

## Routes through history

A series of itineraries designed to give you an insight into different periods in the city's history.

We have grouped into different historical periods a series of itineraries designed to give you an insight into Barcelona's history. A team of specialists has developed a series of routes to help you become better acquainted with the way the city evolved. Roman, Gothic, modernista and contemporary are the four Barcelonas we suggest to those who want to learn a little history as well as enjoy the city.

### **ROMAN:**

The ancient Roman colony was founded between the years 15-10 BC, in the time of Emperor Augustus. The city was built on top of a small hill and covered an area no greater than ten hectares. It was, therefore, a small city which had, at the most, 1,000 inhabitants.

The city was enclosed by walls with four gateways. These gateways led on to the main streets, the *decumanus maximus* and *cardo maximus* which came together right in the centre, at the *forum* or public square. There were also other public buildings, such as **the temple**, the basilica, the curia, where the *Ordo Decurionum* or Municipal Senate assembled, and the tabernae or shops, which sold all kinds of produce brought in from various Mediterranean ports. Near the *Forum* stood the spa or public baths. We do not know if Barcino contained other public buildings which were representative of Roman cities, such as the theatre, amphitheatre or circus.

The water supply for the city of Barcino came from two aqueducts that carried the water, one from the river Besòs and the other from Collserola. Outside the city, and on both sides of the road, were the tombs and mausoleums. An example of these burial sites is the **necropolis which survives in Plaça Vila de Madrid**.

A **new city wall** was built in the 4th century. It was attached to the outer part of the previous wall and **reinforced with watchtowers**. The gateways had three openings: a central road used by vehicular traffic and two pathways at the sides for the people arriving in the city on foot from the different roads in the region.

- 
- » [Roman Temple \(late 1st-century BC\)](#)
  - » [Roman Sepulchral Way \(1st -3rd centuries AD\)](#)
  - » [Walls and gateway into the Roman city of Barcino \(1st century BC-4th century AD\)](#)
  - » [Wall and gateway into the Roman city of Barcino \(1st century BC -4th century AD\)](#)

- » Walls and turrets for defending the Roman city of Barcino (4th century AD)
- » Roman wall and aqueducts (1st century BC)
- » The craftsmen's district: workshops and factories in Barcino. Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (2nd-4th centuries)
- » The Bishopric (4th-8th centuries). Museu d'Història de la Ciutat
- » Archaeological ensemble of the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona
- » Walls and turrets for defending the Roman city of Barcino (4th century AD)

## **BARCELONA MEDIEVAL**

Barcelona received influences from the Islamic world and Carolingian Europe during the late Middle Ages, and developed a leading role across the Mediterranean basin during the Gothic period. As the capital of Catalonia, the city came to govern extensive territories which included such far-away places as Sicily and Athens.

In medieval times, Barcelona was an extremely important trading centre for the whole of the Mediterranean. There are many buildings and areas of the city which bear witness to this flourishing period which spans the 13th to 15th centuries.

The history of medieval Barcelona is fully evident today in its urban layout, formed essentially by important Romanesque and, above all, Gothic buildings which tell us about the city's past. This makes it one of the European cities where history comes to life as you walk through its Gothic Quarter.

Walking through the city one comes to understand the various changes made to its walled enclosures which accompanied its growth in medieval times, or the importance of institutions, evidenced by the Romanesque and Gothic part of the City Hall and the Palau de la Generalitat; the monarchy and the nobility, with the Royal Palace and mansions on Carrer Montcada; and the role of the Church, with the Cathedral and churches, such as Santa Maria del Mar, which had close ties with the bourgeois guilds.

Likewise, buildings such as the Medieval Shipyards, or Drassanes, and the old corn exchange, or Llotja, show the important role of a middle class that increasingly grew in power throughout the world due to the growth of commerce. The Hospital of the Santa Creu and the Pia Almoina also show the importance of the health institutions of the era. The monasteries, at the time located outside the city, such as the Romanesque monastery of Sant Pau del Camp or the Gothic monastery of Santa Maria de Pedralbes, bear witness to the city's past.

Taken as a whole, these landmarks and events make Barcelona one of the most artistically wealthy cities of Europe in terms of medieval heritage which today's visitors can discover on an extraordinary route.

---

- » [Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya \(MNAC\)](#)
- » [Sant Pere de les Puelles](#)
- » [Chapel of Sant LLàtzer](#)
- » [Chapel of Marcús](#)
- » [Sant Pau del Camp](#)
- » [Chapel of Santa Llúcia](#)
- » [Barcelona City Walls](#)
- » [Palau Episcopal](#)
- » [Palau Reial Major. Tinell. Chapel of Santa Àgata](#)
- » [The Cathedral](#)
- » [The Pia Almoïna](#)
- » [Drassanes](#)
- » [Cases dels Canonges](#)
- » [La Llotja](#)
- » [Santa Maria del Mar](#)
- » [Church of Sants Just and Sant Pastor](#)
- » [Church of El Pi](#)
- » [Monastery of Santa Anna](#)
- » [Pedralbes Monastery](#)
- » [Palau de la Generalitat](#)
- » [City Hall](#)
- » [Santa Creu Hospital](#)
- » [Mansions on Carrer Montcada](#)

### **BARCELONA MODERNISTA:**

The Eixample district of Barcelona, an extension of the city planned by the engineer Ildefons Cerdà and begun in 1860, is, *without a doubt, one of the most unusual urban spaces in a European and world context.*

The personality of Barcelona resides, to a large extent, in the unique layout of the Eixample and the way in which this small area has given a unique quality to the city as a whole. Its hallmark, rather than being evenly distributed, is centred around a relatively small area, the central hub of the Passeig de Gràcia.

