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ACTIVE TOURISM AND NATURE GUIDE

Naturally



Aín | Alcúdia de Veo | Argelita | Ayódar | Espadilla | Fanzara | Fuentes de Ayódar | Ribesalbes | Sueras |
Tales | Toga | Torralba del Pinar | Torrechiva | Vallat | Villamalur



NATURE TOURISM

The Espadán-Mijares Community is characterised by a great variety of options for those who wish to enjoy active tourism activities.

Its natural environment enables enthusiasts to participate in various activities, most notably hiking, cycle touring, climbing, caving, canyoning and water sports such as kayaking, paddle surfing, rafting and aquatic caving.

The Sierra de Espadán is one of the easternmost mountain ranges of the Iberian System and separates the Mijares and Palancia basins. It encompasses the regions of Alto Palancia, Alto Mijares and Plana Baja. A large portion of the mountain range is in Sierra de Espadán Natural Park, which occupies 31,180 hectares and is the second largest protected area in the Valencian Community.

The Sierra de Espadán consists of a Triassic mountain chain of great tectonic interest and a geomorphology characterised by steep ridges and gentler rolling hills, passing, in just a few kilometres, from sea level up to an altitude of 1,106 m, the summit of La Rápita. These characteristics endow the Sierra de Espadán with outstanding scenic beauty thanks to the multi-coloured nature of the geological formations, especially the range's landscapes of siliceous rock which are notable for their reddish-pink colour in contrast to the chalky white limestone that surrounds the natural park.

The Sierra de Espadán Natural Park offers the visitor a great diversity of ecosystems: forests of maritime pine, riverside woodlands, rural areas, typical Mediterranean forests of holm oak and Aleppo pine and interesting peculiarities such as chestnut groves.





The most representative ecosystem in the Sierra de Espadán Natural Park is, however, the cork oak forest, both for its uniqueness and its good state of preservation. The cork oak has the characteristic of being resistant to fire, which confers it with great ecological importance. Its rugged bark produces cork, which is then harvested, representing a significant economic resource for the villages of the mountain range. The fauna that inhabits the park is the result of the diversity of landscapes and environments that it possesses.

Particularly prevalent are amphibians, reptiles and a great variety of birds (Bonelli's eagle, short-toed eagle, booted eagle, goshawk, tawny owl, little owl and Eurasian eagle-owl, among many others). The mammal population includes boars, foxes, beech martens, genets and badgers. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the park is home to around 16 species of bat, some of which are of great importance and in serious danger of extinction.

The Serra d'Espadà Natural Park Interpretation Centre and Management Office is located in the municipality of Eslda in the former schools building at the junction of the roads that go to Aín and Chóvar.

Visiting hours are **9:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m., Monday to Sunday.**

Tel: **+34 964 629 112 / +34 679 196 294**

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ACTIVE AND ADVENTURE TOURISM

Canyoning is a sport consisting of travelling across canyons or ravines, torrents of water and mountain rivers using a variety of techniques such as walking, scrambling, climbing, jumping, abseiling and swimming, and employing distinct pieces of custom-made equipment.

Espadán-Mijares boasts numerous ravines suitable for canyoning, many of which are already equipped or semi-equipped for that purpose.

Some that particularly stand out are **the ravines of Manzano, Quiles, Chicharro and Buitrero in the municipality of Argelita; El Hambre (Santa Ana) in Torrechiva-Toga-Argelita; Catalan (Pozo Negro) in Fuentes de Ayódar; Turio in Fanzara; Carboneras and Cañón del Río Chico in Espadilla; Pairo in Toga; Moscador in Torralba; Alcornocal in Benitandús; Salto de los Perros in Alcudia de Veo; and La Covatilla in Aín.**

This latter runs inside a cave and entry is prohibited in summer.



