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## **Barcelona Introduction**

I originally planned a three-week visit to Spain, but a minor injury cut my trip short and I only got to see Barcelona, the first of my planned stops.

Great planning.

Even though it was a shortened trip, it was great. The best of Spain, all in one place.

Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, one of Spain's 17 autonomous communities.

Catalonia seems to have about as much in common with the rest of Spain as California has with the Thirteen Colonies.



Wiki says "Barcelona is today one of the world's leading tourist, economic, trade fair, and cultural-sports centers, and its influences in commerce, education, entertainment, media, fashion, science, and the arts all contribute to its status as one of the world's major global cities."

International surveys place Barcelona high in terms of livability, innovation, productivity, and cultural influence.

Even on a short visit it's easy to see why. I hope that comes across in my pictures.



Orientation Welcome to Barcelona, Spain's Mediterranean jewel.
City population 1.6 million, metro area 4.5 million.



Montjuic First I'd like to find a vantage point to get the lay of the land. There's a big hill in town, Montjuic, that's just perfect.



Montjuic A combination of a funicular and a cable car take you up to the top.



Montjuic There's a 17th century fortress at the top of the hill that's been involved in more than its fair share of bloodshed.



Montjuic

The town was shelled from here in 1842 and it was the site of numerous executions during and after the Spanish Civil War.



**Montjuic** Today the castle provides great views of Barcelona.



Montjuic Barcelona's container terminal and commercial harbour are Immediately south of the castle.



Montjuic

Many cruise ships make stops in Barcelona, immediately below the castle.



Montjuic And there's incredible variety on the waterfront north of Montjuic. Checking that out is next.



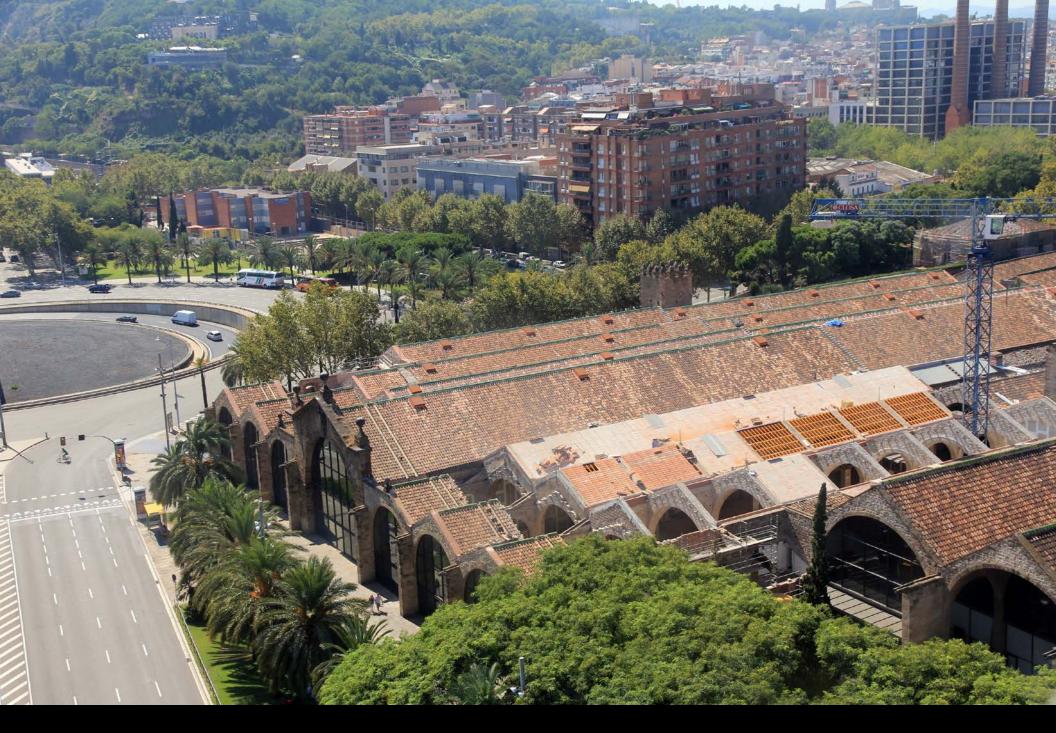
Harbour This is the spot where Columbus stepped ashore in 1493 after discovering America. He was accorded a state welcome by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.



This 60 metre / 200 foot Columbus Monument honours the explorer. There's an elevator inside for even more great views of Barcelona.

Harbour





Harbour The great galleys that made Barcelona a major seafaring power were built in shipyards that now house the Maritime Museum.



Harbour

The Maritime Museum restored this ship to show how the crew lived and worked and to display the beauty of its construction.



The Santa Eulàlia was built in 1918 to transport goods and saw duty in a variety of legal and other roles in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic for 80 years.



Harbour The impressive Port of Barcelona Customs House flies both the Catalan and Spanish flags (left and centre).



Waterfront In the 1980s a modern yacht basin replaced old wharves and warehouses which were no longer being used.



Waterfront There's all sorts of new development ...



**Waterfront** ... and harbour cruise boats waiting to explore it.



Waterfront The Maremàgnum in Port Vell is a shop, theatre, and restaurant complex.



**Waterfront** Port Vell also boasts an IMAX theatre and the Barcelona Aquarium.



**Waterfront** The harbour cruise goes well out into the Mediterranean, but that provides perspective on the scale of the redevelopment done for the 1992 Olympics.



Waterfront These towers, now an office building and a hotel, originally housed the Olympic athletes.



**Waterfront** Frank Gehry's steel, stone, and glass *Fish* was commissioned for the Olympics.



**Waterfront** There are two beaches in the heart of Barcelona, on opposite sides of Port Olimpica.





Las Ramblas A wide pedestrian boulevard stretches north from the Columbus Monument.



Las Ramblas Las Ramblas is a popular shopping and restaurant district, with newsstands, flower stalls, and street artists.



Las Ramblas Placa Catalunya, at the north end of Las Ramblas, is the most central point of Barcelona.





Barri Gotic The Gothic Quarter east of Las Ramblas is the heart of the old city.





**Barri Gotic** Placa Reial

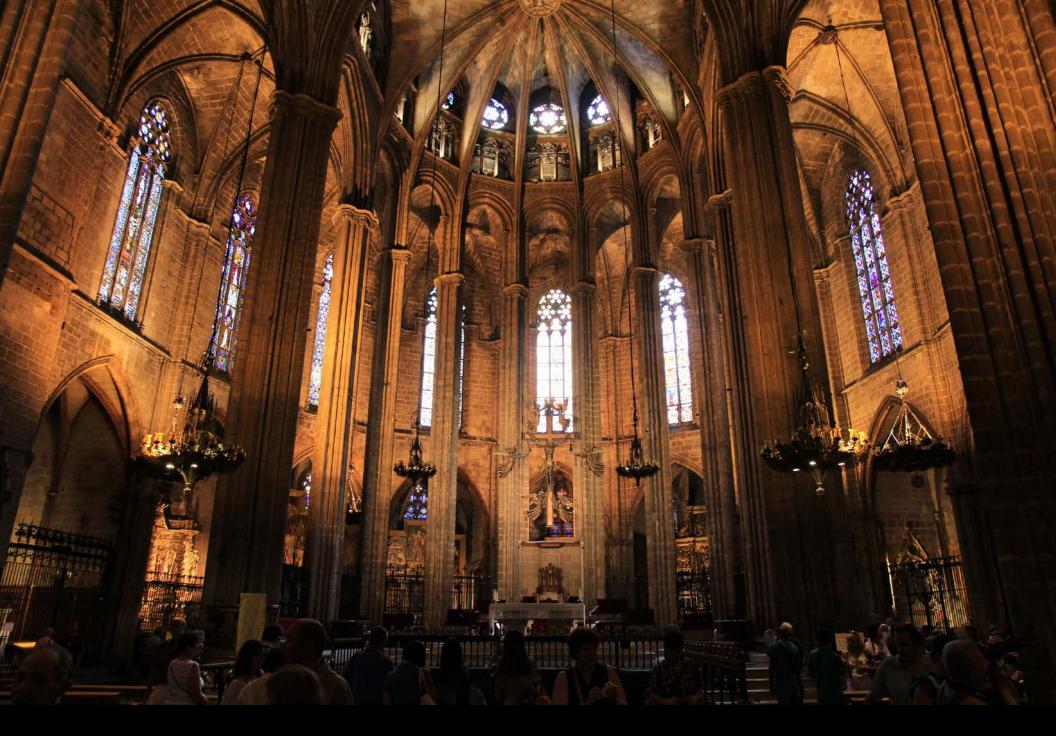


Barcelona Cathedral Barcelona Cathedral was constructed in phases beginning in 1298.



