

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- La Sagrada Família (p104)
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- Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83)
- La Pedrera (p106)
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# NEIGHBOURHOODS

For Barcelonins, the *barri* (*barrio* in Spanish), or local district, is everything. Those born and raised in them are proud to say '*Sóc del barri!*' ('I am from this neighbourhood!'). A *barri* has little to do with official municipal boundaries (Barcelona is officially divided into 10 districts); in fact, it can often be a vague term that might mean just the surrounding few streets.

We start in the Barri Gòtic and La Rambla, the medieval heart of the municipal district known as Ciutat Vella (Old City), which also covers edgy El Raval and lively La Ribera.

El Raval stretches southwest of La Rambla, Spain's best-known boulevard, and was long a sordid slum, home to prostitutes, drug dealers and a louche nightlife. A whiff of those bygone days remains, but hip bars and restaurants are springing up all over, along with art galleries, university faculties and slick hotels.

The southern half of La Ribera was medieval Barcelona's financial district, where bars have long since replaced the bourse. La Ribera was cut off from the 'Gothic Quarter' by the creation of the rumbling traffic corridor of Via Laietana in 1908.

The old town is fronted by Port Vell and La Barceloneta. The 'Old Port' is a combination of pleasure-boat marina and leisure zone with restaurants, cinemas and bars. A brief, sunny stroll takes you into the narrow lanes of the one-time working-class zone of La Barceloneta, a cauldron of seafood eateries with clear signs of gentrification. Beyond its narrow streets, the Mediterranean laps the city's crowded central beaches.

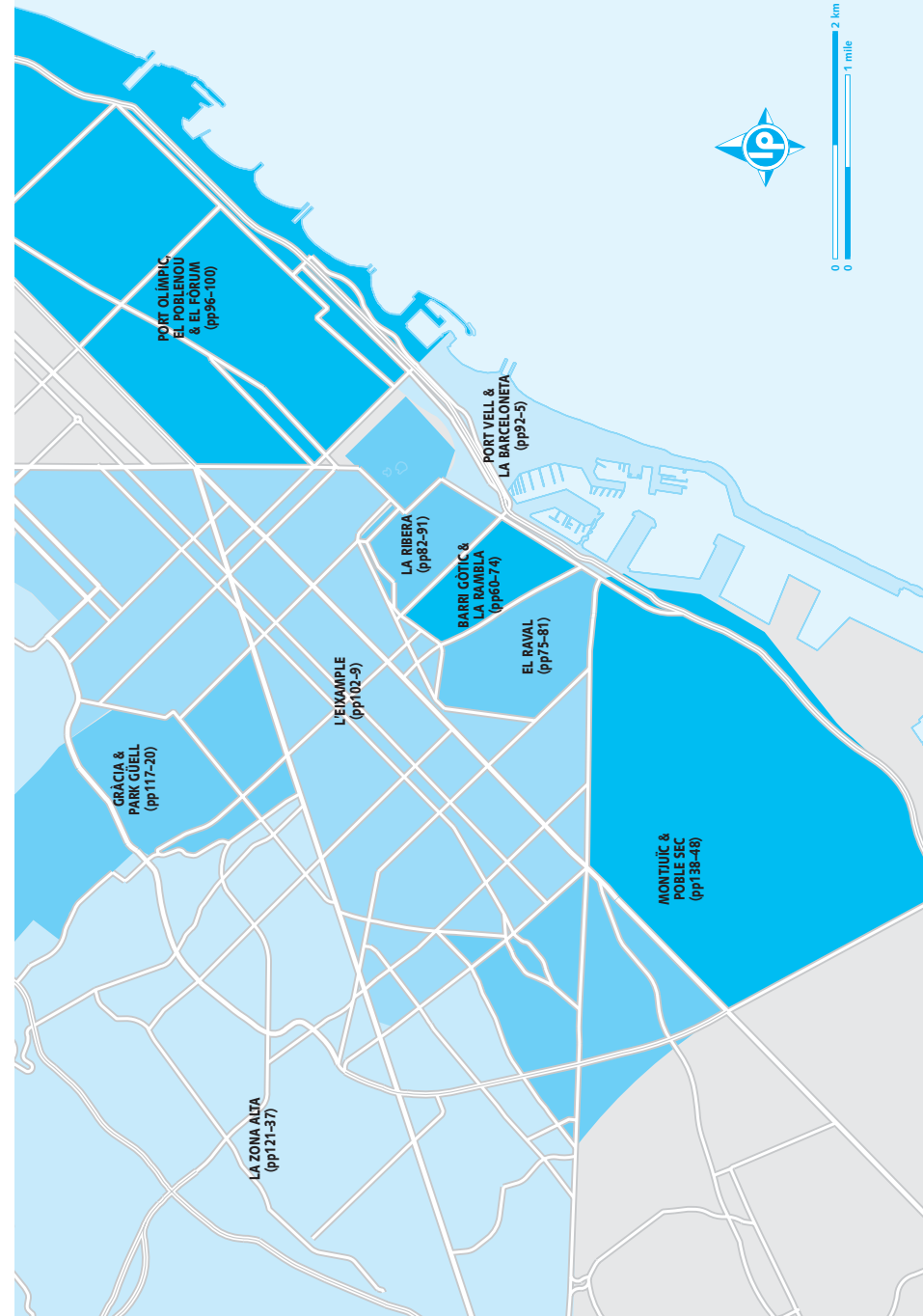
Where La Barceloneta ends, a new chapter in Barcelona's urban history begins. Port Olímpic, El Poblenou and El Fòrum reflect contemporary Barcelona's drive to renew itself. The port was built for the 1992 Olympics, as were the apartments stretching behind it in the southwest edge of the city's former factory district, El Poblenou. The first hi-tech tenants are moving into shining new buildings in the first stages of the remake of this extensive district (see p44). Long shunned as a place to live, its warehouse lofts and big apartments have increasingly attracted homebuyers' attention since the late 1990s. Crowds flock to the nearby beaches that stretch northeast of Port Olímpic but they peter out in El Fòrum, a residential, business and pleasure district where skyscrapers sprouted out of nothing in the first years of the 21st century... and continue to sprout today.

The last time Barcelona went on such an urban-planning drive was towards the end of the 19th century, with the creation of l'Eixample. Its Modernista treasures, from La Pedrera to La Sagrada Família, attract hordes of visitors to its grid streets, which also hide countless gems for foodies, drinkers and shoppers.

L'Eixample filled the gap between Barcelona and Gràcia and Park Güell. Originally a separate town, with its sinuous, narrow lanes and web of lively squares, Gràcia retains an atmosphere utterly its own, with Park Güell a Gaudi fantasy to its north.

From here, the city rises up towards the hills of Collserola. The slopes of Barcelona in the district of Sarrià-St Gervasi are known as La Zona Alta (the High Zone, synonymous with snobbery) and take in sought-after Pedralbes and Tibidabo, with its amusement park. For simplicity's sake, we include the more down-to-earth Les Corts, south of Avinguda Diagonal, in this section. It is a residential district and home to the Camp Nou football stadium.

Finally, we visit Montjuïc, Barcelona's Olympic hill and green lung, Poble Sec (a once-poor area now home to a growing Latin American population) and Sants, a busy working-class neighbourhood that offers little for visitors but is full of life.



# ITINERARY BUILDER

Barcelona is remarkably compact and boasts good public transport, making it easy to see a lot. You can use the Metro to reach key attractions (La Sagrada Família, Park Güell, the Barri Gòtic and perhaps even the beaches) in one long but satisfying day. Walkers can criss-cross most of central Barcelona without even thinking about a Metro ticket.

# HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Museums	Eating	Shopping	Drinking & Nightlife	Arts, Sports & Activities
Barri Gòtic & La Rambla	La Catedral (p61)	Monument a Colom (p71)	Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67)	Pla (p173)	Caelum (p154)	Club Soul (p198)	Gran Teatre del Liceu (p71)
	Gran Teatre del Liceu (p71)		Museu Frederic Marès (p68)	Agut (p173)	Herboristeria del Rei (p154)	Manchester (p199)	Sala Tarantos (p218)
			Centre d'Interpretació del Call (p71)	Bar Celta (p174)	Papabubble (p155)	Harlem Jazz Club (p200)	UBAE Frontón (p224)
El Raval	Palau Güell (p79)	Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (p78)	Museu Marítim (p78)	Casa Leopoldo (p174)	El Indio (p156)	Bar Marsella (p200)	Mailuna (p224)
	Església de Sant Pau Del Camp (p80)		Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba) (p79)	Bar Central (p175)	GI Joe (p156)	Boadas (p201)	Teatre Romea (p219)
			Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) (p80)	Biocenter (p176)	Teranyina (p157)	Moog (p202)	Teatre Lliantol (p219)
La Ribera	Església de Santa Maria del Mar (p83)	Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)	Museu Picasso (p83)	Comerç 24 (p176)	Casa Gispert (p157)	La Fianna (p202)	Palau de la Música Catalana (p217)
	Parc de la Ciutadella (p88)		Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombi (p87)	Cal Pep (p176)	Custo Barcelona (p157)	La Vinya del Senyor (p202)	Tablao Nervión (p218)
			Museu de la Xocolata (p89)	Bubó (p177)	Vila Viniteca (p158)	Magic (p203)	
Port Vell, La Barceloneta, Port Olímpic, El Poblenou & El Fòrum	L'Aquàrium (p92)	Transbordador Aeri (p94)	Museu d'Història de Catalunya (p94)	Can Majó (p179)	Maremàgnum (p158)	CDLC (p203)	Poliesportiu Marítim (p225)
	Beaches (p96)			Vaso de Oro (p179)		Beach bars (p203)	Club Natació Atlètic-Barcelona (p225)
				Xiringuito d'Escribà (p180)		Razzmatazz (p205)	Icària Yelmo Cineplex (p220)
L'Eixample	La Sagrada Família (p104)	La Pedrera (p106)	Museu de la Música (p111)	Casa Dario (p181)	Cubiña (p160)	Dry Martini (p205)	L'Auditori (p217)
	Casa Batlló (p107)		Fundació d'Antoni Tàpies (p109)	Igueldo (p182)	Camper (p159)	Michael Collins Pub (p206)	Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (p219)
			Fundació Francisco Godia (p111)	Inopia (p184)	Xampany (p163)	Antilla BCN (p207)	Teatre Tivoli (p220)
Gràcia & Park Güell	Park Güell (p117)	Casa Viçenc (p119)	Fundació Foto Colectania (p119)	Restaurant Roig Robi (p186)	Érase una Vez (p163)	La Baignoire (p208)	Sala Beckett (p219)
	Mercat de la Llibertat (p119)			Bilbao (p186)	Red Market (p163)	Raim (p209)	Teatreneu (p220)
				Envalira (p187)		Sabor a Cuba (p209)	Flotarium (p224)
La Zona Alta	Parc de Collserola (p134)	Parc d'Ataccions (p134)	CosmoCaixa (Museu de la Ciència) (p121)	El Racó d'En Freixa (p189)	La Botiga del Barça (p163)	Berlin (p210)	Football at Camp Nou (p124)
	Camp Nou (p124)		Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes (p124)	Can Travi Nou (p189)	La Vinya (p163)	Otto Zutz (p211)	Fundació Mas i Mas (p216)
			Palau Reial de Pedralbes (p133)	Bar Tomàs (p190)		Mirablau (p211)	Renoir-Les Corts cinema (p221)
Montjuïc, Sants & Poble Sec	Castell de Montjuïc (p143)	Poble Espanyol (p145)	Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (p139)	El Peixerot (p191)	Elephant (p163)	Barcelona Rouge (p212)	Tablao de Carmen (p218)
	Jardí Botànic (p146)		Fundació de Joan Miró (p143)	Tapioles 53 (p191)		Maumau Underground (p213)	Teatre Mercat de les Flors (p218)
			CaixaForum (p142)	Quimet i Quimet (p192)		Sala Apolo (p213)	Teatre Lliure (p219)

# BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

Drinking & Nightlife [p198](#); Eating [p173](#); Shopping [p154](#); Sleeping [p231](#)

La Rambla is Spain's most talked-about boulevard. It certainly packs a lot of colour into a short walk, with bird stalls, flower stands, historic buildings, a pungent produce market, overpriced beers and tourist tat, a little loose night fauna around its lower end and a ceaselessly changing parade of people from all walks of life. Once a river and sewage ditch on the edge of medieval Barcelona, it still marks the southwest flank of the Barri Gòtic, the nucleus of old Barcelona.

The medieval city was constructed on the Roman core, which in succeeding centuries slowly spread north, south and west. The Barri Gòtic is a warren of narrow, winding streets and unexpected, uneven squares, and is home to a dense concentration of budget hotels, bars, cafés and restaurants. Few of its great buildings date from after the early 15th century – the decline Barcelona went into at that time curtailed grand projects for several centuries. An early port of call for new visitors to Barcelona is Plaça de Catalunya, which roughly marks the northern boundary of the Barri Gòtic. Apart from transport connections, it is also home to the main branch of the city's tourist office (see [p279](#)).

The square hums for much of the day. South American, pan flute-playing bands often set up at its La Rambla end, and other buskers can be seen hard at work in front of the punters sipping coffee at Cafè Zurich. Shoppers stream in and out of El Corte Inglés and the El Triangle shopping centre, while hordes charge down from here into La Rambla.

La Rambla proceeds 1.25km southeast gently downhill towards the waterfront. Yes, it's clichéd, but it is a lively introduction to the city. Human statues compete for the attention of passers-by with newsstands seemingly burdened with half the city's porno magazine supply. Flower stands and bird stalls succeed one another. Among the sober 18th-century mansions are scattered overpriced eateries and bars, Dunkin' Donuts and Burger King, and the enticing Mercat de la Boqueria. The highbrow Liceu opera house offers theatre inside...and outside. Around here at night the local transvestite population comes out to play, vying for attention with female prostitutes further down La Rambla. As the night wears on, revellers cascade up, down and across the boulevard, in search of the next bar or a rare taxi.

Imagine the northeast side of La Rambla lined by a brooding medieval wall. Inside it lies the labyrinth of the Barri Gòtic. To penetrate quickly to its core, follow Carrer de Ferran, an early-19th-century scar driven through the city, to Plaça de Sant Jaume, lined on either side by the seats of city and regional governments. A step away stand the remaining columns from the city's Roman temple and further north is its successor, the grand Gothic La Catedral. This is the core of a 2000-year-old city. To the west of the Generalitat unfold the tiny lanes of what was once the Call, or Jewish quarter. Between the cathedral and Plaça de Catalunya are busy shopping streets, a street dedicated to hot chocolate, another lined with antique shops and remnants of a Roman cemetery.

Heading southeast towards the sea, there is a noticeable change. Although much has been improved since the early 1990s, the streets around Plaça Reial still exude a slight whiff of lawlessness. Pickpockets are on the move (be careful on and around Carrer dels Escudellers too) and a crew of substance abusers congregates around the triangular Plaça de George Orwell (locally known as Plaça del Trippy). Taverns, tearooms and food options from ham to sushi abound. Bars of all sorts, from pseudo-Irish pubs to ill-lit holes in the wall, populate this area, and the acrid smell of urine in the streets late at night is testimony to the roaring trade they do.

With three Metro lines, FGC trains and *rodalies* trains all arriving at Plaça de Catalunya, not to mention airport buses and trains, and night buses and taxis, there is no problem arriving at the north end of the Barri Gòtic. Other strategic Metro stops include Liceu and Drassanes on Línia 3 and Jaume I on Línia 4.

## top picks

### BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

- La Catedral (opposite)
- La Rambla (opposite)
- Museu d'Història de la Ciutat (p67)
- Museu Frederic Marès (p68)
- Plaça de Sant Jaume (p69)

## LA RAMBLA [Map pp64–5](#)

**M** Catalunya, Liceu or Drassanes

Flanked by narrow traffic lanes and plane trees, the middle of La Rambla is a broad pedestrian boulevard, crowded every day until the wee hours with a cross-section of Barcelonins and out-of-towners. Dotted with cafés, restaurants, kiosks and newsstands, and enlivened by buskers, pavement artists, mimes and living statues, La Rambla rarely allows a dull moment.

It takes its name from a seasonal stream (*raml* in Arabic) that once ran here. From the early Middle Ages on it was better known as the Cagalell (Stream of Shit) and lay outside the city walls until the 14th century. Monastic buildings were then built and, subsequently, mansions of the well-to-do from the 16th to the early 19th centuries. Unofficially, La Rambla is divided into five sections, which explains why many know it as Las Ramblas.

The initial stretch from Plaça de Catalunya is **La Rambla de Canaletes**, named after a turn-of-the-20th-century **drinking fountain**, the water of which supposedly emerges from what were once known as the springs of Canaletes. It used to be said that Barcelonins 'drank the waters of Les Canaletes'. Nowadays, people claim that anyone who drinks from the fountain will return to Barcelona, which is not such a bad prospect.

The second stretch, **La Rambla dels Estudis** (Carrer de la Canuda to Carrer de la Portaferriça) is also called La Rambla dels Ocells (birds) because of its twittering bird market.

Just north of Carrer del Carme, the **Església de Betlem** was constructed in baroque style for the Jesuits in the late 17th and early 18th centuries to replace an earlier church destroyed by fire in 1671. Fire was a bit of a theme for this site: the church was once considered the most splendid of Barcelona's few baroque offerings, but leftist arsonists torched it in 1936.

**La Rambla de Sant Josep**, named after a former monastery dedicated to St Joseph, runs from Carrer de la Portaferriça to Plaça de la Boqueria and is lined with verdant **flower stalls**, which give it the alternative name La Rambla de les Flors.

The **Palau de la Virreina** (La Rambla de Sant Josep 99) is a grand 18th-century rococo mansion (with some neoclassical elements) housing an arts/entertainment information and ticket office run by the Ajuntament. Built by the then corrupt captain-general of Chile (a Spanish colony that included the Peruvian

silver mines of Potosí), Manuel d'Amat i de Junyent, it is a rare example of such post-baroque building in Barcelona.

Across La Rambla at No 118 is an equally rare example of a more pure neoclassical pile, **Palau Moja**, which houses government offices, the Generalitat's bookshop and exhibition space. Its clean, classical lines are best appreciated from across La Rambla.

Next, you are confronted by the bustling sound, smell and taste-fest of the **Mercat de la Boqueria**. It is possibly La Rambla's most interesting building, not so much for its Modernista-influenced design (it was actually built over a long period, from 1840 to 1914, on the site of the former St Joseph monastery) as for the action of the food market (see [p183](#)).

At Plaça de la Boqueria, where four side streets meet just north of Liceu Metro station, you can walk all over a Miró – the colourful **Mosaïc de Miró** in the pavement, with one tile signed by the artist.

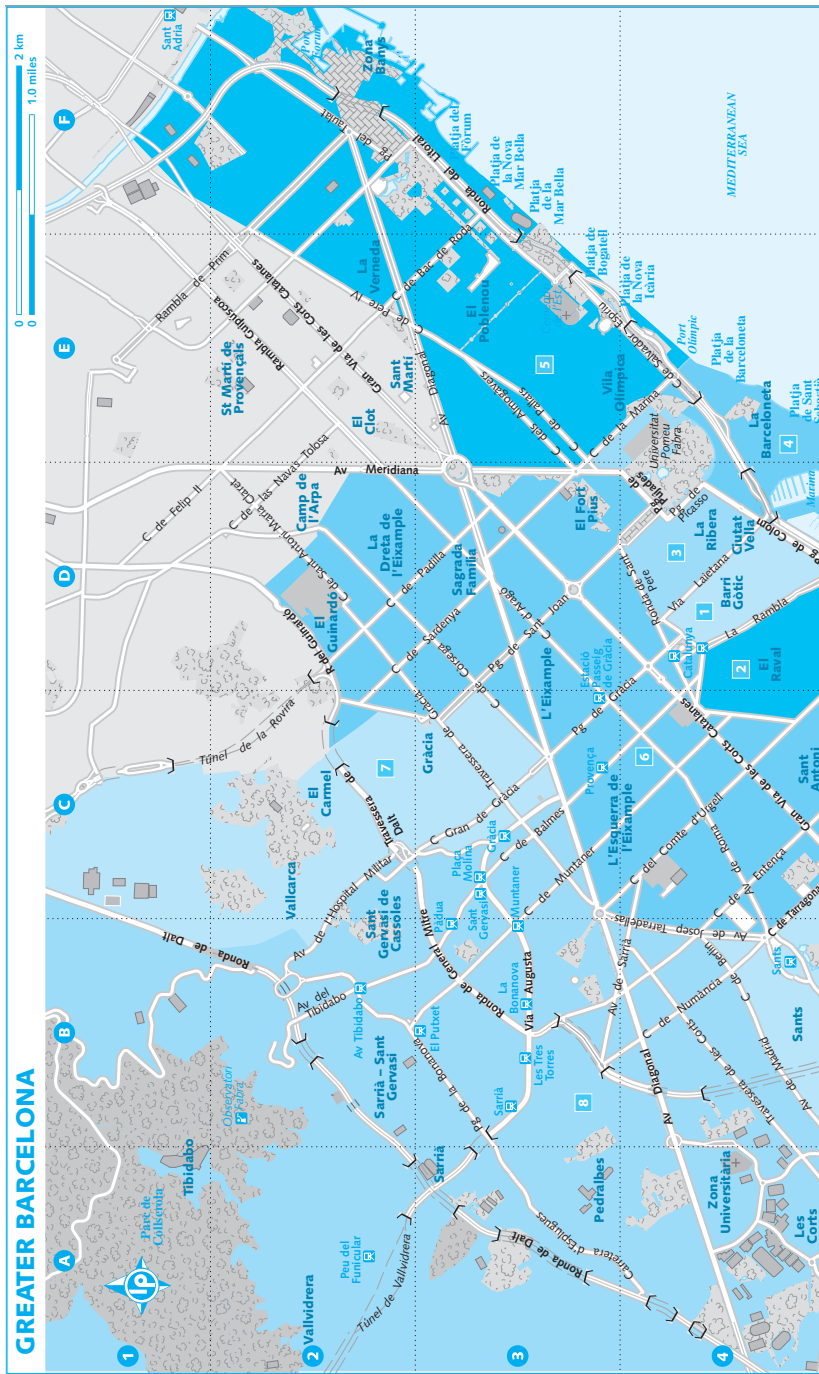
**La Rambla dels Caputxins** (aka La Rambla del Centre), named after another now nonexistent monastery, runs from Plaça de la Boqueria to Carrer dels Escudellers. The latter street is named after the potters' guild, founded in the 13th century, whose members lived and worked here (their raw materials came principally from Sicily). On the western side of La Rambla is the **Gran Teatre del Liceu** (p71).

Further south on the eastern side of La Rambla dels Caputxins is the entrance to the palm-shaded **Plaça Reial**. Below this point La Rambla gets seedier, with the occasional strip club, peep show and hookers. The final stretch, **La Rambla de Santa Mònica**, widens out to approach the **Monument a Colom** (p71) overlooking Port Vell. La Rambla here is named after the Convent de Santa Mònica, which once stood on the western flank of the street and has since been converted into an art gallery and cultural centre, the **Centre d'Art Santa Mònica** (☎ 93 316 28 10; La Rambla de Santa Mònica 7; admission free; 🕒 11am–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Drassanes).

## LA CATEDRAL & AROUND [Map pp64–5](#)

☎ 93 342 82 60; [www.website.es/catedralbcn](http://www.website.es/catedralbcn), in Catalan & Spanish; Plaça de la Seu; admission free, special visit €5; 🕒 8am–12.45pm & 5.15–8pm, special visit 1–5pm Mon–Sat, 2–5pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Jaume I

Approached from the broad Avinguda de la Catedral, Barcelona's central place of



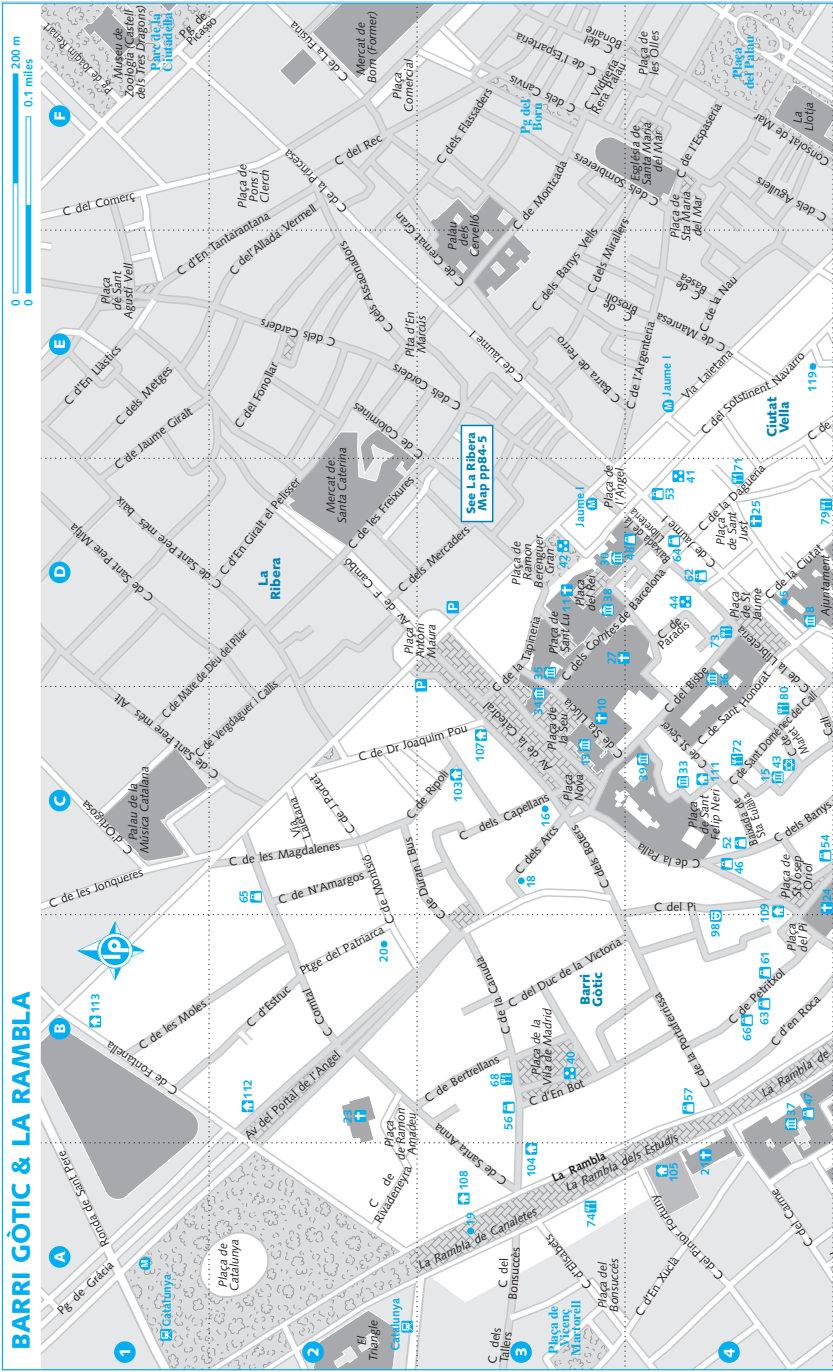
worship presents a magnificent image. The richly decorated main (northwest) façade, laced with gargoyles and the stone intricacies you would expect of northern European Gothic, sets it quite apart from other churches in Barcelona. The façade was actually added in 1870 (and is receiving a serious round of restoration), although it is based on a 1408 design. The rest of the building was built between 1298 and 1460. The other façades are sparse in decoration, and the octagonal, flat-roofed towers are a clear reminder that, even here, Catalan Gothic architectural principles prevailed.

The interior is a broad, soaring space divided into a central nave and two aisles by lines of elegant, slim pillars. The cathedral was one of the few churches in Barcelona spared by the anarchists in the civil war, so its ornamentation, never overly lavish, is intact.

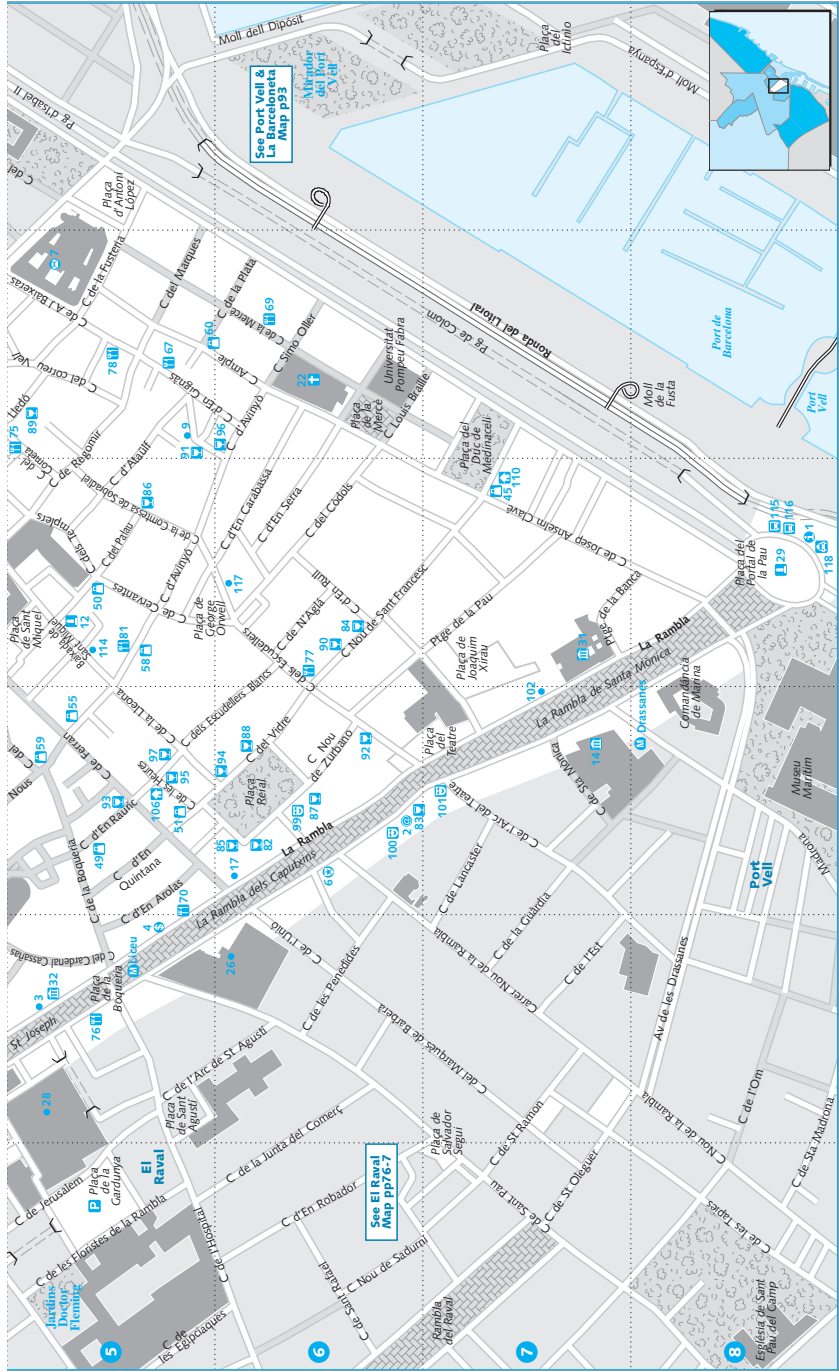
In the first chapel on the right from the northwest entrance, the main Crucifixion figure above the altar is **Sant Crist de Lepant**. It is said Don Juan's flagship bore it into battle at Lepanto and that the figure acquired its odd stance by dodging an incoming cannonball. Further along this same wall, past the southwest transept, are the wooden **coffins** of Count Ramon Berenguer I and his wife Almodis, founders of the 11th-century Romanesque predecessor to the present cathedral. Left from the main entrance is the baptismal font where, according to one story, six North American Indians brought to Europe by Columbus after his first voyage of accidental discovery were bathed in holy water.

In the middle of the central nave is the late-14th-century, exquisitely sculpted timber **coro** (choir stalls; admission €2.20). The coats of arms on the stalls belong to members of the Barcelona chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Emperor Carlos V presided over the order's meeting here in 1519. Take the time to look at the workmanship up close – the Virgin Mary and Child depicted on the pulpit are especially fine.

A broad staircase before the main altar leads you to the **crypt**, which contains the tomb of Santa Eulàlia, one of Barcelona's two patron saints and more affectionately known as Laia. The reliefs on the alabaster sarcophagus, executed by Pisan artisans,



BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA



## BARRI GÒTIC & LA RAMBLA

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recount some of her tortures and, along the top strip, the removal of her body to its present resting place.

For a bird's-eye view (mind the poop) of medieval Barcelona, visit the cathedral's **roof** and tower by taking the lift (€2.20) from the Capella de les Animes del Purgatori near the northeast transept.

From the southwest transept, exit by the partly Romanesque door (one of the few remnants of the present church's predecessor) to the leafy **claustre** (cloister), with its fountains and flock of 13 geese. The geese supposedly represent the age

of Santa Eulàlia at the time of her martyrdom and have, generation after generation, been squawking here since medieval days. They make fine watchdogs! One of the cloister chapels commemorates 930 priests, monks and nuns martyred during the civil war.

Along the northern flank of the cloister you can enter the **Sala Capitular** (Chapter House; admission €2; ☎ 10am–12.15pm & 5.15–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–12.45pm & 5.15–7pm Sun). Although it's bathed in rich red carpet and graced with fine timber seating, the few artworks gathered here are of minor interest. Among

them figure a *pietà* by Bartolomeo Bermejo. A couple of doors down in the northwest corner of the cloister is the **Capella de Santa Llúcia**, one of the few reminders of Romanesque Barcelona (although the interior is largely Gothic). Walk out the door on to Carrer de Santa Llúcia and turn around to look at the exterior – you can see that, although incorporated into La Catedral, it is a separate building.

