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# The Girona Pyrenees, a visit to the most Mediterranean Pyrenees



Costa Brava  
Pirineu de Girona



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The Girona Pyrenees, the section of the Pyrenees mountain range located on the north-eastern extremity of the Iberian Peninsula, is comprised of the *comarcas*, or counties, of La Cerdanya, Ripollès, La Garrotxa and Alt Empordà.

Home to wide, open spaces and a mild climate influenced by the nearby sea, the region – well-connected to metropolitan and coastal areas and easy to get around by land or air – is a premium destination for tourists, providing a rich natural, cultural and culinary heritage paired with a broad network of visitor-oriented tourist services.

Girona's high-mountain region has **three distinct seasons** that mark the pace of its tourism: winter finds its five ski resorts and a range of après-ski activities in full swing; autumn and spring is a time when landscapes are in constant change, inviting visitors and locals alike to get back to nature and enjoy seasonal delicacies; and summer is the season that offers the possibility of a full range of outdoor activities in contact with nature in its purest form.

The destination offers **accommodations** (593 establishments and 32,075 beds) with options more densely located near the mountain resorts and in cities and villages and ranging from small hotels and tourist apartments to campsites and rural houses that provide charming, family-run service.

The Girona Pyrenees is known for its numerous **natural areas and parks** that visitors can discover and explore year-round. It is home to **five natural parks** —Cadí-Moixeró, Garrotxa Volcanic Zone, the Headwaters of the Ter and Freser Rivers (since September 2015), Cap de Creus and Aiguamolls del Empordà— as well as the Albera Natural Area. Visitors can also explore **La Cerdanya valley**, the alpine valley in Europe with the most hours of sunshine a year, as well as spectacular spots like the **Vall de Camprodon and Vall de Ribes**.

Visitors will find these the perfect destinations for delving into new experiences focused on getting back to nature, the search for inner peace, serenity and wellbeing (with the signature *Gerunda Fuga* massage, for example), and a full range of leisure activities and outdoor sports that includes: **hot air balloon rides, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding along marked trails, golf courses in the heart of nature and paragliding, climbing and canyoning**.

Other successful initiatives deserve special mention, like the **Girona Pyrenees Greenways** (the 15-km Iron and Coal routes and the 54-km Narrow-Gauge Railway route from Olot to Girona), the 351-km **Pirinexus cross-border cycling route** and the **Itinerànnia network of trails** that stretches over 2,500 km through the Ripollès, Garrotxa and Alt Empordà regions. These one-of-a-kind options are guaranteed to thrill any visitor who has a passion for sports as well as an interest in other cultural, natural and culinary attractions.

The **cultural wealth** of the municipalities in the Girona Pyrenees has a special draw, the result of the region's rich history and heritage. The Romanesque period left its mark on every corner of this mountainous land, peppering the region with castles, monasteries, abbeys, bridges, roads and even medieval legends that can be traced back to a prolific Middle Ages. From west to east, the region safeguards a treasure trove of historical gems: the 15th-century Llivia pharmacy in La Cerdanya, the oldest in Europe; the rich Romanesque heritage in Ripollès centred mainly on the **Romanesque doorway at the monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll (designed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site)**, as well as Beget church and the monastery of Sant Joan de les Abadesses; Garrotxa features the medieval towns of Santa Pau and Besalú; and the Alt Empordà is home to the Empúries archaeological site in L'Escal, the monasteries of Sant Quirze de Colera and Sant Pere de Rodes and the Basilica of Sant Martí d'Empúries. Numerous thematic museums, traditional and local festivals that celebrate patron saints, historic reenactments, legends and a host of other one-of-a-kind events also draw in thousands of tourists each year.

