

NATIONAL PARK OF ORDESA AND MONTE PERDIDO

english



www.turismodearagon.com

Tourist information telephone: 902 477 000



The Park

On 16 August 1918, the bottom of the Ordesa valley was declared a National Park. Two years after the approval of the Law of National Parks and only weeks from the birth of the first of them, the Park of Covadonga Mountain. Thus the conservation of 2066 hectares full of life on the border of the legendary Aragonese Sobrarbe and in the heart of the Pyrenees, was guaranteed.

In 1982, the Park was reclassified to incorporate the Canyon of Añisclo, the gorge of Yaga, the mountain lake of Pineta and the massif of Monte Perdido. The name of this mythical mountain was added to its name and the surface area it then covered was 15608 hectares, much of which already belonged to the Ordesa-Viñamala Biosphere Reserve, which the UNESCO had declared in 1977. It has also received successive European diplomas from the Council of Europe (1988, 1993 and 1998) and it has been considered Heritage of Mankind since 1997.

Finally, in November 2004, all the management responsibilities, until then shared with the state, were transferred to the Government of Aragon.



Credits:

Photos: Julio E. Foster-Archivo Prames
Javier Romeo, Fernando Lampre,
Chesús Casaus, Eva Acín
Prepared by: Prames
Printed by: INO Reproducciones

The shape

THE PARK HAS THE HIGHEST CALCAREOUS MASSIF IN EUROPE, THE MONTE PERDIDO, WHICH RISES TO 3355 M AT ITS SUMMIT. AT ITS FEET THE VALLEYS OF ORDESA, AÑISCLO, ESCUAIN AND PINETA SPREAD OUT, WITH THE RIVERS ARAZAS, BELLOS, YAGA AND CINCA, RESPECTIVELY, FLOWING THROUGH THEM.



All of this is part of the Inner Mountain ranges or Inner Pre-Pyrenees, which line the Axial Pyrenees or the Pyrenees, strictly speaking. Around 3 million years ago, during the Tertiary Era, the Alpine orogeny rejuvenated the granite and metamorphic rocks of an old mountain range of the Primary Era (Axial Pyrenees) and folded the deposits of limestone accumulated over thousands of years in the adjacent seas (Inner and Outer Mountain ranges).

A long time after, the glaciers of the Quaternary Era moulded these folds and thick rocky layers, excavating the extensive valleys of Ordesa and Pineta. The two small glaciers that resist on the northern face of Monte Perdido and that of the northern face of Marmores, the most southern in Europe, are real geological relics of those glaciations. Whilst the ice continues fragmenting the rock, the liquid water has generated all kinds of karstic reliefs, dissolving the limestone. Here the canyon de Añisclo (*Ballinisclo*) and the gorge of Escuain are outstanding examples.



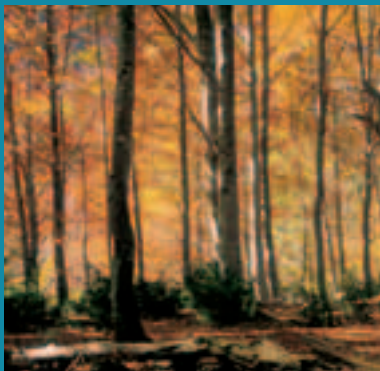
The colour

THE MINERAL OR VEGETABLE COLOUR, WHICH CAMOUFLAGING THE FAUNA, CAN BE ADDED TO THE SHAPE. THE FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER AND PYRENEAN EXPERT, LUCIEN BRIET, FELL IN LOVE WITH ALL OF THIS, AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURIES. HE WAS ONLY ABLE TO CAPTURE THE BEAUTY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE IN BLACK AND WHITE, BUT HIS FASCINATED VIEW WAS KEY TO ACHIEVING THE DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK OF ORDESA.

Grey is the colour that dominates the summits before the first snows. There are different types of limestone (Paleocene and dolomitic) and strips of softer rocks (the Millares loams and clayey limestone), with blocks of ice and glaciers clinging to them.

As one looks down, and if the mist permits, one can see the brownish-reddish tones of the calcareous sandy soils, which line the valley of Ordesa, canyon de Añisclo and Pineta or Balle Berde.

Green is the colour that covers the bottoms of the valleys, woody slopes and mountain flats until the height permits. This is the colour of spring and summer; brightened by the many seasonal flowers. But nothing can compare with the autumn show of beech groves and mixed woods, above all in November; when the deployment of colour bows to the visitor. White is for winter; although the gall oak groves still provide a copper touch with the dry leaves that remain on the tree until the following spring.



