



Castell de Montesquiu Park

XPN

The park lies on the border of the regions of Osona and El Ripollès and occupies part of the municipalities of Montesquiu, Sant Quirze de Besora, Santa Maria de Besora and Sora, in the subregion of Bisaura. It has a relatively small area —681 ha— which is mostly in the municipality of Montesquiu, and is divided into two by the River Ter: the first and larger part lies on the left bank while the other smaller area, which has a gentler relief, is on the right. The whole zone comprises oak and pinewoods and traditional farmhouses, some of which have been renovated as centres for educational activities or for agriculture. The most notable feature of the park is Montesquiu Castle, from which it gets its name.

Since 30 July 1986, this natural area has been legally protected by a special management plan, promoted by Barcelona Provincial Council. Since then, different buildings have been adapted as park amenities. Most noteworthy is the work to consolidate and restore the inside and outside of the castle, to adapt it for use as a museum and resources centre.

Barcelona Provincial Council manages this area in association with the town halls on the park's Coordinating Council, with a view to making its natural values compatible with the socio-economic activities of the local people and to providing society with an ideal framework for leisure, environmental education and research.

## Natural Park Network

**B**arcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network consists of 12 natural areas of significant landscape, environmental and cultural value.

**I**t ensures the territorial and environmental balance of municipalities within its geographical scope.

**O**verall, it covers an area of 102,316 hectares, divided among 100 municipalities. This represents 22% of Catalan territory where 70% of the population of Catalonia lives.

**I**t plans and manages natural and agricultural areas through special plans drawn up with the participation of all of the stakeholders.

**I**t protects the natural, agricultural, forestry, cultural and landscape values of each park.

**I**t works towards achieving balance between the preservation of the parks and the economic development of the area.

**I**t encourages public use of natural heritage.



Parc del Castell de Montesquiu

WELCOME TO THE PARK

Welcome to the Park!

### Parks of Catalonia

#### Barcelona Provincial Council's Natural Park Network

Castell de Montesquiu Park, Les Guilleries-Savassona Natural Area, El Montseny Natural Park, Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac Natural Park, El Montnegre i el Corredor Park, Serralada Litoral Park, Serralada de Marina Park, Serra de Collserola Natural Park, El Baix Llobregat Agrarian Park, El Garraf Park, Olió Park and El Foix Park.



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Printed on eco-friendly paper  
Press and Communication Office. Cover photo: iñaki Relanzón. DL B. 23994-2013





SHOOTING

## The physical environment

The landscape of Castell de Montesquiu Park features relief broken by successive mountain ridges, which run from east to west and form the Eastern pre-Pyrenees. Altitudes vary from 580

to 850 metres. Its features have been shaped by the River Ter, which crosses the park lengthways and divides it into two unequal parts: the somewhat larger left bank, and the right bank, in the West, which is smaller and has a gentler relief.



SHOOTING

As in the rest of the region, humans have made a profound impact on the park's landscape. It features four main different biogeographical types: woodland, meadowland, riverbank and cropland. Although the woodlands are predominated by downy oak woods, there are also large areas of Scots pine, where the undergrowth is the same as in the oak woods. The downy oak generally grows on sunny slopes and flat land while the Scots pine grows in shady areas. The woodland is thick and provides refuge for typically Mediterranean fauna, although there are also areas of beech, lime and box trees. Meadows are to be found in clearings and sunny areas. The reed meadows are the most common.

The riparian vegetation is distributed in narrow strips beside watercourses and features a broad range of species such as the elm, black poplar, willow, alder and plane tree. This environment has a significant diversity of fauna. The crops, distributed around the main farmhouses in the area, are mainly forage and cereals. Allotments run alongside the River Ter, which crosses the park lengthways.



