

**RAMAT
DE CAMINS**

STAGE 8: ESCALÓ - ESPOT

ESCALÓ – PLANELL FOUNTAIN – LLORT CASTLE – ESPOT – SANT MAURICI LAKE – MIRADOR DE L'ESTANY –
SANT MAURICI LAKE – ESPOT

Time needed: 7.50 h

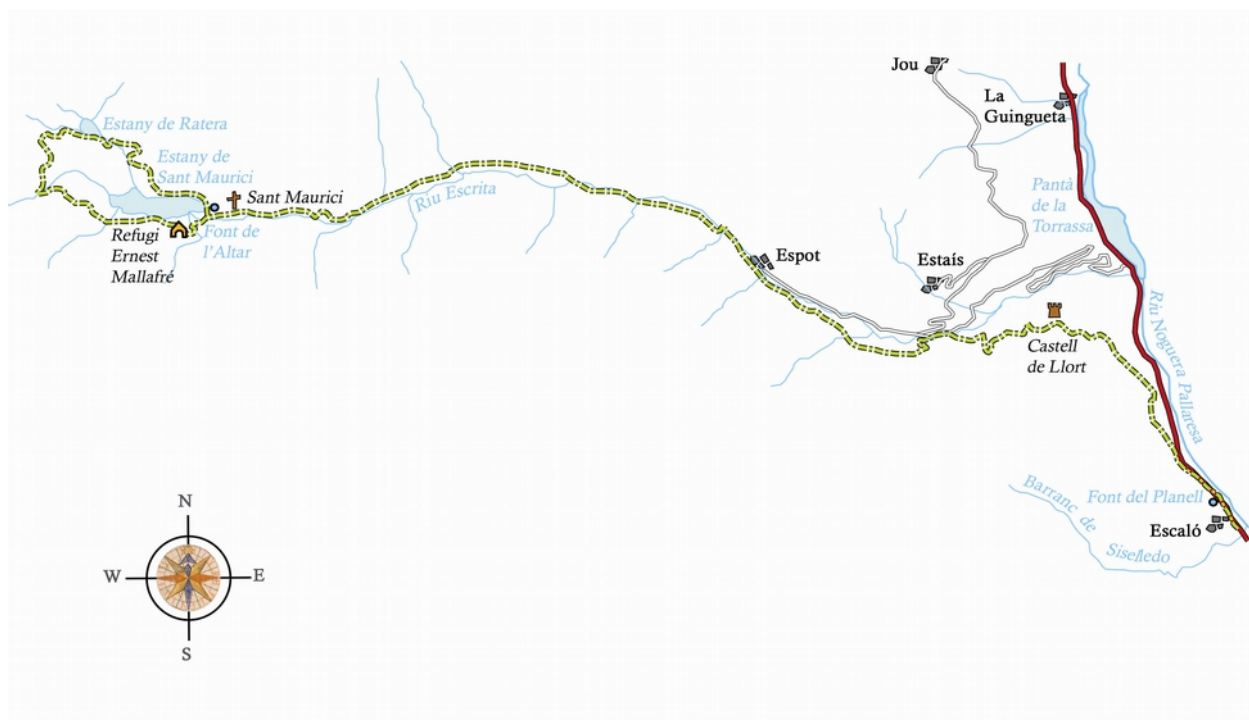
Ascent/descent (approx): 1,565 m ascent, 880 m descent

Distance (approx): 43.3 km

Highest point: 2,180 m

Lowest point: 864 m

Map recommended: *Parc Natural de l'Alt Pirineu*. Scale 1:50,000. Editorial Alpina.



- 0 h **Escaló**, 864 m. Taking great care, we follow the C-28 main road north towards Esterrí d'Àneu for 1.1 km until we come to the start of a track on the left and a sign pointing the way up to Espot via the Camí Reial (old royal road).
- 0.15 h **Planell bridge**, 870 m. Picnic table, benches and a spring. Following the painted yellow spots we start by climbing some steps, rising above the road on our right.
- 0.55 h After a descent, we come to a **wider path**. We need to turn left here. Soon the path becomes narrower and crosses some abandoned fields.
- 1 h We pass under a bridge after which we face a steep climb to find a track through the wood we will hardly leave until we reach Espot.
- 1.25 h **Terrissaire farm building**, 1,029 m. On the right of the track there is a farm building and the hiker's path to what is left of Llorç Castle, a quarter of an hour away. We take the track.
- 1.40 h **Junction**, 1,250 m. Turning right leads to Estaís and Jou by the GR, but we carry on to Espot, to the left. From this point on we will only find the typical red and white markings of the GR. We leave the forest track and go up a quite broad hiker's path while passing under a power line. After five minutes we leave the path we were walking on and turn right to take a narrow one. It passes through a pretty pine grove.
- 1.50 h **Track**. When that path comes out on a track, we turn right and follow the track to Espot. It's very flat and we cross the Escrita river a couple of times.
- 2.15 h **Espot**, 1,300 m. (hotel, hostel, rural accommodation, restaurant, campsite, petrol station, shops.) Not to be missed: a walk round the village streets, the church, a Romanesque bridge and the Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park House. We cross the village passing the river on the right. We pass the pretty, Romanesque La Capella bridge and turn left, leaving the Solau neighbourhood behind. A paved street next to the river goes up to the next bridge, which will take us to the hydroelectric power station.
- 2.30 h **Espot Hydroelectric Power Station**, 1,350 m. Sticking to the GR markings, we leave the village by the road that climbs to Lake Sant Maurici. We have to follow it for 1.4 km, until we reach the Suar bridge, and we'll probably have to move out of the way to let cars and taxis heading for the park go past.
- 2.45 h We pass a **campsite** on the right.
- 2.50 h **Junction**, 1,420 m. We leave the road here and carry on via an old path on the right. A sign points the way and says it will take 2 hours to reach the Sant Maurici lake and the Ernest Mallafré refuge. The path drops down before crossing the Escrita river by a bridge. After a pretty uphill stretch with dry-stone walls either side, it turns left and becomes a narrower path up the river, on our left. This is a well-trodden path and the climb is not steep. Ahead of us the Encantats peaks and Roca de l'Estany (lake rock) are always in our sights.

