

## **COSTA BLANCA MOUNTAIN WALKERS - WALK DESCRIPTION**

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<b>Walk description originally prepared by:-</b>	Ralph Phipps with thanks to Vivien and Philip Freakley	
<b>Last Updated</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	
<b>Title of Walk</b>	Circuit of Ballestera via Barrancos Estrets and Riu de les Valls	
<b>Location of Start (include name of nearest village/town at start of description)</b>	Arnes, Remote location on minor road leading to Els Estrets at finger post indicating 2km to Els Estrets Lay-by suitable for up to 4 cars at side of road. Other parking slots available on this road.	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Distance in km</b>	15	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Ascent in m</b>	460	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Walking time and total completion time including any stops</b>	4hr 5.75hr	
<b>Key Statistics for walk - Grade (using CBMW system)</b>	MS/B	
<b>Grid reference of start point (if known)</b>	Lat: 40.904593, Long: 0.282061	
<b>Directions to Start</b>	<p>The A231 and T333 run along the N edge of the Ports and the town of Arnes lies roughly two thirds along its NW distance.</p> <p>From the North, take the first left turn towards the village. At the T-junction turn right following a narrow street until it descends steeply and then look for a narrow turning on the left (Carrer Terra Alta); take this and the next left immediately after, followed by a right turn into a country lane, sign posted for Els Estrets. Follow this lane as it twists and turns until, after about 10mins a red earth bank appears on the right. This marks the place where the return track meets the lane. At a finger post indicating 2km to Els Estrets there are several off road places to park within the next kilometre.</p>	
<b>Short walk description</b>	2 beautiful barrancos with grand scenery all around with a set of wooded connecting paths with sweeping views between them.	
<b>Full Walk Description</b>		<b>Elapsed Walking Time/Distance so far</b>

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Continue along the road in the direction that you drove in to the parking area.	
When you reach the finger post that shows 1.75km to Els Estrets turn R onto a track.	540m, 7min
Cross a stream by ford or stepping stones and walk uphill to a fork where you turn R now clearly following small blue star markers indicating the Estels del Sud (a 5-day circuit of Els Ports).	
Once this track becomes a grassy lane look out carefully for a footpath going off to the R which we take. This is indicated by a small cairn and a fading blue star paint marker. Follow this about 20m above the stream bed which is on your RHS.	1.1km, 14min
Carry on into the Estrets, an open area with grand crags above you, using a path where you continue directly ahead climbing up to walk on top of a closed water channel. Ignore a small path that moves off to the L shortly after you start along this route.	1.8km, 28min
The valley narrows and the cliffs become more impressive. After some 20mins and 1.5km look out for a small concrete obelisk beside you on the RHS which marks a footpath fork and here you turn R downhill and shortly after R again to cross the stream bed and then begin to walk uphill.	3.6km, 52min
Pass 2 finger posts descending a little at the second and after working up beside a heavily eroded barranco swing around into an open area where there is a third finger post with signs pointing both ahead and to the L. Ignore both of these and instead take a thin path going off to the R which soon becomes clearer in woodland.	4.2km, 1hr 2min
Continue up this path, occasionally climbing steeply up through terraces, for some time to reach a track where you turn R to quickly reach a col.	5.9km, 1hr 35min
Descend the far side of this and cross a barranco onto a grassy plateau where there is a fork. Take the L option and rise steadily.	
This track ends at a col where a footpath continues slightly to the L immediately descending the other side.	6.6km, 1hr 46min
Continue down until you reach a large open area with a ruin on a terrace above you on the LHS. This is the Mas de les Valls.	7.8km, 2hr 7min
Follow the footpath down to the junction with the Riu de les Valls where a R turn brings you onto a path marked with blue stars. This path follows alongside of the barranco as it descends in a series of small cascades and blue-green pools.	
Follow the well-made path across rocky slabs sometimes close to the water and sometimes high above it. After some time you enter woodland and descend steeply on a broad path to a junction. (30 mins and 1.7km after your last R turn into the valley)	9.8km, 2hr 41min
Turn R here onto a smaller path with blue star markings and start to ascend again in woodland.	
From here on the blue markers are essential to help navigate the many junctions and changes from path to track. The path soon passes a substantial ruined Mas on the LHS before reaching a col a few minutes later.	10.4km, 2hr 54min

