

ROUTES AROUND CLARAMUNT CASTLE FRONTIER CASTLES

In the 9th century, what is now the district of Anoia lay between the counties founded by Charlemagne to the north and the frontier of Moorish Al-Ándalus to the south. It was sparsely populated, perilous and lacking political organisation of any kind. From the 10th century onwards the frontier counts gradually extended their control towards the south and west. The initiative of noble families and powerful clergy brought about the growth of the counties of Barcelona and Manresa, and great stretches of territory were fortified and repopulated, amongst them the Òdena basin and almost all the rest of the district.

The territory conquered during the 10th century and the first decades of the 11th were structured around a dense, comprehensive network of castles, each the centre of what became one of the basic territorial and jurisdictional units of each county's frontier areas. The castles were built in this period in order to control and defend the territory. They were mostly very small fortifications, perched on inaccessible hilltops which offered excellent vantage points.

The fortified sites we are suggesting you visit begin to be documented in the 10th century. As you discover them you will be able to retrace the steps of the people who lived there in the middle ages.

View from the south © MHC



1

Claramunt castle

The castle's domains belonged to the families of Claramunt (10th–11th centuries), Cardona (12th–17th centuries) and Medinaceli (17th–19th centuries), and contained the villages of La Pobla de Claramunt, Capellades, Carme, Òdena, Torre de Claramunt and Vilanova del Camí. The castle occupies a prime geostrategic location at the eastern end of the Guàrdia range of hills. The complex is adapted to the shape of the hill so as to occupy the whole of the hilltop. On the highest part of the site, along the cliff, stands the core of the castle, the upper bailey or enceinte, built mostly during the late middle ages. There is such a fine view from the roof terrace that you can make out the castles of Òdena, Montbui, Miralles and Orpi. The outer wall, reinforced by flanking towers at intervals, surrounds and protects the lower bailey, tracing a long course from the square north tower to the entrance gateway. In the north-east corner of the fortress it descends the precipice to reach the most inaccessible point. The fabric of the wall, in spite of the fact that it has undergone various alterations, clearly dates it to the early middle ages.



Apsé of the church of Santa Maria © MHC

The inner defensive wall, of a much later date, separates the upper and lower baileys, following a somewhat angular course from north to south. It can be seen from the perimeter path that this wall was only a few metres high. The defensive complex is completed by the Romanesque church of Santa Maria and the Gothic chapel of Santa Margarida, which also serve to reinforce the perimeter adjacent to the castle's gateway. Claramunt castle is an example of how constructional and stylistic elements of very different periods can combine successfully in a single heritage site.

2

Orpi castle

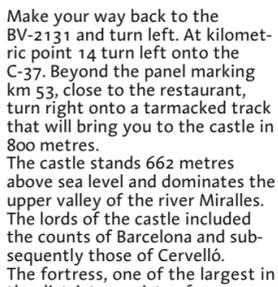


Polygonal tower with adhering buildings

Having descended the road that leads down from Claramunt castle, turn right on reaching the major road. A few metres further on you come onto the BV-2131. Near kilometric point 7 (indicated by roadside panels) turn left onto the BV-2132. The castle stands on a rocky outcrop on the right bank of the usually-dry river Carme, with a commanding outlook over the valley. From the 13th century onwards it appears in records mainly in connection with the house of Cardona. In 1320, Infant (crown prince) Alfons had it demolished as a result of a dispute between him and Ramon Folc de Cardona. As you draw closer you will see that the remains of the original castle have been swamped by modern constructions. The only surviving building is the magnificent hexagonal tower with two curved faces. Approach it by going through the gate and continue until you come to the living rock on which the tower stands. The construction, which might date from the 14th century, was restored in 2004. Its present height is 12 metres. The fabric of the walls consists of small and medium-sized blocks, more finely worked in some areas than others. The visit to the castle is entirely exterior and is free of charge. While in Orpi you might also like to visit the Romanesque church of Sant Miquel, alongside the castle, and the Gothic church of Santa Càndia, at the bottom of the valley.