Upon exiting the Capella de Santa Llúcia, wander into the 16th-century **Casa de l'Ardiaca** (Archdeacon's House; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat) opposite, which houses the city's archives. You may stroll around the supremely serene courtyard, cooled by trees and a fountain; it was renovated by Lluís Domènech i Montaner in 1902, when the building was owned by the lawyers' college. Montaner also designed the postal slot, which is adorned with swallows and a tortoise, said to represent the swiftness of truth and the plodding pace of justice. You can get a good glimpse at some stout **Roman wall** in here. Climb the stairs to the next level, from where you can look down into the courtyard and across to La Catedral.

You may visit La Catedral in one of two ways. In the morning or afternoon, entrance is free and you can opt to visit any combination of the choir stalls, chapter house and roof. To visit all three, it costs less (and is less crowded) to enter for the so-called 'special visit' between 1.00pm and 5pm.

Across Carrer del Bisbe is the 17th-century **Palau Episcopal** or Palau del Bisbat (Bishop's Palace). Virtually nothing remains of the original 13th-century structure. The Roman city's northwest gate stood here and you can see the lower segments of the Roman towers that stood on either side of the gate at the base of the Palau Episcopal and Casa de l'Ardiaca. In fact, the lower part of the entire northwest wall of the Casa de l'Ardiaca is of Roman origin – you can also make out part of the first arch of a Roman aqueduct.

Across Plaça Nova from La Catedral your eye may be caught by childlike scribbles on the façade of the **Col·legi de Arquitectes** (Architectural College). It is, in fact, a giant contribution by Picasso done in 1962, representing Mediterranean festivals and much ridiculed by the local press when it was unveiled.

## MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE LA CIUTAT

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 21 00; www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat; Carrer del Veguer; adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6/free/4 (incl Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes & Park Güell Centre de Accollida), from 4pm 1st Sat of month free; ☎ 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Oct–Mar, 10am–8pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Apr–Sep; ☎ Jaume I Leap back into Roman Barcino with a subterranean stroll and then stride around parts of the former Palau Reial Major (Grand Royal Palace) on Plaça del Rei (King's Sq, the former palace's courtyard), among the key locations of medieval princely power in Barcelona, in what is one of Barcelona's most fascinating museums. The square is frequently the scene of organised or impromptu concerts and is one of the most atmospheric corners of the medieval city.

Enter through **Casa Padellàs**, just south of Plaça del Rei. Casa Padellàs was built for a 16th-century noble family in Carrer dels Mercaders and moved here, stone by stone, in the 1930s. It has a courtyard typical of Barcelona's late-Gothic and baroque mansions, with a graceful external staircase up to the 1st floor. Today it leads to a restored Roman tower and a section of Roman wall (whose exterior faces Plaça Ramon de Berenguer el Gran).

Below ground is a remarkable walk through about 4 sq km of excavated Roman and Visigothic Barcelona. After the display on the typical Roman *domus* (villa), you reach a public laundry (outside in the street were containers for people to urinate into, as the urine was used as disinfectant). You pass more laundries and dyeing shops, a 6th-century public cold-water bath and more dye shops. As you hit the *Cardo Minor* (a main street), you turn right then left and reach various shops dedicated to the making of *garum*. This paste, a fave food across the Roman Empire, was made of mashed-up fish intestines, eggs and blood. Occasionally prawns, cockles and herbs were added to create other flavours. Further on are fish preserve stores. Fish were sliced up (and all innards removed for making *garum*) and laid in alternate layers with salt to preserve (left sitting in troughs for about three weeks before being ready for sale and export).

Next come remnants of a 6th- to 7th-century church and Episcopal buildings,

## NIGHT PASSAGES

On hot summer nights in July and August, the Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat (along with its branches: Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes, Park Güell Centre de Acollida, Museu-Casa Verdaguera, Espai Santa Caterina and the Refugi 307 air-raid shelter) stages guided tours and other nocturnal events. For programmes, check out No Tanquem A La Nit ([www.notanquemalanit.cat](http://www.notanquemalanit.cat), in Catalan).

followed by wine-making stores, with ducts for allowing the must to flow off and ceramic, round-bottomed *dolia* for storing and ageing wine. Ramparts then wind around and upward, past remains of the gated patio of a Roman house, the medieval Palau Episcopal (Bishops' Palace) and into two broad vaulted halls, with displays on medieval Barcelona.

You eventually emerge at a hall and ticket office set up on the north side of Plaça del Rei. To your right is the **Saló del Tinell**, the banqueting hall of the royal palace and a fine example of Catalan Gothic (built 1359–70). Its broad arches and bare walls give a sense of solemnity that would have made an appropriate setting for Fernando and Isabel to hear Columbus' first reports of the New World. The hall is sometimes used for temporary exhibitions, which may cost extra, and mean that your peaceful contemplation of its architectural majesty is somewhat obstructed.

As you leave the Saló you come to the 14th-century **Capella Reial de Santa Àgata**, the palace chapel. Outside, a spindly bell tower rises from the northeast side of Plaça del Rei. Inside, all is bare except for the 15th-century altarpiece and the magnificent *techumbre* (decorated timber ceiling). The altarpiece is considered to be one of Jaume Huguet's finest surviving works.

Head down the fan-shaped stairs into Plaça del Rei and look up to observe the **Mirador del Rei Martí** (lookout tower of King Martin), built in 1555, long after the king's death. It is part of Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragón and so the magnificent views over the old city are now enjoyed by a privileged few.

From Plaça del Rei it's worth taking a detour northeast to see the two best surviving stretches of Barcelona's **Roman walls**, which once boasted 78 towers (as much a matter of prestige as of defence). One is on

the southwest side of Plaça Ramon de Berenguer el Gran, with the Capella Reial de Santa Àgata atop. The square itself is dominated by a statue of Ramon de Berenguer el Gran done by Josep Llimona in 1880. The other is a little further south, by the northern end of Carrer del Sotstinent Navarro. The Romans built and reinforced these walls in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, after the first attacks by Germanic tribes from the north.

### **PALAU DEL LLOCTINENT** Map pp64–5

**Carrer dels Comtes de Barcelona; admission free;**  
🕒 10am–7pm; 🚶 Jaume I

The southwest side of Plaça del Rei is taken up by this palace, built in the 1550s as the residence of the Spanish *lloctinent* (viceroy) of Catalonia and later converted into a convent. From 1853, it housed the Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragón, a unique archive with documents detailing the history of the Crown of Aragón and Catalonia, starting in the 12th century and reaching down to the 20th. Gracefully restored in 2006, its courtyard is worth wandering through. Have a look upwards from the main staircase to admire the extraordinary timber *artesonado*, a sculpted ceiling made to seem like the upturned hull of a boat. It was done in the 16th century by Antoni Carbonell. Exhibitions, usually related in some way to the archives, are also staged. In 2008, precious documents relating to Jaume I El Conqueridor were on show. Indeed, it was in his reign that systematic copying and storage of royal and government documents began in earnest – forming the initial nucleus of the Arxiu. When you walk outside the main entrance, look at the *putti* on the right side of the main façade below the window – one seems to be showing a bellows up the other's backside. And have a glance at the walls of La Catedral. See all the grooves cut into the stone? It's believed that the viceroy's soldiers used the church walls to sharpen their weapons.

### **MUSEU FREDERIC MARÈS** Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 35 00; [www.museumares.bcn.es](http://www.museumares.bcn.es); **Plaça de Sant Lu 5-6; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €4.20/free/2.40, Wed afternoons & 1st Sun of month free;** 🕒 10am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays; 🚶 Jaume I

This eclectic collection is housed in what was once part of the medieval Palau Reial

Major, on Carrer dels Comtes de Barcelona. A rather worn coat-of-arms on the wall indicates that it was also, for a while, the seat of the Spanish Inquisition in Barcelona. Frederic Marès i Deulovol (1893–1991) was a rich scrapper, traveller and obsessive collector. He specialised in medieval Spanish sculpture, huge quantities of which are displayed in the basement and on the ground and 1st floors – including some lovely polychrome wooden sculptures of the Crucifixion and the Virgin. Among the most eye-catching pieces is a reconstructed Romanesque doorway with four arches, taken from a 13th-century country church in the Aragonese province of Huesca.

The top two floors hold a mind-boggling array of knick-knacks, from toy soldiers and cribs to scissors and 19th-century playing cards, from early still cameras to pipes, from fine ceramics to a room that once served as Marès' study and library, but is now crammed with sculpture. The shady courtyard houses a pleasant summer café (Cafè de l'Estiu).

### **CASA DE LA PIA ALMOINA (MUSEU DIOCESÀ)** Map pp64–5

☎ 93 315 22 13; [www.arqbcn.org](http://www.arqbcn.org), in Catalan; **Avinguda de la Catedral 4; adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6/free/3;** 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–2pm Sun; 🚶 Jaume I  
Barcelona's Roman walls ran across present-day Plaça de la Seu into what subsequently became the Casa de la Pia Almoina. The city's main centre of charity was located here in the 11th century, although the much-crumbled remains of the present building date to the 15th century. Today it houses the Museu Diocesà (Diocesan Museum), where a sparse collection of medieval religious art is on display, usually supplemented by a temporary exhibition or two.

### **PLAÇA DE SANT JAUME** Map pp64–5

🚶 Jaume I

In the 2000 or so years since the Romans settled here, the area around this square (often remodelled), which started life as the forum, has been the focus of Barcelona's civic life. Facing each other across it are the Palau de la Generalitat (seat of Catalonia's regional government) on the north side and the Ajuntament (Town Hall) to

the south. Both have fine Gothic interiors, which, unhappily, the public can enter only at limited times.

Founded in the early 15th century on land that had largely belonged to the city's by-then defunct Jewish community to house Catalonia's government, the **Palau de la Generalitat** (🕒 free guided visit 10am–1pm 2nd & 4th Sun of month plus 23 Apr, 11 Sep & 24 Sep) was extended over the centuries as its importance (and bureaucracy) grew.

Marc Safont designed the original Gothic main entrance on Carrer del Bisbe. The modern main entrance on Plaça de Sant Jaume is a late-Renaissance job with neo-classical leanings. If you wander by in the evening, squint up through the windows into the **Saló de Sant Jordi** (Hall of St George) and you will get some idea of the sumptuousness of the interior.

If you *do* get inside, you're in for a treat. Normally you will have to enter from Carrer de Sant Sever. The first rooms you pass through are characterised by low vaulted ceilings. From here you head upstairs to the raised courtyard known as the **Pati dels Tarongers**, a modest Gothic orangery (opened about once a month for concert performances of the palace's chimes; see p216). The 16th-century **Sala Daurada i de Sessions**, one of the rooms leading off the patio, is a splendid meeting hall lit up by huge chandeliers. Still more imposing is the Renaissance Saló de Sant Jordi, whose murals were added last century – many an occasion of pomp and circumstance takes place here. Finally, you descend the staircase of the Gothic **Pati Central** to leave by what was, in the beginning, the building's main entrance.

Facing the Palau de la Generalitat, and otherwise known as the Casa de la Ciutat, the **Ajuntament** (☎ 010; admission free; 🕒 10am–1pm Sun) has been the seat of city power for centuries. The Consell de Cent, from medieval times the city's ruling council, first sat here in the 14th century, but the building has lamentably undergone many changes since the days of Barcelona's Gothic-era splendour.

Only the original, now disused, entrance on Carrer de la Ciutat retains its Gothic ornament. The main 19th-century neo-classical façade on the square is a charmless riposte to the Palau de la Generalitat. Inside, the **Saló de Cent** is the hall in which the town council once held its plenary sessions.



The broad vaulting is pure Catalan Gothic and the *artesonado* ceiling demonstrates fine work. In fact, much of what you see is comparatively recent. The building was badly damaged in a bombardment in 1842 and has been repaired and tampered with repeatedly. The wooden neo-Gothic seating was added at the beginning of the 20th century, as was the grand alabaster *retablo* (retable, or altarpiece) at the back. To the right you enter the small **Saló de la Reina Regente**, built in 1860, where the Ajuntament now sits. To the left of the Saló de Cent is the **Saló de les Croniques** – the murals here recount Catalan exploits in Greece and the Near East in Catalonia's empire-building days.

Behind the Ajuntament rise the awful town hall offices built in the 1970s over Plaça de Sant Miquel. Opposite is a rare 15th-century gem, **Casa Centelles**, on the corner of Baixada de Sant Miquel. You can wander into the fine Gothic-Renaissance courtyard if the gates are open.

## PLAÇA DE SANT JOSEP ORIOL & AROUND

Map pp64–5

**M** Liceu

This small plaza is the prettiest in the Barri Gòtic. Its bars and cafés attract buskers and artists and make it a lively place to hang out. It is surrounded by quaint streets, many dotted with appealing cafés, restaurants and shops.

Looming over the square is the flank of the **Església de Santa Maria del Pi** (☎ 8.30am–1pm & 4.30–9pm Mon–Sat, 9am–2pm & 5–9pm Sun & holidays), a Gothic church built in the 14th to 16th centuries. The bulk of it was completed in 1320–91. With its 10m diameter, the beautiful rose window above its entrance on Plaça del Pi is claimed by some to be the world's biggest. The interior of the church was gutted when leftists ransacked it in the opening months of the civil war in 1936 and most of the stained glass is modern. Perhaps one happy result of the fire was the destruction of the 19th-century, neo-Gothic seating, which therefore had to be replaced by the 18th-century baroque original.

The third chapel on the left is dedicated to Sant Josep Oriol, who was parish priest here from 1687 to 1702. The chapel has a map showing the places in the church where he worked numerous miracles

## MANIC MONDAYS

Many attractions shut their doors on Monday but there are plenty of exceptions. Among the more enticing ones are: Casa-Museu Gaudí (Park Güell); Gran Teatre del Liceu; Jardí Botànic; La Catedral; La Pedrera; La Sagrada Família; Monument a Colom; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba); Museu de l'Eròtica; Museu de la Xocolata; Museu del Futbol Club Barcelona; Museu Marítim; Palau de la Música Catalana and the Pavelló Mies van der Rohe.

(he was canonised in 1909). According to legend, a 10th-century fisherman discovered an image of the Virgin Mary in a *pi* (pine tree) he was intent on cutting down to build a boat. Struck by the vision, he instead built a little chapel, later to be succeeded by this Gothic church. A pine still grows in the square.

## PLAÇA REIAL

Map pp64–5

**M** Liceu

Just south of Carrer de Ferran, near its La Rambla end, Plaça Reial is a traffic-free plaza whose 19th-century neoclassical façades hide numerous eateries, bars and nightspots. It was created on the site of a convent, one of several destroyed along La Rambla (the strip was fairly teeming with religious institutions) in the wake of the Spain-wide disentailment laws that stripped the Church of much of its property. The lampposts by the central fountain are Antoni Gaudí's first known works.

Residents here have a rough time of it, with noise a virtual constant as punters crowd in and out of restaurants, bars and *discotecas* (clubs) at all hours. Downright dangerous until the 1980s, the square retains a restless atmosphere, where unsuspecting tourists, respectable citizens, ragged buskers, down-and-outs and sharp-witted pickpockets come face to face. Don't be put off, but watch your pockets.

The southern half of the Barri Gòtic is imbued with the memory of Picasso, who lived as a teenager with his family in Carrer de la Mercè, had his first studio in Carrer de la Plata (now a rather cheesy restaurant) and was a regular visitor to a brothel at Carrer d'Avinyó 27. That experience may have inspired his 1907 painting *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

## GRAN TEATRE DEL LICEU

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 485 99 00; [www.liceubarcelona.com](http://www.liceubarcelona.com); La Rambla dels Caputxins 51–59; admission with/without guide €8.50/4; ☎ guided tour 10am, unguided visits 11.30am, noon, 12.30pm & 1pm; **M** Liceu If you can't catch a night at the opera, you can still have a look around one of Europe's greatest opera houses, known to locals as the Liceu. Smaller than Milan's La Scala but bigger than Venice's La Fenice, it can seat up to 2300 people in its grand horseshoe auditorium.

Built in 1847, the Liceu launched such Catalan stars as Josep (aka José) Carreras and Montserrat Caballé. Fire virtually destroyed it in 1994, but city authorities were quick to get it back into operation. Carefully reconstructing the 19th-century auditorium and installing the latest in theatre technology, technicians brought the Liceu back to life in October 1999. You can take a quick turn around the main public areas of the theatre or join one of two guided tours.

On the guided tour you are taken to the grand foyer, with its thick pillars and sumptuous chandeliers, and then up the marble staircase to the **Saló dels Miralls** (Hall of Mirrors). These both survived the 1994 fire and the latter was traditionally where theatre-goers mingled during intermission. With mirrors, ceiling frescoes, fluted columns and high-and-mighty phrases in praise of the arts, it all exudes a typically neobaroque richness worthy of its 19th-century patrons. You are then led up to the 4th-floor stalls to admire the theatre itself.

The tour also takes in a collection of Modernista art, El Cercle del Liceu, which contains works by Ramon Casas.

## MONUMENT A COLOM

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 302 52 24; Plaça del Portal de la Pau; lift adult/child under 4yr/senior & child 4–12yr €2.50/free/1.50; ☎ 9am–8.30pm Jun–Sep, 10am–6.30pm Oct–May; **M** Drassanes

High above the swirl of traffic on the roundabout below, a pigeon-poop-coiffed Columbus keeps permanent watch, pointing vaguely out to the Mediterranean (to his home town of Genoa?). Built for the Universal Exhibition in 1888, the monument allows you to zip up 60m in the lift for bird's-eye views back up La Rambla and across the ports of Barcelona. It was

in Barcelona that Columbus allegedly gave the delighted Catholic monarchs a report of his first discoveries in the Americas after his voyage in 1492. In the 19th century, it was popularly believed here that Columbus was one of Barcelona's most illustrious sons. Some historians still make that claim.

## ESGLÉSIA DE SANTS JUST I PASTOR

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 301 74 33; [www.basilicasantjust.cat](http://www.basilicasantjust.cat), in Catalan; Plaça de Sant Just 5; admission free; ☎ 11am–1pm & 5–9pm Wed–Sat, 11am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue, 10am–1.30pm Sun; **M** Liceu

This somewhat neglected, single-nave church, with chapels on either side of the buttressing, was built in 1342 in Catalan Gothic style on what is reputedly the site of the oldest parish church in Barcelona. Inside, you can admire some fine stained-glass windows. In front of it, in a pretty little square that was used as a set (a smelly Parisian marketplace) in 2006 for *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, is what is claimed to be the city's oldest Gothic fountain.

On the morning of 11 September 1924, Antoni Gaudí was arrested as he attempted to enter the church from this square to attend Mass. In those days of the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, it took little to ruffle official feathers, and Gaudí's refusal to speak Spanish (Castilian) to the overbearing Guardia Civil officers who had stopped him earned him the better part of a day in the cells until a friend came to bail him out.

## CENTRE D'INTERPRETACIÓ DEL CALL

Map pp64–5

☎ 93 256 21 22; [www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat](http://www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat); Placeta de Manuel Ribé s/n; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm Wed–Fri, 11am–6pm Sat, 11am–3pm Sun & holidays; **M** Jaume I

Once a 14th-century house of the Jewish weaver Jucef Bonhiac, this small visitor's centre is dedicated to the history of Barcelona's Jewish quarter, or Call. Glass sections in the ground floor allow you to inspect Mr Bonhiac's former wells and storage space. The house, also known as the Casa de l'Alquimista (the Alchemist's House), hosts a very modest display of Jewish artefacts, including ceramics excavated in the area of the Call, along with explanations and maps of the one-time Jewish quarter.

The area between Carrer dels Banys Nous and Plaça de Sant Jaume was the heart of the city's medieval Jewish quarter, or Call Major, until the Jews were expelled in the late 15th century. The Call Menor extended across the modern Carrer de Ferran as far as Baixada de Sant Miquel and Carrer d'En Rauric. The present Església de Sant Jaume on Carrer de Ferran was built on the site of a synagogue.

Even before their expulsion in 1492, Jews were not exactly privileged citizens. As in many medieval centres, they were obliged to wear a special identifying mark on their garments and had trouble getting permission to expand their ghetto as the Call's population increased (as many as 4000 people were crammed into the tiny streets of the Call Major).

### SINAGOGA MAJOR Map pp64–5

☎ 93 317 07 90; [www.calldebarcelona.org](http://www.calldebarcelona.org); Carrer de Marlet 5; admission €2 donation; ☎ 11am–6pm Mon–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun; 🚶 Liceu

When an Argentine investor bought a run-down electrician's store with an eye to converting it into central Barcelona's umpteenth bar, he could hardly have known he had stumbled onto the remains of what could be the city's main medieval synagogue (some historians cast doubt on the claim). Remnants of medieval and Roman-era walls remain in the small vaulted space that you enter from the street. Also remaining are tanners' wells installed in the 15th century. The second chamber has been spruced up for use as a synagogue. A remnant of late-Roman-era wall here, given its orientation facing Jerusalem, has led some to speculate that there was a synagogue here even in Roman times. There were four synagogues in the medieval city but, after the pogroms of 1391, this one (assuming it was the Sinagoga Major) was Christianised by the placing of an effigy of St Dominic on the building. A guide will explain what is thought to be the significance of the site in various languages.

### TEMPLE ROMÀ D'AUGUSTÍ Map pp64–5

Carrer del Paradis; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Jaume I

Opposite the southeast end of La Catedral, narrow Carrer del Paradis leads towards Plaça de Sant Jaume. Inside No 10, itself

an intriguing building with Gothic and baroque touches, are four columns and the architrave of Barcelona's main Roman temple, dedicated to Caesar Augustus and built to worship his imperial highness in the 1st century AD. You are now standing on the highest point of Roman Barcino – Mont Tàber (a grand total of 16.9m, unlikely to induce altitude sickness). You may well find the door open outside the listed hours. Just pop in.

### ROMAN TOMBS Map pp64–5

Plaça de la Vila de Madrid; 🚶 Catalunya

Along Carrer de la Canuda, a block east of the top end of La Rambla, is a sunken garden where a series of Roman tombs lie exposed. The burial ground stretches along either side of the road leading northwest out of Barcelona's Roman predecessor, Barcino.

### MUSEU DE L'ERÒTICA Map pp64–5

☎ 93 318 98 65; [www.erotica-museum.com](http://www.erotica-museum.com); La Rambla de Sant Josep 96; adult/senior & student €7.50/6.50; ☎ 10am–midnight Jun–Sep, 11am–9pm Oct–May; 🚶 Liceu

Observe what naughtiness people have been getting up to since ancient times in this Erotica Museum, with lots of Kamasutra and 1920s flickering porn movies. The museum caters to all tastes. For those red-faced about entering such a scurrilous place, there really is a lot of sound historical material, such as Indian bas-reliefs showing various aspects of Tantric love, 18th-century wood carvings depicting Kamasutra positions (can normal people really engage in all these gymnastics?), Japanese porcelain porn and the like. An array of modern, vaguely erotic artwork also lends intellectual weight to the exercise. Altogether more fun are the 18th-century S&M torture room, the rather complicated, dildo-equipped 'pleasure seat' and early-20th-century skin flicks.

### MUSEU DE CERA Map pp64–5

☎ 93 317 26 49; [www.museocerabcn.com](http://www.museocerabcn.com); Passatge de la Banca 7; adult/child under 5yr/senior & child 5–11yr €7.50/free/4.50; ☎ 10am–10pm daily Jun–Sep, 10am–1.30pm & 4–7.30pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2pm & 4.30–8.30pm Sat, Sun & holidays Oct–May; 🚶 Drassanes

Inside this late-19th-century building you can stand, sit and lounge about with 300

wax figures. Frankenstein is here, along with a rather awkward-looking Prince Charles with Camilla. As if to show us what she feels, Princess Di is elsewhere giving Mother Teresa a hand. *Star Wars* characters prance in sci-fi style, making poor old Don Quixote look a little forlorn. Dalí had to be in the crowd, along with more exotic figures like Ali Bey, the 18th-century Barcelona-born spy in Mecca. The museum also houses a hall of horror (how could it not?!).

### ESGLÉSIA DE LA MERCÈ Map pp64–5

Plaça de la Mercè; 🚶 Drassanes

Raised in the 1760s on the site of its Gothic predecessor, the baroque Església de la Mercè is home to Barcelona's most celebrated patron saint. It was badly damaged during the civil war. What remains is, however, quite a curiosity. The baroque façade facing the square contrasts with the Renaissance flank along Carrer Ample. The latter was actually moved here from another nearby church that was subsequently destroyed in the 1870s.

### DALÍ ESCULTOR Map pp64–5

Carrer dels Arcs 5; admission €8; ☎ 10am–10pm; 🚶 Liceu

One of the best things about this collection is its superb location in the Reial Cercle Artístic (Royal Art Circle) building just near La Catedral. This somewhat hyped display offers 60-odd little-known sculptures by a man who was largely renowned for his paintings. Documents, sketches and photos by and of the artist complete the picture. If you can't visit his [museum-mausoleum \(p249\)](#) in Figueres, this is no substitute, but does provide some clues to the life and work of the moustachioed maestro.

### MUSEU DEL CALÇAT Map pp64–5

☎ 93 301 45 33; Plaça de Sant Felip Neri 5; admission €2.50; ☎ 11am–2pm Tue–Sun; 🚶 Jaume I

This obscurely located Footwear Museum is home to everything from Egyptian sandals to dainty ladies' shoes of the 18th century. The museum and cobblers' guild, which has its roots in the city's medieval past, was moved here shortly after the civil war.

## HIDDEN TREASURES IN THE BARRI GÒTIC

### Walking Tour

#### WALK FACTS

Start Roman Tombs  
Finish Centre Cívic Pati Llimona  
Distance 1.5km  
Duration 30 minutes  
Transport 🚶 Catalunya or Liceu

#### 1 Roman Tombs

On Plaça de la Vila de Madrid is a sunken garden with various [Roman tombs \(opposite\)](#) lined up. It is speculated that they were in a burial ground along a branch road connecting Roman Barcino with the Via Augusta, which linked Rome and Cádiz.

#### 2 Església de Santa Anna

In a tranquil square just off busy Carrer de Santa Anna lies this rarely visited church. The unassuming Església de Santa Anna dates from the 12th century, but little remains of the original Romanesque structure. The Gothic cloister is a shady haven – if you can get in. It's open sporadically.

#### 3 Palace Walls of Guifré el Pelós

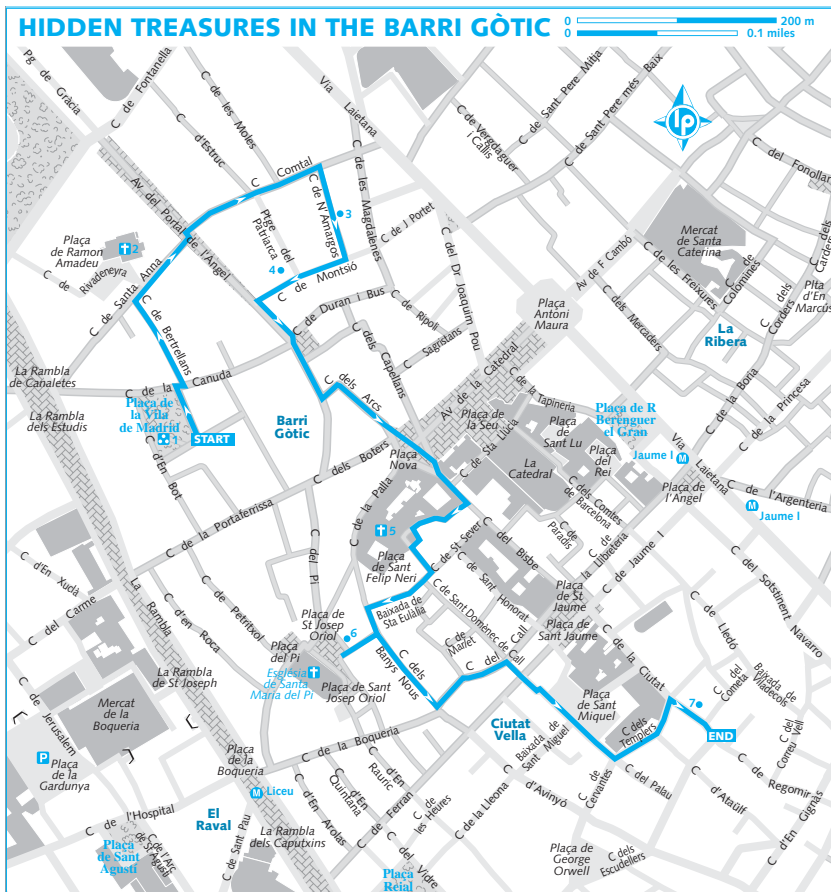
Stroll along Carrer de N'Amargos and muse on the plaque at No 8. It claims the palace garden walls of the first Comte (Count) of Barcelona, Guifré el Pelós (Wilfred the Hair; see [p22](#)), stood here. Carrer de N'Amargos was the first street in Barcelona to get gas lighting.

#### 4 Els Quatre Gats

Near the supposed site of Wilfred's palace is a Modernista icon at Carrer de Montsió 3. 'The Four Cats', a colourful if mediocre restaurant, started life as Casa Martí (1896), built by Puig i Cadafalch. From 1897 to 1903, it was *the* hang-out for Modernista artists and other bohemians, from Picasso to composer Enric Granados.

#### 5 Església de Sant Felip Neri

The baroque façade of the Església de Sant Felip Neri (completed in 1752) has been shattered by the impact of machine-gun fire. One story says that pro-Franco troops carried out summary executions here shortly after they



marched into the city in 1939. An eerie silence hangs over the square.

### 6 Palau de Fiveller

Gracing Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol (at No 4), just opposite the silent stone flank of the **Església de Santa Maria del Pi** (p70), stands Palau de Fiveller, a one-time private mansion dating from 1571. The façade dates from the 18th century.

### 7 Centre Cívic Pati Llimona

Remains of Roman Barcino's southernmost city gate, as well as parts of the 3rd- and 4th-century city wall, line Carrer de Regomir. To get a closer look at the ruins, enter the **Centre Cívic Pati Llimona** (☎ 93 268 47 00; admission free; ☒ 9am-2pm & 4.30-8.30pm). Just beyond the gate at No 13 stands a 15th-century mansion, **Casa Gualbes**.

## EL RAVAL

Drinking & Nightlife p200; Eating p174; Shopping p156; Sleeping p233

Long one of the most rough-and-tumble parts of Barcelona, El Raval is becoming so hip in a grungy, inner-city way that they've even invented a verb for rambling around El Raval – *ravalejar*.

El Raval (an Arabic word referring to the suburbs beyond the medieval walls that long lined La Rambla) has had a chequered history. Its bottom half is better known as the Barri Ximès, a seedy red-light zone that even today, after decades of efforts to clean it up, retains a touch of its dodgy feel.

For centuries the area has been home to prostitutes, louche lads and, at times, a bohemian collection of interlopers. In the 1920s and '30s especially, it was a popular playground with Barcelonins of many classes, busy at night with the rambunctious activity in taverns, *cafés concerts*, cabarets and brothels. Carrer Nou de la Rambla, where Picasso lived for a while, was particularly lively. By the 1960s, many of the brothels and bars had shut down, but there was still plenty of activity, especially when the American fleet came to town. This was also the haunt of Pepe Carvalho, the dissolute star of Barcelona writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's much-loved detective stories (see p37).

Recent waves of immigration have changed the make-up of El Raval completely. It has become the main centre for the city's busy Pakistani population, and has sizeable contingents from North Africa and the Philippines. It is estimated that the percentage of migrants living in El Raval has gone from 3% to 55% since the mid-1990s.

Just as great an impact has come from the explosion of bars and restaurants. While it may never attain the popularity of El Born, El Raval has arrived. Suddenly swarms of more adventurous locals and curious visitors have opened up the area to joyous exploration, especially by night.

Bounded by La Rambla in the east and Ronda de Sant Antoni, Ronda de Sant Pau and Avinguda del Paral·lel to the west and south, El Raval started life as a higgledy-piggledy suburb of medieval Barcelona. Here and there, we stumble across reminders of the area's long history, from Romanesque cloisters to the medieval shipyards of Les Drassanes.

Carrer de l'Hospital, named after the city's 15th-century hospital and once the road to Madrid, roughly divides the area in two. The northern half has an almost respectable air about it. It is certainly full of diversity. From the Meridien hotel on expensive Carrer del Pintor Fortuny you are a couple of blocks away from the colourful Mercat de la Boqueria produce market, a feast of contemporary art at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba), art galleries, the University of Barcelona's history, geography and philosophy faculties (with some 6000 students), the journalism school of Universitat Ramon Llull and the Massana conservatorium. At night, students fill the bars on Carrer de Valldonzella and Carrer de Joaquín Costa.

