

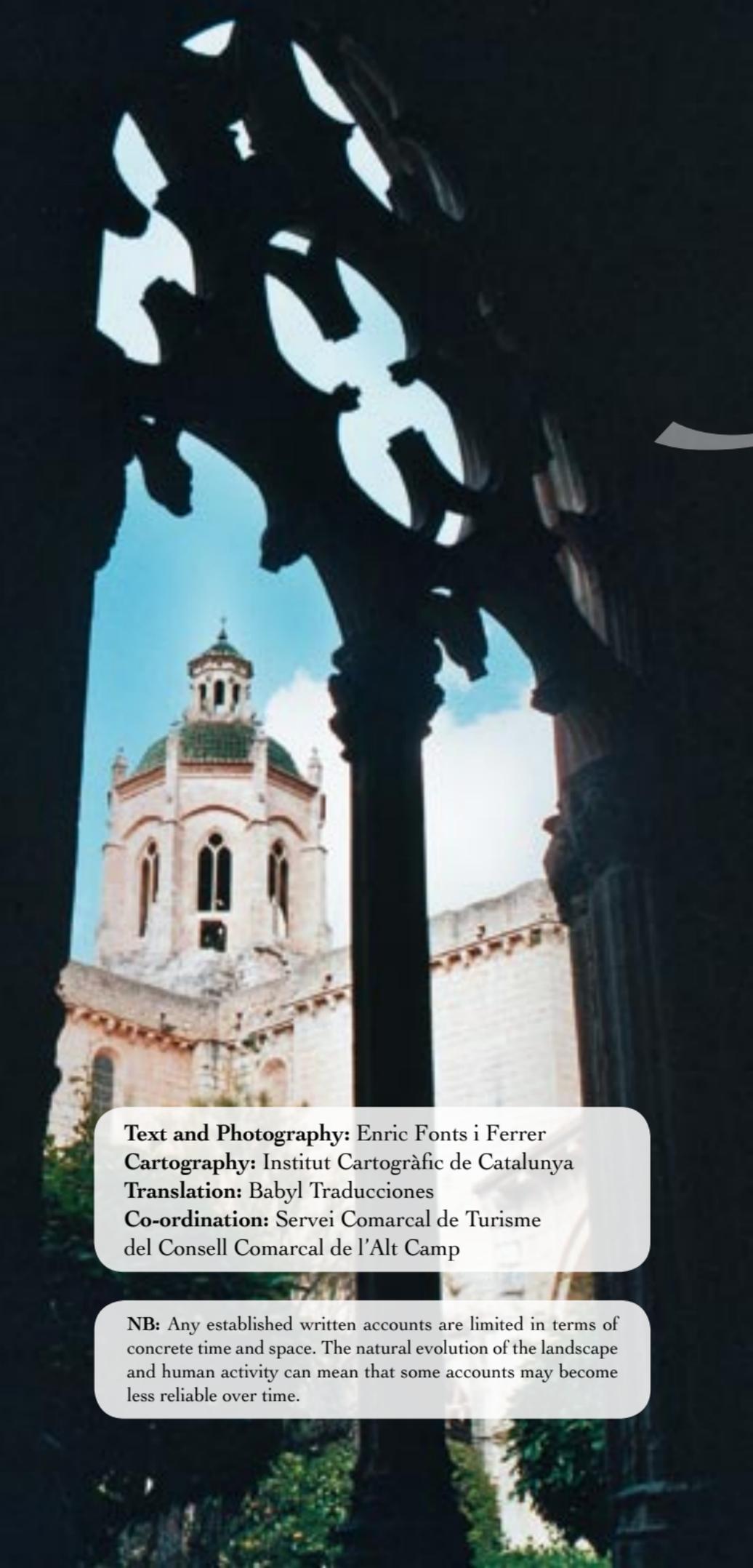
Hiking routes in Alt Camp

4



Masies and remote corners
of the former municipality

of *L'Albà*



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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.

4. *Masies of the former municipality of L'Albà*

When we speak of the former municipality of L'Albà, we are referring to lands ruled by the lords of Albà castle, founded in the middle of the tenth century and endorsed by the Episcopal seat of Barcelona. This vantage point was located on the homonymous sierra and dominated a good part of central Gaià. The municipality fell into a decline in the twelfth century when Aiguamúrcia, Les Pobles and Santes Creus fell into the hands of Cistercian monks from the Valldaura monastery, which then favoured the foundation of the one at Santes Creus.