THE PARK IS A PARADISE FOR ALMOST 1400 VEGETABLE SPECIES, HALF OF THE FLORA PRESENT IN THE PYRENEES, INCLUDING 60 ENDEMISMS. SUCH DIVERSITY IS DUE TO THE VARIETY OF MICROCLIMATES, WHICH DEPEND ON THE ALTITUDE (THE DIFFERENCE IN LEVEL EXCEEDS 2000 M) AND THE DEGREES OF HUMIDITY AND SUNSHINE, WITH THE ADDITION OF THE DIFFERENT SOIL COMPOSITIONS.



Life

The influence of the Mediterranean coast, with kermes oaks, tree strawberries and laurustinus viburnum, reaches the lowest levels, but from 900 m above sea level upwards, we find more typically mountain species. There are masses of kermes oaks, gall oaks, delicate mixed woods (hazelnut, aspen, ash, linden, birch, field maple, mountain ash or very beautiful mountain elms), beech groves and humid mossy wild pine groves. There are fir trees and willow groves lining the rivers. From 1800 m above sea level, new wild and black pine groves initiate the transition to the high mountain meadows, where the trees disappear. Each environment has endless accompanying plants, which become especially rare in the most inhospitable spots, associated with rocky land.

The fauna of all these bioclimatic layers is common to other mountainous areas. There are small and medium sized insect and grain eating birds (tit, blue tit, goldcrest, common bullfinch, common chaffinch, short-toes tree creeper, woodpecker), highlighting the grouse. Others are birds of prey, such as the northern goshawk, sparrowhawk, short-toed eagle or tawny owl, and alongside all of these, martens, dormice, squirrels, foxes and wild boars exist. More typical species of sub-alpine and alpine land are the white partridge, hedge accentator and alpine sparrow, the common crossbill, rock thrush and Alpine chough, accompanied by the majestic flight of vultures, golden eagles and bearded vultures. Stoats, weasels, martens and above all, sarrio (wild goats) complete

the chapter of mammals. The rivers are the territory of the trout, the white-throated dipper and of that singular mammal, which is the desman of the Pyrenees. Typical amphibians are the Pyrenean triton, the grass frog and the Pyrenean frog, described for the first time in 1992, and among the reptiles we have to mention the slow worm, the asp viper, the smooth snake and wall lizards like the rock lizards.

You can also still bump into the traditional flocks of sheep, herds of cows and horses.



The La Larri Plains

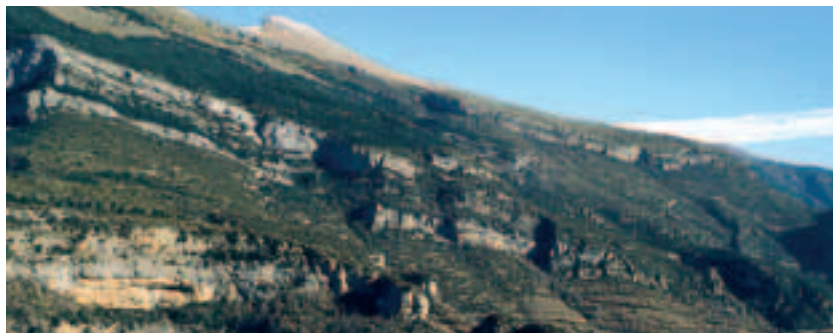
Difference in level: 340 m

Duration: 1 h 15 min (outwards) and 1 h (return)

Difficulty: easy

La Larri is a glacier origin mountain lake perpendicular to Pineta, from where there are spectacular panoramic views of the massif of Monte Perdido and the *mountain range of the Zucas*. Going up Los Llanos is simple and above all pleasant, thanks to the shade provided by the *Selba Pochas* beech grove.

The path begins behind the simple hermitage of Virgen de Pineta (1280 m), next to the National Parador (state-owned hotel), which is reached by road. The path is signposted with the red and white marks of the GR11, so you cannot get lost. Also at the beginning there is a fountain to fill your water bottles. The beech trees, with the odd fir tree, convert the ascent into a suggestive walk. After them, a small wood of pine trees announces the proximity of the plains. Take the track that goes up from Pineta (another itinerary possibility) on the right-hand side and soon the trees disappear, giving way to green meadows, which in July are full of purple lilies. A shepherd's hut (1575 m) can act as an arrival point.



