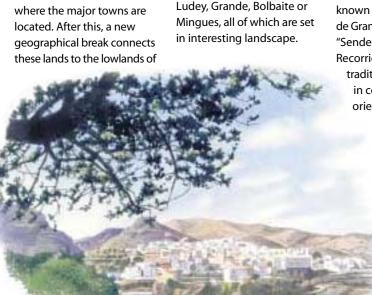
Routes in La Canal de Navarrés

The Caroig massif forms a unique landscape where two of the main mountain systems in the Land of Valencia come face to face: the Iberian from the north, and the Betic from the south. These limestone materials form a large tableland above 400m in altitude, culminating in 1,126m on the peak of Caroig. The eastern part of the massif descends in a series of valleys and depressions (to about 200-300m in altitude) to the areas

therefore a good synthesis of the diversity of the Mediterranean world. In the lower lands crops such as citruses, pomes, tobacco, etc. are grown. In the higher western lands, some of the croplands have been abandoned, with a predominance of hills and sierras covered with forests, where solitary birds of prey fly. To the north and northeast the impressive Júcar river canyon marks the border of the district. Tributaries of this river are the Cazuma, Fraile,

The landscape in La Canal is



The diversity and quality of the landscape in the La Canal de Navarrés district deserves a tranquil tour of the area to enjoy nature at its best and all the admirable improvements to the land worked by generations of inhabitants. The best ways to discover these enchanting lands is to leave your car behind and set out on foot, by bicycle or even on horseback.

La Canal de Navarrés is ideal for hiking trips, which can be made using the so-called Long and Short-Distance Routes, known in Spain as "Senderos de Gran Recorrido" (GRs) and "Senderos de Pequeño Recorrido" (PRs). These are traditional trails signposted in colours to facilitate orientation.

They can be used by anyone in good physical shape and moderately accustomed to walking in the mountains. Please remember that keeping this landscape beautiful is everyone's responsibility. Do not light fires or leave rubbish behind, take it with you until you can leave it in the appropriate place. Respect crops and rural constructions, and plant and animal life in general.

Hiking Routes

The Long-Distance Hiking

Route GR-7 (signposted in

red and white) cuts through

the western part of the district, running through Bicorp, Quesa and Enguera over the higher central For cyclists terrain of the Caroig massif. The Short-Distance Hiking Route PRV-113 (signposted in white and yellow) connects Anna, Chella and the Abrullador recreation area. In Enguera there are a few Local Tracks (signposted in white and green) close to the GR-7 and the town itself. In addition to these proposals, the land in the Canal de Navarrés district offers a wide range of possibilities for enjoying nature, from simple strolls to long excursions.



Roads in La Canal de Navarrés offer a wide choice of routes for cycling fans. The roads only have light traffic and the distance between towns is short. The relative proximity of some railway stations (Xàtiva, l'Alcúdia de Crespins and other towns in the La Ribera district) and line No 1 of the (Villanueva de Castellón) narrow gauge regional railway (Generalitat Valenciana) enables visitors to reach the area by bicycle and ride out from railway stations and back again.

Some asphalted tracks lead into the heart of the Caroig

Those preferring the mountain bike have a range of trails along which they can mark out their own routes. A book by J.M. Almerich, El Macizo del Caroig (València, Centre Excursionista de València, 1998) provides suggestions and technical information.

Publications and maps

Visitors interested in excursions can consult a work by R. Cebrián: Montañas Valencianas vol. II (Valencia, 1983). In view of its publication date, however, some itineraries may have changed due to the opening of new routes, or overgrowth or destruction of the natural habitat by forest fires.

Before going on an excursion or doing outdoor sports in the district it is recommendable to consult maps and obtain detailed written information. The Canal de Navarrés is included in the following 1:50,000 scale maps: Llombai 28-29 (746). Navarrés 28-30 (769), and Canals 28-31 (794).