CANYONING



CANYONING



CLIMBING

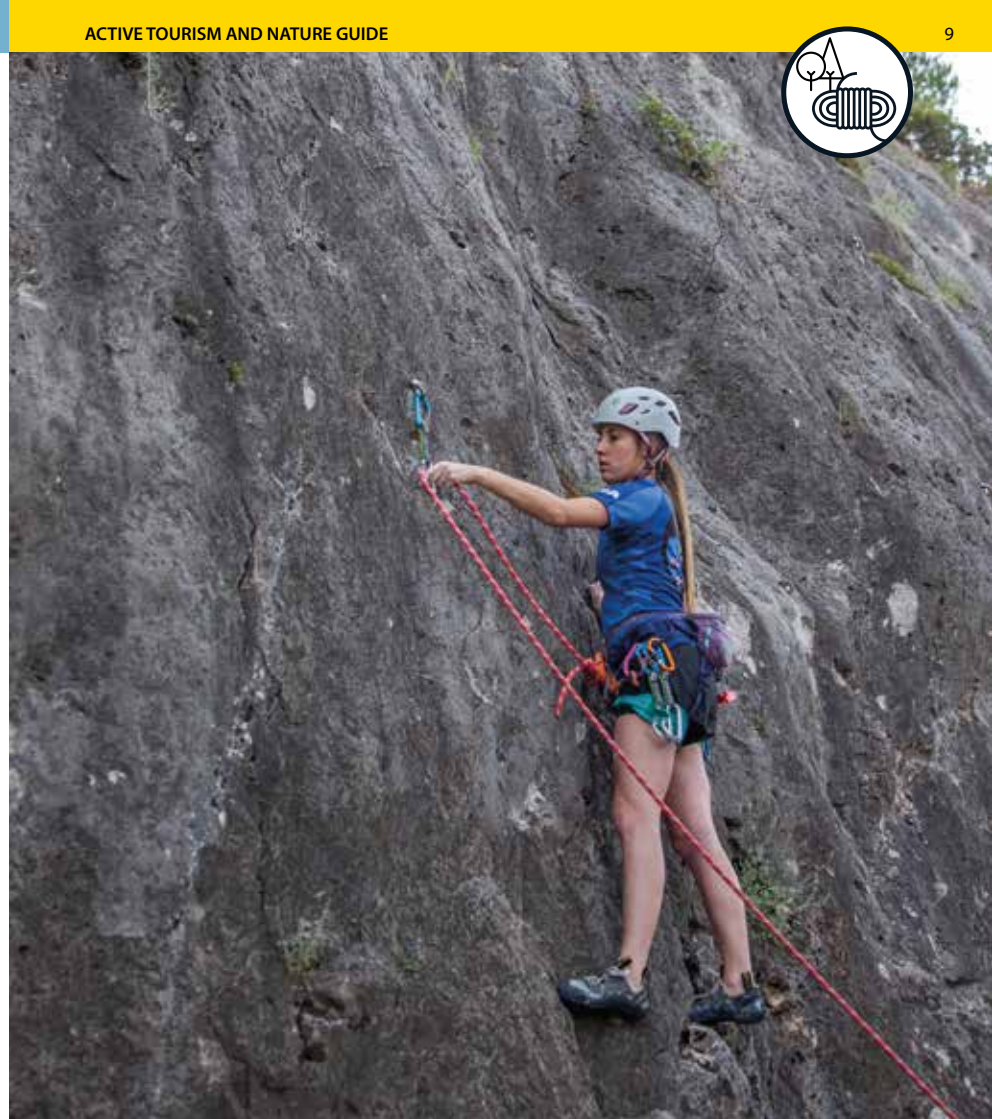
For the more adventurous, the area's range of climbing venues may be of greater appeal. The following are the best areas for climbing:

• VALLAT

The Vallat climbing venue, featuring a profile with a multitude of needles, channels and spurs covered in lines of anchors, make it one of the most eye-catching. The rock, like in all of the valley, is limestone and consists of vertical walls featuring roofs, slabs and overhangs. Its orientation is north-west, meaning that the climber is accompanied by shade until midday.

