

# Walk Through Spain and Portugal 1/26—3/22/2026

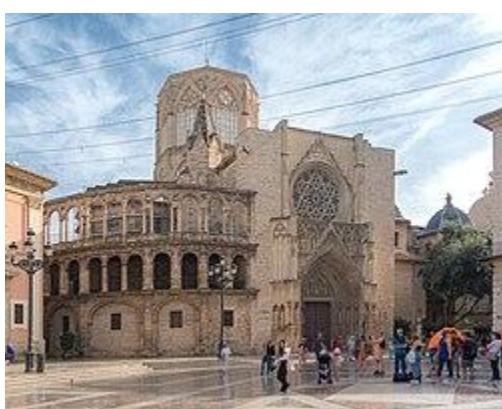
## Results of Week 2 2/2—2/8/2026

During this week we collectively walked 223 miles and had 15 participants. Sources for photos are given in smaller font near the image. You can click on images to increase their size for a better view. The green line on map of Spain and Portugal indicates places we visited each week. A magenta line on the entire map is our proposed route for our 8 week walk map with major cities marked with magenta dots. PAT is free software. Copyright © 2010, 2013 by Ian Macky. **Note: This document is copyrighted by K. Scharer, 2026, except where other copyrights are noted.**

## SPAIN AND PORTUGAL MAP



We got started early Monday morning and walked to Valencia, about 40 miles away. Valencia is a vibrant city with beautiful sights and we are going to explore some of them! Fernando Pascullo, CC BY-SA 4.0, via



Wikimedia Commons, north façade seen from Plaza de la Virgen left and interior view, center ;  
Rene Cortin, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, view from the garden side

The first is the Metropolitan Cathedral–Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady of Valencia but is often referred to

as Saint Mary's Cathedral. As you know, Spain has been periodically controlled in parts by the Moors. This cathedral was consecrated in 1238 when the Spanish recaptured the territory. The building sight was previously occupied by a Visigothic cathedral which had been turned into a mosque by the Moors. If you look closely at the exterior façade, you can see the Moorish influence. Construction occurred between the 1200's and the 1400's in mostly Gothic style but because of the duration of construction other styles were mixed in, including Valencian, Gothic, Romanesque, Baroque, Renaissance, and Neoclassical.



Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left . Fernando Pascullo, CC BY-SA

4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right. The chalice kept in this chapel has been defended as the true Holy Grail; indeed, most Christian historians declare that all their evidence points to this Valencian chalice as the most likely candidate for being the

authentic cup used at the Last Supper and was actually the official papal chalice for many popes, and has been used by many others, most recently by Pope Benedict XVI, on July 9, 2006. The chalice has been dated from the 1st century. King Alfonso V of Aragon donated the chalice to the cathedral in 1436. The picture on the left is of the Holy Chalice kept in the chapel. Vsatinet, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons We spent some time I prayer in this chapel before moving on.



Next, we visited Iglesia San Juan del Hospital. This is an old church, built by Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St. John. It was built between 1238 and 1261 and is considered the oldest church in the city, after the cathedral, based on its consecration date. The original complex included a hospital and a convent. However, only the church and part of the cemetery remain. We were able to attend Mass in English while we were here. The following link will take you to a You Tube video of about 2:45 minutes which shows the rebuilding of this church after years of neglect. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0Yui1uE7w>

After Mass at Iglesia San Juan del Hospital we visited the Royal Basilica of Our Lady of the Forsaken (Spanish: Real Basílica de la Virgen de los Desamparados). The Lady of the Forsaken is the Patron Saint of Valencia. It was designated as a Basilica by Pope Pius XII on April 21, 1948.



Ymblanter, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, exterior; 19Tarrestnom65, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior , center; Joanbanjo, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons , Cupola fresco detail, right.



The Basilica was built at the highest point of the city in the Plaza de la Virgen, close to the Cathedral. One of the Basilica's three doors opens onto a passageway that separates the two building. An upper arch connects them. In earlier times this area served as the Roman forum. There is a legend

that surrounds our Lady of the Forsaken. On 2/24/1409. Which was a Friday at the beginning of Lent, a friar, Joan Gilabert Jofré, was on his way to deliver a sermon. On what is now Martin Mengod Street, he saw a mentally ill man being lynched and intervened, saving the man's life. After this experience he began preaching on the care for the mentally ill and established a hospice for them. These were the first attempts to care for the mentally ill in a benevolent manner. Following a report published around then about the poor treatment of the mentally ill, 10 Valencians responded by building a hospital for the innocents, the poor and mentally ill. By June, 1410, a 'Hospital of the Innocents, Madmen, and the Praying' was opened in Valencia with "Our Holy Lady Mary of the Innocents" as the patron saint. Later the name of the patron saints was changed to 'Our Lady of the Forsaken'.