Useful Tips

The Canal de Navarrés' main link is the Valencia-Albacete dual carriageway (N-340 and N-430), using the following

- CV-590 to Enguera.
- CV-560 from Alcàntara de Xúguer to Navarrés.
- CV-580 from Dos Aguas; this road traverses the Canal de Navarrés from north to south and connects to the

There are regular bus routes from Valencia to towns in the Canal de Navarrés district. Both the Valencia-Alicante and the Valencia-Albacete-Madrid railway lines have stations in Xàtiva and l'Alcúdia de Crespins, close to the southernmost part of the



Here, local trains make stops along the C-5 line, and some long-distance trains also stop. Line No 1 of the narrow gauge regional railway (Generalitat Valenciana) reaches the town of Villanueva de Castellón, where the route can be continued to Navarrés following the CV-560.



Tourist Information Offices

Further information can be obtained from local town councils in the district and in the tourist information offices pertaining to the Tourist Info network.

Tourist Info Xàtiva Alameda Jaume I, 50 46800 Xàtiva Tel: 962 27 33 46 Fax: 962 28 22 21 E-mail:xativa@touristinfo.net









of great beauty. Thanks to the many wells, the people have converted drylands into irrigated fields to produce excellent vegetables and tobacco instead of grapes. (Cavanilles)

This 200-year old observation made by the Valencian botanist Cavanilles is still true today, because water flows from springs and falls over cascades to form pools, wells and lakes, providing a constant backdrop throughout the

towns in the district, which often use their water resources as tourist attractions. Tobacco, rolled into popular caliqueños (homemade cigars), has also given fame to these towns, which say they make the very best to be found.

Set in the heart of the Land of Valencia, the eight towns within the district called La Canal de Navarrés are distributed over a large tabletop platform pertaining to the Caroig massif. This has been dubbed with the poetical name of the "labyrinth of the full moon", where waters flow out through the rivers Fraile, Grande, Cazuma and Ludey to form scenes of great beauty along their way. The

calcareous and permeable soil has been eroded into picturesque landscape, and along certain branches, the water courses disappear into the subsoil only to reappear again later, until they come to the river Escalona, which flows into the Júcar river, creating spectacular defiles, lakes, ravines and waterfalls along the way, giving this district its special attraction.

For adventure sports fans the district offers endless possibilities: ravine descents, ziplining, mountain biking, or climbing on its impressive cliffs or canoeing around the Escalona reservoir. The less adventurous can choose fishing, trekking, horse riding, or swimming

in the clear waters of any of the local lakes and ponds.

Spelunking fans can enjoy discovering the beautiful examples of Levante rock shelter paintings at the site called Cueva de la Araña, the Garrofero rock shelter or the Voro cliffs, named after the shepherd who discovered them only thirty

The landscape in the Canal de Navarrés district offers huge contrasts from its eastern section - where croplands alternate with enormous extensions of orange and lemon orchards - to the west, which is rough, clothed in trees and dominated by the Muela de Cortes de Pallás mountain and the Sierra de Enguera, which runs from the last spurs of the Caroig mountains to the towns of Enguera and Anna.

La Muela de Cortes is a national hunting reserve measuring over 30,000 hectares with large-sized calcareous

mountains that do not have very high peaks, but nevertheless have a very complex and extensive topography. The landscape alternates between thick shrubbery and pine trees, with the ravines often being clothed with holm oak trees, Aleppo pines, flowering ash and vines that often make walking through the area very difficult. The rocky cliffs are home to certain endemic species such as a kind of fountain grass.

Animal life in the Muela de Cortes reserve, just like the scenery, is rich and varied — quite a treat for animal lovers. Flying above the cliffs and ravines are birds of prey such as the booted eagle, Bonelli's eagle, the golden eagle and the short-toed eagle, as well as the hobby, the sparrowhawk, and in fewer numbers, the goshawk. Among the mammals there are wild boars, rabbits, foxes, common hedgehogs, weasels, genets, mountain cats, mountain sheep, and the most emblematic inhabitant of the area, the mountain or

Iberian goat - all challenging targets for photography lovers.

The Sierra de Enguera closes off the district from the southeast, protecting it from the hard winds of the interior. Here the vegetation provides the landscape with a more Mediterranean touch, and Aleppo pines, holm oaks and the rockroses alternate with shrubbery. In the shadier areas there are smaller black pine shrubs together with mountain ash and thyme that perfumes the air.

