

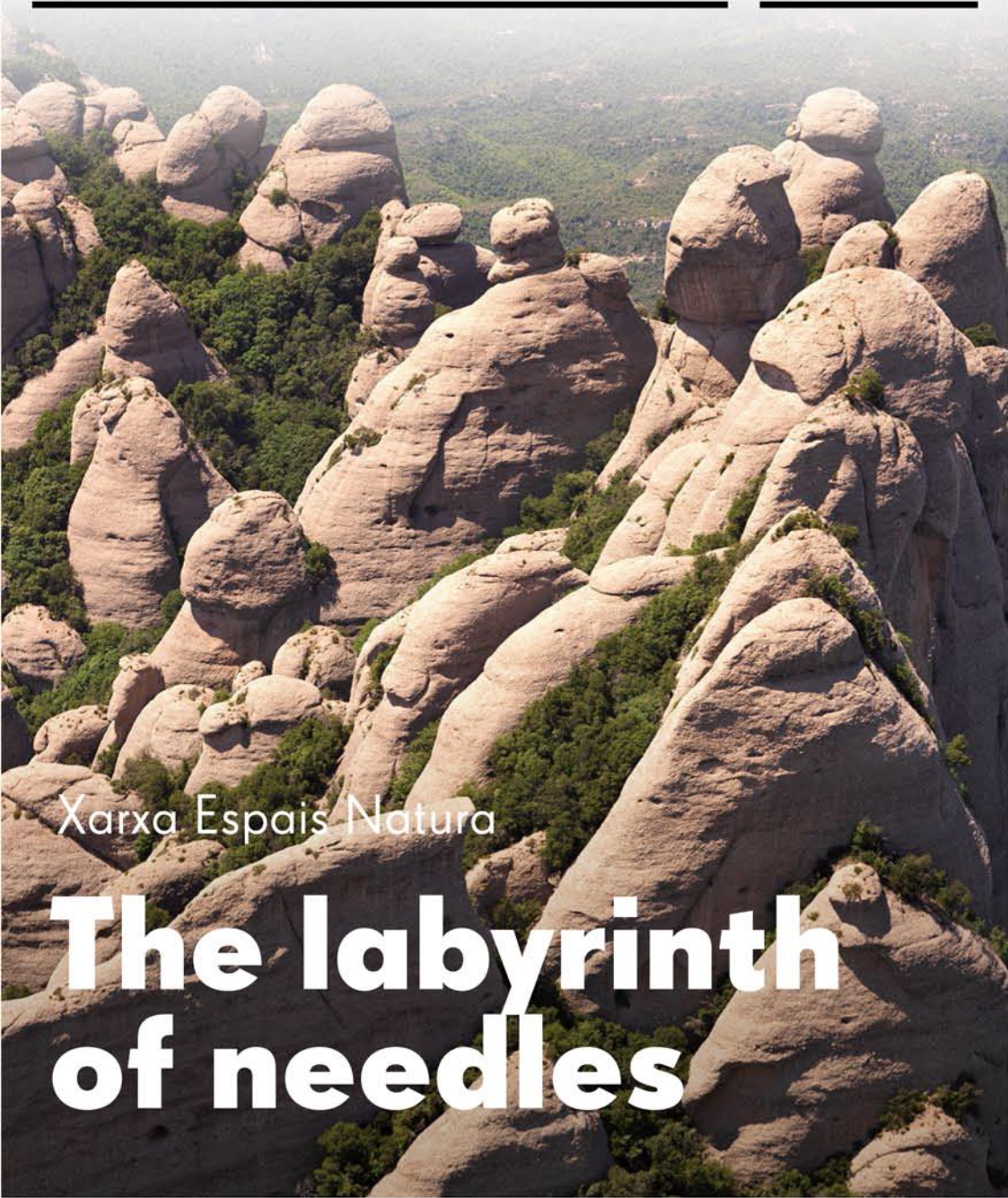
MONTSERRAT

coll de Can Maçana

Fundació

Catalunya

La Pedrera



Xarxa Espais Natura

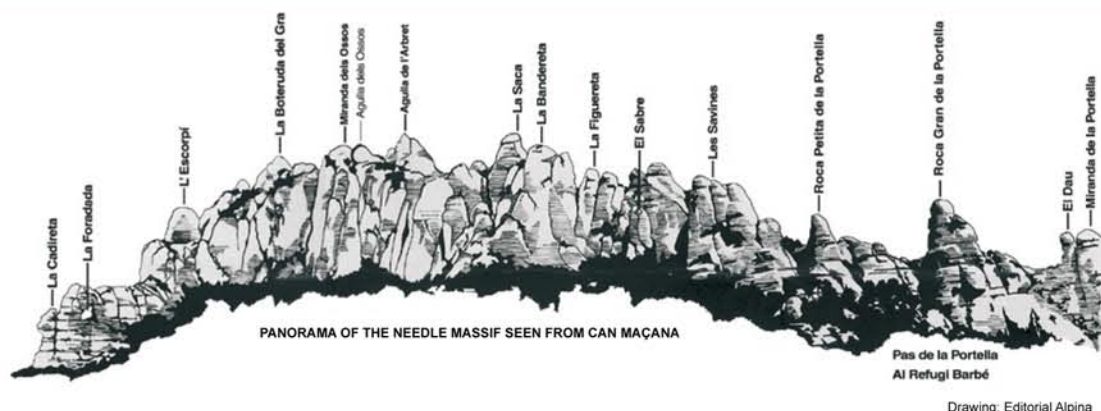
The labyrinth of needles

Montserrat- Coll de Can Maçana

Year acquired: 2004
Area: 176,58 ha
Location: El Bruc, Anoia
GPS coordinates:
N 41°36'35,17" E 1°46'03,13"

Situated in the municipal area of El Bruc, the Espai Natura Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana Natural Area covers almost 7% of the Montserrat mountain natural park and is the main point of access to the paths and rocky needles of this part of the mountain, where monoliths and vertical formations are the defining features in this unique and captivating landscape.

Montserrat's needles rise above Coll de Can Maçana and cut an unmistakable outline in the sky. The mountain's secrets are hidden beneath their cover: intriguing nooks, pathways and rock faces within the reaches of hikers and climbers eager to discover them.



Montserrat's wildest spots

The vertical rock faces and gullies between the needles were, until very recently, the mountain's most unspoiled areas. For centuries the impossibility of reaching them has kept them out of range from human activities, preserving the tranquillity and isolation needed by animals and plants that are very sensitive to human presence. Lately however, the growing popularity of hiking and climbing have increased the pressure on these environments' fragile equilibrium. It is therefore essential to their conservation that everyone who visits act respectfully.

The rocky needles, an unusual relief

The striking rock needles on the westerly face of Montserrat provide the landscape with an extraordinary monument. Montserrat's conglomerate formations were deposited on the bed of a prehistoric sea covering the region's surface. The rock masses emerged ten million years ago, since when erosion has been working away at them to sculpt the eccentric needles of rock we can admire today.

A climber's paradise

Montserrat is the cradle of Catalan climbing and one of the most important areas in the country, thanks to the number of routes (more than 5,600), its quality and its diversity. Climbers from around the world visit it each year. Regulation is necessary to make this recreational sport compatible with protection of the species that inhabit the vertical rock faces, including the birds that nest there.

Montserrat- Coll de Can Maçana

How do you get there?



