

14 PENYA SELLA

Distance: 8km/5mi; 2h50min

Grade: moderate, with an ascent and corresponding descent of 230m/750ft. A high-altitude walk along a fairly wide ridge (avoid windy days). Despite the lack of a path, navigation is only a problem in the event of mist or low cloud.

Equipment: see page 42; also compass

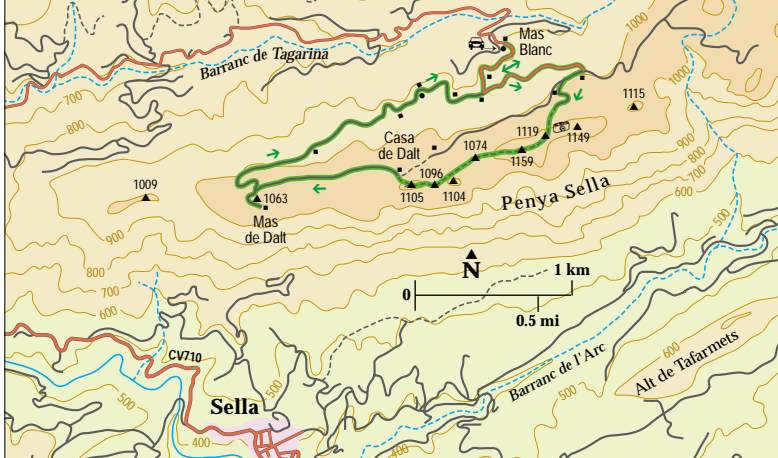
How to get there and return: 🚗 At the 4.9km-point on the Sella to Puerto de Tudons road (the 23km-point on Car tour 4), turn right on a narrow asphalt road. Drive all the way up the valley, past German riding stables. Park opposite a house, 5.5km beyond the turn off, on a level piece of ground (an old *era*, or threshing floor) on the right.

This walk offers splendid views and is high enough to blow away all the cobwebs. Short though it is, this is a must for those who enjoy ridge walks.

Begin the walk at the OLD THRESHING FLOOR: continue up the hill on the road. Pass a house on the left and then a track on the right marked by CAIRNS (11min) — your return route. The road zigzags up towards the Peña Mulero Ridge and Aitana, but you leave it at the top of a rise, where there is a *casita* above on the right and a DRYSTONE WALL (25min). At this point the asphalt runs out and a track runs straight ahead towards a *finca*, but take the sharp hairpin bend to the right, going past the *casita*. Ignore the track up left to the *casita*, but take the next one (about 20m/yds further on), heading for another house. Just before you reach it, two craggy hills appear in front of you. You are making for the saddle between them.

The track, rocky and in poor condition, goes past the HOUSE (31min) and then runs out at its upper terraces (38min). Make your own way left uphill to the SADDLE (41min). From here the mountain views are breathtaking

Casa de Dalt (1h38min into the walk)



— Aitana to the north and Campana behind El Realet (known locally as ‘the Shark’s Teeth’) to the south. Stretching to the west is the Peña Sella Ridge with a sheer drop to the Sella Valley below. From here to the far end of the ridge there is no obvious path (so watch out for snakes!), but the walking is easy, and there is no danger of getting lost.

Turn right and climb to the FIRST SUMMIT on **Peña Sella (56min)**. Continuing west, you’ll see a couple of cairns. The second marks the second, highest peak (1159m/3800ft). From here, descend steeply over smooth rocks and then across the saddle, heading for a third ‘peak’. This is in fact a rounded shoulder with twin summits, the first reached at **1h33min** and the second, across another shallow saddle, at **1h38min**. From here, you will see the ruined house shown opposite (CASA DE DALT), its terracing stretching almost to the top of the ridge. Make your way down to the terraces and ruins.

Take the overgrown track going left from the side of the house and soon meet another track. Turn left and head west on a continuation of the ridge. Ahead you will see an old *finca*, MAS DE DALT, a makeshift windsock indicating its use as a refuge by hang-gliders. As you approach the *finca* (2h), a track joins you from below on the right. You will take this track, but first explore a bit — the house, a well, and the jumping-off spot for the hang-gliders taking the quick route down to Sella!

Return to the junction and go left downhill, a sharp descent. You pass another old *era* (threshing floor) and a few houses (2h30min). Meet the main forestry road of your outward route, turn left and continue down to the OLD THRESHING FLOOR where you parked (2h50min).