AGNÈS PERELLÓ



XPN

## Human occupation

The park area is a transit zone between the mountainous zones of El Ripollès and La Cerdanya and the plains of Osona, and has been a place of human settlement since ancient times. The most significant archaeological remains date from the early Middle Ages. Montesquiu castle, together with the castles of Besora (today in ruins) and Saderra, forms the defensive structure of the area. The most significant examples of medieval building in the park are the little church of Sant Moí, the remains of the Llaés Way, Les Codines bridge, and evidence of the early strada.

The church of Sant Moí, set on a farmstead of the same name, is a pre-Romanesque (or very early Romanesque) structure, which was probably built at the end of the tenth century. This small building comprises a small rectangular hall with a wooden roof and a very steeply banked semicircular apse. There are no examples of civil or agricultural architecture from earlier historical periods. Although some of the farmhouses such as Codines, Planeses, La Casanova, Sant Moí, La Solana or the castle farmstead were originally medieval, they were all subject to large-scale alterations in the eighteenth century. Some, like La Casanova and La Solana, were completely rebuilt in the twentieth century. The auxiliary constructions, known locally as *cabanyes* (lit. huts), characterised by the large semi-circular arch that dominates the main façade, are also of great architectural interest.



EUGENI PONS (XPN)



XPN

## Montesquiu Castle

Records of the castle date from the thirteenth century. It appears to have originated as a small square guardhouse or watchtower, which was probably built during the tenth and eleventh centuries and is still visible in the castle's current structures. The castle, the park's best-known architectural feature, is actually a large medieval manor house with additions and modifications from subsequent periods, which very much altered the original structure. Used in medieval times by the feudal lords of Besora, it has always been associated with Besora Castle, which was the true centre of local power in the late Middle Ages.

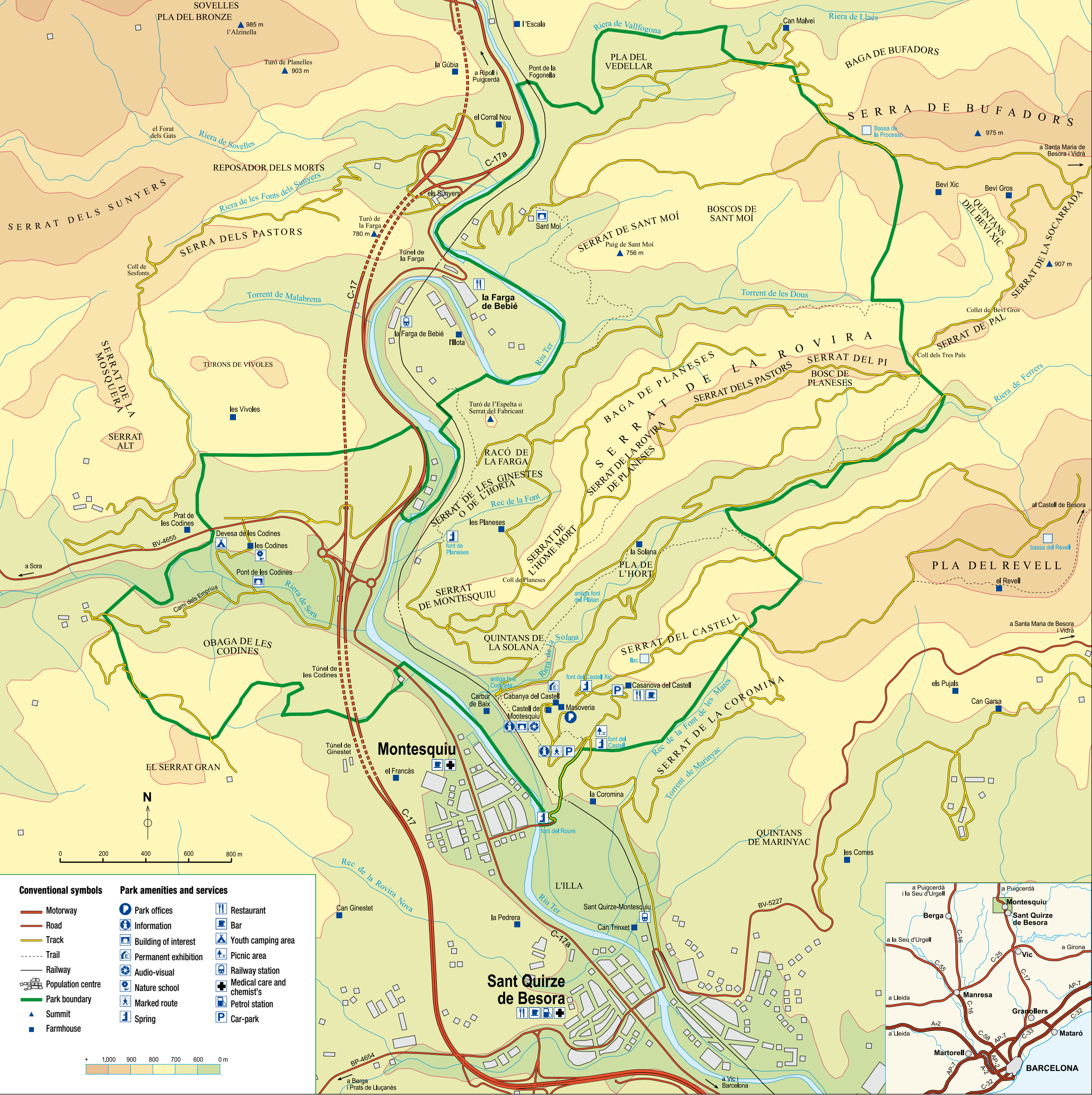
In the mid-fourteenth century, Guillem of Besora moved the habitual residence from Besora to Montesquiu. In the seventeenth century, Lluís de Descatllar undertook large-scale alterations on the manor house and enlarged the area it covered. A small chapel adjoining the castle and devoted to Saint Barbara is from this period. At the start of the twentieth century, the castle was subject to alterations that gave it its current appearance.



