

# 19 PORTELLA BLANCA

## DON'T MISS...

the Bony d'Envalira via ferrata. Its start can be found in the Grau Roig car park. Be sure to come prepared, as it is of medium difficulty level, with a change in elevation of 250 metres and an hour and a half in duration

## DID YOU KNOW?

These mountains were also an escape route for refugees of the Second World War.

## TOPONYMY

**Portella Blanca:** This is said of relatively easy passage through the mountains.  
**Etymology:** From the Latin *portus*, which has the same meaning.

HIKING IN ANDORRA



First lake



Cirque de Colells



Landmarks de la Portella



Els Pessons

This place has a special history, as it borders three countries (Andorra, France and Spain). It for this reason that a granite monolith was engraved here.

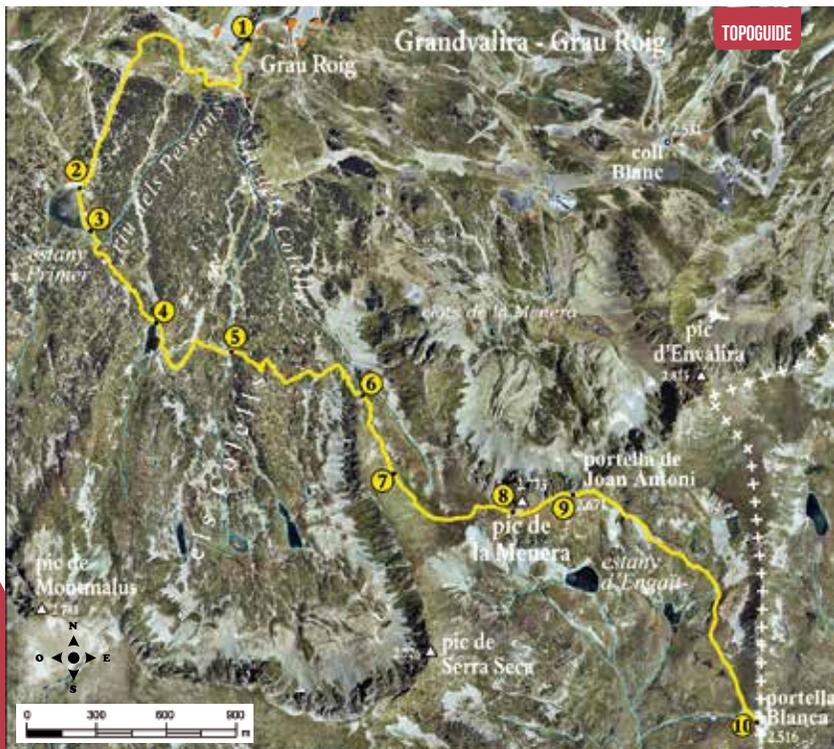
The Camí dels Bons Homes ("Way of the Good Men"; GR-107), coming from La Llosa valley, also passes by this place: it supposedly follows the historic path that the Cathars took in their escape from Montsegur Castle near Foix, to Berga during the middle of the 13th century.

The beginning of the route is at the Grau Roig resort in the Grandvalira skiing area. After a

half-hour hike, you'll reach the glacial Pessons lakes. This is the largest group of lakes in the country. As you keep going up, you'll discover more of the cirque. You'll be surrounded by an alpine landscape full of mountain pines (*Pinus uncinata*) and bushes like alpenrose (*Rhododendron ferrugineum*) and common juniper (*Juniperus communis*). The rest of the landscape is covered with granite rock that bears horizontal marks, signs of glacial movement from the last ice age around 10,000 years ago.

# 19

Engaït lake



**DATA SHEET**

- 3H 30 MIN
- 2H 30 MIN
- +730 M  
-315 M
- 2.100 M
- NO
- APPROXIMATE WALKING TIMES

**ROUTE SIGNPOSTING**

- GRP
- GR 11
- WRONG WAY



LOCATION HEIGHT	DISTANCE DROP	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
<b>1</b> <b>STARTING POINT</b> 2.103 m	-- (--)	--	N42 31.910 E1 41.852	The route begins at the Grandvalira ski resort, in the Grau Roig area. Once in the car park at El Cubil, take the forest trail that will take you to a restaurant called Refugi del llacs de Pessons.
<b>2</b> <b>FIRST LAKE</b> 2.303 m	1.580 m (+203 m)	35'	N42 31.550 E1 41.303	Follow the path until the first lake, where you'll find the restaurant Refugi del llacs de Pessons. Another option is to do this stretch of the route in a 4x4 vehicle.
<b>3</b> <b>SIGN FOR MONTMALÚS</b> 2.303 m	1.800 m (0 m)	40'	N42 31.447 E1 41.340	Take the GRP heading south. The path follows along the left bank of the lake until you come to a fork in the road, where you'll see a wooden sign pointing the way to Montmalús peak and lake.
<b>4</b> <b>COMA ESTREMERERA LAKE</b> 2.390 m	2.410 m (+87 m)	1h	N42 31.227 E1 41.557	Leave the GRP going right and follow the GR-7, which goes up to Montmalús peak. You'll keep going up, following the marks of the GR-7 until you reach Coma Estremera lake.



LOCATION HEIGHT	DISTANCE DROP	TIME	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION
<b>5</b> <b>FORK</b> 2.310 m	3.000 m (-80 m)	1h 10'	N42 31.160 E1 41.806	The path stays on the left bank of the pond, and up ahead you take a wide path going down to the south towards a slope. You follow the trail until you reach the fork on GR-7.
<b>6</b> <b>SHELF</b> 2.515 m	3.930 m (+205 m)	1h 50'	N42 31.024 E1 42.238	Leave the path that keeps going down and follow the GR-7, which goes up to the right. At this point the path crosses a marshy area, and a bit further on it straightens out through an area of scree until you get to a small shelf where you'll be able to stop and admire the beauty of Pessons cirque.
<b>7</b> <b>CIRQUE DELS COLELLS</b> 2.615 m	4.340 m (+100 m)	2h 10'	N42 30.870 E1 42.341	Now 2,500 metres above sea level, the route eases up and continues through the beautiful hanging valley of La Menera.
<b>8</b> <b>LA MENERA PEAK</b> 2.750 m	5.060 m (+135 m)	2h 40'	N42 30.779 E1 42.732	The path crosses the valley in the direction of the pass, but soon starts heading east. Keep going up through an alpine meadow and pass just under La Menera peak.
<b>9</b> <b>JOAN ANTONI GATE</b> 2.680 m	5.230 m (-70 m)	2h 50'	N42 30.822 E1 42.929	From here on, the route is quite high and goes slowly down the crest line until you come to the Joan Antoni gate. Below you on the right are Engait lake and the beautiful La Llosa valley, which leads to Martinet (Spain).
<b>10</b> <b>PORTELLA BLANCA</b> 2.515 m	6.940 m (-165 m)	3h 30'	N42 30.278 E1 43.538	The path drops to 2,500 metres above sea level and then levels off, heading south, until you come to Portella Blanca, the borderland that separates Andorra, Spain and France.



**ROUTE PROFILE**