The very turbulent castle municipality had a sparse and scattered population for centuries in *masies* and hamlets. In the middle of the nineteenth century the old village of L'Albà was abandoned and its inhabitants moved out to the plains, to be close to the arable lands, where the existing village was founded. At the same time the municipality was annexed to that of Aiguamúrcia.

This is a fairly long circular hike, 18.6km (17.3 without going up to the castle), which can easily take a full day's walking. This being the case, we have made provision for an alternative, described in both directions, which means the hike can be divided into two considerably shorter hikes: one of 10.250km which sets off from Santes Creus and covers the easiest part and the other of 15.750km (14.450km without going up to the castle), which sets off from Les Pobles, covers the most mountainous area and finishes at the castle of L'Albà. Both hikes are circular routes and it is necessary to combine the first route with that of the alternative route and join them up at the distance milestones marked on the map. This way the route can be adapted to suite, whether it be down to walking distance, available time or the desire to become more closely acquainted with these historic lands, with depressions, plains, water torrents, sierras, hills, woodlands, forests, north facing slopes, barns, *masies*, villages and hamlets... All in all, one of the most appealing walking areas there is.



Rear view of the Santes Creus monastery

4. Masies of the former municipality of L'Albà

Time

Distance

0:00
Partial



0:00
Total

0,000
Partial



0,000
Total

Santes Creus. At an altitude of 315m, this village comes under the municipality of Aiguamúrcia. The area is largely drained by the river Gaià which crosses from north to south. It was established in 1845 originally under the former monastery. Facilities include bars, restaurants, various accommodation, grocery stores and a medical service.

The Santes Creus Monastery. The main façade of the church is from the 12th century, with a semicircular arched doorway and an impressive gothic window. With a Latin cross floor plan, the church has three naves and five side chapels. Inside the presbytery there is a monumental rose window. The main altar consists of a baroque altarpiece by Josep Tremulles, flanked by the mausoleums of Pere el Gran and Jaume el Just and Blanca d'Anjou, the emblematic work of this gothic Catalan.

The gothic style front cloisters were built at the beginning of the 14th century, at the request of Jaume el Just, to replace the older Romanesque version, of which the hexagonal stand for the font has been preserved. Particularly interesting is the decoration on the capitals showing an extensive

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repertoire of medieval iconography, the work of Reinard des Fonoll. From the cloisters we can take the steps up to the dormitory, a huge room with Gothic arches, now used for cultural activities.

We set off from the Plaça de Sant Bernat, where the local town council or Ajuntament de Aiguamúrcia occupies the Palau de l'Abat building and where there is an ornate pump in the centre crowned with the holy image. The majority of the façades surrounding the plaza display beautiful 18th century graphics. Nearby is the plaza de Jaume el Just, where we find the monastery by the name of Reial Monestir de Santes Creus. We set off from either the Portal Reial or that of the Assumpta, opposite the monastery church façade. On the left is the Santa Llúcia chapel. The portal leads us to a second plaza with a panoramic vantage point which looks out over the poplar grove and the river Gaià. We go through a second portal and come out at the walled grounds to the monastery. We avoid taking Carrer de Pere el Gran, the street which takes us down and deposits us on the right towards a little tree filled square and fountain and from where steps lead up to the road from Les Pobles. The road continues ahead alongside the monastery wall. Once passed the monastery boundaries we pass the asphalted road from Vinya Closa on our right. Some metres further along the road we come to the water source which has supplied the monastery for more than eight centuries. The water channel continues alongside the wall on the right until it comes to the Sant Sebastià woodland, separated by the vineyards.

We continue making our way along the road until coming to the bridge over Rasa dels Hortets.

0:11  0:11

0,750  0,750

Camí Vell from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. Leaving the road at the point where it veers to the left, we continue straight ahead, heading southeast, by the Camí Vell or old road through the Sant Sebastià forest. Shortly we turn to head northeast along the gully, and from where we have a good view of the monastery from behind. We pass numerous paths along the way which go into the woods, the one we are on actually passes between the woods and vineyards.

0:08  0:19

0,550  1,300

Where the path forks. Here we take the well-trodden path to the right, which rises slightly and is excavated out of the clay-like earth. We leave the flat one on the left, which heads towards the fields.