By 1512, the city leaders decided to combine the various charitable institutions into one general hospital but in 1548 it was destroyed by fire and 30 patients were killed in the fire. A new facility was built and provided specialized care for children.

In 1885 Pope Leo XIII declared the Valencia's patron saint should be the Virgin of the Forsaken. Those faithful to the Virgin have since provided significant help to children, the mentally ill, the elderly, and the blind. On the second Sunday in May, an outdoor Mass and festival in honor of their patron saint is held in Valencia.

But before we leave Valencia, I want to share some information with you about Las Fallas. I have a friend from high school who now lives there, and he posts great pictures of the events happening in Valencia. Unfortunately, we will miss the biggest event of each year by about a month! The Las Fallas Celebration occurs from March 1<sup>st</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> in the city of Valencia, Spain. The term *Fallas* refers to both the celebration and the floats burnt during the celebration. A group from each city neighborhood conducts fundraising throughout the year to cover the costs of their floats. Each group produces a construction known as a *ninot* (puppet or doll—think of the Macy's day parade but instead of balloons, the *ninots* are made of wood and other flammable



materials) which are eventually burnt. An example of one float is shown at left.



Simon Burchell, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left During the four days leading up to March 19, each group takes its *ninot* out for a grand parade, and then each *ninot* on its own elaborate float, called a *falla*. The float base is filled with cardboard and fire-crackers which are set off when the *falla* is burned. The *falla* is placed in a street of their own neighborhood for some time during the festival until a few days before the final celebration and parade on 3/19 in Porta de la Mar Square. About a quarter of the city's population engages in their neighborhood group each year.

Simon Burchell, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right

Beginning on 3/14 and continuing until 3/19 *Fallas* seems to be a continuous street party, Processions of floats occur, restaurants are so full people spill onto the streets, fireworks and other noise makers are shot off afternoons and evenings by everyone from small children to the elderly, as shown in the picture above right. Explosions can be heard all day long and sporadically through the night, leaving the streets covered in debris. Around 2:00 PM, the *Mascletà*, a massive fireworks display by pyro-technicians occurs every day of the festival. Sometimes a nighttime display also happens. A nighttime variant runs in the evening hours by the same pyro-technicians that were present in the afternoon.

At 7:00 pm on March 19, the Fire Parade takes place near and in Porta de la Mar square. This celebration of fire is the grand end of Fallas. After the parade there are huge bonfires used to consume the Fallas. Then the surrounding area turns into a huge street party once again. It is too bad we were too early to enjoy this festival but it was time to head north along the coast toward Barcelona.

As we walked along the coast, we came to Castellon de la Plana, about 75 miles north of Valencia. Because of its closeness to Valencia, although the capital of its province, Castellon is

considered part of the Valencian community. There are about 175,000 residents of the city. The city, like much of Spain has changed owners since it was developed and evidence of Moorish invaders can still be seen. In the middle ages, it was protected by city walls and moats, but these were removed to make way for the city's growth in the 1800's.

The Co-Cathedral of Santa María, pictured below, left, is the co-cathedral with Segorbe. This was our first stop here. We stopped and prayed here for a while before exploring more of the city.



Fernando Pascullo, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, CO-Cathedral, left.

The Co-cathedral was originally a church built in the 1200's; later it was named the Co-cathedral. It is Gothic in style. The original church burned down, so it was reconstructed in the 14th century. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936, the church was demolished so the last reconstruction occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Then we went to see the Basilica Santa María del Lledó.



Juan Emilio Prades Bel, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, photo and Nave of the Basilica, and right.



CC BY-Exterior center

The Basilica has an image of the city's patron Saint, Mary as the Holy Mother of Lledó. The image is actually a reproduction of the image found by a farmer during plowing season. The image was less than 2.5" (6 centimeters). It is believed to be quite old but no exact date is known. The tiny image now is kept inside a bigger alabaster statue of the Virgin. The current church was opened in 1731 but there were some other buildings there over the years. It has been a pilgrimage site since 300 AD when the small building there was called a Sanctuary. Regular processions from within the region to the site occurred.