3

Miralles castle



Polygonal tower with adhering buildings

Make your way back to the BV-2131 and turn left. At kilometric point 14 turn left onto the C-37. Beyond the panel marking km 53, close to the restaurant, turn right onto a tarmacked track that will bring you to the castle in 800 metres. The castle stands 662 metres above sea level and dominates the upper valley of the river Miralles. The lords of the castle included the counts of Barcelona and subsequently those of Cervelló. The fortress, one of the largest in the district, consists of an upper and a lower bailey. In both cases the natural defences complement the fortifications perfectly. This fortification strategy is very commonly found in frontier castles. We suggest you begin your tour with the outer line of defence, where the remains of constructions, probably houses, can be seen against the wall and the two towers. The largest of these, located at the south-eastern end, has been dated to the late mediaeval period. It played an important role in controlling access to the castle. In spite of having lost its upper storeys and having been split in two, it has withstood the various demolitions and misfortunes of the past better than the rest of the castle's military buildings. The shape of its perimeter, albeit almost rectangular, is reminiscent of an inverted L. In the walls can be seen loopholes and



Tower of Miralles castle © MHC

a raised doorway. The corners of the construction are reinforced with medium-sized ashlar blocks. On the lower floor you can discern the remains of what was probably a cistern, a feature almost invariably found in castles. The square tower with loopholes at the other end is very ruinous. It seems most likely that it dates from the 10th century. As you pass through this outer line of defences take care as the ground is very rough. In the midst of the fortress stands the church of Santa Maria, which served as the parish church until 1911. Miralles is another example of how ecclesiastical parishes grew under the protective shadow of each district's castle. The single-aisled church is roofed with a slightly pointed barrel vault. The masonry of the walls becomes smaller the greater the height above the ground. The inside of such walls is usually filled with limestone mortar and unworked stones collected from the ground. The evidence points to a date about the turn of the 12th to the 13th century. In order to visit the interior, ask for the key at the town hall. The upper bailey, which stands on a rocky outcrop, is reached by steps on the western side. The faces of the wall are built of rough masonry. If you examine



Church of Santa Maria

the southern wall you will see many courses of *opus spicatum*, or herringbone masonry. This part of the castle, which dates from the earliest period of construction, still preserves the rounded south-east corner. The doorway in the eastern wall is the most likely site of the original entrance. The loopholes in the northern wall emphasize the building's markedly military character. Having finished your tour you are recommended to go down via the steps. Visiting the castle is unrestricted and free of charge.



Miralles castle © MHC

4

Castell de Montbui o de la Tossa



Church of Santa Maria

To reach La Tossa go back to the C-37 and turn left towards Igualada. At kilometric point 60, take the turning that leads to the castle. Lords of the castle included count Borrell II, king Jaume II and the Cardona family. It now belongs to the Tossa Foundation. In 2004 a consortium was created consisting of the Santa Margarida de Montbui local council and the Foundation to complete the restoration and refurbishment of the monument and its surroundings. You should begin your visit with



Great Tower © MHC

pose that it served a residential function. In the faces of the wall, built of roughly-squared blocks of stone, you can see several courses of herringbone masonry. The original doorway into the tower was at first-floor level, a very common mediaeval arrangement. It seems coherent to date the structure to the 10th century. On the ground floor there are two rooms used for exhibitions. On either side of the tower, a few metres lower down, you can see some stretches of mediaeval wall. Be particularly careful on the north side as the land is rougher there.



Church of Santa Maria. On the altar there is a replica of the lost image of Our Lady of Grace

Having visited the castle, you could take the opportunity to explore the rest of the hill top and enjoy the scenery. The Salt de la Donzella ("maiden's leap") viewpoint, with its panorama of the whole of the Òdena basin, is unlikely to leave you indifferent. The visit is free of charge and unrestricted. To see the interior you must go during public opening hours, or make a prior arrangement with the Santa Margarida de Montbui local council or the Tossa Foundation.