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:03  0:03

0,100  1,400

Branch. We pass a path on our right which heads towards the road and which we will take on our return. For now we continue straight on the old road which soon leaves the hollows and rises to a height at which we can enjoy some magnificent views.

0:03  0:24

0,200  1,600

Overgrown Vines. We come to a row of trained vines which have ravaged the path and we continue straight on between the vines and woodland on our left. Two hundred metres on and the surface is once again well-trodden. The route continues in a north easterly direction, always at the most elevated point and without any sharp bends or steep gradients.

0:11  0:35

0,700  2,300

Vineyards. We have risen slightly with the lie of the land and the path takes us into a vineyard, where the same scenario is repeated as before. We continue ahead between the vines and the edge of the slightly elevated almond grove on the right. Even when the path no longer appears to exist, we continue to find traces left by the sheep, which, knowing the route from memory have absolutely no doubts as to which way they must go. This section of the old road now only serves as a path for livestock, there being other sections more suitable for cars, such as the one between Santes Creus and Les Pobles, although that said, we have ruled it out on account of it being too dusty and less attractive.

0:05  0:40

0,300  2,600

Camí Vell from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. Back on the good old road again and immediately we take a slight bend.

0:03  0:43

0,200  2,800

Intersection. Here we continue straight ahead, taking the worst track, well sunken into the terrain. The track on the left joins up with the road from Mig.

0:01  0:44

0,050  2,850

Where the path forks. Here we climb the steps in the rock and continue in the direction of Les Pobles, to the northeast, accompanied by almond groves, vineyards and olive trees. Not being transited by vehicles the surface here is more overgrown.

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We leave the track on the right, which goes down to Mas Miquel. The footpath goes direct to L'Albà and provides a short cut for the hike, described as short cut 1 on the hiking route. From this point on we follow the description of the route from the 14.900 kilometre mark.

0:07  0:51

0,500  3,350

Intersection. After passing a dung heap, we continue straight ahead on the well-trodden path, the one we cross comes from the road and goes to the cultivations.

0:03  0:54

0,200  3,550

Hostalets de Dalt. We pass by the houses. When we come to the end of the fence to a store, we leave the road which goes to Hostalets de Baix and on to the village, on our right. Halfway up the mountain we can see Les Ordes, with Casa Roja standing out, the old fortified *masia* from the time of the Reconquest.

0:03  0:57

0,200  3,750

Intersection with the asphalted road from Celler. Here we continue straight on by the old Santes Creus to Pontons road, which heads permanently towards the northeast. We pass to the west of Les Pobles.

If we so wish, we can go into the village by the road on the right, from Celler, which crosses the main road and into the centre. Just a few metres on and we come to the Xalet de ca la Roser and immediately after, on a piece of flat ground, the weighbridge. If we look back, above the houses in Les Pobles, we will see the L'Albà bell tower. We pass behind the schools and on the opposite side we will see a newly constructed sheep pen.



Fountain on the road into Les Pobles



Panoramic view of Les Pobles

0:06  1:03

0,400  4,150

Road from the Mas d'en Parés urbanisation (455m). We cross this road and continue walking ahead. To the right there are the schools and the start of the village. If we have previously entered Les Pobles village, we can rejoin the route here, or alternatively we can go into the village now and return.

Les Pobles. *At an altitude of 455m, this village is located at the centre of the western part of the municipality of Aiguamúrcia, on the road from Santes Creus to Pontons which runs from west to east. The village has grown up around old masies. Worthy of note is the Santa Maria church, built at the beginning of the last century, and also the village landscape. The village has a traditional stringed instrument maker and we can also find a bodega which specialises in making wines and cava.*

We follow the wire mesh fencing alongside a row of vines, and, soon we come to the start of the village. The path is less transited here and full of stone. We are at the back of housing development's plots.

0:06  1:09

0,400  4,550

Intersection. We cross the access road to the cemetery which is only a stones throw away.

0:01  1:11

0,100  4,650

Road from Santes Creus to Pontons. We cross the road and continue on the farm track opposite (northeast); on the right are the gates to a finca or country house. We make our way down to the bed of Bruell stream. To our left we can see the road bridge. On the opposite side of the stream, the track turns towards the southeast after which it climbs upwards and becomes narrower and stony. We are beneath electric pylon cables at this point and our heads are buzzing with the electric current, soon to be forgotten however. The path is becoming increasingly filled with stones which the sheep have made fall from the sides.

