees, a region with tremendous geological wealth, invites you to travel through time to discover the origins and evolution of the Earth and life itself up to the present day.

This extensive region has a unique natural and cultural heritage giving you the chance to observe, learn and enjoy Earth sciences and Nature in their pure state. So, a good part of the tourism offers and activities in Orígens Geopark are linked to ecotourism, a form of tourism that fits in perfectly with the objectives of the geoparks – the “Geopark” designation is awarded by the UNESCO to areas of international geological interest.

This guidebook contains an extensive collection of ecotourism experiences allowing you to see the local fauna and flora, admire the power of geology, travel through peaceful and wild landscapes on foot, by bike, on horseback, in a hot-air balloon or a kayak, and discover an extraordinarily rich cultural heritage. All these in the context of absolute respect for the environment and the local population. We hope this guide will help and inspire you to enjoy this fascinating territory.

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SANT GERVÀS MOUNTAIN RANGE, ONE OF THE MANY ROCK ESCARPMENTS OF THE GEOPARK. SEE THE PYRENEES IN THE BACKGROUND.

ORÍGENS GEOPARK, A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME



Orígens Geopark, designated by UNESCO in 2018, is located on the southern slopes of the Catalan Pyrenees, in the province of Lleida. It covers a **2,000 km² territory** that includes all the municipalities of Pallars Jussà County, part of La Noguera County (Àger, Camarasa and Vilanova de Meià) and the municipalities of Baix Pallars (Pallars Sobirà) and Coll de Nargó (Alt Urgell). That makes a total of 19 municipalities which, together with Pallars Jussà and La Noguera County Councils, form the Geoparc association, its administrative body.

This peaceful area, where time goes by so slowly, contains a **wide range of genuine natural landscapes**, including rock formations that do not exist anywhere else. The most ancient rocks are found in the northern sector, in the glacial valleys of Vall Fosca. The central and southern areas are mainly characterised by large wide-open valleys, as the Tremp and Àger basins, where sedimentary rocks with large numbers of fossils are predominant. The Montsec mountain range, with imposing mountain cliffs, dominates the southern sector.

Orígens Geopark has been the focus of geological and paleontological research for more than 100 years, providing the basic knowledge to make a **journey back in time** and discover the origins and evolution of the Earth and life. This is a region where rocks speak; a region which needs to be experienced with all five senses to connect with the authentic immensity of Nature, to get away from it all, to taste the local cuisine and to chat with local people.

WHAT IS A GEOPARK AND WHAT ARE ITS GOALS?

Geoparks are territories of international geological interest designated by UNESCO.

The Geopark figure, which goes through a process of revalidation every four years, emerged in 2000 and was integrated into a UNESCO programme in 2015. The Global Geopark Network (www.visitgeoparks.org), which is constantly growing, is made up of more than 150 territories in more than 40 countries.

The Geopark's invaluable geological heritage is associated with the other natural

and cultural features aiming to achieve the following goals: preserving its heritage; encouraging research; raising awareness on issues faced by society, such as the sustainable use of natural resources or the mitigation of the effects of climate change; contributing on to the sustainable growth of the territory by inspiring the establishment of new enterprises and making the most of the opportunities offered by geotourism; and building up a feeling of pride and identification with the Geopark among the local community.

THE GEOPARK'S TOP 10 ECOTOURISM ATTRACTIONS

In such a large territory like Orígens Geopark, it is rather difficult to select the main ecotourism attractions. We encourage you to discover other values not included in this Top 10!

1. THE LAST DINOSAURS IN EUROPE

Millions of years ago, these areas were roamed by gigantic creatures – the dinosaurs – which lived in a tropical environment rather different from the current one. The Pyrenees foothills were home to the last dinosaurs of Europe just before their extinction, 66 million years ago. Several paleontological sites and museums showcase numerous fossil remains of dinosaurs (bones, eggs and footprints) and other animals, such as turtles and crocodiles, which used to live alongside with those giants.

2. A 500-MILLION-YEAR JOURNEY

In Orígens Geopark, the rocks tell us about more than 500 million years of the history of the Earth. Throughout the observation and interpretation of the landscape we can find out about the formation of the Pyrenees, the most prominent topographical unit in the north-eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula. The Geopark also presents a series of impressive geological formations and processes, some very ancient and other more recent, such as: deep canyons (Barranc de l'Infern), landslides (Puigcercós), badlands, bedrock outcrops, tufa plateaus (Mont de Conques), and more.

3. THE MOST MONUMENTAL GORGES IN CATALONIA

Noguera Pallaresa and Noguera Ribagorçana rivers have sculpted the three most impressive gorges in Catalonia: Mont-rebei, Terradets and Collegats. Mont-rebei is the most visited and the only one not crossed by any road. Terradets includes Roca Regina, a huge vertical wall. And Collegats hides l'Argenteria, a delightful tufa waterfall. However, Orígens Geopark enjoys other interesting gorges, such as Escala del Pas Nou, Erinyà, Abella de la Conca and Bóixols.

4. UNESCO-CERTIFIED NIGHT SKIES

The Montsec mountain range, in the southern part of the Geopark, and Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, in the northern sector, are two of the best places in the world for stargazing. Their starry skies are designated Starlight Reserves and Tourist Destinations by UNESCO. The Montsec mountain range has an interpretation centre where you will be able to enjoy a night-time show (exhibi-

tions, telescopes and 3D planetarium), and an astronomical observatory dedicated to scientific research.

5. NATURE IN ALL ITS WILDNESS

In the heart of the Geopark, Boumort Reserve is Nature in its pure state – a real paradise for animals and photography lovers. This wild territory is home to the largest deer population in Catalonia, which every autumn offers the fascinating spectacle of roaring stags during the rut. The Pyrenean foothills are also the only place in Europe where the four European species of vultures share a habitat, including the emblematic bearded vulture. La Terreta valley is another natural site in the Geopark where you can enjoy scavenging birds in flight.

6. DIZZING ESCARPMENTS WITH HIDDEN CAVES

The Montsec mountain range is a real tsunami of stone with great natural and cultural value. This rocky system is the longest escarpment in Catalonia (26 miles) and, together with other rocky areas of the Geopark, contains amazing caves. Some of which can be visited, including the Cova dels Muricecs, Cova Serpent or Cova Negra among others.

7. THE GEOPARK HIGH MOUNTAIN REGION

The territory includes a highland Pyrenean region along la Vall Fosca and Manyanet valleys. Here, along with the Manyanet and Filià lakes, deserve a mention the 32 glacial lakes located at the Vall Fosca highlands, around the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park. Furthermore, the high mountain landscape with several peaks nearing 3,000 metres altitude, allow visitors to watch unique animal species, such as chamois, marmots, rock ptarmigans or alpine accentors, among others.

8. KARSTIC LAKES

Apart from glacial lakes, the region also has groundwater fed lakes. Catalonia has only three of these, two of which are in the Geopark: Montcortès lake, formed by collapse processes caused by the dissolution of salts, and the charming Basturs lakes, built from calcium carbonate precipitation around a groundwater spring. The high lime content of their waters determines their flora and fauna, with some species unique in Catalonia.

9. HERITAGE LINKED TO THE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Geopark's reservoirs – Sant Llorenç de Montgai, Camarasa, Terradets and Sant Antoni – aside from producing power and storing water resources, also have their natural attractions. Sant Llorenç de Montgai reservoir, for example, is a wildlife reserve highly regarded by ornithologists. On the other hand, the mining industry used to be a driving economic force in the region, as testified by the traces left from the past in Gerri de la Sal salt harvesting facilities and the Castell mines.