From Rebilla to the lookout of the Gorge

Difference in level: practically flat

Duration: about 45 minutes in all

Difficulty: easy

Reaching the lookout of the Gorge is a privilege within everyone's reach. The walk runs through a sunny strip on the left banks of the Yaga river, in the company of oak trees, gall oaks, kermes oaks, maples, hazelnuts, boxes... and the singing of robins.

Revilla is at the end of an asphalted track, which takes off from the road that goes to Tella. A tight bend, shortly before reaching the village, can be used to park the car. Here there are some information panels, which mark the start of the path. Soon we cross the Concusa gorge, over a metal footbridge, and the path enters La Faja. On one side the limestone wall rises, which still houses the ruins of the San Lorenzo hermitage; on the other the course of the Yaga river sinks down. There are several lookouts, which look onto the deep valley and the cliffs of the Castillo Mayor, where it is possible to sight bearded vultures. A small pine grove descends to the last of these balconies, open to the narrow gorge of Escuin and to the upwellings and ravines which accompany it.

Walks

From Torla to the meadow of Ordesa through Low Turieto

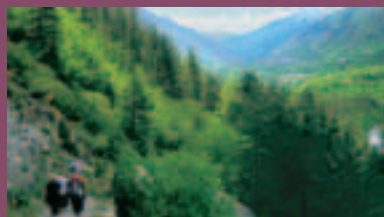
Difference in level: 355 m

Duration: about 3 hours (outbound) and 2 h 30 min (return)

Difficulty: easy

Simple, shady and unknown to many is the old path that used to join Torla and Ordesa. Walking along we discover that the natural deployment of the valley begins a long way before its Meadow is reached, and undoubtedly, it means choosing the best alternative to reach it without using the road.

From Torla, you have to cross the Glera bridge, next to Rio Ara camping site, and continue along the left bank of the river (GR 1.2). Then you leave the track that goes up to the mountain range of *Carquera* on the right; later you will reach the place where it joins path (GR 1.1), which goes to the bridge of the Navarros and to Bujaruelo. On the right, within the Park limits, the path, which goes to Turieto Bajo, begins, on the bank of the Arazas river, which flows into the Ara. Meadows and groves give way to the pine grove and this, in turn, to an exulting beech grove where pine trees find a place, and above all fir trees. Silent shade and padded moss, which the river accompanies with waterfalls (Molineto, Tamborrotera and Abetos). The Ordesa bridge, or further on, the Fuentes and Cazadores bridges, provide access to the Meadow.



Through Ordesa to Cola de Caballo

Difference in level: 540 m

Duration: 2 h (outwards) 1 h 30 min (return)

Difficulty: easy

This is a classical trip, as it includes almost all the typical mountain landscape elements: green meadows, dense woods, jumping rivers and a rugged backdrop. It is so easy that it is suitable for anyone.

The Ordesa meadow has a regulated car park, which cannot be accessed in summer or at Easter. At those times of the year, you have to take the bus that leaves Torla every 15 or 20 minutes and do the rest on foot.

Once at the meadow, the route to Soaso starts from one end of it. You will soon enter a foliage of wild pines, beech trees, fir trees and abundant box, and further on mountain elms, dog roses or mountain ashes, as the road continues under the crags of Fracauta and reaches the Arripas fountain. Next to this is the first of a series of waterfalls (Arripas, Cueva and Estrecho). Then the darkness of the beech tree wood or Estrecho beech grove is reached. On the other side of the river are the steep walls of the Pozino of Arazas, the last redoubt of the "bucardo" or Pyrenean goat, officially extinguished in the year 2000.