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0:12  1:23

0,800  5,450

Road. The road surface is wide and good. We go down a little to get over the hollow. On the way up the road becomes a footpath and we make our way accompanied by gorse and rosemary bushes.

0:05  1:28

0,300  5,750

Carretera del Miracle. We come to an excellent track known as Miracle “road”, and, had the housing development been successful, it would have become an asphalted road. Heading in three different directions, we will take the one in the middle, over the road, in the direction of Mas de Prat, of which we can just see the roof.

The track to the left comes from the road and the one to the right, with a good surface, goes to la Masieta and also to Les Pobles. There is a mini island in the middle of the intersection.

0:01  1:29

0,050  5,800

Mas d'en Prat (490m). We pass between the walls of the house and the bank, where we find the yard and barns. This is a large *masia* with buildings annexed on to the main house. In spite of being in a good state the house has been abandoned for some time now and fears are it may well follow the same fate as the majority of *masies* in the region. A little further down we see the arch of a small aqueduct crossing the brook.

0:04  1:33

0,250  6,050

Mas d'en Prat brook. We cross the brook by a bridge and come to a point where three tracks meet up. We take the one to the right —carretera del Miracle—, which turns back on itself. The one to the left leads to the valley of Santa Agnès and the one in the middle is lost amongst the pine trees, Holm oaks and oak trees in the woods.

The track heads south and provides us with some good views, straight ahead, Mas d'en Prat, above, the dilapidated *masia* of la Pedrera, on the plains, the Mas d'en Parés urbanisation, behind, the Serra de Selmella, el Comaverd, el Cogulló and la Voltorera; slightly to the west, the Coll de Cabra, and immediately beyond, the Serra de Miramar; straight ahead, in la Cogulla, in the foreground la Masieta and in the background, Les Pobles and, in the distance, the Muntanyes de Prades massif. The view to the south is obstructed.

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:08  1:41

0,500  6,550

Where the path forks. We continue along the same track which turns 180° to the left. The two tracks to the right, closed with padlocks, belong to private fincas. At the side we have some growing land which has reclaimed from the forest and now protected by huge stone banks and planted with new vines. The soil is very clayey and is turned over frequently by agricultural machines but scattered gravel prevents the mud forming on rainy days.

0:06  1:47

0,400  6,950

Entrance to the former Miracle urbanisation. We come to the main road through the housing development and follow the road ahead which winds its way down the bed of the stream. Very much abandoned with the pavements, street lights and asphalt all overgrown with vegetation. On the left hand side we pass a demolished house and the road to the *masia* de les Comes and, on the right, another overgrown street.

Urbanització del Miracle. *Originally planned at the beginning of the eighties and included a good part of the Obaga del Miracle mountainside. Even though it was a legal, it never had much success, proof of which, are the few constructions. The development is now no longer classed as an urban zone and the terrain is once more classed as a rural zone.*

0:08  1:55

0,500  7,450

Miracle brook (533m). We cross this brook by the road bridge and once on the other side we continue to head upstream, now on an un-surfaced road. Prior to this we passed a street on the right and a track to the left.

0:08  2:03

0,500  7,950

Where the road forks. Here we take the road to the right in the opposite direction to which we were going and which gently climbs for quite a while. The road ahead leads to the water deposit and recreation area for the housing development, five minutes away. A little beyond that, we can also see the bauxite quarry, where aluminium was extracted until the quarry was abandoned just after the Civil War.

The street we are on, indicated only by the water grates and plot posts, gradually narrows until there is only just room for a vehicle.

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0:10  2:13

0,700  8,650

Mas del Miracle (579m). We come to a street which we follow turning to the right. The remains of the *masia* stand on the hill to the left. It is worth making the effort to do the few metres between us and the *masia* as the view from there is both extensive and surprising: a good part of the amphitheatre of the Camp de Tarragona mountains, the outstretched plains dotted with villages and towns as well as the Mediterranean sea.

All around there are houses to be seen which unfortunately have suffered the same fate as the *masia*. The region, despite the destruction, has a captivating beauty. The track heads west and before very long we are presented with a beautiful view of the *masia* and the stepped terraces below making their way down to fill the gully. Behind we can see the *masia* de les Comas, in ruins. The ground, up until now reddened by the crushed stone used to improve the streets, has now returned to chalk.