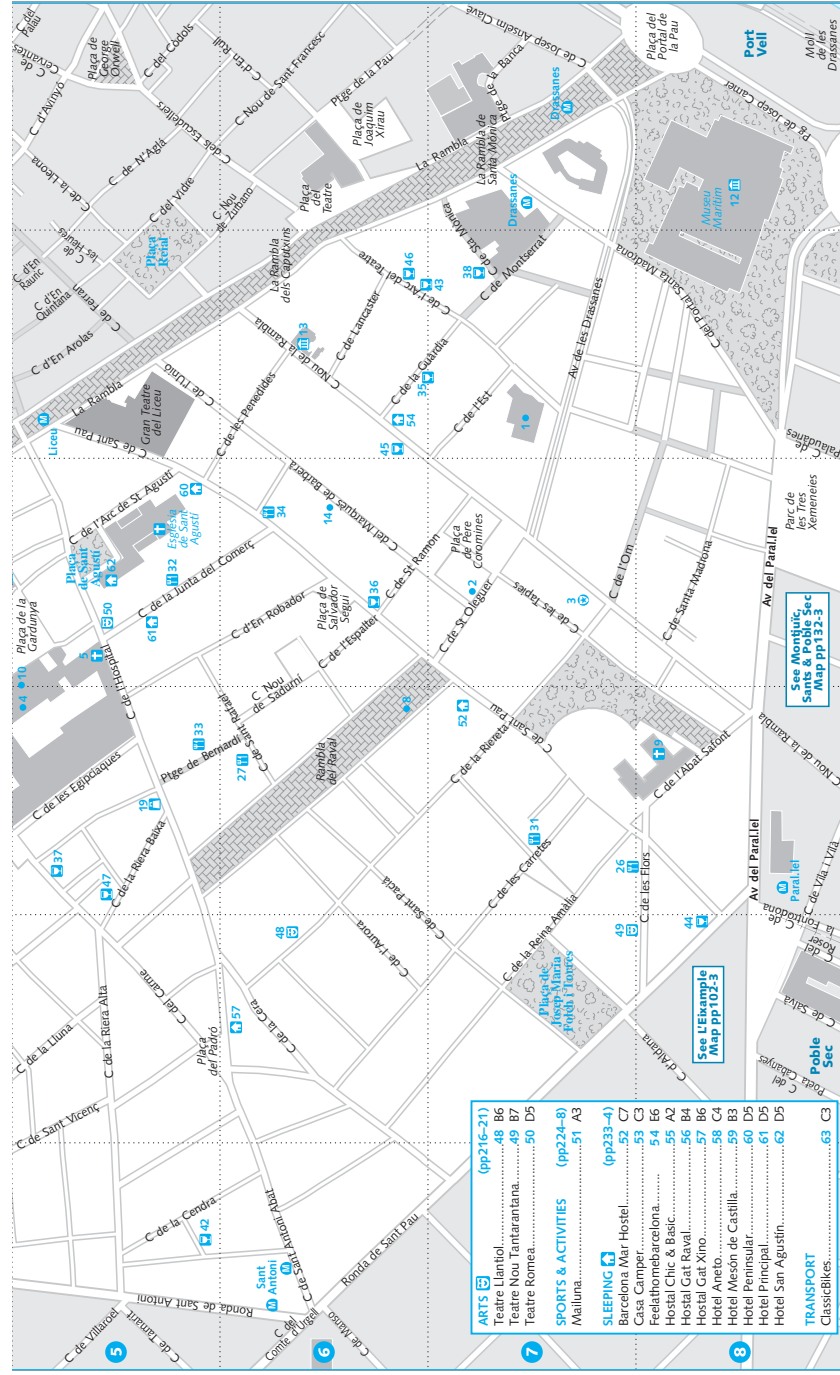
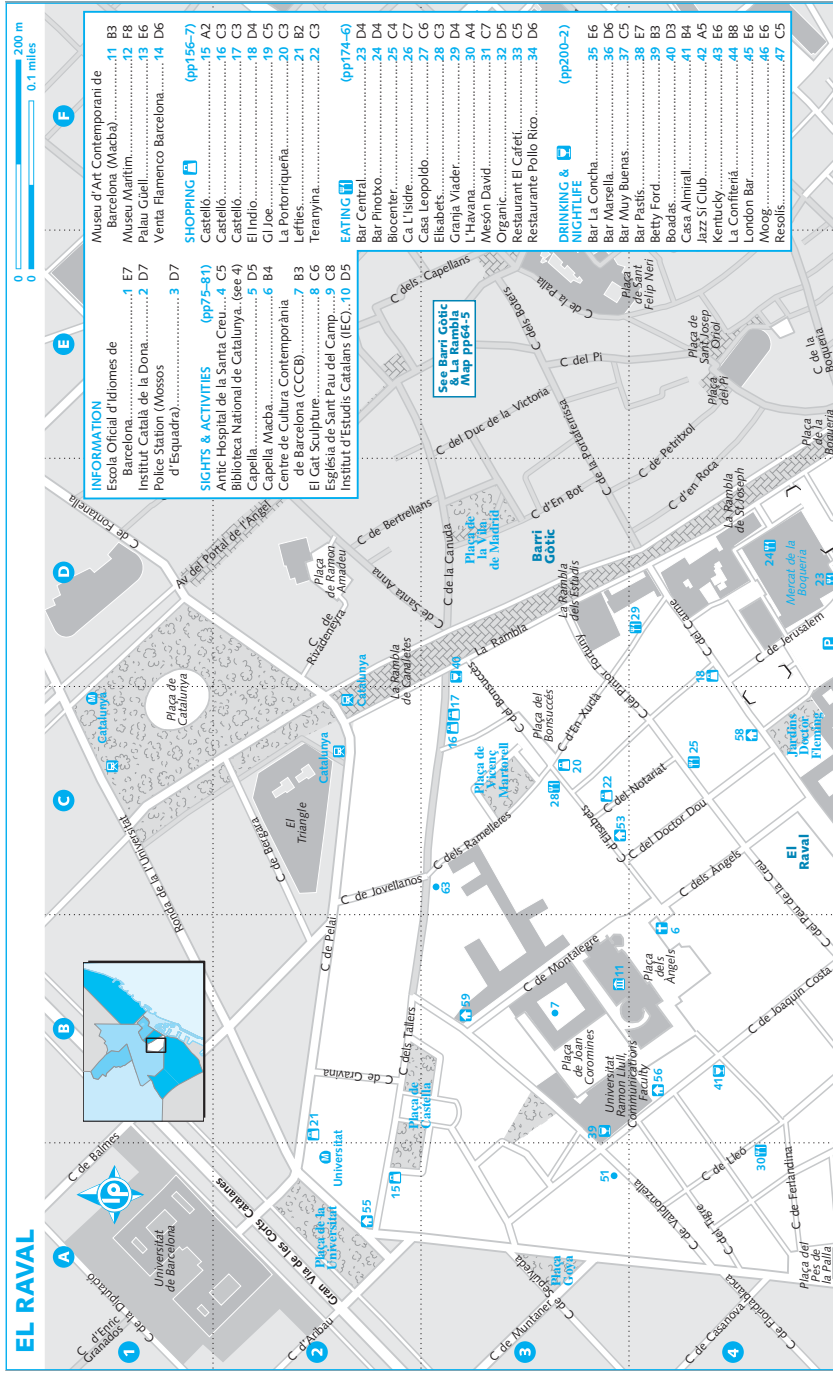
Carrer de l'Hospital marks a crossroads. Home to an unassuming mosque (virtually opposite the national library and one of five in the district), the street is lined with bars that are more reminiscent of Tangier than Spain. The street fills with faithful male Muslims around midday on Fridays for the week's main prayers. The western end of the street has been largely taken over by Pakistanis and North Africans, who have opened *cafés*, halal butcher shops and barbers. In La Rambla del Raval, which replaced a whole slum block in 2000, Pakistanis sometimes play cricket, while a youthful set of hedonists checks out kebab shops and a growing assortment of bars.

Between Carrer de l'Hospital and the waterfront, El Raval retains some of its dodgy flavour of yore. A five-star hotel and the city's central cinema archive are planned for the area bound by the Rambla del Raval and Carrer de Sant Pau (where excavations have uncovered traces of the city's 17th-century women's prison). But for the moment, the latter street remains a haunt of

## top picks

### EL RAVAL

- Museu Marítim (p78)
- Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (p78)
- Palau Güell (p79)
- Església de Sant Pau del Camp (p80)
- Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Macba; p79)



junkies and dealers, while Carrer de Sant Ramon is particularly busy with streetwalkers – some traditions die hard. Some fine old bars have stood the test of time in these streets. Increasingly their customers are a mix of locals and tourists.

El Raval is encircled by three Metro lines. Línies 1, 2 and 3 stop at strategic points right around the district, so nothing is far from a Metro stop. The Línia 3 stop at Liceu is the most strategic exit point.

### MUSEU MARÍTIM Map pp76–7

☎ 93 342 99 20; [www.museumaritimbarcelona.cat](http://www.museumaritimbarcelona.cat); **Avinguda de les Drassanes**; **adult/child under 7yr/senior & student €6.50/free/3.25, 3–8pm 1st Sat of month free**; ☎ 10am–8pm; **M** **Drassanes**  
Venice had its Arsenal and Barcelona the Reials Drassanes (Royal Shipyards), from which Don Juan of Austria's flagship galley was launched to lead a joint Spanish–Venetian fleet into the momentous Battle of Lepanto against the Turks in 1571.

These mighty Gothic shipyards are not as extensive as their Venetian counterpart but they're an extraordinary piece of civilian architecture nonetheless. Today the broad arches shelter the Museu Marítim, the city's seafaring-history museum and one of the most fascinating in town.

The shipyards were, in their heyday, among the greatest in Europe. Begun in the 13th century and completed by 1378, the long, arched bays (the highest arches reach 13m) once sloped off as slipways directly into the water – which lapped the seaward side of the Drassanes until at least the end of the 18th century.

The centre of the shipyards is dominated by a full-sized replica (made in the 1970s) of Don Juan of Austria's flagship. A clever audio-visual display aboard the vessel brings to life the ghastly existence of the slaves, prisoners and volunteers(!) who at full steam could haul this vessel along at 9 knots. They remained chained to their seats, four to an oar, at all times. Here they worked, drank (fresh water was stored below decks, where the infirmary was also located), ate, slept and went to the loo. You could *smell* a galley like this from miles away.

Fishing vessels, old navigation charts, models and dioramas of the Barcelona waterfront make up the rest of this engaging museum. Temporary exhibitions, often on wholly unrelated subjects, are also held. The pleasant museum café offers courtyard seating. A palm-top audio-guide, which allows you to email content to yourself when you're finished, is available.

Outside and partly obscured by rampant vegetation on the Avinguda del Paral·lel

side of the building are the most significant remnants of the **city walls**, erected here in the 13th century and later extended under count-king Pere el Cerimoniós (1336–87).

### ANTIC HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU Map pp76–7

☎ 93 270 23 00; **Carrer de l'Hospital 56**; **M** **Liceu**  
Behind the Mercat de la Boqueria stands what was, in the 15th century, the city's main hospital. The restored Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu (Former Holy Cross Hospital) today houses the **Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya** (National Library of Catalonia; admission free; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat), as well as the **Institut d'Estudis Catalans** (Institute for Catalan Studies).

The library is the single most complete collection of documents (estimated at around three million) tracing the region's long history. The hospital, which was begun in 1401 and functioned until the 1930s, was considered one of the best in Europe in its medieval heyday.

Entering from Carrer de l'Hospital, you find yourself in a delightfully bedraggled, vaguely tropical garden that is home to bums, earnest students on a break and a cheerful **bar-café**. Off the garden lies the entrance to the prestigious Massana conservatorium and, up a sweep of stairs, the library. You can freely visit the most impressive part, the grand reading rooms beneath broad Gothic stone arches, where you can also see temporary displays of anything from old records to medieval monastic hymnals.

Otherwise, it is possible to join a tour on 23 April (Sant Jordi) and one day late in September (the date changes), when the entire building throws itself open for guided visits.

The visit takes you through the library's public areas and others usually closed to the public, such as the **Museu del Llibre Frederic Marès**, a former private ward in the hospital whose bright tile decoration of the stations of the cross was done in the 17th century. Marès donated 1500 documents and books to the library, some of which are on display.

He also sculpted the medallions of great figures of Catalan culture. Antoni Gaudí wound up in the Via Crucis ward in 1926 after being run over by a tram. He died here.

Approaching the complex down a narrow lane from Carrer del Carme or from Jardins del Doctor Fleming (the little park with swings), you arrive at the entrance to the Institute, which sometimes opens its doors for expositions. If it's open, wander into what was the 17th-century Casa de Convalescència de Sant Pau, which housed recovering patients from the hospital. At first, it hosted just seven men and five women. By the end of the 17th century, there were 200 beds and 400 mattresses and patients received meat and desserts (more than many might have hoped for outside). The hospice operated until the early 20th century. The building, which centres on a cloister, is richly decorated with ceramics (especially the entrance vestibule). In the centre of the cloister is a statue of St Paul, after whom the house is named. Up on the first floor at the far end is what was an orange garden, now named after the Catalan novelist Mercè Rodoreda.

**La Capella** (☎ 93 442 71 71; [www.bcn.cat/virreina](http://www.bcn.cat/virreina) expositions; admission free; ☎ noon–2pm & 4–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–2pm Sun & holidays), the former hospital's Gothic chapel, is worth poking your nose into for the frequent temporary exhibitions.

### PALAU GÜELL Map pp76–7

☎ 93 317 39 74; [www.palauaguell.cat](http://www.palauaguell.cat); **Carrer Nou de la Rambla 3–5**; admission free; ☎ 10am–2.30pm Tue–Sat; **M** **Drassanes**

Welcome to the early days of Gaudí's fevered architectural imagination. This extraordinary Modernista mansion, one of the few major buildings of that era raised in Ciutat Vella, gives an insight into its maker's prodigious genius. He built it just off La Rambla in the late 1880s for his wealthy and faithful patron, the industrialist Eusebi Güell. Although a little sombre compared with some of his later whims, it is still a characteristic riot of styles (Gothic, Islamic, Art Nouveau) and materials. After the civil war, the police occupied it and tortured political prisoners in the basement.

Up two floors are the main hall and its annexes (closed for renovation at the time of writing). The hall is a parabolic pyramid – each wall an arch stretching up

### GOD'S ARCHITECT

Gaudí, virtually a pauper and doubtless ruminating on how to solve some architectural conundrum on his unfolding masterpiece, was run over by a tram in 1926. His story is far from over. The rector of La Sagrada Família, Lluís Bonet Armengol, is promoting Gaudí's beatification. In March 2000, the Vatican decided to proceed with the examination of the case for canonising him – at the time of writing no decision had been taken. Says Bonet Armengol, Gaudí's contemporaries 'knew he was God's architect'. Pilgrims already stop by at the crypt of La Sagrada Família (p104) to pay homage to him. One of the key sculptors at work on the church, the Japanese Etsuro Sotoo, converted to Catholicism because of his passion for Gaudí.

three floors and coming together to form a dome. The roof is a mad Gaudian tumult of tiled colour and fanciful design in the building's chimney pots.

Picasso – who, incidentally, hated Gaudí's work – began his Blue Period in 1902 in a studio across the street at Carrer Nou de la Rambla 10. Begging to differ with Sr Picasso, Unesco declared the Palau, together with Gaudí's other main works (La Sagrada Família, Casa Batlló, La Pedrera, Park Güell, Casa Vicens and Colònia Güell crypt) a World Heritage site.

The ground floor and basement reopened to the public in early 2008 after renovation. When the rest will open is unclear.

### MUSEU D'ART CONTEMPORANI DE BARCELONA (MACBA) Map pp76–7

☎ 93 412 08 10; [www.macba.es](http://www.macba.es); **Plaça dels Àngels 1**; **adult/concession €7.50/6, Wed €3.50**; ☎ 11am–8pm Mon & Wed, 11am–midnight Thu–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays late Jun–late Sep, 11am–7.30pm Mon & Wed–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays late Sep–late Jun; **M** **Universitat**

The ground and 1st floors of this great white bastion of contemporary art are given over to exhibitions from the gallery's own collections (some 3000 pieces centred on three periods: post-WWII, around 1968 and the years since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989). You may see works by Antoni Tàpies, Joan Brossa, Paul Klee, Miquel Barceló and a whole raft of international talent, depending on the theme(s) of the ever-changing exposition.

The gallery also presents temporary exhibitions and has an extensive art bookshop. Outside, the spectacle is as intriguing as inside. While skateboarders dominate the space south of the museum (considered one of Europe's great skateboard locations), you may well find Pakistani kids enjoying a game of cricket in Plaça de Joan Coromines.

Across the main skateboard-infested square, the renovated 400-year-old convent dels Àngels church houses the **Capella Macba** (Plaça dels Àngels; **M** Universitat), Macba regularly rotates selections from its permanent collection. Although largely gutted, the Gothic framework of the one-time convent church has been left intact.

### CENTRE DE CULTURA CONTEMPORÀNIA DE BARCELONA (CCCB) [Map pp76-7](#)

☎ 93 306 41 00; [www.cccb.org](http://www.cccb.org); Carrer de Montalegre 5; 2 exhibitions adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €6/free/4.40, 1 exhibition €4.40/free/3.30;

🕒 11am-8pm Tue-Wed & Fri-Sun, 11am-10pm Thu; **M** Universitat

A complex of auditoriums, exhibition spaces and conference halls opened here in 1994 in what had been an 18th-century hospice, the Casa de la Caritat. The expansive courtyard, with a vast glass wall on one side, is spectacular. With 4500 sq metres of exposition space in four separate areas, the centre hosts a constantly changing programme of exhibitions, film cycles and other events.

### ESGLÉSIA DE SANT PAU DEL CAMP [Map pp76-7](#)

☎ 93 441 00 01; Carrer de Sant Pau 101; admission free; 🕒 doister 10am-2pm & 5-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat; **M** Paral.lel

Back in the 9th century, when monks founded the monastery of Sant Pau del Camp (St Paul in the Fields), it was a good walk from the city gates amid fields and gardens. Today, the church and cloister, erected in the 12th century and partly surrounded by the trees of a small garden, are located on a fairly down-at-heel street and surrounded by dense inner-city housing. The doorway to the church bears rare Visigothic sculptural decoration, predating the Muslim invasion of Spain. Inside, the beautiful Romanesque cloister is the main reason for dropping by.

## MODERNISTA WINING & DINING IN EL RAVAL Walking Tour

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Casa Almiraill  
**Finish** London Bar  
**Distance** 2km  
**Duration** 45 minutes  
**Transport** **M** Liceu

#### 1 Casa Almiraill

Long run by the Almiraill family that opened it in the mid-19th century, this corner **tavern** (p201) on Carrer de Joaquín Costa preserves much of its Modernista décor, especially in the picture windows opening on to the street and the counter and display cabinet.

#### 2 Bar Muy Buenas

You'll recognise similarly sinuous curves as you enter **Bar Muy Buenas** (p200), on Carrer del Carme. Opened as a milk bar in the late 19th century, it retains much of its original decoration. It's a welcoming, cosy spot for a tipple and snacks.

#### 3 La Confiteria

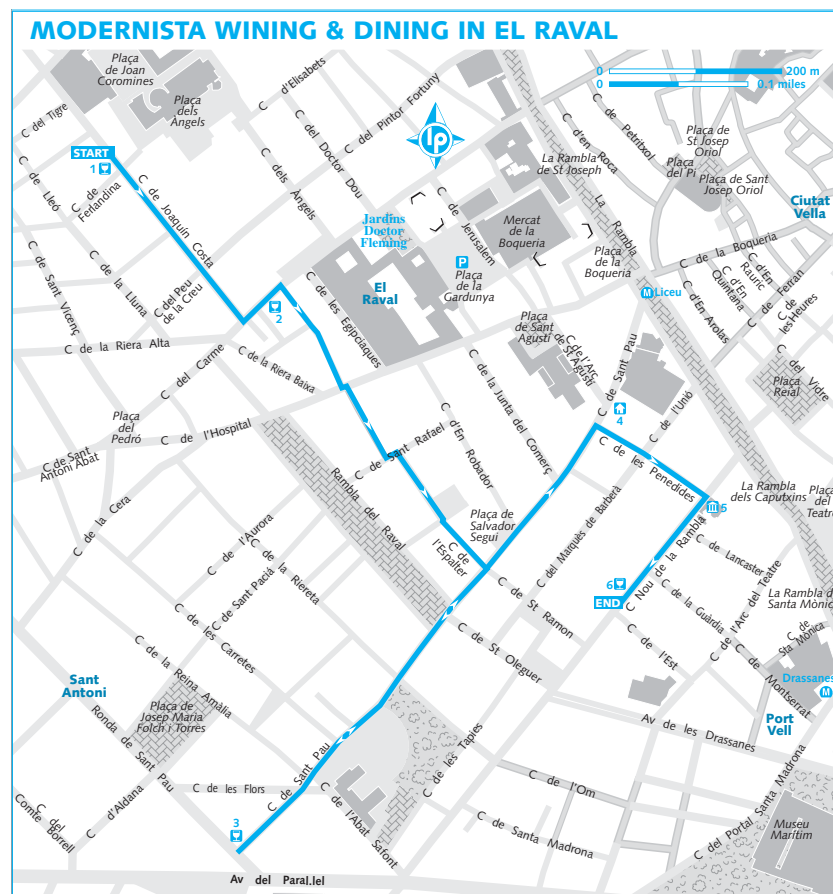
At Carrer de Sant Pau, past the Romanesque church, drop by **La Confiteria** (p201), once a barbershop and then a long-time confectioner's. It was lovingly restored for its reconversion into a classy bar in 1998. Most of the elements, including façade, bar counter and cabinets, are the real McCoy.

#### 4 Hotel España

This hotel is known above all for its two dining rooms, part of the 1903 design by Domènec i Montaner. To the left of reception is the Sala Arnau (Arnau Room), featuring a magnificent alabaster fireplace designed by Eusebi Arnau. Moderately priced traditional Catalan fare is served.

#### 5 Palau Güell

While wandering around El Raval, you should not miss its Modernista star, one of Gaudí's earlier big commissions, **Palau Güell** (p79), a remarkable building. If passing by at night while doing a round of the bars, make a note to return here by day!



#### 6 London Bar

A classic of Barcelona nightlife for over a century, the **London Bar** (p201) displays Modernista décor and is run by the same family

of the waiter who founded it in 1910. In its heyday, it opened 24 hours and attracted the likes of Picasso and Miró for countless swifties.

# LA RIBERA

Drinking & Nightlife [p202](#); Eating [p176](#); Shopping [p157](#); Sleeping [p234](#)

In Roman times, a scattering of *villae* (country houses) and small farms covered the fields here beyond Barcino's walls. In the 6th century, the area was dominated by a Christian necropolis. The first monastery was raised in the 11th century.

By the beginning of the 13th century, two busy communities had developed: Vilanova de Sant Pere, clustered around the convent of Sant Pere de les Puelles, and Vilanova de la Mar, huddled around the Romanesque predecessor to the present Església de Santa Maria del Mar. Between the two, a busy tradesmen's district thrived around Carrer dels Corders (Ropemakers' St). Many streets retain the names of the trades once practised along them.

Vilanova de la Mar, from where merchants carried out their vital trade across the Mediterranean, became the richest part of the city. It was later known as La Ribera, a name that later still referred to the whole area.

Carrer de Montcada was laid to link the tradesmen's workshops with the then-waterfront merchants and soon became the address. Its rich legacy of Gothic and baroque mansions attests to its primacy until well into the 18th century, when the creation of the Ciutadella swept away a whole chunk of La Ribera and trade focus shifted to Port Vell.

Passeig del Born was Barcelona's main square from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Jousting tournaments, executions and other public entertainments took place here in the Middle Ages and it was the hub of the city's vital maritime trade. Barcelonins used to say '*roda el món i torna al Born*' ('go around the world and return to the Born'), and the merchants and ship owners who lived and dealt around here no doubt saw it as the navel of their world. Not far away, one of Europe's first stock exchanges came to life at La Llotja.

Via Laietana, a rumbling, traffic-choked thoroughfare that connects the waterfront with the east side of l'Eixample, marks the southwest side of La Ribera, while the Parc de la Ciutadella closes off its northeast flank. The creation of Via Laietana in 1908 saw the destruction of 2000 houses and displacement of 10,000 people. A great swathe of Barcelona's medieval history thus disappeared in what many considered little more than a speculative manoeuvre.

To the south, parallel ribbons of main road and highway cut it off from the sea and La Barceloneta, and the grid streets of l'Eixample round it off to the north.

Carrer de la Princesa, ramrod straight between Via Laietana and the park, was laid in the 1820s and cuts La Ribera in half. The gentrified southern half is generally known as El Born, after busy, bar-lined Passeig del Born. Capped at one end by the magnificent Gothic Església de Santa Maria del Mar, it runs into the former Mercat del Born.

Several important streets feed south into El Born. From the Jaume I Metro stop, restaurant-lined Carrer de l'Argenteria (whose name dates to the 16th century, when it was lined with silversmiths) leads to the Església de Santa Maria del Mar. Carrer de Montcada, with its majestic houses (now mostly occupied by the Museu Picasso, other museums and art galleries), reaches El Born from Carrer de la Princesa.

Where in the early 1990s there were a few dowdy bars and eateries, El Born is now jammed with colourful restaurants, packed bars and endless fashion outlets, with the likes of Custo Barcelona leading the way. It is a heterodox, cosmopolitan jumble in a magnificent Middle Ages setting.

Northwest of Carrer de la Princesa, the area's physiognomy changes. A mess of untidy streets wiggles northwards around the brand-new Mercat de Santa Caterina and on towards the Modernista Palau de la Música Catalana. North African and South American immigrant communities call this part of La Ribera home.

## top picks

### LA RIBERA

- Església de Santa Maria del Mar (opposite)
- Museu Picasso (opposite)
- Palau de la Música Catalana (p87)
- Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí (p87)
- Parc de la Ciutadella (p88)

The expanse of the Parc de la Ciutadella is a rare gift in a city so densely packed and lacking in serious greenery, but it started life as an ominous 18th-century citadel, of which little more than the name remains.

Metro Línia 4 coasts down the southwest flank of La Ribera, stopping at Urquinaona, Jaume I and Barceloneta. Línia 1 also stops nearby, at Urquinaona and Arc de Triomf (the nearest stop for the Parc de la Ciutadella).

### ESGLÉSIA DE SANTA MARIA DEL MAR [Map pp84-5](#)

☎ 93 319 05 16; Plaça de Santa Maria del Mar; admission free; 🕒 9am-1.30pm & 4.30-8pm; 📍 Jaume I

At the southwest end of Passeig del Born stands the apse of Barcelona's finest Catalan Gothic church, Santa Maria del Mar (Our Lady of the Sea). Built in the 14th century, Santa Maria was lacking in superfluous decoration even before anarchists gutted it in 1909 and 1936. This only serves to highlight its fine proportions and purity of line.

Built with record-breaking alacrity for the time (it took just 59 years), the church is remarkable for its architectural harmony. While many grand European churches betray several styles because they took so long to build, Santa Maria del Mar benefited aesthetically from the haste. The main body is made up of a central nave and two flanking aisles separated by slender octagonal pillars, creating an enormous sense of lateral space. This was built as a people's church. The city's porters (*bastaxos*) spent a day each week carrying on their backs the stone required to build the church from royal quarries in Montjuïc. Their memory lives on in reliefs of them in the main doors and stone carvings elsewhere in the church.

Keep an eye out for music recitals, often baroque and classical, here. The acoustics aren't the best, but the setting more than makes up for that.

Opposite the church's southern flank, an eternal flame burns brightly over an apparently anonymous sunken square. This was once *El Fossar de les Moreres* (the Mulberry Cemetery), named after the mulberry trees that once grew here and originally the site of a Roman cemetery. It's also where Catalan resistance fighters were buried after the siege of Barcelona ended in defeat in September 1714.

### CARRER DE MONTCADA [Map pp84-5](#)

📍 Jaume I

An early example of deliberate town planning, this medieval high street was driven

down towards the sea from the road that in the 12th century led northeast from the city walls. It would, in time, become the snootiest address in town for the city's merchant class, and the bulk of the great mansions that remain today date to the 14th and 15th centuries (although they were often tampered with later). This area was the commercial heartland of medieval Barcelona.

Five of the mansions on the east side of the street have been linked to house the [Museu Picasso](#) (below). Across the road, others house the [Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí](#) (p87) and a future activities department for the yet-to-be-born [Centre de Disseny](#) (p89). Several other mansions on this street are commercial art galleries where you're welcome to browse. The biggest is the local branch of the prestigious Parisian [Galeria Maeght](#) (No 25; see p158) in the 16th-century Palau dels Cervelló. If you can, peek into the baroque courtyard of the originally medieval [Palau de Dalmases](#) (No 20), now a hideously expensive place to sip wine.

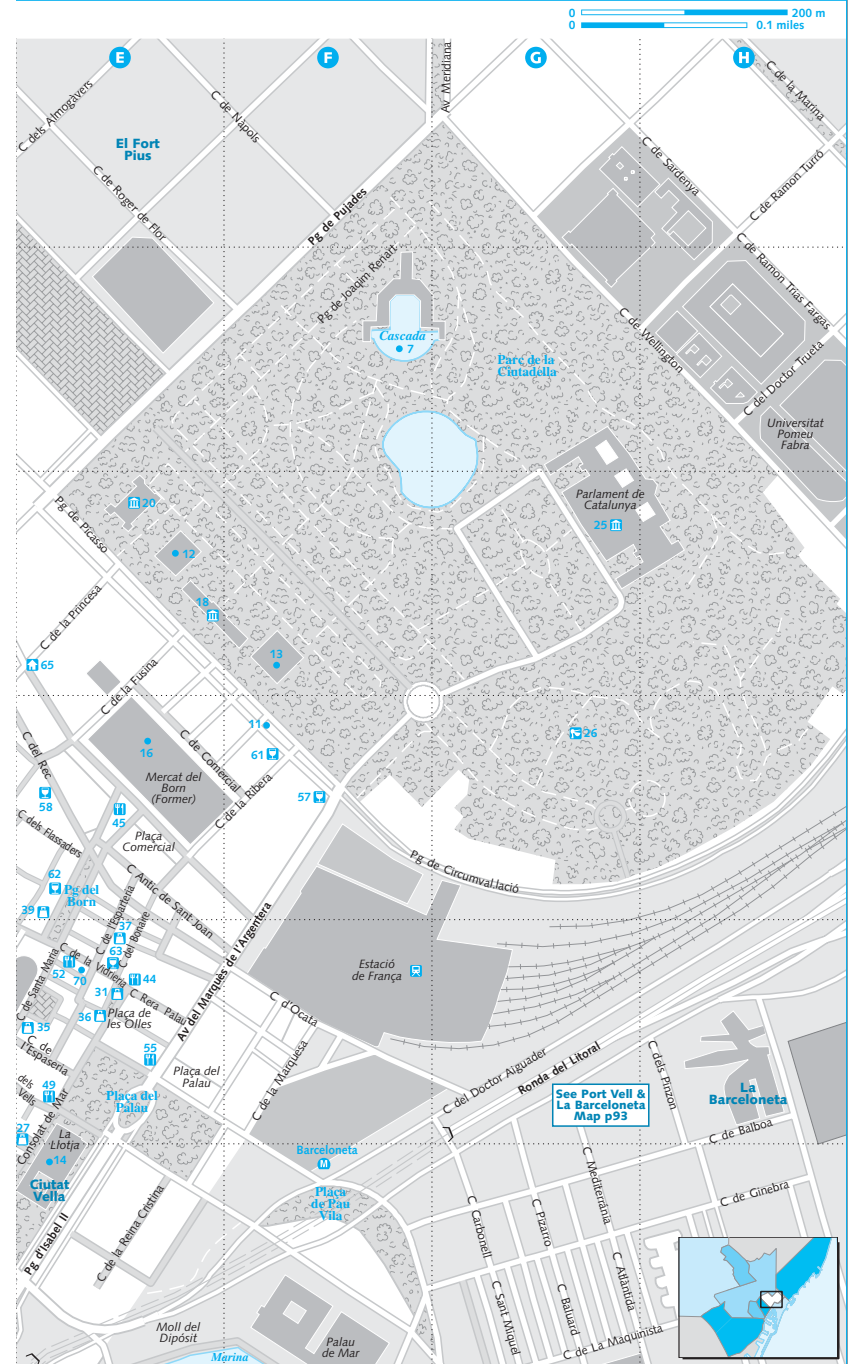
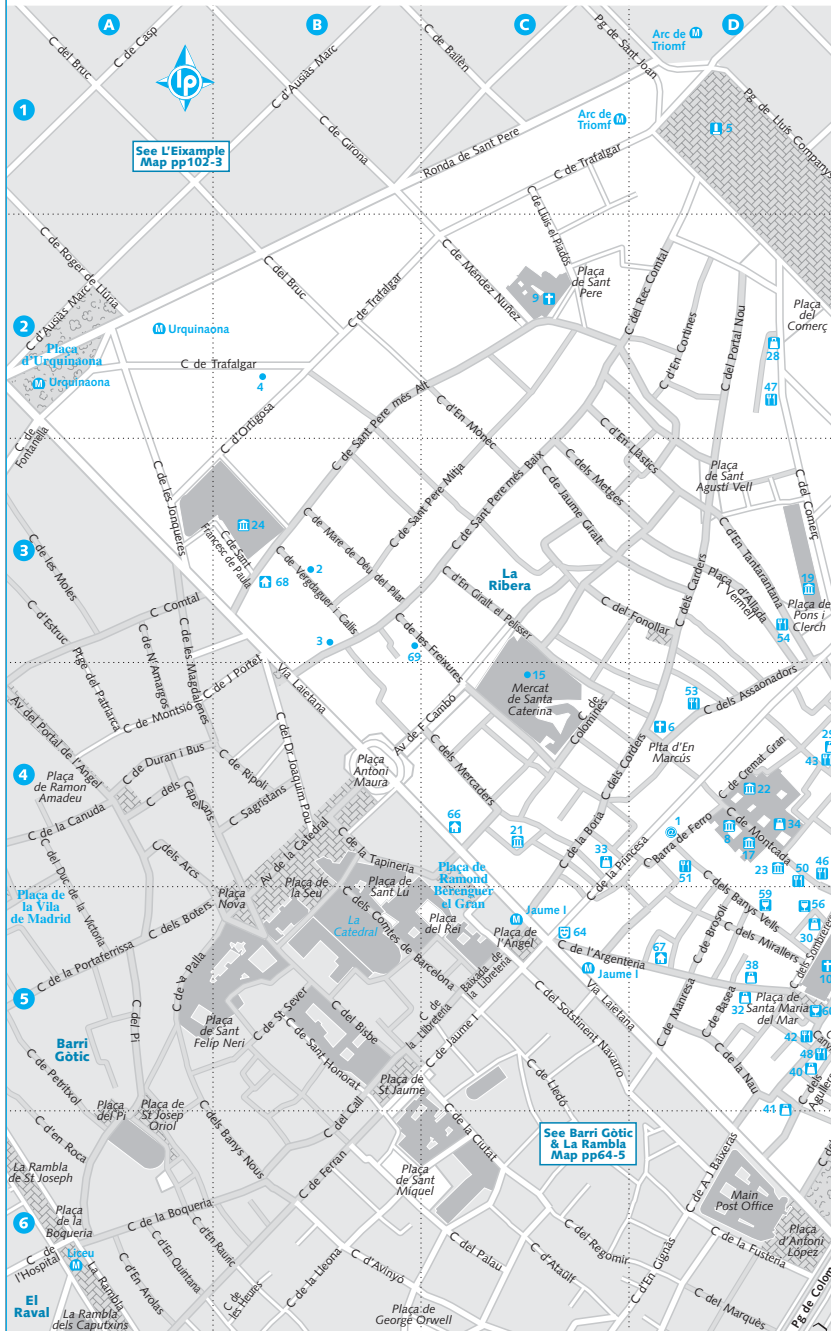
At the corner of Carrer dels Corders and the northern end of the street, just beyond the 19th-century Carrer de la Princesa, stands a much meddled-with Romanesque chapel, the [Capella d'En Marcús](#), once a wayfarers' stop on the road northeast out of medieval Barcelona.