5

Castell d'Òdena



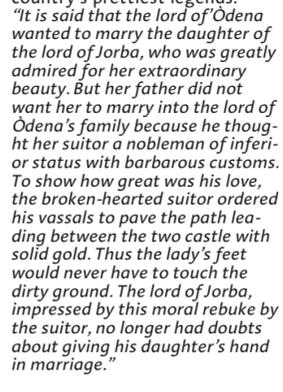
Church of Santa Maria

Having returned to the C-37, turn left. On entering the district of Sant Maure (kilometric point 63) ignore the direction sign at the first traffic lights and go straight on. At the second roundabout cross the bridge on the right. After the bridge turn right and then left, along Carrer del Portal. Go straight on through the Plaça de Castells and along Avinguda de Balmes. Further on, go straight on at the roundabout and continue along the same avenue. Get in the left-hand lane and go under the bridge. Stay on the main road (C-37) and you will come to Òdena. Just by the panel marking km 69, turn left. You will find the castle by following the roads leading uphill. The castle, which came into the possession of the Cardona family in the 14th century, was demolished in 1463 on the orders of the Diputació del General (the ruling council). The start of limestone quarrying in 1943 led to the destruction of nearly all the surviving parts of the fortifications as well as the civil buildings within. In the middle ages many villages were built close to castles, or in some cases within the walls themselves. At Òdena the village huddled within the fortifications. For safety reasons, there is now no access to most of the original site of the castle. We suggest you go up to the foot of the tower and enjoy the view of the Òdena basin, with Claramunt castle in the distance. The tower, which has been dated to the 12th century, now belongs to the local council. Its strategic location, close to the castle gateway, enabled it to defend the weakest, most accessible flank. It is built of ashlar masonry and reaches a height of 10 metres. It is hendecagonal (11-sided) in plan and parts of the walls still retain the original rendering. The faces of the walls slope slightly inward, giving the tower a truncated pyramid shape. It is believed to have been divided into four storeys, the lowest of



Castle tower with the original gateway

which served as a storage silo. The entrance doorway is about 3.6 metres above ground level. Remains of the perimeter wall can be seen close to the tower. For a much better view, take a walk along the street below. The visit to the castle is entirely exterior and unrestricted. While there, you may also like to visit the Romanesque church of Sant Miquel, a few hundred metres away. Also, the neighbouring city of Igualada, the district capital, offers a wide range of possibilities. To conclude, here is one of our country's prettiest legends: "It is said that the lord of Òdena wanted to marry the daughter of the lord of Jorba, who was greatly admired for her extraordinary beauty. But her father did not want her to marry into the lord of Òdena's family because he thought her suitor a nobleman of inferior status with barbarous customs. To show how great was his love, the broken-hearted suitor ordered his vassals to pave the path leading between the two castles with solid gold. Thus the lady's feet would never have to touch the dirty ground. The lord of Jorba, impressed by this moral rebuke by the suitor, no longer had doubts about giving his daughter's hand in marriage."



Remains of the main tower of Vilademàger castle

6-7

Alternative route from point 3



Church of Sant Pere in Vilademàger castle

If you have time after visiting Miralles castle, you might like to pay a visit to Vilademàger castle, in the municipality of Llacuna, and Queralt castle, in Bellprat, which are relatively close by. Go down to the C-37, turn right, and further on, at the roundabout, take the turning for Llacuna. On reaching the village follow the signs for Sant Joan de Mediona. Just before reaching the sign that signals you are leaving the village, turn right following the sign for the camp site. Continue along the track until, after the cemetery, you come to a little esplanade with a fork in the track. It is advisable to go the rest of the way to the castle on foot.