- 3.20 h **Junction**, 1,610 m. The path to the right leads to the Fogueruix vantage point and the Pla de la Font refuge. We carry straight on. There are times when the path passes under the shade of pine and hazel trees.
- 3.30 h **Hikers' path**, 1,685 m. From here on the path broadens out and becomes a track. Soon there is a fork in the latter and we take the lower option.
- 3.35 h **Junction**, 1,685 m. The narrow path from the car park at the park entrance joins the track from the left at this point, meaning it's quite likely to find more people following the same route to the Sant Maurici lake. It's quite a flat stretch.
- 3.45 h **Pallers bridge and road to the left**. We cross the road that goes up to the lake. Soon we enter a dense pine wood, climbing as we go. From time to time we come across panels describing the habitat.
- 4.05 h **Intersecting track** We turn left and follow the track uphill.
- 4.15 h **Sant Maurici hermitage** to the right, under a grotto, 1,810 m.
- 4.20 h **Junction**, 1,850 m. In 10 minutes we'll see the **Ernest Mallafré refuge** on the left. We'll pass it coming down. For the time being, we carry straight on, uphill.
- 4.25 h **Sant Maurici lake**, 1,930 m. Next to the lake we look for a sign pointing the way up to "Ratera Falls". Then we follow this narrow path, with the lake's waters on the left and a nice, panoramic view of the Encantats peaks and the lake behind us. The way is shown by posts with painted yellow points. After five minutes the path splits, with the left fork going to the lake. We take the right one into the wood. All the time we can hear the sound of the waterfall.
- 4.45 h **Ratera waterfall**, 2,040 m. We carry on up the path towards the Ratera lake. The climb gets steeper now. We stick to the path through the middle of the pine trees.
- 5 h **Track** which goes from the Sant Maurici lake to the Amitges refuge, 2,090 m. We turn left, cross a bridge over the river and follow the track for a while. Now we follow the red and white markings of the GR.
- 5.05 h **Ratera lake**, 2,140 m. We pass the lake on the right, next to the track. When we come to a fork, we ignore the track down to the lake and take the main one that carries on uphill.
- 5.10 h **Junction**, 2,145 m. Going right would take us up to the Amitges refuge but we take the left track to the Mirador de l'Estany (lake vantage point). In the distance, to the right, we will see the slender Agulles d'Amitges with the Pic d'Amitges and Tuc de Saboredó peaks behind.
- 5.25 h **Mirador de l'Estany**, 2,180 m. The lake vantage point offers a panoramic view of the Sant Maurici lake and Encantats peaks behind, the surrounding mountains, the remains of the military barracks that burned down in 1955 and so on.

Just before we get to the viewing point, which has an orientation table with the names of the peaks, etc., there is a narrow path on the left which we will follow to get back to the Sant Maurici lake by the other side of the valley. This is an alternative route that few people take but it's worth doing because it offers another view of the valley. So that's what we do. Although the flank to the other slope involves a short climb, after that it is almost entirely downhill back to Espot. There are no trees growing on this flank because there are avalanches every year. We cross the Portarró ravine

- 5.35 h **Path that climbs from the Sant Maurici lake to Portarró d'Espot**, 2,170 m. Going right would take us to Portarró and the Llac Llong refuge, in 2.15 h. We go left, downhill.
- 5.50 h To the right we pass the **narrow path that goes up the Subenuix valley**, 2,050 m. Soon we see a stretch of a short but steep incline, in the middle of the wood. After that we see the Sant Maurici lake reservoir. We'll come out lower down.
- 6.10 h We pass the **Monestero valley** entrance, which is on the right, and carry on straight ahead. Immediately we see a sign for the Ernest Mallafré refuge on the right and follow that.
- 6.15 h **Ernest Mallafré refuge** on the right, 1,910 m. We continue heading down the track.
- 6.25 h **Junction** above the Sant Maurici hermitage, 1,850 m. Going left would lead to the Sant Maurici lake. We turn right. From here on we have to follow the same route as the climb.
- 6.55 h **Pallers road and bridge** to the right.
- 7.05 h **To the right**, a narrow path that goes to the Pierrò meadow car park.
- 7.15 h To the left, the **path that climbs to the Fogueruix pass and the Pla de la Font refuge**.
- 7.40 h **Road**. We follow the road to Espot.
- 7.55 h **Espot**, 1,300 m.

IF YOU FIND ANY MISTAKES IN THE DESCRIPTIONS OR CHANGES TO PATHS, OR IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE, PLEASE WRITE TO info@ramatdecamins.cat.

Support the '[Apadrina un camí!](#)' project and sponsor a footpath.