

# Torrent de Pareis

Duration: 3 to 5 hours downhill, 4 to 6 hours uphill.

Difficulty: Medium/High. Many short scrambles and small climbs over/under/around boulders, no technical passages. Passable by children from around 10 yrs old with adequate supervision. Dogs best left at home. Remember;

- The canyon can flood at times with rainwater from autumn till spring. In case of severe flooding, long sections of the bottom half of the canyon can be un-passable on foot. People have drowned attempting to swim these water catchments, because of low water temperature and lack of easy exit from the said freezing water. Although the canyon is usually dry, some weather awareness is required in the off season.
- The bottom of the canyon gets terribly hot in full summer. Take plenty of water with you and be prepared for temperatures above 40 degrees C.
- You need to be reasonably fit! While there are no technical difficulties along the way, a reasonable amount of agility, flexibility, endurance and general fitness is required. If you can not walk ten kilometres and do a normal day's activities afterwards, you may find the going difficult, and put yourself in danger. There is no mobile phone reception in the canyon.
- The way along the canyon can be at times confusing. Markings are sometimes sparse. Always look for a well trodden passage, usually betrayed by well polished rock (foot and hand grips) and mud discoloured stone. If it looks difficult, dangerous, and there are no signs, paint marks, cairns, fitted rope or hooks, you are going the wrong way. Backtrack, look for alternatives, search for signs and remember that you may have to leave the bottom of the canyon and climb up the flanks to overcome some obstacles.
- During the best periods (March to June and September to November) the canyon can be very busy, specially at week end. There is nothing worse than waiting in a queue of twenty plus people for your turn to overcome an obstacle in a cacophony of squeals, screams, laughter and nonsensical comments in all languages bouncing and echoing from one cliff to the other. Start early, or late, or just choose a week day.

## Getting There

The walk down the Torrent de Pareis starts at Escorca, a two house settlement half way between Gorg Blau reservoir and Lluc, right on the main Soller to Lluc road. At the other extremity, the walk up the gorge starts in the bay of Sa Calobra, linked itself by a spectacular, steep and windy road to the Ma 10. By car: You can park at Escorca as well as at Sa Calobra. The real issue is returning to your vehicle after the walk, as Sa Calobra and Escorca are 16 km apart on the asphalt; groups with two cars should park one vehicle at either end, though this is highly time consuming. There is a bus, service 355, April to October leaving Sa Calobra at 3 pm to Lluc, stopping at Escorca along the way. This is by far the best way back up. For those going up the gorge, the bus goes by Escorca to Sa Calobra far too early to be of any use. Otherwise, thumb work is usually rewarding. If all else fails, there is a taxi service reachable at 608 63 17 07 or 639 28 70 55. Fare is about 50 Euros either way

By public transport: from April to October, using public transport from Soller makes a lot of sense. For those coming from Palma, service 211 leaving at 08:00 will get you to Soller Placa de America bus station or to Port de Soller before 9 am. From Soller town, service 354 departing at 09:10 am will get you to Escorca before 10:00 am. Go down the torrent and take one of the numerous day trip tourist boat back from Sa Calobra to Soller. Easy. Or if you prefer to go uphill from the sea to Escorca, take a morning boat to Sa Calobra from Port de Soller, walk up the Torrent, and catch the service 354 back down from Escorca to Soller at 16:50... Not as easy but very doable.

## The Walk:

From Escorca:

Start off on the trail commencing right by the information/warning panel by the car park across from the restaurant. There is an indistinct fork about 10 min along, on which you have to take the left branch. If you miss it, the path will simply disappear a bit further... just backtrack. You will now have some nice views of the gorge and the sea beyond, as well as on Es Cosconar troglodyte houses and the large custom outpost in its grandiose loneliness on the other side of the valley. You will soon find yourself zigzagging down on an old stone built trail towards the bottom of the torrent, reached in about 45 minutes. This is the easiest part of the trail. There is a signpost here indicating the trail back up for those coming from the sea or Sa Fosca

You will reach s'Entreforc, the junction point of the two canyons in 15 to 20 min. This is an easy section.

After that, you will enter an area of gigantic boulders. The way to go is not always obvious but remains quite easily identified with a bit of effort, as the canyon is narrow and there are only a limited number of options. You will leave the bottom of the gorge on a few occasions, mostly on the right hand side downhill. All the scrambles have some sort of marking or obvious traces of frequent passage; once again, if it looks difficult, dangerous and there are no clues you ARE going the wrong way and putting yourself at risk.

After the large boulder section with its vertiginous walls, you will reach a narrower section of the gorge, and your first possibly water filled catchments. This is quite hard going, as you scramble from rock to rock. A bit further, the foot of the gorge is only some 10 meter wide, sometime with a sandy bottom, with beautifully water sculpted walls and quite a few caves and springs. Should you find the torrent seriously flooded here, you would be well advised to backtrack.

After crossing the last narrow ponds, dry or not (the last ponds may require a swim in very cold water) the canyon will open up. Going around the last water obstacle on the left, you will come to an open area. You are less the 15 min from the sea and Sa Calobra.

Follow the hordes through the tunnel and return to the 21st century tourist industry. Rejoin the car you left at the car park previously, or catch the seasonal 3 pm bus, or just catch an (also seasonal) boat to Soller.

From Sa Calobra:

Whilst the route is basically the reverse of the above description, a few points are worth noting: Water ponds in the lower section of the canyon generally finish with large boulders on the upstream side, difficult to climb when the torrent is flooded.

Also remember you have a possibly very hot 600 meter climb ahead... take plenty of drinking water. The uphill route will probably take an hour longer, if not two, than the downhill one. And the last section from the bottom of the torrent to Escorca is steep, quite long and is likely to drain a fair share of your energy reserves.... Don't miss the bus, passing here a bit before 5pm to Soller and a bit before 4 pm to Pollensa (in season!).

