



The Sea Begins Here



If you look through the trees you can see a part of the Ravine of Santes Creus, which is born from the union of the Ravine de las Guardias and the Ravine del Boc, and which, more than three kilometres later, reaches its estuary at Santes Creus beach, a protected natural space which we'll speak about at this stop.

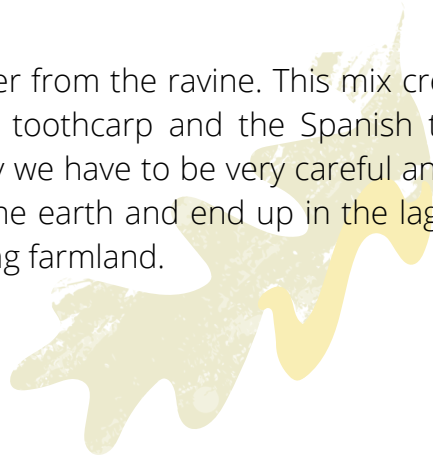
We invite you to get to know a little more about this ravine by touching and testing some of the natural elements that you'll find here in the boxes ahead. Are you ready?

Put your hand into box **number 1**. What's all this in your hands? Exactly! Some little pebbles, small stones that have been washed downriver by the water. Over a long time they've become rounded at the edges and they gather at Santes Creus beach where our ravine joins the sea.

This ravine, dry for the most part, can transport tonnes of water when it rains hard, or with natural phenomena like the storm Gloria in 2020 when the water reached up to two metres deep over a number of hours. When water sweeps down fiercely, it washes trees, reeds and big rocks away downstream, moving tonnes of material down to the lower part of the torrent. That's why the ravine has been cleaned and the pine trees that were lying in the riverbed, causing a flood risk, have been cut. With this felling, we've supported biodiversity by opening spaces and new habitats for the growth of new species. Have you noticed the tree trunks that form part of the path? Well, they all come from the felling of the white pine trees in the ravine.

Now put your hand into box **number 2**. What do we find in here? What is this water? It's water from the lagoons that are found in the ravine's estuary. These lagoons and the beach were declared a protected Natural Space of the Cape of Santes Creus in 1992. The protected area reaches from the train track down to the sea and it goes up to 30 metres deep.

The water in the lagoons is a mix of seawater and fresh water from the ravine. This mix creates very special conditions that allow some small fish, the Valencia toothcarp and the Spanish toothcarp, which are under threat of extinction, to live there. This is why we have to be very careful and prevent chemicals, insecticides and pollutants, which filter through the earth and end up in the lagoons and the sea, from being thrown into the ravine and it's surrounding farmland.



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Now put your hand in box **number 3**. What's this? Take time to notice what you feel. It's green clay extracted from the riverbed! In some places, the ground is clay-like and allows rainwater to gather in pools that can last weeks until they dry out.

This clay is a material used to calm joint inflammation, heal scars, reduce general inflammation and remineralise. A real gift from mother earth for our bodies!

Now it's box **number 4**'s turn. Grab what's inside fearlessly! You just grabbed a branch of a tamarind tree. If you dare, you can chew a bit of the branch without swallowing it. That's it, very good.... What does it taste of? That's right, it's salty, isn't it? We've brought this branch from the stream at the Lagoon of Santes Creus where we can find trees like the tamarind, which can grow in very salty soil with little water. To be able to survive in these conditions, the tamarind expels the excess salt through its leaves to return it to the land. Interesting, isn't it?

And to finish off, we'll go into box **number 5**. Don't be squeamish! Do you recognise this texture? What are these remains? A Kiwi? The remains of a dung beetle? Dirt? No, none of all that. They're the remains of a marine plant called Neptune grass (posidonia oceánica). Maybe you've seen it while strolling along one of the beaches, such as Santes Creus beach in L'Ametlla de Mar. To see the plant alive, we have to dive down with the help of a snorkle. In the winter, you can see its flowers and fruits.

This plant forms extensive underwater meadows, which are protected and are native to the mediterranean sea. They're responsible for a great part of the air that we breathe, thanks to their great capacity for photosynthesis. 1 hectare of Neptune grass meadow is the equivalent to 5 hectares of Amazon rainforest. They also provide refuge for a great quantity of fish and marine invertebrate species.

So, having learnt a little more about this ravine and its estuary, you can continue your walk to the next stop.

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