




culture



 **Andorra**



Welcome to the discovery of Andorran culture



Tracing the course of our history, we will discover monuments, museums and culture trails that put us in contact with the culture and folklore of Andorra's valleys. The Culture Guide shows us how nature and culture are interwoven while revealing how people lived in traditional Andorran society.

We will discover the country's customs and traditions on visits to Andorra's museums. We will learn about traditional Andorran society and its evolution in the Casa Cristo, Casa Rull and Casa d'Areny-Plandolit Home Museums, the Rossell Forge and the Tobacco Museum. We will also see emblematic buildings, like Casa de la Vall and the Meritxell Sanctuary, which will reveal the political and religious structures that were maintained for centuries. We will find traditional buildings with granite, stone slabs and wrought iron as predominant features. Do not miss the many stories hidden behind their walls!

We will enjoy nature on a tour of the Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley, declared a World Heritage Site in the cultural landscape category by UNESCO in 2004. We will discover the essence of the high mountains and follow the steps of humans in their purest state. Forges, cottages and herder shelters are some examples of what the valley offers us.

We will discover Andorra's Romanesque architecture in its small, simple churches. There are more than forty churches to bring us closer to the life of the valley's inhabitants. In the past, they were the centre of religious and social gatherings. Today, they are jewels of our culture: Santa Coloma, Sant Romà de les Bons, Sant Miquel d'Engolasters, etc. We will find them all in unique settings that form part of our cultural landscape.

Take advantage of our suggested trails in order to enjoy our culture! The Country Life Route and the Iron Route allow us to discover the skills of a high mountain society. Alone or guided, on foot or on horseback, come and discover the trails offered all over the country.



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*Times and prices
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www.andorra.ad*

