

## The stretches

### STRETCH 1: MONASTERY OF MONTSERRAT - ARTÉS

Distance covered: 39 km

Maximum height: 682m | Accumulated height: 1.300m

Set out from Montserrat and descend by the main road as far as Santa Cecília de Montserrat. From here follow the GR4 path as far as Castellgalí. Follow the paths leading into Manresa and then up to Mare de Déu de la Salut, which is signposted as going to Les Brucardes, Navarcles and, ending up, via farmroads and paths, to Artés.

### STRETCH 2: ARTÉS - VIC

Distance covered: 44 km

Maximum height: 938m | Accumulated height: 997m

Set out from Artés and follow the forested road towards L'Estany. It initially descends for a while, and then rises up to the highest point at Km 27. From here on, it descends, going through Santa Eulàlia de Riuprimer to the main square in Vic.

### STRETCH 3: VIC - RUPIT

Distance covered: 44 km

Maximum height: 883m | Accumulated height: 968m

Set out from the the main square or Plaça Major in Vic and take the bike route (bici carril) that will take you to a path leading into the village of Calldetenes. At this point follow the Ruta dels Molins, (the watermill route), which is a beautiful pathway that leads to the village of Saint Julià de Vilatorrada (Saint Julian), following farmroads and paths to Folgueroles i Tavèrnoles. At this point follow the BV-5213 road with care (this road doesn't have too much traffic), and it takes you to a hotel belonging to the Paradores Nacionales, called Parador Nacional de Sau. Turning off left, just before the Parador, one can visit the Monastery of Sant Pere de Casserres which is well-worth it. The route now takes you round the reservoir on a narrow surfaced road just below the parador, which later becomes a wider road finally crossing over the reservoir at the Sau dam, and then winds up to a surfaced forest track. This steep forest track carries on up to Rupit and is a fairly demanding ride all the way.

### STRETCH 4: RUPIT - TORELLÓ

Distance covered: 42 km

Maximum height: 1.084m | Accumulated height: 1.150m

Leave Rupit via a very steep narrow stoney pathway to your right, sign-posted as going to Tavertet. The path takes you up to a surfaced farm track at the top that follows the cliffs of L'Avenc as far as Tavertet. On entering the village take the farm track immediately off to the right that is signposted to the village of Cantonigròs. It comes out on the main road C152. Follow it down for about 2 km and then take a turnoff signposted to Sant Julià (Saint Julian) de Cabrera. From here one follows a track down to Sant Vicenç (Saint Vicent) de Torelló and along a pretty pathway to Torelló.

### STRETCH 5: TORELLÓ - CAMPRODON

Distance covered: 56 km

Maximum height: 959m | Accumulated height: 1.040m

By following farm tracks and a path or two, where at times one will have to walk, one arrives at St Quirze de Besora. This takes you the the Park of the Castell de Montesquiu, following a farmroad and then a tiny pathway that takes you to the 19th century riverside factory and workers housing scheme of la Farga d'en Bebié. It is now abandoned but makes an interesting visit. Leaving the factory follow the farmroad to a path that crosses the very busy C17 and taking you on back routes to Ripoll. Here one follows the Via Verda, or Green Route to Sant Joan de les Abadesses, and follows along a range of tracks to Camprodon.

### STRETCH 6: CAMPRODON - LES BASSES DE PUIGSEC

Distance covered: 21km

Maximum height: 1.620m | Accumulated height: 1.179m

This is the shortest stretch insofar as kilometres but one must take into account that there is the return trip to the starting point. It is also the most physically demanding stretch. Leave Camprodon along the tracks and paths that take you to Molló, and carry on to Espinavell and up to the end of the Oliva way at Basses de Puigsec, in the Capçaleres del Ter i del Freser Natural Park



## Ruta del romànic

Comprised of the district councils of the regions of Bages, Moianès, Osona and Ripollès and the city councils of Manresa, Vic, Ripoll, Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Vidrà, L'Esquirol, Tavèrnoles, Calldetenes, Folgueroles, Santa Eulàlia de Riuprimer, Molló and Vilanova de Sau.

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## The trail

The Oliba trail is a waymarked long-distance footpath that takes you through the counties of El Bages, Moianès, Osona and El Ripollès with the common thread of this extraordinary man called Oliba who was a count and then first Abbot and then Bishop in the 13th century. Of all the different tendencies and styles of art and architecture to the present day, the most widespread, without a doubt, is the Romanesque style.