Remains of the main tower of Vilademàger castle

6

Vilademàger castle

According to some sources, during the 11th century, while the castle formed part of the dominions of the count of Barcelona, it was severely damaged in a Moorish raid. In the 14th century it became part of the domains of the barony of Llacuna. The castle stands on a crag 712 metres above sea level. When you reach it, the first thing you will see is the tower on the south-east side, placed there to control the most accessible approach. The lower storey is irregular in plan on the exterior but almost square inside. The upper part, in very ruinous condition, seems to have been circular. Rectangular shapes are more suitable for the arrangement of rooms inside, but circular shapes are better from the point of view of defence. The structure may date from the castle's earliest period of construction. Take care not to go too close to the cliff. From here, go to the centre of the fortress to see the church of Sant Pere, parts of which date from several different periods, mostly Gothic. The church, which had partial rights over the village until the 18th century, consists of a single aisle with a polygonal apse and a doorway with a double semicircular vousoired arch. Notable features of the interior are the ribbed vault over the apse, remains of mural paintings dating from the 14th century and a magnificent Romanesque stoup. You will need to ask for the key at the tourist information office in Llacuna or at the town hall. As for the rest of the complex, it is worth mentioning two stretches of defensive wall and the entrance gateway, located to the north. Close to the gateway there was a semicircular flanking tower that can be discerned through the trees from outside the castle. The visit to the castle, which is unrestricted, affords exceptional panoramic views over the Llacuna plain. On no account should you leave Llacuna without visiting its old quarter. You should not miss the Plaça Major with its arcades, the Banya, Garreta and Gavatx gates, or the Fortmicó tower.

7

Queralt castle



Ruins of the castle

Go back to the roundabout on the C-37 by retracing your route. Then take the B-220 towards Santa Coloma de Queralt and Bellprat. About 100 metres after the panel marking km 8, turn right. After having travelled 2.9 km along the track, you will reach the Romanesque church of Sant Jaume, just below the castle. It is a good idea to start the visit with this church, which has been completely restored. From here a rather steep path leads up to the castle, atop a rocky outcrop. Take extreme care with the last few metres of the ascent, and particularly while you are inside the fortification. The lordship of the castle originally pertained to the counts of Barcelona, who sold it to the viscounts of Guitarr in 976. It later became part of the barony of Queralt. The castle stands at a height of 851 metres above sea level on one of the highest points of the Miralles-Queralt range. Its spectacular outlook takes in a number of other castles, including Vilademàger. Queralt is a perfect example of the importance of intercommunication in case of danger. The castle buildings, which were essentially intact in the early 20th century, are now in ruins. Notable amongst what remains is the great