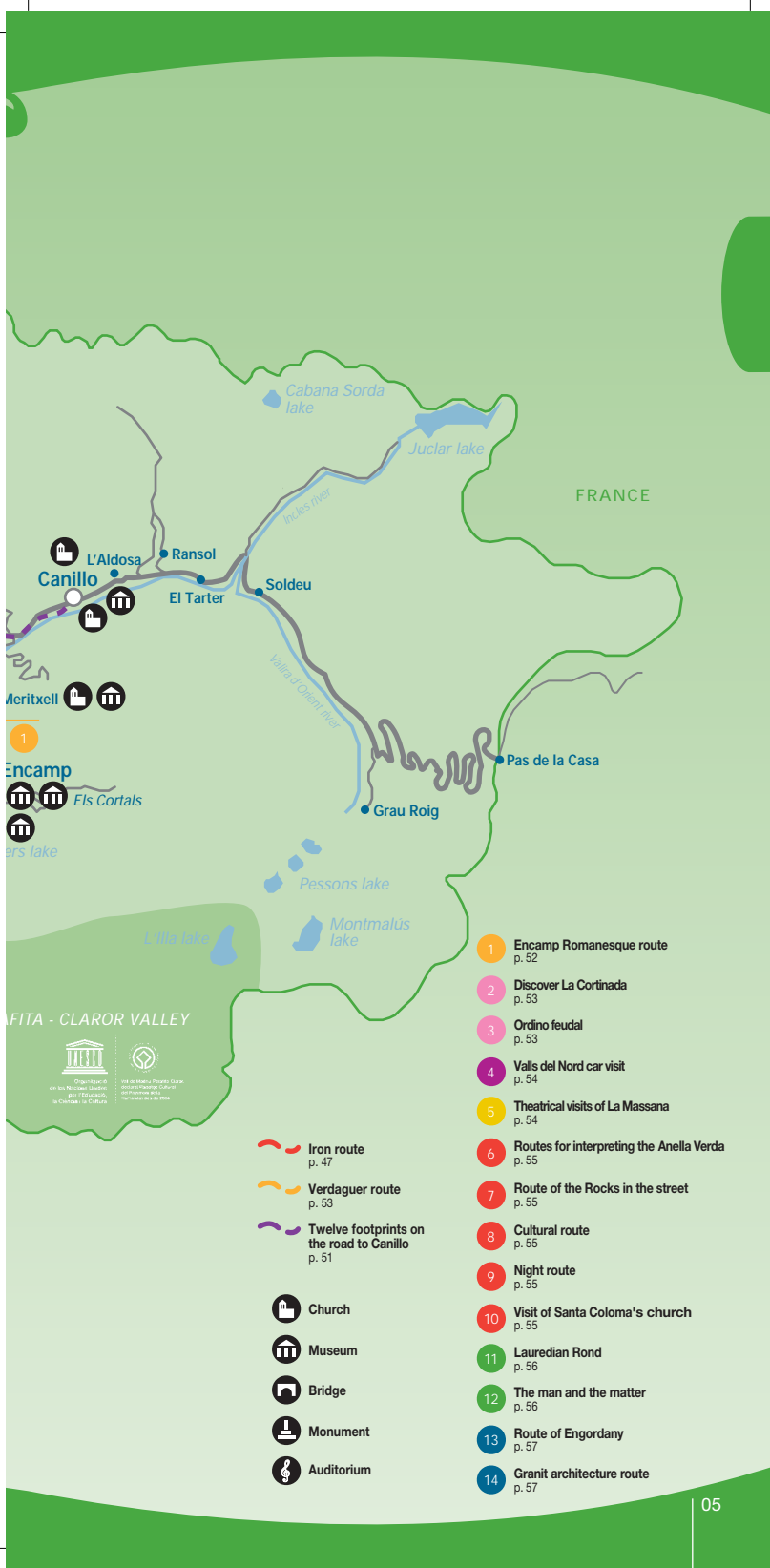


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MAP OF ANDORRA







VALL DE CARDENER - CLAROR VALLEY



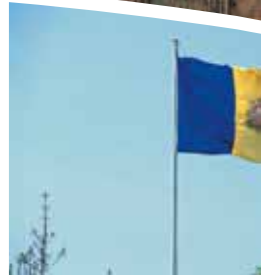
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HISTORY OF ANDORRA



Photograph given up through the National Library of Andorra



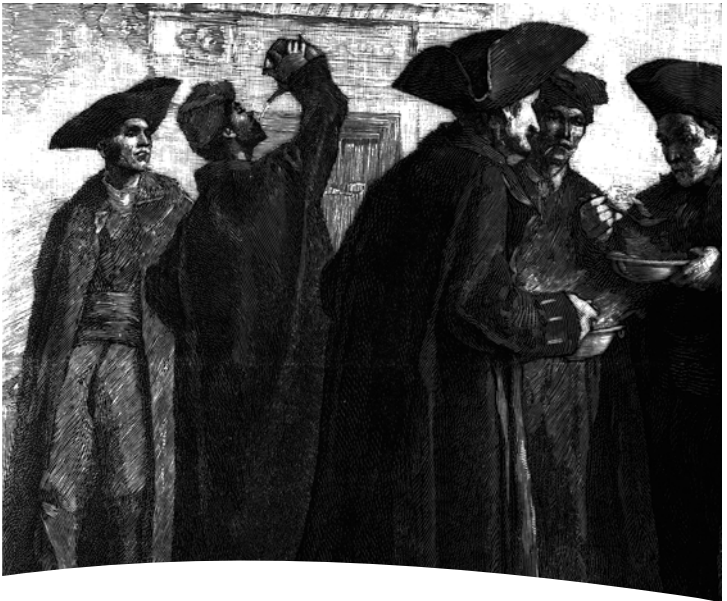
Legend has it that Charlemagne founded Andorra in 805 in recognition of aid given by its inhabitants against the Saracens. However, the earliest document known to mention the country is the act of consecration of the cathedral of Santa Maria of Urgell in 839, which names the parishes (administrative and territorial divisions) of Andorra as the fiefdom of the Counts of Urgell. In the mid 10th century, the dominion of different civil and ecclesiastical lords led to the appearance of fortresses, towers and churches that can still be seen today. During the 11th century, the power of the bishops of Urgell extended progressively through Andorra, until in 1133 it became an ecclesiastic domain.



In the 13th century, a period of struggles and hostilities began between the bishops of Urgell and the Counts of Foix to gain sovereignty over Andorra. This ended in the signing of two rulings, called *Pariatges* (1278 and 1288), agreed between the bishop of Urgell, Pere d'Urg, and the Count of Foix, Roger Bernat III. The signing of the first ruling (1278) established the basis of co-sovereignty: creation of the Principality of Andorra. The second ruling (1288) supplemented the first, regulating other obligations, such as the administration of justice and military service. The pact was maintained over time with significant changes, to the point that the Constitution of Andorra contains the co-principality system, with the bishop of Urgell and the president of the Republic of France as co-princes of Andorra, on equal terms and in a personal capacity.

