

# Camí Vell de Lluc a Pollença

Serra de Tramuntana Nature Area



Photo: Gràcia Salas



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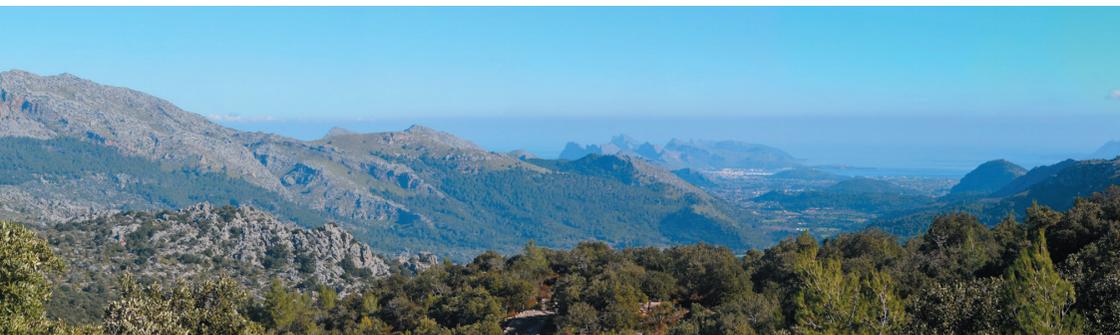
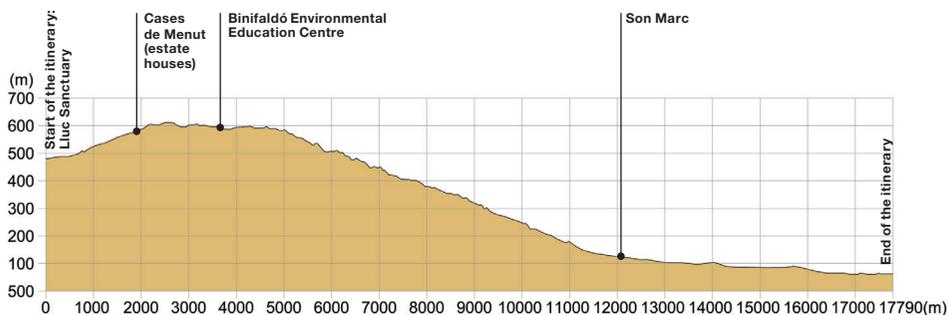
The old road from Lluc to Pollença is signposted as “Camí Vell de Lluc a Pollença”. This excursion begins at Lluc and will lead you through the old traditional farmsteads Binifaldó, Muntanya, Son Marc, Son Grua and Can Serra, until you reach the valley known as Vall d'en Marc, which sits within the limits of Pollença, one of the richest municipal areas in the Serra de Tramuntana Nature Area in terms of nature, culture and landscape.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Distance:** 17.80 kilometres (one way)

**Duration:** 4.5 hours

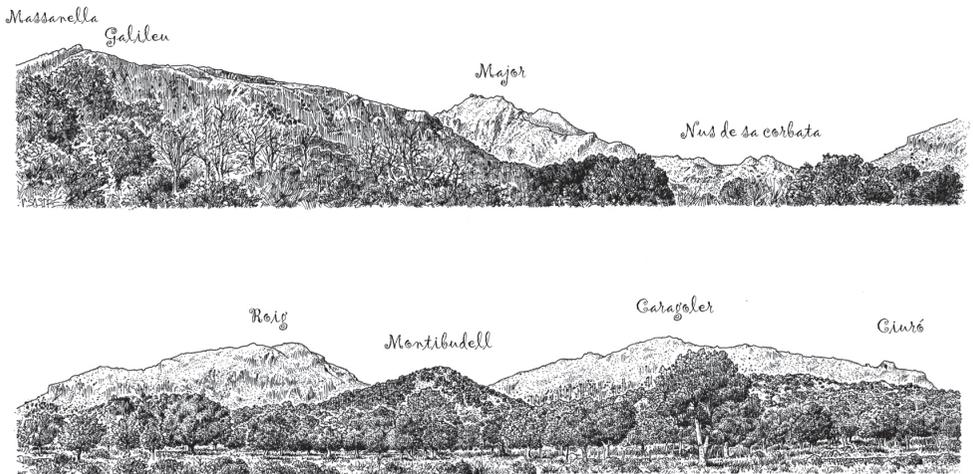
Your itinerary starts at the Lluc Sanctuary. Once you have reached the Binifaldó Environmental Education Centre, simply follow the signs of the GR-221 and you will have no problem finding the trail to Pollença.