### MUSEU PICASSO [Map pp84-5](#)

☎ 93 256 30 00; [www.museupicasso.bcn.es](#); Carrer de Montcada 15-23; adult/senior & child under 16/student €9/free/3, temporary exhibitions adult €5.80, 1st Sun of month free; 🕒 10am-8pm Tue-Sun & holidays; 📍 Jaume I

The setting alone, in five contiguous medieval stone mansions, makes the Museu Picasso worth the detour (and the probable queues). The pretty courtyards, galleries and staircases preserved in the first three of these buildings are as delightful as the collection inside is unique. One word of warning: the collection concentrates on the artist's formative years, sometimes

## LA RIBERA





## LA RIBERA

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Museu de Geologia.....	18	E3	Cal Pep.....	44	E5	Grand Hotel Central.....	66	C4
Museu de la Xocolata.....	19	D3	Casa Delfin.....	45	E4	Hotel Banys Orientals.....	67	D5
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disappointing for those hoping for a feast of his better-known later works (best found in Paris).

The permanent collection is housed in **Palau Aguilar**, **Palau del Baró de Castellet** and **Palau Meca**, all dating to the 14th century. The 18th-century **Casa Mauri**, built over medieval remains (even some Roman leftovers have been identified), and the adjacent 14th-century **Palau Finestres** accommodate temporary exhibitions. A further building, a former orphanage on Carrer dels Flasadars that will be largely given over to administration, reception of groups and workshops, was acquired in 2007.



The collection, which includes more than 3500 artworks, is strongest on Picasso's earliest years, up until 1904, but there is enough material from subsequent periods to give you a deep impression of the man's versatility and genius. Above all, you feel that Picasso is always one step ahead of himself, let alone anyone else, in his search for new forms of expression.

A visit starts with sketches and oils from Picasso's earliest years in Málaga and La Coruña – around 1893–95. Some of his self-portraits and the portraits of his father, which date from 1896, are evidence enough of his precocious talent. *Retrato de*

*la Tía Pepa* (Portrait of Aunt Pepa), done in Málaga in 1897, is a key painting and the enormous *Ciència i Caritat* (Science and Charity) is proof to doubters that Picasso fully mastered the academic techniques of portraiture. In Room 10 hang paintings from his first Paris sojourn, while Room 11 is dedicated to the first significant new stage in his development, the Blue Period. His nocturnal blue-tinted views of *Terrats de Barcelona* (Rooftops of Barcelona) and *El Foll* (The Madman) are cold and cheerless, yet somehow alive.

A few cubist paintings pop up in Rooms 13 and 14. From 1954 to 1962 Picasso was obsessed by the idea of researching and 'rediscovering' the greats, in particular Velázquez. In 1957, he made a series of renditions of the latter's masterpiece, *Las Meninas*, now displayed in Rooms 15 and 16. It is as though Picasso has looked at the original Velázquez painting through a prism reflecting all the styles he had worked through until then. The last rooms contain engravings and some 40 ceramic pieces completed throughout the latter years of his unceasingly creative life. Things like a plate with a fish on it are typical, if not overly practical at the average dining table!





## MUSEU BARBIER-MUELLER D'ART PRE-COLOMBÍ

 93 310 45 16; [www.barbier-mueller.ch](http://www.barbier-mueller.ch); Carrer de Montcada 12-14; adult/child under 16yr/senior & student €3/free/1.50, 1st Sun of month free;  11am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays;  Jaume I

Inside the medieval Palau Nadal you plunge into the world of centuries-old South American art and crafts. The artefacts on show are part of the treasure-trove of pre-Columbian art collected by Swiss businessman Josef Mueller (who died in 1977) and his son-in-law Jean-Paul Barbier, who directs the Musée Barbier-Mueller in the heart of old Geneva in Switzerland. Together, the museums form one of the most prestigious collections of such art in the world.

In blacked-out rooms the eerily illuminated artefacts flare up in the gloom. South American gold jewellery introduces the collection, followed by rooms containing ceramics, jewellery, statues, textiles and other objects.

## PALAU DE LA MÚSICA CATALANA

 pp84-5  
 902 475485; [www.palaumusica.org](http://www.palaumusica.org); Carrer de Sant Francesc de Paula 2; adult/child/student incl guided tour €10/free/9;  50min tours every 30min 10am-6pm Easter & Aug, 10am-3.30pm Sep-Jul;  Urquinaona

This concert hall is a high point of Barcelona's Modernista architecture. It's not exactly a symphony, more a series of crescendos in tile, brick, sculpted stone and stained glass.




Built by Domènec i Montaner between 1905 and 1908 for the Orfeo Català musical society, with the help of some of the best Catalan artisans of the time, it was conceived as a temple for the Catalan Renaissance (Renaissance). The palace was built in the cloister of the former Convent de Sant Francesc, and since 1990 it has undergone several major changes. The latest (in 2004) greatly improved its facilities as well as adding an outdoor café and increasing performance space.

The Palau, like a peacock, shows off much of its splendour on the outside. Take in the principal façade with its mosaics, floral capitals and the sculpture cluster representing Catalan popular music. Wander inside the foyer and restaurant areas to admire the spangled, tiled pillars. Best of all, however, is the richly colourful auditorium upstairs,

with its ceiling of blue-and-gold stained glass and shimmering skylight that looks like a giant, crystalline, downward thrusting nipple. Above a bust of Beethoven on the stage towers a wind-blown sculpture of Wagner's Valkyries (Wagner was top of the Barcelona charts at the time it was created). This can only be savoured on a guided tour or by attending a performance – either is highly recommended.

The original Modernista creation, now a World Heritage site, did not meet with universal approval in its day. The doyen of Catalan literature, Josep Pla, did not hesitate to condemn it as 'horrible', but few share his sentiments today. Montaner himself was also in a huff. He failed to attend the opening ceremony in response to unsettled bills.

## MERCAT DE SANTA CATERINA

 pp84-5  
[www.mercatsantacaterina.net](http://www.mercatsantacaterina.net), in Catalan; Avinguda de Francesc Cambó 16;  8am-2pm Mon, 8am-3.30pm Tue, Wed & Sat, 8am-8.30pm Thu & Fri;  Jaume I

Come shopping for your tomatoes at this extraordinary-looking produce market, built by Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue to replace its 19th-century predecessor. Finished in 2005, it is distinguished by its kaleidoscopically weird wavy roof, held up above the bustling produce stands, restaurants, cafés and bars by twisting slender branches of what look like grey steel trees.

The multicoloured ceramic roof (with a ceiling made of warm, light timber) recalls the Modernista tradition of *trencadis* decoration (such as that in Park Güell). Indeed, its curvy design, like a series of Mediterranean rollers, seems to plunge back into an era when Barcelona's architects were limited only by their (vivid) imagination. The market roof bares an uncanny resemblance to that of the Escoles de Gaudí at La Sagrada Família.

The market's 1848 predecessor had been built over the remains of the demolished 15th-century Gothic Monestir de Santa Caterina, a powerful Dominican monastery. A small section of the church foundations has been glassed over in one corner as an archaeological reminder (with explanatory panels), the **Espai Santa Caterina** (admission free;  8.30am-2pm Mon-Wed & Sat, 8.30am-8pm Thu-Fri).

**PARC DE LA CIUTADELLA** Map pp84–5

**Passeig de Picasso;** ☎ 8am–6pm Nov–Feb, 8am–8pm Oct & Mar, 8am–9pm Apr–Sep; **M** Arc de Triomf  
Come for a stroll, a picnic, a visit to the zoo or to inspect Catalonia's regional parliament, but don't miss a visit to this, the most central green lung in the city. Parc de la Ciutadella is perfect for a little winding down (or getting over a hangover).

After the War of the Spanish Succession (p25), Felipe V razed a whole swathe of La Ribera to build a huge fortress (La Ciutadella) whose main object was to keep watch over Barcelona. It became a loathed symbol of everything Catalans hated about Madrid and the Bourbon kings, and was later used as a political prison. Only in 1869 did the central government allow its demolition, after which the site was turned into a park and used for the Universal Exhibition of 1888. Part of the wall was discovered in 2008, during work on a new sports centre being built near the zoo (right), and architects plan to incorporate some of it as a historical reminder in the new centre.

The monumental **cascada** (waterfall) near the Passeig de Pujades park entrance, created between 1875 and 1881 by Josep Fontserè with the help of an enthusiastic young Gaudí, is a dramatic combination of statuary, rugged rocks, greenery and thundering water. All of it perfectly artificial! Nearby, hire a rowboat to paddle about the small lake.

To the southeast, in what might be seen as an exercise in black humour, the fort's former arsenal now houses the **Parlament de Catalunya** (☎ 93 304 66 45; www.parlament.cat; ☎ free guided visit in Catalan 4–6pm 1st Fri of month). A symbol of Catalan identity, the regional parliament also opens to the public on 11 and 12 September. Head up the sweeping Escala d'Honor (Stairway of Honour) and through several solemn halls to the Saló de Sessions, the semicircular auditorium where parliament sits. At the centre of the garden in front of the Parlament is a statue of a seemingly heartbroken woman, *Desconsol* (Distress; 1907), by Josep Llimona.

The Passeig de Picasso side of the park is lined by several buildings constructed for, or just before, the Universal Exhibition. The medieval-looking caprice at the top end is the most engaging. Known as the Castell dels Tres Dragons (Castle of the Three Dragons), it houses the **Museu de Zoologia** (right).

To the south is **L'Hivernacle**, an arboretum or mini-botanical garden with a pleasant café

# top picks

## FOR KIDS

- **Beaches** (p96)
- **L'Aquàrium** (p92)
- **Museu de la Xocolata** (opposite)
- **La Sagrada Família** (p104)
- **Museu Marítim** (p78)
- **Tibidabo & Parc d'Attraccions** (p134)
- **Park Güell** (p117)
- **Transbordador Aeri** (p94)

in its midst. Next come the **Museu de Geologia** (below) and **L'Umbracle**, another arboretum. On Passeig de Picasso itself is Antoni Tàpies' typically impenetrable **Homenatge a Picasso**. Water runs down the panes of a glass box full of bits of old furniture and steel girders.

Northwest of the park, Passeig de Lluís Companys is capped by the Modernista **Arc de Triomf** (Map pp84–5), designed by Josep Vilaseca as the main exhibition entrance, with unusual, Islamic-style brickwork. Josep Llimona did the main reliefs. Just what the triumph was eludes us, especially since the exhibition itself was a commercial failure. It is perhaps best thought of as a bricks-and-mortar embodiment of the city's general *fin de siècle* feel-good factor.

**ZOO DE BARCELONA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 225 67 80; www.zoobarcelona.com; **Passeig de Picasso & Carrer de Wellington; adult/child under 4yr/senior/child 4–12yr €15.40/free/8.15/9.30; ☎ 10am–7pm Jun–Sep, 10am–6pm mid–Mar–May & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–mid–Mar; M** Barceloneta  
The zoo can make a fun distraction for kids although the comparatively limited space makes it a bit of a squeeze for the 7500 critters (everything from geckos to gorillas). A new site being built on the coast of the El Fòrum site northeast of the city centre will eventually relieve the crowding.

**MUSEU DE CIÈNCIES NATURALS**

Map pp84–5  
☎ 93 319 69 12; www.bcn.es/museuciencias; **Passeig de Picasso; adult/concession €3.70/2.10; ☎ 10am–6.30pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun; M** Arc de Triomf

The Natural Sciences Museum is actually two in one: the Museu de Zoologia, housed

in the Castell dels Tres Dragons, a caprice designed by Domènec i Montaner; and the Museu de Geologia. The former is the more interesting half for the building itself and for the content. Montaner put the 'castle's' trimmings on a pioneering steel frame. The coats of arms are all invented and the whole building exudes a teasing, playful air. It was used as a café-restaurant during the Universal Exhibition of 1888. If you like stuffed animals, model elephants and the inevitable skeletons of huge creatures, the charmingly fusty zoology museum is the place for you. The bulk of the permanent collection is on the 1st floor. Most people would have to have rocks in their heads to spend much time in the geology museum, but then again, budding geologists may well want to examine the seemingly endless cabinets of stones, minerals and fossils.

**MUSEU DE LA XOCOLATA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 268 78 78; http://pastisseria.com; **Plaça de Pons i Clerch s/n; adult/child under 7yr €3.90/free, 1st Mon of month free; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon & Wed–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays; M** Jaume I  
Chocoholics have a hard time containing themselves in this museum dedicated to the fundamental foodstuff. How not to launch yourself at the extraordinary scale models made out of chocolate? A little salivation for sweet teeth is inevitable as you trawl around the displays (in part of the former Convent de Sant Agustí) that trace the origins of chocolate, its arrival in Europe and the many myths and images associated with it. Among the informative stuff (with panels in various languages) are chocky models of buildings such as La Pedrera and La Sagrada Família, along with characters such as Winnie the Pooh. It's enough to have you making for the nearest sweet shop, but you don't have to – they sell plenty of chocolate right here! Kids and grown-ups can join guided tours or take part in chocolate-making and tasting sessions, especially on weekends.

**MUSEU DEL REI DE LA MAGIA** Map pp84–5

☎ 93 319 73 93; www.elreydelamagia.com in Catalan & Spanish; **Carrer de l'oli 6; admission €3, with show €8; ☎ 6–8pm Thu, with show 6pm Sat & noon Sun; M** Jaume I

This museum is a timeless curio. Run by the same people who have the nearby

**magic shop** (p157) on Carrer de la Princesa, it is the scene of magic shows, home to collections of material that hark back to the 19th-century origins of the shop and it is the place for budding magicians of all ages to enrol in courses. Seeing is believing.

**CENTRE DE DISSENY** Map pp84–5

**Carrer de Montcada 12–14; M** Jaume I  
Until 2008, the 13th-century Palau dels Marquesos de Llió and part of the Palau Nadal next door (both buildings underwent repeated alterations into the 18th century) were home to the **Museu Textil i d'Indumentària** (p133). It is being transformed into an activities department for a yet-to-be-born Design Centre, in which at least part of the present Museu de les Arts Decoratives (now housed in the Palau de Pedralbes) will one day have a place. In the meantime, the building's courtyard, with its café-restaurant, makes a delightful stop.

**ESGLÉSIA DE SANT PERE DE LES PUELLES** Map pp84–5

**Plaça de Sant Pere s/n; admission free; M** Arc de Triomf

Not a great deal remains of the original church or convent that has stood here since early medieval times. The church's pre-Romanesque Greek-cross floor plan survives, as do some Corinthian columns beneath the 12th-century dome and a much-damaged Renaissance vault leading into a side chapel. It was around this church that the first settlement began to take place in La Ribera beyond the original city walls. In 985, a Muslim raiding force under Al-Mansur attacked Barcelona and largely destroyed the convent, killing or capturing the nuns.

**MERCAT DEL BORN** Map pp84–5

**Plaça Comercial; M** Barceloneta  
Excavation in 2001 at the former **Mercat del Born**, a late-19th-century produce market built of iron and glass, unearthed great chunks of one of the city districts flattened to make way for the much-hated **Ciutadella** (see opposite). Historians found intact streets and the remains of houses dating as far back as the 15th century. Excitement was such that plans to locate a new city library in the long-disused market were dropped.

Instead, the archaeological site will become a museum and cultural centre (due for completion in 2010).

## LA LLOTJA Map pp84–5

**Carrer del Consolat de Mar s/n; M Jaume I**  
The centrepiece of the city's medieval stock exchange is the fine Gothic Saló de Contractacions, built in the 14th century. Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró attended the art school that from 1849 was housed in the Saló dels Cònsols. These and five other halls were encased in a neoclassical shell in the 18th century. The stock exchange was in action until well into the 20th century and the building remains in the hands of the city's chamber of commerce. Two or three times a year they open their doors to the public (call ☎ 902 448448).

## SINS OF GLUTTONY IN LA RIBERA

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Mercat de Santa Caterina

A glutton's guide to La Ribera has to begin in this modern reincarnation of a 19th-century market (p87). A close rival to La Boqueria, it stands overflow with fish, cold meats, cheeses,

### WALK FACTS

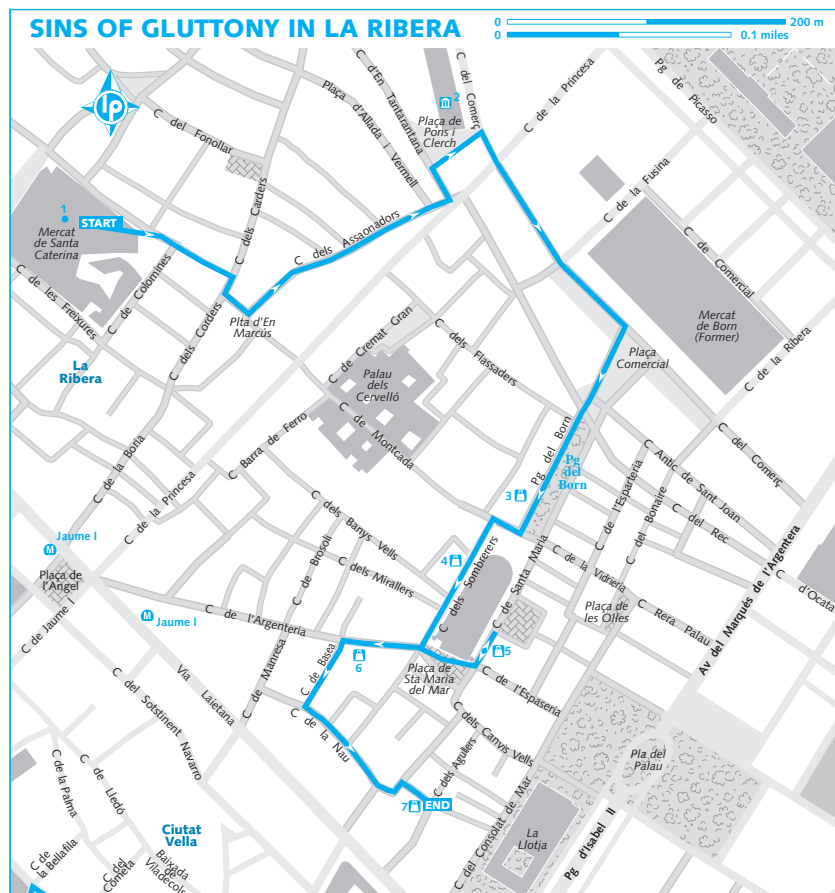
Start Mercat de Santa Caterina

Finish Vila Viniteca

Distance 2.2km

Duration 45 minutes

Transport M Jaume I



countless varieties of olives, an olive oil and vinegar specialist, **Oltsoliva** (p158), bars and a good restaurant.

#### 2 Museu de la Xocolata

Barcelona is awash in specialist chocolate stores, whether traditional *granjas* for enjoying thick hot chocolate with a pastry through to modern dens of chocolate delinquency. Where better to get introduced to the history behind this seductive food than the **Museu de la Xocolata** (p89)?

#### 3 Tot Formatge

Say 'All Cheese!' And not just Spanish classics like the strong-on-the-nose Cabrales from Asturias, *manchego* from Castilla-La Mancha or breast-shaped *tetilla*. These guys present a collection of fine cheeses from around the country and Europe, so you may run into your favourite cheddar, Gouda or Camembert at **Tot Formatge** (p158).

#### 4 Casa Gispert

Welcome to the house of nuts. Since the mid-19th century, **Casa Gispert** (p157) has been toasting up all sorts of nuts and other goodies. The walls are lined with jars of dried

fruit, honeyed hazelnuts and other tasty morsels.

#### 5 La Botifarrerria

In between all the bars on Passeig del Born is this mecca for sausage lovers. **La Botifarrerria** (p158) offers the most startling array of sausages and all sorts of other gourmet goodies. Aromatic cheeses, cold meats, ready-to-eat snacks and more form the colourful armoury of this delectable store.

#### 6 El Magnífico

Coffee represents a significant element in Catalan and Spanish tradition. This magnificent **store** (p157) offers a range of fine coffees from around the world. The family has a long history in the business, and this is a Barcelona institution.

#### 7 Vila Viniteca

No food experience is complete without wines and to investigate some of the enormous variety of Catalan and Spanish drops, visit **Vila Viniteca** (p158), one of the city's top stores. There are many foreign wines on hand and it also occasionally hosts tasting events.

# PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

Drinking & Nightlife p203; Eating p178; Shopping p158; Sleeping p235

Barcelona's old port at the bottom of La Rambla, once such an eyesore that it caused public protests, has been transformed beyond recognition since the 1980s. Abandoned warehouses and general junk are a distant memory, replaced by chic shopping, harbourside munching, movies on the sea, discos and Irish pubs, parking for yachts and a huge aquarium.

La Barceloneta is a mid-18th-century fishermen's quarter laid out by military engineer Juan Martín Cermeño to replace housing destroyed to make way for La Ciutadella. The cute houses along narrow streets were later subdivided into four separate 30-sq-metre abodes and subsequently converted into six-storey rabbit warrens. The attentive eye will pick out some of the few remaining original houses.

By the 19th century, La Barceloneta had become an industrial slum, home to the city's gas company, the Nueva Vulcano shipyards and La Maquinista ironworks and steam engine plant (which shut in 1965). What remains of Barcelona's fishing fleet, about 70 vessels and 400 fishermen who land 10 tonnes of fish a day, ties up along the Moll del Relotge. A complete overhaul of this area is planned for the coming years, as the number of fishermen dwindles.

The area is rapidly gentrifying, but retains a sea-salty authenticity about it, especially in the numerous seafood eateries scattered about its labyrinthine web of back streets – it is estimated there is a bar or restaurant for every 120 local residents!

Port Vell is at the waterside end of La Rambla. It is not only a haven for yachts: **Maremàgnum** ([www.maremagnum.es](http://www.maremagnum.es)), a multistorey mall of shops, cheerful chain restaurants, bars, cinemas and clubs, was built out of what had been nasty old docklands on Moll d'Espanya. It is linked to Moll de la Fusta (Wood Dock) by the **Rambla de Mar**, a rotating pedestrian bridge. Virtually opposite, the new **World Trade Center**, designed by Henry Cobb, juts out like the prow of a cruise ship into the harbour. To the southwest stretch the ferry docks for boats to the Balearic Islands and Italy, while a second arm of Port Vell, another chic yachties' hang-out, is backed by the tight streets of La Barceloneta.

On La Barceloneta's seaward side are Platja de Sant Miquel (popular with a late-arriving, party-exhausted gay set), Platja de Sant Sebastià and Platja de la Barceloneta, Barcelona's central city beaches. Once dirty and unused, they have now been cleaned up and are popular on summer days. Passeig Marítim de la Barceloneta, a 1.25km promenade from La Barceloneta to Port Olímpic – through an area formerly full of railway sidings and warehouses – makes for a pleasant stroll if you manage to dodge the in-line skaters. Behind them rise some interesting new buildings, including the cylindrical Parc de Recerca Biomèdica de Barcelona (PRBB, Barcelona Biomedical Research Park) and Enric Miralles' Edifici de Gas Natural, a 100m glass tower.

Metro Línia 3 takes you to Port Vell (Drassanes stop), while the yellow Línia 4 is best for La Barceloneta. Several buses also converge on La Barceloneta, such as the No 64 that charges down Carrer de Muntaner and Avinguda del Paral·lel, Passeig de Colom and finally Passeig de Joan de Borbó. The No 17 races down Carrer de Balma, Via Laietana and Passeig de Joan de Borbó.

## L'AQUARIUM Map p93

☎ 93 221 74 74; [www.aquariumbcn.com](http://www.aquariumbcn.com);  
Moll d'Espanya; adult/child under 4yr/4-12yr/senior  
over 60yr €16/free/11/12.50; 🕒 9.30am-11pm Jul  
& Aug, 9.30am-9.30pm Jun & Sep, 9.30am-9pm  
Mon-Fri & 9.30am-9.30pm Sat & Sun Oct-May;  
🚗 Drassanes

It is hard to help a slight shudder at the sight of a shark gliding above you, displaying its full munching apparatus. But this, the 80m shark tunnel, is the highlight of one of Europe's largest aquariums. It has the world's best Mediterranean collec-

tion and plenty of gaudy fish from as far off as the Red Sea, the Caribbean and the Great Barrier Reef. All up, some 11,000 fish (including about a dozen sharks) of 450 species are in residence here.

Back in the shark tunnel, which you reach after passing a series of themed fish tanks with everything from bream to seahorses, various species of shark (Whitetip, Sand Tiger, Bonnethead, Blacktip, Nurse and Sandbar) flit around you, along with a host of other deep-sea critters, from flapping rays to bloated sun fish. An interactive zone, Planeta Agua, is

## PORT VELL & LA BARCELONETA

**See La Ribera** Map pp84-5

**See Barri Gòtic & La Rambla** Map pp64-5

**See Port Olímpic, El Poblenou & El Fórum** Map pp98-9

0 400 m  
0 0.2 miles

**INFORMATION** (pp158-9) (see 11)

Hospital de Mar.....1 D2  
World Trade Center.....(see 34)

**SIGHTS** (pp92-5)

Barcelona's Head Sculpture.....2 B2  
BCN Skytour.....3 B5  
Edifici de Gas Natural.....4 C2  
Església de Sant Miquel del Port.....5 C2  
Gamba Sculpture.....6 B2  
Golondrina Excursion Boats.....7 A3  
Sculpture a la Barceloneta.....8 C3  
Homenatge als Nedadors.....9 C3  
L'Aquàrium.....10 B3  
Maremàgnum.....11 B3  
Museu d'Història de Catalunya.....12 B2  
Orsom.....13 A3  
Pailebot de Santa Eulàlia.....14 A3

**SHOPPING** (pp158-9) (see 11)

Maremàgnum.....(see 11)

**EATING** (pp178-80)

Can Majó.....15 C3  
Can Maño.....16 C2  
Can Paixano.....17 B2

**DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE** (pp203-4)

Catwalk.....23 D1  
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Chiringuito del Mar.....25 C4  
LeKasBah.....26 B2  
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**SPORTS & ACTIVITIES** (pp224-8)

Club Natació Atlètic-Barcelona.....32 C4  
Poliesportiu Marítim.....33 D1

**SLEEPING** (p235)

Grand Marina Hotel.....34 B4  
Hostel Sea Point.....35 C3  
Hotel 54.....36 B2  
Hotel del Mar.....37 B2  
Hotel Marina Folch.....38 C3

**TRANSPORT**

Acciona Trasmediterrànea  
Fast Ferry Dock.....39 A3  
Acciona Trasmediterrànea Ferry  
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Acciona Trasmediterrànea Ferry  
Terminal.....41 A4  
Bambike.....42 B2  
Biciclot.....43 D2  
Ciclo Bus Barcelona.....44 C3  
Cooltra.....45 C3  
Grandi Navi Veloci.....46 A5  
Grimaldi Ferries.....(see 40)  
Motoloco.....47 C3  
Transpòrtador Aeri  
(Torre de Jaume I).....48 A4  
Transpòrtador Aeri  
(Torre de Sant Sebastià).....49 C4

host to a family of Antarctic penguins and a tank of rays that you watch close up.

Divers with a valid dive certificate can **dive** (€300; 🕒 9am-2pm Wed, Sat & Sun) in the main tank with the sharks.

### MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE CATALUNYA Map p93

☎ 93 225 47 00; [www.mhcat.net](http://www.mhcat.net); Plaça de Pau Vila 3; adult/senior & child under 7yr/student €4/free/3, 1st Sun of month free; 🕒 10am-7pm Tue & Thu-Sat, 10am-8pm Wed, 10am-2.30pm Sun & holidays; 📍 Barceloneta

The Palau de Mar building facing the harbour once served as warehouses (Els Magatzems Generals de Comerç), but was transformed in the 1990s into something quite different. Below the seaward arcades is a string of good restaurants. Inside is the Museum of Catalonian History, something of a local patriotic statement, but interesting nonetheless. It has been shrouded in controversy since opening in 1996 and the money is on it closing in the coming years. Plans revealed in 2008 have already awakened opposition and would see this museum combined with the [Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya](#) (p146) and the [Museu Etnològic](#) (p146) to create a grand Museu de la Societat (Society Museum). When this might happen seems wide open.

In the meantime, the permanent display covers the 2nd and 3rd floors, taking you, as the bumf says, on a 'voyage through history' from the Stone Age through to the early 1980s. It is a busy hodgepodge of dioramas, artefacts, videos, models, documents and interactive bits: all up, an entertaining exploration of 2000 years of Catalan history. See how the Romans lived, listen to Arab poetry from the time of the Muslim occupation of the city, peer into the dwelling of a Dark Ages family in the Pyrenees, try to mount a knight's horse or to lift a suit of armour. When you have had enough of all this, descend into a civil-war air-raid shelter or head upstairs to the rooftop restaurant and café. The temporary exhibitions are frequently just as interesting as the permanent display.

### PAILEBOT DE SANTA EULÀLIA Map p93

Moll de la Fusta; adult/child €2.40/1.20, with Museu Marítim ticket free; 🕒 noon-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun & holidays May-Oct, noon-5.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5.30pm Sat & Sun & holidays Nov-Apr; 📍 Drassanes

# top picks

## IT'S FREE

Entry to some sights is free on occasion, most commonly on the first Sunday of the month. Free days are noted throughout the listings in this chapter. The following are most likely to attract your attention:

- [CaixaForum](#) (p142) Always.
- [Catedral](#) (p61) Always, except 1pm to 5pm.
- [Església de Santa Maria del Mar](#) (p83) Always.
- [Estadi Olímpic](#) (p144) Always.
- [Jardins del Laberint d'Horta](#) (p135) Wednesdays and Sundays.
- [Museu Barbier-Mueller d'Art Pre-Colombí](#) (p87) First Sunday of the month.
- [Museu de la Xocolata](#) (p89) First Monday of the month.
- [Museu d'Història de Catalunya](#) (left) First Sunday of the month.
- [Museu d'Història de la Ciutat](#) (p67) 4pm to 8pm first Saturday of the month.
- [Museu Frederic Marès](#) (p68) Wednesday afternoons and first Sunday of the month.
- [Museu Marítim](#) (p78) 3pm to 8pm first Saturday of the month.
- [Museu Picasso](#) (p83) First Sunday of the month.
- [Palau Reial de Pedralbes](#) (p133) First Sunday of the month.
- [Park Güell](#) (p117) Always.
- [Temple Romà d'Augustí](#) (p72) Always.

Along the palm-lined promenade Moll de la Fusta is moored a 1918 three-mast schooner restored by the Museu Marítim. You can see it perfectly well without going aboard, and there's not an awful lot to behold below decks. On occasion it sets sail for demonstration trips up and down the coast.

### TRANSBORDADOR AERI Map p93

Passeig Escullera; one way/return €9/12.50; 🕒 11am-8pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10.45am-7pm Mar-mid-Jun & mid-Sep-late Oct, 10.30am-5.45pm late Oct-Feb; 📍 Barceloneta or 🚏 17, 39 or 64 This cable car strung across the harbour to Montjuïc provides a bubble-eye view of the city. The cabins float between Miramar (Montjuïc) and the Torre de Sant Sebastià (in La Barceloneta), with a midway stop at the Torre de Jaume I in front of the World Trade Center. At the top of the Torre de Sant Sebastià is a spectacular restaurant, [Torre d'Alta Mar](#) (p179).

### ESGLÉSIA DE SANT MIQUEL DEL PORT Map p93

☎ 93 221 65 50; Plaça de la Barceloneta; admission free; 🕒 7am-1.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1.30pm Sat; 📍 Barceloneta

Finished in 1755, this sober baroque church was the first building completed in La Barceloneta. Built low so that the cannon in the then Ciutadella fort could fire over it if necessary, it bears images of St Michael (Miquel) and two other saints considered protectors of the Catalan fishing fleet: Sant Elm and Santa Maria de Cervelló. Just behind the church is the bustling marketplace, worth an early morning browse. Ferdinand Lesseps, the French engineer who designed the Suez Canal, did a stint as France's general consul in Barcelona and lived in the house to the right of the church.

