

On approaching Fortanete, the richness of its pine-woods, some of the most wellpreserved in the region, will take us by surprise. Once in its streets, we can gaze at the 16th century Renaissance Town Hall joined to the Church of the Purificación and completed in the 17th century. It has several houses belonging to the local nobility: Casa de los Marqueses de Villasegura, Casa del Marqués and Casa Loras. Also worthy of admiration are the lines of the Loreto hermitage on the outskirts of the village, as well as the remains of the castle and the walls at the top of a hill which lay beyond the village overlooking a beautiful view.

We continue on towards Villarroya de los Pinares, where upon entering we find the beautiful construction that is the hermitage of la Virgen del Loreto. This virgin has many hermitages dedicated to her in this zone, all built during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the Old Town, a declared site of historical-artistic interest, the Church of the Assumption, a structure of gothic origin whose tower has been completely separated from the building as, it appears, it is the remains of a tower in homage to Jaime I, stands out. We also come across the 16th century Town Hall and Casa Carreras, and the stately 15th century Casa Peña which belonged to an illustrious family, one of whom became Cardinal de la Rota. The streets of Villarroya amaze the visitor

at every turn and recall its prosperous past. To finish, we will also call in on the interpretative centre at the Order of San Juan del Hospital in Maestrazgo, where we discover the feudal past of these towns and villages which came under the jurisdiction of this powerful military order.

We branch off to the quiet village of Miravete de la Sierra, small but amazing. Shown in its declaration as a place of historic-artistic interest, in Miravete, we can take in the 16th century final cross; the medieval bridge across the Guadalope which is also 16th century; the "lonja-trinquete" (covered market also used as a pelota court) , the Town Hall and the L-shaped porticoed atrium also connected to the 16th century Church of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves; the oven and the rectory. We pay a visit to the old mill where they have installed exhibition panels and display cases, which together with the machinery preserved from the mill, constitutes the Ciclo de Pan interpretative centre.

We go back in the direction of Villarroya to get to Allepuz, the last stop on our route. Allepuz, at the foot of a steep drop where its castle used to be, offers us the 18th century Church of the Purification, the "lonja trinquete", the 16th century Loreto hermitage and the Casa Grande which was converted into the Hostel de Aragón.



COMARCA DEL MAESTRAZGO

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ITINERARIES FOR MAESTRAZGO



Route 1: Castellote – Molinos – Cuevas de Cañart y Bordón

This route offers visits to four towns though we will be able to visit other places along the way:

We begin in Castellote, where we take a look around the Old Town which has been declared a site of historic-artistic interest. The highlights are: the 15th century gothic church of San Miguel; the 17th century hermitage of la Virgen del Agua; the arches of the city walls; the Town Hall, which was built upon the archway to the original enclosure; various buildings dating from the 16th to the 19th century, amongst which are the Casa Gordiano, Casa Planas, Casa de las Pepetas and the Casa de Don José. We can walk along the path leading to the castle, where the area's most important historic events took place.

We leave Castellote via the tunnel and take the road to Molinos. We then make our way to visit the 18th century El Llovedor hermitage, located in a place of great interest.

We arrive at Molinos and take in the town, admiring the 12th century medieval tower, the 16th century "Casa del Concejo" (Town Council), the Church of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves – a piece of 15th century gothic architecture, the San Nicolás gorge and hermitage, as well as the Casa del Moro. We won't miss out on paying a visit to the Cultural Park's museum and the Eleuterio Blasco Ferrer Exhibition Centre. Calling in on the Crystal Caves, a genuine subterranean marvel, which

is an absolute must-see.

We return to Castellote but will make a detour to Cuevas de Cañart, declared an area of historic-artistic interest, and where the highlights are the 1770 Church of San Pedro Apóstol and the 1648 San Blas hermitage, which serves as the district's interpretative centre; the 17th century hermitage of the Virgen de los Pueyos; the Monastery of the Servitas Monks and the Monastery of the Franciscan Conceptionists, the Portal de Marzo, the Town Hall, the ancient oven and various noble houses amongst which are: Casa Moliner and Casa de los Arellano.

