

# 94 ITINERARI DE L'ESTANY BLAU

## DON'T MISS...

a visit to the spring at Roc del Metge, a thermal natural spring located in the high mountains of Escaldes-Engordany. Here you can touch the hot water coming out of the mountain, sometimes reaching temperatures of 70° C.

## DID YOU KNOW...

The Madriu valley is one of the areas in Andorra where fir forests were first found. The fir forests take up around 1,600 to 1,950 meters of surface area, preferring cool areas with heavy water flow.

## BEHIND THE NAME

**Madriu river:** From the Latin *mater*, meaning "mother". It refers to where the thermal waters spring out, which are just at the mouth of the Valira d'Orient river.



Urban centre



Maiden pink  
(*Dianthus deltoides*)



Field gentian  
(*Gentiana campestris*)



Fisherman on Blau lake

This route runs along the 2.1-hectare Blau ("Blue") lake, misnamed because its waters are cloudy and slight greenish.

This quite technically difficult route will let you discover the Madriu Valley, a valley filled with many natural habitats that make up a good sample of the country's ecosystems. In the Madriu valley there are three distinguishable natural surroundings: lower mountain, medium mountain, and high mountain.

The lower and medium mountain areas are the most common landscapes in the Madriu-Perafita-Claror valley, and here you can find vegetation that makes up the forest ecosystem. Conifers such as the Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), along with the boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*), bearberries (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), common juni-

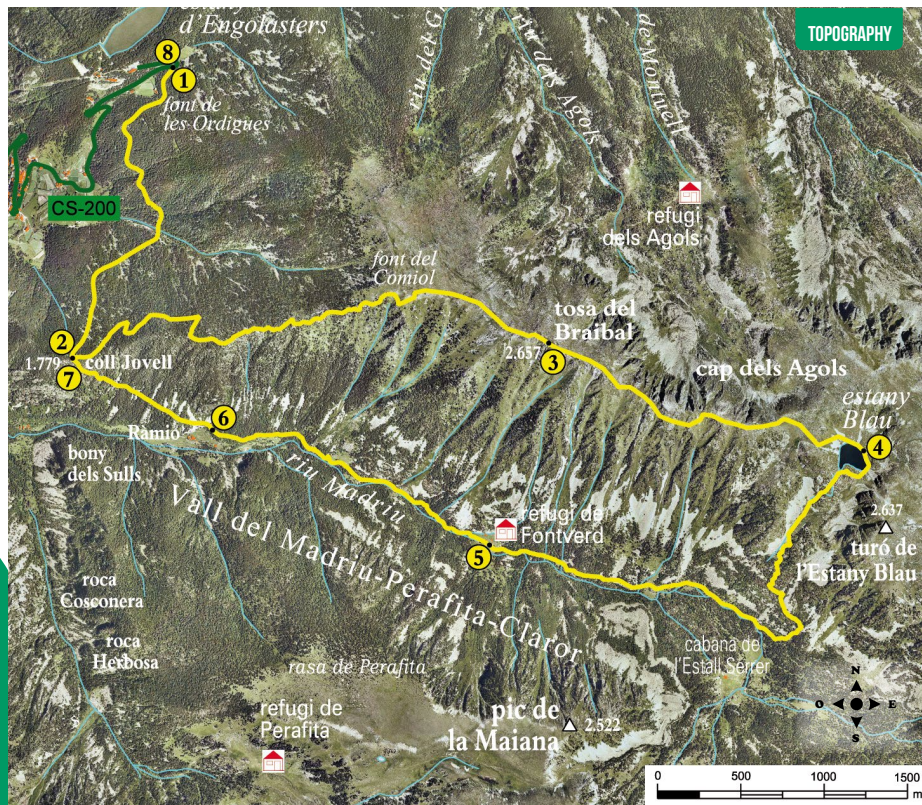
per (*Juniperus communis*) and wild strawberries (*Fragaria vesca*) dominate the forests. Between 1,600 and 2,300 metres above sea level, the mountain pine is best suited for the surroundings.