We continue to look out over Puig del Miracle, to our left, towards the sunny slopes. Turning towards the southeast, opposite we have the rounded Muntanya de l'Albà. The pine trees unfortunately don't allow us to see either the castle remains or the village. Beneath, on the same level as ourselves, we can make out Cal Bernat, by the side of a magnificent oak. The view is just beginning to open up to the right.

0:27  2:40

1,800  10,450

Track from Cal Putxó and Cal Bo to Cal Bernat. We take this track to the left, in the direction of the last of these farming mansions, Cal Bernat.

0:02  2:42

0,100  10,550

Cal Bernat (600m). We pass behind the main building and the same track takes us to the yard and barns. Once past the yard, we come to a forest track which we take to the left. If we don't want to climb up to the castle, we can, at this point, turn right and follow the route from the 12,000 kilometre mark (shortening the route by 1.3 kilometres).

0:02  2:45

0,150  10,700

Footpath to L'Albà castle. A few metres on and we leave the track to take the rather rough, steep footpath to the right which makes its way up through the middle of the woods. The way up the zig zagged path is marked with milestones. After five minutes or so the slope gradient levels out a little.

Time



4 h 39'

Difficulty



18,600 km



Distance



4. Masies of L'Albà

0:07  2:52

0,350  11,050

Forest track from Cal Guillem to Font del Rector and L'Albà Vell. After walking twenty five metres to the left we return to set off on the path to the right. If we had continued along the path for another seven minutes or so we would have come to Font del Rector, now very neglected. From this point, the path is well-trodden and the upward climb isn't so pronounced, in spite of which, it's as well to pay attention to the stone landmarks. The forest is filled with pines, Holm oaks, oak trees and juniper and holly bushes.

0:06  2:58

0,300  11,350

L'Albà Vell (797m). Soon, above us on the right, are the remains of some stone walls. We go up and take the path to the right, heading west, towards the remains of the village of L'Albà Vell. Almost impossible to tell the houses apart, the only distinguishable construction being part of the Santa Maria de l'Albà church apse, a cistern by the side and the round castle tower above. All has been completely taken over by the woods, which also makes it rather difficult to see the magnificent view of the landscape which can be had from here.

Castell de L'Albà. Now in ruins, this castle is located in L'Albà Vell or known as L'Albà de Dalt, meaning old Albà, being the former parish of Santa Maria de L'Albà, of which there now only remains the church apse and part of the walls. Leaving the remains of the village behind us we make our way back down the same footpath we came by, down to Cal Bernat.

0:10  3:08

0,650  12,000

Track (600m) leading from Cal Dalmau to the housing development's water tanks. We continue along the track heading south, leaving Cal Bernat on our right. Initially the track rises above the Cal Bernat hollow, which we now see on the other side of the depression and which gives us a good idea of its size. A mere 200 metres on and we begin to descend rapidly. We pass right by the rocks supporting the *masia*. We are surrounded by woodland, but the edges of the former cultivated plots can still be seen.

0:10  3:18

0,700  12,700

Road from L'Albà to Cal Putxó or Mas de la Llum. We take the road to the left, in the direction of the village. On the same side, in the middle of the depression, there is the barn belonging to Parrillo, and on the right, next to the road, what little there remains of Cal Dalmau.

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Sunset in L'Albà Vell

0:02  3:20

0,200  12,900

Entrance to Cal Fam, which we have already seen on the right, slightly set back and sheltered by small hill which at the moment also hides Cal Pau Cases. In a north easterly direction, we can see Cal Putxó. Fifty paces on and we can almost touch the four, still upright, walls to Putxó barn, where they used to make bricks. Further ahead, the woodland thins out a little to the right and we can see Pau Cases, completely surrounded by pines. Immediately after, on the opposite side of the road, we are faced by the impressive Mas de Cal Güell.

0:05  3:25

0,400  13,300

Road to Cal Güell. With this road to our right, from here we have a good view of the *masia's* main façade and the impressive windows onto the roof terrace. One of the most stately *masies* in the area, the roof and dividing walls are in ruins. These ruined *masies* become an increasingly disheartening sight. From here the way becomes increasingly passable.