• TORRECHIVA

The Peñas Altas climbing area consists of a collection of low-medium grade routes over very interesting limestone rock of exceptional quality thanks to its adhesion and great variety of handholds it offers. Its setting and lush surrounding pine forest are unbeatable. It is orientated to the south-west, meaning that the sun is present almost all day. In this area, the Zócalo sector is ideal for beginners as it features easy, short and well-secured routes with a spacious starting area that is ideal for visits with children. This is the sector where new generations of climbers from the area learn to climb.





• TALES

This area is ideal for spending a few hours or all day climbing. Its range of grades, proximity to parking and surroundings are more than enough reason to make a visit. It is divided into two very different sections: the left half of the wall is orange limestone with overhangs and plenty of climbing holds to help progress quickly, the right half is dark grey limestone and features slabs with the odd vertical section and a lot of natural edges. It is orientated to the south-east so, on hot days, it is recommended to climb in the cool of the morning or evening. All of the routes are equipped with stainless steel M12 and the belays are not lowering stations, but abseilable.

• FANZARA

In the Chalavasar climbing area, the wall is peculiar, both for its shape and location. The limestone is dark on the vertical sections and orange on the overhangs, creating horizontal bands that give rise to a wide variety of handholds. The rock offers a multitude of styles of climbing: areas where the grade is maintained and there are good edges, sections with large cracks and more difficult sectors with greater distance between small edges. It is orientated to the west so there is shade in the morning and sun in the afternoon.