This privileged zone of the Eixample, the *Quadrat d'Or*, or Golden Square, is situated within the limits of Carrer Aribau and Passeig Sant Joan, the Rondes Sant Pere, Sant Pau and Universitat and the Avinguda Diagonal. The consolidation of the *Quadrat d'Or* as the centre of bourgeois Barcelona, which came about during the last decade of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, coincided with the appearance and dissemination of Modernisme, making this privileged area into the focus of modernisme in Barcelona. Other areas of the city

also contain examples of modernista architecture.

A careful walk through this area reveals a wealth of architecture, the result of the move made by the middle-class residents from the old city to the central Eixample, around 1900. The Quadrat d'Or is an authentic open air museum and it is easy to find architecturally interesting buildings there. On the following pages we recommend some of the most outstanding modernista buildings.

---

- » [Casa Bellesguard](#)
- » [Casa Roviralta \(Frare Blanc\)](#)
- » [Casa Vicens](#)
- » [Teresian School](#)
- » [La Rotonda](#)
- » [Park Güell](#)
- » [Casa Golferichs](#)
- » [Casa Sayrach](#)
- » [Editorial Montaner i Simón](#)
- » [Fàbrica Casarramona](#)
- » [Casa Amatller](#)
- » [Casa Batlló](#)
- » [Casa Fuster](#)
- » [Casa Lleó Morera](#)
- » [Casa Comalat](#)
- » [Casa viuda Marfà](#)
- » [Casa Milà, La Pedrera](#)
- » [Casa Calvet](#)
- » [Casa Llopis Bofill](#)
- » [Casa Macaya](#)
- » [Casa Terrades o Casa de les Punxes](#)
- » [Casa Thomas](#)
- » [Palau Baró de Quadras](#)
- » [Sagrada Família](#)
- » [Sant Pau Hospital](#)
- » [Casa Martí](#)
- » [Museu de Zoologia](#)
- » [Palau de la Música Catalana](#)
- » [Palau Güell](#)
- » [Gatehouses of the Finca Güell](#)

## **BARCELONA CONTEMPORARY:**

Since the reinstatement of democracy, Barcelona has undertaken a gradual yet thorough urban development programme. The Olympic areas of Montjuïc, Diagonal, Vall d'Hebron and Poblenou were laid out according to criteria of quality. The incorporation of new infrastructures, such as the ring-roads, was of fundamental importance to the city. The urban transformation and the success of the Olympic Games put

Barcelona on the world map and its modus operandi has since been summarised as the "Barcelona Model".

The seafront is the city's main downtown area. The reuse of this district was one of the main arguments in favour of the city's transformation process. The Olympic Village and the Port Vell are projects which have opened up the city to the sea, by creating places used as the main backdrop for urban activities.

The coastline can be divided into two areas taking as its main landmark Montjuïc hill. The first one, in the south, is the Llobregat delta. In the east, the Besòs delta will become the city's new residential and recreational district and centre for economic activities, where plans and projects will be implemented, such as the extension of the Diagonal, the seafront, the 22@BCN... and where the Universal Forum of Cultures, Barcelona 2004, has been one of the highlights.

Barcelona's urban transformation is a process which is making the city a more balanced space, the cornerstones of which are sustainability and diversity.

- 
- » [Montjuïc](#)
  - » [Raval](#)
  - » [Gothic Quarter and La Ribera](#)
  - » [Port Vell and La Barceloneta](#)
  - » [Olympic Village](#)
  - » [Poblenou and the Diagonal](#)
  - » [Parc de l'Espanya Industrial](#)
  - » [L'Eixample](#)
  - » [Parc de l'Estació del Nord](#)
  - » [Diagonal](#)
  - » [Gràcia](#)
  - » [Parc de la Vall d'Hebron](#)
  - » [Nou Barris](#)
  - » [The ring roads or Rondes](#)
  - » [Collserola Tower](#)
  - » [Parc Metropolità de Collserola](#)
  - » [Llobregat Delta](#)

### **Areas of interest**

- » [Gaudí](#)
- » [Modernisme-"El Quadrat d'Or"](#)
- » [La Rambla and el Raval](#)
- » [Gothic Quarter](#)
- » [Barri de la Ribera](#)
- » [Parc de la Ciutadella](#)

- » Port, Barceloneta and Vila Olímpica
- » Montjuïc
- » Diagonal and Pedralbes
- » Tibidabo and Parc del Laberint d'Horta
- » Glòries and Forum Park