In 1922, Pope Pius XI named the image as the patron saint of the city. In 1924 the image was crowned canonically. But it was Pope John Paul II who designated the church as a Basilica.



We continued on walking north to Tortosa. Tortosa is about 39 feet above sea level. The town is split by the Ebro River. There are some mountains to the north which serve to protect the city. The picture below shows the Bridge over Ebro River and other buildings at night in Tortosa. LBM1948, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, below left. Tortosa was under Moorish rule from 714 until 1148. At least one attempt to regain the city was made by the Spanish in those four hundred years but it was unsuccessful. But as part of the Second Crusade in 1148 it was conquered after a siege by crusaders from

multiple nationalities, many of whom were on their way to the Holy Land but stopped to help. As a result, the city and its territories were divided among the various nationalities and the military and religious orders involved in taking it back from the Moors.

Images of the current cathedral are shown below. The Gothic style Basilica-Cathedral of Santa María de Tortosa was begun in 1347 and was built on the site of an earlier church.



MARIA ROSA FERRE Ⓛ, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons , left aerial view; Deosringas, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, center, side of building; Fernando Pasculo, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, west façade, interior below left, and chapel below right.



It was consecrated in 1441, but was under construction until the mid-1700's. The Basilica-Cathedral is in the city center on the banks of the Ebro River. It was granted the title of basilica in 1931. The Chapel of the Virgin of the Ribbon is pictured right.

As work continued in 1620, a decision was made to use Baroque style for the façade; and, also, to add a large number of new chapels, such as the Chapel of the Virgin of the Ribbon, were constructed. While I found the Chapel of the Ribbon to be beautiful, it somehow felt out of place to the main interior in Gothic style.

After praying at the Basilica-Cathedral, we ventured out to explore a few more sites but our time here was limited. We visited the Old Cathedral seen below.



Old Tortosa cathedral Dosseman, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left; Fernando Pasculo, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior right.

In 1123 the Crusaders built the semi-fortified Cathedral of Our Lady of Tortosa over a Byzantine church that was popular with pilgrims. This



Cathedral itself was used

as a mosque after the Muslim reconquest of the city, then as a barracks by the Ottomans. It was renovated under the French and is now the city museum. Dr. Karl Schlemmer;, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



We also visited the Castle of Sant Joan, or Suda, which can be seen in the picture at left in the back of the city. It stands on a 194-foot hill. The hill was first fortified by the Romans but the current castle was the work of Muslim Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III. After its return to Spanish hands in 1148, it was used a residence of the nobility of Tortosa and the Knights Templar. In the 13th century, it became a royal mansion. We also found a beautiful garden known as the Prince's Garden where we spent some time just

enjoying the beauty surrounding us. We then left Tortosa on Monday morning heading north along the coast to Barcelona. It is the capital of Catalonia. It is also the second largest city in population municipality in Spain. The metropolitan area is even larger with about 5.7 million inhabitants. The city is

believed to have been started by either the Carthaginians or the Phoenicians as a trading post. Later in the middle ages, it became the capital of the country of Barcelona. Later it joined the Kingdom of Aragon and remained the capital of Catalonia. Barcelona became the most important city under the crown of Aragon.

However, after Valencia was taken back from the Moors in the 1500's Barcelona lost out to Valencia in importance. After the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon united, Barcelona became a center of the separatist movement for Catalonia and even became part of France for a while. In 1931, it was the capital city of an autonomous Catalonia until 1939. Barcelona was the epicenter of the revolution experienced by Catalonia during the Spanish Revolution of 1936, until its capture by the fascists in 1939. Finally, when democracy came to Spain in the 1970s, Barcelona emerged as the capital of an autonomous Catalonia.

Today Barcelona is an important cultural city in Spain. It hosted the 1992 Summer Olympics. It has UNESCO World Heritage sites, is known for world-class conferences and expositions and has been the site of numerous international sporting events. Barcelona has two of Spain's most important universities, Pompeu Fabra University and the University of Barcelona. Finally, Barcelona has enough influence in global socio-economic affairs to have achieved the status of a global city (Beta+). This designation means the city plays an important role in linking several cities to form a significant economic power.

As we typically do, we sought out the Cathedral as our first stop in the city, the Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia.

