



The History of El Saler

WALK

ROUTE

This route runs along the El Saler firebreak (*Tallafoc de El Saler*) from the village to the *Muntanyar de la Mona*.

LENGTH OF THE WALK

Approximately 600 metres.

DURATION

Approximately 30 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

- _RESPECT THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS. Do not pick flowers or leaves.
- _RESPECT THE SOUNDS OF NATURE. Do not make noise.
- _DO NOT LEAVE YOUR LITTER BEHIND. Use the bins and containers provided.
- _DO NOT LIGHT FIRES.
- _KEEP TO THE MARKED PATHS AND TRACKS.
- _DO NOT GO BAREFOOT. Use appropriate footwear for walking.

USEFUL NUMBERS

DEVESA-ALBUFERA SERVICE	96 161 03 47
EL SALER FORESTRY PROTECTION CENTRE	96 183 00 12
FIRE AND EMERGENCY	112



THE HISTORY OF EL SALER WALK



STOPS ALONG THE WAY

- 1 EL SALER
- 2 *PI VEROT*
- 3 LA DEVESA AND EL SALER
- 4 A DUNE SLACK AND A *BARRACA* (THATCHED HOUSE)
- 5 *EL MUNTANYAR DE LA MONA*

1st Stop

EL SALER



Casa de la Demanà

The name “El Saler” probably refers to a group of thatched houses (called *barracas*) that were located where the village is now and which were used to store the salt that came from the old salterns near the area known today as “*Racó de l’Olla*”. The growth in population around these *barracas*, seems to have been the origin of the village of El Saler. Other types of building began to appear next to the nucleus of *barracas*. At the end of the 18th century the “*Casa de la Demanà*” (The Request House), and the “*Casa de los Infantes*” (The Princes’ House) were built. The latter, which no longer exists and which was opposite the former, was a hunting lodge for visiting royalty.

In the “*Casa de la Demanà*” also known as the “*Casa de la Campaneta*” (the Bluebell House), auctions were held for licenses to hunt in the Albufera until approximately halfway through the last century. Although it was remodelled at the start of the 20th century, the original curved bars that enclose the small balconies and the windows adorned with “coping”, or “hats”, that are also curved, remain from the original construction.

Currently the right to use the *Casa de la Demanà* has been transferred by the owners to the “Friends of the *Casa Demanà*” Youth Association and the El Saler *Falla* (a neighbour’s association that organises the festivities for the *Fallas* festival in March).

2nd Stop

PI VEROT



Pi Verot

Within the grounds of the Luis de Santangel state school there is a magnificent example of the Stone Pine (*Pinus pinea*), a species of pine that is not very common in the Devesa.

The local Valencian name, *pi verot*, can be translated into Spanish as “large true (*verdaderote*) pine”. The adjective “true” (*verdadero*) is used because it belongs to the only species of all the pines that produces pine nuts, and the suffix “-ote”, meaning large, refers to its unusual size.

Its trunk is robust and short, and the branches form an umbrella shaped canopy that casts a shadow on the ground of approximately 440 square metres at midday.

It is about 14.5 metres high and its circumference at the base is about 5 metres. It is estimated to be about 175 years old.

3rd Stop

LA DEVESA AND EL SALER



Cuttlefish fishing

The inhabitants of the village of El Saler have traditionally made use of many of the natural resources that the Devesa woods provide. Among others we can highlight the use of Butcher’s Broom for cuttlefish fishing, the use of branches of the White Rockrose to protect the sick and dying from evil spirits, the use of Myrtle and Mastic branches to make carpets to decorate the streets for processions and festivals, the use of Glasswort ashes to make soap, the root of the Yellow Lily to find and keep love, and the use of the wood of different bushes, above all the Palestine Buckthorn, as fuel for ovens.

4th Stop

A DUNE SLACK AND A *BARRACA* (THATCHED HOUSE)



Inside the Montoliu barraca



Well and barraca

From this point we can see the El Saler dune slack. Some of the materials used to build the traditional living quarters in this area, the *barraca*, were obtained from the dune slacks.

The dune slacks are depressions that, since they have a muddy clay soil, flood when it rains. Cord-grass (*Spartina versicolor*), the plant which is traditionally used to thatch the roofs of *barracas*, grows at their edges and in the less salty areas. Tuff, which was used to make the floors of these houses, was found in the soil of the dune slacks.

The "*Cubano*" and "*Montoliu*" *barracas*, and the "*Barraca del Cotero*", also called the "*Barraca de la Tía Rosario*", were famous in El Saler. The last two, decorated with original antique furniture, attracted large numbers of visitors.

The "*Montoliu*" *barracas*, which were destroyed at the end of the 60s, were located in what is now *Avenida de los Pinares* (Avenue of the Pines), approximately on the site of number 12. The *barraca* of "*la Tía Rosario*", which was built in the 18th century, was destroyed in 1998.

5th Stop

EL MUNTANYAR DE LA MONA



Muntanyar de la Mona in the 1960s



Muntanyar de la Mona

Around this point is an area which has been used for leisure for many years, called the *Muntanyar de la Mona*. Its name is possibly related to the tradition of the "*Mona de Pascua*" (Easter bun). This area of open scrubland, near the sea, with shade and close to the village, made it an ideal place to go to eat the "*mona*" (this is a deeply rooted tradition in which on Easter Monday families and groups of friends eat the "*mona*" together in the afternoon).

The "*mona*" is a bun made of a spongy dough, which is accompanied by a hardboiled egg, which is usually cracked open against the forehead of a friend or relative, before it is peeled and eaten.

The word "*mona*" comes from the Arab word "*munna*" and means gift. In the 18th century it was the classic gift from a godfather to his godchildren. The number of eggs that accompanied the bun corresponded to the age of the child. This was done until they were 12 years old.