HISTORY OF ANDORRA

Photograph given up through the National Library of Andorra



During the 15th century, the Counts of Foix assumed sovereignty of Navarre. When, in 1589, Henry, King of Navarre and Count of Foix, Viscount of Béarn and Lord of Andorra, ascended to the French throne, his co-rule over Andorra as Count of Foix became fused with the French crown. In 1793, due to the feudal origin of the bonds linking Andorra to France, the French Republicans refused to recognise the relationship with Andorra. In 1806, Napoleon restored the feudal tradition and the French claim to co-lordship over the Principality of Andorra.

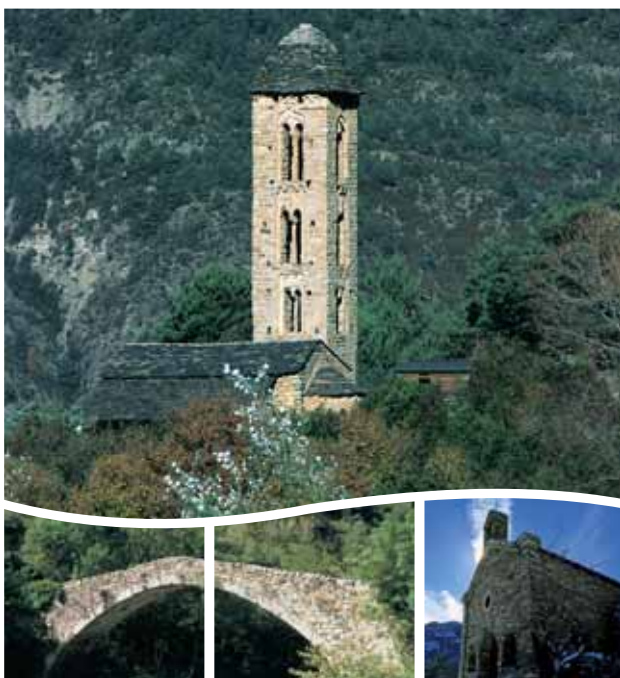
In 1419, the Land Council was the first form of parliament to be created, with the purpose of resolving problems in the community. Officially, since 1702 the General Council has evolved from this to regulate administration, policy, jurisdiction and legislation. In the second half of the 19th century, the 'New Reform' (1866) brought substantial changes to the political and administrative running of Andorra. Suffrage was granted to all heads of household, and the power of the General Council was increased.



The position of Andorra's borders has been a determining factor in its process of growth and modernization. These frontiers felt the impact of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, which led the country's commercial activity to be based on the transit of merchandise and currencies. The Principality then began a particular process of adaptation and change to evolve into the Andorra of tourism and finance that we know today.

The creation of the Executive Council in 1981 was the first step in important reforms in the Principality of Andorra, culminating with the enactment on 14 March 1993 of the first Constitution of Andorra, which converted the Principality into an independent *de jure* state and a social democracy, and established a new definition of the powers of the institutions. On 28 July 1993, Andorra became a member of the UN, a fact that stands as international recognition of the country. Similarly, the Principality forms part of other international organizations, like the Council of Europe since 1994.

CHURCHES AND MONUMENTS



Like the rest of the Pyrenees, Andorra is a place of transit, convergence and exchange, tending to a fusion of external influences with traditional local art. The Principality's emblematic churches are especially attractive to visitors as monuments and architectural sites giving a genuine and unique opportunity to explore the history and culture of the country.

The pre-Romanesque and Romanesque periods of artistic expression lasted longer in the Principality than in other places in Europe, where other architectural styles imposed themselves. Andorran Romanesque architecture speaks to us about the formation of the parish communities, the first power relationships and a fascination with mystery and the ineffable. Architecturally, pre-Romanesque and Romanesque churches are distinguished by their small size and simple construction, austere decorated with great beauty and harmony. You will find them in the most singular settings in our cultural landscape.

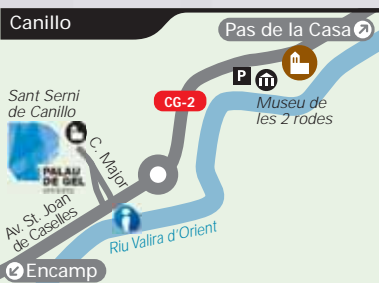
Sant Joan de Caselles Church



The building dates from the 11th-12th century and follows the architectural style of other Andorran Romanesque churches: it has a rectangular single nave with wooden ceiling, a semi-circular apse and Lombard-style belfry. It conserves two archways probably built in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The interior has remains of a 12th century Romanesque stucco crucifix surrounded by a mural showing the crucifixion with Longinus and Stephanon accompanied by the Sun and Moon. Behind the altar grill is a highly artistic 16th century altarpiece showing Italian and German Renaissance influence with scenes from the life and martyrdom of Saint John, author of the book of Revelations and patron saint of the church.