In the subalpine and mountainous areas, there are abundant thickets of alpenrose (*Rhododendron ferrugineum*), vegetation that helps to fix the soil of the scree and other rocky areas on the mountain, but also helps to prepare the terrain for other species' later growth. You may still find some oaks in the lower points of the valley.

The aquatic areas make up their own ecosystem in the valley, which helps to spur the growth of certain forest formations, such as riparian forests. Flowing bodies of water and lakes, as well as springs and streams are common throughout the valley.

# ESCALDES- ENGORDANY

## 94. ITINERARI DE L'ESTANY BLAU



### TECHNICAL INFORMATION

- 9H
- +1.150 M
- 1.150 M
- 21.000 M
- SI
- APPROXIMATE TIME

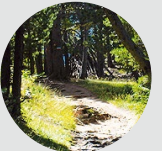
### ROUTE SIGNAGE

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- GR 7 / 11
- WRONG DIRECTION
- USE OF COMPASS AND MAP HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

PLACE	DISTANCE	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
ALTITUDE	ASCENT/DESCENT			
<b>1</b> FOUNTAIN CIRCUITS (ENGOLAS- TERS)	-- (--)	--	N42 31.047 E1 34.255	To get to the starting point from Escaldes-Engordany, you'll need to take the Engolasters road (CS-200) until the 6.2 km mark. At the starting point there is a parking lot and information signs.
<b>2</b> JOVELL HILL	3.190 m (+145 m)	50'	N42 30.102 E1 33.827	From the car park, follow Camí dels Matxos (GR 11), which runs along a wide track to then become a steep sloping track that heads up towards Jovell hill.
<b>3</b> BRAIBAL HILL	7.150 m (+880 m)	3h 20'	N42 30.165 E1 35.912	Heading out from Coll Jovell, you'll need to take the path on the left, which should not be confused with the sunny path to Ràmió. It is a steep incline throughout the climb. You will walk in forests and through stages with large rock formations. On the last stage, now out of the forest, you'll be able to enjoy a splendid view of the Madriu Valley.



PLACE	DISTANCE	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
ALTITUDE	ASCENT/DESCENT			
<b>4</b> BLAU LAKE	10.230 m 2.480 m	4h 50' (-175m)	N42 29.825 E1 37.296	After the hill, you'll need to continue southeast for the first stage, and later you'll need to pay attention to the yellow dots that indicate safe passage. This stage is very technical and high-altitude, and for this reason you should proceed very carefully. The southeastern descent from Cap dels Agols takes us past a pass, from where you can see Blau lake. You will walk around its north side following a trail.
<b>5</b> FONTVERD REFUGE	14.830 m 1.870 m	6h 50' (-610 m)	N42 29.509 E1 35.661	Passing the lake, you'll go down a slight slope that leads to the Madriu path. Throughout the stage, you should be very aware of the yellow dots, as this path is not very clear. When you find the GR at the bottom of the valley, you'll need to continue going down, and then come upon a much more comfortable descending stage leading to the Fontverd refuge.
<b>6</b> RÀMIO INTERSEC- TION	17.110 m 1.650 m	7h 40' (-220 m)	N42 29.873 E1 34.442	Following the GR along the bottom of the Madriu valley before reaching Ràmió, you'll run into an intersection. You'll need to go up and climb until Coll Jovell.
<b>7</b> COLL JOVELL	18.150 m 1.775 m	8h 10' (+125 m)	N42 30.102 E1 33.827	Turn to the right and follow the GR 11, going back up the valley and alternating between scree and Scots pine. One final steep ascent heralds your arrival at Coll Jovell.
<b>8</b> FOUNTAINS CIRCUIT	21.000 m 1.630 m	9h (-145 m)	N42 31.047 E1 34.255	Following the same path you took to ascend, go down the GR until you reach the Fountain Circuit. The path levels out and takes you back to the starting point.



### ROUTE PROFILE