Barcelona Cathedral

The Gothic cloister was completed about 1450.



Barcelona Cathedral



Barcelona Cathedral



Barcelona Cathedral

## Modernisme and Antoni Gaudi

Towards the end of the 19th century a new style of architecture was born in Barcelona.

Modernisme was a variant of Art Nouveau.

It became a means of expression for Catalan nationalism and attracted many now-famous exponents, most notably Antoni Gaudi.

Styles have changed but Modernisme created an awareness of style that characterizes Barcelona to this day.

We will encounter many Modernist buildings later in the Exiample section of Barcelona, both residences and Gaudi's famous Sagrada Familia church.



Palau Güell

(up next) is where we will first encounter Modernism and Antoni Gaudi's work, almost hidden downtown on a side street just west of Las Ramblas.



Palau Güell Palau Güell was built in the late 1880's as a showcase townhouse for Anton Gaudi's most consistent patron, Count Eusebi Güell.



Palau Güell The entrances were designed to allow carriages to enter and exit, leaving guests at the foot of the steps leading into the house.

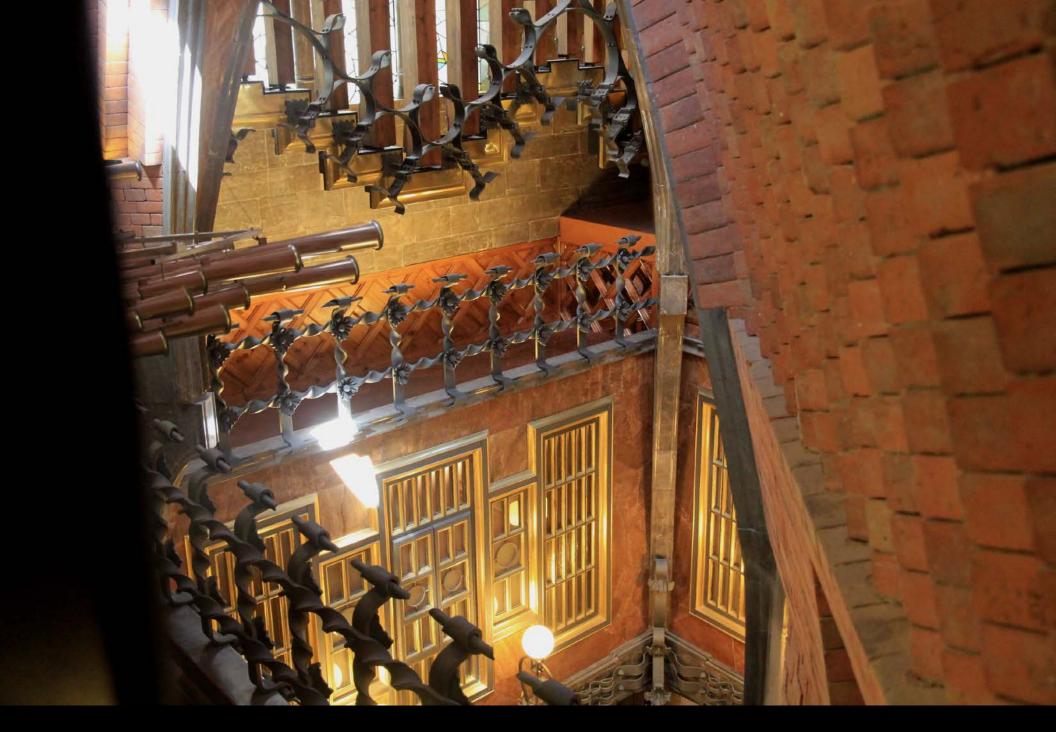


Palau Güell

Horses and carriages could be taken down a spiral ramp to the stables below.



Palau Güell's guests would be immediately impressed.
Gaudi used only the finest materials.

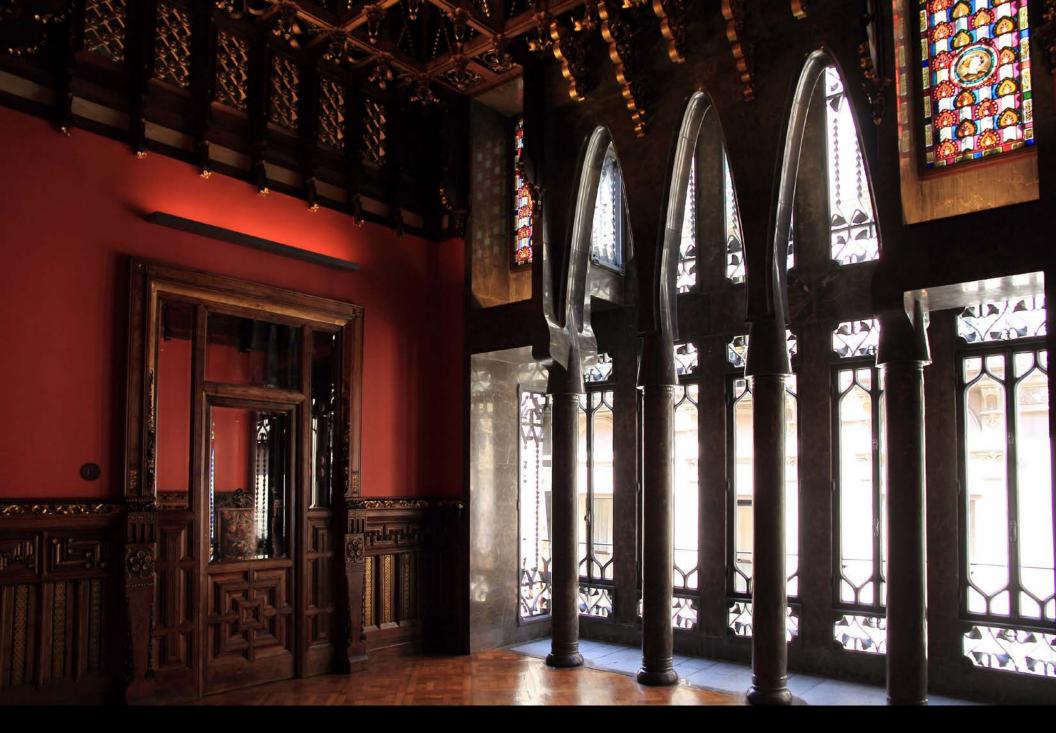


Palau Güell The central salon, complete with pipe organ, rises through three floors ...



Palau Güell

... and is capped with a dome perforated to let sun or lantern light shine through.



Palau Güell re-opened in April 2011 after a seven-year, €9 million / \$ 12.5 million restoration project.



Palau Güell

The interior is the most elegant of Gaudi's residences. This building established his international reputation for outstandingly original architecture.



