



15 Circuit around the Sierra de Oltà

2.15 hrs.

Varied round walk with spectacular views of the coast and the mountains

The impressive Sierra de Oltà (photo p. 62) is easily accessible from the coast. This walk starts along broad forest tracks and with wonderful views of the coast continues along a balcony path round the south side of the mountain before heading northwards revealing views of the mountains inland. The return route follows an attractive and interesting path back down to the starting point. Walkers preferring something more challenging can make the ascent onto the northern summit.

Starting point: Acampada Oltà, 243m. Coming from the north on the N-332, turn right at 'Calp/Calpe sur' (signpost 'Estación') and drive 2km up to the barbecue site and campsite; park here. (If coming from the south on the N-332, there's no left turn at 'Calpe sur', so go right, all the way round the roundabout back towards the N-332, under the bridge and then left.)

Height difference: 240m.

Grade: wide track most of the way, yellow and white waymarked paths, narrow zigzag path on the NE side of the mountain, then forest paths back down to starting point.

Map: IGN-CNIG 848-II.

Food/accommodation: at the coast; Acampada Oltà with limited facilities. Permission from the town hall (*Ayuntamiento*) needed for use of the campsite. Apply 1 week in advance, email: msoler@ajcalpe.es, tel.: 965 874 544.

Worth seeing: Peñón de Ifach, 327m (Walk 16).

Alternative: ascent of north summit: as-

Leave the **barbecue and campsite (1)** on your right and walk up along a narrow path through bushes following the waymarkers. At the broad forest path turn left and continue gently uphill round bends and past the turn-off signposted 'La Canal, Oltà nord' (2; your descent

end the Barranco de la Muela (6) to a large derelict *finca*. Before the house follow the path on the left to reach the pre-summit of Oltà and continue on the west side of the mountain to the main summit. Return to the *finca* (go left at fork) and turn left up onto the plateau. Cross the plateau to the right southeastwards to a gully. Descend in about 15 mins. to a wider path. Turn right, then left to the Ermita de Vella (4) and return to the starting point.

Remarks: the warnings of poisonous bait (*veneno*) for dogs along the route must, unfortunately, be taken seriously and dogs should be kept on a lead.



View of the Peñón de Ifach at Calpe.

path). Walk steeply uphill past a spring, a chain and another **spring (3)** with views of the Peñón de Ifach emerging on your left. Ignore tracks turning off to the left and at a fork (info board) turn uphill to the right. After about 30 mins. from the start you come to a beautiful picnic area at the **Ermita la Vella (4)**; toilets). Continue up the steadily ascending forest track. Ignore a turn-off right (5; the descent path from the summit; see Alternative) and the path bends round to the west. The Sierra de Bèrnia rises on the opposite side of the valley and the Puig Campana comes into view in the southwest. The scenery changes from luxuriant forest to a typically dry Mediterranean vegetation. Continue northwards along the path past the signpost for the 'Cim d'Oltà' (6; see Alternative) up the Barranco de la Muela (also Mola). Continue gently up and down along the broad track to a three-way **junction (7)**. Turn sharp right steeply uphill. As you pass the ruin of Finca Pastor you can see a pinnacle up ahead. At the **pinnacle (8)** turn right along a narrower red dirt path which leads uphill to a cairn on a **col (9)**; Pas de la Canal). A pleasant shady picnic spot can be found on the right under pine trees.

Now the descent begins down a zigzag path over loose stones to reach a pine forest. The more comfortable path over pine needles continues across the hillside and down to a broad track. Turn right (10). On a left hand bend take the narrower path that goes off to the right and descends to meet your original path. Turn left round two bends being careful not to miss the path off to the right back to the **barbecue and campsite (1)**.

