

Description of the walk



1. Start: Sant Pere de Galligants

The walk begins in Girona city, in the area of Sant Pere de Galligants, near Girona Cathedral, by the outer section of the wall.

Here the Benedictine monastery of Sant Pere de Galligants can be seen, one of the best examples of Catalan Romanesque art. The date when the monastery was founded is not known but textual references to it can be found since the end of the 10th century. In 1836 it was abandoned by the Benedictine monks, due to the enforcement of confiscation laws. Today it houses Girona's Archaeology Museum of Catalonia.



2. Saint Daniel Monastery

Still within the city's urban area, the walk passes Sant Daniel Monastery. This monastery was founded in the 9th century, when the monk Saint Daniel was beheaded in Arles en Provence in 888 during the Arab rule. His disciples fled with his body to prevent it from being thrown into the sea. Just before reaching Girona, they buried him in Vall Tenebrosa ("Gloomy Valley", today known as Sant Daniel Valley), a peaceful location, where only a short time later his remains were venerated. A small church was built there in tribute to Saint Salvador and Saint Daniel, which soon became the parish church for the few residents in the valley.

The monastery was founded in the 11th century (1018) and was rebuilt under the orders of the Countess Ermessenda and Ramon Borrell on the site of the former Sant Daniel Church.

Since then monastic life has continued, following the Rule of Saint Benedict, still operating today. It is the only female Benedictine community in Catalonia that resides in the same place it was founded.



3. Sant Daniel Valley / PEIN Gavarres

The walk passes Sant Daniel Cemetery, heading towards Sant Daniel Valley. Agriculture has been the main economic driver in the valley, which is an area of transition, leading into the mountain forests of Les Gavarres, made up mainly of holm oaks and Mediterranean shrubs. At present Les Gavarres is a protected area, included within the Plan for Areas of Natural Interest (PEIN).



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Sant Miquel Walk

This walk reveals a side of Girona that is still largely unknown to many local residents. It passes close to the historic centre of the city, taking in areas of natural beauty and cultural heritage, delving into the heart of traditional life in Les Gavarres.

The walk passes through the picturesque valley of Sant Daniel, along the River Galligants and its tributaries, through small woods and fields, before going into the protected parklands of Les Gavarres and climbing up Sant Miquel Mountain. Here the ruins of Sant Miquel Castle can be seen, alongside spectacular panoramic views out over the province of Girona, a 360° view from the Empordà region to the Pyrenees Mountains.

At the highest part of the walk, there are three options: the main route, passing through Cal Mistaire, Font Martina and Cal Micaló; the eastern variant, which goes through Collet d'en Figueres taking in sites that include the remains of Cal Mistaire spring, or the Cal Micaló variant. The Sant Miquel walk follows the Girona Green Belt signs and specific signs indicating the path to follow.



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Nature walks in Girona

Sant Miquel Walk



4. Font del Ferro

Leaving the main track for a few moments takes walkers to Font del Ferro ("Iron Spring"), worth seeing up close. A defining feature of this spring is its spicy water, with a strong iron-like taste. A picnic area has been built around the spring, and a second spring no longer in use can be seen further down, called Font de la Pinya ("Pinecone Spring").