Palau Güell

The most frequently noted features of Palau Güell are the bizarrely decorated chimneys and vents.



Palau Güell These *trencadis mosaics*, created using small pieces of broken tile, became one of the trademarks of Gaudi's later work.



**Eixample** In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Barcelona expanded to the north-east, into the well-planned Eixample district [eye-SHAM-pla, Catalan for *extension*].



**Eixample** The district featured wide boulevards, lots of trees, and carefully planned mixed uses. It attracted a lot of upscale Modernist architecture.



**Eixample** 

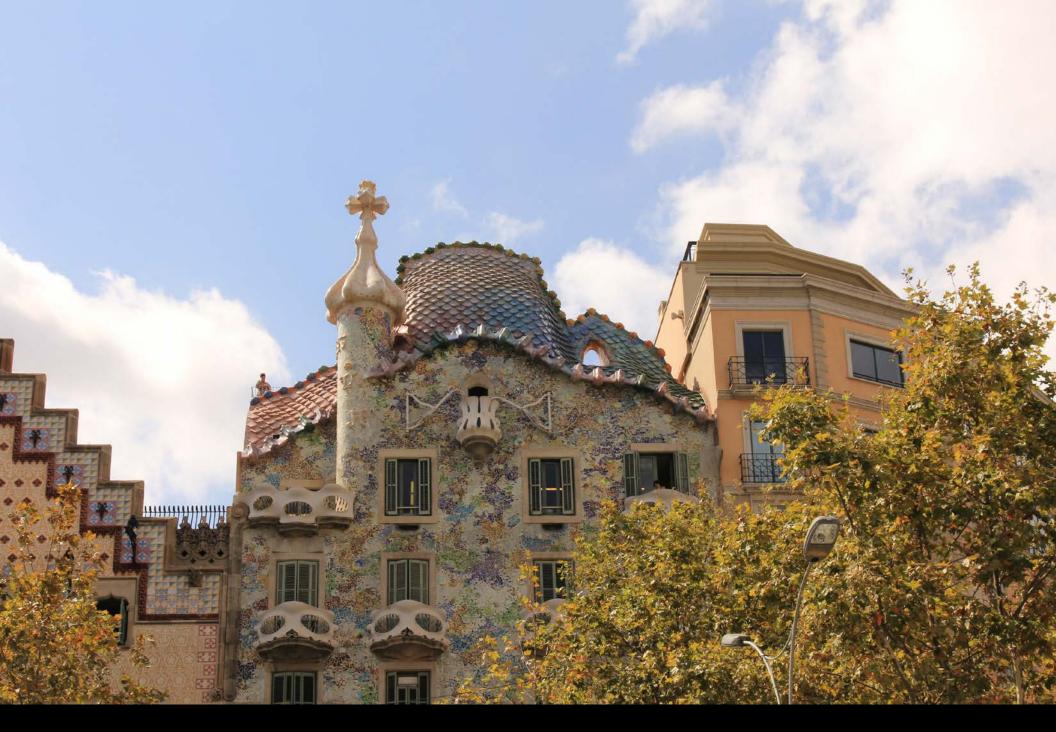
Casa Terrades, also known as 'needle house', was commissioned in 1905 as a residence for the three sisters of the Terrades family.



**Eixample** The Antoni Tàpies art foundation now occupies the 1885 red brick and iron building at the centre. The *Cloud and Chair* roof sculpture is by the artist.



Casa Batlló Casa Batlló was designed as the Batlló family residence by Antoni Gaudi. It was built in the heart of the Eixample district between 1904 and 1906.



Casa Batlló The modernist façade is decorated in Gaudi's innovative trencadis mosaic, made of broken ceramic tiles.



Casa Batlló It seems that the design goal was to avoid straight lines completely.



Casa Batlló The central light well is lined with ceramic tiles, darker at the top to give the impression of uniform colour.



Casa Batlló But, again, the most striking feature is the arched roof, likened to the back of a dragon or dinosaur, with bizarrely decorated chimneys.



La Pedrera Casa Milà, built between 1906 and 1910, was Antoni Gaudi's last and most famous residential design. It's more commonly known as La Pedrera ("the stone quarry").



La Pedrera The building relies on a structure of pillars that allows for an open floor structure with large openings in the façade, rather than traditional weight-bearing walls.



La Pedrera The façade features intricate iron-work balconies that are like seaweed against the wave-like walls of white undressed stone.



La Pedrera

The apartments are arranged around two interlinked patios.

La Pedrera was restored between 1986 ands 1996.



La Pedrera Light wells ensure that all units have daylight. There are no straight walls in the building.



La Pedrera The attic, which now houses the Gaudi Museum, consists of 270 catenary arches which support the roof-terrace.

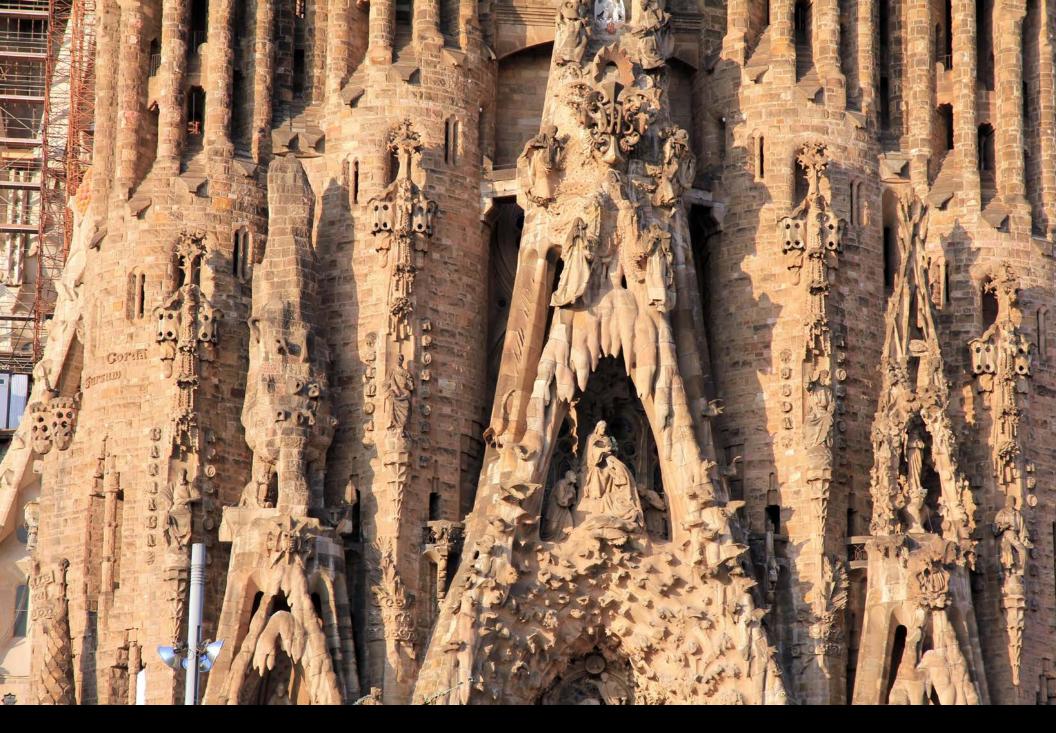


La Pedrera The roofscape of chimneys and vents is considered to resemble abstract sculpture.