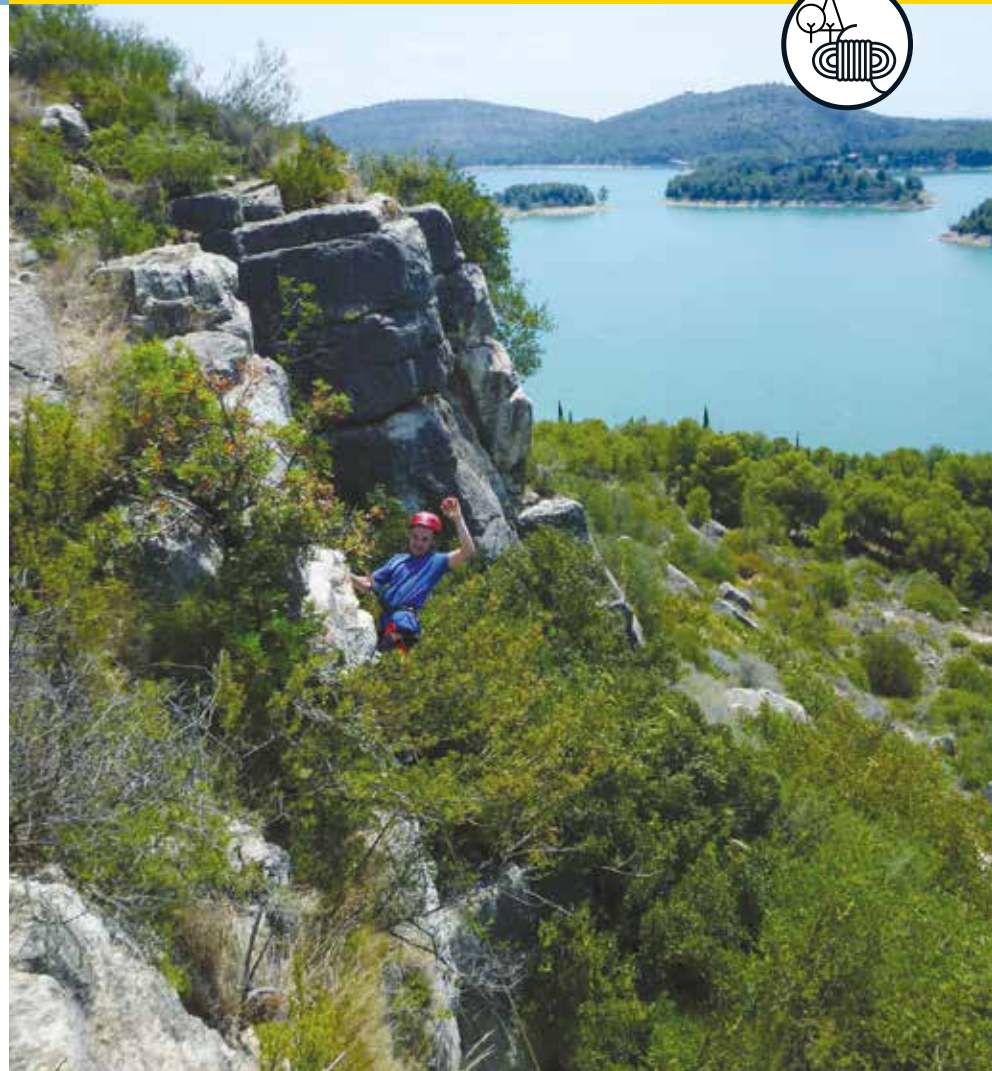


• AYÓDAR AND FUENTES DE AYÓDAR

At Peña Zamela and the narrows, there are two well-defined areas that can be accessed on foot from the car park. The routes are equipped with M10 and M12 and some of them in the narrows are stainless steel. It has intense routes surrounded by spectacular scenery.

The starting area features a number of natural pools of great beauty ideal for enjoying a dip between the climbs you choose. This is a climbing area of outstanding natural and scenic beauty. It is very important to tackle the climbing with respect and awareness in order to ensure full enjoyment of a special place. The rock in the entire area is dolomite limestone with great adhesion and reliability on all of the equipped routes, and climbing is predominantly on a wall featuring crimpers and holes, but with some good quality cracks as well.

As Peña Zamela's routes are of greater length, there are numerous paths with good continuity, while, in the narrows, explosiveness is required. Most of the walls are orientated to the south and the narrows to the north, making them ideal for visits on hot days.





Other less well-known areas for climbing include Cova Negre in Ribesalbes (top rope climbing), Fuente de San Pedro in Alcudia (top rope climbing), the El Estrecho reservoir in Benitandús (boulder climbing) and Fanzara el Turio in Espadilla (ridge climbing).

The area also offers via ferratas in Benitandús and Espadilla (Estrecho Río Chico) and an extensive range of equipped routes such as La Escaleta in Fanzara, Azud in Ayódar, Cova Negre in Ribesalbes and Castillo in Espadilla.

Espadán-Mijares offers multiple possibilities for vertical, horizontal and aquatic caving enthusiasts.

The most adventurous can go vertical caving in Argelita in a cave where the entrance is high up so you have to do a 40-metre rappel down to the centre of the cavern.

There is also the possibility of exploring interesting horizontal cavities more suitable for groups, schoolchildren and families, where you can admire interesting stalactite and stalagmite formations, including the largest stalagmite in the Valencian Community.



Naturally





CAVING

If you are looking for a unique experience, however, the best option is aquatic caving in places such as the Cueva del Toro in Alcudia de Veo, where there is an underground river and you can take a 700-metre tour to observe lakes, waterfalls and bizarre rock formations shaped by the water over thousands of years.



Other interesting and easily acces-sible caves in the area include **the Cueva de la Mola in Fanzara, Cueva de Tía Cantina and Cueva de Mahoma in Sueras, Cueva de Onder in Aín, Cueva del Estuco in Alcudia de Veo, Cueva del Refugio in Benitandús, Cueva de Eulogio in Tales, Cueva Dinero in Toga and Cueva Negra in Ribesalbes.**





WATER SPORTS

River courses and stretches of water are widespread in Espadán-Mijares, where almost all municipalities offer the possibility of bathing in natural pools of great beauty.



