



Information about the mountain

Name of the mountain	El Pedraforca
Country	Spain
Region	Catalunya
Altitude	2.506 metres
Surface area	Natural site of National interest of Massís del Pedraforca expands 1.750,7 ha
Surface of protected area	Cadi Moixeró Natural Park expands 41.060 ha.
Name of local organization in charge of management	Parc Natural del Cadí Moixeró and Patronat del Paratge Natural d'interès Nacional del Massís del Pedraforca.
Number of municipalities	6 - Saldes, Gósol, Gisclareny, Tuixent, Vallcebre i Bagà.
Institutional recognition	<i>Natural Place of National Interest declaration: PNIN Law 6/1982 of May 6</i> <i>Cadi-Moixeró Natural Park declaration: Decree 353/1983.</i> <i>Inclusion in Plan for spaces of natural interest: PEIN; Decree 328/1992</i> <i>Saldes is declared a space with a quality night sky ECNQ: 2017</i> <i>ZEPA_Special protection Area for Birds, Directive 79/409/EEC since 1987</i> <i>Alpine Region in Natura 2000 network since 2003</i>



Contact details

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El Pedraforca

Sometimes, one can almost see hordes of witches
and wizards flying above the boulders of this
pitchfork silhouette. Or perhaps
they are just clouds....

Pedraforca is part of Catalonia's collective imagery: to see this mountain or to hear people talk about it, produces a sensation that is felt to a greater or lesser extent by everyone. Thus, it is perceived as an identity symbol (emblem) of a country and a community of people. This status has emerged over time as an accumulation of many elements unique to this place: its appearance (with an unmistakable silhouette), its position (standing alone), its lack of accessibility until relatively recently and the many legends that have grown around it. Pedraforca is a mythical mountain for ramblers and climbers. In 1928, Lluís Estasen and three companions were the first to succeed in climbing the north face. The building of the road to Gósol in 1942 and of the first mountain hut in 1949, contributed to opening the mountain to the general public and to increase the number of climbing routes, books, websites...



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Proud Local People

The people who inhabit the Pedraforca area have always had a very special relationship with the mountain. In the past, people lived backwards at the mountain as they saw it as an obscure, unknown world, and even an unproductive space not worth paying attention. Over time, however, they have looked at the mountain with other eyes and have begun to value, preserve and protect for everything that it represents in our society (it is legally protected since 1982). Nowadays, the inhabitants of the area feel proud to live in this territory and also to be part of the culture, traditions and gastronomy of the valley's villages and so they transmit it to future generations.

Reputation

Its shape, that is associated with a geological fact, recognizes Pedraforca Mountain. It is also recognized by nature and because it is one of the first places where climbing in Catalonia started. These factors, along with other more emotional -like patriotism-, make Pedraforca widely recognized nationally and internationally. We find a semantic problem with the name and it is the fact that in Catalonia it is considered a natural space of national interest, while in Spain it is a natural monument. It would be interesting to find a consensus to refer to Pedraforca as a natural monument and perhaps would help to increase its reputation.

Legends and Myths

In the past, people who lived in the area could find no rational explanation for the mountain's unique shape and so resorted to supernatural reasons to account for it. This could be one of the reasons why so many myths and legends have been told about this often called witch's mountain. They relate to witchcraft, magic, but also to devils, giants, ghosts, treasures and demons. The main legend talks about an enchanted devil castle appearing overnight on its summit. The astonished local people after a full night of fear and prayers on New Year's eve, found by the morning the castle gone and replaced by the current pitchfork silhouette.

Power of Inspiration

Pedraforca has been consistently mentioned or portrayed in poems, paintings, books, documentaries, films, TV series, commercials... From as early as 1888, the illustrious writer Jacint Verdaguer refers to Pedraforca in different poems and books. Pablo Ruiz Picasso, the famous painter, declared that the serenity felt when facing the Pedraforca from Gósol in 1906, played a key role in the transition of his pictorial work towards modernity. It has also been the location for recording TV series such as La llegenda del conte Arnau and Terra Baixa. Various TV commercials include the spectacular views from Cal Xisquet house. (625)

Picturesque Landscape

Although it is not the tallest mountain in the area, Pedraforca irradiates a peculiar magnetism that holds everyone's gaze. It stands out majestically like an island blotting out the humanised rural backdrop. This landscape is a harmonious mosaic combining villages and isolated farmhouses, woodlands, farmlands, pasturelands, rugged crags whose colours change with the seasons. Its unique shape is reminiscent of a pitchfork, with a peak on each side and a cleft with a steep slope in the middle. The imposing presence of this unmistakable pitchfork silhouette stretching from 1200 metres up to 2506 metres (top peak: Pollegó Superior) is reflected on many coats of arms, logos, souvenirs... (690)

Particular Ecosystem

In the area there are interesting plants either endemic or relics of pre-Quaternary period. The main plant communities consist of Scots pine, mountain pine and montane box and sub-alpine scrub, followed by meadows, rock plants, beech with box and fir, and copses of downy oak. In the Gresolet valley, there are a number of catalogued monumental and ancient trees that can be discovered following marked paths. There is a big variety of invertebrate fauna, with interesting species of moths, butterflies, snails and arachnids. The vertebrate fauna includes mammals such as the chamois, roe deer, wild boar, pine marten or the snow vole. Bird species include, among many others, the black woodpecker.

Mediterranean Cultural Identity

Although Pedraforca is not close by the Mediterranean Sea, its influence is present at all times: climate, landscape, vegetation, local products, culture, traditions, etc. We could also mention features very specific in traditional music, dances, festivities, old trades (shepherds, mowers and trementinaires) ... Moreover, in the valleys of Pedraforca we have an element that relates the Mediterranean culture with the mountainous character: the fire festivals. The most representative is "Fia Faia" that takes place during Christmas in the municipalities of Bagà and Sant Julià de Cerdanyola and that was declared as UNESCO World Heritage in 2005.

Sustainability and Anthropogenic Environment

Pedraforca valleys are located in a territory without industry. That's why the area has maintained a rural and mountainous nature. The impact on the environment that the mining activity caused at the beginning of the 20th century has been restored and, furthermore, the memories of the mining activity have been integrated as a tourist claim to visit the territory. In addition, the area has survived the urban development boom that took place in our country for the last 30 years. That has allowed the maintenance of attractive and well-preserved villages. Pedraforca area has a very positive sustainable and anthropogenic environment in order to promote the area.

Historic Places

The area around Pedraforca has been inhabited since prehistoric times. The Molers dolmen in Saldes dates from 1500 BC. The growth of population from the 9th to the 14th century is responsible for the unique ensemble of well-preserved early and late Romanesque style buildings: castles and churches of Saldes and Gósol, the Sanctuary of Gresolet, the monastery and castle of Sant Sebastià de Sull. Also the settlement of Palomera which consists of 27 dwellings inhabited by shepherds and peasants. The industrial revolution, at the beginning of the 20th century, initiated a period of underground and open-cast coal mining. The mining finished in 2007, leaving many remains that we can visit nowadays.