



CICERONI
T R A V E L

ROMAN, MEDIEVAL & MODERNIST THE HERITAGE OF CATALONIA

SUNDAY 13 – SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2019 (7 DAYS)

LECTURER: GLÒRIA LOMAS

£2250

- Discover the natural beauty & complex history of Catalonia
- Appreciate charming Girona, nestled on the banks of the Onyar River
- Explore Roman archaeology in Tarragona & visit the magnificent monastery of Poblet
- Understand the Catalan character through the architectural legacy of *Modernisme* found in Barcelona
- Stay in two centrally located historic hotels in Barcelona (5*) & Girona (4*)



Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau, Barcelona

OVERVIEW

Catalonia, with its fertile plains and sunny shores, is one of the most distinctive and beautiful regions in Spain. With its own language as well as a markedly defined culture, cuisine and character, it is made up of four provinces: inland Lleida and coastal Girona, Barcelona and Tarragona, the latter three of which we shall visit. As you will discover, many of the Catalan people feel a proud ‘*independentista*’ spirit, rooted in a turbulent past where they have been forced to defend their national identity, again and again.

The former Greek colony of *Emporion* (“Trading Place”) in north eastern Spain became a strategic settlement through the wars between Rome and Carthage, then with the arrival of the Romans in the early third century BC came the development of the great metropolis, Tarraco (capital of Hispania Citerior) and the important city of Barcino. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, Catalonia was ruled by the Visigoths until Muslim conquest in 718, which (unlike within the rest of Spain) here lasted only eighty years before being pushed back by the Franks. The architectural legacy of the Arabs can be seen alongside Girona’s beautifully restored monuments, spreading out from the cathedral where the Arab inspired baths are found next to the old Jewish quarter, Romanesque churches and Benedictine monasteries.

Charlemagne’s knights pushed in after the Visigoths, and Wilfrid the Hairy became Count of Gerona and Barcelona in 878, founding the House of Barcelona, a dynasty lasting almost 500 years. While the rest of Spain remained Moorish, Barcelona and Catalonia retained links to the rest of Europe and in 988 the Counts of Barcelona declared their independence from the Franks – giving rise to Catalonia’s birth as a nation state. The union of the County of Barcelona and the Kingdom of Aragón in 1137 resulted in the Catalan empire’s spread over the western Mediterranean. Artistically, this was the time of the Catalan Romanesque and the *Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya* in Barcelona conserves extraordinary mural paintings of the period. A movement of monastic reform also began about this time, as we shall see in the Monastery of Poblet and in the evolution of the medieval villages of Pals and Peratallada.

The *Generalitat* (government of Catalonia), considered one of the oldest Parliaments in Europe, was established in the mid fourteenth century; though with the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragón-Catalunya and Isabel of Castille in 1469 the nucleus of a Spanish state was formed, with Barcelona reduced to little more than another seat of the ‘Catholic Monarchs’. As Spain’s influence expanded with the discovery of the Americas, Catalonia’s declined, until in 1705 (fearful of a French Bourbon king on the Spanish throne), Catalonia signed a treaty with England in the War of the Spanish Succession. This led to thirteen month siege of Barcelona which ended on 11th September 1714, celebrated today as ‘*La Diada*’, Catalonia’s national day. The Generalitat was dissolved, the Catalan language was banned and new centralising laws imposed from Madrid.

With the loss of its American colonies in the nineteenth century, Spain’s fortunes declined as modern Catalonia was born - the product of industrialisation, accompanied by a cultural and linguistic *Renaixença* (renaissance). Around the year 1900, *Modernisme* (Catalan Art Nouveau) became the style of the learned middle class, and left its mark by way of the work of the great architects: Gaudí, Domènech i Montaner and Puig i Cadafalch; both in large public buildings and the many private commissions from the new Catalan elite, made wealthy by industry.

