

21. *Sóller to the Mirador and Fornalutx*

A chapel, a bar and a popular mountain village

Grade: moderate

Distance: 10km

Time: just over 3 hours, including stops

Start and finish: Sóller's main square – Plaça de sa Constitució

How to get there: See Walk 18.

Map: IGN 670/II (1:25,000 – see reference chart in introduction)

Checklist: walking boots; money for refreshments; water; picnic; camera

Notes: The outward route is on the strenuous side of moderate, as it climbs all the way to the Mirador. If it all becomes a bit too much you can cut it short by, for example, heading for Port de Sóller (signed) less than half-way round or catching a bus back from Fornalutx, though it's all downhill from there!

This splendid walk has many attractions: a tiny chapel that would be more at home in Barcelona; a famous 'mirador'; a visit to a popular mountain village and glimpses of Mallorca's Moorish past.

A 'mirador' is a 'viewpoint' and one of the best on the whole island is the Mirador de Ses Barques, visited on this walk. When we were here in 2008, we met a charming couple from Cologne. The husband told us how he loved the view – and we learned that he had more reason than most to enthuse about it as he had just spent six days in Palma hospital, being treated for a heart condition. According to his wife, this was to be the last time he would see this splendid view, giving us all the more reason to enjoy every minute of our walk.

The Walk

Leave the square along Carrer de sa Lluna and take the second left down Carrer de La Victoria “11 Maig”, marked with a GR221 sign. Follow this road which eventually becomes Avinguda d’Asturies.

1. Turn right at the football stadium. Go up Camí des Murterar, over the Pont de Ca’n Rave and left at the information board – still following GR221 signs – and, then right up an unnamed road (**10mins**).
2. Just 70 paces up this road, opposite to a house called “Villa Ideal”, turn left up a track signposted to “Tuent, Sa Colabra and Cami de Capelleta” – make sure that you do use this track.

Turn left at a wider vehicular track (**15mins**) and almost immediately right at a gap in the wall, to begin a steady climb on a narrower, stony track with occasional waymarks. This crosses the



The Capelleta

vehicle track at several places, effectively cutting out the loops, passing several properties including Ca'n Perus and Ca'n Eugenio.

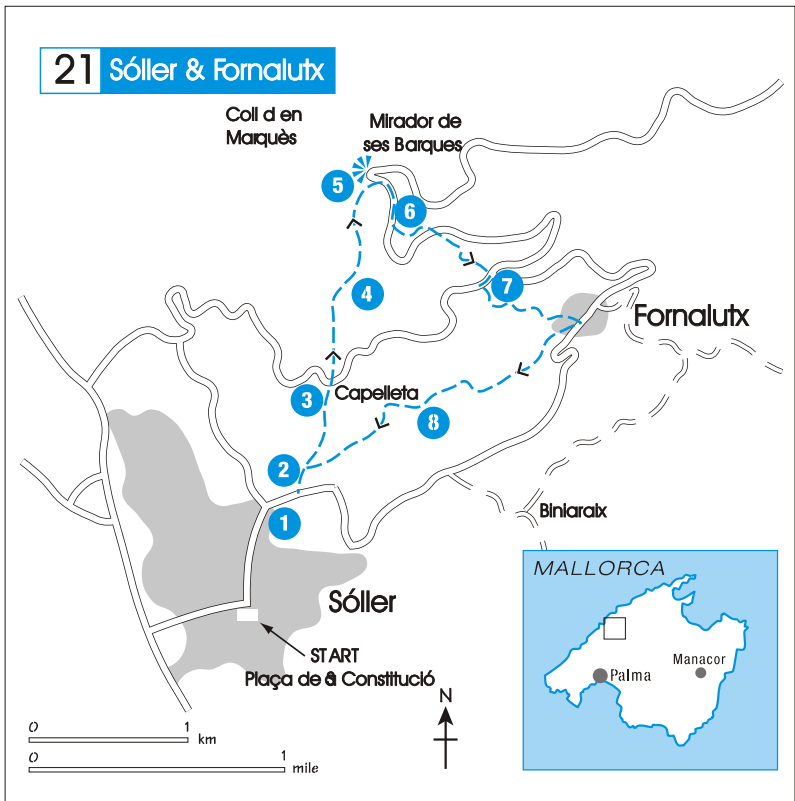
3. Eventually, reach a track and gateway on the right to a religious centre (**40 mins**). For a more interesting – and stranger – building, go left past a large wooden cross and through a gate to the Capelleta de Sant Maria.