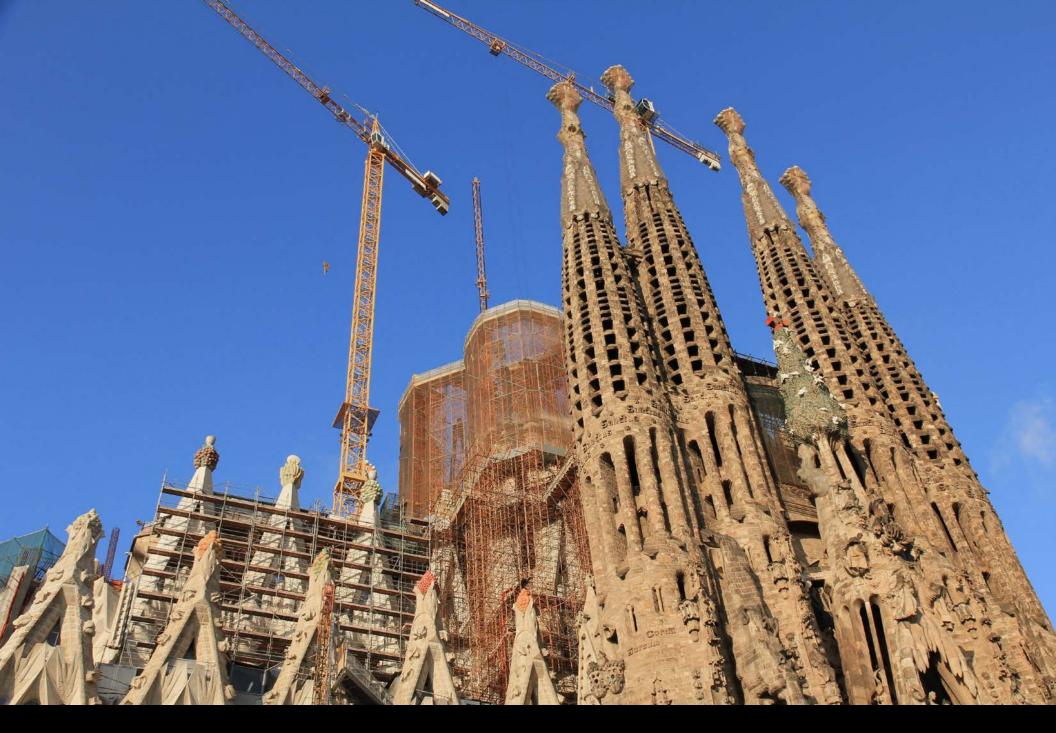
Sagrada Familia The Nativity Façade of the Sagrada Familia, Europe's most unconventional church, faces north-east to catch the light of the rising sun.



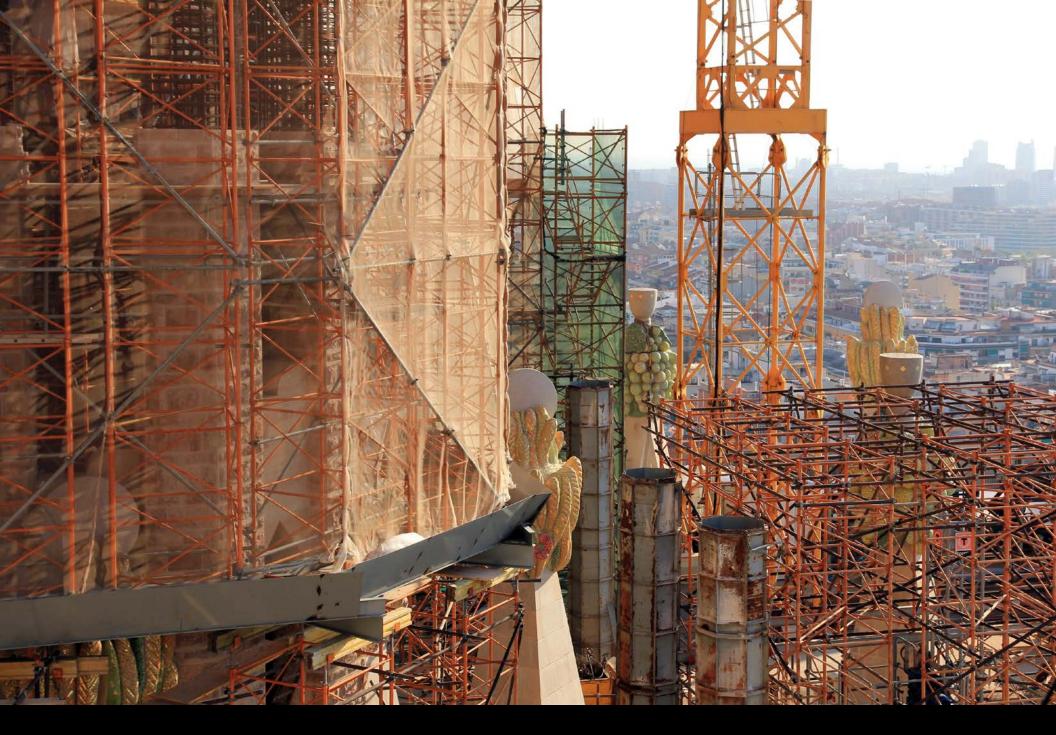
Sagrada Familia Antoni Gaudi, architect of the Sagrada Familia, finished the Nativity Facade first to set an artistic and architectural example for others to follow.



Sagrada Familia The Nativity Façade was completed in 1930. It is decorated with scenes reminiscent of elements of life and images from nature.



Gaudi's design calls for a total of eighteen spires. Eight have been built to date.



Elevators take visitors up two of the completed spires – to see out across Barcelona and get close-up views of construction details.



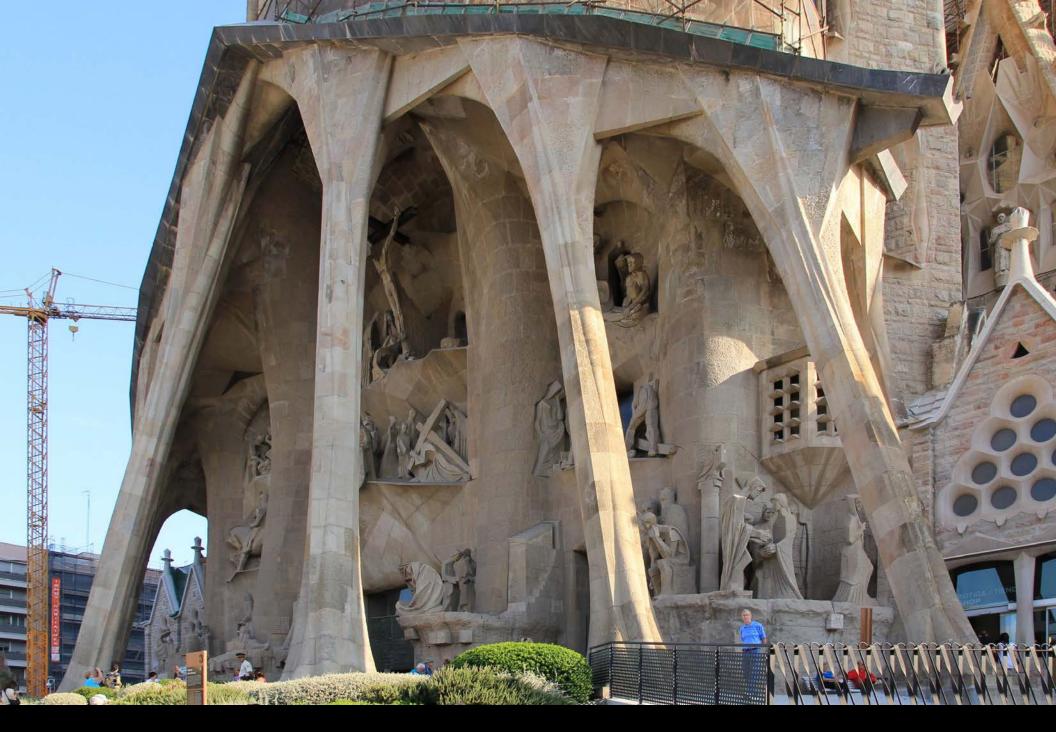
Construction began in 1892, is now more than half complete. Work is expected to be finished by 2028.