Mromanchenko, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral exterior, left; Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia , CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons; Tomb of St. Raymond in the Cathedral of Barcelona, center left, carved choir stalls, center right. Bernat Martorell, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, far right; Altar piece of the Transfiguration

The Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia, AKA the Barcelona Cathedral, is the official cathedral for Barcelona and where the Bishop's seat is. This cathedral was built during the 1200's to the 1400's. Of course

various changes have been made over the



centuries. The style of the cathedral is Catalan Gothic. The Cathedral is 305 feet long by 131 feet wide and 92 feet high main nave. The cimborio, a dome or peak, is 229 feet high. The cathedral has multiple chapels along the sides. The façade is Gothic in style and interestingly has numerous gargoyles and other mystical creatures adorning it at the roof line.

One notable feature of this cathedral (there are many) are the beautiful choir stalls shown above in the center right picture. Coats-of-arms of the Knights belonging to the Order of the Golden Fleece are painted on the stalls. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain,

visited Barcelona in the mid 1500's on his first trip into Spain. He decided Barcelona was a good site for a chapter of the Golden Fleece, his order since its location on the Mediterranean could offer the quickest communication with the other parts of the Holy Roman Empire.





So, who is St. Eulalia (c. 289-303)? Actually, there are two of them from Spain and from about the same time period who were both persecuted during the reign of Emperor Diocletian and his campaign against Christianity. But the St. Eulalia, who is the co-patroness saint of Barcelona and for whom this cathedral is named, was age 13 when she was martyred for her refusal to renounce her

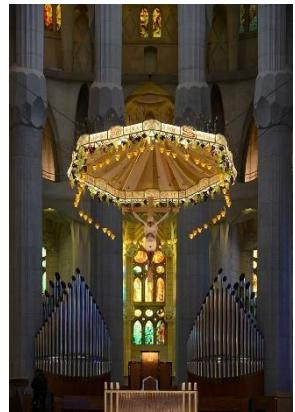
**Christianity.** Cathedral of the Holy Cross and Saint Eulalia, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons , left painting of the Saint, left and Crypt of Santa Eulalia, right

St. Eulalia came from an important family ; she resided near Barcelona. Governor Dacian had come to Barcelona to conduct the Emperor's edict to rid the city of Christians. While Dacian was conducting his orders, Eulalia went into the city to confront him. Dacian's response was to have her stripped of her clothing and tortured publicly. Eulalia refused to renounce her religion and prayed to God to bring her to Heaven. She died from her torture wounds. She was interred in St. Mary of the Sands Church (now known as St. Mary of the Sea). During the Moorish invasion of 713 her remains were hidden from the invaders. Later her remains were placed in a crypt in the cathedral. A week-long festival in her honor is held the week of 2/12, her feast date, each year. We attended Mass while we were there.



C messier, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons , above left. Ank Kumar, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior center; Alvesgaspar, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, main altar right. Next, we headed to perhaps the best known, most visited church with the longest construction time, the Sagrada Familia

Basilica (Church of the Holy Family). In fact, it is still under construction, having been started in 1882. Pope Benedict XVI consecrated the church in 2010 and named it a minor unfinished Catholic



basilica. As the largest

Church in the world, one has to wonder how long it will have that title! One of the reasons for its long construction time is that it has been completely funded by private donations. The original plan was for construction to be completed this year but the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and 2020 COVID pandemic has slowed the construction timetable. Now the anticipated completion is in 2034. And we know from first-hand experience has time seems to lead to increased costs in the budget from our own SJN building

project. So, visitors to the Basilica have to pay an entrance fee to help cover construction costs.

The newer stonework at the Sagrada Familia is clearly visible against the stained and weathered older sections. The completion of the spires will make Sagrada Familia the tallest church building in the world.

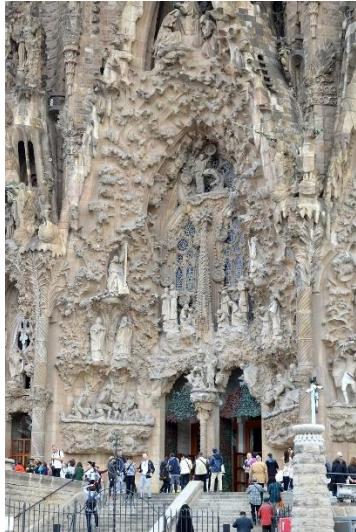
Syniq, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left image; Ank Kumar, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, stained glass. Ceiling of the Sagrada Familia Church ©Photo taken by Sarah Hurbert, right,

The picture, below left, is definitely worth enlarging. It shows the incredible amount of carving



and details that make up the façade of the building. I don't think there is an inch of the façade that is smooth on this church!