## AROUND THE PORT & ALONG THE BEACH

### Walking Tour 1 Maremàgnum

Reached on foot by the elegant Rambla de Mar footbridge, Maremàgnum (which encloses a marina) is a bubbling leisure centre, with chirpy waterside restaurants, bars, shops and cinemas. In September it hosts a four-day taste fest of Catalan wines and *cava* (Catalan sparkling wine; see p19).

### 2 L'Aquàrium

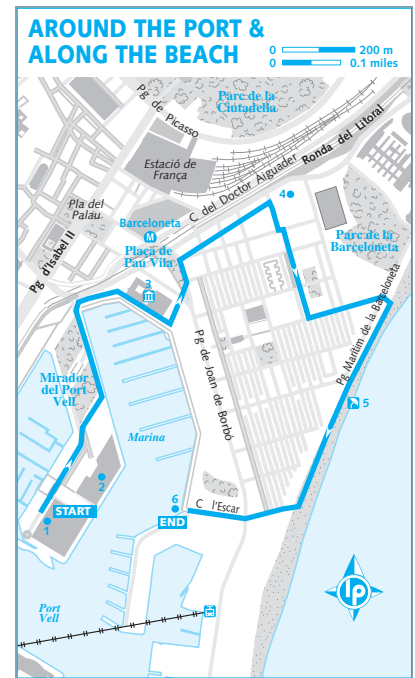
One of Europe's largest aquariums, [L'Aquàrium](#) (p92) offers a host of sea critters. The most spectacular is a varied collection of sharks, accompanied by many other fish, swimming about and above visitors who walk through an 80m transparent tunnel.

### 3 Museu d'Història de Catalunya

Housed in former warehouses, this [museum](#) (opposite) provides a potted history of Catalonia. It also boasts a top-floor restaurant/bar with terrace, while downstairs a series of seafood eateries faces a marina. For a tapas experience, seek [Vaso de Oro](#) (p179).

### 4 Edifici Gas Natural

Local architect Enric Miralles showed daring with his somewhat kooky, 100m-high tower, housing the city offices of a major Spanish gas company. Set back a few blocks from the



## WALK FACTS

**Start** Maremàgnum  
**Finish** Moll del Rellotge  
**Distance** 4.2km  
**Duration** 1¼ hours  
**Transport** 📍 Drassanes

beach, the [Edifici Gas Natural](#) (p54) commands attention with its jutting glass protrusions.

### 5 Platja de la Barceloneta

Barcelona's inner-city beach is packed with people and activity. A series of bars on the sand churn out meals, cocktails and music for the hordes of sun-worshippers. Up in the northeast corner, a string of hip bar-restaurants get especially busy on languid summer nights.

### 6 Moll del Rellotge

A stroll just west from the beach leads to Moll del Rellotge, where you may catch sight of the remaining men and vessels of the city's once-proud fishing fleet. Snooping around here confirms how much modern Port Vell has changed.

# PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU & EL FÒRUM

Drinking & Nightlife p204; Eating p204; Sleeping p235

On the approach to Port Olímpic from La Barceloneta, the giant copper *Peix* (Fish) sculpture by Frank Gehry glitters brazenly in the sunlight. Port Olímpic was built for the 1992 Olympic sailing events and is now a classy marina surrounded by bars and restaurants. Behind it rise two lone skyscrapers, the luxury Hotel Arts Barcelona and Torre Mapfre office block.

From the marina, a string of popular beaches stretches along the coast northeast to the El Fòrum district, which marks the city's northern boundary. Strollers, cyclists and skaters parade on the broad beachside boulevard (dotted with seafood eateries) and admire the ranks of scantily clad flesh on warm summer days. The beaches are dotted with *chiringuitos*, snack bars that stay open until the wee hours for cocktails and dance tunes.

Inland, the southwest end of El Poblenou, a one-time industrial workers' district dubbed Barcelona's Manchester in the 19th century, was converted into the Vila Olímpica, modern apartments that housed athletes and were sold off after the Olympics. That was just the beginning.

Now, long after the excitement of the Games, the rest of El Poblenou is gradually being transformed in an ambitious urban regeneration scheme. At its heart is the planned hi-tech zone, 22@bcn, on which work began in 2000. Its symbol is Barcelona's most spectacular modern architectural icon, Jean Nouvel's Torre Agbar, finished in 2005. Tower blocks of hotels, offices and apartments continue to go up. A 2008 study showed that more than 1000 businesses had opened or relocated to 22@bcn since the idea was launched.

The El Fòrum and Diagonal Mar projects in the city's northeast corner created something out of nothing: a high-rise residential area with grand congress buildings, multistar hotels, a giant solar panel, sea-water baths, a new marina, a future zoo and lots of space for summer concerts and fun fairs.

Metro Línia 4 traverses the area with key stops in Ciutadella-Port Olímpic for the first of the beaches and Maresme Fòrum for the Fòrum area. An alternative that passes the Torre Agbar is the T4 tram, which starts at Ciutadella-Port Olímpic, also stops at Fòrum and terminates on the north side of the Riu Besòs in Sant Adrià de Besòs.

## BEACHES Map pp98–9

📍 **Ciutadella, Bogatell, Llacuna or Selva de Mar or**  
📍 **36 or 41**

A series of pleasant beaches stretches northeast from the Port Olímpic marina. They are largely artificial but this doesn't stop an estimated 7 million bathers from piling in every year! Each autumn, storms wash much of the sand out to sea and the town hall patiently replaces it for the following season. From 2009, a series of underwater barrages in front of some of the beaches should reduce the waves caused by these storms and save a lot of trouble.

The southernmost beach, **Platja de la Nova Icaria**, is the busiest. Behind it, across the Avinguda del Litoral highway, is the Plaça dels Champions, site of the rusting three-tiered platform used to honour medallists in the sailing events of the 1992 Games. Much of the athletes' housing-turned-apartments are in the blocks immediately behind Carrer de Salvador Espriu.

Just in from the next beach, **Platja de Bogatell**, is the **Cementiri de l'Est** (Eastern Cemetery);

📍 902 076902; Carrer de Taulat 2; 🕒 8am–6pm), created in 1773. It was positioned outside the then city limits for health reasons. Its central monument commemorates the victims of a yellow-fever epidemic that swept across Barcelona in 1821. The cemetery is full of bombastic family memorials, but an altogether disquieting touch is the sculpture *El Petó de la Mort* (The Kiss of Death), in which a winged skeleton kisses a young, kneeling but lifeless body. There's a good skateboard area with half-pipes at the north end of the beach.

**Platja de la Mar Bella** (with its brief nudist strip) and **Platja de la Nova Mar Bella** follow, leading into the new residential and commercial waterfront strip, the Front Marítim, part of the Diagonal Mar project.

## TORRE AGBAR Map pp98–9

📍 93 342 21 29; [www.torreagbar.com](http://www.torreagbar.com); Avinguda Diagonal 225; 🕒 10am–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; 📍 Glòries

Barcelona's very own cucumber-shaped tower, Jean Nouvel's luminous Torre Agbar

(the city water company's headquarters), is the most daring addition to Barcelona's skyline since the first towers of the Sagrada Família went up. A little less adventurous than Sir Norman Foster's Swiss Re Tower in London, it stands out all the same. Completed in 2005, it shimmers in shades of midnight blue and lipstick red, especially at night. Temporary exhibitions (usually on a watery theme) are sometimes held in the foyer. Unfortunately, the rest of the interior is off-limits.

Nouvel was also behind the stylised **Parc Central del Poblenou** (Avinguda Diagonal), about halfway between the tower and El Fòrum. It is an odd park, with stylised metal seats, and items of statuary. Barcelona is sprinkled with parks whose principal element is cement. This is supposed to be different but the plants and trees won't fully bloom before 2010, so the jury is out on the result. The ugly cement walls that protect it from surrounding traffic noise will one day be made prettier by sprawling bougainvillea.

## EL FÒRUM Map pp98–9

📍 93 356 10 50; [www.bcn.es/parcdelforum](http://www.bcn.es/parcdelforum);  
📍 El Maresme Fòrum

A work still in progress, this northeast corner of the city has been transformed beyond recognition. Where before there was wasteland, half-abandoned factories and a huge sewage-treatment plant, there are now high-rise apartment blocks, luxury hotels, a brand-new marina (Port Forum), a shopping centre and a major conference centre.

The most striking architectural element is the eerily blue, triangular *2001: A Space Odyssey*-style **Edifici Fòrum** building by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. The navy blue raised façades look like sheer cliff faces, with angular crags cut into them as if by divine laser. Grand strips of mirror create fragmented reflections of the sky, bringing splotches of heavenly movement to play.

The building is home to a permanent exhibition dealing with the urban planning, **Barcelona Propera** (admission free; 🕒 11am–8pm Tue–Sun). The display kicks off with walls plastered in postcards old and new, each wall presenting a theme (La Rambla, Gaudí etc). The various plans, models and videos of future developments are perhaps of limited interest to people passing through, but the

## BURYING THE PAST

Buried beneath the concrete, congress centre, bathing zone and marina created in the Fòrum lies the memory of more than 2000 people executed in the fields of the Camp de la Bota between 1936 and 1952, most of them under Franco from 1939 on. To their memory, *Fraternitat* (Brotherhood), a sculpture by Miquel Navarro, now stands on Rambla de Prim.

highlight is worth a look. The 1:1000 scale model of the entire city (called *Barcelona Riu a Riu*, Barcelona River to River) took five months to create. The detail is breathtaking. There are also occasional temporary exhibitions. Tours of the Fòrum area, including the sewage treatment plant, are sometimes organised here.

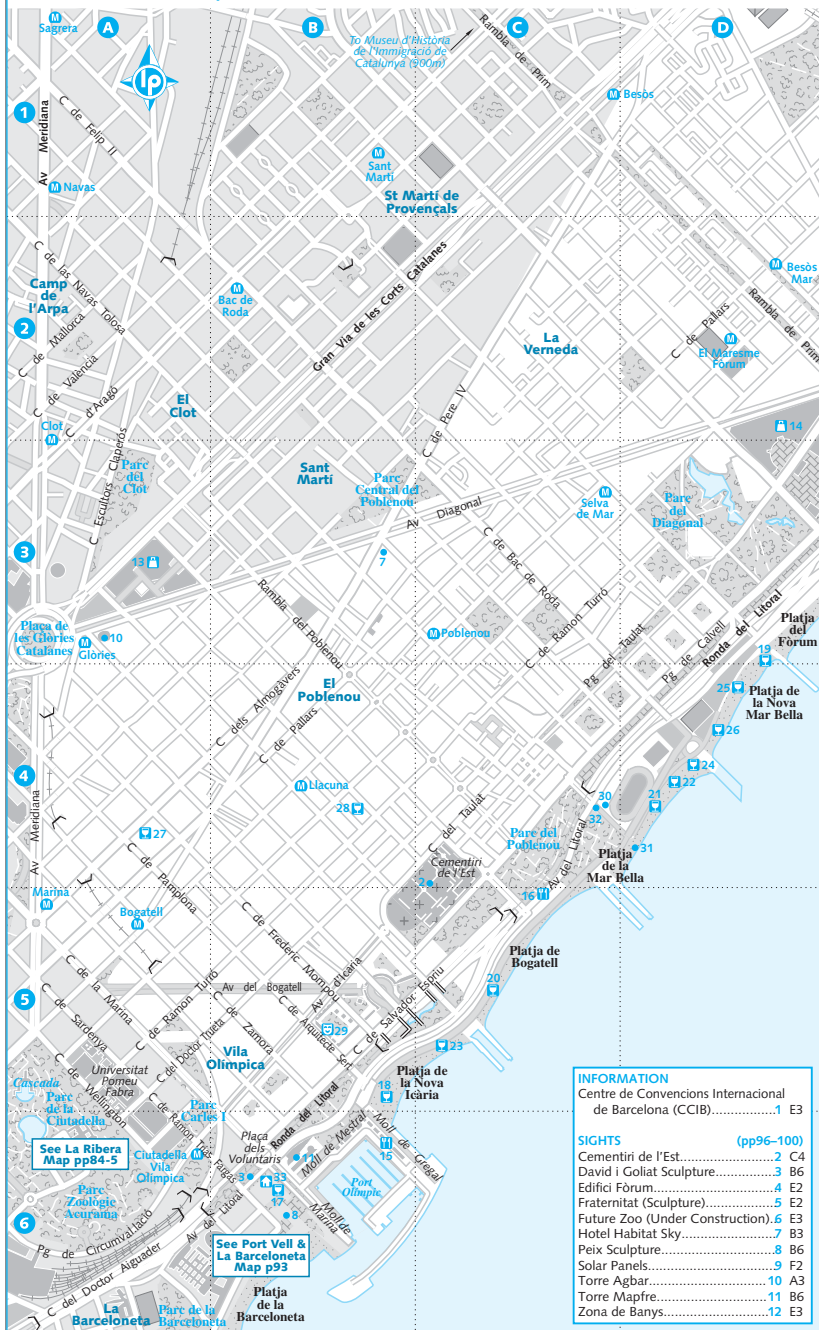
Next door, Josep Lluís Mateo's **Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona** (CCIB) has capacity for 15,000 delegates. The huge space around the two buildings is used for major outdoor events, such as concerts (eg during the Festes de la Mercè) and the **Feria de Abril** (p17).

About a 300m stroll east from the Edifici Fòrum is the **Zona de Banys** (🕒 11am–8pm daily in summer), with kayaks and bikes for rent, the option to learn diving and other activities. This tranquil seawater swimming area was won from the sea by the creation of massive cement-block dykes. At its northern end, like a great rectangular sunflower, an enormous photovoltaic panel turns its face up to the sun to power the area with solar energy. Along with another set of solar panels in the form of porticoes, it generates enough electricity for 1000 households. Just behind it spreads the enormous **Port Forum**, Barcelona's new (and third) marina. The whole area is unified by an undulating esplanade and walkways that are perfect for walking, wheelchair access, bikes and skateboards.

In summer, a weekend **amusement park** (🕒 11am–2.30pm & 5–9pm Sat & Sun Jun–Sep) is set up with all the usual suspects: rides, shooting galleries, snack stands, inflatable castles, dodgem cars and so forth.

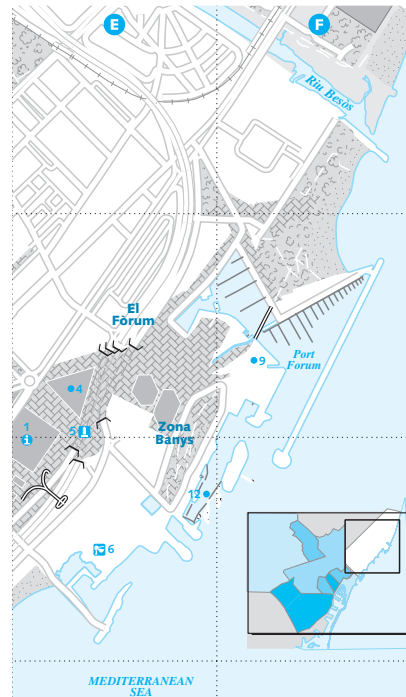
One hundred metres southwest of the CCIB is the **Parc del Diagonal**, designed by Enric Miralles and containing pools, fountains, an educational botanical walk (with more than 30 species of tree and plant) and modern sculptures.

## PORT OLÍMPIC, EL POBLENOU &amp; EL FÒRUM



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Edifici Fòrum.....	4 E2
Fraternitat (Sculpture).....	5 E2
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Peix Sculpture.....	8 B6
Solar Panels.....	9 F2
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Torre Mapfre.....	11 B6
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0 400 m  
0 0.2 miles



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Mochima.....	25 D4
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## THE NEW BARCELONA

## Walking Tour

## 1 Edifici Fòrum

The giant blue triangle that is the **Edifici Fòrum** (p97) is an impossible-to-miss creation at the heart of the El Fòrum development. Like a UFO, it seems to hover just above the ground.

## 2 Zona de Banys

Especially good value for kids, this protected bathing area is a popular summer attraction for families. Just behind it looms a giant solar panel, a symbol of modern Barcelona. Stretching out further inland from the bathing area, kids on swings and other amusements share the space with rollerbladers and strollers.

## 3 Parc del Diagonal

Parc del Diagonal was created out of nothing as part of the redevelopment of this northeast corner of the city. Surrounded by expensive, high-rise apartment blocks, it is a thoroughly modern park, with a didactic botanical walk, sculptures, fountains and pools.

## 4 Beaches

Lining the coast from El Fòrum southwest towards Port Olímpic are the city's **beaches** (p96). In summer, snack-cum-cocktail bars open along these strands for those moments when swimming and sunbathing aren't enough. The water and sand tend to be cleaner than at Platja de la Barceloneta.

## 5 Cementiri de l'Est

A world away from the hedonism and flesh of Platja de Bogatell, this centuries-old **cemetery** (p96) makes for a peaceful stroll. Orderly lanes are lined by monumental family mausoleums, statues of mythical figures, angels and occasionally the sorely missed deceased.

## WALK FACTS

Start Edifici Fòrum

Finish Port Olímpic

Distance 4.2km

Duration 1¼ hours

Transport (M) Maresme Fòrum



### 6 Port Olímpic

The marina of Port Olímpic is lined on both sides by back-to-back restaurants and bars. In summer it is especially popular with both

locals and tourists – it swarms by day as part of Barcelona’s busy beachside promenade, and heaves at night as the tacky bars swing into action.

## L’EIXAMPLE

Drinking & Nightlife p205; Eating p180; Shopping p159; Sleeping p235

In the 1820s, ranks of trees were planted on either side of the road linking Barcelona (from the Portal de l’Àngel) and the town of Gràcia. Thus was born the Passeig de Gràcia, a strollers’ boulevard. A regular horse-drawn coach service linked the city and town. All around were fields and market gardens. In time, gardens were built along the road, along with snack stands and outdoor theatres. It must have been pleasant, given the stifling overcrowding in Barcelona.

For the city was bursting at the seams. As the 1850s approached, industrialisation fed a population boom. A progressive government bit the bullet and had the medieval walls knocked down between 1854 and 1856. In 1859, a competition was held to design l’Eixample (Extension) of the city.

Work on l’Eixample began in 1869 to a design by architect Ildefons Cerdà, who specified a grid of wide streets with diamond intersections formed by their chamfered (cut-off) corners. Each block was supposed to have houses on just two sides, open space on the others and parkland in between, but speculators were soon building houses on all four sides of each block. Cerdà’s greenery failed to survive the intense demand for l’Eixample real estate. Building continued until well into the 20th century. Wealthy bourgeois families snapped up prime plots along and near Passeig de Gràcia, erecting fanciful buildings in the eclectic style of the Modernists.

Along l’Eixample’s grid streets are the majority of the city’s most expensive shops and hotels, a range of eateries and several nightspots. The main sightseeing objective is Modernista architecture, the best of which – apart from La Sagrada Família – are clustered on or near the main shopping avenue, Passeig de Gràcia. The stars include Gaudí’s La Pedrera and the Manzana de la Discòrdia, which comprises three Modernista gems by the three top architects of the period. Never is the old axiom about looking up as you wander more true than here. As you pound the pavement, a seemingly endless parade of eye-catching façades will keep aesthetes pleased. Of course, the equally ancient wisdom about looking down (to avoid stepping into you know what) holds equally true.

For its inhabitants, l’Eixample is several *barris* in one. La Dreta de l’Eixample (the right side of l’Eixample), stretching northeast from Passeig de Gràcia to Passeig de Sant Joan, contains some of the most sought-after real estate. Beyond, it takes on a dowdy feel, even around La Sagrada Família, a *barri* unto itself. L’Esquerra de l’Eixample (the left side of l’Eixample), running southwest from Passeig de Gràcia, changes character several times. As far as Carrer d’Aribau is also prime land. Indeed, the whole area between Carrer d’Aribau, Passeig de Sant Joan, Avinguda Diagonal and the Ronda de Sant Pere has been known since the early 20th century as the *Quadrat d’Or* (Golden Square). It is jammed with pricey shops purveying everything from teak furniture to designer clothes, from gourmet nibbles to shoes. The obvious two boulevards to start on are Passeig de Gràcia (with a growing line-up of international names and the highest commercial rents in Spain) and the much more appealing parallel, tree-lined Rambla de Catalunya. Flats on Passeig de Gràcia can sell for several million euros.

At night, the left side of l’Eixample has its own flavour. From Thursday to Saturday nights Carrer d’Aribau becomes a busy nightlife axis, with an assortment of bars north of Carrer de Mallorca (and spilling north over Avinguda Diagonal). Closer to the Universitat is the heart of the ‘Gaixample’, a cluster of gay and gay-friendly bars and clubs in an area bounded by Carrer de Balma and Carrer de Muntaner. The former also perks up at night as various music bars, largely frequented by a rowdy, juvenile set, fling open their doors. Just to add a little spice, streetwalkers come out to play along Rambla de Catalunya, while more discreet goings-on take place in the girlie bars and massage parlours nonchalantly sprinkled about the area.

Four Metro lines crisscross l’Eixample, three stopping at Passeig de Gràcia for the Manzana de la Discòrdia. Línia 3 stops at Diagonal for La Pedrera, while Línies 2 and 5 stop at Sagrada Família. FGC lines from Plaça de Catalunya take you one stop to Provença, in the heart of the l’Eixample. Numerous buses also ply the roads, so there is always an alternative for tired feet.

## top picks

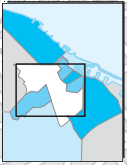
### L’EIXAMPLE

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- La Pedrera (p106)
- Casa Batlló (p107)
- Fundació Antoni Tàpies (p109)
- Museu Egipci (p112)



# L'EIXAMPLE

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See **Gracia & Park Güell** Map **P118**

See **La Zona Alta** Map **PP122-3**



See **Barri Gòtic** Map **PP64-5**

See **El Barri** Map **PP67-7**

See **Montjuïc** Map **PP132-3**

See **Port Vell & Barceloneta** Map **P93**

## LA SAGRADA FAMÍLIA Map pp102–3

☎ 93 207 30 31; [www.sagradafamilia.org](http://www.sagradafamilia.org);  
Carrer de Mallorca 401; adult/senior & student €8/5,  
combined with Casa-Museu Gaudí in Park Güell  
€9/6; 🕒 9am–8pm Apr–Sep, 9am–6pm Oct–Mar;  
📍 Sagrada Família

If you have time for only one sightseeing outing, this should be it. La Sagrada Família inspires awe by its sheer verticality and, in the true manner of the great medieval cathedrals it emulates, it's still under construction after more than 100 years. When completed, the topmost tower will be more than half as high again as those that stand today. Unfinished it may be, but it attracts more than 2.8 million visitors a year, double most of its rivals for tourists' interest. It is the most visited monument in Spain.

The Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família (Expiatory Temple of the Holy Family) was Antoni Gaudí's last great hurrah, an all-consuming obsession. Given the commission by a conservative society that wished to build a temple as atonement for the city's sins of modernity, Gaudí saw its completion as his holy mission. As funds dried up he contributed his own, and in the last years of his life he was never shy

of pleading repeatedly with anyone he thought a likely donor.

This is a building site but the completed sections and the museum can be explored at leisure. Fifty-minute guided tours (€3.50) are offered up to four times daily. Alternatively, pick up one of the audio tours (€3.50), for which you need to leave ID as security. Enter from Carrer de Sardanya and Carrer de la Marina. Once inside, you can spend a further €2 per ride on lifts that take you inside one of the towers in both the Nativity and Passion façades.

These two façades, each with four skyscraping towers, are the *sides* of the church. The main Glory Façade, on which work is underway, closes off the southeast end on Carrer de Mallorca.

Gaudí devised a temple 95m long and 60m wide, able to seat 13,000 people, with a central tower 170m high above the transept (representing Christ) and another 17 of 100m or more. The 12 along the three façades represent the Apostles, while the remaining five represent the Virgin Mary and the four Evangelists. With his characteristic dislike for straight lines (there were none in nature, he said), Gaudí gave his

towers swelling outlines inspired by the weird peaks of the holy mountain Montserrat outside Barcelona, and encrusted them with a tangle of sculpture that seems an outgrowth of the stone.

At Gaudí's death, only the crypt, the apse walls, one portal and one tower had been finished. Three more towers were added by 1930 – completing the north-east (Nativity) façade. In 1936, anarchists burned and smashed everything they could in the church, including the workshops, plans and models. Work only began again in 1952.

The **Nativity Façade** is the artistic pinnacle of the building, mostly created under Gaudí's personal supervision. You can climb high up inside some of the four towers by a combination of lifts and narrow spiral staircases – a vertiginous experience. Do not climb the stairs if you have cardiac or respiratory problems. The towers are destined to hold tubular bells capable of playing complicated music at great volume. Their upper parts are decorated with mosaics spelling out '*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Hosanna in Excelsis, Amen, Alleluia*'. Asked why he lavished so much care on the tops of the spires, which no-one would see from close up, Gaudí answered: 'The angels will see them.'

Three sections of the portal represent, from left to right, Hope, Charity and Faith. Among the forest of sculpture on the manger portal you can see, low down, the manger surrounded by an ox, an ass, the shepherds and kings, and angel musicians. Some 30 different species of plant from around Catalonia are reproduced here, and the faces of the many figures are taken from plaster casts done of local people and the occasional one made from corpses in the local morgue!

Directly above the blue stained-glass window is the Archangel Gabriel's Annunciation to Mary. At the top is a green cypress tree, a refuge in a storm for the white doves of peace dotted over it. The mosaic work at the pinnacle of the towers is made from Murano glass, from Venice.

To the right of the façade is the curious **Claustre del Roser**, a Gothic style mini-cloister tacked on to the outside of the church (rather than the classic square enclosure of the great Gothic church monasteries). Once inside, look back to the intricately decorated entrance. On the lower right-hand

## A HIDDEN PORTRAIT

If you take a careful look at the central images of the Passion Façade, you will spy a special tribute from sculptor Josep Subirachs to Gaudí. The central sculptural group (below Christ crucified) shows, from right to left, Christ bearing his cross, Veronica displaying the cloth with Christ's bloody image after wiping his face, a pair of soldiers and, watching it all, a man called the Evangelist. Subirachs used a rare photo of Gaudí, taken a couple of years before his death, as the model for the Evangelist's face.

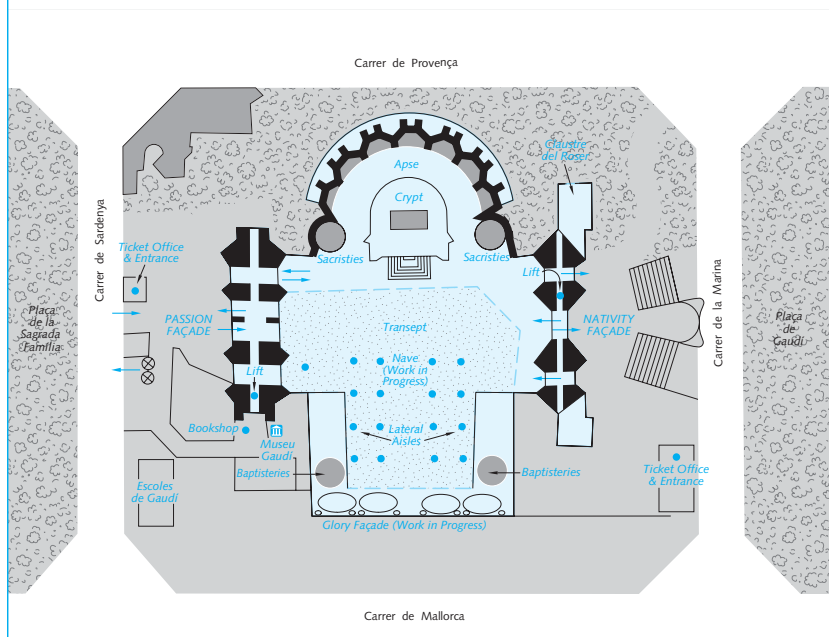
side you'll notice the sculpture of a reptilian devil handing a terrorist a bomb. Barcelona was regularly rocked by political violence and bombings were frequent in the decades prior to the civil war. The sculpture is one of several on the 'temptations of men and women'.

The southwest **Passion Façade**, on the theme of Christ's last days and death, was built between 1954 and 1978 based on surviving drawings by Gaudí, with four towers and a large, sculpture-bedecked portal. The sculptor, Josep Subirachs, continues to add to its decoration. He has not attempted to imitate Gaudí, producing angular, controversial images of his own. The main series of sculptures, on three levels, are in an S-shaped sequence starting with the Last Supper at the bottom left and ending with Christ's burial at the top right.

The main **Glory Façade** will, like the north-east and southwest façades, be crowned by four towers (taller than the other eight) – the total of 12 representing the Twelve Apostles. Gaudí wanted it to be the most magnificent façade of the church. Inside will be the narthex, a kind of foyer made up of 16 'lanterns', a series of hyperboloid forms topped by cones.

The semicircular apse wall at the north-west end of the church was the first part to be finished (in 1894). The soaring interior of the church is progressing apace. The nave and transept have been roofed over and a forest of extraordinary angled pillars is in place. As the pillars soar towards the ceiling, they sprout a web of supporting branches that creates the effect of a forest canopy. The image of the tree is in no way fortuitous – Gaudí envisaged such an effect. Everything was thought through, including the shape and placement of windows to create the mottled lighting effect one would see with

## LA SAGRADA FAMÍLIA



## TREMORS BELOW GROUND AND ABOVE THE LAW

In early 2008, tunnelling companies were given the go-ahead to create a 6km tunnel for the AVE high-speed Madrid–Barcelona train. It will link Estació Sants with the future second railway station in La Sagrera, crossing L'Eixample and passing under streets next to La Sagrada Família and La Pedrera.

Since the collapse of several blocks of flats in 2005 in the district of El Carmel because of tunnelling for a Metro line, locals have little faith in the safety of such projects and neighbourhood groups have protested long and loud against the new tunnel. Protesting louder than anyone, the administrators of La Sagrada Família claim the tunnel will endanger the city's most visited monument. At the time of writing, La Sagrada Família's lawyers had managed to hold up the start of work by demanding full access to the tunnel plans. So far this has been denied. One lawyer decried the lack of transparency on the plans: 'How bad can their plans be that they don't want to reveal them?'

Amid the brouhaha, it came to light in 2007 that La Sagrada Família doesn't have a building permit! In 1885, Gaudí delivered a request to modify the original project but obtained no response. This administrative void has never been filled. And residents on Carrer de Mallorca concerned about the AVE tunnel might have other worries. A 1916 plan to create an open space in front of the Glory façade would mean knocking down several blocks of flats and moving 150 families elsewhere. The church's administration insists this plan should be made reality.

sunlight pouring through the branches of a thick forest. Unusually, the pillars are made of four different types of stone. They vary in colour and in load-bearing strength, from the soft Montjuïc stone pillars along the lateral aisles through to granite, dark grey basalt and finally burgundy-tinged Iranian porphyry for the key columns at the intersection of the nave and transept. Tribunes built high above the aisles can host two choirs; the main tribune up to 1300 people and the children's tribune up to 300.

The **Museu Gaudí** in the church's crypt houses material on Gaudí's life and work, including models, photos and other material on La Sagrada Família. You can see a good example of his plumb-line models that showed him the stresses and strains he could get away with in construction. A side hall towards the eastern end of the museum leads to a viewing point above the simple crypt in which the genius is buried. To the right, in front of the Passion Façade, the **Escoles de Gaudí** is one of his simpler gems. Gaudí built this as a children's school, creating an original, undulating roof of brick that continues to charm architects to this day. Inside is a re-creation of Gaudí's modest office as it was when he died, and explanations of the geometric patterns and plans at the heart of his building techniques.

Guesses on when construction might be complete range from the 2020s to the 2040s. By then, it will almost certainly be necessary to renovate some of the older parts of the church. In the meantime, the entire roof will be completed by 2010, from which time onwards it will be possible to celebrate Mass.

### LA PEDRERA Map pp108–9

📍 902 400973; [www.fundaciocaixacatalunya.es](http://www.fundaciocaixacatalunya.es); Carrer de Provença 261-265; adult/student & EU senior €8/4.50; 🕒 9am-8pm Mar-Oct, 9am-6.30pm Nov-Feb; 🚶 Diagonal

This hallucinatory, undulating beast is yet another madcap Gaudí masterpiece, built between 1905 and 1910 as a combined apartment and office block. Formally called Casa Milà, after the businessman who commissioned it, it's better known as La Pedrera (The Quarry) because of its uneven grey stone façade, which ripples around the corner of Carrer de Provença. In spite of appearances, the building is coated in a layer of stone rather than built out of it. The wave effect is emphasised by elaborate wrought-iron balconies. Pere Milà had married the older and far richer Roser Guardiola and knew how to spend her money (he was one of the city's first car-owners and Gaudí built parking space into this building, itself a first). With this apartment building he wanted to top anything done in L'Eixample.

The Fundació Caixa Catalunya has opened the top-floor apartment, attic and roof, together called the **Espai Gaudí** (Gaudí Space), to visitors. The roof is the most extraordinary element, with its giant chimney pots looking like multicoloured medieval knights (they say the evil imperial soldiers in the movie series *Star Wars* were inspired by them). Gaudí wanted to put a tall statue of the Virgin up here too: when the Milà family said no, fearing it might make the building a target for anarchists, Gaudí resigned from the project in disgust. Mrs

Milà was no fan of Gaudí and it is said that no sooner had the job been completed than she had all his personally designed furniture tossed out!

