The Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park

The Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park is located in the Baix Maestrat region, to the north of the province of Castellón and bordering Catalonia. The area comprises the entire historical territory of the old Tinença of the Cistercian monastery of Santa María de Benifassà. A territory that was granted by Jaume I, on the the foundation of the monastery.

The towns that formed this area were: La Pobla, Ballestar, Boixar, Castell de Cabres, Bel, Fredes and Coratxà. Rossell, which is currently part of the Natural Park, but not part of the historical tenure, is included because of its geological, morphological and ecological characteristics, making it form a natural part of the former possessions of the monastery. In addition, Rossell's economic and social relationship with the people of Tinença has always been very close. This set of characteristics allows Rossell to be the link between the town of Tinença and the coastal plain.

The Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park is one of the most unaltered territories in environmental aspects, that remain within the Valencian Community. The environment has fantastic biodiversity, both botanical and faunistic, giving it immense scientific value. Furthermore, its unbroken landscapes remain virtually unchanged by mankind.

Eagles, vultures, hawks and azores stand out as the most emblematic and common animal species is the Hispanic goat (Capra pyrenaica hispánica), which can be seen with great ease throughout the unbroken orography. Recently, the Department of the Environment has reintroduced the bonebreaker back into the region.

The municipal territory of Rossell, which today includes the old territory of Bel, occupies the southern part of the natural park. The paths that run through the area, constituted over many years, allowed communication of the Tinença people among themselves and with the rest of the villages within the plain and the coast. These trails were used by people, goods and cattle but today, they are toured by walkers who can enjoy a terrain that still retains much of its natural wealth and beauty.

**ROSELL**

The municipality is formed of three areas: the largest, Rossell, occupies the centre of the municipality; in the eastern part, next to the river Sénia, is the village of Les Cases del Riu; and in the northwest corner, Bel.

Rossell’s origins and population date back to the Iberian times. In 1237, Hug de Follalquer, master of the Hospitallers, granted the Carta Pobla (City Charter). First it was part of the Batalla of Cervera, later, in 1377, it was granted to the order of Montesa, until the 19th century.

The small town of Bel is of Islamic origin and offers a compact view of nature in its purest form. It was conquered by Jaume I and was under the domain of the Benifassà Monastery. In 1705, Felipe V fortified the town and in 1971 it was annexed to the Rossell territory.

The village of Les Cases del Riu is located on the right bank of the river Sénia and very close to the town that bears the same name. Nowadays, it collects the most important industrial quota of the municipality and has an important infrastructure of old mills, related to the production of cereals, paper and electricity.
**PATH 1 > THE MOLETA DEL TERME ROUTE**

Start next to the Rossell school, taking the road that goes up to the Hermitage of Sant Marc, a few meters away to the left, follow the path of mas de la Mora, passing through the Font de l’Almenara. Upon reaching mas de la Mora, leave the path and continue on the right, along a path that goes up to Les Molotés. If you want, you can turn right here to see the iron Mines and then return. From Les Molotés continue along the same path, following the crest of the mountains, admiring the panoramic views of the Barranco de las Tonas on the right and the Barranco del Serranerí to the left. To the rear is the coastal plain and straight ahead is the Sierra de l’Esquetxe.

Arrive at the Corral de l’Esquetxe or Les Tones. At which point it joins path 3. A short tour along a small track and up to the Molotés del Terme, which offers a magnificent view of the Pobla ravine and the Ports of La Sénia and Friades, as well as the Pantano d’Ullastres. The trail then turns west and crowning the Sierra de l’Esquetxe runs almost parallel to the road that goes from Bel through mas de n’Insa and mas de l’Esquetxe, reaching the corral of the foot of the Tonas. This section offers magnificent views, on the right is the Pobla Valley and the Ports of La Sénia, Friades and the Bocaire. Before reaching the mas de l’Esquetxe, the path turns south and down the ravine of l’Esquetxe and then converges with the ravine of Requeena, there it joins with the paths 2, 4, 5 and 6. Following the channel of the ravine, it arrives at the mas de la Mora, from here it follows on to Rossell again.