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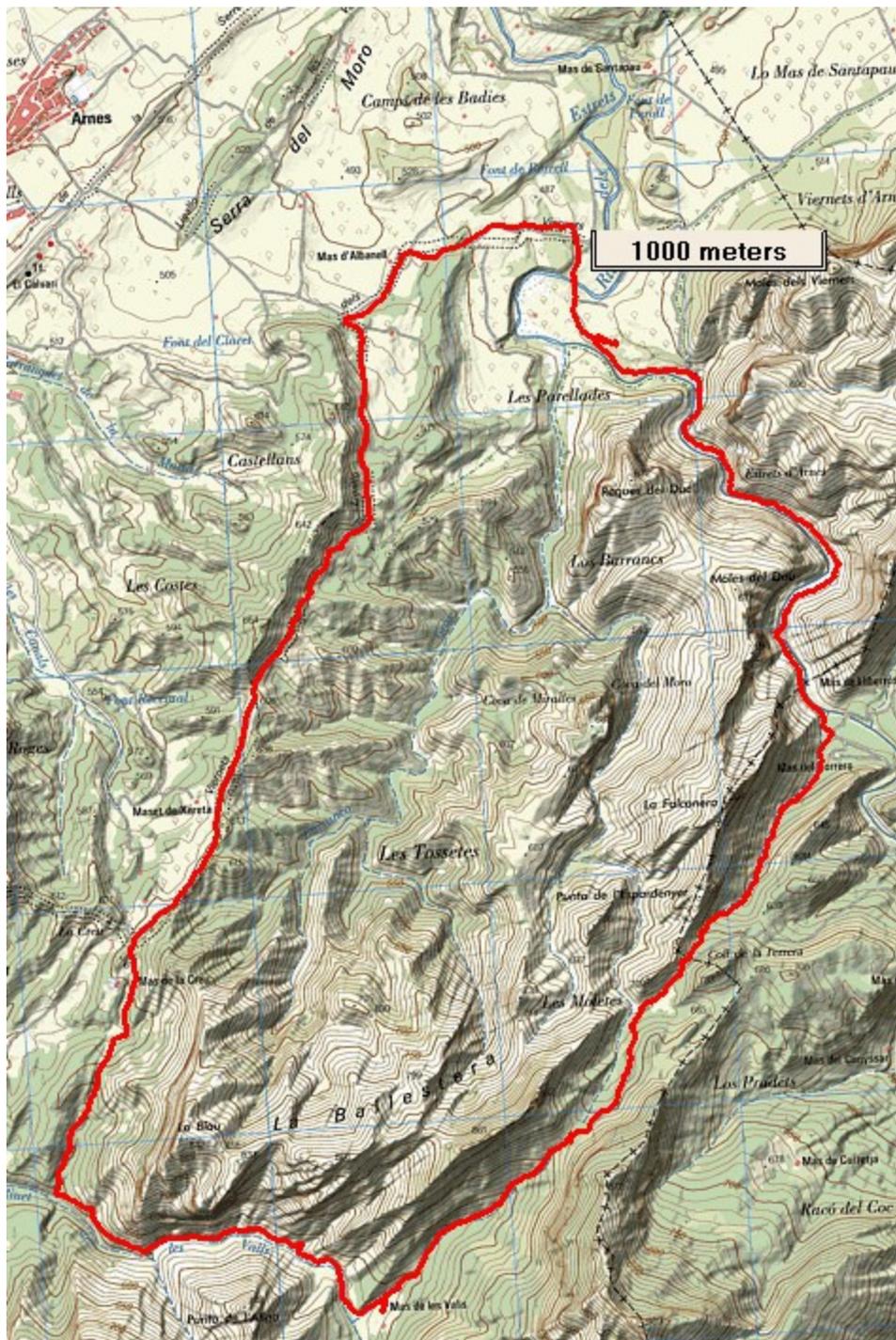
<p>Follow a descending track in an open terraced area from which you can see your footpath continuing ahead and rising up to a further col beyond the terraces.</p> <p>Drop down from the col to soon reach a concrete track where you turn R soon losing the concrete.</p> <p>Ignore a track doubling back to the R and a little way beyond this look out for a footpath leading off L with cairn and blue star. Take this.</p> <p>Follow this as it weaves in and out of low wooded hills until you reach a sandy and stony col where the path turns abruptly L descending into the woodland again.</p> <p>Join a track where you turn L and this quickly diminishes to footpath status again.</p> <p>Join a track again and continue ahead soon reaching a finger post where you turn L towards Arnes.</p> <p>Quickly arrive at the tarmac road where you turn R and walk the 500m back to your parked car.</p>	<p>11km, 3hr 5min</p> <p>11.7km, 3hr 14min</p> <p>13.2km, 3hr 37min</p> <p>13.7km, 3hr 44min</p>
<p>Spanish maps included within these descriptions are provided courtesy of the Spanish IGN and remain © Instituto Geográfico Nacional</p>	

<b>Walk Recommendations or restrictions</b>	None
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See map below.....

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**Route followed is outlined in Red**



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