5. Miralles Bridge

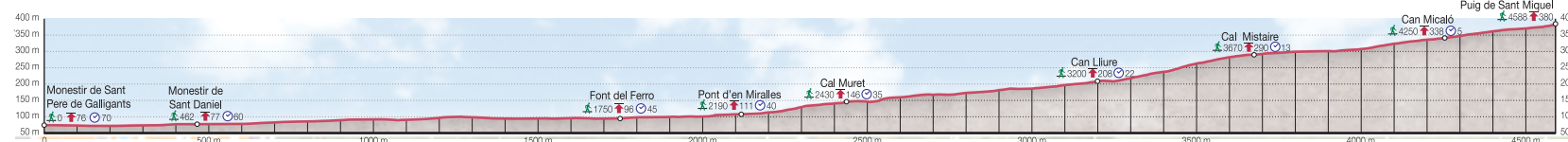
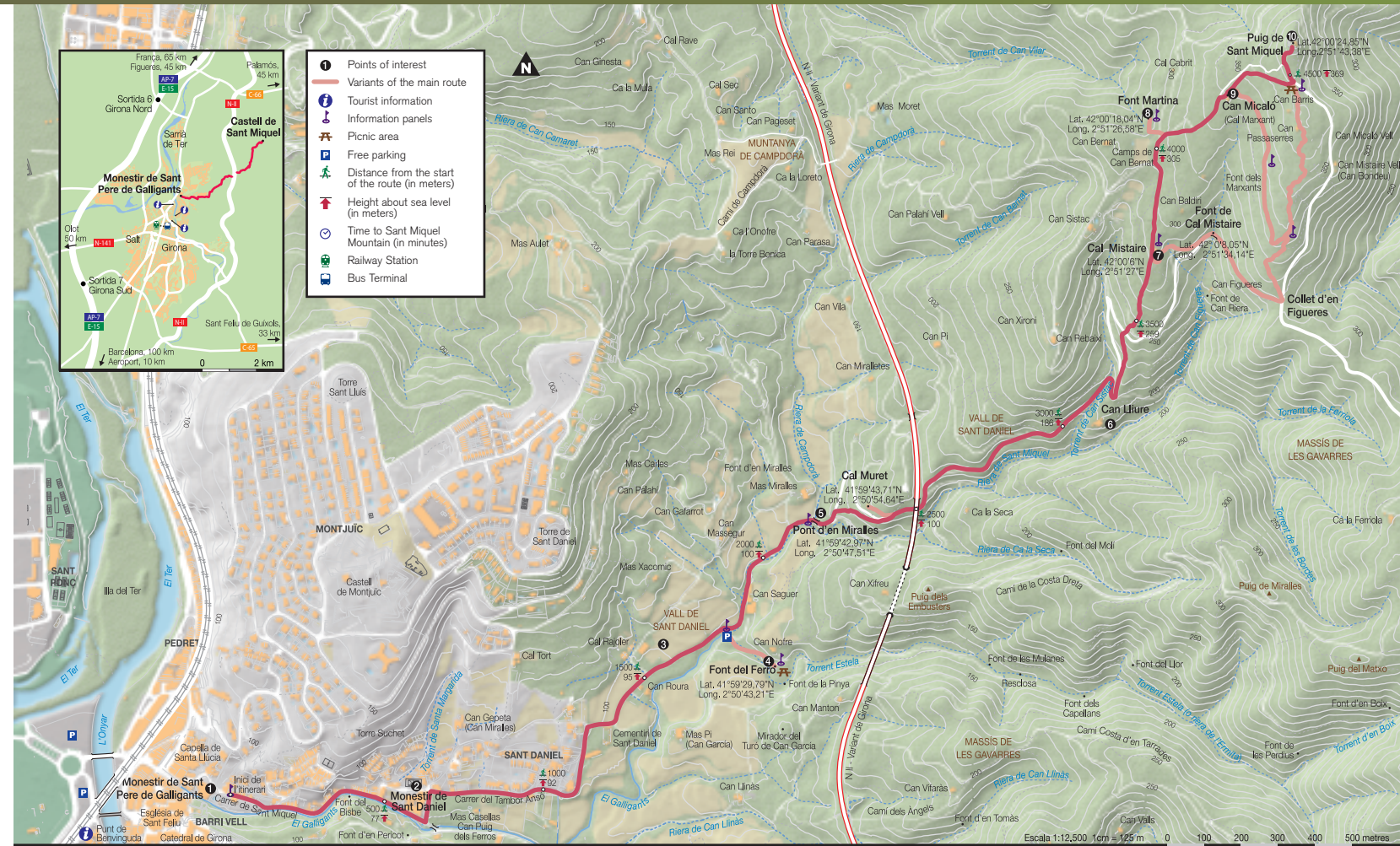
On returning to the main path, the track runs alongside Miralles Stream, before crossing over Miralles Bridge. Mountain water in the area collects in streams and rivers, flowing on to the valley plain before turning into the River Galligants. This river then moves on towards Girona city, where it flows into the River Onyar. The water flow of the streams is irregular, as high rainfall occurs mainly at the end of summer and beginning of autumn. This sometimes leads to a significant rise in water levels which can result in flooding of the plains. This occurred in 1843 when the River Galligants caused one of the worst floods ever experienced by the city of Girona. The neighbourhoods of Sant Pere and La Barca were flooded and around 100 people lost their lives.

6. Can Lliure

The walk continues, passing Can Lliure, a Catalan farmhouse with magnificent views out over Girona as far as the Montseny massif. Its strategic position led the French army to set up base there during their siege on Girona in 1809. The farmhouse typifies traditional architecture of residential dwellings in Sant Daniel and until the 20th century individual farmhouses were spread out across the entire valley, right up to the city gates. Agriculture was the main livelihood for residents, in addition to animal farming and foraging in the forests and nearby lands.

7. Cal Mistaire

Cal Mistaire is an example of local farmhouses in the area, comprising two floors, with a living area of three rooms and storage area. In the kitchen a bread oven, wood or coal stove, several shelves and a stone sink can still be seen. From here, the walk follows the main path (to the left) or an eastern variant, passing by Collet d'en Figueres (on the right). Both paths lead to the top of Sant Miquel Mountain.



i **Sant Miquel Walk (one way)**
 Distance: **4,6 km**
 Approximate time: **1 hour 10 minutes**
 Difficulty: **Medium**
 Height difference: **304 m**
 Type: **Walking, biking (following the forest path)**

More information on walks in Girona:
www.girona.cat/rutasantmiquel

App Girona Rutes



8. Font Martina

Leaving the main path for a few moments takes walkers to the old Martina spring. This is one of 250 springs on the Les Gavarres mountain range. The topography and geology of Les Gavarres favours the existence of many streams and springs. Even so, water has always been a scarce resource in the mountains and huge efforts have been made throughout time to obtain it from whatever source possible.

9. Can Micaló

At this point, the walk can be extended slightly to view a range of buildings, constructed using the traditional dry stone technique. This new path leads to the eastern variant, which also goes to Sant Miquel Castle. Dry-stone is a building technique that uses stone as the basic building material without any other form of cement. It requires great skill to position small individual stones together so that they form a single structure. It is a widely-used technique throughout the Mediterranean. The remains of dry-stone walls can be spotted around Sant Miquel Castle, used to mark out and shore up terraces where vineyards were planted in the past, as well as other edifications built using the same technique.

10. Puig de Sant Miquel

On the top of Sant Miquel Mountain, the remains of a building named after the mountain can be seen. The oldest ruins date back to Medieval times and the site comprises a possible watchtower, section of wall and fortified chapel with polygonal apse. There is no written reference to the tower. The chapel, however, was dedicated to Saint Michael and was erected in gothic style in the mid 15th century. In 1848, during the Second Carlist War, the remains of the chapel were used to build two optical telegraph towers for providing a quick and secure communications network.

The site location is strategic, offering complete surveillance of the Sant Daniel and Celrà valleys, which open onto the plains of Girona and the Empordà respectively.

On Sant Miquel Mountain, there is a picnic spot where walkers can relax before making the return trip back.