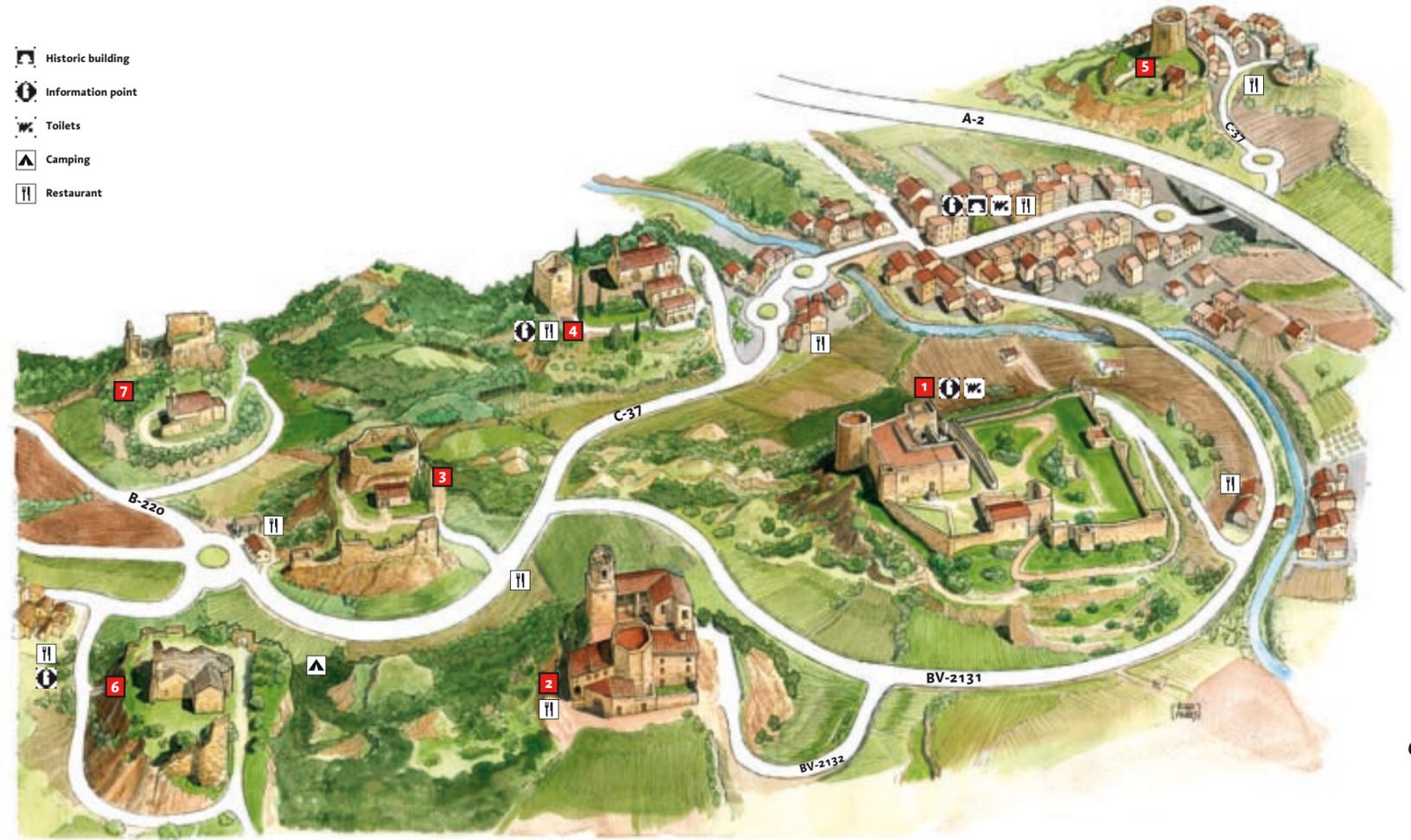
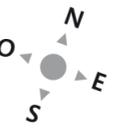
north facade, with windows and loopholes. It is also worth mentioning the pointed arch high up in the building, a room in the south-west corner and the remains of a highly unusual stone channel on the west wall. The path that passes alongside the north facade leads to the church of Sant Miquel, part of the castle complex, of which a good part of the western wall remains, with its bell turret. The Association of Friends of Queralt Castle was founded to refurbish, promote and maintain the castle and its surroundings. The visit to the castle is unrestricted.



Remains of the church of Sant Miquel

WALKS AROUND ROUTES AROUND CLARAMUNT CASTLE

ENGLISH



- 1 CLARAMUNT CASTLE**
- Distance: 1.1 km from the car park
 - Length: 20 minutes on foot
 - Difficulty: moderately difficult
- 2 ORPÍ CASTLE**
- Distance: 11.3 km from the Claramunt castle car park
 - Length: 15 minutes by car
 - Difficulty: easy
- 3 MIRALLES CASTLE**
- Distance: 11.4 km from point 2
 - Length: 17 minutes by car
 - Difficulty: easy
- 4 MONTBUI, OR LA TOSSA, CASTLE**
- Distance: 10.1 km from point 3
 - Length: 14 minutes by car
 - Difficulty: easy
- 5 ÒDENA CASTLE**
- Distance: 11.3 km from point 4
 - Length: 21 minutes by car
 - Difficulty: easy
- 6 VILADEMÀGER CASTLE**
- Distance: 11.4 km from point 3 (11 km by car and 400 m on foot)
 - Length: 30 minutes (18 by car and 12 on foot)
 - Difficulty: easy.
- 7 QUERALT CASTLE**
- Distance: 16.1 km from point 6 (400 m on foot, 15.5 km by car and 200 m on foot)
 - Length: 41 minutes (10 on foot, 26 by car and 5 on foot)
 - Difficulty: easy