One floor below the roof, where you can appreciate Gaudí's taste for McDonald's-style parabolic arches, is a modest museum dedicated to his work. You can see models and videos dealing with each of his buildings.

On the next floor down you can inspect the apartment (El Pis de la Pedrera). It is fascinating to wander around this elegantly furnished home, done up in the style a well-to-do family might have enjoyed in the early 20th century. The sensuous curves and unexpected touches in everything from light fittings to bedsteads, from door handles to balconies, can hardly fail to induce a heartfelt desire to move in at once. All those curves might seem admirable to us today, but not everyone thought so at the time. The story goes that one tenant, a certain Mrs Comes i Abril, had complained that there was no obvious place to put her piano in these wavy rooms. Gaudí's response was simple: 'Madame, I suggest you take up the flute.'

Some of the lower floors of the building, especially the grand 1st floor, often host temporary exhibitions. On hot August evenings, La Pedrera stages '30 Minuts de Música', mini-concerts held on the roof at 7pm, 8pm and 9pm (€5) through August.

### CASA BATLLÓ Map pp108–9

📍 93 216 03 66; [www.casabatllo.es](http://www.casabatllo.es); Passeig de Gràcia 43; adult/student & senior €16.50/13.20; 🕒 9am-8pm (on occasion these hours can be shortened); 🚶 Passeig de Gràcia

This is Gaudí at his hallucinogenic best, and one of the strangest residential buildings in Europe. The façade, sprinkled with bits of blue, mauve and green tile and studded with wave-shaped window frames and balconies, rises to an uneven blue-tiled roof with a solitary tower.

It is one of the three houses on the block between Carrer del Consell de Cent and Carrer d'Aragó that gave it the playful name *Manzana de la Discordia* or 'Apple (Block) of Discord' (see the boxed text, right). The others are Cadafalch's **Casa Amatller** (right) and Domènech i Montaner's **Casa Lleó Morera** (p109). They were all renovated between 1898 and 1906 and show how eclectic a 'style' Modernisme was.

Locals know it variously as the *casa dels ossos* (house of bones) or *casa del drac* (house of the dragon). It's easy enough to see why. The balconies look like the bony jaws of some strange beast and the roof represents Sant Jordi and the dragon. If you stare long enough at the building, it seems almost to be a living being. It is by far the weirdest contribution to the *Manzana de la Discordia*. Before going inside, take a look at the pavement. Each paving piece carries stylised images of an octopus and a starfish, Gaudí designs originally cooked up for Casa Batlló.

When Gaudí was commissioned to refashion this building, he went to town inside and out. The internal light wells shimmer with tiles of deep sea blue. Gaudí eschewed the straight line, and so the staircase wafts you up to the 1st floor, where the main salon looks on to Passeig de Gràcia. Everything swirls: the ceiling is twisted into a vortex around its sun-like lamp; the doors, window and skylights are dreamy waves of wood and coloured glass. The same themes continue in the other rooms and covered terrace. Two grand salons, often used for receptions and other special events, await on the 2nd floor. As you walk out onto the rooftop terrace, the floor on either side is obscurely transparent and shot with more curvaceous motifs. Twisting, tiled chimney pots add a surreal touch to the roof.

### CASA AMATLLER Map pp108–9

📍 93 487 72 17; [www.amatller.org](http://www.amatller.org); Passeig de Gràcia 41; admission free; 🕒 10am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun; 🚶 Passeig de Gràcia

Doubtless one of Puig i Cadafalch's most striking bits of Modernista fantasy, Casa Amatller combines Gothic window frames with a stepped gable borrowed

## HOW DO YOU LIKE THEM APPLES?

Despite the Catalanisation of most Barcelona names since 1980, the *Manzana de la Discordia* has kept its Spanish name to preserve a pun on *manzana*, which means both 'block' and 'apple'. According to Greek mythology, the original Apple of Discord was tossed onto Mt Olympus by Eris (Discord), with orders that it be given to the most beautiful goddess, sparking jealousies that helped start the Trojan War. The pun won't transfer into Catalan, whose word for block is *illa*, and for apple, *poma*.



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others...well, it's difficult to say. He calls it *Núvol i Cadira* (Cloud and Chair).

Antoni Tàpies, whose experimental art has often carried political messages (not always easily decipherable) – he opposed Francoism in the 1960s and '70s – launched the Fundació in 1984 to promote contemporary art, donating a large part of his own work. The collection spans the arc of Tàpies' creations (with more than 800 works) and contributions from other contemporary artists. In the main exhibition area (Level 1, upstairs) you can see an ever-changing selection of about a dozen of Tàpies' grander works. For a historical perspective on his work, head for the basement Level 3, where you'll find displays of his drawings and colourful canvases from the 1940s and 1950s, a far cry from his mixed-materials creations for which he later became better known.

## HOSPITAL DE LA SANTA CREU I DE SANT PAU Map pp102-3

☎ 902 076621; www.santpau.es; Carrer de Cartagenà 167; ☑ Hospital de Sant Pau Domènec i Montaner excelled himself as both an architect and a philanthropist with this Modernista masterpiece, long considered one of the city's most important hospitals. He wanted to create a unique environment that would also cheer up patients. The whole complex, including 16 pavilions (together with the Palau de la Música Catalana a joint World Heritage site), is lavishly decorated and each pavilion is unique. Among the many artists who contributed statuary, ceramics and artwork was the prolific Eusebi Arnau. You can wander around the grounds at any time, and it is well worth the stroll up Avinguda de Gaudí from La Sagrada Família.

The hospital facilities have mostly been transferred to a new facility on the premises, freeing up the century-old structures. Part of the Modernista site will become a museum dedicated to Montaner, medicine and the 600-year history of the hospital (first established in El Raval in the early 15th century; see p78), along with a Modernisme Centre, but not before 2009. You can join a guided tour for €5 (10.15am and 12.15pm in English, 11.15am in Catalan and 1.15pm in Spanish).

## MUSEU DE LA MÚSICA Map pp102-3

☎ 93 256 36 50; www.museumusica.bcn.cat; Carrer de Padilla 155; adult/senior & student €4/free; ☎ 10am-9pm Sat, Sun & holidays, 11am-9pm Mon & Wed-Fri; ☑ Monumental Some 500 instruments (less than a third of those held) are on show in this new museum housed on the 2nd floor of the administration building in l'Auditori, the city's main classical music concert hall (p217).

Instruments range from a 17th-century baroque guitar, through to lutes (look out for the many-stringed 1641 *archilute* from Venice), violins, Japanese kotos, sitars from India, eight organs (some dating to the 18th century), pianos, a varied collection of drums and other percussion instruments from across Spain and beyond, along with all sorts of phonographs and gramophones. There are some odd pieces indeed, like the *buccèn*, a snakehead-adorned brass instrument.

Much of the documentary and sound material can be enjoyed through audio-visual displays as you proceed through the theme-based exhibition. You'll be given an audio device to allow you to listen to how some of the instruments sound as you wander through. However, it's sometimes a trifle hard to hear the recording above the continually changing ambient music that is part of this pleasing display.

The museum also organises occasional concerts in which well-known musicians perform on rare instruments held in the collection.

## FUNDACIÓ FRANCISCO GODIA

Map pp108-9  
www.fundacionfgodia.org; Carrer de la Diputació 250; ☑ Passeig de Gràcia Francisco Godia (1921-90), head of one of the great establishment families of Barcelona, liked fast cars (he came sixth in the 1956 Grand Prix season driving Maseratis) and fine art. An intriguing mix of medieval art, ceramics and modern paintings make up this eclectic private collection, which from 2009 will occupy the ground and 1st floors of Casa Garriga Nogués, a carefully restored Modernista house originally built for a rich banking family by Enric Sagnier in 1902-05. Jaume Huguet is represented by *Santa Maria Magdalena*, a bright, Gothic representation of Mary Magdalene dressed in red ermine. Godia's interests ranged from the

Neapolitan baroque painter Luca Giordano through to Catalan Modernism and Valencia's Joaquim Sorolla. Antoni Tàpies leads the way into the museum's modern pieces.

Also on display is a ceramics collection, with some exquisite pieces from such classic Spanish pottery-production centres as Manises in Valencia, Toledo and Seville.

### FUNDACIÓ SUÑOL Map pp108–9

☎ 93 496 10 32; [www.fundaciosunol.org](http://www.fundaciosunol.org); Passeig de Gràcia 98; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 4–8pm Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat; **M** Diagonal

Rotating exhibitions of portions of this private collection of mostly 20th-century art (some 1200 works in total) offers anything from the photography of Man Ray to sculptures by Alberto Giacometti. Over two floors of exhibition space, you are most likely to run into Spanish artists, anyone from Picasso to Jaume Plensa, along with a sprinkling of others from abroad. It makes a refreshing pause between the rush of often crowded Modernista monuments on this boulevard. Indeed, you get an interesting side view of one of them, La Pedrera, from out the back (where stairs lead down to *Nivell Zero*, a space for temporary exhibitions of works from outside the Suñol collection).

### MUSEU EGIPCI Map pp108–9

☎ 93 488 01 88; [www.fundclos.com](http://www.fundclos.com); Carrer de València 284; adult/senior & student €7/5; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Hotel magnate Jordi Clos has spent much of his life collecting ancient Egyptian artefacts, brought together in this private museum, with some 700 objects spread over an airy seven-floor exhibition space. It's divided into different thematic areas (the pharaoh, religion, daily life etc). In the basement is an exhibition area and library, displaying volumes including original editions of works by Carter, the Egyptologist who led the Tutankhamen excavations.

### MUSEU DEL PERFUM Map pp108–9

☎ 93 216 01 21; [www.museudelperfum.com](http://www.museudelperfum.com); Passeig de Gràcia 39; adult/student & senior €5/3; ☎ 10.30am–2pm & 4.30–8pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2pm Sat; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Housed in the back of the Regia perfume store, this museum contains everything

from ancient Egyptian and Roman scent receptacles to classic Eau de Cologne bottles – all in all, some 5000 bottles of infinite shapes, sizes and histories. Also on show are old catalogues and advertising posters.

### PALAU DEL BARÓ QUADRAS (CASA ASIA) Map pp108–9

☎ 93 238 73 37; [www.casaasia.es](http://www.casaasia.es); Avinguda Diagonal 373; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2pm Sun; **M** Diagonal

Puig i Cadafalch designed Palau del Baró Quadras (built 1902–06) for the baron in question in an exuberant Gothic-inspired style. The main façade is its most intriguing, with a soaring, glassed-in gallery. Take a closer look at the gargoyles and reliefs, among them a pair of toothy fish and a knight wielding a sword – clearly the same artistic signature of the architect behind the *Casa Amatller* (p107). Décor inside is eclectic, but dominated by Middle Eastern and Oriental themes. The setting is appropriate for its occupants. Casa Asia is a cultural centre celebrating the relationship between Spain and the Asia-Pacific region. Visiting the varied temporary exhibitions (mostly on the 2nd floor) allows you to get a good look inside this intriguing building. Take in the views from the roof terrace.

### CASA DE LES PUNXES Map pp108–9

Avinguda Diagonal 420; **M** Diagonal  
Puig i Cadafalch's Casa Terrades is better known as the Casa de les Punxes (House of the Spikes) because of its pointed turrets. This apartment block, built between 1903 and 1905, looks like a fairy-tale castle and has the singular attribute of being the only fully detached building in *l'Eixample*.

### ESGLÉSIA DE LA PURÍSSIMA CONCEPCIÓ I ASSUMPCIÓ DE NOSTRA SENYORA Map pp108–9

Carrer de Roger de Llúria 70; ☎ 8am–1pm & 5–9pm; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

One hardly expects to run into a medieval church on the grid pattern streets of the late-19th-century extension of the city. And yet that is just what this is. Transferred stone by stone from the old centre in 1871–88, this 14th-century church has a pretty 16th-century cloister with a peaceful garden. Behind is a mixed Romanesque-Gothic bell tower (11th to 16th century),

## MODERNISME UNPACKED

Aficionados of Barcelona's Modernista heritage should consider the *Ruta del Modernisme* pack ([www.rutadelmodernisme.com](http://www.rutadelmodernisme.com)). For €12 you receive a guide to 115 Modernista buildings great and small, a map and discounts of up to 50% on the main Modernista sights in Barcelona, as well as some in other municipalities around Catalonia. The discounts are valid for a year. For €18 you get another guide and map, *Sortim*, which leads you to bars and restaurants located in Modernista buildings around the city. The proceeds of these packs go to the maintenance and refurbishment of Modernista buildings. The *Ruta del Modernisme* guide (in various languages) is available in bookstores. You can then take it to one of three Centres del Modernisme to obtain the discount cards, or you can buy the lot at those centres. They are located at the main tourist office at Plaça de Catalunya 17 (p279), the *Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau* (p111) and the *Pavellons Güell* (p134) in Pedralbes.

moved from another old town church that didn't survive, Església de Sant Miquel. This is one of a handful of such old churches shifted willy-nilly from their original locations to *l'Eixample*.

### PALAU MONTANER Map pp108–9

☎ 93 317 76 52; Carrer de Mallorca 278; adult/child & senior €5/2.50; ☎ guided visit only 10.30am in English, 11.30am in Catalan & 12.30pm in Spanish Sat, 10.30am in Catalan, 11.30am in Spanish & 12.30pm in Catalan Sun; **M** Passeig de Gràcia

Interesting on the outside and made all the more enticing by its gardens, this creation by Domènech i Montaner is spectacular on the inside. Completed in 1896, its central feature is a grand staircase beneath a broad, ornamental skylight. The interior is laden with sculptures (some by Eusebi Arnau), mosaics and fine woodwork. Both the interior and exterior feature decoration depicting themes related to the printing industry. It is advisable to call ahead if you want to be sure to visit, as the building is sometimes closed to the public on weekends too.

### UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Map pp108–9

☎ 93 402 11 00; [www.ub.edu](http://www.ub.edu); Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 585; admission free; ☎ 9am–9pm Mon–Fri; **M** Universitat

Although a university was first set up on what is now La Rambla in the 16th century, the present, glorious mix of Romanesque, Gothic, Islamic and Mudéjar architecture is an eclectic caprice of the 19th century (built 1863–82). Wander into the main hall, up the grand staircase and around the various leafy cloisters. On the 1st floor, the main hall for big occasions is the Mudéjar-style *Paranimfo*. Take a stroll in the gardens out the back.

### FUNDACIÓ JOAN BROSSA Map pp108–9

☎ 93 467 69 52; [www.fundaciojoanbrossa.cat](http://www.fundaciojoanbrossa.cat); Carrer de Provença 318; admission free; ☎ 10am–2pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri; **M** Diagonal

Pop into this basement gallery to get an insight into the minds of one of the city's cultural icons, Joan Brossa, a difficult-to-classify mix of poet, artist, theatre man, Catalan nationalist and all-round visionary. You'll see a panoply of objects as art (like *Porró amb Daus*, a typical Spanish wine decanter with dice), followed by samples of his visual poems (see p35).

### MUSEU DE CARROSSES FÚNEBRES

Map pp102–3

☎ 902 076902; Carrer de Sancho d'Àvila 2; admission free; ☎ 10am–1pm & 4–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–1pm Sat, Sun & holidays; **M** Marina

If late-18th-century to mid-20th-century hearses (complete with period-dressed dummies) are your thing, then this museum, probably the city's weirdest sight, is where to contemplate the pomp and circumstance of people's last earthly ride. From the reception desk, you are taken into the rather gloomy basement by a security guard. Along with a metallic Buick hearse and a couple of earlier motorised hearses are lined up 11 horse-drawn carriage-hearses in use in the 19th and early 20th centuries – four of them with horses and accompanying walkers in powdered wigs and tricorne hats. It's a strange little display and easily done in half an hour. The funeral company claims it is the biggest museum of its kind in the world.

### MUSEU I CENTRE D'ESTUDIS DE L'ESPORT DR MELCIOR COLET

Map pp102–3

☎ 93 419 22 32; Carrer de Buenos Aires 56–58; admission free; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri; ☎ 27, 32, 59, 66, 67 or 68

Puig i Cadafalch's 1911 Modernista caprice, the Casa Company, looks like an odd Tyrolean country house, and is marvelously out of place. A collection of photos, documents and other sports memorabilia stretches over two floors – from a 1930s pair of skis and boots (how did they get down mountains on those things?) to the skull-decorated swimming costume of a champion Catalan water-polo player. A curio on the ground floor is the replica of a stone commemoration in Latin of Lucius Minicius Natal, a Barcelona boy who won a *quadriga* (four-horse chariot) race at the 227th Olympic Games...in AD 129.

### MUSEU TAURÍ Map pp102–3

☎ 93 245 58 03; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 749; adult/child €5/4; 🕒 11am–2pm & 4–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–1pm Sun Apr–Sep; 🚗 Monumental Housed in the Plaça de Braus Monumental bullring, this bullfighting museum displays stuffed bulls' heads, old posters, *trajes de luces* (bullfighters' gear) and other memorabilia. You also get to wander around the ring and corrals.

### XALET GOLFERICHS Map pp102–3

☎ 93 323 77 90; www.golferichs.org, in Catalan & Spanish; Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 491; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–9pm Mon–Sat; 🚗 Rocafort This quirky country-style mansion could not look more out of place on one of the city's busiest boulevards. Its owner, businessman Macari Golferichs, wanted a Modernista villa and he got one. Brick, ceramics and timber are the main building elements of the house, which displays a distinctly Gothic flavour. It came close to demolition in the 1970s but was saved by the Town Hall and converted into a cultural centre. Opening times can vary depending on temporary exhibitions and other cultural activities.

### ESGLÉSIA DE LES SALESES Map pp108–9

☎ 93 265 39 12; Passeig de Sant Joan; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–9pm Mon–Sat; 🚗 Tetuan A singular neo-Gothic effort, this church is interesting above all because of who built it. Raised in 1878–85 with an adjacent convent (badly damaged in the civil war and now a school), it was designed by Joan Martorell i Montells (1833–1906), who happened to be Gaudí's architecture professor.

Indeed, the church offers some hints of what was to come with Modernisme, with his use of brick, mosaics and sober stained glass.

## MORE MODERNISME IN L'EIXAMPLE

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Casa Calvet

Gaudí's most conventional contribution to L'Eixample is **Casa Calvet** (Carrer de Casp 48), built in 1900. Inspired by baroque, the noble ashlar façade is broken up by protruding wrought-iron balconies. Inside, the main attraction is the staircase, which you can admire if you eat in the swank restaurant (p180).

#### 2 Cases Cabot

Josep Vilaseca (1848–1910) was one of many architects working in Modernista Barcelona whose names have not come down to us as stars. His two contiguous **Cases Cabot** (Carrer de Roger de Llúria 8–14), built 1901–04, are quite different from one another. The doorway of the house at Nos 8–10 has particularly fine decoration.

#### 3 Casa Pia Batlló

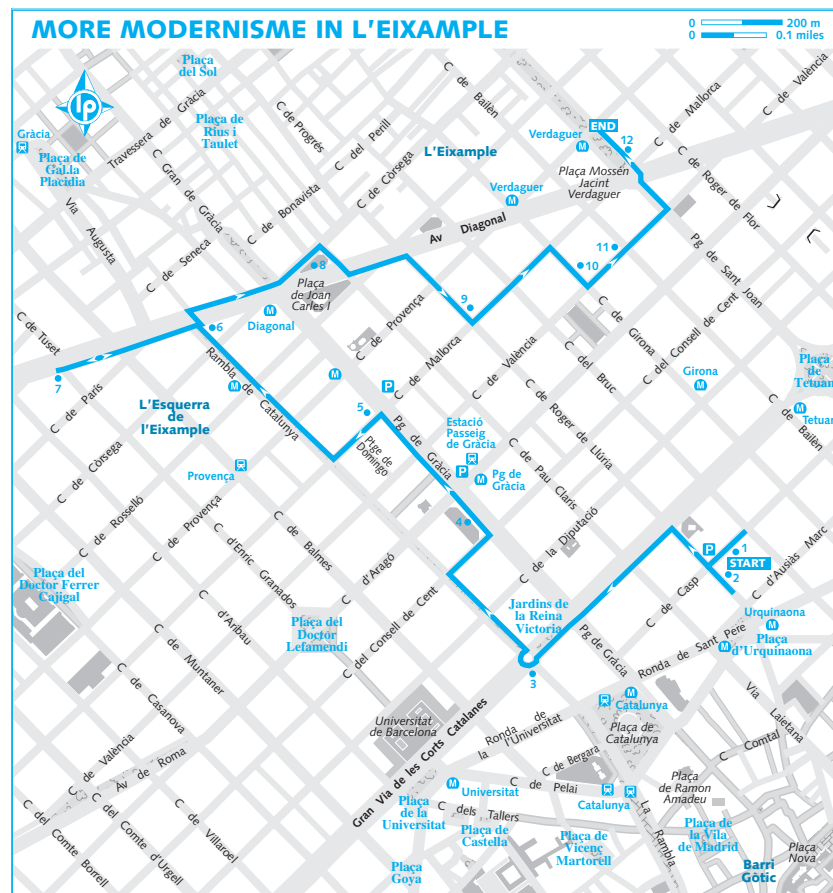
Vilaseca's eclectic **Casa Pia Batlló** (Rambla de Catalunya 17), built between 1891 and 1896, is interesting in its use of ironwork, especially along the 1st- and top-floor galleries around the three façades of the building. Stonework is pre-eminent, and pseudo-Gothic touches, such as the witch's hat towers, abound.

#### 4 Casa Mulleras

In among the big three of the Manzana de la Discòrdia (p107), **Casa Mulleras** (Passeig de Gràcia 37), built in 1906 by Enric Sagnier (1858–1931), is a relatively demure Modernista contribution. The façade transmits a restrained classicism, but it's not devoid of light floral decoration

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Casa Calvet  
**Finish** Casa Macaya  
**Distance** 3.8km  
**Duration** 1½ hours  
**Transport** 🚗 Urquinaona



and a fine gallery. The inside is similarly sober and clean-lined.

#### 5 Casa Enric Batlló

Another apartment building by Vilaseca is **Casa Enric Batlló** (Passeig de Gràcia 75), built from 1895 to 1896 and now part of the **Comtes de Barcelona hotel** (p237). Lit up at night, the brickwork façade is especially graceful.

#### 6 Casa Serra

Puig i Cadafalch let his imagination loose on **Casa Serra** (Rambla de Catalunya 126), built 1903–08, a neo-Gothic whimsy that is home to government offices. With its central tower topped by a witch's hat, grandly decorated upper-floor windows and tiled roof, it must have been a strange house to live in!

#### 7 Casa Sayrach

It's worth walking two blocks west of Casa Serra to see **Casa Sayrach** (Avinguda Diagonal 423–425), built in 1915–18 by Manuel Sayrach (1886–1937); it's one of the last Modernista buildings, is home to a chic restaurant and vaguely resembles La Pedrera. While not as nutty as Gaudí's efforts, the stone façade is all curves.

#### 8 Casa Comalat

Built in 1911 by Salvador Valeri (1873–1954), **Casa Comalat** (Avinguda Diagonal 442) is striking. The Gaudí influence on the main façade, with its wavy roof and bulging balconies, is obvious. Head around the back to Carrer de Còrsega to see a more playful façade, with its windows stacked like cards.

## 9 Casa Thomas

Built 1895-98 and 1912, [Casa Thomas](#) (Carrer de Mallorca 291) was one of Domènech i Montaner's earlier efforts – the ceramic details are a trademark and the massive ground-level wrought iron decoration (and protection?) is magnificent. Wander inside to the [Cubiña design store](#) (p160) to admire his interior work.

## 10 Casa Granell

The colourful [Casa Granell](#) (Carrer de Girona 122), built between 1901 and 1903 by Jeroni Granell (1867–1931), is a peculiar building, with its serpentine lines (check out the roof) and gently curving decorative façade framing the stolid rectangular windows. If you get the chance, take a peek inside the entrance and stairwell, both richly decorated.

## 11 Casa Llopis i Bofill

[Casa Llopis i Bofill](#) (Carrer de València 339), built in 1902, is an interesting block of flats designed by Antoni Gallissà (1861–1903). The graffiti-covered façade is particularly striking to the visitor's eye. The use of elaborate parabolic arches on the ground floor is a clear Modernista touch, as are the wrought iron balconies.

## 12 Casa Macaya

Constructed in 1901, Puig i Cadafalch's [Casa Macaya](#) (Passeig de Sant Joan 108), has a wonderful courtyard and features the typical playful, pseudo-Gothic decoration that characterises many of the architect's projects around the city. The building now belongs to the La Caixa bank and is occasionally used as the setting for temporary exhibitions, when visitors are permitted to enter.

# GRÀCIA & PARK GÜELL

Drinking & Nightlife [p208](#); Eating [p186](#); Shopping [p163](#); Sleeping [p239](#)

Once a separate village north of l'Eixample, and then in the 19th century an industrial district famous for its Republican and liberal ideas, Gràcia was definitively incorporated into the city of Barcelona (the town had been 'annexed' and then won its 'freedom' several times down the century) in 1897, much to the disgust of the locals.

In those days, it had some catching up to do, as the town had poor roads, schools and clinics, and no street lighting or sewers. In the 1960s and '70s it became fashionable among radical and bohemian types, and today it retains some of that flavour – plenty of hip local luminaries make sure they are regularly seen around the bars and cafés of Gràcia. A little way north of the *barri*, and within the municipal district of the same name, lies another of Gaudí's extraordinary creations – Park Güell.

You know you are in Gràcia when you hit the maze of crowded narrow streets and lanes that characterise the *barri*. The official district of Gràcia extends beyond, taking in the residential valley of Vallcarca, which nuzzles up alongside Park Güell.

Gràcia itself is bounded by Carrer de Còrsega and Avinguda Diagonal in the south, Via Augusta and Avinguda del Príncep d'Astúries to the west, Carrer de Sardanya to the east and Travessera de Dalí to the north.

Plunge into the atmosphere of its narrow streets and small plazas, and the bars and restaurants on and around them. The liveliest are Plaça del Sol, Plaça de Rius i Taulet and the tree-lined Plaça de la Virreina. On Plaça de Rovira i Trias, to the north of Gràcia, you can sit on a bench next to a statue of Antoni Rovira, Ildefons Cerdà's rival in the competition to design l'Eixample in the late 19th century. Rovira's design has been laid out in the pavement so you can see what you think of it.

FGC trains get you closest to the sights in Gràcia (alight at Gràcia). Metro Línia 3 (Fontana stop) also gets you close, leaving you in Carrer Gran de Gràcia and close to a network of busy squares described on [p119](#).

## PARK GÜELL [Map p118](#)

☎ 93 413 24 00; Carrer d'Olot 7; admission free;

🕒 10am-9pm Jun-Sep, 10am-8pm Apr, May & Oct, 10am-7pm Mar & Nov, 10am-6pm Dec-Feb;

📍 Lesseps or Vallcarca or 🚶 24

North of Gràcia and about 4km from Plaça de Catalunya, Park Güell is where Gaudí turned his hand to landscape gardening. It's a strange, enchanting place where his passion for natural forms really took flight – to the point where the artificial almost seems more natural than the natural.

Park Güell originated in 1900 when Count Eusebi Güell bought a tree-covered hillside (then outside Barcelona) and hired Gaudí to create a miniature city of houses for the wealthy, in landscaped grounds. The project was a commercial flop and was abandoned in 1914 – but not before Gaudí had created 3km of roads and walks, steps, a plaza and two gatehouses in his inimitable manner. In 1922 the city bought the estate for use as a public park.

Just inside the main entrance on Carrer d'Olot, which is immediately recognisable by the two Hansel-and-Gretel gatehouses, visit the park's [Centre d'Interpretació](#) (☎ 93

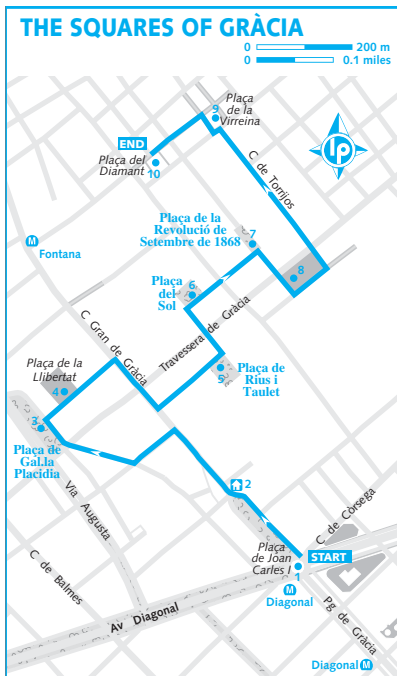
285 68 99; adult/child under 16yr/student €2/free/1.50;

🕒 11am-3pm) in the [Pavelló de Consergeria](#), the typically curvaceous, Gaudían former porter's home that hosts a display on Gaudí's building methods and the history of the park. There are nice views from the top floor. For €6 you get entry here and to the [Museu d'Història de la Ciutat](#) (p67) and the [Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes](#) (p124).

The steps up from the entrance, guarded by a mosaic dragon/lizard (a copy of which you can buy in many downtown souvenir shops), lead to the [Sala Hipòstila](#) (aka the Doric Temple), a forest of 88 stone columns (some of them leaning like mighty trees bent by the weight of time), intended as a market. To the left curves a gallery whose twisted stonework columns and roof give the effect of a cloister beneath tree roots – a motif repeated in several places in the park. On top of the Sala Hipòstila is a broad open space whose centrepiece is the [Banc de Trencadís](#), a tiled bench curving sinuously around its perimeter and designed by one of Gaudí's closest colleagues, architect Josep Maria Jujol (1879–1949). With Gaudí and Co, there is always more than meets the eye. This







de Francisco Franco. To Barcelonins it was simply 'la Diagonal'. That name stuck.

**2 Casa Fuster**

Where Carrer Gran de Gràcia leads you into Gràcia proper, a grand Modernista edifice now turned hotel, **Casa Fuster** (p239), rises up in all its glory.

**3 Plaça de Gal·la Plàcidia**

The square recalls the brief sojourn of the Roman empress-to-be, Galla Plàcidia, here as captive and wife of the Visigothic chief Athaulf in the 5th century AD. She had been hauled across from Italy, where she hastily returned upon her captor-husband's death.

**4 Plaça de la Llibertat**

Liberty Sq is home to the bustling Modernista produce market of the same name. It was designed by one of Gaudí's colleagues, Francesc Berenguer (see p119), who was busy in this part of town, although he was never awarded a diploma as an architect.

**5 Plaça de Rius i Taulet**

This popular square was named after the mayor under whom Gràcia was absorbed by Barce-

**WALK FACTS**

**Start** Plaça de Joan Carles I  
**Finish** Plaça del Diamant  
**Distance** 2.3km  
**Duration** 1 hour  
**Transport** M Diagonal

lona, Francesc Rius i Taulet. It is fronted by the local town hall (designed by Berenguer). At its heart stands the Torre del Relloige (Clock Tower), long a symbol of republican agitation.

**6 Plaça del Sol**

Possibly the rowdiest of Gràcia's squares, Plaça del Sol (Sun Sq) is lined with bars and eateries and comes to life on long summer nights. The square was the scene of summary executions after an uprising in 1870. During the 1936-39 civil war, an air-raid shelter was installed.

**7 Plaça de la Revolució de Setembre de 1868**

This busy, elongated square commemorates the toppling of Queen Isabel II, a cause of much celebration in this working-class stronghold. Today, locals gather on benches for a chat or pop into one of the bars or restaurants for refreshment. For agitated stomachs, check out **0 Gràcia!** (p187).

**8 Mercat de l'Abaceria Central**

The Mercat de l'Abaceria Central opens out one block away from the revolutionary square. It is a no-nonsense produce market, where you can dig up cheap clothes, essential kitchen stocks or stop by for coffee at one of the cafés.

**9 Plaça de la Virreina**

Pleasant terraces adorn this pedestrianised square, notable for its shady trees and presided over by the 17th-century Església de Sant Joan. It was largely destroyed by anarchists during the unrest of the Setmana Tràgica (Tragic Week) of 1909 (see p27). Rebuilt by Berenguer, it was damaged again during the civil war.

**10 Plaça del Diamant**

Two blocks southwest of Plaça de la Virreina is this once down-at-heel square, which lies at the heart of one of the best-known works of 20th-century Catalan literature, Mercè Rodoreda's eponymous novel. It also housed a civil war air-raid shelter, which may one day be opened to the public.

**LA ZONA ALTA**

Drinking & Nightlife p209; Eating p188; Shopping p163; Sleeping p239

Welcome to posh Barcelona. For some, the Quadrat d'Or in l'Eixample remains prime real estate, but most locals with healthy bank accounts opt for the spacious mansions with private gardens and garages that dot the 'High Zone', a loose name for the heights where Barcelona's topography climbs to the Collserola hills marking the city's inland limits.

The highest point in this wooded range is Tibidabo (512m), with its amusement park, luxury hotel and bombastic church. It's great for the fresh air and on a good day you can see inland as far as Montserrat. Tibidabo gets its name from the devil, who, trying to tempt Christ, took him to a high place and said, in Latin: *'Haec omnia tibi dabo si cadens adoraberis me'* ('All this I will give you if you fall down and worship me').

Apart from expensive residential living, the other high points in La Zona Alta are the Parc de Collserola, the CosmoCaixa science museum and monuments of Pedralbes further southwest.

The leafy(ish) suburb of Sarrià is a magnet for much of the serious money in Barcelona. Taken at its broadest, it covers the area arching between Avinguda de Tibidabo (and its cute blue tram) and Via Augusta. At the turn of the 20th century, when this was still largely untouched countryside, wealthy families built whimsical fantasy residences along Avinguda de Tibidabo. More recent are the gated, alarmed mansions further west.