Cuisine in this area is also rich and varied, serving as an additional attraction for people wanting to get acquainted with these towns. Local dishes include arroz al horno (oven-baked rice), the ubiquitous paella and other rices flavoured with herbs, plus heavier stews such as olla con pelotas (with dumplings), or mojete arriero (spicy cod and tomato stew), gazpacho manchego (a chicken and rabbit stew on unleavened bread), or also the exquisite rebollones, or chanterelle mushrooms picked wild from the mountains, popularly known as pebrazos, plus savoury tomato, red pepper and bacon tortas, with their pizzalike bases. Among the local confectionery are sweetmeats such as coscorrones, tortas cristina, rollets d'aiguardent (liqueur-filled rolls), anisette or raisin and nut biscuits, almond nougat turrón de rosas, brazo de gitano, and sweet potato pastries and sugar-coated almonds. Local honey collected from the mountains can be bought all year with different flavours such as rosemary, orange blossom, French lavender, lavender and sunflower.

Festivities are held throughout the year, with every town celebrating a fiesta in honour of its patron saint, including processions, dances and fireworks. Special mention should be given to the Moors and Christians procession in the town of Bicorp and above all in Anna, where it is also interesting to see the feast of San Antón, with bonfires and the

Parade of the Flag Bearer, or the Fiesta de las Eras. August sees the arrival of Calderiquio (paella) Day in the town of Millares. On 14 February in Quesa, the Fiesta de La Reserva is held in memory of the epidemic of 1690 that hit the town and decimated the population, leaving only one family to give shelter to people returning to the town. In memory of this, stews are made for all people coming to the town on this day.

A tour of the La Canal district from south to north pegins in the town of **Enguera**. This is situated which offers a good view of the

which offers a good view of the town centre, where visitors can enjoy strolling through the streets and seeing the solid architecture of the area — especially the houses

known as the "heredades", with their ground floor, first story and outdoor corral. A visit can also be made to the remains of the castle dating from Moorish period, from which the remains

of the town walls and some defensive towers can still be seen, or to the Carmelite Convent, the Church of St Michael the Archangel with paintings by Garnelo and Segrelles, and an interesting anonymous altarpiece attributed to the so-called "Maestro de Enguera".

After a stroll around the town, excursions can be made to the surrounding mountains, on the way to Navalón. There are many forest tracks that crisscross the area, following ravines such as La Hoz, or leading to the outlying villages

of Benalí and La Burrera, and the Iberian settlement of Lucena. The landscape is dominated by heather, herbs and shrubs and white rockrose alternating with wild jasmine growing along the banks of streams, and oleander that brightens up the slopes of ravines and gorges.

Lying between two hilltops, in a valley formed by the Sellent river, is the town of **Anna**. As the botanist Cavanilles once wrote, water flows everywhere and crosses the town in a

complex grid of canals that feed local ponds, public washing places and waterfalls that give the town a special touch. One obligatory visit is to La Albufera, a local spring-fed lake with crystal clear water surrounded by willow and poplar trees that provide visitors with sought-after shade. A stroll along the so-called Alameda is also interesting if you want to see the local public washing place surrounded by plantain trees. Along the high street called Calle Mayor one can visit the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the Palace of the Counts of Cervellón – constructed over an ancient Moorish castle – or go up to the Las Eras quarter to see the Christ of Providence chapel. Before leaving the town a visit is recommended to the Gorgo del Catalán, a small reservoir fed from the "black fountain", or Fuente Negra, and to the Gorgo de La Escalera, to the Azud, a small lagoon surrounded by leafy vegetation, or the

fountain of Marzo, the source for a series of small reservoirs.

Set amongst a landscape of tobacco fields, orange orchards and vegetable gardens lies the town of **Chella**. After strolling through its streets and visiting the Church of the Virgin of Grace, the chapel dedicated to St Nicholas and the local library — which contains interesting archaeological remains found in the area — a stroll is recommended through the surrounding area beginning with a lookout place called El Mirador, from which an panorama of the district can be gained, including places such as El Salto,

Cueva de la Lluvia, Cuevas del Turco, and the Lobo, or wolf, ravine. Water is also ubiquitous here and before continuing the journey travellers can visit the fountains of Abrullador, Chopos, Clochicas or Abogao.