DimiTalen, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons ,left below; Luis Miguel Bugallo Sánchez (Lmbuga), CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons, center, and right images; close up images of detailed façade decoration.



surviving church in  
within the city limits



After our visit to the Sagrada Família Basilica, we went to see Sant Pau del Camp church (Eng: St. Paul of the Countryside), a church that was once part of a monastery. It is the oldest Barcelona. It is now well but before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it

was outside the city gates—hence its name.

Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0; image of Sant Pau del Camp church, right.

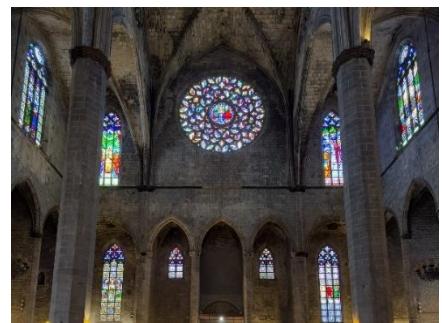
Little is known about the origins of this church and/or Monastery. A funeral inscription for Count Wilfred II of Barcelona found in the church has led people to think the Count may have been responsible for founding the church. It was destroyed in 985 by Muslim troops.

In 1096, efforts to restore the church and monastery began and new monks arrived. By 1117 the church served as the priory for the Monastery of Sant Cugat. In the 1200's, 8 monks and a Prior staffed the monastery but in the 1400's there was a decline in the number of monks to 3. The Spanish government secularized monasteries in 1835 and the three remaining monks left. In 1879, The Church was declared a National monument.

Then we went to visit the Santa Maria del Mar (Eng:"Saint Mary of the Sea") which had formerly been known as St. Mary of the Sands. It replaced an older church. This church was built from 1329 to 1383 in pure Catalan style.



Kent Wang, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left, church front and Rose Window image, right. Jiuguang Wang, CC BY-SA 3.0 ES, via Wikimedia Commons , center interior image



The Rose Window was destroyed by an earthquake in 1428. A new Rose Window was installed in 1459. A 19<sup>th</sup> century addition was the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. Other changes have been made over the years. Anticlerical riots in 1936 led to a fire which destroyed the altar and other decorations. It was on fire for 11 days but the church itself survived. It took until the 1960's to fully repair the church because of difficulties in fund raising. We spent some time in prayer here before leaving.

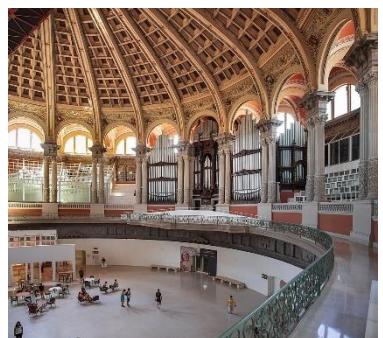
After our church visits, we visited some of the other sights in Barcelona. One of these was the Magic Fountain of Montjuïc. We found the Fountain near the National Palace on the mountain called Montjuïc. The mountain is a broad hill 177 feet above sea level, near the coast and within the city of Barcelona. A cable car system took us to the top of the hill .The fountain is situated below the National Palace. The fountain was built in 1929 for an International exposition and it sprays water up to 170 feet high . It is lighted at night for the "Magic" effect; the lights are multi-colored. Altogether the fountain has 3620 jets shooting water up in different patterns. Music was added to the show in the 1980s. Performances of the fountain are on weekend evenings at every half hour and the selections cover almost every genre of music, from classical to modern, from film, Spanish, to modern pop.

While we were at Montjuïc, we visited the National Palace. The Palace was built for the internal Exhibition of 1929. After the Exhibition in 1934 it became the site of the Catalonia National Art Museum.



