

VILADRAU, ROUTE THE CHESTNUT TREE OF NINE BRANCHES

Introduction: A circular route taking in a number of chestnut trees, including one of the landmarks of the Montseny Massif: the Nine-Branched Chestnut Tree, which rightly lends its name to this short but intriguing trail. Its trunk measures 7.35 metres in circumference. One of the legendary trees of Montseny, the subject of elegies by numerous poets. It is now in rather battle-weary condition, its trunk hollow and with the odd branch missing. Prior to its decline it had a distinctly symmetrical appearance, with its nine parallel branches suggesting a candelabra.

Sant Martí de Viladrau is the parish church of the village and municipality of the same name. It historically belonged to the bishopric of Vic. First documented in the year 908. The church was located within the former borough of Taradell, and has ever since it was founded performed the same parish function as today. The borough of Taradell is documented from the year 893, and Viladrau from 934. The church was consecrated in 1082 by the Bishop of Vic, Berenguer Sunifred de Lluçà.

The current belltower was erected in 1769. Practically none of the original Romanesque construction can now be seen, having been covered over by the church's Baroque design.

Time: 1 hour and 25 minutes for the entire circuit

Climb: 143 metres up and the same distance back down.

Difficulty: easy

Sources of water: In the initial section, alongside the tarmac track, there are two plentiful springs: Font de Miquel and Font del Sot de Can Rossell. In the woods themselves there are the following springs: Les Paitides, Font del Noi Gran and Font del Ferro.

Reference points: * Viladrau town square * Font de Miquel * Font del Sot de Can Rossell * Font de les Paitides * Font del Noi Gran * Font de Ferro * El Martí * La Vila * Sot del Rió * El Trol * Castanyer de les Nou Branques * Sot del Rió * Prat del Solà * Font del Sot de Can Rossell * Font de Miquel * Viladrau town square

Starting point: Viladrau town square.

Route: 0.00 h. Viladrau town square. Head down the main street, Carrer Major, as far as Plaça Doctor Carulla, and then continue straight ahead, southwards, past a church.





0.08 h. Pass by the Font de Miquel spring, to the left. The road you are following then changes its name to Passeig Ramon Bonfill and begins to climb uphill.

0.15 h. Pass by the Font del Sot de Can Rossell spring on the right. The path is quite clear, continuing along the tarmac road.

0.16 h. The “Camí de Castanyer de les 9 Branques” path begins here, branching off diagonally towards the left. The starting point is indicated with the PR green and white marking. Continue along the wide track which heads gently uphill.

0.22 h. Fork. To the left, a little off the route of the path proper, is the Font de les Paitides spring. Continue straight along the right-hand bank and of a dry riverbed.

0.23 h. Leave the track, which by this point is more of a wide path, to take the track branching off to the right. Moderate ascent. PR marks (green and white).

0.27 h. Fork. Up ahead is the Font del Noi Gran spring. Take the track branching off to the right (PR markings), passing by the Font de Ferro spring on the right. The track here heads towards the south. Constant ascent.

0.32 h. The route leads as far as a level tarmac track which you should follow to the right, in other words westwards.

0.33 h. El Martí. Fork. Ignore the branch heading off to the left. Here you should again leave the tarmac and take the earth track which almost immediately begins to climb gently uphill towards the W-NW.

0.38 h. A succession of two secondary branches fork off to the left. Ignore these and continue straight ahead along the main path.

0.41 h. Another secondary track leads off to the left by a bend. Ignore this. Follow the bend round to the right.

0.43 h. La Vila. Fork. Take the downhill path branching off to the left. PR marks. Here there is a sharp change in direction, taking you towards the SE. The route here passes over the normally dry bed of the Sot del Rió. The path here turns back towards the SW.

0.48 h. A secondary path leads off to the left, which you should ignore. Continue along the main track which gradually heads downhill.



0.52 h. Another secondary track leading off to the left to be ignored.



0.54 h. El Trol. Farmland. Fork. Here you reach a perpendicular track which you should take off to the right. PR signs.

0.57 h. Castanyer de les Nou Branques. The famed chestnut tree is to the right of the path. Following this essential visit (although you should not climb the tree), continue northwards along the path.

0.59 h. Once again cross over the Sot del Rió watercourse. Paths on both sides. Leave the path where it heads uphill and take the branch leading off on the right, which climbs sharply. The Prat del Solà meadow can be seen on the left-hand side. PR marks (green and white).

1.04 h. Head as far as the wide path which you should then follow downhill towards the left. From shortly after this point the path is tarmac, and can easily be followed.

1.09 h. Head as far as the next tarmac path, which is the point at which the original trail began. This is familiar territory, following the same route as before in the opposite direction.

1.25 h. Head back past the Font del Sot de Can Rossell and Font de Miquel to arrive at the starting point: Viladrau town square.



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