The Motorcycle Museum, located next to the church, shows the history of motorcycles from the early 20th century on.



Sant Joan de Caselles
Ctra. general-s/n
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Reservations, information and times:

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Aina

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Free entry

Sant Serni de Canillo Church



Although most of the parish church today dates from the 17th century, there are still remains from the old Romanesque building, including the baptistery. The major changes were to the belfry, rebuilt in the 17th century, and the main nave.

Inside there is a late 14th-century popular Gothic style cross, made from polychrome wood, and a Baroque altarpiece dedicated to Saint Cerni, Bishop of Tolosa (3rd century), which stands out for its polychrome wood carving and its panel painting technique. Outside, at the entry to the church, is a font, now used as a fountain.

The church is part of Canillo old town. The town's most exceptional houses can be seen on a stroll around the area.



Sant Serni de Canillo
Plaça de Sant Serni
AD100 - Canillo



Reservations, information and times:

Canillo Tourist Information Office

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Free entry

Nostra Senyora de Meritxell Sanctuary



The day of Meritxell is celebrated each 8 of september

The sanctuary comprises various elements of architectural heritage: the old Romanesque church, the new sanctuary and a royal highway with oratories and a boundary cross.

The old chapel dedicated to Saint Mary underwent major changes in the 17th century. In 1972 it caught fire and was restored in 1994. It currently houses a permanent exhibition in memory of Meritxell, describing the history of the Andorran people's devotion to their patron saint.

The new sanctuary was designed by the architect Ricard Bofill in 1976. This eclectic construction is a synthesis of human art and the landscape surrounding it. The altar has a reproduction of the Romanesque carving of Out Lady of Meritxell.



Meritxell
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Guided visits in summer months (July and August). Nature trail to the Meritxell oratories and the village of Prats.



Free entry

Les Bons Historic Complex

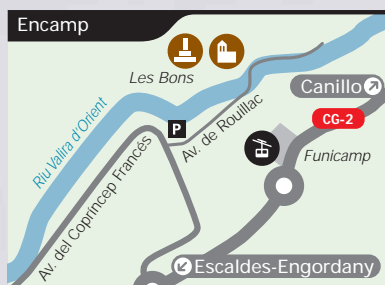


The Les Bons Historic Complex is made up of Sant Romà Church (12th century), a defensive tower (13th century), a water deposit with an irrigation channel cut into the rock, the remains of a fortified house representing civil architecture from the 17th century, and two dovecots from modern times.

The church, dedicated to Saint Romà, is Romanesque, with a rectangular single nave and a semi-circular Lombard-style apse. Several changes have been made over time such as the porch (16th century).

The interior preserves the stone altar, reproductions of the Romanesque paintings by the master artist of Santa Coloma (12th century) representing the apocalyptic vision of Saint John and Gothic paintings of a variety of images from the 16th century.

The historic complex invites visitors to enjoy strolling around the streets and lanes of Les Bons, which preserve charming old building, protected by a traditional architecture protection plan since 1997.



Reservations, information and times:

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Free entry

Historical centre of Les Bons
Les Bons
AD200 Encamp

Santa Eulàlia Church



It's the higher belfry from Andorra: 23 m of height!

The Romanesque parish church still preserves part of its original architecture. The building was extended and refurbished on several occasions during the 17th and 20th centuries. The 23-metre belfry is the tallest Lombard-style Romanesque tower in the country. It was built after the church, towards the second half of the 11th century.

The Romanesque apse was knocked down in 1924. Only its floor remains inside the present-day church. The porch dates from the 14th century. Highlights are the Romanesque font, decorated with an arcade and fleurs-de-lis, the 17th and 18th-century Baroque altarpieces and the new windows by Encamp artist Agustí Rios. The architects Bohigas-Martorel-MacKay led the alterations in 1988 and 1989, creating a square connecting to the nave extension and enlarging the building structure to house the new parish centre.

After visiting Santa Eulàlia, enjoy a stroll around Encamp old town, discover the area's religious art on a trip to the Sacred Art Museum (p. 31) or head to the National Automobile Museum (p. 32).



Santa Eulàlia d'Encamp
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Reservations, information and times:

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Free entry