Route of round to sa Guàrdia d'en Garrot

This itinerary starts and finishes by the Caló d'en Garrot, also known as the Ses Fonts de n'Alis beach.

You enter into a pine grove and arrive at Caló des Burgit, a small but very beautiful sandy beach. Its name is derived from the word 'brogit' (in Catalan it can be written "brogit" or "borgit" and it means roar, in the sense of waves crashing against rocks and wind tugging on trees).


Coastal woodland (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Difficulty: low
Length: 940 metres
Duration: 25 minutes

The cosat: wild olive trees, Aleppo pine and juniper

The recreation area Ses Fonts de n'Alis is right where you access the beach and this is also where the path that takes you near Caló des Burgit begins.

Walk towards the east, following a forest trail through a pine tree and juniper wood.

It is referred to as a juniper wood because of the Phoenician junipers (Juniperus phoenicea), common in coastal areas (in particular where dunes are present), but as you will see wild olive trees and Aleppo pines are the most prominent species. The Aleppo pine (Pinus halepensis) is very common, being well adapted to most of the environments present on the Balearic Islands.

Junipers are actually scarce on Mallorca, which emphasises the importance of the Mondragó natural park.

Here you get a chance to study the most representative species of the marine environment; the vegetation is scrubland typical to coastal areas: first of all juniper, for its representativeness, then the Aleppo pine, but also bushes such as the wild olive tree (Olea Europea sylvestris), rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis), mastic (Pistacia lentiscus), Mediterranean heather (Erica multiflora) and narrow-leaf phillyrea (Phillyrea angustifolia). Underneath a number of herbs like for example Brachypodium retusum you will be able to make out some of the orchid species that grow in this environment (Ophrys speculum, Himantoglossum robertianum, Anacamptis piramidalis, Serapias lingua…) as well as an abundance of moss, lichen and mushrooms.

In truly Mediterranean areas such as this, summer is very dry and hot, spring and autumn are humid with mild temperatures and winter is relatively cold. The variations in weather conditions are marked and this means the landscape changes greatly from one season to another. For example: moss and mushrooms grow in autumn and winter, bushes bloom in spring and many of the herbaceous plants disappear in summer…

This kind of vegetation dominates the juniper wood and nearer the cliffs it mixes with species common on stony ground, such as the Launaea cervicornis of the dandelion family, the sea fennel (Crithmum maritimum) and plants of the Limonium family. These species live on coastal rock and are adapted to strong winds, waves and salty air.


Caló des Burgit (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

The Caló des Burgit inlet

As soon as you see Caló des Burgit you will be amazed by its beauty and the transparency of the water, brilliantly reflecting the blue sky on sunny days.

This small inlet is near better-known beaches such as the Ses Fonts de n'Alis and S'Amarador, but here you can enjoy a swim in much quieter surroundings even if it lacks the services available on the others.

The itinerary follows a path that bears right just before arriving at the beach; it carries on through the juniper wood, nearly parallel to the coast.

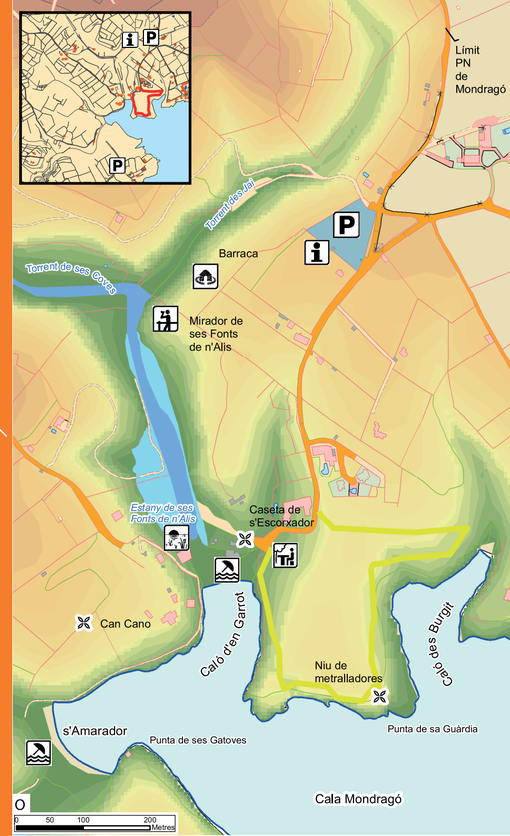
Walking along the seashore

This virgin stretch of coastline is irregular and dominated by cliffs, making it nearly inaccessible from the sea. But there are some boatyards still in between cliffs and stone walls. Such boatyards are spots along the stony coastline where adjustments have been made in the form of slopes to allow vessels to be taken out of the water. Fishermen use them.