10. FIRST LEVEL CULTURE AND GASTRONOMY

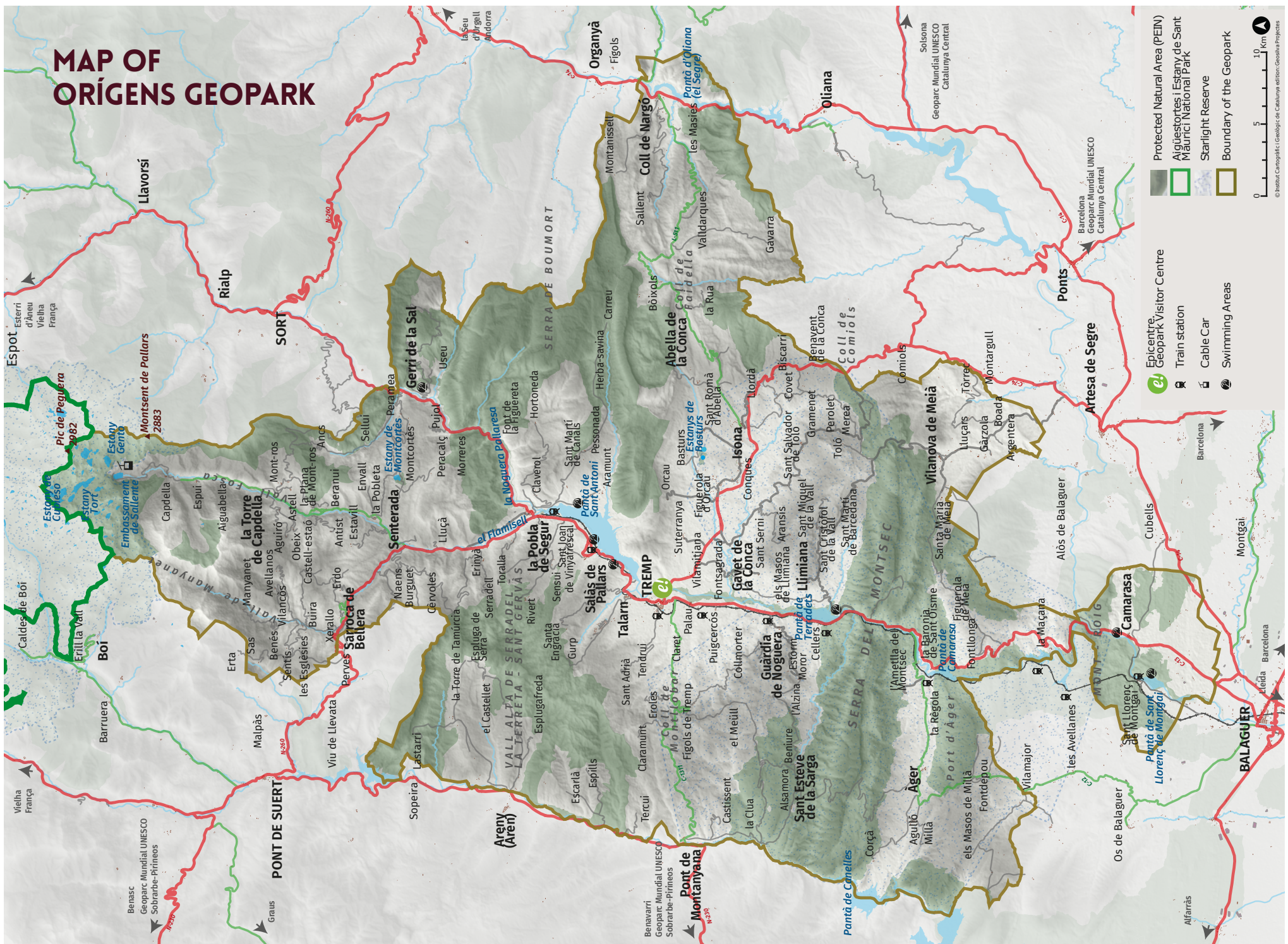
The Geopark natural and cultural heritage go hand in hand. Here, you can enjoy prehistoric caves, such as Cova del Tabac (World Heritage Site), and medieval castles surrounded by wonderful landscapes such as those at Mur, Llordà and Àger, or celebrate old traditions such as *Falles* – a fire festival declared UNESCO World Heritage – and the *Raiers* timber rafting festival, which preserves the historical memory of an ancestral trade.

The local cuisine offers a wide variety of Mediterranean products such as olive oil and wine, as well as local specialities such as Xisqueta lamb, *girella* and *xolís* (cold meats) and *coques de recapte* (thin bread dough topped with vegetables). You can also visit DO Costers del Segre wineries where you will be introduced to the links between wine and geology.



Montsec mountain range, with a sea of fog flowing down the Terradets gorge.

MAP OF ORÍGENS GEOPARK



Protected Natural Area (PEIN)

- Aiguestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park
- Starlight Reserve

Boundary of the Geopark

Epicentre Geopark Visitor Centre

- Train station
- Cable Car
- Swimming Areas

0 5 10 Km

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BADLANDS ARE QUITE COMMON IN THE GEOPARK. SEE THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF FIGUEROLA D'ORCAU IN THE BACKGROUND.

THE BENEFITS OF ECOTOURISM



Ecotourism is a form of tourism which is becoming increasingly popular and consists of watching, contemplating, and discovering Nature in all its forms – wild animals, forests and plants, geological formations, natural landscapes and their corresponding cultural heritage – always in a responsible way and respecting the environment and the local community.

Ecotourism is not only about *what* we visit, but *how* we visit it is just as important. That is why several international bodies have defined some **basic principles of ecotourism** as conditions that should be met by the businesses marketing ecotourism activities, by the public authorities regulating and promoting them, and by the tourists and visitors who, through their decisions and behaviour, always have the final say.

The benefits or principles of ecotourism presented here are entirely in line with the geoparks' goals and values.

STRENGTHEN PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Scientific research provides valuable knowledge, which is the first step towards valuing and respecting something. Ecotourism means both having a great time and learning what natural spaces are like, why we need to preserve them and how to respect them. Visitors are usually accompanied by local specialist guides who reveal the secrets of Nature and help to interpret and give an understanding of the different elements of the landscape.

REDUCE THE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Any tourist activity generates an impact on the environment. However, ecotourism activities done in a correct way use measures to reduce it. Such as the fact that these are carried out in small groups and that respect both the rules governing protected areas and local culture, to the extent that traditional activities are often part of the ecotourism experience.

HELP LOCALS

Ecotourism helps to improve the quality of life of the people who live in the municipalities and regions where it is offered. It provides an opportunity to create businesses and jobs and to settle people in the region, especially young people. It is therefore an economic alternative – although not the only one – for territories with significant natural values where agricultural activity is losing economic significance.

PRESERVE THE NATURAL AREAS YOU VISIT

Ecotourists and the companies which market ecotourism activities generate economic resources, either directly or through taxes that are later invested in projects

of conservation and improvement of natural sites. In some cases, tourists take advantage of their trip to get involved in activities of research or management of the natural landscape.

Apart from these benefits, ecotourism is also beneficial for visitors' health and safety, as it involves small groups of people and takes place in healthy and uncrowded open spaces.

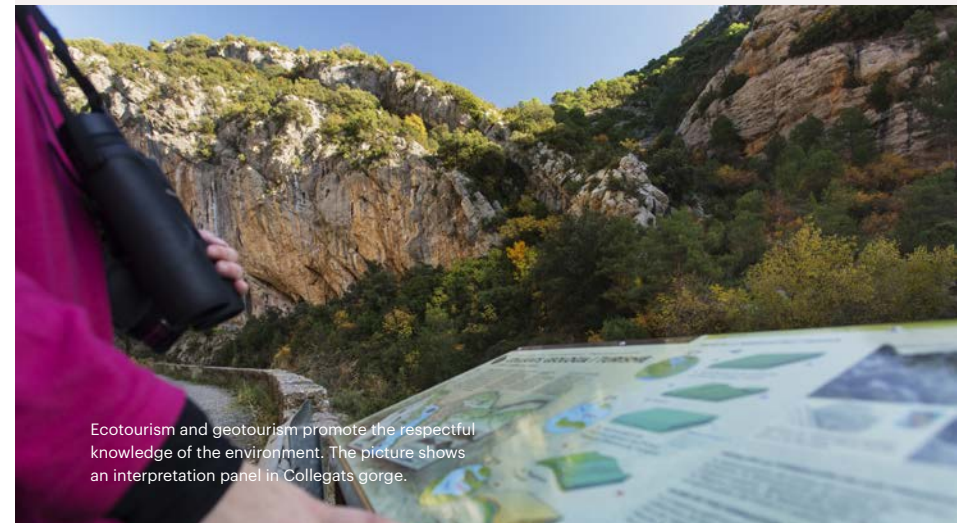
GEOTOURISM AND GEOLOGICAL TOURISM

Ecotourism and geotourism are similar concepts. According to the Arouca Declaration (November 2011, UNESCO), "geotourism sustains and enhances the identity of a territory, taking into consideration its geology, environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents".

