

Itinerary 1: LA ROCA D'EN TONI

Between nature and history

The itinerary that we now start will allow us to get to know one of the most emblematic spots of Parc Serralada Litoral: the outstanding megalithic monument located in the middle of the mountains called *Can Boquet* dolmen, better known as *Roca d'en Toni*. History within nature.

Two routes can be taken to access this area. From Cabrils and from Vilassar de Dalt: These two routes are basically parallel to one another. If you take the first route, start from Cabril's petrol station, cross the river and then take the road that goes to Vilassar de Dalt. When you get to the mountain pass, which separates these two towns, you find the little *Sant Sebastià* hermitage, where we then take the turnoff on the right to get to a track which is about 500 m away.

From Vilassar de Dalt we start our route from the *Vila* square. We go up town leaving the church, dedicated to *Sant Genis*, behind and we take *Àngel Guimera's* street which leads to a dirt road.

For two and a half Km, these two parallel routes gives us the first glimpse of the landscape of the sierra. A mountainous Mediterranean landscape with pine nut trees, some white pine trees, Holm oak, (which are greater in number than the age-old tradition of forestry exploitation), golden broom groves, white and fuchsia rockrose flowers and sweet-scented herbs that merged their intense essence to that of the pine trees, offering us the most pleasant feeling of the Mediterranean forest.

The countryside and the farmhouses

Once we reach the top of the sierra we find a crossing. The left one leads to *Sant Mateu* hermitage and the opposite one to the Vallès, exactly to Vallromanes. We have to take the one on the right which leads us to the *Roca d'en Toni* dolmen. But a few meters before there is another turnoff to the right which takes us to *Can Boquet*, a three story, uninhabited farmhouse. It is one of the biggest farmhouses of Vilassar de Dalt. It has a double water roof and with a ridge at right angles to the façade. Attached to this farmhouse we find *Sant Salvador* chapel. This chapel has written references of the XI century and a pre-Romanesque oblong apse with a base made with an encrusted upside down barrel vault amphora shape unique in the Iberian Peninsula. A magnificent hackberry tree guards the entrance.

Several elements are outstanding in the surroundings of the park. On the one hand, the extraordinary view we get from this point of the coastal plains and the mountains, together with the two towns: Vilassar de Dalt and Vilassar de Mar. This scenery helps us to make a mental geographical map of the area. On the other hand, the mountainous landscape to which we now have to add to the above described vegetation, crop and grain plantations, vineyards, spring green carpet-like fields stained with the blatant red colour of the poppies and the delicate white yellow colour of the *Raphanus sativus*. This vegetation mosaic and countryside is still the vivid image of the sierra, the essence of its own history.

From the megalithic period to the middle ages

We get to the main track, after visiting the farmhouse, and we take the turnoff to the right as we said before. We then walk for about one km between woods and the countryside until we get to another crossing. We stop to see *Can Boquet dolmen* better known as *Roca d'en Toni dolmen*, an important point in our itinerary and possibly the most prestigious megalithic monument of Maresme.

Dolmens are a type of ancient graves made of a group of upright stones supporting a large flat piece of stone. The word dolmen comes from the Breton “tol men” which means stone. The inside of these chambers was used to bury the bodies with their belongings, weapons, jewels and some offerings. Historians place these type of constructions on the Neolithic period, around the second millennium BC. This area is rich in archaeological finds as a result of the nearby caves: *cova d'en Pau* and *cova de la Granota* burial chambers.

A few meters from *Roca d'en Toni*, going up a small path, we can see medieval graves made of large flat pieces of granite which is another sign of ancient cultures. There were discovered in 1974, under a crop field. Some historians say that these graves show the abandonment of the plain o *Marina* in the post-roman period; this movement of people brings about the birth of towns such as Vilassar de Dalt o de Munt.

Woods and romantic fountains

Nearly at the end of our itinerary we go into more humid areas of the sierra. We leave *Roca d'en Toni* and we take the turnoff which leads to **font Freda**, passing by *Cal Senyor's* farmhouse. This farmhouse offers horse renting facilities and a restaurant. From here on we go down the road and about 500 meters further on we find a crossing with a signpost indicating the right direction to get to *font Freda*. The path to *font Freda* is quite narrow and as we go along we notice a change in the environmental conditions. In fact, the environment is much more humid. Pine wood is substituted by dense evergreen Holm oak wood, where strawberry trees, heather, bay laurel, myrtle and even scattered oak trees abound. Lianas and creepers such as the ivy or *vitalba* can also be found. We get a fresher shadier feeling in comparison to the one that we get near the coast.

After walking about half a kilometre and passing a sharp curve, we find on the left hand side a little staircase path with a wooden railing leading directly to the fountain. There we evoke a romantic world of old times where religious routings to sanctuaries, fountains, picnics and the typical Catalan folk dance called *sardana* occurred.

This fountain is certainly the evidence of past times that must be preserved nowadays. We have to respect its environment showing that our society takes into consideration both, past and future values.

1. An outline of the route: (schematic map)

2. Useful information:

- If you wish you can have lunch or dinner at: Sant Salvador, Cal senyor, Ca l'Arcis
- You can get there by train (RENFE) from the station of Premià de Mar and Vilassar de Mar and also from a bus private service called Casas available at the same towns.

3. additional information:

If you need any further information you can contact Parc Serralada Litoral association.

Surveillance telephone number of the Park

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