**PATH 2 > LES COVES ROUTE**

Popular route with trails 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to the mas de la Mora Mas de la Mora, to the right on paths 2, 4, 5, 6 and the channel of the Requena, the turning point that will take you to the area of the ancient olive trees of the same name. From here, you will see the two wheels that form the Bel Pena. Then follow the ravine passing through the Llampera Cova and the Aigua Cova.

At the confluence of the ravine of Bel and the ravine of the Jonquera, path 5 separates to the right. Path 2 together with the 4 separate to the left and leave the channel of the ravine up to mas de las Cardones.

Mas de las Cardones, to the right path 4 separates to the left path 2 continues and crosses the Bel to Rossell, continuing with paths 5 and 6. Continue down the old road from Bel to Rossell, until you find the ravine from Bel or Requeena, then following the course of the ravine you will reach Mas de la Mora and from here, on to Rossell again.

**PATH 3 > L’ESQUETXE CORRAL ROUTE**

Common route with trails 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and the mas de la Mora Mas de la Mora, to the left on paths 2, 4, 5, 6 and on the right with paths 3 and 1, both with a joint route to the corral of Les Coves or l’Esquetxe, where path 3 separates with two options:

a) By the crest of the Serral it goes down to the plain, following the bottom of the Trinxat ravine, passing through is mas de the same name. Eventually, you will join option b.

b) Continue down, following the bottom of the Trinxat ravine, passing through is mas de the same name. Eventually, you will join option a.

**PATH 4 > MAS DE MACIÀ ROUTE**

Same route from path 2 to the Mas de las Cardones, Mas de les Cardones, to the left, path 2 (South) and on the right, path 4 (West). This path goes to the town of Bel until it meets the road from Bel to Rossell, joining path 5, and 6, so you reach the cemetery of Bel tum left, pass in front of the cemetery and continue to the collapsed corridor of Les Planes, during the walk you will see two ferns that form the Bel Pena.

The trail goes down until you reach the Cova dels Colomb, where you will find path 6 that comes from La Pena, both itineraries will be popular until you reach Rossell, continuing east towards Rossell and down the Collet de la Dolça, across the Requena river and enter Rossell.

**PATH 5 > CAMI VELL DE LA POBLA ROUTE**

Common route with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 to the Mas de la Mora. Mas de la Mora, to the right on paths 2 and 3, on the left along with paths 2, and 4 and 6, follow the channel of the Bel or del Requena ravine, past the cliff of the Roca Algosa, where path 6 separates to the left. Path 5 along with 2 and 4 continues along the bottom of the ravine until the confluence with the Jonquera ravine, where paths 2 and 4 are separated on the left and path 5 continues on the right through the Jonquera ravine, which stop at the top of the mas de la Jonquera and turn left (West). Further on, head north to reach the Mas de Macià, climbing up the mas de la Jonquera you will find the highest path that will take you on parallel to the road above from Rossell to Vallibona, with the Mas de Macià below to the right. A little path, the path crosses the road, leaving the Mas de Macià on the left, continuing east towards Rossell and down the Collet de la Dolça, across the Requena river and enter Rossell.

**PATH 6 > PENA DE BEL ROUTE**

Until the Mas de la Mora, follow the same itinerary 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. At the Mas de la Mora follow up the Requena ravine along with the paths 2, 4 and 5, later, leaving the gorge of the ravine, by a path on the right (old road from Bel to Rossell), where it coincides with a section of paths 2 and 5. Cross the road from Bel to Rossell several times, where later it joins path 2 that comes from the Mas de les Cardones, before arriving in Bel, it links with path 4 that also comes from Mas de les Cardones. Here you will see a magnificent view of the town of Bel. To enter it (recommended visit), a track goes to the left (not to be confused with the one that goes through the cemetery, which is part of itinerary 4). A few meters from entering the track, it divides along a path to the left, which below the hill of the Assumpció, looks us to the Pena de Bel, with magnificent views of the coastal and pre-coastal plan, the upper section of the ravine from Cervó, has numerous masses and the mountains of the Ports of Besós, Friedes and Rossell. You are very likely to observe wild goats (Capra pyrenaica hispanica) and the flight of vultures (Gyps fulvus). The road returns following a section along the road that until it separates to the right and crosses a small valley, joining itinerary 4, at the height of the Planes pen.