EUGENI PONS (XPN)

In 1976, ownership of the castle and estate was transferred from the former owner, Emili Juncadella, to Barcelona Provincial Council. Since then, Barcelona Provincial Council has undertaken comprehensive restoration work to ensure its conservation, to increase the values of its architectural and historical contents and to convert some of its rooms into a resource centre.





## Activities

### Excursions

Castell de Montesquiu Park features some extremely beautiful spots that make it well worth a visit. The pools of the Vallfogona creek at its northern end, Sora creek with the medieval bridge of the same name crossing it, the path on the ridge of Sant Moi, which features traces of the old road that joined Llaés with the river, with magnificent views over El Bevi Xic, El Bevi Gros and the Bufadors mountain range outside the park's boundaries, and the Solana river upstream, all require just a short trip and are within reach of any visitor who wishes to enjoy the park's scenery.

Visitors can also follow the route signposted as "L'obaga del castell" (In the shadow of the castle), which runs within the park's boundaries. Information on guided tours or tours on foot or by car in the surrounding area is also available at the office or information point.

### Cultural heritage

An excellent way to discover the park is to take part in one of the events on the "Viu el parc" (Experience the park) cultural programme, which take place each year from June to October.

But there are other attractions outside the park that are worth a visit. Close to Montesquiu, the Bellmunt range, with its shrine at the top, offers panoramic views over the plain of Vic and the Pyrenees. Visitors may also follow the course of the River Ter, which has some sites of great beauty and diverse buildings associated with the industrial use of the river's water (small hydroelectric power stations and textile colonies such as La Farga de Bebié).

The park lies in what is known as the subregion of Bisaura, at the geographical boundary that separates the regions of Osona and El Ripollès. Osona and El Ripollès both have significant monumental complexes of exceptional interest such as the city of Vic, the Romanesque monastery of Ripoll (and its sculpted doorway) and the monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses. The most significant museums are also to be found in the regions' two main towns. These are the Episcopal Museum of Vic, which features one of the best collections of Catalan medieval art and one of the most important tenth-century documentary archives in Europe, and the Ethnographic Museum of Ripoll, which has a very representative collection of the region's popular culture, with special reference to the forging and manufacture of Ripoll's famous fire-arms.