WATER SPORTS



WATER SPORTS

In the Sitjar reservoir, located in the municipality of Ribesalbes, you can try kayaking and paddle surfing and go on guided routes accompanied by a guide.

The Mijares River also offers rafting and kayaking using self-emptying and unsinkable boats, and even the possibility of navigating sections of white water in the river's rapids, adding greater fun and excitement to the descent.



WATER SPORTS





MTB

The Espadán-Mijares Community has recently created a new 154-km MTB route that runs through its 15 municipalities, reaching a maximum height of 911 m and minimum of 167 m, with maximum gradients of 30%. The route was designed by IMBA and RFEC-qualified technicians and features route starting panels, markers and bike stands.

Up-to-date information about the tracks on this MTB route can be found on the website:

www.espadan-mijares.bike





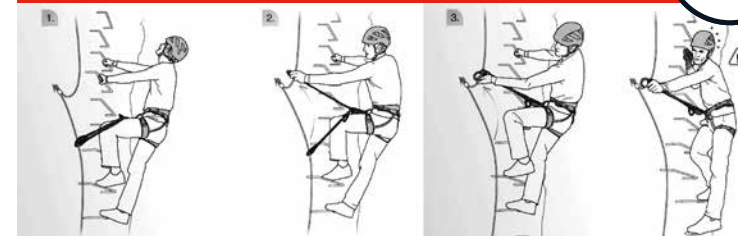
MTB

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Emergency Number: 112



• ADVICE

- To ascend this route, you should be in good physical shape and have the appropriate technical knowledge. This is not an easy tour.
- The use of ropes may be necessary for climbers with little experience.
- Before suffering a fall due to exhaustion, it is advisable to anchor yourself to any rung.
- If you think it is necessary, hire specialised guides for the ascent.
- Take out insurance to practice mountain activities, both for your safety and for the damages you may cause to third parties.

Essential Equipment

Helmet · Harness · Heatsink for ferratas
(All material must be approved for vias ferratas)

Recommended Equipment

Trekking boots · Gloves · Dynamic rope · Anchor strap · Descendant · Carabiners · First aid kit



In case of damage, notify the Espadán-Mijares Community.

T. 964 613 000

VÍAS FERRATAS

For the most daring, climbing a via ferrata may be the most attractive offer. Among the best areas to practice this activity are:

• WHAT IS A VÍA FERRATA?

A via ferrata is an itinerary that consists of various types of equipment, pre-installed for climbers and hikers:

- **Security equipment** : Steel cables, rings for safety and descents.
- **Progression equipment**: Pegs, steps, chains.

This equipment allows access to steep rocky walls, and its use that of specific progression techniques for vias ferratas is compulsory. These itineraries seek to convey vertical sensations without the physical and technical requirements of rock climbing. They also enable us to explore and enjoy the more inaccessible landscapes and ecosystems.

• SAFETY RULES

- Use the specific material for the via ferrata.
- Know the use of specific material for vias ferratas.
- Know the progression techniques in vias ferratas.
- Only one person can go per section of cable or bridge.
- Do not leave the facilities during your ascent and always remain anchored to the safety cable.
- Pay special attention to the sections where the rock is in sub-optimal condition in order to avoid falling stones.
- Leave the ferrata in the event of a storm.
- It is essential to have a minimum level of fitness.
- Respect the environment.

WARNING

Climbing via ferratas is a **NOT A RISK-FREE** activity, it can lead to serious or even fatal accidents. Both the Espadán-Mijares Association, as well as the installer, **warn that any user assumes all the damage they might cause to others or themselves.**

By taking part, you acknowledge and abide by all the rules and safety tips and commit to using the required equipment of via ferratas.

If you do not accept this information, **DO NOT** use this facility.