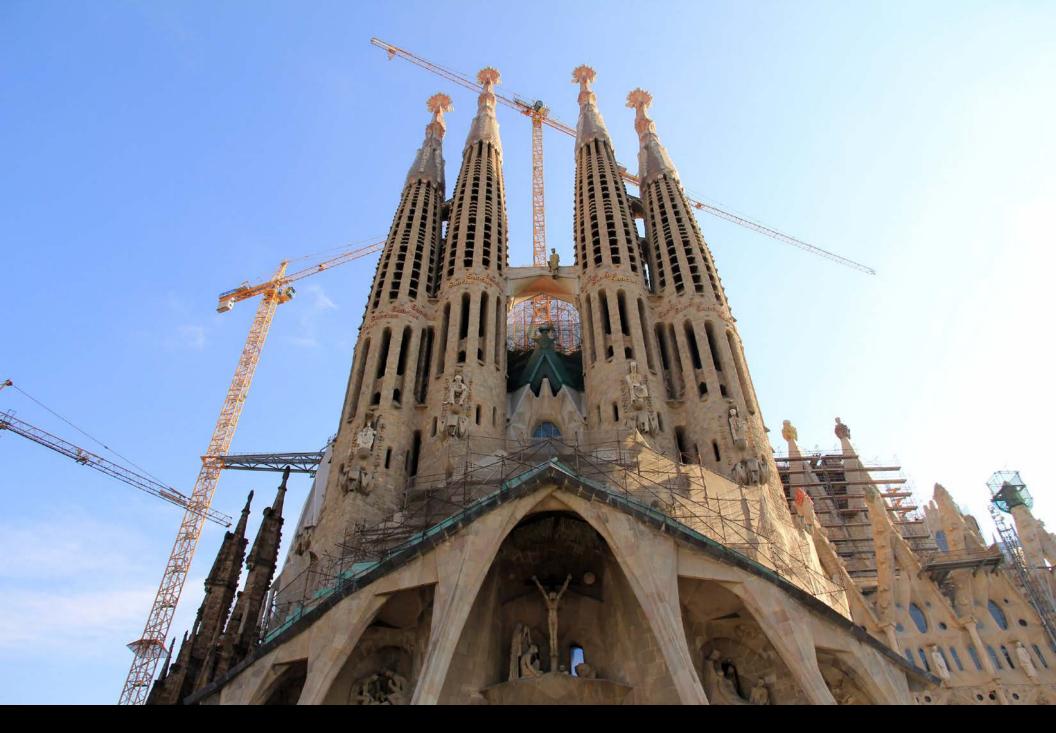
Gaudi's tile mosaics are incorporated into the design.



The Passion Façade was constructed between 1954 and 1976, and its more modern sculptures were added between 1986 and 2000.



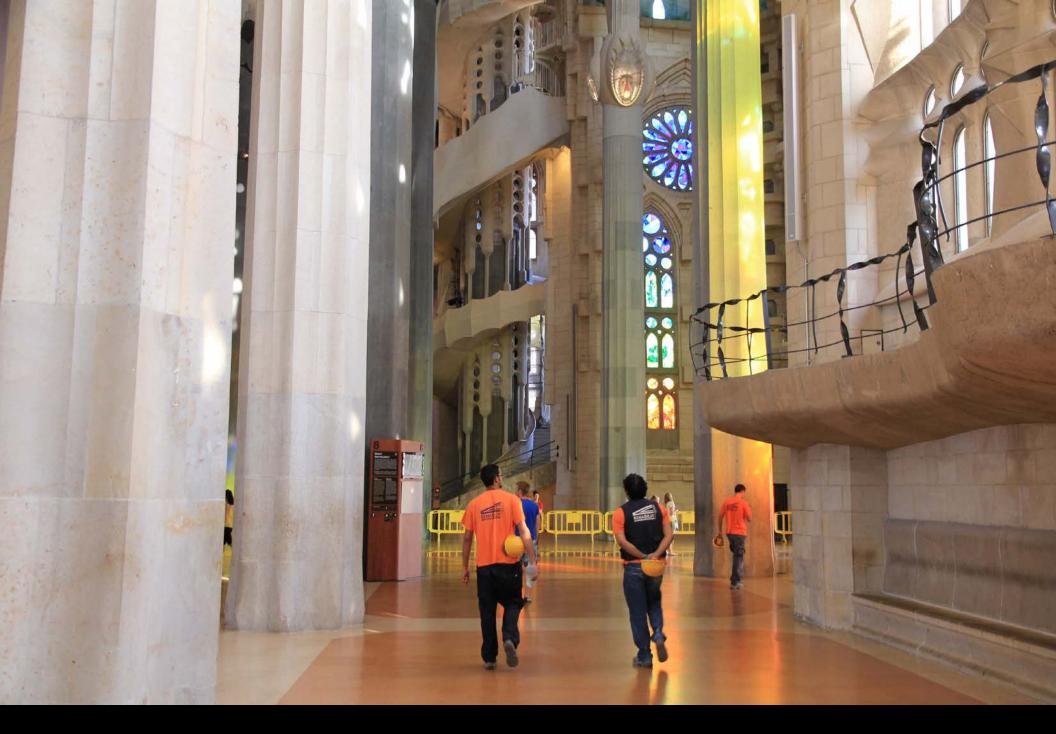
The Passion Façade, dedicated to the suffering of Jesus during his crucifixion, is austere, plain and simple, and is carved with harsh straight lines.



The completion of the spires will make Sagrada Familia the tallest church building in the world.



Portions of the interior were completed for consecration by the Pope in 2010.



Unlike most cathedrals and large gothic churches, the interior of Sagrada Familia is remarkably bright – by design.

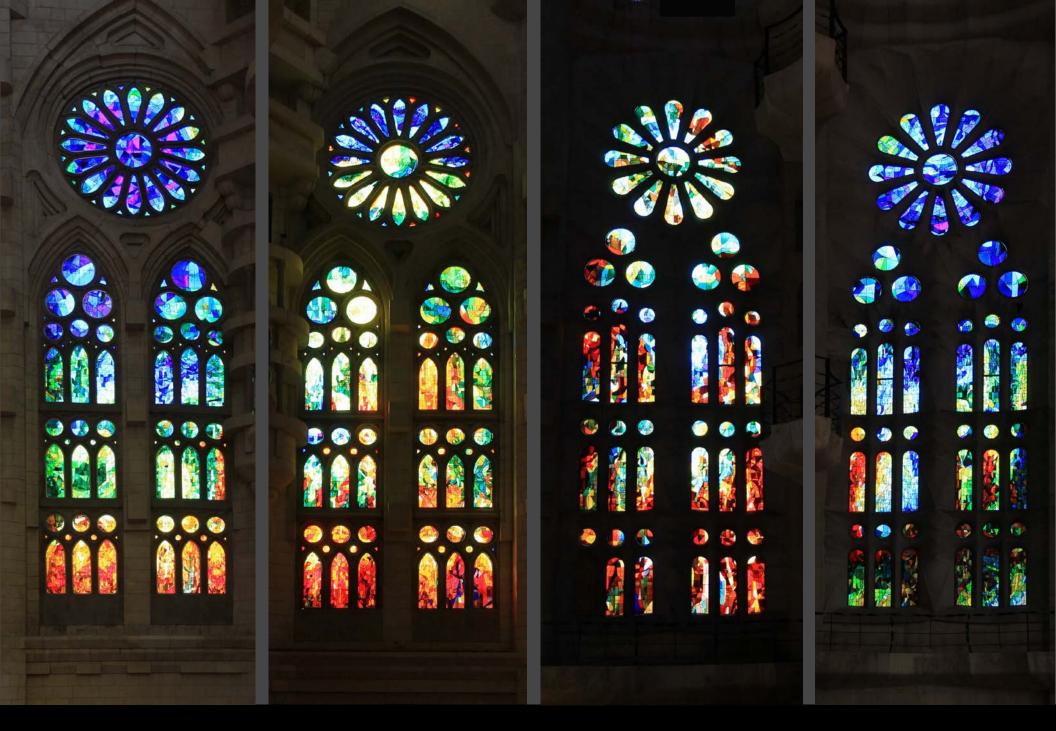




The branching structural design, like much of Gaudi's work, was inspired by nature.



