


Hiking routes in Alt Camp

12



Between
Mont-ral
and Farena



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NB: Any established written accounts are limited in terms of concrete time and space. The natural evolution of the landscape and human activity can mean that some accounts may become less reliable over time.

12. Between Mont-ral and Farena

On this hike we intend to take you along a small stretch of the PR-C 20* footpath between Mont-ral and Farena. This is actually a linear route which links these two pretty villages in the Muntanyes de Prades, which also means we will have to go and return by the same route. We also have to take into account, when the time comes, the weather forecast and our walking desires and limitations.

We begin our hike from the top of Mont-ral (888m) with its impressive panoramic views. We leave the Vall del Glorieta valley behind us and make our way into the Vall del Riu Brugent, this being a longer and wider valley than the former, with numerous *masies* and small villages which have been uninhabited for some time and now literally abandoned to the fate of time. We will make our way past Mas d'en Verd and under Cadeneta taking the old paved road which will take us to Farena (618m). This small village, in the heart of the Muntanyes de Prades, is one of the most beautiful in the country, with its well preserved streets, tastefully restored old buildings, little Romanesque church and the Castellot.

**Short footpaths are indicated by white and yellow markings along the entire route. The PR-C 20 is one of the many numerous footpaths marked out throughout Catalonia. Starting from Albiol, in the Baix Camp region, the route continues to Cogullons, in Conca de Barberà; joins the GR 65-5 (Camino de Santiago) with the GR 171 in approximately 21 kilometres, allowing us to cross the most eastern part of the Muntanyes de Prades using the signposted footpaths with the guarantee of coming to a good end.*





Mont-ral

12. *Between Mont-ral and Farena*

Time

0:00
Partial



0:00
Total

Distance

0,000
Partial



0,000
Total

Mont-ral (888m). *A small town or municipality on the east side of a hill crowned by the 18th century Romanesque church and bell tower, Església de Sant Pere ad Vincula. The church provides the town with the characteristic hilltop silhouette by which it is recognised near and far, throughout the Muntanyes de Prades, as well as being an impressive vantage point, at 888 metres. Dispersed around the extensive municipality are the villages and hamlets of Farena, L'Aixàviga, el Bosquet and la Cadeneta and the Masies de Cabrera, all in surprisingly beautiful locations and worth a visit.*

Amenities include a bar, restaurant, bakery shop and a refuge.

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Plaça Major, Mont-ral. This square is located at the end of the road which brings us into the old town. Here we can park the car, this also being the site of the local Ajuntament or town hall and where there are also various information boards on both town and district. Continuing along the main road we come to the Musté-Recasens refuge, actually the property of the Centre de Lectura, in Reus. If we continue along Carrer de l'Església we will come to the Romanesque church at the top of the hill, Església de Sant Pere ad Vincula, from where we can also enjoy the excellent panoramic views.

The hike itself sets off from Plaça de la Vila: we begin by heading west along Carrer de la Font and after only twenty metres we come across a small board indicating the walks. The GR 7, heading left, goes to Arbolí, and the PR-C 20 to Alcover; heading right, the GR 7 goes to La Riba and the PR-C 20 to Farena.

We continue ahead to Farena.

0:02  0:02

0,200  0,200

Era de Mont-ral (signposted). We leave the GR 7 which follows Camí de la Font, to the right. We make our way across the flat land or Era until we come to the end, and the junction where the La Foradada and Els Motllats routes meet up (the latter to the left with a steep upward climb) and also the one we will be taking, to Farena (to the right with on a slight downward slope). We will be following the white and yellow PR-C 20 route-markers all the way. We enter the woodlands although it is still possible to see small clearings with fennel grass which until not so long ago were cultivated.

0:01  0:03

0,100  0,300

Chain. We continue to make our way down along the track. On the left, a footpath goes off into the woods; a little further ahead and we pass a small shelter.

0:03  0:06

0,200  0,500

Footpath to the left. We come to, and pass, a barely visible footpath on the left. We continue another ten metres along the track, after which we take the footpath to the left which was actually the old bridle path from Mont-ral to Farena.