ROUTES AROUND CLARAMUNT CASTLE

Each of the seven castles included here possesses its own curious and attractive features that make a fundamental contribution to the route as a whole. The beauty of the landscape and the natural surroundings, plus the historical and heritage interest of the visit, will all make for pleasant memories of your time in the Anoia district. The route suggested here can be covered in one or two days. To help you plan the journey, here is a list of distances and approximate times.

- Historic building
- Information point
- Toilets
- Camping
- Restaurant

Pale Stonecrop (*Sedum sediforme*)

This dense plant, with swollen leaves full of water, survives well in dry, rocky places. It is a small plant and would go unnoticed were it not for its corymbs, the pretty yellow flower clusters that grow on the top of its stems.



Red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

The numbers of this popular bird, typically seen in fields and open spaces, have diminished recently due to hunting and the abandonment of formerly cultivated land. At the beginning of June broods of up to fifteen chicks hatch, but they are often easy prey for predators.



Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)

This charming mammal lives in all kinds of woods, although its preference is for pine woods where it leaps from branch to branch. Red squirrels feed mainly off pine nuts, hazel nuts, acorns, walnuts and chestnuts. Their fur is red in the summer but turns greyer during the winter.



Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

A small bird of prey easily recognised by its habit of hovering in the air while beating its wings quickly and energetically. It nests on crags and also on buildings such as towers. On cultivated land it finds large numbers of insects, birds and small mammals.



Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Red foxes can be over a metre in length including the tail and can weigh six kilos. Red foxes have always been in considerable competition with man, given their propensity to visit farm henhouses. Their main source of food, however, consists of birds, small and medium-sized mammals, insects, snails and fruit.



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The countryside surrounding the castles forms a mosaic of woods, thickets, and cultivated fields set between the high plateaus of the Segarra and the mountain ranges running parallel to the coastline. The rock formation gives rise to long cliffs and bare hill-locks of grey earth with gullies formed by the passage of streams. The traditional Mediterranean cultivation of olive trees and vines has now given way to extensive woods of Aleppo pine which now cover the former rows of terraces and provide shelter to a large variety of fauna. The ecological value of this landscape was recognised with the inclusion of the Miralles-Queralt and Ancosa-Montagut ranges in the Plan for Spaces of Natural Interest.



Miralles castle

Holm oak (*Quercus ilex subsp. ballota*)

This sub-species of Holm oak grows in the driest places and is common to inland Catalonia. The hard, glossy, evergreen leaves are velvety below and the fruit of these trees, acorns, is a very important source of food for woodland animals. Traditionally, charcoal was made from the wood.



Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*)

This is the most widespread species of pine in low-lying Mediterranean mountains. It is not a demanding species and often colonises formerly cultivated land and areas that have suffered the effects of fire or have been felled. Aleppo pines are not particularly graceful trees, having twisted trunks. They can also be recognised by their pine cones which hang from backward-curving stems.



Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

One of the most well-known aromatic herbs. In fact it is a bush that can reach a height of one-and-a-half metres. Because its stems are woody and it has needle-like leaves it is well equipped to withstand periods of drought. It has culinary uses and is also used in folk medicine.



CODE OF CONDUCT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The itineraries we suggest here are basically around and about the Miralles-Queralt range. Please remember to treat the countryside with all due respect and leave the places you visit unchanged so that others may enjoy them as you have. Although the routes do not present any great difficulty and almost everywhere is accessible by car we would advise you to wear comfortable and appropriate footwear. If you are with children you must be very careful and not lose sight of them at any time. It is important that, during your visit to these sites and monuments, you observe the following regulations:

Rubbish

Do not leave any bottles, tins, paper or any other kind of rubbish behind you. It mars the landscape and can cause harm. If you do not find anywhere to dispose of refuse properly, take it with you.