View of the Bay of Pollença from the pass Collet de Binifaldó (Foto: Gràcia Salas)

# 1. An itinerary for the senses: to smell, touch, listen... perceive

Starting beneath the porxets, (pilgrims' cells) of the Lluc Sanctuary, you will come to an arched doorway. Go through it and take the asphalted path alongside the stream, which will be on your left. A few metres ahead, turn off to the left until you come to a football field. Passing by a small wooden bridge that will be on your left, you will continue along the old Roman highway that once connected Lluc with Pollença. Follow this ancient thoroughfare for a while until you reach the Andratx – Pollença highway (Ma-10). Here, turn to the left and continue 120 m, until you come to an asphalted road signposted with the welcome signs to the public estates of Menut and Binifaldó. Just past the signs, take the asphalted road amid holm oaks and rocky formations, reaching the houses of Menut. Leaving the houses behind you on the right, you will continue along the path until you come to the Binifaldó Environmental Education Centre, which you will once again leave behind on the right, as you set out down a wide unpaved trail that runs alongside the dry stone wall that marks the enclosure of the grain fields near the houses.



**Relief of the mountains (Drawing: Vicenç Sastre)**

Yet first, you may wish to stop and walk through the itinerary that has been specially adapted for the blind, which runs in the same direction for more or less one kilometre. We invite you to do so, with your eyes open or closed, yet in all cases with all of your senses wide awake.

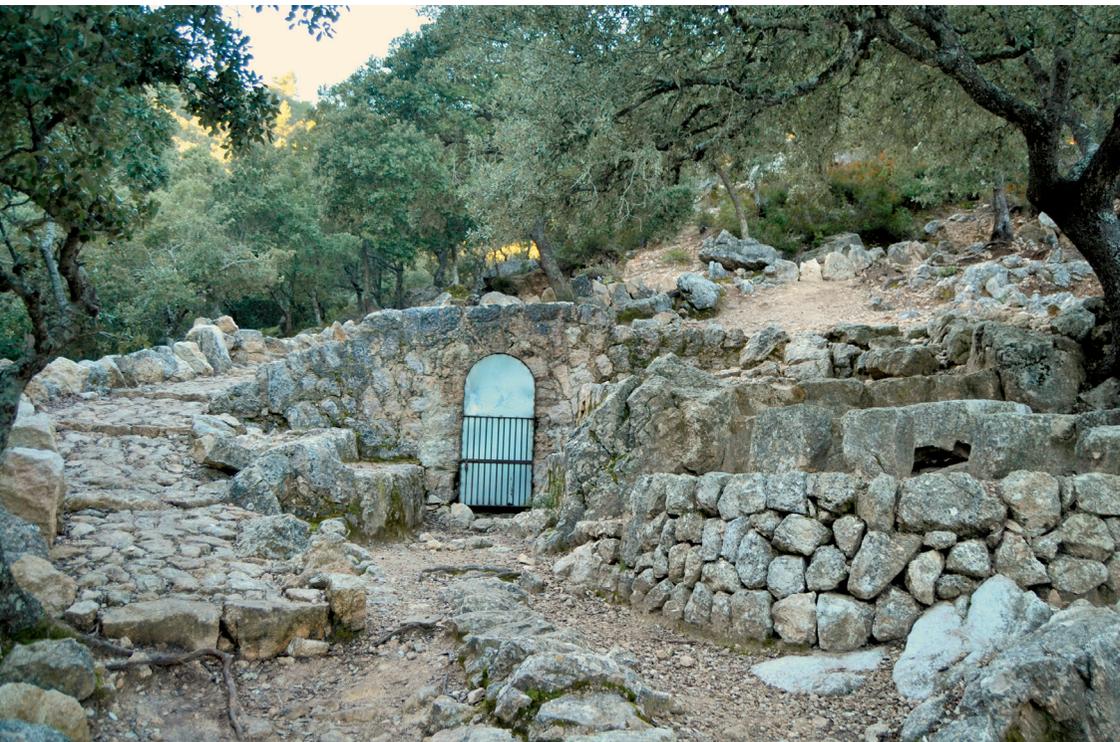
Here you will become aware of the other senses that play a role in the contemplation of nature. In the autumn, you will hear a rustling sound as you tread on the dry leaves shed by the white poplar trees (*Populus alba*), and in the summer, you will enjoy the cool shade of the *Alzina d'en Pere*, a holm oak that's over 500 years old! At different times of the year, you will be accompanied by the songs of different birds: the song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), the great tit (*Parus major*) and the wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*). See if you can guess which is which! You can also discover the serrated edges of the leaves of the *Rhamnus ludovici-salvatoris* and the sticky leaves of the rockrose (*Cistus monspeliensis*). Be sure to run your hand over the rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and then take in its unmistakable scent.