The heart of Sarrià is Plaça de Sarrià, and its main street, Carrer Major de Sarrià, is lined with shops, restaurants and bars. Downhill is the equally residential *barri* of Sant Gervasi, between Gràcia, Avinguda Diagonal and the thundering Ronda del General Mitre freeway.

The better parts of Pedralbes, to the southwest, also attract money for their space and quiet but there is no shortage of apartment-block clumps interspersed amid the greenery, especially along Avinguda Diagonal. The same freeway has its highlights, such as the Palau Reial de Pedralbes.

Wedged between Avinguda Diagonal and Carrer de Sants is a more middle-class residential area, Les Corts. Dominated by Camp Nou, the temple to Barcelona's star football team, it is also home to much of the modern Universitat de Barcelona campus (in an area known as the Zona Universitària).

**COSMOCAIXA (MUSEU DE LA CIÈNCIA)** Map pp122-3

☎ 93 212 60 50; www.fundacio.lacaixa.es, in Catalan & Spanish; Carrer de Teodor Roviralta 47-51; adult/student €3/2; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Sun; 🚏 60 or 🚏 FGC Avinguda de Tibidabo

This bright, modern science museum is housed in a Modernista building (completed in 1909). Kids (and kids at heart) are fascinated by some of the displays here. Indeed, the museum is one of the most visited in the city! The single greatest highlight is the re-creation over 1 sq km of a chunk of flooded Amazon rainforest (Bosc Inundat). More than 100 species of genuine Amazon flora and fauna (including anacondas, colourful poisonous frogs

**top picks**  
**LA ZONA ALTA**

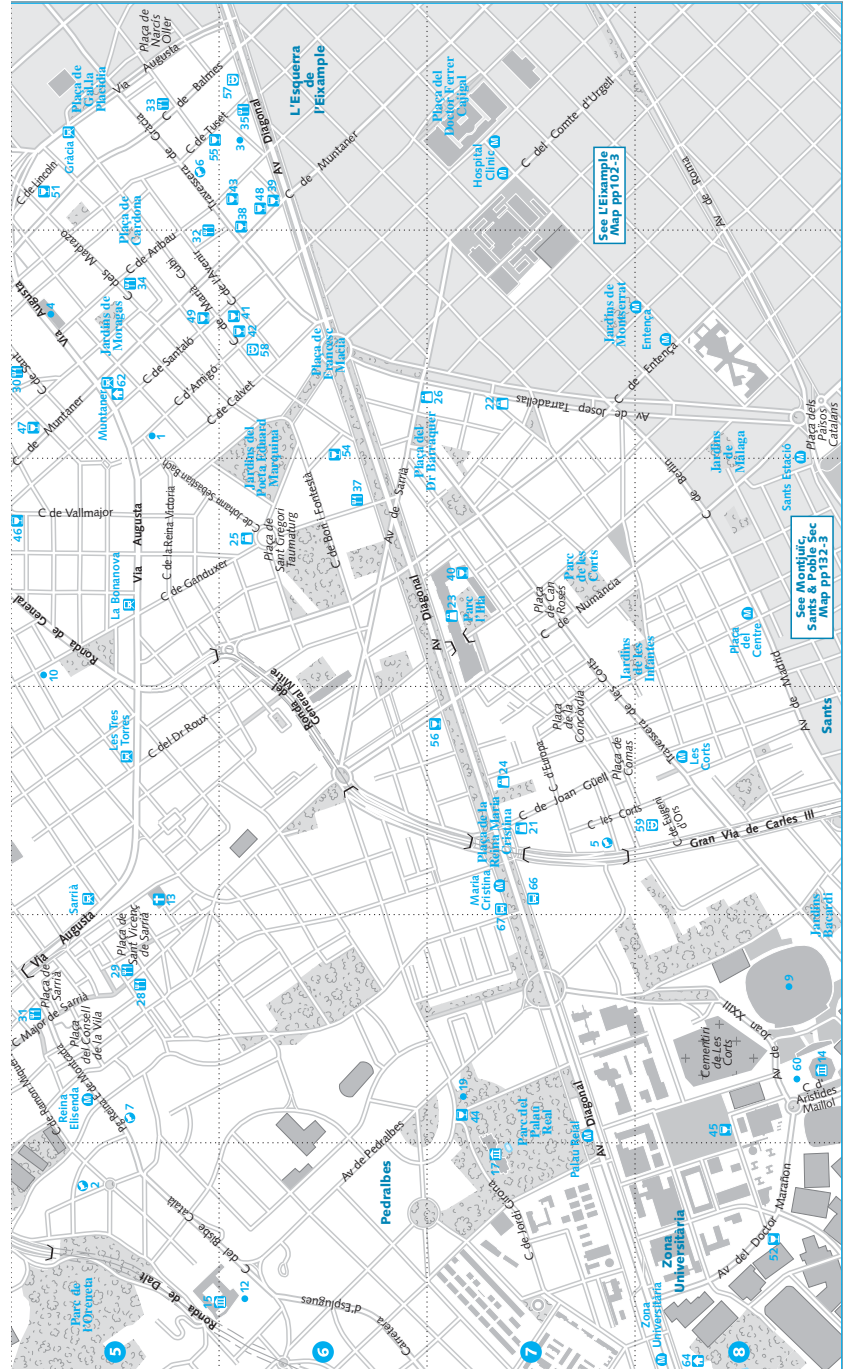
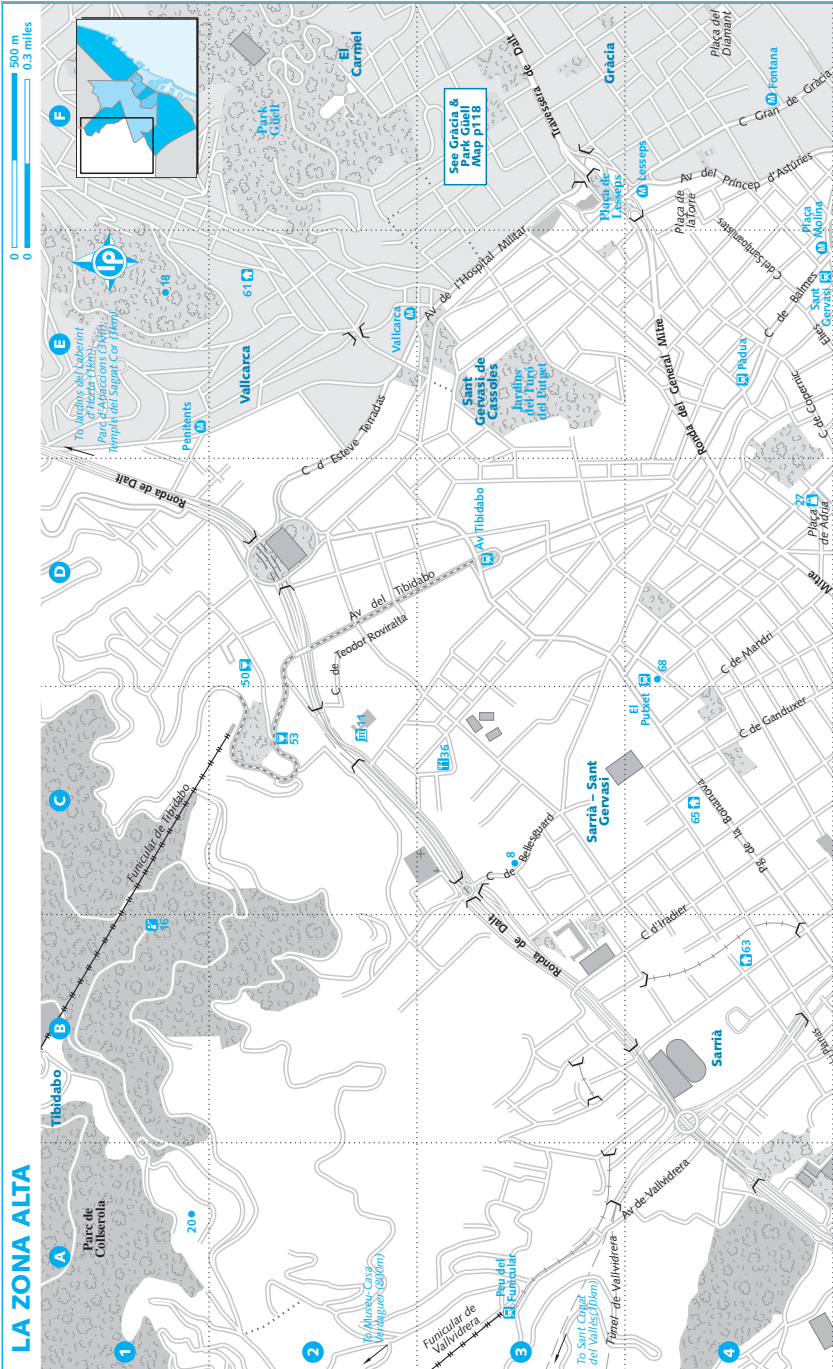
- CosmoCaixa (p121)
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- Camp Nou (p124)
- Jardins del Laberint d'Horta (p135)
- Parc d'Atraccions (p134)

and caymans) prosper in this unique, living diorama in which you can even experience a tropical downpour. In another original section, the Mur Geològic, seven great chunks of rock (90 tonnes in all) have been assembled to create a 'geological wall'.

These and other permanent displays on the lower 5th floor (the bulk of the museum is underground) cover all sorts of fascinating areas of science, from fossils to physics, from the alphabet to outer space. To gain access to other special sections, such as the Planetari (planetarium), check out the timetable for guided visits. Most of these activities are interactive and directed at children and cost €2/1.50 per adult/child.

# LA ZONA ALTA

## NEIGHBOURHOODS LA ZONA ALTA



## NEIGHBOURHOODS LA ZONA ALTA

## LA ZONA ALTA

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(Continued from page 124)

de Pedralbes in a residential area that until the 20th century was countryside but which remains a divinely quiet corner of Barcelona.

The architectural highlight is the large, elegant, three-storey cloister, a jewel of Catalan Gothic, built in the early 14th century. Following its course to the right, stop at the first chapel, the **Capella de Sant Miquel**, whose murals were done in 1346 by Ferrer Bassà, one of Catalonia's earliest documented painters. A few steps on is the ornamental grave of Queen Elisenda, who founded the convent. It is curious, as it is divided in two. This side in the cloister shows her dressed as a penitent widow, while the other part, an alabaster masterpiece inside the adjacent church, shows her dressed as queen.

As you head around the ground floor of the cloister, you can peer into the restored refectory, kitchen, stables, stores and a reconstruction of the infirmary – all giving a good idea of convent life. Eating in the refectory must have been a whole lot of fun, judging by the exhortations to *Silentium* (Silence) and *Audi Tacens* (Listen and Keep Quiet) written around the walls. Harder still must have been spending one's days in the cells on the ground and 1st floors in a state of near-perpetual prayer and devotional reading. On the subject of reading, a young Catalan novelist, Bea Cabezaz (born 1976) set her 2008 historical novel, *El Monestir de les Ombres* (The Convent of Shadows), here.

Upstairs is a grand hall that was once the **Dormidor** (sleeping quarters). It was lined by tiny night cells but they were long ago removed. Today a modest collection of the monastery's art, especially Gothic devotional works, and furniture grace this space. Most is by largely unknown Catalan artists, with some 16th-century Flemish works, and was acquired thanks to the considerable wealth of the convent's mostly high-class nuns.

On some Sunday mornings, a breakfast tour is held in Catalan (10.30am) and Spanish (11.30am). Sip hot chocolate, munch on pastries and then follow the tour (€7.50).

Next to the convent, the sober church is an excellent example of Catalan Gothic. Just west of the convent, where Carretera d'Esplugues meets Carrer del Bisbe Català, is a peaceful park, the **Hort de Pedralbes**.

## PALAU REIAL DE PEDRALBES

Map pp122–3

☎ 93 280 16 21; Avinguda Diagonal 686; both museums adult/student €3.50/2, 1st Sun of month free; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun & holidays, park 10am–6pm daily; 📍 Palau Reial Across Avinguda Diagonal from the main campus of the Universitat de Barcelona is the entrance to **Parc del Palau Reial**. In the park is the Palau Reial de Pedralbes, an early-20th-century building that belonged to the family of Eusebi Güell (Gaudí's patron) until they handed it over to the city in 1926 to serve as a royal residence – among its guests have been King Alfonso XIII, the president of Catalonia and General Franco.

The palace houses two museums. The **Museu de Ceràmica** (www.museuceramica.bcn.es) has a good collection of Spanish ceramics from the 13th to 19th centuries, including work by Picasso and Miró. Spain inherited from the Muslims, and then further refined, a strong tradition in ceramics – here you can compare some exquisite work (tiles, porcelain tableware and the like) from some of the greatest centres of pottery production across Spain, including Talavera de la Reina in Castile, Manises and Paterna in Valencia, and Teruel in Aragón. Upstairs is a display of fanciful modern ceramics from the 20th century – here they have ceased to be a tool with aesthetic value and are purely decorative.

Across the corridor, for now, the **Museu de les Arts Decoratives** (www.museuartsdecoratives.bcn.es) brings together an eclectic assortment of furnishings, ornaments and knick-knacks dating as far back as the Romanesque period. The plush and somewhat stuffy elegance of Empire- and Isabelline-style divans can be neatly compared with some of the more tasteless ideas to emerge on the subject of seating in the 1970s. It is planned eventually to house these collections in a brand-new design museum in Plaça de les Glòries Catalanes. When this will happen is open to speculation and, in the meantime, some of the collection will get a new temporary home in what was until 2008 the **Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària** (www.museutextil.bcn.es) in La Ribera. The bulk of that museum's collection is now on show here. Its 4000 items range from 4th-century Coptic textiles to 20th-century local embroidery, but best is the big collection of clothing from the 16th

Outside, there's a nice stroll through the extensive Plaça de la Ciència, which has a modest garden with Mediterranean flora laid out at one end.

## CAMP NOU

Map pp122–3  
☎ 93 496 36 00; www.fcbarcelona.com; Carrer d'Aristides Maillol; adult/senior & child €8.50/6.80; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Apr–mid-Oct, 10am–6.30pm Mon–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays mid-Oct–mid-Apr; 📍 Collblanc

Among Barcelona's most-visited museums is the **Museu del Futbol Club Barcelona** near the club's giant Camp Nou (aka Nou Camp) stadium. Barça is one of Europe's top football clubs, and its museum is a hit with football fans the world over.

Camp Nou, built in 1957 and enlarged for the 1982 World Cup, is one of the world's biggest stadiums, holding 100,000 people. The club has a world-record membership of 156,000 (and growing). Football fans who can't get to a game (see p226) should find a visit to the museum worthwhile. The best bits are the photo section, the goal videos and the views out over the stadium. Among the quirkier paraphernalia

are old sports board games, a 19th-century leather football, the life-sized diorama of old-time dressing rooms, posters and magazines from way back and the *futbolín* (table soccer) collection.

You can join a **guided tour** (adult/child €13/10.40; ☎ until 1hr before museum closing time) of the stadium, starting in the team's dressing rooms and heading out through the tunnel, on to the pitch and winding up in the presidential box. On match days there are no tours and the museum opens from 10am to 1pm.

## MUSEU-MONESTIR DE PEDRALBES

Map pp122–3

☎ 93 203 92 82; www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat; Baixada del Monestir 9; admission €4 (incl Museu d'Història de la Ciutat & Park Güell Centre d'Interpretació); ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Jun–Sep, 10am–2pm Tue–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun Oct–May; 📍 FGC Reina Elisenda or 📍 22, 63, 64 or 75

This peaceful old convent, first opened to the public in 1983 and now a museum of monastic life (the remaining 20 nuns have moved into more modern neighbouring buildings), stands at the top of Avinguda

(Continued on page 133)

## TRANSPORT: LA ZONA ALTA

Transport options vary wildly depending on where you want to go. Metro Línia 3 will get you to the Jardins del Laberint d'Horta and Palau Reial de Pedralbes. From the latter you could walk to the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes. Otherwise, take an FGC train to the monastery. FGC trains are generally the easiest way of getting close to most of the sights in and around Tibidabo and the Parc del Collserola.

### Tibidabo Transport

Take an FGC train to Avinguda de Tibidabo from Catalunya station on Plaça de Catalunya (€1.30, 10 minutes). Outside Avinguda de Tibidabo station, hop on the *tramvia blau*, Barcelona's last surviving tram, which runs between fancy Modernista mansions (particularly Casa Roviralta at 31 Avinguda de Tibidabo) to Plaça del Doctor Andreu (one way/return €2.50/3.70, 15 minutes, every 15 or 30 minutes 10am to 8pm late June to early September, 10am to 6pm Saturdays, Sundays & holidays mid-September to late June) – it has been doing so since 1901. On days and at times when the tram does not operate, a bus serves the route (€1.30).

From Plaça del Doctor Andreu, the Tibidabo funicular railway climbs through the woods to Plaça de Tibidabo at the top of the hill (one way/return €2/3, five minutes). Departures start at 10.45am and continue until shortly after the Parc d'Atraccions closing time.

An alternative is bus T2, the 'Tibibús', from Plaça de Catalunya to Plaça de Tibidabo (€2.30, 30 minutes, every 30 to 50 minutes on Saturdays, Sundays & holidays year-round & hourly from 10.30am Monday to Friday late June to early September). Purchase tickets on the bus. The last bus down leaves Tibidabo 30 minutes after the Parc d'Atraccions closes. You can also buy a combined ticket that includes the bus and entry to the Parc d'Atraccions (€24).

century to the 1930s. In time, the crème de la crème of each of the two collections will form the bedrock of the new design museum.

Over by Avinguda de Pedralbes are the stables and porter's lodge designed by Gaudí for the Finca Güell, as the Güell estate here was called. Known also as the **Pavellons Güell** (☎ 902 076621; guided tour adult/senior & child under 18yr €5/2.50; 🕒 10.15am in English, 11.15am in Catalan, 12.15pm in English & 1.15pm in Spanish Fri-Mon), they were built in the mid-1880s, when Gaudí was strongly impressed by Islamic architecture. Outside visiting hours, there is nothing to stop you admiring Gaudí's wrought-iron dragon gate from the outside.

### PARC D'ATRACCIONS off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 211 79 42; [www.tibidabo.es](http://www.tibidabo.es); Plaça de Tibidabo 3-4; adult/child shorter than 1.2m €24/9; 🕒 noon-10pm or 11pm Wed-Sun Jul-early Sep, other closing times vary (from 5pm to 9pm) Sat, Sun, holidays & some other days in warmer months The reason most Barcelonins come up to Tibidabo is for some thrills (but hopefully no spills) in this funfair, close to the top funicular station. Among the top attractions are the seven minutes in Hotel Krueger, a hostelry of horrors inhabited by actors portraying Dracula, Hannibal Lecter and other fantasies. The Dididado 4D cinema (basically 3D with the appropriate

glasses and some sound and movement effects thrown in), downstairs from Hotel Krueger, puts on 10-minute films that seem to pop out at you. El Pndol is one of the newest rides. A giant arm with four passengers drops them at a speed that reaches 100kmh before swinging outward. Not for the squeamish. A massive new big dipper is planned for late 2008. Far tamer options abound, from the l'Avió (a 1920s prop plane) to a mini-steam train and magic castle. A curious sideline is the Museu d'Autòmats, around 50 automated puppets going as far back as 1880 and part of the original amusement park. You can still see some of these gizmos at work. Various cheaper tickets with limited rides are also available.

### PARC DE COLLSEROLA Map pp122–3

☎ 93 280 35 52; [www.parcollserola.net](http://www.parcollserola.net); Carretera de l'Església 92; 🕒 FGC Peu de Funicular, then Funicular to Baixador de Vallvidrera Barcelonins needing an escape from the city without heading too far into the countryside seek out this extensive, 8000-hectare park in the hills. It is a great place to hike and bike and bristles with eateries and snack bars.

Pick up a map from the **Centre d'Informació** (🕒 9.30am-3pm). Aside from nature, the principal point of interest is the sprawling **Museu-Casa Verdaguier** (☎ 93 204 78 05;

[www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat](http://www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat); Vil.la Joana, Carretera de l'Església 104; admission free; 🕒 10am-2pm Sat, Sun & holidays), 100m from the information centre and a short walk from the train station. Catalonia's revered and reverend writer Jacint Verdaguer (see p37) lived in this late-18th-century country house before his death on 10 July 1902. On the ground floor is a typical 19th-century country kitchen, with coal-fired stove and hobs in the middle. Upstairs you can see a raft of Verdaguer memorabilia (from original published works through to photos and documents) as you wander through the rooms. The bed in which he died remains exactly where it was in 1902. Labels are in Catalan only.

Beyond, the park has various other minor highlights, including a smattering of country chapels (some Romanesque), the ragged ruins of the 14th-century Castellciuro castle in the west, various lookout points and, to the north, the 15th-century Can Coll, a grand farmhouse. It's open 9.30am to 3pm on Sundays and holidays and is now used as an environmental education centre where you can see how richer farmers lived around the 17th to 19th centuries.

Bus 111 runs between Tibidabo and Vallvidrera (passing in front of the Torre de Collserola).

### TEMPLE DEL SAGRAT COR

off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 417 56 86; Plaça de Tibidabo; admission free; 🕒 8am-7pm

The Church of the Sacred Heart, looming above the top funicular station, is meant to be Barcelona's answer to Paris' Sacré Coeur. The church, built from 1902 to 1961 in a mix

### PERPETUAL ADORATION

Since 1966, devout citizens of Barcelona have taken turns to maintain a permanent vigil of the Holy Sacrament on show in the Temple del Sagrat Cor. Adoradors Diurns (Day Adorers) and Adoradors Nocturns (Night Adorers) donate an hour of their time each month to praying. The idea is that there should be someone praying before the Holy Sacrament 24 hours a day. Night Adorers without a car spend the night in the church, and are picked up by bus at 10.30pm and taken back down at 6am the following day. When not praying, they stretch out in monastery-style cells or indulge in a chat with their fellow adorers.

of styles with some Modernista influence, is certainly as visible as its Parisian namesake, and even more vilified by aesthetes. It's actually two churches, one on top of the other. The top one is surmounted by a giant statue of Christ and has a **lift** (€2; 🕒 10am-2pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm & 3-7pm Sun) to take you to the roof for the panoramic (and often wind-chilled) views.

### TORRE DE COLLSEROLA Map pp122–3

☎ 93 211 79 42; [www.torredecollserola.com](http://www.torredecollserola.com); Carretera de Vallvidrera al Tibidabo; adult/child/senior €5/3/4; 🕒 11am-2.30pm & 3.30-6pm Wed-Sun Mar-Oct; Funicular de Vallvidrera then 🚶 111 Sir Norman Foster designed the 288m-high Torre de Collserola telecommunications tower, which was built between 1990 and 1992. The external glass lift to the visitors' observation area, 115m up, is as hair-raising as anything at the nearby Parc d'Atraccions. People say you can see for 70km from the top on a clear day. If ever anyone wanted to knock out Barcelona's TV and radio sets, this would be the place to do it. All transmissions are sent from here, and repeater stations across Catalonia are also controlled from this tower.

### JARDINS DEL LABERINT D'HORTA

off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 428 39 34; Carrer dels Germans Desvalls; adult/student €2/1.25, Wed & Sun free; 🕒 10am-sunset; 📍 Mundet

Laid out in the twilight years of the 18th century by Antoni Desvalls, Marqués d'Alfarras i de Lupià, this carefully manicured park remained a private family idyll until the 1970s, when it was opened to the public. Many a fine party and theatrical performance was held here over the years, but it now serves as a kind of museum-park. The gardens take their name from a maze in their centre, but other paths take you past a pleasant artificial lake (*estany*), waterfalls, a neoclassical pavilion and a false cemetery. The latter is inspired by 19th-century romanticism, characterised by an obsession with a swooning, anaemic (some might say silly) vision of death.

The labyrinth itself, in the middle of these cool gardens (somehow odd in this environment, with modern apartments and ring roads nearby), can be surprisingly frustrating! Aim to reach the centre from the bottom end, and then exit towards the

## A WANDER THROUGH OLD SARRIÀ

Hugging the left flank of thundering Via Augusta, the old centre of Sarrià is a largely pedestrianised haven of peace. Probably founded in the 13th century and only incorporated into Barcelona in 1921, ancient Sarrià is formed around sinuous, narrow **Carrer Major de Sarrià** (Map pp122–3), today a mix of old and new, with a low-key sprinkling of shops and restaurants. At its top end is the pretty **Plaça de Sarrià** (from where Passeig de la Reina Elisenda de Montcada leads west to the medieval Monestir de Pedralbes), where you'll want to check out **Foix de Sarrià** (p190), an exclusive pastry shop. As you wander downhill, duck off into **Plaça del Consell de la Vila**, **Plaça de Sant Vicenç de Sarrià** and Carrer de Rocaberti, at the end of which is the **Monestir de Santa Isabel**, with its neo-Gothic cloister. Built in 1886 to house Clarissan nuns, whose order had first set up in El Raval in the 16th century, it was abandoned during the civil war and used as an air-raid shelter.

ponds and neoclassical pavilion. This is a good one for kids. At Mundet Metro, take the right exit upstairs; on emerging, turn right and then left along the main road (with football fields on your left) and then the first left uphill to the gardens (about five minutes).

Scenes of the film adaptation of Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume* were shot in the garden.

### PARC DE LA CREUETA DEL COLL

Map pp122–3

[www.bcn.cat/parcsijardins](http://www.bcn.cat/parcsijardins), in Catalan & Spanish; Passeig Mare de Déu del Coll 77; admission Sun €5.20, Mon–Sat €4.15 (less for children depending on age); ☎ 10am–8pm late Jun–mid-Sep; 🚶 Penitents

Not far from Park Güell is this refreshing public park with artificial lake – a pleasant, meandering, splashing pool. The pool, along with swings, showers and snack bar, makes a relaxing family stop on hot summer days and is strictly a local affair. The park area is open all year; only the lake-pool closes outside summer. The whole park seems set inside a deep crater, on one side of which is suspended an enormous cement sculpture, *Elogio del Agua* (Eulogy to Water) by Eduardo Chillida. You can wander the trails around the high part of this hill-park and enjoy views of the city and across to Tibidabo. From the Penitents Metro station, it's a 15-minute walk. Enter from Carrer Mare de Déu del Coll.

### OBSERVATORI FABRA

Map pp122–3  
☎ 902 502220; Carretera del Observatori s/n; admission €8

Inaugurated in 1904, this Modernista observatory is still a functioning scientific foundation. It can be visited on certain

evenings to allow people to observe the stars through its grand old telescope. Visits (generally in Catalan or Spanish) have to be booked. The easiest way here is by taxi. Or take the funicular to Tibidabo and then bus 111 to the Torre de Collserola and walk about 15 minutes.

## CAMP NOU TO SARRIÀ

### Walking Tour 1 Camp Nou

For many, a pilgrimage to the **football stadium** (p124) of one of Europe's most exciting teams, FC Barcelona, is a logical first point of call. A tour of the club's museum includes a peek inside the grounds.

### 2 Palau Reial de Pedralbes

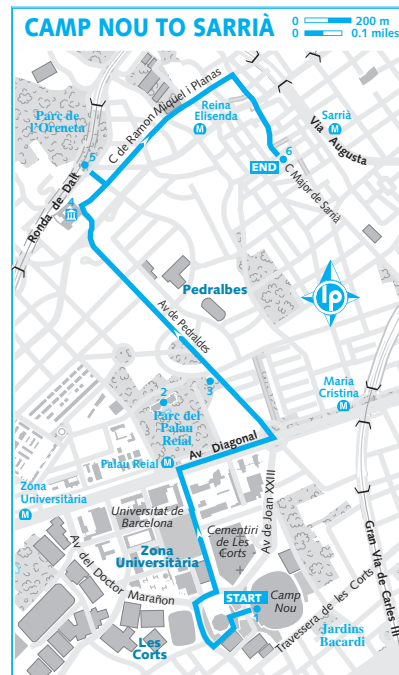
Set in immaculately kept grounds, themselves a joy to wander, the elegant **Palau Reial de Pedralbes** (p133) is fronted by pools and statues. Inside are two museums, one devoted to Spain's rich heritage in ceramics and porcelain, the other to the decorative arts.

### 3 Pavellons Güell

At the northern limit of the ground of Palau Reial de Pedralbes is a Gaudí curiosity. The **Pavellons Güell** (p134) include a porter's lodge and former stables of the Güell family, the original owners of what later became the Palau Reial.

### WALK FACTS

Start Camp Nou  
Finish Carrer Major de Sarrià  
Distance 4km  
Duration 1½ hours  
Transport 🚶 Collblanc



### 4 Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes

A stroll up pleasant Avinguda de Pedralbes from the Palau Reial leads to an oasis of another time, the peaceful **Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes** (p124). Still functioning until recently, this Gothic convent provides a tantalising insight into the life of nuns down the centuries.

### 5 Parc de l'Oreneta

Just behind the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes rise the green slopes of the Parc de l'Oreneta. For a gentle walk and perhaps a picnic lunch, it is a quiet green space that on weekdays attracts few visitors.

### 6 Carrer Major de Sarrià

Back down at the convent, you could head east for Carrer Major de Sarrià, the pleasant pedestrianised high street of what was the medieval village of Sarrià. Wander the pleasant streets and squares in the immediate area and try the city's best *patates braves* at **Bar Tomàs** (p190).

# MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

Drinking & Nightlife p212; Eating p190; Shopping p163; Sleeping p240

Montjuïc, overlooking the city centre from the southwest, may only be a hill in dimension, but it's a mountain of activity. Home to some of the city's finest art collections (including the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, CaixaForum and Fundació Joan Miró), it also hosts several lesser museums, curious sights like the Poble Espanyol, the sinister Castell de Montjuïc and a remake of Mies van der Rohe's 1920s German pavilion. The bulk of the Olympic installations of the 1992 Games are also here. Throw in various parks and gardens and you have the makings of an extremely full day (or two). It has its nocturnal side too, with the engaging La Font Màgica, several busy theatres and a couple of skeleton-shaking dance clubs.

The name Montjuïc (Jewish Mountain) suggests the presence of a one-time Jewish settlement here, or at least a Jewish cemetery. Some speculate the name also comes from the Latin Mons Jovis (Mt Jupiter), after the Roman God. Before Montjuïc was turned into parks in the 1890s, its woodlands had provided food-growing and breathing space for the people of the cramped Ciutat Vella below.

Montjuïc also has a darker history: its fort was used by the Madrid government to bombard the city after political disturbances in 1842, and as a political prison up until the Franco era. The first main burst of building on Montjuïc came in the 1920s when it was chosen as the stage for Barcelona's 1929 World Exhibition. The Estadi Olímpic, the Poble Espanyol and some museum buildings date from this time. Montjuïc got a thorough make-over for the 1992 Olympics, and it is home to the Olympic stadium and swimming complex.

For information, head for the **Centre Gestor del Parc de Montjuïc** (Map pp140–1; Passeig de Santa Madrona 28; ☎ 10am–8pm Apr–Oct, 10am–6pm Nov–Mar) in the Font del Gat building (a nice late-Modernista job done in 1919 by Puig i Cadafalch), a short walk off Passeig de Santa Madrona, east of the Museu Etnològic. It also has a pleasant bar-restaurant. A couple of other info points operate around the park.

The south side of the hill is bounded by the container port to the southeast and, beyond the southwest cemeteries, the Zona Franca commercial zone.

Sloping down the north face of the hill is the tight warren of working-class Poble Sec ('Dry Village', so called because its first fountain was only installed in 1854). Though short on sights, it hides a couple of interesting little bars and eateries. The only reminders of its more industrial past are the three chimney stacks making up the Parc de les Tres Xemeneies (Three Chimneys Park) on Avinguda del Paral·lel. They belonged to La Canadenca, an enormous power station. The avenue itself was, until the 1960s, the centre of Barcelona nightlife, crammed with theatres and cabarets. A handful of theatres and cinemas survive, and one, the Sala Apolo, managed to convert itself successfully into a club.

Poble Sec, birthplace of popular singer Joan Manuel Serrat (p39), was long a working-class district, left wing and Republican in orientation. Because it lay downhill from the castle on Montjuïc, development was largely prohibited until the second half of the 19th century. Many of the working class Catalans have left, replaced by immigrants (now more than a quarter of the local populace), predominantly Caribbean and Latin American.

The swirling traffic roundabout of Plaça d'Espanya marks the boundary between the *barri* of Sants and Barcelona's seaside oasis hill, Montjuïc. From the roundabout unrolls the most majestic approach to the mountain, Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina, flanked by buildings of the Fira de Barcelona, the city's main fairgrounds.

Before you rises the monumental façade of the Palau Nacional (which houses the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya). Approaching Montjuïc on foot this way has the advantage of allowing you to follow a series of escalators up to Avinguda de l'Estadi.

Where the grid system of l'Eixample peters out listlessly at Carrer de Tarragona, Sants begins, marked by the city's main railway station. Once a village, the working-class *barri* of Sants was gradually swallowed up by Barcelona in the late 19th century.

Avinguda de Madrid divides Sants from Les Corts, which we have included in the La Zona Alta section (p121).

## MUSEU NACIONAL D'ART DE CATALUNYA

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 622 03 76; [www.mnac.es](http://www.mnac.es); **Mirador del Palau Nacional; adult/senior & child under 15yr/student €8.50/free/6, free on 1st Sun of month; ☎ 10am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays; ☒ Espanya**

From vantage points across the city, the bombastic neobaroque silhouette of the so-called Palau Nacional (National Palace) can be seen halfway up the slopes of Montjuïc. Built for the 1929 World Exhibition and restored in 2005, it houses a vast collection of mostly Catalan art spanning the early Middle Ages to the early 20th century. The high point is the collection of extraordinary Romanesque frescoes, but there is plenty of other material to keep you busy for hours.