Geological tourism is a component of geotourism that enables visitors to understand the past of the Earth and life so as to view

the present from another perspective and project possible shared future scenarios for the Earth and humankind".

In order to ease its comprehension, geological tourism uses clear concepts as well as accessible and comprehensible to the general public by the use of new technologies and the typical heritage interpretation tools (emotion, seduction, provocation, curiosity, etc.).



Ecotourism and geotourism promote the respectful knowledge of the environment. The picture shows an interpretation panel in Collegats gorge.

ECOTOURISTS WALKING THROUGH
THE WONDERFUL VALLEY OF
RIQUERNA, IN THE PYRENEAN PART
OF THE GEOPARK (VALL FOSCA).

ECOTOURISM EXPERIENCES IN THE GEOPARK





THE BOWELS OF EARTH

GEOLOGY, CAVES AND MINING HERITAGE (GEOLOGICAL TOURISM)

Geology is one of the main reasons for the existence of Orígens Geopark. No-one should miss out on discovering its secrets. Come and listen to what the rocks have to tell you. Throughout the observation and interpretation of the landscape, you will be able to understand how the Pyrenees and other incredible geographical features were formed: the Montsec and Boumort mountain ranges; Mont-rebei, Collegats and Terradets gorges; the spectacular landslide at Puigcercós; badlands displaying a wide range of coloured rocks and soils, and glacial valleys such as Vall Fosca. It is a fascinating 500-million-year journey through rocks, water, ice, soil and the Earth processes.

This activity invites you to make tours of the most interesting geological areas. The Geopark has waymarked viewpoints and “georoutes” that can be explored on foot, by bike or by car. It is highly recommended to be accompanied by specialist geology guides, as their knowledge will help you to better comprehend the origin and evolution of the elements you will be observing on your journey and to learn about what happened during the different geological periods.

As a variation on this activity, visits to caves and abysses usually include a hike inside these formations which may require of some physical strength. Equally, mining heritage which is still in place in the territory should not be forgotten, as it will help you to understand the exciting world of geology.

WHERE

Full details of the seven waymarked georoutes are given in the tourist guidebook “Geoparc Orígens. A journey back in time”, which can be downloaded at www.geoparcorigens.cat/en/about-the-geopark/downloads. For mining heritage, don't hesitate to visit the Gerri de la Sal salt harvesting facilities and the Castell mines (Vall Fosca).

WHEN

Autumn and spring are the best times of year for temperature. In summer, you are recommended to do activities early in the morning or in the northern sector of the Geopark located at higher altitude (Vall Fosca and Manyanet valleys).

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

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EUREKA SGN
http://eurekasgn.com

SALVATGINES
www.salvatgines.com

GERRI DE LA SAL MUSEUM
http://baixpallars.ddl.net



PASSION FOR DINOSAURS

GUIDED VISITS TO PALEONTOLOGICAL SITES

Geopark Origenes was home to the last dinosaurs in Europe. 66 million years ago, the fall of a meteorite caused the extinction of those creatures that still arouse passions all around the world. Paleontological research has found clear evidence of their existence here, including bones, footprints and fossilised eggs. Let your imagination soar and travel back to that time and contemplate those gigantic animals roaming in a landscape of tropical beaches, rivers and lakes full of luxuriant vegetation.

This activity offers two options. First, you can visit some of the paleontological sites where remains were discovered. These visits will obviously be much more rewarding in the company of a specialist guide who will help you locate and interpret the fossils of dinosaurs and other ancient creatures such as reptiles (turtles, crocodiles), fish, molluscs, insects and flowers.

Secondly, the museums and interpretation centres that belong to the “Dinosaurs of the Pyrenees” network are worth a visit. These specialized facilities will show you well-preserved fossils – such as a five-metre titanosaur’s neck – reproductions of local dinosaurs and panels with information about what those animals looked like, how they lived and the fascinating history of paleontological research.

WHERE

La Conca Dellà, Coll de Nargó and Vilanova de Meià are the areas of the Geopark where most fossils of dinosaurs and other organisms were found. Their facilities offer guided tours to paleontological sites such as Orcau, Basturs, Suterranya and La Posa (La Conca Dellà), as well as the Cretaceous Viewpoint (Coll de Nargó).

WHEN

Autumn and spring are the best times the year for temperature. In summer, you are recommended to visit paleontological sites early in the morning to avoid high temperatures. Please, check opening times.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

-  **LA CONCA DELLÀ MUSEUM**
www.parc-cretaci.com
-  **DINOSFERA (Coll de Nargó)**
<http://dinosfera.com>
-  **MONTSEC DE MEIÀ INTERPRETATION CENTRE**
<http://dinosaursdelspirineus.cat>
-  **EPICENTRE**
www.pallarsjussa.net/epicentre
-  **EUREKA SGN**
<http://eurekasgn.com>



VIEWS OF THE WILD

OBSERVING WILDLIFE AND ITS TRACKS

Of all the animals that live on Earth, large land mammals are among the most fascinating. To see them, there is no need to travel too far. Orígens Geopark is one of the best places in Catalonia to watch deer, chamois, roe deer, fallow deer, foxes and otters. Although it is worth watching them all year round, the mating season offers impressive natural displays such as the rut, when stags roar and fight for females.

Among the wide range of wildlife watching activities, 4x4 safaris are the most popular. Visitors travel on board a four-wheel-drive vehicle following a specific route and stop in spots where the guide knows there is an opportunity of viewing animals. Another option, which can be combined with the 4x4 trips, is the outdoor wait. Here, you will reach some specific spots on foot with high chances of viewing wildlife. Once there, the guide sweeps the area with binoculars or a telescope to look for the presence of fauna.

The last alternative consists of hiking along routes. On the way, the guide's attentive eye locates animals with binoculars and looks for marks (hair, footprints, excrement, etc.) which are then interpreted to determine the species and their behaviour.

WHERE

Most activities are concentrated in Boumort, a remote, wild mountain range. The official companies of the National Game Reserve offer 4x4 trips and hikes that go deep into the natural areas to listen to and view animals, especially deer. Chamois and marmots can be seen in the higher mountain areas.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

The beginning of autumn, at dawn or at sunset, is when the deer rut takes place. The chamois mating season is later, in November. Although access is more difficult, winter is the ideal time for watching large mammals and finding their traces.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

AMAROQ EXPLORERS
www.amaroqexplorers.com

PIRINEU EMOCIÓ
www.pirineuemocio.com

SALVATGINES
www.salvatgines.com

BOUMORT INDÒMIT
www.boumortindomit.com

PIRITREK
www.piritrek.com

SERRA BOUMORT
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BOUMORT - WILDLAND
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PIRINEU RURAL
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MARTA CAMBRAS
www.martacambras.com

RUTES PIRINEUS
www.rutespirineus.cat



VULTURE QUARTET

BIRDWATCHING
(ORNITHOLOGICAL TOURISM)

Birding or birdwatching is one of the most popular ecotourism activities in the world. The people who do it, known as “birders” or “birdwatchers”, are easy to identify, because they are always accompanied by two inseparable allies: binoculars and telescopes.

Many places in the Geopark allow you to enjoy the majestic flight of scavenging birds. These enormous birds eat the remains of dead wild or domesticated animals and play a key ecological role. The Pyrenean foothills are the only place in Europe where the four main species of European scavengers coexist: the griffon vulture, cinereous vulture, bearded vulture and Egyptian vulture. Hiking or from the lookouts, you can see them flying in the skies or perched in rocky walls. You can also go into the authorised hides and watch them devour their carrion.