As well as the added appreciation of what this land has to offer: its food, traditions and the resulting hospitality services and establishments that welcome the hiker to inside Catalonia.

The Oliba trail is essentially an outdoor museum. It is the combination of art, culture and history peppered with an outstanding heritage of villages and towns. It is a journey through the origins of Catalonia where such characters as bishop and abbot Oliba decided to repopulate these lands and Christianize them planting churches and monasteries, a historical moment magnificently set out in Verdager's poem Canigó.

Today this road transited by our ancestors is filled with walkers, hikers and runners who intend to cover its close to 300 kilometres from north to south or from south to north wholly, in few day stages or also in a one-day stretch. Their steps or pedalling contribute even more to knowledge spread about these millennium works.



Sant Jaume de Castellbell. Author: G.Franquesa © Bages Turisme-Consell Comarcal del Bages

## Bishop and Abbot Oliba

Oliba (971-1046) was one of the most influential of the nascent Catalan territories and is considered to have introduced Romanesque art in Catalonia. He was a true visionary: he promoted an architectural renovation based on the new artistic trends he saw on his travels in Europe where he returned accompanied by good artists and builders.

The youngest son of one of the most successful county families (his father, Oliba Cabreta, headed six of the main Catalan counties), he renounced the counties of Berga and Ripoll to enter the Benedictine order. Later he became an abbot of the two most important monasteries of the epoch, Santa Maria de Ripoll i Sant Miquel de Cuixà and eventually was appointed the bishop of Vic (1018-1046).

Bishop and abbot Oliba is also known as the founder of the monastery of Montserrat (1025), and a promoter of the ancient cathedral of Sant Pere of Vic. What's more, he encouraged an intense policy of construction, reconstruction and refurbishment of many other monasteries and churches, such as Santa Maria of Manresa and Sant Vicenç of Cardona. He also contributed to building castles to protect these lands from the Saracen threat.

Oliba's legacy, however, goes far beyond architecture. He worked to reduce the great violence that the feudal lords exerted on the farmers, and mediated in territorial conflicts between counts and noble landowners.

The Assemblies of Peace and Truce of God, which he started in Toluges (1027) and which were formed by the great nobles and ecclesiastics of the time, are considered one of the embryos of medieval Catalan constitutionalism that would result in the Usages of Barcelona and the Catalan Courts.

The Oliba Way project is also aimed at the recognition of the figure of bishop and abbot Oliba and of everything that his figure represented.

Monument of the bishop and abbot Oliba (Vic)

## These lands thousand years ago

Thousand years ago Catalonia was not a good place to live. The lands south of the Llobregat River were still under the Muslim rule of the Caliphate of Córdoba, while the territories north of the river (which we now know as "Old Catalonia") were occupied by the Catalan counties, recently independent from the empire of the Franks. Old Catalonia was a border territory between Christianity and Islam, and inland areas, where now the Route of Oliba passes, were very sparsely populated. Until quite recently it has been considered to be "no man's land."

The Count Guifré el Pelós (840-897), bishop and abbot Oliba's grandfather and the owner of the largest territories (Barcelona, Girona, Osona, Cerdanya, Urgell and Confluent), had already made a big effort to repopulate these lands offering privileges to the settlers. The castles that rose there protected the border, and the churches and monasteries made the newcomers feel spiritually protected. Soon, with the full activation of the feudal system, the church found these enclaves a good investment.

Work of the bishop and abbot Oliba, son of an important count family (Urgell, Cerdanya, Besalú, Osona, Manresa and Girona), is part of this Christianizing mission which, at the same time, strengthened the power of clergy in the feudal world at the turn of the millennium. Without knowing it, the bishop and abbot Oliba left us a priceless inheritance. Romanesque art that remains standing along the Route of Oliba is an open book that invites us to imagine how Catalonia of one thousand looked.

