

# 31 ESTANY DE L'ILLA

## DON'T MISS...

on a return trip, try taking the 'Murs d'Aigua' route, visiting five natural lakes with their hydraulic dam distributed between Vall del Madriu and Vall del Valira d'Orient. More info: [fedacultura.ad](http://fedacultura.ad)

## DID YOU KNOW...

the workers who created the dam on Estany de l'Illa were nicknamed 'swallows' because they were temporary and came in the spring and left in the autumn?

## BEHIND THE NAME

Illa: Descriptive place name for the island in this lake.

WALKING IN ANDORRA



Bruna d'Andorra



Cairn



Estanys de Pessons

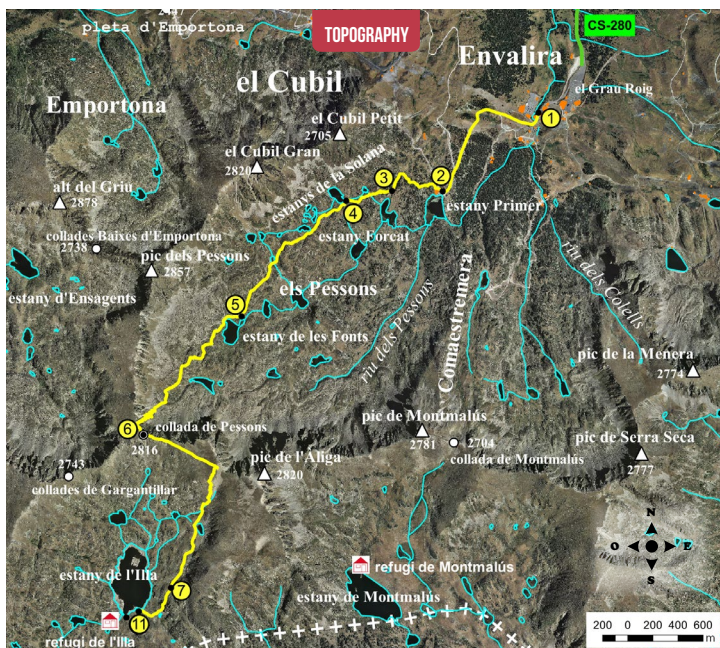


Estany Forcat

The lake you can enjoy is located at the bottom of Vall del Madriu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and can be accessed by two different and spectacular routes: From Escaldes-Engordany, going up Vall del Madriu, or from the Grau Roig, crossing the Pessons cirque, which is the one we're going to talk about here. This is a long, hard hike. You can do it in a day if you want to make a return trip or spend the night in the Illa manned refuge, the most modern refuge in the Principality, opened in 2017.

The Estany de l'Illa dam has a long history, as it was built over several summer periods. Construction began in 1947 and took eight years, being completed in 1955. During all these summers, the staff working on the project stayed in a building under the lake that has been used as an unmanned refuge since the 1980s and forms the base on which the current refuge was built.

The ascent through Encamp will allow you to enter the Pessons cirque and get closer to the lakes, which are spaced out across the mountain.



**TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

- 3H 45 MIN
- 2H 45 MIN
- +790 M
- 392M
- 8.830 M

APPROXIMATE TIME

**ROUTE SIGNAGE**

- 
- WRONG DIRECTION



encamp  
el pas de la casa

PLACE ALTITUDE	DISTANCE ASCENT/DESCENT	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
<b>1</b> START PESSONS TRAIL 2.103 m	-- (--)	--	N42 31.912 E1 41.866	The starting point is in the Grau Roig sector of the Grandvalira ski resort. You have to get to the Cubil car park, where you'll find a large glass and wooden building. On the same side is a forest trail.
<b>2</b> ESTANY PRIMER DE PESSONS 2.300 m	1.580 m (+197 m)	35'	N42 31.567 E1 41.297	Take the trail in a westerly direction, where you'll soon find the forest trail again. Follow the trail to Estany Primer de Pessons.
<b>3</b> ESTANY FORCAT 2.373 m	2.050 m (+63 m)	50'	N42 31.568 E1 41.007	Take the path behind the restaurant marked with yellow dots. Continue over granite blocks until you practically reach Estany Forcat.
<b>4</b> ESTANYS DE LA SOLANA 2.444 m	2.630 m (+72 m)	1h 05'	N42 31.524 E1 40.738	The path continues north a few metres from Estany Forcat. Gain altitude easily. Before arriving at Estans de la Solana, the path flattens out.

PLACE ALTITUDE	DISTANCE ASCENT/DESCENT	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
<b>5</b> ENCREUA- MENT GR7 I GRP 2.493 m	4.160 m (+89 m -39 m)	1h 35'	N42 31.028 E1 40.141	Continue parallel to the Estans de la Solana lakes. Once past the Tercer Estany, the path marked with yellow dots will then take a southerly direction, losing altitude until you reach the junction of the GR7 and the GRP.
<b>6</b> PORTELLA DE PESSONS 2.819 m	6.210 m (+351 m -23 m)	2h 45'	N42 30.506 E1 39.577	In a few metres, you'll pass Estany de les Fonts. Then criss-cross the steep slope until you get to Portella de Pessons. Magnificent view of the Pessons cirque glacier and Estany de l'Illa.
<b>7</b> ENTRENA- MENT CAMÍ DEL REFUGI DE MONT- MALÚS 2.574 m	8.190 m (-245 m)	3h 15'	N42 29.845 E1 39.740	Following the GR 7, head west until you get to the weather station. The path descends abruptly until you get to a small pool. Follow it until you get to the crossroads on Camí del Refugi de Montmalús.
<b>8</b> ESTANY DE L'ILLA 2.528 m	8.660 m (-46 m)	3h 25'	N42 29.741 E1 39.553	Continue along the GR 7 and in a few metres you'll come across the Port de Vallcivera crossroads. Next, you'll arrive at Estany de l'Illa. Next to the lake is the Illa manned refuge.

**ROUTE PROFILE**

