



## NATURAL LANDSCAPE / Physical and natural features

The Tramuntana landscape is the outcome of the application of the cultural know-how of civilisations that succeeded one another there on its physical and natural environment. In the case of the Tramuntana area, this natural environment is basically marked by four main characteristics:

1. Abrupt, rugged reliefs, with an altitude of up to 1,450 metres very close to the sea, consisting predominantly of extremely hard permeable limestone rock, resulting in a landscape with karstic formations. It is criss-crossed by a dense network of streams, dry torrent beds, old streambeds, gullies and torrents, as well as aquifers that supply the many springs, as part of what is a Mediterranean water system.
2. A climate marked by Mediterranean characteristics, distinguished by dry hot summers and mild winters, and an irregular rainfall pattern with peaks in rainfall in autumn and spring and a pronounced rainfall gradient oscillating between a wetter central mountain area (between 800 and 1400 mm of rainfall per year) and progressively drier extreme areas.
3. Mediterranean woodland vegetation with forests of evergreen Balearic holm-oaks (*Cyclamini-Quercetum ilicis*) that represent a climax plant community, replaced in areas that are less wet by wild olive macchia or scrub (*Oleo-Ceratonion ass. Cneoro ceratonietum*) of a thermophilic nature - extremely common in the Mediterranean - which colonizes places where holm-oak woods are in a significant state of degradation. This macchia is heavily colonized by the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) species. In the Tramuntana area, there are also plant communities that make up high Balearic ground cover (*Hypericion balearici*), an extremely low plant formation featuring an outstanding abundance of endemic plants.
4. Wild fauna, also abundant in the form of endemic species, marked to a large extent by the double insularity entailed by the presence of a mountain district, in itself already isolated from the rest of the region, within an island.

The environmental importance of the Tramuntana area is therefore especially well known in terms of the singularity of its reliefs – particularly the karstic landscape -, the originality of its plant communities, presence of endemic, rare and relict taxonomic groups of flora and fauna, and the environmental diversity of its habitats and fauna and flora. In the case of flora, the Tramuntana area contains 65 of the 97 native species described in the Balearic archipelago, and 65 of the 68 plants endemic to the island of Mallorca. Moreover, the Tramuntana area was and still is an important source of resources for Mallorca's society, supplying not only agricultural, forestry and livestock products, but also significant water supplies that are decisive for the rest of the island.