“PONTS” VÍA FERRATA (in Argelita)



TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

- **Difficulty:** High (K4)
- **Unevennes:** 85 metres
- **Equipped Section:** 95 metres
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Return Time:** 1 minute

- Approach
- Vía Ferrata
- Return

Description of the itinerary

From the car park, cross the track and take the path that goes down the slope to cross the stream. At the end of this path there is a handrail on the steps that help us descend the last vertical section of the path (it is also possible to rappel down).

Once down, continue along the path flush with the wall until you reach the start of the via ferrata, in the Pons cave. The route begins by going up a demanding overhanging plate. After about 20 metres you make a crossing to the left that leaves you on a comfortable ledge. The second quarter of this ferrata runs through a chimney that continues to have a slight overhang. At the end of this, you find a somewhat demanding sidestep to the left, to overcome a small overhang that gives access to the edge of the spur and the beginning of the third quarter of this ferrata. Next, you ascend the spur that begins with the first vertical metres and whose gradient decreases as you go up. It is a nice section, in which steps are combined with some natural grip. After this, you will come to a wide ledge where the last quarter begins. You leave the ledge by making an impressive crossing to the left. At the end of this part, you need to use natural supports to make a vertical sequence and continue crossing to the left.

Now you will pass the dihedral and ascend a small vertical section that leaves you at the beginning of a small crossing to the right. Then we find a fun flat plate where there are steps with natural grips. At the end of this, you come to a large ledge, from which the last vertical crossing to the left starts, and that will take you to the end of the via ferrata. From here, follow the path back to the carpark. This via ferrata is characterised by natural supports in the rock to overcome some demanding steps. It is recommended to bring a rope to be able to leave in an emergency.



“BENITANDÚS” VÍA FERRATA (in Alcúdia de Veo)



TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

- **Difficulty:** Low (K1)
- **Unevennes:** 30 metres
- **Equipped Section:** 50 metres
- **Duration:** 30 minutes
- **Travel Time:** 1 hour

- Approach
- Vía Ferrata
- Return

Description of the itinerary

Standing at the entrance bridge, you follow the path that descends to the left towards the reservoir, skirting the path that runs along the right bank in one of the sections that is somewhat exposed, up to the rock wall where the via ferrata begins.

You climb the first section (15 metres), then side around a horizontal section by the rock where there are small ascents and then climb another 10 metres until we reach a ridge that is the end of the via ferrata.

At the top, our reward is the spectacular views of Los Órganos, with the turquoise blue waters of the reservoir at its feet, in the heart of the Sierra de Espadán Natural Park. You descend the path along the ridge towards the reservoir until you reach the access path again where you will be able to make your return.



“LA PIQUETA” VÍA FERRATA (in Espadilla)



TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

- **Difficulty:** Medium (K2)
- **Unevennes:** 85 metres
- **Equipped Section:** 95 metres
- **Duration:** 1 hour
- **Descent Time:** 15 minutes

- Approach
- Via Ferrata
- Return

Description of the itinerary

To the right of the panel, there is a path that goes up towards some cypress trees. Before reaching these, you will see the milestones on the left, which mark the beginning of the access path to the via ferrata. This path goes into the ravine of La Piqueta. After a few meters, you will see a vertical wall on the left, where the via ferrata is located. The milestones will bring you back to the start.

Route: Using a rope to climb the ledge (2 meters), you will have access to the lifeline. You begin to climb with a slight drop for about 5 meters, until you reach the first side pass on the left. This is where you will find the first difficulty - you have to use a natural support to be able to do a hand-foot on the step. Continue and you will come across the second drop of about 5 metres, whereafter you reach a small upward crossing to the right. There are no specific foot supports in this part, which forces you to use natural supports with inclination until you can use the steps previously used for your hands. Continue to climb this section in which the steps recede slightly until you reach a comfortable ledge that includes a small path to the left, where you can progress with good footing. This part of the journey requires you to cross a small buttress with steps that are spaced slightly apart, then you will find the interesting third section. This section is a crossing to the left, in which you must use natural supports for your feet. Next, you must pass a buttress using grip feet. A couple of steps and natural grips will help us get out onto the wide ledge where the tour ends.