Dogs

If you have brought a dog with you, it is your responsibility to ensure that it is always under your control and to prevent it from causing a nuisance to other people and animals. Dogs' owners are responsible for any damage they may cause. Furthermore, you must not allow your dog's excrement to foul public places. Dogs are not allowed in many places.

Noise

Avoid making strident noises. They can be a nuisance to both people and animals, even over long distances. If you have brought a radio with you, please reduce the volume as low as you can.

Flora and fauna

You must not remove any flowers or plants nor cut any branches. There is no need to do so and it is much better to take a photograph. During guided visits, please do not talk while the guide is talking and if you are accompanied by children, please ensure that they too behave with due respect.

Camping

Camping on the mountains is absolutely prohibited.

Signs

Observe the signs. They are there for your safety, the safety of others, and to protect the environment.

Monuments

To avoid any mishaps it is advisable, before visiting any of the monuments, to check the opening times, cost of admittance, places of entrance, etc. You must not climb on the walls of the monuments, it could be dangerous. Neither must you inscribe anything on the walls or write any kind of graffiti anywhere. If you would like a souvenir of your visit it is better to buy one, or to take a photograph. During guided visits, please do not talk while the guide is talking and if you are accompanied by children, please ensure that they too behave with due respect.

Foc

It is absolutely forbidden to make, or start, fires. Do not discard unextinguished cigarette ends, lit matches or glass. All risks must be avoided. A moment's carelessness could destroy what nature has taken hundreds of years to create and could lead to dire consequences.

CLARAMUNT CASTLE

GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS

Wednesday to Sunday and public holidays, subject to prior booking. Information: 93 808 60 75 (Town Council) Reservations: 670 22 55 16 (guide). Except Monday and Tuesday.

OPENING TIMES

From 1 May until 30 September from 10 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. (+30') and from 4 p.m. until 6.30 p.m. (+30') . From 1 October until 30 April from 9.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. (+30') and from 3 p.m. until 4.30 p.m. (+30') The ticket office closes 30 minutes before closing time and entrance is no longer permitted. The castle is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, except on public holidays, and on 1 and 6 January and 25 and 26 December. www.lapoblaDECLARAMUNT.cat

ORPÍ CASTLE

- Information: 93 808 01 39 (Town Council)
- Information desk open: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.
- www.aorpi.com

MIRALLES CASTLE

- Information: 93 808 03 01 (Town Council)
- Information desk open: Tuesday to Thursday from 9.15 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- www.santamariamiralles.cat

MONTBUI CASTLE, OR LA TOSSA CASTLE

- Guided tours for groups on any day of the week subject to prior booking.
- Castle opening times: Sundays from 10 a.m. until 1.30 p.m.
- Information and reservations: 93 803 47 35 (Town Council) • 93 803 29 24 (La Tossa Foundation)
- www.latossa.cat

ÒDENA CASTLE

- Information: 93 801 74 34 (Town Council)
- www.odena.cat

VILADEMÀGER CASTLE

- Tel. 93 897 60 63 (Town Council)
- Tel. 93 897 68 30 (Llacuna tourism and information desk)
- Information desk open: Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.
- www.ajuntamentlallacuna.cat

QUERALT CASTLE

- Information: 97 788 12 40 (Town Council)
- Information desk open: Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.
- www.bellprat.cat

Museu d'Història de Catalunya
 Museu d'Història de Catalunya
 Plaça de Pau Vila, 3
 08003 Barcelona
 Tel. 932 254 700
 www.mhcat.cat

Texts: Tom Escudé, Design: eggassociats. Photographs: Tom Escudé, Pep Mas and Andreu Miquel. Plant and wildlife illustrations: Conxal Luna/Signis Perells (AP), Hugo Prades. English translation: Duail.