The omnipresence of vultures should not overshadow the other stunning birds that also nest in the Geopark, such as red and black kites, the majestic golden eagle, the short-toed snake eagle, the scarce Bonelli’s eagle (in the Montsec mountain range), the goshawk, the peregrine falcon, the black woodpecker and the wallcreeper. And we should not forget birds that live in agricultural and aquatic habitats, such as the European bee-eater, the common kingfisher, the golden oriole and the hoopoe.

WHERE

While the numerous rocky areas of the Geopark – ideal habitats for vultures and other scavenging birds – are perfect places to watch these species, aquatic and wetland areas, such as rivers, lakes and standing water, allow you to watch quite different species. High mountain areas have their own residents, including ornithological treasures such as alpine accentors, yellow-billed choughs, rock ptarmigans and northern wheatears.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

Ornithologically speaking, any time of year is attractive. The Egyptian vulture, for example, is a migratory bird that arrives in March and flies away in September. Spring and summer are usually the best seasons.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
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WHO

AMAROQ EXPLORERS
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BOUMORT - WILDLAND
www.boumort.com

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www.salvatgines.com

CASAL DELS VOLTORS
www.facebook.com/CasalVoltors

PIRITREK
www.piritrek.com



THE BEAUTY OF TINY THINGS

WATCHING SMALL WILDLIFE

It is said that the best things come in small packages. When it comes to ecotourism, the truth is that you can also learn a lot from the tiniest animals. They may be more difficult to find, but they can be even more fascinating than the larger ones.

Insects, for example, include various groups you can discover with the help of specialist guides. In the Vall Fosca or Boumort areas, the fields and forests are perfect for watching butterflies, such as the beautiful Apollos and Spanish moon moths. The traps used during the activity help you to catch and watch small creatures carefully before setting them free again. You can also learn a lot about other insects, such as brightly coloured dragonflies and the tireless, hard-working bees, which give us excellent honey.

Among the most interesting small mammals are bats, with their mysterious reputation. These can be viewed in several caves during the periods outside their breeding season. There are also micromammals such as shrews, as well as moles and hedgehogs. Some amphibians, like salamanders, newts and frogs have really attractive shapes and colours. Reptiles also include fascinating animals, such as snakes, ocellated lizards and Iberian wall lizards. And fish should also not be forgotten, with amazing phenomena like the migration of the barbel (swimming several kilometres upstream before spawning, or laying their eggs).

WHERE

In Terradets gorge, the Cova dels Muricecs is home to a community of about 700 bats which can be seen outside the breeding season. Butterflies can usually be contemplated in middle and high mountain meadows and forests, while amphibians are found in damp woods, rivers and ponds. Reptiles live around rocks, big stones, bushes and fields. You will find fish in the rivers of the Pyrenean foothills.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

Spring and summer are the best seasons to watch and enjoy small animals. In winter, they live in a state of lethargy and therefore are less active.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

BOUMORT INDÒMIT
www.boumortindomit.com

SALVATGINES
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ZENITH AVENTURA
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THE OTHER TWO KINGDOMS

DISCOVERING FORESTS, FLORA, MUSHROOMS AND MEDICINAL PLANTS

Herbs, plants, flowers, fruits, seeds, trees ... as well as fungi, mushrooms and lichens represent two large natural kingdoms that provide us with many benefits that we often ignore. The forests and fields of the Geopark offer several experiences related to botany and ethnobotany, a branch that studies the links between plants and people, including their applications and traditional uses.

The attraction of these activities is walking through natural surroundings while learning how to recognise mushrooms, herbs, flowers and plants and finding out about their curative, agricultural, and gastronomic uses (*ratafia* liqueur, soaps, dye for clothing, etc.) and multiple aromatic properties. Some kinds of flowers are amazingly scarce or have rare colours and shapes, including wonderful species of Alpine flora like the Pyrenean lily, as well as orchids, highly appreciated all over Europe.

Forest bathing is a booming activity that comes from Japan and Korea. It consists of walking silently deep in the woods and doing breathing and relaxation exercises. Led by experts, those “baths” make use of the therapeutic properties of old mature forests – stress relief and improvement of the immune system.

WHERE

The whole area of the Geopark contains a wide range of interesting forests (holm oak, oak, black pine, Scots pine, mountain pine, beech, riverside woodland, etc.) that include monumental trees and plenty of mushrooms. Meadows carpeted with flowering plants can also be found in the low- and mid-mountain areas of the Pyrenean valleys.

WHEN

Plant experiences are offered between spring and summer, when most species bloom, while activities involving mushrooms are carried out in spring and autumn, when the deciduous woodlands burst into a riot of colour.

OPTIMAL			POSSIBLE			NOT RECOMMENDED		
JAN	FEB	MAR						
APR	MAY	JUN						
JUL	AUG	SEP						
OCT	NOV	DEC						

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PARC DE LES OLORS DE CLAVEROL
www.allotjamentrural.cat

PIRITREK
www.piritrek.com

SALVATGINES
www.salvatgines.com



PHOTOS FULL OF LIFE

CAPTURING WILDLIFE,
FLORA AND NATURAL LANDSCAPES

Nature photography is an activity which, with the boom in digital cameras and their development, is becoming increasingly popular. The idea is to capture good shots of incredible landscapes, birds, mammals and other iconic animals, as well as attractive flowers, such as orchids.

Orígens Geopark has permanent and temporary photography hides that allow you to take top-quality pictures of scavengers and birds of prey. Once visitors are inside (or before they arrive), animals are attracted using different methods, usually food distribution and water troughs. The species most people ask to photograph are bearded vultures, cinereous vultures, golden eagles, hoopoes and dippers. Photography hides for mammals (deer, genets, etc.) are also beginning to be installed.

For most photography lovers, the landscapes of the Geopark have an irresistible force and beauty. Autumn forests, gorges, rocky areas, spring flowers, starry skies and high mountain lakes can all provide picture postcard images when caught on camera. On excursions lasting a morning, a whole day or even several days or weeks, you will be accompanied by a professional photographer who knows the best locations and can share photographic techniques with you.

WHERE

There are photography hides all over the Geopark (Baix Pallars, Boumort, La Terreta, Lleràs, Figols, Montsec and others). The most photogenic landscapes are mainly gorges (Montrebei, Collegats, etc.) and lakes (Basturs, Montcortès and high mountain ones). Spring flowers can be admired in the Tremp basin, the Àger valley and Vall Fosca.

WHEN

Photographically speaking, every season has its own charms: snowy and foggy landscapes in winter, flowery meadows and fields in spring, full rivers and lakes after the thaw, night scenes in summer and bursts of warm colours in autumn.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

PHOTO LOGISTICS
www.photo-logistics.com

BIRD PHOTO TOURS - LA SABINA
www.birdphototours.net

BOUMORT INDÒMIT
www.boumortindomit.com

PIRITREK
www.piritrek.com

RNC BOUMORT
www.pallarsjussa.net/boumort

BUSEU PROJECT
www.buseuproject.com

SALVATGINES
www.salvatgines.com



THE STARRIEST SKIES

STARGAZING

Humans have been fascinated by everything they see in the dark skies since the dawn of time: planets, stars, constellations, galaxies, nebulas, ... In 1609, Galileo Galilei changed the way we look at the night, using a telescope. Since then, scientists have revealed the origin of the stars, and the interest in astronomical tourism has been rising.

To enjoy the night show, you need (almost) absolute darkness and favourable weather conditions. The Starlight Foundation – endorsed by UNESCO – certifies the areas that meet those conditions. In Orígens Geopark, the Montsec mountain range, in the south, and the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, in the north, are labelled Starlight Reserves and Tourist Destinations.

This experience consists of watching the night sky with the naked eye, and with laser and portable telescopes, under the supervision of astronomers. The most powerful telescopes are in the astronomic observatories, which, apart from scientific research, also organise activities aimed at tourists, schools and people who want to find out more about astronomy. The village of Àger has several facilities: exhibitions, a telescope park and a 3D planetarium called “the eye of Montsec” – the only one in the world to be equipped with a movable dome that allows the visitors to see the true sky.