GPS coordinates:
N41°36'35,17" E1°46'03,13"

Facilities

Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana Information Centre.
Open 8 am to 6 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Services:



Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana Information point
Road BP-1101, km 2.6, El Bruc
info@montserratcanmacana.cat
www.montserratcanmacana.cat

In partnership with:

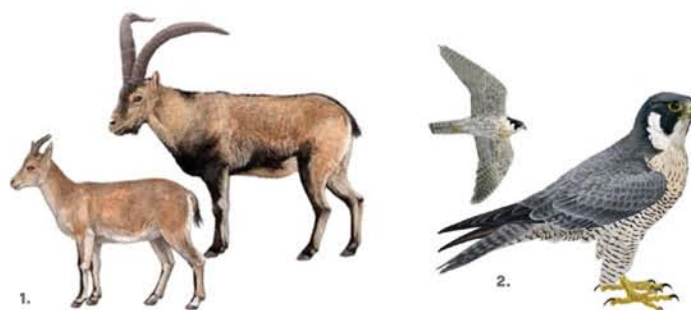


Site managed by:

Fundació
Catalunya
La Pedrera

Our commitment to society

At the Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera, which manages the Espai Natura Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana Natural Area, we help people to build a better and fairer future. This means we offer opportunities to those who are most in need, we foster talent, creativity and education and preserve our natural and cultural heritage.



1. Southeastern Spanish ibex

Capra pyrenaica hispanica
The imposing figure of this wild goat once again casts its silhouette on the crests of Montserrat. The species had disappeared from the massif but has been successfully reintroduced. With a bit of luck you may come across small herds in wilder corners.

2. Peregrine falcon

Falco peregrinus
This bird of prey and skilful hunter of other birds in full flight makes its nest in the mountain's quietest rock faces.

3. Bonelli's eagle

Hieraaetus fasciatus
This bird of prey is one of those under greatest threat, a Mediterranean eagle continuing its survival on the Barcelona part of the Catalan Pre-Coastal Range, where despite a growing human impact on the region there are several mating pairs.

4. Holm oak

Quercus ilex
A very common tree in the Mediterranean region which provides a slightly humid understorey. This allows for much growth of bushes and climbers such as Mediterranean buckthorn, smilax, laurustine and box.

5. Black pine

Pinus nigra
A Mediterranean pine that used to be found in large quantities on Montserrat. Currently there are only small clusters as it has been severely hit by forest fires and replaced by the Aleppo pine.

6. Saxifrage

Saxifraga callosa ssp. catalaunica
This is found at the level of holm oak woods with box and on north-facing rocks. In Catalonia, the only other place it is found other than Montserrat is Sant Llorenç del Munt.

7. Pyrenean violet

Ramonda myconi
This plant lives in the cracks of shaded rocks in the Pyrenees and the mountainous areas of the eastern half of Catalonia. It flowers from May to July, taking on violet tones, and then dries to bud again with the autumn rain.

Wildlife

The mountain of Montserrat's physical and geographical characteristics make it an area of special ecological value. The vegetation that covers most of the mountain is formed by woods of holm oaks, with various different understories and up to 1,250 plant species. Venturing further in along the pathways you discover just how lush the vegetation is on flat areas and especially in gullies. The ubiquitous presence of rock – with countless gullies and crevices – gives refuge to plant life typical to such areas, with endemic species in escarpments and stony areas. The diversity of environments allows for a very wide range of animal life, both vertebrate and invertebrate. Prominent examples of mammals include squirrels, genets, bats, wild boars and, following their reintroduction in 1995, wild goats. There are also various different rock-dwelling bird species, such as crag martins, alpine swifts and wallcreepers, as well as reptiles and amphibians such as snub-nosed vipers and salamanders.



Drawing: Toni Llobet



Recommended routes

Don't miss

1 Around Sant Pau Vell

1h 15' +142 m -142 m 3,8 km Easy

This is a circular route beginning at the recreational area of Coll de Can Maçana. A light hike brings you to the opposite side of the mountain to the monastery, where there are spectacular views of the needles. Having completed the initial (gentle) ascent to Coll de Guiró and gone past the Mirador del Pla de Bages viewpoint, you may choose to take a detour to the Sant Pau Vell hermitage, where you can enjoy magnificent views spanning the Pyrenees to the sea. On the way back to the recreational area, you should not be surprised to come across cows helping to protect Montserrat against forest fires.