Return: Follow the milestones that lead you to the PR-CV 314 path, which you will then descend towards Espadilla. This path will take us back to the information panel of the via ferrata.



“EL ESTRET” VÍA FERRATA (in Ayódar)



TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

- **Difficulty:** Medium (K3)
- **Unevennes:** 70 metres
- **Equipped Section:** 250 metres
- **Duration:** 75 minutes
- **Return Time:** 30 minutes

- Approach
- Via Ferrata
- Return

Description of the itinerary

Passing the town of Ayódar, take the detour to Torralba del Pinar. You can stop to unload equipment and people on the CV-203 road at kilometre 1.3, but you cannot park at this point. From here the approach path will begin, which after 450 metres will leave you at the beginning of the equipped route. This tour begins on the west wall of the Ayódar Strait, parallel to the Cubico ravine. First, there is a horizontal section of 200 metres in length that follows the sinuous path of the wall itself.

The via ferrata begins with a vertical section that goes up to the middle of the wall, a route of approximately 40 metres that has been made possible thanks to a large limestone rock plate. The next section runs along a narrow ledge located in the upper quarter of the wall and reaches 30 metres in length. This section gives the via ferrata a fun stretch of balance and aerial sensation.

The last section of this via ferrata is 25 metres long. It begins with a very aerial 15-metre diagonal crossing, which first leads to a vertical and sloping section and then gives access to the ledge where this via ferrata ends.



HIKING

The Sierra de Espadán is a paradise for hiking enthusiasts, offering numerous well-signposted paths through leafy forests, across and along rivers and ravines and up mountains of more than 1,000 m in altitude.

In the region, you can walk **local paths** such as the **SL-CV 103 Torralba del Pinar-Sendero Pinar** (7.2 km), **SL-CV 91 Argelita-Senda de la Muela** (3.7 km) and **SL-CV 70 Toga-Barranco de Vasall** (4.6 km).

Also **short-distance paths** such as the **PR-CV 398 Ayódar-El Madroñal-Morrones-Ayódar** (14.1 km), **PR-CV 314 Espadilla-Saganta** (9.7 km), **PR-CV 386 Espadilla-Camino a la Cueva Negra** (12 km), **PR-CV 276 Ayódar-Villamalur-Ayódar** (16.3 km), **PR-CV 140 Aín-Sueras via Benitandús** (10.1 km), **PR-CV 139 Tales-Peñas Aragonesas-Artana** (10.6 km) and **PR-CV 136 Villamalur-Sueras** (7.6 km).

The great attraction, how-ever, is the GR-333 Espadán-Mijares Community long-distance path which runs through the 15 municipalities of the Community along a path that covers a distance of 104 km in 15 stages.

The region also has an-other long-distance path, the GR-36 Trans Espadá, which crosses the Sierra de Espadán perpendicu-larly and passes through the basins of the Mijares and Palancia Rivers, cover-ing a distance of 66.6 km.



Likewise, you can enjoy the **Senderos de los Sentidos**, or Paths of the Senses. These are two trails adapted to families, one in the town of **Aín** and the other in the town of **Villamalur**.

