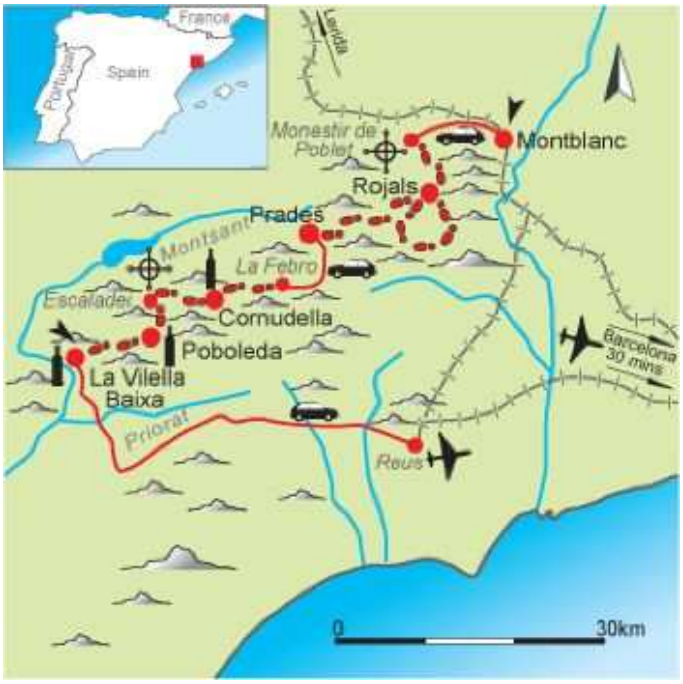


Day 2 - Leaving Poblet Monastery

# Priorat (Spain)

## Along monastery trails to the holy mountain

### Route map




## Route summary

**£700.00** (2014)

7 nights B&B, 5 evening meals, 2 lunches, luggage transfers between hotels, short transfer at start and transfer to Reus at end

**Medium - Hard**

April to November

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## Itinerary

**Day 1** Arrive at Carles and Carme's pretty pension in the historic centre of Montblanc, freshen up, wander around the little town, consider your dinner options (you may like to eat at your pension, and enjoy a demonstration of how to assemble *tosta catalana* which will stand you in good stead for the rest of your holiday) and relax while you plan your first walking day.

**Day 2** **Poblet to Rojals**. Your holiday starts properly, after a short transfer to Poblet Monastery, a working and thriving Cistercian community founded in 1151. A visit to the lovely church and old refectory is a must, and you can even have an early lunch here before your exertions. The afternoon's walk is a good leg stretcher, up into the hills of the Muntanyes de Prades, inspecting an ice house, searching for your first Neolithic rock paintings, and winding your way past the pretty village of Rojals to a stylish and beautifully situated 'Mas' (with occasional views to the Balearics), where you will stay for two nights. (*14.5 km, 5¼ hrs, CUSs 600m*)

**Day 3** **The Farena Circuit**. A descent down to explore the rock pools (yes - take your swimmers) and then along past the old mills (paper and grain) of the Brugent river, to a stop for a simple lunch (included) at El Brugent in Farena (the chef is a master patissier). Discover more rock art on your return. A tough day - but worth it. (*14 km, 6¼ hrs, CUSs 850m. Can extend by a further 2 hrs for the diehards*)

**Day 4** **Rojals to Prades**. A longish but easier walk along the ridge

**Day 4** **Rojals to Prades**. A longish but easier walk along the ridge top – the highest point of your route at 1203m – with spectacular views east to the Mediterranean and north to the Pyrenées, passing more ice houses and with the opportunity for small detours to the Coves del Pere and the Roca del Gringol. Arrive in the little town of Prades, the *villa vermella* and centre for the region. (*20km, 5¾ hrs, CUSs 530m*)

**Day 5** **Prades to Cornudella de Montsant**. This is a lovely day along the valley of the Siurana river, complete with swimmable rock pools. The day includes a spectacular cliff path to the winding streets of the hilltop citadel of Siurana. Descend after a glass of beer or two to the wine town of Cornudella - you have arrived in Priorat wine country. (*18km, 5¼ hrs, CUSs 550m, or save one hour with taxi start (pay locally))*

**Day 6** **Cornudella to Poboleda**. An ancient monastery path takes you up the holy mountain of Montsant, with views for miles. After the wild and desolate top, descend to the pretty village of Morera for (we suggest) lunch in a traditional village cafe, before a gentler afternoon's walk to the former Carthusian monastery of Escaladei, nestling in its wooded valley. After a visit, your evening walk is back into the Siurana valley and the striking village of Poboleda, where you stay at a noted restaurant. (*22 km, 6¼ hrs, CUSs 800m, shortenable by a lift from Escaladei OR try a valley walk to avoid Montsant completely*)

**Day 7** **Poboleda to La Vilella Baixa**. Your final day's walk is in the heart of Priorat, through vineyards made known to the world by Robert Parker's first 100/100 score. But first, over the col to the old wine town of Torroja and maybe an early lunch. Afterwards, wind your way through the vines to the Ermita de Consolacio, with its gorgeous view, and finally arrive at your goal - the delightfully positioned La Vilella Baixa - known as 'little New York' for its multi-storey old houses. Stay in Pilar's striking Art Deco accommodation by the old bridge, eat her good home cooking and drink wine from her family vineyard. (*15km, 4¾ hrs, CUSs 500m*)

**Day 8** A night or two more to relax, wander, and read seems a must, but you might just have to return home (taxi to Reus airport or railway station included in the price). Or why not extend your stay with a few days in Barcelona?