Skylights let in natural light.





Park Güell Park Güell is Antoni Gaudi's most colourful creation, a salvage job on land intended for a housing development that didn't pan out.





Park Güell

The main terrace is surrounded by a long, mosaic-covered bench in the form of a sea serpent.



Park Güell The main terrace offers great views of Barcelona and the Mediterranean.



Placa Espanya was developed in preparation for Barcelona's 1929 International Exhibition.



Las Arenas, which saw its last bullfight in 1977, has been converted into a shopping, restaurant, and entertainment complex. Bullfights are now banned in Catalonia.



The avenue leading to the Palau Nacional is flanked by one of the world's busiest trade fair complexes.



The Palau Nacional (of Catalonia, not Spain), built for the 1929 Exhibition, now houses the National Art Museum of Catalonia.



The Poble Espanyol (Spanish Village) was created to display the range of Spanish architectural styles and crafts for the 1929 Exhibition.



Its creators visited 1600 towns throughout Spain to choose the buildings to be reproduced.



The village is kept active by more than 40 artisans' workshops, including one of the two traditional glassblowing furnaces left in Spain.



The Romanesque Monastery of San Miguel is composed of elements originating from different monasteries in Catalonia.



The bell tower combines elements of Aragonese Mudejar and Gothic style.



The village was supposed to be demolished at the end of the exhibition, but it was saved because it was the most popular part of the fair.



van der Rohe Pavilion The German Pavilion for the 1929 International Exhibition, designed by Mies van der Rohe, didn't fare as well. It was demolished in 1930.



van der Rohe Pavilion Nevertheless the open design, featuring simple lines of glass and polished stone, was recognized as a major milestone in the development of modern architecture.



van der Rohe Pavilion Slightly embarrassed but newly enlightened, Barcelona City Council reconstructed the Pavilion on its original site between 1983 and 1986.



van der Rohe Pavilion

Naturally, the interior features the famous Barcelona Chair, designed by van der Rohe for the 1929 German Pavilion.



Art, architecture, and style abound in Barcelona. This tile mosaic sculpture by Joan Miró enlivens a park just behind Las Arenas.



What's this monstrosity, lurking just around the corner from my hotel?



Parks Well, it's a slide for kids and some of their parents ...



Parks ...

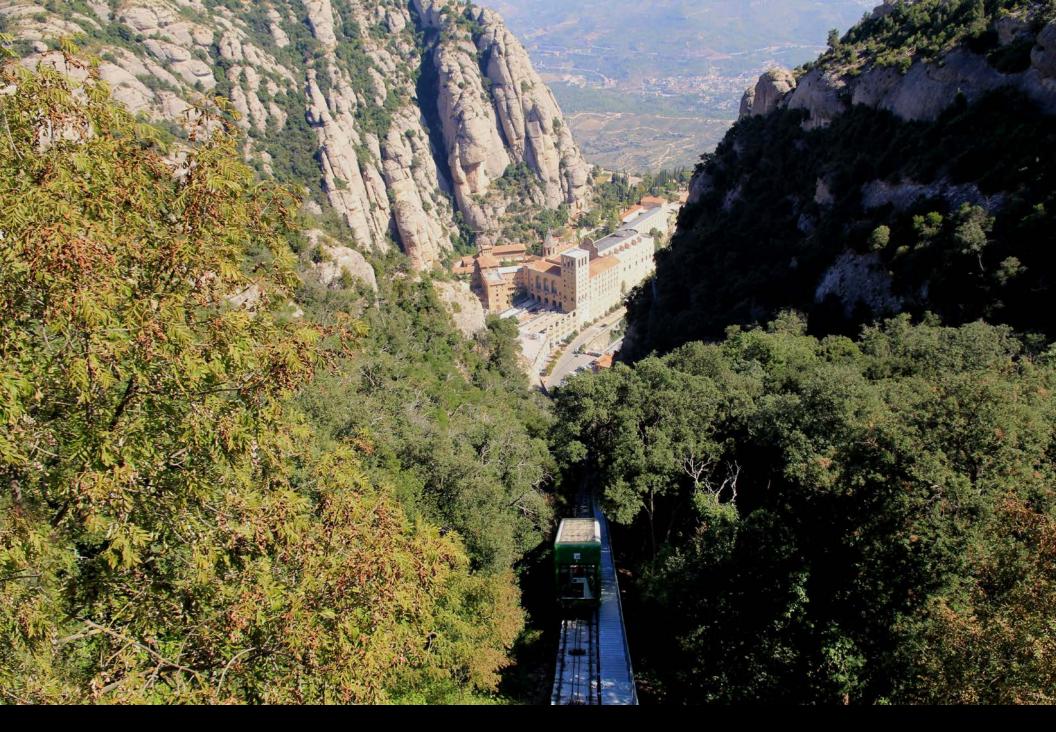
... and the entrance to a delightful park created in 1985 – with trees, a large plaza, an artificial lake, fountains, play areas, modern sculptures, and sports areas.



Montserrat The Catalan Pre-Coastal Range of mountains runs parallel to the coast about 48 km / 30 miles inland from Barcelona.



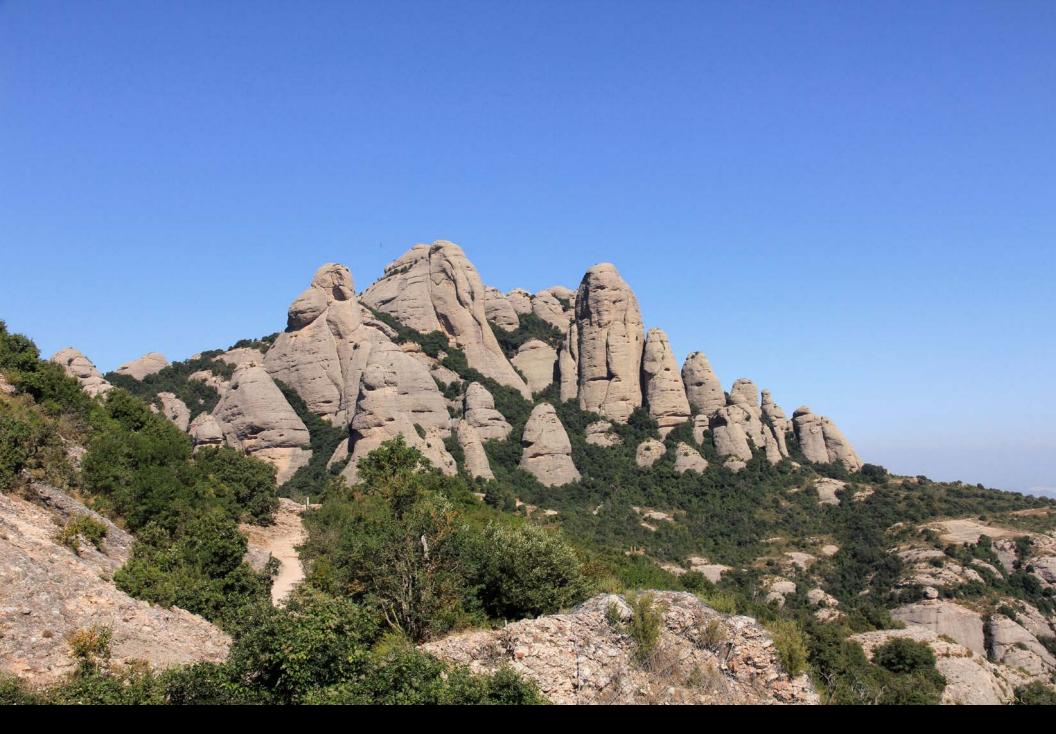
Montserrat Sanata Maria de Montserrat, a Benedictine abbey located on the mountain of Montserrat, is Catalonia's most important religious retreat.