Built under the centralist dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, there is a whiff of irony in the fact that it has come to be one of the city's prime symbols of the region's separate, Catalan identity.

Head first to the Romanesque art section, considered the most important concentration of early medieval art in the world. It consists of frescoes, woodcarvings and painted altar frontals (low-relief wooden panels that were the forerunners of the elaborate altarpieces that adorned later churches), transferred from country churches across northern Catalonia early in the 20th century. The insides of several churches have been re-created and the frescoes – in some cases fragmentary, in others extraordinarily complete and alive with colour – have been placed as they were when *in situ*.

The two most striking fresco sets follow one after the other. The first, in Àmbit 5, is a magnificent image of Christ in majesty done around 1123. Based on the text of the Apocalypse, we see Christ enthroned on a rainbow with the world at his feet. He holds a book open with the words *Ego Sum Lux Mundi* (I am the Light of the World) and is surrounded by the four Evangelists. The images were taken from the apse of the Església de Sant Climent de Taüll in northwest Catalonia. In Àmbit

7 are frescoes done around the same time in the nearby Església de Santa Maria de Taüll. This time the central image taken from the apse is of the Virgin Mary and Christ child. These images were not mere decoration. Try to set yourself in the medieval mind of the average citizen: illiterate, ignorant, fearful and in most cases eking out a subsistence living. These images transmitted the basic personalities and tenets of the faith and were accepted at face value by most.

Opposite the Romanesque collection on the ground floor is the museum's Gothic art sections. In these halls you can see Catalan Gothic painting (look out especially for the work of Bernat Martorell in Àmbit 32 and Jaume Huguet in Àmbit 34), and that of other Spanish and Mediterranean regions. Among Martorell's works figure images of the martyrdom of St Vincent and St Llúcia. Huguet's *Consagració de Sant Agustí*, in which St Augustine is depicted as a bishop, is dazzling in its detail.

As the Gothic collection draws to a close, you pass through two separate and equally eclectic private collections, the Cambò bequest and works from the Thyssen-Bornemisza collections that, until 2005, hung in the Museu-Monestir de Pedralbes. Works by the Venetian Renaissance masters Veronese (1528–88), Titian (1490–1557) and Canaletto (1697–1768) feature, along with those of Rubens (1577–1640) and even England's Gainsborough (1727–88).

From here you will pass into the great central hall, topped by a majestic dome. This area is sometimes used for concerts. Up on the next floor, after a series of rooms devoted to mostly minor works by a variety of classic 17th-century Spanish Old Masters, the collection turns to modern Catalan art. It is an uneven affair, but it is worth looking out for Modernista painters Ramon Casas (Àmbit 71) and Santiago Rusiñol (Àmbit 72). Also on show are items of Modernista furniture and decoration.

If you have any energy left, check out the photography section, which encompasses work from mostly Catalan snappers

## top picks

### MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

- Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (opposite)
- CaixaForum (p142)
- Fundació Joan Miró (p143)
- Poble Espanyol (p145)
- Font Màgica (p145)





## MONTJUÏC, SANTS & POBLE SEC

<b>INFORMATION</b>		Parc de l'Espanya Industrial.....28 B2	<b>ARTS</b> 	(pp216–21)
Coordinadora Gai-Lesbiana		Parc Joan Miró.....29 D1	Sala Apolo.....(see 52)	
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from the mid-19th century on. Coin collectors will enjoy the Gabinet Numismàtic de Catalunya, with coins from Roman Spain, medieval Catalonia and some engaging notes from the civil war days. After all this, you can relax in the museum restaurant, which offers great views north towards Plaça d'Espanya. Finally, students can use the **Biblioteca General d'Història de l'Art** (☎ 9.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–2pm Sat), the city's main art reference library.

### CAIXAFORUM Map pp140–1

☎ 93 476 86 00; [www.fundacio.lacaixa.es](http://www.fundacio.lacaixa.es), in Catalan & Spanish; **Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas 6–8; admission free; ☎ 10am–8pm Tue–Fri & Sun, 10am–10pm Sat;  Espanya**  
The Caixa building society prides itself on its involvement in (and ownership of) the arts, in particular all that is contemporary. Its premier art expo space in the city hosts part of the bank's extensive collection from around the globe. The setting is a completely renovated former factory, the


Fàbrica Casaramona, an outstanding Modernist brick structure designed by Puig i Cadafalch. From 1940 to 1993 it housed the First Squadron of the police cavalry unit – 120 horses in all.

Now it is home to major exhibition space. On occasion portions of La Caixa's own collection of 800 works of modern and contemporary art go on display, but more often than not major international exhibitions are the key draw (in 2008 anything from an audiovisual Charlie Chaplin retrospective to 'Etruscan Princes', with artefacts and statuary from several major museums).

In the courtyard where the police horses used to drink is a steel tree designed by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. It is possible to join one-hour tours of the building at 11am on the first Sunday of the month. On Wednesdays during July and August CaixaForum often remains open until midnight and offers music recitals.

## CASTELL DE MONTJUÏC & AROUND

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 329 86 13; **adult/senior & student €3/1.50; ☎ 9.30am–8pm Tue–Sun late Mar–late Oct, Nov–mid-Mar, 9.30am–5pm Tue–Fri, 9.30am–7pm Sat, Sun & holidays late Oct–late Mar;  PM, Telefèric**  
The forbidding Castell (castle or fort) de Montjuïc dominates the southeast heights of Montjuïc and enjoys commanding views over the Mediterranean. It dates, in its present form, to the late 17th and 18th centuries, and for most of its dark history it has been used to watch over the city and as a political prison and killing ground. Anarchists were executed here around the end of the 19th century, fascists during the civil war and Republicans after it – most notoriously Lluís Companys in 1940. The castle is surrounded by a network of ditches and walls (from which its strategic position over the city and port become clear).

It houses the **Museu Militar**, a time-warp bastion of the army, in all probability destined for a limited existence. For now, you enter a courtyard (which until mid-2008 was lined with a dozen pieces of artillery), off which rooms are filled with a ragbag of weapons old and new, as well as uniforms, yellowing maps and fighting men's gewgaws. Stairs lead down to another series of halls lined with more of the same, along with castle models and even an equestrian statue of Franco, half hidden in a nondescript corner. Sala (room) 15 has a few token Republican flags added in recent years to the ranks of army flags and regimental standards.

Sala 19 is the temporary home to **Museu del Còmic i la Il·lustració**, with examples of Spanish comics mostly dating from the early post–civil war period to modern times, anything from Walt Disney translations to Capitán Trueno, Mariló ('the ideal publication for young girls'), local favourites like Mortadelo and Zipi y Zape, and more. Some are in Catalan, which seems to give the lie to claims that all publications in Catalan were banned in Franco's days.

If the Town Hall has its way, the museum will be turned into a peace museum in an attempt to exorcise some of the awful ghosts that waft around here. Perhaps the tombstones (in Sala 18), some dating to the 11th century, from the one-time Jewish cemetery on Montjuïc will get a more imaginative exhibition space too.

Best of all are the excellent views from the castle area of the port and city below. You can eat amid the cannons at the museum café.

Around the seaward foot of the castle is an airy walking track, the **Camí del Mar**, which offers breezy views of city and sea. Towards the foot of this part of Montjuïc, above the thundering traffic of the main road to Tarragona, the **Jardins de Mossèn Costa i Llobera** (admission free; ☎ 10am–sunset) has a good collection of tropical and desert plants – including a veritable forest of cacti. Near the Estació Parc Montjuïc funicular/Telefèric station are the ornamental **Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer** (admission free; ☎ 10am–sunset). These sloping, verdant gardens are home to various kinds of bulbs and aquatic plants. Many of the former (some 80,000) have to be replanted each year. They include tulips, narcissus, crocus, varieties of dahlia and more. The aquatic plants include lotus and water lilies.

From the **Jardins del Mirador** opposite the Mirador Transbordador Aeri station you have fine views over the port of Barcelona. A little further downhill, the **Jardins de Joan Brossa** (admission free; ☎ 10am–sunset) are charming, landscaped gardens on the site of a former amusement park near Plaça de la Sardana. These gardens contain many Mediterranean species, from cypresses to pines and a few palms. There are swings and things, thematic walking trails and some good city views.

### FUNDACIÓ JOAN MIRÓ Map pp140–1

☎ 93 443 94 70; [www.bcn.fjmiro.es](http://www.bcn.fjmiro.es); **Plaça de Neptú; adult/senior & child €8/6; temporary exhibitions €4/3; ☎ 10am–8pm Tue–Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am–9.30pm Thu, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Jul–Sep, 10am–7pm Tue–Wed, Fri & Sat, 10am–9.30pm Thu, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Oct–May;  50, 55, PM or Funicular**  
This shimmering white temple to the art of one of the stars of the 20th-century Spanish firmament seems to rest at ease amid the greenery of its privileged position on the mountain.

Joan Miró, the city's best-known 20th-century artistic progeny, left his home town this art foundation in 1971. Its light-filled buildings, designed by close friend and architect Josep Lluís Sert (who also built Miró's Mallorca studios), are crammed with seminal works, from Miró's earliest timid sketches to paintings from his last years.

## THE BEATING HEARTS OF SANTS AND LES CORTS

Sants and Les Corts were swallowed up by rank upon rank of housing blocks from the early 20th century on, and you can wander the streets and think nothing has been built here much before the civil war. And you would largely be right. But both started as villages and you can still get a whiff of this today.

Tucked in behind Estació Sants and the odd Parc de l'Espanya Industrial (p147) is a tight web of narrow streets around **Plaça d'Osca** (Map pp140–1) that were at the heart of the rural settlement of Sants from the 18th century. There's nothing specific to see, but it remains a slice of mostly working-class Barcelona that is light years removed from central Barcelona, the modernity of the 21st-century high-speed AVE trains that glide into the nearby train station and traffic-choked Carrer de Sants.

Les Corts is today an upper-middle-class residential district largely devoid of interest. The exception is pretty pedestrianised **Plaça de la Concòrdia** (Map pp122–3), its immediately surrounding streets and, to a lesser extent, nearby **Plaça de Can Rosés** and **Plaça de Comas**. Their two- and three-storey houses give some idea of what the area was like before it was swallowed up by the expanding Barcelona in 1897.

This is in fact the greatest single collection of the artist's work, comprising around 300 of his paintings, 150 sculptures, some textiles and more than 7000 drawings spanning his entire life. Only a smallish portion is ever on display. The exhibits tend to concentrate on Miró's more settled last 20 years, but there are some important exceptions.

In some respects, Miró's earlier work is the most intriguing, mainly because it's the least known. The bulk of it is contained in the Sala Joan Prats and Sala Pilar Juncosa (named after his wife). The first depicts the young Miró moving away, under surrealist influence, from his *relative* realism (for instance his 1917 painting of the *Ermita de Sant Joan d'Horta*), towards his own unique, recognisable style. This section includes the 1939–44 Barcelona series of tortured lithographs – Miró's comment on the Spanish Civil War. The huge 1st-floor galleries burst with the colour and light of his better-known work from the 1960s onwards. Here you can see grand-scale canvases and a sprinkling of sculpture.

Another interesting section is devoted to the 'Miró Papers', which include many preparatory drawings and sketches, some on bits of newspaper or cigarette packets. A *Joan Miró* is a collection of work by other contemporary artists, donated in tribute to Miró and held in a basement hall. The museum library contains Miró's personal book collection.

Outside on the east flank of the museum is the **Jardí de les Escultures** (admission free; ☎ 10am–dusk), a small garden with various odd bits of modern sculpture.

### ESTADI OLÍMPIC Map pp140–1

**Avinguda de l'Estadi; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm Oct–Mar, 10am–8pm Apr–Sep; ☎ 50, 61 or PM**

First opened in 1929, the 65,000-capacity stadium was given a complete overhaul for the 1992 Olympics. You enter from the northern end, in the shadow of the dish in which the Olympic flame burned. At the opening ceremony a long-range archer set it alight by spectacularly depositing a flaming arrow into it. Well, more or less. He actually missed, but the organisers had foreseen this possibility. The dish was alive with gas, so the arrow only had to pass within 2m of it to set the thing on fire. The stadium is used by the city's second football side, Espanyol, as they wait for a brand-new stadium to be built. It rocks to the rhythms of such world acts as the Rolling Stones when they come to town too.

Just east over the road is the **Museu Olímpic i de l'Esport** (☎ 93 292 53 79; www.fundaciobcn.barcelona.olimpica.es; Avinguda de l'Estadi s/n; adult/senior & child/student €4/free/2.50; ☎ 10am–8pm Wed–Mon Apr–Sep, 10am–6pm Wed–Mon Oct–Mar), an all-flashing, all-dancing and information-packed interactive museum dedicated to the history of sport and the Olympic Games. After picking up tickets you wander down a ramp that snakes below ground level and is lined with displays on the history of sport, starting with the ancients. From the original Olympics you pass all sorts of displays: anything from a 1930s discus and early-20th-century dumbbells to a McLaren Formula 1 car and a section devoted to sport and colonialism (ie, games like cricket and polo, which flourished in India under the British Raj). On the basement floor is a special section devoted to Barcelona's 1992 Olympics,

with another on the collection of Olympic stamps, art and more of the former head of the International Olympic Committee, Barcelona's Juan Antonio Samaranch.

West of the stadium is the **Palau Sant Jordi**, a 17,000-capacity indoor sports, concert and exhibition hall opened in 1990 and designed by Isozaki.

The Anella Olímpic (Olympic Ring) describes the whole group of sports installations created for the games. Westernmost is the **Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya** (INEFC), a kind of sports university, designed by Ricard Bofill. Past a circular arena, the Plaça d'Europa, with the slender white **Torre Calatrava** communications tower behind it, is the **Piscines Bernat Picornell** building, where the swimming events were held (now open to the public; see p225). Separating the pool from the Estadi Olímpic is a pleasant garden, the **Jardí d'Acclimatació**.

### FONT MÀGICA Map pp140–1

**Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina; admission free; ☎ every 30min 7–8.30pm Fri & Sat Oct–late Jun, 9.30–11.30pm Thu–Sun late Jun–Sep; ☎ Espanya**

With a flourish, the Magic Fountain erupts into a feast of musical, backlit liquid life. It is extraordinary how an idea that was cooked up for the 1929 Exposition has, since the 1992 Olympics, again become a magnet. On hot summer evenings especially, this 15-minute spectacle (repeated several times through the evening) mesmerises onlookers. The main fountain of a series that sweeps up the hill from Avinguda de la Reina Maria Cristina to the grand façade of the Palau Nacional, La Font Màgica is a unique performance in which the water at times looks like seething fireworks or a mystical cauldron of colour. On the last evening of the Festes de la Mercè in September, a particularly spectacular display includes fireworks.

### POBLE ESPANYOL Map pp140–1

☎ 93 508 63 00; www.poble-espanyol.com; Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas; adult/child/senior & student €8/5/6; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon, 9am–2am Tue–Thu, 9am–4am Fri & Sat, 9am–midnight Sun; ☎ Espanya or ☎ 50, 61 or PM

Welcome to Spain! All of it! This Spanish Village is both a cheesy souvenir-hunters' haunt and an intriguing scrapbook of Spanish architecture built for the Spanish

crafts section of the 1929 Exhibition. You can wander from Andalucía to the Balearic Islands in the space of a couple of hours' slow meandering, visiting surprisingly good copies of characteristic buildings from all the country's regions.

You enter from beneath a towered medieval gate from Àvila. Inside, to the right, is an information office with free maps. Straight ahead from the gate is the Plaza Mayor (town square), surrounded with mainly Castilian and Aragonese buildings. Elsewhere you'll find an Andalusian *barrio*, a Basque street, Galician and Catalan quarters and even a Dominican monastery (at the eastern end). The buildings house dozens of restaurants, cafés, bars, craft shops and workshops (such as glass-makers), and some souvenir stores. ☎ 93 423 41 72; www.fundaciobcn.es; admission free; ☎ 10am–7pm), an eclectic collection of 300 works of art including sculptures, prints, ceramics and tapestries by modern artists ranging from Picasso and Miró to more contemporary figures, including Miquel Barceló. The foundation also has a sculpture garden, boasting 27 pieces, nearby within the grounds of Poble Espanyol (look for the Montblanc gate).

At night the restaurants, bars and especially the discos become a lively corner of Barcelona's nightlife.

### PAVELLÓ MIES VAN DER ROHE

Map pp140–1  
☎ 93 423 40 16; www.miesbcn.com; Avinguda del Marquès de Comillas s/n; adult/child under 18yr/student €4/free/2; ☎ 10am–8pm; ☎ Espanya

Just to the west of La Font Màgica is a strange building. In 1929 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe erected the Pavelló Alemany (German Pavilion) for the World Exhibition. Now known by the name of its architect, it was removed after the show. Decades later, a society was formed to rebuild what was in hindsight considered a key work in the trajectory of one of the world's most important modern architects. Reconstructed in the 1980s, it is a curious structure of interlocking planes – walls of marble or glass, ponds of water, ceilings and just plain nothing, a temple to the new urban environment. A graceful copy of a statue of *Alba* (Dawn) by Berlin sculptor Georg Kolbe (1877–1947) stands in one of the exterior areas.

## TRANSPORT AROUND MONTJUÏC

Metro Línia 3 runs through Poble Sec. The closest stops to Montjuïc are Espanya, Poble Sec and Paral.lel. You *could* walk from Ciutat Vella (the foot of La Rambla is 700m from the eastern end of Montjuïc). Escalators run up to the Palau Nacional from Avinguda de Rius i Taulet and Passeig de les Cascades. They continue as far as Avinguda de l'Estadi.

### Bus

Bus 50 runs to Montjuïc along Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes via Plaça de l'Universitat and Plaça d'Espanya. Bus 61 runs (six times a day, Monday to Friday only) along Avinguda del Paral.lel to Montjuïc via Plaça d'Espanya. Bus 55 runs across town via Plaça de Catalunya and Carrer de Lleida past the Museu d'Arqueologia to terminate at the Funicular station. The PM (Parc de Montjuïc) line does a circle trip from Plaça d'Espanya to the Castell de Montjuïc. It operates every 20 minutes or so from 8am to 8pm on weekends and holidays.

The **Bus Turístic** (p266) also makes several stops on Montjuïc.

Bus Montjuïc Turístic (adult/child €3/2) operates two hop-on, hop-off circuits (red and blue) in single-deck, open-top buses around the park. The blue line starts at Plaça d'Espanya and the red at Plaça del Portal de la Pau, at the waterfront end of La Rambla. There are a total of 22 stops, five interconnecting the two routes. The service operates every 40 minutes, from 10am to 9pm, daily from May to September.

### Metro & Funicular

Take the Metro (Línia 2 or 3) to the Paral.lel stop and pick up the **funicular railway** (Map pp140–1; ☎ 9am–10pm Apr–Oct, 9am–8pm Nov–Mar), part of the Metro fare system, from there to Estació Parc Montjuïc.

### Transbordador Aeri

The quickest way to get to the mountain from the beach is this cable car that runs between Torre de Sant Sebastià in **La Barceloneta** (p94) and the Miramar stop on Montjuïc.

### Telefèric de Montjuïc

From Estació Parc Montjuïc, this **cable car** (information ☎ 93 328 90 03; adult/child one way €5.70/4.50; ☎ 10am–9pm Jun–Sep, 10am–7pm Apr–May & Oct, 10am–6pm Nov–Mar) carries you to the Castell de Montjuïc via the Mirador (a lookout point).

## MUSEU D'ARQUEOLOGIA DE CATALUNYA

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 424 65 77; [www.mac.es](http://www.mac.es); Passeig de Santa Madrona 39-41; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9.30am–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun; ☎ 55 or PM

The archaeology museum, housed in what was the Graphic Arts palace during the 1929 Exposition, covers Catalonia and related cultures elsewhere in Spain. Items range from copies of pre-Neanderthal skulls to lovely Carthaginian necklaces and jewel-studded Visigothic crosses. There's good material on the Balearic Islands (rooms X to XIII) and Empúries (Emporion), the Greek and Roman city on the Costa Brava (rooms XIV and XVII). The Roman finds upstairs were mostly dug up in Barcelona.

## MUSEU ETNOLÒGIC

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 424 64 02; [www.museuetnologic.bcn.cat](http://www.museuetnologic.bcn.cat), in Catalan; Passeig de Santa Madrona 16-22; adult/child under 12yr/senior & student €3.50/free/1.75, 1st Sun of month free; ☎ noon–8pm Tue–Sat, 11am–3pm Sun late Jun–late Sep, 10am–7pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed & Fri–Sun late Sep–late Jun; ☎ 55

Barcelona's ethnology museum presents a curious permanent collection, Ètnic, in which several thousand wide-ranging items are on show in three themed sections, Orígens (Origins), Pobles (Peoples) and Mosaics. Along with lots of material from rural areas of Catalonia and parts of Spain, the museum's collections include items from as far afield as Australia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Japan and Morocco, along with a handful of objects from other parts of Europe. The Spanish collections range from Andalusian ceramics to extraordinary traditional festive dress from the remote Pyrenean valley, Vall d'Ansó.

## JARDÍ BOTÀNIC

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 426 49 35; [www.jardibotanic.bcn.es](http://www.jardibotanic.bcn.es); Carrer del Doctor Font i Quer 2; adult/child under 16yr/student €3.50/free/1.70, last Sun of month free; ☎ 10am–8pm Jun–Aug, 10am–7pm Apr–May & Sep, 10am–6pm Feb–Mar & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–Jan; ☎ 50, 61 or PM

Across the road to the south of the Estadi, this botanical garden was created atop

what was an old municipal dump. The theme is 'Mediterranean' flora and the collection of some 40,000 plants includes 1500 species that thrive in areas with a climate similar to that of the Med, including the Eastern Mediterranean, Spain (including the Balearic and Canary Islands), North Africa, Australia, California, Chile and South Africa. The garden is being extended.

## PLAÇA D'ESPANYA & AROUND

Map pp140–1

### Plaça d'Espanya; ☐ Espanya

The whirling roundabout of Plaça d'Espanya, distinguished by its so-called Venetian towers (because they are vaguely reminiscent of the belltower in Venice's St Mark's Sq), is flanked on its northern side by the façade of the former **Plaça de Braus Les Arenes** bullring. Built in 1900 and at one point one of three bullrings in the city, it is being converted into a shopping and leisure centre by Lord Richard Rogers.

Behind the bullring is the **Parc Joan Miró**, created in the 1980s – worth a quick detour for Miró's phallic sculpture *Dona i Ocell* (Woman and Bird) in the western corner. Locals know the park (which apart from Miró is a dispiriting affair) as the Parc de l'Escorxador (Abattoir Park), as that's what once stood here – not surprising given the proximity to the bullring.

A couple of blocks west and just south of Estació Sants is the odd **Parc de l'Espanya Industrial**. With its pond, trees, children's swings, bar, loads of cement and the odd, sci-fi prison-camp searchlight towers, it is a strange park indeed.

## CEMENTIRI DEL SUD-OEST

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 484 17 00; ☎ 8am–5.30pm; ☎ PM

On the hill to the south of the Anella Olímpica you can see the top of a huge cemetery, the Cementiri del Sud-Oest or Cementiri Nou, which extends down the southern side of the hill. Opened in 1883, it's an odd combination of elaborate architect-designed tombs for rich families and small niches for the rest. It includes the graves of numerous Catalan artists and politicians. Among the big names are Joan Miró, Carmen Amaya (the flamenco dance star from La Barceloneta), Jacint Verdaguer (the 19th-century priest and poet to whom the rebirth of Catalan literature

is attributed), Francesc Macià and Lluís Companys (both nationalist presidents of Catalonia, the latter executed by Franco's henchmen in the Castell de Montjuïc in 1940), Ildefons Cerdà (who designed l'Eixample) and Joan Gamper (the founder of the FC Barcelona football team, aka Hans Gamper). Many victims of Franco's postwar revenge were buried in unmarked graves here – the last of them in 1974. From the PM bus stop it's about an 800m walk southwest. Otherwise, Bus 38 from Plaça de Catalunya stops close to the cemetery entrance.

## REFUGI 307

Map pp140–1

☎ 93 256 21 22; Carrer Nou de la Rambla 169; admission €3; ☎ 30-min tours 11am–2pm Sat & Sun; ☎ Paral.lel

Barcelona was the most heavily bombed city from the air during the Spanish Civil War and was dotted with more than 1300 air-raid shelters. Local citizens started digging this one under a fold of Montjuïc in March 1937. In the course of the next two years, the web of tunnels was slowly extended to 200m, with a theoretical capacity for 2000 people. People were not allowed to sleep overnight in the shelter, as when raids were not being carried out work continued on its extension. Vaulted to displace the weight above the shelter to the clay brick walls (clay is porous, which allowed the bricks to absorb the shock waves of falling bombs without cracking), the tunnels were narrow and winding. Coated in lime to seal out humidity and whitewashed to relieve the sense of claustrophobia, they became a second home for many Poble Sec folks. When the civil war ended, Franco had some extensions made as he considered the option of entering WWII on Hitler's side. When he dropped this idea, this and other shelters were largely abandoned. In the tough years of famine and rationing of the 1940s and 1950s, families from Granada took up residence here rather than in the shacks springing up all over the area, as poor migrants arrived from southern Spain. Later on, an enterprising fellow grew mushrooms here for sale on the black market. The half-hour tours (in Catalan or Spanish, book ahead for English or French) explain all this and more.

## VIEWS & GARDENS ON MONTJUÏC

### Walking Tour

#### 1 Castell de Montjuïc

Long synonymous with oppression, the dark history of **Castell de Montjuïc** (p143) is today overshadowed by the fine views it commands over the city and sea. The ride up on the Telefèric is the perfect way to get there. And from here on it's all downhill!

#### 2 Jardins del Mirador

A short stroll down the road or the parallel Camí del Mar pedestrian trail leads to another fine viewpoint over the city and sea, the Jardins del Mirador. Take a weight off on the park benches or pick up a snack.

#### 3 Jardins de Joan Brossa

Further downhill is the multi-tiered Jardins de Joan Brossa (the entrance is on the left just beyond Plaça de la Sardana, with the sculpture of people engaged in the classic Catalan folk dance). More fine city views can be had

from among the many Mediterranean trees and plants.

#### 4 Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer

Exiting the Jardins de Joan Brossa at the other (west) side, you cross Camí Baix del Castell to the painstakingly laid out Jardins de Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer. This is a beautiful setting for a slow meander among tulip beds and water lilies.

#### 5 Fundació Joan Miró

Joan Miró left a broad collection of his works to the city in his specially designed hillside foundation (p143). You can discover his earliest, tentative artistic attempts and continue right through to the characteristic broad canvases for which he is known.

#### 6 Jardins de Laribal

Dropping away behind the Fundació Joan Miró, the Jardins Laribal are a combination of terraced gardens linked by paths and stairways. The pretty sculpted watercourses along some of the stairways were inspired by Granada's Muslim-era palace of El Alhambra. Stop for a snack at the Centre Gestor del Parc de Montjuïc.

#### 7 Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Even if the escalators aren't working, it is worth climbing the steps to this ochre beast to see one of Europe's finest collections of Romanesque art, salvaged from countless churches and chapels sprinkled over northern Catalonia. Further collections range from Gothic to Modernisme.

## THE OUTSKIRTS

Two key architectural sights lie on the edge of town. Gaudí's crypt in the Colònia Güell provides eye-catching insights into his theories of architecture, while the grand cloisters of the monastery at Sant Cugat del Vallès take us travelling back centuries. Also curious is the immigration museum on the northwest edge of town.

Sant Cugat del Vallès lies about 15km north of central Barcelona, over the Serra de Collserola hills. The Colònia Güell is in Santa Coloma de Cervelló, about 15km west of Barcelona on the west bank of the Riu Llobregat.

#### COLÒNIA GÜELL off Map pp140–1

☎ 93 630 58 07; [www.coloniaguellbarcelona.com](http://www.coloniaguellbarcelona.com); Santa Coloma de Cervelló; adult/student & senior crypt €4/2.50, 1hr tour of crypt €5/3.50, 2hr tour of crypt & Colònia Güell €8/6; ☎ crypt 10am–2pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–3pm Sat, Sun & holidays May–Oct, 10am–3pm Nov–Apr; 🚆 FGC lines S4, S7, S8 or S33

Apart from La Sagrada Família, Gaudí's last big project was the creation of a Utopian textile workers' complex for his magnate patron Eusebi Güell outside Barcelona at Santa Coloma de Cervelló. Gaudí's main role was to erect the colony's church. Work began in 1908 but the idea fizzled eight years later and Gaudí only finished the crypt, which still serves as a working church.

This structure is a key to understanding what the master had in mind for his *magnum opus*, La Sagrada Família. The mostly brick-clad columns that support the ribbed vaults in the ceiling are inclined at all angles in much the way you might expect trees in a forest to lean. That effect was deliberate, but also grounded in physics. Gaudí worked out the angles so that their load would be transmitted from the ceiling to the earth without the help of extra buttressing. Similar thinking lay behind his plans for La Sagrada Família, whose Gothic-inspired structure would tower above any Middle Ages building, without requiring a single buttress. Gaudí's hand is visible down to the wavy design of the pews. The primary colours in the curvaceous plant-shaped stained-glass windows are another reminder of the era in which the crypt was built.

Near the church spread the cute brick houses designed for the factory workers and still inhabited today. A short stroll away, the 23 factory buildings of a Modernista industrial complex, idle since the 1970s, have been brought back to life in a €60 million project under the direction of

local building star Òscar Tusquets. Shops and businesses have moved into the renovated complex. You can pick up a map at the information centre and wander around or join guided visits of the crypt alone or the crypt and former factory complex at noon on weekends. Other tours take place at 10am and 2pm too if there are enough people. In theory, several languages are catered for but, for anything beyond Catalan and Spanish, you need to call ahead to make sure a guide is available for your language. Group tours can be booked ahead for weekdays.

#### SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS off Map pp122–3

☎ 93 675 99 51; [www.museu.santcugat.cat](http://www.museu.santcugat.cat), in Catalan; Plaça Octavià; adult/senior & under 16yr €3/free; ☎ 10am–1.30pm & 3–8pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Jun–Sep, 10am–1.30pm & 3–7pm Tue–Sat, 10am–2.30pm Sun & holidays Oct–May; 🚆 FGC lines S1, S2, S5 or S55 Marauding Muslims razed the one-time Roman encampment-turned-Visigothic monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès to the ground in the 8th century. These things happen, so after the Christians got back in the saddle, work on a new, fortified Benedictine monastic complex was stoically begun. What you see today is a combination of Romanesque and Gothic buildings. The lower floor of the cloister is a fine demonstration of Romanesque design and it's the principal reason for making the effort to come. In particular, the decoration of the 72 pairs of columns, with scenes ranging from pious scriptural events to completely medieval fantasy, is captivating. The former monastery holds occasional temporary exhibitions.

From the train station, head left out of the station along Avinguda d'Alfonso Sala Conde de Egara and turn right down Carrer de Ruis i Tauler, followed by a left into Carrer de Santiago Rusiñol, which leads to the monastery.

### WALK FACTS

Start Castell de Montjuïc

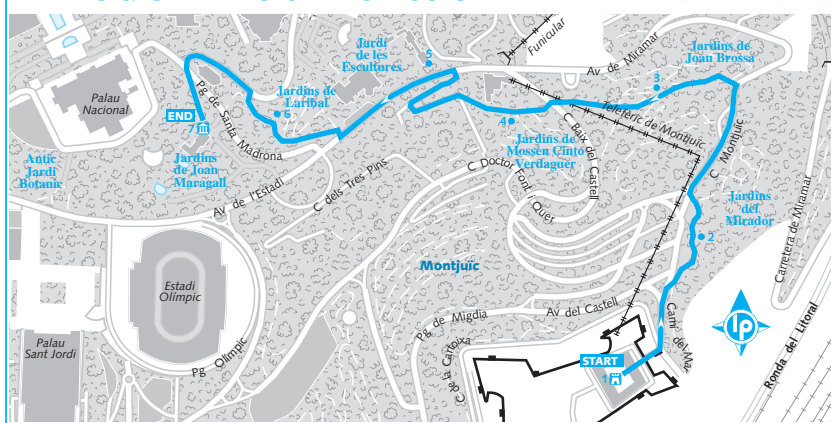
Finish Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Distance 2.5km

Duration 1 hour

Transport 🚆 Telefèric de Montjuïc (Castell)

## VIEWS & GARDENS ON MONTJUÏC



## MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE L'IMMIGRACIÓ DE CATALUNYA

off Map pp98–9

☎ 93 381 26 06; [www.mhic.net](http://www.mhic.net); Carretera de Mataró 124, Sant Adrià de Besòs; admission free; 🕒 10am–2pm & 5–8pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed, Fri & Sat May–Sep, 10am–2pm & 4–7pm Tue & Thu, 10am–2pm Wed, Fri & Sat Oct–Apr; 📍 Verneda

The star piece of this museum dedicated to the history of immigration in Catalonia is a wagon of the train known as El Sevillano, which in the 1950s trundled between

Andalucía and Catalunya, jammed with migrants on an all-stops trip that often lasted more than 30 hours! The one-room exhibition in the former country house, Can Serra (now surrounded by light industry, ring roads and warehouses), contains a display of photos, text (in Catalan) and various documents and objects that recall the history of immigration to Catalonia from the 19th century on. There's also an engaging video with images of migrant life decades ago and today.

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