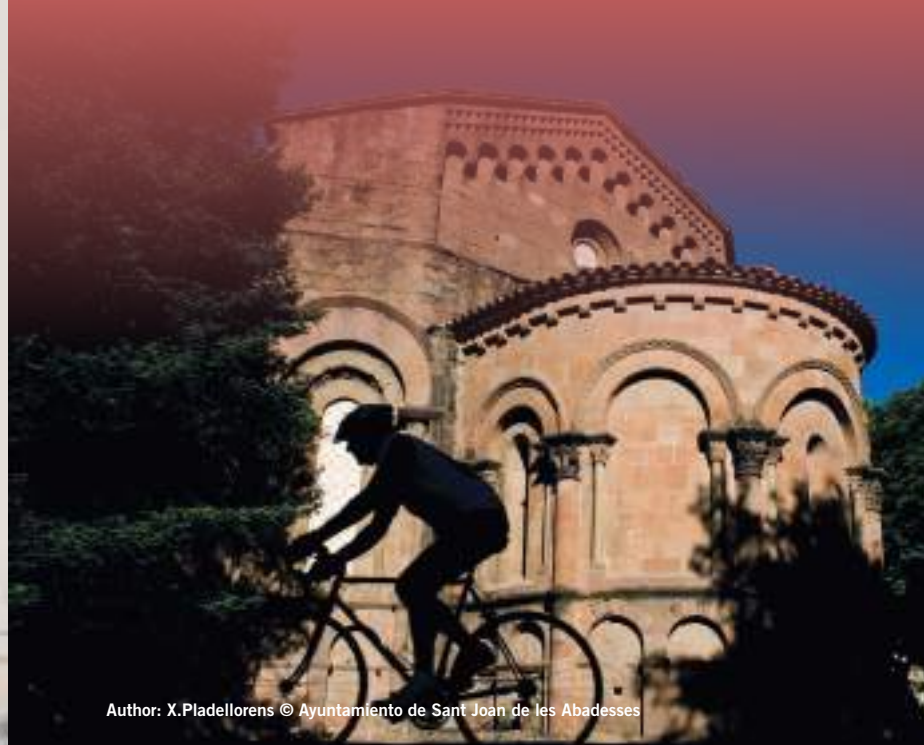
## Further away from Romanesque

The Route of Oliba is surrounded by cultural and natural heritage from Montserrat (monastery, mountain and natural park) to the exceptional ponds of Puig Sec (Canigó viewpoint). This long route runs through vineyards, pastures, forests and rural sites. It crosses the cities of Manresa, Ripoll and Vic; towns of heritage interest such as Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Rupit, Tavertet and Camprodon; hamlets and farmhouses surrounded by a unique landscape.

The Route of Oliba also has mountain views on Collsacabra mountain range and Montseny massif, a crossing through Guílleries or Sau Reservoir, an ascent to Bellmunt sanctuary or numerous hills scattered with towers and castles. There are vineyard huts on Pla de Bages or prehistoric remains of Savassona. There are Medieval bridges that cross the Ter, the Llobregat and their tributaries, reaching de Natural Park of Capçaleres del Ter and Freser.

This region's cuisine reflects the contrasts of the Route of Oliba, a route surrounded by quality hotel services and rural tourism in absolute harmony with natural environment. But the character of the land is its people and in this case proximity is the key to why visitors are treated in the best way.

Paths and trails which this route links are a part of the heritage of Catalonia. From immemorial times there has been an infrastructure that maintained contact between towns, villages and farms in this area and which is proposed today for traveler's discovery.



Author: X.Pladellors © Ayuntamiento de Sant Joan de les Abadesses

Lake of Navarcles. Author: G.Franquesa © Bages Turisme-Consell Comarcal del Bages



# El camí OLIBA

MONTSERRAT • PYRENEES

## Catalan ROMANESQUE ROUTE by BTT



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### Legend

-  ROMANESQUE ART
-  MONUMENTAL INTEREST
-  MUSEOGRAPHIC SPACE
-  NATURAL PROMINENT ELEMENT
-  PANORAMIC VIEW
-  TOURIST OFFICE

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-  CHECK THE SUGGESTIONS FOR ACCOMMODATION, RESTAURANTS, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES THAT YOU WILL FIND ALONG THE ROUTE
-  SEE THE BENEFITS OF HOLDING THE ROUTE CARD
-  TAKE A LOOK AT THE GUIDE TO GOOD HIKING



- a. Molló
- b. Camprodon ©Tracks tour
- c. Ripoll
- d. Rupit Suspension Bridge ©Tracks tour
- e. Sau reservoir
- f. Vic, cathedral and brickyards ©Vic Turisme
- g. L'Estany
- h. Monastery of Sant Benet de Bages
- i. Manresa Author: Jordi Play ©Manresa Turisme