

Visit to the old centre and surroundings of Romanyà

We will visit the village, the church, the Cross of Romanyà, we will head for the Murtra standing stone, the municipal cemetery, where we find the Mercè Rodoreda's grave, the megalithic collection of the en Daina cave and on our return we will go to the Prat spring.

ROUTE – POINTS OF INTEREST

Romanyà de la Selva, possibly the most charming district of Santa Cristina which successfully maintains the peace and quiet of past times. Take a good look at the houses in the old town around the church, which are all made of stone, and if we leave cars behind and use a little imagination they can transport us back to medieval times. On seeing the old centre of Romanyà, it is easy to imagine that we could bump into a knight round any corner, or a monk or any other character from the period.

There is proof of the existence of Romanyà on the border of the Vall d'Aro since 881 in a diploma from the King Charlemagne and of its Church, from 1019 as belonging to the canon of Girona.

The history of Romanyà has officially been linked to Santa Cristina d'Aro since 1858, the year of Santa Cristina's independence from Castell d'Aro, but due to its physical location, it was much easier for the people of Romanyà to communicate with Llagostera, (for example to go to its weekly market, where the peasants took meat and livestock to sell) instead of going to the far-off village of Santa Cristina.

We will start the visit in the old centre of Romanyà. We will enter by the can Roquet restaurant entrance and head for the church of Sant Martí.

Visit to the square and church of Sant Martí de Romanyà. The beautiful church dedicated to Sant Martí is a temple with floor shaped like a Greek cross, with the eastern arm forming the apse.

The building is covered with cylindrical vaulting, reinforced by iron arches.

It is considered to be a highly evolved pre-Romanic construction, as the layout, the horseshoe arches and the technology used in its construction is traditional in pre-Romanic buildings, but it also contains Romanic elements, such as, for example, windows with a double sill. It dates from the end of the 10th century.

The windows with double sill and the reasonably regular rigging of the walls give us a glimpse of the Romanic shapes. The floor of the church is paved in flagstones, indicating their age. The wooden image inside represents St Martin, and was made in the 20th century by the sculptor from Olot, Modest Fluvia.

The bell tower is believed to belong to the 11th century or later as its construction is further evolved than the rest of the church.

The midday door is protected by a small porch.

In the area behind the church, there used to be the old parish cemetery which was closed due to lack of hygiene in 1911.

The same month a new cemetery was built in its current location, which cost 1900 pesetas.

In 1999 the sculptor, Antonio Delgado, donated the sculpture of the Virgin of Romanyà. It is made of solid bronze and it is very well secured to prevent it from being stolen. It is located in the right outer wall of the square.

Once you have visited the inside of the church, we will leave the old town and follow the GR-92 track for 75 metres to the Cruz (Cross) de Romanyà.

The Cruz de Romanyà, located to the left of the centre towards Calonge.

It was inaugurated in August 1904.

With a height of around 7 metres, some of its blocks weigh almost a tonne. Its construction came from the agreement between some property owners from the village of Romanyà, in accordance with the thinking of pontiff Leon XII, who recommended putting up crosses on top of mountains to pay homage to Christ.

We continue walking and we drop down to the road; after walking a short way we turn off into a pine forest where we can see the Murtra standing stone.

Manuel Cazorro Ruiz, in 1912 published a review of this monument with a sketch of the standing stone, which was lying down at the time. The anthropomorphic granite standing stone was stood upright in 1952, by a group of volunteers from Sant Feliu de Guíxols and Santa Cristina d'Aro, and by members of the Montclar Excursionist Centre from Sant Feliu de Guíxols, under orders from Lluís Esteva. It was possibly constructed around 3000 - 2500 BC.

We continue the visit by approaching the new Santa Cristina d'Aro cemetery, where we find the remains of the famous Catalan writer, Mercè Rodoreda.

From here, we will continue until we reach the megalithic collection at the Cova d'en Daina (Daina Cave).

This dolmen is one of the most complete of those which have been preserved. Due to the sepulchre configuration, it can be deduced that it was built around 2700 - 2200 B.C. This refers to a covered U shape gallery built out of granite blocks. Very visible remains can still be seen of its circular-oval artificial tomb and its stone circle. Inside, the monument

measures a maximum of 7.60 m long by 1.70 wide by 1.50 high.

The largest pieces or funereal furniture recovered were found in the excavation of Pere Cama Casas in the 19th century. Other smaller pieces belong to the excavation of Esteva Cruañas. From the collection, the numerous bones which were very fragmented and many teeth from adults and children must be highlighted. There are seven flint tips of several types and fragments of knives, also made of flint. Two ceramic fragments, with incisive lines and another edge fragment, maybe bell shaped. More than three hundred large necklaces made of soapstone and calaite. Two grey-green fibrolite platelets and another two which are sandy and very fine, one of which is perforated. A discoidal piece of blackish shale and a small piece made with a fine gold lamina, in a rolled cylinder.

In order to finish the visit, we will return to the town centre passing via the Prat spring from which it is possible to drink in the summer.

There are several century old cork oaks in the area including many in Romanyà. The monumental "Suro Gros" stands out from the rest, located very close to the spring, within the ancestral house called Can Cama. Its size does not leave you with any doubt why it received its name, 25 metres wide and 14 metres high. This giant was still standing up to 1957, when it died of old age and was cut down.

An image of the monumental Suro Gros de Can Cama, at the Prat spring.

You can appreciate its amazing size here.

Photograph from 1875-80.

Underneath, we can see the height of a person to give it scale.

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