WHERE

Located near Àger, the Montsec Astronomical Park/Universe Observation Centre is the perfect place to enjoy the local starry paradise. The rest of the area, which also has low levels of light pollution, has good conditions for watching the night sky, together with local guides, surrounded only by the sounds of Nature.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

Summer is a good season for night temperatures (warm) and phenomena like the Perseid meteor shower. Autumn is ideal for capturing the zodiacal light, while winter is when the night skies have the best light and when, in mid-December, the Geminid meteor shower takes place.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

CELÍSTIA PIRINEUS
www.celistia.cat

UNIVERSE OBSERVATION CENTRE
www.parcetraonomic.cat



A PARADISE FOR HIKERS

HIKING AND SNOWSHOEING WITH LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

Orígens Geopark is a real hiking paradise. The diversity of landscapes, the wide range of waymarked routes with different lengths and levels of difficulty, the dense network of historic paths, the wide skies and the low human activity are good incentives to travel the region to the peaceful rhythm of your own feet.

This activity consists of walking waymarked routes and enjoying the natural and cultural elements you will find on the way, as well as the landscapes that can be contemplated from panoramic vantage points. Some routes have viewpoints and information panels to help you interpret the landscape. Although you can hike on your own, using the existing information about routes and itineraries, we recommend you to walk with specialist guides who will take you to secret places and make you discover curiosities, stories and details that would go unnoticed without their help. That is a real privilege!

The winter hiking variety takes place in the northern sector of the Geopark and consist of snowshoeing through the white landscapes. Walking then takes on another dimension. Here again, you will be safer and learn much more with a guide. Vall Fosca and its secondary valleys – Filià and Riquèrna – are ideal destinations when covered by snow. You will love them!

WHERE

The whole territory of Orígens Geopark is criss-crossed by a dense network of way-marked hiking paths. Montsec, La Terreta, Collegats-Queralt and Vall Fosca offer a wide range of itineraries. Two of the most original routes, consisting of different stages, are the Fifth Lake, which has been awarded several prizes related to responsible tourism, and Ramat de Camins.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

The best times for hiking are spring and autumn because the temperatures are at their best. In summer, you need to look for the shadiest spots or high mountains areas, or start early in the morning. Snowshoeing is only possible in winter or at the beginning of spring.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

- AMAROQ EXPLORERS**
www.amaroqexplorers.com
- LA CONCA DELLÀ MUSEUM**
www.parc-cretaci.com
- PIOLET XPERIENCE**
www.pioletxperience.com
- BOUMORT INDÒMIT**
www.boumortindomit.com
- NATCURE ECOSENDERISME**
www.natcure-ecosenderismo.com
- PIRENEU EMOCIÓ**
www.pirineuemocio.com
- CASA LEONARDO**
www.casaleonardo.net
- OUTDOOR ADVENTOUR**
www.outdooradventour.com
- PIRITREK**
www.piritrek.com
- GUIES VALL FOSCA**
www.guiesvallfosca.com
- AIGÜESTORTES NATIONAL PARK (Information Desk at Estany Gento)**
parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/aiguestortes
- RAMAT DE CAMINS**
www.ramatdecamins.cat
- THE FIFTH LAKE**
www.elcinquellac.com
- MARTA CAMBRAS**
www.martacambras.com
- RUTES PIRINEUS**
www.rutespirineus.cat



PEDALLING THROUGH THE GEOPARK

BIKE TOURING THROUGH NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Cycling. This is what bike touring is all about: another way to travel through wonderful landscapes, in silence, on peaceful secondary roads and traditional paths. Orígens Geopark includes both flat areas, such as trails around the reservoirs, and other more abrupt and steep mountain sectors that are more physically demanding.

Bike touring combines physical exercise and the discovery of amazing landscapes, together with their natural and cultural heritage. Cycling routes can be followed in one day or in several stages that include accommodation and require bicycles adapted to the transport of luggage. The activity can be done on your own, following the waymarked routes, or with a guide, with the corresponding convenience and added value.

Some of the waymarked georoutes of the Geopark can be done by bike so you can enjoy their landscape in all their splendour. These are relatively flat and have interpretation panels. In the southern part, in the Àger valley, several companies offer guided activities with electric bikes (e-bikes), a way of cycling that has become more popular over the last few years making the experience available to people who are not in top physical shape. La Pobla de Segur train station has an MTB centre offering different services to visitors (information, showers, bike renting, etc.).

WHERE

Vall Fosca, in the north of the Geopark, is a staging post of the Pedals de Foc route. The surroundings of Sant Antoni lake are characterised by flat routes that become more demanding on their way up to Boumort mountain range. La Conca Dellà and Àger valleys are great areas for secondary roads and spectacular views.

WHEN

The best seasons for bike touring are spring and autumn, as temperatures are at their best. In summer, you need to look for the shadiest spots or high mountains areas, or cycle early in the morning.

OPTIMAL	POSSIBLE	NOT RECOMMENDED
JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

HOTEL TERRADETS
www.hotelterrajets.com

SALÀS EBIKES
<https://salasebikes.com>

PYRENEAN SPORTS AND NATURE STATION
www.lapobladesegur.cat

ZENITH AVENTURA
www.zenithaventura.com



HORSE RIDING IN THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAINS

GUIDED HORSE RIDING ROUTES THROUGH NATURAL LANDSCAPES

At a gallop, at a trot or just a walk, horse riding routes offer a different way to get in touch with Nature and discover the secret countryside of Orígens Geopark. And the best of it all is that everybody can take part, whether you are an expert rider or a complete beginner.

This activity, which belongs to the “equestrian tourism” category, consists of riding trained horses along charming, scenic paths in natural areas. The duration of the routes can be short (one or two hours), medium (half day or whole day) or long (several days). Longer routes (more than one day) include overnight stays in different lodges and are aimed at experienced riders.

Riding is done in small groups (1-10 people) with one or more guides. In Orígens Geopark, these activities are offered in Manyanet valley, in the Pyrenean sector, and in the wonderful Pla de Corts, across the fields and forests that surround the Montcortès lake. In both areas, the enchanting routes follow historical paths, with some paved sections that are true works of art, and cross rivers and canyons. You will come across all kinds of features: lonely valleys, mosaics of crops and pastureland, medieval villages such as Peramea, dolmens, wide skies and the opportunity to view wildlife such as vultures or foxes.

WHERE

The two main equestrian centres used as starting points for the routes are in the northern area of the Geopark, in Buirà, a village in the peaceful Manyanet valley, next to Vall Fosca, and Montcortès, next the lake of the same name, in the municipality of Baix Pallars, just above the Collegats gorge.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

Unless the snow prevents the activity, most routes can be done the whole year round. However, the best time is when the fields, meadows and forests burst into colours, in spring and autumn. Summer is also great.

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

CAVALLS WAKAN
www.hipicawakan.com

CENTRE D'EQUITACIÓ VALL DE MANYANET
www.casamasover.com



GORGES FROM WATER LEVEL

GUIDED KAYAKING THROUGH RIVER LANDSCAPES

The Mont-rebei gorge is an incredibly beautiful natural site that can be discovered on foot through a path carved in the rock, from the air on board a hot-air balloon, or at water level, paddling in a kayak. Kayaking on the calm river in Mont-rebei surrounded by 500-metre-high limestone walls is one of the most spectacular experiences you can have anywhere in Catalan waters.

The key element of this experience is the environment itself. You can rent a kayak and go rowing on your own. But the experience will be much more rewarding if you do the activity with a guide-instructor who, apart from making you feel safer, will tell you all the secrets of this amazing gorge (wildlife, flora, geology, history, and more). In some cases, the kayaking can be combined with a guided walk along the gorge path and over the spectacular footbridges of Montfalcó, literally hanging from the rock.

Close to another of the Geopark's gorges, you can enjoy the calm waters of the Terradets lake, another fantastic place to kayak. Again, the experience can be more intense and take on another dimension if you go for the guided activity. The route is actually completed with two possible hikes: a visit to Cova dels Muricecs, where you will learn about how different the Montsec mountain range looked when the cave was formed; and the canyon ascent through Barranc del Bosc, one of the most magical places on the mountain.

WHERE

In Mont-rebei, you can start the activities both from Corçà jetty, at the southern entrance, and from the northern entrance of La Masieta (Sant Esteve de la Sarga). In Terradets, the trip usually starts at the hotel of the same name, with shorter and easier routes than in Mont-rebei. Collegats gorge and its varied landscapes can also be kayaked.

