

La Mola d'Esclop

Difficulty: Easy/ Moderate

Duration: 6 hrs Sa Trappa/Esclop/ Estellencs,

5 hrs Es Capdella/ Esclop/ Estellencs,

4 hrs Estellencs/ Esclop/ Estellencs,

4 Hrs Pla de s'Evangelica/ Esclop/ Estellencs

6 Hrs Font de Pi/ Esclop/ Font de Pi

The great barren massif of the Mola d'Esclop lies just to the west of the Puig de Galatzo, and is easiest reached from Estellencs. A fairly extensive network of trails allows multiple route options, and the massif can also be reached from Es Capdella, Font de Pi and the Pla de s'Evangelica for those coming from Sa Trappa along the GR 221. Combining an ascent to the puig de Galatzo and to the Mola d'Esclop will take most of the day, no matter where you start from. All the trails are cairned, and fairly easily followed, although there is a steeper section on the last stretch to reach the summit of Esclop. The area is very wild and offers a great combination of sea and mountain views. The Northern and western slopes of Esclop have been ravaged by a gigantic fire in 2012; a huge effort has been made to try and help accelerate regrowth, but the once wooded hillsides are set to remain barren for a good many years to come.

Getting There

The main trail to the heart of the massif starts just outside Estellencs, on the main road to the west of the village. There is limited parking here. Note that coming from Palma, going through Esporles is faster than taking the Andratx way. For those on public transport, bus route 200 links Palma to Estellencs; there are at least 4 buses a day, but some of the routes have to be prebooked.

From the south, Esclop is also easily reached from Es Capdella via the finca Galatzo walking trail starting in the village. Bus service 111 links Es Capdella to Palma 6 times a day (less on Sundays and holidays).

For hikers trekking on the 221, an early start from St Elm will see them go through Sa Trappa in the morning, hike along the cami de ses Basses to rejoin Col de sa Granola and the Pla de s'Evangelica by lunchtime, hike to the summit of Esclop and go down to Estellencs for the night. This is a long, full day walk, that might be made a bit shorter in the future if plans to transform the farm house of the Coma d'en Vidal into a guarded refuge ever come to fruit.

Bussing to Es Capdella and hiking over the mountain to Estellencs (or vice versa) makes a great day hike. This is also a good alternative for those hiking the 221 who do not wish to walk the full stage to or from St Elm.

Es Capdella to Estellencs via Esclop (or vice versa)

Walk all the way up the main street in Es Capdella, then take a right on a small road signposted to Finca Galatzo/ GR 221. You will reach a gate in 15 minutes with a map of the various trails in the area. Finca Galatzo, a quite grand building with an odd French garden is about 20 minutes further away.

The track continues at the bottom of the valley with good view of Galatzo and Esclop; you will reach half an hour later an opening in the valley floor where the larger track ends (Ses Sinies). Go straight ahead and up on a narrow cairned trail heading steeply up northwards towards a ridge. Close to the top of the ridge you will come to a junction. Take a left towards Esclop (or a right if you want to go towards Galatzo), on a stony but distinct trail that will lead you in 15 minutes to the top of the ridge where you will find another junction; follow the ridge westwards and upwards (you will take the other trail to the right later on the way down towards Coma d'en Vidal and Estellencs). You will soon arrive to a flat area on the ridge, with a large cairn marking the old path going down to the restaurant Es Grau on the Ma 10 road, now impassable and fenced off at its bottom end. Go straight ahead up the last steep but well marked scramble to the top of Esclop. Enjoy the view from the various summits, go back down the way you came and take the path to Coma d'en Vidal, where you will join a large trail leading you all the way down to the main road by Estellencs. Turn right and hike the two last kilometers to the village itself; the narrow old road branching off below the main road is prettier but takes slightly longer.

Mola d'Esclop from Sa Trappa & Pla de s'Evangelica

Following the GR 221 from St Elm & Sa Trappa, hikers will arrive at the Col de Sa Granola where the trail joins the main Andratx/ Estellencs road. Walk on the main road in the direction of Estellencs for 3 or 4 kilometers, till you reach a long straight stretch of road with a fenced off farm house on the left, the Pla de s'Evangelica. At the far end of the Pla, a small asphalted road branches right with a no entry traffic sign and a plate reading 'Sa coma de ses Selles'. Take this road, walk discretely past the various houses along the way (so as to keep the way open for other hikers in the future) and follow the cairned track that will eventually lead you up a small gully. At the end of the track, followed the small trail (also cairned) that will lead you quite steeply up

behind a pinnacle to the higher slopes of the mountain. You will then follow a sort of ridge upwards; the ground is rocky, the trail indistinct and the cairns can be difficult to spot so take your time. You will eventually reach a stile over a wire fence; go over, and follow the trail on a long swoop around a fairly large finca in what used to be a wooded area before the fire; you'll soon be climbing again quite steeply towards the summit proper, after passing some terraced fields. You will eventually reach a set of ruined buildings, above which the trail splits. Left will take you around the summit's hump and rejoin the trail to Estellencs; ignore this and take a right, keeping going uphill towards a small gully; a small scramble up this gully will take you to the summit proper.

Find the line of cairns heading towards the north east side of the mountain from the geodesic marker, and follow the trail down hill towards Estellencs; once you have scrambled down the hill to the Pla, follow the main trail ahead/ right of the big cairn till you reach the junction to the Coma d'en Vidal, half an hour away further down hill. Head for the main road and take a left toward Estellencs village proper, 2 to 3 km away, following either the new (main) road or the old track. Rejoice, you have arrived.

