

Mortix, Rafal d'Ariant, Bec d'Oca, Roca Llisa and Surrounding Areas

Duration: 4 to 5 hours for the Mortix/ Rafal & Caletta d'Ariant/ Torrent de Mortix loop, a lot longer for a return via the Roca Llisa pass.

Difficulty level: Medium on the short loop, difficult on the Roca Llisa route.

This is a popular way to explore one of the most remote areas of Mallorca, stretching between the Llus-Pollensa road and the sea, crossing large areas of rocky wilderness with stunning views on the island's northern coastline. The routes are cairned all the way, but the going can be hard at times because of the very uneven terrain, long grass and poor condition of the ancient footpaths. The main attraction is the absolutely unique view from the cliff tops above the Cova de s' Arena, just past the old Rafal d'Ariant farmhouse, which is not to be missed, whilst the return through the Torrent de Mortix will take you up a wild gorge. The Bec d'Oca (Goose Beak) pinnacle is a popular climbing spot, the lower reaches of the Torrent de Mortix are a well frequented (and technical) canyoning spot. Last, the Roca Llisa passage to/from the sea back to Mortix Vineyard is a scrambling route, that involves taking some exposed passages on the coast as well as further inland.

Be aware that this area gets very hot in summer, and that the spring time vegetation is exuberant and can make progression difficult, that there is no phone signal and that you are in a remote area.

Access

The walk starts at the Mortix Vineyard gates, less than 10 km from Pollensa on the Ma 10 road to Lluc.

- By Car: Access is fast and straight forward from Pollensa. Park on the main road where possible by the vineyard gates. Unless you are coming from Soller, it is always faster to go via Pollensa rather than via Lluc.
- By Bus: service 354 from Can Picafort goes past Mortix vineyard. There is no bus stop at Mortix, drop off/pick up possibility is at the driver's discretion, so make sure that he will stop for you before boarding. If all is well, you can take service 340 from Palma to Pollensa at 08:30 followed by service 354 from Pollensa at 10:15. Service 354 returns to Pollensa slightly after 16:00, leaving you just over 5 hrs to do the walk. There is no bus on Sunday.
- By Taxi: Radio taxi Pollensa can be called at 971 86 62 13. It won't be cheap, probably 40 Euros each way.

The classic route:

This is described in an anti-clockwise rotation, probably the better choice to enjoy the best sea views. Starting off at the vineyard, follow the obvious signs leading you to the right; after climbing over a stile in a wooded area, you will come to an overgrown orchard where the line of cairn will take you due north over nearly flat ground. You will slowly proceed towards the sea, zigzagging between boulders and climbing between rocks in ever wilder countryside. The line of cairns continues all the way, but can be lost at a moment's inattention. If in doubt, backtrack.

After an hour you will come to a very obvious depression, with what looks like a track going down and a misleading cairn at the bottom. Do not follow this, but instead seek a cairn line to the right avoiding the dip and leading you onto an ancient drystone footpath around the rough terrain. You will soon come to a great view over the Bec d'Oca pinnacle and the ruined Rafal d'Ariant farmhouse, which is reached following the ancient dry stone path meandering down the hill side (Voltes de l' Ullastres).

The walk is not complete without pushing on a further 20 minutes to the natural mirador above the Cove de l'Arena, offering breathtaking views of sculpted and tortured sheer rock cliffs over the sea a few hundred meters below. You can then push on to the Caleta d'Ariant, one of the few spots on this stretch of coast where a boat could offload in calm weather and enjoy passable shore paths, making it a deservedly popular choice with smugglers of a bygone era.

Backtrack to Rafal d'Ariant, but rather the walk back up the Voltes, follow the valley westwards in the direction of the Torrent de Mortix, leaving the Bec d'Oca on your right. Go upstream, following the rocky torrent bed. A larger pond has to be contoured on the east side over a sloppy slab of rock, after which you will find the gorge splits in two. Take the left (eastern) branch (there is a painted sign on a rock anyway), and follow the cairns all the way up and out of the valley. You will soon reach a dirt track in good condition leading to Lavanor Refuge. Take this on the left, pass the gate, and return to the vineyard.

The scramble routes:

This route looks like fun, but not having taken it myself, what follows is second hand information. Take it as such. The route is cairned, but you will probably need to navigate on your own from some of the way.

Start off as for the classic route, but take a trail on the right as soon as you leave the vineyard going slowly uphill in a NNW direction. The way should eventually even out, till you reach a valley that will take you down hill. There is a first pass here that has to be climbed down, the 'Pas del Garrover', going down a small chimney. Past this, continue towards the sea. You will eventually come close to the shore side, surrounded by towering cliffs. The remains of an old dry stone footpath should guide you down hill to the Pas de sa Roca Llisa, Pass of the Smooth Rock. It is a short but exposed lateral passage some 15 meters long crossed from west to east on a strongly slanted smooth rock face with no hand grip.

Once over the pass, continue downhill towards the coastline, that you follow on an eastwards cairned way, clambering on cliff sides through at least two more exposed passages before reaching the Caleta d'Ariant and the classic route.

Another alternative is to return from the Bec d'Oca by turning downstream along the bottom reaches of the Torrent de Mortix, called Torrent Fondo on this section. You will soon come out to more open ground, and leave the torrent eastwards as it becomes narrow again (just before a rope fitted section), towards Ses Bases and the Coll des Vents (see Alpina map). This path should be cairned, but follows a well defined valley in any case. You will soon reach the driveable track coming from the Mortix Finca, which you can follow back to the refuge and vineyards.