WHEN

The best time to come kayaking is summer, when the water temperature is at its best. Spring and the first half of autumn are also good, but proper equipment is needed. As these activities are done in reservoirs, the water level may change.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

INTRÉPID KAYAKS
www.intrepidkayaks.com

KAYAKING MONT-REBEI
www.kmr.es

ZENITH AVENTURA
www.zenithaventura.com

HOTEL TERRADETS
www.hotelterrads.com

OUTDOOR ADVENTOUR
www.outdooradventour.com



THE GEOPARK FROM THE SKY

HOT-AIR BALLOONING AND LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

Flying in a hot-air balloon is an experience you must have once in your life. And if you do it above the broken relieves of Orígens Geopark, you will enjoy a range of extraordinary landscapes from a very unusual point of view. Up in the air, you will feel time literally fly...

This activity consists of a flight on board a hot-air balloon, including landscape interpretation. Although the pilot will obviously be entirely focused on manoeuvring the balloon and ensuring your safety, there are always more relaxed moments when they can give you explanations that will help you discover and understand what you will be seeing from the sky (peaks, mountain ranges, geological structures, valleys, villages, fields, and so on).

The flights through the Geopark on board a hot-air balloon can cover more than 50 km and rise to a height of 3,000 m. From up there, you can see the huge reservoirs of Canelles, Camarasa and Terradets; the long, cultivated valleys around Àger; the steep rocky areas of the Montsec and Sant Corneli mountains, and the extensive Tremp open valley. A landscape dotted with Romanesque chapels and medieval castles in incredible settings, with the magnificence of the Pyrenees in the background. This great adventure will depend on the wind and will give you the opportunity to experience some exciting moments during take-off and landing.

WHERE

Although the number of zones is not limited, the three main areas where the hot-air balloon flights above Orígens Geopark take place are at Sant Llorenç de Montgai lake, Tremp basin – especially La Conca Dellà sector – and the Montsec mountain range, where you will be able to see the famous paragliding area of Àger and the imposing Mont-rebei gorge.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

WHEN

Hot-air balloon flights can be taken all year round. In winter and spring, just put some warmer clothes on: the Pyrenees covered in snow and the seas of fog are well worth it!

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

GLOBUS KON-TIKI
www.globuskontiki.com

Geopark partner | Museum or facility in the Geopark



LEARN, HELP, LOVE

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTARY WORK IN NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

Aside from visiting and discovering natural sites, some ecotourists want to go further and enjoy learning experiences to find out more about specific aspects or to get actively and willingly involved in the conservation of the environment.

The museums and interpretation centres of the Geopark, together with other companies and associations, offer a wide range of educational activities focused on Nature. Most of them are workshops which include an introductory talk, some field work aimed at searching for, studying and sometimes collecting interesting items, and a final part dealing with the analysis of the observed or collected elements, which may be done on site or in a facility. Other activities include building bird nesting boxes, producing items based on medicinal plants, guided visits to exhibitions, audiovisual shows, talks, and more.

If you are willing to get your hands dirty and take part in projects of conservation or recovery of the natural and cultural heritage, there are a series of associations in the Orígens Geopark which will welcome you with open arms. Such is the case of Marques de Pastor, an association that organises the Volunteer's Week of the Gratitude Pallars project – a different kind of holiday that gives you the chance to help restoring old walls and paved paths using the dry-stone building method.

WHERE

Indoor activities (projections, talks, exhibitions) take place in the interpretation facilities located in several municipalities of the Geopark, while outdoor actions are held in rivers (to learn about aquatic wildlife), forests (to install bird nest boxes), fields, and so on. The Volunteer's Week takes place along the paths of the Fifth Lake route.

WHEN

These activities are usually offered when the weather is best: spring, summer and the first half of autumn.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

- EPICENTRE**
www.pallarsjussa.net
- MARQUES DE PASTOR**
www.gratitudpallars.cat
- PARC DE LES OLORS DE CLAVEROL**
www.allotjamentrural.cat
- ESPAI ORÍGENS**
http://espaiorigens.es
- SALVATGINES**
www.salvatgines.com
- LA CONCA DELLÀ MUSEUM**
www.parc-cretaci.com



LANDSCAPES FULL OF HISTORY

CULTURAL TOURS WITH LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

The Geopark's natural environment has been the location for many settlements throughout history: prehistoric villages, megalithic sites, troglodytic caves, medieval castles, chapels and monasteries, farm tracks, lime kilns, stables in rocky areas, trenches during the Spanish Civil War and others. In addition, many legends, brilliantly collected by Pep Coll, among other writers, refer to natural and geological elements. Knowing about this rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage and understanding its relationship with Nature is another aspect that motivates ecotourists.

Origens Geopark offers guided tours that will reveal the history of various fortifications and figures associated with them, as well as some curious facts such as the presence of marine fossils in the walls of a castle. In Gerri de la Sal, the ancient monastery will take you back to the time of the Benedictine monks and their connection to salt. Cova del Tabac, whose paintings have been designated UNESCO World Heritage, offers guided tours with landscape and historical interpretation.

The Geopark is full of legends related to geological heritage. Elves, water women and devils, among others, help us to explain some geological formations. In the north, the Sleeping Giant is one of the most popular of these. Collegats gorge, caves and rocks, Basturs and Montcortès lakes, as well as many other natural sites are also sources of popular stories.

WHERE

Although the castles of Àger, Mur and Llordà are the only ones that offer guided tours, many more, generally located in panoramic settings, are really worth the visit. In Isona, you can learn about the Roman past. In Camarasa, Espai Orígens offers activities related to prehistory. The Boumort mountain range and Collegats gorge have many abandoned troglodytic villages, such as Espluga de Cuberes.

WHEN

The mentioned cultural sites can be visited all year round. Check opening and visiting times. As they are in natural areas, the surrounding landscape changes according to the season of the year, which represents an additional incentive.

OPTIMAL POSSIBLE NOT RECOMMENDED

JAN	FEB	MAR
APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP
OCT	NOV	DEC

WHO

• **ÀGER TOWN COUNCIL**
www.ager.cat

• **LA CONCA DELLÀ MUSEUM**
www.parc-cretaci.com

• **PEPEREPEP CULTURAL**
https://peperepepcultural.cat

• **BOUMORT INDÒMIT**
www.boumortindomit.com

• **ESPAI ORÍGENS**
http://espaiorigens.es

• **SALVATGINES**
www.salvatgines.com

VISITING THE GEOPARK
ACCOMPANIED BY LOCAL
GUIDES MAKES YOUR
EXPERIENCE MORE INTENSE
AND REWARDING.

IDEAS AND TIPS FOR VISITING THE GEOPARK



This last chapter is aimed at helping you to plan your stay at Orígens Geopark and turn it into a real ecotourism experience. It provides you with information and advice to take into consideration before your trip, during your stay and once you get back home.

BEFORE YOUR TRIP

When we prepare a trip, we usually dream, imagine and plan. That means we need useful, accurate and updated information. Here are some resources related to the Geopark territory that could be really helpful.