We shall continue on towards Dos Torres de Mercader and Ladruñán. Entering the gorges of Ladruñán one can get to know Maestrazgo from its very core. We arrive at La Algecira and from there a path takes us to the dwellings with the cave paintings which form a part of the so called rock art of the Mediterranean basin which has been declared a World Heritage site. We go around the marsh which was named after the now disappeared district of Santolea, along a sinuous road. We then head off to Bordón. In Bordón, besides browsing its streets, we will visit the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora De la Carrasca, a gothic building of Templar origin restored in the 17th century. One of the region's most enigmatic buildings

Route 2: Pitarque – Villarluego - Cañada de Benatanduz – Tronchón

The route begins in Pitarque, where wandering its streets we will come across the 19th century Church of Santa María la Mayor and, later, the path that leads to the source of the river Pitarque, one of the most beautiful parts of the region. Passing along this route we will stumble across the hermitage of la Virgen de la Peña and a former electricity power station. The ultimate reward comes at the end of the path upon arriving at the river mouth, an “ode to rock and water”.

On leaving Pitarque, we will take the road to Ejulve to go and admire a quirk of nature, the “Órganos del Montoro”, so named because they give the impression of looking like the pipes of an organ. The visitor marvels at the geological formation and it is possible to practice climbing there, too.

We approach the village of Villarluego, where we walk through its streets finding the neoclassical style church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción; the Town Hall built in the Aragonese style of the 16th and 17th centuries which houses the centre for Environmental Interpre-

tative Centre; the “Balcón de los Forasteros” and the Murada district, complete with a gateway from the old wall.

We will then visit Cañada de Benatanduz. Set above the deepest gorges, this hamlet stretching across the hillocks barely forms streets. At the core of the hamlet, the 18th century Church of the Assumption, the Aragonese style Town Hall and the Paupers’ Hospital, both from the 16th century are the focal points. Numerous fountains spring up within its confines.

We make a move back towards Villarluego in order to take a detour to Tronchón. Tronchón, instated in its declaration as a place of historic-artistic interest, plays host to numerous buildings of interest: the Church, the Village Hall of 1600, the gates of Val and San Miguel, the Rectory house, the Palace of the Marquis of Valdeolivo, the Casa Del Santo, the Casa Monforte and the gothic dungeon and the new jail. All of Tronchón’s streets are worthy of a thorough perusal.



Route 3: Iglesuela del Cid – Cantavieja – Mirambel – La Cuba

This route sets out in Iglesuela del Cid. This town, also declared as of historic-artistic interest, will surprise us with its numerous palaces, Aragonese style nobles’ houses amongst which are the Casa Matutano (now converted into an inn), Casa Guijarro, Casa Daudén, Casa Aliaga, Casa Santa Pau and Casa Agramunt. All of these were built between the 15th and 18th centuries. However, the Tower of Los Nublos and the Assembly Hall which form part of the ancient 13th century Templar castle, the 17th century Church of the Purification, the San Pablo gateway and, 6 km away, the Virgen del Cid hermitage also stand out.

We leave Iglesuela for Cantavieja, another site declared as being of historical and artistic interest. Cantavieja is remarkable for the structure and position of its urban layout, perched on top of a mountain and surrounded by gorges; it is a position worthy of its outstanding historical role. There is a beautiful porticoed square set before the Church of the Assumption, from the 17th and 18th centuries, the Town Hall and the Casa del Bayle. Other monuments of interest in Cantavieja are: the San Miguel hermitage, the ruins of the castle and the walls, Casa Zurita, Casa Peralta and the coat of arms on the remaining facades of other houses of the nobility are still intact.

We leave for Mirambel, “a jewel amongst the walls”. Its walled perimeter has been perfectly preserved and can only be entered via one of its five gates. Once inside, we find a peaceful village where it seems that time has stood still. The 17th century Church of Santa Margarita, the remains of the castle, the convent and the Portal de la Monjas founded by Felipe II, the Town Hall and other houses such as Casa Zurita, Casa Aliaga, Casa Castellot, Casa Pastor and Casa Costearas are of note. Mirambel surprises the visitor at every turn. It has been used as a film location and scenes from the films “Tierra y Libertad”, “En brazos de la Mujer madura” and the series “Clase Media” have been shot there.

After leaving Mirambel we move on to La Cuba, a small village on the provincial border with Castellón, where we can take a turn around the streets and contemplate the Church of San

Miguel and the Town Hall, both from the 17th century. A trip to the interpretative centre for the wicker industry, in which the entire village worked in bygone days, is obligatory.