Montserrat A funicular railway runs from the abbey to the top of the mountain at 1,236 metres / 4,055 feet.



Montserrat On a clear day almost all of Catalonia can be seen from the mountain.



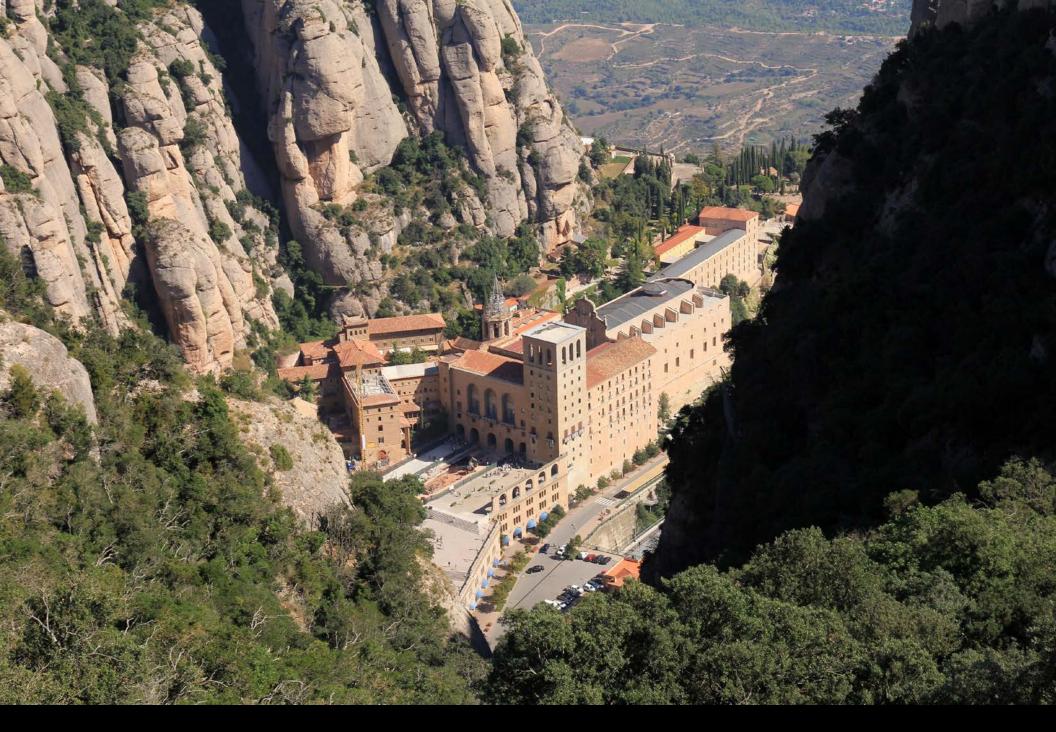
Montserrat means "jagged (serrated) mountain" in Catalan.



Montserrat The mountain was created by uplift 50 million years ago and has been eroded by wind, rain, and freezing temperatures since then.



Montserrat The Santa Cova Chapel, in the mountain opposite the monastery, marks the site where an image of the Virgin Mary was found in a cave in 880.



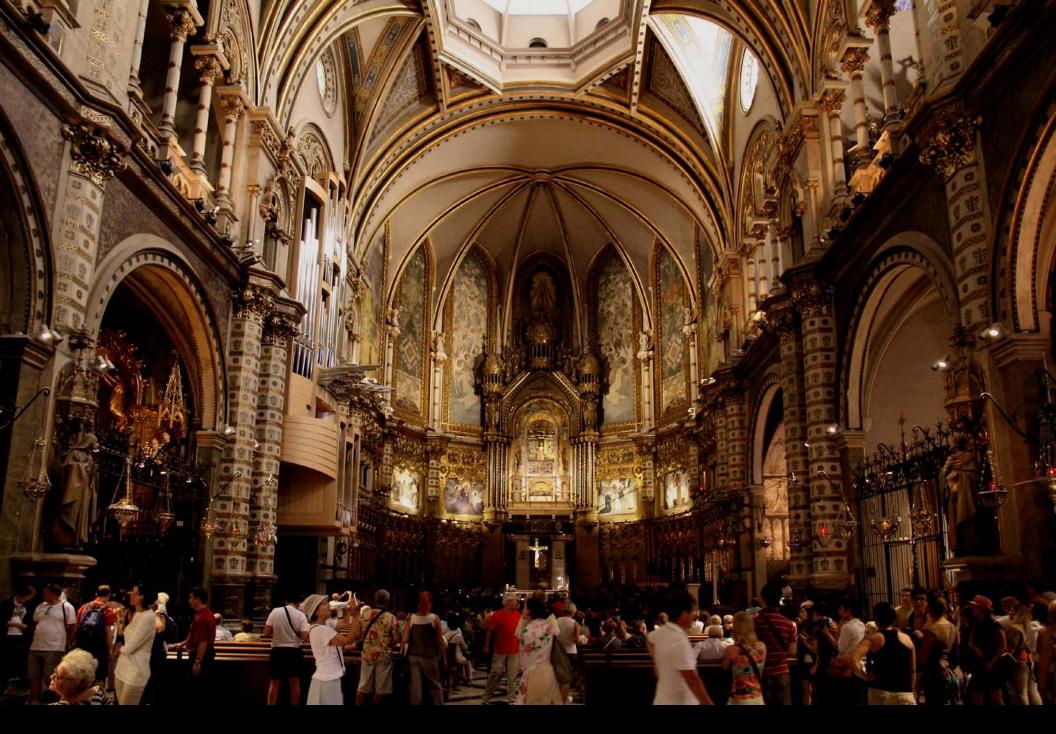
Montserrat The holy image, known as the Black Madonna, is now enshrined in the Basilica in the monastery complex.