The **cuisine of the Girona Pyrenees' high mountain and inland region** makes sitting down at the table and tasting both traditional and signature dishes prepared with an extensive range of premium, locally sourced and seasonal ingredients a true pleasure; many of these products are protected by a geographical indication certified with quality labels (Catalan Pyrenees' veal, La Cerdanya cheese and butter, Empordà ratafia, trinxat and oil and DO Empordà wine). Food and wine is thus another crucial aspect of the region's ethnological heritage, a sector that has experienced a comeback in recent years through the efforts of chefs and culinary associations and collectives to collect, share and update the region's traditional dishes in order to satisfy the palates of even the most demanding diners. Pride in local products can be seen at food festivals and themed culinary events that are guaranteed to delight any foodie.

The prestigious **Michelin Guide awarded its coveted stars to three restaurants in the Girona Pyrenees' inland region: Fina Puigdevall from Les Cols** restaurant in Olot picked up two stars; **Isabel Juncà and her Ca l'Enric** in La Vall de Bianya received one; and **Francesc Rovira from Fonda Xesc** in Gombrèn also earned a star. Two coastal restaurants in the Cap de Creus National Park, where the Catalan Pyrenees meet the sea, also boast Michelin stars: Miramar in Llançà and Els Brancs in Roses

Visitors are drawn to the tourist-friendly Girona Pyrenees as a destination that makes it possible to get back to nature, to discover the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of an ancient land, to enjoy exciting outdoor activities, to search for peace and well-being, and to get a taste of the region's world-renowned cuisine.

More information: [www.pirineugirona.org](http://www.pirineugirona.org)

Graphic and audiovisual material:  
<http://issuu.com/costabravapirineugirona>

Image bank: <http://fotos.costabrava.org>

# The Girona Pyrenees, a theme park for skiers

Winter activities revolve around the region's **five ski resorts** (four for downhill skiing and another for cross-country skiing): Vallter 2000 and Vall de Núria in Ripollès, and La Molina, Masella and Guils Fontanera in La Cerdanya. Together, the five resorts offer an extensive skiable area with over **200 kilometres of slopes** and first-class facilities.

The resorts have implemented a number of improvements to their facilities for the **2016-2017** season (access, lifts, equipment rental, expanded runs and additional artificial snow machines) and tourist services (lift tickets and packages).










La Molina, Spain's oldest ski resort, expanded its "Discover the fauna" cross-country skiing route.

Vall de Núria, the Pyrenees' most family-friendly mountain and ski resort, accessible only by rail, improved its recreational park with more activities, a new cross-country skiing route called "The Creus overlook" and an overall upgrade of its slopes.

Vallter 2000 promotes a new concept in mountain resorts by offering "up and down" attractions: downhill skiing paired with other mountain activities. The Guils cross-country ski resort in Cerdanya improved its runs, its Fontanera shelter and updated its rental equipment.

In 2014 Masella became the Pyrenees' capital of night skiing after opening 13 runs (10 km) for more adventurous skiers. This year, the resort will operate 558 artificial snow machines to cover 49 km of skiable runs, that is, over half of Masella's slopes.

## La Molina + Masella

-  Ski runs **136**
-  Maximum elevation **2.535 m**
-  Minimum elevation **1.600 m**
-  Snow production
  -  Snow cannons **933**
  -  Total km with artificial Snow **86**
-  Chair lifts **12**
-  Ski lifts **10**
-  Cable cars **1**
-  Rope tows **2**
-  Conveyor belts **8**
-  Slopes **123 26 41 41 15**
-  Special slopes: Snowparks,
-  Superpipe **1**, Competition Slopes **4**,
-  Slope adapted for PRM **1**,
-  Children's areas **2**, , Ski schools,
-  Snowboards slopes and Snowshoe trails **935 m**
-  Night skiing in Masella **13 slopes**  
(10 km of ski runs)

## Guils Fontanera

-  Ski runs **45**
-  Maximum elevation **2.080 m**
-  Minimum elevation **1.905 m**
-  Total no. slopes **19**
-  Walking circuit **Summer**
-  Snowshoe circuit
-  **3 circuits: 3 km, 5 km and 7 km**
-  Classic circuit **45 km**
-  Skating **15 km**