Juanedc from Zaragoza, España, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Palace exterior

The palace has an internal area of almost 20 square miles! It was built in Spanish Renaissance style. It has a large elliptical dome which can be partly seen in the photo of the interior below. The Palace was extended between 1960 and 2004 to house the entire Museum's collection of

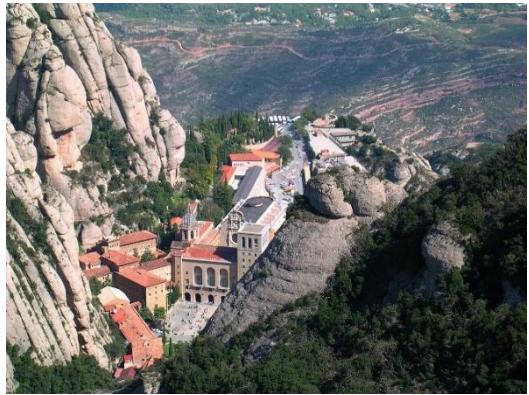


over 5,000 pieces of art. Didier Descouens, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior image right

Our last stop in Barcelona was to visit the Picasso Museum of Art. Four thousand two hundred and fifty-one art works completed by Picasso are housed in this museum. The museum itself is comprised of five adjoining palaces from medieval times. The museum was the first one of its kind dedicated to Picasso. It was started during his lifetime and opened in 1963. Of course, many other of his art pieces are displayed around the world in major museums. The museum has two of the first major pieces of Picasso's art: The First Communion and Science and Charity. Picasso was the one to suggest that a museum of his work should be in Barcelona rather than Malaga (his birthplace) as some friends of his suggested. Apparently, Picasso felt Barcelona was an important city in his life.

Picasso's friend, Sabartés had about 574 pieces of Picasso's work and he set up an agreement with Barcelona to develop the museum with his own collection as a starting point. There were also some works that Picasso had donated to Barcelona that were added to the initial collection. And some donations came from other friends of Picasso.

After Sabartés died in 1968, Picasso donated 920 more artworks and other materials such as schoolbooks, academic papers, and paintings from Picasso's Blue period. As the collection grew the museum space needed to grow as well and additional palaces were added to the first. Now the number of connected palaces stands at 5. The modern style of art works such as Picasso's are not to everyone's preference but the volume of his work is amazing!



Richard Schneider, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Montserrat Monastery viewed from St. James Rock, left. After viewing the museum, we headed northwest out of town to Montserrat, a monastery built into the hillside. Not only are the architecture and natural beauty amazing but the serenity and calmness it offers makes you want to stay. All of the buildings have a natural charm from the museum and shops to the chapels in the monastery. We took a cable car ride from one mountain to another so we could get the best views of the natural beauty of the area. Fortunately, none of our walkers expressed a fear of heights. The monastery, Santa Maria de Montserrat, belongs to the Order of Saint

Benedict. It looks like it was built into the side of the mountain. About 70 monks still reside in the Abbey. The church has a single nave, 222 feet long and 70.5 feet wide. It stands with a height of 109 feet tall. Many works of art adorn the church in the side chapels and others are found in the museum. We were able to attend Mass while we were visiting the church.

Bernard Gagnon, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, L'Escolania (boys choir school of the basilica), below, left.

Yeonu0407, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Basilica viewed from the entrance, below right.



As one of the oldest boy's choirs in Europe, the choir is often called upon to perform during religious events.

In the 1500's the initial construction of the basilica began. It was destroyed during the Peninsular War.

Reconstruction started in 1811.

Pope Leo XIII designated it as a minor basilica in 1881. Other reconstructions and renovations occurred over the years. After the Spanish Civil War, a new façade was finished in 1988. In 1991, the basilica restoration was begun and finished in 1995. The Santa Cecilia

Chapel was redone in 2015. The chapel is next to the abbey.

Misburg3014, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

An important statue in the monastery is the image of the Virgin of Montserrat, image left. The Virgin of Montserrat is considered a co-patroness saint of Catalonia, sharing that honor with Saint George of Catala. Various miracles have been attributed to The Virgin of Montserrat. The statue is believed to have been carved in wood in the middle east and covered with polychrome. It is believed to have arrived in Spain in the 800's. In 718, the statue was moved from its original place and put in a cave to protect it from invading Saracens. She was forgotten there until some young people found her. They noticed this cave seemed to have internal lighting - a blue light - and found the statue. The monastery was built

around the cave she was in in 1025, because the 38' statue was too heavy to move. Various miracles have been associated with the statue including healing people. She is often called La Moreneta ("the little dark-skinned one" or "the little dark one") because her hands and face appeared darker than the rest of her. However, more recent restoration seems to show her face and hands were originally gold like her clothing but the candles lit in her honor had blackened her face and hands. A canonical coronation was granted to the image by Pope Leo XIII in 1881. We ended our week here.

Thanks for participating  
Your Tour Director  
Kathy Scharer