



Restaurant Cal Sastre, Santa Pau. Rafael López-Mohé. Arxiu Imatges PTCBG

ROUTE 5

Volcanic Cuisine

Take a break in **the land of dormant volcanoes and unspoilt scenery.**

The Garrotxa is a region where you eat what you see in the fields, woods and mountains around you. It's where **Volcanic Cuisine** pays homage to local farmers with each of its dishes and where gastronomy becomes a way of understanding the local people, the region's history and its present.

1. Sant Esteve d'en Bas, where Time Seems to Stand Still

Against the backdrop of Puigsacalm mountain, **Sant Esteve d'en Bas** boasts a majestic church as well as one of the most important Romanesque parish churches in the region.

2. Discover the World of Artisan Cheeses at La Xiquella

From its small cheese workshop in the heart of La Vall d'en Bas, **La Xiquella** makes its artisan cheeses and sells them to the public through a guided visit to their dairy and a tasting and pairing in the heart of the marvellous Garrotxa landscape. As well as being a dairy, La Xiquella is also a farm guesthouse, where you can enjoy a relaxing stay amid beautiful countryside.

3. Mas la Coromina: Share a Farmer's Day

Put on your boots and discover what life is like in a traditional farmhouse. At **Mas la Coromina**, in the heart of La Vall d'en Bas, you can visit the cattle farm, help out with some of the jobs and taste the milk and dairy products that have been made here by traditional methods for over 50 years.

4. Santa Pau, the Village where the Beans Come from

With **Santa Pau** it's a case of love at first sight. Stroll through this medieval walled village, in the heart of the Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park: its Plaça Major, the porticoed square with different sized arches, and the various narrow streets leading to the Santa Maria church. Ah! And don't leave without first tasting the authentic Santa Pau beans, an essential ingredient in Volcanic Cuisine.

5. Vol de Coloms, the Volcanoes of the Garrotxa Seen from the Sky

Fly in a hot air balloon with **Vol de Coloms** over the superb Garrotxa Volcanic Area Natural Park. You float peacefully in the air in silence, enjoying a bird's eye view of one of the most important areas of dormant volcanoes in Europe. After the flight, you'll tuck into a hearty country breakfast, made up of Santa Pau beans, Catalan tomato bread and charcuterie, desserts from Cooperativa La Fageda and a glass of magnificent *ratafia* liqueur from Olot.

For lovers of new experiences this part of the route is an absolute must!

6. Explore La Fageda d'en Jordà Beech Forest and Discover Cooperativa La Fageda

A leading business model in terms of its social values and commercial success, **Cooperativa La Fageda** takes visitors on a guided visit of the emblematic Fageda d'en Jordà nature reserve, where you'll discover the area's geology, wildlife and flora, and where you'll have a little group picnic. Afterwards, La Fageda's property, Mas Els Casals, will open its doors so that you can discover the jam production plant and the factory where their yogurts, ice creams and desserts are made. If you haven't been there yet, this iconic local social project is well worth a visit.



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7. Olot, Capital of Volcanoes

Olot is known as the Volcano Capital. The city is surrounded by four volcanoes –Montsacopa, Montolivet, Garrinada and Bisaroques– and its rich natural heritage includes the Moixina wetlands and the Croscat volcano.

Olot is not only famous for its scenic treasures, but also for its wealth of great local food and wine: ratafia liqueur and potatoes from Olot, *tortell de matafaluga* ring cake, *coca de llardons* flatbread. Visit the **Olot Market** and taste them!

As the saying goes, if you don't have fun in Olot... you won't have fun in any spot!

8. Even if it's Just Once, You Have to Cross the Medieval Bridge in Besalú

Besalú is the symbol of medieval Catalonia and is one of its best conserved historic sites. This Jewish town is famous for its emblematic bridge and for the beauty and romanticism that pervades it and which have made it a popular shooting location for films, series and TV commercials.

Take a stroll through its narrow streets and visit the **Miqveh**, the Jewish ritual bath situated under the remains of an old synagogue.

9. Celler Mas Vida, the Garrotxa d'Empordà winery

Mas Vida is a small winery in the Garrotxa d'Empordà area, run by women. It's set just outside the village of Cistella, in an old rectory which has been given new lease of life. The winery offers guided visits, meals in the vineyards, workshops and paired suppers. Mas Vida is a little paradise in an area with a long winemaking history!

EXTRA!

- » **Where to eat:** La Cuina del Mercat, La Quinta Justa, L'Arcada de Fares, La Brasera, Hostal dels Ossos, Restaurant L'Hostalet, Les Cols (2 Michelin stars), Ca L'Enric (1 Michelin star)
- » **Where to stay:** Mas la Ferreria, La Xiquella, Rectoria de Sant Miquel de Pineda, Hotel Restaurant Cal Sastre



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