



Ses Fonts de n'Alis car park (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Route of the Ses Fonts de n'Alis viewpoint

This is a very pleasant walk that links the Ses Fonts de n'Alis car park with the beach.

The itinerary takes you to the beach through the woods, skirting the pond Sa Font de n'Alis. It is an opportunity get to know many different landscapes in a short space of time and a good alternative to the road, since this agreeable walk lets you avoid traffic altogether.

This walk begins at the Ses Fonts de n'Alis car park, next to the park information centre. If you get here during opening hours the centre is a great place to stop and get information about anything to do with the park.

The path starts towards the back of the car park, through a narrow gate. You step out into an old farming area where vegetation progressively changes to become marine, or coastal scrubland. This kind of vegetation is known locally as 'pletes'.

Difficulty: low.
Length: 640 meters.
Duration: 15 minutes.



Ca na Martina estate (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

The Mondragó fields

Nowadays the kind of farming done in this region on Mallorca's east coast, and inside the park itself is of little importance, if not in the sense of actual farmed land then in intensity. These are fields dedicated to non-irrigated crops, mainly arboreal (almond trees, carob trees and less commonly fig trees), sometimes complemented by pasturelands for sheep.

Further on you will be able to see signs of old irrigated land in the Ses Fonts de n'Alis torrent: torrent beds were used for vegetable gardens or citrus trees. Near the S'Amarador torrent in the area known as the S'Hort des Metge, there is an old waterwheel and a canal system that shows how farmers were able to take advantage of the torrents.

The farming of almond and carob trees is not productive any longer, especially in land that is so parcelled up as that here in Mondragó. Much of the farmland you can see is not used; the trees lose productivity and spontaneous marine vegetation takes over the abandoned fields.

The Mondragó fields



Sa Plata (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Wild olive trees, pine trees and... the shore

Wild olive trees and pine trees characterise the woodland you descend through on your way towards the coast. A dry-stone wall to your left separates the woodland from plots with carobs and almond trees.

The path offers a mild descent in the beginning and gets steeper as you get nearer the sea. It is not a difficult itinerary, easy to follow and the route is very straightforward. Being an easy, short walk it is suitable for children as well.

You are now walking through a marine area where Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) dominate, sharing the land with mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*), wild olive trees (*Olea europaea silvestris*), Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*) and rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*).

Take your time at this point to get to know the landscape and to see details you might miss otherwise: what seems like only trees at first will slowly reveal other plants, moss, lichen, nests and insects. The sounds of nature are there to accompany you on your discovery (birds chirping, crickets creaking and even waves beating on a windy day).

Some pine trees feature a formation known as a witch's nest, or a witch's broom. A dense mass of shoots grows from a single point to create this deformity of unknown origin. The formation is used by some bird species as a nest, for example the long-eared owl (*Asio otus*).



Witch's nest (Photo: Josep Rullan)



Lichen (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Also note the slim shape of the pine trees around you. Charcoal makers traditionally used their lower branches, which gave them this shape. Nowadays pinewood is not used for this purpose, the pruning is more selective and the trees have a natural tendency to adopt shapes that are more robust, more rounded.

Walking past a second opening in the dividing walls between plots of land, bearing slightly right, you will see a viewpoint offering a view of the Ses Fonts de n'Alis torrent and the valley it runs through.

Wild olive trees, pine trees and... the shore



The Ses Fonts de n'Alis viewpoint

From the viewpoint and to your left, you can make out the final part of the torrent where it forms a pond before it reaches the sea. To your right you can see how two torrents arriving from opposite directions join up. The one from the east is the Des Jai torrent and the one from the west is the Ses Coves del Rei torrent.

Not much grows in the torrent riverbed and it is completely covered in mud during summer, but the hillsides show a varied vegetation cover with mainly wild olive trees. Only the middle section consists of grey, steep cliffs (limestone) where nothing can grow.

The flow of the torrent and the waves at sea level shaped the landscape in front of you. The valley was formed when descending water and the sea swept away lighter material, and the canal remains in the shape of a pass tucked in between two small but sturdy rocks, nowadays covered by a layer of soil allowing Maquis shrubland to thrive.



The ses Fonts de n'Alis torrent (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Continuing on the path you will slowly arrive at sea level. At the foot of the rocks closing the valley to the left of the trail, you come across lavender (*Lavandula dentata*) and herb-of-grace (*Ruta graveolens*).

The Ses Fonts de n'Alis pond: a little oasis

Once you have descended through the forest and reached the same height as the torrent at the bottom of the valley you find yourself in a very different landscape. You are now close to the Ses Font de n'Alis pond.

The water is very shallow and the torrent riverbed quite flat, which means that in summer the pond shrinks to a small puddle in the middle of the riverbed, but in winter there is normally a continuous body of water filling the entire torrent plain.

Generally speaking, no water flows. So the water that accumulates here does not have the power or volume to make it across the beach, which functions as a sand barrier.

Underground infiltration and the power of waves in rough weather makes the water brackish all year round, even if salt content depends on the influx of fresh water.

This pond, just like the S'Amador pond, is one of the few that remain on the island's east coast. Most of the ponds formed by torrent outlets dried out as a result of urban development during the second half of last century.

The Ses Fonts de n'Alis viewpoint

The Ses Fonts de n'Alis pond: a little oasis

The true service areas

The wetlands are known for their biodiversity, created by the variety of landscapes they contain (salicornia meadows, standing water that is more or less brackish, dunes, flood areas, beach).

Also, the western Mediterranean is a key area for many European birds with migration routes running from southwest to northeast during spring and in the opposite direction during autumn. Wetlands have a very important role to play for these migratory birds, similar to the way we use service stations along motorways that cross the continent.



Moorhen (Cati Artigues)



Little egret (Cati Artigues)

The most common birds around wetlands on these latitudes are herons, such as the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), the little egret (*Egretta garzetta*); charadriiformes, such as Audouin's gull (*Larus audouinii*), the common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*) and the plover (*Charadrius spp.*); and the members of the anatidae family, such as the mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), the Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*) and the common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). Some species live all year round in the wetlands and torrents on Mallorca and others visit periodically, especially during winter.

Caló d'en Garrot or Ses Fonts de n'Alis

Only the sand separates the pool from the sea and this beach is known by many names; apart from Cala Mondragó, which makes reference to the entire region, other names include Platja de S'Amador. It actually does have two proper names: one is Caló d'en Garrot, a name used by residents of S'Alqueria Blanca and the other one is Platja de ses Fonts de n'Alis, used by residents of Santanyí. The latter residents would get here by walking a trail following the course of the Ses Fonts de n'Alis torrent.

The torrent is named after La Font de n'Alis, a natural spring found level with the riverbed itself.



s'Amador beach (Photo: Gràcia Salas)

Las auténticas áreas de servicios

El caló d'en Garrot versus ses Fonts de n'Alis

Photo: Gràcia Salas