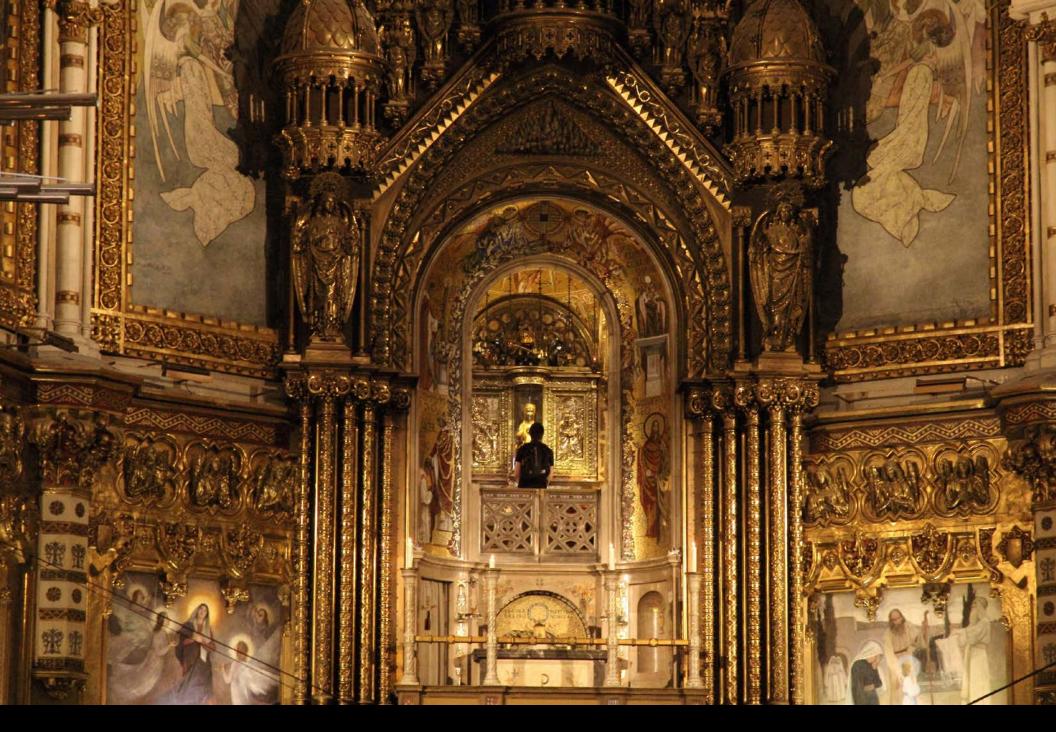


Montserrat Monks have been on Montserrat Mountain since the ninth century. A monastery was officially founded in 1025.

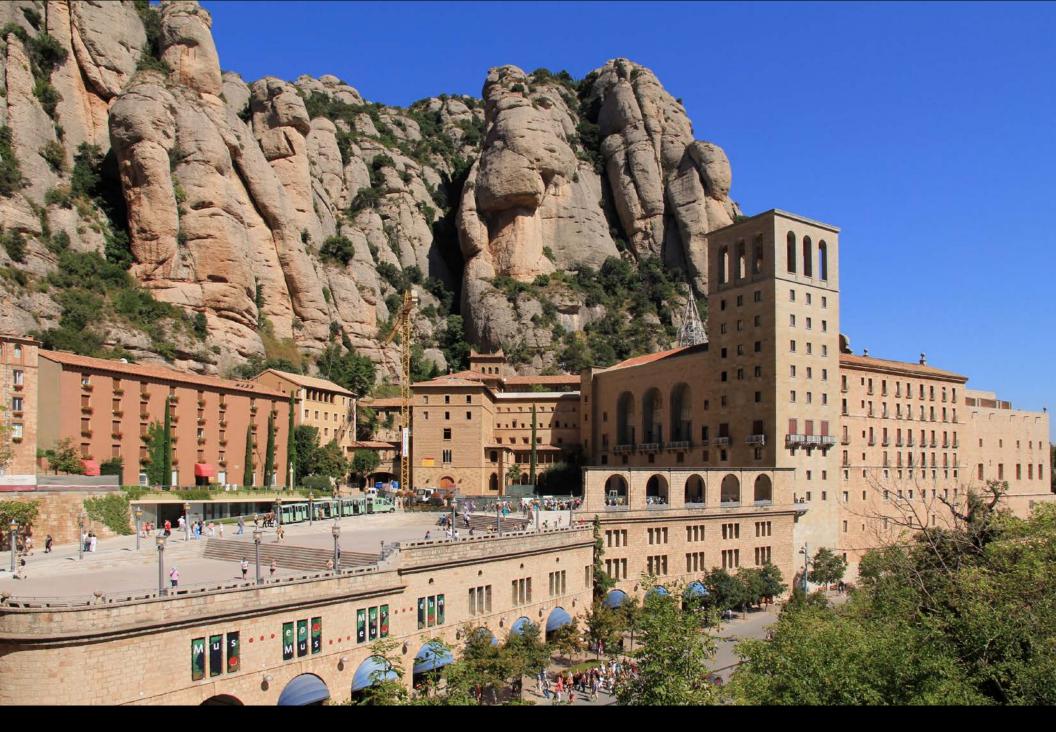


Montserrat The monastery was destroyed by Napoleon's army in 1811. Reconstruction began in 1858.

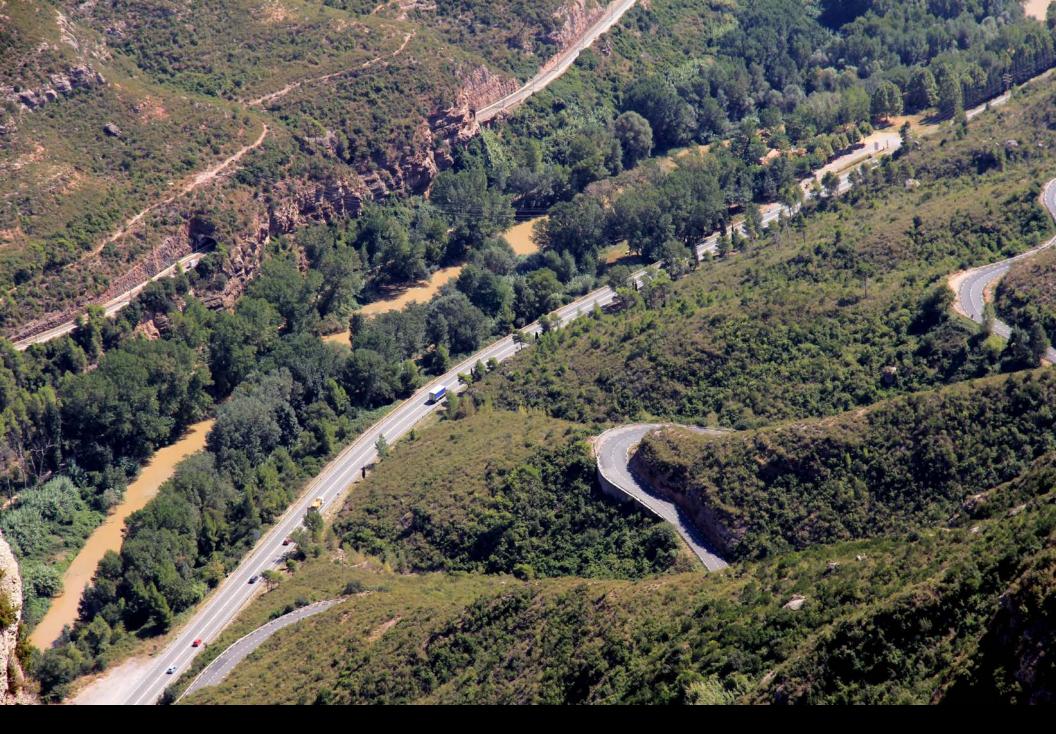




Montserrat Pilgrims can touch the hand of the Black Madonna in the Virgin's Throne area above the altar.



Montserrat The monastery complex now includes a museum and art gallery, apartments, shops, restaurants, and a hotel.



**Montserrat** Time to head down the mountain and back to Barcelona.



Impressions Barcelona is a special treat.
Its highly developed sense of style is a constant delight.



Impressions The wide boulevards are a visual treat, but they are also practical. There's lots of space for traffic, which moves smoothly.



Impressions The pace of life is relaxed, but things get done, and on time, just not in a mad rush.



Impressions The 11 Metro subway lines reach everywhere, and they provide fast, frequent, and reliable service at bargain rates.



Impressions Even the bus shelters tell you when the next coaches will arrive – to the minute.



Impressions Catalonia is proud of its distinctive identity, and it's easy to see why.



Magic Fountains One final treat. Magic Fountains were installed in front of the Palau Nacional for the 1929 International Exhibition.



Magic Fountains



Magic Fountains Good night.

< End >

Barcelona