



Press Release – 23/03/2010

The Principality's tourist bus will cover six routes from 1st May to 31st October uncovering the country's cultural heritage, landscapes and most emblematic spots

Andorra's heritage within your reach

Everything is that bit closer with Andorra's tourist bus: the impressive valleys, Romanesque architecture, ethnographic museums, the most emblematic spots such as Casa de la vall or Meritxell Sanctuary and even shopping in the main shopping areas. The six tourist bus routes will cover from 1st May to 31st October the Principality's seven municipalities to offer visitors the best kept jewels in the Pyrenean country.

The routes will run three times a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) in the morning and afternoon, covering all the valleys in the Principality and offering an audio guide service in four languages (Catalan, Spanish, French and English) so you miss nothing. Visitors can choose between one (€12) and two (€18) routes with entry to museums and churches included. Under 12s go free.

The first route starts in the town of La Massana, with stops to appreciate the impressive landscape in the Valley of Setúria and a panoramic view out over the delightful towns of Pal and La Cortinada. The 12th-century church of Sant Martí de la Cortinada can be visited in the latter, housing murals as well as furniture, the carillon and confessional box from the Baroque period. To round off, there is a visit to Casa Rull, a home museum reproducing the life of the Perich family – one of the most important in La Massana who lived in the house until 1920.

Sanctuary of the local patron saint

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Meritxell is a must-see when coming to Andorra. This is a contemporary church built in honour of the country's patron saint (1976) designed by the architect Ricardo Bofill to replace the original church that was destroyed by fire in 1972. The tour is included on the second route, starting with a visit to the church of Sant Joan de Caselles (11th-12th century) – one of the most emblematic Romanesque buildings in Andorra with its rectangular nave covered by a wooden ceiling, semicircular apse and Lombard-style belfry.

The route continues on to Roc de Quer, in Canillo, with its vantage point looking out over one of the best views in the Principality. Returning from the Sanctuary, visitors will be surprised on the visit to Casa Cristo, in Encamp, the home museum representing the traditions and lifestyle of a poor family in Andorra between the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The third route covers Escaldes-Engordany, Andorra la Vella (the capital) and Sant Julià de Lòria. A highlight is a visit to the Romanesque church of Sant Miquel d'Engolasters (12th century) which stands out due to the disproportion between the nave and belfry, standing 17 metres tall. After this, a guide will accompany visitors around Andorra la Vella centre, ending at Casa de la Vall, an old building from 1580 which is the current seat of parliament for the General Council of Andorra. The Tobacco Museum houses over a thousand objects over the four floors of the former Reig Factory and explains the tobacco tradition in Andorra from the 19th century to today.

Romanesque architecture, nature and shopping



Andorra Turisme

The fourth route starts off at the Romanesque church of Sant Miquel d'Engolasters (12th century) to then head to the Escaldes-Engordany Arts Centre with its two permanent collections: one dedicated to the sculptures of Josep Viladomat and the other a scale model collection of Andorra's Romanesque churches. The route ends at the church of Santa Coloma (9th-10th century), a pre-Romanesque structure. The church's location allows the old town of Santa Coloma to be enjoyed, with its traditional Andorran buildings such as Els Russos Tower, an example of the country's granite architecture structures.

Pal and Ordino are the municipalities on the fifth tourist bus route. The route starts from the Romanesque Andorra Interpretation Centre in Pal and continues on with a visit around the town and church of Sant Climent de Pal (11th-12th century), one of the great examples of Romanesque architecture in Andorra. After heading through the Coll d'Ordino, one of the most beautiful nature spots in the Pyrenees, the route ends in the town of Ordino, with its examples of traditional Andorran architecture. The sixth and last route starts from Casa Cristo, heading to Meritxell Sanctuary and ending at the church of Sant Joan de Caselles.

The six tourist bus routes come together at the country's main shopping centres. Shopping is another activity in Andorra, as it is one of the safest countries in the world with flexible opening hours (shops open all week, including Sundays), over 1,500 sales outlets and quality products from top international brands at great prices (between 11% and 31% cheaper than in Spain according to a recent study).

The Pyrenean country also offers other activities such as relaxing at the largest spa in southern Europe, Caldea, hiking and MTB on signposted routes in different nature spots around Andorra, or experiencing new sensations with the *Tobotronc* Alpine Coaster in Naturlandia – the largest in the world!

Further information:

www.andorra.ad