0:03  3:28

0,200  13,500

The king's highway from Manlleu to Aiguamúrcia. We join the king's highway and make our way straight on, heading southeast. The way to the left leads to Cal Cortada, Pi Casamenter, Manlleva, les Torres and Pla de Manlleu. The track is wider here and gravel covered. To the left we have the Serra de Cal Manco, and beneath, at the bottom, Casa dels Masets.

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:10  3:38

0,700  14,200

Track to Cal Manco. To the right we are joined by a track to a group of houses at Cal Manco, some of which have been renovated. We continue to make our way on the track.

0:07  3:45

0,500  14,700

L'Albà cemetery, on the left and a little away from the track which, from here on, has been asphalted.

0:03  3:48

0,200  14,900

L'Albà (455m). We pass by the church, the size of which we find particularly impressive, particularly when we compare it to the hamlet's only four houses, which appear to be squared up to face south, creating what is the one and only street.

L'Albà. *A hamlet in the municipality of Aiguamúrcia made up of three physically separated residencies, Albà and Cal Canonge, Masbarrat and les Destres. The present hamlet was established in the 19th century when the inhabitants of L'Albà Vell moved out to the plains, to be closer to the agricultural lands. The Santa Maria de L'Albà church is of considerable proportions with a bell tower which is visible from many places across the Camp de Tarragona area.*

Just before arriving we will have left the path from les Guixeres to our right which is described as short cut 2, to shorten the walk by going direct to Les Pobles.

0:03  3:51

0,200  15,100

TV-2005 road, from L'Albà to Aiguamúrcia. Once we reach the end of the lane from Cal Canonge, we continue along this road.

0:06  3:57

0,400  15,500

Short cut. The road turns sharply to the left and makes a detour. Here we leave the road and take the not very clearly marked footpath which goes down through the middle of the woods to the properties at Masbarrat. If we continue along the road, we come to the hamlet in only 500 metres.

0:03  4:00

0,200  15,700

Masbarrat (417m). Back on the road, we head in the direction of Aiguamúrcia. We leave out this hamlet's houses, to the right, which originally came under the jurisdiction of L'Albà.

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0:03 🕒 4:03

0,200 🧑 15,900

Branch off to Cal Tauler. Two hundred metres on, no more, and to our right we come across the access road to the houses at Cal Tauler. Just where the road begins, we start to make our way down the old road from Mas de Rubió, heading northwest in the direction of Coll de Cabra, which we see in the distance.

0:04 🕒 4:07

0,300 🧑 16,200

The new road from Mas de Rubió. We take this road only to leave it immediately we come to the second road on the right hand side, heading north, towards the bottom of the brook. We can see Mas Miquel before us, separated only by the hollow.

0:03 🕒 4:10

0,200 🧑 16,400

Footpath. The road comes to an end at a vineyard and we continue along the footpath which takes us in the same north westerly direction as the road we came by. Nearby, on the opposite side, is Cal Magre.

The footpath gently drops down into the woodland and turns to meet up with the river bed.

0:03 🕒 4:13

0,200 🧑 16,600

Rubió brook (340m). After crossing the stream we make our way up the opposite bank and continue along the footpath.



Cal Magre and the Muntanya de l'Albà



Rubió brook

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:01  4:14

0,050  16,650

Farm track. We take a road to the left which leads to the cultivations. The road climbs gently uphill, the slopes terraced and planted with hazelnut trees.

0:02  4:16

0,200  16,850

Camí Vell (361m). The Old Road. We come to Planes de Cal Magre, planted with vines. We cross the road which links the *masia*, on the right, with the cultivations and we continue along the path of the old road, which appears to be more like a drainage ditch for the land at the side. Now we are heading northwest and underfoot is not good, our advice is to keep to the edge of the cultivated land.

0:06  4:22

0,500  17,350

A well-trodden path, leading to some nearby barns. We continue heading west.

0:02  4:24

0,100  17,450

TV-2441 road from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. We take this road to the left.

0:01  4:25

0,100  17,550

Path. Leaving the main road, we take the path to the right which goes uphill a little. Initially the path takes us parallel to the main road but before long we make a turn to the northwest.