The new millennium so far has involved huge political changes in Catalonia, with ramifications which we shall consider. We shall spend three nights in Barcelona at the lovely **5* Hotel Bagués**, centrally located on Las Ramblas, and three nights in Girona at the traditional family owned **4* Hotel Nord 1901**. Catalan cuisine is world renowned and both hotels are within very easy reach of restaurants, shops and many other delights.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 13 October – We arrive in Barcelona mid-afternoon and join our coach for a panoramic tour to include a visit to **Torre Bellesguard**, a private house built by Antoni Gaudí. On the site of the medieval castle of Martin I of Aragón, the last of the House of Barcelona, there are fabulous views over the city. We continue to our hotel, the historic **5* Bagués** and this evening we walk along the **Passeig de Gràcia** on our way to our first group dinner, passing the famous modernist buildings of the **Manzana de la Discòrdia**, with their dramatic façades. Wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Monday 14 October – We travel by coach this morning to **Tarragona** to explore the **Roman archaeological complex**, when Tarraco was at the peak of its splendour. After a group lunch, we travel inland to the foot of the Prades Mountains to visit the magnificent **Monasterio de Santa María de Poblet**, founded in 1150 and the burial place of the last Catalan count-kings. We return to Barcelona and the evening will be free. You may wish to attend a performance at the **Liceu** or the **Palau de la Música Catalana** - performances are also often offered in the evenings within the city's modernist buildings, and schedules will be shared with participants once published.

Day 3: Tuesday 15 October – Today we visit the **Palau Nacional de Monjuïc**, housing the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya**, a rich collection from the Middle Ages to the 1950s. After our guided tour of the most important Catalan art of the last thousand years, we have lunch in the museum's **Oleum** restaurant. Later we will take a walking tour around the **Gothic Quarter** to end back at **La Boquería**, Barcelona's famous market. Dinner is not included today, but you may find something to tempt you here?

Day 4: Wednesday 16 October – This morning we visit Gaudí's extraordinary **Casa Milá**, or *La Pedrera* (the Quarry) to see the most technical elements of Gaudí's design. After coffee, we move on to the **Sagrada Família** - perhaps Barcelona's most iconic building - before some free time for lunch (not included). In the afternoon we will explore a perfect example of **Modernisme**: the **Hospital de Santa Creu i Sant Pau**, designed for the city in 1902 by Lluís Domènech i Montaner. Our coach will meet us here with our luggage to travel on to **Girona**, where we check into the **4* Hotel Nord** for three nights. This evening we shall have a group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 5: Thursday 17 October – The medieval city of **Girona** is best explored on foot, and today we will have a guided introduction to both the upper and lower parts of the city broken by lunch (which is not included today). This will include, amongst other treasures, the **Guild Quarter**, the **Jewish Quarter** (the *Call*) and a visit to the **Cathedral**. The evening will be free.

Day 6: Friday 18 October – We leave our hotel for a short walk up to the city walls before taking our coach to the stone built medieval towns of **Peratallada** and the beautifully restored **Pals** - the heart of the region's rice industry. There will be some free time to enjoy lunch (not included) in one of Pals' many restaurants before a walking tour and our return to Girona. Our last group dinner will be in an acclaimed local restaurant.

Day 7: Saturday 19 October – We depart the hotel with our luggage and travel to the **Cordonú Winery** for our final visit (which will include a tasting of two of their famous cavas). After a final group lunch, we make the short transfer on to Barcelona for our flight back to Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2250 **Without Flights** £2090 **Deposit** £300 **Single Supplement** £395 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Hotels 3 nights each with breakfast at the 5* Hotel Bagués, Barcelona and 4* Hotel Nord 1901, Girona

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA474** Departs London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **1045**, arrive Barcelona **1355**

Return: **BA481** Departs Barcelona **1820**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 3) **1940**

Price includes 3 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of Glòria Lomas & Tour Manager Chloe Pepper

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 3 lunches



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