WEBSITES WITH TOURIST INFORMATION

ORÍGENS GEOPARK

www.geoparcorigens.cat

TURISME PALLARS JUSSÀ

www.pallarsjussa.net

DINOSAURS DELS PIRINEUS

<http://dinosaursdelspirineus.cat>

TURISME PALLARS SOBIRÀ

<http://turisme.pallarssobira.cat>

VINE AL PALLARS, VIU EL JUSSÀ

www.viujussa.cat

TURISME ALT URGELL

www.alturgell.cat/turisme

AL TEU GUST, ALIMENTS DEL PALLARS

www.alteugust.com

TURISME NOGUERA

www.ccnoguera.cat/noguera-turisme

GETTING TO THE GEOPARK

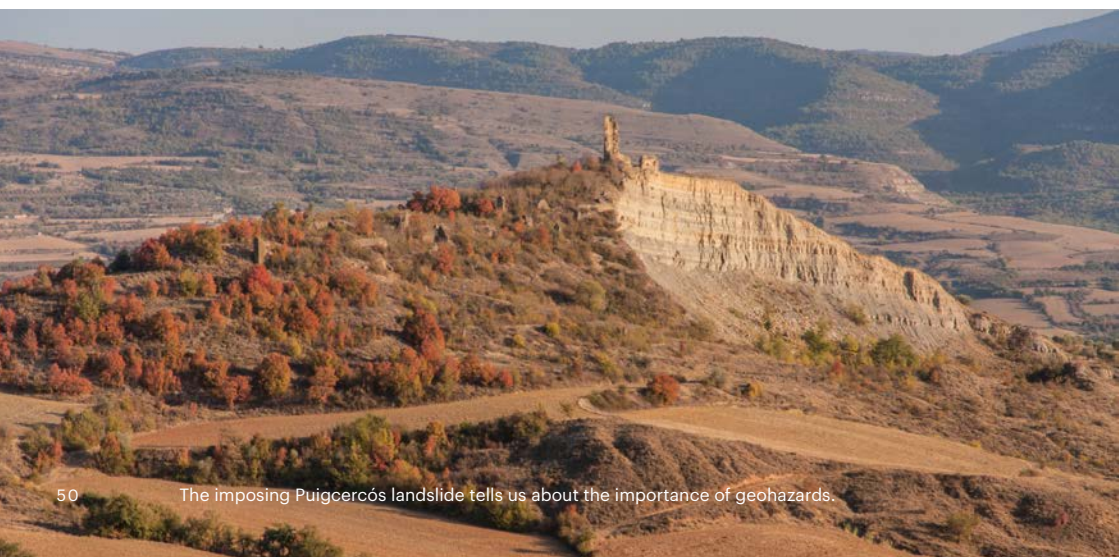
The extensive communication network of Orígens Geopark means you can get there by car, on public transport (train and bus) or by plane.



BY CAR. DeFrom **Barcelona**, the fastest road to Epicentre, the visitors centre of the Geopark, is the A-2 until Exit 517. Then go on to Tremp on the C-74. From **Lleida**, you can follow the C-12, C-13 or C-14 roads, depending on your Geopark destination. From **Valencia**, the main road is the AP-7 to L'Ampolla, and then follow C-12. From the **north of Spain**, the main road is the AP-68, which links to the AP-2 until Lleida. Then take the C-12.

BY TRAIN. Although you may have to combine it with some form of road transport (car, taxi or bus) to your final destination, the train is the most sustainable option for reaching the Geopark. From Barcelona, Tarragona, Zaragoza and Madrid, **Renfe** (Spanish national railway company) offers connections (even high-speed trains) to Lleida, where you need to get off and take the Lleida-La Poble de Segur line.

Operated by **Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya** (Catalan national railway company), the Lleida-La Poble de Segur line has several stops in the Geopark. The main two are Tremp and La Poble de Segur (end of the line), but trains also stop in Sant Llorenç de Montgai, Àger, Cellers-Llimiana, Guàrdia de Tremp, Palau de Noguera and Salàs de Pallars. Further information on www.renfe.com, www.fgc.cat and www.trendellsllacs.cat.



BY BUS. You can travel by public transport with the intercity buses network linking Barcelona and Lleida to several municipalities in the Geopark area. Check lines and times on www.alsa.es.

BY PLANE. The main Catalan airport is Barcelona-El Prat, with services from Spanish and national and international companies, low-cost airlines and charters.

THE TRAIN OF THE LAKES, A TRIP INTO THE HEART OF THE GEOPARK

Lleida-La Pobla de Segur train line has linked these two towns since 1951. Operated by Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan national railway company), the trip takes now about two hours and has 17 stations, some of which are request stops, so you will need to inform the ticket collector to make the train stop.

The route of the line is absolutely fascinating. From the Lleida plain to the Pyrenean foothills, you will go through beautiful landscapes full of fields, rivers, lakes, mountain ranges and great limestone walls, not forget-

ting the numerous tunnels and bridges that allow you to cross the imposing relief of the Montsec mountains.

This rail line is known as the Train of the Lakes. Each Saturday, from April to November, the "Historic Train" offers you a trip on board an old locomotive and carriages. In July and August, you can also enjoy the Panoramic Train, whose special carriages, easy-access platforms and bike spaces allow you to enjoy the landscapes in all their splendour.

Further information: www.trendellsllacs.cat



The Train of the Lakes, a tourist attraction that allows you to enjoy both landscape and history.

LOCAL MEANS OF TRANSPORT

If possible, try to travel across the Geopark by public and collective transport. Several **local taxi services** are available in all the regions (check on the tourist websites).

In Vall Fosca, in the northern part of the Geopark, a **cable car** takes you up to 2,200 metres above sea level to access the only national park in Catalonia: Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici. The 14 minutes long ride carries you 450 m higher, at Estany Gento, the starting point for a wide range of hiking routes. Further information on www.vallfosca.net.

The **Park bus** is a service offered between June and September that joins the villages around Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park. It links La Pobla de Segur, at the end of the railway line from Lleida, to the foot of the Vall Fosca Cable Car. Further information on www.alsa.es and <http://parcsnaturals.gencat.cat/aiguestortes>.

ECOTOURISM CALENDAR

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that can be practised all year round. One of its great advantages is that it is not monotonous at all, as landscapes constantly change, and some natural phenomena only take place at specific times of the year. The following calendar contains some of the attractions of the Geopark that are closely related to the seasons.

SPRING

- Thaw landscapes (lakes, waterfalls, etc.)
- Green fields and blooming fruit trees
- Arrival of Egyptian vultures
- Blooming pastureland and high mountain flowers
- Bird migration
- Barbel migration

AUTUMN

- Landscapes and forests with autumn colours
- Warm light, ideal for photography
- Roaring stags
- Wild mushrooms & fruit
- Chamois and fallow deer rut
- Descent of mountain livestock
- Meteor shower (Geminids)

SUMMER

- Cool forests in shady areas
- Rivers, canyons and gorges (water activities)
- Meteor shower (Perseids)
- Vulture quartet (bearded vulture, griffon vulture, cinereous vulture and Egyptian vulture)
- Roe deer rut

WINTER

- Snowy landscapes (in the highest parts of the Geopark)
- Seas of fog in the basins
- Icy features (springs, lakes, waterfalls, etc.)
- Night skies
- Eagle owl mating song
- Wintering water birds



Grazing Xisqueta sheep (native breed). In the background, La Conca Dellà basin and the Boumort mountain range.

DURING YOUR STAY

By visiting the Geopark, and while you are preparing your trip, you will make decisions that could have a positive impact on the area. Please be aware of this and take note of the following recommendations:

HIRE LOCAL GUIDES TO HELP WITH YOUR ACTIVITIES

Your experience will be much more rewarding and complete than if you do the activity on your own. Check the Geopark partners who offer guide services (www.geoparcorigens.cat/quefer/visites-guiades) and the list of guides of the Alt Pirineu and Aran regions (www.sompirineu.cat/directoriaguides).

TASTE AND ENJOY LOCAL CUISINE, A REAL PLEASURE FOR THE PALATE

Ask for the local specialties in restaurants, buy traditional food (meat, cured meat, wine, cheese, honey, *coques*, jam and so on) and visit local producers (farms, cheese factories, cellars, workshops, breweries, rafia distilleries, etc.). Most food-processed products and local restaurants are promoted with the “*Al teu gust, aliments del Pallars*” (To your taste, food from Pallars) quality stamp (www.alteugust.com).

IF POSSIBLE, GO FOR CERTIFIED TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

Some accommodation and tourist businesses express their commitment to sustainability through well-earned certification. Value their effort and trust them. The “*Vine al Pallars, Viu el Jussà*” project (Come to Pallars, experience Jussà – www.viujussa.cat) includes most accommodation, restaurants, producers and leisure companies from the Pallars Jussà County. Check the offer available in other regions of the Geopark, too.

INTERACT RESPECTFULLY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Try to make sure that the only mark you leave behind is your footprint. That means watching the wildlife in silence and from a cautious distance, taking only pictures of flowers, rocks and fossils (do not take any of them home – leave them so everybody can enjoy them), behaving correctly with mountain livestock and following the rules for protected natural sites.