0:02  4:27

0,200  17,750

Camí Vell from Santes Creus to Les Pobles (381m). Here we retake the Camí Vell or old road we took at the start of the hike. This time we go left and into the heart of the Sant Sebastià woods. A hundred metres on and we are joined by a farm track on the right. Hidden amongst the pine trees we come across the Santes Creus monastery which, together with vine groves and the Serra de Miramar in the background, makes for a perfect picture post card. To the left various footpaths come into the woods.

0:06  4:33

0,400  18,150

Road to Les Pobles. We join this road and continue straight ahead. Twenty metres on and we pass the bridge at Rasa dels

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Hortets. On the left there is a water pipe from the Mina del Monestir, which at a glance appears to be a stone boundary. We continue on towards the monastery, which finally appears in all its splendour.

0:06  4:39

0,440  18,600

Santes Creus (313m). We leave the road, which bends to the right, and we take some steps down by the side of the house boundary fences and come to a small square, with trees and a fountain. We turn onto Carreró de la Ferreria (blacksmith street) which winds its way to the Plaça de Sant Bernat and the end of the walk.

SHORTCUT 1 BY MAS MIQUEL AND LES GUIXERES

0:00  0:00

0,000  0,000

Camí Vell from Santes Creus to Les Pobles (424m). We climb up the stone steps and take the road to the right (southeast), accompanied by almond groves and four solitary pine trees. Soon we begin the steep drop down.

0:03  0:03

0,175  0,175

TV-2441 Road from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. We come out opposite the 4km milestone. We cross the road and continue by the surfaced access road to Mas Miquel, below the main road.

0:01  0:04

0,025  0,200

Mas Miquel. A beautifully paved road leads to the yard in front of the main house. Here we turn right to be met by the dirt track which comes from the road and heads down to the stream. We take the track to the left towards the stream, making our way down by the *masia*.

0:05  0:09

0,400  0,600

Where the track forks. Here we turn right taking a track which takes us in the opposite direction to the way we came. The track we leave behind continues straight ahead to Cal Putxó or Mas de la Llum, 2.6 kilometres from this point. We come to the bed of the Rubió stream and the vegetation is truly luxuriant.

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:01  0:10

0,100  0,700

The bed of Torrent de Rubió. We are at the bed of the same brook which flows by the ditch on our left. Just before there is a small channel which separates the flow from the right.

0:03  0:13

0,200  0,900

Rubió gully (366m). We cross the brook by stepping stones and climb the bank on the opposite side, literally zig zagging our way up out of the hollow. The thickets gradually become increasingly sparse with a vineyard or two in between. On the opposite hillside we have Mas Miquel just a stones throw away and beyond that the Les Pobles properties adorning the hillside.

0:08  0:21

0,600  1,500

Where the track forks. Leaving a farm track on our right we make our way southeast by Plana de la Guixera. Above we can see L'Albà, Masbarrat and Cal Teuler.

Along the way, other less transited paths leave off from the one we are following.

0:07  0:28

0,500  2,000

Branch to the left which leads to vineyards; another hundred metres on we come to another. We begin to descend down towards the bed of the les Guixeres brook.

0:05  0:33

0,400  2,400

The bed of Torrent de les Guixeres (381m) and diverging paths. We take the path to the left which runs alongside the brook for a few metres. The brook heads off northeast and our path continues south taking us close to the other ditch.

The path on the right climbs up to Masbarrat, no more than seven hundred metres, where the route crosses. We can continue on our way with peace of mind, knowing if we want to shorten the hike a little, it can't be missed.

0:04  0:37

0,900  2,700

Route. We come out opposite a vineyard, in view of the L'Albà houses. We come to a road, on the right, coming from Masbarrat, which we take in the opposite direction.

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

0:06  0:43

0,400  3,100

Intersection. We continue along the road to the right which crosses the valley floor and goes back up through the woodland. Having passed close to the four houses at les Guixeres, the only one which still has any resemblance to a house is Cal Petronilo. Opposite and below L'Albà, there is a quarry where gypsum was extracted up until the end of the nineteen fifties.

The path to the left, leads to Cal Guatllo, set on a rocky crag overlooking Roquisser gully. One of the area's most important *masies*, Cal Güell, can be seen halfway up the hill, now unfortunately in ruins.