Apart from fishermen there have also been watchmen, border guards, smugglers, charcoal makers, hikers and numerous tourists walking along this stretch of land, every one in their own time and for their own reasons.

Between the Caló des Burgit and Sa Font de n'Alis you will come across a machine-gun nest built during the Second Spanish Republic on top of the remains of an old tower used to guard the entrance to the Mondragó, Es Burgit and Sa Barca Trencada inlets. If you look carefully you might spot a smugglers' secret near the trail.


Boatyard (Photo: Gràcia Salas)



The Mondragó coast

The coast in this region consists of calcareous platforms shaped underneath the sea during the Tertiary period, in the Miocene epoch, between twenty and five million years ago. After the rock was formed, important climatological changes made the sea level change. Such environmental changes together with the effects of rain, wind and waves have given these rock formations the shape you can see today.

Near the machine-gun nest you can clearly make out the different rock layers: some layers — or strata — consist of sand deposits formed on the surface, others were shaped of fine material containing lots of fossilised shells at the bottom of the sea.

The cliffs by the sea are low and marine abrasion has shaped steps known as tenasses. Wave erosion often causes horizontal cavities and during millennia they change from simple marks on the rock face to complex coastal cave systems that sometimes reach far into the island's interior. The Mallorcan coastline is rich in such caves and galleries, often with entrances underneath sea level.

Other formations common in the area are blowholes and coastal arches. Just after you have passed the machine-gun nest you will find spots with a fantastic panoramic view of the beaches, sea cliffs and the open sea.



Tenasses (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

The Mondragó coast

Shaping the park: a bit of history

The Mondragó area was formed in a warm sea with plenty of corals. It was shaped as a large platform and rose with a slope down towards sea level and constitutes a marine area: flat, homogeneous and coastal.

Along the coast were coral reefs and large stretches of limestone were deposited on top, known in the area as Santanyí stone.

Most of the rock you can see on the surface is karstified: rainwater mixed with carbon dioxide from the atmosphere erodes the stone in a process called karstic shaping. During centuries it results in a variety of formations such as torrents running between eroded stone walls, sinkholes, caves, stalactites and stalagmites.

The sea cliffs get their shape from the abrasive effect of waves beating against the coast. On some of the walls it is easy to make out layers that consist of fossilised dunes.

The quaternary stratum — a younger layer — is shaped by sediment deposits of torrential origin, and they form ground that is better suited for vegetation.

Beaches are the result of waves depositing sand that accumulates on the coastline. Sand consists of tiny stone fragments from the coast itself, but many grains are also calcium carbonate: fragmented molluscs such as sea shells and snails that live on the seafloor.

Rain and waves leave clear traces on the topography, but the wind also acts as a shaping agent in some areas. We can see its effect at the S'Amarador beach for example, where dunes are formed behind the flat expanse of sand without vegetation

The Ses Fonts de n'Alis beach

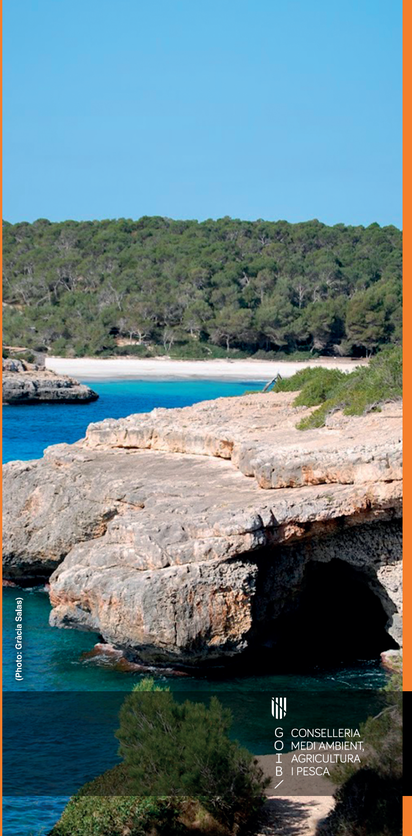
The excursion finishes near the Ses Fonts de n'Alis beach. This little beach is shaped at the mount of a torrent and functions as a barrier between the torrent and the sea.

Behind the beach you can see the lower part of the Ses Coves del Rei torrent. It is a small flooded, brackish area. The pool is almost completely dried out in summer, but in winter this is a very interesting wetland.



Sa Guàrdia d'en Garrot coast (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

The Ses Fonts de n'Alis beach / Shaping the park: a bit of history



(Photo: Gràcia Salas)

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