## Vallter 2000

-  Ski runs **18,73**
-  Maximum elevation **2.535 m**
-  Minimum elevation **1.959 m**
-  Snow production
  -  Snow cannons **86**
  -  Total km with artificial Snow **8**
-  Chair lifts **2**
-  Ski lifts **5**
-  Rope tows **2**
-  Conveyor belts **3**
-  Slopes **13 3 3 6 1**
-  Special slopes: Tubby tobogans, snowpark, fun park, sleigh slope

## Vall de Núria

-  Ski runs **7,6**
-  Maximum elevation **2.252 m**
-  Minimum elevation **1.964 m**
-  Snow production
  -  Snow cannons **88**
  -  Total km with artificial Snow **9**
-  Chair lifts **1**
-  Ski lifts **2**
-  Rope tows **1**
-  Conveyor belts **3**
-  Slopes **11 3 3 3 2**
-  Special slopes: boardercross trails, snowpark, snowshoe trails and fun park



Founded by the Girona Provincial Council, the Costa Brava Girona Tourist Board is Girona's main tourism promotion organisation, working to structure everything the region has to offer tourists as well as to promote the Costa Brava and Pirineu de Girona brands.

The vast diversity of demand requires that we increasingly adapt what we offer to current needs and tastes. The Board created the product clubs as a result, segmenting everything that the destination has to offer and focusing on efforts that are tailored much more closely to the characteristics of the target audience.

Roughly 700 tourism-related departments, organisations and companies have joined the Tourist Board's nine product marketing clubs in order to increase the quality and competitiveness of the tourism product and the tourist destination on one hand and to improve their marketing on the other. The organisation is also included as part of the Pirineus de Catalunya brand, which jointly and specifically promotes the diversity of tourism in the Pyrenees.

The four counties promoted under the Pirineu de Girona brand —La Cerdanya, Ripollès, La Garrotxa and Alt Empordà— have specific tourism departments in their county councils as well as public and private tourism development associations that work to promote the region's social, economic and tourism development.

These promotional efforts are handled by La Cerdanya Regional Tourist Board in La Cerdanya; by the Ripollès Development Agency in Ripollès; by the Garrotxa Tourist Office in La Garrotxa, and the Empordà Tourist Office in Alt Empordà.

The Government of Catalonia's Catalan Tourist Board will celebrate the International Year of Sustainable Tourism in 2017 and the Costa Brava Girona Tourist Board declared 2017 the "Year of Biking and Sustainability".

Both organisations will carry out a host of promotional and communication activities to promote the destination's specific tourism-related products, sustainable services and bicycle touring.

# New Girona Pyrenees' tourism proposals

## 2016-2017 season

- **9 tourism packages for RIPOLLÈS** that include natural, cultural and culinary attractions in the Vall de Ribes, Vall de Camprodon and Baix Ripollès:  
<http://www.elripolles.com/admin/uploads/docs/20160729151052.pdf>
- New brochure with **24 cultural activities and guided tours** in Ripollès. .
- New **Ripollès hiking map** that includes the Itinerànnia network of trails, as well as 21 loop itineraries on the same network of trails through the region's 19 villages; high-mountain hiking and climbing and easy walking trails perfect for families in Vall de Ribes, Vall de Camprodon and Baix Ripollès.
- **Paths of Exile (Camprodon-Prats de Molló) – Trekking Canigó**. This is an unforgettable tourism activity in the Eastern Pyrenees, created and designed to take hikers over the same trails and border crossings that exiled Jews followed during World War II, fleeing to Spain to escape the Nazi Holocaust (1940-1945), and that Republicans followed at the end of the Spanish Civil War, fleeing to France to escape Franco's troops (1939). A tribute to history and the perfect way to discover the region's wealth of cultural heritage:  
<http://hikingandhistory.com/en/>
- **Itinerànnia**, is a network of hiking trails that stretches over 2,500 kilometres and joins the regions of Ripollès, Garrotxa and Alt Empordà (tourism package).
- **Garrotxa Cultour**: Fifteen proposals for discovering the region's cultural heritage. <http://en.turismegarrotxa.com/>

For more information:

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Costa Brava  
Pirineu de Girona



Diputació de Girona

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