Said to be in Modernist style, the surrounding walls are decorated with higgledy-piggledy piles of stones, while the chapel itself resembles a scene from a Grimm's fairy tale or a Tolkien fantasy.

Leave the *capelleta* and go up a path from the gateway to the main road (Ma-10 to Lluc). Cross straight over here and continue up the stepped track. The route continues uphill with waymarks and occasional signs still pointing to Tuent.

4. At about **1hr 5mins**, reach a waymark pointing left to Port de Sóller; this is worth remembering if you need to cut the walk short and there is also a sign on your right to Fornalutx. Our way is straight ahead (signed to Tuent and Sa Costera) – a ladder stile can be seen opposite, but avoid wall damage by going right for a few metres then left to the stile and gate – again signed to Tuent and Sa Costera.

Follow waymarks up and through the terraces, then pass through another gate and further uphill to a waymark opposite stone steps (**1hr 15mins**).



5. A final climb alongside a steel protective cable takes you to the Mirador de Ses Barques (**1hr 30mins**).

There's a lookout point from where you can admire the view over Port de Soller, and the view is just about as good from the open-air terrace restaurant below.

After a 15-minute break, leave the Mirador and retrace your steps alongside the steel cable for a few minutes to a three-way sign and turn left, signed as 55 minutes to Fornalutx. This is the start of a downhill stony track, stepped in parts, that crosses the Ma-10 main road from Soller at several places – it clearly existed long before the Ma-10.

6. The first crossing is signed to "Costa den Nicó and Fornalutx" and, 100m down the Ma-10 fork left (same destinations) and then fork right, downhill at "Fornalutx a Peu" (**1hr 55mins**). There are more crossings of the Ma-10 and, each time you re-join the track be sure to follow the occasional waymarks and cairns, often cutting loops off wider tracks that, while also leading in the right general downhill direction, will take longer.

7. After the final crossing of the main road, track leads directly down to Fornalutx, passing a retaining wall on the left and dropping down to a T-junction with Carrer de La Pau. At this junction, note the house name behind you: “Can Puig de Ros, No 6”. You return to this later but for now, turn left, then right along Carrer de sa Plaça, into the main square of Fornalutx (**2hrs 35mins**).

The village, of Moorish origins, only became independent of Sóller in 1837. It is now a popular day-visit and firmly on the tourist trail. For historic background, see www.mallorcaweb.com/reports/villages/fornalutx/

After a 15-minute break, retrace your steps to “Can Puig de Ros, No 6” and – this time – go straight on, passing a footpath sign for Sóller and Binibassí. Pass the cemetery and continue on a concrete path.

8. Keep right at a steel gate (**2hrs 50mins**) and follow waymarks into the tiny hamlet of Binibassí.

Again of Moorish origins, the village consists of just a few houses and has ancient irrigation channels.

Continue downhill to a tarmac lane where you must turn right – the tempting path ahead leads only to properties. Go down the lane, passing Villa Ideal again (**3hrs**) and retrace your steps by following the GR221 signs in reverse, all the way back to Plaça de sa Constitució in the centre of Sóller.

Other walks in the area

See notes at end of Walk 18 and other walks in this section.

Places of Interest

Fornalutx was, not so long ago, a sleepy mountain village. Nowadays, it is becoming a popular destination for coach parties, but there are still some quiet corners to explore. The town hall has a 17th-century defensive tower, while the parish church is originally 13th century, though with many renovations. There is a tradition of painted rooftiles in the village – see www.firstmallorca.com/ru/fornalutx.