## Park facilities

### Castell de Montesquiu Park Office

Castle country house  
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9 am to 2 pm  
08585 Montesquiu  
Tel. 934 727 600. Fax 938 529 005  
p.montesquiu@diba.cat

### Montesquiu Castle

General information on the park, sale of publications and guided visits to the castle. Audiovisual *Time of history and mystery*.  
Opening hours: October to May: Saturday and public holidays, from 11 am to 2 pm; June and September: Saturday and public holidays, from 11 am to 2 pm and from 4 pm to 7 pm; July and August: week-days, from 11 am to 2 pm; Saturday and public holidays, from 11 am to 2 pm and from 4 pm to 7 pm. Group visits by appointment.  
During school holidays, please enquire for opening times  
Information and bookings: Tel. 938 529 234  
Tel. 934 727 600. Fax 938 529 005  
p.montesquiu.bisaura@diba.cat www.diba.cat/parcsn/montesquiu

### La Cabanya

Temporary exhibition room.  
Opening hours: Saturdays and public holidays, from 11 am to 2 pm

## Recommendations

- Respect the agricultural and livestock activities, as they are the livelihood of some of the inhabitants of this park and the surrounding area.
- The forest is a renewable natural resource that is managed rationally in this area. Tree felling is regulated by the Forestry Act of Catalonia and the park regulations.
- Use the network of signposted tracks and paths. The speed limit is 30 km/h throughout the park. Travel in vehicles and on bicycles and horseback off public roads and tracks is not allowed. Do not park in front of the chains preventing access to certain tracks.
- Enjoy the park while respecting the diversity of the natural and architectural heritage.
- The Castell de Montesquiu Park is an ideal place for open-air activities and sport. For your safety, take the precautions appropriate for the activity you intend to undertake.
- Respect nature and the peacefulness of the park, particularly in breeding areas. Avoid making unnecessary noise.
- Hunting and fishing are regulated by law and only permitted in designated game and fishing preserves.
- Abandoning pets and exotic species is cruel and punishable by law.
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is a rare tree that provides food and shelter for many species of animals. It is protected and therefore collecting either the tree or its parts are punishable by law.
- Remember that burning branches and other materials, setting off fireworks, lighting fires on the ground and barbecues on forestland and within a radius of 500 metres are expressly forbidden (except in the period of the year when permitted by law, and with prior authorisation from the competent body).
- Do not leave litter. Use the bins and containers in the park or in nearby villages.
- No wilderness camping, including camper vans, of any kind is permitted. If you wish to camp, you must have a permit; the town councils will inform you of how to obtain one.
- If you collect wild mushrooms or medicinal herbs, do not damage the forest by using tools or digging in the earth.

Follow the indications and recommendations on signposts, at information points and of the park rangers.

## How to get to the park

### Main road accesses

Road C-17

### Public transport

**Train.** Renfe. CA 3 Regional line. Sant Quirze de Besora station  
www.renfe.es

### Montesquiu Castle Resource Centre

Conference and work rooms equipped for different bodies and institutions to hold courses, congresses and seminars (optional catering services at the Casanova del Castell restaurant)  
Information and bookings: Tel. 938 529 234 and 938 529 902  
p.montesquiu.bisaura@diba.cat

### Casanova del Castell restaurant

Facility with restaurant and catering service  
Tel. 938 529 022. Fax 938 551 311. p.montesquiu.casanova@diba.cat

### School nature of Codines

Educational equipment owned by the Barcelona Provincial Council, managed by the Catalan Foundation for Recreation through the Catalan Association of Holiday Camps  
Further information: Tel. 934 744 678 and accc@esplai.org

### Devesa de les Codines Youth Camp

For use by children's and youth leisure activity organisers only  
Tel. 934 727 600. p.montesquiu@diba.cat

### La Solana

Specialised forestry training centre  
Further information: Tel. 938 592 226 and www.formacioforestal.cat