The municipal area of **Bolbaite** is the source of the river Sellent (or Bolbaite), which divides the town in two sections, both denoting its Moorish origin in the narrow and steeply winding streets. On a hilltop is the chapel dedicated to St Barbara, which serves as an excellent lookout point over the district, but there are also other interesting

places to visit such as Cañada Alcaire, the stone bridge over the Sellent and a natural lake, the Corral and Brú lakes, and finally, the Gorgo de la Cadena and its spectacular underwater cave.

Of Arab origin, as shown by its winding street network in the old town centre, **Navarrés** lies on the skirts of a hill crowned by a chapel dedicated to Christ of Good Health. After visiting the Church of the Assumption and its Parochial Museum of Sacred Art, the castle, the ruins of a fortress that stands on the hilltop,

and a Moorish silo known as La Tinaja, one can still find more to see in the environs. A tour of the surrounding countryside will enable the visitor to see beauty spots such as La Ceja del Río Grande, the Barcal ravine, the chasm known as La Sima de Tous, the Pino and Carrasqueta fountains, the dam along the Escalona river, a water well known as Pozo de la Quebradas, purportedly with curative properties, the recreation areas of Playamonte and Las Fuentes, with

an artificial lake surrounded by a sandy beach, an attractive residential area

in the summer. For those interested in archaeology there are rock shelter paintings on the Abrigo del Garrofero, and prehistoric engravings in the caves called Cueva del Barbero or Las Carasetas — ten mushroom-faced

Moving northeast from Navarrés the landscape becomes denser with trees and hillier, with erosion having made r

figurines in white and red.

and hillier, with erosion having made ravines and a
multitude of caves. With enough time it is also recommended to make a bicycle tour of



the area using a mountain bike or off-road bike to travel along the forest trails between the ravines formed by the Fraile and Grande rivers. The effort is well worthwhile if you want to see beautiful landscape, with a chance to spot wild boars, Hispanic goats,

mountain sheep, weasels or mountain cats, while partridges startle up from the shrubbery and majestic eagles soar through the sky.

Quesa presents a pretty picture in an area known as Los Charcos, or "the ponds", a recreation area greatly affected by erosion, with lots of springs and waterfalls. Here one can visit the rock shelter called Abrigo del Voro, where there are paintings showing scenes of archers in an excellent example of prehistoric Levante art. Towards the north, in the landscape dominated by lavender, spurge flax, terebinth trees, mastic trees, oleanders and mountain ash, one comes to the village of Bicorp, small and tightly packed on a hilltop, flanked by other taller hillocks, around which the Ludey, Cazuma and Fraile streams flow, forming deep gorges, ravines and other geographical phenomena. Here, one interesting thing to do is climb to the Caroig peak, visit the source of the rivers Fraile and Cazuma, stop at the ancient Moorish

waterwheel called the Azud, or see the rock shelter paintings in the Moreno ravine, and above all, those to be seen at the famous Cueva de la Araña, or spider's cave, now a World Heritage site, showing scenes of prehistoric

inhabitants collecting honey — a tradition still

preserved in this area.

Further north on the border of the district with neighbouring Hoya de Buñol, the town of **Millares** looks like it is suspended between the mountains, hanging spectacularly over the canyon formed by the river Júcar. The municipal area includes the Muela de Cortes National Reserve, with fine scenery that should be visited such as the Júcar ravine,

the cave of the pigeons (Cueva de las Palomas), and the Cueva de les Dones (called a women's cave but more appropriately called the cave of donations). This was once explored by Cavanilles and published in his Annals of Natural History. Also because

of its historic value, one can visit a battle plain called Llano de las Contiendas, where according to legend the last battle for the reconquest of Valencia took place, with the bodies of the dead being buried in a ravine called Barranco de la Sepultura.