**Rockrose (Photo: Gràcia Salas)**

## 2. A stroll up to the spring, Font de Muntanya

A light uphill climb will bring you to the pass known as Collet de Binifaldó (598 m), where you will enjoy a magnificent view of the Bay of Pollença. On a clear day, you might even make out the silhouette of the island of Menorca.



**Font de Muntanya (Photo: Gràcia Salas)**

You will now go through a gate that separates the public estate of Binifaldó from the private estate of Muntanya, and descend along an old bridle path until you reach the spring, Font de Muntanya. In the past, this was a frequent cool-off point for pilgrims travelling to Lluç.

Next to the underground gallery of this spring, a stone bench and table invite you to enjoy a brief rest.

### 3. The false daisy and the bracken fern

Before setting out again on the trail, you may wish to have a close look at a small plant that tends to grow in rather damp places such as this one: the false daisy (*Bellium bellidioides*). It is small, and unless you are here in the springtime, you probably will not see it in bloom. You may have to kneel down to appreciate the rounded form of its leaves, which are clustered in a rosette shape at the plant's base.



**False daisy (Photo: Gràcia Salas)**

Also abundant in this area is the bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Yet this plant will not go unnoticed, as it can grow to a height of one metre. The leaves, which in the case of ferns are known as fronds, are highly divided. In the past it was believed that this fern flowered, bore fruit and scattered its seeds at midnight on the night of Sant Joan (23 June). Yet this plant was never seen in bloom and it was moreover impossible to collect its seeds. While this fern has been attributed medicinal properties, some say that it must be collected in the area around Lluc to be effective.

Nevertheless, this belief, which was noted in the *Rondaies mallorquines* (Mallorcan Folktales) by Mossen Alcover, has no scientific basis at all, as ferns reproduce via the spores that are found on the undersides of their leaves.



**Bracken fern (Photo: Gràcia Salas)**

## 4. Walking through the holm oak forest to the Vall d'en Marc



**The path through the holm oak forest (Photo: Gràcia Salas)**

As you enter the holm oak grove, you are sure to be surprised by the almost absolute lack of undergrowth.

After a number of curves in the path, you will come to a wide asphalted road that will lead you to the side of the Fondo de Muntanya stream in the valley Vall d'en Marc, where the landscape is overtaken by fig, almond and orange orchards.

This valley marks the opening of the Serra de Tramuntana to the sea and separates two major mountain ridges. If you turn to the south, you will see the Puig de Ca de Míner (887 m, the heights peak in the municipal area), the Cuculla de Fartàritx, the Moleta and the Moletó. These reliefs act as virtual buttresses for the towering peak of Puig Tomir. The other mountain ridge, located on the north side of the Vall d'en Marc, accommodates the peaks of Puig de Can Massot, Puig Gros de Ternelles (the second highest summit in the municipal area, with an elevation of 839 m) and Puig de l'Esbaldregat.

## 5. The story of Balaixa of Algatzení and Ben-Nassar of Beni-Gigar

Before the Catalan conquest of the island, the land known today as Son Marc, which lends its name to the valley, once housed the Saracen farmstead of Beni-Gigar, the home of the heir Ben-Nassar. He fell in love with Balaixa, the daughter of the neighbouring farmstead of Algatzení, which today is Can Guilló. Yet her parents disapproved of their relationship, and Balaixa became lovesick. In her delirium, she claimed that the flowers of the almond tree of Beni-Gigar were her only cure. Her father was distraught, as there were still several months to go before the almond trees would bloom. Yet Balaixa insisted. Thus, her father decided that if Ben-Nassar brought her a bouquet of almond flowers before the full moon, he would give them his blessings for their wedding.

Ben-Nassar, distressed and worried that the almond trees would never blossom before the moon became full, wept beneath the branches of one of the almond trees of Beni-Gigar. Then, upon seeing its white flowers open up, a nightingale sang:

The almond tree, in bloom  
is a wedding veil,  
and for the damsel,  
The open sky before her soul.



Almond trees in bloom, in the Vall d'en Marc (Photo: Gràcia Salas)



***Pi de Son Grua*** (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

And finally, Balaixa and Ben-Nassar were wed. The town of Pollença has a street named after Balaixa.

As this beautiful legend echoes in your mind, you will come to the *Pi de Son Grua*, a tall pine that stands just where *Camí Vell* (the old road) crosses the Andratx – Pollença highway (Ma-10).

Continue along a narrow path that runs more or less parallel to the highway, alongside the stream Torrent de Son Marc. Banana trees (*Platanus sp.*), hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*) and elm-leaved brambles (*Rubus ulmifolius*) abound in this section of the trail.

A bit further ahead, you will cross a pedestrian bridge known as the Pas d'en Barqueta, and from there the road will lead you right into Pollença.



## Serra de Tramuntana Nature Area

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