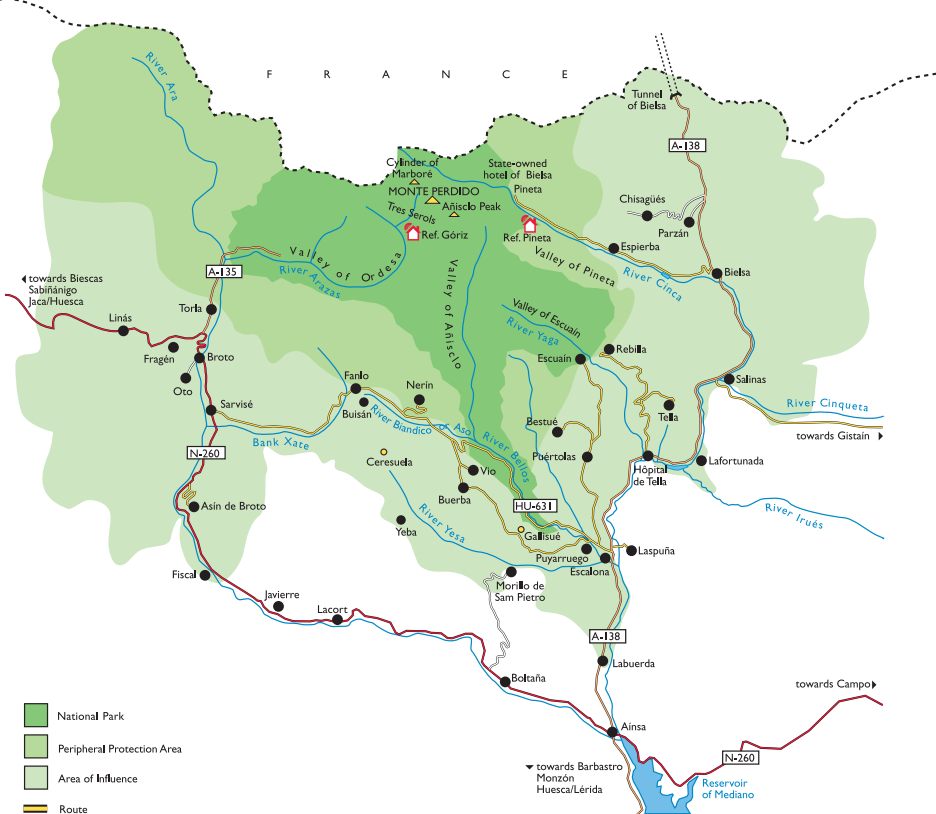
After the wood, the meadows arrive, the slopes of black pine and a succession of river falls known as the Gradas de Soaso. A slope takes us to the final plain, where the river twists and turns and floods the land generating peat bog. In the background the glacier mountain lake appears over which the summits of the Cilindro, Monte Perdido and Pico Aníscolo or Soum de Ramon rise up –from left to right– and, finally, the Rincon de Soaso and its emblematic waterfall, Cola de Caballo.

Rules

The aim of any national park is to protect an enclave of special natural beauty, its fauna and vegetable wealth and its geological and hydrological peculiarities. Its rules try to combine these criteria of conservation with criteria of enjoyment, which must always be responsible.

To achieve this aim, there is a Peripheral Protection Area where some traditional uses are permitted, and an Area of Socio-economic Influence, which includes the villages around the Park. Within the park, its use is governed depending on whether the areas are more or less restricted, varying from areas that isolate certain singular or threatened redoubts to those that are easy to access and which welcome visitors.

The conservation of the National Park of Ordesa and Monte Perdido is a job for everyone. Contribute by respecting this Regulation.



On the inside of the National Park, the following are forbidden...

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | Free camping* |  | Picking up animals, collecting plants, toadstools, minerals or rocks |
|  | Traffic at certain times and periods of the year |  | Leaving rubbish |
|  | Bathing in rivers and lakes |  | Ravine descent |
|  | Making fires |  | Hunting |
|  | Disturbing the tranquillity of nature |  | Having dogs off leash |
|  | The use of bicycles on restricted paths and roads |  | Fishing |

* Only the "vivac" is permitted, that is, sleeping out in the open or in tent – no taller than 1.30 m - which must be set up at night fall and pulled down at dawn, higher than the following altitudes: 1800 m in the sectors of Añisclo (Fuen Blanca) and Escuin (A Ralla), 2100 m in the sector of Ordesa (Clavijas de Soaso) and 2500 m in the sector of Pineta (Balcony of Pineta).





Ordesa and Monte Perdido are already mythical names associated with the conservation of natural spaces. The National Park was created around both places and it can now add to its long history, the declarations of Reserve of the Biosphere and Heritage of Mankind, thus guaranteeing the protection of all the beauty and life forms that continue beating strongly in the heart of the Aragonese Pyrenees.

ACCESS TO THE PARK:

To reach the valley of Ordesa you have to go through Torla; the Canyon of Añisclo can be reached from Escalona and the Escuin sector from Escuin and Tella. The N-260 road between Sabiñanigo and Torla and the A-138 between Barbastro and France are the access roads to all the points indicated.



- Offices of the National Park of Ordesa and Monte Perdido (Huesca)
Tel.: 974 243 361

- Torla
Tel.: 974 486 472
All year round (from Monday to Friday, 8.00 to 15.00 hours)

- Escalona
Tel.: 974 505 131
All year round (from Monday to Friday, 8.00 to 15.00 hours)

- Visitors' Centre "El Parador" (Ordesa Sector, half-way between Torla and the Ordesa meadow)
Tel.: 974 486 421 (from Easter to October)