Bridle paths were constructed to make easier passage for animals loaded with saddlebags, mostly in the steeper mountainous regions. The width was usually between 0.80m and 1.80m. These paths were frequently

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created using the same dry stone as used in boundary walls and also those constructed to support the terraces, and particularly the most transited or steeper sections. It's also not uncommon to come across places where the rock has been broken up to make way for the path. (Rafael López-Mon-



PR footpath markers



Through the shady woodland

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né. A peu per les comarques de Tarragona. Vol. 1, Col·lecció de Ferradura, Arola Editors, 2005.)

On some stretches it is still possible to see stone paving as well as the boundary and dividing walls of some of the adjacent old fincas. We make our way almost on a parallel with the track, which, as on the section up to now, has engulfed the old path. We begin to make our way along the footpath and come across the track again, now on the right hand side, to follow the old route, close to the left boundary, which now makes its way into the dense box tree woods.

0:06  0:12

0,400  0,900

Track. We take the track left (west) accompanied by Holm oaks, Scotch pines and holly bushes.

0:04  0:16

0,250  1,150

Footpath (807m, post). We return to the bridle path which, having been spared the machines, runs alongside the new track which has been opened to haul away the zone's timber.

0:04  0:20

0,230  1,380

Track. Now we follow the track on the left for a hundred metres or so after which it begins to descend steeply.

0:01  0:21

0,100  1,480

Footpath. We leave the new track and join the old bridle path on the left. At this point there is a signpost and a small hole, intended for removing earth to level the track. However, after rain, it becomes waterlogged, making access rather difficult.

0:04  0:25

0,250  1,730

Intersection with the track. We cross the track and continue ahead on the other side. On this section, which until not so long ago was impassable, the path makes its way hidden between two banks and thick vegetation, rather like a tunnel. The track is on a slightly lower level than the one we are on.

0:02  0:27

0,150  1,880

Track. We continue straight down (right).

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Time



1 h 24'

Difficulty



6,050 km



Distance



12. Between Mont-ral and Farena

0:01  0:28

0,050  1,930

Footpath (755m, post). We retake the path to the left, definitively leaving the track, which now makes its way down to the road from Capafonts to Mont-ral. Initially the path levels out, but soon begins a steep descent.

This descent corresponds not to the old path but rather the new recently opened section.

0:06  0:34

0,420  2,350

TV-7041 Road (700m, post). Between Mont-ral and Capafonts. We cross the road, which we follow twenty metres to the right after which we take a footpath off to the left and make our way up and over the embankment via the log steps.

The path rapidly descends until both water and path often run together, until finally coming to the bed of the Mas d'en Verd gully, the name of which changes further downstream to La Coma.

Before crossing the main road, we come across the Font de l'Escopeta also known as the Font d'en Terrer, with a monolith commemorating the reclamation of this footpath.

0:01  0:35

0,100  2,450

Access road to cultivations. We take this road and continue ahead.

0:01  0:36

0,050  2,500

Barranc de la Coma. Short of there being a drought, there is usually water in this gully. We cross the gully stream and continue along the well-trodden cart track.

0:03  0:39

0,200  2,700

Mas d'en Verd (692m) left of the track. We continue, making our way north and pass in front of the *masia* buildings. The main house has been well preserved but the outbuildings (store sheds and pens) are beginning to suffer the consequences of neglect. Keeping a *masia* the size of this well maintained, in a place such as this, is no mean task for the owners, especially if not permanent residents, since aside from the inclement weather, there is also often frequent pillaging to contend with.

Soon we will turn east, facing Mas d'en Feliu, on the other side of the gully.



Font de l'Escopeta



Mas d'en Verd



Masos de la Cadeneta

12. Between Mont-ral and Farena

0:04 🕒 0:43

0,300 🧑‍🌿 3,000

Power line. We pass beneath the power line cables taking electricity to various *masies* and to La Cadeneta. We make a 180° turn leaving the la Coma gully behind us. Right of the track we pass a barely noticeable track leading to Mas d'en Feliu. We head directly towards the properties or *masies* in la Cadeneta, the track narrowing off to a footpath as we go. In spite of the visual impact created by the power line itself and the vegetation having been stripped for the safety clearance strip, the arrival of electricity to these masos, in 2002, must have meant a great improvement.