2 Camí de les Batalles

1h 40' +265 m 5,7 km Medium

This path follows the route on which the Battles of Bruc were fought between Catalan and French armies in 1808, when Napoleon's troops were turned back by militias and a drummer boy of folkloric fame. The route runs from a farmhouse called Can Pasqual on the edge of El Bruc to the entrance to Can Maçana.



La Cadireta and La Roca Foradada

These toponyms, translating as 'the little chair' and 'the holed rock', are, alongside El Cavall Bernat (Bernat the horse), some of the best known of Montserrat's countless needles, faces and shapes. Due to its triangular hole 10 m in height and 6 m wide, La Roca Foradada can be seen from many miles away. Next to it is La Cadireta, an imposing rock in the shape of a small chair, or possibly the head of a cat or a dinosaur.

The importance of large herbivores and preventing forest fires

As it is covered in Mediterranean woodland, Montserrat is a place where fire has always been the number one natural disturbance, where recurrent blazes shape the landscape and mark the development of the vegetation.

When the accumulation of burnable material in the wood is very high, the risk of suffering major forest fires runs equally high. This is why large herbivores have a very special role in these woodlands. Their actions help to make the landscape less vulnerable to fire, by eating a part of the vegetation and reducing its quantity, and by trampling it as they walk thus creating open spaces.

To make the most of this positive contribution to fire prevention, our active management at the Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana site encourages the presence of these large herbivores. The reintroduction of wild goats has been another step towards re-establishing this ecosystem's autochthonous fauna, but it has not been enough, and for a number of years the solution has been to use domestic livestock.



Sant Pau Vell

Ancient partially-rebuilt Romanesque church (1084), which was the El Bruc district's first parish church. Situated at the foot of the Castell de la Guàrdia hill, it is an excellent vantage point looking towards Baix Llobregat and Anoia, with some fantastic views.



Historic site

As well as being the setting where the mythical battles of El Bruc against Napoleon's troops were fought, the site is also home to the Romanesque church of Sant Pau Vell (11th century) – the first place inhabited anywhere on the mountain – a prehistoric site called La Cova Tapada and a castle known as Castell de la Guàrdia.

Useful information

- Montserrat-Coll de Can Maçana information point
- El Bruc town hall: Tel. 93 771 00 06
- Montserrat mountain natural park: Tel. 93 402 46 00
- Vicens Barbé refuge: Tel. 93 364 16 81 / 664 30 69 71
- Emergencies: Tel.112

WHERE TO EAT?

There is a good selection of restaurants and bars in local towns and villages such as El Bruc, Collbató, Marganell, Olesa and Esparreguera.

WHERE TO SLEEP?

There is a wide and varied offering, with especially good rural accommodation options.

At Bruc:

- Hotel El Bruc. Tel 93 771 00 61
- Can Serrat. Tel. 93 771 00 37
- Apt. Turístic Can Tricolet. 93 771 03 82
- Masia Can Ollé de la Guàrdia. 93 771 03 23

FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

El Bruc's Montserrat Mountain museum: Tel 93 771 00 06

Advice for visitors

- Wear clothes that are suitable for the weather conditions: sun protection, sunglasses and cap/hat or similar. Also bring water, and wear footwear and clothing that are comfortable for walking.
- If you have them, it is also recommended to bring binoculars and wildlife guides.
- Vehicles may not be driven any further than the car park.
- Do not stray from the marked paths.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash.
- Camping out is not allowed.
- Starting fires is strictly forbidden.
- Please take your litter with you.
- Climbers must remember that climbing in the natural park is a regulated activity. You can find the regulations at www.muntanyamontserrat.gencat.cat

Did you know...

The whole of Montserrat mountain is considered asite of geological interest (geozona 224) and is included in the Geopark of Central Catalonia.

The forest fires of 1986 and 1994 took a significant toll on Montserrat's vegetation, going so far as to affect almost half of Montserrat's protected area on each occasion.

On some autumn days, from certain spots in the south of Bages you can see the sun setting directly through the hole of the Roca Foradada.