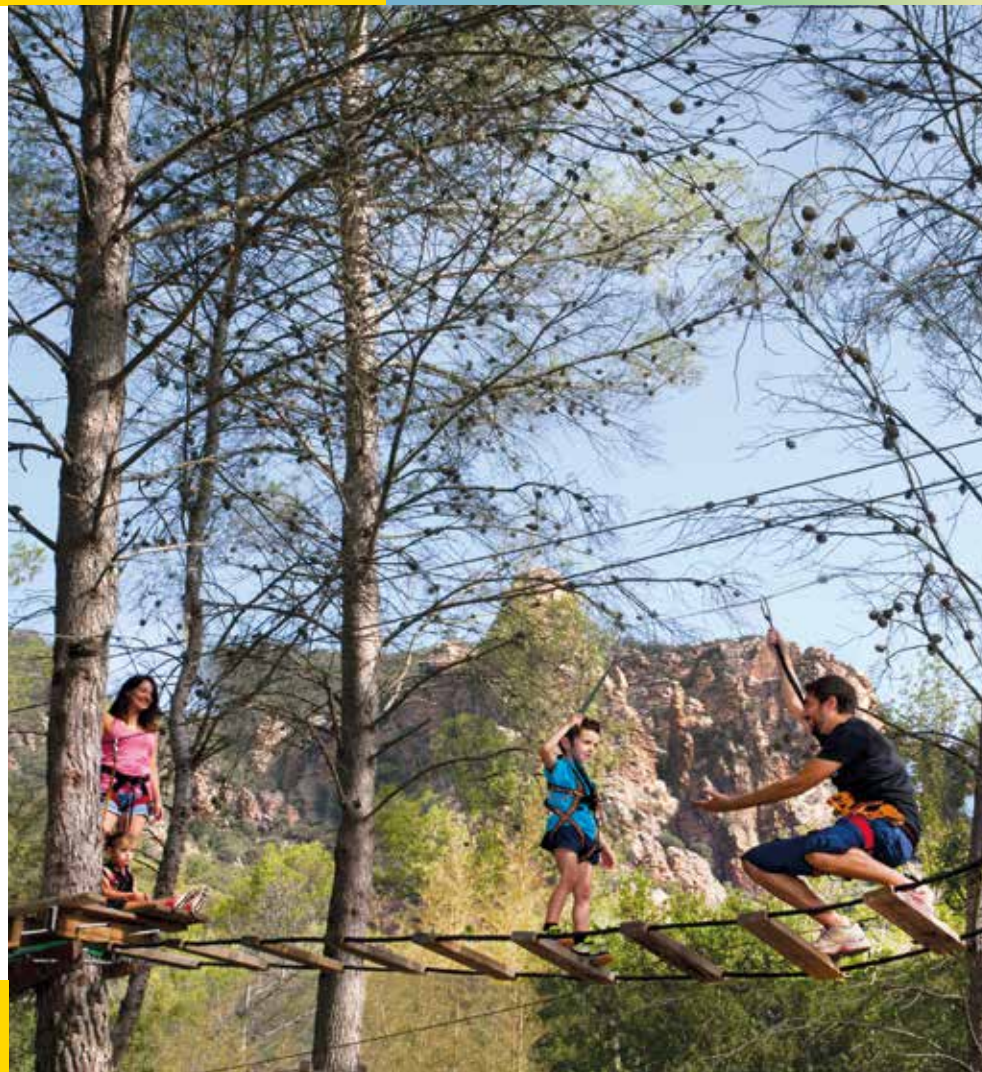
They are circular in type, of medium-low difficulty and of short duration. In addition to a unique landscape beauty, the trails are linked to the use of the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste), which makes these family hikes even more attractive.





MULTI-ADVENTURE CIRCUITS

In the municipality of Alcudia de Veo, the company Sargantana Aventura offers a multi-adventure circuit that combines various activities on three different routes: arboreal (Tibetan bridges, barrels, nets, zip lines, archery, etc.), orienteering and adventure racing which, depending on the time of year, combines canoeing, archery, hiking, via ferrata climbing and regular climbing, canyoning, slacklining and caving.



The following companies offer active tourism and adventure services in Espadán-Mijares:

- Sargantana Aventura: <http://www.sargantanaaventura.com/>
- Viu Natura: <http://viunatura.com/>
- Itinerantur: <http://itinerantur.com/>
- Nucs: <https://www.nucs.pro/es/>

The Espadán-Mijares Community thanks these companies for their contribution to creating this Active Tourism and Nature Guide.





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Plan for Revitalization and Tourism Governance of Espadán-Mijares



CASTELLÓ