0:03 🕒 0:46

0,250 🧑‍🌿 3,250

Barranc del mas d'en Piquer (659m). We cross this gully and a few metres on we are back on a cart track.

0:05 🕒 0:51

0,350 🧑‍🌿 3,600

Intersection with a track (post). We join the track and make a turn to the left (northeast). The branch to the right goes to Roca Monera. We are now in a sunny part of the gully and surrounded by kermes oaks.



Paved footpath

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0:01  0:52

0,050  3,650

Footpath. We continue barely fifty metres along the track to take the footpath branching off to the right between gorse bushes. In front of us we have the impressive Mola de Roquerola, soon to be completely overrun by the woodlands.

0:02  0:54

0,150  3,800

Track. We cross a track and continue along the footpath on the other side.

0:01  0:55

0,100  3,900

Track. We follow the track to the right (northeast). Through a woodland clearing, to the left, we can the masos at la Cadeneta standing proud on the hill.

0:07  1:02

0,500  4,400

Flat land and highway (710m, post). We come to flat stretch of land from where various roads lead off. We take the one to the left, towards the main road from la Cadeneta to Farena, roughly twenty kilometres. We cross the road to follow the cart track on the opposite side. A little further on and we come to a bright yellow notice warning of the presence of bees.

0:03  1:05

0,200  4,600

Fork. We leave what was a comfortable, albeit gradually narrowing, footpath, to take a downward sloping footpath, to the right, which runs in the opposite direction to the one we were following towards la Cadeneta, very close to here.

We have actually taken what was the old bridle path from Farena to la Cadeneta. This stretch has been very well preserved with retaining walls, paving stones, steps, etc.

0:06  1:11

0,450  5,050

Road (665m). We cross the road and make our way down the steep retaining embankment. Once again we take the old bridle path which levels off to a slight downward slope. We pass unhurriedly beneath the foot of the Roca Blanca crags which rise impressively above us. Underfoot the path is paved and with steps.

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Font Calenta

Start of a steep downward slope. The path, intelligently, adapts to the terrain: zigzagging its way down and avoiding the steep slopes the animals loaded with saddlebags weren't able to overcome. Being intelligent we therefore avoid taking the short cuts which appear to be water trenches, more so than the footpaths, the only outcome of which could be our damaging the footpath, or in the worst case, damaging ourselves.

0:07 🕒 1:18

0,500 🏃 5,550

Road (posts). We meet up with the road which we take to the right. Now, for the first time, we can see Farena.

0:04 🕒 1:22

0,300 🏃 5,850

Bridge (590m) over the river Brugent. After the end of the safety fence, on the right hand side (post), we leave the road, coming off close to an agricultural plot. We have to make our way back a little to go between the road embankment and the cypress hedge around the plot. Now we find ourselves close to

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the river and, directly before us, we have a tree of spectacular proportions. We make our way to the left continuing until we come to a paved road. Previously we came across a sign, close to the ground, for Font Calenta, this being where we actually are, accessed by a stairway.

0:01 🕒 1:23

0,100 🧑‍🌾 5,950

Paved road. We come to a paved road which we follow left. We are now at the foot of a large crag which juts out over the river above which stands Farena.

0:01 🕒 1:24

0,100 🧑‍🌾 6,050

Farena (630m). *Farena is a populated nucleus with a unique landscape, located at the point where the river Brugent widens. The village houses have been renovated and the original aspect of the village maintained, set on a hill and topped by the Església de Sant Andreu, the Romanesque church. The village appears to be something from a nativity scene.*

Amenities here include a bar, restaurant and accommodation (“allotjament rural” and “casa de colònies”).

On the right we see an inspection hut for the sewers with a plaque on the wall reminding of the inauguration date for the local public sewage system. We enter the village by making our way up the steps on Carrer de la Font, which will take us to Plaça Vella. Now all that remains is for us to discover the village for ourselves.



Farena



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