0:03  0:46

0,200  3,300

Where the path forks. We continue to climb up to the right, avoiding the flat road coming in from the left. Nevertheless, soon we are also on the level. Looking west we have a beautiful panoramic view of the Serra de Miramar, the Coll de Cabra, the Voltorera, Cogulló, Serra de Selmella, Montclar and Montagut. In line with Tossal Gros we can also see, in the foreground, the Masbarrat houses, behind the Pla de Santa Maria plains and, at the foot of the mountains, the Figuerola del Camp.

0:04  0:50

0,350  3,650

Asphalted road. Here we join the king's highway which goes from Manlleu to Aiguamúrcia and we follow the road to the right, in the direction of the village.

0:02  0:52

0,050  3,700

L'Albà (455m). We enter the village by the side of Santa Maria church. Here we link up with the summary of the main route at the 14,900km mark and continue on to Santes Creus.

SHORTCUT 2 BY LES GUIXERES AND MAS MIQUEL

0:00  0:00

0,000  0,000

L'Albà (455m). We leave L'Albà the same way we came. A few metres on, after having left the houses behind us, we take a left turn on to the les Guixeres road. From our path other, less well-trodden, tracks branch off into the woodland.

4. Masies of L'Albà

0:06  0:06

0,400  0,400

Where the path forks. Here we take the path which goes down to the left and crosses the valley floor, avoiding the one on the right which levels out. The Cal Güell *masia*, half way up the mountain, looks particularly impressive at sunrise. From the middle of the hollow we can also see the Cal Guatllo *masia*, above a rocky outcrop which looks out over the Roquissar gully.

0:03  0:09

0,200  0,600

Intersection before les Guixeres. Here we turn left onto the better track. The track to the right goes to Cal Guatllo.

We pass beneath what remains of the four houses in les Guixeres, only one of which remains standing, Cal Petronilo. Opposite beneath the houses at L'Albà, is the quarry where gypsum was extracted up until the end of the nineteen fifties.

0:06  0:15

0,400  1,000

Where the path forks. We continue by the taking the second path to the right which heads down alongside a ditch. We have left the better track behind us which goes towards Masbarrat, which can be seen ahead of the same.

0:04  0:19

0,300  1,300

Les Guixeres gully. We follow the path along the bottom of the gully for a few metres after which we come to a track, which we take to the right, to climb up the gully. To the left, the track goes to Masbarrat.

0:04  0:23

0,300  1,600

Track to the cultivations. Half way up the gully and we leave a track on our right which leads to the cultivations and a hundred metres further on we pass one on the left and another on the right. The track then levels out between the woodland and the vineyards on the Plana de les Guixeres plain.

0:04  0:27

0,300  1,900

Branch towards the vine plantations below. We continue to make our way over the top of the gully. On the opposite side we can see the hillside properties from L'Albà, Masbarrat, Cal Teuler and Mas Rubió, and opposite, Cal Magre.

Hiking routes in Alt Camp

0:05  0:32

0,300  2,200

Where the path forks. We continue by heading north on the track to the right facing Mas Miquel, which is a stones throw away on the opposite side of the gully. In the northeast, the hill-side is adorned by the properties at Les Pobles.

We begin to make our way down the winding path to the bed of the stream, leaving behind us some paths which disappear into the woods. As we approach the water source the vegetation becomes increasingly more luxuriant.

0:08  0:40

0,600  2,800

Rubió brook. We take the stepping stones across the brook and climb up the bank. A little higher up there is a small weir which re-channels the water from the left.

0:05  0:45

0,300  3,100

Where the path forks. We leave the path which continues ahead and we opt to take the path to the left which climbs up in the opposite direction to the way we came.

0:06  0:51

0,400  3,500

Intersection with a Holm oak in the middle. Here we turn right towards Mas Miquel. We come to the beautifully paved access road to the *masia* and take it to the left. The *masia* is habited and very well kept. It belongs to the Torres family, makers of excellent Penedès wines.

0:01  0:52

0,025  3,525

TV-2441 road from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. We cross the road and take the track up on the opposite side, which happens to be very straight and stony but after two hundred metres it soon starts to level out between the almond groves.

0:04  0:56

0,175  3,700

Camí Vell from Santes Creus to Les Pobles. We take the old road to the right in the direction of Les Pobles. Here we join up with the main route at the 2,850km mark.



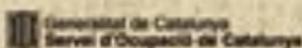
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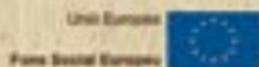
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