VISIT THE LOCAL MUSEUMS AND INTERPRETATION CENTRES

Apart from information, you will find exhibitions, audiovisual material, reproductions of dinosaurs, fossils discovered in archaeological sites, and museum facilities. See below a list of museums and interpretation centres closely related to ecotourism (see also Chapter 3 of this guidebook).



DO Costers del Segre wines from the Pallars region are closely related to its geology.

Epicentre. Geopark Visitors Centre | TREMP

Passeig del Vall, 13. Tremp
T. +34 973 653 470
epicentre@pallarsjussa.cat
www.pallarsjussa.net/epicentre

La Conca Dellà Museum | ISONA

C. del Museu, 4. Isona
T. +34 973 665 062
museucd@parc-cretaci.com
www.parc-cretaci.com

Dinosfera | COLL DE NARGÓ

C. de les Escoles, s/n. Coll de Nargó
T. +34 636 417 678
info@dinosfera.com
http://dinosfera.com

Universe Observation

Centre | ÀGER
Cami del Coll d'Ares, s/n. Àger
T. +34 973 053 022
info@parcastronomic.cat
www.parcastronomic.cat

Capdella Hydroelectric Museum | LA TORRE DE CAPDELLA

Central de Capdella. La Torre de Capdella
T. +34 973 663 001
ajuntament@torrecapdella.ddl.net
www.vallfosca.net

Pyrenean Sports and Nature Station and Tourist Office |

LA POBLA DE SEGUR
Plaça del Ferrocarril, s/n. La Pobla de Segur
T. +34 973 680 257
turisme@lapobladesegur.cat
www.lapobladesegur.cat/ca/fitxa/oficina-de-turisme

Espai Orígens | CAMARASA

Carretera C-13 km. 44. Camarasa
T. +34 973 420 427 Ext. 2
espaiorigens@gmail.com
http://espaiorigens.es

Gerri de la Sal Museum and Tourist

Office | GERRI DE LA SAL
Plaça Àngel Esteve, s/n. Gerri de La Sal
T. +34 630 056 138
turisme@baixpallars.ddl.net
http://baixpallars.ddl.net/museu-de-gerri

Montsec de Meià Interpretation

Centre | VILANOVA DE MEIÀ
C. Costa Codina, 16. Vilanova de Meià
T. +34 973 415 005
http://dinosauresdelspireus.cat/
centre-interpretacio-montsec-meia

La Masieta de Mont-rebei |

SANT ESTEVE DE LA SARGA
Crta. de Pont de Montanyana a Sant Esteve de la Sarga, km 8.
Sant Esteve de la Sarga
info@congostdemontrebei.cat
www.fundaciocatalunya-lapedrera.com/
ca/espais-natura/congost-mont-rebei

Vulture Centre |

LA TORRE DE TAMÚRCIA
C. Major, 9. La Torre de Tamúrcia
T. +34 973 057 947 | +34 638 887 681
terreta@tremp.cat
www.viujussa.cat/casal-dels-voltors

Montsec Llimiana Interpretation

Centre | LLIMIANA
T. +34 973 650 773 | +34 689 176 102
ajuntament@llimiana.cat

AFTER YOUR TRIP

Once back home, the time has come to put your photos in order, recall the good times and help the territory that welcomed you. Here are four ideas for practical support you can provide:

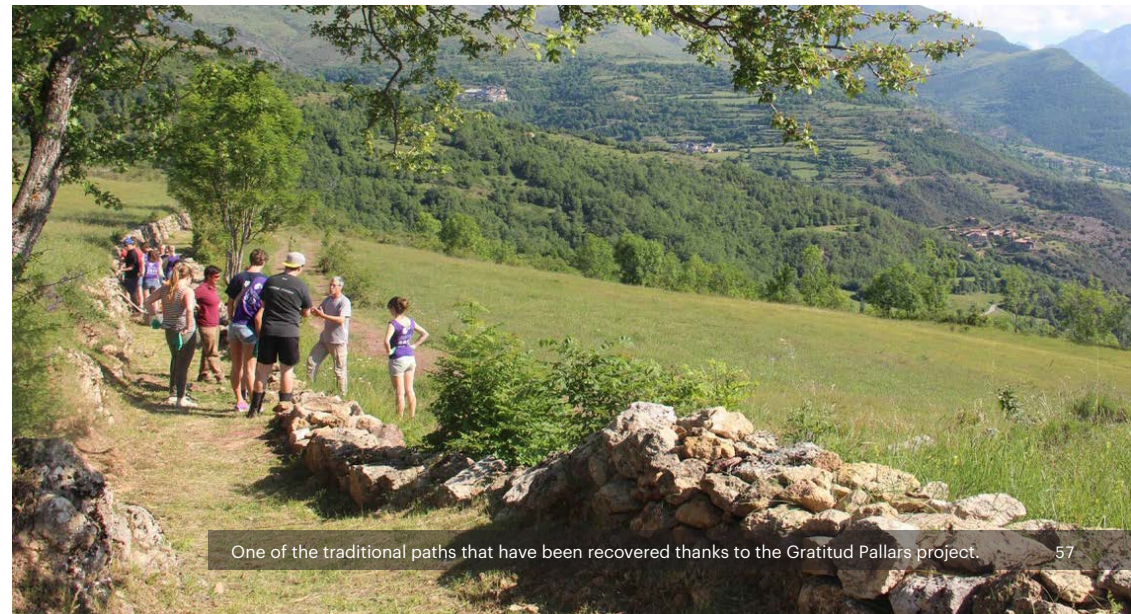
SEND YOUR OPINION

Orígens Geopark is interested in knowing about what you think about your stay so that we can keep improving. To do so, it provides you the following satisfaction questionnaire: www.geoparcorigens.cat/qr0037-eg-ecoguia. Apart from that, accommodation, restaurants and the guides with whom you shared great moments will appreciate it if you leave them some comments on their websites and social media.

DO YOUR BIT FOR LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY

The Gratitude Pallars initiative – launched by the Marques de Pastor association and Consorci Leader Pirineu Occidental – allows you to give all the happiness you received back to Nature and its landscapes. Through small contributions, you can help local projects aimed at conserving some of the natural or cultural elements of the territory you have visited.

Through donations in www.gratitudpallars.cat, you can sponsor traditional paths and make your contribution to recover them or help to manage microreserves (small Nature sanctuaries in the Pallars region). If you wish, you can also take part in volunteer days and learn how to restore old dry-stone walls and paved paths.



One of the traditional paths that have been recovered thanks to the Gratitude Pallars project.

COMPENSATE FOR THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF YOUR TRIP

The carbon footprint indicates the greenhouse gas emissions – quantified as the equivalent CO₂ emissions – that are directly or indirectly produced by a person, organisation or product. When we travel, the emissions from the car, motorbike or plane we use, as well as the nights we spend represent the carbon footprint of our trip. Moving around by train, by bike or on foot can considerably reduce this kind of emission.

Several initiatives and websites allow you to calculate that footprint and to give economic donations to compensate it. Gritud Pallars also offers such a calculator. For example, four people who travel by petrol car from Barcelona to La Pobla de Segur and spend two nights in summer produce 274 kg of equivalent CO₂. These emissions, according to the prices established by the EU Emissions Trading System, are equivalent to about 6.50 euros, a reasonable amount you may donate to help managing Pallars microreserves.

SHARE YOUR GOOD TIMES WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

Tourist destinations are partly influenced by word of mouth, which contributes to promoting them and encouraging other people to visit them. So tell your friends and relatives about what you loved in Orígens Geopark (natural sites, accommodation, gastronomy, guides, etc.) and share your experiences with pictures and texts published on social media (if possible, mentioning [@GeoparcOrigenes](#) and [#GeoparcOrigenes](#)).

THIS IS THE END OF THE GUIDEBOOK.

WE HOPE IT WILL HELP AND
MOTIVATE YOU TO VISIT ORÍGENS
UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK,
WHETHER YOU WANT TO DISCOVER
NEW PLACES OR REDISCOVER ONES
YOU ALREADY KNOW.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU SOON!



Mont-rebei gorge, one of the most spectacular and popular sites in the Geopark.



